

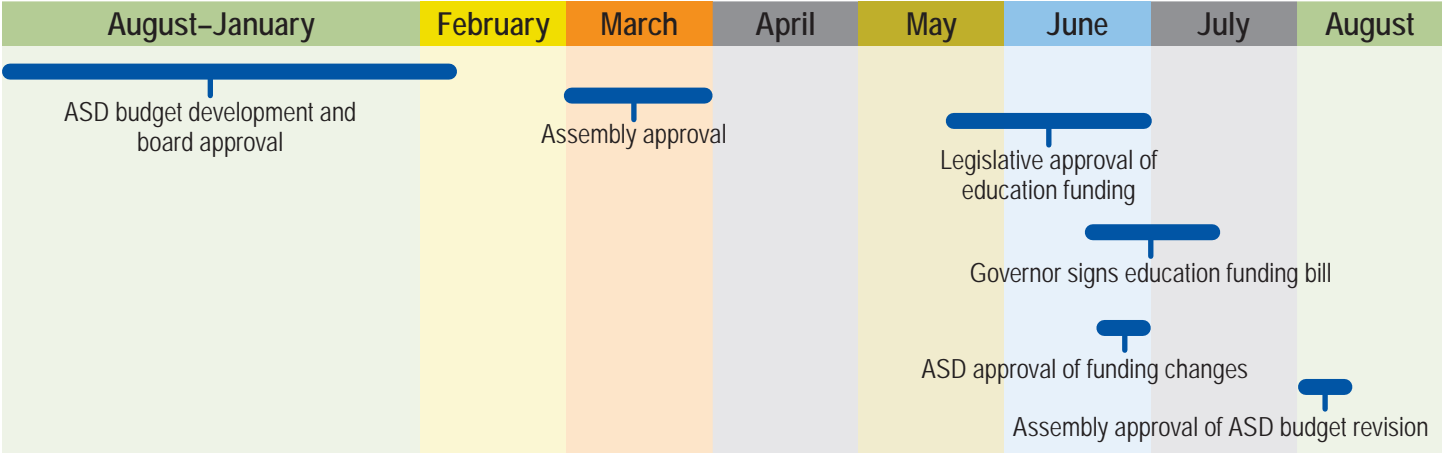


Education Funding

The Anchorage School District’s budget process timeline requires the district to forward a balanced budget to the Anchorage Assembly in March, long before state education funding for the year has been considered. This, tied with inflation, requires budget cuts every year. Once the budget is approved by the assembly, the district then waits until the legislature and the governor complete their work to determine the level of education funding. If the state provides for increased costs, the district then revises its budget and reinstates as many effective programs and positions as possible. The district must then return to the local assembly for authority to spend the funds. This inefficient and time-consuming process directly affects our students, employees and community. Knowing even just one year in advance what the funding will be allows our district and others to make thoughtful, planned decisions. Education needs predictable, sufficient funding.

Budget Process

This chart represents the 2011-12 ASD budget approval process.



Crying wolf

This budget cycle undermines the credibility of the school board, superintendent and district. It leaves the community with the perception that the district is merely “crying wolf” in order to receive additional funding. For school employees, it creates a lack of focus because people start worrying about their jobs and well-being rather than their objectives of increasing student achievement. All of this unnecessarily hurts the community. Late notice of annual one-time increases is not a suitable way to sustain continued improvement and retain the district’s outstanding and effective workforce. The district is very appreciative of the continued support to fund the state retirement system liability and past education funding. Additional efforts must be made for school districts statewide to continue to provide an appropriate education to students. ASD urges the legislature to take action and develop a long-term solution that includes forward-funding of education.

Forward funding education

By forward funding education, as was done for three years following the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force recommendations, districts can plan effectively for their students and needed programs. It’s imperative that the state find a way to consistently fund K-12 education at least one year in advance, if not more. Early funding is vital to enable all districts to make the multi-year changes required to improve student achievement, continue to increase the graduation rate, and meet the changing needs of today’s students.

ASD budget cuts on the back

Budget cuts

Program eliminations include:

- Summer school – elementary, middle and high
- Middle school career guides
- Student support program supervisors
- West High and Romig Middle schools master plan facilitators

Programs reductions include:

- Special Education/Related Services
- English Language Learner services
- Middle school in-school suspension teachers
- Non-school based clerical positions
- Educational Technology and Assessment and Evaluation positions
- Purchasing/Warehouse positions
- Custodial positions
- One-time cut to bandwidth, computer equipment refresh, utility costs

Class size adjustments:

- Grades 3, 7-12: 0.5-1.5 student increase

Value-Based Budgeting

Value-Based Budgeting evaluates district programs and activities in relation to each other to determine which ones contribute most to student achievement. This budget process also links funding to program performance outputs, supporting those programs deemed most effective. Value-Based Budgeting is designed to:

- Align spending with the district's vision, core values and beliefs
- Compare cost effectiveness of programs and activities
- Provide accountability to the public

Even with strong stewardship of existing resources, education funding has not kept pace with inflation and is not sufficient to fight the financial squeeze of reduced annual funding. Districts are suffering from under-funded mandates, competitive employment packages, rising operating costs, and changing population patterns. ASD is working diligently to provide the most effective and efficient programs while maintaining a balanced budget. A plan, that includes continued funds for the state retirement system liability and multi-year education funding would allow districts statewide to better set and manage long-term education goals.

ASD 2012–13 budget snapshot

This year, ASD's budget includes more than \$20 million in painful cuts to programs and staff that we know are making a positive difference in our schools.

\$562.1 million – estimated revenues

- *\$9.6 million* – decrease in state funding
- *\$3.4 million* – increase in local funding

– **\$591.6 million** – continued operating costs

- *\$15 million* – contractual obligations
- *\$3.4 million* – added priorities

(\$29.5 million) – difference

+ **\$7.0 million** – use of ASD fund balance

(\$22.5 million) – budget gap

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