

AIR REPORT KEY TAKEAWAYS: TARGETED FUNDING



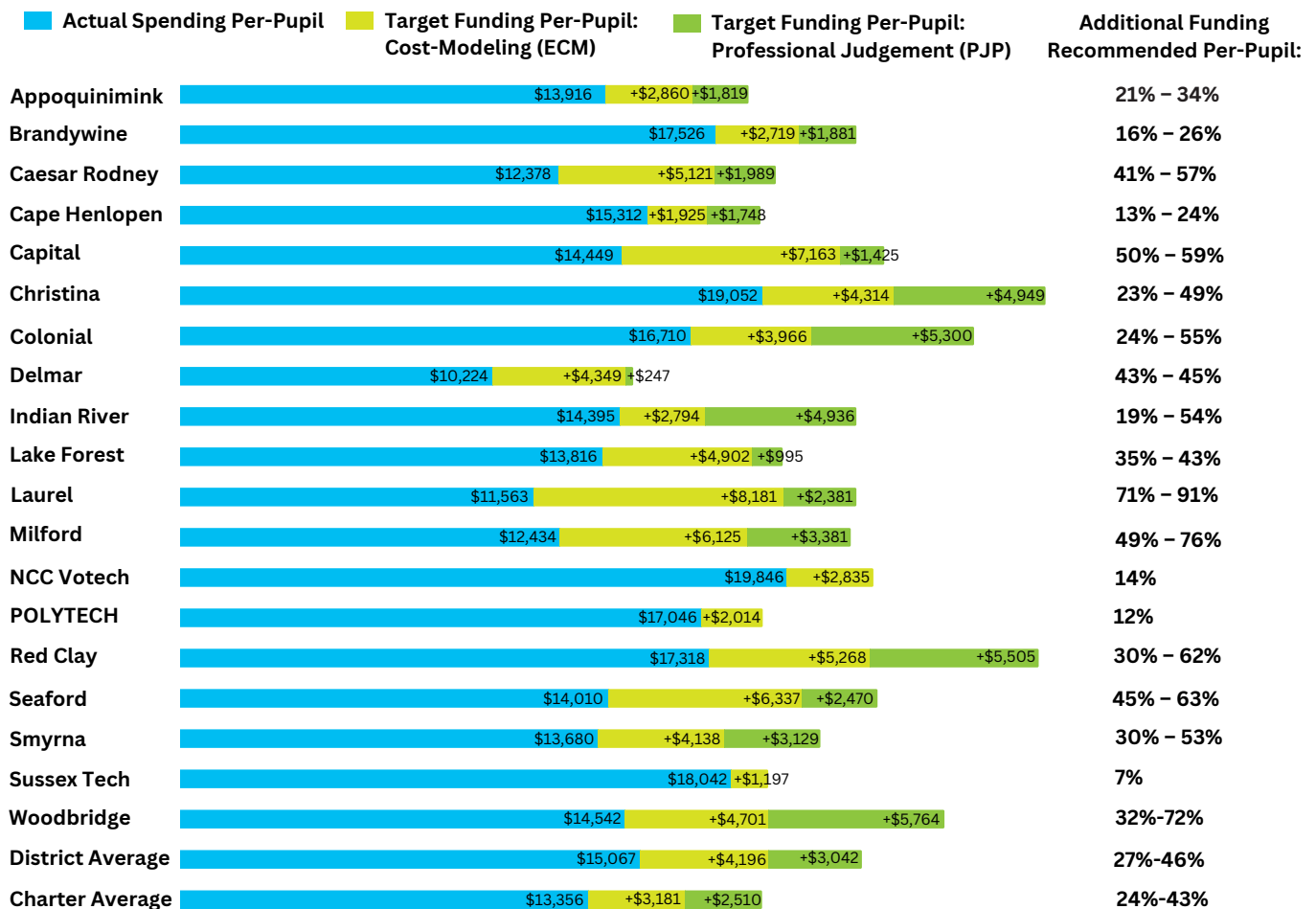
Preparing our students for a lifetime of success

In December 2023, American Institutes for Research (AIR) released the [Assessment of Delaware Public School Funding](#). This independent assessment is the final component of the [Delaware Education Funding Lawsuit](#) settlement. Here are just a few key takeaways from the report related to spending on student need.

