



# KEY MESSAGES AND RISK MESSAGES

## KEY MESSAGES

### EQUITY IN FINANCE

The achievement gap between students of different ethnic or economic backgrounds still exists and in some cases is widening. Additional state resources are necessary to provide our Black, Brown and low income students with an equitable chance at academic success.

When the academic race starts, many students are already several steps behind based on family experiences, ethnicity or economic background. Without equitable state resources, those same students have little to no chance of crossing the finish line to a successful future.

Across the nation and in [Insert State Name], students living in high poverty areas receive less per pupil dollars than students living in low poverty areas. A poor local tax base simply cannot provide the additional support needed, so our state must do more.

Research shows that with more equitable resources students achieve more academically, stay in school longer and earn more as adults.

#### **FLORIDA**

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- Florida students receive resources for education from a funding formula older than many of their parents and grandparents. As a result, our state has among the lowest per pupil spending in the nation.
- Instead of support for all students in need, Florida's inadequate funding formula only provides additional dollars for a few support programs.
- Florida students deserve a greater investment in education that accounts for the unique academic and social needs of today's students.

#### **GEORGIA**

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- Georgia [lawmaker/policymaker or the State of GA] finally agreed to pay what it promised to pay students more than 30 years ago. The challenge is, that funding formula was based on needs identified around the birth of the internet and a decade before social media, meaning it fails to address the advanced needs of today's students.
- To ensure all students have a chance at success, Georgia must invest more in K-12 education and adopt funding weights for students with additional academic needs.

## MISSISSIPPI

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- Even though Mississippi school districts receive the biggest piece of their state's financial pie, they are still among the poorest. That's because they're receiving the biggest piece of the nation's smallest pie. In order for Mississippi and its economic pie to grow, more equitable investments in students are needed.
- Many Mississippi students are facing unhealthy learning environments and a lack of access to college preparatory courses and advanced technology, because they are forced to rely on state dollars which fluctuate each year. More state and federal dollars must be equitably invested in education in order to provide economic growth for one of America's poorest states.

## NORTH CAROLINA

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- As complex as North Carolina's education funding model is, it still fails to provide the simple need of equitable funding for its poorest counties.
- No one wants their colleague to receive three times our salary for the same job, so let's not do that to our students. On average, North Carolina's wealthiest districts receive three times more funding than our poorest districts. Without equitable support from the state, students most in need will continue to fall behind.

## TENNESSEE

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- The State of Tennessee gives all school districts, rich or poor, the same amount of money for each student, meaning the poorer districts continue to lag behind. Equitable state funding would mean an equitable chance at a quality education for all students.
- Two of the largest school districts in Tennessee are suing the state, because the state continues to break the financial promises made to our students decades ago, before the internet, social media or any of the other advancing needs of our students. Tennessee needs a modern, equitable and fully funded education formula.

## TEXAS

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- Texas' school funding model has rigid rules, preventing flexibility in district-level spending. As a result, school leaders are unable to target additional dollars toward their neediest students.
- While Texas' school funding model provides some additional dollars for the state's neediest students, the funding amounts were based on budgets developed when many of u were children.

## EQUITY IN FINANCE

- Nationwide, many Black, Brown and low-income students are overlooked or lack access to advanced placement courses and college prep pathways based upon inherent beliefs that they will not be successful.
- A more diverse team of teachers is needed to adequately reflect the students served. Research proves students of color perform better with teachers who look like them.
- We need more educators who are trained to understand the unique needs of a diverse student population and who inherently believe that all children can be successful.
- We must advocate for all students to be guided to meaningful postsecondary opportunities regardless of economic status or ethnicity.
- Research shows that biased expectations can forecast and even influence student outcomes. When policymakers and educators are able to see beyond demographics, students benefit.

## RISK MESSAGES

**Funding support:** The Southern Policy and Practice Network, made up of representatives from 35 independent organizations in six states, is supported by philanthropic funding given to the Southern Education Foundation and specifically earmarked for this invaluable work.

**Lobbying:** We are not lobbyists but rather community leaders advocating for policy change to ensure all Black, Brown and low income students have an equal chance at a quality education.