

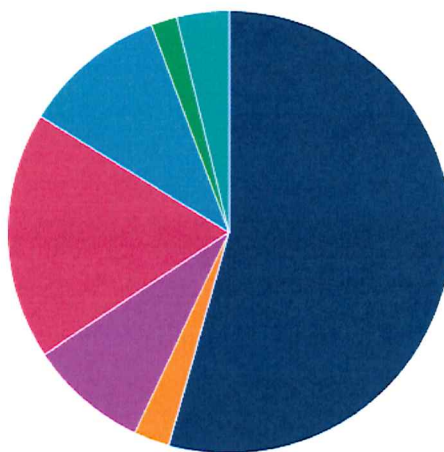
# School district spending analysis—Fiscal year 2021

## Santa Cruz Elementary School District

### District demographic information ▾

County:	Santa Cruz	Students attending:	177
<a href="#">Peer group:</a>	Operational 12	Size:	Very small
Legislative district(s):	2	5-year change in students attending:	17% decrease
Location:	Rural	Special education population:	7%
Number of schools:	1	English learner population:	20%
Graduation rate (2020):	N/A	Poverty rate (2020):	17%

### District's spending by operational area



**Classroom spending, 65.7%**  
 Instruction, 54.4%  
 Student support, 2.6%  
 Instruction support, 8.7%

**Nonclassroom spending, 34.3%**  
 Administration, 18.1%  
 Plant operations, 10.5%  
 Food service, 1.9%  
 Transportation, 3.8%

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 Santa Cruz Elementary School District spent its funding by operational area, including the percentage it spent in the classroom and specifically on instruction.

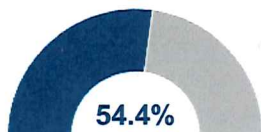
We categorize districts with certain similar qualities into [peer groups](#) in order to help create meaningful comparisons across districts. Santa Cruz Elementary School District's peer group had an average instructional spending percentage of 50.2%. This number can help provide context for Santa Cruz Elementary School District's own instructional spending percentage.

We have monitored instructional spending since fiscal year 2001. Below are highlights from Santa Cruz Elementary 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.

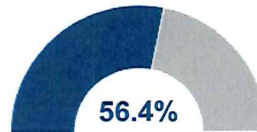
### Instructional spending percentage highlights (2001-2021)

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)



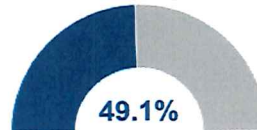
Prior fiscal year (2020)



Highest fiscal year (2005)



Lowest fiscal year (2016)



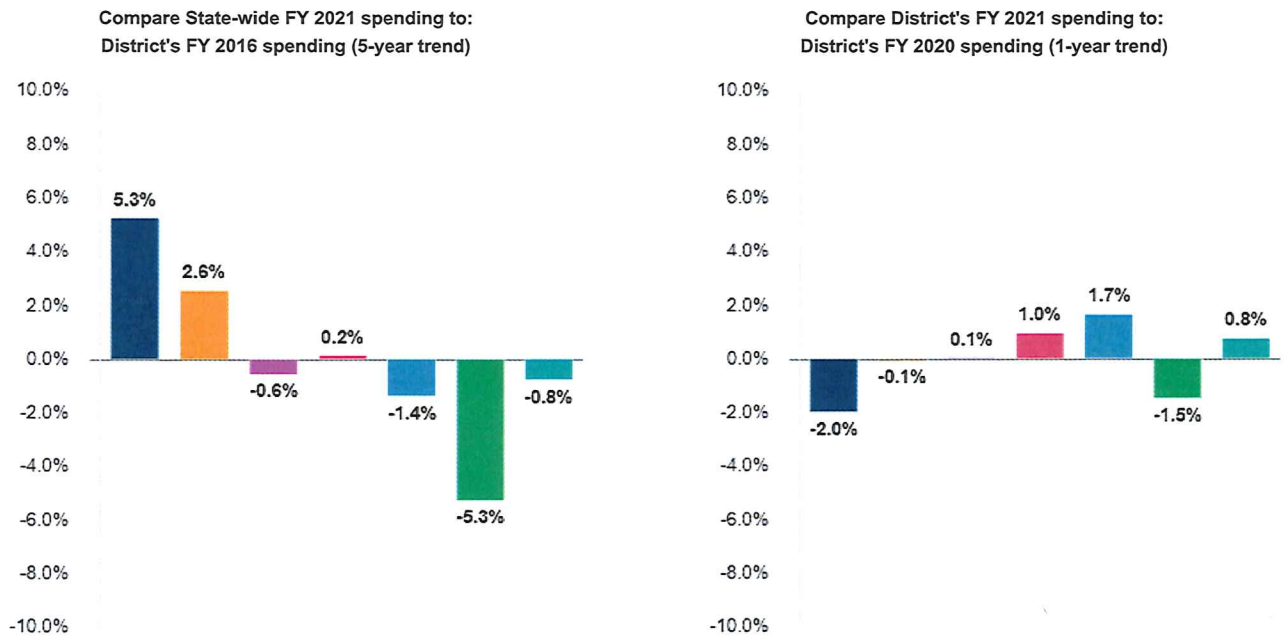
## Why monitor school district spending?

