After over seven years of waiting, an historic school funding lawsuit being brought by six Pennsylvania school districts, the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, the NAACP-PA State Conference, and a group of public school parents got underway in Commonwealth Court this month. The petitioners brought the lawsuit all the way back in 2014 against state government leaders for failing to uphold the General Assembly’s constitutional obligation to provide a “thorough and efficient” system of public education.

I joined other education advocates from around the state for an online watch party to view part of the court proceedings. I was proud to be there to lend my support as a member of the XXX SCHOOL DISTRICT XXX community and as a concerned Pennsylvanian who wants to make sure all the kids in the Commonwealth attend public schools with the resources needed to reach their full potential.

Pennsylvania ranks 45th in the nation for state share of funding for K-12 education. The Education Law Center and Public Interest Law Center estimate it would take $4.6 billion dollars statewide for all school districts to reach adequacy. And every single year, because of increases in mandated costs like cyber charter tuition, that gap widens.

Pennsylvania schools work when our kids’ developmental, health, safety, and educational needs are met, but that will take much more aggressive levels of funding from our state legislature. I hope the resolution of this lawsuit is that the General Assembly is forced to start rectifying this dire problem.