



POLICY BRIEF

School spending and academic learning in the 20 largest school districts in Washington state

By Liv Finne,
Director, Center for Education

January 2020

2	<i>Introduction</i>
4	<i>Major findings on spending increases</i>
4	<i>Findings on student academic learning</i>
5	<i>Conclusion</i>
6	<i>Methodology</i>
9	<i>Appendix A (spending and academic learning by districts in alphabetical order)</i>
28	<i>About the Author</i>



POLICY BRIEF

School spending and academic learning in the 20 largest school districts in Washington state

By Liv Finne,
Director, Center for Education

January 2020

Introduction

Each legislative session lawmakers are lobbied by school district officials, union executives, and political activist groups to increase funding for K-12 schools and to impose new taxes on the public. These interests consistently argue that their current budgets are too small. The message is always the same, regardless of how much additional money the legislature devotes to public education.

For their part, public school officials say that, if only they had enough money, they would provide Excellence for All and Every Child Learns.

In the 2020 Legislative session, these education activists, who themselves benefit from increased school spending, plan to tell lawmakers the schools do not have enough money. They will say they don't have enough money for school nurses and counselors, and that services for special needs students are underfunded, even though the legislature has increased their budgets by over 100 percent in recent years.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal has said Washington state needs to create a new state income tax to spend more on schools.

Proper consideration of these political demands requires a firm understanding of how school districts spend current dollars. In 2018-19 the current ratio of students to school staff in Washington state was 9.7 students for every school employee.¹ Only 51 percent of school employees are teachers.²

Public education is plagued with district bureaucracies that divert 40 cents of every dollar away from school classrooms.³ Among parents, educational options, like charter schools and online learning, are increasingly popular as families seek

1 "Statewide Report, Workload/Staffing/Finance, 2018-19," Washington State K-12 School District Finance Data, at www.fiscal.wa.gov.

2 "Statewide School Personnel Assignment Summary Profiles – 2018-19 Final, Table 7, All School Personnel by Duty," School Apportionment and Financial Services, Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, at <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/safs/pub/per/1819/tbl07.pdf>

3 "K12 Funding Expenditures by School Activity, 2018-19," Washington State K-12 School District Finance Data, at www.fiscal.wa.gov.

alternatives to local school district monopolies. Even in left-leaning Seattle up to a third of families, including many public school employees themselves, send their children to private schools.

The purpose of this Policy Brief is to increase the public's understanding of school district budgets. It provides spending growth data from Washington's 20 largest school districts from 2013 to 2019 to illustrate recent, dramatic increases in state funding to K-12 schools.

To assess whether large increases in spending have actually benefitted students, this study also included data on the academic learning of students in these 20 districts. See Appendix A for this data, organized alphabetically by school district.

The school districts studied include:

Auburn School District

Bellevue School District

Bethel School District

Edmonds School District

Everett School District

Evergreen (Clark) School District

Federal Way Public Schools

Highline Public Schools

Issaquah School District

Kennewick School District

Kent School District

Lake Washington School District

Northshore Public Schools

Pasco School District

Puyallup Public Schools

Seattle Public Schools

Spokane Public Schools

Tacoma Public Schools

Vancouver Public Schools

Yakima School District

Lawmakers and state education officials can use this information to hold school districts accountable for prioritizing the learning of students over funding for special interests, to ensure that every child actually receives the high-quality education state officials promised.

Major findings on spending increases

Over the last six years, the state legislature enacted massive spending increases for K-12 public schools. The legislature increased funding from \$13.5 billion in the 2011-13 state budget to \$27.3 billion in the current 2019-21 budget, a 102 percent increase.⁴

From 2013 to 2019, the 20 largest districts increased spending an average of 61 percent. The 20 districts increased spending per student an average of \$5,520. Public schools now receive more money than most private schools charge for tuition.

Increased spending on teachers:

Average teacher pay and benefits in the 20 districts range from a low of \$102,500 in the Pasco School District to a high of \$136,600 in the Everett School District. Teachers can make as much as \$153,500 in pay and benefits in the Everett School District.

Increased spending on central office staff:

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 ranges from 390 administrators in Seattle Public Schools to 36 administrators in the Pasco School District.

Superintendent pay and benefits range from a high of \$387,500 in salary and \$72,700 in benefits in Vancouver Public Schools to a low of \$178,900 in salary and \$58,800 in benefits in the Pasco School District.

Only about half of all school employees are teachers, ranging from a high of 57 percent of all employees in Federal Way Public Schools to a low of 43 percent of all employees in Highline Public Schools.

Findings on student academic learning

In the last ten years Washington state has changed the tests used to assess student learning on three separate occasions. The state is now using the federal Smarter Balanced tests in math, reading and science. Smarter Balanced tests replaced End of Course tests, which replaced the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, (the WASL).

The Smarter Balanced tests were first administered in the spring of 2015.

Reading. 2018-19 test results in reading for the 20 districts range from a high of 83.2 percent of students in the Lake Washington School District to a low of 39.6 percent of students in the Pasco School District meeting the state standard.

⁴ “Statewide Expenditure History – Operating, Near General Fund Total, Dollars in Thousands, Public Schools,” Washington State Historical Spending Trends, at <http://fiscal.wa.gov/SpendHistFund.aspx>.

School District	Percent of students meeting state standard in reading, 2018-19	Percent of students meeting state standard in math, 2018-19
Auburn School District	55.4	45.7
Bellevue School District	77.8	71.7
Bethel School District	58.3	46.2
Edmonds School District	63.1	52.1
Everett School District	71.9	58.9
Evergreen (Clark)	49.7	39.3
Federal Way Public Schools	45.8	33.4
Highline Public Schools	47.5	34.6
Issaquah Public Schools	80.1	76.0
Kennewick School District	56.7	41.8
Kent School District	56.2	46.1
Lake Washington	83.2	77.5
Northshore Public Schools	76.3	68.2
Pasco School District	39.6	29.8
Puyallup Public Schools	64.8	51.5
Seattle Public Schools	69.8	61.6
Spokane Public Schools	56.0	45.2
Tacoma Public Schools	52.2	38.5
Vancouver Public Schools	52.6	42.2
Yakima School District	41.7	33.1

Math. 2018-19 test results in math for the 20 districts range from a high of 77.5 percent of students in the Lake Washington School District to a low of 29.8 percent of students in Pasco School District meeting the state standard.

The state Smarter Balanced test also shows low-income, minority children in Washington state are falling further behind their peers in academic learning. The achievement gap between black and Hispanic students and white students continues to grow, even after lawmakers announced that reducing it was their top priority.

These disappointing results are reflected in the scores of Washington’s students on the National Assessment of Educational Achievement (NAEP), the nation’s report card and considered the gold standard of testing. The federal government administers this test to a statistically representative sample of students in Washington state every two years. The most recent NAEP scores for the spring of 2019 show that the assessed knowledge of Washington’s students in reading and math has declined since the test was administered in 2017.

