
Comparing Measures of Economically Disadvantaged Students in K-12 Funding Formula

Education Reform Commission
Funding Subcommittee

April 28, 2015



Presentation Topics

- Overview of Goal
- Summary of Other States' Economically Disadvantaged Weight
- Three Options
 - Current QBE Weight: Remedial Education Program (REP) and Early Intervention Program (EIP)
 - Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRL)
 - Direct Certified Students through FRL program
- Equalization vs. FRL Comparison

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Summary of Other States' ED Weights

- As of 2011, 34 states provide additional funding for “at-risk” students, including Georgia through its current EIP and REP weights.¹
- When income status is used, it is most often eligibility for free/reduced price lunch (FRL).
- Examples of weights include the following:
 - SNAP (food stamp) eligibility,
 - Foster,
 - Neglected/Delinquent/Homeless, and
 - Percentage of Students Scoring Below Grade Level.
- Weights range from 1.05 (MS) to 1.60 (MN). Most weights are 1.25.

¹Verstegen, D. A. (2011) Public education finance systems in the United States and funding policies for populations with special educational needs. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 19 (21). <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/769>

Options to Consider

- Current QBE Weight: Remedial Education Program (REP) and Early Intervention Program (EIP)
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRL)
- Direct Certification from FRL Program

Current QBE: Remedial/Early Intervention Program

Overview: Georgia's current QBE funding formula includes two weights for this purpose, Early Intervention Program (EIP) in K-5 and Remedial Education Program in grades 6-12 (REP), to target students determined to be below grade level through a variety of measures.

- The weights are 1.7877 to 2.0363 for K-5 EIP students and 1.3092 for 6-12 REP student.
- State law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-153 to 20-2-154) sets criteria to identify eligible students for each program that allow for significant district-level discretion. Requirements are also waivable in IE2 and charter systems.
- REP eligibility is capped at 25% for schools with less than 50% FRL students and at 35% for those over 50% FRL students.
- EIP funds 1 full-time teacher per 11 students.

2013-2014 Summary Statistics	Average	Minimum	Maximum	25th Percentile	75th Percentile
EIP/REP Eligibility	14.5%	0.0%	56.4%	12.3%	22.3%

Current QBE: Remedial/Early Intervention Program

Positives

- Targets students identified as being below grade level through assessments, teacher recommendations, or being retained in the same grade.

Negatives

- EIP criteria are determined at the district level instead of being consistent across the state.
- Eligibility requirements can be waived in IE2 and charter systems, meaning that systems can include otherwise ineligible students up to the funding cap.
- Provides additional funding to schools identifying students who are below grade level, which could incentivize over-identification (e.g., In 2014, one system had 98.1% in Remedial 6-8 and 44.9% in Remedial 9-12).

Free/Reduced Price Lunch

Overview: The percentage of students who are eligible for free/reduced price lunch. Students are identified through parent/guardian application for eligibility or through direct certification of students who meet one of the following criteria:

- Lives in a family unit receiving SNAP (food stamp) benefits,
- Lives in a family unit receiving TANF benefits,
- Identified as homeless
- Identified as foster, or
- Identified as migrant.

In general, roughly half of FRL students are directly certified, and the other half are identified through parent/guardian application.

2013-2014 Summary Statistics	Average	Minimum	Maximum	25th Percentile	75th Percentile
Percentage Free/Reduced Price Lunch	62.5%	0.0%	100.0%	58.1%	99.6%

Free/Reduced Price Lunch

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

In 2013-2014, the USDA expanded the school lunch program to allow schools or districts with more than 40% of students who are directly certified to opt to have all students receive free lunch.

- Participating schools are not required to gather parent/guardian applications for 4 years.
- In 2014-2015, more than 20% of schools (533) are participating, meaning that all students in these schools are flagged as FRL.
- 1,034 of roughly 2,265 schools are eligible.
- 103 of 199 LEAs have greater than or equal to 40% of students who are directly certified, meaning that they could opt for districtwide CEP.
 - One CEP system has a school that had 25.4% of its students eligible for FRL prior to participation. Now all students are counted.
- For this reason, the GaDOE and GOSA are exploring an alternative measure for poverty for accountability and the Report Card

Free/Reduced Price Lunch

Positives

- Widely used and understood as the standard measure for poverty.
- Most common measure for funding weight in other states (as of now).

