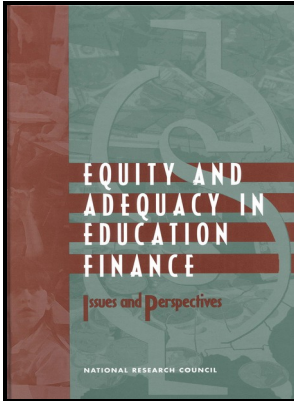


Existing disparities in public school finance and proposals for reform

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston - 5 The Politics of School Finance in the 1990s



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3 Equity ISpending on Schools

Wealth neutrality was no panacea for all the school finance ills perceived by critics of the existing system. During the 1970s, governors and legislatures created commissions and committees to assess equity and propose solutions. School financing formulas that maintain a local property tax component and do not cap wealthy districts' expenditures, redistribute their local revenues, or set the equalization standard at the highest level of funding in the state are open to growing inequities in per-pupil spending over time.

Arizona School Finance Data Shows Large Funding Disparities Between School Districts

Although legislative and executive branch officials generally determine how complex school finance issues are resolved, since about 1970 the framework for their policy making has increasingly been influenced by the rulings in court cases. Over the years, the first-generation immigrants from his home village have sent more than 60 students to top ten U. When equity is defined as providing each child with an equal educational opportunity regardless of that child's place of residence, socioeconomic status, race, nationality, native language, or disability, ensuring equity actually requires differences in per-pupil expenditures.

Meet the Asian

With large professional staffs, legislators and governors could commission their own research on education issues.

Mind the achievement gap: California's disparities in education, explained

While in the 1970s and 1980s courts had used the standards of equal revenue for equal tax effort or equal per-pupil expenditures to evaluate the constitutionality of school finance systems, in the 1990s courts have tended to use the standard of equal educational opportunity. Kirby ruling and the Texas Supreme Court's continued pressure on the legislature to devise a new constitutional system, reform never would have happened.

Mind the achievement gap: California's disparities in education, explained

Such solutions are proposed as cost-effective and efficient ways to improve the quality of education for everyone and are presented as alternatives to pouring more taxpayers' money into schools that do not work. While its findings about the role of schools were then and remain controversial and are increasingly being questioned by scholars evaluating new evidence with new analytical tools, uncertainty over the link between resource and outcome inequalities encouraged challengers of school finance systems to focus on the basic fairness of spending disparities and thus on school inputs rather than attempting to link spending levels to specific educational outcomes. The 1994 sweeping Republican victory in Congress was largely based on an anti-tax, anti-government platform.

Meet the Asian

REFORM AND SPENDING INEQUITIES In the 1970s, 28 states fundamentally changed their school finance structures, some under direct court order and most if not all of the rest influenced by the possibility that their existing systems could face constitutional challenge Odden and Picus, 1992:247; Carr and Fuhrman, 1999:143.

Mind the achievement gap: California's disparities in education, explained

On the other hand, opponents of greater concentration have countered that poor children wherever situated ought to be served and that widely allocating funds ensures a broad base of public support for the program. Until that point, revenues in Connecticut were distributed purely on a flat grant basis.

3 Equity ISpending on Schools

School finance reform emerged as an election issue in gubernatorial and legislative elections. At the same time, though, Kwok is happy to see that 13 Chinese Americans, including five recent immigrants from mainland China, are running for city council this year—a record number.

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