

Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research

Financing Public Education in Delaware 2022
State Level Analysis
District Level Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

The Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR) has been part of the University of Delaware for almost four decades. CADSR's primary mission is 'to ensure that the best possible data and information on important public issues are developed and made available to the UD community, its clients, and, most importantly, to the policy-makers who affect the way we all live and work in Delaware' (About CADSR, n.d.). The following work is presented by CADSR as a study of the State's investment of financial resources in public education.

Education is a vital ingredient in the health of an economy and has direct bearing on the quality of the Delaware workforce. Effective spending on public education may increase the quality of the labor market, enhance the productivity and competitiveness of businesses, and render Delaware attractive to current and emerging industries as well as potential employees. Understanding how the public education system currently uses funding provides an insight on how to turn dollars into productive resources in districts, schools, and classrooms. The purpose of the report is to provide a system-wide review of the public education finance system in Delaware. The report offers details about how public education revenue is raised and spent.

The report begins with a literature review followed by four sections: statewide analysis, district analysis, observations on Delaware public school district education spending in 2019, and special education financing, and an appendix that covers information about congressional COVID funding provided for the United States as a whole and Delaware in particular.

The section on statewide analysis concerns itself with a system overview of how the state raises and spends the education dollars. It provides background material and a broad perspective on public education financing. It also describes Delaware's financial sources and allocation of funds. Where available, data are provided annually from 2000 through 2022. In addition, the statewide analysis uses comparative information to illustrate similarities and differences between Delaware and neighboring states along with national averages.¹

The section on district analysis extends the study and resulting data to the district level. It provides an overview of the Delaware school districts and then discusses expenditure patterns by

¹ The research uses the latest available data from the Delaware Department of Education, U.S. Census, and NCES.

district. After that, administrative costs are covered followed by a discussion of unit allocations. Next come peer comparisons, both regional and national, including a national comparison of administration per pupil spending. This part is followed by a discussion about special education financing nationwide and in the State of Delaware. Finally, a summary of the report is provided.

Understanding the allocation of resources can drive policy choices and highlight accountability of the system. This report serves as an overview of the financial system of public education in Delaware. Where possible, this research utilizes the most recent available data. For Delaware specific data, the primary sources are the Department of Education Reports of Educational Statistics. For interstate comparisons, the Federal Government's Digest of Education Statistics is the main source.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Understanding how the public education system currently uses funding is a first step towards gaining insight on how best to turn dollars into productive resources in districts, schools, and classrooms.

Data

The research involved a large data collection and manipulation effort. Substantial data sets have been constructed during the course of creating this report, which will be maintained and updated when new data become available.

Numerous agents are involved in the process of providing public education in the state. Recognizing that education revenues and expenditures reflect the choices and priorities of each of these agents is important. However, data availability preempts the evaluation of each agent's individual impact. The data compiled by government agencies give greater focus to measuring enrollment and expenditures.

Financial data are published only at the district level by broad revenue and expenditure categories. While these data are useful, they are still several steps removed from the necessary data to answer questions such as how efficiently and productively resources are being used in the provision of public education.

The financial data permit the identification of differing spending patterns among school districts within the state and across the country. Discerning the cause and impact of these differences involves going beyond the routine publications of government agencies. It is hoped that data availability will evolve over time to allow greater transparency in school districts' finances and permit more detailed research into public education finance.

Statewide Findings

The following are some key findings of the state-level research:

- Public education is a more than two-billion-dollar investment in Delaware (United States Census Bureau, 2020a). Public education consumes more than one-third of direct general expenditures per capita, making it the single largest expenditure in the state budget.
- Public education revenue in Delaware is provided by the State (59%), local school districts (33%), and the Federal government (8%). Local district revenue is raised primarily through property taxes (over 95%).
- State funding from the General Fund is allocated based upon formula. Funding levels depend on public school enrollment, and the education and experience of the teaching workforce.
- Salary and benefits are the largest cost of the public education system. Instruction receives the largest share of funding by function within the public education system.
- Despite the diversity of states in the Mid-Atlantic region, the distribution in percentage terms of public education financing is similar. The degree of variation among the Mid-Atlantic states is small. Delaware is in the mainstream in terms of how it spends its education dollars and is not an outlier within the Mid-Atlantic. Delaware ranks in the top ten among all states for per pupil expenditures, reflecting the higher costs of the region versus the nation.
- Local revenue, which is raised primarily through property taxes, is a stable source of revenue and is growing in importance in the public education budget.
- Average teacher salaries in Delaware are lower than in the region (according to the National Education Association (NEA)), but greater than the national average. Beginning salaries in Delaware are lower than in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

District Level Findings

Expenditures

- All districts spend more on net current expenses per pupil than a decade ago. The 2017-2018 current expenditure per pupil was \$16,890.
- Larger districts allocate a smaller proportion of their current expenditures to general administration than do smaller districts. This implies an economy of scale benefit. Therefore, while economies of scale are possible, the significant savings may be difficult to realize.

Charter Schools

The emergence of Charter Schools in Delaware is bringing greater education choice to the state. Given their short history in the state, the full effect of Charter schools has yet to be realized. It is likely that an equilibrium enrollment has not yet been established, making hazardous predictions of their long-term impact on districts and district financing. Growth and stability of Charter schools should be monitored closely in coming years.

Administration

School administrations' share of current expenses varies across districts. School administrators include principals, assistant principals, and office staff. School size is the primary determinant of school administration unit entitlement. Districts that are organized into smaller schools will tend to dedicate a larger share of current expenditures to school administration than districts organized into larger schools.

General administration costs per pupil are rising in many districts in Delaware. These costs include superintendents and their support staff. However, as a share of current expenditures, general administration costs per pupil are falling (this implies that general administrators' share of additional funding is decreasing). School administration costs per pupil are rising in almost every district. School administration costs per pupil as a share of total current expenditures are rising, but not as fast as expenditures on net instruction.

Vocational/Special Education Students

One in every five students in the state is classified as a special education student. There are more vocational units allotted to regular school districts than to the vocational districts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the U.S. Constitution, the responsibility for public K-12 education lies with the states, and states and localities are the primary funding sources of K-12 education (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). Consequently, the share of the federal government in education spending has been relatively small over the years. For example, in the school year 2004-05, it was 8.3%; in 2010 – 8%; in 2012 – 10%; in 2021 – 7.7% (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 1 Chen, 2022; p. 2; Martin et al., 2018, p. 6; Hanson, 2022).

The nation's historic reliance on local control of schools often led to inequities in funding when many affluent districts across the country were funded better by their state and local governments than poorer districts (Martin et al., 2018, p. 2; U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 2). Additionally, heavy reliance on local property taxes to fund education created and still creates 'the great divide in funding' (Raikes & Darling-Hammond, 2019, p. 2). As of 2015, only 12 states allocated more funds to the districts with high rates of student poverty than to the districts where student poverty was low or non-existent, even though by that time most students in all U.S. public schools were from low-income families (Darling-Hammond, 2019, n. p.).

This national-scale problem resulted in school finance litigation as early as in 1968. That year a lawsuit against the Edgewood Independent School District, a high-poverty district outside of San Antonio, Texas, was filed by Demetrio Rodriguez who was unhappy that his four children had to attend schools that were 'dramatically underfunded and marred by dilapidated facilities and weak instruction' (Martin et al., 2018, p. 1). In 1973, the case was considered by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled, however, that *since there was no fundamental right to education under the U.S. Constitution*, there was no violation of any protected rights on the part of Texas' school finance system (Ibid., p. 2; emphasis added).

Most of the federal funding allocated for public education goes directly to local schools. The money is used for special services and programs intended for the most-at-risk students, such as students from low-income families, students with disabilities, and English language learners. These grants can also be used for school library resources and textbooks, supplemental education services, education research, and professional development for teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). Some of the programs funded by the federal government include Title I,

English Language Acquisition, Reading First, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Improving Teacher Quality Grants (Chen, 2022, p. 3). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I, Part A, which allocates funds for education of children from low-income families, is one of the largest federal programs of aid to public K-12 education (Skinner, 2019, p. 8).

In the 2004-05 school year, total investment in K-12 education in the U.S. was estimated to be \$536 billion, with the federal government providing \$37.6 billion in FY 2006 (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, pp. 1, 4). By the 2015-16 school year, the revenue devoted to elementary and secondary education totaled \$678.4 billion with the federal government's share equaling \$56 billion (Skinner, 2019, pp. 1-2). Since the federal government provides no more than 10% of funds for public elementary and secondary education annually, the rest is the responsibility of state and local governments. As for the state revenues for public K-12 education, the U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2016 that almost 48% of taxes were derived from sales taxes, slightly over 42% – from individual and corporate income taxes, and the remainder came from various other taxes. The primary source of local funding in most states is the property tax. In 2016, the data of the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that 72% of all local government revenues had been raised from property taxes (Skinner, 2019, pp. 4-5).

There are many factors that impact public education spending. They include demographics, costs of living, teacher pay and benefits, and others. Therefore, a wide variation in per-pupil spending exists among states. Some states may receive up to three times more money per pupil than other states (Maciag, 2019, pp. 1-2). According to Raikes and Darling-Hammond (2019), in most states children from low-income areas attend schools that have the least resources (p. 2). The amount of average per pupil spending can be as low as \$5,700 and as high as \$17,000 (Martin et al., 2018, p. 4). Although it varies by state, instruction, including teacher wages and benefits, comprises the majority of K-12 spending (Maciag, 2019, pp. 2-8).

Recently the concept of an 'adequate' educational program began to be used to define the necessary level of funding per pupil (Skinner, 2019, p. 6). The new concept lays emphasis on the quality of education. It attempts to define the amount of funding 'sufficient to teach all children to ambitious standards, laws, and requirements' (Verstegen, 2014, p. 4). It is, however, difficult for states to estimate correctly how much educating a student really costs. To an extent, every

methodology used for the purpose is flawed, and disagreement exists on how to define ‘adequate’ education (Chen, 2022, p. 4).

States collect and allot funding for schools according to different formulae (Chen, 2022, p. 3). There are five types of programs through which state funds are channeled into Local Education Agencies (LEAs): foundation programs, full state funding programs, flat grants, district power equalizing, and categorical grants. Following is a short description of each of the programs:

- Foundation Programs guarantee a ‘base’ level of funding rather than fiscal equality among the LEAs in a certain state. The state establishes what an annual target level of funding per pupil is going to be, which might be impacted by various considerations, including budgetary. The pupil count is either undifferentiated or weighted. Programs typically include required local tax effort, state equalization aid, and local leeway funds.
- A Full State Funding Program exists only in Hawaii. It means that it uses virtually no local funding resources.
- Flat Grants provide equal amount of money per pupil in all LEAs in a state. They do not take into consideration the level of taxable property wealth in localities or pupil characteristics. In most cases, they are not used as the primary form of state funding for public K-12 education anymore. In some states, they supplement Foundation Programs or other programs.
- District Power Equalizing program defines a minimum level of revenue that may be raised for each unit of local tax rate. The program attempts to equalize the ability of different state LEAs to raise revenues from their taxable property. Currently, not many states use this type of program as their primary source of funding, although some utilize it as part of their finance system together with other programs.
- Categorical Grants fund students with specific needs, including students with disabilities, English language learners, low-income students, and the like. Their amount depends on the number of students with such needs or on the number of students in particular programs, such as career and technical programs, etc. (Skinner, 2019, pp. 6-8).

According to Hanson (2022), public education spending in the U.S. is not on par with the world patterns and fails to catch up with the country's economic growth. In addition, even though the U.S. may invest in education more than some other countries, it has been unable to achieve the same levels of student performance as other nations that invest far less in their public education (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). Below are some recent education spending statistics highlighting public education spending in the United States:

- K-12 schools spend \$666.9 billion, or \$13,185 per pupil, annually.
- Federal, state, and local governments spend \$764.7 billion, or \$15,120 per pupil, to fund K-12 public education.
- The federal government provides 7.9% of funding for public K-12 education.
- The national gross domestic product (GDP) grows 71.6% faster than public education spending (Hanson, 2022).

SECTION ONE

STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

Summary of Public Education Financing in the State of Delaware

Following is a description of Delaware public elementary and secondary finance policies and programs in effect during the 2017-2018 school year. The description was presented in the ‘A 50-State Survey of School Finance Policies and Programs (2018)’ report (Verstegen, 2018).

Delaware Formula

State support is provided in five (5) major components:

Division I, salary and other employment costs are allocated in accordance with state formula which is driven by the student-based unit system.

Division II, All Other Costs (AOC) are allocated on a student-based unit system using a flat statewide rate per unit earned. AOC funds may be used for all operational costs other than personnel costs, transportation, or debt service.

Division II, AOC – Vocational Education is allocated on the students that are participating in vocational classes.

Division II, Energy is allocated on a student-based unit system using a flat statewide rate per unit earned. Energy funds may be used for heating oil, gas, or electricity.

Division III, Equalization funds are allocated inversely on the basis of school district wealth (full value of real estate per unit of pupils) and are distributed on a per unit basis.

Capital Outlay and/or Debt Service

The state pays between 60% and 80% of approved major capital projects (projects exceeding \$750,000); 100% for special schools and vocational schools. Bond issue must be approved by referendum of the local district. Bonded indebtedness is limited to 10% of the assessed valuation of the district.

Transportation

Transportation for eligible public-school students is funded through a legislatively-directed transportation formula to provide funds to the districts for district- or contractor-provided school transportation. For the districts the State pays for 90% of these costs and the districts pay for approximately 10% of the costs. Transportation benefits are provided for pupils in grades K-6 whose legal residences are one (1) mile or more from the schools to which they would normally be assigned and for pupils in grades 7-12 whose legal residences are two (2) miles or more from the schools to which they would normally be assigned. Public charter schools are provided transportation funding for eligible students based on 70% of the average cost per student of transportation within the vocational district in which the charter school is located.

Density/Sparsity of Small Schools/Districts

Does not apply.

Special Education

Funding is provided through instructional units. The State uses a needs-based funding system for special education students. Funding is based on three categories: basic, intensive, and complex with unit sizes of 8.4, 6.0, and 2.6 students per unit.

Compensatory Education/Low Income; English Language Learner/LEP/Bilingual Education; Gifted and Talented Education

Academic Excellence instruction units are provided on the basis of one unit per 250 pupils enrolled and funds are provided for use by the districts to address areas of need.

Career and Technical Education

AOC-Vocational Education costs are allowed based on the number of minutes students are in vocational education classes.

Preschool Education

Preschool education is provided for special needs students for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Below are some highlights of public education spending in the State of Delaware last updated on June 15, 2022 (Hanson, 2022).

Public education funding per pupil:

total funding – \$16,522

federal funding – \$1,376

state funding – \$10,250

local funding –\$4,896

- Delaware spends more per pupil than the national average. The state ranks 14th in spending and 16th in funding.
- Delaware K-12 schools spend \$15,931 per pupil annually.
- Expenditures are equivalent to 4.12% of Delaware's taxpayer income.
- Delaware schools receive \$190.4 million, or \$1,376 per pupil, from the federal government.
- State funding totals \$10,250 per pupil.
- Local funding totals \$4,896 per pupil.
- State and local funding is equivalent to 3.92% of Delaware's taxpayer income.
- Federal education funding is equivalent to 0.36% of the state's taxpayer income.
- Funding for Delaware education totals \$2.3 billion or \$16,522 per pupil.
- The difference between spending and funding is \$82 million, or \$591 per pupil.

Public education in Delaware is now a two-billion-dollar investment. During the 2018-2019 school year public school current expenditures totaled over \$2,208 billion, and 140,799 students were enrolled in state public schools. The average annual growth of these expenses over the past 18 years is 4.8%. In per pupil terms, current expenses increased from \$8,811 in 2000-2001 to \$15,682 in 2018-2019. This equates to 3.6% average annual growth (see Table 1.0 below).

Table 1.0
Summary of current expenses* on public education in Delaware

	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	2007 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019
Current Expenses	1009	1052	1089	1160	1251	1356	1392	1447	1474	1507	1573	1718	1774	1827	1889	1953	2040	2087	2208
% Growth^	9.9%	4.3%	3.5%	6.5%	7.8%	8.4%	2.7%	4.0%	1.9%	2.2%	4.4%	9.2%	3.3%	3.0%	3.4%	3.4%	4.5%	2.3%	5.8%
Enrollment (FTE)	114518	114877	116287	117776	119109	120963	122277	124046	125430	126805	128503	130620	131526	133369	136675	137623	138800	139992	140799
% Growth^	0.8%	0.3%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	1.6%	1.1%	1.5%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%	1.7%	0.7%	1.4%	2.5%	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	0.6%
Per Pupil Current Expenses	8811	9155	9368	9848	10500	11212	11392	11665	11754	11888	12243	13155	13489	13702	13824	14189	14695	14907	15682
% Growth^	9.1%	3.9%	2.3%	5.1%	6.6%	6.8%	1.6%	2.4%	0.8%	1.1%	3.0%	7.5%	2.5%	1.6%	0.9%	2.6%	3.6%	1.4%	5.2%

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports, Table 46 for school years from 2000-2001 to 2003-2004, and Table 48 for school years from 2004-2005 to 2018-2019.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Financial-Educational-Statistics-Reports)

Notes:

*Current expenses are given in millions USD, while current expenses per pupil are in thousands USD. All sources of revenue. Current Expenses exclude State Board of Education. Enrollment is not ADA (average daily attendance) or ADM (average daily membership).

^Here and elsewhere in the report percentages are rounded for the sake of succinctness.

Increases in educational spending have not produced equivalent increases in educational attainment. In Delaware, as in the nation, average student achievement has not improved significantly (see Table 2.0). Given the apparent disconnect between spending and standards, there is a need to spend wisely. That is, to raise funds and allocate them in a manner that promotes the greatest efficiency.

Table 2.0
Delaware National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Achievement Levels

4th Grade NAEP				8th Grade NAEP			
At or Above Proficient				At or Above Proficient			
Math	2017	DE (public)	36%	Math	2017	DE (public)	28%
		Nation (public)	40%			Nation (public)	33%
Reading	2017	DE (public)	36%	Reading	2017	DE (public)	33%
		Nation (public)	35%			Nation (public)	35%
Science	2009	DE (public)	34%	Science	2011	DE (public)	28%
		Nation (public)	33%		2009	Nation (public)	29%
Writing	2002	DE (public)	32%	Writing	2007	DE (public)	32%
		Nation (public)	25%			Nation (public)	29%

Source: Delaware Department of Education Delaware Report Card.

Retrieved from [PrintStateProfiles-Web \(doe.k12.de.us\)](http://doe.k12.de.us/PrintStateProfiles-Web)

Three sources fund public education: federal, state, and local government. These sources finance a variety of operations relating to the provision of public education including wages, benefits, materials, transportation, energy, and capital projects. The sources and allocation of funds will be analyzed in detail below.

The three primary expenditure types include current, facility/construction and debt service, and community service and adult non-public education. In Delaware, in the 2018-2019 school year, current expenses accounted for 88% of total expenses, facilities/construction for 6.6%, debt

service for approximately 2.7%, adult non-public education 2%, and community service for 0.08% making up the balance.

Federal education grants are available to states via a variety of programs such as Title I, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and English Language Acquisition among others. These funds typically go directly to local schools and are intended for the most-at-risk students. Besides the mentioned purposes, the money can also be used to purchase textbook and library resources, as well as for research and teachers' professional development. Within specific programs, the states have some discretion in using Federal funds, as long as the money is used within the scope of the grant's purpose.

State funding for the operating budget for public education comes from the general fund. The general fund receives money from a multitude of sources, the largest of which are personal income tax, and corporation taxes. Funds are allocated to local school districts via divisions based on enrollment. Each division's funding is designated for particular expenditures: Division I is for the purpose of paying employees of the school districts, Division II is for the purpose of paying other non-salary costs, and Division III is for the purpose of equalizing revenue upon tax efforts of the school districts. Transportation and debt service are the other primary current expenses. Local funding is raised primarily via property taxes. As described later, property taxes are a solid source of finance.

Figure 1.0
Organization of the State Education Budget for Current Expenditure

State Education Budget							
Division I		Division II		Division III	Transportation	Debt Service	
Salaries	Other Costs	Energy	Other	Equalization		Principal	Interest

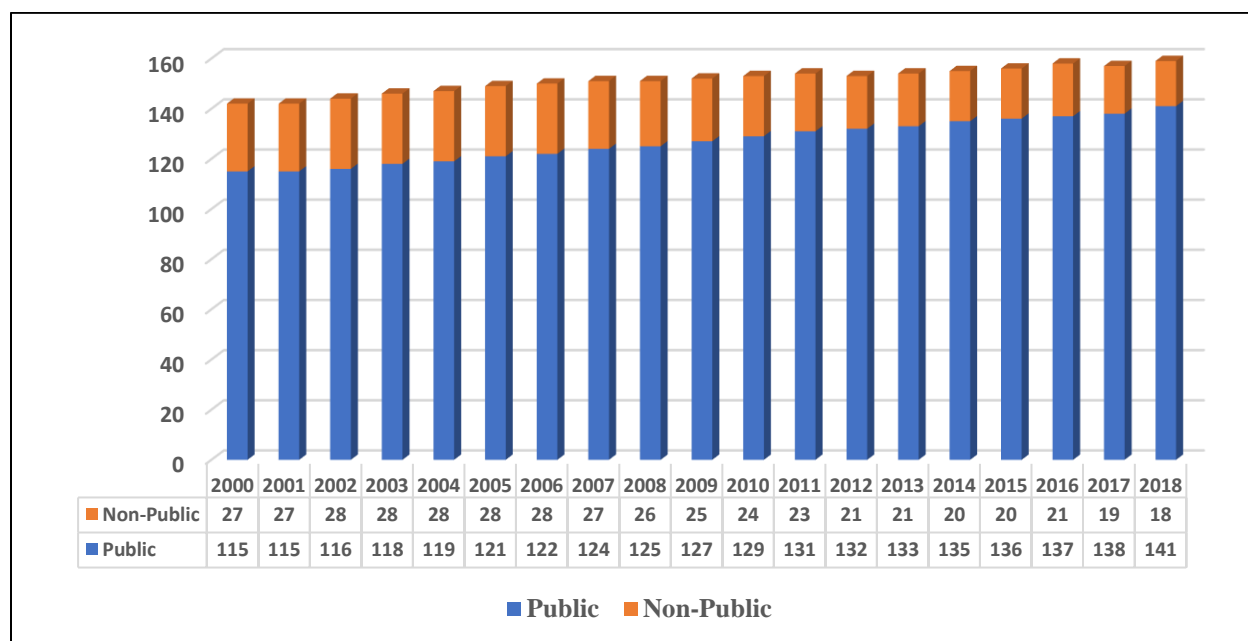
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware.

State funds are the largest contributor to public education. Allocation of these funds occurs from formula, which guarantees a minimum level of funding for public education. The following part discusses the funding mechanism in greater detail. However, it is important to note that,

generally speaking, education funding is tied to enrollment levels: the greater the enrollment, the more allocated funding. Since enrollment is a function of the size of the school age population, demographics play a key role in determining the amount of education expenditures. Below is a brief overview of Delaware’s demographics.

Delaware’s population continues to grow. Between 2000 and 2020, the population increased approximately 26%: from 783,600 to 989,948 (United States Census Bureau, 2020b; State Population Totals: 2020-2021, n.d.). In 2020, Delaware ranked 13th among U.S. states with respect to the percentage change in population, which equaled 10.2% since 2010 (AP News, 2021; United States Census Bureau, 2020c). Between the schoolyears 2000-2001 and 2018-2019, the Delaware population attending K-12 grades in public schools went up almost 23%, from 114,514 to 140,799. The historical trend of school enrolment is shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1
Delaware Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment by School Type, in thousands

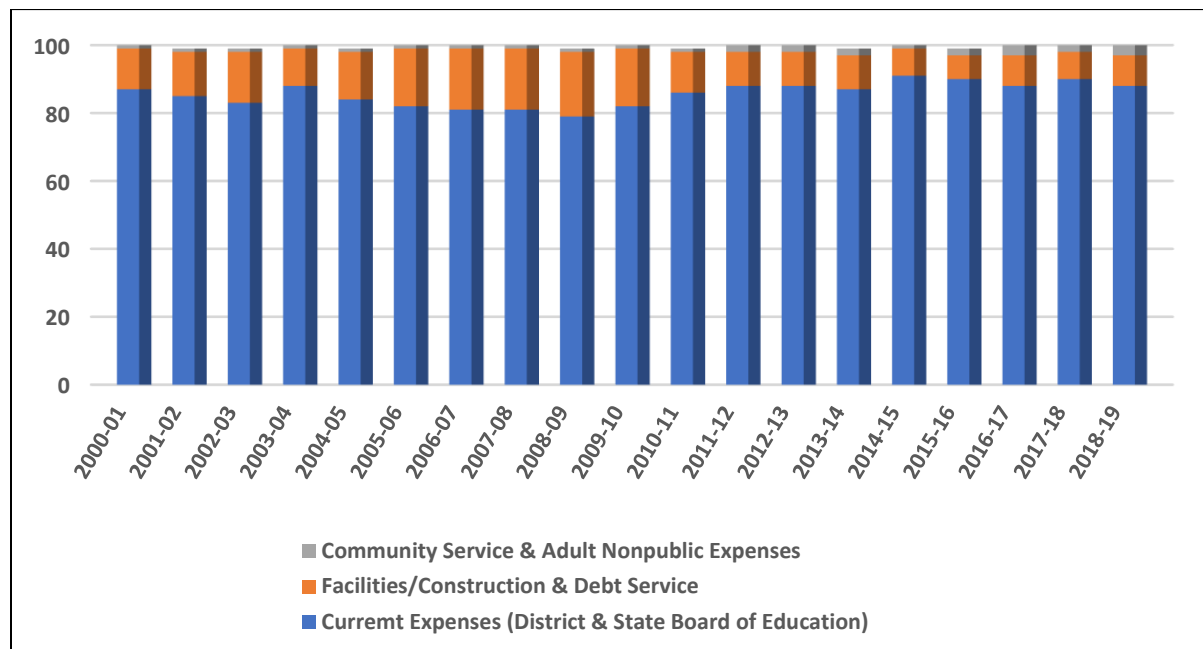


Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports, school years from 2000-2001 to 2018-2019.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Financial-Educational-Statistics-Reports)

State and local districts also fund capital projects or facilities/construction and debt service, as well as community service and adult nonpublic expenses. The state pays between 60% and 80% of approved major capital projects (projects exceeding \$750,000); 100% for special schools and vocational schools. Bond issue must be approved by referendum of the local district. Bonded indebtedness is limited to 10% of the assessed valuation of the district (Verstegen, 2018, pp. 46-49). During the 2008-2009 school year, capital expenditures accounted for 19% of total expenditures, but began to decrease after that and comprised only 9% for the 2018-2019 school year (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2
Share of Total Expenditures by Allocation: 2000-2001 to 2018-2019



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports, school years from 2000-2001 to 2018-2019.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Financial-Educational-Statistics-Reports)

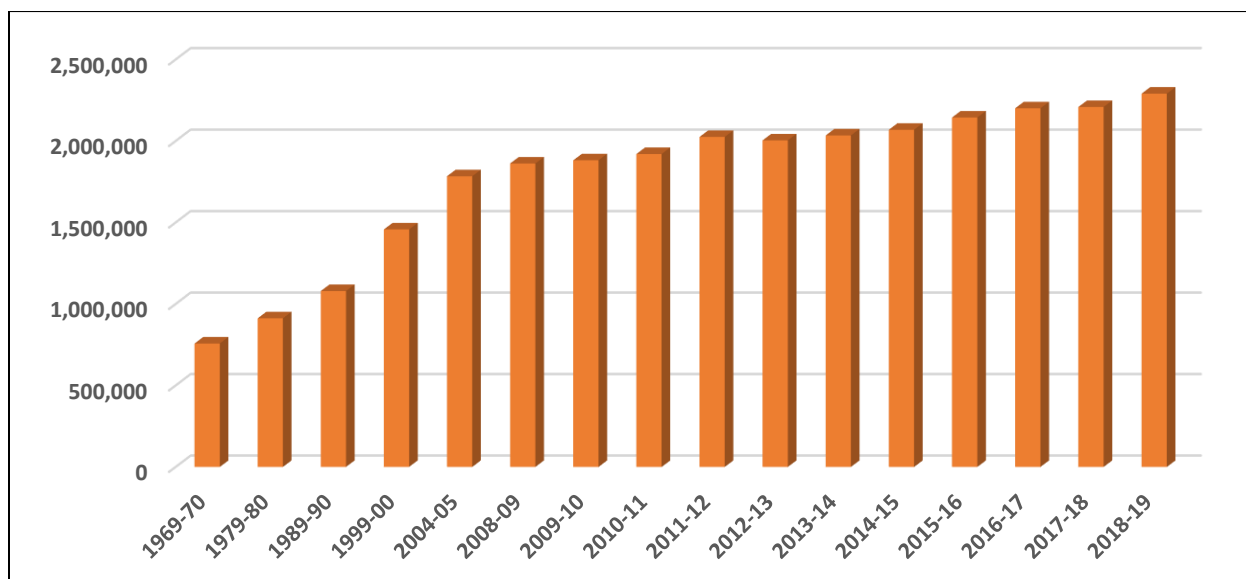
As Figure 1.2 demonstrates, expenditures for current expenses are the largest category of spending. Therefore, current spending will be the primary focus of this report.

Delaware Financing

Delaware's financing of public education has steadily increased over the past several decades, as shown in Figure 2.0 below. In the last decade alone, current expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools grew 1.2 times to more than \$2 billion.

Figure 2.0

Current Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Delaware



Source: Digest of Education Statistics 2020; Table 236.25

Amount in thousands of constant 2020-2021 dollars. Constant dollars based on the Consumer Price Index, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, adjusted to a school-year basis.

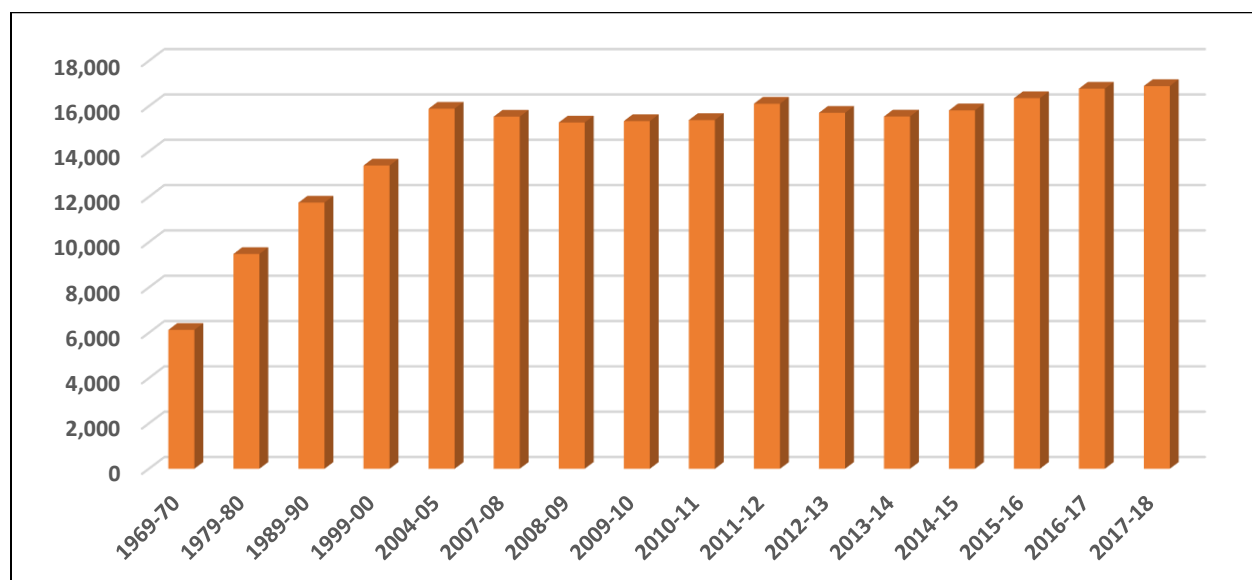
Retrieved from: [Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1969-70 through 2018-19](#)

Since expenditures rise naturally with enrollment, it is useful to report spending on a per pupil basis. In this way the size of the student population is held constant. Per pupil spending increased 176% from \$6,129 in the 1969-1970 school year to \$16,890 in the 2017-2018 school year (see Figure 2.1).

As with most goods and services, education costs rise over time due to inflation. To remove the effect of inflation from the per pupil statistics, expenditures are reported in constant 2019-2020

dollars, which reveals a relatively modest increase and some fluctuation in the rate of increase in per pupil expenditures.

Figure 2.1
Current Expenditures per Pupil in Average Daily Attendance in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Delaware

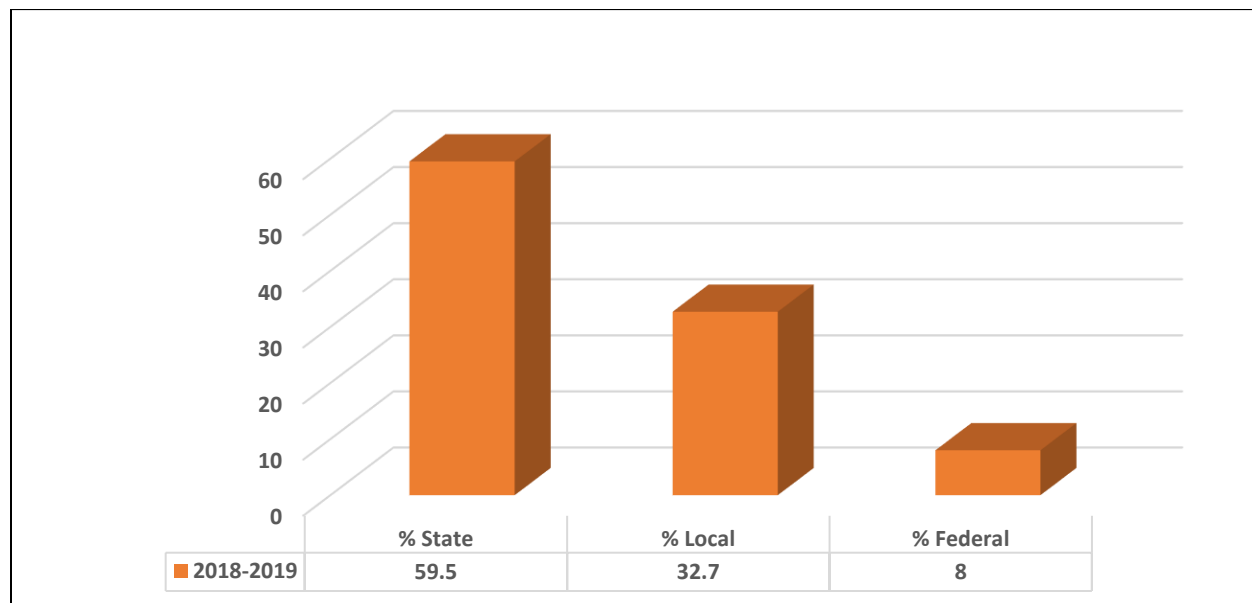


Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2020; Table 236.70; in constant 2019-2020 dollars.

