

# Arizona Auditor General

## Arizona School District Spending Report

### Fiscal Year 2021

This document provides a text-based representation of the numbers and other information presented in the graphics on the State of Arizona's summary results. All data is for fiscal year 2021 unless otherwise noted.

#### State demographic information

Total operational spending: \$8,425,313,015

Total nonoperational spending: \$1,989,022,129

Total spending: \$10,414,335,144

Number of schools: 1,386

Graduation rate for fiscal year 2020: 78%

Students attending: 844,570

5-year change in students attending: 7% decrease

Special education population: 13%

English learner population: 7%

Poverty rate for fiscal year 2020: 16%

#### State's spending by operational area

Every year, school districts must decide where to allocate their monies. This pie chart shows how, as a State, Arizona's public school districts collectively spent their funding by operational area, including the percentage they spent in the classroom and specifically on instruction.

We have monitored instructional spending since fiscal year 2001. Below are highlights from the State's instructional spending trend showing the most recent year-to-year change and the years districts collectively spent the highest and lowest percentages on instruction.

#### Pie chart showing state spending by operational area

Classroom spending, which includes instruction, student support, and instruction support spending: 70.2%

Instruction: 55.3%

Student support: 9.1%

Instruction support: 5.8%

Nonclassroom spending, which includes administration, plant operations, food service, and transportation spending: 29.8%

Administration: 10.4%

Plant operations: 11.7%

Food service: 4.0%

Transportation: 3.7%

## List of the State's instructional spending percentage for the 2 most recent fiscal years, as well as its highest and lowest instructional spending percentages between 2001 and 2021

Reviewing these instructional spending percentage highlights can provide insight into short-term (year-to-year comparison) and long-term (highest and lowest comparison) State-wide trends of districts' allocation of monies to instruction. Depending on how much districts spend in total, even small changes in the percentage spent on instruction can equate to large changes in the State-wide actual dollars the districts spent.

2021 instructional spending percentage: 55.3%  
2020 instructional spending percentage: 54.9%  
Fiscal year of highest instructional spending percentage: 2004  
Highest instructional spending percentage: 58.6%  
Fiscal year of lowest instructional spending percentage: 2016  
Lowest instructional spending percentage: 53.5%

### Why monitor school district spending?

Beginning with the fiscal year 2016 budget, the K-12 education budget reconciliation bills have included the following wording each year: "The governor and the legislature intend that school districts increase the total percentage of classroom spending over the previous year's percentages in the combined categories of instruction, student support, and instructional support as prescribed by the auditor general."

The bar chart below, "Percentage point change in spending by area," shows how the percentage of school districts' spending on each area has changed during that time frame, including the total change for classroom spending. Most school district funding is based on the number of students attending, and districts can choose how to spend most funding, so every decision a school district makes to spend on one operational area directly impacts its ability to spend on another.

To put the spending percentages in context, it can also be helpful to review per pupil spending in dollars. For example, a district's overall spending might increase, but its percentage spent on an operational area may decrease if the dollars per pupil spent on that area stay the same or even increase. We have also included the fiscal year 2019 national per pupil spending averages, which are the most recently available, to compare to the corresponding year of Arizona spending.

### Bar chart showing the percentage point change in spending by operational area (fiscal year 2016 versus 2021)

Change in classroom spending, which includes instruction, student support, and instruction support: 2.8%  
Instruction: 1.8%  
Student support: 0.9%  
Instruction support: 0.1%  
Change in nonclassroom spending, which includes administration, plant operations, food service, and transportation: -2.8%  
Administration: 0.0%

Plant operations: -0.4%  
Food service: -1.4%  
Transportation: -1.0%

### Bar chart showing the percentage point change in spending by operational area (fiscal year 2020 versus 2021)

Change in classroom spending, which includes instruction, student support, and instruction support: 0.9%

Instruction: 0.4%  
Student support: 0.4%  
Instruction support: 0.1%

Change in nonclassroom spending, which includes administration, plant operations, food service, and transportation: -0.9%

