

Facts About Arizona's Education Budget

FACT: Arizona's education budget has consistently been among the lowest in the country.

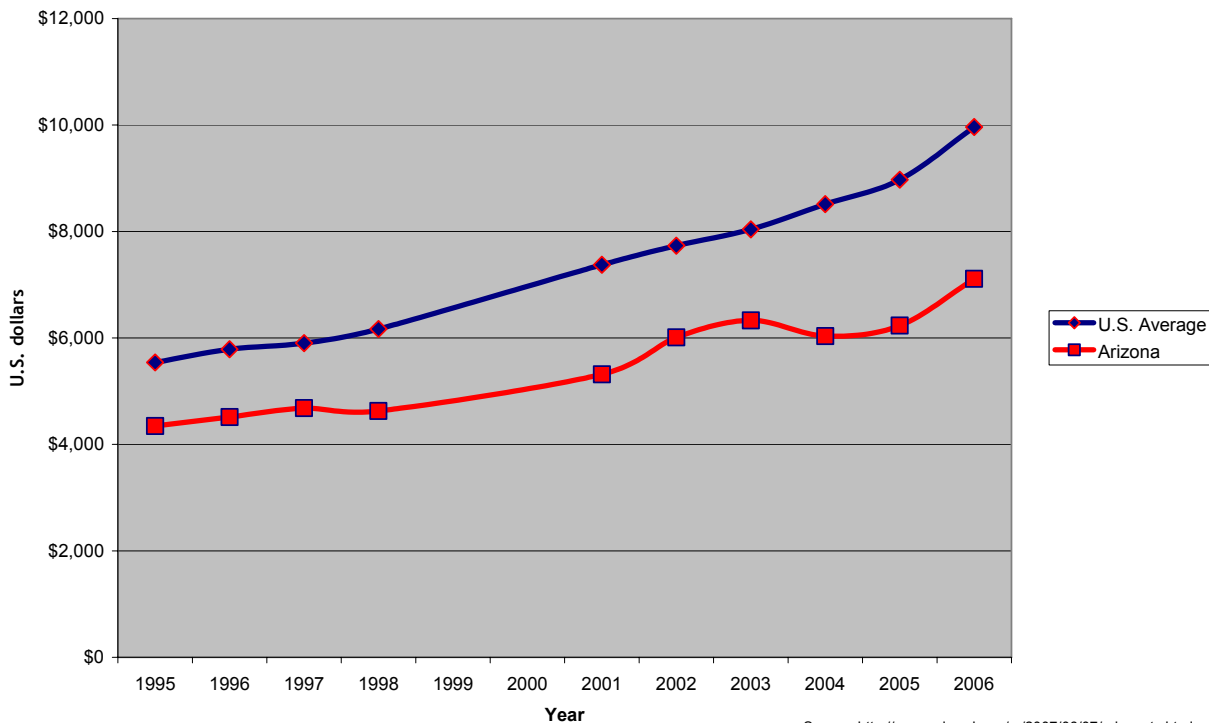
According to the most recent available data, Arizona is ranked 49th out of 50 states in per-pupil education spending.

Sources: <http://ftp2.census.gov/govs/school/06f33pub.pdf>
<http://www.edweek.org/rc/2007/06/07/edcounts.html>

Between 1995 and 2006, the gap between Arizona's per-pupil spending and the national average rose from \$1,195 to \$2,851.

Source: <http://www.edweek.org/rc/2007/06/07/edcounts.html>

Education Spending per Student



FACT: There is a very good chance that Arizona will receive federal stimulus monies to help minimize or even prevent cuts to state education programs.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill of 2009, currently before the U.S. House of Representatives, would provide **\$79 billion in aid to states**, the vast majority of which is specifically earmarked to “restore State support for elementary and secondary education to the fiscal 2008 level.”

Source: <http://appropriations.house.gov/pdf/RecoveryBill01-15-09.pdf>

FACT: Arizonans are not insisting on tax cuts, and are even willing to pay higher taxes for important programs.

A January 2009 poll by Republican pollster Frank Luntz found that **81% of U.S. registered voters** (including 74% of Republicans) **were willing to pay 1% more in taxes** to improve infrastructure, including school buildings. In fact, 18% of those surveyed indicated that **fixing school buildings was their first or second priority**, equal to or ahead of mass transit, bridges, broadband internet, and airports.

Source: http://investininfrastructure.org/newsroom/luntz_memo_010809.pdf

A 2008 O’Neil Associates survey showed that even in our current budget crisis, **66% of Arizonans want to spend more on K-12 education**, more than any other budget area surveyed. Only 3% think we should spend less on K-12 education, the lowest of any budget area surveyed.

Source: http://www.azbiz.com/articles/2009/01/12/opinion/columnists/guest_opinion/doc4967a2d29f854441030722.txt

In a Fall 2008 O’Neil Associates survey, 38% of Arizona small businesses identified having a “skilled workforce” as “critical” to their business success, second only to healthcare costs (at 42%). An additional 34% of respondents identified the need for a skilled workforce as “important.”

Source: O’Neil Associates/ASBA Arizona Economic Indicators Monitor
http://www.oneilresearch.com/publicdomain/aeim/AEIM_Critical_Issues_Q3_2008.pdf

According to a December 2008 survey by Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, almost 600 Tucson business leaders ranked funding for **K-12 and higher education as their top priority**, even further ahead than tax cuts. About 77% of respondents agree that “Arizona needs to make significant new investments in educational achievement to meet real needs and avoid a crisis.” Said Laura Shaw, TREO senior vice president for corporate and community affairs, “When legislators talk about how they’ll prioritize ... they’re still talking about cuts in economic development tools, cuts in funding for education ... **everything we’re saying is the most important seems to be targeted for the biggest cuts.**”

Sources: <http://explorernews.com/articles/2009/01/07/business/doc4963e915289a3313625510.txt>
<http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/altss/printstory/frontpage/106176>

The cuts proposed by Senator Pearce and Representative Kavanagh would:

- eliminate all-day kindergarten
- eliminate over \$300 million in soft capital money from K-12 (textbooks, technology, furniture, etc.)
- reduce “lump sum” payments to school districts by \$220 million
- phase out Career Ladder over 8 years

Sources: <http://www.azleg.gov/jlbc/10chairmenoptions/toc.pdf>
<http://www.azleg.gov/jlbc/10chairmenoptions/79.pdf>

If you would like to share your opinions about these proposals with your legislators, you can find contact information at <http://www.votesmart.org/>.