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**SUBJECT:** FY 2024 BUDGET SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

**DATE:** MAY 5, 2023

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This report provides results from the district's FY 2024 Budget Survey. The Department of Finance sought feedback from both internal and external stakeholders to inform the budget planning process, as aligned with Priority Goal 4: Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Stewardship, Performance Objective C: Maintain a transparent budget process that supports the district's strategic plan. Responses to the survey were collected from March 31 to April 30, 2023, with feedback from Board Members, the Superintendent's Senate, Staff, and the Community.

Aggregate survey results are presented below. The following figure denotes respondents' satisfaction with the transparency of the budget. The table presents a comprehensive list of the written responses to the choice "Other," which was the second most endorsed response to the survey question on reducing the budget.

## **Key Points**

### **A. Demographics, Motivation for Responding, and Best Sources for News**

- Survey responses were received from 1,040 respondents.
  - 75% are parents or guardians of school-aged children within the district.
  - 82% of respondents are in their mid-20s to mid-50s.
  - 63% of respondents are long-time residents of Chatham County:
    - 42% have lived in Chatham County for more than 20 years
    - 21% have lived in Chatham County for 11 to 20 years.
- 61% of respondents indicated their primary motivation for participating in the survey is the desire to create a high-quality school system.
- 55% of the respondents focused on the millage rate and budget details, while 43% focused on the budget details.

- Respondents indicated their best sources for budget or school-related news are:
  - District website (49%)
  - Board of Education meetings (35%)
  - School Newsletter (34%)
  - School website (33%)
  - Word of mouth (25%)

**B. Respondents' preference for balancing local tax rates with district priorities & services**

**(3 questions assigned a value of 1, 3, and 5)**

The average score was 3.6, indicating a preference to maintain school programs and services while minimizing tax increases.)

- 1 Reduce Millage Rate Regardless of Impact on School Programs & Services
- 3 Minimize Tax Increases While Maintaining School Programs & Services to the Greatest Extent Possible
- 5 Maintain School Programs & Services Regardless of the Impact on Millage Rate

Note: Compared to Board Members and the Professional Senate, the community survey responses show a slightly greater preference for maintaining programs and services, regardless of the impact on the millage rate.

**C. Respondents' areas of importance for the schools and community  
(Top 5 ranked by Essential and Somewhat Important)**

1. School Security/Safety (92% Essential & 7% Somewhat Important)
2. Counselors/Social Workers (77% Essential & 19% Somewhat Important)
3. Up-to-Date Technology (76% Essential & 22% Somewhat Important)
4. College-level class offerings at the high school level (71% Essential & 23% Somewhat Important)
5. Paraprofessionals (68% Essential & 25% Somewhat Important)

**D. Respondents' top budget priority**

- 71% of respondents selected "expand programs and opportunities to improve student achievement and wellness"
- 24% of respondents selected "preserve existing programs and opportunities to the greatest extent possible," and 5% preferred to "reduce programs or opportunities as needed to match available funds."

**E. Respondent's top reading on grade-level initiatives  
(Ranked by 1 to 4, with 1 being most important)**

1. Additional EIP/REP Teachers
2. Additional Resources for Direct Reading Instruction
3. Additional PL for Instructional Staff (including Paraprofessionals)
4. Provide additional resources for parents to support them in working with their children at home

