Summary: This 2019-20 profile of Idaho’s public K-12 school finance system focuses on three core indicators from the School Finance Indicators Database: fiscal effort, statewide adequacy, and equal opportunity. On a weighted average of these three measures (see back), Idaho scores 30 out of 100, which ranks 41st out of the 48 states with possible ratings.

FISCAL EFFORT

Fiscal effort is a measure of how much states devote to their schools as a share of their economic capacity (i.e., ability to raise revenue). Effort is calculated by dividing direct state and local K-12 expenditures in each state by its gross state product (GSP).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idaho effort</th>
<th>3.18%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. average</td>
<td>3.61%</td>
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- ID is a low effort state.
- In FY 2020, ID spent 3.18% of its economic capacity (GSP) on its K-12 public schools.
- This was 0.43 percentage points lower than the unweighted national average of 3.61 percent.
- ID’s effort level ranks #38 in the nation (out of 50).

STATEWIDE ADEQUACY

Statewide adequacy compares actual per-pupil (PP) spending in each state to district-level cost model estimates of the amount required to achieve the modest goal of U.S. average test scores. The graphs to the right indicate the percentage of students in districts where spending is below adequate and the funding gap (% above/below) in the typical student’s district. The graphs include regional and national averages.

- Overall adequacy in ID is relatively low.
- By the modest standard of U.S. average scores, 69.0 percent of ID students attend inadequately funded districts, which ranks #36 in the nation (out of 49).
- The typical ID student’s district spends 7.0 percent below adequate levels, which ranks #34 in the nation.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Equal opportunity is the comparison of adequacy between each state’s higher- and lower-poverty districts. The graph to the right presents adequate funding gaps by district poverty quintile (the blue diamonds are U.S. averages). The difference (in pct. points) between the lowest- and highest-poverty groups is a state’s “opportunity gap.”

- Educational opportunity in ID is moderately unequal.
- Spending in ID’s highest-poverty districts is 20.6 percent ($2,701 PP) below the estimated adequate level, compared with 9.0 percent ($682 PP) above adequate in the state’s most affluent districts.
- This opportunity gap of -29.5 percentage points is ranked #8 in the nation (out of 48).

Adequacy gaps by outcome gaps

- ID’s opportunity gap contributes to a student outcome gap: the state’s highest-poverty districts (pink dot) score 0.42 s.d. below its lowest-poverty districts (blue dot).

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### General

The data in this state profile are from the School Finance Indicators Database (SFID), a collection of public K-12 school finance and resource allocation indicators published annually by researchers from the Albert Shanker Institute, University of Miami School of Education and Human Development, and Rutgers University Graduate School of Education. The primary product of the SFID is the State Indicators Database (SID), a state-level dataset containing roughly 125 variables. This profile focuses on three types of measures included in the SID: fiscal effort, statewide adequacy, and equal opportunity. The full SID dataset, along with accessible documentation of and data sources for all the measures presented in this profile, as well other SID datasets, tools, and reports, are freely available to download at [schoolfinancedata.org](http://schoolfinancedata.org). The following are some general notes about the profiles, followed by descriptions and notes pertaining to the three types of measures they present:

- **The years in the profile refer to the spring semester of the school year (e.g., 2022-2023).**
- **Estimates may differ slightly from previous profiles, as some measures are changed or improved each year, and all years are recalculated annually with updated data.**
- **Due to rounding, percentages may not exactly sum to estimates on the front side.**
- **The total number of states assigned rankings varies slightly by measure, as not all measures are available in all states.**
- **Overall state scores:** The overall scores reported at the top of the profile provide a very simple summary of states’ combined “performance” on the three core indicators featured in the profiles. They do not represent comprehensive evaluations of states’ school finance systems. Each state is scored entirely relative to other states (i.e., rather than based on some absolute standard of “good” or “bad”), and the selection of components entails subjective judgments on the part of the SFID research team.

### Fiscal effort

**SID variables used in this section:** effort, year

Fiscal effort indicates how much of a state's total economic capacity goes toward K-12 schools. It is calculated in the SFID by dividing direct state and local K-12 expenditures by either Gross State Product (GSP) or aggregate state personal income. Both of these are measures of a state’s economic capacity. In this sense, effort measures how much each state contributes as a percentage of how much it might contribute. The former denominator (GSP) is used in these profiles, but the two are highly correlated, and the income-based effort indicator is available in the SID. Bear in mind that high-capacity states with larger economies, such as New York and California, can put forth lower effort than lower capacity states, such as Mississippi and Alabama, but poverty in a state does not change the state’s capacity (due to a historically low “capacity” or “adequate” funding threshold) but rather affects how much effort each state can put forth, as effort is calculated as a ratio to represent the amount of state and local spending per student relative to the state's capacity, whereas others like state poverty quintiles are in part defined by regional levels and student characteristics.

- **The table in the right panel presents the total additional funding that would be required to close all these negative funding gaps (“ignoring” all other constraints).** The first bullet directly below the table presents the number of districts with below adequate funding as well as the total number of districts in this state with valid estimates. The second bullet presents the total additional funding that would be required to close all these negative funding gaps (“ignoring” all other constraints). The regrouping in the right panel presents, by district poverty quintile, adequacy gaps in terms of either: 1) the proportion of students in each state in districts with actual funding below estimated adequate funding; or 2) the adequacy gap (percentage difference between actual and estimated adequate spending) for the typical student in this state. Note that even seemingly small changes or differences in effort levels represent large revenue amounts, as the denominators are entire state economies. Note also that 2006 is the first year in which we calculated effort, as quarterly GSP estimates are not available in all states. The scatterplot in the right panel presents, by district poverty quintile, adequacy in terms of either: 1) the proportion of students in each state in districts with actual funding below estimated adequate funding; or 2) the adequacy gap (percentage difference between actual and estimated adequate spending) for the typical student in this state. Note that even seemingly small changes or differences in effort levels represent large revenue amounts, as the denominators are entire state economies. Note also that 2006 is the first year in which we calculated effort, as quarterly GSP estimates are not available in all states.

