



Our Students. Their Moment.

Opportunity Deferred:
A Report on the East Ramapo
Central School District

December 14, 2015

Mission of the Monitoring Team

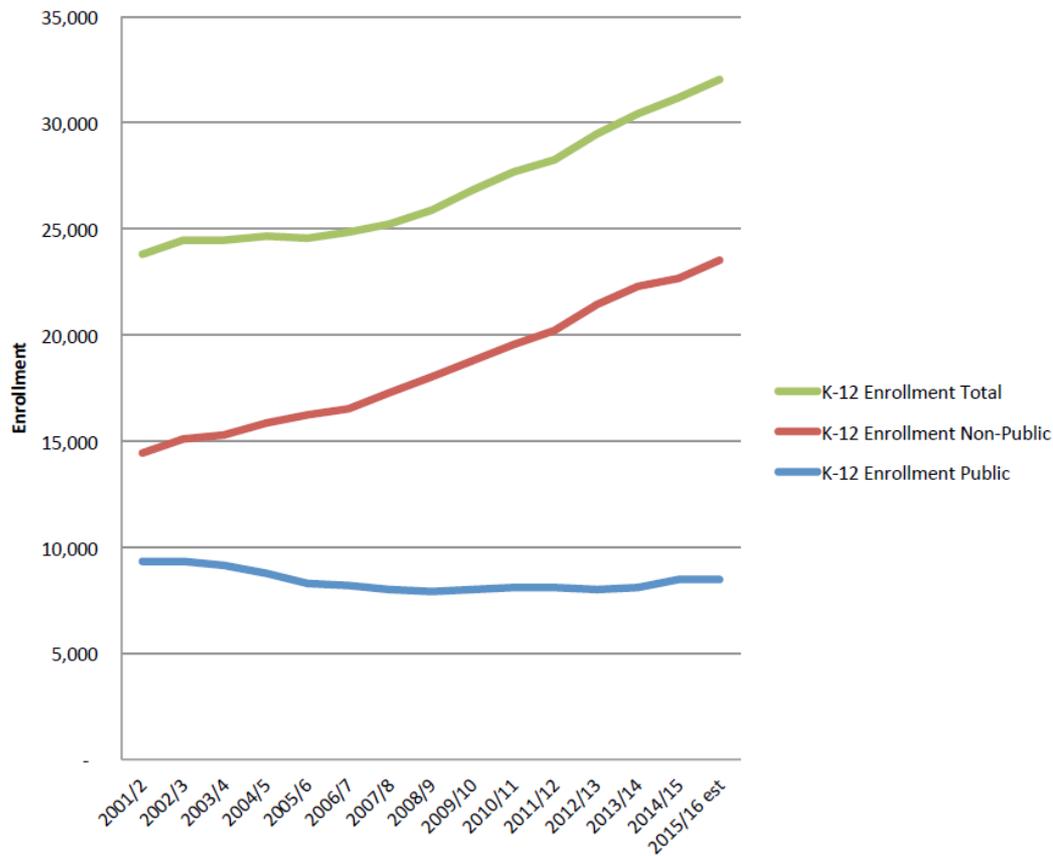
"Suffering brings perseverance. Perseverance brings hope. You have been persevering for years. Our children are getting an education. We all know they can get a better education."

- Dennis Walcott, Lead Monitor

A District In Crisis

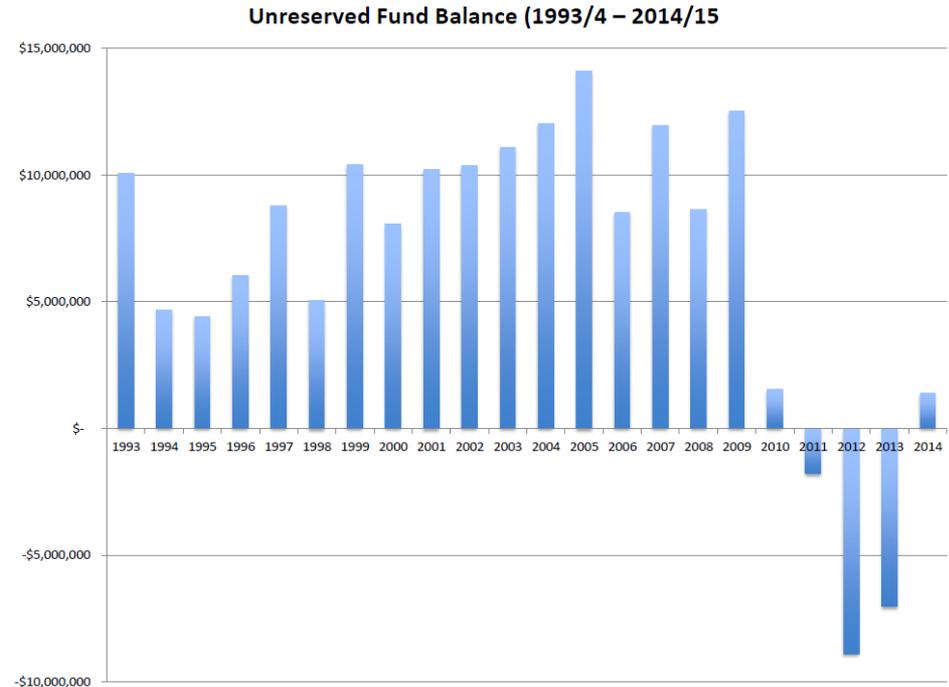
- Today, more than 32,000 children attend school in East Ramapo. Approximately 8,500 of those children attend the East Ramapo public schools, and roughly 24,000 attend private schools – mainly Orthodox Jewish Yeshivas.
- Since 2004-2005, the private school population in East Ramapo has increased by 43% and continued growth is projected.
- Of current public school students, 39% are African-American, 50% are Hispanic or Latino, 84% are economically disadvantaged, and 29% are English language learners.
- Since 2004-2005, the District has seen a 164% increase in its English language learner population, and a 40% increase in the number of public school students eligible for free and reduced price lunch.

Enrollment by Sector, Total & Year



A District in Crisis

- These rapidly changing demographics reflect not only the great diversity of East Ramapo but also underlie enduring tensions between the private and public school communities.
- Since 2005, members of the private school community have gained a majority of seats on the nine-member Board of Education, and with control of the Board, have remade the District. Today, six board members come from the private school community.
- As illuminated by the Monitors' work since August 2015, as reported in Henry M. Greenberg's November 2014 report to the Regents, as documented in the press, and as experienced and voiced by public school families, educators, and community members, the East Ramapo Board of Education has persistently failed to act in the best interests of public school students.
- The crisis in East Ramapo has only been exacerbated by the economic challenges that have faced school districts statewide, including the impact of the 2008 recession and cuts in State aid.



A District in Crisis

"As a result of this confluence of factors, the tensions in East Ramapo have grown into a chasm, full of anger and mistrust, and the District's students have continued to suffer the effects."

- Monitors' Report to the Board of Regents

Timeline of SED's Actions in East Ramapo

Date	Action
June 2014	Commissioner King appoints Henry M. Greenberg as fiscal monitor for the district.
November 2014	Henry M. Greenberg issues comprehensive report with findings and recommendations.
January – June 2015	SED works with East Ramapo legislative representatives to draft legislation installing a permanent fiscal monitor in the district. The legislation is passed by the Assembly in June but is not allowed to come for a vote in the Senate.
July 2015	Almost immediately after her appointment, Commissioner Elia announces her intentions to take action in East Ramapo.
August 13, 2015	Commissioner Elia announces the appointment of a Monitoring Team for the East Ramapo School District. The team is led by former New York City schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott and includes Monica George-Fields – a school turnaround expert – and John Sipple – a school finance expert.

Commissioner's Charge to the Monitoring Team

Charge	Highlights of Action
Maintain a regular presence in the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Announced and unannounced visits to every school in the District. ➤ Attendance and participation at nearly all board meetings held since their appointment. ➤ Community presence by at least one monitor at least two days every week since August.
Maintain a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the board of education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Monitors maintained a working relationship with the board president, including regular formal and informal communications throughout the appointment. ➤ The Monitors were invited to join executive sessions of the board, except for discussions related to personnel and litigation. ➤ The Monitors worked closely with the board during the transition to the new Superintendent. ➤ The Monitors have regularly met with the Superintendent and members of the Cabinet, as well as key District staff to discuss issues as they were brought to the Monitors' attention.
Communicate extensively with and be responsive to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Monitors hosted a community forum in Spring Valley and heard and responded to public comment from numerous members of the community. ➤ The Monitors met formally and informally with a broad representation of stakeholders and advocate groups from the public and private school community, including the local NAACP chapter, Rockland County Clergy for Social Justice, representatives from the Orthodox community, Padres Unidos, the Rockland County School Boards Association, Yeshiva Association of Rockland County, and other organized groups and individuals. ➤ The Monitors established a blog to update the community periodically about their activities. ➤ The Monitors met with and were in regular communication with elected state and federal representatives. ➤ The Monitors published their email addresses in order to be more responsive to community members.
Provide regular updates and reports on findings to the Department, including a final report in December.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Commissioner provided staff support to the Monitors, including representatives from the Commissioner's Office, Office of Counsel, and the Office of P-12 Education. ➤ The Monitors made a public presentation to the Regents at the Board's September 2015 meeting to discuss their charge, strategies and actions to that point. ➤ The Monitors identified and developed a plan for use of facility funding. ➤ The Monitors reported to the Department concerns regarding the use of Title I funds.

Recommendations – Governance & Rebuilding Community Trust

1. Continue Monitors in the District and pursue legislation for increased authority, including veto power.
2. Appoint an independent election monitor for school board elections.
3. Create a comprehensive and community inclusive process to develop a new bond issue for purposes of making much needed capital improvements.
4. Pursue legislation to ensure representation of public school concerns on the board of education by providing that in each election cycle, all candidates for at least one of the seats must be parents of children attending public schools selected in a local process by other public school parents.
5. Pursue legislation to expand required training for the District's board members.
6. Convene meetings with a Human Rights expert.

Recommendations – Teaching & Learning

7. Rethink use of Title I resources.
8. Provide students with full-day kindergarten classes.
9. Continue investigating the feasibility of streamlining grade configurations and start times.
10. Continue progress towards enrichment of academic options for all students.
11. Reform and enhance professional development opportunities for staff.
12. Create a hiring protocol that includes specific departments in the hiring process to ensure that there is a screening process of credentials and appropriate placement for new hires.

Recommendations – Fiscal Management

13. Streamline school district operations to encourage efficiency and transparency.
14. Explore longer-term transportation contracts with public approval.
15. Explore changes to bus routes and policies to maximize efficiency.
16. Review policies and procedures for special education and English language learner programs.
17. Reinstate support services for all students where needed.
18. Ensure responsible local contributions in the district budget.
19. The State needs to provide dedicated support to the District.

Next Steps

"Since August, there has been progress in the District, but after years of challenges, including fiscal distress and a failure of public confidence in the public education system in the District, much more time is needed for the District to overcome years of mismanagement and decline."

- Monitors' Report to the Board of Regents

Next Steps

- The recommendations contained within this report offer a blueprint that would not only continue the progress that was made, but also offers specific and tangible actions for a long-term, sustainable reform effort that will help the District address its three key challenges moving forward:
 - **Improving teaching and learning to ensure that all students graduate from the District with the opportunity to succeed;**
 - **Bringing the District's fiscal house in order so that the community and state can be confident that funding and new investments are prudently and efficiently used to the benefit of students; and**
 - **Healing the deep rifts in the community that have unfortunately contributed to an environment of paralyzing mistrust.**
- The recommendations are not specific to or dependent on the disposition or presence of any given individual – they are recommendations aimed at ensuring that the institutions in the District are in a better position to serve the entire community now and in the years ahead so that all students can succeed.

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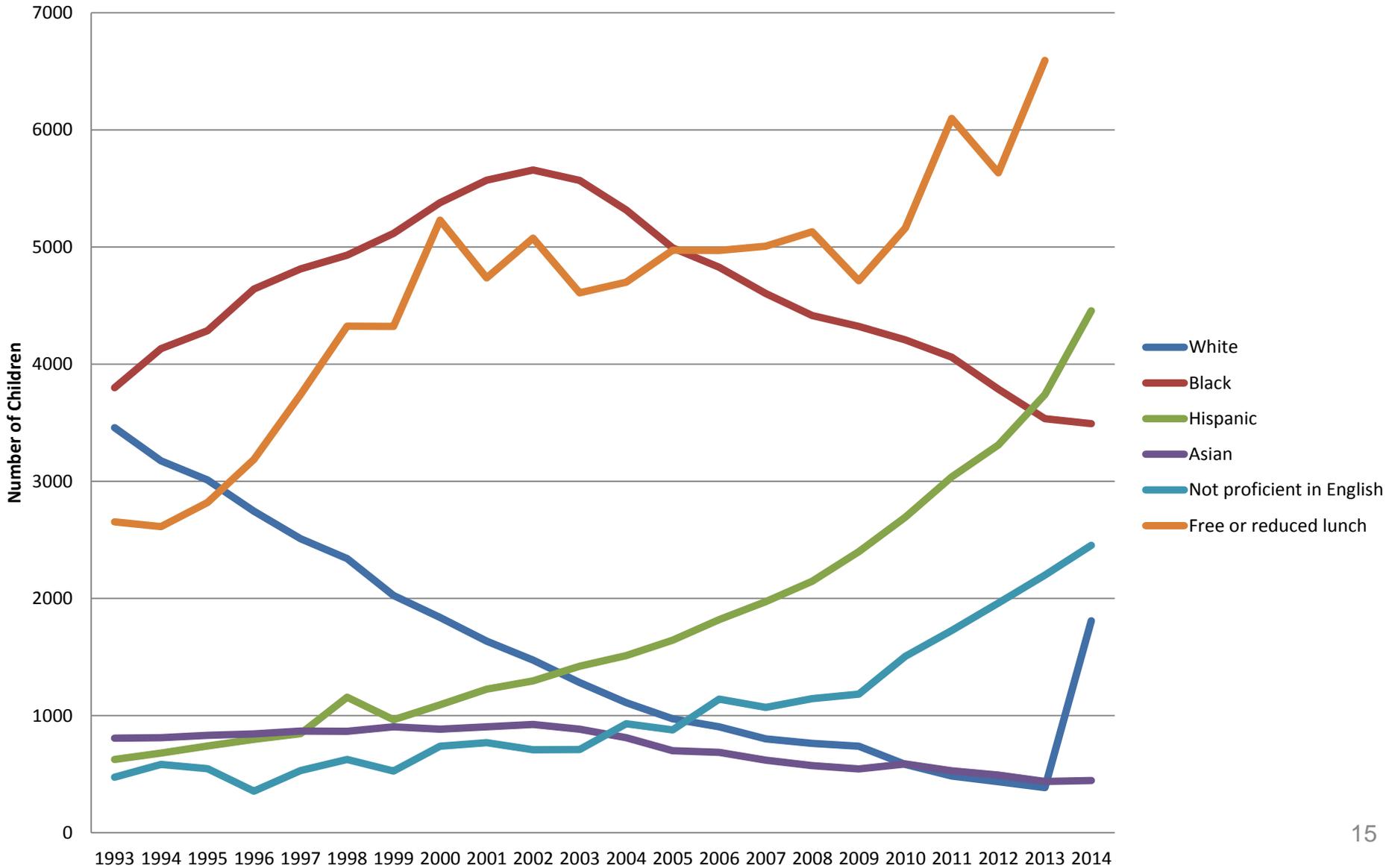
Our Students. Their Moment.

