

The Base

The Foundation of the Governor's Proposed Funding Formula

House Committee on Ways and Means

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Outline of Talk

- What is the base?
- Components
 - Schools
 - Staff ratios
 - Per-student inputs
 - Central office
 - Maintenance and Operations
- Summary



What is the Base?



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The Base

- Foundation formulas have existed within the United States in some form since at least the mid-1900s
- A foundation formula starts with what is called the “base”
- The base is the core amount of funding per student, before applying any weights
- It’s typically understood as the amount needed to fund a school or district *without* any extraordinary circumstances (EL, SpEd, Poverty, etc)



The Governor's Proposed Base

- The base amount of the Administration's Education Transformation proposal is a modified Picus Odden Evidence Based (EB) Model
 - Developed by Picus Odden & Associates to “link strategies and resources in high-performance schools to state school funding formulas...”, and “relies on a school improvement model that allocates resources for educational strategies that... are linked to improvements in student learning”*
- The most recent Picus report came in 2024
- The EB base amount is built off an identified set of resources (both personnel and non-personnel) in prototype schools

* Source: Allan Odden & Lawrence O. Picus, page 8, (2024) *An Evidence-Based Approach to Identifying an Adequate Education Spending Level in Vermont*.

**Note: for a full overview of this model, see slide 32



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The Governor's Proposed Base (continued)

- Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) further refined the Picus work, adding:
 - An \$5,000 increase to the average teacher's salary
 - Additional elective teachers in middle school
 - Additional college and career readiness teachers in high school
 - Additional mental health professionals at all school levels
 - Additional nurses per school
 - Additional funding for in-school CTE courses
- Proposed to be \$13,200 per Average Daily Membership (ADM)*
 - Further adjusted for student populations such as SpEd, EL, Poverty, etc.

**Note: adjusted via inflation factor to fiscal year 2025 dollars*



What's in the Administration's Proposed Base?

- Inputs include:
 - School-level costs driven by staffing ratios and per-pupil resources
 - Central office and district-level costs spread among member schools
 - Maintenance and operations (school-level and district-level)
- The base does *not* include inputs for:
 - Capital costs
 - Food service costs
 - Transportation costs



Schools: Staff Ratios, Per-Student Inputs



School Assumptions in the Base

- The EB Model distinguishes inputs across three school levels: Elementary, Middle, and High School
- For each level, there are two categories of inputs in the base: staff counts and resource allocations
- The EB Model assumes that prototypical schools conform to prescribed staff ratios and identified resources per pupil
- The model builds prototypical schools and aggregates them into a “prototypical district”



Prototypical Elementary School: Staff

K-5 Elementary School Prototype				
	450	Student Count per School		
Core Personnel	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost	Student:Staff Ratio
Core Teachers	26.00	\$103,383	\$2,687,958	17.3
Elective Teachers	5.20	\$103,383	\$537,592	86.5
College and Career Readiness Courses	0.00	\$103,383	\$0	N/A
Instructional Coaches	2.25	\$105,703	\$237,832	200.0
Interventionists	1.00	\$103,383	\$103,383	450.0
Counselors/Social Worker/Mental Health Profes	2.00	\$89,295	\$178,590	225.0
Nurses	0.90	\$91,448	\$82,303	500.0
Supervisory Aides (to protect teacher planning)	2.00	\$38,534	\$77,069	225.0
Library Media Specialists	1.00	\$96,886	\$96,886	450.0
Substitute Teachers	1.72	\$93,814	\$161,594	261.2
Principals	1.00	\$150,812	\$150,812	450.0
Assistant Principals	1.00	\$133,635	\$133,635	450.0
School Secretary	2.00	\$62,746	\$125,492	225.0

*2024 dollars

- Table provided by APA, illustrating the prototypical elementary school used for the calculation of the base amount
 - Assumes
 - 450-pupil elementary school
 - Class sizes of 15 for grades K-3 and 25 for grades 4-5
 - Overall student to staff ratio of 9.77:1
- Per-pupil staff cost: \$10,163



