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# 2025-2026 BUDGET TRANSPARENCY GUIDE

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# Navigating the Budget

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Dear Community Member,

Thank you for your interest in the Westminster Public Schools budget. To promote transparency and community understanding, we have prepared this guide to help you navigate the District's financial outlook for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and the years ahead. Our intention is to provide clear insight into where the District's funding comes from, what it pays for, and how it is used.

This guide is organized into four key sections: where the money comes from, where the money goes, what money is left over, and a District funds overview. While school finance can be complex, we have structured this resource to make the information as clear and accessible as possible.

We invite you to review and share this guide with others in the community who may have questions or interest in the District's budget. Your engagement plays a vital role in ensuring a transparent and accountable financial process.










## Looking to the Future

Westminster Public Schools' Destination 2030 plan aims to provide the region's best student experience through academic excellence, workforce readiness, and student well-being. It focuses on cultivating high-quality educators and leaders, expanding postsecondary and career pathways, and ensuring student growth through a personalized, Competency-Based System. The plan also commits to environmental sustainability, civic engagement, and strong community partnerships to support student success and broader economic development.

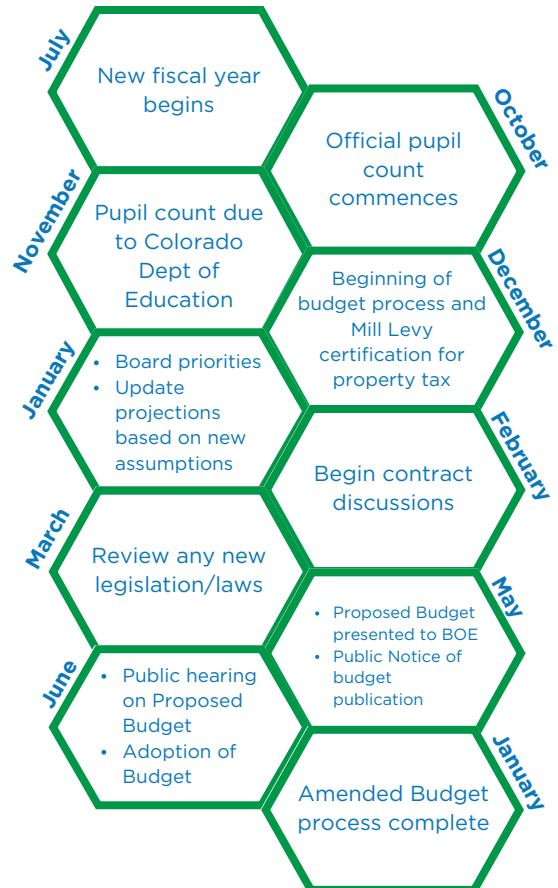
To learn more about Destination 2030, click [here](#).

# Westminster Public Schools at a Glance

 <p><b>Our Facilities:</b>          2 Early Learning Centers          3 Elementary Schools          1 Middle School</p>	<p>6 PK-8 Schools          4 Innovation Schools          1 High School          1 Alternative High School</p>	<p><b>7,724 Students</b></p> 		
 <p><b>326</b>          Gifted &amp;          Talented          Students</p>		<p><b>WPS Demographics:</b>          49% Female          51% Male          79% Hispanic          13% White          3% Asian          2% Black          2% Two or more          Less than 1%:          American Indian/          Alaskan Native          Native          Hawaiian/Pacific          Islander</p>		
<p><b>82%</b>          Students qualify          for free or          reduced lunch</p>		 <p>Our students          originate from 39          different countries</p>	<p><b>Over 30</b>          Languages          spoken in          WPS</p> 	<p><b>1.6 million</b>          meals served          to students</p> 

## Budget Development Calendar

The district-wide budget development process is a collaborative effort involving many stakeholders, including school personnel, the District Leadership Team, the Finance Department, the Chief Financial Officer, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education (BOE). The budget reflects the labor and material resources required to fulfill the goals and objectives outlined by the Board. The budget serves as an operation plan for the full fiscal year. The preparation process begins each year in December and concludes with the Board's adoption of the final budget in June. Any amendments to the adopted budget must be presented to the Board in January.





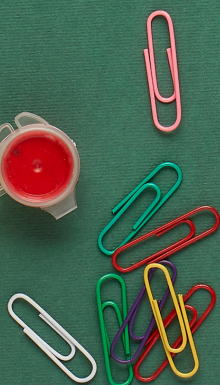
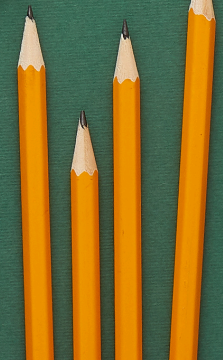
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## How is the District Funded?

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ABCD



# Sources: Where the Money Comes From

Westminster Public Schools receives revenue from local, state, and federal sources.

The largest source of revenue is from state aid. Property taxes and specific ownership taxes also account for a significant portion of the District's Revenue. Districts whose property valuations are lower receive more funding from the state.

