



FLORIDA

Description of the Formula

In 1973 the Florida Legislature enacted the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) and established the state policy on equalized funding to guarantee to each student in the Florida public education system the availability of programs and services appropriate to his or her educational needs that are substantially equal to those available to any similar student notwithstanding geographic differences and varying local economic factors.

To provide equalization of education opportunity, the FEFP formula recognizes: (1) varying local property tax bases; (2) varying education program costs; (3) varying costs of living; and (4) varying costs for equivalent educational programs due to sparsity and dispersion of student population.

The FEFP is the primary mechanism for funding the operating costs of public schools. As noted herein, there are other sources of funding; however, the FEFP is the finance program's foundation. A key feature of the FEFP is that it bases financial support for education upon the individual student participating in a particular educational program rather than upon the number of teachers or classrooms. FEFP funds are primarily generated by multiplying the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students in each of the funded educational programs by cost factors to obtain weighted FTEs. Weighted FTEs are then multiplied by a base student allocation and by a district cost differential in the major calculation to determine the base funding from state and local FEFP funds. Program cost factors are determined by the Legislature and represent relative cost differences among the FEFP programs. In addition to the base funding allocation, three major allocations within the FEFP are the Supplemental Academic Instruction Allocation, Exceptional Student Education Guaranteed Allocation, and the Class Size Reduction Allocation. Please see page 15 of "Funding for Florida School Districts" at <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/pdf/fefpdist.pdf> for an explanation of these allocations.

District-Based Components

Density/Sparsity of Small Schools

The FEFP recognizes the relatively higher operating cost of smaller districts due to sparse student population through a statutory formula in which the variable factor is a sparsity index. This index is computed by dividing the FTE of the district by the number of permanent senior high school centers (not exceeding three). By Appropriations Act proviso, participation is limited to districts of 20,000 or fewer FTE. Each eligible district's allocation is subject to an adjustment for relative wealth of the district. This adjustment is based on the per FTE value of the maximum discretionary levy in the district relative to the state average. If the district value per FTE exceeds the state average, then the sparsity entitlement is negatively adjusted by an amount equal to the district's FTE multiplied by the per FTE amount by which the district's maximum discretionary value per FTE exceeds the state average. However, no district shall have a sparsity wealth adjustment that would cause the district's total potential funds per FTE to be less than the state average. This supplement is limited to \$35,754,378 statewide for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Grade Level Differences

Basic education programs are funded with the following program weights:

Kindergarten and Grades 1 – 3	1.089
Grades 4 – 8	1.000
Grades 9 – 12	1.031

Declining Enrollment or Growth

The declining enrollment supplement is determined by comparing the unweighted FTE for the current year to the unweighted FTE of the prior year. In those districts where there is a decline in unweighted FTE, 25 percent of the decline is multiplied by the prior-year base funding per unweighted FTE. This amount is the declining enrollment supplement for the district.

Capital Outlay and/or Debt Service

Pursuant to Article XII, Section 9(d), of the Florida Constitution, the first proceeds from the tax on motor vehicle licenses are available to school districts and state colleges for capital outlay purposes. The number of instructional units determines the annual allocation of Capital Outlay and Debt Service funds for each school district and state college. A school district or state college may elect to bond its allocation or receive the funds as cash (commonly referred to as "flow-through").

Transportation

The student transportation funding formula provides funds to 67 school districts based on each district's pro rata share of eligible transported students. Eligible transported charter school students may be included in the districts' student transportation funding claims. The formula includes an enhancement for the transportation of disabled students requiring specialized transportation services. In addition to students transported by public school buses, the funding formula includes students transported to and from school on local general purpose transportation systems and students transported to and from school in private passenger cars and boats when the transportation is for isolated students or for students with disabilities as defined by State Board

of Education, Administrative Rule 6A-6.0301, Florida Administrative Code. Adjustments to each district's share of state transportation funds are made for cost of living differences, the percent of population outside of urban centers, and efficiency.

Students in membership in kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) and in prekindergarten exceptional student education programs are eligible for transportation funding if one of the following conditions is met:

- The student lives two or more miles from the school.
- The student is classified as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), regardless of distance (excluding gifted students). K-12 students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech Impairments, or Language Impairments who live less than two miles from their assigned school are eligible only if transportation services are required by the student's Individual Educational Plan.
- The student/parent or infant is enrolled in the Teenage Parent Program (TAP).
- The student is enrolled in a state-funded prekindergarten program (IDEA or TAP), regardless of distance from home to school. Prekindergarten children not enrolled in IDEA programs, or whose parent or parents are not enrolled in a TAP program, are not eligible for state transportation funding. Prekindergarten students in the following programs are **ineligible** for transportation funding under Section 1011.68, Florida Statutes (F.S.), unless the students are also disabled or in a TAP program. These ineligible groups include, but are not limited to, students in Prekindergarten Title I, federally funded Prekindergarten Migrant programs, Prekindergarten Early Intervention, Head Start, and Readiness Coalition programs.
- The student is a career or exceptional student being transported from one school center to another where appropriate programs are provided. Dually enrolled students, as defined by Section 1011.68, F.S., who attend a university, community college, or career college, are included.
- The student meets the criteria for hazardous walking as stated in Section 1006.23, F.S. Only elementary school students are eligible for funding under the hazardous walking category.

