

ESTIMATED
COST OF A
PLACE IN
SCHOOL IN
CATALUNYA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SÍNDIC

EL DEFENSOR
DE LES
PERSONES

ESTIMATED COST OF A PLACE IN SCHOOL IN CATALONIA

Agreement against School Segregation in Catalonia

The report *Estimated cost of a place in school in Catalonia* brings together the results of the work carried out by the European Commission on the cost of a place in school, aimed at quantifying the public expenditure necessary to ensure the provision of free places in school with equivalent quality standards between them.

1. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDYING THE COST OF A PLACE IN SCHOOL

The Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School has segmented this cost into four different **components**: (1) the cost of the basic teaching and support staff needed to teach during school hours; (2) the operating cost of the school, which includes spending associated with providing the material and technological resources necessary to provide education in appropriate conditions, payment for basic supplies, the provision of the necessary administrative and service staff and other considerations; (3) the cost of complementary school activities and services, including expenditure associated with payment for supplementary activities, out-of-school educational activities (outings and school camps), school supplies and textbooks, and the school cafeteria, fundamentally; as well as (4) the cost of attention to diversity, which includes spending associated with providing staff that meet students' specific educational needs, which are generally more present in schools with more complexity.

For each of these components, the Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School has tackled four associated **dimensions of analysis**: (a) the current public funding of public and charter schools, which corresponds to public expenditure intended to finance each of these components; (b) actual expenditure on public and charter schools, which corresponds to the actual cost allocated to these components, resulting from the sum of the public spending of public administrations and private spending by families; (c) the theoretical (accounting) cost, established by the Commission for studying the cost of a place in school, either calculated from the cost accounting of the schools that have it or from estimates made by applying the scales of values of public schools, and (d) the budgetary impact springing from applying the theoretical cost to all the places in school in the system, which would mean eliminating the payments made by families today, which is the result of the difference between current public funding and the theoretical cost.

At the same time, the Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School has estimated four **benchmarks** that apply to each component and dimension of analysis: (I) the cost per student, (II) the cost per unit, (III) the cost of the place in school and (IV) the total amount. The cost per unit or per place in school may be more appropriate for determining the spending associated with staffing or with operating the schools, while the cost per student may be more appropriate for determining the expenditure associated with complementary school activities and services.

This cost analysis, which provides data broken down by educational grades (second cycle of preschool, primary education and compulsory secondary education) and by the sector of ownership of the school (public and charter), is limited to places in school for compulsory basic education and compulsory universal and free education in standard ordinary schools for the year 2019. Schools such as ZER, schools without a minimum unit per grade and schools that only provide other forms of education are therefore excluded from the analysis. It should be borne in mind that the future use of this work must be based on updated data, at least with regard to changes in the cost of living.

To estimate these costs, the Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School uses data from liquidated budgets of public schools, data from educational, administrative and support staff in public schools, data from calls for grants for school activities and services, data from educational charter initiatives and subsidies for charter schools and funding data for general services, provided by the Catalan Ministry of Education. It also uses data from education budgets in local administrations, without disaggregating by school, data from liquidated budgets of a sample of 100 charter schools and, finally, data taken from a survey given to public and charter schools in 2019 regarding fees paid by families for different budget items, including 1,574 primary schools and 758 secondary schools of both public and charter varieties.

The theoretical cost is calculated by referring to a fully balanced schooling scenario that does not currently exist in which public schools and charter schools have an equivalent social composition.

2. CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO A PLACE IN SCHOOL: BENEFITS COVERED BY THE THEORETICAL COST

The cost of a place in school calculated through this study provides:

On the basic staffing of teaching and support staff

- Equalisation of the teaching hours of teaching staff available in public and charter schools, without modifying the teaching staff's working conditions (hourly dedication), taking the availability of teaching hours in public schools as a benchmark.

On the school's operational expenses

- Coverage of expenses directly related to the schools' provision of places for budget items such as communications, teaching activities, cleaning, supplies, school maintenance, computer equipment, equipment in teaching spaces and other spaces, administrative and support staff, structural improvement of school facilities (investments or depreciation of buildings), insurance and management expenses (and external services), taking the criteria for allocating the budget of the Catalan Ministry of Education in public schools as a benchmark.
- Non-accounting of expenditure on in-service teacher training (€26.40 per student in primary school and €20.20 per student in secondary school), nor of non-direct expenditure on the central service schools of the Catalan Ministry of Education (an additional €64.70 per student in primary and secondary school).

On complementary activities and services

- Free complementary activities in public and charter schools carried out by educators, not by teaching staff as has been the case so far in the charter school sector.
- Free school outings and free school camps every two years.
- Free material and textbooks.
- Specifically for students at risk of poverty, aid averaging 50% of the cost of using the school cafeteria.

On attention to diversity

- Increase of the teaching and support staff providing attention to diversity, applying the current ratio of students with specific educational needs in public schools with a ruling on an endowment covering students at risk of poverty.

3. QUANTIFYING THE COST OF A PLACE IN SCHOOL

The Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School places the theoretical cost at €4,973.63 per student in second cycle preschool and primary education (€5,117.30 per student in the public sector and €4,659.60 per student in the charter school sector) and €6,100.10 per student in secondary school (€6,579.99 per student in the public sector and €5,211.08 per student in the charter school sector) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Cost per student by sector of ownership and grade (2019)

Per student	EINF and EPRI				ESO				
	Public schools	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact
Basic staffing of teaching and support staff		3.226,0 €	3.226,0 €	3.226,0 €	0,0 €	4.652,2 €	4.652,2 €	4.652,2 €	0,0 €
School operations		516,8 €	641,8 €	708,9 €	102,6 €	619,9 €	776,6 €	734,9 €	243,2 €
Complementary activities and services		243,70 €	1.119,20 €	664,60 €	420,90 €	33,90 €	383,70 €	576,30 €	542,40 €
Attention to diversity		265,1 €	265,1 €	517,9 €	252,8 €	360,7 €	360,7 €	616,6 €	255,9 €
Aggregated cost		4.248,56 €	5.249,44 €	5.117,34 €	776,20 €	5.643,96 €	6.169,65 €	6.579,99 €	1.041,51 €

Per student		EINF and EPRI			ESO			
Charter schools	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact
Basic staffing of teaching and support staff	2.508,8 €	3.379,6 €	2.829,9 €	321,1 €	3.057,1 €	4.146,0 €	3.304,5 €	247,40 €
School operations	245,52 €	701,2 €	670,5 €	424,98 €	286,1 €	752,6 €	713,7 €	427,6 €
Complementary activities and services	75,20 €	2.385,80 €	641,30 €	566,10 €	75,20 €	2.327,10 €	576,30 €	501,10 €
Attention to diversity	27,5 €	244,3 €	517,9 €	490,4 €	54,8 €	330,1 €	616,6 €	561,8 €
Aggregated cost	2.859,58 €	6.710,82 €	4.659,63 €	1.800,03 €	3.469,50 €	7.555,89 €	5.211,08 €	1.741,58 €
Total	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact
Basic staffing of teaching and support staff	3.000,8 €	3.274,2 €	3.101,6 €	100,8 €	4.093,0 €	4.474,7 €	4.179,8 €	86,7 €
School operations	430,3 €	658,6 €	696,9 €	203,0 €	486,8 €	765,9 €	727,5 €	309,1 €
Complementary activities and services	190,8 €	1.516,9 €	657,3 €	466,5 €	48,4 €	1.065,0 €	576,3 €	527,9 €
Attention to diversity	190,5 €	258,6 €	517,9 €	327,4 €	253,5 €	350,0 €	616,6 €	363,1 €
Aggregated cost	3.812,45 €	5.708,28 €	4.973,63 €	1.097,66 €	4.881,69 €	6.655,61 €	6.100,11 €	1.286,93 €

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, local administrations, the *Enquesta de quotes* (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

Note: The calculation of public funding is based on the average investment scenario (operating cost) and the current schooling scenario: inequitable distribution of socially disadvantaged students and non-equivalence of school hours (cost of complementary activities and services). The calculation of actual expenditure is based on basic operating expenses (operating cost) and the sum of complementary activities, extracurricular activities and school supplies, the school cafeteria and other services (cost of complementary activities and services). The calculation of theoretical costs and budgetary impacts is based on the standard cost (operating cost), the full balanced schooling scenario (cost of complexity) and the average scenario (cost of complementary activities and services).

The total budgetary impact for guaranteeing this investment in schools would be €1.1638 billion in total, €581.2 million in the public sector and €582.6 million in the charter school sector (see Table 2).

