

School district spending analysis—Fiscal year 2021

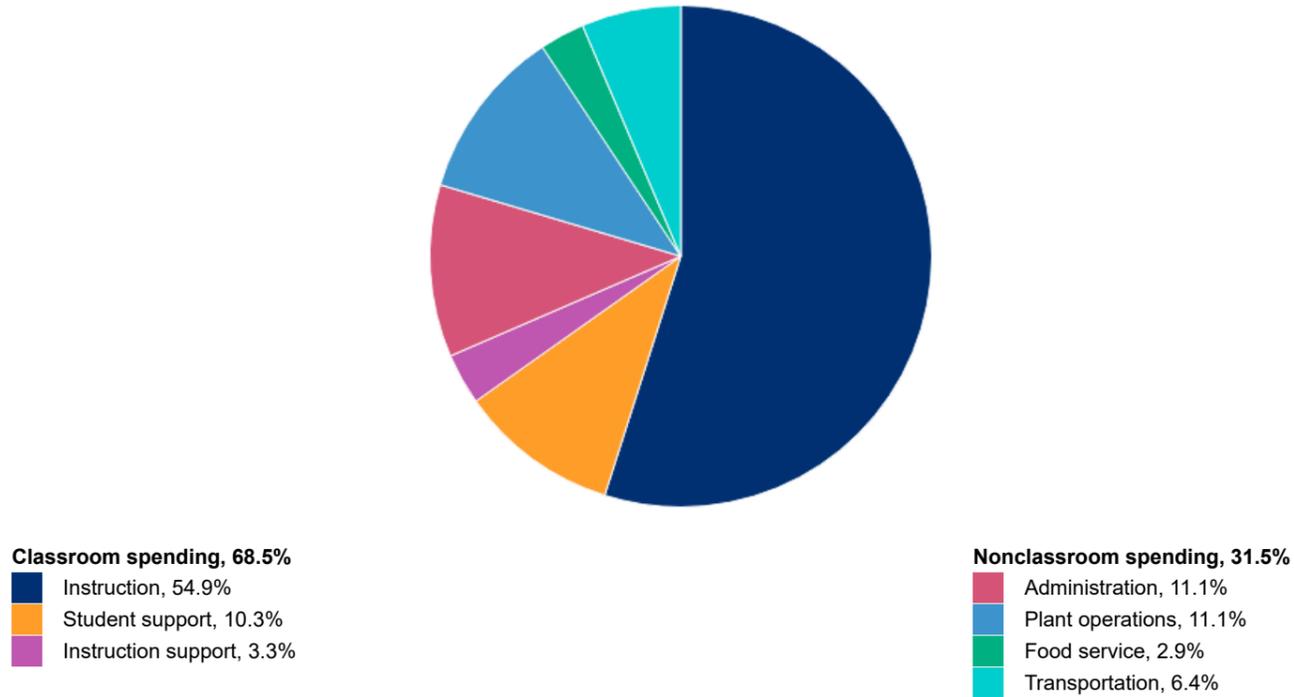
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Cave Creek Unified School District

[District demographic information](#) ▾

District's spending by operational area



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 Cave Creek Unified School District spent its funding by operational area, including the percentage it spent in the classroom and specifically on instruction.

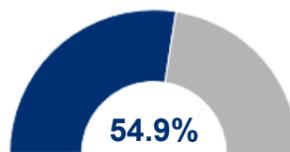
We categorize districts with certain similar qualities into [peer groups](#) in order to help create meaningful comparisons across districts. Cave Creek Unified School District's peer group had an average instructional spending percentage of 54.0%. This number can help provide context for Cave Creek Unified School District's own instructional spending percentage.

We have monitored instructional spending since fiscal year 2001. Below are highlights from Cave Creek Unified 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.

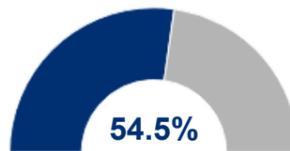
Instructional spending percentage highlights (2001-2021)

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.

