



# Smarter Budgets, Smarter Schools: How To Survive and Thrive in Tight Times

By Nathan Levenson

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## Smarter Budgets, Smarter Schools: How To Survive and Thrive in Tight Times By Nathan Levenson

Armed with real-world examples and out-of-the-box ideas, Nathan Levenson challenges conventional thinking about school budgeting and offers practical, actionable advice for school superintendents, central office leaders, building principals, and school board members.

Virtually every school district in the nation is experiencing an extended period of financial constraints. Shrinking tax revenue, decreasing federal stimulus funds, rising health care and pension costs, and growing high-need student populations will continue to test superintendents and school boards as they seek to prepare students for a globally competitive environment.

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### **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“The concepts are intellectually stimulating with plenty of specifics on how many dollars could be saved in each case. Levenson includes charts and sample worksheets and the narrative is well-written with real-life examples.” — **Art Stellar**, *School Administrator*

“Nathan Levenson offers rational, honest, and tangible ways for cash-strapped district leaders to shed budget heft without compromising student learning.” — **Chris Tessone**, *Education Gadfly*

“*Smarter Budgets, Smarter Schools: How to Survive and Thrive in Tight Times* is a guide for the teacher and school administrator who still wants the best for the students even as the money supply shrinks further for the school.” — **Midwest Book Review**

“This work is an interesting, quick read, filled with inspiring success stories and thought provoking ideas.” — **Kaitlin Anderson**, *Journal of School Choice*

#### From the Back Cover

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“This is an invaluable superintendent and school board member resource: clear and concise, but also bold and courageous in describing what we have to do to get control of school budgeting. Here is the master plan with insight and relevant case examples that will have readers thinking differently in perilous economic times.” — **Glenn Koocher**, executive director, MA Association of School Committees

“From class size to curriculum, from nurses to libraries, from paraprofessionals to administrators, no subject escapes the objective scrutiny that Levenson brings to every line of the budget. In times of acute budget shortages, the author makes a compelling case for rational, if sometimes unpopular, choices that place the interests of children above those of adults.” — **Douglas B. Reeves**, founder, The Leadership and Learning Center

“Anyone who thinks finance is a dry subject hasn’t read this book. Levenson presents a new framework for maximizing benefit at a particular expenditure level, and then fills the pages with fresh and desperately needed ideas about how to rethink resources in ways not typically considered in the district allocation

process. At a time when district leaders face tough decisions about how best to spend their limited dollars, this book is an absolute must-read.” — **Marguerite Roza**, research associate professor, University of Washington

“Many authors talk about restructuring, reimagining, or transforming school districts. Nate Levenson shows you how to accomplish this across the many facets of any school district’s operations. His ‘crazy ideas’ are not so crazy when you stop to think about their implications. In fact, if implemented, you might just create the model school district of the future—driven by student success.” — **Jack Dale**, superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools

“Levenson’s timely book provides specific guidance and examples of how leaders can streamline their operations while keeping dollars in the classroom. Levenson also offers critical advice on how to negotiate the cultural and political barriers that educators often face when seeking financial efficiencies. *Smarter Budgets, Smarter Schools* is a book forward-thinking educational leaders, policymakers, and advocates should have on their shelves.” — **Frederick M. Hess**, director of education policy studies, American Enterprise Institute

**Nathan Levenson** is managing director of the District Management Council in Boston and a former school superintendent.

#### About the Author

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