



EdBuilder Interactive Web Tool: User QuickGuide to Building a School Funding Formula

*Common Sense and Fairness: Model Policies for State Education Funding*¹ is a guide to building a better, fairer education funding formula. Created by EdBuild in consultation with The Education Trust and Education Resource Strategies, this report offers detailed, policy options for each element of the formula and provides references to comparison policies in states around the country. Generally, recommendations are offered in three tiers: Silver, Gold, and Moonshot. (Select formula components have only one or two recommendations presented, as appropriate for the issue.)

A companion website, EdBuilder,² allows users to build their own custom formulas using an interactive design tool. The EdBuilder website is divided into three sections: Homepage/Key Principles, the Builder, and a Reports and Downloads page.

I. Homepage/Key Principles

The homepage provides a brief introduction to the tool and allows you to navigate to the other sections of the website, as well as to Common Sense and Fairness, the PDF report detailing the full recommendations for funding formula policy. This page also describes four key principles for strong school funding policy: **adequacy, equity, responsibility and transparency.**

After reading, to proceed with building your formula, click the “GO TO THE BUILDER” button at the bottom of your screen, or click “Builder” in the menu pinned to the top of your screen. You may also navigate directly to the “Reports and Downloads” page using the menu at the top of your screen if you would like to view and download standard reports regarding the policy recommendations contained in the tool.

EdBuilder

Full Recommendations | Key Principles | Builder | Reports and Downloads

INTRODUCTION

Every state uses a funding formula to distribute education dollars, and these formulas are frequent targets for policy debate and legislative improvements. The EdBuilder is an interactive web tool that allows users to view recommendations for every important area of school funding policy and to select among strong policy options to build a custom funding formula for their states. Below, see the key principles that guide the recommendations in this web tool. Then, click **GO TO THE BUILDER** to begin crafting your funding formula.

This tool is a companion to the report *Common Sense and Fairness: Model Policies for State Education Funding*. Download the report for a full exploration of the policy recommendations included in this web tool.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL FUNDING

ADEQUACY	EQUITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TRANSPARENCY
The school funding allocated through the state formula should be sufficient to support a rigorous, high-quality education program for all students. Students are ill-served when the system overall lacks enough funding or when the funding allocated for any individual district is inadequate.	Funding should be targeted to districts based on their students' needs, including disability, economic disadvantage, and English-language learner status. The state's funding approach should result in comparable funding levels in districts serving students with similar characteristics. District spending decisions should also be guided by students' different levels of need and by the goals of narrowing achievement and opportunity gaps.	District and school leaders should be treated as responsible decision-makers when it comes to education spending. This means that they are provided with sufficient resources to serve their students; that they have the flexibility to operate in the way that works best for their students and communities; and that they are held accountable to ensure that spending decisions support success for all students, including high-need students.	Reporting of district and school spending should allow for a feedback loop between state funding and district need. If districts receive adequate funding, then their spending should reflect students' needs. Expenditure reporting should therefore be aligned with student need categories to hold districts accountable for supporting students appropriately and to hold legislators accountable for funding districts based on the students they serve.

GO TO THE BUILDER

“GO TO THE BUILDER” button

Pinned navigation menu

¹ <https://edbuild.org/content/edbuilder/reports/full-report>

² <https://edbuild.org/content/edbuilder>

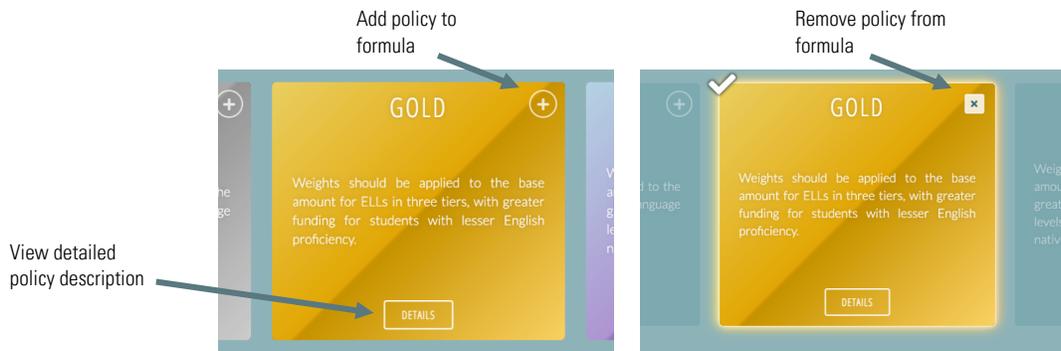
II. The Builder

The Builder guides you through the process of crafting a state education funding formula. First, it displays policies regarding basic formula structure that are foundational to any strong funding policy. You must add these Formula Fundamentals to your formula before proceeding. Then, the Builder unlocks and presents options for considering different student and district characteristics, which you may review and add to your formula in any order. When you have completed selecting policies for your formula allocations, the Builder unlocks policy recommendations for how to account for local revenues.



Within the Builder, a navigation bar tracks your progress. Once you have completed the Formula Fundamentals section, you may proceed to Student and District Characteristics, and so on.

As you proceed through the formula components, use the \oplus button in the corner of a policy recommendation card to add that policy to your formula, or the \otimes button to remove it. Click "DETAILS" on any recommendation card to see further detail about the policy, including references to states using similar policies, if applicable.



At any time within the Builder, you can use one of the three menu options that appear under the word "Builder" in the menu at the top of your screen.

