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NC School Spending Tool Updated with New Data from 2024-25

1 message

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THIBEST NC's Groundbreaking School Spending Data Explorer Tool Has Been Updated to Include Data from the 2024-25 Academic Year

We are excited to announce the annual update of our [School Spending Data Explorer and Landing Page](#), which includes recently released 2024-25 spending data. This tool was designed to make it easier to understand and explore North Carolina's school-level per pupil expenditure (PPE) data.

This update includes the most recent year of school expenditure data and gives users the ability to examine spending trends over time. These data help educators, school leaders, parents, policymakers, advocates, and other members of the public examine education spending and student outcomes for similar schools based on size, grade level, geography, percent of students with disabilities, poverty, and more.

About the School Spending Data Explorer Tool

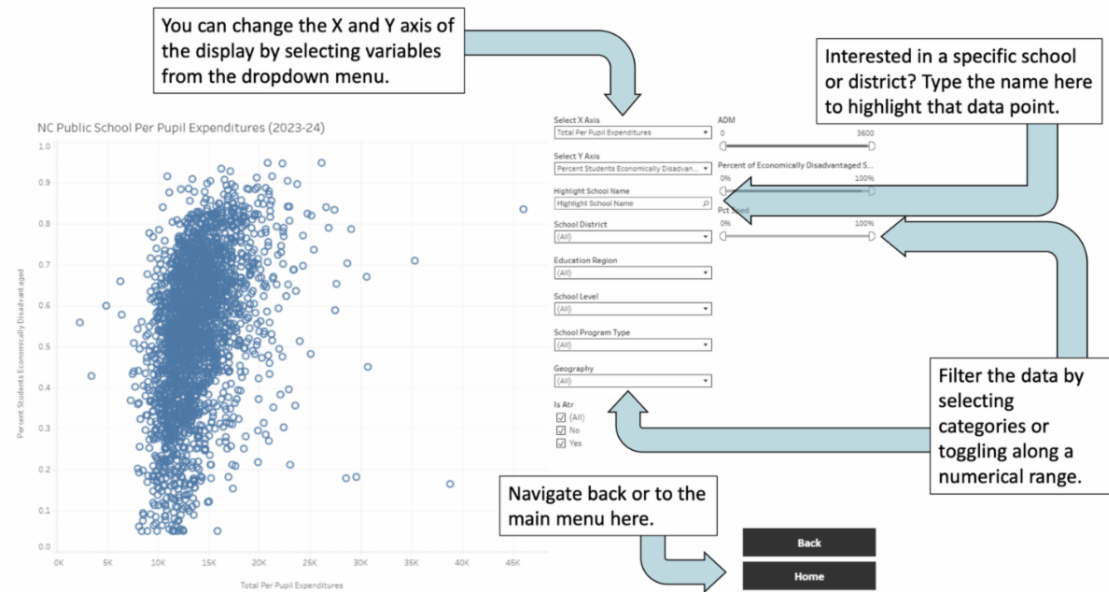
BEST NC's interactive [School Spending Data Explorer](#) enables education stakeholders to explore per-pupil funding trends at the school level, within districts, and across districts throughout North Carolina. There are two major components of the tool: a scatterplot feature that compares spending to other education factors like student achievement and poverty, and a line graph tool that compares spending over time.

