

EQUITY MEASURES OF THE MISSOURI SB 287 SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare horizontal equity measures in Missouri school funding through the fifth year of implementation of the Senate Bill 287 (SB 287) funding formula with the final year of the previous Senate Bill 380 formula. In addition, vertical equity funding components under the new formula were correlated with student achievement measures to determine if the intended goal of providing additional resources to districts with high need students was being met. This study replicated the methodology of a study by Ogle (2007) to provide comparisons between the current and previous formula on horizontal equity statistics of coefficient of variation, federal range ratio, and the McLoone Index. These measures were applied to the data for all districts and to the data for non-hold harmless district on a revenue per pupil basis.

When considering all districts in the state, horizontal equity has not improved under the SB 287 formula, with each measure far from target values. However, for non-hold harmless districts the equity values have improved and, in some cases, are approaching equity target values. The hold harmless provision in the formula continues to limit overall horizontal equity. The impact on equity of prorating the funding distribution equally for all districts during recent state budget shortfalls has been minimal. Correlation calculations indicate the SB 287 formula has been successful at distributing more funds to districts with populations of students with higher needs, as determined by student achievement outcomes.