

The Strategic System Resource Map

Some schools beat the odds by “doing school” in new ways. But for every school and every child to thrive, we need to change the odds by creating strategic school systems. Restructuring the use of people, time, and money makes this possible.

Building on over 10 years of partnering with leaders from over 40 school districts, we have developed the “Strategic Resource Map,” which integrates multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data to paint a clear picture of how people, time, and money are allocated and organized at the school and system level. Based on research, best practice, and system strategy, we use these data to identify key opportunities to change system conditions and resource practices to improve student outcomes.

We have defined seven transformational areas that make up a Strategic System for Strong Schools. Our work—which includes data (analysis and benchmarking), design (prototypes, resource trade-offs, and consensus building) and implementation (planning and monitoring)—starts with an analysis of existing strategy and resource allocation in school systems compared to best practice. We then focus on the five resource-intensive transformational areas: **strategic school design, teaching, leadership, funding and portfolio, and school support and accountability.**

Using our Strategic System framework, the map builds a picture of spending and resource use that is unique in several ways. It:

- Integrates expenditure, payroll, course schedule, HR, student information, student performance, and other data, and is supplemented by extensive district interviews at multiple levels.
- Ensures accuracy and comparability that enable the realistic comparison of spending and resource use to other districts, and it highlights and adjusts for data flaws and inconsistencies.



- Creates a broad set of resource metrics that describe how resources are allocated to create individual attention, leverage teaching quality, and focus student time. These metrics can then be used by the district to support schools and central departments in more strategic use over time.
- Tracks spending and other metrics (like class size and time) first to the school level and then to the individual student level so we can link them to performance.
- Creates a school-level metric based on academic need that identifies opportunities to improve the equity of resource allocation systems.
- Can be recreated over multiple years to measure changes in resource allocation over time.

The resource mapping process is usually conducted with deep engagement from district leadership so it results in shared ownership of the challenges and implementation. We have honed this approach over the last 10 years, and it incorporates research on adult learning, adaptive change, and change management. In that regard, the final report represents the joint understanding and helps memorialize the work, and it invests a broader set of stakeholders in the changes.

Contact us to learn more about this process: www.erstrategies.org/info/contact.

About ERS

Every school. Every child. Ready for tomorrow.

Education Resource Strategies is a national non-profit that partners with district, school, and state leaders to transform how they use resources—people, time and money—so that every school prepares every child for tomorrow, no matter their race or income.

In all our work, we focus on the larger picture—how resources work together to create strategic systems that support strong schools. Our non-profit status enables a different kind of partnership with districts and states: one where we participate in the transformation struggle, create insights together, and share lessons with others. More at ERStrategies.org.