Defining Equity and Student Need Reflective of Student Demographics

2016 CDE Equity & Excellence Conference

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November 4, 2016

Equity Definition - Dictionary

- Fairness
- Balance
- To make adjustments so you can create fairness and balance
- Is not the same as equal

Equity – School Finance

- Equity Study
  - Examines Horizontal and Vertical Equity along with Fiscal Neutrality
    - Horizontal Equity – Examines if like districts are treated similarly
    - Vertical Equity – Examines how differences are treated within the system
    - Fiscal Neutrality – Measures the relationship between the wealth of a district and the resources available to serve students.

Equity in Education Policy

- Need to recognize differences that impact students and to create learning opportunities that offset differences.
- Differences can include:
  - Course offerings
  - Education settings
  - Program quality and offerings
  - Student differentiation
  - Staff expertise

Equity – School Finance Formula

- State funding formulas can help address equity by adjusting for student and district characteristics that are beyond district control including: student need (special education, English language leaners, gifted and talented, and at-risk), district size and regional cost differences.
  - Adjustments can help account for loss of opportunity in program offerings, and ability to recruit and retain teachers
- Formula needs to account for the wealth and tax effort of districts.
- A good formula has adequacy and equity.

Equity Challenges in Colorado

Students	Minimum	Maximum
Enrollment Count	3	90,234
% At-Risk	2.7%	90.5%
% ELL	0.0%	41.0%
% Special Ed	0.0%	21.0%

Equity Challenges in Colorado

- What students do we include? Are special education, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented and At-Risk (free and reduced lunch) the right students?
- How do we make adjustments for size – and economies of scale – creating opportunities for students?
- How do we address taxpayer equity?

Equity Challenges in Colorado

- Using weights derived from the 2013 state costing out study, a need factor can be derived for each district.

Mean (Average)	1.33
Median	1.32
Min	1.12
Max	1.68

Equity Challenges in Colorado

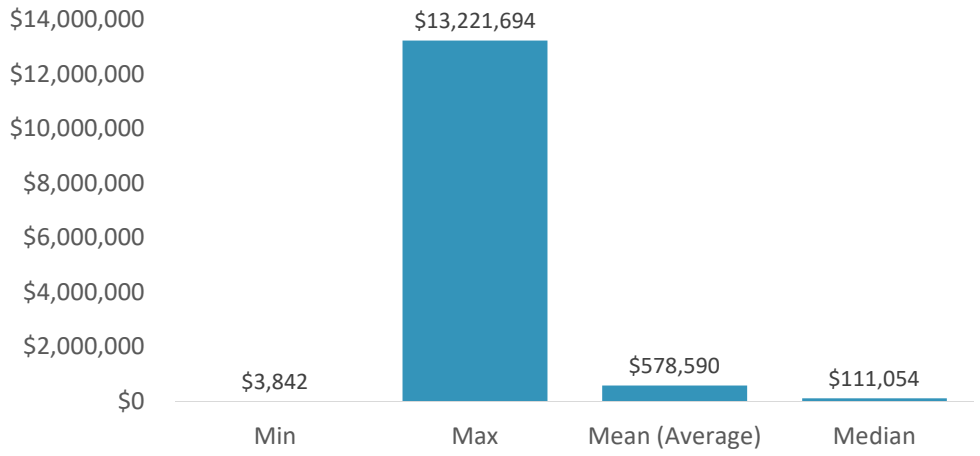
- With the differences in size, need factors can be adjusted for size differential also.

Mean (Average)	1.92
Median	1.79
Min	1.17
Max	2.95

Equity Challenges in Colorado

- In addition to student need differences, districts have very different capacities to address these differences.
- The state allows districts to fund operations above the state formula through local mill levy overrides.
- Nearly all funding for capital projects is provided locally.
- This means that a districts wealth per pupil is an important factor in raising both operating and capital dollars.

