BSCP | Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Westat

Financial Transparency Displays: a) for what? b) for whom? c) how will it work? September 27, 2018

Dr. Marguerite Roza & Katie Hagan

Agenda

1. Visualization Goals & Audiences
2. Sample Visualizations
3. New BSCP Center data visualization paper

The problem with most financial displays…

they. don’t. get. used.

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center
Westat
©2018 Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University

Critical questions for visualization designs

WHAT do you hope they'll do	WHO do you hope will use the info?	HOW will that happen? (no really: How exactly?)
i. Seek improved equity across district schools.	a) Parents	
ii. Seek improved outcomes for the dollar (relative to meaningful peers).	b) Advocacy	
iii. Improve participation in allocation.	c) Principals	
iv. Other?	d) District Leaders	
v. Agnostic?		

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Westat

©2018 Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University

Critical questions for visualization designs

WHAT do you hope they'll do	WHO do you hope will use the info?	HOW will that happen? (no really: How exactly?)
i. Seek improved equity across district schools. ii. Seek improved outcomes for the dollar (relative to meaningful peers). iii. Improve participation in allocation. iv. Other? v. Agnostic?	a) Parents b) Advocacy c) Principals d) District Leaders	*Parents look up how much is spent at their school, then compare to other schools (taking stock of demographics), then lobby district for change.*

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Westat

©2018 Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University

Critical questions for visualization designs

WHAT do you hope they'll do	WHO do you hope will use the info?	HOW will that happen? (no really: How exactly?)
i. Seek improved equity across district schools. ii. Seek improved outcomes for the dollar (relative to meaningful peers). iii. Improve participation in allocation. iv. Other? v. Agnostic?	a) Parents b) Advocacy c) Principals d) District Leaders	*Advocacy compares spending across all schools in the district (taking stock of demographics), then presses district for change.*

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Westat

©2018 Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University

Critical questions for visualization designs

WHAT do you hope they'll do

i. Seek improved equity across district schools.
ii. Seek improved outcomes for the dollar (relative to meaningful peers).
iii. Improve participation in allocation.
iv. Other?
v. Agnostic?

WHO do you hope will use the info?

a) Parents
b) Advocacy
c) Principals
d) District Leaders

HOW will that happen? (no really: How exactly?)

Principals benchmark their own school's spending and outcomes, in comparison to meaningful peers, and then: a) manages school differently to improve results, b) seeks new ideas/innovations from peers, c) presses districts for changes in allocation that can help.

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center | Westat

©2018 Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University

Critical questions for visualization designs

WHAT do you hope they'll do	WHO do you hope will use the info?	HOW will that happen? (no really: How exactly?)
i. Seek improved equity across district schools. ii. Seek improved outcomes for the dollar (relative to meaningful peers). iii. Improve participation in allocation. iv. Other? v. Agnostic?	a) Parents b) Advocacy c) Principals d) District Leaders	*Users examine their own spending (and maybe demographics and outcomes) and are invited to weigh in on proposed spending going forward (requires display of budgets too).*

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Westat

©2018 Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University

Critical questions for visualization designs

WHAT do you hope they'll do

i. Seek improved equity across district schools.
ii. Seek improved outcomes for the dollar (relative to meaningful peers).
iii. Improve participation in allocation.
iv. Other?
v. Agnostic?

WHO do you hope will use the info?

a) Parents
b) Advocacy
c) Principals
d) District Leaders

HOW will that happen? (no really: How exactly?)

Which other data are needed for this to happen?

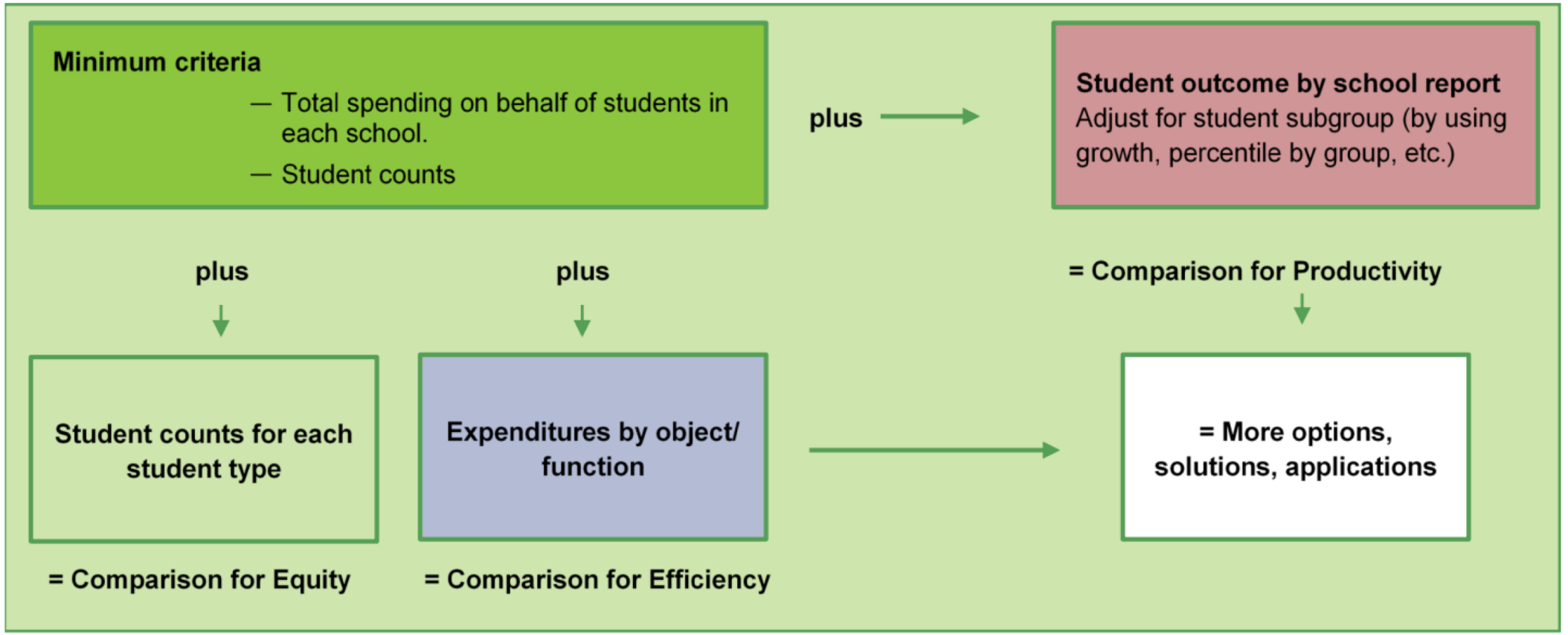
BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Westat

