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:  
Reallocation  
Efficiency  
Do say:  
Leveraging dollars to do more for students
Don’t say:

- Reallocation
- Efficiency
- Do more with less
- Acknowledge a cut as just that:
  - “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 $ amount
- We have the flexibility to make tradeoffs that meet the needs of our students.

Reallocation
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<thead>
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<td>x Reallocation</td>
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Link discussion to STUDENTS
Don’t say:

- Reallocation
- Efficiency
- Do more with less

Do say:

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

Admit to the tradeoff: “XX vs YY”
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“We were told we had to..”
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We have the flexibility to make tradeoffs that meet the needs of our students.
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Allocating for equity
**Don’t say:**

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

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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
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....
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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