



Well-Resourced Schools

A Community Vision for Seattle Public Schools

Findings from PHASE I Community Engagement Efforts

November 2023



Superintendent's Purpose and Goals

- Superintendent Brent Jones launched a community-wide effort to reimagine a *System of Well-Resourced Schools* that is safe, equitable, and offers students and families the programs, services and resources they need to succeed and thrive in the neighborhoods where they live.
- To provide district leadership and the School Board with authentic input, a series of *community engagement* efforts were conducted to help shape a vision grounded in the values and aspirations of the diverse community served by SPS.
- The collective themes in this report are compiled directly from the input of participants about what they value, appreciate, and desire to see in our schools.
- The community vision will provide a foundation to frame challenges and opportunities for SPS in the coming years – and **help guide future strategic planning and resource allocation decisions**, including funding for Well-Resourced Schools, SPS Funding Our Future planning, renewal of the Seattle Excellence Strategic Plan, and the BEX VI Levy.

Phase I Engagement Activities

In August through October 2023, Seattle Public Schools completed its **Phase I Engagement Plan**, which included a series of **five (5) in-person** and **two (2) online** community engagement meetings open to all families and community members; **internal engagement sessions** for school staff; and a districtwide **community survey**.

Setting	Respondents	% of Total
In-person (x5)	479	13%
Online (x2)	143	4%
School staff sessions	908	24%
Community survey	2267	60%

Nearly **3,800 community members** provided feedback in at least one of these opportunities. Of survey respondents who provided background information, 63% were family/caregivers, 35% were staff, and 2% were other community members. Whereas 32% of family members/caregivers responding to the survey identified as people of color, the district's enrollment of students of color is 54%. (Please see **Appendix A** for a more complete breakdown of survey participant demographic characteristics.) Importantly, a **Phase II Engagement Plan** will include engagement opportunities specifically for **students**, plus additional targeted efforts to ensure diverse voices from all backgrounds are **equitably represented and reflected in the community's vision**.

Part I. FACILITIES and LEARNING SPACES



Part I. Facilities and Learning Spaces

Neighborhood Location

- Close, nearby school connected to neighborhood
- Central hub for families to connect, build community

Modern Facilities, Classic Architecture

- Preservation of historical and classical building elements
- Modern, contemporary design of interior spaces, facilities

Safety, Security, and Retrofitting

- Security measures, gated perimeters, entry procedures
- Retrofitting such as earthquake proofing, updated HVAC

Well-Maintained Grounds and Facilities

- Grounds and facilities well-maintained, preserved with care
- Clean, welcoming environment, sense of community pride

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“The incredible history and charm of the building, neighborhood centered, walking distance from my house building a true sense of community.”

“I love that Seattle’s neighborhood schools are... the focal point and anchor of their community”

“We love the beautiful classic building with modern renovations.”

“We love our newly renovated building with earthquake retrofitting and improved ventilation.”

“I love that we have a new security system helping to keep the kids safe, in addition to the fencing of the full property and safe neighborhood.”

“Our building is beautifully maintained and consistently clean.”

Part I. Facilities and Learning Spaces

Playgrounds and Athletic Facilities

- School playgrounds, outdoor play areas and athletic fields
- Gym and indoor facilities for athletics and community events
- Modern, accessible for students with disabilities

Natural Spaces and Natural Light

- Natural, open spaces, connections to nature in settings
- Large windows, natural lighting in classrooms and facilities
- School gardens enhance the learning environment for kids

Interior Spaces Designed for Learning

- Purposefully-designed interior spaces conducive to learning
- High ceilings, wide hallways, large classrooms
- Accommodations, accessibility for students with disabilities

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“The kids LOVE the new playground with the turf field, and our new gym.”

“The new gym is impressively equipped.”

“Our school's playgrounds are awesome... ensuring students with disabilities have opportunities for active play and social interaction.”

“I love the amount of natural light most classes provide with big windows.”

“It's a beautiful, spacious building designed for learning.”

“I am so impressed with each of the classrooms and their layout... This is a place of beauty, learning, and inclusivity.”