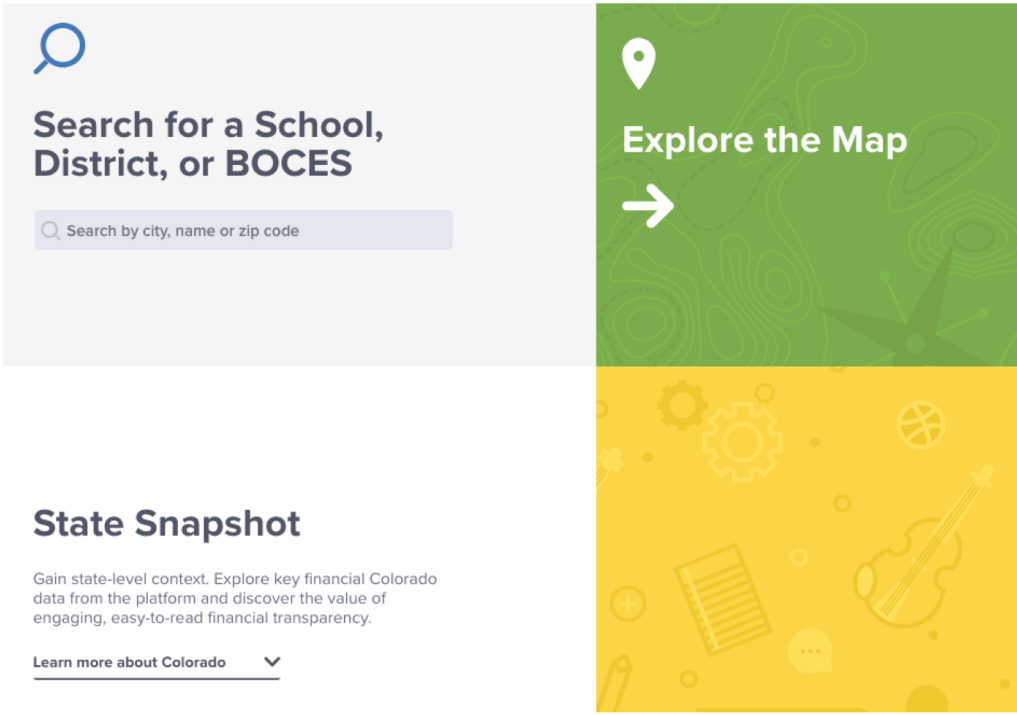
©2018 Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University

What data does your system need to accomplish the HOW?

