

Estimated Classroom Site Fund Per Pupil Amount for FY 2026

A.R.S. § 15-977 requires the JLBC Staff to determine a per pupil amount from the Classroom Site Fund (CSF) for the upcoming fiscal year. The CSF was established by Proposition 301 (2000). It receives funding from the 0.6¢ education sales tax established by Proposition 301 (and continued by Laws 2018, Chapter 74) as well as a portion of K-12 state land trust revenues.

The JLBC Staff currently estimates that public schools will receive \$842 per weighted pupil from the CSF in FY 2026 on both a cash and "budget capacity" basis. This amount is an increase of \$50 from the FY 2025 CSF per pupil amount of \$792.

Statutory Formula

A.R.S. § 15-977G1 stipulates that the per pupil funding amount from the CSF for a given budget year shall be computed using the estimated "weighted" student count for the current year and estimated resources in the CSF for the budget year, adjusted for any prior year carry-forward or shortfall. The JLBC Staff currently estimates that the weighted student count for the next year (FY 2026) will be 1,313,400 and that the CSF will have \$1,105,372,400 in available resources for FY 2026. These 2 estimates yield a CSF per pupil amount of \$842 per weighted student for FY 2026. (*see attachment*).

Estimated Weighted Student Count

The estimated FY 2026 weighted student count of 1,313,400 is based on preliminary 100-day Average Daily Membership (ADM) data from school districts for the current year (FY 2025) and projected 100-day ADM counts for charter schools for next year (FY 2026). This weighted student count represents a decrease of (0.7)% in comparison to counts assumed for the FY 2025 calculation. CSF allocations are based on "student counts," which for Classroom Site Fund purposes is interpreted to mean prior year ADM for districts (FY 2025 for the FY 2026 distribution) and current year ADM for charter schools (FY 2026 for the FY 2026 distribution). The portion of the estimated count that pertains to charter schools is more uncertain than the district portion because it will depend on actual charter school ADM growth next year.

The JLBC Staff's student count estimate includes pupils from the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) and the Department of Juvenile Corrections (DJC), since they both also receive CSF funding. Per pupil allocations for public schools and DJC are based on their "Group A weighted" student counts pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-977G. ASDB allocations are based on its "Group B weighted" student counts pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-977L.

Estimated CSF Revenues

The CSF revenue estimate of \$842 per weighted pupil for FY 2026 uses FY 2025 YTD revenues through March 2025 and assumes a 3.1% increase in education sales tax revenues for the remaining 3 months of the fiscal year; for FY 2026, the estimate assumes a 3.7% increase above FY 2025. These rates are consistent with the JLBC Baseline forecast for state sales tax revenues in general (not just from the education sales tax) for FY 2025 and FY 2026. Excluding the effect of cash balances, FY 2025 total education sales tax revenues were estimated to be \$1,242,345,900 a year ago. We now forecast FY 2025 revenues of \$1,232,240,400 with an increase to \$1,277,833,300 in FY 2026.

The \$842 per weighted pupil estimate also includes a projected \$170,070,500 in K-12 endowment earnings for FY 2026. Under Proposition 301, the first 2.5% of the Treasurer's distribution and the Land Department's expendable receipts above \$72,263,000 are deposited into the CSF.

Based on input from the State Treasurer and State Land Department, total K-12 endowment earnings from the 2.5% share are projected to be \$242,333,500 for FY 2026. Of that amount, only the statutory \$72,263,000 would be used for Basic State Aid. The remaining \$170,070,500 would be deposited into the CSF pursuant to A.R.S. § 37-521B4.

Cash versus “Budget Capacity”

The CSF per pupil amount that is computed each year pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-977G1 represents an amount that school districts and charter schools are authorized to spend (“budget capacity”) per pupil for the fiscal year regardless of how much CSF cash actually ends up being available for that year. If CSF cash ends up being insufficient to fully fund the authorized CSF per pupil “budget capacity” amount, school districts and charter schools may borrow cash from some of their other local funds in the short term in order to make up the difference. The following year, however, A.R.S. § 15-977G1 requires a corresponding reduction in CSF per pupil “budget capacity” in order to bring cumulative CSF cash and “budget capacity” back into balance and repay borrowed local funds.

For FY 2011 through FY 2013, CSF “budget capacity” per pupil was less than the available “cash” amount in order to eliminate large CSF cash shortfalls that developed during the Great Recession. Those cumulative cash shortfalls were eliminated in FY 2014.

