

# What Delawareans Want from a New School Funding System



Delaware is at a turning point in how it funds public education. After decades of incremental changes, state leaders are working to implement a new school funding system designed to be more equitable, transparent, and responsive to student needs. Throughout 2024-2026, students, families, educators, community leaders, and national experts weighed in—sharing not only technical considerations, but clear priorities for how funding should work in practice.

## What Delawareans Are Asking For

### A funding system that:

- Centers students
- Directs resources where needs are greatest
- Is transparent and understandable
- Can evolve over time

### ...and is not one-and-done, with:

- Continuous review
- Ability to refine
- Clear focus on student outcomes

“This is the furthest we’ve ever gone to improve education funding in Delaware.”

— Taylor Hawk, DSEA

## Statewide Engagement, By the Numbers

### 15 meetings

of the Public Education Funding Commission (PEFC)

### 6 public

engagement meetings, in person and online

### 6 Vision Coalition

“Equity in Education” meetings

### 2 legislative

hearings

# Themes



## 1 *Equity At the Center*

Funding that targets students' needs should be a primary goal, with a focus on low-income, multilingual learner students

## 2 *Accountability & Transparency Build Trust*

Ensuring funding reaches students and districts and charters are accountable and transparently reporting on its use

## 3 *Ongoing Review and Improvement*

Annual review to ensure the system is meeting student needs, with community engagement

- Clear, accessible financial reporting
- Consistent expectations across districts and charters
- Ongoing review—not a one-time check
- Community engagement as part of accountability

## 4 *Targeted Investments*

Concentrated poverty and higher language access needs require greater levels of investment

Community leaders and experts alike underscored the importance of investing in students living in poverty.

**“If you have one dollar to invest, the greatest return comes from supporting low-income students.”**

—Qubilah Huddleston, EdTrust



## *Research Shows*

Research affirms: flat funding does not reflect the cost of educating students living in poverty. Directing more resources where needs are greatest leads to stronger outcomes, including:

- Higher test scores and graduation rates
- Increased adult earnings
- Reduced poverty and incarceration
- Strong long-term return on public investment

Delawareans also shared broad agreement: **Multilingual learners** (MLL) students have different **levels of need**, depending on many factors including English language mastery.

When it came to supporting MLLs with a new funding system, community members showed strong interest in:

- Tiered funding
- Differentiation for newcomers, secondary MLLs, and Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)

**“Under-resourced buildings and limited materials shape students' futures.”**

—Delaware high school student