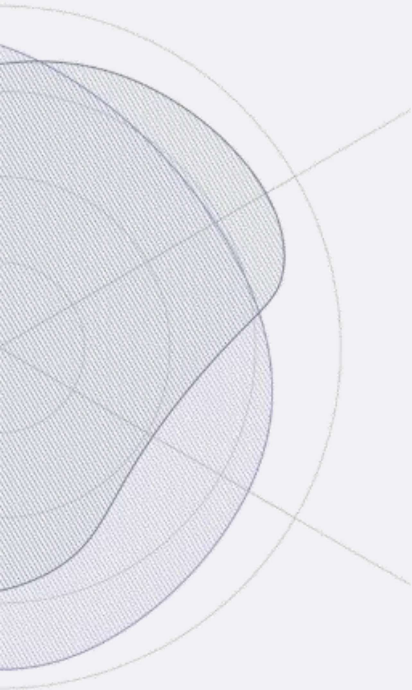


National Center for Educational Research (NCER)

Evaluation of the current funding model: accessibility of resources



About the study

The development of a new funding model for general education schools is a broad, multi-component project aimed at creating an effective system of financing based on equity and accessibility within the general education system. In order to establish a holistic picture of the current school funding model, a comprehensive survey was conducted¹, at the first stage of the project. The present study forms part of this survey.

The study aims at evaluating the impact of the existing funding model on resource accessibility and to identify the key challenges and constraints faced by schools. Special attention is given to examining inequalities in the distribution of resources.

The findings highlight the need to develop a more equitable and effective funding model—one that takes into account both the specific needs of individual schools and the broader context of the education system, thereby supporting the achievement of educational goals and initiatives.

Methodological Framework and Research Design

A critically important stage in the development of a new funding model for the general education system is the systematic analysis of the existing model and the identification of its key challenges and limitations. The present study aims to analyze the current funding model at the institutional level, focusing specifically on schools' access to educational resources. Accordingly, the main research question is: *To what extent does the existing funding model ensure access to the resources necessary for the effective functioning of schools?*

In this study, access to resources is evaluated across four main domains:

- infrastructural resources,
- classroom resources (technologies and learning materials),
- human resources,
- resources for extracurricular activities.

The research is based on the needs assessment methodology, widely recognized in the education sector as one of the most effective tools for decision-making. Needs assessment is a systematic process of identifying and evaluating needs within a target population, describing problems, and determining possible solutions. This approach fully aligns with the goals of the study, as it enables a comprehensive description of the current situation, the identification of priority needs, and the definition of actionable strategies for improvement.

Within the framework of the study, the perceptions and assessments of schools' key stakeholder groups (school principals, teachers, heads of resource centers, etc.) are analyzed, regarding those resources to which access is limited within the current funding model (so-called perceived needs²).

¹ Statistical analysis of school funding databases (report “*How Are Public Schools Funded*”); analysis of schools' utility expenses (report “*School Utility Cost Analysis*”); analysis of international practices of general education school funding (report “*Review of International Practice of School Funding and Related Research Findings*”); school networks – analysis of international practices (report “*School Network Restructuring*” INTERIM REPORT #2); and others.

² Needs are evaluative judgments that reflect the problems of the target group which need to be addressed. (McKillip 1987).

Since the needs assessment methodology encompasses a wide spectrum of methods, various techniques of data collection and analysis were applied. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative designs:

- Qualitative research included focus groups and interviews with teachers, school administrators, and representatives of resource centers. In total, around 100 respondents participated, selected through purposive sampling from schools with diverse characteristics (language of instruction, location, school size, etc.).
- Quantitative research was based on a specially developed questionnaire designed to assess all possible aspects of access to resources. The target group consisted of school administrators, with 1,800 school principals participating in the survey.

Triangulation and comprehensive evaluation of the funding model: To ensure robust analysis and validation of findings, the study applied triangulation techniques, combining qualitative and quantitative data obtained from different stakeholder groups. Triangulation allowed for the creation of a holistic picture of the research problem and made it possible to view the issue from multiple perspectives. The use of this technique enabled the integration of information on resource accessibility gathered through different methods and from different groups.

The adequacy and sufficiency of resources allocated for achieving schools' educational goals—as well as the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the current funding model—were evaluated through the alignment of the school community's experiences, perceptions, and viewpoints.

The overall research model is summarized in the attached diagram.

Figure 1. Study model: “The Impact of the Existing Funding Model on Resource Accessibility”

