



Maintaining student achievement during tough economic times

An environmental scan of school district budget
options under consideration for FY 2011-12

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Introduction

This report is designed to provide an overview of the actions that school districts are taking to balance their budgets in a year that reflects difficult economic times combined with the loss of federal ARRA funds. While it does not contain information on every school district in southwestern Pennsylvania, it provides a list of 33 choices made or considered by 80 districts in 11 counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland. The districts vary widely in size and demographic characteristics and are relatively representative of the region as a whole.

The serious budget discussions that are occurring this year are the result of a combination of factors: namely, the significant reductions in education funding that will be coming to them from the state as well as a reduction in expected revenue in some areas that can be attributed to the poor economic conditions. Consequently, those districts that receive significant funding from the

state and also serve communities that experienced an economic decline in the past year will be worse off than most. Funding to K-12 education was increased in the version of the budget passed by the House in May 2011, which may indicate to districts that they will not have to implement all of the measures that they had originally thought might be necessary to achieve a balanced budget.

Limitations of this report

No interviews were conducted for the purpose of this report; all information was taken from various news sources as well as occasionally from the reports posted by the school districts themselves. Therefore, there are limitations as to its accuracy. However, the purpose of this report is to paint a picture of the types of situations that schools are facing, rather than to meticulously document each change that districts make.

In addition, because most of the sources of this report were news sources, school districts that are not suffering and are managing quite well may be underrepresented. Anecdotally, both Chartiers Valley in Allegheny County and Peters Township in Washington County are expecting to move forward with significant projects. Chartiers Valley is planning to spend over \$1 million to purchase laptops for all high school students, while Peters Township will be upgrading a practice athletic field for the benefit of their softball, baseball, soccer and lacrosse teams at a cost of \$2.5 million.¹

Summary of cost-saving/revenue-generating options

The following cost-saving or revenue-generating options were items proposed by school directors in the past several months during budget discussions for the upcoming year. A list of 80 school districts in the region and the specific options they considered is provided as an appendix.

Some of the most popular options were tax increases, the elimination of teaching/staff positions, the use of reserve funds, and wage concessions for teachers and/or administrators.¹

Cost-saving options

- **Staff reductions:** These include layoffs of teachers and support personnel as well as the elimination of positions through attrition.²
- **Voluntary salary freezes:** These include voluntary concessions made by teachers as well as administrative personnel. In the case of at least one district, concessions were not

¹ A list of 500 cost reduction strategies for school districts was prepared by the PA Association of School Business Officials and is available at <http://www.pasboerc.org>.

² It is important to note that in many of the cases where more controversial cost-cutting measures were taken (school closures, teacher furloughs), population decline was cited as a major reason for the decision. In fact, because legislation to allow teacher furloughs for economic reasons has not yet passed, population decline has to be a primary reason for the elimination of positions through furloughs.

voluntary but were part of a new teachers' contract that was negotiated this year. Districts that are locked into contracts currently can only ask their unions to take concessions; some have had success with this, whereas others have not.³

- **Reduction in staff hours:** This includes changing positions from full- to part-time.
- **Early retirement incentives:** It appears that districts attempted to cut as many positions through attrition as they possibly could, with some offering early retirement incentives as a way to increase the number of retirees (or to replace teachers earning high salaries with new teachers who would earn less).
- **School district consolidation**
- **Building closure:** This includes school buildings as well as other buildings on school property.
- **Freeze/reduction in discretionary spending:** This includes but is not limited to field trips, trips for staff development, and other miscellaneous purchases.
- **Four day workweek:** This mostly relates to building operation during summer hours but one district was considering four day operations year-round.
- **Program cuts:** These include cuts to sports/extracurricular activities, as well as cuts to classroom programming
- **Shared services**
- **Transportation modifications:** This includes route modifications and consolidations. One district is considering having high school students rely on public transportation
- **Return to half-day kindergarten**
- **Deferred purchases:** These include technology and software purchases, as well as general supplies, uniforms and other athletic equipment, maintenance equipment, and textbooks/curricula.
- **Privatization:** This includes the privatization of transportation services, which was extremely controversial in at least one district (Penn Hills).

