Community Budget Survey

1. Please select one of the following choices to complete the statement "I am responding to this survey as a...		Response Percent	Response Count
Rochester Community Schools Student		1.5%	47
Rochester Community Schools Parent		**62.1%**	**1,915**
Rochester Community Schools Employee		22.4%	690
Community Member		14.0%	432
	answered question		**3,084**
	skipped question		**8**

2. Athletics Program The $2.5 million Athletics Program is funded by a combination of gate and tournament ticket receipts, fees collected from parents for student participation, and a subsidy from the school district's general fund. The sources of funding break down as follows: Local Revenue (Gate Receipts, etc.) - $225,000 = 10% Pay to Participate Fees charged to parents - $759,000 = 30% Subsidy from District's General Fund - $1,516,000 = 60% Total Funding - $2,500,000 = 100% The parent fee structure currently in place has a regular rate and a reduced rate for those students who qualify for reduced lunch prices. Students who qualify for free lunch are not charged. Fees are charged per student, per sport. The Annual Maximum Participation Fee per athlete is: High School Regular Rate - $320 includes participation in 3 or more sports. Middle School Regular Rate - $230 includes participation in up to 4 sports. Student Participation Rate: Middle Schools: Approximately 700 students (21%) play at least one sport. High Schools: Approximately 1200 students (24%) play at least one sport. The $1.5 million subsidy from the district's general fund equates to approximately 1.0% of the entire general fund. Please respond to the following statement: A full and comprehensive athletic program is an important component of a well-rounded educational system for students.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	**53.8%**	**1,653**
Somewhat Agree	27.0%	829
Neutral	7.2%	222
Somewhat Disagree	7.1%	219
Strongly Disagree	4.8%	148
	answered question	**3,071**
	skipped question	**21**

3. Athletics Funding Please use the information in Question 2 regarding the three sources of funding to select one of the options listed below for future funding of athletics.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Continue the current funding mix of 10% Gate Receipts, 30% Participation Fees and 60% General Fund Subsidy	32.7%	995
Partially increase Participation Fees to reduce the General Fund Subsidy.	**47.8%**	**1,455**
Increase the Participation Fees to the extent necessary to eliminate the General Fund Subsidy in its entirety.	19.6%	597
	answered question	**3,047**
	skipped question	**45**

4. Extra Curricular Clubs Currently extra curricular clubs are offered at all levels of the school district. Examples of clubs include safety patrol, Science Olympiad,and Key Club. The $162,000 student clubs program is funded by a combination of student participation fees and a subsidy from the district's general fund. The sources of funding break down as follows: Pay to Participate fees charged to parents - $98,000 = 60% Subsidy from District's General Fund - $64,000 = 40% The fee structure currently in place is: Elementary = $0 Middle School = $20 for unlimited High School = $50 for unlimited Please respond to the following statement: A full and comprehensive offering of student clubs is an important component of a well-rounded educational system for students.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	**55.5%**	**1,704**
Somewhat Agree	28.3%	868
Neutral	7.8%	239
Somewhat Disagree	4.4%	135
Strongly Disagree	4.0%	122
	answered question	**3,068**
	skipped question	**24**

5. Club Funding Please use the information in Question 4 regarding the funding of clubs to select one of the options listed below for future funding of clubs.			
		Response Percent	**Response Count**
Continue the current funding mix of 60% Participation fees and 40% General Fund Subsidy		31.7%	968
Partially increase Participation fees to reduce the General Fund Subsidy		**45.9%**	**1,400**
Increase the Participation fees to the extent necessary to eliminate the General Fund Subsidy in its entirety		22.4%	682
	answered question		**3,050**
	skipped question		**42**

