
School Board Work Session:

**Budget Bistro Recap &
School Board Budget
Priorities**

October 8, 2026





GLOWS & GROWS

Gloves

- Community engagement felt authentic; attendees appreciated being asked for their perspectives
- Thoughtful event logistics (e.g. childcare)
- Well-organized event with great food
- Attendees enjoyed themselves
- Great to learn directly from students

Grows

- Not enough time at appetizer round to learn from staff
- Finding the gym was confusing
- Event disrupted CMS after-school activities

"THANK YOU. What a wonderful idea and it was so well organized! I learned a lot, I felt like everyone there was engaged and enjoyed the unique format (and yummy food), and it was fun. Thank you and the team who created the event for a great night of community coming together to make our schools stronger."

— Jackson-Via parent

Thank you for the incredible event you hosted last night. It was a wonderful approach to participatory community engagement in budget allocation and education planning, which is a vital social service. Thank you for partnering with the community, for being thoughtful about the timing, indirect costs, and childcare needs for participants, for such a delicious dinner, and for how well-run and expeditious the event was. It was excellent. I look forward to a report on the outcomes of the balloting!

— Trailblazer Parent

Next year...

Based on feedback, next year we will:

- Offer this event again!
- Set aside more time for 'appetizer' round, when attendees learn from division staff about CCS academics, programs, operations, etc.
- Double the number of student ambassadors
- Improve signage and arrival logistics

COMMUNITY BUDGET ENGAGEMENT:
BUDGET BISTRO, September 23, 2026

Over 120

Participants in Attendance (excluding administrators)

The goal of the event was to gather comprehensive feedback to inform the school board's budget process.



Comprehensive Community Engagement Reaches 78 Unique District Stakeholders

Broad stakeholder commitment ensures diverse viewpoints directly guide budgetary priorities.

RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

47 Responses
Parents & Guardians

19 Responses
Community Members

13 Responses
Dedicated Staff Members

10 Responses
Active Students

DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL & PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

27 Participants
CHS, Lugo & Knight

22 Participants
Trailblazer Elem.

18 Participants
CMS & New Pathways

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Sunrise: 10 • Jackson-Via: 9 • Tall Oaks: 9 • Greenbrier Elem.: 8 • Summit: 8

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMING

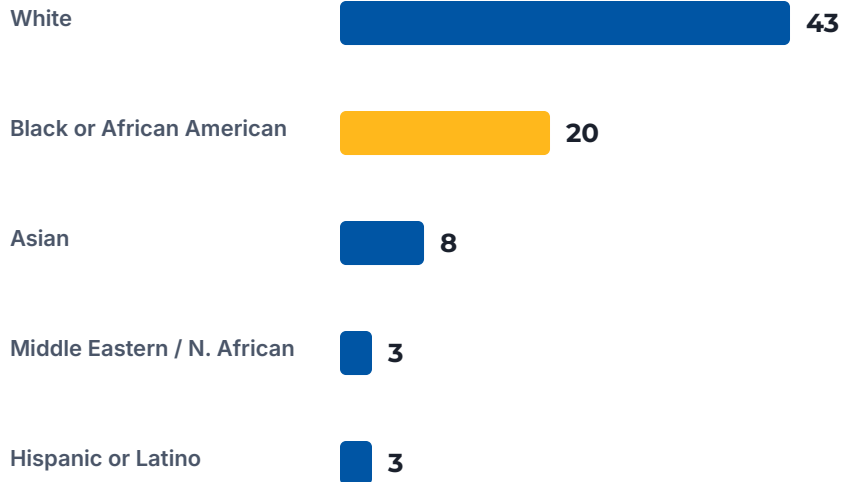
CATEC: 3 • CELC: 3 (*Ensuring complete division representation*)

Survey Demographics Reflect a Diverse Cross-Section of the District



Self-Identified Demographic Profile (N=78)

Racial / Ethnic Group Breakdown & Respondent Counts



Total Survey Sample: 78 Unique Community Respondents

78

Unique Respondents

Actively participating in financial planning dialogue

Diversity & Inclusion Impact

Understanding the demographic makeup of survey respondents is critical to ensuring budget priorities reflect diverse voices across our district community.

The survey captured essential feedback from historically underrepresented groups—including 20 Black/African American, 8 Asian, 3 Middle Eastern/North African, and 3 Hispanic/Latino respondents—representing a key portion of qualitative and quantitative data.

Ensuring resulting budgetary recommendations are grounded in the lived experiences and distinct needs of a multifaceted community.

Mental Wellness and Core Academics Emerge as Top Resource Allocation Priorities



42 Votes

Mental Wellness & Student Wellbeing

39 Votes

Literacy & Core Academics

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

In selecting up to 10 key investment areas, community feedback highlighted student wellbeing and foundational academics as top priorities, with strong support also given to enriched environments, staff compensation, and campus safety.

