



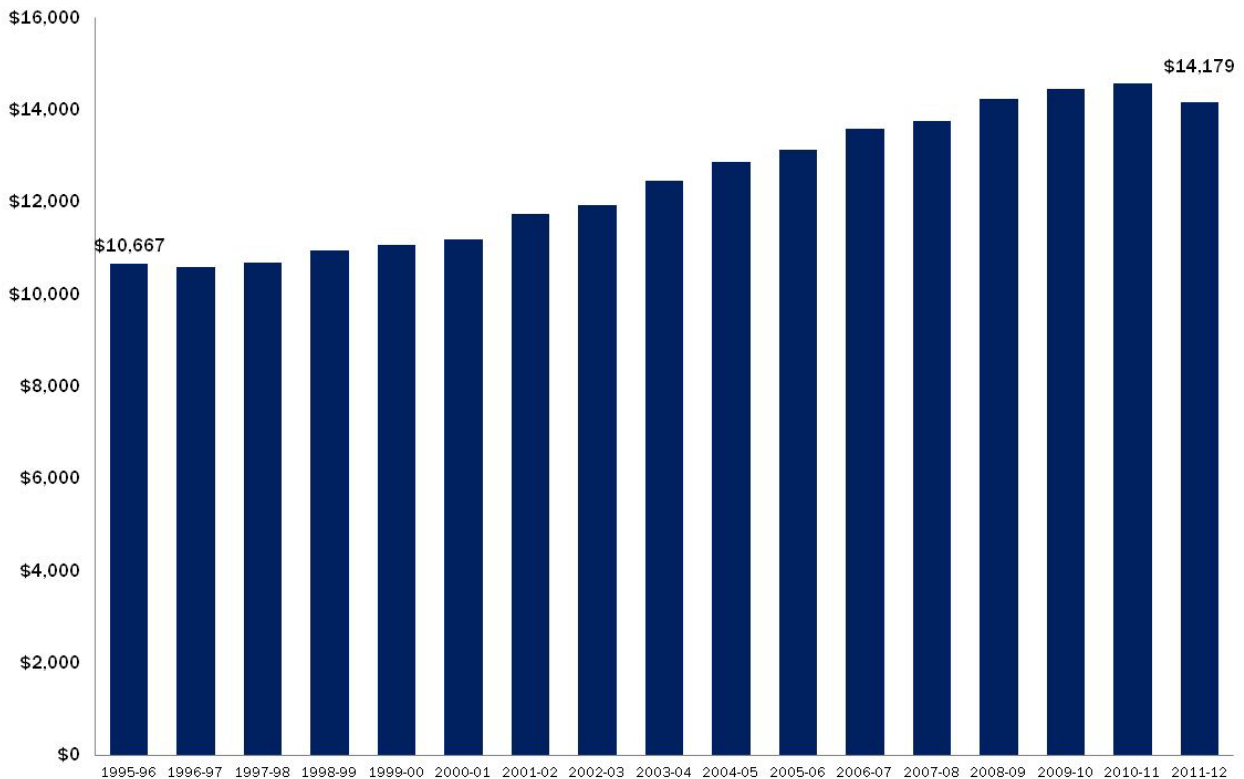
6 Trends in Public School Spending

The Pennsylvania Department of Education recently updated files from public schools' annual financial reports and enrollment reports. Here are six key trends from those data.

1. Public schools continue to collect more than \$14,000 per student from taxpayers.

In 1995-96, federal, state and local dollars for school districts equaled \$7,200 per student (or about \$10,667 adjusted for today's dollars). Last year, revenue exceeded \$14,000 per student, a **33% increase** after adjusting for inflation.¹