Revenue-generating options

- **Tax increases:** At least 33 of the 80 districts in this report are considering or have already adopted a tax increase for the coming year. Many have received or are awaiting permission from the PA Department of Education to raise taxes above the limit set for their districts through Act 1 of 2006.
- **Use of reserve funds:** Many districts will be using significant portions of their reserve funds to balance their budgets this year.
- **Expand alternative programming:** While some districts are looking to save money by reducing payments to other schools or the IU for services, others are looking to earn money by expanding programs like cyber schools or alternative education, for which they can charge tuition.

³ A complete list of districts that have implemented wage freezes for all or part of their staff is listed on the website of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, www.psba.org.

- **Corporate sponsorship:** This includes sponsorship not only of buildings/fields, but also of events and programs.
- **Alumni or community fundraising**
- **Property-related revenue options:** These include allowing Marcellus Shale drilling, which several districts are considering, as well as the decision by the Ligonier Valley School District to explore selling the timber on the now-closed Laurel Valley High School campus.
- **“Pay to play” sports and activities:** Schools are considering implementing fees of up to \$100 per student per activity.
- **Increased prices (for meals, sporting events, parking)**

Consolidations and closures

Generally, when legislation proposing the consolidation of the state’s 501 school districts is discussed or introduced, it is met with resistance from district staff, administration, and residents. However, in the wake of this budget crisis, a number of districts are voluntarily giving consolidation a second look. Most notable is the effort underway in Fayette County, where State Representative Tim Mahoney provided the six districts in the county with a \$100,000 grant to pay for a study to determine if cost savings could be achieved through the creation of one county-wide district.ⁱⁱ (More information about this initiative is provided in the Connellsville Area case study below.) Ambridge in Beaver County and Carlynton in Allegheny County have both indicated an interest in consolidating with one or more neighbors, although this is not the first time that residents in Carlynton’s service area have heard discussions regarding a merger.

The discussion around school closures has, for the most part, been more negative than positive in the past few months. Eight school districts featured in this study indicated that they would likely pursue the closure of a school in response to budget pressures. This diverse group includes: Duquesne City, Highlands, Conemaugh Valley, Conellsville Area, Central Greene, Ellwood City, Conemaugh Township, and Hempfield. School closure seems to be a less divisive issue in districts that had been pursuing consolidation efforts in some fashion prior to this year, and where discussions relating to school closure had already begun prior to this year.

Creative ideas

Some school districts have come up with interesting innovations to maintain programming that is important to the communities they serve.

- Greater Latrobe is looking to start an instrument lending library from instruments donated by the community. This will save both the district and students money in terms of rentals and equipment purchases.
- Some schools are seeking partnerships with local YMCAs for free or reduced price access to facilities in order to maintain swimming and other athletic programs.

- One school director in Washington County suggested pursuing new tax options, such as an amusement tax.
- A number of schools have been able to improve programming through foundation grants.

Case Studies

Armstrong

Armstrong School District serves 30 municipalities in central Armstrong County. Over 5,000 students are enrolled in seven elementary schools and five secondary schools. Because of the large area covered by the district, students in grades 9-12 attend one of four high schools or Lenape Tech, the comprehensive career and technical center. In the past year, Armstrong School District as a whole met AYP goals in 2009-10, but three schools within the district received warnings.

Armstrong is facing a significant shortfall (over \$5.5 million) in its annual budget of over \$85 million. The school board recently announced that it would eliminate 66 positions, 35 of which are teachers, which would save approximately \$3.6 million. Eleven would be eliminated through attrition, but 24 teachers would be furloughed, according to a process called “checkerboarding,” a provision in the teachers’ contract that requires furloughs to be spread throughout the district.ⁱⁱⁱ Other cost-cutting measures for the district include the closure of a building used for storage, deferred spending on facilities and maintenance, books and uniforms, and cuts in discretionary spending. The board also hired a tax collection service to collect unpaid taxes totaling \$5.5 million.^{iv} A tax increase was not mentioned as being under consideration.

