



Participatory Budgeting for your school

OVERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

FirstRoot helps schools use **Participatory Budgeting**
to teach financial literacy.



Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process
in which students are given real money to collaboratively
invest in their school.

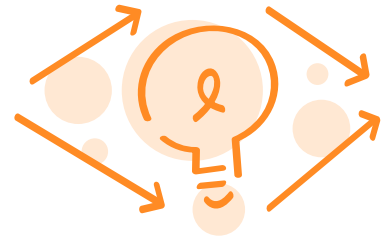
Participatory Budgeting **teaches core life skills.**



Financial Literacy



Civics



Design Thinking

Completed PB projects show that students make thoughtful, **high-impact investments.**



Students worked together to purchase a **3D printer** to prepare for the "future of work"



Students collaborated to create a **driving lesson scholarship program** for fellow classmates.



Students pooled their money and decided to **renovate** the entire school cafeteria in their school.

How does it work?



A teacher or administrator **creates an account** on the FirstRoot platform



The teacher **configures the PB program**, such as establishing the budget, duration and who can participate.



FirstRoot guides students through the PB program:
Students **create, refine, vote and fund** on proposals



The teacher purchases student-funded proposals and shares progress to all participants.

Civic engagement is built into FirstRoot.



Title 1 schools are presented as a funding option to students.



Students support their community by **allocating a portion of the budget** to Title 1 schools.



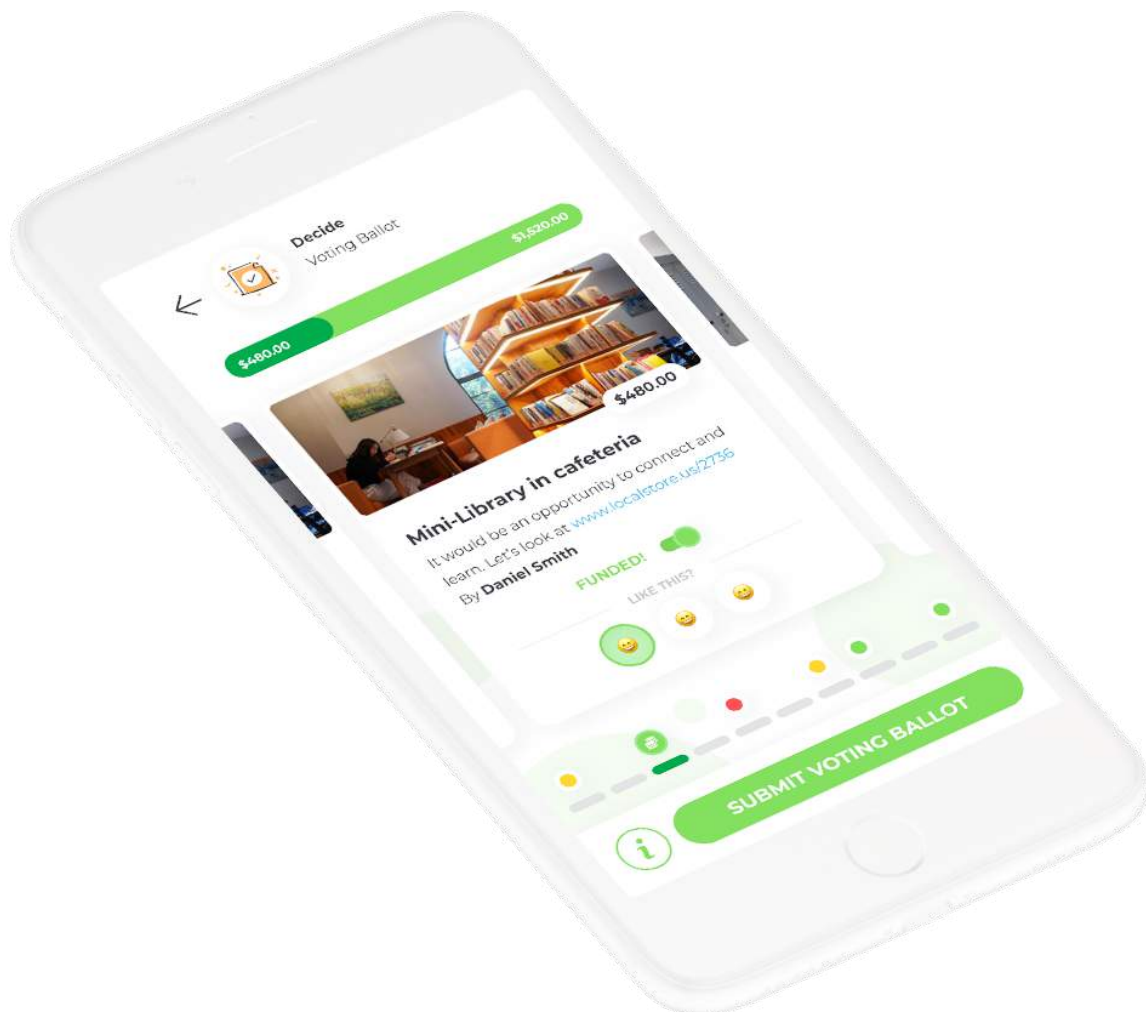
Students in Title 1 schools **run their own Participatory Budgeting** program



All students learn **civics & build unity** among communities

User experience

FirstRoot brings a whole new digital experience for Participatory Budgeting in schools



Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the money for Participatory Budgeting come from?

