

No. 14-0776

In the Supreme Court of Texas

**MICHAEL WILLIAMS, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION,
IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY, ET AL.,**

Appellants/Cross-Appellees,

v.

CALHOUN COUNTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, ET AL.,

Appellees/Cross-Appellants/Cross-Appellees,

v.

TEXAS CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION, ET AL.; and JOYCE COLEMAN, ET AL.,

Appellees/ Cross-Appellants,

v.

THE TEXAS TAXPAYER & STUDENT FAIRNESS COALITION, ET AL.;

EDGEWOOD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, ET AL.; and

FORT BEND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, ET AL.,

Appellees/Cross-Appellees.

*On Direct Appeal from the 200th Judicial District Court, Travis County
Cause No. D-1-GN-11-003130*

AMICUS CURIAE BRIEF OF RAISE YOUR HAND TEXAS

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TO THE HONORABLE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS:

Amicus curiae Raise Your Hand Texas (“RYHT”) is a non-profit education advocacy organization founded and supported by Charles C. Butt of San Antonio, Texas, and advised by a board of business and community leaders from across the State. RYHT works to strengthen public education (pre-kindergarten through 12th grade) in Texas. RYHT is solely responsible for paying the fee to generate this brief in support of the trial court’s judgment declaring the Texas school finance system to be unconstitutional. This brief has been prepared entirely by RYHT’s counsel with the assistance of RYHT’s education experts.

INTEREST OF *AMICUS CURIAE*

RYHT has an interest in this case because it believes that strong public schools are one of the best investments that Texas can make in the future of our State. That interest has motivated RYHT to invest \$15 million in programs designed to provide public school leaders with the knowledge and tools to create and lead high-performing public schools.¹ Reports by program participants attest to the impact these programs are having on current and aspiring principals across the state.

¹ See <http://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/programs> (describing the Harvard Leadership Program, the Raising Blended Learners Grant, the Rice University Education Entrepreneurship Program (REEP), and RYHT’s partnership with the Lubbock schools) (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).

RYHT also seeks to bring an informed and reasoned voice to debates over the direction of education policy in Texas. To further that goal, RYHT has invested millions more to support research projects on innovative methods to improve academic performance – especially at low-performing schools and among disadvantaged portions of the student population. Research reports published in 2015 include:

- *Pre-Kindergarten for the Modern Age: A Scalable, Affordable, High-Quality Plan for Texas* (February 27, 2015);
- *Supporting School Turnaround: Lessons for Texas Policymakers* (March 2, 2015);
- *Educator Data System: Creating a Talent Engine for Texas Public Schools* (March 10, 2015); and
- *Texas Innovation Schools: A Pathway to Success for Autonomous Schools in Texas* (April 7, 2015).²

RYHT’s involvement in public education gives it an informed perspective on the issues before this Court.

WHAT THIS COURT SHOULD DO

The trial court’s findings and RYHT’s independent research confirm two undeniable facts: (i) the Texas school system has slipped far below the constitutional standard for adequacy; and (ii) the system cannot achieve a “general diffusion of knowledge” without sufficient funding. Although this Court cannot

² See <http://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/research> (providing links to all research reports and executive summaries of those reports) (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).

order the Legislature to allocate a specific amount of funding to public education, it *can* and *should* affirm the trial court’s judgment and order the Legislature to provide enough funding to provide all Texas children a constitutionally adequate education that meets the Legislature’s own standards.

Those standards were set in 2009, when the Legislature determined that Texas public schools must eliminate “significant achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status” and put Texas in the “top 10 states in terms of college readiness” no later than the 2019-20 school year. TEX. EDUC. CODE § 39.053(f). Two years after setting those standards, the Legislature slashed the funding that school districts need to achieve them. Even after the partial restoration of funds in 2013, Texas is 47th of the 50 states in terms of state funding for public education. It is disingenuous for the Legislature to purport to (i) eliminate the widening public education gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children, and (ii) require Texas to be in the “*top* 10 states” for college readiness, when the Legislature’s provision of state funding consigns Texas to the very *bottom* (47th) of the states.

