



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

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## **OSSE UPSFF Policy Document**

### **1. Purpose**

The Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) is the mechanism by which DC Public Schools (DCPS) and DC Public Charter Schools (DCPCS) receive local funding. The UPSFF, which is applied to each local education agency (LEA) based on student counts, provides the majority of local funding that all LEAs receive. This policy guidance document is intended to provide LEAs with a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the UPSFF and how funding is applied to LEAs.

### **2. Background**

The UPSFF was created in the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula for Public Schools and Public Charter Schools Act of 1998, and is outlined in Title 38, Chapter 29 of the DC Code. The UPSFF was first implemented for the 1999-2000 school year. The formula is still in use today, but the structure has been revised numerous times since it was first implemented. The administration assesses the UPSFF foundation and weights annually as a part of the budgeting process to ensure that the funding aligns to the educational needs of students in the District of Columbia.

### **3. Foundation and Weights**

The UPSFF is structured with a foundation level and weights for general education and supplemental add-on characteristics. To calculate the funding amount, the applicable weight is multiplied by the foundation level.

#### *General Education Weights*

The general education weights are aligned to a student's grade level or school program. Each student is assigned to only one of the following general education weights:

- Pre-Kindergarten 3
- Pre-Kindergarten 4
- Kindergarten
- Grades 1-5
- Grades 6-8
- Grades 9-12
- Alternative program

- Special Education school
- Adult Education

Adult Education, Alternative program, and Special Education school are defined in § 38-2901 of the DC Code. The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) designates Adult Education and Special Education schools for charter schools that meet the requirements. DCPS designates Adult and Special Education schools for its own schools that meet the requirements. Alternative programs are designated by OSSE through an [application process](#) for programs that meet the requirements to operate an alternative program. More information about Adult Education, Alternative program, and Special Education school is outlined below.

### *Supplemental Education Weights*

In addition to the general education weights, an LEA may also receive supplemental add-on weights, for the LEA's students who are identified as meeting the criteria. It is possible that a student is identified as being entitled to more than one supplemental weight. The supplemental weights that are included in the UPSFF, and the definitions, are as follows:

English Learner (EL)	Additional funding for English Learners (EL) as designated by OSSE's <a href="#">EL policies and procedures</a> .
At-Risk	Additional funding for students who are in the District's foster care system, homeless, qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or high school students who are one year older or more than the expected age for their grade level.

Special Education – Level 1	Eight hours or fewer per week of specialized services
Special Education – Level 2	More than 8 hours and fewer than or equal to 16 hours per school week of specialized services
Special Education – Level 3	More than 16 hours and fewer than or equal to 24 hours per school week of specialized services
Special Education – Level 4	More than 24 hours per week of specialized services, which may include instruction in a self-contained (dedicated) special education school other than residential placement
Special Education Compliance	Weighting provided in addition to special education level add-on weightings on a per-student basis for Special Education compliance.

Special Education Attorney's Fee Supplement	Weighting provided in addition to special education level add-on weightings on a per-student basis for attorney's fees.
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All students with disabilities receive the Special Education Compliance weight and Attorney's Fee Supplemental weight, in addition to the Special Education weight according to their specialized service level.

Special Education Extended School Year – Level 1	Additional funding to support the summer school or program need for students who require extended school year (ESY) services in their individualized education program (IEP)
Special Education Extended School Year – Level 2	Additional funding to support the summer school or program need for students who require extended school year (ESY) services in their IEPs
Special Education Extended School Year – Level 3	Additional funding to support the summer school or program need for students who require extended school year (ESY) services in their IEPs
Special Education Extended School Year – Level 4	Additional funding to support the summer school or program need for students who require extended school year (ESY) services in their IEPs

Residential	For a student that receives residential services in a DC Public School or public charter school that provides students with room and board in a residential setting, in addition to their instructional program
Special Education Residential – Level 1	Additional funding to support the after-hours level 1 special education needs of students living in a DC Public School or public charter school that provides students with room and board in a residential setting
Special Education Residential – Level 2	Additional funding to support the after-hours level 2 special education needs of students living in a DC Public School or public charter school that provides students with room and board in a residential setting
Special Education Residential – Level 3	Additional funding to support the after-hours level 3 special education needs of students living in a DC Public School or public charter school that provides students with room and board in a residential setting
Special Education Residential – Level 4	Additional funding to support the after-hours level 4 special education needs of limited and

	non-English proficient students living in a DC Public School or public charter school that provides students with room and board in a residential setting
English Learner - Residential	Additional funding to support the after-hours limited and non-English proficiency needs of students living in a DC Public School or public charter school that provides students with room and board in a residential setting

In addition to the above supplemental weights, public charter schools in DC also receive a Facilities Allowance for each enrolled student (§ 38-2908). If the LEA operates a residential program, the LEA will receive the Residential Facilities Allowance for each student that is in full-time residence at the residential school. If the LEA does not operate a residential program, the LEA will receive the Non-Residential Facilities Allowance for each student. The Residential Facilities Allowance amount is determined by applying a weight to the Non-Residential Facilities Allowance.