Retrieved from: [Current expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1969-70 through 2017-18](#)

As stated earlier, three distinct sources fund Delaware public education: Federal, State, and local. These sources vary in the size of their contributions, as well as their means of generating revenue. The relative contribution size is shown in Figure 2.2. Clearly, the State is the largest contributor of funds to public education at 59.5% followed by the local funds at 32.7% and rounded out by Federal funds at 8%. Despite the wide variations in the amounts contributed, the public education system depends on each funding source. Each state receives approximately the same amount of funding from the Federal government while states and local shares differ from state to state reflecting each state's organization.

Figure 2.2
Sources of Educational Revenue in Delaware 2018-2019



Data source: Delaware Department of Education, Report of Educational Statistics, Figure 54.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Report of Educational Statistics 2018-2019 \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Report-of-Educational-Statistics-2018-2019)

Delaware's public education system is organized as follows: Delaware operates a combination flat grant and tax-base equalizing program. Under a flat grant, the State sets a minimum level of funding and fully pays that amount through the General Fund. Local school districts may supplement the funding if they choose. Funds are appropriated as per capita grants determined by the number of students, and the education and experience of teachers. The latter factors bring variability to the funding mechanism. These allocations are classified under Delaware's Division I and Division II funding.

The State also operates a tax-base equalizing program, called Division III funding. The State's role is to equalize school districts' abilities to raise necessary funds. Funds are redistributed from affluent districts to less affluent ones in order to provide a more equitable distribution. Other states operate different systems, which will be discussed in the next section.

Following is a description of Delaware public elementary and secondary finance policies and programs in effect during the 2017-2018 school year. The description was presented in the 'A

50-State Survey of School Finance Policies and Programs (2018)' report (Verstegen, 2018, pp. 46-49).

Delaware Formula

State support is provided in five (5) major components:

Division I, salary and other employment costs are allocated in accordance with state formula which is driven by the student-based unit system.

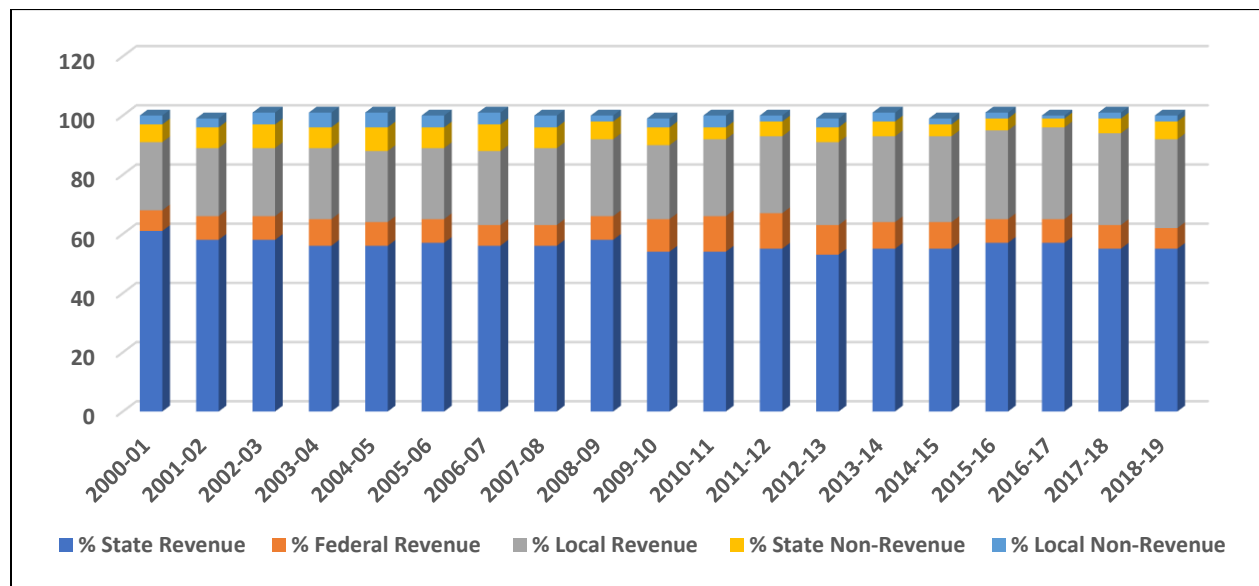
Division II, All Other Costs (AOC) are allocated on a student-based unit system using a flat statewide rate per unit earned. AOC funds may be used for all operational costs other than personnel costs, transportation, or debt service.

Division II, AOC – Vocational Education is allocated on the students that are participating in vocational classes.

Division II, Energy is allocated on a student-based unit system using a flat statewide rate per unit earned. Energy funds may be used for heating oil, gas, or electricity.

Division III, Equalization funds are allocated inversely on the basis of school district wealth (full value of real estate per unit of pupils) and are distributed on a per unit basis. *(This formula has been frozen since Fiscal Year 2009.)*

Figure 2.3
Sources of Educational Revenue in Delaware as Share of Total 2018-2019



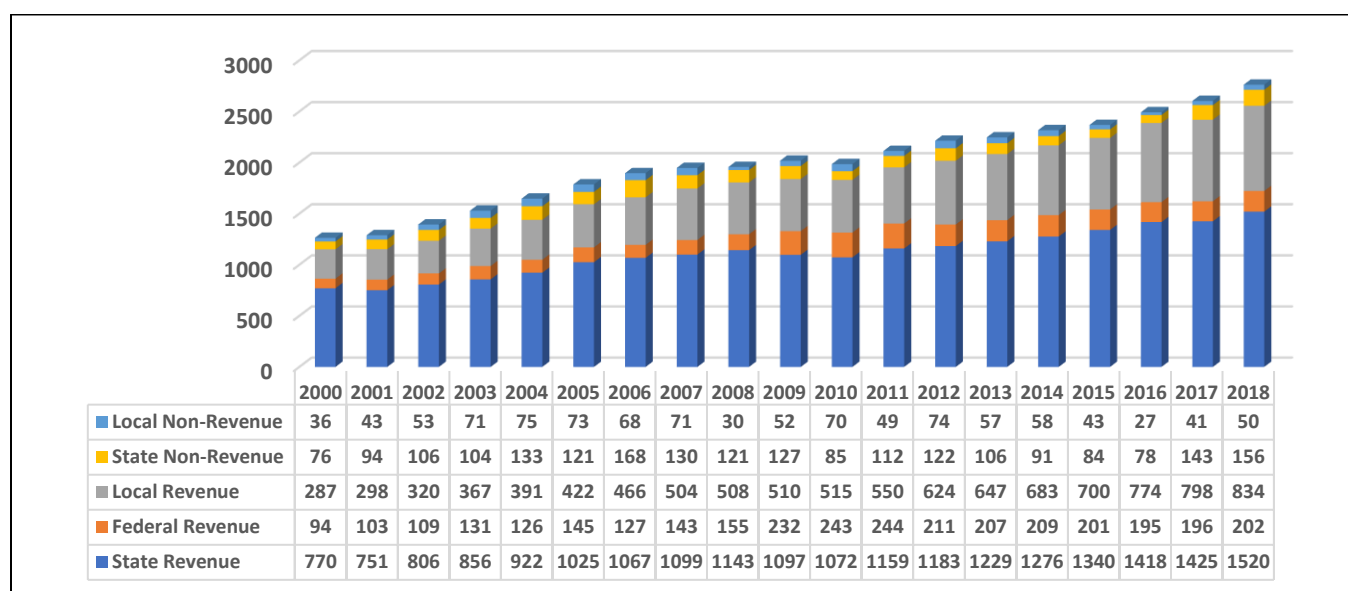
Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports, Table 28 for school years from 2000-2001 to 2003-2004, and Table 30 for school years from 2004-2005 to 2018-2019.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Figure 2.3 illustrates the relative shares of revenue sources. Revenue receipts received allow additions to assets without increasing school indebtedness, reducing school property value, or depleting school property. Money from taxes and tuition are examples of revenue receipts. Non-revenue receipts are receipts that accrue to the district as the result of incurring an obligation that must be met at a future date or reducing the value of school properties through the exchange of a property asset into a cash asset. Money obtained from the sale of bonds or school property would be classified as a non-revenue receipt.

There has been some fluctuation in the relative size of these sources over the past decade. The State revenue was about 61% in 2000 and in 2018 that number is approximately 55%. State non-revenue was about 6% in 2000 as well as in 2018. The associated dollar contribution increased in all areas (see figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4
Sources of Educational Revenue in Delaware: 2000-2018



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports, Table 28 for school years from 2000-2001 to 2003-2004, and Table 30 for school years from 2004-2005 to 2018-2019.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Financial-Educational-Statistics-Reports)

Total spending on public education grew approximately 120% since 2000. State contributions almost doubled over this period, growing from \$846 million to over \$1.6 billion. In general, public education in Delaware is now a close to three billion dollar per year expenditure.

A discussion of each of these sources follows. Attention will be focused on the state and local sources, since they fall under the direct control of the Delaware's Stakeholders. Included are excerpt tables from the Census Bureau's Statistical Tables of Public Education Elementary-Secondary Education Finances 2020. Variation in the data between the Census Bureau and the

Department of Education may exist due to reporting differences. Nevertheless, the Census Bureau data provides valuable insight into the State's education finance.

Table 3.0 provides an overview of the primary revenue streams and expenditures in Delaware. As stated earlier, the State is the largest source of public education revenue. Non-debt expenditures may be categorized into current spending, capital outlay, and others. In the tables that follow, these overview numbers are disaggregated to highlight the principal revenues and expenditures within each category.

Table 3.0

Summary of Public School System Finances for Elementary-Secondary Education (thousands of dollars)

Revenue				Expenditure				Debt outstanding at end of FY	Cash and Securities Holdings
Total	From Federal Sources	From State Sources	From Local Sources	Total	Current Spending	Capital Outlay	Other	758,537	31,100
2,475,301	149,476	1,555,571	770,254	2,305,582	2,137,101	151,230	17,251		

Source: Census Bureau Statistical Tables of Public Education Elementary-Secondary Education Finances, Fiscal Year 2020: Table 1. Thousands of dollars. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

Definitions, FY 2020:

Capital Outlay: Direct expenditure for construction of buildings, roads, and other improvements undertaken either on a contractual basis by private contractors or through a government's own staff (i.e., force account); for purchases of equipment, land, and existing structures; and for payments on capital leases. Includes amounts for additions, replacements, and major alterations to fixed works and structures. However, expenditure for maintenance and repairs to such works and structures is classified as current spending.

Cash and Security Holdings: Cash, deposits, and government and private securities (bonds, notes, stocks, mortgages, etc.) except holdings of agency and private trust funds. Does not include interfund loans, receivables, and the value of real property and other fixed assets.

Current Spending: Comprises current operation expenditure (as defined above), payments made by the state government on behalf of school systems, and transfers made by school systems into their own retirement funds. This classification is used only in Census Bureau education reports in an effort to provide statistics for users who wish to make interstate comparisons. It is not used in other government finance reports to avoid double counting expenditure between levels of government and funds. While expenditure made by the state government on behalf of the school systems is available on a state aggregate basis, it is frequently not available for each school system in given states. Therefore, these payments are included under current spending in the tables which display state totals and are often estimated for the local school systems to be included in the tables which display individual school units. Appendix B identifies this anomaly on a state-by-state basis.

Debt Outstanding at the End of Fiscal Year: All debt obligations remaining unpaid at the end of the fiscal year.

Fiscal Year: The 12-month period at the end of which the school district determines its financial condition and the results of its operations and closes its books.

Federal Funds

Delaware received approximately \$147 million from the Federal government for the fiscal year 2019. Allocations of funds are through a number of Federal programs² and are earmarked for specific purposes. The Department of Education provides detailed explanations of these programs³. School districts receive a degree of discretion in the spending of these funds, contingent upon their use within the scope of the Federal program's design. Federal revenue is either distributed through the state or paid directly. The size of the Federal revenue by function is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Revenue from Federal Sources (thousands of dollars)

	Distributed through State						Direct Federal Aid	
Total	Total	Compensatory (Title I)	Special Education	Child Nutrition	Vocational Programs	Other and Non-specified	Total	Impact Aid Only
149,476	139,674	44,286	29,067	45,006	3,461	17,854	9,802	0

Source: Census Bureau Statistical Tables of Public Education Elementary-Secondary Education Finances, Fiscal Year 2020: Table 2. Thousand dollars. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

Definitions, FY 2020:

Federal Aid Distributed by State Governments: Aid from formula grants distributed through state government agencies. Includes revenue from such programs as:

Child Nutrition Programs. Revenues from school meal and child nutrition programs authorized under the Child Nutrition Act. Includes federal reimbursement revenues provided under the National School Lunch Act, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, a la carte sales, etc. Excludes the value of donated commodities.

Compensatory (Title I) Programs. Revenue authorized by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Includes basic, concentration, targeted, and

² IASA Title I, IASA Title VI, IDEA-B Pre-School, IASA Migrant, Public Law 874, IASA Title II, Math/Science Act, Vocational Education, Adult Basic Education, Drug Free Schools, Other.

³ U.S. Department of Education website: [Home | U.S. Department of Education](https://www.ed.gov/)

Financing Public Education in Delaware

education finance incentive grants. Also includes grants for the education of migratory children, and grants for prevention and intervention programs for neglected, delinquent, or at-risk children.

Special Education Programs. Revenue awarded under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Includes formula grants authorized in Part B, sections 611 and 619 of this legislation, but excludes project grants authorized in Part C and Part D. Revenue from Part C is included in Other Federal Aid Distributed by the State. Revenue from Part D is included in Federal Aid – Direct.

Vocational Programs. Revenue for career and technical education programs. Includes formula grants authorized by section 131 of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Career and Technical Education Act. Also includes revenue from Title II (Basic Grants) and Title III-E (Tech-Prep Education).

Other Federal Aid Distributed by the State. Includes revenue from other formula grant programs distributed through state governments, such as Supporting Effective Instruction grants authorized by Title II-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants authorized by Title IV-A, Subpart 1, Section 4105 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 21st Century Community Learning Center programs authorized by Title IV-B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Rural and Low-Income School Program grants authorized by Title V-B, Subpart 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, English Language Acquisition State Grants authorized by Title III-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Non-specified Federal Aid Distributed by the State. Federal revenue amounts that pertain to more than one of the above categories, but which reporting units could not provide distinct amounts into these categories. This revenue is included in “non-specified” instead of “other.”

Federal Aid – Direct. Aid from project grants for programs such as Impact Aid, Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education, the Small, Rural School Achievement Program, Head Start, Follow Through, Magnet Schools, Dropout Demonstration Assistance, and Gifted and Talented.

Impact Aid. Revenue provided under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to assist in the construction and operation of schools in areas affected by federal activities.

State Funds

The General Fund finances the State’s public education spending. The General Fund’s sources include, but are not limited to, personal income tax, corporation taxes, gross receipts tax, and franchise taxes.

Using the General Fund to finance public education suggests that public education competes for dollars with other public services. However, the State employs a funding formula, which ensures a minimum level of provision to public schools, see Table 3.2 below. Furthermore, local school districts may supplement state funds with their own funds.

Table 3.2
Revenue from State Sources (thousands of dollars)

Total	General Formula Assistance	Compensatory Programs	Special Education	Vocational Programs	Transportation Programs	Other and Non- specified State Aid	State Payments on Behalf of LEA
1,555,571	1,184,000	34,677	15,817	1,698	92,406	226,973	0

Source: Census Bureau Statistical Tables of Public Education Elementary-Secondary Education Finances, Fiscal Year 2020: Table 3. Thousand dollars. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

The funding formula operates by converting enrollment to units. The pupil to unit ratio differs by grade and type of students. Elementary school pupils typically require small class sizes for effective learning, so the pupil to teacher ratio is low relative secondary school pupils, for whom larger class sizes are the norm. Special education pupils do require still smaller class sizes, which leads to small pupil to teacher ratios. For example, 20 secondary students equate to one unit, whereas 17.4 elementary students equate to one unit, and 4 to 15 special education students equate to one unit (depending on the requirements of the special education students). The State compensates school districts on a per unit basis. This compensation is split into divisions for classification purposes, which are defined below:

Division I Unit – State appropriations allocated to a school district on a unit enrolment formula designated for the purpose of paying the employees of the various school districts of the

state in accordance with the state supported salary schedules. The dollar amount paid per teacher varies with their education and expertise.

Division II Unit – State appropriations allocated to a school district on a unit enrollment formula designated for all non-salary costs, such as energy, except those for debt service and the transportation of pupils.

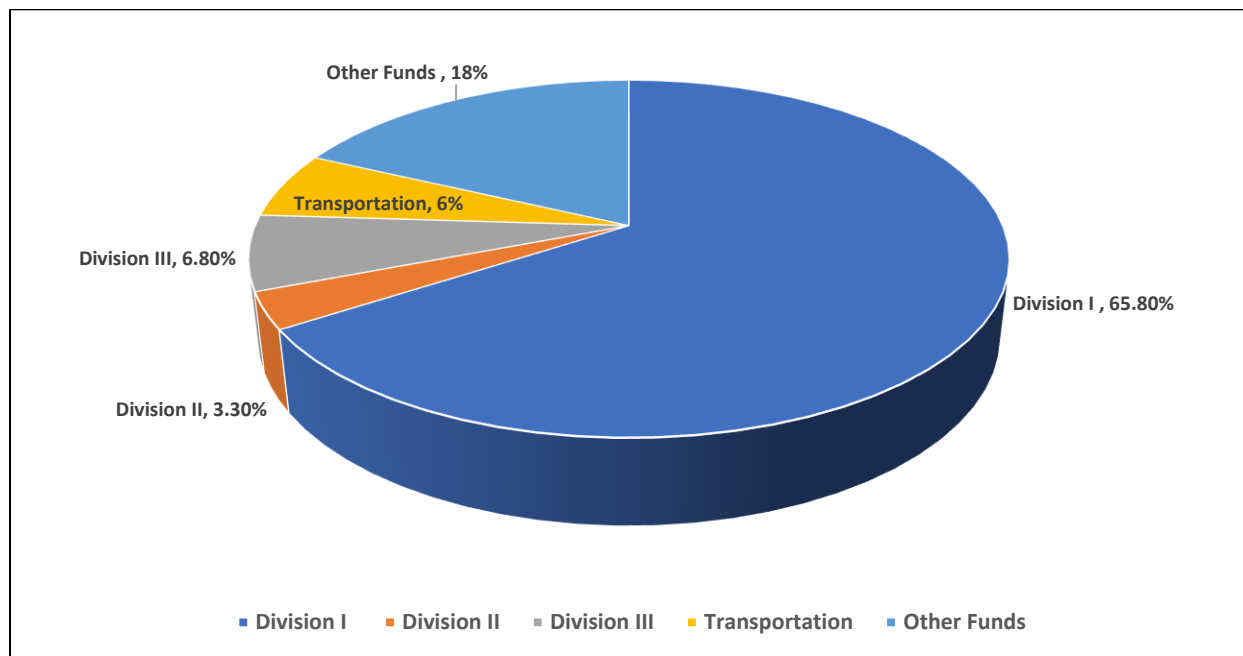
Division III Unit – State appropriations allocated to a school district based on a tax effort formula, utilized to equalize revenue receipts among school districts.

Broadly speaking, therefore, the student class size drive Division I funding. The other determinants of Division I funds are contingent on the teachers hired. Funds are released based upon teacher experience (years of service), and education. The salary reimbursement occurs in the following manner: Each school district may hire a teacher for each enrollment unit, and then charge the state for that teacher's salary based on the approved state salary schedule. The amount a district may charge is a function of that teacher's experience and education. Local school districts may supplement the state supported salary with their own funds. Indeed, districts often supplement the state funding by as much as 40%.

Linking teachers' salaries to their length of service and education can lead to "wage creep" in the expenses: as the age of the teaching staff increases, so does experience, leading to higher wages for the existing staff. In general, the average age of teachers increases over time, as does their level of education. These factors cause larger wage bills.

Division I, which is salaries and other costs, is the largest state appropriation. This is to be expected given the labor-intensive nature of education. Division III equalization is the second largest category, albeit far smaller than Division I. Energy and other costs, which fall under Division II financing receive 3.3% of the budget.

Figure 2.5
State Appropriations 2018-2019
Total All Districts/States



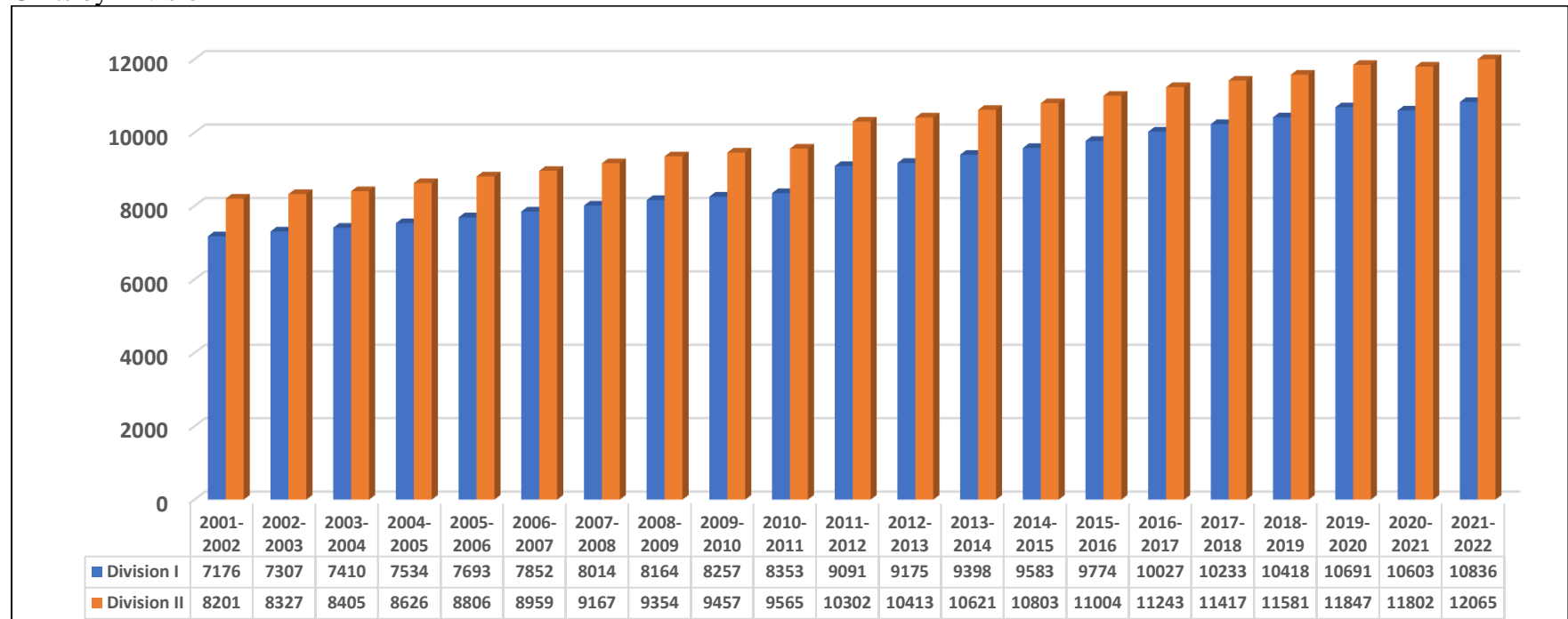
Data source: Delaware Department of Education, Report of Educational Statistics, Figure 55.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Report of Educational Statistics 2018-2019 \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/ReportofEducationalStatistics2018-2019)

Division units mirror population and enrollment trends. The recent trend in Division I and II units is presented in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6
Delaware Funding Units by Division
2001/2002 – 2021/2022

Units by Division



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Students Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports.

Retrieved from [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

Division III State funding seeks to equalize the revenue receipts for school districts. The assessment-to-sales ratio is a critical variable in the formula that allocates Division III funds to school districts in Delaware. Table 3.3 illustrates the growing importance of these funds to State's school districts. Division III funds rose from almost \$54 million in the 1999-2000 school year to \$101 million in the 2020-2021 school year. Division III as a percentage of total state educational appropriations decreased from 8.1% to 6.1% by the 2020-2021 school year.⁴

⁴ For a discussion of Division III funding, see the 1999 Assessment-to-Sales Ratio Study for Division III Equalizing Funding: [Assessment-To-Sales Ratio Study for Division III Equalizing Funding: 1999 Project Summary prepared for the State of Delaware, Office of the Budget \(udel.edu\)](#) and the 2001 Assessment-to-Sales Ratio Study for Division III Equalizing Funding: [Microsoft Word - ASSSAL01.doc \(udel.edu\)](#).

Table 3.3
Division III and Total State Educational Budget (in millions of dollars, unadjusted)

Fiscal Year	Division III Budget	Total State DOE Budget	Percent of Total DOE Budget
1999-2000	53.8	666.7	8.1%
2000-2001	56	720.2	7.8%
2001-2002	58.9	773.5	7.6%
2002-2003	61.4	795	7.7%
2003-2004	63	816.6	7.7%
2004-2005	64.8	887	7.3%
2005-2006	68.3	966.4	7.1%
2006-2007	71.7	1050.7	6.8%
2007-2008	74.4	1113	6.7%
2008-2009	77.3	1150.6	6.7%
2009-2010	78.1	1121.1	7.0%
2010-2011	79	1044.2	7.6%
2011-2012	80	1109.7	7.2%
2012-2013	81.1	1168.7	6.9%
2013-2014	82.2	1217.8	6.8%
2014-2015	87.6	1267.6	6.9%
2015-2016	89.5	1305.1	6.9%
2016-2017	91.4	1379.6	6.6%
2017-2018	94	1418.5	6.6%
2018-2019	96.1	1482	6.5%
2019-2020	98	1572	6.2%
2020-2021	101	1644	6.1%

Source: Budget of the State of Delaware.

Retrieved from: State of Delaware; The Official Website of the First State; Office of Management and Budget; Budget Department and Planning; Budget Development; Budget Archive: [State of Delaware -Budget Development and Planning](#)

Local Funds

Local funding is the second most important source of public education finance. The funds make up almost thirty-three cents of every public education dollar spent, making this a vital component of the education budget. Local sources rely on property taxes for the majority of their revenue, see Table 3.4.

Table 3.4
Revenue from Local Sources (thousands of dollars)

Total	Property Taxes	Other Taxes	*Parent Government Contributions	Non-school Local Government	School Lunch Charges	Tuition and Transportation Charges	**Other Charges	Other Local Revenue
770,254	722,498	0	(X)	0	4,430	2,911	2,792	37,623

Source: Census Bureau Statistical Tables of Public Education Elementary-Secondary Education Finances, Fiscal Year 2020: Table 4. Thousand dollars. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

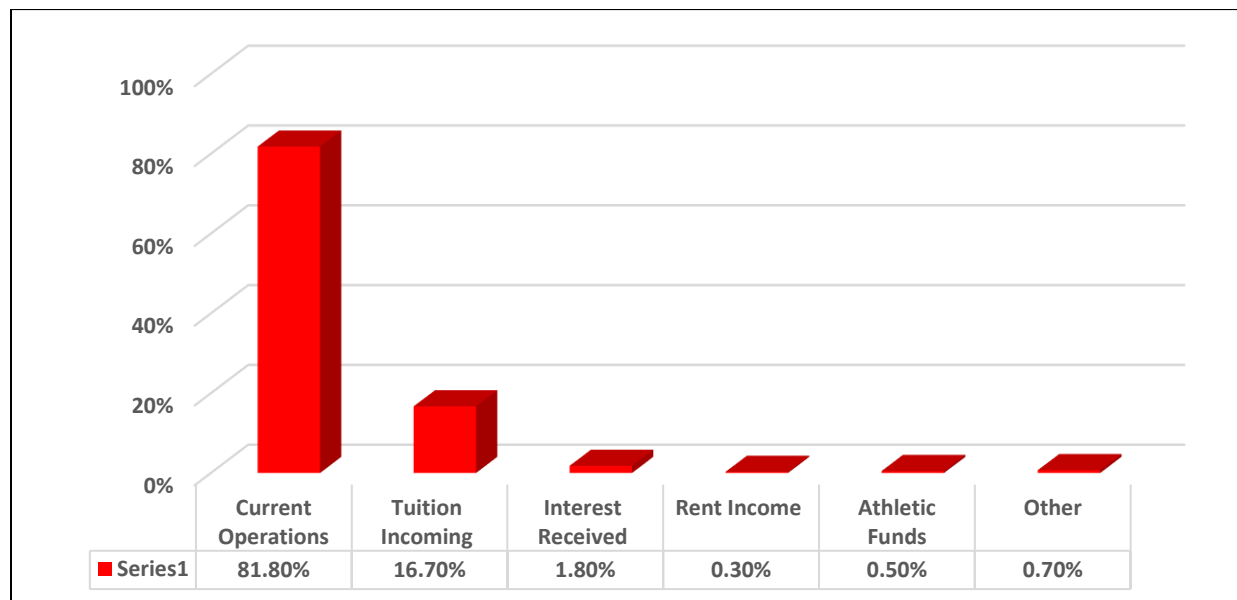
*Not applicable.

**Includes textbook sales and rentals, district activity receipts, rents and royalties, non-specified student fees, and other sales and service revenues.

Property taxes are the primary means of local funding. Property taxation provides a stable source of revenue irrespective of the economic climate, unlike sales and income taxes, which fluctuate with the economy.

Figure 2.7

Allocation of Local Revenue Receipts by Current Expenses Category 2018-2019



Source: 2018-2019 Financial Educational Statistics Reports of the Delaware Department of Education, Table 33.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Financial-Educational-Statistics-Reports)

The percentage distribution of revenue sources is presented below, including selected sources.

Table 3.5

Percent Distribution of Elementary-Secondary Public School System Revenue by Source

Total	Federal Sources		State Sources		Local Sources			
	Total	Compensatory (Title I)	Total	Formula assistance	Total	Taxes and parent government contributions	Other local governments	Charges
100.0	6.0	1.8	62.8	47.8	31.1	29.2	0.0	0.4

Source: Census Bureau's Statistical Tables of Public Education, Elementary-Secondary Education Finances, Table 5, Fiscal Year 2020.

Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

As mentioned previously, expenditures may be categorized into current spending, capital, and debt service. Current spending is analyzed in Table 3.6. Salaries and benefits comprise a large proportion of current spending (79%). Instruction salaries and benefits account for 56% of current spending. Support services account for 21% and other services for 7.5%.

Support services include:

- Pupil support services (Guidance Counselors, Psychologists, Therapists, Nurses)
- Instructional staff support services (Directors of Instruction, Supervisors of Instruction, Librarians)
- General administration (Chief School Officers, Assistant Superintendents, Administrative Assistants, Clerical)
- School administration (Principals, Assistant Principals, Clerical)
- Operations and maintenance (Custodians, Maintenance Specialists)
- Pupil transportation (School Bus Drivers, Transportation Supervisors, Transportation Specialists, Bus Aides Support Services)
- Other (Directors of Administration, Specialists/Support, Supervisor/Support, Administrative Assistant/Support, Clerical)

Table 3.6
Current Spending (thousands of dollars)

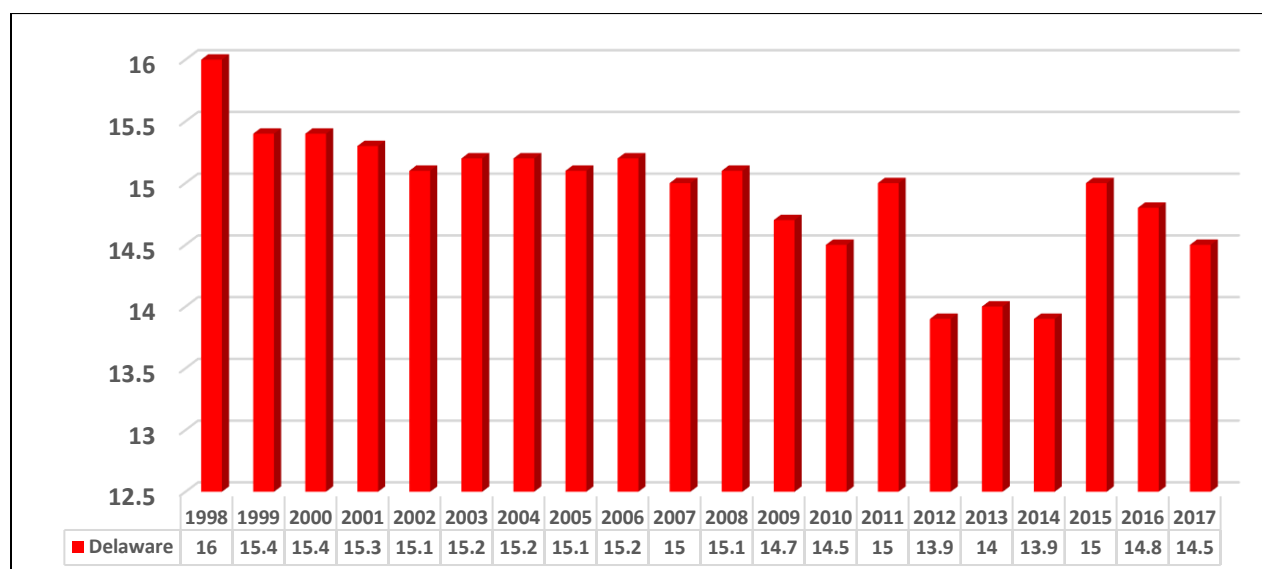
Total	All Functions		Instruction			Support services			All other functions
	Salaries and wages	Employee benefits	Total	Salaries and wages	Employee benefits	Total	Salaries and wages	Employee benefits	
2,137,101	1,121,420	612,690	1,214,308	731,049	416,491	843,497	357,796	189,153	79,296

Source: Census Bureau Statistical Tables of Public Education Elementary-Secondary Education Finances, Fiscal Year 2020: Table 6. Thousand dollars. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finance/secondary-education-finance.html>

When considering budget allocations, a number of measures may be utilized: spending per pupil, spending per school, spending per category, etc. Pupil/teacher ratios are a useful way to consider the level of staffing, holding enrolment constant. Delaware's teacher/pupil ratio remained relatively constant over the past decade (see Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8
Pupil/Teacher Ratio for Delaware 1998 to 2017



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, Table 208.40.

