



The Education Trust–New York

A Primer: School Funding & Equity

Lessons learned from the first year
of school-level budget transparency
data in 76 New York school districts

March 2019



What do we mean when we talk about resource equity?

- Our interest is rooted in how the education system can **increase achievement and opportunity for historically under-served groups of students.**
- **Resource equity** is an important component. We see it as a 3-piece puzzle:

The overall level of state and local funding a school district has



How the school district distributes funds

How well the resources are spent

- **What happens once resources get to a school district** has historically received the least transparency and attention.



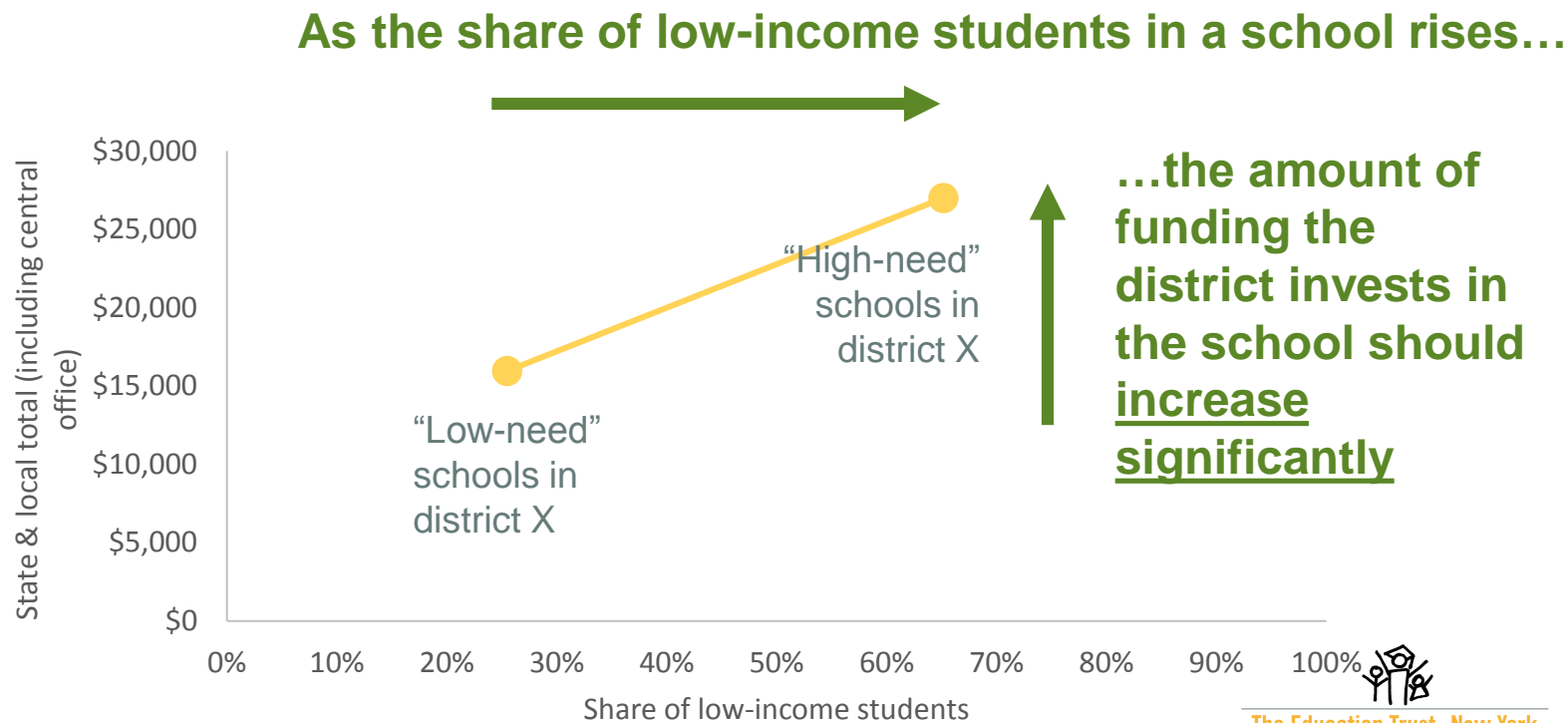
The context: Shining a light on how districts allocate funds

- Last year's state budget required 76 school districts to release data on their 2018-19 school-level budgets – for the first time ever. These budget transparency requirements will expand to more districts over the next few years.
- Federal law will require all school districts to release data on their school-level actual spending, beginning after the 2018-19 school year. Depending how the state sets the reporting requirements, we hope to be able to see how a district planned to spend its funds versus how they were actually invested.
- The current Executive Budget proposal would also require certain school districts with under-funded high-need schools to prioritize those schools for additional resources, based on a formula in law.



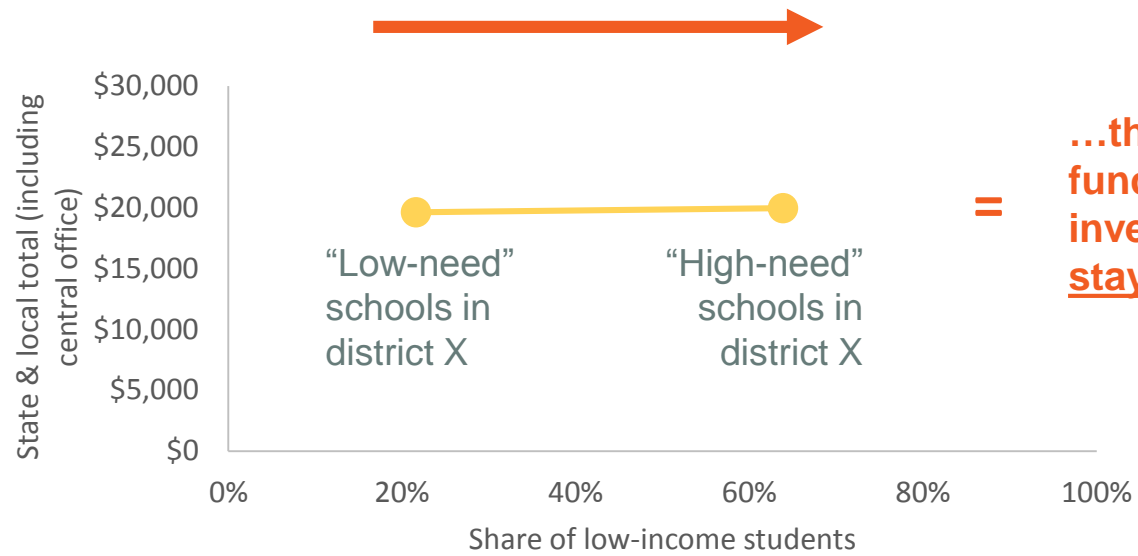
How should a district allocate funding among its schools?

- There is no single “correct answer.”
- But we know that the schools that serve the students with the greatest needs should receive **significantly more funding** than the schools that serve the students with the least needs.
- Here’s the general pattern we’d hope to see:

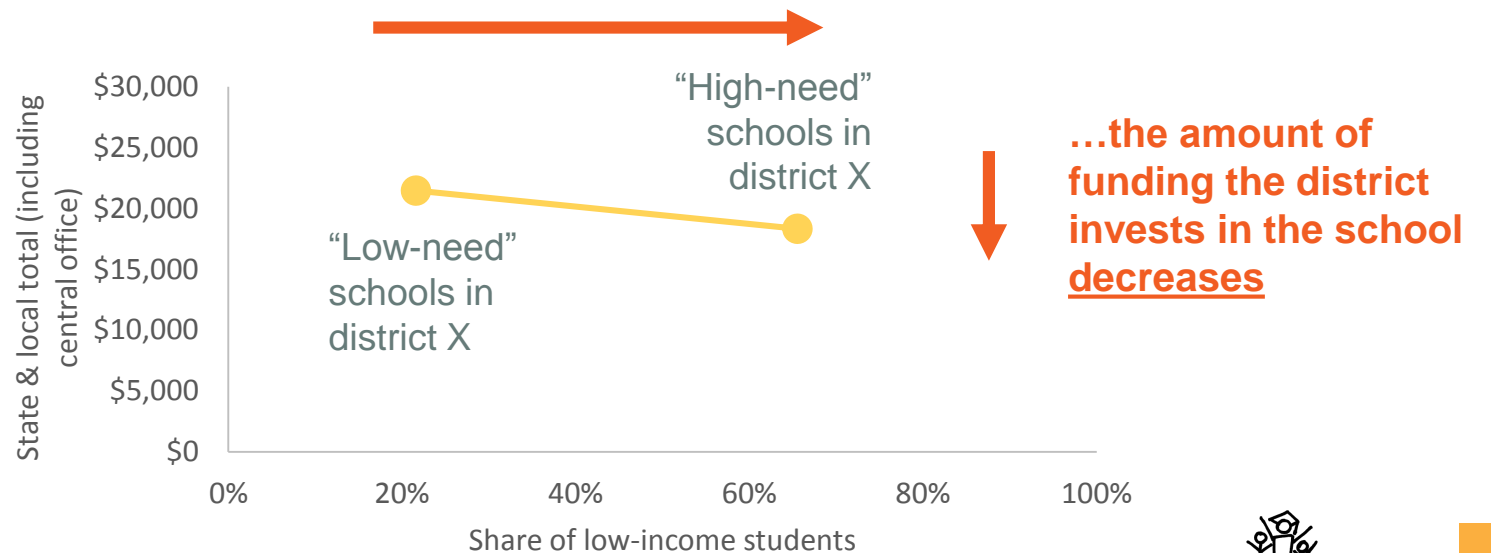


How should a district not allocate funding among its schools?