## STATE

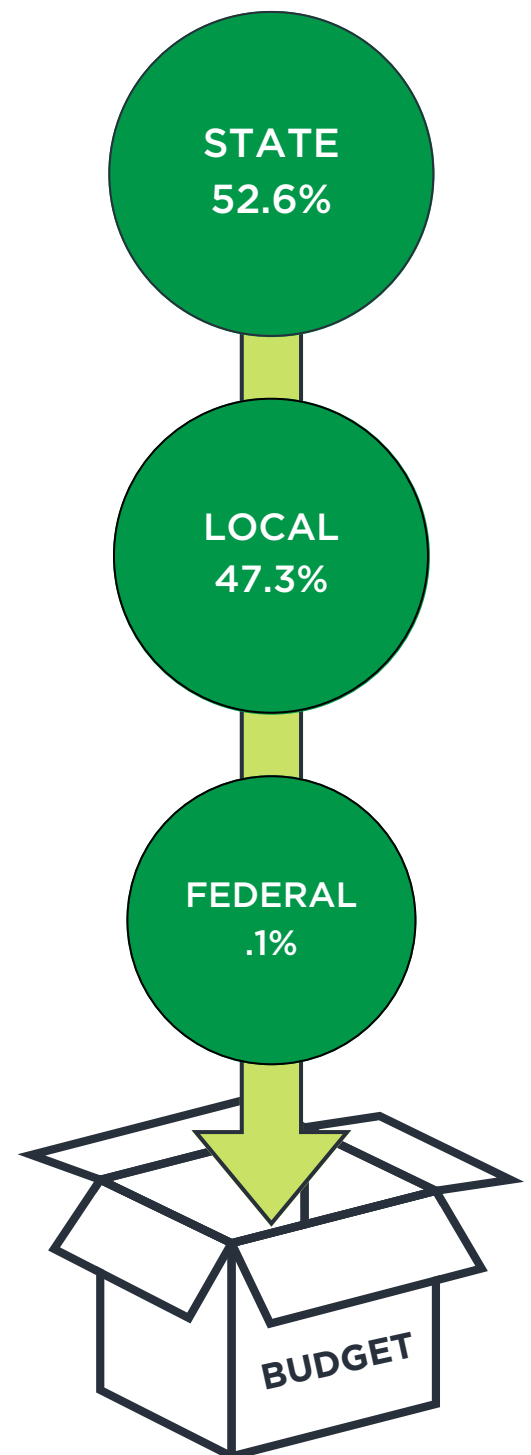
The amount of funding our school district receives is based on the Total Program Funding formula outlined in the Colorado School Finance Act, plus additional funding to recognize district-by-district variances in size, cost-of-living, the number of students who qualify for federal free lunch status, and other similar factors. The formula is used to determine the funding level for providing an equitable educational experience in each of Colorado's 178 school districts. In addition to the Total Program Funding, and in accordance with state and federal laws, the state of Colorado partially reimburses school districts for a portion of expenses paid for specific programs designed to serve particular groups of students or particular student needs. These "categorical" programs include funding for vocational education, special education, transportation, English language learners, and gifted and talented.

## LOCAL

Local funding comes from property and specific ownership (vehicle registration) taxes. Colorado law also allows local school districts to ask voters to approve additional funding through local tax increases called mill levy overrides.

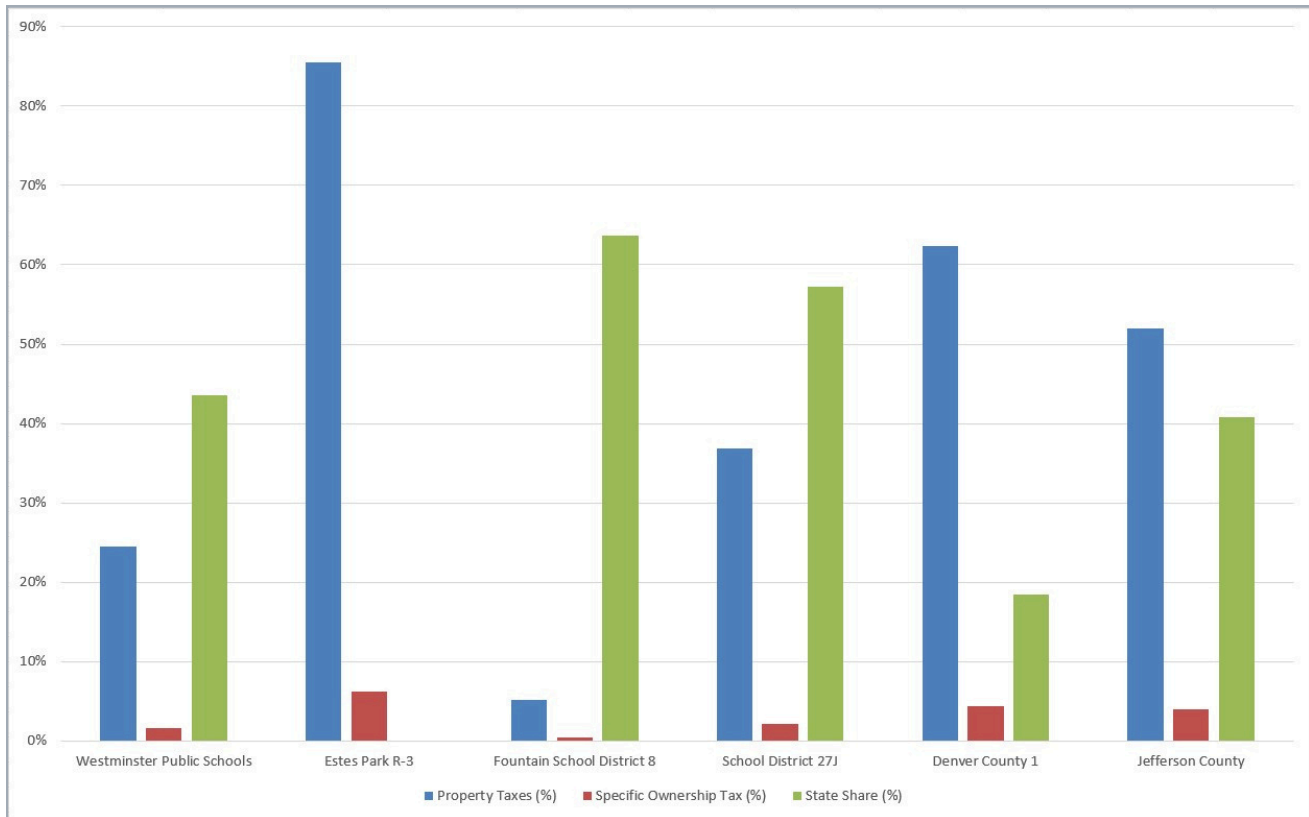
## FEDERAL

The federal government contributes a limited amount to local school districts. Most federal revenue is distributed through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to provide extra support for low-income children and through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that provides support, so children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education. This funding can only be used for specific purposes, and the district has limited flexibility with how it can be spent. The District also receives funds for a robust ROTC program for the military.



