



The New York Adequacy Study: HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Jay G. Chambers (Director)
Dr. Thomas B. Parrish
Dr. Jesse D. Levin
American Institutes for Research

Dr. James R. Smith (Co-Director)
Dr. James W. Guthrie
Rich C. Seder
Management Analysis and Planning, Inc.

Dr. Lori Taylor
Texas A&M University

- **Study Question** – *What is the cost of providing all New York public school students a full opportunity to meet the Regents Learning Standards?*
- **Research Methods** – The professional judgment approach served as the methodological centerpiece for this study. The AIR/MAP research team selected highly qualified New York State educators to serve on a series of Professional Judgment Panels (PJPs) for the purpose of designing instructional programs necessary to achieve the desired results for children. These panels were then asked to specify the resources needed to deliver those programs. A widespread public engagement component was carried out at the beginning of the project to obtain public input and to help establish the appropriate goals for the PJPs to consider in their deliberations. The PJP participants themselves were selected from among the most successful schools and through a nomination process from professional organizations.
- **Overall Cost of Adequacy** – As of the 2001-02 school year, this study suggests that New York State would have needed to spend an additional \$6.21 to \$8.40 billion to ensure a “full opportunity to meet the Regents Learning Standards” to all students. This represents an increase of 20 to 26 percent in school spending spread across about 520 school districts not currently spending at “adequate” levels.¹ Using assumptions corresponding to the a mid-range of the cost estimates, New York State would have had to spend an additional \$7.20 billion in 2001-02 to bring all districts up to “adequate” spending levels. The total “adequacy” expenditure of \$38.91 billion represents an increase of 22.7 percent over the actual spending levels of \$31.71 billion in that same year.
- **Distribution Across Districts** – New York City Schools, enrolling approximately 37 percent of the state’s students, would require an additional \$4.46 billion in 2001-02 dollars, an increase of 39.1 percent. Districts with average and high “needs to resource capacity²,” accounting for 30.7 and 14.1 percent of the statewide enrollment, would require additional expenditures on the order of \$1.23 billion and \$1.00 billion, respectively. Districts in the four big urban cities outside of New York City (approximately 4.6 percent of state enrollment) would need an additional \$0.42 billion.
- **Overview of Instructional Program Design** – The instructional program designs developed by the PJPs added resources to reduce class sizes and add teaching specialists at all levels. This was especially true in the early grades to support improved reading and math programs. The panels also added resources for early education and extended day and summer school programs, especially for schools with higher proportions of students in poverty. Early education programs were included to help students prepare for school. The extended time programs were directed toward students currently unable to master the requisite skills during normal school hours. These programs were especially focused on children from economically disadvantaged families.
- **Patterns of cost differences** – Geographic variations in the costs of school personnel, the scale of district and school operations, and differences in pupil need (percent of students living in poverty, who are English language learners, or eligible for special education services) all play distinct roles in accounting for variations in the estimated cost of achieving adequacy. Analysis of the variations in the patterns of scale and need revealed that the five large urban districts tended to exhibit relatively high projected expenditures based on pupil needs, all else equal, and relatively lower projected expenditures associated with scale of operations. New York City and other districts in the New York metropolitan area tend to exhibit the highest costs of school personnel.

¹ These figures exclude spending on home-to-school transportation and school facilities.

² The “needs to resource capacity” (NRC) index is a technical measure used by the New York State Education Department to capture the relationship between a school district’s pupil needs and its locally taxable wealth.