Conclusion

Lawmakers have responded to lobbying by school officials and union interests and doubled state spending on the schools since 2012, raised property taxes, and funded ineffective and expensive education programs. They promised these programs would improve the quality of education offered to students in Washington state. Here is a partial list of the funded programs that have failed to improve the level of student learning:

- Prototype school funding model

- Smaller class sizes in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades

- Common Core standardized curriculum

Large salary increases for school employees

Increased number of school employees

Learning Assistance Program for struggling learners

Early learning expansion to state-funded pre-school, ECEAP

STARS System of regulation on Child Care providers

State data show that top-down programs imposed by state officials in Olympia and massive increases in public education spending have not raised the level of student learning in Washington state.

One bright spot in this picture are Washington's nine public charter schools. These schools are not subject to union rules and multi-layered bureaucracies. The legislature has granted administrators at these schools the unique authority of:

“...allowing flexibility to innovate in areas such as scheduling, personnel, funding, and educational programs to improve student outcomes and academic achievement.”⁵

In Washington's nine public charter schools, where 63 percent of students are low-income, minority children, the level of student learning outperforms that of traditional schools. In contrast to the failed policy of increasing school funding, Washington's public charter school law has already proved to be a success. The independence and innovation of charter schools, even though they receive less funding, shows how state leaders can improve learning throughout the public education system, to the benefit of all children living in Washington.

Methodology

All the figures reported in this Policy Brief report data provided by government agencies. Original sources include: 1) Individual public school district websites and school websites; 2) School Apportionment, Enrollment and Fiscal Reports, School District Personnel Summary Profiles and School Report Cards by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and 3) Workload/Staffing/Finance Reports by K-12 School District available on fiscal.wa.gov, provided by the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program Committee and Office of Financial Management in Olympia.

F-195 budget reports by district for 2019-20 are posted on the website of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The F-195 budget reports were used to provide per student spending amounts for 2019-20. The 2018-19 F-195 budget reports and 2018-19 School District Personnel Summary Profiles were used to determine the percentage of total employees that are teachers in each district, and to provide the number of administrators paid over \$100,000 per year in each school district.

⁵ RCW 28A.710.040 Charter schools – requirements, Section (3), at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.710.040>.

APPENDIX A

SPENDING AND ACADEMIC LEARNING BY DISTRICTS
IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Auburn Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. Number of students: 17,335

2. Number of schools: 22

3. Spending per student: \$15,400¹

4. Spending on teacher pay:

Average teacher gets \$131,900 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$136,700 in pay and benefits.

5. Spending on central office staff:

Superintendent gets \$272,400 in salary, plus \$84,200 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 98.

Only 50 percent of employees are teachers.

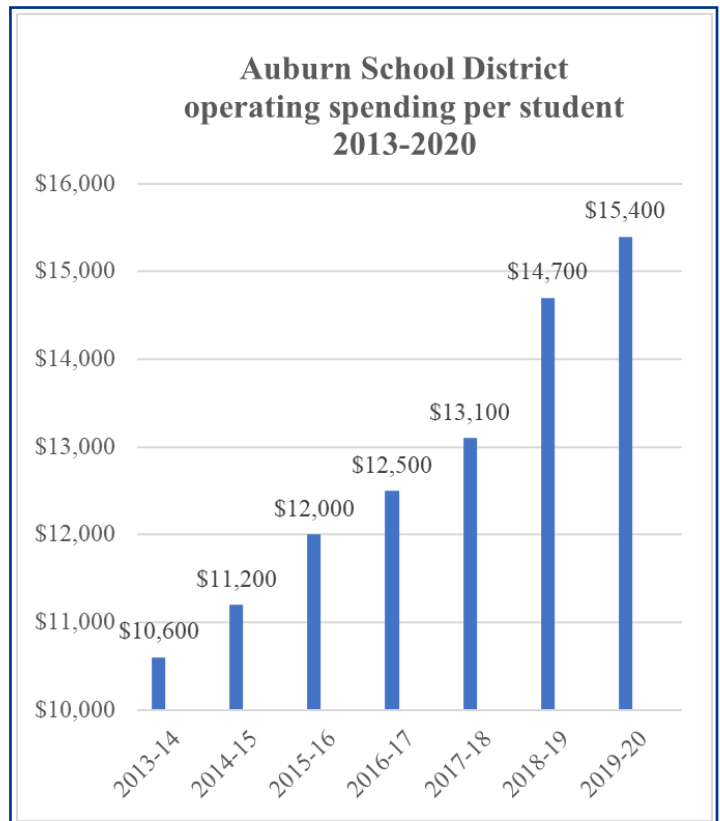
6. Spending growth:

Per-student spending has increased by \$4,800, or 45 percent, in six years.

7. Student learning²

2018-19:

- 44.6 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 54.3 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



¹ "Workload/Staffing/Finance Reports by District, 2013-19," K-12 School District Finance Data, Office of Financial Management, at www.fiscal.wa.gov/K12Districts.aspx, and School District Budgets, Form F-195, Fiscal Year 2019-20.

² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Bellevue Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 20,565

2. **Number of schools:** 29

3. **Spending per student:** \$18,200¹

4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$124,000 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$140,300 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$321,200 in salary, plus \$74,400 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 135.

Only 46 percent of employees are teachers.

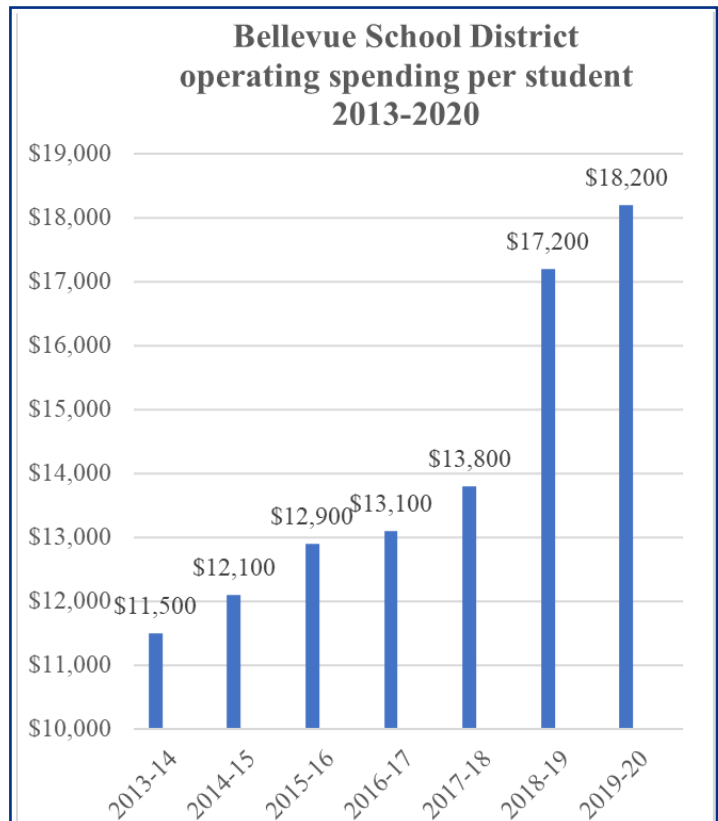
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$6,700, or 58 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 22.2 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 28.3 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report

Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Bethel School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 19,902
2. **Number of schools:** 31
3. **Spending per student:** \$15,900¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$113,300 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$129,300 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$256,100 in salary, plus \$58,100 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 150.

