

Urban Planning - Class Period 11

Class Goal: The value of good schools

Engineering Career: Design Engineer is a general term that covers multiple engineering disciplines including electrical, mechanical, chemical engineer, aeronautical engineer, civil, and structural/building/architectural engineers. When you want to design a school building, you might hire a design engineer to oversee the other engineers. The design engineer focuses on applying the *engineering design process*, in which engineers develop new products or processes with a primary emphasis on functional utility.

SimCity 5: When Sims first move into your city, they are stupid. You need to educate them starting with an elementary school and going all the way up to University. Good schools are crucial for SimCity success. Educated Sims build better homes, get better jobs, pay more taxes, stay healthier, and commit fewer crimes.

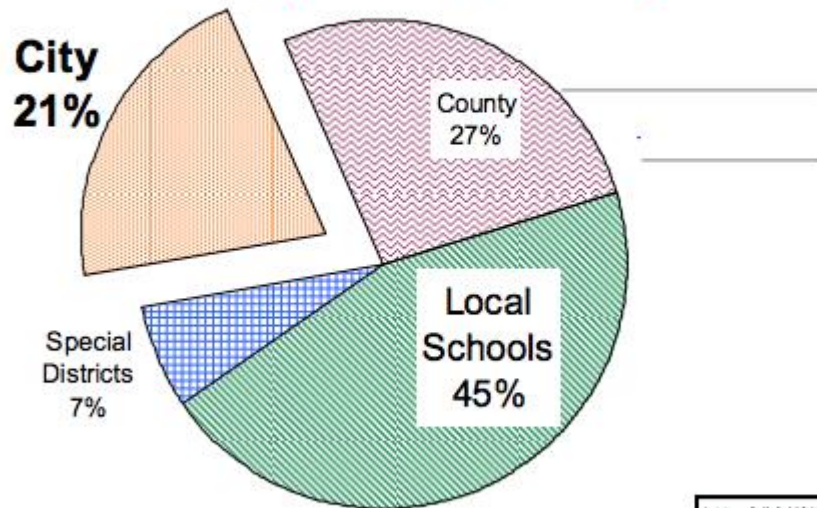
You will need to plant bus stops for school buses that are separate from public bus bus stops. When you plo down a school, be sure to click on the modifications and add school buses. For colleges, you will need public transportation. Schools and public libraries also increase the property values around them.

Problem: *What is the economic value of a good education?*

The right to a full and meaningful education was guaranteed to everyone, regardless of race, religion or socio-economic status by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 when the Court ordered an all-white school to admit African American students. Although we live in a more enlightened time now, many children still do not have access to that full and meaningful education, even here in California.

The biggest portion of people's property taxes goes to fund schools. (Property taxes are money that homeowners pay to the government each year as a tax on their property.)

Property Tax: How much goes to your city?