- The  button allows you to take a snapshot of a formula in progress. It generates a link that you can use to share your formula in progress, or to return directly to that formula instead of beginning the Builder again.
- The  button allows you to clear all policy selections and start fresh.
- The  button opens a preview of your formula so far, showing the selections you have made and the policy sections you have yet to complete.

Buttons appear under "Builder" in the pinned navigation menu



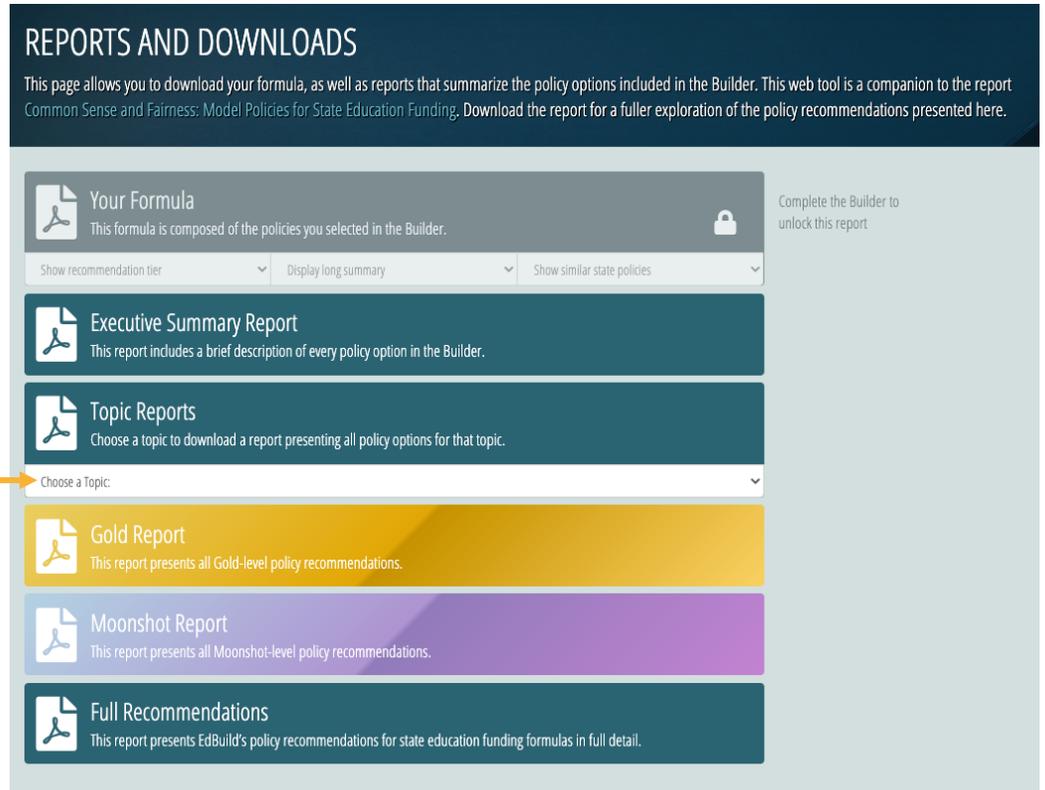
When your formula is complete, a custom report featuring your policy selections becomes available on the "Reports and Downloads" page.

III. Reports and Downloads

The Reports and Downloads page allows you to view download both standard and customized reports.

At any time while using the **EdBuilder** site, you can view and download a variety of standard reports that may be useful to you and your policy partners as you consider changes to your state’s funding formula. These include:

- An **executive summary** report, which presents a brief description of every policy recommendation included on the site
- **Topic reports** for each policy component (that is, the formula fundamentals, student characteristics, district characteristics, and local revenue topics included in the Builder) that present all policy options that that topic
- Reports collecting either **all Gold-level policy recommendations** or **all Moonshot-level policy recommendations** across all policy components
- The report presenting the full, detailed recommendations for all parts of the funding formula, titled *Common Sense and Fairness*

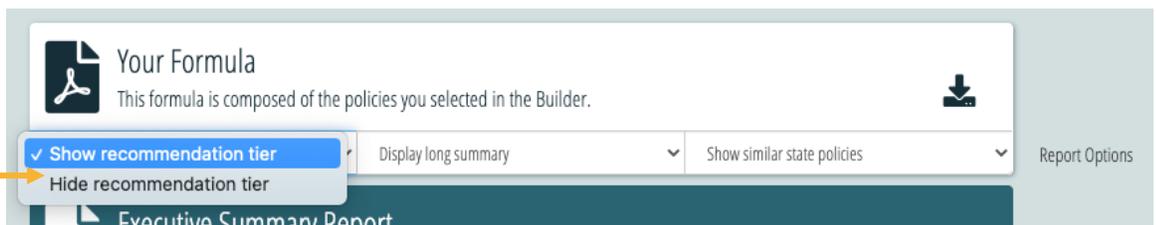


Use the drop-down menu to select a policy component and download a topic report



If you have completed the Builder and created a formula, a **custom report** is created featuring your policy selections. In order to make the custom report as useful as possible for policy discussion and advocacy in different contexts, the website offers further customization options:

- **Show/hide recommendation tier** allows you to either show or hide the tier of each policy recommendation that you selected (Silver, Gold, or Moonshot).
- **Display long/short summary** allows you include either short or longer summaries of your selected policies.
- **Show/hide similar state policy** allows you to include or exclude references to similar policies in other states.



Use the drop-down menu to customize your formula report.

