



Shoreline Schools Budget Survey

Executive Summary

School Board Meeting
March 7, 2023



CONTENTS

- Introduction 3
- Survey Design 4
- Survey Analysis 6
- Summary of Survey Responses 11
 - Maintain Class Size 13
 - Focus on Student Learning 14
 - Maintain Athletics and Activities 15
 - Maintain Safety and Security 16
 - Timeline for Reductions 17
 - Salary Reductions or Freezes 18
 - Athletics/Activities Reductions 19
 - School Consolidations 20
 - Staffing Reductions 21
 - Conclusion 22

INTRODUCTION

Shoreline School District is engaged in proactive budget planning work in light of declining revenues and decreased enrollment in recent years.

Since a high point in 2019-20, the district student enrollment has decreased by more than 400 students due to COVID and other factors. Declining enrollment is generally anticipated in our near future, due to declining birth rates in King County and limited housing affordability. School districts both nearby and across the country have seen similar enrollment declines.

Along with a decline in enrollment, the District has experienced declining regionalization revenue from the State at a time when costs have increased. Ultimately, like our families, with declining resources we must rebalance our budget to live within our means.

For the 2023-24 budget year, based on very early indicators of what our resources and expenses may be, the district faces a significant overspending of estimated available revenue and a depletion of our fund balance (or "savings account"). Mitigation measures will be necessary to reduce expenditures enough to balance the budget and ensure we have adequate fund balance for unexpected expenses.

To address the shortfall, the district is making both short- and long-term plans to rebalance revenue and expenditures and enter the next school year as financially stable as possible.

In February, we sought feedback from members of our school district and community about priorities to help guide planning for reductions to balance our budget. These priorities will also help us to make decisions about services to maintain when possible. Finally, we anticipate that the feedback will be helpful as our budget picture improves in the coming years and we make decisions about what to restore and when.

As we consider our priorities, we are keeping our values of equity, safety, student growth, and student learning at the forefront when making decisions. We also believe in our individual and collective ability to create a system where a student's identity and ability are not predictors of success. To aid us in this regard, the district will use Shoreline's Race and Equity Decision Making Tool during budget planning. Even though we may not be able to reach the ideal by using the Race and Equity tool, its use allows for a more equitable process as we consider expenditure reductions. It helps us consider how race and equity impact choices by asking questions such as:

- Who is making decisions?
- Who is affected by decisions?
- What are the impacts of our decisions?

SURVEY DESIGN AND RESPONDENTS

Survey Prioritization

Survey respondents were first asked to prioritize a range of district services and supports for students, families and staff. This prioritization is one source of information that we will use to inform decisions about services to maintain when possible. At the same time, we know we will need to consider regulatory, legal, and contractual requirements when planning. For these reasons, there may be services in areas that receive a lower priority ranking that we will still need to maintain in some form. For example, there are state requirements for certain staff training that we must provide each year.

Survey Prompts

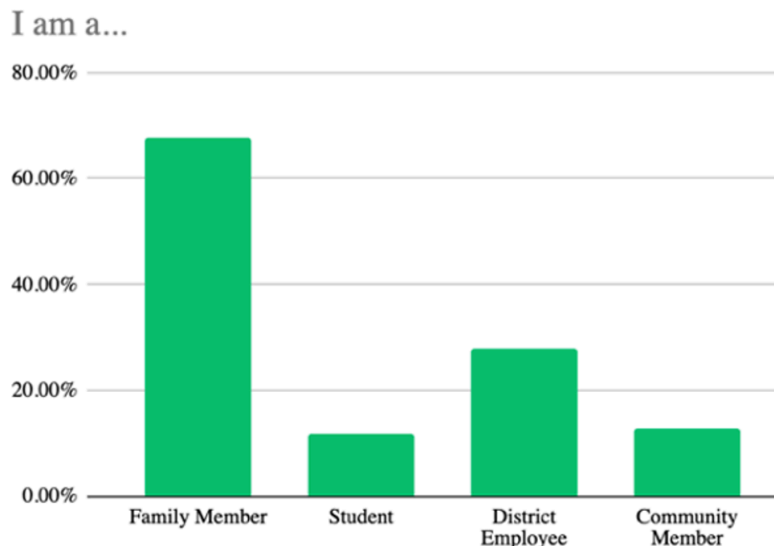
In addition to prioritizing services, respondents were also asked to reply to the following prompts:

1. Is there anything you want to share about the items you ranked above?
2. Do you have a specific suggestion for reducing the district’s expenditures?

Survey Respondents

A total of 1,878 survey responses were collected from families, students, district staff and community members between February 10 and 17. The survey was available in English and translated into Spanish, Amharic, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. A breakdown of respondents can be found in the figures below.

