

Education Law §3614 School Funding Allocation Report
Part F - Narrative Description

- 1. Describe the local methodology/approach used to allocate funds to each school in the district. If schools are allocated funds—either in part or in full—through a formula, outline the nature/mechanics of the formula and the elements impacting each school's allocation.**

The Syracuse City School District (SCSD) allocates resources (financial, staff support, materials, etc.) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of support for schools based on the needs of the school community. The District has undertaken a significant amount of work to link budget priorities and investments with strategic goals, and to more explicitly link budgetary spending with improving student achievement, teacher practices, and student behavior.

During the budget development process, the District utilizes a variety of tools to check for equitable resource allocation across school sites. These tools include:

- Reports to verify that staff support is aligned to program and student needs across schools;
- Comprehensive, all-funds resource allocation reporting by school and student need; and
- Survey results and/or budget requests from department heads and school building leaders that align with the District's strategic plan and needs of the school community.

The budget department conducts needs assessment meetings and prepares various reports that seek to continuously improve the alignment of budgetary resources to need. These reports include:

- Final enrollment projection document
- Department/school needs assessment meetings held by budget team with budget owners and documented via meeting notes and budget line item detail reports
- Budget request documents prepared by budget team and budget owners for each functional area
- Staffing analysis reports by school type and grade level. Staffing categories reviewed during the resource allocation process include: teachers, teaching assistants, academic intervention support teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, security personnel, clerical support, health services, custodial staff, and student support staff such as psychologists, social workers, school counselors, and family support services staff.
- Resource allocations by student need across different types of schools to show patterns and the possible impact of such allocations
- Weighted student funding allocations for instructional supplies.

In addition to the considerations above, the District must also comply with requirements on how some state funding is spent in the 2018-19 year. Included in this budget are allocations to meet the following:

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| • \$ 62,483,114 | Maintenance of Effort for Special Education |
| • \$ 13,175,072 | Community Schools Set-Aside |
| • \$ 12,688,952 | Contracts For Excellence (C4E) |

The level of funding received by the District through Special Aid fund for early childhood programs does not cover the entire amount expensed for those programs in total. As a result, the District anticipates

providing \$3,132,590 of Pre-K local share funding. This equates to 20% of overall Pre-K spend, excluding payments to community based sites.

When planning budget allocations related to the Special Aid fund, grant managers must also consider additional criteria based on the special grant guidelines as they apply to each funding stream or award. These include the following factors:

- School Status
- Program Specific Grant Awards
- School Specific Grant Awards
- Demographics of the Student Population by School.

2. If applicable, is there anything unique about certain schools which explain why per pupil spending at these locations may be significantly higher/lower than the district average?

For various reasons, per pupil funding for several of the schools in the District fall outside the “average” range for that metric. Below please see explanations of the factors contributing to those variances.

Elementary Schools:

When comparing elementary schools, four have higher spending per pupil as noted below:

Dr. King Elementary School: Dr. King is a Community School also funded by several federal funding sources including Title and IDEA grants based on the schools demographics. As a result the spending per pupil at Dr. King is among the highest of all elementary schools.

Meachem Elementary School: This school is one of our smaller elementary schools with a lower student to staff ratio. Meachem receives significant grant funds including Extended Day School Violence Prevention, Title funding and IDEA grant funds. The teaching staff at Meachem is more senior and stable adding to a higher cost when compared to other elementary schools. Onondaga Community College provides in-kind leadership training to the students and staff at Meachem which is not reflected in the budget as no fee is charged for this service.

Syracuse Latin: As part of the plan to address achievement gaps in several of the District’s persistently struggling schools, a phase out/phase in of Hughes Elementary and Syracuse Latin was begun in the 2014-15 school year. Syracuse Latin is a sister school to Boston Latin providing an elementary school of choice in the District with a smaller class size ratio of 23 or fewer as compared to our District standard for grades K-2 of 26 and grades 3+ of 28.

Additionally, the phase-in included expenses for the setup of new classrooms, instructional supplies for enrichment activities and additional training of staff in the building. While the phase out of Hughes Elementary was complete at the end of the 2017-18 school year, Syracuse Latin will continue to be phased in with the addition of grades 6 through 8 to be complete in the 2021-22 school year.

Delaware Academy & Delaware Primary : Similarly, Delaware Academy and Delaware Primary, are also schools following a phase-out/phase-in plan. This is the final year of that process with the full phase out of Delaware Academy in 2018-19. Due to the co-located nature of both of these schools, some resources

based on enrollment and student need are evaluated on a campus-wide basis and apportioned as such in the budget. This would include items such as salaries for special education and special area teachers and items excluded from the by school reporting related to facilities and maintenance of the building.

