

# Southern Public Schools

## Annual Report

### 2023-2024



Southern Elementary School  
315 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 158  
Blue Springs, NE 68318  
Phone: 402.645.3359  
Fax: 402.645.3740

Southern Jr./Sr. High School  
115 South 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 237  
Wymore, NE 68466  
Phone: 402.645.3326  
Fax: 402.645.8049

<http://www.southernschools.org>

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

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## **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

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The 2023-2024 Annual Report is submitted to the patrons of Southern Public Schools in accordance with the accreditation rules set forth by the Nebraska Department of Education. The annual report provides patrons with information regarding our school demographics, student achievement, and financial information. This report highlights some of the challenges and accomplishments in our district.

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## **NEBRASKA EDUCATION PROFILE**

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More information about Southern Public School's 2023-2024 academic year can be found on the Nebraska Education Profile at <http://nep.education.ne.gov>.

- 1) Go to the **DISTRICT AND SCHOOL DATA** tab at the center of the webpage.
- 2) Type **Southern School District 1** in the **Search NEP** box.
- 3) Click on **SOUTHERN SCHOOL DISTRICT 1** and click **Search**.

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## **DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT**

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Southern Public Schools is a progressive D-1 district with 374 students in grades PK-12. Southern is located in Wymore and Blue Springs, Nebraska in the southeastern part of the state. In 1968 the current district was created with the consolidation of the five communities of Wymore, Blue Springs, Barneston, Holmesville, and Liberty, along with much of their outlying area. Wymore is located south of Lincoln and eight miles north of the Kansas border. The Wymore & Blue Springs communities are located within a mile of each other and are home to two schools, Southern Elementary School (PK-6) and Southern Jr./Sr. High School (7-12). The 3-year-old preschool and the 4-year-old preschool programs are located in Blue Springs.

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## **DISTRICT MOTTO**

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*The Southern School District... a small-school community with big opportunities.*

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## **DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

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*Southern School District; a small-school community with big opportunities, empowers and engages students in educational, extracurricular, and real-world experiences that develop responsible, respectful, and productive citizens.*

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## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Betsy Frerichs  
Debie Schlake

Dana Dorn  
Jared McKeerve

David Zimmerman  
Jeff Argo

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## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOALS**

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- All students will improve their reading comprehension.

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## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

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We believe all staff and students have the right to a learning environment that is conducive to high student achievement by ensuring everyone is emotionally, socially, and physically safe.

We believe in fostering the growth of our students in a technological world by integrating the tools of today to prepare them for the future.

We believe in helping students learn the value of leadership and how to become independent, problem-solving thinkers in society.

We believe in stewarding a growth mindset by supporting staff and students in becoming lifelong learners.

We believe our staff are valuable role models that empower our students to become responsible, respectful, and safe citizens.

## ADMINISTRATION

<b>Faculty Members</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Years Experience</b>	<b>Position</b>
Christopher Proski	Ed.D.	16	Superintendent/Curriculum Director
Kane Hookstra	M.A.	28	PK-6 Principal
Jeff Murphy	M.A.	23	7-12 Principal/Athletic Director

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STAFF

<b>Faculty Members</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Years Experience</b>	<b>Position</b>
Jonna Adams	M.A.	23	Fourth Grade Teacher
Jolene Bartels	M.A.	36	Fifth Grade Teacher
Chaysen Bednar	B.A.	5	Sixth Grade Teacher
Kylie Betten	B.A.	9	First Grade Teacher
Shannon Burges	B.A.	18	Fourth Grade Teacher
Shelby Decker	B.A.	1	Special Education Teacher
Rhonda Epp	M.A.	29	Third Grade Teacher
Stacy Fossler	M.A.	12	Special Education Teacher
Chelesy Fralin	M.A.	9	K-12 Media Specialist
Amanda Freese	B.A.	6	Preschool Teacher
Malinda Hock	M.A.	9	Sixth Grade Teacher
Taylor Landenberger	M.A.	6	Kindergarten Teacher
Anna Manley	M.A.	11	Preschool Teacher
Ashley McConnell	B.A.	6	Second Grade Teacher
Kimberly Milius	B.A.	7	First Grade Teacher
Jared Remmers	B.A.	13	Sixth Grade Teacher
Samantha Rzekonski	B.A.	2	Kindergarten Teacher
Lynn Sabey	M.A.	13	Second Grade Teacher
Mary Jane Spence	B.A.	46	Third Grade Teacher
Stephanie Ware	M.A.	25	Title I Teacher

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Degree</b>
B.A.	Bachelor's Degree
M.A.	Master's Degree
Ed.S.	Education Specialist
Ed.D.	Doctor of Education

## JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL STAFF

<b>Faculty Members</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Years Experience</b>	<b>Position</b>
Deb Bachmann-Clasen	B.A.	24	English Teacher
Valerie Barnhart	M.A.	28	English Teacher
Hanah Baumgartner	B.A.	3	Social Science Teacher
Dominique Clay	M.A.	14	Spanish Teacher
Jeremy Doose	B.A.	3	Social Science Teacher
Cathy Hayden	B.A.	34	Science Grade Teacher
Josie Hulse	B.A.	2	K-12 Art Teacher
Greg Iverson	M.A.	11	Physical Education/Health Teacher
Preston Jurgens	B.A.	5	Mathematics Teacher
Heather McKinney	M.A.	28	Special Education Teacher
Brady Meyer	B.A.	5	Agriculture/Industrial Tech Teacher
Shannon Mick	M.A.	19	Mathematics Teacher
Gavin Nielson	M.A.	5	K-12 Instrumental Music Teacher
Jamie Schluter	M.A.	10	Business Teacher
Shelby Thernes	M.A.	6	Special Education Teacher
Pam Trauernicht	M.A.	25	7-12 School counselor
Jeffery Tunink	M.A.	14	Science Teacher
Jake Voorhis	B.A.	1	K-12 Vocal Music Teacher
Beth Willet	B.A.	44	K-12 PE Teacher

