

## 1: Higher Education | Finance, Funding, Affordability in Education

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Learn about the 10 biggest problems with public schools today, both from the perspective of the administrators and the teachers. Few would argue that the state of our education system has plenty of room for improvement. However, developing a plan to take schools in the right direction is easier said than done. The first challenge lies in identifying underlying problems keeping students from learning today. This challenge, in part, is due to the fact that the problems may change considerably depending on who is labeling them, whether it is students, parents, educators or lawmakers. Consider this list of 10 major challenges currently facing public schools, based on the perspective of many involved in the world of education today.

**Classroom Size** Many areas of the country are facing classrooms that are literally busting out at the seams. A report at NEA Today two years ago discussed how schools in Georgia, in the midst of major funding cuts for schools, had no choice but to lift all class size limits to accommodate students with the faculty the school system could still afford to keep. More recently, Fairfax County in Virginia has been looking into a proposal to increase classroom sizes in the face of significant budget cuts. The Board of Education in South Carolina is also weighing their options in this area. When money gets tight, classroom numbers are often impacted. Yet, most teachers agree that they cannot effectively teach every student in a classroom, if the class size exceeds about 25. Their statements are backed up by research. Class Size Matters cites a study performed by the Tennessee Star that found classes of students in grades K-3 provided both long and short-term benefits to both the students and the teachers in those classrooms. Minority students, those living in poverty and male students appeared to benefit from smaller classroom sizes the most. Poverty

Technorati reported last fall that 22 percent of the children in the U. American Graduate also cites a report from the Southern Education Foundation, which shows in 17 states across the U. Students living at or below poverty level tend to have the highest dropout rates. Studies show that students who do not get enough food or sleep are less likely to perform at their full academic potential. Schools know these truths first-hand, and despite efforts to provide students with basic essentials, teachers, administrators and lawmakers know there is simply not enough to go around. Divorce, single parents, poverty, violence and many other issues are all challenges a student brings to school every day. While some teachers and administrators try to work with children in less than ideal family environments, they can only do so much – especially when parents are often not willing to partner with the schools to provide for the children. Technology

Kids Health Guide reports that students are more technologically advanced than many teachers today, putting instructors at a decided disadvantage in the classroom. Technology needs to come into the classroom to keep up with the learning demands of the 21st century. Schools that are already cash-strapped may find an unsurmountable challenge in coming up with the funding to bring computers and other forms of technology into their classes. The website also suggests negotiating prices on technology when possible and allowing student to bring their own from home. Technology has given bullies even more avenues to torment their victims – through social networking, texting and other virtual interactions. Cyberbullying has become a major issue for schools, as evidenced by the number of suicides that can be directly traced to bullying events. The fact that laws are still fuzzy regarding cyberbullying adds to the challenge – since parents, teachers and administrators are unsure of how to legally handle such issues. Student Attitudes and Behaviors

Many public school teachers also cite student attitudes, such as apathy and disrespect for teachers, as a major problem facing schools today. A poll from the National Center for Education Statistics cited that problems like apathy, tardiness, disrespect and absenteeism posed significant challenges for teachers. These issues were seen more frequently at the secondary school level, rather than the primary grades. Although the current Obama Administration is working to reform NCLB policies, the focus in education on both the national and state level continues to be on the testing process. Do we use the data to remediate those who do not measure up? Parent Involvement

Often teachers find there is no happy medium when it comes to parental

involvement , according to the Kids Health Guide. Others never seem to go away, hovering over the child and teacher and interfering with the education process. Student Health Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the U. According to the website , the U. Department of Agriculture released new guidelines in to boost the nutritional quality of the meals students get at school. Exercise programs are also coming to schools across the country to promote more physical activity among students of all ages. However, it seems the country as a whole still has a long way to go to get on the road to better health on a large scale. Funding Budget cuts have created huge problems for most public schools in recent years. Less funding means smaller staffs, fewer resources and a lower number of services for students. There are many problems in public schools today, but identifying those issues is half the battle. With a laundry list of challenges to face, now is the time for educators, parents and lawmakers to come together and begin to find solutions “ for the benefit of all students in public schools today. Contact us on Twitter.