Delaware Academy (in final year of phase-out) is reporting with a higher than average per pupil spending based on the concentration of grant funding allocated to this school as the demographics of this small number of students drives Title funding. In 2019-20 this anomaly will not continue as the entire school campus will be Delaware Primary. Likewise, in 2018-19 Delaware Primary (in final year of phase-in) is reporting lower than average per pupil spending because the student demographics are not driving significant federal funding. The students attending school at the Delaware campus receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians and Child Welfare Liaisons. The District operates a School Based Health Center on campus that is staffed by community professionals providing in-kind medical services to students.

K-8 Schools:

The District operates five K-8 schools districtwide.

Hurlbut W. Smith (HW Smith): The average spend per pupil at Hurlbut W. Smith is higher than the other K-8 schools which is directly correlated to HW Smith operating as an Extended Learning Time School and qualifying for additional funds including My Brother's Keeper, IDEA and Title.

Roberts K-8 School: Conversely, Roberts K-8 spending per pupil is less than average primarily due to less Title funding based on student FRPL rates and a relatively less experienced teaching staff as compared to the other K-8 schools. Roberts students also receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians and Child Welfare Liaisons. Onondaga Community College provides in-kind leadership training to the students and staff at Roberts which is not reflected in the budget as no fee is charged for this service.

Huntington K-8 School: Similarly, per pupil spending at Huntington is less than average mainly due to the highest enrollment of all K-8 schools and minimal Title funds based on the student demographics. Huntington students also receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians and Child Welfare Liaisons.

Middle Schools:

The Syracuse City School District operates six middle schools serving grades 6, 7 and 8. We operate five neighborhood middle schools reflective of their communities and one Expeditionary Learning Middle School of choice.

Clary Middle School: Clary Middle School is the smallest neighborhood middle school and has the highest concentration of students with disabilities and this school is served by a more senior teaching staff resulting in the highest per pupil spend among the six middle schools.

Grant Middle School: Grant is the largest middle school with enrollment 38% more than the next largest middle school driving a lower cost per pupil. Additionally Grant Middle School was previously funded by Persistently Struggling Schools Grant (PSSG) and Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) and the loss of these federal dollars in 2018-19 contributes a lower per pupil spend. PSSG and SIG funds provided upgrades in the furniture, classroom supplies, curricular materials, personalized blended learning materials and teacher professional development in recent past years creating the opportunity for Grant Middle school to operate efficiently while providing students with an updated learning environment where students can thrive.

Grant Middle School students also receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians, Restorative Coaches and Child Welfare Liaisons. The District operates a School Based Health Center at Grant Middle School that is staffed by community professionals providing in-kind medical services to students.

Westside Academy (WSA): the primary factor resulting in a lower than average spend per pupil at WSA is a newer staff as compared to the other middle schools. Westside Academy is an Extended Day School and participates in Community Schools, My Brother's Keeper and Title funds. WSA was previously an elementary school, then a K-8 school and more recently restructured to serve grades 6, 7, and 8 in one of the more impoverished neighborhoods in Syracuse.

Not included in this reporting is a \$3.3 million dollar investment in capital improvements funded by the Community Schools Grant (see question 3 below for more details). Once the renovations in the building are complete more programs for families, community members and students will be operational. WSA is also in the planning phase for more extensive renovations in JSCB Phase II which will allow for expanded program offerings.

WSA students also receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians, Restorative Coaches and Child Welfare Liaisons. The District operates a School Based Health Center at Westside Academy that is staffed by community professionals providing in-kind medical services to students.

High Schools:

The Syracuse City School District operates five high schools. We began transitioning to a high school choice model in 2007-08 with the opening of a technical high school – ITC with 9th grade only and a 4-year phase-in plan adding grades 10, 11, and 12.

Similarly, in 2014-15 Fowler High School began a 4-year phase-out process transitioning the campus to a Career & Technical Education (CTE) high school known as Public Service Leadership Academy (PSLA) at Fowler. In June 2018 we graduated the first cohort of students from PSLA. PSLA at Fowler is a choice high school offering twelve specialty CTE pathways and two PTech offerings. Both ITC and PSLA underwent significant renovations during the transition of these campuses to Career & Technical Education schools. The renovations included classrooms and space for cutting edge technology and

career simulation to thrive allowing significant growth in pathways for high school choice options. We have increased the number of CTE Pathways from 4 to 26 in recent years.

As a result of these two high school transitions, some students who previously would have attended Fowler enrolled in the remaining three more traditional high schools - which at the time had limited CTE offerings. As a result more students are attending Henninger, Nottingham and Corcoran schools in 2018-19 than in years past. We believe this shift in enrollment led to a change in our 2018-19 Title I allocations based on Free & Reduced Price Lunch data to now include all five high schools as compared to only two in recent years. Over time we expect these enrollment fluctuations to level out at all five high schools. In addition, over the last two years we have infused more CTE and PTech offerings at Henninger, Nottingham and Corcoran.

