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Regional Analysis

Module 4 Challenge

Data In The Classroom

This report aims to assist in the strategic decision-making of future budget and spending priorities. This in-depth analysis includes additional insights and suggested guidance for budgeting with an emphasis on improving student performance.

**The identified trends in data for Math and Reading at Charter and District High Schools in North Texas; Grades 9th-12th 2023-24, are as follows:**

* Regional Charter Schools have a significant lead in Math and Reading with an overall passing performance of %90 compared to the Districts %53 overall passing performance.
* All District Schools are large in size, whereas Charter School sizes range from large to small with 5 out of 8 being the majority, medium-sized schools.
* A rough estimate shows the District Schools’ Budget totaling $17 million in comparison to the Charter Schools’ Budget of $7 million.
* The District Total Number of Students is roughly 26,976, compared to the Charter Schools’ student count of 12,194.
* The District spent, on average, $654 per student, and Charter Schools spent, on average, $600 per student.

**Considerable (missing) data for future budget and spending priorities includes:**

* The Teacher to Student Ratio in the District and Charter Schools.
* The total number of Teachers and Staff in both the District and Charter Schools.
* The cost of educational programs, materials, transportation, staff & positions.
* Charts & Statistics from previous years and previously identified trends.
* The School Culture & Climate of the top-performing schools.
* Student/Teacher Demographics and Parent Involvement.

**What the data tells us…**

Something interesting we can take from the selected data is how it challenges the belief that top-performing schools are best in class because they have more funding and resources per student than lower performing schools. Here, we are given an insightful perspective on top-performing schools reaching their academic goals with a smaller budget and spending, on average, a little less per student compared to the District.

Let’s take a closer look at the correlation between school sizes and performance results.

From the data we see that the smaller Network of Charter Schools is significantly better performing than the large-scale Districts’ performance. In asking why, let’s consider some possibilities that can be drawn from this observation.

* Larger schools may have a higher Teacher to Student Ratio (unmanageable class sizes?)
* Larger schools may have poor School Culture and Climate (Perceptions)
* Larger schools may have lower Teacher/Staff Pay or Retention (work environment?)
* Smaller schools may have a balanced Teacher to Student Ratio (smaller class sizes)
* Smaller schools may have positive School Culture and Climate (what is working well?)
* Smaller schools may have better Teacher/Staff Pay or Retention (if so, why-Incentives?)

**Strategic Planning**

In creating a strategic plan geared at managing and improving student progress, let’s generate some hypotheses as to why students are performing the way they are. It is worth considering the Charter (Top-Performing) schools’ detailed reports of expenses on programs, educational materials etc.; used to achieve their academic goals. The importance of class size and teacher to student ratio should be prioritized, considering the negative impact large class sizes potentially have on the learning environment.

Referencing the Top-Performing Schools for what works - (School Culture, Climate, and Perception), how the budget is spent towards academic goals, and sustaining manageable class sizes along with teacher retention can be a solid approach to creating a strategic model for budgeting.

Below is a flexible list of suggestions for budgeting based on a variety of factors, aiming to allocate resources effectively for the educational needs of students and the improvement of their academic performance.

* Educational Programs: Teacher Support/Professional Development, Curriculum Development, Enrichment Programs & Tutoring, Educational Materials.
* Staff Costs: Competitive Salaries and Benefits for Teachers, Administrators, Additional Support Staff etc. (Attract and Retain Qualified Educators & Staff).
* Student Services: Counseling, Special Education, Health Services, Free Breakfast/Lunch, Tutoring, Transportation, and Enrichment Programs, Safety.
* Special Projects and Community Engagement: Parent Programs, Outreach Efforts, Campus Events, initiating data driven teacher teams to set, and strategize reachable goals for short- and long-term performance-based improvement.

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis in this report sheds light on significant disparities between Charter and District High Schools in North Texas, particularly in the realms of academic performance and budget allocations. Notably, Charter Schools exhibit a commendable lead in Math and Reading, achieving a higher overall passing performance with a smaller budget compared to District Schools. The data challenges the prevailing notion that increased funding directly correlates with positive academic outcomes. The data suggests that the size of educational institutions may play a pivotal role in performance, with smaller Charter School Networks outperforming their larger District counterparts.

As we start on strategic planning, it is imperative to consider the successful approaches demonstrated by Charter Schools, focusing on their allocation of resources, with an emphasis on teacher-to-student ratios, and sustained positive school culture. The proposed budgeting suggestions underscore the importance of prioritizing educational programs, staff costs, student services, and community engagement to foster an environment conducive to academic excellence.

Ultimately, this report serves as a valuable resource for informed decision-making in the future budgeting and spending priorities of regional schools. By drawing on the insights from the data and identifying the why and how for areas of improvement, we can work towards creating a plan that implements measurable outcomes for the success of our students.