Construction and renovation projects that were underway prior to the announcement of the 2011-2012 state budget appear to be moving forward, as the board recently approved expenditures relating to the leasing of nine modular classrooms for 27 months at Ford City High School.^v A recent news article argues that projections made during the proposal for the construction projects showed no enrollment decline, yet the board cited declining enrollment as a primary reason for the reductions in teachers and staff.^{vi} However, the article also reports that, according to the district, no significant staff reductions have occurred since the school served 1500 students many years ago, even though the school now serves 700 in grades 7-12.

Connellsville Area

Connellsville Area School District serves 13 municipalities in Fayette County. The district covers over 200 square miles and consists of two senior high schools, two junior high schools, and eight elementary schools. Approximately 1,300 students in grades 10-12 attend Connellsville Area Senior High School and 500 attend Connellsville Area CTC. The district received AYP warnings in 2008-2009 and did not make AYP in 2009-2010.

The district must contend with a \$7.1 million deficit and anticipates a \$5.45 million reduction in state and federal funding. In response to such shortfalls the school board approved furloughs for 23 employees based on scaled-back educational programs, and the district is also considering closing several schools. District officials may also eliminate full-day kindergarten.

State Representative Tim Mahoney has advocated a consolidation plan for Fayette County school districts in which administration is centralized with one superintendent and school board serving the entire county. The plan is intended to achieve efficiency gains in areas such as contract negotiations for busing and food services. Mahoney recently obtained a state grant to study the impact of consolidation programs. If the study, due to be released this summer, demonstrates considerable gains from consolidation, Mahoney plans to place the measure as a referendum on the ballot. Pennsylvania has only seen one voluntary school district merger, when Center Area School District and Monaca School District in Beaver County consolidated in 2009.

Highlands

Located in northeastern Allegheny County, the Highlands school district serves the boroughs of Tarentum and Brackenridge, as well as Harrison and Fawn townships. Currently, over 2,800 students are educated within the district at one of four elementary schools, one middle school, or the high school. Vocational-technical students have the option of attending Forbes Trail CTC.

Like Armstrong School District, Highlands is facing a budget shortfall of over \$5 million. However, Highlands' budget is less than half of Armstrong's; for FY 2011-2012, it is projected to be around \$35 million. As part of this year's budget process, Highlands examined two significant school reorganization strategies. The one originally by the school board calls for the closure of Heights Elementary; all students would attend one of the district's three remaining elementary schools. An alternative plan calls for the closure of Fairmount Elementary (instead of Heights). In addition, approximately 32 teachers will receive furlough notices, representing around 14 percent of the teaching staff.^{vii} Other staff would also receive furloughs, including the dean of students and several guidance counselors, aides, and secretaries. The administration building would close under any of the plans, and offices would be moved to one of the school buildings. Wage concessions had been offered as a strategy but had not been voted on by the union.

Other changes of note include the elimination of all day kindergarten and the change to a four-day work week over the summer for school administration and staff. It is notable that the board did not consider a tax increase as part of the budget process.^{viii}

Since the announcement of the projected budget shortfall some months ago, the community has demonstrated its concern about many of the proposed cuts by showing up in large numbers at school board meetings. At the May 16th board meeting, the Post-Gazette reported a crowd of approximately 500. One of the most controversial program cuts, returning full day kindergarten

to half day, could be restored according to the district if additional funding for the program is included in the state budget.^{ix}

Mars Area

The Mars Area school district serves four municipalities in Butler County and has an enrollment of 3,062 students. It consists of four schools covering kindergarten through eighth grade and one high school. All of Mars Area's schools made AYP in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.

Mars Area is wealthier than the other districts studied and the community's socioeconomic characteristics may have influenced the board's choices and mitigated the need for severe cuts. The school board approved a \$37.6 million preliminary budget in early May which was \$1.3 million less than its current budget. Overall budget cuts totaled \$4.6 million. The new budget did not raise taxes but eliminated staff positions and programs such as the Classrooms of the Future Program which brought computers into classrooms. The district introduced participation fees for extracurricular activities, and students now must pay \$100 a season to play a sport and \$100 a semester to participate in the band, chorus, orchestra, and cheerleading programs.

The district delayed textbook and technology purchases and discontinued several bus routes and a mid-day bus program for kindergartners.

