

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

2025-26 Financial Stability Planning

January 2025

FOR OUR FUTURE WORLD
Bellevue School District Strategic Plan



Our Financial Reality

Like many districts across the state, we are grappling with a substantial budget deficit caused by rising costs, increased student needs, and inadequate state funding. Since COVID, we have been spending more than we receive in revenue, leading to the depletion of our reserves below the 5% required by board policy.

To put us on a path to restoring our financial stability, **we need to reduce spending by approximately \$20M for the 2025–26 school year. That’s on top of the \$10M that we are already working to cut from this year’s spending. This means making tough decisions about programs, services, and staffing.**

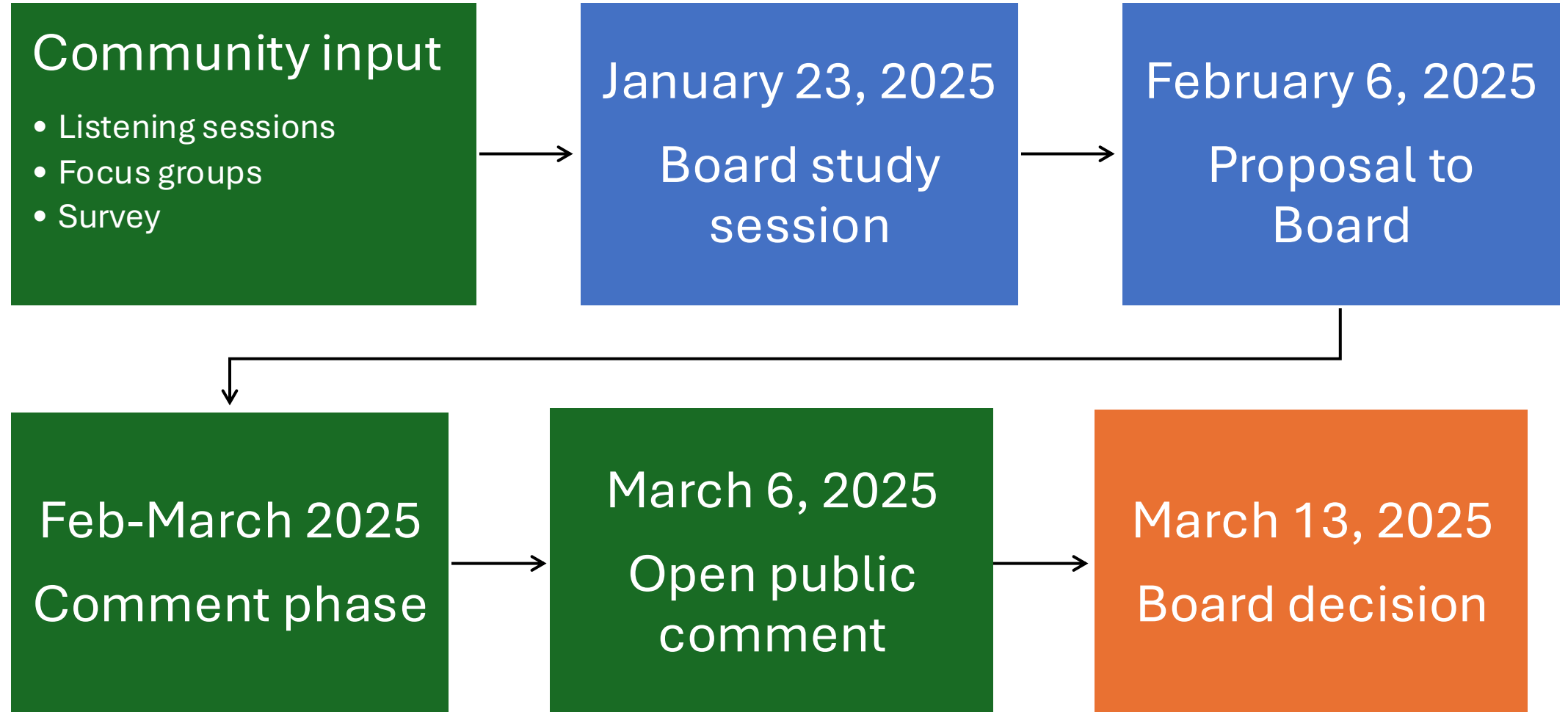


Community Engagement Plan

- **Phase 1: Community Input (January)**
 - EDDM Spectrum of Engagement: Inform and Consult
 - Purpose: to understand our community's perspectives and ideas on ways to reduce spending, generate revenue, and prioritize trade-offs
 - Includes: listening sessions, focus groups, and survey
- **Phase 2: Comment Phase (February – March)**
 - EDDM Spectrum of Engagement: Inform and Consult
 - Purpose: to provide an opportunity for our community to comment on the Spending Reductions Proposal that will be shared on February 6
 - Will include a survey and public comment



Timeline



Community Input

STUDENT OUTREACH

- Chinook
- Student Advisory Group
- Interlake High School ASB
- Tillicum
- Newport High School Black Student Union Group

STAFF LISTENING LUNCHES

- All 28 Schools (16 elementary, 5 middle, 4 high school, 2 choice, and Digital Discovery)
- ESC, ESC-West, MSC, and WISC



FAMILY OUTREACH

- Focus on underserved communities
- Spanish session at Highland
- Families of students receiving special education, multilingual, and advanced learning services
- Families experiencing housing insecurity
- With support from our community partners

