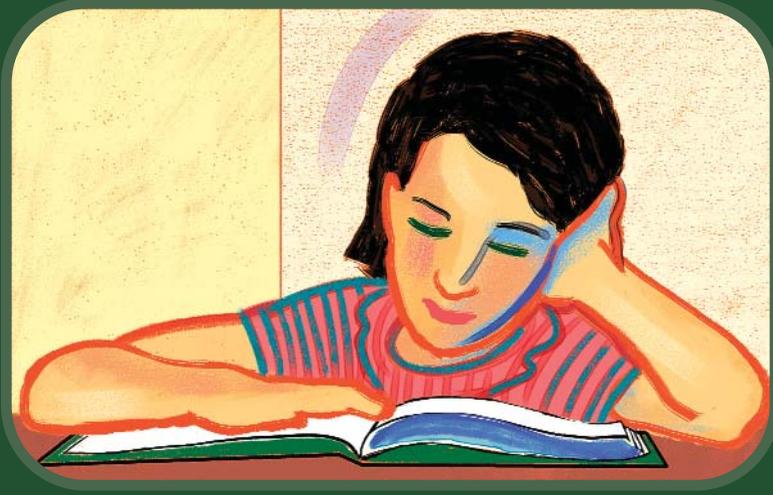


Charlotte Advocates for Education



*Our children,
Our money.*

Community Guide to Understanding the
School Budget



Vision

Charlotte Advocates for Education is an independent advocate that works to empower the community to improve and ensure quality public education for every child.

Mission

The mission of Charlotte Advocates for Education is to define the issues and advocate for the changes required to permanently improve the quality of public education in Mecklenburg County.

What is this Guide about?

This Guide is designed to introduce you to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) budget and to explain how it works.

In a district this big, the budget may seem hard to understand, but the Guide breaks the budget into its main components, making it less complicated. We'll look at where the money comes from, how the money's used, and how you can get involved in school budget decisions.

Who is this Guide for?

The Guide is for parents, voters, taxpayers, residents, and students—everyone who wants to learn about Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and how we pay for them.

Did you know?

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is a large, complex enterprise with an Annual Budget of **\$772 million**.

- **CMS covers as much floor space as 10 Bank of America Corporate Towers** and employs more workers in Mecklenburg County than the Carolinas HealthCare System or Bank of America.

- CMS has two types of funding, each with different sources:

Operating funds cover day-to-day expenses and make up the Annual Budget. The **Annual Budget** is used for *operating expenses only* (not capital expenses) and is paid for by county, state, and federal governments.

Capital funds cover large expenses like buildings, computers, and major repairs, and are paid for by bonds passed by voters.

- Of the three major sources of funding for the Annual Budget, only county funding can be used to address locally identified needs.

- Although in theory the state pays for the basic operations of the schools, **Mecklenburg County ranks 101st out of 117 school districts in state per pupil funding**. That's why 34% of the total Mecklenburg County budget goes for school-related expenses.

- CMS does not prepare specific budgets for individual schools.

- **Most CMS spending is on salaries and benefits**—together they make up almost 85% of the Annual Budget.

- Since 1996, CMS has received \$859.5 million in bonds to build new schools, repair and replace aging systems, and upgrade schools to meet CMS baseline educational standards.

- As of Fall 2002, **87% of schools do not meet CMS standards** defined to ensure all students receive an equitable education.

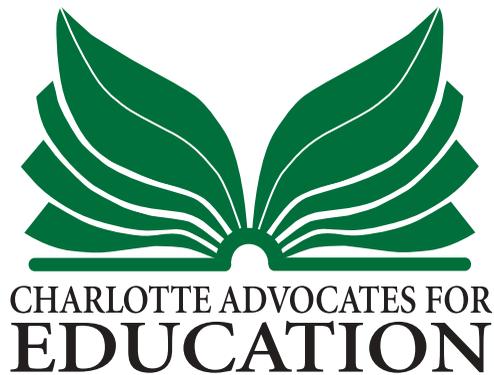
- By 2012, CMS will need 23 new schools and 628 additional classrooms at existing schools.

- Schools need adequate funding, but money must also be targeted for resources and programs proven to help students achieve. CMS uses the **Balanced Scorecard** to report on schools' progress. This tracks our return on investment of **our money, for our children**.

Read inside to find out more.



Community Guide to Understanding the
School Budget



Dear Community Member,

Charlotte Advocates for Education believes that a well-informed citizenry is a crucial ingredient in the recipe for sustained school improvement. Citizens armed with facts make better decisions in the voting booth, are able to clarify key points for their neighbors, and are equipped with enough information to ask important questions and monitor results.

Each year taxpayers, educators, and consumers in general seek to unravel the mysteries of the CMS budget. The *Community Guide to Understanding the School Budget* has been developed to give Mecklenburg County citizens a common baseline of information about how our public schools are funded.

The Guide seeks to make some very large numbers concrete. As the Guide is produced in years to come, we hope it will serve as a tool to help our community monitor our schools and make sure we all are getting the best return possible on our investment in the future—our children.

As you read this document, we expect that you may have additional questions. Explore the resources at the back of the Guide, call Charlotte Advocates for Education at 704-335-0100, or email us at ourchildrenourmoney@advocatesfored.org with your questions or comments. We will help you find the answer.

Margaret Carnes

Managing Director, Charlotte Advocates for Education

Effective public engagement in our schools means the entire community not only invests its resources, but also invests time, energy, and expertise to ensure quality education for all our children.

Mecklenburg County's many civic, government, and business leaders, as well as education advocates and individuals, make this investment daily. They have also helped make the *Community Guide to Understanding the School Budget* possible. Thanks particularly to three Charlotte Advocates for Education board members who gave their time and knowledge to ensure that this Guide would be accurate and valuable to our community: Robert Byrd, Grant Thornton, LLP; Kit Cramer, Charlotte Chamber of Commerce; and Lee Keesler, Wachovia Corporation.

And finally, special gratitude to our community's corporations who support education throughout the year. Without corporate citizens such as Allen Tate Realtors, Bank of America, Duke Energy, The Charlotte Observer, Wachovia, and many others, the health of our public schools would suffer. As Louis V. Gerstner, Jr. said in his book *Reinventing Education: Entrepreneurship in America's Public Schools*:

". . . Business interest [in schools] is simply in having an educated citizenry that can take its place alongside the world's best workforce. . . without business pressure to improve the schools there will be no one else to act. And if no one acts, the schools will ultimately fail to change, and fail to prepare our students and citizens adequately for the next century."



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CMS Snapshot

In the 2001-2002 school year, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools received a budget of about \$772 million from state, federal, and local sources. The year before, voters approved a \$275.5 million county bond referendum. **Where does this money go?**

The CMS Annual Budget is used to teach students, transport them to and from school, feed them breakfast and lunch, and maintain school buildings and grounds. It sponsors special programs like Magnet Schools, Summer School, and Bilingual Education. It's used to train teachers and other staff, and pay their health and pension benefits. Meanwhile, bond funds pay for building new schools, renovating and modernizing existing facilities, and upgrading schools' technology infrastructure.