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Degree</b>
B.A.	Bachelor's Degree
M.A.	Master's Degree
Ed.S.	Education Specialist
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## CERTIFIED STAFF INFORMATION

<b>Category</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>State</b>
Average Teacher Salary	\$54,357	\$60,378
Average Years of Teaching Experience	15	14
Percent of Teachers with Master's Degrees	48%	59%

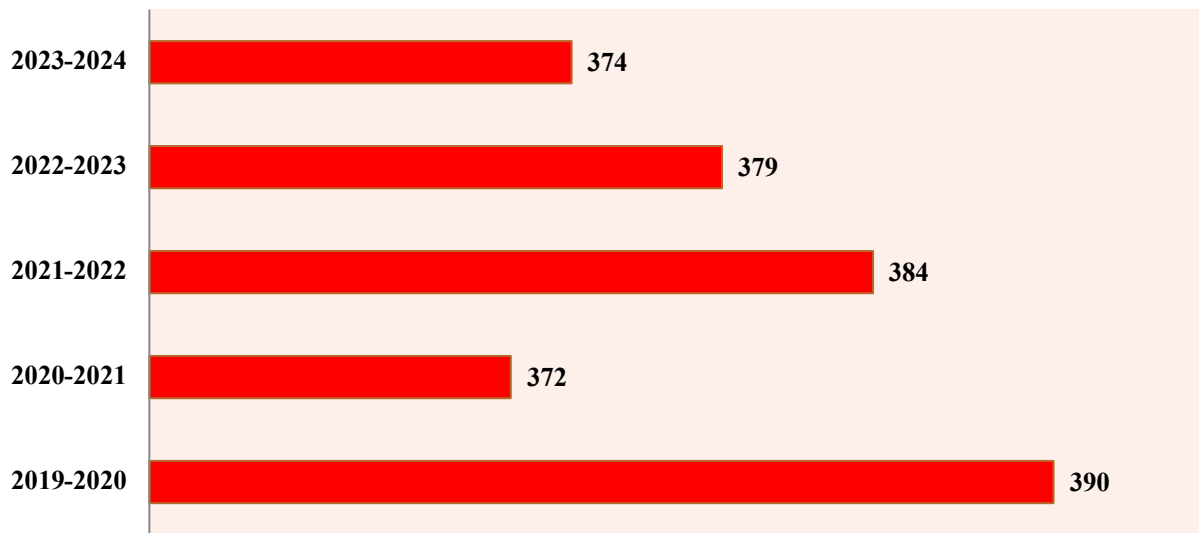
## CLASSIFIED STAFF

<b>Faculty Members</b>	<b>Position</b>
Dyan Allington	School Nurse
Dona Bartels	Paraprofessional
Dee Bednar	PK-6 Community Counselor
Jessica Cooper	Paraprofessional
Susan Davis	Food Service Provider
John Eisenhower	Head of Maintenance
Wendy Garrels	Paraprofessional
Jeanne Hardin	Food Service Provider
Dave Kaster	Assistant Head of Maintenance
Karen Maguire	Secretary
Kim McMurray	Head Food Service Provider
Shelby McMurray	Food Service Provider
Jodi Meints	Paraprofessional
Tammy Meints	Custodian
Lori Moniz-Trisler	Paraprofessional
Patty Novotny	Preschool Paraprofessional
Naomi Pharr	Assistant Head Food Service Provider
Lavone Rabstajnek	Paraprofessional
Dawn Rakes	Secretary
Devin Riggs	Bus Driver
Ginger Riggs	Paraprofessional
Cody Sabey	Technology Coordinator
Brenden Salts	Custodian
Darcie Schmidt	Paraprofessional
Taylor Schmidt	Bookkeeper
Anthony Shepardson	Custodian
Angela Spencer	Paraprofessional
Audrey Whitwer	Data Steward
Steve Whitwer	Bus Driver
JoAnn Wieden	Food Service Provider

## ENROLLMENT FIGURES

<b>Compiled on October 1 (2023)</b>			
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
PK	11	17	28
K	14	9	23
1	13	11	24
2	8	9	17
3	11	22	33
4	13	11	24
5	12	17	29
6	11	10	21
<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>199</b>
7	14	18	32
8	12	10	22
9	18	13	31
10	16	12	28
11	17	15	32
12	13	17	30
<b>Jr./Sr. High School</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>District</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>374</b>

### 5-YEAR ENROLLMENT FIGURES (PK-12)



**SOUTHERN PUBLIC SCHOOLS DEMOGRAPHICS**  
**2023-2024 Academic Year**

<b>Student Characteristics</b>	<b>Southern Public Schools</b>		<b>State</b>
Attendance Rate	92%		92%
Chronic Absenteeism	23%		21%
Dropout Rate	0%		1%
English Learners (EL)	N/A		9%
Free/Reduced Priced Meals	67%		52%
Graduation Rate (4-Year Cohort)	85%		87%
High Ability Learners	31%		12%
Highly Mobile	4%		4%
Special Education	22%		16%
Race/Ethnicity	American Indian/Alaskan Native:	1%	1%
	Asian:	0%	3%
	Black/African American:	2%	6%
	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander:	0%	1%
	Hispanic:	2%	22%
	Two or More Races:	5%	5%
	White:	90%	62%

**Please Note:** A N/A indicates that the data has been masked to protect the identity of students using one the following criteria:

- 1) Fewer than 10 students were reported in a group.
  - a) Fewer than 5 students were reported at a performance level.
- 2) All students were reported in a single group or performance category.