Table 2. Total cost of a place in school by sector of ownership and grade (2019)

Total amount		TOTAL		
Public schools	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact
Basic staffing of teaching and support staff	2.482.309.322,6 €	2.482.309.322,6 €	2.482.309.322,6 €	0,0 €
School operations	365.588.885,3 €	461.021.596,5 €	486.014.320,9 €	98.642.269,2 €
Complementary activities and services	121.807.482,2 €	606.635.726,6 €	432.301.516,2 €	310.494.034,0 €
Attention to diversity	199.516.987,8 €	199.516.987,8 €	371.536.753,3 €	172.019.765,5 €
Aggregated cost	3.169.222.677,9 €	3.749.483.633,5 €	3.772.161.913,0 €	581.156.068,7 €
Charter schools	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact
Basic staffing of teaching and support staff	882.346.423,9 €	1.191.710.799,2 €	979.207.468,8 €	96.858.490,6 €
School operations	85.028.718,2 €	235.231.704,7 €	224.276.567,3 €	139.247.849,1 €
Complementary activities and services	24.601.831,6 €	774.290.007,6 €	202.639.506,4 €	178.037.674,8 €
Attention to diversity	12.059.034,5 €	89.540.130,1 €	180.519.683,7 €	168.460.649,2 €
Aggregated cost	1.004.036.008,2 €	2.290.772.641,6 €	1.586.643.226,2 €	582.604.663,74 €
Total	Public funding	Real expenditure	Theoretical cost	Budgetary impact
Basic staffing of teaching and support staff	3.364.655.746,5 €	3.674.020.121,8 €	3.461.516.791,4 €	96.858.490,6 €
School operations	450.617.603,5 €	696.253.301,2 €	710.290.888,2 €	237.890.118,3 €
Complementary activities and services	146.409.313,8 €	1.380.925.734,2 €	634.941.022,6 €	488.531.708,8 €
Attention to diversity	211.576.022,3 €	289.057.117,9 €	552.056.437,0 €	340.480.414,7 €
Aggregated cost	4.173.258.686,1 €	6.040.256.275,1 €	5.358.805.139,2 €	1.163.760.732,4 €

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, local administrations, the *Enquesta de quotes* (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

Note: The calculation of public funding is based on the average investment scenario (operating cost) and the current schooling scenario: inequitable distribution of socially disadvantaged students and non-equivalence of school hours (cost of complementary activities and services). The calculation of actual expenditure is based on basic operating expenses (operating cost) and the sum of complementary activities, extracurricular activities and school supplies, the school cafeteria and other services (cost of complementary activities and services). The calculation of theoretical costs and budgetary impacts is based on the standard cost (operating cost), the full balanced schooling scenario (cost of complexity) and the average scenario (cost of complementary activities and services).

4. NECESSARY CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONTEXTUALISING THE COST OF A PLACE IN SCHOOL

1. The unequal social composition of the schools

Determining the cost of a place in school, framed in the Agreement against School Segregation, is based on the assumption that all schools have a balanced social composition, though this is not currently the case.

The social composition of the schools is currently quite unequal, not only between schools of different sectors of ownership, but also between schools within each sector of ownership. By way of illustration, according to data provided by the Catalan Ministry of Education, 61.3% of public schools are of medium-high, high or very high complexity, while 38.7% are of medium-low or low complexity. In contrast, 74.6% of charter schools have medium-low or low complexity but 25.4% have medium-high, high or very high complexity (see Table 3 and Figure 1).

In general, charter schools have a more favourable social composition than schools in the public sector: for example, public schools have a higher proportion of foreign students than charter schools and also have students with parents with a comparatively lower level of education.

These imbalances are relevant not only because they highlight the persistence of this phenomenon and the need to combat it, but also, especially in the context of this report, because they can help to explain differences in school funding.

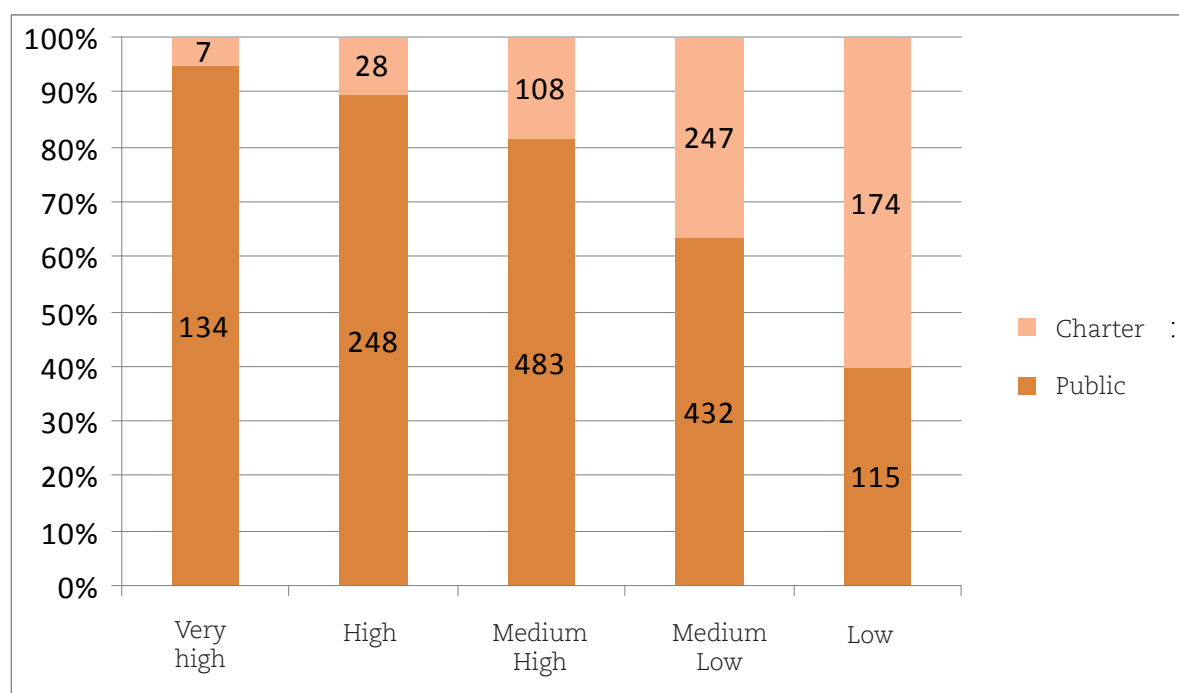
Table 3. School complexity by sector of ownership (2019)

	Public (n)	Charter (n)	Public (%)	Charter (%)
Very high	134	7	9,5	1,2
High	248	28	17,6	5,0
Medium-high	483	108	34,2	19,1
Medium-low	432	247	30,6	43,8
Low	115	174	8,1	30,9

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education.

Note: Unclassified schools are excluded.

Figure 1. School complexity by sector of ownership (2019)



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education.

2. The highest public spending in the public school sector and the highest private spending in the charter school sector

In line with the previous section, the first piece of evidence when analysing the cost of a place in school is the fact that public spending is higher in the public sector than in the private sector. This favourable difference in the public sector, which amounts to €1,220.50 per student in primary school and €2,215.70 per student in secondary school, without counting complementary activities and services (or €1,389 per student and €2,174.50 per student in secondary school, with complementary activities and services), is mainly explained by the different costs of staffing in schools of different types of ownership, although there are also other influencing factors (see Figures 2 and 3).

As stated above, the difference in public funding for teaching activity has to do with a greater provision of teaching hours for teachers in the public sector, and also to less time devoted to classroom teaching for teachers in public schools compared to charter schools, especially in secondary education. This greater provision of teachers occurs in a scenario in which the public sector has a greater shared responsibility in the schooling of socially disadvantaged students.

In contrast, the public funding received by public and charter schools for operating expenses or for attention to diversity does not present such significant differences.

Without this difference in staff size, which largely does not reflect a differentiated provision of teaching hours in schools, but the need for a differentiated provision of teachers (with differentiated hours) to meet the same number of teaching hours, public spending in public and charter schools would be similar.

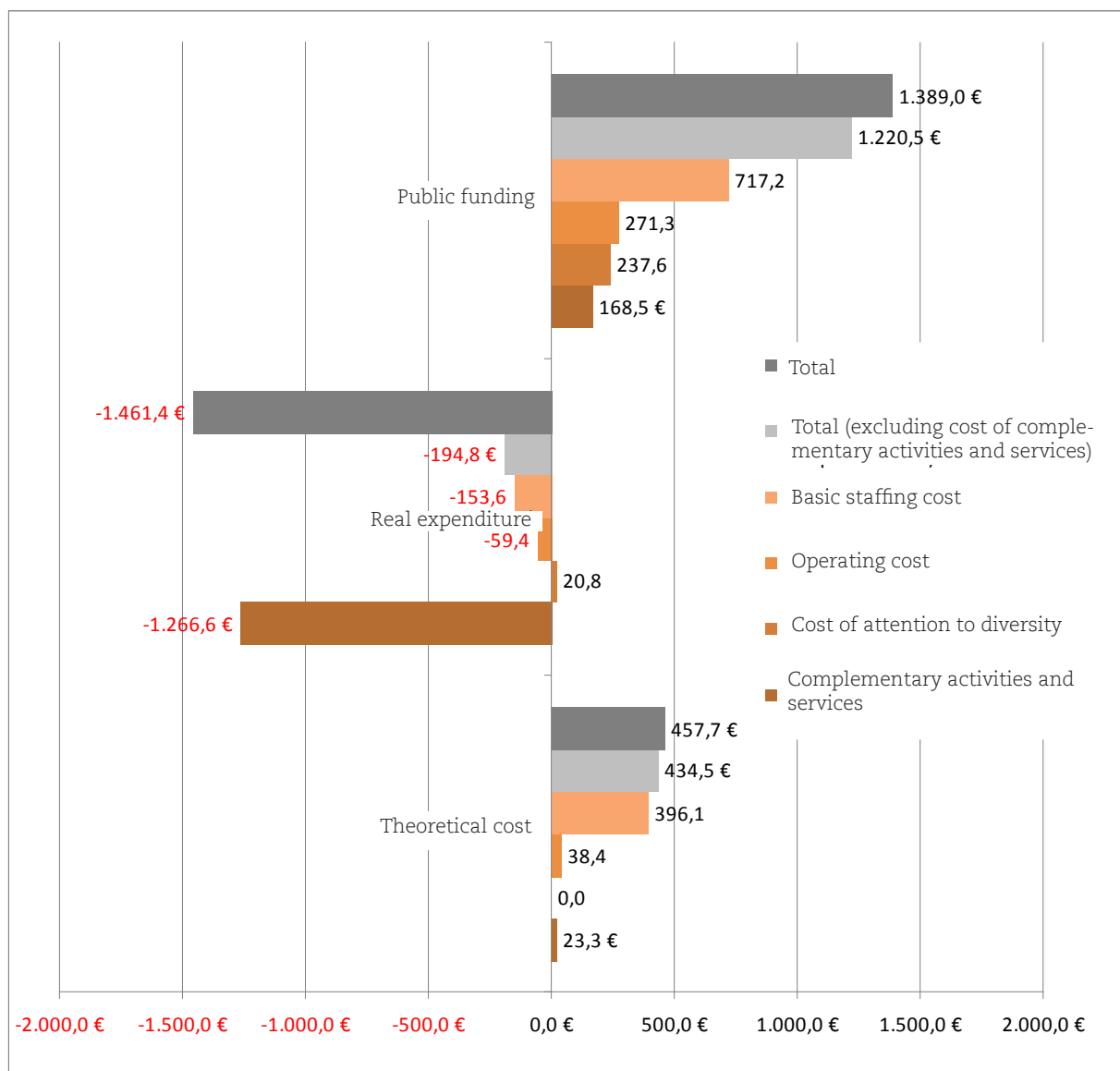
Although public funding is higher in the public sector, the actual expenditure of the schools, whether public or private, tends to be more balanced between sectors of ownership when complementary activities and services are not taken into account,

mainly because private spending on charter schools is also higher. So without counting the complementary activities and services, the public and charter schools have a real equivalent cost, although in the charter school sector a larger part of this is funded by contributions from families.