By any measure, CMS is a major economic force within the region. From Davidson to Pineville, 145 schools serve county residents; the district covers an area of 541 total square miles. The Chamber of Commerce ranks CMS as the county's second-largest employer, with more than 13,000 employees.¹ If you compared CMS funding to the sales volume of a business, it would easily rank within the twenty largest companies headquartered in Mecklenburg County.²

CMS is the largest school district in North Carolina and the 23rd largest in the nation.

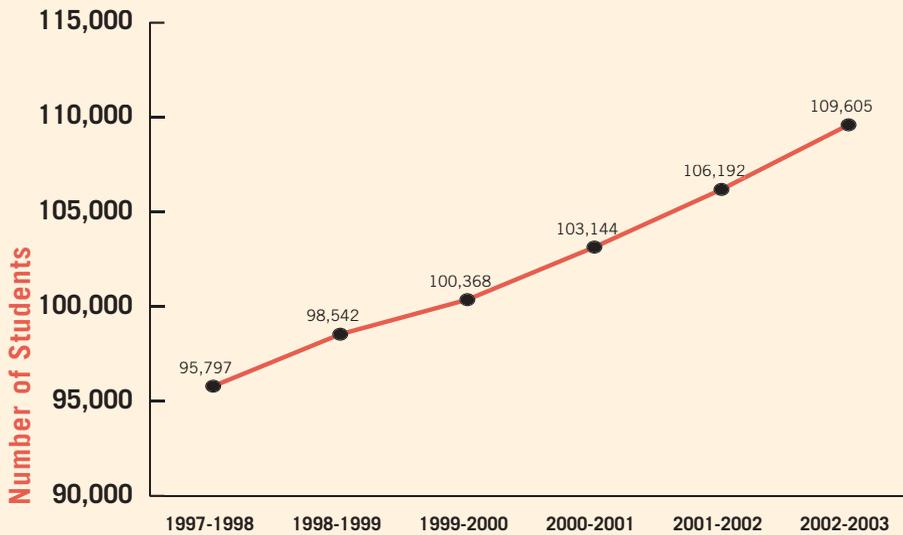
Number of Schools In Use

Elementary Schools	88
Middle Schools	29
High Schools	17
Special Programs.	11
Total Number of Schools	145

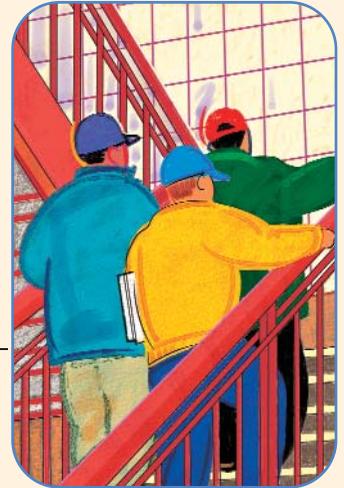
¹ Personnel number from CMS Human Resources Department

² Reference USA Business Database

Enrollment Growth in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*



* Figures based on CMS 20th day enrollments.



As Charlotte's population has climbed in recent years, the school system has struggled to keep pace. During the same five years (1997-1998 to 2001-2002) when Mecklenburg County gained over 87,000 residents,¹ school enrollment grew by 10.9%. In 2000-2001, CMS was the largest school district in North Carolina,² and the 23rd largest in the nation.

Student to Teacher Ratio

CMS Average Student:Teacher Ratio	16 : 1
National Average	16 : 1
Southeast Average	15 : 1
Average in Large Urban Districts	17 : 1

NOTE: CMS student:teacher ratios vary across the district according to grade level, classroom characteristics, and special needs.

Source: Educational Research Service (ERS)

¹ Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

² North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

CMS QUICK FACTS*

English as a Second Language Students.	5.9%
Students with Disabilities.	11.3%
Gifted and Talented.	14.0%
Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. . . .	36.1%

Ethnic Distribution

African-American	42.2%
Asian	4.4%
Hispanic	5.9%
Native American/Multiracial	1.3%
White	46.2%

At the center of this massive organization are our children. Most businesses have a single overriding concern: the bottom line. CMS has a far broader objective: ensuring excellence and equity in education for more than 109,000 students.

How does CMS distribute its funds to meet this goal? What sources of money—federal, state, or county—fund which type of services? As a taxpayer, you’ve made a major investment in the future of children in Mecklenburg County. What level of quality do your tax and bond dollars provide? Who makes school budget decisions, and how can you get involved? You’ll find out in the sections ahead.

The Two Sides of School Funding

Before examining the school budget in detail, you'll need to understand the difference between the two basic types of funding that the school system receives. Although separate in their sources and the types of expenses each pays for, both kinds of funding are equally important to the school system.



Operating funds pay for the day-to-day expenses of running the school system, like salaries, supplies, transportation, and utilities. Operating expenses are paid out of the CMS **Annual Budget**,* which is funded through a mix of county, state, and federal tax dollars.



Capital funds pay for design and construction of new schools, expansion of existing schools, and major renovation and replacement of older facilities to meet educational standards. Capital expenses are paid using **bonds**, where voters authorize the state or county to borrow money. Bonds are then paid for over a number of years through taxes.

* Whenever this Guide refers to the CMS **Annual Budget**, this means the budget for *operating expenses only*. Capital expenses are not part of the Annual Budget. Instead they are paid for with county and state bonds, usually issued every two to three years.

Each year, the school system must decide on its Annual Budget. The CMS Superintendent and department heads work together to create a tentative budget, which they then present to the Board of Education. The Board reviews and amends the budget before submitting it to the Board of County Commissioners, who may make additional adjustments to the funding level before final approval.

Factors affecting the budget include:

- The economy
- Growth in the district
- Public input
- New initiatives that support goals and objectives from the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), a process for defining and measuring performance standards.

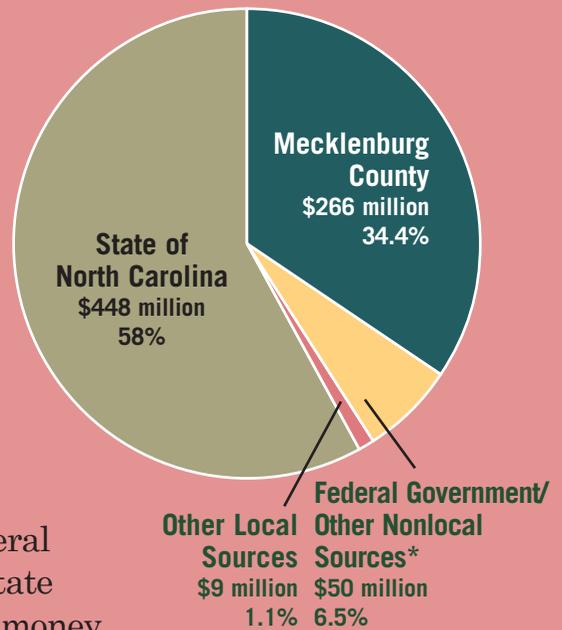
Relatively little funding is discretionary.

More than half of the school system's total annual budget comes from the state of North Carolina. Less than seven percent comes from federal sources.

CMS is not free to spend the state and federal dollars it receives any way it wishes. For state funds (and even more so for federal funds) money must be used for certain types of expenses and spending must follow certain guidelines.