Negatives

- Dependent upon USDA program eligibility guidelines.
- Over-identifies economically disadvantaged students in CEP schools (currently more than 20% of schools).
- Partially dependent upon parents submitting applications to determine eligibility.

Direct Certification from FRL Program

Overview: Percentage of students who are directly certified for eligibility for free/reduced price lunch. These students fall in at least one of the following categories:

- Lives in a family unit receiving SNAP (food stamp) benefits
- Lives in a family unit receiving TANF benefits
- Identified as homeless
- Identified as foster
- Identified as migrant

2013-2014 Summary Statistics	Average	Minimum	Maximum	25th Percentile	75th Percentile
Direct Certification	34.8%	7.1%	83.1%	31.4%	48.9%

Direct Certification from FRL Program

Positives

- Includes data already used by districts to “directly certify” students for eligibility for free lunch.
- Can be calculated at the state level consistently for all systems, regardless of school lunch program participation or school system governance model.
- Minimizes over-identification of students relative to the other two options.

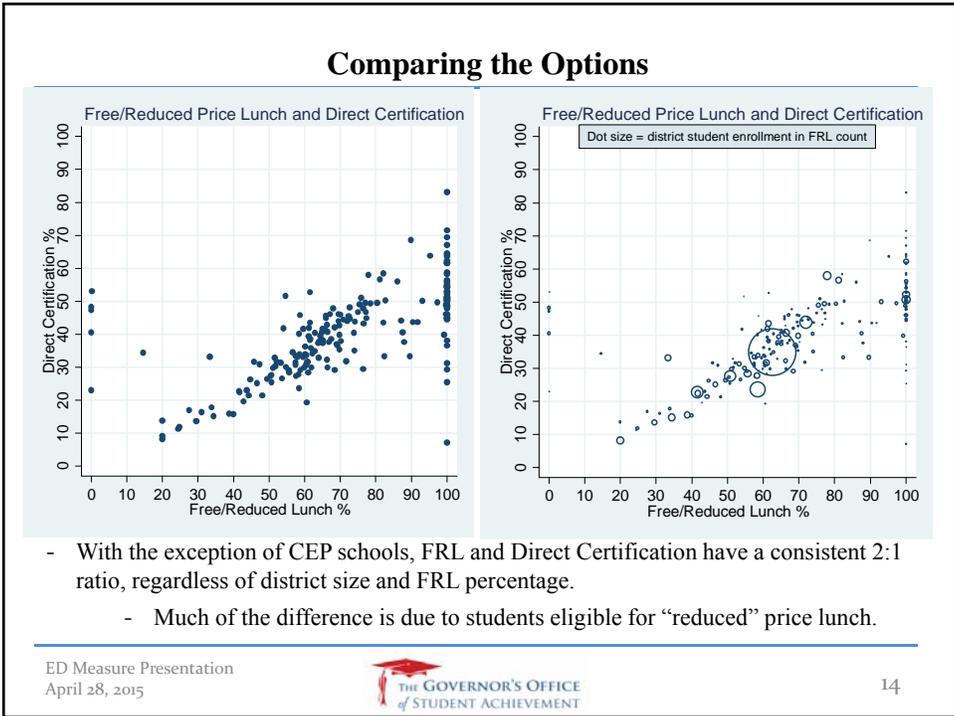
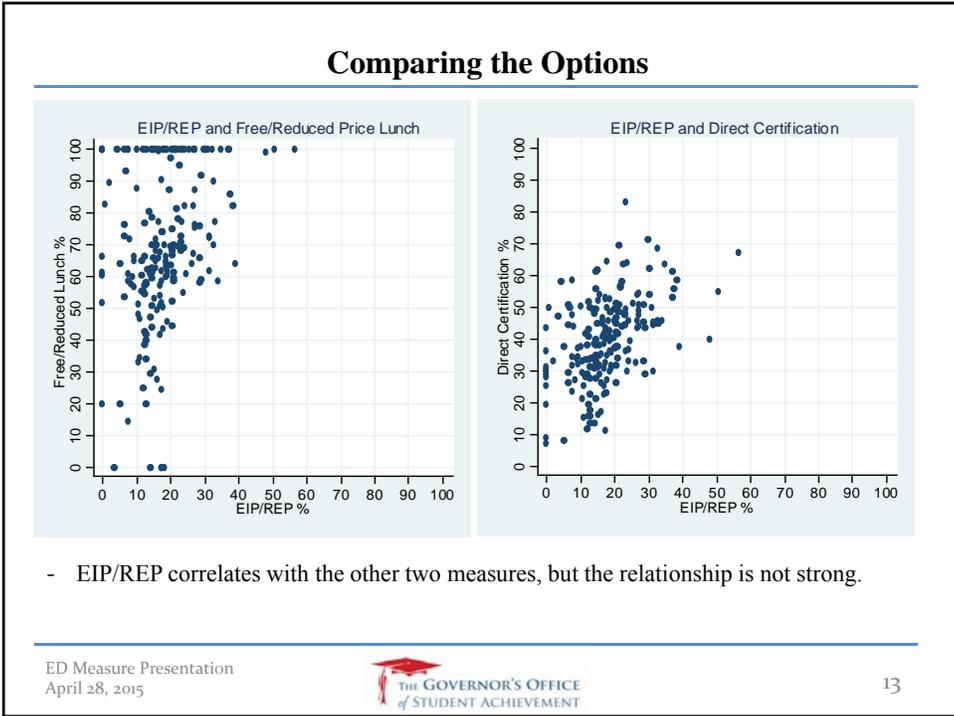
Negatives

