

Delaware Education Funding Convening

Tuesday, October 8, 2019

Early College High School at
Delaware State University
Dover, Delaware

Student Success Says:

- **Ensure Funding Responds to Individual Student Needs**

- “Increase funding system equity by factoring student needs into funding allocations, and update the system so that funding follows each student, enabling them to take courses from a variety of approved providers (e.g., other district and charter schools, distance learning, higher education organizations).”



See handout in your folder for the full list of Fair & Efficient Funding recommendations in Student Success 2025

- **Increase Equity and Flexibility**

- “Allocate a larger portion of district/school funding in flexible funds so that district and school leaders can expand the ways they educate children to meet specific student needs, rather than in one-size-fits-all categories.”

Why Are We Here?

1. Student needs are growing
2. Opportunity Funding is a first step
3. Lawsuit creates a catalyst for community-driven solutions



Objectives and Expectations

- **Objectives:**

Inform all future decisions and conversations about education funding in Delaware by:

1. Surfacing varying perspectives and areas of agreement
2. Identifying potential solutions to issues and questions holding back change
3. Learning from peers in other states

- **Expectations:**

- Focus on what works best for students
- Find common ground and be open to learn
- Raise potential solutions to pain points

Research and analysis supported by:

The Alliance for Resource Equity



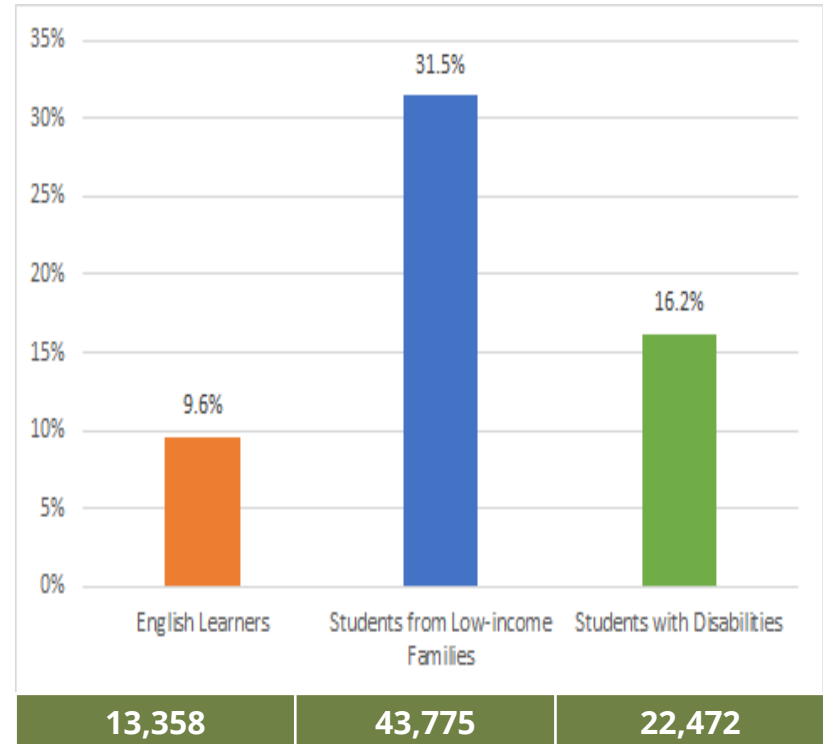
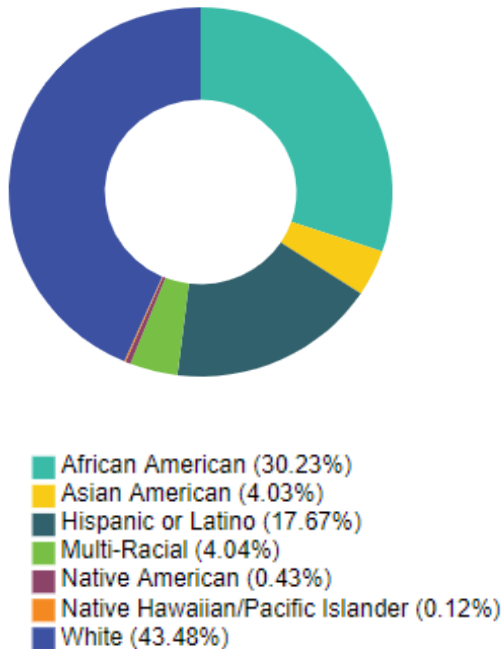
See appendix for more detail on our partners

Education Funding in Delaware



Delaware is a racially, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse state.

