January 12, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

As you may know, Monday, January 9th marked the official start of the FY 2017-18 Budget Development Process.

This budget process will be very challenging, especially in light of the previous eight years of flat funding of the general fund and the reduction of over 230 positions within the 2016-17 budget.

Last year, we spoke of a “perfect storm” with increased costs, decreasing revenues and threats to our stability. We continue to witness chronic uncertainty and instability as state and local budgets face unrelenting fiscal stress. Considering the current fiscal scenarios -- diminishing investment compounded by increasing costs – the challenge will be significant.

We must also recognize the additional and related pressures on schools and the district, such as:

- Many of our schools operate under capacity;
- Enrollment continues to decline;
- Many of our schools have aged facilities that require significant investment; and
- The disparity in student performance across the district.

These pressures have a real impact on our budget and, more importantly, on our ability to provide a high quality education for every student. With fewer budget dollars across many schools, it becomes more difficult to provide the necessary resources and programs that all of our students in every school – neighborhood and magnet schools alike – need and deserve.

As we begin to prepare this year’s budget our focus and priority is Students First! We need to identify and direct our resources to those essential ingredients necessary to ensure student and school success. This will not be easy, especially in light of our persistent fiscal struggles. It is however, our expectation that as we navigate through these challenges, we are driven to collectively change the way we think, act, share and prioritize our limited resources.

Throughout this process, we will work with each of you, with our SGC’s, our staff, families, our Board and community stakeholders to ensure that our resources are aligned to student needs and school goals.

In our strategic plan, we have equity front and center – our budget process will strive to ensure our system is working for all students by finding the best possible alignment of resources to ensure student success.

“Every Child Thrives. Every School is High Performing. No Exceptions.”
Below please find important information as you begin to embark on this process:

- To access the “Budget Development Web Application” please copy the link below into your web browser.
- Given the present uncertainty in revenue and our need to find the best possible alignment of resources to ensure student success, school-based revenue is not available in the Budget Development Application.
- As was communicated at the Principal’s Leadership Meeting, our methodology for developing this year’s budget is a “student-focused needs-based” approach. This is an intentional focus on the resources necessary to provide our students equitable opportunity and access, to ensure quality and success for all students.
- Over the next several days, Assistant Superintendents will be sharing guidelines for principals to use in the initial budget development. These guidelines will support principals in identifying critical needs aligned with the district budget priorities and the Strategic Operating Plan.

- Current school enrollment (as of October 1, 2016) is available within the Budget Development Application. Please provide changes/updates as necessary based on student grade level and student need.
- Attached please find the expanded internal budget process calendar. Please make note of important dates for training, support and continued engagement opportunities. The team will begin reaching out to each of you to establish individual school and portfolio team support meetings within the next several days.
- Preliminary budgets are due February 6, 2017.

We thank you for your continued support, leadership and engagement during this process. As always, if you have any questions or require assistance, please feel free to contact us or any member of your portfolio team.

Thank you,

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