



Education Law Center

Standing Up for Public School Children

Fair School Funding: The Foundation for Equity

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The Equity Frame

- Equity means ensuring all students, including low income (at-risk) students, English language learners, students with disabilities and students of color an education that enables them to achieve rich and rigorous academic standards
- US: 50 state education systems, not one
- States are responsible to educate nation's children
- The states control all facets of local education (governance, funding, etc.)



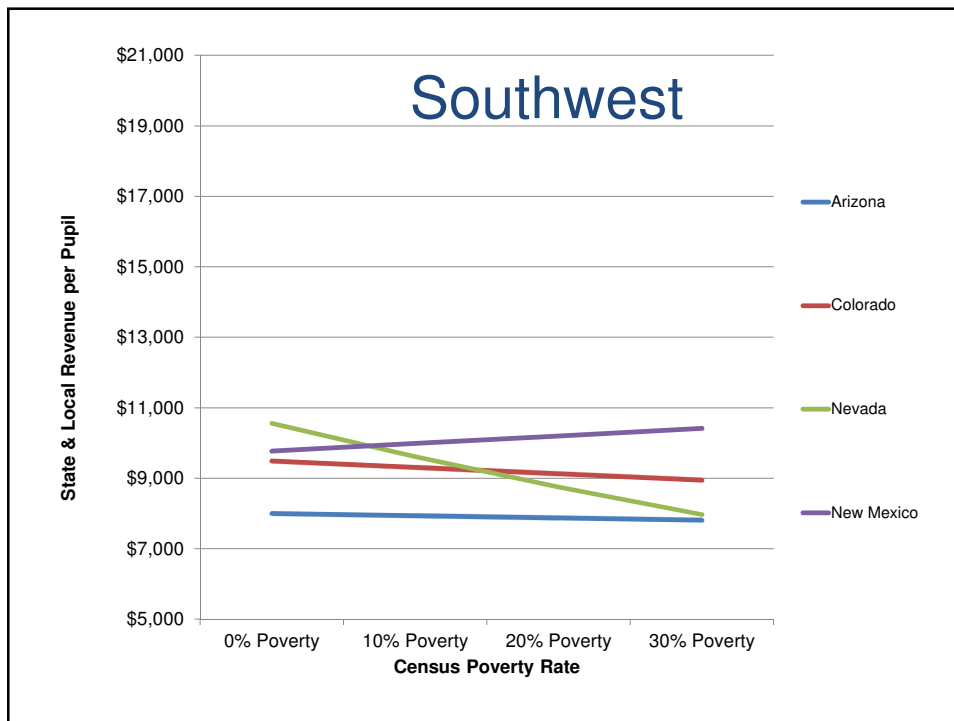
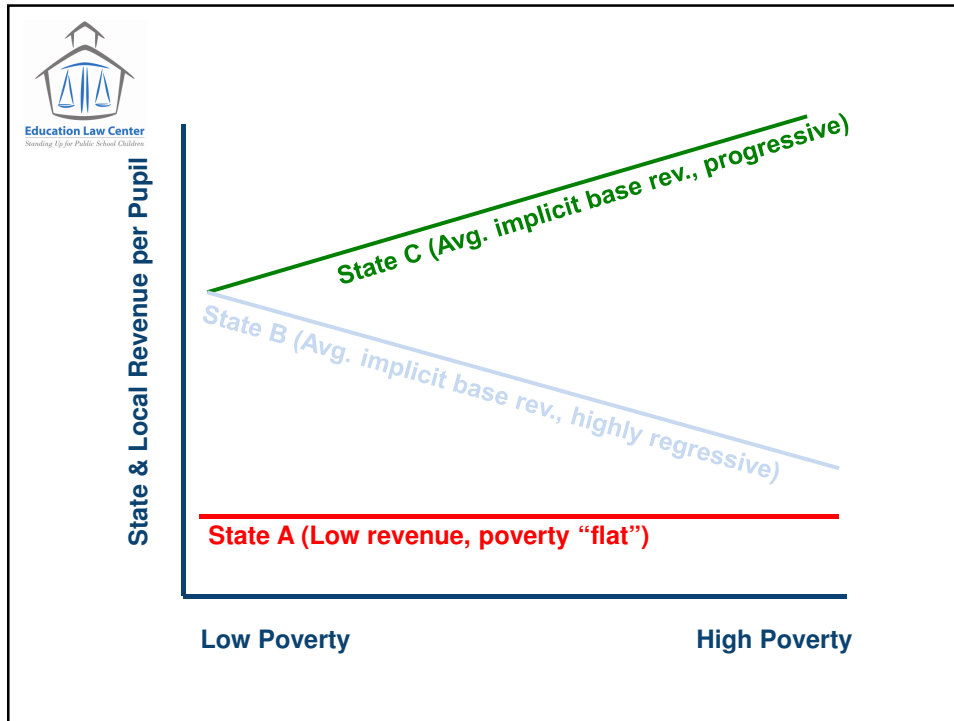
What is “Fair” School Funding?

