

Leveling Guideline 2024-2025

City Schools of Decatur

Leveling Guidelines for 2024-25 School Year Introduction

Leveling is the process City Schools of Decatur utilizes to balance allocations based on **actual** student enrollment versus **projected** student enrollment, which is utilized to staff schools for Day One readiness. After monitoring the student enrollment data closely, CSD is committed to executing leveling in a manner that is least disruptive to the instructional program but ensures the equitable allotment of funds. The CSD leveling process will use a combination of performance and seniority to determine the selection and eligibility of staff to be leveled.

The **10th-day** student enrollment count will serve as the basis for leveling school staff and per-pupil allocations. The student enrollment data from Infinite Campus as of **Monday, August 12, 2024**, will be used to determine the new budget appropriation for each school. It is the responsibility of each school principal to ensure that all enrollment data is accurately reflected in Infinite Campus. This includes withdrawing students from the count who are not enrolled in school. Data accuracy and integrity are critical components of the leveling process, as this data point will inform the district of which schools are over, even, or under-enrolled.

Leveling Timeline and Tasks

Please refer to the detailed task list on the following pages for the 2024-25 leveling process.

Date	Tasks	Tasks Owner(s)
Monday, August 12, 2024 (Day 10)	Ensure all data in Infinite Campus is up-to-date and accurately reflects the number of students assigned to each teacher per course period by noon. Includes home language(s) and birth country data.	Principals Deputy Superintendent
Monday, August 12, 2023 (Day 10)	Complete an internal needs assessment by reviewing the following: 1. Budget Allotment 2. Class size, 3. Class rosters, 4. Staffing assignments, 5. Current enrollment, and 6. Content areas.	Principals Deputy Superintendent
Wednesday, August 14, 2024 (Day 12)	Meet with Deputy Superintendents and review school leveling reports based on the 10th-day student enrollment counts.	Human Resources Deputy Superintendent

Friday, August 16, 2024 (Day 14)	Principals are provided with leveling results based on the 10th-day student count. The Deputy Superintendent will collaborate with school principals to approve leveling decisions.	Finance
Monday, August 19, 2024 (Day 15)	Principals, Deputy Superintendent, T&L, and Human Resources collaborate to determine a strategy for utilizing additional funding from leveling or on ways to balance the budget in the case of reductions	Principals Deputy Superintendent Human Resources
Wednesday, August 21, 2024 (Day 17)	Deputy Superintendent will approve principals leveling decisions	Deputy Superintendent Principals
Thursday, August 22, 2024 (Day 18)	All impacted employees must be notified verbally and in writing by the school principal before final communication to all parents, staff, and students	Principals
Friday, August 23, 2024 (Day 19)	Communicate approved staff transfers to Human Resources via email and internal transfer form.	Principals
Monday, August 26, 2024 (Day 20)	Reassigned staff and principals will be notified via transfer letter sent email confirmation of their new assignment.	Human Resources
Monday, August 26 - Thursday, August 29 (Days 20-23)	Communication of all personnel changes to parents, staff, and students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gaining staff – Prepare room assignments, furniture, materials, books, modify Infinite Campus Schedule, etc. for new staff. ● Losing Staff – Collapse class 	Principals
Friday, August 30, 2024 (Day 24)	Process teacher transfers in badge system and all HRIS (updates Smart Fusion, Frontline, Infinite Campus, and Vector)	Human Resources Information Services
Tuesday, September 3, 2024 (Day 25)	Impacted staff report to new location.	Employees
Deadline Date for September 15 payroll	Formally submit a personnel change form to the finance department	Human Resources

Budget Leveling Protocol

During the leveling process, schools will gain or lose funds depending on the number of students above or below what was projected multiplied by only the base amount, to avoid large swings in funding and to minimize disruption.

The FY25 base per-pupil allocation is \$145. Leveling dollar figures will be based on this base per-pupil amount. Factors implemented to determine the dollar amount schools will gain or lose during leveling:

- Day 10 enrollment data
- Available reserve funds
- Available vacant/banked positions

Principals will work with their Deputy Superintendent to discuss strategies for managing the leveling process (either gains or losses). The Deputy Superintendent will meet with HR to discuss potential personnel impacts. The Deputy Superintendent has the discretion to use any instructional reserves budget if the necessary need arises.

