The Effects of Reducing School Budgets and Approaches to Proceed Toward Successful Educational Programs in Era of Budget Disparity with Concentrating on New Jersey Public Education

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ABSTRACT
Effectivie administrative practices including budget is continually redefined by states, districts, and schools. The administration attempts to keep up with all changes and meet with the expectations such as reconstructing the budget. Furthermore, the school budgeting practices are within a collaborative decision-making context which include the manners to link educational goal development to management. Panic began in New Jersey when Governor Christie (R) cut $1B in education budget in 2010 (Corbett, 2010; Chakrabarti & Sutherland 2012) and again announced $1.6 billion cut in 2013 (Shinski 2013). This action meant that not only many teachers were discharged but also programs were eliminated. When schools face massive cuts, prioritization and measuring the possibilities started by administrators. In a small measure this paper examines the effects of reducing school budgets and approaches to proceed successful educational programs with concentrating on New Jersey public education. The effects of reducing school budgets.

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Introduction
Writing the budget is a journey which needs an essential understanding of the interlace relationship between two independent yet distinctly connected accountability systems which are academic and money. School budgeting requires practices such as; school oriented situations and leadership standards. A budget writer builds skills to plan and develop a budget, allocate, expend, monitor funds, manage and evaluate budget reports, and prepare school action plans. The 1st section of this paper discusses the effects of reducing school budgets and examines:
1. Teacher quality
   • Teachers experience
   • Teacher certification
   • Teacher preparation
   • Professional development
2. The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC)
3. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)
4. Validate the importance of the ELCC and ISLLC standards in support of budget details
5. The use of data in era of budget cuts
6. Compare and contrast the types of data sources that can be measured
7. Needs assessment

The 2nd section of the paper discusses approaches to proceed successful educational programs. The tremendous majority of public school funding derives from local city and county property taxes. However according to Santos (2010): "This was ruled illegal in Ohio by the Ohio Supreme Court and was the topic of an epic legal battle" (para 1). In some states such as Washington, a majority of funding emanates from the state. Sales and business taxes provide most of the revenue for the state government, as there is no state income tax. New Jersey State League of Municipalities (2010) reported"... in 2009, according to the Tax Foundation, our median residential property tax was $6,579— tops in the Nation" (para 3). Anywhere between 60 to 90 percent of property taxes in New Jersey is spent on public education which is the reason for one of the highest property tax in the nation. This section considers:
1. Fundraiser
2. Grants
3. Community

The effects of reducing school budgets
Money is always a factor in writing and preparing budgets. In a document, Guidance on Preparing a School Budget (2006), it is stated: “In particular, schools should ensure that they have detailed workings to justify the budget figures calculated” (para 1). With the number of items that must be factored in and considered, budget can be a difficult writing task. According to State of New Jersey, department of education, Core Curriculum Content Standards are divided to: Visual and performing arts, Comprehensive health and physical education, Language arts literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social studies, World languages, Technology literacy, Career education and consumer- family and life style (State of New Jersey, Department of Education, 2010). Any time there is a downfall with the economy both individual states and congress reduce the education budget. President Obama (2011), has called for new national priorities based on "winning the future," but Washington is more interested in cutting and bailing out the private sector. While the Speaker of the House John Boehner (Speaker Boehner’s Press Office, 2011) and the minority leader Nancy Pelosi (Pelosi, 2010) both call it immoral to short change the future generation, in reality there are programs which are slashed form education due to budgeting setbacks. In an article Magruder (2011) stated, “America's leaders are jeopardizing our generation's future in the name of fiscal austerity” (para 1).
Teacher quality
This is the most important school related factor influencing student achievement. Greater clarity on the pragmatic evidence of this issue can inform and guide the state efforts and provide direction for future policy decisions. The quality of teachers was significantly implemented with highly qualified teachers when No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was passed which placed more stress on districts.

