Equity-Based Staff Reduction Workbook Overview

Background

In March 2015, the Research & Program Evaluation Office (RPEO) was asked to support the development of a tool that would assign hypothetical staff reductions across schools in a manner that was equitable and consistent with our values as a district. To meet this request, we developed the *Equity-Based Staff Reduction Workbook.*

This workbook is designed to support decision-making around equity-based staff reductions.

Formula Components

In total, eight variables are included in the formula:
1. **% Special Education** – The percent of students in the school designated as Special Education. Schools with more Special Education students would receive smaller reductions.
2. **% ELL Levels 1-5** – The percent of students in the school at English Language Learner (ELL) Levels 1-5. Our typical presentations of data for English Language Learners include students in levels 1-6, but because level 6 students are no longer receiving services, they do not receive additional priority in this allocation model. Schools with a larger share of English Language Learners at levels 1-5 would receive smaller reductions.
3. **% Free/Reduced Lunch** – The percent of students in the school receiving free or reduced lunch. Schools with a higher share of students receiving free/reduced lunch would receive smaller reductions.
4. **Total FTE Ratio** – The ratio of students to total FTE in the school. This variable is included in the model to reflect the fact that schools with larger staffs relative to the number of students might be more able to absorb a reduction; as such, schools with a higher total FTE ratio would receive smaller reductions.
5. **Teacher FTE Ratio** – The ratio of students to teacher FTE in the school; this variable serves a proxy for class size. Schools with relatively fewer students per teacher might be more able to absorb a reduction; as such, schools with a higher teacher FTE ratio would receive smaller reductions.
6. **Total Student Count** – The total enrollment in the school. Smaller schools would receive smaller reductions.
7. **Support Level** – This variable indicates whether schools are designated as light, moderate, or intensive support and reflects overall school performance across a variety of areas. Schools at moderate or intensive support levels would receive smaller deductions.
8. **SAGE** – This variable indicates whether a school is part of the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) Program, which reduces class sizes in early grades. SAGE schools must maintain smaller class sizes, so they would receive smaller deductions.

Formula Details

First, we take the first six variables in the formula and convert them to a standard scale, making it possible to compare percentages against ratios against counts. Then, schools are assigned bonuses for the last two variables (Support Level and SAGE). Each of the eight variables is then assigned a priority, with the total priorities across the eight variables adding up to 100%. The priority level for each variable is then multiplied by the school's value for that variable, giving us a number that represents the share of reductions at the school's level (elementary, middle, or high) they would be expected to receive. This share is multiplied by the total reduction for the level to arrive at the specific recommendation for each school's reduction.