As the share of low-income students in a school rises...



As the share of low-income students in a school rises...



What we see in New York's data

Remember:

Equal is not the same as equitable. Equity requires significantly greater support in the highest-need schools than currently appears to be the case. And funding inequity impacts students both across different districts and within the same district.

Our analysis of elementary and middle school budgets in 32 large and mid-sized school districts revealed:

- 19 school districts (59%) budgeted **about the same** in their highest-need and lowest-need schools.
- 6 school districts (19%) **budgeted at least 5% less in their highest-need schools** compared to their lowest-need schools.
- Only 2 school districts (6%) **budgeted at least 20% more in their highest-need schools** compared to their lowest-need schools.



What we see in New York's data

Disproportionate assignment of the newest teachers to the highest-need schools contributes to this inequity:

- 10 school districts (31%) planned to assign **approximately the same** share of experienced teachers in their highest-need and lowest-need schools.
- An additional 12 school districts (38%) planned to assign **at least 5% fewer experienced teachers to their highest-need schools.**

Remember:

Equal is not the same as equitable. Equity requires significantly greater support in the highest-need schools than currently appears to be the case. And funding inequity impacts students both across different districts and within the same district.



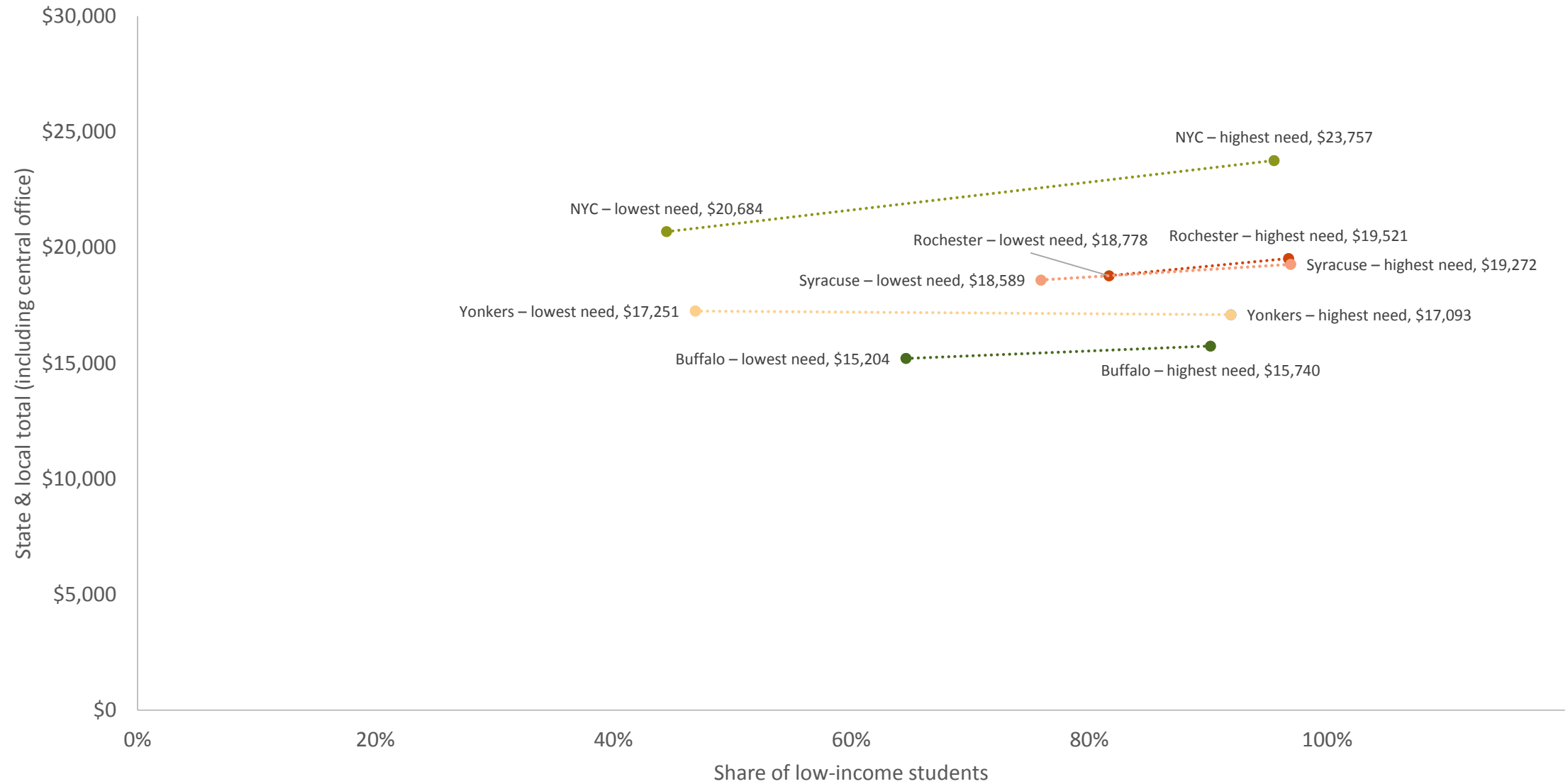
How much can school districts invest and how are they allocating their resources?