Figure 1: Survey Respondents by Group



SURVEY DESIGN AND RESPONDENTS

Figure 2: Survey Respondents vs. District Population by Race and Ethnicity

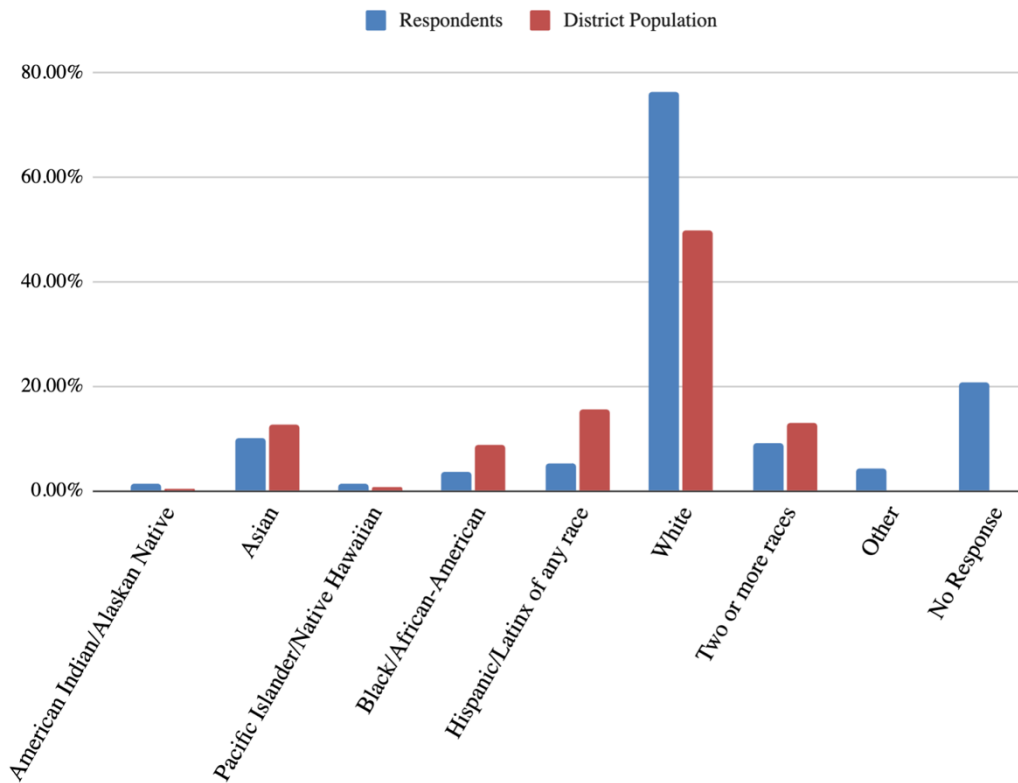
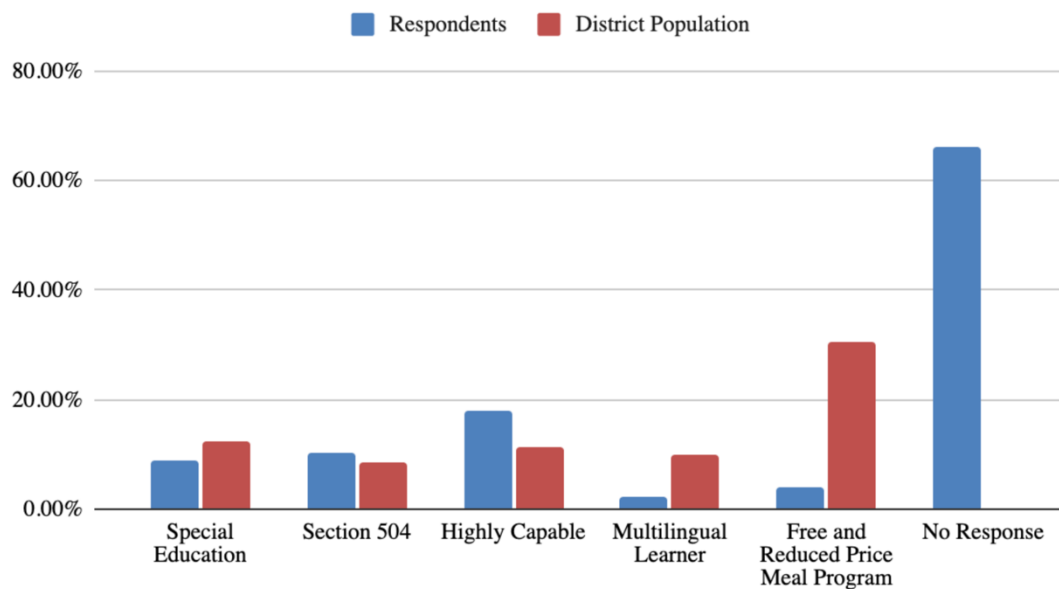