TOP 15 RESOURCE ALLOCATION CATEGORIES (VOTE COUNTS)

01	Mental Wellness	42	09	Family Engagement	26
02	Literacy	39	10	CTE & Career Readiness	26
03	Math Supports	31	11	School Safety	26
04	Nutrition	31	12	Transportation	23
05	Fine & Performing Arts	30	13	Science & Innovation	23
06	Reducing Tech Use	29	14	World Languages	22
07	Outdoor Learning	28	15	Alternative Education	22
08	Staff Compensation	27			

Funding Priorities Vary Significantly Across Distinct Stakeholder Groups



Parents & Guardians

Heavily prioritize a balanced approach to wellbeing and foundational academics.

Top Priorities: Mental wellness (25), Literacy (22), Math (22), Nutrition (22)
Hands-on & Tech: Outdoor learning (21), Fine arts (21), Reducing tech use (18)

School Staff & Teachers

Primarily focused on operational sustainability and specialized support.

Leading Priorities: Facilities maintenance (9), Literacy (8)
Key Supports: Mental wellness (7), Staff compensation (6), Special education (5), Transportation (5)
Takeaway: Critical need for physical facility upkeep and competitive pay.

Students

Presented a unique perspective focused heavily on their immediate environment.

Highest Concern: School safety (9)
Followed by: Transportation (7), Literacy (6), Staff compensation (5), Fine arts (5), Special education (5), Mental wellness (5)

Community Members

Emphasized broader societal integration and educator support.

Top Focus: Mental wellness (11), Literacy (11)
Key Allocations: Community schools (8), Transportation (7), Staff compensation (7), Math supports (7)
Summary: Divergence illustrates the necessity of a multifaceted budget strategy.

Qualitative Feedback Highlights



Beyond the quantitative rankings, qualitative feedback revealed four core operational themes requiring immediate attention.

32 Responses

Physical Infrastructure

THEME 01

Highlighted urgent needs for CHS restroom upgrades and elementary building maintenance, specifically citing mold remediation, cafeteria space constraints, storage deficits at Greenbrier, and spatial limitations at Jackson-Via.

Teacher Funding & Title I

THEME 02

Exposed community concerns regarding restrictive policies on crowdsourcing tools like DonorsChoose and Amazon Wishlists, as well as a strong demand for elementary redistricting strategies that protect Title I funding for Greenbrier.

Fine Arts & Curriculum

THEME 03

Respondents advocated for a comprehensive high school fine arts equipment refresh encompassing band, choir, theater, and orchestra. This theme also included requests for early Spanish language instruction and a pedagogical shift to balance technology with pen-and-paper tasks and outdoor activities.

Operational Equity & Staff Support

THEME 04

Focused heavily on ensuring fair pay for support staff, including custodians, nutrition staff, and special education aides, alongside stipend reviews. Furthermore, this theme stressed the need for robust mental health and discipline frameworks, specifically requesting restorative justice programs, increased counselor and social worker presence, and dedicated de-escalation training.



Budget Priorities for 2027-28



Priority 1

Student Mental Health, Wellness, and Social-Emotional Supports

Mental Wellness stood out as #1 overall priority among community members, staff, and parents, selected by 54% of respondents (42 out of 78). Stakeholders emphasized that supporting student mental health is a foundational requirement for academic learning, campus safety, and effective classroom management. Division leaders identified that the additional resources support mental wellness are **ongoing professional learning and materials for re-regulation spaces** in classrooms as well as small group & individual interventions.

Priority 2

Core Academic Excellence & Instructional Delivery (Literacy, Math, Arts, and Reduced Screen Time)

Core instructional priorities ranked high among community selections, led by literacy (#2 at 50.6%), math supports (tied for #3 at 40.3%), fine and performing arts (#5 at 38%) at and reduced classroom technology use (#6 at 37.7%). Division leaders identified

- The resource needed for literacy and math is the **protection of instructional time as well as additional math specialist positions.**
- The resource needed for reduced tech use is **instructional support**
- The resource needed for arts is equipment maintenance and stipend reviews

Priority 3

Competitive Staff Compensation, Retention, and Operational Support Staffing

Staff compensation was selected by 35% of respondents (#8 overall). Division leaders identified that the resources needed are:

- **Compensation increases for administrative staff** to eliminate wage compression and align with regional compensation.
- **Maintenance of competitive salaries for all staff** in light of regional competitors and cost of living adjustments

Priority 4

School Nutrition and Outdoor Learning

Nutrition emerged as a key area impacting students' overall experience of school (#4 at 40%). Outdoor learning was also high on the priority list (#7, 36%)

Division leaders identified

- The resource needed for outdoor learning is **continued development of outdoor infrastructure.**
- The resource needed for nutrition is more funds to **purchase locally produce weekly.**

Questions?