Title: The Inequalities of the Educational Funding

The United States spends approximately $620 billion dollars annually on educational expenditures, and this amount is significantly greater relative to the rest of the world. Yet, more than sixty years after Brown vs. Board of Education, school systems in the United States are still separate and unequal. Although there is more money being spent, the current budget dedicated to education has not translated to better educational outcomes. With the change in student demographics, the current education system of the United States does not serve the majority of its children properly, and the gaps in educational opportunities and outcomes prove to be especially problematic. Through analysis and comparison, this research seeks to draw attention to the imperfections in the funding of the American educational system, and provide a model and possible solutions to confront the inequalities that exist within the current system.

The effect of inequalities in educational funding in the United States is felt on a federal, state, local, and individual level. These effects pose even greater threats to students that are a part of marginalized socioeconomic groups. In the United States, more than 30 million children grow up in impoverished, low-income urban communities, where there is approximately one book for every 300 children. According to the research conducted by Susan Dynarski, a professor of public policy, education and economics at the University of Michigan, children born into poorer families who also attend schools that lack the proper funds and resources have only a nine percent chance of getting a college degree, compared to the fifty-four percent for their more privileged, middle, and upper class peers. The education that low-income students receive in poor, urban public schools is evidently insufficient to make them competitive in academic and professional settings.

Unlike the United States, the educational system in Cuba is run by the federal government, nationalizing private institutions at all levels of education. The Cuban government invests approximately thirteen percent of the country’s annual gross domestic product into education, compared to the United States’ six percent. This sizeable allocation of funds allows for the education system to be completely subsidized by the Cuban government. In 2015, the World Bank stated that no country, including the richest, spends such a high part of its national
budget on education as Cuba. It ranked Cuba as the world leader in education, placing Cuba in the top position in terms of investment in education for 2009-2015. Despite the difficulties faced by the Cuban economy, schools are equipped with all the necessary resources to provide students with a quality learning experience at all levels. Through primary and secondary research, it was found that even in the most rural areas, schools are afforded with these same resources providing every Cuban student with the opportunity to receive an education. The Cuban educational system is not perfect, but has largely triumphed in the country’s grand educational vision, and can be seen as a model for the reconstruction of the education system in the United States.

For generations, education has been the path to better opportunity in the United States. While many economic and social barriers have been overcome in the last fifty years, the current system of educational funding continues to create obstacles for students in marginalized socioeconomic groups. The incongruities of educational funding prevent students from taking advantage of the benefits that the American education systems has to offer. In order for the current state of the educational system in the United States to improve, a new approach to tackling the issues within education must take place, demanding the federal government to step in and take action. Federal legislature that requires all students an equitable education through sufficient funding from the U.S. federal government currently does not exist, and would be a step in the right direction to ensure that underprivileged schools receive the funding that they need. Educational funding inequality should no longer be seen as a state issue, and the right to an equitable public education should be priritized at all levels of government.