

What School Funding Looks Like

A high-quality education system endows all students with the ability to uncover their gifts, sharpen their skills, and bestow their talents upon this country. A high-quality education system provides the supports and resources required to meet varying student needs (e.g., English language learners, students with disabilities, and students from poverty), but none of this is possible without sufficient and equitable funding.

NEA believes these school funding indicators are the key to national economic vitality and sustainable growth. School funding should be:

Sufficient—Funding should be sufficient for students to meet state-established academic requirements and to obtain skills enabling them to meet the demands of a rapidly changing, competitive global economy.

Equitable—Funds should be distributed according to needs-based criteria; this includes significant investment in our most at-risk schools.

Productive—Funding should be transparent and monitored sufficiently to ensure that funds are meeting students' needs.

Sustainable—Tax structures should be broad-based, equitably shared, and progressive enough to generate the necessary funding in both good and bad economic times.

For more information on what makes a great public school, please visit:

www.nea.org/gpsindicators



Is Your School a Great Public School?

School Funding

Series 5 of 7



A Great Education

As students progress during the school year, it is essential that they are provided all the resources and supports they need to succeed.



A quality education begins with access to an exemplary early childhood education and continues with development of students socially, emotionally, and cognitively, preparing them for college and 21st-century careers. The bridge from early childhood education to graduation is only made possible with:

- High standards and a rigorous curriculum;
- Teaching and learning conditions conducive to engagement and enrichment;
- Educators of the highest quality;
- Valid assessments;
- Engaged families and community; and,
- Sufficient funding for advanced courses, modern materials and facilities, and educator professional development.



Great Public Schools Indicators Framework

The National Education Association's Great Public Schools (GPS) Indicators Framework elaborates on the seven criteria fundamental to a quality education and calls on all educators, families, community leaders, and policy makers to join the effort to ensure that every student has access to a great public school. Together, we can achieve greatness. Here we focus on one of the seven criteria required for student success—School Funding.

School Funding

Across the United States, students receive varying degrees of a quality education—those from affluent backgrounds reap the benefits of experienced educators, AP courses, full-time counselors, gymnasiums, and lessons in the arts while those living in high-poverty areas must tolerate leaky school ceilings, outdated textbooks, a part-time school nurse, and high rates of teacher turnover. As a result of the varying resources distributed to schools, there is an ever-widening achievement gap among affluent and high-poverty students. In 2012, students from the lowest income bracket had a dropout rate of 12 percent, whereas students from the highest income bracket had a dropout rate of just 2 percent. Such inequities translate into long-term economic hurdles for the U.S. economy. Students without the benefit of a quality education can expect lower earning potential, loss of productivity, and a decline in competitiveness. A 2009 McKinsey and Company report likens this situation to a “permanent national recession.” Unless a genuine effort is made to lift all students, this country will fail to meet its full potential.

How You Can Advocate for a Great Public School—School Funding

Essential Pieces

Sufficiency of Funding

Equity in Funding

Productive Use of Funds

Funding Sustainability

Action Steps

Ask your school principal if there have been recent cuts to the budget and how the school plans to meet performance standards.

Ask your school board to require reporting on the distribution of state-certified teachers, education support professionals, and specialized support personnel like nurses, psychologists, and social workers.

Ask your school board to require reporting by school on actual student expenditures disaggregated by federal, state, and local dollars.

Ask your school board to require schools to post their budgets online.

Ask your school principal to hold meetings on the school budget.

Ask your school board to draft multi-year budgets.

Ask your state elected officials to implement fiscal policies that provide public schools with stable and sufficient funding annually.