

Missouri

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On July 3, 2021, Missouri Governor Mike Parson's signed the FY2022 \$35.6 billion annual budget. The budget increased allocations for PK-12 and Higher Education intended to not only restore funding cuts in 2020 due to the pandemic but also to surpass previous budget allocations. Even with the increase in funding, nationally Missouri ranks 49th in public school funding and per pupil expenditures¹.

FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR P-12 AND/OR HIGHER EDUCATION

Education, both at the PK-12 and Higher Education levels, continued to be a top priority for the Parson administration. For PK-12 education, the FY2022 budget apportioned \$8.5 million to fully fund the foundation formula, allotted \$252.7 million for the Office of Childhood, a new unit within the Department of Education, and \$20 million toward school transportation services. The A+ Schools Scholarship program and early childhood special education programs were also key areas of investment with \$13.2 million and \$8.4 million (respectively) in additional funds³.

For Higher Education the FY2022 budget increased funding to 4 year institutions by \$20.2 million and \$10 million additional funds for community colleges.

CHANGES TO THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR P-12 AND/OR HIGHER EDUCATION

There were no changes to the foundation funding formula for PK-12 or higher education. PK-12 education continues to be the largest area of funding for the FY2022 budget with the foundation formula being fully funded in this budget cycle².

PRESSING STATE ISSUES

At the time of this writing, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and equity and access have been top topics of debate and discussion for both the PK-12 and Higher

1. Jodi Fortino, *Missouri ranks next-to-last nationally in funding K-12 schools, state auditor finds* (May 28, 2021), Retrieved from: <https://www.kcur.org/education/2021-05-28/missouri-ranks-next-to-last-nationally-in-funding-k-12-schools-state-auditor-finds>.

2. Galen Bacharier, *Missouri governor signs off on \$35.6 billion budget, vetoing \$115 million* (Aug 23, 2021). Retrieved from <https://missouriindependent.com/2021/08/23/advocates-urge-lawmakers-to-focus-on-inequity-in-education-not-critical-race-theory/>.

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Education environments in the Missouri State Legislature in 2021-2022. The Joint Committee on Education held hearings in July 2021 regarding the teaching of CRT in public PK-12 schools, specifically to determine if legislation banning CRT was warranted. Public school administrators, teachers, Board members, students and parents gave testimony indicating that CRT as a theory is not embedded in the school curriculum nor is it widely being taught in classrooms³. At the request of one legislator, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) surveyed all PK-12 public schools regarding their use of CRT. Survey results of more than 400 school districts indicated that only 2 schools report using CRT in their curriculum and two other districts have embedded the 1619 Project in the curriculum⁴. Regardless of these results, many Republican legislators continue to author bills to ban CRT from public schools completely. For Higher Education the pandemic highlighted issues of equity in access to WiFi and technology as the institutions moved from in-person to online instruction. The Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development found that both the digital and economic divides were exacerbated by the pandemic. College students of color, students with disabilities, and those from low socioeconomic environments were disproportionately impacted⁵.

EXCLUSIVE TO P-12: WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL OFFERED BY MISSOURI AND WHAT DOES THE TREND IN FUNDING LOOK LIKE FOR THESE ALTERNATIVES?

Parents and students have several choices of educational pathways in addition to the traditional public school. Missouri's DESE lists charter, magnet, private, and online options. The charter and magnet options are very limited with options only in St. Louis and Kansas City areas. There are approximately 660 private school options. Missouri launched the first "Private School Choice Program" in 2021 to provide scholarship funds to families whose children attended a public school the previous year and who opt for private education. Priority in funding allocation is given to low-income families and students with disabilities and IEPs⁶.

3. Tessa Weinberg, *Advocates urge lawmakers to focus on inequity in education, not critical race theory* (July 6, 2020). Retrieved from <https://www.kshb.com/news/coronavirus/missouri-k-12-education-receives-roughly-55m-of-cares-act-funding>.

4. Tessa Weinberg, *Kansas City only Missouri school district reporting it teaches critical race theory* (July 27, 2021). Retrieved from <https://missouriindependent.com/2021/07/27/kansas-city-only-missouri-district-reporting-that-it-teaches-critical-race-theory/>.

5. Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development (Jan 2021). *Missouri Higher Education Equity Bridges to Success: Ensuring Access to Technology during the Covid-19 Pandemic*. Retrieved from <https://dhewd.mo.gov/documents/whitepaper-technology.pdf>.

6. CNational School Choice Week Team. *Missouri School Choice Roadmap* (Aug. 10, 2021). Retrieved from <https://schoolchoiceweek.com/guide-school-choice-missouri/>

TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT FOR MISSOURI'S PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE⁷
\$11,059

ALLOCATION OF STATE DOLLARS AND PERCENTAGE OF STATE
BUDGET FOR PK-12 AND HE⁸

PK-12 = 36% of the GR state budget. Higher education = 11%.

7. Public Education Funding by State (Aug 2, 2021). Retrieved from <https://educationdata.org/public-education-spending-statistics#missouri>

8. Missouri Budget Project (2021). *Missouri Budget 101*. Retrieved from <https://www.mobudget.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2015MOBudget101.pdf>.