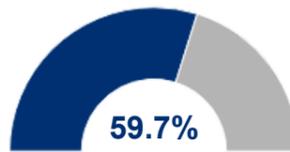
Current fiscal year (2021)



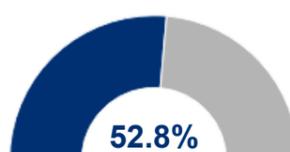
Prior fiscal year (2020)



Highest fiscal year (2005)



Lowest fiscal year (2016)



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.

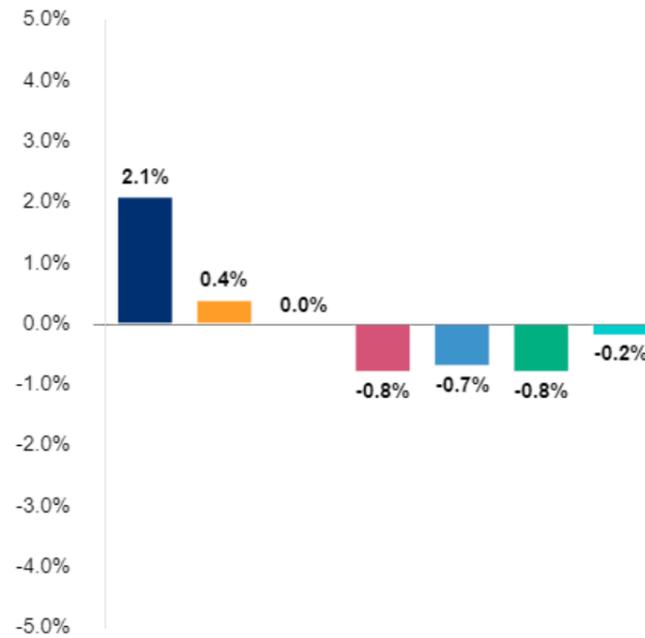
The bar chart below, "Percentage point change in spending by area," illustrates how Cave Creek Unified School District's spending by area has changed from the prior year and 5 years ago.

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 District's FY 2021 spending to:

District's FY 2016 spending (5-year trend)



Change in classroom spending, 2.5%

- Instruction, 2.1%
- Student support, 0.4%
- Instruction support, 0.0%

Change in nonclassroom spending, -2.5%

- Administration, -0.8%
- Plant operations, -0.7%
- Food service, -0.8%
- Transportation, -0.2%

Per pupil spending by area

Compare District's FY 2021 spending to:

District's FY 2020 spending (1-year trend)

Area	District FY 2020	District FY 2021
Classroom spending		
Instruction	\$4,444	\$5,135
Student support	\$838	\$962
Instruction support	\$267	\$310
Nonclassroom spending		
Administration	\$921	\$1,044
Plant operations	\$902	\$1,045
Food service	\$263	\$269
Transportation	\$521	\$595
Total operational	\$8,156	\$9,360
Land and buildings	\$518	\$180
Equipment	\$259	\$306
Interest	\$260	\$268
Other	\$430	\$371
Total nonoperational	\$1,467	\$1,125
Total per pupil spending	\$9,623	\$10,485

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 ¹	District	District spending relative to the peer average
Administration	Spending per pupil	\$1,041	\$1,016	\$1,044	Comparable
	Students per administrative position	63	62	51	N/A
Plant operations	Spending per square foot	\$6.84	\$6.57	\$5.13	Very low
	Square footage per student	171 ft ²	172 ft ²	204 ft ²	N/A

Food service	Spending per meal	\$3.54	\$3.73	\$2.80	District spending relative to the peer average
Operational area	Measures	State average	Peer average ¹	District	N/A
	Meals per student	13	15	96	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.