**5-YEAR OPTION ENROLLMENT COMPARSION**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
Option In Students	18	14	10	10	13
Option Out Students	-42	41	-38	-47	-37
Net Option	-24	-27	-28	-37	-24



**AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING (ACT)**  
**Longitudinal ACT Data**

		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<i>English</i>	District	*	17.9	17.5	15.2	15.6
<i>Mathematics</i>	District	*	18.2	17.8	16.4	15.6
<i>Reading</i>	District	*	18.4	18.0	15.6	16.1
<i>Science</i>	District	*	18.4	19.3	16.6	16.2
<i>Composite</i>	District	*	18.3	18.2	16.0	15.6

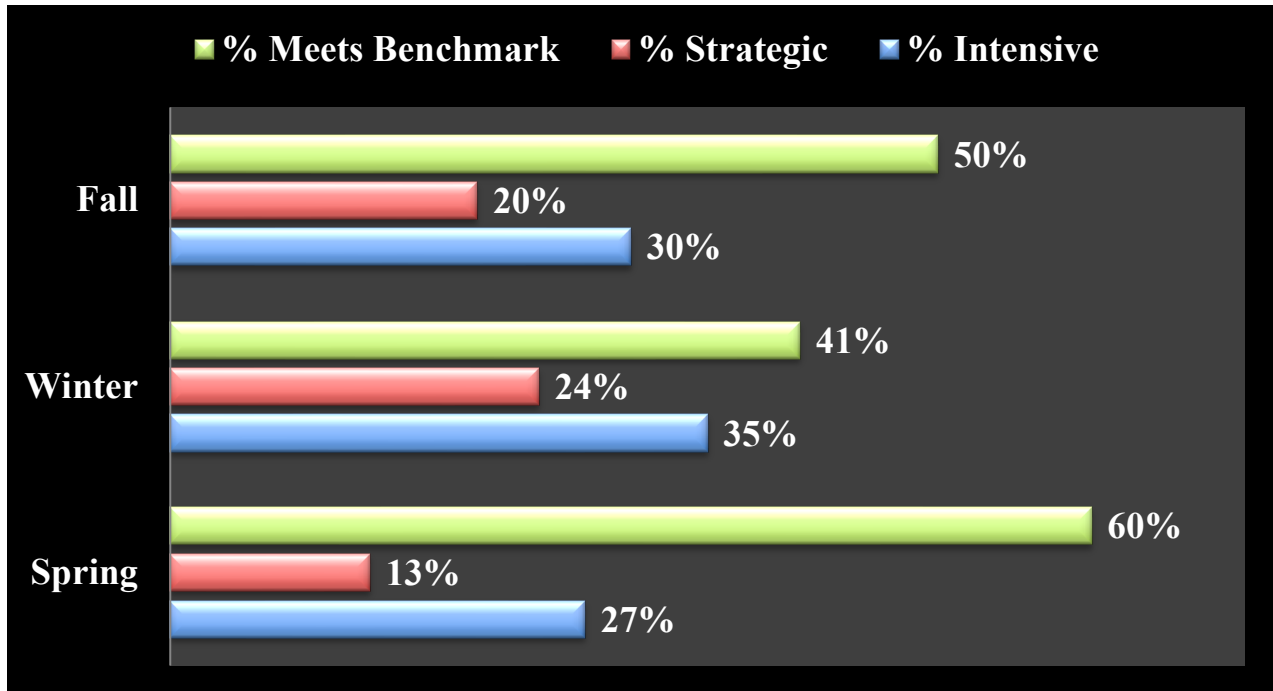
**\*Please Note:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT was not administered in the spring of 2020.

**DYNAMIC INDICATORS OF BASIC EARLY LITERACY SKILLS**

The universal screener that we utilize in our district is called Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills or DIBELS. DIBELS is a set of measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. These assessments are designed to be short, one-minute fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy skills. The DIBELS assessments are comprised of seven measures to function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.

**DIBELS SCORES (K-6 GRADE)**  
**Percentage of Students Proficient by Indicators**

<i>Date</i>	<i># of students</i>	<b>Intensive</b> (Well Below Benchmark)	<b>Strategic</b> (Below Benchmark)	<b>Meets Benchmark</b> (At Grade Level)
<i>Fall 2022</i>	176	30%	20%	50%
<i>Winter 2022</i>	173	35%	24%	41%
<i>Spring 2023</i>	169	27%	13%	60%



