Participatory Budgeting in Schools

Schools, school districts, and colleges around the world are using participatory budgeting (PB) to engage students, parents, educators, and staff in deciding how to spend a part of the school budget.

School PB develops student leadership, supports student and school success, lifts up student and parent voice, and involves the entire school in meaningful civic experiences. Participants learn democracy by doing it.

Why Do PB?

[PB is] an opportunity for students to get real life experience, connect it to what they’re learning in the classroom, and really see the power of using their voice. We’re creating future leaders.

-Cyndi Tercero-Sandoval, administrator, Phoenix Union High School District

PB supports student learning & development

- Students learn lifelong habits of civic participation
- PB increases students’ sense of social responsibility
- Students gain confidence in themselves and their ability to effect change
- Students learn critical career and life skills including:
  - Collaboration
  - Research, interviewing, and surveying
  - Problem-solving and critical thinking
  - Public speaking

PB strengthens school communities

- Students and families become more actively invested in the school community
- PB fosters better relationships between students, families, teachers, and administration
- PB results in more effective school spending
- PB generates new ideas to address school and community needs

participatorybudgeting.org
PB in Schools: Where do I start?

Check out the Participatory Budgeting Project’s resources to help teachers, administrators, students, and parents start PB in their schools at:

participatorybudgeting.org/schools

- Download our free *Guide to Participatory Budgeting in Schools*. It contains lesson plans and worksheets that walk you through planning, idea collection, proposal development, voting, and funded project implementation.
- Watch our short video on the inspiring PB process in Phoenix high schools.
- Contact us with your questions.

What types of schools are doing PB?

- **Elementary schools**: P.S. 139 in Brooklyn, NY is doing PB with students & families to decide how to use Parent Association and school funds.
- **High Schools**: The Phoenix Union High School District in Arizona launched the first PB process in the US using school district-wide funds.
- **Colleges**: City University of New York students are allocating a portion of student government funds and other school fees through PB.
- And others!

What kinds of budgets are used for PB?

- School district budgets
- School budgets
- Principal’s discretionary funds
- Parent Teacher Association budgets
- School government budgets
- Student activity funds
- And others!

When I get older I still want to be seeing what’s wrong with my community and coming up with ways to fix it. That’s what I like doing, I just never really got the chance to act upon it until now.

-Alma O., student, Phoenix Union High School District

[Before PB] I would be the kid sitting in the back, in the corner, head always down, not raising his hand. Now I want to sit in the front right where the teacher’s at.

-Agustin B., student, Phoenix Union High School District