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School Participatory Budgeting in Arizona: Examining partnerships and lessons from three case studies

*Connecting Communities and Classroom: Practical Considerations for
Civically-Engaged Practitioners and Scholars*

Tara Bartlett, PhD, Arizona State University

October 5, 2024



The Participatory Governance Initiative (PGI) at Arizona State University is devoted to undertaking teaching, capacity building, research, and dissemination activities aimed at the study and promotion of participatory democracy initiatives, particularly in local governments and educational institutions.



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Mission

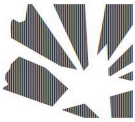
The Center for the Future of Arizona
brings Arizonans together to build a
stronger and brighter future for our state.



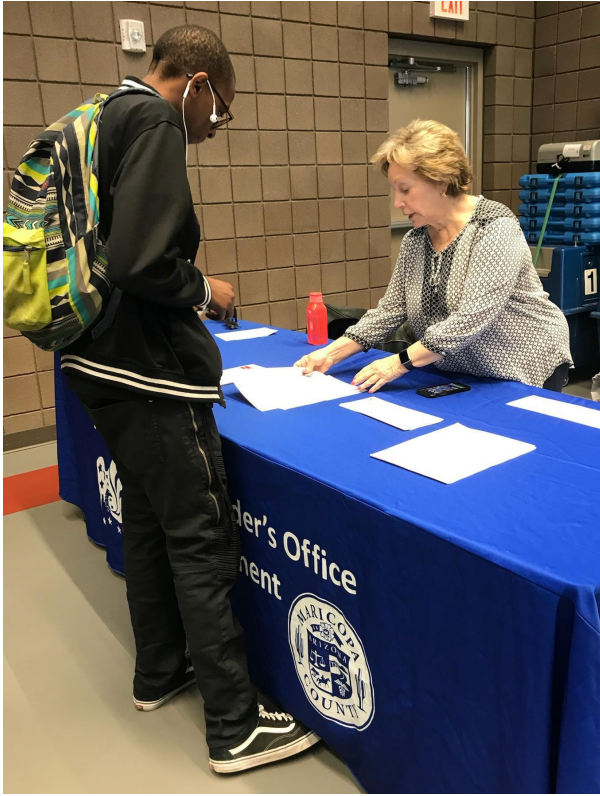
What might a student

say feel learn

if given the opportunity to authentically engage
in a school's decision-making processes and
budget allocations?



School Participatory Budgeting



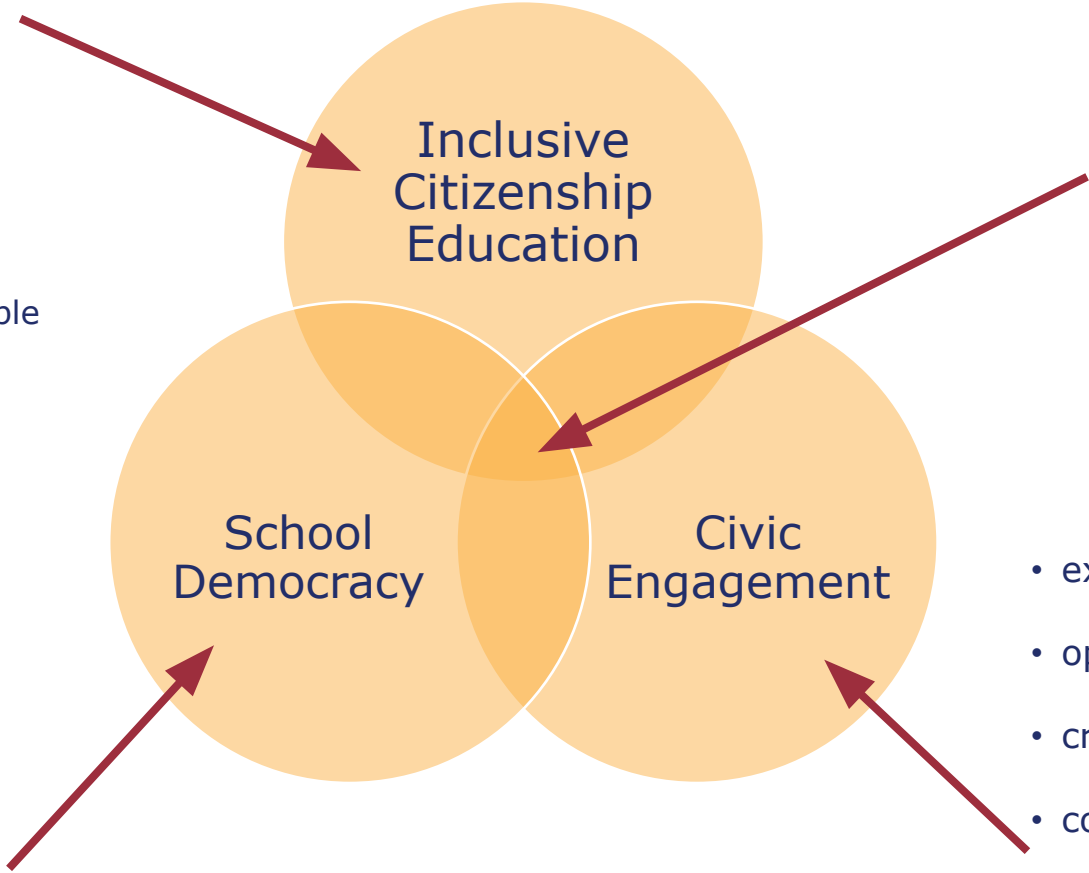
Inclusive Citizenship Education and Civic Engagement for School Democracy

