

School Funding Data Collection and Analysis

In this assignment, you will take on the role of a data analyst, comparing the funding levels, real estate values, demographics, and school grades for two counties in Florida. The goal is to not only see if you can determine the difference between these districts, but what these differences might mean in terms of the lived experience of the students, staff, and families the schools in that district serve.

Collect your data

Your first county for comparison will be Alachua County, the district in which the University of Florida resides. Because you will be complaining volunteer hours in this community, you will have experience on the ground. For your second county, choose a district with which you are familiar--perhaps the district that you attended.¹

1. Once you've chosen your two counties, go to [NPR's interactive funding graphic](#) and copy down the **per pupil funding** for your chosen counties.
2. Next, go to [Zillow's Florida county values](#) website to see the **median home price** (the halfway point of home sales) in your two counties.
3. Go to [StatsAmerica](#) and, considering our module focus on sociology, record the data for **poverty rate, percent with high school diploma or greater**, and well as the **racial percentages** on the "demographics" page.
4. Finally, open the [Florida county grade map \(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and note the respective **"grades"** these counties received under the "District and School Report Cards" link.

Interpret your data

For the second part of this assignment, you will interpret your findings by writing a brief synopsis of what you've found and what it means. Consider the following questions in your response:

1. How large is the funding difference between counties?
2. What other significant differences, if any, did you find in home price, demographics, school grade, etc.?
3. How do the school grades and funding support and/or refute some of the arguments in our readings that funding schools through property taxes is regressive and unfair to poorer communities?
4. What correlations (associations) can you identify between education level, race, income, and industry for these counties?
5. Finally, what is your big take away from this data-analysis exercise?

¹ If you are familiar with a school system in another state, you are free to choose a county or district there, but you'll need to adjust the directions in part 1 to align with that state's data collection policies.