

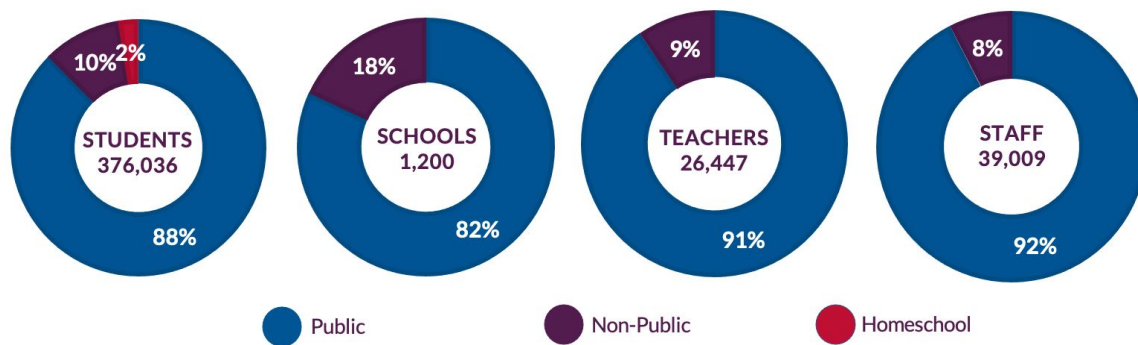
Education in Nebraska



An Overview of K-12 Schooling


As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to cultivating an informed electorate, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska has put together some of the basic facts about K-12 education in our state. On our website (<https://lwnnebraska.org/schools-101/>) you will find videos, links and resources that give an overview of K-12 education in Nebraska as well as more detailed information about four topics specific to public school: who attends our schools (students); who works in our schools (teachers, staff and administrators); what pays for our schools (funding); and what guides our schools (curriculum).

Before jumping into public school details, here is a snapshot of all K-12 education in Nebraska:



Who attends our public schools?

“Free instruction in the common schools” for all children is written into Article VII-1 of the Nebraska State Constitution. In the 2019-2020 academic year, this translated into 329,290 students attending public school in Nebraska. Of those, 7% were enrolled as English learners, 13% as gifted and 16% as special education with almost half of all students (46%) qualified for free or reduced lunch. More than 88% of Nebraska public school students graduate and of those, 75% continue on to additional education. Students of color are overrepresented in Nebraska public schools when compared to the general population.

	American Indian	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White	Two or More Races
Public School Students	1%	3%	7%	19%	66%	4%
Nebraska Population	1%	3%	5%	12%	77%	2%

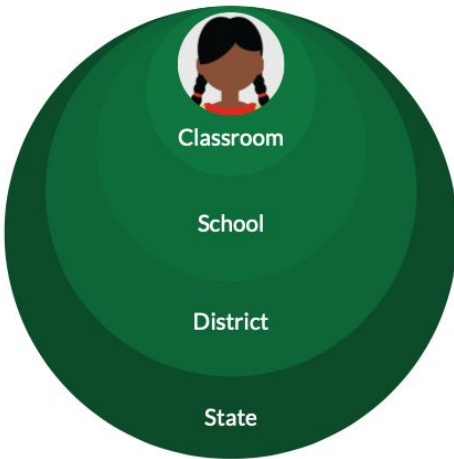


Who works in our public schools?



The 39,009 teachers and staff who work in our schools are our friends, family, neighbors, and community members. The average salary for teachers in Nebraska is \$58,140. More than half of educators have a master’s degree. Across the state, the pupil to teacher ratio range is 5 to 18 with an average of 13. Teachers manage classrooms of varying sizes, with Nebraska K-6 classes as small as 6 or as large as 31. Many of the lower pupil-to-teacher ratios and smaller classes are in rural areas where overall enrollment is lower. In addition to the classroom teachers, public schools employ staff in roughly 45 different areas such as technology coordinators, physical and occupational therapists, librarians, paraprofessionals, and counselors.

Who guides our public schools?

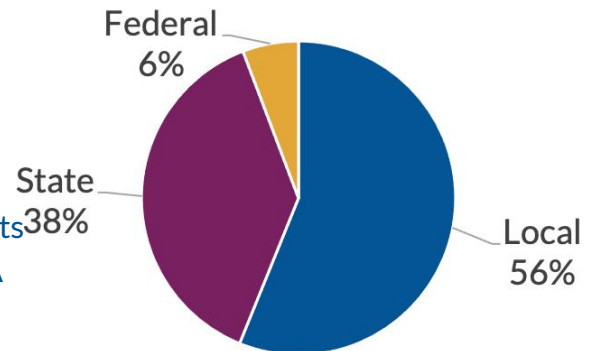


The United States is one of the most decentralized education systems meaning that almost all decisions are made at the local level.

Some decision makers, such as superintendents, teachers, and principals, are hired positions while others such as the local and state boards of education are elected. In an effort to ensure equity and access to a quality education across the state, some content areas have standards that are created at the state board level. These are usually created after engaging teachers and experts in the content areas over the course of months, if not years. How these broad guidelines are implemented falls to the individual districts, schools, and teachers.

How are our public schools paid for?

Public schools are funded by the community through a combination of local, state and federal tax. In Nebraska, local tax, specifically property tax, make up the largest portion of school funding at 56% compared to the national average of 45%. Recognizing that the strengths and challenges of districts vary, Nebraska uses an “equalization” formula called TEEOSA (Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act). This formula calculates which districts need additional state funding in order to provide an equitable education.



The League of Women Voters of Nebraska is a nonpartisan, grassroots civic organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League of Women Voters does not endorse individual political candidates or political parties. The League does work to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to people 16 years and older of all gender identities. With over 100 years of experience, the League is one of the oldest and most trusted civic nonprofit organizations in the United States.