

Five Steps to Using Per Pupil Spending to Help your School

States are required to break down spending of local, state, and federal dollars for each school and calculate a “per pupil expenditure.” This is significant because the per pupil cost must include actual expenses instead of previously used averages. The intent is to gain an understanding of how resources are distributed across communities and within districts. The following document outlines five steps to leverage the per pupil spending to support your school and address resource gaps within your district in an effort to achieve equity whereby schools get the resources they need to maximize their potential.



1. Know When and Where the PPE Data will be Released.

States will be releasing the per pupil data no later than the 2019-2020 school year. Not every state will report the PPE data on the school report card, some have made it available on other websites and provide interactive tools to make comparisons between schools.

- Contact the state department of education and district leaders to determine when, where, and how the information will be released.
- Contact your state and district leaders to inquire about any trainings they’re offering on the release of the data.
- Ask state and district leaders what their plan is for handling any media requests about the release of information.

2. Understand your School’s Funding Costs.

There are multiple funding streams that impact a school’s operational costs and budget. It is important to know how much money your school spends, in its entirety, and how the PPE results are calculated.

- Review your school’s PPE results.
- Ask your district to disaggregate costs by category, in addition to funding source, for your school. For instance, inquire how much money is allocated towards salary, transportation, and instructional needs.
- Schedule a meeting or request the district leadership convene a group of principals in similar schools to compare spending and ascertain lessons learned.

3. Identify Gaps in Resource Allocation.

Funding is one, of many, resources that can support equity and school success. Students can be served in schools with high spending but be under-resourced in other important ways such

as access to a rigorous curriculum, teacher and leader expertise, and the ability for teachers to engage in training throughout the year.

- Where feasible, identify schools in your district with similar student populations.
- Compare these schools with yours and determine if their spending and outcomes are in line with your school's results. For instance, are there high performing schools that are spending less than your school or the district average?
- Identify opportunities that exist or barriers that are preventing you from achieving your outcomes and academic goals.
- Develop recommendations for how to remedy the resource gaps within your school.

4. *Build Principal Autonomy and Advocate Your Needs to District Leaders.*

While many decisions about funding and staffing are within the purview of district leaders, principals still have opportunities to leverage their resources and ask for support. Use the data to talk to district leaders about your schools needs and how to achieve your outcomes.

- Review your ability to impact staffing decisions within your school and determine what changes can be made, or proposed, to better fit the needs of your students.
- Schedule a meeting with your district leaders to review your school budget following the release of the PPE data.
- Ask to review the PPE results at the next school board, or district, meeting following the release of the PPE data. Request a formal part of the agenda to work with school board members on a plan to remedy any resource gaps within the district.

5. *Communicate with Parents, Faculty/Staff, and Engaged Community Leaders.*

The PPE data is required to be on the report card no later than the 2019-2020 school year. Parents and community members may have lots of questions about the discrepancies in funding and the absence of information can spread misinformation. It is important to communicate with parents and community leaders about the PPE results, in a productive manner, and include any important contextual information about your school.

- Work with district leaders to ensure that communications on PPE for your district and school with the public are in a format that is understandable including accessible language and visuals.
- Share the PPE results with the teachers and staff in your school well before the results are released.
- Include a paragraph about the PPE results in communication home to parents. Translate the publications into different languages as needed.
- Solicit input from parents and teachers about their recommendations to remedy any resource gaps.
- Meet with community and business leaders in your district to educate them about your school's PPE results and how they can support your efforts in meeting your student's needs.