



Department of Education Releases the 2012 Taxpayers' Guide to Education Spending

Guide Provides Detailed Information on the Use of Public Dollars in Education Across the State for the 2010-11 School Year

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ - The Department of Education today released the *2012 Taxpayers' Guide to Education Spending* to help New Jersey residents and interested citizens learn how their tax dollars are spent in their schools.

"This report today demonstrates our commitment to providing clear and usable data on our schools to taxpayers across the state," said Acting Commissioner of Education Chris Cerf. "For the second year in a row, this guide now includes a full accounting for all dollars spent on our schools to provide a complete picture of spending in the state."

The *Taxpayer's Guide to Education Spending* provides the public with information about school districts' annual budgets. Included are two types of total expenditures:

- Total Spending Per Pupil, which includes all district expenditures including state expenditures on behalf of school districts.
- Budgetary Costs Per Pupil, which only includes costs that are similar among school districts.

This is the second year that the Taxpayer's Guide to Education Spending includes a full accounting of all spending on education in New Jersey. Before last year, the former Comparative Spending Guide did not include costs such as transportation, debt service, federal funds, and state payments on behalf of the districts for pension, social security, and post-retirement medical costs. The previous guide also omitted the costs of tuition and students sent out of district.

The new Taxpayers' Guide to Education Spending includes these numbers, as they are very real parts to the whole spending picture. For the 2010-11 school year, the average total spending per-pupil spending in the state was \$17,352.

The guide also compares school districts of similar size and ranks districts in 14 of the 17 spending categories, such as total administrative costs or total classroom instruction, and in four staff indicators, such as student teacher ratios and ratios of faculty to administrative staff. Costs are ranked on a per pupil basis from low to high, with three years of data presented for spending categories and two years of data presented for staffing indicators.

Trend information shows that spending in key areas has been proportionately stable since 2006-2007. For example, over that time:

- The budgetary cost per pupil for instruction was virtually flat, rising from 59.0 percent to 59.1 percent.
- The budgetary cost per pupil for administration declined from 11.0 percent to 10.5 percent.
- The budgetary cost per pupil for student support services rose from 15.1 percent to 15.6 percent.

The *Taxpayer Guide to Education Spending* can be found at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/guide/2012/>

The guide was first produced in the spring of 1997 as the *Comparative Spending Guide*. The guide's name was changed last year when the Department made modifications to provide a more inclusive representation of district expenditures, including state expenditures on behalf of the districts, and to illustrate a more complete picture of all education spending.