

New Hampshire’s public school system, and the methods used to fund it, affect all Granite Staters but can often be difficult to grasp. Below are some common questions about Litchfield school funding, along with key facts and figures. We hope this information sheds light on the inequities that continue to challenge our school funding

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

In the 1998-99 school year, the last year before New Hampshire increased education aid in response to the Claremont rulings, Litchfield spent \$5,690 per elementary student, or 90 percent of the median spending among towns. In 2022-23, Litchfield's per-pupil spending had increased to \$18,496, which was 81 percent of the state median.

Figure 2 highlights the spending trends over the past 15 years, comparing Litchfield’s expenditure per elementary student to the state average. The data reveals that Litchfield has consistently spent less than the state average, with spending in 2023 below the state average by \$1,826.

Figure 1

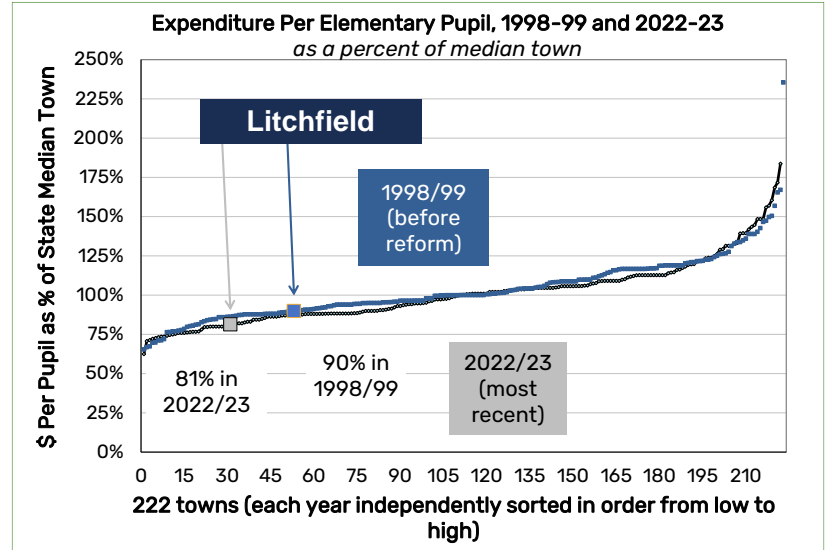
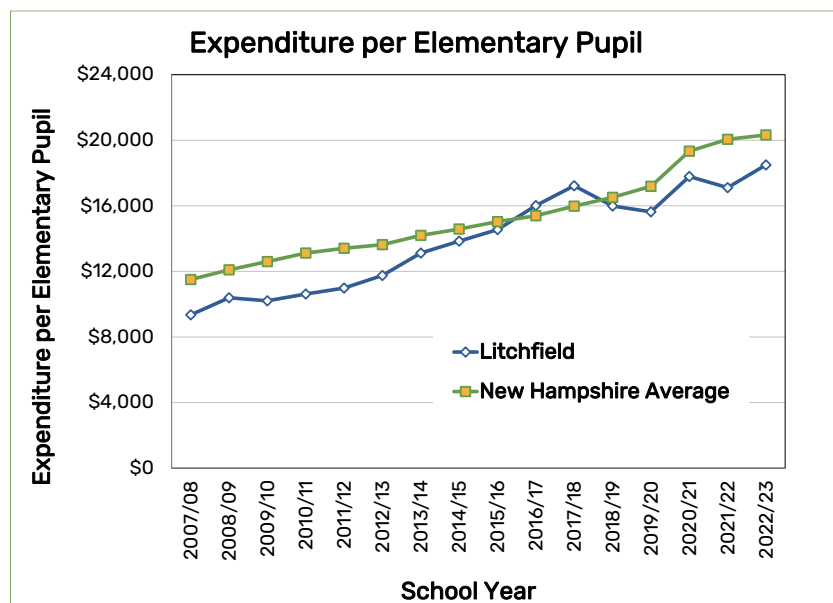


Figure 2



New Hampshire’s public school districts spent \$3.80 billion during the 2022-23 school year. Of that amount, 39 percent was dedicated to regular classroom instruction, 19 percent to special education, 11 percent to administration, 9 percent to building operations, and the remainder was devoted to transportation, food services, and other purposes.

As shown in Table 1, the proportion of Litchfield’s spending on regular instruction and administration was higher than the average. In contrast, spending on special programs, and vocational programs was lower.

