

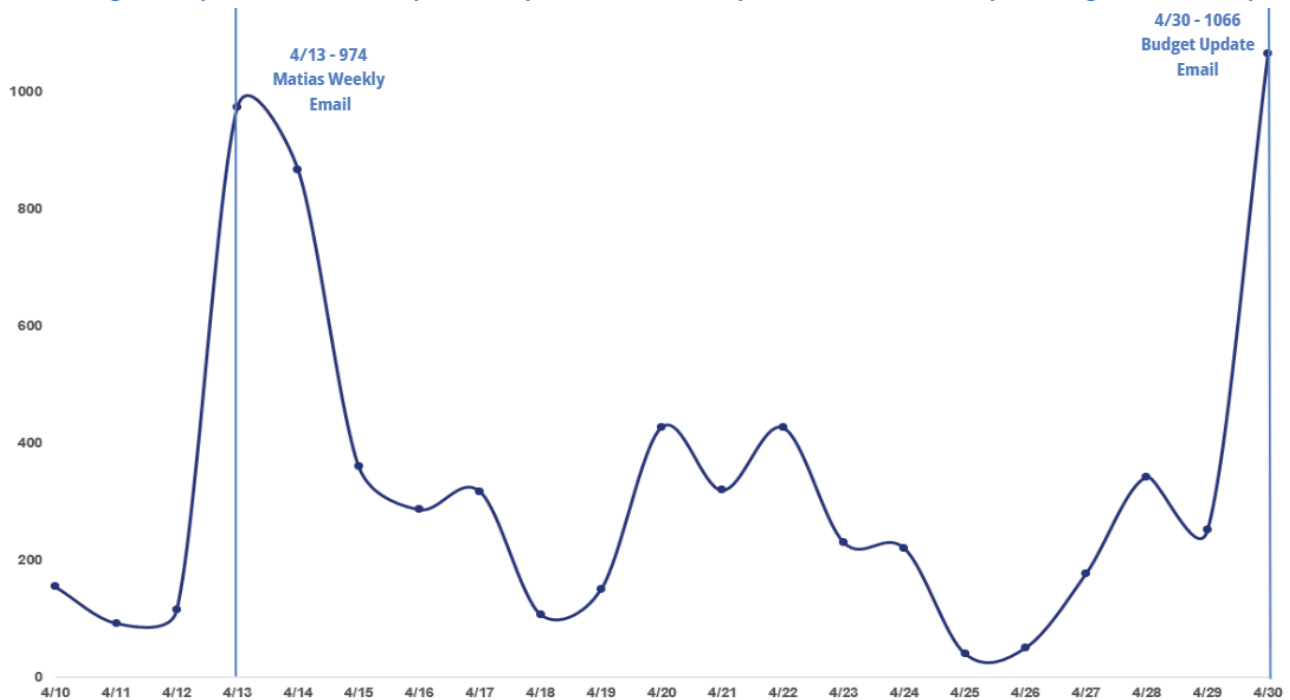


2026-27 Community Budget Survey

The 2026-27 Austin ISD budget survey launched April 10 and ran through April 30. It was an online opportunity open to our community to provide feedback as we make difficult budget decisions. **Austin ISD received 6,988 participant responses to the budget survey.** The [survey](#) contained questions on important areas including: central office, staffing allocations, student programs and services, contracts, transportation, and more. Survey questions were a mixture of open-ended and chances to select up to two items participants would like to protect as reductions are considered. We have had an immense response to the survey with thoughtful reflection in all areas. Participation was strong throughout the survey window. Surge days can be attributed both to district-wide communication/social media as well as campus communications and meetings.

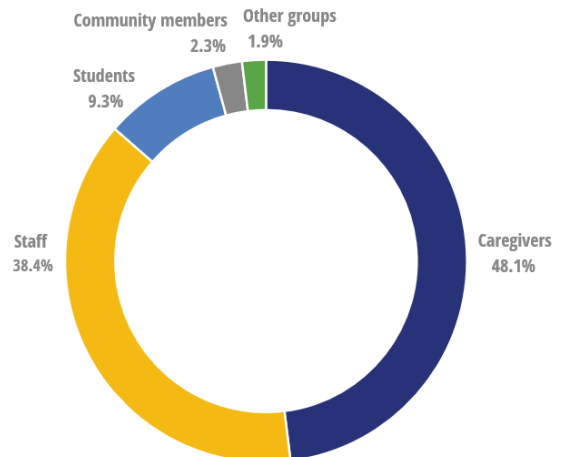
Community interest in the budget survey was large. Days when most surveys were submitted corresponded to district reminders and district/campus meetings.

