Colorado Springs
School District 11

A citizen's guide
to the
Colorado Springs School District 11

2026 - 2027
Budget

Colorado Springs School District 11

Michael Gaal, Superintendent of Schools

Inspire Every Mind.

D11 Community,

It is my honor to share the 2026–2027 Budget for Colorado Springs School District 11. This year's budget strengthens our commitment to our proven strategies by investing more directly in classrooms, supporting our educators, and ensuring every dollar advances student outcomes.

Our priorities remain clear:

- **Investing in instruction:** Increasing instructional spending from 60% to 70%, ensuring more resources reach classrooms, teachers, and school leaders while supporting our portfolio of schools and student-centered learning.
- **Supporting educators:** Building on last year's salary increases with recurring compensation that recognizes those closest to students and helps attract, develop, and retain exceptional teachers.
- **Expanding real-world learning:** Creating meaningful opportunities through career pathways, paid apprenticeships, Study Abroad, Rocket Day, the D11 Promise, and community partnerships that prepare students for success beyond graduation.
- **Empowering schools:** Continuing site-based budgeting so school leaders have greater flexibility to meet the unique needs of their students and communities.

Thank you to our staff, families, community, and Board of Education for your continued partnership and commitment to progress. Together, we remain focused on delivering Excellence for all.

Sincerely,

Michael Gaal
Superintendent of Schools

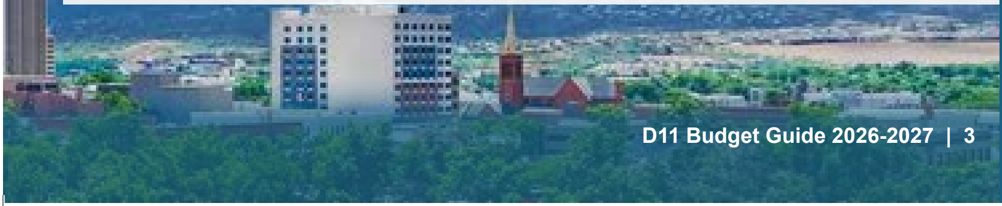
1115 N El Paso St. Colorado Springs, CO 80903

phone: 719-520-2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Short History

The founding of Colorado Springs was due primarily to the imagination and ingenuity of one man, General William Jackson Palmer. Having come west to help plan a transcontinental railroad, he instead founded a north-south railroad of his own, which skirted the frontal range of the Rocky Mountains. During the same period he met and became engaged to a very proper Queen Mellen. He was then confronted with the problem of bringing this eastern aristocrat to the rough and primitive west. The natural beauty of the Pike's Peak region quickly inspired him, and he began working on developing a city. His purposes for the city were (1) to be an attractive way station for his railroad; (2) to make a pleasant, cultured home for his bride; (3) to create a tourist trade and other businesses for the railroad. With a vision for a planned colony concept, Palmer's advertising promoted Colorado Springs as a resort for the elite. His town soon attracted many aristocratic people and became known as "Little London" for its cultivated English mood and atmosphere. A by-product of Palmer's example and desire for a cultured city was a widespread interest in public education, which he and his new bride, Queen, actively implemented.



Beginning with the basics

The first school district of the Pikes Peak region (School District No.1) was established in 1862 in Colorado City. On August 23, 1872, the Colorado Springs Public School District (later to become Colorado Springs School District No. 11) was officially incorporated with geographical boundaries defined and a board of education elected. Since then, the District has grown from one school site to over 60 instruction sites encompassing 72 square miles.

This guide focuses on the District budget for the 2026-27 school year. It covers the cost of educating, feeding, transporting and providing for the shelter and safety of nearly 23,500 students. When we speak about the District budget we're really talking about several budgets that are combined to cover the cost of operating schools, charter schools, and services to the general public. Money for schools comes from many different sources, such as taxes, grants and school bonds.

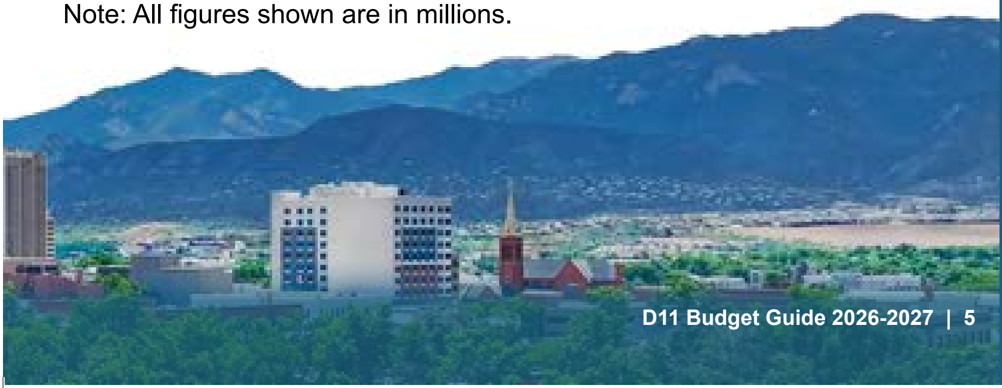
To begin to understand school funding, it is helpful to learn basic terms. In the table to the right and throughout this guide, you will find the names of the different types of fund budgets, and a basic picture of where the dollars come from and where they go for Fiscal Year 26-27 (FY26-27). If you add all of these budgets together excluding beginning fund balance, you have the entire school district funding of $618.4 million.

