

School Finance Adequacy: An Evidence-Based Approach to Doubling Student Performance

Presentation to the NSCL Annual Meeting
August 7, 2007 – Boston, MA

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Adequacy

***What it costs to educate children
to world class performance
standards***

Why 'Adequacy'?

- **Odd word for an ambitious goal**
- **We mean doubling performance in five years**
- **Without doubling costs**

Evidence-Based Approach

- **Not just a funding model**
- **Core academics**
- **Electives including art and music**
- **Teacher professional Development**

It Covers All Aspects of School

- **Staffing schools with high quality teachers and leaders**
- **Students' personal and social skills**
- **Pressure from NCLB and state accountability systems**

Three Bases of Knowledge

- **How students learn complex materials:**
How People Learn
- **Resource dimension of programs that work**
- **How schools that double student performance use resources**

Strengths of the Evidence Based Model

- **Provides detailed references to make our claims transparent**
- **Uses research from randomized trials, quasi-experimental designs, and meta-analyses**
- **Uses results from schools that have doubled performance**
- **Findings offer a solid place to start**

What We Do

We link state policy with what works in schools

We know what works from studying schools that have doubled performance, reviewing existing research on individual programs, assessing the most effective use of resources in schools, and turning that into a new school funding model

Key Elements of School Improvement

- **Recruiting and supporting high quality teachers**
- **High Quality Instruction**
- **Classroom resources**
- **Additional support for struggling students**

Study of Districts that have Aligned Resources with School Effectiveness

- **Arkansas**
- **Washington**
- **Wisconsin**
- **Wyoming**

Ten Steps to Double Performance

- 1. Conduct needs assessment**
- 2. Set higher goals**
- 3. Adopt a new curriculum**
- 4. Commit to data-based decision making**
- 5. Invest in on-going professional development**

Ten Steps to Double Performance

- 6. Focus class time more efficiently**
- 7. Provide multiple interventions for struggling students**
- 8. Create professional learning communities**
- 9. Empower leaders to support instructional improvement**
- 10. Take advantage of external expertise**

The Challenge

Scale up these strategies in all districts by using resources provided by the state's funding model effectively and efficiently

Our Process

- ***We look at all aspects of schools***
- ***We work with the broad spectrum of education officials***
- ***We develop state specific evidence-based models***
- ***We help states design funding formulas that offer equity and adequacy***

The Evidence Based Model:

