

*From my perspective*

*Laura Hine*

**League of Women Voters**

**September 4, 2025**

# Step back: Early American commitment

1647: Massachusetts Bay Colony, tax on dwellings to fund public schooling

1818: Thomas Jefferson's writings on the purpose of primary education:

- Inextricable link between broad public education and freedom, maintaining our democracy
- Objects of primary education:
  - To give every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business;
  - To enable him to **calculate** for himself, and to **express** and preserve his ideas, his contracts and accounts, in **writing**;
  - To improve, by **reading**, his **morals** and **faculties**;
  - To understand his **duties to his neighbors and country**, and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either;
  - To **know his rights**; to exercise with **order and justice** those he retains; to choose with discretion the fiduciary of **those he delegates**; and to **notice their conduct** with diligence, with candor and judgement.

# Florida's commitment

1838: Florida's first Constitution adopted by delegates at a convention (1845 statehood)

**1868:** Florida added the **Education of children is a “paramount duty” of the state.**

**1998: Voters** passed a constitutional amendment adding:

**"The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida."**

In short: We the people have a demonstrated, long commitment to the education of children. How is Florida doing with that today?

# DISTRICT BUDGET OVERVIEW

## 72.2% Local funding

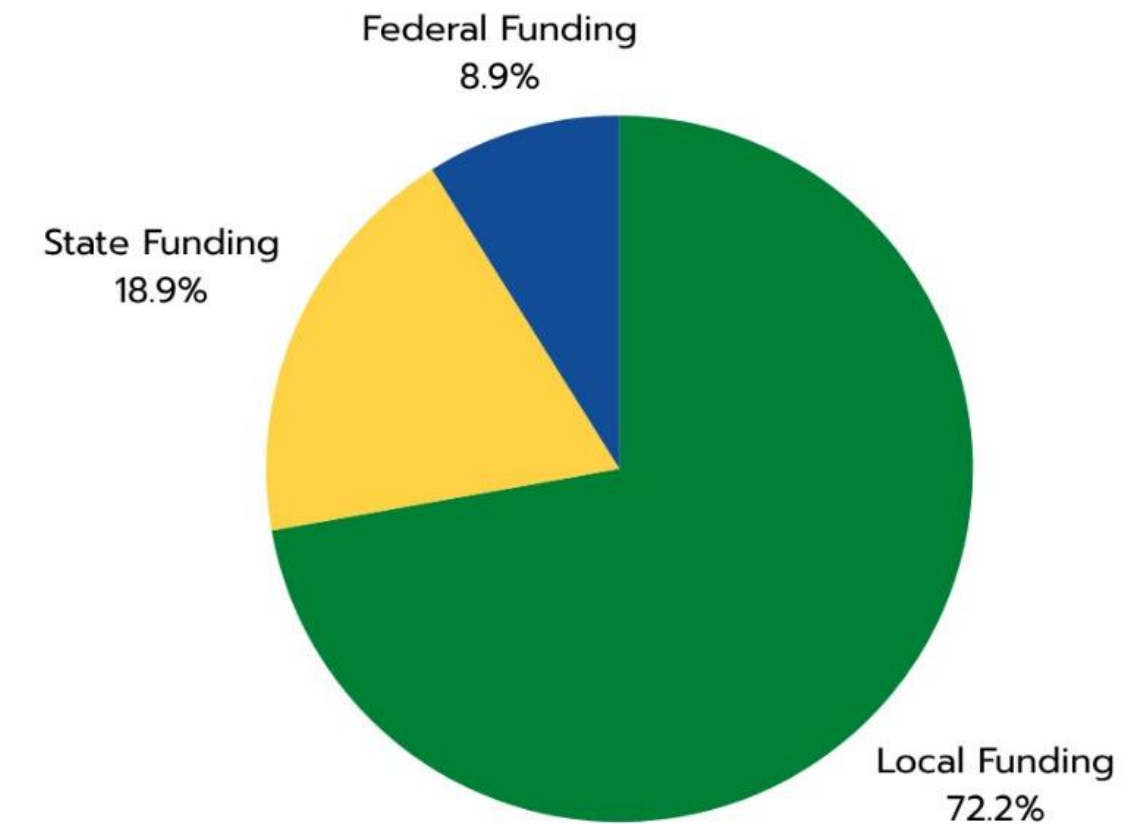
- \$553.9 million Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP)
- \$219.2 million Capital —maintenance and facilities
- \$146.2 million Referendum —salary supplement and support for arts, reading and technology