6. Transportation School districts are NOT required by law to transport general education children. The school district is obligated to provide for the transportation of a special education student if this is determined to be a necessary service to carry out the student's IEP. Transportation eligibility is limited to those students who live at least 1.0 mile from their elementary school and at least 1.5 miles from their middle school and high school. Due to the reductions in school funding, many districts are evaluating whether to reduce or eliminate general education pupil transportation services. Statistics prove that the safest vehicle for students to travel to and from school in on a daily basis is a school bus. Reducing or eliminating pupil transportation will put an additional burden on parents and will have an effect on traffic patterns. Participation Rate for Eligible Students: Elementary = 2,916 students in grades K-5 (46%) Middle School = 1,561 students in grades 6-8 (44%) High School = 1,725 students in grades 9-12 (35%) The annual cost of student transportation is as follows: General Education = $3.5 million Special Education = $3 million School bus replacements = $500,000 to $1 million Approximate annual cost savings from eliminating general education bus transportation are as follows: Grades 9-12 ONLY = $200,000 Grades 6-12 = $1,000,000 Grades K-12 = $3,500,000 School bus replacements would also be reduced, generating additional savings. Regarding General Education Pupil Transportation Services, please select one of the following options

		Response Percent	Response Count
No reduction to current General Education Transportation Service		**48.6%**	**1,480**
Eliminate ONLY grades 9-12 General Education High School Pupil Transportation		24.5%	746
Eliminate ONLY grades 6-12 General Education (Middle & High School) Pupil Transportation		11.4%	348
Eliminate ALL grades K-12 General Education Pupil Transportation		15.4%	470
	answered question		**3,044**
	skipped question		**48**

7. Core Instruction - Class Size Class sizes in RCS could be increased to achieve savings because larger classes require fewer teaching positions. Although actual class size may vary, the following are average class sizes by grade levels: Grades K-2: 22 Students Grades 3-5: 26 Students Grades 6-8: 29 Students Grades 9-12: 31 Students Possible Impact of Raising Class Size • Increasing the class average by one student will result in many classes that will be higher than the class size averages listed above. • Some smaller enrollment classes would not be offered at the high schools • Middle school students may be scheduled into an alternative elective course or courses not selected so that students may fill open seats • 1-to-1 teacher/student contact time would be reduced Increasing average class size by 1 reduces approximately 22 teaching positions. Total Estimated Savings (Salary & Benefits) = $1,430,000 In your opinion, in order to reduce the forecasted budget deficit, should class sizes be increased and if so, to what extent? If class sizes are increased, this will result in a reduction in the number of teaching positions.

	Maintain at current level	Increase by 1 pupil	Increase by 2 pupils	Increase by 3 pupils	Response Count
Grades K-2	**64.5% (1,939)**	17.9% (538)	8.4% (254)	9.1% (275)	3,006
Grades 3-5	**61.6% (1,847)**	22.4% (671)	9.1% (273)	6.9% (208)	2,999
Grades 6-8	**55.4% (1,664)**	26.4% (793)	11.1% (333)	7.1% (213)	3,003
Grades 9-12	**58.5% (1,753)**	20.9% (627)	9.8% (295)	10.7% (322)	2,997
				answered question	**3,047**
				skipped question	**45**

8. Instructional Support - Learning Consultants (Certified Teachers) Major Functions/Contributions to Student Achievement • Assist in building level curriculum & testing assessment and coordination • Provides direct instructional support (lessons) for at risk students • Assist with State and Federal Mandates for compliance • Consults with teachers for student academic progress • Conducts academic evaluations of special education students • Develops and plans programs for at risk students Approx. Number of Learning Consultants = 20 Total Budgeted (Salary & Benefits) = $2.4 million Regarding Learning Consultants, in order to reduce the forecasted budget deficit, in your opinion what level of reduction in these positions is warranted?

	Response Percent	Response Count
No reduction to these positions	**46.0%**	**1,394**
Reduce by 25%	28.3%	858
Reduce by 50%	14.6%	442
Reduce by 75%	3.1%	95
Reduce by 100% - elimination	8.0%	242
	answered question	**3,031**
	skipped question	**61**

9. Instructional Support - Learning Consultant Para Educators Major Functions/Contributions to Student Achievement • Provides support and intervention for at risk students in the areas of literacy and math • Works directly with students in small groups three to five times per week, • Administers individual student assessments • Impacts 30 – 40 K-5 students / 80 – 100 grades 6-12 students at each school • Provides homework help Approx. Number of LC Para Educator positions = 16 Total Budgeted (Salary & Benefits) - $512,000 Regarding Learning Consultant Para Educators, in order to reduce the forecasted budget deficit, in your opinion what level of reduction in these positions is warranted?

