

Testimony Before the Vermont Legislature House Ways and Means Committee

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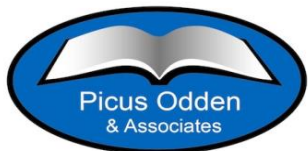


Improving the way public resources
for education are translated
into improved student learning



Today's Presentation

- **Description of the Evidence Based (EB) Model**
- **Discussion of APA adjustments to the EB Model**
- **Foundation Programs**
- **Committee questions and discussion**



The Evidence-Based Approach

- Estimate resources needed to provide all students an equal opportunity to meet state proficiency standards and the cost of those resources – in most cases this means dramatic improvements in student achievement
 - Current education research
 - Studies of schools and districts that have improved student performance
 - Input from educator review panels to meet specific state needs
- This is a “dynamic” model and has changed over time based on both advances in research and the professional judgment of education professionals and policy makers

The 2024 EB Study

Modeling Results and Limitations

- **Estimated adequate spending using this EB model is between \$400 and \$462 million less than Vermont's current Education Fund Payment**
- **Vermont's current policy decisions to maintain smaller schools and districts than used in our research-based model likely results in higher costs that are not fully addressed in this analysis**
- **If we were to conduct a school level analysis, the EB model results would likely differ by a limited degree**

Vermont Evidence Based Model

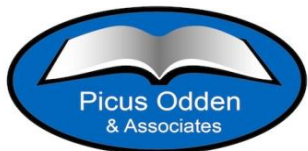
Staffing for
Core
Programs

Dollar Per
Pupil
Resources

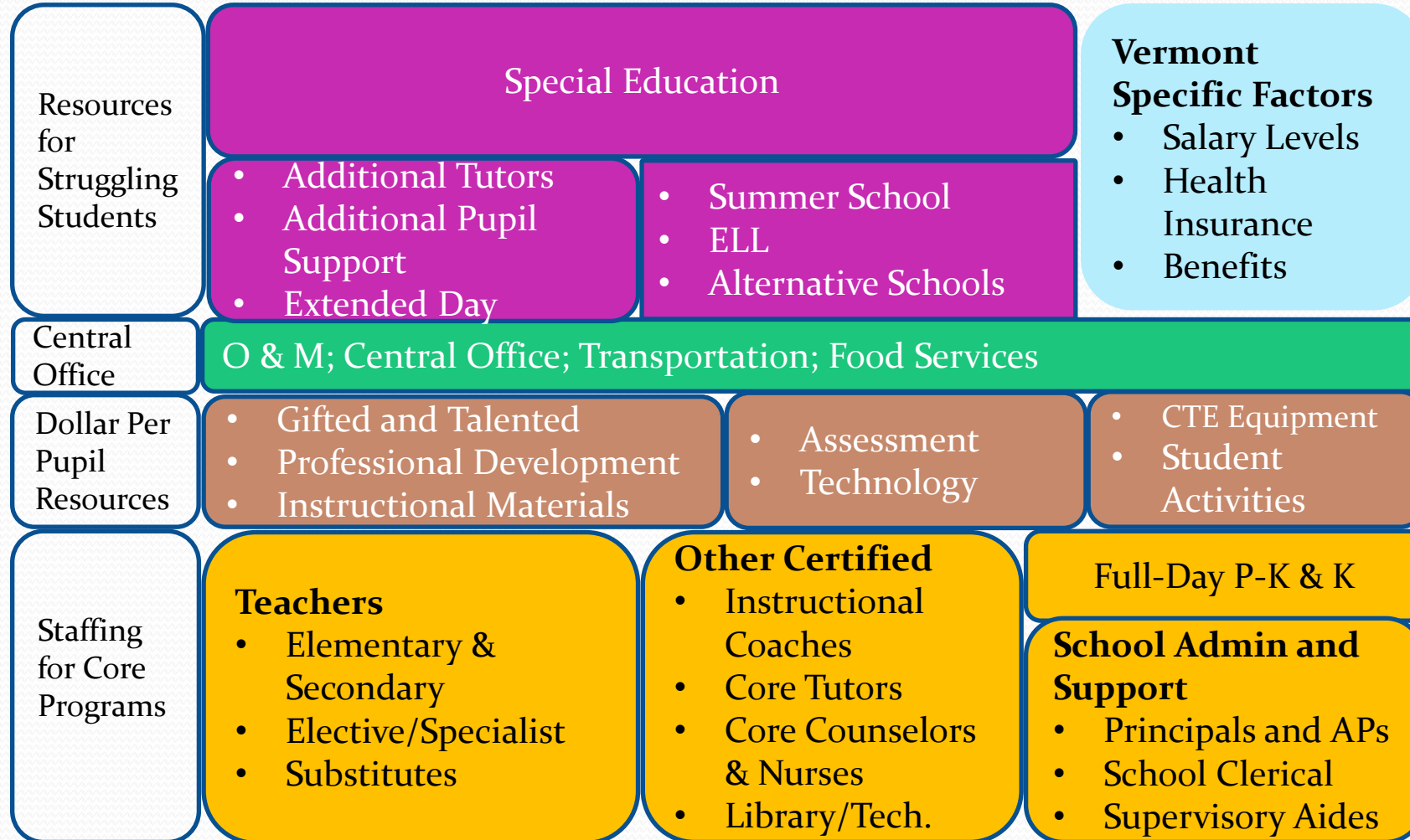
Central Office
Functions

Resources for
Struggling
Students

Vermont Specific Factors



Vermont Evidence Based Model 2024

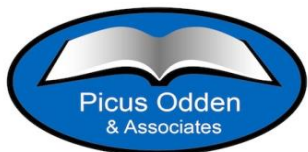


VT-Specific Changes to Prototypical Schools

- The EB model uses prototypical schools to estimate needed resources to individual schools
- We adjusted Vermont's model to reflect the state's unique structure of smaller district and school size
 - The prototypical schools in the EB model were not adjusted to reflect Vermont-specific circumstances
 - Small schools were accounted for by increasing the weighted pupil counts (WADM) for the purpose of comparing spending
