



What You Need to Know:

- Schools are funded with federal, local, and private dollars. The majority of funding comes from local sources using a formula called the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF).
- The UPSFF gives funding to students based on their needs. More funding is provided for certain grade levels, students with special needs or that qualify as at-risk, and English Language Learners.
- Despite recent increases, DC school funding does currently not meet the level needed found in the DC Adequacy Study when adjusted for inflation.

How is Funding Determined for Our Public Schools?

Public education is funded through a number of ways, including local, federal, and private funds, with the largest amount coming from local sources.

Local Funding:

Funding is mostly determined by the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) and estimated student enrollment. **The UPSFF serves as a baseline investment intended to cover the cost of general education services. The formula also includes extra weights for certain grade levels, English Language Learners, students with special needs, and students who are considered at-risk.** To help schools to meet those students' needs, the base UPSFF is multiplied by the additional weighted amount, increasing the total amount given to LEAs.

The funding for DCPS is based on projected enrollment in the next year. Public charter schools' funding is also based on projected enrollment; however, the funding can change depending on the results from the annual count day, which multiplies the UPSFF by the actual enrollment.

In addition to the UPSFF, public schools receive funds from various District agencies for things like school resource officers, nurses, mental health counselors, and legal services. Construction and maintenance of DCPS school facilities are provided by the Department of General Services (DGS). Importantly, this is not the case for charter schools, which receive a per student facilities allowance to help cover the costs of rent, and maintenance or renovations. **Notably, in 2015, a group of nonprofits and charter schools filed a lawsuit against the District arguing that this method of funding is inequitable, resulting in an unfair financial burden for charter school facilities.**

Federal Funding:

DC schools also receive some federal funds. Most of this spending is regulated by the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE), who directs the funds to each Local Education Agency (LEA). These federal funds may include:

- **Title I Funding:** used to help schools with high concentrations of low-income students close the achievement gap
- **Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Funding:** used to support students with disabilities
- **COVID Relief:** additional funding to support schools in responding to the pandemic

Private Funding:

Both DCPS and public charter schools may get additional money from non-profits or parent and community groups. Importantly, this looks very different in each of our city's schools. **Due to growing income inequality and a several schools with many families living in poverty, parents may have limited ability to fundraise for their school, resulting in a disparity in available funding.**

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{UPSFF} \times \# \text{ of} \\
 & \text{students in each} \\
 & \text{Local Education} \\
 & \text{Agency (LEA)}^* \\
 & = \\
 & \text{Total Amount of \$} \\
 & \text{DC gives each LEA.}
 \end{aligned}$$



What Progress Has Been Made?

Over the past seven years, DC has seen small increases in the UPSFF, the most influential of funding sources. Even so, with the extremely high cost of living in the city, these increases are not enough to truly meet the needs of all of our students and families.

Even the most significant increases fall short of the level needed found in the 2013 DC Adequacy Study, which suggests a base rate of \$11,892 per student (when adjusted for inflation). The UPSFF is currently set at \$11,310. Although this was a 3% increase from the previous year, when adjusted to inflation, it was only a real increase of 2%.

As we navigate the consequences of the pandemic, schools have a greater burden to fill the gaps of learning loss that are disproportionately experienced by Black, brown, and low-income students. In order to help students achieve, the UPSFF needs to be fully funded so schools are equipped to meet the moment and help our students, families, and city recover.

What's Next for School Funding?

The DME commissioned a study to determine possible ways to adjust the UPSFF to target funding for English Language Learners and students who are at-risk. We look forward to hearing how families will be engaged in decisions for any future adjustments.

Additionally, without a clear understanding of how school funding is spent, especially at-risk or COVID-relief funding, **DC needs to increase transparency around how schools are funded.** PAVE parent leaders put together their #WeBudgetTogether vision for Transparent Citywide School Funding and are working hard to ensure information about school funding is easily accessible to parents and communities – and that parent voice is included in the work to **advance equity and get to a place where every child in every ward has the support and tools they need to succeed in school.**

How Can Parents Help Drive Funding Decisions?

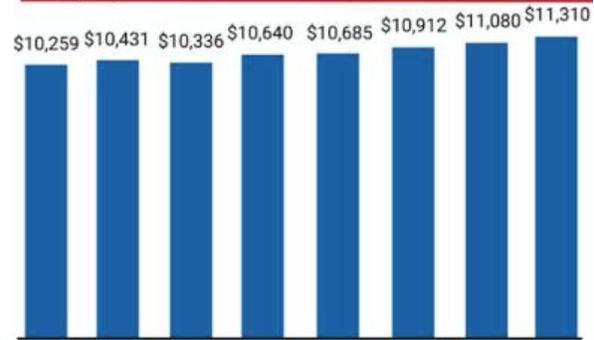


- Testify at **public hearings** to call for increased transparency and accountability in how our schools are funded.
- Reach out to **your child's school** for information about budget engagement opportunities.
- Contact PAVE's **community organizing team** organizers@dcpave.org for more information

Investment in PreK-Adult Education Put District on Path to Closing Adequacy Gap

UPSFF by Fiscal Year, Adjusted for Inflation

Adequacy Standard: \$11,638



FY 2014 FY 2015 FY 2016 FY 2017 FY 2018 FY 2019 FY 2020 FY 2021

Learn More:

- ❖ Read more about this year's education budget in [DCFPI's FY21 Budget Toolkit](#).
- ❖ Read the Center for American Progress's take on the role of school parent organizations in funding inequities: <https://ampr.gs/2yM7fTh>