

## Inside Washington

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### Fuzzy Math

D.C.'s Education Department says it spends \$17,542 per student annually, but hidden costs bring the true price tag to \$28,170, or approximately two and a half times the median cost of sending a kid to private school in the Washington area, the **Cato Institute** says. By listing spending for construction, pensions, debt service, and other items in separate accounts, the 18 school districts studied by Cato could claim they spent an average of \$12,500 per child, even though the actual amount was \$18,000, according to the report, titled "They Spend WHAT?" The Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, says it spends \$10,053 on each of its 737,000 students, but its accounts show the real per-kid cost as \$25,208.-- **Neil Munro**