

4 Ways Schools Can Combat Budget Cuts

A variety of factors can cause budget cuts in districts and schools, but whatever the reason - the negative impact is always on teachers and students. So when funding is low, what can your district do to make sure instruction isn't interrupted, educators still have what they need to teach, and students are still equipped to excel?

1 Implement new curriculum strategies

Make use of Open Education Resources (OER) in place of traditional curriculum and textbooks. Not only will you save on often high procurement costs, but using a variety of OER as opposed to one textbook introduces students to a greater range of subjects and formats to suit their interests and progression.

[Wake County Schools \(NC\)](#) decided to use [free OER materials](#), which reduced their costs, and also allowed them to reallocate funds for professional development for teachers.

2 Develop new learning models

Develop and implement new learning models which make room for personalized learning that allows districts to do more with less. This could include anything from online courses to [learning playlists](#) to [station rotation](#), and relies on better use of data to allow for differentiation.

The [Enlarged City School District of Middletown](#) serves more than 75 percent minorities and most students get free or reduced-price lunch. Using personalized learning and other innovative teaching and learning strategies, they have been able to increase their [high school graduation rate to 85 percent up from 52 percent back in 2004](#).

3 Take advantage of the cloud

Choose cloud storage providers in place of maintaining costly data centers to not only decrease costs, but propel your organization into the new technological climate. [We can learn a lot from corporations](#) regarding how to use the cloud to increase collaboration and efficiency.

Though K-12 districts have been slow to consider moving their infrastructure to the cloud, "[cloud computing is becoming the new school system IT imperative](#)," and the need to reduce costs is as good a reason as any to make the move to the cloud.

4 Eradicate ineffective programs

Cutting programs and departments - often in the arts and humanities - is the usual response to a loss of funding, but is far from an ideal solution. Rather than dropping such programs, which are proven to benefit students, assess your district's existing structures and programs to find underperforming initiatives. Develop a strategy for changing or stopping ineffective programs, and lower spend or re-invest the funds into successful programs instead.

[Eminence Independent Schools](#) were failing with only 39 percent of students meeting statewide benchmarks when the superintendent decided to take action and completely redesign the district. This included partnering with a neighboring university, creating their own standards to enhance the state adopted Common Core standards and even installing Wi-Fi on school buses. In just two years, benchmarks improved to 100 percent.



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