A Guide to Participatory Budgeting in Schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

So, you're interested in doing Participatory Budgeting in your school. Great! This guide will help you plan it.

Participatory Budgeting is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend a part of a public budget. In this case, the community members are students—and even families, teachers, and staff—and the budget is the school budget. Students collect ideas about the school's needs, develop project proposals, and vote on projects to fund. We know Participatory Budgeting is a mouthful, so we'll call it PB from now on.

The process was first developed in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989. In Porto Alegre, as many as 50,000 people have participated each year to decide as much as 20% of the city budget. Since 1989, PB has spread to over 3,000 cities in Latin America, North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. In the US and Canada, PB has been used in Toronto, Montreal, Guelph, Chicago, New York City, and Vallejo (California). Most of these PB processes are at the city level, for the municipal budget. PB has also been used, however, for counties, states, housing authorities, schools and school systems, universities, coalitions, and other public agencies.

We heard from a lot of people (through a PB process, actually) that they wanted help bringing PB to their schools. We wrote this for educators and principals looking to incorporate PB into their classrooms.

Why PB?

Participatory Budgeting is great to bring into your classroom because:
- It's democracy in action.
- It gives your students a positive civic engagement experience.
- It serves as a bridge for your students to be engaged in politics and their community.
- It strengthens the school community by building positive relations between students and the administration.
- It shows students the benefits of getting involved.

By participating in a PB process, students will:
- Increase their ability to work collaboratively.
- Develop research, interviewing, and surveying skills.
- Develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- Develop public presentation skills.
- Increase their awareness of community needs and their role in addressing those needs.
- Understand budgetary processes and develop basic budgeting skills.
- Identify ways to participate in governance.

- Increase their concern for the welfare of others and develop a sense of social responsibility.

Here's what educators and students have said about PB in schools:

"Once you give young people the opportunity to help shape their community, they are incredibly willing and able to step up to that challenge. And students' expertise is so needed as we work to improve education across the participatory budgeting in schools is an excellent tool to harness that expertise to create positive, constructive change."

- Mia Salamone, Democracy in Action Coordinator, Mikva Challenge, Chicago, IL

"In our school we are low income and there's negative stereotypes about our school and who we are, yet [our principal] is trusting us to make decisions about our education and never doubted parents and students like me would make the best decisions, and that is being shown by the project proposals we all have the ability to vote on."

- Stephania Perez, Sophomore, Overfelt High School, San Jose, CA

How it works

This curriculum is set up to take place:
- In 45 minute-class periods
- Once a week
- Over the course of a semester

The idea is to focus on Participatory Budgeting one day of the week and leave the rest of your week to your regular content. We know that might not sound exactly like you. That's OK! Everyone's schedule and needs are different, so you can compress it by meeting more times a week. What you're seeing here is the most efficient way to get through a Participatory Budgeting process. You can also spend more time on specific phases of the process and stretch it out into a whole year.

You'll see lots of ideas for expanding on activities in the "Above and Beyond" sections.

Planning

Planning takes time. We suggest you plan in one semester, and execute PB in the classroom the following semester.

Here's what you need to decide in the planning stage:

Goals

What are your goals? What are you trying to get out of this process? Make sure everyone on the planning team is on the same page!

Timeline

What's the timeline? Start by thinking about when you want students to vote on projects, and then work backwards from there. Schedule voting for a few weeks before the end of the semester so that you can implement the winning projects (or at least begin to implement them) before the end of the semester. It's best for students to see their ideas become a reality as quickly as possible.

Participants

Which teacher is facilitating the project?

Which students are participating, and how?

We set this guide up imagining that one classroom (a group of up to 30 or so students) would do PB in their classroom. You could modify this for another subset of the school, a student government, or an afterschool program. The structure of the PB process would largely be the same. The students would reach out to a bigger portion of the school to collect ideas for projects and to vote on projects. What portion of the school needs to participate in the idea collection and voting for the process to be credible?

In most schools, PB is intended as a youth engagement activity, so only youth vote. But your school or planning committee can decide whether you'd like to include family, teachers, and staff and modify the process accordingly. We've seen schools open idea collection to the broader community while reserving voting for students. We've also seen schools where students may vote and their families additionally get a single vote. Consider your goals and capacity to guide eligibility rules for your process.

ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

The first thing you'll want to do is assemble your team. If you're a teacher and this is your first year running a PB process, your team will probably just be you and your principal.

Above and Beyond

In future years, we recommend you make the planning team more representative and include parents, other teachers, the school engineering department, and students from previous PB processes.

SET ASIDE THE MONEY

PB only works if there's actual money for students to decide how to spend. In your planning process, you'll have to figure out how much you can put towards the project.

How much should I get?

The more the better! We've seen a range from $2,500 to $50,000. Keep in mind that the impact of the final projects will be smaller with smaller budgets, and it takes pretty much the same time and effort to run a $50,000 PB process as it does to run a $2,500 one.

How do I get it?

If you're the principal, you decide.

If you're the teacher, your first step is probably to ask the principal for money. Here's how:

You: Hi Principal, I'm doing this very exciting project in my class called Participatory Budgeting. It's an opportunity for our students to directly decide how money gets spent in the school. It's a great way for students to understand how democracy works and have a positive civic engagement experience first-hand. And it helps *us* by getting students involved in prioritizing needs in the school. For it to work, we need real money students can decide how to spend.

Principal: I don't have extra money!

You: Well, it's not actually extra money. It's just a different way of allocating money that better meets the needs of the students who will benefit from it.