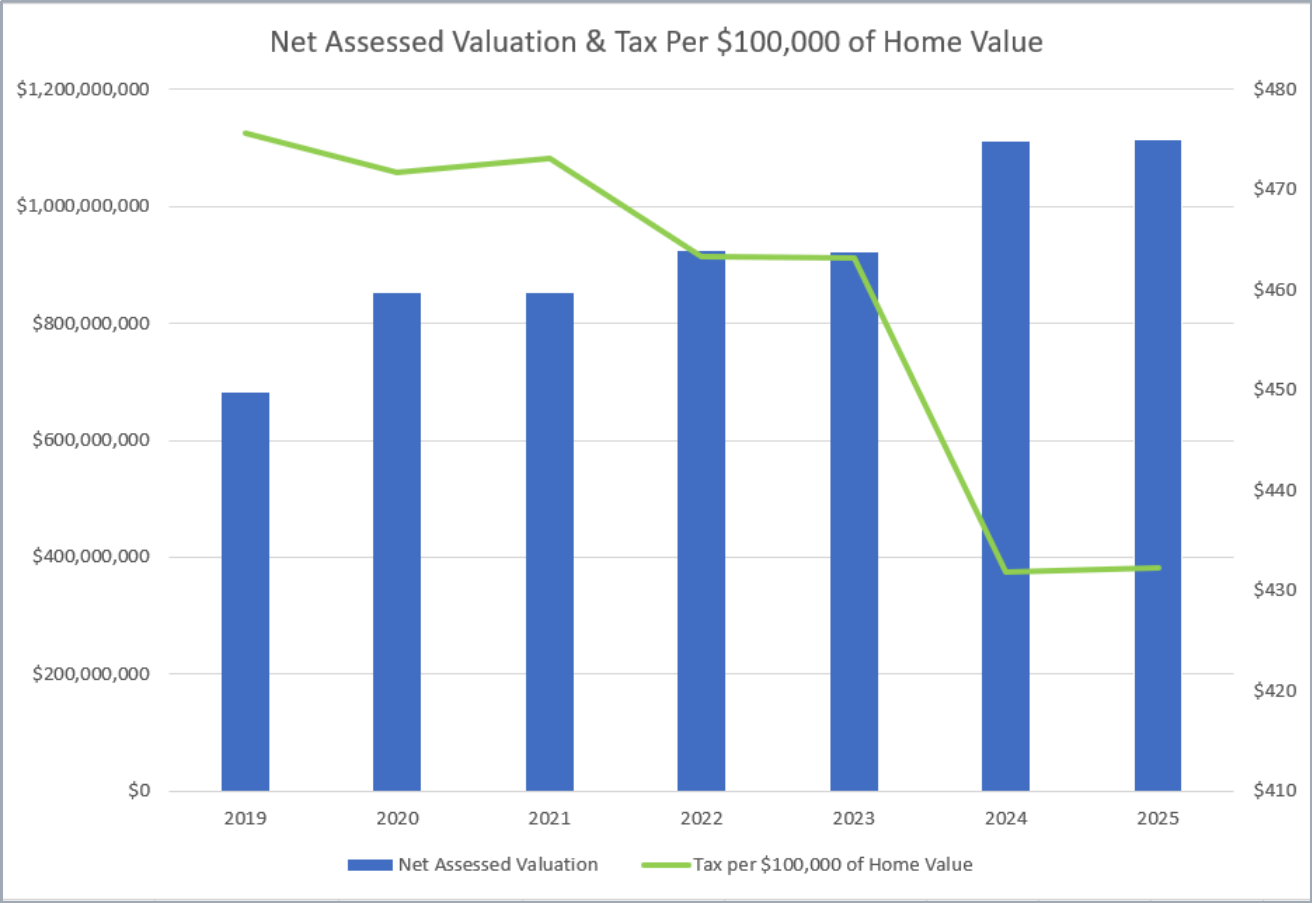
# How WPS Program Compares with Other Districts

The following charts illustrate the funding comparison for Westminster Public Schools, compared with other school districts in Colorado.



# Net Assessed Valuation & Property Taxes

Districts with higher assessed valuations receive most of their revenue from local property taxes; therefore, the state contributes less. Conversely, districts with lower property valuations receive more funding from the state. Westminster Economic Profile for the city of Westminster Economic Development Office reports that the average sales price for a single-family detached home is 540,000. The following chart shows the amount of property tax an owner would owe per \$100,000 that would go to the District.



To estimate the portion of your property tax bill that goes toward the school district, use the following formula:

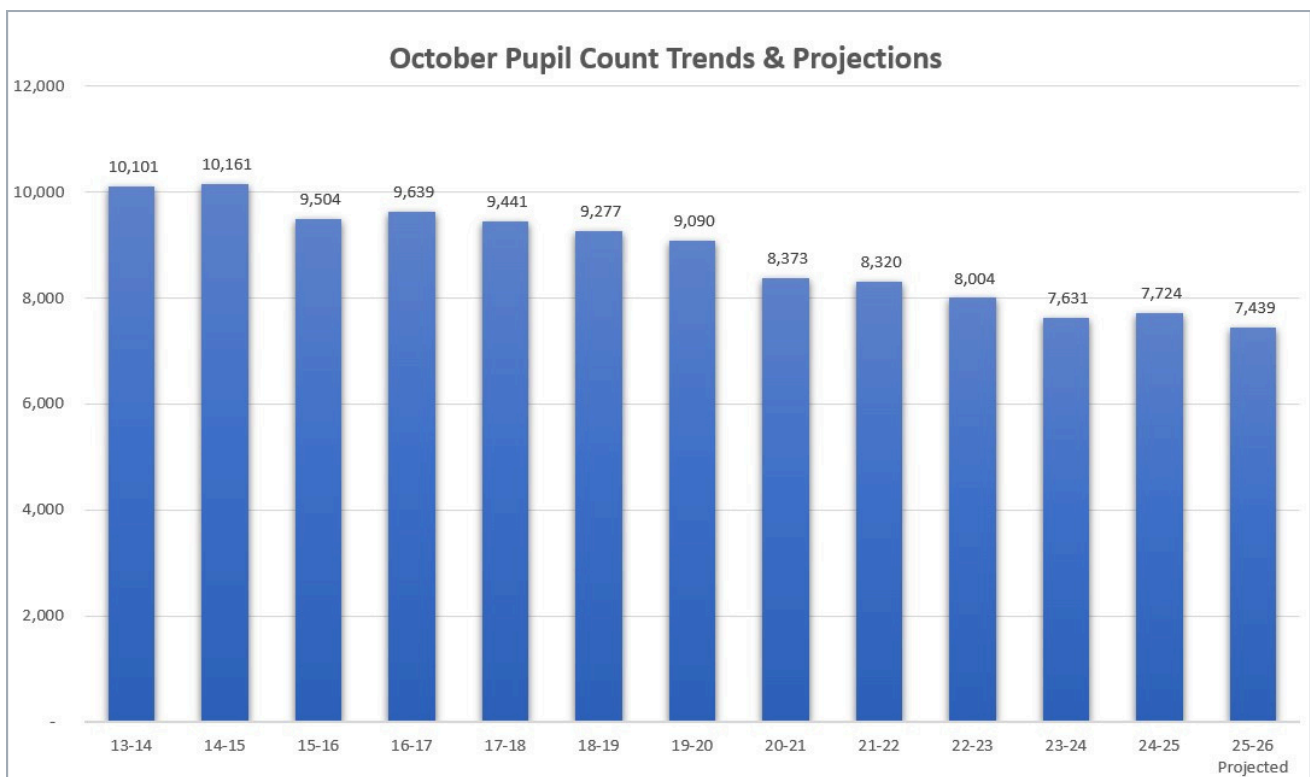
$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{Residential Assessed Value} \\
 \times \\
 \text{Assessment Rate 7.15\%} \\
 \times \\
 \text{School Tax Estimated Mill Rate} \\
 \div \\
 1,000 \\
 = \\
 \text{School Property Tax}
 \end{array}$$

