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ABSTRACT

This report compares plaintiff and nonplaintiff school districts in "Council for Better Education v. Wilkinson" and "Rose v. Council for Better Education" as regards the equity and adequacy outcomes resulting from rulings of the Kentucky Supreme Court and subsequent implementation of the Kentucky Reform Act (KERA) of 1990. Descriptive statistics were utilized to compare variables and determine differences in selected finance measures. The principle of equity utilized was the resource accessibility standard defined by Thompson, Wood, Honeyman, and Miller (1994). Some variables compared are property assessment per pupil, equivalent tax rate, per-pupil expenditures, and average teacher salaries. Comparisons of per-pupil expenditures indicated significant revenue and spending gaps remained among the 176 Kentucky school districts 10 years after KERA's implementation. However, examination of resource accessibility, within the framework of this analysis, supports a conclusion that progress has been made in attaining equity in Kentucky school districts on the state-mandated assessment of student performance. The wide variety in quality in school performance in Kentucky since KERA suggests that not all schools and districts are likely to utilize the resources at their command equally well. This study is only one step toward understanding the relationships among equity, adequacy, and equity outcomes of KERA. (Contains 16 references and 10 tables.) (Author/RT)

A Comparison of Equity Outcomes in Kentucky:

Council for Better Education v. Wilkinson
Plaintiff & Non-Plaintiff School Districts

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Abstract

This study compared, at the school district level, plaintiff and non-plaintiff school districts in Council for Better Education v. Wilkinson and, subsequently, Rose v. Council for Better Education, as regards the equity and adequacy outcomes resulting from the rulings of the Kentucky Supreme Court and subsequent implementation, by the Kentucky General Assembly, of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990.

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were utilized to compare variables and determine the differences in selected finance measures. The principle of equity utilized was the resource accessibility standard as defined by Thompson, Wood, Honeyman and Miller (1994). Variables operationalized included: property assessment per pupil, equivalent tax rate, per pupil expenditures, average teacher salaries and state accountability scores. The percentage of students qualifying for free lunch and special education services, consistent with state and federal guidelines, were also utilized in comparing outcomes for plaintiff and non-plaintiff school districts with all Kentucky school districts.

Comparisons of per pupil expenditures indicated significant revenue and spending gaps remained among the 176 Kentucky school districts 10 years after the implementation of KERA. However, examination of resource accessibility, within the framework of this analysis, supports a conclusion that significant progress has been made in attaining equity in Kentucky school districts 10 years after the implementation of the KERA. Disparities remain, and gaps have increased, between school districts on the state mandated assessment of student performance. What is not clear from this study is whether per pupil spending alone assures adequacy or whether adequacy is a quality issue more associated with more efficient utilization of the resources available. The wide variety in quality evident in school performance in Kentucky since KERA would suggest, in parallel, that not all districts, nor schools within districts, are likely to utilize the resources at their command equally well. This study is only one step toward understanding the relationship between equity and adequacy and the equity outcomes of KERA.

A Comparison of Equity Outcomes in Kentucky:

Council for Better Education v. Wilkinson Plaintiff & Non-Plaintiff School Districts

Several events have renewed public and private interest in school finance equity litigation: successful court challenges to existing state finance formulas; initiatives related to charter schools and vouchers; and proposals by presidents and state governors for national educational goals and competency tests. This paper looks at the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 and compares the equity consequences for Council for Better Education plaintiff and non-plaintiff school districts five and ten years after the enactment of KERA.

Introduction

Public school finance reform and school restructuring have been prominent policy issues at the federal, state and local levels of government. All 50 states enacted school finance reforms between 1970 and 1990 that changed the way schools are funded (Odden & Picus, 1992). A number of factors caused school finance reform to occur. Among these were litigation, property tax disparities, inequities in growth of property assessments, unavailability of an equitable system of taxation and educational accountability as measured by student performance. Between 1973 and 1992, 41 states experienced school finance litigation focused on equity (Hickrod, Hines, Anthony, Dively, and Pruyne, 1992). Equity is the state, ideal or quality of being just, impartial and fair (American Heritage Dictionary, 1991). This paper will: (1) review the chronology of Council for Better Education, et al., v Wallace Wilkinson, Governor, et al., 1988, hereinafter referenced as Council v. Wilkinson, and subsequent appeal, Rose v. Council for Better Education, 1989, hereinafter referenced as Rose v. Council; (2) identify the goals stated by the Kentucky Supreme Court in the Rose v. Council decision; (3) review the legislative response and implementation of KERA; and (4) operationalize variables to determine if plaintiff school districts were successful in achieving equity as compared to all Kentucky school districts and non-plaintiff school districts. The stated goal of KERA is to provide equity for Kentucky's school

children. If equity is not achieved by the school finance adjustments intended in the law, can the goals of the reform be realized? Adams and White (1997) conducted a study of the equity consequences of school finance reform in Kentucky. They determined that Kentucky experienced marked improvements in school finance equity as a result of the policy changes enacted in KERA, but concluded that some disparity remained. Council v. Wilkinson plaintiff school districts argued that school funding in Kentucky was inequitable because some schools districts had much more money than others to support education and inadequate because of Kentucky's low level of educational achievement. Has equity been realized for as a result of school finance reform in Kentucky? This study attempts to determine the equity consequences for plaintiff school districts as compared to non-plaintiff districts 10 years after the implementation of KERA. Prior to determining the answer to this question, a brief review of the history of school finance in Kentucky is in order.