The projected/ forecasted revenues shown in the table below are the amounts the District expects to receive in FY26/27.

The beginning fund balance amounts are unspent funds from the prior fiscal year. Most of the unspent funds are restricted and can only be used for specific purposes as defined by Colorado statutes, accounting regulations, and school board designations. Payments between funds are budgeted within many of the District's funds.

FUND	Beginning Fund Balance	Revenues	Other Sources / Uses	Total Resources Available
General	82.5	284.1	60.6	427.4
Risk Management	1.9	0.1	5.5	7.6
Preschool	5.0	6.8	-1.5	10.5
Designated Purpose Grants	0	41.8	0	41.8
Food Service	8.4	15.5	0.7	24.7
Student Activity	3.0	2.5	0.0	5.5
Other Special Revenue	0.1	0	0	0.2
Mill Levy Override	5.8	83.7	-82.1	7.3
Capital Reserve	135.1	6.6	22.1	163.9
Risk Related Funds	8.5	39.6	-0.6	48.1
Production Printing	0.8	1.7	-1.1	1.4
Private Purpose Trust	0.3	0	0	0.3
Total All Funds	**251.4**	**482.4**	**3.6**	**738.7**

Note: All figures shown are in millions.



A Brief Description of Each Fund

District 11 uses several different Funds to ensure money is spent for the purpose it was intended. Each fund supports a specific area of district operations, from classroom instruction to nutrition services and building improvements.

GENERAL FUND
Supports daily school operations, including teachers, classrooms, supplies, and student services.

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE
Records transactions related to non-school activities, such as donations for scholarships and specific events.

RISK MANAGEMENT FUND
Manages district insurance programs and liability protection.

MILL LEVY OVERRIDE FUND
Tracks voter-approved tax revenues dedicated to specific education priorities.

PRESCHOOL FUND
Supports the Colorado Preschool Program and early learning opportunities.

CAPITAL RESERVES
Funds major facility improvements and construction projects.

DESIGNATED PURPOSE GRANTS
Tracks federal, state, and private grant funding for special programs.

RISK RELATED ACTIVITIES FUND
Supports employee health benefits and self-insurance programs.

FOOD SERVICES FUND
Provides healthy meals and manages all school nutrition programs.

PRODUCTION PRINTING FUND
Supports district printing, copying, mailing and document services.

STUDENT ACTIVITY FUNDS
Transactions related to school sponsored pupil athletics, clubs, or other activities.

PRIVATE PURPOSE TRUST
Records revenues from donations held in trust for a specific purpose.

DISTRICT 11 FUNDS AT A GLANCE

INSTRUCTIONS & OPERATIONS
Funds that support teaching, learning and daily school activities.

STUDENT SUPPORT
Funds that invest in students, staff and special programs.

FACILILTIES & BUILDINGS
Funds that maintain and improve our schools.

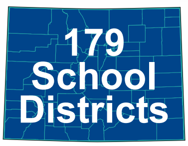
NUTRITION SERVICES
Funds dedicated to healthy meals and nutrition programs

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
Funds that strengthen partnerships and serve our community.

Just How Big is School District 11?

23,458 Students Served

179 SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN COLORADO



Colorado is made up of 179 school districts, ranging from rural systems to large urban districts.

DISTRICT 11 ENROLLMENT

23,500 STUDENTS

With nearly 23,500 youngsters, School District 11's student population makes up nearly 2.7% of the state's total student population of roughly 870,793.

D11 Pupil Membership
per CDE (PK-12)

2026	23,458
2025	22,265
2024	22,744
2023	22,729
2022	23,366

D11 K-12 Projected Student Count
FY27

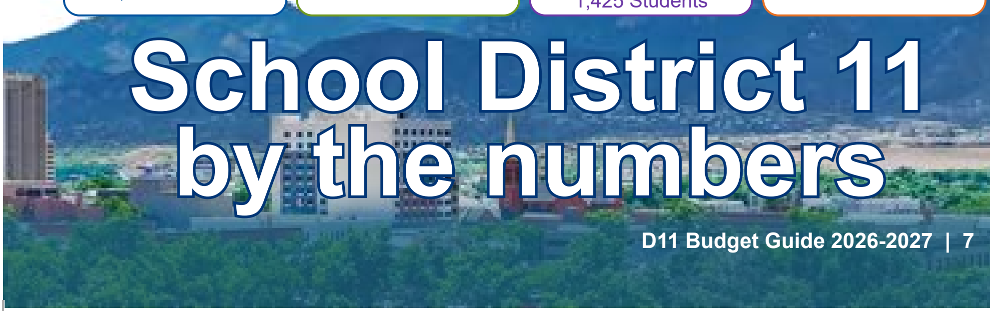
Category	Students	% of Total
Elementary	8,907	40%
Middle	3,900	18%
High	4,513	20%
Alternative	1,396	6%
Charter	3,391	15%
Total	22,107	100%

15%
Special Education
3,360 Students

9%
Gifted & Talented
2,009 Students

6%
English Language Learners
1,425 Students

55%
Free & Reduced Lunch
12,819 Students



School District 11 by the numbers

Where Does School Funding Come From?

District 11 receives funding from a combination of state, local, federal, and other sources. State and local dollars make up nearly 80% of our total revenue - demonstrating the strong partnership between the community and the state in supporting our students.