Mars Area is one of several districts facing the expiration of a teachers' contract this year. During negotiations for a new two year contract, the school board and the Mars Area Education Association approved a fact-finder's recommendation that included wage freezes for the first year. However, the teachers opposed the report both times it went up for a vote.

Despite its budgetary shortfalls, the district is engaging in several new construction projects. It has recently awarded a \$4.17 million contract for an addition to the cafeteria at Centennial School serving grades five and six and a \$473,938 contract to repair the Mars Area High School's track.

McKeesport Area

The McKeesport Area School District serves the Allegheny County municipalities of McKeesport, Dravosburg, Versailles, South Versailles, and White Oak. It consists of three elementary schools, four intermediate schools, and one high school over an area of approximately seven square miles. The region has struggled with a declining population, as the district reported a drop in enrollment from 4,384 in 2005-2006 to 3,821 in 2010-11. Enrollment is expected to further decline to below 3,400 by 2019. The district has the lowest academic performance of those in the case study, though it was seen as making progress in 2009-2010 after not making AYP in 2008-2009.

The district passed a preliminary budget of \$57.5 million for 2011-12, a reduction of \$2.5 million from the previous year's budget. It expected reductions in state subsidies from \$26.3 million to \$21.9 million as a result of Governor Corbett's budget plan. McKeesport Area officials will

attempt to use federal Title I funds to maintain the district's full-day kindergarten program after the proposed state budget eliminated the Accountability Block Grants that originally funded the program.

While the district initially proposed cutting 95 positions, the school board recently approved the elimination of 46 jobs, including 23 teaching positions. The school board also approved an early retirement incentive program, and 35 employees announced early retirements at the end of the school year, reducing the number of required furloughs to one. Property taxes are slated to rise by 0.34 mills to 17.05, which would still be the lowest rate in the county. Each mill is expected to raise \$750,000 in revenue. McKeesport Area also decided to utilize \$4.2 million from its \$6.5 million reserve fund.

Conclusion

In examining the 80 school districts included in this report, over 30 different categories of options for balancing budgets surfaced. The choices that school boards have made and will continue to make seem to reflect not only their personal viewpoints but those of the residents in the communities they serve, and the perceived needs of the communities.

On the one hand, districts are making significant sacrifices that could have a negative impact on student achievement and education in general. School closures and increased class sizes certainly have the potential to disrupt student progress. On the other hand, it is interesting to see some of the creative ways that districts are finding to save money or find additional revenue, and in some cases, one might argue that these budget cuts are forcing school districts to make decisions that needed to be made but that they would not have had the courage to do otherwise.

What it comes down to is how to help each district achieve success for the students that it is responsible for educating; that is, how can schools maintain student achievement in tough budget times?

Next steps

An interesting next step would be to examine school districts in terms of their return on investment as measured by the Center for American Progress. Additionally, it would be interesting to determine how data relating to student achievement could be used more effectively to help schools make these tough budget decisions. Some ideas include:

- Benchmarking closures and consolidations: studying how other districts are making these decisions
- Examining student achievement data with program cuts and seeing if alignment is possible

Appendices

Table 1 – District choices matrix

1	Elimination of teaching positions – attrition
2	Elimination of teaching positions – furloughs
3	Elimination of staff positions
4	Early retirement incentives
5	Moving IU programming in-house
6	Increased cafeteria prices
7	Voluntary or contracted salary freeze or wage concessions
8	Tax increase
9	Closure – schools
10	Closure – other buildings
11	Program cuts (sports and activities)
12	“Pay to play” programming
13	Utilizing public transportation
14	Shared services
15	Discretionary spending cuts/freeze
16	Four day work week
17	Property assessment appeals
18	Reduction in staff hours
19	Expansion of tuition-based cyber/alternative education programming
20	Program cuts (classroom-based)
21	Alumni/community programs
22	Deferred construction, equipment or supply purchases
23	Return to half day kindergarten
24	Use reserve funds
25	Refund bond
26	Corporate sponsorship
27	Creation of or participation in IU cyber school
28	Privatization of services
29	Collection of unpaid taxes
30	Transportation modifications/consolidation of bus routes
31	Sale/lease of natural resources
32	Consolidation of school districts
33	Creation of new taxes