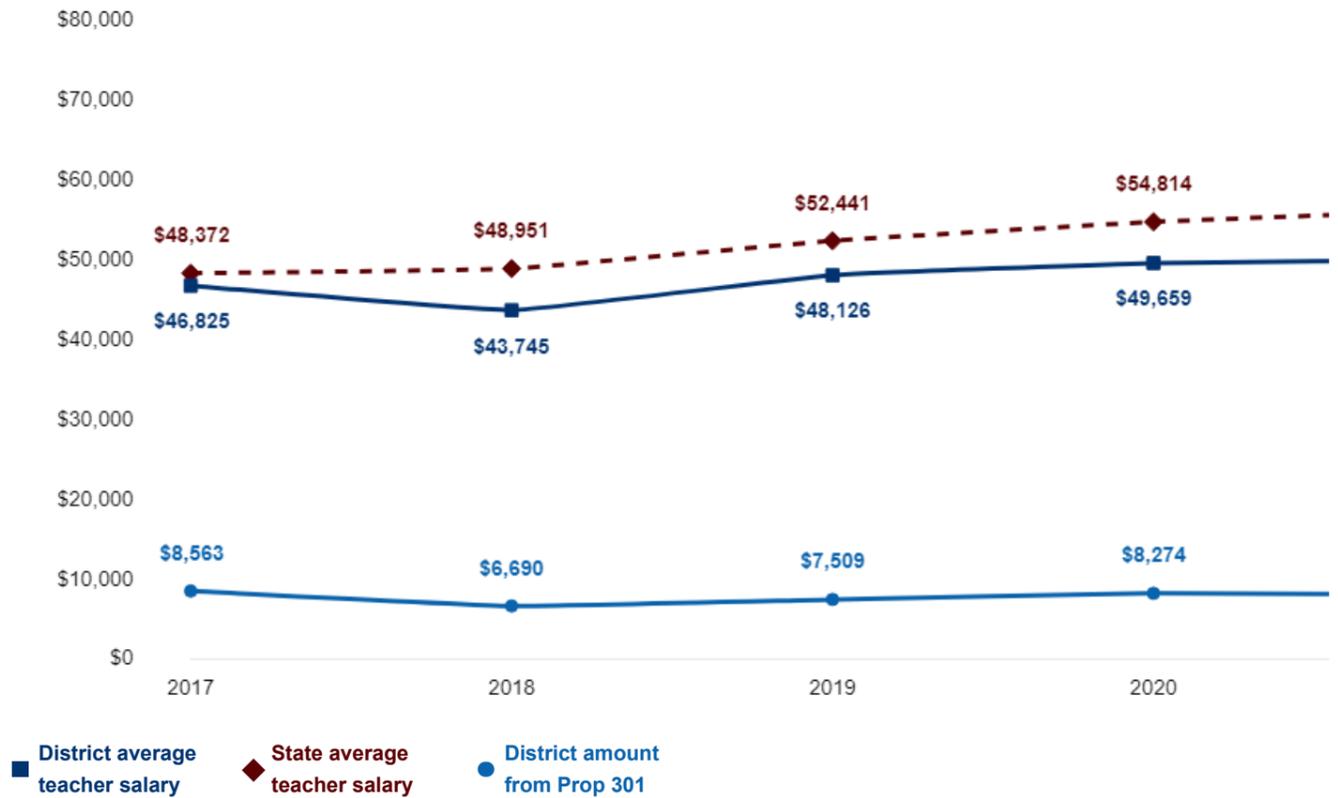
Operational area	Measure	State average	Peer average	District	District spending relative to the peer average
Transportation	Spending per mile	\$7.22	N/A	\$5.05	N/A
	Spending per rider	\$2,862	N/A	\$1,916	N/A

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 Cave Creek Unified 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 Cave Creek Unified School District's average teacher salary may have changed. For instance, changes in a district's [teacher population](#)¹ can impact the district's average teacher salary.

Average teacher salary and other measures



Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Students per teacher ¹	20.8	19.8	19.7	19.5	17.2
Average years of teacher experience	13.2	12.8	12.9	13.5	13.7
Percentage of teachers in first 3 years	17%	20%	19%	19%	18%

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