



Dr. George J. Barnes
Superintendent

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Chief Academic Officer

Governing Board

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Member since 2024

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Member since 2010

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Balsz Schools
Balsz Online Academy
[www.balsz.org/
balszonlineacademy](http://www.balsz.org/balszonlineacademy)
4825 E Roosevelt Street
(602) 629-6400

Orangedale Early
Learning Center
Preschool
5048 E. Oak Street
(602) 629-6800

Brunson-Lee Elementary
Grades K – 5
1350 N. 48th Street
(602) 629-6900

Crockett Elementary
Grades K – 5
501 N. 36th Street
(602) 629-6600

Griffith Elementary
Grades K – 5
4505 E. Palm Lane
(602) 629-6700

Tillman Middle
Grades 6 – 8
4309 E. Bellevue Street
(602) 629-6500

District Office
4825 E. Roosevelt Street
(602) 629-6400

www.balsz.org

Frequently Asked Questions: Balsz ESD Budget Reduction Process

Q1: Why is Balsz facing a budget shortfall?

Balsz ESD is facing a projected \$3 million budget shortfall due to a steady decline in student enrollment over the past three years.

Several factors have contributed to this decline:

- A shrinking school-age population in the area
- Families with children moving out of the district
- Fewer families moving into new housing developments
- Increased use of Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESAs), which shift state funding away from public schools
- Because school funding in Arizona is based on enrollment, fewer students means less funding for school operations.

Q2: Are any schools closing?

No. At this time, no decisions have been made about closing or repurposing any schools.

The district is evaluating multiple options to reduce costs and improve efficiency, including possible changes to how school sites are used. School closures or repurposing are only one of several scenarios being considered.

Q3: How will the community be involved?

This will be a transparent, inclusive process. Families, staff and community members will have several opportunities to provide input, including:

- Community forums and town halls
- Online surveys
- Focus groups
- A community advisory committee with parents, staff and students
- Your voice will help shape the final recommendations.

Q4: How does this affect my child this school year?

There will be no changes to school assignments, programs, or staff for the current 2025–2026 school year.

Any potential changes would occur only after the process is completed and decisions are made no earlier than the 2026–2027 school year.

Q5: What happens next?

The district is currently:

- Analyzing financial, enrollment and facility data
- Developing multiple budget scenarios
- Holding community engagement events
- Forming a stakeholder advisory committee
- Final recommendations will be presented in early 2026. The Governing Board is expected to vote on a plan in February 2026.

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Vision: Students empowered to be globally competitive and innovative thinkers who contribute to their community's sustainability.

Values: Excellence. Achievement. Innovation. Community



Q6: What kinds of changes are being considered?

The district may explore several options to reduce expenses or better align resources, including:

- Repurposing or consolidating underutilized school sites
- Adjusting attendance boundaries
- Reallocating or combining academic programs
- Reducing operational costs such as transportation or utilities
- A reduction in staff
- All options will be evaluated with student success, community impact and equity in mind.

Q7: Why is enrollment declining if new housing is being built?

Although the number of housing units in the district has increased, many new developments are geared toward individuals or couples without children such as students, young professionals or retirees.

At the same time, families with older children often move out of the area, further reducing enrollment in upper grade levels.

Q8: What is the role of the Arizona School Boards Association (ASBA)?

ASBA is partnering with the district to guide and facilitate this process. Their role includes:

- Providing data analysis and decision-making support
- Facilitating community engagement
- Ensuring the process is transparent and inclusive
- Helping the district communicate clearly and consistently with stakeholders

Q9: How can I stay informed?

You can stay up to date by:

- Visiting the district's dedicated webpage: [coming soon]
- Checking your email for regular updates
- Following Balsz ESD on social media
- Attending upcoming community meetings and forums

Q10: How can I share my feedback?

We encourage all families and community members to share their thoughts and questions.

You can do this by:

- Attending community meetings
- Completing upcoming online surveys
- Email Superintendent Dr. George Barnes at webmaster@balsz.org
- Speaking with your school principal or site leader

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