



What You Need to Know:

- The process to set school budgets is different for DCPS and charter schools. The Chancellor sets the budget priorities for DCPS schools, while each charter school network leader determines how they want to spend their school funding.
- School budgets cover everything that a school would need throughout the year, including staff salaries and any programs or equipment used at the school.
- DCPS budgets are publicly available on their website, and public charter school budgets are available on the PCSB website.

School budgets are critically important because they determine the funding for everything that happens within an individual school. Different from school funding, which is the amount of money given to the entire education system, each school has a unique budget based on the needs of the students enrolled. School budgets could include:

- **Salaries:** teachers, administrators, and support staff
- **Resources:** literacy materials, technology, or any school supplies and equipment
- **Programming:** tutoring, after school programs, or social-emotional learning curriculum

Mayor Determines Education Budget



Chancellor or Charter ED/CEO Allocate Money to Their Schools



School Leaders (Principals) Inform School Budgets

How Do School Budgets Get Set?

School budgets are primarily determined by the **Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF)**. The formula includes extra weights for certain grade levels, English Language Learners, students with special needs, and students that are considered at-risk. To help schools provide supports to meet those students' needs, the base UPSFF is multiplied by the additional weighted amount, increasing the total dollar amount provided to schools. This source, combined with a smaller portion of the funding from federal and private sources, is what funds public schools as a whole. How this money gets distributed to individual schools depends on if the school is a DCPS school or public charter school and the priorities of the Local Education Agency (LEA) leaders.

Public Charter Schools: Each public charter school LEA has broad flexibility over the use of its funds. Leaders can direct funds to the priorities of their school model, with oversight from the DC Public Charter School Board (DCPCSB). For this reason, there is no uniform budget process for charter schools.

DCPS: The UPSFF calculation is not the exact amount that goes into an each DCPS school. The Chancellor is responsible for directing the total of DCPS funds to three categories:

- **Central Operations:** This covers management roles, including the Office of the Chancellor, the Office of Family and Public Engagement, and operational support.
- **School Support:** Support functions are provided at the school level but are managed by central office, including food service, data systems, curriculum development, attendance, and special education services.
- **Direct School Operations:** These funds go directly to schools and are managed by the principal, used for staff, programs, and resources in schools.



What is the Individual School Budget Process?

For DCPS Schools:

Each year, the Chancellor of DCPS sets guidelines for spending in schools in the **Budget Development Guide Report**. Alongside this report, the first school budget allocations are sent to school principals, usually in March.

Once principals receive the initial budget, they identify any position and resource needs based on the Budget Development Guide and the goals of their school. DCPS principals should work with their Local School Advisory Team (LSAT), made up of members of the school and one community member, to ensure the budget adequately supports their school. When central office approves a school's final budget proposal, the principal can then share the budget with the community.

For Public Charter Schools:

The CEO or Executive Director of the school develops a budget, which then needs to be approved by the school's Board of Directors. DC residents must make up at least fifty percent of the board, including two parent members. Final budgets and financial reports are available on the DC Public Charter School Board's website.

How Can We Ensure Budgets are Parent-Driven?

To advocate for increased funding for schools and to highlight particular issue areas that need support, parents can testify at the **DC Council Budget Hearings** that take place from February to April.

- **DCPS Parents:** Get involved with your **LSAT** to influence the how the principal at your child's school uses the funding.
- **Charter Parents:** Contact your **school's leadership, the Board of Directors, and Parent Representatives** to gain deeper insight on current use of funding and provide feedback.



Learn More:

- ❖ See this year's DCPS Budget Development Guide to learn about the priorities in the FY19 budget and your school's budget: <https://bit.ly/2wiFHav>
- ❖ For more information on Public Charter School Finances, go to DC PCSB's Financial Report Page: <https://bit.ly/2FQRlss>