Part I. Facilities and Learning Spaces

The Library as a Centerpiece

- Libraries serve as a hub for learning and community activity
- Thoughtful design and layout of newly renovated libraries
- Abundance of books, materials reflecting school diversity

Artwork and Décor Centering Student Diversity

- Colorful display of student artwork throughout the school
- Murals and inspirational posters reflecting school values and the cultural heritage and diversity of the community

Common Gathering Spaces

- Designated commons areas for building strong community
- Courtyards, atriums, flexible spaces, gym, auditorium, theater

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“The library is the picture of inspiration, hope and the future.”

“I love the large library collection that serves the diverse needs and interests of the school.”

“All spaces showcase student learning, student voices and community values.”

“Our mural that honors the Duwamish is stunning.”

“Beautiful murals, inspiring messages.”

“The Commons is used for concerts, lectures, stage plays and performances, as well as an open meeting area and lunch area. It is one of the very best things about the site.”

Part II.

ACADEMIC and EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS



Part II. Academic and Extracurricular Programs



Dedicated, Skilled Educators

- Welcoming, respectful, well-trained and qualified staff
- Caring and nurturing, culturally responsive, collaborative
- Educator resources: curricular, collaboration time, training

Arts and Music Programs

- Well-resourced programs: Music, Visual and Performing arts
- Integrated into other curricular areas, after-school programs
- Dedicated facilities, full-time staff, multiple choices for kids

Physical Education and Athletics

- Well-resourced athletic teams and sports clubs, P.E. classes
- Structured and unstructured play time for elementary kids
- Inclusive, accessible opportunities for all students

"I see the care with which each of the staff demonstrate for each child - holding space for their intellectual curiosities, emotional needs, social learning, and self-expression."

"More teacher training for neurodivergence, ADHD, UDL with tangible practice examples."

"We value music and arts programs because when students participate in creative outlets, they do better academically and socially."

"The integration of arts and creativity into all the classes. My son is a hands-on learner who does better when he can create to express learning."

"Sport programs are highly valued by students since we are able to see the impact it has on their peer development, self-esteem, and sense of belonging."

Part II. Academic and Extracurricular Programs

Enrichment and Extracurricular Programs

- Well-resourced extracurricular clubs, enrichment programs
- Before/after school programs also provide childcare support
- Equitable program offerings and resource allocation

High Quality Instruction in Core Academic Subjects

- Well-resourced curriculum and instruction in core academics
- Tools and resources for educators to differentiate instruction
- Additional tutoring and instructional supports for students

Diversity Reflected in Curriculum and Instruction

- Curriculum reflects diversity, is culturally affirming, inclusive
- Ethnic Studies, Black history, non-Eurocentric World History
- Training for cultural sensitivity, anti-racist teaching practice

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"We value afterschool enrichment programs the most because that allows our child to be involved in the things he is passionate about."

"The before/after school support... Languages, music, enrichment classes like theatre, coding, art have all been valuable to our family."

"Academic programs that help children excel in the basics like reading, writing, and math are essential for kids to be prepared and successful."

"Differentiation in reading and math--both to catch up kids who are struggling and to go deeper for kids who quickly grasp the lesson."

"Programs that are valued most by our community are those that promote racial equity, in alignment with our district mission."

Part II. Academic and Extracurricular Programs

STEM Programs

- Well-resourced courses/programs for science, technology (coding, digital media), and engineering (robotics, biotech)

World Languages and Dual Language Programs

- Learning a second language viewed as educational priority
- Consistent staffing support for multiple language offerings

Project-Based, Experiential Learning Opportunities

- Integrating project-based learning across the curriculum
- Opportunities to develop collaboration, teamwork skills

College and Career Readiness Programs and

Resources

- Career and Technical Education, internships, apprenticeships
- opportunities to earn college credits in high school
- Counseling, support for applying to college and financial aid



"STEM activities for early introduction to critical thinking and problem solving."

"In a hyper-technological generation, it is imperative that we integrate the technologies used to educate our students."

