



**October 16, 2014**  
**Testimony before the**  
**Basic Education Funding Formula Commission**

Presented by Dr. David Zerbe, Superintendent of Schools

# Methacton School District (Demographics)

- Located in Montgomery County (Lower Providence and Worcester Townships)
- Area of about 30 square miles with about 34,000 residents
- Mean household income for Lower Providence Township was \$111,850 and \$154,290 for a household in Worcester Township
- The average residential assessment for a home in the Methacton School District is \$180,767
- Ethnic makeup of the community includes 82% White, 10% Asian followed by Black or African American at 6%

All data according to the 2010 United States Census



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# Methacton School District (Operations)

- 5 elementary schools (K-4)
- 1 upper elementary school (5-6)
- 1 intermediate school (7-8)
- 1 high school (9-12)
- Enrollment is approximately 5,000 students
- 420 teachers
- 240 additional staff - teaching assistants, secretaries & administrators
- Contracts with external providers for transportation, food services, and substitutes.

# Methacton School District (Funding)

- The district's 2014-2015 operating budget is \$99,557,372;
- State provides 35% of the funding for public education
- Methacton School District receives \$19,625,754.00 or about 19%
- Average tax bill being \$5,043.40 per year which is about \$1,125.18 higher than the average tax payer in the Commonwealth

# Methacton School District (Performance)

- Methacton School District typically performs better than most of the State on standardized exams such as the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment)
- Methacton School District was ranked 13th in the Commonwealth on the district (SPP) School Performance Profile and 3rd highest in Montgomery County

# Mission

- Public Education serves the good of the community
- Fundamental issues of predictability, adequacy, equity, and sustainability of public education funding
- Commission needs to address these 4 fundamental issues in a sensible or practical manner
- Mandated costs such as PSERS costs, Special Education costs, and Charter School costs

# Rising Mandated Costs

- Forcing school districts like Methacton, to divert substantial funding away from our core mission
  - Delay our textbook and technology purchases
  - Consider reducing elective and extra-curricular offerings
  - Will have long lasting negative impact on our students and the quality of education
- Raising taxes to provide for technology, or other tangible programs that provide a direct student benefit is difficult enough
  - seeking tax increases to fund a retirement system that is unsustainable, some say broken, well is, downright insane

# PSERS issue for Methacton

<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>SALARIES</u>	<u>PSERS %</u>	<u>DOLLAR CONTRIBUTION</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>
2013-14	44,684,606	16.93%	7,565,103.88	N/A
2014-15	42,567,227	21.40%	9,109,386.58	1,544,282.70
2015-16	43,263,784	25.84%	11,179,361.79	2,069,975.21
2016-17	44,561,698	29.27%	13,043,209.00	1,863,847.22
2017-18	45,542,055	30.25%	13,776,471.64	733,262.63
2018-19	46,543,980	31.28%	14,558,957.01	782,485.37

An increase of nearly \$7Million dollars during this 5 year span will go towards PSERS. How will this \$7 Million help our students?



# Requests for the Commission

- Continue work towards gathering input from across the Commonwealth
- Emphasize in your report that rising mandated costs from PSERS, Special Education, and Charter Schools **MUST** be addressed before making any substantial change to the formula
- Address the fundamental issues of predictability, adequacy, equity, and sustainability of public education funding while considering the sensibility of those actions or outcomes