

Budget Amendment

Increase the Intensive Support Team staff by 3.5 FTE (1 FTE for the Autism /Significant Developmental Delay team/ 2 FTE for the behavioral health team and .50 for a clerical assistant).

Rationale:

Based on community feedback and staff input there is an increased need to support our students with intensive behavioral and mental health needs. According to anecdotal information and district data there are a small number of students that are currently receiving a disproportionate amount of behavioral referrals (about 1% of our students make up 95% of behavioral referrals). Many of these students have documented or undocumented diagnoses, learning differences or a trauma history that require an acute and elevated levels of support in order to be successful in our schools.

Rather than restrict eligibility criteria that create more barriers for students to access specialized services, we should be proactive and prevent escalating disciplinary measures that lead to exclusionary practices by increasing our capacity to serve more students in a timely matter. By investing in programs that prevent suspension and expulsion, hundreds of thousands of dollars can be saved for our district.

<https://systemschangeconsulting.wordpress.com/2016/06/02/the-high-cost-of-school-suspensions/>

Building the capacity at the district level to provide immediate help and ongoing professional development to non-Student Services staff via our Intensive Support Team is more cost effective in comparison to paying for expensive, outside consulting services and trainings. Based on staff feedback, there is an increased need for professional development in the area of working with students that have intensive mental health and behavioral challenges in our district.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5tzvH8Cg2U>

Currently, the Intensive Support Team doesn't have the capacity to organize, schedule and provide professional development in an efficient and effective manner due to limited capacity. By providing additional team members and a clerical position, scheduling professional development during educators' planning time would be more consistent across the district. This increase would also off-set some of the the cuts made in the previous year to Students Services staff (21 Student Services staff).

Possible funding streams:

BEP professional development:

Based on anecdotal data from one-on-ones with staff and Board presentations, opportunities for professional development have been limited and difficult to attend due to other commitments, not due to lack of interest or need. There was no additional information provided to the Board that would support lack of interest or need as the basis for not utilizing professional development funding. In fact, Behavior Education Plan surveys continue to indicate there is a high interest in increased professional development in order to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of our student body.

Student Services staff have also shared that based on 2 years of cuts in staffing, it has been even more difficult to establish an efficient and consistent method to provide professional development to school-based staff. Non-Student Services staff have also expressed their inability to meet the needs of a growing number of students with intensive mental health and behavioral challenges with the current staffing levels.

In the current budget proposal, there is a \$356,000 dollar reduction made to the Behavior Education Plan Professional Development budget which is being repurposed to fund other district initiatives. This money should be utilized to pay for staff increases as these positions are directly tied to improving the implementation of the Behavior Education Plan and reducing the use of exclusionary practices in our schools, including seclusion, suspension and expulsion.

Access to bilingual education:

The district will not be expanding the DLI program to all schools put forth in the ELL plan which should lead to a decrease in FTE by .50 for an additional DLI planner. This would provide about \$43,755 dollars in additional funds. There are very few students and families (currently 4 families based on feedback from Principal) that have shown interest at Thoreau Elementary in the DLI program at a to-be-determined school, therefore \$36,000 dollars appears to be an excessive amount of money set aside for transportation costs for bussing. In total, there would be about \$70,000 dollars in additional funds.

Other possible funding sources:

TID 25 loan

Reduce spending on Technology Plan

Reduce spending on Educational Resource Officers

Utilize funds saved from not filling the position of Special Assistant to the Superintendent (\$125,000 dollars)