



SCHOOL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING BILLY LANE LAUFFER MIDDLE SCHOOL 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 Billy Lane Lauffer Middle School in Sunnyside Unified School District.

In 2020-21, Sunnyside Unified School District (SUSD) piloted School Participatory Budgeting (SPB) at Desert View and Sunnyside High Schools. 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.

Since then, SUSD has also expanded access to the process at middle schools, including Apollo Middle School and Sierra 2-8 School.

In 2024-25, SUSD partnered with Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA) and Arizona State University (ASU) to pilot, implement, and evaluate the SPB process at Billy Lane Lauffer Middle School.

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



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Billy Lane Lauffer Middle School's SPB process was supported by:

District Leaders

- José Gastelum, Superintendent
- Ana Gallegos, Chief Schools Officer
- Dr. Dedee Lyngstad Brown, PreK-8 Director of Schools

School Leaders

- Principal Matthew Craft
- Assistant Principal Leonel Villalobos

SPB Sponsor

- Jackie Nichols
- William Williams
- Aaron Moehlis
- Robert Neviso

Student Steering Committees

- 25 Student Leaders from 6th-8th Grade Social Studies Classes

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

\$5,000

Beauty is on the Inside (Painting)

Voter Turnout: 84%

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

- “I think that helping the school with fixing the problems we see is a great way for people to come together, which really affects our school in a good way.”
- “I am proud that as a group of students, we can work together and decide on things for our school.”
- “Our Participatory Budgeting Committee is making a big change and difference in our school.”
- “This process helped me learn more about voting, and I am proud to be a part of it!”

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

- **+48%** “I know how decisions are made in my school.”
- **+38%** “I know how my school’s budget works.”
- **+33%** “I know how to participate in a democratic process.”
- **+31%** “I know how to fix problems at my school.”
- **+31%** “I feel like I can make a difference in my school.”
- **+27%** “I know the needs of other students at my school.”
- **+27%** “I know about my school’s policies.”



Lauffer's freshly painted gym and hallways. Other painting projects will continue into the next academic year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Start the process earlier in the year to ensure all phases have ample time.
- Embed more opportunities for the entire student body to engage in the process.
- Provide more information about the different ideas before the Vote Day.