

Deer Valley Unified School District FY26 Budget Committee Recommendation

DEER VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

FEBRUARY 25, 2025

Budget Committee Members



Name	Position	*Stakeholder Group
Jim Migliorino	Deputy Superintendent	District Employee
Tracy Rockwell	Director of Finance	District Employee
Ashley Omelian	Parent – BGHS Region	Parent
Curtis Baker	Parent – BCHS Region	Parent
Brenda Lopez	Parent – DVHS Region	Parent
TBD	Parent – MRHS Region	Parent
Michael Vaughn	Parent – SOHS Region	Parent
Kim Lanese	DVBLT	District Employee
Brittany Behrens	Administrator At Large	District Employee
Cheryl Heath	DVEA	District Employee
Katie Stell	Certified Staff At Large	District Employee
Roman Morales	DVESPA	District Employee
Susan Lupo-Mueller	Classified Staff At Large	District Employee
TBD	DVEF	Community
Kjersten Dewey	Parent Organization Representative	Parent
Katie May Smith	Parent Organization Representative	Parent
Jen Baldi	Business Partner	Community
Elizabeth Hale	Business Partner	Community
Roxanne Gustitis	Business Partner	Community
Marshall Militano	Interfaith Representative	Community
Rick Kesselman	Interfaith Representative	Community

Budget Committee Charge



This committee of various stakeholders will develop a recommendation of the budget priorities for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Meeting Dates

December 11, 2024

January 22, 2025

February 19, 2025

Surveys

Initial Input

(Dec. 2024 - Jan 2025)

Forced-Ranking

(Jan. - Feb 2025)

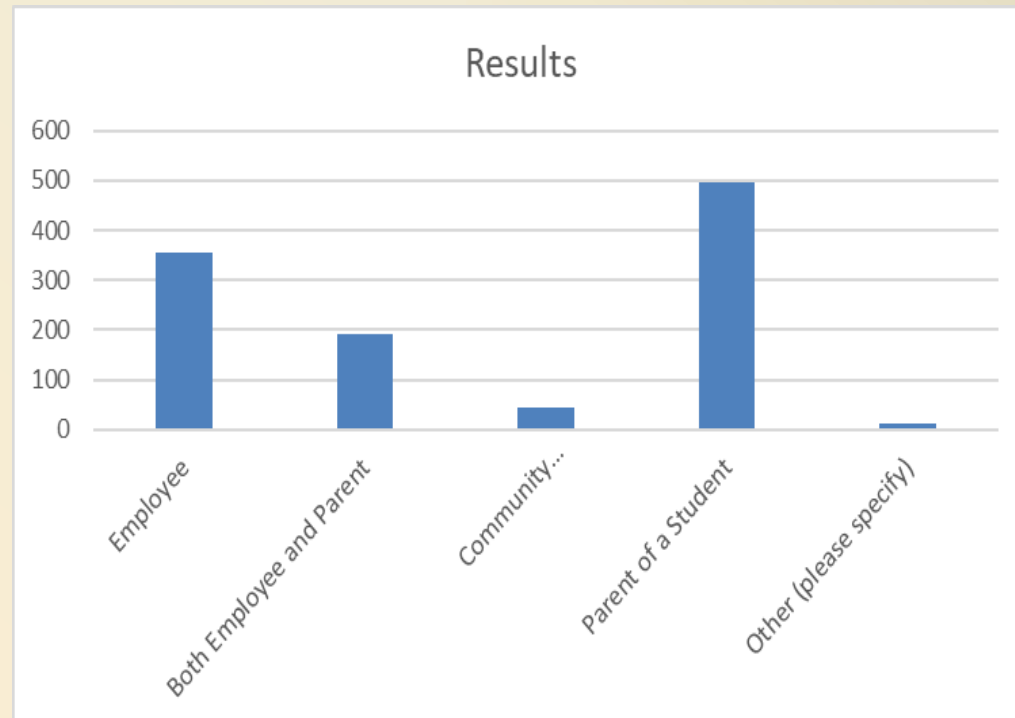


Initial Budget Priority Survey Summary

Survey Questions

- Name one budget area that you feel needs to be preserved the most for the 2025-26 year:
- Name one budget area that can be reduced for the 2025-26 year:

1101 responses



Suggested Budget Priorities for 2025-26

from initial Community Input Budget Survey



Parent Preserve Responses:

1. Staff Compensation is overwhelmingly the top priority, with 112 mentions. This includes teacher salaries, staff pay raises, and competitive compensation to aid retention.
2. Class Size/Student-to-Teacher Ratios is the second most mentioned priority (45 mentions), with strong emphasis on maintaining or reducing current class sizes.
3. Safety & Security ranks third (35 mentions), reflecting concerns about student and campus safety.
4. Special Programs and Services (34 mentions) covers both gifted education and special education services, showing strong community support for diverse learning needs.
5. Full-Day Kindergarten appears as a distinct priority with 25 mentions, specifically emphasizing the desire for it to be free.

