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DOE Overview

What Is in the Overall Budget?

For the school year 2017–18, the Department of Education’s proposed total budget is \$30.8 billion, including \$6.5 billion to pay pensions and interest on Capital Plan debt.

The Department’s proposed \$24.3 billion Operating Budget (the total budget less pension and debt service costs) includes funding for principals, teachers, textbooks and supplies. It covers the cost of standardized tests, after-school programs, school buses, heating and cooling for school buildings, safety, and school lunches. It pays for central administration and field support offices, which work with schools to provide support and help improve student achievement.

The Operating Budget also funds pre-school special education services provided at non-DOE “contract” schools (\$841 million); School-Age special education services provided at non-DOE “contract” schools (\$672 million); non-public schools, such as yeshivas and parochial schools (\$78 million); and \$1.9 billion for charter schools.

The DOE also has a Five-Year (2015-2019) Capital Plan Budget that includes \$15.5 billion to cover costs associated with building new schools, renovating existing buildings, and investing in other new assets within school buildings.

How Are School Budgets Funded?

Schools are funded via School Allocation Memorandums (SAMs). Detailed information on each funding stream’s purpose, allocation methodology and spending restrictions can be found online on the DOE’s website in the [School Allocation Memorandum](#) section. Below is a listing of major categories of school allocations.

Fair Student Funding:

Fair Student Funding (FSF) dollars – approximately \$6.1 billion in the 2017-18 school year – are used by schools to cover basic instructional needs and are allocated to each school based on the grade level and academic needs of students enrolled at that school. All money allocated through FSF can be used at the principals’ discretion.

For information about a particular school’s Fair Student Funding allocation, please visit [this link](#).

Schools in District 75 and programs in District 79 are not funded via Fair Student Funding due to their highly differentiated instructional models.

Categorical Allocations:

- State and Federal Categorical** programs are restricted by the State or Federal governments on how they can be distributed and, in many cases, how they can be used by schools. They total approximately \$2 billion. Examples include Title I, other federally-funded “Title” programs (e.g., Title III, Title II-A), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Universal Pre-K. These programs are listed as [Externally Restricted Funds](#) among the SAMs.
- Contracts for Excellence Funds** come from the State as part of an increase in State Aid starting in 2007. These funds total approximately \$531 million and must be distributed in accordance with needs weights issued by the State. The funds must also be spent by schools according to the City’s Contract for Excellence with the State. For more information about the Contracts for Excellence, please visit [this link](#).

Programmatic Allocations:

- Internally Restricted programs** include City initiatives that remain outside of Fair Student Funding because of their unique structure or priority, such as Summer in the City (SITC), the parent coordinator initiative or new school start-up funds. The way these funds can be spent is often restricted. These programs are listed as [Internally Restricted Funds](#) among the SAMs.
- Related Services funding** pays for mandated special education supports that supplement core classroom instruction services. These dollars are in addition to the funds special education students receive as part of the Fair Student Funding allocation. These programs, in addition to other special education programs and supports are listed as [Other Special Education Funds](#) among the SAMs.

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