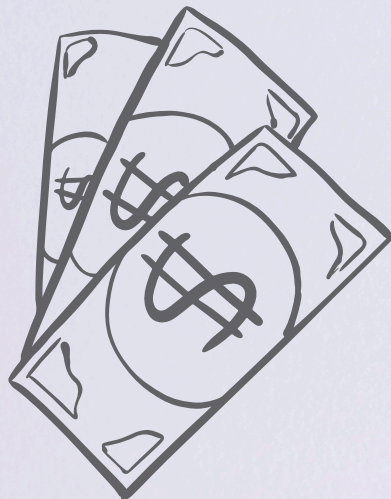
# How Enrollment Affects the Budget

The State funds school districts on a per-pupil basis, therefore, enrollment plays a vital part in developing the District's budget. The District's student enrollment is expected to decline slightly from 2024-2025.

Each year all public school districts and facilities across the state of Colorado participate in the Student October Count. The October Count is based on a one-day membership count in which districts are asked to report all students who are actively enrolled and attending.

The enrollment projections have been within 1% of actual enrollment for the last several years, which adds additional confidence to the enrollment projection process.





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## A Look at the General Fund

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# General Fund Revenues

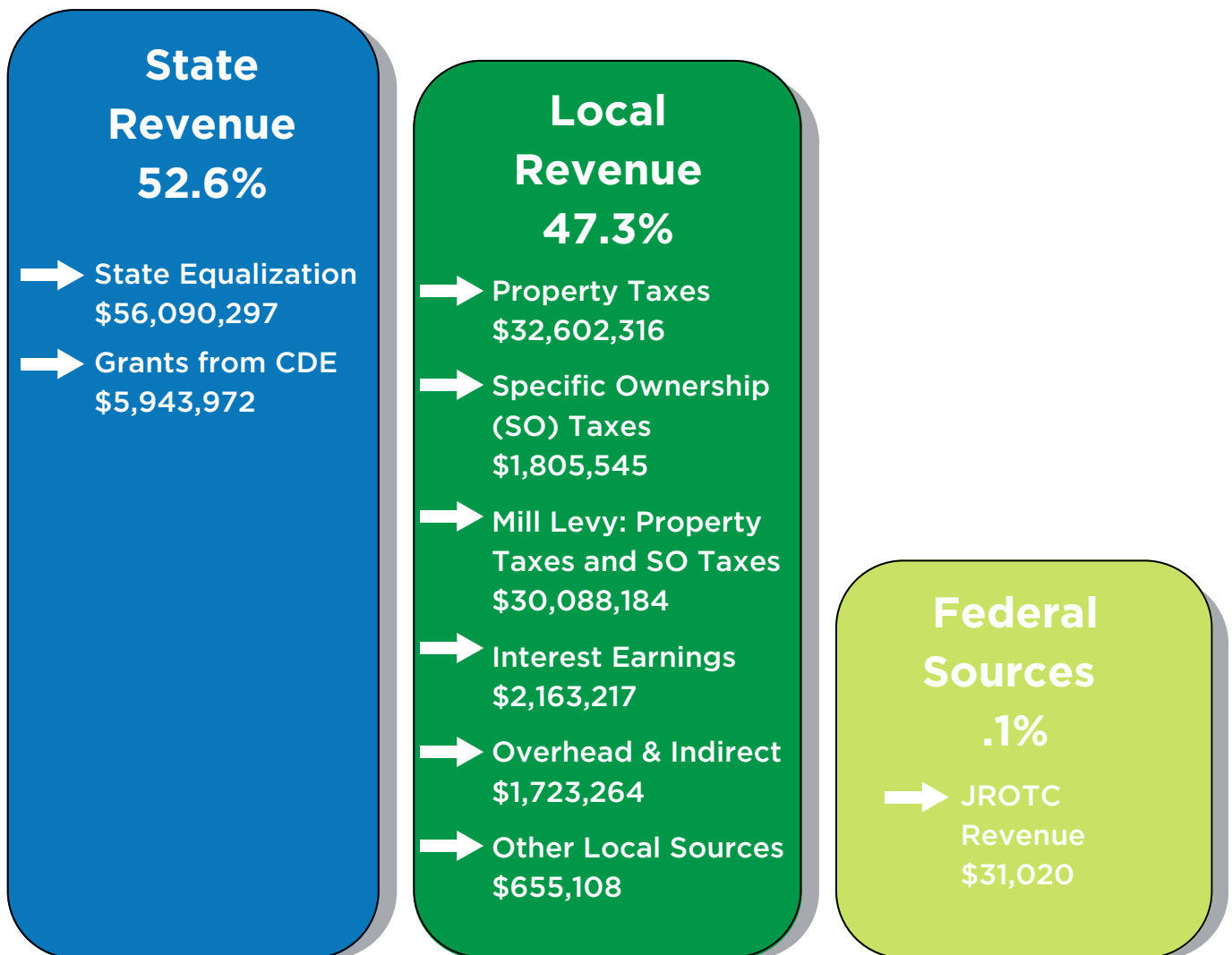
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The general fund is the main district fund. It pays for day-to-day operations of the school district like supplies and materials, the majority of salaries and benefits, as well as expenditures associated with transportation, technology, and many others.