If you have trouble getting the principal to set aside funds, here are some ideas for other places that might provide money for PB:

- District superintendent
- Parent-teacher or parent associations
- Student council
- School board
- An outside organization that's investing in youth development and/or civic engagement

UNDERSTAND THE MONEY

Once you've gotten the money for the project, you need to make sure you know what that money can and can't be spent on. This is important! Can it only be used for physical improvements? Are there going to be procurement requirements? Will you only be able to use certain vendors? You need to know this at the beginning of the process, so students know what's feasible down the line.

DECIDE HOW MANY PROJECTS STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO VOTE FOR

We think it works best when students are voting for more than one project so that they don't just vote for their friend's project and there's not just one winner. The number of winning projects depends on the size of your budget as well as the types of projects the students can implement. Making an infrastructure improvement like upgrading a bathroom facility will on the whole cost more than equipping your art room with new materials. Most processes fund as many winning projects as possible until the funding is expired. However, you should consider limiting the number of projects on the ballot. For example, if you only have $5,000 and your average project cost is around $2,000, then maybe you should limit the ballot to 4 – 5 priority projects. But if you have $10,000 with the same average cost, you could support having 8 – 10 projects on the ballot. No matter what, you should aim for no more than 10 – 12 projects on your ballot.

You should set a minimum project cost if your school has procurement minimums. You also probably don't want several different winning projects that you then have to manage!

HOLD YOURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY

PB works when it's an authentic process where students actually get to decide how money is spent, and everyone follows up on their promises. That means the principal can't pull the funding at the end of the process because she or he doesn't like the results.

Ask the principal to participate in an agreement that she or he will uphold the results of the vote. This should happen publicly. It could be through a newsletter, an assembly, a letter to parents, or some combination of those. This will ensure that the principal can be held accountable.

SCHEDULE IT OUT

Now that you've figured out who is doing the project and how much money you have, you can bring PB to the classroom.

Here is an overview of the PB process in classrooms:

Idea Collection: Your class will go out of the classroom and ask the broader school community about what needs to be improved in the school. Your students can survey their classmates in many ways, but the goal is to hear about as many school needs from as broad a swath of the school community as possible.

Proposal Development: The students in your class will conduct research on project proposals and further develop proposals based on their research and observations. Students will run the refined proposals by decision-makers like the principal and edit their projects based on that feedback.

Expo: The students in your class share the project proposals with the rest of the school so that everyone knows what they're voting on. This is usually in the form a science fair- style expo, but there are other ways to share proposals with the broader school community.

Community Vote: The broader school community votes on the proposals developed by your class. There are many ways to do the vote (at an assembly, during lunch, through classroom-to-classroom surveys). Whichever strategy you choose, your students will play a big role in facilitating the vote.

Implementation: Now it's time for the winning projects to actually happen! The principal or teacher leading PB is usually the one to make sure winning projects are implemented. Ideally, your students and the larger school community can see the results of their participation soon after voting.

Here's how these phases break down over the course of the semester. We know your semester is probably longer than 18 weeks. Leave time at the end to get as far as you can implementing the winning projects.

18 Sessions over 18 Weeks:

Week 1 – 4: Idea collection
Week 5 – 11: Proposal development
Week 12 – 17: Expo and community vote
Week 18: Kick-off implementation

You can adjust this to fit your needs! For example, if you want to have three 45-minute sessions a week instead, you can do it in about two months (and you'd have plenty of time to implement the projects before the end of the semester).

18 Sessions over 6 Weeks:

Week 1 – 2: Idea collection
Week 2 – 4: Proposal development
Week 4 – 6: Expo and community vote
Week 6: Kick-off implementation

Don't forget to schedule your own planning time. As with any curriculum, you'll need to develop materials outside of class time. You'll see "teacher prep" notes throughout the guide.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY FOR IDEA COLLECTION

How many students outside of the students in your class should be a part of idea collection? We think the more participants, the merrier. But we know that it might be unreasonable to get every single student in your school to participate. Ask yourself: what is the minimum number of participants you can get and still have a broad, diverse group of student opinions? Also, consider how much of a budget you are working with. If it's very small, it might not make sense to involve the entire school. You should decide on your strategy as soon as possible because it can take time to schedule idea collection into the school's calendar, or other teachers' calendars.

Above and beyond

We've scheduled idea collection to happen over the course of two sessions, but you can devote more time to idea collection. You can also pursue more than one strategy.

Here are some ways your students can collect ideas. You know best what's most feasible in your school and for the budget you've got.

1. School-wide assembly
Your students do a quick presentation on PB and then students in the audience fill our written surveys. If you choose this strategy, you should schedule it with the principal now!

> **Pros:** You can get lots of ideas all at once.

> **Cons:** These are hard to schedule, they happen less often, and if for some reason it gets cancelled last-minute, that can really throw your PB schedule off. Presenting in front of the whole school can be intimidating, so you'll need to schedule in time for your students to practice their public speaking.

2. Travel class-to-class
Your students travel to other classrooms in small groups to collect ideas. Your students can either work with small groups in the classrooms they are visiting to elicit ideas, or they can collect surveys.

Pros: You can schedule this for the same period when you have your class. You just need to reach out to other teachers to get their permission to interrupt their classes for a few minutes.

Cons: You may get fewer ideas since your students can only visit so many classes in one period.

3. Pop-up stations
Set up stations in the hallways or the cafeteria to collect ideas in between classes or during lunch.

Pros: You aren't taking up classroom time.

