From statehouse to schoolhouse: Education finance apportionment systems in the United States

Author
Deborah A. Verstegen, *Professor of Education, University of Nevada, Reno*
Robert C. Knoeppel, *Associate Professor, Clemson University*

Purpose
The purpose of this research is to investigate state finance policies for public elementary and secondary schools. This research was conducted to update an existing knowledge base apprise the field of current state finance policy.

The Article
Verstegen’s 50-state survey of finance apportionment systems demonstrated that states are financing schools using traditional finance plans, with adequacy emerging as a target for the state guarantee under foundation programs. Weighted student funding is used in most states to provide adjustments that tailor funding streams based on student needs and costs. Transportation is funded by all but a handful of states; capital outlay systems are piecemeal across the states.

What this Means for the Field
States continue to use funding policies developed in the past, but they are implementing weighted apportionment systems and other mechanisms that recognize the differential costs of students and districts. This research provides new knowledge to inform policymakers and practitioners who are considering changes to state finance policies and programs, or to those assessing their finance system and comparing it to other states across the nation. The data include a menu of options for state and identify emerging trends, but also raise a hose of questions. Key among issues to be considered is what constitutes best practice, the cost of a quality education, and how states can provide equitable and adequate opportunities for all children and youths to succeed in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

Citation

Contact
Dr. Deborah Verstegen: dav3e@unr.edu; 775-682-9095 or visit [www.unr.edu/education](http://www.unr.edu/education)