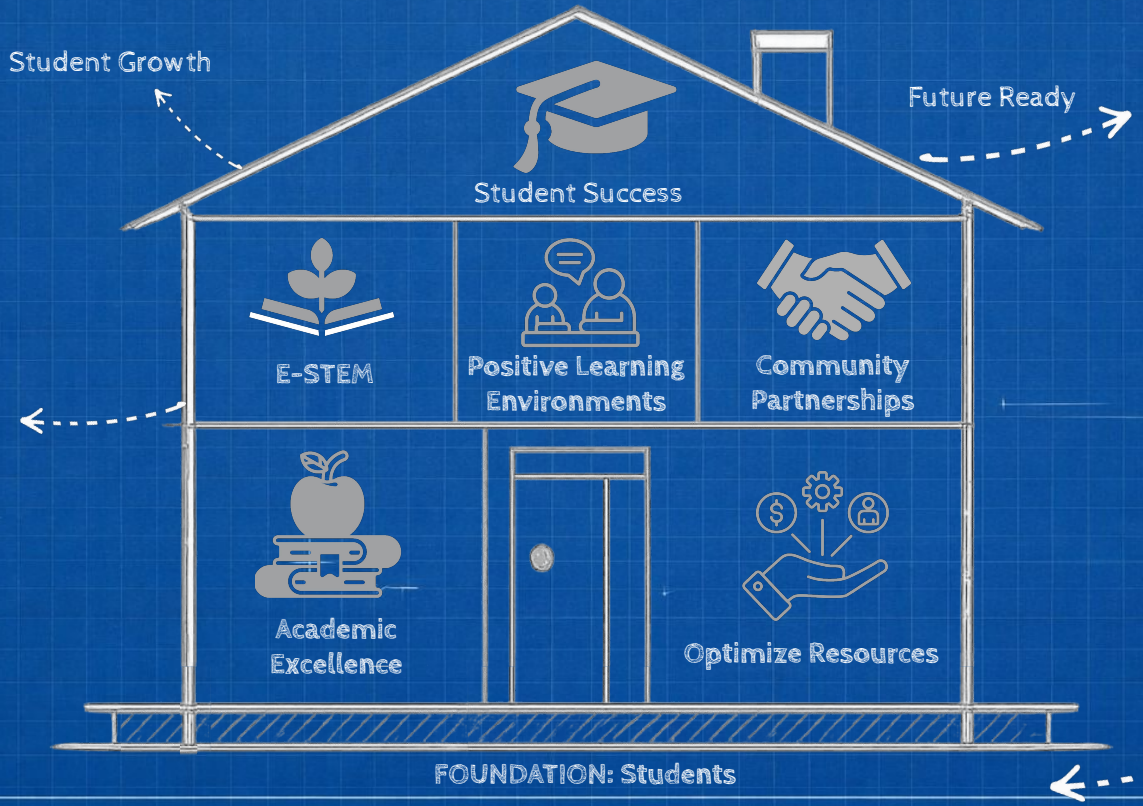
Building a Blueprint for Academic Excellence