A Research Driven Approach to Linking Resources to Student Performance

Core
K-3: 15 to 1
4-12: 25 to 1

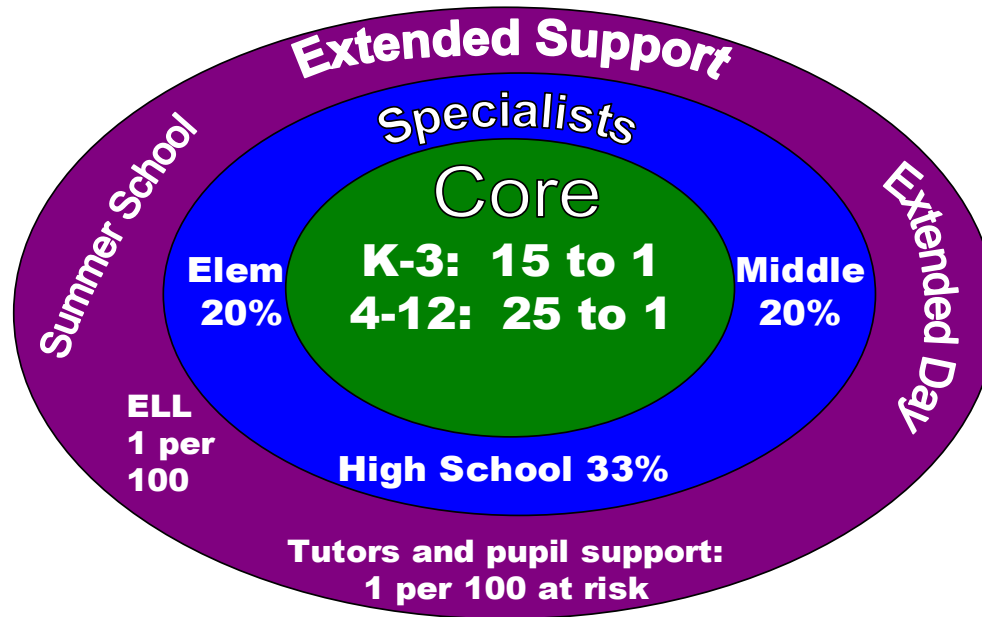
