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Illinois School Finance Adequacy: Calculating the Evidence-Based Model for Statewide Policy Implementation

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August 16, 2016

What is the Evidence-Based Approach?

- ▶ Identifies how much money per pupil is needed to educate students in Illinois according to its proficiency standards.

What is the methodology behind the evidence-based approach?

- ▶ Draws from research and evidence-based best practices to identify those educational delivery strategies and their resource needs that are linked to student learning gains.
- ▶ Attempts to “back” each resource recommendation with reference to research and/or best practices
- ▶ Draws from several comprehensive school reform models, which are based on research-supported practices
- ▶ Can also draw from a synthesis of the best professional judgment panels

How is this approach different from previous attempts in Illinois?

- ▶ Costs out strategies based on rigorous research
- ▶ Objective, transparent model that allows schools and districts to see what staff their allocated resources should buy them
- ▶ Focuses the conversation on what it takes to sufficiently support students and teachers (not just a dollar amount)

What are the advantages?

- ▶ Produces detailed staffing for prototypic schools to address all key educational issues, with all proposals having a research and/or best practices base
 - ▶ Each element has an “evidence” rationale
- ▶ Provides resources to enable schools/districts to determine most effective educational strategy
- ▶ Draws from previous research and adequacy studies already conducted around the country
- ▶ Generally, additional costs are less than other approaches

What are the disadvantages?

- ▶ Should not “stand alone”
 - ▶ Needs a state panel of leading educators and policymakers to review and tailor to the Illinois state context
 - ▶ Implementation should be overseen so that key research-based elements are specifically targeted to fund those strategies
 - ▶ State, regional, district & school leadership around these strategies

What are some of the key resources in the evidence-based model?

- ▶ Intensive teacher training
 - ▶ Trainers
 - ▶ More professional development days for teachers
 - ▶ Instructional coaches in all schools, all levels
- ▶ Extended learning strategies
 - ▶ Tutoring, extended days, academic summer school, ESL help for ELL students, special education
- ▶ Full day kindergarten
- ▶ Smaller classes in K-3: 15
- ▶ Critical pupil support / parent outreach
- ▶ Technology for schools

Effect Sizes of Key Elements

Effect Sizes of Major Recommendations

Throughout the report, we have identified “effect sizes” of the programmatic proposals. Effect size is the amount of a standard deviation in higher performance that the program produces for students who participate in the program versus students who did not. An effect size of 1.0 would indicate that the average student’s performance would move from the 50th to the 83rd percentile. The research field generally recognizes effect sizes greater than 0.25 as significant and greater than 0.50 as substantial. The effect sizes of the major recommendations are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Estimated Effect Sizes of Major Recommendations

Recommended Program	Effect Size
Full Day Kindergarten	0.77
Class Size of 15 in Grades K-3	
Overall	0.25
Low income and Minority Students	0.50
Multi-age classrooms	
Multi-grade Classrooms	-0.1 to 0.0
Multi-age Classrooms	0.0 to 0.50
Professional Development with Classroom Instructional Coaches	1.25 to 2.70
Tutoring, 1-1	0.4 to 2.5
English-Language Learners	0.45
Extended-Day Programs	No consistent impact due to variation in program focus and quality
Structured Academic Focused Summer school	0.45
Embedded Technology	0.30 to 0.38
Gifted and Talented	
Accelerated Instruction or Grade Skipping	0.5 to 1.0
Enrichment Programs	0.4 to 0.7



Poverty Elements

- ▶ Teacher Tutors
- ▶ Extended day resources to provide academic help for 2 hours of before or after school programming
- ▶ Summer School resources for a 6-hour day and 8-week program
- ▶ Additional pupil support/guidance counselors

What Other States have used the EB model?

- ▶ Arkansas
- ▶ North Dakota
- ▶ Vermont
- ▶ Washington
- ▶ Wyoming

Conclusions

- ▶ The evidence-based adequacy model does not cap spending at an adequate amount; local districts are free to spend above the adequacy amount if they choose.
- ▶ The intent of the evidence-based adequacy model applied to Illinois is to provide a level of fiscal resources to enable *all* students to perform at high levels.

Questions & Comments

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