

U.S. Census Bureau News

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Per Pupil Spending Varies Heavily Across the United States

Census Bureau Releases New Public Education Finance Data

June 2, 2015 — Per pupil spending for the nation was \$10,700 during fiscal year 2013, a 0.9 percent increase from 2012, but varied heavily among states with a high of \$19,818 in New York and a low of \$6,555 in Utah.

Today's findings come from [Public Education Finances: 2013](#), which provides figures on revenues, expenditures, debt and assets (cash and security holdings) for the nation's elementary and secondary public school systems. The [report](#) and [tables](#), released annually, include detailed statistics on spending — such as instruction, student transportation, salaries and employee benefits — at the national, state and school district levels.



“These [statistics](#) provide researchers, policymakers and the public with a picture of the nation's public school system education revenue and spending,” said Stephen Wheeler, an analyst with the Census Bureau's Educational Finance Branch. “These data are used in a variety of important economic measures such as the Department of Education's Title I Grants and the Bureau of Economic Analysis' gross domestic product measure.”

States and state-equivalents spending the most per pupil in 2013 were New York (\$19,818), Alaska (\$18,175), the District of Columbia (\$17,953), New Jersey (\$17,572) and Connecticut (\$16,631). States spending the least per pupil included Utah (\$6,555), Idaho (\$6,791), Arizona (\$7,208), Oklahoma (\$7,672) and Mississippi (\$8,130).

Of the 100 largest school systems by enrollment, Maryland had four of the top 10 public school districts with the highest current spending per pupil. The top-five school districts for per pupil spending were Boston City Schools (\$20,502), New York City School District (\$20,331), Anchorage School District in Alaska (\$15,419), Montgomery County Schools in Maryland (\$15,080) and Baltimore City Schools (\$15,050).

Public Education Expenditures

Total expenditure by public school systems totaled \$596.3 billion in fiscal year 2013, up 0.5 percent from the prior year. This breaks a three-year trend of decreasing total expenditures for elementary and secondary education. Public education expenditure categories include instructional spending, support service spending, capital outlay and other spending. Total school district debt increased by 3.2 percent, from \$402.2 billion in fiscal year 2012 to \$415.2 billion in 2013.

• **Instructional expenditures**

- o Expenditures for instruction amounted to \$321.3 billion (60.6 percent) of total current spending.
- o Instructional salaries are the largest expenditure category for public elementary and secondary education, which accounted for 34.9 percent or \$208.0 billion.

• **Support services expenditures**

- o Expenditures for support services amounted to \$181.7 billion, a 1.0 percent increase from the prior year.
- o Expenditures on student transportation were \$23.4 billion, a 1.2 percent increase from the prior year.

Public Education Revenue

Revenue contributions from all sources to elementary and secondary education revenue amounted to \$597.9 billion, up 0.6 percent from the prior year.

- **Revenue contributions**
 - 45.6 percent of revenue comes from state governments at \$272.9 billion.
 - 45.3 percent of revenue comes from local sources (property taxes, student fees, etc.) at \$270.6 billion.
 - 9.1 percent of revenue comes from the federal government at \$54.4 billion.
- **Local revenue contributions**
 - Of the \$270.6 billion schools received from local sources, \$232.8 billion came from taxes and local government appropriations.
 - Property taxes accounted for 65.1 percent of revenue from local sources for public school systems at \$176.2 billion.
- **States receiving the highest percentage of their revenue from the federal government:** Mississippi (16.0 percent), Louisiana (15.2 percent), South Dakota (14.8 percent), New Mexico (14.8 percent) and Arizona (14.6 percent).
 - **States receiving the lowest percentage of their revenue from the federal government:** New Jersey (4.1 percent), Connecticut (4.3 percent), Massachusetts (5.1 percent), New York (5.6 percent) and New Hampshire (5.7 percent).

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The data used in the tabulations came from a census of all 15,144 public school systems. As such, they are not subject to sampling error. Although quality assurance methods were applied to all phases of data collection and processing, the data are subject to nonsampling error, including errors of response and miscoding. For more information, visit the Census Bureau's website at <http://www.census.gov/qovs/school/>.

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