Retrieved from [Public elementary and secondary teachers, enrollment, and pupil/teacher ratios, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2017](#)

Per pupil spending is analyzed below. Of the \$16,315 per pupil spending, 82% is accounted for by salaries and wages and employee benefits. Instructional spending is 62% of current spending. General administration and school administration expressed as a percentage of total current spending are 1.1% and 6.5% respectively.

Table 3.7
Per Pupil Amount for Current Spending (dollars)

Total	Salaries and wages	Employee benefits	Instruction			Support services				
			Total	Salaries and wages	Employee benefits	Total	Pupil support	Staff support	General administration	School administration
17,235	9,075	4,958	9,827	5,916	3,371	6,826	1,925	638	161	918

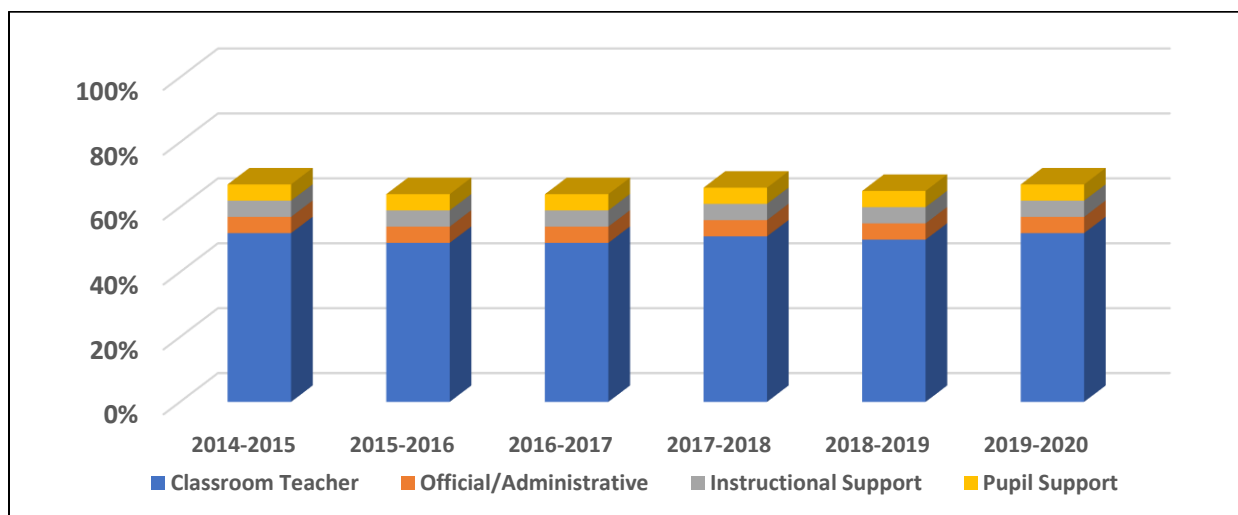
Source: Census Bureau's Statistical Tables of Public Education, Elementary-Secondary Education Finances, Table 8, Fiscal Year 2020. Not all items and functions are reported, therefore, function subtotals do not sum to aggregate.

Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

In theory, public funding of any activity is a reflection of the values, priorities, and preferences of elected officials. However, the reality is that the budget or policy process has for decades now been governed by a formula. A formula-based approach supports primarily current activities, with new programs approved for funding only through availability of additional monies above the needs of current activities. This renders the budget system relatively inflexible to changes in the provision of public education.

Classroom teachers are 52% of total professional staff. A total of 881 full time equivalent (FTE) teachers have been added between 2014-2015 and 2019-2020. The composition of Delaware's staff experienced little fluctuation in the past six years (Figures 2.9 and 2.10).

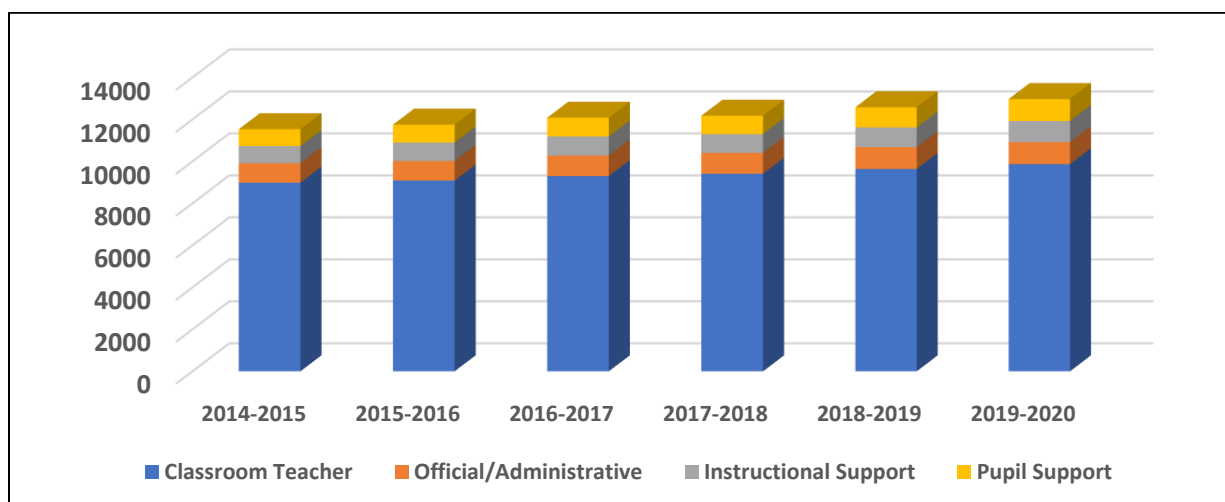
Figure 2.9
Share of Professional Educational Personnel Full-Time Equivalent by Assignment
Classification: 2014-2015 to 2019-2020 (in percent)



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Educational Personnel Reports.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Educational Personnel Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/EducationalPersonnelReports)

Figure 2.10
Professional Educational Personnel Full-Time Equivalent by Assignment Classification:
2014-2015 to 2019-2020 (in thousands)

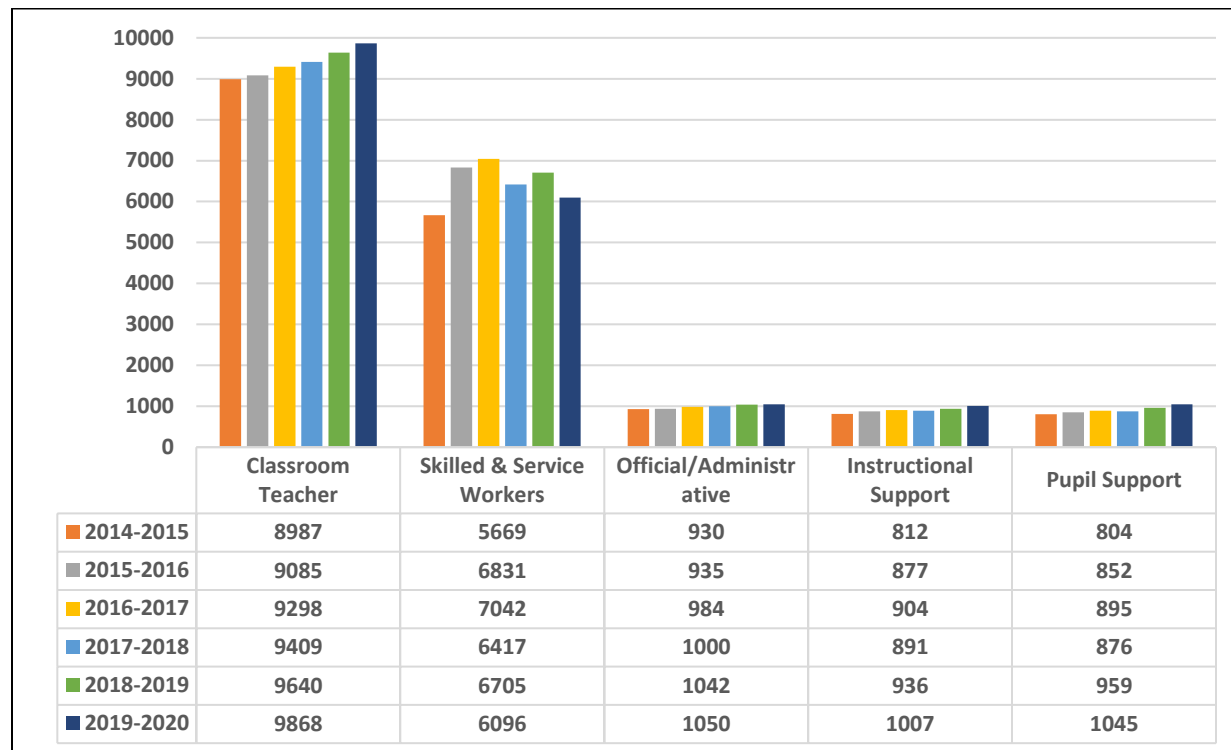


Source: Delaware Department of Education, Educational Personnel Reports.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Educational Personnel Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/EducationalPersonnelReports)

Figure 2.11

Delaware Public Education Staff by Function: 2014-2015 to 2019-2020



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Educational Personnel Reports.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Educational Personnel Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Educational-Personnel-Reports)

The number of classroom teachers including regular and special grew 9.8% between 2014-2015 and 2019-2020. The growth in enrollment is driving this growth of teachers. School officials and administrative staff positions are growing at 12.9%. Other professional staff positions are growing at 27%.

Table 3.8 below shows the trend in staffing over the 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 period. The fastest growing category is pupil support, i.e., staff members who have expertise as psychologists, speech and hearing therapists, social workers, and some others. It is followed by the instructional support category that is defined as an assignment to a staff member who has expertise in a specialized field to provide information and guidance to other staff members to improve the curriculum.

Table 3.8
Delaware Public Education Staff by Function: 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 (in thousands)

	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019	2019- 2020	Growth	Growth %
Classroom Teacher	8,987	9,085	9,298	9,409	9,640	9,868	881	9.8
Skilled & Service Wor.	5,669	6,831	7,042	6,417	6,705	6,096	427	7.5
Official/Administrative	930	935	984	1,000	1,042	1,050	120	13
Instructional Support	812	877	904	891	936	1,007	195	24
Pupil Support	804	852	895	876	959	1,045	241	30

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Educational Personnel Reports.

Retrieved from: <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/page/1490>

Definitions:

Classroom Teacher: teacher, regular elementary; teacher, regular secondary; teacher, special elementary; teacher, special secondary

Skilled & Service Workers: technical; secretarial; teaching & clerical aid; crafts & trades; managerial; custodial; service aide; cafeteria worker; bus driver & laborer

Official/Administrative: superintendent; assistant superintendent; director; administrative assistant; supervisor, general support; specialist, general support; principal; assistant principal; other general support

Instructional Support: supervisor, instructional; specialist instructional; librarian; guidance counselor; other instructional support

Pupil support: psychologist; speech and hearing therapist; social worker; home visitor; nurse; supervisor, pupil support; specialist, pupil support; other pupil support

Table 3.8 shows positive growth across the staff categories. The strong growth among the non-teaching staff suggests that these positions are growing with enrollment. This implies that they are variable costs, which are not fixed and change with volume.

If a measure is constructed comparing pupils to public school personnel, some interesting patterns arise (see Table 3.9 below). The pupil/teacher ratio has fallen over the period as teacher growth outstripped enrollment growth. The pupil-total personnel ratio has fluctuated over the period and decreased slightly between the 2014-2015 and 2019-2020 school years. The pupil/non-teaching staff ratio has also fallen in a minor way. This indicates that non-teaching staff are being hired at a slightly faster rate than enrollment is growing. If staff efficiency increases, the same number of staff would service a greater number of students, and the pupil/non-teaching staff measure would rise. This would equate with economies of scale. Instead, the measure fell modestly.

Table 3.9
Delaware Pupil to Personnel Measures

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Enrollment (FTE)	134,932	136,027	137,217	138,371	139,146	140,851
Total Personnel	17,202	18,580	19,123	18,593	19,282	19,066
Classroom Teachers	8,987	9,085	9,298	9,409	9,640	9,868
Non-teachers	8,215	9,495	9,825	9,184	9,642	9,198
Ratios						
Pupil/Total Personnel	7.8	7.3	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.4
Pupil/Teacher	15.0	15.0	14.8	14.7	14.4	14.3
Pupil/Non-teaching Staff	16.4	14.3	14.0	15.1	14.4	15.3

Source: Enrollment (FTE): Annual Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports.

Retrieved from: <https://education.delaware.gov/data/reports/unitcount/>

Source: Educational Personnel Reports.

Retrieved from: <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/page/1490>

Table 3.10
Disaggregated Official/Administrative Staff in Delaware

	2000-2001	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	Change: 00-01 to 19-20
Superintendent	22	22	23	21	21	22	22	0
Assistant Superintendent	11	16	17	17	15	16	17	6
Director	45	95	94	103	105	120	112	67
Administrative Assistant	16	22	25	28	28	32	30	14
Supervisor, Gen. Support	72	98	89	93	99	96	99	27
Specialist, Gen. Support	88	167	173	176	185	192	189	101
Principal	168	207	210	212	216	219	221	53
Assistant Principal	181	261	259	280	280	291	300	119
Other General Support	14	42	45	54	51	54	58	44
Total	617	930	935	984	1,000	1,042	1,048	431

Source: Years 2000-2001: Best, E. & Ratledge, E. (2019). Financing Public Education in Delaware 2019, p. 43.

Source: Years 2014-2020: Educational Personnel Reports. Retrieved from: <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/page/1490>

The table above disaggregates the official/administrative classification. The greatest number of additions are specialists/general support, assistant principals, and directors. Simultaneously, the number of schools in the system has expanded, which is affecting the number of principals and assistant principals. It is noteworthy that the number of Charter schools has grown by 1,100% since 1996 when the first two charter schools opened in Delaware (Miron, 2004, p. 22). In the school year 2018-2019, there were already 24 active charter schools in the state (Delaware Department of Education, 2020a).

Table 3.11
Delaware Public Schools

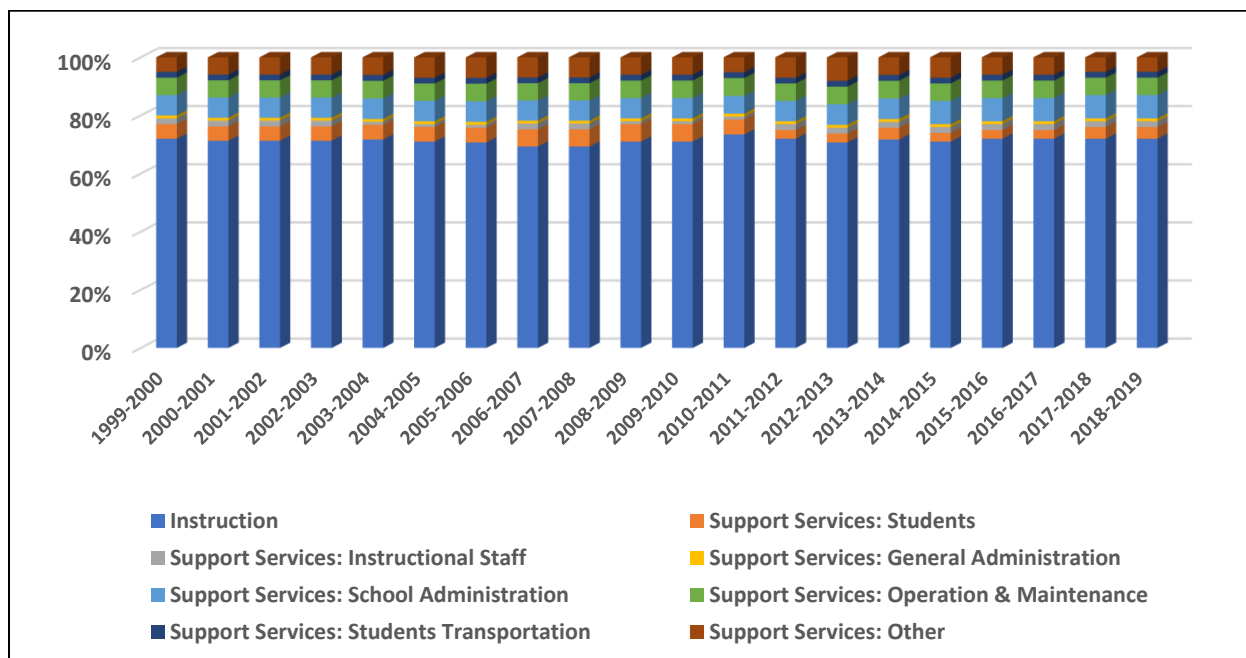
Year	High Schools	Middle/ High Schools	Middle Schools	Elementary/ Middle Schools	Elementary Schools	Early Childhood Education Schools	Special Schools	Charter Schools	Total
2021	32	2	32	2	102	10	11	23	216

Source: Delaware.gov; Delaware Report Card; All Schools in Delaware.

Retrieved from: [State Report Cards - Delaware Department of Education \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/state-report-cards)

The division of staff salaries is presented in Figure 2.12. Classroom teachers' salaries account for about 72% of total salaries. This has been largely unchanged between 1999-2000 and 2018-2019.

Figure 2.12
Share of Total Salaries by Staff: 1999-2000 to 2018-2019

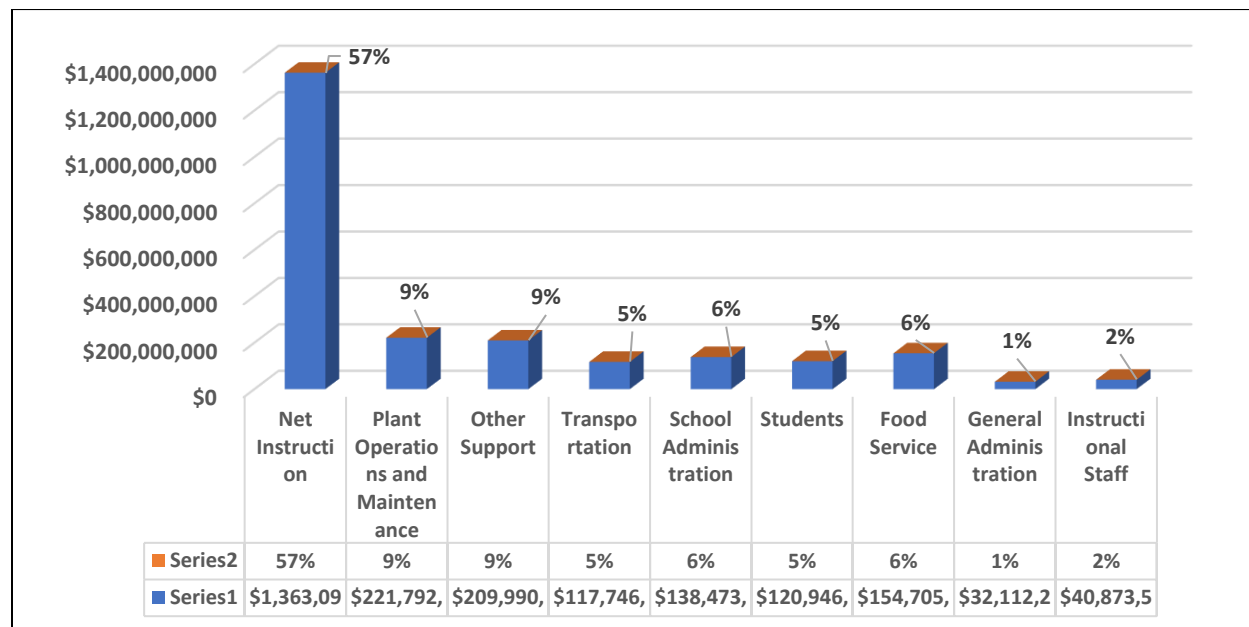


Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/educational-data-and-annual-reports/financial-educational-statistics-reports)

Figure 2.13 illustrates the relative share of current expenses. These shares have exhibited little variation over recent years.

Figure 2.13
Current Expenses, Delaware School, Finance 2018-2019

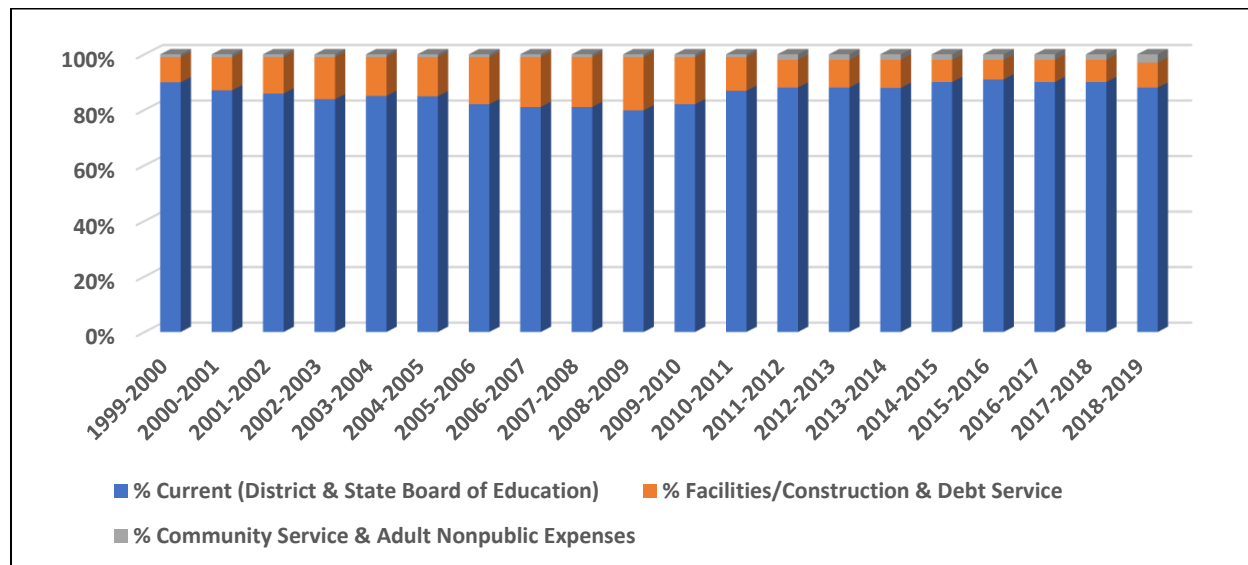


Source: 2018-2019 Financial Educational Statistics Report of the Delaware Department of Education, Table 38.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Breaking total expenditures into their broadest categories: current operations, facilities/construction, and community and adult nonpublic expenses, it can be seen that the majority of expenditures go towards current operations (districts and the state board of education) (see Figures 2.14 and 2.15).

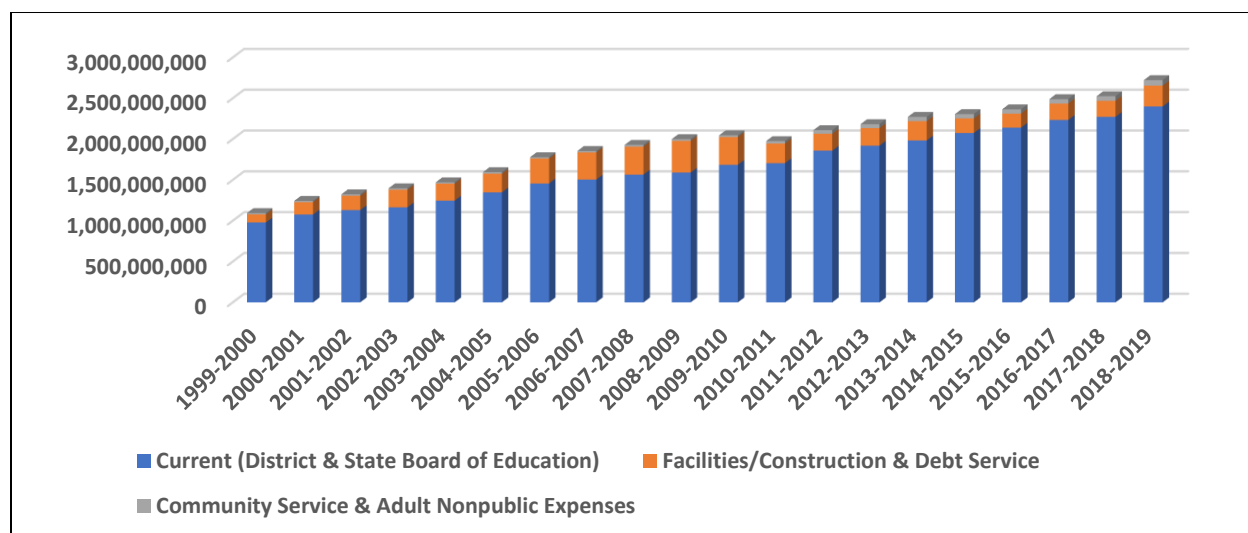
Figure 2.14
Share of Total Expenditures by Allocation: 1999-2000 to 2018-2019



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Figure 2.15
Total Expenditures by Allocation: 1999-2000 to 2018-2019



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

The Delaware Department of Education provides support for districts and charter schools with respect to building, maintaining, and operating public school facilities in the state (Delaware.gov, 2022, Facilities and Operations). Funds for school construction are allocated through two programs: Minor Capital Improvements and Major Capital Improvements.

Minor Capital Improvement Program – The Delaware Department of Education defines the purpose of the Minor Capital Improvement Program as maintaining ‘real property assets in their original condition of completeness and efficiency on a scheduled basis’. These projects do not provide for increasing the inventory or changing its composition. Minor Capital Improvement Program projects are those that cost less than \$750,000 with the exception of the projects for roof repair. Minor Capital Improvement projects do not require a Certificate of Necessity⁵. This program is reviewed annually by school districts and is comprised of work needed for good maintenance practice (State of Delaware, n.d., 405 Minor Capital Improvement Program).

Major Capital Improvement Program – The Major Capital Improvement Program provides for the planned and programmed repairs, renovations, and expansion of existing school facilities. Additionally, it provides for the construction of new schools. The Major Capital Improvement Program funds projects that cost \$750,000 or more. Local school districts submit projects to the Department of Education by August 31 for consideration of a Certificate of Necessity and capital funding for the following fiscal year. The Certificate of Necessity enables the local school district to hold a referendum for the major Capital Improvement Program identified. The referendum is the mechanism that establishes the local public’s desire to raise taxes. (State of Delaware, n.d., 401 Major Capital Improvement Program).

⁵ *Certificate of Necessity* means a document issued by the Department of Education which certifies that a construction project is necessary and sets the scope and cost limits for that project. The Certificate of Necessity authorizes the local school district to hold a referendum for the Major Capital Improvement Program identified, if required (Ibid.).

Capital expenditures are primarily construction costs (98%). Equipment is the second largest capital expenditure (2%) (see Table 3.12 below).

Table 3.12
Capital Outlay, Interest, and Intergovernmental Expenditures (thousands of dollars)
Fiscal Year 2019

Capital Outlay					Interest on Debt	Payments to other governments
Total	Construction	Land and Existing Structures	Equipment			
			Instructional	Other		
181.835	178.287	(N)	1.403	2.145	18.200	0

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2019 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Table 9.

Retrieved from: [2019 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data \(census.gov\)](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/2019/2019_PES_Finance_Data/2019_PES_Finance_Data.html)

(N) Not available. Amounts are included in construction.

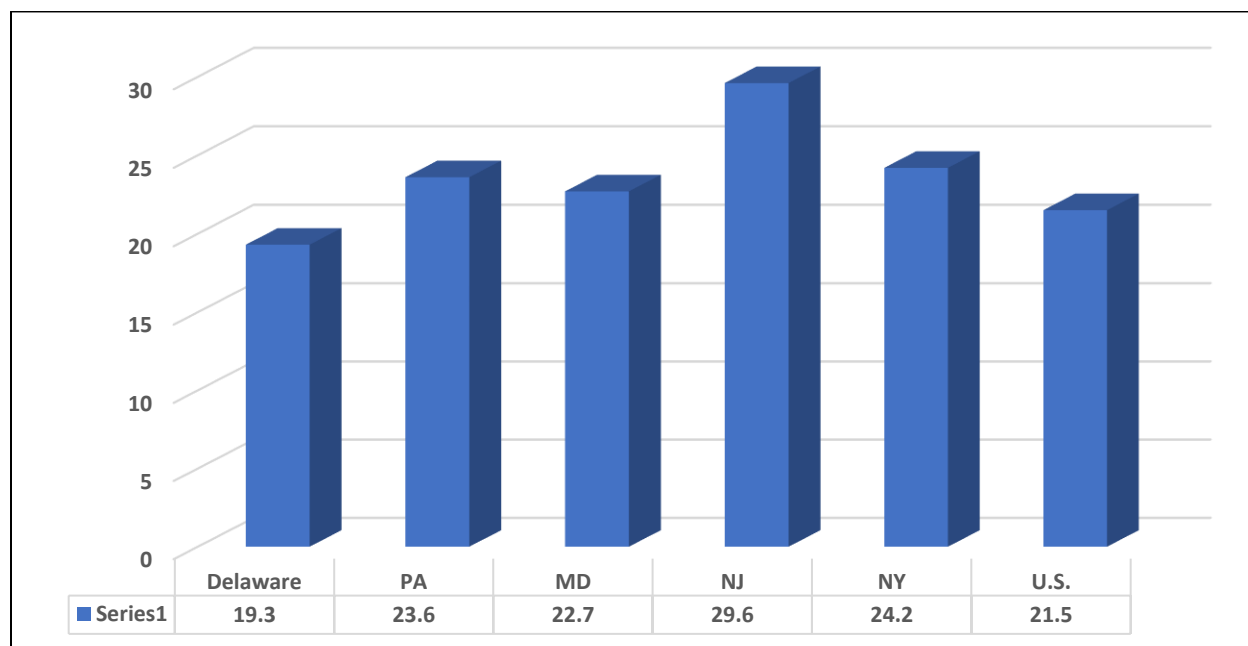
Delaware's formula-based appropriations ensure an objective distribution of state funds across school districts. Per pupil funds have been rising over time, reflecting the state's continued commitment to education. The state shoulders most of the burden of funding public education, however, this reflects the organization of the budget. Funding favors current operations, and within that category, instruction. Teachers comprise the largest share of professional staff. All categories of staff are expanding. Non-teaching staff are growing with enrollment, which implies they are variable costs. Using per-pupil measures, non-teaching staff growth is fractionally outpacing student enrollment growth, resulting in falling pupil/non-teaching staff ratios.

Interstate Comparisons of Public Education Financing

Comparing Delaware's education financing system to those of other states and the national average allows for an important perspective on the issue. Interstate comparisons indicate that there are certain similarities between Delaware and the neighboring states, as well as between Delaware and the nation as a whole.

In most states, a substantial amount of their general expenditures goes to education. Figure 3.0 shows the share of total direct expenditures per capita for elementary and secondary education. Delaware ranks low in comparison to other Mid-Atlantic region states. Public education accounted for approximately 19.3% in direct expenditures in 2017-2018 school year.

Figure 3.0
State Budget Allocations for Elementary and Secondary Education
(direct general expenditure)
2017-2018

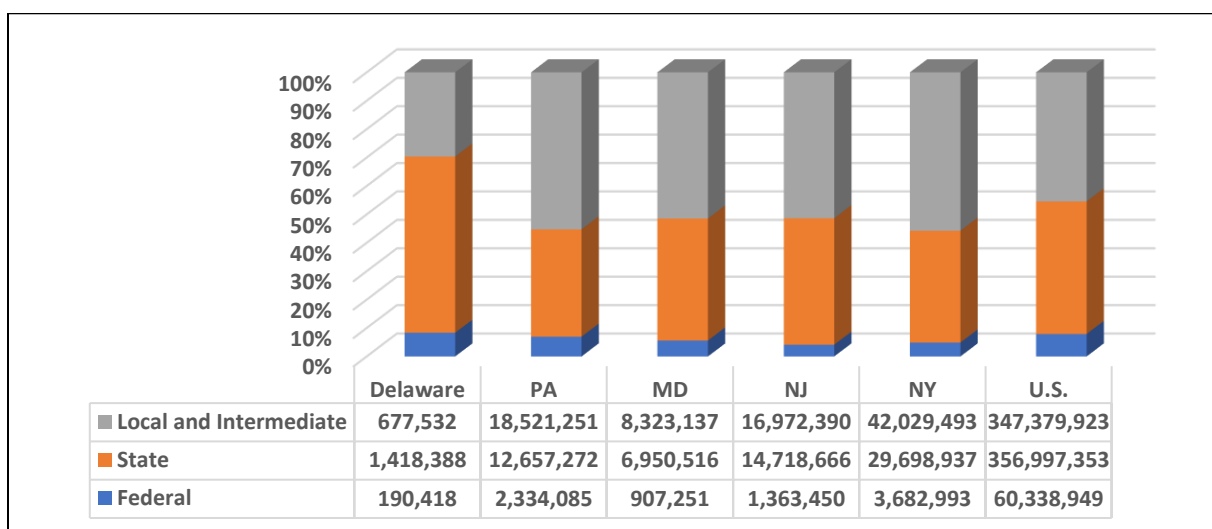


Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); Digest of Education Statistics, 2020; Table 106.50.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_106.50.asp

At the same time, the State of Delaware provides a larger than average share for education compared to other states. This is characteristic of Delaware's system whereby teacher salaries are funded primarily by the state rather than by districts. Figure 3.1 illustrates the contribution to public education by Delaware, the neighboring states, and the USA as a whole.

