

Important Terms

Demographics of Student Population. Delaware's public schools serve approximately 140,000 students. They are 43% white, 30% African American, 18% Hispanic or Latino and 9% other. Of these children 32% come from low income families, 10% are English learners and 16% have identified disabilities requiring special education. About a third of the annual state budget supports public education.

Education Funding. There are two major education funding formulas:

Foundation Formula is used by 33 states. It uses weighted formulae based on individual student needs to determine a specific dollar amount per student. High needs children such as English learners, those living in low-income families, and those with disabilities receive more funding. Different states use different weights so actual funding varies by state. The funding follows the student.

Resource Allocation is used by 8 states including Delaware. It provides schools with resources, primarily teachers, not money. Most of the money (70%) follows the teachers.

Unit System. Delaware determines the state resources a school or district receives based on unit counts. It counts each child who is in school on September 30th. Unit counts translate into resources, primarily teachers. The unit funding system treats all students as if they are the same except for those identified as needing special education. Delaware does not provide additional sustainable funds for English learners or low-income students.

Per Pupil Spending is the average total amount of money that school districts have available to spend on their student population. Districts vary in the amount of money they have available to spend. Most of a district's money comes from the state (about 63%, \$10,000), with local property taxes making up about 32% (\$5,000). The federal government contributes about 5% or \$800. Wealthier school districts have more money to spend per pupil:

Cape Henlopen	\$20,326 per pupil	Milford	\$13,494 per pupil
DE average	\$15,153 per pupil	Delmar	\$11,058 per pupil

Property assessments are the source of the local portion of the money the school districts receive. The current assessments are old: Kent County: 1987, New Castle County: 1983, Sussex County: 1974.

Equalization Fund Chapter 555 is a 1972 act designed to provide supplementary funds to compensate for disparities in property assessment between school districts.

FY20 Opportunity Funding. This is a three-year \$60 million initiative to provide an additional \$500 per English learner and \$300 per low-income student, about 2 to 3% more per student for all school districts. \$15 million has been added to this fund for mental health and reading support.