

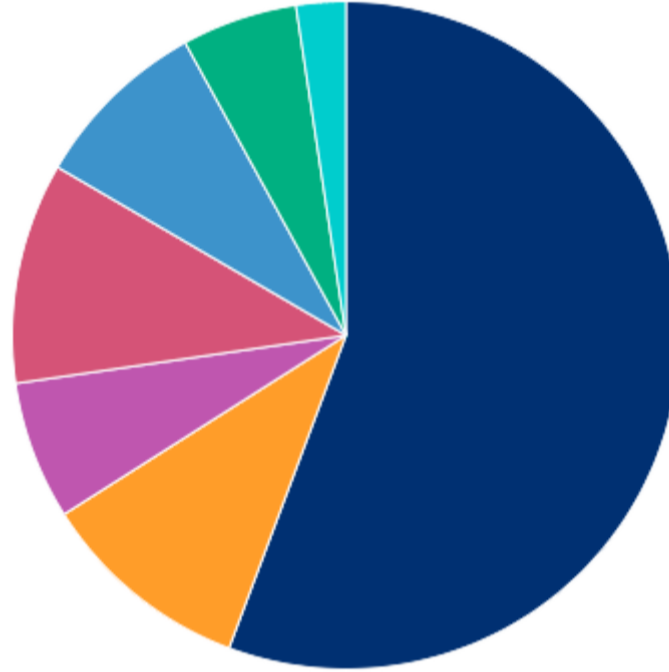
School district spending analysis—Fiscal year 2021

Littleton Elementary School District

District demographic information [▲](#)

County:	Maricopa	Students attending:	5,293
Peer group: ⁹	Operational 9	Size:	Medium-large
Legislative district(s):	19	5-year change in students attending:	2% increase
Location:	Suburb	Special education population:	13%
Number of schools:	7	English learner population:	12%
Graduation rate (2020):	N/A	Poverty rate (2020):	15%

District's spending by operational area



Classroom spending, 72.7%
 Instruction, 55.7%
 Student support, 10.3%
 Instruction support, 6.7%

Nonclassroom spending, 27.3%
 Administration, 10.7%
 Plant operations, 8.6%
 Food service, 5.6%
 Transportation, 2.4%

For definitions of what is included in operational spending and each of the operational areas, see the “Spending areas” section on the [Glossary page](#).

Every year, school districts must decide where to allocate their resources. This pie chart shows how Littleton Elementary School District spent its funding by operational area, including the percentage it spent in the classroom and specifically on instruction.

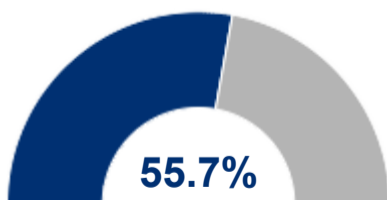
We categorize districts with certain similar qualities into [peer groups](#) ⁹ in order to help create meaningful comparisons across districts. Littleton Elementary School District’s peer group had an average instructional spending percentage of 51.7%. This number can help provide context for Littleton Elementary School District’s own instructional spending percentage.

We have monitored instructional spending since fiscal year 2001. Below are highlights from Littleton Elementary School District’s instructional spending trend showing the most recent year-to-year change and the years it spent its highest and lowest percentages on instruction.

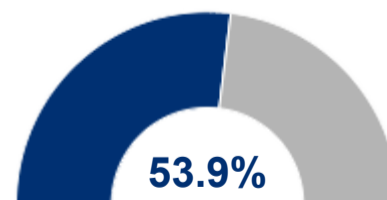
Instructional spending percentage highlights (2001-2021)

Reviewing these instructional spending percentage highlights can provide insight into short-term (year-to-year comparison) and long-term (highest and lowest comparison) trends of a district’s allocation of monies to instruction. Depending on how much a district spends in total, even small changes in a district’s percentage spent on instruction can equate to large changes in the actual dollars the district spent.

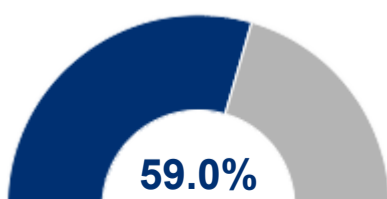
Current fiscal year (2021)



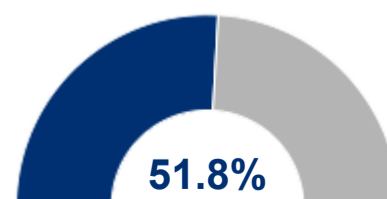
Prior fiscal year (2020)



Highest fiscal year (2009)



Lowest fiscal year (2015)



Why monitor school district spending?

