

**Public Education Funding Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
December 8, 2025

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

The Public Education Funding Commission (PEFC) meeting was held on December 8, 2025, with the following members in attendance:

Cindy Marten, Ruth Ann Miller, Ann Visalli, Laura Sturgeon, Kim Williams, Taylor Hawk, Susan Brown, Kevin Long, David Tull, Jason Hale, Emily Falcon, Nick Johnson, Rachel Valentin, Jose Aviles Rivera, Evelyn Edney, April Albury-Harmon, Karen Ewing, Cassie Queen, Sarah Celestin, Helen Anderson, Jennifer Fuqua, Britney Mumford, Gary Henry, Madeleine Bayard, Meedra Surratte, Marcus Wright, Lisa Lawson, Tyler Gunter

Also participating were Sarah Barzee, WestEd, and Michael Griffith, Learning Policy Institute (LPI).

[Audio Recording of Meeting](#)

### **Welcome/Introductions**

Chair Sturgeon opened the meeting and invited Anna Sullivan from WestEd to conduct a verbal roll call. A quorum was confirmed, and the meeting was called to order.

### **Approval of November 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2025 meeting. Marcus Wright motioned to approve and Sarah Celestin seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

### **New Business**

Co-Chair Marcus Wright summarized feedback from five public engagement sessions held to date (two virtual and three in person) and noted that there are two additional in person sessions planned for January. Overall, feedback was positive, with broad support for the hybrid funding model and its modernized, flexible approach, alongside a strong emphasis on transparency, accountability, and guardrails to ensure funds reach classrooms and students.

Key themes from public feedback included support for increased MLL funding (including interest in tiered weights), continued review of special education weights to assess alignment with student needs, concerns regarding local tax burden and referendum processes, questions about implications for Pre-K, and the importance of clear accountability and communication with families. Participants also emphasized the need for ongoing review and continued public engagement as the formula continues to be refined.

Wright then introduced Mike Griffith. Griffith addressed questions related to special education funding, clarifying that the proposed hybrid formula adds funding on top of current special education allocations. Under the proposal, per-student funding would increase across all special education levels (basic, intensive, and complex), and students who are also low-income or MLL would generate additional layered funding. While the proposal represents an increase, Griffith noted that funding adequacy remains an open question and recommended further study to determine whether funding fully meets student needs.

Griffith reviewed the proposed PEFC hybrid funding formula, emphasizing that the vote being conducted in this meeting relates to the formula's structure and progress to date, not a final version of the formula. Since approving the concept of a hybrid funding model in June, the Commission and the working groups have met multiple times, have incorporated input and feedback from districts, charter schools, and the public, and have made adjustments to most weights, noting that the weights for vocational education still require further attention.

Griffith outlined the project timeline, noting the goal of submitting legislative recommendations General Assembly in April, with potential adoption by July. He highlighted the need to advance work on equalization, which will be a primary focus in upcoming PEFC meetings. Key upcoming decisions include approaches to equalization, local funding considerations, total funding levels, and implementation rules. He also reminded the Commission that transportation, capital expenditures, and food services are excluded from the formula. He concluded by reiterating that major decisions—particularly regarding equalization, funding levels, and long-term review—will continue to shape the model and recommended a formal review after one year of implementation and every three years thereafter.

### **Commission Vote**

The Commission then proceeded to a formal vote to move forward with the proposed PEFC Hybrid Funding Model. Prior to the vote, the Chair outlined the discussion and voting process, including procedures for motions, discussion, and roll-call voting.

The Chair directed members to the language of the proposed motion and read it aloud:

*Members of the Delaware Public Education Funding Commission (PEFC) agree to proceed with the PEFC hybrid funding model, with the understanding that key components—including final weights, local funding reform, funding level estimates, and equalization changes—will be incorporated into the Commission's final recommendations ahead of the March 2026 vote.*

After the Chair called for a motion to adopt the recommendation, a motion was made by Marcus Wright and seconded by Tyler Gunter. Following discussion, the recommendation passed with the following vote:

- **26 Yes votes:** Secretary Marten; Ruth Ann Miller; Brian Maxwell (Ann Visalli); Senator Sturgeon; Representative Williams; Taylor Hawk; Susan Brown; Kevin Long; David Tull; Jason Hale; Emily Falcon; Nick Johnson; Rachel Valentin (noting the need for continued revision to ensure fair representation of all LEAs and schools); Jose Aviles Rivera; Evelyn Edney; April Albury-Harmon; Karen Ewing; Cassie Queen; Sarah Celestin; Helen Anderson; Jennifer Fuqua; Madeleine Bayard; Meedra Surratte; Marcus Wright; Lisa Lawson; Tyler Gunter
- **2 No votes:** Britney Mumford; Gary Henry
- **0 Abstentions**

### **Equalization**

Following the vote, the Chair thanked the Commission for affirming the overall direction of the work and invited Mike Griffith to present on the next phase of the Commission's work: equalization.

Griffith explained that while the proposed formula significantly increases funding based on student need—particularly for low-income and MLL students—it does not yet address disparities in district

wealth. He reviewed Delaware’s current funding mix (state, federal, and local) and noted that differences in local property wealth create inequities in districts’ ability to raise revenue, thereby affecting staffing, educational programming, and support for high-need students.

He noted that Delaware currently addresses equalization through a separate line-item program, which he characterized as outdated and insufficient to meaningfully reduce disparities. He described how many states have moved toward more modern equalization approaches that account for property value per pupil, sometimes combined with income measures, to balance equity and local control. Griffith illustrated these disparities using examples of significantly different revenues generated from equivalent property tax rates across districts.

Griffith outlined two primary approaches to equalization—maintaining a separate program or integrating equalization into the funding system—and emphasized that the effectiveness of either approach depends not only on structure but also on the level of funding dedicated to equalization.

He concluded by noting that the Technical Working Group would develop and present equalization options and scenarios at the January meeting, including considerations related to charter schools.

Following the presentation, public comment was heard, after which Commission members asked questions and shared perspectives regarding equalization.

### **Public Comment**

The commission heard public comment from Kendall Massett, Bill Doolittle, Donna Johnson-Geist, Erin Brian, and Olinda Coverdale.

### **Adjournment**

Senator Sturgeon noted that the commission would reconvene on January 26, 2026 from 4:00-6:00 virtually. Tyler Gunter moved to adjourn, and Marcus Wright seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anna Sullivan for WestEd

Updated on 12.22.2025