Cons: You don't have a captive audience, so your students will have to work harder to get their peers to participate.

Above and beyond

Have your students develop the idea collection strategy with you. You can present them with the above options, or they can come up with strategies on their own. Decide as a class which strategy or strategies make the most sense.

Use an online survey tool, like SurveyMonkey or Google forms, that students administer on tablets or by email to the school community.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY FOR THE EXPO AND COMMUNITY VOTING

Now is the time to figure out how you'll get students to participate in the community vote, too. Here are some options:

1. School-wide assembly
You students could develop short videos or brief presentations about each project to screen at a school-wide assembly. Students in the audience fill out ballots after they've seen all the presentations or videos. If you choose this strategy, you should schedule it now!

Pros: You can be sure everyone heard what they needed to hear about each project, and they'll get to vote right away while it's fresh in their minds.

Cons: These are hard to schedule, and it will take lots of prep time to pull together presentations or videos.

2. Expo and vote

Stage a science fair-style expo in a large meeting space after school or during lunch. Lunchroom voting tends to be very successful. Your students will develop boards for each project ahead of time. The day of the expo, their peers will come to the expo, visit the different projects to hear quick pitches from your students, and then vote. If you choose this strategy, you should schedule it with the principal now!

Pros: Creating boards is not too time-consuming, and these can be very exciting events.

Cons: It can be difficult to find a space for this, and to get a broader group of students to participate during lunch or afterschool.

3. Travel class-to-class

Have your students do quick presentations in other classrooms. Students in the class can fill out ballots after the presentations.

Pros: You can schedule this for the same period when you have your class. You just need to reach out to other teachers to get their permission to interrupt their classes for a few minutes.

Cons: You may get fewer votes since your students can only visit so many classes in one period.

4. Hallway poster

Your students create posters to hang in the hallways for about a week. This way, their peers get familiar with the projects over time. Combine this with one of the voting strategies from above.

Pros: You don't have to schedule something ahead of time.

Cons: You can't guarantee that students will actually pay attention to the posters in the hallway.

5. Official vote count machines

Establish a partnership with the local department or agency that oversees elections in your community, like the County Recorder's Office, to see if they would provide official ballots, polling stations, vote count machines, and even "I voted!" stickers. This would likely be set up in a central area, like the gym or lunchroom, and students would come through in groups by class or grade. This could be combined with other strategies above. And like those, schedule this now!

> **Pros:** This gives weight to the experience for students and helps them better understand how voting works in traditional elections.

> **Cons:** Coordinating with an outside governmental entity may be complicated and time-consuming.

CREATE A VISUAL TIMELINE FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

This is going to be a very new process for your students. We've found that it helps students see a visual timeline of what they're doing so that they know where they've been and what's coming up next. Use images to represent each phase.

Above and beyond

Have your students create visuals to add to each phase as they've gone through it to cement their understanding of the process.

Lesson Plan

SESSION 1

What Is Participatory Budgeting? How Is It Different?

Materials:
Notebooks, pens

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Introduction to PB (5 minutes)
We're going to be doing a project this semester called Participatory Budgeting. It's an opportunity for you to directly decide how school money gets spent.

We have $X to improve the school. And you get to decide how we spend it.

2. Interview community members (30 minutes)
Do you feel like you usually have a say in how school money gets spent?

We're going to talk to people in our school community to hear whether they think they have a say on how to spend the money that is supposed to benefit them.

Break up into groups of three or four and see who you can find outside of the classroom to talk to. Ask them "Do you think you have a say in how school money is spent?" You can ask follow-up questions afterwards, like "Do you think you should?" "Who usually decides?" Take notes on what people tell you.

3. Wrap up (10 minutes)
What did we hear? Do people feel like they have a say? How do decisions usually get made? Did people think that was fair?

Participatory Budgeting is pretty different from what people were describing. Here's how it will work:

There are three main stages in participatory budgeting:

> a. Collecting ideas
> b. Developing proposals
> c. Voting

You will get ideas on what needs to be improved from each other and the rest of the students in the school. Then you will research and develop proposals to address those needs. You'll interview the principal to get feedback. And then you'll present the ideas to the rest of the school, who will vote for winning projects. Then the principal will take the money we've set aside to make the projects happen.

Questions?

Above and beyond

- Have your students conduct street interviews. They can ask people on the street whether they feel like they have a say in how government money is spent. If you're going to do this, make sure you have permissions and chaperones in place. It also helps to give your students name tags that say what project or school they are part of, so that they feel like they have more authority to conduct street interviews
- Create a lesson on tax dollars: where they come from, what they are spent on, and who decides.
- Teach your students interviewing skills, and train them in how to take notes and ask follow-up questions.
- Train your students to document interviews with audio recorders (don't forget to train them to get written permission from their interviewees.)
- Design a T-shirt, or have your students design one, and get those made (or make them with iron-on) so that your class can wear them when they are collecting ideas and during the final expo and vote.
- Present where else in the world PB is happening. The process was first developed in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989. Since 1989, PB has spread to over 3,000 cities in Latin America, North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. It's happened in New York City, Nova Scotia, Paris, Fiji, and many more places. Here's a map.
- Present what else students have been able to get for their schools through PB. For example, at Overfelt High School in San Jose, California, students funded three projects with $50,000. Driver's Ed classes for 50 students, a statewide college visit trip for 50 students, and new athletic uniforms for all 600 students in the school involved in sports.
- Screen this video about the PB process in schools.