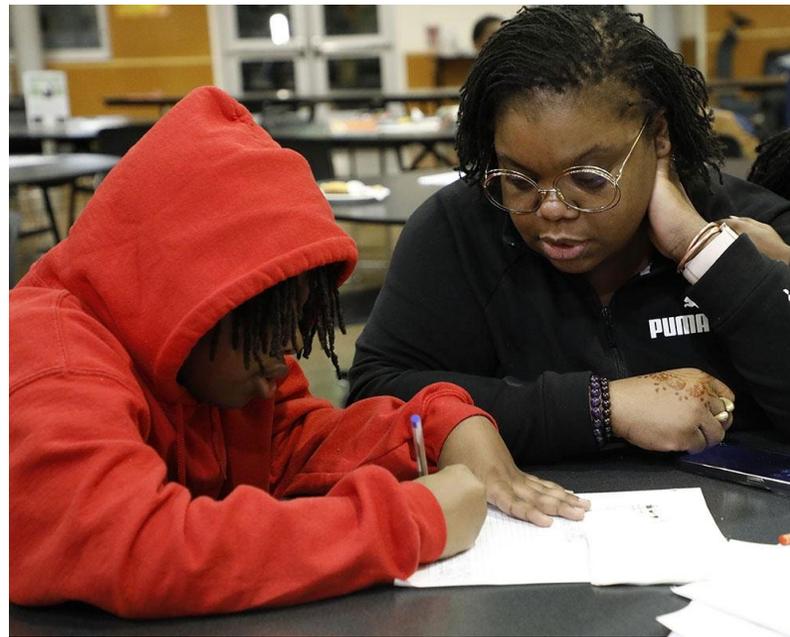
"If we truly want to close the gap and be true global citizens, reading and writing in other languages in addition to English is a must."

"The bilingual education is excellent and something all students should have access to."

"Project Based Learning; students having voice and choice and opportunities to connect learning to the real world."

"College and Career Resources to provide the readiness tools for our students to be prepared for their post-secondary goals."

Part III. SUPPORT SERVICES and RESOURCES



Part III. Support Services and Resources

Full-Time Staff in Key Support Positions

- Full-time counselors, nurses, social workers and librarians
- Adequate educational specialists, interventionists, assistants

Basic Student Needs

- Free, accessible, fresh and nutritious meals
- Support for students' clothing, hygiene, medical needs
- Partnering with community-based organizations

Mental Health Services

- Full-time counselors, social workers, mental health specialists
- Social emotional learning, restorative practices to build emotional resilience, healthy relationships, self-expression

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"Make sure there is a safety net of adults for all schools including nurses, counselors, librarians and intervention teachers so every student can get the support they need to grow and learn."

"The extra support our son gets from school psychiatrist, educational specialist, and all the dedicated staff that have supported us."

"Free breakfast and lunch to make sure no kids are hungry in school."

"Support for essential needs for homeless students such as food and supplies, housing resources."

"More full-time staff for mental health, learning about mental health and social connection, classes for parents to help monitor kids and keep their mental health well."

Part III. Support Services and Resources

Special Education Services

- Fully staffed, well-resourced, easy for families to navigate
- Educator knowledge and training in neurodivergence, trauma informed care, Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Collaboration time for specialists, general educ. teachers

Multilingual Learner Services

- Full-time specialists and instructional assistants who work alongside special education and general education teachers
- Effective translation and interpretation supports for families

Highly Capable/Advanced Learner Services

- Highly capable services; educators trained in differentiation and supporting students who need acceleration, enrichment
- Advanced Placement, Intl. Baccalaureate, Running Start

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“I value special education programs that help students academically and emotionally – occupational therapists, speech therapists, and staff trained to help students with dyslexia and dyscalculia and learn to read and do math.”

“Providing the staffing needed in special education to make inclusion possible.”

“Multilingual support because the instructional assistants help students with math vocabularies and creating more ideas in writing.”

“Translators are especially important at my school. Many of the parents speak English as a second language.”

“Highly Capable Cohort program allows students that need specialized education to learn as a group.”

Part III. Support Services and Resources

Transportation Services

- Consistent, reliable on-time service, clear communications
- Drivers who know how to interact with and support students
- Equitable access to field trips, expeditionary learning trips

Effective Communications

- Regular, accessible communications to families about services, programs and opportunities available at the school
- Opportunities for families and students to provide feedback to schools and the district about programs and experiences.

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"We have many students reliant on school bus transportation - reliable, consistent buses and drivers are key."