Potential Impact of Estimation Error

The estimates are based on projected sales tax revenues, endowment earnings, carry-forward amounts, student counts, and other factors. If revenue factors or student counts vary from the assumptions, more funding will end up being available per pupil than anticipated, or vice versa.

If the per pupil estimate is too *high*, recipients will receive only what is available for distribution from the CSF for the year, which would be less than the estimated per pupil amount. Under this circumstance, A.R.S. § 15-977M and 15-978 would allow school districts to borrow from other internal funds or issue “warrants” (short-term loans from commercial banks) to temporarily make up the difference. Districts would then have to pay back their internal funds or warrants with interest the following year. Charter schools do not have statutory authority to issue warrants, however, so would have to cover any CSF shortfall with alternative funding, such as from separately-arranged bank financing.

If the per pupil estimate is too *low*, recipients potentially could receive at least a portion of the surplus funding through prior year back-payments authorized by A.R.S. § 15-977K if any prior year shortfall exists. Otherwise, surplus monies would be carried forward into next fiscal year and factored into CSF per pupil computations for that year.

The \$842 per pupil “cash” and “budget capacity” estimate for FY 2026 does not include adjustments for contingencies related to revenue or enrollment growth. Current law does not make provisions for such adjustments.

Estimated Classroom Site Fund Per Pupil Allocation for FY 2026

JLBC Staff

3/28/2025

Notes:

1. "Sales Tax" revenue estimates use FY 2025 YTD revenue data from the State Treasurer and assumes 3.1% growth for the remaining 3 months of the fiscal year. FY 2026 estimates assume a 3.7% increase in FY 2026.
2. "Education Sales Tax Expenditures" estimates are based on the distribution formula in A.R.S. §42-5029.02A.
3. "Endowment Earnings" estimates are based on currently available trust land data from the State Treasurer and State Land Department.
4. "Weighted Student Count" estimates are from JLBC Staff and include ASDB and DJC, which also receive CSF funding.
5. The "Cumulative Prior Year Shortfall Per Pupil" amount equals the difference between "cash" and "budget capacity" that schools have received from the Classroom Site Fund (CSF) cumulatively since its inception in FY 2002 (no difference currently projected).

	FY 2024	(original) FY 2025	(revised) FY 2025	(estimated) FY 2026
Education Sales Tax Revenues				
Sales Tax	1,206,701,300	1,242,345,900	1,232,240,400	1,277,833,300

Education Sales Tax Expenditures

SFB Debt Service	-	-	-	-
Basic State Aid Distribution	64,100,000	64,100,000	64,100,000	64,100,000
Universities	137,112,200	141,389,500	140,176,800	145,648,000
Community Colleges	34,278,000	35,347,400	35,044,200	36,412,000
Tribal Assistance	849,100	1,378,700	1,373,500	1,480,100
Additional School Days	86,280,500	86,280,500	86,280,500	86,280,500
School Safety	7,800,000	7,800,000	7,800,000	7,800,000
Character Education Matching Grants	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Accountability Measures / SAIS	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000
Failing Schools Tutoring Fund	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Income Tax Credit for Sales Tax Paid	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000
DOR Integrated Tax System Modernization Project	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000
Classroom Site Fund	841,781,400	871,549,800	862,965,400	901,612,700
Total (sales tax only)	1,206,701,200	1,242,345,900	1,232,240,400	1,277,833,300

Classroom Site Fund Revenues

Education Sales Tax	841,781,400	871,549,800	862,965,400	901,612,700
Endowment Earnings	161,280,200	147,385,100	157,379,500	170,070,500
Prior Year Carryforward	129,395,900	89,839,100	118,052,500	91,866,700
Total Estimated Revenues	1,132,457,500	1,108,774,000	1,138,397,400	1,163,549,900

Classroom Site Fund Expenditures

Total Estimated Revenues	1,132,457,500	1,108,774,000	1,138,397,400	1,163,549,900
Less: Backpayments for Prior Year Shortfalls	-	-	-	-
Less: Carryforward to Next Year	(118,052,500)	(55,438,700)	(91,866,700)	(58,177,500)
Net Revenues Available for Current Year	1,014,405,000	1,053,335,300	1,046,530,700	1,105,372,400
Weighted Student Count	1,338,889	1,330,790	1,322,193	1,313,380
Available Funding Per Weighted Pupil -- Cash	\$758	\$792	\$792	\$842
Cumulative Prior Year Shortfall Per Pupil	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Available Funding Per Weighted Pupil -- Budget Capacity	\$758	\$792	\$792	\$842