Only 49 percent of employees are teachers.

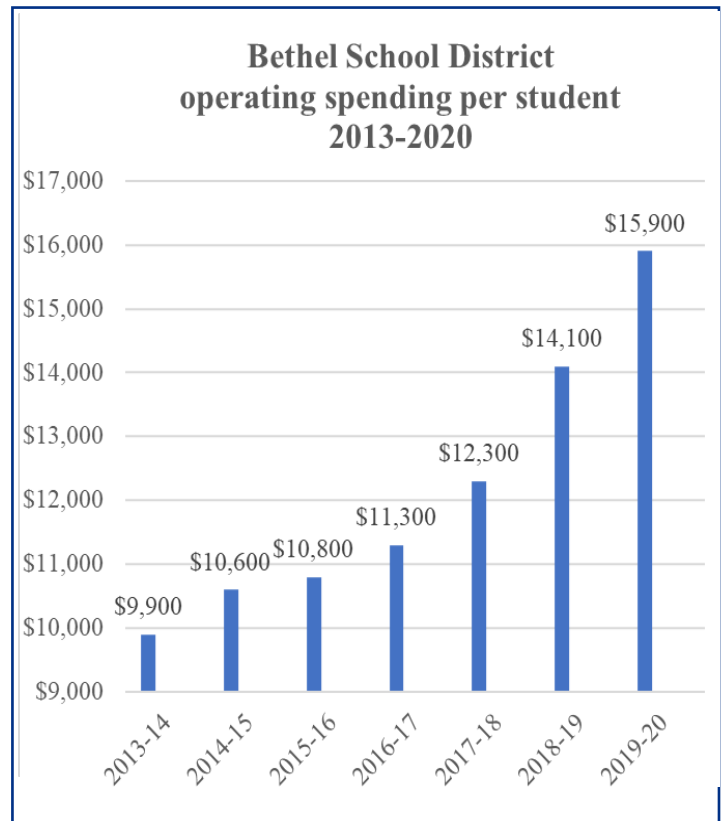
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$6,000, or 60 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 41.7 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 53.8 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report

Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Edmonds Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 20,651

2. **Number of schools:** 34

3. **Spending per student:** \$16,600¹

4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$125,600 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$149,200 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$276,700 in salary, plus \$71,200 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 101.

Only 50 percent of employees are teachers.

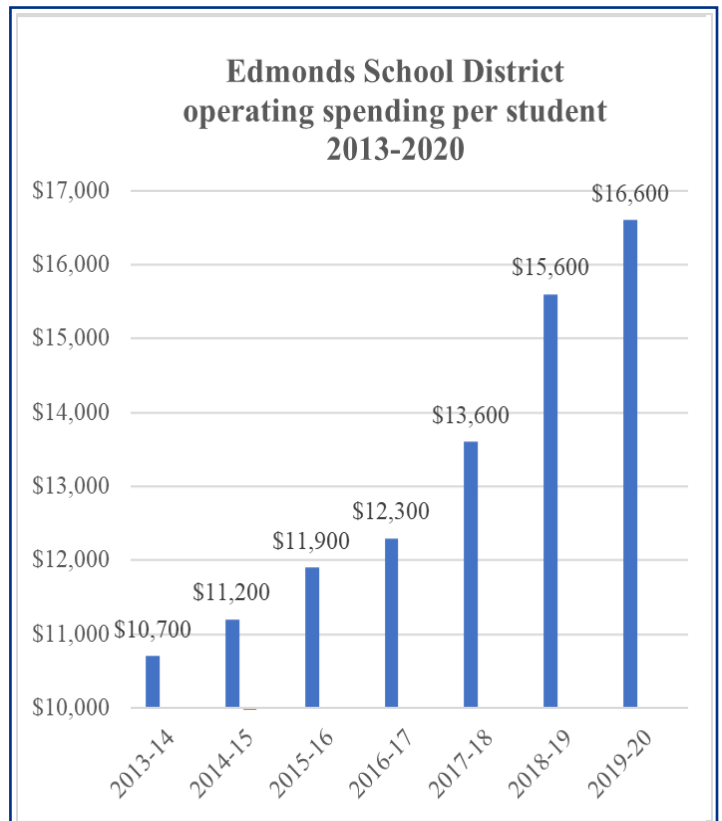
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,900, or 55 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 36.9 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 47.9 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Everett School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 20,308
2. **Number of schools:** 27
3. **Spending per student:** \$17,100¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$136,600 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$153,500 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$263,000 in salary, plus \$62,900 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 103.

Only 52 percent of employees are teachers.

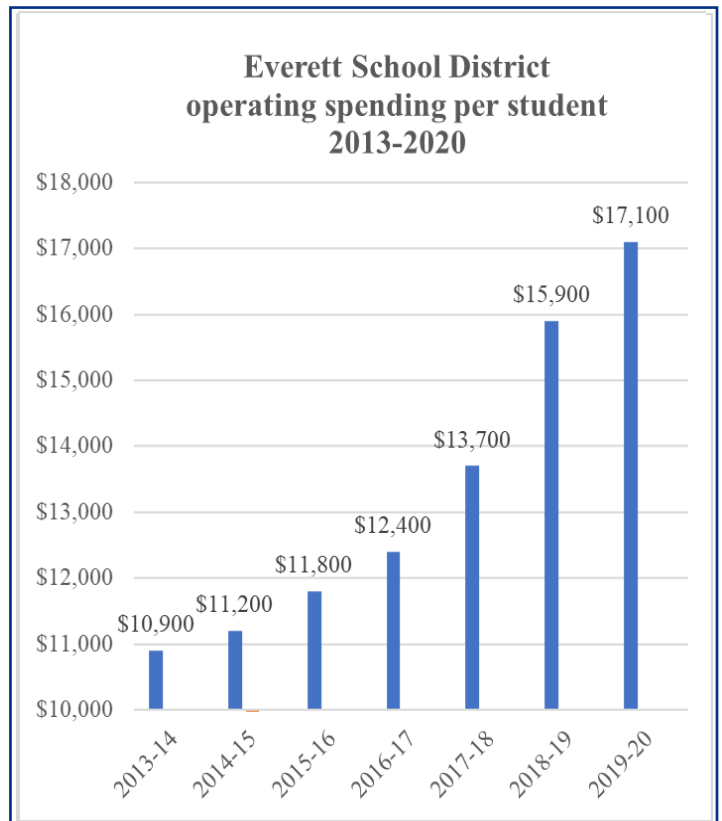
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$6,200, or 57 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 28.1 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 41.1 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Evergreen (Clark) School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 25,220
2. **Number of schools:** 35
3. **Spending per student:** \$15,300¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$113,534 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$124,700 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$428,400 in salary, plus \$61,649 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 153.

Only 54 percent of employees are teachers.

