

Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State of Maryland

Progress Report: April, 2015

Study Components

High Performing Schools Case Studies (Section 3.2.1):

- Conducted final site visit at final Case Study school.
- Case reports for all sites are being drafted, reviewed and finalized.

Evidence-Based Study (Section 3.2.1):

- An initial draft of the Evidence-Based report with core recommendations is nearly completed.
- Initial work has started on developing the EB simulation model in Excel.
- Leading Edge Solutions is working to identify the availability of community college facilities located in four regions of the state to hold evidence-based panel sessions during the week of June 22-26.

Professional Judgment Study (Section 3.2.1):

- Work on the literature review on effective practices and strategies to share with the PJ panels is continuing.
- APA has started work on developing the PJ panel materials, including a summary of state standards, agendas and instructions.

Successful Schools Study (Section 3.2.1):

- APA is continuing work on the data collection tool used for gathering data on school level expenditures for the study. An initial draft is nearing completion.
- APA is working on adjusting the successful schools selection criteria to reduce the total number of schools selected to 80 or 90 schools.

School Size Study (Section 3.2.2):

- Continued work on the literature review on creating small school models and costs of small schools.
- Additional research is being conducted on identifying best practices for public input into school size decisions.
- Continued work on collecting data on school climate and extra-curricular participation. We have developed a short interview protocol for use with several statewide organizations involved in extracurricular activities.
- Continued work on the data preparation and analysis of the school climate data components that are currently available.
- Continued developing a model for distributing school operating support expenditures on a per square foot basis.
- We have identified three case study districts and completed a draft of an interview protocol.

- Work has started on an empirical analysis of the relationship between school size and 1) student achievement and 2) operating costs.

Evaluate Potential Impact of Community Eligibility Provision on State Aid Formulas

(3.2.3.1.1):

- Continued work on identifying proxies for low-income students used in other states' school finance formulas.
- Continued to look at the strategies used by other states to implement and address issues related to CEP.
- Continued research on the MSDE protocols used to implement CEP.
- Continued building a county-by-county dataset of alternative poverty measures.
- Continued analyses to fine tune estimates of funding dislocation caused by adopting different poverty proxies.
- Began to investigate the potential effects of varying match rates of poverty certification data for direct certification.
- Began work on drafting the final report.

Evaluation of Prekindergarten Services (3.2.3.2)

- Continued to assess the available program and financial data.
- Continued work on developing state-by-state comparisons, including examining other states' QRIS systems, ECE systems, enrollment, and funding.
- Held a conference call with MSDE's Assistant Superintendent for Early Childhood Development and staff to gather additional information about the goals of the study and to gain a better understanding of the early childhood data collected by the state.
- Began analyzing EXCELS data by county.

Study of Increasing and Declining Enrollment (3.2.3.4):

- Continued the analysis of transportation costs and operations.
 - Continued research on Maryland's transportation formula.
 - Continued trend analyses of transportation components (buses, students, mileages).
- Continued use of a Geographic Information System for analysis and development of presentation materials.
- Continued review of state subsidy calculations, history of policy changes, and enrollment data needed for subsidies.
- Drafted an interview protocol for phone interviews with four school district transportation contacts. This will be sent to MSDE for review.
- Examined district websites to assess what types of relevant information may be available.

Equity and Local Wealth Measures (3.2.3.3):

- Continued work on integrating additional data for FY 2012-2013 into the equity analysis.
- Continued work on the initial outline of the issues involved in the wealth measures study.
- Began a review of other states' definition of wealth for school funding purposes and real property assessment policies.

Evaluation of the Maryland Geographical Cost of Education Index (Section 3.2.3.6):

- Continue to identify and collect data for the computation of the current GCEI and potential alternatives.
- Received some key data for recalculating the state's current GCEI if necessary.

Upcoming Deliverables

June 30, 2015

Final Report - School Size Study

Final Report - Proxy for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Final Report - Evaluation of the Impact of Increasing and Declining Enrollment

Interim Report - Adequacy Cost Study – Methodology and Progress to Date

Interim Report - Impact of Concentrations of Poverty, Literature Review

September 30, 2015

Final Report – Prekindergarten Services and Funding

Final Report – Evaluation of the Wealth Calculation

Preliminary Report – Review of the Maryland Geographic Cost of Education Index