## 18.9% State funding

- \$211 million is FEFP
- \$42 million for Workforce Development, Food & Nutrition, and other sources

## 8.9% Federal Funding

- PFY \$53M
- \$47.8 million Food and Nutrition
- \$38.4M
- \$27.7 million Title I
- \$29.4M
- \$28.5 million Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
  - **\$9 million in other grants: Title II, Title III, Title IV, Adult Education**



**Frozen: June 30, 2025**  
**FY starts: July 1, 2025**  
**Released: July 25, 2025**

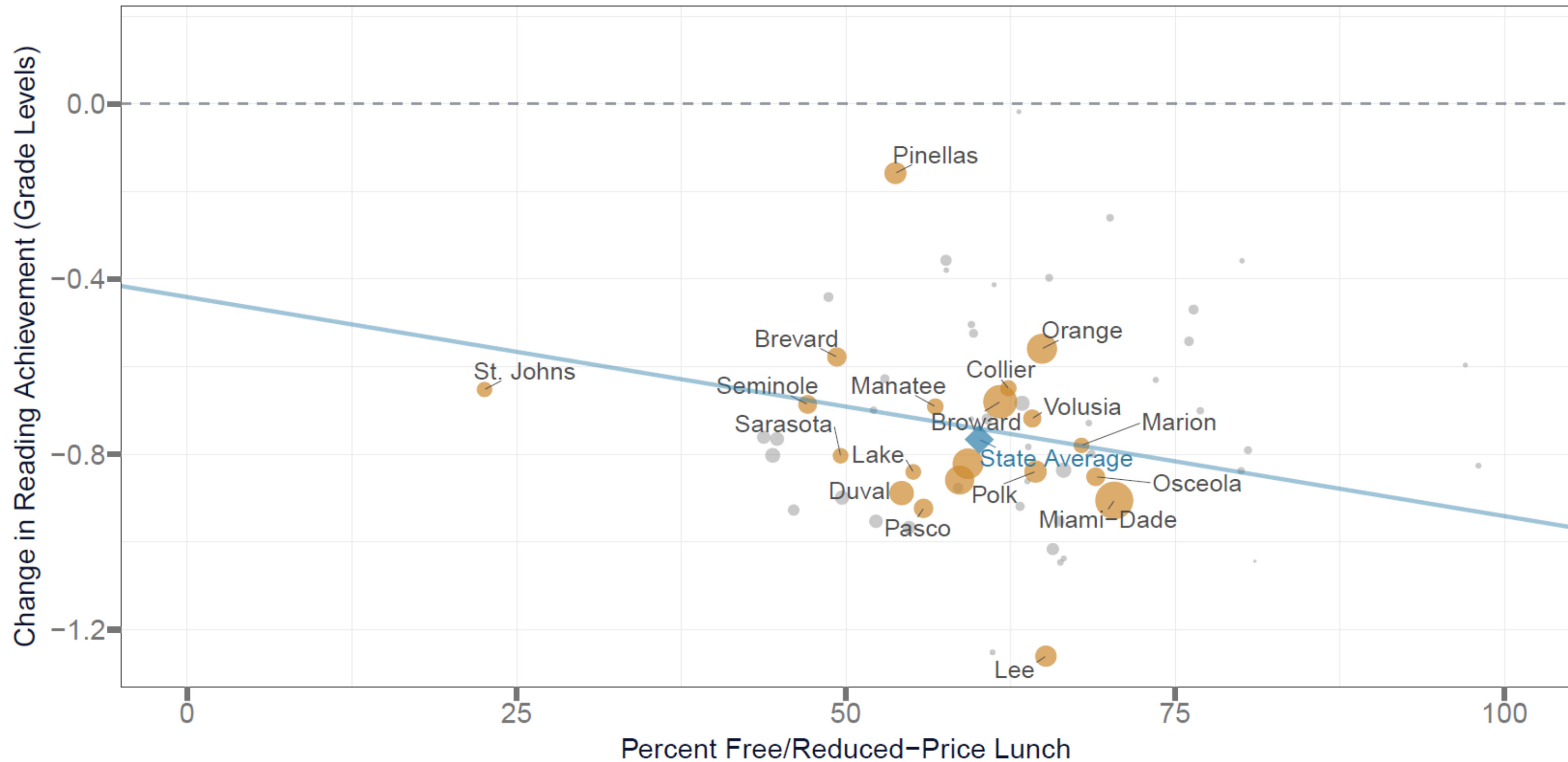
# **U.S. Department of Education**

**What does the USDOE mean to Pinellas students? All students?**

- 1. Funding for essential programs**