Great schools are strengthened by the people who help shape them

Why We're Here Today

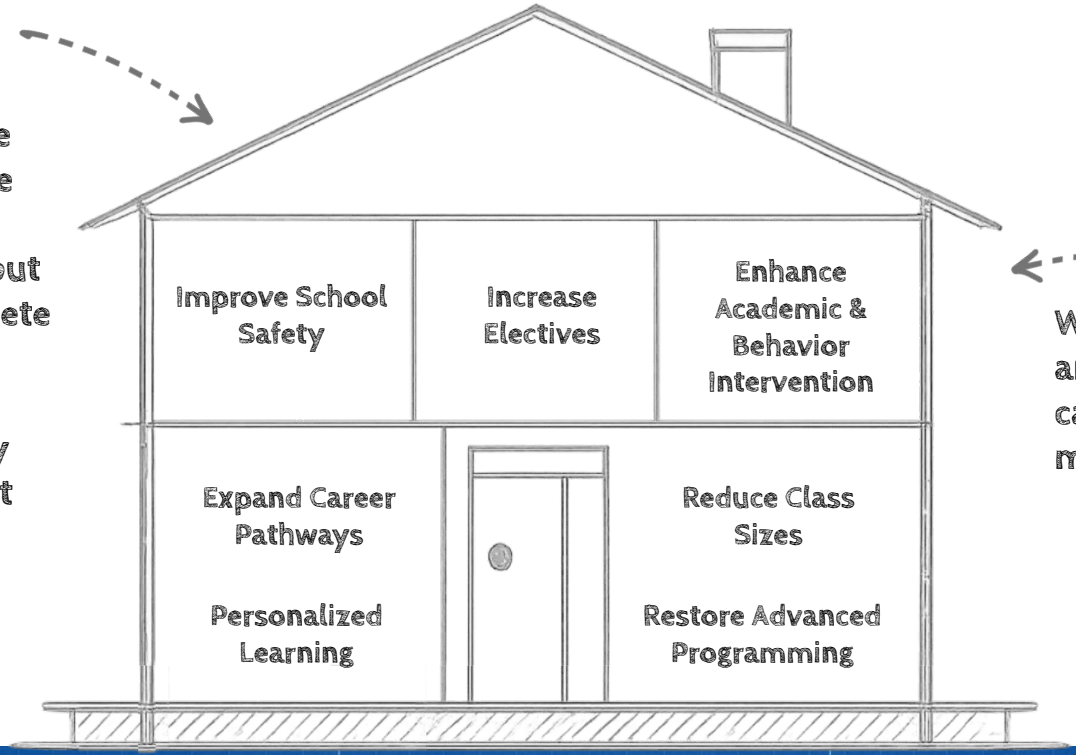
- Assess the financial reality
- Show how we've been managing resources
- Gather community input to guide our long-range Academic Excellence plan

Our Work is Grounded in Our Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Plan guides our decisions

Building the Future Takes Planning

Like making updates to a home, there are many things we want to accomplish – but we can't complete everything at once and our financial reality means we must plan improvements over time.



With thoughtful planning and community input, we can prioritize what matters most.

PLSAS Is Like a Well-Built Home That Needs Some Improvements

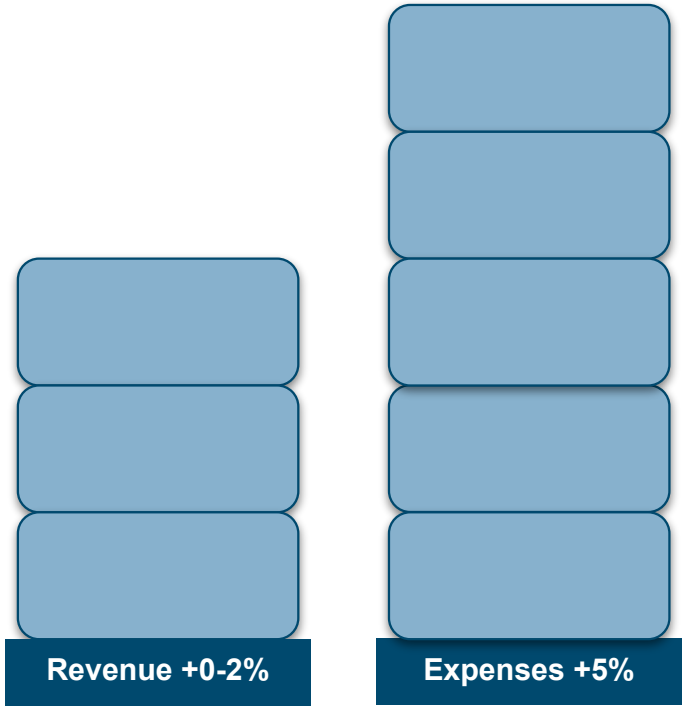
Our schools have strong foundations.

But some important systems are aging and under strain.

Phase	Home Project Example	The School Reality (Levy)	Cost Impact
Priority 1	**The "Safe & Dry" Phase:** Fixing the roof, updating old wiring, and replacing the furnace.	**Operations & Maintenance:** Keeping class sizes manageable and maintaining core instruction, basic safety/security tech.	**Low to Moderate:** The "keep the lights on" investment.
Priority 2	**The "Functional Living" Phase:** Knocking out a wall to fix the flow and updating the one bathroom everyone shares.	**Targeted Programming:** Updating outdated curriculum materials and basic tech infrastructure.	**Moderate:** Meaningful improvement without luxury finishes.
Priority 3	**The "Dream Kitchen" Phase:** High-end appliances, and a brand-new primary suite addition.	**Full Expansion:** Universal elective expansion, enhanced schedules and staffing increases.	**High:** Requires a much larger tax lift.

