

STATE of the DISTRICT PUBLIC TOWN HALL MEETINGS
DRAFT as of 1-17-2024 Sorted by Question Type
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Consolidation

Q1: Has the district done a feasibility study to include all the costs of consolidation and the savings it would receive if it consolidated the three outlying traditional public schools into MCCS?

A1: In conversations with Senator Montford, FADSS CEO, about the possibility and timeline of conducting a feasibility study to consider costs and time to complete, Senator Montford referred the Superintendent back to the two previous feasibility studies done by FADSS.

In 2010, FADSS did an Organization and Management Review of the district and a report was submitted to the School Board in December 2010. This was a systemic perspective on the operation of the district. The review analyzed each district process to determine its contribution to the district mission. The review process included interviews with Board members, the Superintendent, district administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and community members. It examined all system processes and formulated recommendations. Its objectives were to analyze student achievement data, unique needs of individual schools to determine appropriate district-level services, study the management practices and organizational climate, recommend and communicate strengths of the existing system. Among its recommendations, it highlighted the following:

- Provide a more effective structure for a small school district with limited financial resources.
- Continuous improvement for all students should be a paramount goal.
- Ensure that decisions are data-driven, analyzed and based on an understanding of their impact throughout the district.
- Monitor and direct system operations to ensure maximum utilization of services and resources.
- Remain fiscally sound.
- A careful review of teaching should be made to determine where the needs of students are not being met. Purposeful abandonment of non-productive/low-yield practices to promote and improve student performance.
- The district must be prepared for continued support for essential staffing when grant funds are no longer available and to continue to provide maximum support for teaching and learning practices that lead to student achievement and make maximum use of resources to operate the system effectively and efficiently.
- The district should review the current bus routes and stops and consider implementing 'depot stops; where a number of students come to one stop. This will allow stops to be spaced further apart, speed up time on rout and potentially eliminate routes, saving cost of additional drivers and fuel.
- The district should ensure more efficient routing of buses and full loads.

Comparative Statistical Analysis of Madison County with six other school districts of similar size was conducted to compare enrollment, personnel counts, general financial condition,

transportation data, and selected demographic data. Those findings and recommendations included:

- Madison was highest in comparison to select schools for students in poverty (free and reduced lunch eligible FRL).
- Student enrollment in Madison was less than state average and state median.
- Madison County was second highest in decrease in student enrollment from 2005 to 2010
- Madison County was third highest in drop-out rate of the seven districts.
- Madison County's graduation rate based on National Governor's Association was lowest of all seven counties and third lowest based on NCLB rates.
- The value of Madison's state millage to unweighted FTE in 2010-11 was third lowest of all seven counties
- Madison reported the highest of all seven counties in total program expenditures per pupil
- Madison was third lowest with student to staff ratio and was well below the state average.
- Madison had an average of 12.3 students per instructional staff – being the second lowest of the seven counties and a 15.9 students per non-instructional staff being the third lowest.
- Student enrollment from 1999 to 2010 fell by 16.5% where change in numbers of full time staff fell 5.9%

There was a follow-up study done in **September 2015** by FADSS focusing on human resources, finance/business and transportation. The goal of the study was to ensure the superintendent was well informed and providing her a forum to address state and federal decision makers on matters that directly impact the membership and quality of education in Madison. The intent of FADSS was to provide the Superintendent with enough information about service delivery so that she could recommend ways to improve services, improve fiscal stability, and maintain resources necessary to budget for changes to school instructional programs and delivery that would positively impact student academic performance. Pervasive issues included:

- A continual falling enrollment in subsequent years
- No forecast for new operating revenue for the next several years
- The district needs to find ways to mitigate the decline

The other findings and recommendations include:

- The district is experiencing declining population and student enrollment and the Board needs to work to provide leadership to meet the challenge in practical ways.
- The Board should convene a community-based committee to make recommendations regarding the continued operation of Greenville Elementary and the educational opportunities provided to those students.
- Average Bus Occupancy is about 40% which indicates running a significant number of buses on routes daily under capacity. District should investigate options to increase average bus occupancy to lessen the impact on the district budget.
- FEFP provides approximately 42% of the funding for transportation with the district required to fund the remaining amount.
- The district is experiencing a decline in the number of students eligible for transportation.
- Fund bus aids as a related service through IDEA instead of through transportation budget.
- Charges for field trips do not cover the cost and are negatively impacting transportation budget.