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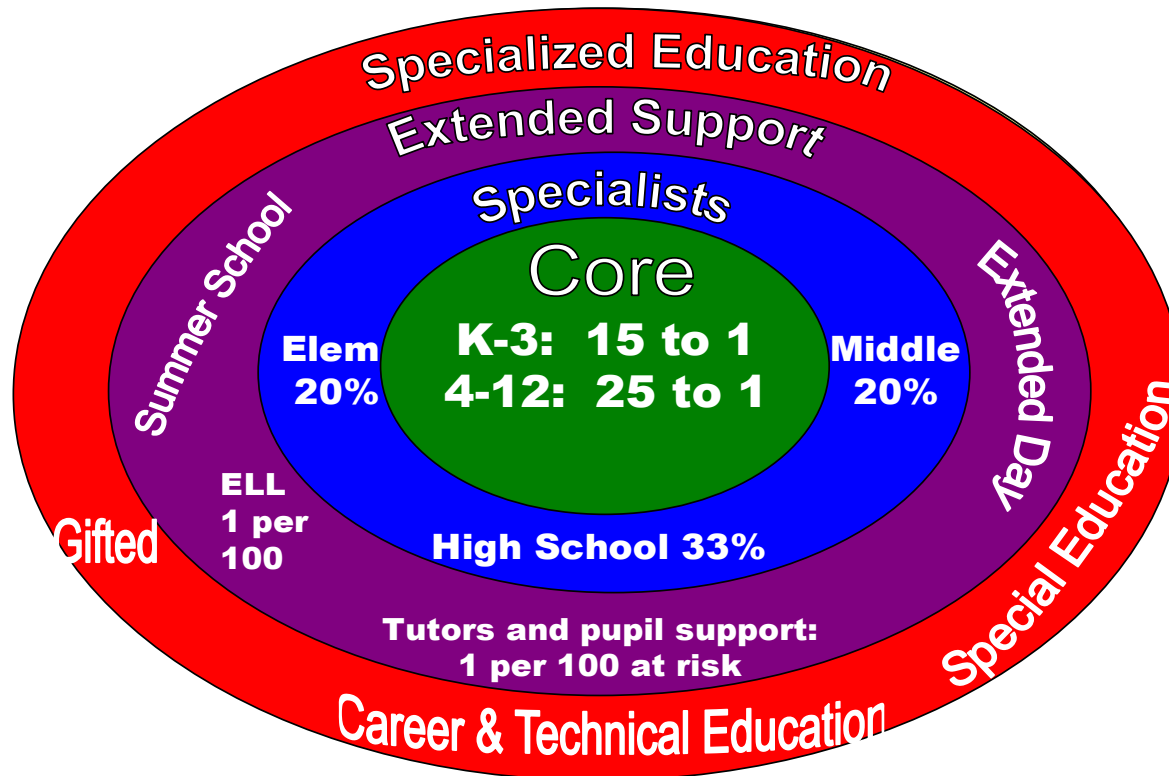
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