Family and Community Guide to the DC Public Schools Budget
VISION
Every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared to positively influence society and thrive in life.

MISSION
Ensure that every school guarantees students reach their full potential through rigorous and joyful learning experiences provided in a nurturing environment.

The Family and Community Guide to the DC Public Schools (DCPS) Budget is a resource for students, families, and community members to learn and engage on how the district and individual DCPS schools are funded and how school budgets are developed. For more detailed information, including school-by-school data, visit dcpsdatacenter.com.
The Budget Timeline

August  School year begins.
October Fiscal year begins.

November Opportunities for public input, including community forums and the public budget hearing, begin and continue through the next few months.

January Projected student enrollment count for School Year 19-20 used to determine district funding amount; DCPS provides initial school budgets to schools for next fiscal year; Local School Advisory Teams (LSATs) discuss their school’s proposed budget.

February Schools submit the next fiscal year budgets to DCPS.
March DCPS submits the next fiscal year budget.
Spring DC Council approves the next fiscal year budget.
June/July School year ends.
Summer City presents the next fiscal year budget to Congress for approval.
August School year begins.
October Fiscal year begins.
How DCPS is Funded

Sources of Funding
DCPS receives funding primarily from local tax dollars. DCPS also receives funding from federal grants, including Title I and Head Start; other sources such as philanthropy; and special purpose revenue, including custodial fees generated from building rentals.

Opportunities for Budget Stakeholder Input
Each year, DCPS invites student representatives from each high school to participate in a Student Budget Hearing. Students share their feedback on DCPS investments and make recommendations about what they would like to see at their schools in areas such as attendance, technology, literacy, social emotional learning, and more.

In the fall, DCPS’ Chancellor and senior leadership convene an annual Public Budget Hearing to hear from key DCPS stakeholders about what they would like to see in the upcoming fiscal year budget. DCPS also hosts an opportunity for the community to learn more about the budget process and DCPS’ priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, and provide feedback through interactive discussions with district leaders and fellow stakeholders. This happens during community forums in the fall and winter.
Local Funding
DCPS’s local funding is determined by the city’s Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF). This formula provides a base or “foundation level” for each DCPS student and supplements on top of the base for certain student factors.

Additional funding is provided for students in certain grade levels, students with disabilities, students who are English Learners, and students in Opportunity Academies. Additional funding is also provided for students who meet the “at-risk” definition, including students who are homeless, students in foster care, students who qualify for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and high school students who are overage for the grade in which they are enrolled.

The total per-pupil funding amount is then multiplied by the expected DCPS student enrollment count to determine the total local funding DCPS receives. For more information on the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula, visit code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/titles/38/chapters/29.

Federal Funding
DCPS receives several different types of federal funding, including formula (or enrollment-based) funding and competitive grant funding. This includes funding for students from low-income families (Title I), students with disabilities (IDEA), and students who are English Learners (Title III).

District Funding Breakdown
DCPS invests the majority of funds in schools and in support of schools. In Fiscal Year 2019, for every dollar in the budget, nearly 97 cents went to schools or to directly support schools.
How School Budgets are Created

In January and February, schools develop their budgets for the following school year. This is a three-step process.

**Step 1: Enrollment**

School budgets are based on the expected student enrollment count for the upcoming school year, which is determined using historical enrollment data, trends, and other relevant factors. To begin the school budget creation process, DCPS central office provides each school with an expected student enrollment count for the following year. This includes an estimated number of students by grade, students with disabilities, English Learners, and students who may be eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch.
Step 2: Initial Funding Amount
Each school then receives an initial funding amount, or allocation, based on its unique population. This initial funding amount is determined by:

- **The Comprehensive Staffing Model:** Each school receives funding for staff positions based on the school’s expected enrollment and the staffing model for that school type (elementary, middle, high school, or education campus). For more information, visit [dcpsdatacenter.com](http://dcpsdatacenter.com).

- **Non-Staff:** Each school receives funding for non-personnel investments, such as funding for technology and supplies.

- **Other:** Each school receives grant and flexible funds. For example, the UPSFF includes additional funding for students who meet the definition of “at-risk.” Schools receive additional staff positions and resources to support these students.

The **Comprehensive Staffing Model** (CSM) allocates funding for school staff positions including school leadership (such as a principal), instructional staff (such as a 1st grade teacher), and other school staff (such as a psychologist, custodian, or guidance counselor). The model also provides dedicated funding for staff who support students with disabilities and English Learners.

Elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and education campuses each have a different staffing model. For example, every school gets a principal, but a high school may receive funding for an athletics and activities coordinator, while an elementary school may receive funding for a prekindergarten instructional aide. In addition, each school type model takes into account each grade level’s specific teacher-to-student ratio requirements.

While the CSM allocates funding for staff positions, schools are not required to spend the funding on every position included in the CSM. Some positions, like a principal, are required. Other positions are flexible or the school may ask permission to spend the associated funding differently.

More information about the Comprehensive Staffing Model is available at [dcpsdatacenter.com](http://dcpsdatacenter.com).
Step 3: School Budget Development
Between January and February, principals use their initial funding amount to develop their budgets for the following school year. This process involves the steps below.

• **Engagement:** Principals work with their school’s LSAT in developing their budgets. Principals and LSATs gather additional input from teachers, staff, families, and communities; they consider this feedback as they decide how to use funds that can be spent flexibly.

• **Budgeting for Required Positions:** Schools are required to include certain positions in their budgets. Examples include principals and teachers.

• **Budgeting for Flexible Decisions:** Schools make decisions about staffing and budgeting to design programs that support their students’ educational success. For staff positions under the CSM that are flexible, schools may seek permission from DCPS central office to spend the allocated funding on a different investment aligned with their school goals. This could look like investing in an afterschool provider or additional professional development for teachers and staff.

More information about individual school budgets is available at dcpsdatacenter.com.

The **Local School Advisory Team** (LSAT) is a group of elected and appointed members that exists for every DCPS school. The team consists of parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff, a community member, and in some cases, students. This team advises the principal on matters that promote high expectations and achievement for all students, including the development of the school’s budget.

**Average Salaries at DCPS**
DCPS budgets for all school-based staff based on the average cost of the staff member. As a result, each school receives funding for the average cost of each staff position, including salary and benefits, and includes the average cost in the school’s budget development. The actual staff member who is hired may receive a salary that is more or less than the average. Using average salaries protects schools against fluctuations due to staff changes and maintains schools’ ability to hire teachers based on quality.
Budget Review and Approval by DC Council

After principals submit their proposed budgets, DCPS compiles and submits the proposed budget for the district, including schools and central office, to the Mayor. The Mayor adds DCPS’s proposed budget to the proposed DC government budget and submits it to DC Council for approval.

The DC Council holds a hearing on DCPS’s budget, can make changes or additions to the proposed budget, and ultimately approves the budget for the district.

Questions?
For more information, visit dcpsdatacenter.com.