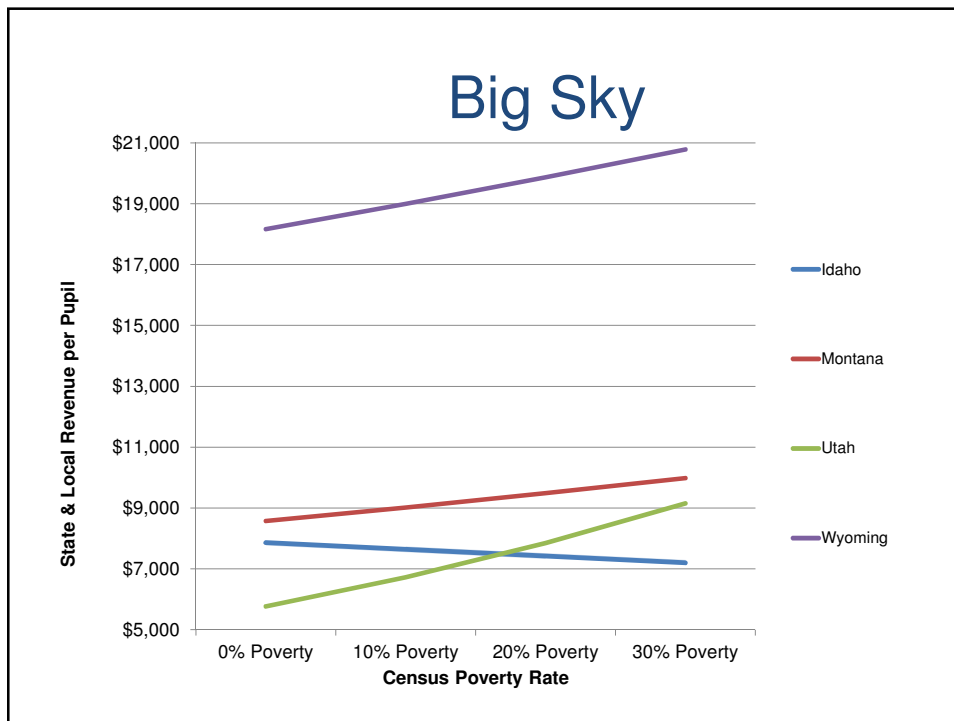
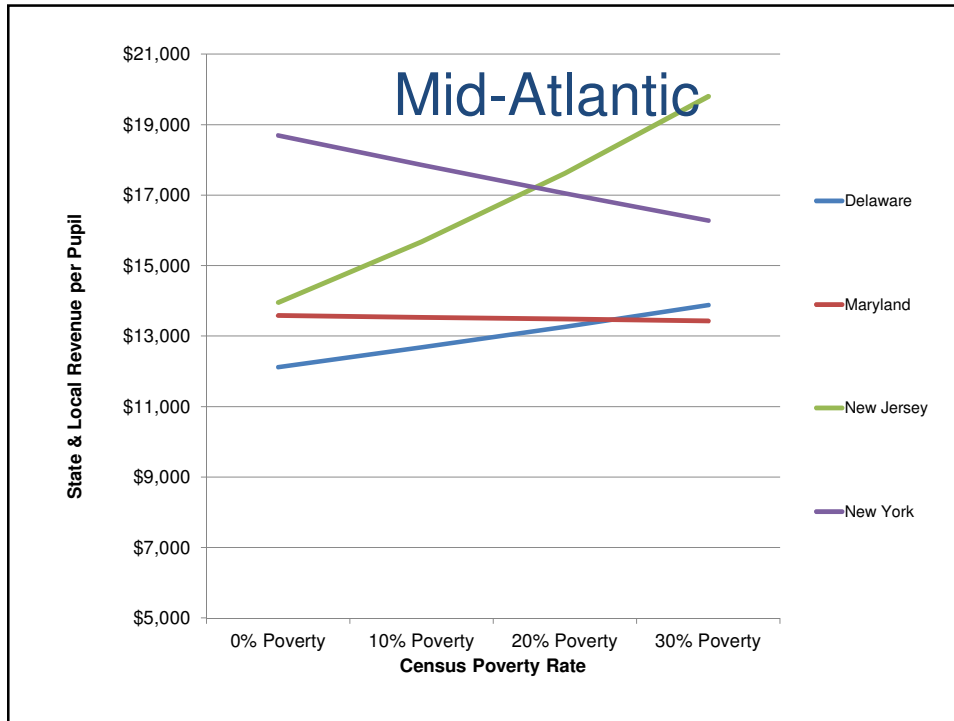
“Fair” school funding is defined as a state finance system that provides a sufficient level of funding to ensure equality of educational opportunity, with funding distributed to districts within the state to account for additional needs generated by student poverty.




