

2018-2019 Budget Survey Responses

Thank you to the many people who took the Budget Survey for the current year 2018-2019 Budget process last spring. Below you will see a high level look at some of the results. There is also a PowerPoint presentation with much more! [Please feel free to review it.](#) We think you will be interested in knowing the answers to your questions, knowing how your ideas have already begun to be implemented as well as the interesting questions and comments from the community. We look forward to your input again this year with a [new survey here.](#)

[Click to see the full PowerPoint presentation.](#)

- A. There were 1289 total responses. With a little over 80,000 students that is about 1 response for each 62 students.
- B. The majority of the responses came from the NE and NW parts of Albuquerque.
- C. The top five program/subject areas that were of the most importance were:
 - 1. Safety
 - 2. Math
 - 3. Smaller Class Size
 - 4. Science
 - 5. Up-to-date Technology
- D. The highest ranking write in program/subject area was Counselors.
- E. The biggest area for cuts from the write in section was administration.

Here are some of the things that APS is currently doing based partly on your responses:

- A. Phase-in of Art and Music in every Elementary. During the 2018-2019 school year, we began adding additional classes at several Elementary schools to ensure that both Art and Music will be taught every year. In the 2019-2020 school year, we will add additional schools. The phase-in will take a few years, but our goal is offer both Art and Music every year in every Elementary.
- B. Increasing Counselors, Social Workers, Security and other staff to support our student's mental and physical health.
- C. Increasing Custodians across the schools
- D. Purchasing instructional materials-The instructional materials fund has been under funded for several years. In an effort to update materials for the classroom, we are investing money each year to increase our materials.
- E. Re-evaluating department on a continual rotating basis for budget, function and direct effect on students. We identify areas for improvement in efficiency, cost and necessity and make adjustments accordingly.

There were several areas for writing in your own comments and/or questions. There were over 3,000 individual comments/questions. Many addressed the same concerns. Below are some of the comments and the APS staff response.

Students-Attendance:

Survey Comment/Question: “Declining enrollment is a major factor in our budget issues. Addressing that should be a high priority.”

APS Response: We agree! This is very high on our priority list. We are currently working on several plans to increase student’s choices for many areas. By doing this, we feel that APS will become an attractive option for students and parents in the community.

Students-Building Cleanliness:

Survey Comment/Question: “Having Students take pride in their schools by helping to clean and convey safety issues.”

APS Response: This is also a great way to teach accountability. There are currently several schools participating in energy conservation program which helps students assume the responsibility mentioned in the comment. With students learning about saving energy and other conservation techniques, the school can be given additional funds that the students have control over how to spend to improve their environment. The program is called “Building Buddies.”

Survey Comment/Question: “Clean facilities that are in good repair and meet the needs of today’s instruction.”

APS Response: We are always improving our upkeep of buildings including cleanliness and repairs. Our long term goal is to hire more custodial staff to assist with this area.

Students-Career Technical Training (CTE):

Survey Comment/Question: “Realizing that not all students are college bound and need other opportunities to succeed after high school.”

APS Response: APS does offer many Career Technical Education courses such as Culinary Arts, Mechanics, etc. We are working to expand the choices and the locations that offer these courses.

Students-Education

Survey Comment/Question: “I do not think that extracurricular activities of any kind (music, sports, etc.) should be the first thing sacrificed if the district does not have enough money. These programs provide valuable and enjoyable experiences for students, keep them interested in their school, and motivate them to maintain good grades. In many ways, working with others toward a goal that everyone is interested in is a more useful experience than, say, learning calculus.”

APS Response: APS realizes the importance of extracurricular activities and is always hesitant to cut any program. Student programs of all areas, core and extracurricular are never the first place for cuts. When cuts are necessary, they are always made as far from the students as possible.

Survey Comment/Question: “More emphasize on education and less money spent on building huge gyms.”

APS Response: Funding for education is given with specific uses mandated for each type of fund. The funding received for building schools, adding gyms, improvements, etc. are called Capital Funds and cannot be used for salaries or curriculum. This funding can only be used for Capital or “building” purposes.

Students-Equity

Survey Comment/Question: “Prioritizing and creating a level playing field for all schools, so we can support all students.”