- increasing **equitable opportunities for participation** in the learning process
- **reducing exclusionary dynamics**, providing opportunities for equal involvement of all school community stakeholders (especially students)
- fostering **open spaces and accommodations** for diverse and equitable needs

(Hawkins and James, 2018; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018; Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2021; UNESCO, 2015, 2021)

- lived and **participatory experiences** in democratic communities
- schools can function as **laboratories of democracy** through a variety of civic learning and engagement opportunities
- school community stakeholders should **have a say in decisions that affect them**

(Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970; Gutmann, 1987; Hahn, 1998; Levinson, 2014)



School Participatory Budgeting

- experiential and project-based learning
- open classroom climate and dialogue
- critical reflection and problem-solving
- collaboration and active participation
- KASP (knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices)

(Crick, 1998; Jamieson et al., 2011; Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017)



Municipal and Community Participatory Budgeting



- **government transparency and accountability**

(Avritzer, 2002; Cabannes, 2004a; Holdo, 2016)

- **prioritization of social well-being and issues of justice**

(Russell & Jovanovic, 2020; Sakala & Vigne, 2019; Touchton et al., 2017; Touchton & Wampler, 2014)

- **more equitable allocation and redistribution of public resources**

(Baiocchi, 2001; de Sousa Santos, 1998; No, 2018; Wu & Wang, 2012)

- **increased levels of political efficacy, civic capacities, social networks and community engagement**

(Cabannes, 2004a, 2004b; Curtis, 2020; Johnson et al., 2021; Lerner & Schugurensky, 2007; Lerner & Secondo, 2012; Nysten, 2002; Schugurensky, 2002, 2006)

How SPB Works



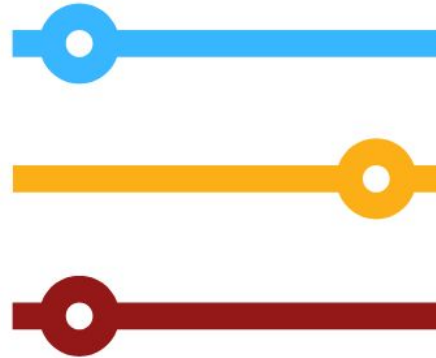
Issue Identification



Idea Collection



Proposal Development



Campaign and Deliberation



Vote



1. Students identify problems in their school community that have directly impacted them or someone they know.

2. Students ideate project ideas that, if funded and implemented, would solve one of the identified school community problems.

3. Students create project proposals with budget, timeline, and impact details for each project idea that aligns with school/district parameters.

4. Students campaign for and deliberate on the different project proposals in classrooms, after school events, etc.

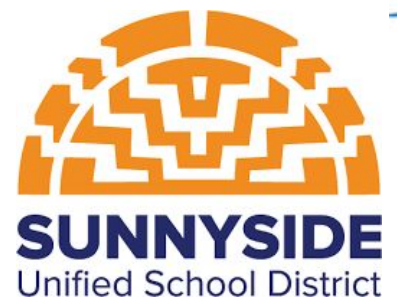
5. Students vote for which project proposal(s) they would like to see funded and implemented in their school community.

SPB in AZ Features

- Schools → Municipal
- Incremental Diffusement
- Community Partnerships

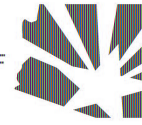


School & District Partners



Case Study 1: Inclusive SPB

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Partners: ASU PGI, CFA, MPS, ADDPC, MCRO

Budget: \$2,500

Funding Sources: Principal discretionary funds

Setting: Carson Jr. High social studies classrooms & extracurricular club

Key Stakeholders:

- 7th-8th grade students (1/3+ steering committee students with disabilities)
- Educator sponsors (ELA & SpEd teachers, Title I Specialist)
- Families

Winning Projects: School therapy dog (followed by district-wide roll-out)



Case Study 2: School Safety PB

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Partners: ASU PGI, ASU SIRC, PXU, PBP