- 2. Compliance with federal law**
  - **Congressional Acts:** 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1975 IDEA Act, 1965/2001/2015 ESSA
  - **Supreme Court Decisions:** 1954 Brown vs. Board of Ed, 1969 Tinker vs Des Moines
- 3. National academic performance data and research**
  - **States submit performance reports**
  - **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), includes NAEP or Nation's Report Card**

# ACADEMIC RECOVERY

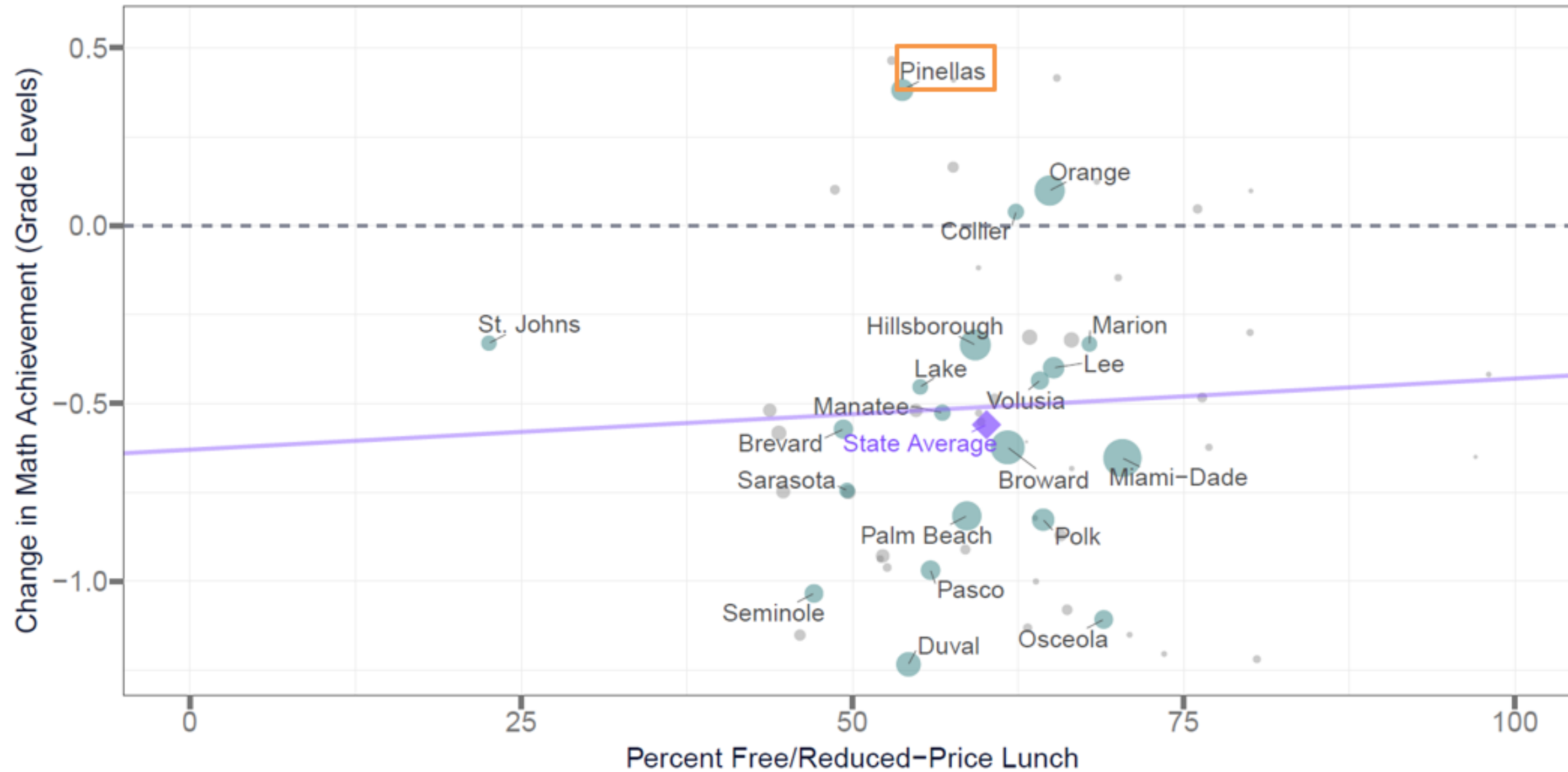
Change in Reading Achievement 2019–2024  
by Percent FRPL in Florida Districts