Total Enrollment: 139,144



Source: DE Report Card <https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/detail.html#aboutpage?scope=state&district=0&school=0>

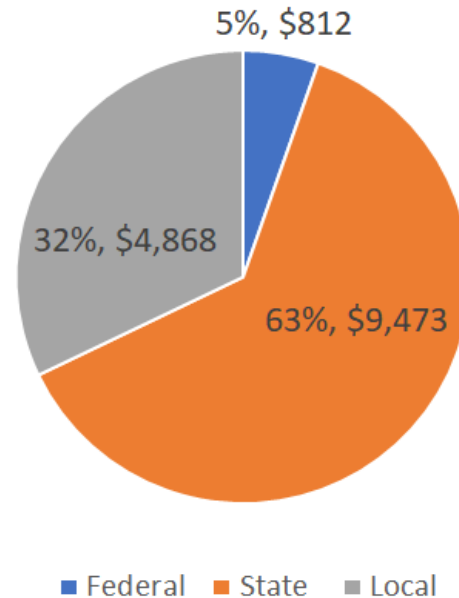
Delaware schools spend about \$15K per student and most of those funds come from the state.

In 2018, Delaware schools



spent an average of
\$15,153 per student.

Per-Pupil Expenditures by Source of Funds



Source: DE Report Card <https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/>

Current Resource Inequities

Students from **low-income families** are far **less likely** to be enrolled in **higher-level math** in 8th grade than their higher income peers.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2017 Mathematics Assessment.

Schools with more **students from low-income families** and **students of color** are **more likely** to have **novice teachers**.

