Defining Equity and Student Need Reflective of Student Demographics

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Equity Definition - Dictionary

- Fairness
- Balance
- To make adjustments so you can create fairness and balance
- Is not the same as equal
Equity – School Finance

• Equity Study
  • Examines Horizontal and Vertical Equity along with Fiscal Neutrality
    • Horizontal Equity – Examines if like districts are treated similarly
    • Vertical Equity – Examines how differences are treated within the system
    • Fiscal Neutrality – Measures the relationship between the wealth of a district and the resources available to serve students.

Equity in Education Policy

• Need to recognize differences that impact students and to create learning opportunities that offset differences.
• Differences can include:
  • Course offerings
  • Education settings
  • Program quality and offerings
  • Student differentiation
  • Staff expertise
Equity – School Finance Formula

• State funding formulas can help address equity by adjusting for student and district characteristics that are beyond district control including: student need (special education, English language learners, gifted and talented, and at-risk), district size and regional cost differences.
  • Adjustments can help account for loss of opportunity in program offerings, and ability to recruit and retain teachers
• Formula needs to account for the wealth and tax effort of districts.
• A good formula has adequacy and equity.

Equity Challenges in Colorado

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% At-Risk</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% ELL</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Special Ed</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Equity Challenges in Colorado

• What students do we include? Are special education, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented and At-Risk (free and reduced lunch) the right students?

• How do we make adjustments for size – and economies of scale – creating opportunities for students?

• How do we address taxpayer equity?

• Using weights derived from the 2013 state costing out study, a need factor can be derived for each district.

  Mean (Average)  1.33
  Median         1.32
  Min            1.12
  Max            1.68
Equity Challenges in Colorado

• With the differences in size, need factors can be adjusted for size differential also.

Mean (Average)  1.92

Median  1.79

Min  1.17

Max  2.95

Equity Challenges in Colorado

• In addition to student need differences, districts have very different capacities to address these differences.
• The state allows districts to fund operations above the state formula through local mill levy overrides.
• Nearly all funding for capital projects is provided locally.
• This means that a districts wealth per pupil is an important factor in raising both operating and capital dollars.
Equity Challenge – $ One Mill Raised

Min | Max | Mean (Average) | Median
--- | --- | --- | ---
$3,842 | $13,221,694 | $578,590 | $111,054

Equity Challenge: $ One Mill Raised Per Student

Min | Max | Mean (Average) | Median
--- | --- | --- | ---
$19 | $3,239 | $283 | $133
Taxpayer Equity Challenge: Total Program Mills

- Min: 1.68
- Max: 27
- Mean (Average): 19.72
- Median: 21.74

Taxpayer Equity Challenge: Total Override Mills

- Min: 0
- Max: 22.47
- Mean (Average): 4.06
- Median: 2.29
Bringing Together Policy-Funding and Equity

- The latest school finance act was enacted in 1994.
- The act was put into place at the beginning of standards when no state assessments existed.
- No state accreditation system was in place and no statewide teacher evaluations existed.
- It was the first year of charter school implementation and there was no online options, Post Secondary and Work Force readiness, statewide graduation guidelines, third grade literacy requirements, and minimal preschool offerings.
- The act required 40 mills locally to ensure a 50/50 state/local split.
- The act differentiated funding for at-risk (free lunch), district size, and cost of living variances.
Evaluating 1994 in 2016

• Over 300,000 more students
• Over 200 languages taught – 25% population
• At-risk students encompass 40% of population
• Measuring student growth and yearly progress
• Mills range from less than 2 to 27
• State picks up 62% - locals 38%
• Negative factor – impact – economies of scale and differentiation reduced

A Plan Forward/Change

• Leadership – a vision of educational excellence that creates opportunities for all students – addresses equity between students, opportunity for students to have access to high quality programs delivered by high quality educators.

• 4 step plan –
  • Is there a problem?
  • How big is the problem?
  • What analysis and research needs to be done to indicate how big and how to create a solution?
  • Leadership in creating a solution forward – implement over time
Where is Colorado in this Plan?

• Agreement on the problem
• Determining how big the problem
• Research being done to determine the size and potential ideas for a solution.
• Leadership – Superintendents across the state

Determining How Big a Problem and Solution

• Equity Analysis – student need factor, adjusted for size
• Adequacy Analysis – Evidenced Based, Professional organizations recommendations, Successful School District, and Professional Judgment
• Results create an equity need for each school district and an appropriate multiplier to address adequate resources
Questions: Now & Later

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