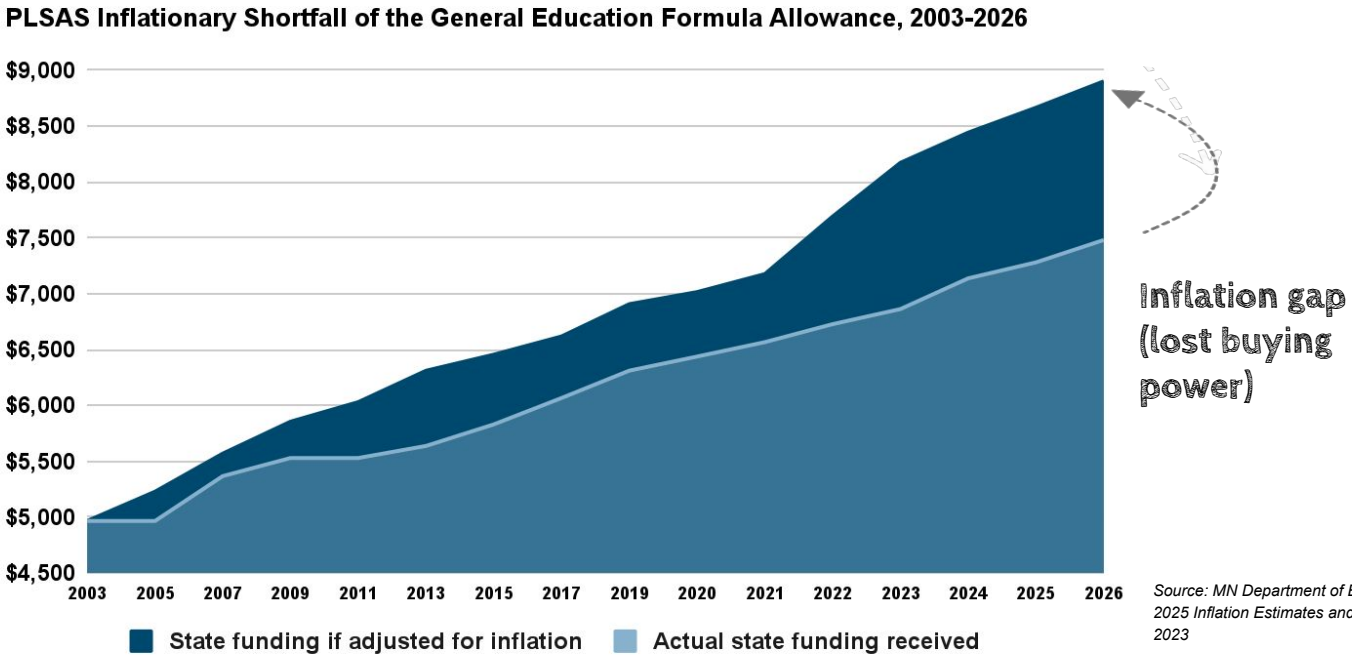
The Reality: Why Finances Are Tight

- State funding has not kept pace with inflation since 2003
- If it had, we would have received **$13+ million** more this year
- Declining enrollment = less revenue



The General Education Formula Allowance Has Not Kept Up With Inflation Since 2003

If state funding had kept pace with inflation since 2003, we would have received $13+ million more this year