### **NEBRASKA STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (NSCAS)**

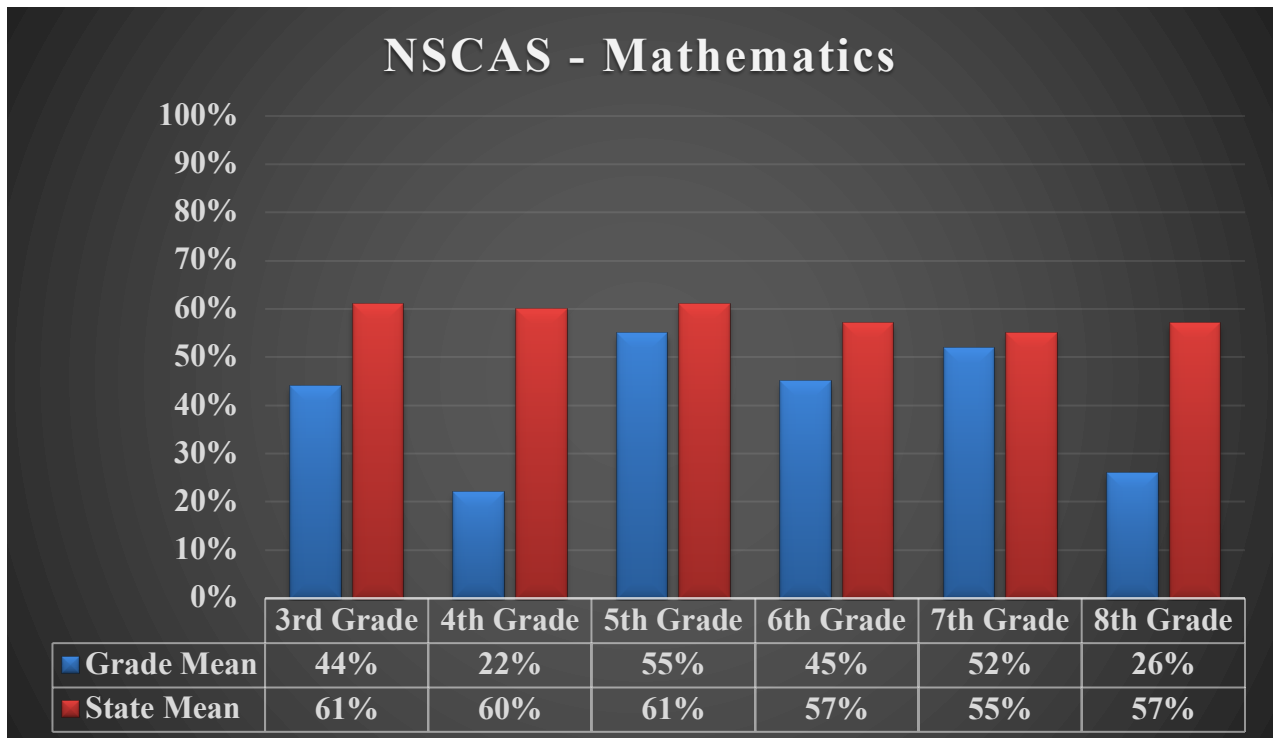
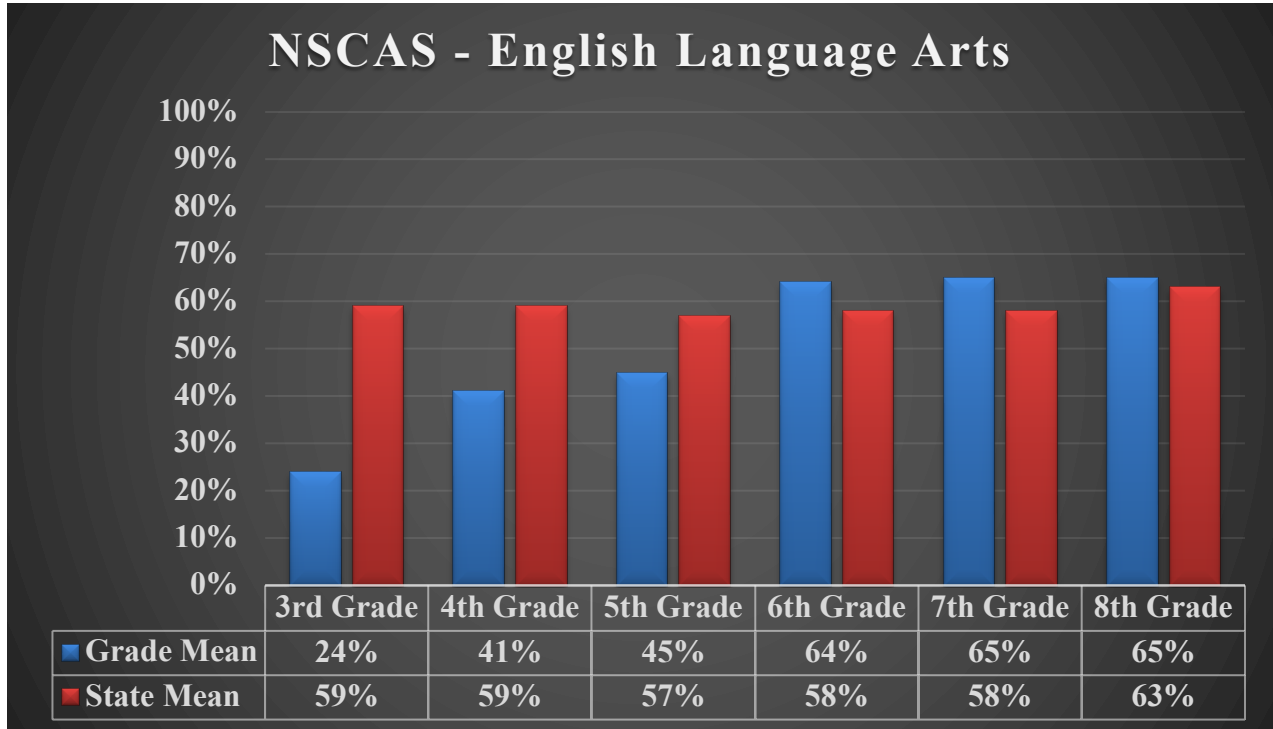
The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) is a new statewide assessment system that embodies Nebraska’s holistic view of students and helps them prepare for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life. It uses multiple measures throughout a school year to provide educators with the insights they need to support student learning. The following table is a breakdown of the NSCAS assessments administered at each grade level.

