

Reimagined School Funding in the Boston Public Schools

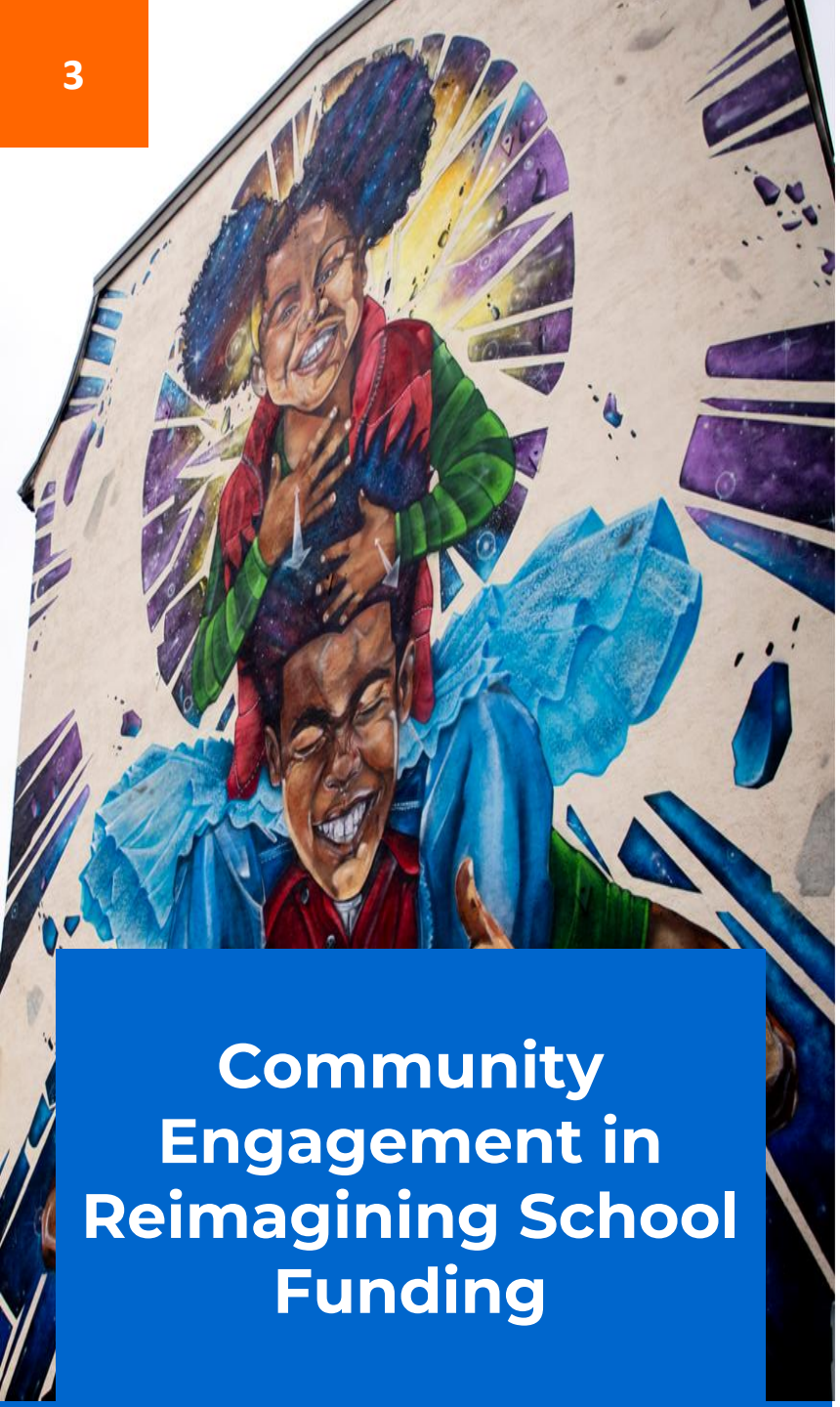
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Boston Public Schools Reimagined School Funding Formula - Context

- We have 114 Schools Serving 44,846 Students
- We are 31% Multilingual Learners, 23% Students with Disabilities, 70% Low Income
- BPS has been seeing persistent enrollment decline for over a decade as there are fewer school age children in the City
- Until the pandemic we used a Weighted Student Funding (WSF) formula (sometimes called Student Based Budgeting or SBB) to fund schools
- Weighted Student Formula was closely tied to school enrollment and fill rates
- As the district experiences persistent enrollment declines, a funding system that rewards student enrollment can perpetuate some of the inequity that it initially sought to disrupt
- Enrollment changes during the pandemic caused us to hold many school budgets constant to maintain stability

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Community Engagement in Reimagining School Funding

What was the ReImagine Project?

The ReImagine School Funding Project was a BPS initiative that engaged the community in **equitably reimagining school funding formula.**

An 18+ month process was designed to bring student, family, community, and school leader voice to the center of the funding redesign recommendations to rethink together how our funding policy can better serve BPS students and support BPS schools.

A successful reimagined funding policy will:

1. Provide more equitable support for each child to achieve and thrive with a focus on BPS students and families that have been historically marginalized;
2. Be clearly articulated and well-understood across our constituents;
3. Make explicit connections to other aspects of resource equity beyond the funding allocation that merit further review.

