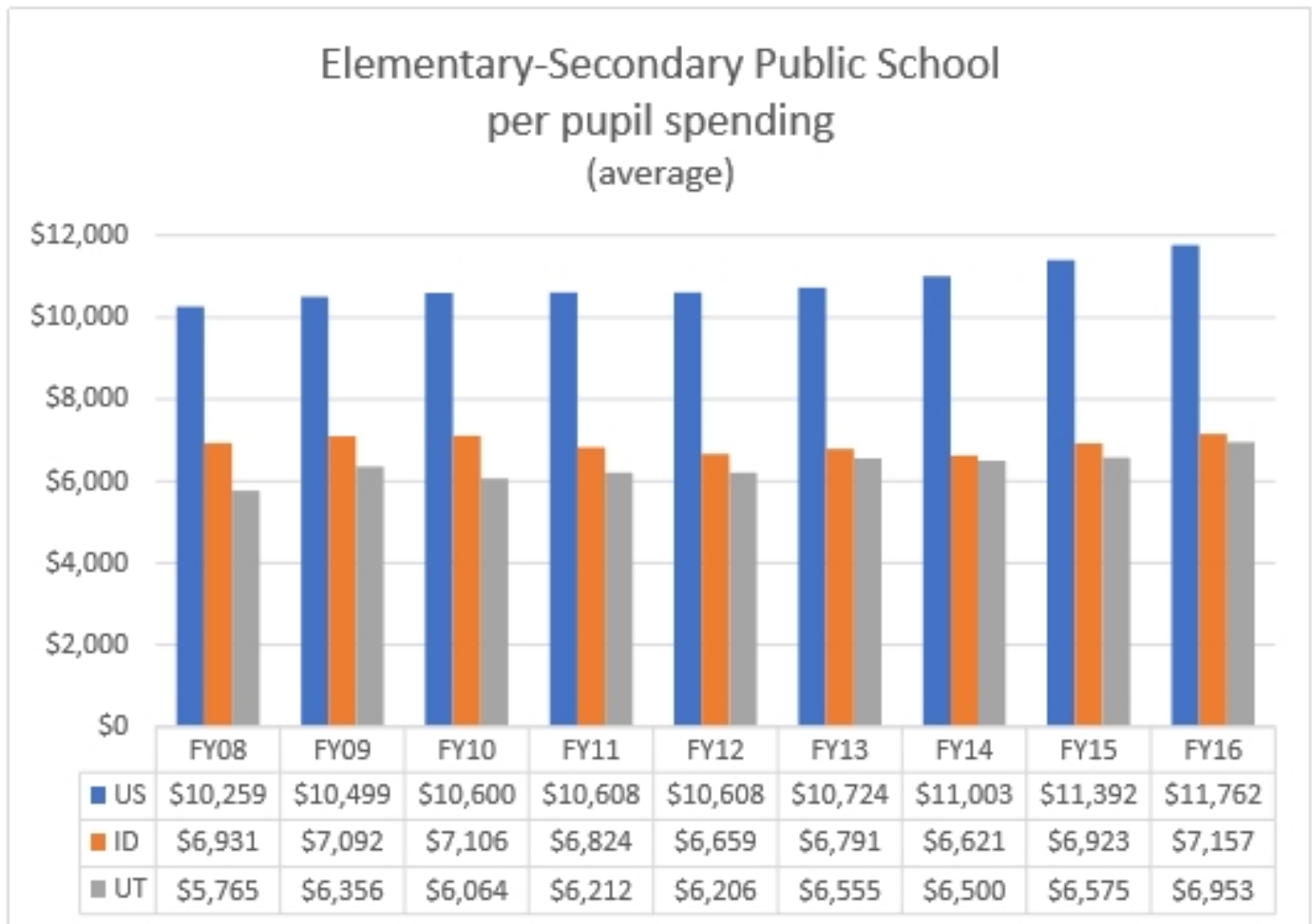


Utah Education – 30 years at the bottom

Published: Tuesday, 30 October 2018 11:00

Written by: Questions?



Source: US Census Bureau

As has been pointed out to me recently, I have worked off and on for Voices for Utah Children in each decade of its existence. I have had the privilege to be associated with the organization in some way for almost 30 years! It is amazing how Utah takes one step forward and later two steps back. We continue to fight on behalf of families and children to access health care, child care, economic stability and the perennial favorite, quality K through 12th grade education.