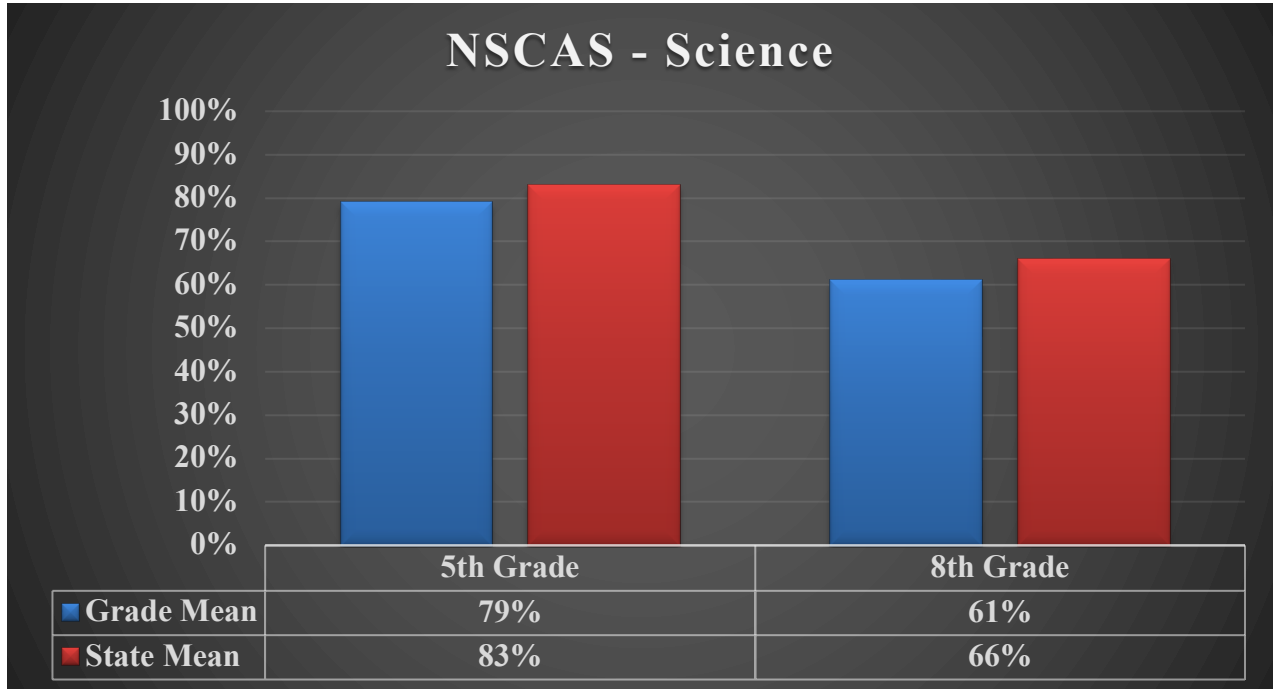
<b>NSCAS Assessment</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grades Administered</b>
NSCAS–ELA	English Language Arts	3-8
NSCAS–M	Mathematics	3-8
NSCAS–S	Science	5 & 8

**NEBRASKA STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (NSCAS)**

**Percent Proficient by Grade/Subject Area**

**Spring 2023 Assessments**





**Please Note:** A blank score indicates that the data has been masked to protect the identity of students using one the following criteria:

- 1) Fewer than 10 students were reported in a group.
  - a) Fewer than 5 students were reported at a performance level.
- 2) All students were reported in a single group or performance category.

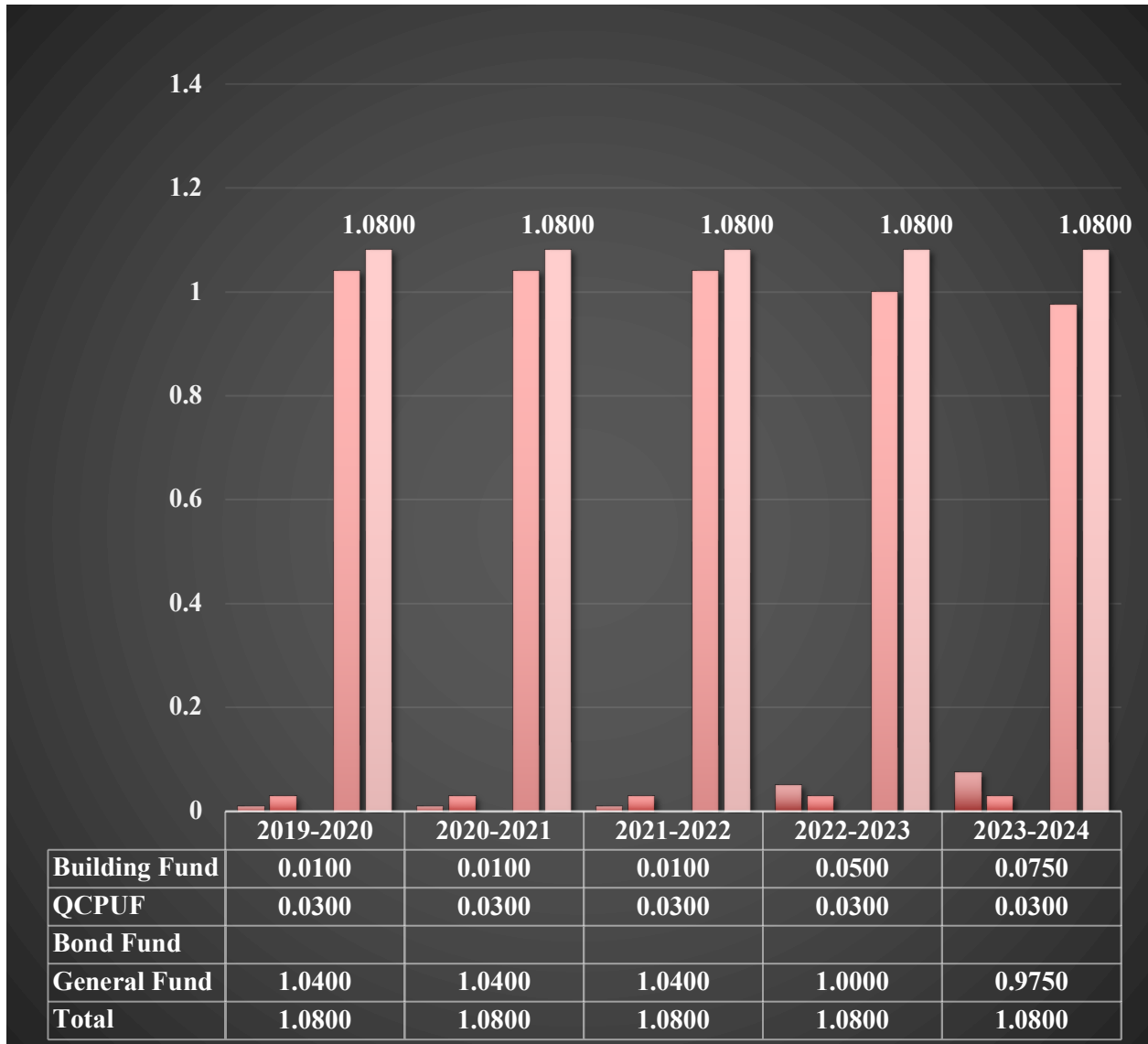
### **NEBRASKA STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (NSCAS)** **Combined Results for all Grades Tested** **Percent Proficient**

