**Education Law §3614 School Funding Allocation Report**

**Part F - Narrative Description**

**Describe the local methodology/approach used to allocate funds to each school in the district during the process of budget development and implementation. If schools are allocated funds—either in part or in full—through a formula, outline the nature/mechanics of the formula and the elements impacting each school’s allocation. In addition, explain any non-formulaic elements impacting each school’s allocation. (Please note that this question asks about the district’s budget process, not about how the district completed the New York State School Funding Transparency Form.)**

The Syracuse City School District (SCSD) allocates and budgets resources (staff, goods, services) in a way that aligns appropriate levels of resources for schools based on the unique school offerings and the needs of the school population and the community served. The District aligns budget priorities and investments with strategic goals and explicitly aligns budgetary spending with improving student achievement, providing dynamic rigorous curriculum, increasing student attendance, reading to learn by third grade, ensuring culturally relevant practices, increasing family engagement, enhancing teacher practices, and improving student behavior.

During the budget development process, the District utilizes a variety of tools to ensure equitable resource allocation across school sites. These tools include:

• Reports to verify that staff support is aligned to program and student needs across schools

• Comprehensive, all-funds resource allocation reporting by school and student need

• Survey results and/or budget requests from department heads and school building leaders that align with the District's strategic plan and needs of the school community

The budget department conducts needs assessment meetings and prepares various reports that seek to continuously improve the alignment of budgetary resources to need. These reports include:

• Final enrollment projection document

• Department/school needs assessment meetings held by budget team with budget owners and documented via meeting notes and budget line item detail reports

• Budget request documents prepared by budget team and budget owners for each functional area

• Staffing analysis reports by school type and grade level. Staffing categories reviewed during the resource allocation process include: teachers, teaching assistants, academic intervention support teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, security personnel, clerical support, health services, custodial staff, and student support staff such as psychologists, social workers, school counselors, and family support services staff. Realignment of staffing occurs when student to staff ratios indicate inequity.

• Resource allocations by student need across different types of schools to show patterns and the possible impact of such allocations

• Weighted student funding allocations for instructional supplies.

In addition to the considerations above, the District must also comply with requirements on how some state funding is spent in the 2019-20 year. Included in this budget are allocations to meet the following:

• $ 62,619,743 Maintenance of Effort for Special Education

• $ 14,607,303 Community Schools Set-Aside

• $ 12,688,952 Contracts For Excellence (C4E)

The level of funding received by the District through the Special Aid Fund for early childhood programs does not cover the entire amount expensed for those programs in total. As a result, the District anticipates providing $2,548,503 of Pre-K local share funding. This equates to 18% of overall Pre-K spend, excluding payments to community based sites. This is reflected in the per pupil funding at each building with Pre-K programs.

When planning budget allocations related to the Special Aid Fund, grant managers must also consider additional criteria based on the individual grant guidelines as they apply to each funding stream or award. These include the following factors:

• School Status

• Program Specific Grant Awards

• School Specific Grant Awards

• Demographics of the Student Population by School

• Free and Reduced Priced Lunch Rates

**If applicable, is there anything unique about certain schools which explain why per pupil spending at these locations may be significantly higher/lower than the district average?**

For various reasons, per pupil funding for several of the schools in the District fall outside the “average” range for that metric. A significant factor in the ‘per pupil spending’ range is merely the size of the school because the fixed costs such as principal salary are divided by a large or small number of students depending on the school. Below please see explanations of the factors contributing to those variances.

Elementary Schools:

The Syracuse City School District operates thirteen elementary schools serving grades Pre-K through 5. Eleven are neighborhood schools reflective of their surrounding communities. The Montessori Education Model at LeMoyne Elementary and Syracuse Latin are schools that offer differentiated curriculum Districtwide through an application process attracting students from all four quadrants of Syracuse.