Teacher characteristic will affect teacher’s effectiveness and in conclusion it links to student achievement. The characteristics differ from elementary school to high school teachers and also in regards to grade levels, subject areas, and student populations. Parents speak on the critical importance of developing and maintaining relationships with the teachers. Connecting with children and families are spoken by teachers. With both parties stating desire to maintain quality teachers and ensure strong leadership. In a study, Miles and Frank (2008) indicated, “Principals, parents, and students experience firsthand what research shows—that quality of teaching trump any other factor is predicting improved student performance” (p. 23). The schools have exasperate in assisting underperformed students since the Reagan administration, yet, many schools still fail. The truth is that there are plenty more occurrence in and around these schools than non educators realize.

Sequentially, children’s success in parts depends on teachers’ qualifications. Professional development, higher education, and classroom monitoring are just small numbers which administration can investigate. In a study Miles and Frank (2008) indicated, “Integrating significant resources for well-designed professional development that provides expert support to implement the school’s core instructional design” (p. 92). The New Jersey Department of Education released a designed professional development which was developed in 2009. Based on current research on teacher efficiency and best practices, the plans have been designed to facilitate both school planning and district level planning (State of New Jersey, Department of Education, 2010). Committee members, administrators, teachers and support staff should comprehend the needs for high quality professional development sessions.

In recognition of the valuable collaborative planning time, many schools have adapted the schedules to ensure that teachers and other professionals have time to collaborate through team meetings such as critical groups in which teachers cooperatively plan, observe, and analyze classroom lessons; or other developments that pertain to the profession. One characteristic that all thriving learning communities have in common is collaboration, “…opportunities for adults across a school system to learn and think together about how to improve their practice in ways that lead to improved student achievement” (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2004, p. 2). In addition, School districts need to explore alternatives to teacher growth except once or twice a year evaluation. A school can utilize induction, leadership training and planning to boost the teacher growth.

The pragmatic evidence of teacher quality includes:

Teacher Experience
This sensitive issue is open to much debates. New Jersey is one of the states which ended traditional teacher tenure in 2012. Chris Cerf, New Jersey’s acting education commissioner at the time compiled the proposed legislation “…does everything in its power to retain those achieving success and get rid of those who aren’t,” and that the proposed legislation is not “trying to bash teachers for our education’s failure” (Livingstone Patch, 2011, Para 9). In response Sheila Oliver a former East Orange board of education member and a New Jersey Assembly speaker said: “…will do so knowing that solving the problems facing our poorest children in failing urban schools is more complicated than throwing around slogans and blaming teacher job protections” (Livingstone Patch, 2011, Para 17).

In the early years of teaching “learning by doing” effect is the most obvious. The development of teacher wisdom requires experience. There is general consensus that the returns to experience are strongest in the first year of teaching. Then the rate of improvement starts to level off quickly – usually stagnating within about 4-5 years (time frames vary a bit). After that, most teachers tend to remain relatively stable in terms of their effects on student test scores (DeCarlo, 2010).

The biggest threat to eliminate tenure could lead to laying off experienced teachers due to the wages. The states and districts may suspect that the budget is rescued from down fall but in reality this approach will produce more complications. The former mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg, sold the argument to the public while seeking for the 3rd term on ‘experience’. Nevertheless Bloomberg was one of the officials who aspired to end tenure ship in New York City public schools.

Teacher Certification
There are positive effects of certified teachers, however since there are no standards across the nation, each state determines what is necessary and sufficient to become a certified teacher. An article by Jelmberg (1996) compares both forms of certifications used in New Hampshire. This study discovered “significant differences, all but one favoring college-based teacher education programs” (p. 62). The research on both traditional certification and alternate route is extensive. Quality teachers come from traditional and alternate route programs where both offer much great understanding of the facets of teaching. Most pre-service as well as experienced teachers enjoy learning and teaching. Teachers graduated from both programs are hired at the same rate and are certified.