Budget: \$1.2 million

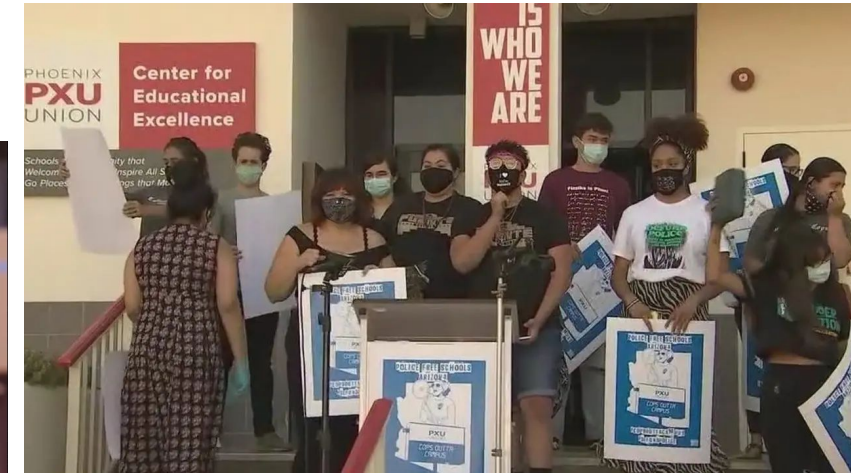
Funding Sources: Reallocation of funding from school resource officers

Setting: Phoenix Union High School district-wide convenings (virtual/in-person), stakeholder committees, governing board meetings

Key Stakeholders:

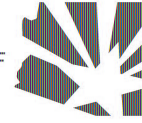
- High school students, families, staff
- Governing board members & district leaders

Winning Projects: varied school safety projects across 22 campuses, more school counselors/social workers and campus security officers



Case Study 3: SPB and SEL

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Partners: ASU PGI, CFA, RSD

Budget: \$2000 per school

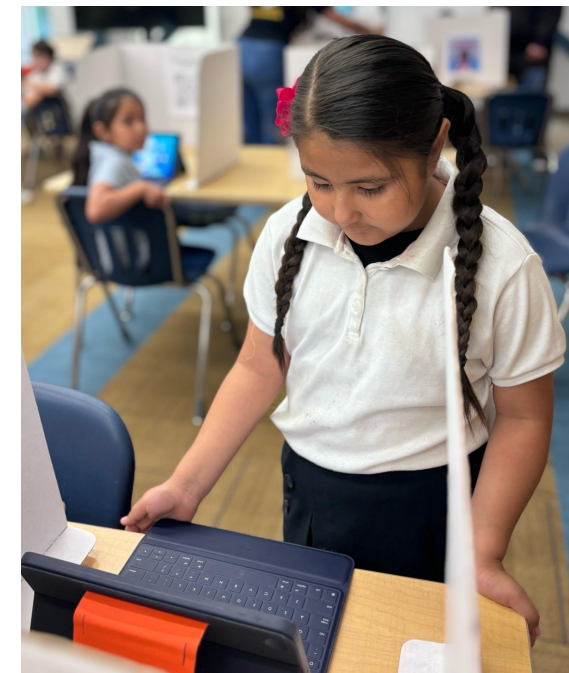
Funding Sources: ESSER funds

Setting: Nine K-8 Title I schools; classrooms and clubs

Key Stakeholders:

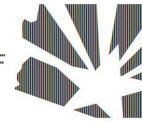
- K-8 students
- Superintendent, Executive Director of Leadership and Learning & Executive Assistant
- Educator sponsors (principals, K-8 teachers)

Winning Projects: bathroom mirrors, outdoor equipment, game room, book and snack vending machines, outdoor seating & shade, school garden



SPB Evaluation and Outcomes

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Fosters Positive Impacts on School Climate and Community

psychological empowerment, trust, communication, empathy, future-thinking

(Albornoz-Manyoma et al., 2020; Brown, 2018; Kupriyanov, 2023)

Builds Civic Competencies, Skills, & Dispositions

public speaking, leadership, deliberative skills, critical thinking and decision-making, knowledge of public institutions and budgets, electoral trust and knowledge

(Abrantes et al., 2017; Bartlett & Schugurensky, 2023a, 2023b; Brennan, 2016; Cohen et al., 2015; Crum & Faydash, 2018; Duncikaite, 2019; Gibbs et al., 2021; Johnson, 2023; Todd, 2022)