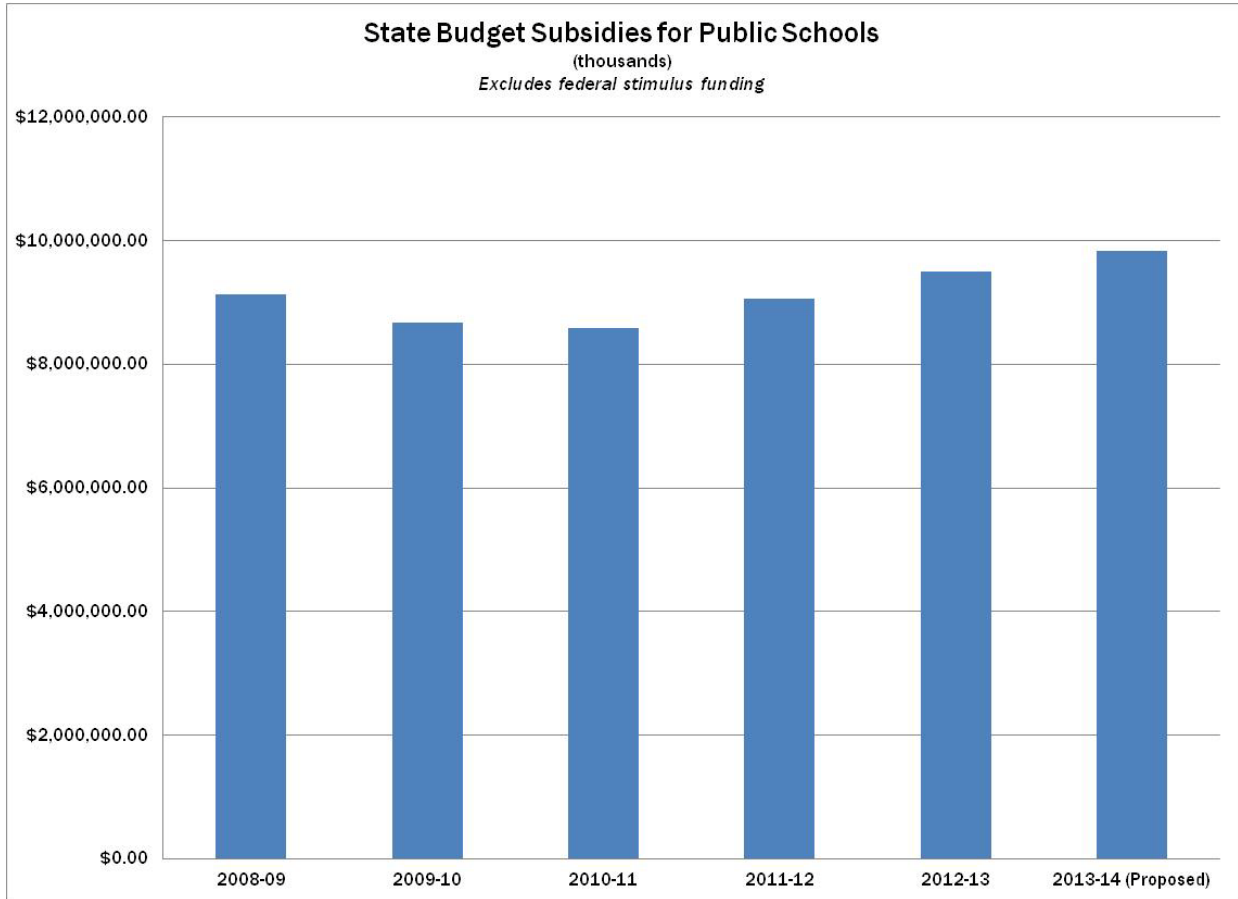
Pennsylvania Public School Revenue Per Student
(Inflation-adjusted, 2011 dollars)



¹ Pennsylvania Department of Education, "Revenue Data for All LEAs," 1995-96 to 2011-12, http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/summaries_of_annual_financial_report_data/7673/afr_excel_data_files/509047.

2. State spending on public schools is at an all-time high. Critics claim that Gov. Corbett “cut \$1 billion” in education spending in the state budget. But in 2011-12, temporary federal stimulus funding—\$1.3 billion of which was used for public education in 2010-11—disappeared. The following year, the state budget increased *state dollars* for public schools by \$480 million.