Figure 3: Survey Respondents vs. District Population by Program Participation



SURVEY ANALYSIS

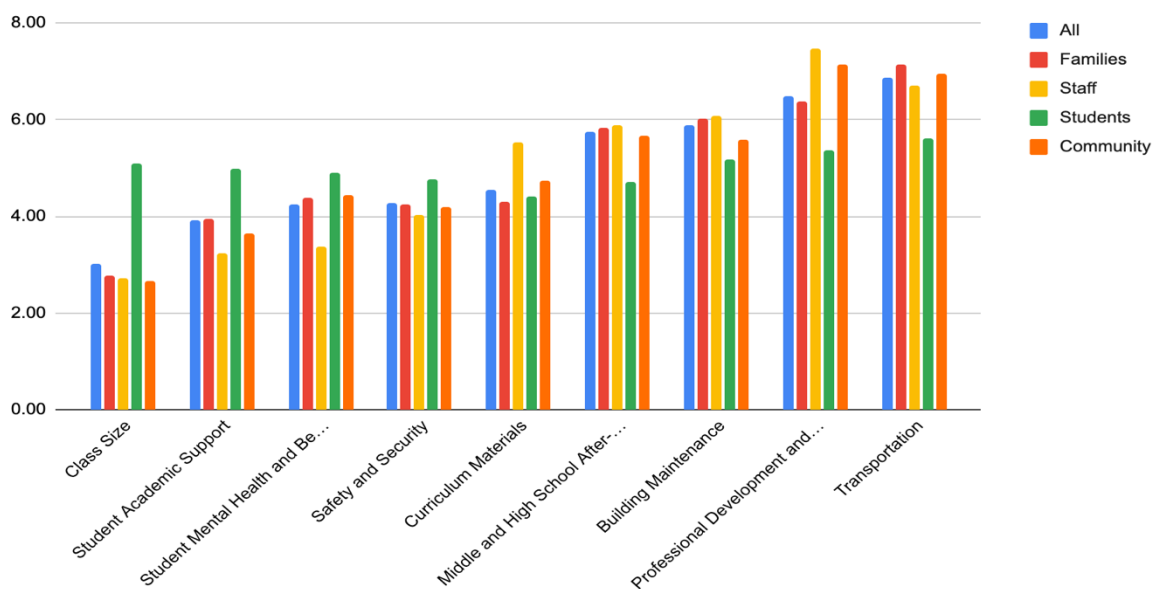
For the first part of the survey, respondents were asked to rank nine service areas on a scale of 1 – 9. A score of 1 indicated the area that was the most important to the respondent and a score of 9 was the least important. No two items could receive the same score.

Average scores were calculated for each item and were disaggregated by role and demographics. Results of the prioritization can be found in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Survey Prioritization by Respondent Groups

	All (N=1878)	Families (N=1272)	Staff (N=521)	Students (N=223)	Community (N=48)
Class Size (e.g. keeping class sizes at current levels when possible)	3.02	2.76	2.72	5.08	2.65
Student Academic Support (e.g. individual and small group instruction, tutoring, curriculum and other supports)	3.93	3.94	3.24	4.98	3.65
Student Mental Health and Behavior Support (e.g. individual and small group support, social and emotional learning, instructional materials, and coordinating support for students who need extra help)	4.25	4.37	3.36	4.91	4.44
Safety and Security (e.g. student supervision, emergency supplies, building access)	4.26	4.25	4.02	4.77	4.19
Curriculum Materials (e.g. textbooks, digital curriculum and other student and teacher learning materials)	4.55	4.31	5.52	4.41	4.73
Middle and High School After-School Sports and Activities	5.76	5.84	5.88	4.70	5.67
Building Maintenance (e.g. school and building repair, cleaning, and general upkeep)	5.88	6.02	6.08	5.18	5.58
Professional Development and Training	6.49	6.38	7.47	5.37	7.15
Transportation (e.g. bus service to and from school and school-sponsored events during and after school, walk distances)	6.86	7.13	6.71	5.60	6.96