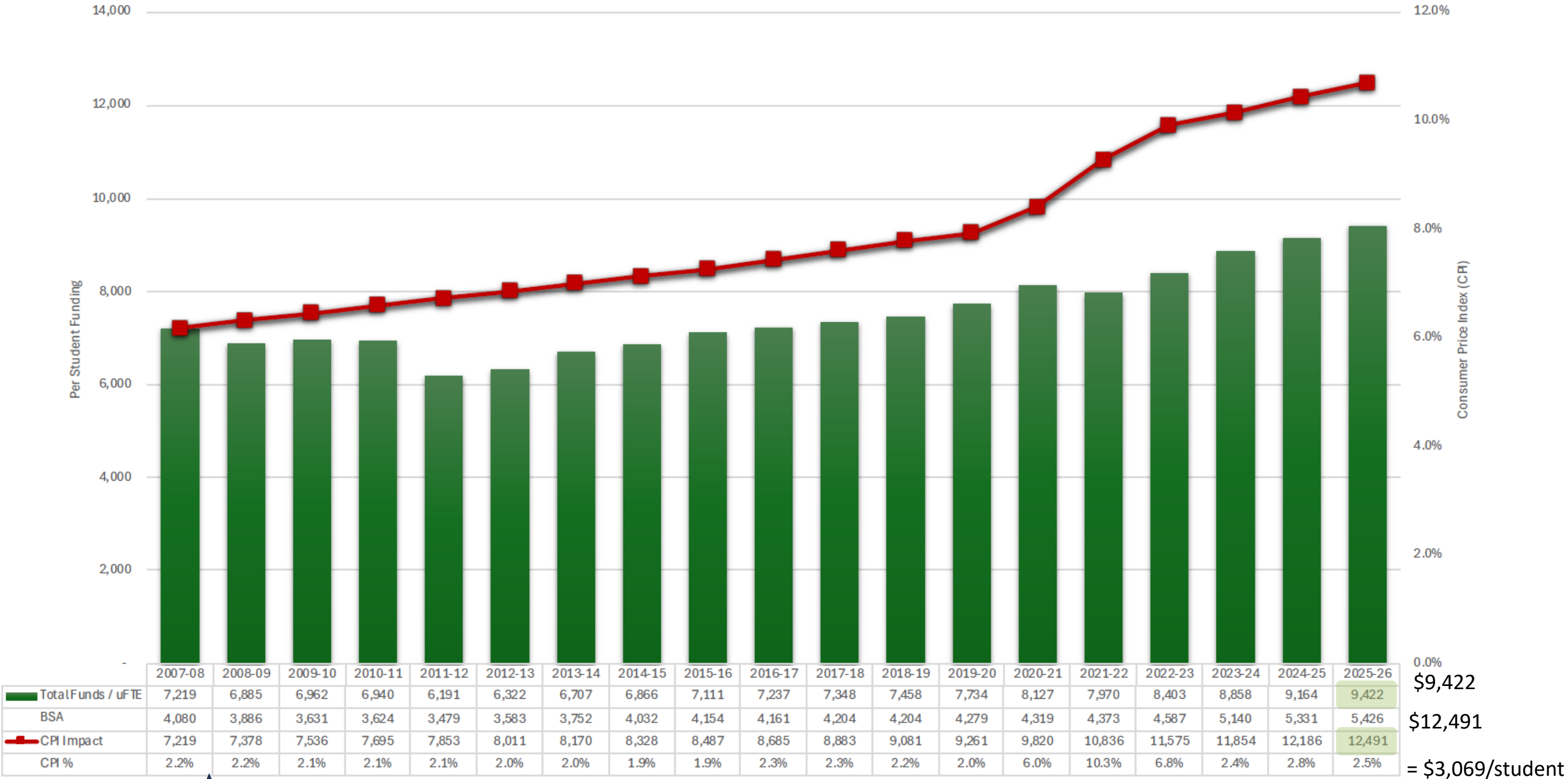
# ACADEMIC RECOVERY

## FLORIDA DISTRICTS

Change in Math Achievement 2019–2024  
