

Aligning School Finance to Performance Goals

Prepared for WA House K-12 Finance Workgroup

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Helping Schools Accomplish Ambitious Goals

- **You are addressing key questions—**
alignment and resource use
- **Your questions require school finance redesign—**
uniform goals, beyond resource distribution to results
- **There are no off-the-shelf answers—**
staff, educators, experts, public have helpful ideas
- **No example, expert, or interest can substitute for your judgment in this matter—**it's up to you
- **In face of uncertainty—**
studies, policies that match knowledge/agreement, and experiments are reasonable approaches

A Word About Equity and Adequacy

Does adequacy mean giving up equity?

- **No, it means moving from resource distribution to results.**

“It would, of course, be possible for the state to offer plaintiffs equal educational opportunity but still offer them virtually no opportunity at all.” Alabama Supreme Court, 1993

A Word About Equity and Adequacy

continued

Does adequacy mean more money?

- **It means linking resources to learning.**

Adequacy “obligates the state to provide its children with an education that will in fact benefit them by offering them appropriate preparation for the responsible duties of life.”

Alabama Supreme Court, 1993

SFRP—Overview

What is SFRP's Purpose?

- **Redesign school finance to support student performance**

How will it operate?

- **Provide new empirical basis and policy options**
- **Support policy initiatives**
- **Inform audiences that shape policy and practice**

SFRP—Research

Knowledge base—

- **How finance structures constrain/facilitate performance**
- **How money matters for schools**

Policy options—

- **“How people learn”**
- **High quality teachers**
- **Closing the achievement gap**
- **High-performing schools**
- **Linking finance to learning**
- **Feasibility of redesign options**

Implementation tools—

- **Tool for simulating state problem solving with finance options**
- **Tool for changing district spending**

SFRP—Research Team

Individuals from the following institutions:

- University of Washington
- The RAND Corporation
- University of Southern California
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Vanderbilt University
- Education Resource Strategies
- Sharp Consulting
- Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media

Asking the Right Questions

What is the scope of a school finance system?

- **State, district, school; federal, private actors**
- **Distribution, allocation, use of resources**

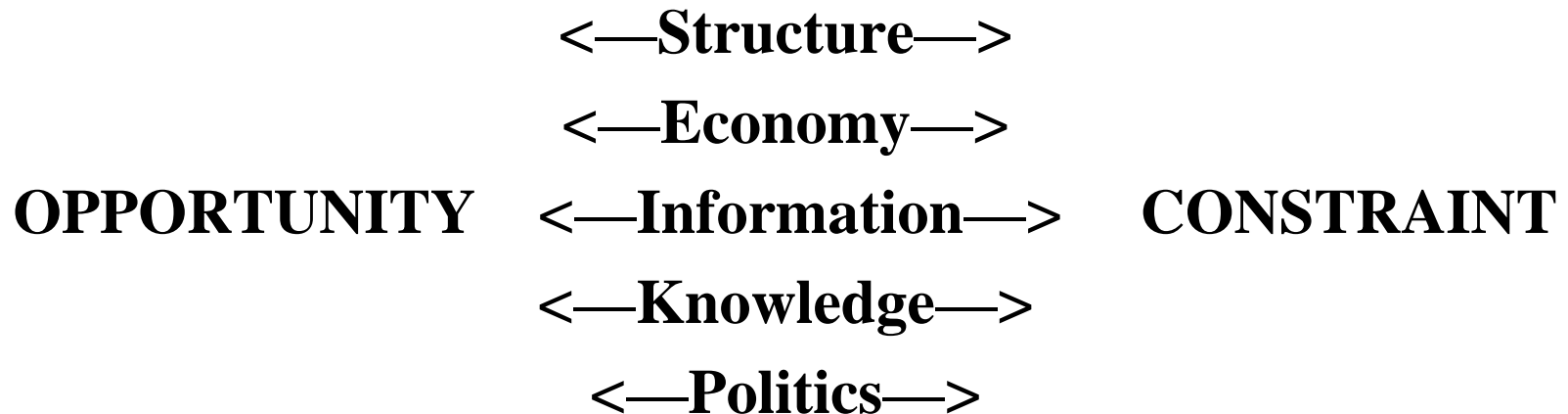
Asking the Right Question continued

What parts deserve attention?

- **Structure** (formulas, programs, rules, decision points)
- **Economy** (tax structure and level of support)
- **Information** (about finance and performance)
- **Knowledge** (about goals and means to accomplish them)
- **Politics** (what, how, why, by whom decisions are made)

Finance-Performance Alignment

Balance Points



Target: How Individuals Learn

- **Motivation (goals and contexts)**
- **Capacity (general and specific skills)**
- **Pressure/support**
 - Incentives, inducements**
 - Information**
 - Materials**
 - Support**
 - Opportunities to practice**
- **In schools**

Implications for Finance Policy

- Create incentives that focus on performance goals
- Build capacity to get job done
- Seek classroom, school, or system conditions that link resources to learning
- Create flexibility for school-level problem solving
- Coordinate state, district, school roles
- Create, manage data systems that support alignment
- Protect students & teachers from competing demands