"Consistent and reliable transportation (for afterschool programs as well)"

"After school buses so students can participate in after school enrichment activities."

"The key to strengthening services (besides just funding them) is constantly raising awareness that they're available and should be used."

"Consistent communication from the school. We do get communications, but they are not always timely and not always easy to find."

Participant/Respondents

Setting	# of respondents	% of total
In-person (x5)	479	13%
Online (x2)	143	4%
School staff sessions	908	24%
Community survey	2,267	60%

SPS Affiliation	# of respondents	% of total
Family member/caregiver	1,988	52%
Staff member	1,109	29%
Unknown*	700	19%

*Demographics were opt-in for the survey and not collected at meetings

Family member/ caregiver race	% of family survey respondents	% of students in SPS
Black	3%	15%
Native	1%	1%
Latinx	6%	14%
Asian	10%	12%
Pacific Islander	1%	1%
Middle Eastern/North African	1%	1%
Multiracial	12%	13%
White	68%	46%

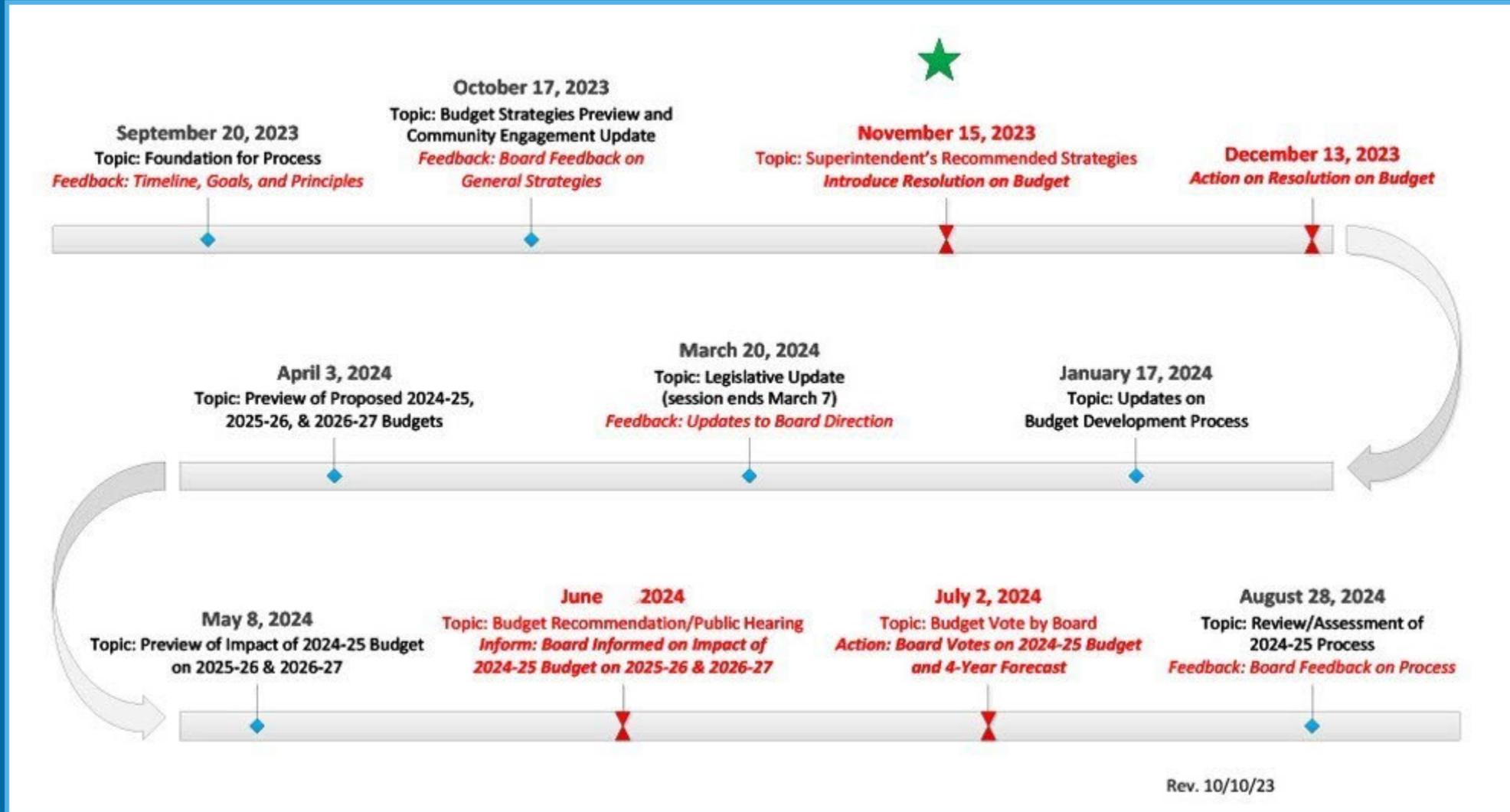
Student support service	% of family survey respondents	% of students in SPS
Multilingual learner services	5%	14%
IEP/504 services	26%	25%
Advanced learner services	28%	12%