Non-Residential Facilities Allowance	For all public charter school students that are not enrolled in a residential program
Residential Facilities Allowance	For public charter school students that are enrolled in a residential program in which student is provided with room and board, in addition to their instructional program.

**4. Budget and Legislative Process**

The UPSFF foundation level and weights are set each year through the city’s annual budget process. In the first step in the budget process the Mayor submits the proposed UPSFF foundation and weights and the projected number of students for DCPS and each public charter LEA to DC Council. The enrollment projection process is managed separately by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) in consultation with DCPS, DC PCSB, the public charter LEAs, and Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO).<sup>1</sup>

The second phase of the budget process is DC Council’s revisions and legislative approval of the final budget. DC Council can adjust the enrollment projections, the foundation level and weights with legislation that updates the DC Code (§ 38-2903 through § 38-2905). The DC Council’s budget needs to be signed by the Mayor and then is submitted to Congress for approval.

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<sup>1</sup> The enrollment projections included in the final approved budget are the result of a multi-step process. For public charters, LEAs submit for review and approval their projections to an enrollment projection team consisting of the DC PCSB, OSSE, OCFO, and the DME. After reviewing, the enrollment projection team submits the updated projections to the Mayor’s Budgeting Office for inclusion in the Mayor’s proposed budget.

When the budget is approved, the foundation level and weights are finalized for the upcoming school year. OSSE, along with the OCFO, administers the UPSFF payments for public charter schools in DC.

## **5. Pupil Count – Projections and Enrollment Audit**

The final approved UPSFF foundation and weights are used to calculate the funding to LEAs based on pupil counts. For DCPS, the pupil count is the LEA’s enrollment projections that are included as part of the annual District of Columbia budget process. For public charter schools in DC, the pupil count is determined through the annual enrollment audit. Information about the enrollment audit is outlined in OSSE’s [Enrollment Audit and Child Count Handbook](#), which is released annually.

Each year, OSSE conducts an enrollment audit to determine the number of students that are enrolled in DCPS and public charter schools in DC. In addition to auditing the total number of students in the public education system, OSSE also verifies the student-level characteristics that are aligned to the UPSFF general education and supplemental add-on categories. The pupil counts reported in the enrollment audit report are used to calculate funding for charter LEAs. Counts are determined by taking a “snapshot” of the number of students enrolled as of Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> each year (or the next business day). This date is known as Data Freeze day. The enrollment status and student-level characteristics identified as of Data Freeze day are used to determine the total UPSFF funding that each charter LEA will receive<sup>2</sup>. This UPSFF funding amount is paid to charter LEAs through a series of quarterly payments. The schedule and calculation for these quarterly payments is outlined in the next section.

Charter LEAs are also eligible to receive Supplemental Funding for changes to a student’s at-risk, EL, or special education status that occur after Data Freeze day. Supplemental funding payments are made three times a year and are separate from the quarterly payments. Supplemental funding is further outlined later in this document.

## **6. Schedule of Payments for Charter LEAs**

Charter LEAs receive their UPSFF payments in four, quarterly installments. The quarterly payments are made no later than July 15, Oct. 25, Jan. 15, and April 15 (§ 38–2906.02). The OCFO processes these payments to charter LEAs.

The first (July 15) payment is based on the schools’ enrollment projections included in the final approved budget for the upcoming year.

The second and third payments (Oct. 25 and Jan. 15) are based on the LEA’s unaudited October enrollment figures. The OCFO receives the unaudited enrollment figures from

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<sup>2</sup> LEAs have until Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> to make updates to student characteristics.

OSSE. Enrollment figures are provided to OSSE by LEAs through their student information system. The unaudited enrollment figures are certified by LEAs through the Enrollment Audit & Child Count Application. This process is documented in the [enrollment audit handbook](#).

The fourth payment (April 15) reconciles the public charter schools' annual UPSFF funding to their audited enrollment figures. The OCFO receives the final enrollment audit figures from OSSE at the completion of the enrollment audit when OSSE releases the annual [Audit and Verification of Student Enrollment Report](#). The OCFO also makes sure that the charter LEA payments are capped at the enrollment ceiling that is in each LEA's Charter Agreement with PCSB. If an LEA enrolls students above their enrollment ceiling, they do not receive the per-pupil allocation for these students.