The bulk of state dollars goes toward teachers' salaries and benefits. Federal money pays for more targeted programs. County funds go toward day-to-day operating expenses like maintenance, equipment, transportation, textbooks, administration, and support services. The county also supplements teachers' pay and benefits, to attract and keep the best and brightest teachers.

Total 2001-2002 School Budget
\$772,485,562



* May include specialty grants and corporate donations as well as federal funding.

NOTE: Budget shown above is CMS April 9, 2002 Amended Budget. It does not show final numbers.

Here are some U.S. companies similar in financial size to the CMS system:

Organization	Annual Revenue
Samsonite	\$736 M *
eBay	\$749 M **
CMS	\$772 M ***
Columbia Sportswear	\$780 M **

* Fiscal year ending January 31, 2002 ** Fiscal year ending December 31, 2001
*** Fiscal year ending June 30, 2002

Source: FISonline Database





In theory, the North Carolina state government pays for the basic operations of public schools in the state. In practice, the state contribution does not cover all these costs, and local government must make up the difference.

Since the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education does not have the power to tax citizens directly in support of schools, it must ask the County Commission for funds each year. County revenues come from several different sources, including property tax on homes and businesses, county sales tax, and fees, fines, and permits. In 2001-2002, about \$348 million, or 34% of the total county budget, went to school-related expenses.

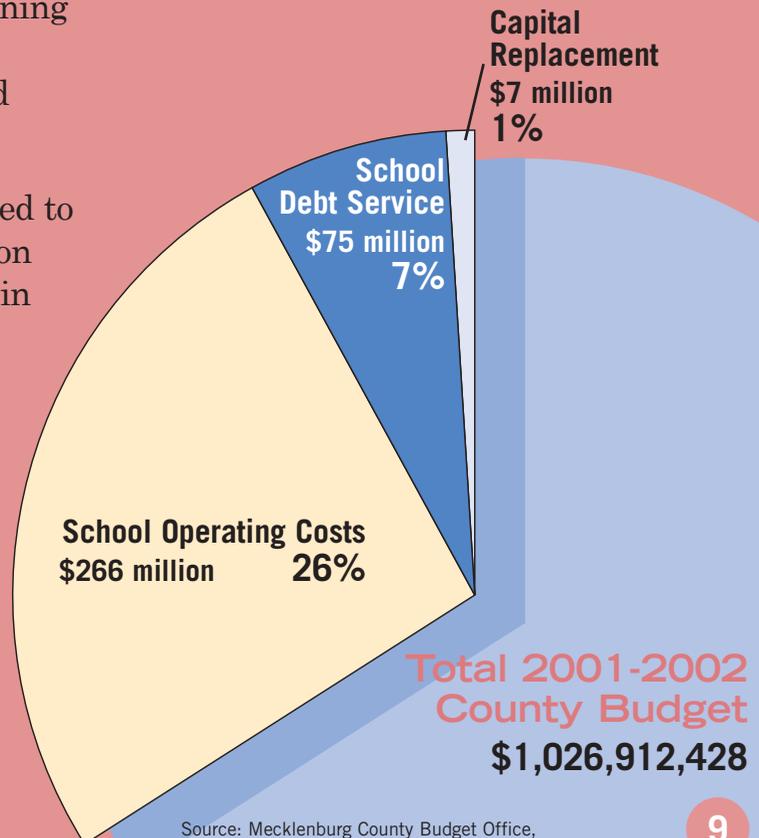
The county's yearly budget pays for three kinds of school expenses:

School Operating Costs: The county's contribution to the CMS Annual Budget. This money pays for the basic, day-to-day costs of running schools, including salary supplements for teachers and maintenance of facilities.

School Debt Service: Money used to repay interest and principal on bonds that have been issued in the past for major school construction and renovation. The county uses current tax dollars to pay off bond debts.

Capital Replacement: "Pay-as-you-go" repair and replacement funds for roofs, heating and air conditioning systems, and other expensive items.

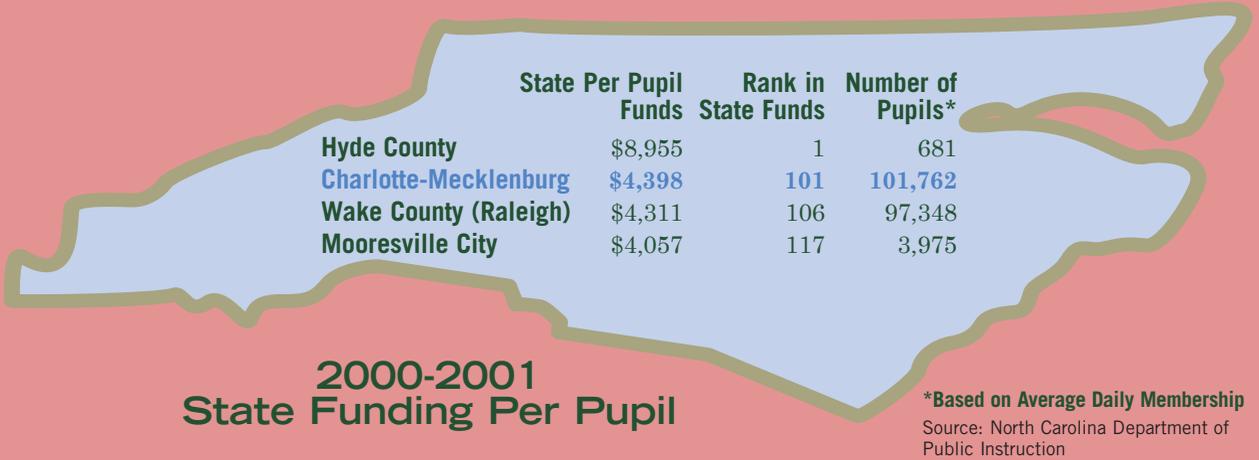
In 2000-2001, Mecklenburg County contributed the 5th largest amount of local funding per pupil, out of 117 North Carolina school districts.¹



¹ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Source: Mecklenburg County Budget Office, FY 01-02 Adopted Budget

Each year, North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction divides more than \$5 billion in funds among 117 school districts, including Charlotte-Mecklenburg.



The money each district receives depends on a complex set of formulas that consider the number of students, special needs of the district, income level, and many other factors. Most state funding is categorical and must be used for specific programs. CMS usually ranks near the bottom in per-pupil funds received from the state: **101st out of 117 in the 2000-2001 school year.** Here’s why:

- **CMS is the state’s largest district.** Other school districts with large numbers of students are also near the bottom of the list while Hyde County—a district with a tiny student population—is at the top. Many of the state’s formulas provide a base amount of funds to every district, regardless of size. This base amount represents less per pupil in larger districts. Also, some small districts get special funding supplements.
- **Mecklenburg County is one of the state’s wealthiest counties.** Its 2000 per capita income was \$37,737, the highest in the state.¹ Many of the state’s formulas provide more funding for districts in poorer counties.

While total state funding for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has increased, the state’s share of the CMS budget has dropped over the past five years—from 64.4% of the total school budget in 1997-1998 to only 58% in 2001-2002.





