

**PER PUPIL SPENDING:**  
**Questions You May Receive from Parents  
and Community Members**

**1. *Why is there a per pupil cost on the report card? What does this mean?***

Federal law now requires that states publicly report the actual per pupil spending by each individual school building. Prior to this law, spending was tracked at the district level. In many states and districts, it was incredibly difficult, or not feasible, to know what was spent at individual schools. What this means is that educators and community leaders can ask new and important questions about performance, equity, and how resources are allocated in the district to meet the needs of all students.

**2. *How will district and school leaders use the information, will this result in my school losing money?***

The district has an obligation to meet the needs of all its students in a fair and equitable way. In order to do this our district needs to have a clear and transparent approach to make purposeful decisions about how funding and resources are allocated. This information will also reveal how some spending choices yield better outcomes. Some have raised a legitimate concern about certain schools losing funding over others. Toward that end, our district is committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn in a high-quality classroom. Also, we're examining ways to increase our ability to approach school finance flexibly and responsively. We are working with district leaders and school board members to ensure that principals have the flexibility to ensure that all students have access to high-quality instruction.

**3. *My schools per pupil cost seems high/low. What is included in the calculation and why is it high/low?***

States are required to report how much each school spends federal, state and local dollars. To determine this cost, the state includes expenses such as salaries and benefits for our teachers, textbooks and classroom supplies, transportation, as well as additional funding we receive to help students with more needs, such as students with disabilities or English language learners.

**4. *Why do schools in my district have significant differences in per pupil expenditures?***

There are lots of factors that impact the cost including the number and demographic of students (i.e. serving a larger percentage of students with disabilities) and the types of programs offered (i.e. AP/IB or a special education program). In addition, the number of teachers/leaders and the length of time they have been teaching is another significant factor in the difference between schools. In fact, salary is often the biggest expense (60% or more) in a district budget.

**5. *Who decides the budget for each school and are student outcomes (performance) considered when determining how much a school receives? How much control do principals have in making these decisions?***

Once the district receives information on funding amounts from the state , the school board then creates and adopts a budget which determines how much each school receives. Though the budget is based on a predetermined formula, we as principals can help determine how the money for our school is spent such as the number and type of staff, instructional supplies, and professional development for our teachers. Having access to PPE data will help principals make more informed decisions about how to utilize the budget they are given. Some principals might have opportunities to address budget concerns and anticipated needs to the appropriate district-level committees and/or advisory boards, but this varies across districts and states. Many factors contribute to why a school is underperforming and additional funding for those schools varies by district. For more information about how much money a school receives and why, talk to a district representative.

**6. *A neighboring school is spending less money but serves students who need more support and resources. Why are they not receiving enough support?***

I cannot speak about what is happening at our neighboring school. What I can tell you about our campus is .... (share successful stories about your school).

**7. *As a parent/guardian, is there anything that I can do to help get more funding for our school/district?***

Your involvement is crucial to helping us achieve our schools' goal which is to serve all students equitably. Regularly attending district town halls and board meetings can help ensure that PPE data is prioritized. In addition, it would be beneficial to research parent/guardian committees, advisory boards, and/or task forces that exist at the district level for the purposes of informing budgetary decisions. These contexts provide a space to ask questions about how budgets are determined and inquiring how money is spent.