

A FY 2023 Comparative Review of Nine Mississippi School Districts: Operations

A Report to the Mississippi Legislature

Report #731 – Volume V

June 9, 2026



PEER Committee

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Kevin Ford, Vice-Chair
Tracy Arnold, Secretary

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The *Mississippi Constitution of 1890* gives the Legislature broad power to conduct examinations and investigations. PEER is authorized by law to review any public entity, including contractors supported in whole or in part by public funds, and to address any issues that may require legislative action. PEER has statutory access to all state and local records and has subpoena power to compel testimony or the production of documents.

PEER provides a variety of services to the Legislature, including program evaluations, economy and efficiency reviews, financial audits, limited scope evaluations, fiscal notes, and other governmental research and assistance. The Committee identifies inefficiency or ineffectiveness or a failure to accomplish legislative objectives, and makes recommendations for redefinition, redirection, redistribution and/or restructuring of Mississippi government. As directed by and subject to the prior approval of PEER, the Committee's professional staff executes audit and evaluation projects obtaining information and developing options for consideration by the Committee. PEER releases reports to the Legislature, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the agency examined, and the general public.

The Committee assigns top priority to written requests from individual legislators and legislative committees. The Committee also considers PEER staff proposals and written requests from state officials and others.



Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review

PEER Committee

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June 9, 2026

Honorable Tate Reeves, Governor
Honorable Delbert Hosemann, Lieutenant Governor
Honorable Jason White, Speaker of the House
Members of the Mississippi State Legislature

On June 9, 2026, the PEER Committee authorized release of the report titled
***A FY 2023 Comparative Review of Nine Mississippi School Districts:
Operations.***

Representatives

Kevin Ford
Vice Chair
Tracy Arnold
Secretary
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Cedric Burnett
Becky Currie
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Kevin Felsher

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. C. McMahan".

Senator Chad McMahan, Chair

Executive Director

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This report does not recommend increased funding or additional staff.

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CONCLUSION: A review of the operations programs for nine Mississippi school districts in FY 2023 showed opportunities for districts to strengthen their programs and increase efficiency. For example, six districts (67%) did not have a formal preventative maintenance program. Without such a program, districts risk unexpected and potentially costly issues with their facilities and equipment. There was also wide variance in the performance of districts in key areas such as custodial cost per square foot and maintenance cost per square foot, suggesting that districts have room for improvement.



BACKGROUND

In FY 2026, PEER received funding to contract with Level Data (formerly GlimpseK12) to conduct a comparative review of nine school districts. This report focuses on one of six non-instructional areas of review—operations (Volume V). Other non-instructional reports include:

- Finance and Supply Chain (Volume I);
- Human Resources (Volume II);
- Information Technology (Volume III);
- Nutrition (Volume IV); and,
- Transportation (Volume VI).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Of the nine districts in this cohort, three (33%) did not utilize an electronic maintenance work order system.**
Such systems could increase efficiency and enhance decision making.
- **Six districts (67%) did not have a formal preventative maintenance program.**
Without such a program, districts risk unexpected and potentially costly issues with their facilities and equipment.
- **Six districts (67%) did not participate in an energy management program.**
An energy management program that involves principals and facility leaders could lead to savings and environmental sustainability.
- **Four districts (44%) did not conduct a formal facilities assessment each year.**
Such assessments are intended to ensure building safety and can assist administrators in prioritizing repairs and upgrades.

Variance in District Performance

Districts reported a wide range of costs and performance associate with custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping services. For example:

- Custodial cost per square foot ranged from \$0.34 in Harrison to \$3.48 in Humphreys.
- Maintenance cost per square foot ranged from \$0.37 in Rankin to \$16.36 in Humphreys.
- The average number of days to complete a work order ranged from 3 days in Humphreys to 23 days in Harrison.

These wide variances suggest that districts have opportunities to improve their performance on the key indicators in this report, which could result in improved efficiencies, cost savings, and/or improved service levels.

Issues with Missing Data

The conclusions of this report were inhibited by district's inability to provide the requested data. For example, four of the nine districts in this cohort were unable to provide the data needed to determine the average number of days to complete a maintenance work order. When a district is unable to report data for key performance measures, district administrators' ability to monitor and manage operations areas for efficiency and effectiveness is diminished.

Cost Savings

Based on FY 2023 data reported, seven districts in this cohort could realize annual projected potential cost savings of up to approximately **\$9 million** by bringing costs associated with their custodial, maintenance, and/or groundskeeping functions more in line with those of state and regional peers.

See Exhibit 13 on page 33 for projected potential cost savings by district.

While the reported data suggests the potential for cost savings for these districts, each district's administration should carefully review the data and recommendations in light of the particular circumstances of the district.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICTS

1. In FY 2027, each district's superintendent, in consultation with the district's operations personnel, should review the information from this report and implement the relevant recommendations to increase efficiency, improve service levels, and/or achieve cost savings. Such recommendations include, but are not limited to:
 - a. implementing an electronic work order system;
 - b. conducting formal annual facility assessments;
 - c. implementing an energy management program; and,
 - d. implementing a formal preventative maintenance program.
2. For districts that were unable to provide certain information during this review pertaining to their operations, relevant district personnel should begin collecting and monitoring this data on an ongoing basis.
3. If feasible, districts should begin tracking custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping costs separately.
4. District personnel should provide an annual report to the district superintendent regarding the status of the district's operations using the measures included in this review.

A FY 2023 Comparative Review of Nine Mississippi School Districts: Operations

Restrictions

This review is a continuation of previous studies conducted by Level Data (previously GlimpseK12) of Mississippi school districts' operational programs and expenses. (See additional information on these previous studies in the Introduction on page 2.) Appendix A on page 41 lists the districts included in this review.

Level Data provided this report to the PEER Committee based on data and extrapolated information provided by the school districts for school year 2022-2023 (i.e., FY 2023). Level Data did not independently verify the data or information provided by the districts or their programs. If the districts choose to provide additional data or information, Level Data reserves the right to amend the report.

All decisions made concerning the contents of this report are understood to be the sole responsibility of any organization or individual making the decision. Level Data does not and will not in the future perform any management functions for any organizations or individuals related to this report.

This report is solely intended to be a resource guide.

PEER staff contributed to the overall message of this report and recommendations based on the data and information provided by Level Data. PEER staff also provided quality assurance and editing for this report to comply with PEER writing standards; however, PEER did not validate the source data collected by Level Data.

Introduction

School district administrators are responsible for spending millions of dollars annually on instructional and operational expenses. While operational expenses could be viewed as a secondary concern to instructional expenses, operational costs could escalate, possibly unnecessarily, without proper oversight and monitoring.

As noted previously, this report is one of a series of reports that provide decisionmakers with comparative data regarding selected Mississippi school districts' key operational programs and associated costs (i.e., human resources [HR], transportation, operations, nutrition, information technology, and finance). Mississippi has a total of 138 school districts, excluding public charter school districts. To date, Level Data has collected and analyzed the following data sets from Mississippi's districts:

Number of School Districts	Period of Data Collected	Name of Data Set for PEER Purposes	Reporting of Analysis Results
30 districts	FY 2022	Cohort 1	Published in PEER Reports #690a through #690f.
	FY 2023	Cohort 2	Not published in separate PEER reports. However, selected Cohort 2 data was combined with selected Cohort 3 data in PEER Reports #703i through #703vi.
50 districts	FY 2023	Cohort 3	Published in PEER Reports #703i through #703vi.
50 districts^	FY 2023	Cohort 4	Published in PEER Reports #719i through #719vi.
9 districts^	FY 2023	Cohort 5	Published in this report.*

^ 50 districts were originally selected for Cohort 4, which included the Aberdeen district, although Aberdeen did not submit any of the requested data for the Cohort 4 review. However, the Aberdeen district was included in this Cohort 5 review and did submit some data for this analysis.

Note: Appendix A in each respective report lists the districts that were included in the analysis for that report.

*In order to represent a more complete data set and provide a better sense of the true state median, Level Data combined selected FY 2023 data from Cohorts 2 through 5 to calculate medians and performance quartiles for the exhibits in these reports.

For the analysis in this report, Level Data reviewed the remaining nine school districts (see Appendix A on page 41). Therefore, Level Data has collected FY 2023 data for all 138 traditional public school districts in Mississippi. By collecting data from a single fiscal year for all school districts, Level Data has calculated medians and performance quartiles for the entire state on each performance measure. As a result, district administrators will have the comparative data for their districts to identify which operational areas potentially need improvement and which areas demonstrate effectiveness and/or efficiency.

This report presents FY 2023 data reported by school districts regarding benchmarks (e.g., implementation of a formal preventative maintenance program) and performance indicators (e.g., maintenance cost per square foot). The report also provides some regional and national averages as a basis for comparison. Appendix B on page 42 provides enrollment and staff data for all nine districts included in this review. Appendix C on page 43 provides FY 2023 operations benchmark data and performance indicators for the districts that reported information.

School district administrators should use the information in this report to determine areas for improvement and to make informed decisions regarding their districts' operations.

Conclusions Regarding Districts' Collection of Benchmark Data for Use in Managing Operations

Benchmarking is the process of comparing and measuring different organizations' activities. Districts can use benchmark data, combined with key performance indicators, to gain insight in identifying best practices and opportunities for improvement and cost reductions. This report surveyed districts' reporting of the following benchmark data:

- utilization of an electronic maintenance work order system;
- implementation of a formal preventative maintenance program;
- implementation of an energy management program; and,
- administration of a formal annual facilities assessment.

All nine districts in this cohort provided the above-listed benchmark information.

Utilization of an Electronic Maintenance Work Order System

In this cohort, three districts did not use an electronic work order system. Such systems could increase efficiency and enhance districts' decision making.

In the current cohort, the DeSoto, Forrest County Agricultural High School (AHS), and Yazoo City districts did not use an electronic maintenance work order system. A properly implemented electronic maintenance work order system can offer districts several advantages. First, it can enhance maintenance efficiency by automating work order requests and improving communication, resulting in quicker response times and improved task prioritization. Furthermore, most systems allow for tracking maintenance history and asset information, enabling the identification of trends and patterns for informed decision making and optimal resource utilization. However, the adoption and understanding of technology within district operation departments may hinder the implementation of an electronic work order system, leading to potentially unsatisfactory results. Also, not having an electronic work order system does not ensure that a district will perform poorly in relation to operation services.

All Cohorts: Among the 129 districts reporting FY 2023 operations benchmark data, 48 (37%) did not use an electronic work order system.

Implementation of a Formal Preventative Maintenance Program

In this cohort, six districts did not have a formal preventative maintenance program. Without such a program, districts risk unexpected and potentially costly issues with their facilities and equipment.

In the current cohort, the Aberdeen, Harrison, Humphreys, Jackson City, Meridian, and Yazoo City districts did not have a formal preventative maintenance program. Preventative maintenance refers to a proactive approach to maintaining equipment and facilities to prevent potential issues, breakdowns, or failures. It involves regularly scheduled inspections, servicing, and repairs to identify and address any potential problems before they escalate. The goal of preventative maintenance is to increase reliability, prolong the lifespan of assets, reduce the risk of unexpected failures, and minimize downtime and costly repairs.

Implementing formal preventative maintenance programs in school districts can be beneficial for several reasons. Such programs:

- ensure the safety of students and staff by regularly inspecting and maintaining equipment and facilities, reducing the risk of accidents and injuries;
- offer long-term cost savings by addressing minor issues before they escalate and become expensive to fix and thus extending the lifespan of equipment and facilities. Moreover, well-maintained assets are more efficient, reducing energy and utility bills, increasing productivity, and minimizing downtime;
- facilitate compliance with regulations and standards, ensuring schools meet safety and operational requirements. Examples of these regulations and standards include the Environmental Protection Agency Healthy School Environments and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Public Playground Safety Handbook; and,
- help build a positive reputation within the community by maintaining well-kept facilities and equipment.

All districts should implement preventative maintenance programs based on available resources.

All Cohorts: Of the 129 school districts reporting FY 2023 operations benchmark data, 79 (61%) did not have a formal preventative maintenance program.

Implementation of an Energy Management Program

In this cohort, six districts did not participate in an energy management program. Such programs may result in reduced energy cost and improve environmental sustainability.

In the current cohort, the Aberdeen, Forrest County AHS, Humphreys, Jackson City, Meridian, and Yazoo City districts did not have an energy management program. An energy management program that involves principals and facility leaders could lead to savings and environmental sustainability. School districts should consider implementing their own behavior-based energy management programs for cost, control, and staff engagement reasons. Hiring an outside energy management company can be expensive, while self-implementing programs can be more cost-effective because they use existing staff and resources. A behavior-based energy management program can be implemented in five basic steps: form a team to oversee the program; conduct an energy audit; develop an energy management plan; educate staff and students; and continuously monitor energy consumption, along with cost savings.

