



Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent

Illinois School Funding Reform Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Summary as Approved by Commission Members

Wednesday, December 9, 2016

10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

- Illinois State Board of Education, Videoconference Room (3rd Floor), 100 N. First Street, Springfield, Illinois
- Illinois State Board of Education, Videoconference Room (14th Floor), 100 W. Randolph, Suite 14-300, Chicago, Illinois

Attendees

Commission Members

Springfield

Avery Bourne
Representative, 95th District

Sue Rezin
Senator, 38th District

Jodi Scott
Regional Superintendent of Schools for Henderson,

Knox, Mercer, and Warren Counties

Chicago

Barbara Flynn Currie
Representative, 25th District

William Davis
Representative, 30th District

James Dimas, *Secretary, Department of Human Services*

Sheri Jesiel
Representative, 61st District

Kimberly Lightford
Senator, 4th District

Andy Manar
Senator, 48th District

Emily McAsey
Representative, 85th District

Beth Purvis (Commission Chairperson)
Secretary of Education

Evelyn Sanguinetti
Lieutenant Governor

Call-In Participants

Jason Barickman
Senator, 53rd District

Jennifer Hammer
Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy

Rita Mayfield
Representative, 60th District

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Amanda Elliott
Legislative Affairs

Robert Wolfe
Chief Financial Officer

Tony Smith
State Superintendent of Education

Allie Lichterman
Office of the State Superintendent

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff

Jeremy Rasmussen

Meeting Objective

- To gain familiarity with the evidence-based model and its inputs

Opening

Dr. Beth Purvis, chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Thirteen members were in attendance, and a quorum was present.

Dr. Purvis opened by stating how the convening today would focus on the evidence-based model and its inputs.

Lieutenant Governor Sanguinetti motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Representative McAsey seconded.

Presentation: Evidence-Based Model, Evaluation of Its 27 Elements (Dr. Mangan, Concordia University; Dr. Jacoby, Illinois Association of School Business Officials)

Dr. Jacoby started by presenting background on the development of the evidence-based model and the building of its adequacy framework for Illinois.

Dr. Mangan remarked that, in terms of effect sizes, it is important to understand that it has to do with standard deviation. She then gave an example of how a standard deviation works within the context of effect size. Dr. Mangan then gave an overview of the effect size chart. She said that professional development coaches and tutoring have been shown to have the largest effect size.

Representative McAsey pointed out what seemed to be a large variation in the effect sizes for professional development coaches and tutoring.

Dr. Mangan replied that it depends on how these things are implemented. She said if things like tutoring are not concentrated on the students' needs, then that would be a variable that could change the effect size. She said that's why there is a range, because it takes into account implementation efforts.

Representative McAsey noted that especially with instructional coaches, if you have an environment where there has never been collaboration among the teachers, then merely putting money into this is not going to change the culture within the district or school.

Dr. Mangan said that leadership is important and that you do need to have people who are trained as instructional coaches, and you have to build a foundation within the school that allows the steps for leadership to take place.

Representative McAsey asked whether building these steps would be a separate investment in terms of the evidence-based model.

Dr. Mangan replied that there has been talk about the state or perhaps the regional offices taking a lead in building foundational capacity.

Representative McAsey asked whether, under the evidence-based model, the ideal is that the instructional coach would be compensated for [his/her] work out of whatever money the evidence-based model allocates.

Dr. Jacoby noted that in the early years of the evidence-based model, there are going to be priority choices made at the local level in terms of allocating resources. In the end, there should be resources available to do all of these [elements] and the measures as they are laid out, but you have to increment over time to be able to afford it.

Representative McAsey commented that with such great variation, there would be a patchwork across the state in terms of how [use of instructional coaches] would be implemented.

Dr. Jacoby replied that the evidence-based model presents a pathway to adequacy and not immediate change.

At this point, Dr. Marguerite Rosa joined via phone, and she provided some context on the evidence-based model.

Presentation: Evidence-Based Model in Context (Dr. Marguerite Rosa, Georgetown University)

Dr. Rosa told the commission that a big caution with changing school funding is that whatever changes are made have a very long shelf life (potentially decades) and that those changes are hard to modify over time. She explained that in that time, a lot of educational strategies can happen. Because of this, it is important to look far into the future. One big push will be around how flexible and adaptable the funding model is over time.

