

# Utah Children's Budget Report 2021

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Written by: Taylor Throne

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## Children's Budget Report Finds Utah Is Spending More On Children Than Ever Before, But Education Funding Effort Is At A Record Low

Salt Lake City, December 9, 2021 - Voices for Utah Children, the state's leading children's policy advocacy organization, released its biennial [Children's Budget Report](#). The report, published every other year, measures how much (before

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and after inflation) the state invests every year in Utah's children by dividing all state programs concerning children (which add up to about half of the overall state budget) into seven categories, without regard to their location within the structure of state government. The seven categories are as follows, in descending order by dollar value (adding state and federal funds together):



## ***Education***

91.3% of the state-funded portion of the Children's Budget and 77.7% overall counting both state and federal funds



## ***Health***

3.9% of the state-funded portion and 12.0% overall



## ***Food & Nutrition***

0.7% of the state-funded portion and 3.8% overall



## ***Early Childhood Education***

1.0% of the state-funded portion and 3.2% overall

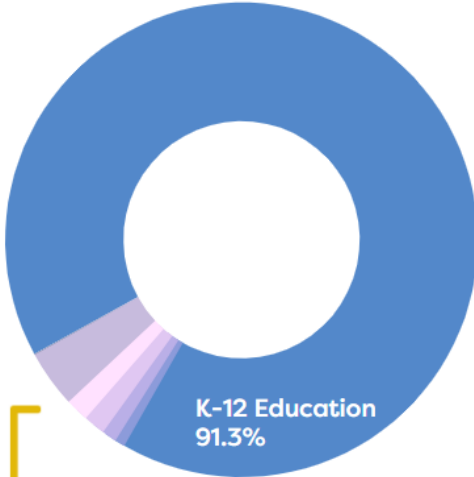
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## *FY2020 Children's Budget (State Funds Only)*



Health 3.9%  
Child Welfare 1.6%  
Juvenile Justice 1.5%  
Early Childhood Education 1.0%  
Food & Nutrition 0.7%  
Income Support .04%

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## *Child Welfare*

1.6% of the state-funded portion and  
2.0% of overall



## *Juvenile Justice*

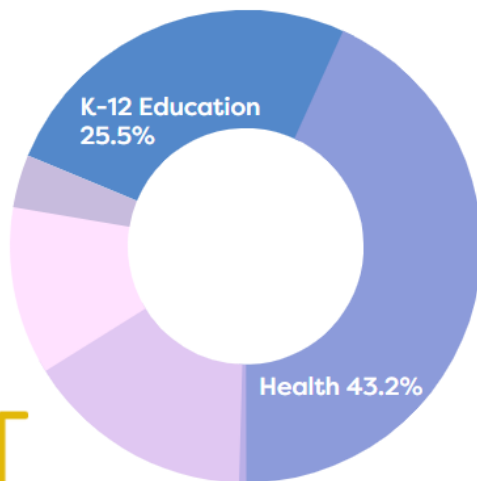
1.5% of the state-funded portion and  
1.2% overall



## *Income Support*

0.04% of the state-funded portion  
and 0.1% overall

### *FY2020 Children's Budget (Federal Funds Only)*



Child Welfare 3.6%  
Juvenile Justice 0.02%  
Early Childhood Education 11.5%  
Food & Nutrition 15.7%  
Income Support 0.5%

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Public investment in children should be understood as a central component of Utah's economic development strategy. Examining how much Utah invests in children can help the state evaluate whether it is maximizing the potential of our future workforce through our investment in human capital.

This is especially important given the rapid demographic changes taking place in our state. The 2020 Census found that 30% of Utahns under 18 are members of a racial or ethnic minority (almost one-third of our future workforce), compared to just 24% in 2010. The investments we make today in reducing racial and ethnic gaps among Utah's children will enable the state to thrive and prosper for generations to come

## *How Upfront Investment in Children Pays for Itself: The Virtuous Cycle*



Report highlights are as follows

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The state-funded portion of the Utah Children's Budget reached a new peak in FY2020 of \$7,488 per child.