<i>Data Years</i>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
<i>2023-2024</i>	49%	42%	72%
<i>2022-2023</i>	45%	40%	65%
<i>2021-2022</i>	30%	25%	57%
<i>2020-2021</i>	34%	24%	

## 2023-2024 BUDGET INFORMATION

Southern Public Schools continues to operate a fiscally responsible budget with very little state aid. Southern continues to have one of the lowest cost per pupil (student) in the Pioneer Conference and amongst school districts that are similar in size across Nebraska. Southern Public Schools continues to provide a high-quality education at an economical cost to district patrons.

### 5-YEAR MILL LEVY COMPARISON



**5-YEAR MILL LEVY COMPARISON**  
**Based on Home Values**

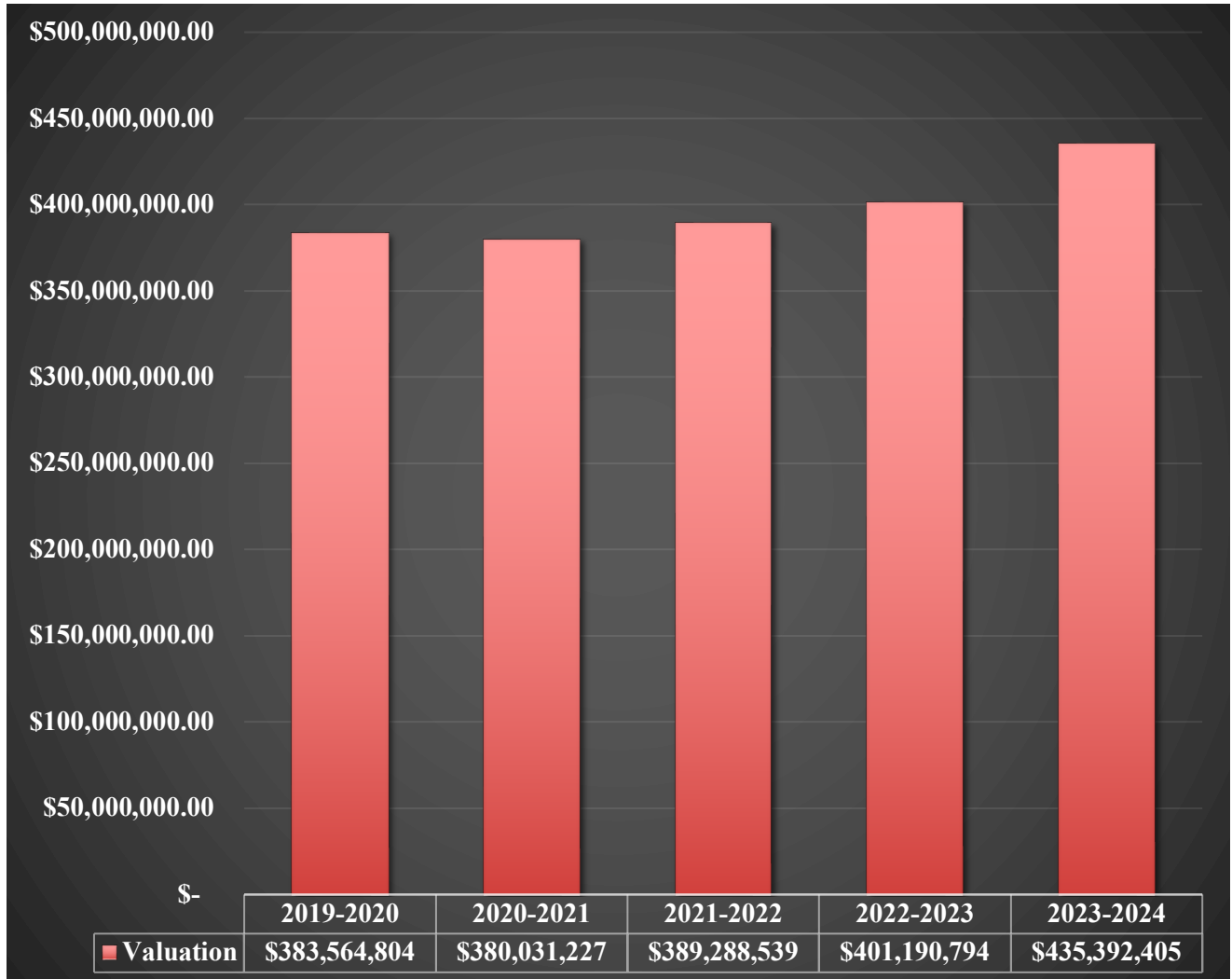
<i>Tax Year</i>	<b>Total Mill Levy</b>	<b>Home Value</b>	<b>Taxes Paid (Per Month)</b>	<b>Taxes Paid (Per Year)</b>
<i>2019</i>	1.0800	\$100,000	\$90	\$1,080
		\$200,000	\$180	\$2,160
		\$300,000	\$270	\$3,240
<i>2020</i>	1.0800	\$100,000	\$90	\$1,080
		\$200,000	\$180	\$2,160
		\$300,000	\$270	\$3,240
<i>2021</i>	1.0800	\$100,000	\$90	\$1,080
		\$200,000	\$180	\$2,160
		\$300,000	\$270	\$3,240
<i>2022</i>	1.0800	\$100,000	\$90	\$1,080
		\$200,000	\$180	\$2,160
		\$300,000	\$270	\$3,240
<i>2023</i>	1.0800	\$100,000	\$90	\$1,080
		\$200,000	\$180	\$2,160
		\$300,000	\$270	\$3,240