Figure 1. Different data pairings enable different analyses and uses

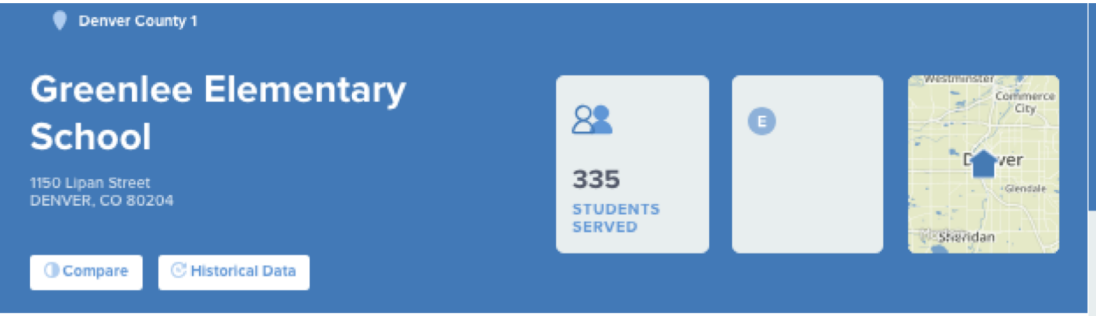


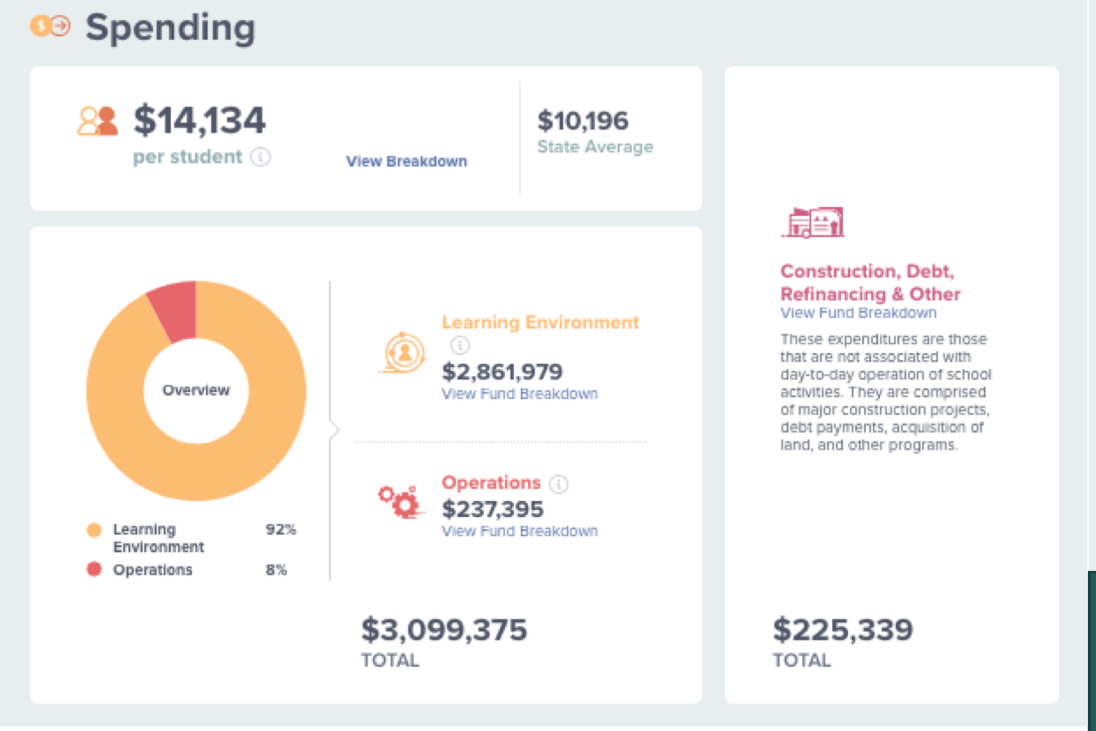
Colorado Financial Transparency Website

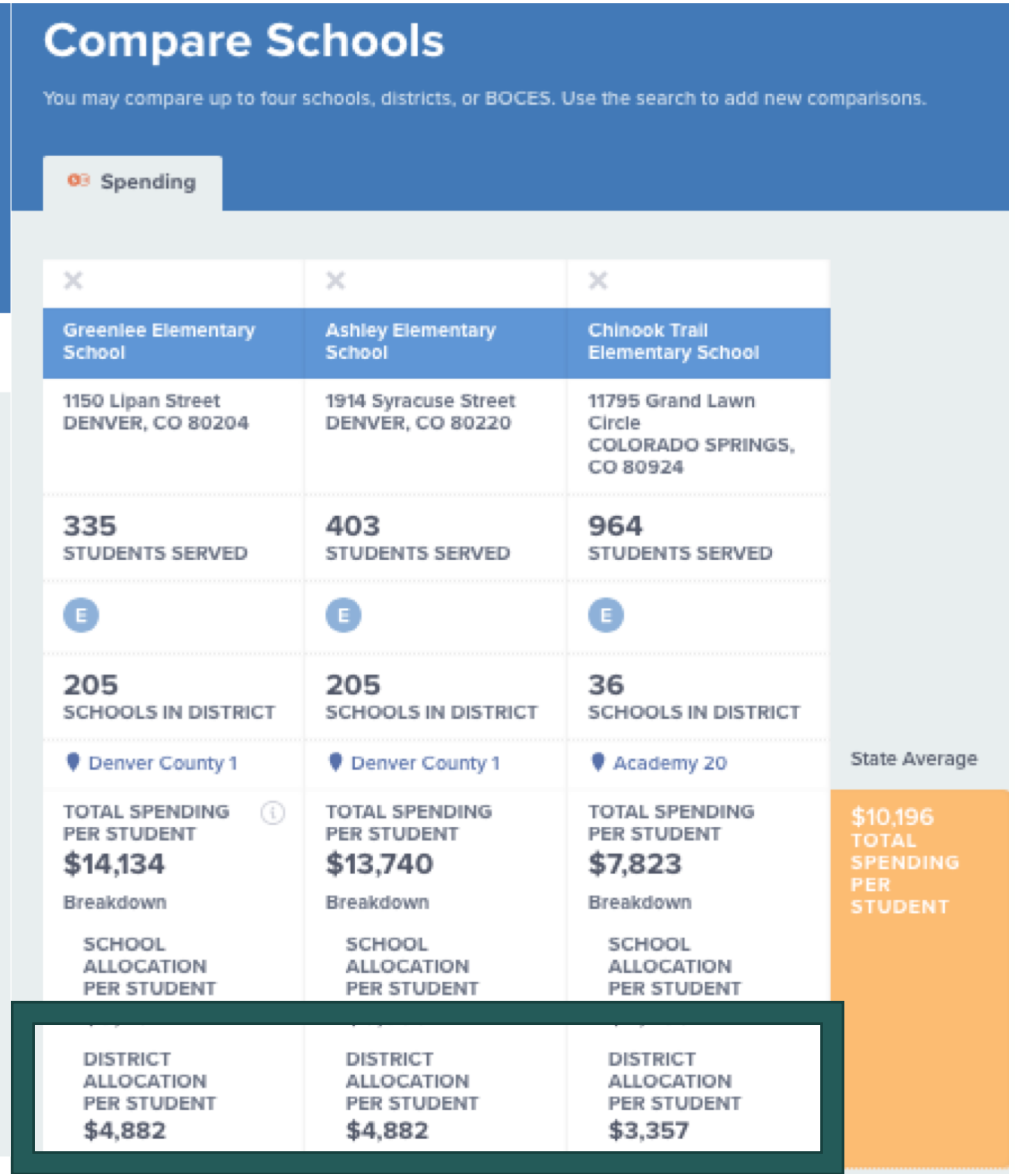


- What: Other/Agnostic (comply with state law)
- Who: Unsure
- How: Unsure

