

District Policy & Regulations

BOARD OF EDUCATION COLUMBUS SCHOOL DISTRICT

FINANCES
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FUND BALANCE POLICY

The school district of **COLUMBUS**, organizes the accounting systems on a "fund" basis. A fund is a separate set of accounting records, segregated for purpose of carrying on an activity. A fund is established for accountability purposes to demonstrate that financial resources are being used only for permitted purposes. A fund will have "balance sheet" accounts consisting of "assets", "liabilities" and "fund balance," and a series of "revenue" and "expenditure" accounts. A "fund balance" is created or increased when fund revenues exceed fund expenditures for a fiscal period. Correspondingly, a fund's balance is decreased when fund expenditures exceed fund revenues. The balance sheet accounts identify the assets that belong to a fund, such as cash or a grant payment receivable; and what liabilities it owes, such as accounts payable to a supplier. The difference between the fund's assets and liabilities equals the "fund balance." A positive fund balance represents a financial resource available to finance expenditures of a following fiscal period. A deficit fund balance can only be recovered by having revenues exceed expenditures in a following fiscal period.

The school district of **COLUMBUS** has 5 different fund balance classifications as outline in GASB Statement 54 as follows:

Non-spendable Fund Balance: The non-spendable fund balance classification includes amounts that cannot be spent because they are either (a) not in spendable form or (b) legally or contractually required to be maintained intact. The "not in spendable form" criterion includes items that are not expected to be converted to cash, for example, inventories and prepaid amounts. It also includes the long-term amount of loans and notes receivable, as well as property acquired for resale. However, if the use of the proceeds from the collection of those receivables or from the sale of those properties is restricted, committed, or assigned, then they should be included in the appropriate fund balance classification (restricted, committed, or assigned), rather than non-spendable fund balance.

Restricted Fund Balance: The restricted fund balance classification should be reported as restricted when constraints placed on the use of resources are either:

- a. Externally imposed by creditors (such as through debt covenants), grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments; or
- b. Imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation. *Enabling legislation*, as the term is used in this Statement, authorizes the government to assess, levy, charge, or otherwise mandate payment of resources (from external resource providers) and includes a legally enforceable requirement that those resources be used only for the specific purposes stipulated in the legislation. Legal enforceability means that a government can be compelled by an external party—such as citizens, public

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interest groups, or the judiciary—to use resources created by enabling legislation only for the purposes specified by the legislation.

Committed Fund Balance: The committed fund balance classification are amounts that can only be used for specific purposes pursuant to constraints imposed by formal action of the Columbus School Board should be reported as committed fund balance. Those committed amounts cannot be used for any other purpose unless the district removes or changes the specified use by taking the same type of action it employed to previously commit those amounts. Committed fund balance also should incorporate contractual obligations to the extent that existing resources in the fund have been specifically committed for use in satisfying those contractual requirements.

In contrast to fund balance that is restricted by enabling legislation amounts in the committed fund balance classification may be redeployed for other purposes with appropriate due process. Constraints imposed on the use of committed amounts are imposed by the government, separate from the authorization to raise the underlying revenue. Therefore, compliance with constraints imposed by the district that commit amounts to specific purposes is not considered to be legally enforceable.

The formal action of the Columbus School Board that commits fund balance to a specific purpose should occur prior to the end of the reporting period, but the amount, if any, which will be subject to the constraint, may be determined in the subsequent period.

Assigned Fund Balance: The assigned fund balance classification are amounts that are constrained by the district's intent to be used for specific purposes, but are neither restricted nor committed, should be reported as assigned fund balance, except for stabilization arrangements. Intent should be expressed by (a) the Columbus School Board or (b) Business Administrator.

Assigned fund balance includes (a) all remaining amounts (except for negative balances) that are reported in governmental funds, other than the general fund, that are not classified as non-spendable and are neither restricted nor committed and (b) amounts in the general fund that are intended to be used for a specific purpose. By reporting particular amounts that are not restricted or committed in a special revenue, capital projects, debt service, or permanent fund, the district has assigned those amounts to the purposes of the respective funds. Assignment within the general fund conveys that the intended use of those amounts is for a specific purpose that is narrower than the general purposes of the district itself.

An appropriation of existing fund balance to eliminate a projected budgetary deficit in the subsequent year's budget in an amount no greater than the projected excess of expected expenditures over expected revenues satisfies the criteria to be classified as an assignment of fund balance. Assignments should not cause a deficit in unassigned fund balance to occur.

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Unassigned Fund Balance: The unassigned fund balance classification is the residual classification for the general fund. This classification represents fund balance that has not been assigned to other funds and that has not been restricted, committed, or assigned to specific purposes within the general fund. The general fund should be the only fund that reports a positive unassigned fund balance amount. In other governmental funds, if expenditures incurred for specific purposes exceeded the amounts restricted, committed, or assigned to those purposes, it may be necessary to report a negative unassigned fund balance.

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