### Statewide adequacy

**SID variables used in this section:** necm_predcost_state; necm_ppcost_state; necm_predcost_tercile; necm_ppcost_tercile

Adequacy is typically defined as the extent to which the amount of funding for schools is sufficient for students to reach a minimum/acceptable level of educational outcomes. Our adequacy estimates compare each district’s actual spending levels to estimates from cost models of how much that district would have to spend in order to achieve national average test scores (i.e., “required” or “adequate” spending). We express statewide adequacy in terms of either: 1) the proportion of students in each state in districts with actual funding below estimated adequate levels; or 2) the adequacy gap (percentage difference between actual and estimated adequate spending) for the typical student in each state. Both these adequacy measures are from the National Education Cost Modeling Project (NECM), which is part of the SFID. The NECM calculates required spending based on the relationship between outcomes and cost factors such as regional wage variation, district size, and student characteristics. Note that this model and the data it uses are necessarily imperfect, and estimates should be viewed with appropriate caution. For more information about the NECM, see the SID user's guide. Some of the estimates presented in this section of the profile can be calculated using SID variables, whereas others (e.g., the district-by-district estimates in the right panel) require the use of the SFID's Cost Database (OCD); many but not all SID adequacy measures (all of which have variable name beginning with necm,) are aggregations of DCD estimates. The full DCD dataset (going back to 2009) is also publicly available at the SFID website (2020 estimates will be released in early 2023). Statewide adequacy results also reflect assumptions that students are not allocated in all isolated, single-district state, and for Vermont between 2017 and 2020 (due to data irregularities). Estimates for D.C. apply to a single school district (District of Columbia Public Schools).

- **In the first bullet of the left panel, we characterize statewide adequacy as follows:** high (fewer than 20 percent of students in below adequate districts and statewide gap above +30 percent); moderately high (20-30 percent below adequate and statewide gap above +30 percent); high (higher than 30 percent in below adequate districts). The regional categorizations in the graph are U.S. Census divisions (9 groups). ID’s division is Mountain. Axes ranges for the bottom graph may vary by state.
- **In the first bullet directly below the table presents the number of districts with below adequate funding as well as the total number of districts in this state with valid estimates.**
- **In order to provide a sense of states’ capacity, we characterize each state’s GDP per capita as small, medium, or large by sorting states into three roughly equal groups using terciles.**

### Equal opportunity

**SID variables used in this section:** necm_predcost_q1—q5; necm_ppcost_q1—q5; necm_risk_slope_q1—q5; necm_risk_quad_q1—q5

Equal educational opportunity is achieved in a given state when none of that state’s districts are substantially further above or below adequate spending levels than are other districts. In the SFID, we measure equal opportunity (EO) with the same NECM estimates used for statewide adequacy (see above), but in this case by comparing adequacy gaps (percentage difference between actual and estimated adequate spending) between the highest- and lowest-poverty districts in each state. That is, each state’s “opportunity gap” is the difference (in percentage points) between these two groups (district poverty groups are defined in terms of quintiles—e.g., the 20 percent highest-poverty districts compared with the 20 percent lowest-poverty districts in each state) that EO is conceptually independent of statewide adequacy—e.g., a hypothetical state in which all districts are below adequate funding levels might still exhibit EO, so long as high- and low-poverty districts are inadequate by roughly the same proportions, whereas highly unequal opportunity might exist in a state in which funding is universally adequate, if high-poverty districts are more adequately funded than low-poverty districts.

- **EO estimates are not available for Vermont and Hawaii (adequacy estimates not available), and cannot be calculated for D.C. (single government-run district state).**
- **In the first bullet of the left panel, we characterize EO in each state as follows:** severely unequal (EO gap less than -75 points); highly unequal (EO gap between -30 and -75 points); moderately unequal (-75 and -30 points); slightly unequal (0 to -75 points); adequate (0 to 75 points); and high (75 to +30 points). The center panel figures present adequate funding gaps for all five quintiles in each state (although opportunity gaps as we define them for the purposes of this profile use only the highest- and lowest-poverty groups, this graph permits comparison of gaps between different combinations of groups). The state (bars) and U.S. (blue diamonds) estimates in the graph are average differences between actual and required spending (weighted by enrollment), by district poverty quintile. Note, however, that poverty quintiles are defined by state, and so the U.S. averages (blue diamonds) represent an approximation of the national situation. Axes ranges for this graph may vary between states.

- **In the right panel presents, by district poverty quintile, adequacy (difference between actual and required spending) expressed in dollars per pupil (horizontal axis) by average student testing outcomes expressed as the difference from the national average in standard deviations (vertical axis).** The other markers (circles) in the plot are other states’ district poverty groups (color coded in the same manner, but with more transparent markers to allow for clear viewing of this state’s markers). The difference in student outcomes between the highest- (Q5) and lowest-poverty (Q1) estimate is presented in the first bullet, below the plot, and can be interpreted as a poverty-based student achievement gap in this state.