Thank You.

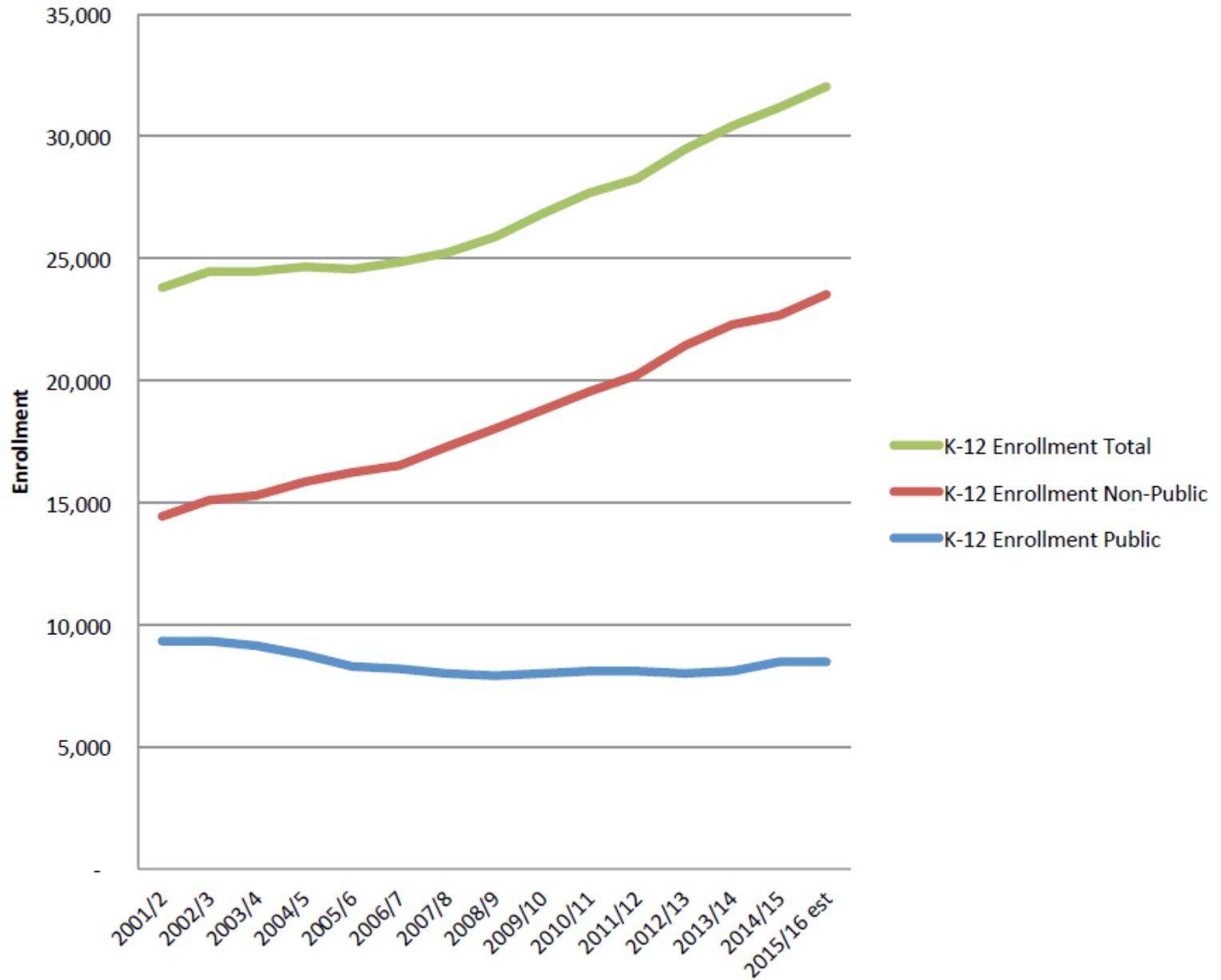
Appendix

Demographic Trends

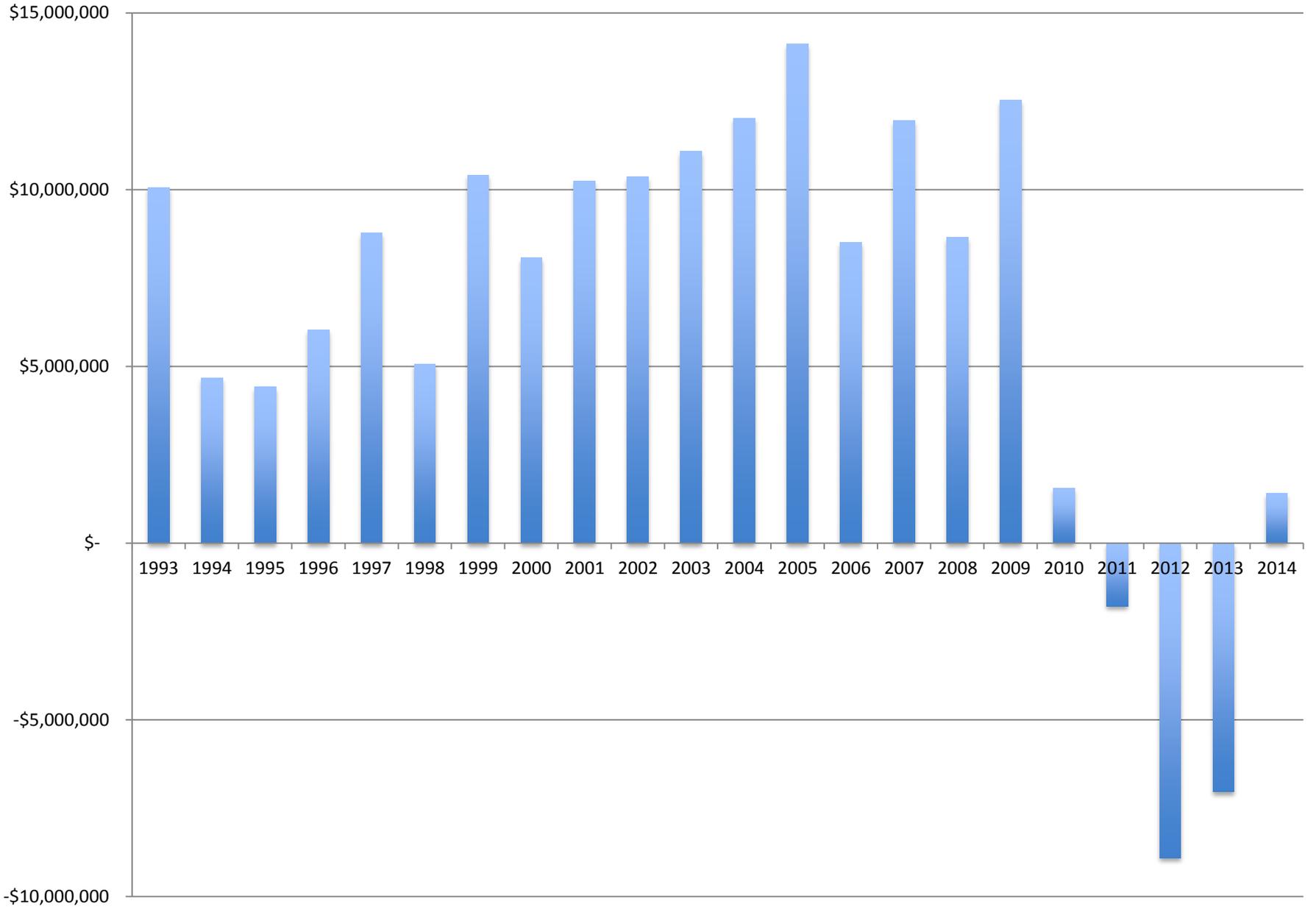
Enrollment Trends for Public School Children in ERCSD (1993/4-2014-15)



Enrollment by Sector, Total & Year



Unreserved Fund Balance (1993/4 – 2014/15)



Cost of Budget Failures

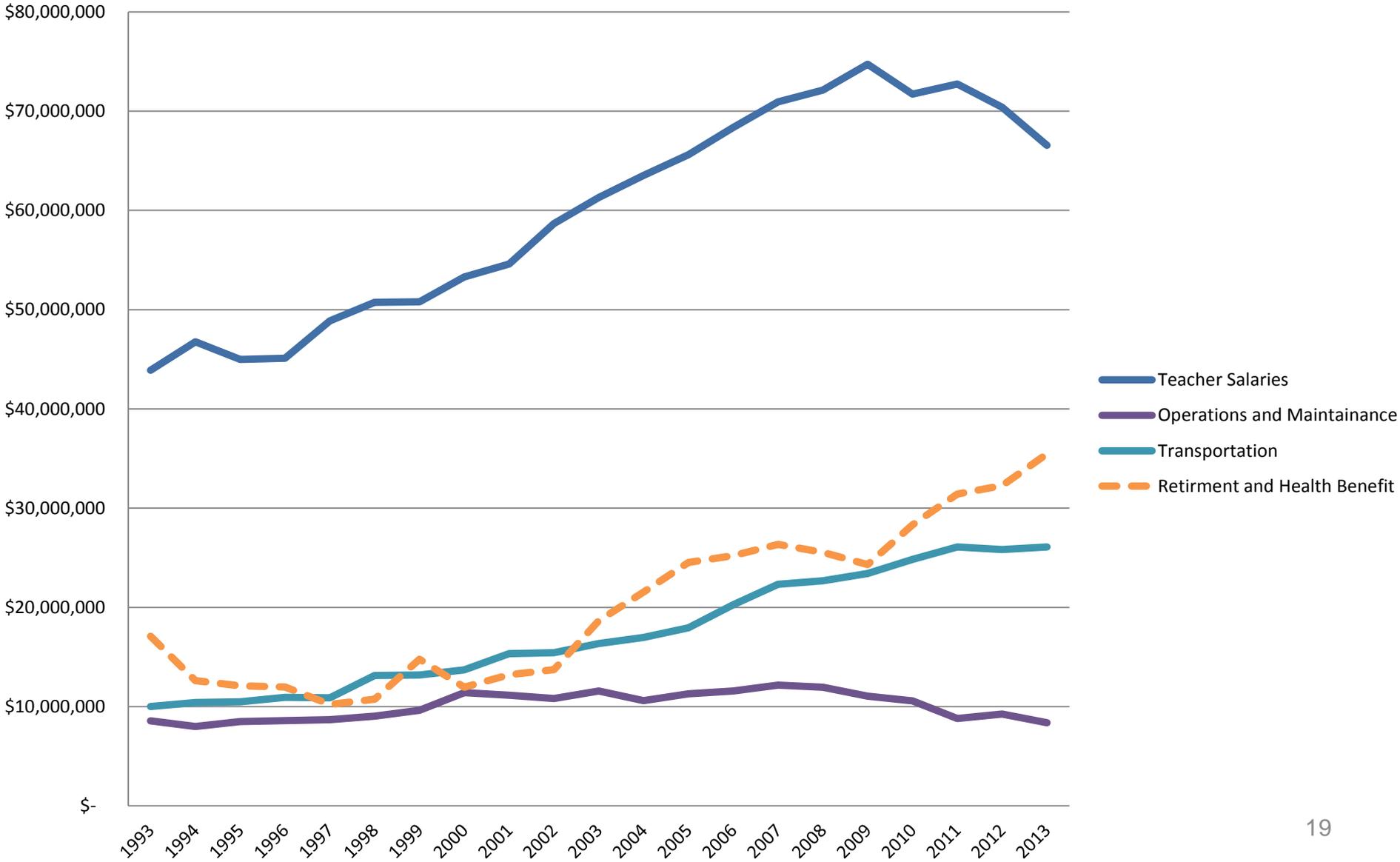
Budget revotes/contingency budgets: 2005-06 to 2015-16

- May 2004/5 budget voted down.
 - Adopted (June) budget (-1,835,294)
- May 2005/6 budget voted down.
 - Adopted (June) budget (-\$1,708,000)
- May 2008/9 budget voted down.
 - Contingent budget, no 2nd vote (-\$716,078)
- May 2010/11 budget voted down.
 - Adopted (June) budget (-\$2,778,287)
- May 2011/12 budget voted down.
 - Contingent budget no 2nd vote (-\$1,637,580)
- May 2012-13 budget voted down.
 - Same budget was offered to the voters with no cuts

