

DOES MONEY MATTER?

What the Courts are Saying

There is a consensus among academic and legal experts that “money matters.” Additional money for education, if spent well, leads to higher student achievement. In 29 of the 30 cases in which state courts have considered the issue, the courts have ruled that money does indeed matter, citing resource deprivations in predominantly low-income and minority schools and causal connections between inadequate funding and low performance.

<i>State</i>	<i>Name of Decision (Highest State Court Decision Unless Otherwise Indicated)</i>	<i>Money Matters Issue Not Addressed by High Court</i>	<i>Plaintiffs Prevail on Money Matters Issue</i>	<i>Defendants Prevail on Money Matters Issues</i>
<i>Alabama</i>	Siegelman v. ACE, 2001 Ala. LEXIS 251, (Supreme Court of Alabama, 2001)	Previous litigation in Alabama held that money does matter. Subsequent litigation re-opened and reversed the prior order on a separation of powers argument.		
<i>Alaska</i>	Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District v. State, 931 P.2d 391 (Supreme Court of Alaska, 1997)		capital funding	
<i>Arizona</i>	Roosevelt Elementary School Dist. No. 66 v. Bishop 179 Ariz. 233, 877 P.2d 806 Ariz., 1994.		. . . children have a better opportunity to learn biology or chemistry, and are more likely to do so, if provided with laboratory equipment for experiments and demonstrations; that children have a better opportunity to learn English literature if given access to books; that children have a better opportunity to learn computer science if they can use computers, and so on through the entire state-prescribed curriculum.	
<i>Arkansas</i>	Lake View School District v. Huckabee, No. 1992-5318 Chancery Court of Pulaski County, 2001 (Trial Court Decision, affirmed by Supreme Court)		“Facilities, materials, teachers and other resources affect a student’s opportunity and ability to learn.”	

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<i>California</i>	Serrano v. Priest 5 Cal.3d 584, 96 Cal.Rptr. 601 Cal. 1971. (citing directly to footnote 16)		States that though there is controversy concerning the impact of spending and environment in schools, courts which have considered defendant's contentions have uniformly rejected them.	
<i>Colorado</i>	Lujan v. Colorado State Board of Education 649 P.2d 1005 (1982)	Reverses district court holding which finds that money does matter based on "social policy" grounds- i.e., not wanting to get involved.		
<i>Connecticut</i>	Horton v. Meskill 376 A.2d 359 (1977)		"...Children living in towns with relatively low property values are afforded public education, but the education they receive is ... lower in quality than that which pupils receive in comparable towns with larger tax base and greater ability to finance education."	
<i>Delaware</i>		No decision		
<i>Florida</i>	Coalition for Adequacy And Fairness in School Funding v. Chiles 680 So.2d 400 Fla.,1996.	Defendant victory because Ps lacked ability to define and defend claim of inadequacy and failed to show there was no separation of powers issue.		
<i>Georgia</i>	McDaniel v. Thomas, 285 S.E. 2d 156 (Ga. 1981).	The Supreme Court reverses the trial court based on separation of powers concerns.		
<i>Hawaii</i>		No decision		
<i>Idaho</i>	Idaho Schools for Equal Educational Opportunity v. State 142 Idaho 450, 129 P.3d 1199 Idaho,2005.		Capital Funding	
<i>Illinois</i>	Committee for Educational Rights v. Edgar 174 Ill.2d 1, 672 N.E.2d 1178 Ill.,1996	Finds that need for local control overrides funding concerns. Funding system based on property taxes did not impact "efficiency".		
<i>Indiana</i>	Bonner v., Daniels	No decision (case pending)		
<i>Iowa</i>	Coalition v. State	No decision (case settled)		

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<i>Kansas</i>	Montoy v. Kansas No. 99-C-1738, 2003 (Trial Court Decision, affirmed by Supreme Court)		Though equal educational opportunity does not necessarily correlate with dollar amounts, adequate funding does matter.	
<i>Kentucky</i>	Rose v. The Council for Better Education 790 S.W.2d 186 Ky.,1989.		There is a direct correlation between the amount of money a district spends and the quality of education that it provides its students.	
<i>Louisiana</i>	Charlet v. Legislature of the State of Louisiana, 713 So.2d 1199, 1998.	Lack of provisions for capital funding was not unconstitutional		
<i>Maine</i>	School Administrative District No. 1 v. Commissioner, 659 A.2d 854, 1995	Funding system met rational basis test. This is an issue for the legislature and for localities, not the courts.		
<i>Maryland</i>	Maryland State Bd. of Educ. v. Bradford 387 Md. 353, 875 A.2d 703, Md.,2005.		Court accepts trial court finding that cutbacks in services resulting from fiscal crises deny students a constitutionally adequate education, but interprets another constitutional provision to preclude school districts from running deficits.	
<i>Massachusetts</i>	Hancock v. Driscoll 822 N.E.2d 1134 (2005)		No one reading the [lower court] judge's report can be left with any doubt that the question is not "if more money is needed, but "how much."	
<i>Michigan</i>		No state court decision.		
<i>Minnesota</i>	Skeen v. State 505 N.W.2d 299 Minn.,1993.	There is a floor level of funding which would be unconstitutional to go beneath, but this is not the case here.		
<i>Mississippi</i>		No decision		
<i>Missouri</i>	Committee for Educational Equality v. State, 878 S.W. 2d 446 (Supreme Court of Missouri, 1994)			