- Create the least amount of bus stops possible (minimum of 2/10 of a mile apart)
- Evaluate the courtesy bus passengers within 2 miles of elementary schools to identify who qualifies for hazardous walking conditions according to Florida Statute
- An enrollment decline of 26% since 2002 but no comparable decline in personnel serving the students.
- If district is to have access to funds required to improve student performance, existing expenditures must be reduced or eliminated to create the revenue needed to fund school improvement.
- Because of the small size of the district and the very small size of the schools, the district may find itself in the same situation as many small rural Florida school districts, struggling to remain fiscally sustainable and academically competitive and attractive.
- Transform Greenville Elementary into a school that consistently performs at or above satisfactory levels
- District leadership and the community have the advantage of having made some difficult decisions in the past such as deciding to retain very small elementary schools in communities near student's homes rather than consolidating the schools to achieve economies of scale. Small schools are not able to provide students with enhanced services such as assistant principals, counselors, media specialists, art/music teachers and PE teachers. Because of the cost, these programs, are not sustainable in small schools. As enrollment declines, the district will be required to address the issue of small community schools.
- For the district to survive and thrive in the future facing declining enrollments and revenues it must attract families and students. To do that, the district must make tough budgeting decisions that move the academic achievement to higher levels.

In March 2017, FADSS did a focus study on District Staff Plan and Related Human Resources Issues to address the Board policy requiring a 5% fund balance at the close of the fiscal year. Staffing was found to have been based on principals or hiring managers choosing new staff, making the recommendation for the new staff member to be appointed, and then the district leadership team was tasked with identifying funding to support the recommendations. The recommendation was to develop a staffing formula and process with position control systems implemented by Personnel and monitored by Finance and Personnel Offices jointly prior to reappointment and throughout the school year. The recommendation was for non-instructional staffing to be adjusted based on the size of the school, especially at elementary schools and that in schools with low student enrollment positions need to be shared and that process expanded to other low enrollment schools. Recommendations included that initial staffing be conservatively issued and monitored closely. Positions not reappointed early can be held back and once enrollments reach a 75% range of a new class size, then be advertised and funded from the fund balance. The survey included staffing formulas for small districts which recommends that small elementary schools with less than 300 students should have 1 principal, 1 secretary/clerical, 2 paras, .5 guidance, and 1.5 resource teachers. Small district K8 staffing with 751 or more students should have 1 principal, 2 APs, 1 secretary, 4 clerical, 5 paras, 3 guidance, 3 resource teachers, 1 bookkeeper, and 1 behavior teacher. Small district staffing for high schools with under 750 students should include 1 principal, 1 AP, 1 secretary, 3 clerical, 2 paras, 1 guidance, 1 bookkeeper, 1 behavior teacher, 1 media specialist, and 1 registrar.

In early 2019, the Board created an ad hoc committee to consider the best interests of both the district and its children and report back in April 2019. The committee studied and discussed all pertinent information and report findings back to the Board. The following members were on the committee: CFO Andy Barnes, Eddie Ealy, Gwen Hubbard, Tommie Bodenstein, Board Member VeEtta Hagan, Pearlie Curry, Kimberly Reams, Janna Barrs, Cynthia Dell Langston, Lori Korn, Brittini Brown, Kevin Parker, George Williams, and Jason Justus. Mr. Williams led the meeting and set the tone that the meeting was not to advocate for any one school, employee, or position. The expected Outcome of the meeting was to make recommendations to the Board about fiscal soundness through the use of the most current data. The options determined by the committee included: school closure/consolidation, staffing, administrative costs, VPK, student count/tracking, transportation, and allocation of resources. Discussion was held on each topic. Recommendations from the committee to the Board included:

- No closure for Greenville Primary School
- **Close Greenville Elementary and consolidate into other district schools**
- Minimize administrative costs
- Explore cost savings from outsourcing non-instructional services
- Manage employee health benefits effectively
- Reform collective bargaining
- Personnel and Plant Operation should be the main cost drivers
- Move administrative offices/functions to unused school buildings
- Discontinue subsidizing cost of VPK over funding received
- Evaluate all non-instructional services for cost effectiveness
- **Consolidate all under-enrolled outlying elementary schools to MCCS**
- Eliminate principal positions at outlying elementary schools if they remain open
- Consolidate secretary/bookkeeper if outlying schools remain open
- Ensure instructional staff at all schools follow class size ratios
- Use paras and other non-instructional staff to reduce expenses of substitute teachers
- Renegotiate contract with union for cost saving measures that are currently prohibited
- Freeze hiring
- Analyze each position and its responsibilities
- Consider OPS temporary employees
- Don't fill vacant positions
- Update the staffing allocation manual
- Surplus vacant educational facilities
- Paying off accumulated time off to reduce future liabilities
- Review staffing allocation annually
- Be conservative when counting FTE and planning budget
- Analyze number of FTE per year to plan for upcoming year
- Fix the problem of students leaving district
- Review students leaving traditional schools for school choice options
- Formalize staff allocation process for teachers
- Review all staffing for what is really necessary
- Remember SROs and transportation are critical
- Review all positions to see if they are sustainable

- Reduce custodial staff to 11 month
- Review bus stops and two-mile policy for adjustment
- Centralize supply purchasing
- Conduct plant surveys to equalizing utility costs
- Allow a private organization to do VPK
- Move grade 6 back to outlying elementary schools
- Salary increases only after contract negotiations are over
- Adopt staff allocation manual
- Discuss school reconfiguration based on school fiscal suitability
- Consider relocating district staff to high school
- Sell the annex
- Contract outside services
- Look at all bids annually

Committee recommendations to the board were:

- Restructure all outlying schools to PK-6
- Restructure M CCS to PK-6
- Restructure M CHS to 7-12
- Analyze cost and benefit of relocating administrative offices
- Strictly adhere to two-mile radius for bus routes
- Locate with local providers for extra-curricular transportation needs
- Analyze positions to ensure they support student performance, safety, and are fiscally sustainable and the degree to which each is central to the operation of the district
- Explore outsourcing services
- Create and enforce process and formula for allocating resources
- Discontinue full day preK (look for grant funding)

Q2: What is the cost of consolidation of the schools?