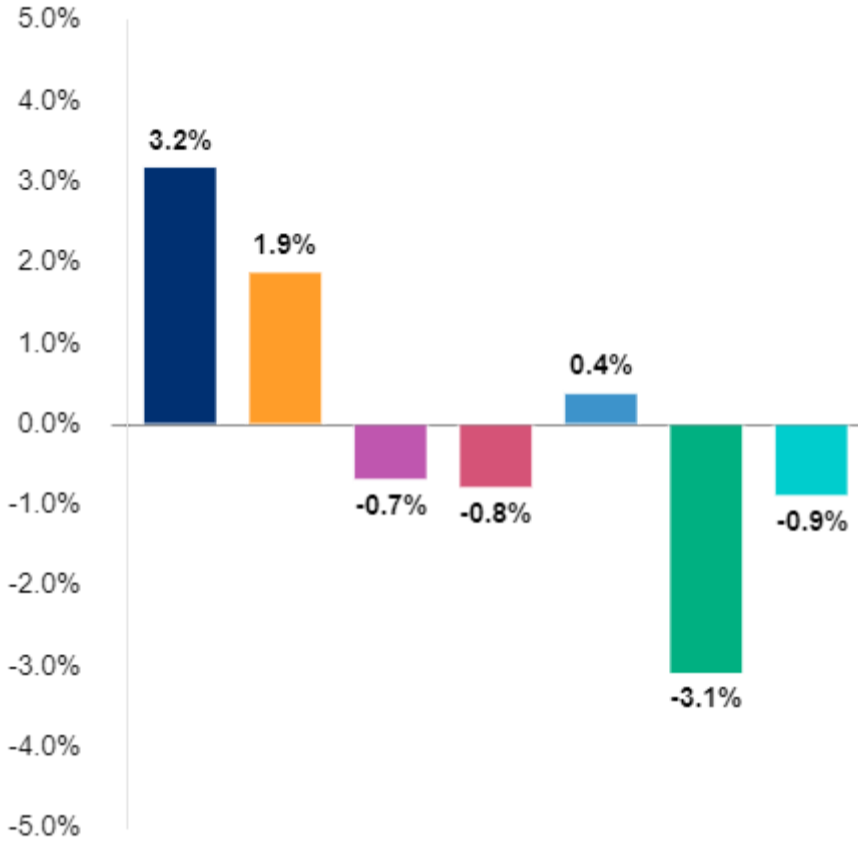
Most school district funding is based on the number of students attending, and districts can choose how to spend most funding, so every decision a school district makes to spend on one operational area directly impacts its ability to spend on another.

The bar chart below, "Percentage point change in spending by area," illustrates how Littleton Elementary School District's spending by area has changed from the prior year and 5 years ago.

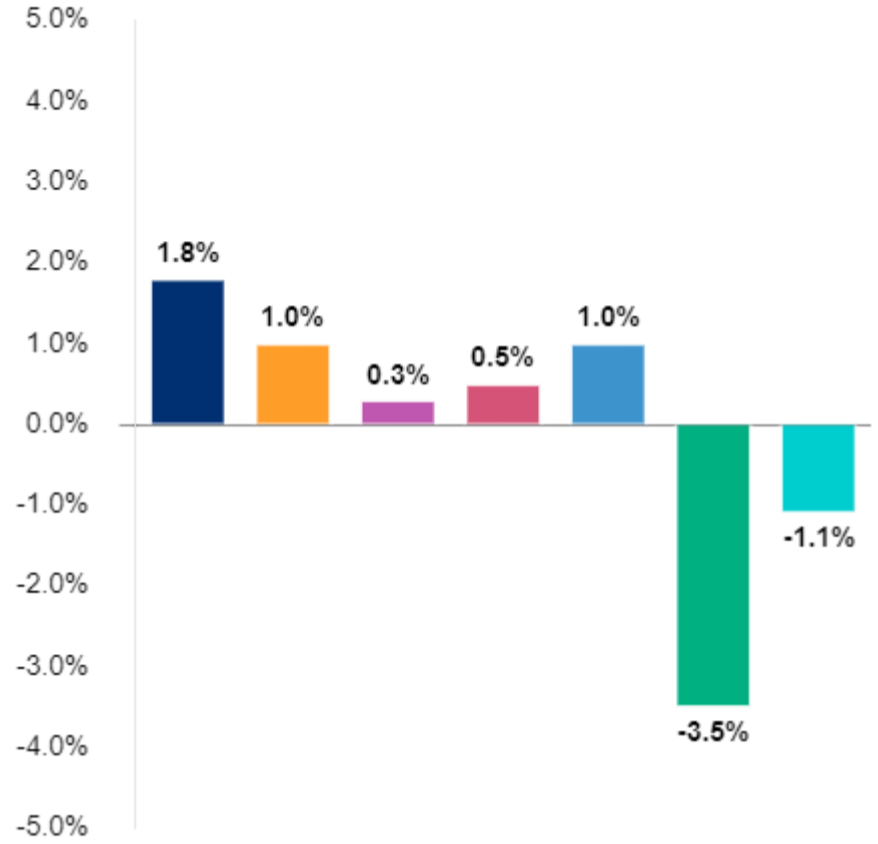
To put the spending percentages in context, it also can be helpful to review a district's per pupil spending in dollars. For example, 2 districts may spend the same percentage of their resources on instruction, but on a per student basis, 1 district may spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars more than the other.

