

Answers to Key Questions about School Funding in Warren

March 2023

New Hampshire’s public school system – and the way in which money is raised to pay for it – touches the lives of all Granite Staters yet can often be difficult to understand. Listed below are a few questions you might have about how schools are funded in Warren, along with helpful facts and figures in response. After reading them, we hope you’ll better understand some of the inequities plaguing our school funding system.

What Does Warren Spend on Public Schools? How Does It Compare to Other Communities?

The 1998-99 school year was the last school year before the State of New Hampshire, in response to the Supreme Court’s *Claremont* rulings, increased the amount of aid it provides to pay for an “adequate” education. That year, Warren spent \$5,163 per elementary school student or 87% percent of what the typical (or median) town had spent. In the school year 2021-22, Warren spent \$26,962 per elementary pupil, which was 123 percent of the NH Median.

Figure 2 compares spending per elementary pupil in Warren and the state average for the past fifteen years. As it shows, spending in Warren has stayed above the state average over the last 14 years.

Figure 1

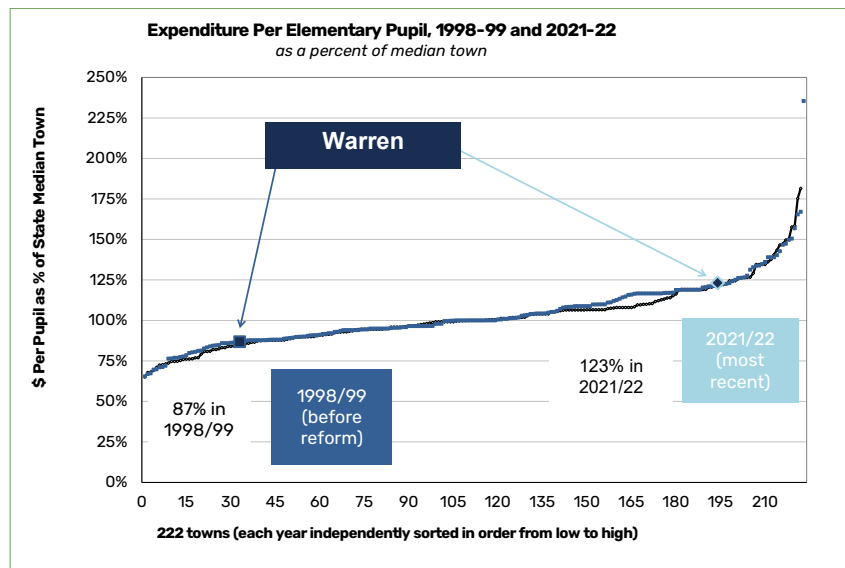
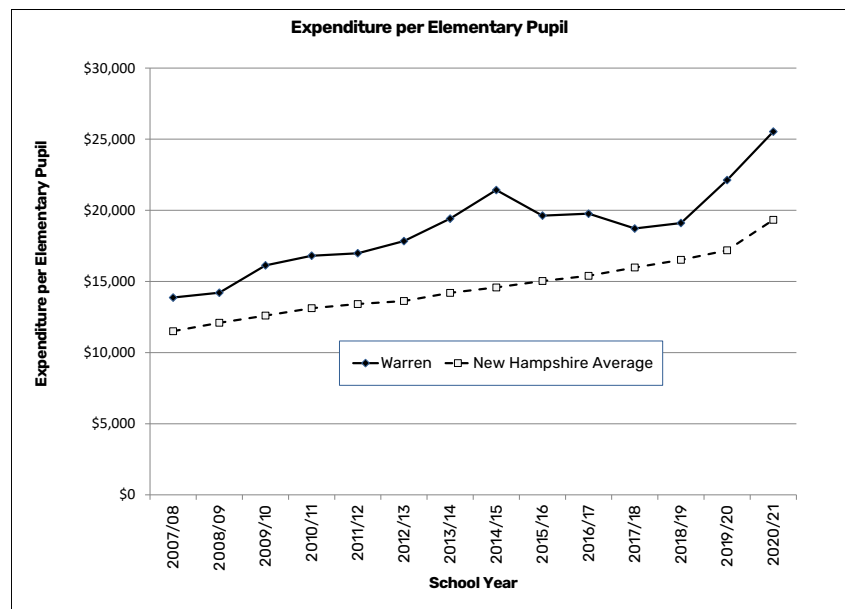


Figure 2



All told, New Hampshire’s public school districts spent \$3.64 billion during the 2021-22 school year. Of that amount, 40 percent was dedicated to regular classroom instruction, 21 percent to other educational programs (including special education and vocational instruction), 11 percent to administration, 9 percent to building operations, and the remainder was devoted to transportation, food services, and other purposes.

