

Q&A on WSF

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Q: What's the base per pupil allocation in other WSF districts?

A: Typically about a quarter of the district's total funds go into the base amount.

Base Amount

District	FY22 Base Weight	% of total expenditures
Atlanta Public Schools	\$4,445	23%
Boston Public Schools	\$4,505	14%
Chicago	\$4,665	24%
DC Public Schools	\$5,973*	19%
Indianapolis Public Schools	\$3,665	27%
Memphis-Shelby Co. Public Schools	\$3,370	27%
New Orleans Parish Board	\$7,799	57%
New York City	\$4,197* (for K-5)	14%

*FY23 base weight



Q: Among WSF districts, what student categories are weighted?

A: Districts' type and number of weights varies.*

	Grade level	English language learner	Special education	Poverty	Low academic performance	Gifted	Vocational	Interrupted formal education	High academic performance	Homeless	Refugee
Baltimore			•		•				•		
Boston	•	•	•	•	•		•	•			
Chicago	•		•								
Cleveland	•	•	•		•			•	•		
Denver		•		•		•					
Douglas Co.	•			•	•	•					
Hawaii	•	•		•		•					
Houston	•	•	•	•		•	•			•	•
Indianapolis	•		•	•							
Jefferson Co.	•			•							
Milwaukee	•										
Nashville	•	•	•	•	•						
New York City	•	•	•	•	•		•	•			
Newark	•	•	•								
Norwalk	•										
Orleans Parish	•	•	•			•					
Prince George's Co.	•	•									
San Francisco	•	•	•	•							
Springfield Emp. Zn.	•	•	•	•			•				
Total Number of Districts Using	17	12	12	11	6	5	4	3	2	1	1
Percent of Districts Using	89%	63%	63%	57%	32%	26%	21%	16%	11%	5%	5%

*Published October 2020



Q: Among WSF districts, what student categories are weighted?

A: Districts' type and number of weights varies.*

	Grade level	English language learner	Special education	Poverty	Low academic performance	Gifted	At-risk	Interrupted formal education	High academic performance	Homeless	Refugee
Baltimore											
Boston	•	•									
Chicago	•		•								
Cleveland	•	•	•								
Denver		•									
Douglas Co.	•			•							
Hawaii	•	•		•							
Houston	•	•	•	•		•				•	•
Indianapolis	•		•	•							
Jefferson Co.	•			•							
Milwaukee	•										
Nashville	•	•			•						
New York City	•	•	•								
Newark	•	•	•								
Norwalk	•										
Orleans Parish	•	•	•								
Prince George's Co.	•	•									
San Francisco	•	•	•								
Springfield Emp. Zn.	•	•	•	•							
Total Number of Districts Using	17	12	12	11	6	6	6	6	6	1	1
Percent of Districts Using	89%	63%	63%	57%	32%	26%	21%	16%	11%	5%	5%

Most common are weights by grade level. Some allocate more \$ to HS, some give more to elementary, some to MS.

Also common are EL weights. Often these come with lower tiers for EL students in lower grades or longer duration in EL.

*Published October 2020



Q: How are districts structuring weights for Special Education?

A: Some provide tiers based on cost range, other weight disability. Some fund highest needs groups outside WSF.

	Special education
Baltimore	•
Boston	•
Chicago	•
Cleveland	•
Denver	
Douglas Co.	
Hawaii	
Houston	•
Indianapolis	•
Jefferson Co.	
Milwaukee	
Nashville	•
New York City	•
Newark	•
Norwalk	
Orleans Parish	•
Prince George's Co.	
San Francisco	•
Springfield Emp. Zn.	•
Total Number of Districts Using	12
Percent of Districts Using	63%

Two approaches:

- **Generalized Tiers** – Fixed dollar amounts for tiers based on range of need/costs

Special Education Level 1	0.71	\$ 4,496
Special Education Level 2	1.16	\$ 7,282
Special Education Level 3	2.12	\$ 13,425
Special Education Level 4	3.60	\$ 22,797

Hartford

- **Type of disability** – weights are organized by type and severity of the disability

Challenges:

Perverse Incentives – who diagnoses students?