Percentage point change in spending by area

Compare State-wide FY 2021 spending to:
District's FY 2016 spending (5-year trend)



Compare District's FY 2021 spending to:
District's FY 2020 spending (1-year trend)



**Change in classroom spending,
4.4%**

Instruction, 3.2%
Student support, 1.9%
Instruction support, -0.7%

**Change in nonclassroom spending,
-4.4%**

Administration, -0.8%
Plant operations, 0.4%
Food service, -3.1%
Transportation, -0.9%

**Change in classroom spending,
3.1%**

Instruction, 1.8%
Student support, 1.0%
Instruction support, 0.3%

**Change in nonclassroom spending,
-3.1%**

Administration, 0.5%
Plant operations, 1.0%
Food service, -3.5%
Transportation, -1.1%

Per pupil spending by area

Area	District FY 2020	Peer average FY 2021	State-wide FY 2021	District FY 2021
Classroom spending				
Instruction	\$4,581	\$5,248	\$5,521	\$5,035
Student support	\$794	\$889	\$905	\$932
Instruction support	\$540	\$637	\$576	\$603
Nonclassroom spending				
Administration	\$865	\$1,214	\$1,041	\$962
Plant operations	\$647	\$1,134	\$1,168	\$772
Food service	\$772	\$677	\$396	\$510
Transportation	\$300	\$322	\$369	\$219
Total operational	\$8,499	\$10,121	\$9,976	\$9,033
Land and buildings	\$1,326	\$1,455	\$1,175	\$170
Equipment	\$469	\$721	\$722	\$413
Interest	\$174	\$343	\$303	\$183
Other	\$24	\$184	\$155	\$20
Total nonoperational	\$1,993	\$2,703	\$2,355	\$786
Total per pupil spending	\$10,492	\$12,824	\$12,331	\$9,819

Operational efficiency measures

Performance measures, such as those shown below, can be used in addition to instructional spending percentage to assess a district's operational efficiency. We have classified the District's spending relative to its peer districts' average as very low, low, comparable, high, very high, or N/A (not applicable). High or very high spending when compared to peer averages may signify an opportunity for improved efficiency in that area.

N/A is presented for the nonspending related measures, for districts that did not operate a program in that area (i.e., food service or transportation), and for very small districts. For more information, see the "Operational efficiency measure calculations" section on the [Glossary page](#).

Operational area	Measure	State average	Peer average ^④	District	District spending relative to the peer average
Administration	Spending per pupil	\$1,041	\$1,214	\$962	Very low
	Students per administrative position	63	62	65	N/A
Plant operations	Spending per square foot	\$6.84	\$6.94	\$5.68	Very low
	Square footage per student	171 ft ²	162 ft ²	136 ft ²	N/A
Food service	Spending per meal	\$3.54	\$3.33	\$3.75	High
	Meals per student	113	195	136	N/A

Transportation performance measures are compared using different peer groups because we have found there are other factors, such as the number of miles a district averages for each rider, that impact transportation spending. In fiscal year 2021, we did not develop transportation peer groups for comparison due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on district operations. For more information, see the "Summary of significant changes" section on the [Resources page](#). However, we did still calculate the measures for each individual district. An N/A for a district's individual measure may mean they do not operate a transportation program or did not operate one for the year, or they did not transport any riders on their routes in fiscal year 2021.