**F. Respondents' suggestions on reducing teacher and school staff burnout  
(Top 3 selected)**

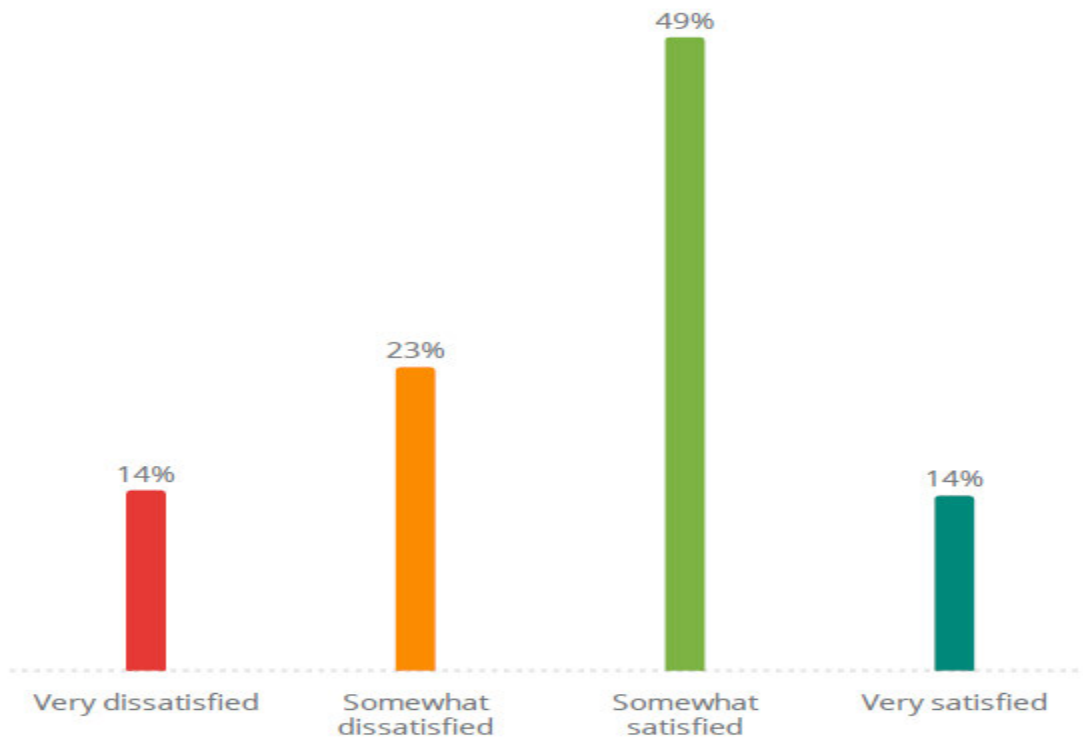
1. Allocate resources to implement meaningful staff wellness programs (36%)
2. Fund additional teachers to reduce class size (20%)
3. Utilize and invest in technology to support instruction (14%)

**G. Respondents' recommendation if forced to reduce the budget  
(Top 3 selected)**

*Note: 25% provided no response*

1. Phase out extracurricular and after-school programs (16%)
2. Other (13%; responses provided in Table 1)
3. Reduce support staff personnel (13%)

**Figure 1. Respondent's satisfaction with budget transparency**



**Table 1. "Other" Category Responses: If SCCPSS is forced to reduce the budget**

**Other (please specify):**

An analysis of salaries & the actual work being performed should be looked at.
Again during covid and through the use of SCELA we can reduce the number of teachers since everything being used is online.
All areas are VERY important
All important
All of these are essential in creating a highly functional and successful school system
All of these categories are essential and intricate to our students overall success. The mega school in Garden City was and is not needed! Considering the cost and safety concerns for the younger students being significantly close to the older students, the risk overshadows the reward. The money utilized could've and should've been allocated to resources that'll improve education and staff/support!
All the meaningless positions at the district that are created for friends.
All these are essential. Take away from those receiving bonuses outside of teachers.
BOA Positions that are not essential
Board office personnel salary. 300,000 is insane. You need all of these above to run smoothly. Every single body in the building counts.
None of above
Reduce administrative
Reduce Central Office staff/salaries to reallocate funds to school sites
Raise mileage rate
all are needed
Reduce SROs as they are not present in the schools as they should be
reduce a few high price jobs downtown
phase out all of the testing programs, teachers can assess and more teachers would be very helpful
There's not an area that can stand to be reduced when it involves education
Reduce positions such as academic coaches or deputy superintendents.
every area is needed
These are all needed and important.
Reduce District Staff
Reduce bloat in the central office - more money should be used to increase teacher salary to retain excellent teachers
Reduce administration costs. We are too heavy on Bull St.
None
Reduce the number of people working in the board offices with 6 figure salaries and annual 10%+ salary increases
Reduce bureaucratic /administrative positions. Reduce redundant and excessive computer-based learning programs. Reduce spending on standardized testing and supporting programs.
Reduce top tiers of leadership.