Prototypical Elementary School: Resources Per Pupil

K-5 Elementary School Prototype			
	450	Student Count per School	
Dollar per Pupil Resources	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gifted and Talented Programs		\$25	\$11,250
Career and Technical Education		\$0	\$0
Flexible Pathways (applied per student)		\$0	\$0
Professional Development		\$156	\$70,200
Instructional Materials		\$256	\$115,200
Short Cycle/Interim Assessments		\$25	\$11,250
Technology/Equipment		\$250	\$112,500
Student Activities		\$360	\$162,000

*2024 dollars

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical elementary school
- Assumes a 450-pupil elementary school
- Per-pupil resource cost: \$1,072



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Prototypical Middle School: Staff

6-8 Middle School Prototype				
	450	Student Count per School		
Core Personnel	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost	Student:Staff Ratio
Core Teachers	18.00	\$103,383	\$1,860,894	25.0
Elective Teachers	6.00	\$103,383	\$620,298	75.0
College and Career Readiness Courses	0.00	\$103,383	\$0	N/A
Instructional Coaches	2.25	\$105,703	\$237,832	200.0
Interventionists	1.00	\$103,383	\$103,383	450.0
Counselors/Social Worker/Mental Health Professional	3.60	\$89,295	\$321,463	125.0
Nurses	0.90	\$91,448	\$82,303	500.0
Supervisory Aides (to protect teacher planning)	2.00	\$38,534	\$77,069	225.0
Library Media Specialists	1.00	\$96,886	\$96,886	450.0
Substitute Teachers	1.36	\$93,814	\$127,821	330.3
Principals	1.00	\$150,812	\$150,812	450.0
Assistant Principals	1.00	\$133,635	\$133,635	450.0
School Secretary	2.00	\$62,746	\$125,492	225.0

*2024 dollars

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical middle school
- Assumes:
 - 450-pupil middle school
 - Class sizes of 25 for grades 6-8
 - Overall student to staff ratio of 11.22:1
- Per-pupil staff cost: \$8,751



Prototypical Middle School: Resources Per Pupil

6-8 Middle School Prototype			
	450	Student Count per School	
Dollar per Pupil Resources	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gifted and Talented Programs		\$25	\$11,250
Career and Technical Education		\$25	\$11,250
Flexible Pathways (applied per student)		\$0	\$0
Professional Development		\$156	\$70,200
Instructional Materials		\$256	\$115,200
Short Cycle/Interim Assessments		\$25	\$11,250
Technology/Equipment		\$250	\$112,500
Student Activities		\$360	\$162,000

*2024 dollars

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical middle school
- Assumes a 450-pupil middle school
- Per-pupil resource cost: \$1,097



Prototypical High School: Staff

9-12 High School Prototype				
	600	Student Count per School		
Core Personnel	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost	Student:Staff Ratio
Core Teachers	24.00	\$103,383	\$2,481,192	25.0
Elective Teachers	8.00	\$103,383	\$827,064	75.0
College and Career Readiness Courses	2.00	\$103,383	\$206,766	300.0
Instructional Coaches	3.00	\$105,703	\$317,109	200.0
Interventionists	1.00	\$103,383	\$103,383	600.0
Counselors/Social Worker/Mental Health Professional	4.80	\$89,295	\$428,617	125.0
Nurses	1.00	\$91,448	\$91,448	600.0
Supervisory Aides (to protect teacher planning)	3.00	\$38,534	\$115,603	200.0
Library Media Specialists	1.00	\$96,886	\$96,886	600.0
Substitute Teachers	1.90	\$93,814	\$178,246	315.8
Principals	1.00	\$150,812	\$150,812	600.0
Assistant Principals	1.00	\$133,635	\$133,635	600.0
School Secretary	3.00	\$62,746	\$188,239	200.0

*2024 dollars

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical high school
- Assumes:
 - 600-pupil high school
 - Class sizes of 25 for grades 9-12
 - Overall student to staff ratio of 10.97:1
- Per-pupil staff cost: \$8,865



