

## NOTES ON DCPS FY 2023 NEW LOCAL SCHOOL BUDGET MODEL

Mary Levy February 16, 2022

**Description of new DCPS model for local school budget allocations:** School budget allocations flow through four different methods:

1. Student-based budgeting (37%): Every student in K-grade 12 receives a base weight, and percentage add-ons are applied for special population categories—Early Childhood, Special Education, English Language Learners and At-Risk students. The funding is flexible.
2. Staffing ratios (42%): Schools are assigned staff positions on the basis of 1/school, 1/set numbers of students, or for custodians enrollment + square footage. These allocations apply to principals, librarians, custodians, secondary school counselors, early childhood, special education, psychologists, social workers and English Language Learners. Except for special permissions, these must be included in their budgets.
3. Special programs and specialty school payments (16%). Federal grants are 2%, other funds 14%. Special programs are required in the budgets, while specialty payments are flexible. Sixty-five (65) schools received these allocations and 50 did not.
4. Stability (5%): these payments are meant to ensure minimum resources at smaller schools and protect budgets from the impact of fluctuating enrollment. Eighty-two (82) schools received these allocations, and 33 did not. These payments are only promised for next year (FY 2023)

### Research questions:

1. Are any schools losing money, and if so, what are the causative factors?
2. Do schools have enough money to maintain current resources (regardless of enrollment change)
3. How do the FY23 local schools budgets compare with the FY22 budgets, as to equity in General Education funding per pupil?
4. Is at-risk funding still being used to supplant core program funding? [spreadsheet]
5. Setting aside special needs funding (special ed, ELL, at-risk), what does the basic funding provided to all schools – i.e., the minimum -- enable them to buy? What staff, class size, supplies, etc. could they afford?
6. If either of the Mendelson bills were in effect, how would they have affected the FY23 budgets?
7. Assuming the Mayor announces it, how does the FY23 UPSFF compare with the FY22 UPSFF? And how does overall FY23 funding compare with FY22 funding?

### Findings to date:

Note: DCPS has provided two different numbers for the FY 22 budgets as submitted: the number posted on [www.dcpsbudget.com/](http://www.dcpsbudget.com/) and a spreadsheet later provided to C4DC. The first does not include the Covid recovery funding (“ESSER”) allocated to local schools, while the latter includes all of it. Neither includes the librarian positions and funding added by the DC Council during the budget process. The DCPS calculations of the change in total budget from FY22 Submitted to FY23 Initial in the files posted on

the website is based on the FY22 Submitted Budgets as they appear on the website except for the exclusion of Security. Thus in those calculations

- Both numbers are comparable as regards Security.
- The FY22 totals in the web budgets do NOT include librarian positions added in the Council's budget process, while the FY23 totals do.
- The FY 22 totals in the web budgets do NOT include Covid recovery funds; the latter are listed separately. The FY23 totals include no Covid funds; whether some are forthcoming has not been announced.

Problem: the submitted budget totals used by DCPS in citing increases over the current year do not reflect the resources schools actually have. In addition to the missing librarian positions, schools have used Covid recovery funds to keep everyday school resources, such as teachers, aides, social workers, and supplies.

In addition, looking to the city's budget process, the Mayor and Council do not use these budgets but use budgets with the extra "hold-outs" amounts removed from the school budgets and placed in central accounts AND different categories and definitions. One has to operate within one system or another exclusively.

DCPS projects a decrease in enrollment of about 1,000 students. The Mayor usually uses different projections, so the import of this is unclear.

**Question: Are any schools receiving less money next year than this?**

- **If Covid recovery funding is not included in the FY22 comparison budgets**, five schools have lower budgets next year than this year, in amounts ranging from \$7,439 to \$95,018 less. These schools are projected to have lower enrollment than was projected for this year, in numbers ranging from 22 to 46.
- **When Covid recovery funding is included in the FY22 comparison budgets**, school losses are much higher. Sixty-one schools – a little over half the total – have budgets lower for next year than this. The typical loss is about \$250,000 or enough money for two teachers plus supplies. Twelve of these have flat or increasing projected enrollment. The rest are projected to lose students, ranging from 4 to 89, median 22.

**Question: Do schools have enough money to cover next year's higher costs for current resources?**

Regardless of enrollment and program change:

- **If Covid recovery funding is not included in the FY22 comparison budgets**, 31 schools have too little to maintain existing staff and other resources. A few are projected to gain enrollment, the rest to lose students in numbers varying from 8 to 89, median 30.
- **When Covid recovery funding is included in the FY22 comparison budgets**, 77 schools have budgets insufficient to maintain existing staff and other resources. The typical shortfall is about \$300,000. Twenty of these schools have flat or rising projected enrollment, ranging from 2 to 43 students. The rest are projected to lose students, ranging from 4 to 89, median 19.

**Question: How do the FY23 local schools budgets compare with the FY22 budgets, as to equity in General Education funding per pupil?** do the FY23 local schools budgets compare with the FY22 budgets, as to general education funding per pupil? General Education (my term) funding consists of all funds remaining after funding for special populations is set aside. It means funding available for resources for all students in a school, regardless of special needs of subgroups, such as Early Childhood or Special Education students. It therefore includes the Core (or baseline) program but special programs such as IB and dual language, and stability funds. One would expect per pupil funding here to be roughly similar, with higher numbers for small schools, which need more to provide baseline services. One would hope that it is about the same for each school from year to year, with additional funds sufficient to cover rising costs.

Historically per pupil funding for General Education has had significant inequities, with some schools receiving hundreds of dollars less than other of similar size and even similar demographics. Moreover it has fluctuated for individual schools from one year to the next, creating instability.

My preliminary analysis finds that per pupil funding for General Education next year is even more inequitable than last year. The contrasts between pairs of similar size schools have risen to as much as \$5,000 per pupil, and in some of these pairs, the advantaged school has a far smaller percentage of at-risk students! Per pupil amounts have almost no correlation with enrollment for Core Program or Special Programs and only a low correlation with Stability funds.