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Have more K-12 schools
NONE
Reduce fluff from Bull St... spending for things such as PR banquets, photo ops, superintendent parking space signage, etc.
reduce the school board pay
Stop paying the higher echelon ridiculously high wages. Forensic accounting would be great as well. Find out where and what the money is being used for.
Find ways to reduce without hurting anyone , find additional donations first
Reduce the size of the Superintendents Cabinet and reduce superintendent pay
REDUCE THE SUPERINTENDENTS Salary. Period full stop.
Reduce the pay of the superintendent and pass it along to teachers
Sell 208 Bull Street
Reduce central office staff
JUST GET ALL STUDENTS TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOLS
First, this is an unfair question because what is the point of cutting quality? The issue is transparency on exactly how funds are utilized. SCCPSS has too much waste in expenditures, but moreover misappropriation of funds and possibly outright corruption when it comes to funds. Busses aren't available and if/when they are the drivers are poorly qualified. Why are you paying them to do badly? Additionally it is not an ideal job in that drivers are required to be available full time hours but only paid as part time drivers, thus the job isn't appealing. Teachers are overworked and underpaid. Why aren't there enough supplies in classrooms? Stop letting parents away with not supporting their children and not providing the structure necessary for the children to model productive citizen behavior. In the classroom, stop teaching the test and start teaching what young people actually need to thrive in society. Bring back in school driver's education, wood shop, home-ec. These programs actually taught young people how to function in life. Make the arts a fundamental part of the education process, studies show children exposed to the arts, do better in sciences.
Reduce administration and higher level staff, there seems to be a lot of middle management. More teachers, paraprofessionals, social workers, and counselors are needed to work directly with students are needed.
We all of these things
Reducing services will not help our children.have athletics sponsor their events. While athletics provides an outlet after school.. the focus should should be improving in school behavior and services
Donot reduce anything .. only improve
All these are essential. Take away from those receiving bonuses outside of teachers.
Stop spending money on programs that don't work only to find a new shiny program 3 years later that doesn't work. Teachers are just getting into the groove with Eureka math and I hear that money was wasted for a new program. Why do that to teacher and the kids? You spend money on the programs, then trainers to teach said program, then pay subs to cover teachers for new training. Such a waste. But it's not just with Eureka, this happens all over the school system. Mismanagement of funds are bleeding this district. And your questions on this survey are so vague because you don't honestly want the answers parents and teachers would give you. One of your sections asks about the importance of counseling... it's HUGE, but counselor don't get to go to the class anymore to help. They only deal with

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<p>fighters, attendance meetings, etc. We don't need more counselors, we need the ones at school already able to do their jobs instead of being a 3rd admin.</p>
<p>It's illegal to reduce transportation</p>
<p>None, all of these options are essential to maintaining a successful environment for the schools. The education system in this county is already lacking severely and is not setting up our children for success</p>
<p>None is acceptable</p>
<p>Reduce staff at 208 Bull Street</p>
<p>some staff is repetitive and really does not know what they are linking when they are "sharing" info on fb, seems like a waste</p>
<p>Reduce or eliminate staff jobs at district level.</p>
<p>BOA Positions that are not essential</p>
<p>Reduce the amount of highly paid positions outside the school setting.</p>
<p>Look into how much money Boe employees are getting paid. Start looking into Board positions before cutting school activities or programs</p>
<p>Reduce executives. It is said this is not on the list.</p>
<p>Reduce none of these</p>
<p>None at all. Nothing needs to be reduced, the focus should be on trying to increase these programs.</p>
<p>Reduce academic coaches</p>
<p>Property taxes increase incrementally as values increase, how are taxes used responsibly if the current rates are not sufficient to grow a successful education program?</p>
<p>Reduce the pay and cut bonuses for BOE employees and reallocate the funds to truly necessary programs and pay increases such as bus drivers and teachers.</p>
<p>Reduce positions that are not useful to student growth in the classroom.</p>
<p>You shouldn't be reducing any of the above and should focus on cutting the bloat in the downtown offices. To suggest cutting teacher, counselor, para, sped positions or to suggest FURTHER reduction of transportation is ridiculous.</p>
<p>Reduce district level positions. Reduced the size of the Superintendent's Cabinet. All other options if not District reductions will have DIRECT NEGATIVE impacts on educators, children, families, and economic development.</p>
<p>Reduce upper management positions at 208 Bull Street</p>
<p>Reduce over head down town at bull street</p>
<p>Reduce pay of staff who do not work directly with the students</p>
<p>Introduce pay by performance model, use European school model like Denmark, Netherlands for ideas, seek Grant support and/or donations</p>
<p>Reduce the board employees. They're not in the classrooms or schools making a difference anyways!</p>
<p>Nothing</p>
<p>None of the above- all these areas are important to run a public school system. Reduce cost of superintendent. Salary.</p>
<p>Make cuts at the district level to prioritize teachers, support staff, and admin at the school level.</p>
<p>None, if we want a high quality school system then we have to be willing to fund it</p>