Teacher Preparation
The teachers’ advanced degrees have a positive effect on student achievement. This could be partially a reflection of the cognitive ability of the teacher. Evidence shows that teachers who have earned advanced degrees have a more affirmative impact on student achievement when the degrees earned are within the subject. This is especially accurate in high school while the impact of advanced degrees at the elementary level is mixed. Teacher compensation comes with a significant public investment. According to Rice (2003), “…in 2002 alone, the United States invested $192 billion in teacher pay and benefits” (p1). Therefore at the present time many states are demanding to eliminate higher pays to teachers with advanced degrees however professional and experienced teachers inquire adequate payment for the qualifications.

Professional Development
Positive education outcomes is achieved in both subject area and pedagogical contribution. Pedagogical professional development contributes to teacher effectiveness at all grade levels, particularly if coupled with content knowledge. To design professional development in order to improve student learning several facts are important. Under professional standards and learning of New Jersey: “The Professional Standards and Learning unit supports the work required to implement the New Jersey Professional Standards for teachers and school leaders and other state and federal educator quality initiatives” (State of New Jersey, Department of Education, 2010, Para, 1). Educator quality is one of the most important influences upon student achievement. High quality professional
development sessions are essential to increase of educators’ knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs.

In reviewing Miles and Frank’s four models for Investing in Teacher Quality (2008), two of the models exhibit professional development. The most effective professional development in improving educator practices are: result-oriented, data driven and job embedded. Exploring the link between purposeful resources and academic achievement, Miles and Frank (et al 2008) demonstrate how educators along with administrators can expand successful schools by assessing all obtainable resources such as; people, time, and money. The extensive research especially with urban schools and districts present a case that schools which successfully reorganized resources to implement improving teaching quality, generate individual attention and exploiting academic time attained the student achievement.

However a budget constraint translate to limited funding for teachers to attend professional developments or to invite guests to the districts. Teachers’ qualifications need a budget to advance and this conundrum needs to be solved by innovating personnel. The participation, collaboration, and knowledge gained at these professional developments are invaluable. The faculty and administration are require to weight options on how a district can continue to development of understanding in the field. Most importantly how to apply knowledge with faculty, students, and the administration.

Districts need to hire highly qualified teachers and maintain the positions to progress onto experienced teachers. To teach children effectively, teachers need continuing, sustained opportunities to extend knowledge and skills. Education objectives and demanding standards, more severe assessments plus more concentration in parental involvement, greater student diversity and increasing use of technology all obligate districts to build efforts on teachers’ quality. One important aspect of teacher quality is professional development and districts need to seek for financial resources when money is stretched. A teacher’s quality which has a direct link to students’ achievement is not reached inexpensive. In order not to fall in a trap of wasting money and time, districts investigate in different arenas.

Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC)

Department of Educational Leadership is required to meet with the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards (Boario, 2010, para 3) which was developed in 1995. In a study Bonds (2008), explained that agency demonstrates the ability to describe the economic factors shaping a local community and the effects economic factors have on local schools. Under the diversity related to ELCC, a learning environment for all students is optimized as in case of budget cuts the effects of economic factors on local schools in much greater.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)

Six standards are required under the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and an administrator is mandated to educate every child by promoting success, response to community with a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. Standard 6 indicates: “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context” (Florida Gulf Coast University, 2011, para 25). This standard points out to models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling.

Validate the importance of the ELCC and ISLLC standards in support of budget details

The standards are critical importance in creating, nurturing, and sustaining a culture in school climate within its political, social, economic and legal perspectives. A school leader integrates the national standards into sensible steps to achieve the ideal academic success for all students. It is also important to incorporate budget planning process while subsequently designing it. There are many factors working against the school leaders in many areas as the states and senate keep reducing the budget. However an intelligent leader will examine all options and implement the best available.