Moreover, without counting the complementary activities and services, the real expenditure of primary schools, combining public and private funding, is higher in charter schools than in public schools. However, the real spending of public schools is higher in the public sector than in the charter school sector.

However, when accounting for complementary activities and services, the actual expenditure per student in charter schools is significantly higher than in public schools. In primary school, this comes out to €1,461.40 per student in charter schools, and in secondary school, it is €1,386.20 per student, also in charter schools.

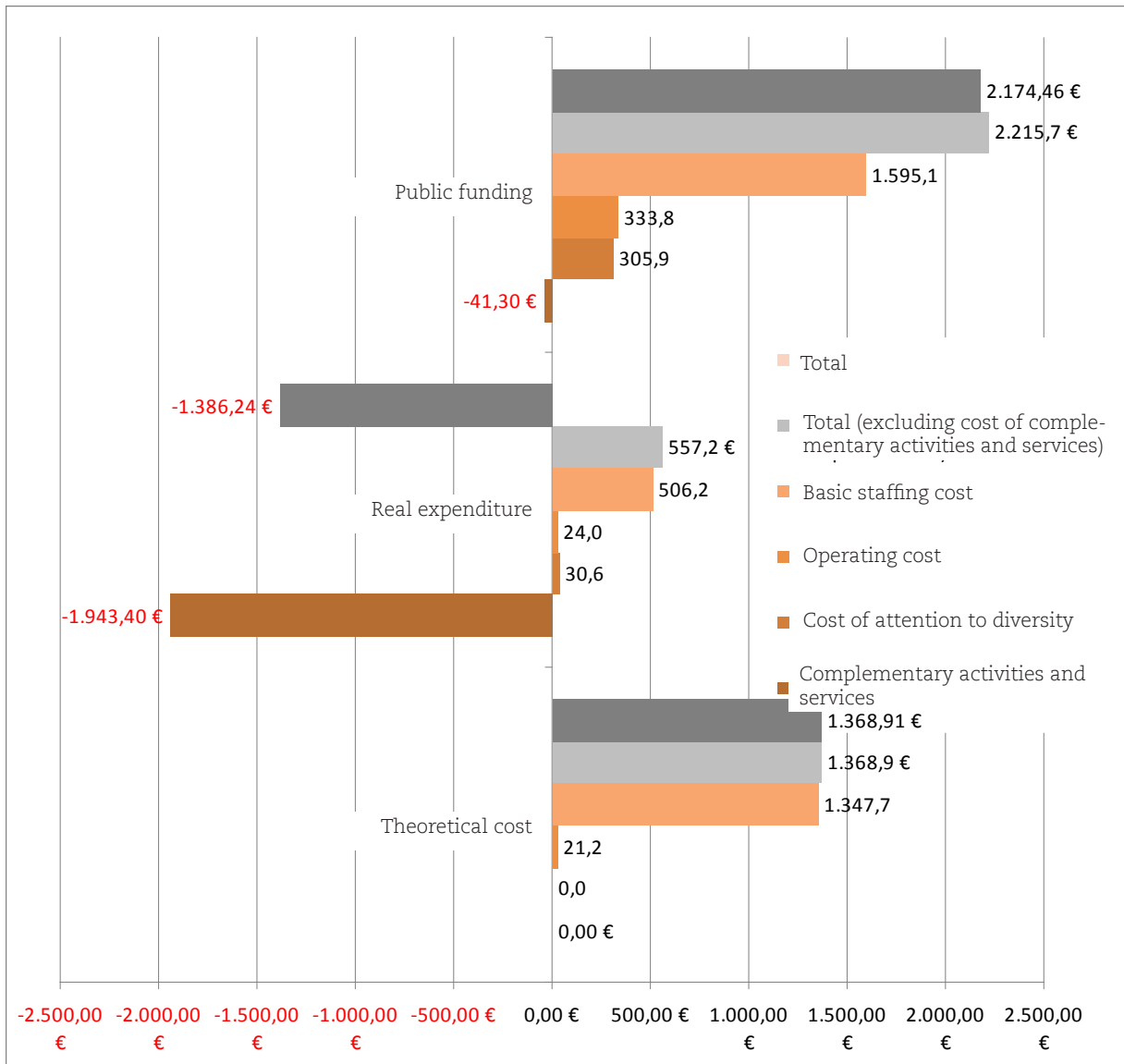
Figure 2. Cost difference (with and without complementary activities and services) between sectors of ownership (in favour of the public sector) in primary education (2019)



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, the Enquesta de quotes (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

Note: The data show the calculated difference in funding for each component of the cost between the public and private sector (public school sector financing-charter school sector financing).

Figure 3. Cost difference (with and without complementary activities and services) between sectors of ownership (in favour of the public sector) in compulsory secondary education (ESO) (2019)



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, the Enquesta de quotes (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

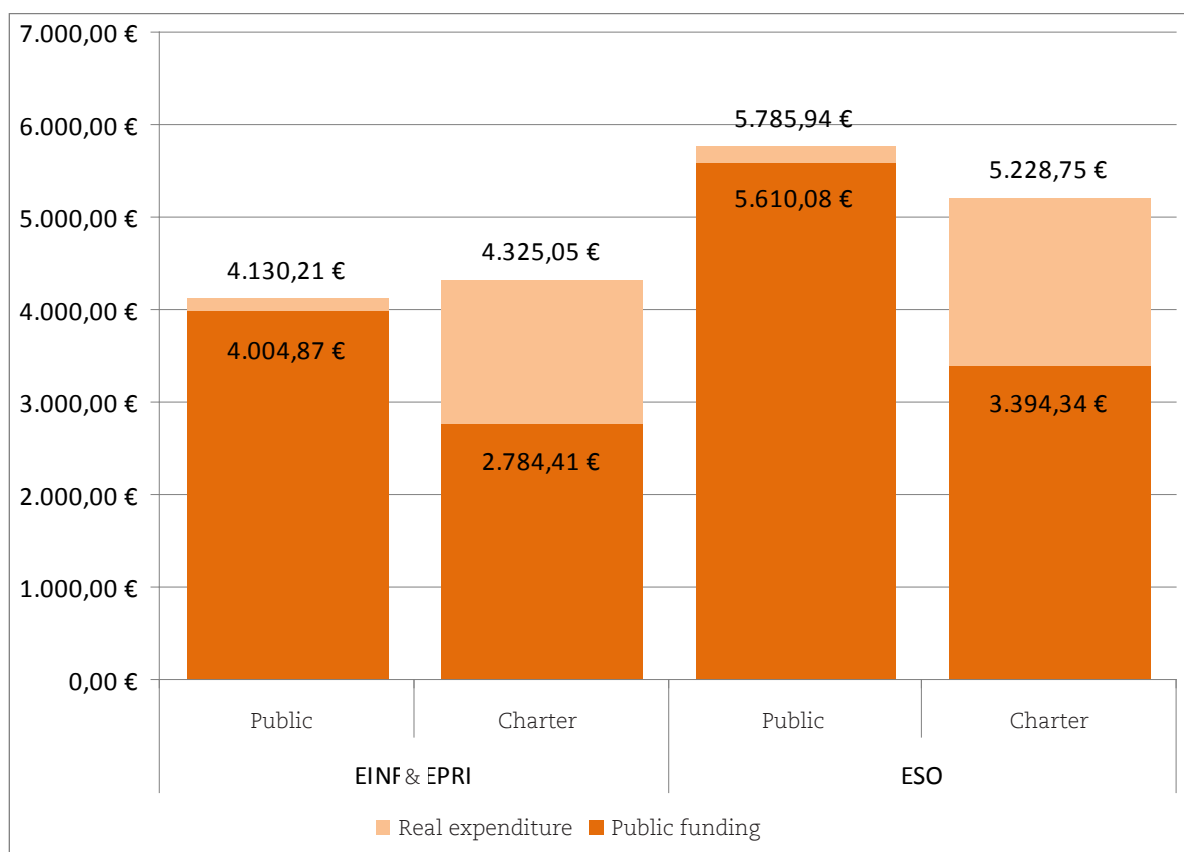
Note: The data show the calculated difference in funding for each component of the cost between the public and private sector (public school sector financing-charter school sector financing).

3. Public underfunding of places in school

The study of places in school has also made the remarkable discovery that public administrations' current investment in places in school is insufficient for covering the cost without the need for co-payment, whether measured to ensure the public funding needed to cover the actual cost of the place in school (see Figure 4) or to cover the theoretical cost of the place in school, in accordance with the criteria established by the Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School (see Figure 5).

