

A publication  
of Public  
Citizens for  
Children and  
Youth (PCCY)



## Helping to improve the lives and life chances of children, youth and families in Southeastern Pennsylvania

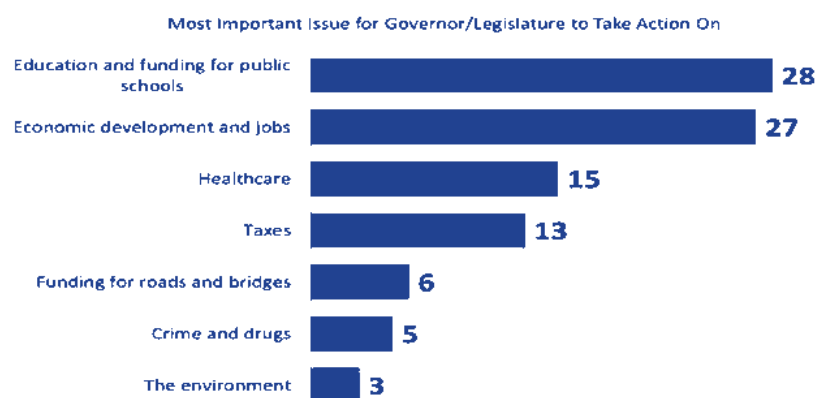
Fall/Winter 2013

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### Funding for Schools is a Top Priority for PA Voters ... and We Have the Numbers to Prove It

Twenty-eight percent of likely Pennsylvania voters ranked funding for schools as the most important issue for the Governor and the legislature to take action on based on a poll commissioned by PCCY last June. Education funding outpaced other issues like the economy (27%) and funding for roads and bridges (6%). The poll also found an overwhelming majority of voters are paying close attention to what's going on when it comes to how their schools are funded. Nearly eight of ten (77%) voters polled said they were concerned about cuts in funding to public schools in Pennsylvania. The majority (55%) also said they supported a combination of a small sales tax increase and a delay of a planned corporate tax cut as a way to restore funding for schools. The poll shows Pennsylvania lawmakers are out of step with their constituents. Join our effort to remind elected officials and candidates that education is the top issue for the future of the Commonwealth. You can sign up for email alerts by heading to [pccy.org](http://pccy.org) and entering your email address on the home page. You can also send your email address to [info@pccy.org](mailto:info@pccy.org).



### Demanding High Standards for Charters

The PCCY audit of the school district's charter schools seeking renewal titled "Philadelphia's Charter Renewal Process Challenges and Recommendations," found problems in two areas: academics and enrollment. Charter schools are designed to provide children with a better education and should be open to all children. PCCY found one charter up for renewal that performed worse on state assessments than the district did over the last two years.

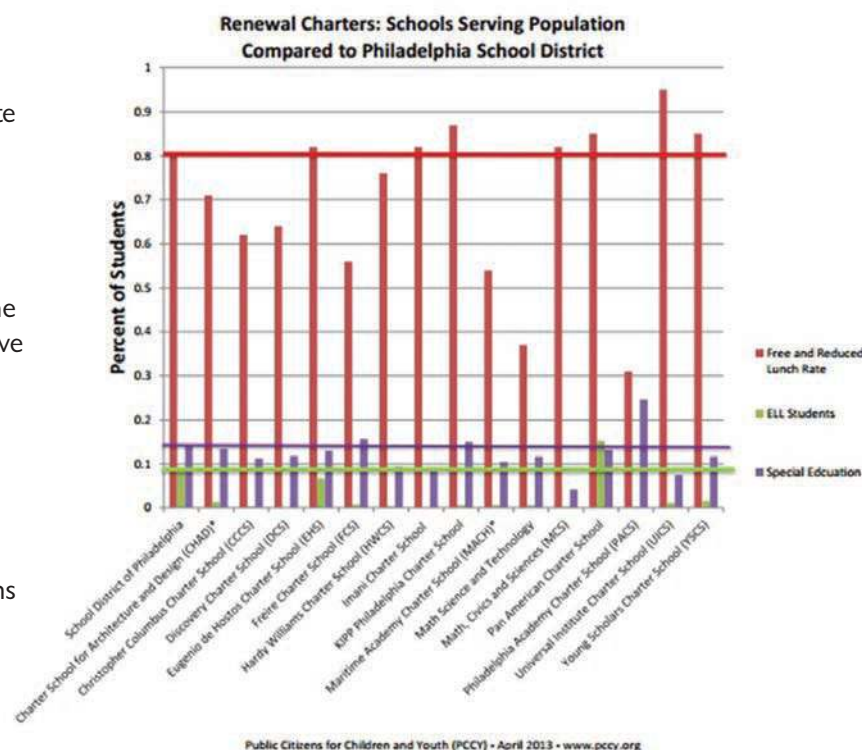
PCCY also found many of the schools did not enroll Special Education, English Language Learner and low-income students at average District rates.