Figure 3.1
Share of Revenues for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools (by source)
2018-2019



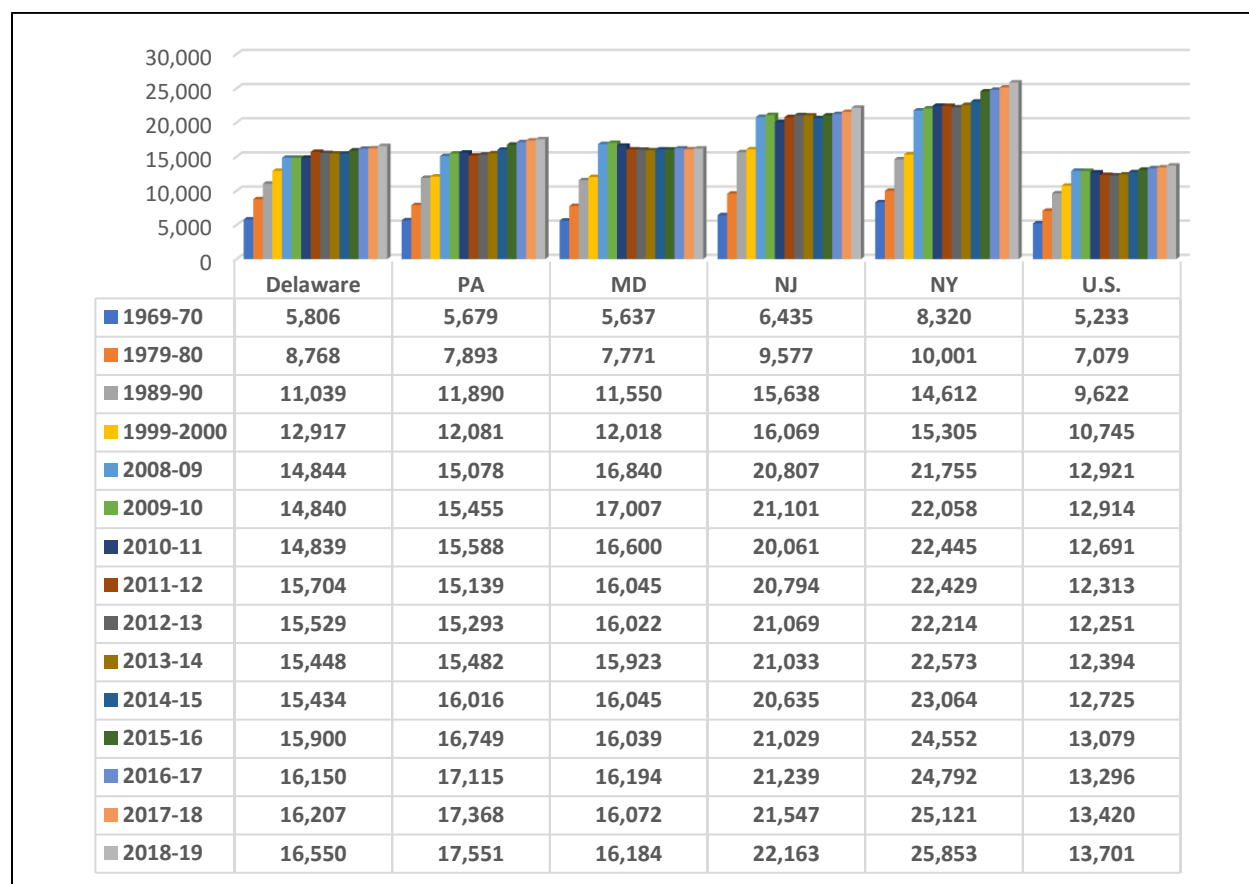
Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); Digest of Education Statistics, 2021; Table 235.20.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_235.20.asp

Throughout the nation, per pupil expenditures, adjusted for inflation, continue to grow. Figure 3.2 demonstrates that Delaware conforms to the trend. In other states of the Mid-Atlantic region, per pupil expenditures adjusted for inflation have also increased. The current per pupil expenditure in Delaware exceeds the national average.

Figure 3.2
Current Expenditures per Pupil Enrolled in Fall Semester
Public Elementary and Secondary Schools (by source)
1969-1970 to 2018-2019

Constant 2020-2021 dollars

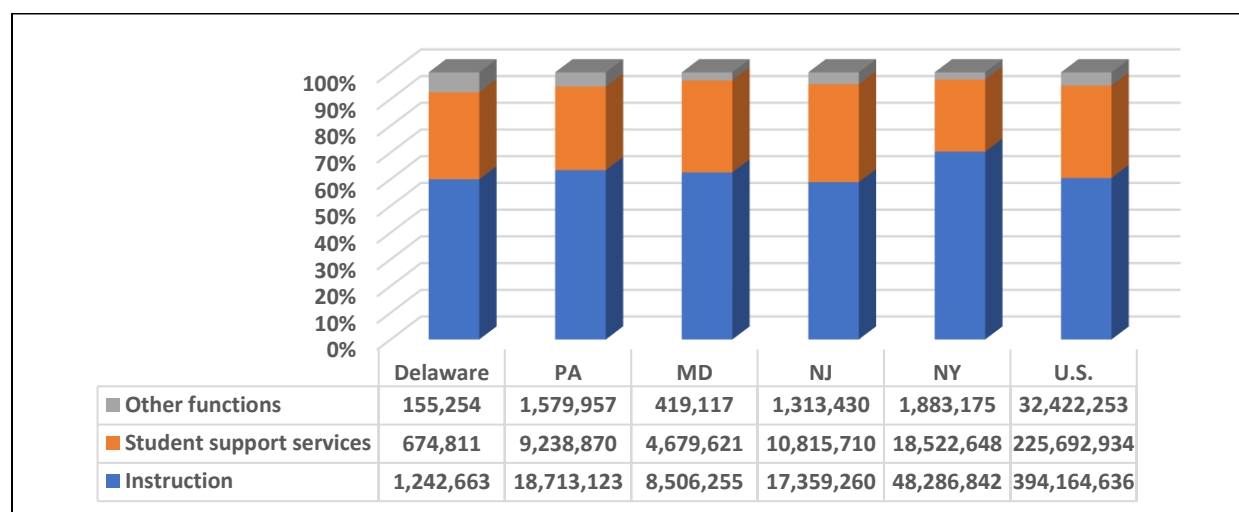


Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); Digest of Education Statistics, 2021; Table 236.65.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_236.65.asp

As follows from Figure 3.3, the largest share of expenditures in every state goes to instruction: between 50% and 60% of the budget. The second largest share is allocated to student support. It equals approximately 30% to 35%. The percentage of funds allocated to student support varies slightly across these states. At the same time, the amount of funds available for the purpose varies significantly.

Figure 3.3
Share of Total Current Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education (by function), Fiscal Year 2019

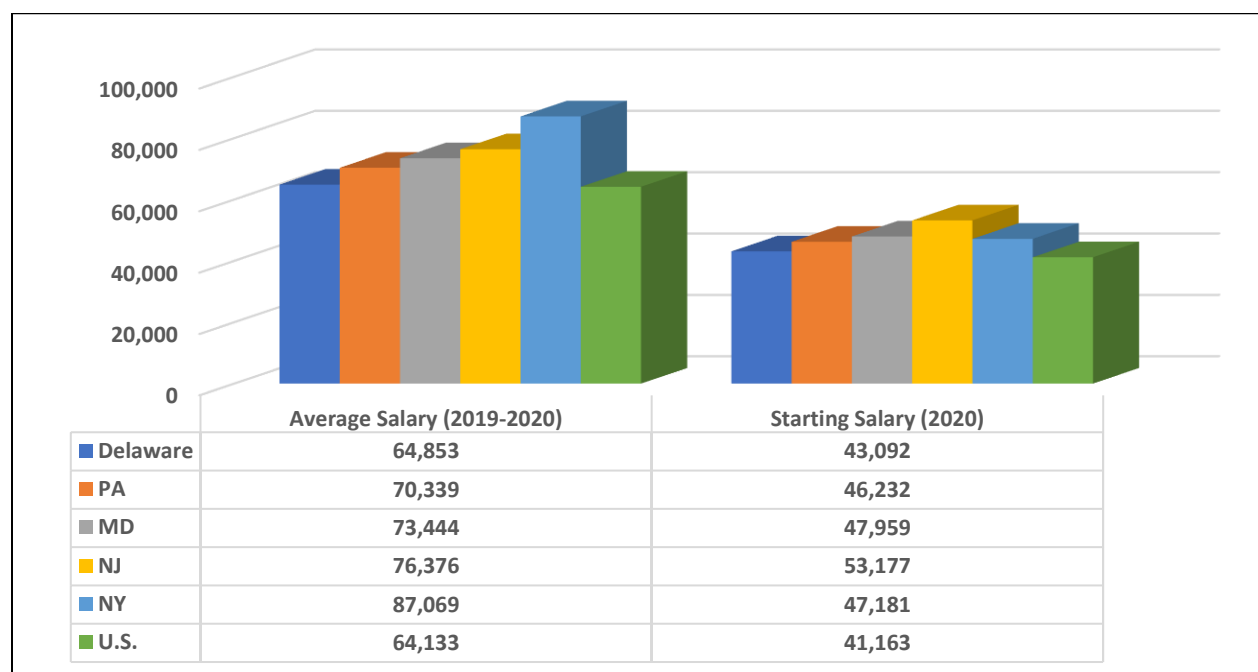


Source: Census Bureau, 2019 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data; Table 6.

Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2019/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

Further we provide two measures of teacher salary: average and starting. Delaware's starting average teacher salary is not significantly lower than in the other states in the region and is slightly higher than the national average (see Figure 3.4). When it comes to state averages though, one need to interpret them with caution since state averages conceal the differences in district salaries, which can make meaningful state-to-state comparisons difficult. For example, Pennsylvania school districts vary greatly according to income level and to whether they are urban or rural. Many of Pennsylvania affluent school districts are just outside Delaware, and the latter does not compare favorably with those school districts.

Figure 3.4
Teacher Salaries, 2019-2020



Source (average salary): National Education Association, Rankings of the States 2020 and Estimates of School Statistics 2021, p. 25.

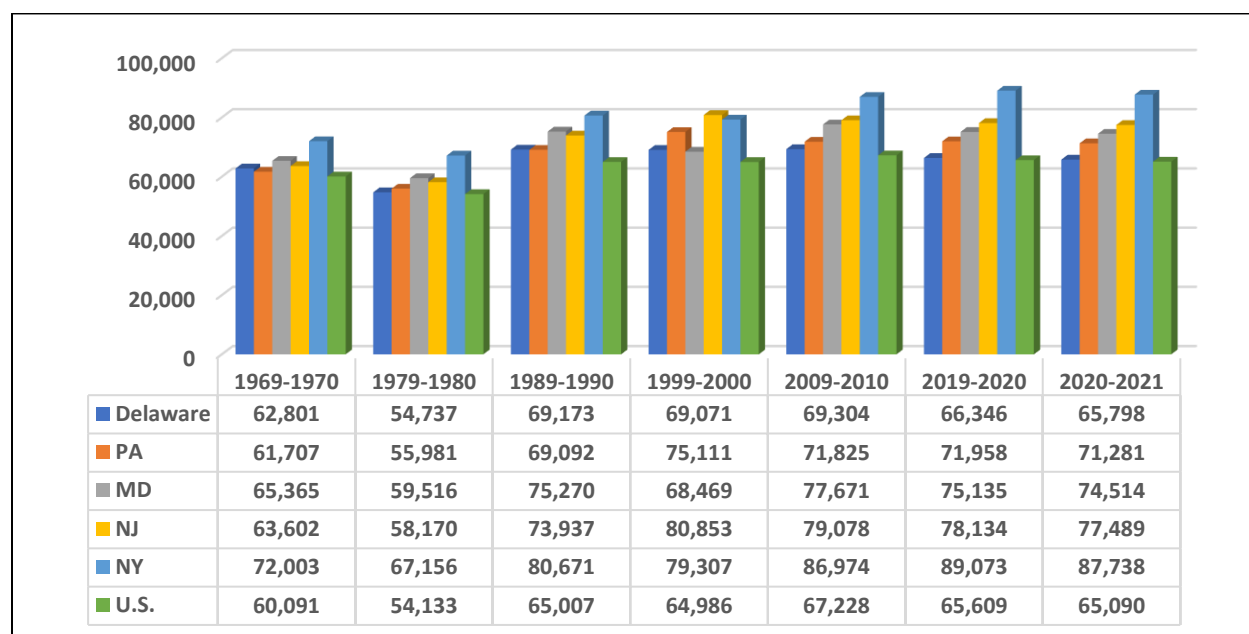
Retrieved from: https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20Rankings_and_Estimates_Report.pdf

Source (starting salary 2020): Seril, L. (2021). How Much Do Teachers Make?

Retrieved from: <https://study.com/academy/popular/teacher-salary-by-state.html>

When teacher salaries in Delaware are adjusted for inflation, it is revealed that the salaries have experienced a slight decrease over the years. Other Mid-Atlantic states exhibit the same tendency for declining teacher salaries. Average teacher salary is the broadest measure that reflects the level of compensation in public education. Therefore, it is not an overstatement to say that compensation is lagging behind the rate of inflation, and as a result, Delaware's teacher salaries are slightly depreciating. The situation in other states is similar to the one in Delaware: teacher salaries fail to keep pace with inflation engendering a decline in inflation-adjusted salaries (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5
Estimated Average Annual Salaries of Public Elementary and Secondary School Teachers by State: 1969-1970 to 2020-2021



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); Digest of Education Statistics, 2021; Table 211.60.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_211.60.asp

Another way of considering how revenue is gathered and allocated is to analyze the budget according to its component sources (see Table 4.0).

Table 4.0
Percentage Distribution of Elementary and Secondary Public School System Revenue by Source and Selected States: Fiscal Year 2020

State	Total	Federal Sources		State Sources		Local Sources	
		Total	Compensatory Programs (Title I)	Total	Formula Assistance	Total	Taxes & Parent Government Contributions
DE	100	6	2	63	48	31	29
PA	100	6	2	39	19	55	52
MD	100	5	1	43	20	52	49
NJ	100	4	1	43	22	53	49
NY	100	4	1	40	26	56	50
U.S.	100	8	2	47	32	46	40

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Fiscal Year 2020. Summary tables, Table 5.

Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

State revenue accounts for two-thirds of the public education distribution in Delaware, and slightly less than fifty percent is made through formula assistance. Thirty-one percent of distributions are from local fund allocations, which are generated almost entirely through property taxes. Delaware is among 37 states that use the *Foundation program* system to finance their public elementary and secondary education (Verstegen, 2014, p. 2). This formula provides a uniform state guarantee per pupil and uses state and local district funding. In the Mid-Atlantic region, other states that use the same formula are Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York (Ibid.). Maryland uses the *Combination/Tiered* system, which offers districts a combination of state and local funding, with a uniform per pupil base amount of funding, and a wealth equalizing formula that provides local education agencies with ‘vastly different’ combinations of state, local, and federal funds that constitute their budgets (Checovich, 2016, p. 6).

Other systems used to finance public elementary and secondary education in the U.S. include *Full State Funding* in Hawaii, which means that all funding is collected and distributed by

the state; *Flat Grant* in North Carolina that provides a uniform amount per pupil from state funds with localities being able to add funding to this amount; and *District Power Equalization* systems in Vermont and Wisconsin that provide funding that varies based on tax rates (Verstegen, 2014, p. 2). The nuances of each state's system determine the mix of revenue and disbursements. Under one system, the state may appear to be shouldering more than local districts in the expense of public education. Under another system the reverse may appear to be the case.

State rankings is a different way to represent Delaware's finance system relative to others (Table 4.1). Delaware ranks third in the top ten in terms of total revenue raised from state sources per pupil.

Table 4.1
States Ranked According to per Pupil Elementary-Secondary Public School System
Finance Amounts: Fiscal Year 2020

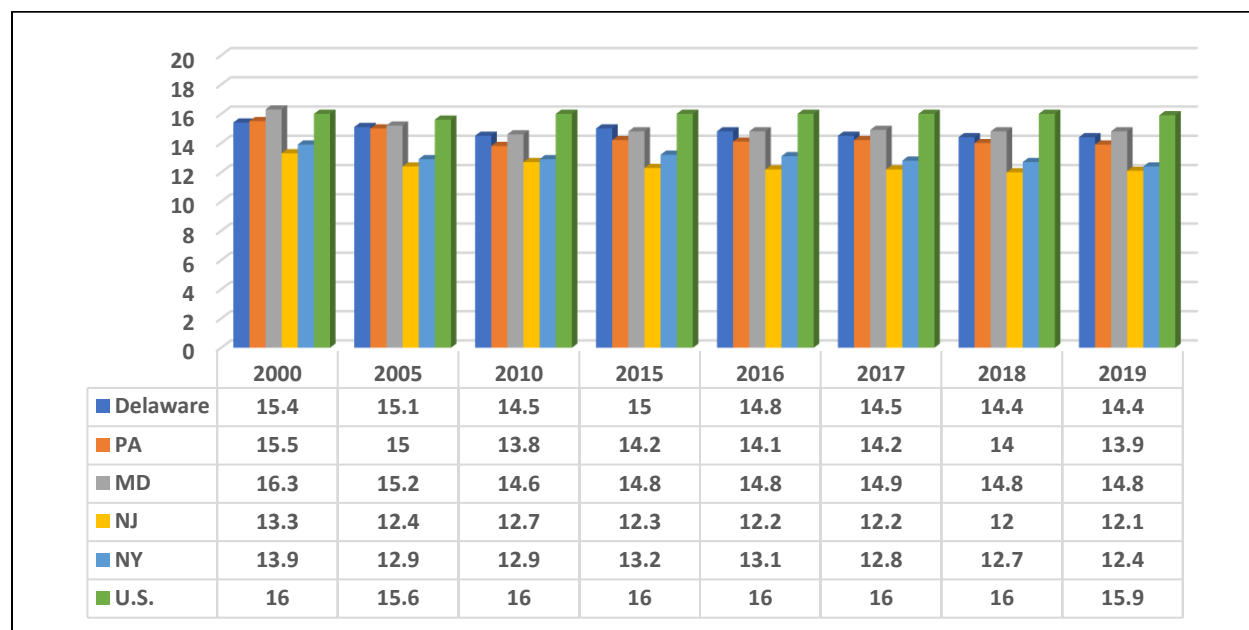
Rank	Revenue		Current Spending for Selected Categories		
	Total	From State Sources	Total	Instruction	
				Total	Salaries Only
1	DC	VT	NY	NY	NY
2	NY	HI	DC	CT	DC
3	CT	DE	CT	VT	CT
4	NJ	AK	VT	NJ	MA
5	VT	WA	NJ	MA	VT
6	PA	NY	MA	DC	NJ
7	MA	MN	AK	NH	NH
8	IL	NJ	NH	PA	RI
9	NH	WY	IL	IL	MD
10	DE	KS	DE	RI	WY

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data, Fiscal Year 2020. Summary tables, Table 11.

Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/econ/school-finance/secondary-education-finance.html>

Delaware's pupil to teacher ratio is lower than the nation as a whole, Maryland and Pennsylvania, but higher than New Jersey and New York (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6
Pupils to Teacher Ratio, 2000-2019

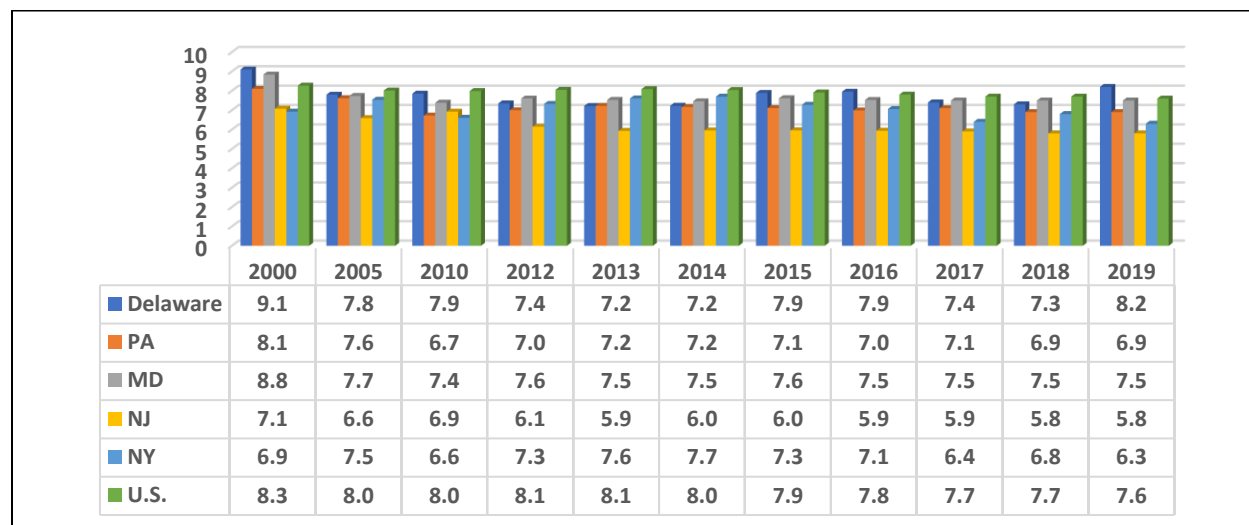


Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2021; Table 208.40.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_208.40.asp

Measuring the number of pupils to total school staff (teachers, instructional support, administration, and service personnel) provides insight into the balance between the workforce who supply education and pupils who receive it (Figure 3.7). This measure continues to decrease, both nationally and regionally. This implies that the provision of education requires a greater number of staff than in prior years. This measure is heavily impacted by the downward trend in pupil to teacher ratio, which occurred due to the tendency towards smaller class sizes. As Figure 3.8 indicates, around fifty percent of school staff are teachers.

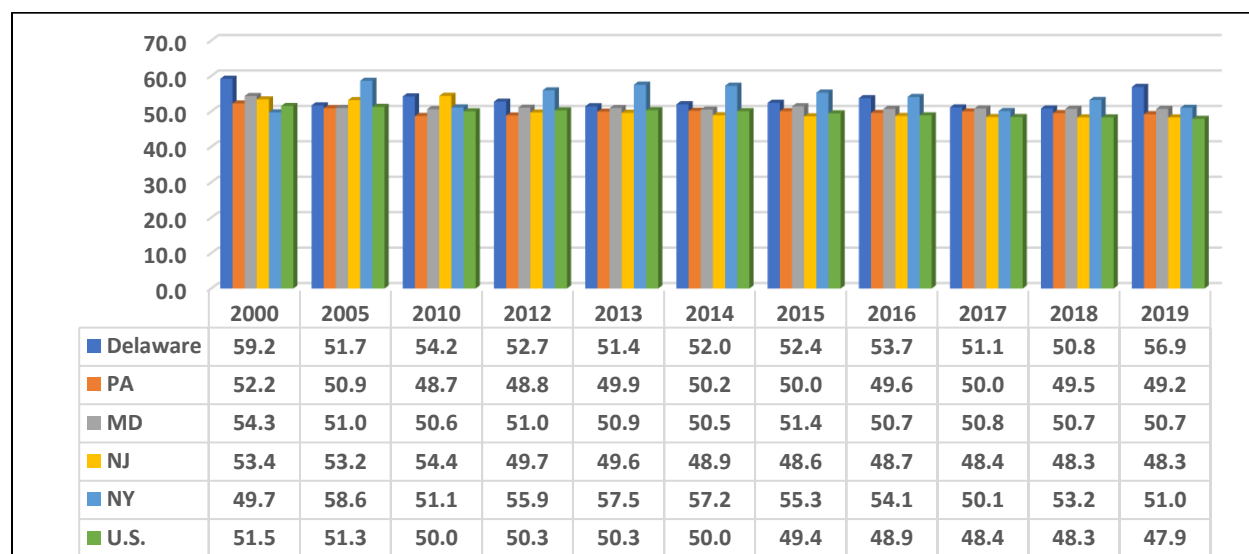
Figure 3.7
Pupils to Total Staff Ratio, 2000-2019



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2021; Table 213.50.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_213.50.asp

Figure 3.8
Teachers as a Percentage of Staff, 2000-2019



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2021; Table 213.40.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_213.40.asp

As mentioned earlier, public education in Delaware is financed primarily by the State (63%), and Local funds (31%). The State/Local funding mix varies from state to state. At the low end, New Hampshire's State/Local mix is 31/64. At the high end, Hawaii's mix is 90/2 and Vermont's mix is 91/3 (United States Census Bureau, 2020e). Despite this variation, the manner in which spending is allocated varies little. For example, in most states about 60% of current per pupil spending is allocated to instruction regardless of the State/Local funding mix, with the District of Columbia (50%) and New York (70 %) being the two outliers. Therefore, Delaware's level of instruction spending equaling 57% is neither high nor low (United States Census Bureau, 2020f).

Delaware's closest peer in the Northeast is Rhode Island in terms of the size of public-school enrollment. Rhode Island's State/Local mix is 40/52 (United States Census Bureau, 2020e). Nevertheless, Rhode Island ranks alongside Delaware among the top ten states in per pupil measure (see Table 4.1), suggesting that Delaware is in the mainstream with respect to public education finance, and particularly among the states in the Northeast. Student proficiencies between the two states do not differ significantly. In 2019, in Delaware, for example, 39% of the 4th graders were at or above proficiency level in mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments, and in Rhode Island – 40%. As for reading, the same year, 33% of Delawarean 4th graders and 35% of 4th graders in Rhode Island were at or above proficiency level, according to NAEP (Nation's Report Card, 2019).

Delaware's closest peers in terms of funding mix are Indiana (State 63%; Local 30%), Minnesota (State 64%; Local 31%), and Nevada (state 62%; local 30%) (United States Census Bureau, 2020e). Indiana's enrollment is 8 times higher than Delaware's; Minnesota's is 7 times higher, and Nevada's is approximately 4 times higher, which complicates comparisons of total expenditures (United States Census Bureau, 2020h). On a per pupil basis, however, current spending per pupil in Delaware is higher than in Minnesota (\$17,235 vs. \$13,603), and considerably higher than in Indiana and Nevada: \$10,935 and \$9,814 respectively (United States Census Bureau, 2020f). This implies a significantly greater level of funding in Delaware. However, a caveat should be made here: education expenditures reflect the income level of a particular state and its region, thus creating a drawback to this comparison. For example, all Northeast states, from

Connecticut to Vermont, are among the highest per pupil spenders. This reflects the high levels of income in these states.

Comparing states in different areas of the country in a meaningful way requires certain adjustment for the different income level. Per capita income in Delaware is almost \$6,000 higher than in Indiana, almost \$4,000 higher than in Nevada, but slightly more than \$2,000 lower than in Minnesota (United States Census Bureau, 2020i). In 2020, starting teacher salary in Delaware was more than \$5,000 higher than in Indiana, almost \$3,000 higher than in Minnesota, and over \$2,000 more than in Nevada (Seril, 2021). According to the National Education Association (NEA), average teacher salary in the schoolyear 2019-2020 in Delaware was \$13,000 higher than in Indiana, \$6,000 higher than in Minnesota, and \$8,000 higher than in Nevada (NEA Research, 2021, p. 25). Therefore, public education spending should be adjusted by some factor that captures the income differences.

Adjusting public education spending per \$1,000 personal income helps remove this income bias. Total current spending per \$1,000 personal income is \$40.53 in Delaware, \$34 in Minnesota, \$33.28 in Indiana, and \$27.62 in Nevada (United States Census Bureau, 2020g). Based on this measure, Delaware still ranks in the top ten in the nation (Ibid.).

Delaware's public education expenditures are comparable with both neighboring states and the nation. The State's public education spending reflects the higher income of the state, which places Delaware high in the national expenditure rankings and as compared to the neighboring states. With its rank of 10, Delaware is between New York (1) and New Jersey (5), and Pennsylvania (11) and Maryland (15). Adjusting for income levels, Delaware still remains among the top ten states in terms of public education spending.

State Level Summary

Many states across the nation are wrestling with the issue of improving public education. Public education consumes a large part of state and local funds, yet, in general, standards are not improving significantly. Therefore, there is a need to ensure the efficient allocation of funds.

Policymakers must understand the structure and size of finance sources and allocations in order to comprehend the problem of access that can be related to cost. This project is a review of the statewide system of public education funding in Delaware. Its purpose is to inform policymakers of the structure and size of public education finance sources and allocations. The project is pursued with the following constraints: where possible the most recent Delaware data is used, and comparability kept allowing interstate comparisons.

There are a number of findings that are worth reiterating from the study:

- Public education is an over \$2 billion dollar investment in Delaware, rapidly approaching \$3 billion. According to the Delaware Department of Education, in the school year of 2018-2019 (the latest data available) total expenses on public education in the state equaled \$2,722,087,693 (Delaware Department of Education, 2020b).
- Public education consumes more than one-third of direct general expenditures per capita, making it the single largest expenditure in the state budget (Delaware General Assembly, 2022).
- Public education revenue in Delaware is provided by the State (59.5%), local school districts (32.7%), and the Federal government (8%). (Delaware Department of Education, 2020c).
- Local school district revenue is raised primarily through property taxes (94%) (United States Census Bureau, 2020d).
- State funding from the General Fund is allocated based upon formula (Verstegen, 2014). Funding levels depend on public school enrollment, and the education and experience of the teaching workforce.
- Salary and benefits are the largest cost of the public education system.
- Instruction receives the largest share of funding by function within the public education system.

- Despite the diversity of states in the Mid-Atlantic region, the distribution in percentage terms of public education financing is similar.
- The pupil/teacher ratio is falling in Delaware.
- The pupil/non-teaching ratio is falling, which reflects the fact that growth in non-teaching staff is outpacing public school enrollment growth.
- This implies that non-teaching staff are a variable cost (i.e., varying with enrollment sizes).
- The fastest growing section of staff is other professionals.
- Local revenue, which is raised primarily through property taxes, is a stable source of revenue and is growing in importance in the public education budget.
- Delaware ranks tenth among all states for per pupil expenditures (see Table 4.1 above).

Collectively these data suggest that Delaware is essentially in the mainstream regarding financing of public education. Even so, there may be room for improvement. All levels of professional staff are growing. That the percentage growth of school officials/administrators exceeds the growth in classroom teachers implies that school officials/administrators are a variable cost – a cost that varies with the size of operation. However, could these official/administrator positions be classed as fixed costs – costs that do not vary with size of operations? If they can, then their growth constitutes an increase in overhead and is a drain on education resources.

The funding formula guarantees a certain level of funding for schools each year. This method of funding has the advantage of bringing certainty to the budget process and saves public education from competing for dollars from the general fund. The downside to the funding formula is the rigidity it instills in the public education system. Consequently, there is little evidence of change in the allocation expenditures over the last decade. Current expenses, those expenses that finance the day-to-day running of the school, account for approximately 88% of funds (Delaware Department of Education, 2020d).

This figure has been relatively static since 2000, averaging 86% between the school years 2000-2001 and 2018-2019 (see Figure 1.2 above), which suggests that there has been no significant change in the apportionment of public education funding. Within current expenses, instruction receives the largest share of funds: approximately 57% (see Figure 2.12 above). This is on par with the funding allocations across the region and the nation. The implication is that as the budget

continues to grow, so too do all uses of funds and at similar rates, leaving the relative shares unchanged. That is, the expenditure pie is growing larger, but it is divided into the same shares. Therefore, no one function of public education gains more than another.

The natural extension of this research is to explore the revenue and costs at the district, or even school level. This finer level of analysis may uncover how funding may be more effectively allocated in ways that were not revealed with the system-wide view.

SECTION TWO

DISTRICT LEVEL ANALYSIS

Methodology

The principal data source is the annual Report of Educational Statistics, a publication of the State Board of Education and the Department of Education. Peer data used within the report are available from the Federal Department of Education through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Digest of Education Statistics. This report includes information on expenditures by major category and staffing levels. Staffing data include counts of professional staff, including administrators, teachers, librarians and counselors, instructional aides, and support staff. Analyzing these data provides a beginning towards understanding the utilization of funds, but the results are several steps removed from the data needed to answer important productivity issues. Nevertheless, these data provide a starting point for identifying spending patterns.

School districts vary in a number of factors including land area, enrollment size, and school size. It is desirable to employ expenditure measures that allow for meaningful comparisons between districts. Constructing spending measures in per pupil terms equalizes expenditures across districts. Also, reporting spending in sub-categories as a share of total expenditures will illustrate the relative allocation of school resource.

Increases in public education expenditures arise due to a number of factors: inflation, enrollment, number of inputs, and real (inflation-adjusted) changes in the price of inputs. To better enable inter-district comparisons, expenditure levels will be adjusted for inflation over both five- and twelve-year periods and expressed in per-pupil terms.

Limitations

The primary source of public education expenditure data, the Report of Educational Statistics, is not without shortcomings. District data are the finest level of detail, and expenditures are reported by major spending category only. Therefore, while it remains possible to recognize different spending levels across districts, identifying the root cause for funds disbursement is not. The Report of Educational Statistics also groups together officials and administrators when reporting full time equivalent and salaries. This prevents detailed analysis between general

administration and school administration costs. Nevertheless, the report is the best available source of data at this time.