	Response Percent	Response Count
No reduction in these positions	**55.5%**	**1,687**
25% reduction	24.3%	739
50% reduction	10.4%	316
75% reduction	2.6%	78
100% reduction / elimination	7.1%	217
	answered question	**3,037**
	skipped question	**55**

10. Instructional Support - Media Specialists (Certified Teacher) Major Functions/ Contributions to Student Achievement •Provide instruction to students on information literacy, research, technology integration, literacy •Assist in identifying methods to incorporate the use of technology into the learning process •Coordinate/Deliver building based technology professional development on information literacy, research, technology integration •Manage print and electronic resources for buildings Approx. Number of Media Specialist positions = 20.4 Total Budgeted (Salary & Benefits) - $2.2 million Regarding Media Specialists, in order to reduce the forecasted budget deficit, in your opinion what level of reduction in these positions is warranted?

	Response Percent	Response Count
No reduction in these positions	**54.5%**	**1,656**
25% reduction	27.8%	846
50% reduction	17.7%	537
	answered question	**3,039**
	skipped question	**53**

11. Instructional Support - Media Assistants Major Functions/ Contributions to Student Achievement •Support instruction to students on information literacy, research, technology integration, literacy •Process and manage print collection (books) •Provide entry level technology (hardware/software) support to all building staff •Provide clerical support for the operation of the building media center Approx. Number of Media Assistant positions = 16 Total Budgeted (Salary & Benefits) - $625,000 Regarding Media Assistants, in order to reduce the forecasted budget deficit, in your opinion what level of reduction in these positions is warranted?

	Response Percent	Response Count
No reduction in these positions	**38.3%**	**1,162**
25% reduction	33.1%	1,006
50% reduction	15.6%	475
75% reduction	3.0%	90
100% reduction	10.0%	304
	answered question	**3,037**
	skipped question	**55**

12. Instructional Support - Guidance Counselors Major Functions/Contributions to Student Achievement • Monitor student and school schedules/scheduling • Assists with academic problem solving • Interprets assessments with students; MEAP, EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, • Assists students with graduation, post-graduate admissions/scholarships, future career choices • Develops individual Educational Development Plans (EDPs) • Provides Personal/Social/Emotional support as it affects academic success Approx. Number of Guidance Counselor positions = 29 Total Budgeted (Salary & Benefits) - $3.1 million Contractual obligations sets a maximum limit of students a counselor may work with at 350. Currently, this limits the reduction to 25% or elimination of the program completely. Regarding Guidance Counselors, in order to reduce the forecasted budget deficit, in your opinion what level of reduction in these positions is warranted?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No reduction in these positions		**42.7%**	**1,299**
10% reduction		29.3%	892
25% reduction		22.3%	678
Eliminate counselors within the district		5.7%	173
	answered question		**3,042**
	skipped question		**50**

13. District Administrative Costs Over the last two years, a number of administrative positions have been eliminated from our district due to budget reductions. A recent analysis of district administrative costs in Oakland County revealed that Rochester Community Schools General Administration and School Administration costs are the second lowest percentage in the county among the 28 school districts. General Administration Countywide Average Percentage = 1.24% of General Fund Expenditure Rochester Community Schools = 0.64% of General Fund Expenditure School Administration Countywide Average Percentage = 5.79% of General Fund Expenditure Rochester Community Schools = 4.54% of General Fund Expenditure Please give your opinion regarding the level of administrative costs in Rochester Community Schools.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Further reductions should be made.		**54.8%**	**1,655**
No further reductions should be made.		43.3%	1,307
Eliminated Administrative positions should be reinstated.		1.9%	58
		answered question	**3,020**
		skipped question	**72**