State Funding

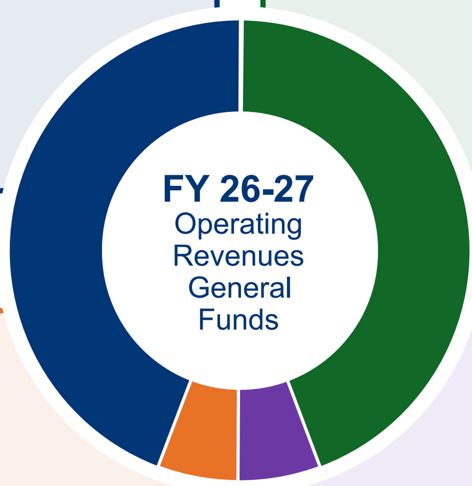
The State of Colorado provides the largest share of District 11's funding through the School Finance Act.

40.6%

Local Taxes

Local property and ownership taxes fund important programs, operations, and student support.

39.3%



10.7%

Federal Funding

Federal sources support programs such as Title I, special education, and breakfast and lunch.

9.4%

Other Revenue

Includes grants, fees, donations, investment income, and other miscellaneous sources.

A Shared Investment in Student Success

Our students thrive because of the strong support of our community and the state. Together, these investments help us provide high-quality schools, dedicated educators, and the resources every student needs to succeed.

Property Tax Information

Assessed Valuation, Property Tax Mill Levy and Property Tax

Mill Levy Rate
37.695 MILLS
(per $1,000 of assessed valuation)

Assessed valuation is the value placed upon real estate by the El Paso County Assessor's Office and is the basis for the levying of taxes. While property values have risen over the past ten years, property taxes are limited by state law.

Limits are placed on the annual increase of revenue and spending of state and local governments. Property taxes can only increase from the prior year by the Denver-Boulder CPI (%) plus the % increase (or decrease) in the District's student population.

Even when property values rise, the mill levy rate is reduced from the prior year so property taxes collected do not exceed the growth restrictions. This allowable increase use substantially less than the amount that could be realized without these restrictions.

CSSD11 has one of the lowest mill levy rates in the county, when compared to our peers districts who sit historically at mill levy rates between 45-55 mills.

How to Figure Your School Property Tax

The market value of your home **x** The assessment rate which is set by state law. **x** The tax rate, also known as mill levy, set by the local taxing agency. **=** Property Tax

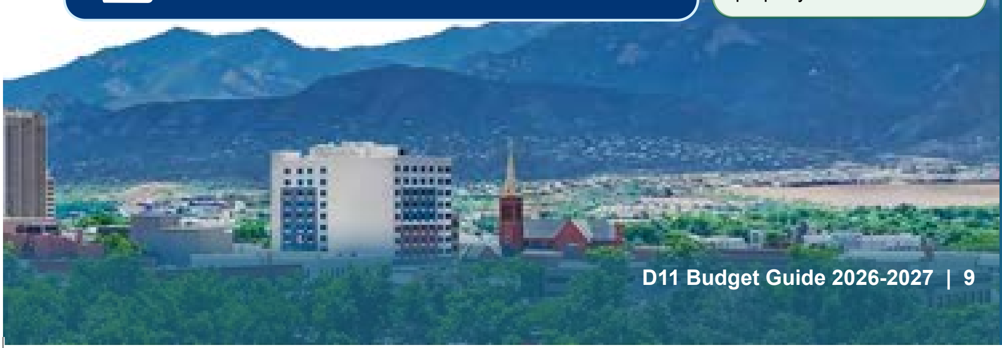
For residential property, the assessment rate is 7.05%

1 mill is equal to one-thousandth, or .001

(The school district's tax rate is 37.695 mills, so the number to use in figuring your taxes is .037695)

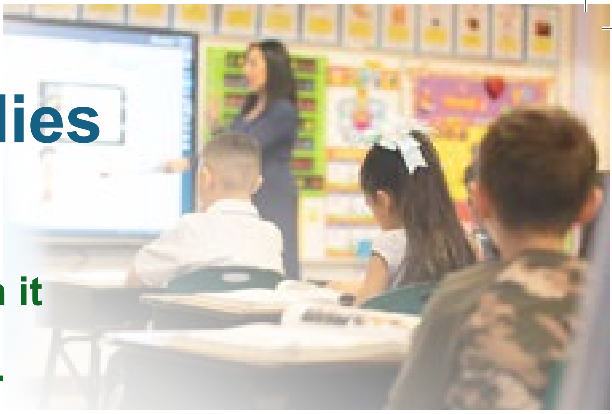
You can look up mill levies for all taxing agencies in El Paso County at www.elpasoco.com/assesor or call the El Paso County Assesor at 719-520-6600.

Most property owners pay property tax to more agencies than Colorado Springs School District 11. Typically, a homeowner will pay property taxes to the school district, their county, their city, and possibly other agencies such as library, water, or fire-protection districts. The property tax for each district is figured in the same way as shown on the left. Adding together all the property taxes that apply to where you live produces your total property tax.



State Subsidies and Grants

How does the state determine how much it gives to schools?



Every winter, the Governor proposes a budget to the Colorado General Assembly that includes school funding. Once the budget is approved in the spring, the Colorado Department of Education distributes the money among the 179 school districts around the
state, as dictated by state school finance law.

State school finance law is based on a per-pupil formula that calculates revenue through a process called total program funding. For each pupil counted on October 1, the formula provides a base per pupil amount of money plus additional money to recognize district-by-district variances in: (a) costs of living, (b) personnel costs, and (c) the size of the District's student population. The total program amount also includes additional funding for at-risk pupils - student eligible for the federally funded free lunch program.