Colorado Financial Transparency Website







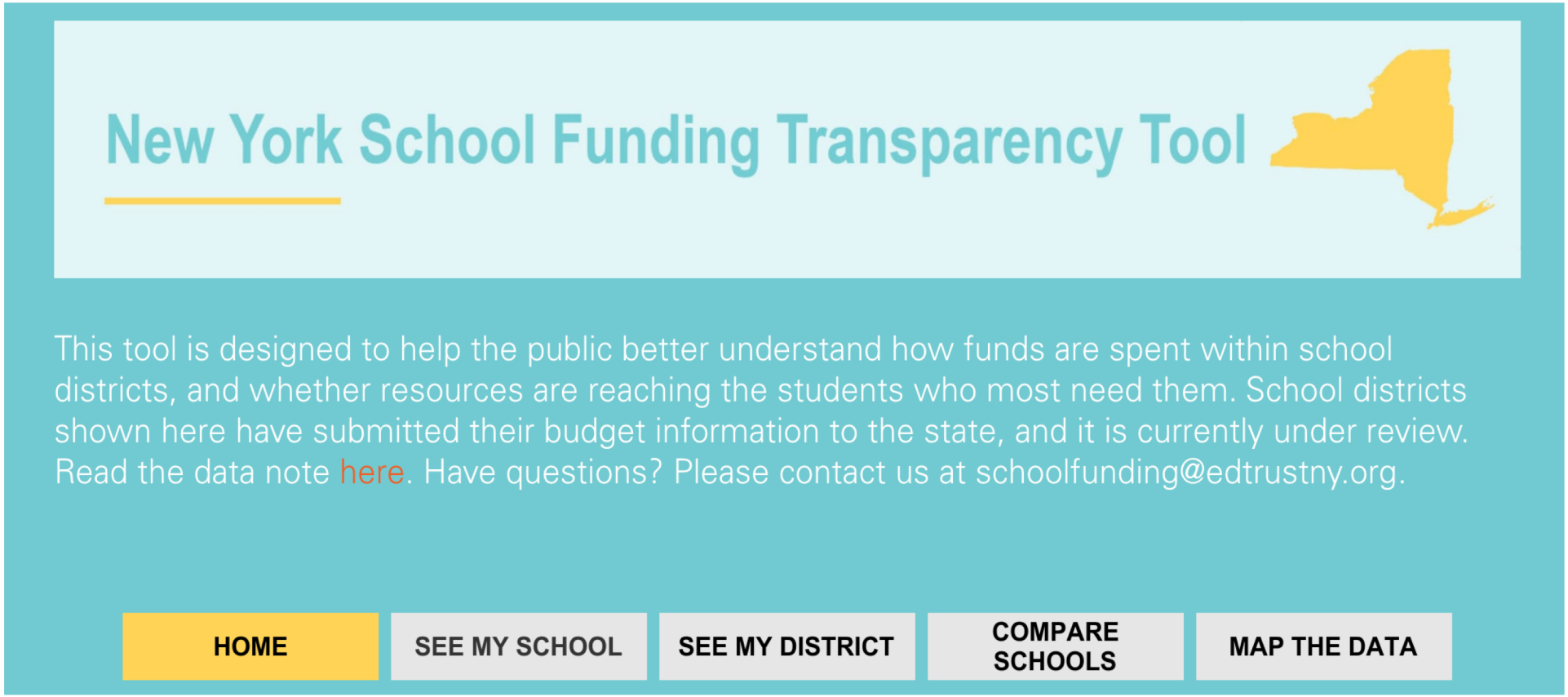
- Start by looking at one school or district at a time
- Can compare schools, but cannot see all schools in one LEA at the same time
- Financial data only
- Does include school's share of central dollars (district allocation)