SESSION 2

Get Ready to Collect Ideas

Teacher Prep:
Have your idea collection strategy figured out. If it's an assembly, make sure you've scheduled it to happen soon after this session, so it's fresh in students' minds.

If there's anything the money can't be spent on (e.g. school lunch), incorporate that into your survey and presentation.

Print out copies of Worksheet 1: Idea Collection Survey.

Materials:
Surveys, pens

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Share the idea collection survey (15 minutes)
Here's the survey we'll be using to gather ideas about what can be improved in the school.

This is also your chance to suggest what you'd like to spend the money on. Pair up and practice getting ideas out of each other. What are some follow-up questions we can ask if people get stuck and can't think of anything? Don't forget to switch roles halfway through.

2. Practice the presentations (30 minutes)
We're going to be getting ideas from other students by presenting at an assembly/visiting other classrooms/setting up pop-up stations. Let's come up with a presentation plan.

Who wants to present what PB is? Let's do a practice round.

Who wants to tell people how much money they'll decide how to spend? Let's practice.

Who wants to explain the PB process? Let's practice that one.

We should let people ask questions if they're confused. Who will run the Q&A part of the presentation?

[If you're traveling class-to-class or doing pop-ups]: And finally, we'll want to give everyone time to fill out the surveys in small groups. You'll help the small groups

develop their ideas. What tips did we come up with before to help people think of problems in the school?

Don't forget, we want everyone's ideas. Make sure you're not saying your own ideas when you're working in small groups. And don't tell people if you think their suggestion is a good idea or a bad idea. It's OK if they write down problems without solutions, and it's OK if they write down just solutions, too.

[If you're doing a larger assembly]: How will we get surveys to everyone, and how will we collect them?

Let's run through the whole thing once.

Above and beyond

- Create outreach materials as a class to let the school know that PB is happening and to generate excitement. If you're collecting ideas with a class-to-class strategy, you could distribute the flyers in classrooms to get people thinking about things they'd want to improve in the school.

- Have your students create PB banners to use in the pop-ups or the assembly.

- If you're doing an assembly, you can create big ballot boxes with your students that the school can use to drop off their ideas.

- If you're doing an assembly, screen this video about the PB process in schools.

Worksheet 1: Idea Collection Survey

What would you like to see changed or improved in your school? Be as specific as possible.

Explain the problem that needs to be fixed.

How would you fix it?

Can you draw the solution?

SESSION 3

Collect Ideas

Teacher prep:
Confirm your idea collection plan. That means reminding your principal if you're presenting in an assembly, reminding other teachers if you're visiting their classroom and letting them know how long it will take and what to expect, or finding a table and chairs for your pop-up stations and getting whatever permission you need to set that up.

If you're doing pop-up stations at a time that's not your regular class time, make sure your students know where and when to go. Make sure you've got all the materials you need (tables, surveys, pens, clipboards, banner) and the stations are set up.

Print out surveys.

Materials:
Surveys (enough for all the students you expect to reach, plus a bit extra), clipboards, pens. Optional items may include ballot boxes and a banner.

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Review presentation plan and how surveys will be collected (5 minutes)

2. Present idea collection survey (35 minutes)

3. Collect surveys (5 minutes)

SESSION 4

Collect More Ideas

Teacher prep:
Confirm your idea collection plan. If you did an assembly the first time around, you can use this as an opportunity to work more closely with students to develop ideas by going class-to-class. Remind other teachers if you're visiting their classrooms and let them know how long it will take and what to expect, or find a table and chairs for your pop-up stations and get whatever permission you need to set that up.

If you're doing pop-up stations at a time that's not your regular class time, make sure your students know where and when to go. Make sure you've got all the materials you need (tables, surveys, pens, clipboards, banner) and the stations are set up.

Print out surveys.

Materials:
Surveys (enough for all the students you expect to reach, plus a bit extra), clipboards, pens. Optional items may include ballot boxes and a banner.

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Debrief about collecting ideas (5 minutes)
- How did the idea collection go?
- What worked well?
- What do we want to change this time around?

Let's review our new presentation plan.

2. Conduct second round of idea collection presentations (30 minutes)

3. Collect surveys and explain next steps (10 minutes)
Since you won't be able to work on all of these ideas, I'm going to group them into categories and come up with a system to prioritize them.

Here are the criteria we'll use to prioritize projects:
- You can do it within our budget.
- There won't be weird costs down the line, like recurring membership fees or light bulb replacements.
- It will benefit a huge group of students.
- It will benefit a smaller group of students, but those students will be high-need and are the kinds of students who don't usually get a lot of resources.

- The project addresses a real need in the school (it's not just a random idea).
- There was a lot of interest (more than one person suggested it).

Any thoughts on these? Things you want to change? Things you want to add?

Above and beyond

You can develop the criteria for prioritizing projects from scratch. Have a conversation with your students about their values. Who usually benefits the most from special projects in the school? Who usually gets left behind? Who needs extra resources the most? Is it better to impact as many people as possible a little bit? Or have a really big impact on a small group of people?
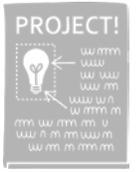
SESSION 5

Research the Ideas

Teacher prep:

Once you've got all the surveys back, you'll want to take the mess of data you've gotten and make it workable. You've gotten more ideas than your class could possibly work on and than you'd want to put on the ballot, so your job is to prioritize and group needs and ideas.

First, remove any ineligible projects (projects that would spend money on something that you're not allowed to spend money on).

Next, see if there are ideas or needs that are very similar and could be grouped.