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Similar to our last Children's Budget report, 79% of the Utah Children's Budget is from state funds, 21% from federal. Federal funds increased in real terms by \$691 million or 57%; 72% of that increase went to Health. State funds increased by \$1.76 billion or 33% in real terms, with 92% of that increase going to K-12 Education and 8% to Health.

PAGE 9

The biggest share of the state-funded portion of the Children's Budget is K-12 Education (91%) while the biggest share of the federally-funded portion is Health (43%).

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Highest & lowest areas for real state dollar increases 2008-2020 were:

- Highest: K-12 Education & Health
- Lowest: Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice

PAGE 15

For the first time since 1988, Utah has won the fight for 49th place in per-pupil education funding compared to the other states. However, Utah's education funding effort continued to decline, measured by the share of state personal income that we dedicate to K-12 education.

## THE LINK BETWEEN INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN & ECONOMIC GROWTH

*When we invest in our children, we build a better tomorrow*



Investment in the Development of Young Children



Increased School Readiness  
Higher Educational Attainment



Increased Workforce Productivity  
Increased Competitiveness of Utah Businesses



Enhanced Economic Growth & Prosperity  
Reduced Poverty, Dependency, Substance Abuse, Crime, Incarceration

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## *Our most important findings are as follows:*



Utah is investing more in the next generation now than ever before, both overall and on a per-child basis. On an overall basis, after accounting for inflation, the \$7.1 billion state-funded portion of the Children's Budget is 33.1% above where it was in 2008 – a real increase of \$1.8 billion (see page 8). On a per-child basis, it has risen \$1,120 or 17.6% (which is less than the overall increase because the state's child population rose 13% over that time period).



The non-K-12 Education portion of the Children's Budget peaked on a per-child basis in FY 2016 and has fallen since then by 2% (see page 6).



In spite of the state's putting 92% of all its new Children's Budget dollars into K-12 education over the last dozen years, Utah's education funding effort continues to fall to record low levels (page 16). In the 1990s Utah ranked in the top 10 nationally by this metric and invested 6% of state personal income in education. Now, following decades of tax cutting that has averaged \$100 million each year for 35 years, we rank in the bottom 10 states, and our investment has fallen by over a third to less than 4% of personal income.