In both cases, underfunding is higher in the private sector than in the public sector when this expenditure is calculated per student (without analysing this student according to the prevalence of specific educational needs). However, it is worth repeating that the social composition of the two sectors of ownership is also currently unequal: as noted above, the public sector enrolls a higher proportion of socially disadvantaged students, which in turn requires higher per capita expenditure.

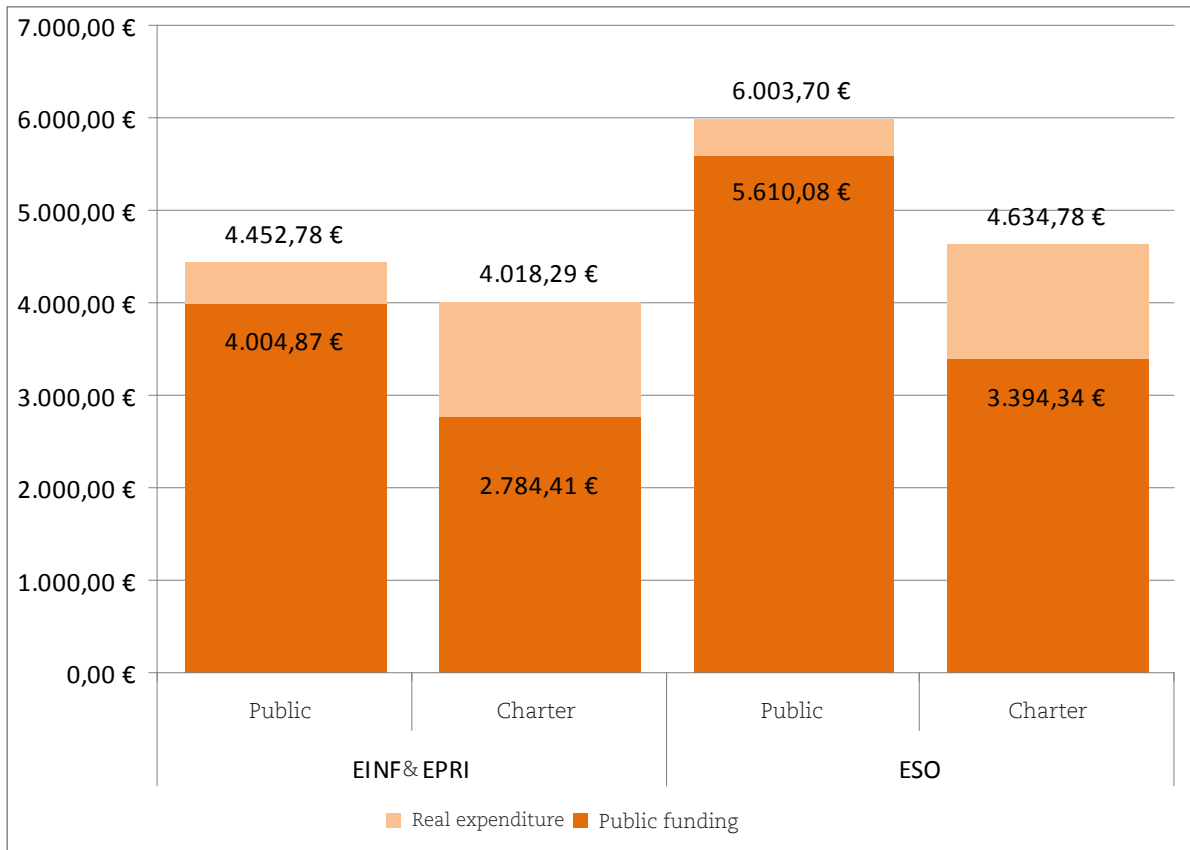
Figure 4. The relationship between public funding and real expenditure per student by sector of ownership (2019)



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, the *Enquesta de quotes* (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

Note: Data on real expenditure and public funding do not account for investment in complementary activities and services.

Figure 5. The relationship between public funding and theoretical cost per student by sector of ownership (2019)



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, the Enquesta de quotes (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

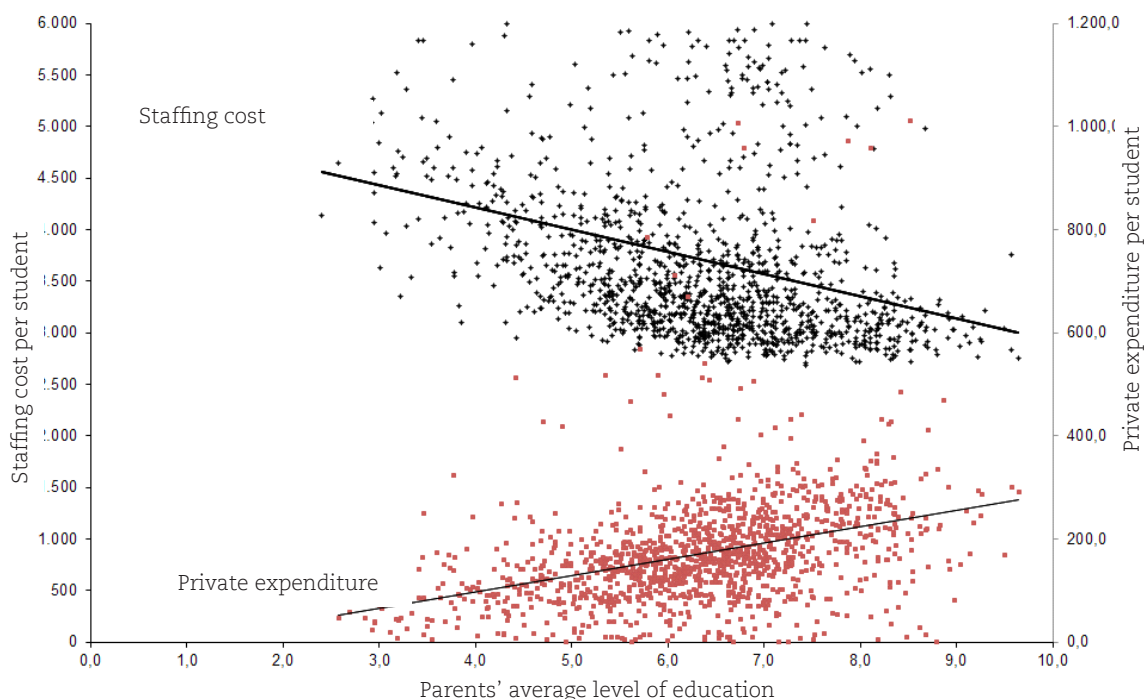
Note: Data on real expenditure and public funding do not account for investment in complementary activities and services.

4. The differentiated relationship between private spending, public spending and social composition by sector of ownership

A third notable piece of evidence from studying the cost of a place in school is the relationship between social composition and public and private spending, with some differences between sectors of ownership.

In the public sector, there is a statistically significant relationship between the social composition of public schools and staffing, but also an inverse relationship between the social composition and contributions from families: schools with a more disadvantaged social composition have a higher number of teachers, but also less revenue coming from families (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. The relationship between staffing costs, contributions from families and the social composition of public primary schools (2019)



	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	1.331	2,6	9,6	6,3	1,22
Private expenditure per student	1.332	0,4	1011,2	171,7	105,58
Staffing cost per student	1.332	2.812,5	13.701,7	3.888,2	938,73

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education

Note: The black dots reflect the relationship between the cost of staffing per student and the parents' average level of education in different public schools. The orange dots show the relationship between private expenditure per student and the parents' average level of education in different public schools.

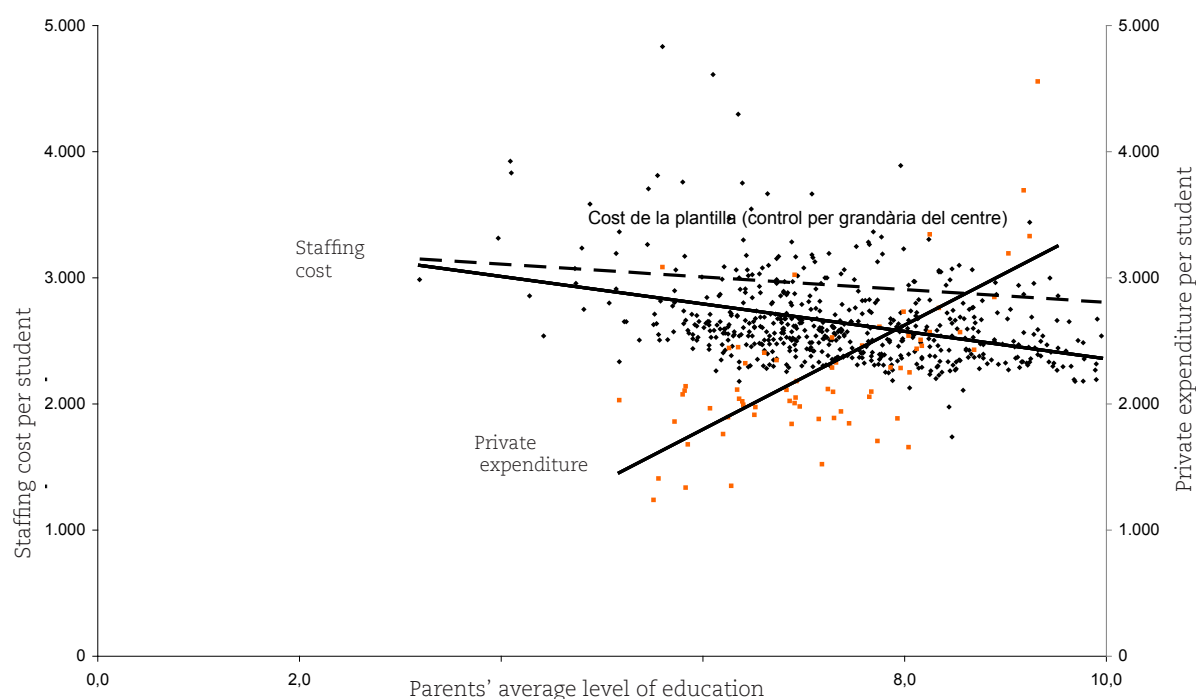
The variable of the parents' level of education can range in each school from 1 to 10 depending on the average of the values assigned to each level of studies according to Idescat's classification (where 1 is "cannot read or write" and 10 is "degree and doctorate").