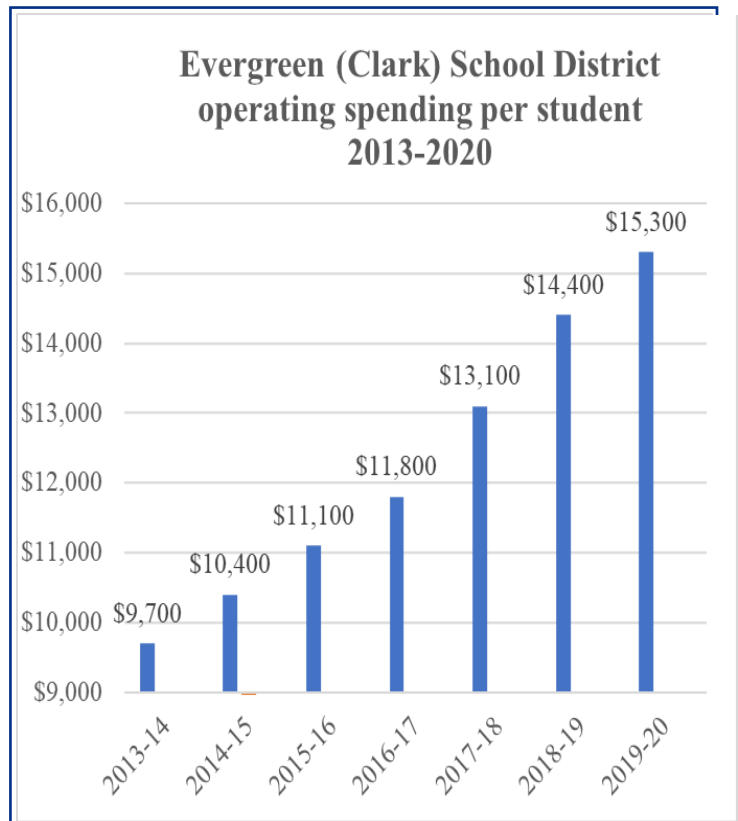
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,600, or 58 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 50.3 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 60.7 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report

Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Federal Way Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 22,439
2. **Number of schools:** 37
3. **Spending per student:** \$16,100¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$111,606 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$133,500 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$315,759 in salary, plus \$52,570 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 166.

Only 57 percent of employees are teachers.

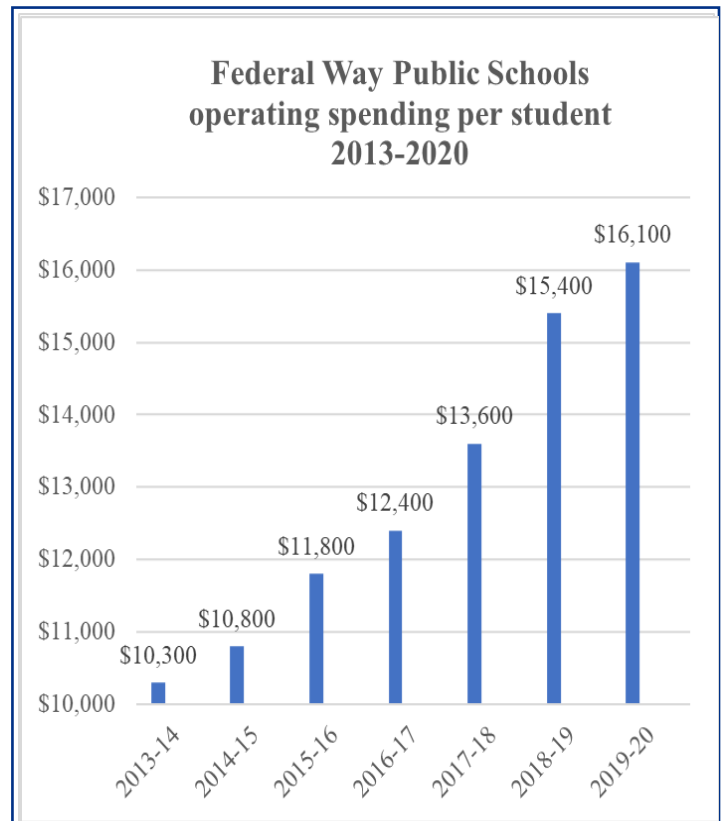
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,800, or 56 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 54.2 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 66.6 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Highline Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 18,273
2. **Number of schools:** 33
3. **Spending per student:** \$17,900¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$113,200 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$136,300 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$301,300 in salary, plus \$57,300 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 100.

Only 43 percent of employees are teachers.

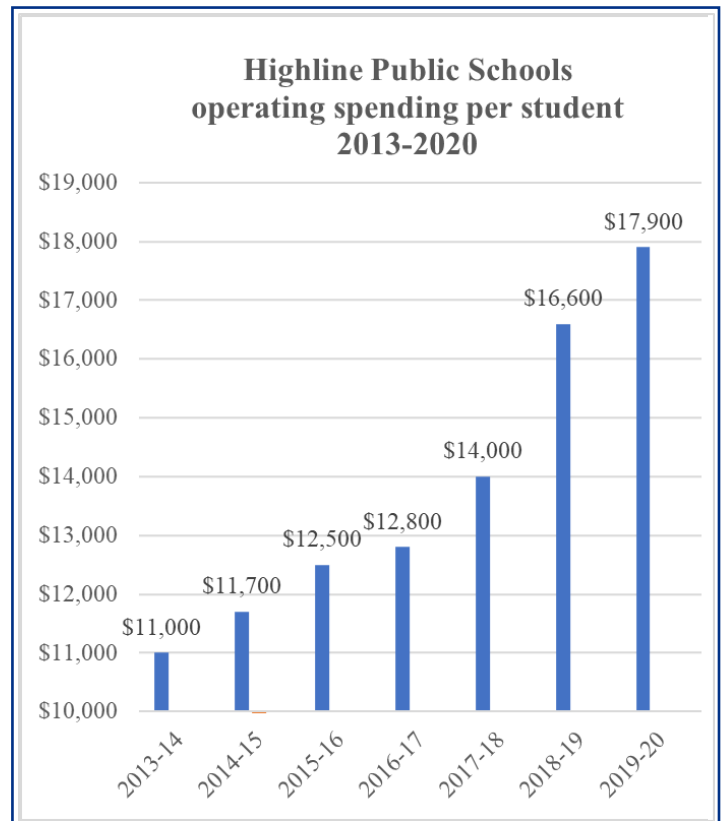
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$6,800, or 63 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 52.5 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 65.4 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Issaquah School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 20,974
2. **Number of schools:** 25
3. **Spending per student:** \$16,100¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$120,700 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$136,000 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$318,800 in salary, plus \$68,700 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 131.

Only 48 percent of employees are teachers.