**COST PER PUPIL BY AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP (ADM)**  
**Pioneer Conference Comparison (2022-2023)**

<i>District</i>	<b>Rank (244 Districts Total)</b>	<b>Per Pupil Spending (ADM)</b>
<i>Johnson-Brock</i>	42	\$15,607
<i>Sterling</i>	86	\$18,749
<i>Southern</i>	102	\$19,788
<i>Friend</i>	163	\$23,026
<i>Pawnee City</i>	173	\$23,473
<i>Diller-Odell</i>	193	\$24,890
<i>Lewiston</i>	215	\$29,579
<i>HTRS</i>	234	\$32,438
<i>Exeter-Milligan</i>	236	\$34,509
<i>FCSH</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>NCL</i>	N/A	N/A

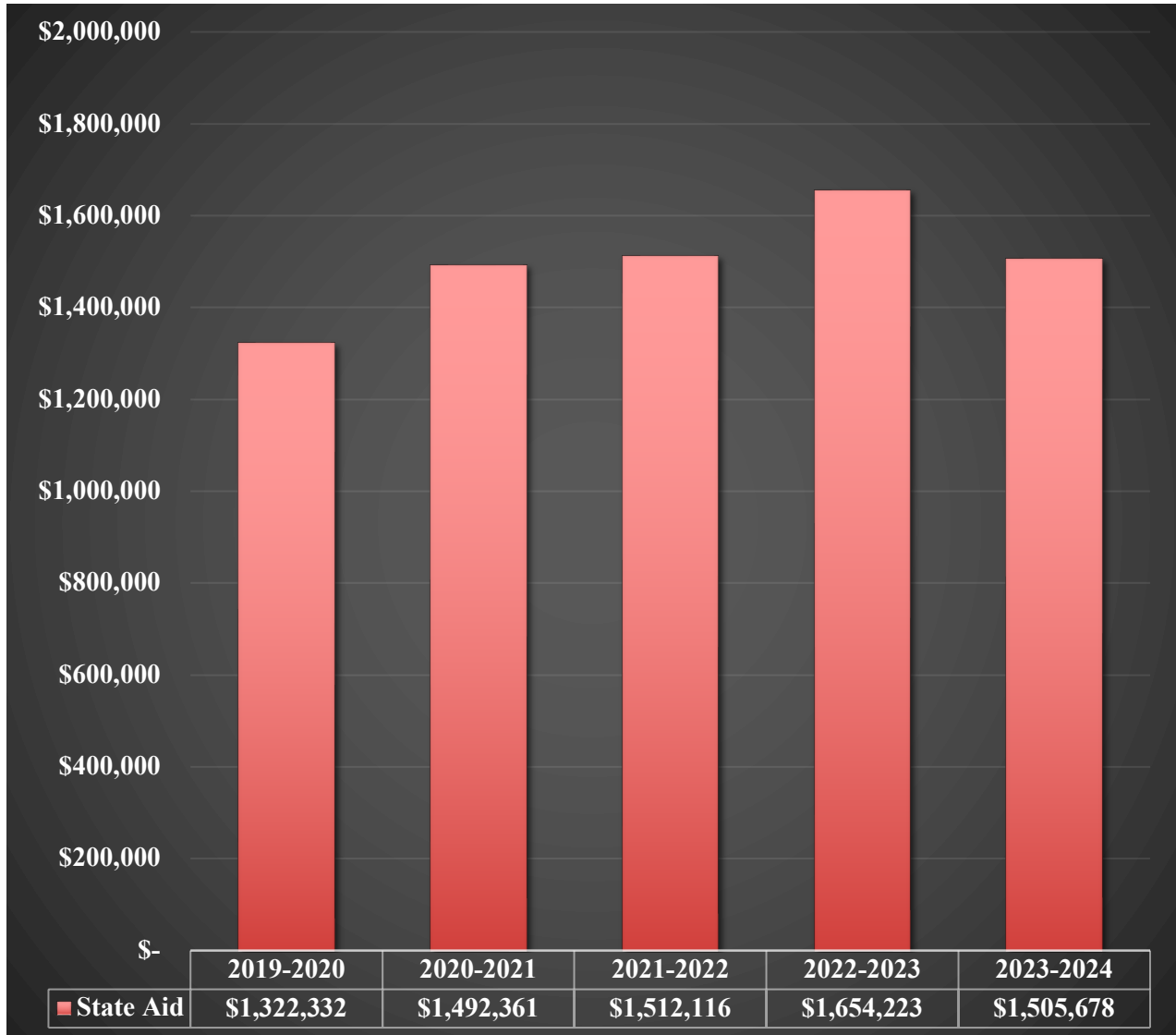
**Please Note:** The 2023-2024 cost per pupil by average daily membership is not available at this time.

