

“At-Risk” Funding For High-Poverty Schools

Did you know? Almost 40,000 students in DC Public Schools and public charter schools are considered “at-risk” of academic failure due to poverty. As of the 2014-15 school year, the DC school funding formula provides \$2,079 additional local dollars for high-poverty schools to help meet the needs of these students. How do you think these resources should be used?

What is “at-risk” funding? In 2014, the District changed the school formula to account for poverty. This means that all DC schools—DCPS and charter schools—receive additional funding in their school budgets to help meet the needs of their low-income students. The funds are also meant to meet the costs of summer school.

Are there rules about how the money can be spent? DCPS allocates the funds to individual schools based on their at-risk student population, and principals are given a set of options on how to use these dollars. Public charter schools do not have any restrictions on how they can use the funds.

Who is considered at-risk? Students who fall into one of the following categories are considered “at-risk”:

- ◆ Homeless
- ◆ Eligible for SNAP (food stamps)
- ◆ Eligible for TANF (welfare)
- ◆ In the foster care system
- ◆ Over-age high school students

How are DCPS schools using the funds?

In the 2014-15 school year, DCPS invested at-risk funds into almost 300 staff and programming support, with a focus on arts, longer school days, and high school grades.

How are DC Public Charter Schools using the funds?

Of the schools that reported on their at-risk funds for the 2014-15 school year, most charter schools used the resources for before- and afterschool activities, academic interventions, social workers, and summer school programming.

What can I do to influence the way this funding is used next year? Parents and community members are encouraged to speak up during LSAT meetings and DC Council oversight hearings about the best ways to ensure these funds are helping the students that need it the most.



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