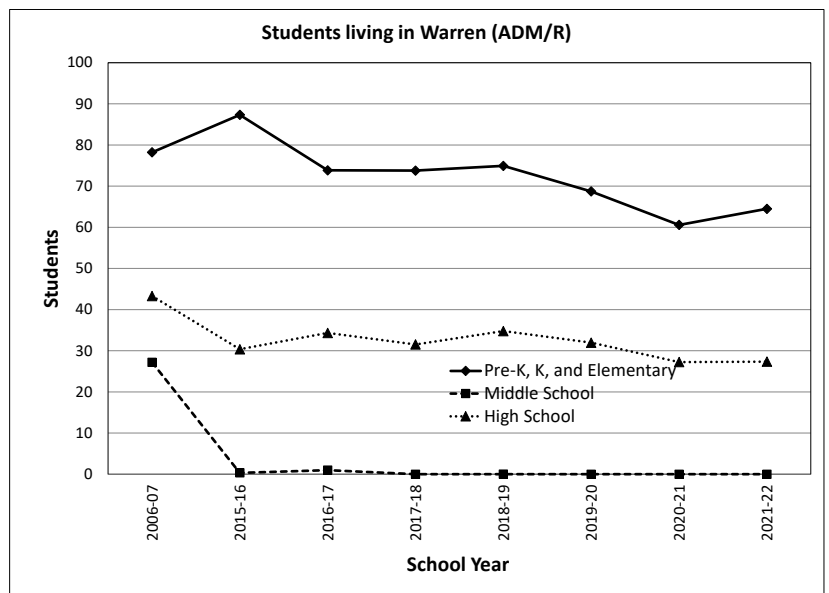
As shown in the table, the proportion of Warren Regional School District’s spending on regular instruction is more than the state average and spending on special education is lower than average. Warren spends a higher amount on pupil transportation than the state average.

Spending by Type	Percentage	
	Warren	NH Average
Regular Instruction	46%	40%
Special Programs	10%	19%
Vocational Programs	2%	1%
Other Instructional Programs	1%	1%
Student Support Services	8%	8%
Instructional Support Staff	4%	3%
Administration	14%	11%
Plant Operations	7%	9%
Pupil Transportation	6%	4%
Food Services	3%	2%
Bond & Note Interest	0%	1%
Other Expenses	0%	0%
Total Expenses	100%	100%

How Many Students Are Enrolled in Warren Regional School District’s Schools?

Average Daily Membership in Residence (ADM/R) is one way in which enrollment is measured. It measures the number of public school students living in a district. Overall, in New Hampshire, ADM/R has been in slow decline in recent years, attributable to declining birth rates. In Warren, there has been a decrease of 38.2 percent since 2006-07. Figure 3 displays ADM/R trends at Warren’s elementary, middle, and high schools for the past fifteen years. During this period, the number of elementary students decreased by 17.6 percent and middle school students decreased by 100 percent, and high school students decreased by 36.8 percent.

Figure 3



How Does Warren Pay for Public Schools?

Figure 4 shows all the various revenue sources that Warren uses to pay for its students’ education, measuring them on a per-pupil basis. It also compares Warren’s revenue sources to the New Hampshire average. As this figure makes clear, local property taxes are the major source of revenue for public schools, both in Warren and across the state.

During the 2021-22 school year, Warren School's total school revenue was \$26,318 per pupil, a bit more than the state average of \$21,642. Property taxes (local plus statewide) provided \$14,535 or 55 percent of the \$2,416,967 overall amount. Warren Regional received \$8,932 state "adequacy" aid per pupil. The state average aid is \$3,905.

How Do Warren's School Property Tax Rates Compare to Other Communities?

1998 was the last tax year before the state responded to the Supreme Court's *Claremont* rulings and introduced new aid to pay for an "adequate" education. That year, Warren's equalized property tax rate for its schools was \$27.75 per \$1,000 of property value. This rate was 149% of the median town. In 2021, the equalized school property tax rate in Warren was \$11.17 per \$1,000 of value (a \$9.86 local tax rate plus a \$1.31 state tax rate, which is retained locally).