Even more than state funds, almost all federal funds are earmarked for very specific programs. CMS received only \$45 million from the federal government for the 2001-2002 school year.

Some of the federal funds, like Title I, are given out based on formulas reflecting the makeup of the CMS student population. For other resources, like magnet school funds, the school system must submit competitive grant applications. Federal funds also go to the district's Child Nutrition program, which provides free or reduced-price meals to children in need.

2001-2002 Federal Funding for CMS

Program	(dollars in millions)
Child Nutrition Program (school lunches and breakfasts)*	\$18.6
Title VI (students with disabilities)	\$17.8
Title I (for economically disadvantaged students)	\$11.2
Class Size Reduction	\$2.4
Magnet Schools	\$2.1
21st Century Grant (for a school-based community learning center)	\$1.2
Career and Technical Education	\$1.1
Title-B (preschool students with disabilities)	\$0.9
Safe and Drug Free Schools	\$0.7
Emergency Immigrant Assistance	\$0.4
Other	\$7.2

* Not included in \$45 million 2001-2002 federal funding total, because it goes to a separate Child Nutrition Enterprise Fund.

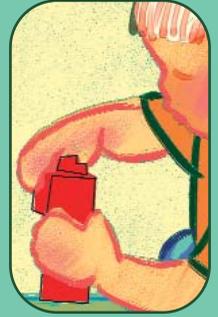
Other Local



Other local resources, such as police auctions, also benefit Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Police sales, together with indirect charges to other funds, tuition revenues, private donations, earnings on investments, and other sources, amount to about \$9 million, or a little more than one percent of the 2001-2002 Annual Budget.



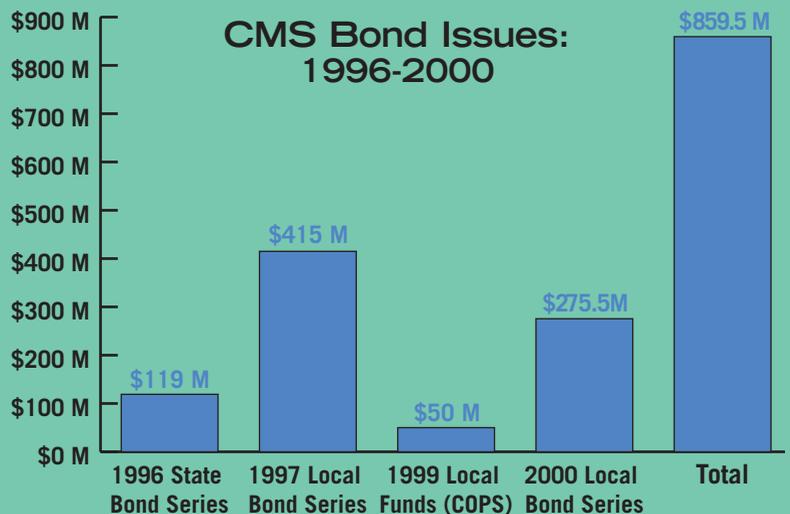
While money for schools' day-to-day expenses comes from the Annual Budget, money for building, renovating, and expanding schools comes from bonds. Bonds allow us to complete a project now and get full use from the investment while we're gradually paying back its costs.



Since 1996, CMS has received about \$860 million in state and local dollars for capital funding. Of that money, 70% has been invested in capital projects; the remaining 30% is slated for future projects, but not yet spent. Because large construction projects are phased in over a number of years, schools must start planning for future needs now, while current projects are still underway. Here's how the capital funding process works:

- CMS links school planning to demographic forecasts and planned community development like roads, transit, water, sewers, and parks.
- The Board of Education reviews requests from the CMS master plan to form the district's Capital Improvement Program.
- The Mecklenburg County Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee reviews, prioritizes, and recommends a capital program to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners.
- The Board of County Commissioners adopts a three-year capital improvement plan and decides on an amount of bonds to issue.
- County residents vote on whether to authorize the bonds in a bond referendum.
- The Board of Education appoints a citizens' Bond Oversight Committee to monitor and report to the public how the bond money is spent. Design and construction of a new school takes between two and four years.
- Once the bonds are issued, local taxes repay the bonds.

Issuing bonds for schools is a lot like the way most families buy their homes—taking out a loan today, and repaying it over time.





Three quarters of a billion dollars is a lot of money. That's about the size of the CMS Annual Budget in 2001-2002—\$772,485,562, to be exact. How do we even begin to talk about this much money? What do these funds deliver for each student, in each classroom?

One useful way to break down the Annual Budget is by the amount spent per pupil. Divide the lump sum of the 2001-02 budget by the number of students enrolled in September 2001, and you get the figure of **\$6,951 budgeted per pupil.***

Keep in mind, though, that this number reflects all of the schools' expenses divided by all their pupils. Every child is different, with different needs and different demands on the system. Some expenses are targeted to specific groups of students, like academically gifted students or students learning English as a Second Language.

*Source: Educational Resource Service (ERS).

NOTE: Sometimes school districts calculate per pupil spending differently. The CMS formula, which differs from the ERS formula, yields a budgeted per pupil figure of \$7,337.

What are other districts spending?

Here's how CMS compares in per pupil spending to nine other large urban and suburban school districts in the South.

District	2001-2002 Per Pupil Expenditure
Fairfax County, VA	\$8,916
Austin, TX	\$7,846
Virginia Beach, VA	\$7,499
Raleigh/Wake Co., NC	\$7,187
CMS	\$6,951
Jacksonville/Duval Co., FL	\$6,657
Orlando/Orange Co., FL	\$6,645
Greensboro/Guilford Co., NC	\$6,392
Louisville/Jefferson Co., KY	\$5,717
Memphis/Shelby Co., TN	\$5,675

Source: Educational Research Service (ERS)

NOTE: When calculating per-pupil spending, ERS excludes some portions of the budget, such as Pre-K programs and Capital Outlay.

CMS Per Pupil Spending, Adjusted for Inflation: 1996-2001*



*Shown in 2001 Dollars. Calculated using Average Daily Membership. Excludes Capital Outlay and pass-through to Charter Schools.

Another way to look at the Annual Budget is to break it into categories of spending. Most of this money—about 84 cents out of every dollar—goes to staff salaries and benefits.

Purchased Services

work performed by people who are not on the CMS payroll (everything from consulting to utilities)

7.56%

Materials and Supplies

easily replaceable, low-cost items, often consumed in use (paper, pencils, textbooks)

5.85%

Furniture and Equipment

durable fixed assets like computer hardware, desks, and chairs

1.96%

Other

property insurance, membership dues, depreciation, license, and title fees

1.12%

Benefits

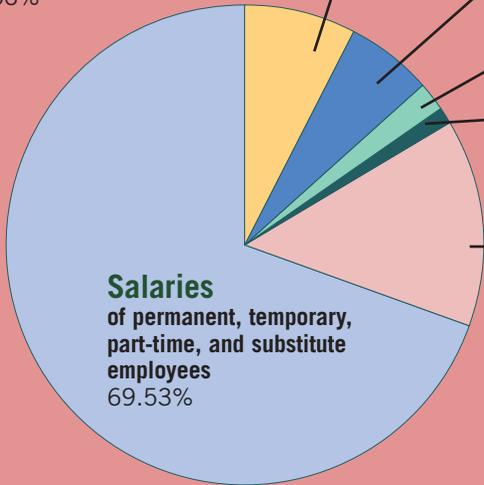
social security; pensions; health, dental, and life insurance; worker's and unemployment compensation

13.98%

Salaries

of permanent, temporary, part-time, and substitute employees

69.53%



Last year, CMS spent over \$13 million on textbooks alone.