Compare Per Pupil Expenditures to Student Characteristics

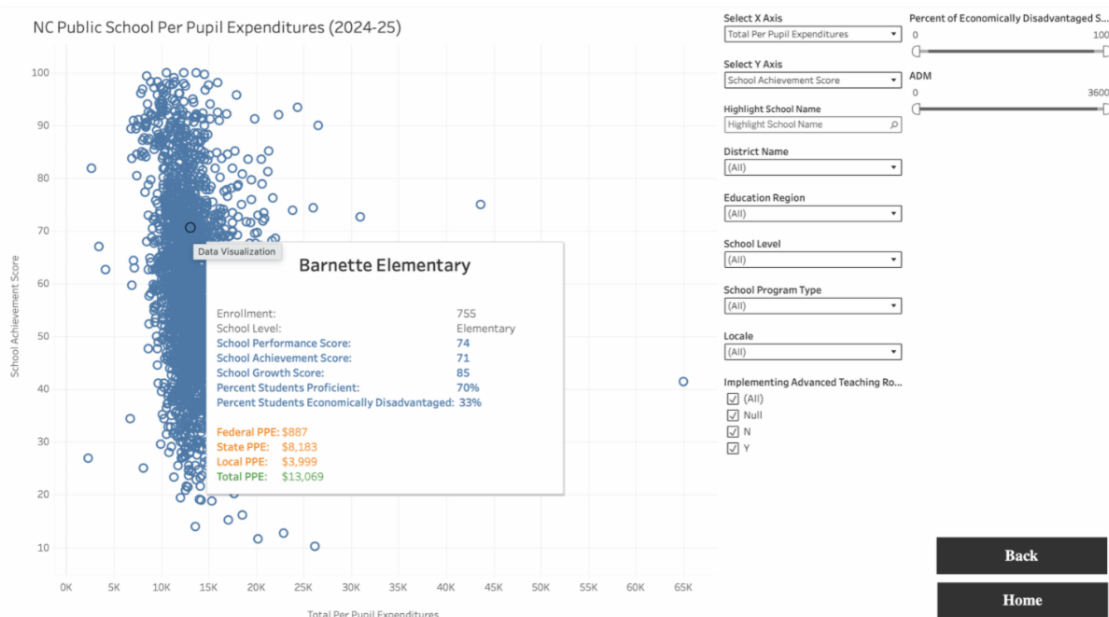
Using the scatterplot tool, educators, school leaders, parents, policymakers, advocates, and members of the public can examine education spending and student outcomes for similar schools based on size, grade level, geography, percent of students with disabilities, poverty, and more.

By comparing schools with similar characteristics, school leaders and other education stakeholders can identify schools with strong student performance at varying levels of funding and/or relative to the characteristics of their student body. Promising or innovative practices from these schools might then be examined to help improve teaching and learning in similar schools.

For example, users can narrow the analysis to include all elementary schools above a given threshold of economically disadvantaged students and then examine schools with strong student growth numbers and modest per pupil expenditures.

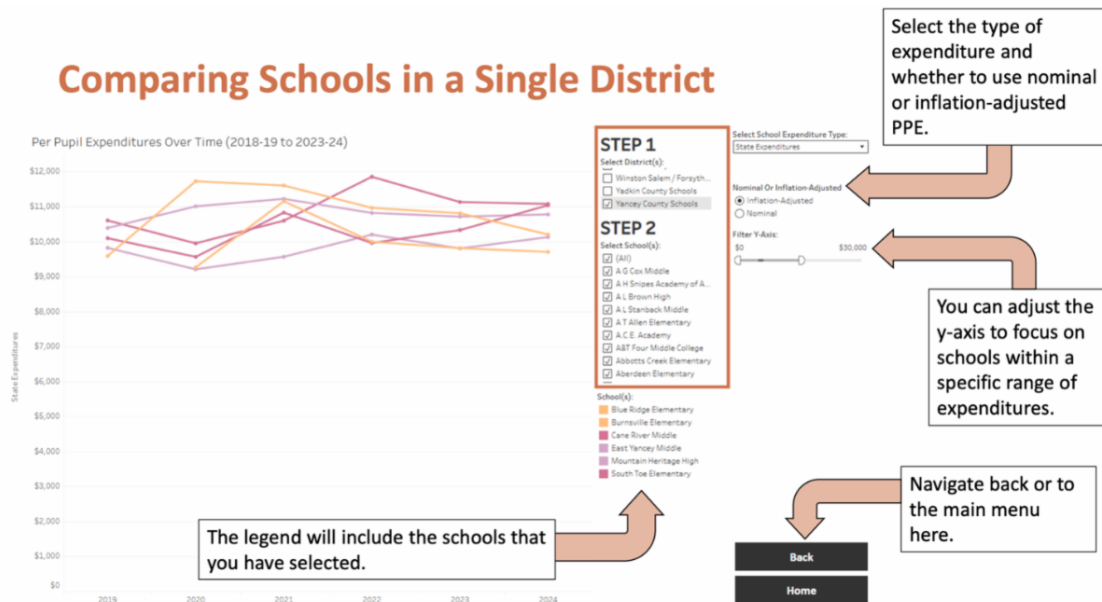


Users can hover over any school to see its data.