Figure 4

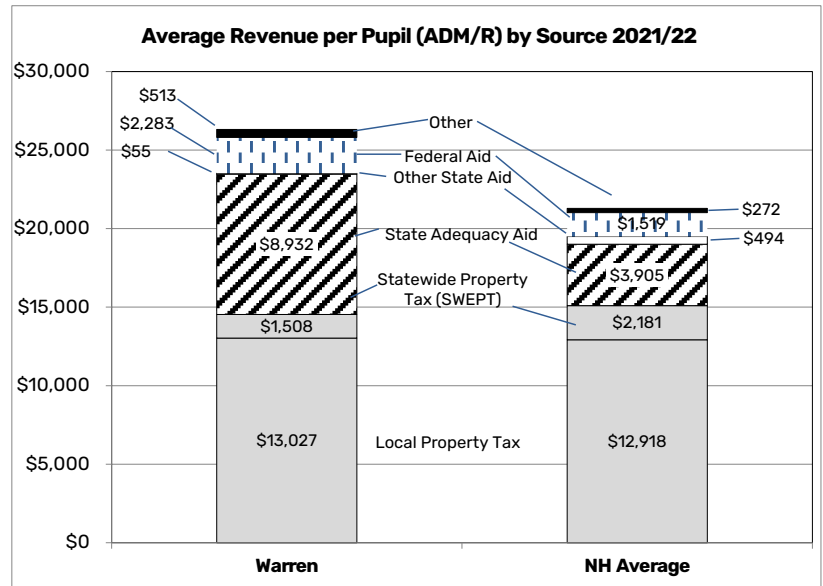
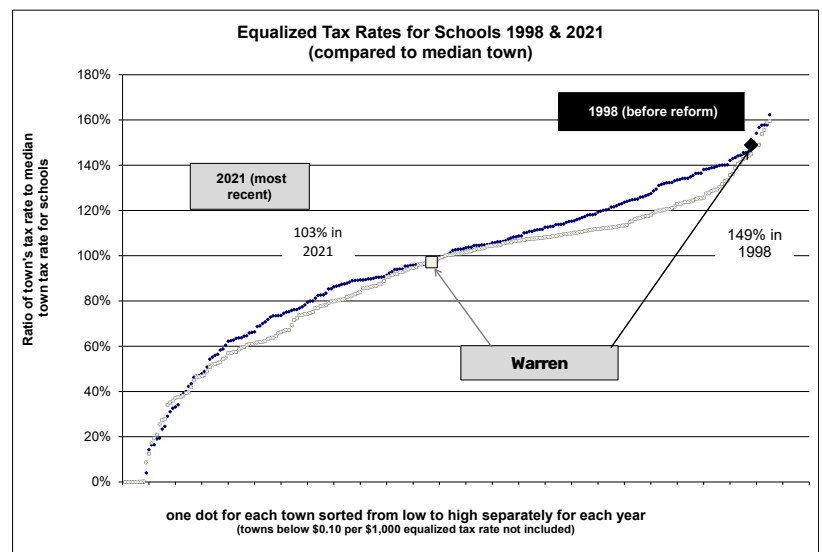


Figure 5



How Has Warren’s School Property Tax Rate Changed Over Time?

The reforms enacted in 1998 imposed the Statewide Education Property Tax (SWEPT). In 1999 its rate was \$5.83 per thousand equalized valuations in Warren. Also, in 1999 the state began the distribution of its new “adequacy aid” to each district. The result for Warren was a sudden reduction in its equalized tax rate from \$27.75 per thousand in 1998 to \$9.58 in 1999. Since that time the total rate had steadily gone up, peaking in 2013. The 2021 equalized rate of \$8.05.

How Do Property Values in Warren Compare to Other Communities?

The most important statistic that relates to the ability of different towns to raise taxes for the purpose of their schools is Equalized Property Value per Pupil or EQVP. EQVP essentially provides an answer to the question, “What resources are available to be taxed in our town for each of the students whose education we pay for through our school budget?” The higher a town’s EQVP, the lower the school property tax rate it needs to use to generate a set sum of money.

