



# Equity Index

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A way to show the real value of school funding

Who is the  
Alliance  
For Quality  
Education  
And what we fight  
for...

# A VISION FOR EDUCATION JUSTICE



**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION** New York State public schools should offer a variety of classes, curricula, projects, books and resources that are grounded in the rich diversity of the New York State student population. Students should be learning about the histories and cultures of African, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern and Native heritage people in New York schools, and the intersections with gender, LGBTQIA and religious diversity. Every child should have access to anti-racism and anti-bias education.



**POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE** All students deserve a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. Educators need training on a variety of topics, including how to identify bullying; and school employees' duties concerning the reporting, investigation, and documenting of alleged incidents of harassment. We support increased investment in restorative justice practices as an effective alternative to punitive responses to wrongdoing. School-based restorative justice offers a more sustainable, equitable, and respectful alternative to dealing with misbehavior, from minor infractions to violence. It can also be used as a proactive strategy to create a culture of connectivity and care where all members of the school community can thrive.



**INCREASE TEACHER DIVERSITY** When students have teachers of the same race as them, they report feeling more cared for, more interested in their schoolwork and more confident in their teachers' abilities to communicate with them. They are also more likely to graduate high school and have higher college aspirations. This is why we must actively recruit and support teachers of different races and cultural backgrounds.



**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS** We want strong schools with curricula that are engaging, relevant and rigorous; support high-quality teaching and not high stakes testing; social, emotional, health and mental health services as well as wraparound supports for every child; student-centered school climate, and transformative parent and community engagement.



**SUPPORT CHILDCARE & PRE-K** New York needs to fulfill its promise to provide full-day Pre-K for all 4- and 3-year-olds across the state. Instead of decreasing child care subsidies, we should be increasing support for children and families. High quality early childhood education creates long terms benefits for children, families and community. For every \$1 invested in early learning, taxpayers save \$7-\$11 in future cost. We need to invest in our youngest New Yorkers.

# New York ESSA plan requires:

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**Every school district and building to show its per pupil spending**

It should also show the EQUITY per pupil spending so parents, legislators, community members, voters, students, etc. have an accurate picture of a school's ability to meet all the standards we as a state have set.

# Let's Define Equity

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“Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential (fairness) and that all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills (inclusion). In these education systems, the vast majority of students have the opportunity to attain high level skills, regardless of their own personal and socio-economic circumstances.”

OECD (2012), Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en>

# What is the Equity Index

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Equity Index:

- Reflects an accurate student count based on student need.
- Is based on the current need weightings within the Foundation Aid Formula
- Illustrates the relationship between funding levels and student need.

Index: links all the factors of the student need together to show the real value of school funding.

# Why we started this work

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- The Every Student Succeeds Act affords New York an opportunity to discuss equity in a way that only lawsuits allowed us to do before.
- Participation in the ESSA Think Tank showed that the lack of resources is a barrier to meeting standards
- The metrics the Regents decided to use in our ESSA plan, are all dependent upon resources

# Research shows that more resources are necessary to educate

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- Students in poverty
- English Language Learners
- Students with Disabilities
- At risk students

<http://edlawcenter.org/research/school-funding-data.html#FWP>

<https://schoolfinance101.wordpress.com/>

# New York State Law agrees

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The basic operating aid formula, also known as Foundation Aid, includes weightings accounting for student need

We can and should have the conversation of whether the weightings in the Foundation Aid formula are adequate or whether they need adjustments. But the fundamental problem with the formula is that **IT HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY FUNDED.**

# The Equity Index is based on Current Law

Foundation Aid Formula is needs-based and takes into consideration regional cost.

Was created as a statewide remedy to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit in 2007.

Was only funded for 2 years

## NEEDS OF STUDENTS

EVERY STUDENT COUNTS AS:

-  **ONE STUDENT**
-  **SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT (+1.41)**
-  **STUDENT LIVING IN POVERTY (+0.65)**
-  **STUDENT RECEIVING FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH (+0.65)**
-  **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (+0.5)**

# The governor has said it many times:

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“Education is one of the most important civil rights issues of today. There are two different education systems in the state, not public and private, but one system for the rich and one system for the poor.”

