

Leveling Guideline 2026-2027

City Schools of Decatur

Leveling Guidelines for 2026-27 School Year Introduction

Leveling is the process City Schools of Decatur uses to balance allocations between **actual** and **projected** student enrollment, which is used to staff schools for Day One readiness. After closely monitoring student enrollment data, CSD is committed to implementing leveling in the least disruptive manner while ensuring the equitable allocation 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 **Friday, August 14, 2026**, 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-enrolled, even, or under-enrolled.

Leveling Timeline and Tasks

Please refer to the detailed task list on the following pages for the 2026-27 leveling process.

Date	Tasks	Tasks Owner(s)
Friday, August 14, 2026 (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
Friday, August 14, 2026 (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 19, 2026 (Day 13)	Meet with Deputy Superintendent and review school leveling reports based on the 10th-day student enrollment counts.	Human Resources Deputy Superintendent

Friday, August 21, 2026 (Day 15)	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.	Deputy Superintendent Principals
Monday, August 24, 2026 (Day 16)	Principals, Deputy Superintendent, T&L, Finance, 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 Finance
Wednesday, August 26, 2026 (Day 18)	Deputy Superintendent will approve principal leveling decisions	Deputy Superintendent Principals
Thursday, August 27, 2026 (Day 19)	All impacted employees must be notified verbally and in writing by the school principal before final communication to all parents, staff, and students.	Principals
Thursday, August 27, 2026 (Day 19)	Communicate approved staff transfers to Human Resources via email and internal transfer form.	Principals
Thursday, August 27, 2026 (Day 19)	Reassigned staff and principals will be notified via transfer letter sent email confirmation of their new assignment.	Human Resources
Friday, August 28 - Monday, August 31 (Days 20-21)	Communication of all personnel changes to parents, staff, and students. ● Gaining staff – Prepare room assignments, furniture, materials, books, modify Infinite Campus Schedule, etc. for new staff. ● Losing Staff – Collapse class	Principals
Monday, August 31, 2026 (Day 22)	Process teacher transfers in badge system and all HRIS (updates SmartFusion, Frontline, Infinite Campus, and Vector)	Human Resources Safety & Technology
Tuesday, September 1, 2026 (Day 24)	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 FY27 base per-pupil allocation is \$145 (Lower and Upper Elementary) and \$135 (Secondary). 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 the Deputy Superintendent or designee to discuss strategies for managing the leveling process (either gains or losses). The Deputy Superintendent or designee will meet with HR to discuss potential personnel impacts. The Deputy Superintendent or designee has the discretion to use any instructional reserves budget if the need arises.

Schools that are under projection as of August 14, 2026, 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 or designee 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 the 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 2025-26 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 2025-26 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 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 2025-26 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 a performance improvement plan continuation from 2025-26 school year.
- Employees receiving a rating of needs improvement, ineffective or lowest rating on the appropriate performance scale
- Employees with excessive absenteeism during the 2025-26 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.

Principal Leveling Checklist

Completed	Not Applicable	Action Item
		Infinite Campus – All numbers in Infinite Campus should match the actual enrollment count based on the actual number of students in each grade level.
		Schedules – A completed schedule for each student should be in Infinite Campus. Schedules should include EIP/REP, Gifted, ESOL, Special Education, and other programs.
		Class Size – All class sizes should be reviewed in Infinite Campus and balanced across grade levels or subject areas.
		HR Notification – Sent confirmation email with Deputy Superintendent, HR, and Finance to confirm move approval. Completed internal transfer form provided by Human Resources to initiate transfer in all HRIS platforms.
		Employee Communication – All teachers who are moving to a different location or classroom should be informed.
		Parent Communication – All parents with students who will be shifting to another class should receive a communication. A plan should also be in place for communicating changes to students along with an opportunity to meet and greet the new teacher and move materials to the new room location (as applicable).
		School/Community Communication – This communication should be discussed with your Deputy Superintendent to ensure that stakeholders receive information as appropriate.