

Funded: California Report

A Detailed Look at California's Funding Policies



California



Funding Basics

Formula Type

California has a primarily student-based funding formula. It assigns a cost to the education of a student with no special needs or services, called a base amount. It then accounts for the additional cost of educating specific categories of students chiefly by applying multipliers to that amount to generate supplemental funding for those students.

The categories of students generating supplemental funding in California are students in certain grade levels; low-income students, with additional funding support for those in districts serving high concentrations of such students; migrant, homeless, and foster youth; English language learners; and students enrolled in certain necessary small schools.

Base Amount

California has per-student base funding amounts that differ by grade level. For FY2015, the amounts ranged from \$7,011 to \$8,491.

These base amounts correspond with specific grade spans even before other weights are applied, including a second layer of additional weighted funding for certain grade levels.

Expected Local Share

California expects school districts to contribute a minimal amount of revenue to the funding of public schools. The amount each district is expected to raise is based on that district's school funding history.

Each locality collects property tax at a rate of 1%. Revenue from this tax is pooled at the county level and distributed to local agencies, including school districts. Local funding for school districts is comprised of a portion of the county's 1% property tax. The precise amount varies from district to district based on guidelines set by AB8, a 1979 statute.

Student Characteristics

Grade Level

California provides different amounts of funding for students in different grade levels in two different ways. First, the state assigns different per-student base funding amounts to three different grade spans (K-3, 4-6, and 9-12). Then, it applies additional multipliers to these base amounts for students in two different grade spans (K-3 and 9-12).

For FY15, students in grades K-3 had a base funding amount of \$7,011. Students in grades 4-6 had a base funding amount of \$7,116. Students in grades 7-8 had a base funding amount of \$7,328. Students in grades 9-12 had a base funding amount of \$8,491. The additional multipliers applied were 1.104 for students in grades K-3 and 1.026 for students in grades 9-12.

English Language Learner

California provides increased funding for English language learners (ELLs). It does so by applying a multiplier of 1.2 to the base per-pupil amount for these students.

This multiplier is applied to a base per-pupil amount specific to the student's grade span (K-3, 4-6, or 9-12).

Student Poverty

California provides increased funding for students from low-income households. It does so by applying a multiplier of 1.2 to the base per-pupil amount for these students.

This multiplier is applied to a base per-pupil amount specific to the student's grade span (K-3, 4-6, or 9-12). Students are eligible for this supplemental funding if they qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch (FRL) under the National School Lunch Program, are migrants, are homeless, are in foster care, participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or are directly certified as eligible for free meals because they appear in state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, known locally as CalFresh) or county welfare (CalWORKS) records.

Special Education

California funds special education using a census-based system, assuming that a set percentage of students in each district will require special education services and using each district's full enrollment count to determine the amount of special education funding required.

More than three-quarters of state special education funds are allocated based on the total enrollment of each Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), which are regional conglomerations of districts. Each SELPA has a unique per-pupil special education funding rate consisting of both state and federal funds, based primarily on what the SELPA received before the current funding system was adopted. The SELPA develops a local plan for how to allocate funds among the districts in its region.

Gifted

California does not provide additional resources for gifted and talented students.

Career and Technical Education

California does not provide specific funding for career and technical education programs.

However, the state provides funding at a level higher than the per-student base amount for all high school students. This funding is intended to cover the cost of career and technical education programs. (See "Grade Level" for a description of this adjustment.)



District Poverty

California provides increased funding to certain districts based on the concentrations of students from low-income households that they serve. It does so by providing a grant in the amount of 50% of the per-student base amount for each disadvantaged student served in the district above an enrollment threshold of 55%.

For the purposes of this allocation, a disadvantaged student is one who is either low-income or an English language learner. (Students meeting both criteria generate this supplemental funding allocation only once.) Students are considered to be low-income if they qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch (FRL) under the National School Lunch Program, are migrants, are homeless, are in foster care, participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or are directly certified as eligible for free meals because they appear in the state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, known locally as CalFresh) or county welfare (CalWORKS) records.

Sparsity and/or Small Size

California provides increased funding for small schools. It does so in the form of a supplementary payment to eligible schools, the amount of which varies depending on the district's enrollment and its number of teachers or certificated employees.

"Necessary small schools" are identified based on a combination of factors, including total student enrollment, grade levels served, the number of students that would have to travel a certain number of miles to the nearest public school, and any conditions that might make travel difficult.

For a complete list of primary sources, please see the appropriate state page at funded.edbuild.org

