

# Cost of Administration

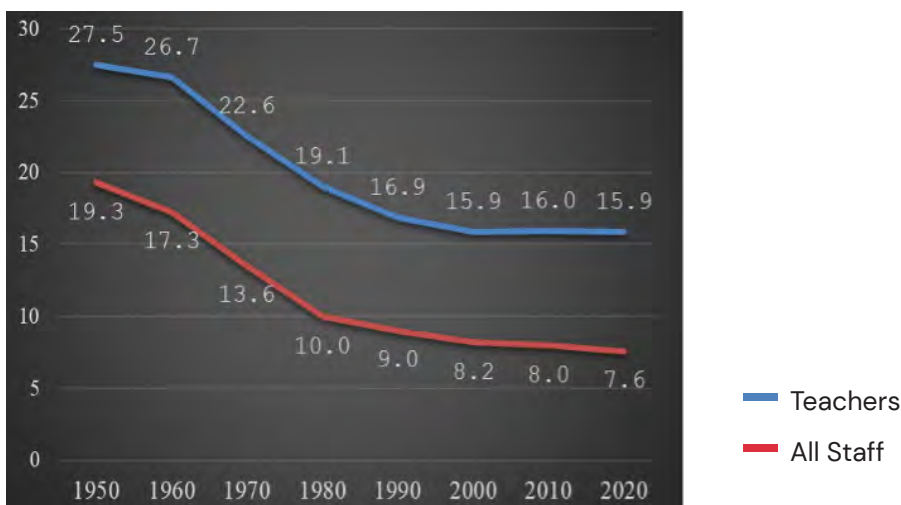
Between 1970 and 2021, the number of public school students nationwide increased 9.4%, while the number of public school employees grew 97.4%. Even these figures overlook important variations among personnel hiring for school districts: During that time period, the number of teachers increased 59.4% while the number of non-teaching staff increased a whopping 154%.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, public schools across the nation have become increasingly top-heavy, with administrative and support personnel consuming a growing share of public education dollars. Whereas teachers comprised more than 70% of public school staff in 1950, that ratio fell to less than half of total school staff by 2015 and continues to decline.

## Key Points

**Although pupil-teacher ratios have fallen rapidly since 1950, pupil-administrator ratios have fallen much faster.** In 1950, American public schools employed an average of one teacher for every 27.5 students. Enthusiasm for class-size reduction led to a gradual reduction in that figure to one teacher for every 15.4 students by 2021 — in other words, 44% fewer students for every teacher, on average.

## Students-to-Personnel Ratios, United States, 1950–2020



When all school district employees are considered, however, the ratio fell from 19.3 to 7.5 — meaning 61% percent fewer students per employee by 2019.<sup>2</sup>

**Nevada is no exception to the national trend.** In 2021, instructional staff accounted for just 50.2% percent of all full-time equivalent positions in Nevada public schools. That's down from 65.4% percent as recently as 2010.<sup>3</sup>

Further, many of these non-teaching employees are paid significantly more than teachers. In the 2021–2022 school year, the average licensed teacher in Nevada earned \$62,091 while the average licensed administrator earned \$95,364 — all before accounting for benefits. Even non-administrative support personnel were paid more than

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2012–2023 editions.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Nevada Department of Education, FY21 NRS 387 Report.

<sup>5</sup>Nevada Legislature, 76th Session, Senate Bill 316.

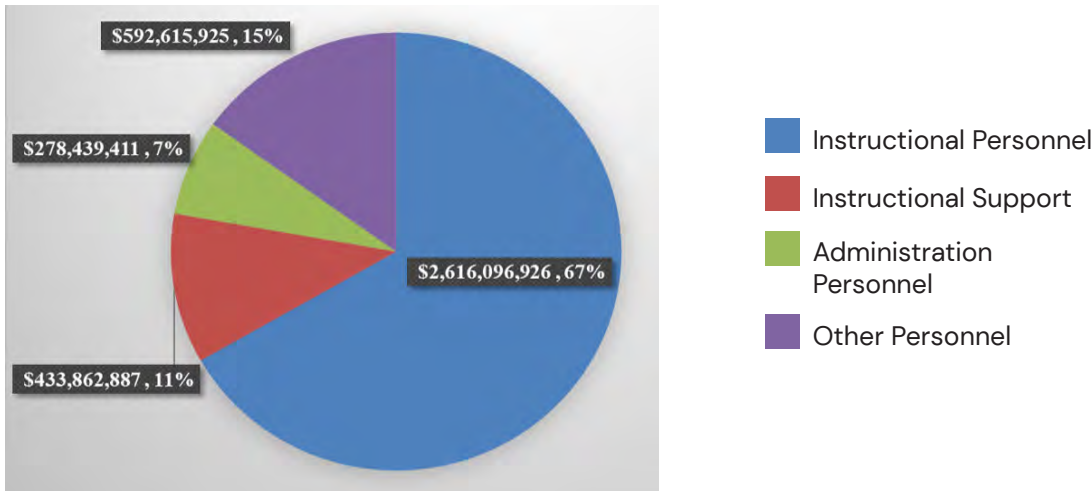
<sup>6</sup>Nevada Legislature, 76th Session, Senate Committee on Finance Minutes, April 11, 2011.

teachers, at \$79,951. In total, instructional personnel received only \$2.6 billion out of \$4.0 billion in total salary and benefits paid to personnel in Nevada public schools during the 2020–2021 school year.<sup>4</sup>

## Recommendations

**Restrict school districts’ spending on administrators, private consultants, and other outside-the-classroom expenses.** With good reason, parents expect their tax dollars to be spent inside the classroom, and for the administration in public schools to remain lean. In 2011, Nevada lawmakers considered Senate Bill 316, which would have required public school districts to spend at least 65 cents of every dollar they receive inside the classroom.<sup>5</sup> At the time, the Fiscal Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau estimated that Nevada school districts were spending only 57 cents out of every dollar inside the classroom.<sup>6</sup>

## Personnel spending by Nevada public school district (salaries+benefits, FY21)



## Composition of personnel spending by Nevada public school districts, FY21

