

Education

Improving Student Achievement Through Teacher Training and Preparation

Greene County's eight public school districts continually stress student achievement. Teachers encourage students to become actively engaged in the learning process and to combine a strong knowledge foundation with higher level thinking skills.

Several quality teacher preparation institutions in Greene County prepare teachers for classroom settings and also provide follow-up training and assistance for new teachers. Teacher preparation programs and ongoing, job-embedded professional development offer outstanding curriculum and instructional support, with several initiatives at local universities providing expertise and resources for local school district programs. Student achievement in Greene County has consistently shown improvement; many districts received the Distinction in Performance Award by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Teacher to Student Ratios

Greene County's total student enrollment was 36,293 for the 2003-04 school year. Class sizes in most schools were slightly above the state average. Some county schools are growing quickly, which presents a challenge for maintaining smaller class sizes. Other districts have fewer new students or have a decreasing student population, which produces a lower student-teacher ratio.

5-YEAR PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT TREND

	2000	2004	Enrollment Change	Percent Increase/Decrease in Enrollment
Springfield	24,585	24,285	-300	-1.2%
Willard	3,098	3,441	343	11.1%
Republic	2,822	3,269	447	15.8%
Logan-Rogersville	1,837	1,892	55	3.0%
Strafford	1,012	1,114	102	10.1%
Fair Grove	1,010	1,061	51	5.0%
Ash Grove	836	858	22	2.6%
Walnut Grove	340	312	-28	-8.2%
Greene County	35,540	36,232	692	1.9%
State of Missouri	895,624	893,270	-2,354	-0.3

"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth."

Aristotle

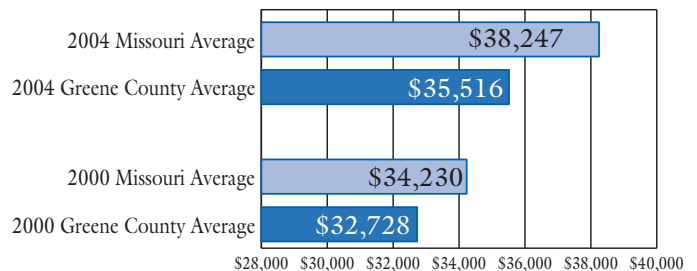
5-YEAR CLASSROOM TEACHER-STUDENT RATIO TREND

	2000	2004
Springfield	21	22
Willard	20	19
Republic	22	22
Logan-Rogersville	22	22
Strafford	17	18
Fair Grove	21	20
Ash Grove	19	18
Walnut Grove	17	19
District Average in Greene County	19.9	20.0
State of Missouri	19	19

Teacher Salaries in Greene County

In 2000, the average salary for teachers in Greene County was \$32,728 (state-wide, this figure was \$34,230); this increased to \$35,516 in 2004 (state-wide, \$38,247). Districts vary from 27.2% to 58.8% in teachers with master's degrees (state average is 47.6%). Because educational level helps determine teacher pay, the variance in this category directly affects average teacher salary per district.

Average Teacher's Salary
Greene County and State of Missouri 2000 and 2004



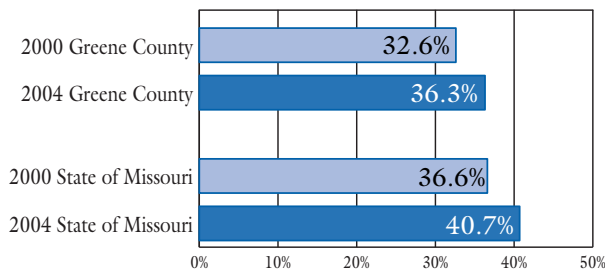
Who Are Our Students?

Public education is the prevailing choice for most Greene County families, but many students are educated in private, parochial and home school settings. Residents can choose from many good options to make the best educational decisions for their children.

Reflecting state and national trends, Springfield Public Schools and surrounding districts educate an increasing number of

economically disadvantaged students, as indicated by the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch rates. Children living in poverty face numerous academic obstacles.

