Charter School Funding

Report 22-11

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OPPAGA

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

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SUMMARY

Scope

As directed by Ch. 2022-144, *Laws of Florida*, OPPAGA analyzed the current methods used to distribute capital outlay funds and specified federal program funds to traditional public schools and charter schools. The law further directs OPPAGA to recommend changes to provide an equitable allocation of these funds to all public schools. In Florida, charter schools are public schools. In this report, public schools that are not charter schools will be referred to as traditional public schools.

The summary section of this report provides a high-level overview of OPPAGA's research and findings. Following the summary,

- Chapter 1 provides detailed information on capital outlay funding available to school districts and the current methodology used to distribute these funds to public schools as well as survey results related to the distribution of capital outlay funds; and
- Chapter 2 provides detailed information on specific federal program funding available to school districts, the current methodologies used to distribute these funds to public schools, and survey results related to the distribution of federal program funds.

Methodology

OPPAGA reviewed relevant state and federal laws, rules, and regulations; interviewed officials in other states, Florida Department of Education (FDOE) officials, representatives from charter school advocacy groups, and officials from the Florida Association of District School Superintendents; and analyzed financial data provided by FDOE, the Florida Department of Revenue, and the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. OPPAGA also surveyed 48 school district finance officers (for school districts with at least one charter school) and received responses from 30 (64%) finance officers. In addition, 581 principals of 652 charter schools that were operating in the fall of 2021 were sent a survey invitation or given the opportunity to complete OPPAGA's survey. One hundred fourteen of the 652 (17%) charter schools completed the survey.[1]

OPPAGA was directed to recommend changes to provide an equitable allocation of capital outlay funds and specified federal program funds to all public schools. For the purpose of this study, OPPAGA defined equitable as fair and impartial allocations to best serve the interests of students being educated in public schools. In surveys of charter school principals and school district finance officers, respondents were asked if they believed that the current methods for allocating major sources of capital outlay funds and specified federal program funds were equitable; respondents were also asked to provide the rationale for their responses. Additionally, the survey asked respondents who reported that the current allocation methods were not equitable to recommend a more equitable method. OPPAGA considered survey responses when assessing potential recommendations.

[1] OPPAGA excluded conversion charter schools from the survey because these schools do not receive capital outlay funding from the same source as regular charter schools, per s. 1013.62(1)(5)(b), *F.S.* OPPAGA also excluded virtual charter schools from the survey because capital outlay funds are not included in the funding formula for virtual charter schools, per s. 1002.45(6), *F.S.*

FDOE collects annual financial reports (AFRs) from school districts. These school district AFRs show funds expended by the school district during a given fiscal year from different funding sources. OPPAGA used these AFRs to analyze capital outlay funding expended by school districts. In some cases, funding allocated during one fiscal year may be expended during a subsequent fiscal year or over multiple fiscal years. For federal program funds, FDOE provided a report of final subgrant allocations for specified programs that OPPAGA used to analyze the amounts of federal program funds received by school districts. (See Appendix A for a more detailed description of OPPAGA's methodology.)

Background

Charter schools are public schools that operate under a performance contract (or charter) between the charter school's governing board and its sponsor (typically a school district). Charter schools are exempt from most state education laws in an effort to permit educational innovation and flexibility in school operations.[2] With this increased flexibility comes increased accountability; the charter school's contract is automatically terminated if the school earns two consecutive school grades of F.[3]

Charter schools receive operational funds in the same manner as traditional public schools. This funding is based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled in the charter school, provided as part of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).[4] Both charter schools and traditional public schools may use FEFP operating funds for capital expenses, including building lease and building maintenance costs. This report does not review the distribution of operational funds to charter schools or traditional public schools.

Capital Outlay Funds

Chapter 2022-144, *Laws of Florida*, directs OPPAGA to examine the distribution of capital outlay funds to charter schools. Capital outlay funds are used to acquire, maintain, upgrade, or refurbish capital assets, which include land, facilities, and machinery. Florida school districts may use multiple federal, state, and local funding sources for capital projects.

In Fiscal Year 2020-21, school districts expended $5.2 billion from local sources—93.6% of all public sources for capital outlay. (See Exhibit S-1.) The major sources of local capital outlay funding include

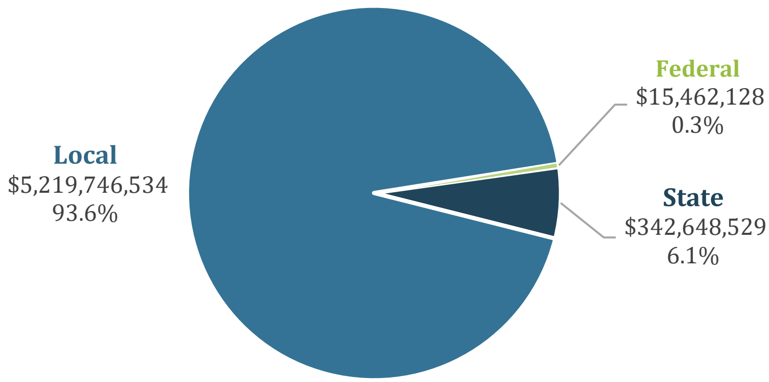
- District Local Capital Improvement Taxes ($3.2 billion);
- School District Local Sales Taxes ($971.6 million);
- Impact Fees ($582.0 million); and
- County Local Sales Taxes ($287.7 million).

[2] Charter schools are exempt from all requirements of Chs. 1000-1013, *F.S.*, (the Early Learning to 20 Education Code) with exceptions for provisions related to charter schools; student assessments and school grades; services to students with disabilities; civil rights; student health, safety, and welfare; and other provisions related to public records, class size, school safety, and the evaluation of instructional personnel and school administrators.
[3] Section 1002.33, *F.S.*, provides exceptions in cases where the charter school is established to turn around the performance of a traditional public school; the charter school has been in operation fewer than four years, serves students where the majority of students are zoned for a traditional public school in turnaround status, and earns a school grade of D or higher in its third year; or the charter school applies for and receives a waiver from the State Board of Education.
[4] An FTE student is defined as a full-time student, or a combination of full-time or part-time students who are equivalent to one full-time student, enrolled in a basic kindergarten through grade 12 program, an exceptional student education program, a secondary career education program, or an English for speakers of other languages program. An unweighted FTE student count is the number of students who meet the definition of FTE student, while a weighted FTE student count is the number of students who meet the definition of FTE student multiplied by the cost factor (i.e., the extra cost for educating certain groups of students).

During the same period, school districts expended $342.6 million from state sources—6.1% of all public sources for capital outlay. (See Exhibit S-1.) The major sources of state capital outlay funding include

- Charter School Capital Outlay funding, available only to charter schools ($167.6 million);
- Capital Outlay and Debt Service funding ($92.0 million);
- Other miscellaneous state revenues ($65.5 million); and
- Public Education Capital Outlay funding (PECO, $15.1 million).[5]

Exhibit S-1
In Fiscal Year 2020-21, Most Capital Project Expenditures Came From Local Revenue Sources



Source: OPPAGA analysis of FDOE annual financial reports.

This report examines the methodologies used to distribute revenue from the District Local Capital Improvement Tax and the School District Local Sales Tax, which, together, accounted for 81% ($4.2 billion of $5.2 billion) of all local capital outlay expenditures in Fiscal Year 2020-21, and the Charter School Capital Outlay allocation, which accounted for 49% ($167.6 million of $342.6 million) of all state capital outlay expenditures during the same period. Expenditures by school districts for other major sources of state funding for capital outlay are provided in Appendix B (see Exhibits B-5 to B-7).

The scope of this report does not include a review of the use of private bond funding for capital outlay projects by school districts and charter schools. The FDOE does not separately report information from school districts on privately funded bonds for capital outlay projects for traditional public schools. However, an October 2022 Florida Auditor General Report identified more than $11.5 billion in Certificates of Participation, General Obligation Bonds, and Qualified School Construction Bonds in outstanding debt by school districts as of June 30, 2021. In addition, OPPAGA identified at least 10 charter school governing organizations that accessed at least $1.75 billion in privately funded bonds issued from July 2016 through November 2021 to support capital outlay projects. Such bonding is addressed in state law, including in s. 1002.33, *Florida Statutes*.

[5] Other smaller sources of state capital outlay fund expenditures total $2.4 million and include sales tax revenue per s. 212.20(6), *F.S.*, and interest from the Capital Outlay and Debt Service trust fund.

Findings on Capital Outlay Funds

OPPAGA's analysis focused on the two largest local sources and the largest state source of public capital outlay funds representing 78.8% of the total funding available for capital outlay: District Local Capital Improvement Tax, School District Local Sales Tax, and Charter School Capital Outlay, which together, accounted for $4.4 billion of capital outlay expenditures in Fiscal Year 2020-21. OPPAGA's findings on the distribution of these funds are presented below.[6] More detailed information on each of these funds as well as school district and charter school survey responses are presented in Chapter 1.

- **District Local Capital Improvement Tax** is the largest source of funds available to school districts for capital outlay. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, school districts expended $3.25 billion in District Local Capital Improvement Tax revenue. School districts are not generally required to share these funds with charter schools; 4 of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey reported allocating a portion of these funds to their local charter schools. Twenty-four of the 30 school districts believed the allocation method used for these funds was equitable, while 21 of the 55 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported knowing how these funds were distributed believed that the school district's allocation method was equitable. Thirty of the 66 charter schools reporting that the school district had a local capital improvement tax said that the most equitable allocation method would be charter schools receiving a portion of this funding based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE.
- **School District Local Sales Tax** is the second largest source of funds available to school districts for capital outlay. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, school districts expended $971.6 million in revenue derived from the School District Local Sales Tax. These funds must be approved by referendum and, for referenda passed after July 1, 2020, school districts must share these tax revenues with district charter schools based on a proportional share of the total school district enrollment. Eight of the 13 charter schools that reported receiving a share of these revenues believed the allocation was equitable.
- **Charter School Capital Outlay** is the largest source of state funds for capital outlay and is only available to eligible charter schools. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, 608 charter schools in 46 school districts expended $167.5 million in Charter School Capital Outlay funding.[7] The Legislature appropriates these funds in the General Appropriations Act, the FDOE distributes the funds to eligible charter schools using a formula prescribed in law, which provides a greater amount of the funds to charter schools that have at least 75% of students on free or reduced price meals or at least 25% of students with disabilities.[8]

Overall, school district and charter school opinions varied on the allocation of capital outlay funds. School districts were most likely to believe current capital outlay funding allocation methods are equitable, whereas charter schools most often were unsure as to whether the funds are allocated equitably. Seventeen of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey reported that the current methods used to allocate all sources of capital outlay funds are equitable, 8 were unsure, and 5 said current allocation methods are not equitable. In contrast, 46 of the 114 charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey reported being unsure if the methods the school district uses to

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[6] OPPAGA reviewed capital outlay expenditures from public revenue sources. Funding from private sources such as bonds and certificates of participation were not part of OPPAGA's review of capital outlay funding.
[7] This count of charter schools and school districts only includes the 67 county-level school districts; it does not include special school districts.
[8] If the Legislature does not appropriate Charter School Capital Outlay funds above a certain baseline value, s. 1013.62(3), *F.S.,* specifies that the FDOE calculates how much of the District Local Capital Improvement Tax must be distributed to the charter schools by district based on the number of unweighted student FTE in each eligible charter school. The GAA has included an allocation for Charter School Capital Outlay above this baseline amount for Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2021-22.

allocate all capital outlay funds are equitable, 36 reported that the methods are not equitable, and 32 believed the methods to be equitable.

Twenty-three of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey reported that charter schools should be required to meet additional criteria (e.g., operating in a publicly owned building following the state review process for approval to construct a new school, or complying with the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, commonly referred to as SREF) to be included in the district process for school maintenance, repair, and renovation and receive state and local capital outlay funding. Similarly, 18 school districts reported that charter schools should be required to meet additional considerations such as complying with the same building standards as traditional schools and holding a public hearing on school budgets. In contrast, 85 of the 114 charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey reported that charter schools should not be required to meet additional requirements. In addition, 71 charter schools reported that charter schools should not be required to meet additional considerations to receive state and local capital outlay funding. Thirty-six charter school principals reported that current allocation methods were not equitable and described what they believed to be more equitable alternatives. These alternatives included allocating these funds based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE (16) or based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE (7). Of the remaining charter school principals, 32 reported that they believed that the current capital outlay funding allocation methods were equitable, and 46 were unsure if the current capital outlay funding allocation methods were equitable.

After reviewing the recommendations from school districts and charter schools, examining the practices of allocating funds to charter schools in Florida and other states, and analyzing financial data provided by the Florida Department of Education and other entities, OPPAGA provides a recommended option that meets the OPPAGA criteria for an equitable distribution of capital outlay funding. The considerations relative to this option are listed below. (See Exhibit S-2.)

Exhibit S-2
Considerations Related to the Distribution of Capital Outlay Funding Based on Demonstrated Need

Funding Source	Considerations
District Local Capital Improvement Tax Funds	• Would ensure that facilities with the greatest needs for capital outlay funds would receive those funds • Would allow the school district to have a better understanding of the conditions and maintenance requirements of the charter school facilities for the district-sponsored charter schools • Existing funds would be spread across more schools, which might result in the capital needs of traditional public schools being delayed or not addressed at all • Public funds might be used to pay for construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance of educational facilities that are not publicly owned • Might be difficult to implement because it would require school district administrators to work with charter school administrators to jointly determine and prioritize which capital projects and maintenance projects have the greatest need
School District Local Sales Tax Funds	• For surtaxes enacted since July 1, 2020, school districts must share these funds with district charter schools on a per-student basis. By changing to a needs-based distribution model, facilities with the greatest capital outlay needs would be able to receive greater funding • Might result in less funding being provided to charter schools if the schools have less pressing construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance needs compared to traditional public schools

Funding Source	Considerations
Charter School Capital Outlay Funds	• Currently, these funds are only allocated to charter schools on a weighted FTE basis; by changing to a needs-based distribution model, facilities with the greatest capital outlay needs would be able to receive greater funding • Existing funds would be spread across charter and traditional schools, which might result in less funding for charter schools with less pressing construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance needs than other schools • Might be more complicated to administer than the current process as methodology would need to be developed to distribute these funds to school districts that would then allocate them based on need

Source: OPPAGA analysis.

Recommendations on the Allocation of Capital Outlay Funds

To ensure that the most pressing construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance needs are addressed regardless of the type of public school a student attends, OPPAGA recommends distributing capital outlay funding to charter schools based on demonstrated need. School districts are already required by s. 1013.31, *Florida Statutes*, to conduct a plant survey of traditional public schools at least every five years. By including charter school facilities as part of this district plant survey, school districts can work with charter schools to evaluate and prioritize the use of capital outlay funds from all sources to fund the most urgent capital projects and maintenance needs for both charter schools and traditional public schools.

Federal Program Funds

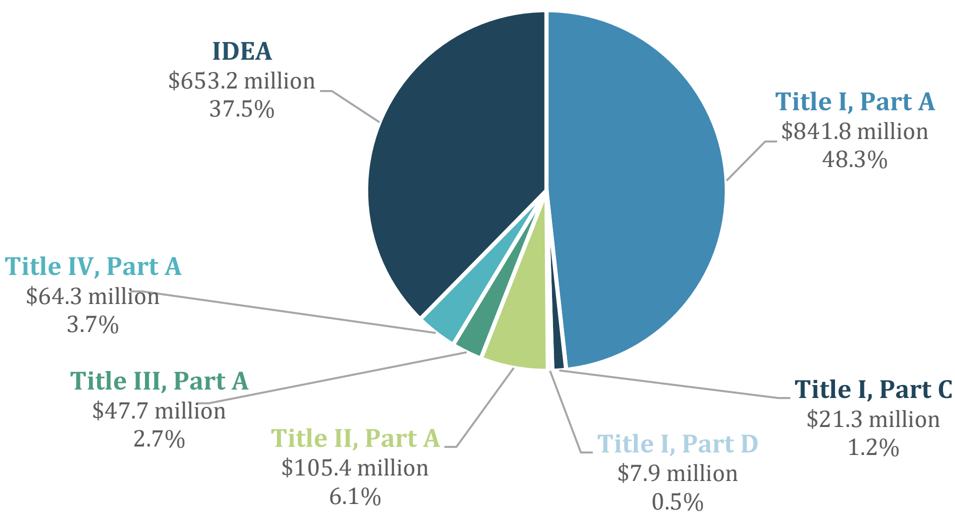
Federal program funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These funds are intended to assist local educational agencies (LEAs), which are typically school districts, in improving the academic outcomes of particular groups of students, including students who are disadvantaged, migrant, neglected, delinquent, at-risk, or homeless; students with disabilities; and students in rural and low-income schools.

This report examines the federal programs classified by FDOE as non-competitive, entitlement programs. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, these programs provided $1.7 billion to LEAs to supplement educational programs. (See Exhibit S-3.)

The federal programs examined are

- ESEA Title I, Part A, Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies ($841.8 million);
- ESEA Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Children ($21.3 million);
- ESEA Title I, Part D, Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk ($7.9 million);
- ESEA Title II, Part A, Supporting Effective Instruction ($105.4 million);
- ESEA Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement ($47.7 million);
- ESEA Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment ($64.3 million); and
- IDEA, Assistance for Education of All Children With Disabilities ($653.2 million).

Exhibit S-3
In Fiscal Year 2020-21, Title I, Part A Was the Largest Source of Federal Program Funding Available to School Districts



Source: OPPAGA analysis of FDOE final allocation reports.

Findings on Federal Program Funds

OPPAGA's analysis focused on the non-competitive, entitlement grants through which federal funds are allocated to local education agencies. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $1.7 billion in these federal funds. OPPAGA's findings on the distribution of these funds are presented below. More detailed information for each of these funding sources as well as school district and charter school survey responses are presented in Chapter 2.

- **Title I, Part A** funds are provided to LEAs to assist schools with a high percentage of children from low-income families to ensure all children have an opportunity to receive a high-quality education. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $841.8 million in Title I, Part A funding. All 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey received these funds during the 2021-22 school year. Twenty-five of these school districts reported allocating funds to charter schools, all using the same method used to distribute funds to traditional schools. Twenty-nine of the 30 school districts believed the allocation method was equitable. Twenty-one the 47 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving funds were unsure if the allocation method was equitable, 21 believed the allocation method was equitable and 5 believed the allocation method was not equitable.
- **Title I, Part C** funds are provided to LEAs to meet the unique needs of students from migratory families. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $21.3 million in Title I, Part C funding. Fifteen of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey received these funds during the 2021-22 school year. One of the 15 school districts reported allocating funds to charter schools using the same method used to distribute funds to traditional schools. Fourteen of the 15 school districts believed the allocation method was equitable, while 1 was unsure. Seven of the 11 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving funds were unsure if the allocation method was equitable and 4 believed the allocation method was equitable.

- **Title I, Part D** funds are provided to LEAs to improve educational services for children and youth who are neglected or delinquent and provide them with support services. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $7.9 million in Title I, Part D funding. Twenty-one of the 30 school districts that responded to OPPAGA's survey received these funds during the 2021-22 school year. One of the 21 school districts reported allocating funds to charter schools using the same method used to distribute funds to traditional schools. Of the 20 school districts that did not distribute funds to charter schools, 4 reported providing services to these charter schools rather than allocating funds. Twenty of the 21 school districts believed the allocation method was equitable, while 1 was unsure. Seven of the 12 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving funds believed the allocation method was equitable and five were unsure if the allocation method was equitable.
- **Title II, Part A** funds are provided to LEAs to improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $105.4 million in Title II, Part A funding. All 30 school districts that responded to OPPAGA's survey received these funds during the 2021-22 school year. Eighteen school districts reported that all district charter schools participated in the district-level programs provided with these funds, 10 reported that some charter schools participated, and 2 reported that no charter schools participated. Nine school districts reported allocating funds to charter schools that did not participate in the district-level program. All 30 school districts believed the allocation method was equitable. Thirty-one of the 69 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving funds believed the allocation method was equitable, 29 were unsure if the allocation method was equitable, and 8 believed the allocation method was not equitable.
- **Title III, Part A** funds are provided to LEAs to build the capacity of teachers and school leaders to provide effective instructional programs to English language learners. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $47.7 million in Title III, Part A funding. Twenty-six of the 30 school districts that responded to OPPAGA's survey received these funds during the 2021-22 school year. Twelve of these school districts reported allocating funds to charter schools and 11 reported using the same method used to distribute funds to traditional schools. Twelve of the 14 school districts that did not distribute funds to charter schools reported providing services to these charter schools rather than allocating funds. Twenty-five of the 26 school districts that received Title III, Part A funds believed the allocation method was equitable, while one was unsure. Fourteen of the 29 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving funds were unsure if the allocation method was equitable, 11 believed the allocation method was equitable, and 4 believed the allocation method was not equitable.
- **Title IV, Part A** funds are provided to LEAs to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of schools to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, and improve the use of technology to enhance students' academic achievement and digital literacy. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $64.3 million in Title IV, Part A funding. All 30 school districts that responded to OPPAGA's survey received these funds during the 2021-22 school year. Fourteen of these school districts reported that all district charter schools participated in district-level programs provided with these funds, five reported that some charter schools participated, and 11 reported that no charter schools participated. Six school districts reported allocating funds to charter schools that did not participate in the district-level program. Twenty-eight of the 30 school districts believed the allocation method was equitable, while 1 was unsure and 1 believed the allocation method was not equitable but was unsure of a better alternative. Forty-

three of the 73 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and received funds were unsure if the allocation method was equitable, 26 believed the allocation method was equitable, and 4 believed the allocation method was not equitable.