by Percent FRPL in Florida Districts



# Florida education funding

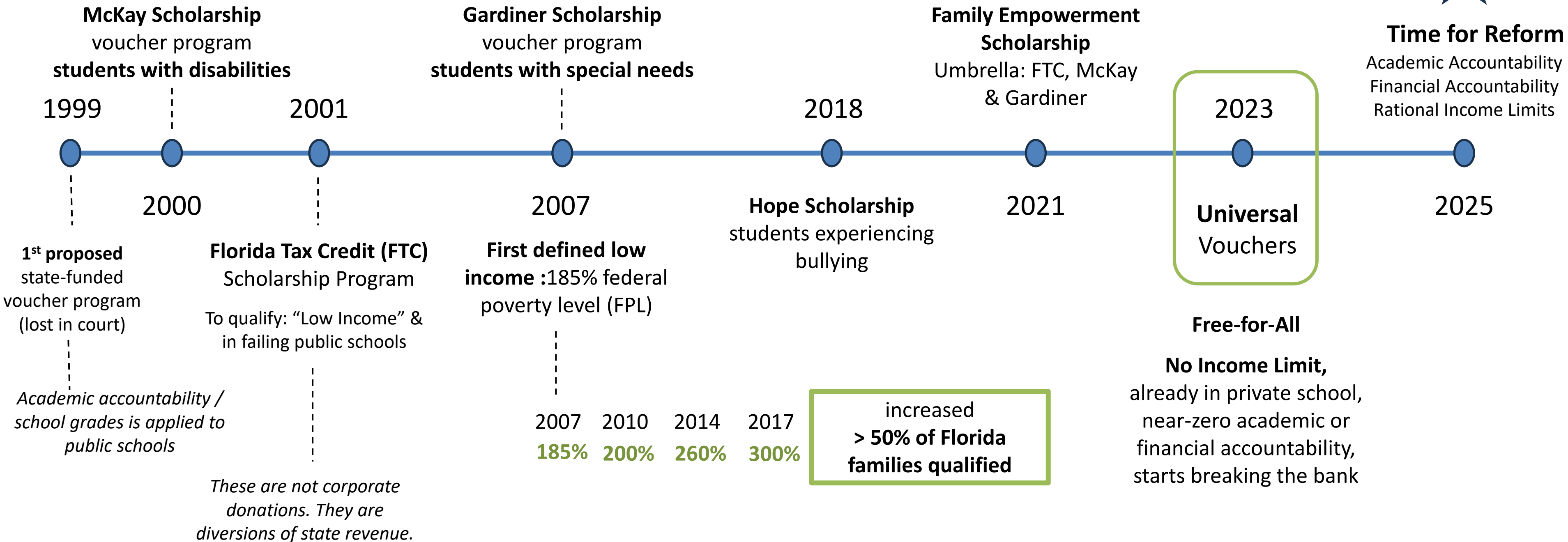