A2: This meeting was to examine the financial solvency of the school district in light of falling enrollments, falling state and federal revenues, and the costs of emergency recovery from Hurricane Idalia. If there is Board action at a later time to consolidate schools, a study will be done to consider potential costs of consolidation. However, there will be some costs associated with consolidation, initial costs would include moving, record retention, revamping of current school site to open up classrooms currently used for storage, etc. After the initial costs, there would be significant savings in personnel, utilities, maintenance, and transportation.

Q3: Is there a Florida Statute that limits the size of a K-8 elementary school?

A3: Florida Statute 235.2157 was passed into law in 2000. It established definitions of 'small schools' and stated that effective July 1, 2003, no newly built K8 elementary school should be built to hold more than 700 students. However, in 2003 the statute was repealed by the Florida Legislature to allow schools to comply with the replacement law that limits class size for K8 students to be no more than 18 students per K-3 classrooms and no more than 22 students per 4-8 classroom. Currently, in Walton County, a new K8 school is being built to house over 1,400 students.

Q4: It would not be good to move my child from a small class size into a larger class size. Why would you move children from smaller classes into larger classes at a consolidated school?

A4: Class size is mandated by Florida Statute 1003.23. There is no difference in the size of classes at any elementary or K-8 school than are mandated by law. The child's class size would not differ from what is required now at the smaller school.

1003.03 Maximum class size.—

(1) CLASS SIZE MAXIMUMS.—Each year, on or before the October student membership survey, the following class size maximums shall be satisfied:

(a) The maximum number of students assigned to each teacher who is teaching core-curricula courses in public school classrooms for prekindergarten through grade 3 may not exceed 18 students.

(b) The maximum number of students assigned to each teacher who is teaching core-curricula courses in public school classrooms for grades 4 through 8 may not exceed 22 students. The maximum number of students assigned to a core-curricula high school course in which a student in grades 4 through 8 is enrolled shall be governed by the requirements in paragraph (c).

(c) The maximum number of students assigned to each teacher who is teaching core-curricula courses in public school classrooms for grades 9 through 12 may not exceed 25 students.

Q5: If a school building is not used by students, what does the district have to do with it?

A5: When a facility is no longer being used by students, the Board has several options as to how they would want to repurpose the facility. They can include, but are not limited to, use for other district operations such as an alternative school, a community school, district offices, and many other acceptable uses. Madison County is in what has been identified as an Opportunity Zone because it has had many lower performing schools over the years. There is state legislation that talks about this zone and what a HOPE Charter School Operator is (section 1002.333 Florida Statute). If a facility is unused or underused and there are no plans for repurposing the facility, and a HOPE Charter School Operator wants to open a HOPE Charter school in that unused/under used facility, the district would have to make arrangements with that HOPE operator through the Department of Education (DOE) educational facility team and the DOE Charter School Office to use the building or parts of it for the proposed HOPE Charter school. There must be a mutual agreement established between the HOPE Charter school and the School Board to plan for reasonable maintenance of the facility. The HOPE operator may use the facility at no cost or a mutually agreeable cost not to exceed \$600 per student. Per 1002.333(7)(d) a HOPE Operator may not sell or dispose of such facility without the written permission of the school district. Ownership of the facility and its contents remains titled to the school district if there is a Board approved agreement for its use to be allowed by an outside agency (section 1002.333(10)(a)(6).

Q6: What would you do with the three school buildings if you consolidated?

A6: That is a Board decision, if the Board votes to consolidate schools. Possibilities include, but are not limited to establishing a new alternative school center, establishing a more comprehensive community PreK center, moving district operations to a vacant facility, contracting with investors to repurpose a facility into affordable teacher housing to recruit more teachers to the district.

Q7: What percentage of the available student capacity is currently occupied by each traditional public school?

A7: Per FDOE's, Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) report, student occupancy capacity at each school as of December 2023 is:

MCHS	47%
MCCS	44%
GES	37%
LES	65%
PES	49%

Q8: What metric of success was measured after the last consolidation?

A8: The last consolidation was done in 1981, over 32 years ago. Any metric of success would be irrelevant to today's public school operations.

Q9: Are there any other small school districts who have consolidated schools or reconfigured grade levels in the Panhandle of Florida recently?

