



Tabletop Session Summary

June 24, 2021

Linking Spending to Student Outcomes for Summer and Beyond

Presenters: Marguerite Roza, [National Comprehensive Center](#)

This tabletop discussion emphasized the importance of connecting spending and student outcomes throughout the investment lifecycle from planning to evaluation.

Session Highlights

- » There are four things that states and districts can do to connect American Rescue Plan spending to student outcomes. First, they can compute the cost per pupil to weigh the value of investments. Second, they can specify intended outcomes in contracts (i.e., structure contracts around desired outcomes). Third, they can use competitive grants and can judge contractors and vendors based on whether they met intended outcomes. Fourth, they can keep communication about a given program focused on outcomes, repeatedly stating the goal of the programming.
- » There has been increased interest in participatory budgeting in discussions around the relief funds. Participatory budgeting involves publishing financial data, ensuring it is easily accessible to the public, inviting and responding to meaningful input on spending options (e.g., through a survey or poll), and incorporating the feedback into decision-making.
- » There are some challenges around participatory budgeting including the time and effort involved, concerns about uneven participation, and when officials aren't comfortable responding to input. (Trust is highest when officials respond to input.)
- » Effective communication is essential during this process. Avoid business lingo that may not be easily understood by the public. Reference students even when discussing benefits for staff (e.g., staff bonuses). Explain, for example, that staff are the best tool that we have to get students back on track. Share tradeoffs that have been considered and not just the final outcome. Finally, improve credibility by citing dollar figures and allow the community (including teachers) to weigh in on what they are hearing.

Shared Resources

- » [District Spending Plan Options](#)