Individual School Funding



By now, you probably have one question on your mind: "How much money does my school have to spend, and what does that money buy?"

In fact, CMS doesn't prepare specific budgets for individual schools. Funding for individual schools is determined by several factors, including number of students, number of students in special programs, and the education and experience of staff. (Salaries rise with seniority and degrees earned.)

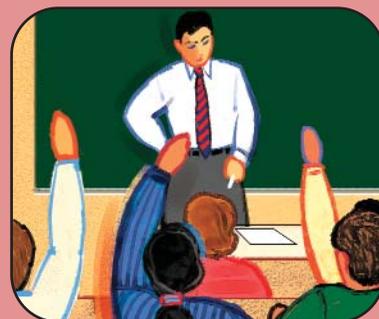
Through the EquityPlus II program, schools with high levels of "at risk" students can receive extra staff, incentives, supplies, and materials.

CMS is implementing baseline standards for facilities, technology, materials and equipment, faculty, and student:teacher ratios. While all schools are making progress, EquityPlus II schools (49 in 2002-2003) are rapidly reaching these goals. As of Fall 2002, all EquityPlus II high schools are at baseline standards in instructional materials, media equipment, instructional technology, AV resources, and co-curricular activities.



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is the county's second-largest employer, with 13,281 employees as of October 2001. About 93% of staff members work in schools. Of the school-based employees, 6,927—or more than half—are teachers. The rest are administrators, guidance counselors, librarians, teachers' aides, bus drivers and other support staff.

The average CMS teacher salary was \$40,441 in November 2001. CMS also paid benefits like health insurance, pensions, and life insurance worth \$8,899 for each teacher. But an individual teacher's salary is based on many factors. Most of a teacher's salary is determined by North Carolina's salary schedule. To attract the best and brightest teachers, Mecklenburg County supplements these funds, adding 13 to 17 cents for every dollar paid by the state. Teachers earn more as they gain experience and credentials like masters' degrees and doctorates. They can also earn bonuses for serving in "critical needs" areas and for the overall performance of their school.



How does CMS compare?

District	2001-2002 Average Salary
Fairfax County, VA	\$50,712
Memphis/Shelby Co., TN	\$43,258
Louisville/Jefferson Co., KY	\$43,220
CMS*	\$40,441
Austin, TX	\$39,298
Virginia Beach, VA	\$38,892
Jacksonville/Duval Co., FL	\$38,646
Greensboro/Guilford Co., NC	\$38,510
Orlando/Orange Co., FL	\$38,149
Raleigh/Wake Co., NC	\$34,188
National Average	\$43,802
Southeast Average	\$38,514
Average for Large Urban Districts	\$45,049

* CMS figure. All other districts' average salary data is from Educational Research Service (ERS).

CMS Teacher Facts

Minimum Salary*	\$28,532
Average Salary	\$40,441
Maximum Salary	\$68,925

Years of Experience	% of Teachers with
Less than 1	12%
1-3	20%
4-8	21%
9-15	15%
16-24	17%
25 or More	15%

Highest Degree Earned	% of Teachers with
Bachelor	67%
Master	31%
Advanced Certificate	1%
Doctorate	1%

* Minimum salary generally reflects a new teacher's starting salary.

Minimum, Average, and Maximum Salary for 2001-02; all other data for 2000-01.

On any given school day, about 7 in 10 CMS students ride the bus. CMS is one of the ten largest transportation districts in the nation, moving an estimated 65,000 students approximately 17,000,000 miles per year.

CMS buses covered more than twice as many miles last year as the Charlotte city bus system.

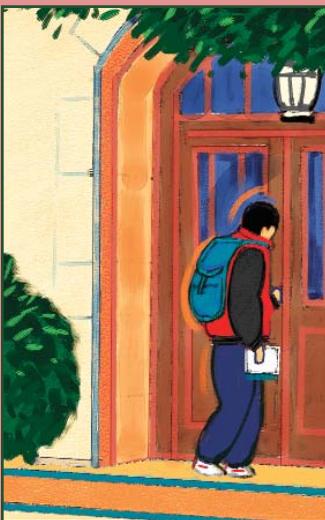
Miles traveled last year	17,000,000
Number of active yellow buses	1,020
Number of students transported daily	65,000
Cost per mile*	\$1.83
Average cost of a yellow bus	\$62,000
Average life of a school bus	165,000 miles or 13 years

*2000-2001 School Year

Maintenance



CMS buildings and mobile units cover more than 15 million square feet—over 10 times the floor space of the Bank of America Corporate Center.



That’s a lot of space to clean, and a lot of systems to keep working. Maintenance responsibilities include carpentry, painting, roofing, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, pest control, mechanics, and welding. Meanwhile, custodial services employees keep **more than 520 buildings** clean.

Building Services received **over 47,500 work orders** last year. As with any home or office building, costs depend not only on the size and number of facilities, but also on their age. The average age of a CMS school building is nearly 30 years old.



Every day, the Child Nutrition program serves about 18,000 breakfasts and 54,000 lunches to students and staff members. That adds up to nearly 13 million meals per school year. CMS food service staff also prepare snacks for After School Enrichment programs and cater for school events.

Child Nutrition staff members include registered dietitians, administrative support staff, and cafeteria managers and workers—1,200 employees in all. Meals are transported to locations without operational kitchen facilities. Serving food at each of the district’s 145 schools requires a lot of equipment and planning resources.

Think of the Child Nutrition program as a chain of **145 restaurants** operating within Mecklenburg County—**that’s more than the number of McDonald’s, Burger King, Bojangles, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and Wendy’s restaurants in Charlotte combined!**

CMS Food Facts

Meals served daily	72,000
Meals served per school year	12,960,000
Child Nutrition employees	1,200
Cafeteria equipment costs per school:	
Elementary	\$200,000
Middle	\$250,000
High School	\$300,000



Last school year, students ate 2,052,000 servings of pizza and drank 5,896,000 cartons of 1% reduced-fat chocolate milk.



Most instruction dollars in the CMS Annual Budget go to regular classroom teaching, but a substantial amount supports programs that target students with special needs or characteristics, like children with disabilities or academically gifted students.

CMS is required by state and federal law to provide many of these programs. Most of their funding comes from federal and state sources. Some of the largest programs in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are shown below:



Program		2001-02 Budget (in millions)
Exceptional Children	Programs and services for students with a variety of special needs	\$65.4
Bright Beginnings	Pre-K skills program for at-risk children	\$18.4
Alternative Schools	Schools for students with behavior problems or who are at risk of dropping out	\$14.8
Extended Year	School year and summer programs to help students who have fallen behind	\$12.3
After School Enrichment*	Before- and after-school care provided for children in Pre-K through middle school	\$11.7
Bilingual Education	Programs for students with limited English proficiency	\$4.8
Gifted and Talented	Programs for academically gifted students	\$4.6
Title I **	Programs for economically disadvantaged students	\$3.1
Magnet Schools	Theme-based educational programs offered at several CMS sites	\$2.3
ROTC	Program to develop knowledge in basic military skills and branches of service	\$1.7
International Baccalaureate	Internationally recognized accelerated program of learning	\$0.9

* 2001-2002 Operating Expenses shown. This program supports itself almost entirely through fees parents pay for their children's before- and after-school care.