A9: Small and large districts throughout the state of Florida and the nation are consolidating resources to better serve smaller numbers of traditional public school students. Some of the districts in the Panhandle who have consolidated include:

- Jackson County
 - combined 2 elementary and one middle school into one K-8
- Holmes County
 - combined 1 elementary and one middle school into a K-8
- Taylor County
 - reconfigured an existing elementary school into a K-8 by shifting students from a middle school to the new combo school
- Calhoun County
 - combined one middle and one high school into a single 6-12 combo school
- Jefferson County
 - combined all schools into one K-12 school
- Escambia County
 - Repurposed a persistently low performing middle school into a charter school
- Gadsden County
 - Closed three schools, reorganized two schools into two primary schools and reorganized two schools into K-8 schools
 - In the process of closing one primary, one elementary, one grade 4-8, and one K-8 and combining them all into one K-8 with a newly constructed school
- Hamilton County
 - combined all outlying community schools into one K-5 and one 6-12 with both schools on one campus

Q10: Will the Board consider appointing an Ad Hoc Committee to make recommendations related to consolidation?

A10: When the Board makes a decision to consolidate, recommending and/or appointing an Ad Hoc Committee will be determined by the Board.

Employment

Q1: Are many jobs going to be lost due to school closure, including bus driver, food service, custodial, paraprofessionals, etc.

A1: There will be positions cut, whether we consolidate schools or not, based on available funding and enrollment. It is anticipated that some ‘positions’ will not be necessary if schools were combined, however, the district believes that the people in those positions will naturally transition into other vacant positions within the school district. It is expected that the total number of ‘positions’ would be reduced district-wide. The staff at the outlying schools would be incorporated into the staff at MCCS and/or MCHS as is necessary to accommodate the number of students who would move to the consolidated site(s). Vacant positions will be filled internally, if possible. Retirements would create more opportunities to absorb positions. It is the intent of the Board to protect jobs, to the extent possible, based on the needs of the schools to provide quality instruction to the total numbers of students in the consolidated school(s).

Q2: How are you going to consolidate six extra food service workers?

A2: Refer to answer A1.

Q3: How many teachers are at each traditional public school?

A3: Teacher positions at a school are based on projected FTE for the upcoming school year. The School Board approves a staffing allocation plan annually based on formula projections of staff needs at each site. Below is a list of how many teachers we had at each traditional public school over the past several years. Data from September payroll records each year. Does not include instructional specialists, staffing specialists, MTSS specialists, or coaches.

MCHS

2020-21	33
2021-22	30
2022-23	34
2023-24*	31

MCCS

2020-21	65
2021-22	61
2022-23	61
2023-24*	61

GES

2020-21	8
2021-22	6
2022-23	8
2023-24*	7

LES

2020-21*	16
2021-22	13

2022-23	12
2023-24*	13

PES

2020-21	12
2021-22	10
2022-23	10
2023-24*	8

FEMA (Hurricane Idalia)

Q1: What does our obligation to pay our Insurance Deductibles from the damage of Hurricane Idalia have to do with our financial solvency? Aren't we just going to get that back from FEMA?

A1: FEMA is a 100% reimburseable program. You must pay the bills before they will reimburse you the money. The bills you submit, must meet FEMA's definition of eligibility in order to be reimbursed. If it is eligible emergency work done in the first 30 days after a named storm it is likely to be reimbursed at 100%. If it is eligible permanent work after a named storm, it will only be covered at 75% by FEMA. The state of Florida will cover another 12.5% but that still leaves 12.5% to be paid for by the district. The FEMA process takes many years to process so the district must pay out the money first in order to get any/some/all the money back. The most current level of damage in the district is over \$5.5 million with our insurance deductibles over \$4.6 million. Total fund balance is only \$3.7 million with only \$1.1 million even possible to draw from. The district will be forced to look to borrow the money necessary to pay for the damages from either banks or through bonds. Each borrowing will require the district to pay back the loan with interest.

Q2: Has the district applied for the Community Disaster Loan Program? Do you have to pay that money back?

A2: The district has attended training for applying for the Community Disaster Loan program. We are currently developing the materials and application to apply for funding. The packet is sent to the state who determines who is eligible and for how much. The process of determining eligibility is at least six months, then the packet is forwarded up to US FEMA for review. After review and being sent back to the state FEMA to collateralize the loan, it is determined how much a district is eligible for. The funding can be up to \$5,000,000. The minute the district pulls the money down, the district is obligated to repay the money at the current rate of interest. There have been instances in other named storms that the loan was 'forgiven', but that is not a guarantee. It is up to the state Legislature at a later time after the money is drawn down.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

Q1: What is an 'FTE'?

A1: Florida public schools receive about 70% of their funding through the Florida Education Financing Program (FEFP). A school district receives a base allocation based on one full-time

equivalent (FTE). One FTE is measured by seat time every day during the school year by one student. One student in grades K-3 attending five fifty-minute classes every day for 180 days = 1 FTE. One student in grades 4-12 attending six fifty-minute classes every day for 180 days = 1 FTE. 1 student does not necessarily equal 1 FTE. For example, if you have a senior who is taking dual enrollment classes at a local college and they are actually in the high school for two fifty-minute classes and take the rest of their four classes at the college, that one student only equals 2/6th (or 1/3) of one FTE, even though we are talking about one whole student. FTE measures seat time in classes by students, not students themselves. One student cannot generate more than 1 FTE in funding (with the exception of Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) students who are students 250 days a year. The FEFP funding program does not pay for pre-K students. It only pays for K-12 students.