Self-implementation of such programs grants greater control over the process and outcomes, allowing them to tailor the programs to their specific needs and goals. Additionally, behavior-based energy management programs engage staff and students, fostering sustainable behavior change and buy-in from the school community. Overall, self-implementing a behavior-based energy management program can be a viable and effective option for school districts that have the resources to do so. If implementing an energy management program is beyond the current resources of a school district, the district may be able to coordinate with a local energy provider for guidance and help in reducing and managing energy consumption.

All Cohorts: Of the 129 school districts reporting FY 2023 operations benchmark data, 68 (53%) did not participate in an energy management program.

Administration of a Formal Annual Facilities Assessment

In this cohort, four districts did not conduct a formal facilities assessment each year. Such assessments are intended to ensure building safety and can assist administrators in prioritizing repairs and upgrades.

In the current cohort, the Aberdeen, DeSoto, Meridian, and Yazoo City districts did not conduct a formal facilities assessment each year. Of the four districts that did not conduct annual assessments, two reported conducting assessments on an as-needed basis, one district reported conducting assessments every three years, and one district reported conducting assessments every four to five years. Regular facility assessments demonstrate proactive and responsible

practices by school districts to ensure a safe and comfortable learning environment for students and faculty. Regular assessments of school facilities identify potential infrastructure issues such as outdated electrical or HVAC systems, structural damage, and safety hazards. School districts can effectively prioritize and plan needed repairs and upgrades by understanding these issues prior to need. Facility assessments can provide information for use in a preventative maintenance program. Additionally, these assessments contribute to long-term cost savings by addressing minor issues before they escalate into more significant and costly problems. Regular annual assessments reduce resource needs and ensure that any changes are noted early.

If resources do not allow for annual assessments, districts should define the shortest time interval beyond one year that resources will allow for and pre-schedule assessments to ensure that they are completed.

All Cohorts: Of the 129 school districts reporting FY 2023 operations data, 55 (43%) did not conduct a formal facilities assessment each year.

Conclusions Regarding Districts' Collection of Key Performance Indicators for Use in Managing Operations

Key performance indicators in operations include districtwide effectiveness measures such as custodial cost per student and indicators that focus on the districts' operations departments. It is essential to consider all key performance indicators together; one indicator should not be viewed as an overall performance measure by itself.

This study included a review of the following key performance indicators in the area of operations:

- total operations expenses as a percentage of total district expenses;
- maintenance and operations cost per student;
- custodial cost per square foot;
- custodial cost per student;
- custodial supply cost per square foot;
- square footage per custodian;
- maintenance cost per square foot;
- average number of days to complete a maintenance work order;
- maintenance workload (square footage per maintenance technician);
- acreage per groundskeeper;
- square footage per student; and,
- square footage per school.

All nine of the districts reviewed in this cohort provided the above-listed performance data for FY 2023, either in full or in part.

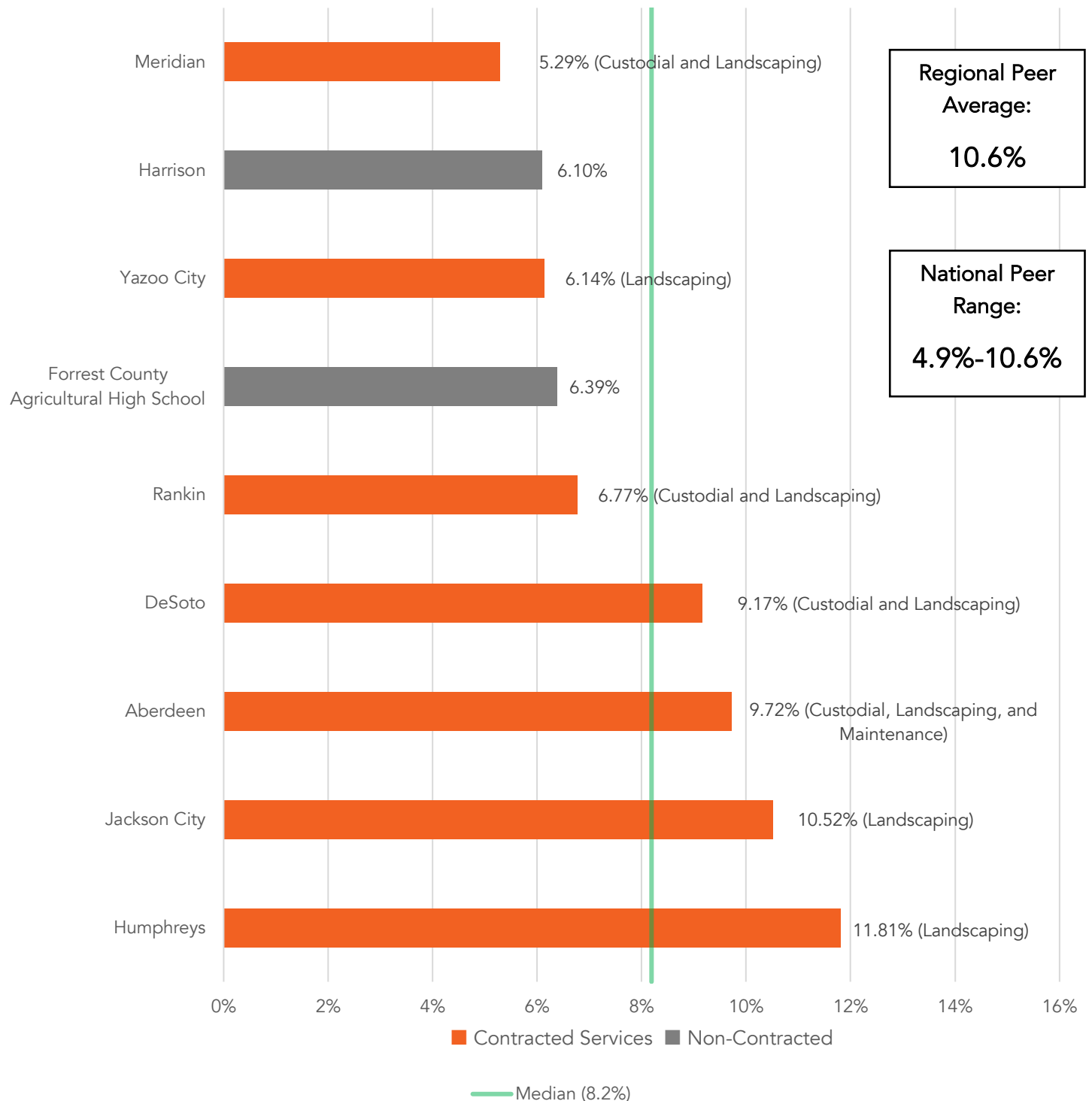
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses

For this cohort, the FY 2023 total operations expenses as a percentage of total district expenses ranged from 5.29% in the Meridian district to 11.81% in the Humphreys district. Of the 124 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, total operations expenses represented a median of 8.2% of total district expenses, which was below the regional peer average and near the midpoint of the national peer range.

Total operations expenses as a percentage of total district expenses varied among districts based on several factors (e.g., square footage of facilities, number of students, facility age/condition). Due to the circumstances of each district, this measure should not be used as a sole determinant of whether spending in the area of operations is appropriate.

As shown in Exhibit 1 on page 8, for the current reporting districts, total operations expenses as a percentage of total district expenses ranged from 5.29% in the Meridian district to 11.81% in the Humphreys district. Within the current cohort, five districts reported operations expenses below the median and eight of the nine districts were below the regional average. These results may indicate that operations functions are being supported at comparatively lower funding levels, which could reflect efficiencies, budget limitations, or potential under resourcing that may impact the district's ability to adequately sustain operations, depending on its specific context.

Exhibit 1: Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses for Reporting Districts for FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Contracted services are listed by each school district in parentheses.

Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student

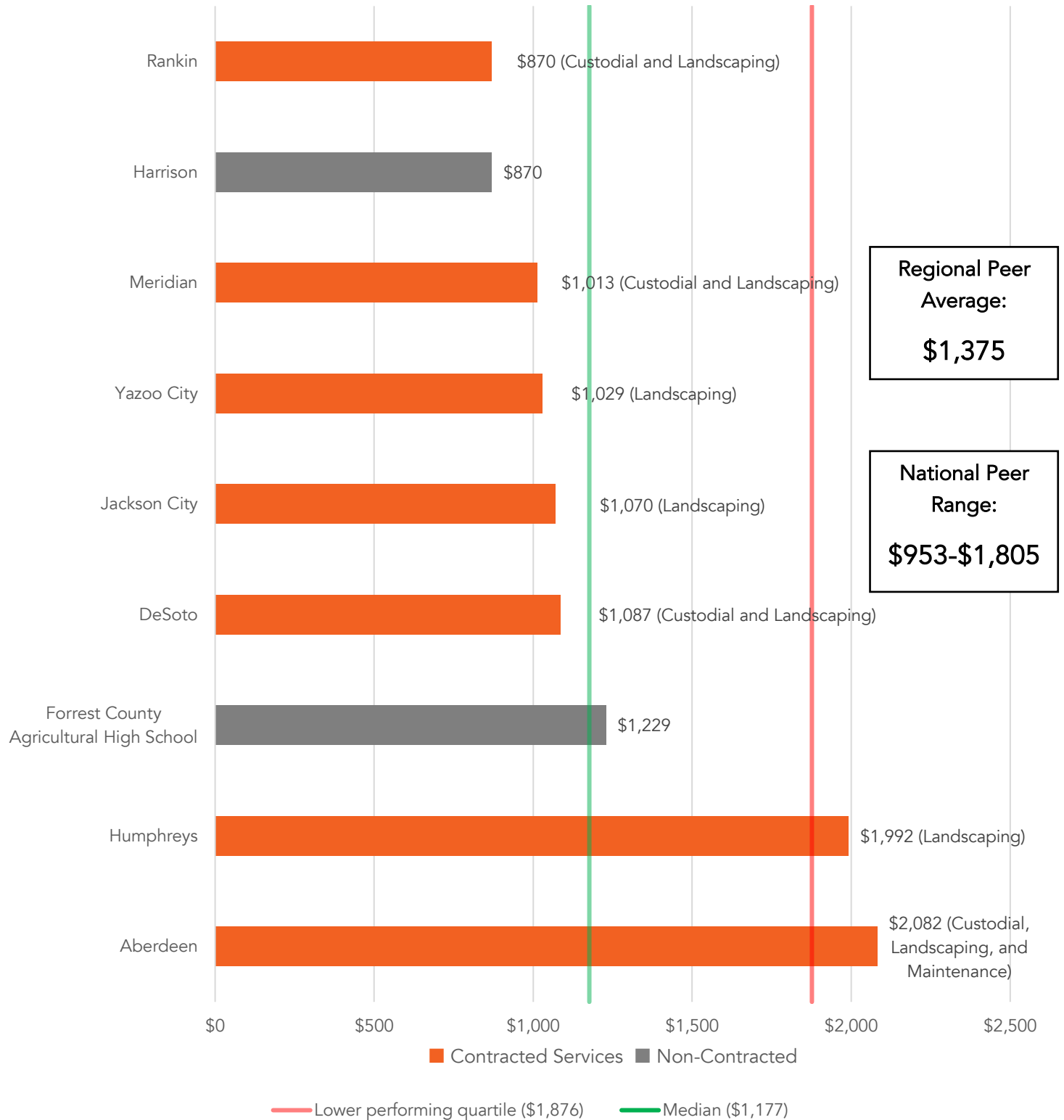
For this cohort, the FY 2023 maintenance of operations cost per student ranged from \$870 in the Rankin and Harrison districts to \$2,082 in the Aberdeen district. Of the 121 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median maintenance and operations cost per student was \$1,177, which is below the regional average and on the lower end of the national peer range.

The maintenance and operations cost per student measure encompasses a wide range of costs—custodial, groundskeeping, routine maintenance, minor and major renovations projects, and construction projects. These activities can lead to elevated costs per student in a district and contribute to wide variances between districts. Accordingly, information for this metric should not be used to infer that a district's operations and maintenance cost per student is excessive. Instead, districts should use this measure in combination with other measures included in this report to assess efficiency.

As shown in Exhibit 2 on page 10, for the districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data, maintenance and operations cost per student ranged from \$870 in the Rankin and Harrison districts to \$2,082 in the Aberdeen district. Within the current cohort, six districts reported total operations costs per student below the median and seven were below the regional average. These results may indicate that maintenance and operations functions are supported at comparatively lower funding levels, which could reflect operational efficiencies, budget limitations, or potential underinvestment in facility and maintenance needs, depending on each district's specific context.

