



Missouri Education Spending Continues To Grow

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Earlier this week, the Census Bureau released the [Annual Survey of School System Finances](#) . It provides detailed spending figures for states and large school districts across the country. The numbers from this week reflect spending in fiscal year 2017.

Missouri's education spending has continued its upward march. Current spending is up 2.7% from the year before, to \$10,589 per student. This is roughly in line with previous year-over-year increases (which were 1.6%, 2.7%, 2.9%, and 1.7%, respectively).

When looking at the total revenue figure, which is a good way of looking at the total amount of money that schools spend (not just on current expenses), Missouri schools received \$12,492 per student.

Every time I see spending figures like this, I have to ask myself, where does all of this money go? If you think of a class of 18 students, those children are generating over \$190,000 in current revenue alone. How much is the teacher getting? Less than half?

The Kansas City Star's Editorial Board [took to its pages](#) earlier this year to decry low teacher salaries that haven't even kept pace with inflation. But no where in there did they try to square the circle that spending is actually up! Its just that the new money is not making it to teachers.

Looking at a [slightly longer time horizon](#) , Missouri per student spending is up 33% since 1992

while teacher salaries are down 4%. This is largely because both the number of teachers and the number of staff members in Missouri schools have grown substantially faster than the growth in students. While the student population is up 9% over that time period, the number of teachers grew 28% and the number of all other staff grew 24%.

These are policy decisions. We can make different ones.

Our education system has become bloated with bureaucrats, administrators, and non-teaching staff that are sucking up money that could be going to the people who are in the classroom every day doing the hard work of educating children. If you want to be outraged about something, be outraged about that.

Bottom line: we are spending enough money to adequately compensate teachers. We just aren't spending it on them.

About the Author



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[2] <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/school-finances.html>

[3] <https://www.kansascity.com/opinion/editorials/article224256725.html>

[4] <http://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Back-to-the-Staffing-Surge-by-Ben-Scafidi.pdf>

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