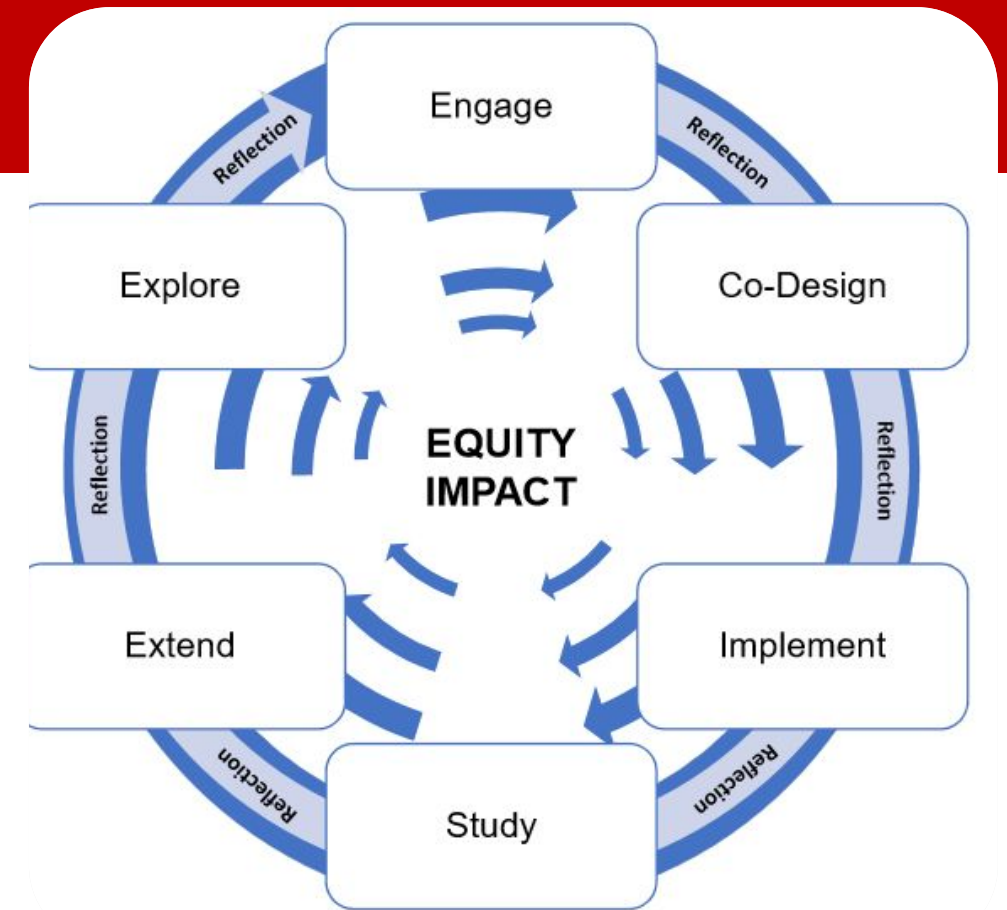


Addressing Funding Inequality in Texas K-12 Schools

Introduction The disparities in school funding across Texas significantly impact educational opportunities and outcomes. The reliance on local property taxes, the uneven distribution of state aid, and the shortcomings of the recapture system exacerbate these inequalities, affecting both urban and rural districts differently. This project proposes targeted policies to mitigate funding disparities, ensuring equitable education for all Texas students.