The teaching staff in charter schools also has a statistically significant relationship with the social composition of the school, mainly because it is conditioned by the school's size: schools with a more favourable social composition tend to be larger and by applying teaching staff ratios, they have a comparatively lower proportion of teachers per student. In fact, when the size of the teaching staff is controlled, this relationship is diminished (see the regression line in Figure 7).

However, in the charter school sector, the strong association between family contributions and the social composition of the school is especially relevant.

In general, in both the public and private sectors, the association between social composition and private spending is more robust than between social composition and public spending.

Figure 7. The relationship between staffing costs, contributions from families and the social composition of charter primary schools (2019)



	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	564	3,2	9,9	7,4	1,15
Private expenditure per student	95	1.238,5	8.034,4	3.073,3	1.471,17
Staffing cost per student	577	1.486,2	8.309,2	2.646,4	414,30

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education.

Note: The black dots reflect the relationship between the cost of staffing per student and the parents' average level of education in different charter schools. The orange dots show the relationship between private expenditure per student and the parents' average level of education in different charter schools (sample). The discontinuous regression line corresponds to the relationship between the staffing cost per

student and the parents' average level of education on a par with the size of the schools.

The variable of the parents' level of education can range in each school from 1 to 10 depending on the average of the values assigned to each level of studies according to Idescat's classification (where 1 is "cannot read or write" and 10 is "degree and doctorate").

This strong association between private spending and social composition is observed when analysing the fees for school activities and services. For most complementary activities or services subject to a fee, there is a strong association between the amount of the fee and the complexity of the school: the amount of the fees, which is higher in the charter school sector than in the public sector, decreases as the complexity of the school increases (see Tables 4 and 5). This can clearly be seen regarding fees for school outings and camps (see Figures 8 and 9).

Table 4. Family contributions to public primary schools based on their complexity (2019)

Public		AMPA/AFA	Outings and camps	School material	Cafeteria
Very high	Medium	17,6	56,3	86,6	1.080,9
	N	72	74	98	72
High	Medium	23,6	102,9	88,6	1.064,1
	N	152	152	175	142
Medium high	Medium	27,2	123,7	93,1	1.071,3
	N	302	312	341	279
Medium low	Medium	34,9	133,3	101,1	1.076,1
	N	270	269	295	240
Low	Medium	50,3	178,8	119,7	1.069,8
	N	63	69	70	63
Unclassified	Medium	29,0	136,0	75,5	1.031,0
	N	147	163	177	126
Total	Medium	29,8	123,9	92,8	1.066,6
	N	1.006	1.039	1.156	922

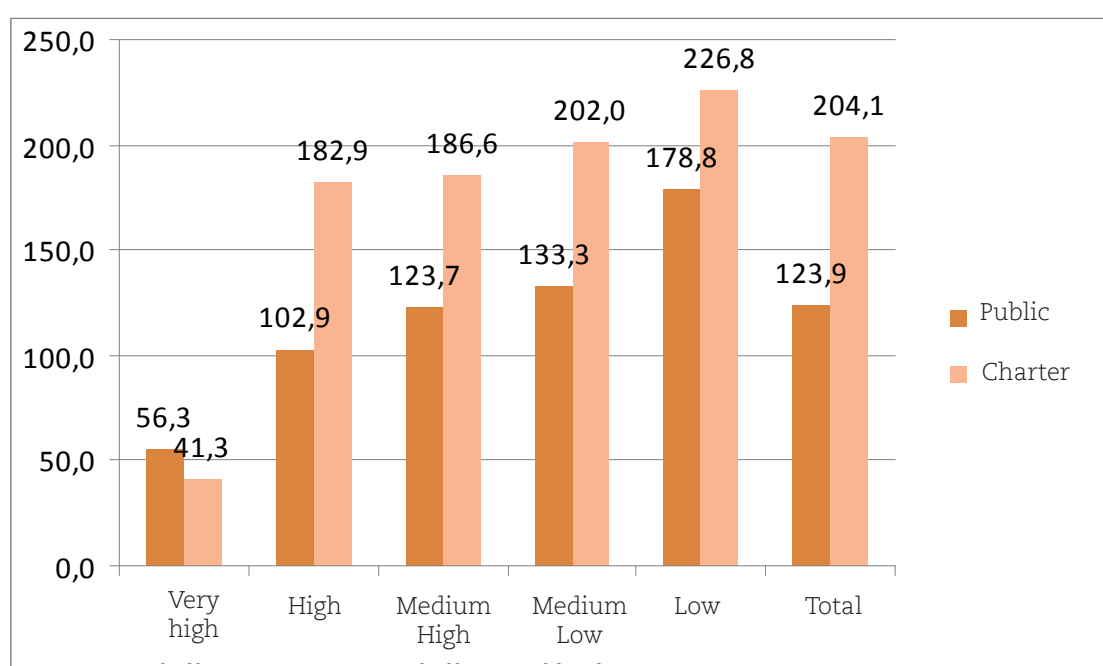
Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the *Enquesta de quotes* (2019).

Table 5. Family contributions to charter primary schools based on their complexity (2019)

Charter		Comple- mentary activity	AMPA/AFA	Outings and camps	School material	School services	Cafeteria
Very high	Mitjana	633,3	27,5	41,3	240,5	101,5	1.405,4
	N	3	2	4	4	2	4
High	Mitjana	668,2	29,9	182,9	284,8	106,5	1.276,0
	N	15	7	14	13	7	14
Medium high	Mitjana	679,7	27,6	186,6	243,2	172,4	1.333,5
	N	53	28	43	48	44	58
Medium low	Mitjana	697,0	45,2	202,0	270,3	224,0	1.372,6
	N	129	89	113	124	118	141
Low	Mitjana	731,7	35,0	226,8	276,5	512,1	1.506,6
	N	98	76	82	93	92	98
Unclassi- fied	Mitjana	600,0	-	272,0	225,5	-	1.249,6
	N	1	-	1	1	-	1
Total	Mitjana	702,9	38,2	204,1	267,8	376,7	1.402,7
	N	299	202	257	283	264	316

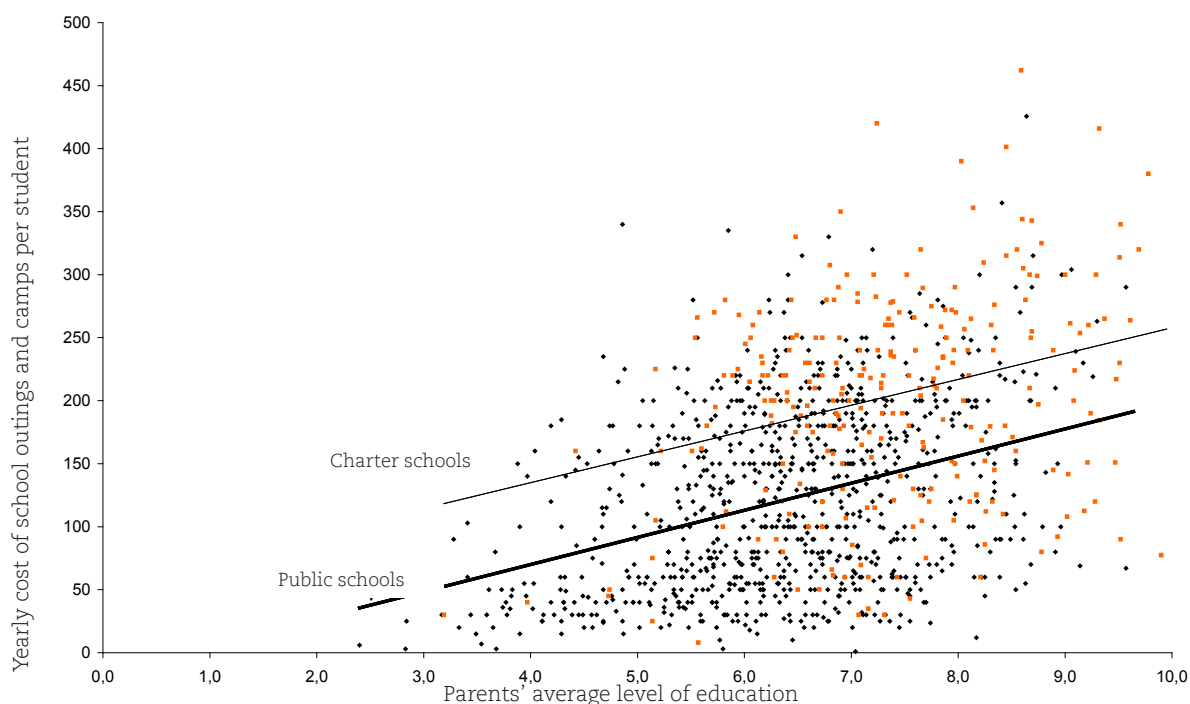
Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the Enquesta de quotes (2019)

Figure 8. Yearly cost of the school outings and camps per student based on the school's complexity by sector of ownership in primary education (2019) (2019)



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the Enquesta de quotes (2019).

