

Fund Our Future Nevada

Coalition of parents, teachers, school staff, students and education advocates in southern, northern and rural Nevada.

Agenda Item VII A (EDUCATION)
Meeting Date: 08-09-18

Vision

All students deserve appropriate resources to reach their full academic potential and graduate to be college and career ready.

Goals:

New and modernized formula

Increased and appropriate funding

Funding and program accountability

Our Proposal

Our Students Deserve:

- A new education funding formula that accounts for evolving demographic changes and that appropriately funds the needs of every Nevada student.
- Lawmakers who respect and reflect the will of taxpayers and voters by using new revenue sources, such as the Marijuana Tax and Room Tax, to increase public education funding rather than to fill budget holes in other areas.
- Increased funds that come with accountability, stability and resources to ensure a return on the investment in our students and their academic success.

Overview

Understanding approaches, processes, challenges of other states that have transitioned to modern K-12 funding formulas.

In the past - school funding formulas and funding levels were typically determined by incremental changes related to politics and historical expenditures, and several states are now focusing on how formulas can address the resources needed for students to achieve.

Approaches, Processes, and Challenges

Many states have used the advent of standards based education reforms and better research methods to use actual cost factors to modernize their funding formulas - using various approaches (or combinations)

Some popular approaches

- Successful schools
- Professional judgment
- Evidenced-based

To understand “adequacy” - the cost of educating students to meet the state/federal standards and requirements (to have the tools to succeed)

Some cost factors that can be considered

- Teachers needed for appropriate class sizes;
- Specialists needed for certain student populations;
- Special Education, ELL, or At-Risk students - and the services they need;
- Pre-k for high needs students;
- Instructional Support/Professional Development;
- GATE programs and services;
- Career and Technical Training;
- Social workers or counselors;
- Librarians;
- School supplies and technology; and
- Extracurricular, P.E., and other class offerings.
- Central services (varies based on district size)

What is needed to give students the opportunity to achieve? What do we value as a state?

Other states - highlighting important features

Illinois - A governor's commission examined how to create a more adequate and equitable funding model, inviting experts and community input to develop a new evidenced-based model formula. It includes a multi-year phase in of additional funds, focusing more funds on districts furthest from "adequacy target" and a **hold harmless** for all districts.

Maryland - A state commission examined the funding formula, current state standards, and funding levels, using a combination of PJ and successful schools approach to make recommendations. The commission's recommendations were adopted by the legislature - with a multi-year phase-in of new dollars.

Maine - The formula is a "cost-driven" approach. It estimates the cost of quality educational services necessary for students to achieve the state's education standards, the "Maine Learning Results." The state department of education examines Maine schools, national research, and expert testimony to determine the level of per-pupil funding necessary.

More states

Massachusetts - A 1991 Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education report was impetus for a new funding formula based on actual cost. Formula and updates including an integrated accountability system to ensure funds used in a way that reflects priorities in funding formula. Holistic approach also included focus on efficiencies within the system.

Missouri - Funds based on a “State Adequacy Target,” the baseline amount given to each district per student, using successful schools as a base model. It’s a measure of the average spending per student in schools that meet state standards. It is designed to be recalculated every other year, to keep up with changes.

Closer to home...

Washington - Uses cost-based funding formula based on prototypical school and district level expenses - taking into account costs of staffing (teachers, support staff, librarians, counselors, nurses, etc), appropriate class sizes, transportation, technology, ELL/FRL/GATE programs, and other resources.

Colorado - Districts currently engaged in a process of developing and advocating for a new funding formula.

New Mexico - With recent *Martinez* court decision, it will also need to address the costs of providing its students a “sufficient education,” particularly its special populations, and address its arbitrary and inadequate funding model

Challenges as states transition

No phase-in for additional funding

Striking balance between local control and using funds in ways agreed upon in the formula (accountability tied to student achievement)

No long term vision, giving it time to work

Progress is lost with changing political tides

Nevada: On the right track

Positive steps

District Equity - Recognition that rural districts don't have fiscal capacity, so state steps in to equalize funding and take into account geography and transportation challenges of those counties (this is often the most major hurdle in other states)

Beginning to recognize unique needs of special populations (ELL, FRL, GATE, and SPED)

K-12 Task Force - excellent process with good recommendations on weighted funding

Restricted use programs - ZOOM, Victory, SB 178

Beginning to address issue of teacher average vs. actual salaries

NDE appears to be using SB 178 working group to begin thinking about a cost-based approach to funding schools

Where we can improve

Fund education based on cost of providing resources necessary for all students to succeed (cost-based formula)

Put into action prior studies and work done by creating law and policy

Developing a strong vision and targets - and staying the course (versus looking for quick fixes/band aids)

Recognizing funding is a statewide issue (addressing base funding)

But we have the tools and experience

Using the K-12 Task Force as a model - excellent community involvement, technical advisory committee, inviting experts

Engaged community ready for change

We have additional tax revenue (marijuana and IP1 room tax) as a step towards adequate funding

Thank You

We look forward to working with the committee and the NV Department of Education to support efforts to support our students.

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