



CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Chief Financial Officer

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RE: Budgeting for Equity in Education Whitepaper

Equity is not a budget bolt-on.

Because school districts appropriate funds annually, there is a natural bias towards the short-term. To guard against poor planning, we deploy multi-fund, multiyear forecasts and strategies for the general fund revenues and expenditures, capital projects, curriculum and instructional innovation, debt service, technology, and transportation.

Our major investment in equity began with implementation of a 1:1 Chromebook environment for the 2017-18 school year in all secondary grades, a project that has expanded to grade 5 for 2018-19. At the elementary grade levels K-4, Centennial deploys a 1:2 strategy leveraged primarily around iPads. Every classroom is outfitted with either a short-throw projector or large screen television, augmented by an Apple TV for quick and easy multimedia collaboration. Our network infrastructure is robust, and our staffing includes a technology resource for every building to facilitate effective integration of the tools into engaged teaching and learning. The digital divide is further bridged by follow-me printing for faculty and students, such that students can print to virtually any multifunction printing device across the district.

Our movement to the 1:1 and 1:2 equity-friendly technology environments added approximately \$500,000 in expenditures to each year of the district's multiyear forecast. Longevity of the program has been made possible by sound, yet aggressive management of Centennial's health and welfare benefits plan. Our medical renewals for the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 school years were 1.33%, 1.91%, and 1.26%, respectively. Pharmacy costs for 2018-19 alone were reduced by 10%.

Centennial is also keenly aware that students have different learning styles and sometimes need additional supports. By way of example, we added two full-time behavioral analysts to assist students in bridging the gap, a staffing model facilitated by close attention to natural gas and electricity expenditures. In 2018, every single Centennial school building received the EPA's Energy Star certification. Some of our exceptional students earn valuable work and life skills by working alongside our custodial teams to maintain warm, safe, and dry facilities for up to two hours a day.

Stewardship of our equity in education initiative is provided by a Principal of Practice. This new position was funded entirely by consolidation of administrative positions throughout the district, meaning that not a single dollar of additional expense was required.

The 2018-19 budget includes a modest appropriation of \$12,000 for an equity audit underway in November 2018, as well as membership in an equity-focused consortium, and other incidental

expenses thereof. The miscellaneous costs of the initiative – from membership to travel to study – will not likely exceed \$50,000 in any given year. Because we have consciously made equity in education a rail of our pathway forward, the project is much more about applying existing resources in ever-increasingly effective ways to deliver better results with the same pool of dollars.

A recent refresh of musical instruments is a perfect example of how our strategic vision is made possible by long-term financial planning. We collaboratively built competitive procurements to refresh our instrument fleet, fully aware that functional equipment at school is essential to mitigating socioeconomic barriers to participation in musical programs. Likewise, relatively level annual investments in school furniture replacement of roughly \$50,000 per year have focused on flexible learning spaces that foster comfortable group learning.

Centennial is sensitive to the challenges that participation in extracurricular athletics and clubs can have across a spectrum of socioeconomic capacities. We do not charge an activities fee. Rather, the conversation is truly about offering a variety of programs that our community can afford. By Board policy, any sanctioned competitive team that advances to state or national championships is fully underwritten by the district to attend those events.

Additionally, while major investments are funded in the district through centrally-managed budgets, each school receives a modest per pupil allocation and flexibility to allocate non-personnel resources to the classrooms that need it most. Proof of concept innovations are supplemented by grants from our Education Foundation.

Finally, concepts of return on investment, life-cycle costing, and multiyear planning are discussed at virtually every district finance committee meeting. The data speaks for itself as testament to the Board, Superintendent, and Chief Financial Officer's commitment to champion equity in education. In actual expenses, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, in sum only the direct instructional and direct student support segments of our general fund budget increased, while appropriations in total for the business, operations, and debt service components decreased.

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