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On Behalf Of:

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School Participatory Budgeting (SPB) is an innovative and highly malleable civic learning process designed to build student agency, collaboration, and critical thinking skills while creating equitable opportunities for students to participate in authentic, impactful decision-making opportunities within their school communities and prepare for civic life. SPB derives from the municipal Participatory Budgeting (PB) model, which started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989 and is now implemented in various levels of government, nonprofits, and community organizations worldwide (Dias et al., 2019). The SPB process is typically organized in five steps: 1) students propose ideas to improve the school community; 2) students transform these ideas into viable proposals by conducting research and considering impacts, costs, and feasibility; 3) students campaign for and deliberate on viable proposals by discussing pros and cons; 4) full student body votes on proposals to select winning projects; and 5) winning projects are funded and implemented, with the cycle repeated the following year. The SPB process focuses on creating a space for students to advocate for a school community project through collective voice while increasing civic and leadership skills and building relationships.

The first SPB process in the U.S. was implemented in 2013 in Bioscience High School in the Phoenix Union High School District (PXU), one of the state's largest and most diverse school districts. This first process was piloted in partnership with Arizona State University's Participatory Governance Initiative (ASU PGI), the Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA), and the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP). This initiative aimed to directly involve student voice and choice in allocating a portion of the school budget. Since then, SPB has been expanding, and Arizona has been at the forefront of SPB experimentation, innovation, and expansion (Bartlett & Schugurensky 2024, 2021, 2023; Brown, 2018; Cohen et al. 2015; Gibbs, 2021; Johnson, 2023). These pioneering efforts have spurred growth in SPB across Arizona, having now been adopted and implemented in over 70 schools statewide. SPB has also been growing in different parts of the world in the last decade, from Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico to the United States to Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Scotland, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, and Georgia, to Romania, and Zambia and Kenya among others (Bartlett & Schugurensky 2024).

Several studies have shown SPB to empower students to lead as community problem-solvers and acquire skills and attitudes needed for lifelong active civic engagement. Research on civic learning outcomes found students to have increased knowledge of the history and tenets of democracy and public budgets, heightened skills in project management, research, and leadership, improved deliberative and

decision-making competencies, and strengthened political efficacy (Abrantes et al., 2017; Bartlett & Schugurensky, 2023; Brennan, 2016; Cohen et al., 2015; Crum & Faydash, 2018; Duncikaite, 2019; Gibbs et al., 2021; Johnson, 2023; Todd, 2022). The effects on school climate have been observed in increased levels of trust, peaceful resolution of conflicts, demonstrations of empathy and a common good mindset, and stronger relationships between members of the school community (Albornoz-Manyoma et al., 2020; Brown, 2018; Kupriyanov, 2023). School improvements stemming from the SPB process include changes in educators' perceptions of young people, heightened leadership competencies among teachers, and tangible improvements to a school's campus (Bartlett et al., 2020; Cheerakathil, 2023; Parrish, 2023). Additionally, during Vote Days in high schools, after students cast their ballot, partnerships with community organizations or county recorder offices to conduct voter registration for eligible and interested high school students to be prepared to participate in their upcoming local, state, and federal elections.