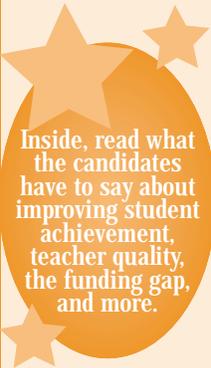


# Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership Voters' Guide to the 2002 Governor's Election

FALL 2002



The Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership is...

**Lancaster Foundation for Educational Enrichment**

www.lfee.org  
717/391-8660

445 N. Reservoir St.  
Lancaster, PA 17602

**Mon Valley Education Consortium**

www.mvec.org  
412/678-9215

336 Shaw Ave.  
McKeesport, PA 15132

**Philadelphia Education Fund**

www.philaedfund.org  
215/665-1400

7 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Suite 700  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1294

**Pittsburgh Council on Public Education**

www.Ed4AllKids.org  
412/434-0851

2934 Smallman Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15201-1523

*Our mission:*  
To work with partners across the state to mobilize the public in support of state education policies that ultimately will create better outcomes for all students, particularly those who traditionally have been underserved.

**The general election is Tuesday, November 5. Be an informed voter!**

A copy of the official registration and financial information of the Pittsburgh Council on Public Education may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## Why must the next governor make education a priority?

The four executive directors of the Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership respond.

**Bette L. Hughes**  
*Executive Director*  
*Pittsburgh Council on Public Education*

**“W**hen it comes to education, the public recognizes the importance of civic responsibility, including the obligation to pay taxes, to pay attention to resource allocation, and to vote...Americans believe that schools can improve, that children can rise to new levels of achievement, and that communities will benefit from the process.”

Earlier this year, the Public Education Network (PEN) joined with Education Week to conduct a national survey of public opinion on citizens' expectations of our leaders regarding not only what they say about public education, but also what they do. In *Accountability for All: What Voters Want from Education Candidates*, PEN and Education Week share their findings in what they describe as a “nation-wide call to action for a continuing commitment to public education and to the essential American values and ideals that our public schools embody.”

With the support of PEN—our national membership organization—our four groups came together a little over a year ago to form the Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership. This voters' guide is just one of the ways we are acting with a statewide voice on issues that help or hinder the work of public schools in our communities and throughout Pennsylvania.

Here are highlights of the PEN/Ed Week key findings, excerpted from their report:

**Education remains a top priority—**

- Education ranks second only to the economy and jobs on the public's list of most serious concerns
- Quality education for all is a national priority, with 92 percent of respondents saying that providing all children with a quality education is an attainable goal
- School quality has a profound influence on where Americans live, because citizens believe that quality public schools build stronger families, improve the economy, and reduce crime

**Citizens demand no cuts in education spending—**

- Among survey respondents, 80 percent say that education should be either a top or high priority for financial support in their states
- When naming priorities the government should shield from spending cuts, education and schools are cited by a majority

- In a tight economy, citizens view early childhood education, reduced class size, and teacher training as most deserving of protection from budget cuts

**Voters hold both candidates and communities accountable—**

- Elected officials should be held accountable for school quality, and school boards, along with parents with children in public schools, bear the most responsibility for quality education and have the most power to effect change
- The public also believes that students should be held accountable, with almost 75 percent favoring requiring

students to pass a basic test of skills to be promoted (with 23 percent believing that such tests will help direct assistance to students who need it most)

The Pittsburgh Council on Public Education has been engaging the community around key issues in public education for almost 40 years, and we continue to serve as our city's only

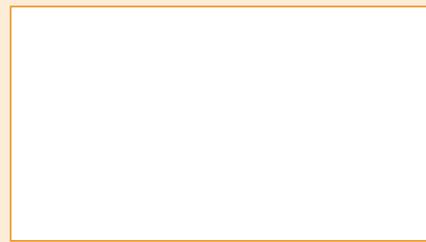
group whose sole focus is championing the cause of all children in our public schools.

All our children have the right to an education which prepares them to not only reach their highest potential as individuals, but also to serve our nation as responsible, productive citizens. As Edward Everett observed, “Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army.” Because we agree, we urge you to read this voters' guide thoughtfully, make an informed decision, and then VOTE!