As shown in Exhibit 1 on page 8, because the data in this exhibit could include construction costs, the cost per student could be distorted by these non-recurring expenses. Accordingly, information in this exhibit alone should not be used to infer that a district's maintenance and operations cost per student is excessive.

Exhibit 2: Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student for Reporting Districts for FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Contracted services are listed by each school district in parentheses.

Custodial Cost per Square Foot

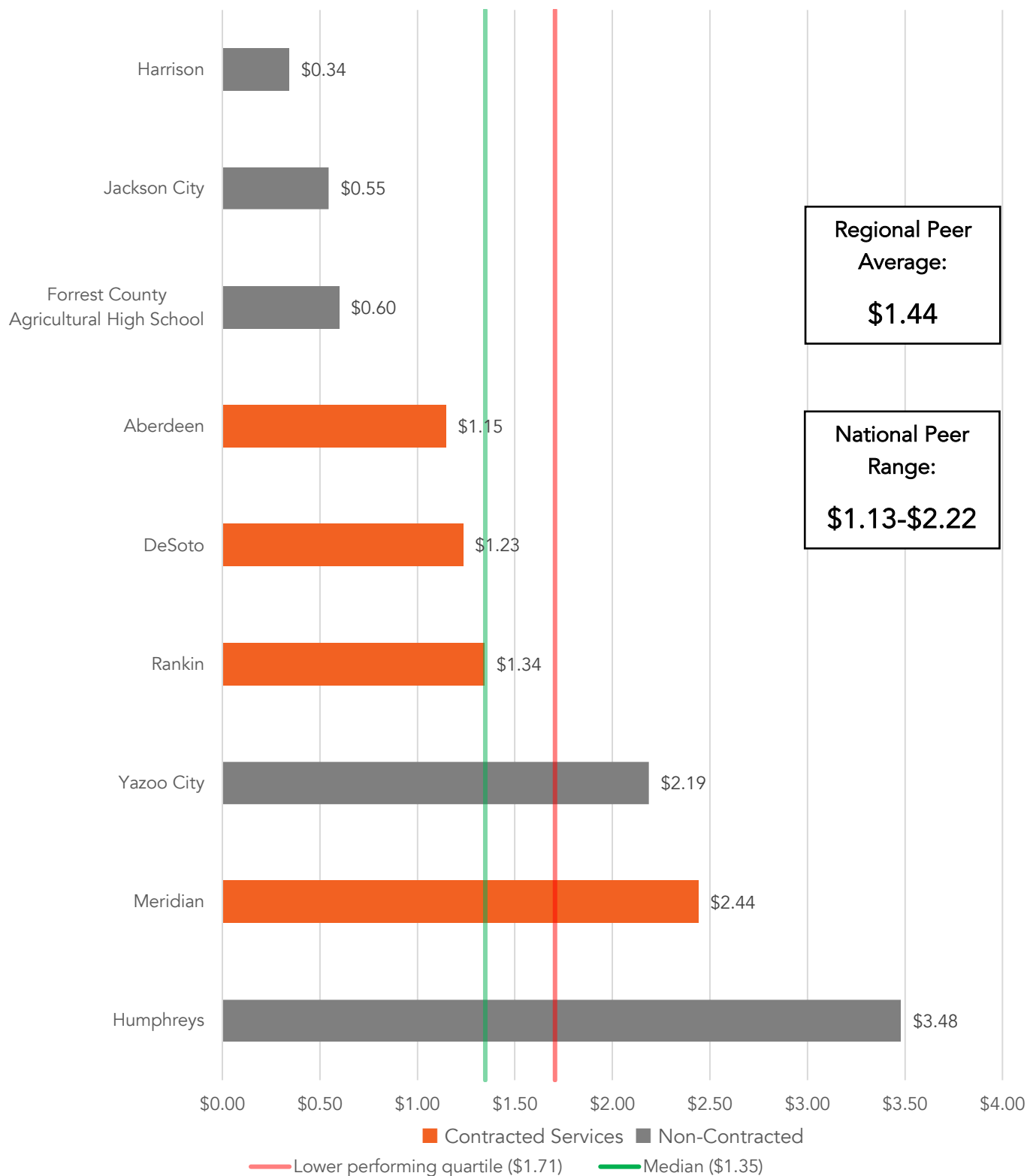
For this cohort, the FY 2023 custodial cost per square foot ranged from \$0.34 in the Harrison district to \$3.48 in the Humphreys district. Of the 100 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median \$1.35 custodial cost per square foot was below the regional peer average and at the lower end of the national peer range.

A district's custodial cost per square foot may be used to evaluate the cost efficiency of custodial services and should be viewed in relationship to costs per student and supply cost per square foot.

As shown in Exhibit 3 on page 12, for districts that used an outside contractor, the custodial cost per square foot ranged from \$1.15 in the Aberdeen district to \$2.44 in the Meridian district. For districts that used district personnel for custodial services, custodial cost per square foot ranged from \$0.34 in the Harrison district to \$3.48 in the Humphreys district.

Districts in this cohort reported a wide range of costs in which the highest district (Humphreys, \$3.48) reported a cost ten times that of the lowest district (Harrison, \$0.34). An analysis of the data submitted by the districts calls some of the cost information into question. For example, after subtracting custodial supply costs from total custodial costs, Harrison reported an average custodial salary of \$3,130 and Jackson City, which reported the second lowest custodial cost per square foot (\$0.55), reported an average custodial salary of \$12,693. Both of these amounts are lower than an annual custodial salary would likely be. Further, Yazoo City (\$2.19), reported an average custodial salary of \$77,969, an amount significantly higher than what an annual custodial salary would likely be. These anomalies suggest that custodial expenses are not being captured accurately in some districts. Without timely, accurate cost information, district officials' ability to monitor this function of operations and ensure the efficient use of taxpayer funds is hampered.

Exhibit 3: Custodial Cost per Square Foot for Reporting Districts for FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Custodial Cost per Student

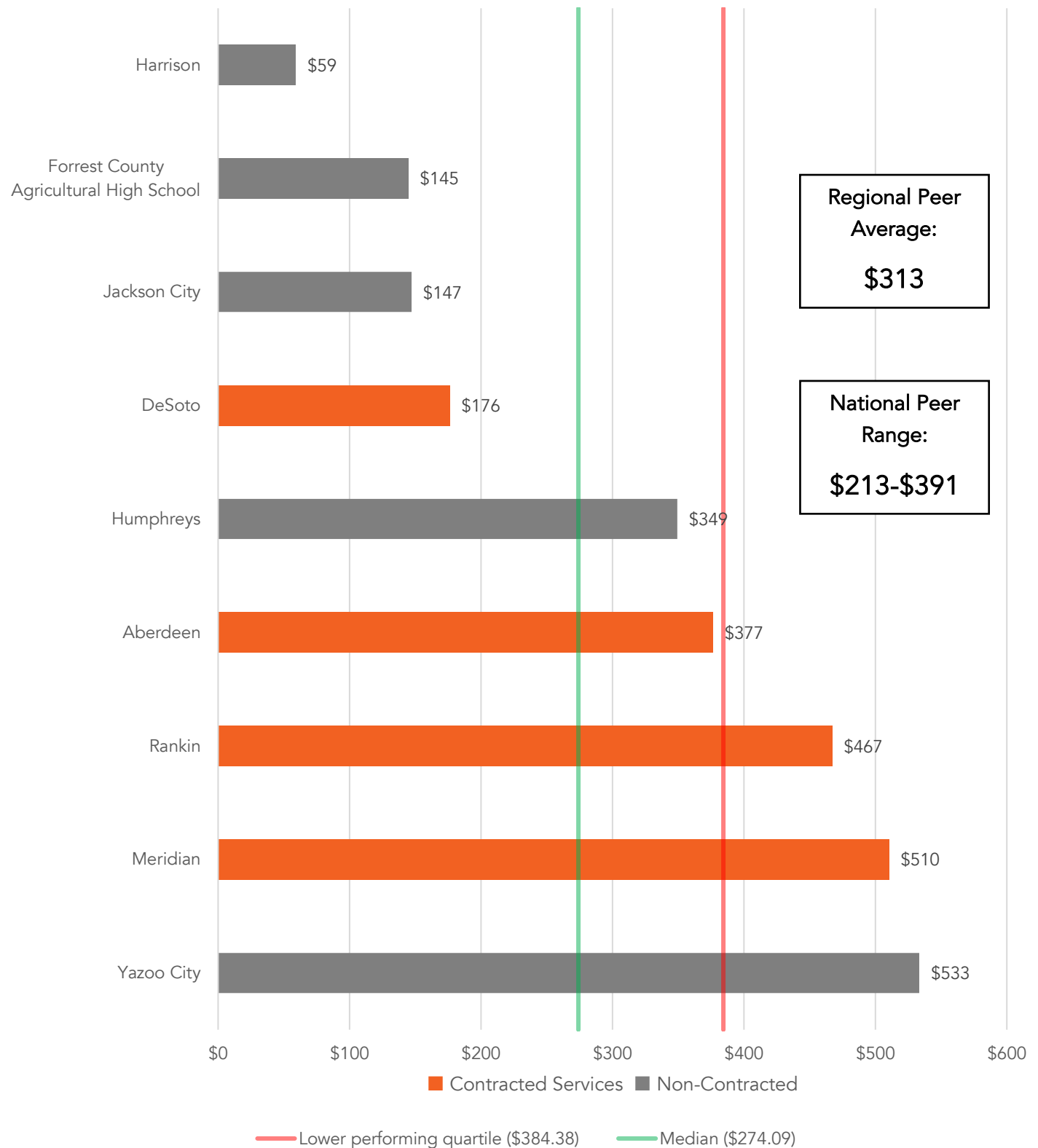
For this cohort, the FY 2023 custodial cost per student ranged from \$59 in the Harrison district to \$533 in the Yazoo City district. Of the 108 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median custodial cost per student was \$274, which is below the regional peer average and on the lower end of the national peer range.

The custodial cost per student measure is important for evaluating the cost efficiency of custodial services and should be viewed in relationship to costs per square foot and supply cost per square foot.

As shown in Exhibit 4 on page 14, for districts that used a third-party contractor, the custodial cost per student ranged from \$176 in DeSoto to \$510 in Meridian. For districts that use district personnel for custodial services, the custodial cost per student ranged from \$59 in Harrison to \$533 in Yazoo City. Given the wide range of reported costs, this information presents district officials an opportunity to compare their costs to those of similar districts and in the case of districts reporting very low or very high cost figures, determine factors leading to the reported costs.

Within this cohort, four districts reported total operations costs per student below both the median and the regional average, indicating comparatively lower levels of custodial resource allocation that may reflect efficiencies, budget constraints, or potential under resourcing depending on local context. Five districts were above both the median and the regional average, indicating higher custodial costs per student that may reflect differences in budgeting priorities, staffing models, or purchasing practices that warrant further review depending on each district's context.

