

INDEPENDENCE INSTITUTE ISSUE BACKGROUND

AMENDMENT 66: SPEND MORE, GET LESS

BY LINDA GORMAN • IB-H-2013 • OCTOBER 2013

More spending does not create better schools. Many well-funded districts have lower graduation rates. Colorado Springs spent \$1,500 less than Denver. It graduated 76 percent of its students, while Denver only graduated 46 percent. If passing Amendment 66 lets Denver spend \$4,000 more, it might end up matching Indianapolis's 30 percent graduation rate.

Low Graduation Rates Common in Well-Funded City School Districts

The principal school district for each of the 50 largest cities in the U.S., ranked by per-student expenditures.

CITY	CITY POPULATION	PRINCIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	PER-STUDENT EXPENDITURES (2005 DOLLARS)	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE IN 2003-04
Boston, MA	590,763	Boston	\$16,879	57.0
New York, NY	8,214,426	New York City	15,455	45.2
Washington, DC	581,530	District of Columbia	15,411	58.2
Indianapolis, IN	785,597	Indianapolis	14,428	30.5
Minneapolis, MN	372,833	Minneapolis	14,355	43.7
Atlanta, GA	486,411	Atlanta City	14,011	46.0
Detroit, MI	871,121	Detroit City	13,529	24.9
Portland, OR	537,081	Portland	13,522	53.6
Philadelphia, PA	1,448,394	Philadelphia City	13,498	49.6
Milwaukee, WI	573,358	Milwaukee	12,789	46.1
Cleveland, OH	444,313	Cleveland Municipal City	12,157	34.1
Los Angeles, CA	3,849,378	Los Angeles Unified	11,647	45.3
Dallas, TX	1,232,940	Dallas Intermediate	11,604	44.4
San Jose, CA	929,936	San Jose Unified	11,473	77.0
Seattle, WA	582,454	Seattle	11,445	67.6
Denver, CO	566,974	Denver County	10,905	46.3
San Diego, CA	1,256,951	San Diego Unified	10,805	61.6
Sacramento, CA	453,781	Sacramento City Unified	10,783	66.7
Oakland, CA	397,067	Oakland Unified	10,756	45.6
Baltimore, MD	631,366	Baltimore City	10,707	34.6
San Antonio, TX	1,296,682	San Antonio Intermediate	10,460	51.9
Austin, TX	709,893	Austin Intermediate	10,400	58.2
Chicago, IL	2,833,322	City of Chicago	10,181	51.5
San Francisco, CA	744,041	San Francisco Unified	9,844	73.1
Columbus, OH	733,203	Columbus	9,762	40.9
Phoenix, AZ	1,512,986	Phoenix Union	9,578	58.3
Honolulu, HI	377,357	Hawaii	9,429	64.1
Virginia Beach, VA	435,619	Virginia Beach City	9,396	67.4
Fresno, CA	466,714	Fresno Unified	9,330	57.4
Miami, FL	404,048	Dade County	9,322	49.0
Nashville-Davidson Co., TN	552,120	Nashville-Davidson Co.	9,160	77.0
Louisville-Jefferson Co., KY	554,496	Jefferson County	9,069	63.7
Colorado Springs, CO	372,437	Colorado Springs	9,011	76.0
Charlotte, NC	630,478	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	8,911	59.8
Houston, TX	2,144,491	Houston Intermediate	8,849	54.6
Omaha, NE	419,545	Omaha	8,828	55.1
Las Vegas, NV	552,539	Clark County	8,817	53.1
Long Beach, CA	472,494	Long Beach Unified	8,561	63.5
Wichita, KS	357,698	Wichita	8,554	59.6
Kansas City, MO	447,306	Kansas City	8,402	45.7
El Paso, TX	609,415	El Paso Intermediate	8,374	60.5
Albuquerque, NM	504,949	Albuquerque	8,242	60.8
Tulsa, OK	382,872	Tulsa	8,223	50.6
Memphis, TN	670,902	Memphis City	8,055	61.7
Tucson, AZ	518,956	Tucson Unified	7,941	71.7
Fort Worth, TX	653,320	Fort Worth Intermediate	7,863	55.5
Jacksonville, FL	794,555	Duval County	7,793	50.2
Arlington, TX	367,197	Arlington, Intermediate	7,304	62.7
Oklahoma City, OK	537,734	Oklahoma City	6,860	47.5
Mesa, AZ	447,541	Mesa Unified	6,558	77.1

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, District Information, at <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch> (August 19, 2008), and Christopher B. Swanson, "Cities in Crisis: A Special Analytic Report on High School Graduation." Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, April 1, 2008 at <http://www.edweek.org/media/citiesin crisis040108.pdf> (August 19, 2008). Chart courtesy of Heritage.org.

↑ 50% Graduation Rate