

Funding School Facilities: Equal is not Equitable

By Dr. G. Victor Hellman, Jr., Research Project Director
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Two concepts that are essential to Vincent and Jain's analysis are *equitable* and *adequate*.

In November 2015, Berkley's Jeffrey Vincent and Liz Jain released the study, *Going it Alone: Can California's K-12 School Districts Adequately and Equitably Fund School Facilities?* They conducted an analysis of spending on K-12 public school facilities within the state of California utilizing metrics that compare to industry standards. Overall, they find substantial rates of underinvestment. While these

findings have important implications for California policy, the authors have provided a practical framework for analysis that can be used by other states to examine the equity and adequacy of their facility financing.

Adequate funding implies that the funding is sufficient to meet the needs or bring about the desired results for that which is funded. For example, adequate funds must be budgeted to meet the school division's operational and capital needs.

Now let's examine the concept of *equitable*. On a simplistic level, it is tempting to think of *equitable* and *equal* as synonymous. This is not the case. Equality implies that all parties are treated equally. Using per pupil funding

under the concept of equality would imply each school division within a state or each school within a division receives the same dollar amount per student. While this method achieves *equality* of funding, it is not necessarily an equitable process. Simply put, the concept of equity implies funding at a different level depending upon the needs. At the core of equity is the fact that *needs differ* and spending must too. A community with a high percentage of low socioeconomic students may need to spend more per pupil to level the playing field. Some communities have higher real estate assessments (AV) on a per capita basis than others. These communities are able to generate revenue easier than their lower socio-economic neighbors. Only by funding equitably can equality be achieved.



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A copy of the complete study can be found at <http://www.efc.gwu.edu/library/reports/going-it-alone-can-californias-k-12-school-districts-adequately-and-equitably-fund-school-facilities/>