Dr. Rosa said that in terms of effect size, there are two important questions to ask:

- Can two schools, with roughly the same mix of kids, spend the same amount of money but have different outcomes? (Dr. Rosa said that most people would say “yes” to this question.)
- Can two schools, with roughly the same mix of kids, spend the same amount of money in the same way but have different outcomes?

Dr. Rosa remarked that the second question is a little more confusing, but seems to also be true. She noted that when you look at these effect sizes, there are other larger effects happening at the same time. In other words, the number you are looking at for effect sizes could be giving a false relationship between money and outcomes. She explained that these effects are highly dependent on human behavior and that we are still learning how to harness that behavior.

Representative McAsey asked what we can do to address the human behavior piece.

Dr. Rosa responded that when those in the school believe that it is their responsibility to leverage their dollars to get the best outcomes, then they start changing their behavior to reach that effect. If, however, they believe it is the job of the legislator, then their behavior does not change. She said there is a part of human behavior around ownership that correlates to solving problems.

Presentation: Evidence-Based Model, Evaluation of Its 27 Elements [continued] (Dr. Mangan, Concordia University; Dr. Jacoby, Illinois Association of School Business Officials)

Dr. Mangan reviewed prototypical school sizes and referenced numbers in a handout.

Representative McAsey asked whether these numbers suggest that school districts ought to be about the size indicated in the handout.

Dr. Mangan said “no” and that it is proportional.

Representative McAsey replied that the assertion was still being made that there is a certain size of a school population that has more successful outcomes than others.

Dr. Mangan said she is not suggesting that anyone change the size of their school, but that research shows that having one principal for a school of 3,000 maybe is not the best, and that perhaps there needs to be a school within a school.

Representative Jesiel noted that round numbers are easiest [to work with], but most school are not round numbers, so how does this model apply to schools that do not have a round number? Is the funding prorated proportionality, or does the school decide?

Dr. Mangan responded that the school decides.

This led to an extended conversation about local control, flexibility, and how this legislation should be written in the end.

Representative Jesiel had a question regarding class size. She asked whether the optimal is 15 students per class and where they should put the extra capacity if they don't have room in the school.

Dr. Mangan replied that there would need to be a facilities study with the model and that implementation really does matter.

Dr. Purvis pointed out that reducing classroom size to 15 for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) alone would very expensive.

Dr. Jacoby explained that "we are not saying that everyone has to have a class size of 15," but that you would get the most effect by having a class size of 15. He said that having two teachers in larger classrooms would provide some of the same effects of having a class size of 15 students.

Senator Manar said there are so many districts that are so far from having 15 students per class. He remarked that if we were to look at the least adequately funded districts in the state, how would we balance that with the need for resources if what is being proposed is additive only.

Dr. Jacoby responded that this probably goes to the distribution of resources. He said we would get all those schools [the least adequately funded] at 60% within 2 years and then continue to focus on those school districts and filling them with a greater [percentage] of per-pupil allocation.

Senator Manar expressed concern that not enough [resources are] put into the distribution model to move those districts that are the least adequately funded. He said they don't have capacity or the space for things like full-day kindergarten. He said there is a lot of great stuff in the evidence-based model, but he is worried about the practical application.

Dr. Purvis said she thinks Senator Manar is right, but that we need to think of a funding system as one piece of the solution and not a panacea.

This led to conversation on whether a new funding system would involve new mandates and how that might be an important future conversation.

Element 1: Full-Day Kindergarten

Dr. Mangan said that full-day kindergarten has the biggest return in regard to investment. She said you can lower the achievement gap a lot more in the early years, especially if you address it before third grade.

Element 2: Class Size for K-3

Dr. Jacoby said that in this model (as opposed to the general state aide model used today), they use average student enrollment because they are basing it on class size expectations versus average daily attendance.

Dr. Mangan noted that the research for this model is based on the *Tennessee Star* study, which showed an overall effect size of .5, although it had more of an effect for low-income students.