- **Individuals With Disabilities Education Act** funds are provided to LEAs to support the implementation of a free and appropriate public education that meets the needs of children with disabilities. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, LEAs received $653.2 million in IDEA funding. All 30 school districts that responded to OPPAGA's survey received these funds during the 2021-22 school year. Twenty-two of these school districts reported allocating funds to charter schools, with 19 using the same method used to distribute funds to traditional schools. Of the eight school districts that did not distribute funds to charter schools, seven reported providing services to these charter schools rather than allocating funds. Twenty-eight of the 30 school districts believed the allocation method was equitable, while two were unsure. Thirty-six of the 67 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and received funds were unsure if the allocation method was equitable, 24 believed the allocation method was equitable, and 7 believed the allocation method was not equitable.

Typically, federal program funding is allocated to LEAs based on the number of eligible students, including students attending charter schools, for the specific federal program. However, federal law allows LEAs to provide funds or services to a portion of eligible schools based on need, which means that some eligible schools, traditional and charter, may not receive funds or services. In addition, LEAs are allowed to reserve funds to design and provide district-level programming based on need, which may not meet the needs of some charter schools. Thirty-six percent of charter school principals who responded to OPPAGA's survey were unsure how the school district allocates federal program funds and services. This indicates a need for greater transparency and consultation between school districts and charter schools during the application and allocation processes for these federal programs.

Recommendations on the Allocation of Federal Funds

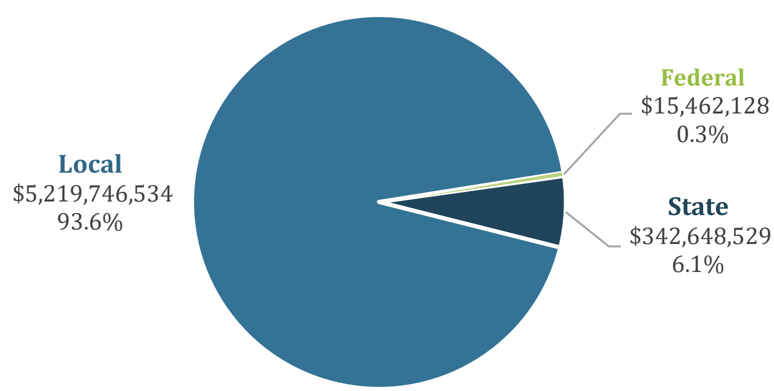
To address the lack of understanding on how federal funds are distributed revealed via survey responses, OPPAGA recommends that the FDOE work with school districts to provide additional training and information to charter schools regarding requirements for eligibility and distribution of federal program funds for the federal programs reviewed by OPPAGA. While the charter school survey response rate was very small, of those responding, 9% indicated they did not think the allocation methodology of federal funds was equitable. However, 50% indicated they do not know whether the federal funding allocation methodology is equitable. This additional training and information would make the process more transparent to charter schools and could result in more collaboration between school districts and charter schools in the application for and distribution of funds in a manner that would best serve all eligible public school students, teachers, and families.

CHAPTER 1: CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDS

OPPAGA's analysis found that local and state capital outlay funds are not distributed in a manner that ensures the most pressing construction, renovation, and refurbishment needs are addressed regardless of the type of public school a student attends. The largest source of these funds ($3.3 billion) is generally available only to traditional public schools for specific allowable capital projects and debt servicing. A much smaller amount of capital funding ($167.6 million) is available to charter schools meeting certain statutory eligibility criteria. This funding is allocated to eligible charter schools based solely on student full-time equivalents. Overall, school district and charter school opinions varied on the allocation of capital outlay funding. School districts responding to OPPAGA's survey were more likely than charter schools to believe that current methods used to allocate capital funds are equitable (17 out of 30). In contrast, charter schools were more likely than school district respondents to be unsure (46 out of 114) or to believe that current allocation methods are not equitable (36 out of 114).

There are several federal, state, and local funding sources that Florida school districts may use for capital projects. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, almost 94% of funding for capital projects came from local revenue sources. (See Exhibit 1.) In Fiscal Year 2020-21, state expenditures for capital projects totaled $342.6 million and comprised 6.1% of all revenue available for such projects. During the same period, federal revenue expended for capital projects totaled $15.5 million and comprised 0.3% of all revenue available for such projects. Federal sources of capital project funding included money from the American Rescue Plan for the state to safely reopen schools and sustain safe operations after the COVID-19 pandemic and from the federal Charter School Program fund. This report examines the current allocation of the largest sources of local and state capital outlay funding.

Exhibit 1
In Fiscal Year 2020-21, Most Capital Project Expenditures Came From Local Revenue Sources

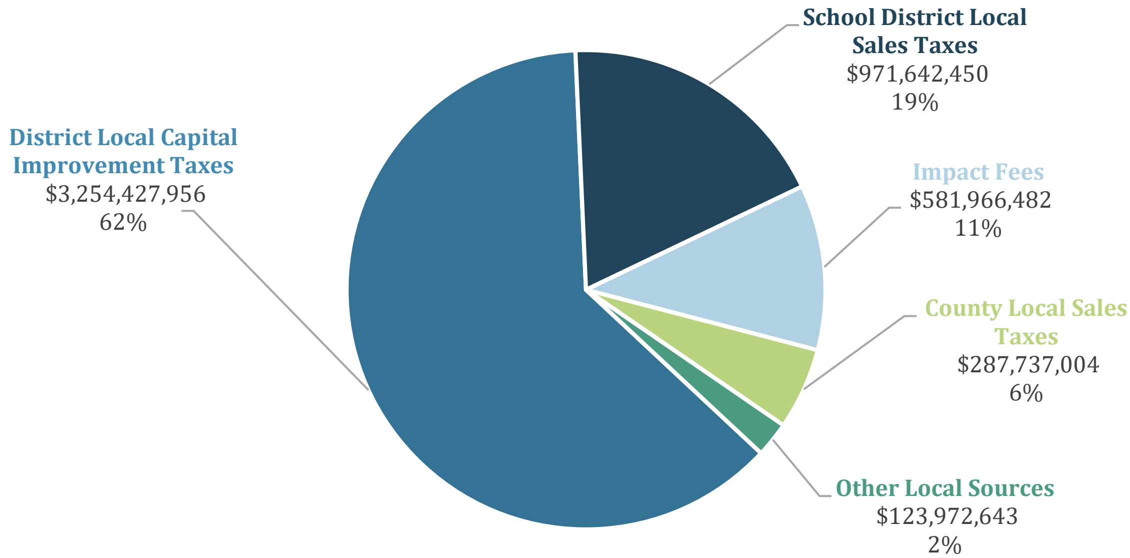


Source: OPPAGA analysis of FDOE annual financial reports.

Local Sources of Revenue for Capital Projects

OPPAGA examined the methodologies used to distribute revenue from the District Local Capital Improvement Tax and the School District Local Sales Tax, which, together, accounted for 81% ($4.2 billion of $5.2 billion) of all local capital outlay expenditures in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Other local major funding sources for capital outlay projects included Impact Fees (11% of local expenditures) and County Local Sales Tax (6% of local expenditures). (See Exhibit 2.)

Exhibit 2
In Fiscal Year 2020-21, Most Local Capital Outlay Expenditures Were From the District Local Capital Improvement Tax



Source: OPPAGA analysis of FDOE annual financial reports.

District Local Capital Improvement Tax

Overview

Funds from District Local Capital Improvement Tax, authorized by s. 1011.71(2), *Florida Statutes*, are derived from an ad valorem tax levied by school districts of not more than 1.5 mills. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, school districts expended $3.25 billion in revenue derived from the District Local Capital Improvement Tax, which accounted for 62.3% of the capital funding from all local sources. During the same period, the millage rates for 59 of the state's 67 county school districts were set at 1.5, the maximum permitted by Florida law. The eight school districts with lower millage rates were Collier, Escambia, Franklin, Gulf, Jackson, Monroe, Walton, and Washington.[9]

Revenue expended from the District Local Capital Improvement Tax varied considerably by school district. Miami-Dade ($485.6 million), Broward ($325.4 million), and Palm Beach ($320.7 million) school districts had the largest amounts of expenditures from the tax in Fiscal Year 2020-21. In contrast, smaller school districts, such as Liberty ($454,987), Lafayette ($442,451), and Union ($434,408), had substantially fewer expenditures from the tax during the same period. (See Appendix B, Exhibit B-1 for a listing of the millage rates, estimated revenue generated, and funds expended by school districts in Fiscal Year 2020-21.)

In recent years, Florida law has not required school districts to share revenue from the up to 1.5 mills District Local Capital Improvement Tax with the charter schools.[10] However, s. 1011.71(9), *Florida Statutes*, provides that school districts, which levy, by local referendum, an additional millage above

[9] The millage rates for these eight school districts were 1.1500 (Collier), 1.2140 (Escambia), 1.0000 (Franklin), 0.8290 (Gulf), 0.8776 (Jackson), 0.5000 (Monroe), 1.3930 (Walton), and 1.1500 (Washington).
[10] Section 1013.62(1), *F.S.*, states that if the Florida Legislature allocates funding for charter school capital outlay funds in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) that is less than a baseline per student FTE amount from Fiscal Year 2018-19, adjusted by the number of charter school students and the Consumer Price Index, then the difference must come from the school district's discretionary millage authorized in s. 1011.71(2), *F.S.* The GAA has included an allocation for Charter School Capital Outlay above this baseline amount for Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2021-22.

the 1.5 mills, must share the additional revenue with charter schools based on each charter school's proportional share of the district's total unweighted FTE student enrollment. These funds must be used in a manner consistent with the purposes of the referendum-approved levy.

Pursuant to s. 1011.71(2), *Florida Statutes*, District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds may be used for charter schools and traditional district schools to fund

- new construction, remodeling, site improvements, auxiliary facilities, athletic facilities, or ancillary facilities;
- maintenance, renovation, and repair of existing school plants or leased facilities to correct deficiencies;
- purchase, lease-purchase, or lease of school buses;
- purchase, lease-purchase, or lease of new and replacement equipment; computer and device hardware and operating system software to support digital instructional content and resources; and enterprise resource software classified as a capital asset with a useful life of at least five years, which is used to support districtwide administration or state-mandated reporting requirements;
- payments for educational facilities and sites due under certain lease-purchase agreements not to exceed three-fourths of the millage levied under s. 1011.71(2), *Florida Statutes*;
- payment of certain loans;
- payment of costs directly related to complying with state and federal environmental statutes, rules, and regulations governing school facilities;
- payment of the cost of leasing relocatable educational facilities or of renting or leasing certain educational facilities and sites or space within existing buildings; and
- payment of the cost of school buses contracted by the school district to provide student transportation services under specified circumstances.

Allocation Methods

Twenty-six of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey reported that the school districts did not allocate any District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds to charter schools. Two of the four districts that allocated these funds to charter schools reported distributing the funds to traditional schools and charter schools using the same methodology: based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE and based on a specific dollar amount of $200 per student.[11] For the two districts that allocated the funds to traditional schools and charter schools differently, both allocated the funds to traditional schools using a needs-based model, but one allocated funds to charter schools based on a proportional share of unweighted FTE and one allocated funds to charter schools using a slightly different needs-based model than the needs-based model for traditional schools.[12]

[11] A weighted FTE student count is the number of students that meet the definition of FTE student multiplied by the cost factor (i.e., the extra cost for educating certain groups of students). For example, a fourth grade student in a basic program has a cost factor of 1.000, while a fourth grade student in a Support Level 4 exceptional student education program has a cost factor of 3.648.
[12] The difference between the two needs-based models was not clear from the school district's survey responses.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

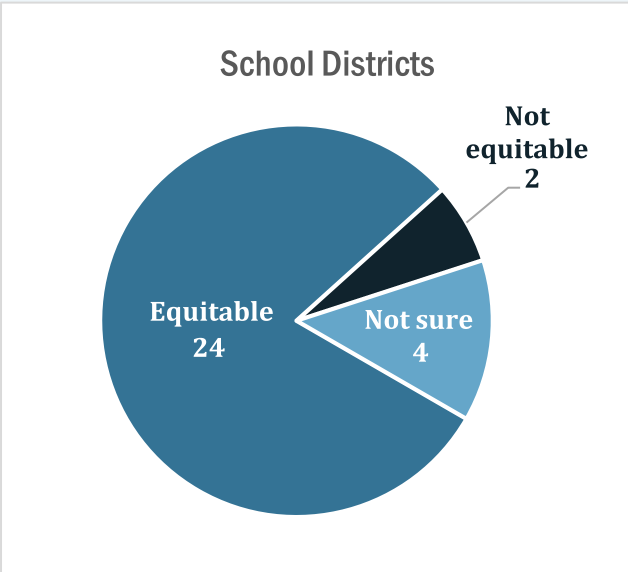
As indicated above, the majority of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey reported not sharing revenues derived from the District Local Capital Improvement Tax with charter schools. Twenty-four districts reported that the current methods used to allocate these funds were equitable. The school districts gave various reasons for this opinion, including that charter schools already receive state-allocated funds specifically to address capital outlay needs (10) and the district is following statutory requirements (7). Four school districts reported being unsure if the methods that the districts currently use to allocate District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds were equitable; these four districts did not share these funds with charter schools.[13]

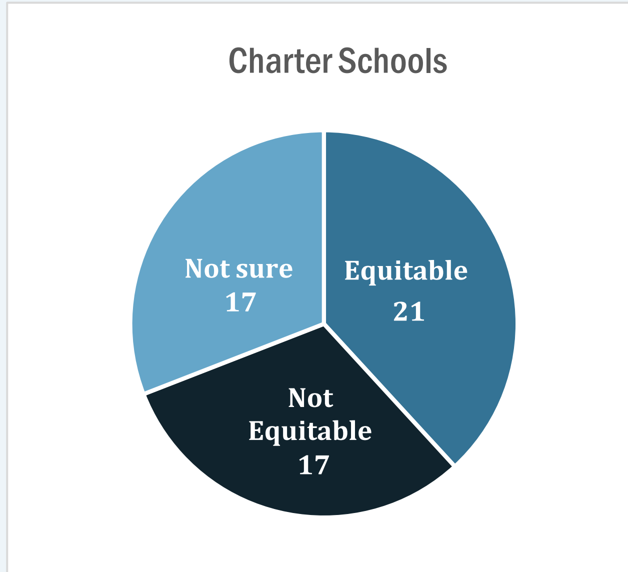
Fifty-five of the 114 charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey reported knowing how District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds were distributed by the school districts. Twenty-one of the charter schools reported that the school district's allocation of these funds was equitable. All but one of the 21 charter schools operated in school districts that did not share District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds with charter schools. The 21 charter school principals provided various explanations for their responses, including that charter schools had other funding streams available to them to address capital outlay needs. Seventeen of the charter schools reported that current methods used to allocate District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds were not equitable, with the most common reason given being that the schools did not receive any of the funds. The remaining 17 charter schools were unsure if the funds were distributed equitably.

The opinions on the most equitable method of distributing District Local Capital Improvement Tax to charter schools varied among the 55 charter school principals who reported receiving District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds and knowing how these funds were allocated in OPPAGA's survey. The most common response, provided by 30 charter schools, was to allocate the funds based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE, while 17 charter schools cited using a proportional share of unweighted FTE to allocate the funds. Thirteen charter school principals reported that they were unsure of the best way to allocate the funds to charter schools. (See Exhibit 3.)

[13] Two school districts reported that their current methods for allocating millage funds were not equitable. However, these responses are not included in the report, as these school districts provided contradictory responses to other related questions.

Exhibit 3
Do You Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating District Local Capital Improvement Tax Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?

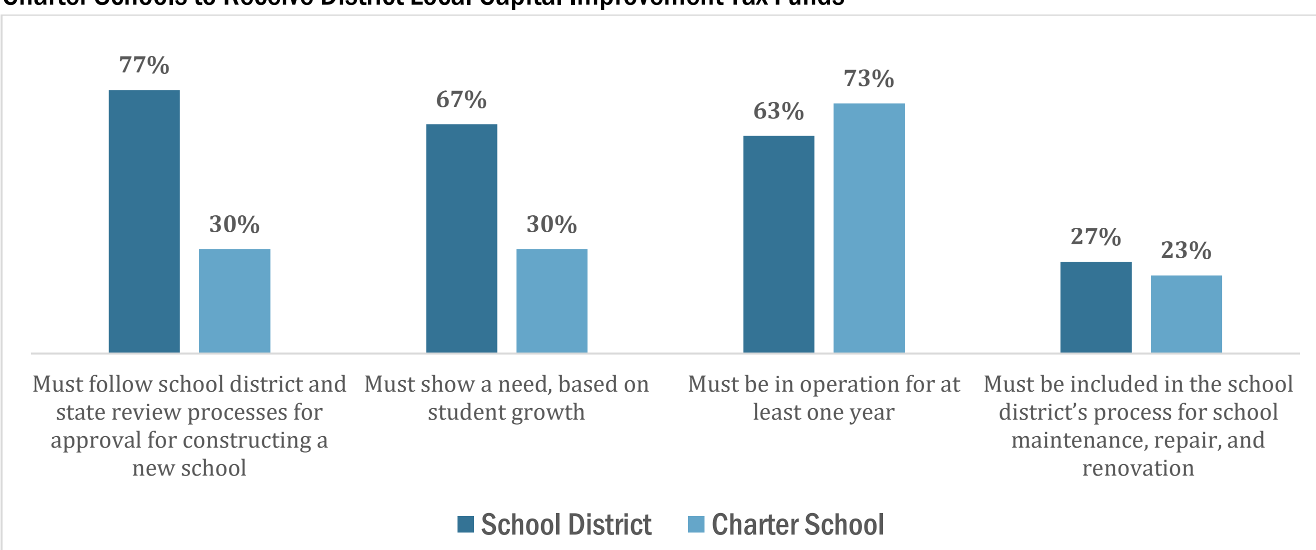




Source: OPPAGA district and charter school surveys.

In general, school districts were more supportive than charter schools of the specified requirements for charter schools to receive District Local Capital Improvement Tax funds.[14] Thirty school districts and 66 charter schools reporting that districts levied a District Local Capital Improvement Tax responded to this set of survey questions. In general, school districts were in favor of additional requirements being placed on charter schools to receive these funds and charter schools were not in favor of such requirements. (See Exhibit 4.)

Exhibit 4
The Percentage and Number of School Districts and Charter Schools in Favor of Specified Requirements for Charter Schools to Receive District Local Capital Improvement Tax Funds



Source: OPPAGA district and charter school surveys.

[14] Only charter schools that were aware that their school district levied a district capital outlay millage were asked these survey questions.

School District Local Sales Tax (Sales Surtax)

Overview

School District Local Sales Tax funds, authorized by s. 212.055(6), *Florida Statutes*, are derived from a sales surtax not to exceed 0.5%, which the school district may levy if approved by a majority of the school district voters by referendum. Since July 1, 2020, this statute has required that resolutions for voters include a statement that, "the revenues collected must be shared with eligible charter schools based on their proportionate share of the total school district enrollment." For resolutions adopted prior to July 1, 2020, Florida statute did not require school districts to share surtax funds with charter schools.