The DOD has implemented a system that harmonizes the reporting of expenditure data. Rather than the districts preparing their own expenditure reports for submission to the Department of Education, the DOD will generate that report for the districts to then verify. The lack of a uniform standard for expenditure reports across all school districts comprises the usefulness of the object code data.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the best single source for expenditure data from all school districts nationwide. All data provided from their reports utilize the same consistent measures. However, a problem arises when comparing data from the NCES with data expressed within the Department of Education's Report of Educational Statistics, as each actor defines the categories for expenditures in different ways. For the State of Delaware analyses, the Department of Education data serve as the primary source. However, the need for consistent methodology for inter-state and inter-district comparisons necessitates the use of NCES. The difference in methodology does not detract from the value of the NCES data for cross-state comparison purposes.

Each state in Mid-Atlantic region utilizes different methods for data collection and reporting, particularly for general and school administration costs. While Delaware's Report of Educational Statistics divides general and school administration expenditures into salaries, benefits, contracted services, supplies, capital outlay, and an 'other' category, Maryland and Pennsylvania use other reporting methods. The NCES attempts to harmonize these data. However, discrepancies were discovered in the NCES data. For Delaware, NCES the administrative cost data measure includes general administrative costs, school administrative costs, deducts capital outlay costs, and includes the 'support services: other' costs when determining total administration costs for each school district. The Delaware DOD Report of Educational Statistics would only use general administration and school administration in any administration measure.

The Maryland State Department of Education produces only selected financial data reports for public use. Expenditures are classified into administration and mid-level administration categories. The state defines administration as expenditures for the general regulation, direction, and control of the local education agency, including such things as board of education services,

office of the superintendent, community relations, business services, and other activities that involve the formulation and execution of education policy as a whole. Mid-level administration consists of expenditures for district-wide administration, supervision of instructional programs, and school administration. The total costs from these functions include similar categories to Delaware administration and support services, such as salaries, contracted services, supplies and equipment, but spending on benefits for administrative employees falls into a broader category for fixed charges. Furthermore, several smaller enrollment level school districts have cooperative agreements for the operation of special education programs, as well as some administrative data processing.

In Maryland, the state and county governments share the responsibility of financing public education. However, the percentage of revenues by source varies by district, with some receiving greater amounts from local sources, and others from the state. The state program known as APEX provides each district with state funds that creates a floor amount for overall per pupil expenditures. These funds are distributed to the county, and then to the district, which has final discretion for which to dedicate these funds. The majority of local revenues comes from property taxes and income tax surcharges, both of which are paid to the State Department of Assessments and Taxation, and then returned to the county governments. The implication is that the state provides the majority of funds for education if one were to include the funds collected for property and income taxation, which are returned to the counties from the state government for disbursement.

Pennsylvania reports general and school administration costs in three categories: administration, business, and central. Administration includes services related to the school board, superintendent, tax assessment and collection, legal services, principals, and various other administrative activities. Business and related services include financial accounting and reporting, budgeting, accounting, payroll, purchasing, printing, and other related activities. Central support services include planning research and data processing related services. The state board of education attempts to equalize spending per pupil by providing additional funds for lower revenue, and low per-pupil expenditure districts. Districts have the ability to charge income tax up to one percent on citizens within their borders to supplement their revenues. However, all monies collected from an income tax must be evenly divided with the municipalities within the school district.

New Jersey's Comprehensive Annual Financial reports classify expenditures into school administrative services and general administrative services under the heading 'Support services', but without dividing them into salaries, benefits, etc. 'Support services' do include an 'Employee benefits' category, but that apparently refers to all the employees under 'Support services'.

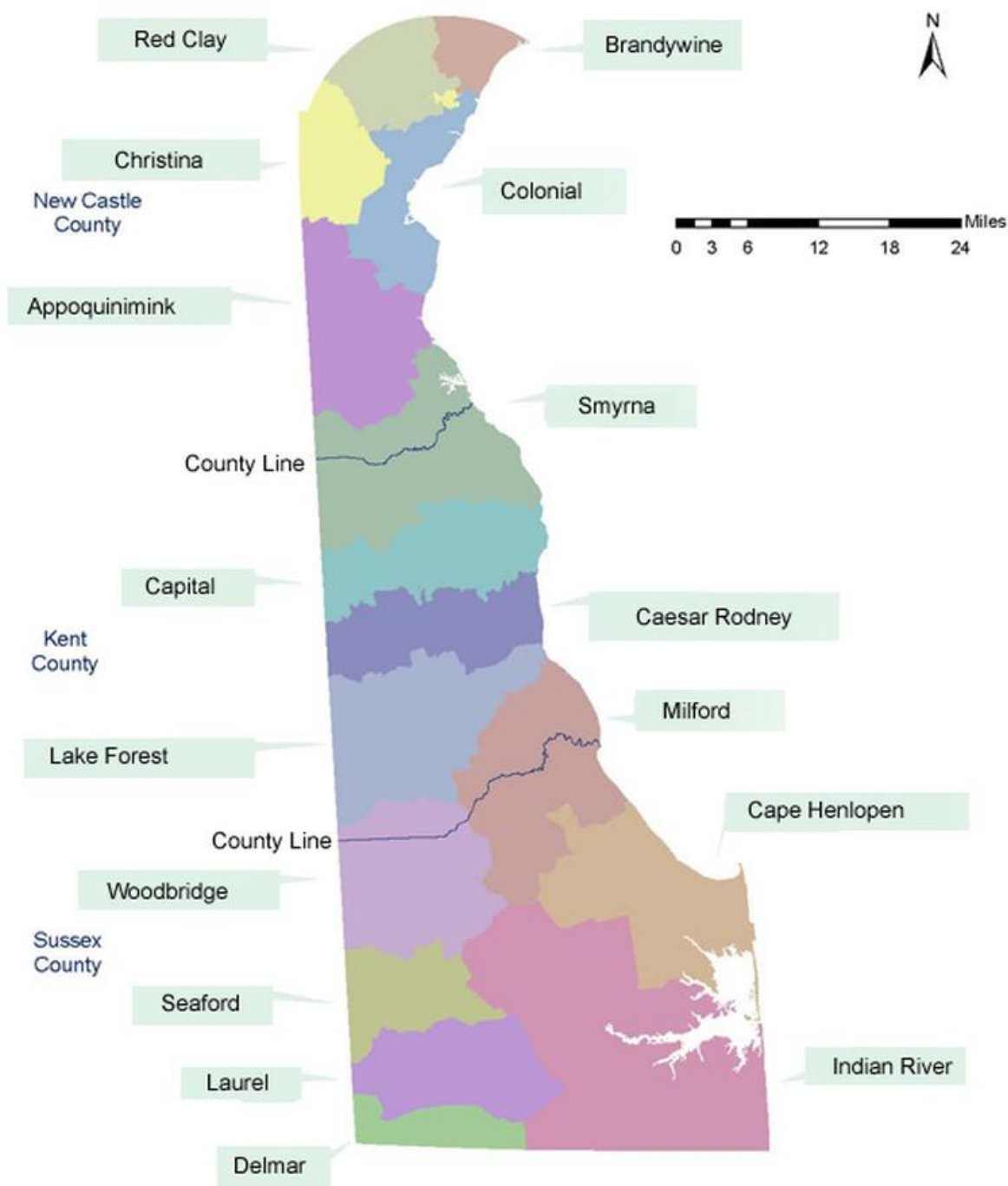
In summary, there is no consensus regarding the reporting of public education financing among states and districts. Public education reporting by states and districts supports the budget process, and thus reflects differing priorities, which impart the comparability of district finances across the lines.

Background

The public education system in Delaware is organized into sixteen school districts, plus three vocational districts. The districts are shown in Figure 4.0 below. The three vocational districts, New Castle Vocational/Technical, Polytech, and Sussex Technical, serve New Castle County, Kent County, and Sussex County respectively.

Figure 4.0
Delaware School Districts

Financing Public Education in Delaware

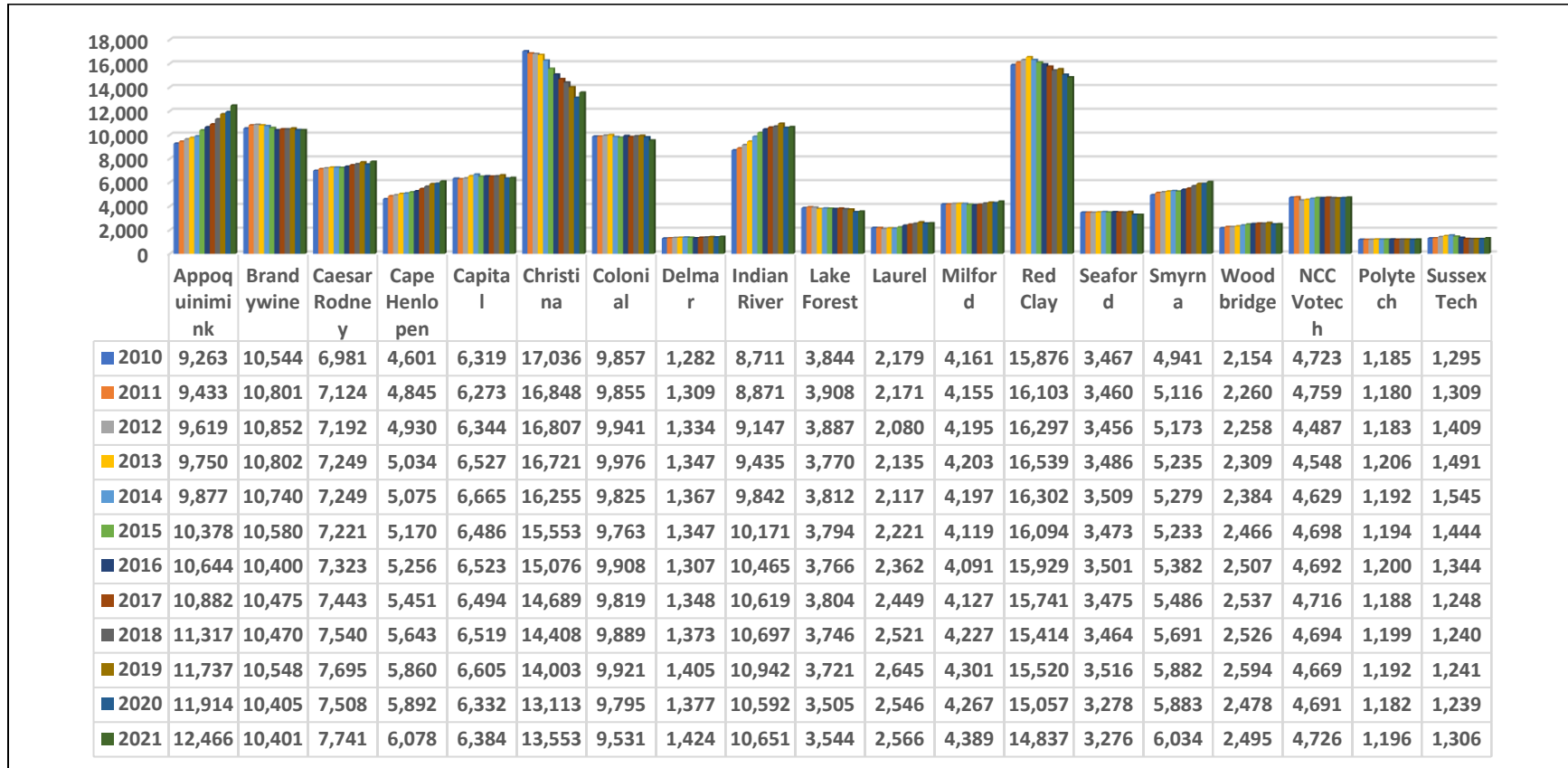


Source: Delaware Department of Education, Vocational Districts (not shown) follow county lines.

Retrieved from the site of StudioJAED: <https://www.studiojaed.com/projects/delaware-state-wide-public-school-facility-assessment>

During the 2021-2022 school year, Delaware's school districts ranged in size from Delmar with 1,424 students to Red Clay with 14,837 students. Figure 4.1 shows the enrollment per district for the 2010-2011 to 2021-2022 school years.

Figure 4.1
Public Enrollment by School District



Source: Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports for School Years 2010-2011 to 2021-2022.

Redrived from <https://education.delaware.gov/data/reports/unitcount/>

District enrollments grew at different rates over the past ten years, as seen in Table 4.0. Appoquinimink experienced the largest increase in the number of enrolled students, growing more than 34% in 11 years (see Table 4.0).

Table 4.2
Enrollment by School Districts

School District	2011-2012	2021-2022	% Change 2012-2022
Appoquinimink	9,433	12,466	32%
Brandywine	10,801	10,401	-4%
Caesar Rodney	7,124	7,741	9%
Cape Henlopen	4,845	6,078	25%
Capital	6,273	6,384	2%
Christina	16,848	13,553	-20%
Colonial	9,855	9,531	-3%
Delmar	1,309	1,424	9%
Indian River	8,871	10,651	20%
Lake Forest	3,908	3,544	-9%
Laurel	2,171	2,566	18%
Milford	4,155	4,389	6%
NCC Votech	4,759	4,726	-1%
Polytech	1,180	1,196	1%
Red Clay	16,103	14,837	-8%
Seaford	3,460	3,276	-5%
Smyrna	5,116	6,034	18%
Sussex Technical	1,309	1,306	0%
Woodbridge	2,260	2,495	10%
State Total	119,780	122,598	2%
Academia Antonia Alonso		613	
Academy of Dover Charter School	256	375	46%
Campus Community Charter School	582	397	-32%
Charter School of New Castle		761	
Charter School of Wilmington	970	971	0%
Delaware Military Academy	559	595	6%

Financing Public Education in Delaware

Early College High School at Delaware State University		342	
East Side Charter School	401	474	18%
First State Military Academy		456	
First State Montessori Academy		600	
Freire Charter School		503	
Gateway Charter School	183	178	
Great Oaks Charter School		285	
Kuumba Academy Charter School	260	637	145%
Las Americas Aspira Academy	304	1,225	303%
MOT Charter School	677	1,376	103%
Newark Charter School	1,344	2,458	83%
Odyssey Charter School District	500	1,988	298%
Positive Outcomes Charter School	125	104	-17%
Providence Creek Academy Charter School	688	702	2%
Sussex Academy of Arts and Sciences	335	1,120	234%
Sussex Montessori School		341	
Thomas A. Edison Charter School	729	700	-4%
Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security	117		
Delaware College Preparatory Academy	276		
Maurice J. Moyer Academy	192		
Family Foundation Academy	751		
Pencader Business and Finance Charter High School	507		
Prestige Academy	300		
Reach Academy for Girls	266		

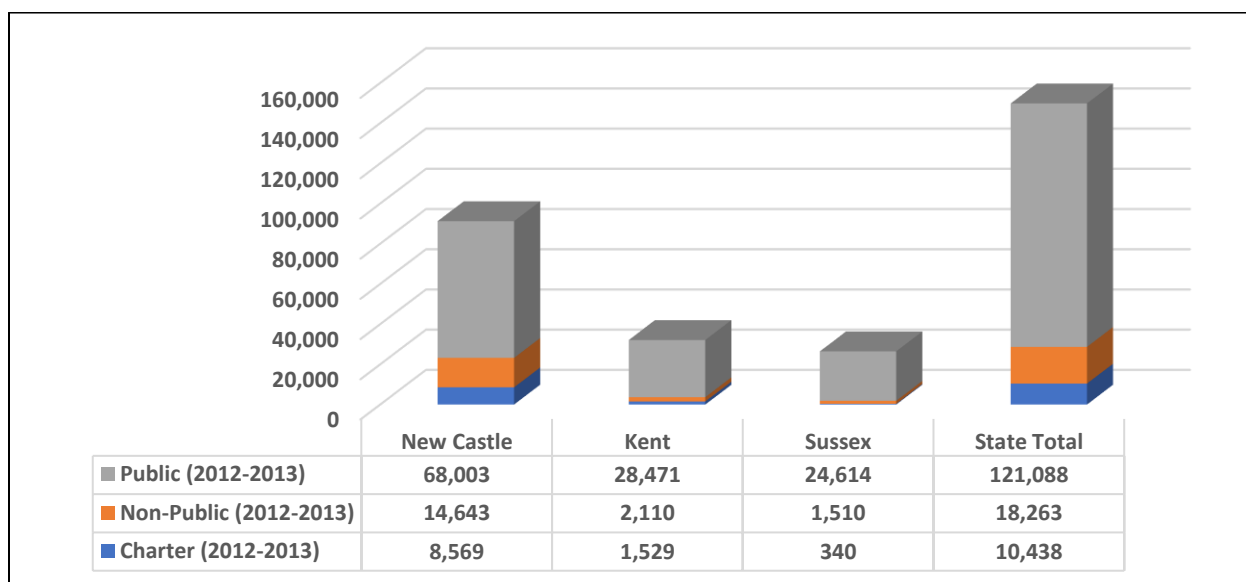
Charter Total	10,322	17,201	67%
Grand Total	130,102	139,799	7%

Source: Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports for School Years 2010-2011 to 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: <https://education.delaware.gov/data/reports/unitcount/>

Over the 2011-2012 to 2021-2022 period, some districts experienced declining enrollment in public schools: from 1% in the NCC Votech school district to 20% in Cristina school district. This situation reflects demographic shifts within the state and possible competition from Charter and private schools.

Figure 4.2
Enrollment by County 2012-2013



Source: Annual Nonpublic School Report 2012-2013.

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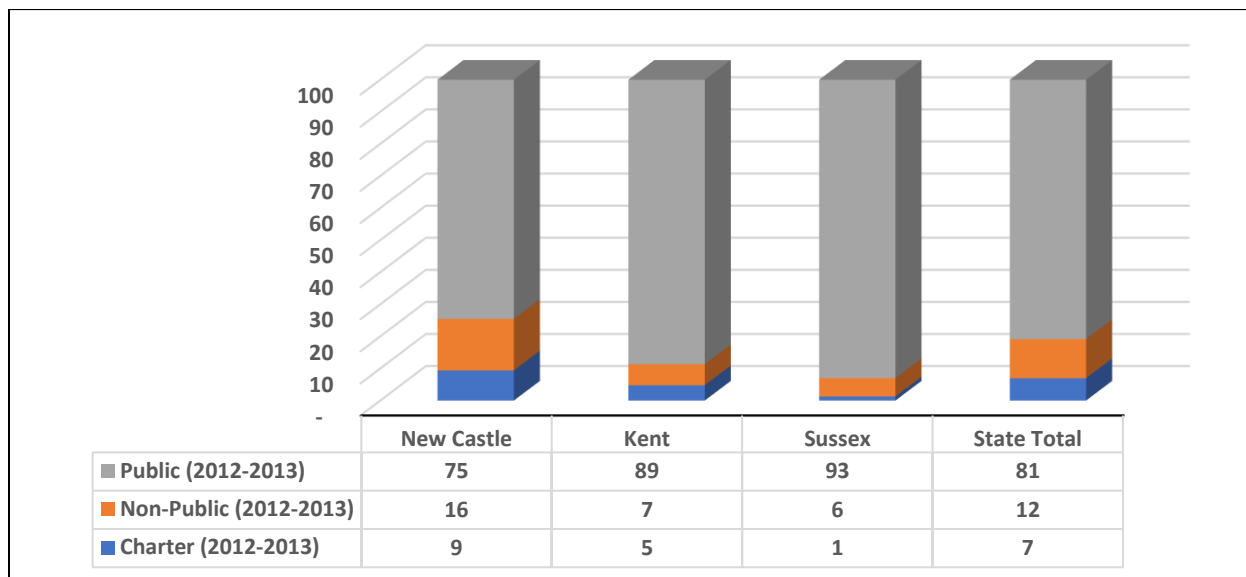
<https://fvacg197xz747ur7h3vi44up-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2012REPORT.pdf>

Source: Report on Education Statistics 2012-2013.

Retrieved from:

https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/167/Fiscal%20district%20financial%20report%20REGULAR%20SCHOOL_FY2013_2014826.pdf

Figure 4.3
Enrollment by County 2012-2013 (in %)



Source: Annual Nonpublic School Report 2012-2013.

Retrieved from:

<https://fvacg197xz747ur7h3vi44up-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2012REPORT.pdf>

Source: Report on Education Statistics 2012-2013.

Retrieved from:

https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/167/Fiscal%20district%20financial%20report%20REGULAR%20SCHOOL_FY2013_2014826.pdf

Figure 4.4
Enrollment by County 2021-2022

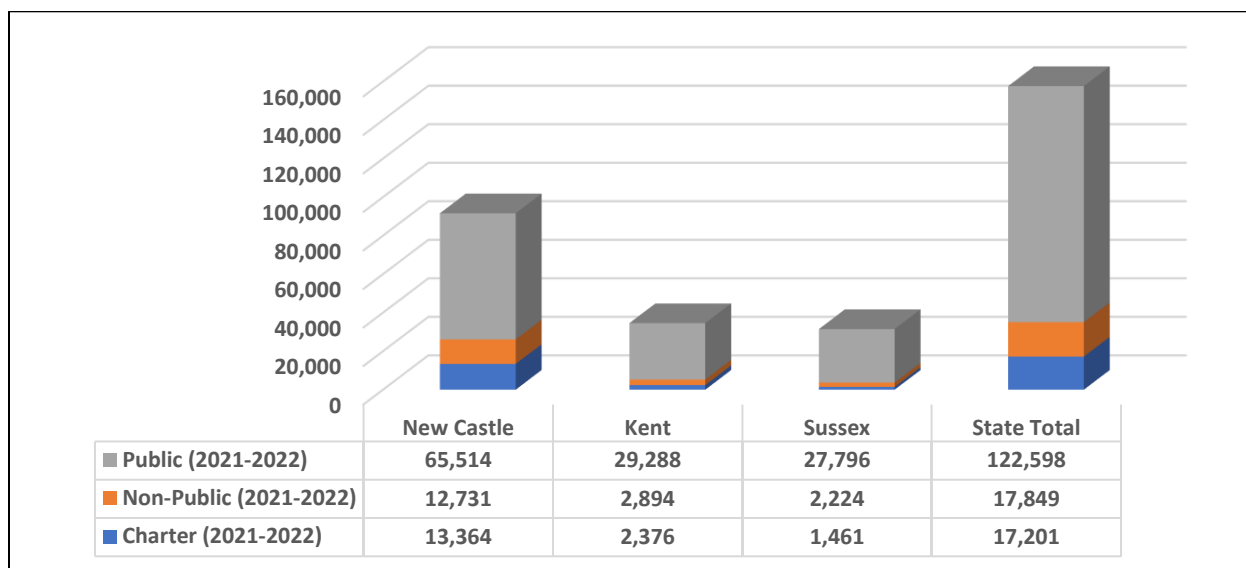
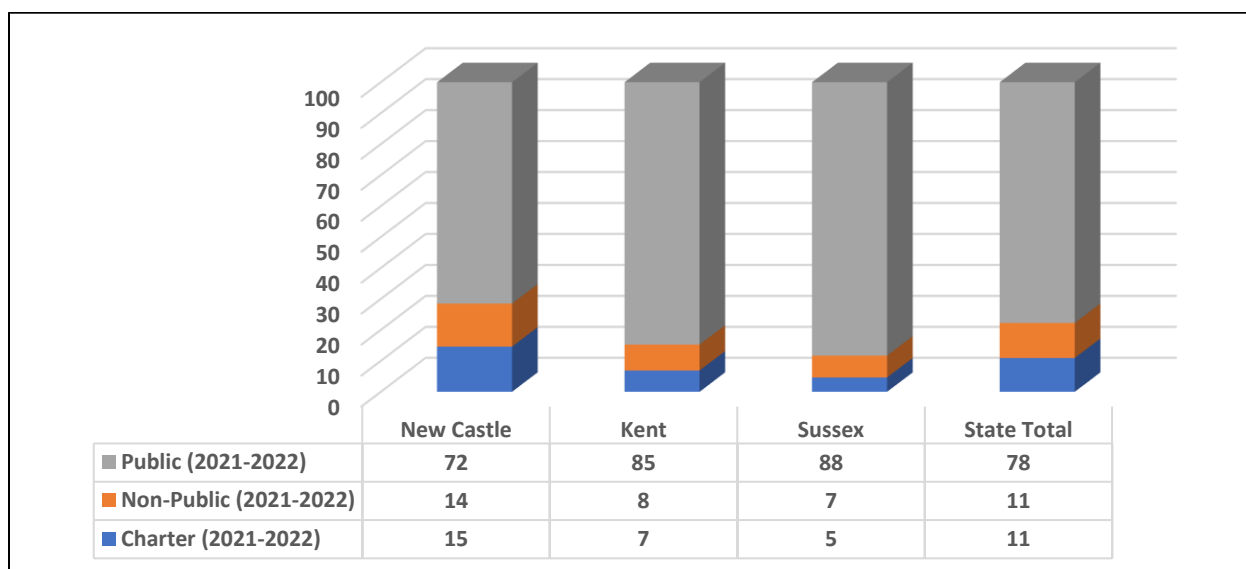


Figure 4.5
Enrollment by County 2021-2022 (in %)



Source: Non-Public Enrollment (2021-2022): 2021 Annual Delaware Non-Public School Report. Retrieved from <https://fvacg197xz747ur7h3vi44up-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NPSReport12.2021.pdf>

Source: Public and Charter Enrollment (2021-2022): Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Report for School Year 2021-2022. Retrieved from: https://fvacg197xz747ur7h3vi44up-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/21_UnitCountReport.pdf

The preceding figures illustrate the composition of enrollment by county for the years 2012-2013 and 2021-2022. In New Castle County, 75% of students attended public (non-Charter schools) in 2012-2013. By 2021-2022, this figure was 72%. The impact from charter schools keeps increasing. Even though some charter schools close with time, other charter schools open, and those that already exist expand to serve additional grade levels. For example, Las Américas ASPIRA Academy opened its doors in 2011, and in the school year 2012-2013 served just 338 students in grades K-5. In the school year 2021-2022, the Academy was already serving 1,225 students across two campuses in Newark, Delaware: grades K-8 on the East Campus, and a high school on the West Campus (Las Américas ASPIRA Academy).

In Kent County, 89% of pupils attended public (non-Charter) schools in 2012-2013. By 2021-2022, this figure decreased to 85%. This change was driven by a growth in the number of students attending private schools and the emergence of new charter schools. Sussex County experienced a similar decrease in the proportion of students enrolled at public schools. Public (non-Charter) decreased from 93% to 88%. All counties also sustained an increase in the total number of students. At the same time, the expansion of school choice affected the mix of students attending different types of schools: public, non-public, and charter.

Enrollment directly impacts the level of state funding that school districts receive in that it generates funding units from the state. Districts then allocate these funds across schools. There is a '98 percent rule'⁶ that requires schools to receive 98% of the funding they generate through enrollment. School district can waive this rule only through a public hearing.

Examining the public/private/charter mix at the district level is risky. One of the reasons for that is that students may attend private and charter schools irrespective of their school district residency. For example, an increase in enrollment in a private or charter school in the Brandywine school district does not necessarily imply that the additional students reside in the Brandywine

⁶ Title 14 Education, Free Public Schools: Chapter 17. State Appropriations §1704 (4) reads as follows: Each local school board shall allocate Division I units to schools in its district such that as of the last school day of October each school receives not less than 98% of the Division I units it generates as a result of the actual unit count. A local school board may waive this subsection after voting to waive it at a public meeting noticed for that purpose. Any local school board seeking such a waiver shall do so on or before December 1 of each year. Notice for such a meeting shall be placed in the local newspaper for 2 consecutive weeks before the meeting and shall be posted on the door of any school affected for the same time period, and a copy shall be sent to the principal, teacher association building representative, and Parent Teacher Organization/Parent Teacher Association parent leader of any affected school. The notice shall include the procedures for such persons to provide oral or written comments on the proposed waiver to the local school board. Notice of any approved waiver shall be sent to the same persons (Delaware Code Online, n.d.).

School District. It is also important to recognize that school choice affects enrollment differently depending on grade level. Vocational/Technical schools usually serve grades nine through twelve. Charter schools may vary in their service (see Table 4.2 below).

Table 4.3
Active Delaware Charter Schools

Charter School	Location	Grades Served
Academia Antonia Alonso	Wilmington	K-5 (600)
Academy of Dover Charter School	Dover	K-5 (370)
Campus Community Charter School	Dover	K-8 (412)
Charter School of New Castle	New Castle	K-8 (790)
Charter School of Wilmington	Wilmington (Red Clay)	9-12 (970)
Delaware Military Academy	Wilmington (Red Clay)	9-12 (715)
Early College High School at Delaware State University	Dover	9-12 (425)
East Side Charter School	Wilmington	K-8 (460)
First State Military Academy	Clayton	9-12 (475)
First State Montessori Academy	Wilmington	K-8 (650)
Freire Charter School	Wilmington	8-12 (500)
Gateway Charter School	Wilmington	3-8 (216)
Great Oaks Charter School	Wilmington	6-10 (579)
Kuumba Academy Charter School	Wilmington	K-8 (700)
Las Americas Aspira Academy	Newark	K-12 (1,197)
MOT Charter School	Middletown	K-12 (1,392)
Newark Charter School	Newark	K-12 (2,470)
Odyssey Charter School District	Wilmington	K-12 (2,004)
Positive Outcomes Charter School	Camden	7-12 (120)
Providence Creek Academy Charter School	Clayton	K-8 (708)
Sussex Academy of Arts and Sciences	Georgetown	6-12 (1,079)

Sussex Montessori School	Seaford	K-6 (325)
Thomas A. Edison Charter School	Wilmington	K-8 (745)

Source: Delaware Department of Education, List of Active Charter Schools, last modified on February 24, 2022.

Retrieved from: <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/1910>

Expenditures

The annual Financial Educational Statistics report, a joint publication of the State Board of Education and Department of Education, is the primary source for district-level expenditure data. The most recent data covers the 2018-2019 school year. There are several questions that need to be addressed when examining the financing of public education. How have funds been allocated in the past? How is new funding allocated? How are school staff allocated across public school functions? To answer these questions, a series of expenditure and staff measures are used.

Per pupil expenditures are used to aid the comparability between districts. Utilizing a twenty-year time horizon helps to smooth any year-to-year volatility in expenditures. Removing monetary inflation from the expenditures creates real (inflation-adjusted) expenditures levels. This will indicate whether there was real growth in resources to public education. The effect of inflation on the costs of purchasing inputs absorbs a substantial portion of the increased public education expenditures. Between 1999-2000 and 2018-2019, current public education expenditures in the state (from all sources) rose from \$978 million to over \$2 billion.

Table 5.2 illustrates the allocation of school-district spending across expenditure categories in 1999-2000, the apportionment of the share of total spending in 2018-2019, the allotment of the increase in real per-pupil spending that occurred over the period in dollar terms, and finally as a percentage of total real per-pupil increase. The fluctuations in spending levels for different categories were not particularly significant between 1999-2000 and 2018-2019.

Table 5.0
Allocation of Expenditure Increase, 1999-2000 to 2018-2019

	Share of total actual expenses (1999-2000) (in %)	Share of total actual expenses (2018-2019) (in %)	Change in dollar terms	Share of change (in %)
Net Instruction	60	56.8	775,676,196	55
Student Support	4.4	5	77,916,769	5
Instructional Staff	1.4	1.7	27,377,867	2
General Administration	1.1	1.3	21,591,184	2
School Administration	5.4	5.8	86,108,785	6
Operations and Maintenance	10.2	9.2	122,278,496	9
Student Transportation	5.6	5.0	62,988,640	4
Other Support	8.8	8.8	123,469,651	9
Food Services	3.1	6.4	123,981,026	9
Net Current Expense	100	100	1,421,388,614	100

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports, 1999-2000 and 2018-2019 school years.

Table 35 and Figure 31 for school year 1999-2000; Table 38 and Figure 56 for school year 2018-2019.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

The first column of Table 5.0 shows each category's share of 1999-2000 current expenditures. Net instruction received the largest share of current expenditures in 1999-2000 (60%). Column two reports each category's share of 2018-2019 current expenditures. Column three shows the change in current expenditures between the school years of 1999-2000 and 2018-2019 in dollar terms, and column four – the same change in percent.

The data show that instructional expenditures comprise 56.8% of the operating budget, decreasing slightly from 60% in 1999. Thus, as schools utilized additional expenditures, fewer funds were directed towards the instruction category. The shares of real per-pupil expenditures on student support and instructional staff support increased slightly over the period. The data also show what have become typical expenditure distribution patterns: about 6.7% for student and

instructional support, 2% for district administration, 6% for site administration, 9% for operations and maintenance, and about 20.2% for transportation, food, and other services.

General administrative costs received a relatively small share of new real per-pupil expenditures. School administration costs received a similar share over the period. The share of the new real per-pupil expenditures for operations and maintenance decreased slightly over the period, lowering the share of total expenditures to 9.2%. Student transportation's share of total current expenditures in 2018-2019 is slightly less than twenty years ago, decreasing to 5%. Other support's share remained the same, whereas the food services' share of net current expenses increased. Operations and maintenance's share of current expenses decreased slightly and student transportation, other support services, and food services each comprise a relatively small share of net current expenses.

Since education services are organized by local education systems – school districts – and provided in schools and classrooms, statewide expenditure patterns need to be disaggregated to these lower levels. Translating these broad expenditures into staffing patterns is the next step in analyzing what happens to the education dollar (Table 5.1).

Administrators do not appear to represent a large portion of the total staffing on average. District, or central office, administrators' totals range from 3.7% in the case of Cape Henlopen school district to 15.4% in the case of the Early College High School at Delaware State University (ECHS at Del State). The only exception is Great Oaks Charter School where the administration staff comprises 27.1% of the total staff employed. The table shows that teachers as a percentage of staffing by district range from 39.3% (CDAP SCOPE-North) to 80% (Providence Creek). Teacher aides range from 1.4% of staff (Academia Antonia Alonso) to 12.5% (Great Oaks Charter School). Collectively, teachers and teacher aids account for from 49% (Cape Henlopen) to 82% (Providence Creek) of district staff.⁷ When questioning why only 57% of expenditures is spent on instruction, one answer is that operations, maintenance, transportation, and administration account for nearly a third of public-school expenditures.

