

Feedback Summary from Budget Community Forum Janney Elementary (December 12, 2018 at 6:00pm)

Overview of Community Forum at Janney Elementary

On December 12, 2018, DCPS Leadership met with parents, school staff, and community members from across the district. As part of the event's agenda, attendees participated in a small group feedback session around the DCPS Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) budget from a district level perspective as well as a school level perspective. During the exercise, attendees were asked to review their individual schools' Comprehensive School Plans (CSP) and answer guiding questions.

Summary of Feedback from Janney Elementary- Small Group Activity

When asked how they could budget towards supporting their school's CSP goals and strategies, attendees responded:

- Protect at-risk funding, especially in staffing Bottom 5% schools.
- Comprehensive staffing model still doesn't meet needs of school with a need for additional support.
- Support technology and staffing
- Technology (computers and smart boards) are needed to have online curriculums and take standardized tests.
- Professional Development Funding
- Technology Funding- Baseline class set for each core class (Math, English, Science and Social Studies)
- Using budget to add an assistant principal. Shepherd ES does not have one and really needs one
- Schools need more money and more fungibility of funds to do anything creative.
- Put flexibility into the Comprehensive School Model and reduce mandates. Do this before the allocations.
- Allocations of money to pay teachers who teach seniors before or after school to help them achieve graduation by June.
- More flexibility in spending money to meet the needs of the school.
- Flexibility in adjusting the school schedules
- Hiring more staff per student to support literacy, math, and SEL. Full-time psychologists and social worker for SEL.
- More reading and math specialists to support intervention and environments to meet each students' need.

When asked to what additional supports and strategies should be considered to support CSP goals, attendees responded:

- Consider a new budget model that is less rigid and more transparent than the current one.
- Technology
- More differential learning tools
- Math ready interventions
- More support for at-risk

- Increase technology funding throughout DCPS
- Facilities renovation
- Fund LEAP
- Start before DC government provides final allocation to DCPS- with understanding that funding is tentative.
- Existence of the per pupil student funding formula makes allocation reasonably predictable, so plan ahead and trim as necessary.
- More transparency in budget formula
- Provide smaller schools with full-time support staff.
- Fund repair and maintenance of technology (smart boards, laptops, etc.)

When asked what flexibility would be needed to improve the FY20 budget season related to school goals and your CSP, attendees responded:

- More flexibility on staffing
- More flexibility on specials
- More flexibility on no-personnel funding
- More flexibility on at-risk funding
- Principals and LSATS need to be consulted about their needs in advance, and feedback should be seriously considered and a discussion with DCPS staff before the very short two-week window in February/March.
- Stop spending so much money on central office- have DCPS based in schools and focus on the “bottom 40” schools.
- Add more money to Community Schools Coordinators
- Flexibility on directing far more money towards the proper implementation of special programs such as IB
- Allow the principals to determine their teaching staff needs

Additional Questions/Comments from Attendees:

- At Janney, we need to implement small group and inclusive instruction. We need to restore our SEL staff, which were cut last year.
- At Deal we need resources that allow us to retain strong teachers.
- DCPS gives much lip service to SEL. However, staff position in this area have been cut in recent years. We need resources in this area if it is a priority for DCPS.
- At-Risk funding by law must be targeted to at-risk students but in practice it is not. Different schools have different amounts siphoned to Comprehensive School Models positions and purposes
- I understand this is tough in under-enrolled schools. Why not lease school space to Central Office (Noma isn't cheap!) or charters to get some extra cash until these newly-renovated schools have higher enrollment?
- More resources should be given to LSATs
- Are there any changes to the budget formula for this year? Is it possible that our budget would get cut despite increased or same enrollment?

- Will DCPS fund maintenance and repair of technology (e.g. smart boards, laptops)?
- Will data from STAR system be considered when making budget decisions? Will you consider what 5-star schools are doing well to decide how to allot resources?
- Given discussions on misuse of at risk funding & need to provide more support for at risk students, will the budget have anything extra/new with at risk funds?
- What are plans for increased access and functioning technology for schools and students? Class sets in all core classes, one to one?
- How can principals purchase materials throughout the year that were not budgeted but data shows are necessary?
- Does DCPS have a plan for schools dealing with an ongoing rodent problem, or is it an issue for the school to deal with on its own using its own budget?
- Schools over student capacity experience diseconomies of scale. How is this accounted for in the budgeting process?
- How will DCPS fund goals related to SEL? Full time psychologists and social workers?
- How can elementary schools add comprehensive science instruction when budgets don't allow for it? It should be a basic requirement.
- What flexibility do principals have to budget for a master educator?
- Will successful schools be granted the autonomy they had in previous years?
- How is the minimum per pupil funding figure set?
- How can budget delivery to ALL schools, w/review & petition for changes then return to DCPS for assessment and back-and-forth occur in only a few weeks in Feb?
- Is any evaluation of spending planned? E.g. measuring the impact of an additional staff member in central office, one teacher, or one SEL counselor on outcomes?
- Shepherd desperately needs the gym/multipurpose room renovated. It's dirty, worn down and far too small for the school. The cafeteria is also too small, has a rodent problem, and has a lack of accessible emergency exits for students with mobility issues.
- Hearst is not provided full time positions for language, SEL, etc. even though we need full-time staff for those positions to meet our Comprehensive School Plan (CSP) goal. DCPS should provide smaller schools with full-time support staff to help this issue.
- We are required to teach world language but are funded for only a half-time language teacher.

School Communities Represented:

- Amidon-Bowen ES
- Ballou HS
- Brightwood EC
- Columbia Heights EC
- Deal MS
- Duke Ellington HS
- Hyde-Addison ES
- Janney ES
- Malcom X ES

- Murch ES
- Oyster EC
- Shepherd ES
- School Without Walls HS
- Tyler ES
- Wilson HS
- Whittier EC