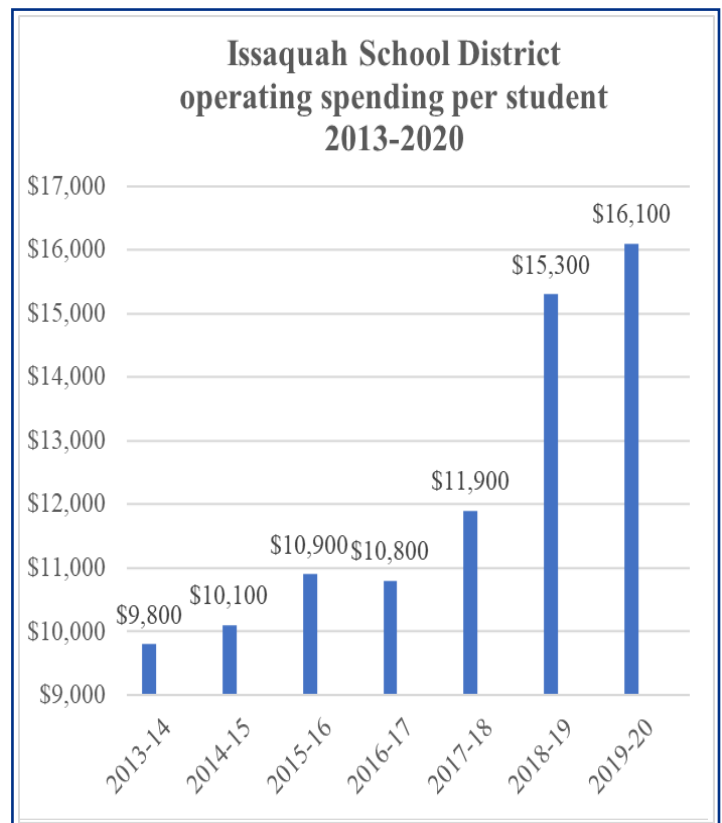
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$6,300, or 64 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 19.9 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 24.0 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report

Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Kennewick School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 18,710
2. **Number of schools:** 34
3. **Spending per student:** \$14,200¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$108,200 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$127,000 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$249,500 in salary, plus \$37,700 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 103.

Only 49 percent of employees are teachers.

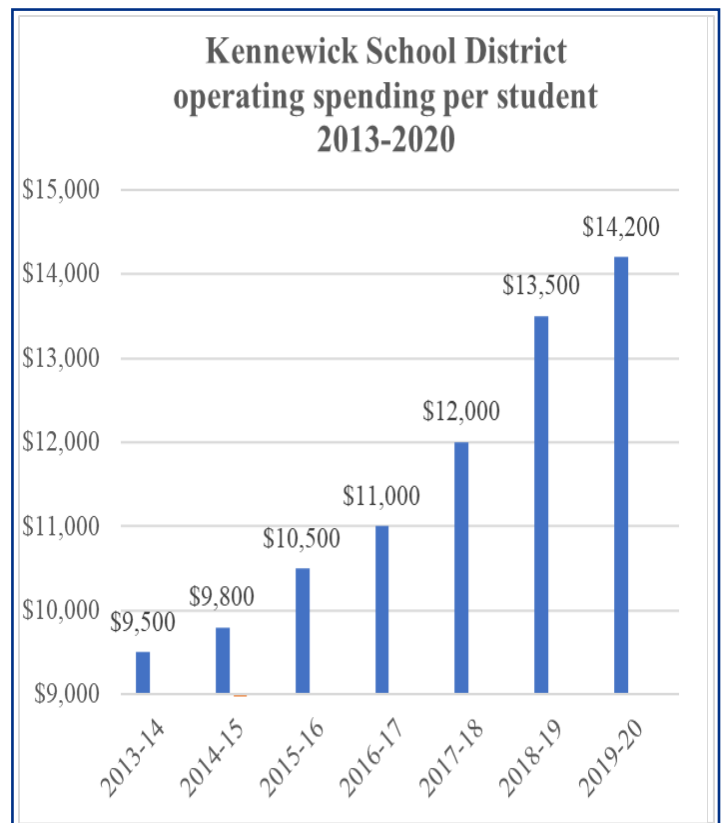
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$4,700, or 49 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 43.3 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 58.2 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Kent School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 26,644
2. **Number of schools:** 42
3. **Spending per student:** \$15,700¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$112,700 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$133,500 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$264,700 in salary, plus \$73,500 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 144.

Only 49 percent of employees are teachers.

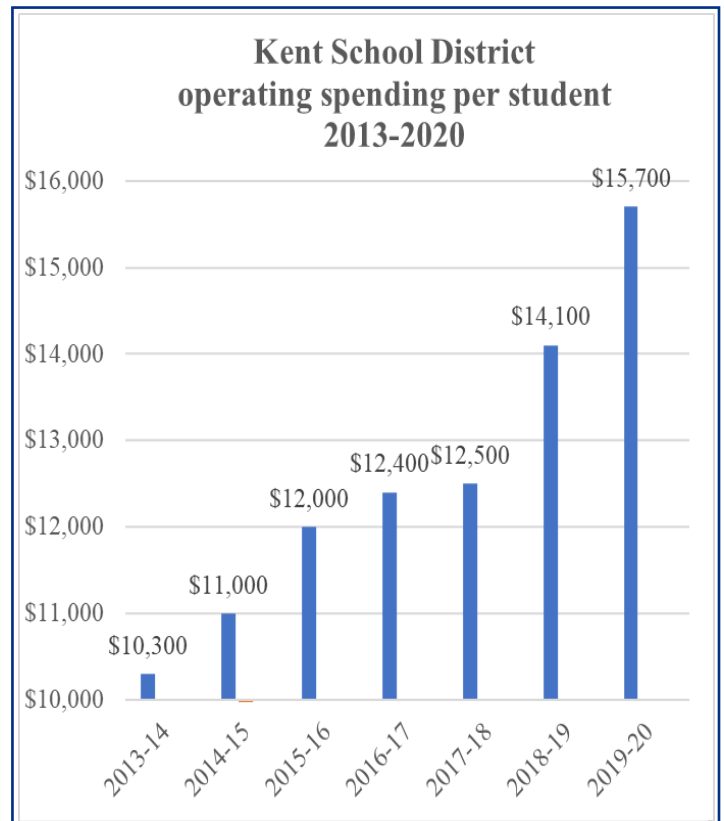
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,400, or 53 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 43.8 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 53.9 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Lake Washington Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 31,171
2. **Number of schools:** 55
3. **Spending per student:** \$15,000¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$117,000 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$134,500 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$347,400 in salary, plus \$66,400 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 139.

Only 55 percent of employees are teachers.