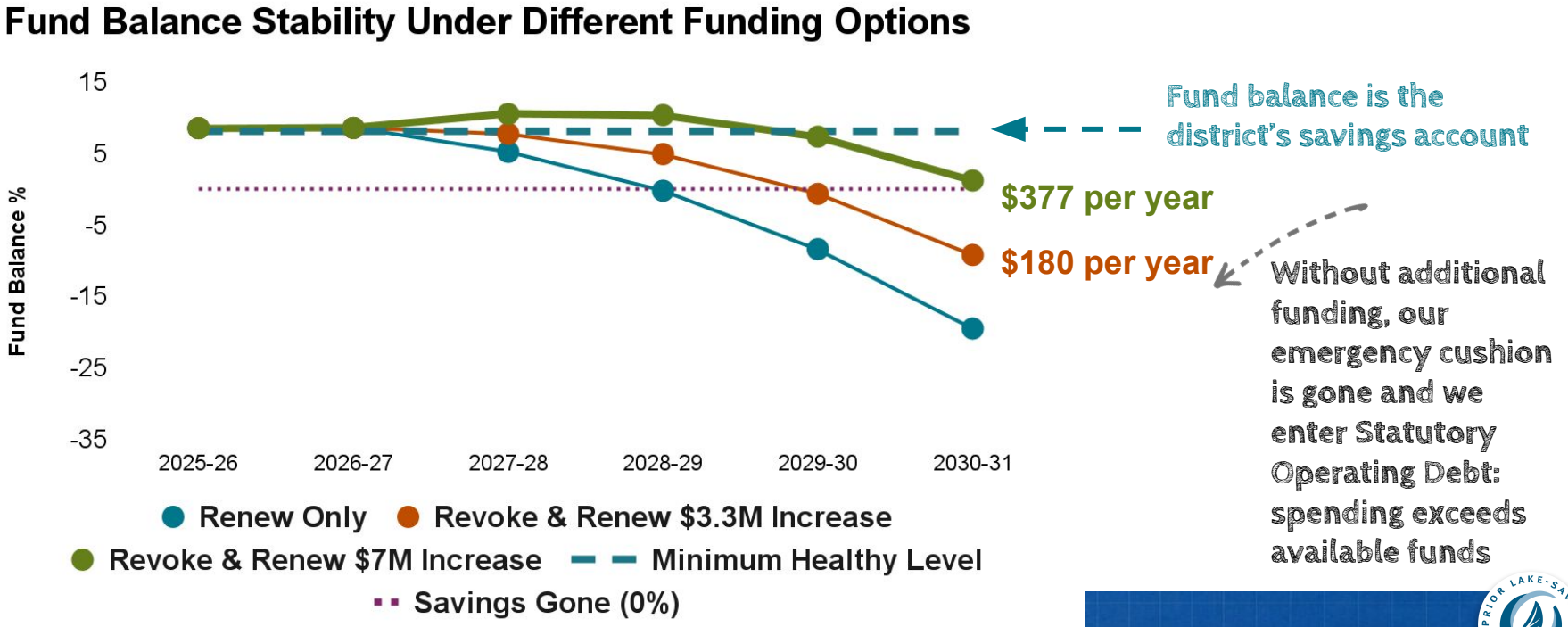
Source: MN Department of Education June 2025 Inflation Estimates and Minnesota Laws 2023

Why Our Plan Must Be Phased Over Time

- Revenue growth has slowed while costs continue to rise.
- We must balance immediate needs with long-term sustainability.
- This means implementing improvements in thoughtful stages.

Our Savings Help for a While — But Run Out Without a Plan

A new referendum could ease short-term challenges (with an annual reduction of $3M), but won't solve long-term funding gaps



We Have Already Taken Significant Steps to Adjust Spending

2024/25 | $4.0M Reduced

- DSC department reductions
- Administrator cost reductions
- $958K one-time fund balance use

