

Adopted: May 10, 2011
Revised: June 14, 2016
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Revised: June 18, 2024



714 FUND BALANCES

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to create fund balance classifications to allow for more useful fund balance reporting and for compliance with the reporting guidelines specified in Statement No. 54 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The policy of this school district is to comply with GASB Statement No. 54. To the extent a specific conflict occurs between this policy and the provisions of GASB Statement No. 54, the GASB Statement shall prevail.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Assigned” fund balance amounts are comprised of unrestricted funds constrained by the school district’s intent that they be used for specific purposes, but that do not meet the criteria to be classified as restricted or committed. In funds other than the general fund, the assigned fund balance represents the remaining amount that is not restricted or committed. The assigned fund balance category will cover the portion of a fund balance that reflects the school district’s intended use of those resources. The action to assign a fund balance may be taken after the end of the fiscal year. An assigned fund balance cannot be a negative number.
- B. “Committed” fund balance amounts are comprised of unrestricted funds used for specific purposes pursuant to constraints imposed by formal action of the school board and that remain binding unless removed by the school board by subsequent formal action. The formal action to commit a fund balance must occur prior to fiscal year end; however, the specific amounts actually committed can be determined in the subsequent fiscal year. A committed fund balance cannot be a negative number.
- C. “Enabling legislation” means legislation that authorizes a school district to assess, levy, charge, or otherwise mandate payment of resources from external providers and includes a legally enforceable requirement that those resources be used only for the specific purposes listed in the legislation.

- D. “Fund balance” means the arithmetic difference between the assets and liabilities reported in a school district fund.
- E. “Nonspendable” fund balance amounts are comprised of funds that cannot be spent because they are either not in spendable form or are legally or contractually required to be maintained intact. They include items that are inherently unspendable, such as, but not limited to, inventories, prepaid items, long-term receivables, non-financial assets held for resale, or the permanent principal of endowment funds.
- F. “Restricted” fund balance amounts are comprised of funds that have legally enforceable constraints placed on their use that either are externally imposed by resource providers or creditors (such as through debt covenants), grantors, contributors, voters, or laws or regulations of other governments, or are imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.
- G. “Unassigned” fund balance amounts are the residual amounts in the general fund not reported in any other classification. Unassigned amounts in the general fund are technically available for expenditure for any purpose. The general fund is the only fund that can report a positive unassigned fund balance. Other funds would report a negative unassigned fund balance should the total of nonspendable, restricted, and committed fund balances exceed the total net resources of that fund.
- H. “Unrestricted” fund balance is the amount of fund balance left after determining both nonspendable and restricted net resources. This amount can be determined by adding the committed, assigned, and unassigned fund balances.

IV. CLASSIFICATION OF FUND BALANCES

The school district shall classify its fund balances in its various funds in one or more of the following five classifications: nonspendable, restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned.

V. MINIMUM FUND BALANCE

The Board of Education shall strive to maintain an unassigned general fund balance of 10% to 18% of the annual budget with the intent to remain near the top of the range and with the understanding that the fund balance may dip to the lower end of the range in the event of a drastic enrollment decline or other unusual circumstances. The fund balance shall be defined as the sum of the unrestricted fund balance. It shall not include funds reserved for operating capital, Health and Safety and ADA, severance, or any other new reserve created by the School Board, State or Federal guidelines. The Business Office will monitor the fund balance. If the fund balance falls below the minimum fund balance policy, the School Board will implement procedures to stabilize the district’s financial position.

[Note: The fund balance policy containing a range of 10% to 18% shall take effect in the 2024-25 school year and will follow the timeline set forth. Timeline: The Board of Education shall make fiscal decisions such that the district general unassigned fund balance incrementally increases to meet the policy requirement of 10% to 18% by June 30, 2027 as presented in the annual School Board audit presentation by December 31, 2027.]

VI. ORDER OF RESOURCE USE

If resources from more than one fund balance classification could be spent, the school district will strive to spend resources from fund balance classifications in the following order (first to last): restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned.

VII. COMMITTING FUND BALANCE

A majority vote of the school board is required to commit a fund balance to a specific purpose and subsequently to remove or change any constraint so adopted by the board.

VIII. ASSIGNING FUND BALANCE

The school board, by majority vote, may assign fund balances to be used for specific purposes when appropriate. The board also delegates the power to assign fund balances to the following: Superintendent. Any assignments made must be reported to the School Board on an annual basis.

An appropriation of an existing fund balance to eliminate a projected budgetary deficit in the subsequent year's budget in an amount no greater than the projected excess of expected expenditures over expected revenues satisfies the criteria to be classified as an assignment of fund balance.

[Note: Columbia Heights Public Schools assignments include Special Education, English Learner Program, and Capital Projects, along with other state and federally-required assignments.]

Legal References: Statement No. 54 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board