In Fiscal Year 2020-21, school districts expended $971.6 million in revenue derived from the School District Local Sales Tax, which accounted for 18.6% of the capital funding from all local sources. During the same period, 26 of the state's 67 county school districts received local surtax revenue. Revenue expended from the surtax varied considerably by school district. Orange ($223.6 million), Hillsborough ($134.2 million), and Lee ($88.7 million) county school districts had the largest expenditures from the tax in Fiscal Year 2020-21. In contrast, Washington ($1.2 million), Calhoun ($559,617), and Liberty ($149,161) county school districts had substantially fewer expenditures from the tax during the same period. (For a listing of school District Local Sales Tax expenditures for capital projects for Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2020-21, see Appendix B Exhibit B-2.)

Surtax funds may be used for fixed capital expenditures or costs associated with the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of school facilities or campuses that have a useful life expectancy of five years or more and any land acquisition, land improvement, and related design and engineering costs. Additionally, surtax funds may be used for technology implementation, including hardware and software, for sites within the school district and to service bond indebtedness to finance projects authorized by s. 212.055(6), *Florida Statutes*. Finally, effective July 1, 2022, these funds may be used for a purchase, lease-purchase, lease, or maintenance of school buses that have a life expectancy of five years or more only if the referendum adopted by the electors provided for this use.

Current School District Allocation Methods

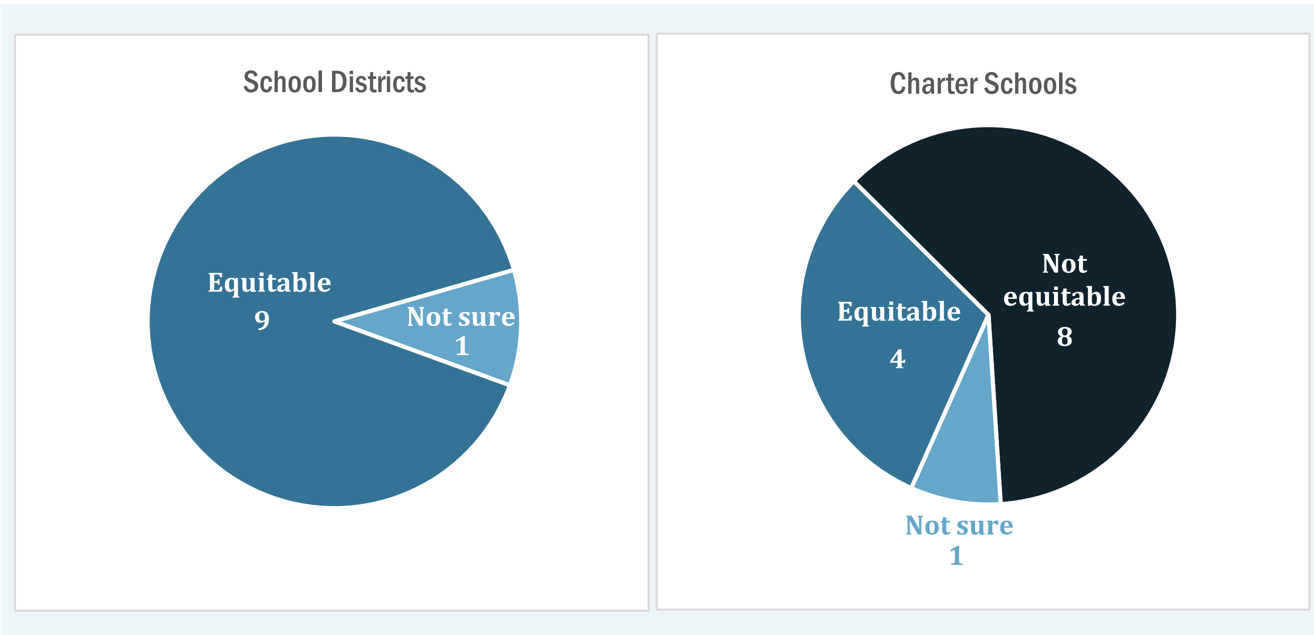
Thirteen of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey reported that the school board levies a discretionary sales surtax for school capital projects. Of these, 10 reported that the school district's capital outlay surtax referendum passed prior to July 1, 2020, when districts were not required by law to share these funds with charter schools. Of these 10 districts, only 1 reported that it shares these funds with charter schools using a needs-based funding model that was developed at the time of the referendum. The remaining nine school districts with referenda passed prior to July 1, 2020, reported not sharing surtax revenues with local charters schools.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

Nine of the 10 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey that had a surtax referendum that passed prior to July 1, 2020, believed that the method of allocating surtax funds was equitable, while 1 school district was unsure if the allocation method was equitable. The majority of districts believed the method was equitable because the referenda language, which was approved by voters, established how the districts would allocate the funds.

Twenty-one charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey were located in school districts with a surtax passed prior to July 1, 2020. Eight of the 13 charter schools in these districts that knew the district's method for allocating surtax funds reported that the district's method of allocating school capital outlay surtax funds was not equitable. Six of the eight charter schools said that a more equitable method of allocating surtax funds would be based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE. The other two charter schools reported that a more equitable method of allocating surtax funds would be based on needs of both traditional and charter schools and based on $200 per student. (See Exhibit 5.)

Exhibit 5
Do You Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating School Capital Outlay Surtax Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?

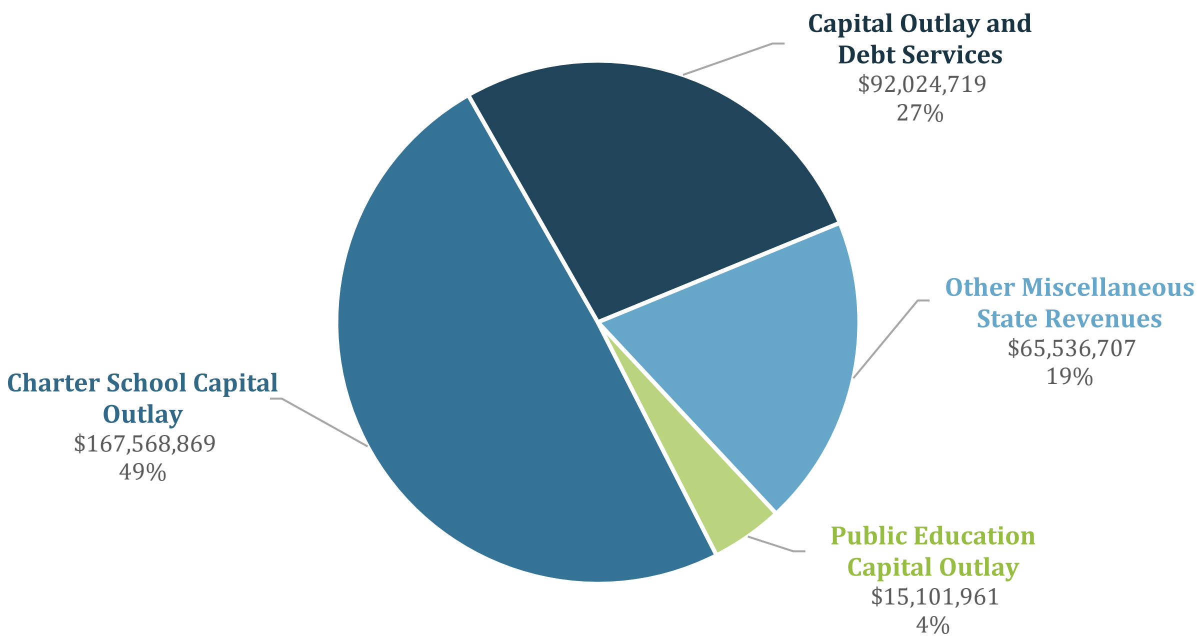


Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

State Sources of Revenue for Capital Projects

OPPAGA examined the methodology used to distribute revenue from Charter School Capital Outlay Funding, which accounted for 49% ($167.6 million of $342.6 million) of all state capital funding expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Capital Outlay and Debt Servicing Funding and Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funding comprised approximately 27% and 4%, respectively, of state funding expended for capital outlay projects. Sources of the remaining nearly 20% of state capital outlay expenditures were other miscellaneous state funds. (See Exhibit 6.)

Exhibit 6
In Fiscal Year 2020-21, Approximately Half of the State Capital Outlay Expenditures Were From the Charter School Capital Outlay Allocation



Source: OPPAGA analysis of FDOE annual financial reports.

Charter School Capital Outlay Funding

Overview

Charter School Capital Outlay funding is provided only to eligible charter schools and is appropriated at the discretion of the Legislature each year in the General Appropriations Act. To be eligible to receive these funds, charter schools must meet five criteria specified in s. 1013.62(1)(a), *Florida Statutes*. These criteria include having operated for two or more years or meeting other specified operational or governance criteria, having satisfactory student achievement based on state accountability standards, and having an annual audit that does not reveal any of the financial emergency conditions provided in s. 218.503(1), *Florida Statutes*, for the most recent fiscal year for which such audit results are available. Funds are allocated to eligible charter schools based on a calculation methodology specified in law.[15] The methodology requires the Florida Department of Education to group eligible charter schools based on student populations that have 75% or greater who are eligible for free or reduced price school meals or 25% or greater who are students with disabilities. Eligible charter

[15] Section 1013.62(2), *F.S.*

schools that meet either one of the these criteria have the total student FTE weighted by 1.25 and any eligible charter schools that meet both criteria have the total student FTE weighted by 1.50. Eligible charter schools that do not meet either criteria have no additional weight applied to the student FTE. The FDOE uses the adjusted student FTE to distribute the funds appropriated by the Legislature to eligible charter schools.

In Fiscal Year 2020-21, 611 charter schools in 46 school districts expended $167.5 million or 49% of all state capital funding expended that year. Revenue expended varied considerably, with the largest amounts expended by charter schools in Miami-Dade ($42.1 million) and Broward ($25.3 million) county school districts and the smallest amounts expended by charter schools in Citrus ($59,700) and Dixie ($81,900) county school districts. (See Appendix B, Exhibit B-5 for a listing of the funds expended by charter schools in each school district in Fiscal Year 2020-21.)

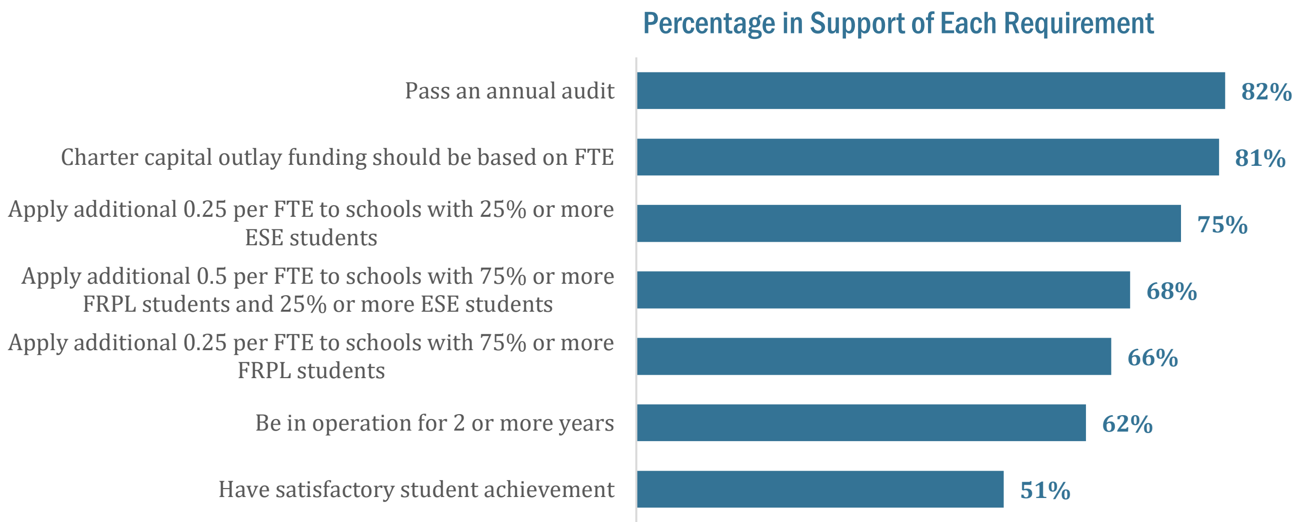
Pursuant to s. 1013.62(4), *Florida Statutes*, Charter School Capital Outlay funds may be used by the charter school's governing body to

- purchase real property;
- construct school facilities;
- purchase, lease-purchase, or lease permanent or relocatable school facilities;
- purchase vehicles to transport students to and from the charter school;
- renovate, repair, and maintain school facilities that the charter school owns or is purchasing through a lease-purchase or long-term lease of five years or longer;
- pay the cost of premiums for property and casualty insurance necessary to insure the school facilities;
- purchase, lease-purchase, or lease driver's education vehicles; motor vehicles used for the maintenance or operation of plants and equipment; security vehicles; or vehicles used in storing or distributing materials and equipment;
- purchase, lease-purchase, or lease computer and device hardware and operating system software necessary to support digital instructional content and resources; and enterprise resource software classified as a capital asset with a useful life of at least five years, which is used to support school-wide administration or state-mandated reporting requirements; and
- pay the cost of the opening day collection for the library media center of a new school.

Current School District Allocation Methods

OPPAGA's survey asked charter school principals questions about their support of several statutory criteria that charter schools must meet to receive state capital outlay funds. Overall, while they were supportive of the criteria, the level of support for each individual requirement varied. For example, of the 114 charter school principals who responded to the questions, 93 supported requiring passage of an annual audit and 92 supported basing allocations on student FTE, while 58 supported requiring satisfactory student achievement. (See Exhibit 7.)

Exhibit 7
Most Charter School Principals Who Responded to OPPAGA's Survey Were Supportive of Key Statutory Requirements Their Schools Must Meet to Receive Charter School Capital Outlay Funding



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

Recommendations

School districts and charter schools rely on state and local funds to address capital needs. OPPAGA's review determined these funds are not distributed in a manner that ensures that the most pressing construction, renovation, and refurbishment needs are addressed regardless of the type of public school a student attends. Funds such as the District Local Capital Improvement Tax are generally available only to traditional public schools that have prioritized capital needs as determined by the district school board, while Charter School Capital Outlay funds are allocated to eligible charter schools based on student FTE without respect to a charter school's particular capital needs. Overall, school district and charter school opinions varied on the allocation of capital outlay funding. School districts responding to OPPAGA's survey were more likely than charter schools to believe that current methods used to allocate capital funds are equitable. In contrast, the majority of charter school respondents believed that the current allocation methods are not equitable or were unsure about whether the funds are allocated equitably.

After reviewing the recommendations from school districts and charter schools, examining the practices of allocating funds to charter schools in Florida and other states, and analyzing financial data provided by the Florida Department of Education and other entities, OPPAGA provides the following policy option for equitable distribution of capital outlay funds to traditional and charter schools: distribute all public capital outlay funding based on demonstrated priority capital project needs. (See Exhibit 8.)

Exhibit 8
Considerations Related to the Distribution of Capital Outlay Funding Based on Demonstrated Need

Funding Source	Considerations
District Local Capital Improvement Tax Funds	• Would ensure that facilities with the greatest needs for capital outlay funds would receive those funds • Would allow the school district to have a better understanding of the conditions and maintenance requirements of the charter school facilities for the district-sponsored charter schools • Existing funds would be spread across more schools, which might result in the capital needs of traditional public schools being delayed or not addressed at all • Public funds might be used to pay for construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance of educational facilities that are not publicly owned • Might be difficult to implement because it would require school district administrators to work with charter school administrators to jointly determine and prioritize which capital projects and maintenance projects have the greatest need
School District Local Sales Tax Funds	• For surtaxes enacted since July 1, 2020, school districts must share these funds with district charter schools on a per-student basis. By changing to a needs-based distribution model, facilities with the greatest capital outlay needs would be able to receive greater funding • Might result in less funding being provided to charter schools if the schools have less pressing construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance needs compared to traditional public schools
Charter School Capital Outlay Funds	• These funds are currently allocated only to charter schools on a weighted FTE basis. By changing to a needs-based distribution model, facilities with the greatest capital outlay needs would be able to receive greater funding • Existing funds would be spread across charter and traditional schools, which might result in less funding for charter schools with less pressing construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance needs than other schools • Might be more complicated to administer than the current process as a methodology would need to be developed to distribute these funds to school districts that would then allocate them based on needs

Source: OPPAGA analysis.

To ensure that the most pressing construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance needs are addressed regardless of the type of public school a student attends, OPPAGA recommends distributing capital outlay funding to charter schools based on demonstrated need. School districts are already required by s. 1013.31, *Florida Statutes*, to conduct a plant survey of district traditional public schools at least every five years. By including charter school facilities as part of this district plant survey, school districts would be able to work with charter schools to evaluate and prioritize the use of capital outlay funds from all sources to fund the most urgent capital projects and maintenance needs for both charter schools and traditional public schools.

CHAPTER 2: FEDERAL PROGRAM FUNDING

As directed by Ch. 2022-144, *Laws of Florida*, OPPAGA examined the methodologies used to distribute federal funding provided to public schools through Titles I, II, III, and IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended. Federal program funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) through the ESEA enables state educational agencies to supplement the educational programs provided with local, state, and other federal funds, while funding provided through the IDEA assists state educational agencies with providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. (See Exhibit 9 and Appendix C.)

OPPAGA's analysis found that although school districts reported allocating federal program funds to eligible charter schools, on average, 36% of charter school principals reported being unsure how federal program funds are allocated to charter schools. OPPAGA's survey asked school district and charter school officials if they believed the school district's allocation method for each federal program was equitable. Responses between school districts and charter schools varied. Ninety-three percent to 100% of school districts reported believing that allocation methods for the specified federal programs were equitable, while 36% to 58% of charter schools reported believing that the school district's allocation methods were equitable. It should be noted that 50% of charter schools indicated they did not know if the allocation methods of federal funds were equitable.

Exhibit 9
OPPAGA Examined Methodologies Used to Distribute Federal Funding Provided to Public Schools Through Titles I, II, III, and IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act

Program Title and Fiscal Year 2020-21 Allocation	Purpose
Elementary and Secondary Education Act	
Title I, Part A Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies *$841.8 million*	Provides additional education funding, particularly to schools with high percentages of children from low-income families, to ensure all children have an opportunity to receive a high-quality education and meet challenging academic standards, and to close the achievement gap between children meeting the standards and children not meeting the standards
Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children *$21.3 million*	Supports the implementation of high-quality, comprehensive educational programs and services that meet the unique needs of migratory children, and ensures that migratory children receive opportunities to meet the same academic standards that all children are expected to meet
Title I, Part D Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk *$7.9 million*	Improves educational services for children and youth who are neglected or delinquent and provides them with services to successfully transition to further schooling or employment, and prevents at-risk youth from dropping out of school
Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instruction *$105.4 million*	Improves the quality and effectiveness of teachers and school leaders, increases the number of teachers and school leaders who are effective in improving student achievement, and provides low-income and minority students greater access to these educators
Title III, Part A English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement *$47.7 million*	Builds the capacity of teachers and school leaders to provide effective instructional programs that enable English language learners to attain English proficiency and meet the same academic standards that all children are expected to meet
Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment *$64.3 million*	Improves students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of schools to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, and improve the use of technology to enhance students' academic achievement and digital literacy

Program Title and Fiscal Year 2020-21 Allocation	Purpose
Individuals With Disabilities Education Act	
Part B Assistance for Education of All Children With Disabilities *$653.2 million*	Protects the rights of students with disabilities and their parents, and supports the implementation of a free appropriate public education that meets the needs of children with disabilities and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida Department of Education final subgrant allocation reports and federal statute.

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) distributes federal funds to local educational agencies (LEAs), which federal law defines as public boards or authorities within a state that are legally charged with the administrative control of public elementary and secondary schools. In Florida, the term LEA includes

- school districts (67 agencies) as defined in s. 1001.30, *Florida Statutes*;
- Florida Virtual School (1 agency) pursuant to s. 1002.37, *Florida Statutes*;
- Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (1 agency) pursuant to s. 1002.36, *Florida Statutes*;
- developmental research schools (4 agencies) pursuant to s. 1002.32, *Florida Statutes*;
- schools of hope or hope operators designated as an LEA for the purpose of receiving federal funds (5 agencies) pursuant to s. 1002.333, *Florida Statutes*; and
- charter school systems designated as an LEA for the purpose of receiving federal funds (3 agencies) pursuant to s. 1002.33, *Florida Statutes*.

