

# BULLETIN BOARD

## Budget-Savvy Boards

It's that time of year—school district budgeting season! School board members are responsible for governance of the school district, which includes overseeing the allocation of resources. The process of approving a school district budget can be very intimidating for school board members unfamiliar with financial and education terminology and processes. The solution? School board members should set aside some time to get acquainted with the district's budget, the process and policies related to it and ask questions, if needed.

### **What is the purpose of a school district budget?**

The budget lays out the school district's projections for revenues and expenditures for each year. Very much like your own personal budget, the district's budget is an important tool for:

- Identifying what monies will be coming in and from whom
- Planning for anticipated expenses based on commitments and what you're trying to accomplish
- Forecasting possible reserves

The school district budget should reflect the priorities of the school district by aligning with the goals in the strategic plan.

### **Where do I learn about my school district's budget?**

The best places to seek information about the school district budget are your school board president and superintendent. Set up an appointment and let them know in advance you'd like to learn about the district's budget, the process for establishing the budget and any related policies. Ask for specific guidance on who budget-related questions should be directed to in the future and also at what point in the cycle is it appropriate for questions to be asked.

### **Who is involved in the budgeting process?**

Many people are involved in establishing a budget throughout the cycle. The school board and superintendent often involve various stakeholders in establishing goals for the school district—goal-setting is the foundation for the budgeting process. District staff members and administrators further develop the budget by putting together cost estimates and projections. The school business official and superintendent pull the full budget together, with a careful eye on both revenues and expenses. Once completed, the budget is presented to the board for approval.



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