

Depew Union Free School District – 2023/2024 Foundation Aid Increase and Plan

7/1/2023

New York State requires schools that will receive an increase of 10% or more in Foundation Aid develop a plan on how the increase will be spent. Depew Union Free School District's Foundation Aid increase for the upcoming year is \$2,165,340. As reported in the 2023/2024 budget presentations, Depew UFSD had been one of the many districts in the state that was delayed in receiving all past foundation aid. This past year was the 3rd and final phase-in year to make the district whole. The district is committed to fiscal responsibility. The increased aid will be used to support academic programs, social emotional learning, arts in education, maintaining our commitment to small class sizes, and interventions which bridge the achievement gap.

During the winter of 2022/23, a Strategic Planning committee was established with representation from several stakeholder groups that included students, staff, teachers, administrators, community leaders, alumni, parents and student support personnel. Although in the midst of their planning process, five areas of strategic priority has been identified that include 1) School Safety, 2) Mental Health and Wellness, 3) Improved Academic Success, 4) Culture, Climate and Inclusivity (DEI) and 5) the development of a K-12 "School to Work" continuum that will better prepare our students for college and careers. Each member of the stakeholder group has been reaching out to their peers for comment and feedback throughout the process. Two surveys were conducted as part of the initial process.

A community survey was developed in late spring and shared with our stakeholder groups specific to the NYSED Foundation Aid requirements.

- Increasing graduation rates and eliminating the achievement gap;
- Reducing class sizes;
- Providing supports for students who are not meeting, or at risk of not meeting, state learning standards in core academic subject areas;
- Addressing student social-emotional health;
- Providing adequate resources to English language learners, students with disabilities; and students experiencing homelessness;

The survey results aligned with the District Strategic initiatives and included much of what the NYSED has requested our District to prioritize. The key goals and planned use of the increased Foundation Aid includes:

Foundation Aid Use	District Planned Service	Estimated Funding – Staffing and Supports
<i>Increasing graduation rates and eliminating the achievement gap</i> (1)	<i>The District will continue to maintain and increase support for students and monitor the progress of each student beginning in the freshman year with a goal of increasing the overall graduation rate to 95% to include the June and August Regents examinations. Data teams will be created and overseen by our Assistant Superintendent, High School Principal and Director of Curriculum and Instruction.</i>	<i>\$150,000</i>
<i>Reducing class sizes</i> (2)	<i>The District will continue to maintain and increase teachers and administrators to maintain class sizes that are at or below targeted ratios. Special emphasis will be in the areas of ELA and mathematics instruction and support.</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>
<i>Providing supports for students who are not meeting, or at risk of not meeting, state learning standards in core academic subject areas</i> (3)	<i>The District will continue to maintain and increase teachers and administrators to increase our Response to Intervention, Literacy and Mathematics supports for those students who fall below our formative assessments targets.</i>	<i>\$790,340</i>
<i>Addressing student social-emotional health</i> (4)	<i>The District will continue to maintain and increase support for student social-emotional health. The addition of a Director of Special Education and Pupil Services to coordinate the efforts of the District to include, but not limited to, training in Mental Health First Aid, and a comprehensive review of our District Guidance Plan.</i>	<i>\$250,000</i>
<i>Providing adequate resources to English language learners, students with disabilities; and students experiencing homelessness</i> (5)	<i>The District will continue to maintain and increase support for students of special needs, English language learners and homelessness through the addition of a Director of Special Education and Pupil Services, additional TESOL staff as needed and a comprehensive review of our pupil services.</i>	<i>\$275,000</i>

<i>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</i> (6)	<i>The District will continue to maintain and increase support of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of all students. Student voice will be increased through their participation on committees, advisories and as a non-voting member of our Board of Education.</i>	<i>\$125,000</i>
<i>School Safety</i> (7)	<i>The District will continue to maintain and increase support of school safety. A comprehensive review of our School Safety Plan will take place to examine the physical, cyber and psychological safety of our students and staff.</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>
<i>Total:</i>		<i>\$2,165,340</i>

For further information regarding the strategic initiatives and plans, please contact Dr. Hank Stopinski, Superintendent of Schools at hstopinski@depewschools.org