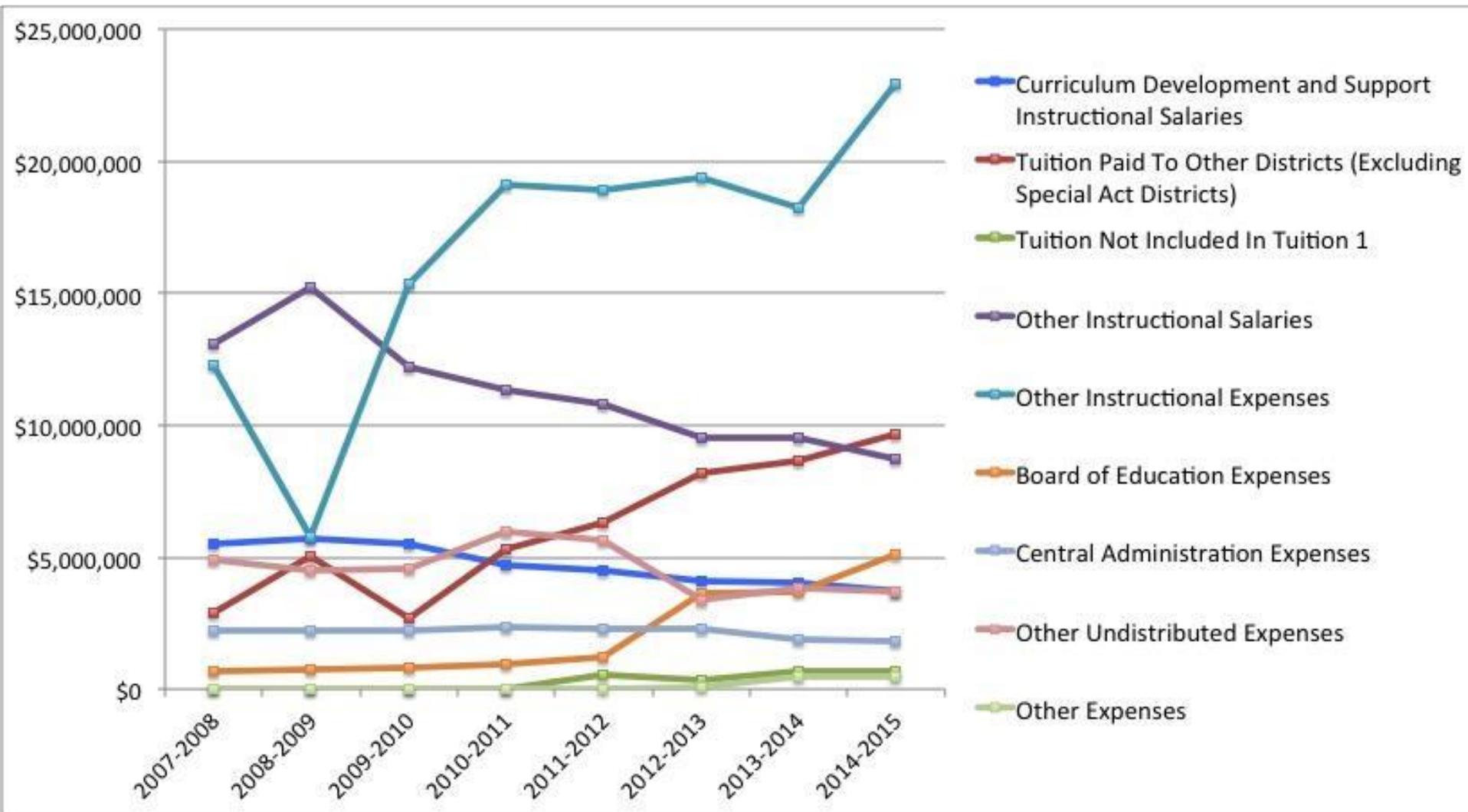
- Total “Lost” dollars from budget rejections
 - -\$ 8,675,264

Expenditures

Expenditures by Type & Year (1993/4-2013/14)