Dr. Purvis asked whether it makes sense to fund class size statewide if it does not have the same effect on students of all income ranges.

Dr. Mangan mentioned a program in Wisconsin (Student Achievement Guarantee in Wisconsin [SAGE] program) in which the money first went to the schools with low income and then got expanded. It's really a policy question.

Dr. Purvis then asked what the standard deviation would be if we went from 15 students per class to 17.

Dr. Mangan responded that you would need a separate study for that.

Representative Currie asked whether Wisconsin did an evaluation after the Sage program implementation.

Dr. Mangan replied that she assumes so and that she could look that up.

There was then a discussion on whether the effect size could be duplicated with 17 or 18 students per class rather than 15, which would save on costs.

Element 3: Class Size for Grades 4–12:

Dr. Mangan said this element is based on information from a professional judgment panel. She explained that the national average class size in middle schools and high schools is roughly 25, and nearly all comprehensive school reform models were developed based on a class size of 25. She said there is a modest improvement in student performance when the class size drops from 25 to 15 students.

Senator Manar said he wondered whether they could do a drill-down on how much would have to be put into the new distribution model for a typical school district to achieve 15 students per full-day kindergarten class.

Adding to Senator Manar's comment, Dr. Purvis said they have data on average class sizes for different districts on the report card. It would be good to look at how many districts are already doing this.

Element 4: Specialist Teachers

Dr. Jacoby said that for specialist teachers, we allocated 20% additional full-time employees (FTEs) to address elementary school needs (art, music, etc.) and 20% more at the middle school level as well. He noted that comprehensive high schools become even more unique because students have more of a desire to become specifically involved, whether in vocational training areas or more advanced course above and beyond core courses, which explains why the FTE is a little higher at 33%.

Dr. Mangan said the research behind it is that while students are engaged with their specialist teachers it gives core teachers time to plan and collaborate.

Dr. Mangan remarked that for high school, block scheduling has been shown to be more effective.

Representative McAsey said it goes back to that human element and implementation.

Dr. Mangan stated that there needs to be leadership around this for it to happen. She said that teachers have to take ownership of it.

Senator Bertino-Tarrant asked whether the research for this element is based on one school district or multiple districts.

Dr. Mangan said that this is founded on the comprehensive school reform model, which would be multiple things implemented in the same place; however, the specifics she has been sharing are based on multiple studies.

Senator Lightford asked whether we need all 27 elements for this distribution model to work.

Dr. Purvis explained that she thinks the idea here is that we want to dig into each of these elements to see whether their inputs represent what Illinois should be doing.

Mr. Dimas asked whether there have been states that have implemented only some of the elements because that's all they could afford.

Dr. Jacoby said you would need to look at every element individually to see whether it fits the state's needs.

Representative Jesiel asked whether it wouldn't be better to keep all 27 elements but to scale back some that the state might not be able to afford now, but could [afford] in the future.

Dr. Purvis said that if we are going to put this model forward, are the numbers that we have within the model the right numbers (i.e, 15 or 18 students per classroom)? She noted that, from her point of view, that's the conversation.

Mr. Dimas stated if we are not going to do everything all at once, it would be good to know the things we shouldn't do before we do something else.

Dr. Jacoby remarked that if you were going to fund this all at one time, then you could probably determine what to do first, second, etc. But we are talking about incremental funding over time.

Senator Rezin observed that in order for this model to be successful, an additional five billion dollars would be needed. If we can't reach that [goal], can this still be successful?

Dr. Jacoby said this is a target for adequacy and that it does not necessarily reflect what you are going to see funded in the first year. He also stated that he believes most of the modeling today is way below five billion.

Element 5: Instructional Facilitators/Coaches

Dr. Jacoby explained that research has shown that one instructional coach per every 200 students has a strong effect size.

Dr. Mangan said this is based on seminal research, which has been reinforced by subsequent studies. She said that although professional development outside of the classroom is helpful, it is really the instructional coaches inside the classroom who produce a large effect size.

Representative Currie asked whether they could cancel professional development outside the classroom as a trade-off for instructional coaches.

Representative McAsey asked how one becomes a professional coach.

Dr. Mangan responded that it requires training to be an instructional coach. It may require going to a university or having the regional offices of education providing that training.

