



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives  
Representative Matt Gress (R-4)

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## House Education Chairman Matt Gress Laments Record Low School Spending on Student Instruction

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – State Representative Matt Gress, Chairman of the House Education Committee, responds to the latest Arizona Auditor General [report](#) on *Spending in the Classroom*, which highlights how Arizona school districts allocate resources. The report shows that while total spending increased \$519 million from the previous year, instructional spending decreased for the third year in a row. School districts now spend the lowest percentage ever reported in the classroom—just 52.6% of operational spending.

From the report:

*“The FY 2024 State-wide Instructional Spending Percentage is the lowest it has been since we began monitoring in FY 2001, despite total operational spending reaching an all-time high of \$10.54 billion.”*

**“Arizona school districts have more resources today than ever before,”** said Chairman Gress. **“The state’s \$16 billion K-12 education program provides more than \$15,000 per pupil. Yet, once again, district leadership has disproportionately allocated money to areas other than instruction. Collectively, school districts have \$7.8 billion in ending fund balances—an astonishing sum. Arizonans have sent a message, loud and clear: they want more money spent in the classroom, and districts appear to be ignoring it.”**

The report revealed that 120 of 206 school districts decreased spending in the classroom as a percentage of operational spending. While most school districts increased average teacher pay, 38% saw a decrease, which may be due to the replacement or loss of experienced teachers. The percentage of teachers with four or more years of experience dropped sharply from 82% to 78% since last year.

**“While I’m encouraged that average teacher pay continues to slowly rise, our school districts should be doing much more for our teachers,”** Chairman Gress added. **“The report shows that if districts allocated the same percentage to classroom instruction as they did twenty years ago, an additional \$624 million would be available for teacher pay—enough to increase salaries by \$8,500 per year. Resources are available but teachers are taking the back seat to administration.”**

*Matt Gress is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 4 in Phoenix and is Chairman of the House Committee on Education. Follow him on X at @MatthewGress.*

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