

# Delaware Public Education Funding Commission (PEFC)

## Communications Guide for Commission Members and Key Stakeholders

### What is the PEFC?

The Public Education Funding Commission (PEFC) is a statewide commission created by the Delaware General Assembly to *comprehensively review how Delaware funds public education and recommend funding improvements*. It was established by Senate Concurrent Resolution #201 and re-established by House Concurrent Resolution No. 2 of the 153rd General Assembly and began its work in September 2024. The Commission will make recommendations for changes to the current funding system to the DE General Assembly during the 2026 legislative session.

PEFC members include legislators, education leaders, school administrators, educators, support professionals, financial officers, community representatives, and parent and advocacy groups — reflecting a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

### Why is PEFC doing this work?

Delaware's current school funding formula dates back decades and doesn't align well with today's student needs or the state's equity goals. In response to a lawsuit filed by the NAACP, ACLU and other education advocates and settled in October 2020, as well as subsequent analysis of the funding system by the American Institutes of Research (AIR) ([AIR report](#), December 2023), the commission was formed to make recommendations regarding an updated funding system that:

- Better accounts for student needs
- Promotes fairness and transparency in how money is allocated across school districts.

### What is PEFC recommending to the General Assembly in the 2026 Legislative session?

The PEFC is currently exploring and refining a new hybrid funding model comprised of three components

- **Tier 1 – Base Funding:** Staffing required to open a school/LEA. Weighted to maintain student/teacher ratios based on grade level and special education status. Includes teachers, instructional support positions, principals, administrative/clerical support positions.
- **Tier 2 – Opportunity Funding Student-Driven Funding:** Per pupil flexible weighted allocation based on number of low income and MLL students. (Note: other needs, such as homeless, foster, gifted, concentration of poverty, etc. will be addressed in subsequent versions)
- **Tier 3 – Operational Funding - Flexible & Strategic Support Funding:** Per pupil flexible allocation of funds to support school operations and allow for LEA flexibility

This hybrid model:

- Blends elements of the current unit-based system in which student characteristics (grade level and special education) generated units to fund classroom teacher positions and other school support positions with a new student-based weighted approach, giving additional resources to students with higher needs, including low-income and multilingual learners and students receiving special education services.
- Seeks to provide more flexibility for how districts use funds while still ensuring core staffing and operational needs are met.

- Includes a multi-year phased implementation plan, including a hold-harmless provision which would ensure no district or charter would lose funding in year 1 of implementation.

Under this model, weights for student groups such as low-income learners, multilingual learners, and students receiving special education services would be significantly higher than under the current formula, though the exact funding figures and total state investment are still being discussed.

## How is the public involved?

Public engagement has been a core part of PEFC's work. The Commission:

- **Hosts public forums and listening sessions** across the state where educators, families, and community members can hear about proposals and share feedback.
- Posts **meeting agendas, presentations, audio recordings, and materials** on the Delaware Department of Education website to allow anyone to follow the process.
- Includes **public comment time at every PEFC meeting**, ensuring constituents can speak directly to commissioners.
- Participates in public comment sessions during General Assembly PEFC hearings

Virtual and in person community meetings were held in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties in November and December 2025 and January 2026 to brief the public on the proposed hybrid funding model and obtain feedback to help refine the model recommendations.

## Where are we in the process?

The Commission has been meeting monthly since 2024 and continues to meet monthly. Early proposals and guiding principles have been shared publicly, and more detailed recommendations are expected to be finalized in Spring 2026.

PEFC will translate those recommendations into legislative proposals that will be considered by members of the DE General Assembly during the 2026 legislative session. Changes could take effect as early as the 2027–28 school year, depending on the outcome of the legislative session and implementation planning. The current goal is to implement version 1.0 of the new hybrid funding model in August 2027.

## Where will the hold harmless funding come from?

The funding required to implement the formula will be needed in the 2027-2028 school year which falls in fiscal year 2028. Delaware leaders and the General Assembly will begin deliberations on the FY2028 budget in January 2027. Decisions will be based on state revenues and potential expenditure cuts to support funding the new hybrid model.

## What should I do to stay engaged?

Attend the monthly PEFC virtual meetings and provide comments during the public comment period. Watch the General Assembly hearing calendar and plan to attend the upcoming House and Senate hearings where the new funding reform legislation will be debated. You will again have an opportunity to provide public comment. Once the legislation is signed into law, engage with your school district leaders and attend school board meetings to learn how the new formula will be implemented in your district or charter school. Your voice matters.