Reflection

What elements should the next round of community engagement include?



2024-25 Budget Development Timeline



Structural Deficit

- SPS faces projected deficits of \$104 million for FY2024-25, \$129 million for FY2025-26, and \$153 million for FY2026-27. This structural shortfall is caused primarily by:
 - insufficient funding from the State of Washington;
 - declines in enrollment;
 - previous service and staffing decisions.
- Additionally, the one-time funding sources (e.g., Federal ESSER dollars, SPS' Economic Stabilization Fund, and other one-time resources) which have recently masked the impact of this structural shortfall are no longer available to cover the gap.



Budget Development Goals

- Stabilize our financial future to be able to fund our highest priorities
- Resolve long term (decades of) structural deficit spending
- Display fiscal stewardship and responsibility



Budget Development Principles



Prioritize quality instruction and learning



**Good faith efforts:
We each share the same values**



**Teamwork:
Board and Superintendent
are one team**



Be clear on the challenges and opportunities

Enrollment

- From 2019-2023, SPS enrollment has decreased by 4,900 students, which has resulted in an \$81 million drop in revenue. Initially, the budget was not impacted by this drop in revenue because the state continued funding all districts at pre-pandemic levels. However, starting in the 2023-2024 school year, districts are funded at current enrollment levels.
- The district has consulted with multiple external demographic experts, including FLO Analytics and Educational Data Solutions, LLC, in addition to our district planning teams. Our forecasts do not show substantial enrollment increases for at least the next 10 years. School districts go through longer-term cycles of enrollment increases and decreases.
- District enrollment peaked in 1964 with 94,042 students and the district had 117 school buildings. Today, enrollment is approximately 48,000 students and there are 104 school buildings.



Small Schools

- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Prototypical Model allocates funding based on 400 students in an elementary school.
- SPS has 28 elementary schools with less than 300 students.
- None of the districts contiguous to Seattle (Bellevue, Renton, Lake Washington, Shoreline, Highline) has an elementary school with less than 300 students.



Fiscal Stabilization Plan Resolution

Benefits of the Resolution:

- Seeks Board Approval and Direction
- Sets Expectations Going Forward
- Provides Early Review and Feedback
- Promotes Accountability and Transparency



Superintendent's Recommendation: 2024-25

- Seattle Public Schools should purposefully and collaboratively build towards a system of well-resourced schools.
- Build a budget for FY2024-25 that does not include school consolidations for the 2024-25 school year.
- To facilitate this transition to a system of well-resourced schools, Seattle Public Schools will need to borrow on a short-term basis and/or liquidate assets.



Superintendent's Recommendation: 2024-25

The FY 2024-25 budget may include:

- Reductions and adjustments in central office staffing and expenses;
- Changes to transportation;
- Fees;
- Lease or sale of non-school properties;
- Program adjustments and restructuring;
- Delayed repayment of the Economic Stabilization Fund;
- Reductions in contingency balances;
- Reductions and adjustments in school staffing;
- Utilization of one-time self-help funds and school carryforwards.