Dr. Purvis asked whether the one instructional coach per every 200 students applies to K–12.

Dr. Mangan replied that it is the same across and that it doesn't differentiate.

Representative Pritchard asked how these instructional coaches tie in with specialist teachers.

Dr. Jacoby responded that the same thing would apply. Specialist teachers benefit the same way from instructional coaches as core teachers.

Senator Manar asked whether we know that many districts in the state today teach the recommendations that the research shows.

Dr. Jacoby said he does not believe so.

Dr. Purvis remarked that perhaps they could do a quick survey of some of the superintendents, which might provide a basic idea of which schools or districts are using these research-based practices.

Senator Manar then asked whether they could look at how much money would need to be put into the new formula to result in the least-funded districts meeting this ratio for instructional facilitators.

Dr. Jacoby said, yes, they could isolate those dollars.

Senator Manar asked whether, in light of knowing that we are constrained for resources, there is a better way to direct resources for districts furthest away from [having achieved] adequacy.

Dr. Purvis asked whether the distribution model being talked about would do that in some ways.

Dr. Jacoby said the distribution model deals with the adequacy target for each district.

This led to a brief discussion on Tier I and II funding.

Representative Currie asked if the districts at 100% are spending their money wisely.

Dr. Jacoby said yes, many of those districts already have instructional coaches, teaching specialists, etc.

Element 6: Core Intervention Teachers

Dr. Jacoby said the distribution for core intervention teachers is one per prototypical school.

Dr. Mangan said the effect size for this element has a range of 0.4 to 2.5, but an average of 0.75 for tutors. It has to be a certified teacher tutor; it can't be a teacher's aide or a volunteer community member.

Representative Currie asked whether the research for core intervention teachers was compared to [that of] programs that were using tutors who are not certified teachers.

Dr. Mangan replied that this is correct.

Dr. Jacoby stated that effectively using core intervention can reduce the number of student IEPs [individualized education programs].

Dr. Mangan noted that most special education research shows that specific, preventative measures should be the focus.

Representative McAsey asked whether you get the same effect if you have a community member who is a certified teacher.

Dr. Mangan said, yes, as long as they are certified.

Representative McAsey then asked whether it needs to be a consistent teacher—one student always working with the same tutor.

Dr. Mangan responded that studies have shown that the greatest effect size is about the strategy and not the person. Sometimes a student will get the same tutor using the same strategy, and we wonder why the student isn't improving, so it's more about the actual instructional strategy.

Dr. Purvis said the research shows that it is both about having a certified teacher and the instructional strategy, so is there a situation [in which], if you have really good professional development for tutors who are not certified instructors, you could get similar outcomes?

Dr. Mangan said, "No; with that strategy, you could get to about half the effect size."

Dr. Purvis asked how technology interventions fit within the overall model. This led to a conversation about the need to focus on instruction and assessments first.

Element 9: Supervisory Aides

Dr. Jacoby said that supervisory aides are about the need to oversee the population on a regular basis. A recommendation is needed for the 25 elementary and middle school [students and the]

nearly 200 [students] in high school. These are everything from lunch duty to recess to playground to bus duty to other kinds of things that need to take place on a regular basis and [that] would not require, necessarily, a certified or licensed teacher to do what is just supervisory in nature.

Dr. Mangan said the research behind this does not support instructional aides.

Representative Davis asked whether there is something lost if these duties are performed by teachers.

Dr. Jacoby replied that he thinks it is about a person, and the question is, “What do you want to pay for that function? Do you want to pay a certified teacher’s salary for that function or do you want to pay a noninstructional teacher assistant?”

Dr. Purvis asked whether this was suggesting that there should be no instructional aides.

Dr. Jacoby said he is saying that certified teachers are more in those instructional environments [and are] are more effective than having an aide.

Dr. Purvis asked, “If all of these 27 were implemented, does that mean the schools would then have a reduction in cost because instructional aides are not there?”

Dr. Mangan replied, “No, because the model costs more than this currently.”

Element 10: Librarians

Dr. Jacoby said the library world is changing in terms of media integration; student access is still very important in regard to giving students access to extend instruction or to get research into instruction that students need. The recommendation is one librarian for each prototypical school and also one library media tech assistant for every 300 students.