*continued on page four*

**Mon Valley Education Consortium**  
336 Shaw Avenue  
McKeesport, PA 15132

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# The candidates on public education

To provide information for voters, the Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership (PA PEP) asked candidates for governor Mike Fisher (R), Ken Krawchuk (Libertarian), Michael Morrill (Green), and Ed Rendell (D) to respond to a questionnaire on key education issues. Below are the questions we asked and the responses we received from Fisher, Krawchuk, and Rendell. Morrill did not participate.

New federal education legislation—the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—makes new demands on states, districts, schools, and teachers, and Pennsylvania places its own demands on students through a “high-stakes” assessment. For students to be successful, Pennsylvania’s schools must be built upon solid foundations that support student academic performance. PA PEP believes that students must have “opportunities to learn,” including these components: school readiness, high quality learning, high quality instruction, safe and modernized schools, and parent and community involvement.

**1. To comply with “No Child Left Behind,” Pennsylvania will have to test students annually in grades 3-8 in reading and math, and schools must demonstrate progress every year to avoid federally-mandated sanctions. Already, 256 Pennsylvania schools will be facing such sanctions this school year because of low scores. While test scores are only one measure, it is evident that Pennsylvania needs a plan for improving schools. What interventions or strategies will you promote to help these lowest-performing schools improve student achievement?**

**Fisher:** Failing school districts should be permitted to develop and implement specific plans for improvement. My plan includes an unprecedented investment in early childhood initiatives so that all children read by the third grade. My administration will also work with the lowest-performing schools to develop programs to increase achievement and results through investments in teacher training, school readiness programs and increased state aid.

**Krawchuk:** 90 percent of Pennsylvania’s children attend

government schools, effectively creating a monopoly with attendant higher costs, lower quality, and lack of choice. To improve performance in all schools, end that monopoly by introducing competition. Parents should be empowered to choose any government school, and funding which currently goes to the local school would instead follow the child to the school chosen by the parents. Good schools would grow without raising taxes, and bad schools would close.

**Rendell:** Standardized test scores should not be used as the sole measure for whether or not districts receive additional funding. This obsession that is going on with standardized tests is bad for the education of our children. We do need standards and we do need some sort of assessment, but there are so many other factors that affect overall performance of a school—graduation rates, attendance rates and promotion rates. I would like to see a move towards a weighted standard of assessment that factors in a number of different measures.

- Uncouple the property tax from education funding by providing substantial additional funding for local school districts

- Provide funding for full-day kindergarten
- Begin implementing universal pre-K for all four-year olds
- Begin reducing class sizes in K to 3
- Provide technical assistance for development of after-school programs

**2. The NCLB Act calls for states to establish a “highly qualified” teaching corps—one in which all teachers are certified and can demonstrate competence in the academic content they teach. The Pennsylvania Department of Education also is required to work to ensure that inexperienced, uncertified, or “out-of-field” teachers do not teach poor and minority children at higher rates than they teach other children.**

**A. What strategies will you support to recruit and retain “highly qualified” teachers, particularly those serving high concentrations of poor and minority students?**

**Fisher:** As Governor, I will seek to increase loan forgiveness programs for teachers and increase training for our teachers. Performance criteria for teachers should be tied to specific indicators of good teaching rather than vague guidelines. My administration will allow districts to identify teachers in need of skills improvement, but it will also provide a new opportunity for teacher growth from evaluation to evaluation.

**Krawchuk:** Rather than restricting the pool of available teachers with bureaucratic solutions, we must open up our educational system to alternative forms of education, such as homeschooling, cyber schools, apprentice programs, charter schools, and community-based schools, all of which by their very nature do not fit the centralized “certification” concept. Limiting educational choices can only serve to limit our children’s education.

**Rendell:** We need to establish additional funding incentives so that we can motivate “highly qualified”

teachers to serve in districts that have a high concentration of poor and minority students.

**B. How will you encourage and support professional development—for teachers and other school staff—that is focused on school improvement?**

**Fisher:** We must provide high-quality, focused professional development allowing educators to share knowledge of techniques and ideas that benefit students. I will establish “best teaching practices” allowing the best ideas from each district to be shared among classrooms throughout the Commonwealth.

**Krawchuk:** Rather than a centralized model for all schools, professional development must be decided locally, either by the schools or by parents. For the state to impose such standards creates a “one size fits none” approach. What may be needed for one school may often be inappropriate for another school. I would work to provide a more diverse educational system where the needs of the individual school and community would dictate the direction of professional development.