★ Great Recession

@ 90,000 students = \$276M

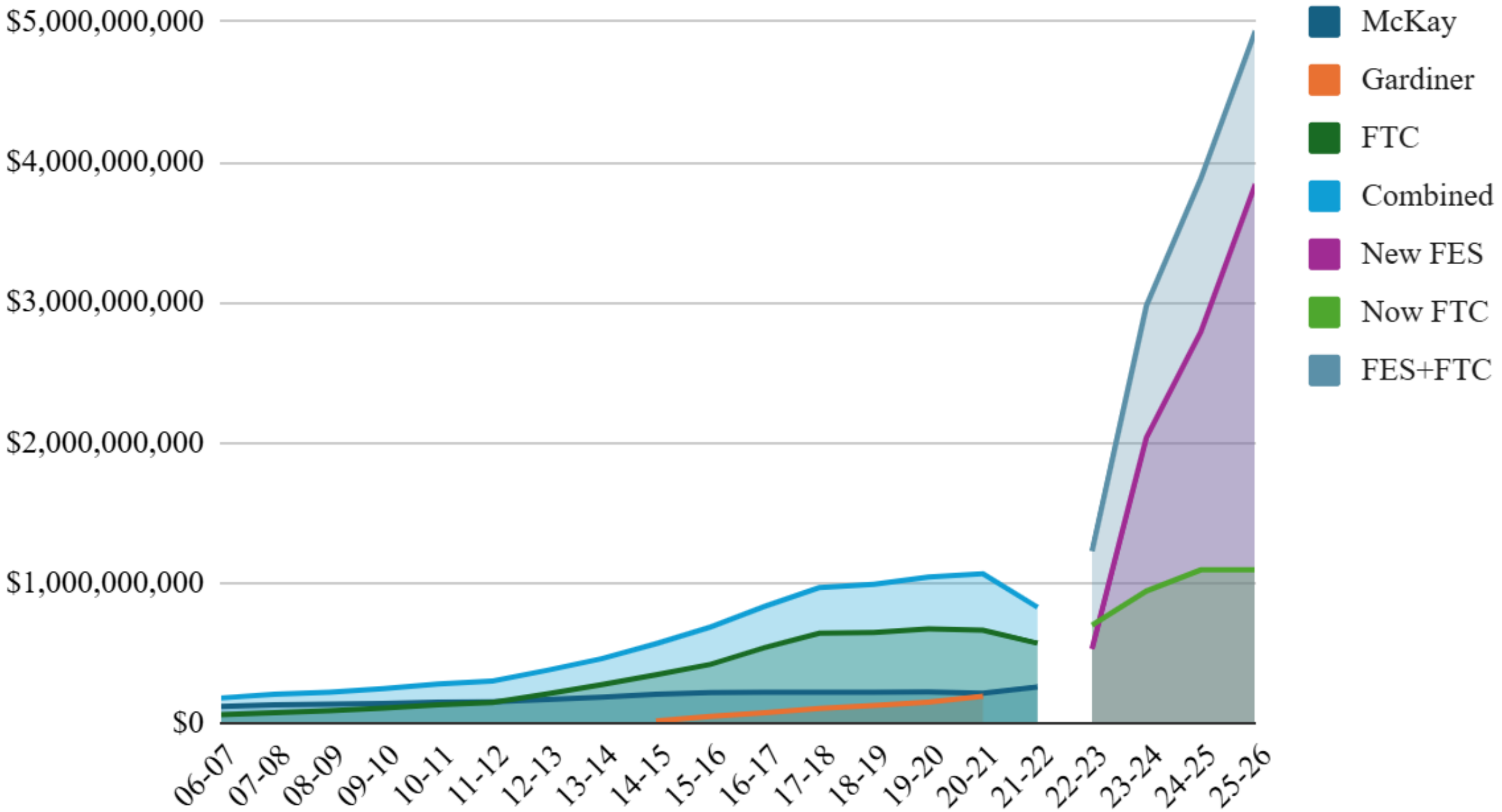
\$9,422  
 \$12,491  
 = \$3,069/student

