



Poll: Most think schools underfunded

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Sixty-five percent of Pennsylvanians believe that their local school district needs more money to provide students with a quality education, according to a survey released yesterday.

The survey of 800 randomly selected adults was conducted in anticipation of the release next Wednesday of the Pennsylvania Board of Education's costing-out study.

That study, for the first time, will attempt to establish the minimum cost of providing each child in the state with a quality education, based on the specific needs and location of the student.

The survey, commissioned by the Education Policy and Leadership Center, a Harrisburg non-profit group, also found that 84 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the state should pay at least half the cost of local schools' education expenses.

The state already pays 59 percent of the expenses of the 172,000-student School District of Philadelphia, according to the district.

The survey also found that 30 percent of respondents agreed with this statement: "Pennsylvania's system of funding schools is fair."

Eight percent said that either their own school district or those around the state spend too much. About 37 percent said they thought their own districts spent too little, and 54 percent said they thought public-school districts in general spend too little to adequately educate their students.

The phone survey was conducted by the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin & Marshall College between September 17 and Oct. 8. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. *