Figure 4: Survey Prioritization by Respondent Groups

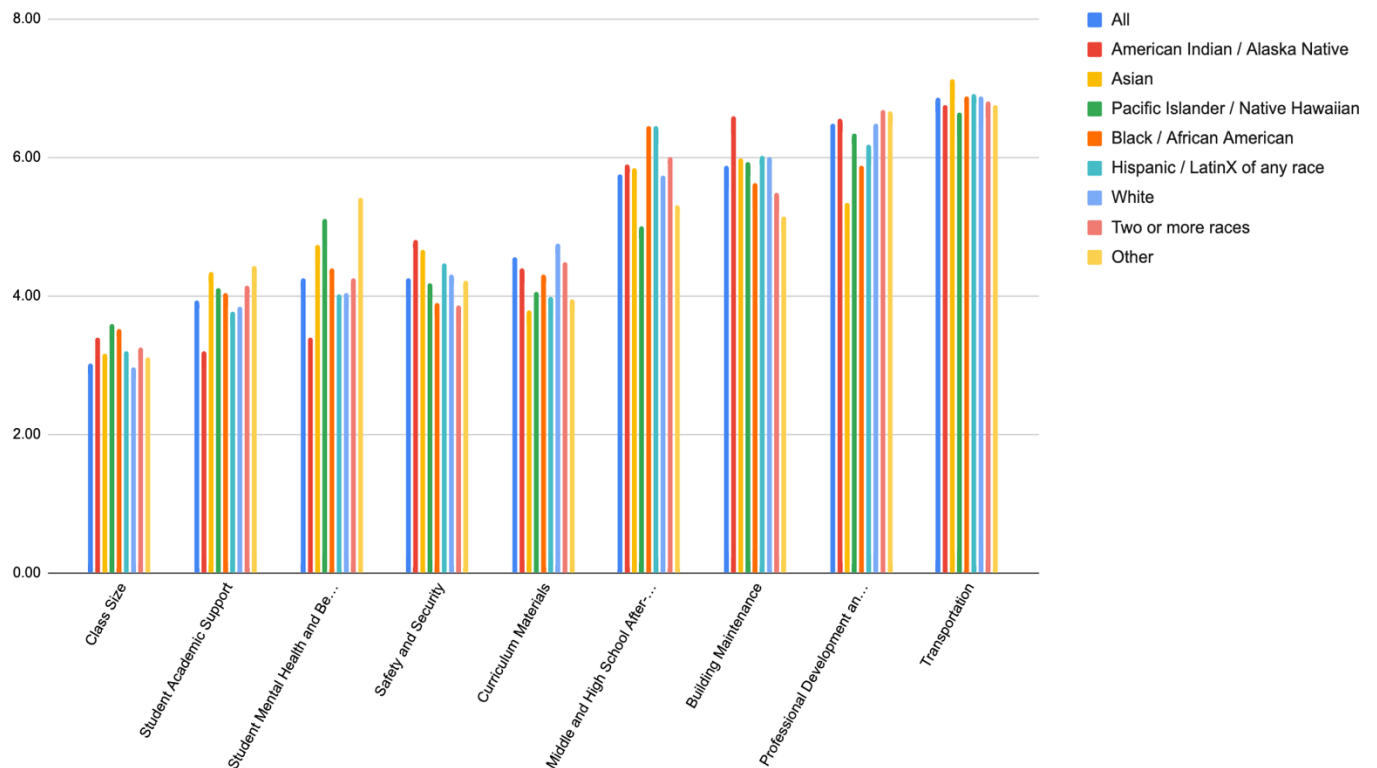


SURVEY ANALYSIS

Table 2: Prioritization by Respondents' Race and Ethnicity

	All (N=1878)	American Indian / Alaska Native (N=20)	Asian (N=150)	Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian (N=20)	Black / African American (N=55)	Hispanic / LatinX of any race (N=78)	White (N=1134)	Two or more races (N=136)	Other (N=60)
Class Size	3.02	3.40	3.17	3.59	3.53	3.20	2.97	3.25	3.12
Student Academic Support	3.93	3.20	4.35	4.12	4.04	3.77	3.84	4.15	4.43
Student Mental Health and Behavior Support	4.25	3.40	4.73	5.12	4.39	4.03	4.04	4.26	5.41
Safety and Security	4.26	4.80	4.67	4.18	3.90	4.46	4.31	3.86	4.22
Curriculum Materials	4.55	4.40	3.79	4.06	4.31	3.98	4.75	4.49	3.96
Middle and High School After-School Sports and Activities	5.76	5.90	5.84	5.00	6.45	6.45	5.73	6.00	5.31
Building Maintenance	5.88	6.60	5.98	5.94	5.63	6.02	6.00	5.49	5.14
Professional Development and Training	6.49	6.55	5.34	6.35	5.88	6.18	6.48	6.68	6.67
Transportation	6.86	6.75	7.13	6.65	6.88	6.91	6.88	6.81	6.75