As these components vary among school districts, so do the expenses of the districts and, as such, the amount of total program funding provided. D-11 's total program funding for FY26-27 is budgeted at $286,525,970 or $11,961.16 per pupil (charter schools included).

The state's portion of funding, arrived at through this calculation is based on a concept called state equalization. The portion of total program funding not covered by the District's own property taxes and specific ownership taxes is made up (equalized) by the state. In the case of D-11, state equalization comprises over 62% of total program funding, or $178 million.

FY26-27 Total Program Funding

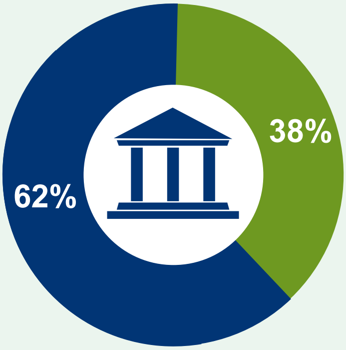
$286.5 MILLION

$11,961 per pupil

State Equalization (62%)

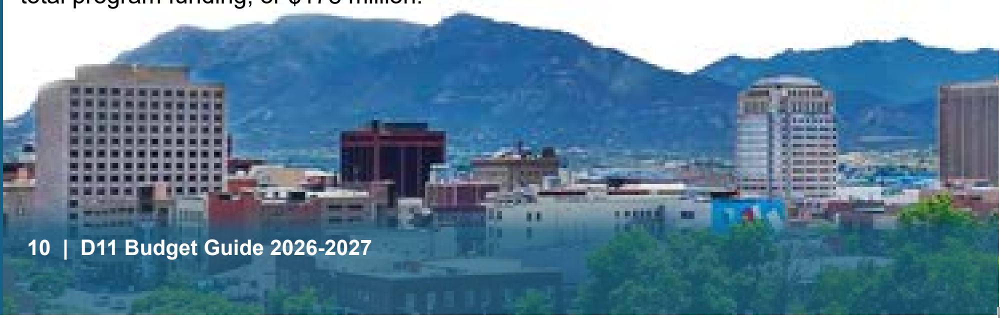
$178 MILLION

of total program funding comes from the State.



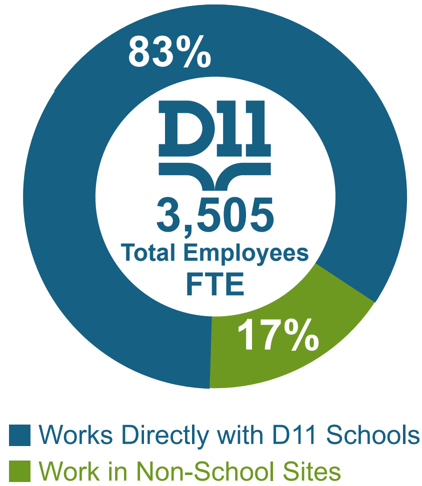
State Equalization
$178 Million (62%)

Local Share
$108.5 Million (38%)

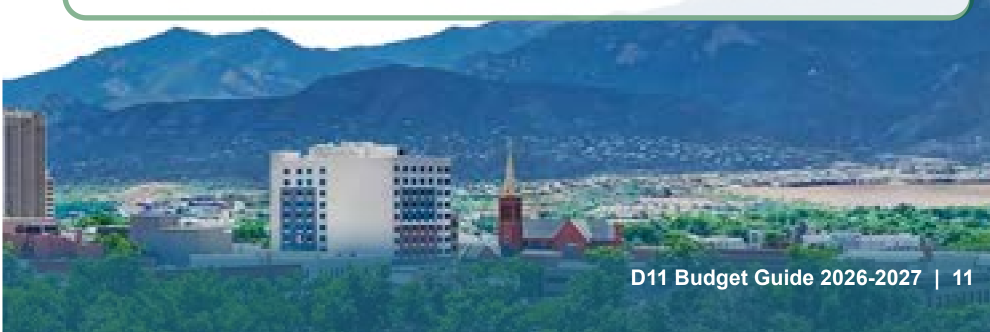


How Many Employees to Students?

Almost 83 percent of School District 11's full and part time employees work inside D-11's schools, or provide direct services to it's nearly 23,500 students. Of these school-based staff, over 50% are teachers. In D-11, a regular classroom teacher will typically be assigned anywhere from 15-20 students. Teachers who work with students with special needs usually work with smaller classes, or, in a few cases, one-to-one.



