

Gov. John Carney proposes expanding Opportunity Funding to \$75 million

[Natalia Alamdari](#), Delaware News Journal Published 7:00 a.m. ET June 4, 2019

Local leaders discuss if they feel high-poverty city schools should get more funding than suburban schools.

Delaware could see a boost in funding for high-needs schools in this year's state budget.

On Monday, Gov. John Carney proposed an additional \$15 million in spending on mental health and reading supports for high-needs schools.

The supplement brings the governor's proposed Opportunity Funding initiative to a total of \$75 million over the course of three years. The other \$60 million, proposed in January, would give schools additional funding for each low-income and English learner student.

OPPORTUNITY FUNDING: [Gov. Carney proposes additional \\$75 million in education funding](#)

The money has been approved by the state's Joint Finance Committee and awaits approval by the full General Assembly.

"Our job as political leaders is to make sure all those little girls and boys have the same opportunity to be successful in life," Carney said in a press conference. "Sometimes though, we struggle with that."

Schools would have flexibility in how spend part of the money to meet their needs when it comes to literacy and mental health, Carney said. But money would also be allocated specifically for special education and reading specialists.



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Governor John Carney announces an education initiative to provide support for English learners and low-income students statewide. *(Photo: Jason Minto, The News Journal)*

“We know that early intervention works, and we have children in our classrooms with needs that need to be addressed in order for them to learn,” said Stephanie Ingram, president of the Delaware State Educators Association. “This affects kids from all zip codes and all socioeconomic statuses. Students need to have a stable emotional environment before they can learn at any level.”

In addition to the proposed \$75 million, the state budget also allocates an additional \$12.5 million for school services; including funding for special education, reading interventionists in high-need elementary schools, math coaches, student loan forgiveness for teachers in high-needs schools, and elementary wellness centers.

[ACLU SUIT: Civil rights groups sue Delaware over education funding for low-income, disadvantaged students](#)

Carney's original move to offer schools additional funding for high-poverty and English learner students came in the midst of a lawsuit filed by the ACLU of Delaware against the state.



That suit seeks a change in the way schools are funded for the poor and English learners.

"We share the belief that these investments will help close achievement gaps," said David Bever, interim executive director of the ACLU of Delaware. "In addition to this temporary funding boost in a surplus year, we call on the governor and the General Assembly to support more substantial and permanent reform to education funding."

Delaware is one of the only states that does not give schools additional funding for low-income and English learner students.

The deadline for the General Assembly to approve the state budget is June 30.

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