
The Children's Agenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

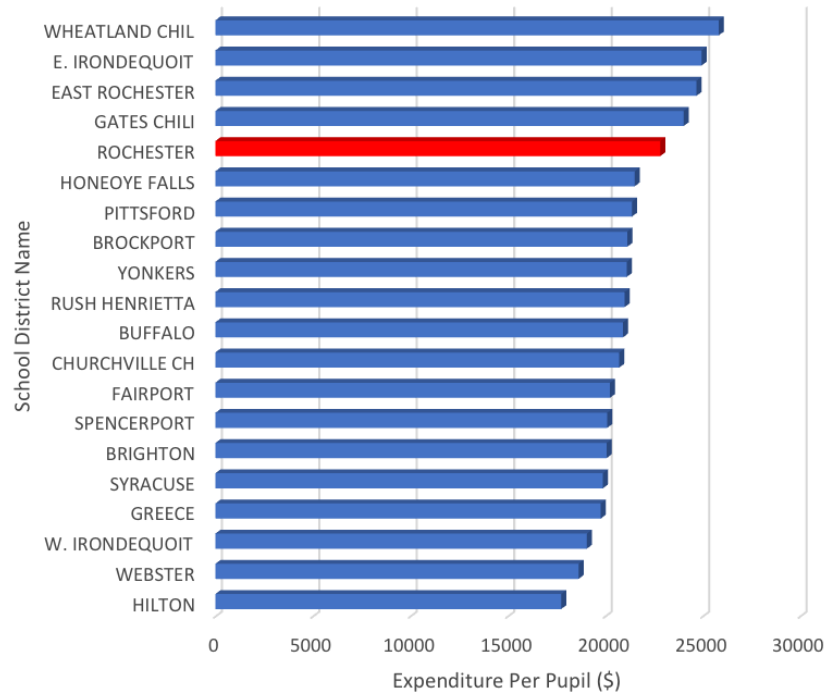


April E-UPDATE 2018

HELPING RCSD's BUDGET BECOME MORE ACCESSIBLE

Figure 1: Expenditure Per Pupil

Monroe County Public Schools and Big 4 (2015-2016)



Important Survey Coming to You Soon!

The Children's Agenda wants to understand your views as part of our planning process. We've engaged Causewave (formerly the Ad Council) to help us gather your input in an important online, Anonymous, quick survey. You'll see an email with a link to that survey coming to you soon from research@causewave.org.

In the News - [Click the link to be redirected to the article on the publisher's website.](#)

[Children in Monroe County continue to wait for developmental services](#)

[Report: Early Intervention underfunded, fragmented](#)

[Local group calling for more resources for children](#)

[Parents of RCSD students speaks out 2018-2019 Budget hearing](#)

[Children's advocacy group wants more transparency in RCSD budget](#)

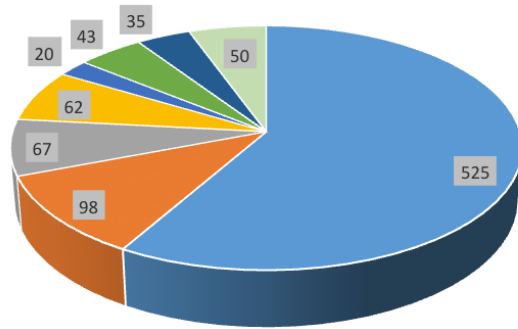
[RCSD budget has funds for Puerto Ricans, but no location](#)

[2018-2019 Budget hearing](#)

[RCSD budget hearing](#)

[Ahead of school budget vote, advocates say more stability needed](#)

RCSD 2017-18 school year spending:
\$900 million



- Salaries and benefits for all employees (\$525 mil)
- Charter schools, non-RCSD special education (\$98 mil)
- Transportation (\$67 mil)
- Paying interest on loans (\$62 mil)
- Textbooks, buses, computers, software (\$43 mil)
- Facilities, supplies and materials, utilities (\$43 mil)
- BOCES services (\$35 mil)
- Staff training, contracts and other services, misc (\$20 mil)

The Children’s Agenda released our [first annual analysis](#) of the Rochester City School District’s (RCSD) budget earlier this month, just as for the past 14 years we’ve analyzed the impact on children of proposed annual City and County budgets. It seems that everyone has an opinion about how the Rochester City School District should spend its budget, but few people have the facts. That’s where The Children’s Agenda comes in.

Of course, budgets contain more than facts. Every budget is a moral document. Numbers might be the language budgets use, but they are all about the priorities and choices -- the issues, things or people -- that are most valued and important, and which are least valued or important. That’s true of this nearly \$1 billion, 800-page budget proposed by the Rochester City School District.

[Report challenges city school district's spending](#)

Upcoming Events!

