
Disparities Between Urban and Suburban Schools



Brief #12

July 2, 2015

The Education Trust calculated the funding gap per student by poverty, minority background, and by state, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Education, for the 2003-2004 school year. The numbers are staggering for many states. In the State of Pennsylvania, the gap between revenues per student in the highest- and lowest poverty districts is \$1,001 and it is \$454 per student in the highest-and lowest-minority districts. (Hobson, pp. 17-18)

In America we have accepted that public education is critical to the very foundation of our country. Are all schools provided with the same resources, quality of teaching, facilities, and parental support? We sometimes do not speak the obvious, but think about the schools you have visited in urban areas and how they differ from schools in the suburbs. The literature exposes the achievement gap in urban and suburban areas, but what about the funding gap? What differences are related to the funding in urban and rural areas?

The consequences of funding disparities in American schools are sobering. “The funding gap shows that many low-income minority students are subjected to inferior facilities, less adequate teachers, and an incomparable curriculum to their counterparts” (Wright, 2012). Russo (2011) made the point more poignant when he wrote about Illinois schools, “In both 2002 and 2011, the 10 poorest schools on average spent 30 percent of what the 10 richest schools spent on average to educate each student. . .”

Funding inequalities are present in federal, state, and local governments. Equalizing this funding is not likely to equalize the education all students receive; however, it is the first step to enhancing the education of our urban youth.

It seems only fitting that all students attend school in clean, healthy, safe environments; that they have quality teachers; that we rid our American public education system of the plague of disparities in educational quality and financing.

[Read Full Summary.](#)

The Education Facilities Clearinghouse (EFC) is a program of The George Washington University and the Graduate School of Education and Human Development and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.