As the proof in this case shows, and as RYHT’s research confirms, the perennial lack of funding has inexorably led to an unconstitutional system. RYHT thus urges the Court to acknowledge and confront the fundamental problem in this case and direct the Legislature to provide enough additional funding for school

districts to eliminate achievement gaps and put Texas in the “top 10 states” for college readiness. That is the only way to cure the constitutional violations found by the trial court and to give *all* Texas children access to public schools that meet constitutional requirements.

CONTEXT FOR THIS COURT’S DECISION

Thirty years of school-finance litigation is enough. Ten years ago, the Court recognized that the system was on the brink of constitutional inadequacy – and that a “predicted drift” to unconstitutionality could only be prevented if the Legislature made a “significant change, whether that change take the form of increased funding, improved efficiencies, or better methods of education.” *Neeley v. West Orange-Cove Consol. Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 176 S.W.3d 746, 790 (Tex. 2005) (“*WOC II*”).

But since *WOC II*, the population of students who are economically disadvantaged and/or English language learners has grown dramatically. (FOF 11-15.) These student populations are “struggling the most academically” and are often more expensive to educate. (FOF 17, 23.)

In the past ten years, the Legislature has also significantly raised the academic standards to determine whether Texas students are acquiring the constitutionally mandated “general diffusion of knowledge” (FOF 81) and demanded that student performance on those standards, “disaggregated by race,

ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, . . . ranks nationally in the top 10 states in terms of college readiness.” TEX. EDUC. CODE § 39.053(f). But, notwithstanding this Court’s warnings, the only “significant change” the Legislature made with respect to funding was to *slash* it.

The Legislature’s recent actions – raising standards in 2009 and slashing funds in 2011³ – have pushed the system so far beyond the brink that the existence of a constitutional violation is beyond any serious dispute. In affirming that the system is constitutionally inadequate, unsuitable, and inefficient, this Court should send a strong message that 30 years is long enough. The children of Texas deserve to have their public schools funded at a level sufficient to enable *all* students to acquire a general diffusion of knowledge and graduate from high school ready for college or a career.

BRIEF OF THE ARGUMENT

The evidence that the system is not providing a “general diffusion of knowledge” is overwhelming. It shows that a significant portion of Texas students – especially economically disadvantaged and ELL students – are not meeting *any* of the academic performance standards designed to measure whether they are acquiring a constitutionally required “adequate” education. (*See* FOF 126-209

³ The partial restoration of funds in 2013 does not change the fact that there has been a significant decline in per-student spending since *WOC II*. (FOF 69.) Nor does it change the fact that most schools “remain worse off than they were” before the cuts. (FOF 70.)

(discussing abysmal results on STAAR, SAT/ACT, TAKS, NAEP, and other tests.) The evidence also shows that the performance gap between students in Texas and students in other states is growing. (See FOF 163.) Absent “significant change,” this generation’s under-educated students will become the next generation’s under-educated teachers, workers, and citizens. That puts the future of Texas at risk.

The Legislature must be directed to “do what’s right for the state of Texas and the children of Texas.”⁴ It must be directed to allocate sufficient resources to support a constitutional system that meets the Legislature’s own requirements for adequacy.

I. The Core Problem Is Insufficient Funding.

When the arguments relating to the constitutional standards of adequacy, sufficiency, and efficiency are unraveled, it is apparent that the core problem is *insufficient funding*. That is what precludes many school districts from providing an *adequate* education for all Texas schoolchildren. That is what creates *inequities and inefficiencies* in the system by putting economically disadvantaged and ELL students at even greater disadvantages. And that is what forces districts to tax at or

⁴ Press release by State Representative Jimmie Don Aycock, *Aycock Unveils School Finance Reforms* (Apr. 7, 2015), <http://www.house.state.tx.us/news/member/press-releases/?id=5447> (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).

near the cap, thereby running afoul of the constitutional prohibition against a *statewide property tax*.

Because insufficient funding is the root cause of all the constitutional violations proven at trial, it must be addressed by this Court (and, ultimately, the Legislature) if Texas is to break its 30-year cycle of school-finance litigation. RYHT's *amicus* brief is devoted to this simple – yet crucial – point.