APS Response: This is a constant item on the agenda for APS. Our goal is to provide the best possible education to ALL students regardless of any individual obstacles that a student may have. We have several programs that address specific needs including health, hunger, homelessness, disabilities, and many more.

Students-Class Size

Survey Comment/Question: “Adequate staff (i.e., smaller class sizes and staff for programs such as art).”

APS Response: This is an ongoing concern for APS. There is a high number of vacant positions in APS, many of which are teachers and other staff who directly work with students. We were very happy to see the legislature increase the teacher pay scale for FY19 and fund increases for all staff. With additional statewide funding available for FY20, we are hopeful that more increases will follow. This would then increase our ability to attract staff and thus, lessen the class sizes.

Transparency-Top Heavy

Survey Comment/Question: “Too top heavy... tons of Administrators that lack the classroom experience to be in current position.”

APS Response: While it is true that some administrators lack classroom experience, the ones who do lack classroom experience are in positions that require different experience to be successful. There are many positions who require different education and experience for a reason. Electricians need electrical experience when fixing the wiring at a school. Finance staff should have degrees in working finance, food service staff should understand nutrition etc. However, the positions of administrators that are in departments such as curriculum and instruction, student services, counseling etc., all have experience working in a school setting with students in the classroom.

Survey Comment/Question: “APS has always been top heavy. Why are there over 30 people making six figures while classroom teachers continue to leave APS for other districts, other states, or other careers all together because they cannot make a livable salary?”

APS Response: Not including the superintendent, there are 186 people in APS who make between \$50 and \$70 per hour. Of those, 121 are Teachers & other ATF employees, 33 are Principals and 32 are Administration. The administration breaks down as follows:

Accounting, Capital & Payroll: 1	Innovation & School Choice: 1
APS Foundation: 1	Maintenance & Operations: 1
Board of Education: 1	Police: 1
Budget & Grants: 1	Procurement, Business & Payable: 1
Capital Master Plan: 1	Special Education: 4
Chief Finance Officer: 1	Student Family & Community Support: 1
Chief Operations: 1	Student & School Services: 1
Community Relations: 1	Technology: 1
Curriculum & Instruction: 1	Title I: 1
Equity Learning & Support: 1	Transportation: 1
Facilities, Design & Construction: 1	Zone 1 Associates & Support: 1
Food & Nutrition: 1	Zone 2 Associates & Support: 1
Human Resources & Legal Support: 2	Zone 3 Associates & Support: 1
Information & Strategy: 1	Zone 4 Associates & Support: 1

Each of these positions have a tremendous amount of responsibility in assuring all laws, regulations, policies and procedures are followed so that each and every student in APS is given the best education possible. Each person in these positions hold degrees, licenses and multiple years of experience in their given field. Like the majority of teachers and other exempt staff, these staff members go above and beyond the expectations of their jobs working nights, weekends and holidays.

Transparency-Financial Management

Survey Comment/Question: “Review administrative jobs for necessity and combine jobs that are similar. APS is too top heavy.”

APS Response: As you can see from the previous question, there is only one top level administrator for each area of responsibility with the exception of Special Education which has 4 and Human Resources & Legal which has 2. In Human Resources, there is also a section dealing with district liability. In Special Education, the need of our special education population is very specific in nature and requires a tremendous amount of knowledge, statute requirements and other individualized student attention.

Survey Comment/Question: “The fact that APS is relying on a survey to help solve this problem. I would think in that administration there are plenty of HIGHLY paid (overpaid, perhaps?) people that are supposed to do this.”

APS Response: State regulation requires that school districts receive input from the community on the budget. Parents, tax payers and community members should and do have a voice in how the budget is spent to educate our youth. APS has tried several different methods to obtain community input including: community meetings, live radio call in question and answer sessions, mailings, emails, web postings, surveys, etc. The survey has provided the highest amount of community input. APS will continue to reach out in as many ways as possible to give students, parents and the community a voice in the budget per the regulated requirements for budgeting.

Survey Comment/Question: "Hire real accountants that know how to handle money. Many of the employees at City Center are "friends" of higher-ups. Use the same standards as you do when hiring teachers - highly qualified staff are needed."

