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S. Moore, Morrison, Osienski, Michael Smith,
K. Williams, Wilson-Anton; Sens. Gay, Hansen,
S. McBride, Pinkney, Sokola, Townsend

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 24

MODERNIZING DELAWARE'S EDUCATION FUNDING SYSTEM.

1 WHEREAS, Delaware's Opportunity Funding, if institutionalized in Senate Bill No. 56, will codify additional per
2 pupil funding for low-income and English learner students on top of the unit count system. These changes, which are
3 essential for Delaware's students, are just a first step to ensuring that we address existing inequities and improve the way
4 we fund schools overall, including the state and local funding not affected by Senate Bill No. 56; and

5 WHEREAS, the COVID pandemic has exacerbated existing educational gaps and brought new attention to the
6 need for racial justice in schools, beginning with, but not limited to, how schools are funded; and

7 WHEREAS, Delaware's School Funding System dates to World War II, before desegregation and the movement
8 towards fully inclusive public schools with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and

9 WHEREAS, since that time, most other states have modernized their funding systems and Delaware remains one
10 of fewer than 10 states that uses a resource-based allocation system of school finance; and

11 WHEREAS, over a dozen reports by a variety of Delaware stakeholders in the last decade have recommended
12 modernizing the school funding system; and

13 WHEREAS, education stakeholders have noted that Senate Bill No. 56 and the other steps put forward in the
14 Settlement of Delawareans for Educational Opportunity v. Carneys will lead to progress towards a more holistic solution
15 needed to truly address the student-based needs of generations to come; and

16 WHEREAS, there is agreement among education stakeholders that both the referendum system and the
17 equalization units fall well short of ensuring fair and sufficient local revenue for education; and

18 WHEREAS, there is a need to build upon the urgency of this moment. The confluence of the COVID pandemic
19 and the movement toward racial justice require that we define a path forward for future generations that raises and allocates
20 funding for schools in ways that are more flexible, transparent, equitable manner based on the needs of students; and

21 WHEREAS, this is a moment to rethink this nearly 80-year-old system to learn from the nation and modernize it
22 to advance our collective future.

23 NOW, THEREFORE:

24 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the 151st General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the
25 Senate concurring therein, that The General Assembly is seeking additional data to help define and understand the scope of
26 the current funding system to inform the development of future potential funding models and legislation that modernizes
27 Delaware's education finance system holistically by increasing the flexibility, transparency, equity, and responsiveness to
28 student needs of state and local funds.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that The Department of Education, with input from the Office of Management and
30 Budget and other relevant agencies, shall produce a report with the following information by September 1, 2021:

31 (1) Information about district access to local revenue, including the amount of revenue per pupil currently
32 being raised by each district from each form of school tax, and the estimated value of the millage rate in each district;

33 (2) Descriptions of existing flexibility for district and or school-level decision-making in spending for each
34 unit division and other state resources;

35 (3) Information about the per-pupil allocations of the Delaware funding formula across districts and student
36 groups including, but not limited to:

37 a. Average value of a Division I unit and other positional units prescribed by code statewide and for each
38 individual district;

39 b. Average per pupil amount of regular education unit funding, statewide and for each individual district,
40 and average per-pupil amount and percentage of additional funding for low-income, English learner, special
41 education, and CTE students. If this is not available, DOE shall provide the closest estimate possible using school-
42 level data and/or an explanation of why the current allocation system is not set up to answer these questions.

43 (4) Information about equity in school level per-pupil spending as required by Senate Bill No. 172 passed by
44 the 148th General Assembly, including publicly reported school-level spending by location (i.e., "school site" and
45 "central office" detail), and the ability to compare spending at the school and district level by student demographics.

46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report is to be submitted to the Chairs and Co-chairs of Senate and House
47 education committees.

SYNOPSIS

This Resolution: 1) Celebrates Senate Bill No. 56 and the immediate investment of targeted funding for student needs; 2) Describes the need for additional action from the General Assembly to update and modernize remaining underlying education funding issues; 3) Requires the Department of Education to report information to help illuminate systemic inequities in the current education funding system to inform future legislative proposals.