



DCPS Budgeting Basics

What is the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula?

All publicly funded DC schools get most of their resources from local funds, with the amount determined by the **Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF)** and enrollment levels. This formula is used to set the total local funding allocated to DC Public Schools and to each public charter school. In fiscal year (FY) 2013, some \$1.2 billion was allocated using the UPSFF to DCPS and to public charter schools.

The UPSFF starts with a **foundation level** that is meant to reflect the per-student amount needed to provide general education services. The foundation level for the current school year 2012-13 is \$9,124 per student, with adjustments for students in different grade levels. The UPSFF for a Pre-K student, for example, is 34 percent above the base foundation, or \$12,226 in 2012-13.¹ This reflects the smaller class sizes used at the Pre-K level. The foundation level will be increased to \$9,306 for next school year as a result of the Mayor’s 2% increase to the UPSFF.

The UPSFF has **supplemental weights** to reflect the added costs of serving students in special education and English language learners, and there is a separate UPSFF level for summer school instruction. For both DCPS and charter schools, the total local funding they receive is based on the UPSFF amounts multiplied by the number of students at different ages, and in various special needs categories.

DC Public Schools FY 2013 Per Pupil Funding Allocation - UPSFF and Local Funds Appropriation

Foundation Level Per Pupil: \$9,124				
General Education	Weighting Factor	FY 2013 Budgeted Enrollment	Per Pupil Allocation (Rounded)	Total Budget (Rounded)
Pre-K 3	1.34	2,130	\$12,226	\$26,041,380
Pre-K 4	1.30	3,406	\$11,861	\$40,398,566
Kindergarten	1.30	4,014	\$11,861	\$47,610,054
Grades 1-3	1.00	10,684	\$9,124	\$97,480,816
Grades 4-5	1.00	6,075	\$9,124	\$55,428,300
Grades 6-8	1.03	7,050	\$9,398	\$66,255,900
Grades 9-12	1.16	11,671	\$10,584	\$123,525,864
Alternative	1.17	165	\$10,675	\$1,761,375
Special Ed Schools	1.17	295	\$10,675	\$3,149,125
Adult	0.75	1,684	\$6,843	\$11,523,612
<i>Subtotal for General Education</i>		<i>47,174</i>		<i>\$473,174,992</i>

Source: CFO FY 2013 Proposed Budget

¹ Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Support Act of 2012. Subtitle (IV)(A) – Funding for Public Schools and Public Charter Schools Amendment Act of 2012. http://app.cfo.dc.gov/services/fiscal_impact/pdf/spring09/Fiscal%20Year%202013%20Budget%20Support%20Act%20of%202012.pdf.

How is the Per Pupil Funding Level Set?

The weighted allocations for the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula have stayed largely the same from year to year, while the base foundation level is changed each year in the District's budget process. In the early and mid-2000s, the UPSFF base was adjusted regularly based on an analysis of changes in the costs of educational services. In recent years, the Mayor and DC Council have set the UPSFF amount without such analysis. Adjustments for inflation or other factors have been made in some years, but not all. See how the UPSFF base level has changed in recent years below:

UPSFF Base Foundation Levels by Year

School Year	Fiscal Year	UPSFF Foundation Level Per Pupil
2005-2006	2006	\$7,307
2006-2007	2007	\$8,002
2007-2008	2008	\$8,322
2008-2009	2009	\$8,770
2009-2010	2010	\$8,770
2010-2011	2011	\$8,945
2011-2012	2012	\$8,945
2012-2013	2013	\$9,124
2013-2014	2014	\$9,306

How Does DCPS Make Allocations to Individual Schools?

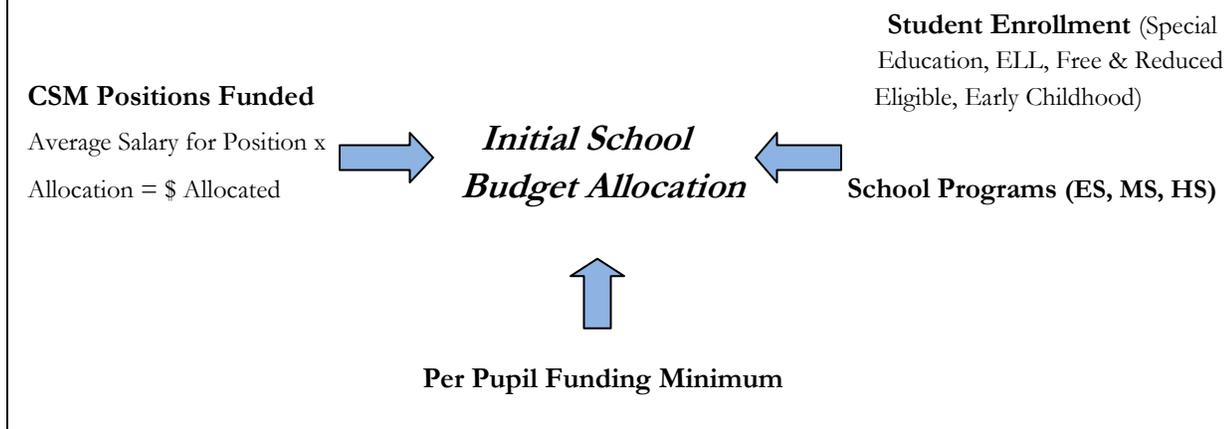
The funding allocated to each individual school is based on guidelines set by the Chancellor each year and are tied largely to a school's enrollment and student composition. Each year, these guidelines are released by DCPS in a **Budget Development Guide** which outlines the assumptions made and how individual school budgets were created. Along with the guide, the **initial school budget allocations** are released to school superintendents and principals.

It is important to note that the amount allocated to individual schools is not the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula amount. The UPSFF is used to fund DCPS as a whole, and DCPS uses those funds to support central administrative costs and school support costs in addition to funding local schools.

The guidelines for directing funding to schools are affected by a number of factors, such as class size maximums and teacher salary levels set in collective bargaining or requirements to serve students with special and language needs. Nevertheless, the Chancellor has great flexibility in deciding how to allocate funds to schools, and this can change from year to year.

The major driver currently used by DCPS is the **Comprehensive Staffing Model (CSM)**. The Comprehensive Staffing Model establishes what positions each school should have (teachers, principals, librarians, etc) and sets staff-student ratios for each position to calculate the number of staff and the funding each school needs to support those positions.

What drives initial school allocations from DCPS?



The CSM funding is based on average salary, and when schools decide on staffing, the cost out of their budget is based on average salary even if they have staff with below or above average salaries. This means schools with experienced staff are not constrained and schools are not encouraged to hire more staff by hiring less experienced staff with below-average salaries. This also means that the actual expenditures of a school in any given year will not match the amount allocated to the school in the budget process, since most school's staff will have salaries that differ from the average.

Finally, the allocations to schools are governed by a separate **per-student minimum funding** level. If the allocations under the formulas in the Comprehensive Staffing Model result in total funding (not only general education funding) that falls below the per-student floor – \$8,739 for 2013-14 – the school's budget is adjusted upward to meet the minimum.

**For more information this budget season,
check out the DC Fiscal Policy Institute website at
www.dcpfi.org**