

WHO GETS A SLICE?

The debate isn't just about how big the education pizza is - it's about how we're slicing it.



THE CURRENT SYSTEM: A BROKEN, RESOURCE-BASED PIZZA CUTTER

West Virginia's education funding formula is like slicing a pizza based on who used to be at the table, where the chairs are placed, and how many plates are in the cabinet - not who's actually sitting at the table now.

We cut slices based on:

- Staffing formulas (e.g., 72.3 staff per 1,000 students)
- Transportation mileage
- Building size and maintenance needs
- Fixed costs, not actual enrollment



The Floor: No matter how far enrollment drops, funding can't fall below a certain level.

THIS MEANS:

- Students who've left the system still get counted for funding ("ghost students")
- Small or shrinking districts often get more per-pupil funding than growing ones
- Parents who choose other options still pay local taxes - but their children don't get a slice



We're cutting the pizza the same way we did 30 years ago, even though the table looks completely different.

OPPONENTS SAY: "MAKE THE PIZZA BIGGER!"

Some argue the solution is to make a bigger pie - add funding across the board. But:



- We already spend \$16,000 per student on average
- ESSER brought in over \$1.2 billion in extra funding
- Student outcomes haven't improved - and enrollment is falling

More money won't fix a broken formula.

In many districts, adding money means funding empty chairs.

SLICE IT DIFFERENTLY

Student-centered funding is like slicing the pizza based on who actually shows up for dinner.

- Every student gets a fair slice
- Schools earn their share by attracting and serving families
- Weights are added based on student need - not district status

The pizza doesn't need to be bigger. It needs to be sliced smarter.



KEY TAKEAWAY

- A funding formula should be a tool to serve students - not preserve bureaucracies.
- Let's give every student in West Virginia a seat at the table - and a fair slice of the pie.

Current Slices

Fixed staff ratios
Ghost students
Buildings/transport
District guarantees

Student Based Slices

● Base per-student amount
● Weights for need
● Follows the child
● Encourages innovation