



Weighted Staffing Standards

A Change to the Formula for Allocating Budget Resources to Schools

Frequently Asked Questions *(Updated 9/25/07)*

What is the current system for school funding in Seattle Public Schools?

Seattle Public Schools uses the Weighted Student Formula (WSF) method to allocate budget dollars to schools. Funds come to the District from a variety of sources – primarily state funds, federal funds, levies and grants. The WSF funding method is based on three basic principles:

- Resources (funds) follow the student.
- Resources are calculated in dollars, rather than in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff.
- Resource allocation varies by the learning needs and characteristics of each student (including different factors for students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, and students who qualify for free- or reduced-price meals).

What is the new system being proposed?

Weighted Staffing Standards (WSS) is the new system being proposed. It is designed to provide a more efficient, understandable, and transparent school-funding process. WSS retains the principle of funding a school according to the needs of its student population, but it is much simpler to use. The Seattle School Board unanimously approved the concept of moving to WSS during its February 17, 2007, meeting. Staff were directed to develop and recommend details of the WSS concept.

Why replace the Weighted Student Formula?

Many groups have asked for the District to change from the WSF to another method of allocating resources to schools. These groups include principals, community members, central staff, and other members of the District's Budget Advisory Team. The major reasons they recommended replacing the WSF include:

- WSF is complex. It involves a combination of funding sources and bargaining agreements that require the District to provide additional funding.
- WSF is cumbersome to work with. It requires school principals and staff to spend many hours developing the budget.
- WSF is a decentralized, site-based approach, which makes it difficult to develop carefully coordinated strategies between the District and schools.

What are the major characteristics of the new Weighted Staffing Standards system?

The WSS model is not finalized, but the major components include a “core staffing” concept that:

- defines and funds “core” standards staffing for administrators, secretaries, counselors, nurses and other basic staff at elementary, middle and high schools;
- provides additional staffing beyond the “core” for larger schools;
- standardizes some class sizes at lower level than the WSF;
- increases funding for non-staff expenditures, such as supplies.

When the model is completed, staffing – particularly core staffing – will meet District standards and be consistent with best practices throughout the District, regardless of the location.

Will the Weighted Staffing Standards be more efficient?

Yes. Less time will be spent at the District – and more importantly at the school level – translating dollars into staffing equivalents. The new standards will provide staffing without the challenge of trying to combine portions of various funding sources. Because of this efficiency, the District ultimately will be able to provide more funds through the WSS model than was provided under the WSF model.

Will the Weighted Staffing Standards change how staff is hired?

No. The model does not change how staff is hired or placed in school buildings.

Is it allowable for schools to trade one position for another, such as trade a counselor for a librarian?

Yes. Provided that contractual agreements are not violated, schools can convert certain certificated instructional positions into other certificated instructional positions. Approval by the school’s instructional director and the Chief Academic Officer will be required after a review of academic data.

Will the Weighted Staffing Standards still include a weighting factor for students with special needs?

Yes. Seattle Public Schools is committed to a system that adds resources for students who are disabled, bilingual, or qualify for free and/or reduced-price lunch.

Will this new model change the amount of resources allocated for special education?

Yes. Additional resources are identified in the new model for some areas of special education that were not fully funded at the recommended program level. In the WSF this required schools with programs such as blended kindergarten to have to take funds from their general education resources to provide their special education kindergarten classes. In the WSS, special education programs are funded without needing additional building funds.

Does the model change the way funding is allocated for students who qualify for free and/or reduced-price lunch?

In the WSF, schools were expected to use a portion of their weighted discretionary dollars allocated based on student poverty characteristics to fund the bilingual programs in their building. This practice made it seem that poverty characteristic funds were truly discretionary and that contractually mandated bilingual programs were fully funded. But under the WSF, neither was the case. In order to be fully transparent, the WSS shifts a portion of the funding for poverty to bilingual programs. This leaves bilingual programs fully funded under the model and also leaves poverty generated funds truly discretionary.

The state is moving toward paying for full day kindergarten. Are these funds included in the model?

Yes. The district already funds one full-day kindergarten class per school. The new state revenue is being applied to these classes, thus allowing previously committed funds to be used to fund the WSS model.

Will Title I and LAP grants be managed the same as in previous years?

Yes. These funds are supplemental and will continue to be so. Just as in the WSF, usage of grant funds must comply with specific grant regulations governing allowable usage.

Will I-728 be handled the same as in previous years?

Yes. These funds are supplemental and will continue to be so. Just as in the WSF, usage of I-728 funds must comply with the specific grant regulations governing allowable usage. Note that I-728 funds are used to fund the WSS models and some grade levels will receive decreased I-728 allocations as a result.

How will the Weighted Staffing Standards affect the ability of parent groups to raise money for their school?

There will be no impact. The shift in standards will not affect PTA fund-raising. The intent of the WSS is to fund the educational needs of all students. The WSS does not change any policies or procedures around donations or self-help.

Are special programs (i.e. – Spectrum, ALO, Dual-Language, Montessori, etc.) treated differently in the model?

No.