When comparing elementary schools, three have lower spending per pupil as noted below:

Dr. Weeks Elementary School: Dr. Weeks Elementary School is our largest elementary school serving over 700 students in grades K-5. Although over 90% of the students are eligible for Free & Reduced Price Lunch, only 13.6% are children with special needs. The instructional staff at Dr. Weeks are relatively new teachers with 45% having taught for three or fewer years resulting in a lower teaching salary cost per pupil. Dr. Weeks is eligible for Title and IDEA funds to support students living in poverty and students with special needs. The combination of a large building, accommodating over 700 students, and a younger teaching staff are the primary drivers of Dr. Weeks spending per pupil less than the average. Dr. Weeks Elementary School was previously funded by a Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) and the loss of these federal dollars and a reduction in Community Schools Grant funding available to the school in 2019-20 are additional factors in a lower per pupil spend.

Franklin Elementary School: Franklin Elementary School is our second largest elementary school educating nearly 650 students in grades K through 5. 90% of the students attending Franklin are eligible for Free & Reduced Price Lunch and over 40% of the students are English Language Learners. Franklin is a well-established extended day school in good standing. Over 70% of instructional staff have more than 3 years teaching experience. The lower than average spend per pupil is primarily attributable to the significant enrollment, an efficient higher student to instructional staff ratio of 12:1 as compared to smaller schools with single digit ratios, and a stable extended day model with little turnover of staff in recent years. Franklin Elementary School was previously funded by a Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) and the loss of these federal dollars in 2019-20 is an additional factor in a lower per pupil spend.

Seymour Dual Language Academy: Seymour is located on the west side of Syracuse serving one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city with over 93% Free and Reduced Price Lunch rate. Seymour has operated for many years with multi-lingual enrollment of over 35%. Several teachers are dual certified providing an instructional model where ELL services are woven into the curriculum and lesson plans throughout the school day. This school serves 550 students. Seymour students receive many supports from a long list of community partners throughout the school day at minimal or no cost to the district. Seymour provides a longer school day for all students and because of the larger school capacity and extensive community partner involvement, the school is able to deliver educational services efficiently yielding a lower cost per pupil.

When comparing elementary schools, three have higher spending per pupil compared to the average as noted below:

LeMoyne Elementary School: This school is the second smallest elementary school, with enrollment of 315 students, and a lower student to staff ratio. In 2017, the District began the phase-in of the Montessori Education Model at LeMoyne Elementary where children learn by exploring and manipulating specially designed materials teaching one concept or skill at a time. Implementation of this model requires the use of specialized instructional materials and furniture, a higher ratio of staff to students and additional professional development. 80% of the students attending Lemoyne are eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch and nearly 20% are students with disabilities. These rates are somewhat favorable when compared to other elementary schools across the District. Small class size, specialized professional development and materials aligned to the Montessori Model are the primary factors driving the higher per pupil spend at Lemoyne Elementary as compared to other elementary schools in the District.

Meachem Elementary School: This school is the smallest elementary school with a lower student to staff ratio when compared to other elementary schools in the District. Meachem receives grant funds including Extended Day School Violence Prevention, Title funding and IDEA grant funds. The teaching staff at Meachem is more senior with over 93% of teachers with 3 or more years of experience adding to a higher cost when compared to other elementary schools. The demographics at Meachem include 25% students with disabilities and 81% of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch. Meachem’s low enrollment served by a senior teaching staff are the primary factors contributing to higher than average per pupil spend at this school. Additionally, Onondaga Community College provides in-kind leadership training to the students and staff at Meachem which is not reflected in the budget as no fee is charged for this service.

STEAM at Dr. King Elementary: This year Dr. King Elementary School is required to close and reopen as a result of past low academic performance. STEAM at Dr. King is opening in September with a new Principal and leadership team and new staff exceeding 50% as required by the turnaround school model. The community served by the new school is the poorest of all Syracuse Elementary Schools with a Free and Reduced Priced Lunch rate of nearly 94%. The demographics of this student body is comprised of 19.5% English Language Learners and 17.5% students with disabilities.