Figure 9. Relationship between the yearly cost of school outings and camps per student and the social composition of the school by sector of ownership in primary education



Public schools	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	1.411	2,4	9,6	6,4	1,25
Yearly cost of school outings and camps per student	1.039	1,0	425,8	123,9	71,95
Charter schools	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	564	3,2	9,9	7,4	1,15
Yearly cost of school outings and camps per student	257	8,0	930,0	204,1	97,77

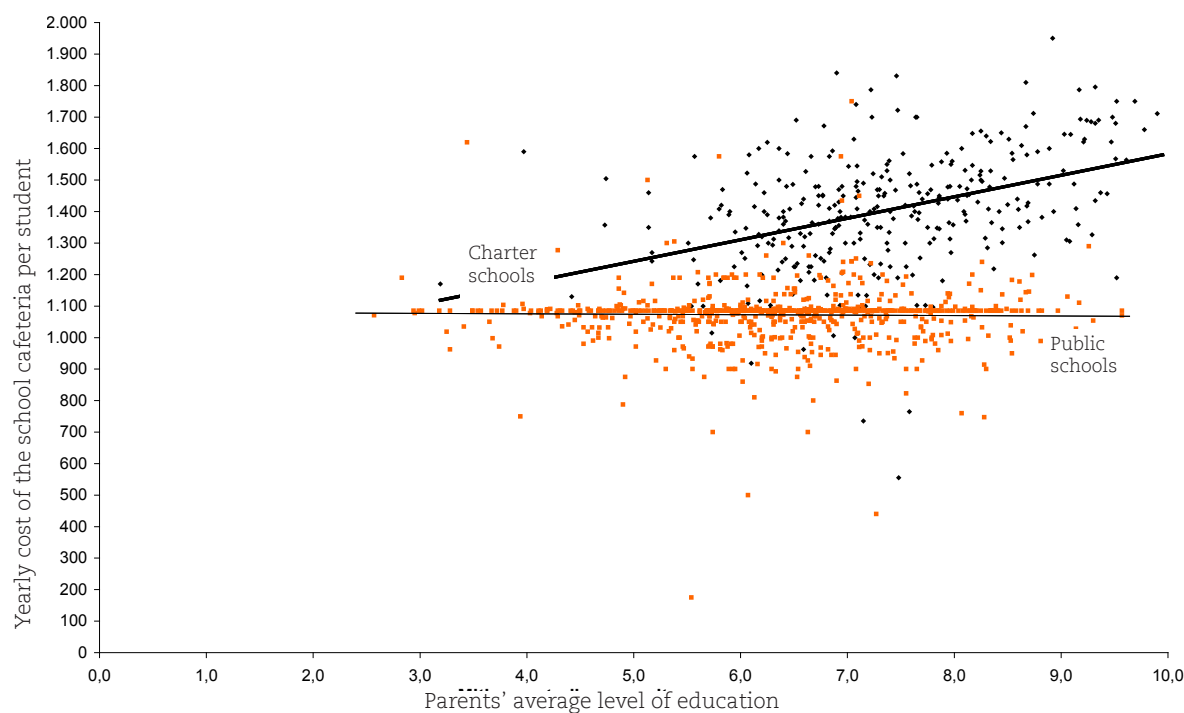
Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the Enquesta de quotes (2019).

Note: The black dots reflect the relationship between the yearly cost of school outings and camps per student and the parents' average level of education in different public schools. The orange dots show the relationship between the yearly cost of school outings and camps per student and the parents' average level of education in different charter schools.

The variable of the parents' level of education can range in each school from 1 to 10 depending on the average of the values assigned to each level of studies according to Idescat's classification (where 1 is "cannot read or write" and 10 is "degree and doctorate").

At the same time, this association between family contributions and social composition is conditioned by the sources that the schools use to fund their educational projects. In the public sector, one of the main sources of fundraising for funding educational projects in public schools comes from the contributions of families through AMPA/AFA, while the same happens for charter schools and the school cafeteria service. In fact, this association occurs in charter schools, but not in public schools for the school cafeteria service, while it occurs in public schools and not in charter schools for AMPA/AFA fees (see Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10. Relationship between the yearly cost of the school cafeteria per student and the social composition of the school by sector of ownership in primary education (2019)



Public schools	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	1.411	2,4	9,6	6,4	1,25
Yearly cost of the school cafeteria per student	922	175,0	2.175,4	1.066,6	113,11
Charter schools	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	564	3,2	9,9	7,4	1,15
Yearly cost of the school cafeteria per student	316	555,0	1.950,0	1.402,7	186,69

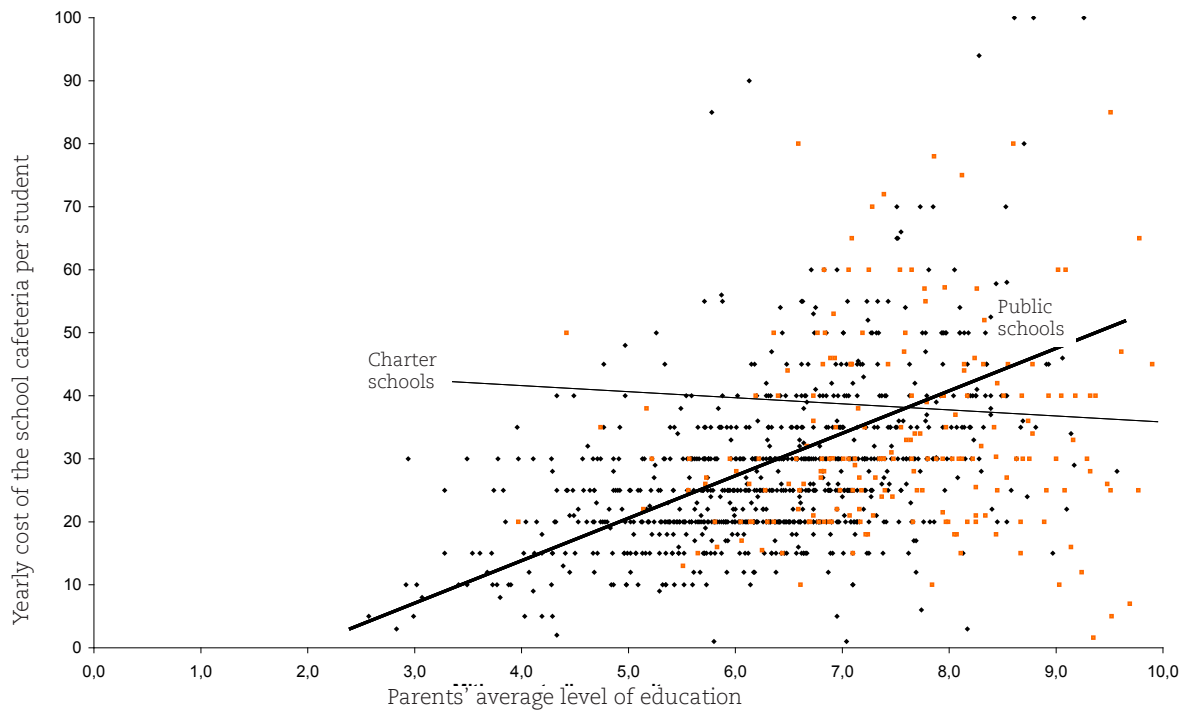
Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the Enquesta de quotes (2019).

Note: The black dots reflect the relationship between the yearly cost of cafeteria meals per student and the parents' average level of education in different charter schools. The orange dots show the relationship

between the yearly cost of cafeteria meals per student and the parents’ average level of education in different public schools.

The variable of the parents’ level of education can range in each school from 1 to 10 depending on the average of the values assigned to each level of studies according to Idescat’s classification (where 1 is “cannot read or write” and 10 is “degree and doctorate”).

Figure 11. Relationship between AMPA/AFA fees and the social composition of the school by sector of ownership in primary education (2019)



Public schools	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	1.411	2,4	9,6	6,4	1,25
Yearly cost of the school AMPA/AFA fees per student	1.006	1,0	290,0	29,7	22,11
Charter schools	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	564	3,2	9,9	7,4	1,15
Yearly cost of the school AMPA/AFA fees per student	202	1,6	550,0	38,2	49,16

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the Enquesta de quotes (2019).

Note: The black dots reflect the relationship between the yearly cost of AMPA/AFA fees per student and the parents' average level of education in different public schools. The orange dots show the relationship between the yearly cost of AMPA/AFA fees per student and the parents' average level of education in different charter schools.

The variable of the parents' level of education can range in each school from 1 to 10 depending on the average of the values assigned to each level of studies according to Idescat's classification (where 1 is "cannot read or write" and 10 is "degree and doctorate").

5. The high spread of public spending between public schools and private spending between charter schools

A fourth remarkable piece of evidence is that the variability between schools of the real cost of a place in school is very high, especially in charter schools, as a result of the greater spread of private spending that they receive from families.

Along this line, while the spread in staffing is higher in public schools than in charter schools, the spread in family contributions is higher in charter schools than in public schools (see Table 6).

Table 6. Average and standard deviation of staffing costs and of complementary activities and services by sector of ownership

Public	Staff resources	Complementary activities	AMPA/AFA	Outings and camps	School material	School services	Cafeteria
Average	3.888,2	-	29,8	123,9	92,8	-	1.066,6
Standard deviation	938,7	-	22,1	72,0	50,1	-	113,1
Charter	Staff resources	Complementary activities	AMPA/AFA	Outings and camps	School material	School services	Cafeteria
Average	2.646,4	702,9	38,2	204,1	267,8	376,7	1.402,7
Standard deviation	414,3	109,0	1.006	1.039	1.156	1.109,8	186,7

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the *Enquesta de quotes* (2019).

