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## Proposed Bill Would Advance Education Equity in the District

A new DC Council legislative proposal represents a major step toward education equity in DC, according to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute.

The legislation, the [Critical Risk Rate School Funding Designation Act of 2019](#), would change the school funding formula to provide additional resources to schools—DCPS and public charter schools—where at least 70 percent of students are considered “at-risk,” meaning they are in families with low incomes, facing homelessness, in foster care, or behind grade for their age. These schools are primarily in Wards 5, 7 and 8, and most of these students are Black or Latinx.

The Critical Risk Rate School Funding Designation Act was introduced by Councilmember Trayon White (Ward 8) and co-introduced by Councilmembers Brianne Nadeau (Ward 1) and Robert White (At-Large).

The impacts of DC’s long history of forced racial segregation in housing and schools, and disinvestment in schools serving Black children, are still present today. Some 82 percent of white students are considered college and career ready in English, compared with 25 percent of Black students and 32 percent of Latinx students. These differences reflect historic barriers to academic success that continue to marginalize students of color.

A key to addressing these historical inequities is to intentionally provide more financial resources for students attending schools that have traditionally faced divestment. The Critical Risk Rate School Funding Designation Act would ensure that schools with the largest share of students who are low-income or otherwise face trauma receive additional resources for things like added counselors, tutoring, or meaningful after school programs.

DCFPI notes that many schools targeted by this legislation faced [budget cuts](#) this year, and that DCPS [routinely diverts funds for “at-risk” students](#) to other purposes. The new legislation would help reverse these impacts.

“High-poverty schools face unique challenges,” said Ed Lazere, Executive Director of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. “If as a city we truly want all students to succeed, and if we’re committed to undoing historic education inequities, we must start by putting more resources in their schools.”

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