The use of data in era of budget cuts

The need for better decision making in the nation’s schools has grown with the rise of standards-based reform and performance accountability systems “The use of data in education remains an elusive concept and skill, yet the path to using data in making decisions is not out of reach or difficult to implement” (Technology Alliance, 2005, para1). Under the requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation (2001), school districts were obligated to test students, collect performance data and use the data to identify strengths and weaknesses in the educational system. Schools that did not demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) were identified as needing improvement and subject to instant interventions. Most often educators discuss on the disciplinary uses of data to improve instruction. Understanding and using data about school and student performance are significant to improving schools, “…meaningful information can be gained only from a proper analysis of data and that good decisions are based on this thoughtful process of inquiry and analysis” (Creighton, 2007, p. xi).

Encouraged by Obama administration, school systems are making significant progress in using student achievement data to drive continuous improvement. A report from the U.S. Department of Education suggests that educators are still looking for examples of how best to connect data to instruction, underscoring the need for more professional development focused on best practices in data-driven improvement” (eSchoolNews 2011, para 1).

Facing a budget freeze and growing across the board with budget reductions, districts depend on tightly integrated financial programs and schools analyze which actions proceed to improve efficiency. In a report conducted by Initiative for Collaborative Government (2011) it is stated: “…agency leaders must take a strategic, next-generation management approach to drive available funds to high-priority programs and find ways to create efficiencies in them” (para 4). Analyzing the data is one of the most significant evidence that a leader can create to allocate decisions that bring the most mission performance for each taxpayer dollar.

Comparing and contrasting measured data

Judgment unavoidably introduces a comparison. In order to contrast, the individual making the comparison uses standards to judge the issues. The purpose of comparing and contrasting is to adopt the right tool for the task in hand. In a data all approaches can be criticized or found insufficient. Administrators set up the budget by looking at the data and perform a needs assessment. In some cases the comparison and contrast of the data is executed, in order to complete a sufficient budget.

There are so many data sources that can be collected in education. On one hand the math and the standardized achievement are measured, but surely there are other ways to measure a schools or even an individual teacher’s evaluation.
Educators have learned how, when and where to collect data and how to interpret it. This will assist to establish how instructions and interventions can be adjusted to increase each student’s success. A measurable data promotes progress in a student’s academic and behavioral program as Johnson (2011) confirmed: “It is especially useful for helping students with autism, severe behavioral disabilities, or highly aggressive behavior” (para2).

Needs Assessment

Schools are struggling to integrate the budget and planning processes to follow various budgetary programs however it requires to remain on designated needs assessment bases. The purpose and outcome of many planning activities are questionable without an ability to redirect budgetary resources toward priorities. It is confirmed by Phelps (1996) that common budget themes included leveraging central resources by supporting highest priorities exclusively, encouraging interdisciplinary programming, and aligning new budget allocations with plan objectives.

The schools which are most successful in influencing extra time to support student learning have identified a clear academic focus and carefully analyzed the students’ needs. The focus is used by schools to determine how to benefit from the school day and continuously monitor the impact of the time management on students’ performance.

Approaches to Proceed Successful Educational Programs

Tax laws differ in states to fund schools however New Jersey school funding comes from two sources: property taxes and state aid. An equalization factor may be used to raise or lower assessments in an actual district or county. This issue is important to local governments because state funding to education is based on assessed value of the property. The town, county, state and school districts all have different formulas in distribution of property taxes in various towns. Beyond the federal, state, and local funds, districts are engaged in fundraising and-or applying for grants. Additional alternative sources which have to pass the legislature is sales tax and lottery earning.

Fundraisers

Schools are a different from many years ago and the fear of school closure due to poor performance or taken by the state are genuine. Teachers make sure that all students learn the subject matter and meet academic standards to pass the standardized state tests. Students have to designate participation in the meaningful function of the society and learn careers in a multicultural society. These needs are taught to all students regardless of the English language proficiency, special education, gifted and talented, motivated or unmotivated children. Salaries, cost of maintenance and utilities are up while insurance costs in addition to issues of management and marketing.