Percent Free and Reduced Lunch Public School Students



(Greene County data compiled by aggregating student data within the eight school districts in the county.)

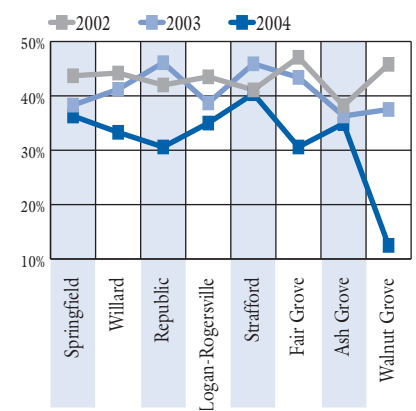
Despite the growing number of students in poverty, Springfield and Greene County student academic performance is on par with or exceeds state averages. For five of eight districts, the percent of graduates scoring at or above the national ACT average is higher than the state percent. Attendance rates in all Greene County school districts surpassed the state average of 93.7%. While the drop-out rate for most county districts slightly increased over the previous year, most districts were below Missouri’s average of 3.9%. Community programs, such as those sponsored by the Greene County Prosecutor’s Office, emphasize the importance of regular school attendance and high school completion. Continued and persistent community attention to these areas will also positively affect public safety and workforce development.

State Testing for Adequate Yearly Progress

To comply with federal and state law, students are tested annually to determine academic progress. The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Test is the standard measure used for scholastic performance. Reading is assessed at the third-grade level; the results provide one component of the Adequate Yearly Progress required by No Child Left Behind.

Greene County Adequate Yearly Progress trends for reading proficiently at the third-grade level are provided to the right. The state defines proficient as “... able to go beyond the typical grade-level expectations for reading. They not only demonstrate mastery of basic reading skills, they are able to apply what they comprehend in complex and sophisticated ways.”

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)



Budgetary Issues

Adequate and equitable public funding remains a top concern for county districts. Several Greene County districts joined a lawsuit intended to force the state to remedy the inadequacies of the current state education funding formula. The state recently changed the funding formula, but many districts still perceive the formula to be inadequate. Possible solutions that will affect local districts include consolidating small districts and mandating minimum levels of local tax support.

District budgets rely on a combination of local, state, and federal revenues. The reductions in and general uncertainty surrounding state support has challenged local districts, increasing the percentage of their budgets that districts fund through local taxes. In 2000, 60.5% of operating funds for the Greene County school districts came from local sources (state-wide, that number was 56.2%); however, in 2004, 61.9% of operating funds were local (state-wide, 57.9%).

Five of the eight county districts passed increases to their local operating levy rates during 2004. Despite these increases, per pupil expenditures remain well below the state average.

2000 STUDENT DATA

	MO	Springfield	Willard	Republic	Logan-Rogersville	Stafford	Fair Grove	Ash Grove	Walnut Grove
ACT – Graduates Scoring at or Above Nat'l. Avg.	35.4%	46.6%	35.3%	41.6%	40.2%	47.7%	39.6%	31.3%	40.0%
Attendance	93.6%	93.8%	95.0%	93.8%	93.5%	94.7%	94.4%	95.0%	95.4%
Dropouts	4.50%	7.50%	2.80%	1.60%	4.00%	2.40	2.70%	2.40%	3.70%

2004 STUDENT DATA

	MO	Springfield	Willard	Republic	Logan-Rogersville	Stafford	Fair Grove	Ash Grove	Walnut Grove
ACT – Graduates Scoring at or Above Nat'l. Avg.	33.3%	39.0%	34.3%	35.1%	30.0%	42.0%	44.6%	35.8%	15.8%
Attendance	93.6%	94.2%	93.9%	94.5%	95.5%	95.2%	95.2%	95.4%	94.7%
Dropouts	3.90%	4.65%	3.70%	2.80%	1.90%	6.00%	2.90%	3.40%	2.80%