

# Fund allocation

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



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ED533 May 12, 2010 The finance systems for public schools throughout the United States are different from state to state. This is due to the property tax rate setup by the local school districts, local officials, and directly by the citizens in a certain area. Depending on the location and area of the schools and their districts, funding can be abundant or scarce in numbers. This means that if the school is located within a wealthy community, they will receive more funding than schools located in a poor community. It is the sole responsibility of the administrator within a school to understand the distribution of funds through either Average Daily Attendance (ADA) or Average Daily Membership (ADM). Administrators need to know the best way to get funding for their schools and how it will be used to best serve the students. Schools are changing daily and funds are not readily available to schools as they were in the past. Effective administrators need to learn how to plan for each school year with the anticipation and knowledge that things could change quickly in the areas of their revenue and allotted expenditures. In a rapidly growing and ever changing society, administrators need to understand the challenges that students face on a daily basis and how to overcome these challenges to effectively teach and engage students in a classroom setting. Technology, IDEA, No Child Left Behind, and support services have changes the outlook on education. School systems and educators are now implementing the use technology into their daily instruction to incorporate twenty first century skills into their classroom. Many people do not understand the funding that is needed for public schools and the resources needed to actively engage students in the learning

process. Twenty first century learners do not learn by lecture, pencil, and paper. These technological children like to learn through the use of ipods, computers, the internet, laptops, wiki pages, etc. If we actively engage our students by implementing technology into our classroom, using manipulatives, and hands on activities to enhance our instruction students will more likely to become engaged. Unfortunately, funding is sometimes based on data taken from the school districts. Test scores differ from county to county depending on the culture and wealth of the community members in that particular are. Without adequate funding, these new teaching techniques wouldn't be possible. Students with special needs are often being left behind because they require more services and funding to provide them with the adequate materials to learn. Twenty first century schools have higher expectations and accountability for their students than they did in the past. These levels, especially with testing data and scores, increase every year. Each state needs to come together with the school districts to decide how they are going to give each school the funding that they need by using Average Daily Attendance or Average Daily Membership averages. As an effective administrator, I would decide to use Average Daily Membership to help receive and distribute the funds that are needed for my school. Average Daily Membership is more effective than Average Daily Attendance because it is more reflective and accurate when taking a student count within the school. If ADA was the deciding factor on proper funds, attendance rates would decrease the funds allotted to me school and schools in general. Effective administrators need to look into both ADA and ADM averages before making any decisions on funding for their schools. School districts

that serve and teach more students are awarded, or allotted more money because it is divided on a set amount of money, or funds, per student. Rural districts do not have as many students in their schools as urban districts. Their class sizes are often small, especially when compared to urban schools that have large class sizes. These schools receive more funds because they need to support more students. For example, an urban school teacher might have a class with thirty-six students. They are doing more work and require more supplies than a teacher who might teach in a rural district with thirteen students in their class. The urban school is receiving more funds to help support the large amount of students within their school compared to a rural school. Unfortunately, these funds are not seen in any drastic amount or supplies that come into the school. State and federal funds are used to pay for the free or reduced breakfast and lunch programs that were designed to feed students who live in a high-poverty urban community. Unlike these communities, students who live in a rural community usually come to school fed and ready to learn. This program is very helpful and effective because it provides students with a free meal. Students learn and have a set focus on instruction when they are fed and have a full stomach. If students are hungry throughout the day, they are not focusing on the teacher and what is being taught, they are focusing on how hungry they are and when they are going to eat. North Carolina School Districts have budgets that begin on July 1st and commence on June 30th of each year. A school's administrator has certain responsibilities when building the budget for their school district. Although the basic premise for building the budget is the same at most districts, each district depending on its size allocates

responsibilities differently. There are some major differences in budgeting when it comes to small rural districts in comparison to large urban districts. In the urban district the building budget consists of fifteen line items, six of which are magnet, or federal money. The money located in the magnet line items are the most flexible. Four items are funded formulas and/or cost per student allocations. When I discussed this with Edgecombe County's Central Office, they went through each line item to clarify how much money has been allocated to each elementary school for the year 2009 - 2010. They also discussed and reviewed how the principals of each school were allowed to spend the money they were allotted. Unfortunately, there is less flexibility with the budget and spending than in the rural school. Administrators are mainly responsible for seeing that assessment is completed for students with special needs, establishing priorities, creating the budget, sitting down with the superintendent and going over the budget. When decisions are made and decided how the budget and allotted money will be spend, an administrator must justify their needs, the student needs, and their staffs needs. Effective administrators always have to show justification for the money that their school has been award will be used. In contrast, in urban school districts many things are bought in bulk through a designated vendor list at the district office. Therefore many items are bought based on school teacher ratio, student teacher ratio, or enrollment. Many administrators do not have to budget for these items. It is cost effective for larger districts to order most supplies in large quantities. This would include instructional supplies, such as plan books, rulers, glue, crayons, pencils, copy paper, construction paper, pens, toner, ink, etc. Instructional supplies money is