## 5-YEAR VALUATION COMPARISON



<i>Tax Year</i>	<b>Gage County Valuation</b>	<b>% Change (Prior Year)</b>	<b>Pawnee County Valuation</b>	<b>% Change (Prior Year)</b>	<b>Overall Valuation</b>	<b>% Change (Prior Year)</b>	<b>\$ Change (Prior Year)</b>
2019	\$382,188,694	(4.23%)	\$1,376,110	(0.00%)	\$383,564,804	(4.21%)	(\$16,874,224)
2020	\$378,656,597	(.92%)	\$1,374,630	(0.11%)	\$380,031,227	(0.92%)	(\$3,533,577)
2021	\$387,897,024	2.44%	\$1,391,515	1.23%	\$389,288,539	2.43%	\$9,257,312
2022	\$399,748,194	3.05%	\$1,442,600	3.67%	\$401,190,794	3.05%	\$11,902,255
2023	\$433,936,240	8.55%	\$1,456,165	0.94%	\$435,392,405	8.52%	\$34,201,611

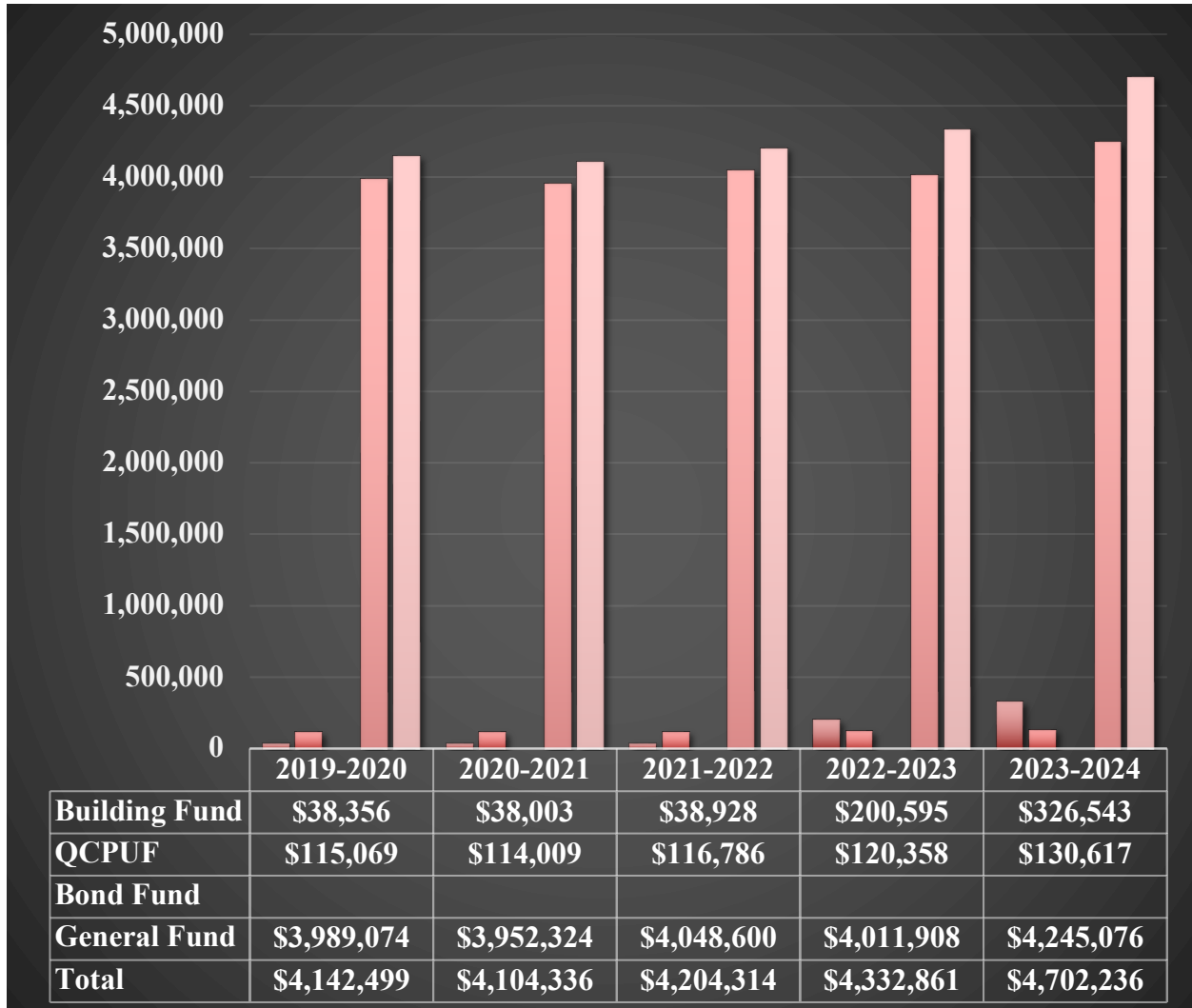
## 5-YEAR STATE AID COMPARISON



<i>School Year</i>	<b>State Aid (Allotment)</b>	<b>% Change (Prior Year)</b>	<b>\$ Change (Prior Year)</b>
2018-2019	\$1,322,332	16.72%	\$189,496
2020-2021	\$1,492,361	12.85%	\$170,029
2021-2022	\$1,512,116	1.31%	\$19,755
2022-2023	\$1,654,223	9.40%	\$142,107
2023-2024	\$1,505,678	(9.86%)	(\$148,545)



## 5-YEAR PROPERTY TAX REQUEST COMPARISON



<i><b>Tax Year</b></i>	<b>Local Property Tax Request</b>	<b>% Change (Prior Year)</b>	<b>\$ Change (Prior Year)</b>
<i>2019-2020</i>	\$4,142,499	(4.39%)	(\$182,242)
<i>2020-2021</i>	\$4,104,336	(0.93%)	(\$38,163)
<i>2021-2022</i>	\$4,204,314	2.43%	\$99,978
<i>2022-2023</i>	\$4,332,861	3.05%	\$128,547
<i>2023-2024</i>	\$4,702,236	8.52%	\$369,375

Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you might have regarding the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Dr. Christopher Prosofski  
Superintendent