Fair School Funding: Core Principles

- States should provide varying levels of funding to ensure equal educational opportunities to children with different needs.
- A “**progressive**” finance system allocates more funding to districts with high levels of student poverty; a “**regressive**” system allocates less to those districts; and a “**flat**” system allocates roughly the same across districts with varying needs.









Funding Level

State	Predicted State & Local Revenue	Rank
Wyoming	\$19,520	1
Alaska	\$17,967	2
New York	\$17,375	3
New Jersey	\$16,817	4
Connecticut	\$15,693	5
Colorado	\$9,198	35
Arizona	\$7,899	47
Idaho	\$7,509	48
Oklahoma	\$7,449	49
Utah	\$7,379	50
Tennessee	\$7,306	51




State Funding Distribution

State	At 0% Poverty	At 30% Poverty	High/Low	Grade
Utah	\$5,772	\$9,157	159%	A
New Jersey	\$13,961	\$19,805	142%	A
Ohio	\$8,993	\$12,301	137%	A
Minnesota	\$10,026	\$13,043	130%	B
Massachusetts	\$12,598	\$15,550	123%	B
Colorado	\$9,490	\$8,949	94%	D
North Dakota	\$10,774	\$8,577	80%	F
North Carolina	\$11,111	\$8,699	78%	F
New Hampshire	\$13,958	\$10,849	78%	F
Illinois	\$11,312	\$8,707	77%	F
Nevada	\$10,561	\$7,974	76%	F



Funding Effort

State	Per capita GDP	Effort Index	Grade
Vermont	\$36,789	0.057	A
New Jersey	\$49,840	0.050	A
New York	\$49,976	0.049	A
New Hampshire	\$40,566	0.045	A
Indiana	\$36,168	0.045	A
Colorado	\$46,199	0.031	F
Arizona	\$35,000	0.030	F
Tennessee	\$34,828	0.030	F
North Dakota	\$44,970	0.029	F
South Dakota	\$44,261	0.026	F
Delaware	\$61,248	0.025	F

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- ## Takeaways
- Fair School Funding: Essential precondition to reform efforts to close achievement gaps
 - Key to Effective Teaching, Closing Gaps
 - Urgent need for state school finance reform
 - “Resistance is Deep”
 - New Federal Policies: Title I and Federal Grants to leverage states to improve funding fairness



For More Information:

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