Flexibility

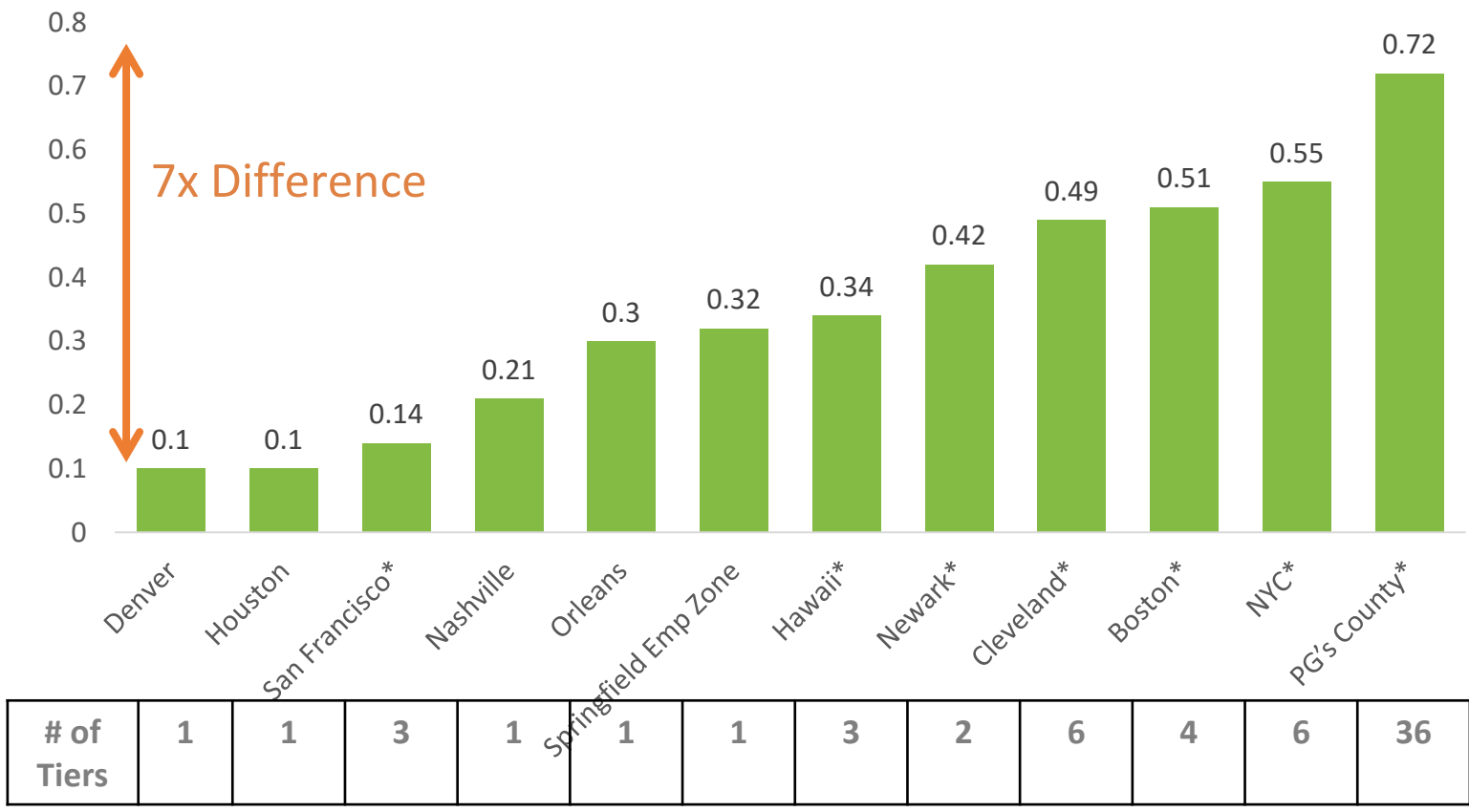
Complexity

Q: How are districts structuring weights for EL students?

A: EL weights vary significantly across districts. Tiered weights are common.

	English language learner
Baltimore	
Boston	•
Chicago	
Cleveland	•
Denver	•
Douglas Co.	
Hawaii	•
Houston	•
Indianapolis	
Jefferson Co.	
Milwaukee	
Nashville	•
New York City	•
Newark	•
Norwalk	
Orleans Parish	•
Prince George's Co.	•
San Francisco	•
Springfield Emp. Zn.	•
Total Number of Districts Using	12
Percent of Districts Using	63%

ELL Weights, 2018-9



* District has a range of weights for ELL. The largest weight is provided.

*Published October 2020



Q: How are districts weighting poverty or low performance?

A: More common to weight poverty than low performance.

	Poverty	Low academic performance
Baltimore		•
Boston	•	•
Chicago		
Cleveland		•
Denver	•	
Douglas Co.	•	•
Hawaii	•	
Houston	•	
Indianapolis	•	
Jefferson Co.	•	
Milwaukee		
Nashville	•	•
New York City	•	•
Newark		
Norwalk		
Orleans Parish		
Prince George's Co.		
San Francisco	•	
Springfield Emp. Zn.	•	
Total Number of Districts Using	11	6
Percent of Districts Using	57%	32%

Poverty and low perf are correlated, but districts tend to weight poverty. (NYC is unusual in connecting them.)