Exhibit 4: Custodial Cost per Student for Reporting Districts for FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot

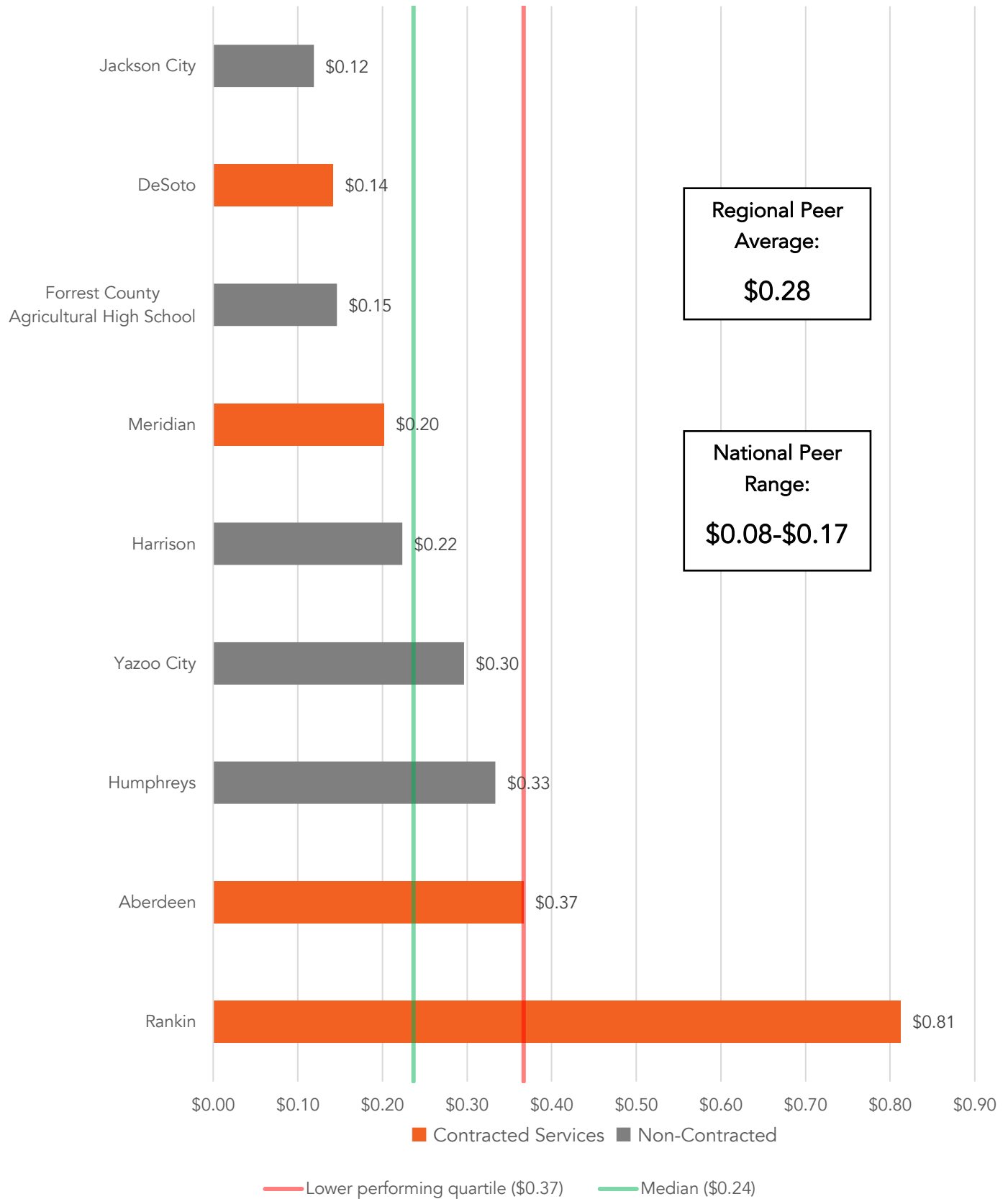
For this cohort, the FY 2023 custodial supply cost per square foot ranged from \$0.12 in the Jackson City district to \$0.81 in the Rankin district. Of the 90 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median custodial supply cost per square foot was \$0.24, which was below the regional peer average but above the national peer range.

The custodial supply cost per square foot measure can be used to determine whether improvements should be made in the area of custodial operations in order to reduce costs. It should be considered along with the overall custodial cost per square foot and custodial cost per student.

As shown in Exhibit 5 on page 16, of the nine reporting districts, four districts used an outside contractor for custodial services and reported custodial supply costs per square foot ranged from \$0.14 in the DeSoto district to \$0.81 in the Rankin district. For districts that used district personnel for custodial services, custodial supply cost per square foot ranged from \$0.12 in the Jackson City district to \$0.33 in the Humphreys district. Rankin's \$0.81 custodial supply cost per square foot is more than twice the reported costs of the second highest district (Aberdeen, \$0.37) and presents district officials an opportunity to review costs in this area for potential cost savings.

Within this cohort, five districts reported custodial supply costs per student below both the median and the regional average, indicating comparatively lower spending on custodial supplies. Additionally, four districts were above the median and the regional average, indicating comparatively higher spending on custodial supplies, which may reflect differences in product selection, purchasing practices, inventory management, or local budget priorities that may warrant further review to identify opportunities for greater cost efficiency.

Exhibit 5: Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot for Reporting Districts for FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Square Footage per Custodian

For this cohort, the FY 2023 square footage per custodian ranged from 10,810 in the Humphreys district to 72,607 in the Forrest County AHS district. Of the 95 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median square footage per custodian was 31,250, which was below the regional peer average but above the upper end of the national peer range.

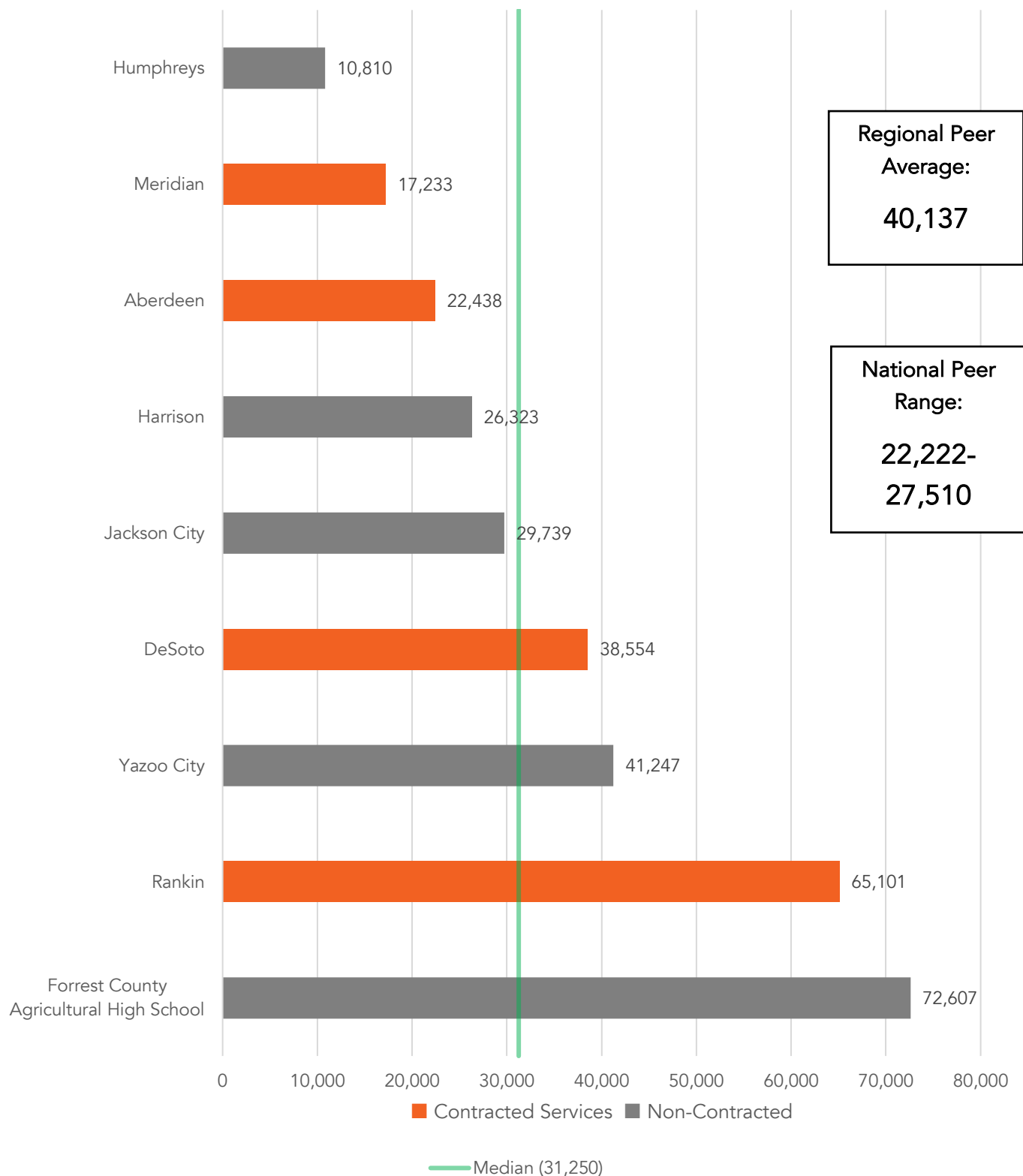
The square footage per custodian measure is important for evaluating the efficiency of a district's custodial services and can help in assessing staffing levels. However, this measure should not be used as the sole determinant for staffing decisions and each district's unique circumstances should be considered.

As shown in Exhibit 6 on page 18, square footage per custodian in reporting districts ranged from 10,810 in the Humphreys district to 72,607 in the Forrest County AHS district, which has only one school. The Humphreys district reported 121,612 square feet total maintained by the district and four active schools, which equals 30,403 square feet per school, a low number for a school compared to data for other districts. If the Humphreys district's square footage was estimated and underreported, this could be a contributing factor to the district's low square footage per custodian and the high custodial cost per square foot noted in Exhibit 3 on page 12. The accuracy of other reported performance data for the district would also be impacted if the square footage was estimated and underreported. Accurate information is vital for district officials to assess custodial operations efficiency properly and district officials may wish to explore this issue further.

The Rankin district reported the second highest square footage per custodian at 65,101. Based on other submitted data, the Rankin district had 18,720 enrolled students, 28 active schools, and maintained approximately 6.5 million square feet. In comparison, the DeSoto district reported 34,800 enrolled students, 41 active schools, and maintained approximately 5 million square feet. The Rankin district's administration officials have an opportunity to review the district's maintained square footage; identify any underutilized buildings, wings, or other areas; and develop a strategic plan to address these underutilized areas so that they do not contribute to higher operational costs.

Within this cohort, five districts reported square footage per custodian that were below both the median and regional average and one district (DeSoto) reported square footage above the median but below the regional average. Three districts reported square footage per custodian above the median and regional average.

Exhibit 6: Square Footage per Custodian for FY 2023 for Reporting Districts



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Maintenance Cost per Square Foot

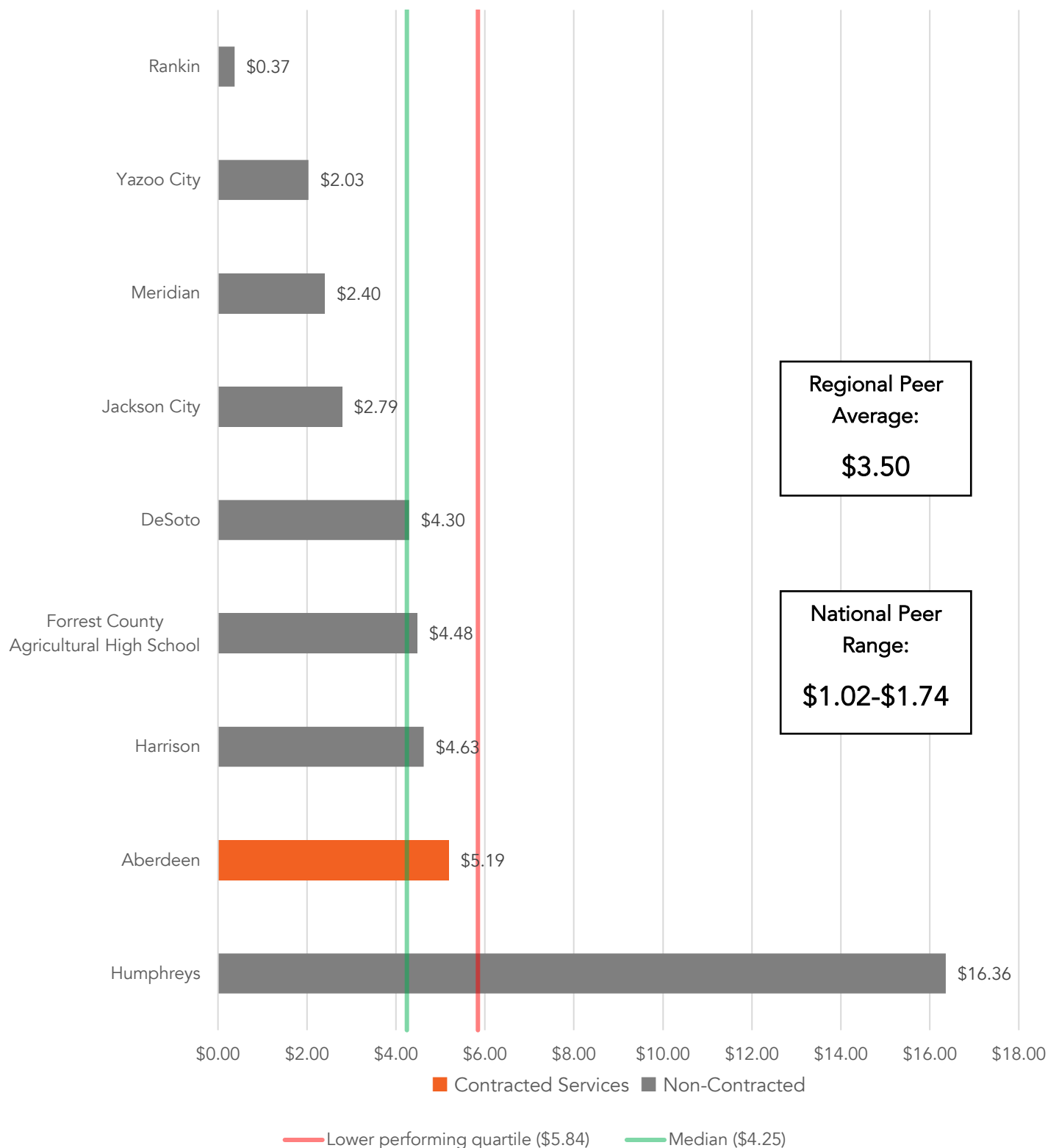
For this cohort, the FY 2023 maintenance cost per square foot ranged from \$0.37 in the Rankin district to \$16.36 in the Humphreys district. Of the 107 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median maintenance cost per square foot was \$4.25, which was higher than the regional peer average and significantly above the national peer range.