The audit found:

- 1 charter had a Special Education enrollment rate that was a third of the district's rate, another had a rate that was half the district's rate, and five had rates significantly less than the district's rate.
- 13 charter schools had fewer than 2% English Language Learners. The district average is 8%.
- 9 charter schools served fewer low-income students than the district average.

PCCY found a staggering 111 barriers parents faced enrolling their kids in these charters. The School Reform Commission used PCCY's audit as a lens for identifying and addressing issues with charter admissions. As a result, PCCY played a key role in eliminating barriers. We will continue to keep a close eye on charters and all schools to make sure they provide high-quality education for Philadelphia's children.

For questions about the audit, please contact Shanee Garner at [shaneeg@pccy.org](mailto:shaneeg@pccy.org).



## Contract Talks Present Opportunity for Education Reform

PCCY led the formation of the Coalition for Effective Teaching- a group of diverse organizations that calls on both the district and the teachers’ union to support measures to bolster more effective teaching in Philadelphia’s public school classrooms.

- Our suggested reforms include:
- Maintain class-size limits but allow for flexibility to support innovations such as blended-learning models.
  - Give all schools full site selection, whereby principals and school selection committees determine which teachers are right for their schools.
  - Increase a teacher’s pay for additional qualifications only in the cases of degrees and certifications which research has shown lead to gains in student achievement.
  - Pay teachers more for taking on leadership roles in their schools.

The Coalition believes that in tandem with a new contract, the district must also hold principals accountable for the safety of their teachers and students as well as academic success in the classroom.

To learn more about the Coalition please visit [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) or email Anthony at [anthonyh@pccy.org](mailto:anthonyh@pccy.org).

### Coalition for Effective Teaching

Aspira Inc. of Philadelphia  
Congreso de Latinos Unidos  
Economy League of Greater Philadelphia  
Education Voters of Pennsylvania  
NAACP Philadelphia Chapter  
Parent Power  
Philadelphia Education Fund  
Public Citizens for Children and Youth  
United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern NJ  
Urban Affairs Coalition  
Urban League of Philadelphia

## PHILADELPHIA SCHOOL FUNDING: A Crisis in Leadership

The budget crisis in the Philadelphia School District forced schools to open with a skeleton crew of teachers and staff to educate the city’s roughly 153,000 public school students. Faced with a \$304 million budget shortfall and no solutions in sight, the district sent layoff notices to nearly 4,000 employees. Through last minute funding from the city, the district hired back about a 1,000 secretaries, counselors, and other staff.

The district would not be in this position if the state met its constitutional obligation to provide adequate funding for its schools. In 2011, the Governor enacted a devastating \$1 billion budget cut to public education. The cuts disproportionately hit Philadelphia and crippled the district’s finances.

In June, PCCY mobilized parents, students and education advocates to deliver thousands of letters and petitions directly to lawmakers in Harrisburg to demand they support additional funding measures for schools. One of the letters from a Philadelphia student read in part, “Although to you, this decision is merely a signature, it is my future... Please, do the right thing.” Instead of listening to these messages, the legislature provided a miserly \$2 million in additional funding for the district, effectively passing the buck on to the city and the teachers’ union to come up with the necessary funding for the schools.

The solution to this problem is a fair and adequate state funding formula for Pennsylvania’s schools. Pennsylvania is just **one of three states** in the nation that does not have a funding plan for public education. It is time for our elected lawmakers to step up so our districts, parents and, most importantly, our children are not placed in this situation ever again.



