

The Peoria Unified School District's dedication to financial stewardship is evident in its 34-year history of earning awards for its Annual Financial Report from the Association of School Business Officials and the Government Finance Officers Association. To maintain financial transparency, the district includes its budget, and the previous budgets for the past 10 years, on its public-facing website. However, qualitative, informal feedback from Governing Board public comments and social media comments indicates that the community remains uncertain about how the district allocates its funds. Notably, 70 percent of district households do not have school-age children at home, presenting unique engagement challenges to share district updates and other timely and relevant information with the community. School finance is a complex topic that is often misunderstood and difficult to explain succinctly to a community with more than 100,000 residents. To address community feedback, the Peoria Unified communications (comms) team sought to educate key stakeholders on the intricacies of school finance. The district created a detailed, three-and-a-half-minute video titled "School Finance 101" in alignment with survey data. The key messages derived from the survey were woven into the script based on community feedback, and the imagery reflected the district's commitment to ensuring that Peoria Unified is good stewards of its resources. Prior to recording the video, Peoria Unified sent out a community survey and asked individuals to submit questions that they may have about school finance. The comms team collected responses from community members and made sure these questions were addressed during the recording. The video was shared in the district's internal and external newsletters, on the district's website, and on social media. Since its release on September 16, 2024, it has been viewed over 250 times, a 50 percent increase from an average district video shared on YouTube. Reminders about the video continue to be shared in the community as Peoria Unified prioritizes engaging with key audiences.