

Bond Case Briefs

Municipal Finance Law Since 1971

GFOA PK-12 Budget Resource Center.

School districts are under continuous pressures to provide a high quality education to their students with ever tighter budgets. GFOA has developed the Best Practices in School Budgeting and numerous related resources and supports in order to help school districts better align their limited resources with their student outcome and achievement goals.

Step 1. Plan and Prepare. The planning and budgeting process begins with mobilizing key stakeholders, gathering information on academic performance and cost structure, and establishing principles and policies to guide the budget process.

Step 2. Set Instructional Priorities. The budget needs to be rooted in the priorities of the district. Intentionally created instructional priorities provide a strong basis for developing a district's budget and strategic financial plan, as well as presenting a budget document.

Step 3. Pay for Priorities. Current resources and expenditures must be thoroughly analyzed in order to find capacity to pay for top instructional priorities.

Step 4. Implement Plan. The "strategic financial plan" is the long-term road map for implementing the district's instructional priorities. A "plan of action" describes how the strategic financial plan will be translated into coherent actionable steps.

Step 5. Ensure Sustainability. The planning and budgeting process should be one that can be replicated in the future in order to ensure the district remains focused and plans accordingly for reaching its student achievement goals.

The Best Practices in School Budgeting incorporate research proven practices into a cohesive budget process that is centered on aligning resources with student outcomes through strong collaboration of academic and finance staff. The following provides more information on the Best Practices and how to incorporate this process in your district.