

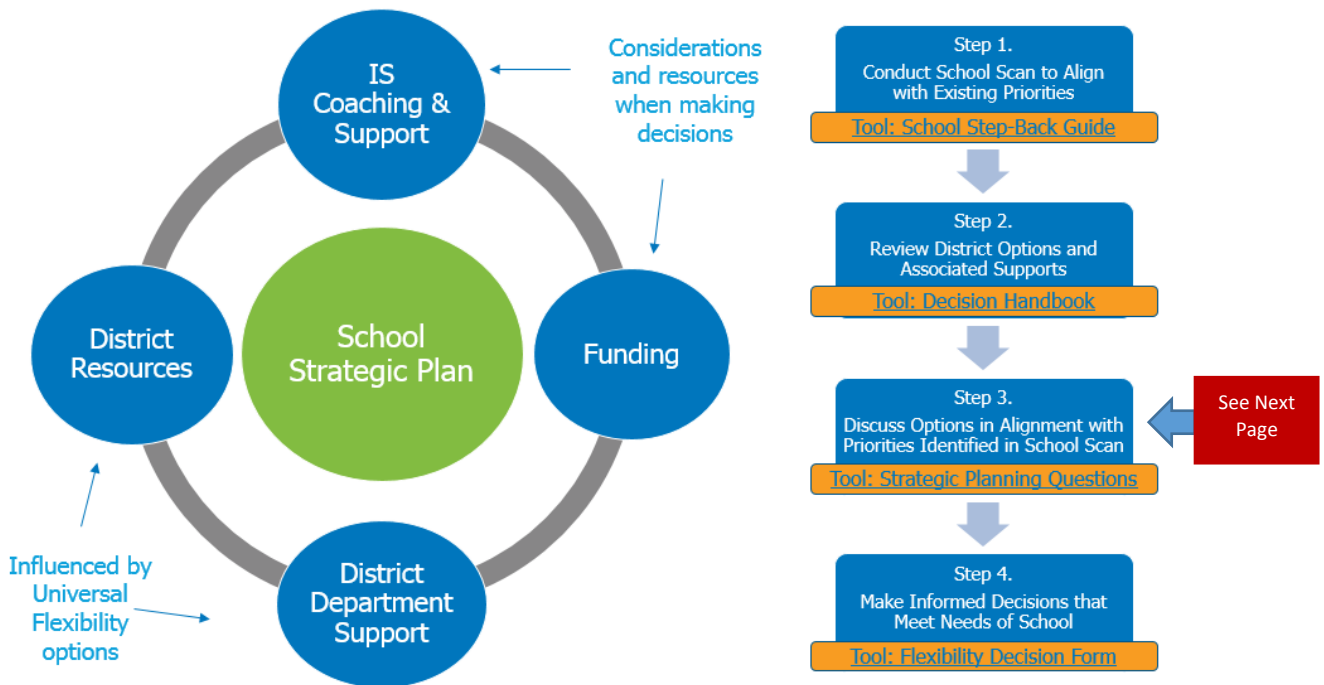
# Strategic Planning and Universal Flexibilities



This document has been created to provide school leaders with additional support for thinking through the impacts of Universal Flexibility decisions in their buildings. To learn more about the decision-making process or the Menu of Options, visit [flexibility.dpsk12.org](http://flexibility.dpsk12.org) or read the [2018-19 Flexibility Decision Handbook](#).

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND UNIVERSAL FLEXIBILITY

School leaders should make Universal Flexibility decisions in alignment with their school’s strategic plan to ensure the decisions they make reflect the direction and priorities of the school. As part of this process, school leaders are advised to review their strategic plans, as well as other existing planning documents (UIP, innovation plans, intensive school snapshots, etc.) and evaluate the ways in which the District options, available through the Universal Flexibility process, do or do not support the school’s priorities. School leaders can use the [School Step-Back Guide](#) to conduct a school scan, which includes analyzing current school data trends and adjusting priorities based on these trends. After reviewing and, if needed, revising the school’s priorities, school leaders **should engage their leadership teams around Universal Flexibility decisions** and carefully consider the capacity of both the leadership team and the school staff to implement new resources and/or programs. Additionally, school leaders should review their enrollment projections and budget. All of these strategic planning steps should inform the leadership team’s discussions and decisions regarding Universal Flexibility.



## Strategic Plan: School Improvement Levers

School leaders and their leadership teams may want to consider the strategic planning questions in the table below when discussing and deciding whether to opt-into or decline to opt-into District-supported resources.