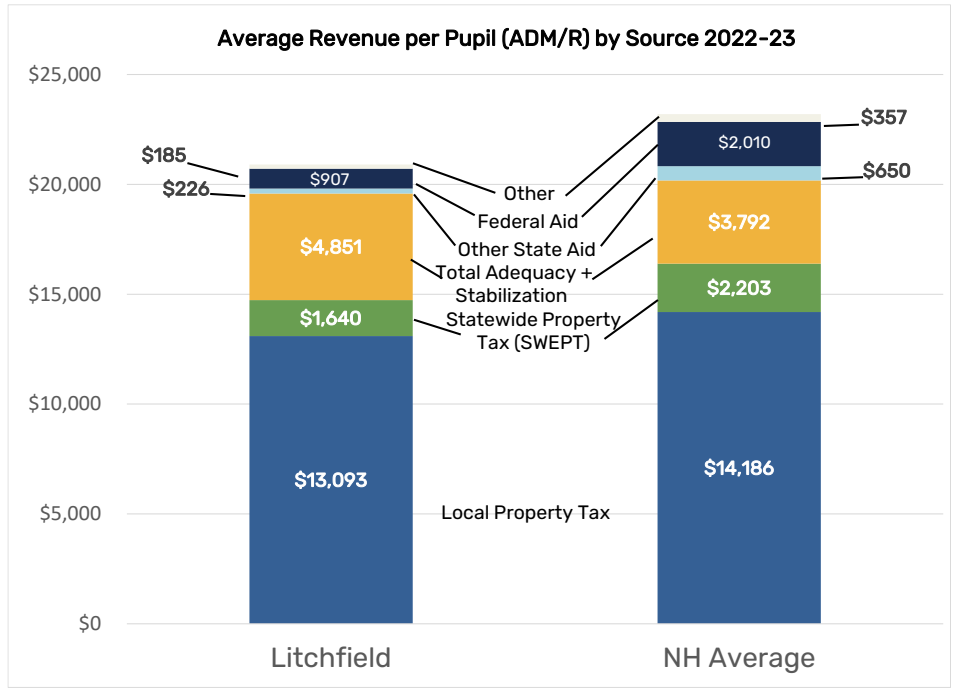
Spending by Type	Percentage	
	Litchfield	NH Average
Regular Instruction	40%	39%
Special Programs	14%	19%
Vocational Programs	0%	1%
Other Instructional Programs	3%	2%
Student Support Services	9%	8%
Instructional Support Staff	4%	4%
Administration	15%	11%
Plant Operations	9%	9%
Pupil Transportation	5%	5%
Food Services	1%	1%
Bond & Note Interest	0%	1%
Other Expenses	0%	0%
Total Expenses	100%	100%

How Does Litchfield Pay for Public Schools?

Figure 3 shows all the various revenue sources that Litchfield uses to pay for its students’ education, measuring them on a per-pupil basis. It also compares Litchfield’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 across the state.

During the 2022-23 school year, Litchfield School District’s total school revenue was \$20,902 per pupil, much less than the state average of \$23,198. Property taxes (local plus statewide) provided \$14,733 per pupil or 70 percent of the overall amount, about the same as the state average of 71 percent. Litchfield received \$4,851 in total state “adequacy grant” per pupil. The state average aid was \$3,792.

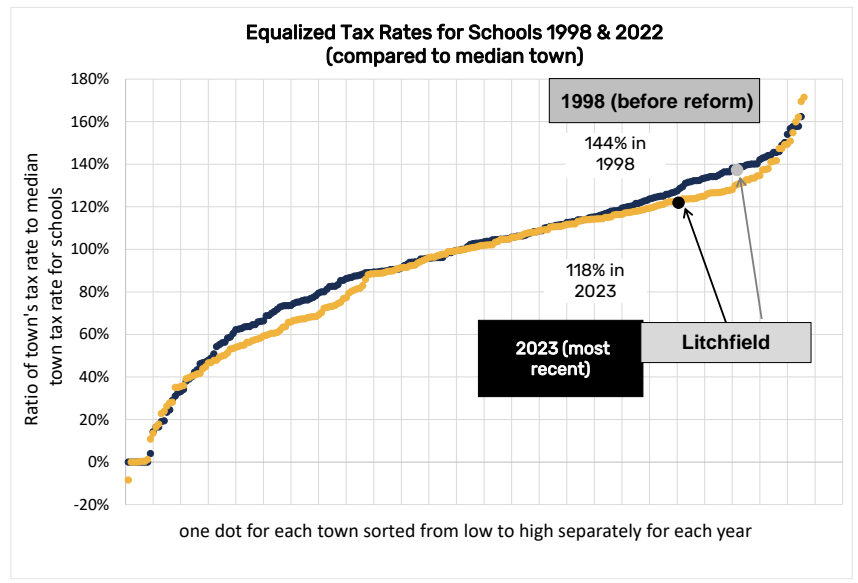
Figure 3



How Do Litchfield’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, Litchfield’s equalized property tax rate for its schools was \$26.86 per \$1,000 of property value. This rate was 144 percent of the median town. In 2023, the equalized school property tax rate in Litchfield was \$11.09 per \$1,000 of value (a \$9.88 local tax rate plus a \$1.21 state tax rate, which is retained locally). This was 118 percent of the median town.