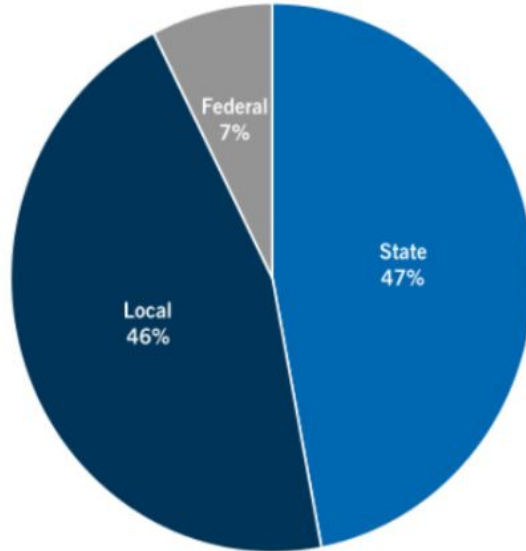


The IEL Equity Impact Framework

Lisa McNeill, M.Ed., Texas EPFP 2023-2024 Fellow

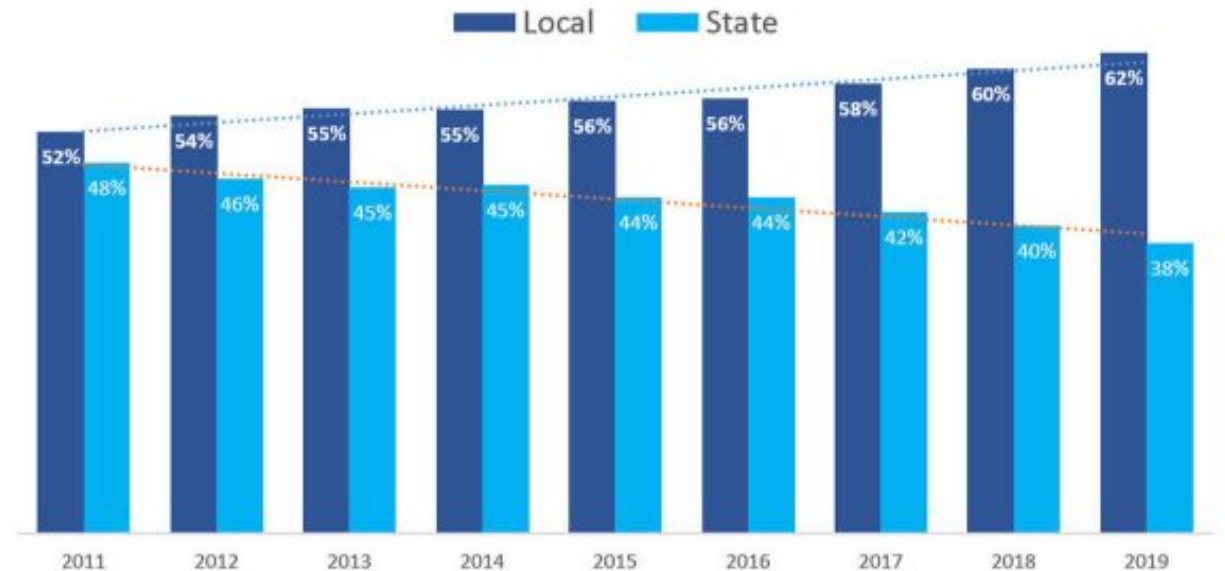
Addressing Funding Inequality in Texas K-12 Schools

EDUCATION FUNDING BY SOURCE, 2019–2020 SCHOOL YEAR



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, May 2022.
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Most Funding for Schools Comes from Local Property Taxes



Source: Legislative Budget Board. Does not include federal funds outside of Foundation School Program or grants.

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Education Policy Fellowship Program

Lisa McNeill, M.Ed., Texas EPFP 2023-2024 Fellow

Addressing Funding Inequality in Texas K-12 Schools

■ Actions Taken During the Policy Project Process:

- **Initial Research and Data Collection:** Conducted research on historical and current funding mechanisms, including property tax reliance and the recapture system.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Organized discussions and feedback sessions with educators, administrators, and community members to understand firsthand the challenges faced by underfunded districts.
- **Policy Analysis:** Analyzed the effectiveness of past legislative measures such as House Bill 3 and compared them with successful models from other states.
- **Collaboration with Experts:** Consulted with education policy experts and advocacy groups to develop comprehensive policy recommendations.
- **Drafting Policy Proposals:** Created detailed policy recommendations focusing on increasing state contributions and implementing weighted student funding.
- **Presentation and Advocacy:** Presented findings and proposed solutions to stakeholders, policymakers, and educational committees for consideration and action.

Addressing Funding Inequality in Texas K-12 Schools

■ Future Directions for Advocacy and Change-Making

- **Continued Engagement with Policymakers:** Maintain a dialogue with state legislators to push for comprehensive funding reforms and ensure policies are adapted to evolving educational needs.
- **Community-Based Advocacy:** Mobilize community members to advocate for equitable funding solutions and participate in local decision-making processes.
- **Partnerships for Innovative Solutions:** Collaborate with non-profits, educational think tanks, and technology partners to develop programs that address resource gaps through modern solutions.
- **Monitoring and Accountability:** Establish long-term oversight mechanisms to track the effectiveness of implemented policies and adjust strategies as needed.
- **Leadership Development:** Support emerging education leaders and policy fellows in gaining expertise and practical skills to lead future initiatives that promote educational equity.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch targeted campaigns to raise public awareness about funding disparities and their impact on student outcomes, fostering broader support for policy changes.

Addressing Funding Inequality in Texas K-12 Schools

Conclusion

- For a K-12 educator with 25 years of experience, understanding and addressing funding inequalities is not just a policy concern—it is a reflection of my lived professional reality. The disparities in school funding directly affect classroom resources, teacher retention, and student outcomes. With firsthand knowledge of how funding challenges shape educational quality and opportunity, educators play a pivotal role in advocating for meaningful reforms. By engaging in data-driven advocacy, fostering collaborative partnerships, and supporting policies that ensure equitable distribution of resources, experienced educators can contribute to building an education system where funding is not a barrier to student success. Sustained efforts in this direction will help bridge the gap between districts, promote fairness, and provide all students with the foundation they need to thrive.