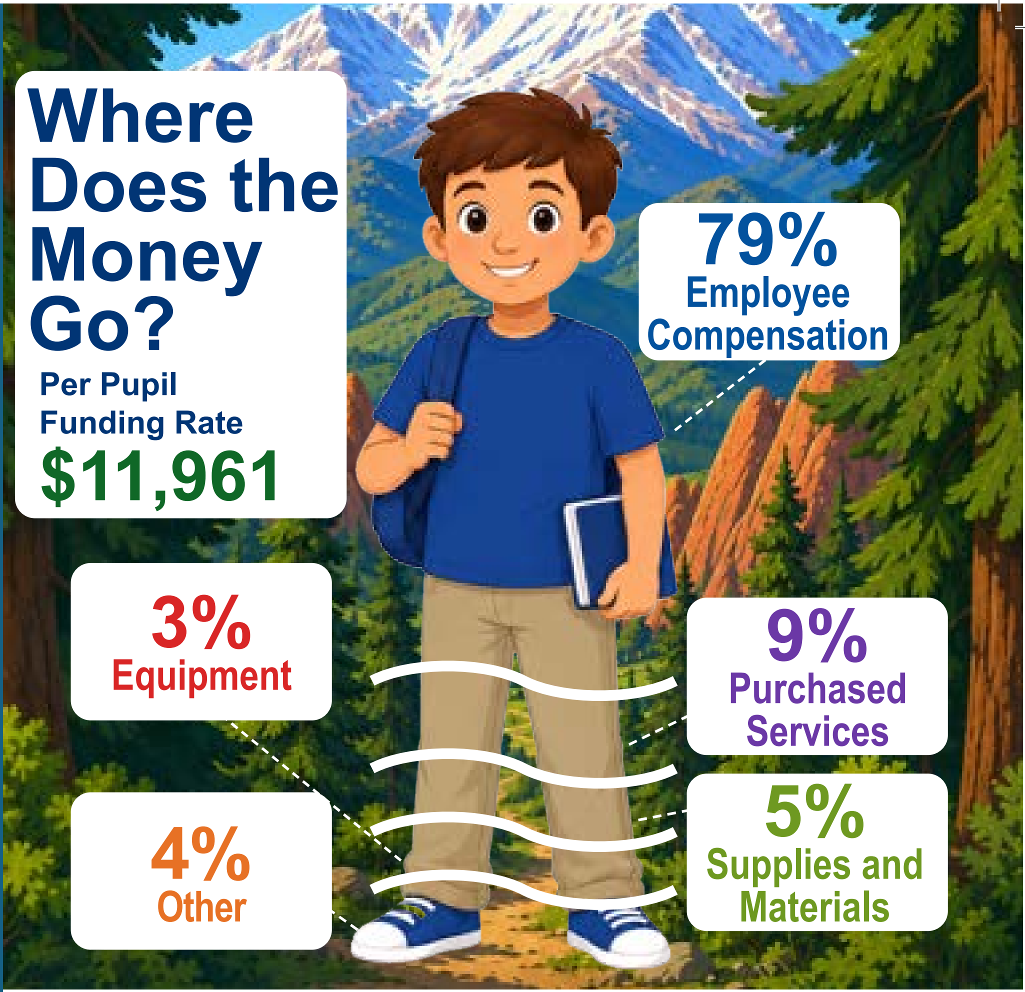
FTE - Working Directly with D-11 Schools*	FTE (All Funds)	% of Total
Classroom Teachers	1,548	44.2%
Teacher / Classroom Aides	407	11.6%
Custodians	168	4.8%
Special Teachers	178	5.1%
School Clerical	171	4.9%
Food Service Workers	210	6.0%
Principals & Assistant Principals	99	2.8%
Bus Drivers	71	2.0%
Campus Security	58	1.7%
TOTAL - School-Based & Direct Service	**2910**	**83%**
Non-School Site FTE	595	17%
TOTAL FTE	**3,505**	**100%**



Where Does the Money Go?

Per Pupil Funding Rate

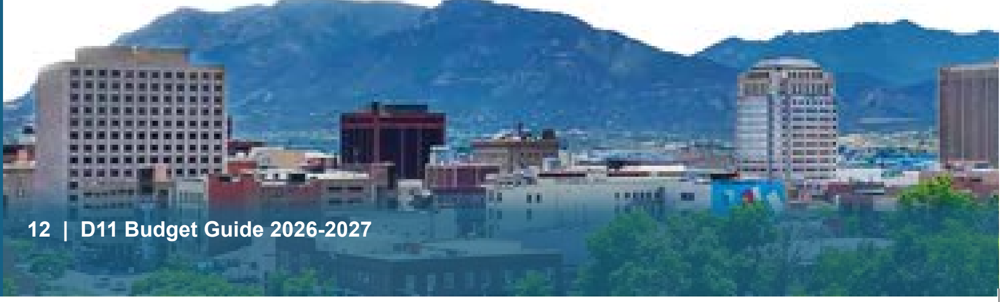
$11,961



For every student at D11, the funds we receive are invested in the people, services, materials, and resources that make a difference in the classroom every day.

EXPENDITURES BY OBJECT

79% Employee Compensation	9% Purchased Services	5% Supplies and Materials	3% Equipment	4% Other
Salaries, benefits, and payroll-related costs for our dedicated staff.	Services provided by outside organizations and professionals.	Classroom supplies, instructional materials, and learning resources.	Technology, furniture, and equipment used in schools.	Utilities, insurance, dues, and other operational expenses.



How District 11 Invests Resources

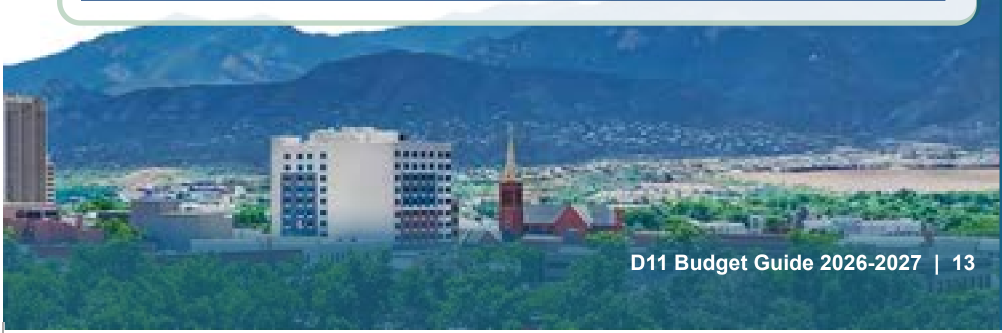
Another way to look at the budget is by program. The graph below details the percentage of FY26-27 budget provided to each program. Services provided between funds are eliminated in this graph to more accurately reflect the District's true expenditure breakdown.