Then, group projects into categories. That way, you can break your class up into groups and assign each group a category. Sample categories include:

     a. School beautification
     b. Recreation
     c. Classroom materials
     d. Environment and sustainability

You'll want to end up with enough categories to make groups of three to five students. If you still have way too many categories after this process, you may want to schedule a second survey with a handful of classes to prioritize the categories.

Your final step is to prioritize projects within each category, since your students can only refine so many ideas. Create clear criteria and then apply them across the board. Worksheet 2 contains criteria you can use under the categories of feasibility, impact, and interest, and how many points each one is worth. If you got suggestions from your students on criteria to add or change, write up a new scorecard.

Score each proposal, choosing one from each row. Add up the totals for each project.

Within each category, write out a prioritized list of projects based on their total scores.

Note: some of the things on the list will be problems, as opposed to solutions. That's OK. Your students will help develop proposals based on the problems on their list in the next phase.

Materials:

A sheet of paper or each category with the list of prioritized projects/needs, students' cell phones, blank paper, clipboards (two for each group), pens

Project:

Choose one:

You would have to scale down the project to do it within the budget. **0 points**	You can do the project within budget. **1 point**

Choose one:

The project has ongoing costs that will be a problem later on. **0 points**	The project won't have ongoing costs. **1 point**

Choose one:

The project will benefit a small group of students who are not underserved. **0 points**	The project will benefit a large group of students. **1 point**	The project will benefit a small group of students who are high-need and underserved. **1 point**

Choose one:

The project is not addressing an urgent need. **0 points**	The project is addressing an urgent need. **1 point**

Choose one:

The problem was suggested by just one student. **0 points**	The project was suggested by more than one student. **1 point**

Add up your points:_____
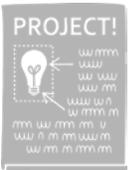
IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Introduce the next phase (5 minutes)

I've created categories for all the problems and projects we heard about, and I used your criteria ideas and made a prioritized list of problems and projects for each category. I'm going to split you into committees; each group will work on one category.

You'll see on your lists that some things are specific proposals, like "I want more lights in the bathroom." Some others are just issues, like "The cafeteria smells."

Today, you are going to start investigating the top two items on your list. Our goal is to better understand the problems we are trying to address.

2. Break up into groups and research the scope of the problem (30 minutes)

In your committee, figure out where you're going to go to see the first item. For example, if your first item is "I want more lights in the bathroom," you'll go to the bathrooms and document the problem. If the list just mentioned one place, think of other places where it might be a problem. Maybe all of the floors don't have enough lights in the bathrooms. Visit all those locations and document the issue.

One person will take a photo of the problem with their phone, one person will sketch the problem, and one person will make a rough map of where the problem is.

When you're done documenting the first item on your list, do the same work for the second item on your list. Switch roles.

Come back to the classroom when you're done.

3. Discuss findings as a class (5 minutes)
- Now that you've seen them firsthand, do you think the problem was a real issue?
- Do you have proof that there's a problem?
- How widespread is the problem?
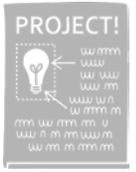
SESSION 6

Research the Ideas Some More

Teacher prep:
Print out worksheets.

Materials:
Worksheet 3: Imagining Solutions and Worksheet 4: How Much Will This Project Cost (1 of each per committee), computers or phones with internet access

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Introduce the next phase of research (5 minutes)
Now that you've gotten a better sense of the issue, you're going to think through potential solutions in your committees.

If one of your two priorities was just a need or a problem, you can brainstorm solutions and fill out the worksheet.

If you think one of the solutions proposed originally is not feasible, now is your chance to think of another way to address the need. Brainstorm alternative solutions and fill out the worksheet.

2. Break up into committees and research potential solutions (15 minutes)

3. Introduce the final phase of research (5 minutes)
Now that you have two potential proposals to work on that are addressing needs you heard from your fellow students, it's time to figure out some details.

As a committee, use this worksheet to figure out how much your proposal might cost. This is not going to be exact; we're just trying to get a general sense of the budget. Use the "How Much Will This Project Cost?" worksheet and research on your phones or the computer. Split up research tasks, so each of you is researching a different item at the same time.

Above and beyond

Students can conduct more pricing research on their own as homework.

Worksheet 3: Imagining Solutions

What is the issue you are trying to address?

Brainstorm three ways you could fix or improve the situation.

1.

2.

3.

As a committee, choose the solution that you think is best. Is it practical? It is doable?

Now draw the solution.

[drawing box]

Worksheet 4: How Much Will This Project Cost?

Describe your project in one sentence:

List out all the physical stuff you'll need for the project. Use the back of this paper if you have more than three items. *Don't fill out the cost and subtotal yet!*

Item 1	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 2	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 3	How many?	Cost	Subtotal

List out anything you'll need to pay for that isn't a physical thing (any repeating fees, etc.). Installation and maintenance will be covered by the school, so don't worry about that. Use the back of this paper if you have more than three items. *Don't fill out the cost and subtotal yet!*

Item 4	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 5	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 6	How many?	Cost	Subtotal

Now, go online and research how much each item costs. For example, if you need to install new lights, you can do a search for how much light bulbs costs and how much a light fixture costs. Fill out the cost for each item on your list.

Now do the math to calculate your subtotal for each item.

How many? x **Cost** = **Subtotal**
How often? x **Cost** = **Subtotal**

To get an estimate of your proposal cost, add up all the subtotals and fill it in below:

Total proposal cost =

SESSION 7

Finalize Research

Teacher prep:
Create a list of missing pieces for each committee. For example: "Team A, you still need to document the problem for your second proposal, and finish your cost worksheet for your first proposal."