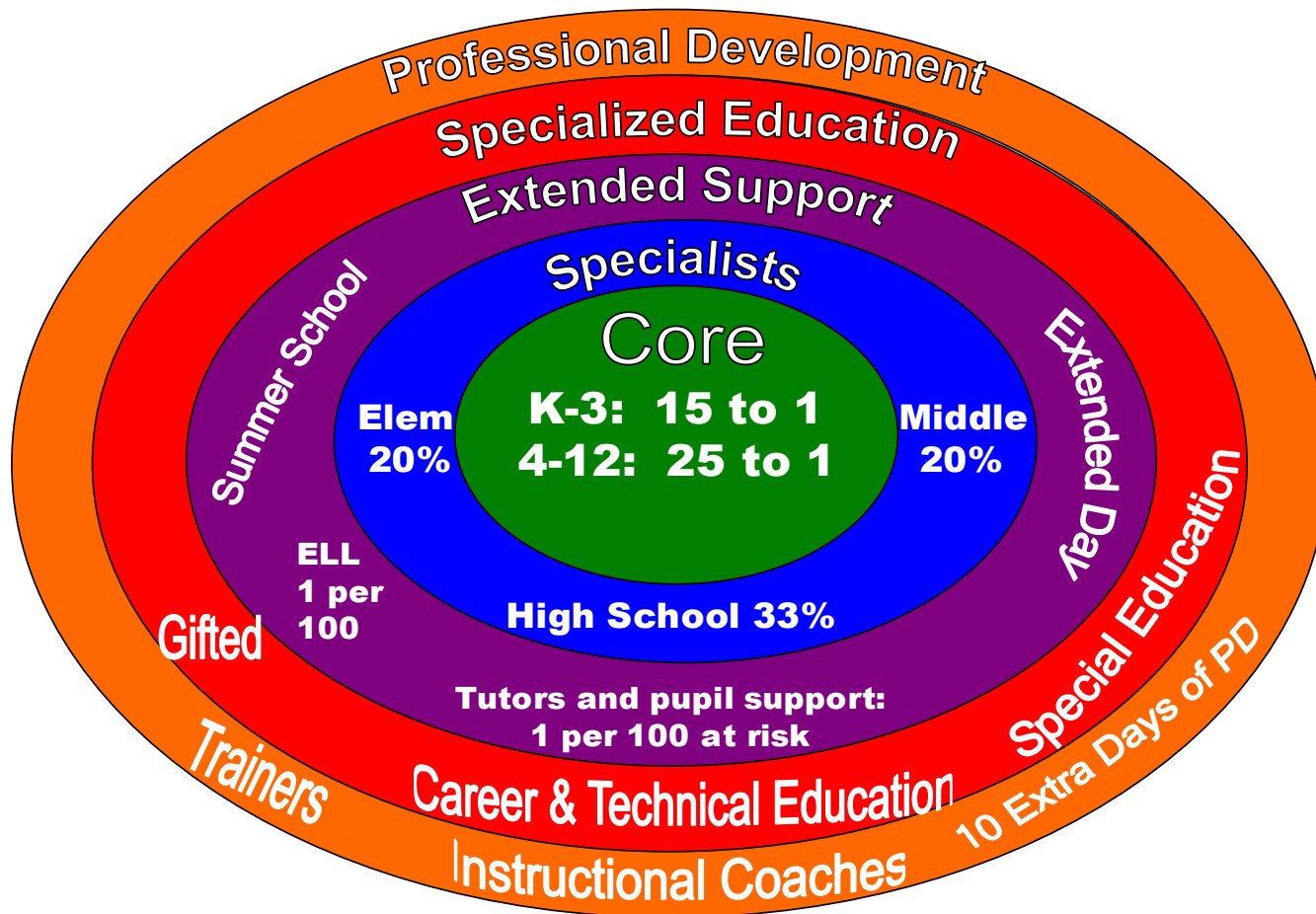
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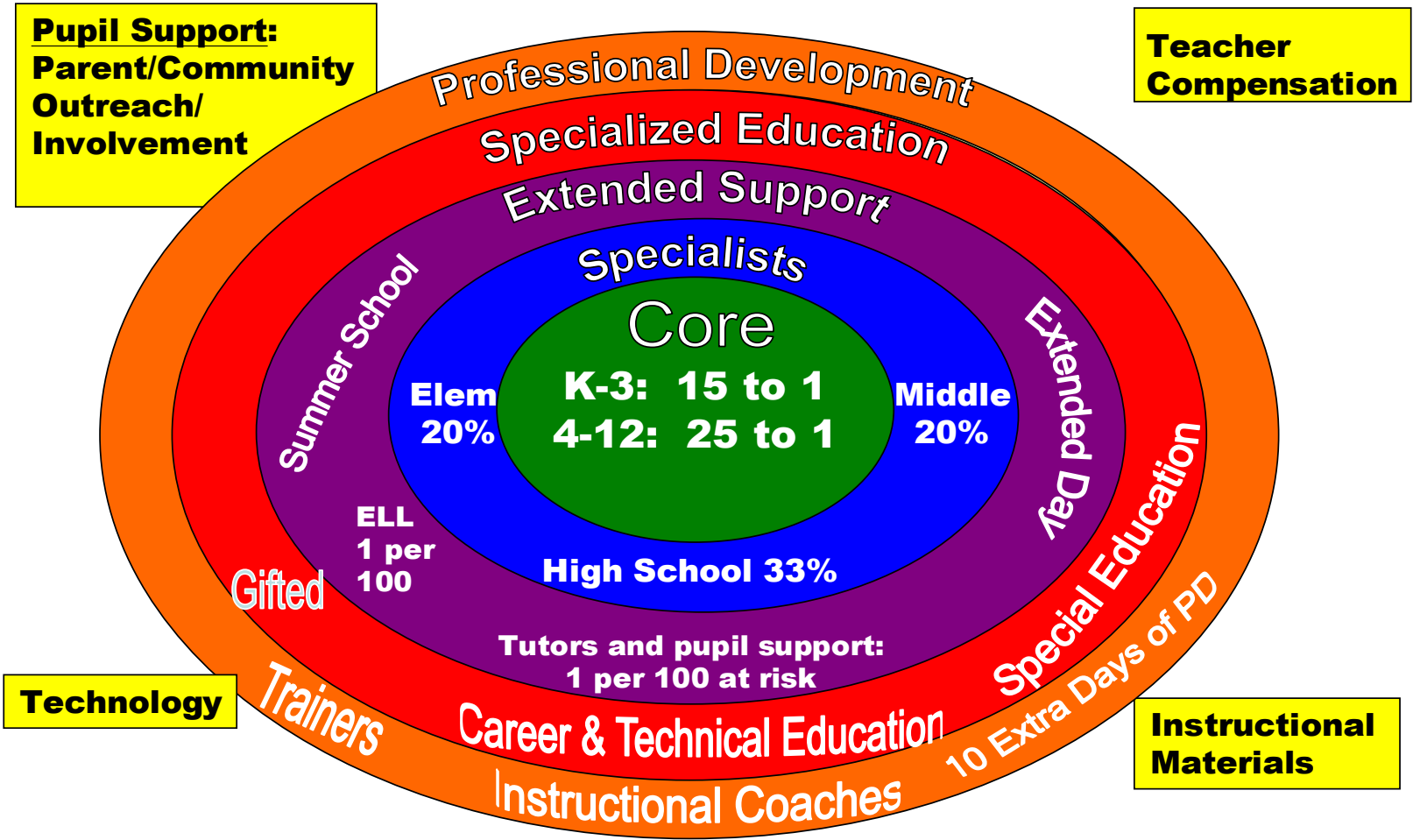
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