History of Kentucky School Finance

The history of Kentucky school finance legislation, and the struggle to achieve equity in funding, begins with the Kentucky constitution, Section 186, which mandated that school funds appropriated by the General Assembly be allocated to each local school district on the basis of a set amount of funds for each child 5 through 17 years of age. State funds were initially provided to school districts based on the census of school-aged children living in the school district regardless of whether the children attended school.

Prior to the enactment of KERA, the state's financial contribution to local school districts was distributed through the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) and the Power Equalization Program (PEP). To qualify to participate in the MFP, a local school district was required to operate 185 days per school year. The state Superintendent of Public Instruction allocated classroom units (teachers) based on the average daily attendance in each grade level. Funds were appropriated by the legislature and allocated by the state for each unit. Local school districts received funds based upon the number of units certified by the state in the local district. Funds

could be used for teacher's salaries, current expenses, capital outlay and transportation of students (Rose v. Council, 1989, p. 196).

In addition, the Kentucky Department of Revenue calculated (on an annual basis) the equalized fair cash value of all taxable property in a local school district. The data were certified to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who determined the maximum tax rate that the PEP fund would equalize and applied that rate to all local school districts. To qualify for PEP funds, a local district was required to levy a minimum equivalent tax rate of 25 cents per \$100 of valuation or the maximum rate supported by the PEP, whichever was greater. The "minimum equivalent tax rate" was defined as the quotient derived by dividing the district's previous year's income from tax levies by the total assessed property valuation plus the assessment for motor vehicles (Rose v. Council, 1989).

The Supreme Court, when reviewing the history of school funding in Kentucky, concluded, "if one were to summarize the history of school funding in Kentucky, one might well say that every forward step taken to provide funds to local districts and to equalize money spent for the poor districts has been countered by one step backwards" (Rose v. Council, 1989, p. 196). The focus of this study is the Kentucky school finance case, resulting legislation and results. We now focus our attention on the "Kentucky case."

The Kentucky Case

In April 1985, The Council for Better Education, representing a coalition of 66 local Kentucky school districts, filed a lawsuit seeking a judgement that Kentucky's system for financing its public schools violated the Kentucky Constitution and the fourteenth amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Also included as plaintiffs in the case were 22 individual students, representing as a class "similarly situated students in Kentucky districts" (Council v. Wilkinson, 1998, p. 1). Franklin County Circuit Court Judge Ray Corns decided the case without a jury.

The plaintiffs alleged that the system of financing schools in Kentucky placed too much emphasis on local school board resources and, consequently, resulted in inadequacies, inequities and inequalities throughout the state and resulted in an inefficient system of public school education. This was seen as both a violation of the Kentucky Constitution, Sections 1, 3 and 183, the equal protection clause and the due process of law clause of the 14th amendment to the United States Constitution. Additionally, the complaint maintained the entire school system was not efficient under the mandate of Section 183 of the Kentucky Constitution and that the funding of schools was both inadequate and unconstitutional (Rose v. Council, 1989).

Specific questions posed by the plaintiff Council for Better Education to the court were:

1. What does the phrase . . . an efficient system of common schools . . . as outlined in Section 183 of the Kentucky Constitution mean?
2. Is education a fundamental right under the Constitution?
3. Does Kentucky's current method of financing the common schools violate Section 183 of the Kentucky constitution?
4. Are students in property poor districts denied equal protection of the laws as guaranteed by Sections 1 and 3 of the Kentucky Constitution and the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution (Council v. Wilkinson, 1988, p. 2)?

Definitive requirements for providing an educational system, to be followed by the General Assembly, are outlined in Section 183 of the Kentucky Constitution as follows:

- (1) The General Assembly shall bear full responsibility for the enactment of laws to govern the common schools;
- (2) The schools shall be established as a system, an organic whole, arranged with interdependent parts;
- (3) The schools shall be public, of the body politic, and shall be governed and controlled by the people;
- (4) The schools shall be free and common to all with no charges to limit access;
- (5) The schools shall be financed by tax resources which are distributed in such a manner as to ensure that the quality of a child's education will not be dependent

on the fiscal ability of the local school district; (6) The schools shall be funded at a level adequate to provide quality educational programs and services to all school districts; (7) The schools shall be financed in a manner which will prevent the quality of a child's education from being dependent on the vagaries of local tax effort; (8) The school shall provide equitable educational treatment to all children in the accommodation of their educational needs; and (9) The school shall be properly managed to assure the most effective and productive use of funds (Ky. Const. Sec. 183).

Trial proceedings began in April 1988. Evidence at trial demonstrated that school districts with relatively large tax bases were able to raise significantly more money locally than districts with smaller local property tax bases. In addition, plaintiff school districts maintained that districts with lower local tax bases offered fewer courses, operated with larger class sizes and smaller libraries, employed less qualified teachers, and held classes in substandard facilities. Plaintiffs also showed a statistical correlation between school district wealth and student achievement, interpreted to mean that students in districts with relatively large tax bases tended to have higher achievement scores than those in districts with smaller local tax bases (Council v. Wilkinson).

