

Reallocation of Resources to Meet the No Child Left Behind Act Requirements

Extensive research has shown educators that schools that succeed in accomplishing their mission to teach all children share certain characteristics. Four of these attributes seem particularly relevant when discussing resource reallocation: strong leadership, an academic focus, high quality teaching staff, and coherence of approach (Walters, 2001, p. 4).

Introduction

The issue of resource allocation in most school districts is challenging and complex because of competing needs and scarce resources (Burrup, Brimley, & Garfield, 1993; Pan, Rudo, Scheneider, & Smith-Hansen, 2003). This is worsened by the spiraling costs of providing public education, as opposed to the decline in fraternal and state budgets to finance education. One would expect that with the implementation of the federally mandated *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001), enough funding would have been allocated to states by the federal government to implement the requirements of this groundbreaking legislation. One would have expected that state departments of education would have revised their funding formulas to schools, allocated more money for professional development, and developed alternative benchmark assessments. States generally are always in a dilemma of how to fund education in light of

declining federal and state funding (Burrup et al., 1993). Reallocation of resources certainly could create efficiencies and reduce duplication of effort (Walters, 2001). It is against this backdrop that the Center for Policy Studies, Education Research, and Community Development in the College of Education at Idaho State University conducted a telephone survey with the state departments of education throughout the United States. The goal was to determine if policies had been put into place which would ensure reallocation of resources to meet the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

During the survey, state education departments were asked the following questions:

1. Has your state department revised its funding to schools as a result of No Child Left Behind?
2. Has money been allocated for professional development as a result of the No Child Left Behind?

3. Has money been allocated to school districts for alternative benchmark assessments?

The results of the survey indicated that generally, there are no signs of policy revision in resource allocation to satisfy the demands of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLBA).

Results of the Survey of State Departments of Education

1. Sixty-six percent of states did not respond to the reallocation of resources survey.
2. Twenty-four percent of states indicated that they are not currently revising funding to meet the reforms of the NCLBA.
3. Only ten percent of states indicated that they are currently in the process of revising funding.
4. Twenty percent of states indicated they are not currently revising funding for professional development.
5. Fourteen percent of states indicated they are currently revising funding for professional development.
6. Twenty percent of states indicated they are not revising funding for alternative benchmark assessment.
7. Only fourteen percent of states indicated they are currently revising funding for alternative benchmark assessments.
8. Most responding state departments stated that they have not revised their funding formulas to meet the reforms of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and continue to use allocated Title I funds.

The following is a synopsis of information attained during telephone conver-

sations with staff members within a particular state department of education.

1. States, such as New York, have aligned resources in light of limited funding from the federal government to meet the mammoth task of the NCLBA.
2. Money for professional development comes from the 1% of federal Title II funds set aside in the following states: Alaska, Colorado, Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, Michigan, New Mexico New York, West Virginia, and Vermont.
3. North Carolina reported increased activity in professional development programs, but these are still supported with federal Title II funds.
4. The Director of the Office of Innovative Support within the Mississippi Department of Education reported:
 - a. They have always had accountability measures in place such as the *Mississippi Adequate Educational Program* and equity funding formulas.
 - b. They are rated sixth in the nation by the *Princeton Review* because of their accountability workbook on the *No Child Left Behind Act*.
 - c. The school districts are compelled to provide professional development on a scientific-based research component in reading and math.
 - d. The Middle Grade Professional Institute offers courses to teachers through distance education.
 - e. Follow-up sessions are always provided for any workshop, course, or conference offered.

- f. The Mississippi Curriculum Framework is the guiding blueprint for alternative benchmark assessments.
 - g. The Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) and Subject Area Test Program (SATP) are used in grades 2-8. Subject area tests include biology, English, and US history.
5. Generally states are confident that their instruments already meet the provisions of the NCLBA and are not developing alternative benchmark assessments, but are using instruments established prior to NCLBA. For example, Illinois uses existing state assessments and there are no plans for developing alternative assessments.
 6. Missouri, using federal grant funding, is in the process of developing alternative assessment instruments for grades 3-8. An instrument does not exist for every level.
 7. The State of Louisiana is adjusting established instruments to meet the provisions of the NCLBA.
 8. The District of Columbia Education Department stated categorically that it has revised its funding, which includes setting aside 60% funds for professional development, and is currently working on alternative assessments.
 9. The Delaware State Department of Education reported that while no funding formulas have been changed as a result of the NCLBA, funds have been appropriated for non-Title I Schools, which are under improvement or on *academic watch*, to provide technical assistance in preparing their school improvement plans. About \$7-8

million is allocated to the Local Education Agencies (LEA) for professional development either through direct allocation or services provided directly to the LEA. No additional funding has been allocated to school districts for the development of alternative benchmark assessments since this service is directly provided to districts by the department

Views of the National Council of State Legislators and Council of Chief State School Officers were sought on the issue, but there were no responses from either organization.

A longitudinal study begun in 2001 (Pan et al., 2003) investigated the relationship between resource allocation and student performance. The study was three-pronged. It examined (a) district level patterns of resource allocation, (b) district and school resource practices, and (c) barriers and challenges that affect student performance. The study revealed the following findings:

1. High-performing schools indicated different resource patterns in specific fiscal and staffing categories than lower-performing districts. High-performing districts spent more on instruction as a share of current expenditures, while low-performing districts spent more on instruction per pupil and employed more teachers per 1,000 students.
2. Improving districts demonstrated different resource allocation patterns in specific fiscal and staffing categories than districts of similar size. Improving school districts spent more on instruction and related areas.