No matter political affiliation, education is on the minds of Utah's families and politicians. In November, voters will make a decision on ballot Question 1, a non-

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binding resolution “suggesting” legislators raise gas taxes by 10 cents per gallon to add much needed dollars to Utah’s chronically underfunded education system.

Why, one has to ask, doesn’t Utah just bite the bullet and make a long term commitment to adequately and consistently invest in education? Over the next several months we will blog in depth about Utah’s public education system looking at educational achievement and its relationship to spending, teacher salaries, teacher recruitment and retention, the difference between education spending and funding, and the infrastructure supporting Utah’s public school education system.

Maybe all or part of the question can be answered by this blog – or at least dispel some myths and add a few new facts. Voices goal in this discussion is for Utah’s children to grow up healthy and educated, ready and able to compete in a global economy. And who can argue with that?



[Education Series, Blog 1 - Education Input and Output](#)

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Voices for Utah Children

Education Series, Blog 1

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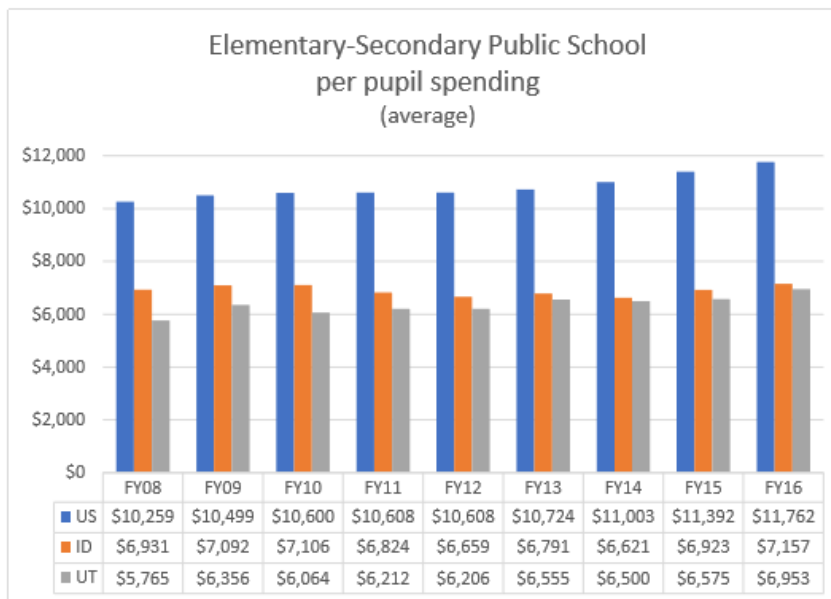
Utah has ranked at the bottom in per-pupil spending for K-12 education since 1988. For 30 years running, Utah has remained at the bottom.¹ That's two generations of children going through a public school system that is chronically underfunded.

How does this bottom ranking affect Utah kids? This blog will examine, using the traditional business model, the inputs, outputs and product produced by Utah's education system. Input is average current spending per pupil in the elementary-secondary public school system. Spending represents the people, raw materials, information and funding needed to achieve the desired output – student achievement. The product represents a well-educated workforce ready to help Utah's economy remain successful and grow; a workforce that attracts and retains businesses and can compete in a global economy.

INPUT

Per-pupil spending is an indicator of Utah's financial investment to educate its children. It is the spending that provides the nuts and bolts of education -- everything from buildings, books, and utilities to teacher salaries. It is specifically based on an average of spending to maintain school administration, instruction salaries and benefits, general administration and other needs.

Each year Voices for Utah Children releases a "[Children's Budget](#)". The 2017 report examines public investment on behalf of our children. It includes data comparing Utah's education spending with our neighboring state, Idaho. For many years, Utah and Idaho share the distinction of being at the bottom of per pupil spending among the states.



Source: US Census Bureau

Comparing years 2008 through 2016, Utah's per pupil spending increased 21% while Idaho's spending increased 3%.

¹ <https://www.thespectrum.com/story/news/2017/06/28/bad-news-utahs-k-12-kids-were-worst-nation-again-funding-them/413274001>

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