A look by region



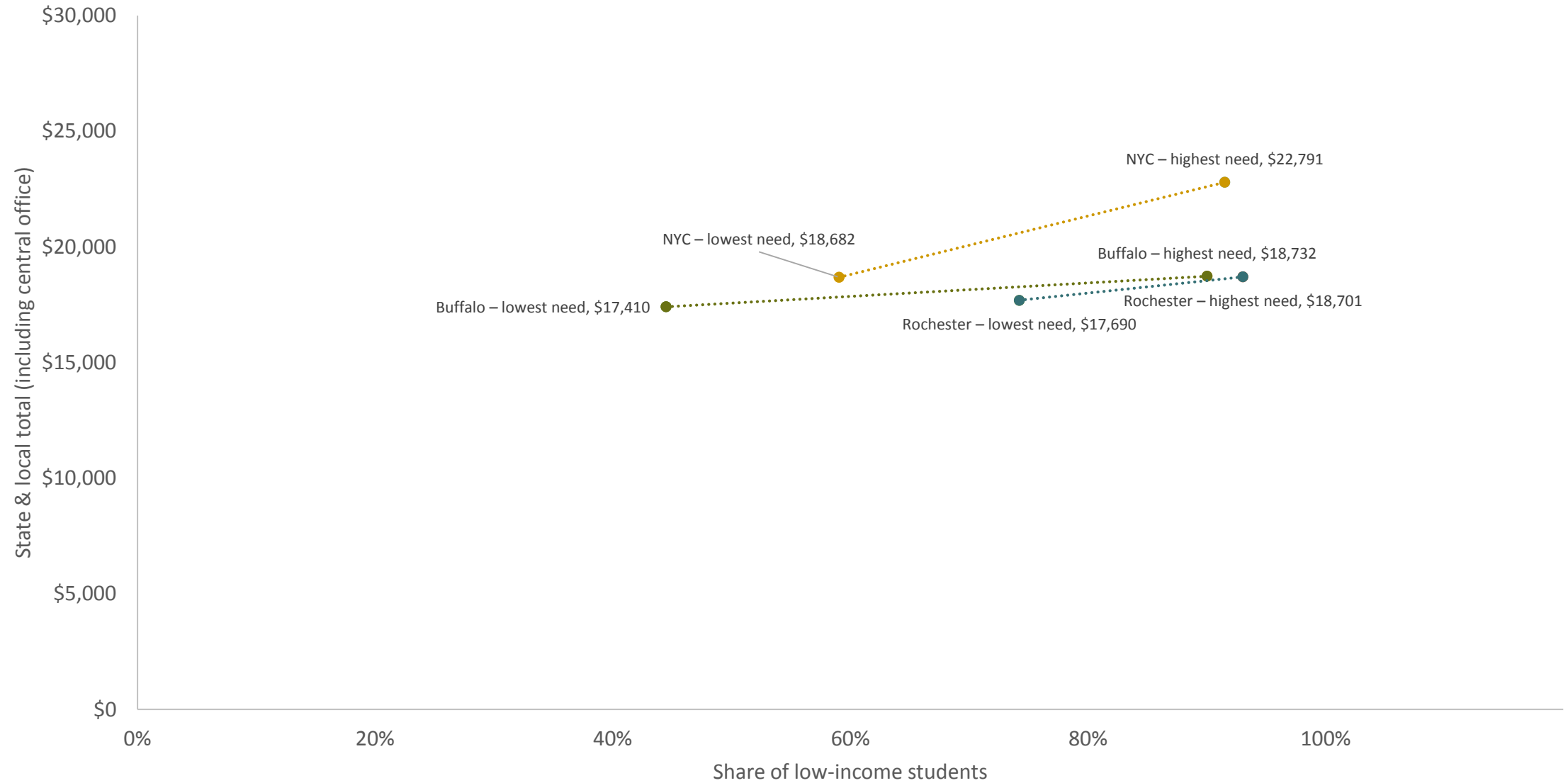
The Big 5

Elementary/middle schools



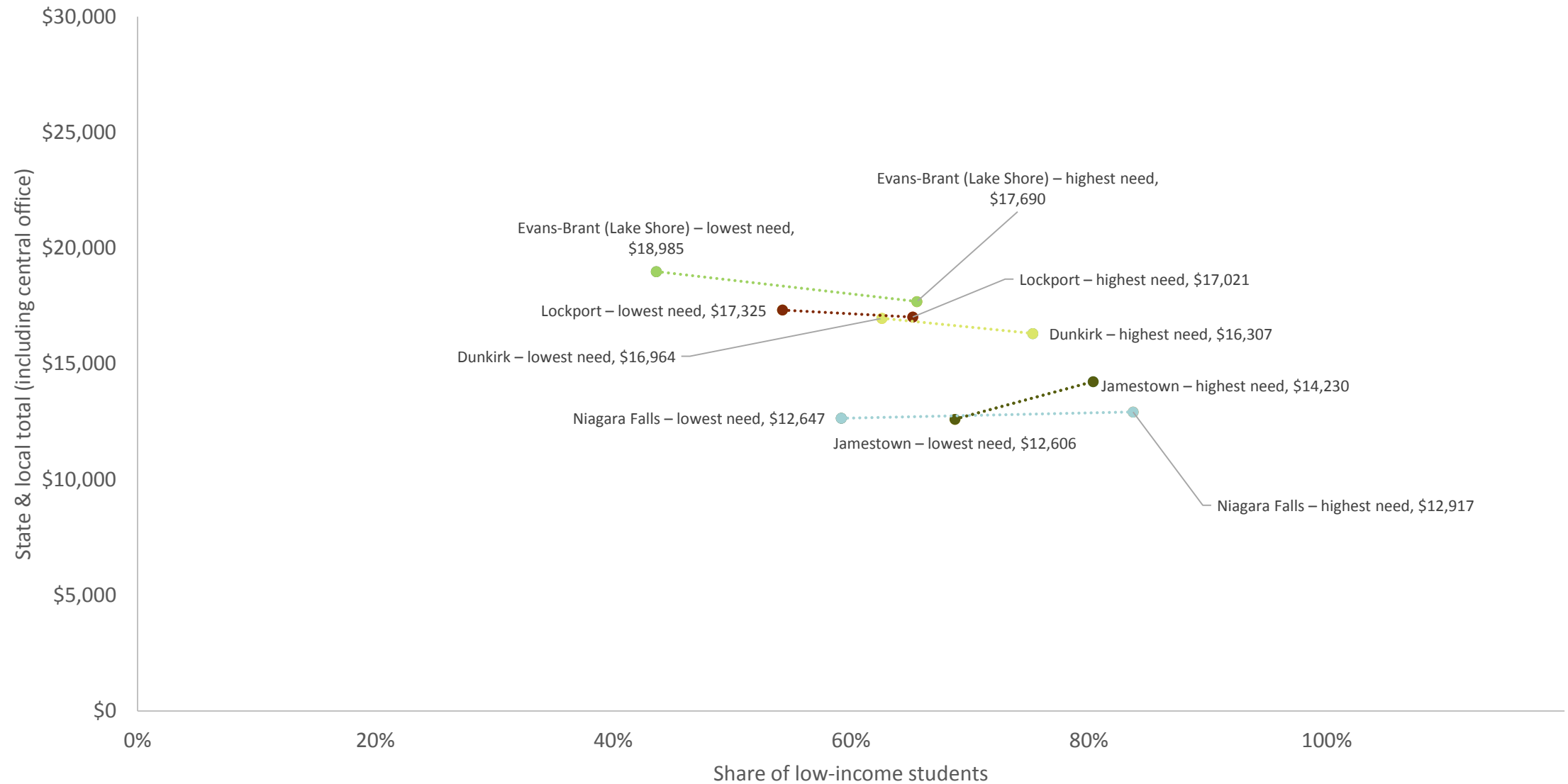
The Big 5

High schools



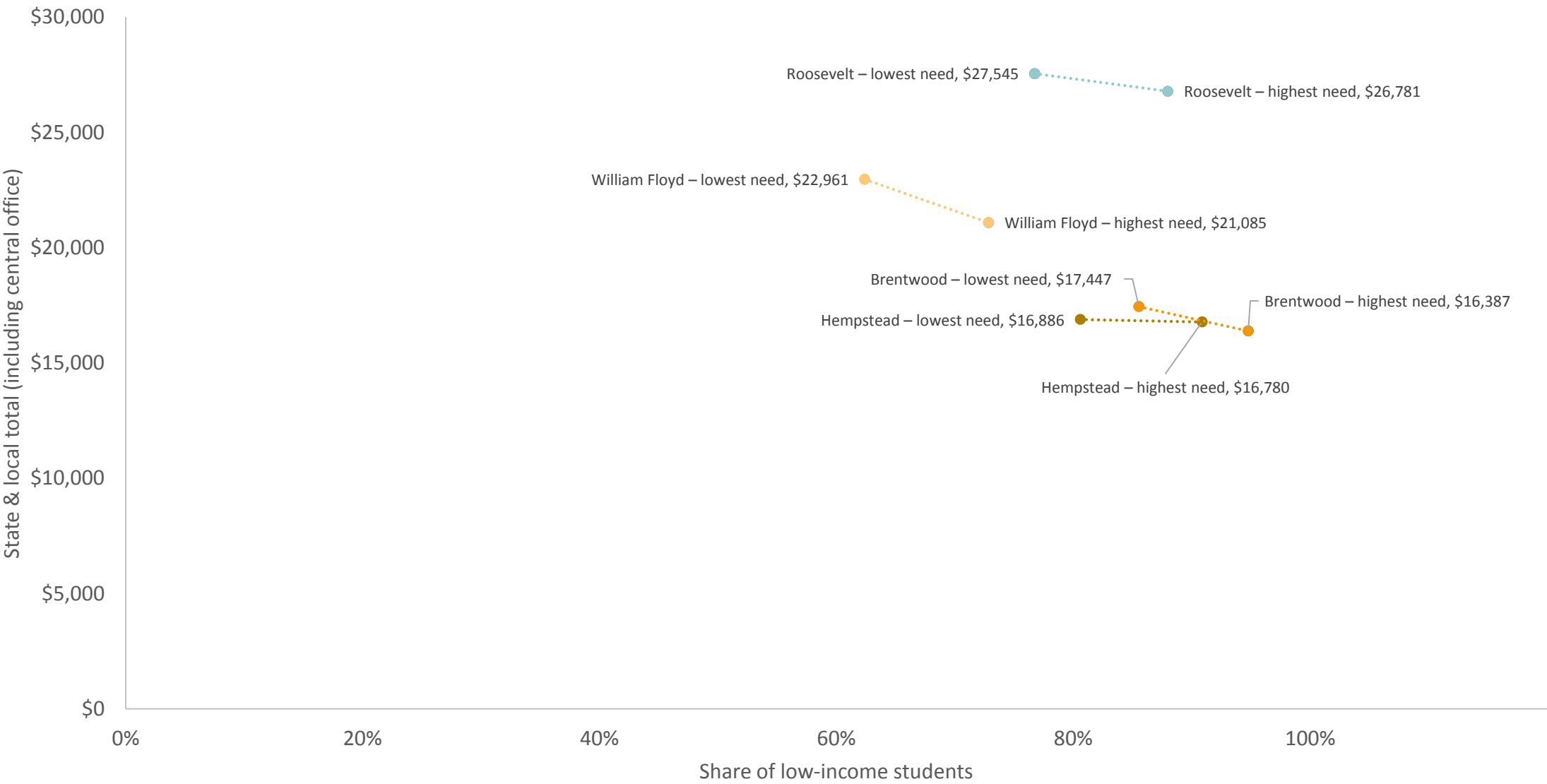
Western NY

Elementary/middle schools



