

District System of Support

Staffing Allocations

Developing a Staffing Standard: Several district administrators we interviewed recommend developing a staffing standard for the district that provides for equity among campuses, a growth model, and a tool to inform budgets as well as cost estimates associated with opening a new school. Setting a staffing standard would involve a review of the contractual agreement between the district and the teachers' union relative to: the teacher case load, maximum class size, teacher preparation time, number of courses taught by each teacher, number of preparations allowed for each teacher, and other contractual factors impacting staffing. Setting a staffing standard would also involve considering the student bell schedule; graduation requirements; the utilization of teachers and rooms at each site, and the cost per student. In addition, a District would need to review relevant State statutes as well as learn from research and peer districts. A District also should exam its own use of funding and possible reallocation of funds so that more funding focuses directly on teaching and learning.

Resources frequently used in developing a staffing standard include Board staffing policy, procedures, and staffing guidelines; certificated and classified union contracts; school budget and purchasing policy and procedures; any existing staffing formulas; pupil projection data, staffing FTE reports, current master schedule/s, staffing efficiency studies (students per teacher compared to state average and regional average), staffing ratios (the number of students per teacher, the number of students per administrator in each school), support staff ratios (number of custodians per square foot of school space, cafeteria meals served per labor hour), etc.

Some districts, such as the School District of Philadelphia, “prioritize staffing decisions based on student and school needs.” Still others allow funding and staffing autonomies for “pilot” schools and/or schools with records of student achievement.

District-level Staffing Committee In some districts there is a district-level Staffing Committee that includes representatives from curriculum and instruction, school administration, finance, special education, bilingual education, facilities, human resources, and planning as well as principal representatives from elementary, middle, and high schools. The Staffing Committee might be responsible for reviewing:

- Standard District enrollment and FTE projections
- Site enrollment and staffing needs projections by campus and by grade level
- Changes in low income, special education, English Language Learner, and GATE student populations – both district-wide and by campus
- District-wide and site-specific Budget Constraints

- District-wide and site-specific Budget Opportunities
- Any Special Programs and associated budget opportunities and constraints
- Budgeted unfilled positions
- Justifications for new positions

This committee is expected to be or become knowledgeable about the types of bell schedules utilized, the number and nature of course offerings, District learning and teaching priorities, and trends in student enrollment. Ideally, they would also learn more about innovations in the use of time in schools, national and international trends in education, the importance of finding time for teacher collaboration, and effective strategies to assure cohort pathway scheduling.

In other districts, staffing is determining at the school site level and frequently involves a committee made up of the principal, teachers, parents, and community members.

State Department of Education Guidelines, statutes, and regulations: Some State Departments of Education have guidelines for school-based decision-making on staffing allocations. The Kentucky Department of Education, for example, has regulations that govern staffing allocations. A few of these include the requirement that “all local school districts...provide to school councils a tentative allocation of funds for the next budget year by March 1 of each year with a final allocation draft by May 1”; a staffing formula for grades 7 through 12 of 31 to 1; a requirement that there can be no more than 150 pupil hours per teacher; and a requirement that each school must have an instructional leader and at least some part of a media specialist/school media librarian. In Kentucky, “all other certified staff are supplemental and not a requirement under statute or regulation.” The Kentucky Department of Education provides a Staffing Allocation Worksheet for district use.

District Allocation Guidelines: Some Districts have very clear staffing allocation guidelines, but also make allowances for variances in school bell schedules. In Jefferson County Schools, for example, the allocation for high schools supports “no less than 28 to 1 student to teacher ratio per class period. However, individual class-size may vary by grade level, dependent upon specific enrollment, space usage, and council decisions.” According to information available of the District website, the staffing allocation is established based on a traditional six-period instruction day and provides each teacher with a planning period. Jefferson County Board of Education also provides “teacher staffing for student scheduling as follows: Trimester, AB Schedule, and 7-period schedule. The allocations established also provide each teacher a planning period.” Staffing allocations for both certificated and classified staff are based on school enrollment.

(<http://www.jcpsy.net/Departments/FinancialServices/Documents/AllocationStandards.pdf>)

In Polk County Schools, Florida class sizes vary for core classes (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and ESOL) and non-core classes. Core classes are staffed at a 25:1 ratio; non-core classes are staffed at a 30:1 ratio. In Dade County, Florida the allocation of teacher positions in grades 9-12 is based on a FTE ratio of 27:1. (See sample School Allocation Plan from Dade County at <http://www.ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/81.pdf>)

Staffing Allocations are also informed by Data that may impact Projected Enrollment by Campus by Grade Level. These include:

Demographic Considerations/Factors

- Planned Residential Development

- New Home Starts and Sales

- Housing Projections

- Future Thoroughfare Plans (County, regional considerations)

- Historical Growth Trends

 - Neighborhoods

 - Apartment Complexes

 - Campus/Site by Grade Level

- Number of Occupied Homes by Neighborhood

- Estimated Number of Students per Home (by grade level)

- New Schools/New Zoning

- Five-Year Projection

Changes in School Configuration (adding a grade)

- New school or new program expansion

- Changes in transfer policy or school boundaries

Data from the sites that is also useful includes:

- Course Tally Reports

- Instructor Utilization Reports

- Room Utilization Reports

- The tentative master schedule/schedule of classes – schedule per instructor and number of students in each section.

Other District Considerations in overall Staffing include:

- Department staffing at the District Level

- Budgets for ancillary departments such as: food service, custodial, transportation, and maintenance.

Master Schedule experts frequently talk about how course offerings and course selections lead to the course request tally and how the course request tally results in the number of teacher needed (the staffing request) in each subject area. Critical ingredients in the cost of a secondary school program of study include the total number of courses taken by students, any class size restrictions (maximums and minimums), the total number of courses taught by teachers, and average teacher salary.

A Typical Staffing Allocation Budget Calendar includes dates and benchmarks for:

- A Review of Projected Enrollment
- A Review of any Demographic Changes (new housing developments, new schools/zoning, growth or decline in low income population, growth or decline in bilingual population, etc.)
- Staffing Requests (must include justifications for positions)
- Staffing Meetings (involving collaboration between district and sites)
- Staffing Adjustments based on enrollment changes

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that “cost” is not the only factor that should determine staffing allocations. There are examples of schools and districts where other criteria more closely related to learning and teaching, access to work-based learning experiences, or the value of personalization for students also come in to play. There are examples of districts that have reallocated funds to better align with their stated goals. Research on high performing schools has shown that there are myriad ways to organize staffing, time, and money in order to improve student achievement. Ideally a District creates guidelines that support equity in staffing and funding, but allow for innovation and creativity in addressing staffing needs.

Terms:

Revenue Allocations – Allocations that are consolidated into a single revenue line for the purpose of developing a school’s site-based budget.

Non-Revenue Allocations – Allocations that can be used only for a specific purpose and that cannot be consolidated into the school’s site-based budget.

Additional Resources:

Report: Pan, Diane, Zena H. Rudo, Cynthia L. Schneider, and Lotte Smith-Hansen, Examination of Resource Allocation in Education: Connecting Spending to Student Performance: Executive Summary (2003) Research Report, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Retrieved at

<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/policyresearch/policydocs/Executive-summary.pdf>

Includes recommendations to States and Districts

Sample School Allocation Plan, PK-12, Springfield Public Schools

<http://www.sps.springfield.ma.us/webContent/Policies/SchoolStaffingAllocationPlan.pdf>