

Capitol Alert: The latest on California politics and government

<http://blogs.sacbee.com/capitolalertlatest/2014/03/reaching-california-education-coalitions-goal-would-cost-36-billion-more.html>

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[California school spending goal would cost \\$36 billion more](#)

Representatives of the [Education](#) Coalition told a state Senate budget subcommittee Thursday that despite increases in school spending in the current state budget and promises of more in the next one, California still needs to spend much more money on education.

The Education Coalition, a consortium of unions, school boards and administrators, backed voter approval of [Proposition 98](#), the state's school finance law, in 1988 and lobbies for higher school spending continuously.

How much more would be needed to meet its goal?

[Steve Henderson](#) of the California School Employees Association, representing the Ed Coalition, told the committee that its aim, implied in [Proposition 98](#), is to raise spending to the per pupil average of the nation's 10 highest-spending states on education.

No number was mentioned, but [Census Bureau data](#) indicate that reaching that goal for six million K-12 students would cost about \$36 billion more a year.

The latest data [Census Bureau](#) report on school spending is three years old, and pegs California's per pupil spending from all sources at \$9,139 per pupil in 2011 and the national average at \$10,560. Individual states ranged from a high of \$19,076 in [New York](#) to \$6,824 in Idaho.

The average for the 10 highest-spending states was \$15,181, \$6,042 above California, and raising it to that level would translate into \$36.3 billion more a year. Since 2011, California has increased spending substantially - to at least \$10,000 per pupil from all funds - but other states have done so as well, so the California's relative standing probably hasn't materially changed.

The Education Coalition cites Education Week magazine's rankings, which count only state and local funds and omit federal funds, that peg California's spending at \$8,341 per pupil, \$3,523 under the average of \$11,864 for all states. Raising California school spending to that level would cost about \$20 billion more a year.