This whole school turnaround and renewal initiative is a cornerstone of two community efforts underway by the City of Syracuse;

a. Blueprint15 is a neighborhood revitalization program underway in the community served by Dr. King

b. Syracuse Surge is a City initiative poised to reinvigorate the south side of the City of Syracuse

Additionally, STEAM at Dr. King is supported in 2019-20 with additional staff including instructional coaches, academic intervention specialists, early reading specialists, additional teaching assistants in early grade levels, additional administrative team members and an independent monitor. The new school has a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math focus offering instruction in all five disciplines throughout the curriculum and lesson plans. The class sizes are lowered to 20 for grades K through 3 and 22 for grades 4 and 5 from the traditional 26 in grades K-2 and 28 in grades 3-5.

The new school will be supported by robust partnerships with local universities and community based organizations. The additional staff, smaller class size, and STEAM educational supports have resulted in a higher per pupil cost when compared with the average spend per pupil in elementary schools across the District. As a result, spending per pupil at Dr. King is among the highest of all elementary schools.

K-8 Schools:

The District operates six schools with enrollment in grades Pre K through 8 located throughout Syracuse.

Edward Smith: With enrollment of 705 students and the lowest student to staff ratio of the K-8 schools in the District, average spend per pupil is higher than average at Edward Smith. Additionally, 82.7% of teaching staff at the school have three or more years of experience, and Edward Smith has the highest percentage of enrollment of students with disabilities at the K-8 schools with 24.5%. Additionally, Edward Smith partners with many community agencies to offer After School programs for all grade levels. All of these factors contribute to higher spending per pupil at Edward Smith as compared to the other K-8 schools.

Huntington K-8 School: The per pupil spending at Huntington is lower than average mainly due to it being the school with the highest enrollment of all K-8 schools, serving 938 students, and minimal Title funds based on a Free and Reduced Price Lunch rate just shy of 80%. Huntington students also receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians and Child Welfare Liaisons. The large number of students, lower Title I eligible students and myriad of community funded supports all contribute to the lower per pupil spend when compared to other K-8 schools districtwide.

Middle Schools:

The Syracuse City School District operates six middle schools serving grades 6, 7 and 8. The District is in the early stages of offering middle school choice with a well-established Expeditionary Learning Middle School (ELMS), the opening of Brighton Academy as an Expeditionary Learning School, and the opening of Syracuse STEM at Blodgett as a school focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The remaining middle schools are neighborhood schools reflective of their neighborhood communities.

There are two middle schools with higher than average spending per pupil when compared to the average middle school spending per pupil:

Syracuse STEM at Blodgett: Syracuse STEM at Blodgett is one of three receivership schools in the District that was closed at the end of June 2019 and will reopen as a new school in September. This school is located on the west side of Syracuse with the highest concentrations of poverty. Enrollment at the school will be limited to 375 students and class size is capped at 25 students as compared to 28 students in most middle schools across the District.

As part of this change an Independent Monitor was added in 2019-20. Additionally, staffing for academic intervention services and special education was increased. Staff will also receive additional funding for instructional supplies, curriculum writing and professional development aligned to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

Syracuse STEM at Blodgett is partnering with LeMoyne College to ensure a robust Science, Technology, Engineering and Math curriculum and supporting professional development for teachers. The student demographics are 94.5% eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, 13.5% English Language Learners and 22.7% students with disabilities. The newly opened Syracuse STEM at Blodgett school will have smaller class sizes and additional staffing and services which all contribute to higher than average spending at the school when compared to middle schools districtwide.

In addition, Syracuse STEM at Blodgett students will receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians, Restorative Coaches and Child Welfare Liaisons. The District operates a School Based Health Center at the building that is staffed by community professionals providing in-kind medical services to students.

Not included in this reporting is a $3.3 million dollar investment in capital improvements funded by the Community Schools Grant (see question 3 below for more details) for this building. Once the renovations in the building are complete more programs for families, community members and students will be operational. Syracuse STEM at Blodgett is also in the planning phase for more extensive renovations in JSCB Phase II which will allow for expanded program offerings.

Brighton Academy: Brighton Academy, formerly Danforth Middle, is one of three receivership schools in the District that closed at the end of June 2019 and will reopen as a new school in September. As part of the turnaround model, resources have been added to the school to expand services and supports for teachers and students as well as efforts for certification in the Expeditionary Learning model. Enrollment at Brighton Academy in 2019-20 will be limited to 400 students, an Independent Monitor has been added to the school, academic intervention and special education staffing have been increased and staff will receive professional development related to the Expeditionary Learning Model. Staff will also receive additional funding for instructional supplies and curriculum writing.

