



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

## **Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) Working Group**

### **Meeting Notes**

**Oct. 8, 2020, 3-5 p.m.**

- Introductions and roll call
- Review of survey results regarding at-risk student need options
  - Survey received twelve responses.
  - Two most popular options: increase funding for students with 2+ characteristics and increase funding for overage students. Second tier or popularity: increase funding for Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) students, both overage and CFSA students, creating a high school at-risk weight.
  - Bottom tier: two options that lagged behind the others – increase funding for students with 3+ characteristics, increase high school base weight for all high school students. The group generally agreed that these two options can be removed from consideration.
  - Discussion about making sure that funding for different options isn't overlapping if more than one option is utilized and how incremental funding for at-risk cannot be prescriptive.
  - One option not on the survey was funding for overage prior to high school to prevent students from becoming overage in high school. Group discussed this option, and it is still under consideration.
  - Overall, incremental funds are preferred to redistributed funding. Redistributed funding is preferred by some because of the current financial limitations. Incremental funding is preferred as a long-term solution.
  - For the at-risk concentration options, the sliding scale is the most popular option, followed by an "at-risk community eligibility provision," tiered funding, and a qualification level-based tiered funding.
  - The group discussed the preference for at-risk concentration vs. at-risk student need. It depends on what options are chosen and how this would affect what students are targeted. There is a preference for funding the at-risk student need options, so as not to create a "cliff" for local education agencies (LEAs), and to continue to allow the money to follow the student through per-pupil funding.
- Public Comment period on the at-risk funding options
  - No public comments.
- Discussion about English learners (EL) weight structure
  - Overview of the 2020 UPSFF Study regarding EL weight structure. The main question addressed in the study was: Should the EL weight be tiered, and if so, what is the appropriate proportion of additional funding for each recommended tier?
  - The number of EL has increased since FY15. While the growth has impacted DCPS more significantly than the charter sector, some individual charter LEAs

- have also been significantly impacted. This growth led to an increase in EL funding through the UPSFF over the past five years. The majority of EL students are in elementary grades. Important to note that students that are “not EL” also includes students that are no longer EL (i.e., they have exited EL status).
- The working group reviewed the study slides that showed assessment proficiency rates for EL students, based on various characteristics. The working group also reviewed how EL students are funded in other states. Most states provide funding in a similar way as DC, but some provide tiered funding based on proficiency level or grade level.
  - The working group reviewed the options to modify the UPSFF for EL students as outlined in the study, which include funding EL students based on grade-level, funding based on proficiency level, and funding based on other characteristics (new to country and students with limited interrupted formal education (SLIFE)).
  - Members of the working group discussed the services that are needed for EL students. In addition to classroom expenses like staffing, bilingual teachers and classroom inclusion models, LEAs also have other expenses like bilingual operations staff members, providing specialized professional development, and providing translation services and interpreters. The grade-levels that the LEA serves also has an impact on services provided, with students placed in upper grades with lower WIDA scores requiring additional supports and resources relative to younger students with lower WIDA scores.
    - Members discussed the greater general focus on language acquisition for all students in elementary grades, while instruction in secondary grades often focuses more on the content of the course in which the student is enrolled rather than language acquisition specifically.
  - Generally, members of the working group thought that tiered funding based on grade-level is better than funding based on proficiency. The group would also consider raising the weight for EL students. A survey will be sent out so that all working group members can provide additional input.
- Opened Public Comment period on the EL funding structure and any other items.
    - No public comments.
  - Other items of discussion
    - The group discussed other topics that were not specifically discussed in this meeting or previous meetings, as other areas of future consideration. This includes looking at the relative weights in the UPSFF, the definition of at-risk, facilities funding, payment based on projections vs. enrollment, and the impact of at-risk funding on students.