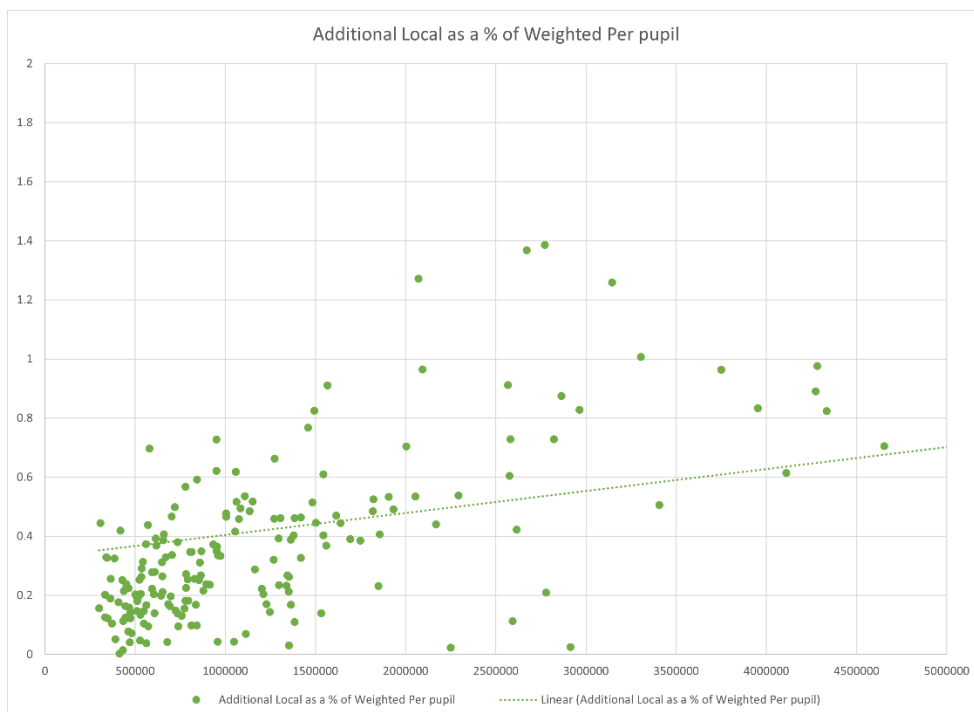


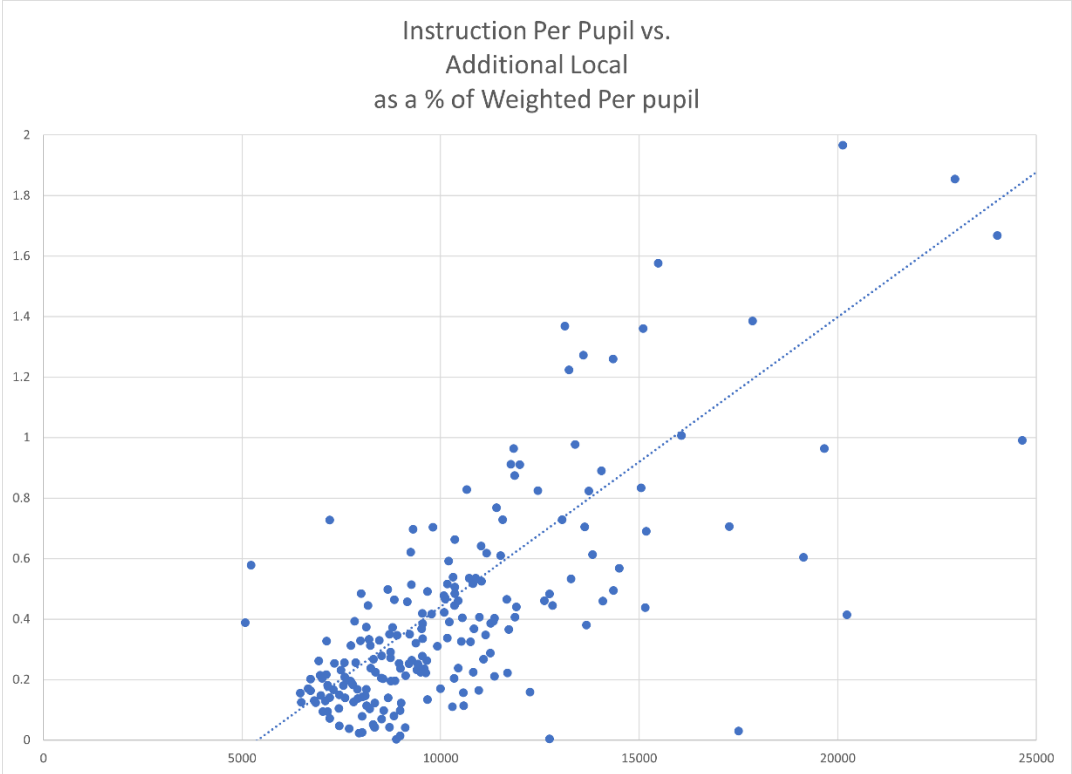
Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint Standing: My name is Tyler Backus and I am a resident of Oakland, Maine. I write to you today in support of LD 1160, Resolve, Directing the Department of Education to Conduct a Study on the Equity of the State Education Subsidy Formula.

