



## Rebuilding Stronger

### Meeting 4 Small Groups

Committee Responses

Public Responses

IPS Answers to Questions or Requests for Information

Examine the **financial data** (see slides 19-51) and respond to the following questions.

*What do you notice about the data?*

- Funding becoming more equal and less equitable
- IPS is NOT receiving the resources it needs – schools, students and families are not receiving what they need
- Need to keep up with inflation – state funds versus cost for SPED
- School choice is expensive with facilities and transportation
- District will go bankrupt without intervention and/or referendum
- **Transparency – the data is well presented and not hard to follow**
- **Property tax supports funding AND discriminates against black and brown students and/or poverty-stricken areas**
- **They are only statistics - not all schools have the same needs**
- **The questionnaires have lots of different questions that us as parents see**

*What does the data make you wonder?*

- What other funding streams are available to urban districts?
- If we know small schools cost more per pupil to operate, why do they remain open?
- What is the actual dollar # per pupil for an equitable and excellent district – that adequately supports general education, special education, English language learners, etc.?
- Will we be able to not only sustain the district but also produce an equitable system?
- If there is an increase in choice schools – will that impact the appetite/luster for them?
- Are we comfortable with the likely attrition of some of our current choice school families, in the event that we expand choice options and further diversify the population?
- Is there an opportunity to ensure choice enrollment demographics depict a more equitable picture of the actual demand?
- Is there an opportunity to increase Innovation restarts to propel an increase in enrollment?
- How will assessed valuation (av) increases for residential and commercial impact in referendum dollars?
- When will IPS go after another referendum?
- **When coming to funding in data – will we hold businesses around the schools of middle- and lower-class areas accountable and responsible to helping students, schools, and communities?**
- **Can we replicate what more successful schools are doing?**

- There is no access to transportation due to funding – how can we work with the city to find less dangerous ways?

*What additional information or questions do you have after reviewing the data?*

- Is there a process or what is the process to determine which schools should be closed? Academic performance? Facility rating? Enrollment? What is the timeline?
  - IPS does not have a “formula” that might inform a school closing. We know that any recommendations to close schools will be extremely difficult and painful for impacted communities. We are taking all of the factors you name above into consideration, as well the demography study predictions, census and population growth data, and demand for programs and schools into consideration. Even then, there is no perfect combination of factors that indicates a school should close. We’re considering all of the options in pursuit of what will provide improved experiences for students.
  - Currently we plan to have recommendations for the content of the Rebuilding Stronger Plan in Fall 2022. If we do propose school closures, that is when they will be announced.
- What is the overall impact if increasing the number of students – how beneficial – what is the cost versus the reward? Where is the sweet spot?
  - State funding is given on a dollar- per-pupil basis. Property tax funding is received the same no matter how many students are served. Increasing the number of students who will benefit from the system brings additional state revenue that can offset additional cost of serving the student once they are at the classroom/school.
  - However, those additional students do not bring additional property tax dollars, and so consideration will have to be given on how to serve more students with the same tax base. That may result in changes to services.
  - Indiana districts, especially in Marion County, are more and more reliant on operating referendums for school operations at current student/staffing levels.
  - The sweet spot is an amount of operating referendum proceeds that meets community needs while also not causing undue local property tax burden .
- Is there a cap on increasing teacher salaries?
  - There is not a legal cap to what we can pay a teacher. It’s a function of the total number of teachers a district employs alongside the total funds available for teacher compensation.
- In reference to the guiding principles – how is “student need” determined?
  - In the Guiding Principles themselves, we don’t mention student need. In general, we do define student need in our SBA (student based allocation) formula as well as in how we apply supports for schools based on poverty status, EL status, special education identification and performance gaps within or across schools. If we’re misunderstanding your question, please email Jamie VanDeWalle at [vandewallej@myips.org](mailto:vandewallej@myips.org).
- Slide 44 – bullet 4 – regarding central office spending remaining low relative to national peers – are the national peers referenced similar in enrollment, infrastructure, and school type?
  - Some of the districts referenced to have some degree of choice, charter partnerships, etc. But, none have quite the unique landscape as IPS.

- o There are nine other districts in our “comparison group.” Here is how we compare with them across a variety of metrics:
    - **Enrollment:** IPS - 32,093, Peer Median - 43,840
    - **% ELL:** IPS - 21%, Peer Median - 13%
    - **% Students w/disabilities:** IPS - 17%, Peer Median - 15%
    - **% Students in poverty:** IPS - 67%, Peer Median - 81%
- How are teacher salaries compared to other local districts?
  - o Over the last few years, IPS has increased teacher pay so that we are paying more than surrounding districts in most cases.
- How is IPS addressing opening access and preparing students for choice schools from middle- and lower-class status? Black and brown students?
  - o This is a question/trend that arose from our Enrollment Data session two weeks ago as well. IPS is exploring ways to more equitably increase access, all while being mindful of student needs during any potential transition or entry into a new program.
- How are ELL students being qualified? There are many students that need the extra support and don't fall under that – so less money.
  - o English-Learner students are identified when a home language survey is completed, and they are then administered an exam called the ACCESS screener. If a student scores below a level 5 they are considered an ENL student. All students who score below a 5 do generate additional funding to support their learning needs.