**Good News: Utah is investing more in the next generation now than ever before, both overall and on a per-child basis**

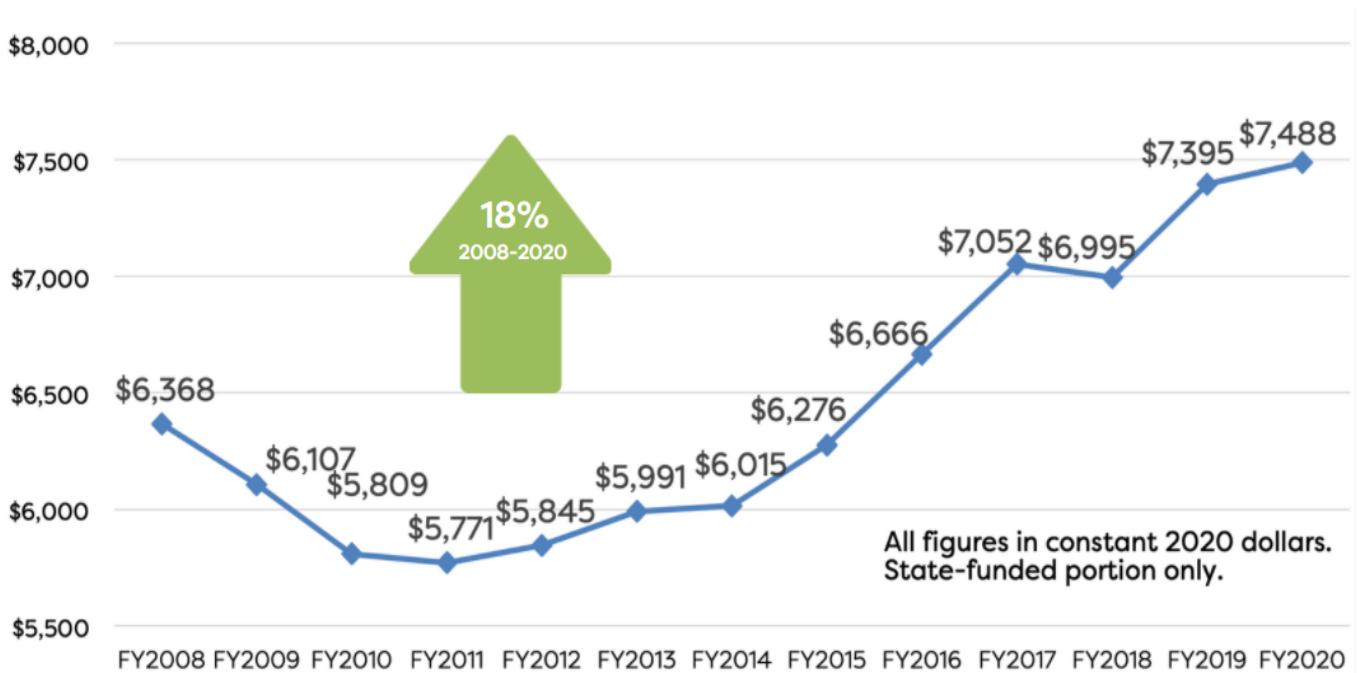


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## *FY2020 Real State Investment Per Child Was 18% Above Its Pre-Great Recession Level*



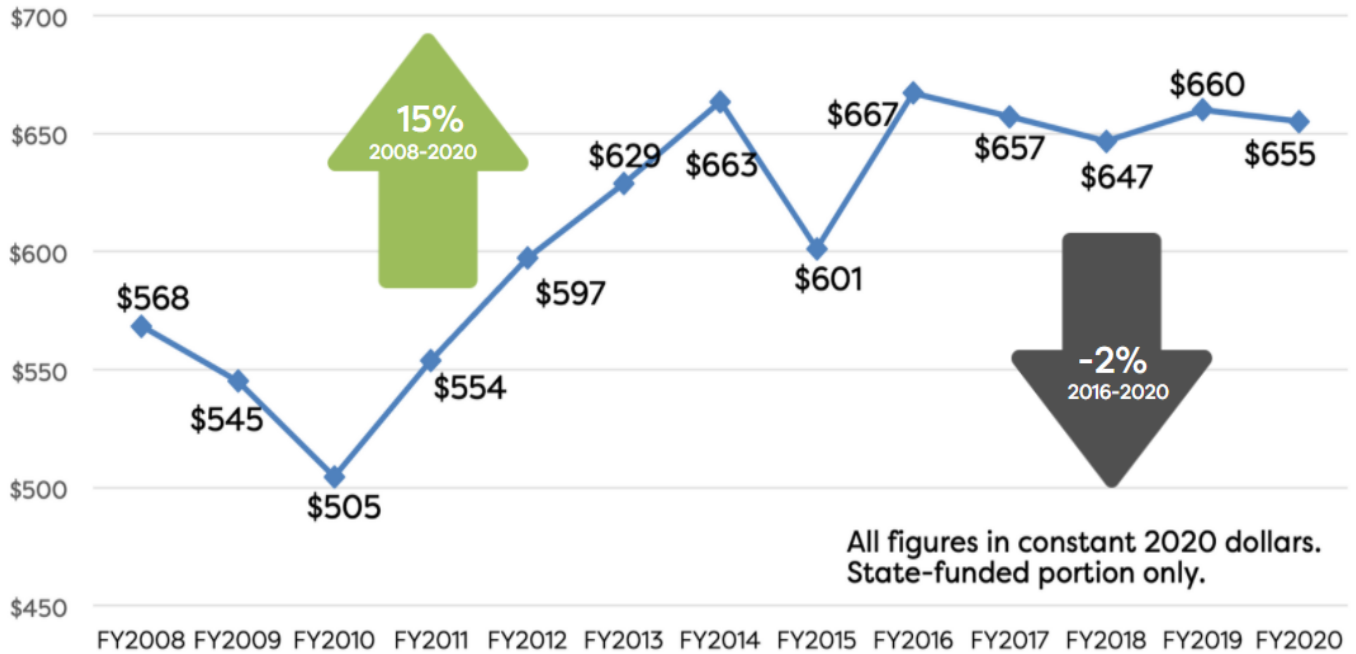
**Not-so-good News: The non-K-12 Education portion of the Children's Budget peaked on a per-child basis in FY 2016 and has fallen since then by 2%**

