



BIENNIUM REVIEW

Education

Key changes

- Schools and education stakeholders are already grappling with the impacts of COVID-19 and related legislation which resulted in a light year for policy.
- Despite decreased enrollment, the budget continues to invest more into K-12 funding.
- Movement to address transparency in education and school choice was blocked by Democrats in committee despite constituent and bipartisan support.

Background

With schools back to in-person instruction, this year's largest debate was over school funding in the face of declining enrollment. Forecasts expect more parents to pull their kids from traditional public schools in favor of private schools and homeschooling as frustrations with traditional public schools increases. Recent polling shows that approximately two-thirds of Americans believe that public schools are on the wrong track and should be focused on math, reading, and writing. Republicans advocated for bills to support school choice to address this shift, including Democrat-sponsored charter school bills, but all died. Democrats instead enacted several pieces of smaller legislation that are further overwhelming our school districts with paperwork and responsibilities outside of traditional academic responsibilities including several additional notices that must be given by schools and new areas of education such as bone marrow donation.

Bills

- ✓ [House Bill 1664](#) (Rule) – **Prototypical School Funding Formulas for Physical, Social, and Emotional Support.** This bill creates a new bucket within the school funding formula that requires schools to spend a portion of their received funding on staff to provide physical, social, and emotional support such as school nurses, counselors, and psychologists. Allocations are increased over a three-year period with an impact of over \$500 million in the next biennium. *Passed House 73-23-3. Signed by Governor. Effective September 1, 2022.*
- ✓ [Senate Bill 5497](#) (C. Wilson) – **Extending Voting Authority to Student Members on the State Board of Education.** While the two student members already had honorary voting rights, this bill extends full voting rights to the student members of the State Board of Education as an agency request. *Passed House 60-37. Signed by Governor. Effective June 6, 2022.*
- ✓ [House Bill 1590](#) (Dolan) – **Providing K-12 Enrollment Stabilization Funding.** Provides enrollment stabilization funding in the 2021-22 school year equal to 50% of the enrollment decline (essentially comparing pre-pandemic caseloads to actuals). Authorizes the use of pre-pandemic enrollment to calculate local enrichment levy limits in the 2023 calendar year and to calculate local effort assistance (aka "levy equalization") in the 2022 and 2023 calendar years. *Passed House 62-36. Signed by Governor. Effective immediately.*
- ✗ [House Bill 1195](#) (Dolan) – **Extending the Timeline to Establish New Charter Schools.** This bill would have extended the timeframe for establishing up to 40 total charter schools by five years to April 3, 2026 (currently there are less than 20). *Died in House Education Committee.*

- ✘ [House Bill 1591](#) (Dolan) – **Increasing Funding to Charter Schools.** This bill would have increased funding allocations for charter schools. *Died in the House Education Committee.*
- ✘ [House Bill 1536](#) (Maycumber) – **Establishing Regional Apprenticeship Programs through Educational Service Districts.** This bill would have required all educational service districts (ESD) to provide two apprenticeship programs for high school students which included membership in the relevant trade organization. *Died in House Education Committee.*
- ✘ [House Bill 1633](#) (Walsh) – **School Choice through Scholarships.** This bill would have provided 100,000 scholarships of \$10,000 to private and homeschooled students to pay for books, tuition, transportation, and other associated costs. *Died in House Education Committee.*
- ✘ [House Bill 2036](#) (Steele) – **Promoting Academic Transparency in Public Schools.** This bill would require teachers to post on the school district's website a list of the materials used in their classrooms at the end of each school year. *Died in House Education Committee.*

Budget information

The 2022 supplemental budget increased K-12 funding by \$2.1 billion over the four-years, however, that increase is offset by enrollment-related caseload savings of \$1.8 billion. As a result, the 2021-23 budget now spends \$27.77 billion in state funds on K-12, representing about 43% of the state NGF-O budget. While K-12 spending is down as percentage of state spending (currently 43% when it was 51% in 2019-21), this has more to do with explosive spending growth in other areas rather than cuts to K-12. The 2019-21 budget spent \$26.72 billion on K-12 so the 2022 supplemental budget still represents a state spending increase of over \$1 billion compared to last biennium (despite serving fewer students). Significant funding was provided to school districts through the supplemental budget totaling \$2.1 billion over the four-year budget outlook, including \$363 million in one-time enrollment stabilization, \$865 million to respond to high inflation, and \$639 million for additional support staff (nurses, social workers, psychologists, and counselors). Funding is provided to support districts that meet certain criteria (namely charter schools) to bring the district up to \$18,000 per pupil. Most federal funding is from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER).

Here is a look at the average per pupil spending by school year across state, federal (mostly ESSER), and local enrichment funds:

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Enrollment	1,103,195	1,063,049	1,063,893	1,069,921	1,070,715
State Per Pupil	\$12,277	\$12,354	\$12,899	\$13,608	\$13,849
State + Federal Per Pupil	\$12,291	\$12,594	\$14,183	\$14,883	\$13,849
State + Federal + Local Per Pupil	\$13,886	\$14,536	\$16,290	\$17,108	\$16,127