
K-12 Funding Still Below Pre-Recession Levels in Most States

At least 30 states are spending less per K-12 student — often far less — than before the Great Recession hit seven years ago, a new CBPP report finds. The cuts undermine education reform and hinder schools' ability to deliver high-quality education, harming the nation's economic competitiveness over the long term.

“At a time when the nation is trying to produce workers with the skills to master new technologies and adapt to the complexities of a global economy, states should be investing more — not less — to ensure that our kids get a strong education,” said Michael Leachman, CBPP's director of state fiscal research and co-author of the report.

Fourteen of the 30 states have cut per-student funding by more than 10 percent since fiscal year 2008, after adjusting for inflation. Four states — Oklahoma, Alabama, Arizona, and Idaho — have cut funding by more than 15 percent. (See graph.) The report focuses on funding distributed through general aid formulas, the primary form of state aid to local schools.

While most states have raised per-student funding this school year, the increases generally haven't been large enough to offset prior cuts, the report explains.

Funding cuts undermine schools' efforts to implement proven reforms to better educate students, such as reducing class sizes, improving teacher quality, and increasing learning time. Many schools have had to move in the wrong direction — with, for example, classrooms growing *more* crowded in many places.

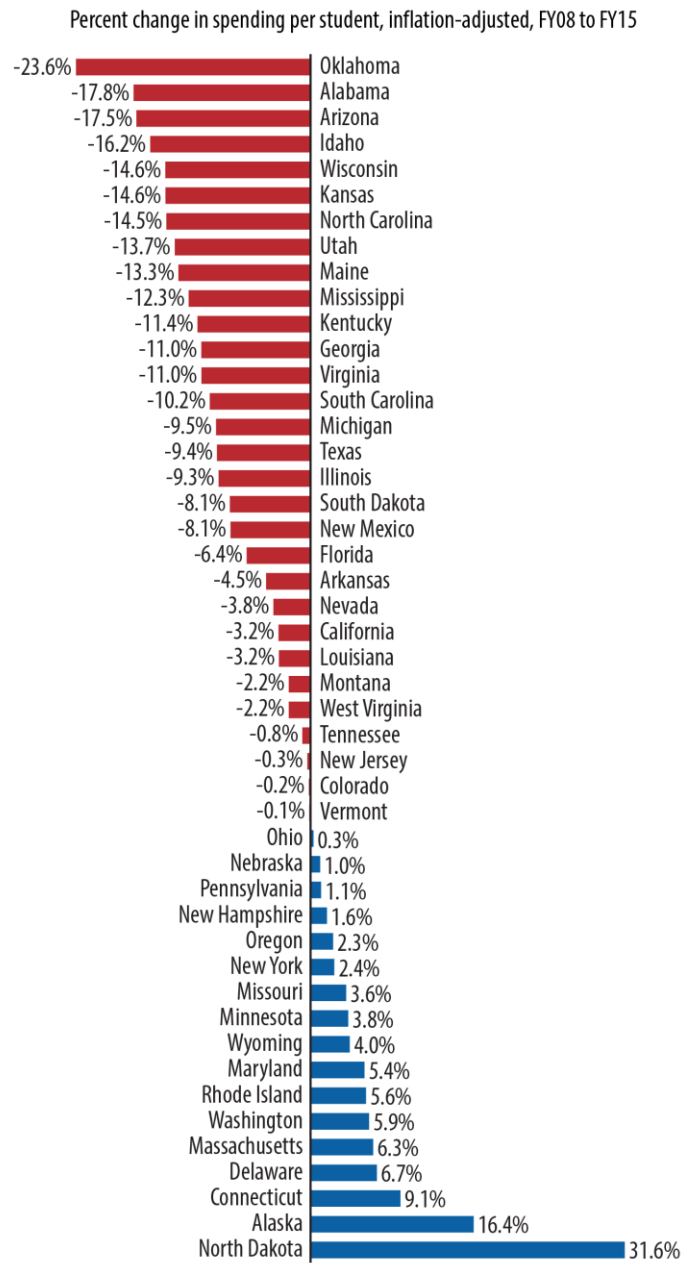
Reducing investment in schools also has long-term economic consequences. The jobs of the future will increasingly require high-level technical and analytical skills. Helping children develop those skills is key to competing successfully in the global economy.

The report, “Most States Still Funding Schools Less Than Before the Recession,” is available at <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=4213>.

#

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization and policy institute that conducts research and analysis on a range of government policies and programs. It is supported primarily by foundation grants.

Figure 1
Per-Student Spending Remains More Than 10% Lower Than 2008 in 14 States



Note: Hawaii, Indiana, and Iowa are excluded because the necessary data to make a valid comparison are not available.

Sources: CBPP budget analysis and National Center for Education Statistics enrollment estimates.