

2015-16 Budget Release

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. What is the premise behind Student Based Budgeting (SBB)?

Student Based Budgeting is a budget delivery method that ensures the budget for each school reflects the total number of students enrolled in that school, as well as their individual needs. The idea is to fund schools equitably based on the number of students in each grade, in addition to allocating additional funds based on a formula for supporting students with gifted and special education needs, English language learners (ELL) and students whose high mobility, low attendance or reading skills need added support.

2. Cleveland residents passed levies in 2012 and 2014, so why is the budget going down?

The total budget allocated to schools next year through the funding formula is one percent less than this year's allocation. The total amount of money controlled by principals is up about three percent. The District has maintained direct funding of schools despite a five percent drop in enrollment since last year.

3. If enrollment is down District-wide, why doesn't every school lose money?

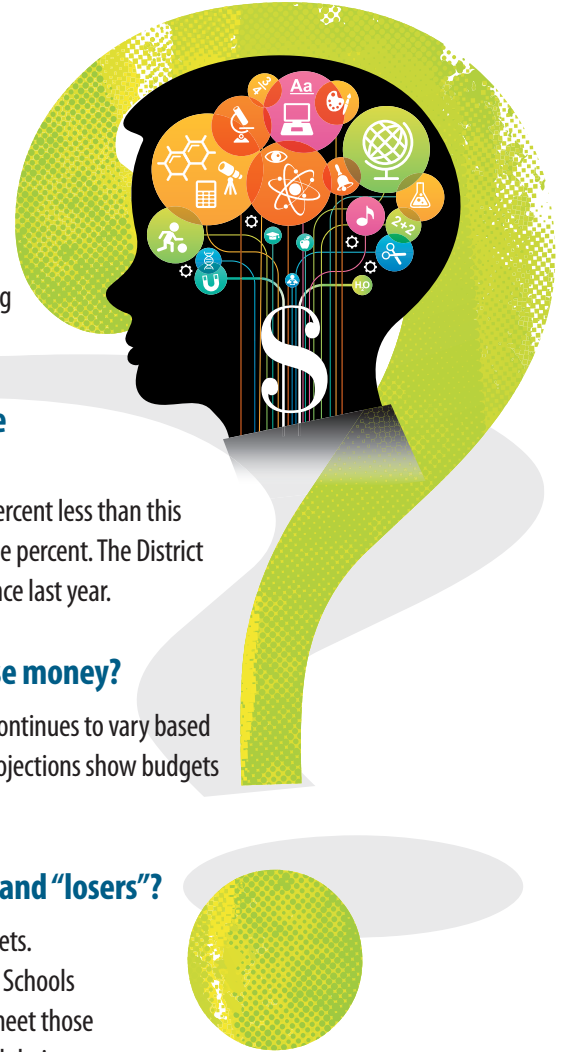
While the District's overall enrollment is down, enrollment at the individual schools continues to vary based on the number of students enrolled in the school and the needs of those students. Projections show budgets increased for 48 CMSD schools due to enrollment increases at their schools.

4. How can Student Based Budgeting be fair if it creates "winners" and "losers"?

Student Based Budgeting by its very premise is about ensuring equity in school budgets. Schools with more students receive larger budgets than schools with fewer students. Schools whose students have greater academic and social needs receive additional funds to meet those needs. Each year, school budgets are adjusted to reflect each school's enrollments and their actual students' needs. The fairest way to allocate resources and to support the school choices that families and students make is by allowing the allocation associated with each child to follow the child to his/her school choice.

5. What can schools do to increase their budget?

Schools can increase their budgets by attracting more students and families. The District tracks enrollment at each school by grade during the spring and summer to make sure each school has the right number of teachers assigned to each grade when that school opens in August. The budgeting process has a built-in "fall adjustment" so school budgets can be increased or decreased based on the actual enrollment. Under this system last fall, the number of adjustments was significantly lower and far less disruptive than in previous years.



6. Isn't Student Based Budgeting simply a passing off of Central Office responsibility for budgets and staffing to schools?

Central Office is fulfilling its responsibility to manage the overall budget and staffing processes. However, instead of prescribing to schools how to spend their money or how to staff their building, the central office has shifted this authority to principals and their teams. Principals and teachers are in a better position to make budget decisions that align with their school's instructional model and their individual students' needs. Central Office teams continue to work closely with principals and their teams, providing tools, training and direct support for their staffing and program decisions.

7. Will decreases in some school budgets result in increased class sizes or split classes next year?

No. All K-8 schools are funded to have at least one teacher per grade level, and high schools are funded to have a minimum of 14 teachers. There are no staffing requirements for specific teaching models, so each school can choose how it configures classes and how it groups students.

8. Will CMSD lose some of its best or its newest teachers because of budget reductions?

The schools' budgets will not create major job losses or layoffs. We fully anticipate that staff vacancies due to retirements and other reasons will be sufficient to ensure openings for teachers and staff from schools where enrollment has declined. In fact, the District expects to hire more than 320 new teachers for next year.

9. Does a reduced budget mean that schools will see a corresponding decrease in supplies or instructional materials?

All schools receive sufficient funds to cover supplies and essential services and have the flexibility to choose their instructional materials. Costs for supplies related to maintenance and facilities are managed centrally and do not affect school budgets.

10. If increased enrollment means more money for schools, how can some schools with increased enrollment have a reduced budget this year?

Of the 62 schools that gained enrollment this year, 48 saw an increase in their school budgets. The reasons the remaining 14 did not see increases in their budgets was either because the weights of their students changed or the school was over-funded the previous year with a buffer allocated in the first year of the new budget process.