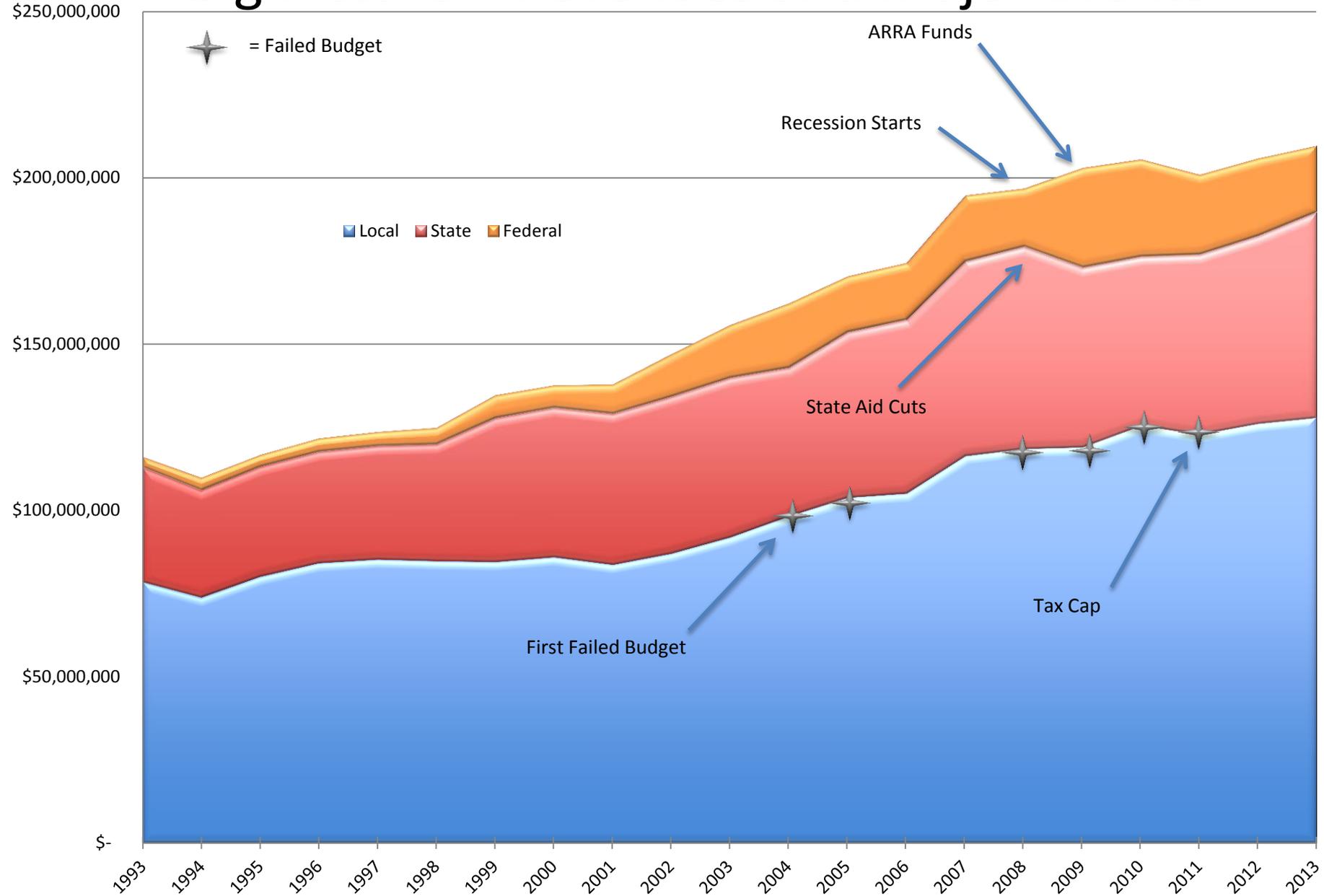


Expenditures

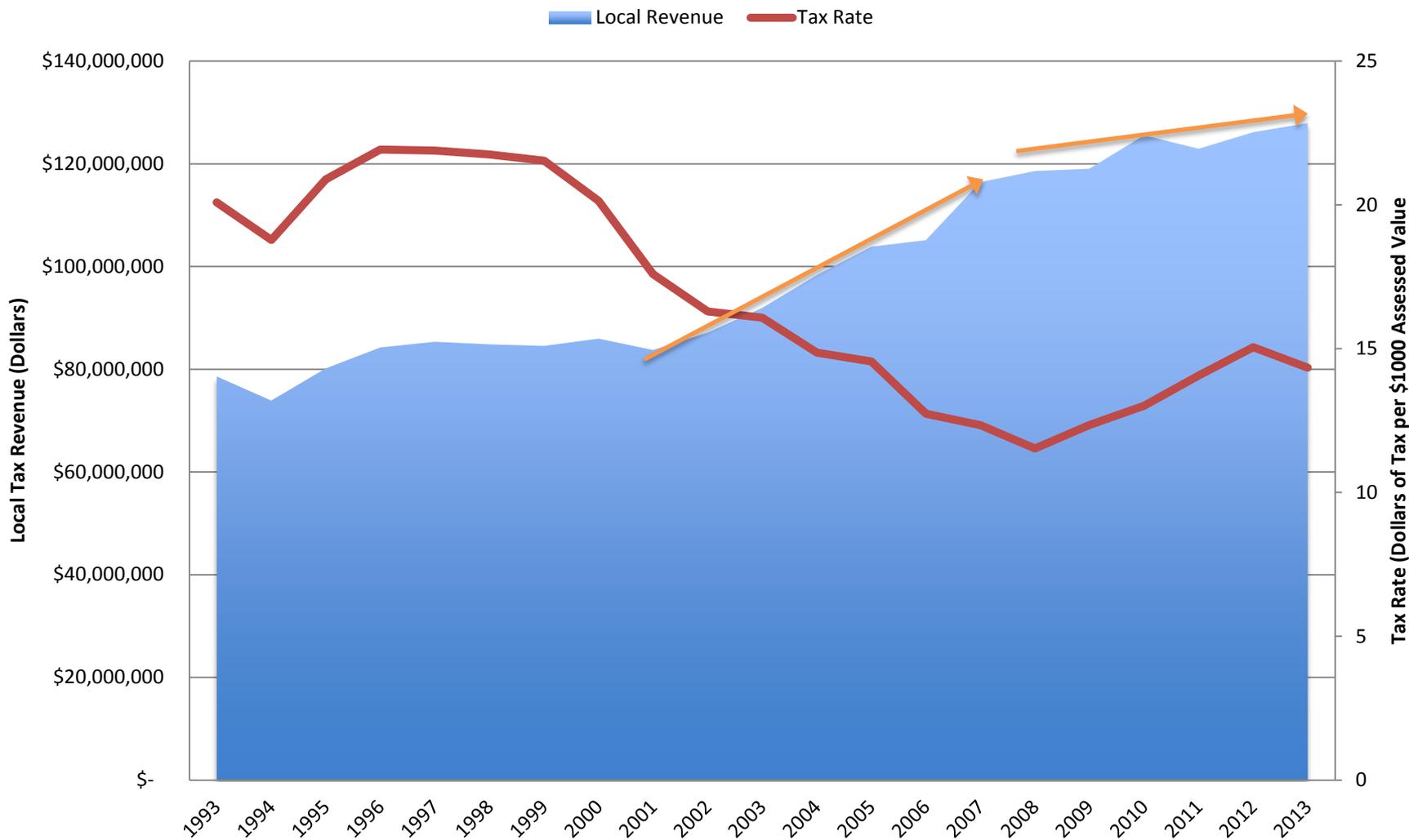


Revenue by Source 1993/4 - 2013/4

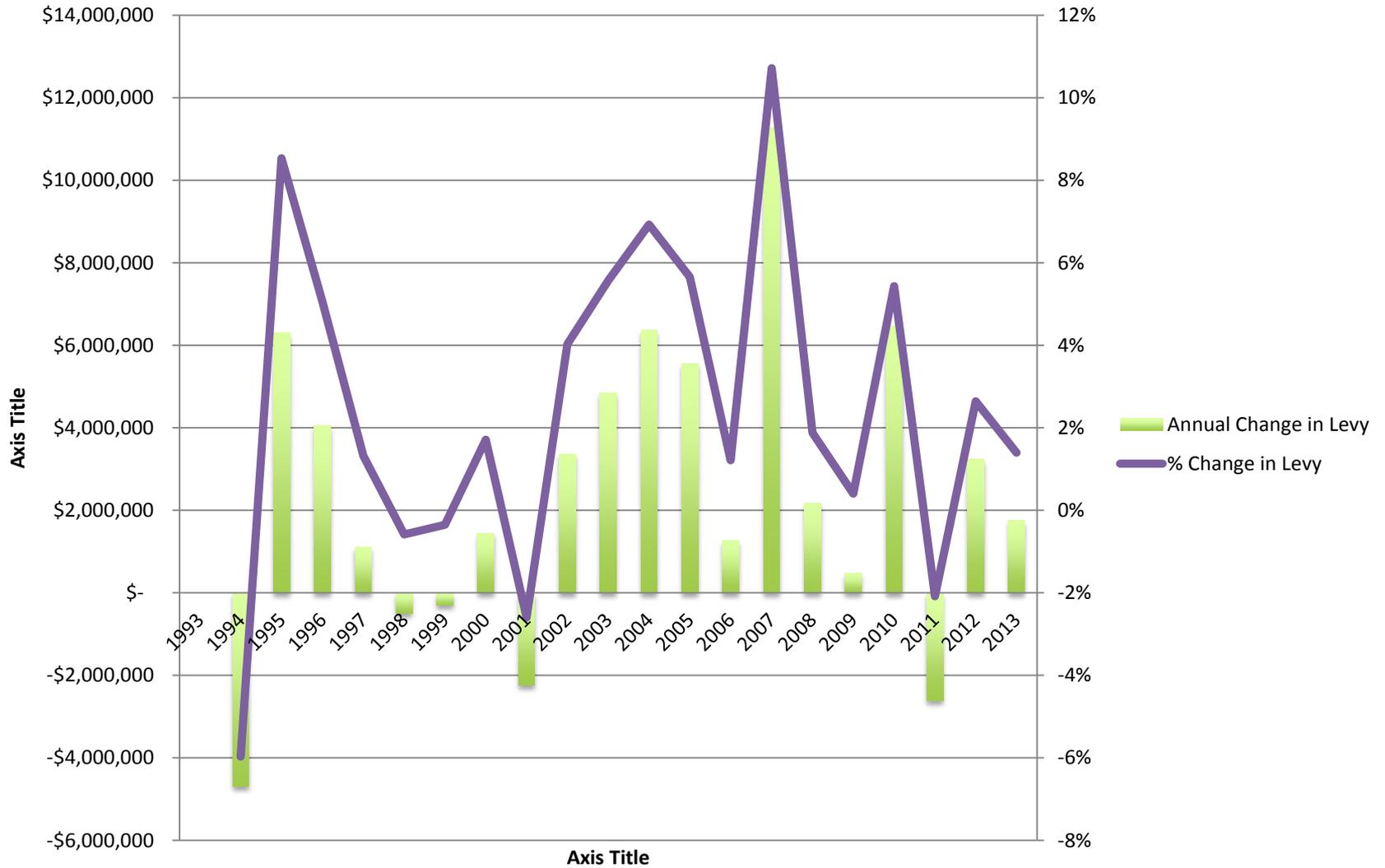
Big Picture – Revenues and Major Events



Local Tax Levy vs. Tax Rate



Per Annum Change in Local Tax Levy and Tax Rate



Program Area with Substantial Reduction or Increase in Costs (rounded for simplicity)	Expenditures/year 2014/15-Peak Year in Millions of Dollars
Reductions	-\$13.3
Regular Teachers	-\$6.0
Occupational Education & Special School Teachers	-\$1.5
Sports/Activities	-\$0.8
Social Workers	-\$1.0
In-Service Training for Teachers	-\$0.2
Maintenance	-\$4.0
Libraries and AV	-\$1.0
Increases	\$49.8
Special Education	\$18.0
Legal Fees	\$4.0
Transportation	\$8.6
Health & Retirement Benefits	\$14.0
Principal and Debt Service	\$5.2
Revenue Increase	\$50

Local Tax Levy vs. Tax Rate

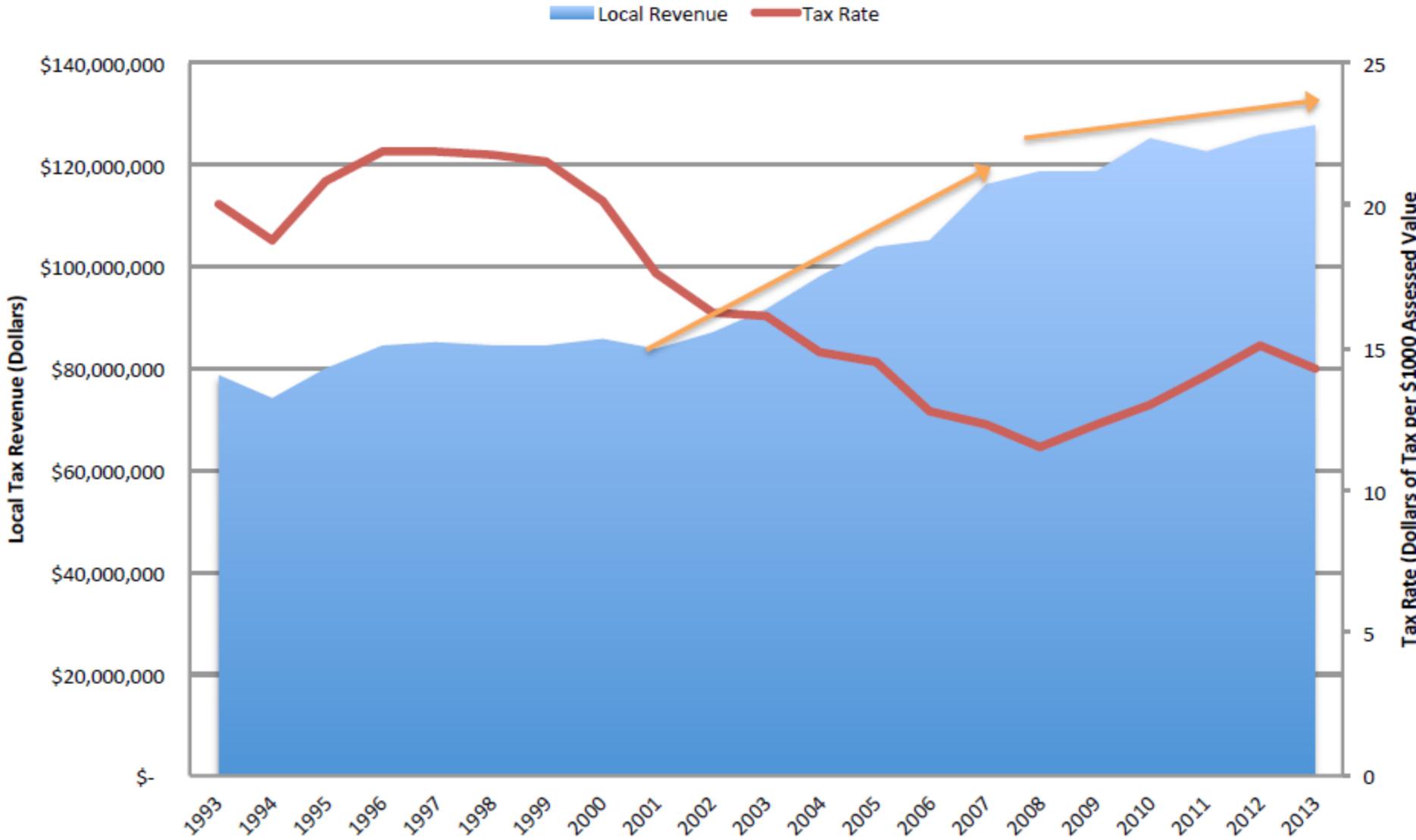
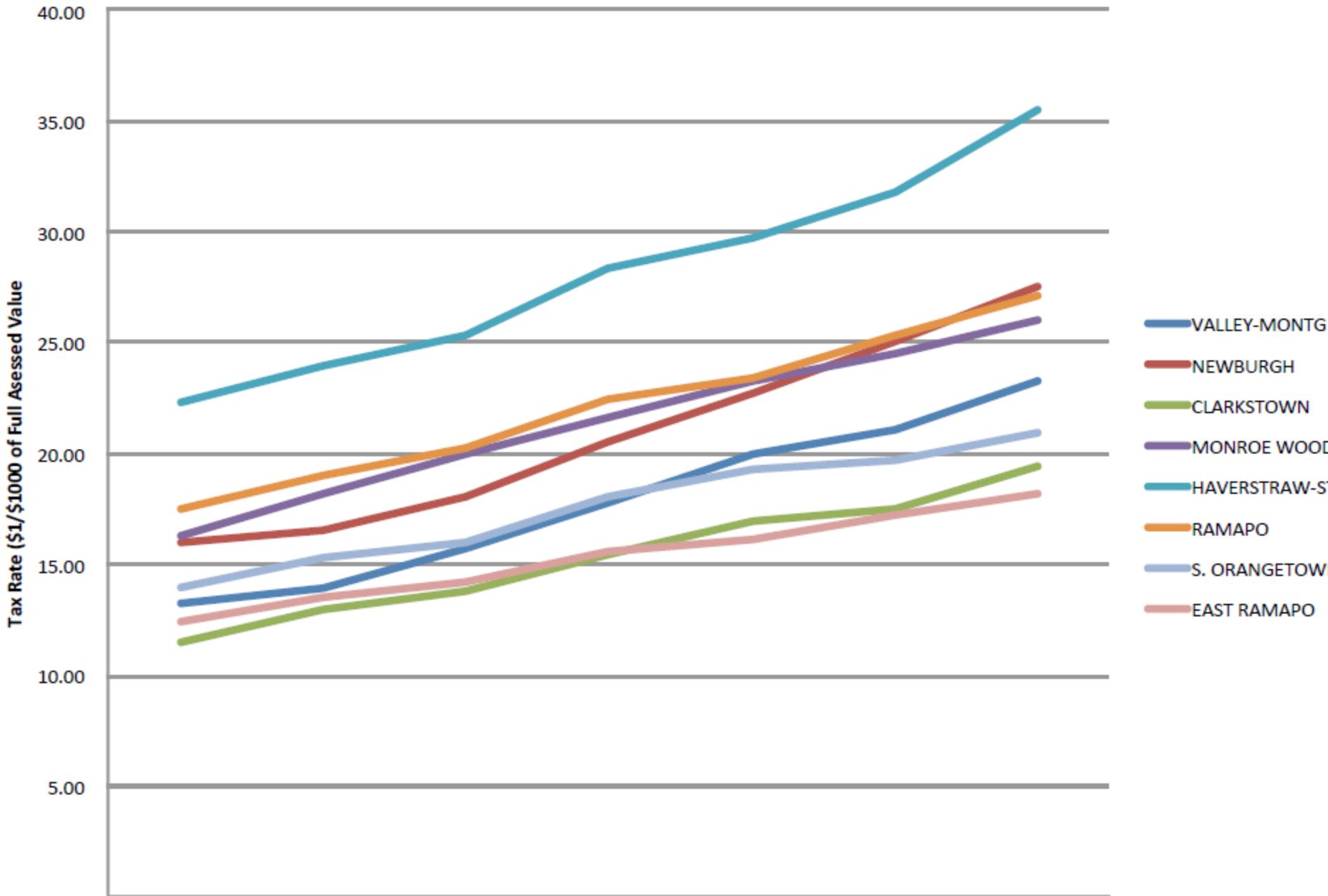
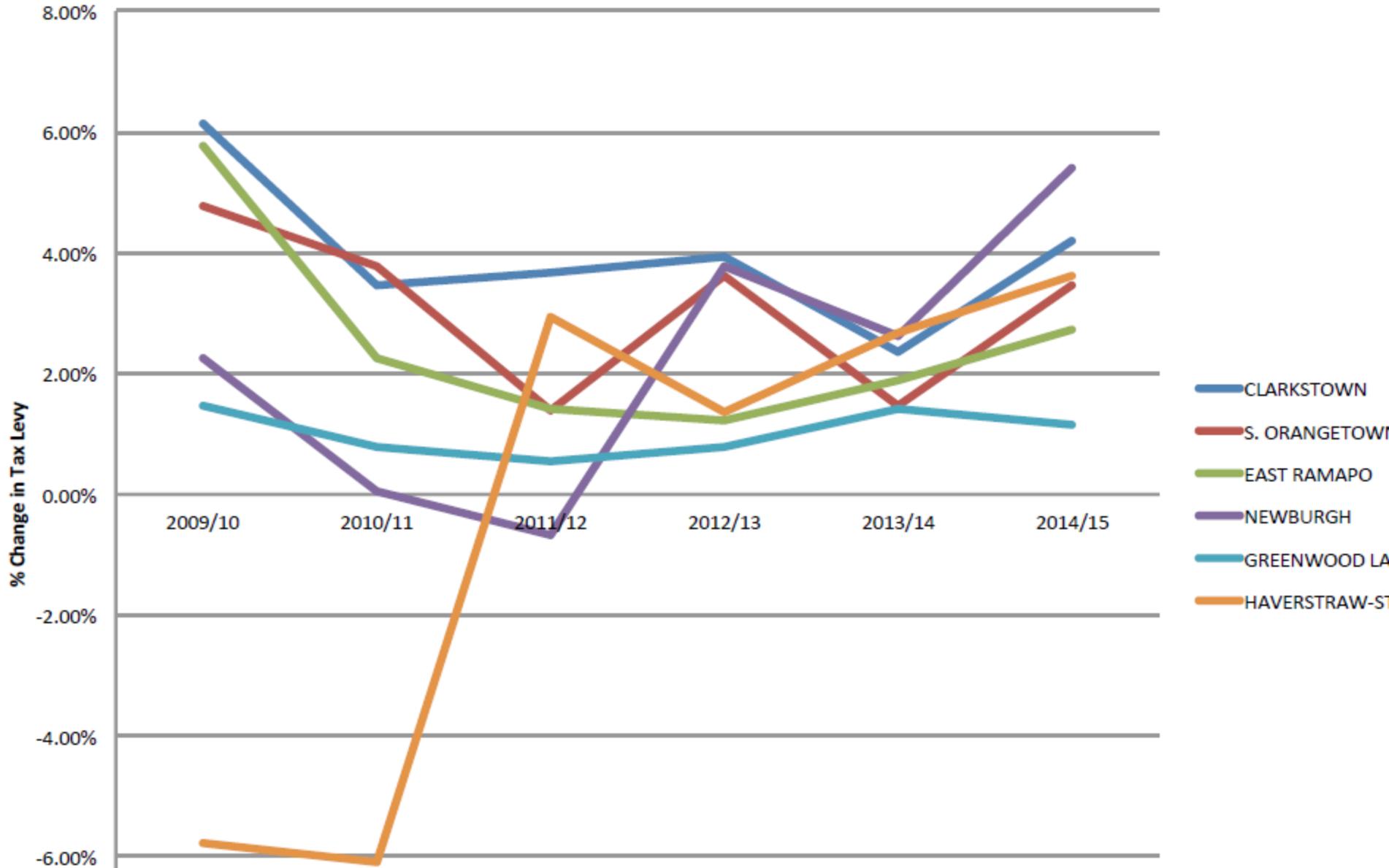