Tuesday, May 8th: The NYS Office of Child & Family Services is holding a hearing in Rochester from 11 - 3:00 on how the state’s child care subsidy program will be structured over the next three years, including how substantial new federal dollars will be allocated.



SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 1:00-4:00 PM

CELEBRATION OF CHILDREN

*Sponsored by The Children's Agenda's
Interfaith Collaborative*

TheChildren'sAgenda

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Enjoy children's performances and displays

Food, activities, information tables

Location:
East High School
1801 East Main St
Rochester, NY
14609

Our analysis is a tool to help the Rochester City School District improve its priority-setting and choice-making for its 29,000 students. Our purpose is more transparency and understanding of those priorities and choices. We want to see more parent and community involvement in shaping those choices. We want the best, most effective and evidence-based uses of every precious dollar to support every precious child. And above all else, we want to see better outcomes for our children's education, their physical health, their emotional well-being, their sense of belonging, and their limitless opportunities in life. Please click here for more information

We hope that parent voices, partnered with the facts and evidence from The Children's Agenda's, will combine to accelerate the improvements needed in RCSD for the benefit of our children. Parents who joined us to release our budget analysis included:

- A Rochester school mom, who spoke about the need for a permanent, K-12 newcomer program for the 560 new students from Puerto Rico sinu Hurricane Maria.
- A Spanish-speaking mom who spoke about the need for bilingual special education supports for her RCSD student with cerebral palsy;
- A parent of a 5th grader with Down's syndrome who has been repeatedly suspended unnecessarily due to lack of adequate staff training;

Congratulations to our colleague and friend Carolyn Lee-Davis, who was recently named a "Champion for Children" by the New York Association for the Education of Young Children! Carolyn's work at The Children's Agenda led to significant advances for young children in the Rochester community and around New York State. She continues to pursue good things for children and families through her work with the national Parent Leadership Training Institute. This is well-deserved recognition!

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

The Children's Agenda does not accept any government funding, and none of our work is possible without the generous support of private individuals, foundations, businesses and others. Our sincerest thanks go out to the following for their donations since our last update:

Dr. Rev. Marvin A. McMickle, Vincent Esposito, Barbara Green, Holly Barrett, Marc Lavender, Dianne Minet, Elizabeth Cook, and Minority Reporter Inc.

- And a parent who spoke about the need to continue training and funding for restorative justice practices and social-emotional health supports, rather than punitive disciplinary practices.

The budget analysis offers a detailed look at four areas that are prominent in parents' concerns – special education, English language learners, school climate, and early childhood education.

Important takeaways include:

- The 800-page budget document and the process to develop it must be more transparent and open, enabling parent and community understanding in how proposed changes will impact their children, and enabling more influence in budget decisions.
- The Rochester City School District is proposing significant new investments in special education and bilingual education in the 2018 - 2019 budget.
- Important changes must be made to stabilize the Bilingual Education and Special Education Departments in the district, and additional investments in mandatory professional development of staff must be made for improved social-emotional health and special education supports.
- The Children's Agenda will serve as a watchdog from now on to monitor implementation of these investments.

thank
you

We expect our analysis will grow in usefulness as a tool helping many community efforts around children, and we expect our reports will improve over time -- both as we learn more and as additional organizations and leaders get involved in using this tool. To read our report and for more information about how to get involved advocating for our children, [click here](#)

New York State Budget

The New York State FY2019 enacted budget funds progress on longstanding challenges facing New York's children, but also moves us backward in some important areas. Among The Children's Agenda priorities, the final budget includes:

- \$7 million restoration in state funding for child care subsidies that was cut in last year's final budget. It also includes language relating to how New York will use an estimated \$100 million in new federal funding for child care – a historic increase of \$2.37 billion contained in the FY2018 omnibus budget bill passed by Congress on March 21, 2018;
- \$1.45 million to support the First 1000 Days on Medicaid initiative, investing in services and programs to improve outcomes among children ages 0 – 3, such as evidence-based home visiting;
- \$100 million investment for Raise the Age implementation, expanding and creating services and facilities

that will be needed as New York moves 16- and 17-year-old youth from the adult criminal system to the juvenile system; and

- \$15 million expansion in after-school funding - \$5 million more for the Advantage After School Program, and \$10 million more for the Empire State After-School Program;

For details on these and other child-related budget items. [click here](#) to access the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy's "Last Look at the NYS 2018-19 Budget.

Early Childhood Developmental Services

On April 5th, The Children's Agenda released a new report titled "Valuing Early Childhood Developmental Services." The report identifies the true cost of providing critical developmental services like Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Therapy to children birth to five. It also concludes that the low reimbursement rates for these services are contributing to a shortage of providers working with young children and a growing waiting list for children needing these important services. The report makes four specific recommendations to New York State policymakers to address this growing issue in communities across the State.

[Click here to read the full report](#)

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