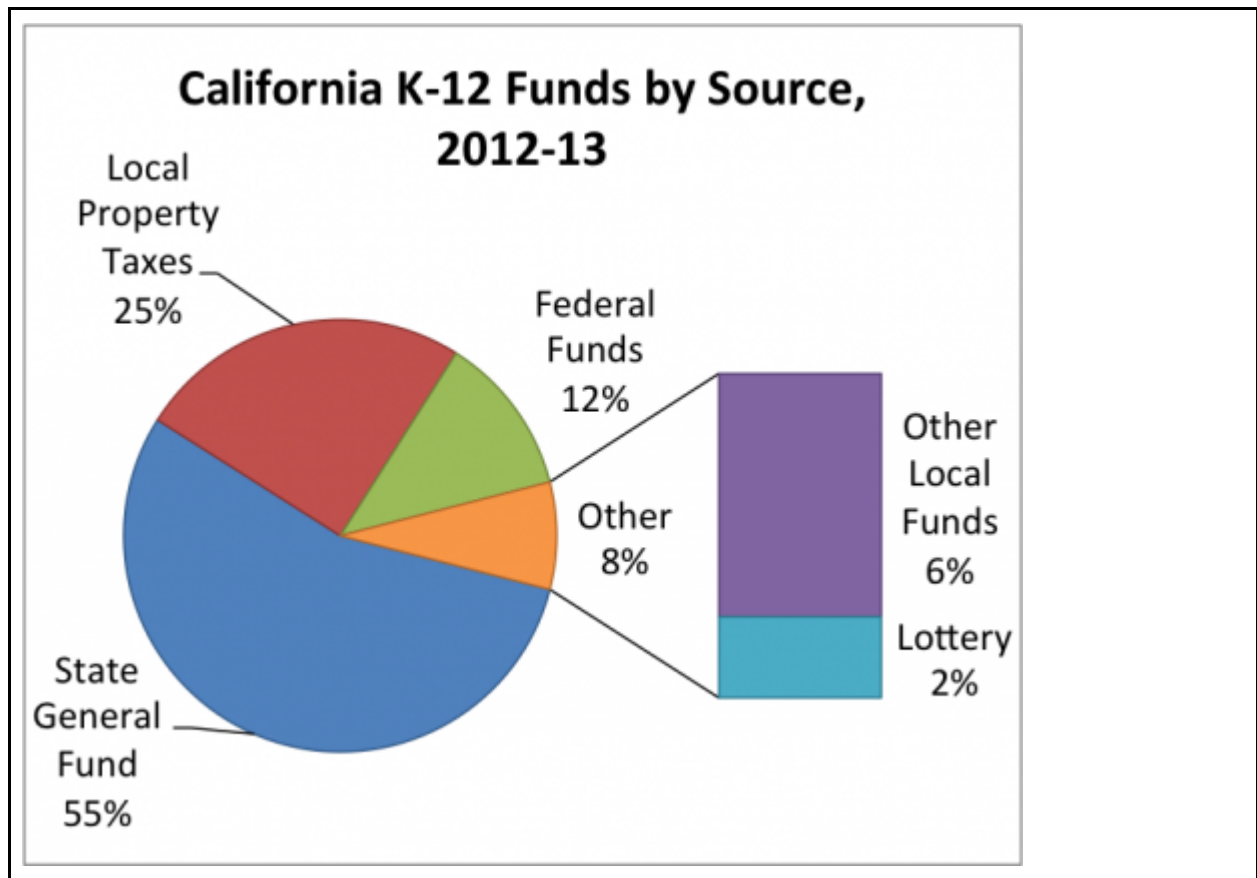
⁵ [Source:](#) Coleman Advisory Services computations from Board of Equalization and State Controller data.



In the 1970's California's property values were skyrocketing. As the value of the property went up, so did the amount of taxes people had to pay. These taxes were forcing some people (mostly elderly people on a fixed income) out of their homes. In response, California's people passed Proposition 13 in 1978. That new law capped the property tax at the date the property was purchased. A person who bought a home in 1980, then, is still paying the same amount of taxes now even though the value of the house has doubled or tripled.

The unintended effect of Proposition 13 was that the public schools stopped getting the money they needed to keep up with the passing years. (Think of it like they are still being funded for 1980's economy.) This has had a tremendous impact on schools in poor areas.

Q: Why didn't Prop 13 affect public schools in affluent areas?



As you can see, public schools get money from many places.

But it's not enough money. California, #1 in the number of students educated in public schools (California educates about 6.5 million students), is about 30th in the amount of money spent per student. Our average is under \$8,000 per year per student.

But school funding in California changed in 2014. Here's an article from the Huffington Post that explains it.

Probably the most important part of the change is the extra money that will be made available for programs for students with high needs.