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*Excluding Education, Real State Spending Per Child Is Up 15% Since 2008 -- But Fell 2% Since 2016*



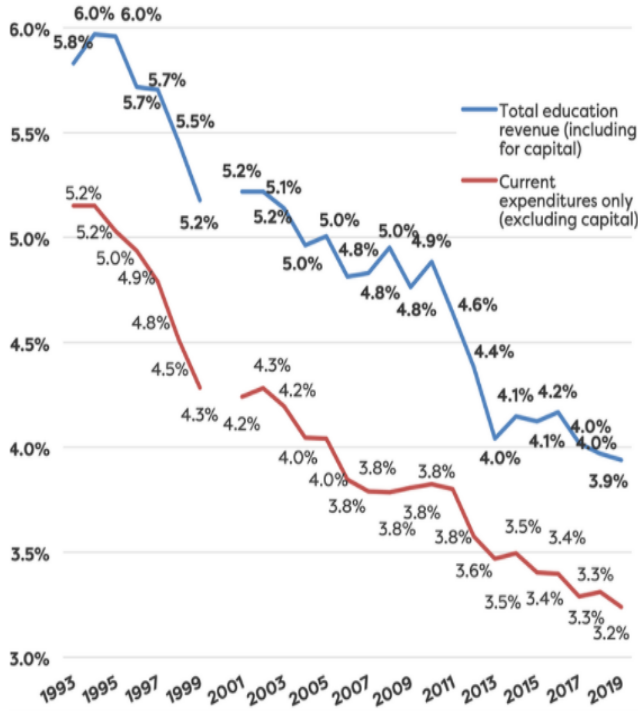
**Bad News: Utah's education funding effort continues to fall to record low levels**

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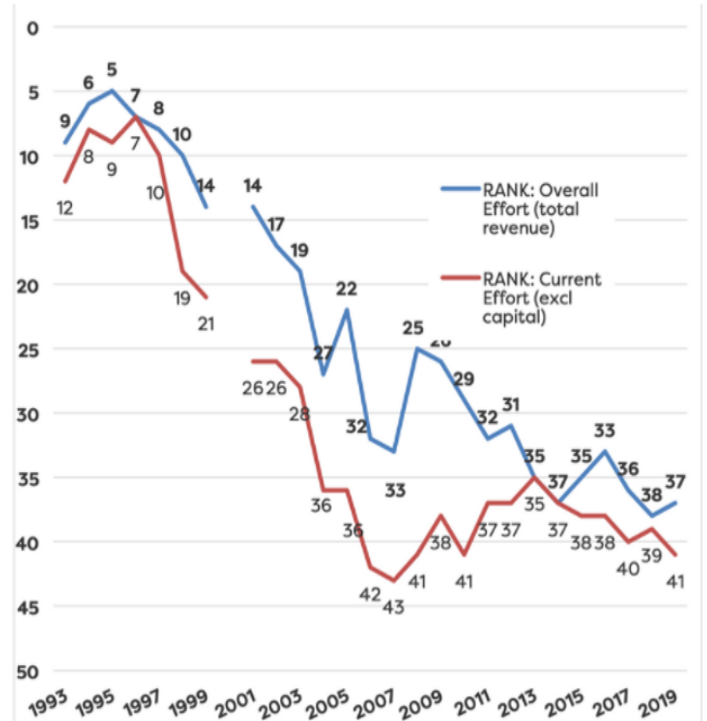
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**Utah Education Funding Effort:  
Percent of Personal Income 1993-2019**