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Education Programs

Overview

The purpose of Title I, Part A funding is to provide additional education funding, particularly to schools with high percentages of children from low-income families, to ensure all children have an opportunity to receive a high-quality education and meet challenging academic standards, and to close the achievement gap between children meeting the standards and children not meeting the standards. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, $841.8 million was allocated to LEAs as part of this program, which was 48.3% of the federal program funds reviewed by OPPAGA.

USDOE allocates Title I, Part A funds to FDOE, and FDOE awards subgrants to eligible LEAs, primarily school districts, based on the proportional share of eligible children.[16,17] Prior to allocating any funds to LEA-level activities or public schools, an LEA must first determine the proportional share of funds it must reserve to provide Title I-equitable services to eligible children attending non-profit private schools and their teachers and families.[18] From the remaining LEA-level allocation, an LEA must

[16] FDOE may reserve up to 1% of the federal allocation for administrative costs and 3% for direct student services, and must reserve 7% for school improvement activities and grants.

[17] Eligible children are defined as children ages 5 through 17 from families below the poverty level; children ages 5 through 17 from families above the poverty level receiving assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; children ages 5 through 17 in publicly funded foster homes; and children ages 5 through 17 in institutions for neglected and delinquent children that are not included in the count for Title I, Part D and are not in publicly funded foster homes.

[18] The proportional share is calculated by determining the percentage of children from low-income families who reside in school attendance areas the LEA will serve with Title I funds and attend private schools. School attendance area is defined as the geographical area in which the children who are typically served by a school reside.

determine the amount of funds it will reserve for required and authorized activities at the LEA level before allocating any funds to its public schools.[19]

Ranking Process. After reserving funds for the required and authorized LEA-level activities, an LEA determines school-level allocations by rank ordering its schools, from highest to lowest, based on the percentage of children from low-income families residing in the school attendance area. Schools that serve more than one school attendance area (e.g., magnet schools and charter schools) are ranked based on the percentage of children from low-income families enrolled at the school.

Once the schools are in rank order, an LEA must serve all schools with a poverty rate above 75%. For high schools, an LEA is authorized to lower the poverty rate threshold to 50%. An LEA determines the per pupil allocation for each school, ensuring that schools with higher poverty rates have a larger per pupil allocation than schools with lower poverty rates.

If any funds remain, an LEA may continue serving schools in rank order for the LEA as a whole or by grade span (e.g., elementary, middle, high), again ensuring that schools with higher poverty rates have a larger per pupil allocation than schools with lower poverty rates. A school is eligible to be served if its poverty rate is as high as the LEA's poverty rate or, at the LEA's discretion, at least 35%. As each LEA determines its threshold for serving schools with a poverty rate of 75% or less, an eligible school is not guaranteed an allocation.[20]

Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Programs. There are two types of Title I, Part A programs schools may implement. Schools with a poverty rate of 40% or more may choose to implement a schoolwide program, which allows a school to consolidate Title I, Part A funds with other federal, state, and local funds to upgrade the educational program for all students attending the school. Schools with a poverty rate below 40%, as well as schools with a poverty rate of 40% or more that choose not to implement a schoolwide program, may implement a targeted assistance program, which only allows a school to serve eligible children with the greatest need for extra assistance.[21]

Current School District Allocation Methods

Twenty-five of the 30 school districts that completed OPPAGA's survey reported allocating Title I, Part A funds to charter schools during the 2021-22 school year, all using the same method used to distribute funds to traditional schools. All 25 school districts described using an allocation method consistent with the rank-and-serve process outlined in the ESEA, although school districts classified allocation methods differently on the survey. Ten school districts reported allocating the funds using a needs-based funding model, six reported allocating the funds based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE, five reported allocating the funds based on a specific dollar amount between $380 and $1,539 per student, and four reported allocating the funds using other methods.

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[19] An LEA must reserve at least 1%, but no more than 2%, of the remaining allocation for parent and family engagement activities, and the amount of funds necessary to provide services to children and youth in Title I and non-Title I schools who are experiencing homelessness, children in local institutions for neglected children. After setting aside funds for these required reservations, an LEA may reserve up to 10% of the remaining allocation for direct and indirect administrative costs; up to 1% of the remaining allocation for eligible schools to provide educational services in accordance with the approved Title I plan; and the amount of funds that are necessary and reasonable to provide transportation services for children in foster care to attend their school of origin or choice programs, services to children in local institutions for delinquent children and community day programs for neglected or delinquent children, and prekindergarten programs and activities.

[20] Section 1011.69(5), *F.S.*, outlines additional requirements for serving schools with a poverty rate of 75% or less. After allocating funds to all schools with a poverty rate above 75%, an LEA must allocate the remaining funds to all eligible schools. The threshold for identifying eligible schools may not exceed the threshold established by an LEA for the 2016-17 school year or the statewide percentage of economically disadvantaged students, as determined annually.

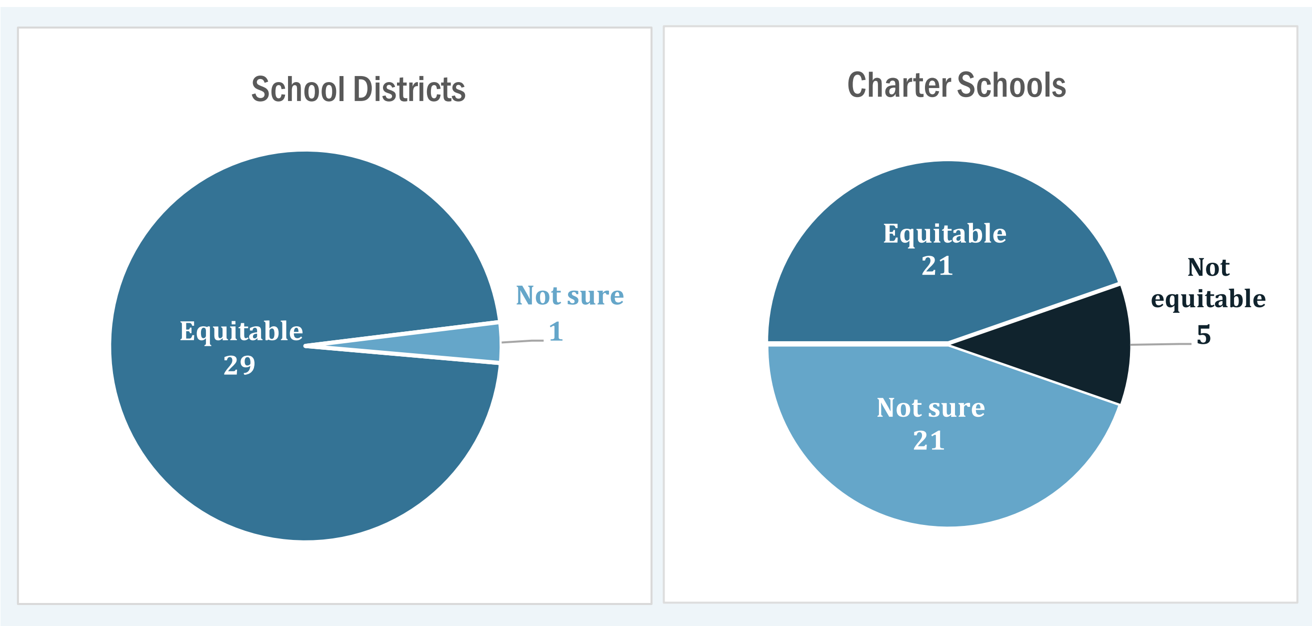
[21] Eligible children in a targeted assistance program are defined as children under the age of 21 who are not performing at grade level and have been identified as failing or most at risk of failing to meet the academic standards.

The five school districts that did not allocate Title I, Part A funds to any charter schools stated that no district charter schools qualified to receive the funds based on the eligibility threshold set by the school district.[22] In addition, 19 of the 25 school districts that reported allocating funds to charter schools reported that there were some charter schools in the school district that did not receive funds. All of these districts stated that the charter schools that did not receive Title I, Part A funds did not qualify based on the eligibility threshold set by the school district.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

Twenty-nine of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey believed the method for allocating Title I, Part A funds was equitable. The school districts provided various rationales for this response, including that the same methodology was applied to traditional schools and charter schools (20), all schools received an equal allocation per student (8), and the school district followed the program allocation guidelines (7). One school district reported it was unsure if the allocation method was equitable. (See Exhibit 10.)

Exhibit 10
Do School Districts and Charter Schools Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating Title I, Part A Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

In contrast, 21 of the 47 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving Title I, Part A funds during the 2021-22 school year were unsure if the school district's allocation method was equitable, while 21 believed the allocation method was equitable. However, five charter school principals believed the allocation method was not equitable and provided several alternatives they believed would be more equitable, including allocating funds based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE (3) or based on a specific dollar amount per student (2).

[22] Of the 29 school districts that reported an eligibility threshold for the 2021-22 school year, 10 school districts set a threshold that exceeded the statewide percentage of economically disadvantaged students or the threshold established by the school district during the 2016-17 school year.

Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

Overview

The purpose of Title I, Part C funding is to support the implementation of high-quality, comprehensive educational programs and services that meet the unique needs of migratory children, and to ensure that migratory children receive opportunities to meet the same academic standards that all children are expected to meet. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, $21.3 million was allocated to LEAs for this program, which was 1.2% of the federal program funds reviewed by OPPAGA. In general, Title I, Part C funds are used to support students ages 3 through 21 who are from migratory families and have resided in Florida at some point in the last three years.

From the state-level allocation awarded by USDOE, FDOE may reserve up to 1% for administrative costs. With the remaining funds, FDOE awards subgrants to eligible LEAs based on the sum of four weighted components.

- 80% of the allocation is based on the total number of migrant students.
- 11% of the allocation is based on the number of students meeting the priority for services criteria.[23]
- 8% of the allocation is based on the needs of the migrant student.
- 1% of the allocation is based on the availability of other funding.

In addition to typical administrative costs, LEAs may use Title I, Part C funds to carry out program-specific administrative activities, including identification of migrant children, parent involvement, professional development for school personnel, and program evaluation. From the remaining LEA-level allocation, LEAs may provide instructional and support services that directly benefit migrant children such as preschool programs, after-school tutoring, health and nutrition programs, and transportation.

Current School District Allocation Methods

Based on allocation data provided by FDOE, 15 of the 30 school districts that completed OPPAGA's survey received Title I, Part C funds during the 2021-22 school year.[24] One of the 15 school districts reported allocating these funds to some district charter schools. The school district reported allocating the funds to charter schools based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE, which is the same method used to allocate funds to traditional schools.

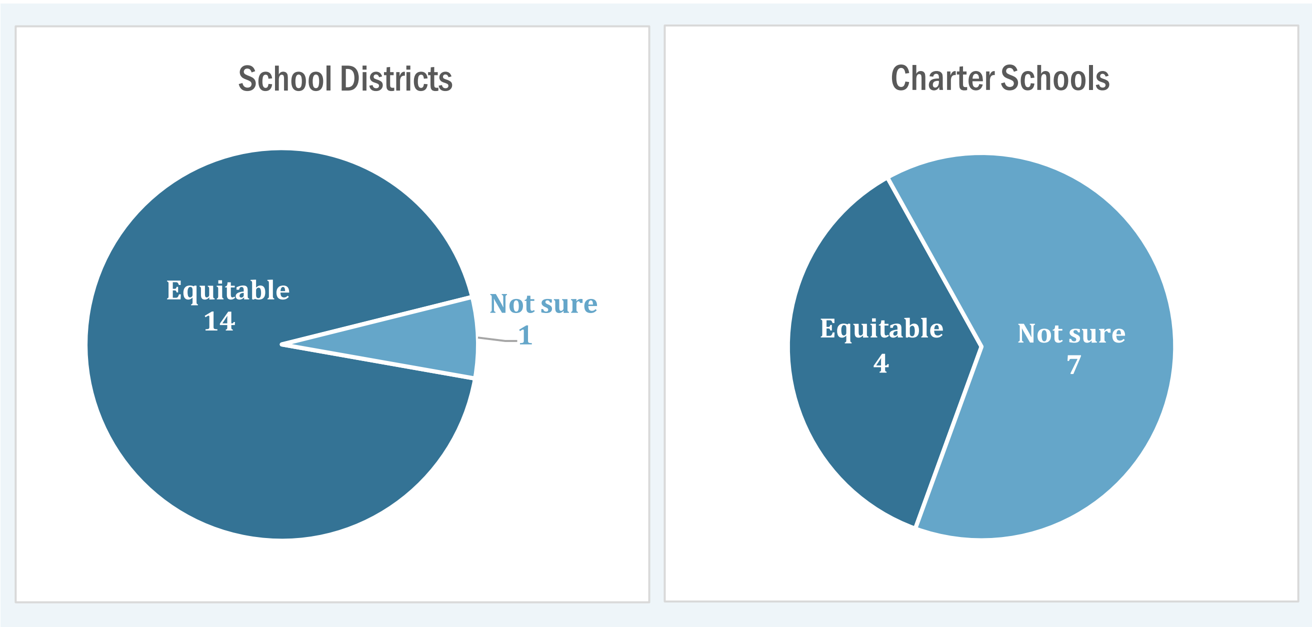
Of the 14 school districts that did not allocate Title I, Part C funds to charter schools, eight reported providing services to charter schools using Title I, Part C funds rather than allocating funds directly to the schools, 4 reported that no district charter schools qualified to receive funds, and 1 stated that the eligible charter school did not request services.[25]

[23] Priority for services is defined as migratory children who have made a qualifying move within the past year, and are failing or most at risk of failing to meet the academic standards or have dropped out of school.
[24] Survey responses from school districts for Title I, Part C are limited to school districts that received Title I, Part C funds during the 2021-22 school year.
[25] One school district did not provide a rationale for not allocating Title I, Part C funds to charter schools.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

Fourteen of the 15 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey that received Title I, Part C funds during the 2021-22 school year believed the method for allocating funds was equitable. The school districts provided various rationales to support this position, including that services were provided to all eligible students (3), all schools had access to the same services (2), and the school district followed the program allocation guidelines (2). One school district reported it was unsure if the allocation method was equitable. (See Exhibit 11.)

Exhibit 11
Do School Districts and Charter Schools Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating Title I, Part C Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

Seventy-five of the charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey are located in school districts that received Title I, Part C funds during the 2021-22 school year. Seven of the 11 charter schools that reported receiving funds were unsure if the school district's allocation method was equitable, while 4 believed the allocation method was equitable.

Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk

Overview

The purpose of Title I, Part D funding is to improve educational services for children and youth who are neglected or delinquent and to provide them with services to successfully transition to further schooling or employment and to prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, $7.9 million was allocated to LEAs for this program, which was 0.5% of the federal program funds reviewed by OPPAGA. In general, Title I, Part D funds are used to support children ages 5 through

17 residing in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children or in adult correctional institutions.

The Title I, Part D program consists of three subparts.

- Subpart 1 provides funding for state agencies to support state-operated educational programs for children and youth in adult correctional facilities, or in institutions or community day programs for neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students.
- Subpart 2 provides funding for LEAs to support educational programs for children and youth in locally operated correctional facilities, in community day programs for delinquent students, or who are neglected or at risk of dropping out of school.
- Subpart 3 requires state agencies and LEAs to evaluate Title I, Part D programs at least once every three years.

OPPAGA's research focused on Subpart 2 of the Title I, Part D program, as funds under this subpart can be allocated to charter schools.

From the state-level allocation awarded by USDOE, FDOE may reserve up to 1% for administrative costs and then allocate the remaining funds to Subparts 1 and 2 of the program as prescribed by USDOE. With the funds allocated to Subpart 2, FDOE awards subgrants to LEAs based on the proportional share of children and youth ages 5 through 17 in correctional facilities or institutions for delinquent students.

From the LEA-level allocation, an LEA must first determine the amount of funds it will reserve for administrative costs and for operating a dropout prevention program for students returning from locally operated correctional facilities. With the remaining allocation, an LEA may obligate funds to allowable activities and services such as providing educational programs that prepare children and youth to complete high school, enter training or employment programs, or further their education, and operating dropout prevention programs in local schools for at-risk children and youth.

Current School District Allocation Methods

Based on allocation data provided by FDOE, 21 of the 30 school districts that completed OPPAGA's survey received Title I, Part D funds during the 2021-22 school year.[26] One of the 21 school districts reported allocating these funds to some district charter schools. The school district reported allocating funds to charter schools based on a specific dollar amount $193 per student, which is the same method used to allocate funds to traditional schools.

Of the 20 school districts that did not allocate Title I, Part D funds to charter schools, 15 stated that no district charter schools qualified to receive funds; 4 reported providing services to charter schools with Title I, Part D funds rather than allocating funds directly to the schools; and 1 stated that charter schools did not receive funds because priority for these funds was given to residential facilities.

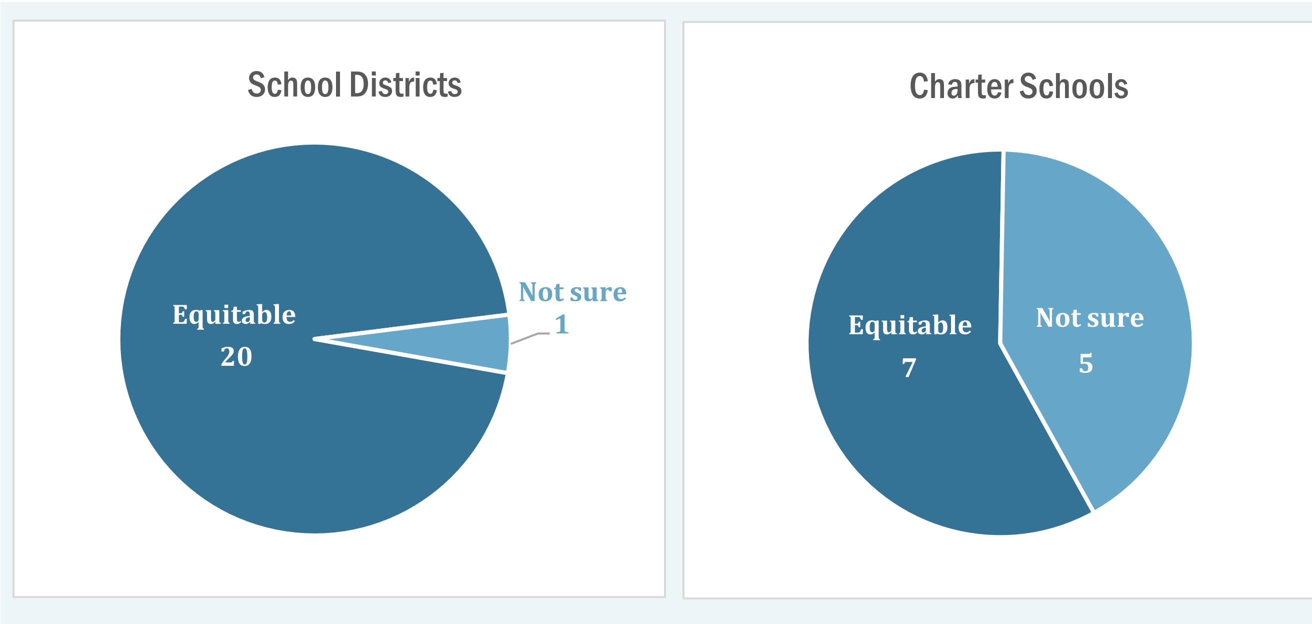
Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

Twenty of the 21 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey that received Title I, Part D funds during the 2021-22 school year believed the method for allocating funds was equitable. The school districts provided various rationales to support this position, including that no district charter schools

[26] Survey responses from school districts for Title I, Part D are limited to school districts that received Title I, Part D funds during the 2021-22 school year.

had eligible students (8) and the allocation was based on student needs (3). One school district reported it was unsure if the allocation method was equitable. (See Exhibit 12.)

Exhibit 12
Do School Districts and Charter Schools Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating Title I, Part D Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

Ninety-eight of the charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey were located in school districts that received Title I, Part D funds during the 2021-22 school year.[27] Five of the 12 charter schools that reported receiving funds were unsure if the school district's allocation method was equitable, while 7 believed the allocation method was equitable.

