



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

**UPSFF Working Group
Meeting
September 7, 2016, 3:00-5:00pm**

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees: Shana Young, James Albright, Ryan Aurori, Jenn Comey, Justin Ellis, Allen Francois, Faida Fuller, Irene Holzman, Anjali Kulkarni, Kevin Lang, Ed Lazere, Mary Levy, Mikayla Lytton, Julie Meyer, Cathy Reilly, Kim Reuben, Sarah Richardson, Kathy Rowland, Catherine Sanwo, Shawn Stover, Tony Taylor, Pete Weber.

Introductions

- Introductions were made
- Group reviewed summary of previous meeting, informed members where to locate meeting materials

Review of Minutes, August 3, 2016

- Draft minutes were distributed to the group for review and comment
- No comments on minutes as drafted

School Finance Update

- An informational update was provided on upcoming changes to federal school finance policies, including new requirements for annual reporting of school finances, and proposed "Supplement not Supplant" regulations.
- No discussion

At-Risk Data Overview

- An overview was provided of data about the impact of the UPSFF At-Risk of Academic Failure funding category ("At Risk"). At-Risk funding was identified as being the second-largest demographically related UPSFF funding category, after funding for special education students.
- A summary of At-Risk data was provided, including:
 - o 46% of K-12 Students Are Designated "At-Risk"
 - o DCPS serves a slightly higher percentage of AR students, 48%, than Charter schools, 44%
 - o AR rates are roughly equal for males and females
 - o AR rates are highest for African American students (56%), followed by Hispanic/Latino students (37%)
 - o 123 schools have AR rates at or above 50%
- Definitions of At-Risk designations were provided, including:

- The Fair Student Funding and School Based Budgeting Act of 2013 (D.C. Official Code § 38-2901) legislates the definition of the UPSFF At Risk category, how DCPS should allocate AR funds to their schools, and their reporting requirements.
- Per the legislation, students are designated “at-risk” who are identified as homeless, receive TANF or SNAP benefits, at least one year older than the expected age for their grade in high school, or wards of the state (i.e. under the care of the Child and Family Services Agency). By definition, Adult and Alt students are not eligible for at-risk funding.
- While adult and alternative program students don’t qualify for at-risk funding (as the funding allocation has at risk funds already “baked in”), a significant portion of the students in these programs would qualify as “at-risk” if enrolled in a K-12 school.
- The source of the data discussed is the enrollment audit in 2015-2016. The enrollment audit is a verified snapshot of time, October 5th of each school year, but does not capture the mobility of our students, for example students entering the school system mid-year.

Breakdown of Students Funded by At-Risk

- Review of eligibility, including that the majority of students are designated eligible for At-Risk funding through TANF/SNAP participation. Discussion of TANF/SNAP “eligibility” vs. participation, and clarification that funding for students is designated based on participation.
- Review of At-Risk distribution by grade level, with most grades between 48-55% At-Risk. Discussion of the high proportion of At-Risk designation in 9th grade based possibly on high incidence of “over-age” students.
- Review of At-Risk distribution by Ward of residence, including breakdowns of the At-Risk funding population, and “At-Risk” students in adult and alternative schools. Discussion of high rate of “at-risk” in adult/alternative schools in Ward 1.
- Review of At-Risk distribution by SPED funding level, ranging between 56 and 63%
- Review of At-Risk distribution by race, and discussion of high rate of Hispanic/Latino students in adult-alternative schools, with possible cause being Carlos Rosario and other adult schools serving ELL population. Discussion of potential underrepresentation of at-risk students in ELL and immigrant communities due to lack of engagement with systems that confer eligibility.
- Discussion of how many funding categories an individual student could be concurrently eligible for (e.g. SPED, ELL, and At-Risk)
- Discussion of PARCC outcomes for At-Risk students vs. overall population, and significant existing gaps

Discussion of Reporting on At-Risk

- Review of reporting on At-Risk including example of charter school reporting on use of At-Risk funding
- Discussion of At-Risk funding taking the place of previous summer school payment (implemented in FY15)

- Discussion of multiple ways schools choose to spend funds, including summer schools, whole-school programs, and specific support programming

Discussion of Research Questions to Pursue

- Investigation if all qualifying categories indicate the same level of “risk” based on student outcomes or if some eligibility categories are correlated with greater risk; comparison with other measures of risk such as “economic disadvantage” or “income level.”
- Multi-year investigation into how At-risk is spent, and how investment correlates to student outcomes (using PARCC or other data)
- Investigation as to full funding level in previous years compared to after At-Risk was instituted
- Investigation into retention of At-Risk students, or other outcome measures.

Discussion of Data and Policy

- Discussion of usefulness of a “community eligibility” standard for At-Risk designations at schools, e.g. designating an entire school “At-Risk” if a minimum percent of students qualify
- Discussion of parent engagement in use of At-Risk funds and suggestion that parents should give feedback about At-Risk funding spending choices. Suggestion that this should be true specifically in DCPS schools since the Fair Student Funding Law applies to them (and not to public charter schools); disagreement and discussion about whether DCPS could or should theoretically have different engagement obligation.
- Discussion of DCPS use of At-Risk funds, and suggestion that DCPS should be required to isolate At-Risk funds; disagreement, and discussion of transparency and of increased flexibility of budgeting at DCPS schools.
- Discussion of DCPS comprehensive staffing model and differences in inherent budget and spending flexibilities between sectors.
- Discussion of whether funding discussion should be primarily about where more funding would be helpful, or reallocation of current funding.
- Discussion of potential to re-examine true cost of educating At-Risk students, including review of Adequacy Study; suggestion to explore an extended year UPSFF weight; suggestion to investigate the Alternative school funding weight, and whether there is an increased cost beyond current funding to get students “back on track.” Discussion of whether more detailed breakdown of costs for specific subgroups or combinations of subgroups is possible or helpful, e.g. cost of High School at-risk.

Discussion of Future Meetings

- Discussion of the goal of the committee and if and how to focus conversations in future meetings
- Discussion of whether types of eligible expenditures are within the purview and interest of the committee.

- Suggestion and discussion of possible directions of conversation, including: investigating weights and if they are adequate for each level; investigation of school-related services funded by LEAs and the city, and identification of frictions; investigation of UPSFF categories and if they are appropriate.
- Discussion of whether facilities funding should be examined