Set up a meeting time with the principal for two sessions from now. This meeting is a chance for the principal to give in-person feedback on all of the proposals at once. You'll need the whole class period for this. Ask the principal if anyone else should be at the meeting. You could involve a maintenance worker, a superintendent, a representative of a local school council, or any other decision-makers.

Materials:
Phone or computer with internet access, list of committees' missing pieces

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Committees wrap up any remaining research (43 minutes)

2. Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Now that you have two refined proposals, we're going to share these proposals with the principal so that she/he can give us feedback. The principal will be able to tell us if something isn't feasible and if our cost estimates are off.

In our next session, we'll practice presenting our proposals.
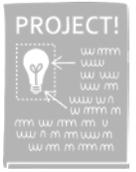
SESSION 8

Prepare to Present to the Principal

Teacher prep:
Write out prompts on index cards.

Confirm the meeting date and time with the principal.

Materials:
Presentation cards, notebooks, pens

Note: For presentation cards, write one prompt at the top of an index card. Committees will need two cards per prompt, so each committee should get 14 index cards.

The problem we are trying to address is:
We know it's a problem because:
Our proposed solution is:
The people who would benefit are:
It will cost approximately:
The questions we still have are:
What do you think of the proposals? What should we think about changing?

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Introduce the presentation (5 minutes)
Next week, you're going to present your proposals to the principal.

I'm going to give you seven numbered index cards. These are the things we'll want to present, in that order, to the principal.

In your committees, assign cards to each member (it might not divide up evenly). Discuss each card one by one. The person responsible for the card can take notes.
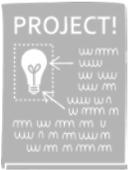
Avoid writing out whole sentences to read out loud. That never sounds good in a presentation.

Since you are presenting two proposals, go through the process once for the first proposal, then do it again for the second proposal.

2. Break up into committees and develop presentations (20 minutes)

3. Practice the presentations (20 minutes)
Let's practice our presentations. Each committee can present their first proposal.

After each committee presents, we can offer constructive feedback. When you get feedback, take notes on what people are saying. We are going to do the same when the principal gives us feedback.

Above and beyond

Conduct an extra session to work on public speaking skills with your students and practice each committee's second proposal.

Brainstorm or share information about what makes feedback constructive.

SESSION 9

Meet with the Principal to Vet Projects

Materials:
Presentation cards, notebooks, pens

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Introduce the goal of the meeting and introduce the participants (5 minutes)

Our committees have been working hard to turn the ideas they heard from their classmates into project proposals. Each committee will present two ideas to you. We'd like your feedback on the feasibility of the projects and whether there's anything we should change in our proposals.

Can everyone here say their name and their role?

2. Committees present projects, principal gives feedback to each committee, students take notes on feedback (40 minutes)

Above and beyond

For homework, students write a paragraph on how they will change their proposals based on the principal's feedback.
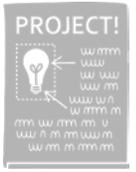
SESSION 10

Revise Proposals

Teacher prep:
Print out Worksheet 5: Project Revisions (2 per committee).

Materials:
Project revision worksheets, pens

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Narrow down the final list of proposals (5 minutes)
We want to put a maximum of ten projects on the ballot. Based on the feedback we got from the principal, are there any proposals we should eliminate at this point?

2. Revise remaining proposals (35 minutes)
For the remaining proposals, you'll want to work as a committee to modify the projects based on the feedback you received. The worksheet looks a lot like the presentation questions. To start, look back at your notes on the principal's feedback, then go through your remaining proposal or proposals and fill out the worksheet as a group. You might need to go back and do more cost research.

Worksheet 5: Project Revisions

1. The problem we are trying to address is:

2. We know it's a problem because:

3. Our proposed solution is:

4. The people who would benefit are:

5. Cost calculator

List out all the physical stuff you'll need for the project. Use the back of this paper if you have more than three items. *Don't fill out the cost and subtotal yet!*

Item 1	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 2	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 3	How many?	Cost	Subtotal

List out anything you'll need to pay for that isn't a physical thing (any repeating fees, etc.). Installation and maintenance will be covered by the school, so don't worry about that. Use the back of this paper if you have more than three items. *Don't fill out the cost and subtotal yet!*

Item 4	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 5	How many?	Cost	Subtotal
Item 6	How many?	Cost	Subtotal

Now, go online and research how much each item costs. For example, if you need to install new lights, you can do a search for how much light bulbs costs and how much a light fixture costs. Fill out the cost for each item on your list.

Now, do the math to calculate your subtotal for each item.

How many? x Cost = Subtotal
How often? x Cost = Subtotal

To get an estimate of your proposal cost, add up all the subtotals and fill it in below:

Total proposal cost =

SESSION 11

Finish Revising Proposals

Teacher prep:
Create a list of missing pieces for each committee.

Make sure you've chosen your expo and community vote strategy by now.

Materials:
List of missing pieces, pens

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Hand out list of missing items for each committee (2 minutes)

2. Committees finish revising their proposals (40 minutes)

3. Introduce the next steps (3 minutes)
In the next few sessions, we're going to be creating presentations so that the rest of the school can learn more about the proposals and then vote on which ones they think should be funded.