State sources like State Equalization and various grants from the Colorado Department of Education comprise the state share and represent 52.6% of total General Fund revenue.

Local sources are the biggest source of income for the general fund. These sources contribute 47.3%. Items like Property Taxes, Mill Levy Overrides, and others contribute to these funds. The assessed valuations for properties located within the District have fluctuated in the last five years primarily due to the effect of the economy on the housing market.

Federal funding accounts for 0.1% of the General Fund revenue. These funds support the JROTC program in the district



# State Share: New Funding Formula

Total Program refers to the total amount of funding a school district receives under Colorado’s School Finance Act (SFA) of 1994. The SFA uses a formula that allocates funding to each school district based on a combination of base funding and district-specific factors. For the 2025–2026 school year, the statewide base per-pupil funding is \$8,691.80, which is consistent across all districts. Additional amounts—called factors—are then added to account for differences among districts, such as cost of living, district size, personnel costs, and non-personnel costs. There is also a base at-risk factor applied to support students identified as at-risk.

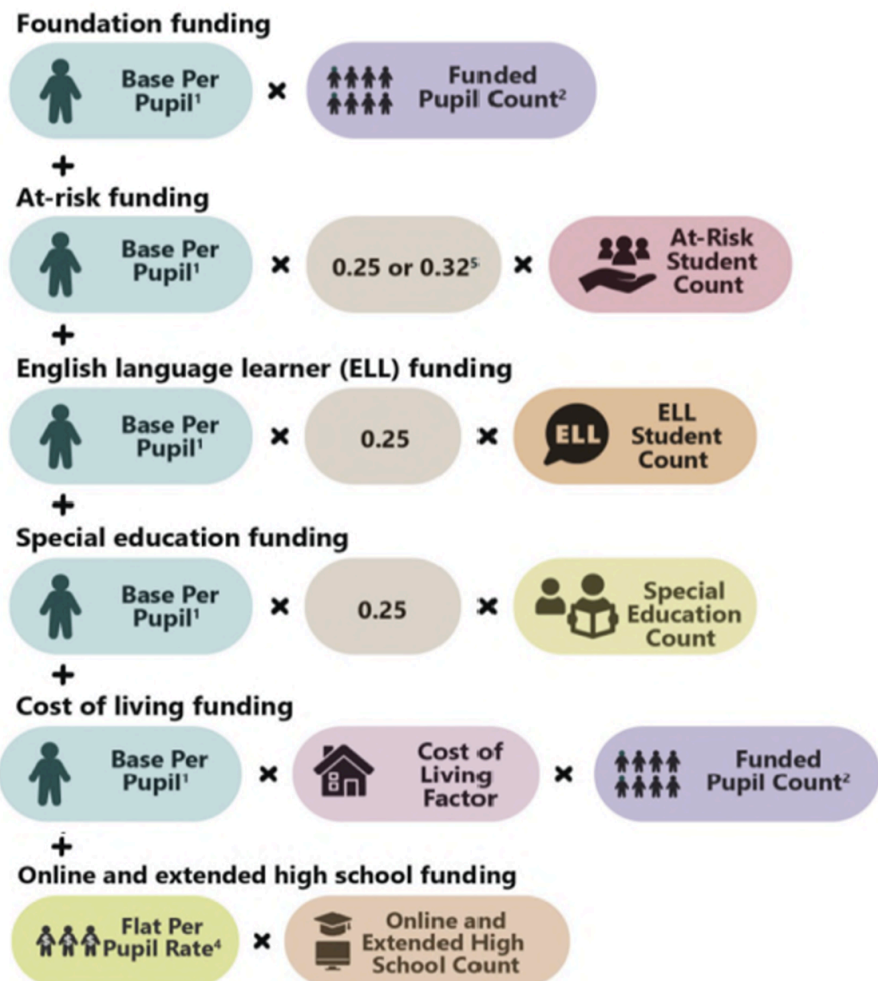
Importantly, for the first time since its introduction in 2009, the Budget Stabilization Factor, previously used to reduce Total Program funding due to state budget shortfalls, was set at 0% for 2024–2025. This means that going forward, school districts are receiving full funding as determined by the SFA formula, without any across-the-board reductions. The Total Program amount is calculated based on the October Pupil Count and includes both the base funding and additional funds for district-specific needs and at-risk student populations.

## New School Finance Formula Facts

- New formula will be implemented over a 7-year transition period
- Decreases student enrollment averaging from 5 years to 4 years
- Will lead to an average district increase of 2.9% or \$380 more per student

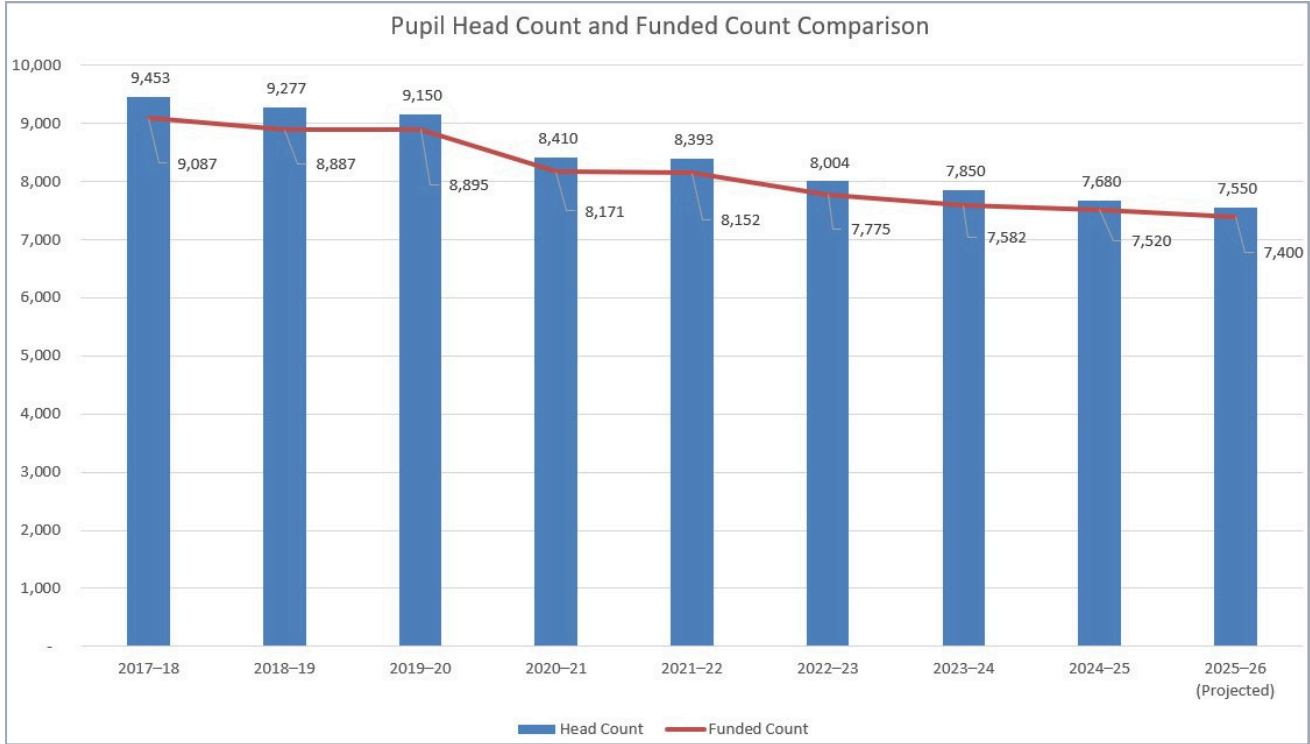
WPS 2025-2026  
Total Per Pupil  
Funding:  
  