District officials can use the maintenance cost per square foot measure to determine whether improvements should be made in maintenance operations in order to reduce costs. This measure should be considered along with other maintenance workload measures such as the average number of days to complete a maintenance work order and square footage per maintenance technician.

As shown in Exhibit 7 on page 20, maintenance cost per square foot ranged from \$0.37 in the Rankin district to \$16.36 in the Humphreys district. As noted in the discussion on page 17 concerning square footage per custodian, Rankin reported maintaining approximately 6.5 million square feet, well above the approximately five million maintained square feet for the DeSoto district, the state's largest district by enrollment. The Humphreys district reported four active schools and maintaining approximately 122,000 square feet, less than the maintained square footage reported by Forrest County AHS (approximately 145,000 square feet), a district with only one school. If districts report maintained square footage inaccurately (by including square footage that is underutilized or reporting less square footage than is actually maintained), this naturally would impact the accuracy of maintenance performance data. Without accurate information, administration officials' ability to monitor maintenance functions is impaired.

Typically, "maintenance" suggests small repairs and preventative maintenance. Under the Mississippi Department of Education's (MDE) Accounting Manual's Expenditure Function codes, "maintenance" includes repairing and replacing facilities and equipment and remodeling or re-roofing projects that maintain a building for its intended purpose. Stakeholders should keep in mind that some districts' reported data could have included costs for more complicated maintenance projects that incurred costs higher than those for basic and preventative maintenance.

Exhibit 7: Maintenance Cost per Square Foot for Reporting Districts for FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order

In this cohort, the five districts reporting FY 2023 data showed work order completion times above the median of two days.¹ Of the 110 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median number of days to complete a maintenance work order (two) was lower than both the regional peer average and the national peer range.

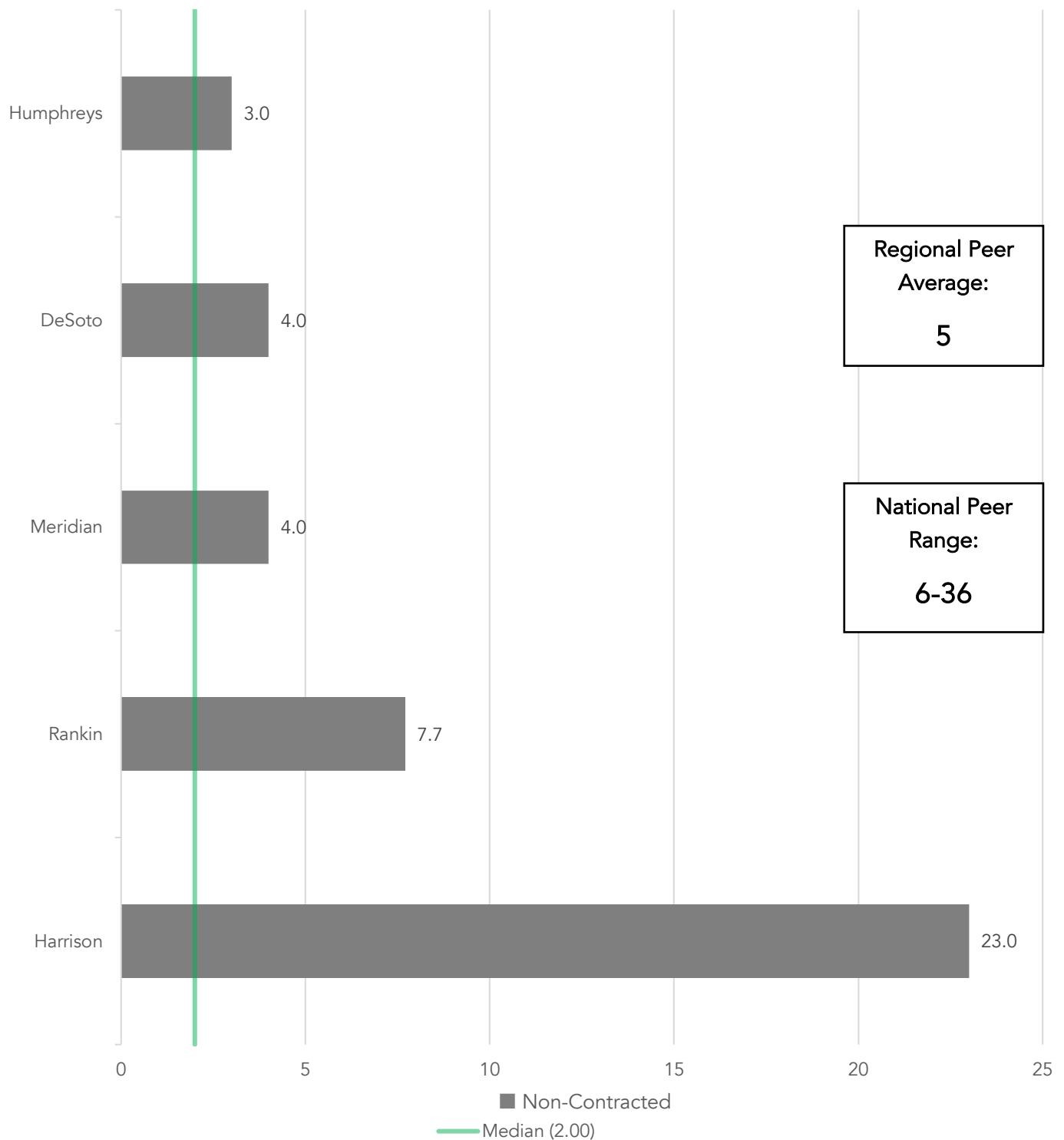
The measure of average number of days to complete a maintenance work order is indicative of a district's efficiency in completing its maintenance responsibilities. District officials have the opportunity to compare their district's data with that reported in this exhibit with the goal of improving maintenance services and timeliness.

As shown in Exhibit 8 on page 22, five districts reported the ability to track the number of days to complete a maintenance order. Among districts with the ability to track this metric, all five reported average work order completion times above the median of two days for reporting districts across all cohorts. The Humphreys district reported an average turnaround of three days, while the Harrison district reported an average of 23 days. (However, since FY 2023 the Harrison district has implemented an electronic work order management system and reports that the average turnaround time has been reduced by approximately half.)

Four districts did not provide the data needed to determine the average number of days to complete a maintenance work order. (The districts that did not supply the requested data are listed in the note to Exhibit 8 on page 22.)

¹ The two-day median represents the reporting districts in this review as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Exhibit 8: Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order for Reporting Districts for FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: The Aberdeen, Forrest County AHS, Jackson City, and Yazoo City districts did not provide data regarding this measure.

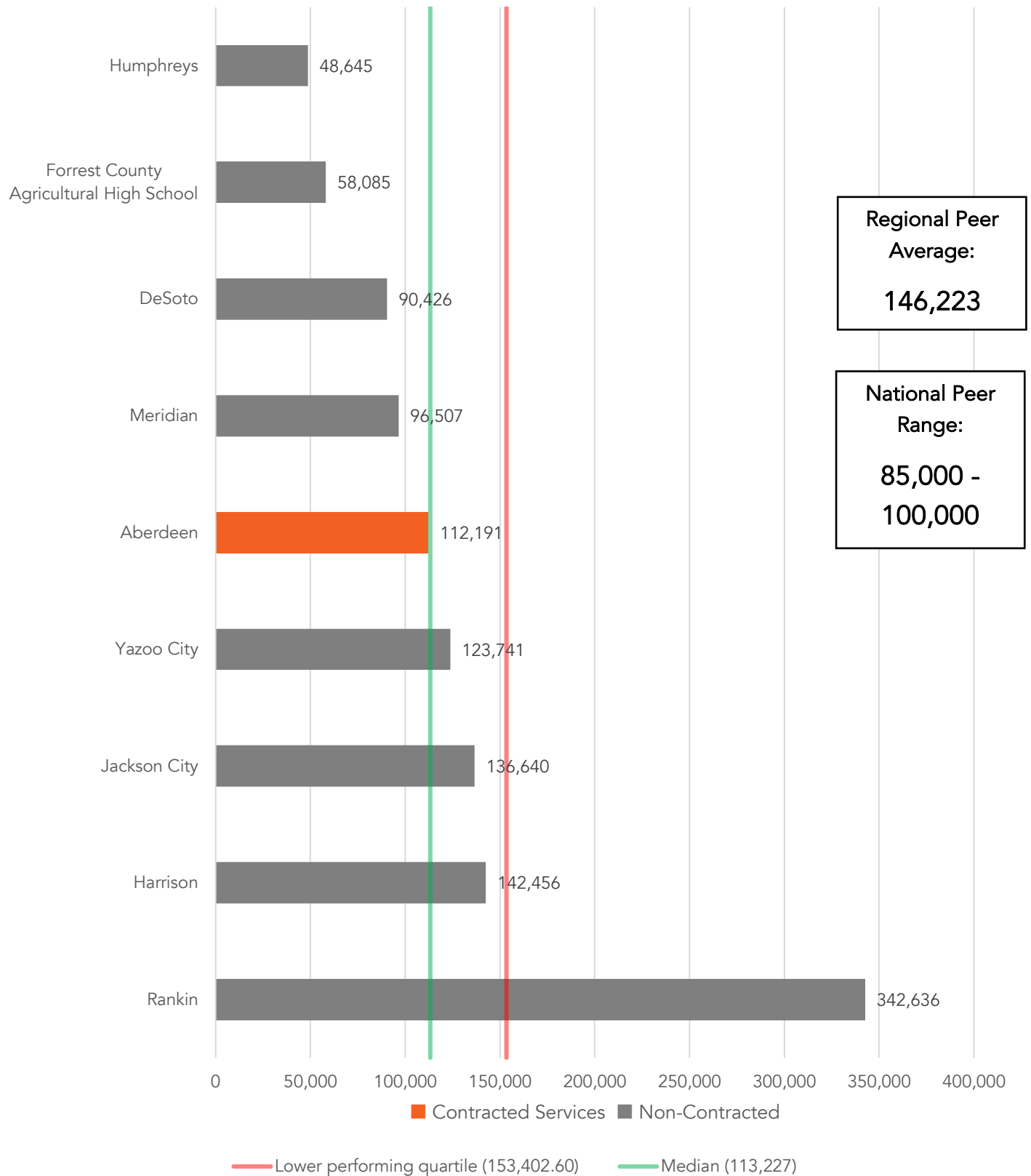
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician

For this cohort, the FY 2023 square footage per maintenance technician ranged from 48,645 in the Humphreys district to 342,636 in the Rankin district. For the 111 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median of 113,227 square feet per maintenance technician was lower than the regional peer average but higher than the national peer range.

The square footage per maintenance technician measure is an important workload measure for evaluating the efficiency of a district's maintenance services and can help in assessing staffing levels. However, this measure should not be used as the sole determinant for staffing decisions and each district's unique circumstances should be considered.

As shown in Exhibit 9 on page 24, square footage per maintenance technician ranged from 48,645 square feet in the Humphreys district to 342,636 square feet in the Rankin district. As noted earlier, Humphreys reported 121,612 square feet are maintained for the entire district and Rankin reported approximately 6.5 million square feet are maintained. These reported square footage totals are inconsistent with totals reported by districts of similar size and indicate that these districts' officials should review these figures to ensure accuracy. Without accurate information, district officials' ability to evaluate maintenance staffing levels is impaired. The wide range of square footage per maintenance technician in the remaining districts may reflect the differing management philosophies of districts' officials but also offers opportunities to review the maintenance workloads of similar districts and evaluate staffing levels and policies with the goal of improving maintenance efficiencies and services.