SESSION 12

Create Boards and Catch Up on Proposal Revisions

Teacher prep:
The prep depends on what format you've chosen for the expo and the community vote. Below, we'll give tips to create boards for an expo, since that's the most common format for citywide PB processes. If you're going to do a presentation with slides or short videos, you'll want to develop a list of shots or images for your students to get, and questions for them to answer in a voice-over or their presentations. These can be very similar to the questions in the presentation cards.

For boards, print out photos that the students have taken of the problems being addressed.

Materials:
Presentation boards (usually 36" by 48"), one for each proposal, markers, glue, glitter, construction paper, scissors, tape

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Explain the goal of the boards (5 minutes)
For the next few sessions, you'll be working in your committees to create presentation boards for your proposals. Each proposal gets one board.

The goal is to explain the need for the project and the proposed solution as clearly as possible. Make sure you use images to show how things are now, and how they could be improved.

You will be standing next to your board to explain the project, but you should create boards that explain the proposals on their own. If someone looks at your board and you aren't there to explain it, you still want them to understand it.

Use any materials you want—try to make this thing catchy! And let me know if there are any other materials you want me to get for your boards for the next session.

If you still need to finish your proposal revisions, half of your committee can work on that while the other half gets started on boards.

2. Committees work on boards and proposal revisions (40 minutes)

SESSION 13

Create Boards

Teacher prep:
Gather any extra materials that students requested.

Materials:
Presentation boards (usually 36" by 48"), one for each proposal, markers, glue, glitter, construction paper, any extra art materials, sticky notes, scissors, tape

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Committees work on boards (35 minutes)

2. Design review (10 minutes)
We're going to step back from our boards for a second and get some outside opinions. Walk around to other people's boards and write down one thing you think is working, and one thing that isn't clear yet on sticky notes.

In the next session, you'll use that feedback to help you revise your boards.

SESSION 14

Create Boards

Teacher prep:
Gather any extra materials that students requested.

Materials:
Presentation boards (usually 36" by 48"), one for each proposal, markers, glue, glitter, construction paper, scissors, tape, any extra art materials

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Committees review feedback (5 minutes)
Read the feedback you got last week and discuss as a committee how you will revise your boards.

2. Committees work on boards (40 minutes)

SESSION 15

Practice Presentations

Teacher prep:
The prep depends on what format you've chosen for the expo and the community vote. Whichever strategy you've chosen, confirm the details. For example, confirm the space and time with the principal if you're doing a science fair-style expo, or confirm with other teachers when you'll be coming in to present in their classrooms. Below, we'll give tips to prep for a science fair-style expo, since that's the most common format for citywide PB processes.

For any strategy that isn't a mandatory assembly, you'll need to figure out how to get students to participate. You may want to schedule announcements in assemblies or over the loudspeaker, or have your students create flyers to post up around the school in advance of the expo and vote.

Materials:
Presentation materials (boards/videos/posters), presentation notes

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Explain the expo and vote and assign roles (5 minutes)
We're going to have a science fair-style expo. As students come in, we'll explain the process to them. They need to visit all of the projects, hear about them from you, then go to the voting table, pick up a ballot, vote, and then drop the ballot in the ballot box.

We need two students to be at the door to explain the process. You'll ask students to fill out a sign-in sheet. Then you'll tell people to visit every proposal and to go to the voting area to pick up their ballots once they've seen all the proposals. Who will do that?

We're going to need at least one person to stand by each proposal and explain it to other students as they walk by. Who will sign up for that?

We'll need two people to sit by the ballot boxes and collect ballots. Who will do that?

2. Practice presentations (40 minutes)
In your committees, have each person who is standing by the proposal practice the presentation you'll give to passers-by.

Any suggestions on what makes a good presentation? How long do we think it should be?

Once you've run through it once, decide as a committee if there's anything you'd like to change in the presentation. Then run through it again. Make sure everyone who is standing next to a proposal has had a chance to practice her or his presentation.

Above and beyond

- If you'd like to make sure all the students have seen every proposal, you can have presenters give out a sticker (one kind of sticker per proposal) once they've explained it to the student. Only students with all proposal stickers get a ballot. Students could also design a "passport" where the stickers can be collected.

- Students can design ballot boxes.

- Students can design T-shirts for PB so that it is clear who is a student in your class versus who is a student voter.

- Students design flyers with expo and vote information.

SESSION 16

Expo and Community Vote

Teacher prep:
Create ballots. Remember, there should be no more than 10 proposals on the ballot. Explain the voting rules on the ballots. Here's a sample <u>ballot</u>[1]—don't worry if yours is not as fancy! You probably don't need to ask the voter survey questions on the first page and it shows more projects than you will be doing.

Create sign-in sheet or "voter oath." This way, you can record who voted, but the ballots themselves can stay confidential. This is optional, but has been successful in other PB processes. In the past, the voter oath has said, "I understand I need to be [insert eligibility rules here] to vote in [your school's name] PB. I certify that I am eligible to vote in the process." The voter oath also asks for the voter's name, date, and contact information.

Print ballots (enough for everyone expected to vote, plus a bit extra).

Remind your students the day of the expo and vote what's expected of them. Remind the voting students that it's the day of the expo and vote.

Materials:
Presentation materials (boards/videos/posters), ballots, voter oath

IN-CLASS PLAN

What you do here really depends on the strategy you chose for the expo and community vote. Refer to the "Develop your strategy for the expo and community voting" section on the bottom of page 14 for ideas.

Make a plan to collect all the ballots and store them in a safe place.

---

[1] participatorybudgeting.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Seattle2015Ballot_PBP.pdf

SESSION 17

Ballot Count

Teacher prep:
Collect all ballots.