⁷ These data reflect staffing from all funding sources: Federal, State, and local.

Table 5.1
Staff Employed in Public Schools, 2019-2020 (percent distribution)

	Administration (%)	Classroom Teacher (%)	Instructional Support (%)	Pupil Support (%)	Skilled and Service Worker (%)	Total (%)
State	5.5	51.8	5.3	5.5	32.0	100
Academy of Dover	6.1	57.6	3.0	6.1	27.3	100
Caesar Rodney	4.1	51.3	5.4	5.8	33.3	100
Campus Comm	8.8	70.6	5.9	2.9	11.8	100
Capital	4.2	50.3	4.9	7.8	32.8	100
ECHS at Del State	15.4	50.0	7.7	7.7	19.2	100
First State Military	7.0	55.8	7.0	4.7	25.6	100
Lake Forest	5.8	55.0	5.0	4.1	30.2	100
Milford	5.1	59.4	3.1	5.5	26.8	100
Polytech	5.3	57.0	5.3	6.0	26.5	100
Positive Outcomes	13.8	51.7	3.4	6.9	24.1	100
Providence Creek	6.0	80.0	2.0	2.0	30.0	100
Smyrna	5.4	53.4	5.7	5.5	30.0	100
Academia Antonia Alonso	11.4	55.7	1.4	2.9	28.6	100
Appoquinimink	6.6	57.0	5.6	5.5	25.3	100
Aspira Academy	8.1	52.8	8.9	0.8	29.3	100
Brandywine	7.0	55.5	5.6	4.7	27.2	100
Charter of New Castle	13.7	64.4	2.7	8.2	11.0	100
Christina	4.8	45.7	5.3	5.9	38.2	100
Colonial	4.4	45.8	7.1	7.4	35.3	100
East Side Charter	12.5	51.6	7.8	6.3	21.9	100
First State Montessori	10.4	66.7	8.3	10.4	4.2	100
Freire Charter School	10.4	54.2	8.3	4.2	22.9	100

Gateway Lab	5.3	60.5	5.3	10.5	18.4	100
Great Oaks Charter School	27.1	52.1	12.5	2.1	6.3	100
Kuumba Academy	6.6	67.1	7.9	2.6	15.8	100
MOT	6.1	60.6	3.8	2.3	27.3	100
NCC Votech	5.5	59.6	3.5	2.6	28.8	100
Newark Charter	5.6	60.8	4.3	3.4	25.9	100
Odyssey Charter	4.9	76.1	2.0	2.9	14.1	100
Red Clay	5.9	48.2	6.5	5.2	34.2	100
Thomas Edison	8.8	53.8	3.8	3.8	30.0	100
Cape Henlopen	3.7	46.5	2.3	6.4	41.1	100
CDAP SCOPE-North	3.6	39.3	10.7	7.1	39.3	100
Delmar	4.5	54.9	4.5	3.8	32.3	100
Indian River	5.1	52.9	4.7	6.2	31.0	100
Laurel	5.8	58.0	4.4	3.7	28.1	100
Seaford	4.8	47.6	5.4	5.0	37.1	100
Sussex Academy	10.8	55.4	5.4	1.4	27.0	100
Sussex Tech	6.9	53.5	5.7	3.1	30.8	100
Woodbridge	4.4	50.7	5.0	3.2	36.7	100

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Detail Number of Staff 2019-2020.

The education personnel data in this report are based on the snapshot of early November pay period.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Educational Personnel Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/EducationalPersonnelReports)

The major portion of the education budget goes towards spending on instruction; but a large portion of instructional expenditures occurs outside the regular classroom on services for special-needs students. Districts also provide a host of non-education services. Districts run buses, heat, and clean buildings, serve meals, and administer a complex system. The result is that only a small portion of the education dollar goes towards regular education instruction.

The proportion of 57% spent on instruction is slightly lower than the proportion across the districts in Delaware. Research examining spending across a number of different district characteristics, including spending level, rural and urban location, high and low percentages of minority students, as well as students from low-income families, still shows that spending patterns

are remarkably consistent. The proportion of spending on instruction varied from about 57% (Sussex Technical) to 68% (Delmar) for all of the districts in Delaware (Delaware Department of Education, 2020e).

Table 5.2
Delaware Public Schools Expenditures by Function by Level of Enrollment (%)

Component of Current Expenditures	Level of Enrollment		
	Low	Medium	High
Net Instruction	61.2	63.8	62.1
Students Support	3.6	3.9	6
Instructional Staff Support	2.7	1.3	1.6
General Administration	1.3	1.2	1.1
School Administration	6.2	6.6	6.9
Operations and Maintenance	10.5	9.4	10.3
Student Transportation	7.3	5	4.6
Other Support	2.8	4	3.7
Food Services	4.4	4.8	3.7
Net Current Expenses	100	100	100

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Report, 2018-2019; Table 34.

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Table 5.2 arranges average district expenditures by level of enrollment. The allocation of expenditures has a level of stability across all district sizes. Net instruction receives from slightly over 61% to almost 64% of expenditures on average. Student support and instructional support comprise between about 5% and 7.6%. General administration consumes slightly over 1% in small, medium, and high enrollment districts. Operations and maintenance comprise around 10% across the three district size classes.

Table 5.3 presents expenditure data by school district, categorized by level of spending (quartiles). Net instruction comprises 67% of expenditures in low spending districts. This compares with 51.5% in high spending districts. Nevertheless, high spending districts spent 28% more on instruction per pupil (\$10,954 versus \$8,528). This infers that as per pupil expenditures rise, expenditures per category rise in unison. In general, the pupil/teacher ratios have relative uniformity across the districts. Thus, differences in spending on teachers reflected primarily through the differences in teacher salary levels.

Table 5.3
Delaware Public Schools
Expenditures by Function by Level of Spending (2018-2019)

Component of Per Pupil Expenditures	1st quartile (\$)	Percent (%)	2nd quartile (\$)	Percent (%)	3rd quartile (\$)	Percent (%)	4th quartile (\$)	Percent (%)
Net Instruction	8,528	67.0	9,560	64.2	9,952	59.7	10,954	51.5
Student Support	445	3.5	555	3.7	680	4.1	1,612	7.6
Instructional Staff	183	1.4	260	1.7	384	2.3	902	4.2
General Administration	154	1.2	187	1.3	238	1.4	370	1.7
School Administration	741	5.8	897	6	1,140	6.8	1,325	6.2
Operations and Maintenance	1,219	9.6	1,451	9.7	1,867	11.2	2,361	11.1
Student Transportation	617	4.8	807	5.4	1,021	6.1	1,485	7
Other Support	272	2.1	554	3.7	671	4	1,483	7
Food Services	583	4.6	631	4.2	726	4.4	797	3.7
Net Current Expense	12,742	100	14,902	100	16,679	100	21,289	100

Financing Public Education in Delaware

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Report, 2018-2019; Table 34 and Table 38.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Table 5.4 illustrates the change in the share of current expenditures per pupil from 2008-2009 to 2018-2019.

Table 5.4 source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports, 2008-2009 and 2018-2019; Tables 38.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Table 5.4
Change in Current Expenditure Shares 2008-2009 to 2018-2019
Instruction and Support Services (%)

New Castle County																		
School district	Net Instruction		Students Support		Instructional Staff Support		General Administration		School administration		Operations and Maint.		Student Transportation		Other Support		Food Services	
	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19
Appoquinimink	65	64	4	5	0	1	1	2	9	8	11	8	7	5	2	5	1	3
Brandywine	61	61	6	5	2	3	1	1	6	8	14	12	4	3	6	5	1	3
Christina	62	56	4	5	1	2	1	1	6	6	11	13	9	6	5	6	1	4
Colonial	64	62	4	3	2	1	0	1	7	8	10	10	5	6	6	3	1	5
NCC Votech	59	59	5	4	0	4	1	1	10	7	10	12	10	8	5	2	1	3
Red Clay	64	64	4	10	1	2	1	1	6	7	12	8	5	4	7	0	1	4
Kent County																		
School district	Net Instruction		Students Support		Instructional Staff Support		General Administration		School administration		Operations and Maint.		Student Transportation		Other Support		Food Services	
	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19
Caesar Rodney	67	65	0	5	1	1	1	1	6	6	8	7	0	5	4	4	1	5
Capital	66	64	4	4	1	1	1	1	3	5	12	10	5	5	6	5	1	5
Polytech	60	60	3	3	1	2	3	2	4	8	11	13	9	8	9	2	1	4
Lake Forest	59	62	8	3	0	1	1	2	4	7	9	9	7	6	10	5	1	5
Milford	65	64	3	4	2	0	1	1	6	7	9	10	8	7	5	2	1	5
Smyrna	63	64	5	5	2	1	1	1	6	5	11	9	6	5	5	4	1	5
Sussex County																		
School district	Net Instruction		Students Support		Instructional Staff Support		General Administration		School administration		Operations and Maint.		Student Transportation		Other Support		Food Services	
	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19	08/09	18/19
Cape Henlopen	64	64	6	3	3	2	1	1	6	8	10	10	7	4	2	4	1	4
Delmar	63	68	6	3	1	2	4	2	4	5	12	7	5	4	4	3	1	5
Indian River	64	67	5	3	1	2	1	1	6	6	11	9	7	5	3	4	1	4
Laurel	62	61	5	3	1	2	3	3	7	6	12	12	7	6	2	2	1	6
Seaford	66	61	6	4	2	6	1	1	6	5	9	9	6	9	4	0	1	5
Sussex Technical	61	57	5	2	0	2	3	1	6	4	10	14	10	9	4	9	1	3
Woodbridge	61	64	6	3	2	2	2	2	7	5	10	10	8	7	4	4	1	5

Summary

Instruction received 62% of per pupil spending on average in 2018-2019. District administration staff as a percentage of total staff tended to be lower in larger districts, which suggests economies of scale (see Table 5.2). All ranges of school districts including low, medium, and high enrollment districts spent slightly more than 1% on current general administration expenditures.

There was little evidence that larger districts dedicated a greater share of expenditures for instruction than smaller districts. The districts with enrollment greater than 10,000 spent 62.1% of current expenditures on net instruction. The districts with between 6,000 and 9,000 students enrolled spent 63.8% on net instruction, while the districts with less than 5,000 students enrolled spent 61.2% of their budget on net instruction.

Administrative Costs

A central point of focus for this study is the administrative costs for each school district. The Delaware Department of Education identifies two branches of administrative expenses: *General Administration*, including Chief School Officers, Assistant Superintendents, Administrative Assistants, and Clerical; and *School Administration*, including Principals, Assistant Principals and Clerical.

Although not labeled as administrative costs, some activities that could be considered administration are reported as other support services. The definition of other support services is directors of administration, support specialists, support supervisors, and administrative assistants and clerical staff not classified as general or school administration. The Delaware Department of Education distinguishes between school administration and other support services on the basis that the former is concerned with policies and procedures, while the latter is concerned with the general operation of the school.

School districts earn administrative units on the following basis:

Table 6.0
Units and Professional Staff

Employee	Units
Superintendent	1 for every district
Assistant Superintendent	1 per 300 units per district, but not to exceed a total of 2 per district
Principals	1 per 15 or more unites per district
Assistant Principals	1 per 30 units with additional assistant added at 55 units; after 55 units, one assistant principal may be employed per every 20 additional units beyond the first 55 units.
Driver Education Specialist	1 per each 125 10 th grade students or 1/5 of a teacher for every 25 10 th grade students

Directors	1 per the first 200 units and 1 for each additional full 100 units, not to exceed a total of 6 per local district
Administrative Assistants	1 per local school district
Supervisors	1 per 150 units; districts with not enough units will receive a fractional part of the first supervisor
Supervisors of Transportation	1 per 7,000 or more pupils transported
Supervisors of School Lunch (a)	1 per district with less than 500 units having 4 or more schools with lunch programs
Supervisors of School Lunch (b)	1 in any district having 500 units or more; also, each district shall employ additional supervisors so that the ratio is 1 to 300 units, in which the additional supervisors are paid from receipts of cafeteria funds
Supervisors of Buildings and Grounds	1 per district if the district had 95 or more building units
Clerical (Section 1308 (a))	1 per 10 units up to the first 100 units and 1 additional for each additional 12 units
Custodial	1 per 12 building units (building units based on space, not units of pupil)
Cafeteria Managers	1 per cafeteria
Cafeteria Workers	1 worker for 7 hours for every 100 meals
Class Aides	2 – in lieu of teachers in some education settings ILC

Source: Best, E., & Ratledge, E. (2020). *Financing Public Education in Delaware 2019*, (pp. 88-89).

It is obvious that school and district enrollment units play an important role in funding of administrative staff. The more units a school and district generate, the more state funding they receive. There is an incentive, therefore, for districts and schools to organize in such a way as to maximize their unit allotments. A unit generates funding based on the state salary scale, where funds vary with education and experience. The state funds then are supplemented with local revenue funds.

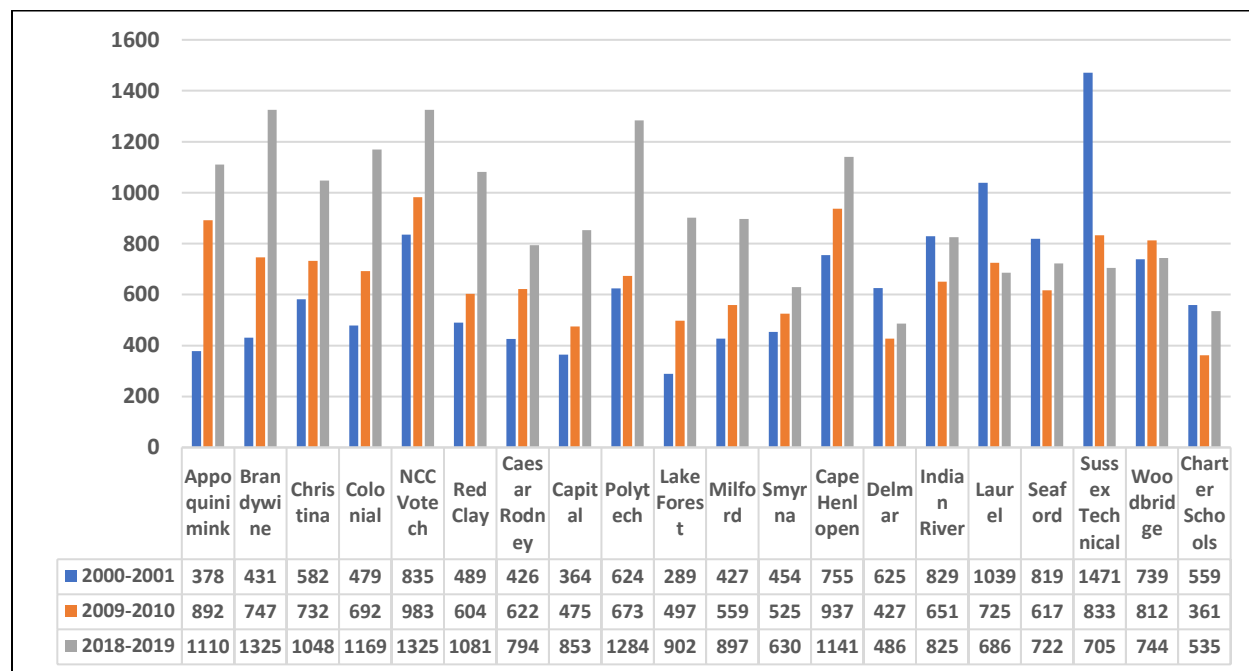
Regardless of district size, there must be provisions for a superintendent (the statewide average superintendent base salary is \$144,543 per year (Salary Expert, n.d.), along with an administrative assistant. A school principal is funded per 15 units, for which all schools qualify. Enrollment units earn additional assistant principals and assistant superintendents for a district.

Accruing the necessary units for an assistant principal depends on school size. A 500-student high school will earn $\frac{1}{2}$ assistant principal. A further 100 high school students, will earn a full assistant principal. To earn a further $\frac{1}{2}$ assistant principal requires a high school of 1,000 regular students. Those districts with preferences for smaller schools may therefore be at a disadvantage in accruing the necessary units to qualify for state funding of these positions.

The following series of figures and tables illustrates the general administration and school administration costs per pupil per district. Within each of these accounts, there are the following sub-accounts: salaries, benefits, contracted services, supplies, capital outlay, and other. Adjusting administrative costs to per pupil levels aids the inter-district comparisons. Among the districts with higher school administrative expenses per pupil are the Vocational/Technical districts. This can be attributed to their relatively large budgets and small enrollment count of only high school aged students.

School Administration

Figure 5.0
School Administrative Expenses per Pupil per District



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports: 2000-2001 (Table 41), 2009-2010 (Table 43), and 2018-2019 (Table 43).

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Brandywine and New Castle Vo-Tech were among the highest spenders on school administration expenses per pupil. Each spent \$1,325 per pupil on administrative costs in 2018-2019. Delmar – a relatively small school district that enrolled only 1,373 students in 2018-2019 had one of the lowest school administrative expenses per pupil equaling just \$486 that school year (Delaware Department of Education, 2020f). Charter schools spent \$535 per pupil on school administration.

Table 6.1
Total School Enrollment by District and Grade 2021-2022

School District	K	Grade 1-6	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-12
Appoquinimink	774	4847	1705	3216
Brandywine	649	3911	1437	2567
Christina	1,063	5404	1724	2,148
Colonial	603	3791	1336	1820
NCC Votech				4110
Red Clay	971	6046	2232	2832
Caesar Rodney	501	3013	1103	1843
Capital	502	2337	792	1437
Polytech				1064
Lake Forest	261	1428	501	703
Milford	332	1748	631	974
Smyrna	353	2362	880	1412
Cape Henlopen	404	2367	749	1493
Delmar		331	365	613
Indian River	727	4225	1466	2490
Laurel	162	990	389	596
Seaford	234	1382	475	653
Sussex Technical				1176
Woodbridge	170	1019	328	557

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Report for School Year 2021-2022. Charter schools and special education students excluded.

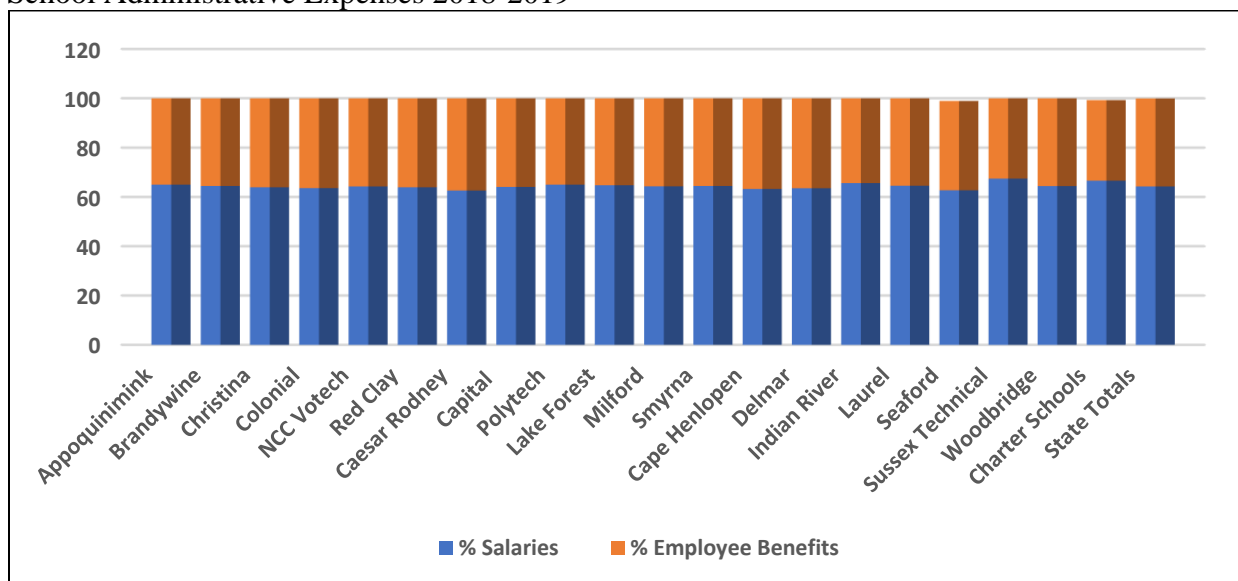
Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

For a school district to receive additional financial support for school administrators above the core level of one principal and administrative assistant, the district must have schools with large enrollments in order to generate funding units. Small schools must always spend a certain floor amount on administration costs, thus their per pupil costs may appear to be greater than schools of medium and large enrollment size that have more students over which to spread the costs. For the smallest schools, rising enrollment works to lower school administration per pupil expenditures. However, once the enrollment level generates enough units to fund another administrator, the amount of total school administration expenses increases accordingly, raising the per pupil expenses while decreasing the number of pupils per administrator. Thus, the per pupil

school administration expense rate declines as enrollment increases until the level when another unit is generated, at which point the process repeats itself.

Figure 5.1
School Administrative Expenses by District

School Administrative Expenses 2018-2019



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Report 2018-2019; Table 43.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

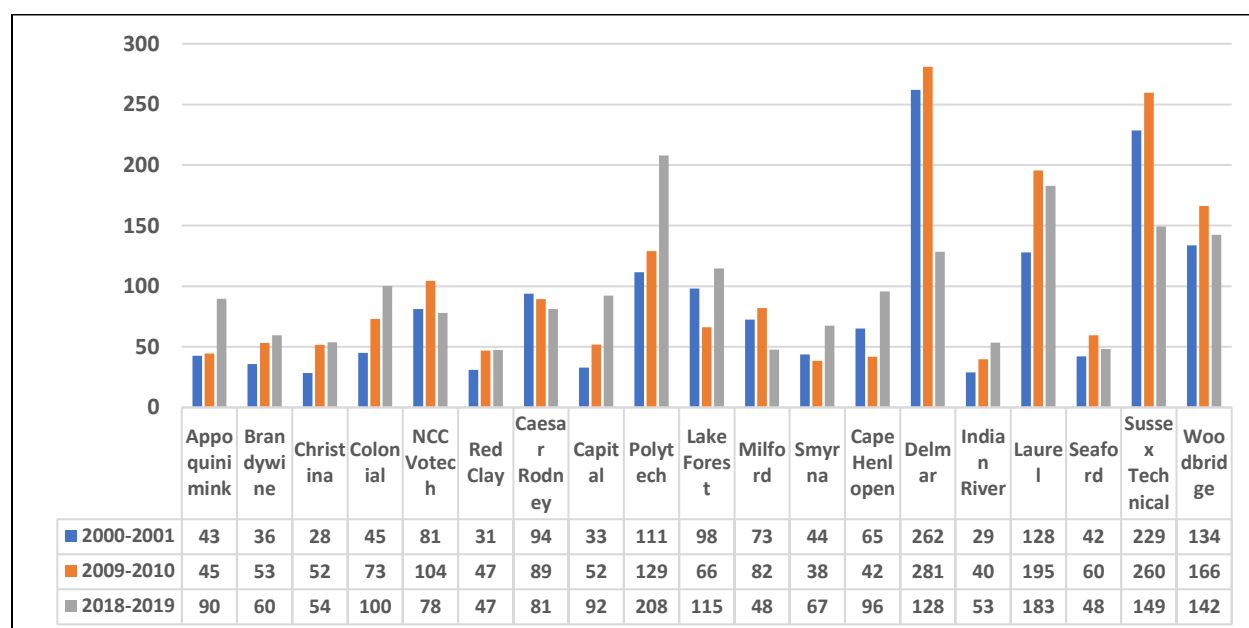
Figure 5.1 shows the share of school administration expenses by category. Salaries and benefits comprise the majority of administrative expenses. The variation across districts is very slight. In general, districts' salaries and benefits comprise over 90% of school administration costs.

General Administration

General administrative expenses per pupil were rising in many districts in 2018-2019 but not in all of them.

Figure 5.2
General Administrative Expenses per Pupil by District

General Administrative Salary Expenses per Pupil



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Reports: 2000-2001 (Table 41), 2009-2010 (Table 43), and 2018-2019 (Table 43).

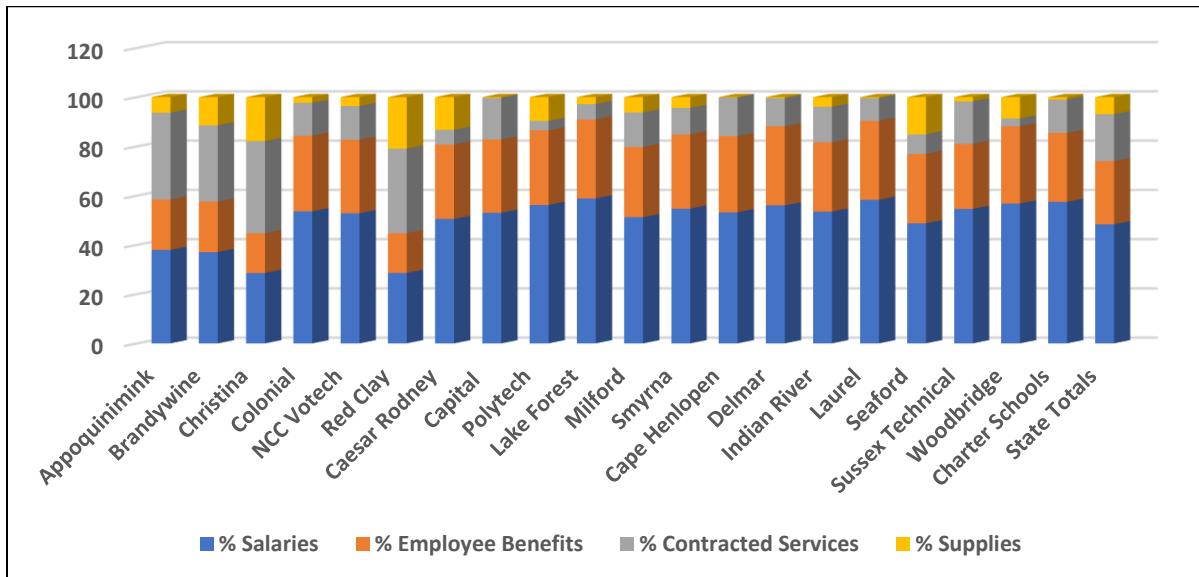
Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Financial-Educational-Statistics-Reports)

Figure 5.2 shows the rate and change of general administrative costs per pupil by district over the nineteen-year period between 2000-2001 and 2018-2019. The smaller districts that have low enrollment figures, such as Delmar, Laurel, and Woodbridge, and vocational-technical districts, have the highest general administrative costs per pupil. The reason for that is that all districts have the same basic allotment for general administration, no matter what their enrollment size happens to be, i.e., all districts have at least a superintendent and administrative assistant.

The following Figure 5.3 shows the composition of general administration costs by expenditure type. General administration salaries as a percentage of total general administrative costs vary greatly among districts. This variation can be partially explained by the hiring practices that the districts employ. Some districts rely more on in-house staff for certain activities as opposed to outsourcing them to contracted services. This skews their expenditure away from contracted services towards salaries. The opposite may be true for the districts that prefer to use contracted services instead of in-house employees.

Figure 5.3
General Administrative Expenses by District

General Administrative Expenses 2018-2019



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Report 2018-2019 (Table 42).

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/Educational-Data-and-Annual-Reports/Financial-Educational-Statistics-Reports)

Table 6.2
General Administration Costs, 2018-2019
Share of Total General Administration Costs

District	Salaries (%)	Employee Benefits (%)	Contracted Services (%)	Supplies (%)	Total (\$)
Appoquinimink	38	20	35	6	2,671,853
Brandywine	37	21	31	11	1,681,762
Christina	29	16	37	18	2,712,393
Colonial	54	31	13	2	1,848,937
NCC Votech	53	30	14	4	693,286
Red Clay	29	16	34	21	2,554,608
Caesar Rodney	51	30	6	13	1,211,033
Capital	53	30	17	0	1,133,617
Polytech	56	30	4	10	443,716
Lake Forest	59	32	6	3	730,819
Milford	51	29	14	6	394,175
Smyrna	55	30	11	4	701,769
Cape Henlopen	53	31	16	0	1,014,855
Delmar	56	32	11	0	314,501
Indian River	54	28	14	4	1,067,928
Laurel	58	32	9	0	790,863
Seaford	49	28	8	15	341,889
Sussex Technical	55	26	17	2	339,021
Woodbridge	57	31	3	9	633,223
Charter Schools	57	28	14	1	10,592,994
State Totals	48	26	19	7	32,112,229

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Report 2018-2019; Table 42.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Table 6.3
School Administration Costs, 2018-2019
Share of Total School Administration Costs

District	Salaries (%)	Employee Benefits (%)	Total (\$)
Appoquinimink	65	35	12,562,377
Brandywine	64	36	13,869,938
Christina	64	36	15,099,669
Colonial	64	36	11,560,072
NCC Votech	64	36	6,220,493
Red Clay	64	36	16,661,906
Caesar Rodney	63	37	5,986,918
Capital	64	36	5,558,901
Polytech	65	35	1,540,081
Lake Forest	65	35	3,377,776
Milford	64	36	3,793,002
Smyrna	64	36	3,587,682
Cape Henlopen	63	37	6,441,386
Delmar	64	36	666,983
Indian River	66	34	8,828,695
Laurel	65	35	1,730,010
Seaford	63	36	2,501,667
Sussex Technical	67	33	873,900
Woodbridge	64	36	1,879,209
Charter Schools	67	33	8,613,202
State Totals	64	36	138,473,631

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Report 2018-2019; Table 43.

Retrieved from: [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Financial Educational Statistics Reports \(doe.k12.de.us\)](https://doe.k12.de.us/EducationalDataandAnnualReports/FinancialEducationalStatisticsReports)

Summary

General administration costs per pupil rose in many districts in Delaware. School administration costs per pupil also increased in almost every district. These rising costs over the past nineteen years reflect growth in both number of staff and salaries.

School size plays an important role in school administration costs per pupil. Districts that prefer smaller schools have larger school administration costs per pupil than those districts that opt for larger schools. When school enrollment level reaches a certain point, additional administrator units are generated, which results in an increase in the amount spent per pupil. This rate then declines until another administration unit has been generated.

Unit Allocation

This section analyzes the unit allocation by district. Enrollment units determine the amount of state funding. An examination of the funding units' patterns by district provides a better understanding of district expenditures. The following table shows the change in the total number of regular and special units allotted to the individual school districts in ten-year periods for both regular and special education.

Table 7.0
10-Year Change in Total Regular and Special Unit Allotment

District	2011-2012	2021-2022	10 Year % Change
Appoquinimink	578	877	52%
Brandywine	670	746	11%
Christina	1,276	1,248	-2%
Colonial	651	752	16%
NCC Votech	282	295	5%
Red Clay	1,047	1,147	10%
Caesar Rodney	519	588	13%
Capital	461	531	15%
Polytech	67	71	6%
Lake Forest	249	248	0%
Milford	262	308	18%
Smyrna	334	455	36%
Cape Henlopen	372	488	31%
Delmar	76	82	8%
Indian River	605	804	33%
Laurel	142	176	24%
Seaford	238	243	2%
Sussex Technical	76	77	1%
Woodbridge	149	185	24%
Charter Schools	8054	9321	16%
State Totals	578	877	52%

Source: Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports for School Years 2011-2012 and 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

All districts, with the exception of Christina and Lake Forest, experienced a growth in the number of units received over the ten-year period from 2011-2012 to 2021-2022. Appoquinimink school district experienced the largest amount of growth equaling 52%, as did the state total.

The composition of enrollment varies greatly across districts. Student enrollment is split into regular and special. Expressing special education enrollment as a percentage of total enrollment reveals that in some districts over 40% of total units are special education units, with the maximum of 55% of special education units as percentage of total units in Christina school district (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.1
Special Education Enrollment as a Percentage of Total Enrollment

School District	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Appoquinimink	10	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	16	16	15
Brandywine	12	13	13	14	14	15	16	17	17	17	18
Caesar Rodney	16	16	15	15	16	16	16	17	17	17	17
Cape Henlopen	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	18	18	18
Capital	17	18	18	18	19	19	20	20	22	22	21
Christina	17	17	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	23	24
Colonial	14	14	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21
Delmar	10	9	9	9	10	10	9	10	10	9	8
Indian River	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	17	17	17	16
Lake Forest	15	16	15	15	16	16	17	18	19	19	18
Laurel	15	15	15	16	15	15	16	16	16	16	17
Milford	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	15	15	16
Red Clay	13	13	13	13	13	14	15	16	18	18	19
Seaford	16	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	1	17	16
Smyrna	15	14	15	15	15	16	16	17	17	17	17
Woodbridge	13	13	12	13	12	14	16	17	16	17	17
NCC Votech	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13
Polytech	9	9	9	9	8	9	8	9	10	10	11
Sussex Tech	9	8	8	7	7	8	8	8	9	10	10
State District Average	14	14	14	14	14	15	15	16	15	16	17

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports for School Years 2010-2011 to 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

In 2011, the state average special education enrollment expressed as a percentage of total enrollment was 14%, rising to 17% in 2021. Most districts contributed to this statewide increase. Delmar, Indian River, and Seaford are the only districts that did not experience a percentage increase in this time period, with Delmar actually displaying a percentage decrease in the number of special education enrollment.