14. Outsourcing of Non-Instructional Support Services Prior to the 2009-10 school year, the school district collected bids from prospective vendor companies to potentially outsource the non-instructional support service functions of custodial and transportation. The school district bargained concurrently with the representative labor union and a mutual agreement was reached that included major concessions by this employee group, saving the school district an estimated $2 million per year in operating costs. Currently the school district is exploring the possibility of outsourcing the Food Service Program, by going out for bids from prospective vendors. Concurrently, the school district is engaged in collective bargaining with the Food Service labor union. A decision on this issue is expected in May 2010. There is pending State of Michigan Legislation House Bill No. 5594 that would require public school districts to outsource at least one of the non-instructional support service functions of food service, custodial, or pupil transportation no later than 7/1/12; and to routinely seek competitive bids for these services in the future as existing labor contracts expire. Please respond to the following statement: The school district should continue to explore options regarding the potential outsourcing of non-instructional services, as those opportunities arise in the future.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	**32.3%**	**983**
Somewhat Agree	22.0%	671
Neutral	10.5%	321
Somewhat Disagree	10.1%	309
Strongly Disagree	25.0%	763
	answered question	**3,047**
	skipped question	**45**

15. SINKING FUND Since 1997, the electorate of the Rochester Community Schools has passed three bond issues (1997, 2000, 2004) totaling nearly $300 million that have vastly improved school district facilities and technological capabilities for students. With taxable values estimated to decline by over -10% for the coming year, there is no opportunity to pass another bond issue without an increase in the millage rate. Since these three bond issues, the needs of the district have changed from previously requiring major renovations and new construction to now needing to adequately maintain and keep in good repair existing school facilities in order to protect the investment made by RCS taxpayers. A Sinking Fund Millage would provide a lump sum pay as you go approach each year for the school district to make major repairs and replacements to buildings and sites such as roof replacement projects, asphalt surface reconstruction projects, HVAC components, and technology infrastructure. The purchase of equipment, such as school buses and personal computers, is not an allowable Sinking Fund expenditure. Unlike a bond issue that requires a 20-year or more payback period there is no interest expense charged to taxpayers. The school district currently estimates that a sinking fund of approximately $1.5 million per year for the next ten years would help to protect and preserve the substantial investment by RCS taxpayers in school district facilities. A Sinking Fund Ballot Question asking approval for 0.5 mills for the next ten years would provide funding for these major repairs and maintenance projects that are not currently budgeted for in the General Fund. This would be a tax increase of approximately $63/year on a $250,000 home. How likely would you be to support a new Sinking Fund Ballot Question in order to fund major repair and replacement projects for school district facilities?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Likely	**41.7%**	**1,262**
Somewhat Likely	27.6%	834
Neutral	15.3%	464
Somewhat Opposed	7.1%	216
Strongly Opposed	8.2%	248
	answered question	**3,024**
	skipped question	**68**

16. Schools of Choice - Admitting Non-residents RCS has the option of becoming a "Schools of Choice" district and allowing limited enrollment of non-resident students. The district would receive the lesser of the per pupil foundation allowance revenue between RCS and the school district of residence. RCS has the right to limit the number of openings, by school and by grade level. For example, the school district has the right to open only 100 slots in the entire district, in any one grade level or combination of grade levels, in any one school or combination of schools. Some districts, such as Troy, have elected to go to a limited K-2 enrollment, based only on available openings so that classrooms do not become overcrowded. In this model, these students will conceivably have had the benefit of the school district curriculum for several years prior to participating in state standardized testing. If a school district has more applicants than openings available, all students must have an equal opportunity to secure a spot. This is usually accomplished via a lottery selection process. There may be no illegal discrimination in the student selection process. Additional important points regarding this program are: 1. Non-resident children are not eligible for district-provided pupil transportation services 2. Non-resident families do not pay taxes on the bonded debt of the school district (currently 5.18 mills) for the 3 bond issues that have been approved by the RCS electorate since 1997 (totaling approximately $300 million) to improve and modernize school district facilities. 3. If the school district has "empty seats" in some classrooms and could fill those seats with non-resident children and still be within our target class sizes, the additional revenue from those students comes with almost no additional expenditures, thus benefitting all the students in the classroom by having more money for educational programs 4. Once students are admitted they may continue through graduation. 5. The district can expect to collect about $8,000 per pupil on average. Estimated recurring additional revenue based on this assumption might therefore be: Number of New students 10 = $80,000 50 = $400,000 100 = $800,000 200 = $1.6 million 300 = $2.4 million Please indicate your opinion regarding School of Choice by selecting one of the following options.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Allow non-resident students in ALL grades K-12 to enroll, based on availability of open slots within the RCS class size guidelines		35.6%	1,083
Allow non-resident students ONLY in grades K-8 to enroll, based on availability of open slots within the RCS class size guidelines		6.1%	184
Allow non-resident students ONLY in grades K-2 to enroll, based on availability of open slots within the RCS class size guidelines		12.0%	364
Continue current practice of NOT ALLOWING non-resident students to enroll (with the exception of the current practice of admitting children of employees)		**46.3%**	**1,407**
	answered question		**3,038**
	skipped question		**54**

