

Bellevue School District Budget Shortfall 2024 and Beyond

A RESOLUTION by the Bellevue PTSA Council

A Resolution of the Bellevue PTSA Council to declare that Bellevue School District Budget reduction process be collaborative with the community and focused on reducing impacts to the academic and extra-curricular opportunities of all students K-12.

Whereas, Bellevue School District is experiencing year-over-year declining enrollment due to factors which include, but are not limited to: declining birth rates; fewer families with children moving into the Bellevue School District attendance area; and lack of affordable housing; and

Whereas, Bellevue School District uses discretionary levy revenue to provide opportunities beyond state-defined basic education, such as, but not limited to: MS/HS 7-period day; MS/HS tutorial; MS language classes; additional school nurses and counselors; mental health supports; STEM Programs and AP Classes; orchestra, band, music, and art in elementary schools; athletics and extra-curricular opportunities; access to new technologies and software that support student learning; integrated digital curriculum; and

Whereas, due to the Washington State legislature funding basic education using a "prototypical model"¹ tied to enrollment and adding a new state cap on local school operating levies², the Bellevue School District has had its state funding reduced, and is prohibited by law from increasing its revenue via new levies, creating a projected budget shortfall; and

Whereas, state law requires Bellevue School District to submit a balanced budget³; and

Whereas, increased revenue does not appear to be forthcoming; and

¹ The prototypical model's staffing ratios, funding formulas, and mandated subject offerings are defined in RCW 28a.150.260.

² Enrichment (operating) levies are limited to \$2.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value, beginning in 2020 and adjusted for inflation annually each subsequent year. RCW 84.52.0531.

³ RCW 28a.505.130

Whereas, Bellevue School District is reviewing various ways to reduce expenses in order to meet its legal duty to submit a balanced budget: Middle School consolidation is one of several possible paths being considered to solve this shortfall, but the only solution that the District has discussed with families. The District has stated clearly that other options are on the table, without defining which cuts would be considered, and which students would be impacted. Furthermore, even with school consolidation, more cuts will likely be necessary. Many District families do not understand that the current budget process may have large ramifications for students' education and services across all grade levels, and they have not been consulted on their priorities and needs.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Bellevue PTSA Council Board and Membership advocates that Bellevue School District to make cost reducing decisions with collective student impact as the driving factor. While student impact varies at all levels of education, we ask that BSD make decisions based on the impact on students at all grade levels and programs, with attention to impacts on previously affected groups, high-needs groups, and historically under-represented groups;

Resolved, that Bellevue PTSA Council Board and Membership advocates for clear and early communication that results in deep understanding about potential cuts to ensure adequate time for all members of the Preschool-12th grade community to provide feedback. Particular attention should be paid to educating and acquiring feedback from communities that are traditionally under-represented in District processes;

Resolved, that Bellevue PTSA Council Board and Membership advocates for avenues for community involvement in the decision-making process, with intentional attempts to collect feedback from community partners that utilize District-held resources;

Resolved, that Bellevue PTSA Council Board and Membership advocates for family, staff, community, and student voice from all levels (elementary, middle, and high school) during the budget balancing process;

Resolved, that Bellevue PTSA Council Board and Membership advocates that school-level budget cuts and program reductions be proportionate to where student enrollment impact has been most affected, in order to maintain high quality and equitable services for all students;

Resolved, that Bellevue PTSA Council Board and Membership advocates that Bellevue School District will provide transitional support to the impacted communities of any budget decisions.

Resolved, that Bellevue PTSA Council Board and Membership advocates that an analysis of any proposed cuts to program or foundational courses include an evaluation of the impact on subsequent grade levels. For example: the impact to high school course options if middle school prerequisites are cut, or the impact to the secondary music program if 5th grade band/orchestra is eliminated.

ADOPTED by Bellevue PTSA Council Board at a regular meeting thereof, held December 1, 2023.

ADOPTED by Bellevue PTSA Council at a regular and open General Membership meeting thereof, held December 4, 2023.