Submissions of budget surveys calculated from daily, timestamped entries between April 10-30. Vertical lines represent high submission days.



Most surveys came from caregivers (48.1%), while district staff (38.4%), students (9.3%), Austin ISD community members (2.3%), and other groups (1.9%) also provided feedback.

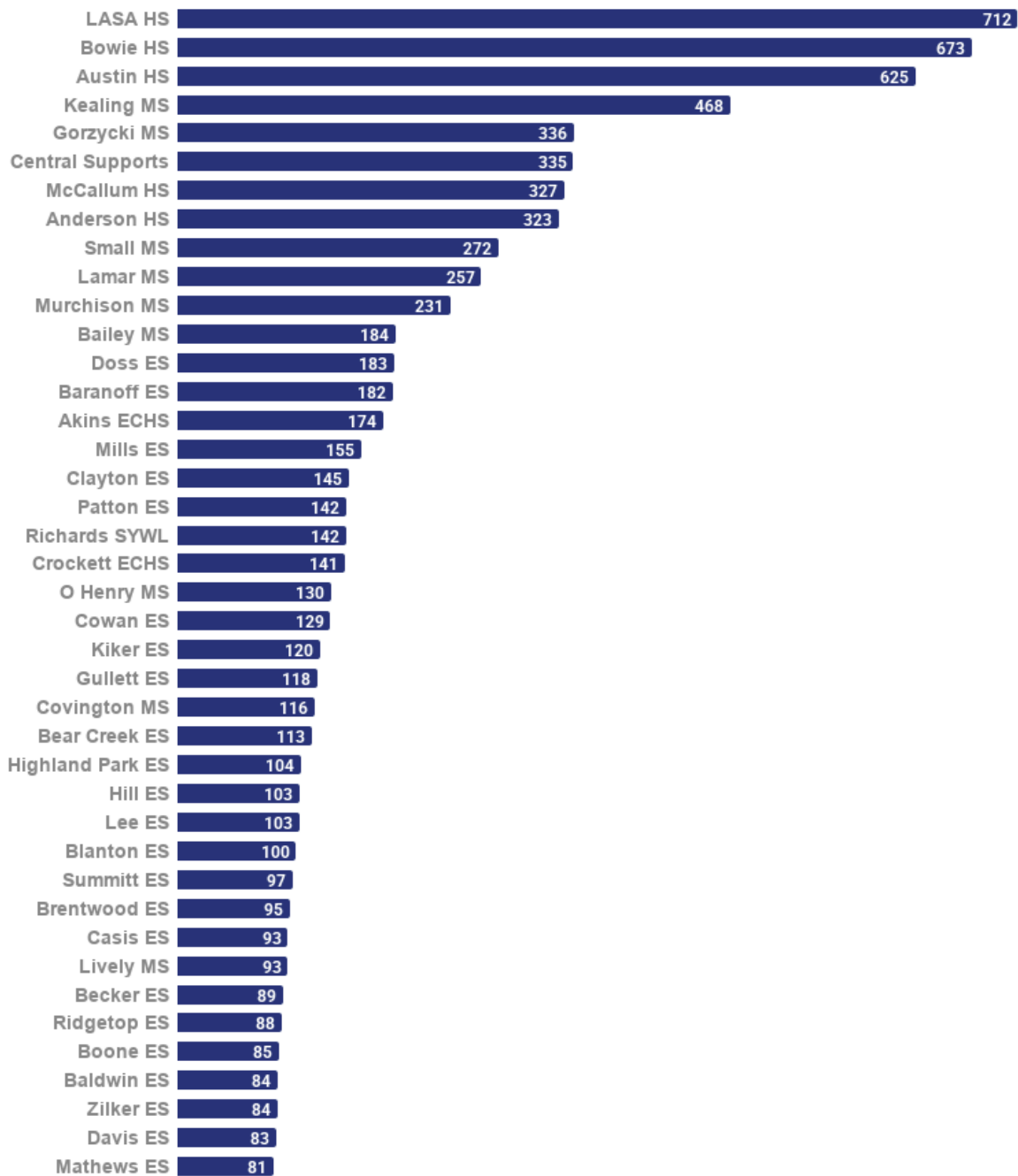
Staff (38.4%) was broken down further into teaching (24.6%), administration (7.7%), and non-teaching (6.0%).





