

# Wyoming Can Afford to Eliminate School District Property Taxes



BY VANCE GINN, PH.D.  
PRESIDENT OF GINN ECONOMIC CONSULTING

## Overview

Wyoming does not have a revenue problem. Wyoming has a spending discipline problem. [Residential property taxes](#) increased by 241% to \$1.8 billion from 2000 to 2025, while Wyoming accumulated one of the largest reserve balances in America relative to its population and economy. Using [NASBO data](#) and population growth plus inflation (PGI) [calculations](#), Wyoming's general funds budget exceeded this sustainable growth repeatedly over the last decade. These differences represent substantial fiscal capacity that could have been used to reduce tax burdens while still maintaining strong reserves and core government functions.

The following table shows how the state's general funds 90% surplus buydown approach could have eliminated school district property taxes by 2024 if it had started in 2017. We assume that school district property taxes increase by up to 2% annually, while the surplus buydown occurs every year except 2020.

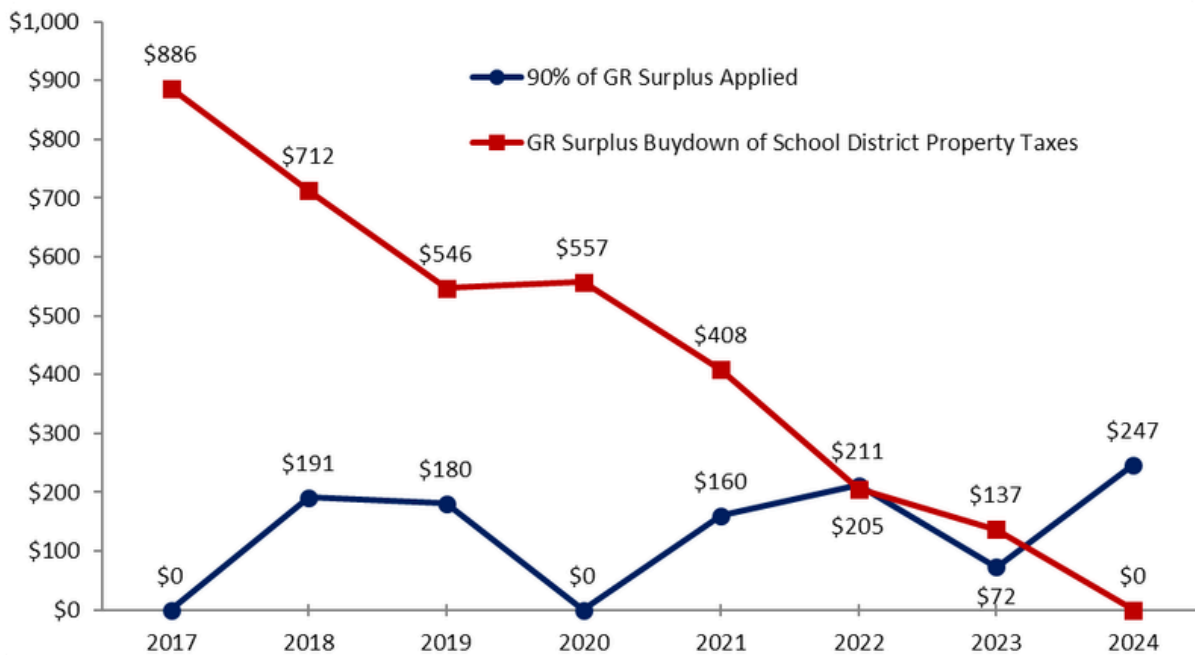
### Wyoming GR Surplus Buydown of School District Property Taxes (Millions of \$)

Fiscal Year	State General Funds Tax Revenue	State GF PGI Spending Baseline	State GF Surplus	90% of State GF Surplus Applied to Surplus Buydown	GF Surplus Buydown of School District Property Taxes
2017	1,173	1,173	0	0	886
2018	1,393	1,181	212	191	712
2019	1,394	1,194	200	180	546
2020	1,204	1,212	-8	0	557
2021	1,407	1,229	178	161	408
2022	1,491	1,257	234	210	205
2023	1,394	1,314	80	72	137
2024	1,664	1,390	274	247	0
Cumulative Totals	11,123	9,950	1,173	1,055	

Sources: [Wyoming Department of Revenue](#), [NASBO State Expenditure Reports](#), and [Americans for Tax Reform's Responsible State Budget](#).

The figure below shows what this could have looked like had school district property taxes been frozen in 2017. Under the PGI limitation, the general fund surplus buydown would use 90% of the surplus to reduce school district property tax rates each period, with no additional annual increases until they are eliminated. If this process had started in 2017, school district property taxes would have been eliminated by 2024, or just seven years. A similar scenario could happen today if it starts soon.

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## Wyoming Can Afford Property Tax Relief

Wyoming can become a national leader in sustainable property tax reform. A reform package should include:

- Adopting a PGI Spending Limit, with a supermajority vote of 60% to exceed it
- Using Surpluses to Provide School District Property Tax Relief
- Maintaining Prudent Reserve Targets
- Creating a Path to Lower Property Taxes

## Conclusion

Wyoming has an opportunity to lead the country with a sustainable alternative rooted in spending discipline instead of temporary political fixes. The state already possesses strong revenues, large reserves, and substantial fiscal capacity. The missing ingredient is spending discipline. Had Wyoming consistently limited spending growth to population growth plus inflation since 2017, the state could have eliminated school district property taxes by 2024. Wyoming needs a fiscal framework that prioritizes taxpayers, affordability, and sustainable growth.



### About Vance Ginn, Ph.D.

Dr. Ginn previously served as Associate Director for Economic Policy (chief economist) at the White House's Office of Management and Budget and as Chief Economist at the Texas Public Policy Foundation. He advises policymakers, think tanks, and business leaders nationwide on tax, fiscal, and regulatory reforms grounded in free-market principles, with the mission to let people prosper.

For more about his work, visit his website: [vanceginn.com](http://vanceginn.com).