\$12,564.96

## District Total Program Funding =



# Revenue Per Pupil

Per-pupil funding to school districts varies across the state. The variances in funding are based on the school finance formula, which recognizes costs of living, personnel costs and size factors.



# General Fund Expenditures

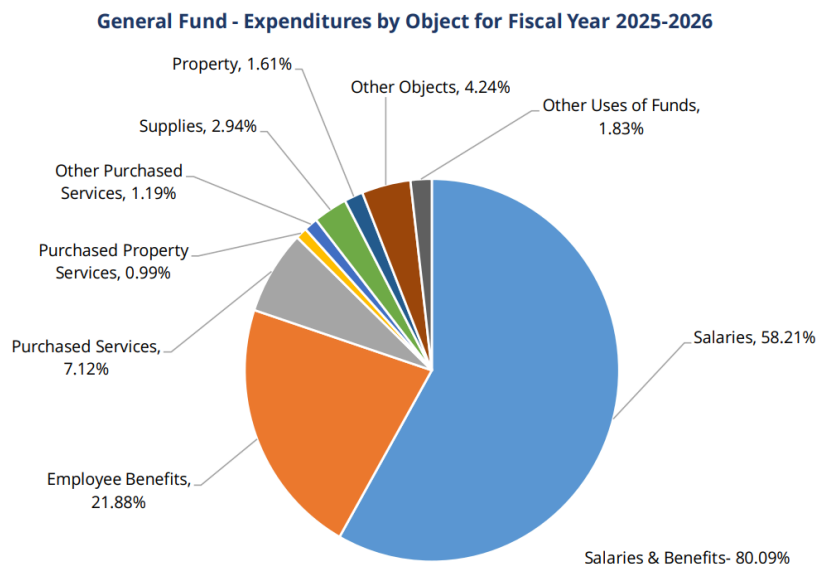
The District's expenditures reflect the implementation of the budget goals and objectives adopted by the Board of Education for the fiscal year. Most items are funded through the department or schools' allocations. If there are additional requests submitted, then the administrative cabinet reviews and approves or denies the request.

The District's general fund budgeted expenditures for 2025-2026 are projected to be \$130 million, representing a 1.2% increase from the 2024-2025 budget. This modest increase is primarily due to commitments under the newly established two-year salary and benefits agreement with the district association, as well as rising operational costs.

## Classifying Expenditures

Westminster Public Schools uses a chart of accounts prescribed by the Colorado Department of Education to account for its revenues and expenditures by fund, location, program, project, and object. Object identifies the type of expenditures, jobs, and grants. For expenditures, objects break down into salaries, benefits, various purchased services, supplies, property-related expenditures, and others. Analyzing expenditures by the program allows the district to track expenditures by the activity for which a service or material object is acquired. The program also provides for discernment between instructional and non-instructional spending.

Expenditures by Object Summary	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Actual 2024	Amended 2025	Adopted 2026
0100-0199 Salaries	\$ 64,686,288	\$ 67,524,909	\$71,707,455	\$ 76,766,503	\$ 75,843,075
0200-0299 Employee Benefits	23,601,061	27,712,872	24,813,559	27,457,639	28,506,792
0300-0399 Purchased Services	5,778,881	6,135,714	8,668,146	9,063,908	9,274,851
0400-0499 Purchased Property Services	1,090,918	1,044,440	1,210,024	1,261,010	1,287,823
0500-0599 Other Purchased Services	867,451	1,159,606	1,191,306	1,522,365	1,549,448
0600-0699 Supplies	4,392,494	4,485,196	4,210,286	3,757,974	3,829,127
0700-0799 Property	1,524,637	2,682,058	2,466,546	2,059,457	2,092,387
0800-0899 Other Objects / Dues & Fees	457,033	554,433	4,096,812	4,582,149	5,522,989
0900-0999 Other Uses of Funds	234,521	447,096	2,640,236	2,321,723	2,386,988
<b>Total Expenditures by Object</b>	<b>102,633,285</b>	<b>111,746,323</b>	<b>121,004,372</b>	<b>128,792,728</b>	<b>130,293,480</b>
Transfers & Prior Year Obligations	12,950,761	15,247,346	9,963,551	7,684,752	4,599,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 115,584,046</b>	<b>\$ 126,993,669</b>	<b>\$ 130,967,923</b>	<b>\$ 136,477,480</b>	<b>\$ 134,892,480</b>



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# How Each Dollar is Spent

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## **47¢ General Instruction and Instructional Support Services**

Costs associated with the delivery of instructional services to students, which include teachers, classroom supplies and equipment, instructional staff training, instructional and curriculum development, student assessments, etc.

## **13¢ Student Support Services and Instructional Staff Support Services**

Costs associated with support services for students like guidance and counseling, school library/media centers, nurses, psychologists, social workers, curriculum and staff development, supplies and materials, and equipment.