Employee Preserve Responses:

1. The dominant priority across both sets of responses was compensation-related:
2. The second most emphasized priority was class size and staffing:

Suggested Budget Priorities for 2025-26



from initial Community Budget Input Survey

Reduce Responses:

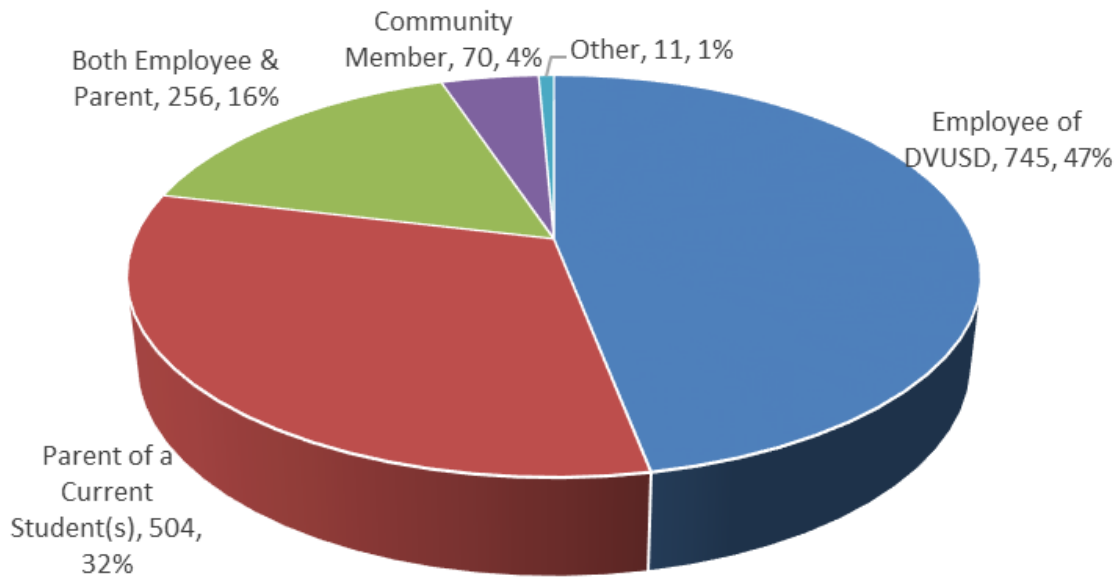
- 1. Class Size & Teacher Support:** Concerns about class size, student-to-staff ratios, and the need for academic support, mental health services, and specialized programs like full-day kindergarten, counseling, and extracurriculars.
- 2. Administration Costs:** There is significant concern about administrative salaries, unnecessary spending, and inefficiencies within district offices, with calls to reduce administration budgets and refocus on classroom support and teacher salaries.
- 3. Extracurricular Activities & Sports:** Multiple references to funding for sports, extracurriculars, and after-school programs. Some suggest charging fees for activities or reducing those with low participation to save costs.
- 4. Facilities & Technology:** There are mentions of school maintenance, upgrades, and building new schools. Some suggest reducing technology expenditures, especially on devices like laptops and tablets for students.

The overarching theme emphasizes the need to protect teaching staff and student support services while scrutinizing administrative expenses and non-essential programs. .

Review of Survey Data



FY26 Budget Forced Ranking Survey Responses



Employee of DVUSD	745
Parent of a Current Student(s)	504
Both Employee & Parent	256
Community Member	70
Other	11
Total	1586



DVUSD

2025-26 Budget Priority Forced Ranking Results

	School Safety	Technology	Building Improvements	Professional Development	Class Size	Full-Day Kindergarten	Extracurricular Activities	Counseling and Behavioral Support Staff	Transportation Services
Average (All Stakeholders)	6.83	4.72	3.83	3.38	6.64	4.96	4.51	6.02	4.08
1	41	113	205	434	43	268	195	49	192
2	45	174	250	259	69	176	214	95	254
3	59	186	299	232	71	130	202	124	238
4	102	240	250	174	94	135	178	142	225
5	128	245	217	139	145	112	176	183	209
Top 3 Reduction	145	473	754	925	183	574	611	268	684
Blank	43	57	53	40	44	39	47	27	48
Percent #1	3%	7%	13%	28%	3%	17%	13%	3%	12%
Percent in top 3	9%	31%	49%	60%	12%	37%	40%	17%	44%