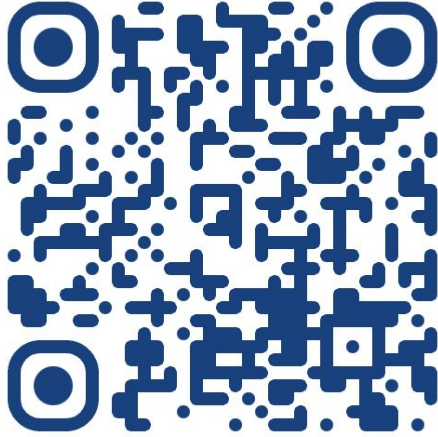
Improves Infrastructure and Environment

projects focused on broad, inclusive impact, sustainability, well-being and health

(Bartlett et al., 2020; Cheerakathil, 2023; Parrish, 2023)



Resources



Case Study #1
**Inclusive civic education and
school democracy through
participatory budgeting
(2023)**



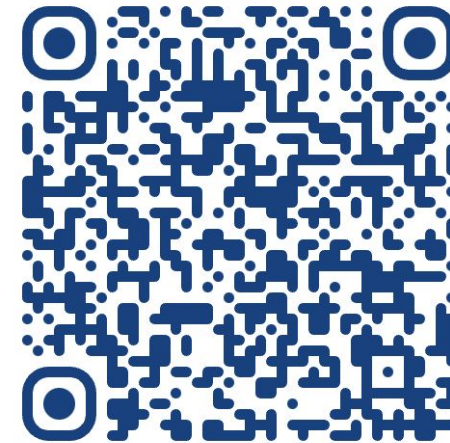
Case Study #2
**Participatory Processes to
Address Wicked Problems in
K12 Schools: A Case of
Reimagining School Safety
(2023)**



Case Study #3
**Roosevelt School District
2022-23 Evaluation
Report (2022-2023)**



SPB 40 Frequently Asked Questions

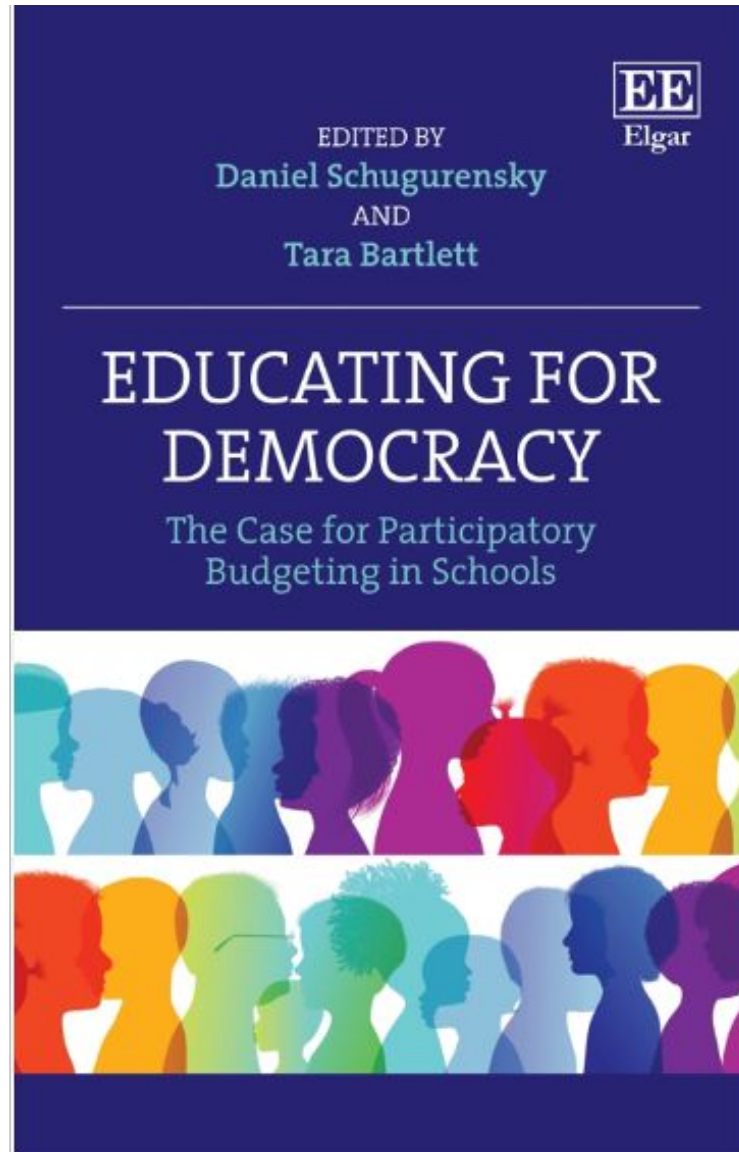


SPB Evaluation Toolkit

Resources



**Educating for
Democracy: The Case
for Participatory
Budgeting in Schools
(2024)**



Chapters from processes in:

Czech Republic

Italy

Mexico

Poland

Portugal

Serbia

Spain

United Kingdom

United States

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Thank You

Q & A

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