**Rendell:** While no specific programs can provide all the professional development necessary, I recognize that professional development needs to focus on a variety of strategies to help teachers and administrators continuously improve their classrooms and schools to help all students achieve to high standards. Specific plans would include using a variety of teaching strategies to adapt to multiple learning styles, reading across various content areas, and effective assessment strategies to determine how well our students, and classrooms, are performing. Pennsylvania’s schools, teachers, and students are too diverse for a one size fits all solution.

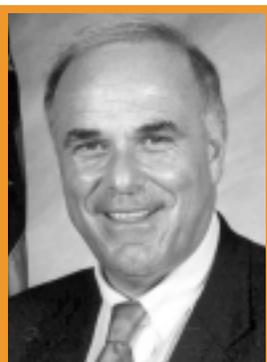
**3. Much attention has been focused this year on how public education is funded.**



**Ken Krawchuk**  
(Libertarian)



**Mike Fisher**  
(Republican)



**Ed Rendell**  
(Democrat)

**A. What percentage of local school instructional expenditures should be funded by the state?**

**Fisher:** Pennsylvania has increased funding for education by over \$2 billion in the last eight years. I believe that the state needs to continue to increase funding for basic public education. I also believe that the state needs to contribute a greater share of the costs for special education and charter schools, and that will be a priority in my administration.

**Krawchuk:** Rather than basing education funding on some complicated formula or simplistic percentage, the state should be responsible for funding all of their mandates, especially special education. Spending should also be limited to those things authorized by the Pennsylvania Constitution, specifically the infrastructure of education: physical buildings, computers, locally-selected textbooks, and other non-curriculum decisions.

**Rendell:** As Governor, my goal is to immediately raise state funding to over 50 percent of the costs of instructional education in our 501 school districts—the level at which State funding was provided 30 years ago. Shortly after taking office in January 2003, I will call a special session of the legislature to accomplish this goal.

**B. Based on the share you believe the state should pay, how should per-student spending be calculated, taking into account economically disadvantaged students, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and other factors?**

**Fisher:** Every district should receive a per-student base funding level, and economically disadvantaged districts should receive an increased funding. I will support working with the General Assembly

and education groups like the Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership to create a fair and equitable system that ensures state help for our economically disadvantaged districts. I will also increase the state share of funding for special education.

**Krawchuk:** Educational spending decisions must be made at the local level rather than by appointed bureaucrats. Only at the local level can these decisions best be made.

**Rendell:** Because the state shoulders so little of the funding burden, there is an immense discrepancy in what districts spend to educate their students. The highest spending district invests \$14,341 in each student, while the lowest spending is only able to spend \$4,637 per child. The state's most successful school districts and its wealthiest each spend more than \$9,000 on each student every year. The problem is exacerbated because Pennsylvania lacks a coherent way of deciding how much money every school district receives each year. There is no formula that determines funding levels and distribution. As a result, the Commonwealth's school funding system is actually not a system at all. School districts must have adequate resources to provide every child with a quality education. We have to start out by saying, "This is what it costs to educate a child so that she will meet high standards by the time she graduates." By setting this foundation level and adjusting it for factors such as poverty, limited English proficiency and special education, we are explicitly linking the funds that we invest in our schools with the expectations that we hold for student achievement.

**4. Results from the 2001 state test—the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment—show that economically disadvantaged and minority students scored significantly lower than students**

**from wealthier families and students who are white.**

**A. What do you think accounts for this gap?**

**Fisher:** The gap is from a combination of both social and economic circumstances. It is a lack of funding for schools, but it is also a lack of family structures to reinforce learning.

**Krawchuk:** The education monopoly held by the state is intrinsically incapable of providing an optimal education for such a varied student body. Only by eliminating the monopoly can the needs of our diverse population be served. Control of education must reside at the lowest possible level—with the parents and the community.

**Rendell:** The funding disparity in Pennsylvania means that where you live determines the quality of the education your child receives, the access they have to new technology, the availability of early learning programs such as all-day kindergarten and the after-school programs in which they can participate. A child in a poor community who attends a school with far fewer resources ultimately has less opportunity to succeed than his or her peer in a wealthier district. That is totally unacceptable.