2025/26 | $4.1M Reduced

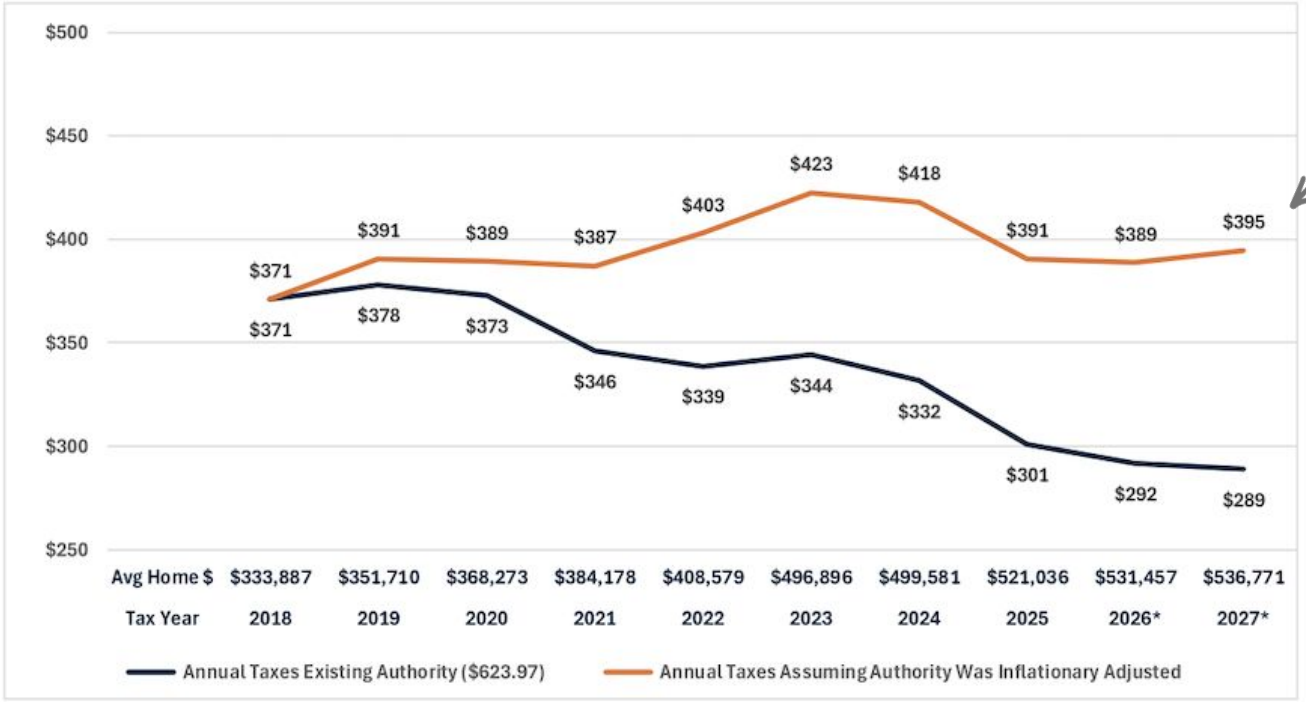
- Staffing/Administration reductions
- MNCAPS lease eliminated
- Twin Oaks pool closed
- Laker Online eliminated
- K–1 iPads & staff desktops reduced
- Fewer Gr. -12 elective options

2026/27 | Structural Changes

- Site consolidation
- Changing K–5 attendance boundaries
- Selling the District Services Center

