

Opinion: Education funding in California not equitable

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Wouldn't it make sense for education funding in California to be transparent and equitable, with money spent according to students' varying needs? Gov. Jerry Brown is proposing to inject some overdue clarity and logic into the process by allocating to schools a flat amount per pupil, plus a large additional sum for low-income students or those who aren't fluent in English.

The governor's plan is far from perfect – it's especially lacking in accountability – and the Legislature appears unwilling to support it this year for reasons both political and philosophical. But the reasoning behind it is sound, and legislators should work with the governor to move the state in this direction in coming years.

California's system for allocating public school dollars – if it can be called a system, which implies that there's an organizing principle behind it – has needed an overhaul for decades. Only a handful of people in the state claim to understand how it works. Some school districts receive more money for each student than others, even when living costs and student characteristics are roughly the same. The Inglewood Unified School District receives about \$1,200 less per student annually than Los Angeles Unified, for example, although the two have almost identical demographics and educational challenges. Some affluent districts get far more than the statewide average; others receive less.

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