In 2021, Warren had \$121,294,619 of equalized property valuation and 92 students (as measured by average daily membership in residence or ADM-R). This means that Warren’s EQVP that year was \$1,320,738. The state average EQVP was \$1,599,979. Warren had 82.5 percent of the state average. Pittsfield is an example of one of many communities that had less property value per pupil than Warren.

Clearly, there is not a level playing field when it comes to the ability of towns’ property tax bases to support their schools.

Figure 6

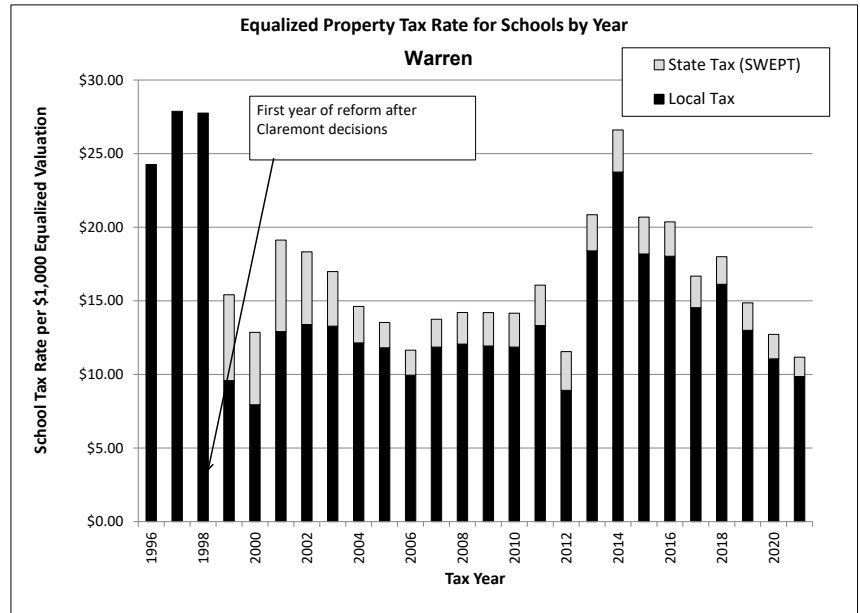
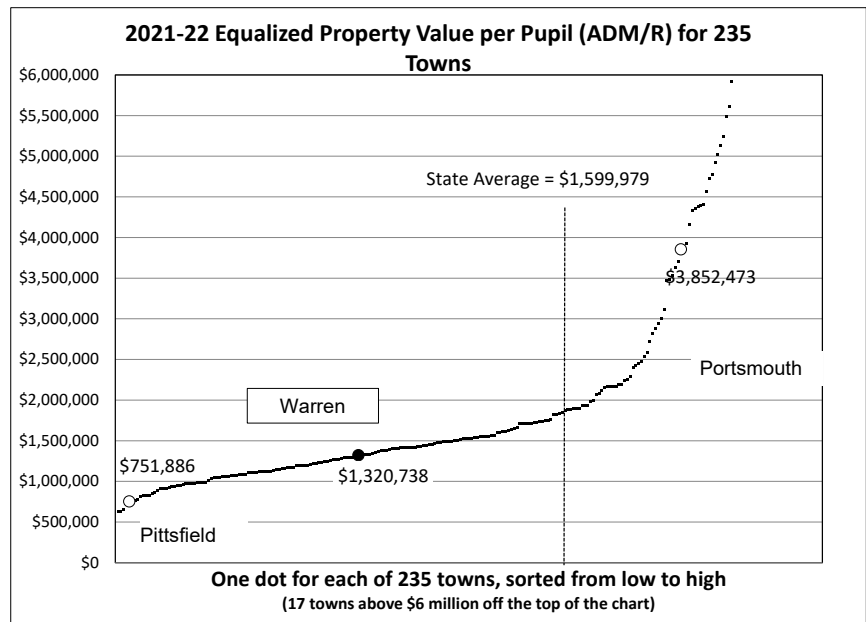


Figure 7



Note: Data used in this report are taken from reports and spreadsheets of the NH Department of Education (Equalized Valuation per Pupil, Cost Per Pupil by District, Average Daily Membership Based Upon Attendance and Residence (ADM), Average Class Size by School, and DoE25 Extract for State Profile Data for various years). Such data are reported by New Hampshire school districts to the Department. Tax rates printed on town tax bills are not equalized and cannot be compared among towns. Using equalized data allows an apples-to-apples comparison among town tax rates and property values.