## **11¢ Operations & Maintenance**

Maintenance, operations, utilities, custodial services, and security services.

## **8¢ School Level Leadership & Management**

School-level administration, including principals, assistant principals, and front office staff, office supplies and equipment.

## **12¢ Support Departments**

Human Resources, Financial Services, Operations Department, Communications, Staff Development, Purchasing, Warehouse, Board of Education, Technology, Legal Services, Assessments, Learning Services, Risk Management, and Curriculum.

## **3¢ Transportation**

Bus transportation for pupils and vehicle maintenance.

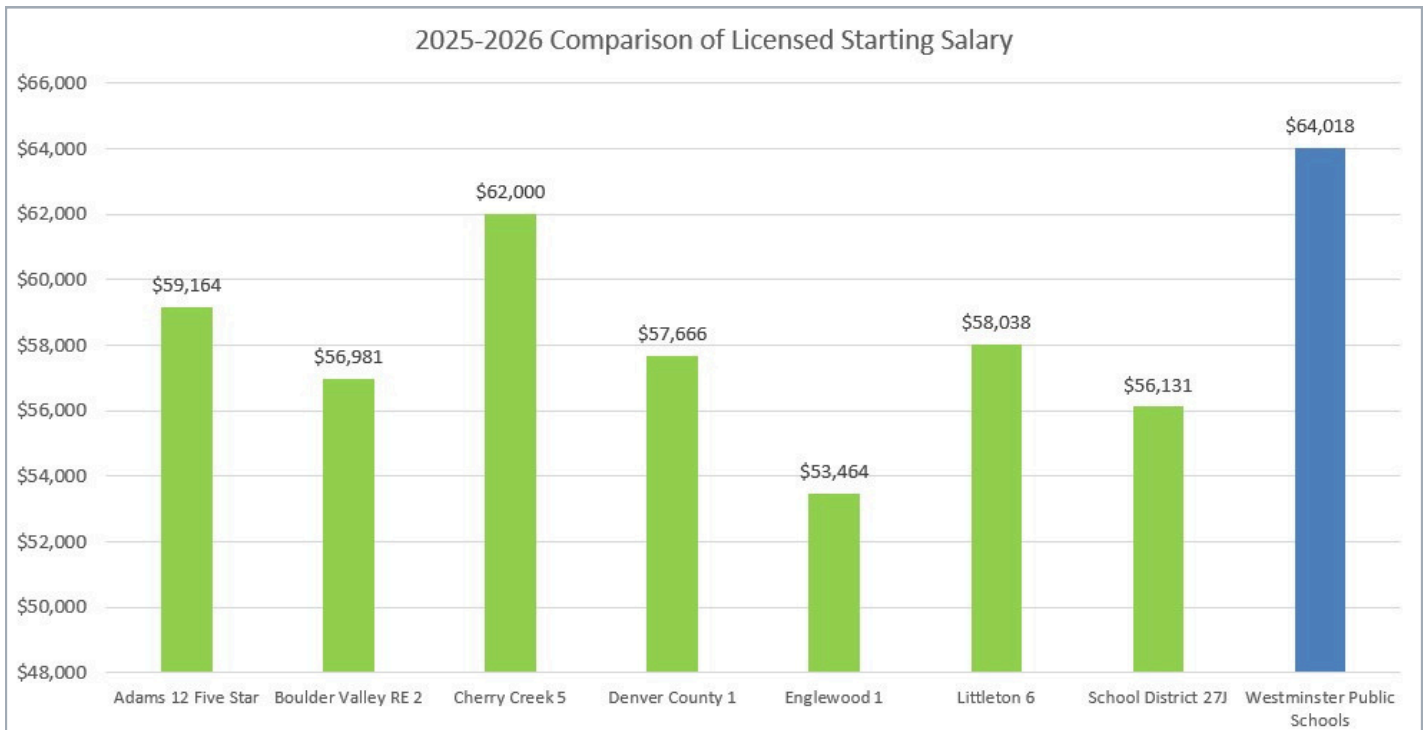
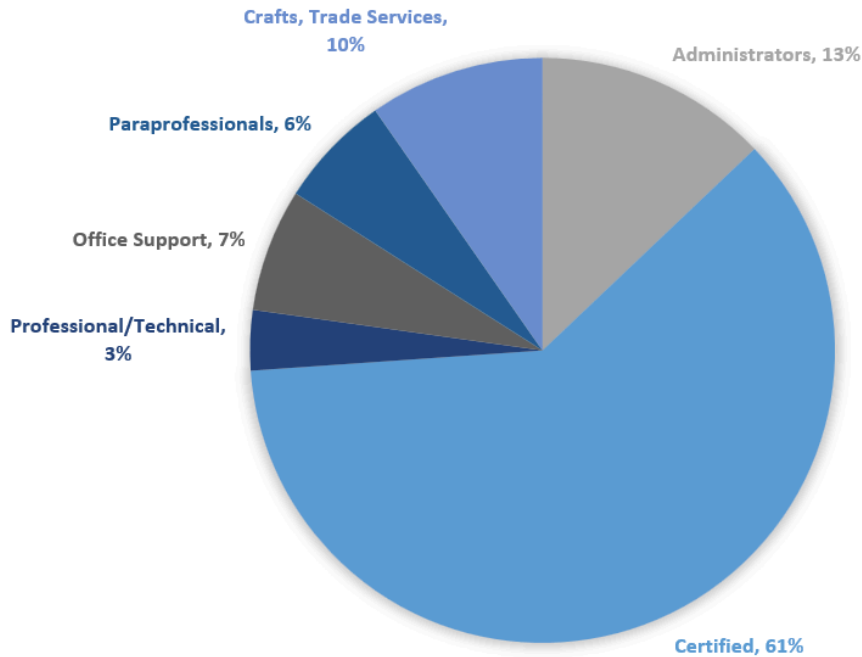
## **6¢ Other Services**

Community Services like Boys & Girls Club.

# Staffing

Westminster Public Schools continues to create programs to position itself as a vanguard for attracting highly effective teachers. We invest in and support our staff through mentoring, ongoing quality professional development, and a dynamic innovation-minded instructional model that encourages 21st-century ingenuity and creativity. The district is one of the highest-paying districts in the state. For the 2025-26 fiscal year, the District's licensed starting salary is \$64,018.