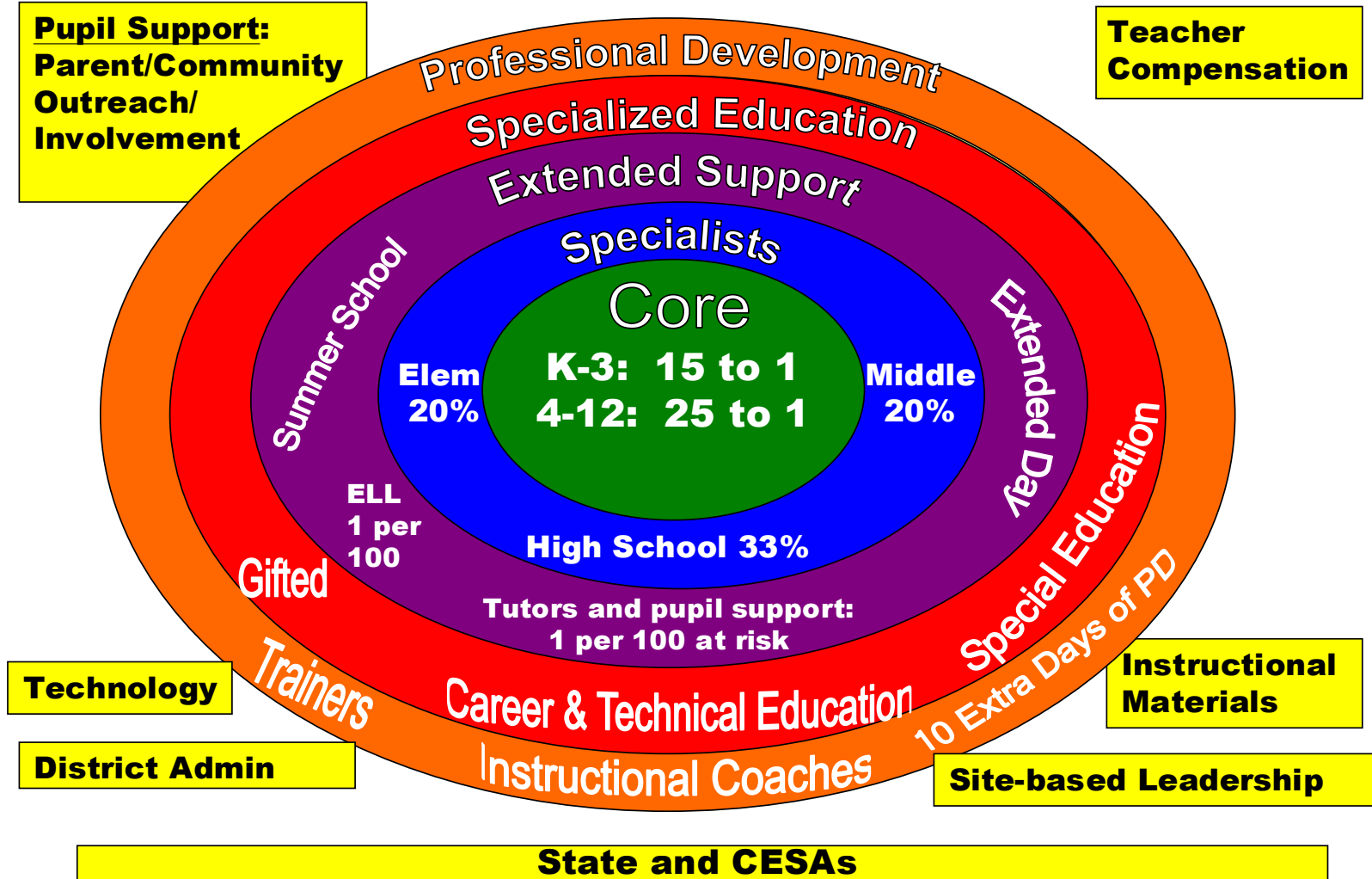
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What Does the Evidence-Based Model Cost?

