

Fast Facts: School Funding in Mississippi

\$8,130 – Mississippi's average per-pupil education expenditure in 2013. Massachusetts, often ranked as the highest achieving state, spent \$14,515 per pupil.¹

71% – percentage of Mississippi students living in low-income households, according to eligibility for the federal free and reduced lunch program – the highest in the nation.²

up to 200% more – amount of additional resources required to level the playing field and provide opportunities for success for children in poverty, according to research.

50th overall – ranking from Forbes' Best States for Business. Mississippi is 18th in cost of doing business but last overall due to **poor rankings related to education** of the workforce and quality of life.

The Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) provides the bulk of state funding for public schools and is intended to pay for **basic operating expenses** like teachers, technology, books, transportation and building maintenance.

FY2008 – the last year MAEP was fully funded. K-12 funding has yet to be restored to pre-recession levels when the teacher pay raise of FY15/FY16 is taken into account.

Schools have less buying power today than they did eight years ago.

2,000 – Number of teachers, teacher assistants, and support personnel laid off from Mississippi public schools since 2008. Meanwhile, **80%** of local communities have raised property taxes to make up for state funding shortfalls.³

2.47% – Increase in state education funding since 2008. Cumulative inflation during the same period was 15%. Meanwhile, the rest of the state budget grew by **47.64%**.⁴

K-12's portion of the state budget is shrinking. When all state taxes and fees are considered, K-12 education makes up 21% of the FY2016 state budget. In FY2008, education made up 28% of the state budget.⁵

To improve education in our state, all Mississippi children need rigorous and rich course offerings, well-trained teachers, reasonable class sizes, sufficient books and technology, and safe buildings and buses. **Providing an adequate education requires adequate funding.**

"Across our state, class sizes are steadily climbing because of inadequate funding..."

– Gearl Loden, Tupelo Public School superintendent, *Daily Journal*, October 15, 2015

"The number of students in classrooms is too large because school districts cannot afford enough teachers. Children are riding in our county and city in 20-year-old buses. School building roofs are leaking and textbooks are scarce and way out of date. Conditions like this are common and unacceptable."

- Lisa Kennedy Perkins, Philadelphia parent, *Clarion-Ledger*, October 15, 2015

"I live in one of the top school districts in the state...but underfunding hurts even the most successful districts. Books aren't always available for all students and over 10 years, elementary class sizes increased by 30 percent."

- Jan Richardson, Ridgeland parent, *Clarion-Ledger*, September 26, 2015

"There are real technological needs in almost every school or district and they are profound. There are classrooms in which 30 students are crammed together because more teachers are needed. There are also numerous serious infrastructure upgrades or new buildings that need to be constructed."

- Ben Alexander, principal of West Lauderdale Middle School, *Meridian Star*, August 23, 2015

"As a PTO and classroom volunteer, I witness our best Mississippi schools struggling because tools (computers, books, furniture, supplies, etc.) needed to best educate our children are in short supply. The funding void is too wide to be filled by PTOs."

- Jacquie Lipski, Long Beach parent, *Sun Herald*, October 29, 2015

1 U.S. Census Public Education Finances: local, state and federal dollars included

2 Mississippi Department of Education, 2012-2013 school year

3 In Mississippi, education money gap grows to \$1.5B, *Clarion-Ledger*, December 14, 2014

4 <http://www.tpcref.org/policy-issues/school-funding/school-funding-and-state-budget-fy2016/>

5 http://www.tpcref.org/wp-content/uploads/State_Budget_Comparison_FY08-FY16.pdf