*Problems in state high school finance by Julian E. Butterworth, , World book company edition, in English.*

The report recommends overhauling school finance systems so that the resources can be better spent supporting the ambitious learning goals that the general public demands. With the current downturn in the economy, school districts across the country are getting hit hard. Most school districts depend on state and local tax revenue, so when state and local budgets take a hit, so do schools. In addition, some school districts have been affected by problems in the financial sector. From Wisconsin to California, school districts have lost money because of the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers and investment deals gone sour. These financial losses will mean larger class sizes, and cutbacks in programs, supplies and school maintenance projects. Advertisement School district spending data on GreatSchools school profiles, which comes from the National Center for Education Statistics NCES , gives you information on the average amount of money spent per student in your district. What the data means School finance data gives you an indication of how much money is spent per student in your district, and how this amount compares to the state average. What the categories mean Instructional expenditures include costs related to teachers instructing students. This percentage includes teacher salaries, supplies such as textbooks, and purchased instructional services, libraries, curriculum development and training for staff and teachers. Student and staff support includes the percentage of funds spent on the cost of health, psychological, guidance and therapy departments at a school. Staff support includes the cost of school libraries, media centers and training. Administration costs includes expenditures for the administration of both schools and school districts. This would include expenditures on the board of education, the office of the principal, graduation expenses, as well as central office expenses such as budgeting, payroll, purchasing, planning and research. Examples of costs in this category include operations utilities, maintenance and security , food service, and the salaries of support staff such as bus drivers and cafeteria workers. What to look for Compare what your school or district spends to the state average. When comparing averages for school-level expenditures, note that certain factors may affect comparisons, such as the experience level of teachers and administrators, the types of instructional programs offered and student characteristics. If you have questions or concerns, ask your school principal or school superintendent. Consider the breakdown of expenses instructional, student and staff expenditures, administrative and other and compare these to the state average. Find out how much your state spends on average to educate students, and compare that with the national average. Questions parents should ask Want to know more about where the money goes at your school and in your school district? Ask questions like these of your school administrators, school site council and local school board: To the state average? How does my state compare to other states in school funding? How much money does my school get from local property taxes and how does this compare to other schools in my state? How much money does my school get from local sources fundraising and grants? If the state cuts school district budgets, what effect will it have on my school? What kind of investment vehicles does the school district use to invest funds? Are the funds secure? Does your state have a lottery that provides some funding for schools? Currently 24 states have lotteries where a portion of the money goes to schools and an additional 18 states have lotteries where the money goes into the general fund, where a portion may be used for schools. If your state has a lottery, how much revenue does the lottery generate and what is this money used for? How much does the revenue differ from year to year? Are parents and community members active in raising funds for the school and the school district? Does my school or school district have a nonprofit foundation dedicated to fundraising? How can I get involved? Other factors to consider While many states have made efforts to equalize funding among school districts, a EdTrust report notes that there are severe inequities among federal and state funding allocations, and within districts. Low-income and minority students suffer the most as less money is generally spent in schools serving the most disadvantaged students. The District of Columbia, which ranks high in per-pupil spending, ranks well below average on the fourth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress NAEP in reading, a national test measuring student achievement, while New York, which ranks high in per-pupil spending, ranks well above average on the

fourth grade NAEP in reading. Finance is only one of many factors affecting student achievement, along with the quality of the school leadership and teachers, staff training, class size, aligning state standards to curriculum and accountability, and parent involvement. While the majority of school finance systems are based on student enrollment, a handful of states including California, Kentucky, Idaho, Illinois, Mississippi, Missouri and Texas base funding on average daily attendance ADA. ADA funding is designed to provide an incentive to get students to attend school on a regular basis. It can be problematic for schools, however, which may lose funding for reasons beyond their control, such as when there is a bad flu season or weather-related problem, which may keep large numbers of students from coming to school. Many people hoped that state lotteries would provide additional funds for schools, but the reality is that lottery revenues do not help finance education in the long run. Often, when states rely on lottery profits, they divert general tax revenues to other areas; when gambling decreases, so do the proceeds to the state and lawmakers must raise taxes or divert funds from other areas to make up the difference. School spending can be complicated to understand and it can be difficult to track where the money goes. The report indicated that most states need to fix their school finance systems because they no longer align with the results we expect from schools. They must deal with competing demands for funds along with such other priorities as health care, social services and transportation. What can you as a parent do about the complicated school funding system? Ask your local school board how they analyze the budget. Join with other parents to lobby your state legislature to make school funding equitable among schools and simpler for citizens to understand.

### 3: School Finance and Education Studies and Analysis

*Problems in state high school finance Book digitized by Google from the library of the University of Michigan and uploaded to the Internet Archive by user tpb.*

### 4: School finance: issues to consider | Parenting

*Excerpt from Problems in State High School Finance Obviously, a set of governing principles in this field can come only from a careful study of the many details involved. Several studies made during the last few years have contributed their share.*

### 5: Problems in state high school finance | Game Library | Read eBooks online

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### 6: NPR Choice page

*Most school districts depend on state and local tax revenue, so when state and local budgets take a hit, so do schools. In addition, some school districts have been affected by problems in the financial sector.*

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*Problems in State High School Finance By Butterworth, Julian Edward. Book Id: WPLBN Format Type: PDF eBook Education and state ; Education ; High schools.*

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