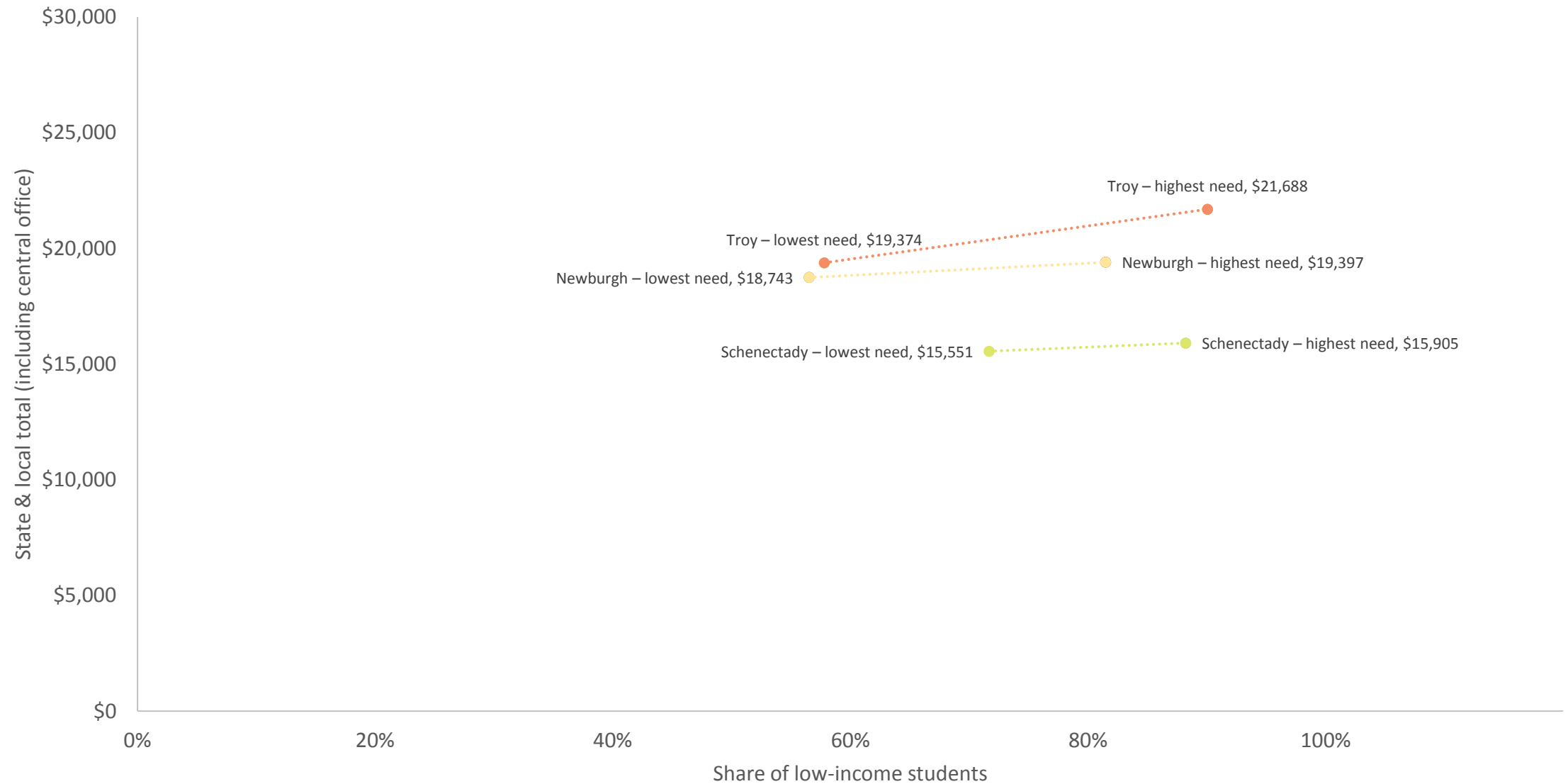
Long Island

Elementary/middle schools



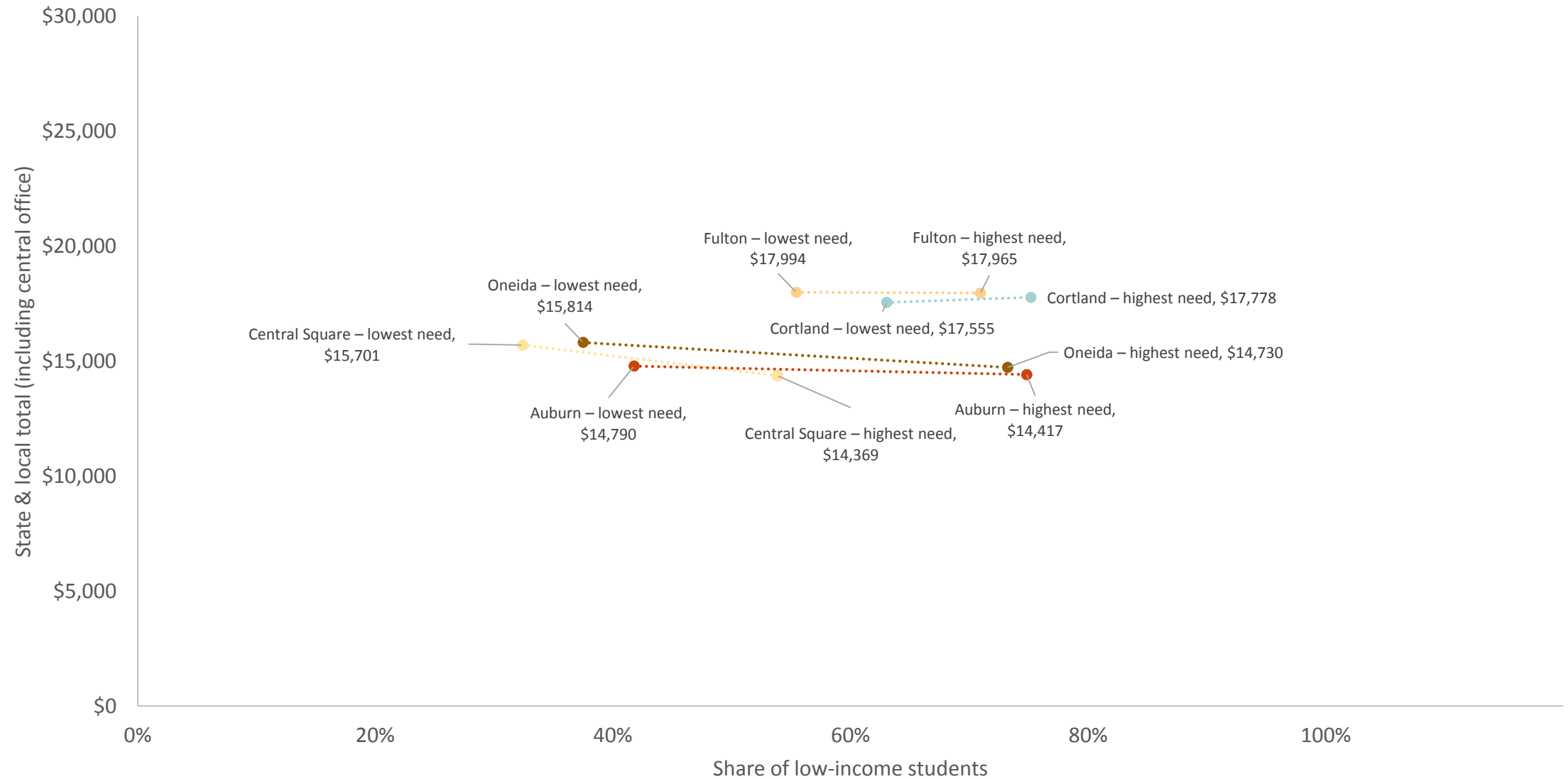
Capital Region & Mid-Hudson

Elementary/middle schools



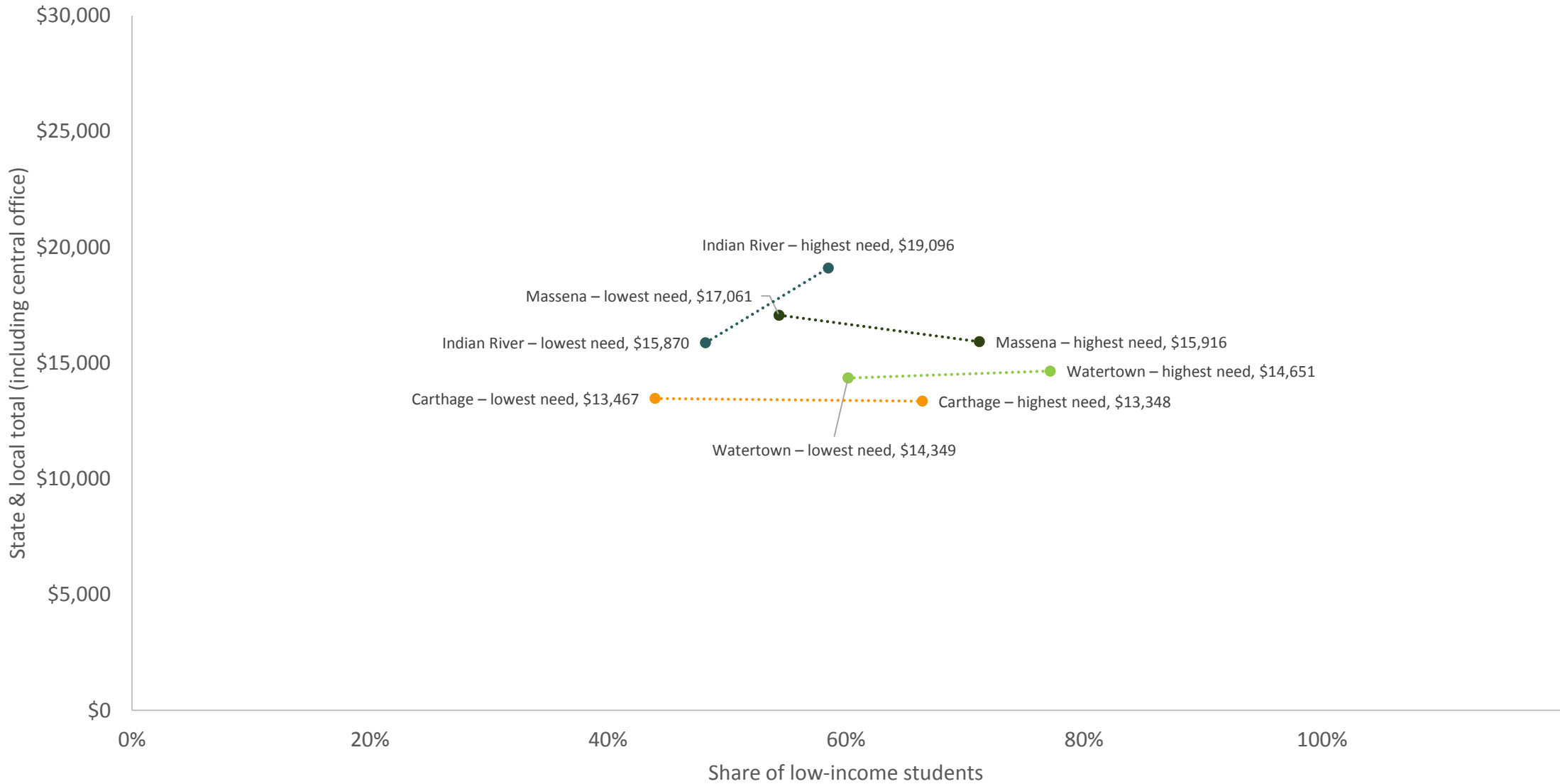
Central NY

Elementary/middle schools



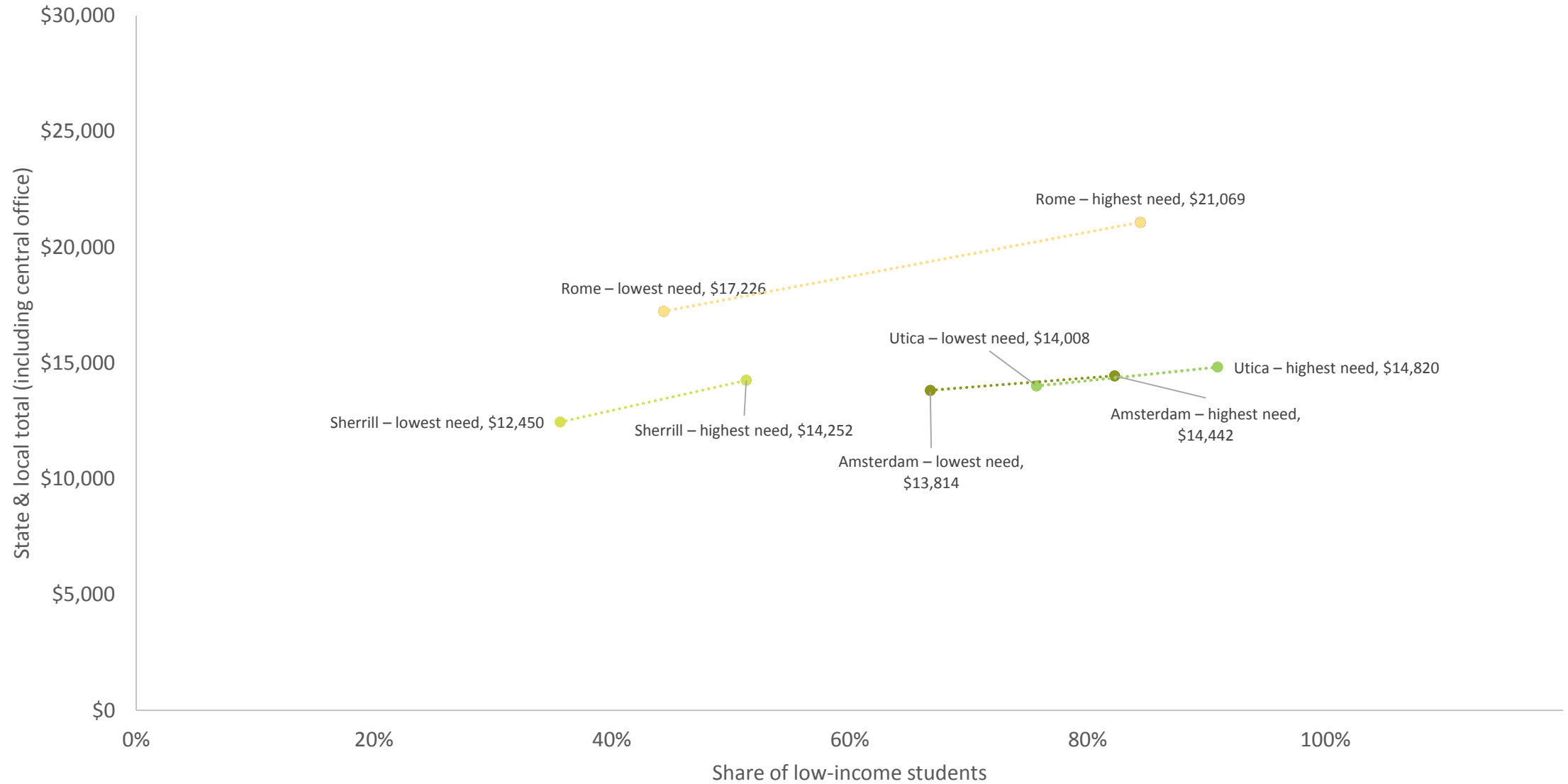