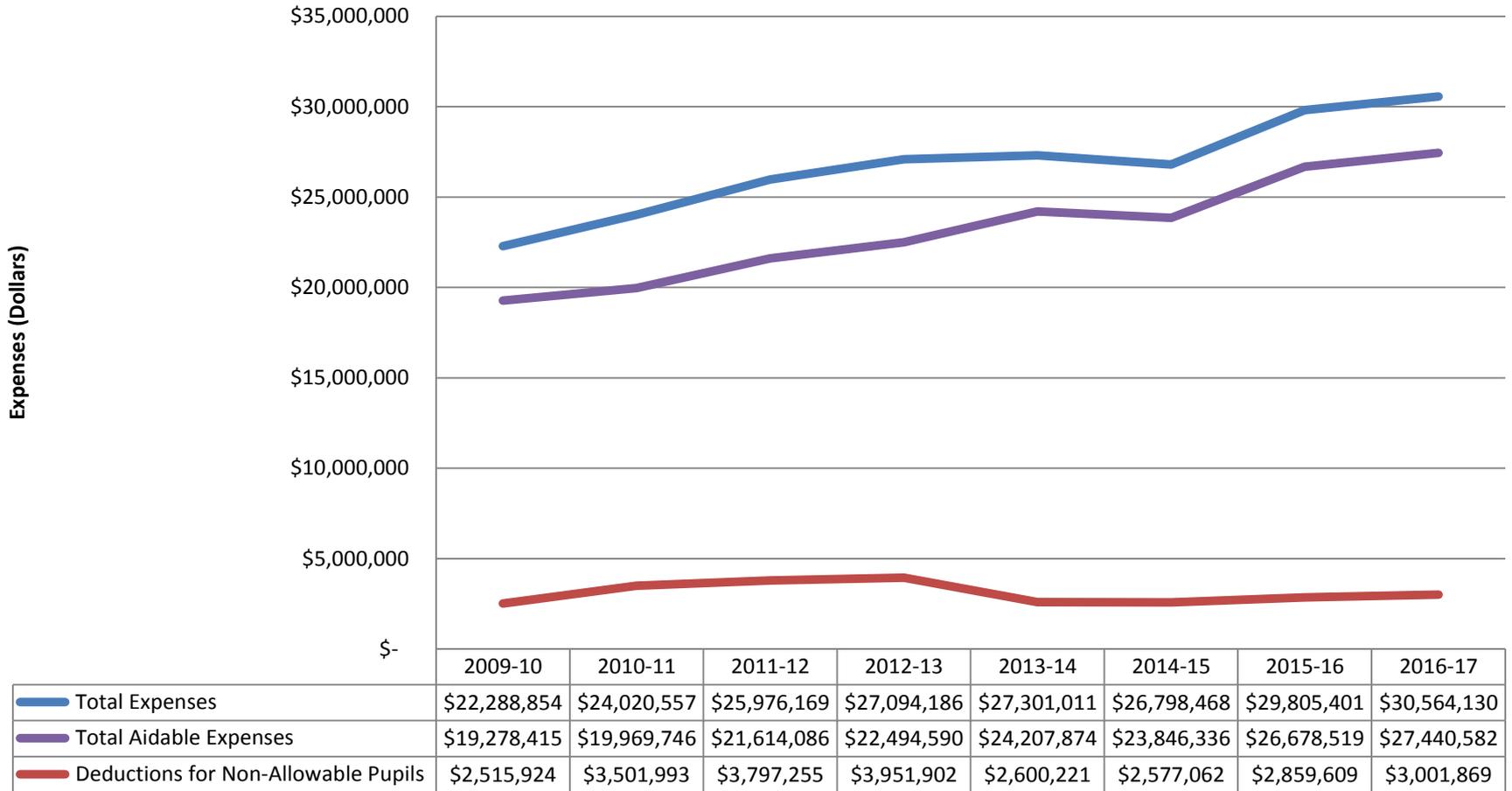
Chart Full Value Tax Rate by Rockland Districts and Year



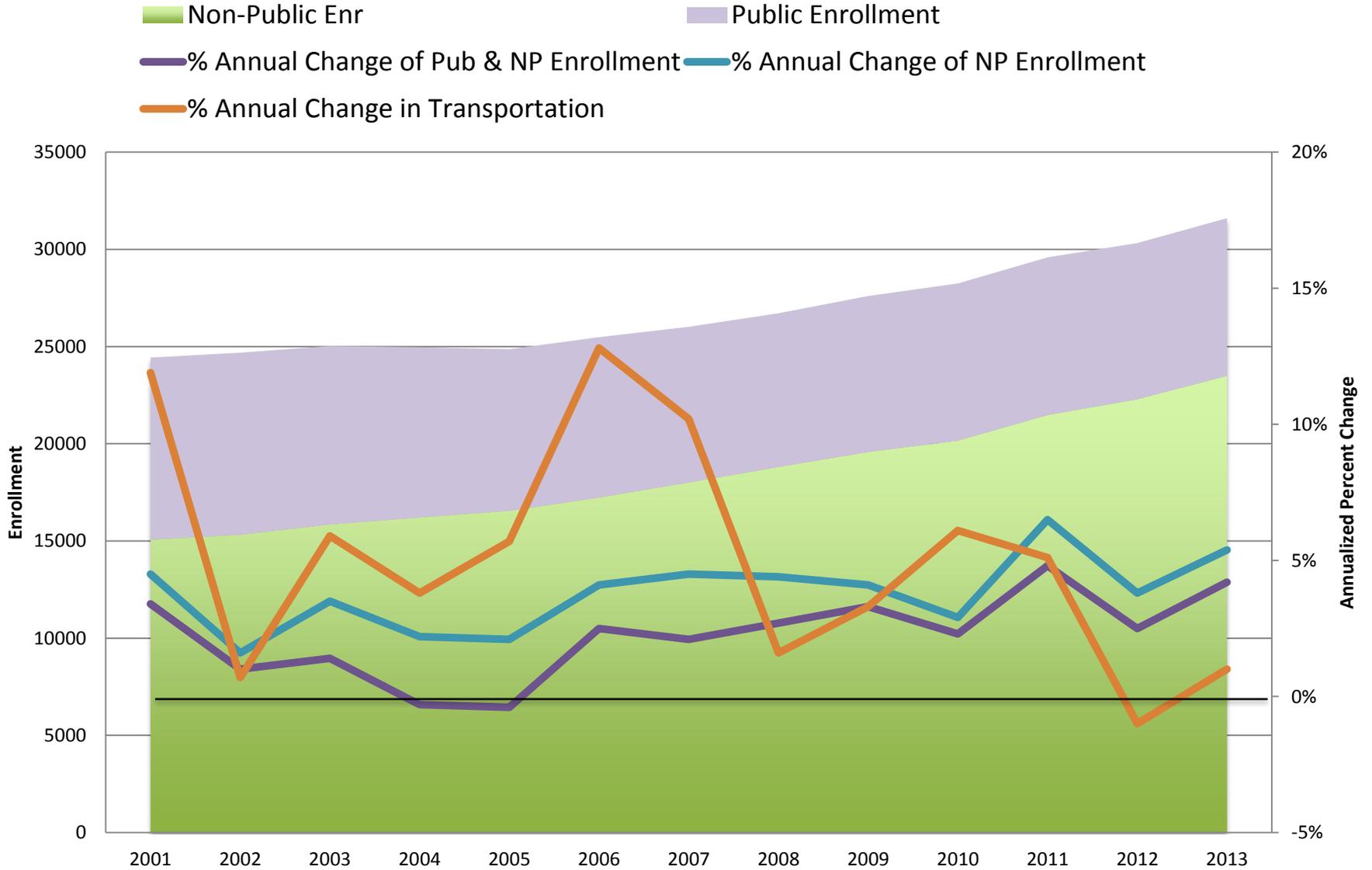
Change in Local Tax Levy



Transportation Expenses (Total & Aidable) and Deductions



Enrollment Trends and Change (2001/2-2012/13)



