

Florida



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 FLORIDA

For some schools in Florida 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, Florida will need to spend \$129,026,000 on 2,742 schools by 2025, impacting 2,394,030 students across 72 school districts in Florida. By 2025, 96% of students in 92% of schools across Florida will be impacted by these costs.

This increase in hot days will mean schools have to spend an additional \$56,662,000 every year to operate these systems, which will impact 2,495,750 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.



The Cost of Cooling Florida'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	Dade County School District	\$17,924,360	\$7,734,953	279,914	⬆️ 41/228
2	Broward County School District	\$15,560,982	\$5,017,010	219,274	⬆️ 33/228
3	Palm Beach County School District	\$11,537,016	\$3,892,526	173,044	⬆️ 28/218
4	Hillsborough County School District	\$10,643,661	\$4,256,747	194,226	⬆️ 24/189
5	Orange County School District	\$9,581,556	\$4,115,508	191,911	⬆️ 25/191
6	Polk County School District	\$5,309,228	\$2,130,562	89,183	⬆️ 28/204
7	Lee County School District	\$5,195,168	\$1,914,364	82,320	⬆️ 26/222
8	Pinellas County School District	\$5,104,053	\$2,075,441	93,057	⬆️ 25/177
9	Duval County School District	\$4,523,641	\$2,286,359	111,636	⬆️ 23/139
10	Pasco County School District	\$3,889,031	\$1,657,638	69,719	⬆️ 29/193

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)
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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.

See our full report for more data at coolingcrisis.org



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