Since the unit allotment for special education is greater than that of regular education, the former's share of total units exceeds its share of total enrollment. For example, in 2021, 17% of public-school students were classified as special education; at the same time, 38% of total units were special education units (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2
Special Education Units as a Percentage of Total Units

School District	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Appoquinimink	21	21	23	24	26	29	30	33	35	35	36
Brandywine	31	27	28	29	31	32	35	36	37	37	39
Caesar Rodney	38	37	36	37	38	40	40	40	40	40	41
Cape Henlopen	41	42	41	41	42	43	42	43	44	45	45
Capital	39	41	41	41	43	44	46	49	51	51	48
Christina	40	40	42	44	46	48	49	51	52	54	55
Colonial	29	29	31	34	38	40	41	43	45	45	46
Delmar	22	22	22	22	24	23	24	23	25	22	21
Indian River	37	37	36	37	38	39	40	41	41	41	41
Lake Forest	28	30	29	30	31	31	32	34	36	38	37
Laurel	29	30	30	32	30	29	32	33	33	34	35
Milford	27	27	27	27	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Red Clay	28	28	28	29	30	33	36	38	40	41	43
Seaford	33	33	35	38	38	38	38	39	40	40	39
Smyrna	30	30	30	31	33	35	36	38	40	41	41
Woodbridge	29	29	29	30	31	32	35	35	37	38	39
NCC Votek	25	27	27	27	27	27	28	30	30	31	31
Polytech	19	21	21	21	19	19	19	22	23	23	25
Sussex Tech	21	20	19	16	16	17	18	21	22	23	23
State District Average	30	30	30	31	32	33	34	36	37	38	38

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports for School Years 2010-2011 to 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

The next table shows the total amount of special education units per school district, along with their change in rate over the years.

Table 7.3
Ten-Year Change in Special Education Units

School District	2011-2012	2021-2022	Ten Year Change
Appoquinimink	124	313	152%
Brandywine	186	288	55%
Caesar Rodney	198	242	22%
Cape Henlopen	154	218	42%
Capital	179	257	44%
Christina	510	687	35%
Colonial	190	346	82%
Delmar	17	17	0%
Indian River	224	326	46%
Lake Forest	69	92	33%
Laurel	41	62	51%
Milford	71	109	54%
Red Clay	288	497	73%
Seaford	79	95	20%
Smyrna	99	187	89%
Woodbridge	43	73	70%
NCC Votech	70	90	29%
Polytech	13	18	38%
Sussex Tech	16	18	13%
All Counties and Districts	2,571	3,935	53%

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports for School Years 2011-2012 to 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

None of the districts experienced a decline in the amount of special education units they received over the past ten years. Delmar is the only school district in which the amount of special education units remained the same over the ten-year period. All other districts showed an increase in the number of special education units. The rate of unit allotment in each school district is generally much larger than the increase in the percentage of enrollment of special education students during the ten-year time frame. For example, Appoquinimink school district experienced

a 152% increase in special education units received – the largest increase among all other school districts.

The implication of increased special education enrollment and funding is that a greater share of funds is diverted into special education settings. As a consequence, proportionally fewer pupils and funding dollars remain in regular education (see Table 7.4). Since state/district net instruction expenditures do not split into regular and special education, the ratio of special education units to regular education units can be used, especially given that special education funding cannot be used to fund regular education. The result is that net instruction per pupil measures appear higher as the result of the combined reporting of regular and special education spending per pupil. If net instruction comprises closer to 60% of current expenditures, and special education units comprise 40% of Division I units, then the proportion of total current expenses directed to regular education is less than 50% (Delaware Department of Education, 2021). Delaware's unit allocation provides greater units for special education enrollment than regular education enrollment. Therefore, there are obvious financial incentives to increase numbers of students labeled 'special education' (McCann, 2014; Sandler-Morrill, 2018).

Table 7.4 represents the total amount of regular education units per school district and their change in rate over the years. In contrast to the special education units, many districts experienced a decrease in the number of regular education units between 2011-2012 and 2021-2022. An increase in the regular education units in some other districts was relatively smaller than the increase in the number of special education units within the same time frame. For example, the aforementioned Appoquinimink school district saw a 152% growth in special education units received, whereas the increase in its regular education units equaled only 24% between 2011-2012 and 2021-2022 school years.

Table 7.4
Ten-Year Change in Regular Units Allotment

School District	2011-2012	2021-2022	Ten Year Change
Appoquinimink	454	564	24%
Brandywine	511	458	-10%
Caesar Rodney	321	346	8%
Cape Henlopen	219	270	23%
Capital	282	274	-3%
Christina	765	562	-27%
Colonial	461	407	-12%
Delmar	59	65	10%
Indian River	405	478	18%
Lake Forest	180	156	-13%
Laurel	101	114	13%
Milford	191	199	4%
Red Clay	759	651	-14%
Seaford	159	148	-7%
Smyrna	235	268	14%
Woodbridge	106	112	6%
NCC Votek	212	206	-3%
Polytech	54	53	-2%
Sussex Tech	60	59	-2%
All Counties and Districts	5,534	5,390	-3%

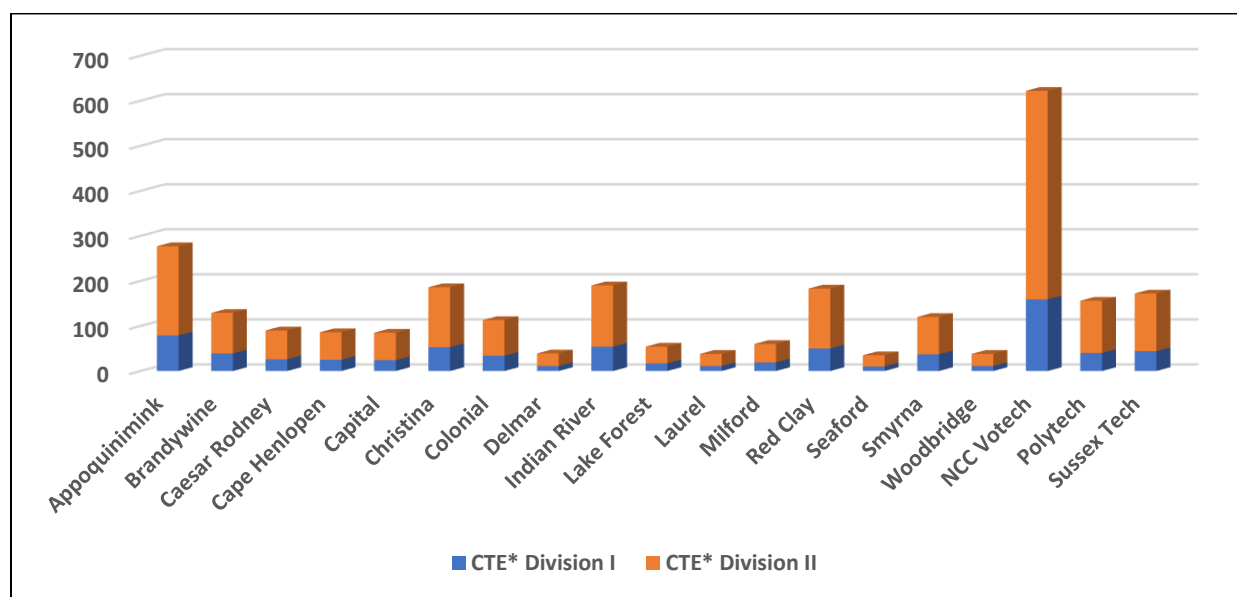
Source: Delaware Department of Education, Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Reports for School Years 2011-2012 to 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

Vocational Units

Vocational students are another subgroup in the unit allotment system. Students enrolled in vocational courses earn units at a faster rate than regular units. For example, a high school student who divides his or her time between regular classes and vocational classes, will earn a regular unit at the rate of 20 students per unit, and a vocational unit at the rate of 15 students per unit. The ‘vocational deduction’ for Division I units reduces the incentive of labeling students as vocational. The deduction formula subtracts one-half unit for everyone whole vocational unit (Delaware Department of Education, 2021, p. 1). However, an economic incentive remains in the Division II (supplies and materials) funding. Division II units can be earned at different dates depending upon the vocational course. The Division II units range from one per vocational course to three.

Figure 5.4
Vocational Units by District



Source: Delaware Department of Education, Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Report for School Year 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

*CTE – Career Technical Education

Figure 5.4 shows the amount of vocational Division I and Division II units by district for 2021-2022. As expected, vocational Division II units outnumber Division I units in every district. For some districts, the ratio of Division II units to Division I units is 3:1. Collectively, there are more vocational units in regular school districts than in the three Vocational Technical districts – 816 vs.1,857 (see Table 7.5). In the past, vocational districts used to receive learning-disabled students from the regular school districts. However, school districts are increasingly retaining this student group.

Table 7.5
Vocational Units by District, 2021-2022

School District	CTE Division I	CTE Division II
Appoquinimink	79	198
Brandywine	39	90
Caesar Rodney	26	64
Cape Henlopen	25	61
Capital	24	61
Christina	53	133
Colonial	34	79
Delmar	11	28
Indian River	54	136
Lake Forest	17	37
Laurel	11	27
Milford	19	41
Red Clay	50	133
Seaford	10	25
Smyrna	37	83
Woodbridge	11	27
NCC Votech	159	463
Polytech	40	116
Sussex Tech	44	128
State District Total	743	1,930

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Student Enrollment and Unit Allotment Report for School Year 2021-2022.

Retrieved from: [Annual Enrollment – Delaware Department of Education](#)

Summary

Enrollment levels drive state funding via the unit system. The more units a district generates, the more funding it receives. Special education as a percentage of total enrollment rose in almost all districts. Statewide, the proportion of students classified as special education rose from 14% in 2011-2012 to 17% in 2021-2022. Special education units account for two fifths of total units statewide. This happens because special education students generate units faster than regular students. While one in five students classifies as special education, the formula generates one of every four units amassed statewide.

Vocational units are a significant source of funds for non-vocational school districts. Indeed, there are more vocational Division I and Division II units in non-vocational school districts than in the three vocational districts.

There is no data source that will permit the disaggregation of net expenditures into regular education and special education. Based on the rising percentage of students who classify in the special education category, and the rising share of special education units, it is possible to infer that although the percentage of resources dedicated to instruction is significant, the percentage dedicated to regular education continues to diminish.

Peer Comparisons

This section compares Delaware districts with other districts in the Mid-Atlantic region and other districts across the country. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) identifies national peer districts and creates automatic peer groups based on the following criteria (NCES, Finance Peer Search Tool, n.d.):

- ✓ Total students
- ✓ Student/teacher ratio
- ✓ Percent children in poverty
- ✓ District type
- ✓ Locale code

NCES serves as a clearinghouse for district-level data for all districts in the nation, which is suitable for this analysis. One drawback of the data is that the most recent available datasets pertain to the school year 2019-2020. The following data tables examine the NCES data in different subsets. To begin, the first two tables compare the school districts within the State of Delaware, while two more tables that follow set the Delaware districts against a random sampling of school districts from the Mid-Atlantic counterparts: Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Table 8.0

**Delaware School Districts: Public Education Expenditures per Pupil (in US dollars)
2019-2020**

District	Total	Instruction	Student & Staff Support	School Administration	Operations, Food Service, Other
Appoquinimink	13,286	8,408	685	2,056	2,137
Brandywine	17,615	10,379	1,552	2,356	3,328
Caesar Rodney	14,309	9,059	1,136	1,973	2,140
Cape Henlopen	14,561	9,246	654	1,889	2,773
Capital	16,491	10,460	698	1,889	3,443
Christina	22,578	13,027	1,768	3,027	4,756
Colonial	16,741	10,384	957	1,842	3,577
Delmar	10,726	7,220	587	1,078	1,842
Indian River	15,493	10,038	893	1,612	2,950

Lake Forest	12,752	7,772	607	1,733	2,640
Laurel	11,869	7,265	613	1,236	2,756
Milford	12,949	8,151	620	1,244	2,934
Red Clay	17,839	11,377	2,060	1,332	3,069
Seaford	14,833	8,937	1,493	851	3,551
Smyrna	12,724	8,193	860	1,323	2,349
Woodbridge	15,027	9,369	662	1,600	3,396

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Table 8.1
Delaware Districts: Percentage Expenditures by Category
2019-2020

District	Instruction	Student Support	School Administration	Operations and Maintenance
Appoquinimink	63	5	15	16
Brandywine	59	9	13	19
Caesar Rodney	63	8	14	15
Cape Henlopen	63	4	13	19
Capital	63	4	11	21
Christina	58	8	13	21
Colonial	62	6	11	21
Delmar	67	5	10	17
Indian River	65	6	10	19
Lake Forest	61	5	14	21
Laurel	61	5	10	23
Milford	63	5	10	23
Red Clay	64	12	7	17
Seaford	60	10	6	24
Smyrna	64	7	10	18
Woodbridge	62	4	11	23

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Table 8.1 above shows the difference in the overall state district averages.

The NCES defines administrative costs or administration expenditures as ‘Expenditures for school administration (the school principal’s office), general administration (the superintendent and board of education and their immediate staff), and other support services expenditures (local education agency [LEA] planners/researchers, personnel, fiscal services, warehousing, and other activities of an LEA)’ (Cornman et al., 2018, p. B-1). The equivalent within the State Board of Education’s Report of Educational Statistics is general administration, school administration, and other expenses.

According to the NCES data, Delmar School District spends the most money on current instruction costs within the state at 67%. In comparison, Christina School District spends the lowest percentage on current instruction costs at 58%.

Table 8.2 illustrates sample Delaware school districts expenditures in comparison to others in the region (Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania), with a total of fifteen districts in all. There are various measures available to assess the financial effectiveness of a school district. Adjusting expenditures for the enrollment size of a district is a common way to compare districts of various sizes. Having this in view, the following tables present per pupil expenditures.

Even within this random subset of Mid-Atlantic districts, there is a certain diversity of expenditure levels. For example, total current expenditures per pupil range between \$10,726 in Delmar and \$22,578 in Christina in Delaware, and between \$14,006 in Ann Arundel County in Maryland and \$20,968 in Salem City in New Jersey.

Table 8.2
Peer Comparison: Expenditures per Pupil (in US dollars)
2019-2020

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Appoquinimink	DE	13,286	8,408	685	2,056	2,137
Brandywine	DE	17,615	10,379	1,552	2,356	3,328
Christina	DE	22,578	13,027	1,768	3,027	4,756
Colonial	DE	16,741	10,384	957	1,824	3,577
Delmar	DE	10,726	7,220	587	1,078	1,842
Red Clay Consolidated	DE	17,839	11,377	2,060	1,332	3,069
Anne Arundel County	MD	14,006	8,757	1,287	1,536	2,427

Baltimore County	MD	14,526	9,005	1,439	1,608	2,474
Cecil County	MD	14,403	9,059	1,619	1,454	2,270
Pennsville	NJ	20,126	11,595	3,521	2,336	2,674
Manasquan	NJ	19,490	11,331	3,325	2,214	2,620
Salem City	NJ	20,968	12,175	3,667	2,181	2,945
Kennett Consolidated	PA	15,578	9,210	1,435	1,905	3,027
Oxford Area	PA	13,445	8,408	900	1,487	2,650
Unionville-Chadds Ford	PA	18,474	11,898	2,074	1,591	2,911

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

School districts within New Jersey have the highest total current expenditure rates within the subset, with Christina School District in Delaware being the only exception. Current expenditure rates in Pennsylvania school districts are comparable to those in Delaware, whereas the expenditure rates in Maryland school districts are on average lower than the ones in Delaware. The higher rates in New Jersey, for example, go back to its relatively small school districts in both enrollment and geographic size. Maryland, on the contrary, has large districts, which may envelope the entire county.

Table 8.3
Peer Comparison: Percentage Expenditures by Category
2019-2020

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Appoquinimink	DE	100	63	5	15	16
Brandywine	DE	100	59	9	13	19
Christina	DE	100	58	8	13	21
Colonial	DE	100	62	6	11	21
Delmar	DE	100	67	5	10	17
Red Clay Consolidated	DE	100	64	12	7	17
Anne Arundel County	MD	100	63	9	11	17

Baltimore County	MD	100	62	10	11	17
Cecil County	MD	100	63	11	10	16
Pennsville	NJ	100	58	17	12	13
Manasquan	NJ	100	58	17	11	13
Salem City	NJ	100	58	17	10	14
Kennett Consolidated	PA	100	59	9	12	19
Oxford Area	PA	100	63	7	11	20
Unionville-Chadds Ford	PA	100	64	11	9	16
Peer Averages		100	61	10	11	16

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Among this random sample of Mid-Atlantic school districts, Appoquinimink and Delmar School Districts in Delaware have the lowest percentage of spending dedicated towards Student Support Services at 5%. According to NCES, these services include ‘attendance and social work, guidance, health, psychological services, speech pathology, audiology, and other student support services’ (Cornman et al., 2018, p. B-4). By contrast, all three New Jersey school districts presented in the sample allocate 17% of their funds for Student Support Services.

Summary

The random subset of Mid-Atlantic school districts reveals a considerable disparity in total current expenditure levels both among the districts in Delaware and among the districts in the neighboring states. New Jersey spends much more per pupil than Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Administration per Pupil Spending: National Comparison

This section extends the peer comparison of Delaware school districts beyond the Mid-Atlantic region. The NCES is again the primary source of data, and the peer districts are identified based on the following factors: total students, student/teacher ratio, percentage of children in poverty, district type, and location type.

Numerous peer districts exist for each Delaware school district from across the nation. This portion of the report presents the top ten peer districts for three school districts in Delaware, including Appoquinimink, Brandywine, and Seaford. The vocational school districts do not meet the criteria needed to run this search.

The NCES search produced the top ten peer districts for Appoquinimink School District. Among the peer districts, Woodstock Community Unit 200, IL ranks highest in terms of current instructional spending per pupil (\$9,826). Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, MN is the second highest with \$7,587, and Arlington, TN is the lowest with \$5,722.

Table 9.0

Sample Peer District Comparisons for Appoquinimink School District Expenditures per Pupil (in US dollars), 2019-2020

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Appoquinimink	DE	13,286	8,408	685	2,056	2,137
Arlington	TN	9,138	5,722	1,081	1,338	996
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose	MN	11,460	7,587	998	692	2,183
Forest Lake	MN	11,577	6,374	1,314	1,154	2,735
Hudson	WI	12,410	7,396	1,194	1,594	2,227
Kearney R-I	MO	9,822	5,834	795	1,249	1,943
Mukwonago	WI	10,797	6,708	925	1,133	2,030
Platte County R-III	MO	10,211	5,822	1,109	1,289	1,991
Waconia	MN	11,598	7,538	883	973	2,204
Woodstock Community Unit 200	IL	17,042	9,826	2,212	1,964	3,040

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Table 9.1
Sample Peer District Comparisons for Appoquinimink School District
Share of Current Expenditures per Pupil (in %), 2019-2020

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Appoquinimink	DE	100	63	5	15	16
Arlington	TN	100	63	12	15	11
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose	MN	100	66	9	6	19
Forest Lake	MN	100	26	5	5	11
Hudson	WI	100	64	10	14	19
Kearney R-I	MO	100	47	6	10	16
Mukwonago	WI	100	68	9	12	21
Platte County R-III	MO	100	54	10	12	18
Waconia	MN	100	65	8	8	19
Woodstock Community Unit 200	IL	100	58	13	12	18

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

At the same time, Arlington, TN has one of the highest per pupil expenditure share of student support at 12%, exceeded only by Woodstock Community Unit 200, IL at 13%.

Of the top ten schools in the peer districts for Brandywine School District three have considerably higher current instructional expenditures for per pupil spending, all of them in the State of New York: Haverstraw-Stony Point Central (\$17,150), New Rochelle City (\$15,182), and William Floyd Union Free (\$16,088). Instructional expenditure spending in Brandywine amounts to \$10,379. The least amount spent on current instructional expenditures among the top ten peer districts for Brandywine is in West Clermont Local, OH: \$5,674 (see Table 9.2). Brandywine's total current spending is \$17,615 per pupil, which places it in the middle in the group of its peer districts with respect to total current spending.

Table 9.2

**Sample Peer District Comparisons for Brandywine School District Expenditures per Pupil
(in US dollars), 2019-2020**

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Brandywine	DE	17,615	10,379	1,552	2,356	3,328
Bristol	CT	17,562	9,121	1,463	3,856	3,122
Derby	KS	9,376	5,997	926	865	1,588
Haverstraw- Stony Point Central	NY	24,828	17,150	1,587	1,928	4,163
Madison County	MS	9,653	5,802	915	1,067	1,869
Methuen	MA	14,072	8,823	1,794	853	2,602
New Rochelle City	NY	23,768	15,182	2,296	2,248	4,042
Orange County Schools	NC	11,598	7,151	1,296	1,272	1,879
West Clermont Local	OH	9,586	5,674	997	1,098	1,818
William Floyd Union Free	NY	23,964	16,088	1,505	2,125	4,246

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Table 9.3

**Sample Peer District Comparisons for Brandywine School District
Share of Current Expenditures per Pupil (in %), 2019-2020**

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Brandywine	DE	100	59	9	13	19
Bristol	CT	100	52	8	22	18
Derby	KS	100	64	10	9	17
Haverstraw- Stony Point Central	NY	100	69	6	8	17
Madison County	MS	100	60	9	11	19
Methuen	MA	100	63	13	6	18

New Rochelle City	NY	100	64	10	9	17
Orange County Schools	NC	100	62	11	11	16
West Clermont Local	OH	100	59	10	11	19
William Floyd Union Free	NY	100	67	6	9	18

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Of the top ten peer school districts for Seaford School District, Hudson Falls Central School District, NY has the highest per pupil expenditure at \$17,202. Herrin Community Unit 4 School District, IL has the lowest per pupil expenditure equaling \$10,430 (See Table 9.4).

Table 9.4
Sample Peer District Comparisons for Seaford School District Expenditures per Pupil
(in US dollars), 2019-2020

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Seaford	DE	14,833	8,937	1,493	851	3,551
Connellsville Area	PA	15,561	9,416	914	1,367	3,864
Herrin Community Unit 4	IL	10,430	6,256	708	1,516	1,950
Hudson Falls Central	NY	17,202	11,140	1,743	1,356	2,963
Laurel Highlands	PA	14,707	9,059	1,067	1,480	3,100
Madison Local	OH	11,419	7,204	826	1,516	1,874
RSU 22	ME	12,226	7,047	1,608	1,103	2,469
Salt Fork Community Unit 512	IL	13,294	7,619	454	3,085	2,136
Texarkana	AR	11,278	6,097	1,597	1,343	2,240
Uniontown Area	PA	15,182	8,989	974	1,363	3,856

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Table 9.5
Sample Peer District Comparisons for Seaford School District
Share of Current Expenditures per Pupil (in %), 2019-2020

School District	State	Total	Instruction	Support	Administration	Operations
Seaford	DE	100	60	10	6	24
Connellsville Area	PA	100	61	6	9	25
Herrin Community Unit 4	IL	100	60	7	15	19
Hudson Falls Central	NY	100	65	10	8	17
Laurel Highlands	PA	100	62	7	10	21
Madison Local	OH	100	63	7	13	16
RSU 22	ME	100	58	13	9	20
Salt Fork Community Unit 512	IL	100	57	3	23	16
Texarkana	AR	100	54	14	12	20
Uniontown Area	PA	100	59	6	9	25

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School District Finance Peer Search Tool, 2019-2020.

Retrieved from: [Public School District Finance Data](#)

Summary

There are many differences in expenditures among school districts, both within Delaware and comparing individual Delaware districts to their 2019-2020 NCES peers. Consequently, it might be advisable to conduct further research to evaluate comparative district spending.

District Level Summary

Numerous agents are involved in the process of providing public education in the state. These agents include the Federal government, state government, local government, school districts, households (through property taxes), and school education boards. It is important to recognize that education revenues and expenditures reflect the choices and priorities of each of these agents. However, data availability preempts the evaluation of each agent's individual impact. The data compiled by government agencies are geared towards measuring specific items. Greater focus is given to enrollment and expenditures: how many students are enrolled in each district? How many students are in each grade? How many special education students are in each district?

Financial data are reported at only the district level, by broad revenue categories (Federal, state, local) and expenditure categories (instruction, instructional support, pupil support, general administration, school administration, transportation, and other). While these data are useful, they are still several steps removed from the necessary data to answer questions such as how efficiently and productively resources are being used in the provision of public education. Some pertinent questions that cannot be answered with currently available data include: how many resources are being dedicated to regular education versus special education? What core resources are being dedicated to core instruction of English, math, and science?

The financial data permit the identification of differing spending patterns among school districts within the state and across the country. Discerning the cause and impact of these differences involves going beyond the routine publications of government agencies. Nevertheless, the data presented in the report provide a starting point for identifying spending patterns among Delaware school districts and their peer groups. It is hoped that data availability will evolve over time to allow greater transparency in school district finances and permit more detailed research into public education finance.

The emergence of Charter schools in Delaware is bringing greater education choice to the marketplace. However, given the short history in the state, the full effect of Charter schools has yet to be realized. In the future, more Charter schools may be established, and existing ones may expand grade coverage (this is a typical practice of at least one Charter school, Las Américas ASPIRA Academy). It is also unknown which schools will stay open in future years (see the Table 4.2). The turnover in Charter schools makes it difficult to evaluate them in comparison to public

school districts. Given the relatively short existence of Charter schools in the state, it is likely that an equilibrium enrollment has not yet been established, making hazardous predictions of their long-term impact on districts and district financing.

Larger districts allocate a smaller proportion of their current expenditures to general administration than do smaller districts. Low enrollment districts (fewer than 5,000 students) apply 1.3% of their current expenditures to general administration. Therefore, while economies of scale are possible, the potential savings may not be significant.

School administrators' share of current expenses varies across districts. School size is the primary determinant of school administration unit entitlement. Despite being a large enrollment district, schools in Brandywine are not the largest in the state. Therefore, their schools do not earn additional school administrators as larger schools, which limits their school administration costs.

General administration costs per pupil are rising in many districts in Delaware (see Figure 5.2). School administration costs per pupil are rising in all districts. However, as a share of current expenditures, general administration costs per pupil are falling. School administration costs per pupil as a share of total current expenditures are rising, but not as fast as expenditures on net instruction.

One in every five students in the state is labeled a special education student. The majority of districts report increased numbers of special education students (see Table 7.1 and Table 7.3).

School size plays an important role in school administration costs per pupil. Districts that opt for smaller schools have larger school administration costs per pupil than their larger counterparts.

There are more vocational units allotted to regular school districts than the vocational districts. At the same time, the Vocational-Technical school districts skew the Delaware peer averages by more than \$500 per pupil for total current expenditures.

There is great disparity in total current expenditure levels for the random subset of Mid-Atlantic school districts. This outcome may connect with the smaller sized school districts, both geographically and in population/enrollment, within Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

In Pennsylvania and Maryland, local funds pay for a majority of operating expenditures, meaning the districts have the opportunity to allocate funds in different ways, rather than a set of state funds, which Delaware school districts utilize. With school districts in the neighboring states

having this control over the majority of their funds, there is greater variability among the districts in expenditure patterns, influencing, among other areas, the number of administration staff hired at the district and school levels.

Another driver in this scenario is the number of staff hired by the school district. Maryland and Pennsylvania districts have the ability to hire as many administrators as deemed necessary for which funds are available. Delaware districts depend upon the state unit formula for the majority of their funding and have only a small amount of local revenue over which they have discretion to use to supplement employee incomes or hire additional staff.

SECTION THREE
OBSERVATIONS ON DELAWARE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
EDUCATION SPENDING 2019

Based on nationwide comparisons, Delaware spends a smaller percentage of money on direct educational expenditures than Maryland, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Rhode Island. The data used to define this statement was pulled from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Report titled *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 19*. Direct educational expenditures were defined in the *Delaware Public School District Education Spending* report of 2011 as the total of instruction expenses, instruction support, and student support. According to NCES, instruction expenses include expenses related to the interaction between teachers and students (salaries and benefits for teachers and teacher aids, textbooks, supplies and purchased services); instructional staff support services refer to instructional staff training, educational media (library and audiovisual), and the like. Finally, student support services refer to attendance and social work, guidance, health, psychological services, speech pathology, audiology, etc. (NCES, 2009).

When looking only at direct instructional expenditures within Delaware as defined afore, the amount spent per pupil in the state is mainstream when compared to the neighboring states (see Table 10.0). However, if one looks only at the instruction expenses, Delaware's spending turns out to be on par with Maryland but noticeably less compared to other states in the immediate vicinity. When it comes to student support services, Delaware's spending per student is relatively low and slightly exceeds only that of Maryland: \$866 vs. \$722. In contrast, Connecticut spends \$1,440 per pupil on student support services, Rhode Island – \$1,862, and New Jersey – \$2,254.

Instructional staff support is the category that has one of the greatest degrees of disparity among other states surrounding Delaware. Still Delaware spends significantly less than all other states shown in Table 10.0. While Delaware spends only \$295 per pupil on instructional support, New Jersey spends \$801. It may seem logical to increase the amount of funding in instructional staff support to schools with the greatest need and conclude if there is an improvement in student performance. However, further analysis and comparison of the performance rates in other states in the region that enjoy considerably higher amounts of instructional staff support do not indicate that

additional spending automatically correlates with increased student performance. When looking at student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Delaware scores approximately as high as, for example, Maryland and Rhode Island on both the 4th grade reading and mathematics NAEP (see Table 10.9).

Table 10.0
Current Expenditures per Pupil for Public Elementary and Secondary Education,
by Function, Subfunction, and State of Jurisdiction: FY 19

State	Instruction	Instructional Staff Support	Student Support Services	Total (Instruction, Staff Support, and Student Support)	Total (Instructional Staff Support and Student Support Services)	Total (Student Support and Instruction)	School Administration
Delaware	9,833	295	866	10,994	1,161	10,699	1,000
Maryland	9,860	786	722	11,368	1,508	10,582	1,016
Connecticut	13,055	725	1,440	15,220	2,165	14,495	1,202
New Jersey	12,627	801	2,254	15,682	3,055	14,881	1,049
Pennsylvania	10,420	615	988	12,023	1,603	11,408	764
Rhode Island	10,553	683	1,862	13,098	2,545	12,415	852

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 19; Table 4.

Retrieved from: [2021-302 Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 19](#)

Table 10.1 highlights the percent distribution of current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education in Delaware, Maryland, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. Instruction expenditures are relatively mainstream without the inclusion of instructional staff support and student support services. When looking only at instructional staff support, Delaware at 2% spends a much smaller proportion of these expenses than any of the identified neighboring states, with Maryland spending the largest share on instructional support at 5%. The same is mostly true for the expenses on student support services. According to this

category, Delaware (5%) is on par with Maryland (5%) and Pennsylvania (6%) but is lagging behind New Jersey (11%) and Rhode Island (11%).

Table 10.1
Percent Distribution of Current Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education

State	Instruction	Instructional Staff Support	Student Support Services	Total (Instruction, Staff Support, and Student Support)	Total (Instructional Staff Support and Student Support Services)	Total (Student Support and Instruction)	School Administration
Delaware	62	2	5	69	7	67	6
Maryland	63	5	5	73	10	68	7
Connecticut	62	3	7	72	10	69	6
New Jersey	59	4	11	74	14	70	5
Pennsylvania	62	4	6	72	9	68	5
Rhode Island	60	4	11	75	15	71	5

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 19; Table 4.

Retrieved from: [2021-302 Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 19](#)

No Child Left Behind

In 2001, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized by Congress and signed by President Bush as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The new legislation retained Title I provisions that addressed the promotion of equal opportunities for disadvantaged students. The U.S. Department of Education also mandated the states to set adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals to measure annual achievement for public schools as well as districts. All students were expected to meet or exceed AYP goals within a 12-year-time period beginning with the school year 2002-2003 and be proficient in Math and English Language Arts by 2014. The goal of the new policy was to improve the achievement of all students, and particularly disadvantaged students, and thus narrow the achievement gap. However, studies

conducted several years after the introduction of NCLB indicated that the outcomes of the policy were ‘decidedly mixed’ (Dee & Jacob, 2009, p. 36).

Since NCLB apparently failed to achieve the intended results, policymakers had to decide how to address the issue. In 2015, NCLB was replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed by President Obama. On the one hand, ESSA preserved the standards-based accountability of the previous policy. On the other hand, it provided state governments with additional flexibility in deciding what aspects accountability systems should include and how teacher effectiveness should be defined. In exchange for the flexibility, states were expected to develop rigorous and comprehensive plans whose ultimate goal would be ‘to close achievement gaps, increase equity, improve the quality of instruction, and increase outcomes for all students’ (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., a).

The Delaware Department of Education was increasing its AYP targets each year to assist in reaching the federally mandated goal of 100% of students proficient in Math and English. Within Delaware, the schools that did not meet their AYP goals for five or more years were required to undergo restructuring. Nationally, targets to meet the NCLB goals requirements were increased each year too, but Delaware schools were not meeting the increased goals. Part of the challenge was that low performing schools were frequently in areas with high proportions of special needs students, including low income, English language learners, and special education students. While NCLB put in place measures that helped expose achievement gaps among students who were traditionally underserved, it also laid bare the existing challenges in the way of reaching AYP goals for all students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., a).

Race to the Top

In July 2009, President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the allocation of \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top Fund to assist in reforming America’s public schools and improving student learning (Race to the Top, n.d.). The funding was intended for the states that were ‘leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive education reform’. Delaware turned out to be one of only two states that received Phase 1 funding for Race to the Top, with its application and testimony getting

the highest score among forty states and the District of Columbia that had also applied for awards in Race to the Top.

Delaware's Race to the Top goals were quite ambitious. The ultimate goal was 'to become the best state public education system in the country'. Other goals included:

- more than half of Delaware's students becoming proficient or advanced on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)
- decreasing the achievement gap by 50% no later than 2014-2015 school year
- improving all students' achievement so as to meet state standards
- raising graduation rates
- increasing the number of students who would enter and succeed in college

In addition, it was planned to use funding to improve low performing schools and provide fellowships and retention bonuses for highly effective teachers in some high-needs schools. Delaware received \$119 million in funding to reach those goals. The distribution of funds was expected to begin in the summer of 2010, and the funds had to be spent or encumbered by the end of September 2014.

The bonuses provided for highly effective teachers and leaders were for those who chose to work in high poverty or high minority schools. Those teachers were eligible for retention bonuses that ranged from \$8,500 to \$10,000 per year. Additionally, a Delaware Fellows program begun in 2011, provided bonuses of \$5,000 to highly effective teachers who were willing to work in certain high poverty or high minority schools. Race to the Top Fund would also allow funding through an Academic Achievement Award Program that would provide a \$150,000 bonus to each of five schools that exceeded their AYP progress for two or more years. Ideally, that potential bonus would encourage school administrators to focus on implementing measures that were highly likely to improve student performance.