On poverty

- Federal Title I is also for poverty.
- Most provide a fixed amount per low income pupil.
- For "concentration" some require a threshold of poverty before a school qualifies for the weight, e.g. DCPS:

At-Risk greater than 40%	Provided for number of students above 40% of at-risk compared to total enrollment	0.2	\$1,195
At-Risk Secondary greater than 70%	Provided for number of grade 6-12 students above 70% of at-risk compared to total enrollment	0.2	\$1,195

On low academic performance

- Perverse Incentives: lower scores = more \$?
- Boston bases perf weight on scores from prior school (and only uses it for HS)
- Some districts have shifted away from perf weights.



Q: Do WSF districts provide any funds outside the formula (e.g. for core staffing, for small schools, or those with declines)?

A: Some do, but then strive to eliminate them. “At the end of the day, those things will not continue to exist because they perpetuate inequities.”

Lots of different approaches:

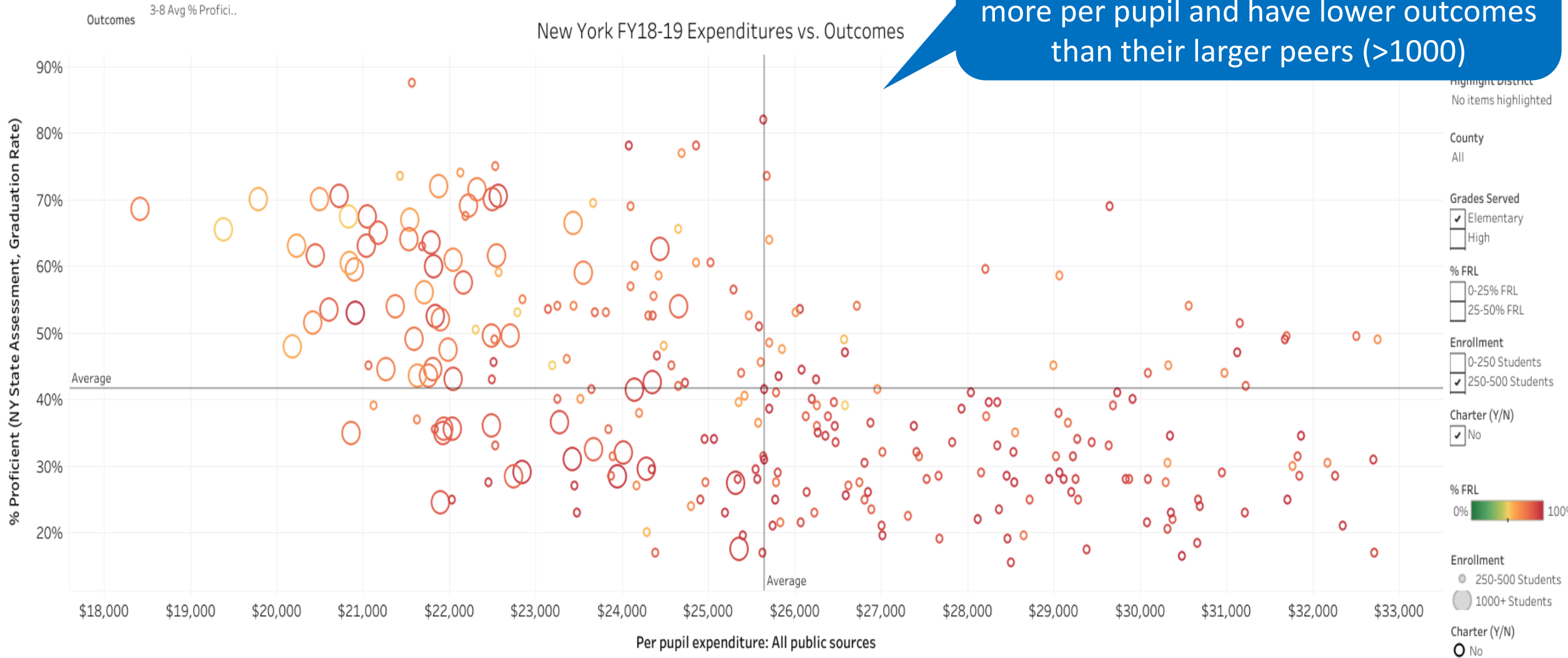
- No extra funding outside formula (e.g. NOLA)
- Allocate positions outside the formula (e.g. principals in Atlanta)
- Provide a fixed amount per school for core staff (e.g. NYC = \$225,000)
- Apportion different amounts to smaller schools to ensure funding for “non-negotiables” (e.g. Indy).
- Provide a fixed supplement for schools under a certain size (Douglas Co.)
- Grant a one-year fixed supplement to help with schools with enrollment losses adjust staffing.

Boston spent \$24.4M on supplements in FY22, = a total of \$473 per student that came at the expense of spending on the base.

Cautions:

- Equity
- Funds directed outside the formula erode available funds for base/weights in all schools
- Do these funds bring value for students?

Among NYC high poverty elem schools, smaller (250-500) schools tend to spend more per pupil and have lower outcomes than their larger peers (>1000)



Thank you!

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