Figure 5: Survey Prioritization by Respondents' Race and Ethnicity

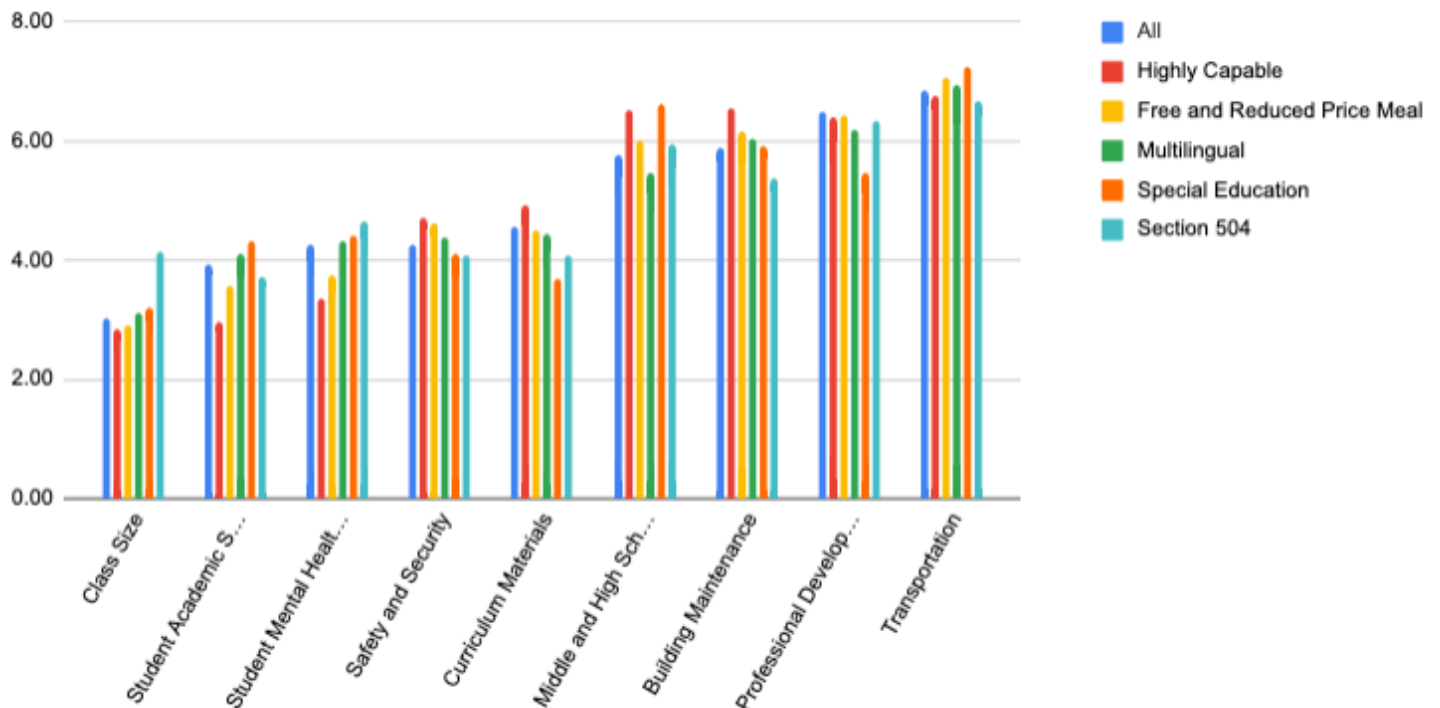


SURVEY ANALYSIS

Table 3: Survey Prioritization by Program Participation

	All (N=1878)	Highly Capable (N=335)	Free & Reduced Price Meal (N=74)	Multilingual (N=42)	Special Education (N=170)	Section 504 (N=195)
Class Size	3.02	2.83	2.90	3.13	3.21	4.15
Student Academic Support	3.93	2.96	3.57	4.10	4.31	3.73
Student Mental Health and Behavior Support	4.25	3.37	3.76	4.33	4.40	4.66
Safety and Security	4.26	4.72	4.62	4.39	4.12	4.07
Curriculum Materials	4.55	4.91	4.49	4.44	3.69	4.08
Middle and High School After-School Sports and Activities	5.76	6.51	5.99	5.47	6.62	5.95
Building Maintenance	5.88	6.55	6.15	6.02	5.93	5.36
Professional Development and Training	6.49	6.40	6.44	6.19	5.48	6.34
Transportation	6.86	6.75	7.07	6.94	7.24	6.66

Figure 6: Survey Prioritization by Program Participation



SURVEY ANALYSIS

For the second part of the survey, respondents were asked to reply to two prompts. For each set of responses, individual comments were reviewed by a small team and coded by topic/area. The frequency of topics/areas are indicated in the figures and tables below. A number of comments were general statements such as “*These are hard choices,*” and were not included in the figures below.

Figure 3 Responses to prompt: Is there anything you want to share about the items you ranked?

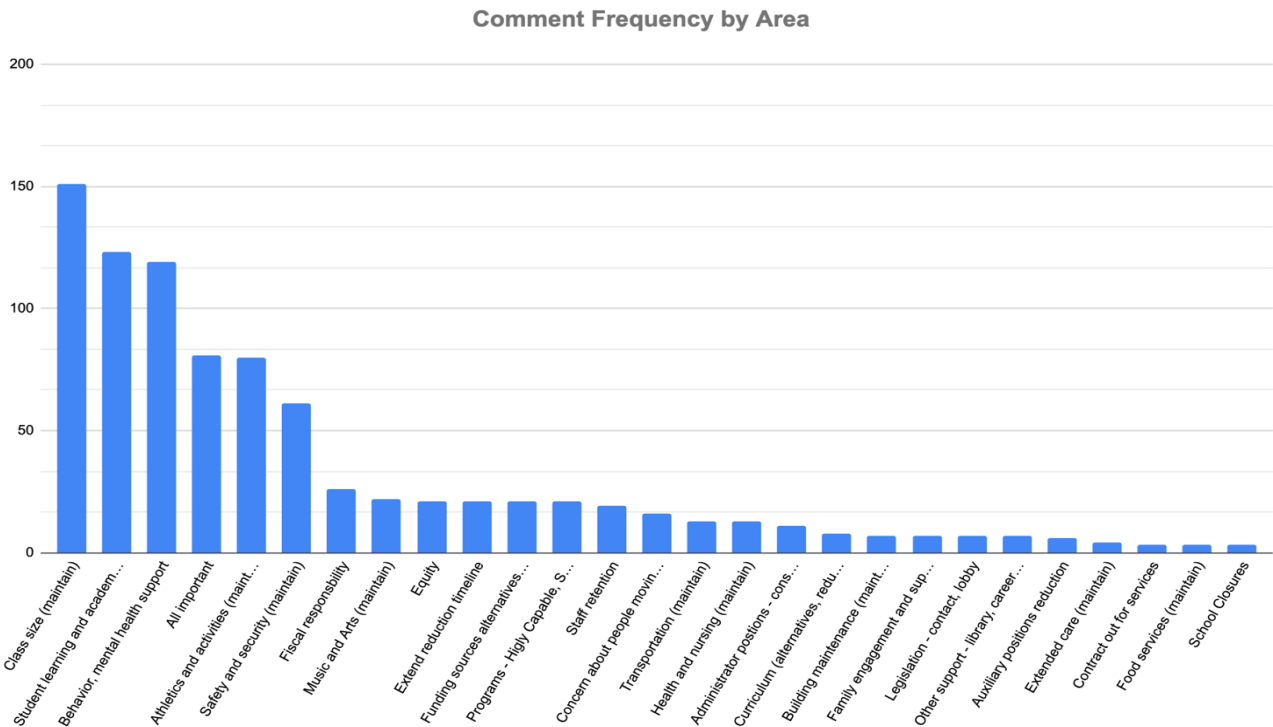


Table 3: Comment Categories:

Class size (maintain)	Transportation (maintain)
Student learning and academic support (maintain)	Health and nursing (maintain)
Behavior, mental health support	Administrator positions - consolidate, reduce
All important	Curriculum (alternatives, reducing costs, use of online)
Athletics and activities (maintain)	Building maintenance (maintain)
Safety and security (maintain)	Family engagement and support (maintain)
Fiscal responsibility	Legislation - contact, lobby
Music and Arts (maintain)	Other support - library, career center
Equity	Auxiliary positions reduction
Extend reduction timeline	Extended care (maintain)
Funding sources alternatives e.g., grants, volunteers, donations.	Contract out for services
Programs - Highly Capable, Multilingual, Dual Language (maintain)	Food services (maintain)
Staff retention	School closures
Concern about people moving out of district	

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Figure 4 Responses to prompt: Do you have a specific suggestion for reducing the district’s expenditures?

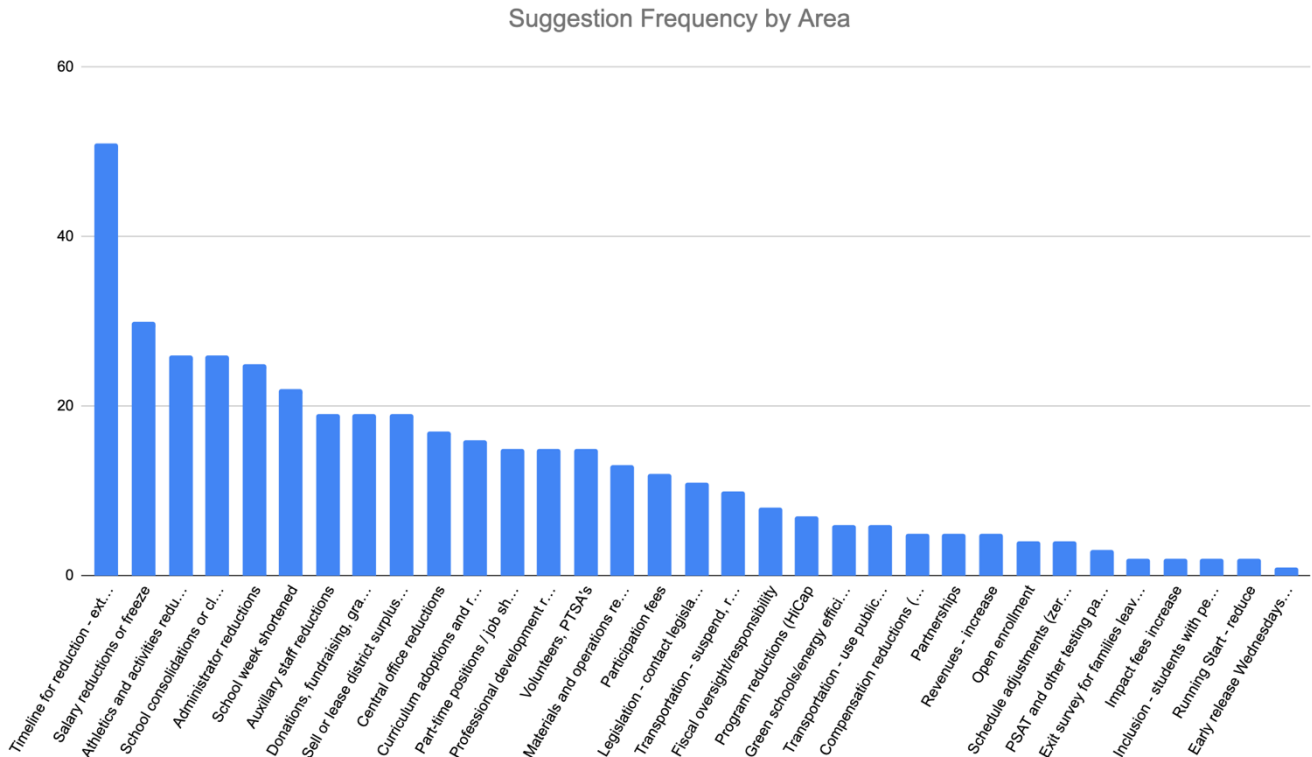


Table 5: Suggestion Categories:

Timeline for reduction - extend	Part-time positions / job shares reduction	Compensation reductions (non-salary)
Salary reductions or freeze	Professional development reductions	Partnerships
Athletics and activities reductions	Volunteers, PTSA's	Revenues - increase
School consolidations or closures	Materials and operations reductions	Open enrollment
Administrator reductions	Participation fees	Schedules (zero period, passing time)
School week shortened	Legislation - contact legislators	PSAT and other testing pause
Axillary staff reductions	Transportation - reduce, consolidate routes	Exit survey for families leaving
Donations, fundraising, grants	Fiscal oversight/responsibility	Impact fees increase
Sell or lease district supplies, property	Program reductions	Inclusion - students with peers
Central office reductions	Green schools/energy efficiency	Running Start - reduce
Curriculum renewals paused	Transportation - use public transportation	Early release Wednesdays - pause

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

This summary provides an overview of themes that emerged from the survey responses.

The survey can be divided into two general categories:

- The first category includes areas that are valued by people in the district and community. Responses in this category generally include services and supports that respondents encouraged the district to maintain when possible.
- The second category includes areas to potentially consider for reductions, though some comments also indicated areas to maintain or that might increase revenues.