** Does not include Title I funds for Bright Beginnings.



By the end of the decade, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will hold more than 160,000 students. This increase alone—50,000 new students in eight years—equals the total student population of the fourth largest school district in the state.



Many CMS schools are already overflowing. Currently, over 10,000 CMS students attend classes in more than 560 mobile classrooms; 178 of the mobile units are 35 years old or older.

In the 2001-2002 school year, CMS had six high schools with a student population greater than 2000. At the start of the 2002-2003 year, 10 of our 145 schools are expected to be at or above 120% capacity.¹ CMS must use capital funds to plan and build new schools to accommodate this growing population.

CMS CONSTRUCTION FACTS

Between January 1, 2000 and August 31, 2001, CMS...

Installed **12,170,000 pounds of steel**—enough to complete construction of Ericsson Stadium with a ton to spare.

Laid down **1,755,262 feet of data cable**—enough to wrap around Lowe's Motor Speedway 221 times.

Used **9,605 gallons of paint**—enough to coat the average University Area home more than 1,392 times.

Laid **3,594,400 bricks**—enough to build a path from Charlotte to Atlanta and back.

Poured **55,095 cubic yards of concrete**—enough to fill Ovens Auditorium from floor to ceiling.

Installed **65,535 square feet of carpet**—more than enough to completely cover the playing field at Ericsson Stadium.

Put in **434,916 feet of pipe and conduit**—equal to the height of 499 Bank of America Corporate Centers stacked on top of each other.

Source: Bovis Lend Lease, Inc.



¹ Charlotte Advocates for Education

Growth isn't the only factor affecting capital decisions. CMS has established baseline educational standards to ensure that all students have access to a clean, safe, and healthy environment.

These standards are designed to produce schools equipped for all required curriculum needs. They address areas like capacity; space usage; and federal, state, and local requirements. For instance, all new high schools must have 21,500 to 30,800 square feet of classroom space; ten science laboratories; a media center; and visual arts, music, and theater space.

Only 13% of CMS schools meet baseline educational standards.

As of Fall 2002, 13% of schools meet these baseline standards. According to the U.S. Department of Education, numerous studies have shown that substandard facilities can affect students' learning as well as health and morale. One study showed an 11% drop in achievement test scores for students in substandard buildings—even after correcting for other factors like income level.¹

To meet these needs, CMS is building new schools—and replacing, renovating, and expanding old ones. Here's what our current bond initiatives buy:

1996 State Bonds	23 Renovations/Expansions	\$119 M
1997 County Bonds	10 New Schools 46 Renovations/Expansions	\$415 M
1999 Certificates of Participation (COPS)	2 New Schools 5 Renovations/Expansions	\$50 M
2000 County Bonds	4 New Schools 22 Renovations/Expansions	\$275.5 M

If approved by voters, the proposed \$224 million 2002 County Bonds will pay for additions at 19 more schools, 1 new middle school, renovations and repairs at 39 schools, plus designs for 4 new schools and 8 renovations. But that's only the beginning. **In its 2002 Capital Needs Assessment, CMS predicts that by 2012, we'll need 23 new schools and 628 new classrooms at existing schools.**

¹ "Building Conditions, Parental Involvement and Student Achievement in the D.C. Public School System," Edwards, Maureen M. (1991)



In addition to building new classrooms and bringing old ones up to standard, capital funds also pay for major replacements and repairs of school facilities.

School roofs, plumbing, and ventilation systems generally need to be replaced every 20 to 25 years. Failure to do so can result in unreliable systems and disruptions and loss of class time. The average age of a CMS school building is nearly 30 years old. This means that CMS has systems to replace every year. The annual operating budget can cover routine maintenance and small repairs, but not the cost of installing brand new systems.

School needs have also changed drastically since the 1960s and '70s. Four decades ago, there were no personal computers, few kindergarten classrooms, and no laws guaranteeing access to the disabled. Increasingly, parents and students also demand higher-quality athletic facilities and more parking space.

TYPICAL AREAS OF UPKEEP

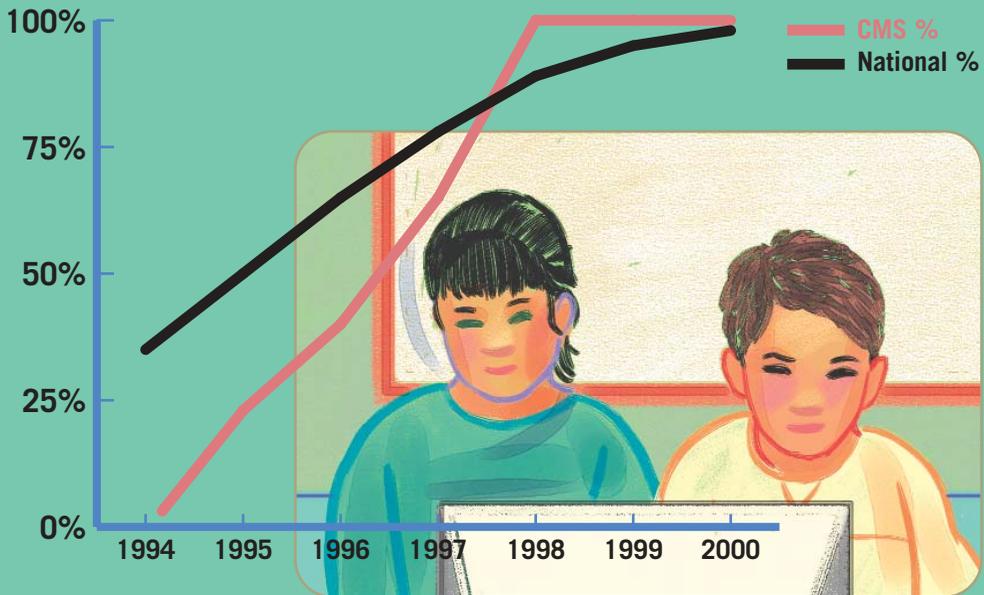
- Roof replacement
- Plumbing and fixture replacement
- Track and parking lot resurfacing
- Mobile classroom replacement
- Stadium renovations
- Replacement of heating and air-conditioning systems

New computers, software, Internet access, firewalls, data cabling, electrical wiring, furniture, training, maintenance, and upgrades... these are some of the recent technology investments CMS has made in its schools.

In general, bond money goes toward creating technology infrastructure: network cabling, electrical wiring, and new workstations in new schools and renovated classrooms. Meanwhile, money for training, and for maintaining and replacing older computers in existing classrooms, comes from the Annual Budget.

The role and demand for technology in schools has changed tremendously in the past ten years, largely due to the growth of the Internet. In 1994, just 35% of U.S. public schools had Internet access; in 2000, the figure was 98%.

