

The Cost of Failure to Teach Reading: Projections Based on 3rd Grade Reading Skills

For every student who fails to master reading by grade 3, taxpayers are subjected to what amounts to a *hidden annual surtax* - one that cumulates with each graduating class. It is levied in the form of added local, state, and federal taxes absorbed by the resulting school dropouts and unprepared graduates. [How to interpret this report.](#)

Because state [tests and reading proficiency benchmarks](#) vary substantially, the reading proficiency rates and projected costs generated by our calculator may not be compared from state to state. Within states, however, schools and districts may be compared-especially those with similar demographics (see: <http://education-consumers.org/school-performance-nationally>). Also, users may compare states by manually substituting [NAEP](#) proficiency percentages for the states of interest.

State: NY (2019)
County: ERIE
School District: FRONTIER CENTRAL
School: DISTRICT-WIDE

Calculations Based on the Following:

Third grade students enrolled	238
Percent reading at BASIC level	32
Percent reading at BELOW-BASIC level	6

Projection of Dropouts and Unprepared Graduates:

Number of dropouts	10
Number of unprepared graduates	50
Total Dropouts+Unprepared	60
As a percent of BASIC + BELOW-BASIC readers	66%

Total Cost of Dropouts:

Cost per Dropout	\$93,000
Total cost of dropouts in this class	\$947,000

Total Cost of Unprepared Graduates:

Cost per unprepared graduate	\$29,000
Total cost of unprepared graduates in this class	\$1,545,000

Total Cost, all Students:

Total cost of dropouts & unprepared students in this class	\$2,492,000
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The dropout and student preparedness estimates produced by this calculator are based on research by the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) and [ACT](#). The cost calculations are modeled after an extensive study reported by [Teachers College](#), Columbia University. Estimates may vary slightly due to rounding. For more about the calculator: http://www.education-consumers.org/pdf/ECF_CalculatorBackground.pdf. For more about the roots of the third grade reading problem and how it can be addressed, visit