17. Marketing Rochester Community Schools to Attract New Families The school district does not currently participate in the "Schools of Choice" program that allows non-resident pupils to enroll in RCS. Therefore the only way for the school district to gain more pupils is to have new families move into the school district boundaries and enroll their children, or to gain RCS resident students who may attend private schools or schools in other communities. A marketing plan requires a target audience to be identified. The school district is facing a significant budgetary challenge heading into next year so the decision to invest money into new marketing efforts comes at a risk of insufficient returns on investment. New students generate approximately $8,300 per pupil annually. It may be difficult to ascertain whether the investment in additional advertising ended up being the factor that actually tipped the decision for a family to enroll their children here, especially in light of a poor economy. The district could mount an advertising and informational campaign to attract resident students who do not currently attend school in RCS – namely those students who attend private schools and/or attend schools outside this community. Ads may include direct mailings, radio ads, signage or television infomercials such as the one seen on Channel 7 Best School in Michigan. Please indicate your opinion regarding establishing a marketing budget to attract new families to Rochester Community Schools by selecting one of the following options:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Support $100,000 budget (requires 12 new students to break even)		8.7%	262
Support $75,000 budget (requires 9 new students to break even)		3.7%	111
Support $50,000 budget (requires 6 new students to break even)		12.1%	366
Support $25,000 budget (requires 3 new students to break even)		14.3%	430
Do not support allocating additional funds to market the school district		**61.3%**	**1,848**
	answered question		**3,017**
	skipped question		**75**

18. Advertising in Schools The school district currently has a policy that allows only a limited presence of advertising by third parties in the school district. It is generally limited to temporary signage in the football stadiums. Allowing more advertising would increase the revenue potential to the district. Would you support an increased presence of permanent vendor advertising within the school district in areas such as school bus interiors, and common areas such as cafeterias, hallways, gymnasiums and stadiums?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Support		27.4%	834
Somewhat Support		**33.2%**	**1,012**
Neutral		12.0%	364
Somewhat Oppose		10.8%	329
Strongly Oppose		16.6%	505
		answered question	**3,044**
		skipped question	**48**