**Utah's Education Funding Effort Rank:  
Top 10 in the '90s, Now in Bottom 10-15**



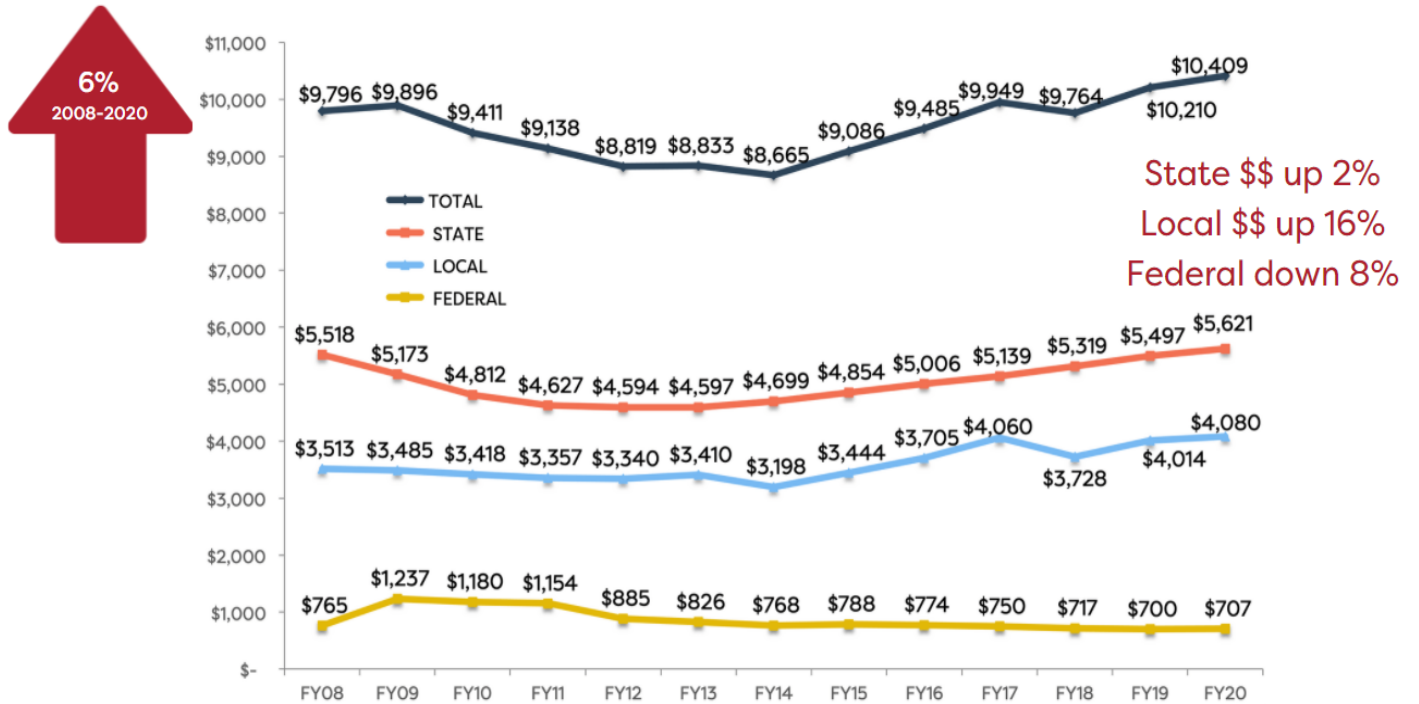
## Additional Trends: Changes in Funding by Source