K-3 students must put in a net 720 hours of seat time in a regular school where grades 4-9 must put in 900 hours of seat time during the regular school year. If the students do not meet these minimum hours, then FTE is not paid to the district (or is taken back by the Auditors during FTE audits). Each school district must create a master schedule for students to meet the minimum net hours during a school year.

Q2: How much does the district get paid per FTE?

A2: Madison County gets paid through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Payment is made per Full-time Equivalent student (FTE), **not on numbers of students** enrolled.

The amount of state funding through FEFP varies each year. Funding includes both base student allocation (unweighted FTE) and additional funding for different grade levels and types of students (weighted FTE). Base student allocation then has different supplement categories of funding added to it for each FTE, depending on which supplement a student is eligible. Examples of supplemental categories are ESE guaranteed allocation, safe schools, mental health, reading allocation, instructional materials, transportation, etc.

Note: Base student allocation + categories + weights = total possible funding for one FTE

Note: Total funding for the district includes pass through funding for charter schools, DJJ school, and Family Empowerment Scholarships (private vouchers)

Note: 2023-24 is based on projections until actual FTE is verified through Surveys

Note: All funding and allocations can be verified by going to <https://www.fldoe.org/finance/fl-edu-finance-program-fefp/fl-edu-finance-program-fefp-calculatio.stml>

Year	Base student allocation	Total base + all categories IF applicable	Total FTE	Total state and local funding
2019-20	4,279.49	7,941.53	2,541.98	20,187,204
2020-21	4,319.49	8,141.20	2,367.44	19,273,811
2021-22	4,372.91	7,908.28	2,381.24	18,831,501
2022-23	4,587.40	8,340.51	2,390.42	19,937,326
2023-24*	5,139.73	8,831.84	2,392.40	21,129,298

Q3: What is the ratio of Administrators to FTE?

A3: The state required transparency information is available to be found at www.madison.k12.fl.us under the Business and Finance page. There is a link that can be viewed to see the costs per FTE of staff and administrators. The average cost of administrators in relation to FTE is approximately 16% of the cost of total school operations (including staff and plant operations). When the total costs per pupil are compared to the school costs per pupil versus the percentage of district costs per pupil, the district percentage is averaging around 5.5% for all schools (data are from FLDOE websites Know Your Schools Portal for the past five years)

Q4: Can you give us a better view of how FTE is falling in the district rather than just showing us two years of data?

A4:

- In 2007-08 school year, Madison County School District (all schools) had 2,774.93 base allocation unweighted FTE.
- In 2008-09, FTE number fell to 2,733.29.
- In 2009-10 FTE fell again to 2,720.45.
- In 2010-11 FTE fell again to 2,699.84.
- In 2011-12 FTE fell to 2,627.93.
- In 2012-13 FTE fell to 2,598.53.
- In 2013-14 FTE fell to 2,489.22.
- In 2014-15 the district picked up some charter school students and FTE came back up to 2,537.90.
- In 2015-16, FTE fell to 2,520.19.
- In 2016-17, FTE came up to 2,671.86 when Madison Creative Arts became a charter school from a private school.
- In 2017-18, FTE came up a bit more to 2,682.76 as more students enrolled in the charter school.
- In 2018-19, FTE fell to 2,601.85.
- In 2019-20, FTE fell to 2,541.98.
- In 2020-21 FTE fell to 2,367.44 – mostly because of COVID.
- In 2021-22, FTE recovered a little to 2,381.24 as some students returned to brick and mortar.
- In 2022-23, FTE recovered slightly from more returning students to 2,390.42.

From 2017-2022 total FTE of all public schools fell 384.51 (average of 24.03 FTE per year). In that same period, total FTE for just the five traditional schools fell 413.64 (an average of 68.94 FTE per year). Current comparisons between the first FDOE survey in October for 2022-23 school year compared to the same survey in October 2023-24 school year, FTE has fallen to 2,238.96 (total fall of 156.38 FTE with 108.40 of those FTE being in traditional public schools).

Q5: What do the actual unweighted FTE (not student enrollments) look like for each school over the past several years?