One important consideration for school leaders is the alignment of the District-supported curriculum, curriculum-aligned professional learning, assessment, and small group instruction options with the school’s program model and instructional priorities. One option or another may align better with program objectives, student learning models, or priority focus areas of a school.

Another area to consider is the supports that a school will receive from DPS based on its Universal Flexibility decisions. In order to offer high-quality supports, the District does not have the ability to provide comprehensive supports beyond its recommended offerings in curriculum, curriculum-aligned professional learning, assessment, and small group instruction. As such, schools declining the District options will receive more limited supports from DPS and, subsequently, will have a greater level of school-based responsibility and autonomy than schools opting-into the District options.

More details on the key features and considerations of the District-supported options, the available supports based on an opt-in or decline to opt-in decision, and the responsibilities that come with declining a District option can be found in the [Decision Handbook](#).

*Table: Strategic Planning Questions*

School Improvement Lever	Key Questions	Potential Universal Flexibility Implications
<b>Overall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will your Universal Flexibility decisions impact or integrate with other school improvement strategies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universal Flexibility decisions should work as a lever in support of the school’s existing school improvement strategies.</li> <li>School leaders should consider their school’s vision and focus areas when making flexibility decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the current student and staff culture?</li> <li>What changes do you want to make to student and staff culture?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School leaders should consider their school’s population, current culture, and desired culture when making flexibility decisions.</li> <li>In some cases, the District-supported options may not be the best match for a school’s unique culture or student demographic.</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the vision for learning in your school?</li> <li>What systems, structures, and expertise are in place at your school to support the implementation of a new curricular or assessment resource or a new small group instruction program?</li> <li>What experience do you and your leadership team have in selecting and implementing curricula, professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School leaders should consider their vision for learning and their leadership team’s expertise and capacity when making flexibility decisions.</li> <li>In some cases, the leadership team may not have the capacity or expertise to select an alternative to the district option.</li> <li>If considering declining District-resources, the leadership team should carefully consider its capacity to implement and/or</li> </ul>

	<p>learning, assessments, and/or small group instruction programs in your school? If no previous, direct experience, are you clear about the guidance and expectations provided and the implications for the work in the school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the level of teacher experience, expertise, and knowledge of standards in your school?</li> <li>• What systems, structures, and resources do you have in place to support teachers in unit planning/lesson planning, scope and sequence design, etc.?</li> </ul>	<p>develop a resource without access to comprehensive supports from the District. (See Chapter 2 of the <a href="#">Decision Handbook</a> for details.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools should consider systems and structures in place in terms of lesson and unit planning, should they decline the District curriculum.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the school schedule for next year support your decisions?</li> <li>• How will your Universal Flexibility decisions impact budget and staffing?</li> <li>• Does the resource you are choosing have consumable materials that need to be replenished annually? Does it have licensing fees?</li> <li>• Does your school have the required devices and/or bandwidth to implement a specific curriculum or assessment?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From an operational and financial standpoint, school leaders should be aware of the impacts of their Universal Flexibility decisions.</li> <li>• School leaders should ensure that they factor in all related costs when assessing whether they could purchase an alternative with the devolvement funds they receive.</li> </ul>
<b>Data-Driven Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have a data team and data cycle in place to inform instruction?</li> <li>• How do you currently use data to inform classroom decisions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The District-adopted assessment options include data training and coaching supports.</li> <li>• A school should consider the needs of its data culture in order to make decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the Professional Development Plan and planning approach for preparing teachers for implementing new curricula, assessments, and/or a small group instruction program by the start of school and throughout the school year?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders should consider their current capacity for scheduling, developing, and facilitating professional learning, including any costs for third-party vendors.</li> </ul>
<b>Observation Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What systems, structures, and schedule do you have in place to ensure regular walkthroughs with targeted feedback and coaching for teachers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All schools will continue to receive curriculum-agnostic supports, but only schools that opt-in to the District options will receive curriculum-specific supports.</li> </ul>
<b>Whole Child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will Universal Flexibility decisions impact your most at-risk populations?</li> <li>• What interventions do you currently have in place to support your school's population?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Flexibility decisions should be made in alignment with the needs of the school's population, including any relevant legal requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What systems and structures do you have in place to ensure that families are engaged in student learning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regardless of Universal Flexibility decisions, all school leaders should notify their community of the resources they will be using.</li> </ul>

**Additional resources are available on our website at [flexibility.dpsk12.org](http://flexibility.dpsk12.org).**