



## NJDOE News

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#### **Commissioner Hespe Releases New [Comparative Spending Guide](#)**

Commissioner of Education David Hespe today released the *2000 Comparative Spending Guide*. The guide, produced annually by the New Jersey Department of Education for the public and for educators, is a statistical report that outlines how local public school districts in New Jersey are allocating their financial resources.

"We produce the *Comparative Spending Guide* each year at this time to provide comprehensive and objective information about school spending," Commissioner Hespe said. "School budgets are best produced when the community and the school board can enjoy an informed dialogue. The *Comparative Spending Guide* is ideally suited to aid in the local decision-making process that culminates with the annual school elections."

The *Comparative Spending Guide* provides local educators and interested citizens with information about a school district's annual budget. It ranks similar school districts in 14 of 15 spending categories, or indicators, as well as in four staffing indicators. Each indicator presents costs on a per pupil basis, with three years of data presented; the four staffing indicators contain two years of data.

The total per pupil cost indicator reflects all spending common to school districts and includes total current expense and spending for early childhood programs, demonstrably effective programs, special education, bilingual education, transportation, distance learning, instructional supplement, county vocational schools, and adult and post-secondary education. Pensions, transportation and tuition expenditures are among some of the items excluded.

School districts of similar size are compared with each other in the guide. The groups are: K-6; K-8 (with subgroupings of enrollments from 0-399, 400-750 and more than 750); K-12 (with subgroupings of enrollments from 0-1,800, 1,801-3,500, and more than 3,500) grades 7-12 and 9-12; County Special Services, and County Vocational Schools.

Districts are listed alphabetically and are ranked low to high in spending for each of three years, within their grouping. The guide does not include data for nonoperating districts, educational services commissions, regional day schools, and jointures. All local school districts were given an opportunity to review the information in the guide.

Commissioner Hespe cautioned that local school spending patterns are best reviewed within the context of each district's goals and objectives, rather than simply based on the rankings. Some districts are increasing their spending to achieve local objectives, while others are seeking ways to decrease their spending.

The *Comparative Spending Guide*, along with the School Report Card, gives parents and citizens key information about what local school districts are doing to provide their students with a thorough and efficient education as required by the state constitution.

The guide will be available in libraries, local school districts, and in the 21 county offices of education. In addition it can be reviewed on the Department of Education's website:

**<http://www.state.nj.us/education>**