

*How would you spend
\$10,000 to improve
your school?*

POLICY #6

Participatory Budgeting

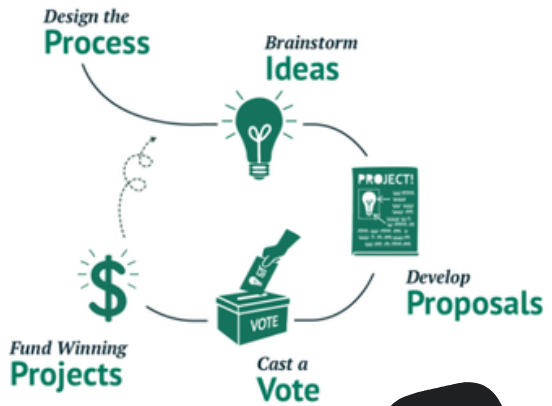
Description:

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a process where students vote directly on how to spend a portion of their school's budget. Over the course of a year, students propose projects to improve their school, vote on their favorite, and then put the top-voted idea into practice!

PB is designed to empower students to solve problems in their school, while also teaching them how to budget and participate in local decision-making.

Examples:

- Schools in the Phoenix Union High School District each received \$4,000 to \$7,000 for Participatory Budgeting. Students voted to fund projects like filtered water stations, music programs, improved bathroom facilities, and study lounges. Students reported that they felt empowered to address their daily needs, especially needs that adults might forget.





POLICY #6

Participatory Budgeting (Continued)

Pros	Cons
Student power: PB empowers students to solve problems at school. If adults aren't fixing an issue in your school, PB gives you the money and power to address the issue yourself.	Student power: PB doesn't empower students to influence school policies (school discipline, attendance, etc.).
Inclusion: PB is designed to include the entire school. If students want to get deeply involved, they can propose an idea for funding. Other students can debate and vote on their favorite idea.	Inclusion: Because PB projects are chosen based on a student vote, the voices of less represented students might be crowded out by the majority of students.
Likelihood of passing: Lawmakers may support PB as a type of civics education – teaching students how to be responsible citizens and future leaders.	Likelihood of passing: Some lawmakers may not want to spend lots of money to fund Participatory Budgeting. However, we could propose a PB process that uses existing school funds, which may help.

If we chose Participatory Budgeting, we would want to make sure that:

- A small group of students designs the idea-selection and voting process through a diverse "Steering Committee."
- Students of different backgrounds and identities are encouraged to design projects and vote
- Students get to control as much of the budget as possible (not just \$50!)