



## Rocky road ahead for Kentucky school funding disparities

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### Dive Brief:

- When the Kentucky Supreme Court declared the state's school funding system unconstitutional in 1990, poor school districts saw significant increases in budgets and more equity was created across the state for students.
- But because local property taxes are still supporting many education budgets, disparity is again growing in the state.
- NPR reports much of the success gained over the past 25 years may be walked back unless the state addresses current challenges.

### Dive Insight:

Kentucky is not the only state currently struggling with funding disparities due to property tax revenue. Pennsylvania is grappling with the same problem. But education leaders are still debating whether inequity in school performance stems from unequal funding or unequal use of funding. The Cato Institute recently released a report saying no link exists between spending and academic achievement.

Data analyst David Mosenkis finds poverty alone does not account for funding level disparities among Pennsylvania school districts. Some, like school reform activist Ashley DeMauro, say Pennsylvania should enact a student-weighted funding formula in order to better distribute funding, instead of looking just for ways to increase overall budgets. According to DeMauro, research shows weighted student funding formulas give at-risk students 25% higher earnings when they enter the workforce and also result in a 20% drop in the adult poverty rate.

### Recommended Reading

NPR: [Kentucky's Unprecedented Success In School Funding Is On The Line](#)

