K-12 Data Study Proposed Final Report

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee

February 21, 2007

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Study Background

- 2005 JLARC study (#05-19) found that expenditure information is reported at the *district* level.

- Outcomes are reported at the *school* level.

- JLARC members recognized there would be costs and challenges to collect uniform and reliable school spending information.

- Committee addendum to 2005 study directed JLARC staff to propose ways to overcome challenges and improve data.
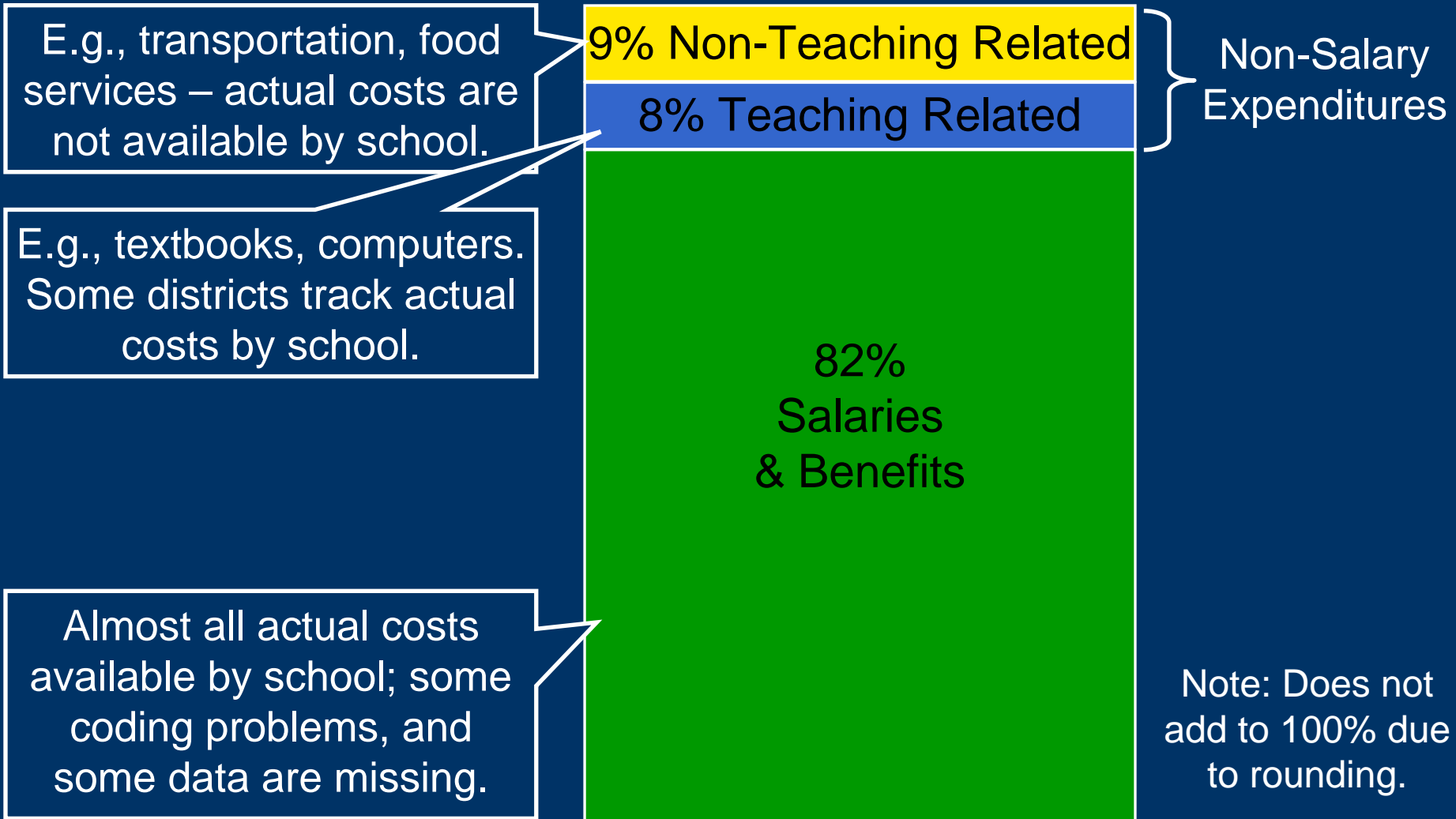
Study Scope

- Work with Washington Learns staff and local school districts and boards to identify critical school performance data that would enhance informed resource commitments.

