BOARD OF EDUCATION
2024-25 BUDGET GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The Board of Education has used a five-year budget planning model in recent years which resulted in intentionally increased operating fund balances. These balances have allowed sustained operations without reductions. When considering the priorities for the 2024-25 budget, the long-term impact of the costs of those priorities is considered as well.

The District acknowledges deficit spending is not a long-term sustainable strategy, however, it is planned for future budget years to continue operations, open new schools, maintain class size at reasonable levels and allow for an intentional planned reduction of fund balances.

With this long-term vision, the 2024-25 budget was developed using a collaborative process which prioritized the following areas in the 2024-25 through 2028-29 financial model. The budget supports the District's Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) with the following budget priorities developed to meet the CSIP goals.

1. Improved compensation for all employee groups to remain competitive with local and comparison districts and industry standards including planned steps for experience each year, with specific approval of those for 2024-25 is a priority in the five-year model. Compensation was enhanced further by improved salary schedules as included in this document for the 2024-25 fiscal year. The model allows for more enhancements to those schedules in 2024-25 and beyond, should the Board continue those efforts. (CSIP Goal 2)

2. The Board of Education prioritized the continuance of fully board paid medical, dental and life insurance for all full-time employees and shared cost for part time employees. This benefit remains a priority in the current five-year planning model. (CSIP Goal 2)

3. Support of quality curriculum is prioritized throughout the five-year model by the addition of professional development for teachers and the purchase and implementation of high-quality curriculum on a planned cycle. (CSIP Goal 3)

4. The Board prioritizes social emotional needs in the 2024-25 school year through the addition of school counselors and behavior support specialists including support and training in de-escalation techniques to reduce overall behavior incidents. The Board supports non-traditional programming for students who need additional support including alternative school models.(CSIP Goal 2)

5. Support of growing populations of exceptional students is prioritized in the 2024-25 school year through additional support staff and service/supply increases. (CSIP Goal 3)

6. Support of growing population of English Language Learner students including immigrant

students is prioritized in the 2024-25 school year through additional teaching staff. (CSIP Goal 3)

7. Support increased enrollment in Early Childhood education, including Early Childhood Special Education, in the 2024-25 school year to improve kindergarten readiness. (CSIP Goal 3)

8. Support of elective offerings for secondary students is prioritized in the 2024-25 school year through additional teaching staff including increased programming for the Columbia Area Career Center to promote workforce development initiatives. (CSIP Goal 3)

9. Support of additional resources and support of emerging systems at Title I elementary and Title I eligible middle schools and high school is prioritized in the 2024-25 school year through additional staff and resources. The Board of Education will strive to ensure class sizes for these buildings are under the DESE recommended maximum sizes. (CSIP Goal 3)

10. The Board of Education has continued to prioritize technology device equity across all buildings for students and staff as well as the increase of technology staff to support instructional technology initiatives.(CSIP Goal 1)

11. The Board of Education supports the addition of trained human resource professionals to help improve district recruitment and retention efforts. (CSIP Goal 2)

12. The five-year model plans for the operating budgets necessary for one time purchases as well as permanent operating costs for the opening of the new Southwest Elementary School and the Battle Elementary addition in 2024-25 and beyond. (CSIP Goal 1)

13. The Board of Education continues to prioritize budgets for the care and maintenance of existing buildings, with a focus on deferred maintenance including addressing safety and security issues and ADA compliance, as well as new facilities including allowing for additional staffing and operating budgets as new buildings are opened. (CSIP Goal 1)

These priorities are made in the final budget for 2024-25 with a focus on their sustainability throughout the coming five years and beyond.