Children read letters written by Philadelphia public school students during a rally at the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg last June.

## Misplaced State Budget Priorities Lead to Property Tax Increases

The Governor and the State legislature passed a woefully inadequate budget which failed to restore the \$1 billion in cuts to public education made two years ago and is now leading to uncertainty for schools across southeastern Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania’s 500 districts received a miniscule state funding increase of \$129 million, or about \$70 per student. Meanwhile, the state departments of Corrections and Probation budgets were increased by \$85 million or nearly \$1,000 per offender.

### Prisons vs. Schools

	Pennsylvania Prisons & Probation	Pennsylvania Schools
Additional Funding	\$85 million	\$129 million
Percentage Change	4.26%	2.3%
Enrollment	85,724	1.8 million
Per Person	\$991.55	\$71.67

Source: PA Dept. of Corrections & PA State Budget

As a result, local taxpayers are the ones footing the bill for school funding. The State cut funding to school districts in Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware and Chester counties by nearly \$74 million since 2010. To make up the difference, 53 out of 63 districts raised local property taxes, in some cases for a second straight year from 2010-2012.

### Local Taxes Rise

County	% of Districts that Raised Property Taxes Once	% of Districts that Raised Property Taxes Twice
Bucks	70%	62%
Chester	100%	86%
Montgomery	81%	71%
Delaware	87%	67%

And while taxes have gone up, it has still not been enough to make up for the lack of funds from Harrisburg. To make up for the cut, districts phased out programs and laid off teachers. One example where taxes have gone up while the quality of education has gone down is in the Upper Dublin School District. In an effort to close a \$7 million dollar budget deficit, the district raised property taxes 3%, dipped into their reserves, eliminated staff and furloughed others.

The legislature doled out \$30 million via twelve cryptically written formulas to districts of their choosing. One example of the state’s allocation scheme is the “English Language Learner Supplement.” Through this fund five districts, Reading, York, Lebanon, Allentown and Lancaster all received additional funding. But ten other districts that serve either more ELL students or a higher share of ELL students, including Philadelphia, Upper Darby, Norristown and Bethlehem didn’t see a penny from that fund. PCCY found that four of the five districts receiving these ELL funds are represented by key members of the majority party in the Pennsylvania House and Senate.

This has to change. PCCY will be conducting community and parent workshops, meeting with legislators, and calling on YOU to join us in the call for a fair and adequate state funding formula.

## Support PCCY Through The United Way Donor Choice Campaign

Public Citizens for Children and Youth is proud to be a partner and member agency of our local United Way. How can you help? Check with your employer to see if they participate in the United Way Donor Choice Program. If so, you can make a tax deductible payroll contribution to PCCY by using our donor code: **04883**. You can also ask your employer about giving PCCY an opportunity to tell others in your company about the great work we do. For more information contact, Steven Fynes at 215-563-5848 x11 or [stevenf@pccy.org](mailto:stevenf@pccy.org).





15 DAYS AND COUNTING

PCCY Report Finds Low-Income Children in Philadelphia Wait Far Too Long for Behavioral Health Treatment

Fifteen days of waiting. Fifteen more days of acting out. Fifteen more days of falling behind in school. Fifteen more sleepless nights for parents. That’s the agonizing amount of time low-income Philadelphia children wait for an initial behavioral health appointment, according to PCCY’s latest report “Fifteen Days and Counting: Philadelphia Children Wait Too Long for Behavioral Health Help.” That’s only the half of it. Tack on another 12 days before treatment can begin, and the waiting game jumps to nearly a month.

PCCY’s latest report found providers failed to see children in a timely manner, violating a contract from Community Behavioral Health (CBH) - the agency that reimburses providers for patients enrolled in Medical Assistance. According to their contract, providers are required to see children within seven days of the initial call from a parent or guardian. PCCY found that only about a

WAIT TIME DATA FOR PHILADELPHIA CHILDREN TO OBTAIN OUTPATIENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, 2008 AND 2010-2013			
Year	Average Number of Agencies Reached	Average Intake Wait Time (days)	Average Wait Time to See Therapist After Intake Completed (days)
2008	38	16 (variation: 0-107)	12 (variation: 0-106)
2010-2013	36	15 (variation: 0-59)	12 (variation: 0-51)

