

April 17, 2019

The State Auditor's recent "report" is an egregious misrepresentation of the facts on K-12 school spending.

Here is the actual data:

- The auditor selectively presents numbers to make it appear as though growth in administrative spending greatly exceeded growth in instructional spending. The truth is that when all non-instructional spending is compared to all instructional spending, the growth is very similar, 13.38% versus 12.27%.
- From FY2007 to FY2017, the time period that the auditor's report spans, cumulative inflation was 18.2%.
- From FY2007 to FY2017, state funding for PreK-12 education increased by 9.54%.
- From FY2007 to FY2017, state funding for the entire state budget (without federal funds) increased by 39%.
- From FY2007 to FY2017, state funding for the rest of the state budget, all agencies excluding PreK-12, increased by 50%.
- Within K-12 appropriation bills for the reporting period, funding for MAEP – which provides the funding for teacher salaries – increased by 12.27%, well below the 18% cumulative inflation for the period.
- Of the MAEP appropriation, 99.55% is required to cover the cost of teachers' salaries and benefits statewide (no administrator salaries or operational costs included).
- Within K-12 appropriation bills for FY2007-FY2017, funds for pet projects and lobbyists' vendor projects increased by more than 500%. These pet projects include MCOPS, ESA vouchers, Stride, Life Tracks, Amplify, Magee Enterprise Learning Inc, New Learning Resources, & Smart Lab, among others.
- Using the auditor's argument that spending should track K-12 enrollment, if MAEP funding had tracked inflation and also had been reduced by 2.37% decline in enrollment, the MAEP appropriation would have been \$69M more than the Legislature provided in FY2017 – enough for a \$3,250 pay raise for every teacher.
- If MAEP had increased by the same amount as the overall state budget from FY2007 to FY2017 (39%), the MAEP appropriation would have been \$900M more than the Legislature provided – enough for a \$23,000 pay raise for every teacher.
- Among expenditures the auditor suggests should have been spent on teacher salaries are school construction, federal funds, debt service, 16th section land maintenance, and school lunches.