



# Student Based Allocation District Collaborative Meeting

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Citation should include: Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University, 2017.*

# Messaging research related to finance

## (Drawn from research by the Winston Group)

### General Landscape:

- Lots of distrust regarding school financial information.
- Teachers/parents know VERY LITTLE about how much is being spent and why.
- Average community member (and even teacher) thinks money is being “wasted” on things that don’t relate to student achievement
- Faculty and community members are hungry for more transparency.
- Teachers want a say in tradeoffs.
- They trust their principals for communication regarding \$



## Toward better messaging:

- All financial communication should reference students (and what XX will do to improve student outcomes).
- Parents/communities respond better to info from their principals. Email works best. Prefer short bullet points to communicate finance concepts.
- Teachers want to hear directly from their principals in a format that allows for them to weigh in.
- Communication should acknowledge local context to be trusted.
- Parents and teachers will accept cuts (or reallocations) if they understand the tradeoff: “By raising class sizes, we are able to pay for xx”.



**Don't say:**

**Do say:**

Leveraging dollars to do more for  
students

**Don't say:**

**Do say:**

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.

Reallocation

## Don't say:

X Reallocation

## Do say:

✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.

Efficiency

## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.

Do more with less



## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.

Link discussion to STUDENTS





## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS

Admit to the tradeoff: "XX vs YY"

## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.

Spending smarter

## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.
- ✓ Spending smarter

Acknowledge a cut as  
just that: a cut

## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less
- X Acknowledge a cut as just that: a cut.

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.
- ✓ Spending smarter

Communicate with \$ amounts

## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less
- X Acknowledge a cut as just that: a cut.

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.
- ✓ Spending smarter
- ✓ Communicate with \$ amounts

“We were told we had to..”



## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less
- X Acknowledge a cut as just that: a cut.
- X “We were told we had to...”

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.
- ✓ Spending smarter
- ✓ Communicate with \$ amounts

We have the flexibility to make tradeoffs that meet the needs of our students.



## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less
- X Acknowledge a cut as just that: a cut.
- X “We were told we had to...”

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.
- ✓ Spending smarter
- ✓ Communicate with \$ amounts
- ✓ We have the flexibility to make tradeoffs that meet the needs of our students.

Allocating for equity



## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less
- X Acknowledge a cut as just that: a cut.
- X “We were told we had to...”
- X Allocating for equity

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.
- ✓ Spending smarter
- ✓ Communicate with \$ amounts
- ✓ We have the flexibility to make tradeoffs that meet the needs of our students.

Allocating for fairness





## Don't say:

- X Reallocation
- X Efficiency
- X Do more with less
- X Acknowledge a cut as just that: a cut.
- X “We were told we had to...”
- X Allocating for equity

## Do say:

- ✓ Leveraging dollars to do more for students.
- ✓ Link discussion to STUDENTS
- ✓ Admit the tradeoff: “we could have done XX or YY and we chose YY because it helps us do ZZ for students.
- ✓ Spending smarter
- ✓ Communicate with \$ amounts
- ✓ We have the flexibility to make tradeoffs that meet the needs of our students.
- ✓ Allocating for fairness





## Building on the Research Base

### NEW on the horizon

Communicating about finances

Certificate in Education Finance

### Ongoing research projects

IES grant -

Betheny Gross & Ashley Jochim,

Center on Reinventing Public Education

AIR study – Drew Atchinson



## IES Grant

*How do school and district spending patterns change with weighted student funding and what's happening to equity and achievement, particularly for low-income and at-risk students?*

# We are excited about the research agenda

1. What portion and amount of funds are deployed in WSF districts for at-risk students (and to schools with higher proportions of at-risk students)?
2. How do WSF implementation features compare across districts, (including student weights, student types/characteristics for weights, %SBA, degree of school-level spending flexibility)?
3. How do allocations for the lowest-performing schools in WSF districts compare to those in matched districts using more traditional staffing-based allocation models?
4. How does implementing WSF change patterns in within-district spending equity after the introduction of WSF in districts?
5. How do achievement patterns (by race and poverty level) compare among WSF districts and across various WSF features to matched districts using more traditional staffing-based allocations?

*Additional research will focus on California to document whether state-to-district WSF allocation under the state's LCFF formula are sufficient to trigger trickle-down school-level allocation changes.*





## What this means for you

### Opportunity to learn

- About differences in how districts are approaching WSF

- How it's working on the ground

- The relationship between WSF and student achievement





**SURVEY SAYS...**

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## Principal survey

What we will learn: How WSF is affecting principals day-to-day work in schools, including their:

- Sense of ownership

- Use of flexibility

- Resource allocation decisions

How we will do it:

- Align timing and scope to minimize burden

- Work w/district research office as needed

- Coordinate with you to ensure the work is useful





# Analysis of WSF and student achievement







# Analysis of WSF and student achievement

## What we want to learn

- To what extent is WSF associated with improvements in student outcomes over time?
- To what extent are there improvements among schools serving low income and high needs students?

## How we will find out

- Compare trends in student outcomes:
  - Across WSF and similar non-WSF **districts**.
  - Across **schools** in WSF districts to similar schools in non-WSF districts.
  - Across WSF districts/schools over time



## What we can learn from you

Hope the research will inform your local work along the way:  
Are there other questions we could be asking?





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