North Country

Elementary/middle schools



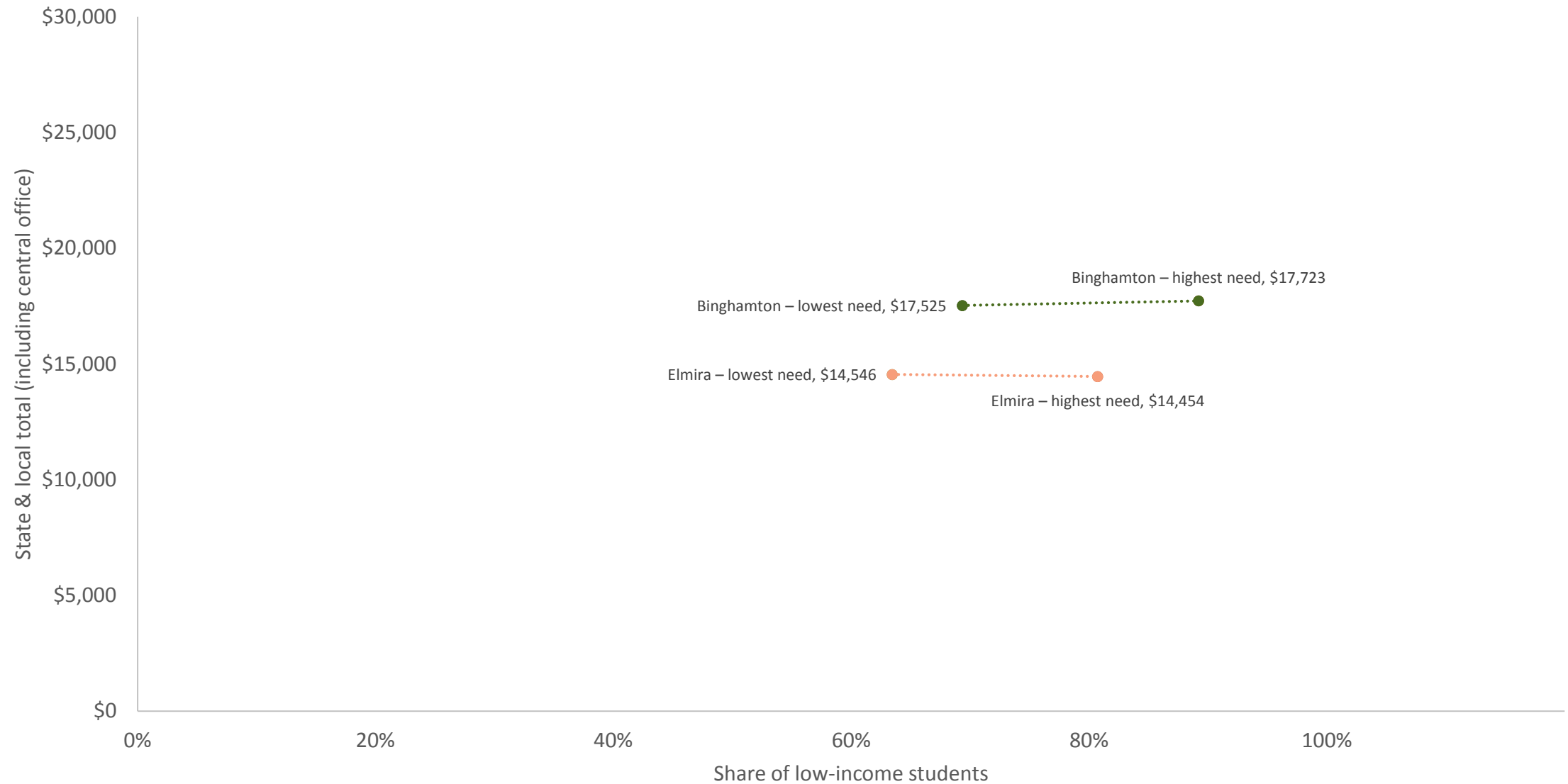
Mohawk Valley

Elementary/middle schools



Southern Tier

Elementary/middle schools



How much can school districts invest and how are they allocating their resources?

