

POLICY 15:

Elementary and Secondary Education

Challenges for States. States across the country face major challenges in improving the quality of public education. Historically, locally elected or appointed school boards have driven the management of public schools. However, the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) tied federal funding to new quality requirements, accountability measures, and student testing. NCLB requires governors and state legislators to play a greater role in driving educational improvements, and to focus on helping local schools meet the new accountability standards. To further complicate matters, since 2000, 36 states faced lawsuits concerning school finance equity.⁷⁵ Litigation over funding equity has dominated state discussions in recent years, but now states are moving toward a discussion of funding and education adequacy, i.e., whether funding levels, school practices and early education practices sufficiently support student achievement.⁷⁶

Key State Policy Measures. States can begin improving the effectiveness and equality of K-12 public education by enhancing teacher quality, and by ensuring that resources are distributed equitably and adequately.

15.1 Teacher quality standards. Substantial research evidence indicates that students with highly qualified teachers make the best academic progress, without regard to socioeconomic factors, and that an undergraduate major in the subject matter taught can have a greater effect on teacher quality and student performance than teacher certification.¹⁰⁶ New federal standards require all new teachers to pass a competency test or have a college major in the subject taught. For veteran teachers, however, states have flexibility to define standards for teacher quality. To set standards for veteran teachers to achieve “highly qualified teacher” status, states have the option of employing a system referred to as a High Objective Uniform State System of Evaluation (HOUSSE). According to reviews by independent researchers and the U.S. Department of Education, however, the HOUSSE standards developed by states generally fall short of the standards required to promote highly qualified teachers, and therefore should be phased out.¹⁰⁷

Change in 2007: Changes in the phase-out of HOUSSE standards are reflected in the tables on the following pages.

15.2 Funding equity among districts. As recently as 2002, research shows that most states have a significant funding gap between students in high-income districts who receive more education funding than students in low-income districts.⁷⁷ Financial resources are essential to support the professional development of teachers, lower the pupil-teacher ratio, and support other education investments that research shows are essential for improving educational performance, particularly in low-wage and minority communities.⁷⁸ State policy determines the degree of funding equity among districts through the interaction of three major mechanisms: state funding formulas, categorical grants and limits on property taxes as a source of local income for school districts.⁷⁹ The interaction of these three factors determines the equity of a state’s school finance system, which can be measured by an “equity index.” This index measures the degree to which state policies perpetuate inequitable funding relative to a standard of equity and relative to other states. A higher equity index indicates greater funding equity between districts.

No data update is available for this measure.

15.3 Funding adequacy. In addition to equity, the adequacy of funding is an essential consideration for states seeking to improve the effectiveness of public schools. Research suggests that a key element of promoting education adequacy is to determine a foundation level of funding necessary to achieve a performance standard specified by the state, and for the state to assume responsibility for providing that funding level.⁸⁰ In general, this approach requires that states provide a greater proportion of school funding, and localities provide a smaller portion.

Changes in 2004-05: From 2003-04 to 2004-05, the percentage of total school funding provided by the state declined for all states except for Alabama, in which this percentage remained constant, and the following states, in which the percentage increased:

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Alaska | Kansas | New Mexico |
| Arizona | Massachusetts | Pennsylvania |
| Arkansas | Minnesota | Tennessee |
| California | Montana | Vermont |
| Connecticut | New Jersey | Virginia |

15.4 Funding equity for students in public charter schools. Updated state policy data is unavailable for this measure.

Elementary and Secondary Education Policy Measures

Measure 15.1: Teacher Quality Standards

At what stage is the state phase-out of alternate quality standards for veteran teachers? *Table reflects policy as of June 2007.*

| | |
|--|---|
| Complete | Ala., Ariz., Colo., Fla., Ga., La., Maine, Mass., Mich., Minn., N.J., N.M., N.C., N.D., Okla., S.D., Utah, Wis., Wyo. |
| In process | Alaska, Ark., Conn., Del., Idaho, Iowa, Kan., Ky., Nev., N.Y., Ohio, Ore., Pa., Vt., Wash., W.Va. |
| Continuing to use alternate standards | Calif., Md., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., N.H., S.C., Tenn., Texas, Va. |
| No plan to phase out alternate standards | D.C., Hawaii, Ill., Ind., R.I. |