**B. What actions will you take to reduce it?**

**Fisher:** As part of my education plan, I have outlined an unprecedented investment in early childhood learning programs that include funding for Head Start, reading programs and library enhancement initiatives. My plan seeks to make certain that every child starts school ready to learn, and that all children are reading by the third grade.

**Krawchuk:** We must open up our educational system to alternative

forms of education, such as home-schooling, cyber schools, apprentice programs, charter schools, and community-based schools. Limiting educational choices can only serve to limit our children's education.

**Rendell:** Research shows children who have attended high quality child care, preschool and all-day kindergarten do better in many areas—school attendance and achievement, social and emotional health and well being, continued participation in higher education, reduced rates of juvenile crime and violence. The definitive economic analyses on this issue show that \$1 invested in high quality early learning now avoids \$2 to \$7 in public sector expenditures on special education, welfare, juvenile justice and other related "deep end" investments. Optimal development during this period provides the best possibility for lifelong success in school and beyond. We must make sure that a) eligible families are able to access these programs and b) state funding is provided to support the implementation of these programs.

As Governor, I will move aggressively to implement pre-kindergarten education and full-day kindergarten across the state by providing grants to local communities. The program will be phased in over five years, beginning with school districts and charter schools with high concentrations of low-income students. We will also begin to phase in smaller class sizes from kindergarten to third grade. Again, this will begin in districts with high concentrations of low-income and minority students. ▲

**For more information**

Fisher for Governor  
225 Market Street, Third Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
717/234-7564  
www.mikefisher.com

Ken Krawchuk  
Libertarian for Pennsylvania  
Governor  
P.O. Box 260  
Cheltenham, PA 19012  
215/881-9696  
www.KenK.org

Morrill for Governor  
P.O. Box 7571  
Reading, PA 19601  
570/372-0503  
www.michaelmorrill.org

Rendell for Governor  
124 S. 15th St., Third Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
www.rendellforgovernor.com

## Why must the next governor make education a priority?

*continued from page one*

**Linda L. Croushore, Ed.D.**  
*Executive Director  
Mon Valley Education  
Consortium*

If there is one essential quality that the next governor of Pennsylvania must have, it is that of strategic decision-maker. Many individuals, organizations and policy makers have pushed the issue of education funding to the forefront as this election nears. Conversations about equity have been on the table for years. Now, finally, we need a leader to bring these critical questions to a resolution that will uphold the public schools, the teaching profession, and the thousands of children who pass through the school doors every day with the hope and expectation of a better future.

For years, unfortunately, public education in our Commonwealth has not been about those children. It has been about the money. With ever-increasing demands for fiscal responsibility, there is no doubt that our next governor must be very conscious of spending—our economy demands it. Yet some children need more support from the state than others. Not all children are lucky enough to be raised in communities where they have good public libraries, access to recreation centers, the newest technology in the classroom, the chance to take advanced placement classes. It is imperative that the state level this playing field. It should matter to all of us what happens to children in every district, not just in our own home school district.

The Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership has outlined what children need from schools in order to meet high standards of learning, what communities need from their school districts, and what school districts need from the state. Children must have the necessary skills, especially pre-reading skills, to begin first grade successfully. They must have access to classroom materials that help them meet the standards. Small classes. Extra help for those who need it. Qualified teachers in every classroom, supported by an effective principal. Safe and well-maintained schools. Parent and community involvement. We need a governor who will advocate for these basic opportunities. We need a governor who will make sure that mandates are funded fully so that children receive these promised services.

True improvement in the future of public education is going to require

money, raised in the fairest and most appropriate ways, but it cannot only be about money. It is going to take an incredible thoughtfulness about the ways in which we intervene in and support the lives of our children and their families. Their success, and our ability to help them achieve that success, will determine Pennsylvania's future.

**Laura Sadler Olin**  
*Executive Director  
Lancaster Foundation for  
Educational Excellence*

When individuals think about the future, most hold dreams that are of more peaceful and prosperous times. We look for a "better tomorrow" for our children, family, friends, and the world. One proven factor in the health of cities and neighborhoods is education. In 2001, Edward Glaeser and Jesse Shapiro of the Harvard Institute of Economic Research published a study that shows the relationship of education to city growth. They suggested that "high human capital people" (those who have marketable skills, higher reasoning and thinking abilities, and greater income/consumption levels) produce more new ideas, and that there is an economic advantage in "speeding the flow of ideas."

