

State aid systems vary widely.



Logan Geen

There is, of course, no one right way to distribute state aid to education. During his time as MCSBA Student Intern Logan Geen has studied methods used by a number of states of varying sizes with differing approaches to supporting schools. At the right is a table that delineates some of these differences in levels of support. The data indicate that NYS is in the middle of the range.

A Comparison of State Funding Systems for Schools

State & # school districts	Total \$ for Education in millions	% Budget for ed.	Average Per Pupil Cost	Basic Aid (% of TSA)	Special Ed (% of TSA)
New York 700	\$22,126.5	37%	\$11,515	58%	13.2%
California 1,056	\$53,000.0	40%	\$6,708	90.2%	8.9%
Michigan 612	\$10,932.0	32.6%	\$7,764	89.1%	7.7%
Washington 296	\$9,854.4	43.8%	\$5,024	73%	9.5
Illinois 897	\$6,554.3		\$8,377	60.2%	10.9%
Virginia 137	\$9,552.9	38%	\$7,887	50.1%	6.8%
Kentucky 176			\$7,908	61.7%	8.1%
Maryland 24	\$9,552.9	38%	\$9,162	58.2%	5.8%
Massachusetts 329			\$7,345	80.7%	2.9%
Tennessee 138			\$7,543	99.2%	N/A
Texas 1,042	\$49,683.7	43%	\$5,685		
Kansas 304			\$7,873	80.1%	10.2%
Wyoming 48			\$8,756		

Some state funding formulas

New York	For Operating Aid, multiply state share ratio (district wealth divided by average district wealth) by 7.5% of previous year's operating expenses minus a "ceiling amount." Multiply this amount by average daily attendance and weightings.
California	Basic aid is distributed according to average district attendance. An addition, the state will make up any difference between property tax revenues and a state-imposed revenue limit (with its own formula).
Michigan	State aid is delivered based on enrollment and per pupil cost. A local tax levied on property may not rise more than the lesser of the increase in the consumer price index or 5%. In 1993 the state-wide base rate was 6 mills (\$6 per \$1,000 valuation).
Illinois	Basic aid is based on average daily attendance (ADA). Funding per district is determined by subtracting locally available resources from a foundation level, then multiplying by the ADA.
Virginia	Per-pupil aid is distributed for instructional, support and non-personnel budget items according to state formulas for determining the required number of instructional positions and prevailing market costs.
Massachusetts	Formulas define rates for different grade levels and share income. Another formula determines local share. Aid is adjusted based on wages; state share is based on the difference between calculated aid and a district's overall spending.
Tennessee	The state pays 75% of classroom expenses and 50% of non-classroom expenses. Level of local support is based on a district's ability to raise revenue. Staff and students numbers determine funding individual components of the aid plan.
Wyoming	Developed after its former formula was declared unconstitutional in 1995, the new formula is based on Average Daily Membership (ADM), class and school sizes, and 25 other cost components (e.g., transportation, specialized services), and adjusted for cost of living.

State aid formulas also vary. At the left is a chart briefly describing the essentials of the formulas used in several states, as recorded by Geen during his study. Of particular interest may be the formula adopted by Wyoming after its former formula was declared unconstitutional in 1998. The states listed in both tables were selected for investigation because of similarities with New York State (cosmopolitan nature, population size), or because they had developed a new system of education aid in recent years.

Full copies of Geen's report are available from the MCSBA Office (585-328-1972). Logan will be graduating from Spencerport High School this June and will attend Roberts Wesleyan College majoring in education. His ultimate goal is to become a school superintendent. He is enrolled in Monroe 2 BOCES' New Vision program this year, providing him with internships and opportunities to meet with Superintendents and other administrators.

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