

Background and Methodology

In order to estimate the level of public investment in New York City public schools, we needed to look beyond the Department of Education budget. Pension and debt service costs, for example, are not included in the department’s budget, but are carried centrally for all agencies in the city’s budget. Yet clearly pensions and debt service represent investments of public dollars in traditional public schools that need to be taken into account. And to estimate public funding for charter schools, it was necessary to estimate the value of in-kind benefits received by those charters given space within public school buildings.

Since charter schools have typically enrolled a lower percentage of students with special needs, and special education services vary greatly in their intensity and cost depending on the needs of individual students, we decided to remove special education students and their associated costs from our estimates of enrollment and spending

in both traditional public schools and charter schools. Therefore, our analysis is comparing the funding provided to both traditional public schools and charter schools for general education pupils alone.

Similarly, since charter schools cannot provide pre-kindergarten services, the students in these programs and the cost of these services were excluded from our estimates of enrollment and spending in traditional public schools. Finally, because we wanted to be able to compare per student funding that would be available to all schools, we disregarded spending that depends on the make-up of the student body by removing categorical funding from our per student measures. (Categorical funding includes state and federal money allocated specifically to schools based upon student needs and characteristics. In the case of charter schools, they receive their categorical money directly from the state and federal governments.)

See charts below.

**Per Capita General Education Spending at
Traditional Public Schools 2009-2010 School Year**

Spending, Dollars in thousands

Total Department of Education	\$18,501,502
Less Tex Levy Funded Pre-kindergarten	(29,625)
Less All Categorical Programs ¹	(2,315,467)
Less Special Education Spending ²	(3,062,134)
Less All Non-public School Payments ³	(1,902,020)
Less Fringe Benefits for Categorical Programs ⁴	(13,955)
Less Fringe Benefits for Special Education Programs ⁴	(477,667)
Subtotal DOE General Education Spending	\$10,700,634
Debt Service for DOE ⁵	1,589,986
Pensions for DOE Staff	1,912,202
Total Support for DOE General Education Spending	\$14,202,822

Enrollment

Total Students Department of Education	1,098,977
Less Pre-kindergarten (General Education)	(22,673)
Less Charter Enrollment	(30,519)
Less Nonpublic School Enrollment	(71,480)
Subtotal: Traditional Public School Enrollment	974,305
Less Special Ed Enrollment	(105,627)
Traditional Public School General Education Enrollment	868,678

Per Capita General Education Spending

Dept. of Education General Education Spending	\$12,318
Per Capita Debt Service for Education From City Budget ⁶	1,561
Per Capita Pension Costs for Education From City Budget ⁷	2,132
Total Per Capita General Education Spending	\$16,011

SOURCES: IBO; Department of Education; Mayor's Office of Management and Budget

NOTES: 1. Units of appropriation 481 and 482

2. Units of appropriation 403, 404, 421, 422, 423, and 424 other than School Based Assessment Staff, plus special education administration in 414 and 415.

3. Units of appropriation 470, 472, and 474, which includes special education pre-k, contract schools, other non-public schools, charter schools, and FIT.

4. Fringe costs were prorated based on the share of personal services costs associated with special education, and reimbursable positions not found in unit of appropriation 481.

5. Includes General Obligation, Transitional Finance Authority, and Building Aid Revenue Bond

6. Debt service per capita based on Total DOE enrollment minus non-public school enrollment and 30 percent of charter enrollment

7. Pension per capita based on Total DOE enrollment minus pre-kindergarten and non-public school enrollment

Per Capita General Education Spending at Traditional Public Schools 2008-2009 School Year	
	2009 School Year (Revised)
General Education Spending , <i>Dollars in thousands</i>	
Total Department of Education	\$17,906,497
Less All Categorical Programs ¹	(1,912,308)
Less Special Education Spending ²	(2,967,209)
Less All Nonpublic School Payments ³	(1,565,041)
Less Fringe Benefits for Categorical Programs ⁴	(8,136)
Less Fringe Benefits for Special Education Programs ⁴	(481,400)
Tax Levy Funded Universal Pre-kindergarten Spending	(29,126)
Subtotal DOE General Education Spending	\$10,943,277
Debt Service for DOE ⁵	1,349,679
Pensions for DOE Staff	1,660,700
Total Support for DOE General Education Spending	\$13,953,656
Enrollment	
Total Students Department of Education	1,080,787
Less Pre-kindergarten (General Education)	(21,768)
Less Charter Enrollment	(23,507)
Less Nonpublic School Enrollment	(70,819)
Subtotal: Traditional Public School Enrollment	964,693
Less Special Ed Enrollment	(99,308)
Traditional Public School General Education Enrollment	865,385
Per Capita General Education Spending	
Dept. of Education General Education Spending	\$12,646
Per Capita Debt Service for Education From City Budget ⁶	1,346
Per Capita Pension Costs for Education From City Budget ⁷	1,681
Total Per Capita General Education Spending	\$15,672
SOURCES: IBO; Department of Education; Mayor's Office of Management and Budget	
NOTES: 1. Units of appropriation 481 and 482.	
2. Units of appropriation 403, 404, 421, 422, 423, and 424 other than School Based Assessment Staff, plus special education administration in 414 and 415.	
3. Units of appropriation 470, 472, and 474, which includes special education pre-k, contract schools, other nonpublic schools, charter schools, and FIT.	
4. Fringe costs were prorated based on the share of personal services costs associated with special education, and categorical programs.	
5. Includes General Obligation, Transitional Finance Authority, and Building Aid Revenue Bonds.	
6. Debt service per capita based on Total DOE enrollment minus nonpublic school enrollment and 30 percent of charter enrollment.	
7. Pension per capita based on Total DOE enrollment minus prekindergarten and nonpublic school enrollment.	

**Measuring Public Support Per Student at
Charter Schools 2008-2009 School Year**

	In DOE School Buildings	Not in DOE School Buildings
Adjusted Operating Expense	\$12,443	\$12,443
Software	10	10
Library Materials	6	6
Textbooks	58	58
Special Education Evaluation	62	62
Health	28	28
Transportation	339	339
Classroom supplies, furniture/fixtures	266	266
Food	407	407
Other Administrative Services	33	33
Facilities	878	
Utilities (Heat, Light, Power, Fuel)	279	
Safety	290	
Debt Service	1,561	
TOTAL Charter School Support	\$16,660	\$13,653
Public School Per Capita General Education Spending	\$16,011	
Difference in Per Capita Support	\$649	\$(2,358)

SOURCES: IBO; Department of Education