



SCHOOL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING STARLINE ELEMENTARY 2024-25 Evaluation Report

In partnership with Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton College of Teaching and Learning Innovation & Participatory Governance Initiative, Center for the Future of Arizona, and Starline Elementary School in Lake Havasu Unified School District.

In 2024, Starline Elementary School launched the first School Participatory Budgeting (SPB) pilot in the Lake Havasu Unified School District (LHUSD). Through SPB, students “learn democracy by doing” through a process of generating ideas, developing proposals, campaigning and deliberating, and voting to fund improvement projects that build stronger school communities.

LHUSD partnered with Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA) and Arizona State University (ASU) to pilot, implement, and evaluate the SPB process.

By integrating the SPB process with Kid City—an experiential civic and economic learning activity where students take on the role of various community stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, bankers, and elected leaders—Starline enhanced the event from a simulation to tangible change. After spending their ‘money’ with the local businesses created by students, they had the chance to cast their ballot for how they’d like to improve their campus using real funds allocated by the school. This experience showcased the innovative potential of SPB in Lake Havasu and beyond.

This report shares the impact of SPB at Starline from the Academic Year 2024-25.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Starline Elementary’s pilot process was supported by:

District Leaders

- Rebecca Stone, Superintendent
- Michael Murray, Director of Business Services

School Leaders

- Principal Ginny Sautner

SPB Sponsor

- Rachel Charette

Student Steering Committees

- 31 6th Grade Students from Gifted Class

SPB Advisors

- Center for the Future of Arizona Civic Health Team
- Arizona State University’s Mary Lou Fulton College of Teaching and Learning Innovation & Participatory Governance Initiative



2024-25 Winning Project & Budget

\$4,000
Soccer Nets and Recess Equipment

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

- “This showed that the adults actually cared about what we thought as students, and about what we would like to add to the school.”
- “Many students came up with some great ideas for school wide improvement!”
- “Through this process, we are benefiting future students.”

HIGHLIGHTED STUDENT GAINS IN KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, SKILLS, AND PRACTICES

- **+31%** “I know the needs of other students at my school.”
- **+28%** “I know how to participate in a democratic process.”
- **+28%** “I feel my ideas are being heard by others in my school.”
- **+25%** “I know how my school’s budget works.”
- **+21%** “I know how decisions are made in my school.”
- **+14%** “I feel connected to my school community.”
- **+13%** “I plan to vote as soon as I am able.”



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide more opportunity for discussion and reflection of projects before the vote day.
- Guidance on allowable projects ahead of proposal development.
- Allow more students to participate in the voting process.