

Frequently Asked Questions about Greenville County Schools Finances

Why don't they take the money they spend on buildings and use it to pay teachers?

By state law, funding for school construction and school operations must be kept totally separate. Money cannot transfer between the two.

What happened to all of the education lottery money?

From the start most lottery proceeds have paid for higher education tuition assistance and scholarships. In 2009-10, 82% went for this purpose.

In addition the lottery generates a relatively small amount of revenue. Less than 1% of all operations funding for Greenville County Schools comes from the lottery.

While making all these budget cuts, why aren't they cutting sports?

The school district gives middle and high schools a small amount of money to support their athletic programs. Most of the costs of athletic programs are paid for through booster club fundraisers.

For all extra-curricular activities, including sports, the average high school receives about \$135,000 from the school district.

Why is the district sitting on all this money they have in reserve?

Standard accounting practices require the district to keep one month of operating expenses in reserve. This allows the district to keep a high bond rating and pay less in interest on construction bonds.

Because the inflow of operating revenue doesn't match the payment of expenses, reserves allow the district to pay bills without borrowing funds and paying interest on those funds.

The district tries to keep additional monies in reserve to protect the classroom against mid-year cuts in state funds. In the last two years, the state has enacted eleven mid-year cuts. Reserve money prevents major disruptions during the school year.

Why don't they stop spending all that money on high-paid administrators and put it in the classroom?

Most of the school district's money is spent on instruction. Only 2% of school operating funds is used for central office administration. Over 70% goes to classroom instruction and instructional support.



There is too much testing. Why don't they stop wasting money on testing?

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is being eliminated in grades 4, 6 and 8 saving the district \$183,000. The 2nd grade test will still be given to identify students for the Gifted and Talented program

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests cost the district \$540,000 with \$300,000 of that paid by the state. MAP is considered very effective in identifying specific areas where students need help.

All other tests are mandated by state and federal laws.

Aren't our taxes already too high?

Total school tax rates in Greenville County are among the lowest in the state—72nd out of 85 school districts.

In terms of all taxes, taxpayers in South Carolina have the 37th highest tax burden in the country.

How much are we actually spending per pupil?

For 2007-08, per pupil spending for operations in Greenville County Schools was \$8,114. This is below what the median school district in South Carolina spends (\$9,279).

Why is per pupil spending for our school district less than the state median?

Several factors: Low local property tax rates, lower state per pupil funding since we are a "wealthy" school district, a lower percentage of schools receiving federal Title I monies, and the efficiencies that come with being a larger district.

How does per pupil spending in South Carolina compare to other states?

According to the 2010 national "Quality Counts" report, South Carolina ranks 34th in the country.

Why can't our schools live within their financial limits like everyone else?

Our students and our community are in a world-wide competition for high-paying jobs.

Large budget cuts make it difficult for our school system to keep up with educational improvements being made around the world and to prepare our children to compete.

Every year we don't move ahead, we fall behind. The world won't wait for us to catch up.