3. Improving “districts that aligned general reform efforts with creative and effective use of the application of monetary, staff, time, and parent/community resources demonstrated how resources support student achievement performance” (Pan et al., 2003, p. 3).
4. Resource allocation generally involved trade-offs among competing needs and this often led to inequalities.

This survey validates the assumption made by Burrup et al. (1993), that the ability of the fifty states to fund education varies from state to state as measured by the amount each state spends per child and also the variations in the taxation formulas.

Results of Survey of State School Finance Officers

Because of the low response rate to the previous survey, it was determined that a survey of financial officers for each of the various state departments of education should be conducted. Both emails and follow-up attempts with telephoning were completed.

Ninety percent of financial offices from the state departments of education did not respond

Question 1

Has your state revised its funding to schools or districts as a result of the No Child Left behind Act?

- Ten percent (5 school finance directors) reported that they have not revised their funding formulas to schools.

Question 2

Has money been reallocated for professional development?

- Of the 10% responding, 40% of financial officers reported increased professional development activities by using funds related to NCLBA. The other 60% percent have not allocated any additional funding for professional development.

Question 3

Has money been allocated for alternative benchmark assessments as a result of NCLBA?

- All states that responded (10%) indicated that there was no money set aside for alternative benchmark assessments to accommodate NCLBA.

The general indication is that states feel the assessment systems and professional development already in place meet the demands of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The money being used for professional growth is that which is related to the provisions of the Act.

Pan et al. (2003) advised that decision-makers and policy-makers should work collaboratively to consider the reallocation and reapplication of fiscal and non-fiscal resources. Since their study established a relationship between resource allocation and student performance, they advised that school districts should have a resource allocation strategy that is based on identified needs. Districts should use the services of accountants and financial analysts to “better understand the limits and flexibility of fund sources, examine

information on spending patterns, determine whether spending supports district priorities, and reallocate funds as needs arise from year to year or within a school year” (Pan et al. 2003, p. 5).

Funds are not the sole resources for implementing school reform. Walter (2001) advised school district leaders to look at other resources such as time, professional staff development, staff qualifications, partnerships, information management, energy, and focus. Grant-writing skills are an avenue that educational leaders could develop in order to obtain money outside the traditional sources of funding (Pan et al., 2003). Research shows that resource allocation is related to student achievement (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; Walters, 2001).

Schools that are successful in teaching all children amply demonstrated four attributes. These are strong leadership, an academic focus, high-quality teaching staff, and coherence of approach (Walters, 2001). He suggested that professionalism, growth, and maintenance are critical assets that should be used through resource allocation to realize student achievement management. School districts may need to consider aligning staffing patterns with priorities.

The Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (2003) stated that the key is to find additional financial resources in these difficult times. They suggested considering new uses of Title I funds, or shifting resources to help teachers learn to use new curricula or instructional strategies. Resources for professional development should be set aside in order to fully address the

nuances of the school reform. Lezotte and Jacoby (1992) emphasized the need for developing district and school plans to address school reform. These plans should clearly articulate the relationship among curriculum, assessment, and student learning (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1992; Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, 2003).

A case study on teaching literacy conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2000) pointed out that in order to implement reform, funding has to be specifically set aside and professional development is necessary. Accountability measures must also be in place to measure the success of the reform. For example, students took two standardized tests to measure if achievement was indeed improving. Additionally funding was set aside for professional and technical consulting services.

The National Accelerated Schools, the brainchild of Dr Levine, began at Stanford University in 1986 is a living proof that if human and financial resources are pooled together, educational reform can make a great impact. Visit <http://www.acceleratedschools.net/> for more details. Many such centers were opened in a number of colleges of education at a number of universities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the general policy trend, in those states that responded to the surveys, indicated that there is no revision of funding (Title I). Schools that are funding professional development programs and alternative assessments are doing it from the allocated federal funds (Title II). Additionally, the overall indi-

cation is that states are not revising funding for any type of alternative assessment process.

For the *No Child Left Behind Act* to be successful, sufficient financial resources should be applied to professional development translating into improved student achievement. The cost of providing high-quality education is not the burden of the federal government alone. States and their school districts must come up with alternatives to adequately and equitably finance education. Districts should develop grant-writing skills so that funding can be acquired from other entities. Federal funds alone are not sufficient for such a Herculean task. School financing is not predictable and states have to find alternative sources of funding to create equity in education (Burrup et al, 1993). Federally mandated programs such as the *No Child Left Behind Act* pose a serious challenge to state governors and educators, particularly amidst scarce financial resources and diminishing local control.

The individual responses of each state to the Survey of State Departments of Education can be found in Table 1 and 2 in the full text of the research brief at <http://icee.isu.edu/publications>.

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Idaho State University
College of Education
Intermountain Center for Education
Effectiveness
Dr. E. E. “Gene” Davis
Director

Charles R. Zimmerly, MPA, Ed.D.
*Coordinator for the Center for Policy
Studies, Education Research, and
Community Development
College of Education
Idaho State University*

Precious Mudiwa
*Graduate Assistant
Center for Policy Studies, Education
Research, and Community Development
College of Education
Idaho State University*

*The Center for Policy Studies, Education
Research, and Community Development
Is a Consortium Service Idaho,
Montana, Utah, and Wyoming*

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Intermountain Center for
Education Effectiveness
College of Education
Idaho State University
Campus Box 8019
Pocatello, Idaho 83209

Phone: (208) 282-3202
Fax: (208) 282-2244

Website: <http://icee.isu.edu>