Survey participation represented all school locations but some showed larger interest. 41 sites (those with over 80 submissions) comprised 75% of all feedback.

Participants selected school locations they were most affiliated with and could select more than one option.

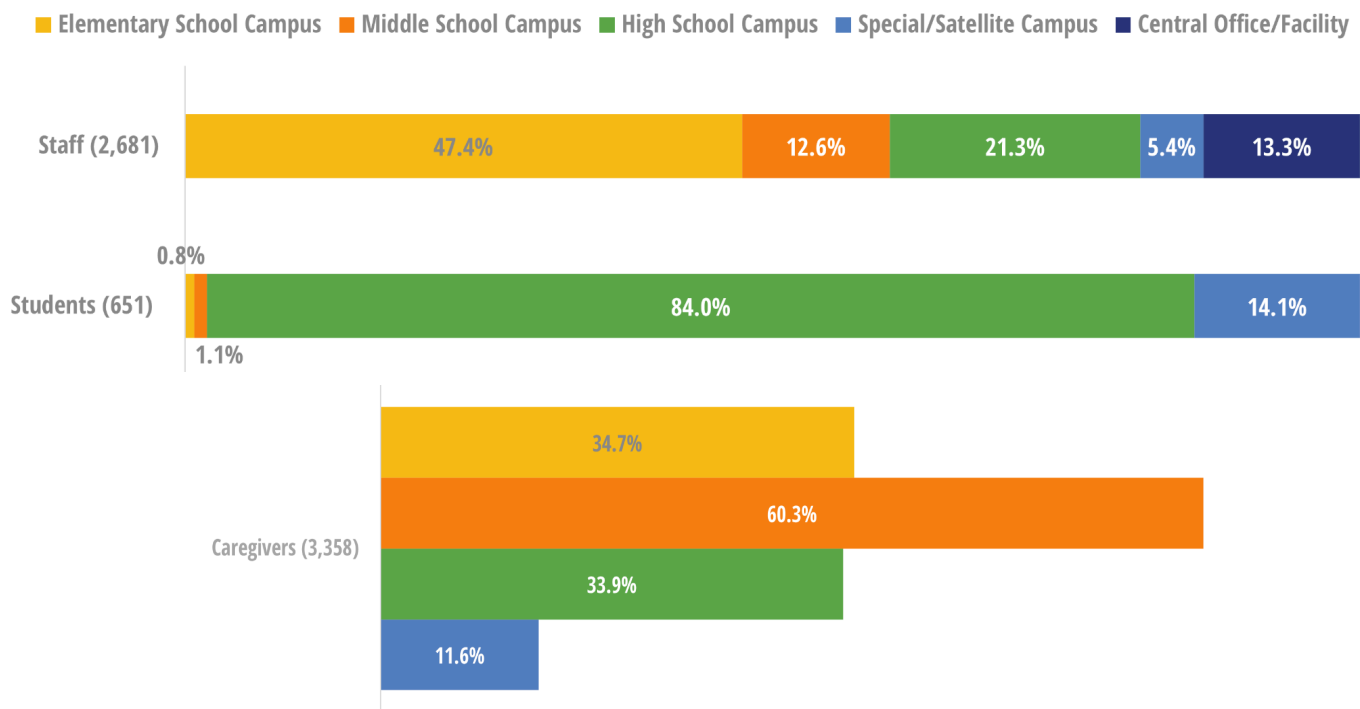


All 116 school sites plus central supports had one or more surveys submitted. The average number of surveys per location was 91 (median 47). If a participant selected more than 5 locations we recoded their response to central supports as we best considered their locations as district-wide (examples might include community partners serving across numerous sites).



Levels associated for each type of participant varied but showed representation from elementary, middle, special, and high school areas as well as centralized offices.

Caregivers selected all locations they were associated with as they may have multiple students in different grades.



What are you doing with my survey response?