Equity Challenge – $ One Mill Raised



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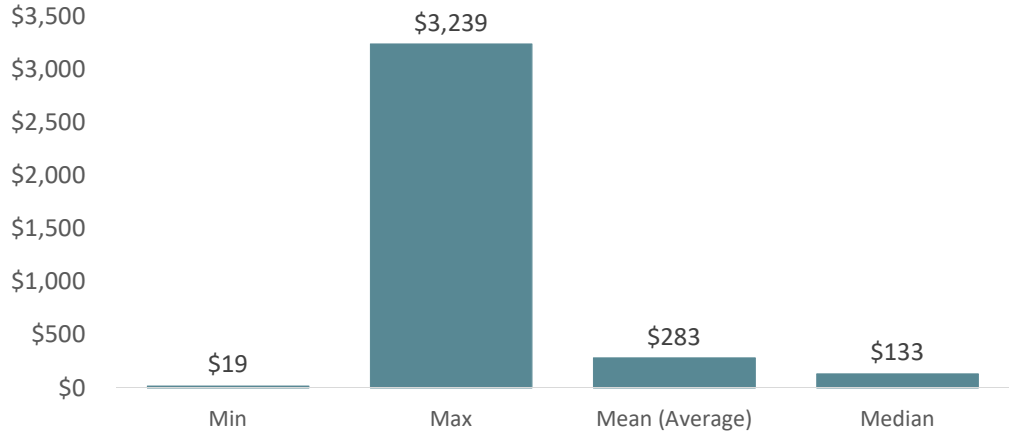
Equity Challenge: $ One Mill Raised Per Student



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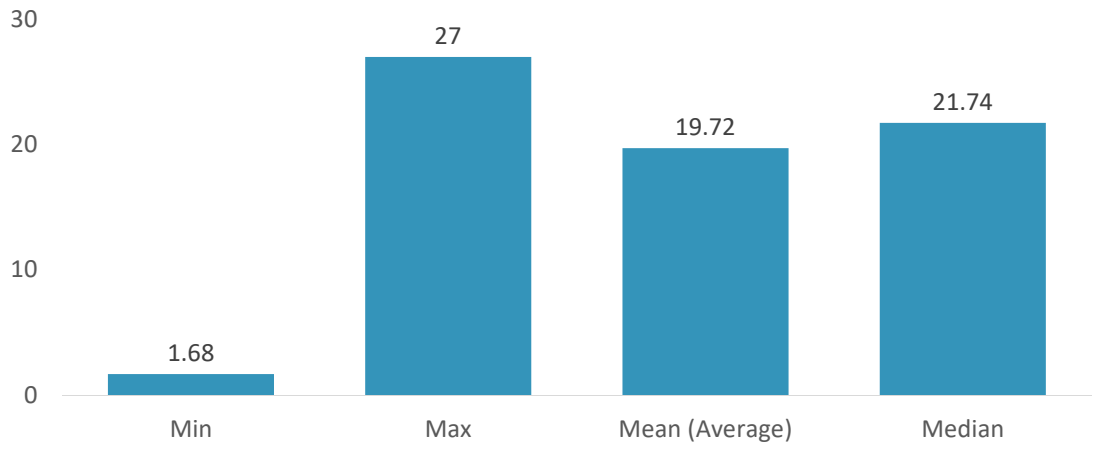
Taxpayer Equity Challenge: Total Program Mills



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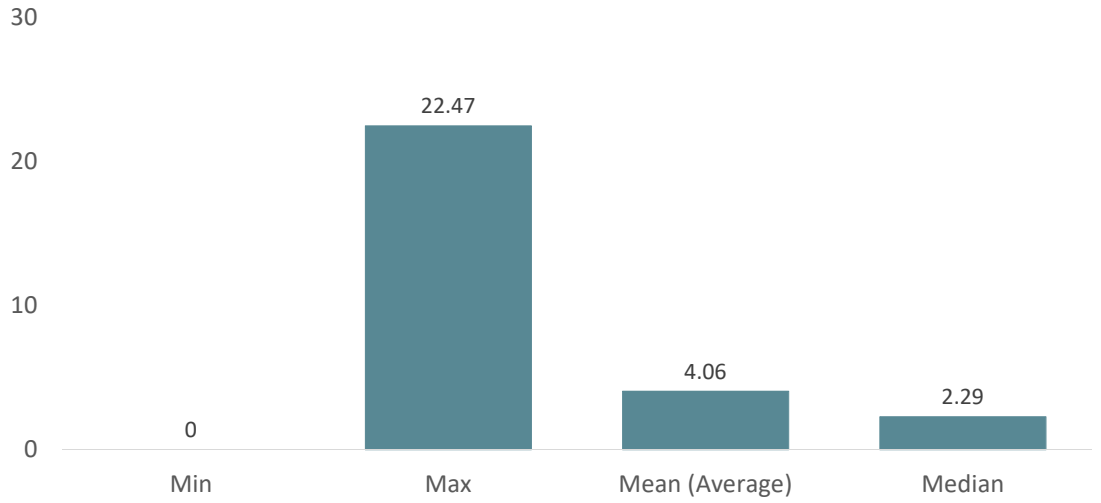
Taxpayer Equity Challenge: Total Override Mills



