TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.

Budget Advisory Committee
Recommendations to the Superintendent

The Tacoma School District Budget Advisory Committee presents this report as a culmination of our work and summary of our formal recommendations to the Superintendent, as charged in the Committee charter.

Committee Membership

In March 2025, prospective members applied by responding to a survey indicating their affiliation with the district, funding topics of interest, and goals they hoped to achieve through the 2025-2026 budget development process. Twenty-eight applications were submitted by individuals representing a variety of stakeholder groups, including parents, staff, community partners, and Tacoma residents.

Amanda Laws	Francis Faye Oak	Kayla Hipp
Balvina Cortez	Heidi Buchberger	Melissa Commodore
Beverly Allen	Holly Newman Dzyban	Milagros Thompson
Brad Mills	Jacob Vela	Rita Rose
Cazandra Santos-Richter	Jaime Singer	Roberto Nieves
Dailys Garcia Padron	Jasmine Spaulding	Stacie Chapman
Damien Mills	Jenee Adams	Tony Andersson
David Lamkin	Jill Yamamoto	Verda Washington
Elizabeth Krajewski	Jessie Labadie	
Emily Holloway	Julia Gordon	

Committee Charter

The charter outlined the Committee's objectives and the guiding principles that shaped its work:

Objectives	• The committee will have a clear understanding of the district's financial landscape and budgeting process. • The committee will have opportunities to influence the district on future budget decisions.

	• The district will utilize community survey data and committee input to inform funding decisions related to our strategic goals and initiatives
Guiding Principles	• We will be sensitive to our diverse needs and continue to focus on eliminating disparities among all groups. • We will prioritize coursework necessary for on-time graduation. • We will focus on maintaining and enhancing social emotional well-being and mental health services for all students. • We will focus on maintaining and enhancing the quality of learning and the learning environment for all students. • We will protect our institutional or program accreditations or compliance with laws and regulations. • We will rely on data and benchmarks, when available, to assess the educational impact of programs and initiatives considered for enhancement, reduction, or elimination. • We will engage with the community to ensure transparency and communicate adjustments to district staff, partner organizations, parents, and community members. • If position eliminations are necessary, we will make every effort, to reassign displaced employees to vacant positions for which they qualify

Committee Meetings – Education Series

On April 15th and 22nd, the Budget Advisory Committee convened meetings dedicated to providing an understanding of school district funding and foundational budget concepts. Presentation topics included: school district vocabulary and acronyms; fund accounting basics; revenue sources, drivers, and limitations; budget development components; the Budgeting by Priorities process; state funding; student demographics; and staffing models. Members participated in a SWOT analysis to share thoughts on how the District can focus on strengths to minimize threats and take advantage of opportunities for student achievement. You can find an archive of the SWOT Summary document on the Committee's Membership Page on the District's website.

Committee Meetings – Budgeting by Priorities Focus Group Series

The Budgeting by Priorities portion of the Committee's work took place on April 29th and continued to May 6th and 13th. Budget Advisory Committee members voted on which programs or services to explore in greater detail. Based on these results, the relevant directors and cabinet members were invited to present overviews of their Budgeting by Priorities proposals in small focus group sessions. This activity allowed Committee members to have in-depth conversations and ask their questions directly of the staff overseeing the program. The following departments/programs participated in the focus group series, and we thank those District representatives for their time and contributions to this process:

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Advanced Programs	Partnership Office
Athletics and Activities School	Partnership Schools
Career & Technical Education	Safety & Security
Curriculum & Instruction	Social Emotional Learning
Early Learning	Special Education

Recommendations to the Superintendent

Agendas, presentations, and other meeting artifacts are available on the Budget Advisory Committee's Membership Page and will continue to be available for public view through August 31st, 2025.

Additionally, several themes emerged from the education series conversations, SWOT analysis, and Budgeting by Priorities focus groups. We offer the following suggestions for consideration in budget decisions for the 2025-2026 school year:

Transparency & Communication

- Ensure consistent, clear communication from both the district and the union.

Continued Support for Student-Centered Programs

- Protect programs that promote student well-being, engagement, and community connection.
    - **Direct Classroom Support and Instruction:**
        - Maintain small class sizes
        - Support teachers, educational support professionals, and instructional coaches
        - Provide access to curriculum and supplies, especially for special education
        - Prioritize early learning and advanced/CTE programs for long-term success
    - **Whole Child Support and Student Well-being:**
        - Provide behavioral and mental health supports (e.g., SEL teams)
        - Ensure adequate staffing and resources for special education
        - Maintain safety and de-escalation staff who build positive student relationships
        - Support nutrition programs like free/reduced lunch to promote health and engagement
    - **Additional Supports:**
        - Continue to strengthen family engagement efforts
        - Continue to support extended learning programs such as Beyond the Bell (BTB)

Cost-Saving Opportunities through Resource Optimization and Efficiencies

- Identify and reduce any administrative redundancy in curriculum, instruction, and professional development to improve coordination and cut costs.
    - *The Committee recognized some overlap in Athletics, CTE, and Community Partnership activities during the Focus Group interviews.*
- Review compensation and overall salary structures for equity.
- Reevaluate specialized programs (e.g., Montessori) for cost-effectiveness and alignment with student needs.

- Improve curriculum consistency to reduce spending on frequent changes and duplicate teacher-created materials.

Leverage Community Partnerships and Alternative Funding Sources

- Continue to expand public-private partnerships and pursue grants and external funding.
- Develop new revenue streams through:
    - Advertising at athletic events
    - Merchandise sales
    - Facility rentals
    - Revisiting pre-COVID meal pricing, while ensuring free meals remain available for students in need.

Reallocate Security Funding

- Shift resources from security toward direct student support services to better align with priorities.

Budget Advisory Committee Archive

The Committee's involvement page hosted on the District's Budget website archives the Committee's presentation materials, work output and final report: Budget Advisory Committee Page.