

Centrally Funded Budget Process

Saint Paul Public Schools budgets its schools using a site based budgeting model. This accounts for approximately 50% of the General Fund budget each year. The other 50% of the budget is comprised of the centrally funded budgets that support schools. These are budgeted centrally and administered to schools in the form of staff and/or services.

The district begins the budgeting process by determining the amount of revenue that will be available for the year. Since the revenue that comes to the district is almost solely dependent on the number of students that are expected to be in the district, the projections of enrollment from the Student Accounting Office are critical to the projections process. The other determining factor is the laws that are in place governing the amount of revenue that the district will receive per student. A careful analysis is done and estimated revenue for the year is determined. Every other year the legislature is in session during the district's budgeting cycle what the amount of revenue will be that schools will have access to, so that complicates the revenue projection process.

Once the projected revenue is determined, the distribution of that revenue between sites and central budgets is made. It has stayed stable at about 50% to schools and about 50% to the centrally funded budgets that support schools since the inception of the site based budgeting process. Since students are not associated with many of the centrally funded programs, a pupil funding formula is not effective in the distribution of these funds to budget areas.

The 50% that is distributed to the central budget administrators is instead distributed based on the adopted budget from the previous year for each program, adjusted for the projected inflation rate. The Citizen's Budget and Finance Advisory Committee recommended to the School Board that this adjusted adopted budget be the base budget and that has remained the method of distribution for many years. This does not mean that program budgets never change from that base. Revisions to program budgets are made every year as a part of the Board's adoption of the annual budget and then become a part of the adopted base for the next year. In that way the Board is aware of and approves any major changes to program budget spending.