Dr. Mangan noted that there are two studies here showing that regardless of family income, schools that have a full-time librarian do perform better on state exams.

Representative Pritchard asked, “Is the benefit here the ability of the student to read? Therefore, wouldn’t a reading specialist be as helpful as a librarian?”

Dr. Mangan said, “It’s somebody focused on getting books into students’ backpacks in addition to a reading specialist who is working one on one with the students.”

Dr. Jacoby said that anytime you move into even STEM kinds of scenarios, where kids are doing problem solving and such, you need somebody to help guide some of their research at times.

Element 11: Principals and Assistant Principals

Dr. Mangan observed that besides the classroom teacher, the leadership had the second highest effect on student achievement.

Dr. Jacoby said, “You think about the principal’s role, and the weight of that on just that one individual leaves very little time to oversee instructional coaching and [to] build culture and deal with parent problems and student discipline issues and all those kind of things. You really need that bigger focus on leadership at the local level.”

Representative Currie stated, “The real point here should be how do we create effective leadership, and that’s a rote numbers game, and I don’t disagree that you may need more people on the ground to do that kind of evaluation, but the numbers don’t seem to push toward effectiveness in the way the principal actually operates the school.”

Dr. Purvis replied, “How many of the large high schools in Illinois have dual principals?” She stated that she knows a lot [of high schools] that have a principal with multiple assistant principals, but she wondered whether “there were any who have taken on this idea that if I have 1,200 or 1,300 kids that I should have two principals?”

Dr. Jacoby said, “I think the differential between a deputy principal or an assistant principal and a principal are in terms of overall salary. It’s going to be somewhat smaller. You may have one principal at a higher salary and several other assistants that offset that at a different level.”

A commission member from Springfield said, “It’s highly likely in some rural districts to have 240 students in the high school. So, you come in at .4 for a principal and .4 for an assistant principal. Is there a minimum number of students that work with this model?”

Dr. Mangan responded that the way she has seen it work in different states is that in rural areas, usually, it’s a half-time teacher who is also a half-time principal.

Element 13: Gifted and Talented

Dr. Jacoby noted that under gifted and talented students, right now, in Illinois, we spend \$40 per pupil.

Representative McAsey asked, “Per pupil [who] have been identified as gifted?”

Dr. Jacoby clarified, “No, per total pupils.”

Dr. Mangan said, “Right now, we have a very broad definition of gifted and talented, which is your top five list of performing students, and there are no guidelines as to what gifted and talented has to be.” She said there are national guidelines and they may be helpful in creating state standards.

Element 14: Professional Development

Dr. Mangan said the research behind professional development is that there are the different elements. If you get a new curriculum, then you need to train the teachers on the curriculum. If instructional strategies aren’t working, then you need professional development on those instructional strategies. You don’t necessarily need to send people out, but you might need to bring people in.

Element 15: Instructional Materials

Dr. Jacoby observed that Illinois hits the national average in terms of how much it spends on instructional materials for its students.

Representative Jesiel asked, “Is there any effect with using e-textbooks? Any cost savings?”

Dr. Mangan replied that she is not sure whether there are specifically savings on it because “you have a [one]-year subscription and then there is the training on the technology that has to happen.”

Dr. Purvis said there are examples of community colleges in the state that have saved money using technology [such as] e-readers.

Element 16: Assessment

Dr. Jacoby said that assessments here are also reflective of what we are currently spending for people in Illinois. He said, “Things like MAP and AIMSweb and STAAR—those kinds of costs range between \$10 and \$12 per pupil to implement.”

Dr. Mangan noted that data-based decision making has become a central element of “schools that are moving the student achievement needle.”

Element 17: Technology

Dr. Mangan said, “Studies show that if you start with the technology and you don’t focus on the instruction, it’s just like a gadget. It doesn’t do anything. It has to be the instruction that is provided first, and that you’re providing training with it.”

Dr. Jacoby remarked, “Instead of going into a 21st Century learning kind of environment, it’s actually maximizing what they already do in their homes, and that kind of thing in terms of their learning styles and access to the outside world. A one-on-one environment provides that opportunity, and a one-to-three limits that opportunity significantly.”