On May 31, 1988, Judge Corns ruled in favor of the plaintiff school districts, parents and students in finding the common school system to be unconstitutional and discriminatory. He also found that the General Assembly had not produced an efficient school system, included goals to be achieved by students, and requirements for financing, curriculum, personnel, accessibility for all children, physical facilities, instructional materials and management of schools. Further expanding the constitutional definition, Judge Corns maintained an efficient school system is a "tax supported, coordinated organization which provides a free, adequate education to all students throughout the state regardless of the geographical location or local fiscal resources" (Rose v. Council, 1989, p. 194). To be efficient, a school system must provide sufficient physical

facilities, teachers, support personnel and instructional materials to enhance the educational process. Judge Corns emphasized that it was the absolute, unequivocal duty of the General Assembly to provide such a system.

The defendants in the case, led by John "Eck" Rose, the President of the State Senate and Don Blandford, the Speaker of the State House of Representatives, appealed directly to the Kentucky Supreme Court, bypassing the state court of appeals process. The Kentucky Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. The appeal was based on 10 issues including the trial court's findings that the system of common schools was not efficient, that the definition and standards set for an efficient school system were at variance with the Kentucky constitution and that the system to finance Kentucky schools was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court reviewed evidence considered by Judge Corns "including numerous depositions, volumes of oral testimony and a seemingly endless amount of statistical data and reports" (Rose v. Council, 1989, p. 197). The court concluded "the overall effect of appellants evidence is a virtual concession that Kentucky's system of common schools is underfunded and inadequately funded; is fraught with inequalities and inequities . . . is ranked nationally in the lower 20-25% in virtually every category that is used to evaluate educational performance; and is not uniform among the districts in educational opportunity" (p. 197).

In June 1989, the Kentucky Supreme Court issued what has been termed a landmark decision in school finance litigation (Fiske, 1991). The Court went beyond the rulings of Corns' lower court and declared the entire system of common schools in Kentucky unconstitutional. A review of the rationale for the Supreme Court's decision included the court's conclusion that the state's current system of common schools did not comply with the constitutional requirement that the General Assembly provide an efficient system of common schools throughout the state, "given the overall inadequacy of the educational system when compared to national standards and standards of adjacent states, the great disparity in educational opportunities throughout the state,

and the great disparities and inadequacy of financial efforts throughout the state” (Rose v. Council, 1989, p. 188).

To comply with the state’s constitutional requirement that the General Assembly provide an efficient system of common schools throughout the Commonwealth, the court also ruled school systems must be adequately funded to achieve their goals and become substantially uniform throughout the state so that “every child is provided with an equal opportunity to have an adequate education” (Rose v. Council, 1989, p. 188). Another significant finding of the court was that the General Assembly must not only establish an efficient system of public schools, but must also monitor the system on a continuous basis so that the system would be maintained in a constitutional manner. The legislature would also have to assure that there “is no waste, no duplication, and no mismanagement at any level” (p. 188). The Supreme Court went to great lengths to emphasize that it was the sole responsibility of the General Assembly to re-create and re-establish a school system, which would comply with the constitutional requirement for an efficient system of common schools throughout the Commonwealth. The court referenced the Kentucky constitutional definition of an efficient system as requiring “substantial uniformity, substantial equity of financial resources and substantial equal educational opportunity for all students” (p. 211). Efficient was also interpreted to require that the educational system be adequate, uniform and unitary (p. 211).

Financing an adequate system of schools, which would also be uniform and unitary, presented a significant challenge to the Kentucky General Assembly. Suggested methods of financing the re-established system included increasing taxes, levying new taxes or re-allocating existing funds (Council v. Wilkinson, 1988). Legislation designed to meet the Supreme Court’s mandate was enacted as part of House Bill 940, commonly referenced as the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA).

The Kentucky Education Reform Act

Consistent with the court decision, the legislature, as part its response to the Supreme Court's Rose v. Council decision, included the following statement declaring its legislative intent:

It is the intent of the General Assembly to assure substantially equal public school educational opportunities for those in attendance in the public schools of the Commonwealth, but not limit nor to prevent any school district from providing educational services and facilities beyond those assured by the state supported program. The program shall provide for an efficient system of public schools throughout the Commonwealth, as prescribed by Section 183 of the Constitution of Kentucky, and for the manner of distribution of the public school fund among the districts and its use for public school purposes, as prescribed in Section 186 of the Constitution (Ky. Const. Section 183).

It is clear that the General Assembly responded to the Supreme Court's decision with a commitment to provide a public school system that would meet the requirements of the Rose v. Council decision and comply with the Kentucky constitution. Critical to the legislative response was the creation of a new system of financing Kentucky's public schools, Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK), an area that next receives our attention.

The General Assembly created SEEK as a three tiered system including a foundation program with a guaranteed tax base, local revenue requirements and local options. Base funding levels, adjustments, enforcement of maximum class size limits and allotment of program funds in SEEK were outlined by statute. Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. Section 157.350 (Baldwin 1990).