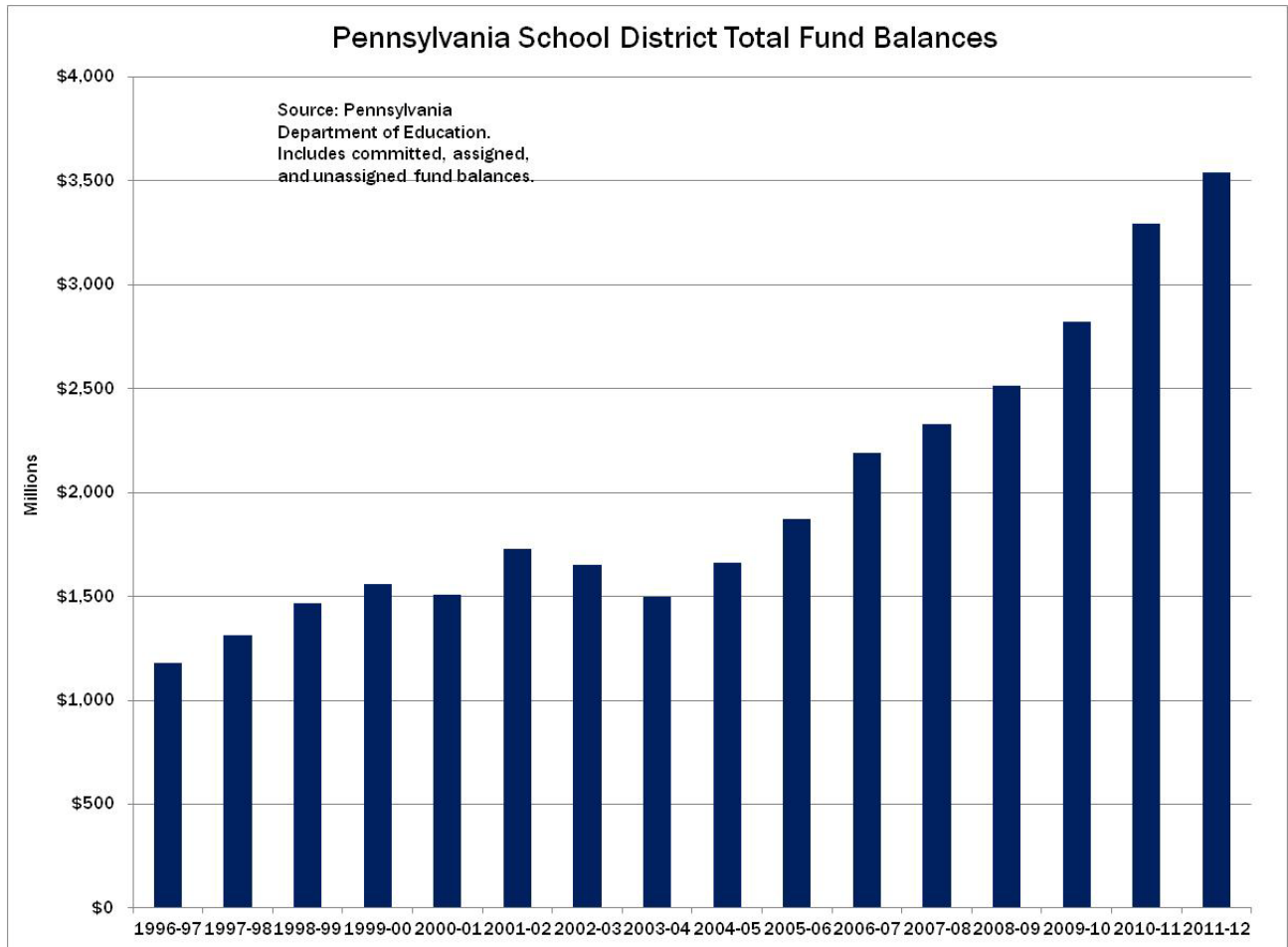
The 2013-14 budget would spend nearly \$10 billion on PreK-12 education. This represents a record high, even greater than state plus federal stimulus dollars.²



² Pennsylvania Department of Education budget presentation, "Education Innovation in Pennsylvania: Governor Corbett's 2013-14 Education Budget," February 5, 2013; http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/news_and_media/7234/p/1089220; Pennsylvania Office of the Budget, "Governor's Executive Budget 2012-13," http://www.budget.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/past_budgets/4571.