The lower the number = reduce

The lower the number = retain

Ranked priorities to be retained (based on Average):

1. School Safety
2. Class Size
3. Counseling and Behavioral Support Staff
4. Full-Day Kindergarten
5. Technology
6. Extracurricular Activities
7. Transportation Services
8. Building Improvements
9. Professional Development

DVUSD

2025-26 Budget Priority Forced Ranking Results by Group



Average by Stakeholder	School Safety	Technology	Building Improvements	Professional Development	Class Size	Full-Day Kindergarten	Extracurricular Activities	Counseling and Behavioral Support Staff	Transportation Services	
Parent of a Current Student(s)	7.01	4.86	3.73	3.91	6.79	4.30	4.99	5.64	3.63	The lower the number, the more chosen to reduce.
Employee of DVUSD	6.78	4.62	3.89	3.16	6.51	5.32	4.18	6.25	4.38	
Both Employee & Parent	6.62	4.50	3.74	3.06	6.75	5.17	4.54	6.46	4.08	
Community Member	6.66	5.37	4.20	2.90	6.63	5.11	4.85	4.85	4.25	
Other	7.18	5.73	3.91	3.73	5.82	6.45	2.64	5.18	4.36	

Observations

1. Responses are fairly consistent among stakeholder groups.
2. Greatest variation in groups is with Full-Day Kindergarten (4.30 for Parents to 6.45 for Other).
3. Also variation for Counseling/Behavioral Support (4.85 for Community to 6.46 for Both Employee & Parent).

DVUSD

2025-26 Budget Priority Forced Ranking Results by Top 1 /Top 3 Count



Priority #1 Count (#1 to reduce)	School Safety	Technology	Building Improvements	Professional Development	Class Size	Full-Day Kindergarten	Extracurricular Activities	Counseling and Behavioral Support Staff	Transportation Services
Parent of a Current Student(s)	18	35	71	88	9	129	48	15	84
Employee of DVUSD	18	60	99	233	26	91	106	17	63
Both Employee & Parent	4	15	31	83	6	37	34	7	35
Community Member	0	3	4	28	1	11	3	9	8
Other	1	0	0	2	1	0	4	1	2
All Stakeholders	41	113	205	434	43	268	195	49	192
Top 3 Count									
Parent of a Current Student(s)	49	140	254	233	53	236	148	110	270
Employee of DVUSD	66	232	342	475	95	233	330	101	268
Both Employee & Parent	24	84	123	164	23	83	104	32	114
Community Member	5	16	29	47	9	20	21	22	29
Other	1	1	6	6	3	2	8	3	3
All Stakeholders	145	473	754	925	183	574	611	268	684

Heat Map Index: Red = Retain; Green = Reduce

AI Summary of Narrative Comments

(446 responses)

CoPilot



4-Day School/Work Week:

Many respondents suggested moving to a 4-day school week to save on budget, reduce operational costs, and improve work-life balance for teachers and students.

School Closures and Consolidation:

There were numerous comments about closing or repurposing schools with low enrollment to optimize resources and reduce costs.

Administrative and District Office Cuts:

A significant number of respondents recommended reducing administrative positions and district office staff, suggesting that cuts should start at the top rather than impacting teachers and students directly.

Teacher Salaries and Benefits:

Maintaining or increasing teacher salaries and benefits was a high priority. Many comments emphasized the importance of competitive pay to retain quality staff and avoid turnover.

Program Reductions:

Suggestions included cutting or reducing non-essential programs such as the Mandarin immersion program, PLC (Professional Learning Community) positions, and certain extracurricular activities.

Increased Fees for Services:

Some respondents proposed increasing fees for extracurricular activities, transportation, and full-day kindergarten to help cover budget shortfalls.

AI Summary of Narrative Comments

CoPilot (con't)



Transparency and Community Involvement:

There were calls for greater transparency in budget decisions and more involvement from the community in the decision-making process.

Support for Gifted and Special Education:

Maintaining and prioritizing gifted services and special education programs were highlighted as important to many respondents.

Professional Development:

Opinions were mixed on professional development, with some suggesting cuts to reduce costs, while others emphasized its importance for teacher growth and retention.

Technology and Resources:

Comments included reducing spending on technology and ensuring that existing resources are fully utilized before making new purchases.

Additional Points:

Behavioral and Mental Health Support: Emphasis on the need for better behavioral supports and mental health resources for students.

Class Size and Teacher Support: Concerns about maintaining manageable class sizes and providing adequate support for teachers.

Facility Maintenance: Importance of maintaining and upgrading school facilities, especially older buildings, to ensure a safe and functional learning environment.