Measure 15.2: Funding Equity Among Districts

To what extent do state school financing policies provide funding equity among school districts? (The index scores below measure the level of equity, with a higher score indicating a greater degree of equity.)* *Table reflects policy as of 2003.*

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 90 or above | Nev. |
| 80 to 89 | Ark., Calif., Del., Fla., Ind., Iowa, La., Minn., N.M., Okla., Utah, W.Va., Wis. |
| 70 to 79 | Ala., Colo., Conn., Ga., Kan., Ky., Maine, Md., Mass., Mich., Miss., Mo., Neb., N.J., N.C., N.Y., Ohio, Ore., Pa., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Texas, Wash., Wyo. |
| Below 70 | Alaska, Ariz., Idaho, Ill., Mont., N.D., N.H., R.I., Va., Vt. |

*The District of Columbia does not have a state revenue source and therefore it does not receive a grade for this measure. The District of Columbia is a single-district jurisdiction.

*Hawaii is a single-district state, and therefore it is not appropriate to measure district-level equity.

Measure 15.3: Funding Adequacy

What share of total funding for school districts is provided by the state?

Table reflects policy as of 2004-05.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Above 60% | Del., Mich., Minn., N.M., N.C., Vt., Wash., W.Va. |
| 50 to 59.9% | Ala., Alaska, Ark., Calif., Idaho, Kan., Ky., Miss., Okla., Utah, Wis., Wyo. |
| 40 to 49.9% | Ariz., Colo., Fla., Ga., Ind., Iowa, La., Maine, Mass., Mont., N.J., N.Y., Ohio, Ore., S.C., Tenn., Va. |
| 25 to 39.9% | Conn., Ill., Md., Mo., Neb., Nev., N.D., N.H., Pa., R.I., S.D., Texas |

*The District of Columbia does not have a state revenue source and therefore it does not receive a grade for this measure. The District of Columbia is a single-district jurisdiction.

Measure 15.4: Funding Equity for Students in Public Charter Schools

Updated state policy data is unavailable for this measure.

