

March 2022 update

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How much does Alaska spend on K-12 education?

In 2019, ISER analyzed Alaska's per-pupil spending compared to that of other U.S. states, using 2017 figures. In this update, we use the same methods to contextualize Alaska's 2019 spending.

Alaska still ranks 6th highest in nominal per-pupil spending among states. However, the 2019 figures show that per-pupil spending in raw dollars was 39% higher than the U.S. average, compared to 46% higher in 2017. After adjusting for Alaska's higher living costs, and accounting for differing per-pupil spending costs across the state, the figures show that Alaska's 2019 per student spending was only 93% of the national average, compared to 98% in 2017 (see table below).

These figures show that while Alaska increased spending on K-12 education between 2017 and 2019, other states increased their investments even more.

Alaska's 2017 and 2019 per-pupil spending, adjusted to state and national indices

	2017			2019		
	RAW DOLLARS	DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL AVERAGE		RAW DOLLARS	DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL AVERAGE	
		\$	%		\$	%
ALASKA'S AVERAGE PER-PUPIL SPENDING	17,838	+5,637	+46	18,394	+5,206	+39
ADJUSTED TO ANCHORAGE*	14,853	+2,652	+22	15,290	+2,103	+16
NATIONAL AVERAGE	12,201			13,187		
ADJUSTED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE	11,997	-204	-2	12,281	-906	-7



2017

ADJUSTED PER-PUPIL SPENDING*

98%

of the national average

2019

ADJUSTED PER-PUPIL SPENDING*

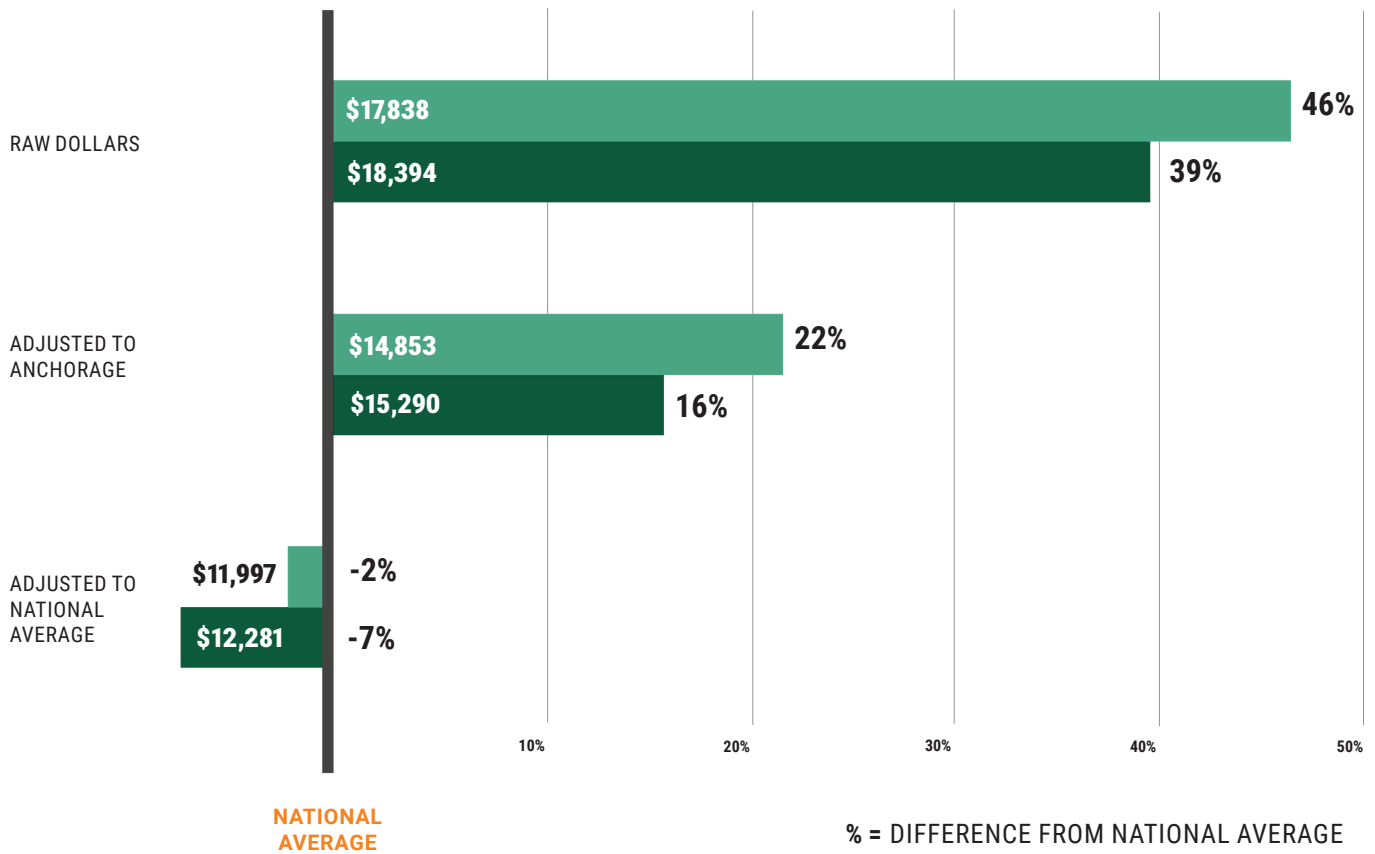
93%

of the national average

* Within Alaska, costs differ significantly between communities, so the first step of our analysis adjusts Alaska's education spending using the School Foundation Formula to calculate an Anchorage-adjusted average per-pupil spending. Anchorage's cost of living is higher than most other communities in the US, so we also apply the most widely used cost of living index (COLI), published by the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER), formerly American Council for Community and Economic Research (ACCRA), to our statewide calculations.

ALASKA'S AVERAGE PER-PUPIL SPENDING

2017
2019



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Matthew has been on ISER's faculty since 1981. His research includes studies of economic organization, political economy, and social change, especially in Alaska and Arctic communities. A current focus of his research is measuring indicators of community adaptive capacity, well-being, and resilience. His recent publications examine, among other things, the effects of universal basic income. He teaches UAA economics and interdisciplinary social science courses.

DAYNA JEAN DEFEQ, *Research Assistant Professor and Director, CAEPR*

Dayna has worked at ISER's Center for Alaska Education Policy Research since 2014 and became the director in 2017. Her current research interests include college and postsecondary transitions, particularly in the career and technical fields and for underrepresented populations; teacher turnover, supply, and demand; STEM education; and representation and equity in the curriculum and institutional systems.

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