

# Education Funding Backgrounder:



## Delaware's Education Funding System Is Outdated, Inefficient, And Inequitable

80 YEARS OLD

Delaware has one of the **oldest funding systems in the country** and is one of the last to undergo updates

2-3 PERCENT

Delaware provides an additional **2-3% (\$300 - \$500) in funding per English learner and low-income student**. Research suggests systems should provide 100% to 200% more

1/8 STATES

Delaware is **one of only eight states** that funds schools based on adult needs, rather than student needs

\$1.4B SPENT ANNUALLY

We spend more per-pupil than the national average, but **spend less per-pupil (and have worse outcomes) than our neighboring states**

10 PERCENT

**Less than ten percent** of state funding provided to districts is truly flexible since units are mostly prescriptive

Michael is an English Learner student and Michelle is a low-income student.



Both attend Delaware schools and receive very little additional funding (\$300-\$500, or 2-3% more) to help educate them.

If Delaware funded 40-50% more for student needs like **New Jersey**, Michael and Michelle would each receive an additional \$4,000 - \$5,000.



If Delaware funded 60% more for student needs like **Pennsylvania**, Michael and Michelle would each receive an additional \$6,000.

If Delaware funded 99% more for student needs like **Maryland**, Michael and Michelle would each receive an additional \$9,000.



## No More Delaware Delay

- 30+ (and growing) organizations advocating together for change
- Increased interest from legislators, and some additional funding provided for student needs
- Senate Bill 172 (2018) will increase transparency of school-level funding data, if implemented well



- Act now before the pending lawsuit decides for us
- Adding more money without addressing the underlying system is not enough
- High-need student populations grow every year, overall and as a percentage of student enrollment
- Many previous study and working groups in Delaware highlight change is needed

# Principles For An Updated Student-Centered Funding System



Our Principles	Where We Want To Go
Money follows students	Each student receives the same guaranteed funding level as students with similar characteristics, regardless of what public school they attend.
Responsive to student needs	Each English learner, low income, and special education student receives additional, weighted funds.
Flexibility	Local leaders closest to the students are empowered to make decisions about resource use, rather than the state dictate how schools spend.
Transparency	Investments are easily understood by all stakeholders. Consistent reporting requirements show how money is used.
Predictability	Funding is sustainable and predictable. Districts and charters are supported with professional development, a gradual phase-in with planning time, and no one loses during the transition.

## Our Goals and Vision

### Increase Transparency and Engagement

- Grow the coalition
- Build public understanding of how the system works and how money is allocated
- Advocate for school-level funding data that is comparable across the state so that we can understand our state's investments in education

### Update Education Funding System

- Address how much funding is provided for students with greater needs, AND how well all funds are allocated, ensuring money follows students and meets their individual needs
- Learn lessons from other states and undergo the recommended process of **gradually transitioning** to a system where funding follows students and high-needs students get what they deserve

### Better Serve Delaware's Students

- Create the conditions that will allow for increased student learning
- **Great leaders** are attracted to flexible, adequate resources—and **great teachers** stay where leadership is strong. Flexible, student-based resources can be targeted, and spent innovatively to **address the holistic needs of diverse learners**. A simpler, transparent system allows taxpayer and **parent engagement**

## Act Now

Visit our [website and subscribe \(bit.ly/EdEquityDE\)](https://bit.ly/EdEquityDE) to the Education Equity Delaware email newsletter for more information and opportunities to get involved.

## About Education Equity Delaware

A group of organizations committed to **excellent** and **equitable** education **opportunities** for all Delaware students—who believe the underpinning of an equitable education is the funding system.