- **Compared to current expenditures**
 - Model costs are 2-9 percent above national average
 - Full NCLB and IDEA would enable full model funding in the states
- **Exceeds current costs in low spending states**
- **Less than current costs in high spending states**

Considerations for building a state school finance model

- **School based cost estimation**
- **Distribution based on districts (Arkansas) or schools (Wyoming)**
- **Relative distribution of block and categorical grants**

Questions

- **How proscriptive should a funding formula be?**
 - **Block v. categorical grants**
- **What will schools do with unrestricted funds?**
- **What can we learn from existing evidence?**

Do Districts and Schools Spend New Dollars on These Key Resources?

- **There is little existing evidence**
- **Inadequate fiscal reporting systems**
- **Use of new dollars**
 - **Higher teacher salaries**
 - **Smaller class size**
 - **Additional electives**
 - **Enhanced pupil support services (social workers, etc.)**
 - **Instructional aides**

Initial Findings from Arkansas and Wyoming

- **We studied 107 Arkansas Schools**
- **We studied 187 Wyoming schools**
- **We will study all remaining schools in Wyoming in the Fall**

Few Schools Use Total Resources for Evidence-Based Reforms

- **Less focus on core subjects – more electives than in the model**
- **Limited professional development, under use of school-based instructional coaches**
- **Few tutors or other strategies to help struggling students**
- **Numerous instructional aides**

Resource Use in the Average State School (sample)

Staffing	Funding Model	Sample
Principal	0.90	0.97
Instr. Facilitator	2.25	0.45
Secretary	1.80	1.51
Core Teachers	18.66	18.55
Spec. Teachers	3.73	7.62
Tutors	2.69	0.31
Librarian	0.63	0.93
Pupil Support	2.25	3.51

Average School-Level Resources in High Schools with More than 105 Students

Staffing	Funding Model	Sample
Principals	0.90	0.96
Assistant Principals	0.77	1.04
Core Teachers	24.80	22.20
Specialist Teachers	7.44	13.02
Instructional Aides	0.00	2.10
Certified Tutors	1.02	0.42
Librarians	1.06	0.87
Pupil Support Staff	3.11	3.19
Secretaries	1.06	2.53

School Resource Use: Tutors

Poverty Concentration	State Funding Model	Actual in Sample
< 70%	1 Tutor for Every 100 Students = 177	17
70-89%	2 Tutors for Every 100 Students = 93	15
≥90%	3 Tutors for Every 100 Students = 18	2
TOTAL	288	34

Number of Instructional Aides

Type of Inst. Aide	# of Elementary Inst. Aides	# of Middle School Inst. Aides	# of High School Inst. Aides
Library	65	18	15
Title I	88	2	4
Other Extra Help	62	7	8
Special Education Inclusion & Resource Room	262	93	49
Other Instructional	150	35	45
TOTAL	627	155	121

Model does not fund instructional aides

Bottom Line

- **Know much about how to improve schools – double performance in 4-7 years**
- **Costs of funding those strategies are reasonable**
- **Most states and districts can do this now**

Key Implementation Challenges

- **Willingness to focus on “core” subjects not electives?**
- **Sufficient sense of urgency**
- **Educator knowledge and belief in approaches**
- **Leadership to launch, support and fund these efforts?**

What is Needed

We need a funding model that:

- ***includes positions that research and best practice identify as linked to increased student learning***
- ***provides incentives for schools to use such resources strategically***
- ***allows school officials some flexibility in meeting local needs***

Resources

- Odden, A.R. and Picus, L.O. (2008). *School Finance: A Policy Perspective, 4th edition*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. Available April 2007.
- *How People Learn* (Bransford, Brown and Cocking)
- *How Students Learn: (Donovan & Bransford)*
 - *Mathematics in the Classroom*
 - *Science in the Classroom*
 - *History in the Classroom*
 - Reading
- *What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do*
 - Darling-Hammond and Bransford

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