Scatterplot Visualization

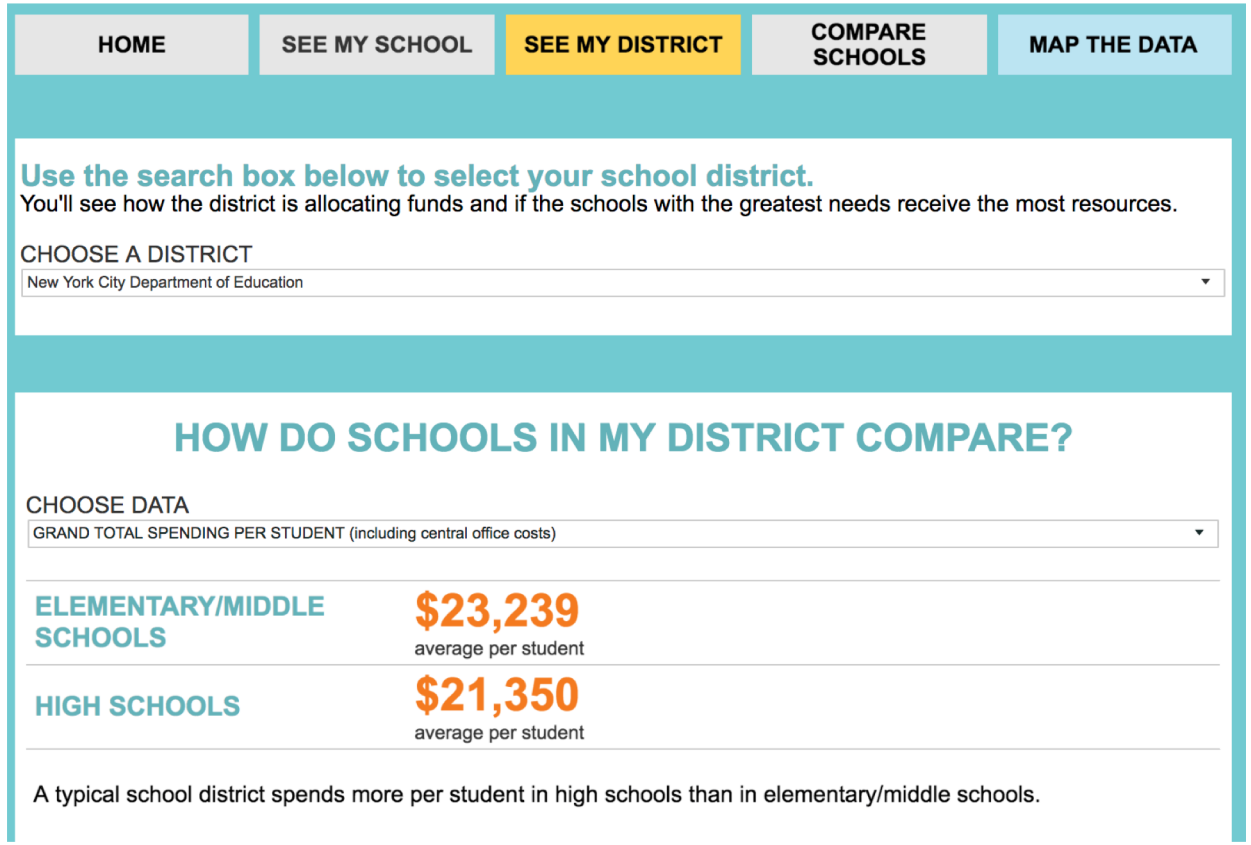
- What: Seek improved outcomes
- Who: District and school leaders
- How: Compare spending and outcomes so user can utilize information to drive improvements