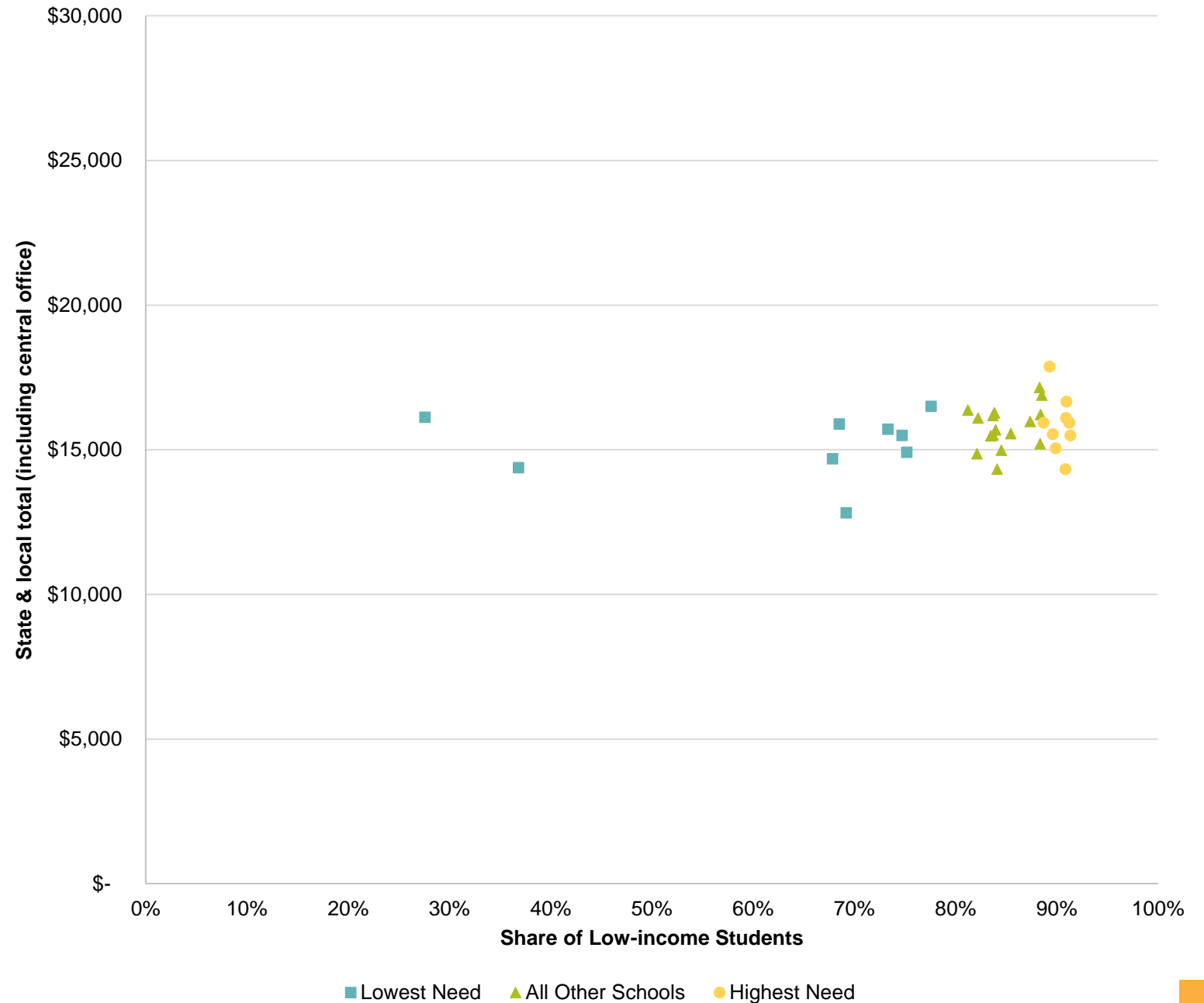
A closer look at the Big 5



Buffalo

Elementary/middle schools

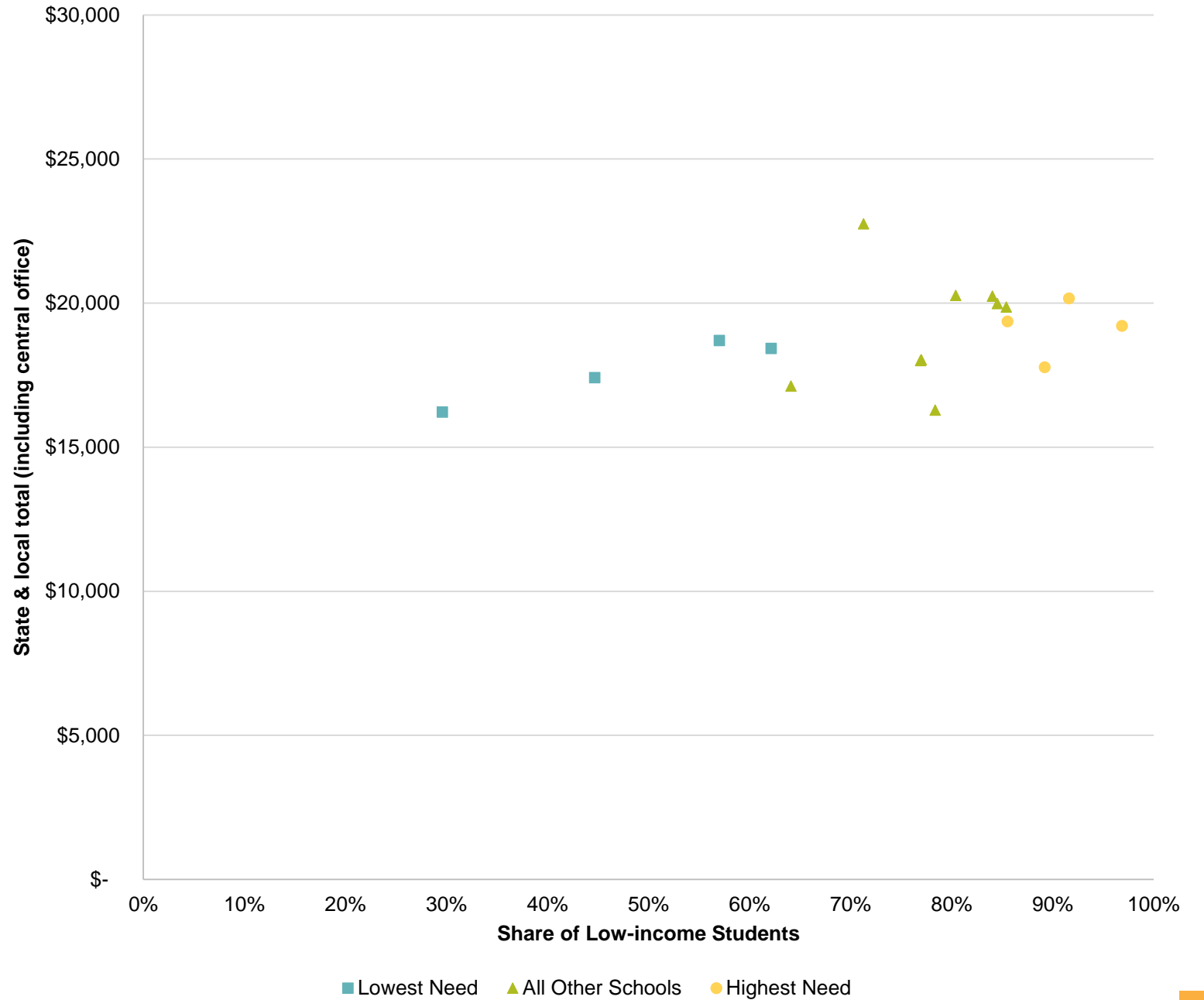
For every \$100 per student invested by Buffalo in its lowest-need elementary/middle schools, they are budgeting just **\$4 per student more** in their highest-need schools.



Buffalo

High schools

For every \$100 per student invested by Buffalo in its lowest-need high schools, they are budgeting just **\$8 per student more** in their highest-need schools.



New York City

Elementary/middle schools

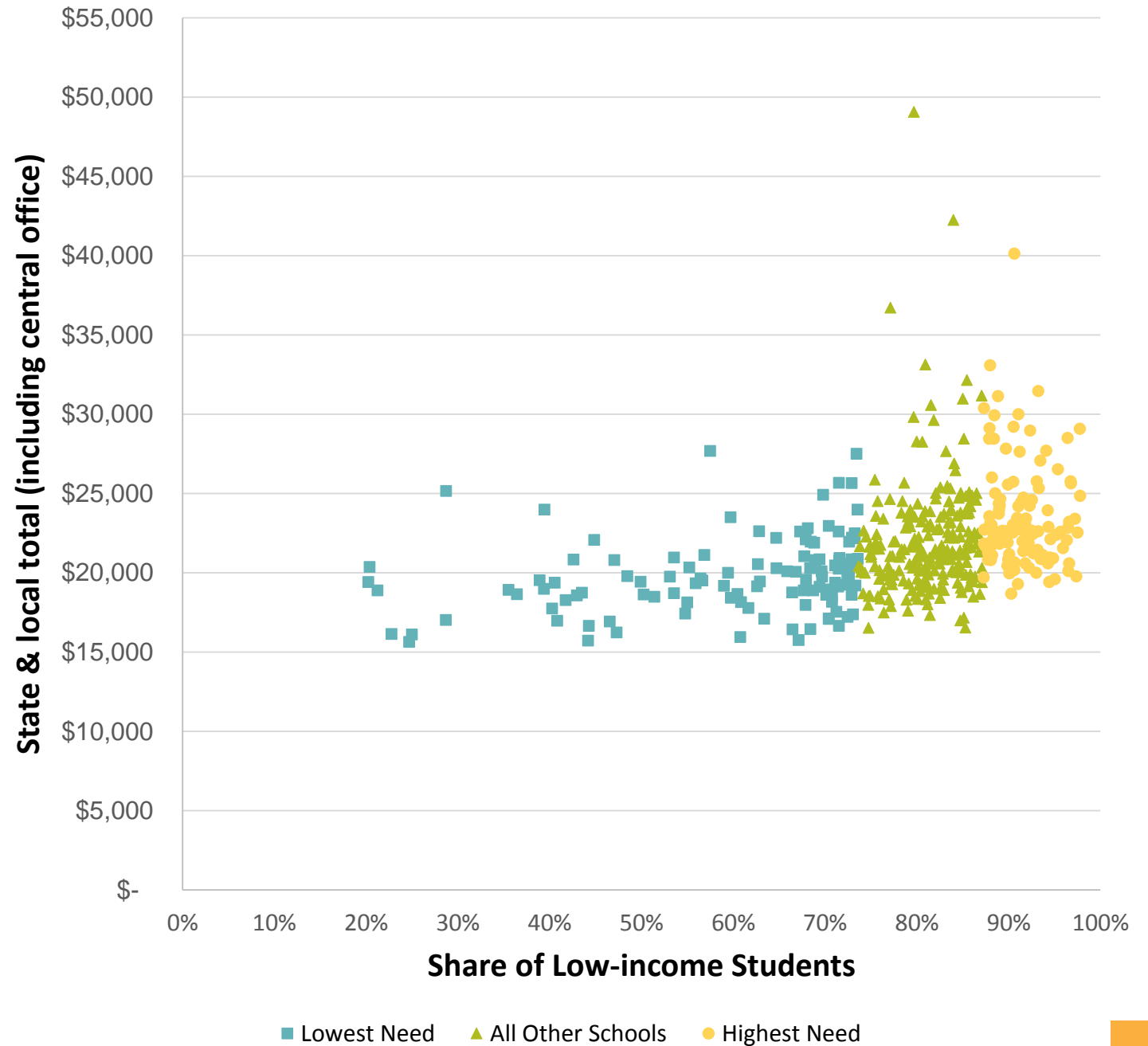
For every \$100 per student invested by New York City in its lowest-need elementary/middle schools, they are budgeting **\$15 per student more** in their highest-need schools.



