

# FUNDING IMPACTS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND THE AT-RISK FACTOR

Presentation to the Interim Committee on School Finance

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# APA

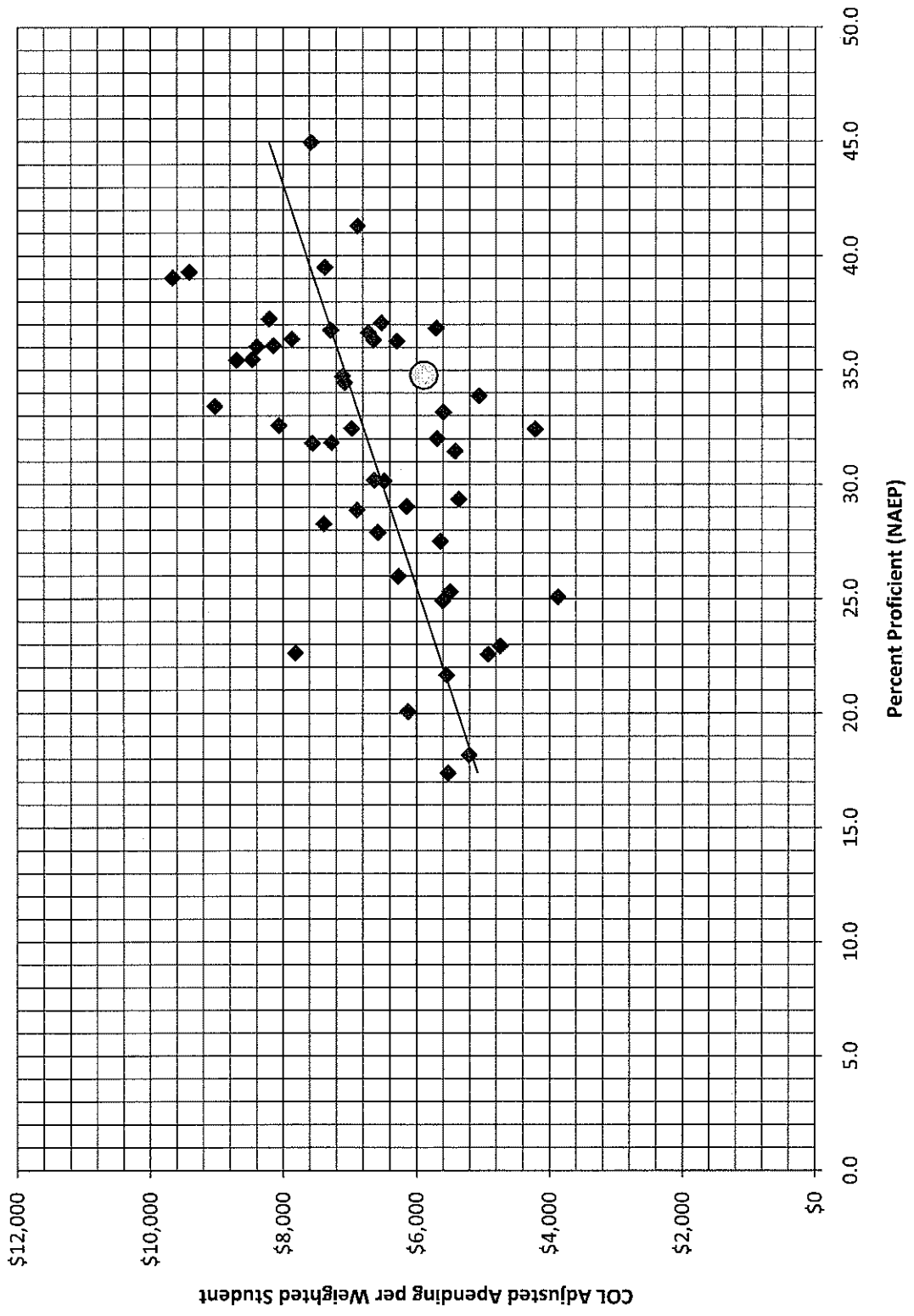
- Denver-based consulting firm founded in 1983
- Focus on education policy with an emphasis on school finance
- Has worked in all 50 states

# What We Will Discuss

- Funding Impacts of Student Achievement
  - Factors
  - Results
- At-Risk Student Funding
  - Identifying Students
  - Different Weights Across the Country
  - Funding of Students
  - Types of Programs

# Achievement: Factors

- Policy makers have had a long interest in how funding impacts student achievement – “Does Money Matter?”
- Many states are looking at, or have recently looked at, the level of funding needed to reach state expectations
- Need Factors include: At-Risk, Special Education and English Language Learners
- Evidence that improvement is related to services, which have a cost
  - Maryland and New Jersey
- APA examined the relationship between performance (NAEP) and spending (adjusted for need and cost of living) by state



## At-Risk: Identifying Students

- Need a count of at-risk students to distribute funds; designed to identify students in need of additional services to meet academic goals
- Generally proxies have been used; not necessarily designed to identify specific students who need services but to estimate the total number of students who need services
- Could identify individual students; similar to Special Education and ELPA identification

## At-Risk: Identifying Students

- Colorado uses eligibility for Free Lunch program and ELL
- 18 states use Free and Reduced Lunch
- 7 states use just Free Lunch
- 9 states use other factors
  - Students in TANF families
  - Families below poverty level
  - Assessment scores
  - Census factors, such as parent education level

## At-Risk: Weights

- Many states distribute At-Risk dollars based on an additional amount per student above the base/foundation amount. This is a weight.
- Key question is: what does the weight mean?
  - Some are simply historical amounts
  - States are beginning to set weights that are tied to accountability systems and new funding formulas
  - Even weights that look the same, i.e. a .25 weight in two states, can be very different depending on how the base cost has been derived.



## At-Risk: Weights

- Colorado's current weight is .12 minimum, with an increase for being above state average % and a higher increase if above 50,000 students
- Funds to District
- Charters receive funding at district average
- Weights range from lows around .12 up to Maryland's weight of over 1.0
- New Jersey – up to .46
- Pennsylvania – .43

## At-Risk: Funding to Student

- Some states require that the dollars be used on specific programs
- Dollars often used for similar purposes as Title I dollars which do have restrictions
- Many states do not restrict the expenditures
- Should the dollars have to be fully tracked back to specific students or programs?
- Colorado looks for 75% of at-risk funding to go to at-risk programming
- Often different programs cost different amounts
- States generally do not currently collect expenditure data for at-risk

## At-Risk: Programs

- Many different types of programs, which vary in cost
  - Reduce class size
  - Alternative schools
  - Tutoring
  - Before / After school programs
  - Summer School
  - Credit Recovery
  - Others