Exhibit 9: Square Footage per Maintenance Technician for FY 2023 for Reporting Districts



— — The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Acreage per Groundskeeper

For this cohort, only three districts reported data regarding acreage per groundskeeper. For the 57 districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the approximately 50 acres per groundskeeper median was below the regional peer average. District officials in the remaining districts lack the needed information to monitor this area of operations properly and therefore oversee the efficiency of the groundskeeping function.

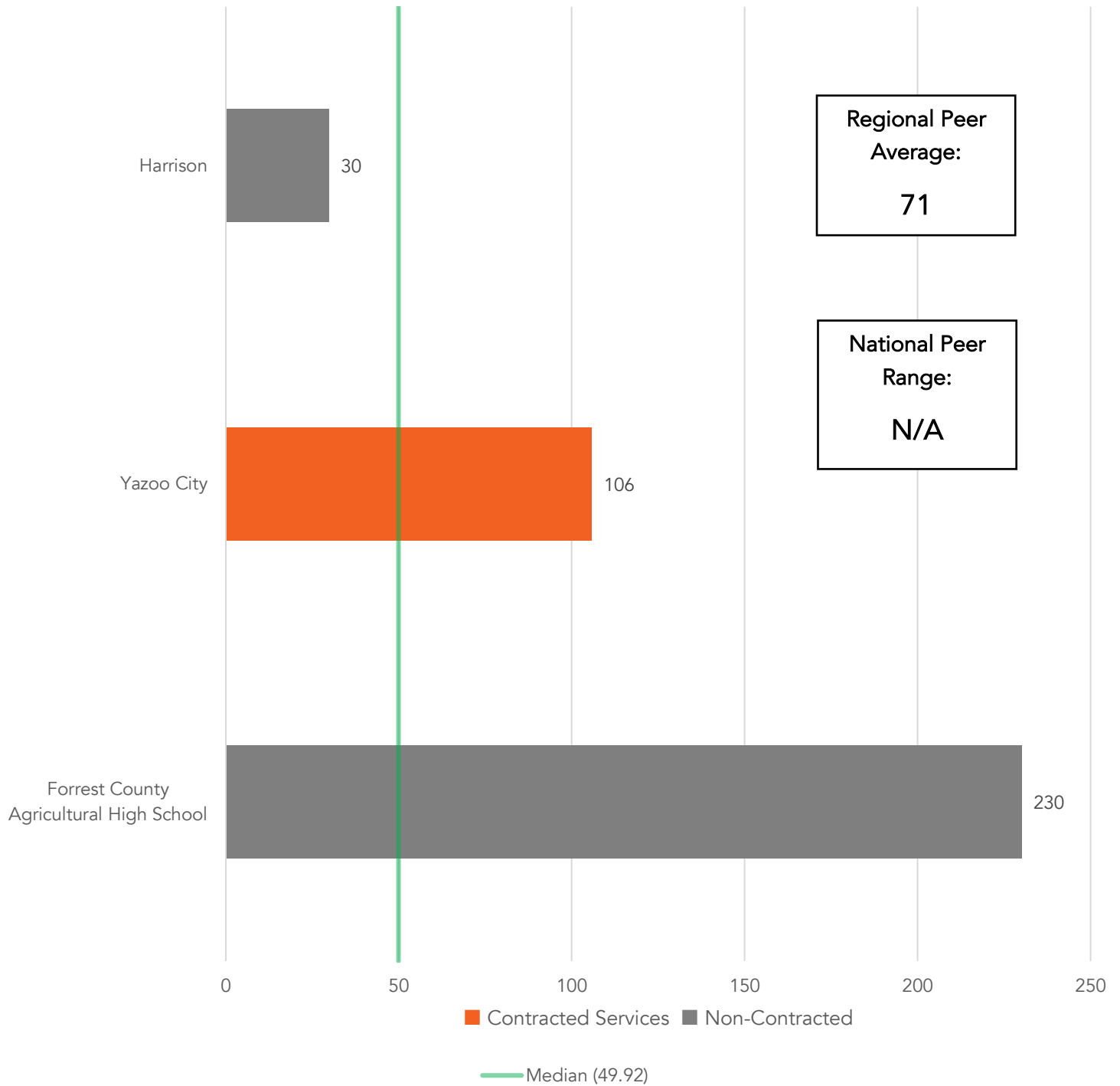
Acreage per groundskeeper measure is important for evaluating the efficiency of a district's groundskeeping services and can help in assessing staffing levels. The low response rate to this metric due to districts not providing the requested data, providing inaccurate data, or using contracted services impaired the assessment team's ability to draw conclusions regarding the efficiency of districts' landscaping services.

As shown in Exhibit 10 on page 26, of the three reporting districts, one district used contracted services for groundskeeping services at 106 acres per groundskeeper at the Yazoo City district. For the districts that used district personnel, acres per groundskeeper ranged was 30 acres per groundskeeper at the Harrison district and 230 acres per groundskeeper at Forrest County AHS.

Only 56 out of 138 (41%) Mississippi districts supplied complete or accurate information for this metric. Some districts in previous reviews and in this cohort, such as Rankin, did not report landscape technician staffing levels since landscaping services are provided through contractors on an as-needed basis. Under this approach, contractor staffing is not fixed, and crews are deployed in variable numbers based on the scope of work required to complete each assignment.

In districts that did not provide the requested data or provided inaccurate data, the lack of complete and accurate information impairs district officials' ability to monitor and assess the efficiency of landscaping services. Using contracted services for landscaping can be an effective and efficient alternative to using district personnel if district officials monitor such services for efficiency as they would if district personnel were used. Acreage per groundskeeper should not be used as the sole determinant for staffing decisions and each school district's unique circumstances should be considered.

Exhibit 10: Acres per Groundskeeper for FY 2023 for Reporting Districts



Note: Aberdeen, DeSoto, Meridian, and Rankin were excluded from this exhibit because they contract groundskeeping staff, specifically landscape technicians.

Note: Jackson City was excluded from this exhibit since it employs 3.5 technicians and also contracts for landscape services. Humphreys was excluded for contracting but also having maintenance staff assist with landscaping.

Square Footage per Student

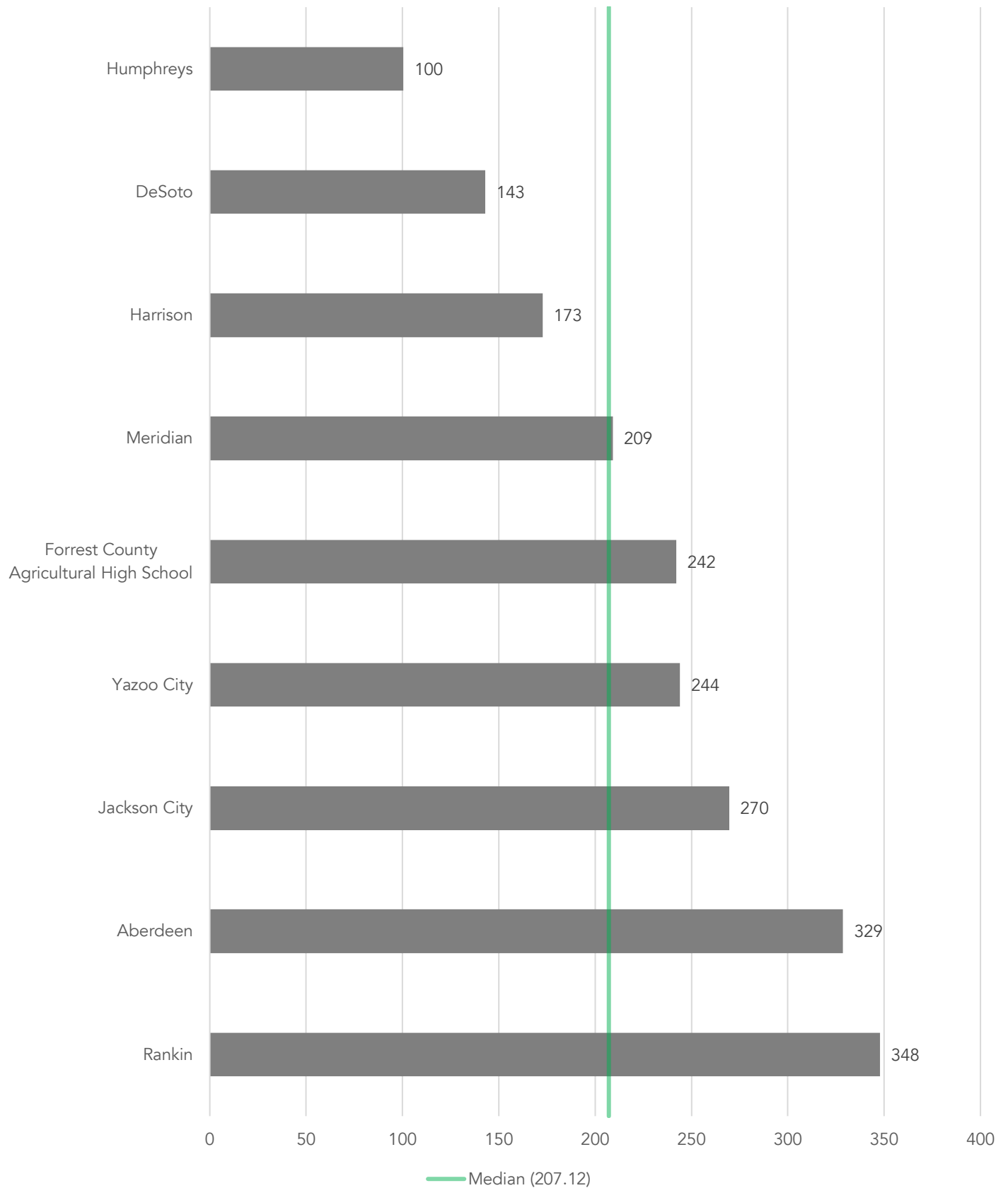
For this cohort, FY 2023 square footage per student ranged from 100 in the Humphreys district to 348 in the Rankin district. For all districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median square footage per student was approximately 207 square feet. Regional or national peer comparisons were not available.

The square footage per student measure can assist districts in evaluating the utilization of space across district facilities and whether there are opportunities for consolidation, optimization, or repurposing facilities. Such efforts could help ensure financial resources are allocated effectively and sustainably.

As shown in Exhibit 11 on page 28, square footage per student ranged from 100 in the Humphreys district to 348 in the Rankin district. As noted previously, the Humphreys and Rankin districts reported square footage totals inconsistent with that of similar size districts. For the remaining seven districts, square footage per student ranged from 143 in the DeSoto district to 329 in the Aberdeen district. The wide range of square footage per student indicates that some districts may be experiencing overcrowding, while other districts may have excessive square footage and could explore the viability of consolidating underutilized facilities.

Within this cohort, six districts reported square footage per student above the state median. Higher square footage per student can increase operational demands, including custodial, maintenance, and utility needs, which may affect overall efficiency and cost. Those districts with higher square footage per student may benefit from examining facility utilization, space management practices, and long-term facility planning to ensure that available space aligns with instructional needs and operational capacity.