New York City

High schools

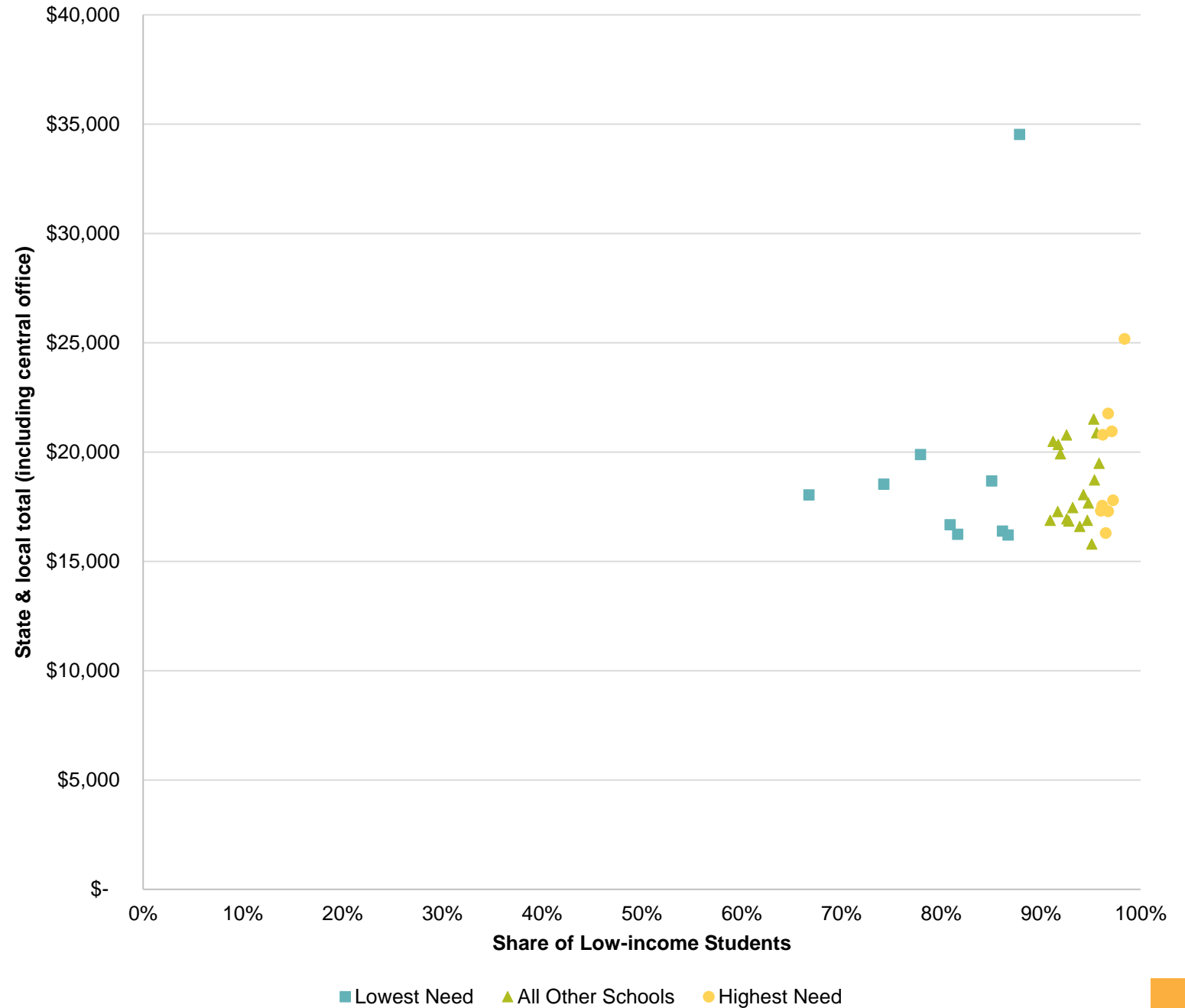
For every \$100 per student invested by New York City in its lowest-need high schools, they are budgeting \$22 per student more in their highest-need schools.



Rochester

Elementary/middle schools

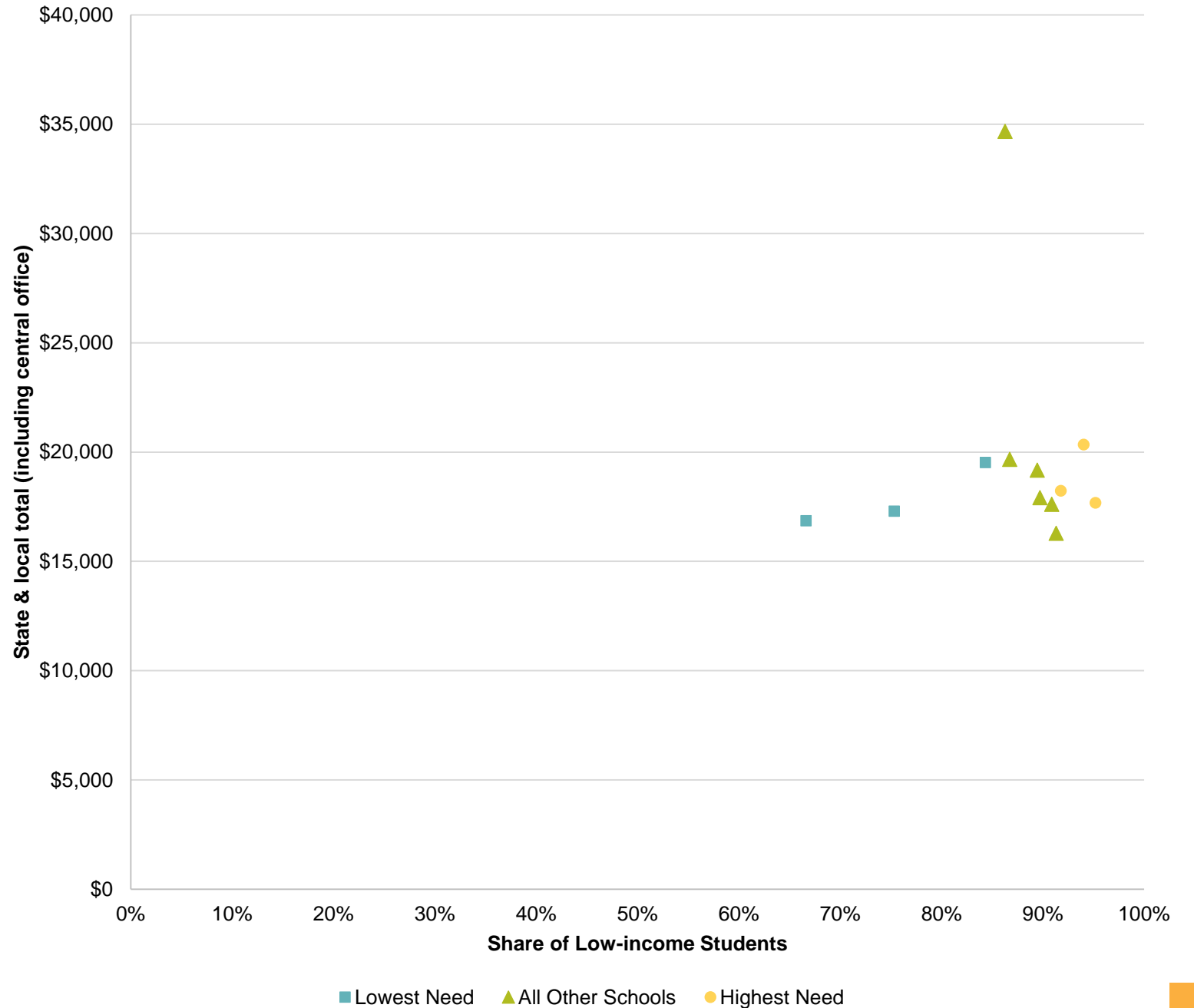
For every \$100 per student invested by Rochester in its lowest-need elementary/middle schools, they are budgeting just **\$4 per student more** in their highest-need schools.



