

## **Adequacy/Equity Study Process Summary September 2006**

Four Professional Judgement Panels™ were conducted by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) as a part of its school funding adequacy/equity study. Designed to gather information from a diverse base of experts in education and public policy makers, these panels took place on April 18, April 19, June 16 and August 11, 2006.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Attendees had various areas of expertise within education, including a state board of education member, school board members, superintendents, chief financial officers, curriculum specialists, teachers and representatives from education-focused groups. One panel specifically addressed special needs students, which included special education, English language learners, at-risk and gifted and talented.

### **DISTRICTS REPRESENTED**

Participants hailed from a wide variety of Colorado school districts, both in terms of size and geographical location.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the panel meetings was to update the adequacy study data first gathered five years ago and to determine a fair assessment of how much it costs to educate students so they meet the various required academic standards in public schools. Issues of district and school size, geographical location and grade levels were taken into consideration. Finally, one panel of financial grappled with specific issues of escalating costs associated with employee benefits, utilities, charter/choice schools, special programs like Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) and efficiency as a whole.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

APA researchers presented consistent introductions at the beginning of each Professional Judgement Panel™ meeting—that the panel would gather data for the study, which would also take into consideration elements of “Successful School Districts” and “Evidence-based” models. Each time, the task at hand was described:

1. Identify resources needed for regular students to meet standards in hypothetical Colorado schools (NOT dream school and NOT anything unrelated to standards)
  - Colorado Accountability Standards (SAR’s and accreditation)
  - No Child Left Behind
  - Colorado Commission on Higher Education requirements
2. Identify additional resources for the same school given a particular number of special need students that need to meet standards
3. Deal separately with preschool, summer school, technology and other programs that may be necessary

**PANEL TOPICS**

Panels were assembled and work sessions focused on needs specific to:

- Elementary schools
- Middle schools
- High schools
- Small schools/districts
- Large schools/districts
- At-risk/free-lunch students
- Special costs not captured earlier
- Benefits
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Charters
- Outside district transfers
- Virtual schools
- Online classes
- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- Career tech
- Student activities
- Efficiency
- Time