




Portland Public Schools Community Budget Review Committee

2024-25 Annual Budget Report
Presented to the Board of Education
May 7, 2024



Background on CBRC

Community Budget Review Committee (CBRC) reviews, evaluates and makes recommendations to the board regarding the Superintendent's Proposed Budget and local levy funds and provides a vital connection between the district and school students and families.

Purpose and Focus Analysis of Budget Alignment with Board Goals

1. Third-grade Reading
2. Fifth-grade Mathematics
3. Eighth-grade Readiness
4. High School Graduation

CBRC Core Messages for 2024-25

- The PPS communities, the board, and the district should **advocate for additional state funding**
- **Increasing student-facing direct service positions and reducing class sizes** will help the district achieve the board goals

Climate and Trends

- Structural challenges: revenues are not keeping pace with expenses
- Uneven educational progress and persistent racial achievement gap
- Financial and instructional time impacts

Climate and Trends Recommendations

- Declining enrollment
- Costs rising faster than revenues
 - maintain 5% reserve
- Deferred maintenance of PPS schools
- Reforms to the budget process
- Continued application of racial equity social justice lens

Budgetary Decisions that Directly Impact Board Goals for Student Achievement

Equitable and Targeted Direct-Service Staffing Allocations

These budgetary decisions are in alignment with board goals and prioritize direct service to students:

- Staff has attempted to craft a budget that minimizes the impact of reductions to direct support for students, while maintaining core operations.
- The 2024-25 budget continues the practice of determining staffing allocations based on the differentiated staffing model, designed to provide more funding for direct support services in schools serving student populations with highest needs.

Cuts to Direct-Service Staff

Recommendations:

- Prioritizing student-facing positions
- Continued analysis of contracts
- Analysis of all investments in indirect (not student-facing) services
- Reconsider library staffing changes

The Continued Need for Differentiated Staffing Allocation Based on Student Need

Recommendations:

- Review efficacy of equity investments
- Review of outcomes for school-based interventionists to the schools with the highest needs based on MAP testing data after 2025-26
- Collaboration with school administrators during the time of transition from an 8% equity allocation to a 4%

Summer, After School, and Specialized Learning Supports

Recommendations:

- Provide programming for students not qualifying for SAA because they scored below the 10th percentile on certain academic tests, and analyze the student disqualified for SAA to determine the impact on underserved students.
- Continue funding for CBO programs with a record of strongly positive educational outcomes.
- Continue TAG program funding at a level that matches current enrollment needs.

Investment in Instructional Coaches and Professional Development

Recommendation:

- Prioritize class sizes and current student support positions over additional instructional coaches and paid or released professional learning and collaborative planning time. Exception: early literacy interventionists providing direct service to students.

Maintain Social-Emotional Supports for Students

Recommendations:

- Maintain current levels of targeted investment in direct educational supports in 2024-25 to make progress toward academic recovery.
- If possible, reduce the counselor to student ratio as recommended in the QEM at all K-5s, K-8s, and middle schools serving the highest percentages of CU students.

Special Education (SPED) Changes

Recommendations:

- Review reductions in special education staff to assess whether current levels meet highest needs under the new model.
- Assess benefits of reducing FTE increases for school psychologists and speech language pathologists to offset reductions in classified staff for special education.
- Monitor the shift towards the “neighborhood model” of services from the “regional model” for the impact on students.

Maintain Social-Emotional Supports for Students

Recommendations:

- Maintain current levels of targeted investment in direct educational supports (primarily teaching staff, counselors, and educational assistants) in 2024-25 to make progress toward academic recovery.
- If possible, reduce the counselor to student ratio as recommended in the QEM at all K-5s, K-8s, and middle schools serving the highest percentages of CU students.

Early Literacy Changes

Recommendations:

- Maintain access to libraries at all schools full-time, by staffing libraries at the state's QEM.

Recommendations if additional funding becomes available:

- Allocate more direct service FTE to early literacy in grades K-2.
- Maintain or reduce class sizes from 2023-24 level for all K-2
- Maintain 1.0 EA allocation and targeted early literacy support kindergarten where most needed.
- Expand high-dosage tutoring starting in the 3rd quarter of the kindergarten year, instead of starting high-dosage tutoring at grade 3.
- Increase the number of Learning Acceleration Specialists and allocate the FTE with targeted intervention support in grades K-3 to address early literacy gaps.

High School Graduation

Recommendations:

- We recommend that more information on Multiple Pathways to Graduation, Alliance, and the Reconnection Services be shared with the community. These options are developed to meet the needs of a specific student population (at risk and underserved students).

Reductions in Central Office Expenditures

Recommendations:

- Review central office spending cuts and their possible impacts on student success.
- Examine whether future budget reports can include information about central office spending. This information is not readily available in the current budget.

Local Option Levy Review

Local Option Levy Review

- The committee finds that all levy funds are being used as approved by voters.
- In 2022-23 the levy funded **922** teachers.
- In 2023-24, the levy will fund an estimated **802** teachers.
- Due to decreasing revenue and increasing costs, the levy will fund fewer teachers in coming years.
- The committee notes the upcoming levy renewal on the May ballot (Measure 26-246). If not renewed, there will be a funding impact in 2025-26.

CBRC Members

Karanja Crews
Aaron Cronan
Mo Damtew (Student Member)
Mariah Hudson (Co-Chair)
Dashiell Elliott
Tasz Ferguson (Co-Chair)
Paul Freese
Jen Gray-O'Connor
Grace Groom (Vice Chair)
Sonya Harvey
Roger Kirchner
Stephan Lindner (Vice Chair)
Adriel Person
Luke Susswood (Student Member)

Appendix

Closing Remarks

Portland Public School's mission statement is:

We provide rigorous, high quality academic learning experiences that are inclusive and joyful. We disrupt racial inequities to create vibrant environments for every student to demonstrate excellence.

CBRC compared the proposed 2024-25 budget to board goals supporting the **district's mission**.

- More focus on direct student-facing positions would bring greater alignment of the budget with the four board goals.
 - Maintaining or even reducing class sizes further by increasing teaching staff to provide more individualized attention to students would have a positive impact on all students and should be prioritized over training and curriculum in light of difficult budget reductions.
 - Preventing further increase in class sizes and social emotional support is key to educational environments in which all students can safely and joyfully thrive and excel.
 - We encourage continued reflective practice and study, collaboration with the teaching staff and school communities, along with greater transparency, as the district responds to financial pressures and works toward realization of the Quality Education Model and eliminating racial academic disparities.
 - CBRC has welcomed the opportunity to work in concert with the district during this process. We recognize the difficult budgeting decisions and investments that the district needs to make in order to have a budget reflective of the overall PPS community. CBRC is appreciative of the district's efforts to continue growing and learning with students, staff, and community members to create a budget that is increasingly more reflective of its own mission of racial equity, inclusion, rigor and high quality academic learning.
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