

Bend-La Pine 2026

A Demographically-Adjusted Look at Spending and Outcomes

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+7.9
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How much Bend-La Pine students outscored expectations in math on Oregon's 2024-25 state test. The expectation comes from comparing Bend-La Pine to other Oregon districts that serve similar students — similar poverty levels, similar shares of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and English learners, similar racial composition. Reading scores beat the expectation by +4.5 points; math by +7.9. Both are above what the district's student demographics alone would predict.

Findings

- **Test scores beat expectations.** On Oregon's 2024-25 state tests, 53% of Bend-La Pine students met grade-level standards in reading and 41.9% in math. After comparing the district to Oregon districts that serve similar students, those scores came in 4.5 points above expectation in reading and 7.9 points above in math.
- **Spending below peer districts.** Bend-La Pine spent \$19,938 per student in fiscal year 2023-24 — less than the typical Oregon district (\$23,373) and less than every one of the six Oregon districts that most closely resemble it in student demographics.
- **Most of the money goes to people.** About 77 cents of every General Fund operating dollar pays salaries and benefits — for teachers, classified staff, and administrators (from the district's 2024-25 audited financial report). Counted Oregon's statewide way a year earlier, the share reads 84%. The typical Oregon district sits at about 75% on the same basis. Bend-La Pine is on the personnel-intensive end of normal.
- **The 2022 school bond is fully drawn.** Deschutes County voters approved \$249.7 million in 2022 for school capital projects. The district borrowed \$100 million in 2023 and the remaining \$149.7 million in 2025 — the exact authorized amount, split into two pieces. Across all seven school bonds since 2013, Bend-La Pine has borrowed about \$771.7 million in total.
- **Enrollment is declining.** The district had 18,647 students at its 2019-20 peak. Today it has 16,530 — about 2,100 fewer. The post-pandemic recovery never arrived.
- **Transparency: 2 green, 3 yellow, 0 red.** On a five-question test of how easy it is for a citizen to find the district's financial information, Bend-La Pine scored well on report timeliness and board-meeting detail; mid on machine-readable budgets, public bond-spending reports, and the district's republication of state-required per-school spending data. No category failed.
- **The state-level backdrop.** On the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) — the only test that lets states be compared head-to-head — Oregon ranked 48th in 4th-grade math, 46th in 4th-grade reading, 38th in 8th-grade math, and 31st in 8th-grade reading. Oregon spends in the upper half of states per pupil, so this is not a money story at the state level. Bend-La Pine is a bright spot inside a system-wide problem.

How the comparison works

We built a statistical model using data from 185 Oregon school districts. The model asks a single question: knowing only the share of a district's students who experience poverty, who have Individualized Education Programs, who are learning English, and the district's racial composition, how well can we predict that district's results on the state Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests? It turns out demographics alone explain about 40% of the differences between Oregon districts on these tests. The remaining 60% — what the model can't predict — is where district practice, leadership, curriculum, geography, and chance live.

When we say Bend-La Pine “beat its expectation by 7.9 points in math,” we mean this: given the district's student demographics, the model predicted 34% of students would meet grade level. The actual share was 41.9%. That is a description of where Bend-La Pine sits compared to Oregon districts serving similar students. It is not proof of what's causing the difference. Full methodology and source code: <D:/code/oregon-edu-pipeline/docs/METHODOLOGY.md>.

Numeric snapshot

Indicator	Bend-La Pine	For comparison
Enrollment (Fall 2024)	16,878	—
Spending per student (FY 2023-24)	\$19,938	\$23,373 (typical Oregon district)
Reading: % meeting grade level (2024-25)	53.0%	39.6% (Oregon median)
Math: % meeting grade level (2024-25)	41.9%	26.7% (Oregon median)
Reading vs. peer-district expectation	+4.5 points	0 by definition
Math vs. peer-district expectation	+7.9 points	0 by definition
Personnel share, operating budget (FY24-25 audited)	77%	75% (typical Oregon district, n=191)
Personnel share, statewide reporting (FY23-24)	84%	75% (typical Oregon district, n=191)
2022 voter-approved bond	\$249.7M	Issued: \$100M (2023) + \$149.7M (2025)
Total school borrowing, 2013-2025	\$771.7M	Seven bond series; \$609.8M new construction
Citizen-information transparency score	2 green / 3 yellow / 0 red	Five-question test of public-document accessibility

Sources

ODE PAGR (Smarter Balanced 2024-25); ODE Spring Enrollment and Fall Membership 2024-25; ODE District Financials FY23-24; NCES CCD Membership SY 2024-25; EMMA Official Statements (7 Bend-La Pine bond series 2013-2025); Bend-La Pine FY24 and FY25 Annual Reports; blschools.org; The Nation's Report Card 2024 NAEP results. Full specification at <D:/code/oregon-edu-pipeline/docs/METHODOLOGY.md>.