250 Pittsburg State Assessment Review for Budget Considerations

250 Pittsburg District Summary

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

Our teachers, students, and families face a number of challenges in ensuring student proficiency on assessments. Some of those challenges in our School District include:

- High percentage/number of free and reduced students and increased poverty rate
- High percentage of EL students receiving ESL/ESOL supports and services
- Though not necessarily identified as at-risk using the free and reduced lunch calculation, a number of students are at a high risk of falling behind
- High or increased levels of homeless students and families and foster care families
- Difficulty in retaining and attracting highly qualified teachers and replacing teachers as they retire
- High levels or increased levels of student trauma (Adverse Childhood Experiences, ACE Study)
- Lack of or limited access to quality Pre-K education
- Special Education funding shortfall has limited supports of our highest need students
- Increased or high levels of student discipline issues, including high numbers of suspensions and/or expulsions
- High levels or an increase in absenteeism among our student population
- An increasing level of social emotional challenges and needs of students
- High levels or increased student mobility affects the amount of instructional time we have with highly mobile students and creates instructional issues when students move in or out throughout the school year
- Lack of, limited, or difficulties in engaging parents in the educational process
- Diminishing local control limits our ability to provide supports and services specific to our student and community population
- We believe using one assessment score is not an accurate measure of student success, especially because assessments are written in a way to avoid 100% success for every assessment participant.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

Given an appropriate level of funding for both general education and special education, there are a number of budget actions we could take to remove some barriers. Some of them include:

- Increased salary to recruit and retain high quality certified and classified staff
- Increased funding and time for staff development
- Additional substitute teachers for teacher release time
- Increase paraeducator support in special education classrooms
- Increased funding to expand extended school year and summer school programs for students
- Additional ESOL teaching staff for bilingual students
- Increase funding for Pre-K programs
- Allocating budget to focus on prevention, identification, and intervention concerning trauma and mental health issues

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

While our board of education, administration, teachers and classified staff work tirelessly to meet the academic and social emotional needs of all of our students, too many factors come into play that do not allow us to accurately assess when all students will be at a certain level. Some of those factors include:

- Our ever-changing student population brings a varying degree of cognitive abilities and disabilities which precludes us from being able to guarantee a date when all students will meet a singular level of proficiency.
- The current and future levels of school funding have a significant impact on student learning and any increases or decreases have an affect on student success. Any changes to those funding levels, in either direction, impact the ability of students to meet proficiency criteria.
- Lack of constitutional funding of special education continues to impact our ability to fully meet the needs of all students
- While assessment scores are one measure, our district does not believe that student assessment scores should be the sole measure of student proficiency
- Similar to how other professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, etc, cannot ensure 100% success due to a variety of factors and obstacles, we will be unable to achieve 100% proficiency
- Many of the factors that affect student success, such as trauma, poverty, mental health and student disabilities, are out of the local board's control, so giving a time estimate on things that consistently change, or are under the control of other agencies, is not a realistic practice of a local school board.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
School: Pittsburg High School
Building Number: 1316
Grades Served: 9 - 12

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

- Lack of mandatory preschool to increase reading and writing confidence, as well as social skills
- Mental health and trauma needs for both students and staff
- Increase in ESOL/SLIFE population and service needs
- Absenteeism–gaps in learning
- Transient student population–gaps in learning
- Lack of para support for both Special Education and ESOL populations
- Recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers
- Lack of family engagement and reduced value in their student's education
- Tobacco, drug, and alcohol dependencies that impact educational outcomes

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

- Better community resources and partnerships with a focus on prevention, detection, and intervention concerning trauma, mental health, and addiction issues would be beneficial in managing and overcoming these barriers
- Increase paraprofessional wages to make the job more attractive and to retain effective paras
- Hire a dedicated Reading Interventionist at the secondary level
- Increase in physical space for small groups, interventions, mental health visits, and decreased class size
- Implementation of programs to assist students with addiction that will reduce absenteeism
- Communication resources to engage families