A5: FDOE Survey 3 February student enrollment counts are below for the **five traditional public schools** (Note 1: 2023-24 is based on Survey 2 October student enrollment counts; Note 2: Grade 6 was added to three outlying schools in 2022-23):

MCHS UFTE

2018-19	506.18
2019-20	501.65
2020-21	472.46
2021-22	446.78
2022-23	464.91
2023-24	469.06

Loss of 37.12 FTE from 2018-19

2023-24	159
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Loss of 59 FTE from 2018-19

GES UFTE

2018-19	114
2019-20	128.28
2020-21	94.54
2021-22	94.24
2022-23	110.97
2023-24	94.42

Loss of 29.58 FTE from 2018-19

MCCS UFTE

2018-19	990.04
2019-20	1,022.08
2020-21	967.22
2021-22	915.11
2022-23	812.10
2023-24	768.48

Loss of 221.58 FTE from 2018-19

LES UFTE

2018-19	218
2019-20	195.66
2020-21	156.31
2021-22	173.15
2022-23	189

PES UFTE

2018-19	197
2019-20	171.18
2020-21	122.23
2021-22	120.38
2022-23	134.85
2023-24	125.70

Loss of 71.3 FTE from 2018-19

Q6: What is the difference between weighted FTE (WFTE) and unweighted FTE (UFTE)?

A6: Each year, the legislature meets to determine how to fund public schools. Public school programs include K-3 (program 101); 4-8 (program 102); 9-12 (program 103). If a child has some level of disability, they are categorized as K-3 ESE (program 111); 4-8 ESE (program 112); 9-12 ESE (program 113). If a child has severe disabilities and has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan to identify specific services they must receive, they are classified by levels of severity (programs 254 and 255). English Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) is classified as program 130. Career education in grades 9-12 is classified as program 300. Each program has different weights based on the extra services that would need to be provided to ensure the child is getting the appropriate accommodated instruction. In the current year, the weights are:

Category	Program	Weight	Weight x base allocation = WFTE 23-24
K-3 and K-3 ESE	101/111	1.122	\$5,139.73 x 1.122 = \$5,766.77
4-8 and 4-8 ESE	102/112	1.000	\$5,139.73 x 1.000 = \$5,139.73
9-12 and 9-12 ESE	103/113	0.988	\$5,139.73 x 0.988 = \$5,078.05
ESOL	130	1.208	\$5,139.73 x 1.208 = \$6,208.79
High level ESE w IEP	254	3.706	\$5,139.73 x 3.706 = \$19,047.84
Higher level ESE w IEP	255	5.707	\$5,139.73 x 5.707 = \$29,332.44
Career 9-12	300	1.072	\$5,139.73 x 1.072 = \$5,509.79

Q7: How much would each traditional public school generate in 2023-24 based on current FTE at both UFTE rate and WFTE rate? How does that compare to their current budget?

A7: Assuming each traditional public school would get funded based on the current Survey 2 FTE and assuming that each FTE was multiplied by the UFTE rate for 2023-24 and the WFTE rate for 2023-24. This is what it would like compared to the current level of budget each traditional

public school would generate if they generated the full WFTE amount and were eligible for all categorical funding:

School	23-24 Budget*	UFTE count**	UFTE \$ **	WFTE \$ **	Difference if only FEFP was available for all costs
MCHS	5,068,286.29	469.06	2,410,841.75	4,142,662.87	-925,623.42
MCCS	8,248,109.34	768.48	3,949,779.71	6,787,092.4	-1,461,016.94
GES	1,669,710.64	94.42	485,293.31	833,902.33***	-835,808.31
LES	2,053,405.04	159	817,217.07	1,404,262.56***	-649,142.48
PES	1,775,419.87	125.7	646,064.06	1,110,162.29***	-665,257.58

**Includes all current funding – general and federal*

***Only general funding from state and local sources through FEFP*

****Moving FEFP from GES, PES, LES to MCCS would bring an additional \$3.3 million to MCCS (net positive of almost \$2 million)*

Note: Additional funding necessary to make school budgets balance must come from federal dollars (Stimulus, Entitlements, other federal grants) or fund balance.

Student Enrollment (not-FTE)

Q1: Why is enrollment going down?

A1: Nationwide, enrollment of public school students is falling. Some of this is due to the national push to give parents more choice to move their child to other public and private options for education. Lower birth rates contribute to falling enrollments, as well as Florida’s Parent Rights legislative action to offer any student, regardless of income levels, an opportunity to move to a private, virtual, or home school setting with a full scholarship/voucher.

Q2: Why not open all elementary schools to 8th grade and bring back students lost to private schools?

A2: Dividing up the existing students in grade 8 between four schools, does not bring any more funding to the school district. When the Board voted to put grade 6 back at the three outlying elementary schools, it had a minimal impact on the student population at each outlying school, but required the expense of an additional teacher at each school to support those extra students. Class size for grades 4-8 is 22 students by state statute. In order to pay the costs of staffing, a class needs to be very close to class size, otherwise it is costing more to pay extra staff than the money that is generated by the students.

Q3: Can you recruit students from other districts for the small classroom size?

A3: Recruitment efforts do not include attempts to entice students from other districts to Madison County. Students usually go to schools where the student resides. If a student chooses to come to Madison County from another school district, they would need to provide their own transportation which is often prohibitive in cost.

Q4: What do the actual student enrollment numbers (not FTE) look like for each school over the past several years?

