



Financing the Cost of a Sound Basic Education

Presentation to the Governor's Commission on a Sound Basic Education

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WestEd's Mission

WestEd is a *nonprofit, nonpartisan research, development, and service agency* that works with education and other communities to *promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults.*



Today's Objectives

- Develop collective understanding of cost modeling
- Discuss goals of providing a “sound basic education”

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Agenda

- Background
- Costing Out Methodologies
- Discussion

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Background

State Constitution

“The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein **equal opportunities shall be provided for all students.**” N.C. Const. Art. IX, § 2(1).



1997 Supreme Court Ruling

“Every child in North Carolina has a constitutionally-enforceable right to an **opportunity for a sound basic education** in a public school.”



Defining a Sound Basic Education (1997 Ruling)

A sound basic education must provide each student with at least a:

- Sufficient ***ability to read, write, and speak the English language and a sufficient knowledge of fundamental mathematics and physical science*** to enable the student to function in a complex and rapidly changing society;
- Sufficient ***fundamental knowledge of geography, history, and basic economic and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices*** with regard to issues that affect the student personally or affect the student’s community, state, and nation;
- Sufficient ***academic and vocational skills to enable the student to successfully engage in post-secondary education or vocational training***; and
- Sufficient ***academic and vocational skills to enable the student to compete on an equal basis*** with others in further formal education or gainful employment in contemporary society.



Leandro Tenets (2004 Ruling)

An opportunity for a sound basic education requires at a minimum:

- That every classroom be staffed with a **competent, certified, well-trained teacher** who is teaching the standard course of student by implementing effective educational methods that provide differentiated, individualized instruction, assessment and remediation to the students in that classroom.
- That every school be led by a **well-trained competent principal** with the leadership skills and the ability to hire and retain competent, certified and well-trained teachers who can implement an effective and cost-effective instructional program that meets the needs of at-risk children so that they can have the equal opportunity to obtain a sound basic education by achieving grade level or above academic performance.
- That every school be provided, in the most cost effective manner, the **resources necessary** to support the effective instructional program within that school so that the educational needs of all children, including at-risk children, to have the equal opportunity to **obtain a sound basic education**, can be met.



Answering the Resource Question

What are the resources needed (and associated costs) to ensure that all students in North Carolina have a sound basic education?



Costing Out Methodologies

Spending Variation

Why Does Spending Differ?

Outcomes	Costs	Efficiency
Considers the different outcomes of the system relative to the make-up of the student population and services provided.	Considers the <i>costs</i> associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student needs, • input prices, and • economies of scale. 	Considers how schools and school districts differ in their output (student outcomes) relative to the amount of funding available.

Methods to Costing

Input-Based: Sum up the costs associated with building a prototype school	Output-Based: Estimates costs based on observed relationships between: (1) spending, (2) student performance, and (3) other characteristics
Professional Judgment Method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene focus groups of local practitioners to design prototype schools that meet performance goals. Calculate the cost of the prototype in various locations. 	Education Cost Function Method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost and performance data to estimate the relationship between expenditures and school outcomes, resource prices, student needs and other factors. Predicts the cost of achieving outcomes.
Evidence-Based Method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource needs derived from “proven effective” school reform models. 	Successful Schools Method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on student performance identifies schools that meet a designated standard. The cost is the average level of spending among those “successful schools”.



Input-Based Considerations

	Considerations
<i>Both methods are simple, transparent and straightforward. But, many only be applicable to a handful of prototypical school districts.</i>	
Professional Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable to the blind spots and biases of panel members Frequently cost out performance standards that are difficult to quantify and well beyond current levels
Evidence-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seldom specify the performance standards being evaluated Evidence of practitioners following evidence-based reform is lacking Identified, proven outcomes may be out of line with system goals.



Output-Based Considerations

	Considerations
	<i>Direct link between education costs and desired outcomes. And, estimates based on what districts actually do. But, method requires high-quality datasets.</i>
Successful Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policymakers must designate <i>measurable</i> performance standards.
Cost Function Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a strong empirical foundation for estimates of cost differentials. • Describe relationships within the experience of the data • Statistical models are not transparent and explicitly involve errors of estimation and modeling.



Discussion

Aligning on the Goal

- The first step for any cost and resource analysis is to determine the desired outcomes for students.
- And in this case, clearly defining what it means to provide a “sound basic education.”