To approach a fundraising, the ideas are described and planned. All appropriate materials, contacts and a profit tracking system must be organized and gathered, while mission statement is clearly stated. This form of outside financial support will involve public with the school functions and needs of students.

Grants

School districts across the state of New Jersey were put in punitive place by the governor’s $820 million cut in school aid in 2010. As a result, districts laid off staff, cut programs, reduced busing, and increased property taxes despite the 2% property tax increased which Governor Christie proposed. The year before in 2009 the state Supreme Court upheld a new school funding formula that distributes aid to more districts based on enrollment. The extra money was available to schools with high concentrations of students who are poor, had special needs or limited English skill. Immediate need for districts to finalize budgets and prepare for the 2010-11 school year was days apart. Immediately some districts accomplished different ways of earning money, the ideas were concise and fully detailed in order to convince the grant givers that results are great. Districts necessitate to allocate with a long term plans of grants.

Community

Familiarization with the Community

- Investigating the higher education institutions: Many local colleges work closely with districts if there is a positive relationship between the school and the college. In return, colleges charge less or none to train faculty members at schools and-or the faculty members are able to attend seminars presented by the college for less or no money.
- Investigate the professionals in the community: There are professional employees in every community. For example doctors, chiropractors and nurses along with investigators and police officers can lead sessions in drug abuse for health teachers. The district can utilize this method as an advertisement for a specific profession additionally. In some cases the professionals utilize such opportunity as own staff development. Certain dance companies offer professional development free of charge or with minimal charges for professional development as well as for students.
- Investigate local companies: Few companies dedicate time and resources to professional development for health educators, school nurses and other subjects.
- Building a network: The districts create a script to approach each person when inviting to participate. The network is local to share knowledge and experience.
- Attracting human resources: Every school has teachers, coaches, facilitators or administrators who are specialized in one or two areas. These personnel are able to utilize and contribute the knowledge with other educators. In the field of physical education many teachers have existed as athletes, personal trainers or currently are coaches. These faculty members can donate the time in exchange for more hours of professional development.
- Complimentary services: Certain agencies such as US Tennis Association, NJ Women’s Golf Association, Jump Rope for Heart and Horizon offer free of charge professional development. These service are conventionally available for non-traditional sports. The school also can inquire parents and guardians to work during lunch, recess and dismissal as well as dedicate few hours per day to assist with teachers’ work or some office performance. In addition these individuals can coordinate different school functions such as; book fair, field day, carnivals or health or career days.

Conclusion

A budget contains difficulty in write, especially with the number of articles that must be factored in, and considered. An administrator considers all facts from salary based staff to insurance costs in addition to issues of managing the physical facility, supplies, equipment and maintenance. In recent years schools were struck by budget cuts which dominated the America's public schools. In a Rundquist, (2011) wrote: “Gov. Chris Christie's deep cuts to state school aid last year left New Jersey's schools unable to provide a ‘thorough and efficient’ education to the state's nearly 1.4 million school children, a Superior Court judge found today” (para 1).
Over the past few years a debate over how states fund education in the midst of a deep budget deficit has raged in state capitals. In one corner are people such as governors, state senators and legislators who believe that in times of fiscal crisis, the endlessly escalating court-mandated cost of education, like the cost of anything else in government, is a cause for great concern. This group claims that they have enough faith and trust of talented, dedicated educators to know that to reform the system by value classroom performance over seniority and student outcomes over dollars.

Others hold a different view, aside from eliminating much of the testing they believe that spending determines the quality of education our children receive. Quarels (2011) stated: “A growing movement is being built in many cities to fight school closures and budget cuts and defend public education” (para 4). After years of Abbott Districts in New Jersey, statistics have shown that NJ’s poor/minority students do better than nearly all the poor/minority students in the U.S. Schools simply cannot function without money to pay expenses. It does not matter which way an administrator glimpse at budget, the necessary money to operate an institution should be available to educate every child.

References
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