

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FAIR FUNDING OF EDUCATION
TREDYFFRIN/EASTTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
February 26, 2024**

02-26-24

WHEREAS on February 7, 2023 the Commonwealth Court of PA ruled that the General Assembly has failed to uphold its constitutional obligation to provide for “the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education” because our current funding system deprives students in low income districts with the same opportunities afforded students in wealthier ones, and mandated that the General Assembly ensure that “*all students* have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of *public education*.”; and

WHEREAS on January 11, 2024 the Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC), which was tasked with gathering input from stakeholders, analyzing and evaluating options and making recommendations for meeting the court ordered obligation, released both a majority supported report and a report from the minority with substantial overlap in their recommendations; and

WHEREAS the substantial overlap between the BEFC majority and minority reports include increasing funding to basic education and special education, Cyber Charter reform, support for Career and Technical Education programs, facilities improvements, support for student mental health programs, addressing the teacher shortage, and support for early literacy programs; and

WHEREAS both the ruling of the Commonwealth Court and ACT 51 of 2014, which created the BEFC, focused their mandates exclusively on public education funding; and

WHEREAS one of the recommendations in the minority report is to implement the “PA Award for Student Success” (PASS) program, which would divert money away from public schools by creating publicly funded scholarships to attend non-public schools; and

WHEREAS any program that diverts public money away from public schools and into non-public schools would make the court ordered mandate for the fair funding of public schools more difficult to achieve; and

WHEREAS the stated intention of PASS is “assisting students in low-achieving schools” by providing “school choice opportunities”; and

WHEREAS PA law already provides for public school choice opportunities in the form of charter schools; and

WHEREAS a program already exists, in the form of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)/ Opportunity Student Tax Scholarship (OSTS) that provides taxpayer supported scholarships for students in low achieving schools to attend non-public schools; and

WHEREAS there have been no studies done to indicate whether students who receive public funds from the EITC/OSTS programs achieve better academic outcomes, and

WHEREAS the most recent senate bill creating PASS (SB 757) specifically prioritizes renewal of non-public school scholarships for students who are neither low income nor residing within the boundaries of low achieving schools; and

WHEREAS the current proposal for PASS provides for no meaningful reporting requirements or accountability regarding academic progress of the students who receive the publicly funded scholarships, and

WHEREAS the current proposal for PASS provides for additional funds for students with special needs but provides for no requirement that those funds be used for special education services.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Tredyffrin/Easttown School Board calls on Governor Shapiro and the General Assembly to work together to quickly enact legislation that builds upon the common ground provided in the two BEFC reports that includes both specific funding targets and a timeline for implementation, since failure to do so could result in further litigation at taxpayer expense; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tredyffrin/Easttown School Board is opposed to any proposal (such as PASS) that diverts additional public funds away from public education in the absence of any data indicating that such programs provide better academic outcomes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tredyffrin/Easttown School Board is opposed to any proposal (such as PASS) that lacks robust academic and fiscal accountability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tredyffrin/Easttown School Board is opposed to any proposal (such as PASS) that allows public funds to support non-public school scholarships for students who are neither low-income nor residing within the boundaries of low achieving schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be submitted to the elected Senators and Representatives of the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District in the General Assembly, and to the Governor of Pennsylvania.

Adopted this 26th day of February, 2024.

Signed,

School Board President

Board Secretary