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Acting Commissioner Gagliardi Releases [Comparative Spending Guide](#)

Acting Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. today released the *2001 Comparative Spending Guide*. The New Jersey Department of Education each year produces the guide, a statistical report that details how local public school districts in New Jersey are allocating their financial resources.

"The greatest share of our tax dollars supports education," said Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco. "The *Comparative Spending Guide* gives parents and taxpayers a chance to see how those tax dollars are put to work in our local school districts. The guide can serve as a valuable tool in assessing the spending priorities of a school district."

"It's no coincidence that we release the *Comparative Spending Guide* at the height of budget development season," said Dr. Gagliardi. "We want the guide to both inform and stimulate community discussions at the local level. It is essential for all of us to do our part to give our children the best possible education at the most reasonable cost."

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, 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, county vocational schools, and charter schools.

Districts are listed alphabetically and are ranked low to high in spending for each of three years, within their grouping. All local school districts were given an opportunity to review the information in the guide.

Acting Commissioner Gagliardi said: "While the *Comparative Spending Guide* is a valuable tool, it alone does not tell the whole story about a school district's investments in education. I would encourage parents and taxpayers to consider the district's goals, objectives and special needs, as well as assessments of academic performance, in order to gain a better understanding of spending practices and priorities."

The *Comparative Spending Guide*, along with the School Report Card, inform parents and citizens about local educational activities to provide 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. It can also be reviewed on the Department of Education's website:

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