Schools that are under projection as of August 12, 2024, will be allowed to eliminate vacant positions to cover their deficit. Principals of under-enrolled schools may also use funds budgeted for hourly staff and/or non-personnel funds to balance. Note that the reduction of certain positions will require principals to submit a plan or discussion with the Deputy Superintendent detailing how they plan to support students without the position. The elimination of any itinerant or shared positions that will create pairing issues must be agreed upon by the impacted Principal(s), Deputy Superintendent, and program manager (if applicable).

Staff Leveling Protocol

I. CRITERIA FOR REDUCING STAFF

To be eligible to reduce staff FTEs during the leveling process, a school must be losing more funds than the equivalent of an average teacher salary or receive authorization from their Deputy Superintendent.

Leveling Tiers for Selecting Impacted Staff

TIER I: VACANCY REDUCTION

In instances where one or more vacancies exist in a school, vacancies will be cut first in most situations. If there are no existing vacancies, proceed to Tier II.

TIER II: VOLUNTARY PROCESS

Staff desiring to volunteer for leveling must meet the criteria outlined below:

1. Volunteers may not be on a current performance improvement plan, AND
 2. **Teacher staff:** Must have an overall exemplary or proficient rating during the 2023-24 school year, OR
 3. **Other staff: All positions are subject to the leveling process.** Cannot have a rating of needs improvement, ineffective or lowest rating on the appropriate performance scale during the 2023-24 school year. Building leaders (APs, school managers, etc.) will follow the administrative transfer process.
- **If the number of volunteers from this group satisfies the number of employees that are being leveled,** then the leveling requirement has been satisfied. The name of each volunteer should be submitted as noted on the timeline above.
 - **If the number of volunteers exceeds the number of employees that need to be leveled,** then principals should select the number of employees to be leveled based on their ratings. Begin first with the lowest-rated staff member. For example, teachers start with proficient and then work upward to exemplary.

If you have not satisfied your leveling requirement, then proceed to Tier III for further selection.

TIER III: INVOLUNTARY PROCESS

1. Principals should review the seniority report provided by their Chief HR Officer, and for elementary schools, principals should select the employee with the least seniority in the grade levels K-5
2. Student enrollment reports showing grade levels that are under-enrolled
3. Secondary Schools -The employee with the least seniority in the grade level or subject losing the most students should be selected first, then work upward through the seniority list and additional grade levels to meet the appropriate number of teachers to be leveled.
4. Elementary Schools-The employee with the least seniority in the grade levels K-5 including EIP should be selected first.

K-5 Leveling Example: An elementary school has to lose two teachers based on low enrollment. Principal Jane Doe will review the seniority report given by the Chief HR Officer to determine the last hired employee using the adjusted hire date if there are no volunteers.

NOTE: Teacher staff must have an exemplary or proficient rating and all other staff cannot have a rating of needs improvement, ineffective or lowest rating on the appropriate performance scale during the 2023-24 school year.

ELIGIBILITY for EXCLUSION

Employees meeting one or more of the following conditions may not be leveled:

- Special revenue positions and those budgeted by central office (i.e. special education, ESOL, Gifted, Pre-K).
- Currently on performance improvement plan continuation from 2023-24 school year.
- Employees receiving a rating of needs improvement, ineffective or lowest rating on the appropriate performance scale
- Employees with excessive absenteeism during the 2023-24 school year
- Employees currently on district-approved leave (i.e. military leave, educational leave, extended medical leave (FMLA/ADA), administrative leave, worker's compensation leave)
- Teachers serving in coach or grade level/department chairperson roles (or special assignments.)
- Teachers serving in a split-funded position.
- Any positions allocated by the district. Examples of these are Special Education positions, Custodians, Site Managers, CTAE positions, GIFTED, ESOL, etc.

Definitions

Leveling: The process where employees are reassigned from schools with an excess number of staff to schools with a need for additional staff due to changes in student enrollment. Additionally, there may be schools with an excess number of teachers in certain content areas only.

Excess: The number of staff that exceeds the school's allocation based on student enrollment as compared with the initial student enrollment projections.

Reassignment: A transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not result in a change in the status of an employee.
Seniority: The number of years an employee has worked for the district based on his/her hire date or adjusted hire date (if the employee had a break in service).

Volunteer: An employee, in good standing with no performance concerns, who volunteers for placement at another school location within the district.