Write up the names of the projects on a whiteboard.

Create tally sheets for each group of three that lists each proposal and leaves space for students to tally votes.

Materials:
Ballots, tally sheets

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Assign roles (5 minutes)
We're going to count our ballots.

Let's split into groups of three. Within each group, one person will read them, the second person verifies that the votes were read correctly, and the third person tallies the votes next to the project names on your own tally sheets. When you're done, transfer the tallies to the board.

2. Count ballots (15 minutes)

3. Transfer small group tallies to the whiteboard (5 minutes)

4. Announce the winner(s) and discuss next steps (5 minutes)

Please don't share the results of our vote until after the principal has made a public announcement!

SESSION 18

Celebrate and Reflect

Teacher prep:
Buy some cake.

Invite the principal to the celebration.

Research whether there is a PB process happening near you. _Here_[2] is a good place to start.

Print Worksheet 6: Reflection Prompts.

Materials:
Reflection prompts, pens

IN-CLASS PLAN

1. Eat cake! And discuss announcement strategy (10 minutes)
How do we want to communicate the results back to the school? Should the principal make an announcement? Do you want to announce it at the next assembly? Should we make flyers? Should we put it in a newsletter or the school paper?

2. Discuss implementation (5 minutes)
The principal is going to take these winning projects and make sure they will happen. Can I get a few volunteers to step up and agree to serve as advisors to the principal during the implementation process? That just means that if any questions come up, we know who to turn to. And if we do PB again next year, you can be on the steering committee, which means you help us plan it and make decisions about what to do differently. Who would like to be advisors?

3. Reflect (30 minutes)
We just went through a process that's happening not just in schools, but in cities across the world.

In Argentina, young people voted and got a skate park.

In Boston, young people voted on $150,000 to provide free WiFi and charging stations in key locations across the city.

---

[2] www.participatorybudgeting.org/participate/participate/

In New Brunswick, residents voted to use $66,000 for an indoor climbing wall at their local Boys and Girls Club. *[Watch the video]* [3]

What you did in the classroom would be called a "Budget Delegate" in a city PB process.

[If there's a PB process in your city] Do you think you'd want to participate in a city PB process as a Budget Delegate or as a voter?

[If there is no PB process in your city] Who do you think we could talk to in order to bring PB to our community?

Now take the remaining time to put some of your thoughts on what you just did in writing.

Above and beyond

Create materials to announce the winning projects, such as newspaper articles, flyers, newsletter announcements.

Practice announcements with students if they'll be announcing winners at an assembly.

---

[3] http://bit.ly/pbclimbing

Worksheet 6: Reflection Prompts

What did you think of this experience?

How did PB feel different from how school money usually gets allocated?

Did you feel like your voice was heard?

Did you feel like your school community's voice was heard?

Did the project change the way you feel about your school? How?

Describe the principal's role in the project. How did it feel different from usual?

Will this change how you participate in your city? How?

Implementation & Beyond

Now it's the principal's turn to make sure the winning projects happen.

First, hold yourselves accountable to the community, and make sure you communicate the results right away to everyone who was involved in the process.

Then, you'll want to get the winning projects going as soon as possible. The sooner they are implemented, the more positive the experience will be for students. We know implementation takes time, but it can be a real letdown if the winning projects aren't visible until the following year.

We recommend that students be meaningfully included in the implementation process and be involved in tracking projects. A student who worked on developing a winning proposal could be a lead on tracking their project and responding to issues that arise. Here are some things that will probably come up during implementation:

What needs to be purchased?

The students may have specified something that's sold out, or maybe there are a few versions of the thing to choose from (like different tablets). Get a student to help the principal choose specific purchases.

What are the rules?

You probably didn't have a chance to develop policies to go with the winning project. Who gets to use the stuff and when? Students can develop policies together with the principal. For example, in one school, students chose buying games and electronics to enhance their lunch period, and quickly discovered that there were too many students who wanted to use them at the same time. The students helped the principal sort through questions like: Should access be based on rewards? Should games be accessible outside of lunchtime? Students helped develop policies (like an iPad or tablet check-out system through the library), and then announced the new policies to their peers.

Why isn't the project here yet?

Lead students can update their fellow students during assemblies on the projects' progress.

If you have any questions about this guide, about PB, about Participatory Budgeting Project's services, or if you wish to share photos or written accounts of your school's PB journey (highly encouraged!), contact:

info@participatorybudgeting.org

For more on the Participatory Budgeting Project, visit participatorybudgeting.org

You can also download a brochure about the Participatory Budgeting Project here,[4] and the 2016-2017 annual report can be found here.[5]

Here are some materials from other PB processes that you might find helpful!

> An info sheet[6] on Participatory Budgeting
>
> The Rulebook[7] for New York City's Participatory Budgeting process
>
> A flyer[8] for idea collection in Boston and some posters[9] promoting a vote in New York City

---

[4] bit.ly/aboutpbp

[5] bit.ly/pbp-annual-report

[6] bit.ly/pbschools

[7] bit.ly/pbrulebook

[8] bit.ly/pb-boston-flyer

[9] bit.ly/pbnyc-poster

THANK YOU

Thank you to the students of Sullivan High School, Principal Adams, and the students of MIKVA Challenge whose work and experience informs the core of this guide. Additional thanks to Francesco Tena, PBP Project Manager and former Manager of Boston's Youth Lead the Change, and Liz Robbins from the Office of Social Science and Civic Engagement at Chicago Public Schools.