The SEEK program is a "tiered" system composed of three distinct but closely related components. SEEK begins with guaranteed base. The base amount of funding per pupil is set by the General Assembly and is the only amount that is constant for all districts. In 1990-91, SEEK's first year, the base guarantee equaled \$2,305; by 1999/00 the base guarantee had risen to \$2,924 (Office of Educational Accountability, 2000). The adjusted base guarantees an amount of revenue

per pupil to be provided for each school district adjusted by a series of factors that affect the cost of providing services to students. The base amount is adjusted by these four factors: (a) exceptional children, (b) transportation, (c) at-risk pupils, and (d) pupils receiving services in a home and/or hospital setting.

SEEK also requires that each local school district levy a minimum equivalent tax rate (ETR) of 30 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. This required "Local Effort" is the local contribution to the adjusted base guarantee. The difference between the Local Effort and the adjusted base represents the state SEEK contribution to the local school district (Kentucky School Laws, 1996, pp. 246-249). Due to differences in school property wealth, some districts raise more money than others through this uniform tax. To assure equity, the adjustments vary between school districts depending on the demographics of the student population in each school district; local effort will also vary from district to district depending on the property wealth and average daily attendance (ADA) of the district. Additionally, when calculating the SEEK program, all calculations are made on a per pupil ADA basis and the calculated amounts apply to each pupil in the district.

The second component of SEEK is Tier I. This is an optional component available for school districts that wish to spend more than their adjusted base guarantee and allows local school districts to generate additional revenue of up to 15% above the adjusted base guarantee. School districts whose per pupil property wealth is less than 150% of the statewide average per pupil property wealth receive state equalization funds if they choose to levy this additional tax. Districts may participate in Tier I at any level up to 15% above the adjusted base with the state providing equalization funds to guarantee that any district participating will receive the same revenue per pupil if they make the same local tax effort. The tax rate levied by a local school board under Tier I is not subject to the public hearing nor the recall provisions contained in KRS 160.470.

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The third component of SEEK is Tier II and is also a local option. Tier II allows school districts to generate additional revenue up to 30% of the amount generated by the adjusted base guarantee and Tier I. These funds are not equalized by the state. However, the hearing and recall provisions of KRS 160.470 apply. Tier II has the effect of placing a cap on the amount of revenue a local school district can raise, thereby maintaining some control over the disparity in per pupil revenues that might be available in local school districts.

In summary, the Rose v. Council decision addressed the relationship in Kentucky between property wealth and educational opportunities for students; it concluded students in wealthier districts were provided opportunities and inputs not available to students in less wealthy districts. The SEEK program was structured in such a way as to compensate for this relationship.

Having said what the plaintiff's wanted, what the supreme court said they should get and having shown what the legislature provided, we now turn our attention to determining the results of the remedy.

Measuring Equity

Statistical measurement is a necessary condition in determining equity. By determining differences in the values of selected school finance measures, conclusions can be reached about the effectiveness of finance formulas on equity standards. Despite the absence of a single approach to measuring equity, there are generally accepted principles of equity found in the research literature in education finance: resource accessibility, wealth neutrality and equal tax yield (Thompson, Wood, Honeyman, & Miller, 1994).

The resource accessibility standard asks whether students have access to resources to appropriately meet their educational needs. The wealth neutrality standard then asks whether those resources are unacceptably related to local wealth and residence. The tax yield standard seeks equity for taxpayers and asks whether equal tax effort results in equal yield (Thompson et al., 1994). For the purpose of this study the resource accessibility standard, as represented by

assessment per pupil and expenditure per pupil, will be utilized as the most appropriate standard to determine the degree of equity achieved by plaintiff school districts under KERA.

Standard measures of central tendency, mean, range, variance, standard deviation, analysis of correlation coefficients, and analysis of variance, were used in this study to evaluate resource accessibility. These tests were applied, by group, to independent variables including assessment per pupil, equivalent tax rates, percentage of at-risk students and percentage of students receiving special education services, which are components of SEEK, the mandated state funding formula. Additional independent variables included in this study were district expenditures per pupil and average teacher salary, determined by Judge Corns' to be factors related to equity (Council v. Wilkinson, 1988). These fundamental tools formed the basis for assessing resource accessibility in Kentucky after the implementation of KERA. The results of the analysis can be utilized to respond to potential claims of formula based inequity between plaintiff and non-plaintiff districts.

Groups used in this analysis included all districts, plaintiff districts, and non-plaintiff districts. All data were for the 1994/95 and 1999/00 school years and were provided by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). The 1994/95 fiscal year was selected since this was the first year a uniform system of valuing property at 100% of real value was required across the commonwealth. The 1999/2000 school year was selected since this was the most recent year for which data was available and was also the 10th anniversary of the enactment of KERA.

Review of the Analysis

Table 1 reports the derived values for all school districts per pupil property assessment, equivalent tax rates, expenditures per pupil for instruction, and average teacher salary for the 1994/95 and 1999/00 school years.

