



The Strategic School Funding for Results (SSFR) – Phase II: a project overview

Purpose

During the 2009-10 school year, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Pivot Learning Partners (PLP) formed a partnership with two large California school districts—Los Angeles and Twin Rivers Unified School Districts—to design a comprehensive approach to the governance of local district finance to enhance teacher and student learning effectiveness. With the ultimate goal of improving the level and distribution of both teacher effectiveness and student learning opportunities, the *Strategic School Funding for Results (SSFR)* project was designed to (a) develop and implement more **equitable** and **transparent** strategies for allocating resources within each district; (b) link those strategies to policies and processes designed to encourage **innovation**, **efficiency**, and **teacher effectiveness**; and (c) strengthen **accountability** for improving student outcomes.

What policies underlie SSFR?

The theory of action underlying the project encompasses the following three elements: a culture of innovation and efficiency, increased transparency, and resource equity.

- 1) *A **culture of innovation and efficiency** can be achieved by:*
 - a) *increasing school autonomy linked with accountability for results;*
 - b) *creating appropriate incentives for improving the performance of principals, teachers, and other school faculty;*
 - c) *ensuring access to a wide range of educational choices by families and children; and*
 - d) *providing school leaders with the opportunity to select and purchase various support services from the central office.*
- 2) ***Increased transparency** can be achieved by:*
 - a) *simplifying and clarifying the processes by which resources are allocated to schools; and*
 - b) *increasing the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the design of these processes.*
- 3) ***Equity** can be improved by*
 - a) *allocating dollars to schools based on student needs and*
 - b) *supporting the mechanisms for facilitating the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.*

The results of this evaluation will provide information to help federal, state, and local policymakers in their consideration of policies that will improve learning opportunities for all children.

What are the benefits of participation in the SSFR project?

Within the framework of the SSFR project, the AIR/PLP team provides the districts with data tools and analysis, technical assistance, coaching, and training to implement the funding strategies and evaluate their success. While there are common themes being promoted across the three participating districts, each has adopted its own focus and is adapting the SSFR components to fit its unique culture and context. Each of the three participating districts has committed time on the part of its leadership and staff to participate effectively in this project and has acknowledged that the project represents a collaborative effort between the AIR/PLP and district leadership teams. The formative nature of the project allows for a mutual learning experience between the participating districts and the AIR/PLP team and the creation of a strong partnership in successfully implementing SSFR.

How is SSFR being funded?

During the 2009-10 school year, the William and Flora Hewlett and Ford Foundations provided grants to the AIR/PLP team to support the first phase of the SSFR work. August 1, 2010 marks the beginning of the second phase of the project. During the spring of 2010, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the U.S. Department of Education awarded a grant of \$1.67 million to the AIR/PLP team to support the further development of the SSFR model over the next three years. In addition, the Hewlett foundation has awarded a three year grant of \$1.5 million to the AIR/PLP team to extend its support of the implementation and evaluation components of the project over the same three-year period. The Ford Foundation will also be contributing \$200,000 to support the SSFR work during 2010-11.

The result of this work will provide a guidebook to other districts interested in implementing their own version of the SSFR model and a series of reports describing the changes in the patterns of resource allocation and student outcomes that coincided with the implementation of SSFR in the two districts.



Who are the Project Leaders for SSFR?

For additional information, contact Jay Chambers of AIR or Steve Jubb of Pivot Learning Partners:

<p><u>Dr. Jay G. Chambers,</u> <u>SSFR Co-Principal Investigator</u> Senior Research Fellow and a Managing Director Education, Human Dev., & Workforce Program American Institutes for Research 2800 Campus Drive, Suite 200 San Mateo, California 94403 Phone: 650-843-8111 Email: jchambers@air.org</p>	<p><u>Mr. Steve Jubb,</u> <u>Project Director, Pivot Team</u> Director of Innovation & District Redesign Pivot Learning Partners 731 Market Street, Suite 400 San Francisco, CA 94103 Phone: (415) 348-5534 x 134 Email: sjubb@pivotlearningpartners.org</p>
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Who are the key staff members who have been assigned to the project and what are their roles?

American Institutes for Research:

Dr. Jay Chambers, Co-Principal Investigator
Dr. Jesse D. Levin, Director of Research and Evaluation for the SSFR Project
Lisa Cruz, Co-Project Manager and Research Assistant on Analysis Tasks
Clarisse Haxton, Research Analyst and Task Leader on Documentation and Survey Tasks
Iliana Brodziak de los Reyes, Research Analyst, Resource Allocation Tasks
Caitlin O'Neil, Project Research Assistant

Pivot Learning Partners:

Pivot Leadership Team:
Merrill Vargo, Project Co-Principal Investigator, State Policy
Steve Jubb, Project Director of Implementation and Change Management; Chief Liaison with the District Partners; LAUSD Executive Coach
Jim Brown, Senior Advisor
Pivot-Based, Cross-District Support Team:
Cristin Quealy, SSFR/Pivot Project Manager
Jim Hollis, Data Tools Designer and Developer, TRUSD Budget Tools Design and Development Specialist
Amy Dabrowski, Knowledge Management and Research
Brentt Brown, Documentation
Jee Song, SSFR Project Assistant
LAUSD Embedded Project Team:
Jeannette Soriano, Project Manager, Parent and Family Engagement in School Planning and Budgeting
Denise Petrusis, Project Manager, Budget Tools Design and Development
Beth Marco, Project Manager, Program Planning and Budget Development Training
TRUSD:
Ray Tolleson, Executive Coach for Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD)

Project Consultants:

Aaron Sokol, Budget Process Redesign
Jason Willis, TRM & Budget Process

District Project Managers, Superintendent, and other Key Staff:

Los Angeles Unified School District:

William Bass, Transparent Budgeting, Program and Policy Development Advisor
John Deasy, Superintendent
Matt Hill, Administrative Officer, Superintendent's Office

Twin Rivers Unified School District:

Mahala Archer, SSFR project manager
Frank Porter, District Superintendent

Project Advisory Group

Susanna Cooper, Principal Consultant for CA Senate Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg
Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco, Program Officer, Ford Foundation
Stephen Frank, Director of Rethinking School and School System Resources, Education Resource Strategies
Ken Hall, Founder and Chairman Emeritus, School Services of California, Inc. & USC School Business Management Program
Matt Kelemen, Consultant to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Henry M. Levin, William H Kilpatrick Professor of Economics & Education, Teachers College, Columbia University
Rick Miller, Senior Partner, California Education Partners & Partner, Capitol Impact LLC
Warren Simmons, Executive Director, Annenberg Institute for School Reform