



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. Where does the money for DCPS schools come from?

The majority of funds are local, derived from District of Columbia revenue. DCPS can also receive funding from the federal government and private donors. For example, DCPS was awarded the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) last year to help fund staff and programs at Patterson ES and Ballou HS. On November 7, 2014, Lockheed Martin committed \$2.4 million to increase STEM opportunities in DCPS.

2. How do you allocate funds to a school?

One of the challenges in the budget development process is ensuring that the needs of individual schools are being met within the DCPS budget development process. No two schools serve the exact same population.

Even if the schools have the same number of students, a variety of factors affect the allocation from which a school can build its budget.

Those factors include the number of special needs students a school serves or the number of early childhood programs it offers. If those numbers change, the budget allocation also changes.

DCPS accounts for the following when calculating initial school budget allocations:

- Projected student enrollment;
- Special education student population;
- English Language Learner (ELL) student population;
- Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARM) eligible students;
- School configuration (Elementary School, K-8 or 6-12 Model School, Middle School, or High School);
- Teacher-to-student ratios by grade configurations;
- Specialty School Status;
- Non-Personnel Spending (NPS); and
- Per-pupil funding minimum.

3. What role does student enrollment play in budget allocations?

Student enrollment is the primary driver of school budgets, so enrollment size will impact your school allocation. The cost of maintaining small schools and expanding early childhood programs often falls disproportionately on our larger schools. The cost is reflected in the fact that our largest schools spend the least per student. Without any adjustment or “floor,” larger schools lose funding while they are gaining students and often outperforming other schools.



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Without adjustment, we consistently provide larger schools less money than the per student amount DCPS receives from the city (through the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula).

In FY12, we introduced the Per Pupil Funding Minimum (PPFM), which ensures that all schools, regardless of size, receive a minimum funding amount per student. We identified schools that were funded at less than the set PPFM amount and added funds to restore the per-pupil spending to the PPFM at those schools. Even with the adjustment, these larger schools spend the least per student.

We have increased the PPFM amount to reflect the percentage increase in the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula amount.

Additionally, FY15 was the first year where we invested funds, called stabilization, to ensure no school lost more than five percent of its budget between FY14 and FY15, no matter how many students were lost. For instance, Brookland EC saw a seven percent decrease in projected student enrollment between FY14 and FY15 but actually saw an increase in its budget.

4. What is the majority of the money in the budget used for?

The majority of the money in the DCPS budget goes directly to schools. In FY15 nearly 84% of the budget went directly to schools to fund staff, programs, and non-personnel costs necessary for day-to-day school operations. Another 11% funds school support costs. These are costs that may appear on the Central Office budget but directly support schools such as the City Year contract. Schools may buy-in to the City Year contract but staff at the Central Office manages the district-wide contract to improve operational efficiency and reduce individual school costs. By DC Council mandate DCPS will not budget more than 5% of its entire budget on Central Office administration.

5. What factors are responsible for any increases in my school's budget?

There are a number of factors that can contribute to changes in a school's budget. The largest driver of a school's budget is enrollment. If a school sees a large increase or decrease in their projected student enrollment then they will likely see a corresponding change in their budget.

The following can contribute to increases or decreases in a school's budget:

- Student enrollment
- Special Education student population
- English Language Learner student population
- Early Childhood student population
- Specific school programs (e.g. literacy intervention)



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Budget Priorities (in FY15 this was middle grades, 40/40 schools and student satisfaction)
Grants (Race to the Top, School Improvement)
Special school configuration (e.g. Career and Technical Education programs, STEM)
Funding Minimum Funds (to ensure there is a minimum per pupil spend at all schools)

DCPS will work to ensure that schools do not lose more than 5% of their total budget between school years to improve school funding stabilization.

6. Who should I contact if I have questions or want to leave feedback or recommendations about the DCPS budget?

We welcome feedback on how we can meet our goal of becoming the best urban education district in the country. If you are interested in providing feedback or recommendations for the entire DCPS budget, we encourage you to go to www.engagedcps.com or participate in the Everyone, Everywhere campaign and ensure your community's feedback is heard by DCPS.

If you have questions or feedback about a specific school's budget, you are encouraged to join your school's Local School Advisory Team (LSAT), which helps to advise principals on budget decisions.

If you simply want to know more about DCPS budgets in general, you are encouraged to visit www.dcpsdatacenter.com, where you can explore the relationship between DCPS budgets and student enrollment.