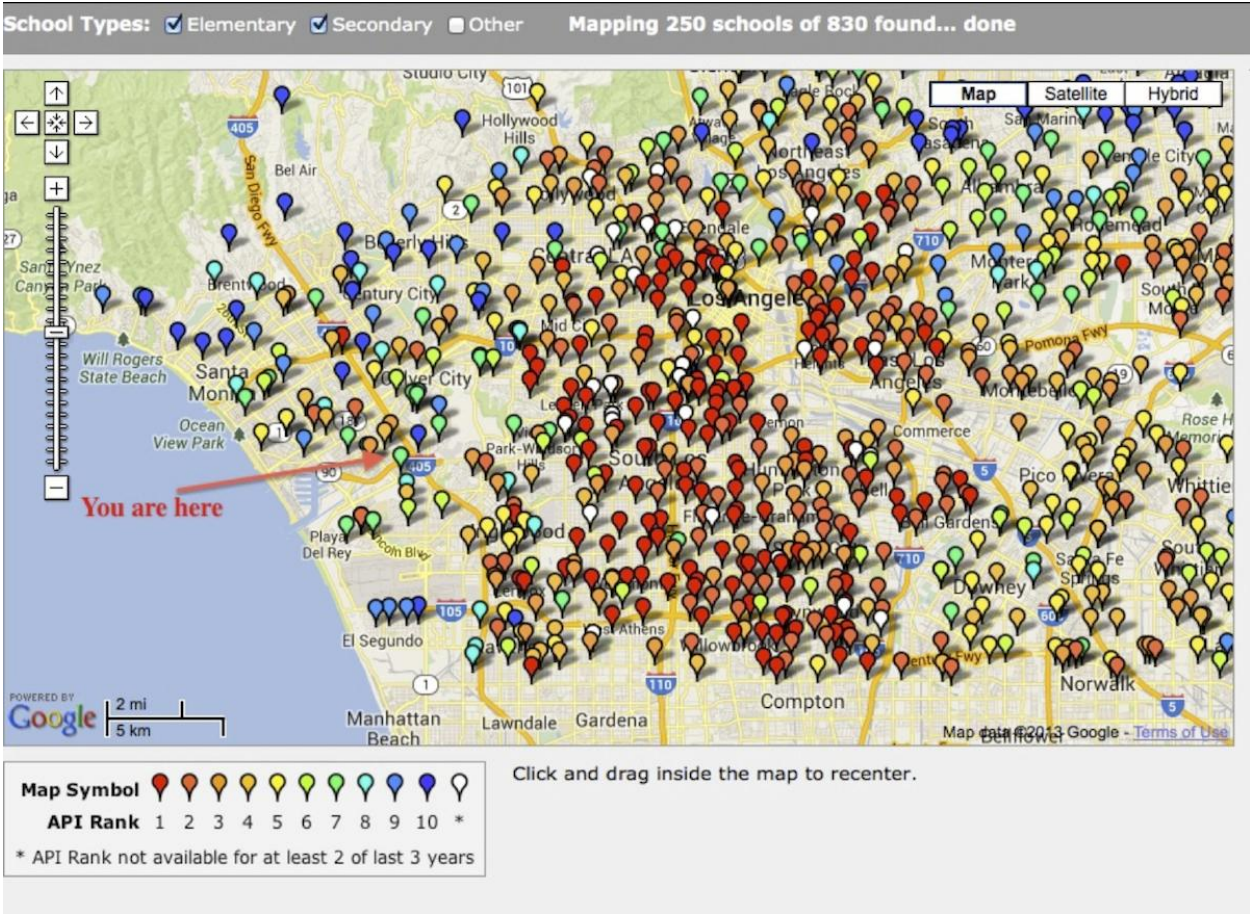
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/05/california-schools-funding-system_n_5651215.html

If the article isn't there anymore, email me and I'll send you a copy of it.

If your students are interested in learning more about the history of California schools, have them read *Serano v. Priest*.

Here's a wrap-up assignment for students:

(This is A 2014 map and it points to Wildwood School.)



This is an API ranking map for Los Angeles. What do you see?

What questions do you have? These should be open-ended, thoughtful questions for class discussion.

Here's another idea: Use The Right Question Protocol for a thought-provoking statement about your district's schools.