If Pennsylvanians overlook the part that education plays in the health of the Commonwealth, our future will indeed be dim. We must elect a governor and legislators who believe that young people are our collective responsibility. We must insist that Pennsylvania live up to its Constitution, which states, "the General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth." We must be adamant that adequate and equitable support for our students and our schools becomes a reality.

The Lancaster Foundation for Educational Enrichment is proud to assist the School District of Lancaster in its goal of high achievement for every child. The District has offered full-day kindergarten for the past three years, and the success it has brought our children has been remarkable. Research clearly shows that access to high quality, early childhood learning experiences greatly increases a child's chances of academic success in later years. Lancaster's experience suggests that all 501 Pennsylvania districts could benefit from a state policy that would mandate and fund kindergarten for every child.

The vitality of our

Commonwealth—currently and in the future—depends on its citizens. Education, and particularly the public education system upon which 85 percent of our young people depend, is fundamental to a thriving, civil, and democratic society. Our students are the citizens of tomorrow: our businesspeople, clergy, doctors, teachers, lawyers, mechanics, technicians, and parents. I urge you, the voters of Pennsylvania, to consider the issues and make choices that will result in positive opportunities for all citizens.

**Nancy J. McGinley, Ed.D.**  
*Executive Director  
Philadelphia Education Fund*

As the legislature debates property tax reform and Election Day approaches, I would like to offer a firsthand account of how the existing education funding system in Pennsylvania affects student achievement. I've looked at life from both sides now, having been a principal in both the city and the suburbs. When I was principal at a middle school in Philadelphia, my school had 1200 students and an 85 percent poverty rate. I was assigned one assistant principal, a nurse for four days a week, two counselors, five non-teaching assistants, and two security officers. My role as instructional leader was often secondary to the daily demands of bus supervision, issuing mediations, dealing with discipline, central office priorities, and parent concerns.

Besides lacking necessary support and record-keeping positions, we had an operating budget for supplies that allowed us to spend only \$59 per child. We could not afford current textbooks in all subject areas. Newer classroom sets were shared among five classes per day, forcing us to send students home with outdated books from which to study.

Our course offerings were fairly basic. Academically, we provided few electives or support programs. Less than 25 students received instruction in instrumental music. We had only six interscholastic athletic teams to keep students engaged after school.

By contrast, when I left my job in Philadelphia to become principal of a suburban school of comparable size, grade level, and diversity, it seemed a world apart. In reality, this school was only three miles outside city limits. At my suburban school, I had two and a half times the support staff—including a full-time psychologist, two nurses, and two full-time librarians. With an

operating budget for supplies totaling \$147 per student, difficult decisions about resources did not have to be made—the school district even provided each student with a calculator. We offered honors programs in five disciplines. Students were involved in supporting each other through peer mediation and student-to-student tutoring. Additional academic support was provided by small group tutoring staffed by aides or certified teachers. Approximately 880 students participated in band, orchestra, and chorus, and 28 interscholastic sports were offered along with a wide variety of clubs and organizations.

As in every school, both of my schools had students with highly developed academic skills and those in need of academic support. Because of the contrast in poverty rates between the two schools, student needs varied. Still, it has been my experience that adolescents, in both the city and suburbs, pass through the same stages of development, pose similar challenges for educators, and most importantly, have the same dreams for successful, productive lives.

The suburban school where I was principal was named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in Pennsylvania. But I did not become a better principal when I moved to the suburbs; rather, I was given the tools necessary to produce better results for children. It is my belief that given the resources I had in the suburban school, students in the Philadelphia school could be performing at comparable academic levels.

My experience tells me that even the most committed educators cannot transform schools without the infrastructure of support that exists in some other districts throughout the state. State education policies, which will be influenced by the next governor, can profoundly affect school districts by taking simple measures. State leaders should ensure that all schools have adequate levels of quality staff, materials, resources, and programs. More broadly, policies should focus on providing students with basic opportunities to learn—school readiness, high quality learning and instruction, safe and modernized schools, and parent and community involvement—all of which no child should be denied.

If the next governor, along with the state legislature, allows children of means to have adequate support and resources as a prerequisite for success in school, then these same politicians must create an education funding system that provides low-income students with the supports they need to succeed in school. ▲

*Excerpted and adapted from  
McGinley's "Principaling in Urban  
and Suburban Schools," 1998.*