Rochester

High schools

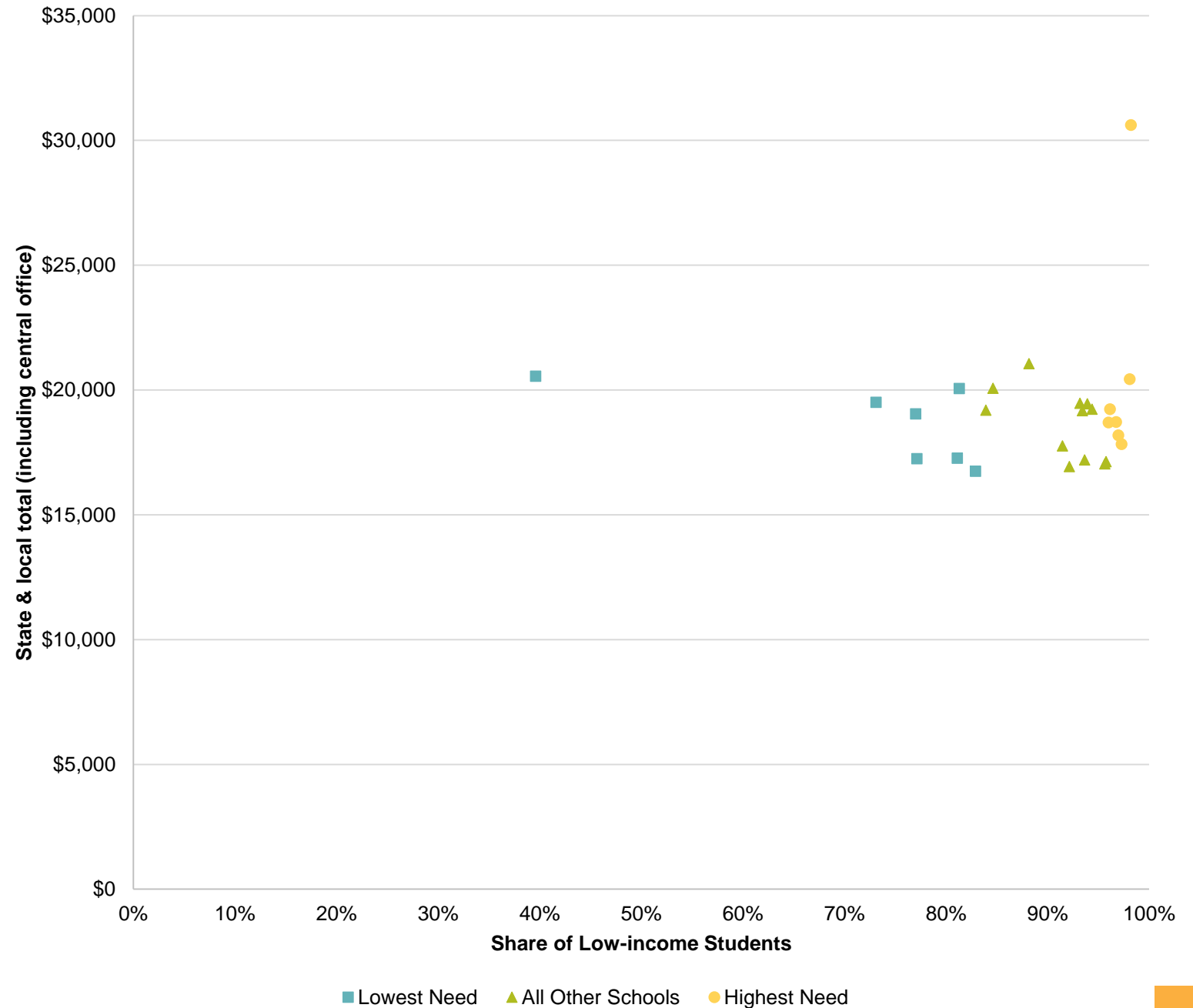
For every \$100 per student invested by Rochester in its lowest-need high schools, they are budgeting just **\$6 per student more** in their highest-need schools.



Syracuse

Elementary/middle schools

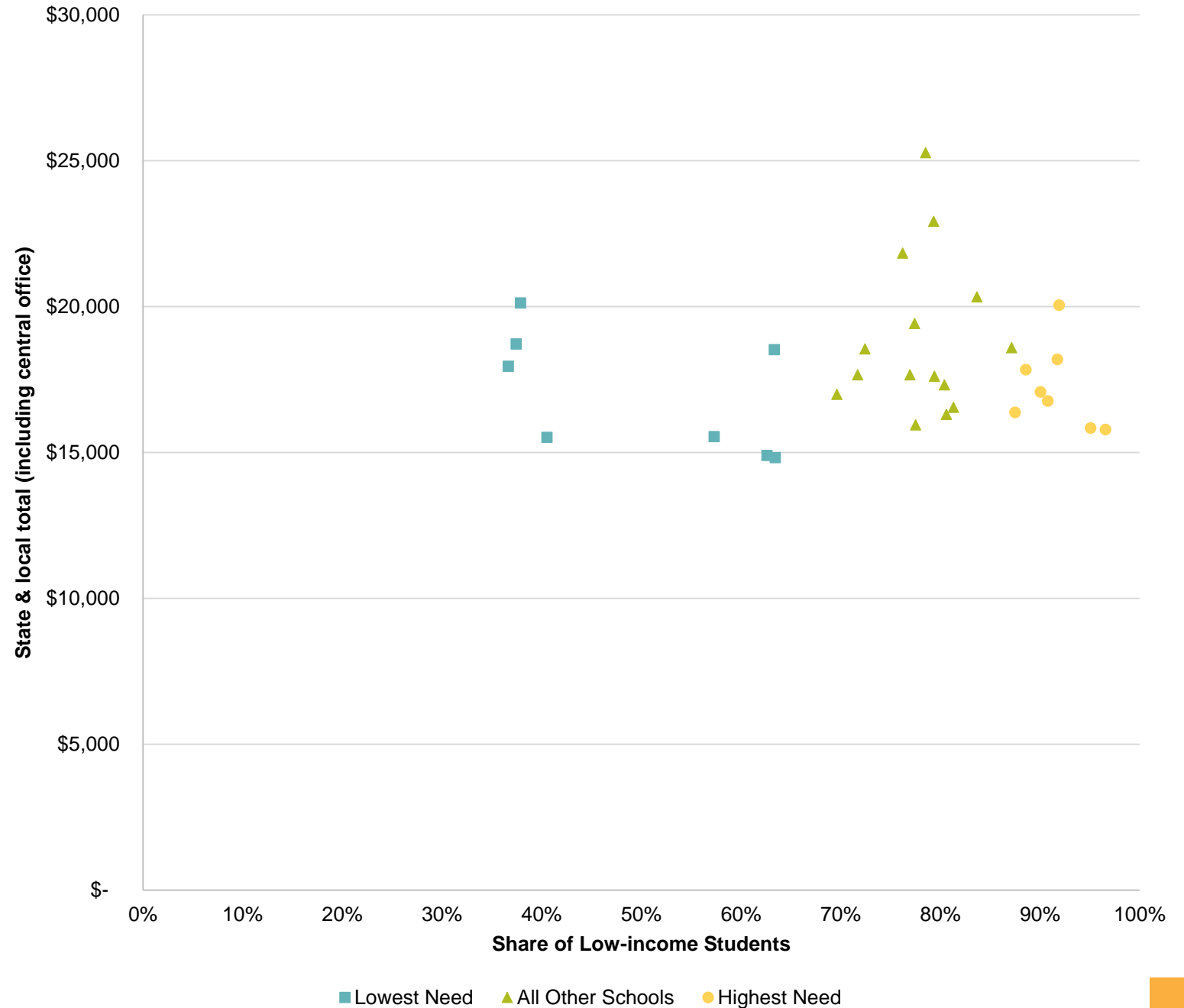
For every \$100 per student invested by Syracuse in its lowest-need elementary/middle schools, they are budgeting just \$4 per student more in their highest-need schools.



Yonkers

Elementary/middle schools

For every \$100 per student invested by Yonkers in its lowest-need elementary/middle schools, they are budgeting **\$1 per student less** in their highest-need schools.



Our resources

- We launched The New York School Funding Transparency Tool at www.NYSchoolFunding.org.
- The tool makes it possible to look up any school and see parent-friendly budget information.
- Parents can also access advocacy resources and directly contact their school district during the 2019-20 local budget process.

New York School Funding Transparency Tool



HOME

SEE MY SCHOOL

SEE MY DISTRICT

COMPARE
SCHOOLS

MAP THE DATA

IS MY SCHOOL GETTING THE FUNDING IT NEEDS TO HELP ALL STUDENTS SUCCEED?

We know that the amount of school funding and how these resources are invested play an important role in student success.

For the first time ever, many New York school districts are now required to tell parents and the public how much the district is spending *in each school*.

We've created this tool to help you see the information and explore what it means.

LOOK UP A SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amsterdam City School District

VIEW DETAILS

LOOK UP A SCHOOL

30th Avenue School (G&T Citywide)

VIEW DETAILS

Data Note

- Please see www.NYSchoolFunding.org for a complete data note.
- This analysis is limited to school districts with enough schools for comparison and that have sufficiently diverse enrollment so that some schools in the district have a significantly higher share of low-income students than other schools (by at least 10 percentage points).
- 32 mid- and large-sized districts meet these criteria:
 - *Large school districts:* A school district is included if they have at least 10 elementary/middle schools and/or at least 10 high schools. For these school districts, we compare the lowest-need quartile of schools to the highest-need quartile of schools.
 - *Mid-sized school districts:* A second set of school districts is included if they have at least 3 elementary/middle schools serving the same grade span and at least a 10 percentage point gap in the weighted average of low-income students in at least two of those schools.





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