The survey offers insight into many areas as well as opportunities for complex interaction through comments. **To help understand the large amount of data we have organized a group of experts to read and review all information. Over 25 staff have been trained and are actively reviewing responses as part of budget decisions.** Experts are assigned to specific areas by content knowledge, and our Research-Insight-Analytics team is supporting the process with additional data triangulation. There are three items we are looking for in survey responses.

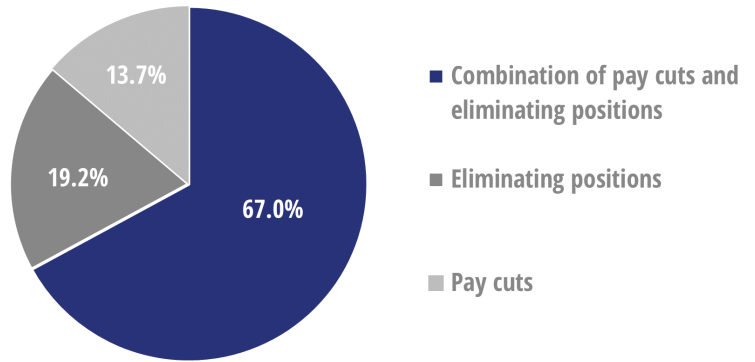
- **COMMON THEMES:** What are topics of consideration that are brought up often? They might be described in different ways but they are a similar sentiment read again and again.
- **COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS:** What are concepts participants don't understand well that hamper the decision process? These might be FAQs (frequently asked questions) or occasions to show our work better.
- **UNIQUE IDEAS:** This is the most complex of the items to look out for in the data. These are new/novel ideas. Often they include something we could consider for now or in the future.

We will review and learn from the rich data our community has provided throughout the budget process. This will extend to the 2026-27 budget adoption and beyond. In the meantime, we have visualizations and initial themes from expert review available. Below you will find visuals from the survey questions where participants could select up to two items to protect as reductions are considered. And, we have a selection of general themes found in open-response questions.



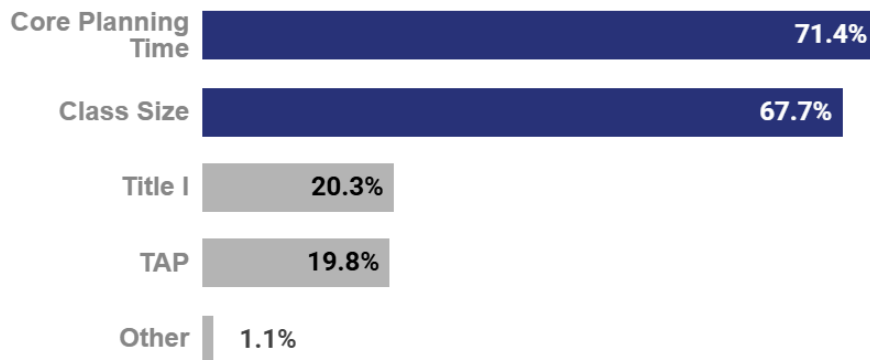
Survey participants were most interested in a combination of reduced positions and pay in central office supports (67.0%).

Respondents (n=6,613) selected one of three options to consider including eliminating additional positions (drawback of increased workload/decreased services), pay cuts (drawback less competitive pay), and a combination of reductions.



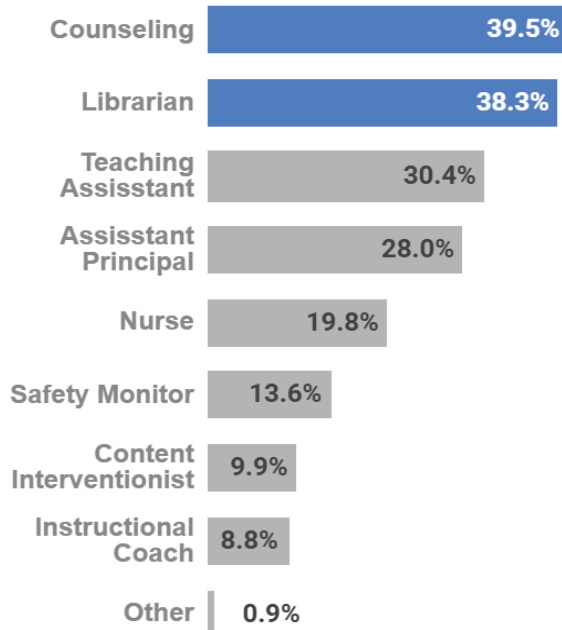
Planning time for core content (71.4%) and class sizes (67.7%) were both very high priorities in reference to campus staffing considerations.