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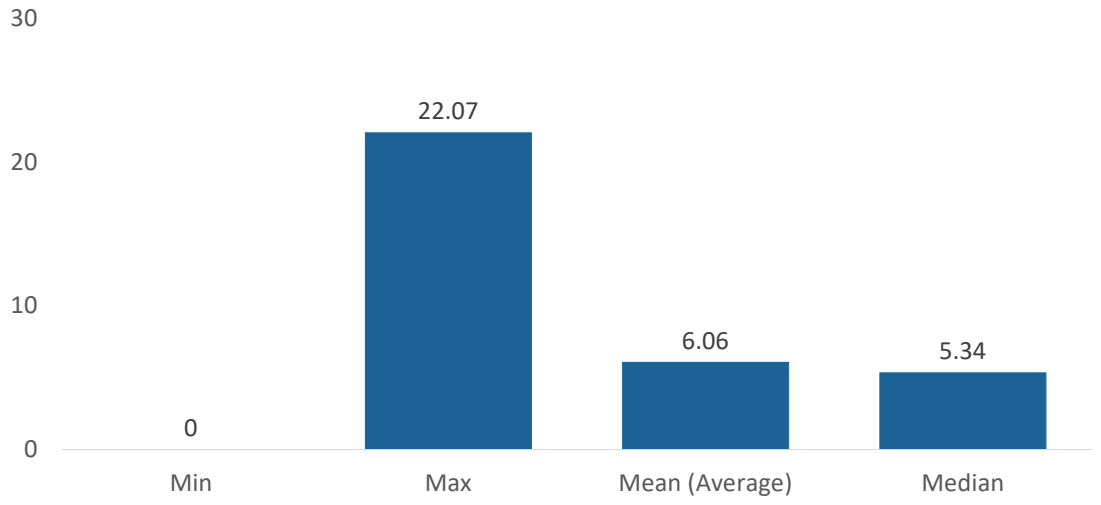
Taxpayer Equity Challenge: Total Bond Mills



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Bringing Together Policy-Funding and Equity

- The latest school finance act was enacted in 1994.
- The act was put into place at the beginning of standards when no state assessments existed.
- No state accreditation system was in place and no statewide teacher evaluations existed.
- It was the first year of charter school implementation and there was no on-line options, Post Secondary and Work Force readiness, statewide graduation guidelines, third grade literacy requirements, and minimal pre-school offerings.
- The act required 40 mills locally to ensure a 50/50 state/local split.
- The act differentiated funding for at-risk (free lunch), district size, and cost of living variances.

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Evaluating 1994 in 2016

- Over 300,000 more students
- Over 200 languages taught – 25% population
- At-risk students encompass 40% of population
- Measuring student growth and yearly progress
- Mills range from less than 2 to 27
- State picks up 62% - locals 38%
- Negative factor – impact – economies of scale and differentiation reduced

A Plan Forward/Change

- Leadership – a vision of educational excellence that creates opportunities for all students – addresses equity between students, opportunity for students to have access to high quality programs delivered by high quality educators.
- 4 step plan –
  - Is there a problem?
  - How big is the problem?
  - What analysis and research needs to be done to indicate how big and how to create a solution?
  - Leadership in creating a solution forward – implement over time

Where is Colorado in this Plan?

- Agreement on the problem
- Determining how big the problem
- Research being done to determine the size and potential ideas for a solution.
- Leadership – Superintendents across the state

Determining How Big a Problem and Solution

- Equity Analysis – student need factor, adjusted for size
- Adequacy Analysis – Evidenced Based, Professional organizations recommendations, Successful School District, and Professional Judgment
- Results create an equity need for each school district and an appropriate multiplier to address adequate resources

Questions: Now & Later

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