The quarterly payments for the education-portion of the UPSFF (as opposed to the facility-portion of the UPSFF) are structured so that charter LEAs receive a larger portion of their total annual funding in the beginning of the school year. For the first quarterly payment, new charter LEAs receive 45 percent of projected enrollment funding, while existing charter LEAs will receive 35 percent of projected enrollment funding. Under the second quarterly payment, new and existing charter LEAs will both receive 25 percent of enrollment funding based on unaudited October figures. Under the third quarterly payment, new charter LEAs will receive 15 percent of enrollment funding based on unaudited October figures, while existing charter LEAs will receive 20 percent of enrollment funding based on unaudited October figures. Under the fourth quarterly payment, both new and existing charter LEAs will receive reconciliation amounts that make the total amounts paid over the four quarters equivalent to the amounts owed per OSSE's annual enrollment audit report.

The payment of the facility allowance funding is also structured so that LEAs receive the facility-portion of the UPSFF earlier in the school year. Under the first quarterly payment, new charter LEAs will receive 45 percent of projected facilities funding (based on projected enrollment), while existing charter LEAs will receive 35 percent of projected facilities funding (based on projected enrollment). Under the second quarterly payment, new charter LEAs will receive 55 percent of remaining facilities funding (based on unaudited October enrollment figures), while existing charter LEAs will receive 65 percent of remaining facilities funding (based on unaudited October enrollment figures). If any discrepancy exists between a charter LEA's unaudited and audited enrollment figures, OSSE will make a reconciliation adjustment within the school's fourth quarterly (April 15) payment.

Special Education Extended School Year (ESY) funding is not included in the quarterly payments. These payments are made separately. The process for ESY funding is described later in this document.

## **7. Supplemental Payments for Charter LEAs**

In addition to the quarterly UPSFF payments, charter LEAs also receive supplemental payments for audited students who receive new or changed supplemental designations after the October count day. The supplemental payments are made for students who have the following changes:

- 1) New or increased IEP levels;
- 2) New EL designations; and/or
- 3) New at-risk designations.

Supplemental payments are made at three times during the school year:

March 15	New or changed designations between Oct. 6 and Feb. 10
May 15	New or changed designations between Feb. 11 and April 15
July 30	New or changed designations between April 16 and June 17

Supplemental payments for students with new or increased IEP designations are pro-rated to align with dates of IEP service, while supplemental payments for students with new LEP and at-risk designations are for the full annual per-pupil amounts. The students must be enrolled at the same LEA that they were enrolled in during the enrollment audit in order for the LEA to be eligible to receive supplemental payments.

OSSE calculates the payments based on data from the Special Education Data System (SEDS) and the DC Statewide Longitudinal Education Data (SLED) system. The calculated payments are sent to OCFO to process the payments.

## **8. Extended School Year (ESY) Payments for Charter LEAs**

ESY funding is available to LEAs that offer an ESY program to eligible students. Please refer to OSSE's Extended School Year Services Policy for more information on student eligibility. As ESY services are usually provided over the summer months, OSSE makes ESY funding payments to LEAs by July 15 and Sept. 30 of each year. The first ESY payment to charter schools is based on an estimate of the number of students that will attend the ESY program. After the ESY period for schools has concluded, OSSE will compare attendance records to the projected enrollment figures, and will count as enrolled for the duration of the time period any student who attended ESY for at least one day and received ESY services. The second ESY payment will reconcile actual attendance in the ESY program against the projected enrollment estimate.

ESY funding is paid to LEAs on a per-pupil basis, for students who meet all of the following criteria:

- 1) The student has a finalized, current IEP;

- 2) The LEA's IEP team determines that the student is eligible for ESY services and the student's ESY data is certified in SEDS. (Note: this determination must be made annually.);
- 3) The student is assigned to a school that is providing ESY services (the ESY School Assignment) in the SLED ESY module; and
- 4) The student attended the ESY program, as demonstrated by the ESY school recording attendance in the SLED ESY module. The student must have an ESY Attendance Status of "Partially Attended" or "Attended" in SLED. The ESY Attendance Status must be completed within five business days after the ESY program ends.

If a student did not attend the ESY program at all, the LEA will not receive ESY funding for that student. In addition to reviewing ESY Attendance Status, OSSE will also review ESY Progress reports and ESY Service Logs to ensure that students are receiving ESY services. If an LEA did not offer an ESY program during the previous summer, the LEA is not eligible to receive the first ESY payment. If an LEA is not eligible to receive the first payment, but provides ESY services to students during the summer, the LEA will receive the full ESY funding amount within the ESY second payment. In the following school year, the LEA will then be eligible to receive ESY funding as part of the first ESY payment.

## **9. Additional UPSFF Policy guidelines**

### Special Education Funding

- LEAs that opt out of receiving federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grant awards for the school year are not eligible to receive any of the UPSFF Special Education funding supplemental weights.