SURVEY

- Open January 13 - 24

EMAIL

- communityinput@bsd405.org

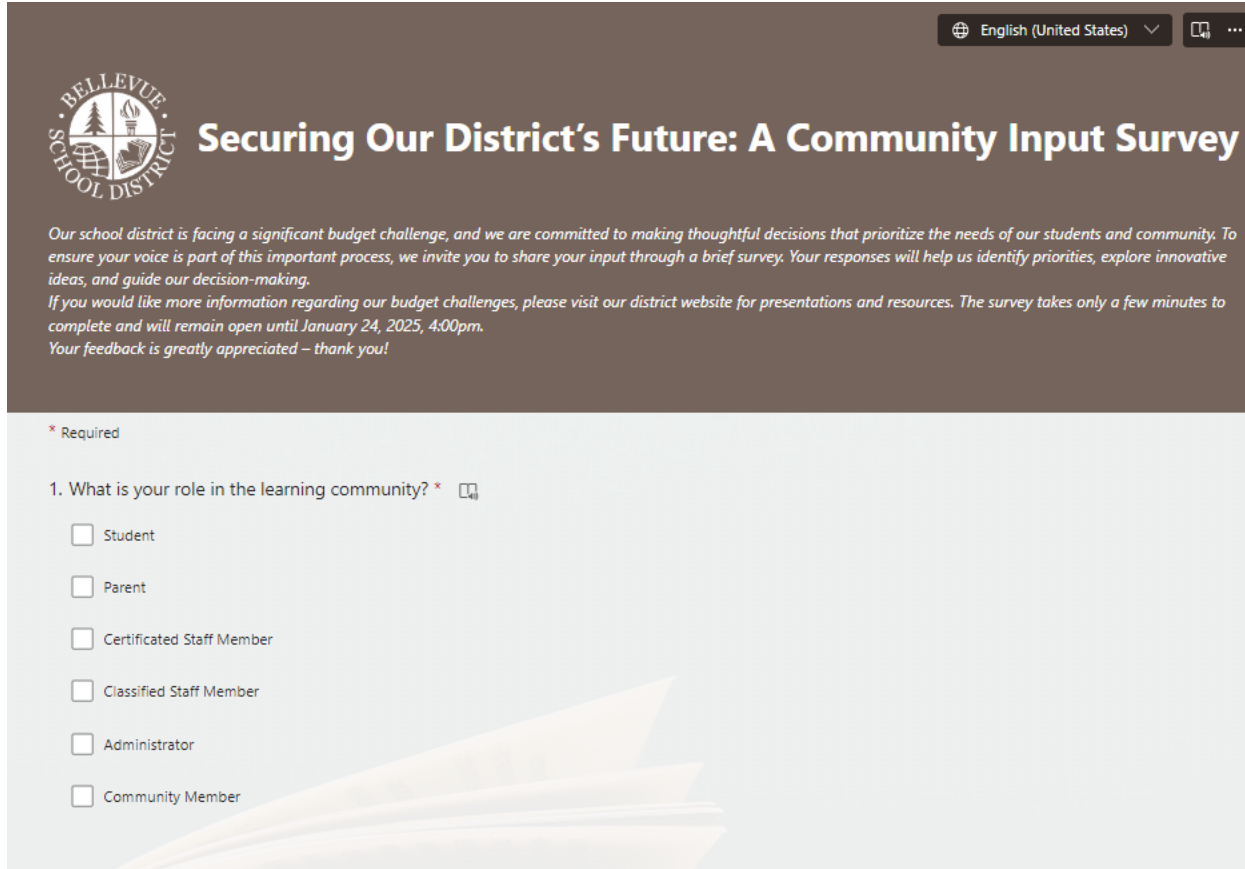
COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

- Two in-person Community Listening Sessions
- One online Listening Session


ADMINISTRATOR LISTENING SESSIONS

- Two elementary sessions
- Two secondary sessions

Community Input Survey



English (United States) [Language dropdown] [Accessibility icon]



Securing Our District's Future: A Community Input Survey

Our school district is facing a significant budget challenge, and we are committed to making thoughtful decisions that prioritize the needs of our students and community. To ensure your voice is part of this important process, we invite you to share your input through a brief survey. Your responses will help us identify priorities, explore innovative ideas, and guide our decision-making.

If you would like more information regarding our budget challenges, please visit our district website for presentations and resources. The survey takes only a few minutes to complete and will remain open until January 24, 2025, 4:00pm.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated – thank you!

* Required

1. What is your role in the learning community? * [Accessibility icon]

- Student
- Parent
- Certificated Staff Member
- Classified Staff Member
- Administrator
- Community Member

