

SESSION C

Knowledge is Key: Know Your Numbers

Presenters

Alita McCoy Zuber | Ossining Union Free School District

Presentation can be found here: https://prezi.com/cfbq3xlllrjf/knowledge-is-key-know-your-numbers/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

Context

Case study of Ossining Union Free School District in New York

Key Points

1. Enrollment: Do these projections justify the need for additional funding? If there has been no change in your enrollment than its best to identify increases in student needs.
2. Identify English Language Learners: determine need for more resource for them and it can be expensive.
3. Has there been an increase in number of students living in poverty? Need for free and reduced price lunch? More homeless kids than years past? They need additional services- it will make you eligible for competitive grant. Must ask why you aren't even asking for those grants.
4. Affordability - AGI, property values and budget approval rates: are they going down? Indicator for the need of more funding. Let tax payer know that state is not contributing and community is bearing the brunt of cost. Have you analyzed AGI and property value?
5. Graduation rates - how much funding are we getting from state in correlation to graduation rates? Are grad rates or test sores declining by group or cohort? Has the decline in funding declined even further? Regional cost factor - poorer district in a wealthier county? Does your state know the region your district is located when making funding decisions?

Strategies/Lessons Learned

Must learn State funding formula: will help your discussion with legislators that may not understand the State Aid formulas. Have budget cuts caused district to reduce security? is there an increase in the number of student accidents? Not in her district. Would be complying if there was correlation.

- Share any saving or efficiencies you have made to reduce expenses, address everything when asking for funds show them that you are doing everything possible.
- Look at at the age of data (her district was using 7-year-old data) highlight hard cuts that district enforced. The quality of data source will inevitably be scrutinized.
- Data source- only use the state's own database or district's externally audited data.
- Encourage parents to meet with local legislators. Equip them with simple discussion point to keep the messaging consistent.
- Be creative and prepared to offer suggestions to legislators.
- Use visuals that tell a compelling story.

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Other Key Takeaways

Ossining has large wealthy population; however the small part of the county that has about 50% of kids needing free or reduced price lunch have been bearing the brunt because they don't get enough funding. Wealthier parts are getting overfunded when the Ossining county are being extremely underfunded (and their student population is growing). The wealth ratio is getting worse by 31% In the wealthier section the wealth ratio went up by 57%. Essentially Ossining County is under by over 12 million while Bedford is getting overfunded by almost 2 million (and their student population went down by 47 students). Ms. Zuber uses information from the website to show just how underfunded her district is. Showed an analysis of how underfunded her district is compared to the district the Mayor of the city lives in.