



SCHOOL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING CHANDLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

2023-24 Evaluation Report

In partnership with Center for the Future of Arizona, Arizona State University's Participatory Governance Initiative, and Chandler Unified School District.

In 2018, Chandler Unified School District (CUSD) piloted School Participatory Budgeting (SPB). 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.

CUSD partnered with Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA) and Arizona State University's Participatory Governance Initiative (PGI) to pilot, implement, scale, and evaluate the SPB process.

Since 2018-2019, **14** CUSD junior highs and high schools have participated in this process, engaging approximately **48,000** students in voting on **49** campus improvement projects. The process has also led to over **2,500** students registered to vote in Arizona through SPB Vote Days.

This report highlights student and educator reflections from Academic Year 2023-24.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

CUSD District Leaders

- Frank Narducci, Superintendent
- Dr. Jessica Edgar, Executive Director of Pk-12 Curriculum and Instruction
- Tom Dunn, Executive Director of Capital Projects and Operations
- Heather Caviar, Director of Finance
- Philip Robertson, K-12 Social Studies Academic Coach

School Leaders and Sponsors

- **Andersen Junior High:** Principal Antasio Holley, Sponsor Debra Vickman
- **Basha Accelerated Middle School:** Principal Marques Reischl, Sponsor Allison Ekren
- **Basha High School:** Principal Marques Reischl, Sponsor Paige Cambell
- **Bogle Junior High:** Principal Amanda Cook, Sponsor Darlene Denardis
- **Casteel High School:** Principal Jayson Phillips, Sponsors Julie Aboud & Evelyn Anderson

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ARIZONA



Participatory
Governance
Initiative

ASU Arizona State
University

STUDENT/EDUCATOR REFLECTIONS

- “I like that students get to vote for what they want in the school.” –6th grade student, Basha AMS
- “I’m proud of the Participatory Budgeting process on my campus because it means that the school district cares about the improvement and wellbeing of the school.” –6th grade student, Basha AMS
- “I learned that voting as a democracy is important.” –7th grade student, San Tan Junior HS
- “I loved learning to work as a team to impact the whole school positively.” –8th grade student, Basha AMS
- “I gained knowledge in how to move an idea through my school’s policies and higher levels of administrators.” –10th grade student, Chandler HS
- “The process was very straightforward and thoroughly included students views on what would better benefit our school.” –12th grade student, Casteel HS

- **Chandler High School:** Principal Greg Milbrandt, Sponsors Kelsey Brown
- **Chief Hill Learning Academy:** Principal Luke Hickey, Sponsor Robert Vivian
- **Hamilton High School:** Principal Mike De La Torre, Sponsor Brianna Willits
- **Payne Junior High:** Principal Lisa Palella, Sponsor Brandon D’Entremont
- **Perry High School:** Principal Heather Patterson, Sponsor Jessica Popham
- **Santan Junior High:** Principal MaryAnn Rezzonico

Student Steering Committee

- Over 120 6th-12th Grade Students through Class, Club, and Other Models

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Allow for broader student participation during key phases of the process.
- Create opportunities for mentorship between past and present student steering committee members.
- Establish clearer and more consistent communication channels between the school site and the district concerning the project ideas.
- Provide training and information on the approved vendor process.
- Adjust the timeline so that the process ends with time to still implement a portion or all of the winning project idea(s).

\$85,000 public dollars invested in 11 student-developed campus improvement projects

Over **8,300** students cast their ballots, ensuring their voices were counted in improving their school community

Over **400** high school students were registered to vote for upcoming local, state, and federal elections during their SPB Vote Day



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

- **+37%** in “I know what a public budget is.”
- **+27%** in “I know how decisions are made in my school.”
- **+23%** in “I feel my ideas are heard by others in my school.”
- **+22%** in “I know about participating in a democracy.”
- **+19%** in “I feel like I can make a difference in my school.”
- **+17%** in “I feel connected to my school community.”