### Adult Education

- "Adult Education" is defined in the DC Code (§ 38-2901(1)) as services or instruction below the college level for adults who:
  - Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society;
  - Do not have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education and who have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
  - Have limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose native language is a language other than English.
- Students who receive the adult funding weight are not eligible to receive at-risk weight, per DC Code § 38-2905.01(c). When the at-risk weight was introduced for



fiscal year 2015 (FY15), the adult weight was adjusted to incorporate costs related to students at-risk of academic failure that are attending an adult program.

### Alternative programs

- “Alternative program” is defined in the DC Code (§ 38–2901(1B)) as specialized instruction for students under court supervision or who have a history of being on short- or long-term suspension or who have been expelled from school, or who meet other criteria as defined by the State Education Office through rulemaking. To qualify as an alternative program, a school must meet the criteria and rules set by the State Education Office. An alternative program may describe an entire school or a specialized program within a school.
- Students who receive the alternative funding weight are not eligible to receive the at-risk weight per DC Code § 38–2905.01(c). When the at-risk weight was introduced for FY15, the alternative weight was adjusted to incorporate costs related to students at-risk of academic failure that are attending an alternative program. In FY15, the alternative weight was designed to be equal to the high school general education weight plus the at-risk supplemental weight.

### Residential Schools

- A “Residential School” is defined in DC Code (§ 38–2901(10)) as a DCPS or public charter school in DC that provide students with room and board in a residential setting, in addition to their instructional program.
- Only students who are in full-time residence at a residential school are eligible to receive the various residential weights DC Code (§ 38–2905(b)). The student needs to be in full-time residence at the residential school on the Data Freeze day in order for the LEA to receive the various residential funding weights.
- If a student is in full-time residence at a residential school in the enrollment audit (as of Data Freeze day), the LEA will be able to receive supplemental payments for the Special Education Residential weight if the student has an increased IEP or a new IEP.
- The total number of students for which an LEA receives residential funding cannot exceed the maximum number of students allowed to be in full-time residence at the school, as determined by DC PCSB.

### Errors in Enrollment Audit data or UPSFF payments

- LEAs are required to provide complete, valid, timely, and accurate data submissions to OSSE, as per the [LEA Data Management Policy](#). OSSE relies on accurate data submissions to ensure that financial resources are allocated appropriately to District of Columbia students. If inaccurate data results in inaccurate UPSFF payments to an LEA, then OSSE and OCFO may take action to recoup UPSFF funding.

- If an LEA changes the demographic status for a student that would have impacted the UPSFF funding the LEA received had this change been included before the finalization of the enrollment audit report, OSSE and OCFO will request that the LEA return the additional funds that the LEA incorrectly received. Two common areas of incorrect data occur when an LEA misidentifies students as homeless or as ELs.

### Non-resident students

- In the event a District public school has already received UPSFF funding for a student found to be a non-resident, the District may withhold a portion of the school's subsequent funding, equal to the amount of UPSFF funding previously distributed to the LEA for the student found to be a non-resident. (5-A DCMR § 5013.4)

### UPSFF Working Group

- Every two years, starting in January 2017, the Mayor issues a report to the DC Council that reviews the UPSFF and provides recommendations for revisions.
- OSSE convenes a working group of LEAs, agencies, and public education finance stakeholders to provide recommendations regarding the UPSFF that are included in the report. The working group is convened every two years prior to the issuance of the report.

### UPSFF Algorithm

- Beginning with the FY20 budget process, the Mayor annually transmits to DC Council the considerations made to determine the next fiscal year's UPSFF foundation level. This letter is posted annually on the [OSSE website](#).

## **10. Other applications of the UPSFF**

In addition to funding DCPS and public charter schools, the UPSFF is also used as guidance for other funding purposes.

- *Non-Public Tuition Rate:* The Maximum Annual Per Student Tuition Rate to be paid to non-public schools that receive OSSE's calculated rate is determined using the Special Education School general education weight and the Special Education – Level 4 supplemental weight (5 DCMR § A-2848).
- *Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion:* Funding that is distributed to community-based organizations pursuant to the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008 does not exceed the Pre-Kindergarten 3 and Pre-Kindergarten 4 general education weights. Community-based organizations may also be eligible to receive funding equivalent to the

At-risk supplemental weight for students in foster care, who are homeless, or who receive TANF or SNAP funds.

- *Non-Resident Tuition:* Students who are not residents of the District of Columbia but attend DCPS or public charter schools are required to pay tuition to the District of Columbia. The tuition rates are calculated using the UPSFF rate and weights. Non-resident students who attend a public charter school are also required to pay the equivalent of the Facility Allowance. (5-A DCMR § 5014.2)