1120 responses
received

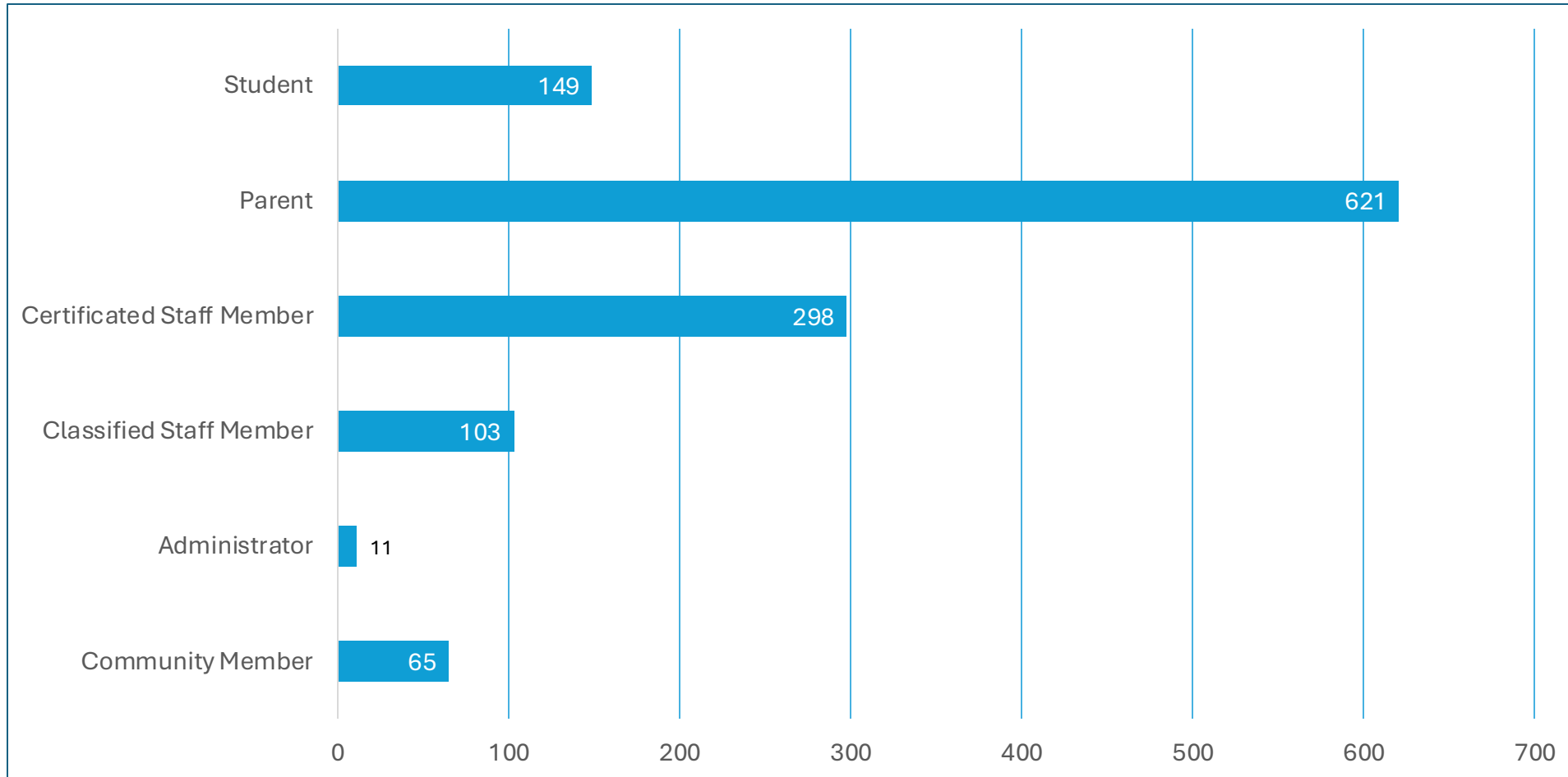


Survey Questions

- How well do you understand the district's current financial situation and the need for long-term stability?
- If you feel less informed, what additional information would be helpful?
- What cost-saving measures would you recommend for the district to consider during this budget challenge?
- Do you have suggestions for new programs or initiatives that could attract more students to our district or other ideas for increasing revenue?
- Please provide any other ideas or comments regarding budget reductions.



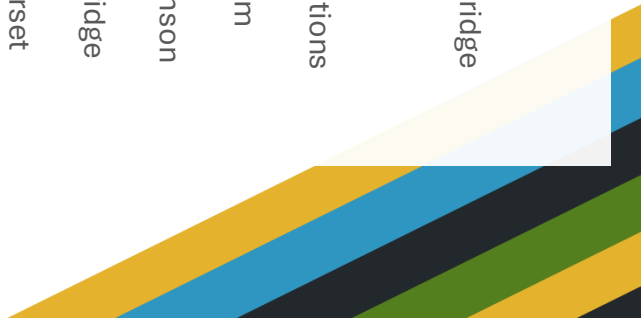
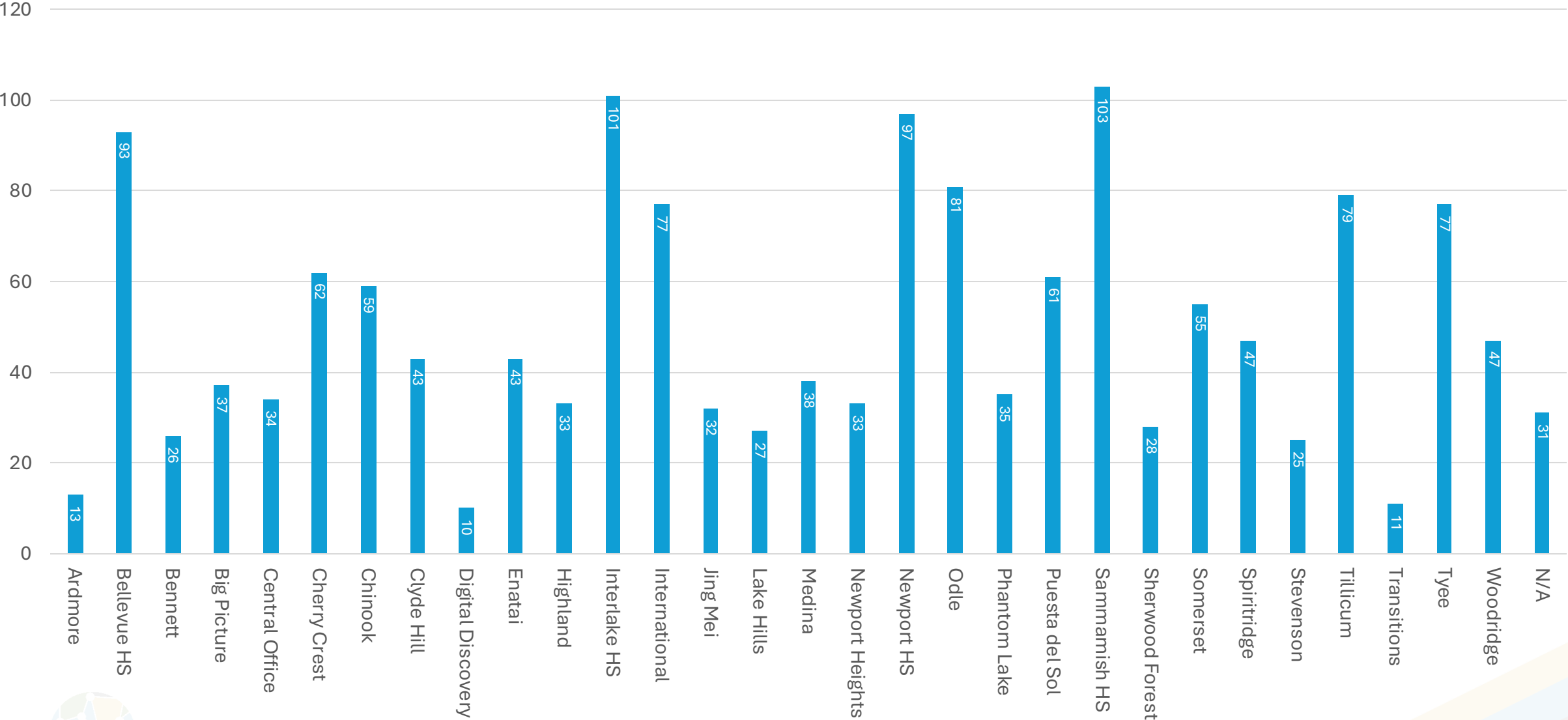
Survey Results – Who has responded?