Prototypical High School: Resources Per Pupil

9-12 High School Prototype			
	600	Student Count per School	
Dollar per Pupil Resources	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gifted and Talented Programs		\$25	\$15,000
Career and Technical Education		\$50	\$30,000
Flexible Pathways (applied per student)		\$345	\$207,000
Professional Development		\$156	\$93,600
Instructional Materials		\$256	\$153,600
Short Cycle/Interim Assessments		\$25	\$15,000
Technology/Equipment		\$250	\$150,000
Student Activities		\$360	\$216,000

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical high school
- Assumes a 600-pupil high school
- Per-pupil resource cost: \$1,467

*2024 dollars



Prototypical District: Staffing

K-12 Prototype District				
	3900	Student Count per District		
Core Personnel	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost	Student:Staff Ratio
Core Teachers	188.00	\$103,383	\$19,436,000	20.7
Elective Teachers	48.80	\$103,383	\$5,045,089	79.9
College and Career Readiness Courses	4.00	\$103,383	\$413,532	975.0
Instructional Coaches	19.50	\$105,703	\$2,061,207	200.0
Interventionists	8.00	\$103,383	\$827,064	487.5
Counselors/Social Worker/Mental Health Professional	24.80	\$89,295	\$2,214,521	157.3
Nurses	7.40	\$91,448	\$676,715	527.0
Supervisory Aides (to protect teacher planning)	18.00	\$38,534	\$693,620	216.7
Library Media Specialists	8.00	\$96,886	\$775,086	487.5
Substitute Teachers	13.42	\$93,814	\$1,258,511	290.7
Principals	8.00	\$150,812	\$1,206,498	487.5
Assistant Principals	8.00	\$133,635	\$1,069,082	487.5
School Secretary	18.00	\$62,746	\$1,129,431	216.7

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical school district
- Assumes a 3900-pupil district (four elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools)
- Overall student to staff ratio of 10.43:1*
- Per-pupil districtwide staff cost: \$9,438

*2024 dollars



*Note: staff ratio does not include the central office; for central office costs see slide 22

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Prototypical District: Resources Per Pupil

K-12 Prototype District			
	3900	Student Count per District	
Dollar per Pupil Resources	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gifted and Talented Programs			\$97,500
Career and Technical Education			\$82,500
Flexible Pathways			\$414,000
Professional Development			\$608,400
Instructional Materials			\$998,400
Short Cycle/Interim Assessments			\$97,500
Technology/Equipment			\$975,000
Student Activities			\$1,404,000

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical school district
- Assumes a 3900-pupil district (four elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools)
- Per-pupil districtwide resource cost: \$1,199

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Prototypical School Costs Per Pupil

K-5 Elementary School Prototype			
Student Count per School	450		
School Costs			\$5,055,546
School Per Pupil Costs			\$11,235
6-8 Middle School Prototype			
Student Count per School	450		
School Costs			\$4,431,538
School Per Pupil Costs			\$9,848
9-12 High School Prototype			
Student Count per School	600		
School Costs			\$6,199,199
School Per Pupil Costs			\$10,332
K-12 Prototype District			
Student Count per School	3900		
District Costs			\$41,483,656
District Per Pupil Costs			\$10,637

*2024 dollars

- School costs are sum of staff and non-staff costs per school
- The K-12 Prototype District school costs and per pupil costs are based on the district's entire costs divided by the total number of students
- Total district cost of \$41,483,656
- Per-pupil districtwide costs: \$10,637

**Note: District costs do not include the central office or the M&O; for central office costs see slide 22, and for M&O see slides 25-26*



Central Office: Staff Ratios, Per-pupil Inputs



Prototypical Central Office

- The model includes a prototypical central office for a prototypical school district as presented in the EB Model
- Includes
 - Central office staff such as the superintendent, business manager, and program directors who work at the “district-level”
 - Support positions such as computer technicians and psychologists who may work within schools but are assigned to the central office
 - A non-personnel amount per pupil intended to support the district