A. The Legislature has defined the standards that determine whether students are acquiring a “general diffusion of knowledge.”

Recognizing that “[a] general diffusion of knowledge [is] essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people,” the Texas Constitution imposes a “*duty*” on the Legislature “to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.” TEX. CONST. art. VII, § 1 (emphasis added). The Legislature defined clear standards by which a “general diffusion of knowledge” is measured by requiring that students receive the “essential knowledge and skills” that “prepare and enable all students to continue to learn in postsecondary educational, training, or employment settings.” TEX. EDUC. CODE § 28.001 (college or career readiness standard). The constitutional mandate that the system provide a “general diffusion of knowledge” is, thus, inextricably linked to “the goal of preparing all Texas students to graduate from high school ready to enter college or the workforce.” (FOF 82.)

B. Setting standards is not enough.

The Legislature’s duty to “establish and make suitable provision” for a constitutional public school system cannot be discharged by merely defining standards and setting goals. The Legislature must also provide *funding* that enables all Texas students to meet those standards and goals. That the Legislature has failed to comply with its duty comes as no surprise, given that the State sets funding levels without making any effort to determine how much it actually costs to provide an “adequate” education – or to meet its heightened academic standards to measure whether students are receiving a “general diffusion of knowledge” – even though it has tools at its disposal to do so. (FOF 603.)

C. The Legislature failed to provide sufficient funding for all students to obtain a general diffusion of knowledge.

The fact that current levels are woefully insufficient is beyond doubt. When amounts are adjusted for inflation, Texas spends *less* per student today than it did at the time of *Edgewood IV* (1995). (FOF 632.) To simply return to *Edgewood IV* levels would require an additional \$1,212 per student per year. (*See id.*) However, due to changing demographics and increased performance standards, it costs *more* to educate Texas students today than it did at the time of *Edgewood IV*. (FOF 245.) Because returning to *Edgewood IV* levels of funding would not account for these demographic changes, it would only guarantee that “significant achievement gaps” between student groups would continue to widen

instead of close. Clearly, Texas will have to do more than “equal *Edgewood*” to ensure that all Texas children have access to a constitutionally adequate public education.

National statistics help put Texas’s funding decisions in perspective. Even before the Draconian budget cuts in 2011, Texas was ranked 49th among the states in per-pupil spending. (FOF 63.) That earned it the grade of “F” from Education Week. (*Id.*) The partial restoration of funding in 2013 moved Texas up to 40th in total school funding from all (federal, state, and local) sources.⁵ But Texas’s per-student total of \$10,191 was \$2,189 *less* than the national average. *U.S. Census* (Table 11).

Almost all of the difference in total funding stems from Texas’s low share of funding from *state* revenue sources. In fact, Texas is 47th among the states – contributing only \$3,928 of state revenue per student, which is \$1,722 less than the national average. *Id.*

The amount of state funding in Texas is also significantly less than the amount of state funding provided by the “top 10 states in terms of college readiness.” For example, one of the most well-known indicators of college readiness is the SAT. In 2014, Texas’s average combined SAT score was 47th

⁵ See United States Census Bureau, *Public Education Finances: 2013* (June 2015), Table 11, <http://www2.census.gov/govs/school/13f33pub.pdf> (last visited Aug. 18, 2015) (“*U.S. Census*”).

among the states.⁶ The previous year, when Texas’s state share of funding for public education was \$3,928 per student, the “top 10 states” for SAT performance provided an average of \$6,328 per student in state funding. (*See App. A.*) That is \$2,400 *more* than the amount Texas gave. It hardly seems like a coincidence that Texas is 47th both in state funding and in this measure of “college readiness.”

Other indicators of “college readiness” reveal even larger spending gaps between state funding in Texas and state funding in the “top 10 states”:

- The “top 10 states” for SAT performance in states with at least a 60% participation rate spent an average of \$7,220 per student in 2013. (*Id.*) That’s \$3,292 *more* than Texas spent.
- The “top 10 states” for ACT performance spent an average of \$8,310 per student in 2013. (*Id.*) That’s \$4,382 *more* than Texas spent.
- The “top 10 states” in *Education Week’s Quality Counts 2015: State Report Cards* spent an average of \$8,388 per student in 2013. (*Id.*) That’s \$4,460 *more* than Texas spent.