Examples of Goals: Hawaii

Definition of College, Career, and Community Readiness in Hawai'i

Hawai'i students who are prepared for meaningful engagement in college, career, and community have successfully:

- Achieved proficiency in essential content knowledge
- Mastered key learning skills and cognitive strategies
- Acquired practical knowledge enabling successful transitions from high school to college and career
- Built a strong foundation of identity through an ongoing process of exploring to engage in local, national, and global contexts

By "college," we mean those enrolled in Hawai'i's education system recognizing that college, career and community readiness is a lifelong process that begins with early childhood learning.

By "career," we mean two- and four-year post-secondary institutions, trade schools, and technical schools.

By "community," we mean a pathway of employment that provides a family-sustaining wage.

By "community," we mean the set of interconnected relationships among physical, social and/or cultural groups bound by shared values and responsibility for one another, the natural world, and local and global work, living.

Student Readiness Outcomes:

To effectively achieve college, career and community readiness, there are key conditions for success that students should have, including: 1) supportive, meaningful and respectful relationships—whether at school, home, work, community, etc.; 2) high expectations for a rigorous course of study; and 3) a sense of responsibility for their own educational success that is shared by families, schools, and other community members.

The following outcomes begin to define the knowledge, skills and/or behaviors that students who are college, career, and community ready have acquired:

- Essential Content Knowledge**
Students have the knowledge and skills associated with college and career readiness including those outlined in the Common Core State Standards and standards for other core subject areas such as social studies, science, foreign and world languages, and the arts.
- Learning Skills and Cognitive Strategies**
Students can utilize specific learning methods such as goal setting, persistence and self-direction, as well as time management and organization, study skills, technology skills, and collaborative learning.
- Transitional Skills**
Students have the career knowledge and skills to be eligible to enroll in the postsecondary course of study, including making and/or implementing a plan without the need for remediation, and complete their secondary education.
- Waysfinding**
Students know what makes their communities unique and become more connected and involved through opportunities such as volunteer service, ecological stewardship, and civic engagement.

Students can construct meaning for themselves as an active part of the learning and behavioral development process, and begin to understand the world through many sources of knowledge.

Students are able to identify their talents and work hard to fulfill their responsibilities to their families, peers, community, and future and past generations.

Students better understand themselves and their values and can contribute meaningfully through perspectives, culture, and behaviors to people in and across local and global communities.



http://p20hawaii.org/corecollege/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/CCCR_Definition_Handout_6.pdf

Examples of Goals: Achieve

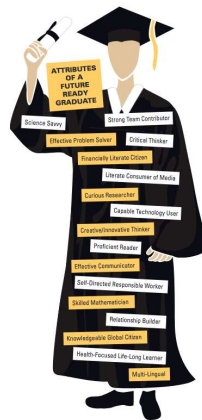
A P-20 CONTINUUM OF ACADEMIC READINESS

I. School Readiness	II. High School Readiness	III. College and Career Readiness (CCR)	IV. Postsecondary Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Kindergarten Readiness b. Reading in Grades K-2 c. Reading in Grade 3 d. Mathematics in Grade 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mathematics in Grade 5 b. Course Failure in Mathematics or English/language arts in grade 6 c. Completion of 8th Grade Mathematics or Algebra I with a "C" or Higher by the End of the 8th grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cohort Graduation Rate b. CCR Diploma c. CCR Assessments d. Earning College Credit in High School e. Career Readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remediation b. Early Postsecondary Success c. Postsecondary Completion

<https://www.achieve.org/files/StudentReadinessIndicators.pdf>



Attributes of a Future Ready Graduate in NC



<http://region1rttt.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/file/view/FutureReadyGraduate.pdf/400613810/FutureReadyGraduate.pdf>

Discussion Question 1

Input-Based Cost

Output-Based Cost

What outcomes should North Carolina set for every student to achieve a sound basic education?



Discussion Question 2

Input-Based Cost

Output-Based Cost

What are the measures available to know that each student has been provided a sound basic education?



Discussion Question 2

Goals for Each Student	Measurement	Data Currently Exists



Discussion Question 3

Input-Based Cost

Output-Based Cost

What are the different types of resources needed to ensure that each child can meet these goals? How do these inputs differ by student and district?



Discussion Question 3

Considerations for Differences in Cost/
Economies of Scale

Small Rural District	Large Urban District

Considerations for Differences in Student Needs

Special Education	Gifted	English Learners	Career and Technical Education	Economic Disadvantage	Other At Risk Students