3. Despite claims of severe budget cuts, school districts' reserve balances grew last year.

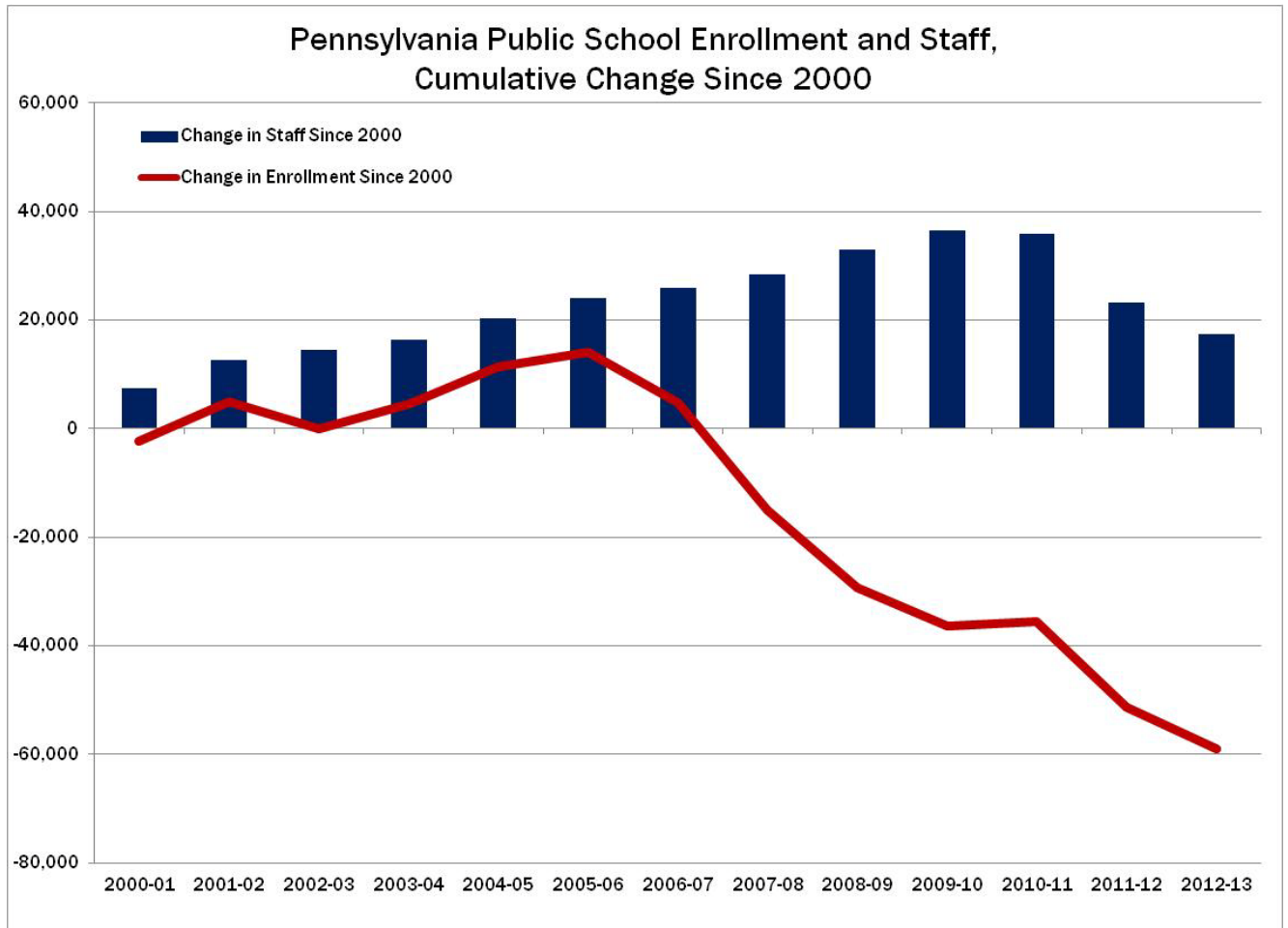
School districts increased their fund balances in 2011-12 by more than \$200 million. As of June 2012, they held **\$3.5 billion** in total reserve funds.³



³ Pennsylvania Department of Education, "General Fund Balance: 1996-97 to 2011-12," http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/summaries_of_annual_financial_report_data/7673/other_financial_information/509049.