Charter Schools

No response

Student-Based Components

Special Education

In Florida, services for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students (students identified as gifted and students identified as disabled) are funded through the FEFP. Exceptional education services for most students are funded through the ESE Guaranteed Allocation. For those ESE students requiring the most intensive services, funding is weighted by cost factors in accordance

with level of need. Please see Section 1011.62 (1)(e), F.S., for an outline of the funding model for ESE programs. Approximately 88 percent of the total expenditures for students with disabilities are funded through state and local programs.

Since July 1, 2000, approximately 95 percent of ESE students have generated base funding at the same level as non-disabled students. These students are reported under basic programs 111(grades PK-3 basic with ESE services), 112 (grades 4-8 basic with ESE services), or 113 (grades 9-12 basic with ESE services). These programs have the same cost factors as basic programs 101, 102, and 103. A portion of funding for students in these programs is generated by multiplying the base student allocation by the program cost factor. For 2010-11, the base student allocation is \$3,623.76. The approximate base weighted funding amounts generated by students in basic programs for 2010-11 are:

Grades PK-3 Basic	\$3,946.27	(\$3,623.76 x 1.089)
Grades 4-8 Basic	\$3,623.76	(\$3,623.76 x 1.000)
Grades 9-12 Basic	\$3,736.10	(\$3,623.76 x 1.031)

In order to fund exceptional education and related services (including therapies) for these students, an Exceptional Student Education Guaranteed Allocation was established by the Legislature in addition to the basic funding. The guaranteed allocation is a fixed amount provided each district. For the current school year (2010-11) the ESE Guaranteed Allocation appropriation is \$980,571,070.

For the remaining five percent of students with disabilities (those with the most intense needs), funding is determined using a matrix of services. Consistent with the services identified on the Individual Educational Plan, matrices are completed by checking all the services that will be provided to the student. Students with the two highest matrix ratings (254 and 255) generate base weighted funding as follows:

Support Level 4 (254)	\$12,766.51	(\$3,623.76 x 3.523)
Support Level 5 (255)	\$17,883.26	(\$3,623.76 x 4.935)

The ESE matrix of services consists of five support levels and five domains: curriculum and learning environment, social/emotional behavior, independent functioning, healthcare, and communication. See “Use of the Exceptional Student Education Matrix of Services” at <http://fldoe.org/ese/pdf/matrixnu.pdf/>

Low Income / Comp Ed / At-Risk

There is no comparable program existing at this time.

English Language Learner/Bilingual Education

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs are funded with a program weight of 1.147.

Gifted and Talented Education

Please see the response for Special Education above.

Career and Technical Education

No response

Preschool Education

No response

Other

N/A

Revenue and Expenditure Information**State Mandates Restricting Revenue or Expenditure Increases**

In accordance with Section 1011.71, Florida Statutes, districts may levy up to 0.748 mills for discretionary operating funds. In addition, each district school board may, by supermajority vote, levy an additional 0.250 mills for critical operating or critical capital outlay needs. If a school board's 0.748 or additional 0.250 mill levy provides funds that are less than the state average per unweighted FTE, the school district shall receive a supplement that, when added to the funds generated by each of these levies, is equivalent to the state average per unweighted FTE.

Property Assessment Ratios Used/Legal Standards for Property Assessment

Each district's share of the state total required local effort is determined by a statutory procedure that is initiated by certification of the property tax valuations of each district by the Department of Revenue. This certification occurs no later than two working days prior to July 19. No later than July 19, the Commissioner of Education certifies each district's required local effort millage rate. These rates are primarily determined by dividing the dollar amount of required local effort by 96 percent of the aggregated taxable value for school purposes of all districts. Certifications vary due to the use of assessment ratios designed to equalize the effect on the FEFP of differing levels of property appraisal in the counties.

Measure of Local Ability to Support Schools

Each school board participating in the state allocation of funds for the current operation of schools must levy the millage set for its required local effort from property taxes. The Legislature set the amount of \$7,197,552,375 as the required local effort for 2010-11. Millage rates are also adjusted because required local effort may not exceed 90 percent of a district's total FEFP entitlement.

School District Budget and Tax Rate Procedures/Sources of Local Revenue

The primary source of local operating and capital outlay revenue for schools is ad valorem taxes; however, school boards are authorized to levy a sales tax of 0.5% for capital outlay purposes if approval is granted by referendum.

State Support for Nonpublic Schools

Scholarship payments for education provided by private schools are available pursuant to the provisions of the John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program and the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program.