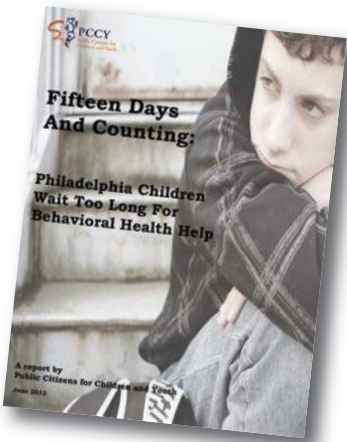
dozen of the 56 behavioral health providers reached this one week benchmark.

CBH acknowledges that a majority of providers come up short. To improve wait times they set up “Pay for Performance” incentives to reward providers who see half of their children within the one week window. A troubling 41% of providers failed to reach this minimal goal.

PCCY issued recommendations that include:

- Requiring providers who can not see a child in seven days to refer families back to CBH. CBH will then connect them to a provider who can see them in the one week time period.
- CBH should set a maximum wait time for children to begin therapy so children do not wait nearly a month to receive care.

PCCY shared this report with providers who tell us they have made changes to improve wait times. CBH is also aware of the report and is taking our findings very seriously. PCCY is also pushing Philadelphia City Council’s Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold a hearing on the behavioral health system. To read the full report head to [www.pccy.org/publications](http://www.pccy.org/publications) or email Colleen McCauley at [colleenm@pccy.org](mailto:colleenm@pccy.org)



Philadelphia’s Early Intervention System: Progress, But Still Not Good Enough For Our Kids

The federally funded Early Intervention program is one of our nation’s best resources for helping children with developmental delays and disabilities reach their full potential. That’s why it’s so troubling that compared to the other major cities in the state with high-risk populations, Philadelphia is at the bottom of the pack when it comes to serving children who suffer from developmental delays or disabilities. PCCY’s report Philadelphia’s Early Intervention System: Progress, But Still Not Good Enough for Our Kids found that only 8.7% of children under two and 12% of three and four year olds participated in Philadelphia’s Early Intervention programs in FY 2011-2012. By comparison, in Reading, 15% of children under two and 18% of three and four year olds were receiving these critical services. PCCY’s calculations show that if Philadelphia was doing as good a job as other major cities in the state with respect to identifying the kids who need the services and enrolling them, as many as 7,000 more children would have received these essential development services in FY 2011-2012.

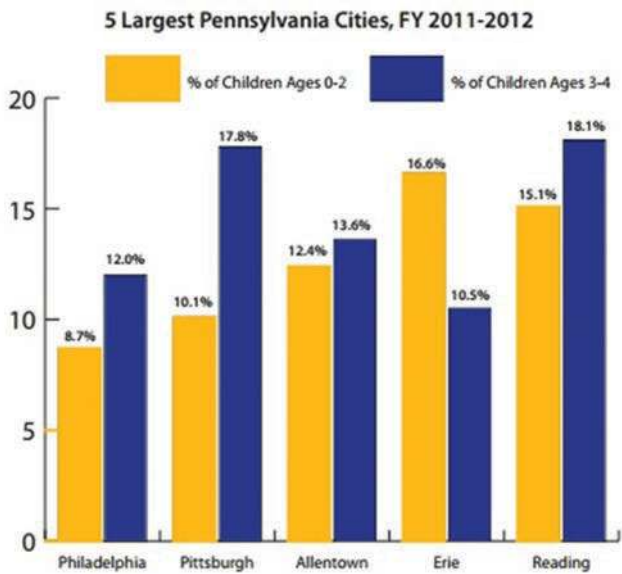
PCCY’s report includes recommendations for improving the system that should be adopted by the state, the City of Philadelphia and providers. Specifically, PCCY called for the creation of a high quality early learning system that links early intervention services with pre-k and other early learning programs. The report points out that, “... targeted preschool



programs reduce special education expenditures in the state by at least 8 percent annually; a typical school district could save 78 cents of every dollar spent on preschool education through savings in special education.”

To view PCCY’s full report, head to [www.pccy.org/publications](http://www.pccy.org/publications). For questions about the report please email Shawn Towey [shawnt@pccy.org](mailto:shawnt@pccy.org).