Exhibit 11: Square Footage per Student for FY 2023 for Reporting Districts



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Average Square Footage per School

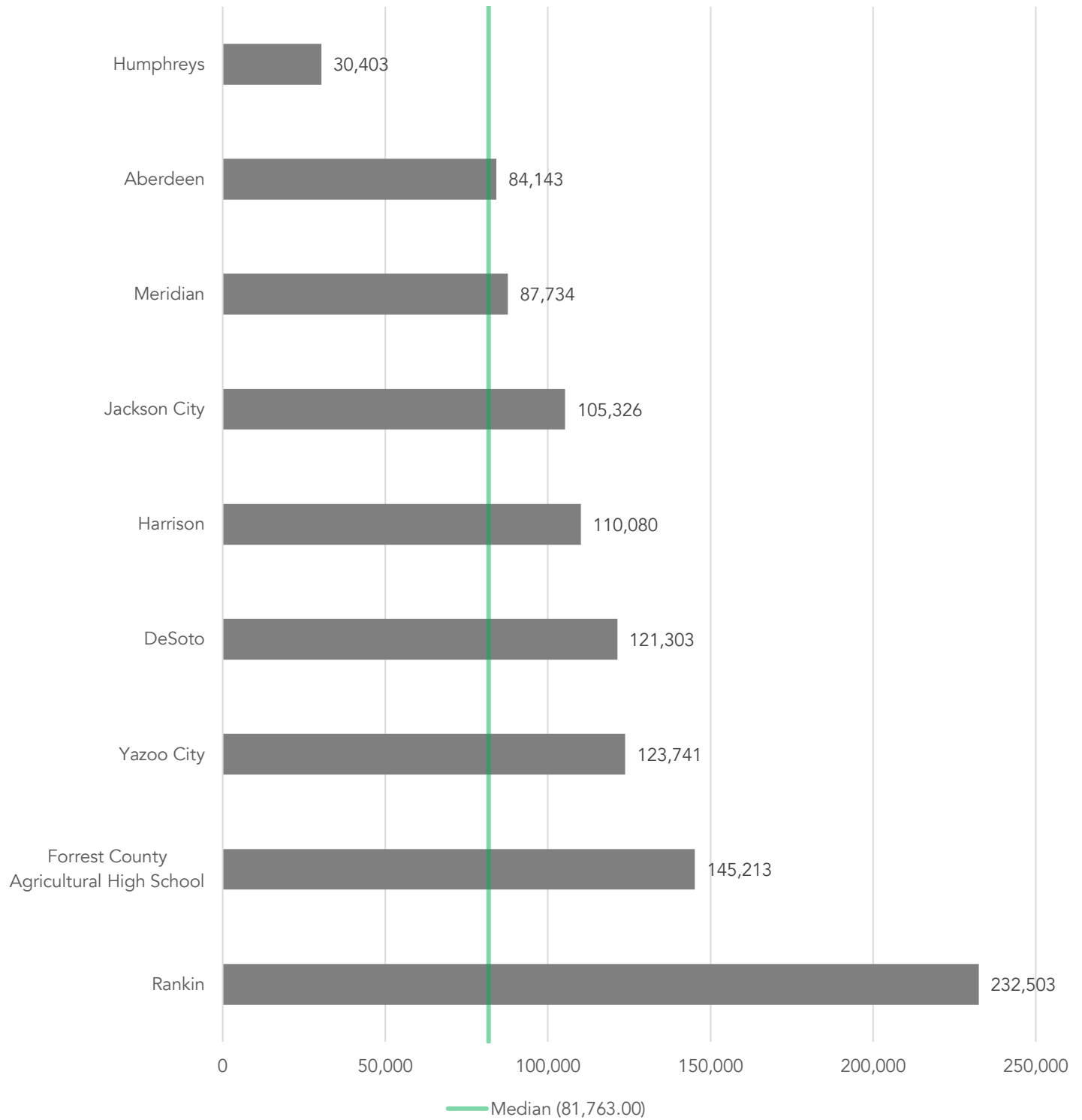
For this cohort, FY 2023 average square footage per school ranged from 30,403 in the Humphreys district to 232,503 in the Rankin district. For all districts reporting FY 2023 operations key performance data across all cohorts, the median average square footage per school was 81,763. National or regional comparison data were not available.

The average square footage per school measure is a complementary measure to square footage per student and can provide further information regarding resource distribution and facility utilization.

As shown in Exhibit 12 on page 30, the Humphreys district reported the smallest average square footage per school of 30,403 square feet and the Rankin district reported the highest with 232,503 square feet. As noted previously, the Humphreys and Rankin districts reported square footage totals inconsistent with that of similar size districts. For the remaining seven districts, square footage per school ranged from 84,143 at Aberdeen to 145,213 at Forrest County AHS.

Within this cohort, six districts reported average square footage per school at least 25% higher than the median. These districts' larger facilities likely influence operational demands, staffing needs, and maintenance requirements.

Exhibit 12: Square Footage per School for FY 2023 for Reporting Districts



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts as well as other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Conclusions Regarding How Districts' Data Collection May Impact Operations Costs

The assessment team's conclusions for this report were inhibited by some districts' inability to provide the requested data.

For example, as noted in Exhibit 8 on page 22, four of the nine districts in this cohort were unable to provide the data needed to determine the average number of days to complete a maintenance work order. When a district is unable to report data for key performance measures, district administrators' ability to monitor and manage operations areas for efficiency and effectiveness is diminished.

Conclusions Regarding Cost Savings

Based on FY 2023 data reported, seven districts in this cohort could realize annual projected potential cost savings of up to approximately \$9 million by bringing costs associated with their custodial, maintenance, and/or groundskeeping functions more in line with those of state and regional peers.

Seven districts in this cohort have the potential for up to approximately \$9 million in cost savings (see Exhibit 13 on pages 33 to 39 for a summary) by bringing operations expenditures more in line with state and regional peers. While the reported data suggests the potential for cost savings in these districts, each district's administration should carefully review the data and recommendations considering the circumstances of the district.

Exhibit 13: Projected Potential Cost Savings in Reporting Districts based on FY 2023 Data Reported

District	Potential Savings	Recommendations
Aberdeen	< or = \$906,464	Operations as a percentage of overall expenditures is higher than the state median but lower than the regional average. Maintenance costs per student and per square footage are significantly higher than all peer groups. Additionally, custodial costs per student and custodial supply costs per square footage are significantly higher than most peer groups. The district should review these costs to determine if there are opportunities to align costs more closely with those of its peers. If the district can bring its costs in line with peer averages, it could realize cost savings. Regarding staffing, the square footage per custodian and per maintenance employee are lower than the state median and the regional average. This measure is indicative of high staffing levels. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of custodial and maintenance services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. Although the district reported implementing an electronic work order management system, the school district was unable to provide data reflecting the number of days required to complete a work order. The district should ensure effective and consistent use of the system to monitor efficiency and timeliness. The district reported that a formal preventive maintenance program was not in place during the 2022-2023 school year. A documented preventive maintenance program is essential to extend the useful life of facilities and equipment, reduce unplanned breakdowns and service disruptions, improve safety and compliance, and support cost-effective planning for repairs and replacements. The district also reported that an energy management program was not in place. A documented energy management program is essential to monitor and reduce utility consumption and costs, identify inefficiencies and prioritize improvements, support budgeting and long-range planning, and promote consistent energy conservation practices across district facilities. The district reported that formal facility assessments are conducted only as needed. The district should develop and implement a documented plan and process for conducting facility assessments on a regular, defined schedule to support proactive maintenance planning, identify emerging facility needs before they become costly repairs, inform capital improvement priorities, and strengthen long-range budgeting and resource allocation decisions.
DeSoto	< or = \$2,749,016	Operations as a percentage of overall expenditures is higher than the state median but lower than the regional average. Maintenance costs per square footage are higher than all peer groups. The district should review these costs to determine if there are opportunities to align costs more closely with

District	Potential Savings	Recommendations
		those of its peers. If the district can bring its costs in line with peer averages, it could realize cost savings. Regarding staffing, the square footage per maintenance employee is lower than the state median and the regional average. This measure is indicative of high staffing levels. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. The district reported that work orders are completed, on average, within four days. The district should establish and document a standard work order completion timeframe of two business days (i.e., the state median) for routine requests and implement an electronic work order management system to track completion timelines, monitor adherence to the standard, and support corrective action when timelines exceed expectations. The district reported that formal facility assessments are conducted approximately every four to five years. The district should increase the frequency of facility assessments, up to annually, and adopt a documented plan and process to identify facility needs earlier, inform preventative maintenance and capital planning, and support timely budgeting and prioritization of repairs and renovations.
Forrest County Agricultural High School	< or = \$134,889	The Forrest County AHS district operates a single school and functions as an agricultural school district. This unique organizational structure and service model impacts staffing, operations, and facility needs; accordingly, comparisons of district data to peer districts should be interpreted with caution, as results may not be directly comparable to districts with multiple schools or more traditional configurations. Maintenance costs per square footage are higher than those of all peer groups. The district should review these costs to determine if there are opportunities to align costs more closely with those of its peers. If the district can bring its costs in line with peer averages, it could realize cost savings. Regarding staffing, the square footage per custodian and square acreage per groundskeeper are significantly higher than the state median and regional average. These measures are indicative of low staffing levels. Regarding the maintenance workload, the square footage per maintenance employee is significantly lower than the state median and regional average. This measure is indicative of high staffing levels. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. The district was unable to provide data reflecting the number of days required to complete a work order. The district should implement an electronic work order management system to support efficient and effective work order processing and to ensure timely tracking and reporting of completion timeframes. The district reported that an energy management program was not in place. A documented energy management program is essential to monitor and

District	Potential Savings	Recommendations
		reduce utility consumption and costs, identify inefficiencies and prioritize improvements, support budgeting and long-range planning, and promote consistent energy conservation practices across district facilities.
Harrison	---	Regarding staffing, the square footage per custodian and square acreage per groundskeeper are lower than the state median and regional average. These measures are indicative of high staffing levels. Regarding the maintenance workload, square footage per maintenance employee is significantly higher than the state median. This measure is indicative of low staffing levels. Because other indicators (e.g., custodial cost per square foot) showed that Harison's costs for custodial services are lower than the state median and regional peers, it is possible that the staffing is appropriate. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. The district reported that work orders during the 2022-2023 school year were completed, on average, within 23 days. After the implementation of a new electronic work order management system, the district reports that average work order completion time has since been cut in half. The district should continue to monitor and report work order completion timelines through the system, reinforce consistent system use, and maintain supervisory oversight to ensure routine work orders are completed within two business days (i.e., the state median). The district reported that a formal preventive maintenance program was not in place during the 2022-2023 school year. A documented preventive maintenance program is essential to extend the useful life of facilities and equipment, reduce unplanned breakdowns and service disruptions, improve safety and compliance, and support cost-effective planning for repairs and replacements.
Humphreys	< or = \$1,557,575	Operations as a percentage of overall expenditures is higher than that of all peer groups. Maintenance costs per student and per square foot, as well as overall custodial costs and custodial supply costs per square foot, are significantly higher than all peer groups. Additionally, custodial costs per student are higher than the state median, as well as the regional average. The district should review these costs to determine whether there are opportunities to align costs more closely with those of its peers. If the district can bring its costs in line with peer averages, it could realize cost savings. Regarding staffing, the square footage per custodian and per maintenance employee are significantly lower than the state median and regional average. These measures are indicative of high staffing levels. The square acreage per landscape employee is significantly higher than the state median and regional average. This measure is indicative of lower staffing levels. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary.

District	Potential Savings	Recommendations
		The district reported that work orders are completed, on average, within three days. The district should establish and formally document a standard completion timeframe of two business days for routine work order requests, which is the state median. If an electronic work order management system has not been implemented, staff should evaluate the feasibility of implementing such a system. If a system is already in place, the district should use it to track completion timelines, monitor compliance with the established standard, and support corrective action when completion timelines exceed expectations. Although the district reported implementing an electronic work order management system, the school district also reported that the system was no longer available for use during the 2024-2025 school year. The district should adopt such a system, if it has not already, to support efficient work order processing and ensure timely tracking and reporting of completion timeframes. The district reported that a formal preventive maintenance program was not in place during the 2022-2023 school year. A documented preventive maintenance program is essential to extend the useful life of facilities and equipment, reduce unplanned breakdowns and service disruptions, improve safety and compliance, and support cost-effective planning for repairs and replacements. The district also reported that an energy management program was not in place in all schools except the high school, where a new HVAC system that monitors energy savings was installed. A documented energy management program for all schools and district facilities is essential to monitor and reduce utility consumption and costs, identify inefficiencies and prioritize improvements, support budgeting and long-range planning, and promote consistent energy conservation practices across district facilities.
Jackson City	---	Regarding custodial staffing, the square footage per custodian is lower than the state median and regional peer average, which could indicate high staffing levels. Further, although square footage per maintenance employee is lower than the regional average, it is higher than the state median, indicating another area in which staffing could be high. Because other indicators (e.g., custodial cost per square foot) showed that Jackson City's costs for custodial and maintenance services are lower than the state median and regional peers, it is possible that the staffing is appropriate. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. Although the district reported implementing an electronic work order management system, the school district was unable to provide data reflecting the number of days required to complete a work order. The district should ensure effective and consistent use of the system to monitor efficiency and timeliness.