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Table 1

Measures of District Wealth for all Kentucky School Districts

Source of Variation	<u>Assess/Pupil</u>		<u>ETR</u>		<u>Exp/Pupil</u>		<u>ATS</u>	
	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00
Mean	153,758	223,735	57.27	58.11	884	3,583	33,589	37,628
St. Dev.	65,295	94,368	11.25	11.16	502	416	1,712	1,879
Variance	4.26x10 ⁹	8.91x10 ⁹	126.63	124.61	252,505	172,813	2,929,961	3,531,198
Range	441,741	561,966	81.40	67.80	4,960	2,621	11,882	14,800
Min.	54,746	57,484	31.30	41.60	302	2,772	29,673	31,891
Max.	496,487	619,450	112.7	109.40	5,263	5,393	41,555	46,691

Note. All numbers represent amount in dollars, except tax rate. N=176 school districts

When comparing assessment per pupil (Assess/Pupil) values for all Kentucky school districts, range values increased 27.22% from \$441,741 in 1994/95 to \$561,966 in 1999/00. Range values for equivalent tax rate (ETR) decreased 16.71% from 81.40 in 1994/95 to 67.80 in 1999/00. Range values also decreased 46.94% for expenditure per pupil (Exp/Pupil) from \$4,940 in 1994/95 to \$2,621 in 1999/00. However, the range for average teacher salary (ATS) increased 24.56% from \$11,882 in 1994/95 to \$14,800 in 1999/00.

Plaintiffs in this case were 66 school districts in Kentucky. The analysis includes 65 plaintiff school districts due to the consolidation of two districts. Because Kentucky has greater diversity in district sizes than was represented by plaintiff school districts, comparisons between plaintiffs and the rest of the state in funding and expenditures per pupil should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, Tables 2 and 3 show descriptively the per pupil property assessments, equivalent tax rates, expenditures per pupil for instruction, and average teacher salary of all plaintiff and non-plaintiff districts, thereby giving some preliminary indication of the relative position of plaintiffs to the remainder of the state's school districts.

Table 2

Measures of District Wealth for Plaintiff School Districts for 1994/95 and 1999/00

Source of Variation	<u>Assess/Pupil</u>		<u>ETR</u>		<u>Exp/Pupil</u>		<u>ATS</u>	
	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00
Mean	124,627	180,946	57.02	57.67	696	3,599	33,478	37,622
St. Dev.	52,510	64,393	10.65	10.19	238	419	1,438	1,714
Variance	1.81x10 ⁹	4.15x10 ⁹	113.42	103.77	56,566	175,546	2,069,102	2,937,715
Range	184,913	286,745	56.5	42.00	1,050	2,138	7,782	9,339
Min.	57,388	57,485	31.3	46.20	302	2,772	30,999	34,022
Max.	242,301	344,228	87.8	88.20	1,352	4,910	38,781	43,361

Note. All numbers represent amount in dollars, except tax rate. N=65 school districts

When comparing assessment per pupil values for plaintiff districts, range values increased 55.07% from \$184,913 in 1994/95 to \$286,744 in 1999/00. Range values for equivalent tax rate decreased 25.66% from 56.50 in 1994/95 to 42.00 in 1999/00 while the range for expenditures per pupil increased 103.62% from \$1,050 in 1994/95 to \$2,138 in 1999/00. The range for average teacher salary also increased 20.01% from \$7,782 in 1994/95 to \$9,339 in 1999/00

Table 3

Measures of District Wealth for Non-Plaintiff School Districts for 1994/95 and 1999/00

Source of Variation	<u>Assess/Pupil</u>		<u>ETR</u>		<u>Exp/Pupil</u>		<u>ATS</u>	
	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00
Mean	170,816	248,792	57.41	58.37	995	3,575	33,655	37,632
St. Dev.	70,259	100,196	11.64	11.73	579	415	1,856	1,977
Variance	4.94x10 ⁹	1.00x10 ¹⁰	135.41	137.69	335,286	172,575	3,445,751	3,908,567
Range	441,741	540,851	75.80	67.80	4,940	2,536	11,882	14,800
Min.	54,746	78,599	36.90	41.60	322	2,857	29,673	31,891
Max.	496,487	619,451	112.70	109.40	5,263	5,393	41,555	46,691

Note. All numbers represent amount in dollars, except tax rate. N=111 school districts

When comparing assessment per pupil values for non-plaintiff districts, range values increased 22.4% from \$441,741 in 1994/95 to \$540,851 in 1999/00. Range values for equivalent tax rate decreased 10.55% from 75.80 in 1994/95 to 67.80 in 1999/00. Range values also decreased 48.66% for expenditure per pupil from \$4,940 in 1994/95 to \$2,536 in 1999/00. However, the range for average teacher salary increased 24.56% from \$11,882 in 1994/95 to \$14,800 in 1999/00.

Analysis of data of descriptive statistics for the 1994/94 and 1999/00 school years for all school districts, plaintiff and non-plaintiff districts indicates similar pattern of increases in assessment per pupil for all districts (27.22%) and non-plaintiffs (22.40%) with a significantly higher increase (55.07%) for plaintiff districts. All groups reported decreases in range of equivalent tax rates with all districts (-16.71%) and non-plaintiff (-10.55%) lower than plaintiff (-25.66%) districts. Ranges of expenditures per pupil revealed significantly lower ranges for all districts (-46.94%) and non-plaintiffs (-48.66%) but a significantly higher range (103.62%) for plaintiff districts. Average teacher salary did not indicate a meaningful difference between groups and was consistently higher for all groups with all districts' and non-plaintiffs' data indicating a 24.56% increase and plaintiffs reporting a 20.01% increase in range.

Table 4 illustrates the means and standard deviation values for all groups the per pupil property assessments, equivalent tax rates, expenditures per pupil for instruction, and average teacher salary for all districts, plaintiff and non-plaintiff districts, thereby reporting the relative position of plaintiffs to the remainder of the state's school districts.