As one might guess I have looked into this issue deeply, and have determined that the funding formula is falling short in supporting our most vulnerable students in the state. This is not because our local education units do not care about the education of our students, but because the cost of education in a district is determined by how much that district can raise, which is a result of how much valuation the district has.

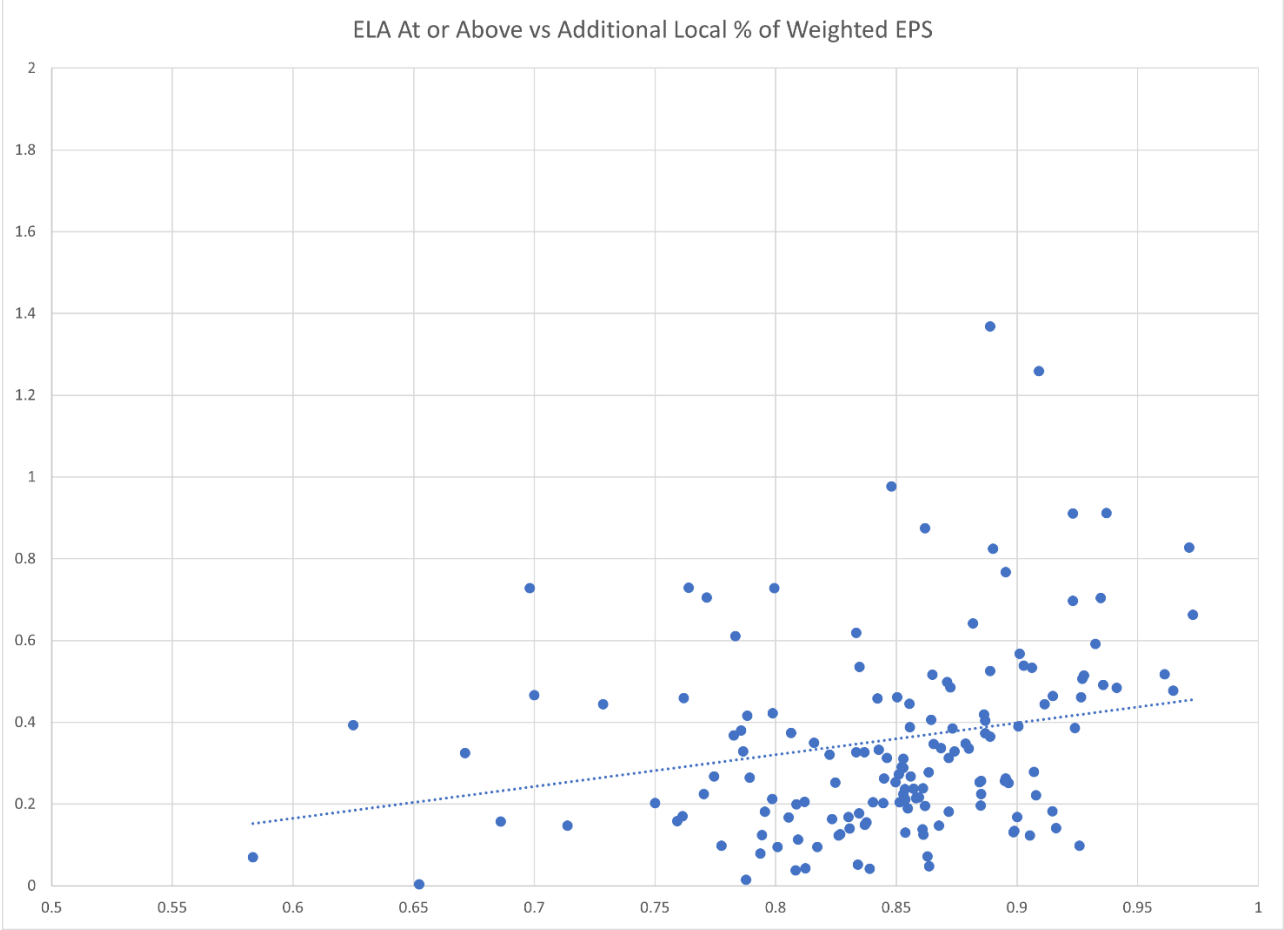
Although hard to see in the picture below, along the vertical axis we show how much additional local is raised compared to the weighted per pupil as determined by the EPS formula. This is the division of operating allocation, as calculated in Section 2 of the formula divided by the number of students. Along the horizontal axis the graph shows the per pupil valuation of the district. We can see that as a whole, if a district has more ability to raise funding locally, as compared to what is needed for the district, it will raise more funding. This puts property poor districts at a disadvantage to educate their students.