On average, students who used computers ranked 14 percentile points higher on achievement tests.



Public Schools with Internet Access
Fall 1994 – Fall 2000

National data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Fast Response Survey System, Internet Access in U.S. Public Schools and Classrooms: 1994-2000." (2001)



A growing body of research points to the benefits of technology in learning. In one analysis of more than 500 different research studies, students who used computers in school ranked an average of 14 percentile points higher on achievement tests than those who did not.¹



¹ "Meta-Analytic Studies of Findings on Computer-Based Instruction," Kulik, James A. (1999)

CMS Technology Facts

Students per computer	6 : 1
Average age of a CMS computer	5 years
Schools with full data cabling	82%
Schools with Internet access	100%

Other Capital Expenses



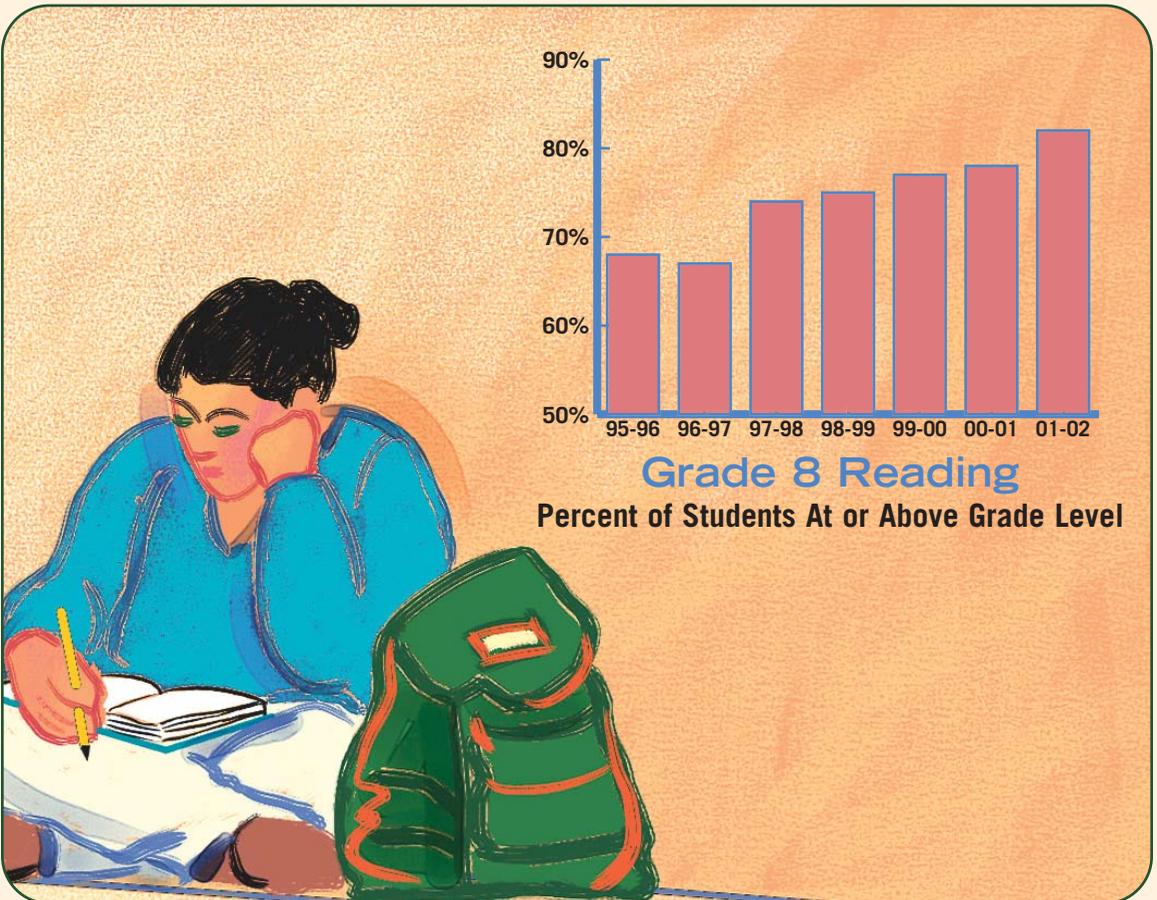
Capital spending buys more than just buildings and computers. In addition to building technology infrastructure in schools, capital funds help schools meet the requirements of new laws. Federal and local mandates include asbestos removal, the Americans with Disabilities Act, water usage compliance, and fire alarm system upgrades.

What Does the Budget Buy Us?

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools have made solid gains in the past seven years. Reading and math scores are up, and the achievement gap has narrowed for African-American students and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch.

More high school students are taking college-level Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses. The graduating class of 2002 won \$28.9 million in academic and athletic scholarships and included 24 National Merit Semifinalists.

But CMS still has a long way to go. Using a process called the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), CMS has defined goals in five core areas: academic achievement; a safe and orderly environment; community collaboration; equity; and effective, efficient support operations.

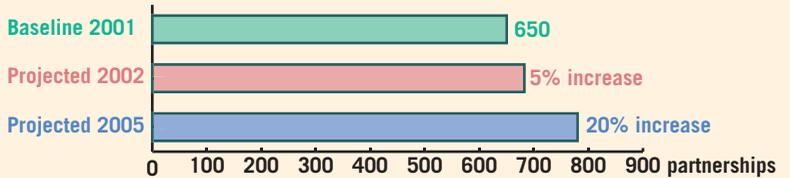


Distribution of budget funds is increasingly tied to Balanced Scorecard priorities. Specific, measurable benchmarks and targets have been defined for each objective. Using the PMOC (Plan Management Oversight Committee) process, CMS monitors its own progress in achieving these targets and reports on its findings.

Two Balanced Scorecard objectives appear below. For more information, you can contact the CMS Public Information Department at (704) 343-7450 or view the complete Balanced Scorecard on the Internet at <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/discover/goals/balancedScorecard.asp>.