4. Staffing levels increased while student enrollment declined over the past decade.

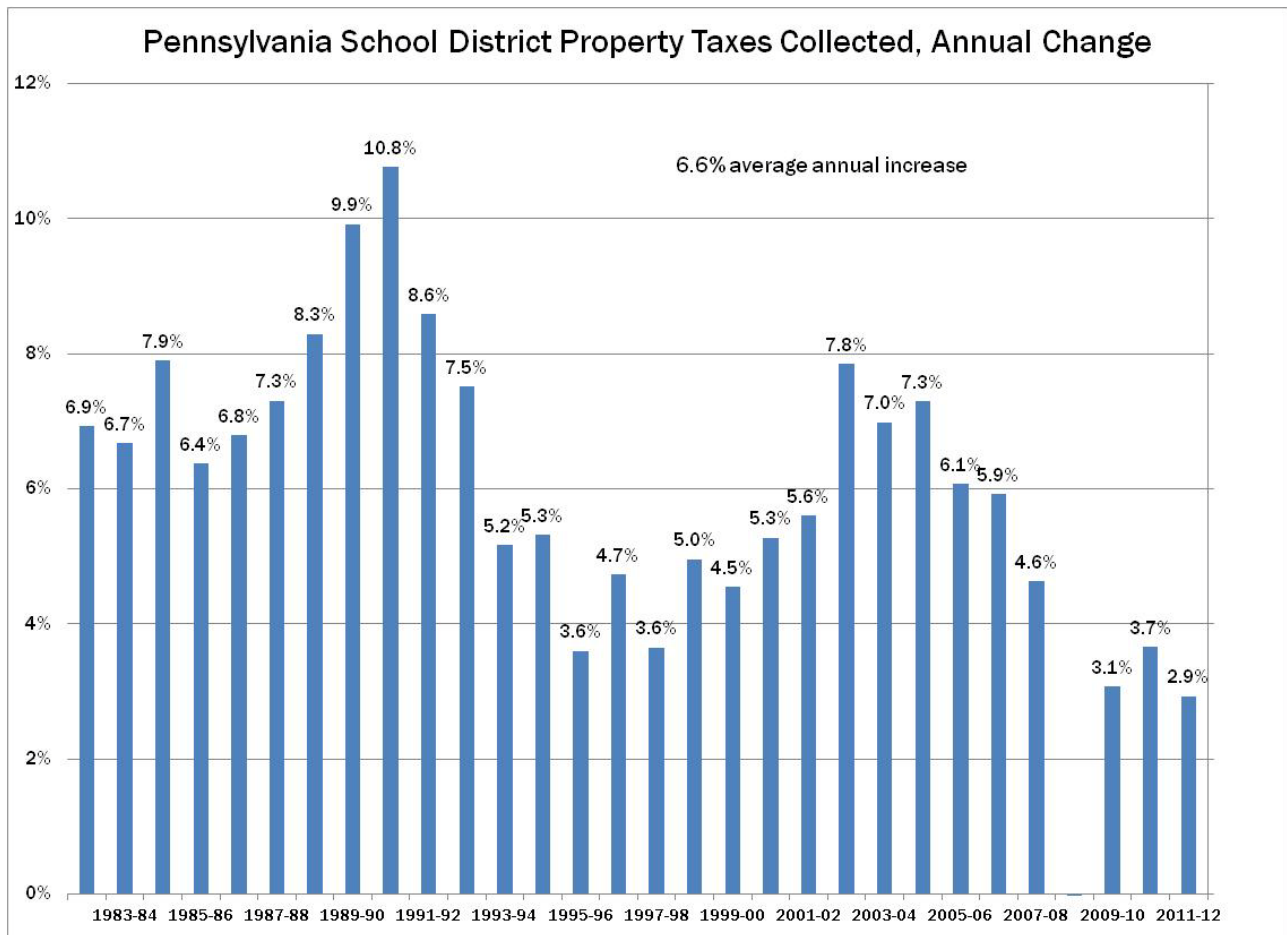
In the last two years, schools have reduced their total staffing. Yet despite this short-term decline, public school staff has increased by more than 17,000 since 2000. Over the same time period, enrollment dropped by nearly 60,000 students.⁴



⁴ Pennsylvania Department of Education, "Public School Enrollment Reports," <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/enrollment/7407>; "Professional and Support Personnel Data and Statistics," http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/professional_and_support_personnel/7429.

