

Shakespeare wisely wrote words by which student teachers (and by extension all teachers—including specialists, generalists, and substitutes) should abide: “Neither a borrower nor a lender be...” Learning the parameters set by school budgets and living within them is paramount to success as a teacher and a colleague.

The Art Budget

As a student teacher, it is unlikely that you will be given your own art budget; however, it is highly probable that your cooperating teacher is fully aware of a budget and has the year carefully planned around it. You will be expected to live within the cooperating teacher’s budget. Make sure that you are familiar with the parameters of art finances, and be prepared to live within those means.

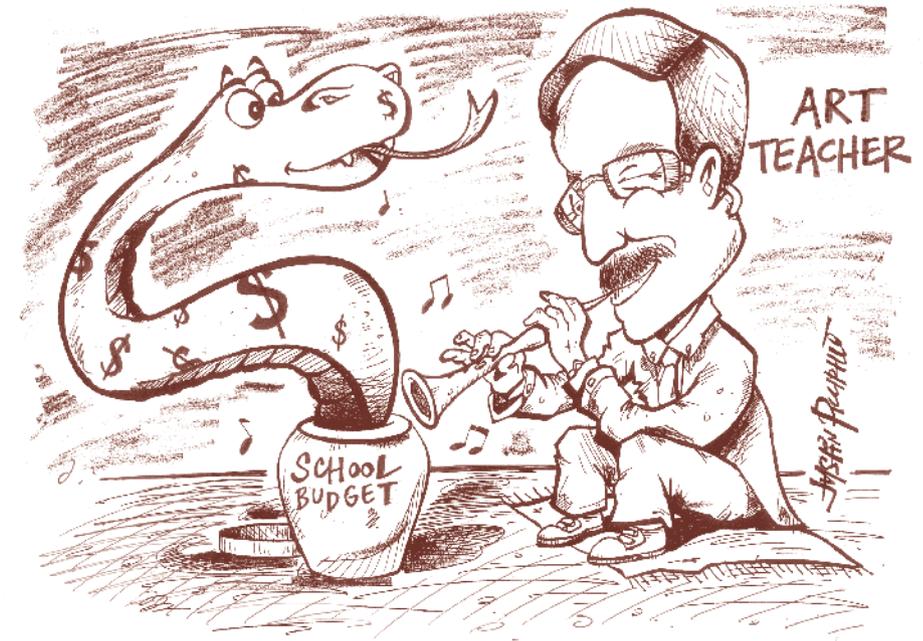
How Budgets Are Set

Budgets are usually set by individual campuses. There are many formulas. One formula provides a certain number of dollars per student per year. For example, if an elementary school has 650 students and the formula provides \$2.00 per student per year, the annual art budget is \$1,300. Another formula (more common in secondary classrooms) combines this per-student dollar amount with student-paid fees. Other schools have a flat rate that is given to each content area while other schools have consumable/non-consumable budgets that are divided as needed among teachers.

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend...”
William Shakespeare, Hamlet

Expanding a Budget

What can you do if the budget doesn’t cover materials that you need? Be inventive! Most schools have Web sites or monthly newsletters. Ask if you may post a note requesting odds and ends that can



Living with an Art Budget

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stretch the budget (e.g., plastic containers, broken crayons, or yarn). Another approach is to call area merchants. Often copy shops or the local newspaper will provide reams of scrap paper. Always check with your cooperating teacher before seeking outside contributions.

Rules to Keep in Mind

1. *Plan ahead.* Know weeks in advance what materials you will need. Make sure the materials are in adequate supply and available for your use. If materials are needed, ask if the budget will cover them and how you should go about purchasing them. If no funding is available, you’ll have to make do or be inventive.
2. *Ask permission before using any materials.* Do not assume that the box of clay or stack of watercolor paper is there for the taking. Chances are that the materials were purchased for specific activities.

3. *Do not ask to borrow supplies from colleagues.* This suggests that you are ill-prepared.
4. *Monitor the use of materials and tools.* Make sure that each student has adequate materials, but do not allow multiple “start overs.” Provide scrap paper for practice if students aren’t sure how to begin. Check that all materials and tools are accounted for and returned before the end of class.
5. *Keep a tidy room.* Take a few extra moments for students to clean up so that you can make quick observations about whether everything is in its place. An orderly room demonstrates for students and others that you respect art and the space where it is taught. This will encourage better student behavior. ☺

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