90%
of District Spending is School Based

EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

General Fund Expenditures by School Based Programming or Central Admin.		%
School Based	$317,760,988	90%
Central Admin	$34,963,679	10%
TOTAL	**$352,724,667**	**100%**

General Fund Program Expenditures by School Based or Central Admin.	School Based	Central Admin
Instruction Services	$207,792,216.76	
Pupil Services	$20,949,827.83	
Instruction Staff Support	$21,787,339.47	
General Administration		$3,447,348.67
School Administration	$31,174,851.75	
Business Administration		$3,511,239.03
Central Services		$17,288,467.95
Maintenance & Operations	$27,259,843.70	$6,814,960.93
Transportation Services	$6,809,198.34	$756,577.59
Other Services		$3,145,084.39
Community Services	$1,987,710.29	
TOTAL	**$317,760,988.15**	**$34,963,678.56**



TRANSPORTATION - $7.5 MILLION

While not required by the state, D-11 provides transportation because student safety is our priority.

- **66** YELLOW BUSES
- NEARLY **2,300** STUDENTS TRANSPORTED DAILY
- ON ROUTES COVERING **73** SQUARE MILES

Transportation staff also bus students to athletic, cultural and educational events.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

255
DISTRICT SUPPORT VEHICLES MAINTAINED for Administration, Security, Application, Development, and Support, Facilities and Food Services.

1200
PIECES OF SMALL EQUIPMENT MAINTAINED including lawnmowers, snow removal equipment, weed eaters, tractors, etc.

INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY - $11.5 MILLION

Information and technology dollars are placed within three central service programs; Technology and Support; Application; Development and Support; and Network Operation Services. These programs take on the major task of providing support for students, teachers, schools and management.

TECHNOLOGY HELPS EXPAND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORTING STUDENTS
with the tools they need to learn and grow.

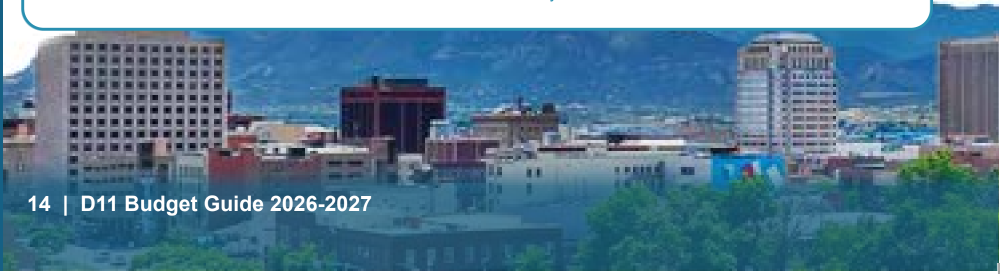
SUPPORTING TEACHERS
with technology integration and professional development.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS
with reliable systems and responsive support.

SUPPORTING DISTRICT OPERATIONS
with efficient, secure and data-informed solutions.

KEEPING SCHOOLS RUNNING EVERY DAY

FACILITIES $28.9M	+	TRANSPORTATION $7.5M	+	TECHNOLOGY $11.5M	=	FOCUSED STUDENT SUCCESS
Safe, clean, well-maintained schools.		Safe, clean, well-maintained schools.		Powering learning today and tomorrow.		



School Safety $5.1 Million

Colorado Springs School District 11 operates one of the state's largest in-house security service forces. Every day, Security Services strives to insure a safe, secure learning environment for almost 69,441 people, students, staff, parents, visitors and volunteers) and protects more than 69 buildings in a 72-square-mile radius from fire, theft, vandalism and graffiti on a 24-hour basis.

For FY26/27 , the service employs 62 staff, of which 56 are security officers and campus supervisors.

Security Services deals with crime in a proactive manner through crime prevention and policy analysis and in a reactive manner with suppression, interdiction, and enforcement programs.

EVERY DAY
69,441
PEOPLE PROTECTED
Students - Staff - Parents - Visitors - Volunteers

62 SECURITY STAFF

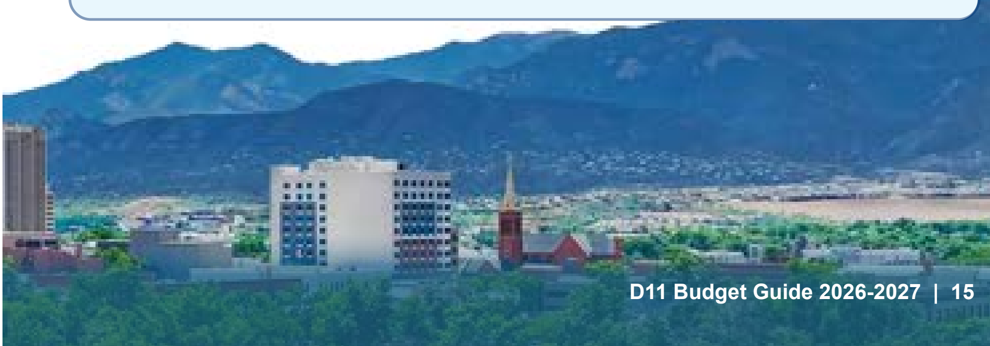
69+ BUILDINGS PROTETED

SAFETY INVESTMENT
$5.1 MILLION
FY 26/27 BUDGET

Protecting District 11 schools from fire, theft, vandalism, and graffiti across a 72 square mile area on a 24 hour basis.