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<p>All of these categories are essential and intricate to our students overall success. The mega school in Garden City was and is not needed! Considering the cost and safety concerns for the younger students being significantly close to the older students, the risk overshadows the reward. The money utilized could've and should've been allocated to resources that'll improve education and staff/support!</p>
<p>Reduce salary of superintendent.</p>
<p>This is poor leadership. You know exactly where things could be cut administratively that would not impact teachers or students. This is just trying to drum up outrage amongst parents to get a tax increase. Trim the fat at central office. Not a single thing in this list needs to be reduced. Shame on you for even putting this out to the public.</p>
<p>Reduce the excessive number of people who don't educate! The majority of people who could be cut are not in the schools teaching and are not the administrators at the schools. The heaviest and least productive persons work at the district office on Bull Street and in other offices! And thankfully the current superintendent is on the way out and she can take all of her sorority sisters in high positions with her!</p>
<p>Stop Stealing the School money</p>
<p>reduce the number of district staff</p>
<p>Our Students Deserve All Things On This List</p>
<p>All important</p>
<p>Since no one thing is ideal for reducing or phasing out, the only acceptable approach would be to skim a little off everywhere.</p>
<p>None of the above. Figure out a way to increase financial resources</p>
<p>Fewer superfluous district-level positions and so-called instructional coaches.</p>
<p>Reduce staff in Board offices. TOO many people at the top with 6 digit salaries!</p>
<p>All of these are essential in creating a highly functional and successful school system</p>
<p>None of the above</p>
<p>better facility management and more energy efficient options to reduce energy bill, such as all LED lights, motion sensor switches in the bathrooms/classrooms, etc.</p>
<p>Overpaying staff at the board of education that don't have degrees but get paid large amounts of money. Trips for staff including foreign countries like current one has done with principals.</p>
<p>Pay administrators less obviously</p>
<p>Reduce school hours or days</p>
<p>Reducing any of these is not OK</p>
<p>These are all seemingly crucial - certainly there are other categories that could be looked at for reduction</p>
<p>Reduce woke surveys from liberal America that cost 90k</p>
<p>Reduce the number of downtown executives. We should only have a superintendent and an associate superintendent. There are a number of people at that level who are just taking a paycheck with no real job ( )</p>
<p>None</p>
<p>streamline administration</p>
<p>More textbooks less Chromebooks</p>
<p>Cut pay/staffing at district. Just don't see that people that don't have daily contact with classrooms and children should make enough in their salary to pay multiple classroom</p>



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teachers or several paras. I'm not saying they shouldn't make competitive wages but there is a lot of fat that could be trimmed the higher you go.d
Board office personnel salary. 300,000 is insane. You need all of these above to run smoothly. Every single body in the building counts.
Decrease the triple digit salaries at 208 Bull Street; reduce high paying positions and have them return to the classroom
Reduce middle management at 208
Reduce administrative staff downtown. All these other options are essential
Salaries downtown
All the meaningless positions at the district that are created for friends.
Reduce the pay/bonuses of board of education employees and replace it's learning with google classroom
Reduce salaries of the high-up administration employees. A super making over \$300K is absurd. I can only imagine the salaries of others high up are overpaid as well.
Can't select one because all balances out the school function
All areas are VERY important
Reduce staff at main BOE, too many upper level positions with high salaries.
Reduce number of unnecessary staff at the upper level that is Employees making more than \$100,000.00 a year
The adopted reading program is not being used at all elementary schools. Go back and reassess the reading curriculum and select a sound Orton Gillingham based reading program the works such as Preventing Academic Failure PAF and then be sure that each school grade K- 5 is using it. Then you will see reading progress
Reduce 208 Bull Street administrative staff as currently very top heavy. Take those funds and place in state of the art professional learning programs such as LETRS for early literacy. <a href="https://www.lexialearning.com/letrs">https://www.lexialearning.com/letrs</a>
School resources are currently lower than what's needed. There's no way we can reduce resources further.
Reduce Bull St office personnel, emphasize teachers
Reduce positions at central office not in school buildings
District Level Staff
None of the above
Reduce the amount of Chiefs and Assoc. Superintendents OR reduce there salaries to align with other districts
Reduce annual income for board members
reduce the number of administrators and pay classroom teachers more
Reduce redundant and ineffective administrative staff
Top level administration
Reduce bureaucracy
Reduce salaries of personnel downtown.
reduce administration
None