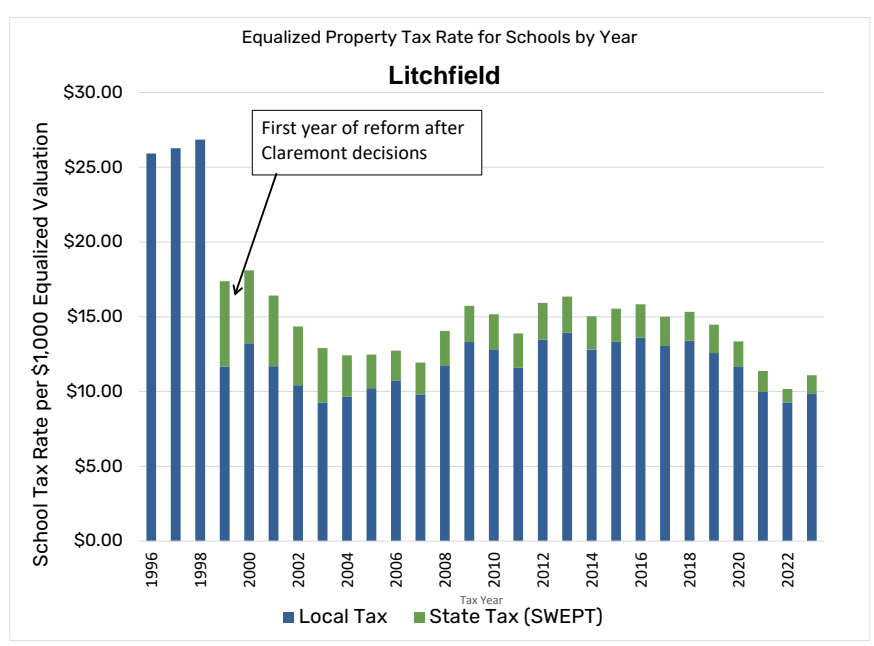
Figure 4



How Has Litchfield’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 \$5.71 per thousand equalized valuations in Litchfield. Also, in 1999 the state began the distribution of its new “adequacy aid” to each district. The result for Litchfield was a decrease in its equalized tax rate from \$26.86 per thousand in 1998 to \$17.38 in 1999. The 2022 equalized rate was \$11.09.

Figure 5

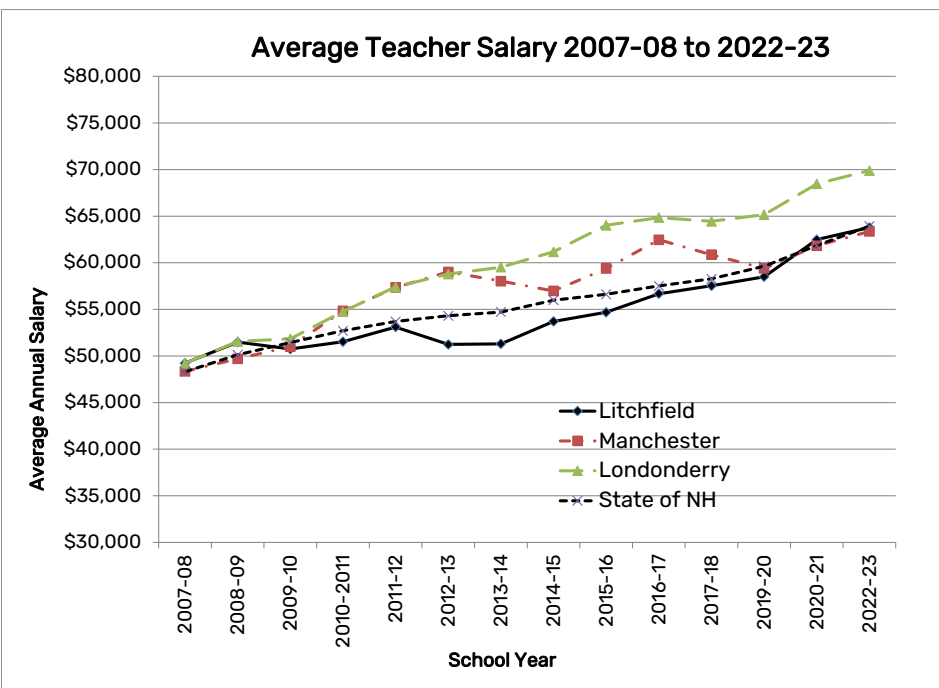


How Much Do Teachers Earn in Litchfield?