Data Source: DE Department of Education (2016–17), Data Request

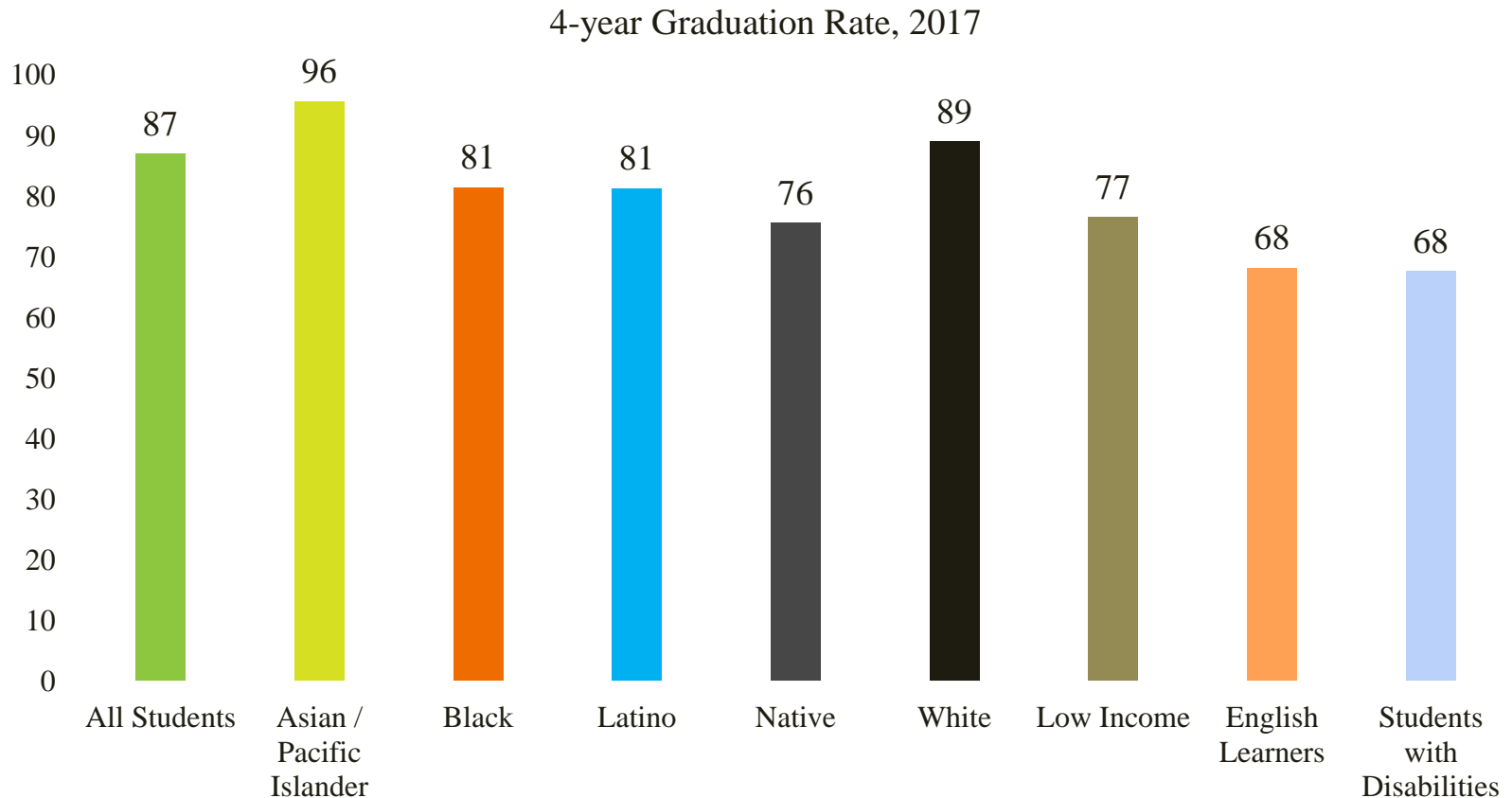
Districts serving more **students from low-income families** tend to have **lower average teacher salaries** than districts serving primarily students from historically advantaged groups.

Data Source: DE Department of Education (2016–17), <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/1490>

High-poverty schools have **higher student-to-counselor ratios** than low poverty schools.

Data Source: 2015–16 Civil Rights Data Collection and the 2015–16 Common Core of Data.

Nearly one in four students from low-income families and nearly one in three English learners does not graduate from high school in four years.



Source: Delaware state report card at <https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/detail.html#displaypage?scope=state&district=0&school=0&id=1>

With new school-level per-pupil spending data expected this year...

Delaware will have the opportunity to better understand differences between schools within a district and the extent to which spending is aligned with student needs and outcomes.

Delaware has made some progress in providing additional funding for students from low-income families and English learners.

FY18 Opportunity Grants

\$1M in competitive grants to a handful of districts/charters

FY20 Opportunity Funding

\$60M (over three years) in formula grants

This is real progress in the right direction

This is an additional \$500 per English learner and \$300 per low-income student, or about 2-3% more per student.