School District	County	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33		
Seneca Valley	Butler			1	1				1																								1			
South Butler County	Butler	1	1						1										1		1				1						1					
Central Cambria	Cambria	1							1																											
Conemaugh Valley	Cambria									1																										
Portage Area	Cambria		1					1											1																	
Westmont Hilltop	Cambria							1	1														1													
Albert Gallatin Area	Fayette														1																				1	
Brownsville Area	Fayette														1																				1	
Connellsville Area	Fayette		1					1		1					1							1													1	
Frazier	Fayette														1																				1	
Laurel Highlands	Fayette	1													1					1	1		1		1										1	
Uniontown Area	Fayette			1					1			1			1																				1	
Cetnral Greene	Greene		1	1	1		1	1	1	1		1				1	1				1		1		1											
West Greene	Greene																																		1	
Blairsville-Saltsburg	Indiana		1	1												1																				
Indiana Area	Indiana				1				1																1											
Ellwood City	Lawrence	1						1		1																										
Conemaugh Twp Area	Somerset									1											1															
Rockwood Area	Somerset	1																					1													
Shade-Central City	Somerset							1	1				1										1													
Shanksville-Stonycreek	Somerset								1																											
Windber Area	Somerset								1				1												1											
Bentworth	Washington			1	1			1					1							1																
Bethlehem-Center	Washington	1						1	1			1																								
Burgettstown Area	Washington	1		1		1		1	1			1	1			1						1		1								1			1	
California Area	Washington	1	1	1	1	1	1																													
Canon-McMillan	Washington		1	1				1				1	1			1								1	1								1			
Charleroi	Washington					1			1																											
Ringgold	Washington		1	1				1	1																1	1										
Trinity Area	Washington		1	1									1		1																					1
Washington	Washington	1		1					1			1				1				1		1		1												
Burrell	Westmoreland			1	1	1		1	1						1										1											
Franklin Regional	Westmoreland	1	1	1				1	1			1								1		1														
Greater Latrobe	Westmoreland	1		1				1					1			1									1											
Greensburg-Salem	Westmoreland	1		1	1				1															1	1								1			
Hempfield	Westmoreland									1																										

School District	County	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33		
Kiski Area	Westmoreland	1	1	1				1	1																											
Ligonier Valley	Westmoreland		1	1				1	1			1	1									1		1									1			
New Kensington-Arnold	Westmoreland	1	1						1			1	1				1			1	1	1		1	1											
Norwin	Westmoreland	1					1		1																											
Penn-Trafford	Westmoreland	1																																		
Southmoreland	Westmoreland			1	1			1													1		1		1											
Yough	Westmoreland	1	1																				1													
TOTALS		30	31	33	11	4	4	26	32	8	2	13	13	1	10	11	6	1	6	3	16	5	19	8	18	1	2	2	2	1	5	2	8	1		

Table 2 – Detailed list of school districts and the options they considered

This table provides a detailed look at the options considered by each district. Districts are listed in alphabetical order, and estimated budget shortfalls are provided when available. The number of positions under consideration for elimination were also listed when possible.

School District	County	Budget Shortfall/Surplus	Solutions	Additional notes
Albert Gallatin Area	Fayette		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School district consolidation (all of Fayette County) Shared services 	
Allegheny Valley	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher/staff layoffs Elimination of positions through attrition 	
Ambridge Area	Beaver	\$1.8 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary salary freeze Elimination of junior high sports Elimination of teaching positions through attrition (8) Elimination of staff (5) Four day workweek for administration Corporate sponsorship of buildings, sporting events, and 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> programs • Alumni fundraising • Consolidation with other districts 	
Apollo-Ridge	Armstrong	\$1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teaching positions through attrition and layoffs • Elimination of staff positions through attrition and layoffs • Discretionary purchase freeze • Expansion of cyber academy • Four-day work week • Use reserve funds 	
Armstrong	Armstrong	\$5.5 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teaching positions through attrition and layoffs (35 furloughs) • Elimination of staff positions (31 furloughs) • Use of reserve funds • Deferred equipment purchases (facilities and maintenance, books and uniforms) • Closure of warehouse building • Discretionary spending cuts • Collection of unpaid taxes • Reduction in staff hours 	
Avonworth	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase 	
Baldwin-Whitehall	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booster fundraising for two new playgrounds 	
Beaver Area	Beaver	\$1.4 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase (max. limit of 3.7 mills) • Using public transit for older students • “Pay to play” sports programs • Cutting sports programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that the cuts in sports programs will increase student loitering • Concerns that “pay to play” will affect booster clubs