Total Responses as of Jan 26th, 2025: 1120



Survey Results – Where have the responses come from?



Survey Results – Overall Common Themes

Increase Budget & Spending Transparency

- Many respondents expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in budget allocation and the need for detailed breakdowns of spending, especially in special education and administrative costs.

Protect Class Size & Staffing

- There were frequent mentions of the need to maintain or reduce class sizes and concerns about potential staff reductions, particularly among teachers and support staff.

Prioritize Core Programs & Services

- Respondents highlighted the importance of prioritizing core educational programs and services, with some suggesting cuts to non-essential programs or administrative roles.

Implement Cost-Saving Measures

- Suggestions included reducing administrative overhead, consolidating underutilized facilities, and implementing energy-saving measures.

Survey Results – Common Themes by Group

Students

- Focused on maintaining quality education and extracurricular activities, with some suggesting innovative fundraising ideas.

Parents

- Emphasized the need for transparency and accountability in budget decisions, with concerns about the impact of cuts on educational quality and student support services.

Certificated Staff

- Highlighted the importance of maintaining manageable class sizes and adequate support staff, with suggestions for reducing administrative costs.

Classified Staff

- Focused on job security and the need for clear communication about budget decisions and their impact on staff roles.

Administrators

- Suggested strategic cuts and efficiency improvements, with a focus on maintaining essential services and programs.

Community Members

- Emphasized the need for community involvement in budget decisions and suggested partnerships with local businesses and organizations for additional funding.

Survey Results – Cost-Saving Measures Examples

Staffing Savings

- Suggestions included reducing administrative roles, consolidating positions, and offering early retirement incentives.

Facility Usage

- Ideas included consolidating underutilized facilities, renting out school spaces, and implementing energy-saving measures.

Technology

- Proposals for reducing technology costs included limiting device purchases and exploring more cost-effective software solutions.

Program Adjustment

- Suggestions included cutting non-essential programs, reducing the frequency of professional development days, and streamlining curriculum offerings.

Survey Results – Revenue Generation & Attracting Students

Start or Enhance Programs

- Expand STEM programs to attract more students interested in science and technology.
- Enhance arts programs and extracurricular activities to increase student engagement and enrollment.
- Expand career and technical education programs to provide students with practical skills and job opportunities.

Generate Revenue

- Proposals for increasing enrollment through targeted marketing and outreach efforts.
- Ideas for renting out school facilities for community events and private functions.
- Suggestions for securing corporate sponsorships for specific programs and initiatives.

Reduce Waste

- Combining program expansions with efficiency improvements, such as using existing resources more effectively and reducing waste.

Stakeholder Group Preferences:

- **Students:** Prioritized technology-based offerings and innovative programs.
- **Parents:** Focused on extracurricular programs and community partnerships.
- **Staff:** Maintain essential services and programs while exploring new revenue sources.

Survey Results – Additional Comments by Themes

Improve Communication

- Need for better communication and transparency.

Ensure Equitable Access

- Ensuring all students have access to quality education.

Support Staff Morale & Wellbeing

- Importance of supporting staff to maintain morale and effectiveness.

Focus on Student Achievement and Wellbeing

- Focus on improving student achievement and well-being.

Listening Sessions and Focus Groups



What is **important** to you about your child's education that you want us to consider when coming up with a spending reduction plan?



What ideas do you have for how we can **reduce spending**?



What ideas do you have for how we can **increase revenue**?



What **tradeoffs** are you willing to make given that we can't fund everything we want or need?



3 KEY TAKEAWAYS (Listening Sessions, Focus Groups, and Survey Results to date)

- **Understanding of School Funding:** There is a significant variance in understanding among students, staff, families, and community members regarding how public schools are funded and the specific purposes for each funding category.
- **Desire for Financial Transparency:** Many participants expressed a strong desire for more detailed information about the costs and potential savings associated with different programs, services, and supports within the district.
- **Commons Themes and Conflicting Recommendations:** There are common areas of concern across multiple audiences; however, there are also conflicting recommendations based on individuals' personal experience, position, or role within the district on what to prioritize.



Listening Session Themes – COMMUNITY

Reduce Costs through Efficiencies

- There was a consensus on the need to protect essential services while finding ways to reduce costs, such as consolidating bus routes and using yellow buses instead of charter buses.

Increase Communication & Engagement

- Many participants called for increased transparency in budget decisions, including publishing detailed financial data and involving the community in the decision-making process.
- There was a strong desire for better communication and engagement with parents and community members to encourage their involvement and support for the schools.

Protect Mental Health Supports

- Community members highlighted the importance of mental health supports for students, including professional development for teachers and culturally relevant instruction.
- There was a consensus on the need to protect mental health services and ensure that students have access to the necessary support.

Improve Transportation Efficiencies

- Several participants discussed the need for more efficient transportation solutions, such as using yellow buses instead of charter buses, staggering school start times, and hiring more substitute drivers.
- The funding gap in transportation was highlighted as a significant issue, exacerbated by increased fuel costs and decreased ridership post-COVID.

Listening Session Themes – STAFF

Prioritize Mental Health Supports

- Staff emphasized the need to maintain and prioritize mental health support through MHAT which plays a critical role in addressing mental health needs, preventing crises, and supporting students with anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges

Prioritize Lower Class Sizes

- Staff raised concerns about class sizes and the need to maintain or reduce them to ensure effective teaching and learning. There is a consensus that larger class sizes negatively impact student engagement and teacher effectiveness.

