

# South Carolina



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 SOUTH CAROLINA

For some schools in South Carolina 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, South Carolina will need to spend \$3,971,000 in 309 schools by 2025, impacting 223,340 students across 43 school districts in South Carolina. By 2025, 30% of students in 27% of schools across South Carolina will be impacted by these costs.

This increase in hot days will mean schools have to spend an additional \$14,965,000 every year to operate these systems, which will impact 745,500 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.**



# The Cost of Cooling South Carolina'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	Richland School District 1	\$935,917	\$526,427	23,476	⬆️ 26 <sub>/118</sub>
2	Lexington School District 1	\$398,085	\$582,502	26,735	⬆️ 24 <sub>/111</sub>
3	Lexington School District 2	\$352,656	\$205,327	8,973	⬆️ 26 <sub>/118</sub>
4	Florence School District 1	\$312,121	\$350,459	16,051	⬆️ 25 <sub>/109</sub>
5	Richland School District 2	\$271,103	\$689,448	29,557	⬆️ 24 <sub>/104</sub>
6	Orangeburg School District 5	\$244,420	\$135,194	5,986	⬆️ 31 <sub>/118</sub>
7	Lexington School District 5	\$201,869	\$361,114	17,404	⬆️ 20 <sub>/110</sub>
8	Charleston County School District	\$145,239	\$867,405	45,777	⬆️ 20 <sub>/98</sub>
9	Berkeley County School District	\$127,841	\$708,922	36,134	⬆️ 21 <sub>/106</sub>
10	Beaufort County School District	\$115,100	\$451,291	21,643	⬆️ 22 <sub>/112</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	Greenville County School District	\$0	\$1,470,960	75,710	⬆️ 19 <sub>/86</sub>
2	Charleston County School District	\$145,239	\$867,405	45,777	⬆️ 20 <sub>/98</sub>
3	Horry County School District	\$21,996	\$826,484	44,177	⬆️ 19 <sub>/104</sub>
4	Berkeley County School District	\$127,841	\$708,922	36,134	⬆️ 21 <sub>/106</sub>
5	Richland School District 2	\$271,103	\$689,448	29,557	⬆️ 24 <sub>/104</sub>
6	Lexington School District 1	\$398,085	\$582,502	26,735	⬆️ 24 <sub>/111</sub>
7	Richland School District 1	\$935,917	\$526,427	23,476	⬆️ 26 <sub>/118</sub>
8	Dorchester School District 2	\$96,975	\$517,837	26,217	⬆️ 23 <sub>/109</sub>
9	Aiken County School District	\$98,725	\$475,674	23,490	⬆️ 25 <sub>/111</sub>
10	Beaufort County School District	\$115,100	\$451,291	21,643	⬆️ 22 <sub>/112</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.

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



5614 Connecticut Ave. NW, #314  
 Washington, DC 20015  
 919 307 6637  
[info@climateintegrity.org](mailto:info@climateintegrity.org)