2006/7 - 2013/14

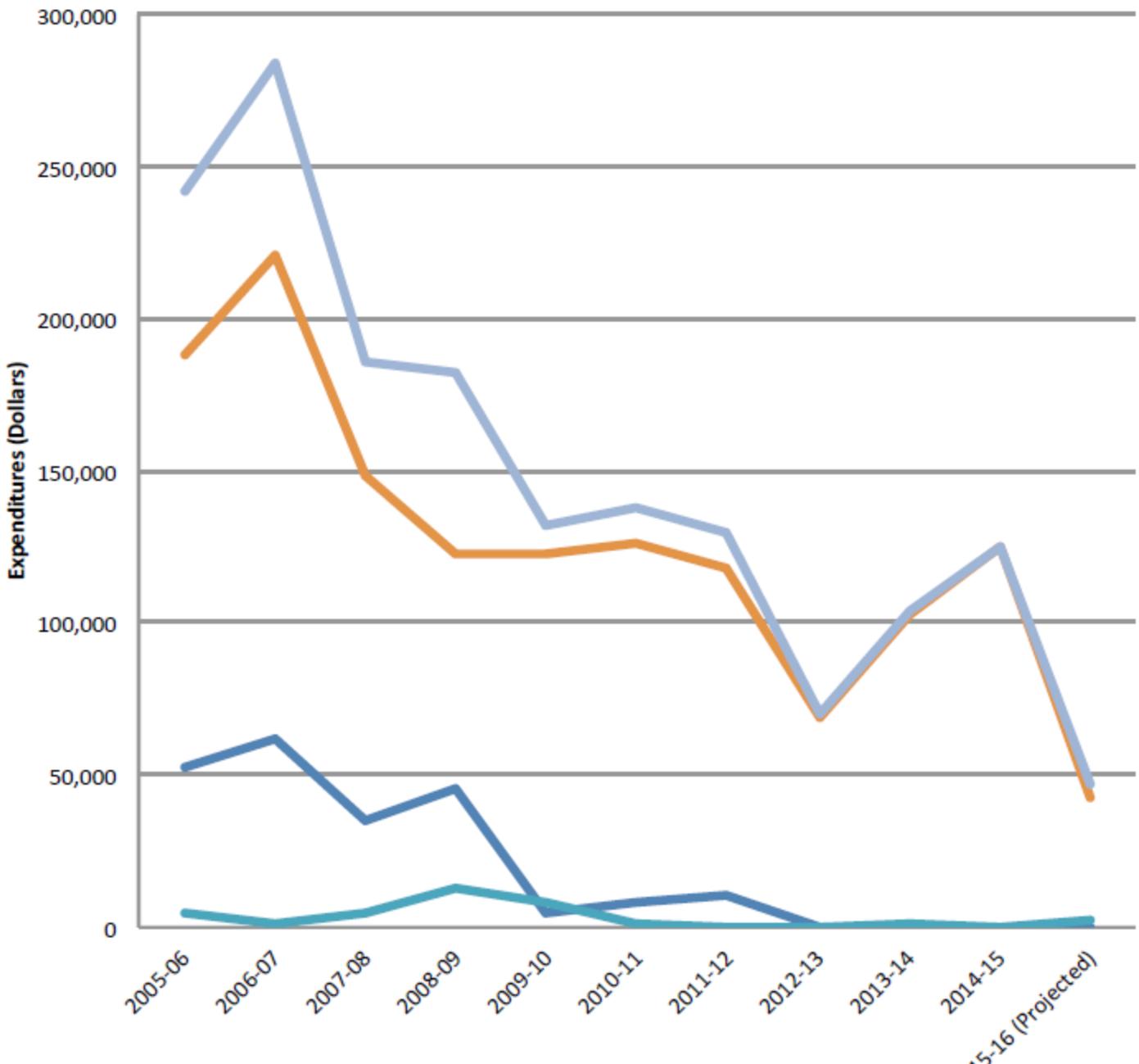
Public Enrollment Change -2.5%

Non-Public Enrollment Change 41.9%

Total Enrollment Change 27.1%

Transportation Cost Change 43.9%

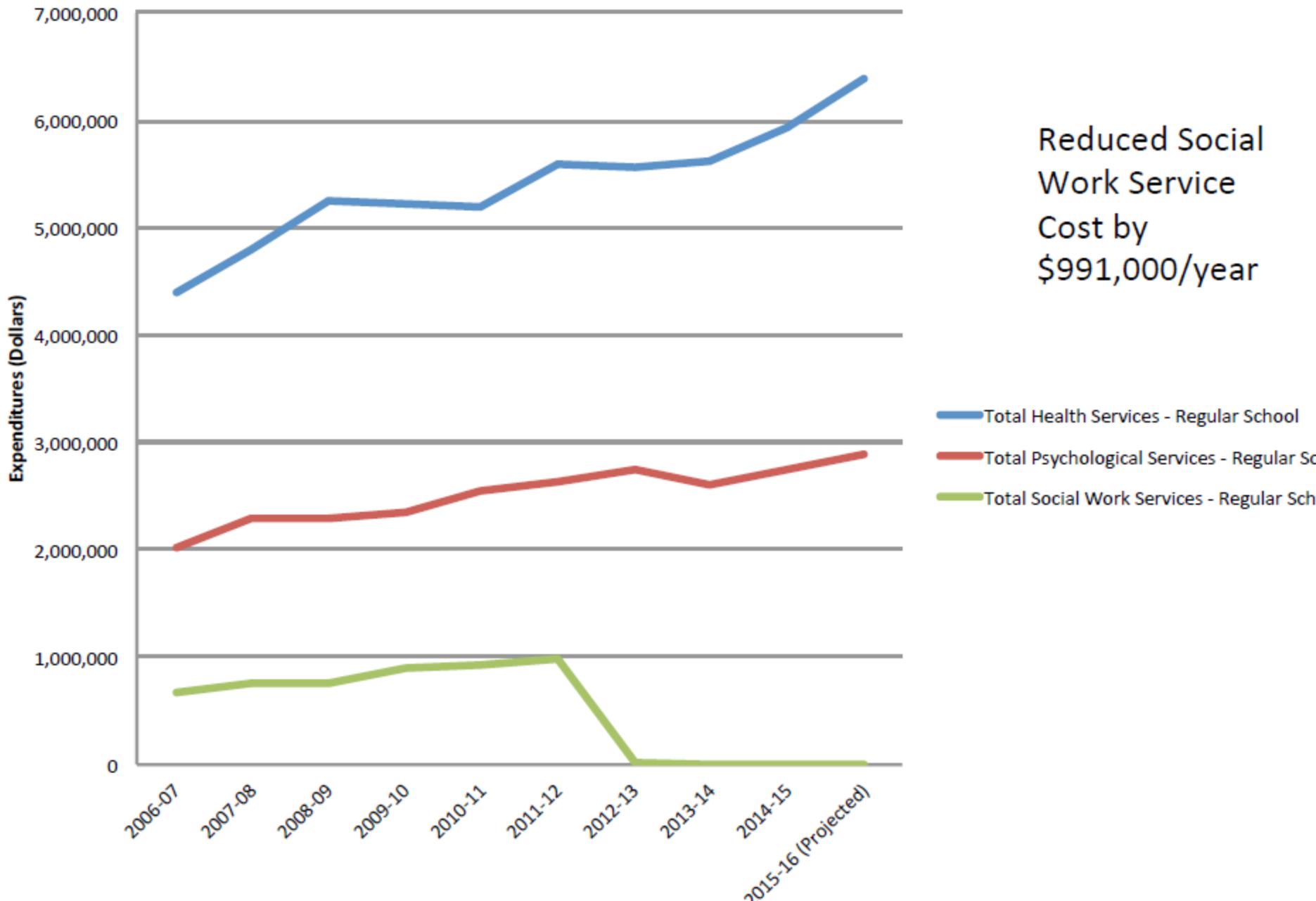
Inservice Training - Instruction



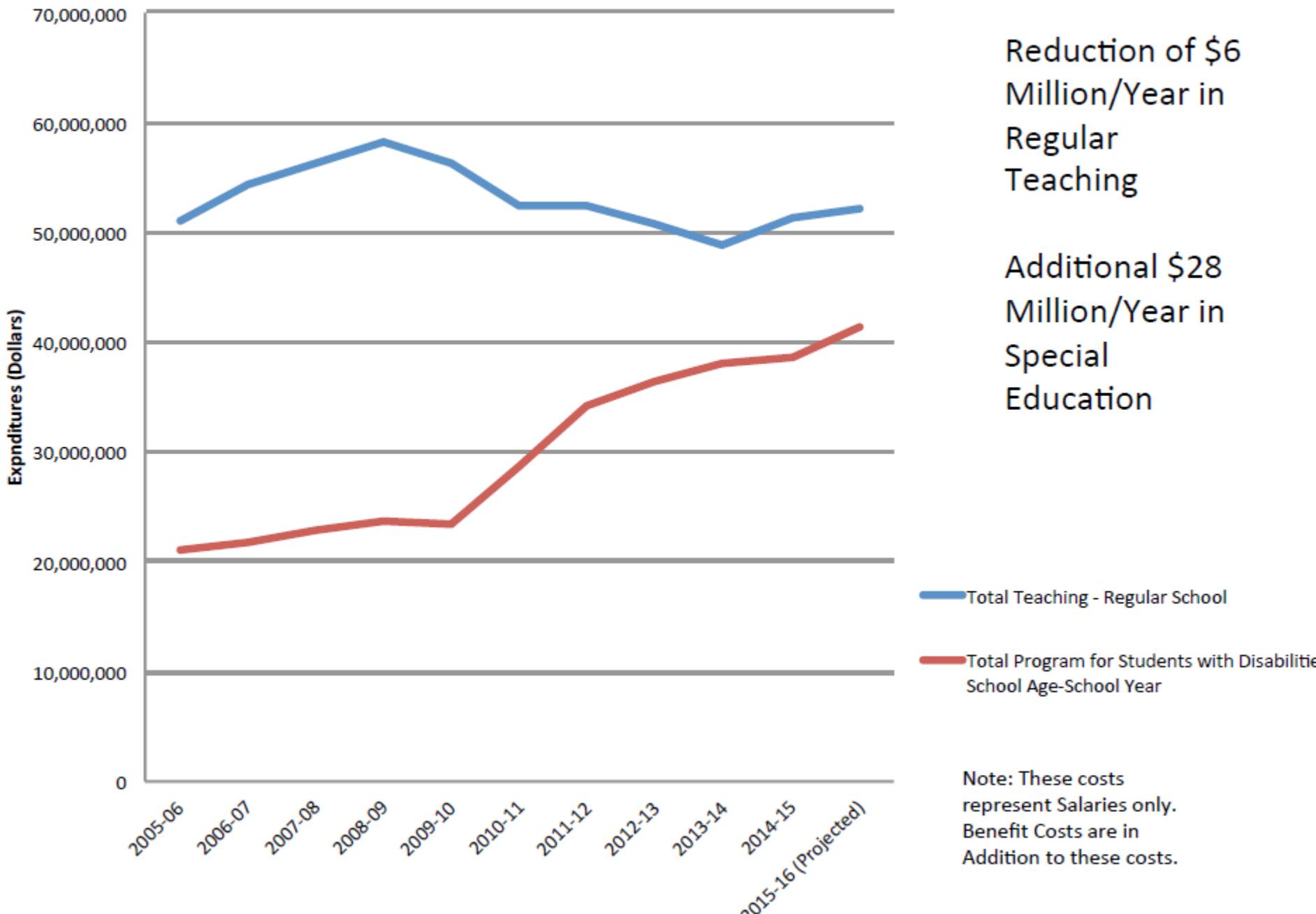
Reduction of
\$155,000/year
thru 2014/15

- Instructional Salaries
- Materials and Supplies
- BOCES Services
- Total Inservice Training - Instruction

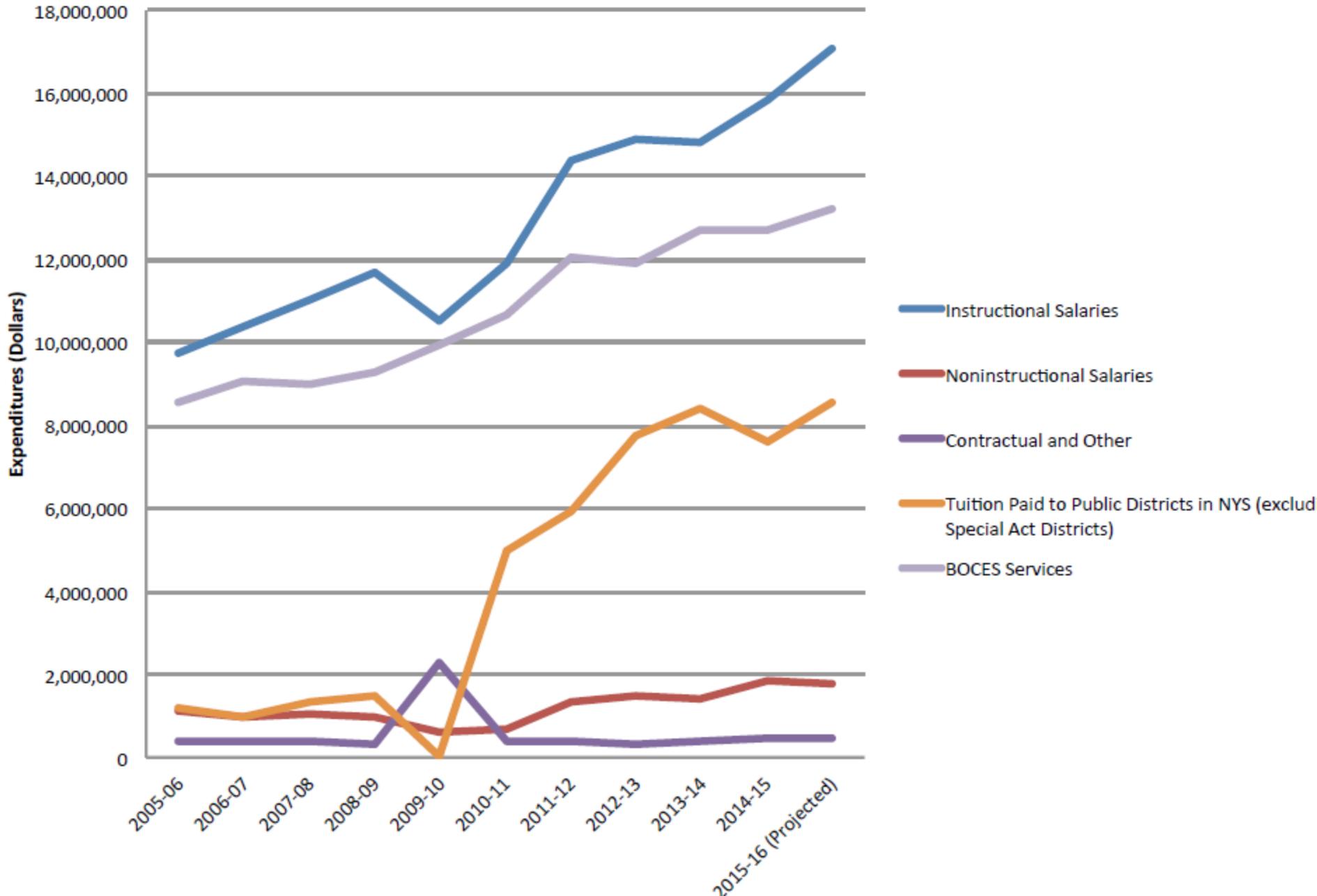
Expenditures on Services by Type and Year



Teaching Expenditures by Program Type



Expenditures for Program for Students with Disabilities



Title 1

2014-15

	# FRPL Students	% of FRPL by Sector		Title 1 Per Pupil Allocation
Public School FRPL	3,906	27%		\$1,098.00
Nonpublic School FRPL	10,674	73%		\$761.66
TOTAL FRPL students	14,580	Actual PPA = \$645		

2015-16

	# FRPL Students	% of FRPL by Sector		Title 1 Per Pupil Allocation
Public School FRPL	4,804	30%		\$873
Nonpublic School FRPL	11,383	70%		\$705
TOTAL FRPL students	16,187	Actual PPA = \$691		

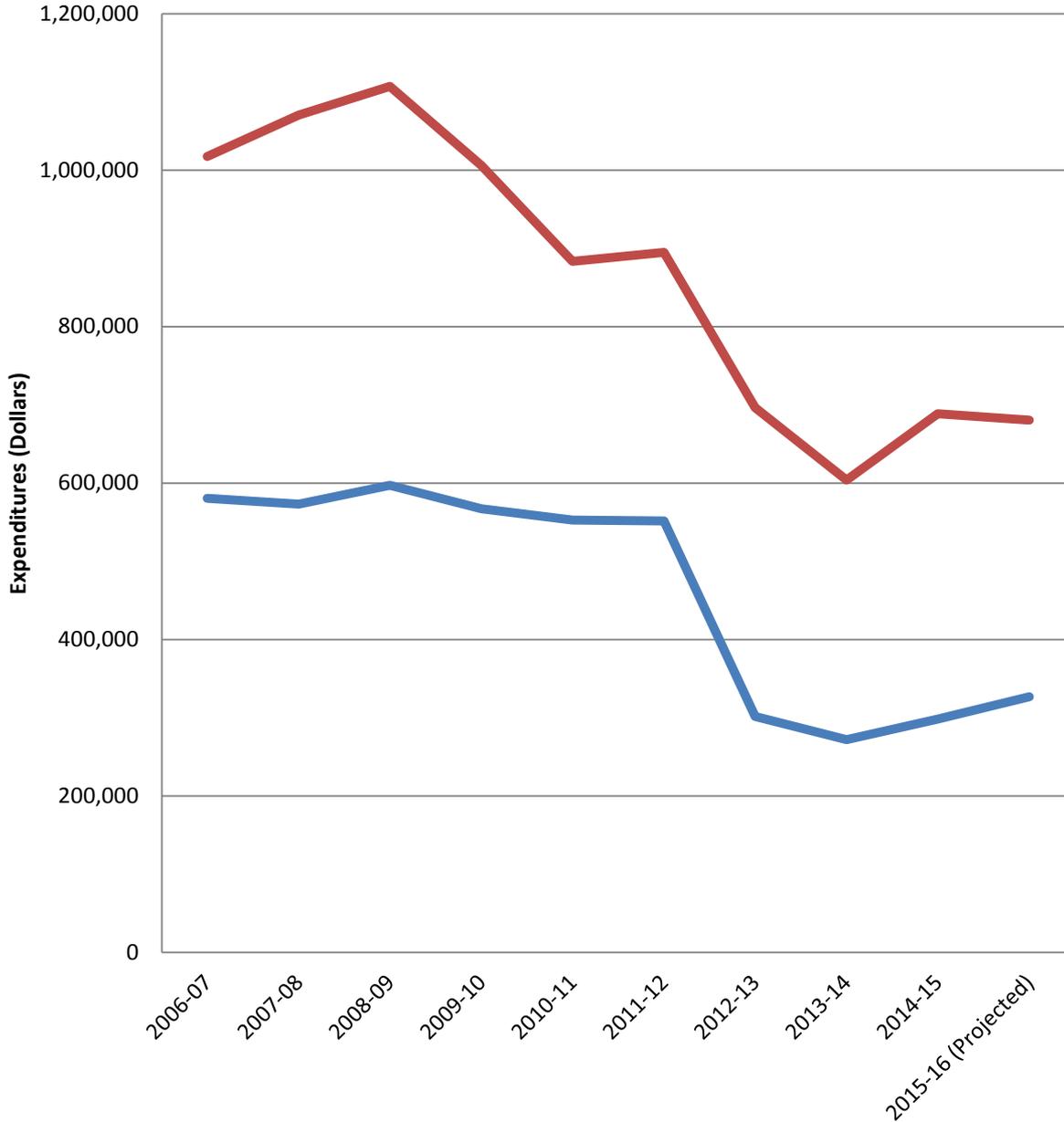
Title 1 Budget- 2015

Public	Non-Public	Total
\$5,046,072	\$9,684,752	\$14,730,824
34%	66%	% of Expenditures by Sector
30%	70%	FRPL Enrollment by Sector