Prototypical Central Office

Office	Position	FTE	Total Compensation	Resource Cost	Student:Staff Ratio
Superintendent's Office	Superintendent	1	\$211,863	\$211,863	3,900
	Secretary/Clerical	1	\$72,926	\$72,926	3,900
Business Office	Business Manager	1	\$152,126	\$152,126	3,900
	Directors	1	\$99,802	\$99,802	3,900
	Secretary/Clerical	5	\$72,926	\$364,632	780
Curriculum and Support (and SPED)	Assistant Supt. for Instruction	1	\$161,242	\$161,242	3,900
	Directors: Pupil	2	\$128,528	\$257,057	1,950
	Teacher Level	0	\$0	\$0	N/A
	Psychologist	3.9	\$107,948	\$420,996	1,000
		0	\$128,528	\$0	N/A
	Secretary/Clerical	3	\$72,926	\$218,779	1,300
Technology	Director of Technology	1	\$128,528	\$128,528	3,900
	Secretary/Clerical	1	\$72,926	\$72,926	3,900
	Network/Systems Supervisor	2	\$109,397	\$218,794	1,950
	School Computer Technician	4	\$80,288	\$321,153	975
Operations & Maintenance	Director of O&M	1	\$128,529	\$128,529	3,900
	Secretary/Clerical	1	\$72,926	\$72,926	3,900
Insurance/Supplies/etc	Miscellaneous Per Pupil	3,900	\$450	\$1,755,000	N/A
Total	Central Office Resources	28.9		\$4,657,282	N/A
Total Per Pupil	Central Office Resources			\$1,194	N/A

- Table provided by APA, illustrating their EB prototypical school district's central office
- Assumes a 3900-pupil district (four elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools)
- Per-pupil staff costs: \$744
- Per-pupil resource costs: \$450
- With the central office, the district's student to staff ratio is 9.68:1**

**Note: see slide 17 for districtwide staffing

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Maintenance and Operations: Staff Ratios and Per-pupil Inputs



Prototypical Maintenance and Operations

- The EB Model's Maintenance and Operations formula assumes certain staffing ratios are followed at the school and central office levels
- Central office Maintenance and Operations staff includes individuals who work within schools
- The Maintenance and Operations formula also includes non-personnel resources estimated using pupil counts (utilities) and building sizes (supplies)
- Note, the school and central office cost tables (particularly staffing) are best viewed as illustrative
- The EB Model aggregates all Maintenance and Operations costs and divides them across the entire prototypical district on a per pupil basis



Prototypical Schools: Maintenance and Operations

Inputs	K-5 Elementary School Prototype		
	450	Pupils per School	
	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gross Square Footage	63,000		
Staffing			
Custodians	2.62	\$42,174	\$110,531
Maintenance		\$62,247	\$0
Groundskeepers	0.25	\$62,247	\$15,562
Supplies	63,000	\$1.00	\$63,000
Utilities	450	\$350	\$157,500
Total			\$346,593
Per Pupil			\$770

	6-8 Middle School Prototype		
	450	Pupils per School	
	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gross Square Footage	63,000		
Staffing			
Custodians	2.34	\$42,174	\$98,851
Maintenance		\$62,247	\$0
Groundskeepers	0.50	\$62,247	\$31,124
Supplies	63,000	\$1.00	\$63,000
Utilities	450	\$350	\$157,500
Total			\$350,474
Per Pupil			\$779

	9-12 High School Prototype		
	600	Pupils per School	
	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gross Square Footage	110,000		
Staffing			
Custodians	3.46	\$42,174	\$145,949
Maintenance		\$62,247	\$0
Groundskeepers	1.50	\$62,247	\$93,371
Supplies	110,000	\$1.00	\$110,000
Utilities	600	\$350	\$210,000
Total			\$559,320
Per Pupil			\$932

- Elementary school:
 - Per-pupil staff costs: \$280
 - Per-pupil resource costs: \$490
- Middle school:
 - Per-pupil staff costs: \$289
 - Per-pupil resource costs: \$490
- High school:
 - Per-pupil staff costs: \$399
 - Per-pupil resource costs: \$533

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Prototypical District: Maintenance and Operations