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if

the budget actions would be implemented.
Assuming everything was funded, it would take a large amount of time (5 or more years) for significant improvement. It would take a cohort group where everything was consistently and properly funded to be able to determine gains.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
School: Pittsburg Community Middle School
Building Number: 1310
Grades Served: 6-8

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade-level proficiency on assessments.
First and foremost, student mental health and trauma need to be addressed by families and outside agencies. Until students' basic needs are met, we will struggle to achieve academic success. We have an increase in students who haven't developed executive functioning skills. Their behavior disrupts their learning and the learning of others. Part of executive functioning includes being organized, completing multi-step problems, and taking initiative. Students who have less than a 90% attendance rate are rising. Students come to us already behind in grade-level standards, and you can trace that back to early childhood needs and services not being addressed. Therefore, mandatory pre-school would be helpful. Also, special education students need more support, and all teachers need better training on meeting various student needs. Our school also has a growing population of ESOL students who would benefit from a newcomers program to help acclimate them to our school system. Smaller core class sizes would also benefit students. This would allow us to move to a more personalized learning model and better draft their Individualized Plans of Study for post-secondary success.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.
Allocating budget to focus on prevention, detection, and intervention concerning trauma and mental health issues would be beneficial in managing and overcoming these barriers. The state must add funding to outside agencies to help solve this issue. Additional certified staff are needed to address behavior and executive function issues. Allocating funds to make core classes and ESOL class sizes smaller would be impactful. Funding for retention of paraprofessionals, such as higher pay and professional development opportunities. It would also greatly benefit us if the state made pre-school mandatory and appropriately funded. We need to invest in professional development to keep our teachers up to date and ensure they have the skills to provide high-impact interventions when required.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.
If the state makes pre-school mandatory and funds it appropriately, significant gains could be made. If the budget were allocated to more resources at the lower levels, we would begin to see those academic gains at the secondary level within the next 5 - 10 years. Since there are so many variables that impact student achievement, such as socioeconomic status, social-emotional health, etc, it is difficult to predict how long it would take to see significant gains. With the budget actions fully funded above, you would see gains in the first year.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
School: Meadowlark Elementary
Building Number: 1307
Grades Served: K-5

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

Student mental health and basic needs must be prioritized by families and external agencies to enable academic success. Many students lack executive functioning skills, which, along with rising absenteeism, disrupts learning. Early intervention, such as mandatory preschool, could address developmental delays. Special education and ESOL students need more targeted support, and all teachers require better training to meet diverse needs. Smaller class sizes would promote personalized learning and more effective planning for students' post-secondary goals.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

Investing in Student Well-Being and Academic Success

To effectively address the growing challenges in student mental health and behavior, a strategic allocation of budget resources is essential. Prioritizing funding for **prevention, detection, and intervention efforts** related to trauma and mental health will significantly enhance our ability to manage and overcome these barriers. This includes increasing financial support to **partner agencies and community organizations** that provide critical services to students and families.

Additionally, schools require **more certified staff** to address behavioral concerns and executive functioning challenges, which have become increasingly prevalent. Reducing **class sizes in core subjects and ESOL programs** would provide students with more individualized instruction and attention, directly improving academic outcomes.

Paraprofessionals play a vital role in supporting instruction and student needs; therefore, funding should also focus on **retention strategies**, such as **higher compensation and expanded professional development opportunities**.

We strongly advocate for the **mandatory implementation of pre-school**, with sufficient and sustained state funding. Early childhood education is

foundational to long-term academic success and social-emotional development.

Finally, investing in ongoing **professional development for teachers** is crucial. Ensuring educators have access to training in high-impact instructional strategies and intervention techniques will empower them to meet diverse student needs effectively.

By making these targeted investments, the state can ensure a more supportive, equitable, and effective educational environment for all students.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

If the state were to **make pre-school mandatory and fund it appropriately**, it could lead to **significant long-term gains** in student achievement. Early access to high-quality education provides a strong foundation for future learning, especially for students who face challenges related to **socioeconomic status, social-emotional development, and trauma**.