With higher enrollment those fixed cost items such as school administration and building maintenance result in a lower spend per pupil at Henninger, Nottingham and Corcoran. With lower enrollments at ITC and PSLA at Fowler, the amount spent per pupil is incrementally higher than that at Henninger, Nottingham and Corcoran.

The average high school spend per pupil is \$17,508. Henninger and Nottingham are below this average at \$15,784 and \$16,419 respectively. Despite lower FRPL, ELL and SWD rates than its counterparts, ITC is above the average spend at \$19,947 per pupil in part due to lower enrollment and the higher cost of four specialty CTE pathways and grant funding associated with Smart Scholars and two P-Tech offerings.

In the coming years we plan to renovate Henninger, Nottingham and Corcoran high schools through our Joint Schools Construction Board (JSCB) Phase II providing more space for CTE specialty pathways for students across the District. This should result in more equitable spending per pupil among the five high schools and an alignment of enrollment among each high school aligned to pathways.

Summary:

The funds spent Districtwide and by school and per pupil tell only part of the story of the supports and programs offered to the students of the Syracuse City School District. In many ways our District operates as a Community District partnering with City, County, local not-for-profits and businesses to provide services to the families and students we serve. When the District joined the Say Yes to Education program the entire community joined in to what is now called the School Based Collaborative.

Onondaga County provided over \$14.5 million of supports in our school buildings in 2017-18 and has committed to continue this level of support in 2018-19. None of this funding or spending is included in the School District budget, however, the investment is provided directly to our students in their respective school buildings.

The County receives state and local funding as local share that leverages Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) federal funds to provide over 160 full-time support employees in all Syracuse City School District school locations. Services provided by the County include:

- Family Support for Student Success (to address barriers to learning, provision for intervention as needed and activities to improve skill development)
- Promise Zone (which matches students emotional / behavioral needs with effective interventions)
- Student Assistance Counselors (in high schools for ‘first line’ mental health and substance abuse counseling)
- Mental Health Clinics in 28 schools (providing on-site mental health clinics staffed full-time making connections to various providers such as Arise, Liberty Resources, Upstate and St. Joseph’s Hospitals, and Syracuse Community Health Center allowing for on-going care of students minimizing missed instructional time)

Additionally, Onondaga County provides direct funding for various other programs including School Liaisons, Seeds of Peace, Building Men, Primary Project and Peacemaking Project for students.

3. If applicable, describe any items which the district feels are anomalous in nature and require additional description beyond the Excel entry.

Debt Service: The amounts reported in Part A Section II-A represents the amount of Debt Service recorded specifically in the Debt Service Fund for the District. Part A II-B excludes amounts recorded on the general fund for debt service payments in addition to Debt Service Fund amounts.

Community Schools Grant Capital Funding: The District was the recipient of Community Schools grant funds in 2017-18 that were extended through 2018-19. A component of that funding was an apportionment for capital projects use. These funds will be used for renovations at Westside Academy at Blodgett. For SCSD this represents significant capital expenditures for general construction to be reported in the Special Aid Fund, not the Capital Projects Fund. Based on guidance received from NYS DOB, the capital projects portion of this grant funding has been excluded from this reporting.

Calculated Benefits: There is an anomaly when using the blended benefits rate for calculations in the report versus the actual benefits rates in our General Fund and Special Aid Fund budgets.

The calculated benefits rate in Part A Section IV is lower than the District’s total projected General Fund benefits rate and higher than our total projected Special Aid fund Rate.

Part A Section II-A is reported with actual projected/budgeted benefits amounts. We are using the Section IV rate for all benefits calculated and reported in Part C and all other section of Part A.

While the use of the blended rate allows for us to report the total \$ amount of benefits correctly, it is skewing the split between State/Local and Federal funding. The impact on this report is only a potential shift of funding source by 0.1% of the District’s total reported budget or up to 0.2% of the spending by school reported.

The total for funding sources reported on Part A Line 83 is correct, however it does not match the split on Part C. The Part A amount is derived using projected actual total amounts (Section II-A) less calculated benefits in the other sections, while Part C is strictly using the calculated rate.

	Spending	State/Local	Federal
Part A – Line 83	\$241,889,075	\$224,209,950	\$17,679,125
Part C	\$241,889,074	\$223,523,591	\$18,365,483

Data Validation Error: Part C #3 shows as a Fail in the validation tab due to rounding discrepancies of less than \$1. The amounts displayed in the validation tab show rounded to the nearest dollar and all display as the same amount. This same level of rounding error can be seen when comparing Part A Line 83 spending to Part C spending in columns I, Q and T.