EXPLORING Site-Based Expenditure Reporting

Districts and communities will see school-by-school spending data on the 2020 Illinois Report Card now with multiple years of data displayed.

The data visualizations invite inquiry and dialogue about the relationships between spending, student outcomes, and student characteristics within a district. Remember when exploring the data that differences in spending between schools can arise from many factors, including positive ones; for example, a commitment to equity may result in tailoring resources based on students’ needs. The Questions to Consider listed below give examples of where dialogue may go as stakeholders in your community have productive conversations about the Report Card visualizations. When facilitating conversations in your community, also consider more open-ended inquiries with sentence starters like:

- I notice...
- I wonder...
- So, what do we do?

You may also encourage stakeholders to contact key district leaders as they share their observations and seek deeper understanding.

Report Card Visualizations

The District and School Report Cards display the spending per student at each school in the district in a bar graph. The data can be disaggregated by source of funds and by expenditure type: site-level vs. centralized. The display includes Evidence-Based Funding information for additional context. On the School Report Card, view both the 2019 and 2020 data side by side.

Questions to Consider

- Why might schools be funded the same or differently, based on the school’s local context?
- Could any of these typical drivers of school-by-school spending differences be affecting the data?
  - Additional resources for special student populations
  - Curriculum, schedule, or school improvement decisions
  - Programs at certain school size variances
  - Strategic plan/priority investments
  - Teacher salary schedules differentiated by longevity or other factors in accordance with collective bargaining agreements
- How did spending vary from 2019 to 2020?
The District Report Card displays all schools in the district in a list beneath the bar graph, along with each school’s enrollment, school type, percentage of low-income students, percentage of English Learners, percentage of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and summative designation. Percentages show changes in each data point from the previous year.

Questions to Consider
- Do I notice any connections between student needs, student outcomes, and expenditures?
- What other information about a school’s local context would be helpful to know, such as geographic region or special programs?
- How do data points vary from 2019 to 2020?
- If the district has provided narrative above the data listing: How does the additional narrative add to my understanding of the data?

The District and School Report Cards also provide a scatterplot display to further explore the relationships between data points.

Questions to Consider
- What information would be helpful to know about the district’s strategic plan or priorities for student support and school improvement?
- Which schools seem to achieve better than average results with less than average spending? What would I be interested in learning from those schools?
- What further information would help me better understand if the district is spending fairly across schools and students?