Looking Ahead

Research suggests systems should provide 100% to 200% more

Regional neighbors invest 30-99% more

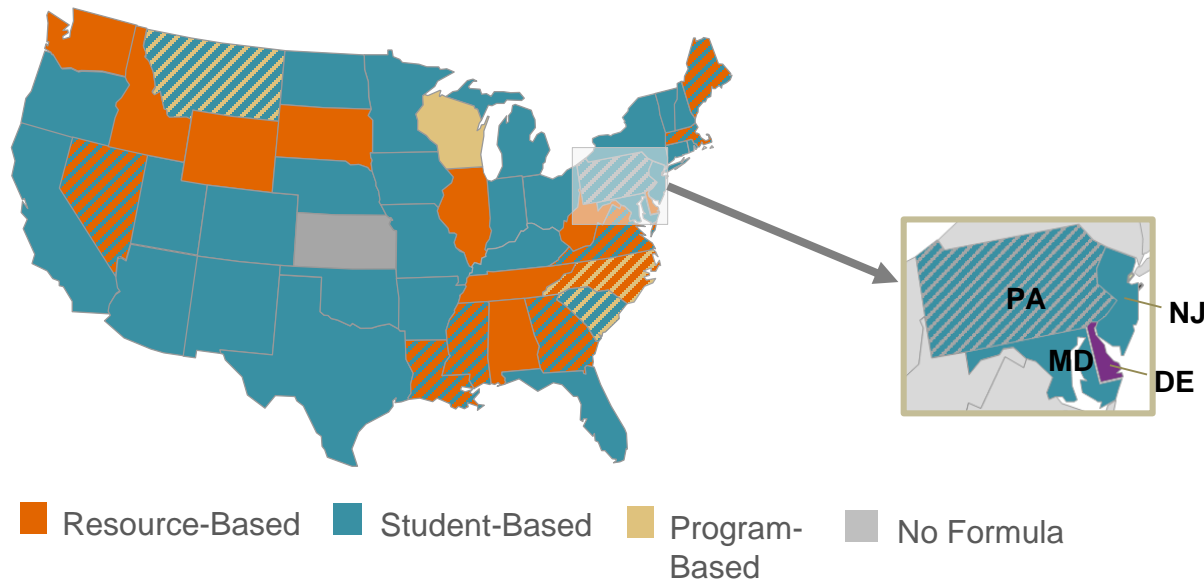
Sources: State of Delaware, Delaware News, <https://news.delaware.gov/2017/09/27/opportunity-grants/>
Delaware Department of Education, Opportunity Funding <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/587>

A National Comparison



How does Delaware compare to other states?

Delaware is one of **8 states** that relies solely on a **resource allocation-based funding system**.



Delaware's neighbors use a student-based system

Other states that use a resource allocation-based system exclusively:
Alabama, Idaho, Illinois, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Source: EdBuild FundEd: A National Overview of State Education Funding Policies <http://funded.edbuild.org/national#formula-type>

Every state/district funding system ends up developing a system that includes a unique combination of these components:

For example, even in districts that use “Student-Based Budgeting (SBB)”:

Only **45 to 60% of school-based resources** (or 35-50% of total district operating dollars) are allocated out per pupil

Unit/Resource-based allocation

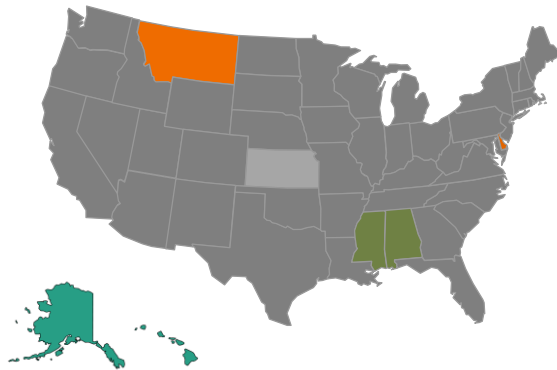
Programmatic allocation

Per pupil allocations

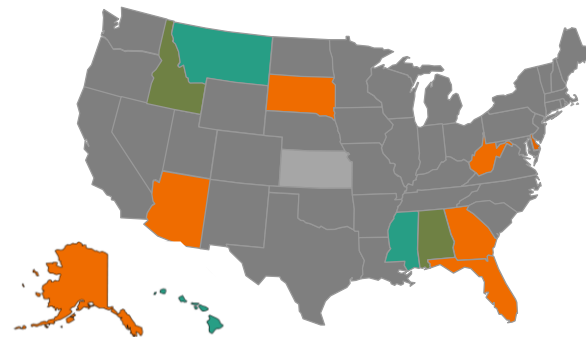
How does Delaware compare to other states?