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<i>Montana</i>	Columbia Falls Elementary School District No. 6 v. Montana Docket No. BDV-2002-528 (Mont. Dist. Ct. Apr. 2004) (Affirmed by Supreme Court)		Finds that the funding system was not based on educationally relevant factors or on a determination of what is needed to meet educational standards and that this is unacceptable.	
<i>Nebraska</i>	Douglas County School Dist. 0001 v. Johanns 269 Neb. 664, 694 N.W.2d 668 Neb.,2005.	Equal funding is not necessary, but adequate funding may be a different story.		
<i>Nevada</i>		No decision		
<i>New Hampshire</i>	Claremont School District v. Governor 635 A.2d 1375 (1993)		“Constitution requires the state to provide a constitutionally adequate education ... and to guarantee adequate funding.”	
<i>New Jersey</i>	Abbott v. Burke 575 A.2d 359		“Money can make a difference if effectively used... [Plaintiffs] have the right to the same educational opportunity that money buys for others.”	
<i>New Mexico</i>	Zuni School District v. State , C.V. 98-14-II (1999)		Capital funding	
<i>New York</i>	Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc. v. State, 100 N.Y. 2d 893		“Plaintiffs established necessary “causal Link” between the present funding system and the poor performance of City schools...by showing that increased funding can provide better teachers, facilities and instrumentalities of learning.”	
<i>North Carolina</i>	Hoke County Bd. of Educ. v. State, 195 CVS 1158 (Superior Court, Oct. 2000), at 74.		“Only a fool would find that money does not matter in education.”	
<i>North Dakota</i>	Bismarck Public School District et al. v. State et al. 511 N..2d 247 (N.D. 1994)		“Greater funding means that schools do more things educationally and do them better.” Refutes the notion that the importance of local control should trump the need to accept funding from the state.	

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<i>Ohio</i>	DeRolph v. State 677 N.E.2d 733 Ohio, 1997		“we must ensure that there is enough money that students have the chance to succeed because of the educational opportunity provided, and not in spite of it.”	
<i>Oklahoma</i>	Fair School Finance Council v. Oklahoma 746 P.2d 1135 (1987)	Equal funding is not mandated (though a level of adequate funding may be).		
<i>Oregon</i>	Olsen v. State, 554 P.2d 139 (1976)	There is a floor level of funding which would be unconstitutional to go beneath, but this is not the case here.		
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	Marrero v. Commonwealth, 702 A.2d. 956 (1998)	Finds for defendants on procedural matters.		
<i>Rhode Island</i>	City of Pawtucket v. Sundlun, 662 A.2d 40 (1995)			Used legislative interpretation and intent to show system was constitutional and additionally claimed that experts have shown that parental involvement is the biggest factor in a child’s education. Further stated the need to maintain local control of education. The court also noted that this was the jurisdiction of the legislature. The Superior Court held in favor of plaintiffs- that school finance system violated the state constitution’s education article, as well as the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses.
<i>South Carolina</i>	Abbeville Trial Court Order (December 9, 2004)		Need to provide a minimally adequate education for <i>each</i> child. This entails allocating funding for early childhood intervention programs.	However funding for teachers and facilities was found unimportant (as the court noted that money was not the only factor in attracting and retaining qualified teachers and that buildings which were not fire hazards were good enough to provide a minimally adequate education). The court further held that there is no connection between spending and achievement.
<i>South Dakota</i>	South Dakota Coalition v. State Civ. # 06-244 (filed 2006)	No decision (case pending)		

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<i>Tennessee</i>	Tennessee Small School Systems v. McWherter 851 S.W.2d 139 Tenn.,1993.		The court holds that “there is a direct correlation between dollars expended and the quality of education a student receives.”	
<i>Texas</i>	Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby (<i>Edgewood I</i>) 777 S.W.2d 391		“The amount of money spent on a student’s education has a real and meaningful impact on the educational opportunity offered that student... The differences in the quality of educational programs offered are dramatic.”	
<i>Utah</i>		No decision		
<i>Vermont</i>	Brigham v. State, 692 A.2d. 384 (1997)		“... there is no reasonable doubt that substantial funding differences significantly affect opportunities to learn...”	
<i>Virginia</i>	Scott v. Commonwealth of Virginia 247 Va. 379, 443 S.E.2d 138 Va.,1994.	Funding system was not unconstitutional, though certain “standards of quality” must be met.		
<i>Washington</i>	Seattle School District No. 1 of King County v. State 90 Wash.2d 476, 585 P.2d 71 Wash.,1978.		Plaintiffs prevailed based on requirement for “ample” funding	
<i>West Virginia</i>	Pauley v. Bailey 243 S.E.2d 128, 132		“... the [lower] court determined that the overriding cause of the current unconstitutional system is inadequate and inequitable funding.”	
<i>Wisconsin</i>	Vincent v. Voight, 614 N.W.2d 388 (2000)	Finds for the defendants that equality of funding is not mandated, but states that “substantial funding differences may significantly affect students’ opportunities to learn.” (If this had been an adequacy lawsuit the results may have been different.)		
<i>Wyoming</i>	Campbell County School District v. State 907 P.2d 1238 (Wyo. 1995)		“any justification (of educational funding) which is not demonstrably cost-based is constitutionally infirm.”	