Weighted Pupil Funding for California Schools

Margaret Weston
California’s school finance system is complex

Average district revenue of $8,832 per pupil, 2011–12

- Federal Categorical
- State Categorical
- Other Unrestricted
- Revenue Limits

Percent of total revenue

Restricted funds

Unrestricted funds

Proposition 98 funds

Proposition 98 funds
The governor has proposed a weighted pupil formula

- Consolidates most state aid into weighted pupil formula
- Differentiates base by grade level
- Provides supplemental weights
  - For grades K–3 and 9–12
  - For disadvantaged students
- Creates a “concentration factor” for districts with more than 50% disadvantaged students
The proposal provides a transparent allocation of state aid…

Estimated funding per pupil upon full implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School districts</th>
<th>$/pupil</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escondido</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fresno</td>
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<td>Los Angeles</td>
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<td>Palo Alto</td>
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<td>Redding</td>
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- Excluded funds
- Add-on
- Concentration
- Supplement
- Grade weight
- Base
...and directs future state aid to disadvantaged students

![Graph showing the relationship between percent of students participating in subsidized lunch program and $/ADA.](image)

- **WPF proposal**
- **WPF proposal and all excluded funds**
- **Current funding folded into WPF proposal**
It also meets many school finance reform principles

- Simpler, more transparent
- Recognizes important cost differences
- Provides more equitable distribution
  - Reduces variation among similar districts with similar students
But many questions lie ahead

- What is the “right” weight?
- What are other potential adjustments?
- What is the trade-off between base and weight?
- Is school spending adequate overall?
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Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.