Table 4

Comparisons of Measures of District Wealth for All Districts, Plaintiffs, and Non-Plaintiffs1994/95 and 1999/00

		<u>All Districts</u>		<u>Plaintiffs</u>		<u>Non-Plaintiffs</u>	
		1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00	1994/95	1999/00
Assess/Pupil	Means	153,758	223,735	124,627	180,946	170,816	248,792
	St. Dev.	65,295	94,367	42,510	64,394	70,259	100,197
ETR	Means	57.27	58.11	57.02	57.67	57.41	58.37
	St. Dev.	11.26	11.16	10.65	10.19	11.64	11.73
Exp/Pupil	Means	885	3,583	695	3,599	995	3,575
	St. Dev.	503	416	238	419	579	415
ATS	Means	33,590	37,629	33,478	37,623	33,655	37,632
	St. Dev.	1,712	1,879	1,438	1,879	1,856	1,977

Note. All numbers represent amount in dollars, except tax rate. N=176 for all districts, N=111

for non-plaintiff districts, and N=65 for plaintiff districts

In 1994/95 differences in mean expenditures per pupil between plaintiff and non-plaintiff districts were \$300 more for non-plaintiff districts and \$190 between plaintiffs compared to all districts. In addition to non-plaintiffs having higher mean expenditures per pupil, wealth as shown by per pupil assessment, was higher for non-plaintiffs. Thus, non-plaintiff districts were wealthier districts with higher per pupil expenditures for instruction in 1994/95.

When comparing mean assessment per pupil values between 1994/95 and 1999/00, the differences were higher for non-plaintiff (\$77,975) and all districts (\$69,978) than plaintiff districts (\$56,319). These data indicate plaintiff districts assessment per pupil, which represents wealth, did not increase as much as non-plaintiff districts. This result is meaningful because the 100% valuation requirement, fully enacted in 1994/95, was intended to standardize property valuation methods. When comparing equivalent tax rates, a slight increase was reported for all districts (.84) and non-plaintiff districts (.96) while plaintiff districts increased .65, indicating non-plaintiff districts increased tax rates more than plaintiff districts. Expenditures per pupil increased by \$2,903 in plaintiff districts, \$2,699 in all districts and \$2,579 in non-plaintiff

districts indicating plaintiff districts increased spending levels more (7.56%) than non-plaintiff districts. Likewise, average teacher salary data indicate plaintiff districts increased average teacher salary by \$4,144 with all districts increasing \$4,039 and non-plaintiff districts by \$3,977. Once again, plaintiff districts increased average teacher salary slightly more (4.20%) than non-plaintiff districts.

Standard deviations were higher, indicating more variability (and consequently less equity) in the assessment per pupil, equivalent tax rate, expenditure per pupil and average teacher salary for the non-plaintiff group comparisons. Standard deviation for all districts was higher in all four categories for all districts as compared to plaintiffs in 1994/95 while mean average teacher salary was about equal in all comparison groups. In 1999/00, standard deviations were higher for the non-plaintiffs, as compared to the plaintiffs, indicating more variability (and consequently less equity) in the assessment per pupil, equivalent tax rate, and average teacher salary, but less for expenditure per pupil indicating less variability (and consequently more equity) for the non-plaintiff group comparisons. The standard deviation for all districts was higher in all groups except expenditure per pupil for all districts as compared to plaintiffs in 1999/00 but less than non-plaintiff's in all groups except expenditure per pupil indicating progress had been made in bringing about greater equity in relation to the resource accessibility standard.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for district wealth, as represented by assessment per pupil and expenditure per pupil, comparing non-plaintiff, plaintiff and all districts for the 1994/95 school year is reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Analysis of Variance for District Wealth and Expenditures Comparing Plaintiff, Non-Plaintiff, and All Districts 1994/95

Source	Assess/Pupil		Exp/Pupil	
	Df	F	df	F
Between Groups	1	23.104*	1	15.84*
Within Groups	174		174	
Total	175		175	
Non-plaintiff	N=111	(6,668)	N=111	(54.96)
Plaintiff	N=65	(5,273)	N=65	(29.50)
All districts	N=176	(4,922)	N=176	(37.88)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard errors. *p < .0001

ANOVA for district wealth, as represented by assessment per pupil and expenditure per pupil, comparing non-plaintiff, plaintiff and all districts for the 1999/00 school year is reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance for District Wealth and Expenditures Comparing Plaintiff, Non-Plaintiff, and All Districts 1999/00

Source	Assess/Pupil		Exp/Pupil	
	df	F	df	F
Between Groups	1	23.971*	1	.139
Within Groups	174		174	
Total	175		175	
Non-plaintiff	N=111	(9,510)	N=111	(39.43)
Plaintiff	N=65	(7,987)	N=65	(51.97)
All districts	N=176	(7,113)	N=176	(31.34)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard errors. * $p < .0001$

ANOVA for assessment per pupil indicated statistically significant differences for all three groups in 1994/95. Non-plaintiff districts were wealthier per pupil than either plaintiffs or all districts in both 1994/95 and 1999/00. The ANOVA for expenditure per pupil indicates plaintiffs spent statistically significantly less per pupil than either non-plaintiff districts or the state as a whole in 1994/95 ($p < .000$). However, by 1999/00 there was no statistically significant difference in spending per pupil between plaintiffs, non-plaintiffs or the state as a whole ($p = .710$) indicating greater equity had been achieved in pupil spending.

