

CHSVT Current Cost per Student

Section E.337 of Act 179 (2013 Legislative session, adjourned) required the Commissioner of Corrections, in consultation with the Community High School of Vermont Board, to prepare and submit a report to the Joint Legislative Corrections Oversight Committee on the current trends relating to the student population at the Community High School of Vermont. One of the requirements was to compare the Community High School of Vermont's (CHSVT) current cost per student with statewide education spending per student.

Student population data for CHSVT came from a relatively new student information system. The system was described by CHSVT personnel as a real-time system, enabling daily data pulls that reflected student counts, absences, and attendances, allowing calculation of a student full-time equivalency (FTE) for the year up to that point. When asked if the system had ever been audited for accuracy and to ensure it was performing as expected, the reply was no. In order to make a valid comparison with the AOE statewide education spending per student, the CHSVT student data for determining an FTE should be verified.

A request was made by AOE to see several weeks of raw student data. The reason for the request was to ascertain whether the system was accurately calculating an FTE count. These raw data were not provided to AOE for review. Therefore, student FTE data as provided by CHSVT were used. Table 1 summarizes the CHSVT data.

Table 1: CHSVT full-time equivalency counts, FY2014

Grade	Student FTE
Freshman	265.20
Sophomore	53.53
Junior	45.94
Senior	46.22
Subtotal	410.89
Graduate	49.39
Adult with diploma	57.44
Subtotal	106.83
Total	517.72

The pupil count used by AOE for the statewide education spending per student is equalized pupils. Equalized pupils are a two-year average of average daily membership (ADM) plus the FTE count of state-placed students (SPS) from the prior school year. ADM is an FTE of publicly funded resident students for each district, counted over a 20-day census period. The combined count (ADM plus SPS) is weighted for various categories and then normalized by an equalization ratio so that the equalized pupil count is equal to the original combined count.

The student population at CHSVT is a transient population and does not lend itself to a specific census period such as the 20-day census period for ADM. The CHSVT population is more akin to the state-placed student population, a group that tends to be more mobile in terms of residency in any given school year. Therefore, it is reasonable to count the CHSVT students as the state-placed students are counted – i.e., as full-time equivalency over the course of a full academic year.

Students included in the equalized pupil count are individuals who are publicly funded and do not have a high school diploma. The CHSVT data show a total of 517.72 FTEs for FY2014. Of those, 49.39 are listed as graduates and 57.44 are listed as adults with diplomas. Those 106.83 FTEs do not meet the criteria of not having a high school diploma and are therefore excluded from the calculation in order to keep the data as similar as possible between AOE and CHSVT. The remaining 410.89 FTEs are analogous to publicly funded students in the equalized pupil count.

CHSVT personnel stated expenditures of \$3,835,278 for the FY2014 year as of June 17. After discussion, it was agreed that while the total for the full fiscal year would likely increase from this figure, the increase would be immaterial and that this total was an acceptable figure.

Table 2 is a comparison of the cost per pupil for CHSVT and education spending per equalized pupil for AOE. All data are FY2014 data.

Table 2: Cost per pupil calculations

CHSVT		AOE	
Expenditures	\$3,835,278	Education spending	\$1,217,808,313
FTEs	410.89	Equalized pupils	89,055.14
Current cost per student	\$9,334	Education spending per equalized pupil	\$13,675

The calculated current cost per student (FTE) for CHSVT was \$9,334 in FY2014 versus an education spending per equalized pupil amount of \$13,675. While the CHSVT figure appears favorable to the statewide figure, the CHSVT expenditures do not include everything the public school districts must fund. Costs not included in the CHSVT expenditures include, but are not limited to:

1. Transportation
2. Additional special education expenses
3. Librarians, nurses, guidance counselors, etc.
4. Professional development
5. Central office
6. Food services
7. Facility upkeep
8. Utilities

Additionally, the CHSVT personnel are State of Vermont employees whereas the personnel employed by the school districts are not and are under a variety of salary structures.