APS Response: APS hiring standards are high for all areas of employment. The Finance Department currently has at least 4 licensed Certified Public Accountants (CPA), 3 licensed Certified Procurement Officials (CPO) and at least 6 licensed School Business Officials which requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in finance/accounting. There are several other staff that currently hold bachelors and/or associates degrees and there are many staff currently enrolled in college working toward their degree.

Survey Comment/Question: "I find information about the budget to be exceedingly difficult to find/learn about. What I do find often seems really inaccurate or misleading."

APS Response: School Budgeting is a difficult subject, all of it has specific rules and regulations that can be overwhelming. In short, there are several funds that go into funding public schools in New Mexico. Each fund has specific rules, regulations, laws, guidance, restrictions and reporting that must be followed. The Public Education Department posts a [Manual of Procedures \(PSAB\)](#) which outlines the procedures around school budgeting. It is not a fully comprehensive account of each area, but a fairly comprehensive summary of the overarching guidelines. [It can be found here on their website.](#) The budget department is dedicated to increasing the information about the budget to the community.

Capital-Buildings

Survey Comment/Question: "Why is there a state of the art training facility when there is not state of the art trainers to staff it? Could they not have fit in the Eubank complex? Judging from the size of the lot Transition Services, Black Student Union and Title I Outreach and the Clothing Bank all fit in ramshackle portables behind WILSON they can't get housed out of Louisiana Complex instead of also getting sate of the Art Building? New buildings are nice but the amount of money going into them verses Educational Assistants pay or Ladies at the front desk who deal with a lot and for very little."

APS Response: APS has over 6000 teachers in the district. There is not a facility large enough in Albuquerque to give professional development to all staff at one time. The facility on Louisiana does not contain any office space. It will be used for professional development of all APS staff. In some cases, APS will be able to hire speakers and other professional contractors to come into Albuquerque to train rather than sending our employees out of town or out of state for training. Often, only a few people are able to travel to conferences and knowledge is not always translated back in the full effectiveness of being at the conference. Where it may cost tens of thousands of dollars, loss of class time and lost time with family to send 30 people to a training, APS may now hire someone to come in and give the same training to hundreds of people instead of 30 for a few thousand dollars instead of tens of thousands. The funds that were dedicated to this building came from funds that were not legally able to be used for salaries or other expenses. Our lower paid work force is a huge concern for APS and we are working diligently to increase those positions as funding becomes available.

Other-Politics

Survey Comment/Question: “That decisions are made based on support to and outcomes of schools and students versus politics. Just because staff are not located in schools, doesn't mean that they are making less of an impact on students and schools. I know of staff at the district who make more of an impact (and have to support many schools) than having a staff person in a school.”

APS Response: This comment was very much appreciated. The district level staff are very dedicated to helping students succeed. It is on the forefront of every conversation and decision made. Sometimes the work “behind the scenes” are not as easily noticeable, but they are very important none the less. While we do not have individual class loads, there are many people in administration that feel that the success of all 80,000 students individually rests on our shoulders.

Survey Comment/Question: “Work with State legislatures to help them understand the needs of the District better.”

APS Response: Working with State Legislature is one of the responsibilities of the APS Board Office staff. With assistance from all of administration, they are kept up to date on the important issues facing the district, cost analysis and other concerns about bills that are introduced during each session. APS does have a voice representing the needs of our students during the Legislative Sessions.

Other-Charter Schools

Survey Comment/Question: “Take a look at charter schools for inefficiencies. How many charter schools are under APS's purview? How many of the charter schools impact the APS budget? I realize they have separate budgets, but do all of them have separate budgets?”

APS Response: There are currently 186 educational entities in PreK-12 in New Mexico. Of those, 89 are districts, 41 are authorized dependents of districts and 56 are authorized directly through the Public Education Department (PED). Currently, there are 29 of the 41 district dependent charters authorized through APS. Each Charter School has its own budget. This includes district dependent Charters. The impact that Charter Schools have on district budgets is that they are each treated separately through the calculation by the Public Education Department in the State Equalization Guarantee and does not come directly out of the individual districts.