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

Overview

The purpose of Title II, Part A funding is to improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers and school leaders, increase the number of teachers and school leaders who are effective in improving student achievement, and provide low-income and minority students greater access to these educators. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, $105.4 million was allocated to LEAs for this program, which was 6.1% of the federal program funds reviewed by OPPAGA. In general, Title II, Part A funds are used to support the teachers of children ages 5 through 17 residing in the geographical area served by the LEA.

From the state-level allocation awarded by USDOE, FDOE must reserve at least 95% for LEA subgrants and may reserve up to 5% for state administration and activities. Of the amount reserved for state administration and activities, FDOE may obligate up to 1% of the total state-level allocation for administrative costs, up to 2% of the total state-level allocation for establishing or expanding teacher and school leader preparation academies, and any remainder of the reservation for other allowable

[27] Survey responses from charter schools for Title I, Part D are limited to charter schools located in school districts that received Title I, Part D funds during the 2021-22 school year.

state activities such as developing mechanisms to assist LEAs in effectively recruiting and retaining teachers and school leaders.

Of the amount reserved for LEA subgrants, FDOE may obligate up to 3% for activities to support school leaders. With the remaining funds, FDOE awards subgrants to LEAs based on the sum of two weighted components.

- 80% of the allocation is based on the LEAs' proportional share of students ages 5 through 17 from low-income families.
- 20% of the allocation is based on the LEAs' proportional share of students ages 5 through 17.

From the LEA-level allocation, an LEA must first determine the amount of funds it will reserve for administrative costs. With the remaining allocation, an LEA may obligate funds to allowable activities such as supporting initiatives to assist in recruiting, hiring, and retaining effective teachers; improving the evaluation system for teachers and school leaders; and providing evidence-based professional development to teachers and school leaders focused on improving student achievement.

Current School District Allocation Methods

Eighteen of the 30 school districts that completed OPPAGA's survey reported that all district charter schools participated in the district-level Title II, Part A professional learning program, 10 reported that some district charter schools participated, and 2 reported that no district charter schools participated. Sixty-nine of the 114 charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey reported participating in the district-level program.

Twenty-nine of the 30 school districts reported that there were district policies or practices that provided charter schools with access to the district-level program. The two most common examples provided by school districts were notifying all charter schools of professional learning opportunities (21) and providing all charter school with access to the school district's online learning systems (6). Of the 69 charter schools that participated in the district-level program, 50 reported that the school district had policies or practices that provided charter schools with access to the district-level program. However, 16 charter schools reported that the school district had policies or practices that created challenges for the charter school to access the district-level program. The two most common examples provided were that the school district restricted charter schools from attending some trainings (6) and the school district did not provide charter schools with access to the district's online learning system (3).

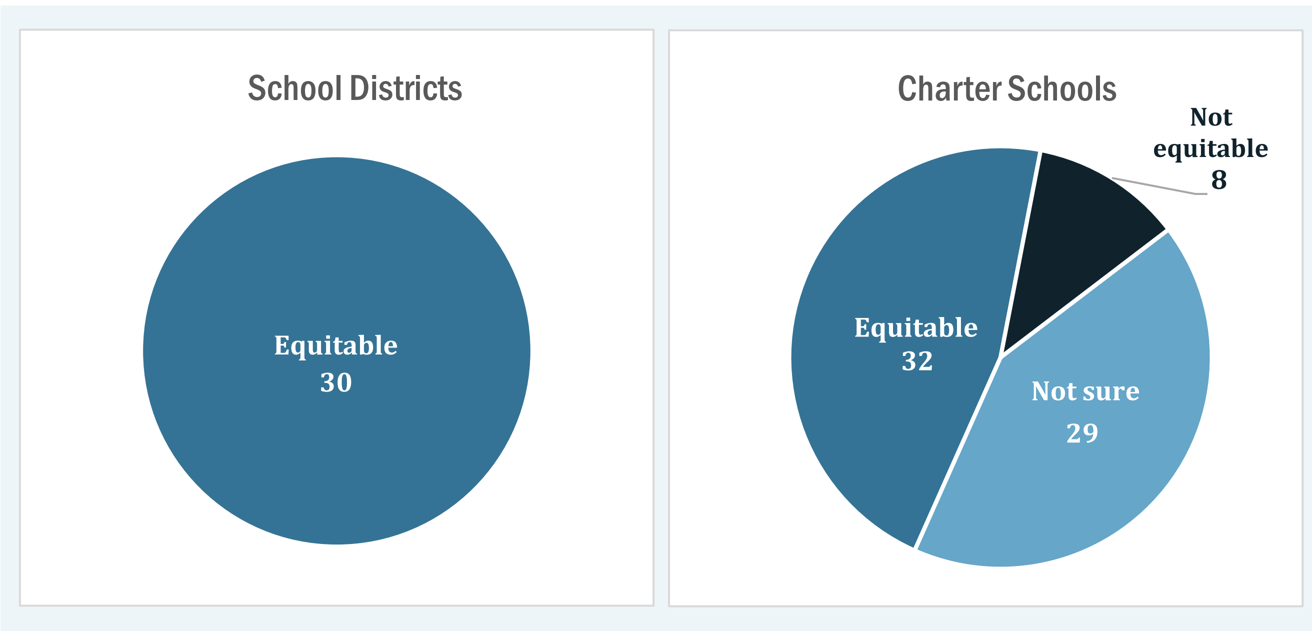
Of the 28 school districts that reported all or some district charter schools participated in the district-level program, 17 reported also allocating funds to charter schools that participated in the district-level program, while 11 reported not allocating funds to charter schools that did participate in the district-level program. Of the 17 school districts that allocated funds to charter schools, 14 reported allocating funds based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE, 2 reported allocating funds based on a specific dollar amount per student, and 1 reported allocating funds using a needs-based funding model.

Of the 12 school districts that reported some or no district charter schools participated in the district-level program, 9 reported allocating funds to charter schools that did not participate in the district-level program, while 3 reported not allocating funds to charter schools that did not participate in the district-level program. Of the nine school districts that allocated funds to charter schools, five reported allocating funds based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE, one reported allocating funds using a needs-based funding model, one reported allocating funds based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE, and one reported allocating funds based on a specific dollar amount of $35 per student.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

All 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey believed the method for allocating Title II, Part A funds was equitable. The school districts provided various rationales to support this position, including that all schools received the same per pupil allocation (13), the school district followed the program allocation guidelines (6), the same methodology was applied to traditional schools and charter schools (5), and charter schools had the same access to professional learning opportunities as traditional schools (4). (See Exhibit 13.)

Exhibit 13
Do School Districts and Charter Schools Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating Title II, Part A Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

In contrast, 32 of the 69 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving Title II, Part A funds believed the allocation method was equitable, while 29 were unsure if the school district's allocation method was equitable. Eight charter school principals believed the allocation method was not equitable and provided several alternatives they believed would be more equitable, including allocating funds based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE (3), allocating funds based on a specific dollar amount of $200 per student (2), and allocating funds based on adjusted FTE.[28] In addition, two charter schools were unsure what would be a more equitable allocation method.

[28] Based on the responses provided by the charter school, OPPAGA is interpreting an allocation method based on adjusted FTE to mean that the school district would use the most recent enrollment data for the charter school, not previous enrollment projections.

Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

Overview

The purpose of Title III, Part A funding is to build the capacity of teachers and school leaders to provide effective instructional programs that enable English language learners to attain English proficiency and meet the same academic standards that all children are expected to meet. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, $47.7 million was allocated to LEAs for this program, which was 2.7% of the federal program funds reviewed by OPPAGA. In general, Title III, Part A funds are used to support children ages 3 through 21 who are English language learners or who were not born in the U.S. and have not been attending school in the U.S. for more than three years.

From the state-level allocation awarded by USDOE, FDOE must reserve at least 95% for LEA subgrants and may reserve up to 5% for state activities. Of the amount reserved for LEA subgrants, FDOE may obligate up to 15% to LEAs that have experienced a significant increase in immigrant students. With the remaining funds, FDOE awards subgrants to LEAs based on the LEAs' proportional share of English language learners. From the LEA-level allocation, an LEA must reserve at least 98% for allowable activities and services and may reserve up to 2% for direct administrative costs.

An LEA receiving an English language learner grant must use the funds to provide effective instruction programs that meet the needs of English language learners; provide effective professional development designed to improve the instruction and assessment of English language learners; and provide and implement other effective activities and strategies that enhance or supplement language instruction programs. An LEA receiving an immigrant student grant must use the funds for activities that provide enhanced instructional opportunities for immigrant students such as providing family outreach activities; recruiting and supporting teachers who have been specifically trained to provide services to immigrant students; and providing tutorials, mentoring, and academic or career counseling for immigrant students.

Current School District Allocation Methods

Based on allocation data provided by FDOE, 26 of the 30 school districts that completed OPPAGA's survey received Title III, Part A funds during the 2021-22 school year.[29] Twelve of the 26 school districts reported allocating Title III, Part A funds to charter schools, with 11 using the same method used for allocating funds to traditional schools. Six of the 11 school districts reported allocating funds using a needs-based funding model, 4 reported allocating funds based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE, and 1 reported allocating funds based on a specific dollar amount between $500 and $6,500 per school depending on the number of English language learner students. In addition, one school district reported allocating funds differently to traditional schools and charter schools using slightly different needs-based funding models.[30]

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[29] Survey responses from school districts for Title III, Part A are limited to school districts that received Title III, Part A funds during the 2021-22 school year.

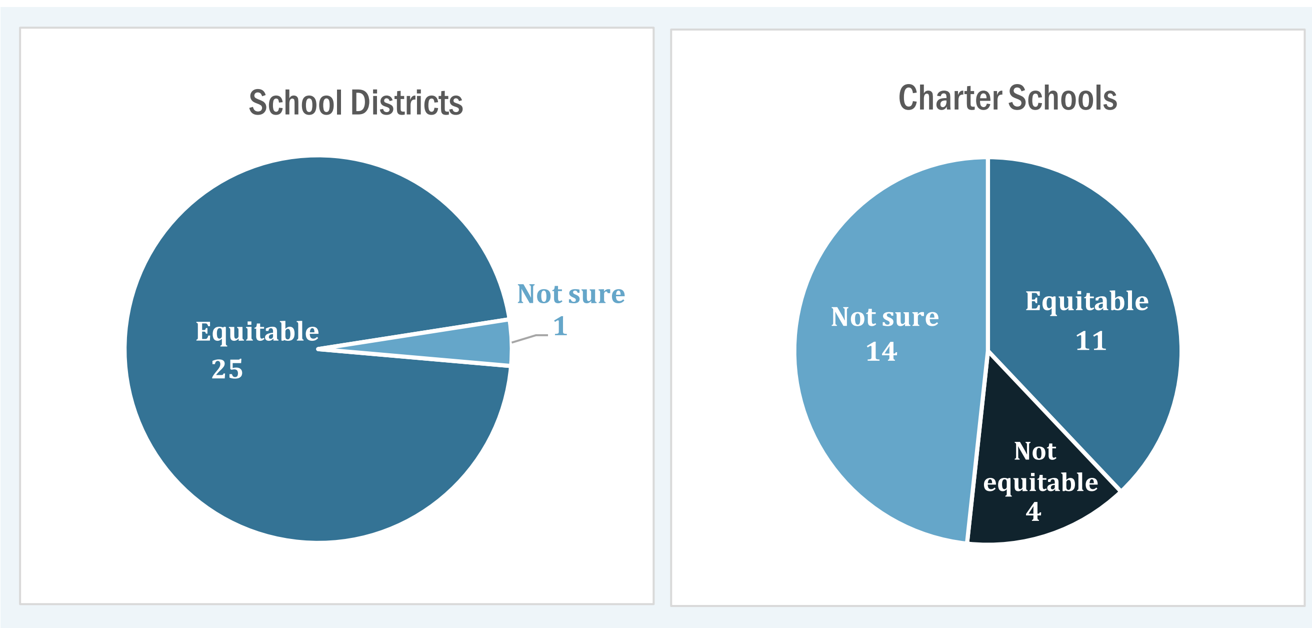
[30] The factors the school district reported considering to determine student needs are the same for traditional schools and charter schools with English language learners. However, for each charter school with no English language learners, the school district reported reserving $500 of the Title III, Part A funds, in case an English language learner was to enroll during the school year.

Of the 14 school districts that did not allocate Title III, Part A funds to charter schools, 12 reported providing services to charter schools with Title III, Part A funds rather than allocating funds directly to the schools; 1 stated that no district charter schools qualified to receive funds; and 1 stated that the charter school has more than 15 English language learners speaking the same native language so the school is required to provide services for these students with its general funds.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

Twenty-five of the 26 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey that received Title III, Part A funds during the 2021-22 school year believed the method for allocating funds was equitable. The school districts provided various rationales to support this position, including that the same services were available to all schools (11) and the same methodology was applied to traditional schools and charter schools (9). One school district reported it was unsure if the allocation method was equitable. (See Exhibit 14.)

Exhibit 14
Do School Districts and Charter Schools Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating Title III, Part A Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

One hundred eleven of the charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey are located in school districts that received Title III, Part A funds during the 2021-22 school year.[31] Fourteen of the 29 charter schools that reported receiving funds were unsure if the school district's allocation method was equitable, while 11 believed the allocation method was equitable. However, four charter school principals believed the allocation method was not equitable and provided several alternatives they believed would be more equitable, including allocating funds based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE (1), based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE (1), and using a needs-based funding model (1). One charter school was unsure what would be a more equitable allocation method.

[31] Survey responses from charter schools for Title III, Part A are limited to charter schools located in school districts that received Title III, Part A funds during the 2021-22 school year.

Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment

Overview

The purpose of Title IV, Part A funding is to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of schools to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, and improve the use of technology to enhance students' academic achievement and digital literacy. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, $64.3 million was allocated to LEAs for this program, which was 3.7% of the federal program funds reviewed by OPPAGA. In general, Title IV, Part A funds are prioritized to support students and teachers at schools that demonstrate the greatest need, have the highest number of students from low-income families, or are identified for improvement or as a persistently dangerous public school.

From the state-level allocation awarded by USDOE, FDOE must reserve at least 95% for LEA subgrants and may reserve up to 5% for state administration and activities. Of the amount reserved for LEAs, FDOE awards subgrants in an amount equal to the LEAs' proportional share of Title I, Part A funds received in the previous school year.[32]

From the LEA-level allocation, an LEA may reserve up to 2% for direct administrative costs. With the remaining allocation, an LEA must use at least 20% for activities to support a well-rounded education, at least 20% for activities to support safe and healthy students, and a portion for activities to support the effective use of technology.[33]

Current School District Allocation Methods

Fourteen of the 30 school districts that completed OPPAGA's survey reported that all district charter schools participated in the district-level Title IV, Part A student support and academic enrichment program, 5 reported that some district charter schools participated, and 11 reported that no district charter schools participated. Sixty-one of the 114 charter schools responding to OPPAGA's survey reported participating in the district-level program.

Nineteen of the 30 school districts reported there were district policies or practices that provided charter schools with access to the district-level program. The most common example provided by school districts was providing charter schools with access to the same services that traditional schools receive (6). Of the 61 charter schools that participated in the district-level program, 31 reported that the school district had policies or practices that provided charter schools with access to the district-level program. However, 12 charter schools reported the school district had policies or practices that created challenges for the charter school to access the district-level program. The most common example provided by charter schools was that the school district did not provide charter schools with access to or restricted the charter schools from accessing the program activities (5).

Of the 19 school districts that reported all or some district charter schools participated in the district-level program, 13 also reported allocating Title IV, Part A funds to charter schools that participated in the district-level program, while 6 reported not allocating funds to charter schools that did participate in the district-level program. Of the 13 school districts that allocated funds to charter schools, 7 reported allocating funds based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE, 4 reported

[32] FDOE may not award subgrants in an amount less than $10,000. LEAs that would not qualify for subgrants on their own may form a consortia with other LEAs to combine their funds and carry out the program jointly.
[33] LEAs receiving a Title IV, Part A allocation in an amount less than $30,000 are only required to use funds in one of the three areas.

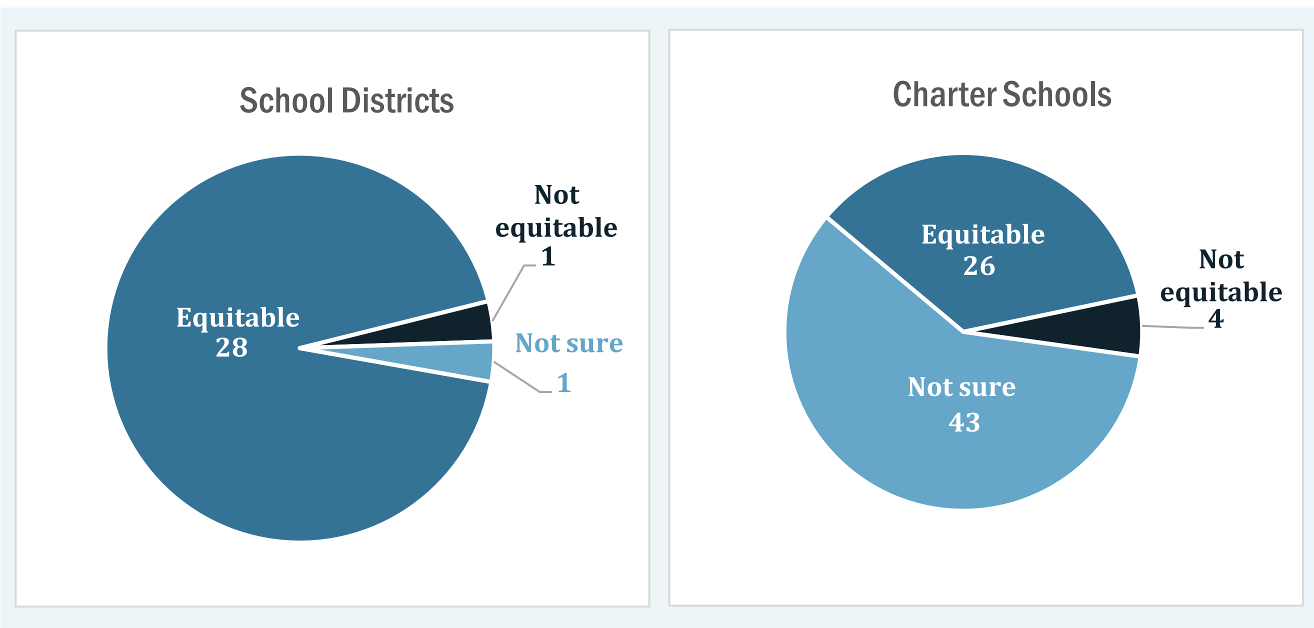
allocating funds based on an average dollar amount of $15 per student, and 2 reported allocating funds using a needs-based funding model.

Of the 16 school districts that reported some or no district charter schools participated in the district-level program, 10 reported not allocating funds to charter schools that did not participate in the district-level program, while 6 reported allocating funds to charter schools that did not participate in the district-level program. Of the six school districts that allocated funds to charter schools, five reported allocating funds based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE and one reported allocating funds using a needs-based funding model.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

Twenty-eight of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey believed the method for allocating Title IV, Part A funds was equitable. The school districts provided various rationales to support this position, including that all schools received the same per pupil allocation (12), all traditional schools and charter schools had access to the same opportunities (9), and the same methodology was applied to traditional schools and charter schools (4). In addition, one school district reported it was unsure if the allocation method was equitable, and one school district reported that the allocation method was not equitable but was unsure of what would be a more equitable allocation method. (See Exhibit 15.)

Exhibit 15
Do School Districts and Charter Schools Believe That the School District's Method tor Allocating Title IV, Part A Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

In contrast, 43 of the 73 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving Title IV, Part A funds during the 2021-22 school year were unsure if the school district's allocation method was equitable, while 26 believed the allocation method was equitable. Four charter schools believed the allocation method was not equitable. Of these charter schools, three believed a more equitable allocation method would be one based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE and one was unsure what method would be more equitable.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act: Assistance for Education of All Children With Disabilities

Overview

The purpose of IDEA funding is to protect the rights of students with disabilities and their parents, and to support the implementation of a free appropriate public education that meets the needs of children with disabilities and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, $653.2 million was allocated to LEAs for this program, which was 37.5% of the federal program funds reviewed by OPPAGA. In general, IDEA funds are used to support children ages 3 through 21 who are students with disabilities.