$4.15 million more in cuts still need to be made

If We Had Added Inflation to the 2017 Referendum Request

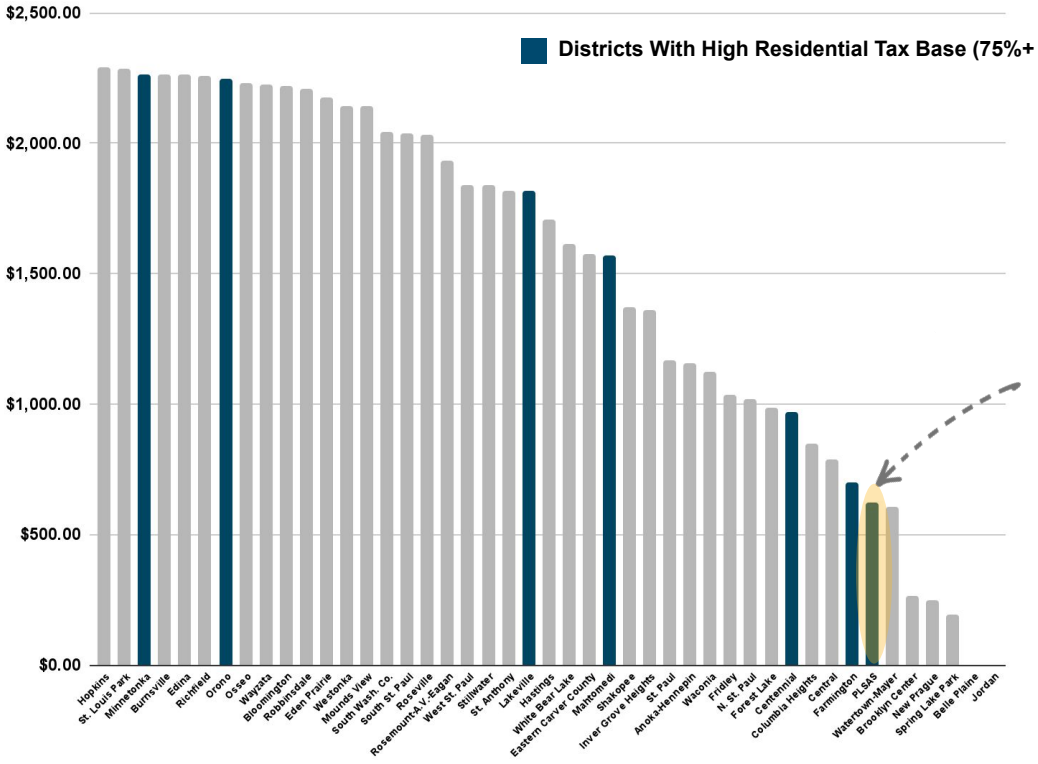


EHLERS

* Taxes Payable 2026 and 2027 are preliminary estimates

With an inflation adjustment, the 2017 operating referendum would have provided $12.6 Million more, while keeping taxes relatively stable. Over time, this funding could have supported programs, staff, and student opportunities.

Voter-Approved Operating Levy Comparison (2025/26 per student)



PLSAS' operating levy is one of the lowest in the metro, giving our district less money than neighboring districts to operate schools and offer competitive programs

Gray bars show a sample of other Minnesota school districts for context.

Source: MN Department of Education Taxes Payable 2025 Levy Limitation and Certification Reports

Now We Face Important Choices

- Because resources are limited, not everything can happen at once.
- Community input helps us decide what happens first and what can wait.

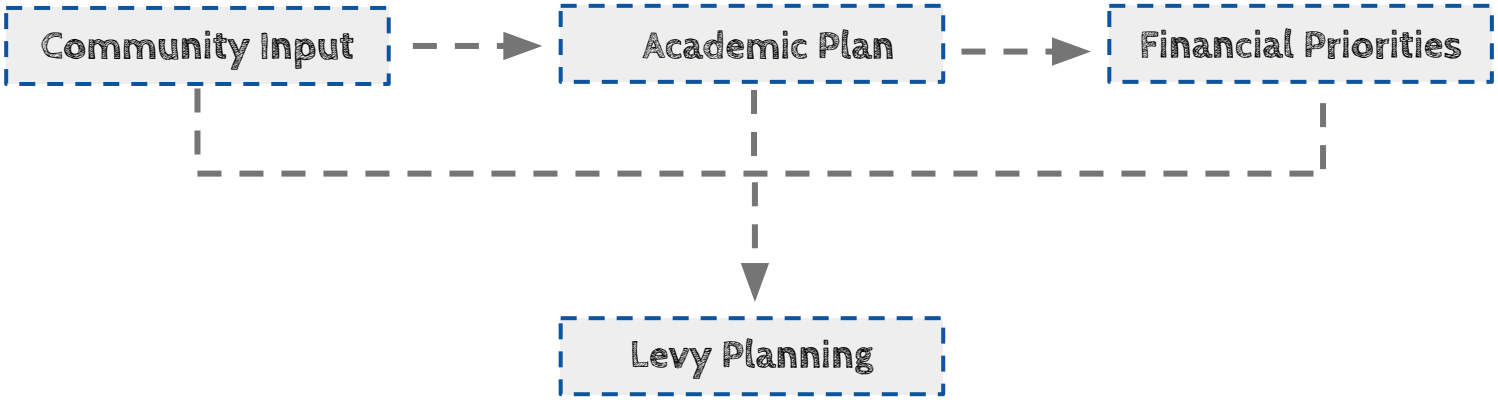
Table Questions

Why do you continue to choose PLSAS for you and your family? What keeps you in the community?

What do you see as the greatest challenge in helping our students find academic success?

What one or two changes or new ideas would you suggest to improve how our district delivers learning to students?

How Your Input Will Be Used



Planning Responsibly While Advocating for the Future

Minnesota's education funding formula **has not changed since 1971.** Despite rising costs and increasing mandates, schools are still funded under a system designed over 50 years ago.

- We plan carefully at the local level.
- We listen to community priorities.
- We continue advocating for fair and sustainable school funding.

Contact your local lawmakers

Thank you for being part of building the blueprint!
Strong schools are built together.