By **allocating more resources to the early grades**, we would likely begin to see measurable academic improvements at the **secondary level within 5 to 10 years**. However, because student achievement is influenced by a wide range of complex and interrelated factors, including family background and mental health, it is difficult to predict an exact timeline for substantial gains.

That said, **if the budget actions outlined above were fully funded**—including increased mental health support, reduced class sizes, additional certified staff, higher paraprofessional pay, and targeted professional development—we are confident that **positive results would be visible within the first year**. These strategic investments would lay the groundwork for both immediate improvements and sustained long-term success.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
School: Lakeside
Building Number: 1304
Grades Served: K-5

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.
First and foremost, student mental health and trauma must be prioritized by families and supported by outside agencies. Until students' basic needs are met, achieving academic success will remain a challenge. We are seeing a rise in students who have not yet developed essential executive functioning skills. This affects their ability to stay organized, complete multi-step tasks, and take initiative—resulting in behaviors that disrupt their own learning and that of others. Additionally, the number of students with attendance rates below 90% is increasing. Many students arrive already behind in meeting grade-level standards, often tracing back to unaddressed early childhood needs and services. Implementing mandatory preschool could help bridge that gap. Furthermore, special education students require more robust support, and all teachers would benefit from enhanced training to meet the diverse needs of their students. Our school is also experiencing growth in its ESOL population, highlighting the need for a newcomers program to help these students acclimate to our school system. Reducing core class sizes would further support personalized learning models and allow for more effective development of Individualized Plans of Study, paving the way for post-secondary success.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.
Investing in the prevention, detection, and intervention of trauma and mental health challenges is crucial for overcoming barriers to learning. To support this, the state must increase funding for outside agencies dedicated to addressing these issues.

Furthermore, additional certified staff are needed to manage behavior concerns and improve executive functioning skills in students. Reducing class sizes in core subjects and ESOL programs would also have a positive impact, allowing for more personalized instruction and targeted support.

Retention of paraprofessionals is vital, and this can be achieved through competitive pay and expanded professional development opportunities. Additionally, making preschool mandatory with proper state funding would help address early learning gaps and set students up for success.

Investing in ongoing professional development for teachers is equally important, ensuring they remain equipped with the skills and strategies necessary for delivering high-impact interventions and meeting diverse student needs.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

If the state were to make preschool mandatory and fund it appropriately, substantial academic gains could be achieved. Redirecting budget resources toward early education would likely result in measurable improvements at the secondary level within 5 to 10 years.

While variables such as socioeconomic status and social-emotional health can impact student achievement, fully funding the proposed budget measures would drive noticeable progress as early as the first year.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
School: Westside
Building Number: 1310
Grades Served: PreK-5

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.
First and foremost, student mental health and trauma must be prioritized by families and supported by community agencies. Until students' basic needs are met, academic success will remain out of reach for many. We are witnessing a rise in students who lack essential executive functioning skills, which impairs their ability to stay organized, complete multi-step tasks, and demonstrate initiative. These deficits often manifest as behaviors that disrupt not only their own learning but also that of their peers. Attendance is another growing concern, with an increasing number of students falling below the 90% attendance threshold. Many arrive at school already behind academically, often due to unmet early childhood needs. Implementing mandatory preschool could play a critical role in closing this gap and ensuring more students begin their K-12 journey on solid footing. Students in special education require stronger, more consistent support systems, and all educators would benefit from enhanced professional development to address the diverse learning needs within today's classrooms. Additionally, the growth of our ESOL population underscores the need for a dedicated newcomers program to support language acquisition and cultural acclimation. Finally, reducing core class sizes would enable more personalized instruction, allowing educators to better implement Individualized Plans of Study and guide students toward post-secondary success.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.
Investing in the prevention, detection, and intervention of trauma and mental health challenges is essential to eliminating barriers to learning. To

effectively support students, the state must increase funding for external agencies that specialize in mental health and trauma-related services.