Bentworth	Washington	\$1.1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary salary freeze • Early retirement incentive • Support staff furloughs • Reduced hours for bus drivers • Elimination of middle school sports
Bethel Park	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions – furlough (10-12) • Classroom program cuts (marketing, elem. music, German, Latin) • Wage freeze/concessions
Bethlehem-Center	Washington	\$1.2 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in athletic programming • Wage freeze • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition • Tax increase
Blackhawk	Beaver	\$1 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage freeze • Elimination of teacher positions – furloughs (10) • Tax increase • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition
Blairsville-Saltsburg	Indiana	\$1,121,629	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher furloughs (7) • Staff furloughs (15) • Reduction in discretionary expenditures
Brentwood Borough	Allegheny	\$700,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use fund balance • Deferred equipment purchases
Brownsville Area	Fayette		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district consolidation (all of Fayette County) • Shared services
Burgettstown Area	Washington	\$998,637	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program cuts – sports (JV)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cheerleading, weightlifting) • “Pay to play” programming • Wage freeze • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition • Moving IU programming in house • Deferred equipment purchases • Bus route modifications • Discretionary spending reductions • Program cuts – classroom • Tax increase • Elimination of staff positions • New taxes (amusement, parking) 	
Burrell	Westmoreland	\$630,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving IU programming in house • Shared services • Early retirement • Staff layoffs/elimination of positions through attrition • Pay freeze • Use of fund balance • Tax increase 	
California Area	Washington	\$900,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teaching positions (5) • Elimination of aide positions (2) • Early retirement • Moving IU programming in-house • Increased cafeteria prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned that there will now be a gap in the science/technology curriculum
Canon-McMillan	Washington	\$2.2 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pay to play” sports programs • Wage freeze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most kids are already on half-day kindergarten; the

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions – furloughs • Elimination of staff positions • Transportation modifications • Discretionary spending reductions • Deferred equipment purchases • Return to half-day kindergarten • Program cuts (student activities, not including sports or band) 	extended day program was for kids who need the most help
Central Cambria	Cambria	\$1.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Elimination of teaching positions through attrition (2) 	
Central Greene	Greene	\$2.35 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased cafeteria prices • Close elementary school (Perry) • Discretionary spending freeze • Four-day workweek • Program cuts (classroom) • Use of reserve funds • Tax increase • Elimination of staff positions • Early retirement • Deferred equipment purchases • Teacher furloughs • Program cuts (sports/activity) 	
Charleroi	Washington		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving IU programming in house • Tax increase 	
Clairton	Allegheny	\$1.8 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full to half-day kindergarten 	
Conemaugh Township	Somerset	\$1.4 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close primary school (Jerome) and create middle school 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program cuts – classroom (Head Start) 	
Conemaugh Valley	Cambria	\$1.2 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close elementary school (East Taylor) 	
Connellsville	Fayette	\$7.1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of French (lack of interest) • Salary freezes included in current contracts • Teacher furloughs • Classroom program cuts • School closure • School district consolidation (all of Fayette County) • Shared services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to take French via cyber lessons
Deer Lakes	Allegheny	\$4.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early retirement • Program cuts (classroom) • Alumni/community fundraising (creation of community foundation) • Deferred equipment purchases (buses) • Increased cafeteria prices • Teacher furloughs 	
Duquesne	Allegheny	\$4 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure of middle school • Teacher and support staff furloughs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure of middle school will be prevented by PDE because there is not time to place the students in other districts
East Allegheny	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full to half day kindergarten 	
Ellwood City	Lawrence	\$2.3 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School closure (Walnut Ridge) • Wage concessions (administrative staff) 	
Fox Chapel	Allegheny	\$2 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of positions through attrition 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deferred equipment purchases • Use of reserve funds
Franklin Regional	Westmoreland	\$2.7 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting sports programs (elementary swim) • Elimination of support staff • Reduction in hours for staff • Voluntary wage freeze/concessions • Elimination of teachers through attrition (3) • Elimination of teachers through furloughs (4) • Elimination of innovative classroom programming • Tax increase
Frazier	Fayette		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district consolidation (all of Fayette County) • Shared services
Freedom Area	Beaver		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared services
Freeport Area	Armstrong		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition (2) • Teacher and administrative concessions • Privatization of driver’s ed • Student activity fee
Gateway	Allegheny	\$3.452 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase
Greater Latrobe	Westmoreland	\$3.1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical instrument lending library • “Pay to play” sports fee • Voluntary salary freeze • Elimination of teacher positions through attrition • Discretionary spending freeze

