



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

The DC Fiscal Policy Institute blog

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What's In Store for Next Year's Public Education Budget?

By Soumya Bhat

At DCFPI's "What's In Store for the DC Budget?" event this week, Gray Administration budget director Eric Goulet noted that education would be one of the big winners in the upcoming budget, with \$116 million in additional funds. Most notably, this includes new resources to help address the educational challenges of at-risk students — the first time in years that the school funding formula has taken poverty into account — and additional resources for subsidized child care.

This means the 2014-15 school year could bring a number of big changes to education in the District!

The vast majority of additional funding — \$112 million — will go toward DC public schools (DCPS) and DC public charter schools through changes in the per-pupil funding formula. This formula sets the total local funding for DCPS and for each public charter school or cluster of schools if it has more than one campus. The funding increase includes a 2 percent cost-of-living adjustment to the per-student formula, and it also reflects projected growth in student enrollment in both DCPS and in the charter sector.

Importantly, the funding increase also reflects a new weight in the formula for students considered "at-risk." According to the new formula, an additional \$2,079 will go toward each student in this new category, which includes those who are academically behind and living in poverty. About 21,000 DCPS students and almost 16,000 students in charter schools will be identified as at-risk in FY 2015. This change was recommended by a recent study on the adequacy of DC's school funding and was reflected in legislation adopted in December by the DC Council.

Questions remain on how these funds will be used next year — the new [DCPS Budget Guide](#) emphasizes investments in middle school grades, the 40 lowest-performing schools, and expanding the number of schools that offer an extended school day. DCFPI hopes the resources will follow the student and help DCPS and each charter school to target extra assistance to low-income students, half of whom score in the lowest level on national assessment tests.

About \$4 million will go to improve access to child care for low-income DC families. It is not yet decided if the funds will be used to increase DC's low reimbursement rates for child care providers or to expand the number of child care slots. Low reimbursement rates for providers create barriers to providing high-quality child care. Without adequate reimbursement, many providers are unable to keep up with their rising costs and may have to close their doors.

See below for a breakdown of per-pupil funding formula changes projected for fiscal year 2015.

Table 1					
Changes to Uniform Per Student Funding Formula for FY 2015					
	Current Weight	Next Year's Weight	Increase	Decrease	No Change
General Education					
Pre-K 3	1.34	1.34			X
Pre-K 4	1.30	1.30			X
Kindergarten	1.30	1.30			X
Grades 1 – 5	1.00	1.00			X
Grades 6 – 8	1.03	1.08	X		
Grades 9-12	1.16	1.22	X		
Alternative	1.17	1.44	X		
Special Ed Schools	1.17	1.17			X
Adult	0.75	0.89	X		
Special Education (Sped capacity fund was moved into levels, increasing weights by 0.4)					
Level 1	0.58	0.97			X
Level 2	0.81	1.20			X
Level 3	1.58	1.97			X
Level 4	3.10	3.49			X
English Language Learners					
	0.45	0.49	X		
At-Risk Students					
(summer school is now included in this weight)	N/A	0.219	X		

Source: March 2014, Office of the Mayor.

DCFPI will continue to keep you posted on the proposed budget – stay tuned for our education toolkit next month!