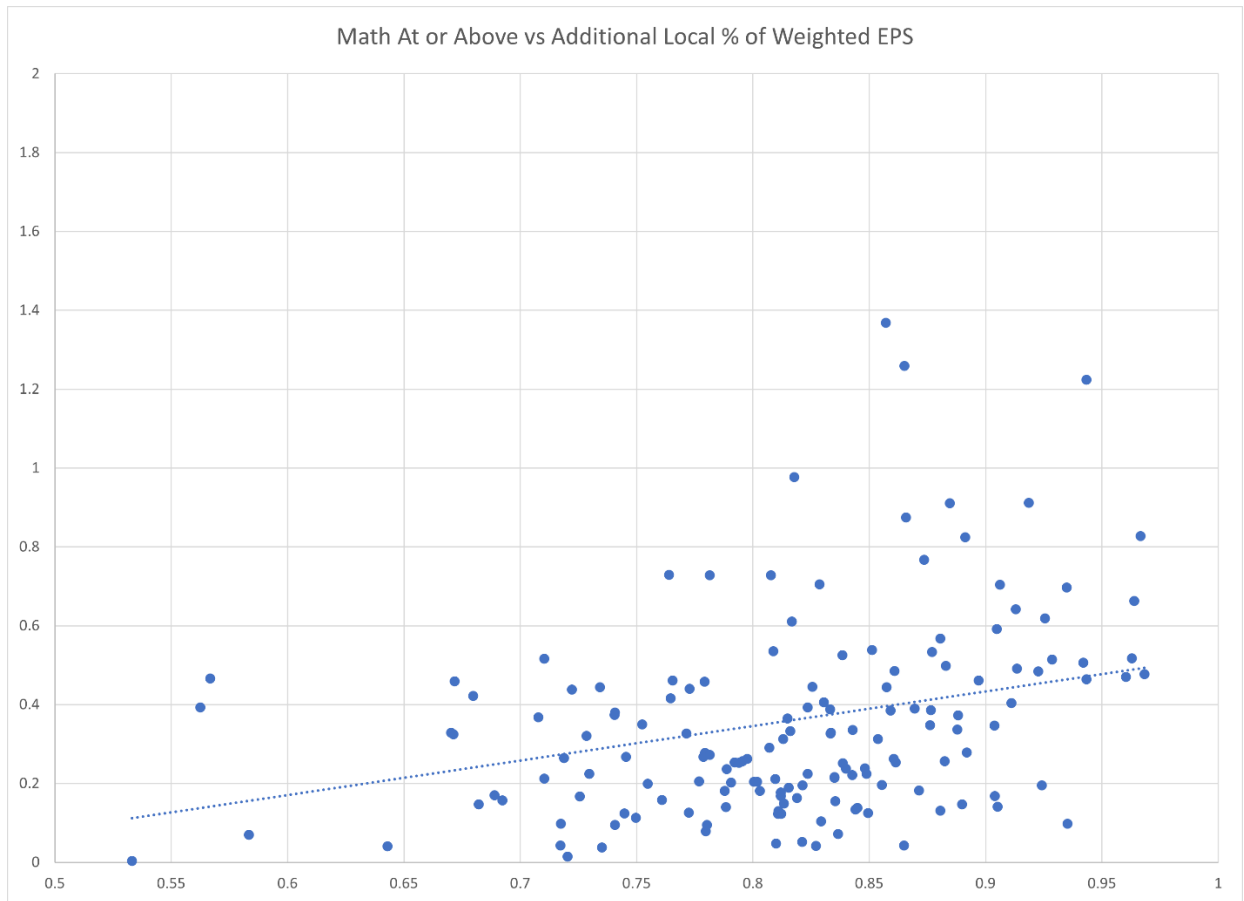


In this graph I have compared how much is being spent on instruction at the per pupil level to the amount of additional local they are raising. As can be seen, districts that are raising more funds are spending it on instruction.



Lastly, I want to show that those districts that are raising additional funds, as compared to what the model is already allocating, on a per pupil basis are seeing results in the state assessments for that given year. Below, you can see that both ELA and Math scores are higher in those districts that are raising more funds.





I would caveat that the department does not currently have the staff to conduct this study, and MEPRI does not currently have the funding to add a study of this magnitude, though both have perfectly capable staff to conduct this study. There are however national organizations that help with these studies that are non-partisan. Two organizations, for which I know have worked with multiple states on their funding formula, that have no particular agenda are The Education Trust and ERS Strategies, though I am sure other such organizations exist.

This is highly important work that needs to be completed and has been put off for far too long.

Thank you for your time.

Tyler Backus