Boston Public Schools Reimagined School Funding Formula - Process

Who did the work?

- BPS Finance engaged Afton Partners to lead an 18+ month process is designed to bring student, family, community, and school leader voices to the center of the funding redesign process
- **Steering Committee -** A group of 12 BPS community members engaged as critical stakeholders from BSAC, SPEDPAC, DELAC, CPC, ELL Task force.
- **Principals Working Group -** 12 Principals
- **Funding Policy Design -** 18 Central Office Team Members
- **Engagement and Communications Group -** Flexible Internal

What is the new formula?

The new formula has two different components and starts with knowing the students you're serving:

Compliance: Using district policies, collective bargaining contracts and state and federal laws, we identify the staff required to serve students. *Examples: Teachers, Paras, Nurse, etc.*

Flexible Spending: Each school receives flexible resources to help build the special programming, partnerships and/or academic models that make their community unique beyond what is required. *Examples: external partnerships, additional staff beyond what is required*

Compliance Funding + Discretionary Funding = School Budget

An explanation of these rules is available in tonight's materials and will be covered in more detail at our School Budget presentation on February 12

What's Different Between the Formulas?

Weighted Student Funding		Reimagined School Funding
Homerooms needed to be 87.5% full to be funded	→	Homerooms are funded based on instructional staffing needed to meet projected enrollment and class size rules
Schools that were full received more flexible dollars per pupil	→	Flexible dollars per pupil varies based on student need (ex. Funding for external partners)
Schools might not receive enough funding to meet compliance, which resulted in the need for soft landings and hold harmless dollars	→	As a system, compliance is funded first, then flexible dollars are allocated. No need for soft landings or hold harmless, but will have 2 year transition plans.

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Impact on Schools

Shifting to the new formula, schools fell ONE of FIVE different Scenarios

Category	Description	# of Schools
Scenario A	Enrollment is declining and budgets are declining roughly proportionately	31
Scenario B	Budget is going down and enrollment is flat or increasing	13
Scenario C	Budget is going up and enrollment is flat or declining	8
Scenario D	Budget is going up and enrollment is increasing	7
Scenario E	Budget and enrollment change is relatively small or adjustments are straightforward	45

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Impact on Schools

CASE EXAMPLE

Tobin K-8

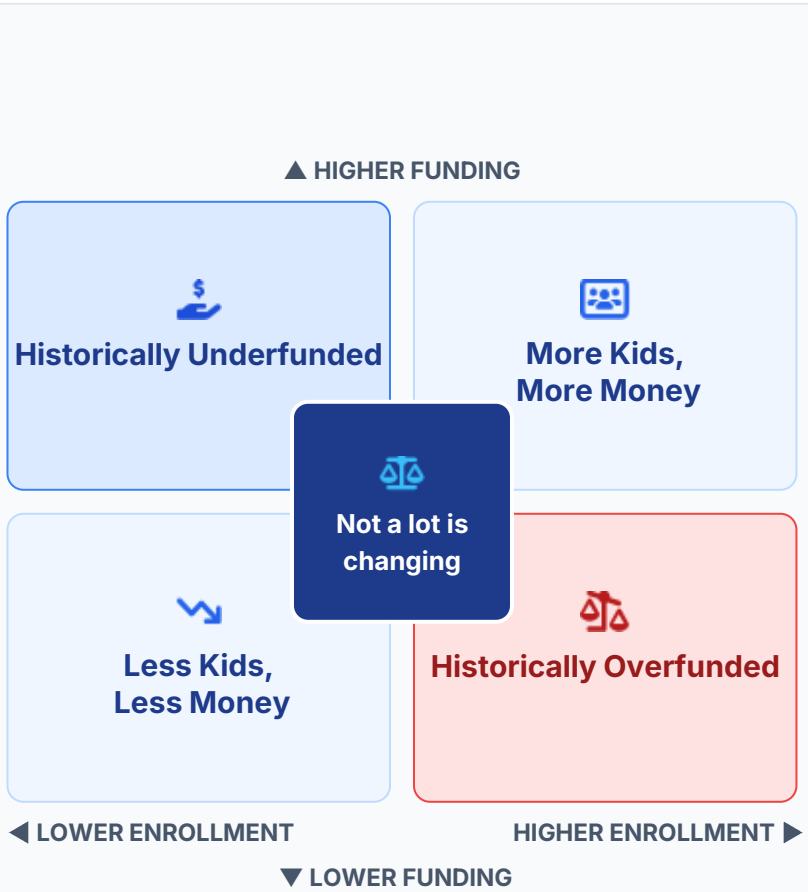
+$715k (+10%)

Increased special education needs & new equity rules in formula.

Transition Support

Held back $465k of the $715k to support transitions in schools with declining budgets.

Quadrant: Historically Underfunded



CASE EXAMPLE

Higginson K0-2

-$282k (-7%)

- End of pandemic-era hold harmless policy.
- 25% decrease in multilingual learners.

Transition Support Assessment

Reviewed schools to evaluate whether custom transition support was required.

Quadrant: Historically Overfunded