- Not currently used or widely understood.
- Dependent on SNAP/TANF program eligibility requirements.
- Underestimates poverty level in areas with low SNAP/TANF participation.
- Requires an MOU with the Department of Human Services to use data for this purpose.
- In general, identifies about half as many students as FRL.

Comparing the Options

2013-2014 Summary Statistics	Average	Minimum	Maximum	25th Percentile	75th Percentile
EIP/REP Eligibility	14.5%	0.0%	56.4%	12.3%	22.3%
Percentage Free/Reduced Price Lunch	62.5%	0.0%	100.0%	58.1%	99.6%
Direct Certification	34.8%	7.1%	83.1%	31.4%	48.9%

- Free/reduced price lunch identifies about twice as many students as direct certification and four times as many students as EIP/REP.
- The school-wide free lunch option skews free/reduced lunch toward 100%.
- Direct Certification more closely mirrors free lunch percentages (excluding students eligible for reduced price lunch).



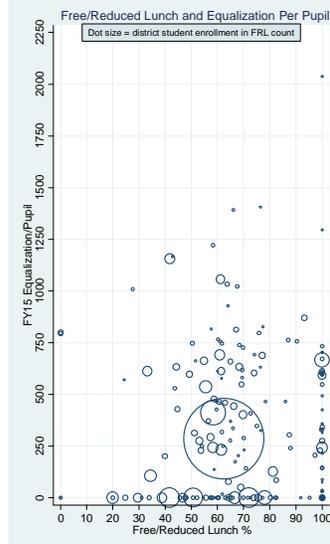
Summary Findings & Discussion

- Recent changes to the school lunch program limit the usability of FRL as a funding weight.
- EIP/REP requirements are waivable in IE2 and charter systems and creates an incentive for over-identification for these services.
- Direct certification, while identifying roughly half of students identified in FRL, consistently identifies economically disadvantaged students across the state.

Further Graphs & Analysis

Can an ED measure substitute for Equalization?

- No statistically significant relationship between equalization per pupil and percentage of FRL students
- The other two measures exhibit similar patterns.



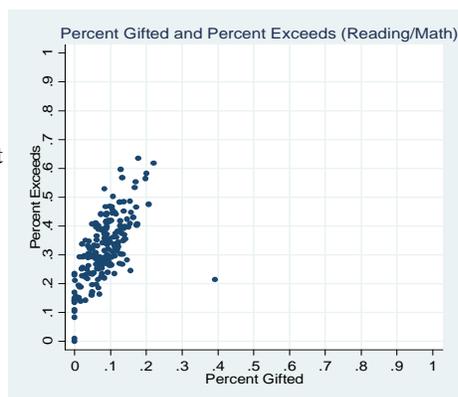
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Comparing Gifted and CRCT/EOCT Exceeds Rate

- Strong positive relationship exists between Percent Gifted and Percent Exceeds*
- At the district level, the percent exceeds is generally 4 times as high as the percent gifted
- The state-level percent gifted is 11.4%, and the state-level percent exceeds is 37.4%
- Relationship could change with introduction of Georgia Milestones and its 4th performance level



**2014 CRCT and EOCT results. The CRCT subject areas included are Reading and Mathematics. The EOCT courses are 9th Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature and Composition, Coordinate Algebra, and Analytic Geometry.*

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