Delaware is one of few states that does **not provide sustainable funding** or resources to support **English learners** and **students from low-income families**.

Supplemental Funding for English Learners



Supplemental Funding for Students from Low-Income Families



■ Sustainable Additional Funding ■ No Additional Funding ■ Ad-Hoc Funding ■ No Formula

Source: EdBuild FundEd: A National Overview of State Education Funding Policies <http://funded.edbuild.org/national#poverty> & <http://funded.edbuild.org/national#ell>

What We Heard: Initial Findings from Interviews with Delawareans

**We talked to Delaware district,
charter, government,
advocacy, business, and
community leaders from all
three counties.**

We heard broad agreement that ...

1. **How much** money is allocated matters, but **how well** it's used to support student success matters just as much.
2. Delaware's current funding system has **strengths** to build upon, but also **opportunities** to improve.
3. Change will require a **gradual transition**, not flipping a switch overnight. There are things the state could do **immediately** that would have a positive impact for students.
4. To work best for all students, a funding system should have the following principles: **equity, flexibility, stability, and transparency.**

We heard broad agreement that Delaware's funding system should have:



Equity

Resources are distributed equitably to districts and schools based on student need



Stability

District and school leaders are able to make strategic long-term planning decisions



Flexibility

District and school leaders define the resources they need to drive student achievement



Transparency

Clear and easily understood rules for where, how, and why dollars flow

Equity

Broad agreement that changes to the funding system should ...

- Ensure the amount of funding a child's school receives **does not depend on where they live**
- Ensure that each school receives **increased and sustained funding according to their needs**, especially for low-income students, English learners, and students with disabilities
- Improve the **ability to equalize** between property-rich and property-poor districts

Questions and differing perspectives ...

- How much does the unit system **advance or inhibit equity**?
- How can we allocate more equitably and maintain a salary schedule, given most money is spent on personnel? What are the **impacts on teachers/hiring**?

"The existing arrangement systematically disadvantages certain types of kids – and it happens to be poor kids, English learners, and other kids with special needs."

- Advocate

"We do get Opportunity Funding for ELL/poverty but ... it's unknown how long that funding will be available. The unit system has always been equitable when it comes to SPED but not really with ELL/poverty."

- District leader

Flexibility

Broad agreement that changes to the funding system should ...

- **Increase flexibility** for district and school leaders to make **resource decisions**
- Reflect the **current needs** of schools and students in Delaware
- Empower **local decision making**, including maintaining **state salary schedule** while improving ability to **recruit and retain** strong educators

"If we want a counselor right now or reading specialist or a school psychologist, I need to take it out of teacher allotment ... because the [current] formula doesn't account for those positions."

- District leader

Questions and differing perspectives ...

- How do we balance **local decision making** with **oversight/accountability**?
- What would be the **impact of increased flexibility on school leaders**?
- What is the **range** of ways to give districts and schools **more flexibility**?

"You want to give [district leaders] as much flexibility as possible ... so they can look at the population of students and create the best environments and attract the best people to make that work."

- Advocate

Stability

Broad agreement that changes to the funding system should ...

- Maintain **predictability** so that districts and schools know what they will receive from the state
- Maintain the **state's investment** in education

Questions and differing perspectives ...

- How to prevent shifting additional costs to districts?

*"I know what I'll get each year so I can **plan ahead**."*

- District leader

*"We have a system that has quite distinctive strengths in comparison with some other systems. Those strengths are that it's reasonably, at the state-level, stable in its operation and function. **It's predictable. It's reliable.**"*

- Advocate

Transparency

Broad agreement that changes to the funding system should ...

- Prioritize **transparency**

*“Discussing units makes for a much simpler budgeting process. **Everyone understands how many units we have**, how many units we’ve spent, and how many are left so we can jointly make decisions about what’s best. If we were to shift towards money, the discussion would be so much more complicated.”*

- District leader

vs.

