Every year Columbia Public Schools creates and shares a detailed and thorough budget document. The 2021-22 Budget is 436 pages, more than three times what it was a decade ago, and represents the financial information for the coming fiscal year. The primary purpose is to provide timely and useful information concerning the past, present and projected financial status of the District to facilitate financial discussions that support the mission, goals, and objectives of the Board of Education. CPS shares this document publicly and updates the Board of Education monthly to aid in sharing how the district is fiscally responsible with taxpayer money.

The process CPS uses to develop the budget requires a great deal of analysis. The decisions CPS makes in the short-term need to be sustainable in the long-term. CPS works collaboratively with schools, District programs and District administration to develop strategies and align resources in a manner that reflects our vision, mission and values. CPS believes budget development is the foundation of meeting our District’s vision and mission to be the best district in our state.

The CPS budget positions CPS students to be ready for life after high school. During the planning phase, stakeholders weigh in and make additional contributions. At all times, the CPS Finance Committee meets prior to Board of Education meetings. This committee is diligent at reviewing financial trends and working toward fulfilling the promises the district has made to stakeholders with the funds available. Further, CPS administration is committed to providing transparency with regard to district finances and will prudently allocate the funds entrusted to us. This document created by the Business Services Department and the office of the Chief Financial Officer intends to provide a clear and transparent insight into the 2021-22 budget.

CPS has received the award for exemplary transparency and budget excellence. By using the MBA as the gold standard with a focus on continuous improvement, CPS continually increases the information and data necessary to be responsive to stakeholder needs. The budget document is also a way for CPS to reiterate the commitment to considering the future impacts of current decisions and the dedication to remain transparent to all stakeholders.

**Overall Goal (outline in CSIP and based on survey feedback):** Columbia Public Schools will inform and engage stakeholders to increase transparency and support for the classroom. CPS will communicate district financial and budget data and information and engage stakeholders in long-range facility and financial planning.

**Objectives:** Receive the 2021 Association of School Business Officials’ Meritorious Budget Award (MBA). Between 2019 and 2022, CPS will work with stakeholders to move “Spend tax dollars wisely/control costs” from an area of improvement to a graded area in the next stakeholder survey to be conducted in summer 2022 (delayed one year due to COVID) with a focus on strengthening the community’s relationship with the district.

**Tactics:** Continuously share budget information and updates in monthly Board of Education meetings. Host monthly Finance Committee meetings. Share impacts financial decisions have on the five-year model at each Finance Committee and Board of Education meeting. Use storytelling and graphics in all budget documents and presentations to be user-friendly for the average taxpayer. Provide information in a variety of ways (narrative, tables, charts, etc.) in all budget documents and presentations to meet the needs of various users.

**Evaluation/Results:** CPS was one of seven Missouri districts to receive the 2022 Association of School Business Officials’ Meritorious Budget Award (MBA). This is the fifth year CPS has received this award.

CPS will conduct the next stakeholder survey in summer 2022 (delayed one year due to COVID).
ENDNOTES:

1. **Stakeholders**
   - Level 1 Stakeholders (those we exist to serve)
     - Key Customers
       - Students
       - Parents/Guardians
       - Patrons/taxpayers
     - Staff
       - Administrators
       - Support Staff
       - Certified Staff
     - Board of Education
     - Potential Residents
     - Potential Staff
   - Level 2 Stakeholders (those that enable us to serve effectively)
     - Collaborators
   - Volunteers, higher education, neighboring school districts, professional development networks
   - Partners
     - Parent organizations (PTA, Booster Clubs), higher education, neighboring school districts, area youth organizations (athletics, scouts, etc.) city and county departments and officials, chambers of commerce, economic development councils
   - Suppliers
     - Vendors, business services, legislators, etc.

2. **Area of strength include: Student Safety – currently 60% gave an “A” grade, 31% gave a “B” grade. Quality of school facilities – currently 57% gave an “A” grade, 28% gave a “B” grade. The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event – currently 49% gave an “A” grade, 24% gave a “B” grade. Performance of district teachers – currently 29% gave an “A” grade, 62% gave a “B” grade and Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students – currently 33% gave an “A” grade, 39% gave a “B” grade.

   Identified areas of improvement from the 2019 Patron Telephone survey of 400 head-of-household, registered voters living within the boundaries of the school district include: “Spend tax dollars wisely/control costs,” “Stress academics over athletics” (51 mentions), and “Communication” (42 mentions).