Support Special Education

- The need for adequate support and resources for special education is a recurring theme. Staff have expressed concerns about the underfunding of special education, the need for more paraeducators, and the importance of inclusion practices

Ensure Equitable Allocation of Resources

- Ensuring equitable distribution of resources and support across schools is a common concern. There is a call for systematic interventions like Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to address disparities and ensure all students receive the support they need.

Address Professional Development

- There are mixed feelings about the necessity and effectiveness of professional development. Some suggest reducing or eliminating certain PD sessions to save costs, while others emphasize the importance of targeted and effective PD.

Staff Listening Session – UNIQUE DIFFERENCES

Choice Schools

- Maintain unique philosophy and staffing ratios
- Importance of specialized staff who align with school's philosophy

Title Schools

- Support trauma-informed practices, emotional support for students, and importance of full-time counselors
- Protect equitable funding (ex. focus funds)

Middle Schools

- Prioritize smaller class size and need for co-teaching support
- Reduce professional development

High Schools

- Expand co-teaching models
- Maintain support for prom and unified sports for students with disabilities
- Need for a continuum of service model for inclusion



Listening Session Themes – ADMINISTRATORS

Preserve Core Staff and Supports

- Maintain roles that are essential for managing increased workloads, responding to students' needs, coordinating activities and supports, and fostering positive school climates.

Improve Staffing Efficiencies

- Consolidate roles where possible to streamline support and services.

Maximize Revenue and Program Efficiency

- Expand high-demand programs, keep electives that bring funding and enrich students, streamline or combine low-enrollment classes to save costs/

Examine Class Sizes and School Consolidation

- There is significant concern about potential school closures and the impact on student stability and learning outcomes. Examine the impact of student-to-teacher ratios and the effect on teaching quality.

Increase School Autonomy in Budget Decisions

- There is a shared call for school-based cuts, allowing each school to make decisions based on their unique needs. This includes considering multiple roles for staff and evaluating the cost-benefit of cutting specific positions.

Address Student Mental Health

- MHAT (Mental Health Assistance Teams) are seen as essential for student mental health at the secondary level. However, there's a need to evaluate their roles and how they fit with overall staffing needs, especially in middle schools.

Listening Session Themes – CENTRAL OFFICE

Transparency and Communication

- Provide greater visibility into budget allocation and decision-making process.
- Utilize collaborative decision-making, particularly in Special Education and program adjustments.

Special Education

- Rising costs and turnover rates were identified as critical concerns.
- Need clearer goals, metrics, and accountability in special education programs.
- Program review for centered, resource and inclusionary practices

Sustainability

- There was strong support for reducing waste through improved resource management and sustainable practices.

Revenue Generation

- Explore innovative revenue streams, including facility rentals and private sponsorships.

Program Retention and Adjustment

- Preserve high-impact programs like MHAT and advanced learning opportunities.
- Evaluate under-enrolled courses and adjust offerings to maximize efficiency.

Listening Session Themes – STUDENTS

Prioritize Equity & Inclusion

- Black students feel a low **sense of belonging** and **lack support** from counselors.
- **Disproportionate effects** on low-income and minority students due to reduced teacher connections in larger classes.
- Retain **mental health support** roles like MHAT counselors for vulnerable students.
- Prioritize maintaining facilitators and support staff to ensure **inclusive learning environments**.

Maintain the 7 Period Day

- Students stress the importance of keeping the **7th period** for more credits and flexibility which is crucial for **academic success**.
- Reducing from 7 to 6 periods could lead to staff cuts, curriculum constraints, and transcript concerns

Prioritize Lower Class Sizes

- Larger class sizes could impact **teacher-student interactions, learning outcomes**, and classroom dynamics, especially in smaller schools with limited resources
- Consider **creative staffing models** like student TAs to support larger classes.
- Ensure classrooms have **adequate space and infrastructure** if sizes are increased.

Increase Representation in Staffing

- There is a strong desire for more counselors and staff members who are Black or Hispanic.
- Students believe that having counselors who share their racial background would lead to **better understanding and support** for their unique challenges.

Protect Electives and Extracurriculars

- Cuts to electives, sports, and other programs would reduce **student engagement** and overall school experience.
- Concerns about **inequitable access** for low-income students due to increased fees or reduced options.
- Focus on retaining popular electives and streamlining less-utilized programs.
- Expand fundraising efforts, such as Spring for Schools auctions, to maintain extracurriculars.

Increase Transparency & Engagement

- There is limited awareness among families and students about the budget allocation process and district challenges.
- Increase **transparency** by regularly sharing **budget updates** and details on allocation decisions.
- Host engagement events to involve parents and community members in fundraising and support initiatives.

Listening Session Quotes – STUDENTS

“Student resource counselors and MHAT should be prioritized”

“Class sizes can affect black and brown students disproportionately.”

“A lot of grad coaches are getting a lot of push back and should not be put on the table as they help students get back on track”

“With smaller classes, these students/teachers can create bonds and then teachers encourage these students to take difficult courses. Low-income students rely on close personal relationships with teachers and other staff as resources for finding pathways to solutions or scholarships, etc.”



Listening Session Themes – FAMILIES

Protect Essential Services and Programs

- Families are concerned about the impact of budget cuts on essential services and programs, such as special education, counselors, and support staff

Maintain Electives and Specialists

- Many parents emphasized the importance of maintaining funding for arts, music, and physical education programs.

Ensure Equity and Access

- Families expressed the importance of equitable funding across all schools to ensure that every student has access to necessary resources and support.
- There were calls for maintaining programs that support low-income families, such as free meals and transportation.