available through Magnet, or federal funds. An efficient administrator must budget and have a request for funding that must include researched based reasons and justification to receive this money. A certain amount is allotted through a magnet formula and the rest is awarded at the discretion to the Title One Program or Magnet Program. Since the magnet or federal money is part of a grant it can only be spent within certain parameters. Therefore it is important that the administrator understands the federal grant, federal monies, and how to be able to request the most money for their school. It was very interesting to find out that the textbooks and workbooks used in the Edgecombe County Public Schools are based on a price per student state formula. The cost of these items is about \$56.00 a student. The district takes this money and pays for the textbooks and workbooks needed in all subject areas. Any left over money is then distributed to the schools based on enrollment. The district will then provide the administrators with all of the textbooks and workbooks based on the schools budgeted enrollment. The extra money is allocated in case something needs to be ordered due to an enrollment change. Usually the district has a contract with the textbook company to supply the workbooks for a certain number of years after the adoption of the textbook. There are line items in the budget for both teacher travel and staff development. These line items are both allotted to the school through federal funds. The teacher travel account is handled jointly with the staff through a conference committee. It is a fund that allows teachers to attend conferences. The school district indicated that there is never enough money in the line item for the amount of teachers who want to attend conferences. Therefore, before administrators sign off on any conference

attendance form, the teacher must be able to explain to the principal how the conference will support curriculum and instruction which will ultimately help the students. By adding this inquiry into the process teachers are held more accountable and helps them to really focus on why they are attending the conference. It is important for the administrator to be a part of the teacher travel committee. It allows the administrator to get an idea and understanding of what the teachers feel is important as far as staff development. The principal can then take that information into consideration along with the findings of the Professional Development Planning (PDP) committee to provide the needed staff development. A major difference between the large urban and small rural district in budgeting process is that rural districts may not have department heads. Therefore the administrator must budget for Library, Special Education, Music, Art, PE, Speech, OT, PT, school psychologist, maintenance etc. In the large urban district each of these areas has their own department. These “ special area” teachers give their “ wish list” of needs and wants to the department heads at central office and not to the administrator. In the urban district there is very little money and most money is available on an enrollment basis or a cost per student funded formula. There are also similarities between the two districts. One is that the administrator must always save some money to be used on “ unfunded mandates”. As an effective and efficient administrator you always want to be prepared for needs that might arise throughout the school year. For example, you don’t want to be caught last minute needing protractors for the fifth grade math assessment and not have enough money in the budget to buy them. Another similarity is the importance of the Cohort Survival

Ratio. Knowing your enrollment, trends, and community is the key in planning and budgeting. The biggest similarity is the need to have good working relationships with both your staff and the central office personnel. Whether you are in an urban or rural district your staff needs to have trust in you. In order to help develop a trusting relationship with your staff you must be able to show equity. Getting your staff to understand the issues involved with equity can be difficult. As an effective and informative administrator, you must often facilitate meetings and conversations that point the staff in the proper direction based on accountability and, unfortunately, testing and scores. According to research, some teachers do not like to base their instruction on testing and do not want to be accountable for their test scores. But in the world of accountability we must show growth in order to be awarded and get the money and funds that we need to teach and encourage learning. It is important to bring the teachers back to the fact that we are all here to educate children. As a staff we need to find out where the students weaknesses lie along with the instructional weaknesses, so that we can use the little money we have where it will affect the most children. As an effective administrator, I would have each teacher fill out a wish list at the end of each school year. They would need to put their list in order of priority with reasons why they need the item on the list. It is also important for each teacher to write down how they will use these resources or materials in the classroom. Twenty first century learning is the key to success. Students have a wide variety of learning styles and by creating hands on, engaging lessons, students will be eager to learn and crave more! This method and process helps teachers to self reflect and look at the data as to what is going to help



the students the most. Unfortunately, schools and funding is driven by test scores and I believe this is a weakness in many school districts and many states. I think that positive test score results and success will come with good, engaging, hands-on instructional practices. Would you want to sit in a classroom through lecture after lecture? Or would you want to sit in a classroom where you are up and moving, manipulating objects to formulate an answer? As effective teachers and administrators, we need to create a positive, engaging learning environment. Administrators can help with this by being visible and approachable for both students and staff members, rather than mulling over data in their office. As a facilitator, it is important to have teachers focus and plan their lessons around the questions, " How is this going to help children? " and " How is what I am doing going to affect student achievement? " I feel that in an urban setting it is easy for the teachers to get caught up in the " happenings of the district" and an administrator's major focus should be to make sure their teacher's are focused on the children and their achievement. In summary, an administrator's most important priority, due to funded formula's and cost per student allocations, in having to budget for their school, the school's culture and setting, and sees that it has accurate enrollment figures. It is also crucial for an administrator to understand the grants that the school has both applied for and is what funds they are currently receiving. If an administrator does not have a clear understanding of the grants, than they will not be able to access the funding. It is also important for administrators to develop trusting relationships with the understanding of fairness and equity with their staff. Finally to guide you in the budgeting process, never stop asking this of

yourself and your staff, “ How is this good for kids? ” and “ How will it affect student achievement? ” Students come first and we are here to help them grow and achieve on a daily basis, on step at a time! References Brimley, V. & Garfield R. (2008) Financing Education in a Climate of Change. (10th ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Great Schools, Inc. (2009). Retrieved on January 15, 2010 from <http://www.greatschools.org/cgi-bin/nc/district-profile/101#eog> Jones, Beverley. (2003). Public School Funding in North Carolina. Retrieved on May 6, 2010 from [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/1b/3d/55.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1b/3d/55.pdf) Marzano, R., Pickering D. and Pollock J.(2004 ). Classroom Instruction that Works. Prentice Hall. North Carolina Public School Districts. Finance and Business. Retrieved on May 8, 2010 from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/> Reeves, D. (2005). Accountability in Action. Advanced Learning Press. Verstegen, D. (1991). Funding Rural, Small Schools: Strategies at the Statehouse. Retrieved on May 8, 2010 from <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9221/rural.htm>