

RESOLUTION No. 5229

Adopting Budget Principles

RECITALS

- A. As part of the work under the Government Finance Officers Association best practices budget framework, the Community Budget Review Committee (CBRC) met six times starting May 2015 to develop a set of budget principles.
- B. On February 18, 2016, representatives of the CBRC presented a draft of these principles to the Board of Education's Business and Operations Committee (BOC).
- C. The BOC reviewed the proposal, made one revision to some wording and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the principles to the Board of Education.

RESOLUTION

The Board of Directors of Portland Public Schools approves and adopts the attached Budget Principles.

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Budget Principles

Recommend by CBRC, February 18, 2016
Recommended by Business & Operations Committee

Background

Budgeting principles set forth the ideals that the district's decision makers will adhere to as they develop the budget and can help counteract the tendency to induct short-term emotion into decisions that have long-term consequences. Principles are important for creating a shared understanding of the overarching values that underpin budget development. Finally, because principles are broader ideas about what the budget process ought to look like, they are more accessible to elected officials and the public than budget policies, which are more technical.

Recommendation

The CBRC recommends that Portland Public Schools adopt the following set of budget principles to help frame and guide budget deliberations.

Providing Students with an Exceptional Educational Experience and Ensuring their Academic Success Should Drive the Budget Process

Clear goals for an exceptional educational experience and the academic success of our students should guide how resources are allocated, how progress is tracked, and how budget decisions are made to prioritize programs and strategies.

Decisions Should Be Driven By Data

Programs and service providers should be selected based on qualitative and quantitative data on student outcomes, both in terms of academic success and students' whole educational experience. Data should include input from relevant stakeholders. Programs and providers that have a demonstrated track record of success in achieving the district's desired goals should be prioritized for funding.

Base Resourcing Decisions on Cost-Effectiveness

The budget process should seek to allocate available dollars optimally, in a way that will create the most benefit for children given the costs. Prioritize strategies and programs with proven cost-effectiveness. Strategies and programs that have proven to produce larger gains in student learning relative to their cost should be given priority for funding. Programs that are chosen should be implemented fully and faithfully even if that means fewer programs.

Prioritize the Core Program in All Schools

Ensure there are sufficient resources for the core program, including core instruction and ongoing, comprehensive, and systemic professional development, as well as school-based instructional support for teachers and students.

Furthermore, the district must provide resources for the most impactful supplementary strategies and interventions for students who do not perform within the expected parameters in the core program. This includes all students, but most importantly the extra help or interventions made available by federal Title I and state compensatory education programs, and for subgroups including special education students, English Language Learners and other historically underserved populations.

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Critically Re-Examine Patterns of Spending

Past patterns of spending may no longer be relevant given changing needs of the community and student body. Hence, the budget process should encourage review of past spending decisions and critically change, where necessary. The district should develop and adhere to a program review and sunset process to identify and discontinue programs that are not achieving their objectives or that are simply not as effective as available alternatives.

Provide Every Student with Equitable Access

The district will significantly change its practices in order to achieve and maintain equity for historically underserved populations* in education. Educational equity means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students and (2) eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories. The concept of educational equity goes beyond formal equality – where all students are treated the same – to fostering a barrier-free environment where all students have the opportunity to benefit equally. Educational equity benefits all students, and our entire community. All students shall graduate from PPS ready to succeed in a diverse local, national and global community. To achieve educational equity, PPS will provide additional and differentiated resources to support the success of all students, including students from all historically underserved populations.

(Based upon the PPS Racial Educational Equity Policy)

*Historically Underserved Populations includes students who meet one of the following criteria: special education eligibility; limited English proficiency; free meal eligibility by direct certification; Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander or Native American race.

Take a Long-Term Perspective

The district will not be able to make large changes to its educational strategy and resource allocation patterns within a single year. Further, a consistent application of proven strategies over a multi-year period will deliver better results. Therefore, to the degree possible, the district should develop and adhere to a multi-year funding and review plan for its strategies, with the goal of fully funding and re-aligning resources where necessary to fund high priority elements of the strategies.

Be Transparent

Effective budgeting requires valid information about the true costs of serving students and the outcomes produced for students.

- Make current, valid and reliable data on defined fiscal and academic outcomes readily available.
- Consider all direct and indirect expenditures in evaluating the cost of educating students.
- Use a comprehensive budget that considers all available funds and acknowledges constraints on restricted funds.
- Be clear on what activities are being funded and how they help the district reach its goals—not just line items and broad expenditure categories.
- Ensure that the budget is transparent and accessible to the community it serves.