Preserve Special Education Services

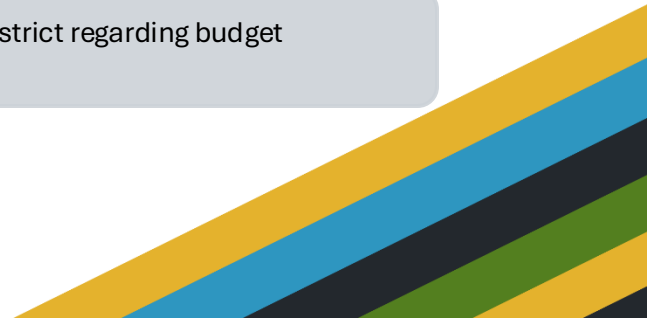
- A significant number of families highlighted the need to preserve and enhance special education services, including speech therapy, IEP accommodations, and support for students with disabilities.

Avoid School Closures and Class Sizes Increases

- There is a strong desire to avoid school closures and maintain small class sizes to ensure quality education.

Improve Communication and Transparency

- There is a desire for better communication and transparency from the district regarding budget decisions and their impact on schools



Listening Session Quotes – FAMILIES

“Please do not remove counselors from schools, they are indispensable.”

“Varied electives and robust foreign language programs at the middle and high school levels is vital for preparing students to compete in today’s globalized world.”

“When my family went through a crisis and we had to move to a shelter, the first people who helped me were the people from the school.”

“I am concerned about losing the FCC because it is where families get support.”

“Focus on keeping adequate support staff for kids who are managing in really challenging circumstances.”





Budget Development Guidelines and 2025-26 Budget Parameters



Budget Development Guidelines

(approved January 25, 2024)

Equity Commitment & Equity-Driven Decision Making

1. The budget starts with an understanding that to be equitable to our students and community we must **identify who is in need, what their needs are, and how best to address them**. This requires that we not assume that all needs are the same, nor treat such needs equally as equal treatment does not result in equitable outcomes.
2. The budget provides adequate resources for the implementation of policies and programs that support **equitable student outcomes** that are identified in our strategic plans, annual plans, and school improvement plans.
3. The budget process will be built on our commitment to **equity-driven decision making**.
4. Equitable **community engagement** should be the foundation of the development of the strategic plan which should in turn serve as the foundation of the annual budget.
5. In the event of **budget reductions**, we will provide equitable engagement of students, families, and staff, inclusive of those who have been historically marginalized and those who speak a language other than English

Budget Drivers

6. Given that our budget is primarily driven by student enrollment, the budget should include **contingencies** for unexpected enrollment fluctuations.
7. Budgeting for staff compensation and benefits levels reflect the district's **collective bargaining agreements** (a component of which is not deviating materially from the local k-12 educator market to the extent district resources allow).

Financial Health Indicators

8. Budgeted **reserves** should not dip below the 5-6% threshold and budgeted reserves should be allowed to fluctuate depending on the current financial position and needs of the district.
9. If the Four-Year Budget Plan Summary forecasts any years with a **negative fund balance** in the General Fund, the current and future budgets will include proportional budgetary considerations that will avoid any projected negative fund balance.

Strategic Plan Alignment

10. The budget reflects the District's **Strategic Plan Priorities**, which should be evidenced by the alignment of resources to those priorities as directed by the annual plan.
11. The budget includes sufficient research-based **training in the effective strategic planning** for the Board and district staff when creating a strategic plan.
12. The budget prioritizes goals and strategies specifically selected to close identified **opportunity gaps**.

Professional Development and Staff Collaboration and Supports

13. The budget represents a strong commitment to hiring and retaining and **diverse, high quality instructional staff**.
14. The budget represents a strong commitment to a **system of professional learning** designed to increase student learning for each and every student.
15. The budget includes necessary time for **staff collaboration and coordination** necessary to implement selected strategic goals.

DRAFT 2025-26 Budget Parameters **(to guide the 2025-26 Spending Reduction Plan)**

Prioritize Each & Every Student

- Prioritize **students** and their educational experience; start with cuts furthest from the classroom
- Protect the district's **strategic priorities**, moving funds from other areas as needed
- Maintain **equitable supports**, services, and opportunities to continue to close opportunity gaps and deliver on our Equity and Accountability commitments
- Prioritize maintaining student programs that create student joy, engagement, belonging, and mental health supports

Reduce Expenditures

- Find ways to reduce the budget by \$10 ~~10~~ 16M through **efficiencies and trimming**, versus elimination of programs or services
- Maintain consistent and predictable **operations and services**, while improving efficiency
- To the extent possible, take into consideration student, family, and staff voice

Increase Revenue

- Advocate for ~~regionalization of the local levy~~ additional state funding for Special Education; Materials, Supplies and Operating Costs; and Transportation consistent with the Board approved 2025 legislative priorities-during this year's short legislative session
- Build on the educational excellence of BSD and pursue **strategies to stabilize enrollment**
- Partner with **community partners**, including Bellevue Schools Foundation and City of Bellevue to increase revenue through ~~community~~ donations and grants

Plan for the Long-Term

- Stabilize our **long-term** financial picture
- End the 2023/2024 ~~2024-25~~ school year with at least \$20 ~~between \$4 and 7~~ million in **general fund reserves** and prioritize the restoration of the 5-6% fund balance over the next 5 years
- Allocate resources to successfully ~~launch~~ **implement** the and support our new **strategic plan**, including investing in new and innovative opportunities, using an intentional, multi-year budget-responsible approach to program investments
- Develop a plan to address district **structural issues** that result in budget deficits.
- Develop a **restoration plan** built on community priorities.

