

June 24 Rally for Fair Education Funding

Pennsylvania State lawmakers are presently debating the state budget for the coming year. Budgets are moral documents, in that they reflect the values and priorities of the state in advancing the common good. As people of faith, we are called to share a moral witness to this process, especially as it relates to the most vulnerable members of our society – the poor in our communities, and the children in our schools.

Our United Methodist Social Principles state, “As a church, we are called to support the poor and challenge the rich. To begin to alleviate poverty, we support such policies as: adequate income maintenance, quality education, decent housing, job training, meaningful employment opportunities...”

In rural, suburban, and urban areas alike, Pennsylvania’s school districts have been underfunded for decades. According to federal data, Pennsylvania has the most unequally funded public schools in the United States.

But, even after national attention on our schools and a mandate from voters for more education funding, Harrisburg still isn’t listening. Gov. Wolf proposed an increase to public education funding that is still just a fraction of what would fully fund schools next year. Pennsylvania’s House has proposed a budget with no new money for schools.

In response to this condition, POWER (Philadelphian’s Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild) and PIIN (Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network) have organized a Demonstration for Fair Education Funding. Starting on June 20th, 2015, people of faith from across the state will gather to fast and pray for 10 days, until the budget deadline of June 30th. It is being called a “Moral Takeover.” During this period, many people of faith have committed to maintaining a presence on the Capitol Building steps in Harrisburg.

June 24 has been selected as the day for United Methodists to show support for this interfaith demonstration in favor of a fair education funding formula in Pennsylvania. The day will include a morning worship service, orientation for visitors, distribution of flyers and a silent “Jericho Walk” through the halls of the Capitol.

Those interested in participating or learning more about this event are invited to contact Rev. Dai Morgan, Coordinator of United Methodist Advocacy in Pennsylvania at: daimorgan@comcast.net.