

Guiding Principles for Multi-Year Budget Development

NOTE: Although these Guiding Principles were adopted at the Board Meeting of January 25, 2011, minor edits were requested by the Board during the meeting. This version includes all edits.

Our school system is committed “to cultivate a learning community where students are engaged in their learning, strive for excellence, and are supported to achieve to their fullest potential.” The multi-year budget is a reflection of this commitment and the District’s annual goals. The following guiding principles are to be used in making resource allocation decisions during the multi-year budget development process.

1. Maintain the current depth and breadth of educational opportunities and student support services with available resources. Use the themes identified in the Shaping Our Future initiative as a guide to evaluate future changes in programs and/or services.
2. Attract, develop, and retain highly qualified staff with available resources. Provide ongoing coaching and staff development that supports professional growth and instructional effectiveness. Work in partnership with staff and employee associations to provide quality programs and services, and to maintain a competitive level of compensation (salary, benefits, and working conditions) that is financially sustainable.
3. Work collaboratively with parents, support groups and the community to maintain the local support needed to offer a high quality educational program for all students, and to advance the District’s commitments and goals over time. Over the long term, stabilize the local taxpayers’ share (percentage) of funding the District’s budget by reducing the growth rate of local parcel taxes.
4. Bring expenditures in line with revenues by the end of the multi-year budget cycle. Reduce and control the growth in expenditures from year to year by keeping the following in mind:
 - a. As much as possible, align future increases in compensation and other expenditures to increases in ongoing revenues.
 - b. When appropriate, match anticipated one-time revenue opportunities with one-time expenditures.
 - c. Reduce any automatic and uncontrolled growth in expenditures which are not matched to increases in revenues.
5. Share the pain and/or benefits associated with changes in state and federal funding across the entire community of stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, and taxpayers. As state funding levels are restored, work in collaboration with all stakeholders to develop priorities for allocating the additional revenues.
6. Develop and revise multi-year budgets and projections (3 year statutory minimum) based on:
 - a. State and federal mandates
 - b. K-12 vision and goals
 - c. Conservative financial assumptions
 - d. Current information
 - e. Recommendations from the District’s Administration
 - f. Historical financial data and trends
 - g. Input from staff, students, parents, community members, and support and community groups
7. Maintain a minimum reserve of 3%. Build the reserve above this statutory minimum whenever possible, in order to set aside funds for the future and smooth the volatility of the budget over time.