



News Release

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As school districts across the state finalize their 2018-19 budgets, many continue to face challenging financial conditions requiring cuts and reductions to programs and increased property taxes to offset the annual growth in mandated costs. The latest iteration of the PASBO-PASA School District Budget Report, a joint initiative of the PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) and the PA Association of School Administrators (PASA), indicates that school districts continue to struggle to balance their budgets.

This latest budget survey report is the most current and comprehensive financial picture for Pennsylvania's public schools. Survey findings reveal that for 2018-19:

- 48% of respondents indicate that the fiscal conditions of their school district will worsen in 2018-19.
- Almost 11% of the districts in the survey plan to furlough professional employees, and almost half anticipate leaving positions vacant that are created by retirements and job movements.
- 55% of respondents anticipate making changes, reductions or cuts to instructional programs next year, which include shifting staff across schools or grades, increasing class sizes, reducing electives, delaying textbook purchases and reducing summer school.
- 58% of respondents anticipate making cuts or reductions to non-instructional programs, which include deferring building maintenance, reducing non-essential staff travel and reducing field trips and other extra-curricular activities.
- Nearly all respondents anticipate use of resources to make improvements to school safety and security, including infrastructure changes, hiring of additional security personnel, hiring of additional counselors or social workers and training of school personnel.
- 77% of respondents are planning property tax increases to balance their budgets, with 15% of respondents anticipating use of exceptions to exceed the Act 1 index.

Jay Himes, PASBO executive director, said the survey demonstrates the mismatch between school district resources and mandated costs. “Year after year, we have seen school districts struggle to balance their budgets—walking a careful line of addressing rising costs while trying their best to minimize any negative impact on student programs and services. The survey illustrates that it is becoming increasingly difficult for school districts to achieve that balance and without additional state resources, mandated cost increases will continue to overwhelm budgets to the detriment of educational programs.”

Additionally, the survey found that critical focus on needed school safety and security improvements for next year is further stretching school district budgets.

Mark DiRocco, PASA executive director, responded to the survey stating “The data from this recent survey highlights that many school districts have not recovered from the great recession and continue to struggle financially. The urgency of school safety needs in terms of personnel and infrastructure add to the funding dilemma for school leaders. Without adequate funding for our schools, difficult decisions will have to be made at the local level as to how to keep our students and staff safe, while trying to offer a quality educational program. There simply are not enough resources to do both at current state funding levels.”

The survey of the 500 school districts was conducted in April and May of this year. Responses were provided by 265 school districts (53 percent). A copy of the report is available on the PASBO website at www.pasbo.org and on the PASA website at www.pasa-net.org.

About PASBO:

The Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials is a statewide organization with more than 3,000 members, two-thirds of whom are K-12 non-instructional administrators serving in the areas of finance, accounting, facilities, transportation, food service, technology, communications, human resources, purchasing and safety. PASBO’s focus is on educating its members through professional development opportunities as well as keeping them informed on the latest legislative issues affecting school business through workshops, the annual conference, specialty conferences and publications. Business Associate members provide products and services that can improve the operation of schools and support classroom learning.

About PASA:

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators represents school superintendents and other school leaders from across the Commonwealth. PASA’s mission is to promote high quality public education for all learners through its support and development of professional leadership.