The most common themes that emerged in the first category about areas to consider maintaining are as follows:

1. **Class Size:** Maintaining class size where possible. Comments about class size were the most common in the survey.
2. **Students and Student Learning:** Emphasize the importance of maintaining core instruction and attending to students' academic, behavioral and social needs in schools.
3. **Athletics, Activities and Extracurricular:** This theme includes maintaining extracurricular sports, clubs, music programs, and the arts.
4. **Safety and Security:** Making sure our schools are safe including student supervision, emergency supplies, school building access.

Other Areas: *Though not as frequent in the comments, other areas that were mentioned in the survey included the need to consider all areas when operating a school district; importance of fiscal responsibility moving forward; equity; family engagement; retention of staff and students; maintaining programs; and extending the timeline for reductions.*

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

The most common themes that emerged in the second category about potential reductions are as follows:

1. **Timeline for Reductions:** Extending the timeline for budget reductions by one or more years.
2. **Salary Reductions or Freezing Salaries:** This included primarily salaries of administrators, followed by teachers.
3. **Athletics, Activities and Extracurricular:** Though many advocated for maintaining athletics and activities, others encouraged reductions or maintaining at some level through participation fees or donations.
4. **School Consolidations:** Closing smaller schools and adjusting school enrollment boundaries.*
5. **Staffing Reductions:** This included administrator, non-classroom staff, and central office positions. It also included reducing the number of part-time staff.

***Other Areas:** Though not as frequent in the comments, other areas that were mentioned in the survey included pausing the renewal and purchase of curriculum materials; reducing professional development; use of volunteers and partnerships to offset costs; selling or leasing district property; reducing materials and operations costs; reducing transportation; and working to address state funding gaps.*

**Some items, such as school closures, would not be considered until 2024-25*

MAINTAIN CLASS SIZE

The comments related to class size were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **Connections to Teaching and Learning:** One of the most frequent themes was the connection between class size and educators' ability to serve students' academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs.
- **Current Class Sizes:** A number of comments spoke to existing class sizes and the impact that reductions in the number of teachers could have on their ability to serve students, particularly students of color and students from historically marginalized groups.
- **Impact of COVID:** Comments related to the needs of students academically, socially and behaviorally following the pandemic. Comments often referred to the greater needs of students following the pandemic and remote instruction, and that higher class sizes can make it more difficult to respond to these needs.

Example comments include:

The class size needs to be manageable for any teacher to effectively teach and provide specialized instruction based on the students in the class. -Family Member

We know, historically, when teacher to student ratios and mental, behavioral and academic supports are reduced, our students' successes are negatively affected. Even more, our Black, Brown, and Indigenous students, our LGBTQ+ students and our disabled students become further oppressed, neglected, impacted. -District Employee

Class sizes are too large. The students are complaining/noticing and making comments about it. Class size is about mental health and behavior support. -District Employee

Children, especially at the elementary level, have been significantly impacted by the deficits from virtual learning/COVID. Small class size and academic support is crucial for this group. -Family Member

FOCUS ON STUDENTS & LEARNING

The comments related to student learning were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **Core Purpose of Schools:** Comments included the importance of addressing academic learning and future success as a core function of public schools. Though many respondents acknowledged the importance of a variety of services and supports in school, they encouraged the district to make a clear connection between services being considered for reducing or maintaining, and the impact of those services on student learning.
- **Support for Students Who Need Extra Help:** As with the theme of class size, many comments described the impact of COVID on students and the need to maintain services and supports for individuals and small groups of students who need more if they are to be successful. Comments also stressed the importance of equity when considering budget reductions that impact student learning.
- **Behavior, Social and Emotional Support:** In addition to academics, respondents referred to other needs including behavioral, social and emotional learning that must be prioritized and addressed if students are to be successful in school.

Example comments include:

The core mission of public education is to educate. Anything that advances that mission should be prioritized. – Family Member

Providing support for kids who are struggling need to be a priority now more than ever given the continued effects of COVID and lack of in person instruction during remote learning during the pandemic. It has become a huge issue for a large population of students not only throughout the district but the nation. We cannot allow those who are struggling to continue to pass on each year with the academic gaps we have been seeing. This absolutely needs to be a high priority. – Family Member

BIPOC children are faring worse at Shoreline measures of achievement and if our goal is equity for students then support programs need to remain funded and increased, not decreased. – Family Member

Given the lasting impacts of the pandemic - mental health, learning deficits, behavior issues - these areas should be off limits for budget cuts. – District Employee

MAINTAIN ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

The comments related to athletics and activities were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **Connection Between Athletics/Activities and Students' Success in School and Beyond:** Comments referred to how sports and activities keep some students in school and increase motivation to do well in school; access to post-secondary scholarships and opportunity; and how sports and activities may contribute to students' well-being.
- **Community Connections:** Comments in this category spoke to the importance of sports and activities to school culture and the connections students, families and community members have with the school and students.
- **Visual and Performing Arts:** Comments related to the value of the arts in our communities; the quality of the district's music and arts programs; and how the arts help students succeed.

