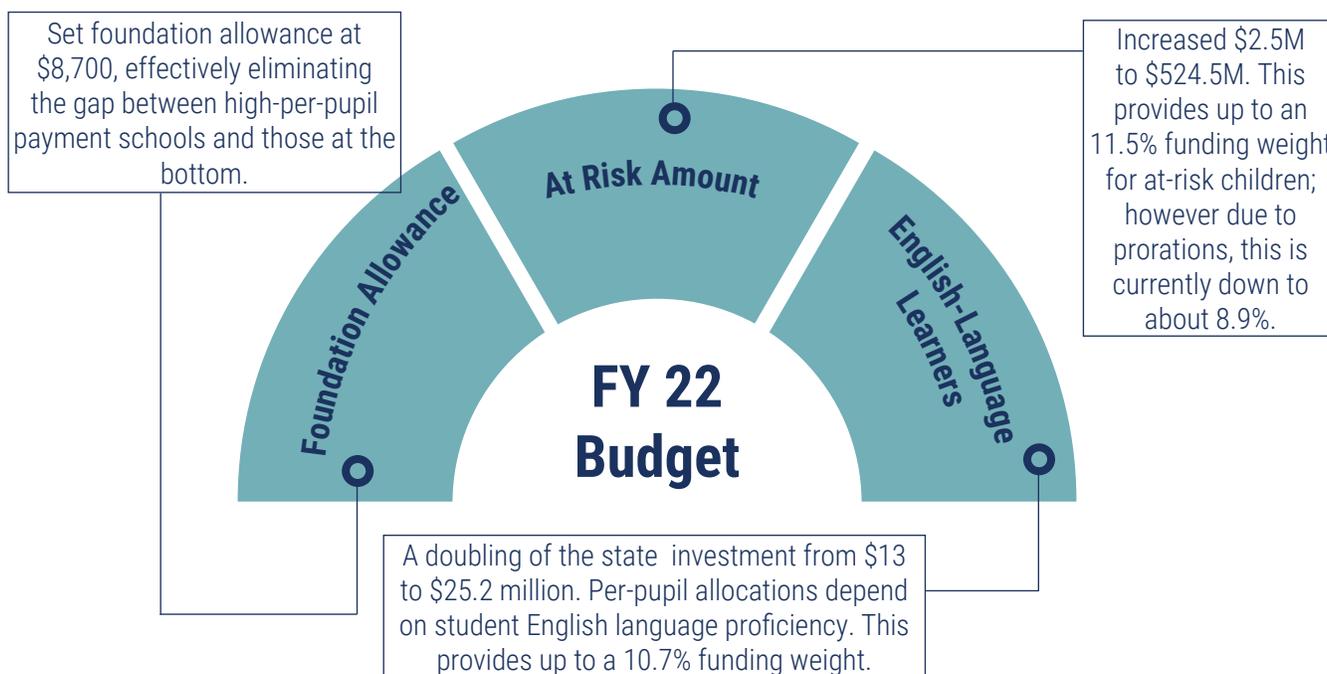




2023 STATE BUDGET PRIORITY: Provide More State Funding to Public Schools in High-Poverty Communities

Recommendation:

Provide the resources needed to address the educational challenges faced by children exposed to the stresses of poverty by adopting a School Aid formula that is weighted by the number of students in poverty, English language learners and children with special needs.



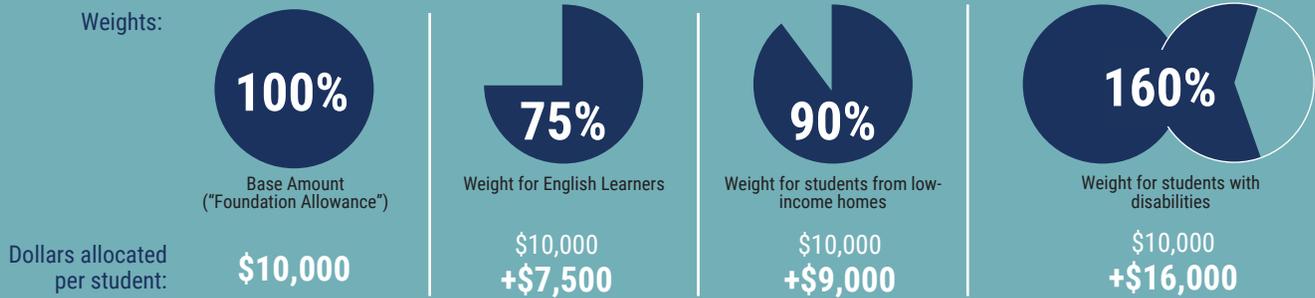
Equal funding does not mean all students have the same access to opportunity and achievement. Numerous studies of school funding in Michigan have shown that the state is failing to provide the resources needed to guarantee a high-quality education for all students, and particularly for students in low-income schools, English language learners and children with disabilities or special needs.

The nonpartisan Michigan School Finance Research Collaborative recommended in a January 2018 report that schools receive a base state payment of \$9,590 per pupil, with additional funding weighted by the number of students in poverty, the number of English language learners, district size and geographic isolation—up to a maximum of \$11,482 per pupil.

The At-Risk School Aid program has been the primary vehicle for providing state funds to schools to serve students who are at risk of failing academically or are chronically absent. Current law sets the allocation at 11.5% of the weighted foundation allowance per eligible pupil, but if the budget doesn't contain sufficient funds, payments are allowed to be prorated. Despite increases in recent years, the At-Risk program is still not fully funded and payments are prorated at approximately 77%.

Let's think about funding schools differently. Under a weighted funding formula, the state would set a base per-student payment amount (e.g., \$10,000) and then would add weights to that base payment for kids who are English-language learners or economically disadvantaged or who have special needs.

Hypothetical funding formula to demonstrate how weights work:



Under this example, a district would receive \$10,000 for every student with no additional needs, \$17,500 for every English language learner, \$19,000 for every student who is economically disadvantaged, and \$26,000 for every student with a disability.

Source: EdTrust Midwest

Why it Matters:

While family income alone does not keep children from learning, the many stresses faced by those living in poverty can—including, potentially, low parental literacy, poor health, a lack of stable housing, frequent moves, less access to high-quality early education and care, fewer after-school or enrichment programs, and increased exposure to environmental toxins like lead that can affect brain growth and development.

COVID has had a disproportionate impact on communities of color and high-poverty communities, and this disproportionate impact has extended to schools. A recent study by the Education Policy Innovation Collaboration at Michigan State University found that kids who had been underserved by school funding policies before COVID, including Black, brown, and economically disadvantaged students, were the ones whose learning was most negatively impacted by the pandemic, increasing educational disparities.

Weighted funding would help students all around the state. Below is just a small sampling of the 259 school districts in Michigan that have over 75% of their students on free or reduced price meals. 272,570 students attend those districts, which make up 29% of the state.



Based on Fall 2020 data
Source: Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information

Call to Action:

Follow the K-12 School Aid Appropriations subcommittees in the [House](#) and [Senate](#).

Reach out to your own lawmakers to talk about the needs of the students in your schools.

Talk to your schools about the needs their students face and how increased funding would improve education.