Central Office			
	3900	Pupils per SAU	
	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gross Square Footage	25,000		
Staffing			
Custodians	1.39	\$42,174	\$58,575
Maintenance	9.88	\$62,247	\$614,796
Groundskeepers	0.25	\$62,247	\$15,562
Supplies	25,000	\$1.00	\$25,000
Utilities	100	\$350	\$35,000
Total			\$748,933
Per Pupil			\$192

District			
	3900	ADA per K-12 SAU	
	Resources	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Gross Square Footage	623,000		
Staffing			
Custodians	23.48	\$42,174	\$990,297
Maintenance	9.88	\$62,247	\$614,796
Groundskeepers	5.25	\$62,247	\$326,798
Supplies	623,000	\$1.00	\$623,000
Utilities	3900	\$350	\$1,400,000
Total			\$3,954,892
Per Pupil			\$1,014

- Central Office:
 - Per-pupil staff costs: \$177
 - Per-pupil resource costs: \$15
- Districtwide:
 - Per-pupil staff costs: \$495
 - Per-pupil resource costs: \$519

*2024 dollars



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Bringing It Together: How the Inputs Feed Into the Base



Prototypical District: Total Cost

K-12 Prototype District			
	3900	Student Count per District	
School Costs			\$41,483,656
School per Pupil Costs (aggregated school costs / total district ADM)			\$10,637
M&O per Pupil Costs			\$1,014
Central Office per Pupil Costs			\$1,194
District Total Cost per Pupil (school+M&O+central office)			\$12,845
School Level	Elementary	Middle	High
Base Amount	\$13,443	\$12,056	\$12,540
Inflation Adjustment	2.76%		
FY25 Base	\$13,200		

- After aggregating the district's school, central office, and M&O costs and dividing them by the district's ADM, the proposed prototypical district's total per-pupil cost is \$12,845
- Overall, using the prescribed staff ratios, the student to staff ratio for a prototypical district is 8.83:1
- Varies at the school level due to differing staff ratios, program offerings, etc.
- After multiplying the district's per-pupil cost by the NEEP inflation index (\$12,845 X 2.76%), the proposed base is **\$13,200** per pupil for a prototypical district



Summary

- The base is made up of many different components
- Impacts of changes differ significantly across components:
 - \$1 added per Average Daily Membership (ADM) = \$126,349 statewide through weighting
 - Changing staff ratios (changing high school class sizes from 25:1 to 23:1 = additional \$13.9 million statewide)
- Some costs lie outside of the base



Costs Outside of the Base

- Costs that are not included within the foundation base include but are not limited to:
- Food service
 - Staff
 - Supplies
- Capital costs
 - Extensive repairs/new construction
- Special education services
- School Resource Officers
- Transportation
 - Staff
 - Vehicles, supplies, maintenance



Considerations

- PreK was not explicitly modeled for the base
- How does the base interplay with weights?
- If adopted, how will the base amount be managed to ensure that it remains sufficient?
 - Inflation factor, professional reevaluation?
- Remember, not all costs are explicitly included within the base:
 - How will major capital construction/repairs be funded?
 - If the proposed transportation aid (100% reimbursement of district costs) was ended, how will transportation be funded?



Resources

- Spreadsheets provided by APA
- “An Evidence-Based Approach to Identifying an Adequate Education Spending level in Vermont,” Picus Odden & Associates
 - https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Publications/Education/Picus_Odden_Vermont_Adequacy_Study_10152024.pdf
- Documents provided by the Agency of Education during testimony:
 - <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Ways%20and%20Means/Education%20Finance/W~Zoie%20Saunders~Education%20Transformation%20Proposal%20-%20%20Foundation%20Formula%20Explained~1-31-2025.pdf>
 - <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Ways%20and%20Means/Education%20Finance/W~Zoie%20Saunders~Education%20Transformation%20-%20Funding%20Presentation~1-31-2025.pdf>
 - <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Ways%20and%20Means/Education%20Finance/W~Zoie%20Saunders~Foundation%20Formula%20Follow-Up~2-5-2025.pdf>

