

# Arkansas



As climate change produces more extremely hot days across the country, many schools are struggling to cope with overheated classrooms and inadequate cooling systems—if they have them at all. This ongoing increase in the number of hot days during the academic year is forcing schools to install air conditioning or upgrade their equipment to a higher cooling capacity.

*Hotter Days, Higher Costs: The Cooling Crisis in America's Classrooms* analyzed localized heat trends during the school year from 1970 to 2025 using a widely used and publicly available ensemble of climate models. Our analysis identified a threshold of 32 days above 80 degrees Fahrenheit during the school year as the point at which air conditioning is needed, based on engineering protocols, peer-reviewed studies examining the relationship between heat and learning, and actual practice in school systems across the country. For every school district, we used climate model output to tally the number of days above the 80°F threshold during the school year in 1970 and 2025.

**The result: billions of dollars in school cooling costs that are directly attributable to climate change.**

## THE IMPACT ON ARKANSAS

For some schools in Arkansas that required cooling systems before 1970, the increasing number of extremely hot days has already and will continue to overwhelm the cooling capacity of these systems. To upgrade these systems, Arkansas will need to spend \$775,000 on 97 schools by 2025, impacting 51,720 students across 30 school districts in Arkansas.

This increase in hot days will mean schools have to spend an additional \$6,895,000 every year to operate these systems, which will impact 461,500 students.

## THE IMPACT ON THE U.S.

Numerous studies have found that hot temperatures reduce a student's ability to learn.

Nationally, the bill totals over \$40 billion to install or upgrade air conditioning in schools that serve a third of the country's public school students. That's equivalent to the amount that public schools spend each year on all capital improvements, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Who's going to pay for this? As it stands, taxpayers have been on the hook. The total bill is enormous, particularly for schools feeling the pinch from increased spending on security and health-safety measures, and burgeoning technology demands. Taxpayers, teachers, and students aren't to blame for rising temperatures. Oil and gas executives have known nearly half a century that their products were causing climate change, and intentionally misled the public about the dangers.

**Schoolchildren understand that when you make a mess, it's your responsibility to clean it up. It's time to hold oil and gas executives accountable for the damage they've caused.**



5614 Connecticut Ave. NW, #314  
Washington, DC 20015  
919 307 6637  
info@climateintegrity.org

See our full report for more data at [coolingcrisis.org](https://coolingcrisis.org)

# The Cost of Cooling Arkansas's Schools

## TOP 10 SCHOOL DISTRICTS, RANKED BY EQUIPMENT COST

RANK	SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL EQUIPMENT	ANNUAL OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	# OF STUDENTS IMPACTED	INCREASE IN HEAT DAYS (TOTAL HEAT DAYS)
1	North Little Rock School District	\$278,950	\$148,576	8,330	⬆️ 20 <sub>/95</sub>
2	Pulaski County Special School District	\$212,657	\$240,915	12,918	⬆️ 20 <sub>/96</sub>
3	Little Rock School District	\$93,288	\$393,167	23,368	⬆️ 20 <sub>/95</sub>
4	Fort Smith Public Schools	\$36,891	\$183,100	13,740	⬆️ 23 <sub>/100</sub>
5	El Dorado School District	\$22,497	\$83,200	4,296	⬆️ 23 <sub>/109</sub>
6	Magnolia School District	\$16,411	\$58,535	2,819	⬆️ 24 <sub>/111</sub>
7	Texarkana School District	\$16,335	\$61,245	4,114	⬆️ 19 <sub>/107</sub>
8	Lakeside School District	\$10,634	\$16,496	1,052	⬆️ 20 <sub>/108</sub>
9	Malvern Special School District	\$8,810	\$42,074	2,884	⬆️ 21 <sub>/103</sub>
10	Jacksonville North Pulaski School District	\$8,617	\$68,925	4,256	⬆️ 20 <sub>/95</sub>

## TOP 10 SCHOOL DISTRICTS, RANKED BY OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE COST

RANK	SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL EQUIPMENT	ANNUAL OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	# OF STUDENTS IMPACTED	INCREASE IN HEAT DAYS (TOTAL HEAT DAYS)
1	Little Rock School District	\$93,288	\$393,167	23,368	⬆️ 20 <sub>/95</sub>
2	Springdale School District	\$0	\$266,716	22,190	⬆️ 17 <sub>/71</sub>
3	Bentonville Public Schools	\$0	\$248,279	17,824	⬆️ 19 <sub>/73</sub>
4	Pulaski County Special School District	\$212,657	\$240,915	12,918	⬆️ 20 <sub>/96</sub>
5	Rogers Public Schools	\$0	\$189,409	15,222	⬆️ 18 <sub>/72</sub>
6	Fort Smith Public Schools	\$36,891	\$183,100	13,740	⬆️ 17 <sub>/96</sub>
7	Conway Public Schools	\$0	\$172,216	10,255	⬆️ 19 <sub>/92</sub>
8	Cabot Public Schools	\$0	\$161,719	10,376	⬆️ 20 <sub>/95</sub>
9	Bryant Public Schools	\$0	\$152,422	9,277	⬆️ 20 <sub>/97</sub>
10	North Little Rock School District	\$278,950	\$148,576	8,330	⬆️ 20 <sub>/95</sub>

Total equipment is the combined estimated HVAC installation and upgrade costs from 1970–2025. Annual Operation & Maintenance is the estimated costs of operating and maintaining the HVAC systems. Heat days are the number of days 80° or warmer between September 1 and June 15. The increase in heat days was estimated between 1970–2025.

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