19. Fund Balance The district's Fund Balance is its savings account, and provides stability from a cash flow perspective as well as serves as an emergency source that can be drawn from. Many independent agencies such as the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) and the Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO) recommend that school districts maintain a fund balance that amounts to 10-15% of annual budgeted expenditures. School districts are required to pass a balanced budget every year, however they are allowed to partially or fully rely on their fund balance in order to comply with this law. For example, for the 2009-10 school year, RCS is budgeting $4.2 million more in expenditures than in revenues, but is allowed to do so because it has an adequate fund balance in order to make up this shortfall. The forecasted fund balance at the end of this school year, on June 30, 2010 is $24.9 million which represents 15.62% of the budgeted annual expenditures of $159.4 million. As of 6/30/09, the average level of fund balance for all 28 school districts in Oakland County was slightly over 11%. Some school districts have no fund balance whatsoever, and some school districts have 25% or more. Money in the Fund Balance can only be spent one time. It does not have a recurring, stable revenue source in order to replenish it. For this reason, many financial experts advise against spending the fund balance on recurring costs such as employee wages and benefits. There is a timing difference between the State fiscal year and the school district fiscal year that creates a situation where there is no monthly State Aid revenue that school districts collect between August 20 and October 19. The presence of an adequate fund balance allows the district to avoid having to temporarily borrow money each year in order to meet payroll while State Aid payments are suspended. School districts that fall below a threshold of approximately 13% are required to take out short term loans with associated legal fees and interest expense. The school district fund balance was reduced by $4.6 million for 2008-09 and is expected to be reduced by another $4.2 million for 2009-10. This pattern is of concern because it is unsustainable. In your opinion, what level of Fund Balance should be the target for the school district to maintain? This directly affects the level of potential budget cuts that must be made heading into any given school year.

	Response Percent	Response Count
15% or more = $24.6 million	11.7%	330
12-15% = $19.7 to $24.6 million	**31.9%**	**899**
9-11% = $14.8 to $18.1 million	29.5%	830
6-8% = $9.8 to $13.1 million	12.5%	352
5% or less = $8.2 million or less	14.4%	404
	answered question	**2,815**
	skipped question	**277**

20. Pending Legislation Related to Increasing School Aid Fund Revenues The Governor's Executive Budget Recommendation for 2011 includeds a recommendation to reduce the current sales tax from 6% to 5.5 while expanding the base for sales taxable transaction to services which are currently not taxed such as haircuts, sporting events tickets, legal and accounting services etc. Do you support this proposal?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Support	16.3%	490
Somewhat Support	22.2%	667
Neutral	19.0%	569
Somewhat Oppose	15.9%	476
Stongly Oppose	**26.6%**	**799**
	answered question	**3,001**
	skipped question	**91**

21. Pending Legislation Related to Collective Bargaining and Public School Employee Compensation – Employee Health Care Costs State of Michigan pending legislation Senate Bill No. 1046 would require all public employees (including those in public education) to contribute at least 20% toward the cost of their employee health care insurance premiums (or at least 15% if there is an employee "wellness" component to the employer-provided health care plans). Do you support this pending legislation?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Support	**41.0%**	**1,237**
Somewhat Support	14.4%	434
Neutral	7.3%	221
Somewhat Oppose	7.6%	228
Strongly Oppose	29.8%	898
	answered question	**3,018**
	skipped question	**74**

22. Pending Legislation Related to Collective Bargaining and Public School Employee Compensation – Gross Wages State of Michigan Senate Joint Resolution U would require all public employees (including those in public education) to sustain an across the board pay cut of -5%, and for that reduced rate of pay to be in effect for three consecutive years. Do you support this pending legislation?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Support	21.3%	644
Somewhat Support	15.9%	482
Neutral	11.2%	340
Somewhat Oppose	12.3%	372
Strongly Oppose	**39.2%**	**1,186**
	answered question	**3,024**
	skipped question	**68**

23. Pending Legislation Related to Collective Bargaining and Public School Employee Compensation – Gross Wages Senate Bill 1148 limits teachers' salaries to the current salary of a legislator, which is $71,685 plus $10,000 expense allowance. Do you support this pending legislation?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Support	23.5%	713
Somewhat Support	17.8%	539
Neutral	13.8%	419
Somewhat Oppose	11.0%	333
Strongly Oppose	**33.9%**	**1,028**
	answered question	**3,032**
	skipped question	**60**

24. Pending Legislation Related to Superintendent's Compensation Senate Bill 1148 limits the salaries of superintendents (local school districts and intermediate school districts) to no more than 75% of the Governor's current salary, which is $159,300 plus a $54,000 expense allowance Do you support this legislation?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Support	**48.8%**	**1,485**
Somewhat Support	19.9%	605
Neutral	14.2%	431
Somewhat Oppose	7.5%	228
Strongly Oppose	9.6%	293
	answered question	**3,042**
	skipped question	**50**