

**K-12 DATA STUDY**  
**PROPOSED FINAL REPORT**

**REPORT DIGEST**  
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STATE OF WASHINGTON

JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND  
REVIEW COMMITTEE

**STUDY TEAM**  
Nina Oman  
John Bowden

**PROJECT SUPERVISOR**  
Keenan Konopaski

**LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR**  
Ruta Fanning

Copies of Final reports and Digests are  
available on the JLARC website at:

<http://jlarc.leg.wa.gov>

or contact

Joint Legislative Audit & Review  
Committee  
506 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
Olympia, WA 98501-2323  
(360) 786-5171  
(360) 786-5180 FAX

## Study Background

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) conducted this study to enhance both the Legislature's and school districts' ability to **make informed resource commitments**. A JLARC review of school spending and performance in November 2005 found that while schools are increasingly held accountable for the performance of their students, **school-level expenditures are not reported to the state**.

## Study Objectives

To explore the connection between school expenditures and student and school outcomes, this study focuses on the following four objectives:

1. Describe existing (and planned) data systems and accounting practices;
2. Identify data elements that may prove helpful for evaluating the relationship between resource commitments and performance;
3. Propose potential models for collecting and reporting resource and performance information; and
4. Describe associated changes to information systems and accounting practices under various data models.

## Types of Data that Are Necessary

**The relationship between expenditures and outcomes is complex.** To help explain why a dollar expended a certain way either produced or did not produce the desired outcome, four types of data are necessary:

1. School-Level Expenditure Data;
2. Descriptive Data about Teachers and Other Staff;
3. Descriptive Data about Students and Student Outcome Data; and
4. Descriptive Data about Schools and Communities.

## Conclusions

JLARC staff reviewed the literature, surveyed other states, and consulted with researchers, school staff and administrators, and state agency staff and concluded that:

**Fairly reliable data already exist that account for most staff salaries and benefits expended by school.** These data could be improved by:

- Requiring that the same set of school codes be used to report both salary and benefit expenditures and school outcomes; and
- Requiring that end of year, total expenditures be reported by school and by staff member for all salaries and benefits.

**Actual expenditures for activities related to teaching and its support should be reported by school. All other expenditures should be allocated to schools using a standardized statewide methodology.**

**Better data about teachers and staff are needed, including:**

- Teacher schedules, including grade(s) and subject area(s) for courses being taught;
- Types of certifications and endorsements;
- Academic degrees, majors, and routes to certification;
- Professional growth plans and progress toward meeting goals; and
- Reasons for additional pay for certificated staff.

**OSPI collects most of the student descriptive and outcome data identified in research literature as essential, but these data could be improved by adding:**

- Routine data audits to assess the comparability of student data collected from the districts;
- College readiness test scores; and
- Better information about courses, including course minutes and core coursework completed, and standard conventions for naming courses.

**Further consideration and analysis are needed to determine the costs and benefits of reporting additional school and community information.** Some of these data are now collected via surveys and not always collected by individual schools. Because of the complexities involved with collecting and reporting some of these data, we identify these data elements as “useful” rather than “necessary.”

**Summary of Recommendations:**

- OSPI, in consultation with others, should develop state standards and methodologies for reporting and allocating school-level expenditures.
- OSPI should collect improved information about teachers and staff, including teacher schedules, qualifications, professional growth, and reasons for additional pay.
- OSPI should conduct regular audits of the student data it collects.
- OSPI should collect better information about courses, including course minutes, and core coursework completed by students in preparation for college. OSPI should also develop statewide conventions that districts adhere to when naming courses.
- OSPI should conduct an analysis to determine the college readiness test that best fits the state’s needs.

The diagram shown on the following page provides a summary of the current status of K-12 data collected by the state, with the gray-shaded areas indicating a need to collect additional data. The diagram also shows how data could be linked together. By linking the different types of data together, researchers and policymakers can learn how teacher, staff, and student characteristics affect the relationship between expenditures and outcomes.

### School Expenditure Data

School ID
Employee ID
Expenditures for teacher/staff salaries and benefits (94%)
School ID
Object Code
Activity Code
Expenditures for teacher/staff salaries and benefits (6%)
Non-salary expenditures directly related to teaching and its support at a single school
Allocated expenditures for all other costs

Gray shaded = Missing data not available for every school

### Staff/Teacher Descriptive Data

School ID (Location Code)
Employee ID/Certification No.
Birth date, gender, race/ethnicity
Program assignment
Job duty code
Years of experience
Highest degree obtained
Institutions attended
Years degrees granted
Academic credits beyond highest degree
In-service credits
Grade span taught
Types of certification and years earned
Certifications and endorsements
Teacher subject knowledge test scores
Teacher schedules including courses or grades and subject areas taught
Academic majors, degrees, and routes to certification
Professional growth plan and record of professional development training completed
Reasons for additional pay

### Student Descriptive and Outcome

School ID
Teacher/Employee ID
Student ID
School Year
Grade level
<u>Demographic information</u> (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, disability status)
<u>Program participation</u> (e.g., Title I, free/reduced lunch)
<u>Transcripts</u> : courses completed and grades (planned)
<u>Graduation/dropout data</u> : Expected graduation year Actual graduation year
<u>Test scores</u> WASL scores (grades 3-8 and 10) Kindergarten readiness (planned) K-3 outcomes (planned)
College readiness
Ability to match to baccalaureate records
Course minutes
Core courses completed

### School/Community Descriptive

School ID
School Size
Percentage of students by program
Student health and risk factors
Income/education (Census data)
Nine characteristics of effective schools
Percentage of students based
Volunteer hours
Student access to computers and Internet
Condition and use of school facilities

Source: JLARC.