Administration: 0.2%  
Plant operations: 0.2%  
Food service: -0.7%  
Transportation: -0.6%

### Table showing per pupil spending

#### Operational spending

2020 State instruction per pupil spending: \$5,016  
2021 State instruction per pupil spending: \$5,521  
2019 State instruction per pupil spending: \$4,869  
2019 National instruction per pupil spending: \$7,970  
2020 State student support per pupil spending: \$796  
2021 State student support per pupil spending: \$905  
2019 State student support per pupil spending: \$754  
2019 National student support per pupil spending: \$809  
2020 State instruction support per pupil spending: \$513  
2021 State instruction support per pupil spending: \$576  
2019 State instruction support per pupil spending: \$497  
2019 National instruction support per pupil spending: \$659  
2020 State administration per pupil spending: \$936  
2021 State administration per pupil spending: \$1,041  
2019 State administration per pupil spending: \$903  
2019 National administration per pupil spending: \$1,487  
2020 State plant operations per pupil spending: \$1,048  
2021 State plant operations per pupil spending: \$1,168  
2019 State plant operations per pupil spending: \$1,027  
2019 National plant operations per pupil spending: \$1,216  
2020 State food service per pupil spending: \$432  
2021 State food service per pupil spending: \$396  
2019 State food service per pupil spending: \$438  
2019 National food service per pupil spending: \$494  
2020 State transportation per pupil spending: \$395  
2021 State transportation per pupil spending: \$369

2019 State transportation per pupil spending: \$417  
2019 National transportation per pupil spending: \$552  
2020 State total operational per pupil spending: \$9,136  
2021 State total operational per pupil spending: \$9,976  
2019 State total operational per pupil spending: \$8,905  
2019 National total operational per pupil spending: \$13,187

### Nonoperational spending

2020 State land and buildings per pupil spending: \$1,053  
2021 State land and buildings per pupil spending: \$1,175  
2019 State land and buildings per pupil spending: \$1,086  
2019 National land and buildings per pupil spending: \$1,212  
2020 State equipment per pupil spending: \$533  
2021 State equipment per pupil spending: \$722  
2019 State equipment per pupil spending: \$496  
2019 National equipment per pupil spending: \$234  
2020 State interest per pupil spending: \$273  
2021 State interest per pupil spending: \$303  
2019 State interest per pupil spending: \$261  
2019 National interest per pupil spending: \$404  
2020 State other per pupil spending: \$175  
2021 State other per pupil spending: \$155  
2019 State other per pupil spending: \$180  
2019 National other per pupil spending: \$170  
2020 State total nonoperational per pupil spending: \$2,034  
2021 State total nonoperational per pupil spending: \$2,355  
2019 State total nonoperational per pupil spending: \$2,023  
2019 National total nonoperational per pupil spending: \$2,020

### Spending totals

2020 State total per pupil spending: \$11,170  
2021 State total per pupil spending: \$12,331  
2019 State total per pupil spending: \$10,928  
2019 National average total per pupil spending: \$15,207

### Pie charts showing state spending by category

In reviewing State-wide nonclassroom spending in more detail, spending in some areas, like administration, is heavily driven by a single category of costs whereas spending on others, like food service, is more evenly distributed across different categories.

### Administration spending

Administration spending: \$879,058,251  
Administration salaries and benefits: 86%  
Administration contracted services: 11%  
Administration supplies and other: 3%

### Plant operations spending

Plant operations spending: \$986,520,820  
Plant operations salaries and benefits: 43%  
Plant operations utilities: 25%  
Plant operations contracted: 18%  
Plant operations insurance: 7%  
Plant operations supplies and other: 7%

### Food service spending

Food service spending: \$334,356,344  
Food service salaries and benefits: 44%  
Food service food: 29%  
Food service contracted services: 23%  
Food service other: 4%

### Transportation spending

Transportation spending: \$311,508,415  
Transportation salaries and benefits: 76%  
Transportation contracted services: 13%  
Transportation fuel: 6%  
Transportation other: 5%

## Table showing state operational efficiency measures for fiscal years 2019 through 2021

In addition to monitoring spending on a percentage and per pupil basis, calculating performance measures at the State level and monitoring them over multiple years can also identify trends in school district operations that are being seen State-wide, such as declining enrollment, fewer meals being served, and reduced transportation riders. State-wide performance measures also provide benchmarks districts can use to compare and track their efficiency.