How does the Weighted Staffing model meet the unique needs of some alternative schools?

It is recognized that some alternative schools have unique needs. That is why these programs are handled on an individual basis in the WSS.

How do other districts across the state and the nation fund schools?

There is some variation in methods. However, the vast majority of districts use some form of staffing standards to fund schools, such as the WSS being proposed.

Who has been involved in developing the components of Weighted Staffing Standards?

The concepts of the model were discussed by the Student Funding Committee during the 2003-04 school year. In September 2005, the Budget Advisory Team was formed and charged with developing a new school funding formula that maintained the benefits of the weighted student formula and school-based decision making, but eliminates time and complexity. The project was co-lead by the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Financial Officer. Assisting in the development of the WSS was the Budget Advisory Team; and a team of stakeholders, which included principals, Seattle Education Association leaders, representatives of the Seattle Council of PTSA and central office administrators.

What are the next steps?

The following are the proposed timelines:

- Oct. 1, 2, 4, 2007 – Community meetings intended to describe the proposed model
- Oct. 3, 2007 – Introduction of motion to approve new Weighted Staffing Standards model to the Board
- Oct. 17, 2007 – Board action expected on new Weighted Staffing Standards model
- February 2008 – If approved, schools develop budgets for 2008-2009 school year using new model
- Sept. 1, 2008 – If approved, first fiscal year using Weighted Staffing Standards model

How do I find out more information?

Community meetings are planned as a way to inform the public about the model that staff developed at the Board's direction and in collaboration with a dedicated stakeholder group. Members of the public are invited to attend informational meetings on the following dates:

October 1, 2007 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	Hamilton Middle School 1610 N. 41 st Street
October 2, 2007 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	First AME Church 1522 14 th Avenue
October 4, 2007 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	Madison Middle School* 3429 45 th Avenue SW

* Interpreters will be available for the following languages: Cambodian, Chinese, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese.

In addition, updates will be posted on the [Seattle Public Schools Web site](http://www.seattleschools.org/area/media/WSS/wss.html), www.seattleschools.org/area/media/WSS/wss.html or send an E-mail to: wss@seattleschools.org.

Non-Classroom Core Staffing Allocations by Grade Level and School Size

Elementary School Core Staff	54 Elementary Schools			
	AAFTE students	to 299	300 to 472	473 +
JOB/TITLE	Core	Core	Core	Core
Principal I-Elementary	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Asst Principal-Elementary				1.0
Admin Secretary-Elementary - 220	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Elementary School Assistant	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Nurse	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4
Librarian-Elementary	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Counselor-Elementary*	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Certificated Core Staff				0.5
Total Core staff	3.7	4.3	5.9	5.9
School Counts	21	31	2	
1 full day kindergarten, rest of K at .5				

K-8 School Core Staff	10 K-8 Schools				
	AAFTE students	to 299	300 to 399	400 to 499	500+
JOB/TITLE	Core	Core	Core	Core	Core
Principal I - Alternative School	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Asst Principal-Elementary				1.0	1.0
Admin Secretary-Elementary - 220	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Elementary School Assistant	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Nurse	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5
Librarian-Elementary	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Counselor-Middle School*	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Certificated Core Staff					0.5
Total Core staff	3.7	4.3	5.9	6.5	6.5
School Counts	2	3	2	3	
1 full day kindergarten, rest of K at .5					

Middle School Core Staff		10 Middle Schools		
AAFTE students	to 749	750-999	1000+	
JOB/TITLE	Core	Core	Core	Core
Principal-Middle School	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Asst Principal-Middle School	1.0	2.0		2.0
House Administrator				1.0
Admin Secretary-Middle School	1.0	1.0		1.0
Asst Secretary 201	1.0	1.0		1.0
Attendance Spec II-MS-201	1.0	1.0		1.0
Data Registrar 220	1.0	1.0		1.0
Nurse	0.5	0.5		0.5
Librarian-Middle School	1.0	1.0		1.0
Counselor-Middle School (1:400) pro-rated				
Certificated Core Staff	0.5	0.5		1.0
Total Core staff	8.0	9.0		10.5
School Counts	6	2		2

High School Core Staff		10 High Schools		
AAFTE students	to 799	800 to 1499	1500 +	
JOB/TITLE	Core	Core	Core	Core
Principal-High School	1.0	1.0		1.0
Asst Principal-High School	1.0	2.0		3.0
Admin Secretary-High School -260	1.0	1.0		1.0
Asst Secretary-High School 220**	1.0	1.0		1.0
Attendance Specialist-High Sch	1.0	1.0		1.0
HS Data Registration Spec	1.0	1.0		1.0
Nurse	0.8	0.8		0.8
Librarian-High School	1.0	1.0		1.0
Library Assistant-201	0.5	1.0		1.0
Counselor-High School (1:400) pro-rated				
Counseling Secretary	1.0	1.0		1.0
High School Fiscal Specialist	1.0	1.0		1.0
Career Center Specialist	1.0	1.0		1.0
Activity Coordinator	1.0	1.0		1.0
Total Core staff	12.3	13.8		14.8
School Counts	2	5		3