Summer Rental Income

Fiscal Year	July 1-August 31 Recorded Summer Rental Revenue
2003	2,515
2004	6,847
2005	37,337
2006	24,275
2007	-
2008	69,215
2009	119,320
2010	144,422
2011	245,139
2012	210,831
2013	244,413
2014	277,861
2015	217,262

Expenditures on Co- & Extra-Curricular Activities by Type & Year

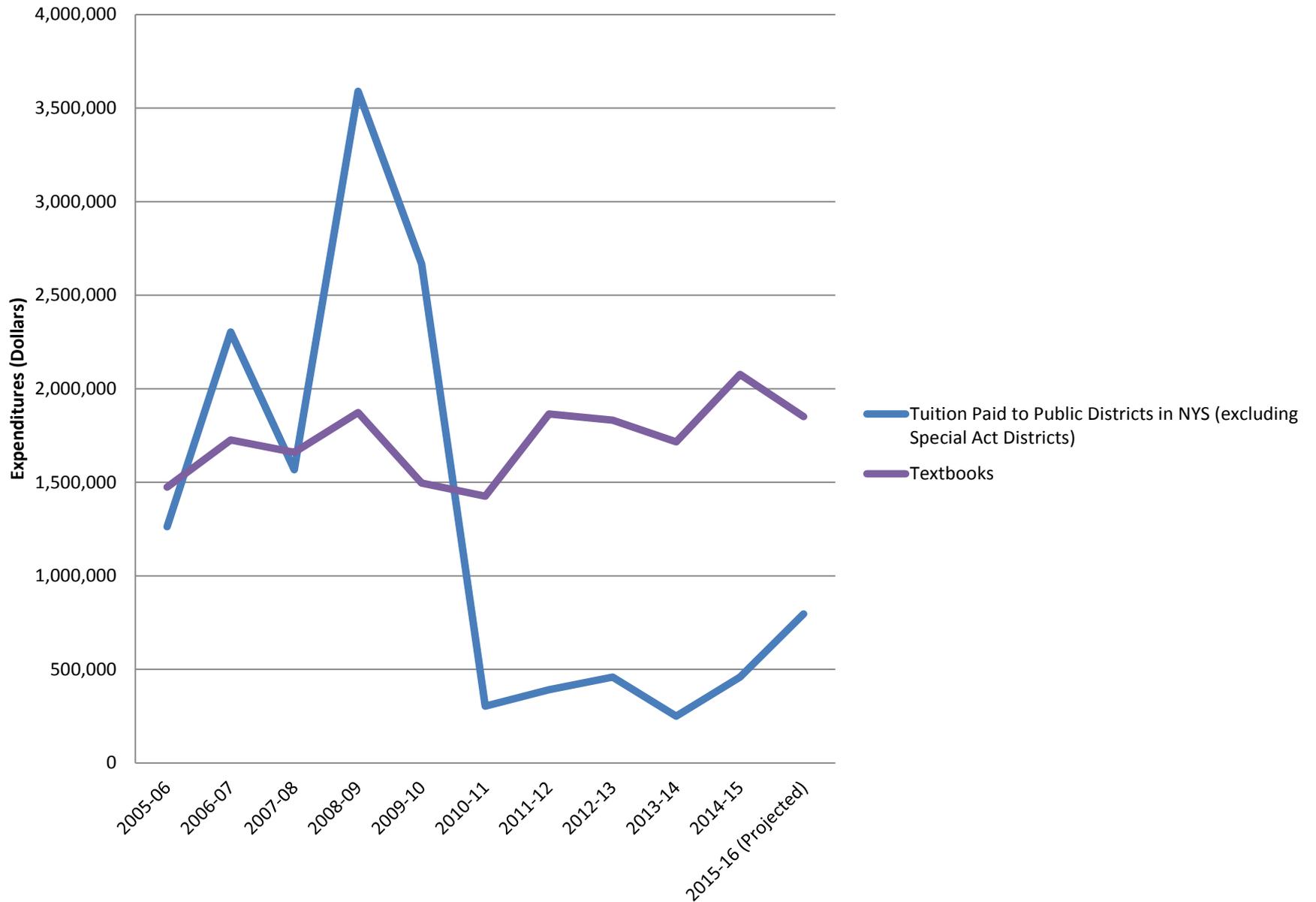


Reduced Interscholastic sports by \$500,000/year & Co-Curricular by \$270,000/year

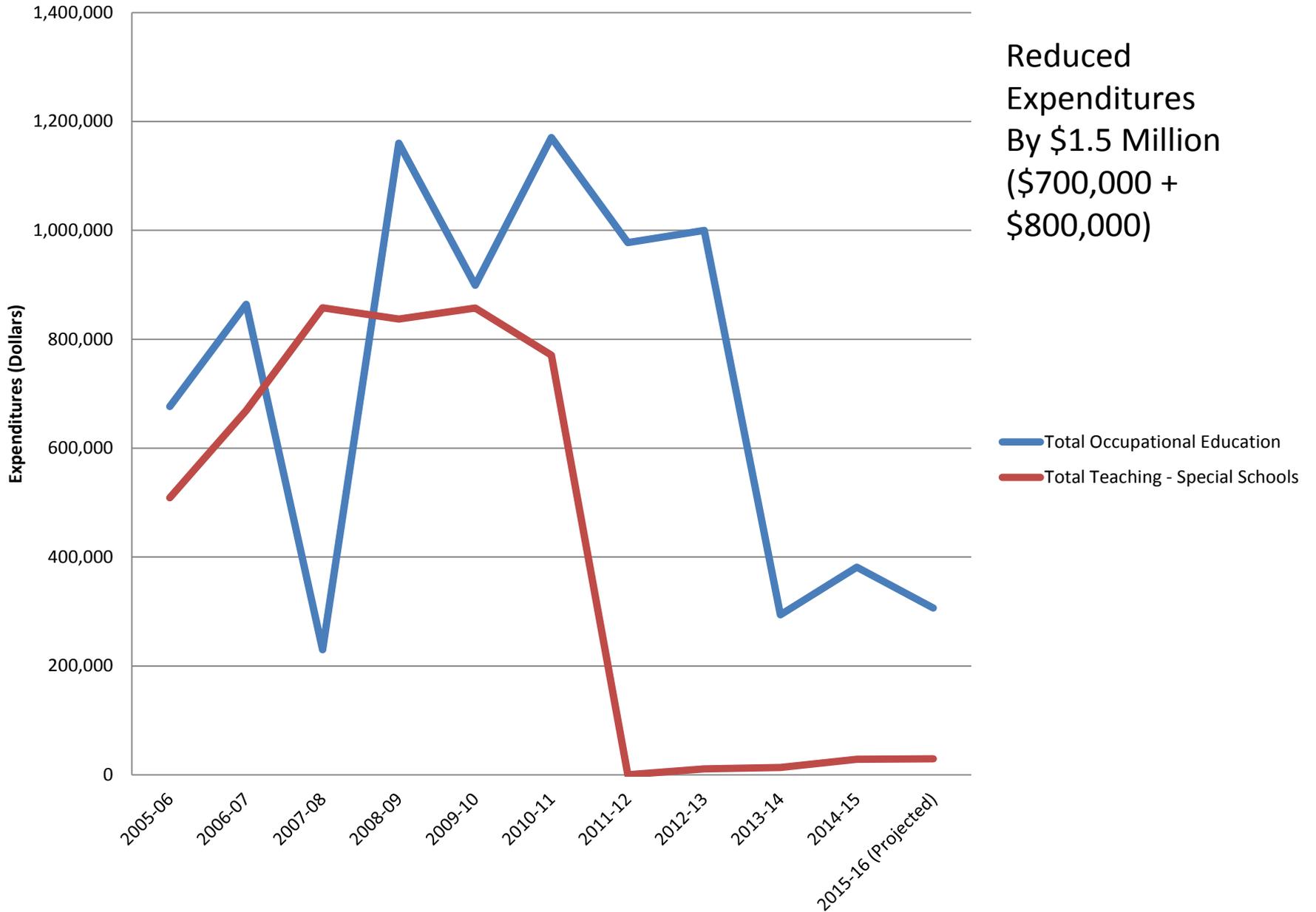
Total = \$770,000/year

- Total Co-Curricular Activities - Regular School
- Total Interscholastic Athletics - Regular School