Dr. Purvis asked, “If we were to invest in the technology, will that increase the instructional materials cost or decrease it over time, or do they stay the same?”

Dr. Jacoby replied, “It goes to what level of resource you have available to the local level.”

The discussion then drifted back toward gifted students and whether they would be covered by specialist teachers, with details about the specialist teacher line item. This was followed by a discussion on what the state spends per pupil on maintenance and operations (i.e., custodial services).

Dr. Purvis asked, “When you look at this \$1,800 per kid in maintenance and operations and central office—if we look at surrounding states, is that about average? Have you looked at how we’re doing on average in comparison to national studies?”

Dr. Jacoby said he has not benchmarked that.

Element 18: Extra Duty and Activities Stipends

Dr. Jacoby said, “These are the clubs, the sporting, and afterschool music—all of those particular stipends that occur within school districts that allow students to have extra opportunities.”

Dr. Mangan observed, “If you overschedule things, it can have a detrimental effect. If a student is involved in one sport, it can help with time management, but if they are involved in three sports, it might have the opposite effect.”

Representative Currie asked, “Why is there no positive effect for intramurals?”

Dr. Jacoby remarked that there is a difference when you have a coach and practice every day; that’s something that intramurals [do] not offer.

Element 23: Additional Pupil-Support Teachers

Dr. Mangan said that this is more at the high school level. Parent outreach is really important for students who are not only low income but also low-performing. Essentially, it is “connecting the parents not only to get the students to school but, then, what resources they might need.”

Representative Currie said, “Once you went down to 15 kids per classroom, then the teacher would have time to do a lot of that parent outreach.”

Dr. Mangan said, “Yes.”

Mr. Dimas remarked that he “can’t help feeling that we are going to be disappointed with the result if we expect teachers and even school social workers to compensate for everything the child is not getting at home or the fact that they have to walk to school through a war zone.”

Dr. Mangan noted, “That is the difference between our system and someplace like Finland or places where the social structure is actually recognized.”

Mr. Dimas explained, “Dollars aren’t enough by themselves because it doesn’t matter how much we pay a teacher if the child is coming home every day to a domestic violence situation.”

This led to a discussion on mandates around this issue.

Dr. Jacoby said that the final three elements are on special ed[ucation], and these are reflective of national identification averages. “It is one FTE for every 141 total students, and that addresses somewhere around that 12% to 13% saturation of IAPs. Psychologists and special aides are that additional factor you need in a special ed environment. You need an assessment kind of component the psychologist brings. You need aides that are, a lot of [the] time, depicted within the IAP as somebody to assist students in the classroom. The one piece on special ed that is not in this model is the area related to what we call ‘high needs/high costs.’ This would be students [who] are in very, very expensive types of programs with very extensive disabilities; sometimes

private placement; sometimes very unique, one-on-one kinds of scenarios with teachers, even in special education cooperatives.

This led to a discussion around categorical reimbursements and special education line items in relation to funding special education services.

Representative Pritchard asked, “Where are we in drafting legislation that is being pursued to come up with some cost model for this?”

Dr. Jacoby replied that they are very close to finalizing the legislation in terms of the language and that he is expecting to see the final draft over the weekend, but the actual modeling piece is going to take some time.

Dr. Purvis said, “What they are talking about is a model so that we can see the distribution. That does not mean that is the model that will be recommended by this task force and the model to be decided on, but a way to be able to look at the implications of each of these 27 factors and to better understand how they affect different ones.”

Representative Currie said, “We need to understand how all these elements run through the model. We talked about general distribution methods, but I would say we need to go back to what does the distribution look like with different amounts of money in a project.”

Senator Manar asked, “What happens if—a hypothetical—let’s say we have come up with \$300 million next fiscal year beginning July 1, and we start this process of both the new adequacy model plus the distribution model, and then, as with Y19, we have to reduce funding for schools. What happens to the model?”

