



The League of Women Voters of Delaware

Supports Initiatives to Eliminate Inequities in School Financing. This aligns with the League's position calling for access to a high-quality education for all students.

The League of Women Voters of Delaware recognizes and appreciates the complexity of the problems surrounding educational funding. However, in a state the size of Delaware, it is baffling that these problems cannot be solved. While many of the children in our state are experiencing an inadequate education, politicians are failing to take action, although a number of initiatives have been and continue to be attempted.

As the Legislature and specific school districts around the state grapple with this issue, there are two areas we wish to highlight and support -- namely (1) property reassessment and (2) funding that is equitable and equalized.

The need for **property reassessment** has been on the radar of the League for many years. We are troubled by the fact that property in New Castle County has not been reassessed since 1983, while in Kent and Sussex, no reassessment has been done since 1986 and 1974 respectively. Clearly, property values do not remain constant, and the result is inequity.

The need for **funding equity and equalization** is also clear. Scrutiny of the School District profiles, found on the Department of Education website, reveals the current inequity. For example, the Brandywine School District spent \$15,530 per student in 2015-16 (the most current data available), while Red Clay spent \$13,707. Downstate, Cape Henlopen spent \$15,481 per student, while Indian River was at \$13,373.

A new funding allocation system is needed. The system should take into account the characteristics of the students in each district, factoring in the income level of the families and the presence of children with special educational needs, including *basic* needs, from pre-kindergarten all through grade 12. In addition, allocation amounts should not be based on enrollments at one particular point in time during the year. Given family transience and changing circumstances, adjustment(s) should be made at intervals throughout the year to reflect the characteristics of the student population at the time of the adjustment.

We know that such initiatives will take resolve, but the future of our state is in the balance. To ensure that Delaware's economic and social fabric remains strong, we must put aside narrow interests. We must educate all our children in the best way possible - to prepare our future leaders and to enable every child to live up to his and her potential.