Students who are involved in sports and activities do better in school. Dropping them could result in even more students leaving the district. – Family Member

Many students rely on sports and music to feel connected with school. Many students also use sports to leap into post high school programs and receive Scholarships. Do not cut sports or other art/music activities. – Family Member

The Arts (fine arts, drama, band, orchestra etc.) and after-school activities and sports are what build a school community and help with student mental health more than anything! – Family Member

After-school sports and activities help support countless school communities that are vital to the overall school. - Student

MAINTAIN SAFETY AND SECURITY

The comments related safety and security were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **Ensuring Safety is a Necessity:** Students cannot learn, and educators cannot teach, if they are not in a safe environment. Comments described essential connections between safety, a feeling safety and readiness to learn. Safety was defined in terms of physical, mental, and emotional.
- **Local and National Violence:** Comments referred to examples of gun violence in schools.

I feel like making students feel safe at school, supporting their mental health and giving academic support should be a priority for schools. - Student

We live in a reality where we have to worry about safety and security every day, and in order for our kids to learn they need to feel safe. – Family Member

Given the current environment on school shootings our students and staff safety and security should not be impacted by budget constraints. – Family Member

TIMELINE FOR REDUCTIONS

The comments related to timeline for reductions were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **The Scale and Impact of Budget Reductions in a Single Year:** Comments in this category described the size of the necessary budget reduction and how making all of the cuts in one year will have significant and far-reaching impacts on schools and the services they provide, particularly in relation to equity.
- **The Duration of the Reduction Period:** Respondents recommended stretching the reductions over two or more years.

The effect 19 million dollars of cuts will have on the staff, students, and district as a whole will not last one year. The consequences will last for years: trust in the district will decrease, families will pull their kids from the district (losing you even more money), mental health will decline, and teachers will quit and look for jobs outside of shoreline. - Student

Make smaller cuts over a series of years. Supposedly this problem was not created in one academic year; it will cause too much strain on staffing and resources to try to fix it all at once. The district has made a heroic effort to recruit new staff that reflects the diversity of our community in the last several years. Cutting FTE at the rate that is being discussed will eliminate all of that hard work, and negatively impact students' experience across the board. – District Employee

Extend the length of replacing reserves so that the district isn't trying to do it this fiscal year/in a couple fiscal years. – Family Member

No specific suggestions other than to say that if we make drastic cuts because there is a desire to replenish the shortfall within a year instead of the recommended plan of a slow and steady replenishment, more students will leave the district which will only extend the crisis. – Family Member

SALARY REDUCTIONS OR FREEZES

The comments related to salary reductions or freezes were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **Reductions for Those Earning the Most:** Comments in this category focused primarily on administrator salaries, with some referring to teachers as well.
- **Salary Freezes:** Respondents recommended freezing salary increases for some or all administrators and staff.

Implement salary reductions across professional admin and staff. – Family Member

I would not want to see any pay cuts for non-certificated staff. – District Employee

*Freeze any annual salary increases. Sorry, unpopular idea, but probably necessary and happens in other industries. Furlough/percentage pay cuts to high salaried employees. Again, unpopular but happens in other industries as well and if this is a crisis, it should not just effect the kids and the schools, but all areas of the district.
– Family Member*

ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES REDUCTIONS

The comments related to reducing athletics and activities were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **Need to Prioritize:** While many respondents acknowledged the value of sports and activities, when held up to other services, they encouraged reductions or alternatives.
- **Offsetting Costs through Fees and Donations:** Respondents recommended considering other sources of funding for athletics and activities.

*While it pains me to say this, schools' primary function is education, so I would cut sports, clubs, and extra activities ahead of anything directly impacting the classroom.
– Family Member*

Our family would be willing to pay more for sports and activities fees and tickets to school games and productions. – Family Member

It may be necessary to charge activities and athletics fees (with exception for families receiving free and reduced meals of course). – Family Member

Make budget cuts for after-school sports and activities, and then encourage participants' families to donate money or do fundraising to meet their needs. - Family Member

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATIONS

The comments related to school consolidations were primarily focused on the following topics:

- **Past Experience and Examples from Neighboring Districts:** Respondents pointed to examples of school consolidations and closures in Shoreline during past budget reductions, and closures being considered in neighboring districts.
- **Strategic Consolidations:** Respondents recommended closing schools and/or programs with lower enrollment.

Consolidate nearby elementary schools and temporarily close a school or schools. This has been done to good effect in the past. - Family Member

Can we close schools sooner than later? Bellevue and Seattle are doing it within months of announcing their intentions. We are a small district, and although it's an agonizing decision, some schools are small and neighborhood students could be redistributed. – Family Member

Close schools if insufficient enrollment and projections are for continued decrease. - Family Member

STAFFING REDUCTIONS

The comments related to staff reductions were primarily focused on:

- **Reductions of Positions Furthest from Classrooms:** Many comments included recommendations for reducing administrative positions, followed by central office and other non-classroom positions.

Reduce expenditures on district-office administrative staff. – Community Member

*The first area to cut budget should be at the administrative/district level.
– Family Member*

Cuts should first be oriented at faculty and staff that are furthest from direct work with students. – District Employee

CONCLUSION

We wish to express our appreciation to our students, staff, families, and community for engaging in this process. We recognize the significant challenge ahead of us, and your contribution will inform the decisions about services to reduce and to maintain when possible. The responses to this survey and other feedback received during this process will also be helpful as our budget picture improves in the coming years and we make decisions about what to restore and when.

