



NAACP

Pennsylvania
STATE CONFERENCE

PRESS RELEASE

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Pennsylvania School Funding Lawsuit on Track to Begin Trial in September 2021

The NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference as one of the lead petitioners joined the Pennsylvania school funding lawsuit in 2014 under the leadership of Jerry Mondesire, President at the time. “Throughout the years of various motions that have been heard and depositions taken, with the court order issued by Judge Renee Cohn Jubelirer on April 1, 2021, we finally have the opportunity to go to trial,” stated NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference President, Kenneth L. Huston. This trial is our best chance to fix Pennsylvania’s school funding system so that all our students, including Black and Brown students, receive the high-quality public education they deserve and need. Educational equity begins with this trial. We are proud to be a part of this important effort.

Pennsylvania schools have been described as among the most racially segregated and highly inequitable in the nation. The State’s inadequate and inequitable school funding system has disproportionately impacted Black and Brown students across the Commonwealth.

What does this mean for students of color across our state? Generations of Black and Brown students have attended under-funded schools and been deprived of educational opportunities, which has narrowed and limited their futures. They have attended schools in buildings that are falling apart and lack science labs and adequate technology. They have been educated in overcrowded classrooms with no aides, in classrooms that lack up to-date textbooks and materials. These schools struggle to attract experienced teachers and desperately need more social workers and guidance counselors. I know this from my work with families who reach out to the NAACP for help and from our organization’s direct work with school districts like Duquesne, McKeesport, Woodland Hills, and Philadelphia.

We have paid a steep price for the fact that half of Pennsylvania’s Black students live in the state’s lowest-funded districts: due to underfunding, students in these districts are less likely to receive a rigorous course of study in high school and they are far less likely to graduate from high school and go on to earn post-secondary degrees.

It is hoped that at the conclusion of the trial now tentatively scheduled for September 9, 2021, the process of making equitable changes will begin.

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Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation’s oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. The Pennsylvania State Conference was established in 1934 and pursues the same mission throughout the Commonwealth.