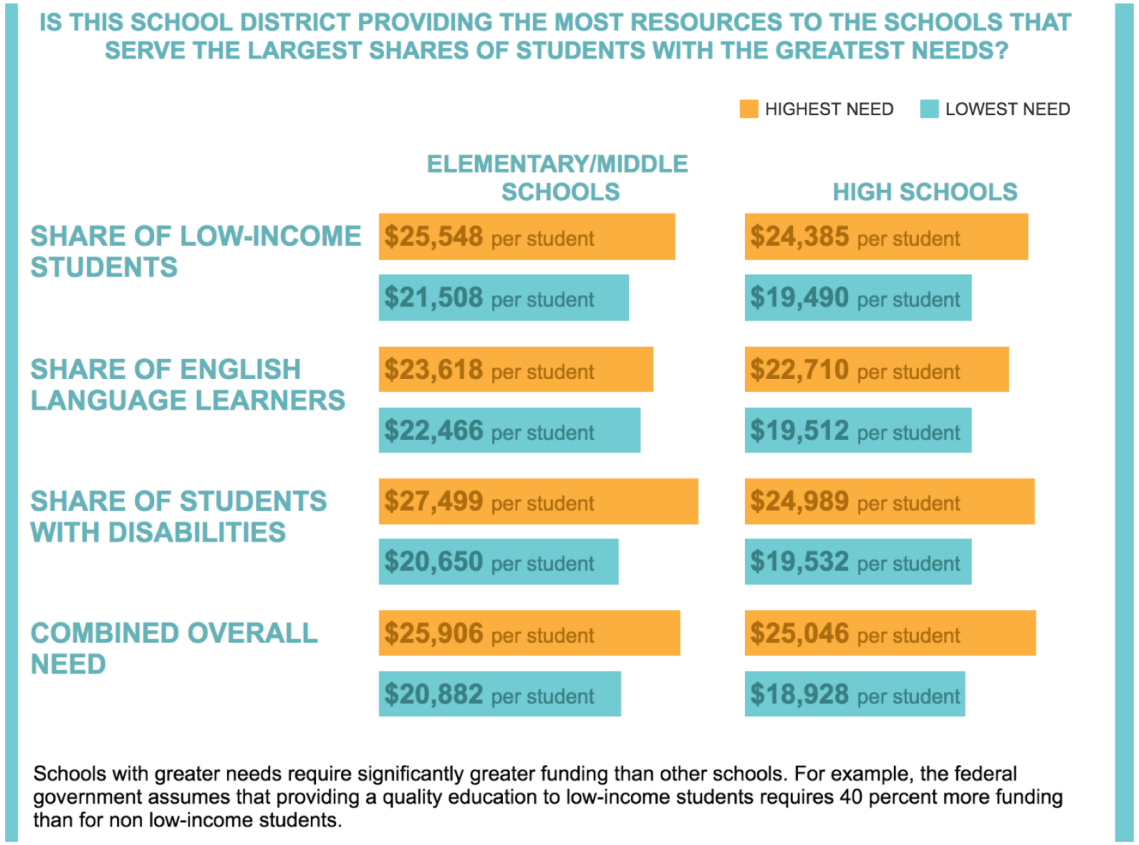
EdTrust New York: Advocacy tool

- What: Equity
- Who: Multiple
- How: Compare spending across schools in district to advocate for equitable distribution
- Some info on outcomes but user has to navigate numerous screens



District user: Allows quick comparison of budgeting in high need to low need schools.