Compare Per Pupil Expenditures Over Time

The [School Spending Data Explorer](#) includes a line graph feature that allows users to see spending trends over time (2018-19 to 2024-25). This feature of the School Spending Data Explorer allows stakeholders to track federal, state, and local school expenditures for their local school or district and gauge the impact of school spending across the state.



All the analyses in the following sections of this *Catalyst* are derived from the data found in the online tool.

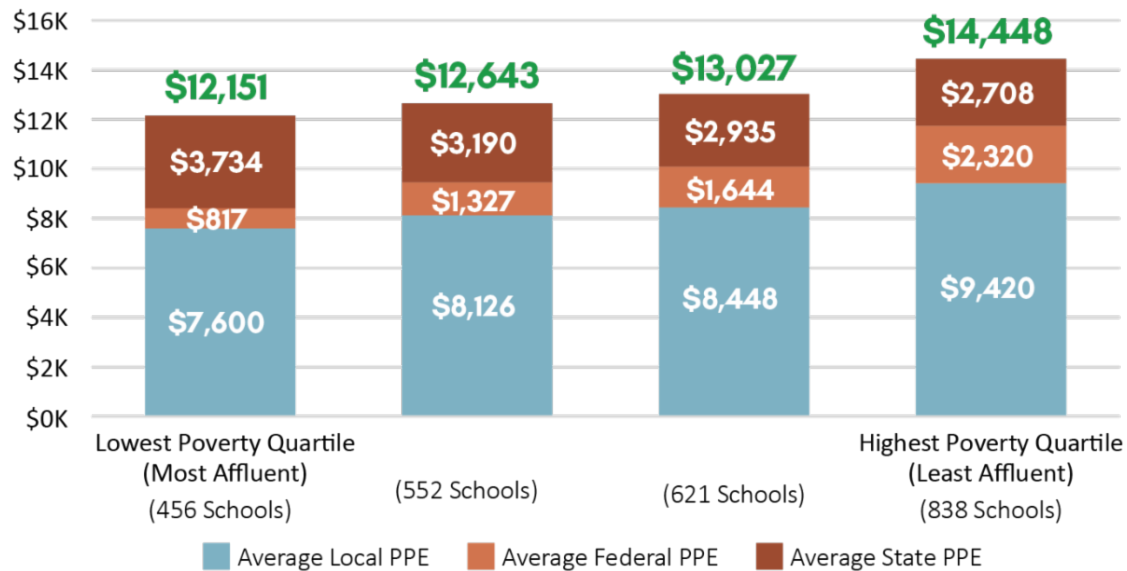
Key Findings from the Updated Data

With the release of school-level expenditure data, and with the help of BEST NC's Spending Data Explorer, education stakeholders can explore trends in education spending at the school level, instead of being limited to district-level metrics. Several insights are highlighted on the [Spending Data Explorer landing page](#). An example of these findings is included below.

Expenditures Increase at Higher Levels of Student Poverty

On average, total per pupil expenditures in North Carolina are substantially higher in schools that serve higher poverty communities. In 2024-25, about \$2,300 more was spent per pupil in schools in the highest-poverty quartile, as compared with schools in the lowest-poverty quartile (equivalent to 18% more in the highest-poverty quartile). In a school with 500 students, this equates to around \$1.5 million in additional resources (this analysis is not intended to address the degree to which North Carolina has funding adequacy).

Median per Pupil Expenditures in K-12 Public Schools, by Source and School Poverty Quartile (2024-25)



When expenditures are broken down by funding stream, schools with more economically disadvantaged students receive more federal and state funds. Schools with more affluent students generally receive more funding from local sources. These patterns track with [national trends](#) showing that state and federal funding are higher in higher-poverty schools. Local funding is lower in higher-poverty schools, as they tend to have a lower tax base.

Where Can I Learn More?

The Spending Data Explorer is an important tool for education stakeholders to examine trends in student performance and education finance and shed light on which schools are outperforming their peers. Below are some other resources focused on student learning and school funding in North Carolina.

- BEST NC: [Facts & Figures](#)
- [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: School Report Cards](#)
- Education Commission of the States: [50-State Comparison of K-12 Education Funding](#)
- [North Carolina General Assembly Fiscal Research Division: 2025 Budget & Fiscal Highlights](#)



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