From the state-level allocation awarded by USDOE, FDOE may reserve funds for administrative costs up to an amount equal to the maximum amount the state was eligible to reserve for administrative costs in 2004, adjusted for inflation. Additionally, FDOE may reserve funds for other required and allowable state activities up to an amount equal to the maximum amount the state was eligible to reserve for other state activities in 2006, adjusted for inflation. With the remaining funds, FDOE awards subgrants to LEAs based on a two-step allocation process. FDOE first calculates a base payment for each LEA, which is the amount the LEA would have received in 1999, if the state had distributed 75% of its state-level allocation to LEAs. With the remaining funds, FDOE allocates 85% based on the LEAs' proportional share of all students and 15% based on the LEAs' proportional share of children from low-income families.

An LEA may allocate up to 15% of the funds for early intervening services for students who have not been identified for special education services but need additional support to succeed in a general education classroom. With the remainder of the allocation, LEAs may use funds to pay for the additional cost of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities and other allowable activities such as purchasing technology to assist with the case management process.

Current School District Allocation Methods

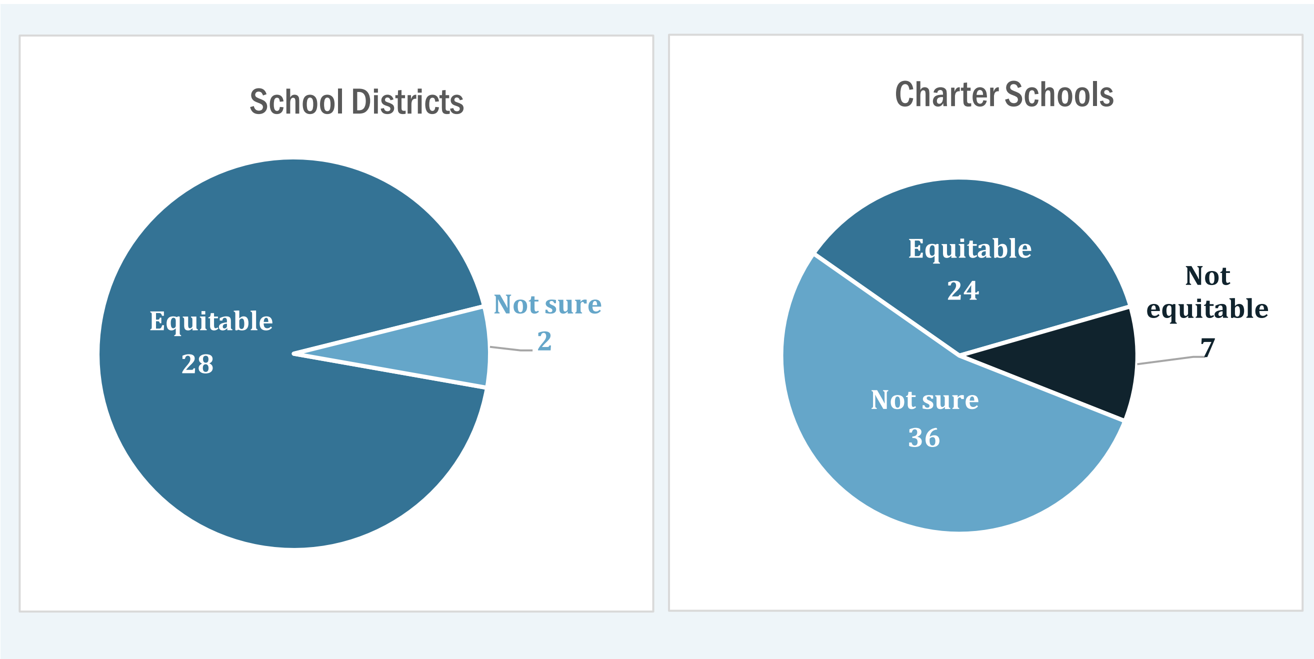
Twenty-two of the 30 school districts that completed OPPAGA's survey reported allocating IDEA funds to charter schools during the 2021-22 school year. Nineteen of the 22 school districts reported allocating funds to traditional schools and charter schools using the same methodology. Seven of these 19 school districts reported allocating funds to both traditional schools and charter schools based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE, 5 reported allocating funds using a needs-based funding model, 4 reported allocating funds based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE, and 3 reported allocating the funds based on some other method. Three of the 22 school districts reported allocating IDEA funds to traditional schools and charter schools using different methodologies. The first district reported allocating funds to traditional schools based on the needs of students, and to charter schools based on the number of eligible students. The second school district reported allocating funds to traditional schools using a needs-based funding model and to charter schools based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE. The third school district reported allocating funds to traditional schools based on a proportional share of unweighted student FTE and to charter schools based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE.

Of the eight school districts that did not allocate IDEA funds to charter schools, seven reported providing services to charter schools with IDEA funds rather than allocating funds directly to the schools, and one reported that no district charter schools requested funds.

Perceptions on Equitability of Current Allocation Methods

Twenty-eight of the 30 school districts responding to OPPAGA's survey believed the method for allocating IDEA funds was equitable. The school districts provided various rationales to support this position, including that the method was based on student needs (13), the school district followed the program allocation guidelines (3), and the same methodology was applied to traditional schools and charter schools (2). Two school districts reported being unsure if the district's allocation method was equitable. (See Exhibit 16.)

Exhibit 16
Do School Districts and Charter Schools Believe That the School District's Method for Allocating IDEA Funds to Traditional Schools and Charter Schools Is Equitable?



Source: OPPAGA school district and charter school surveys.

In contrast, 36 of the 67 charter schools that responded to OPPAGA's survey and reported receiving IDEA funds during the 2021-22 school year were unsure if the school district's allocation method was equitable, while 24 believed the allocation method was equitable. However, seven charter school principals believed the allocation method was not equitable and provided several alternatives they believed would be more equitable, including allocating funds based on a proportional share of weighted student FTE (1), a needs-based funding model (2), and a proportional share of unweighted student FTE (1). In addition, one charter school stated that the allocation method used should have consistent procedures and accountability, and two were unsure what would be a more equitable allocation method.

Recommendations

OPPAGA's review found that although school districts reported allocating federal funds to eligible charter schools, on average, 50% of charter school principals were unsure how federal program funds are allocated to charter schools. To address the lack of understanding among charter schools on how federal funds are distributed, OPPAGA recommends that the FDOE work with school districts to provide additional training and information to charter schools regarding eligibility requirements and distribution of federal program funds for the specific federal programs reviewed by OPPAGA. Additional training and information would make the process more transparent to charter schools and could result in more collaboration between school districts and charter schools in the application for and distribution of funds in a manner that would best serve all eligible public school students, teachers, and families.

AGENCY RESPONSE

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(2), *Florida Statutes*, OPPAGA submitted a draft of this report to the Florida Department of Education for review and response. The department's written response is reproduced in Appendix D.

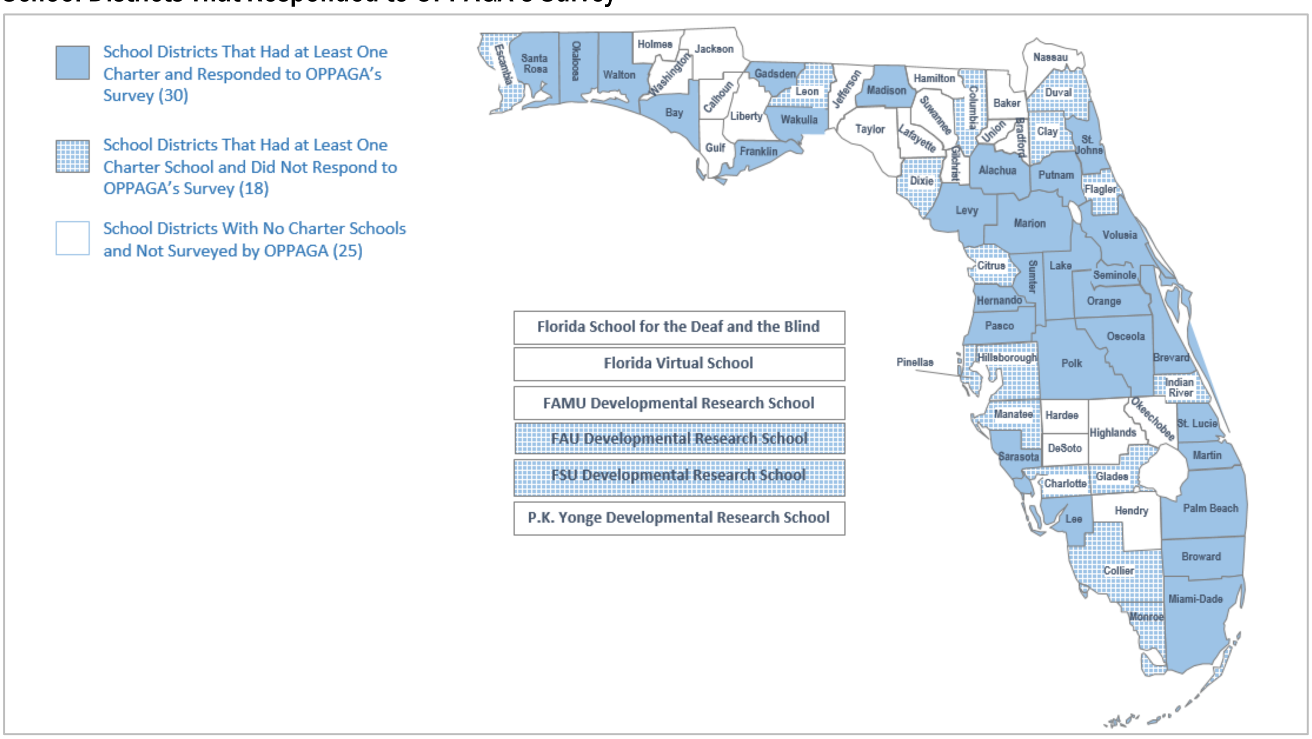
APPENDIX A: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

OPPAGA reviewed relevant state and federal laws, rules, and regulations; interviewed officials in other states, Florida Department of Education (FDOE) officials, representatives from charter school advocacy groups, and officials from the Florida Association of District School Superintendents; and analyzed financial data provided by FDOE, the Florida Department of Revenue, and the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. In addition, OPPAGA conducted surveys to obtain information on the allocation of capital outlay funds and specified federal funds as well as perceptions on the equitability of the allocation methods.

Surveys

OPPAGA conducted two online surveys: one of finance officers in the 48 school districts that had at least one charter school operating during the fall of 2021 and another of Florida's 652 charter schools. Respondents were asked if they believed that current methods for allocating major sources of capital outlay funds and specified federal funds were equitable and the rationale for their response. The survey also asked those who believed current allocation methods were not equitable to recommend a more equitable method. OPPAGA considered survey responses when assessing potential recommendations. Thirty of the 48 (63%) school districts completed OPPAGA's survey and 114 (17%) principals at charter schools completed the survey. Eighteen school districts with charter schools did not respond to OPPAGA's survey. (See Exhibit A-1.)

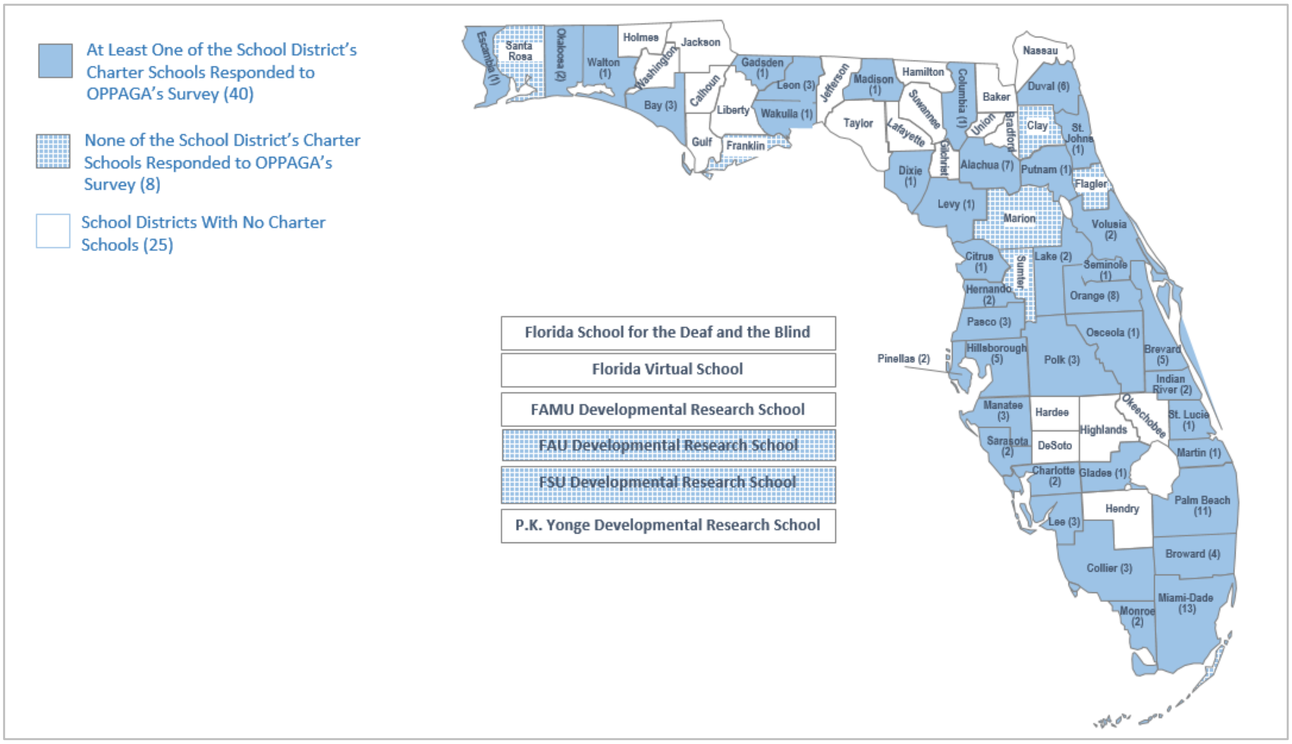
Exhibit A-1
School Districts That Responded to OPPAGA's Survey



Source: OPPAGA analysis of school district surveys.

OPPAGA provided all individuals who were listed as a principal at more than one charter school the opportunity to complete a survey for each charter school for which they were listed as principal. OPPAGA excluded conversion charter schools from the survey because these schools do not receive capital outlay funding from the same source as regular charter schools, per s. 1013.62(1)(5)(b), *Florida Statutes*, and excluded virtual charter schools because virtual charter schools do not receive capital outlay funds, per s. 1002.45(6), *Florida Statutes*. To achieve the highest response rate possible, OPPAGA sent two reminder emails and enlisted the assistance of FDOE's Office of Independent Education, which emailed information about OPPAGA's charter school survey to all charter schools in the state. The 114 charter schools that completed OPPAGA's survey were located in 40 of the 48 school districts with at least one charter school. In the eight school districts where no charter school completed a survey, there were a total of 11 charter schools. (See Exhibit A-2.)

Exhibit A-2
Charter Schools That Completed OPPAGA's Survey



Note: The figures in parentheses reflect the number of charter schools in the school district that responded to OPPAGA's survey.
Source: OPPAGA analysis of charter school surveys.

In school year 2021-22, some school districts did not receive one or more of the following federal program funds: Title I, Part C; Title I, Part D; and Title III, Part A. If a charter school was located in a school district that did not receive these federal program funds, the responses of charter school principals to questions related to these funds were excluded from OPPAGA's survey analysis. Only the responses from charter school principals in school districts that received funding from these federal programs were included in OPPAGA's survey analysis.

Funding Information

FDOE collects annual financial reports (AFRs) from school districts. These school district AFRs show funds expended by the school district during a given fiscal year from different funding sources. OPPAGA used these AFRs to analyze capital outlay funding expended by school districts. In some cases, funding allocated during one fiscal year may be expended during a subsequent fiscal year or over multiple fiscal years. For federal program funds, FDOE provided a report of final subgrant allocations for specified federal programs, which OPPAGA used to analyze the amount of federal program funds received by school districts.

APPENDIX B: CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDS

Appendix B includes seven exhibits that provide information related to public sources of funds available to and expended by school districts for capital outlay projects. Exhibits B-1 through B-4 provide information about the four largest sources of these funds, which are derived from local taxes and fees and which make up approximately 94% of the total public capital outlay funds. Exhibits B-5 through B-7 provide information about the top four state sources of funding for capital outlay projects, which make up about 6% of the total public capital outlay funds. These exhibits are ordered from the largest to smallest source of funding.

Exhibit B-1: District Local Capital Improvement Tax

The District Local Capital Improvement Tax, authorized by s. 1011.71(2), *Florida Statutes,* is the largest source of local capital outlay funds available to school districts ($3.25 billion expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21). School districts are permitted to share this funding with charter schools; however, only four of the 51 school districts that responded to OPPAGA's survey reported sharing these funds with charter schools. In Exhibit B-1, the millage rate, the taxable value, and the estimated taxes levied were provided by the Florida Department of Revenue for tax year 2021. The fourth column provides the amount of these funds expended by school districts for Fiscal Year 2020-21 based on school district annual financial reports provided to the Florida Department of Education. The last column shows if the school district reported sharing these funds with charter schools in their school district.

