

School Funding Op-Ed Talking Points

Parents in communities across the country are reading with concern about funding cuts to their local schools

- Due to a financial crisis, many schools in Oklahoma are shifting to four-day weeks, cutting art and music programs and laying off teachers.
- In Ohio, Republican Governor John Kasich recently submitted a budget that would cut funding to two-thirds of the state's districts.
- In New York, Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo has for years resisted releasing \$4.3 billion in "Foundation Aid" a court ruled are due to the schools based on legislation passed in 2007. Cuomo froze the funding increases in 2009.
- In Illinois, 17 school districts are suing the state, the governor, and his board of education for failing to fund public education.
- In Arizona, funding is so bad, over 2,100 classrooms don't have a teacher and another 2,200 are led by uncertified staff.
- [add local example]

State and local spending, which account for 92 percent of public school districts' budgets, on average, has been in steep decline since before the Great Recession in 2008. According to a new report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

- In 29 states state funding per student is less than it was in 2008.
- 17 states have cut school funding 10 percent or more in the same time period.
- Cuts to state funding force local school districts to scale back educational services or raise taxes to cover the gap.
- But in 19 states, local government funding per student fell over the same period.
- In 29 states, total state and local funding combined is less than it was in 2008.
- Many of these states have increased education spending lately, but the increases haven't brought back spending levels to what they were nearly a decade ago.

[Source: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/a-punishing-decade-for-school-funding>]

A recent review of the research on the effects of school funding on school outcomes, "Does Money Matter in Education?" by Rutgers University Professor Bruce Baker, found that spending more money on education tends to benefit students "and there is scarce evidence that there are more cost-effective alternatives."

Another review of research, “How Do You Fix Schools? Maybe Just Give Them More Money,” by Jordan Weissmann for online news outlet Slate, found that when schools get more money, they “seem to use their new funding in reasonable ways.” And “they get results.”

A recent survey by National Public Radio, Kaiser Family Foundation and Kennedy School of Government found

- Three out of four Americans say they would be willing to have their taxes raised by at least \$200 a year to pay for specific measures to improve community public schools.
- More than half (55%) say they would be willing to have their taxes raised by \$500.
- Only 16% say they would not pay even an additional \$100 for this purpose.

[Source: <https://www.npr.org/about/press/990920.edpoll.html>]

Money is not a panacea, and spending needs wise oversight. But there's no substitute for it.