

Factors in financing public education



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Introduction to Public Education

Public Education is about the development of each child as an individual and their abilities to benefit our societies. Colleges and universities are critical social enterprises that have operated largely unchanged for centuries. In recent years, however, the traditional models of higher education have struggled to respond to the demands of new consumer groups, rapidly evolving demands of existing stakeholders, and emerging technologies that fundamentally change historic assumptions about how, when, why and what people learn (Public Administration Review, 2015). Public Education in the United States means a free education for all students, which holds importance to families who are underprivileged but still deserve the right to education regardless of their religion, race or abilities. Education holds importance as our nation has strengthened because of what people know and can do. Public education has provided opportunity for advancement and made an economic difference for individuals, as “ The United States is a world leader in high school completion Eighty-seven percent of eighteen to twenty four year olds have completed high school (American Imperative, 2006).” So, public education is a worthy investment for state government, with immense social and economic benefits. However, there still remains a high and low end of annual expenditures of counties within the states on education, as it is never equal. Improving education outcomes has been shown through studies to result in national saving of about seven billion dollars in public assistance, food stamps, and housing assistance. These are just a few examples of what the government’s funds towards education can help reduce the funds needed in other areas. Also, with improved education society benefits when citizens are employed with higher earnings as it gives

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the government the ability to collect greater tax revenue. All of these factors contribute to why education holds importance for citizens as well as our government, but the lack of financial support is the issue of importance. Most believe the federal budget is of more importance to our government than the education of citizens, which is the only way we get knowledgeable citizens to run our government.

Supporting Factor of Finances Spent on Public Education

Nearly half of the K-12 education funding in the United States is intended to come from the states, drawn from a combination of income taxes, fees, and other taxes. This is why the public finances contribute to education, because without these funds the educational systems of each state would fail to exist.

“ As an overall share of the total federal budget, federal spending on elementary and secondary education programs through the U. S.

Department of Education account for less than three percent of the total federal budget. In the annual appropriations process, elementary and secondary education funding accounts for about five percent of discretionary funding across all federal programs. Early school funding litigation efforts generally focused on education equity, which sought the same level of per-pupil funding for every student in the state. Since the late 1980's, litigation has focused more on education adequacy, which seeks funding levels necessary to ensure that every student receives an adequate education.

Defining what constitutes an adequate education as well as what resources are necessary to provide that level of education, have been central questions in the litigation (School Finance).” For the past several years, we have been living through the most severe recession since the Great Depression, which

has affected public education, not just through cuts to core programs, but through job losses that destabilize students' families, cuts to other critical services that the communities depend on, and stress that pulls at the social fabric that unites us. Public Education is a public responsibility and must be a public trust. " As used here, the term " public education" means education that is publicly financed, tuition- free, accountable to public authorities, and accessible to all students. It covers various types of public schools, including traditional schools, charter and magnet schools, vocational schools, and alternative schools. During the 1960s and '70s, the federal government enacted a series of laws aimed at improving education for poor children, migrant children, students with disabilities, Native Americans, limited-English proficient children, and women and girls. These laws brought additional funding to public schools, along with new requirements to meet the special needs of particular groups of students. In recent years, the emphasis of state and federal reforms has shifted to improving public education for all students. The No Child Left Behind Act requires public schools to steadily raise achievement and to close the test score gaps that exist for minority, poor, and special needs students until one hundred percent of United States students are performing at the same high level. Schools that fall short of these goals must undergo a series of interventions. In summary, the growth of public education during the past two centuries has been fueled by high ideals about advancing the common good, but the realities of public schools have sometimes failed to live up to these ideals (Kober, 2007)." Most taxpayers provide this subsidy because public education in their eyes is crucial to forming the public good. It prevents poverty as well as decreases the crime rate, and prepares young people for the work force, and fosters

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social mobility. “ The United States has changed dramatically since the early debates on the role of public schools and the role of the federal government in supporting and sustaining them. The importance of education for the common good has shifted from primarily local control to state and national control, with national attention from the Federal government and national organizations. Studies have shown that twenty five percent of most state budgets contribute to educational funding (Jenkins and Hill, 2011).” States are one of the main funders of the nation’s public elementary and secondary schools, which provide grants to local school districts where entities are responsible for administering schools. However, the federal government provides only about ten percent of public school revenues. Although the funding numbers have increased, there is still a lack of federal dollars relating to the opposing factors.