Dr. Jacoby responded, “The conceptual elements of the model that we have articulated in our language, obviously, we wanted to continue to grow and not step back, but what we’ve tried to do is to guarantee that districts in Tier 1, which are the [furthest] from adequacy, that if there is a reduction in school funding, they would be insulated. So, a reduction in school funding would stop at the top with Tier 4, 3, 2, and if it got all the way down to Tier 1, it would have to be pretty significant, but what we want to do is not give up the gains we made for the districts who are the farthest away.”

Senator Manar said that “personnel reimbursement for special ed is essentially frozen for that school district regardless of what reimbursements they would submit to the State Board of Education in future years. Would they be reliant on the new distribution model to reflect their either increase or decrease here appropriately?”

Dr. Jacoby remarked that “the base funding item is a per-pupil allocation. So, even under the current dollars, if their pupils increase, they’re going to see an increase in their base funding. If their pupils decrease, they would see a decrease in their base funding.”

This led to an extended conversation around base-level funding in relation to the evidence-based model.

Presentation: Why Funding the Elements Contained in the Evidence-Based Model Makes Sense From Both Educational and Economic Standpoints (Ralph Martire, Executive Director, Center for Tax and Budget Accountability)

Mr. Martire said, “[If] we put these elements into this funding formula based on what you suggest is needed, will we see better student achievement? The answer to this is ‘yes.’ There is no other school funding model that allows you to get to that conclusion. You generally need a tax increase, and that, believe it or not, is a politically difficult thing to do. You need to find a way to bridge these ideological desires and have people focus on evidence-based practices. So, number one, it allows you to answer this question in a positive way. Literally, no other school funding formula lets you do that.”

Mr. Martire remarked that number two “gets to efficiency because it’s not just about putting money into the system; it’s about putting money into the system in a manner suggested by best practice. So, it is about high-quality investment, [about] using your money wisely.” He noted that prior to the evidence-based model, “money would go into education blind.” He explained that the second way is “blind” because “it really doesn’t provide any sort of metrics or rubric for a school district to look at that suggests what the best practices are for allocating it. An evidence-based model absolutely does.”

Mr. Martire explained, “When we [saw] generations of children in a state [such as] Illinois not necessarily attaining academically the way we want them to, we tended to blame the education system itself. The system must be flawed. We actually looked at that at the federal level. We looked at that at our commission, and what we found was the system overall wasn’t flawed. It just, for the most part, lacked the capacity to educate middle-income kids and below. In fact, school districts that happened to be located nationally in more affluent communities generally had the capacity on the front end to generate the outcomes we desire on the back end that matters. If you don’t have adequate capacity to begin with, you’re not going to get the outcomes you want on the back end.”

Mr. Martire said the Federal Reserve of Cleveland even found that differences in personal income between states can be explained in large part by differences in educational attainment.

Mr. Martire then talked about the benefits and costs of evidence-based K–12 education models.

Representative Jesial asked, “Have you done any analysis of a point at which the investment returns exceed the investment, so that your revenues that are generated because of the higher capacity and higher wages and larger GDP exceed the cost of investing in education? [Are] there any data to that?”

Mr. Martire responded, “If you reduce your dropout rate by one point, you already are receiving a massive return on investment. By having a distribution model that focuses on those schools that really have the most need, you should be able to attain that relatively quick[ly]” (a couple of years).

Senator Manar said he knows that Mr. Martire is for putting as much money behind the model as possible. He then asked whether he would advocate for using existing resources to help speed up that process.

Mr. Martire said he would advocate for taking the money that's currently going into K–12 and using it according to the best practices.

There was then a prolonged conversation regarding resource allocation and the evidence-based model.

Dr. Purvis had a question regarding the reporting side. She asked, “What types of measures should we be looking at to say that this is having an effect?”

Mr. Martire said, “We should be looking for some improvement and some growth. We should be looking for some positive outcomes and move to a double best practice.”

Representative Davis asked, “How is poverty addressed in the midst of all of this?”

Mr. Martire replied that it creates the capacity to provide an adequate education to an average student body from a demographic standpoint.

There was a request for more information on how districts with high concentrations of children with disabilities, children who are English language learners, and children who are living in poverty would look within the evidence-based model.

This led to some discussion on how the subgroups are weighted within the model.

Dr. Purvis then gave closing remarks.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.