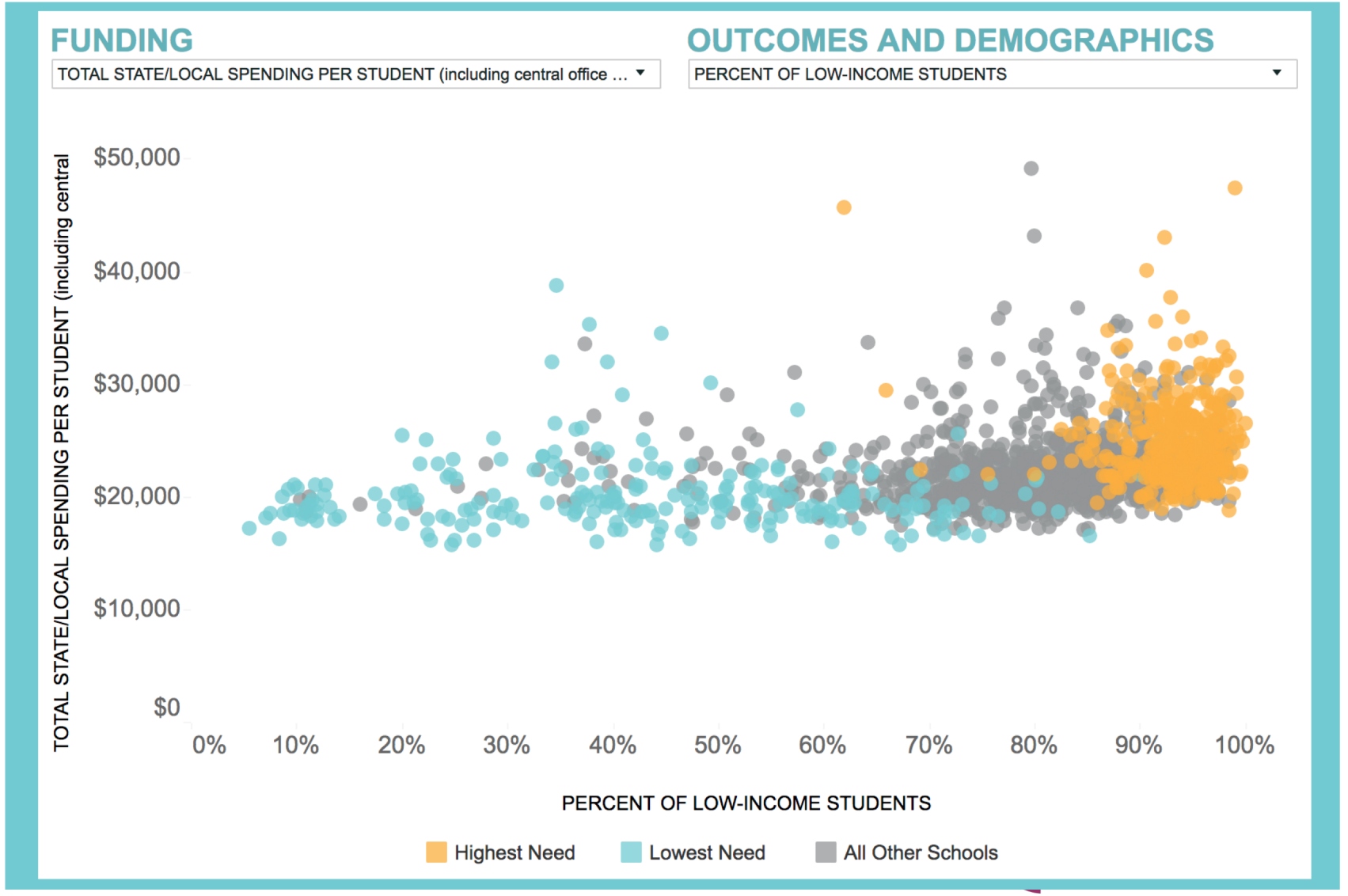


On average, does this district budget more on highest need schools?

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

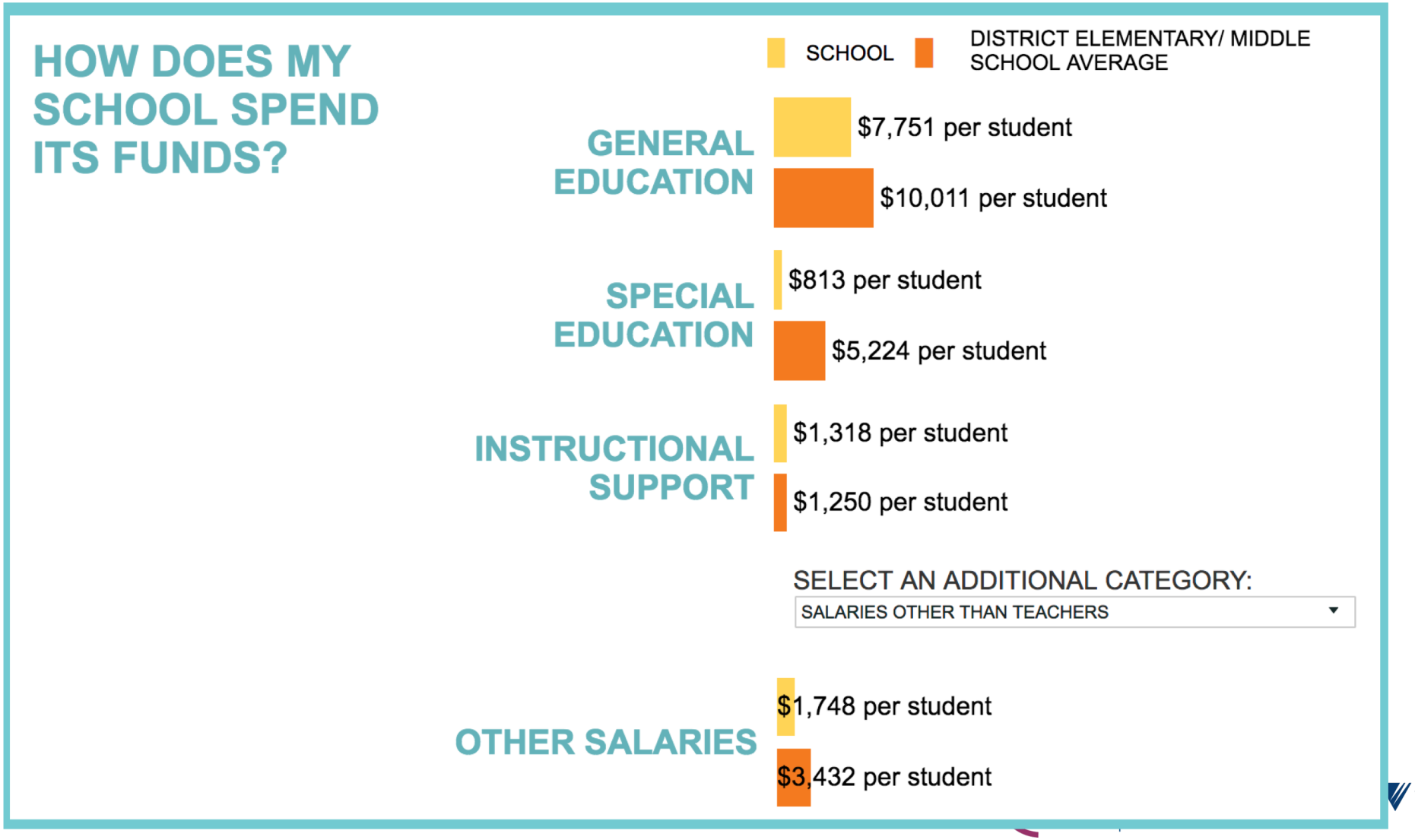
Westat

District user: quick view of budgeting and poverty across all schools – for equity