Appendix



Listening Session Summary – Community

Common Themes and Concerns:

1. Budget and Resource Allocation:

- Many community members emphasized the need for fiscal responsibility, suggesting cost-saving measures such as using off-brand printer cartridges, reusing supplies, and training staff on efficient printer usage
- There were discussions about the impact of budget cuts on essential services, with some participants advocating for protecting mental health supports and special education services

2. School Closures and Class Sizes:

- A significant concern was the potential closure of schools, with some community members suggesting that closing under-enrolled schools could be a viable cost-saving measure
- There were mixed opinions on increasing class sizes, with some participants suggesting it as a last resort to avoid cutting programs

3. Community Involvement and Transparency:

- Community members called for increased transparency in budget decisions, including publishing detailed financial data and involving the community in the decision-making process
- There were suggestions for better communication and engagement with parents and community members to encourage their involvement and support for the schools

4. Transportation and Logistics:

- Several participants discussed the need for more efficient transportation solutions, such as using yellow buses instead of charter buses, staggering school start times, and hiring more substitute drivers
- The funding gap in transportation was highlighted as a significant issue, exacerbated by increased fuel costs and decreased ridership post-COVID



Listening Session Summary – Community

Unique or Divergent Themes:

- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Some community members emphasized the importance of mental health supports for students, including professional development for teachers and culturally relevant instruction
- **Environmental and Health Policies:** There were unique suggestions related to environmentally friendly policies, such as reducing plastic use and promoting child health-friendly practices

Contradictory or Conflicting Recommendations:

- **Special Education and General Education:** While some community members advocated for preserving special education funding, others suggested it as an area for potential budget cuts
- **School Closures:** There were conflicting views on school closures, with some participants strongly opposing them and others suggesting that closing certain schools could be a viable cost-saving measure
- **Class Sizes:** Opinions were divided on whether to increase class sizes to save costs, with some community members supporting it as a last resort and others opposing it to maintain teaching quality



Listening Session Summary – Elementary Staff

Common Themes and Concerns:

- 1. Emotional and Mental Health Support:** Staff emphasized the importance of maintaining full-time counselors and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) positions to support students emotionally and ensure effective learning environments
- 2. Special Education:** Concerns were raised about the adequacy of paraeducators for special education, the impact of budget cuts on special education services, and the challenges of inclusionary practices.
- 3. Professional Development:** There were suggestions to cut or reduce professional development (PD) sessions, such as October and March PD days and the Summer Institute, to save costs.
- 4. Resource Allocation:** Staff highlighted the need to continue trauma-informed practices and maintain support systems like MLL (Multilingual Learners) and LAP (Learning Assistance Program).
- 5. Equity and Funding:** Differences in needs between affluent schools and Title I schools were noted, with concerns about the potential loss of focus funds and its impact on support services.



Listening Session Summary – Elementary Staff Continued

Unique or Divergent Themes:

- **Certificated Staff:** Emphasized the importance of maintaining full-time counselors and PBIS positions, as well as the need for trauma-informed practices.
- **Classified Staff:** Highlighted the critical role of paraeducators in supporting students with extreme needs and the potential impact of cuts on their ability to provide adequate support.

Contradictory or Conflicting Recommendations:

- **Professional Development:** While some staff suggested cutting PD sessions to save costs, others emphasized the importance of ongoing training and support for staff.
- **Inclusionary Practices:** There were conflicting views on the extent to which inclusionary practices should be pushed, with concerns about the financial strain and the adequacy of support for special education students.



Listening Session Summary – Middle School Staff

Common Themes and Concerns:

- 1. Preservation of Core Programs and Staffing:** Staff emphasized the importance of maintaining the 7-period day to support student choice, preserve elective programs, and attract families to the district. Electives such as arts, drama, music, and world languages were highlighted as essential for student engagement and well-being.
- 2. Mental Health Support:** The importance of Mental Health Assistance Teams (MHAT) was emphasized as critical for identifying, supporting, and addressing students' mental health needs, particularly in secondary schools.
- 3. Equity in Resource Allocation:** Staff voiced concerns about resource distribution, advocating for systematic interventions such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to ensure equitable student support across schools.
- 4. Building Maintenance and Support Staff:** Custodians expressed frustration over management inefficiencies, questioning the need for multiple supervisors and advocating for reallocating resources to direct support staff.



Listening Session Summary – Middle School Staff Continued

Unique or Divergent Themes:

- **Certificated Staff:** Emphasized the importance of maintaining full-time counselors and PBIS positions, as well as the need for trauma-informed practices.
- **Classified Staff:** Highlighted the critical role of paraeducators in supporting students with extreme needs and the potential impact of cuts on their ability to provide adequate support.

Contradictory or Conflicting Recommendations:

- **Professional Development:** While some staff suggested cutting PD sessions to save costs, others emphasized the importance of ongoing training and support for staff.
- **Inclusionary Practices:** There were conflicting views on the extent to which inclusionary practices should be pushed, with concerns about the financial strain and the adequacy of support for special education students.



Listening Session Summary – High School Staff

Common Themes and Concerns:

- 1. Preservation of Core Programs and Staffing:** Staff emphasized the importance of maintaining the 7-period day to support student choice, preserve elective programs, and attract families to the district. Electives such as arts, drama, music, and world languages were highlighted as essential for student engagement and well-being.
- 2. Mental Health Support:** The importance of Mental Health Assistance Teams (MHAT) was emphasized as critical for identifying, supporting, and addressing students' mental health needs, particularly in secondary schools.
- 3. Equity in Resource Allocation:** Staff voiced concerns about resource distribution, advocating for systematic interventions such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to ensure equitable student support across schools.
- 4. Building Maintenance and Support Staff:** Custodians expressed frustration over management inefficiencies, questioning the need for multiple supervisors and advocating for reallocating resources to direct support staff.



Listening Session Summary – High School Staff Continued

Unique or Divergent Themes:

- **Certificated Staff:** Emphasized the importance of maintaining full-time counselors and PBIS positions, as well as the need for trauma-informed practices.
- **Classified Staff:** Highlighted the critical role of paraeducators in supporting students with extreme needs and the potential impact of cuts on their ability to provide adequate support.

Contradictory or Conflicting Recommendations:

- **Professional Development:** While some staff suggested cutting PD sessions to save costs, others emphasized the importance of ongoing training and support for staff.
- **Inclusionary Practices:** There were conflicting views on the extent to which inclusionary practices should be pushed, with concerns about the financial strain and the adequacy of support for special education students.