How much should Delaware districts spend per student?

The AIR report lays out per-pupil spending rates in each Delaware district, along with a target funding figure—based on two different models. The chart below shows the current per-pupil spending by each Delaware school district and charter school average, along with a range of target per-pupil spending. It also shows the funding gap between current spending and target spending as both a dollar amount and a percentage increase.

By following either of the target per-pupil funding models (ECM or PJP), Delaware would find itself spending a comparable amount to our regional peers, whose students perform better on math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment, known as the Nation’s Report Card. (Source: [AIR Assessment of Delaware Public School Funding_p.187](#))



Note: this includes the range between both models proposed by AIR, Education Cost Modeling and Professional Judgement. Vo-tech weights were not included in PJP model so only ECM projection is included here. The weights for different student groups vary between the two models, so a range is presented here. For more information on methodologies see pages five through seven of the [Assessment of Delaware Public School Funding](#), PJP value represents total amount recommended by AIR beyond ECM.

*This state average does not include revenues from federal sources, capital or debt service revenues.

What additional resources would be available in schools if the funding were there? What would the additional resources mean for students, educators, and families?


If Delaware invested more in public education, districts and charter schools would have resources to spend more flexibly on evidence-based programs and resources.


Programming for students


As Delawareans learned during the Vision Coalition “Money Matters” event, research concludes that increased spending on public education improves student achievement in the short- and long-term. When given additional resources in the form of Opportunity Funding, this is how Delaware districts and charters used them—with most of the resources focused on additional staffing, targeted student programming, and materials—uses that are aligned with research-based evidence.


Throughout the AIR report, experts (including professional judgment panels comprised of Delaware educators) suggested the following uses for additional funds.


Delaware Department of Education. (2024). Opportunity Funding, <https://education.delaware.gov/community/funding-contracts/federal-and-state-programs/opportunity-funding/>.


 Specialized programs, services, or interventions to support students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and economically disadvantaged students


 Smaller classes


 Early childhood programs, including universal pre-K


 Specialized courses


 Extracurricular activities


 Summer programming


 Arts programming

 Athletics


 Transportation for field trips


 Career education beginning in middle school


 Career exploration, co-ops, and internships and related transportation, and/or college or military preparation


 SAT prep


Educator support


 Increased professional learning for educators


 More psychologists, counselors, and social workers


 Transition coaches for middle and high school students

 Instructional aides


 Keep up with special education costs, including special education coordinators


 Technology staff to support consistent instruction and assistive technology for special education students


 Multilingual language specialists and coaches


 Bilingual support staff and family liaisons

Supporting students and families

 Basic needs: school food and clothing pantries, backpack programs for meals beyond the regular school day, and nutritionists to support such programs

 School-based family liaisons

 Wellness centers


 Wi-fi hot spots

If Delaware invested as AIR recommended (27%–46% more), the state could expect to see outcomes including increases over state averages in:


 **Higher student assessment scores**

Increases in Smarter Balanced proficiency rates

English Language Arts


16.5% 

Math

17.6% 


Increases in SAT proficiency rates


English Language Arts

11.6% 


Math


5.9% 

 **Lower absence rates**

0.9% 

 **Lower suspension rates**


3% 

 **Higher teacher retention rates**

7.2% 

 **Higher graduation rates and lower dropout rates**

Graduation rate

8% 

Dropout rate

0.7% 

[See the full Assessment of Delaware Public School Funding](https://visioncoalitionde.org/resources)
[Visit <https://visioncoalitionde.org/resources> to learn more](https://visioncoalitionde.org/resources)