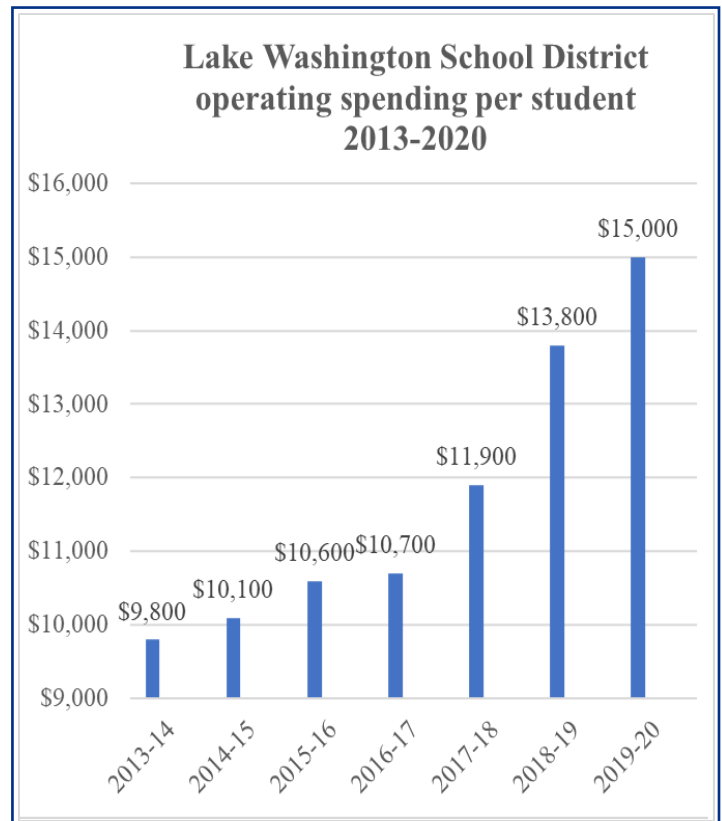
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,200, or 53 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 16.8 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 22.5 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Northshore Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 22,990
2. **Number of schools:** 34
3. **Spending per student:** \$16,700¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$132,400 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$145,500 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$350,115 in salary, plus \$63,200 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 105.

Only 55 percent of employees are teachers.

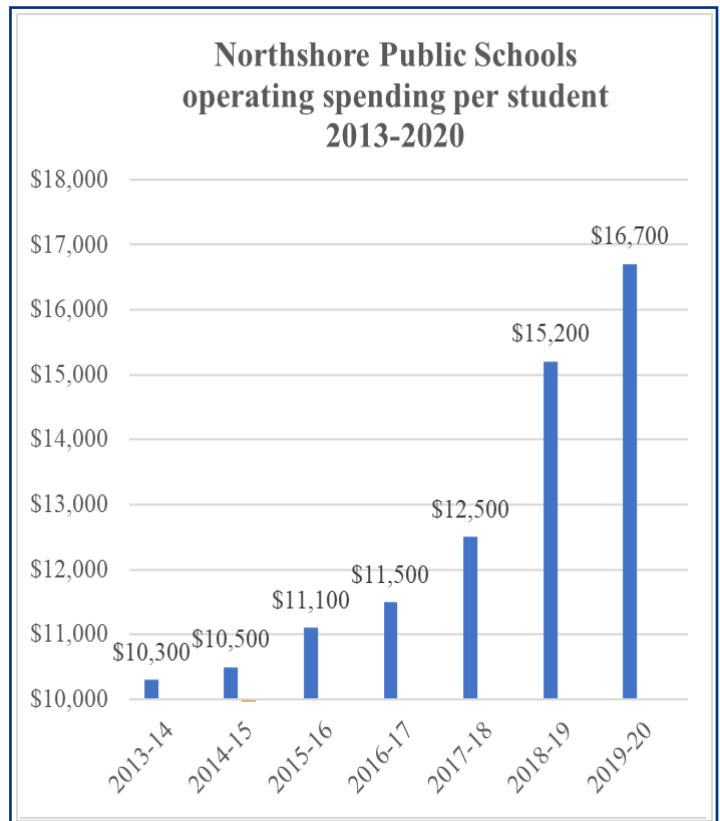
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,400, or 62 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 23.7 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 31.8 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Pasco School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 18,173
2. **Number of schools:** 29
3. **Spending per student:** \$14,600¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$102,500 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$126,800 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$178,900 in salary, plus \$58,800 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 36.

Only 50 percent of employees are teachers.

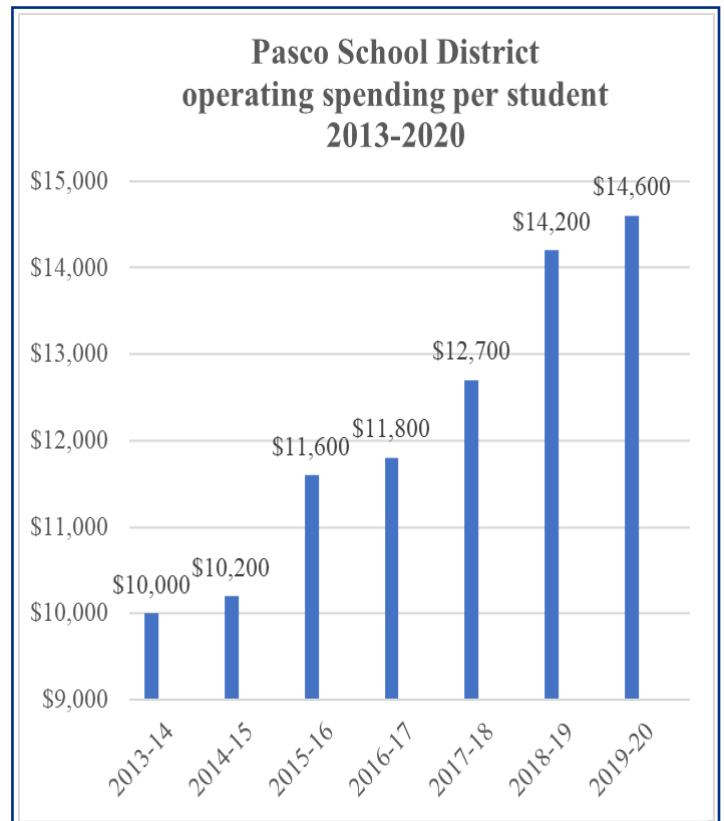
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$4,600, or 46 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 60.4 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 70.2 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Puyallup Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 22,926
2. **Number of schools:** 32
3. **Spending per student:** \$14,100¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$117,400 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$132,800 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$326,251 in salary, plus \$58,502 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 117.

Only 53 percent of employees are teachers.

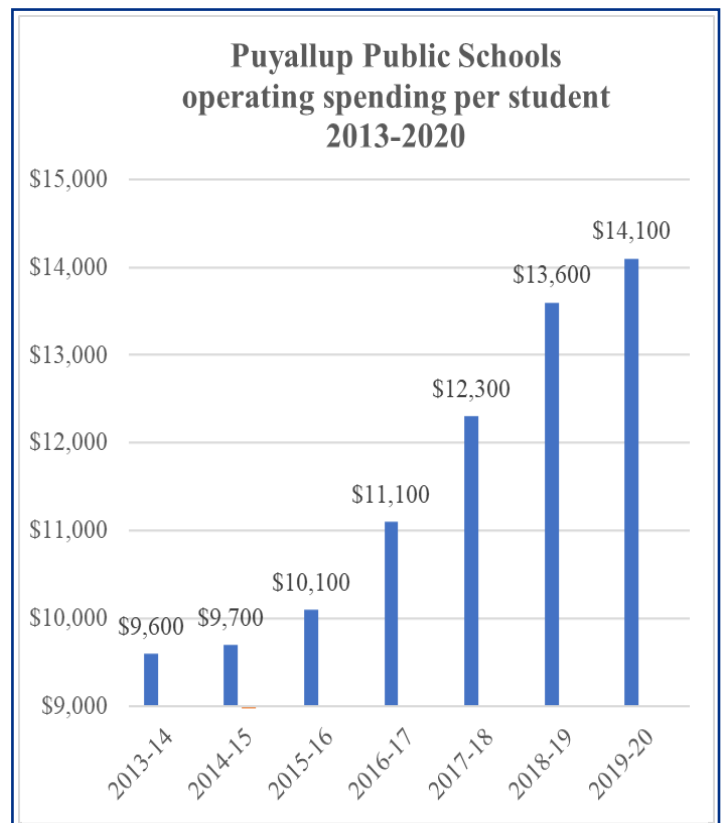
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$4,500, or 47 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 35.2 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 48.5 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report

Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Seattle Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 52,931
2. **Number of schools:** 101
3. **Spending per student:** \$19,700¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$113,000 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$145,000 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$318,400 in salary, plus \$66,410 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 390.

Only 53 percent of employees are teachers.

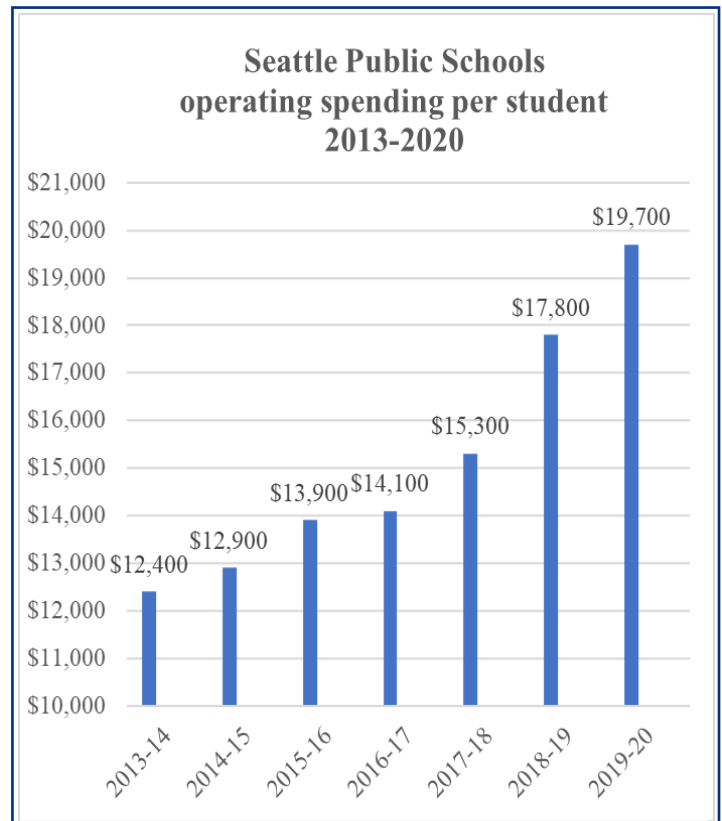
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$7,300, or 58 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 30.2 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 38.4 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Spokane Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 30,065
2. **Number of schools:** 50
3. **Spending per student:** \$15,400¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$116,300 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$124,800 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$270,000 in salary, plus \$67,500 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 151.

Only 53 percent of employees are teachers.

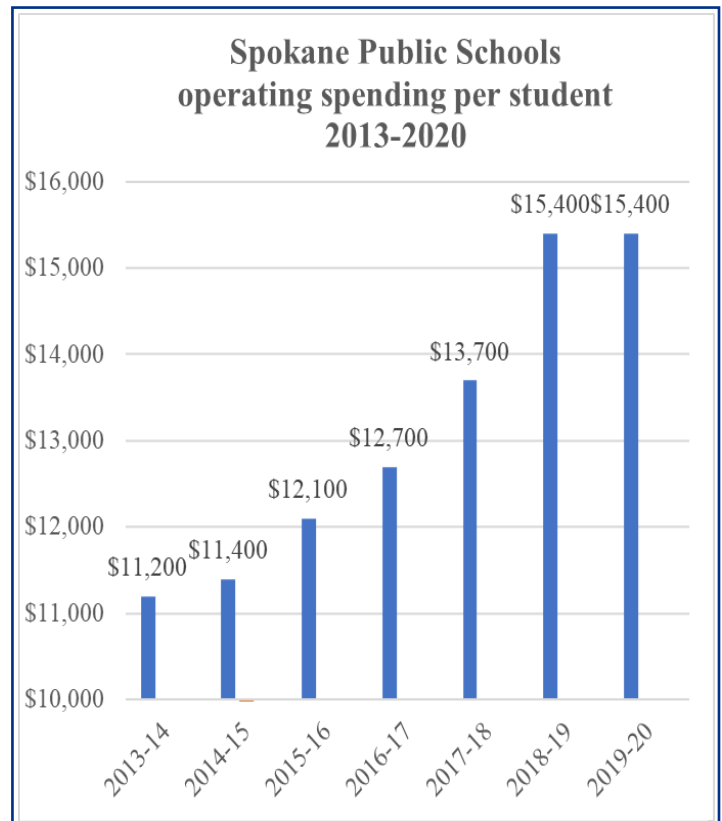
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$4,200, or 38 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 44.0 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 54.8 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Tacoma Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 28,159
2. **Number of schools:** 57
3. **Spending per student:** \$17,100¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$108,500 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$134,500 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$334,400 in salary, plus \$26,000 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 193.

Only 47 percent of employees are teachers.

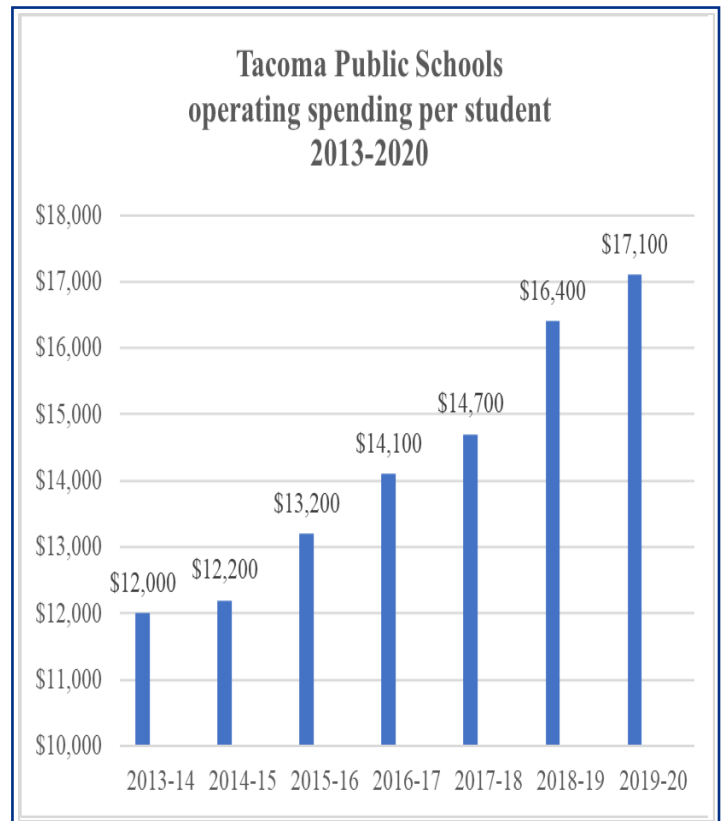
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,100, or 43 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 47.8 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 61.5 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report

Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Vancouver Public Schools

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 22,446
2. **Number of schools:** 37
3. **Spending per student:** \$15,300¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$106,700 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$120,179 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$387,500 in salary, plus \$72,700 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 116.

