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## **Comptroller's OREA Examines Tennessee Charter School Funding**

The Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) has released a new report examining whether charter schools in Tennessee receive the correct amount of funding from their authorizing school districts.

The report concludes that a definitive answer to the question of whether charter schools have received the correct amount of funding is not currently possible. The Comptroller's Office found there is insufficient clarity, transparency, and verification associated with the calculation and receipt of charter school funding in Tennessee.

In February 2016, the chair of the Senate Education Committee in Tennessee's General Assembly requested that the Comptroller's Office look into the issue.

The report focuses on four specific issues surrounding funding for charter schools.

One issue is the lack of clarity and consistency among state law, State Board of Education rules, and Tennessee Department of Education policies on the formula districts use to calculate the per-pupil funding that is required by law to follow students who attend charter schools.

Additionally, a lack of clarity and transparency exists in how additional growth funds a district may receive should be distributed to charter schools. Districts receive growth payments when they experience significant increases in enrollment.

The report also scrutinizes the local funds that are included or excluded from the per-pupil calculation for charter schools.

Lastly, the report found there is no process at the state level to verify that charter schools have received the correct amount of funding. With no definitive funding formula verified by the state, the Comptroller's Office cannot determine whether each district is calculating and transferring the correct amount of funding to its charter schools.

To view the full report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/OREA/>

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