

2020 UPSFF Study Findings: At-Risk Student Need

Proficiency gaps increased for all categories of at-risk students with the largest gaps for over-age high school and CFSA students

The 2020 [Uniform Per Student Funding Formula \(UPSFF\) Study](#) revealed increasing [PARCC](#) proficiency gaps between categories of students considered at-risk for academic failure and those not at-risk between FY2015 and FY2019. Among at-risk students, over-age high school students and those in the care of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) had the largest performance gaps compared to both their at-risk and not at-risk peers.

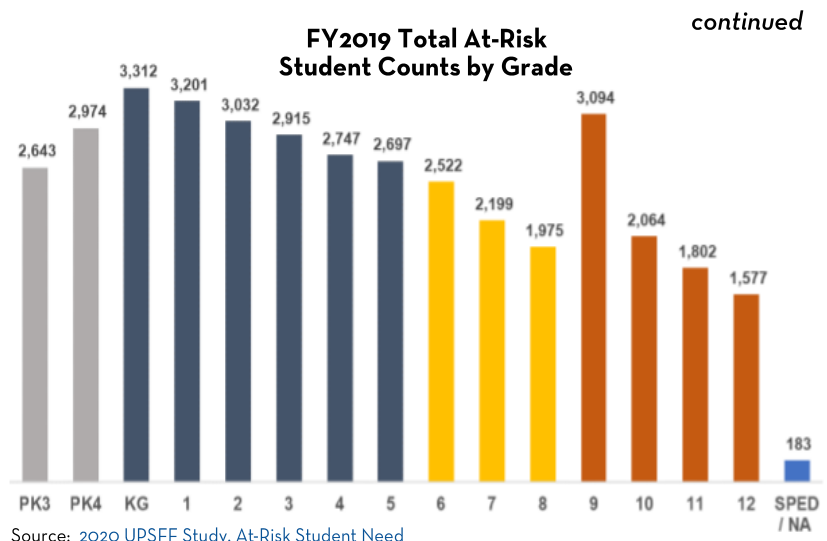
What is the UPSFF?

The UPSFF is a budgetary tool used to distribute local funding for each DC Local Education Agency (LEA). The formula includes a foundation level of funding for each DCPS and public charter school student. Supplemental weights including funding for English language learners, students receiving special education services, and students at-risk for academic failure are provided on top of the foundation funding in an effort to target more resources to students with greater needs.

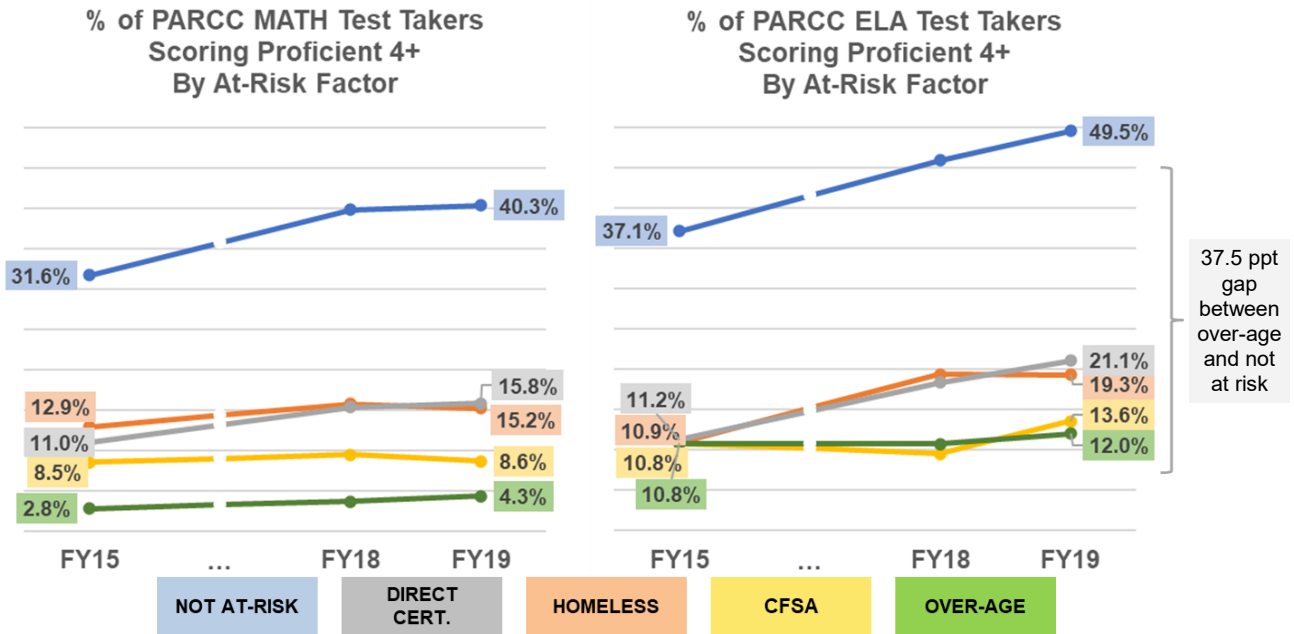
In DC, students are eligible for at-risk funding if they meet at least one of the following criteria: direct certification (student qualifies for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), homelessness, foster care, or over-age. A high school student whose age is one or more years older than the age expected for their grade is considered over-age. Each at-risk student is funded at the same level, regardless of the type of risk factor, the number of risk factors, or the combination of factors a student may have.

Population Trends of At-Risk Students

In FY2019, over 45% of all DC students



Student Proficiency by Risk Factor, All Grades



Source: 2020 UPSFF Study, At-Risk Student Need

were designated at-risk. The largest counts of at-risk students were in KG, 1st, and 9th grades; however, high school grades had a higher percentage of at-risk students. The spike of at-risk students in 9th grade was largely driven by the over-age designation beginning in high school. Of all 9th grade students in FY2019, 58% were designated at-risk, and one-third of all 9th graders were considered over-age. Comparatively, 44% of students in grades PK - 8 were designated at-risk in FY2019.

Performance Trends by Risk Factor

The 2020 UPSFF Study analyzed student performance on the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math PARCC tests and found that the proficiency gap increased between each category of at-risk students and those not at-risk between FY2015 and FY2019. Over-age high school and CFSA students

had the most significant performance gaps compared to both their at-risk and not at-risk peers. The largest gap in PARCC proficiency was 37.5 percentage points between over-age students and those not at-risk on the FY2019 ELA PARCC.

Aligning the UPSFF to Student Need

The 2020 UPSFF Study presented several options to provide additional support for student groups with greater need. These include increasing funding for over-age and/or CFSA students, funding over-age interventions prior to high school, increasing funding for students with multiple risk factors, increasing the high school weight for all high school students, or creating a higher at-risk weight for high school students who are at-risk of academic failure.

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