Selected Elementary and Secondary Education Policies

| STATE | 15.1 | | 15.2 | | 15.3 |
|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--|
| | PHASE-OUT OF ALTERNATE STANDARDS FOR VETERAN TEACHERS | | FUNDING EQUITY AMONG DISTRICTS | INDEX SCORE | PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICT REVENUE PROVIDED BY STATE |
| Alabama | Complete | 76 | 78 | 55.5% | 55.5% |
| Alaska | Phaseout in Process | 77 | 67 | 56.7% | ▲57% |
| Arizona | Complete | 75 | 69 | 47.7% | ▲47.8% |
| Arkansas | Phaseout in Process | 79 | 81 | 53.2% | ▲58.2% |
| California | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 78 | 81 | 55.5% | ▲59.2% |
| Colorado | Complete | 77 | 72 | 43.3% | ▼42.7% |
| Connecticut | Phaseout in Process | 81 | 76 | 36.3% | ▲38.2% |
| Delaware | Phaseout in Process | 83 | 81 | 61.9% | ▼61.8% |
| District of Columbia | No Plan to Phase Out Alternate Standards | N/A [a] | N/A [a] | N/A [a] | N/A [a] |
| Florida | Complete | 83 | 81 | 43.6% | ▼42.1% |
| Georgia | Complete | 73 | 75 | 45.9% | ▼43.9% |
| Hawaii | No Plan to Phase Out Alternate Standards | N/A [b] | N/A [b] | N/A [a] | N/A [a] |
| Idaho | Phaseout in Process | 65 | 59 | 58% | ▼57.4% |
| Illinois | No Plan to Phase Out Alternate Standards | 70 | 68 | 33.3% | ▼31.7% |
| Indiana | No Plan to Phase Out Alternate Standards | 75 | 80 | 50.9% | ▼47.2% |
| Iowa | Phaseout in Process | 90 | 89 | 45.8% | ▼45.7% |
| Kansas | Phaseout in Process | 83 | 78 | 51% | ▲54.4% |
| Kentucky | Phaseout in Process | 76 | 76 | 57.2% | ▼56.6% |
| Louisiana | Complete | 85 | 83 | 48.7% | ▼47.5% |
| Maine | Complete | 72 | 70 | 42.2% | ▼40.9% |
| Maryland | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 72 | 72 | 38.1% | ▼37.7% |
| Massachusetts | Complete | 70 | 72 | 40.4% | ▲42.7% |
| Michigan | Complete | 72 | 71 | 61.8% | ▼60.1% |
| Minnesota | Complete | 83 | 83 | 69.5% | ▲69.6% |
| Mississippi | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 73 | 72 | 54.7% | ▼53.9% |
| Missouri | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 72 | 73 | 34.2% | ▼34.1% |
| Montana | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 65 | 62 | 44.6% | ▲45.1% |
| Nebraska | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 81 | 77 | 32.8% | ▼31.3% |
| Nevada | Phaseout in Process | 93 | 92 | 29.5% | ▼27.1% |
| New Hampshire | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 62 | 63 | 45.7% | ▼39.2% |
| New Jersey | Complete | 74 | 72 | 43.3% | ▲43.4% |
| New Mexico | Complete | 83 | 88 | 69.1% | ▲69.9% |
| New York | Phaseout in Process | 83 | 74 | 43.2% | ▼42.9% |
| North Carolina | Complete | 78 | 71 | 62.8% | ▼62.7% |
| North Dakota | Complete | 71 | 62 | 38.1% | ▼36.9% |
| Ohio | Phaseout in Process | 77 | 74 | 44.9% | ▼43.9% |
| Oklahoma | Complete | 82 | 80 | 54.3% | ▼53.3% |
| Oregon | Phaseout in Process | 80 | 72 | 51.9% | ▼48.8% |
| Pennsylvania | Phaseout in Process | 71 | 72 | 35.7% | ▲35.9% |
| Rhode Island | No Plan to Phase Out Alternate Standards | 77 | 66 | 41.1% | ▼38.6% |
| South Carolina | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 80 | 76 | 46% | ▼45.2% |
| South Dakota | Complete | 84 | 78 | 34.3% | ▼33.5% |
| Tennessee | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 72 | 73 | 42.8% | ▲43.1% |
| Texas | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 75 | 72 | 38.6% | ▼35.9% |
| Utah | Complete | 91 | 87 | 55.6% | ▼55% |
| Vermont | Phaseout in Process | 58 | 59 | 66.3% | ▲84.9% |
| Virginia | Continuing to Use Alternate Standards | 70 | 67 | 38.8% | ▲40.6% |
| Washington | Phaseout in Process | 76 | 74 | 61.2% | ▼60.7% |
| West Virginia | Phaseout in Process | 86 | 85 | 60.6% | ▼60.5% |
| Wisconsin | Complete | 82 | 82 | 52.2% | ▼50.7% |
| Wyoming | Complete | 82 | 79 | 52.2% | ▼51.7% |
| Year Data Collected | 2007 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 |

Data Source:

- 15.1** Kate Walsh, *State Teacher Policy Yearbook 2007: Progress on Teacher Quality*, Washington, D.C.: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2007.
- 15.2** Education Week. *Quality Counts at 10 – A Decade of Standards-Based Education*. Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education, January, 2006.
- 15.3** Unpublished data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, December, 2007.

Data Table Notes:

- a. Because the District of Columbia does not have a state revenue source, it did not receive a grade for equity. The District of Columbia is a single-district jurisdiction.
- b. Because Hawaii is a single-district state, it is not appropriate to measure district-level equity.