Questions and differing perspectives ...

Heard **varying opinions** about the **transparency** of the current systems

- Systems leaders see the system **as easy to understand**
- Those outside the system find it **complex and lacking in transparency**

*“That’s one of the biggest problems ... **How funding is spent and is allocated, is really not clear**. So, that’s something I think is very much needed. I think they need to be very transparent about and very clear about how much money is being spent, how it’s being allocated within schools itself, and the school districts.”*

- Advocate

Delaware Discussion

Moderated by:

Betty Chang, Director, Education Resource Strategies

Panelist:

Alonna Berry, Founder, The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence

Mark Dudendach, Retired Superintendent, POLYTECH School District

Emily Falcon, Chief Financial Officer, Colonial School District

Paul Herdman, President and CEO, Rodel and Vision Coalition
Leadership Team member

Margie López-Waite, Head of School at Las Américas ASPIRA Academy
and Vision Coalition Leadership Team member

What We Heard From Delawareans

- **A tension between how much the system can change and how fast the system can change**
 - There is concern about a “gradual” approach to change because students do not have time to wait.
 - One panelist proposed making incremental change rather than waiting for a big political battle.
- **The importance of districts receiving stable funds for students from low-income backgrounds and students of color**
- **The importance of flexibility but only when connected with adequate resources**
- **The funding system’s impact on teacher recruitment**
 - There was acknowledgement that the unit system allows districts to hire without worrying about which salaries they can afford.
 - Another panelist, however, mentioned that teacher applicants vary from district to district and the teachers and resources students have access to depend on their zip code.
- **Varied opinions on the panel and in the audience about transparency**
 - Audience members shared that there is not a lot of consistency in budgets across districts
 - It’s not just about money, but it is hard to understand how money or resources flow to certain programs

National Discussion

Moderated By:

Betty Chang, Director, Education Resource Strategies

Panelist:

Ary Amerikaner, Vice President for P-12 Policy, Practice, and Research, Education Trust

Dan Curry, Superintendent, Calvert County Public Schools and Former Superintendent, Lake Forest School District

Jonathan Travers, Partner, Education Resource Strategies

What We Heard From National Experts

- **Like Delaware, a lot of states and many districts have gone through or are currently going through the process of changing their education funding system**
 - Other states' approaches demonstrate that there is a spectrum of flexibility and that can be implemented in a funding system.
- **The agreement among all stakeholders on the principles of a funding system (stability, flexibility, equity, and transparency) is very promising.**
 - Designing a technical system that best achieves those criteria can involve making incremental changes or large-scale changes.
- **Good public reporting of school-level per-pupil funding will help ensure money and resources are going to the right places and being used well.**

Audience Feedback on Proposed Principles

Equity	Flexibility
<p><i>"It is impressive that so many panelists see this as an issue. Hopefully this means this will gain momentum and create some urgency to change in this area."</i></p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to incentivize, recruit and retain quality teachers in higher need schools • Budgeting and supports for different student needs 	<p>Audience members found it helpful to discuss how other states are allocating funds and the varying changes that could be implemented.</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to better enable district discretion • There are still a lot of questions about how money and resources are distributed and used
Stability	Transparency
<p>Opportunity Funds are a good step and should be made permanent and consistent to target student needs.</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to combat a fear of change • Must ensure that districts can make adjustments without a referendum every few years 	<p><i>"Vision Coalition has helped to provide transparency [for] education issues in DE."</i></p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase public understanding of system • Need coordinated interagency data sharing and collection

Audience Perspectives on Opportunities for Delaware

- Delawareans want to know more about the options available for districts and schools to better support students
- School-level per pupil reporting is an opportunity for better understanding of how school and district resources are allocated

“How do we ensure funding is used in ways that improve student outcomes for all?”

“What are the key factors districts and schools need flexibility around?”

“Publicly share in layman’s terms comparison of resources across SES levels and school districts.”