## STAFFING SUMMARY



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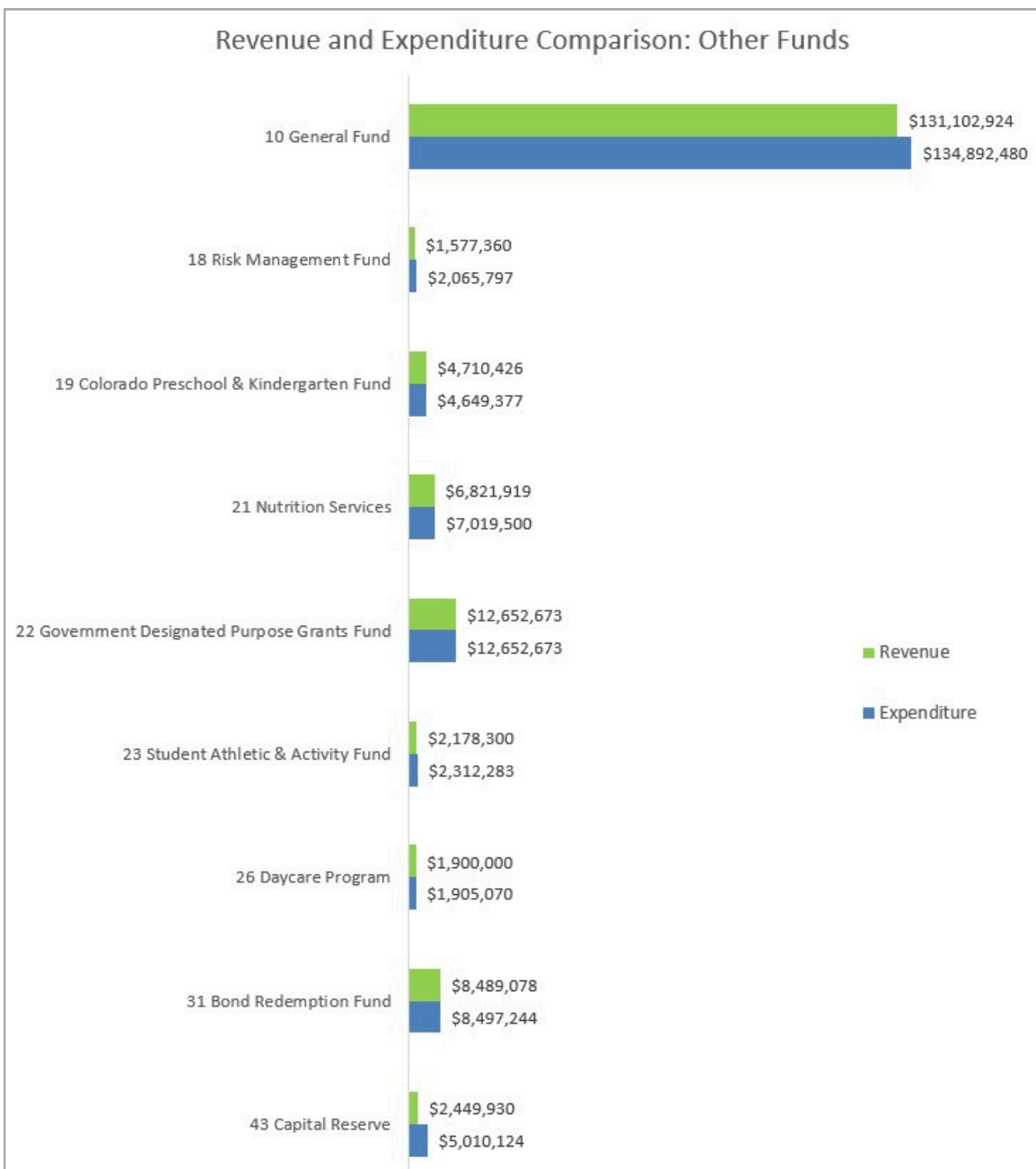
## Other District Funds

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# Summary of All District Funds

Westminster Public Schools has ten different funds. General Fund is the District's main operating fund and accounts for more than half of all expenditures. Government resources are allocated to and accounted for in individual funds based upon the purposes for which they are to be spent and how spending activities are controlled. Any budgeted fund that represents more than 10 percent of the total appropriated expenditures is considered a major fund. The operating objectives of governmental entities, such as school districts, are different from those of commercial enterprises and therefore accounting requirements are different. Governmental entities use fund accounting to track revenues and expenditures. This is particularly important because some funds have very specific restrictions on how dollars can be spent.



# Special Recognition

**Special recognition goes to all community members for their continuous support of our students, teachers, and schools. Community support is vital to the success of Westminster Public Schools.**

**THANK YOU!**

**Westminster Public Schools appreciates the dedication of The Board of Education members for their hours of service to our students, employees, and community.**

**THANK YOU!**



# Get Involved

## Your Influence on the Budget Process

Westminster Public Schools must determine its annual budget for the upcoming school year each spring. District staff works together to develop a tentative budget that balances the needs and values of students, parents, employees, and taxpayers with fiscal responsibility. The budget is then presented to the Westminster Public Schools Board of Education for final approval by June 30 of every year.

School districts and school boards across Colorado have had to make difficult budget decisions over the past several years due to the economic slowdown and funding reductions. This comes at a time when even more resources are required to increase educational rigor, meet the increased need for English Language and Special Education Services, and implement multiple federal- and state-mandated reforms.

Due to the multiple years of decreased state funding and increased needs, it's more important than ever to make sure budget dollars are directed where they will make the biggest difference for students.

Supporting success in our schools is everybody's business, so you are encouraged to get involved. You can participate in the following committees:

- School Accountability Advisory Committee (BAAC). The BAAC is responsible for making recommendations to the principal regarding budget decisions and other priorities.
- District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC). The DAAC is an advisory committee to the Board of Education and is responsible for collecting feedback from BAAC and then advising the Board regarding spending priorities, among other responsibilities.

Visit the District's Transparency Website at [www.wps.org](http://www.wps.org) under the Finance Department to learn more about the budget and the process. You can also email [finance@wps.org](mailto:finance@wps.org).

For more information on the state education policy and budget for all school districts, contact the Colorado Department of Education at 303-866-6600 or visit the CDE website at [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us).