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## K-12 Per-Student Investment 2008-2020 in constant 2020 dollars



**Trends in Education Funding: UT beat ID for 49th place, still far behind US overall**

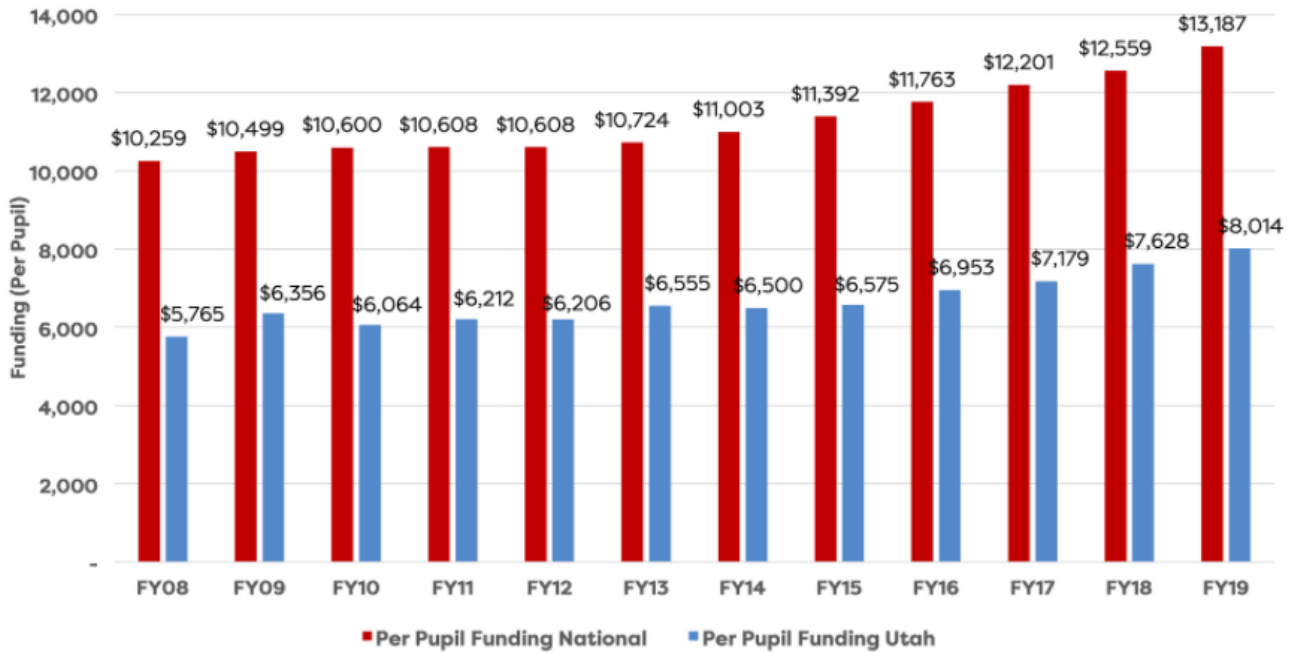
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## *US Census Bureau Per Pupil Current Spending (nominal/not adjusted for inflation) US vs Utah*