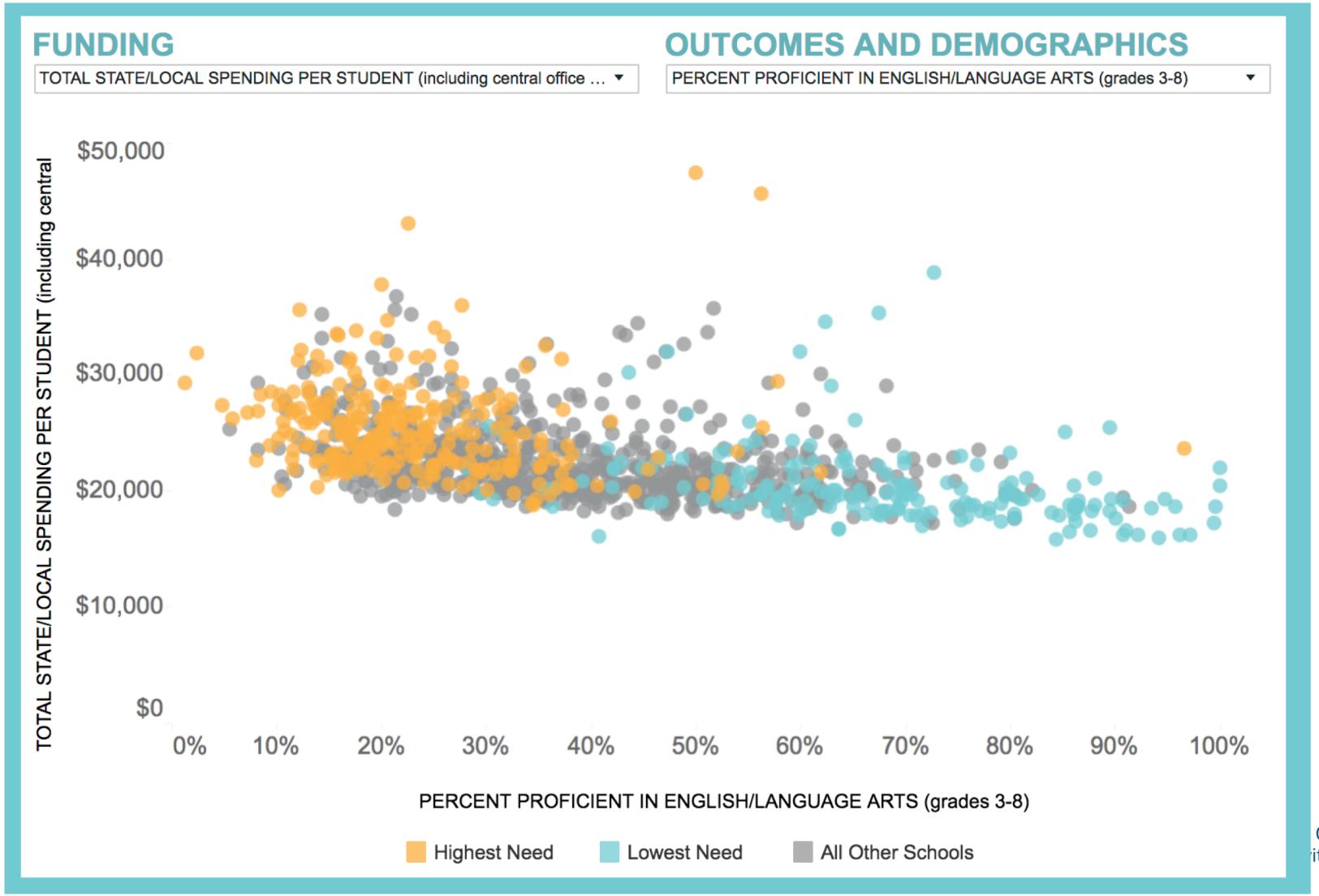
Westat

Principal/parent user–does my school budget more/less than district average?



Westat

District user: comprehensive view of funding and outcomes



Data Visualization Checklist: Helps clarify the WHO, WHAT and HOW

1. How much is spent in School X?
2. Is School X spending more or less per pupil than other schools in the same district? Other schools with similar student demographics? Other schools in the same state?
3. Does it appear that District Y divvies up funds equitably across schools?
4. What is driving spending differences across schools?
5. What funds/expenditures (if any) were excluded?
6. How does School X's expenditures on services (transportation, food, etc.) compare to other schools?
7. How does School X's costs for inputs (teaching, leadership, etc.) compare to other schools?
8. Is there a school (or schools) School X can learn from? Specifically, is there a school spending a similar amount with similar student demographics but is able to achieve higher student outcomes?
9. Compared to peer schools, how well is School X able to leverage funds to achieve outcomes for students?

4 Easy Wins for Data Visualization:

1. Keep budgeting (funding) and spending language straight
2. Include an option for users to weigh in, ask questions or provide feedback
3. Report spending alongside relevant student and school information when possible (don't report spending numbers in isolation)
4. Think of visualization development on a continuum – don't rule out ideas simply because they cannot happen in Y1

New BSCP Center Resource

A Checklist to Guide Data-Visualization Decisions

When considering how school-level per-pupil expenditures are to be made public, an important first step is to understand how the data can (and will) be used by various stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, district and school leaders, community advocates, parents, media, etc.).

http://www.bscpcenter.org/ftresources/resources/BSCP_Visualization_Checklist_Document.pdf

BSCP Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Westat

Questions?

Dr. Marguerite Roza, mr1170@georgetown.edu

Katie Hagan, katie.hagan@georgetown.edu