- Address related changes to information systems and accounting practices.

Data Categories

- Research and interviews showed that the relationship between expenditures and outcomes is complex.

- Four types of data are needed:

  1. School-level expenditures
  2. Teacher & staff descriptive data
  3. Student descriptive data and outcomes
  4. School & community descriptive data

1. School-Level Expenditures

E.g., transportation, food services – actual costs are not available by school.

9% Non-Teaching Related

8% Teaching Related

Non-Salary Expenditures

E.g., textbooks, computers. Some districts track actual costs by school.

82%
Salaries
& Benefits

Almost all actual costs available by school; some coding problems, and some data are missing.

Note: Does not add to 100% due to rounding.

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2. Teacher/Staff Descriptive Data

- Teacher/staff descriptive data needed:
  - Specific grade(s) and subject area(s) taught
  - Teacher schedules, including courses taught and a teacher identifier that links to student schedules
  - Academic majors, degrees, and routes to certification
  - Professional growth plan and record of training completed
  - Reasons for additional pay

- Data spread across several data systems and hard to tie together.

3. Student Descriptive and Outcome Data

- Most necessary data are currently collected through the Core Student Records System.

- Data still needed include:
  - Better information about courses
  - A college readiness test

- Routine data audits to ensure comparability and accuracy are needed.

4. School & Community Descriptive Data

- School & community descriptive data are useful in explaining the teaching and learning environment.

- Some data are already collected and JLARC supports use of existing data.

- No consensus on importance of additional data.

- Not recommending additional data collection at this time.

Priorities for Data Collection

1. Focus first on collecting school-level expenditures (Recommendations 1-3).

2. Next, collect additional descriptive data about teachers and staff (Recommendation 4).

3. Then turn to collecting additional student data (Recommendations 5-7).

4. Lastly, address collection of additional school & community descriptive data (No Recommendation).

Recommendation #1: Expenditure Data

OSPI should collect missing salary/benefit data, and use school codes that can be linked to outcomes.

OFM: Concur

OSPI: Concur

Recommendation #2: Expenditure Data

OSPI should collect teaching related non-salary expenditures by school using standard codes and definitions (and report back to JLARC by July 2007).

OFM: Partially Concur – concerns over cost

OSPI: Concur

Recommendation #3: Expenditure Data

OSPI should develop a statewide standardized methodology for allocating all other expenditures to schools (and report back to JLARC by July 2007).

OFM: Concur

OSPI: Concur

Recommendation #4: Teacher/Staff Data

OSPI should develop a plan for creating a unified staff data system that includes all descriptive data currently collected, plus the missing data identified by JLARC. (Report plan, including timeline and costs, to JLARC by September 2007.)

OFM: Partially Concur – concerns over cost

OSPI: Concur with Reservations – concurs with developing plan, but has reservations about the feasibility of collecting elements relevant to state-level policy making

Recommendation #5: Student Data

OSPI should conduct regular audits of student data.

OFM: Concur

OSPI: Concur

Recommendation #6: Student Data

OSPI should identify an appropriate college readiness test and report back to Legislature.

OFM: Concur

OSPI: Partially Concur – recommends focusing on the Transition Math Project

Auditor Response: Urge OSPI in its analysis to consider other areas in addition to mathematics

Recommendation #7: Student Data

OSPI should collect better information about courses, including:

- Course minutes

- Core coursework completed by students

- A common course catalogue with standardized naming conventions for courses

OFM: Partially Concur – concerns over cost

OSPI: Concur

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