### Operational area--Administration

2019 State average administration spending per pupil: \$903  
2020 State average administration spending per pupil: \$936  
2021 State average administration spending per pupil: \$1,041  
2019 State average students per administrative position: 66  
2020 State average students per administrative position: 65  
2021 State average students per administrative position: 63

### Operational area—Plant operations

2019 State average plant operations spending per square foot: \$6.49  
2020 State average plant operations spending per square foot: \$6.55  
2021 State average plant operations spending per square foot: \$6.84  
2019 State average plant operations square footage per student: 158  
2020 State average plant operations square footage per student: 160  
2021 State average plant operations square footage per student: 171

### Operational area—Food service

2019 State average food service spending per meal: \$3.08

2020 State average food service spending per meal: \$3.46

2021 State average food service spending per meal: \$3.54

2019 State average food service meals per student: 143

2020 State average food service meals per student: 126

2021 State average food service meals per student: 113

### Operational area—Transportation

2019 State average transportation spending per mile: \$4.29

2020 State average transportation spending per mile: \$4.28

2021 State average transportation spending per mile: \$7.22

2019 State average transportation spending per rider: \$1,424

2020 State average transportation spending per rider: \$1,370

2021 State average transportation spending per rider: \$2,862

### Why monitor average teacher salary?

Arizona's fiscal year 2021 budget included the final year of additional funding intended to increase the State's average teacher salary by 20 percent between fiscal years 2017 and 2021. We have broken down the intended and actual percentage increases for each year below to show the progression. Although the additional monies were provided to districts with the intention to increase teacher salaries, districts were not required to use them this way, and the monies were not separately tracked to show how each district chose to spend them.

We've also included a table of other student and teacher measure trends during the same time frame for additional context. At a State level, these trends may not fluctuate much, but when looking at individual districts, some of these variables can help explain why the average teacher salary increased or decreased in certain years.

### Table showing intended and actual State average teacher salary increases for fiscal years 2017 through 2021

2017 State average teacher salary: \$48,372

2018 Intended percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 1%

2018 Actual percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 1.2%

2018 Met intended percent increase?: Yes

2018 State average teacher salary: \$48,951

2019 Intended percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 10%

2019 Actual percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 8.4%

2019 Met intended percent increase?: No

2019 State average teacher salary: \$52,441

2020 Intended percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 15%

2020 Actual percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 13.3%

2020 Met intended percent increase?: No

2020 State average teacher salary: \$54,814

2021 Intended percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 20%

2021 Actual percent increase from fiscal year 2017: 16.5%  
2021 Met intended percent increase?: No  
2021 State average teacher salary: \$56,349

### Table showing State other student and teacher measures for fiscal years 2017 through 2021

2017 State students per teacher: 18.5  
2018 State students per teacher: 18.4  
2019 State students per teacher: 18.0  
2020 State students per teacher: 18.0  
2021 State students per teacher: 17.0  
2017 State average years of teacher experience: 11.3  
2018 State average years of teacher experience: 11.4  
2019 State average years of teacher experience: 11.5  
2020 State average years of teacher experience: 11.7  
2021 State average years of teacher experience: 11.9  
2017 State percentage of teachers in first 3 years: 19%  
2018 State percentage of teachers in first 3 years: 19%  
2019 State percentage of teachers in first 3 years: 19%  
2020 State percentage of teachers in first 3 years: 18%  
2021 State percentage of teachers in first 3 years: 17%  
2017 State amount from Prop 301: \$5,840  
2018 State amount from Prop 301: \$6,411  
2019 State amount from Prop 301: \$6,941  
2020 State amount from Prop 301: \$7,255  
2021 State amount from Prop 301: \$7,215