HOW D11 KEEPS SCHOOLS SAFE

CRIME PREVENTION → POLICY ANALYSIS → ENFORCEMENT



Where Do We Get the Money to Improve and Build New Schools?

THE CAPITAL BUDGET

$132.3 MILLION

Up until now, we've talked about the costs of running the day-to-day operation of schools. Another important category of expense is the capital budget. This refers to what is spent on the 69 buildings that make up D-11 's capital assets.

Like any home or office building, the amount that a school district must spend on buildings depends not only on how many they have and how big they are, but also their age.

As buildings grow old, they need new roofs, new heating and air conditioning systems, new plumbing and electrical systems. In addition, schools built over 50 years ago lack many things we now take for granted from our schools, including computer and internet wiring, an environment free from asbestos and fire hazards, and doors and ramps for disabled students and visitors.

KEY TAKEAWAY

70% of D11 school buildings were built before 1969, which means ongoing capital investment is essential to keep schools safe, modern, and ready for future students.

Of D-11's 55 school buildings 39 were built between 1900 and 1969, as you can see in the chart below.

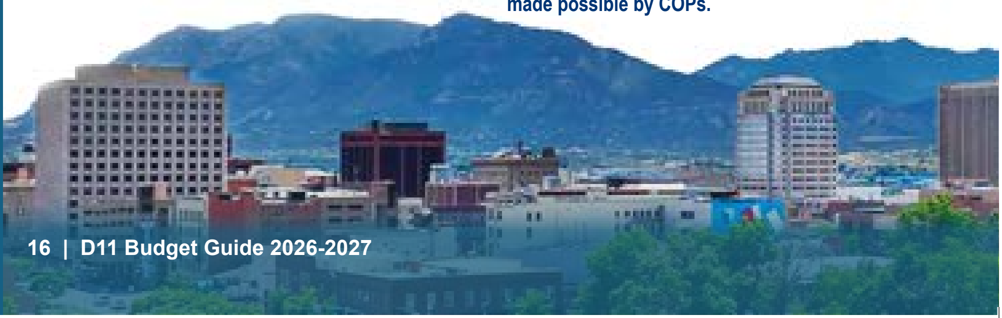
HOW MANY DISTRICT 11 SCHOOLS WERE BUILT EACH DECADE

1900-1969	39 SCHOOLS
1970-PRESENT	16 SCHOOLS

WHY OLDER SCHOOLS NEED INVESTMENT

- New roofs
- Computer & internet wiring
- HVAC Systems
- Accessibility upgrades
- Plumbing upgrades
- Asbestos and fire-safety improvements
- Electrical systems

The capital budget typically operates on 20-30 million a FY. The 132 million budgeted today was made possible by COPs.



What Do School Bonds Pay For?

School bonds help pay for major building and facility improvements.

When voters approve school bonds, District 11 can borrow money to improve schools, upgrade facilities, and build new learning environments.

$132.0 MILLION
VOTER-APPROVED BOND PROGRAM
APPROVED NOVEMBER 2006

$350.0 MILLION
VOTER-REJECTED BOND PROGRAM
FAILED NOVEMBER 2021

Ballot Issue 4B was narowly rejected by 11 votes.