Regardless of how “college readiness” is measured, it is undeniable that the Legislature has not provided sufficient funding to meet its “top 10” goal.

The Legislature has a duty to provide the additional funding needed to ensure a constitutional system. But problems with property tax caps and financial inefficiencies could be avoided by having the State increase its share of support.

Although RYHT is not suggesting that the Court should adopt any of the above-

⁶ Commonwealth Foundation, *SAT Scores By State 2014* (Dec. 22, 2014), <http://www.commonwealthfoundation.org/policyblog/detail/sat-scores-by-state-2014> (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).

referenced numbers as benchmarks for adequacy of state funding, Texas should provide state funding commensurate with the “top 10 states.” That would not only put Texas in line with national norms, it would bring the system back into compliance with constitutional requirements.

D. Insufficient funding has resulted in constitutional inadequacies and inefficiencies.

The impact of the Legislature’s systematic underfunding of public education is obvious. The evidence that supports the trial court’s findings speaks for itself and leaves no room for reasoned debate⁷:

- A variety of test scores shows that the system is not providing Texas students a constitutionally mandated “general diffusion of knowledge.” (FOF 126-209.)
- The performance gap between Texas and other states is growing. (FOF 163.)
- The gap between economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students is growing. (FOF 209.)
- The wide performance gaps between ELL students and native speakers are not getting any narrower, and the low test results for ELL students show that this significant portion of the student population is not acquiring a general diffusion of knowledge. (FOF 349-75.)

RYHT’s independent research corroborates these findings. A recent RYHT study finds that “Texas students are making less progress than their counterparts in the nation’s other large states, including California, Florida, Massachusetts and

⁷ The State’s position that the system is constitutionally adequate because performance measures show a “pattern of improvement” cannot be reconciled with the facts. (*See* State’s Br. at 110.)

New York.”⁸ Not surprisingly, “[t]he state lags in international comparisons of school systems’ competitiveness in the modern economy and was outperformed in math by 21 – and in reading by 16 – of the 65 developed and developing nations that participated in a recent international study.” *Texas Innovation Schools*, at 2.

This is not simply a matter of abstract rankings. As things currently stand, “[m]any employers in the state report that its high school graduates are not prepared to succeed in the workforce, and economic development experts fear that Texas’ public education system is an obstacle to its ability to continue attracting business and investment.” *Id.* Absent “significant change,” these trends will only get worse.

A constitutional system of public education requires a constitutionally sufficient level of funding.

II. Additional funding is necessary to cure the constitutional violations.

Denying that insufficient funding is the problem, the State and the “Efficiency Intervenors” take the corollary position that additional funding is not the solution. This Court has espoused just the opposite for decades: “[t]he amount of money spent on a student’s education has a real and meaningful impact on the educational opportunity offered that student.” *Edgewood Indep. Sch. Dist. v.*

⁸ James S. Liebman et al., *Texas Innovation Schools: A Pathway to Success for Autonomous Schools in Texas* 1-2 (2015), http://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Texas-Innovation-Schools_ResearchReport.pdf (last visited Aug. 18, 2015) (“*Texas Innovation Schools*”).

Kirby, 777 S.W.2d 391, 393 (Tex. 1989), *quoted in* FOF 643. That is why, during the trial in this case, the State’s own witnesses “continued to acknowledge that funding is a crucial element in achieving positive student performance.” (FOF 642.)

RYHT’s independent research confirms the correlation between funding and student achievement. The following examples are proven strategies that will help close achievement gaps and improve college readiness *if sufficiently funded*.

