

**Citizens Budget Review Committee
Summary of May 14, 2009 Meeting
6:15 – 9:00pm**

14 of 17 members were in attendance.

Charge & Guiding Questions

The Co-Chairs met with the Board Officers (Mark Williams, Vincent Torres, and Lori Moya) and noted highlights. The Board Officers verified that the purpose of the CBRC is to focus on processes and not getting into examining the budget line-by-line. They were pleased with the direction the CBRC was going and affirmed the guiding questions that reflect the charge. They also noted that the charge may adapt and the work of the CBRC may not always be about process; setting up subcommittees remains an open question for the future.

Review of Current Budget Development Process

Steve West, Interim Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the various documents that CBRC members received at the meeting (and are also posted on the web). His presentation took a deeper look at the budget process and was an expansion of the presentation from the prior CBRC meeting. He noted that even though Board approval and focus is on the General Fund, it is important to think about how the General Fund relates to the other funds, such as Title I.

During the discussion facilitated by the Co-Chairs, CBRC members shared several concerns about the current process through their experience with campus processes. For instance, several members indicated that Campus Advisory Councils (CACs) do not have much involvement even though they technically are required to sign-off on the campus budget. One member noted the need to get the budget information to CACs sooner – perhaps at the same time that principals get it – because of the timing of CAC meetings can limit their involvement in the budget process. It was suggested that the campus BTO, or a more simplified version of the campus BTO, be posted on the web in order to increase access and transparency. In addition, there was discussion about the CAC's role in involving the community as well as considering what appropriate and productive involvement might look like and its impact on the budget timeline.

Relatedly, members discussed the need for guidance on what to do with the BTO. It was noted that there seemed to be no clear guidelines for principals and campuses on the designing the BTO. A member noted that while some is formula-driven, including by state law and other parts are flexible, the BTO does not seem packaged in a way that helps the campus understand the budget process. There is a need for greater clarity around roles and how individuals (such as parents and citizens) can affect the process.

Discussion of a New Budget Development Process

Steve West urged the CBRC members to ask questions about things members would like to see happen and make statements accordingly. While it may take time to get consensus, direct statements will be helpful to him and the District. CBRC members then discussed elements of the new process and the following highlights notes written on the Board as well as related comments.

1. Tie budget to strategic plan
 - a. Are priorities informed by data/evaluation?
 - b. Are our standards appropriate?

The district needs to design programs aligned to the strategic plan, allocate the budget to support the programs, and then evaluation the programs. There is then a continuous loop between program design, budget, and program evaluation.

2. Systems benchmarking
 - a. Student performance
 - b. Financial performance
3. How are data used to inform decisions? Set priorities?
4. Programs? Who owns them? Definitions?

Training (to support better use and understanding of information) for:

- CAC
- Internal staff

Financial accountability

- critical analysis of expenditures / recommendations for reductions

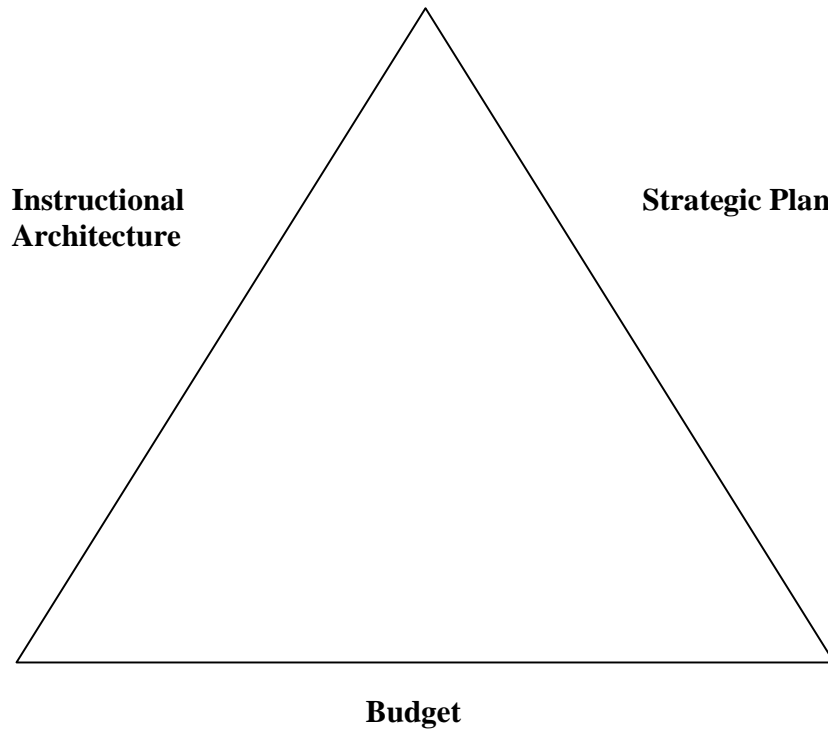
Best practices (informed by data/evaluation)

- finance
- technology use and implementation

Transparency

- Data
- Documentation
 - Make widely available.
 - Understandable to all constituents
 - Process to facilitate input from CAC

The following preliminary framework emerged:



The Instructional System, Strategic Plan, and Budget form the legs of a triangle and all point to each other to show interdependence and alignment.

The Efficiency Study informs the three-legged framework. The District needs to link instructional architecture and the strategic plan (goals from instructional system and goals from strategic plan need to be almost the same). And these in turn need to be aligned with the budget.

In addition, the District needs to tie everything with goals and measures. How do these measures drive the budget? What is the process/methodology to get here? To what extent is the public driving those phases?

It was noted that while most of the budget (85%) is people, it is important to keep in mind that the way people are utilized is something the district has control over. It's about alignment.

We need to identify barriers or limitations on implementing the elements in the triangle and consider items in the critical path. Think: What is our capacity to respond?

A member suggested that the CBRC recommend that the District start down the three legged path beginning September 1st.

Next Steps

Members and Co-Chairs noted the need to continue talking about the process, including roles. It was suggested that the CBRC look at the current strategic plan, even though it is ending, as an exercise to think about alignment.