For the remaining analysis districts were analyzed across funding categories. Results of range measures for the 1994/95 school year, examining assessment per pupil, expenditure per pupil, academic index, and equivalent tax rates are reported in Table 7.

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Table 7

Comparisons of Non-plaintiff, Plaintiff, and All Districts on Measures of Resource Accessibility (1994/95)

	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Range
Non-plaintiff					
ETR	57.41	11.64	36.90	112.70	75.80
Exp/Pupil	995	579	322	5263	4940
Assess/Pupil	170,816	70,259	54,746	496,487	441,741
Acc. Index	46.08	5.28	32.20	64.70	32.50
Plaintiff					
ETR	57.02	10.65	31.30	87.80	56.50
Exp/Pupil	695	238	302	1,352	1,050
Assess/Pupil	124,627	42,410	57,388	242,301	184,913
Acc. Index	44.38	4.97	33.00	59.70	26.70
All districts					
ETR	57.27	11.26	31.30	112.70	81.40
Exp/Pupil	885	503	302	5,263	4960
Assess/Pupil	158,758	65,295	54,746	496,487	441,741
Acc. Index	45.46	5.22	32.20	64.70	32.50

Note. All numbers represent amount in dollars, except tax rate and academic index.

Analysis of 1994/95 data showed ranges of these variables were noteworthy. Non-plaintiff districts had greater average wealth per pupil (\$170,816) than was true for either the state (\$158,758) or for plaintiff (\$124,627) districts. The range of wealth expressed as property assessment per pupil was in fact dramatic, as wealth varied by \$441,741 per pupil between the highest (\$496,487) and lowest (\$54,746) wealth districts in the state. This relationship was also true for the nonplaintiff groups. For plaintiffs, however, the range was considerably narrower at \$184,913 (from \$242,301 to \$57,388).

That plaintiff districts were less wealthy than either non-plaintiff districts or the state as a whole was especially apparent when considering these comparison groups by category. Both the expenditure per pupil and assessment per pupil differences were found to be located in districts holding extremely high or extremely low wealth. While both the expenditure per pupil and assessment per pupil differences were found to be located in districts holding extremely high or extremely low wealth, the mean expenditure per pupil for non-plaintiffs (\$995) and plaintiffs

(\$695) were inconsistent indicating equity in the resource allocation standard had not been met according to the 1994/95 data with plaintiff districts spending less (43.17%) per pupil than plaintiff districts.

As seen earlier in discussion of wealth, plaintiffs had a slightly lower mean of expenditures per pupil than the state as a whole (\$695 to \$885). Consequently, mean scores on state assessments of student achievement (Acc. Index) were higher, as indicated in Table 7, for non-plaintiff (46.08) and all districts (45.46) as compared to plaintiff (44.38) districts indicating plaintiff districts had achieved less in terms of educational adequacy in 1994/95. Results of range measures for the 1999/00 school year, examining assessment per pupil, expenditure per pupil, academic index, and equivalent tax rates are reported in Table 8.

Table 8

Comparisons of Non-plaintiff, Plaintiff, and All Districts on Measures of Resource Accessibility (1999/00)

	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Range
Non-plaintiff					
ETR	58.37	11.73	41.60	109.40	67.80
Exp/Pupil	3.575	415	2,857	5,393	2,536
Assess/Pupil	24.879	100.197	78,599	619,450	540.851
Acc. Index	61.22	6.10	45.8	85.3	39.5
Plaintiff					
ETR	57.67	10.19	46.20	88.20	42.00
Exp/Pupil	3,599	419	2,773	4,911	2,138
Assess/Pupil	180.946	643.393	57,485	344,229	286,745
Acc. Index	58.68	4.65	47.1	68.7	21.6
All districts					
ETR	58.11	11.16	41.60	109.40	67.80
Exp/Pupil	3,584	416	2,773	5,393	2,620
Assess/Pupil	223.735	94.368	57,485	619,451	561.966
Acc. Index	60.28	5.73	45.8	85.3	39.5

Note. All numbers represent amount in dollars, except tax rate and academic index.

Analysis of 1999/00 data showed ranges of these variables were also noteworthy. Non-plaintiff districts had greater average wealth per pupil (\$248,792) than was true for either plaintiff (\$180,946) or all (\$223,735) districts. The range of wealth in all districts was in fact dramatic, as

wealth varied by \$561,967 per pupil between the highest (\$619,450) and lowest (\$57,484) wealth districts in the state. That plaintiff districts remained less wealthy (\$180,946) than either non-plaintiff districts (\$248,792) or the state as a whole (\$223,735) was especially apparent when considering these comparison groups by category. The mean expenditure per pupil for non-plaintiffs (\$3,575) and plaintiffs (\$3,599) were consistent indicating equity in the resource allocation standard had been met according to the 1999/00 data with plaintiff districts spending more per pupil than plaintiff districts.