The demographics for this schools include 96% Free and Reduced Lunch, 24.8% English Language Learners and 17.1% students with disabilities. Smaller school population, smaller class sizes, increased field experiences, and enhanced staffing and services aligned to Expeditionary Learning contribute to higher spending per pupil when compared to the average at middle schools districtwide.

There are two middle schools with lower than average spending per pupil when compared to the average middle school spending per pupil:

Grant Middle School: Grant Middle School is located in the northern quadrant of the City of Syracuse where many settlement communities have been established resulting in increased enrollment of middle school students. As such, Grant is the largest middle school serving nearly 750 students in grades 6 through 8 with enrollment 26% higher than the next largest middle school. Grant has a higher student to staff ratio resulting in a lower cost per pupil when compared to the other middle schools in the District. Additionally, Grant Middle School previously received a higher level of funding under IZone and the Community Schools Grant. Though the Community Schools funding has been extended through 2019-20, the amount available to the school has decreased thus contributing to a lower per pupil spend.

Grant Middle School students receive additional supports from our community partners paid for and provided by Onondaga County including Promise Zone, Family Support for Student Success, Mental Health Clinicians, Restorative Coaches and Child Welfare Liaisons. The District operates a School Based Health Center at Grant Middle School that is staffed by community professionals providing in-kind medical services to students.

Lincoln Middle School: Lincoln is the second largest middle school, serving nearly 600 students, with a high student to staff ratio contributing to lower than average spending per pupil when compared to other middle schools in the District. To better serve the students in this school, staff added during the budget process included instructional coaches, academic intervention specialists and reading instruction teachers. The Lincoln Middle School staff is comprised of 42.7% of teachers with less than 3 years of teaching experience, resulting in lower than average staffing costs. Lincoln Middle School was previously funded by a Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) and the loss of these federal dollars in 2019-20 is an additional factor in a lower per pupil spend.

High Schools:

The Syracuse City School District operates five high schools. The District began transitioning to a high school choice model in 2007-08 with the opening of a technical high school – ITC with 9th grade only and a 4-year phase-in plan adding grades 10, 11, and 12. We have increased the number of CTE Pathways at high schools across the District from 4 to 27 in recent years.

Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central (ITC): ITC underwent significant renovations during the transition of their campus to a Career & Technical Education school. The renovations included classrooms and space for cutting edge technology and career simulation to thrive allowing significant growth in pathways for high school choice options.

ITC is above the average spend, at $21,138 per pupil, in part due to lower enrollment, the higher cost of four specialty CTE pathways and grant funding associated with Smart Scholars and two P-Tech offerings.

Henninger High School: In contrast to ITC, Henninger is below the average spend, at $17,043 per pupil. Henninger enrollment is projected to be the highest of all high schools - 355 more students than the second largest high school and three times the enrollment of the smallest high school. With higher enrollment those fixed cost items such as school administration and building maintenance result in a lower spend per pupil. Henninger offers a P-Tech program for Pathways in Technology including clinical lab and health information technology strands as well as health professions career and technical education programs for interested students.

In the coming years we plan to renovate Henninger, Nottingham and Corcoran high schools through our Joint Schools Construction Board (JSCB) Phase II providing more space for CTE specialty pathways for students across the District. This should result in more equitable spending per pupil among the five high schools and an alignment of enrollment among each high school aligned to pathways.

Summary:

The City of Syracuse is among the poorest cities nationwide and certainly within Onondaga County. Providing equitable educational opportunities for a diverse, poor population of students is a systemic effort. Poverty in Syracuse is pervasive and to call out one school as poorer than or as wealthier than another for comparison is telling only part of story. Tremendous effort goes into planning, implementing and executing providing the resources and supports that every child needs to be successful. Comparing one school to another from a financial resource lens alone does not tell the whole story. The local community partners provide an abundance of resources and services in the schools. Year to year schools progress through change and in any single year a number of factors may result in spending per pupil that is higher or lower than the average of like schools.