A. High-quality, full-day pre-kindergarten.

High-quality, full-day pre-k is one of the key building blocks to achieve an adequate system of public education. RYHT’s research has shown that “large scale, publicly funded pre-k programs have significant benefits for children’s school readiness skills and future academic achievement.”⁹ Because of their “enormous potential for closing skills gaps, both in the short and long-term,” pre-k programs are particularly beneficial for economically disadvantaged and ELL students. *See Pre-Kindergarten for the Modern Age*, at 2. That is why the trial court made extensive findings (FOF 384-401) on the importance of high-quality pre-K:

⁹ Robert C. Pianta, Ph.D., & Catherine Wolcott, M.Ed., *Pre-Kindergarten for the Modern Age: A Scalable, Affordable, High-Quality Plan for Texas* 1 (2014), http://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/PreK_ResearchReport.pdf (last visited Aug. 18, 2015) (“*Pre-Kindergarten for the Modern Age*”).

- “Access to quality preschool programs is critical for the success of economically disadvantaged and ELL students.” (FOF 384.)
- “It is well established that low-income and ELL students begin school far behind their non-disadvantaged peers, in part because these students often do not receive basic educational experiences at home.” (FOF 385.)
- “[T]he more educational experiences schools are able to offer at-risk students at the beginning of their academic years, the less remediation is needed in later years.” (FOF 386.)
- Full day pre-K is “needed to close the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged and ELL students.” (FOF 387.)

Those findings are consistent with research from other states, including Oklahoma, which shows that economically disadvantaged students who attend high-quality pre-k programs showed “substantial gains in children’s language, cognitive, and motor skills at the end of the pre-k year, and these learning gains lasted through third grade.” *Pre-Kindergarten for the Modern Age*, at 4 (internal citation omitted). Similarly, a study from New Jersey demonstrated that “the achievement gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students closed by at least one-quarter in one year, and by 40% in two years of preschool through second grade [and that] [l]ong term gains from the most intensive preschool programs can close the achievement gap by as much as one-half for children living in poverty.” (FOF 389.)

Despite irrefutable proof of the value of high-quality, full-day pre-k, Texas has yet to implement such a program. Although it offers a half-day program for at-

risk four-year-olds, that program lacks many of the features that have “led to meaningful gains” in other states. *Pre-Kindergarten for the Modern Age*, at 17. Using additional funds to improve the quality of Texas pre-k would clearly be one way to close performance gaps and ensure that Texas’s economically disadvantaged and ELL students have access to an adequate system of public education.

B. Other strategies.

The trial court’s findings and RYHT’s independent research highlight many other strategies that, when implemented, reduce achievement gaps and improve college readiness. But implementing any of these strategies requires funding:

- Smaller class sizes: “Extensive research on class size shows that reducing classes to approximately fifteen students in kindergarten through grade three has significant positive effects on graduation rates and student achievement in math and reading.” (FOF 563.) That is why the Legislature has set statutory limits on class size. (FOF 562.) But in recent years, the number of districts requesting waivers from class-size limits has “spiked” – primarily due to “financial hardship.” (FOF 572.)
- Improve teacher quality: “[T]eacher quality is a key determinant of student achievement.” (FOF 529.)¹⁰ “[H]igher salaries help schools attract and retain better teachers.” (FOF 541.) But “superintendents uniformly testified that they lack the resources to hire the personnel needed to achieve the necessary progress.” (FOF 523.) Although no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, attracting and

¹⁰ See also Education First, *Educator Data System: Creating a Talent Engine for Texas Public Schools* 1 (2015), http://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/EducatorDataSystem_ResearchReport.pdf (last visited Aug. 18, 2015) (recognizing that educators “have the greatest influence on student achievement within a school”).

retaining high-quality teachers is in large part a function of the school districts providing competitive compensation.

- More professional development: Investments in high-quality professional development are also linked to improvements in student achievement.¹¹ Professional development is especially important for teachers of ELL students. (FOF 416.) However, “[d]espite the importance of qualified, experienced teachers in high need settings, the State’s budget cuts [have] limited districts’ abilities to recruit and retain teachers.” (FOF 419.)
- Better instructional support: High-quality educational support systems – “including counselors, librarians, school nurses, tutors, principals, assistant principals, and central administrators” as well as libraries and extra-curricular programs – “are critical to helping schools meet the statutory and constitutional requirements of a general diffusion of knowledge.” (FOF 577, 580, 584.) Technology can also play a key role in improving student outcomes. *See Supporting School Turnaround*, at 10-11. But districts lack the funding necessary to provide a support network for learning. (FOF 575-84.)