It is important to note, however, that although the Race to the Top Fund awarded additional retention bonuses to highly effective teachers, for years Delaware's starting and average salaries have been noticeably lower than in the surrounding states, according to the National Education Association (NEA) (see Figure 3.4). In 2020, Delaware's starting salary was \$43,092 whereas the average salary in the state was \$64,853. In comparison, in Pennsylvania the starting salary was

\$46,232 and the average salary for teachers was \$70,339, while in Maryland the starting salary was \$47,959 and the average salary was \$73,444.

Table 10.2 presents the percentages of Delaware's 4th and 8th grade students who were found proficient in reading and mathematics at different levels of proficiency as defined by NAEP in 2015, i.e., a year after the Race to the Top funding provided to Delaware had to be spent or encumbered. The numbers vividly demonstrate that by 2015 the ambitious goal of 'more than half of Delaware's students becoming proficient or advanced' on the NAEP proficiency scale had not been reached.

Table 10.2
Percentages of Delaware Students Proficient in Reading and Mathematics According to
NAEP Reading and Mathematics Levels
Grades 4 and 8 (2015)

	Below NAEP Basic	NAEP Basic	NAEP Proficient	NAEP Advanced
4 th Grade Reading	30	33	28	9
4 th Grade Math	18	45	32	5
8 th Grade Reading	27	42	28	3
8 th Grade Math	31	39	22	7

Sources:

4th grade reading:

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016008DE4.pdf>

4th grade math:

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016009DE4.pdf>

8th grade reading:

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016008DE8.pdf>

8th grade math:

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016009DE8.pdf>

At the present moment, the Delaware Department of Education does not use AYP goals as a measurement of achievement by the state's public schools and districts. Instead, Delaware employs what is called the Delaware System of Student Assessment (DeSSA). The Department of Education defines assessment as 'the process for collecting evidence of every learner's knowledge, skills, competencies, or behaviors' (Delaware Department of Education, 2022a). It is administered at the state, district/charter, and school levels with the goal of supporting student growth. Delaware follows ESSA's requirement for each state to offer its students a balanced Assessment Series System (BAS). In Delaware, such a balanced system of assessments provides educators and students with an opportunity to measure learning achievement throughout the year, as well as each spring during statewide testing.

Through DeSSA, student learning is measured by means of different types of assessments: summative, interim, and benchmark assessments. The accountability standards by which all Delaware public schools are measured are outlined in the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) (Continuous Improvement, 2018). DSSF measures the following areas to determine school success: academic achievement, academic progress, school quality/student success, graduation rates, and English language proficiency (Delaware Department of Education, n.d.). The following assessments are administered in Delaware: English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, high school SAT, science, social studies, alternative assessment (Alt-1), and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

According to the *Delaware System of Student Assessment (DeSSA) Executive State Summary* for the academic year 2018-2019, the Smarter assessments are designed in order to measure the progress of Delawarean students in grades 3-8 in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics standards (Delaware Department of Education, 2019, p. 11). The spring of 2019 was the fifth year when the Smarter ELA/Literacy and Smarter Mathematics assessments were implemented. Both types of assessment required 'deeper thinking and application of real-world skills in English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Mathematics' (Ibid.).

The Smarter assessment scores are reported on a developmental scale for grades 3-8 and range from 2000 to 3100. The overall achievement has four levels with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 4 – the highest. At the lowest level 'student demonstrates minimal understanding of and ability to apply the English language arts and literacy (mathematics) knowledge and skills needed

for success in college and career, as specified in the Common Core State Standards,’ whereas at the highest level ‘student demonstrates thorough understanding of and ability to apply the English language arts and literacy (mathematics) knowledge and skills needed for success in college and career, as specified in the Common Core State Standards’ (Delaware Department of Education, 2019, pp. 12, 11). Proficiency in these assessments is defined as Achievement Levels 3 and 4 combined (Ibid., p. 14).

Tables 10.3 demonstrates that in 2019, there were only three school districts in Delaware (Appoquinimink, Caesar Rodney, and Cape Henlopen) that had about a third of their students performing at the highest level of achievement in English Language Arts according to Delaware’s Smarter assessment scores, while such school districts as Colonial, Delamr, and Capital had only 12%, 14%, and 15% of their students respectively performing at the highest level in ELA. As for mathematics, in 2019, only in Cape Henlopen school district, over 30% of students had the highest level of proficiency in the subject, whereas Colonial school district, for example, had only 9% of such students (see Table 10.4). At the same time, if one combines Achievement Levels 3 and 4, then it becomes clear that most districts had over 50% of students who were considered proficient in ELA, according to the Smarter assessment scores. The same, however, did not apply to mathematics: in 2019, only five school districts had over 50% of their students who were considered proficient in the subject.

Table 10.3
Delaware Statewide English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy Percent Proficient and
Achievement Levels (AL), 2019

School District	ELA Prof %	AL 1	AL 2	AL 3	AL 4
Statewide	53	24	23	31	22
Appoquinimink	66	15	20	36	30
Brandywine	53	25	22	30	23
Caesar Rodney	65	15	21	33	32
Cape Henlopen	67	15	18	35	32
Capital	44	30	26	29	15

Christina	40	36	24	24	16
Colonial	40	33	27	28	12
Delmar	52	22	26	38	14
Indian River	61	15	24	38	23
Lake Forest	60	17	23	33	27
Laurel	55	17	28	37	18
Milford	51	22	26	32	19
Red Clay	50	29	21	28	22
Seaford	56	22	23	32	24
Smyrna	57	20	23	34	23
Woodbridge	41	35	24	26	15

Source: 2019 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Summary.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/111/2019%20DeSSA%20ELA-Math%20-%20State%20Summary%20All.pdf>

Table 10.4

Delaware Statewide Mathematics Percent Proficient and Achievement Levels (AL), 2019

School District	Math Prof %	AL 1	AL 2	AL 3	AL 4
Statewide	44	29	27	23	21
Appoquinimink	53	20	28	27	26
Brandywine	43	30	27	21	22
Caesar Rodney	49	22	28	24	25
Cape Henlopen	59	18	23	25	34
Capital	33	36	31	20	13
Christina	37	38	26	19	18
Colonial	26	42	31	17	9
Delmar	43	23	34	24	19

Indian River	56	17	27	30	26
Lake Forest	53	21	26	27	26
Laurel	39	31	29	22	17
Milford	46	24	29	27	19
Red Clay	39	36	25	20	19
Seaford	48	27	25	23	25
Smyrna	51	21	28	28	23
Woodbridge	33	38	28	19	14

Source: 2019 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Summary.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/111/2019%20DeSSA%20ELA-Math%20-%20State%20Summary%20All.pdf>

Table 10.5 compares proficiency levels of Delaware public schools' students in ELA and Math for grades 4 and 8 in 2019, as measured by the State of Delaware and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – a congressionally mandated large-scale assessment that is administered by the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES). The three subjects in which students are assessed most frequently are mathematics, reading, and science, usually for grades 4 and 8. The Nation's Report Card provides results on student performance based on gender, race/ethnicity, public or nonpublic school, teacher experience, and hundreds of other factors. Results based on some of these factors are also shown in Table 10.5. It follows from the table that in 2019, many more Delaware students in the 4th and 8th grades were found proficient in reading and mathematics by the State of Delaware than by NAEP. For example, 53% of the 4th graders were found proficient in reading by the state vs. 24% by NAEP; 38% of the 8th graders were found proficient in mathematics by the state vs. 22% by NAEP. This begs the question why is there such a difference between the proficiency levels as measured by Delaware and NAEP? Another question that asks itself is to what extent do the criteria applied by Delaware and NAEP to measure proficiency differ from each other?

Table 10.5
Percentages of Delaware Statewide English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and
Mathematics Proficiency, and NAEP Reading and Mathematics Levels,
Grades 4 and 8 (2019)

	Delaware Proficiency	Below NAEP Basic	NAEP Basic	NAEP Proficient	NAEP Advanced
4 th Grade Reading	53	38	31	24	9
4 th Grade Math	51	21	40	30	9
8 th Grade Reading	52	31	38	27	4
8 th Grade Math	38	35	36	22	7
<p>NAEP 2019 National public average scale score was (0-500)</p> <p>NAEP 2019 4th Grade Reading Average Score Results:</p> <p><u>Overall results:</u> In 2019, the average score of fourth-grade students in Delaware was 218. This was not significantly different from the average score of 219 for students in the nation. The average score for students in Delaware in 2019 (218) was lower than their average score in 2017 (221) and was higher than their average score in 1998 (207).</p> <p><u>Score gaps for student groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2019, Black students had an average score that was 27 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (30 points). ▪ In 2019, Hispanic students had an average score that was 21 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (42 points). ▪ In 2019, female students in Delaware had an average score that was higher than that for male students by 7 points. ▪ In 2019, students who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), had an average score that was 23 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (30 points). 					
<p>NAEP 2019 National public average scale score was (0-500)</p> <p>NAEP 2019 4th Grade Math Average Score Results:</p>					

Overall results: In 2019, the average score of fourth-grade students in Delaware was 239; it was higher than their average score in 2017 (236) and in 2003 (236). This was not significantly different from the average score of 240 for students in the nation.

Score gaps for student groups:

- In 2019, Black students had an average score that was 25 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2003 (22 points).
- In 2019, Hispanic students had an average score that was 18 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2003 (19 points).
- In 2019, male students in Delaware had an average score that was not significantly different from that for female students.
- In 2019, students who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), had an average score that was 18 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2003 (18 points).

NAEP 2019 National public average scale score was (0-500)

NAEP 2019 **8th Grade Reading** Average Score Results:

Overall results: In 2019, the average score of eighth-grade students in Delaware was 260. This was lower than the average score of 262 for students in the nation. The average score for students in Delaware in 2019 (260) was lower than their average score in 2017 (263) and was higher than their average score in 1998 (254).

Score gaps for student groups:

- In 2019, Black students had an average score that was 25 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (28 points).
- In 2019, Hispanic students had an average score that was 22 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (15 points).
- In 2019, female students in Delaware had an average score that was higher than that for male students by 12 points.
- In 2019, students who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), had an average score that was 20 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (24 points).

NAEP 2019 National public average scale score was (0-500)

NAEP 2019 **8th Grade Math** Average Score Results:

Overall results: In 2019, the average score of eighth-grade students in Delaware was 277. This was lower than the average score of 281 for students in the nation. The average score for students in Delaware in 2019 (277) was not significantly different from their average score in 2017 (278) and in 2003 (277).

Score gaps for student groups:

- In 2019, Black students had an average score that was 29 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2003 (26 points).

- In 2019, Hispanic students had an average score that was 23 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2003 (30 points).
- In 2019, male students in Delaware had an average score that was not significantly different from that for female students.
- In 2019, students who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), had an average score that was 25 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2003 (24 points).

Source: Delaware 2019 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Summary.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/111/2019%20DeSSA%20ELA-Math%20-%20State%20Summary%20All.pdf>

Source: NAEP, The Nations Report Card, State Profiles.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile?chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=&sfj=NP&st=MN&year=2019R3>

Table 10.6 shows that there is no consistency between spending on instruction and administration and student achievement. Delmar school district spends most on instruction at 68% but has more students who are non-proficient in ELA and mathematics than Appoquinimink and Cape Henlopen that spend less on instruction. Appoquinimink spends the most on administration at 10% but has approximately the same numbers of non-proficient students as Indian River that spends only 6% on this category.

Table 10.6

Delaware Statewide English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Mathematics Percent Proficient (2019)*; and Public School District Education Spending: Direct Instructional Spending Total and Administrative Spending Total (2018-2019)**

School District	ELA Non Prof. (%)	Math Non Prof. (%)	Instr. (%)	Instr. Support (%)	Student Support (%)	Total (%)	Admin. Total (%)	Net Current Expenses (\$)
Statewide	47	56	57	2	5	64	7	2,399,740,778
Appoquinimink	34	47	64	0.5	5	69	10	152,465,177
Brandywine	47	57	61	2.5	5	69	9	182,902,848

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Caesar Rodney	35	51	65	1.5	5	71	8	92,144,980
Cape Henlopen	33	41	64	1.6	3	69	9	81,226,835
Capital	56	67	64	0.8	4	68	6	107,028,593
Christina	60	63	56	1.7	5	63	7	238,708,931
Colonial	60	74	62	1.4	3	67	9	151,499,878
Delmar	48	57	68	2.3	3	74	7	14,497,330
Indian River	39	44	67	1.8	3	72	6	153,047,616
Lake Forest	40	47	62	1.4	3	67	9	47,607,772
Laurel	45	61	61	2.0	3	66	8	30,171,773
Milford	49	54	64	0.5	4	69	8	53,999,286
Red Clay	50	61	64	1.5	10	76	8	249,145,277
Seaford	44	52	61	6.3	4	71	6	50,076,483
Smyrna	43	49	64	1.3	5	71	6	72,699,973
Woodbridge	59	67	64	2.0	3	68	7	38,177,489

Source*: 2019 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Summary.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/111/2019%20DeSSA%20ELA-Math%20-%20State%20Summary%20All.pdf>

Source**: Delaware Department of Education, Financial Educational Statistics Report, 2018-2019, Table 38.

Retrieved from [Educational Data and Annual Reports / Report of Educational Statistics 2018-2019 \(doe.k12.de.us\)](#)

Comparisons of Education Quality among Multiple States

Although it is important to look at educational performance in our state, it is also important to consider the education quality of other states in close proximity. By looking at both education performance and the cost of direct instructional expenses in other states, it is easier to get a picture of whether there is a correlation between the additional resources that are being spent on education and an improved educational performance of students. As previously mentioned in this report, the primary disparity in terms of direct educational expenditures between Delaware and other surrounding states is in the area of instructional staff support.

By utilizing the report *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 19* produced by the National Center for Education Statistics and analyzing scores and proficiency from NAEP's *2019 State Mapping Analysis*, we can compare the performance of students in Delaware with their peers in Maryland, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. This comparison will help us determine if the additional funding the other states receive impacts their students' performance (see Table 10.0 and Table 10.1 above).

New Jersey spends the most on instructional staff support per pupil in dollar terms: \$801, while Maryland ranks second in this respect at \$786. At the same time, percentwise, Maryland spends the most at 5%, followed by New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island at 4% each. Compared to all the states in its close proximity, Delaware spends the least on instructional staff support per pupil: \$295 (2%). If we now look at the percentage of 4th grade students performing at or above NAEP proficiency level in reading, we will see that students in New Jersey perform the best (42%), and Maryland's students rank only third at 35% after Connecticut and Pennsylvania, both scoring at 40% (see Table 10.7). Delaware scored the lowest among the neighboring states at 33%. As for the 4th graders proficiency level in math, New Jersey again scored the highest at 48%, while Maryland and Delaware ranked fifth, both at 39%.

Table 10.8 shows the percentage of 8th graders who performed at or above NAEP proficiency level in reading and math. Unfortunately, Delaware does not have scores for the 8th grade students' NAEP proficiency level in reading and math for 2019. Maryland and New Jersey are also missing scores for the 8th grade students' NAEP proficiency level in math. Therefore, it is impossible to provide a meaningful comparison in this case. However, one can still see that New Jersey's 8th graders scored the highest among the other states (excluding Delaware) with respect

to the state's 8th grade students' proficiency level in reading. Nevertheless, the numbers seem to suggest that no consistency and unequivocal correlation exist between spending on instructional staff support and student performance.

Table 10. 7

Percentages of Students Meeting State Proficiency Standards and Performing at or above the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Proficient Level in Reading and Mathematics in Grade 4, 2019

State	Reading		Mathematics	
	Meet State Proficiency Standard	At or above NAEP Proficient Level	Meet State Proficiency Standard	At or above NAEP Proficient Level
Delaware	54	33	51	39
Maryland	44	35	40	39
Connecticut	56	40	53	45
New Jersey	57	42	51	48
Pennsylvania	63	40	46	47
Rhode Island	38	35	33	41

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019 State Mapping Analysis.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/table_2019g.aspx

Table 10. 8

Percentages of Students Meeting State Proficiency Standards and Performing at or above the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Proficient Level in Reading and Mathematics in Grade 8, 2019

State	Reading		Mathematics	
	Meet State Proficiency Standard	At or above NAEP Proficient Level	Meet State Proficiency Standard	At or above NAEP Proficient Level
Delaware	52	N/A	38	N/A
Maryland	46	36	34	N/A
Connecticut	57	41	44	39
New Jersey	63	43	47	N/A
Pennsylvania	58	35	32	39
Rhode Island	37	35	25	30

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019 State Mapping Analysis.

Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/table_2019g.aspx

Summary

Based on nationwide comparisons, Delaware spends a smaller percentage of money on direct educational expenditures than its neighboring states. If, however, one looks only at direct instructional expenditures within Delaware, it becomes obvious that the amount spent per pupil in the state is mainstream when compared to the surrounding states. On the other hand, Delaware spends relatively little per pupil on student support services and the least per pupil on instructional staff support among all the states in its close proximity.

After adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals were introduced by the U.S. Department of Education, the Delaware Department of Education kept increasing its AYP targets every year to ensure that the state's school districts reach the federally mandated goal of 100% of students proficient in Math and English. Despite doing so, Delaware schools were unable to meet the increased goals set up by the NCLB policy. When President Obama announced allocation of a considerable sum of money for the Race to the Top Fund, Delaware turned out to be one of only two states that received Phase 1 funding for the program. However, even with the available funding, by 2015, the ambitious goal of 'more than half of Delaware's students becoming proficient or advanced' on the NAEP proficiency scale had not been reached.

The Delaware Department of Education does not use AYP goals as a measurement of achievement by the state's public schools and districts anymore. Instead, it utilizes the Delaware System of Student Assessment (DeSSA). In 2019, many more Delaware students in the 4th and 8th grades were found proficient in reading and mathematics by the State of Delaware than by NAEP. When comparing Delaware scores for its students' NAEP proficiency level in reading and math with the neighboring states, a conclusion suggests itself that no consistency and correlation exist between spending on instructional staff support and student performance.

SECTION FOUR

FINANCING SPECIAL EDUCATION

In December 2015, Congress amended the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through Public Law 114-95, the Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., b). That year IDEA also marked its 40th anniversary. IDEA imposed an obligation on districts and charters to make free and appropriate public education available to all their students with disabilities (Delaware Department of Education, 2022b). The passage of IDEA provided states with a better understanding of the services they were mandated to offer to their special needs students, as before the new law went into effect, services offered to such students by states and districts differed significantly (Griffith, 2015, p. 2). Under IDEA, federal aid is provided to states to supplement their own aid allocated for their exceptional students.

There are for main methods states utilize to pay for their special education programs and services. These include:

- Per-pupil funding – either pupil-weighted or flat grant
- Cost reimbursement – when state defines eligible costs
- Instructional/teacher units – funds to support teachers
- Census – based on total student population rather than eligibility for special education (Verstegen, 2014, p. 5).

States can also use multiple and single student weights systems, a resource allocated model, block grants, and a high-cost students system (Parker, 2019). As an illustration of how diverse the funding mechanisms are in different states, Delaware uses the resource-allocation system, which means the distribution of resources (not dollars) based on the number of identified students who require special education services, whereas New Jersey utilizes a combination of the census-based and high-cost systems, which provides additional funding for its very high-cost students (Parker, 2019). Pennsylvania used to incorporate census-based assumptions and block grants, i.e., grants given by the state to the districts to use on special education services (Stadler & Von Culin, 2016, p. 56; Parker, 2019), and then changed to the multiple student weights system that assigned students a different weight or dollar amount based on severity of disability, specific disability, or

other factors (Parker, 2019). According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, no formula was going to be run for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, since special education appropriations were legislated to be identical to the previous fiscal year (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2020).

Within the funding formulae described above, the funding level in different states may also vary according to the grade level (Griffith, 2005, p. 2). In the State of Delaware, for example, the weight for kindergarten is .50, whereas for grades 1-12 it equals 1.00. In Pennsylvania the system of weights is different: the weight for K-6 is 1.00, and for grades 7-12 it is 1.36. In New Jersey the weight differentiation is even more precise: K – .50; 1-5 – 1.00; 6-8 – 1.12; and 9-12 – 1.20 (Ibid.). In Delaware, funding is also provided through instructional units. The State uses a needs-based funding system for special education students. Funding is based on three categories: basic, intensive, and complex, with unit sizes of 8.4, 6.0, and 2.6 students per unit respectively (Verstegen, 2018, pp. 46-49).

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education determined that Delaware met the requirements and purposes of Part B of IDEA. That meant that Delaware earned the highest rating possible in the Department's evaluation of the state's special education services (Delaware.gov, n.d.). The highest ranking was given to Delaware just three years after its rating had been defined as 'needs intervention,' which was the second lowest.

Tables 10.9 and 10.10 below provide data on the actual numbers of special needs students and percent of such students in Delaware in the school year 2021-2022.

Table 10. 9
2021-2022 Special Needs Students in Delaware

Total number of students	English Language Learners	Low Income	Special Education
140,263	14,559	34,112	23,648

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Delaware Report Card, Enrollment.

Retrieved from: <https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/detail.html#aboutpage?scope=state&district=0&school=0>

Table 10.10
2021-2022 Percent Special Needs Students in Delaware

Total number of students	English Language Learners	Low Income	Special Education
100	10.38	24.32	16.86

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Delaware Report Card, Enrollment.

Retrieved from: <https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/detail.html#aboutpage?scope=state&district=0&school=0>

Summary

The current situation with special education in the United States is an enormous improvement in comparison with the one that existed before IDEA was passed by Congress. It does not mean, however, that IDEA has managed to address successfully all the existing problems associated with educating special needs students. States utilize a number of formulae to distribute their special education funds. Delaware uses a resource-allocation system, as well as systems of grade weights and needs-based funding. In 2017, Delaware received the highest rating possible in the U.S. Department of Education evaluation of the state's special education services.

CONCLUSION

Education spending is clearly one of the main topics of current policy in Delaware. Just like other states nationwide, Delaware struggles to successfully address the issue of improving public education. Since education consumes such a large part of state and local budgets, it is important to ensure that the funds are allocated efficiently.

The data analyzed in this report suggest that Delaware is essentially in the mainstream regarding financing of public education. This being said, there is certainly room for improvement. To fund its public education, Delaware uses a formula that guarantees a certain level of funding for schools each year. The drawback of the formula is that it makes financing of the public education system inflexible. An example of the rigidity of the public education financing is the amount of money spent on current expenses, i.e., expenses that finance the day-to-day running of schools. This figure has been relatively static since 2000, averaging 86% over the period of twenty years. Instruction receives the largest share of funds within current expenses at about 57%. This figure is on par with how funds are allocated region- and nationwide.

Education revenues and expenditures reflect the choices and priorities of numerous agents involved in the process of providing education in Delaware. The data presented in the current report help identify spending patterns among Delaware school districts and their peer groups.

Delaware charter schools offer greater education choice for Delaware students, but the turnover in such schools makes it difficult to evaluate their success in comparison to public school districts. General and school administration costs per pupil have been growing in almost every district of the state. As for administration costs per pupil, they depend on the school size. Smaller schools have larger school administration costs and vice versa. The amount of state funding depends on enrollment levels via the unit system: the more units a district is able to generate, the more funding it receives. Special education as a percentage of total enrollment is on the rise with special education students generating units faster than regular students. Non-vocational school districts also benefit from vocational units and have more of these units than the three vocational districts.

When total current expenditure levels of Delaware's districts are compared with each other and with school districts in the random subset of Mid-Atlantic school districts, a considerable

disparity is revealed. At the same time, even though Delaware spends a smaller percentage of money on direct educational expenditures than its neighboring states, the amount spent on direct instructional expenditures per pupil is mainstream when compared to the surrounding states. However, Delaware spends relatively little per pupil on student support services and on instructional staff support as compared to all the states in its close proximity.

After adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals were introduced by the U.S. Department of Education, Delaware schools were unable to meet the increased goals set up by the No Child Left Behind policy. Race to the Top funding put a spotlight on Delaware with regards to the methods that had been taken and were planned to improve underperforming schools. Although Delaware was one of only two states that received Phase 1 funding for the program, by 2015, the ambitious goal of ‘more than half of Delaware’s students becoming proficient or advanced’ on the NAEP proficiency scale had not been reached. Currently, the Delaware Department of Education does not use AYP goals as a measurement of achievement by the state’s public schools and districts. Instead, it utilizes the Delaware System of Student Assessment (DeSSA), according to which many more Delaware students in the 4th and 8th grades were found proficient in reading and mathematics by the State of Delaware than by NAEP as of 2019.

To fund its special education, Delaware uses a resource-allocation system, as well as systems of grade weights and needs-based funding. Even though the passage of IDEA by Congress did not resolve all the issues relevant to the special education financing, the law helped improve the situation with special education significantly. In its turn, Delaware was able to give a boost to its special education services so as to receive the highest rating possible in the U.S. Department of Education evaluation in 2017.

GLOSSARY

Average Daily Attendance (ADA) – For a given school year, the average daily attendance of a school is the sum of days present of all pupils when the school was in session divided by the total number of days the school was in session.

Average Daily Membership (ADM) – For a given school year, the average daily membership of a school is the sum of days present and absent of all pupils when the school was in session divided by the total number of days the school was in session.

Capital Outlay – An expenditure which results in the acquisition of fixed assets, including land, existing buildings, improvement of grounds, construction of buildings, additions of buildings, remodeling of buildings, initial equipment, or additional equipment.

Classroom teacher – A staff member assigned the professional activities of instructing pupils in classroom situations for which daily pupil attendance figures for the school system are kept.

Current Expenses – Any expenditure except for capital outlay and debt service. Staff categories included in the Current Expenses tables are:

Instruction: Teachers, Instructional Aides

Support Services: *Students*

Guidance Counselors, Psychologists, Therapists, Nurses

Support Services: *General Administration*

Chief School Officers, Assistant Superintendents, Administrative Assistants,
Clerical

Support Services: *School Administration*

Principals, Assistant Principals, Clerical

Support Services: *Operations & Maintenance*

Custodians, Maintenance Specialists

Support Services: *Student Transportation*

School Bus Drivers, Transportation Supervisors, Transportation Specialists, Bus
Aides Support Services

Support Services: Other

Directors of Administration, Specialists/Support, Supervisors/Support,
Administrative Assistants/Support, Clerical

Food Services: Cafeteria Managers, Cafeteria Supervisors, Cafeteria Worker

Debt Service – Expenditures for the retirement of debt and expenditures for interest on debt, except principal and interest on current loans.

Division I Unit – State appropriations allocated to school districts on a unit enrollment formula, which are designated for the purpose of paying the employees of the various school districts of the state in accordance with the state supported salary schedule.

Division Unit II – State appropriations allocated to school districts on a unit enrollment formula which are designated for all other non-salary costs, except those for debt service and the transportation of pupils.

Division Unit III – State appropriations allocated to school districts based on a tax effort formula, which are designated to equalize revenue receipts among school districts.

Enrollment September 30 – Delaware law requires a total enrollment report for each school district as of September 30. This enrollment count is used as a basis for calculation of units of pupils for school funding purposes.

FTE Staff – Derived by dividing the amount of time a person is employed by the time normally required for a corresponding full-time position.

FTE Student – Derived by a formula to aggregate full-time students and part-time special education students for unit computation.

Instructional Support – An assignment to a staff member who has expertise in a specialized field to provide information and guidance to other staff members to improve the curriculum.

Non-Revenue Receipts – Receipts which accrue to the district as the result of incurring an obligation which must be met at a future date or reducing the value of school properties through the exchange of a property asset into a cash asset. Money obtained from the sale of bonds or school property would be classified as a non-revenue receipt.

Official/Administrative – A grouping of assignments comprising the various skill levels required to perform management activities.

Professional/Other – A grouping of assignments requiring a high degree of knowledge and skills acquired through at least a Baccalaureate Degree (or its equivalent obtained through special study and /or experience) but not requiring skills in the field of education.

Property Tax – A tax levied on real estate, at a rate per \$100, on the assessed valuation of such property within the school district.

Revenue Receipts – Receipts which produce additions to assets without increasing school indebtedness and without reducing the value or depleting school property. Money from taxes and tuition are examples of revenue receipts.

Salary – Average salary is the arithmetic mean of teacher salaries, state, and local funds only. Beginning, middle, and top salaries are schedule steps for teachers with bachelor's degree and no experience, a master's degree and thirteen years' experience, and a master's degree plus thirty credits with maximum years' experience.

Skilled and Service Worker – A grouping of assignments such as secretarial, technician, cafeteria, and custodial worker that requires a varying level of skills.

Special – Class for exceptional (handicapped) children for whom a program of special education is provided.

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APPENDIX

CONGRESSIONAL COVID FUNDING

On March 27, 2020, the \$2.2 trillion stimulus bill known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Trump. The Act was a response to the economic hardships experienced by the country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among other provisions, it stipulated the allocation of \$13.2 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund (ESSER Fund) to help K-12 schools deal with the consequences of the economic fallout. The Education Department used the fiscal year 2019 State shares of Title I, Part A to determine how much funding to allocate to each state (Methodology, 2020, p. 1). The law allowed 12 different uses of the K-12 relief fund. Some examples include providing principals with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools; activities to address the needs of low-income children, children with disabilities, English learners, and children experiencing homelessness; purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean facilities and the like (Jordan, 2021, p. 9).

The CARES Act required that no less than 90% of the ESSER Fund was directed to local education agencies (LEAs), no more than 10% – to state education agencies (SEAs), and no more than 0.5 of 1% of the total allocation – for administrative costs (Jordan, 2021, p. 12; Methodology, 2020, p. 1). Additionally, almost \$3 billion was directed to the Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund. Governors could use the money for school districts or higher education institutions that were ‘significantly impacted’ by the pandemic (Jordan, 2021, p. 9). The rounded totals in U.S. dollars of the CARES funds allocations for the U.S. and the State of Delaware are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
CARES Funds Allocations for the U.S. and the State of Delaware

State	Total for School Relief	Minimum for LEA	Maximum for SEA	Maximum for Administration	Total for Governors Fund
U.S.	13.2B	11.9B	1.3B	66M	2.9B
Delaware	43M	39M	4.3M	217,500	7.9M

In late December 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump. It provided additional \$54.3 billion for K-12 schools to be delivered mostly through Title I funding as well as \$4 billion for governors to spend as they deemed appropriate, including \$2.7 billion of that money for private schools (Jordan, 2021, p. 6). As with the CARES Act, the Education Department used the fiscal year 2020 State shares of Title I, Part A to determine the ESSER II Fund allocations for each state (Methodology, 2021a, p. 1; Methodology, 2021b, p. 2). Table 2 that follows presents rounded totals in U.S. dollars of the CRRSA funds allocations for the U.S. and the State of Delaware.

Table 2
CRRSA Funds Allocations for the U.S. and the State of Delaware

State	Total for School Relief	Minimum for LEA	Maximum for SEA	Maximum for Administration	Total for Governors Fund
U.S.	54.3B	48.9B	5.4B	271.5M	4B
Delaware	182.9M	164.6M	18.3M	914,426	8.4M

Additionally, CRRSA allocated 7\$ billion for the broadband access expansion and another \$10 billion for childcare. CRRSA also continued to fund school meal programs. Just like the CARES Act funds, districts can use CRRSA funds for a broad range of activities. Among others, these include addressing learning loss with the special focus on disadvantaged students, purchasing PPE, providing mental health services for students, and so on (Jordan, 2021, pp. 6-7).

On March 11, 2021, the new President Joe Biden signed into law another economic stimulus bill. This time it was the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARP). It should be mentioned that not a single Republican voted for the bill to be passed. The new bill allocated \$123 billion for public K-12 schools. The Education Department provided rules and guidance to the states and school districts on how to spend COVID relief dollars (Jordan, 2021, p. 4). States, local school districts, and charter networks are required to submit plans describing strategies for safe reopening of schools as well as their plans for addressing learning loss and other issues. It is expected that states and local districts will seek suggestions of the community, educators, and students for developing their plans (Ibid.).

The Education Department provided estimates of how much money each state is going to receive. The rounded totals in U.S. dollars of the ARP funds allocations for the U.S. and the State of Delaware are presented in the Table 3 below (Methodology, 2021c, pp. 1-2).

Table 3
ARP Funds Allocations for the U.S. and the State of Delaware

State	Total ARP ESSER Fund Allocation	Minimum LEA Distribution (90%)	Maximum SEA Reservation ¹ (10%)	Maximum For SEA Administration (1/2 of 1%)
U.S.	123B	109.8B	12.2B	610M
Delaware	411M	370M	41M	2M

¹ Each SEA must reserve, at a minimum, 7 percent its total allocation as follows: 5 percent for interventions to address learning loss, 1 percent for summer enrichment programs, and 1 percent for comprehensive afterschool programs (Methodology, 2021c, p. 1).

According to the Explainer updated on April 30, 2021, the American Rescue Plan includes the following provisions:

- \$123 billion for K-12 schools to be distributed through the federal Title I formula for funding schools and districts with concentrated poverty. Districts must spend at least 20 percent of the money addressing learning loss and must make public a plan for returning to in-person schooling safely. Another \$2.75 billion is allotted for private K-12 schools, bringing the total to about \$126 billion.
- State agencies must spend at least 5 percent on learning loss, 1 percent on summer learning, and 1 percent on afterschool programs.
- \$40 billion to support higher education institutions.
- \$2.75 billion for governors to share with private schools.
- \$7.2 billion for the E-rate program that makes it easier to connect homes and libraries to the internet.
- \$3 billion in added funding to support students with disabilities.
- \$1 billion to expand national service programs to support response and recovery, including tutoring programs in schools and other priorities.
- \$800 million to support education and wraparound services for homeless children.
- \$10 billion for COVID-19 screening testing for K-12 teachers, staff, and students in schools (Jordan, 2021, p. 5).

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