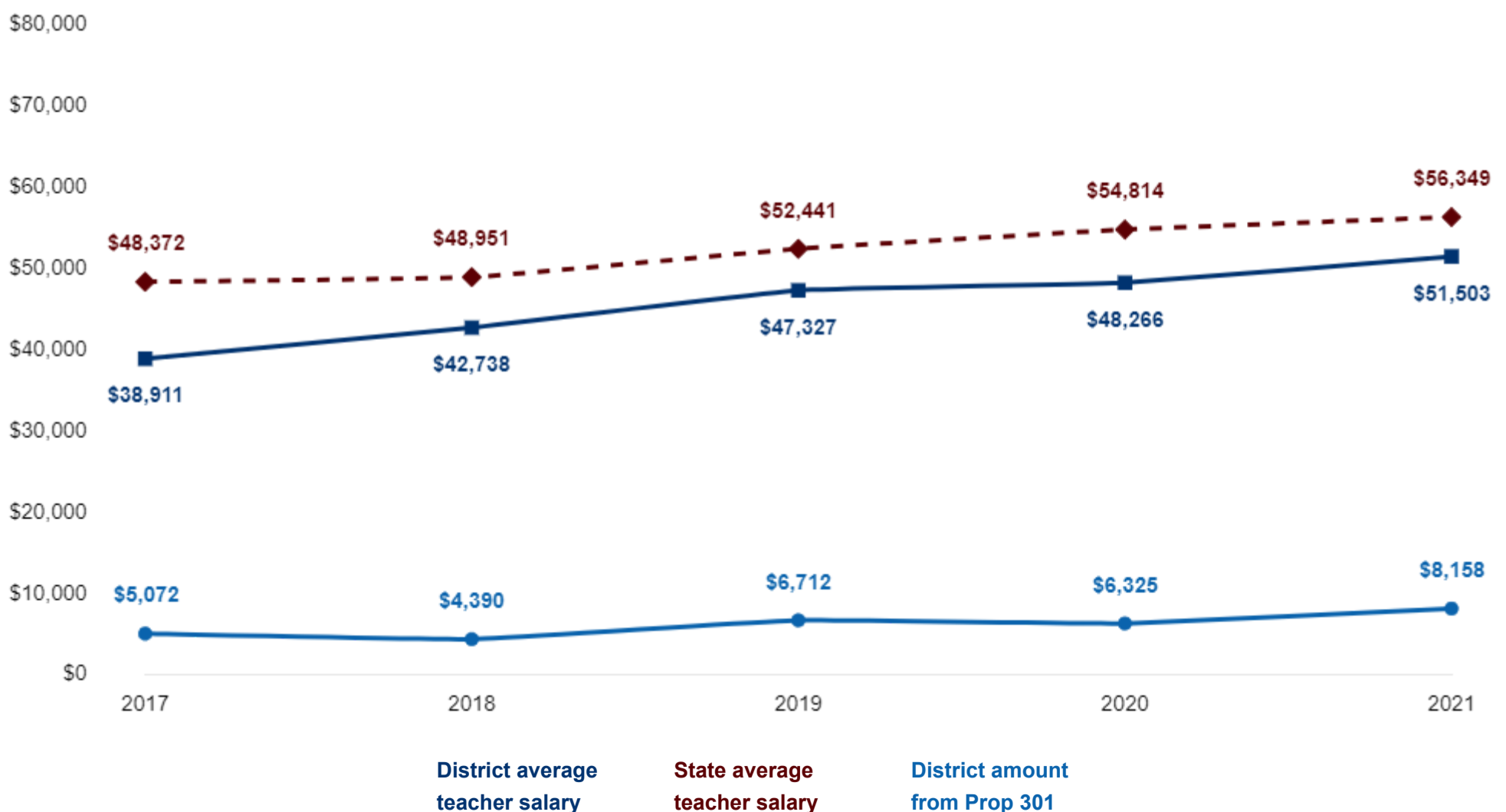
Operational area	Measure	State average	Peer average	District	District spending relative to the peer average
Transportation	Spending per mile	\$7.22	N/A	\$29.62	N/A
	Spending per rider	\$2,862	N/A	\$3,461	N/A

Why monitor average teacher salary?

Teacher salaries are one of a school district's most significant costs and have been a topic of high interest in recent years in Arizona. Beginning in fiscal year 2018, the State budget included additional money intended to increase the State's average teacher salary by 20 percent between fiscal years 2017 and 2021. The trend lines below show how Littleton Elementary School District's average teacher salary changed during this time, as well as how it compared to the State average.

We have also included a table that displays other student- and teacher-related measures that may provide additional context for how Littleton Elementary School District's average teacher salary may have changed. For instance, changes in a district's [teacher population^④](#) can impact the district's average teacher salary.

Average teacher salary and other measures



Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Students per teacher ¹	16.9	17.7	17.0	16.7	15.3
Average years of teacher experience	5.3	6.0	5.3	8.1	9.2
Percentage of teachers in first 3 years	51%	44%	51%	34%	29%