To sum up: The Court should not be misled into believing that the constitutional violations that are crippling Texas’s public education system can be cured without a substantial increase in funding. While exactly how much money to spend and exactly which strategies to implement are policy decisions for the Legislature, the evidence in this case conclusively demonstrates that the current level of funding is insufficient to meet the constitutional requirements. The children of Texas deserve a public education system that fosters, rather than impedes, their ability to become educated and productive members of society.

¹¹ See Kerstin Carlson LeFloch, Ph.D., *Supporting School Turnaround: Lessons for Texas Policymakers* 5 (2015), available, at http://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/up-content/uploads/2015/03/Turnaround_ResearchReport.pdf (last visited Aug. 18, 2015) (hereinafter, “*Supporting School Turnaround*”).

CONCLUSION AND PRAYER

How can Texas expect to close the ever-widening gap between its advantaged and disadvantaged children or provide them with a “top 10” education if the Legislature systematically underfunds the public schools? This Court should require the Legislature to provide additional state funding to close achievement gaps and enable all Texas students to graduate from high school ready for college or a career.

Although more money may “not guarantee better schools or more educated students,” *WOC II*, 176 S.W.3d at 788, history has shown that insufficient funding guarantees an unsuitable, inadequate, and inefficient system. It also forces districts to tax at or near the cap, which violates the prohibition on imposing statewide property taxes. Until the core problem of insufficient funding is fixed, the system will remain unconstitutional and future generations of Texas children will suffer.

For these reasons, Raise Your Hand Texas urges the Court to affirm the trial court’s judgment in its entirety and, in so doing, to direct the Legislature to provide a significant increase in funding to ensure that the system complies with constitutional requirements for the foreseeable future. The children of Texas deserve nothing less.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I hereby certify that this *Amicus Curiae* Brief of Raise Your Hand Texas contains 3,885 (excluding the sections excepted under Texas Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.4(i)(1)).

/s/ Mike A. Hatchell

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on August 25, 2015, a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served via EFileTX.Gov upon the following:

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Appendix A

Raise Your Hand Texas: Appendix A

	SAT		SAT (>60%)		ACT		Quality Counts	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Funding</u>
1	ND	\$6,784	NH	\$5,435	MA	\$6,966	MA	\$6,966
2	IL	\$5,021	MA	\$6,966	CT	\$7,475	NJ	\$7,812
3	IA	\$6,243	VT	\$16,009	NH	\$5,435	MD	\$7,092
4	SD	\$3,131	VA	\$4,644	ME	\$5,667	VT	\$16,009
5	MN	\$8,464	NJ	\$7,812	NY	\$8,986	NH	\$5,435
6	MI	\$7,155	CT	\$7,475	VT	\$16,009	CT	\$7,475
7	WI	\$5,603	WA	\$6,814	DE	\$9,471	WY	\$9,626
8	MO	\$4,721	CA	\$5,660	NJ	\$7,812	PA	\$6,014
9	WY	\$9,626	NC	\$5,375	WA	\$6,814	NY	\$8,986
10	KS	\$6,537	PA	\$6,014	MN	\$8,464	MN	\$8,464
<u>Avg.</u>		\$6,328		\$7,220		\$8,310		\$8,388
<u>Diff.</u>		\$2,400		\$3,292		\$4,382		\$4,460

Sources:

SAT rankings (2014): Commonwealth Foundation, *SAT Scores By State 2014* (Dec. 22, 2014), <http://www.commonwealthfoundation.org/policyblog/detail/sat-scores-by-state-2014> (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).

ACT rankings (2014): ACT, *2014 ACT National and State Scores*, <http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2014/states.html> (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).

Quality Counts rankings (2015): Education Week, *Quality Counts 2015: State Report Cards Map*, <http://edweek.org/ew/qc/2015/2015-state-report-cards-map.html> (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).

Funding from state sources (2013): United States Census Bureau, *Public Education Finances: 2013* (June 2015), Table 11, <http://www2.census.gov/govs/school/13f33pub.pdf> (last visited Aug. 18, 2015).