

Public Charter School Funding – per LD 131 (PL 2015 Ch. 54)

Based on the passage of LD 131, PL 2015 Ch. 54, beginning with the next school year (2015-16), the State Department of Education will make direct payments to those public charter schools (PCSs) authorized by the Maine Charter School Commission and local school administrative units will no longer make payments to these public charter schools.

The calculation of “each” public charter schools subsidy will be based on a calculation similar to the public school administrative unit’s State Calculation for Funding Public Education (PreK-12) Report (ED279) and mirrors those requirements in current law for funding public charter schools.

Public Charter School (PCS) ED279 Subsidy Printout:

- PCS EPS Per-Pupil Rates – will be based on the EPS Per-Pupil Rates of the student’s resident school administrative unit (SAU). For the estimated new students, the State Average EPS Per-Pupil Rates will be used.
- Student counts for funding allocations will be based on prior year October 1st student counts plus estimated counts for those public charter schools that have increased enrollment ceilings established by the Charter School Commission.
- PCS Operating Allocation will include allocations for students who are economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient and targeted funds (Assessment/Technology/PreK-2).
- PCS Operating Allocation will be adjusted by the same transition percentage as applied to the SAUs – currently 97%.
- PCS Other Subsidizable Costs will include allocations for students who are identified (IEP) as special education and if the public charter school is eligible, funding will also include allocations for transportation and gifted & talented programs.
- PCSs are not eligible for the following funding:
 - Declining Enrollment Adjustments
 - Isolated Small School Adjustments
 - Debt Service Allocations
 - Bus Purchases.

Other Funding:

- Special Education:
 - High cost in-district – additional allocation assigned to the public charter school because of a high-cost in-district special education placement in accordance with section 15681-A, subsection 2, paragraph B. *“B. For high-cost in-district special education placements. Additional*

funds must be allocated for each student estimated to cost 3 times the statewide special education EPS per-pupil rate. The additional funds for each student must equal the amount by which that student's estimated costs exceed 3 times the statewide special education EPS per-pupil rate;"

- High cost out-of-district – additional allocation assigned to the school administrative unit because of a high-cost out-of-district special education placement in accordance with section 15681-A, subsection 2, paragraph C. *"C. For high-cost out-of-district special education placements. Additional funds must be allocated for each student estimated to cost 4 times the statewide special education EPS per-pupil rate. The additional funds for each student must equal the amount by which that student's estimated costs exceed 4 times the statewide special education EPS per-pupil rate;"*
- Career & Technical Education (CTE)
 - Cost of CTE education programs – a public charter school student's eligibility for and the funding of the student's career and technical education programming are the same as if the student were attending school within that student's resident school administrative unit.
 - Transportation – If the public charter school is located outside the student's resident school administrative unit, the public charter school is responsible for ensuring that the student is transported to the career and technical education center or to a location from which the student will be transported to the career and technical education center by the resident school administrative unit, the career and technical education region or the career and technical education center.

Any estimated student counts will be reviewed and adjusted based on the Fall student counts in the new school year. (For more details see "Charter School Estimated Count Adjustment")

The 1% that was formerly withheld by the local school administrative unit will no longer be withheld under the new direct State payment.

The 3% payment for the Maine Charter School Commission will automatically be withheld from the Charter School ED 279 calculations and the Department will transfer these funds to the Maine Charter School Commission.

Payments to public charter schools will be made monthly July through June same as school administrative units.

Preliminary ED279s for the 2015-16 are available at:

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/eps/>

May 12, 2015

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What does “newly expanded charter schools” mean?

A: Newly expanded charter schools are those public charter schools in the 5 year phase-in period that have annual increased enrollment ceilings established by the Charter School Commission.

Q: Will public charters be getting the same EPS amount that they do now?

A: The calculation of “each” public charter schools subsidy will be based on a calculation similar to the public school administrative unit’s State Calculation for Funding Public Education (PreK-12) Report (ED279) and mirrors those requirements in current law for funding public charter schools.

Q: Will there be a “cap” to how much revenue goes into this line item or is each charter school going to be an independent school district and the funding would operate purely according to how many students were attending?

A: Each public charter school will have a separate calculation similar to the public school administrative unit’s State Calculation for Funding Public Education (PreK-12) Report (ED279).

Q: Will this mean that Charters will have an April 1, and October 1 enrollment date for funding students currently enrolled?

A: Student counts for funding allocations will be based on prior year October 1st student counts PLUS estimated counts for those public charter schools that still in their 5 year phase-in period and have increased enrollment ceilings during that period established by the Charter School Commission. Please note that Charter Schools will need to meet “all” reporting requirements that provide the necessary data to perform these funding calculations – as well as those prescribed in 20-A MRSA Chapter 112.

Q: Does funding levels for estimated student counts include weights for Limited English Proficient (LEP), Economically Disadvantaged and Special Education?

A: Yes, estimated students also include funding for these statuses based upon state-wide average percentages. These will be adjusted based on the statuses of the new student enrollments in August.

Q: Will virtual public charter be eligible for transportation funds?

A: If the Maine Charter School Commission establishes a transportation percentage higher than 0% (bases on actual student transportation expenditures by the public charter school) then “yes” they would be eligible.

Q: Why is the Economically Disadvantaged percentage based solely on the Elementary students?

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A: The number of elementary students reported as being eligible is more reliable than those reported for secondary; therefore, we use this percentage and apply it to both elementary and secondary student counts.

Q: What does “base year expenditures” for Special Education Funding mean?

A: Base year expenditures means the actual expenditures that occurred in 2nd year prior to the allocation year. If the allocation year is 2015-16, base year would be 2013-14. If the allocation year is 2016-17, base year would be 2014-15.

Q: After the first year, would all charter schools need to enroll new students by August 1st?

A: For the 1st year and every year during the school’s 5 year phase-in, the public charter schools must enroll their new students by August 1st.

Q: What is the “notification of state contribution to public charter schools”?

A: This will be the February 1st posting of the “preliminary” subsidy calculation similar to the same February 1st posting of the public school administrative units’ preliminary subsidy calculation.

If you have additional public charter school “funding” questions, please email these questions to: tyler.backus@maine.gov