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of reserve funds • Elimination of staff positions 	
Greensburg-Salem	Westmoreland	\$2.5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teaching positions – attrition (16) • Early retirement incentive • Transportation modifications (consolidation of bus routes) • Deferred equipment purchases (technology upgrades, carpet replacements, uniforms) • Elimination of staff positions (secretary, custodial, administration) • Use of reserve funds • Tax increase 	
Hampton	Allegheny	(\$960,000) surplus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce proposed tax increase • Increase reserve funds • Pay off equipment purchases early 	
Hempfield	Westmoreland	\$5.3 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School closure – Crossroads alternative school 	
Highlands	Allegheny	\$5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close administration building • Close elementary school • Teacher layoffs • Defer construction (auditorium seat replacement) • Voluntary salary freeze • Staff layoffs • Eliminate full-day kindergarten • Four day workweek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased transportation time to school for elementary children
Indiana Area	Indiana	\$1.066 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Use fund balance • Early retirement incentive (for support staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If House Republican budget passes, tax hike will be reduced from 4.07 mills to 1.72.

Kiski Area	Westmoreland	\$6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teachers through attrition (6) • Elimination of teachers through layoffs (6) • Elimination of staff positions (8) • Wage freeze • Tax increase
Laurel Highlands	Fayette	\$3.8 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district consolidation (all of Fayette County) • Shared services • Use fund balance • Offering special education programming to students outside the district • Deferring purchases (math textbooks) • Program cuts (dual enrollment) • Elimination of teaching positions through attrition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike most schools, they will not benefit financially from the House version of the budget • School will still offer dual enrollment, but it will no longer be subsidized
Leechburg Area	Armstrong	\$900,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Transportation route modifications • Corporate sponsorship of athletic events • Pay freeze for teachers/administrators • Four-day work week • Discretionary spending cuts
Ligonier Valley	Westmoreland	\$3.4 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program cuts – sports (swimming, cross-country, golf) • “Pay to play” for athletes • Alumni/community donation

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> program • Tax increase • Return to half day kindergarten • Sale of timber from Laurel Valley campus • Furloughs – staff and teachers • Wage freeze - administrators
Mars Area	Butler	\$4.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pay for play” sports and extracurricular activities (\$100 per season/semester) • Support staff layoffs • Program cuts – classroom • Teacher furloughs • Contracted salary freeze • Deferred equipment purchases (textbooks and technology)
McKeesport Area	Allegheny	\$4.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom programming (in-day tutoring) • Tax increase • Teacher and staff furloughs
Moon Area	Allegheny	\$1 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions – furlough • Elimination of staff positions - furlough
New Kensington-Arnold	Westmoreland	\$4.7 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teachers through furloughs • Elimination of teachers through attrition • Classroom program cuts • “Pay to play” sports programs • Tax increase • Expansion of alternative education program • Alumni fundraising

- Willing to cut elsewhere to maintain full day kindergarten

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports program cuts • Return to half-day kindergarten • Use of reserve funds • Four day work week for administrators during the summer
North Allegheny	Allegheny	\$7.9 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Wage concessions (health care contributions) • Deferred supply purchases
North Hills	Allegheny	\$800,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Early retirement incentives • Elimination of teacher/staff positions through attrition
Northgate	Allegheny	\$763,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full to half-day kindergarten • Elimination of teacher position – furlough (1) • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition (2)
Norwin	Westmoreland	\$3.3 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of positions through attrition • Increased cafeteria prices • Tax increase
Penn Hills	Allegheny	\$3.9 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher furloughs • Staff furloughs • Privatization of services (school busing)
Penn-Trafford	Westmoreland	\$2.28 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition
Pine-Richland	Allegheny	\$2.5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pay to play” sports and activities fee • Reduction in staff through attrition • Use of reserve funds