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 via Twitter

<https://twitter.com/nygovcuomo/status/977211579258241024?s=21>

But current funding levels...

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...are far from what is necessary.

Accounting for need in school funding and providing ADEQUATE sums, will begin closing the spending gap and the opportunity gap.

# There is new research that says it best

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Summarized by David Kirp, professor at UC Berkeley and author, in this piece published last week in the LA Times.

“Money matters in education, as long as you spend it at the right time and on the right students”

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kirp-money-in-education-20180322-story.html>

# Here's how the Index works

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- School Equity Pupil Count = (Total School Enrollment + (School FRPL Count x .65) + (School Census Count x .65) + (ELL Count x .5) + (School Students with Disabilities Count x 1.41) + School Sparsity Count) x Regional Cost Index

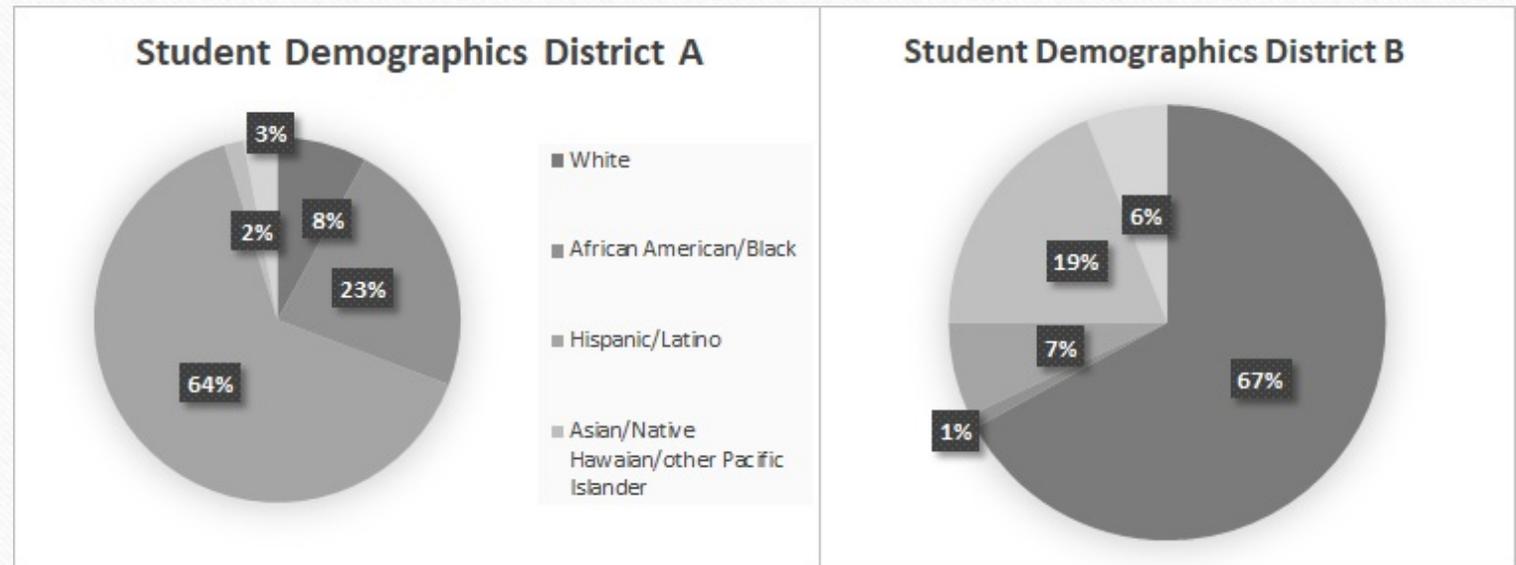
- THEN:

School Equity Spending = School Level Total Spending / School Equity Pupil Count

# The Equity Index is Important

Because it will lead to a better assessment on the equity indicators the state is using under ESSA

For example:



# District A and B

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	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	English Language Learners	Graduation Rate	Revenue from local property taxes
District A	79%	19%	11%	72%	42%
District B	0	11%	1%	99%	92%