# Florida Vouchers: Recent radical change



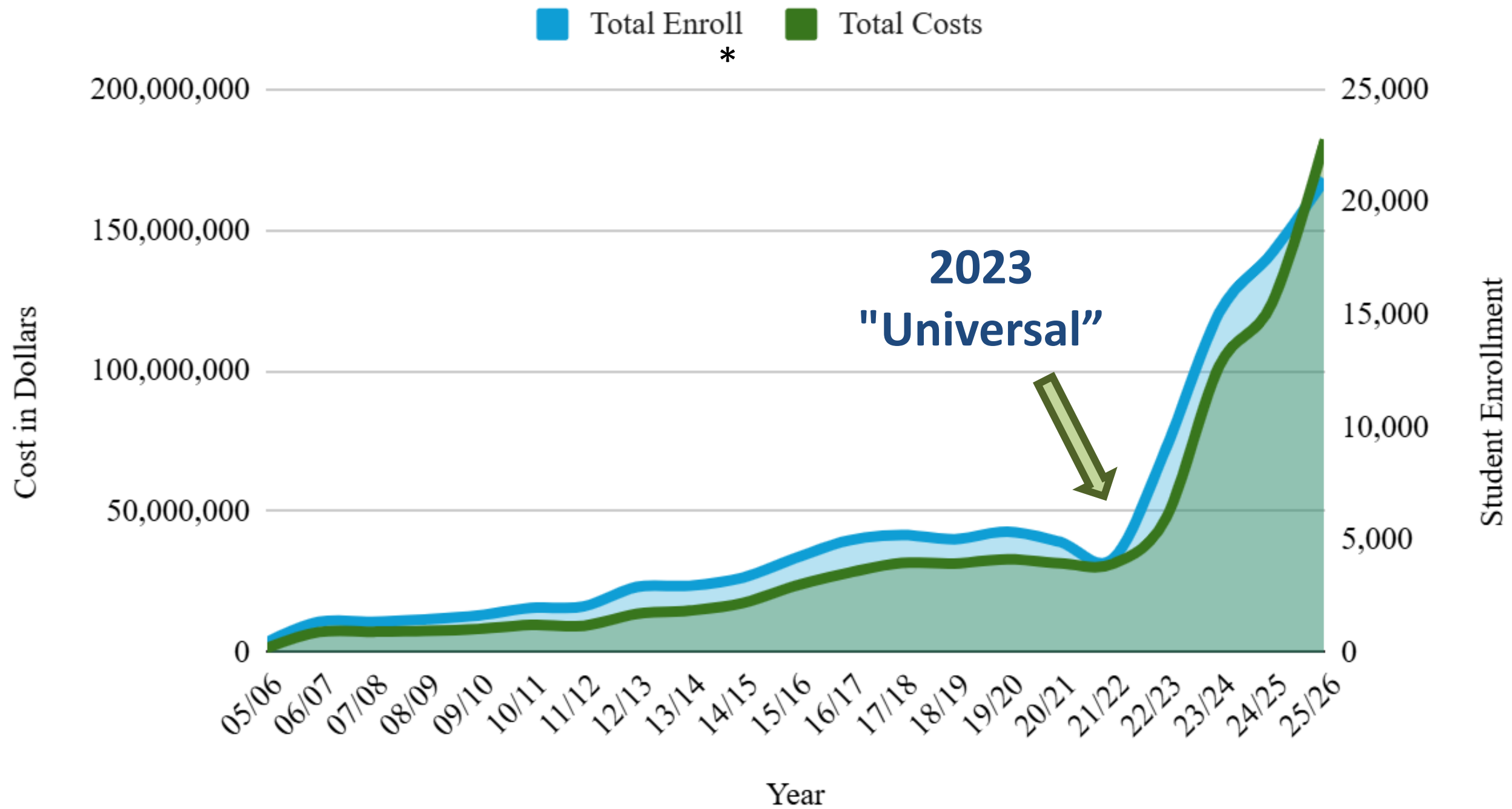
# Florida Vouchers - cost

State Voucher Program Costs



# Closer look at Pinellas Voucher cost

## Pinellas Voucher Enrollment & Cost



**\$31M to \$183M  
in 4 yrs**

- **Enrollment:** in the recent 3 years Pinellas has had a net gain of students from private to public & from homeschool to public. These are not students leaving public schools. This is choosing to use public taxes to fund private schools and homeschool that do not academically or financially report.

# We know what works.

## If Florida has \$4B to spend.. imagine:

Full Day VPK for all 300% FPL:	\$375M	(~\$26M in Pinellas vs the \$150M new V)
Full Day Pre-K 3 for all 300% FPL:	\$650M	(~\$16.5M in Pinellas)
Fully fund Mental Health, Social Work:	<u>\$900M</u>	(Pinellas funded \$5.2M, spent \$28M)
	\$1.9B	
Fully fund School Safety:	\$690M	(Pinellas funded \$10M, spent \$23M)
Teacher pay +\$10,000	\$1.7B	

**So much potential.**

# How can you help?

Contact your state elected officials.

They decide education funding & laws.

State Representatives

State Senators

Also:

Florida DOE Commissioner

Governor

**These are our tax dollars, not yours. Education is a fundamental value; all tax dollars on Ed must be academically accountable and expenditures publicly reported; and we want our public schools better funded.**

Pinellas Delegation Meeting 9/24

Register by 9/17