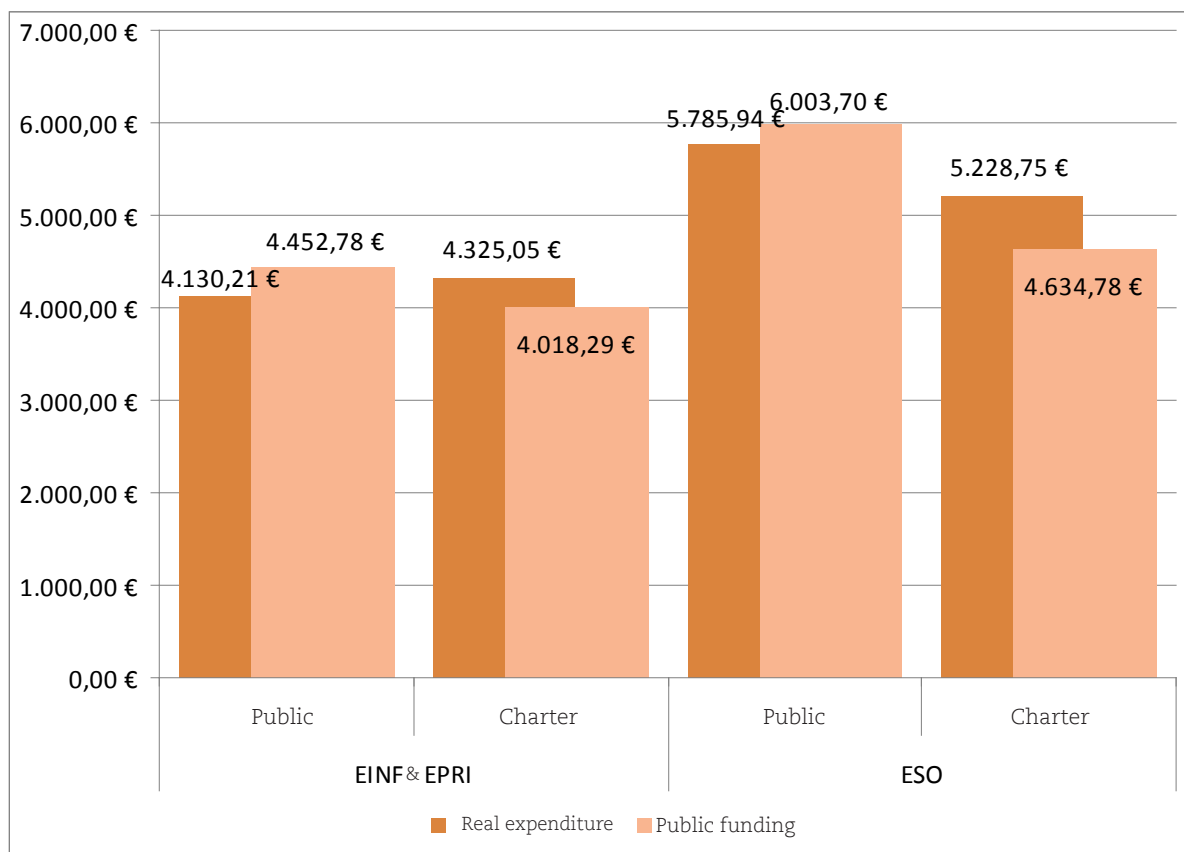
6. The dissociation between real expenditure and the cost of a place in school: private expenditure as compensation for underfunding, redistribution, payment for more quality or distinction

The fifth piece of evidence has to do with the fact that the schools' real expenditure and the cost of a place in school are not comprehensible. The Commission for the Study of the Cost of a Place in School has defined a theoretical cost of a place based on objective criteria, despite being aware that it does not fully correspond to the schools' average actual spending (see Figure 12).

As part of this report, it has been shown on several occasions that the schools' real expenditure can be unlimited, so that the real cost does not necessarily have to be the reference cost for the place in school, especially when it is discovered that this real cost is strongly shaped by the economic capacity of the families that make up the

community of each school. In fact, the large spread between schools regarding their real expenditure on a place in school confirms the difficulty of determining a cost of a place in school based on real expenditure.

Figure 12. The relationship between real expenditure and theoretical cost per student (excluding complementary activities and services) by sector of ownership (2019)



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, the *Enquesta de quotes* (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

Note: Data on real expenditure and theoretical cost do not account for investment in complementary activities and services.

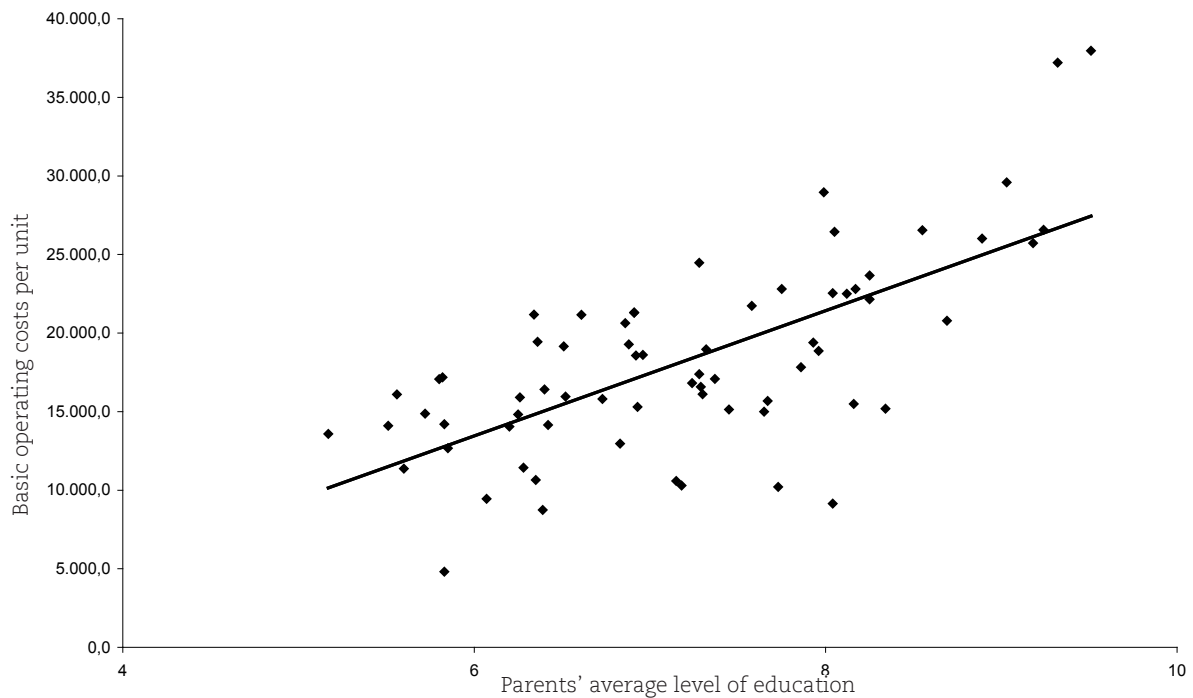
This same spread of the schools' real expenditure forces us to reflect on the role that private spending plays in shaping schools' educational projects.

Part of this expenditure is intended to offset public administrations' objective underfunding of schools and failure to provide sufficient basic school service. In some schools, another part of this expenditure is used to finance charitable mechanisms by paying the schooling expenses of families that cannot afford to make the required financial contributions. In some schools, another part of private spending is also used to fund increases in the quality of school service provision. These increases could be covered by public funding and be part of the basic cost of a place in school in a context of larger public investment and improvements in system quality standards. Finally, another part of private spending is aimed at financing differentiation of the school supply itself in a quasi-educational market.

This means that we must dissociate real spending and educational quality, because not every hike in private spending is aimed at ensuring higher quality education. Likewise, the cost of a place in school should not be determined by real expenditure, because parts of spending could be funded that do not necessarily correspond to the basic provision of school service in equitable and quality conditions.

For example, the Study of the Cost of a Place in School has shown that charter schools have operating costs that differ substantially from each other and can range from €6,000 per unit and €35,000 per unit in primary education. Moreover, these differences have a strong relationship with social composition: the more favoured the social composition, the higher the operating expenses (see Figure 13). Along the same lines, due to the school's level of complexity, low-complexity charter schools have basic operating costs two or three times higher on average, depending on the grade, than high-complexity schools (see Figure 14). One should therefore ask what part of this private funding is aimed at ensuring the coverage of basic operating expenses to ensure the provision of a quality and equitable school service and what part is aimed at funding expenses that are not part of the basic quality standards for a school.

Figure 13. Relationship between operating expenses and the social composition of charter primary schools (2019)

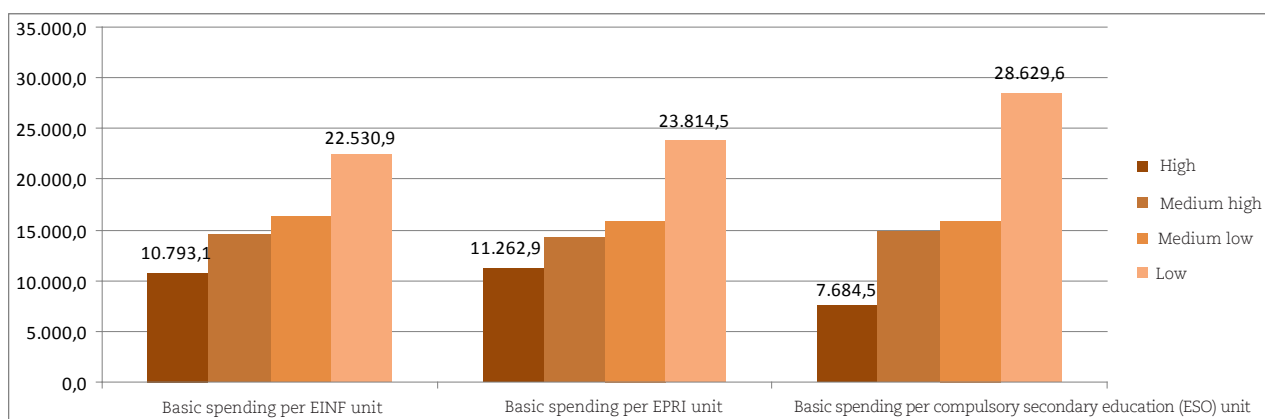


	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Type of deviation
Parents' average level of education	69	5,2	9,5	7,2	1,05
Basic operating costs per unit	100	0,0	37.967,7	16.237,1	7.083,58

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the ownership of the charter schools.

