

# Education

Greene County's eight public school systems are facing the same issues that challenge public education on the national level: a stronger demand for accountability, erratic state and local funding, and the volatility that comes from the increased politicization of public education.



Still, unlike other metropolitan areas, Greene County's school systems have not experienced a drastic flight toward private education, and the districts have maintained an overall competence in academic performance.

The greatest challenge to Greene County's school districts is remaining competitive in the educational funding arena. Per pupil expenditures are well below the state average, and teachers' salaries also lag considerably. These trends are exacerbated by a steady increase in free and reduced lunch rates, a traditional indicator of the number of economically disadvantaged students. Although Greene County's relatively low cost-of-living impacts school funding comparisons, the gaps between the County's districts and the state average are alarming. This funding shortfall combined with the necessity to combat the effects of poverty will continue to challenge school boards, administrators, and teachers.

Despite the funding hurdles, Springfield and Greene County public school students' overall academic performance is on par with or exceeds state averages. In fact, five Greene County districts have better-than-average dropout rates, and four districts meet or exceed the state average for the ACT. These academic

## LIBRARY SERVICES

The Springfield-Greene County Library District has served the area for more than 100 years, and continues a fine tradition of providing the community with access to information for educational, recreational and business use. In 2003, the district opened its newest branch at 2535 N. Kansas Expressway, and added a new 30-foot, satellite equipped bus for the purpose of bringing computers, storytelling and other services to patrons.

Our public libraries compare favorably to other communities in circulation and numbers of patrons served. The various branches are well suited to facilitate the needs of patrons in new, interactive ways that cater to multiple tastes. Such amenities include Internet access, gift shops, food services, meeting rooms, story times and special programming for children, computer classes, and drive through check-in/out services.



## LIBRARY USE

Comparison Data with similar size communities

	<i>Springfield</i>	<i>Anchorage</i>	<i>Harford County</i>
Annual Visits	<b>1,292,004</b>	<b>865,397</b>	<b>976,524</b>
Total Circulation	<b>2,491,907</b>	<b>1,383,668</b>	<b>2,841,750</b>

successes, in the midst of challenging economic times, are a testimony to the personal dedication of our county's public school teachers and students.

Indicator (2002-2003)	STATE	SGF	Willard	Ash Grove	Fair Grove	LR	Republic	Strafford	Walnut Grove
Total Enrollment	893,575	24,356	3,313	883	1,012	1,883	3,151	1,060	314
Free and Reduced Lunch	39.21%	37.82%	27.95%	31.03%	32.51%	20.25%	29.31%	34.28%	37.92%
Student Mobility (Grades 9-12)	28.70%	19.90%	14.50%	16.90%	9.10%	20.70%	20.10%	23.70%	9.80%
Students to Classroom Teachers	18	20	18	18	20	21	21	17	16
Avg. Total Teacher Salary	\$39,293	\$37,321	\$35,546	\$33,622	\$34,918	\$32,816	\$36,955	\$35,263	\$32,811
Current Expenditure Per Pupil (ADA)*	\$7,345.00	\$6,222.46	\$5,378.05	\$5,197.70	\$5,706.49	\$5,261.79	\$4,921.47	\$5,995.38	\$6,721.28
Total Dropout Rate	3.38%	4.59%	3.43%	2.44%	2.42%	2.06%	2.70%	2.89%	0.98%
ACT-Graduate Scoring at or Above Nat'l Avg	33.90%	38.00%	30.30%	28.60%	29.60%	45.50%	33.90%	42.90%	33.30%

*Source: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. \*ADA refers to per pupil expenditure based on Average Daily Attendance.*

**SELECTED MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
2002 – 2003 PER PUPIL  
EXPENDITURES (ADA)\***

State Average	\$7,345
Parkway	\$8,114
Columbia	\$7,815
Independence	\$7,814
Camdenton	\$6,815
Jefferson City	\$6,750
Raytown	\$6,701
St. Joseph	\$6,232
Springfield	\$6,222
Joplin	\$5,746

\*ADA refers to per pupil expenditure based on Average Daily Attendance.

**PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN UNDER 18  
RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS**

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Missouri	21.8%	22.0%	23.9%	25.9%
Greene Co.	21.2%	21.6%	24.7%	27.0%

Source: Missouri Kids Count, 2003