A4: FDOE Survey 3 February student enrollment counts are below for the **five traditional public schools** (Note 1: 2023-24 is based on Survey 2 October student enrollment counts; Note 2: Grade 6 was added to three outlying schools in 2022-23):

MCHS Student Enrollment

2018-19	520
2019-20	494
2020-21	481
2021-22	441
2022-23	474
2023-24	484

Loss of 36 students from 2018-19

GES Student Enrollment

2018-19	133
2019-20	133
2020-21	110
2021-22	96
2022-23	116
2023-24	99

Loss of 34 students from 2018-19

LES Student Enrollment

2018-19	208
2019-20	199
2020-21	164
2021-22	188
2022-23	203
2023-24	166

Loss of 42 students from 2018-19

PES Student Enrollment

2018-19	209
2019-20	177
2020-21	129
2021-22	134
2022-23	142
2023-24	131

Loss of 78 students from 2018-19

MCCS Student Enrollment

2018-19	1,021
2019-20	1,038
2020-21	981
2021-22	965
2022-23	811
2023-24	802

Loss of 219 students from 2018-19

Funding

Q1: What are the district and school costs per pupil for the past several years?

A1: Below is a chart of the costs per pupil for each traditional school. Note: This data always lags about 18 months. 2022-23 data is not audited yet by FDOE and Auditor General and will be included after the audit is finalized. Per pupil costs will be posted on the **Know Your Schools portal** when complete at <https://edudata.fldoe.org/>.

School	Year	Total Costs per pupil	School Costs Per Pupil	District Indirect Costs per pupil	Total Costs per pupil	% of district costs per pupil
GES	2021-22	12,084.00	10,780.00	1,304.00	12,084.00	10.50%
	2020-21	10,490.00	9,339.00	1,151.00	10,490.00	11.00%
	2019-20	7,842.00	6,807.00	1,034.00	7,842.00	13.20%
	2018-19	9,102.00	8,162.00	940.00	9,102.00	10.30%
	2017-18	8,509.00	7,580.00	929.00	8,509.00	10.90%
LES	2021-22	12,258.00	10,727.00	1,531.00	12,258.00	12.50%
	2020-21	10,793.00	9,546.00	1,247.00	10,793.00	11.60%
	2019-20	8,609.00	7,541.00	1,069.00	8,609.00	12.40%
	2018-19	8,215.00	7,305.00	910.00	8,215.00	12.50%
	2017-18	7,766.00	6,934.00	832.00	7,766.00	10.70%

PES	2021-22	13,150.00	11,619.00	1,531.00	13,150.00	11.60%
	2020-21	10,483.00	9,504.00	979.00	10,483.00	9.30%
	2019-20	8,164.00	7,135.00	1,029.00	8,164.00	12.60%
	2018-19	7,842.00	6,884.00	958.00	7,842.00	12.20%
	2017-18	7,193.00	6,399.00	794.00	7,193.00	11.00%
MCCS	2021-22	9,658.00	8,447.00	1,211.00	9,658.00	12.50%
	2020-21	9,120.00	7,894.00	1,226.00	9,120.00	13.40%
	2019-20	8,194.00	7,230.00	964.00	8,194.00	11.80%
	2018-19	10,042.00	8,961.00	1,060.00	10,042.00	10.60%
	2017-18	9,164.00	8,167.00	997.00	9,164.00	10.90%
MCHS	2021-22	11,667.00	10,385.00	1,282.00	11,667.00	11.00%
	2020-21	10,332.00	9,256.00	1,076.00	10,332.00	10.40%
	2019-20	8,659.00	7,774.00	885.00	8,659.00	10.20%
	2018-19	8,607.00	7,759.00	848.00	8,607.00	9.90%
	2017-18	8,993.00	8,223.00	770.00	8,993.00	8.60%

Q2: What is the overhead allocation to each school?

A2: IF the question is talking about the costs of keeping a facility open, it would depend on the size of the school, the occupancy of the school, the cost of the utility services available at that school, and the cost of support personnel to keep the school operational from a building perspective, among other things.

Q3: Why don't you look at finance expenses and there may a company able to run things at a lower price, allowing the school to focus on education?

A3: In order to answer this question, we would need to know what it is that we would be trying to outsource to see if we could save any money.

Q4: Why are we letting charter schools piggy back but getting rid of our A & B schools?

A4: The funding generated by charter schools comes from the state and is passed through to the charter schools as the state requires.

Q5: Does the district contribute any funding from its general fund for sports?

A5: There are many costs related to sports in the district. A primary cost is the payment of supplements to those teachers at MCHS and MCCS who are sponsors of cheerleading, football, soccer, weightlifting, baseball, softball, tennis, volleyball, golf, and/or basketball. Without considering the costs of additional supplements if a team is a winning team and has to go into extra games, the cost of sports supplements is well over \$60,000. The salary costs of a head football coach and the assistant coaches for football and basketball are well over \$200,000. The district annually provides funds to assist the football departments recondition helmets - approximately

\$10,000. Each time a chartered bus is used to take the football team out of town, the district pays half the cost of those trips and for some sports and other events the district pays all of the costs. Each time a regular school bus is used to take sports or band teams to events or competitions, all the costs are borne by the district for drivers, benefits, fuel, etc. Buses run daily on second runs for school activities like sports and band. These additional transportation costs are absorbed by the district and are not reimbursed from any source. Costs of running several buses every day after school can be upwards of \$200,000 in overtime pay, fuel, and maintenance. There are many other costs of ensuring that the students have access to sports and band.