 - Additionally, the average salaries and benefits for Vermont school employees were used for this modeling

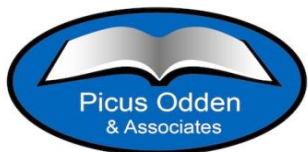
APA Adjustments

- **Picus Odden & Associates has a long history working with APA to reconcile differences between the PJ and EB models**
- **Specific APA Adjustments to the 2024 Vermont EB Model**
 - **Middle School Teachers – specialists from 20% to 33%**
 - **Courses for college and career readiness – addition to EB model**
 - **Counselors, social workers, mental health professionals**
 - **Increase the number in prototypical schools to meet increased needs**



APA Adjustments

- Nurses – 500:1 student/nurse ratio instead of 700:1
- Assistant Principals – adding assistant principals to prototypical elementary and middle schools
- CTE and Flexible Pathways – \$129 per student
 - This replaces the \$10,000 per CTE teacher for equipment – **I would maintain this Funding along with the additional allocation per student**

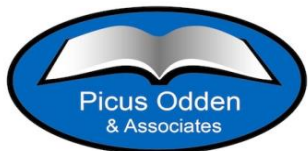


APA Adjustments

- **Student Weights**
 - **Economically Disadvantaged (0.75)**
 - EB weight is a function of base cost (0.34)
 - **English Learners**
 - EB weight is a function of base cost (0.44)
 - **CTE students (1.3 for CTE centers)**
 - EB does not include
 - **Preschool (fund as 1.0)**
 - EB weight of 1.45 which is a function of adding teacher aides

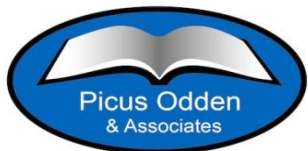
APA Adjustments

- **Small schools**
 - EB made an adjustment based on our Wyoming adjustments
 - APA recommendation avoids “cliff effects” and adjusts up to the EB prototypical school sizes
- **Sparsity – not addressed in EB model**
- **Special Education – Concur with APA approach**
- **Transportation – Concur with APA on full funding**



Foundation Programs (Policy Issues)

- Have been in use since about 1905
- Powerful way to equalize property tax disparities
- Use of tiered system to allow districts spending options
- The challenge is ensuring the state continues fund its share and that the foundation level keeps up with costs
- Maintaining Vermont's income tested property taxes
- My view is a foundation program will work better with many fewer school districts than it did when *Brigham* was decided and there were some 246 school districts



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