- Principals may provide funding
- The PTA / PTSA / PTO may provide funding
- The student council may provide funding
- FirstRoot may provide funding to qualified Title 1 schools

How does FirstRoot make money?

When a debit card is used to make a purchase, a small portion of that money is distributed to the banks and credit card processing companies like Visa, Mastercard, etc.

FirstRoot will make a small amount of money (0.005%) for every PB program that uses a FirstRoot debit card. When many schools are using FirstRoot there will be enough money for FirstRoot to create a sustainable business.

Will teachers be paid?

Congruent with school and union policies, FirstRoot intends to offer teachers a small stipend to compensate them for their support of this program. As a startup we have not yet established the amount, but we anticipate the stipend to be \$500.

How is the budget managed?

Teachers can manage the budget through spreadsheets or through a free, FirstRoot issued debit card. The advantage of the FirstRoot issued debit card is that students can see the transactions made on the card. This builds trust by demonstrating that the projects they selected are purchased and implemented.

What controls do teachers have?

Teachers and school administrators set the policies, such as the maximum cost of a single proposal or requiring that proposal be for capital improvements. Student leaders and teachers review all proposals to ensure they meet school guidelines.

What training does FirstRoot provide?

FirstRoot will provide free video training courses on our website. We will also work with our community of teachers to create additional training videos.

Additional resources:

- [Participatory Budgeting in Schools from PB Scotland](#)
- [Civics for all: Participatory Budgeting Curriculum from NYC Dept. of Education](#)

Is this a school-wide or classroom project?

Most Participatory Budgeting programs are run as a school-wide program, but it also can be for classroom, project-based learning or even an extra-curricular project.

What is the research on program effectiveness?

Research has shown that:

- PB in schools increases civic engagement, even when there is not a formal curriculum driving the process.¹
- PB in schools and the community influences budget priorities.²
- “Most scholars and participants of PB’s agree that one of their most important benefits is the deepening of the exercise of democracy”.³

Does FirstRoot have any influence or control over the program?

No.

What will FirstRoot do with the profits?

FirstRoot will use our profits to continue to expand the use of Participatory Budgeting in schools both in the US and globally.

Do student’s grades impact their participation?

Teachers, coaches and school administrators determine who may participate in the program. FirstRoot does not determine who participates.

What policies exist to keep students safe?

Student submitted content is automatically reviewed to identify and remove offensive or potentially offensive images or language. Students can flag content for review by teachers. Offensive content can be removed by teachers.

¹ Cohen, M., D. Schugurensky and A. Wiek (2015). Citizenship Education through Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Bioscience High School in Phoenix, Arizona. Curriculum and Teaching, Volume 30, Number 2, pp. 5-26. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/193620515.pdf>

² [New research on Participatory Budgeting Highlights – Community Pri](#)

³ [72 Frequently Asked Questions about Participatory Budgeting](#), UN-HABIT.

Is school district approval required?

FirstRoot has no knowledge that school district approval is required. We recommend that teachers check with their principal, school district or other administrators to confirm that a PB program is suitable for their school.

Is FirstRoot compliant with teaching regulations?

FirstRoot is actively monitoring relevant state and national standards for educational content. At present, we do not know of any teaching regulations that govern the use of Participatory Budgeting in schools.

How will we judge long-term success?

FirstRoot is planning to use these outcomes to determine long-term success:

- Improved credit scores
- Increased savings rates
- Greater civic engagement
- Increased involvement in school and the broader community
- Self-confidence and 'comfort' with money

How is data protected?

FirstRoot was created by extremely experienced software developers with backgrounds in information and data security, app development, and hosted software development.

- All data is stored in an encrypted format in Amazon Web Services
- Access to the service is controlled through SSL (Secure Sockets Layer)
- FirstRoot is FERPA and GDPR compliant

Can I use FirstRoot with kids under 13?

FirstRoot is not yet COPPA compliant and cannot be used with children under the age of 13. FirstRoot expects to complete our COPPA compliance in Q2-2021.

How will FirstRoot choose which Title 1 schools are funded?

FirstRoot will provide a means for interested Title 1 schools to register for a grant. A lottery process will be conducted to determine which schools are selected for funding.

How do I get started?

Contact us at hello@firstroot.co

Or join our Slack community: <https://pbforschools.slack.com>