In schools, additional certified staff are urgently needed to address behavioral concerns and enhance students' executive functioning skills. Reducing class sizes, particularly in core subjects and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programs, would enable more personalized instruction and targeted support, ultimately improving student outcomes.

The retention of paraprofessionals is also critical to the success of school communities. This can be achieved by offering competitive compensation and expanding access to professional development opportunities.

Furthermore, making preschool education mandatory—with adequate state funding—would help close early learning gaps and better prepare students for long-term academic success.

Equally important is sustained investment in ongoing professional development for educators. Teachers must be equipped with up-to-date strategies and tools to deliver high-impact interventions and meet the diverse needs of their students.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

If the state were to mandate preschool and provide adequate funding, significant academic gains could be realized. Redirecting budget resources toward early childhood education would likely lead to measurable improvements at the secondary level within five to ten years. Although factors such as socioeconomic status and social-emotional health influence student achievement, fully funding the proposed measures could produce noticeable progress as early as the first year.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
School: George Nettels
Building Number: 1302
Grades Served: K-5

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

First and foremost, student mental health and trauma must be addressed by both families and community agencies. Until students' basic needs are met, academic success will remain out of reach for many. Increasingly, we are seeing students who lack critical executive functioning skills, such as organization, problem-solving, and initiative, which significantly impact their learning and the classroom environment.

Chronic absenteeism is also on the rise, with more students attending school less than 90% of the time. Many arrive already behind in grade-level standards, often due to unmet early childhood needs and a lack of access to services. Implementing mandatory preschool would be a crucial step toward early intervention and school readiness.

In addition, students receiving special education services require more support, and all educators need ongoing professional development to better address diverse learning needs. Our school is also seeing a growing number of ESOL students, who would greatly benefit from a dedicated newcomers program to ease their transition into the school system.

To effectively support all students, many of whom are developmentally delayed, trauma-impacted, or English language learners, smaller core class sizes are essential. This would enable educators to provide more individualized instruction and better respond to the complex needs of our student population.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

To effectively manage and overcome the barriers caused by trauma and mental health challenges, allocating a budget toward prevention, early detection, and intervention is essential. This includes increased state funding for outside agencies that provide critical support services to students and families.

Addressing behavior and executive functioning issues requires additional certified staff trained to provide both academic and behavioral interventions. Smaller class sizes in core academic subjects and ESOL programs would enable more targeted, individualized instruction, which is crucial for students facing these challenges.

Furthermore, funding for the recruitment and retention of paraprofessionals is vital. This should include higher wages and access to professional development, recognizing the critical role paraprofessionals play in supporting students and classroom instruction.

It would also be highly beneficial for the state to mandate and adequately fund universal preschool, ensuring children receive foundational support before entering elementary school. Finally, ongoing investment in high-quality professional development is necessary to ensure educators are equipped with up-to-date strategies and interventions that drive student growth and success, as well as de-escalating behavioral concerns, which have increased significantly over the years.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

If the state were to mandate and properly fund universal preschool, we could expect to see significant academic gains over time. Early investment in foundational skills sets the stage for success in later years. By allocating more resources to early childhood education and support services at the elementary level, we would likely begin to see measurable academic improvements at the secondary level within the next 5 to 10 years. It is normal to have 2-3 students who enter kindergarten delayed or very delayed. The cohort entering kindergarten this year had 11 delayed or very delayed. These students are not entering ready to learn.

Student achievement is influenced by numerous variables, such as socioeconomic factors, social-emotional development, and mental health, so progress can vary. Still, if the proposed budget actions were fully funded, including increased staffing, reduced class sizes, expanded mental health services, and professional development, we believe meaningful gains would be visible within the first year.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
School: George Nettels
Building Number: 1302
Grades Served:

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 250 Pittsburg
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Building Number:
Grades Served:

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