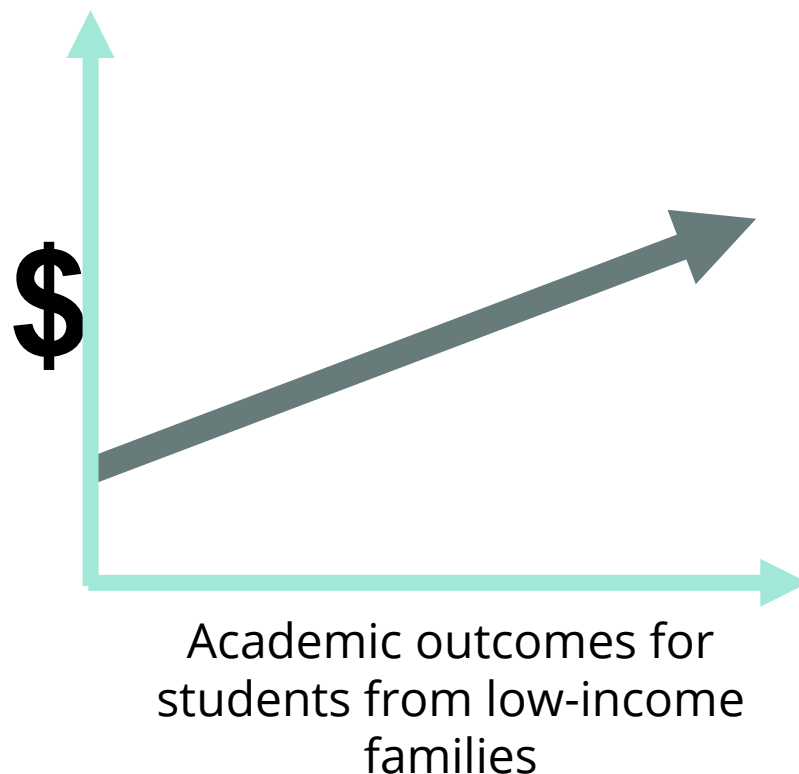
Appendix:

The Alliance for Resource Equity



Core Belief: Resources Matter

“How Much” Matters: increases in spending lead to improved student achievement, educational attainment, and higher wages – with **greater benefits for students from low-income families.**



Core Belief: Resources Matter

“How Well” Matters: Money should be spent on evidence-based policies and practices.

Up to 40¢ of every
\$1 spent is spent
on resources that
are not correlated
with student
outcomes

“Resource Misalignments”



Our Goal: Resource Equity

*Resource equity is the **allocation and use** of resources (people, time, and money) to create student experiences that enable all children to reach empowering, rigorous learning outcomes – no matter their race or income.*