Superintendent's Recommendation: 2025-28

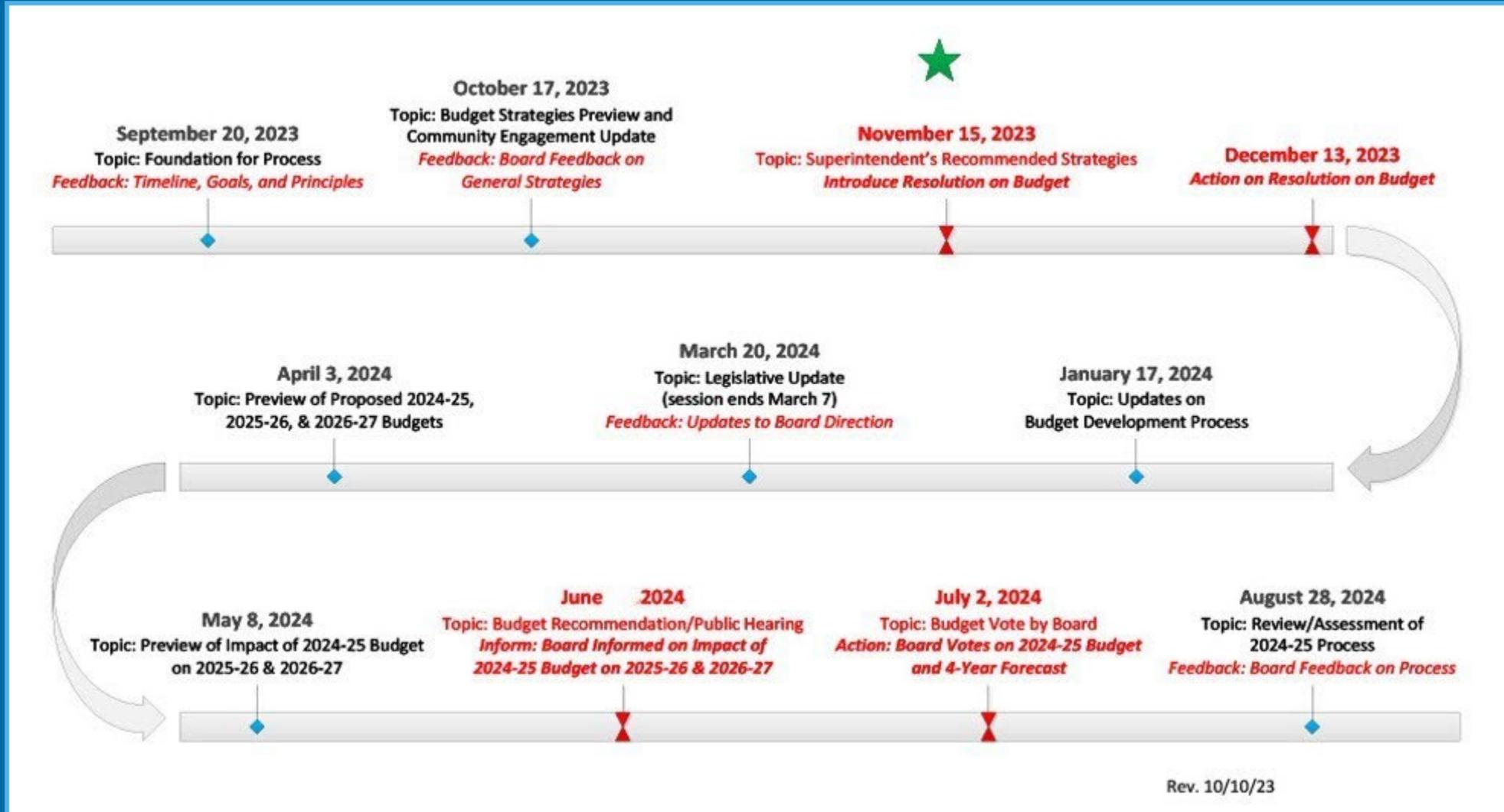
A plan to realize the vision for a system of well-resourced schools will be developed and presented by May 8, 2024.

This plan may include:

- School consolidations;
- Grade level reorganizations;
- Program adjustments and restructuring.



2024-25 Budget Development Timeline



Superintendent's Recommendation

Next Steps:

- **December 13, 2023**
 - Action on Fiscal Stabilization Plan Resolution
- **January 17, 2024**
 - Budget Development Updates





Thank you!

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Regular Board Meeting, November 15, 2023