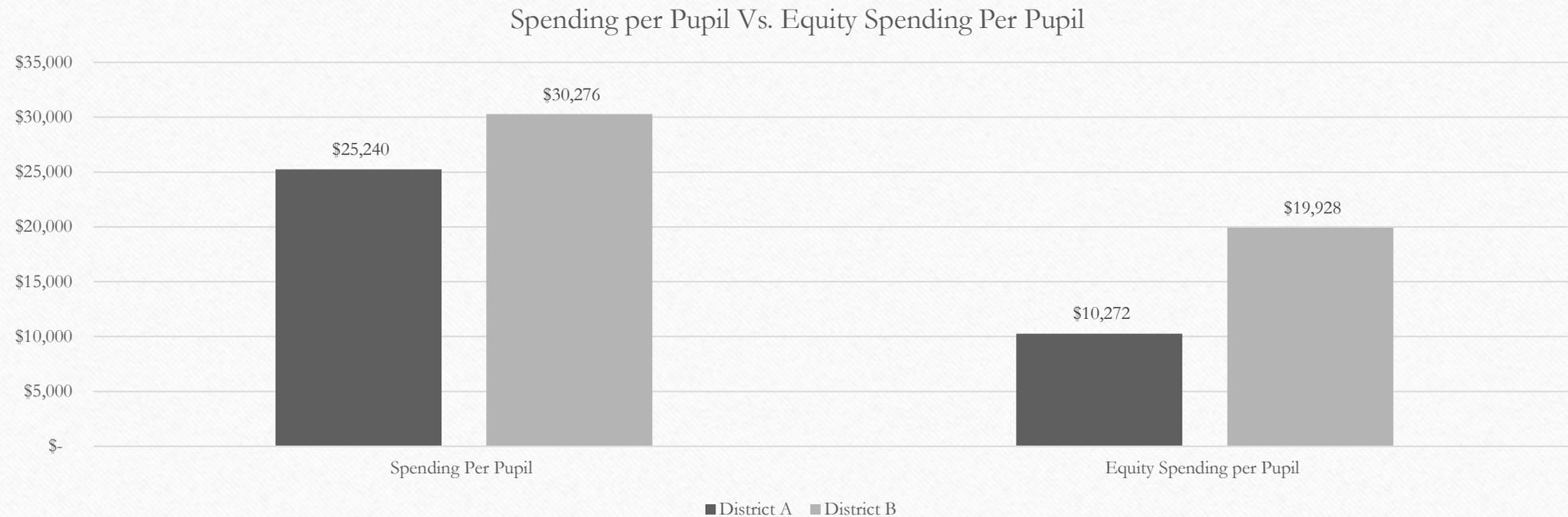
# District A and B

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- District A is a much more dependent on state aid than District B.
- Under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, District A is owed \$14 million, whereas District B is not owed anything
- District A also has a much needier student body
- When the Equity Index is applied to per pupil spending at district and school level a clearer picture is painted about District A's and B's resource capacity to meet the standards and requirements set by the state.

# District A and District B:

## This is the tale of the two education systems



# So, we should ask ourselves

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- Are districts such as District A, who are severely underfunded by the state, able to meet the standard that ESSA sets for college, career and civic readiness?

The ESSA plan specifies that school quality and student success will be measured through the availability of advanced courses and student success in them. The Equity Index will show us the level of resources available to schools when student need is accounted for- whether schools have an adequate resources to teach those courses and material, training in latest methods, using culturally responsive methods.

The same applies to all the other pillars of  
ESSA, in addition to  
College, Career and Civic Readiness

- School climate
- Chronic absenteeism and Suspensions
- Graduation Rate

# NYS must define what adequacy is and what programs must be present in each school

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The Board of Regents has the authority and the ability to define what adequacy means and what programming must look like, what every school must have to provide meet state standards and to provide the “sound, basic education” our constitution requires.

The Equity Index will help the public understand whether or not schools have adequate and necessary resources.

# The Equity Index

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Will show parents, legislators, community members, taxpayers, students, etc. whether schools have the financial ability to meet state standards.

The reporting on spending per pupil that districts and schools must do under ESSA should also include the Equity spending per pupil.

Comments? Feedback? Questions?

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