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretionary spending cuts
Plum	Allegheny	\$2.4 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teachers through furloughs • Early retirement
Portage Area	Cambria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions – furlough (3-4) • Wage freeze • Reduction of hours (nurse)
Ringgold	Washington	\$3.2 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher furloughs (6) • Voluntary salary freeze • Elimination of staff positions • Use of reserve funds • Refund bond • Tax increase
Riverside Beaver County	Beaver	\$1.485 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition • Elimination of staff positions (retirement) • Use of fund balance • Discretionary spending cuts
Rockwood	Somerset	\$500,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions through attrition (4) • Deferred equipment costs
Seneca Valley	Butler	\$10 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Early retirements • Natural gas drilling leases (signed 2010) • Elimination of positions - furlough
Shade-Central City	Somerset	\$683,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pay to play” sports/activity fee • Deferred equipment purchases (textbooks) • Voluntary salary freeze

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase
Shanksville-Stonycreek	Somerset		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase
South Butler County	Butler	\$1.3 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Teacher furlough (1) • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition • Bus route consolidation • Reducing hours • Deferred equipment purchases • Use of fund balance • Classroom program (delayed implementation of planned extended day kindergarten)
South Fayette	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase (up to 3.013 mills) • Deferred equipment purchases
Southmoreland	Westmoreland	\$1.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of reserve funds • Budgeted wage freeze • Elimination of classroom programming (swimming lessons, on-the-job training, after-school tutoring) • Elimination of staff positions (3) • Early retirement
Steel Valley	Allegheny	\$2.4 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher layoffs • Support staff layoffs • Property assessment appeals
Sto-Rox	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full to half day kindergarten
Trinity Area	Washington	\$2.7 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pay to play” sports programs • Creation of cyber school • Shared services • Elimination of teacher

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positions – furloughs • Elimination of staff positions
Uniontown Area	Fayette		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts to middle school extracurricular programs • Elimination of staff positions • Tax increase • School district consolidation (all of Fayette County) • Shared services
Washington	Washington	\$1.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase • Discretionary spending reductions • Deferred equipment purchases (textbooks) • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition • Elimination of staff positions – furloughs • Reducing staff hours • Program cuts – sports and activities • Program cuts – classroom (tech ed, driver’s ed)
West Greene	Greene		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in IU 1 cyber school
West Mifflin	Allegheny	\$5 million+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of teacher positions (22) • Elimination of staff (25) • “Pay to play” fee for sports and activities • Tax increase • Classroom program cuts (French, music tech, business, freshman academy)
Westmont	Cambria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary salary freeze

Hilltop			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax increase (2.7 mills) • Defer construction (middle school)
Wilkesburg	Allegheny		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and staff layoffs • Nonacademic program cuts • Willing to cut elsewhere to maintain full day kindergarten
Windber Area	Somerset	\$2.5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of reserve funds • Tax increase • “Pay to play” sports fee
Woodland Hills	Allegheny	\$4.4 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program cuts – classroom (BCMC for at-risk students)
Yough	Westmoreland		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deferred equipment purchases (supplies) • Elimination of teacher positions – furloughs • Elimination of teacher positions – attrition

ⁱ (Johnson 2011)

ⁱⁱ (DeStefano 2011)

ⁱⁱⁱ (Shuster, Armstrong School District teaching cuts laid on "declining enrollment" 2011)

^{iv} (Shuster 2011)

^v (Shuster, Armstrong school district hires tax collection service 2011)

^{vi} (Shuster, Armstrong School District teaching cuts laid on "declining enrollment" 2011)

^{vii} (Duncan 2011)

^{viii} (Guido 2011)

^{ix} (Duncan 2011)

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