

# EQUITY IN EDUCATION SERIES: WHAT WE LEARNED

**Since March 2023, we held three sessions. You asked and experts answered:**

- How are schools funded in Delaware?
- How is our system different from what we see in other states?
- What does research say about increased investments?

## Education Funding Impact

We learned that funding—when targeted at student needs and invested in effective ways—can have a big impact on student performance and long-term outcomes.

## Opportunity Funds

The lawsuit settlement led to additional funds, known as Opportunity Funding, for low-income students, students with disabilities, and students who are multilingual learners.



**Delaware's Opportunity Funding allocates \$616 per student as of 2022, which is roughly 3-9% on top of the average spending. Most other states allocate a weight of between 25-50% on top of base funding for the same student groups. Some states, like Maryland, allocate as much as 100% more.**

*Note: Delaware does not fund per student, so the average spending per student in 2022 is an estimate. This includes federal, state, and local funding.*

“ We have an opportunity to do good by our kids and get resources in an equitable manner where they belong. Good things are happening: Opportunity Funding helps get resources to students that are multilingual learners and those who come from low-income families. It is helpful, but not enough. Our system is based on student enrollment, not need, and that needs to change. My hope is that a new system will get the resources equitably where they're needed most and provide much needed flexibility to our schools and districts so they can use resources to meet the needs of our students.

*~ Mark Holodick, Secretary of Education, from [Equity in Education: Understanding School Funding, Basics and Beyond](#), March 2023*

## Delaware's Current Resource-based Funding Formula

1

At the beginning of each school year districts conduct a student count based on attendance, referred to as the September 30th Count.

2

Delaware's Department of Education verifies and then translates it to "units" using the current state unit formula.

3

Delaware allocates funds to schools and districts based on these units.

4

Funds must be used for expenses that are outlined in the budget.

*Delaware Department of Education, 2023*

## Conditions for Change in State Funding Systems

Other states have successfully moved to a student-based system. We heard that these five conditions make change successful (all of which are present in Delaware):

1. Coalition
2. Champions
3. Research
4. Economics
5. Lawsuits

## National Landscape



Only Delaware and 6 other states use a resource allocation-based funding system. Most states use a system that allocates funding based on students and their needs.

## Most states allocate more funding per low-income and multilingual learner student than Delaware.

Delaware spends **Most states spend**

\$600...  
more per student

# \$1,000-\$1,500 more

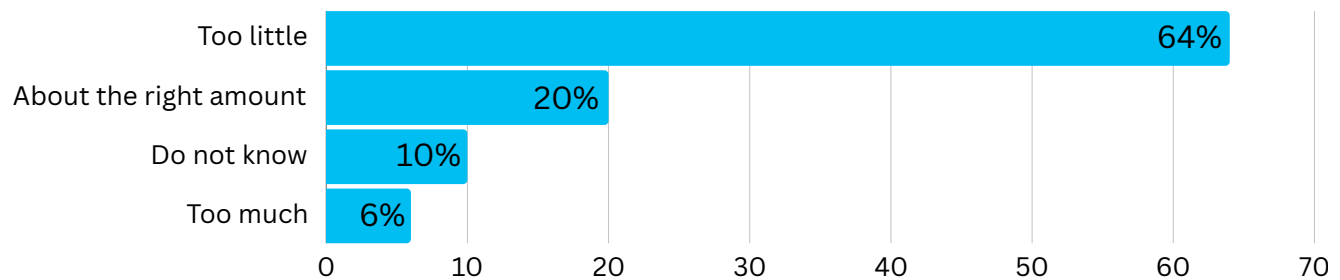
[Learning Policy Institute](#)

“ Each student has a different set of needs....we have their best interests in mind, and we are prioritizing equitable education in Delaware. Equitable funding will not only impact the children of Delaware but will greatly benefit us, the educators, who give our very best to these students every day: it is what they deserve. Access to these resources will make a difference...allow us to recruit and retain the best educators and compensate them well.

~Ashley Lockwood, 2023 Delaware State Teacher of the Year, [Equity in Education: Money Matters, 2023](#)

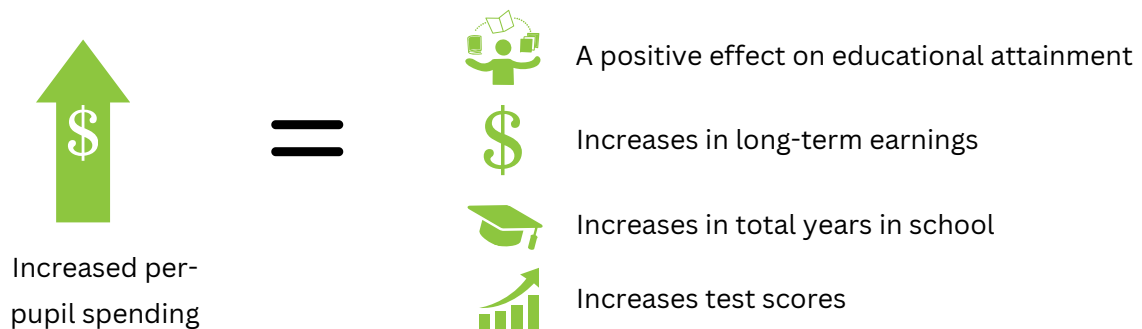
## MONEY MATTERS

### Delawareans do not think that the state spends enough on education



[Franklin & Marshall College, Center for Opinion Research, 2023](#)

### Policy Impacts Related to Increased Spending



[Public Policy Institute of California, 2023](#)

### Experts affirmed: "How money is spent makes a difference."

Some of the most impactful investments include prepared and experienced teachers and social-emotional supports for students.

[Public Policy Institute of California, 2023](#)

### What does Delaware still want to know?

1. What are the implications for our multilingual learners, low-income students, and students with disabilities?
2. How can we build a more equitable system?
3. What states can we look to as examples?

For a full collection of resources and livestream recordings, visit [visioncoalitionde.org/resources](https://visioncoalitionde.org/resources)