



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Townsend Building
401 Federal Street Suite 2
Dover, Delaware 19901-3639
<http://education.delaware.gov>

Mark A. Holodick, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education
(302) 735-4000
(302) 739-4654 - fax

- Good afternoon Director Cade and OMB team and thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the Fiscal Year 2024 public education Operating and Capital budget requests. I would like to introduce a few members of my team that are with me today: Kim Klein, Associate Secretary of Operations Support and Jennifer Carlson, Finance Director and Emily Cunningham, Chief of Staff.
- I would like to preface my overview of the budget requests with a thank you to the Administration and General Assembly for the continued financial support and unwavering commitment to public education in Delaware.
- As you know, the Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Request for public education is just over \$2 billion.
- Of that request, funding for door openers totals \$149.8 million, and includes:
 - The reallocation of \$36 million from the Office of Management and Budget for the Fiscal Year 2023 personnel contingency;
 - \$10.8 million for annual public education salary steps and paraprofessional compensation enhancements;
 - \$37.5 million to address unit and enrollment growth, both in the current year and for the coming school year;
 - \$30 million for additional mental health supports and services as provided for in House Bills 100 and 300 of the 151st General Assembly;
 - \$7.9 million for public school transportation formula adjustments and continued enhancements;
 - \$15 million in Opportunity Funding to provide additional supports to low income and English learner students;
 - \$6.1 million in Early Childhood Assistance funding to provide additional state-funded seats for early childhood students;
 - \$5.7 million in Inspire and SEED scholarship funding as requested by Delaware State University, Delaware Technical and Community College and the University of Delaware; and,
 - Just over \$700 thousand to address several operational issues within the public education budget, such as transitioning bus driver CDL testing from the Division of Motor Vehicles to the Department of Education and increasing prison education staffing to address special education services for eligible students.

- In addition to the required door opener funding, the Operating Budget request includes \$18.3 million for additional public education supports. Those requests include:
 - \$10 million in School Safety and Security, for ongoing funding as described in Title 14, Chapter 41, Section 4140 of the Delaware Code. This request is a top priority of district superintendents and school leaders;
 - \$4.2 million to exercise the Delaware Code authority which allows the Department to increase the “local” salary supplement for departmental staff to remain competitive with total salaries being offered within our school districts, ensuring that the Department is best positioned to support the public education system statewide;
 - \$1.6 million in public education technology initiatives, to include the required procurement of a new student information system, rewrite of the statewide unit count system and ongoing support of a communication application that was previously funded through an expiring federal grant;
 - Just over \$600 thousand for early childhood initiatives, to include 3 additional staff to support developmental screening requirements of House Bill 202 of the 151st General Assembly and increased usage of an assessment tool for monitoring child outcomes;
 - \$1.25 million to implement modifications to the existing mentor stipend program, allowing more flexibility to meet the needs of novice teachers, create mentor roles as retention strategies and compensate these roles at a higher rate;
 - \$200 thousand for the Delaware Math Plan, which is currently funded through federal pandemic relief supports that will end;
 - \$200 thousand to support expansion of the State Registered Apprenticeship system; and,
 - \$250 thousand for additional supports to Career and Technical Students Organizations.

- The Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Request for public education is comprised of those initiatives; however, should additional funding become available in the Operating Budget, I encourage that consideration be given to addressing the work of the Public Education Compensation Committee, enhancing early childhood supports and improving the public school transportation funding formula.

Moving onto the Capital Budget ...

- The Fiscal Year 2024 Capital Budget Request for public education is just under \$204 million, with a primary focus on the funding necessary to move previously approved projects toward completion, including increased costs as a result of market pressures, and statewide funding for Minor Capital Improvement and Equipment (also known as MCI) and Architectural Barrier Removal.

- For additional details, the project summary chart in the Capital Budget Request includes funding by district for previously approved projects, estimated market pressure contingency needs, and statewide funding for MCI and Architectural Barrier Removal.

- Given existing funding pressures, the Department is not requesting funding for any new projects at this time. It is important to note that this is not an indication that the requests are not necessary, rather this is based on estimated available funding and the need to continue prior funding commitments.
- Having said that, should additional resources become available within the Capital Budget, the Department would appreciate the opportunity to discuss additional funding for public education, to potentially include increased funding for MCI and/or new projects requested by six of our school districts: Christina, Colonial, New Castle County Vo Tech, Polytech, Red Clay and Seaford.
- Additionally, in light of lead water testing results in our schools and ongoing conversations with stakeholders, the Department looks forward to working with the Office of Management and Budget to identify funding opportunities to support our school districts and charter schools in their efforts to remediate water quality issues within our public schools.
- That concludes my remarks this afternoon. We look forward to working with you and your team through the budget process, and are happy to answer any questions you may have.
- Thank you!