

# MEMO

**To:** Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) Board of Education

**From:** District Accountability Committee (DAC)

**Date:** January 24, 2023

**Re:** Recommendations on Spending Priorities for School Year 2023-2024

To fulfill the DAC responsibility: C.R.S. 22-11-302(1)(a) – *To recommend to its local school board priorities for spending school district monies. Whenever the school district accountability committee recommends spending priorities, it shall make reasonable efforts to consult in a substantive manner with the school accountability committees of the school district. The local school board shall consider the school District Accountability Committee recommendations in adopting the school district budget for each fiscal year pursuant to article 44 of this title.*

## Process

The DAC considered a variety of data to guide its spending recommendations. Sources include available enrollment and academic data, the BVSD Strategic Plan (SP), consultation with the School Accountability Committees (SAC) through the SAC Budget Survey, and review of prior year recommendations. DAC membership voted virtually to approve the recommendations summarized here.

## Framing

The scope and scale of the annual spending recommendations were expanded in 2022, recommending that BVSD take the opportunity to consider the context of larger trends which recur across multiple budget cycles and cannot be addressed in a single financial year. The DAC commends the district for steps taken to address strategic long-term planning, in particular the formation of a long-term planning committee, expanded efforts to increase data transparency and accessibility, and the continued focus on prioritizing equitable outcomes for our students. The current recommendations for 2023 reinforce the long-term recommendations but return to a focus on the current priorities identified by schools via the annual SAC Budget survey, alignment with the Strategic Plan, and current enrollment and academic data patterns.

## Recommendations

The DAC recommends that BVSD continue to align its budget with the broad goals and strategies identified in the strategic plan on a yearly basis to address short-term and immediate need, but also recommends that the district continue to invest in long-term planning and to re-examine whether the strategic plan in its current iteration will continue to address the needs of BVSD in the post-pandemic educational and social context. For the 2023-2024 academic year, schools have overwhelmingly identified three areas to prioritize for spending. As a result, particular attention should be paid to investments in supporting equity and social emotional well-being for students and staff, the continued district-wide implementation and expansion of a culturally responsive tiered system of supports and of need based differentiated supports, and the implementation of accountability metrics to assess return on investment.

**1) Equity and Supports for All Students:** Gaps in achievement and growth for special populations of students (e.g., DLL, FRL, Special Education) have seen little progress over time, and are likely to have been exacerbated as a result of school disruption and the pandemic. DAC continues to recommend more dedication to these issues. In particular, schools prioritize that BVSD increase allocations that provide more equitable access to:

- a) Highly-skilled teachers and academic support staff
  - i) Expanded access to gifted and talented programming for all students, in particularly DLL, FRL, & Special Education students
  - ii) Expanded training and supports for special education
  - iii) Increased investment in classroom paraprofessional who have considerable student contact hours
- b) Differentiated interventions and supports across schools based on need to address long standing gaps and disparities
- c) High-level evidence-based culturally competent curricula

**2) Social-Emotional Learning and Supports:** Return to the classroom has been challenging for all students and as academic success is predicated on social and emotional well-being, particular attention should be paid to social emotional learning and supports. The DAC commends the district for expansion of access to mental health resources and implementation of multi-tiered systems of supports across schools in the district, and encourages the district to continue to focus on expanding the existing support infrastructure and developing an inclusive learning environment by prioritizing:

- a) Continued investment in culturally competent school mental health professionals and wrap around services
- b) A concerted focus on developing family supports (e.g., community liaison, family partnerships, brokering external supports)
- c) Expansion of evidence based SEL programming into the academic curricula

**3) Improved Data Reporting and Accountability:** We commend the considerable investment and progress by the district in making strategic plan metric data publicly available, the roll out of the public facing data dashboards is a critical first step. Making performance data available, particularly for special populations, increases trust and allows the public to evaluate district progress. To continue to improve transparency and build a culture of accountability, the DAC encourages BVSD to continue to invest resources to:

- a) Further develop and publicize reliable measures of student performance and program evaluation.
  - i) Continued investment in data driven instruction and training
- b) Collaborate with stakeholders to make available data accessible and translatable to increase and improve utility
  - i) More frequent progress reporting to increase accountability and facilitate family engagement
  - ii) Expand access and utility of data dashboards
- c) Expand efforts to inform families about state assessments (e.g., CMAS, SAT, PSAT) and strategic plan metrics, and their purposes.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A: BVSD Strategic Plan**

Themes and Objectives highlighted in yellow were identified within the DAC spending priorities.

Long Term Student Outcomes			
<input type="checkbox"/> All students benefit from challenging and relevant educational opportunities		<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce disparities in achievement	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Every student graduates empowered with the skills necessary for post-graduate success	
<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Theme 4</b>
Ensure all instruction is challenging, engaging, relevant and meets the needs of all students	Provide schools and educators with responsive and customized supports to best serve students	Engage the talent and passion of our community and families through communication, empowerment and partnership	Cultivate a positive and inclusive culture throughout BVSD that promotes the well-being of students, families and employees
<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Objective 6</b>
Increase alignment to a guaranteed and viable instructional model	Ensure allocation of resources is responsive, accountable, and focused on student growth	Increase and improve school-family connections to develop a more supportive and collaborative environment that promotes equitable outcomes and removes barriers	Align to a common, research-based framework that ensures all students and adults feel supported, respected, and safe
<b>Strategic Initiatives</b>	<b>Strategic Initiatives</b>	<b>Strategic Initiatives</b>	<b>Strategic Initiatives</b>
<b>1a. Create a standards-based scope and sequence for PreK-12</b> <b>1b. Define and implement common and aligned instructional practices</b> 1c. Design support systems to maximize school-based administrators' instructional leadership capacity	<b>3a. Create a tiered system of school requirements, supports, and accountability metrics which drive the allocation of resources</b>  3b. Implement a needs-based allocation system <b>3c. Create a system to monitor and assess return on investment for current and future initiatives</b>	4a. Strengthen school-family connectedness through implementation of consistent district-wide strategies that improve communication, collaboration, and belonging  <b>Objective 5</b> Optimize community partnerships to systematically align with BVSD's priorities  <b>Strategic Initiatives</b> <b>5a. Establish a system for strategically managing existing partnerships and building new partnerships</b>  5b. Embrace community assets to ensure meaningful career discovery and postgraduate preparation across all school levels for every student	<b>6a. Define and put into practice culturally responsive principles and best practices that challenge inequity and bias</b>  6b. Develop and implement an employee support system to increase their overall wellness and efficacy in serving students
<b>Objective 2</b>			
Increase fidelity to a tiered system of supports			
<b>Strategic Initiatives</b>			
2a. Expand and increase district-wide implementation of a culturally responsive tiered system of supports  2b. Redefine and complete development of an adaptive assessment framework that informs instruction and aligns with a tiered system of supports across all content areas			

Additional detail on the BVSD Strategic Plan is available here:

<https://www.bvsd.org/about/strategic-plan>

**Appendix B: SAC Budget Survey Findings**