The variable of the parents' level of education can range in each school from 1 to 10 depending on the average of the values assigned to each level of studies according to Idescat's classification (where 1 is "cannot read or write" and 10 is "degree and doctorate").

Figure 14. Basic operating costs of charter school per level of complexity and grade (2019)



Complexity	N	Basic spending per EINF unit	Basic spending per EPRI unit	Basic spending per compulsory secondary education (ESO) unit	Private spending per student
High	4	10.793,1	11.262,9	7.684,5	-
Medium high	16	14.633,4	14.392,2	14.998,1	1.928,4
Medium low	29	16.362,3	16.025,7	15.974,6	2.088,3
Low	19	22.530,9	23.814,5	28.629,6	2.958,5

Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education and the ownership of the charter schools.

7. The risks of improving funding for schools to combat school segregation

Public and charter schools are underfunded with different intensities in the various types of school complexity. In addition, the Study of the Cost of a Place in School also highlights the aggregate underfunding of the educational system regarding attention to diversity: public and charter schools would require more resources to help students with specific educational needs in a context of full student enrolment (see Figure 15).

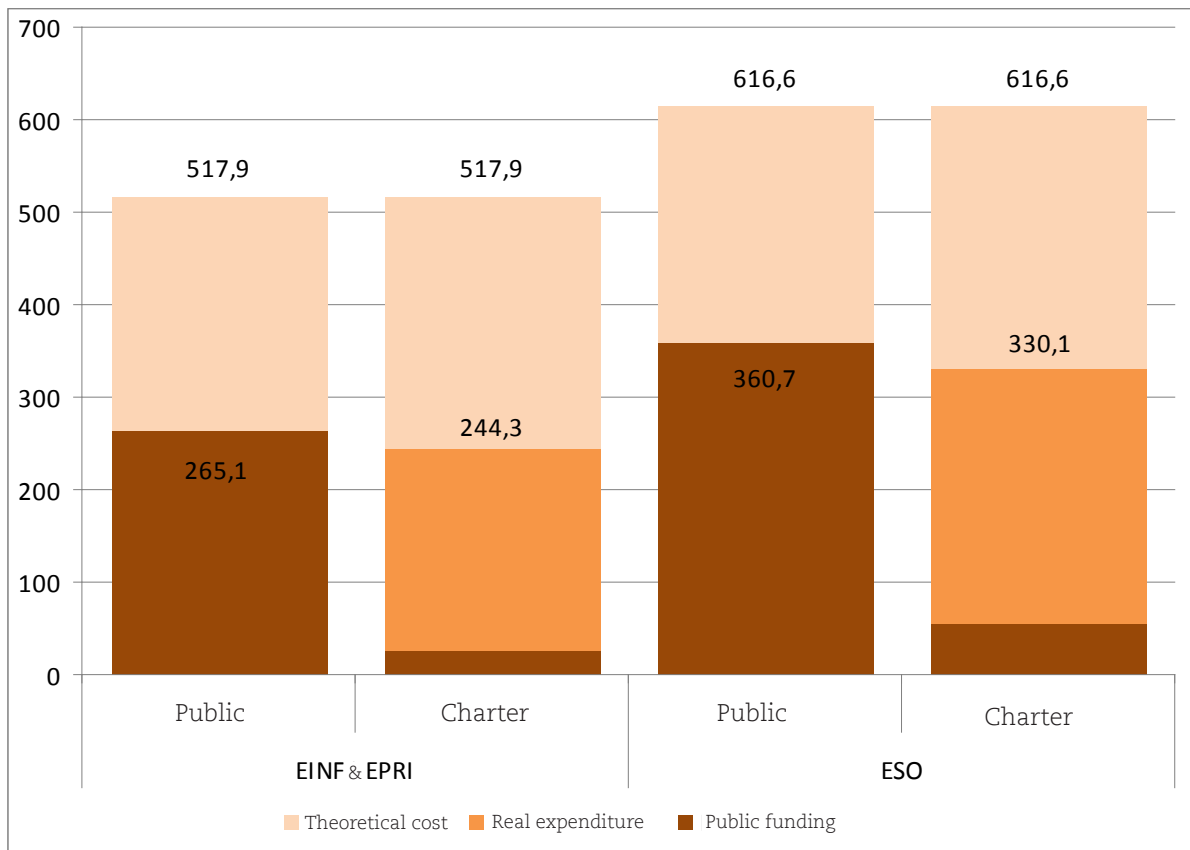
From the perspective of the fight against school segregation, this scenario poses a double risk. On the one hand, improving school funding is basically aimed at guaranteeing compliance with the principle of financial sufficiency, without the need to reverse or combat imbalances in schools' social composition. On the other hand, improving school funding is basically aimed at boosting the resources available for the schools to care for the students with specific educational needs, without ensuring a balanced distribution. These two scenarios would occur if efforts were focused primarily, in the first case, on linearly improving schools' financial resources in terms of staffing or operating costs without additional actions aimed at combating school segregation or, in the second case, on improving schools' financial resources with a

more disadvantaged social composition, without additional actions to turn the situation around.

Regardless of the value of these funding options, the Commission for the Study of the Cost of a Place in School works under the Agreement against School Segregation and recalls that improving funding for public and charter schools is not necessarily a guarantee of free education nor of a progressive comparison in the education of socially disadvantaged students between schools.

The theoretical cost, which reflects the public investment that should be paid by the Catalan Ministry of Education to ensure the quality and equitable provision of the Education Service of Catalonia, is based on it being a fully balanced education free of charge.

Figure 15. The relationship between public funding, real expenditure and the theoretical cost of attention to diversity per student (in a hypothetical context of fully balanced education) by sector of ownership



Source: Created from data taken from the Catalan Ministry of Education, the *Enquesta de quotes* (2019) and the ownership of the charter schools.

Note: Data on theoretical cost and public funding do not account for investment in complementary activities and services.

5. THE BUDGET ALLOCATION SYSTEM

The Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School is based on the premise that presumably the budgetary impact of guaranteeing the cost of a place in school with public funds is not affordable in the short term by the Catalan Ministry of Education, according to the current available budgets of the Government of Catalonia.

At the same time, the Commission for Studying the Cost of a Place in School also starts from the premise that public funding for a place in school as part of the Agreement against School Segregation should only be increased if aimed at correcting this problem. Therefore, it is not only a question of improving the funding of public and charter schools, but of promoting this improvement with measures that help to reduce school segregation in the educational system in Catalonia.

On this basis, the Commission for the Study of the Cost of a Place in School makes two basic proposals to guide increased funding for schools.

Firstly, the study shows that the budget allocation system could be based on programme contracts in both public and charter schools, which must be accompanied by improved instruments of control to fulfil the conditions established under the programme contract, as well as improved instruments for balanced student education. The approval of the new decree on the student admissions, also provided for as part of the Agreement against School Segregation, heads in this direction.

The programme contracts, which were put into operation in the 2006-2007 academic year with a total of 27 charter schools and were abolished from the 2012-2013 academic year due to budgetary constraints, have been shown to be an effective instrument to promote the balanced education of students in municipalities such as Vic, Manlleu and Olot. The fact that students enrolled in charter schools did not have to make additional financial contributions meant that families' choice of school was not as shaped by their socioeconomic status and the ownership of the school.

Programme contracts are one of the measures provided for in the LEC as a form of shared responsibility for all schools in student education (Articles 48.5, 201.2 and 205.9). Through the programme contracts, the educational authorities provide additional resources to the schools provided by the Catalan Educational System based on the socio-economic characteristics of the area, the types of families of the students served by the school and the content of the shared responsibility agreement to be signed.

Programme contracts should be aimed at ensuring the quality of the educational service, equal educational opportunities and the elimination of school segregation. To this end, programme contracts should incorporate specific objectives and monitoring indicators, as well as the commitments of both parties, a monitoring process and anticipation of the consequences in case of non-compliance.

Secondly, it would be necessary to establish a system of gradual and progressive application that affects the struggle against school segregation and that begins by favouring the conditions of free services between students, schools and environments with greater complexity, and that gradually extends to the whole educational system, depending on budgetary availability.

This gradual application system could combine:

- Initial improvement in funding for schools with more complexity, as a system of compensation for the purpose of guaranteeing educational projects with spending levels equivalent to schools with less complexity.
- Initial improvement of the funding focused on socially disadvantaged students, regardless of the school where they are enrolled, with the aim of guaranteeing their education with equal opportunities in any of the schools that make up the Catalan Educational System.
- Finally, initial improvement in funding schools in areas with high levels of school segregation in order to remove economic barriers to the schools that are part of it and guide this investment to reduce imbalances.

This improvement in funding, which would gradually be extended to all students and schools, depending on budget availability, as already stated, should be part of the strategy to reduce school segregation, which implies fulfilment of the objectives established in the programme contracts and also effective application of the instruments available for balanced student education.

