What School Funding Looks Like

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.

Sufficient and equitable means enough funds to ensure all students can meet state-established academic requirements and funds are distributed according to students’ needs, that is, more funds are allocated to schools with the greatest need.

Help us ensure our schools receive the funds they need to help students succeed by taking the action steps listed in this brochure and reading up on the policies and practices that make up a great public school (GPS) at nea.org/GPSIndicators.

For tools and resources that can help you achieve a GPS, fill out the Opportunity Checklist at myschoolmyvoice.nea.org where you will be asked questions about your school and emailed resources related to your needs.
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 policymakers 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gymnasiums, and lessons in the arts while those living in high-poverty areas must tolerate leaky school ceilings, outdated textbooks, a part-time school nurse, and high rates of teacher turnover.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, lower 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Pieces</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficiency of Funding</td>
<td>Ask your school board if there have been recent cuts to the budget and how the board intends for each school to meet performance standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity in Funding</td>
<td>Ask your state elected officials to explain how they determine the funding necessary for all students to meet the state’s challenging academic standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive Use of Funds</td>
<td>Ask your school board to provide copies of the budget and to hold meetings on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Sustainability</td>
<td>Ask your state elected officials to implement fiscal policies that provide public schools with stable and sufficient funding annually.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 to develop 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 expectations and a well-rounded curriculum;
- Teaching and learning conditions that lift all students, no matter their zip code;
- Educators of the highest quality;
- Meaningful assessments;
- Engaged families and community; and,
- Sufficient funding for advanced courses, modern materials and facilities, and educator professional development.

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