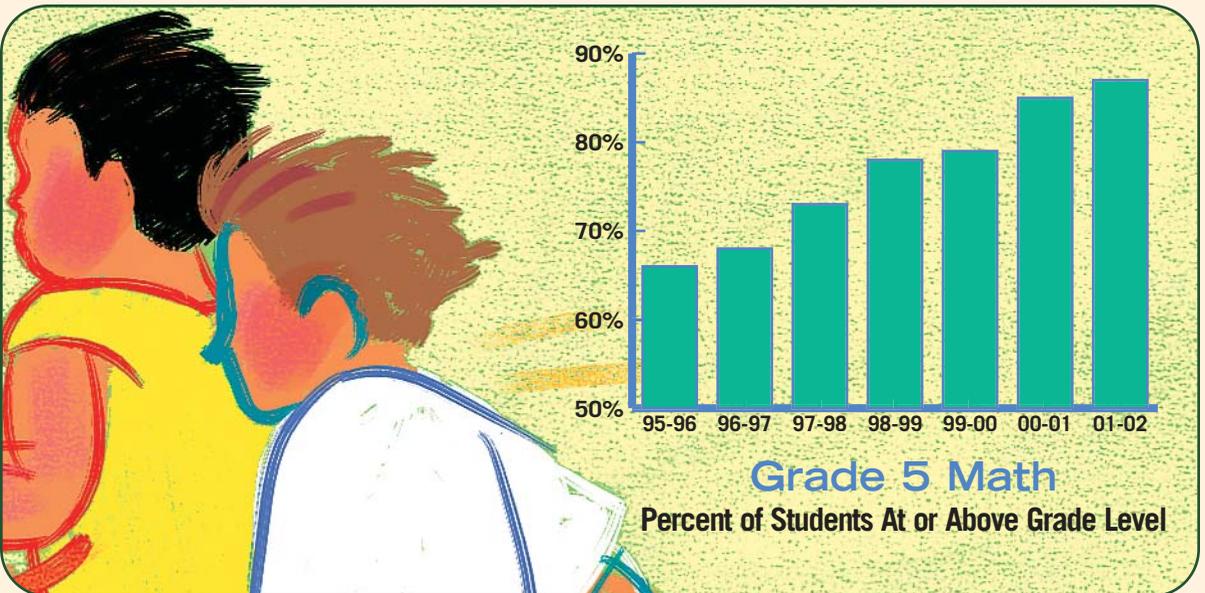
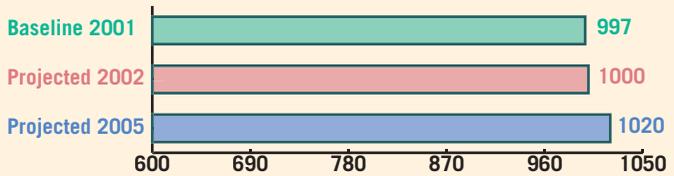
OBJECTIVE

The number of volunteers and partnerships designed to impact district goals will increase.



OBJECTIVE

The CMS average SAT score will meet or exceed the national average without reducing the percent of students taking the test.



What You Can Do

The economic boom of the late '90s is over, and the recession has squeezed state, local, and federal budgets. Where do we go from here? In large part, the answer depends on informed, involved community members like you.

You can write letters to state and local politicians and to Charlotte newspapers, telling them about the issues that matter to you. You can go to Board of Education meetings and county public hearings and comment on the school budget, live and in person. You can volunteer in the schools, sharing your own knowledge and experience and reducing the strain on school staff.

Most of all, you can stay informed about school budget issues—throughout the school year. **Know** where your education dollars are going. **Know** how schools are performing. **Know** politicians' voting records. And **bring that knowledge with you** when you vote for the School Board, the County Commission, and school bond referendums.

Budget Calendar



November-February

The superintendent and department heads gather input and draw up a tentative budget.

March

The superintendent presents the budget to the Board of Education. The Board of Education revises the budget. **A public hearing on the CMS budget takes place.**

April-May

The Board of Education presents the CMS Budget Request to the County Commissioners. **A public hearing on the county budget takes place.**

June

The County Commissioners approve the Mecklenburg County budget.

June-September

The state legislature approves the state budget.

June-September

Congress approves the federal budget.

Remember, you have a say in school budget decisions.

Writing a Letter or Email

- Writing to an elected official or newspaper is easier than it seems. The simpler and more direct your message is, the more effective your letter will be. Many politicians believe that every letter stands for many other constituents who don't take the time to write.

● Here are some tips:

● **Keep it brief.** Your letter should be one page long at most. Letters to editors at newspapers should be even shorter—about 250 words, or four short paragraphs.

● **Stay on track.** State who you are and why you're writing. Identify your issue and position clearly, and only write about one issue per letter.

Hit three big points. Choose your three strongest, most important points to support your position and persuade readers and elected officials.

Make it personal. Tell how the issue will directly impact your community. Use real-life stories. If you have children in school, talk about how a proposed budget issue might affect them, or has affected them in the past.

Don't forget to sign. Include your full name and address when writing to an elected official so they know you're a constituent. If you're mailing or faxing a letter to a newspaper editor, include a signature; many newspapers won't publish a letter without one. (Obviously you don't need a signature on an email.) Also list a phone number in case the paper wants to contact you.

Sample Letter to an Elected Official

[Today's Date]

[Official's Name and Title]

[Official's Address]

Dear [Official];

My name is _____. I'm a resident and voter in ____ [your city, county, and/or state] _____. I am writing to you about ____ [the local, statewide, or national education issue that concerns you] ____, an issue of vital importance to our community. ____ [State your position here.] ____

[Reason # 1 for your position] _____

[Reason # 2 for your position] _____

[Reason # 3 for your position] _____

[If you have children in school, mention their age[s] and also where they go to school.] This issue affects our children directly. As a concerned citizen [and parent], I urge you to ____ [the position you want the official to support or vote for] ____.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your Phone Number]

Contacts

Share your views on the education and budget issues that concern you. Use the general addresses below, or visit official websites to find a specific school board member, commissioner, or representative.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Draws up initial CMS budget request and plans for long-term growth.

<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us>

Write to:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Education Center
P.O. Box 30035
Charlotte, NC 28230-0035

Email: cms@cms.k12.nc.us

Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board

Reviews CMS requests for capital and operating funds and presents them to the county.

<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/boardEducation/index.asp>

Write to:

CMS Policy Administrator
701 East Second St.
P.O. Box 30035
Charlotte, NC 28230-0035

Email: cmspolicy@cms.k12.nc.us

Fax: (704) 343-5739

Mecklenburg County Commissioners

Decides how much local money will go to schools and when to propose bond issues.

<http://www.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/comanager/directory.htm>

Write to:

Commissioners' and Manager's Office
P.O. Box 31787
Charlotte, NC 28231

Fax: (704) 336-5887

North Carolina General Assembly

Decides how much state money to spend on schools, and what requirements must be met.

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/Representation/WhoRepresentsMe/index.html>

Use the web page above to find out who represents you. Or email all legislators at:

internete-mail@ms.ncga.state.nc.us

Charlotte Observer

<http://www.charlotte.com>

Write to:

The Observer Forum
The Charlotte Observer
P.O. Box 30308
Charlotte, NC 28230-0308

Email: opinion@charlotteobserver.com

Fax: (704) 358-5022

Charlotte Post

<http://www.thecharlottepost.com>

Write to:

The Charlotte Post
1531 Camden Road
Charlotte, NC 28203

Email: charpost@mindspring.com

Fax: (704) 342-2160

Resources

Want to learn more about the issues in this Guide? Try these organizations:

Charlotte Advocates for Education

<http://www.advocatesfored.org>

(704) 335-0100

Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.charlottechamber.com/education>

(704) 378-1300

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us>

Public Information Dept.: (704) 343-7450

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org>

(919) 807-3300

Public School Forum of North Carolina

<http://www.ncforum.org>

(919) 781-6833



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Produced by Topics Education Group for Charlotte Advocates for Education.

Design: Jennifer Gaddy, Tess Gadwa

Copy: Tess Gadwa

All data courtesy of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools except where otherwise noted.

Special Thanks

Special appreciation to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools staff for their extensive cooperation in providing information for this Guide. In particular, Building Services and the Finance Office have given numerous hours helping to ensure our data is accurate.



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