In 2007-08, Litchfield had 113 teachers, but by 2022-23, that number had decreased to 96. During the 2022-23 school year, the average teacher salary in Litchfield was \$63,790, 0.2% lower than the state average of \$63,926. Consistently remaining below both the state and Londonderry averages since 2009. Over the same period, Litchfield’s average teacher salary increased by 24 percent, while the Consumer Price Index increased 42%, while Concord saw a 45 percent rise.

The average teacher salary is influenced by both the district’s salary schedule and the experience levels of its teachers, which can result in salary differences between districts with similar pay scales. Starting salaries, a key factor in attracting and retaining quality teachers, ranged from \$31,712 to \$64,007 in New Hampshire for the 2022-23 school year. Litchfield offered a starting salary of \$42,463, with Litchfield’s starting pay 0.6 percent lower than the unweighted state average of \$42,560.

Figure 6



What Does Litchfield Spend on Special Education?

Under federal and state law students with physical, mental, or learning disabilities require special additional services to support their learning. An Individual Education Program (IEP) is created for each such student. The cost of these services is tracked within the overall spending of each district.

As shown in the table below, in 2022-23 Litchfield reported spending \$4,777,844.97 for these additional services.

Function	Amount
Instruction	\$3,133,454.73
Instruction Related	\$959,760.95
Administration	\$244,534.11
Legal	\$865.80
Transportation	\$439,229.38
TOTAL	\$4,777,844.97

During that year, Litchfield had 225 students with IEPs. On average, this was \$21,234 for each such student. In the state overall there were 30,965 such students and the total cost was \$915,220,911. The statewide average was \$29,557. The average cost for extra services for each student with an IEP at Litchfield was lower than the average throughout the state.

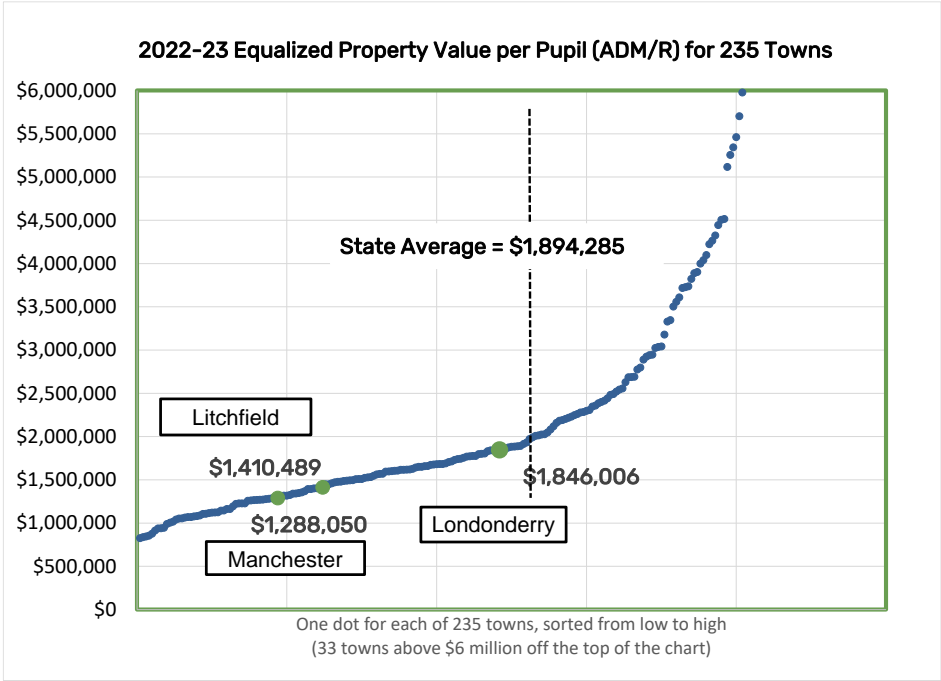
These costs are in addition to the non-special education costs that are shared among all students. While \$29,557 was the average extra cost, for some students with considerable disability, the cost can be much higher than the average while for others it may be only a few hundred dollars.

How Do Property Values in Litchfield Compare to Other Communities?

The most important metric reflecting a town’s capacity to raise taxes for its schools is the Equalized Property Value per Pupil (EQVP). This figure answers the question: “What financial resources are available in our town to be taxed for each student funded by the school budget?” A higher EQVP allows a town to generate the same revenue with a lower school property tax rate.

In 2022, Litchfield had \$1,667,723,488 of equalized property valuation and 1,182 students (as measured by average daily membership in residence or ADM-R). This means that Litchfield’s EQVP that year was \$1,410,489. The state average EQVP was \$1,894,285. Litchfield had 74.5% percent of the state average.

Figure 7



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

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.