District	Potential Savings	Recommendations
		The district reported that a formal preventive maintenance program was not in place during the 2022-2023 school year. A documented preventive maintenance program is essential to extend the useful life of facilities and equipment, reduce unplanned breakdowns and service disruptions, improve safety and compliance, and support cost-effective planning for repairs and replacements. The district also reported that an energy management program was not in place. A documented energy management program is essential to monitor and reduce utility consumption and costs, identify inefficiencies and prioritize improvements, support budgeting and long-range planning, and promote consistent energy conservation practices across district facilities.
Meridian	< or = \$1,014,290	Custodial costs per square footage and custodial costs per student are significantly higher than those of all peer groups. The district should review these costs to determine whether there are opportunities to align costs more closely with those of its peers. If the district can bring its costs in line with peer averages, it could realize cost savings. Regarding staffing, the square footage per custodian and per maintenance employee are lower than the state median and regional average. These measures are indicative of high staffing levels. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of custodial and maintenance services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. The district reported that work orders were completed, on average, within four days. The district should establish and document a standard order completion timeframe of two business days (i.e., the state median) for routine requests and utilize the electronic work order management system to monitor adherence to the standard and support corrective action when timelines exceed expectations. The district reported that a formal preventive maintenance program was not in place during the 2022-2023 school year. A documented preventive maintenance program is essential to extend the useful life of facilities and equipment, reduce unplanned breakdowns and service disruptions, improve safety and compliance, and support cost-effective planning for repairs and replacements. The district also reported that an energy management program was not in place. A documented energy management program is essential to monitor and reduce utility consumption and costs, identify inefficiencies and prioritize improvements, support budgeting and long-range planning, and promote consistent energy conservation practices across district facilities. The district reported that formal facility assessments are conducted only as needed. The district should develop and implement a documented plan and process for conducting facility assessments on a regular, defined schedule to support proactive maintenance planning, identify emerging facility needs before they become costly repairs, inform capital improvement priorities, and strengthen long range budgeting and resource allocation decisions.

District	Potential Savings	Recommendations
Rankin	< or = \$2,306,991	Custodial costs per student and custodial supply costs per square foot are significantly higher than those of all peer groups. The district should review these costs to determine whether there are opportunities to align costs more closely with those of its peers. If the district can bring its costs in line with peer averages, it could realize cost savings. Based on the district's reported facility utilization data, the Rankin district may benefit from evaluating whether school consolidation or reconfiguration could improve operational efficiency. The district maintains a comparatively high square footage per student, large average school facility size, and a substantial number of schools relative to total enrollment, all of which may indicate underutilized space and increased operational costs. While additional building level analyses would be required to confirm excess capacity, these indicators suggest that a more detailed review of facility usage and long-range planning options, including potential consolidation, is warranted. Regarding staffing, the square footage per custodian and per maintenance employee are significantly higher than the state median and regional average. These measures are indicative of low staffing levels. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of custodial and maintenance services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. The district reported that work orders were completed, on average, within 7.7 days. The district should establish and document a standard work order completion timeframe of two business days (i.e., the state median) for routine requests and utilize the electronic work order management system to monitor adherence to the standard and support corrective action when timelines exceed expectations.
Yazoo City	< or = \$472,765	Custodial costs per square foot and per student are significantly higher than those of most peer groups. Additionally, custodial supply costs per square foot is significantly higher than all peer groups. The district should review these costs to determine whether there are opportunities to align costs more closely with those of its peers. If the district can bring its costs in line with peer averages, it could realize cost savings. Regarding staffing, the square acreage per groundskeeper is significantly higher than the state median and the regional average. This measure is indicative of low staffing levels. The district should gather feedback from school and central office staff to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of groundskeeping services and determine whether staffing adjustments are necessary. Because the district did not have an electronic work order management system during the 2022 to 2023 period, the district was unable to provide data reflecting the number of days required to complete work orders. With the subsequent implementation of an electronic system, the district should routinely monitor and report work order completion timelines to ensure routine work orders are completed within the established standard of two

District	Potential Savings	Recommendations
		business days (i.e., the state median) and to support ongoing operational efficiency. The district reported that a formal preventive maintenance program was not in place during the 2022-2023 school year. A documented preventive maintenance program is essential to extend the useful life of facilities and equipment, reduce unplanned breakdowns and service disruptions, improve safety and compliance, and support cost-effective planning for repairs and replacements. The district also reported that an energy management program was not in place. A documented energy management program is essential to monitor and reduce utility consumption and costs, identify inefficiencies and prioritize improvements, support budgeting and long-range planning, and promote consistent energy conservation practices across district facilities. The district reported that formal facility assessments are conducted every 3 years. The district should increase the frequency of facility assessments, up to annually, and adopt a documented plan and process to identify facility needs earlier, inform preventative maintenance and capital planning, and support timely budgeting and prioritization of repairs and renovations.
TOTAL	< or = \$9,141,990	

Recommendations

1. In FY 2027, each district's superintendent, in consultation with the district's operations personnel, should review the information from this report and implement the relevant recommendations to increase efficiency, improve service levels, and/or achieve cost savings. Such recommendations include, but are not limited to:
 - a. implementing an electronic work order system;
 - b. conducting formal annual facility assessments;
 - c. implementing an energy management program; and,
 - d. implementing a formal preventative maintenance program.
2. For districts that were unable to provide certain information during this review pertaining to their operations, relevant district personnel should begin collecting and monitoring this data on an ongoing basis.
3. If feasible, districts should begin tracking custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping costs separately.
4. District personnel should provide an annual report to the district superintendent regarding the status of the district's operations using the measures included in this review.

Appendix A: List of School Districts Included in this Review

1. Aberdeen
2. DeSoto
3. Forrest County Agricultural High School (AHS)
4. Harrison
5. Humphreys
6. Jackson City (i.e., Jackson Public Schools)
7. Meridian
8. Rankin
9. Yazoo City

SOURCE: PEER.

Appendix B: FY 2023 Operations Information for Districts Reporting

District	Maintenance and Operations Expenditures	Total Square Feet Maintained	Total Square Acres on School Campuses	Number of Schools	Total Student Enrollment	Total Square Acres of 16 th Section Land*	Number of Maintenance FTE**	Number of Custodial FTE**	Number of Grounds-keeping FTE**
Aberdeen	\$2,131,873	336,572	70	4	1,024	0	3	15	Contracted Services
DeSoto	\$37,811,962	4,973,405	1,336	41	34,800	0	55	129	Contracted Services
Forrest County AHS	\$737,215	145,213	115	1	600	0	2.5	2	0.5
Harrison	\$12,200,712	2,421,751	208.5	22	14,024	23,040	17	92	7
Humphreys	\$2,412,424	121,612	26,786	4	1,211	7,681	2.5	11	2.5
Jackson City	\$20,074,815	5,055,662	1,000	48	18,759	2,560	37	170	3.5 (Contracts Additional Staff)
Meridian	\$4,672,624	965,074	159	11	4,614	720	10	56	Contracted Services
Rankin	\$16,285,908	6,510,084	994.5	28	18,720	13,560	19	100	Contracted Services
Yazoo City	\$2,088,832	494,963	158.6	4	2,029	345	4	12	1.5

*16th section land refers to a specific type of land grant set aside for the benefit of public education. These lands were originally designated under the provisions of the U.S. Land Ordinance of 1785. The ordinance reserved every 16th section (approximately one square mile or 640 acres) within each township to generate revenue for local schools.

Note: The treaty with the Chickasaw Indian Nation ceding their land to the United States failed to specifically reserve Sixteenth Sections, and when the lands were later sold by the government, no provision was made for the reservation of school trust lands. Later the United States granted the State of Mississippi lieu land as compensation for this error. However, this lieu land was sold by the state and the money was invested in railroad bonds. The investment was lost during the Civil War. The State Legislature currently makes annual appropriations to school districts in the Chickasaw Cession area to compensate for this lost source of local education funding.

**Some districts provided the number of contracted employees, whereas some did not.

Appendix C: FY 2023 Operations Benchmark Data and Performance Indicators for Districts Reporting

Aberdeen			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?	✓		
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?		✗	
Has an energy management program?		✗	
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?		✗	The district conducts assessments on an as-needed basis.
Use of contracted services	Custodial, Landscaping, and Maintenance		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	9.7%	+	–
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$2,082	+	+
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$1.15	–	–
Custodial Cost per Student	\$376.54	+	+
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.37	+	+
Square Footage per Custodian	22,438	–	–
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$5.19	+	+
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	112,191	–	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Student	329	+	N/A
Square Footage per School	84,143	+	N/A

DeSoto			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?		x	
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?	✓		
Has an energy management program?	✓		
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?		x	The district conducts an assessment every 4-5 years.
Use of contracted services	Custodial and Landscaping		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	9.2%	+	-
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$1,087	-	-
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$1.23	-	-
Custodial Cost per Student	\$176.22	-	-
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.14	-	-
Square Footage per Custodian	38,554	+	-
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$4.30	+	+
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	4	+	-
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	90,426	-	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Student	143	-	N/A
Square Footage per School	121,303	+	N/A

Forrest County Agricultural High School (AHS)			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?		x	
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?	✓		
Has an energy management program?		x	
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?	✓		
Use of contracted services	None		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	6.4%	-	-
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$1,229	+	-
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$0.60	-	-
Custodial Cost per Student	\$144.63	-	-
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.15	-	-
Square Footage per Custodian	72,607	+	+
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$4.48	+	+
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	58,085	-	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	230	+	+
Square Footage per Student	242	+	N/A
Square Footage per School	145,213	+	N/A

Harrison			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?	✓		
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?		x	
Has an energy management program?	✓		
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?	✓		
Use of contracted services	None		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	6.1%	–	–
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$870	–	–
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$0.34	–	–
Custodial Cost per Student	\$59.16	–	–
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.22	–	–
Square Footage per Custodian	26,323	–	–
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$4.63	+	+
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	23	+	+
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	142,456	+	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	30	–	–
Square Footage per Student	173	–	N/A
Square Footage per School	110,080	+	N/A

Humphreys			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?	✓		
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?		✗	
Has an energy management program?		✗	
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?	✓		
Use of contracted services	Landscaping		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	11.8%	+	+
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$1,992	+	+
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$3.48	+	+
Custodial Cost per Student	\$349.37	+	+
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.33	+	+
Square Footage per Custodian	10,810	–	–
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$16.36	+	+
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	3	+	–
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	48,645	–	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	10,714	+	+
Square Footage per Student	100	–	N/A
Square Footage per School	30,403	–	N/A

Jackson City			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?	✓		
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?		✗	
Has an energy management program?		✗	
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?	✓		
Use of contracted services	Landscaping		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	10.5%	+	+
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$1,070	–	–
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$0.55	–	–
Custodial Cost per Student	\$147.05	–	–
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.12	–	–
Square Footage per Custodian	29,739	–	–
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$2.79	–	–
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	136,640	+	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	286	+	+
Square Footage per Student	270	+	N/A
Square Footage per School	105,326	+	N/A

Meridian			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?	✓		
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?		x	
Has an energy management program?		x	
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?		x	The district conducts assessments on an as-needed basis.
Use of contracted services	Custodial and Landscaping		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	5.3%	+	+
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$1,013	+	+
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$2.44	+	+
Custodial Cost per Student	\$510.40	+	+
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.20	–	–
Square Footage per Custodian	17,233	–	–
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$2.40	–	–
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	4	+	–
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	96,507	–	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Student	209	+	N/A
Square Footage per School	87,734	+	N/A

Rankin			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?	✓		
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?	✓		
Has an energy management program?	✓		
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?	✓		
Use of contracted services	Custodial and Landscaping		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	6.8%	–	–
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$870	–	–
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$1.34	–	–
Custodial Cost per Student	\$467.24	+	+
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.81	+	–
Square Footage per Custodian	65,101	+	+
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$0.37	–	–
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	7.7	+	+
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	342,636	+	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Student	348	+	N/A
Square Footage per School	232,503	+	N/A

Yazoo City			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses an electronic maintenance work order system?		x	
Has a formal preventative maintenance program?		x	
Has an energy management program?		x	
Conducts a formal facilities assessment each year?		x	The district conducts assessments every 3 years.
Use of contracted services	Landscaping		
Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Total Operations Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses	6.1%	–	–
Maintenance and Operations Cost per Student	\$1,029	–	–
Custodial Cost per Square Foot	\$2.19	–	–
Custodial Cost per Student	\$533.45	–	–
Custodial Supply Cost per Square Foot	\$0.30	–	–
Square Footage per Custodian	41,247	+	–
Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	\$2.03	–	–
Average Number of Days to Complete a Maintenance Work Order	Data Not Provided		
Square Footage per Maintenance Technician	123,741	+	+
Acreage per Groundskeeper	106	+	+
Square Footage per Student	244	+	N/A
Square Footage per School	123,741	+	N/A

Performance Evaluation

Lonnie Edgar, Deputy Director
Jennifer Sebren, Deputy Director
Taylor Burns
Emily Cloys
Kim Cummins
Kelsi Ford
Will Harper
Matthew Holmes
Ryan Morgan
Meri Clare Ringer
Colby Spence
Sarah Williamson
Julie Winkeljohn

Administration

Kirby Arinder
Stephanie Harris
Gale Taylor

Quality Assurance and Reporting

Tracy Bobo
Bryan "Jay" Giles

Reapportionment

Ben Collins