Q6: Why does the FEFP not pay for preK students?

A6: PreK students are funded out of another state funding source. The state pays for preK students to go to school 3.5 hours per day on the same FTE basis as all students. If a district keeps the preK students all day (to eliminate having to have several additional bus runs each day), the costs of the additional hours per day are borne by the district who does not get reimbursed for them. PreK students are not eligible for transportation reimbursement unless they are Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan for their disabilities. This is another reason why costs are so high for transportation and not reimbursed. The additional hours of instruction for preK students is another reason the district has financial constraints since the district is not reimbursed for those extra hours.

Q7: How much does the district get per student from the state?

A7: The district is not paid per student, but per unweighted and weighted FTE. The FEFP recently underwent (for 2023-24 school year) some drastic revisions removing categorical funding from separate allocations and adding the money to the base student allocation. The base student allocation went up, but many of the categorical allocations that were cut were not replaced with equal funding in the new base student funding, leaving many small districts with a several million dollar deficit in total funding even though the base allocation went up.

Q8: Don't you also get tax money to pay for schools, in addition to FTE funding through FEFP?

A8: Tax money is included in the FEFP state funding. Each year, FDOE evaluates how much a district would get in tax money and they make the district add that money to the state money to all become one FEFP pot of money. As local tax money goes up, FDOE adjusts their state share down and the local tax money becomes a bigger part of the whole pot of money.

Q9: What are the current 2023-24 budgets for each of the traditional public schools?

A9: As of 12-5-23, the overall budget for each school is below. This is subject to change as the year progresses and any unanticipated costs that might require budgetary changes (also see A38).

PES	\$1,775,400
LES	\$2,053,400
GES	\$1,669,700
MCCS	\$8,248,110
MCHS	\$5,068,290

Q10: What is a 'fund balance'?

A10: A fund balance is the remainder of money left after all money is received and expended in a year. Fund balance includes money that is un-spendable because it is targeted for a specific purpose. It is like a savings account that is used to make up for the difference in the cost of things that are unplanned for.

Q11: Do we have to have a fund balance? Can't we just use that money for the schools?

A11: State statute requires each public school district to maintain a minimum of 3% discretionary (spendable) dollars to meet any unplanned financial emergencies. Madison County School Board requires the district to maintain a minimum of 5% discretionary dollars. Madison has been in financial emergency before and the Board wants to see a larger pot of money to protect its financial solvency in case of a financial emergency.

Q12: When you say you have a 15.34% fund balance what exactly is that a measure of and how much money is that?

A12: Fund balance is a measure of the amount of money (spendable and non-spendable) that is in the district's 'savings account'. To determine what percentage it is, the total cash value of the fund balance is divided by the total amount of expected general revenue a district expects in a new year. For 2023-24, the value of the fund balance at the beginning of the school year was 15.34% that had a value of \$3,724,279.62. Of that money, only \$1,143,902.90 is discretionary. The rest is either restricted or assigned to cover expected revenue deficits based on expected expenses. This is the money that the Board says must be kept at a minimum of 5%. The fund balance changes every month throughout the year. Revenues do not all come in at the same time so there are months when the expenses exceed the revenues. That deficit must be handled by the district fund balance until revenues level out later. Over the course of the year, revenues are received and expenses are paid. At year end, a new fund balance is determined from what is left after expenses.

School/Student Performance

Q1: Where can I find School grades to see what my school got as a school grade?

A1: <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/accountability-reporting/school-grades/> - click on the school grades excel sheet under 2022 school grades. It will show you all the school grades available from 1999 to present. There are a couple of years when schools did not receive a grade or could take an optional grade because DOE changed the test format. There was no test and no school grades in 2020 because of COVID. Astrex at end of year indicates a non-official graded school year. Year in the matrix is the date of testing so if it says 2023, that means that the school year that the test measured was 2022-23.

School	2003*	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995*	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979
MCHS	I	B		D	C	C	D	C	C	B	A	C	C	F	D	D	D	D	F	C	D	C	C	C	
MCCS	C	D		C	C	D	D	D	D	F	D	D	D	C	D	D	C	D	C	C	N				
GES	F	F		C	B	C	B	F	F		F	D	F	A	B	F	C		C	D	C	A	D		
LES	C	B	A	B	B	C	C	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	C	B	B	C		N				
PES	B	D	B	C	B	A	A	B	C	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	B				C	D

transportation. These are all benefits the Board has allowed to ensure that your children can be safe and participate fully in their free and appropriate education in public school.

DRAFT