Overall, the comments reflect a strong desire to prioritize direct classroom impact, maintain teacher compensation, and make strategic cuts at the administrative level to address budget constraints.

AI Summary of Narrative Comments

(446 responses)

Claude



1. Preserve Teacher & Staff Compensation

- ▶ **Overwhelming support for maintaining current teacher and staff salaries**
- ▶ **Strong opposition to any pay cuts or furlough days**
- ▶ **Concerns about losing quality teachers if compensation is reduced**
- ▶ **Emphasis on competitive pay for retention**
- ▶ **Requests to maintain current health insurance benefits**

2. District Office Restructuring

- ▶ **Widespread calls to reduce district office positions and administrative costs**
- ▶ **Suggestions to:**
- ▶ **Reduce number of assistant superintendents**
- ▶ **Consolidate administrative roles**
- ▶ **Cut district-level coaching positions**
- ▶ **Reduce PLC (Professional Learning Community) staff**
- ▶ **Return district coaches to classroom teaching positions**

3. School Consolidation & Boundaries

- ▶ **Strong support for closing or consolidating low-enrollment schools**
- ▶ **Recommendations to redraw school boundaries for efficiency**
- ▶ **Specific mentions of evaluating schools in Anthem/New River area**
- ▶ **Focus on maximizing building utilization**

4. Program Priorities

- ▶ **Strong support for maintaining:**
- ▶ **Gifted services and Renaissance program**
- ▶ **Special education services**
- ▶ **Counseling services**
- ▶ **Language immersion programs**
- ▶ **Arts and music programs**
- ▶ **Willingness to increase fees for:**
- ▶ **Full-day kindergarten (except at Title I schools)**
- ▶ **Athletics and extracurricular activities**
- ▶ **Transportation**

5. Operational Changes

- ▶ **Significant support for 4-day school week**
- ▶ **Suggestions to reduce professional development costs**
- ▶ **Recommendations to limit out-of-state travel**
- ▶ **Proposals to reduce technology spending, especially in lower grades**

AI Summary of Narrative Comments

Claude (con't)



Innovative Solutions Proposed

1. Revenue Generation:

- ▶ Increase facility rental fees
- ▶ Raise parking fees
- ▶ Implement transportation fees
- ▶ Increase extracurricular participation fees
- ▶ Expand tax credit donation program

2. Operational Efficiency:

- ▶ Combine clerical positions at schools
- ▶ Convert some 12-month positions to 9/10-month
- ▶ Reduce number of half-days in favor of full days
- ▶ Maximize class sizes in advanced courses
- ▶ Review vendor contracts

3. Program Modifications:

- ▶ Implement multi-level classrooms for small programs
- ▶ Reduce frequency of PLC meetings
- ▶ Scale back technology 1:1 programs
- ▶ Limit field trips and travel for sports

Community Sentiments

1. Impact Distribution:

- ▶ Strong feeling that cuts should impact voters/community more than staff
- ▶ Preference for fee increases over program elimination
- ▶ Desire for cuts to start at district level before affecting classrooms

2. Key Concerns:

- ▶ Teacher retention
- ▶ Maintaining competitive programs vs. charter schools
- ▶ Student safety and support services
- ▶ Class sizes
- ▶ Building maintenance

3. Communication Needs:

- ▶ Desire for transparency about district-level cuts
- ▶ Request for clearer information about budget allocation
- ▶ Interest in understanding long-term strategic plan

Critical Considerations

1. Enrollment Impact:

- ▶ Risk of losing students to charter/private schools if key programs cut
- ▶ Need to maintain competitive advantages (gifted, language programs)
- ▶ Importance of full-day kindergarten for retention

2. Staff Retention:

- ▶ Risk of mass exodus if salaries reduced
- ▶ Importance of maintaining benefits
- ▶ Need to protect classroom-level positions

3. Long-term Sustainability:

- ▶ Balance between immediate savings and long-term viability
- ▶ Importance of maintaining core educational quality
- ▶ Need for strategic rather than reactive cuts

2025-26 Budget Committee Priorities Recommendation



In light of the financial circumstances for the upcoming year, the FY26 Budget Committee recommends the following priorities with the objective of minimizing the direct impact to the classroom:

- Maintain salary and benefits
- Continue to enhance student and school safety, including social and behavioral supports
- Maintain the student-to-staff ratio
- De-emphasize Professional Development opportunities
- Consider fees to continue programs

The Budget Committee identified that a focus on community outreach and communication is necessary to have a more informed community. The Committee also stated that seeking the continuation of the 15% M&O Override is needed for the long-term financial well-being of the District.