Opposing Factors of Finances Spent on Public Education

Americans spend more to educate their children than the citizens of most other countries; in fact, only Norway spends more per capita on education. Yet when it comes to student performance, the United States ranks no better than average, resting directly in the middle of the pack of developed nations. Rising government debts and lack of improved student performance have led some to call for cutbacks in school funding. In recent years, skyrocketing state and federal debt levels have led some politicians to support cuts in the educational budget. Conservative politicians have vowed to eliminate the Department of Education ever since its creation, arguing that schooling is an issue for states and local governments to handle, and that tax dollars could be better spent elsewhere. Another strategy aimed at reducing government

spending is the restriction of public employee union rights, particularly those of teachers' unions. " In 2011, Wisconsin governor Scott Walker introduced a bill that sought to eliminate the right of teachers and other public employees to collectively bargain for their salary and benefits. This was presented as a way to reduce state costs and to help close the budget gap. Critics of the current public school system have argued that, despite massive education spending in recent decades, public schools are doing a progressively worse job of educating American children. For example, Washington, DC, boasts one of the highest per-student school funding rates, yet scores below average on student performance. Public school advocates point out that much of the current spending in the public school system goes toward administrative costs; if the federal and state governments reduced the number of regulations and policies that school districts are forced to follow, they assert, the money saved could be spent on improving the teacher-to-student ratio and purchasing necessary classroom supplies such as textbooks-areas proven to directly impact student performance (Gale, 2015)."

Assessment of Supporting and Opposing Sides of Public Education Funding

In my research, I found that both of the supporting and opposing sides have arguable factors to their belief in whether or not public financing through the government is relevant and helpful in education. I believe that while both sides do show factual proof of evidence, I agree that finances should be used in the budgeting process of the government and states for education. Each citizen should be given full advantage of an education to broaden their future regardless of their financial situation. As the schooling systems

receive funds, this allows an opportunity for supplies as well as facilities to be created and purchased to hold schooling and educational opportunities. The supporting and opposing factors are a result in the expenditures of tax dollars and revenues, which creates the combustion between the two parties. While it is hard to provide whether one argument trumps another, I feel that the supporting factors of government spending on education are pertinent to myself. Public education specifically relates to myself because if it were not for the opportunity to receive a free education through my local government, my parents would not have obtained the ability to send me to receive a higher education; college. Also, in the supporting factors is stated the factual evidence that education improves the communities as well as lowers things such as crime rates which is of importance to our common wealth and good. The federal and state debt levels have led to politicians deceiving beliefs in education as well as their support in reducing the federal budget for them. This has led to controversy about whether the issue should be left to state and local or federal government when it comes to the financial standpoint. If education is what entails a citizen being equipped for their desired field, then I do not see why limiting the money for a skill needed for employment would even be an option. If the federal government is limited in the education department, then that includes the omission of federal student loans to only private loans. Federal government has to rebuild their education funding.

Conclusion

As the federal debt is increasing, I agree that the federal government has to budget accordingly in the educational department. In suggestion, federal

loans for education should be limited, which would reduce the amount of college debt in America, which has recently exceeded the amount borrowed on credit cards. As there is much insight to what should occur in the government's action, opinions of citizens persist. It is made clear in the arguments that government funds are needed in order for education to occur as the state funding and grants are not enough. Education is important for all citizens because even the intelligent kids should be given the opportunity to receive a diploma in order to share their ideas in corporations or even a government position in their future. As there is the opposing factor that although all these funds pour into the school systems of lower level income areas, the testing scores still remain low which cause confrontation between the supporting and opposing parties. This occurs in every school system, as there are students with lower motivation in private schooling where their education is paid for by their parents and not the government. Government funds are also used to provide an income for what I think is one of the most important occupations in the United States, which is the career of teaching. Teachers often use their own funds to provide school materials, or to make the classroom environment more collaborative and energetic for students, but they are argued against as some citizens think they should not receive pay. While much of a school's budget is believed to be spent on the administration, there are other things that play into the factor of finances such as the cost of a new gymnasium facility to keep the students healthy, art room and supplies to allow creativity, books for the knowledge and development of the brain, as well as a playground for the enjoyment of being a kid. A parent with three children and a \$20, 000 salary per year should not have to fight for their child a free education just because of their

circumstances. I believe that government should require the local and state governments to pour their tax dollars into an education because it overall creates a better place. Public Finance plays into the issue because the collection of taxes is used for the public good in which this case, the public educate is the good. I am in support of government financial support in funding education, and firmly believe that it distributes good to our society through its outcome.

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