Philadelphia Lags Behind Other PA Cities



Source: PA Office of Child Development & Early Learning

Boost for Early Care and Education: A Baby Step in the Right Direction

There wasn’t much to celebrate in the 2013-2014 State budget, but there was one bright spot. After PCCY and our allies and supporters made calls, sent hundreds of letters and visited lawmakers, the state approved an overall increase of 4% in funding for Early Care and Education (ECE) programs. Spending for the Pre-K Counts and Head Start programs rose by 5%. The Child Care Subsidy for low-income working families also grew by 10%, to more than \$14 million. While this is good news, it represents only a small chunk of the 18% in cuts made to ECE programs in the last two years. Unfortunately the additional funds added to the Child Care Subsidy program will not give more children access to child care. Instead it will only compensate for the impact of federal sequestration cuts to child care subsidy funds in Pennsylvania. For more information on Early Child Care and Education policy, email Shawn Towey at [shawnt@pccy.org](mailto:shawnt@pccy.org).

	FY 2012-13*	Enacted, FY14	Difference FY13 to FY14	% Difference FY13 to FY14
Early Childhood Core Programs				
Child Care Services (subsidy for low-income working families and Keystone STARS)	\$ 141,369	\$ 155,673	\$ 14,304	10.1%
Pre-K Counts	\$ 82,784	\$ 87,284	\$ 4,500	5.4%
Head Start Supplemental Assistance	\$ 37,278	\$ 39,178	\$ 1,900	5.1%
Total	\$ 418,159	\$ 434,744	\$ 16,585	4.0%
* all numbers in thousands				



Join Our Network Online: [www.pccy.org/joinus](http://www.pccy.org/joinus)

Sign up today to receive:

- Event invitations online
- PCCY Blog every Tuesday focusing on one timely issue that affects children
- PCCY Issues in the News E-Alert every Friday on breaking or urgent news
- Every issue of ChildWatch electronically

Support PCCY By Making A Donation

- Online: [www.pccy.org/donate](http://www.pccy.org/donate)
- By check: PCCY, 1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103



## PAINTING THE PATH TO CHANGE:

### PCCY's Picasso Project Leads the Charge in Push for School Funding

As the crisis in the Philadelphia School District unfolded, it was the smallest voices that made the loudest noise and made the largest impact on the City and State to take action to fund the schools. Through grants from PCCY's Picasso Project, 13 schools

completed projects this past year ranging from a school play at Amedee Bregy Elementary School in South Philadelphia, to a battalion of terracotta warrior puppets made by students at Samuel Powel Elementary School in West Philadelphia.

Joining parents in the front row to see their amazing performances were reporters, TV cameras and other members of the media who used Picasso projects as the basis of news coverage around the school funding crisis.

PCCY also mobilized young musicians, artists,



*Powel students and their terracotta warrior puppets traveled to Philadelphia City Hall last April to urge City Council to save arts programs in schools.*

their parents and teachers to urge City Council to come up with funding to save arts programs for schools. In one instance, the Northeast High School band, which was barred from entering a City Council meeting with their instruments, held an impromptu concert right outside Council chambers.

The band's presence, along with the testimony of other students, caught the eye of the media and most importantly members of City Council. In the end Council listened to the kids and took action to give additional funding for schools and it was music that was one of the first programs restored by the district.

Since its inception in 2002, PCCY's Picasso Project has provided \$422,000 in grants to 107 schools in Philadelphia, reaching 26,500 children. For grant information or other questions email Gretchen Elise Walker at [gretchenelise@pccy.org](mailto:gretchenelise@pccy.org)

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## TOAST TO AN ICON

### Fund Named for Former PCCY Chief Raises \$426,000



PCCY created a new fund to honor former executive director Shelly Yanoff for her decades of service towards helping children in southeastern Pennsylvania. To date, the fund has raised more than \$426,000 for PCCY's ongoing advocacy initiatives. PCCY donors came out to honor her at a reception on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

If you would like to donate to honor Shelly's great work, please email Steven Fynes at [stevenf@pccy.org](mailto:stevenf@pccy.org) or call 215-563-5848 ext. 11.