The funds spent Districtwide and by school and per pupil tell only part of the story of the supports and programs offered to the students of the Syracuse City School District. In many ways our District operates as a Community District partnering with City and County agencies, higher education institutions, local not-for-profits and businesses to provide services to the families and students we serve. When the District joined the Say Yes to Education program the entire community joined in to what is now called the School Based Collaborative.

Onondaga County provided over $14.5 million of supports in our school buildings in 2018-19 and has committed to continue this level of support in 2019-20. Only a fraction of this funding or spending is included in the School District budget, however, the investment is provided directly to our students in their respective school buildings.

The County receives state and local funding as local share that leverages Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) federal funds to provide over 160 full-time support employees in all Syracuse City School District school locations. Services provided by the County include:

• Family Support for Student Success (to address barriers to learning, provision for intervention as needed and activities to improve skill development)

• Promise Zone (which matches students emotional / behavioral needs with effective interventions)

• Student Assistance Counselors (in high schools for ‘first line’ mental health and substance abuse counseling)

• Mental Health Clinics in 28 schools (providing on-site mental health clinics staffed full-time making connections to various providers such as Arise, Liberty Resources, Upstate and St. Joseph’s Hospitals, and Syracuse Community Health Center allowing for on-going care of students minimizing missed instructional time)

Additionally, Onondaga County provides direct funding for various other programs including School Liaisons, Seeds of Peace, Building Men, Primary Project and Peacemaking Project for students.

**If applicable, describe any items which the district feels are anomalous in nature and require additional description beyond the Excel entry.**

Debt Service: The amounts reported in Part A Section II-A represents the amount of Debt Service recorded specifically in the Debt Service Fund for the District. Part A II-B excludes amounts recorded on the General Fund for debt service payments in addition to Debt Service Fund amounts.

Community Schools Grant Capital Funding: The District was the recipient of Community Schools grant funds in 2017-18 that were extended through 2019-20. A component of that funding was an apportionment for capital projects use. These funds will be used for renovations a Syracuse STEM at Blodgett (formerly known as Westside Academy at Blodgett). For SCSD this represents significant capital expenditures for general construction to be reported in the Special Aid Fund, not the Capital Projects Fund. Based on guidance received from NYS DOB, the capital projects portion of this grant funding has been excluded from this reporting.

Calculated Benefits: Again this year, there is an anomaly when using the blended benefits rate for calculations in the report versus the actual benefits rates in our General Fund and Special Aid Fund budgets. The calculated benefits rate in Part A Section IV is lower than the District’s total projected General Fund benefits rate and higher than our total projected Special Aid fund Rate.

Part A Section II-A is reported with actual projected/budgeted benefits amounts. We are using the Section IV rate for all benefits calculated and reported in Part C and all other section of Part A. While the use of the blended rate allows for us to report the total amount of benefits correctly, it causes an insignificant shift (less than .2%) in the split between state/local and federal funding.

Receivership Schools: This year three schools were identified in the spring as receivership schools required by the state to close. In order to close and reopen new schools in these facilities, tremendous effort in a short period of time was required. All were renamed with community input, new leadership teams were put in place, thematic focus was identified for each school and more than ½ of the instructional staff was replaced. By implementing this change and opening with new programming, none of these three schools are eligible for Title funds despite their high free and reduced priced lunch rates. As such the District earmarked General Fund dollars to supplement services for students attending the new schools - STEAM at Dr. King, Brighton Academy and Syracuse STEM at Blodgett.

Urban Education: The population in Syracuse is fluid. Syracuse has become a settlement community for many refugees and throughout the year relatively large groups move to Syracuse with multiple families and children of varying ages. These children are placed in our schools and resources are provided to accommodate their needs accordingly.

Syracuse City School District serves an urban city population with relatively low property wealth and low income wealth. As such, none of our schools are wealthy or serve a wealthy population. Poverty is systemic across the City of Syracuse and each school reflects the communities where their students live. To compare one school against another based on relative wealth or poverty measures alone is not the only or best measure of equity.

  