

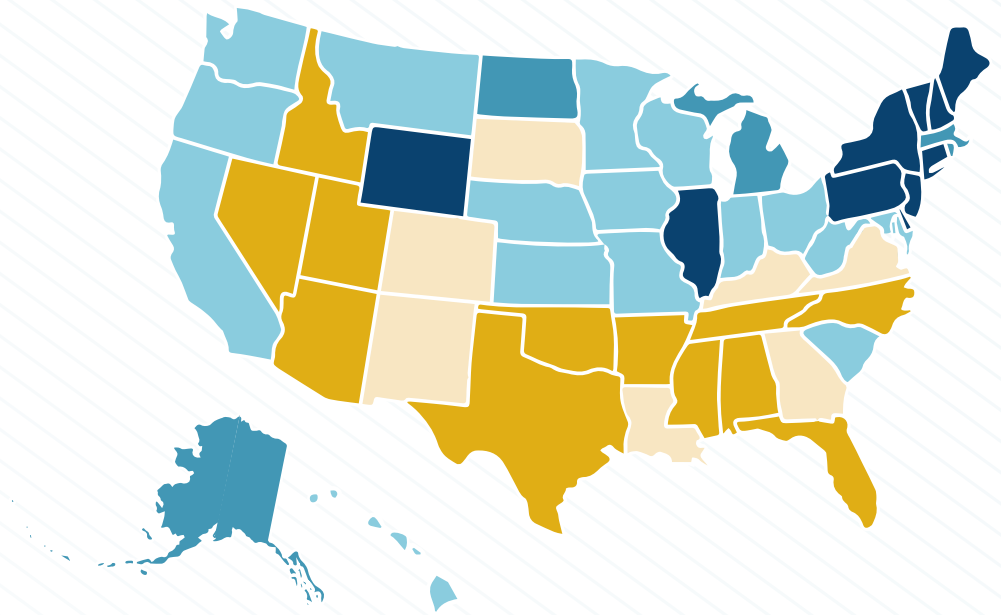
Making the Grade 2021

How Fair Is School Funding in Your State?

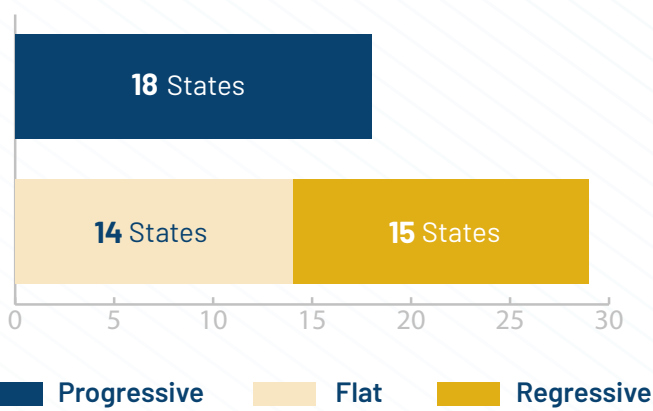
Making the Grade analyzes the condition of public school funding in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Using the most recently available data from the 2018-19 school year, we rank and grade each state on three measures: funding level, distribution, and effort.

Funding Level

The U.S. has vast school funding disparities among states. There is a \$17,000 per student difference between the highest (Vermont) and lowest (Arizona) funded states. Even after adjusting for regional cost differences, states in the South and West have markedly lower funding levels than states in the Northeast and Midwest.



Funding Distribution



The hallmark of a fair school funding system is that it delivers more funding to educate students in high-poverty districts. States allocating more funds to high-poverty districts have a "progressive" distribution. States that do not provide more for poor districts are either "flat" or "regressive."

Funding Effort

Effort is measured by the percentage of the state's gross domestic product (GDP) allocated to support the PK-12 school system. Below-average effort states could raise thousands of dollars more per student just by raising the effort index to the national average.

By raising their funding effort to the national average, North Carolina, Arizona, Nevada, Florida, and Tennessee could all increase funding by more than

\$3,000
per student.

Why Does Fair School Funding Matter?

A fair, equitable and adequate school funding formula is the basic building block of a well-resourced and academically successful school system for all students. The research on the needs of vulnerable student populations for extra academic and academically-related programs and services is compelling, as is the growing evidence that increasing investments in these students improves their achievement and other outcomes.