Listening Session Summary – Central Office

Common Themes and Concerns:

- 1. Transparency and Communication:** Central office staff repeatedly called for greater visibility into budget allocation and the decision-making process. They also emphasized collaborative decision-making, particularly in special education and program adjustments.
- 2. Special Education:** Rising costs and turnover rates were identified as critical concerns. Staff expressed a need for clearer goals, metrics, and accountability in special education programs. They also asked for program reviews for centered, resource and inclusionary practice programs.
- 3. Sustainability:** There was strong support for reducing waste through improved resource management and sustainable practices.
- 4. Revenue Generation:** Staff suggested exploring revenue streams such as facility rentals and private sponsorships.
- 5. Program Retention and Adjustment:** There was desire to preserve high-impact programs like Mental Health Assistance Team (MHAT) and advanced learning opportunities. There was also a request to evaluate under-enrolled courses and adjust offerings to maximize efficiency.



Listening Session Summary – Central Office Continued

Contradictory of Conflicting Recommendations:

- 1. Transparency and Communication:** While there is a general call for more transparency, there are differences in how this should be achieved. Some suggest more detailed communication about budget allocations, while others emphasize collaborative decision-making processes.
- 2. Special Education (SpEd):** There were conflicting views on how to address rising costs and turnover rates. Some suggest maintaining essential services, while others recommend reviewing costs and developing strategies to address expenditures and turnover.
- 3. Sustainability:** Central office staff held divergent views on the importance of sustainability. Some sessions emphasize the need for sustainable practices, while others do not mention it as a priority.
- 4. Cost-Saving Suggestions:** Central office staff recommended different approaches to cost-saving measures. Some suggest reusing materials and increasing fees for facility rentals, while others focus on enforcing sustainability policies and best practices for resource usage.
- 5. Program Retention and Adjustment:** There were conflicting recommendations on program retention. Some emphasize preserving high-impact programs, while others suggest reassessing programs with low enrollment.
- 6. Revenue Generation:** Central office staff shared different strategies for generating revenue. Some suggest marketing district facilities and exploring private sponsorships, while others focus on increasing fees for amenities and considering service agreements.



Student Outreach Summary

Equity and Inclusivity

- Black students report a low sense of belonging and a lack of adequate support from counselors.
- Disproportionate effects on low-income and minority students due to reduced teacher connections in larger classes.
- Increase the hiring of counselors of color and improve counselor training to better support marginalized communities.
- Retain mental health support roles like MHAT counselors to assist vulnerable students.

Class Sizes and Periods

- Larger class sizes could impact teacher-student interactions, learning outcomes, and classroom dynamics, especially in smaller schools with limited resources.
- Reducing the number of class periods (e.g., from 7 to 6) would lead to staff reductions, curriculum constraints, and concerns about transcript impacts.
- Explore creative staffing models like student TAs to support larger classes.
- Ensure adequate space and infrastructure in classrooms if sizes are increased.

Electives and Extracurriculars

- Cuts to electives, sports, and other programs could significantly diminish student engagement and overall school experience.
- Concerns about inequitable access to these programs for low-income students due to increased fees or reduced options.
- Focus on retaining popular electives and streamlining less-utilized programs.
- Expand fundraising efforts, such as Spring for Schools auctions, to maintain extracurriculars.

Special Education

- The district's heavy reliance on local funding (84%) for special education creates a significant budget strain.
- Advocate for increased state funding for special education programs.
- Prioritize maintaining facilitators and support staff to ensure inclusive learning environments.

Revenue Generation and Cost Savings

- Insufficient revenue sources to address the growing budget gap.
- Rent out unused properties and facilities.
- Implement energy-saving measures like turning off lights and reducing transportation costs through carpooling and alternative bus arrangements.

Student and Parent Engagement

- Limited awareness among families and students about the budget allocation process and district challenges.
- Increase transparency by regularly sharing budget updates and details on allocation decisions.
- Host engagement events to involve parents and community members in fundraising and support initiatives.



Student Outreach Summary – Session Specific

Chinook School

- Concerns about the variety of electives and the need for inclusive environments for multilingual learners and students with disabilities.
- Debate over the value of project-based learning vs. traditional teaching.

Student Advisory Group

- Advocacy for maintaining student resources, mental health support, and avoiding cuts to vital staff.
- Discussion of alternative transportation arrangements (e.g., carpooling) to reduce costs.

Tillicum Middle School

- Emphasis on maintaining mental health roles and essential programs like music and language classes.
- Practical cost-saving suggestions like energy conservation and facility rentals.

Newport High School Black Student Union

- Strong emphasis on representation, with calls for more Black and Hispanic counselors.
- Concerns about the negative impact of reduced electives, sports, and the 7th period on student engagement and credit flexibility.



Family Outreach Summary

Budget Cuts and Resource Allocation

- Families are concerned about the impact of budget cuts on essential services and programs, such as special education, counselors, and support staff
- Many parents emphasized the importance of maintaining funding for arts, music, and physical education programs.
- There is a strong desire to avoid school closures and maintain small class sizes to ensure quality education.


Special Education Services

- A significant number of families highlighted the need to preserve and enhance special education services, including speech therapy, IEP accommodations, and support for students with disabilities.
- Concerns were raised about the potential negative impact of reducing special education staff and resources.

Equity and Access


- Families expressed the importance of equitable funding across all schools to ensure that every student has access to necessary resources and support.
- There were calls for maintaining programs that support low-income families, such as free meals and transportation.

Community and Parent Involvement

- Many parents suggested increasing community partnerships, fundraising efforts, and voluntary contributions to support school programs and offset budget cuts.
 - There is a desire for better communication and transparency from the district regarding budget decisions and their impact on schools.
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Family Outreach Summary Continued

Contradictory or Conflicting Recommendations

- **Special Education vs. General Education:** While many families advocated for preserving special education services, some suggested cutting special education budgets to allocate resources elsewhere.
 - **School Closures:** There were conflicting views on school closures, with some families strongly opposing them and others suggesting that closing certain schools could be a viable cost-saving measure.
 - **Elective Programs:** Some parents emphasized the importance of maintaining elective programs, while others suggested reducing or eliminating them to save costs.
 - **Class Sizes and Staffing:** Families disagreed on whether to prioritize small class sizes or reduce staff to save costs.
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