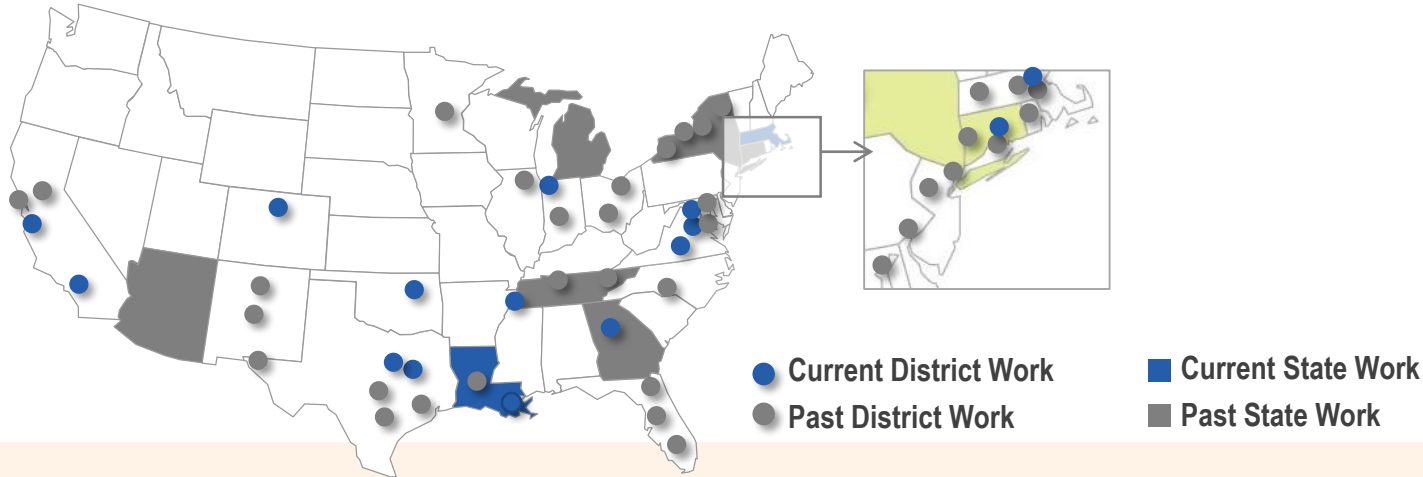
ERS



Every School. Every Child. Ready for Tomorrow.

ERS is a national nonprofit that **partners with district, school and state leaders** to transform how they **use resources** (people, time, and money) so that **every school prepares every child for tomorrow**, no matter their race or income.

We partner with districts across the country to transform resource use so that every school succeeds for every student



WEST COAST

California
Sacramento, Oakland,
[Los Angeles](#),
[Ravenswood](#)
Colorado
Denver

SOUTHWEST

Arizona
Arizona Community Foundation
New Mexico
Santa Fe, Albuquerque
Oklahoma
[Tulsa](#)
Texas
El Paso, Austin, Aldine, Spring
Branch, [Fort Worth](#), [Dallas](#)

MIDWEST

Minnesota
St. Paul
Illinois
Chicago
Indiana
Indianapolis, [South Bend](#)
Ohio
Cleveland, Cincinnati
Michigan
Michigan State University

SOUTH

Tennessee
[Memphis](#), Nashville, Knox County,
TN Dept. of Education
Georgia
[Atlanta](#), GA Dept. of Education
Florida
Duval County, Lake County,
Palm Beach County
North Carolina
Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Louisiana
Avoyelles Parish, [LA Dept. of Education](#),
[Orleans Parish School Board](#)

NORTHEAST

Massachusetts
Boston, Cambridge, Holyoke, [Salem](#)
Rhode Island
Providence
Connecticut
[Hartford](#), Waterbury, New Haven,
Connecticut Council for Education
Reform
New York
Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, New
York City, NY State Dept. of
Education

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia
New Jersey
Newark
Maryland
Baltimore,
Prince George's County,
[Montgomery County](#)
Washington, D.C.
[D.C. Public Schools](#)
Virginia
[Richmond](#)

We believe ...

- **All students deserve a great education** tailored to their needs.
- One school-at-a-time reform is not enough; **we must redesign school systems** to create the conditions for all schools to succeed.
- **It's not *just* about how much you have, but how well you use it:** districts can restructure their resources to meet their strategic goals and schools' unique needs.





The Education Trust

- The Education Trust is a national, nonprofit organization that advocates for the high academic achievement of all students – particularly those of color or living in poverty.
- We work alongside educators, parents, students, policymakers, and civic and business leaders in communities across the country, providing practical assistance in their efforts to transform schools and colleges into institutions that serve students well.



The Education Trust

WHERE WE WORK



California



Michigan



New York



Louisiana



Massachusetts



Maryland



North Carolina



Texas



Washington



Delaware



Kentucky



Tennessee



Illinois



Ohio

EdTrust and ERS have partnered to leverage our organizations' collective strengths in work to improve resource equity for all

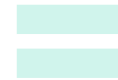
Advocates & **Practitioners**
are more effective working together



The Education Trust



ERS



In order to change the resource equity landscape, we must collaborate to create and elevate examples of effective resource use