



# The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

The DC Fiscal Policy Institute blog  
[www.dcfpi.org](http://www.dcfpi.org)

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## Creating a High Quality Education System For All DC Residents

By Soumya Bhat

“The challenges that remain are the greatest,” said Mayor Bowser during her inaugural remarks last week. As she and the new DC Council start their work, they indeed face many challenges, but also many opportunities to reduce income inequality and to give all residents of the District of Columbia the opportunity for a secure economic future. Over the next two weeks, The District's Dime will share our [recommendations](#) for building shared prosperity in DC through improving education, housing, job training, health care, and social services.

Today, we focus on strengthening DC schools and expanding high-quality child care. We have four [recommendations](#) for meeting these goals.

**Maintain School Boundary Recommendations that Support Low-Income Students.** Mayor Bowser and the Council may consider modifications to new school boundary and admission policies adopted last year, but three important changes should be maintained. These new policies would make it easier for low-income parents to enroll their preschooler in a

neighborhood school, help low-income parents who need to use public transportation to escort their elementary-aged child to school, and create opportunities for more low-income students to attend DC Public Schools and charter schools that have a small number of low-income children.

**Increase Funding to Raise the Quality Child Care.** DC's child care subsidy program pays child care providers well below market rate, which makes it hard for providers who serve low-income infants and toddlers to provide the best quality care. It also makes it hard for working parents to find suitable care for their children. DCFPI recommends raising DC's child care subsidy reimbursement rates and continuing the city's focus on improving the quality of care.



Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wwwworks/2458666314/>

**Provide More Funds to Schools for Low-Income Students, and Monitor How the Money is Spent.** There are 35,000 low-income students considered “at-risk” in DC Public Schools and public charter schools. The school funding formula was changed this year to provide about \$2,000 additional dollars for each of these students, about half of what was recommended by a 2014 study on school funding. The at-risk weight should continue to be phased in to the fully recommended level, but DC’s leaders also should monitor the use of these new resources to ensure they are being used for effective programs. This year, neither DCPS nor charter schools were required to show how the new at-risk funds were spent.

**Improve Student Supports to Help Close the Achievement Gap.** DC offers a number of programs that help low-income students succeed in the classroom, but there are still large gaps in many areas, including help for homeless students, mental health services, and afterschool programming. The District should expand services in targeted ways to address the special challenges faced by low-income students.

See DCFPP’s full set of education recommendations [here](#). Stay tuned to tomorrow’s District Dime for our thoughts on economic development.