

## With nearly 3 million students in the state, education spending totals more than \$60 billion — with local districts taking on more than half

REPORT:

### NY SPENT \$21K PER PUPIL IN 2013-14

**JON CAMPBELL @JONCAMPBELLGAN ALBANY** Total education spending in New York topped \$60 billion during the 2013-14 school year, averaging out to \$21,812 for each of the state's nearly 3 million students, according to a report released Monday. ♦ The analysis from the New York State Association of School Business Officials showed the state's 679 local school districts took on the brunt of the cost, spending about \$32.7 billion, which comes out to \$11,888 per pupil or 54.5 percent of the total. The vast majority of the local share — about 90 percent — is covered by property taxpayers, according to the report. ♦ The state's share was about 41.4 percent — \$24.9 billion total or \$9,026 per pupil — while the federal government accounted for the rest. ♦ Overall, spending during the 2013-14 year was up about 3 percent from the previous year's total of \$58 billion. And while the state's share has increased each year since 2010-11, it still lags behind what it was prior to the most recent economic recession, leaving local districts to pick up the difference, the report found.

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**“The state share of education funding is still below pre-recession levels despite recent increases in school aid, demonstrating a need for further state investment.”**

**MICHAEL BORGES**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS

**\$10,700**

**National average of per-pupil education spending, according to the most recent federal data. New York spent \$19,818 per pupil during that same time period (Oct. 1, 2012, to Sept. 30, 2013) — making it tops in the nation.**

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#### Pupil

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“The state share of education funding is still below pre-recession levels despite recent increases in school aid, demonstrating a need for further state investment,” Michael Borges, the association's executive director, said in a statement. New York spends well above the nationwide perpupil average, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The national average was \$10,700 per student from Oct. 1, 2012, to Sept. 30, 2013, the most recent federal data available. During that period, New York topped the nation, averaging \$19,818. The report Monday covered the period from August 2013 through July 2014. The association's report raised issue with a recession- fueled drop in state funding that began in 2009, as well as the Gap Elimination Adjustment, a series of school-aid cuts that remain partially in place. In 2011, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the state Legislature approved a property- tax cap that prevents school districts from raising their overall levy by the lower of 2 percent annually or the rate of inflation. The cap has been derided by school groups.

Direct state funding for education has increased in recent years, however, to its current total of \$23.5 billion for the coming school

year. That figure doesn't include STAR rebate checks, which are distributed each year to homeowners making less than \$500,000 a year and adds to the state's tab. "New York school aid increased by 6.1 percent this year alone and is at the highest level in state history — \$23.5 billion," Azzopardi said in a statement. "At the same time, the governor put into place a 2 percent tax cap that delivered real relief to taxpayers and broke the cycle of skyrocketing property tax increases."

During the 2004-05 school year, New York's school districts picked up the tab for 50.3 percent of education costs, the report found. In 2013-14, it was 54.5 percent.

Over that same time period, the state's share dropped from 43.5 percent to 41.4 percent, including a low of 39.8 percent in 2011-12. The federal share, meanwhile, dipped from 6.2 percent to 4.2 percent over that decade.

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