



News Release

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As school districts across the state finalize their 2017-18 budgets, there will be more personnel cuts, property tax increases and use of reserves in order to offset continuing growth of mandated expenditures consistent with findings from the annual School District Budget Survey Report, a joint initiative of the PA Association of School Administrators (PASA) and the PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO).

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

- 43% of respondents indicate that the fiscal conditions of their school district will worsen in 2017-18.
- Almost 15% of the districts in the survey plan to furlough employees, and more than half anticipate leaving positions vacant that are created by retirements and job movements.
- One in five respondents anticipate reducing instructional programs next year which include increasing class size, reducing electives, delaying textbook purchases and decreasing additional instructional time for students.
- Non-instructional cuts will affect more than one in five districts will include delaying maintenance reducing field trips and other extra-curricular activities.
- More than 20% of respondents indicated their district had closed school buildings since 2010-11.

Consistent with previous survey findings, seven in ten districts participating in the survey said their budgets contain a property tax increase with 12% expecting an increase above the Act 1 Index.

Mandated pension, health care, special education and charter school costs continue to escalate at rates that continue to exceed the total additional resources provided through increased state funding and local tax increases.

Mark DiRocco, PASA executive director, responded to the survey stating “Many districts are approaching the tipping point where they no longer will be able to deliver a quality education program to students due to their financial situation. Subsidy increases to districts need to be greater than what they are required to spend on pensions and other state mandates in order to ebb the tide of program cuts and staff reductions in our schools.”

Jay Himes, PASBO executive director, said the survey shows that mandated expenses continue to outpace additional revenues. “We have a new formula that is just one year old to direct additional resources to educate students in poverty, special needs students, English language learners and to growing school districts. We need to fund the formula in order to prevent the repeated negative consequences of mandated costs overwhelming any new resources generated for school budgets.”

The survey of the 500 school districts was conducted in May of this year. Responses were provided by 332 school districts (66 percent). A copy of the report is available on the PASA website at www.pasa-net.org and the PASBO website at www.pasbo.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.