

It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders...

Washington State Constitution Article IX Section I

The state's paramount duty is to fully fund public education and it has failed to do so.

To date the state has failed to carry out this duty. Districts, like Seattle, are forced to make up the financial difference by passing local levies and by asking our community and families to cover the cost of education services. The state only pays 70 cents for every dollar it costs to provide our students with the bare minimum of services. Each school year, our Seattle community provides an additional \$100 million dollars in salary compensation, which is a state responsibility.

Unless the Legislature takes action to address school funding, the district has a projected deficit of \$74 million for the 2017-18 school year.

This is the largest budget deficit we have faced since the late 1970s and has the potential to erode many of the programs, supports and services students are currently receiving. Closing the \$74 million gap will be the most difficult challenge we've faced in decades. Right now there are many unknowns. These unknowns will cause challenges and disruptions to the good work that our schools, educators and central office staff are doing.

We want to thank our Seattle Legislative delegation for their continued support to provide ample and sustainable funding for K-12 education. They have been extremely helpful partners in supporting our next generation of learners.



This potential deficit is the result of two key failures by the state.

First, the state has not fully funded education, as it is constitutionally required to do. While the Legislature has started to address their obligation regarding all-day kindergarten, class size, Maintenance, Supplies and Operating Costs (MSOC), and transportation, the state has been underfunding compensation for school district staff for more than 30 years.

Second, the Legislature has also made it impossible for our community to make up the difference by restricting how much we can collect from our voter approved levies. This has increased our 2017-18 budget gap by 30 million dollars and is known as the **Levy Cliff**. The Levy Cliff will happen, unless State Legislators take action by April 2017 and make adjustments to [House Bill SHB 2893](#), an act relating to school levies passed in 2010.

Levy Cliff



Seattle Public Schools will need to plan for the worst-case scenario

Unless the Legislature takes immediate action, the worst case scenario must be planned for. The potential deficit will affect the entire district including central office supports (maintenance, programs, services, and accountability), support for teaching and learning, educators, school leaders and support staff. We will need to make significant cuts and or leave critical positions unfilled. Most of significantly, it will affect our students – the children that we have all committed to serve.

Initial reduction recommendations have been made that protect school services. These reductions, if approved by the School Board, could bring the gap down to an estimated **\$44 million**. The budget reductions beyond this point will be challenging for all of us. Eight-five percent of our budget is salaries and much of the remaining budget includes fixed costs like utilities and insurance. Forty-four million dollars represents over **440 positions** within the district. The worst-case scenario budget will be finalized on January 11 and lay the foundation for school-based budgeting in February/early March.

2017-18 Budget Development Timeline



We don't anticipate, based on the Legislature's past practice that they will pass an approved budget until June 2017. This will be highly disruptive for our schools, staff and students. The district will need to plan for the worst-case scenario in order to perform essential school and depart. planning for 2017-18 school year.

Already Complete:

August – October 2016: Community engagement on budget priorities.

November 22, 2016: Board Budget Work Session; initial recommendations.

December 3, 2016: Board Budget Retreat; Review of additional recommended reductions.

Next Steps:

December 2016 – January 2017: Enhanced outreach to families and staff regarding budget priorities.

December 12, 2016 - Bryant board voted to adopt to extend the "levy cliff" and fully fund compensation for the 2017-18 school year.

January 11, 2017: Worst-case scenario budget recommendations and additional feedback from the School Board.

February 2017: 2107-18 school budget allocations go out in Feb. to schools to prepare for the next year. This will likely include displacement of staff due to the Legislative crisis and anticipated budget deficit.

February – April 2017: School-based decisions and staffing.

May 2017: 2017-18 contracts will be provided as well as a potential Reduction in Force (RIF). By state law the district must let educators know if they have a contract by May 15, 2017 (unless delayed by the Legislature's inability to do their work on time. If so, we must notify staff by June 15).

June 2017: Based upon past Legislative sessions, we expect that the State Legislature will not act on the final budget until late June or early July. The Legislature could avoid major disruption to students, staff and families if they complete their work on time.

July 2017: Introduction of the district budget to the SPS School Board (dependent on Legislature timeline).

August 2017: Approval of the district budget by the SPS School board (dependent on Legislature timeline). Once the budget is approved the district may be able to call back staff or reinstate funding to schools, departments and divisions based on the School Board's priorities.

Action You Can Take

The district is actively lobbying our legislature to fully fund education. However, we are legally prohibited from encouraging the public to lobby on our behalf. The following are actions we can ask our families and community stakeholders to take.

Attend a PTSA Hosted Budget Meeting

Attend a Seattle Council PTSA hosted budget meeting. Interpretation will be available.

- [Tues., Dec. 13, 6:30-8 p.m., Ballard High School](#)
- [Thurs., Dec. 15, 6:30 - 8 p.m., South Shore PreK-8](#)
- [Tues., Jan. 3, 6:30 - 8 p.m., Franklin High School](#)

Learn More

Learn more and support the Seattle School Board's resolution to ensure full funding of public education by visiting the [Network for Excellence in Washington Schools' website](#).

Need more information? Watch this video:

<https://youtu.be/hNTP2wBAzkM>

This information came directly from the Seattle Public Schools Website. For more information about our paramount duty, the levy cliff, and the budget shortfall go here:

<http://www.seattleschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=627&pageId=16682292>