$775.0 MILLION
BOND MEASURE
PENDING NOVEMBER 2026

COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT 11's BOND WEBSITE

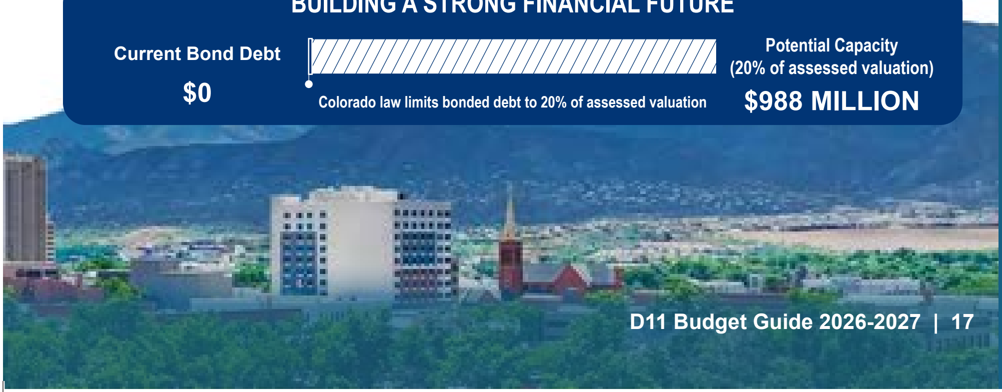
https://www.d11.org/bond/home

BUILDING A STRONG FINANCIAL FUTURE

Current Bond Debt
$0

Colorado law limits bonded debt to 20% of assessed valuation

Potential Capacity
(20% of assessed valuation)
$988 MILLION

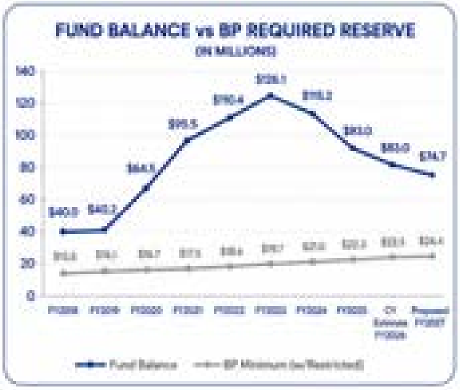


Fund Balance Reserves

The projected reduction in the District's fund balance from a peak of $126.1 million in FY2023 to $74.7 million in FY2027 reflects a deliberate strategy to invest resources directly into students, teachers, and schools rather than accumulate reserves beyond operational needs. During and following the pandemic, the District experienced significant growth in reserves due to strong revenues, federal relief funding, and prudent fiscal management. As those one-time resources became available, the Board intentionally prioritized investments that would have an immediate and lasting impact on student achievement and employee support.

These investments included enhanced teacher and staff compensation, expanded student support services, classroom resources, instructional programs, technology improvements, and school safety initiatives. The District also utilized reserves to help offset inflationary pressures and sustain educational programs during a period of rapidly increasing costs. This approach allowed the District to address critical needs without shifting financial burdens to future students and taxpayers.

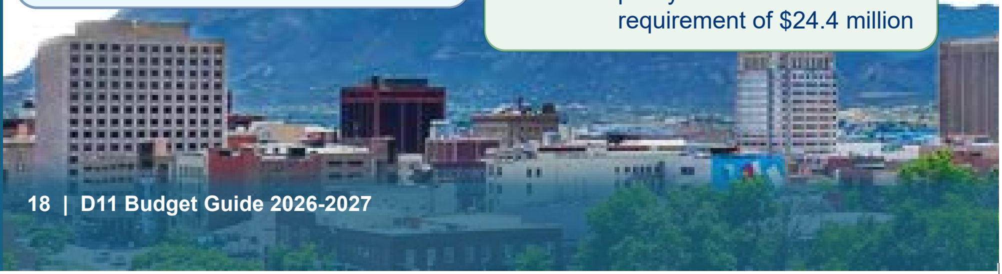
While reserves have declined, the District remains in a strong financial position with a projected fund balance of $74.7 million in FY2027. This balance is approximately $50 million above the Board policy minimum reserve requirement of $24.4 million. Even after these strategic investments, reserves remain more than three times the required minimum level.



The District's financial strategy reflects a balanced approach that combines responsible stewardship with meaningful investment in student success. Rather than allowing one-time resources to sit idle, the District has chosen to put those dollars to work where they can make the greatest difference for classrooms and communities. The result is a stronger educational program today while maintaining sufficient reserves to support long-term fiscal stability and future challenges.

Reserves remain more than three times the required minimum level.

Projected fund balance in FY2027 is $74.7 million, which is approximately $50 million above the Board policy minimum reserve requirement of $24.4 million



Who Decides How We Spend School Funds?

EVERY COMMUNITY MEMBER HAS A VOICE.
Your Participation helps shape the future of District 11 schools.

COMMUNITY
YOU

As citizens, we elect all of these public officials. Your voice matters!

FEDERAL LEVEL

The U.S. Congress and President decide how much federal money to spend on education, how to divide it up among state and districts, and what conditions apply.

STATE LEVEL

The Colorado State Legislature and Governor decide how much state money to spend on schools, how to allocate that money to districts, and what conditions apply.

BOARD LEVEL

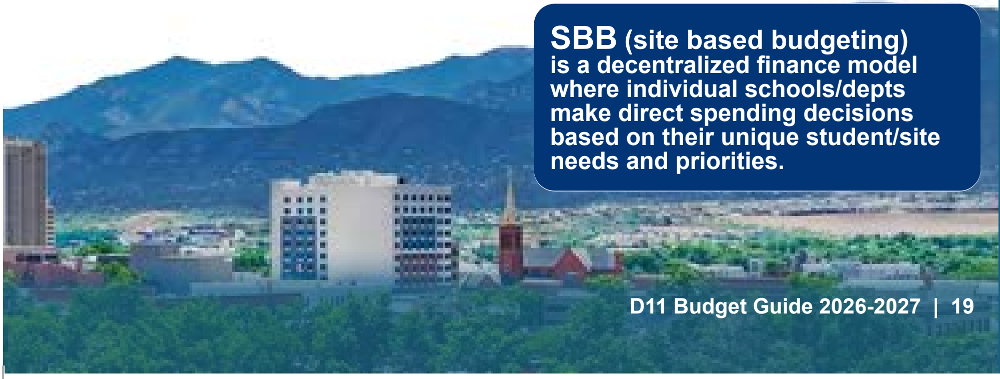
The Board of Education reviews, approves, and adopts the budget forthe upcoming school year and presents it to the public.

DISTRICT LEVEL

The Superintendent and district leadership develop the SBB (Site Based Budgeting) model/ factors that will be used this year.

SCHOOL LEVEL

Principals, staff and school accountability committees (SAC) make their SBB budget decisions at the school/dept level.



SBB (site based budgeting) is a decentralized finance model where individual schools/depts make direct spending decisions based on their unique student/site needs and priorities.

D11

We're Here for You!

Questions about the budget?
We welcome your feedback.

1115 North El Paso Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

(719) 520-2000

www.d11.org/budget