Respondents (n=6,775) selected up to two priority items to protect. Numbers show how often an item was selected over the total.



Counselors (39.5%) and librarians (38.3%) were the most often selected positions within administrative staffing considerations followed by teaching assistants (30.4%), assistant principals (28.0%), and nurses (19.8%)

Respondents (n=6,847) selected up to two priority items to protect. Numbers show how often an item was selected over the total.

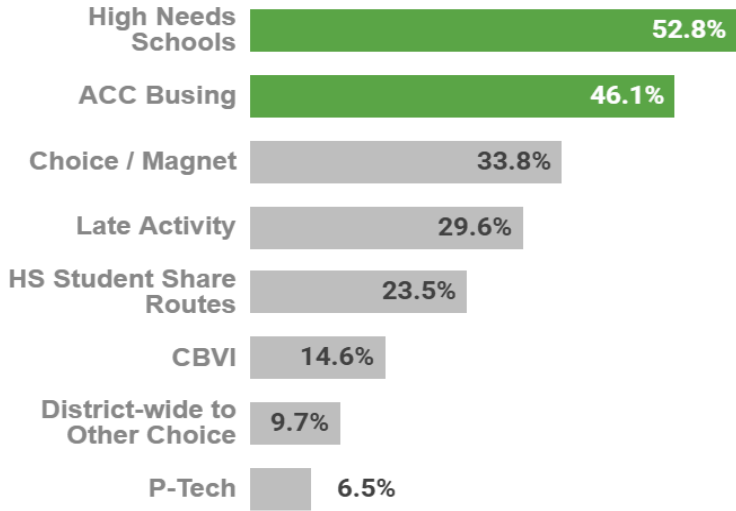




The majority of surveys opted to look at a combination of positions and pay cuts at central office, a selection that would balance work load increases, fewer services, and decreases in competitive pay. Participants were asked several questions on how they would prioritize staffing. **Respondents were in high agreement on the protection of core class planning time and manageable class sizes.** For administrative staffing, responses varied more often with a cluster of support positions selected including counselors, librarians, teaching assistants, assistant principals, and nurses.

Busing for high-needs elementary and secondary schools (52.8%) and Austin Community College (ACC) students (46.1%) were the most often selected items within transportation considerations.

Respondents (n=5,961) selected up to two priority items to protect. Numbers show how often an item was selected over the total.



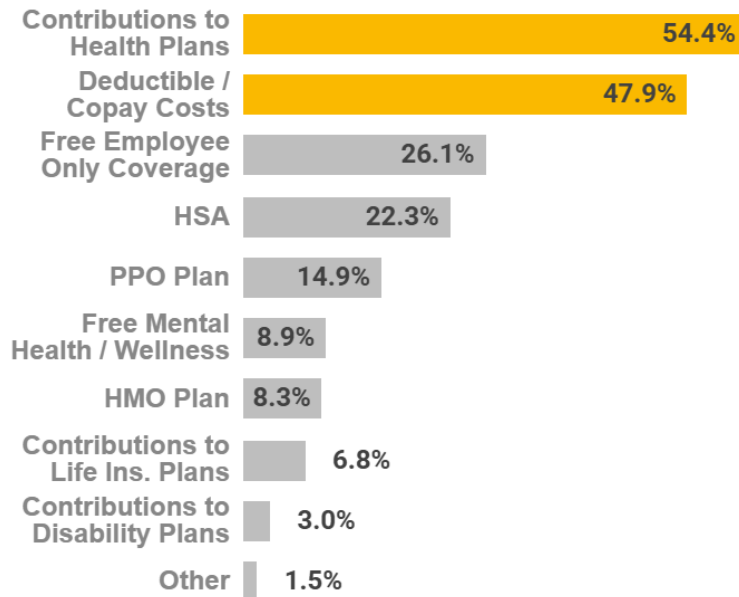
Transportation offered 7 non-mandatory busing choices for participants to prioritize. While clear choices were selected as priorities, there was also variability in response. **Open-ended comments showed that transportation guidelines and funding structures are complex and hard to understand.** Many spoke about reduction in alignment with program participation.

