

How much are school districts spending on School-level and District-level administration?

The table below shows data from the Colorado Department of Education’s Financial Transparency website for FY 2020-21 (the most recent data posted). The chart includes the 20 largest school districts in the state. There were 652,456 students, representing 74% of students that were served in the state in the 2020-21 school year (883,199).

The data illustrates that, on average, school districts spend about 10% of per pupil dollars on school-level administration. This includes principals, assistant principals, department chairpersons, and all other individuals who help run school activities, including the clerical staff. The school districts are spending 1%-2% on district-level administrative costs. These costs include activities associated with the general administration or executive responsibility for the entire school district; including cabinet level positions as well as district governance services (i.e. Board of Education).

District Name	Students Served	# of Schools in District	Percent of Per Pupil \$s for School-level Administration	Percent of Per Pupil \$s for District-level Administration	School-Level administration \$ per student	District-level administration \$ per student
Denver County 1	89,081	205	13%	2%	\$1,331	\$159
Jefferson County R-1	80,099	165	12%	1%	\$1,041	\$85
Douglas County Re-1	62,979	90	11%	1%	\$968	\$58
Cherry Creek	54,184	70	6%	5%	\$603	\$129
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	37,907	67	12%	2%	\$1,366	\$284
Adams 12 Five Start Schools	36,654	53	10%	1%	\$969	\$69
St. Vrain Valley	31,312	53	10%	1%	\$898	\$102
Poudre R-1	29,418	52	9%	1%	\$856	\$116
Boulder Valley Re 2	29,239	56	10%	1%	\$1,046	\$155
Academy 20	25,711	40	11%	1%	\$927	\$90
District 49	23,984	31	13%	2%	\$913	\$118
Colorado Springs 11	23,885	56	10%	1%	\$962	\$111
School District 27J	19,203	29	10%	2%	\$759	\$130
Greeley 6	21,903	36	8%	1%	\$715	\$118
Mesa County Valley 51	21,084	47	9%	2%	\$776	\$142
Thompson R2-J	14,965	33	9%	1%	\$851	\$56
Pueblo City 60	15,219	35	9%	2%	\$694	\$148
Littleton 6	14,132	24	8%	2%	\$819	\$153
Harrison 2	11,177	27	11%	2%	\$964	\$176
Pueblo County 70	10,320	26	10%	1%	\$731	\$87
Total	652,456	1,195				
Average	32,623	60	10%	2%	\$909	\$124

According to CDE the school level administration activities are concerned “with the overall administrative responsibility for a school or combination of schools.” CDE summed the expenditure records with a program code within range of 2400-2499. District administration activities are concerned “with the establishing and administering policy for operating the school district.” CDE summed the expenditure records with a program code within the range of 2300- 2399.