Exhibit B-1
Tax Year 2021 Estimated School Taxes Levied for School Capital Outlay and District Local Capital Improvement Tax Expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21

County	Capital Outlay Millage	Taxable Value[1]	Taxes Levied[1]	Expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21[1]	School District Reported Sharing Funds With Charter Schools
Alachua	1.5000	$19,237,861,834	$28,856,793	$25,879,505	No
Baker	1.5000	$1,268,307,242	$1,902,461	$1,698,460	No Charter Schools
Bay	1.5000	$21,042,708,710	$31,564,063	$27,370,142	No
Bradford	1.5000	$1,203,053,001	$1,804,580	$1,590,835	No Charter Schools
Brevard	1.5000	$51,930,424,822	$77,895,637	$70,804,494	No
Broward	1.5000	$235,162,541,694	$352,743,813	$325,359,811	No
Calhoun	1.5000	$497,847,374	$746,771	$686,609	No Charter Schools
Charlotte	1.5000	$22,289,712,413	$33,434,569	$30,052,148	No Survey Response
Citrus	1.5000	$12,264,559,026	$18,396,839	$16,956,825	No Survey Response
Clay	1.5000	$14,360,755,094	$21,541,133	$19,265,453	No Survey Response
Collier	1.1500	$109,157,572,697	$125,531,209	$150,062,073	No Survey Response
Columbia	1.5000	$3,564,581,786	$5,346,873	$4,712,019	No Survey Response
DeSoto	1.5000	$2,188,890,195	$3,283,335	$3,073,087	No Charter Schools
Dixie	1.5000	$631,624,988	$947,437	$883,739	No Survey Response
Duval	1.5000	$85,536,625,344	$128,304,938	$115,186,764	No Survey Response
Escambia	1.2140	$23,226,321,506	$28,196,754	$28,510,061	No Survey Response
Flagler	1.5000	$12,066,016,499	$18,099,025	$15,922,099	No Survey Response
Franklin	1.0000	$2,524,579,364	$2,524,579	$2,226,109	No
Gadsden	1.5000	$1,829,245,279	$2,743,868	$2,372,608	No
Gilchrist	1.5000	$1,053,577,514	$1,580,366	$1,372,217	No Charter Schools
Glades	1.5000	$832,595,306	$1,248,893	$1,111,268	No Survey Response
Gulf	0.8290	$2,307,713,484	$1,913,094	$1,654,684	No Charter Schools
Hamilton	1.5000	$1,068,162,058	$1,602,243	$1,528,852	No Charter Schools
Hardee	1.5000	$1,960,570,413	$2,940,856	$2,745,738	No Charter Schools
Hendry	1.5000	$2,939,949,686	$4,409,925	$3,562,176	No Charter Schools
Hernando	1.5000	$12,420,189,618	$18,630,284	$16,635,378	No
Highlands	1.5000	$6,295,404,957	$9,443,107	$8,540,161	No Charter Schools
Hillsborough	1.5000	$132,098,301,934	$198,147,453	$171,313,528	No Survey Response
Holmes	1.5000	$564,947,164	$847,421	$783,851	No Charter Schools
Indian River	1.5000	$21,940,784,984	$32,911,177	$29,831,504	No Survey Response
Jackson	0.8776	$1,916,239,373	$1,681,692	$1,769,860	No Charter Schools
Jefferson	1.5000	$794,515,273	$1,191,773	$1,074,341	No Charter Schools[2]
Lafayette	1.5000	$319,365,766	$479,049	$442,451	No Charter Schools
Lake	1.5000	$29,399,937,130	$44,099,906	$39,613,738	Yes
Lee	1.5000	$104,616,973,587	$156,925,460	$139,309,916	No

County	Capital Outlay Millage	Taxable Value[1]	Taxes Levied[1]	Expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21[1]	School District Reported Sharing Funds With Charter Schools
Leon	1.5000	$20,929,168,872	$31,393,753	$28,962,215	No Survey Response
Levy	1.5000	$2,545,985,582	$3,818,978	$3,291,494	No
Liberty	1.5000	$339,774,975	$509,662	$454,987	No Charter Schools
Madison	1.5000	$875,248,275	$1,312,872	$1,187,719	No
Manatee	1.5000	$47,666,050,988	$71,499,076	$64,261,360	No Survey Response
Marion	1.5000	$24,565,882,978	$36,848,824	$32,544,920	No
Martin	1.5000	$26,624,105,342	$39,936,158	$36,592,987	No
Miami-Dade	1.5000	$357,960,465,263	$536,940,698	$485,634,215	No
Monroe	0.5000	$33,635,119,753	$16,817,560	$15,617,924	No Survey Response
Nassau	1.5000	$12,031,150,282	$18,046,725	$15,834,738	No Charter Schools
Okaloosa	1.5000	$22,571,993,046	$33,857,990	$30,705,303	No
Okeechobee	1.5000	$3,690,844,107	$5,536,266	$4,977,831	No Charter Schools
Orange	1.5000	$171,336,070,936	$257,004,106	$242,226,504	No
Osceola	1.5000	$36,439,468,939	$54,659,203	$48,898,005	No
Palm Beach	1.5000	$234,429,746,291	$351,644,619	$320,725,104	No
Pasco	1.5000	$39,219,336,721	$58,829,005	$50,742,874	No
Pinellas	1.5000	$106,238,474,751	$159,357,712	$143,976,786	No Survey Response
Polk	1.5000	$48,924,669,326	$73,387,004	$63,713,564	No
Putnam	1.5000	$5,290,797,740	$7,936,197	$7,213,269	No
Santa Rosa	1.5000	$13,673,805,923	$20,510,709	$18,065,506	No
Sarasota	1.5000	$74,435,427,897	$111,653,142	$100,049,687	Yes
Seminole	1.5000	$43,144,017,881	$64,716,027	$59,449,493	No
St. Johns	1.5000	$37,147,732,755	$55,721,599	$49,309,622	No
St. Lucie	1.5000	$28,924,225,135	$43,386,338	$38,147,078	No
Sumter	1.5000	$16,664,574,619	$24,996,862	$22,212,054	Yes
Suwannee	1.5000	$2,296,618,791	$3,444,928	$3,140,789	No Charter Schools
Taylor	1.5000	$1,782,032,921	$2,673,049	$2,353,947	No Charter Schools
Union	1.5000	$331,840,012	$497,760	$434,408	No Charter Schools
Volusia	1.5000	$47,481,429,887	$71,222,145	$64,565,401	No
Wakulla	1.5000	$1,734,743,058	$2,602,115	$2,291,797	No
Walton	1.3930	$27,126,822,672	$37,787,664	$31,785,568	Yes
Washington	1.1500	$1,105,723,988	$1,271,583	$1,158,302	No Charter Schools
Total		**$2,431,675,806,821**	**$3,561,737,705**	**$3,254,427,956**	—

[1] Tax Values are assessed as of January 1 in any year and billed in November. Fiscal Year 2020-21 runs from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021.
[2] Jefferson County School District did not have any charter schools as of the fall of 2022.

Source: Florida Department of Revenue and Florida Department of Education data.

Exhibit B-2: School District Capital Outlay Local Sales Tax

The School District Capital Outlay Local Sales Tax is authorized by s. 212.055(6), *Florida Statutes*, and is the second largest source of local capital outlay funding available to school districts ($971.6 million expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21). The maximum allowable rate for this discretionary sales tax is 0.5% and the tax must be approved by a majority of the electors of the county voting in referendum. The 26 school districts below had passed a referendum and were collecting this surtax in Fiscal Year 2020-21. School districts that passed referenda after July 1, 2020, are required to share the surtax revenues with eligible district charter schools based on the charter schools' proportionate share of the total school district enrollment. Exhibit B-2 provides the amount of these funds expended by school districts for Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2020-21 based on school district annual financial reports provided to the Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit B-2
School District Capital Outlay Local Sales Tax per s. 212.055(6), *Florida Statutes*, Expended From Fiscal Year 2018-19 Through Fiscal Year 2020-21

County	Fiscal Year 2018-19	Fiscal Year 2019-20	Fiscal Year 2020-21	School District Reported Sharing Funds With Charter Schools
Alachua	$10,026,982	$21,367,146	$23,314,714	No
Bay	$23,248,989	$23,071,079	$26,109,097	Yes
Brevard	$47,380,336	$45,733,641	$50,920,358	Yes
Calhoun	$539,224	$518,639	$559,617	No Charter Schools
Duval	$0	$0	$50,543,280	No Survey Response
Escambia	$28,220,187	$28,259,025	$32,008,937	No Survey Response
Flagler	$6,455,120	$6,335,027	$7,747,343	No Survey Response
Hernando	$11,015,453	$11,578,748	$13,157,697	No
Highlands	$6,179,919	$5,691,793	$6,936,482	No Charter Schools
Hillsborough	$50,112,974	$127,771,011	$134,152,000	No Survey Response
Jackson	$2,791,091	$2,823,798	$2,964,359	No Charter Schools
Lee	$36,453,161	$79,534,198	$88,730,152	No
Leon	$20,846,963	$21,976,463	$23,964,899	No Survey Response
Liberty	$206,642	$198,619	$149,161	No Charter Schools
Manatee	$31,128,377	$31,282,122	$36,684,612	No Survey Response
Martin	$7,078,922	$17,662,350	$20,217,349	No Survey Response[1]
Monroe	$19,068,984	$16,861,981	$21,126,779	No Survey Response
Okaloosa	$0	$0	$12,322,738	Yes
Orange	$274,456,899	$253,965,180	$223,647,866	No
Osceola	$31,876,654	$29,591,338	$30,323,844	No
Polk	$50,939,372	$48,661,625	$59,123,828	Yes
Santa Rosa	$9,835,817	$10,194,670	$12,177,574	No
St. Johns	$15,945,589	$15,773,989	$20,189,348	No
St. Lucie	$19,678,466	$19,243,942	$22,820,479	No Survey Response[1]
Volusia	$44,814,724	$44,257,468	$50,507,247	No
Washington	$459,111	$1,093,988	$1,242,692	No Charter Schools
Total	**$748,759,956**	**$863,447,841**	**$971,642,450**	**—**

Note: School districts that did not expend school district capital outlay local sales tax from Fiscal Year 2018-19 through Fiscal Year 2020-21 are not included in this exhibit.
[1] Although these school districts responded to the OPPAGA survey, they did not indicate in the survey if their districts were collecting this sales tax.

Source: Florida Department of Education data.

Exhibit B-3: County Impact Fees

County impact fees authorized by s. 163.31801, *Florida Statutes,* represent the third largest source of local capital outlay funding available to school districts ($582 million expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21). The 27 school districts below imposed Impact Fees in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Exhibit B-3 provides the amount of these funds expended by school districts for Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2020-21 based on school district annual financial reports provided to the Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit B-3

Capital Outlay Impact Fees Collected by School Districts From Fiscal Year 2018-19 Through Fiscal Year 2020-21[1,2]

County	Fiscal Year 2018-19	Fiscal Year 2019-20	Fiscal Year 2020-21
Baker	$256,194	$336,620	$429,764
Brevard	$13,734,323	$16,004,661	$18,549,679
Broward	$15,900,055	$18,372,555	$20,819,259
Citrus	$133,397	$945,237	$554,424
Clay	$4,899,923	$8,657,052	$10,431,325
Collier	$24,138,111	$23,559,950	$23,918,247
Flagler	$4,267,469	$4,391,182	$9,151,478
Hernando	$2,427,403	$2,153,894	$3,767,707
Hillsborough	$51,357,567	$34,882,070	$50,457,616
Indian River	$1,846,512	$1,589,714	$1,649,218
Lake	$24,596,192	$26,525,672	$23,375,687
Lee	$15,392,068	$16,841,899	$18,144,986
Levy	$120,058	$173,073	$236,390
Manatee	$17,236,868	$21,759,271	$29,073,369
Martin	$2,166,061	$3,176,421	$5,556,117
Miami-Dade	$20,366,639	$21,144,817	$19,661,199
Nassau	$7,682,174	$6,113,069	$9,490,185
Orange	$64,641,613	$65,864,685	$61,095,416
Osceola	$74,409,260	$74,387,899	$83,128,923
Palm Beach	$0	$6,447,347	$46,847,394
Pasco	$25,572,407	$31,267,511	$46,506,591
Polk	$30,806,847	$39,234,410	$9,958,743
Sarasota	$7,030,622	$5,916,927	$7,554,948
Seminole	$9,217,998	$12,067,940	$18,777,731
St. Johns	$17,217,299	$15,156,440	$22,138,718
St. Lucie	$14,911,094	$15,163,964	$28,314,739
Volusia	$8,659,017	$12,781,428	$12,372,661
Total	**$458,987,170**	**$484,915,708**	**$581,966,482**

[1] School districts that did not expend impact fees from Fiscal Year 2018-19 through Fiscal Year 2020-21 are not included in this exhibit.
[2] Florida statutes do not require school districts to share these funds with district charter schools, and OPPAGA did not ask school districts to report if they share these funds with their charter schools.

Source: Florida Department of Education data.

Exhibit B-4: County Local Sales Tax

County local sales taxes authorized by s. 212.055(2), *Florida Statutes,* represent the fourth largest source of local capital outlay funding available to school districts ($288 million expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21). The rate for this discretionary sales tax may be 0.5% or 1% and the tax must be approved by a majority of the electors of the county voting in referendum. The nine school districts below expended funds from this source in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Exhibit B-4 provides the amount of these funds expended by school districts for Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2020-21 based on school district annual financial reports provided to the Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit B-4
County Local Sales Tax Expended by School Districts From Fiscal Year 2018-19 Through Fiscal Year 2020-21[1,2]

County	Fiscal Year 2018-19	Fiscal Year 2019-20	Fiscal Year 2020-21
Charlotte	$0	$0	$5,000,000
Clay	$2,197,401	$1,272,846	$6,037,755
Hillsborough	$12,511,163	$7,696,448	$6,023,860
Lake	$16,646,825	$15,023,873	$18,765,215
Osceola	$15,972,508	$14,805,629	$15,165,487
Palm Beach	$145,847,735	$138,186,981	$156,620,949
Pasco	$31,013,628	$32,123,910	$36,736,646
Sarasota	$21,451,257	$21,254,038	$23,109,104
Seminole	$19,275,590	$17,961,786	$20,277,988
Total	**$264,916,107**	**$248,325,511**	**$287,737,004**

[1] School districts that did not expend County Local Sales Tax from Fiscal Year 2018-19 through Fiscal Year 2020-21 are not included in this exhibit.

[2] Florida statutes do not require school districts to share these funds with district charter schools, and OPPAGA did not ask school districts to report if they share these funds with their charter schools.

Source: Florida Department of Education data.

Exhibit B-5: Charter School Capital Outlay Funding

Charter school capital outlay funding authorized by s. 1013.62, *Florida Statutes,* represents the largest state source of capital outlay funding ($167.5 million expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21). These capital outlay funds are only available to eligible charter schools as described in the statute. The 46 school districts below had eligible charter schools that expended funds from this source in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Exhibit B-5 provides the amount of these funds expended by charter schools from Fiscal Year 2018-19 through Fiscal Year 2020-21 based on school district annual financial reports provided to the Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit B-5

Fiscal Year 2018-19 Through Fiscal Year 2020-21 Distribution of Charter School Capital Outlay Funding

County	Fiscal Year 2018-19	Fiscal Year 2019-20	Fiscal Year 2020-21
Alachua	$1,056,739	$1,122,105	$1,012,990
Bay	$2,259,497	$2,555,780	$2,695,897
Brevard	$3,055,458	$3,580,967	$4,080,505
Broward	$23,004,320	$24,381,176	$25,320,703
Charlotte	$185,075	$407,053	$417,728
Citrus	$58,190	$60,466	$59,716
Clay	$282,783	$723,488	$796,649
Collier	$1,419,542	$1,478,756	$1,528,948
Columbia	$238,074	$274,471	$302,669
Dixie	$62,732	$79,463	$81,872
Duval	$7,893,111	$8,815,453	$9,700,971
Escambia	$375,979	$374,388	$347,992
Flagler	$428,127	$438,052	$437,588
Franklin	$214,956	$229,942	$224,775
Gadsden	$293,099	$319,773	$336,122
Glades	$170,996	$172,537	$147,182
Hernando	$153,525	$173,253	$177,688
Hillsborough	$11,843,129	$13,113,680	$13,847,395
Indian River	$1,130,099	$1,169,042	$1,208,414
Lake	$1,091,211	$1,288,488	$1,643,187
Lee	$5,336,743	$5,624,174	$5,943,691
Leon	$857,383	$837,549	$976,674
Levy	$138,496	$144,854	$122,620
Madison	$236,052	$247,647	$259,344
Manatee	$3,150,075	$3,333,614	$3,427,353
Marion	$254,021	$286,066	$250,710
Martin	$139,140	$153,921	$163,720
Miami-Dade	$34,503,031	$37,819,207	$42,138,110
Monroe	$409,492	$454,784	$464,575
Okaloosa	$690,367	$712,163	$718,672
Orange	$7,531,789	$7,822,664	$8,529,470
Osceola	$6,474,530	$7,573,129	$7,976,189
Palm Beach	$9,671,893	$10,349,106	$10,810,271
Pasco	$2,544,095	$2,817,867	$3,540,200
Pinellas	$3,243,762	$3,406,065	$3,551,071
Polk	$3,585,348	$3,962,957	$4,132,484
Putnam	$311,160	$247,250	$225,342
Santa Rosa	$106,179	$96,959	$67,078
Sarasota	$3,142,051	$3,252,576	$3,123,848
Seminole	$869,832	$983,133	$989,681
St. Johns	$99,582	$97,726	$94,089
St. Lucie	$1,815,741	$2,022,957	$2,177,638
Sumter	$1,549,298	$1,661,456	$1,709,389

County	Fiscal Year 2018-19	Fiscal Year 2019-20	Fiscal Year 2020-21
Volusia	$1,181,774	$1,219,265	$1,352,633
Wakulla	$85,400	$68,748	$113,558
Walton	$278,045	$286,034	$321,932
Total	**$143,421,921**	**$156,240,204**	**$167,549,333**

Note: Although listed by school district, funding is paid directly to the eligible charter schools in the school district. The funds provided may be used by the eligible charter schools for statutorily specified purposes only. The funding amounts in this table are for the 67 county-level school districts only; special school districts are excluded and school districts without any charter schools are excluded from this exhibit.

Source: Florida Department of Education data.

Exhibit B-6: Capital Outlay and Debt Service

Capital Outlay and Debt Service (CO&DS) funds, which are provided from the CO&DS Trust Fund authorized by s. 320.20(1), *Florida Statutes,* represent the second largest source of state capital outlay funding ($92 million expended in Fiscal Year 2020-21). Exhibit B-6 provides the amount of funds expended by school districts for Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2020-21 based on school district annual financial reports provided to the Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit B-6
Fiscal Year 2018-19 Through Fiscal Year 2020-21 School District Capital Outlay and Debt Service Funding[1]

County	Fiscal Year 2018-19	Fiscal Year 2019-20	Fiscal Year 2020-21
Alachua	$1,000,371	$992,037	$905,889
Baker	$164,856	$165,147	$161,798
Bay	$874,918	$854,411	$836,862
Bradford	$109,152	$109,152	$109,152
Brevard	$2,223,446	$2,321,914	$2,346,592
Broward	$8,589,641	$8,863,598	$8,832,341
Calhoun	$64,484	$64,484	$64,484
Charlotte	$602,338	$581,534	$549,926
Citrus	$540,076	$529,099	$577,608
Clay	$1,399,065	$1,460,602	$1,377,375
Collier	$1,893,876	$1,911,105	$1,862,706
Columbia	$337,510	$340,013	$331,060
DeSoto	$158,115	$157,271	$149,129
Dixie	$48,195	$49,185	$45,418
Duval	$4,210,103	$4,364,350	$4,212,640
Escambia	$1,384,598	$1,377,113	$1,384,283
Flagler	$395,209	$389,215	$388,923
Franklin	$44,756	$44,756	$44,756
Gadsden	$243,654	$262,893	$287,049
Gilchrist	$101,305	$103,745	$98,819
Glades	$60,457	$62,546	$57,542
Gulf	$73,612	$72,475	$74,909
Hamilton	$69,396	$68,317	$61,352
Hardee	$113,649	$111,451	$145,382
Hendry	$269,239	$269,155	$263,732
Hernando	$581,360	$628,521	$651,771
Highlands	$417,609	$416,184	$381,404
Hillsborough	$5,575,624	$6,085,060	$6,294,723
Holmes	$27,729	$25,947	$62,236
Indian River	$123,212	$120,213	$125,100
Jackson	$248,258	$234,181	$235,561
Jefferson	$72,746	$72,746	$72,746
Lafayette	$37,307	$38,286	$40,547
Lake	$691,310	$775,022	$679,545
Lee	$3,073,832	$3,224,110	$3,267,309
Leon	$1,113,553	$1,152,857	$1,203,614
Levy	$183,474	$194,341	$181,709
Liberty	$11,276	$40,654	$39,142
Madison	$96,155	$96,055	$104,122
Manatee	$1,224,242	$1,293,177	$1,356,739
Marion	$1,256,612	$1,368,190	$1,305,604
Martin	$684,358	$683,605	$686,340
Miami-Dade	$13,152,893	$13,328,223	$13,331,474

County	Fiscal Year 2018-19	Fiscal Year 2019-20	Fiscal Year 2020-21
Monroe	$255,172	$267,221	$246,213
Nassau	$373,600	$399,575	$415,000
Okaloosa	$950,712	$1,010,453	$992,965
Okeechobee	$218,433	$217,245	$203,172
Orange	$6,986,229	$7,308,876	$7,202,139
Osceola	$1,883,722	$2,029,073	$2,039,935
Palm Beach	$5,454,031	$5,901,437	$5,754,672
Pasco	$1,932,791	$2,117,748	$2,065,257
Pinellas	$3,859,189	$3,828,771	$4,430,304
Polk	$3,019,982	$3,222,173	$3,153,849
Putnam	$383,307	$401,375	$403,535
St. Johns	$1,081,654	$1,274,713	$1,316,382
St. Lucie	$1,348,985	$1,434,722	$1,433,796
Santa Rosa	$800,634	$871,901	$758,126
Sarasota	$975,854	$1,186,743	$1,304,783
Seminole	$1,485,353	$1,614,746	$1,596,347
Sumter	$302,826	$310,095	$301,063
Suwannee	$182,468	$181,423	$184,416
Taylor	$102,799	$102,799	$102,799
Union	$73,999	$73,930	$76,395
Volusia	$1,954,816	$2,034,082	$2,213,474
Wakulla	$161,223	$182,438	$188,844
Walton	$323,706	$344,689	$336,068
Washington	$125,944	$125,918	$115,775
Total	**$87,780,999**	**$91,745,082**	**$92,024,719**

[1] Florida statutes do not require school districts to share these funds with district charter schools, and OPPAGA did not ask school districts to report if they share these funds with their charter schools.

Source: Florida Department of Education Data.