In addition to questions for all participants, **staff taking the survey were able to respond to an additional set of questions about their pay and benefits.** We asked these questions to gain a better understanding of employee experience in budgeting. Respondents emphasized the importance of district contributions to health plans and deductibles, mitigating growing health care costs. When asked about stipends, special education was the highest priority to protect followed by bilingual education. Both choices support additional certification requirements and hard to staff areas.



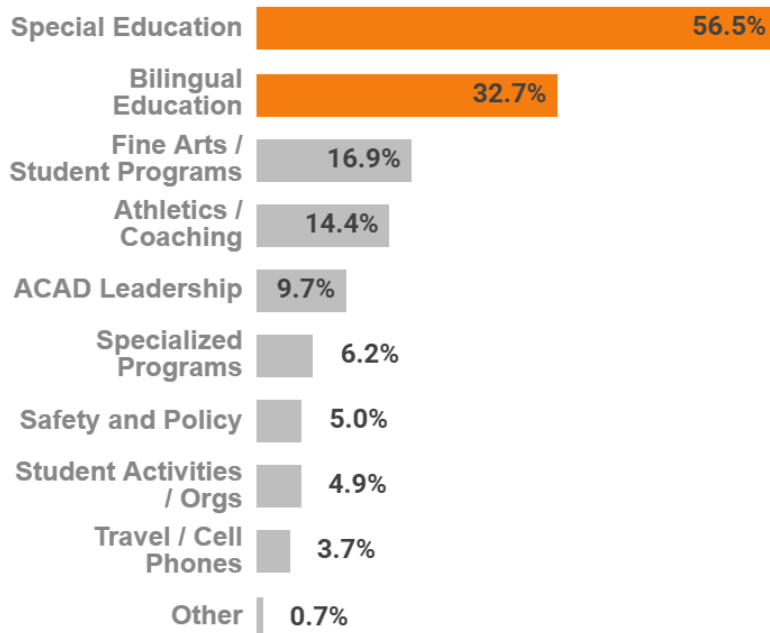
Staff selected contributions to health plans (54.4%) and employee deductibles/copays (47.9%) as items of priority within employee benefits.

Staff were given additional questions on benefits and stipends. Respondents (n=2,605) selected up to two priority items to protect. Numbers show how often an item was selected over the total.



Stipends for special education (56.5%) and bilingual teachers (32.7%) were highly valued as areas to protect.

Staff respondents (n=3,358) selected up to two priority items to protect. Numbers show how often an item was selected over the total.





What are top themes found in survey comments?

Alongside priority questions, our content experts have been reviewing open-ended survey questions for each budget area. Questions ask around cost-saving ideas as well as concepts that might minimize disruption. Comments often expand on findings from the priority information. **Across all budget areas the following themes have emerged as common desires and understandings.**

- **REDUCE** central office and/or administrative costs before cutting into campus or classroom operations.
- **EXAMINE** complexity in staffing reduction including types, locations, ratios, instructional minutes, calendars/schedules, and stipends.
- **REVIEW** outside contracts, additive programs, and software subscriptions. Look for duplication of services and connection to outcomes.
- **INCREASE** transparency on spending, staffing, and how it all links to outcomes.
- **STANDARDIZE** current/future processes to identify and evaluate funds to ensure alignment.
- **SEEK** new revenue through partnerships, leases, grants, and asset use.
- **UTILIZE** community for continued support, in schools and in generation of creative plans.

Content experts are still reading and annotating findings for additional detail. **Leaders are using this information to create the current 2026-27 budget.** The survey data has a longer lifespan as well. Information will be useful in long-term fiscal planning as well as connection points to academic vision and other strategic efforts.

Where can I find additional information?

Stay involved and informed on the budget process [here](#). The below timeline was first shared on [April 30](#) and includes plans to share a comprehensive summary of potential cuts along with line-item budget details on Tuesday, May 5. Look for features from budget survey participation incorporated into budget adoption and future planning. Your input and collaboration is heard and continues to shape Austin ISD in positive ways.

