# School Finance Adequacy and the Evidence Based Model as Applied to Alaska

Presentation to the Task Force on Education Funding

Lawrence O. Picus November 10, 2025



Improving the way public resources for education are translated into improved student learning



## **EB School Improvement Model**

- Analyze student performance data
- Ambitious goals
- Review evidence of good instruction and effective curriculum
- Invest in professional development including using instructional coaches

- Extra help for struggling students
- Restructure the school day
- Strong leadership for databased decision making
- Professional school cultures
- External professional knowledge
- Talent matters



### **Evidence Based Model**

Staffing for Core Programs

Dollar Per Pupil Resources

Central Office Functions Resources for Struggling Students

State Specific Factors



# Evidence Based Model

Resources for Struggling Students

#### Special Education

- Tutors
- Pupil Support
- Extended Day

- Summer School
- ELL
- Alternative Schools

### School Specific Factors

- Salary Levels
- Health Insurance
- Benefits

Central Office

#### O & M; Central Office; Transportation; Food Services

Dollar Per Pupil Resources

• Gifted and Talented

Professional Development

• Instructional Materials

Assessment

Technology

• CTE Equipment

• Student Activities

#### **Teachers**

Staffing for Core Programs

- Elementary & Secondary
- Elective/Specialist
- Additional CTE
- Minimum Teachers
- Substitutes

#### **Other Certified**

- Instructional Coaches
- Core Tutors
- Core Counselors& Nurses
- Library/Tech.

Full-Day K

### School Admin and Support

- Principals and APs
- School Clerical
- Supervisory Aides



### Recommendations from Our April 2024 Study

- EB BSA estimated at \$13,995
  - ELL \$6,464 (weight of 0.43)
  - Low Income (non-ELL) \$4,769 (weight of 0.34)
  - Special education weight of 0.70 per student with mild and moderate disabilities and assumes students with severe disabilities are fully state funded
- Need to reorder the way WADM is computed to apply these values to Alaska



### Calculation of the BSA

### **Current Funding Formula**

- 1. School based size adjustment
- 2. Apply the district cost factor (update the cost factor)
- 3. Special needs factor (ELL, mild and moderate SPED, gifted, Vocational Ed.)
- 4. Additional weight of 0.015 for CTE
- 5. Intensive needs factor
- 6. Add correspondence students

### **Proposed EB Allocation Formula**

- 1. School based size adjustment
- 2. Add the additional ADM for FRL, ELL and mild and moderate SPED so WADM includes size and student need
- 3. Compute EB Basic Need (EB WADM times EB BSA)
- 4. Apply the district cost factor
- 5. Add correspondence students
- Add intensive special education student dollars (not cost adjusted)
- 7. Compute total EB Basic Need



### Advantage of Proposed EB Allocation Formula

- Starts with an "accurate" estimate of per pupil costs
- Adjustments are additive rather than multiplicative
- Applies the cost factor or adjustment at the end of the WADM computation for student counts that are appropriately adjusted by that factor
- Can be easily computed with existing data and incorporated into an updated school funding formula



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