

Budget-Think

Nobody asked but ...

In a world where process is invented as though it were bandages and antiseptic gel, budget-think is the stopgap, short term parent process. As a good, former bureaucrat, I learned long ago to address the shortest term effects with the longest term process. By the time that it was finally determined that the process was junk, and the short-term problems only get worse (as though they have a mind of their own), there was almost a dead certain likelihood that I would have been moved up the bureaucracy, leaving the old process to crash and burn in someone else's hayfield. But don't worry, it just gave the successor a chance to come up with a process of her own. In both cases, lots of self-congratulatory verbiage ensued.

That's pretty much how the budgeting process eventuates. It is the worst process for the most short-lived challenges. It is completely backward looking — "Let's plan again for a year that is exactly like the year past — with all the same overages and underages." Underages are given disregard for politically favored bureaus, but given emphasis for hand-to-mouth, ugly stepchild bureaus.

I just heard a public school administrator on the radio this morning, yammering about how many consecutive budget cuts he has had to go through. Does he see any handwriting on that wall? No, he just starts coming up with new innovations to pay for an increasing array of things (boosters pay for footballs and unis) — are we far from student loans in K-12? His job is not a fiscal job, it is to stroke as many special interest groups as possible. His juggling act is about feelz, not debt, dollars, and dull-witted taxpayers.

— Kilgore Forelle