Exhibit B-7: Miscellaneous State Funding and PECO Expenditures

Exhibit B-7 provides information about state-level sources of capital outlay funding appropriated to school districts or expended by school districts in Fiscal Year 2020-21, including

- the Special Facility Construction Account, authorized by s. 1013.64(2), *Florida Statutes* ($41.3 million allocated to four school districts);
- Educational Facilities Security Grants (formerly called the School Hardening Grant) that are allocated in line 113A of the 2021 General Appropriations Act, Ch. 2021-36, *Laws of Florida* ($41.7 million allocated to 67 school districts);
- other miscellaneous state revenues reported by school districts used for capital outlay expenditures ($65.5 million expended by 55 school districts); and
- Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO), authorized by s. 1013.65, *Florida Statutes*, ($15.1 million expended by three school districts in Fiscal Year 2020-21) based on school district annual financial reports provided to the Florida Department of Education (these expenditures are from PECO allocations made to these school districts in prior fiscal years—school districts have 31 months from the time the PECO funds are allocated by which to expend these funds).

Exhibit B-7
Fiscal Year 2020-21 School District Miscellaneous State Allocations and Expenditures for Capital Outlay and Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) Funding Expenditures[1,2]

County	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Appropriations for Special Facility Construction	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Allocation for Educational Facilities Security Grants	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Expenditures for Miscellaneous State Revenue for Capital Outlay	Fiscal Year 2020-21 PECO Expenditures
Alachua	$0	$431,004	$406,680	$0
Baker	$8,504,580	$73,152	$0	$2,898,708
Bay	$0	$370,183	$526,548	$0
Bradford	$13,178,063	$43,448	$0	$12,055,384
Brevard	$0	$1,044,061	$2,622,391	$0
Broward	$0	$3,992,410	$5,198,373	$0
Calhoun	$0	$42,000	$42,000	$0
Charlotte	$0	$232,937	$29,341	$0
Citrus	$0	$226,890	$451,347	$0
Clay	$0	$564,940	$695,107	$0
Collier	$0	$707,499	$507,771	$0
Columbia	$0	$147,869	$0	$147,869
DeSoto	$0	$71,981	$71,889	$0
Dixie	$0	$42,000	$29,592	$0
Duval	$0	$1,902,538	$1,566,247	$0
Escambia	$0	$578,876	$578,876	$0
Flagler	$0	$189,208	$189,208	$0
Franklin	$0	$42,000	$42,000	$0
Gadsden	$0	$71,462	$0	$0
Gilchrist	$7,205,344	$42,000	$0	$0
Glades	$0	$42,000	$0	$0
Gulf	$0	$42,000	$42,000	$0
Hamilton	$0	$42,000	$32,250	$0
Hardee	$0	$75,793	$75,793	$0

County	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Appropriations for Special Facility Construction	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Allocation for Educational Facilities Security Grants	Fiscal Year 2020-21 Expenditures for Miscellaneous State Revenue for Capital Outlay	Fiscal Year 2020-21 PECO Expenditures
Hendry	$0	$105,983	$32,945	$0
Hernando	$0	$340,923	$789,224	$0
Highlands	$0	$178,450	$178,450	$0
Hillsborough	$0	$3,269,202	$2,938,316	$0
Holmes	$0	$45,941	$84,353	$0
Indian River	$0	$262,606	$273,772	$0
Jackson	$0	$91,014	$131,717	$0
Jefferson	$0	$42,000	$0	$0
Lafayette	$0	$42,000	$42,000	$0
Lake	$0	$651,150	$914,714	$0
Lee	$0	$1,413,850	$1,956,855	$0
Leon	$0	$509,098	$610,863	$0
Levy	$12,416,164	$79,742	$45,841	$0
Liberty	$0	$42,000	$0	$0
Madison	$0	$42,000	$92,000	$0
Manatee	$0	$731,783	$542,943	$0
Marion	$0	$630,735	$630,735	$0
Martin	$0	$275,257	$311,075	$0
Miami-Dade	$0	$5,017,839	$16,293,176	$0
Monroe	$0	$127,089	$127,089	$0
Nassau	$0	$181,573	$59,153	$0
Okaloosa	$0	$469,623	$13,130	$0
Okeechobee	$0	$95,044	$100,898	$0
Orange	$0	$3,069,924	$7,166,457	$0
Osceola	$0	$1,012,051	$0	$0
Palm Beach	$0	$2,879,863	$6,354,346	$0
Pasco	$0	$1,121,093	$2,192,075	$0
Pinellas	$0	$1,445,255	$2,060,643	$0
Polk	$0	$1,581,918	$0	$0
Putnam	$0	$157,662	$211,177	$0
St. Johns	$0	$646,504	$646,504	$0
St. Lucie	$0	$597,229	$860,865	$0
Santa Rosa	$0	$425,474	$1,000,221	$0
Sarasota	$0	$642,928	$1,369,230	$0
Seminole	$0	$1,006,257	$1,905,320	$0
Sumter	$0	$130,637	$104,882	$0
Suwannee	$0	$86,330	$86,295	$0
Taylor	$0	$42,000	$29,410	$0
Union	$0	$42,000	$0	$0
Volusia	$0	$920,201	$40,071	$0
Wakulla	$0	$75,837	$2,046,391	$0
Walton	$0	$151,594	$186,163	$0
Washington	$0	$50,090	$0	$0
Total	**$41,304,151**	**$41,748,000**	**$65,536,707**	**$15,101,961**

[1] The funding amounts in this exhibit are for the 67 county-level school districts only; special school districts are excluded.
[2] Florida statutes do not require school districts to share these funds with district charter schools, and OPPAGA did not ask school districts to report if they share these funds with their charter schools.

Source: Florida Department of Education data.

APPENDIX C: FEDERAL PROGRAM FUND ALLOCATIONS

Appendix C includes two exhibits that provide the allocations from the Florida Department of Education to the state's local educational agencies (LEAs) for specific federal programs in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Federal program funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These funds are intended to assist LEAs, which are typically school districts, in improving the academic outcomes of particular groups of students, including students who are disadvantaged, migrant, neglected, delinquent, at-risk, or homeless; students with disabilities; and students in rural and low-income schools. Exhibit C-1 includes the allocations for Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part D; Title II, Part A. Exhibit C-2 includes the allocations for Title III, Title IV, and IDEA.

Exhibit C-1: FDOE Allocations to LEAs for Specific Federal Programs in Fiscal Year 2020-21

Exhibit C-1
Fiscal Year 2020-21 Allocations to Local Educational Agencies for Specific Federal Programs: Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part D; Title II, Part A

Local Educational Agency	Title I, Part A	Title I, Part C	Title I, Part D	Title II, Part A
Alachua	$8,171,401	$522,156	$149,963	$1,170,147
Baker	$1,161,824	$0	$0	$224,577
Bay	$7,438,784	$0	$109,064	$1,024,555
Bradford	$1,117,371	$8,221	$0	$152,704
Brevard	$19,170,432	$0	$248,802	$2,258,176
Broward	$76,709,075	$111,162	$611,782	$9,471,048
Calhoun	$714,752	$0	$0	$98,907
Charlotte	$3,762,540	$0	$0	$659,539
Citrus	$4,537,106	$31,676	$64,757	$596,803
Clay	$4,736,798	$3,149	$0	$1,186,817
Collier	$10,860,552	$4,437,245	$151,667	$1,773,360
Columbia	$3,257,240	$75,786	$0	$471,040
DeSoto	$2,302,386	$629,317	$0	$248,437
Dixie	$868,792	$40,441	$0	$117,296
Duval	$42,987,365	$0	$342,529	$5,133,354
Escambia	$14,475,945	$122,487	$310,151	$1,633,153
Flagler	$3,002,620	$0	$0	$446,780
Franklin	$613,770	$0	$0	$66,038
Gadsden	$4,423,762	$74,653	$0	$276,012
Gilchrist	$701,311	$37,449	$0	$128,150
Glades	$458,072	$40,820	$0	$62,690
Gulf	$543,938	$0	$0	$64,535
Hamilton	$923,619	$158,380	$59,320	$85,348
Hardee	$2,465,920	$708,278	$0	$272,880
Hendry	$3,127,587	$1,060,367	$0	$451,108
Hernando	$5,920,570	$0	$66,925	$1,064,607
Highlands	$6,809,004	$905,961	$0	$615,100
Hillsborough	$65,401,651	$2,874,486	$577,700	$7,823,350
Holmes	$992,707	$0	$0	$152,712
Indian River	$3,982,671	$15,824	$0	$585,420
Jackson	$2,625,015	$9,219	$47,716	$298,392
Jefferson	$541,878	$0	$0	$40,098
Lafayette	$352,762	$11,655	$0	$58,775
Lake	$11,791,266	$30,702	$63,053	$1,778,394
Lee	$25,127,160	$591,682	$211,312	$4,010,142
Leon	$8,945,777	$7,060	$172,117	$1,144,106
Levy	$1,848,285	$113,715	$0	$285,947
Liberty	$337,373	$2,169	$90,319	$50,960
Madison	$1,351,397	$63,077	$86,910	$110,878
Manatee	$11,804,517	$453,278	$308,447	$1,803,621
Marion	$16,885,771	$76,757	$432,849	$1,861,724
Martin	$3,696,047	$22,440	$0	$586,046
Miami-Dade	$139,913,783	$1,846,745	$264,139	$13,977,178
Monroe	$1,715,359	$0	$0	$276,084
Nassau	$1,625,369	$0	$0	$352,512
Okaloosa	$6,880,659	$0	$211,312	$913,184

Local Educational Agency	Title I, Part A	Title I, Part C	Title I, Part D	Title II, Part A
Okeechobee	$2,480,395	$678,289	$277,773	$330,473
Orange	$73,057,983	$338,837	$487,380	$7,349,087
Osceola	$18,096,096	$0	$114,176	$2,901,594
Palm Beach	$51,178,411	$2,720,343	$308,447	$7,037,381
Pasco	$17,180,402	$122,060	$185,750	$2,494,327
Pinellas	$25,422,644	$0	$443,073	$3,594,297
Polk	$36,579,729	$1,510,605	$299,927	$4,354,548
Putnam	$5,763,745	$130,185	$0	$552,063
Santa Rosa	$4,231,003	$0	$0	$790,664
Sarasota	$9,038,326	$0	$0	$1,257,055
Seminole	$11,748,587	$0	$173,821	$2,018,997
St. Johns	$2,948,632	$12,500	$214,720	$750,771
St. Lucie	$12,011,914	$164,126	$334,009	$1,614,409
Sumter	$2,025,028	$0	$0	$349,638
Suwannee	$2,255,727	$252,890	$0	$294,652
Taylor	$1,195,070	$0	$0	$141,012
Union	$473,553	$10,474	$23,862	$103,032
Volusia	$19,142,879	$80,104	$390,245	$2,240,794
Wakulla	$821,569	$0	$0	$178,306
Walton	$2,533,499	$0	$35,786	$321,508
Washington	$1,341,499	$188,678	$0	$155,748
Lake Wales Charter	$1,711,244	$28,605	$0	$195,630
South Tech Academy	$533,623	$0	$0	$76,512
UCP	$359,625	$0	$0	$40,891
KIPP Miami	$428,175	$0	$0	$30,962
FAMU DRS	$260,404	$0	$0	$32,024
FAU DRS	$464,510	$0	$0	$69,089
FSU DRS	$273,752	$0	$0	$51,125
P.K. Yonge School	$140,488	$0	$0	$26,257
Florida School for the Deaf and Blind	$131,878	$0	$0	$24,218
Florida Virtual School	$846,491	$0	$0	$132,471
Total	**$841,758,864**	**$21,324,053**	**$7,869,803**	**$105,372,219**

Source: Florida Department of Education data.

Exhibit C-2: FDOE Allocations to LEAs for Additional Specific Federal Programs in Fiscal Year 2020-21

Exhibit C-2
Fiscal Year 2020-21 Allocations to Local Educational Agencies for Selected Federal Programs: Title III, Part A; Title IV, Part A; and IDEA, Part B

Local Educational Agency	Title III, Part A[1]	Title IV, Part A	IDEA, Part B[2]
Alachua	$201,065	$639,190	$7,590,371
Baker	$0	$93,801	$1,143,431
Bay	$141,000	$588,334	$6,366,091
Bradford	$0	$88,373	$1,034,578
Brevard	$506,614	$1,618,430	$17,369,762
Broward	$7,164,382	$5,751,885	$58,344,661
Calhoun	$0	$56,530	$548,503
Charlotte	$63,060	$297,580	$4,076,283
Citrus	$19,006	$395,163	$4,173,096
Clay	$201,540	$374,634	$8,423,917
Collier	$1,012,343	$811,836	$10,456,344
Columbia	$29,665	$236,717	$2,569,095
DeSoto	$74,311	$189,974	$1,286,872
Dixie	$0	$70,120	$744,446
Duval	$1,184,873	$3,279,089	$33,663,764
Escambia	$155,179	$1,144,905	$10,851,734
Flagler	$59,818	$222,793	$2,562,192
Franklin	$0	$44,021	$360,343
Gadsden	$70,227	$244,406	$1,660,363
Gilchrist	$17,468	$55,467	$745,568
Glades	$10,313	$38,962	$356,080
Gulf	$0	$43,020	$462,018
Hamilton	$29,025	$75,733	$504,643
Hardee	$58,299	$154,654	$1,344,223
Hendry	$145,552	$247,361	$2,185,684
Hernando	$81,919	$463,164	$5,155,513
Highlands	$85,307	$396,496	$3,222,517
Hillsborough	$3,249,339	$5,081,803	$46,749,939
Holmes	$0	$78,513	$800,751
Indian River	$142,768	$314,990	$3,973,230
Jackson	$14,734	$139,180	$1,806,795
Jefferson	$0	$42,235	$432,029
Lafayette	$10,903	$27,900	$271,847
Lake	$293,787	$896,727	$9,965,855
Lee	$2,225,800	$2,026,617	$20,031,324
Leon	$123,173	$651,592	$8,961,899
Levy	$29,762	$160,062	$1,495,663
Liberty	$0	$26,683	$336,982
Madison	$0	$95,003	$816,410
Manatee	$1,175,857	$933,621	$11,397,351
Marion	$301,743	$1,286,929	$10,454,935
Martin	$417,726	$292,321	$5,161,962
Miami-Dade	$9,011,486	$11,037,029	$80,782,738
Monroe	$133,633	$121,437	$2,090,371
Nassau	$25,342	$128,551	$2,774,535
Okaloosa	$289,273	$478,990	$7,150,407

Local Educational Agency	Title III, Part A[1]	Title IV, Part A	IDEA, Part B[2]
Okeechobee	$118,124	$155,175	$1,811,543
Orange	$4,818,315	$5,145,600	$45,703,880
Osceola	$2,384,115	$1,405,848	$13,849,368
Palm Beach	$5,855,425	$3,704,586	$43,000,438
Pasco	$696,531	$1,358,800	$16,304,680
Pinellas	$931,898	$2,203,574	$27,813,017
Polk	$1,419,431	$2,847,056	$22,474,657
Putnam	$102,398	$405,188	$2,814,662
Santa Rosa	$58,483	$354,392	$6,063,299
Sarasota	$413,444	$610,648	$9,913,850
Seminole	$542,195	$911,765	$14,897,540
St. Johns	$50,241	$222,847	$7,498,598
St. Lucie	$599,950	$963,150	$9,042,779
Sumter	$38,013	$151,514	$1,869,807
Suwannee	$57,953	$178,406	$1,481,331
Taylor	$0	$84,014	$852,567
Union	$0	$39,552	$565,788
Volusia	$677,398	$1,420,471	$15,147,834
Wakulla	$0	$64,978	$1,223,172
Walton	$123,239	$188,000	$2,036,983
Washington	$0	$91,199	$947,840
Lake Wales Charter	$49,063	$107,966	$885,408
South Tech Academy	$13,555	$38,511	$369,272
UCP	$0	$19,474	$421,498
KIPP Miami	$0	$28,772	$144,288
FAMU DRS	$0	$17,358	$100,027
FAU DRS	$13,408	$35,376	$406,873
FSU DRS	$10,019	$18,846	$382,482
P.K. Yonge School	$0	$11,111	$274,621
Florida School for the Deaf and Blind	$0	$10,430	$438,302
Florida Virtual School	$0	$66,062	$765,263
Department of Corrections	$0	$0	$993,248
Total	**$47,729,490**	**$64,303,490**	**$653,152,030**

[1] Title III, Part A includes LEA allocations for the Title III subgrant as well as the Immigrant subgrant.

[2] IDEA, Part B includes LEA allocations for the IDEA, Part B subgrant as well as the IDEA, Part B Preschool subgrant.

Source: Florida Department of Education data.

APPENDIX D: AGENCY RESPONSE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
fldoe.org

Manny Diaz, Jr.
Commissioner of Education

December 22, 2022

Ms. PK Jameson
Coordinator
Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
111 W. Madison St., Pepper Building

Dear Coordinator Jameson:

We thank you and your staff for the opportunity to participate in the review process, the December 19 copy of your draft report, and the window of opportunity through December 27 to provide feedback. Pursuant to section 11.51(2), Florida Statutes, this letter serves as the Department of Education's (DOE) response to the preliminary report titled: Charter School Funding.

Regrettably, OPPAGA's draft report does go astray from the Legislature's request, and first and foremost we would recommend you address this broader concern. The Legislature's focus of determining if a more equitable means exists to distribute capital funds between traditional public schools and public charter schools would only be further strained, not aided, by the draft report.

More specifically, this letter addresses one untenable recommendation found in the report.

<u>Chapter 1: Capital Outlay Funds</u>
Recommendation: To ensure that the most pressing construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance needs are addressed regardless of the type of public school a student attends, OPPAGA recommends distributing capital outlay funding to charter schools based on demonstrated need. School districts are already required by s. 1013.31, *Florida Statutes*, to conduct a plant survey of district traditional public schools at least every five years. By including charter school facilities as part of this district plant survey, school districts would be able to work with charter schools to evaluate and prioritize the use of capital outlay funds from all sources to fund the most urgent capital projects and maintenance needs for both charter schools and traditional public schools.

Department Response:

- This recommendation is not appropriate and fails to recognize the basic tension between most school districts and public charter schools. In almost any instance that school districts are empowered to assess the needs of public charter schools, districts have and will continue to assess those needs in the least beneficial manner to school charters. There is a high degree of probability that such a recommendation, if enacted into law, would create further inequities between what charters and districts receive, and such enactment of law would force the hand of public charter schools to litigate the matter. Additionally, it will create inequities *between* charter schools within the same district. The educational plant survey is a vehicle appropriate only for evaluating facilities that the district oversees. Furthermore, the educational plant survey is meant to address the renovation and needs of aging district facilities. Based on this survey, districts prioritize capital projects for their own facilities, which does not include charter schools.

- Functionally, the Department has concerns that the recommendation, as written, may result in districts prioritizing improvements to district schools over charter schools because the building is owned by the district.
- The reason the educational plant survey does not include charter schools is because charter schools operate in different types of learning spaces based on the unique programs they offer and the students they serve. The purpose of a charter school is to operate independently of the purview and oversight of the school district.
- The very premise of the Legislature asking for this report was to determine if more equitable means exist to distribute capital funds between traditional public schools and public charter schools. The report identified three different sources of capital funds for all public schools in Florida; therefore, a more equitable distribution of all capital funds would be for charter schools to receive a proportionate share based on student enrollment to maintain and upgrade facilities. Such a method would recognize the independence of charter schools and their unique differentiation from each other. However, as it stands, OPPAGA's draft report would serve to recommend policy that only exaggerates the inequities of a system that currently tilts towards traditional public schools.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Cory Dowd, Legislative Affairs Director, by phone at (850) 245-5037.

Sincerely,

Manny Diaz, Jr.

OPPAGA Comments to the Agency Response

OPPAGA appreciates the department highlighting additional implementation considerations for policymakers who are addressing this very important issue. The department's response supplements the numerous considerations that the report details in Exhibit S-2 (pp. vii-viii) and Exhibit 8 (pp. 10-11). OPPAGA recognizes that education funding is a very complex issue, and any policy option has advantages and disadvantages that must be examined prior to advancing legislation.

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OPPAGA provides performance and accountability information about Florida government in several ways.

- Reports deliver program evaluation and policy analysis to assist the Legislature in overseeing government operations, developing policy choices, and making Florida government more efficient and effective.
- Government Program Summaries (GPS), an online encyclopedia, provides descriptive, evaluative, and performance information on more than 200 Florida state government programs.
- PolicyNotes, an electronic newsletter, delivers brief announcements of research reports, conferences, and other resources of interest for Florida's policy research and program evaluation community.
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