Only 48 percent of employees are teachers.

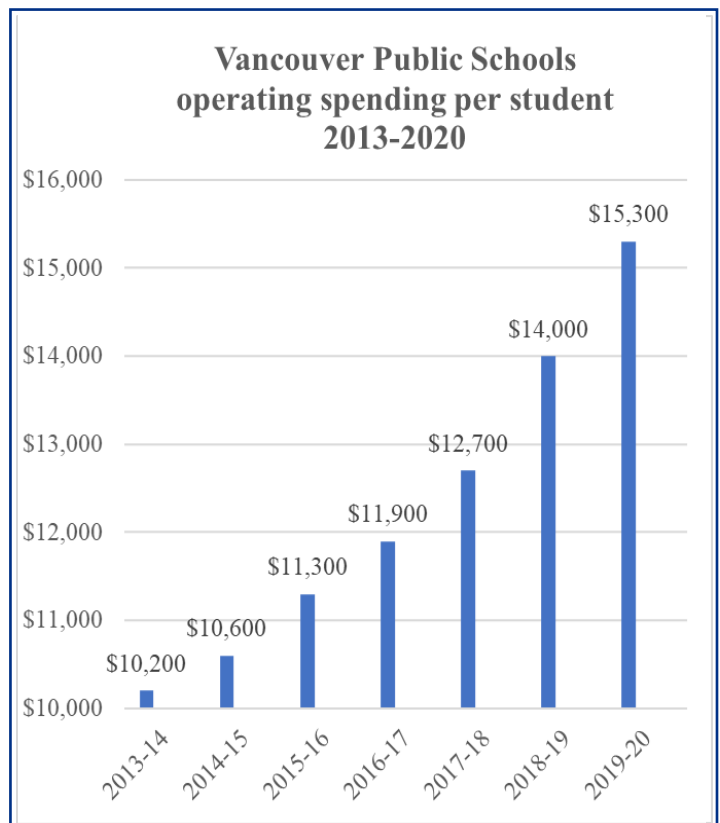
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$5,100, or 50 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 47.4 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 57.6 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

Yakima School District

Despite recent large increases in spending, public school officials are not providing children with the high-quality education they promised.

1. **Number of students:** 15,962
2. **Number of schools:** 25
3. **Spending per student:** \$15,700¹
4. **Spending on teacher pay:**

Average teacher gets \$103,500 in pay and benefits.

Teachers can make up to \$114,200 in pay and benefits.

5. **Spending on central office staff:**

Superintendent gets \$280,400 in salary, plus \$38,500 in benefits.

Number of administrators paid over \$100,000 a year: 89.

Only 49 percent of employees are teachers.

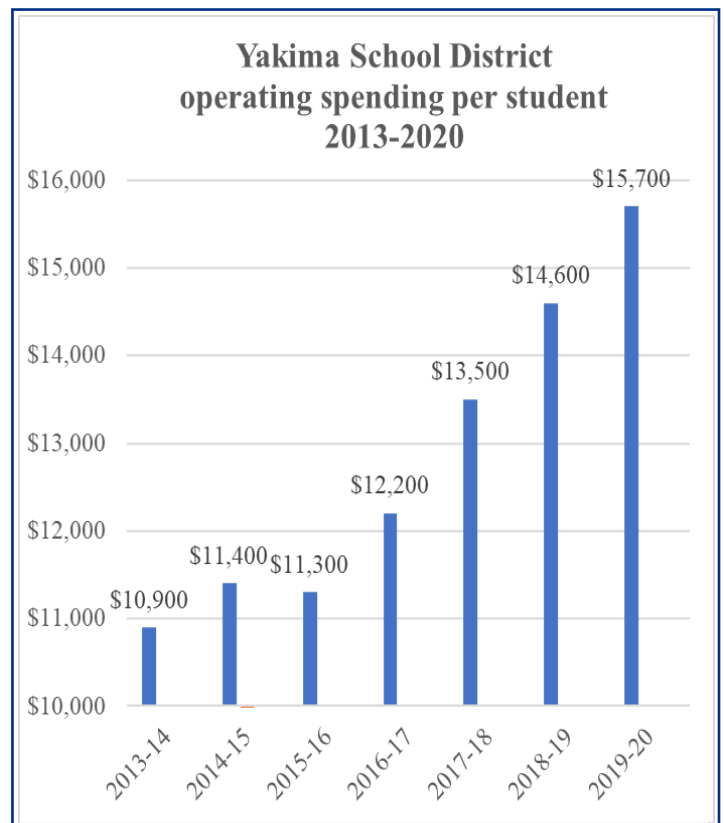
6. **Spending growth:**

Per-student spending has increased by \$4,800, or 44 percent, in six years.

7. **Student learning²**

2018-19:

- 58.3 percent of students fail to meet state standard in English
- 66.9 percent of students fail to meet state standard in math



² "Assessment Summary, School Report Card, 2018-19," Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.



Liv Finne is the Director of the Center for Education at Washington Policy Center. She is the author of *An Option for Learning: An Assessment of Student Achievement in Charter Public Schools*, which in 2011 reignited the charter school debate in Washington state. She wrote “Why parents will love charter schools,” “Why teachers will love charter schools,” and many other publications during the 2012 public debate on Initiative 1240, the nation’s first charter school initiative. When charter schools came under attack from the state teachers union, she wrote “Analysis: Why the state supreme court ruling against charter schools is wrong.” She is also the author of Washington Policy Center’s widely-read education blog, and of Washington Policy Center’s Education Reform Plan: Eight Practical Ways to Improve Public Schools. Liv holds a law degree from Boston University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College. She retired from civil litigation practice to raise two children and work as business partner for a small business she owns with her husband. Liv is committed to improving public schools by expanding school options for all parents, regardless of their zip code, including charter schools, vouchers, online and other innovations in education.

Published by Washington Policy Center

Washington Policy Center is an independent research organization in Washington state. Nothing here should be construed as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any legislation before any legislative body.

Chairman	Mark Pinkowski
President	Daniel Mead Smith
Vice President for Research	Paul Guppy
Communications Director	David Boze

If you have any comments or questions about this study, please contact us at:

Washington Policy Center
PO Box 3643
Seattle, WA 98124-3643

Online: www.washingtonpolicy.org
E-mail: wpc@washingtonpolicy.org
Phone: (206) 937-9691

© Washington Policy Center, 2020