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 Santa Cruz Elementary 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



**Change in classroom spending, 7.3%**

Instruction, 5.3%  
 Student support, 2.6%  
 Instruction support, -0.6%

**Change in nonclassroom spending, -7.3%**

Administration, 0.2%  
 Plant operations, -1.4%  
 Food service, -5.3%  
 Transportation, -0.8%

**Change in classroom spending, -2.0%**

Instruction, -2.0%  
 Student support, -0.1%  
 Instruction support, 0.1%

**Change in nonclassroom spending, 2.0%**

Administration, 1.0%  
 Plant operations, 1.7%  
 Food service, -1.5%  
 Transportation, 0.8%

## Per pupil spending by area

Area	District FY 2020	Peer average FY 2021	State-wide FY 2021	District FY 2021
<b>Classroom spending</b>				
Instruction	\$6,718	\$9,782	\$5,521	\$7,438
Student support	\$317	\$902	\$905	\$357
Instruction support	\$1,023	\$528	\$576	\$1,194
<b>Nonclassroom spending</b>				
Administration	\$2,034	\$3,907	\$1,041	\$2,482
Plant operations	\$1,050	\$2,877	\$1,168	\$1,442
Food service	\$412	\$1,014	\$396	\$255
Transportation	\$356	\$829	\$369	\$515
<b>Total operational</b>	<b>\$11,910</b>	<b>\$19,839</b>	<b>\$9,976</b>	<b>\$13,683</b>
Land and buildings	\$77	\$1,870	\$1,175	\$19
Equipment	\$1,794	\$1,377	\$722	\$756
Interest	\$0	\$35	\$303	\$0
Other	\$0	\$57	\$155	\$0
<b>Total nonoperational</b>	<b>\$1,871</b>	<b>\$3,339</b>	<b>\$2,355</b>	<b>\$775</b>
<b>Total per pupil spending</b>	<b>\$13,781</b>	<b>\$23,178</b>	<b>\$12,331</b>	<b>\$14,458</b>

## 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 <sup>1</sup>	District	District spending relative to the peer average
Administration	Spending per pupil	\$1,041	\$3,907	\$2,482	N/A
	Students per administrative position	63	29	50	N/A
Plant operations	Spending per square foot	\$6.84	\$8.23	\$9.88	N/A
	Square footage per student	171 ft <sup>2</sup>	375 ft <sup>2</sup>	146 ft <sup>2</sup>	N/A
Food service	Spending per meal	\$3.54	\$7.12	\$4.08	N/A
	Meals per student	113	177	63	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.

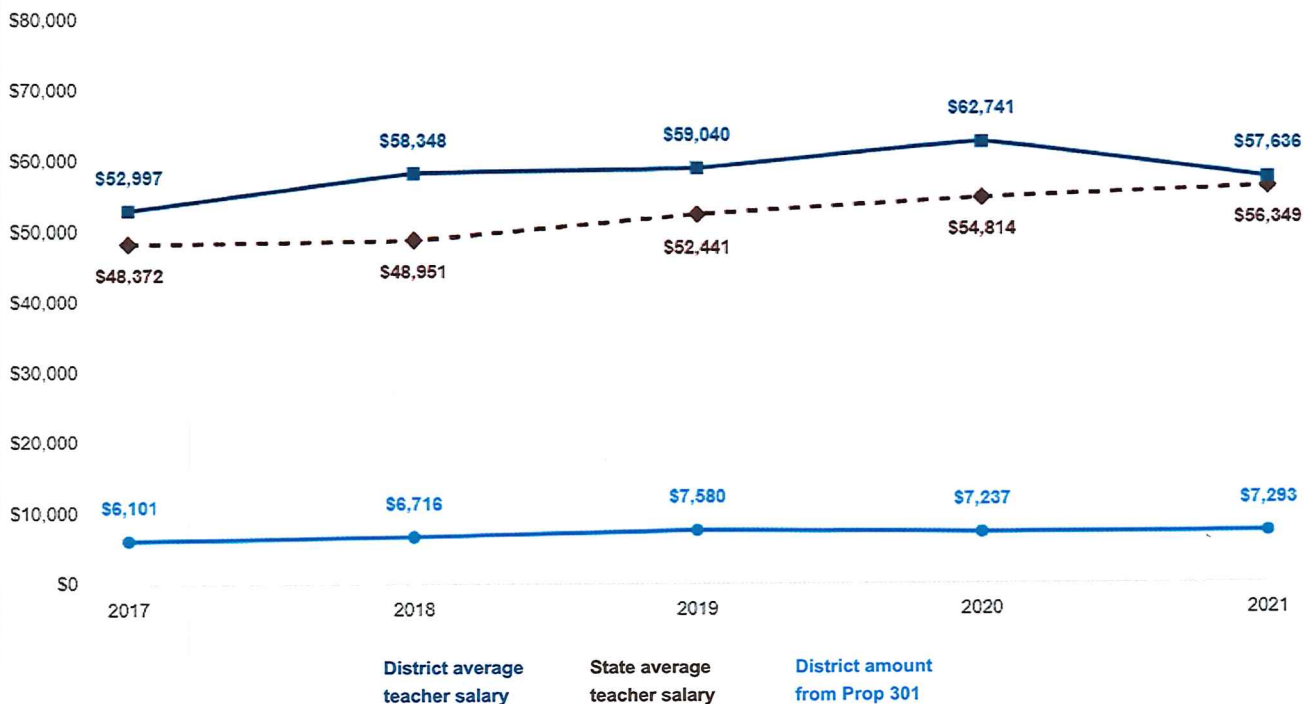
Operational area	Measure	State average	Peer average	District	District spending relative to the peer average
Transportation	Spending per mile	\$7.22	N/A	\$4.46	N/A
	Spending per rider	\$2,862	N/A	\$1,719	N/A

## 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 Santa Cruz Elementary 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 Santa Cruz Elementary School District's average teacher salary may have changed. For instance, changes in a district's [teacher population](#)<sup>1</sup> can impact the district's average teacher salary.

## Average teacher salary and other measures



Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<a href="#">Students per teacher</a> <sup>o</sup>	16.5	15.8	13.4	14.6	12.6
Average years of teacher experience	13.5	14.5	15.9	17.8	17.0
Percentage of teachers in first 3 years	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%