5. Property taxes grew at the *second-lowest* rate in 30 years in 2012.

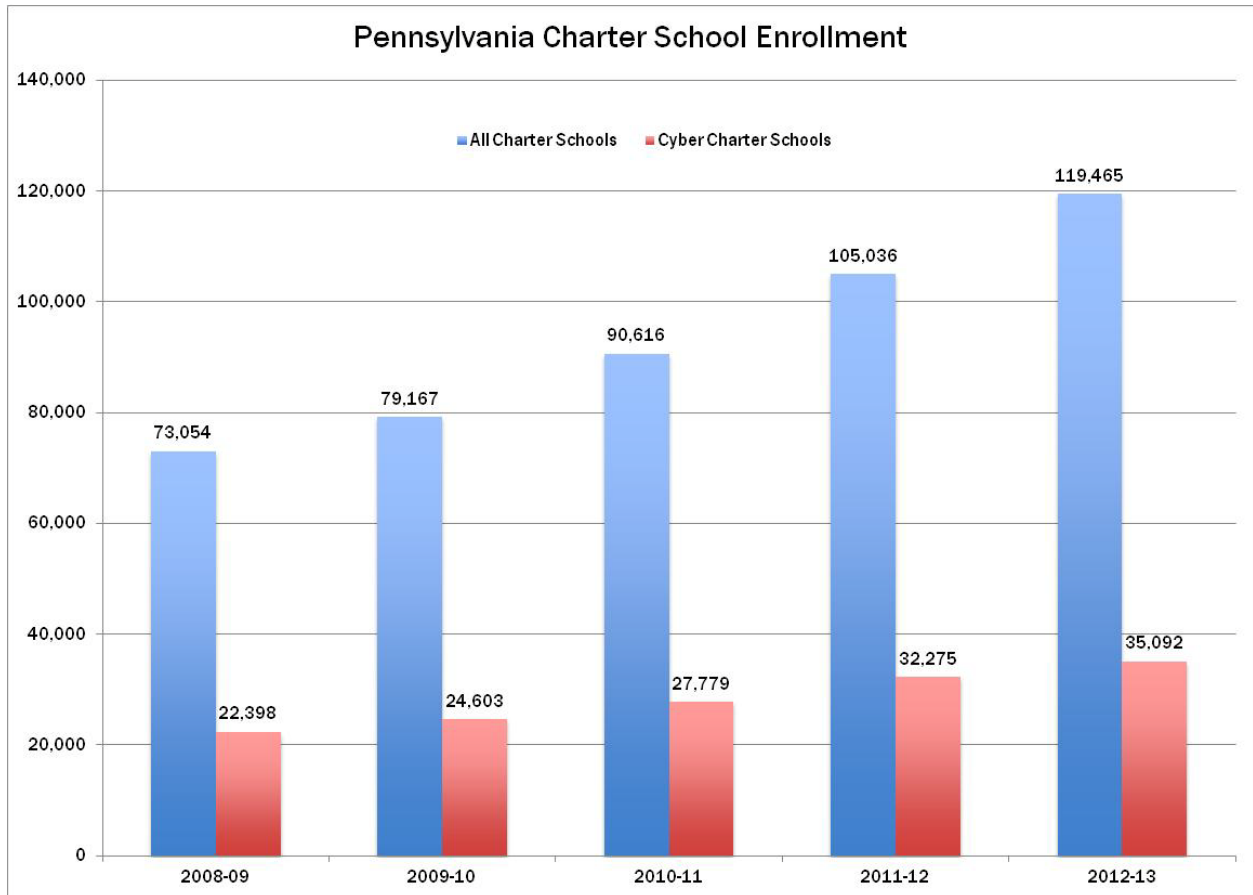
Critics who demanded higher state spending on public education claimed that last two budgets would force school districts to raise property taxes. Yet school property tax growth in 2011-12 (2.9%) was the *second-lowest* rate of growth in 30 years, only topped by the slight decrease when property tax “relief” money hit from gambling.⁵



⁵ Pennsylvania Department of Education, “Local Property Taxes Collected: 1981-82 to 2011-12,” http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/summaries_of_annual_financial_report_data/7673/other_financial_information/509049.

6. Charter school enrollment continues to grow at high rates.

Charter schools continue to be an immensely popular public school choice for Pennsylvania families. In just five years, charter school enrollment has grown 64%, while cyber charter enrollment grew 57% over the same period.⁶



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⁶ Pennsylvania Department of Education, "Public School Enrollment Reports," <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/enrollment/7407>.