



Viewpoints

A start on school funding

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Much was made in Harrisburg earlier this year of a so-called "costing-out" study that attempted to determine what each of Pennsylvania's school districts was spending on each student -- and how much should be spent.

State Rep. Bev Mackereth, R-Spring Grove, is to be commended for her drive to see the state's 17-year-old school funding formula primed for an overhaul.

Now comes the catch.

It's the Pennsylvania General Assembly, a body where foresight doesn't extend beyond the next general election and where short-term fixes are a way of life.

The \$2.6 billion Gov. Ed Rendell wants the state to spend on the funding formula would be part of this year's state budget which, according to law, is to be passed, signed and in place by June 30. That's not likely.

Also not likely -- even if by some legislative miracle the funding formula as proposed by the governor becomes a reality -- is a round of general applause from the state's 501 school districts.

Growth certainly is back in the proposed funding formula, and several York County districts, including the troubled York City School District, will benefit from the millions of dollars added to and distributed from the state education budget.

Other districts, those with a skewed mix of growth and higher tax bases, clearly will not benefit as much, if at all.

The funding formula is far from a perfect fit for York and other counties, and will face opposition in budget negotiations.

But it is a start, and holds out the option of improvement in the 2009 budgeting process which will be less at the mercy of political infighting.