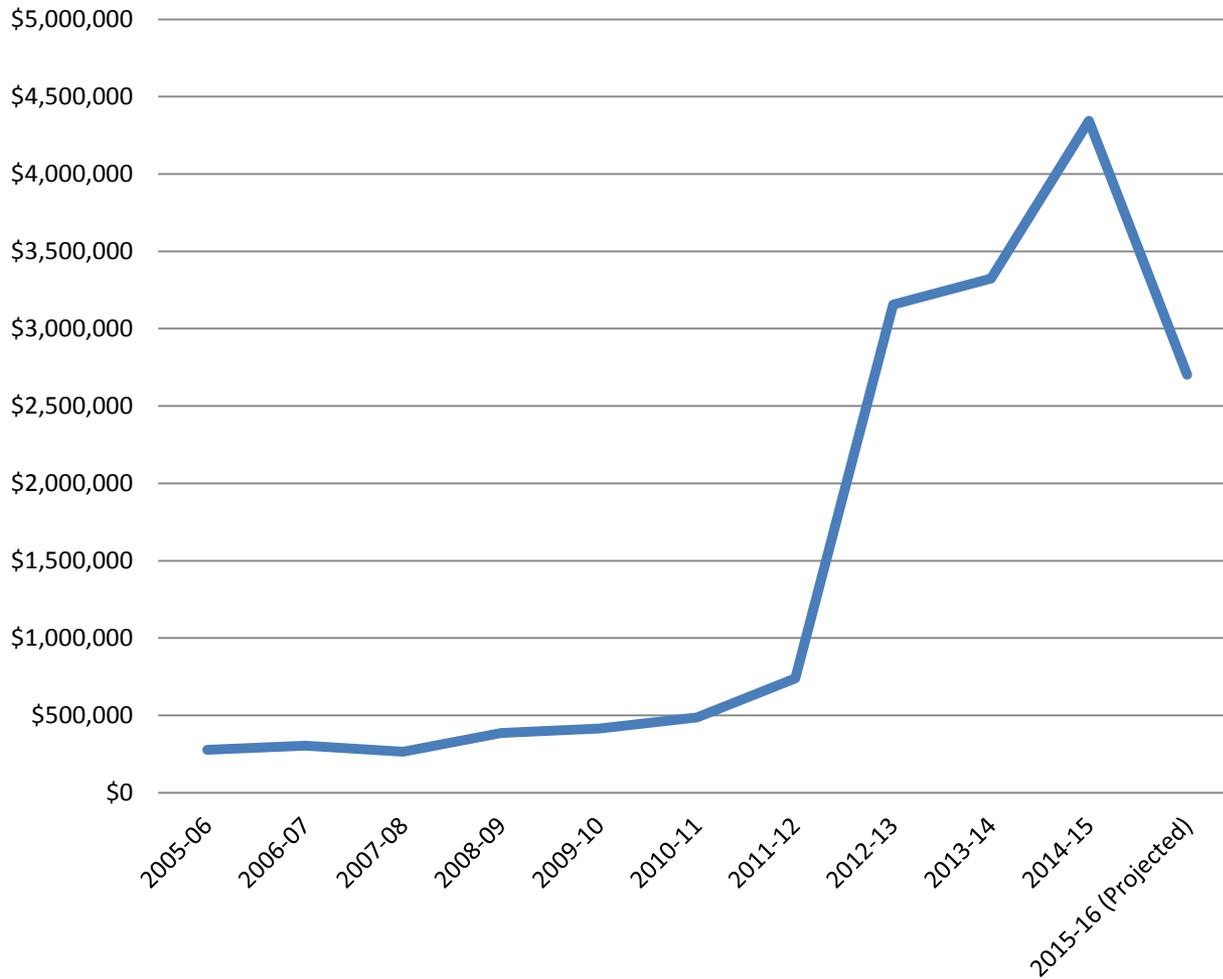
Instruction - Tuition & Textbooks



Instructional Expenses by Program Type & Year

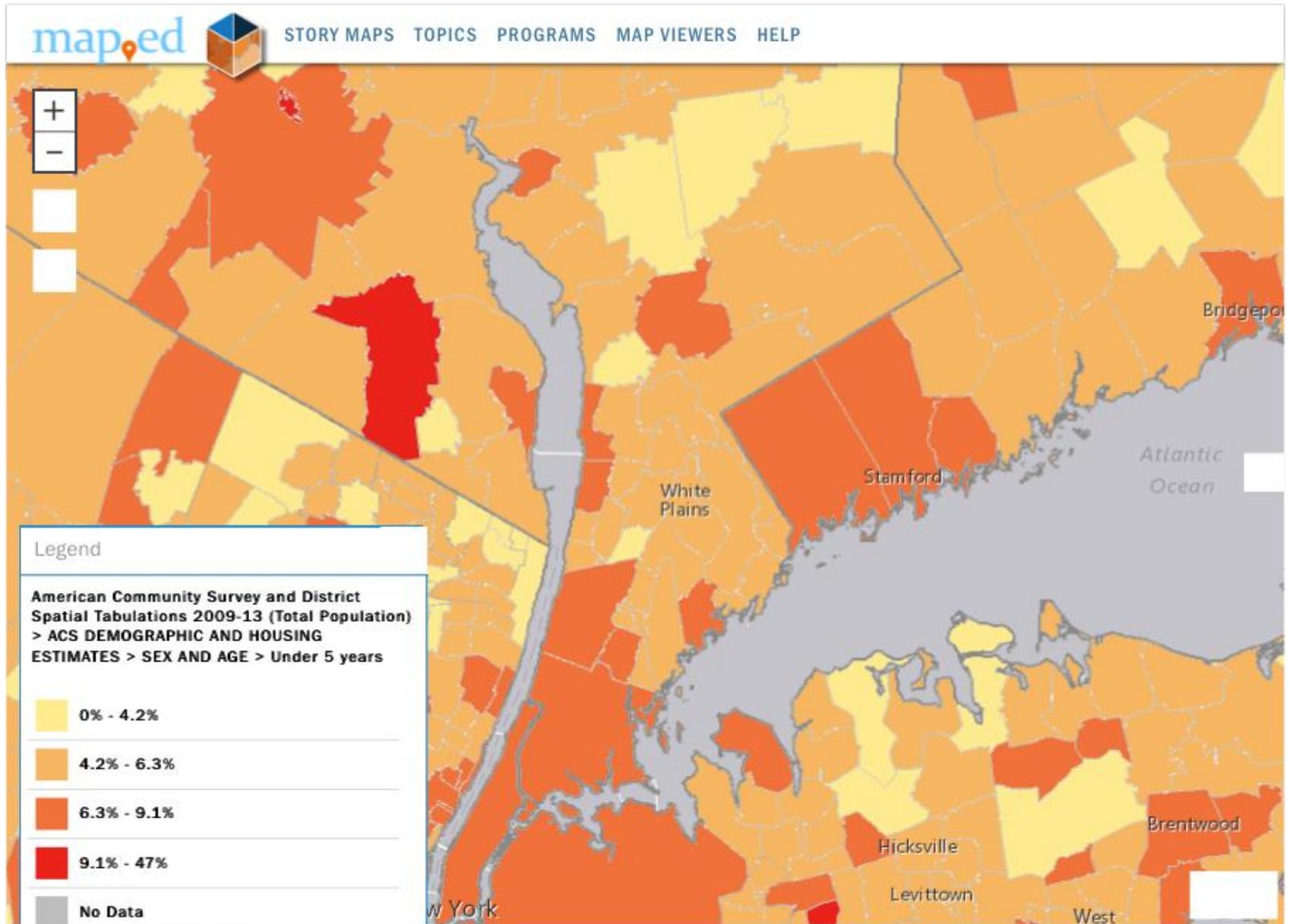


Total Legal Fees for ERCSD (2008/9-2015/16)

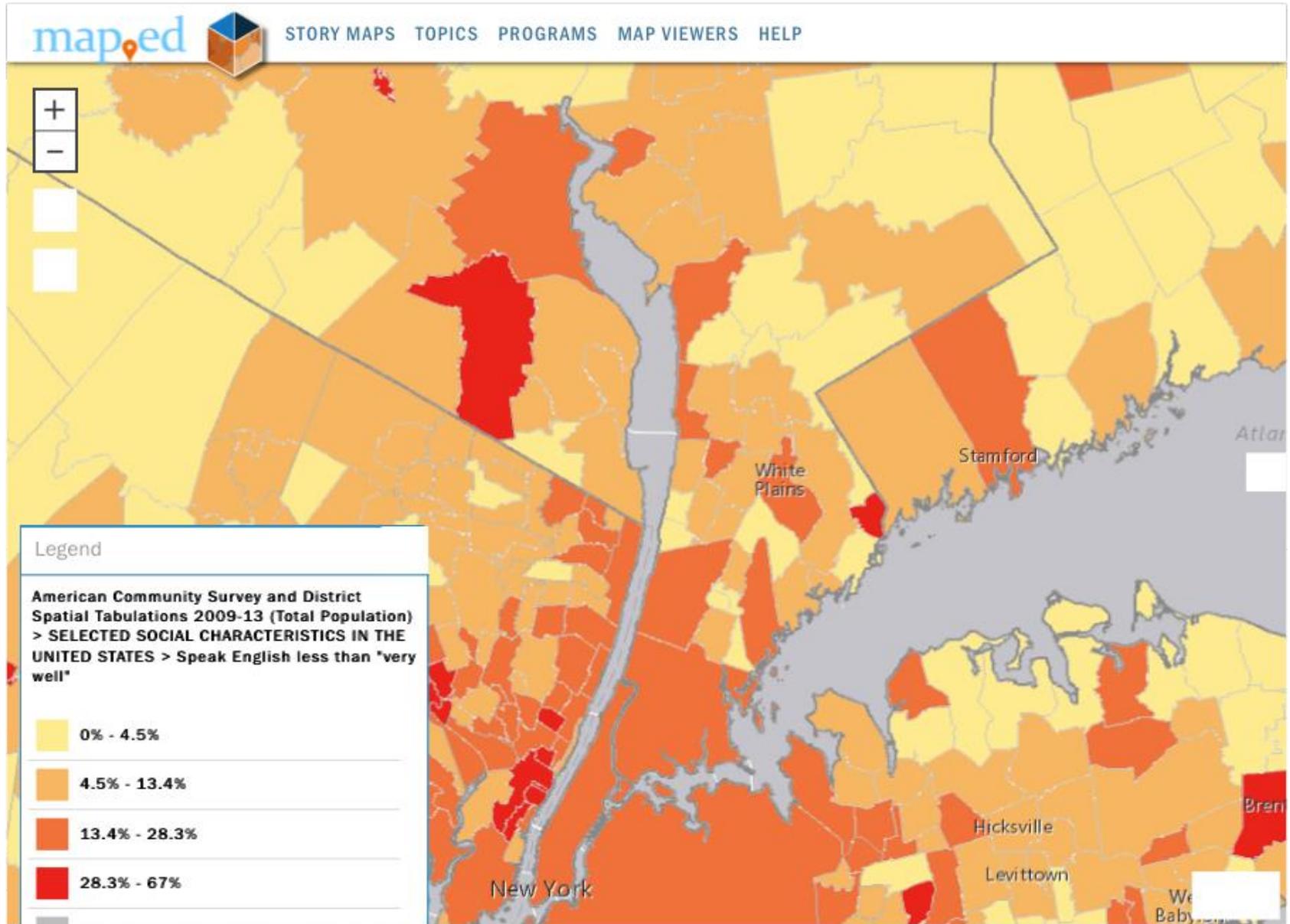


Additional Cost
of \$4
Million/year for
2014/15

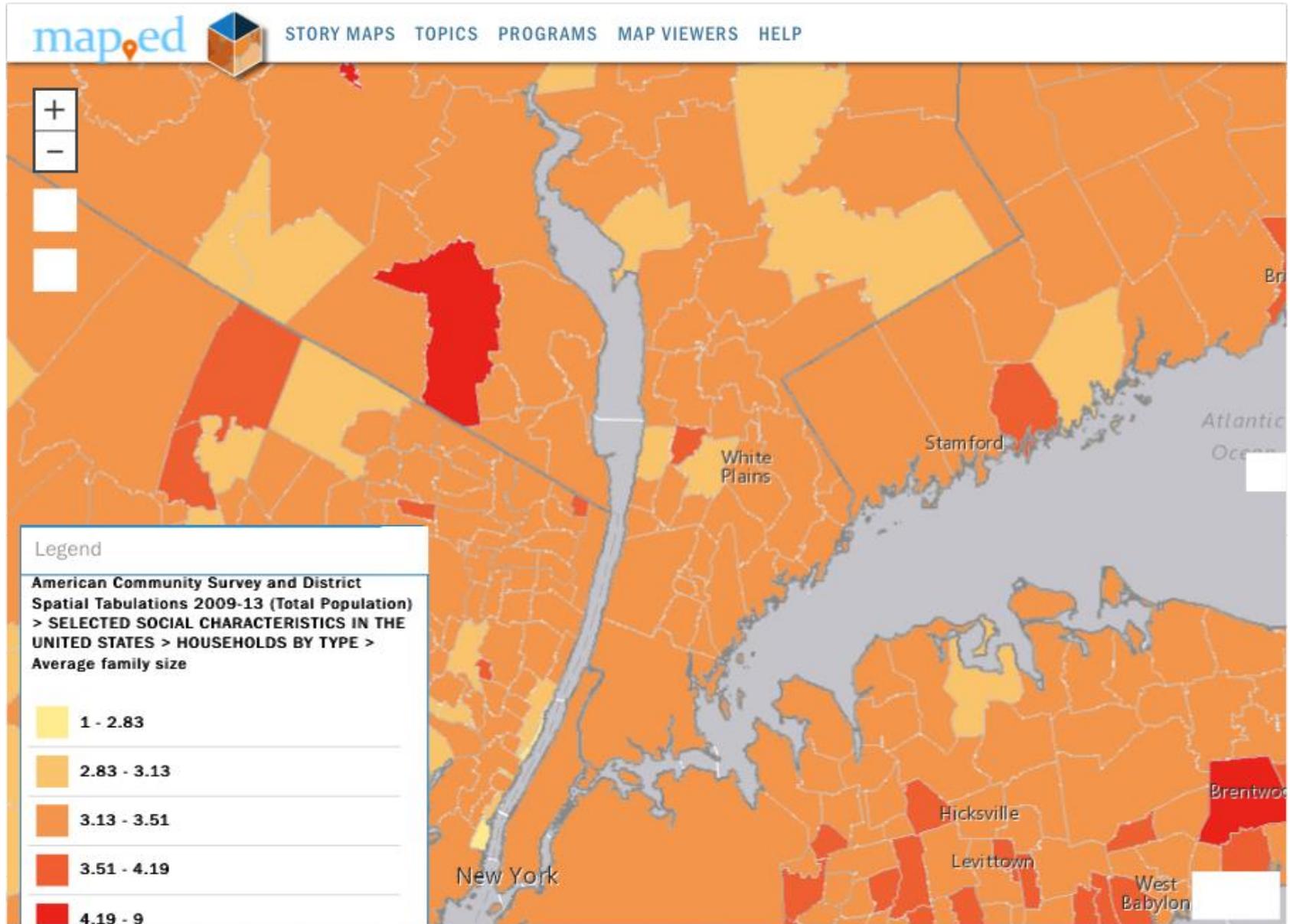
% Population Under 5 Years old



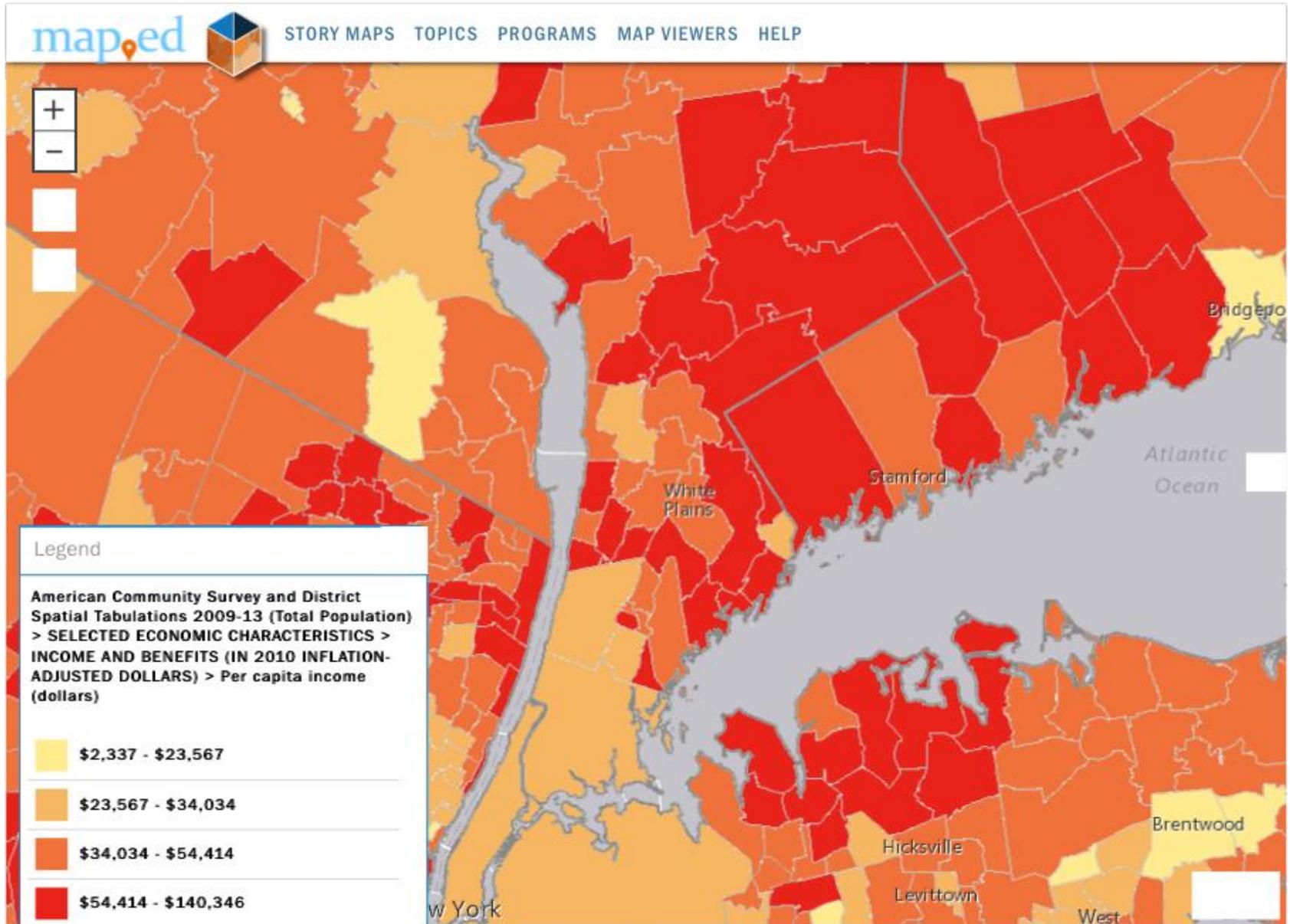
% Population Speaks English less than "very well"



Average Family Size



Per Capita Income



% High School Graduate or Higher