As reported in Table 8, plaintiffs also had a slightly higher mean of expenditures per pupil than the state as a whole (\$3,599 to \$3,584). However, mean scores on state assessments of student achievement were higher, as indicated in Table 8, for non-plaintiff (61.22) and all districts (60.28) as compared to plaintiff (58.68) districts indicating plaintiff districts continue to achieve less in terms of educational adequacy. It is significant to note that plaintiff districts have achieved a smaller increase in state assessment scores (14.29) over the five year period than either non-plaintiff (15.13) or all districts (14.82). Comparisons of state assessment scores, between the 1994/95 and 1999/00 school years, indicates a widening gap between both scores achieved by group and percentage increases with plaintiff districts falling further behind non-plaintiff districts.

The relationships between variables are also a factor in determining equity outcomes. A correlation matrix representing the 1994/95 school year for equivalent tax rate, expenditure per pupil, average teacher salary, percentage of at-risk students, percentage of special education students and assessment per pupil for all districts, non-plaintiff districts and plaintiff districts, is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Correlation Coefficients for Assessment Per Pupil and Other Variables for all Districts,Non-plaintiff and Plaintiff Groups (1994/95)

	All Districts	Non-plaintiff	Plaintiff
N = 176	176	111	65
ETR	.079	.181	-.235
EXP/P.P.	.883**	.881**	.865**
ATS	.347**	.406**	.161
% At-Risk	-.655**	-.680**	-.491**
% Sp. Ed.	-.198**	-.111	-.269*

Note. * Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Analysis of data reported in table 9 indicates the highest positive correlations for the 1994/95 school year are between assessment per pupil and expenditure per pupil for instruction for all three groups. The correlation for all districts was .883, for non-plaintiff districts .881, and for plaintiff districts .865. All three correlations were statistically significant at the .01 level. The highest negative correlation is between assessment per pupil and percent at-risk, reinforcing the contention assessment per pupil is an indication of district wealth and at-risk population as an indicator of poverty. All correlations for percent at-risk and percent special education, with all other variables, are negative with the exception of the positive relationship between these two variables and a small and insignificant positive correlation (.146) between special education and tax rate. The negative correlation between assessment per pupil and equivalent tax rate (-.235) represented by plaintiff districts contradicts a positive correlation for all districts (.079) and non-plaintiff district (.181) categories although none of these correlations was statistically significant.

Correlation coefficients for assessment per pupil and other variables for all groups for the 1999/00 school year are reported in Table 10.

Table 10

Correlation Coefficients for Assessment Per Pupil and Other Variables for all Districts,Non-plaintiff and Plaintiff Groups (1999/00)

	All Districts	Nonplaintiff	Plaintiff
N = 176	176	111	65
ETR	.122	.214*	-.170
EXP/P.P.	-.034	-.020	-.041
ATS	.336**	.392**	.265*
% At-Risk	-.659**	-.661**	-.544**
% Sp. Ed.	-.279**	-.271**	-.221

Note. * Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the .01

level (2-tailed).

The highest positive correlations for the 1999/00 school year are between assessment per pupil and expenditure per pupil for instruction for all three groups. The correlation for all districts was -.034, for non-plaintiff districts -.020, and for plaintiff districts, -.041. None of the three correlations were statistically significant, in contrast to the 1994/95 analyses. The highest negative correlations were between assessment per pupil and percent at-risk, consistent with 1994/95 data. All group correlations between assessment per pupil, percent at-risk and percent special education are negative. The negative correlation between assessment per pupil and equivalent tax rate (-.170), represented by plaintiff districts, contradicts a positive correlation for all districts (.122) and non-plaintiff district (.214) categories following the 1994/95 patterns.

Wealth measures are important, as they related to expenditures per pupil, by either facilitating or hindering the ability of districts to fund expenditures and by indicating the relative position of districts to one another on the resource accessibility standard.

Conclusions

Comparisons of district expenditures per pupil indicate significant revenue and spending gaps remain among Kentucky school districts 10 years after the Rose decision. Analysis of the relationship, in 1994/95, between assessment per pupil and expenditure per pupil, as represented

by correlation coefficients (Table 9) indicates a high positive correlation for all three (all districts, nonplaintiffs and plaintiff) groups. However, the same analysis conducted for the 1999/00 school year (table 10) indicated no significant correlation between assessment per pupil and expenditures per pupil values. The result of remedies implemented by SEEK, within the framework of this analysis, support a conclusion that significant progress has been made in attaining an equitable performance on the resource accountability standard in Kentucky 10 years after the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. However, disparities remain between school districts on the state mandated assessment of student performance. What is not clear from this study is whether per pupil spending alone assures adequacy or whether adequacy is a quality issue more associated with efficient utilization of the resources available. The wide variety in quality evident in school performance in Kentucky since KERA would suggest, in parallel, that not all districts, nor schools within districts, are likely to utilize the resources at their command equally well.

These results lead to the conclusion that this study is only one step toward understanding the relationship between equity and adequacy. Still at issue is funding outside the SEEK calculation. Currently, the extended school services, preschool, family resource/youth service centers, gifted and talented, and professional development, mandated under KERA, and other categorical state and federal grants, remain outside the SEEK funding formula. Finally, the author notes that the policy option of tinkering with SEEK versus more effective and efficient usage of existing resources may not simply be either/or, but both/and. Only further study can shed light on the most effective policy response to improving equity and providing more adequate educational programming for all children in Kentucky.

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