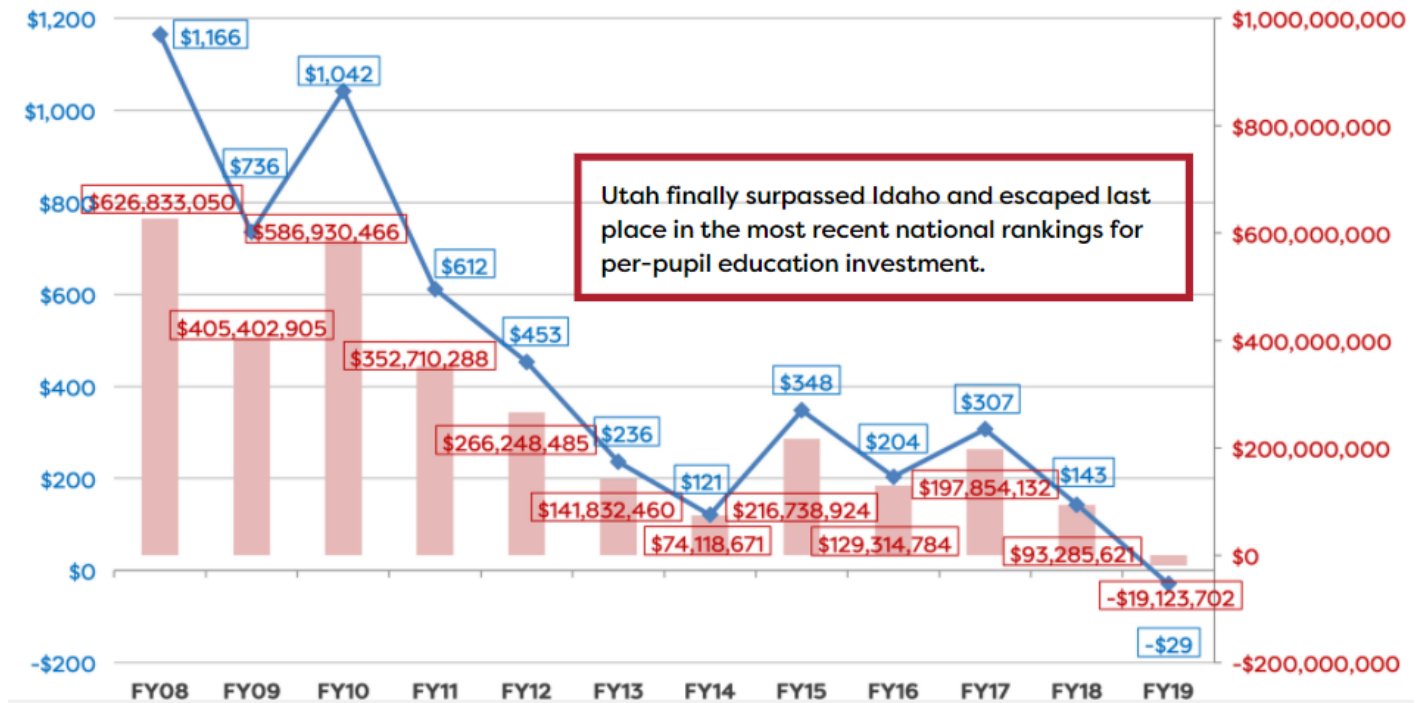
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## *The Education Funding Gap Between Utah and Idaho Per-Pupil and Total*

From 1988 to 2018 Utah had the lowest per-pupil funding in the nation, but in FY2019 Utah finally won the fight for 49th place over Idaho by \$29.



### MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CHILDREN'S BUDGET REPORT:

Facebook Live Event presenting the 2021 Children's Budget Report, major findings and summaries of all the categories of funding that impact children in Utah. <https://fb.watch/9O05ECPAHi/>

KSL: [https://www.ksl.com/article/50308739/utah-children-drowning-in-unmet-needs-according-to-new-budget-report?utm\\_source=Salt+Lake+Tribune&utm\\_campaign=93649b5bb5-rundown\\_12\\_10\\_2021&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_dc2415ff28-93649b5bb5-45560674](https://www.ksl.com/article/50308739/utah-children-drowning-in-unmet-needs-according-to-new-budget-report?utm_source=Salt+Lake+Tribune&utm_campaign=93649b5bb5-rundown_12_10_2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_dc2415ff28-93649b5bb5-45560674)

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