

**ELK GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**2021 FINANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Finance Committee is pleased to submit their annual report to the Elk Grove Unified School District Board of Education and Cabinet.

**Finance Committee Members**

Ms. Angee Wangsgard (appointed by Board Member Albiani) serves as Finance Committee Chairperson with Marites Rivera (Perez) as the Vice-Chairperson. Committee Members are: Samia Aguirre (Martinez-Alire), Michael Alvarez (Forcina), Igor Carreon (At Large), Zenobia Nicholson (At Large), Megan Sapigao (Chaires-Espinoza), Jon Scriven (Hoffman), and Peter Suda (At Large). Positions appointed by Trustees Jamerson and Yang are not filled.

**Function of the Finance Committee**

The function of the Finance Committee is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Elk Grove Unified School District Board of Trustees on matters pertaining to District finances. The Committee provides community input that is shared with the Board of Education. The Committee is composed of community members appointed by each Board Member, three community members appointed at-large by the Board of Education, and one community member appointed by the Superintendent. Student representatives from the district's high schools are invited to provide feedback twice a year on important issues that may have a financial impact at their respective schools. The Committee is assisted by non-voting district staff members including the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Fiscal Services, and other staff as requested by the Committee.

The functions of the Finance Committee, according to the bylaws approved on December 8, 2015 shall be: a) To review the annual budget and interim financial reports and provide comment when deemed necessary; b) To provide opinions on current fiscal strategies for the District; c) To identify potential fiscal problems and refer them to the Board of Education; d) To provide an annual written report of the Committee's activities to the Board of Education; e) To provide any oral presentations to the Board of Education at the Board's request or at the Committee's initiative; and f) To serve as an ad hoc resource for specific research or study as requested by the Board.

**Finance Committee 2021 Meetings and Primary Topics**

The Committee held 9 meetings on Zoom during 2021. We met on January 25<sup>th</sup> for an Organization Meeting with Superintendent Hoffman, February 22<sup>nd</sup> Pandemic preparation and activities related to Technology and Facilities, March 29<sup>th</sup> Mental Health, April 26<sup>th</sup> Student Representatives, May 24<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 Funding and Priorities, June 28<sup>th</sup> Curriculum and Professional Learning, September 27<sup>th</sup> Family and Community Engagement, October 25<sup>th</sup> Student Representatives, and November 15<sup>th</sup>- Annual Report.

**Finance Committee Activities Report and Recommendations for 2021**

Introduction/Background: The Committee received presentations from staff representing various departments and programs. The presentations were helpful in providing the Committee with a clear understanding of the current projects and financial state of the departments. We appreciate the time and effort the departments spent presenting to the Committee, and the way they answered our questions.

JANUARY- Organization Meeting with Superintendent Hoffman: The Committee was pleased to have Superintendent Hoffman speak to us in January. Superintendent Hoffman gave an overview of the financial state of EGUSD and the various labor groups within the district and discussed the possibility of returning to in person learning. He discussed the graduate profile, equity work, and social emotional outcomes the District is working on. The majority of the meeting was spent discussing new revenue and expenses related to the pandemic.

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FEBRUARY- Facilities and Technology in connection with the Pandemic: Steve Mate reported to the committee about District efforts to mobilize staff and equipment for distance learning. He discussed devices, connectivity, software, and subscriptions the District was using to make distance learning more meaningful. He reported on total and ongoing costs related to distance learning. Rob Pierce reported on COVID safety measures throughout the District. He discussed classroom environments, PPE, signage and cleaning procedures.

**The Finance Committee Recommends:** **1)** That the district analyze teacher usage of subscriptions, software, and other new technology and the related learning outcomes to justify their cost.

MARCH- Mental Health Services Update: Don Ross, Lisa Vartanian, Moriah Brasel and Katy Thomas presented about the District's efforts to support mental health and wellness for students and staff and how they are using the extra CARES Act funding. They discussed Multi-Tiered System Support, Fidelity monitoring, and their plans for the future.

**The Finance Committee:** **1)** Supports the increased spending on Mental Health Services and would like the department to enhance the way they measure outcomes for the new and enhanced programs; **2)** Recommends more focus on Tier 1 Support, and **3)** Anticipate the need for additional expenditures in this area, especially in Social and Emotional Learning

APRIL- Student Representatives Spring: The committee invited students from each District high school to address 3 questions at the meeting. Eleven students attended the Zoom meeting.

1. *Are the district's priorities in returning to school working for the students at your school?* Students generally felt their schools were working hard as students returned but that there were gaps that needed filling. About half the students asked for more mental health support, especially one on one support. Some wanted more information about preventive measures being taken to make school safe as students were returning from distance learning.
2. *Do you feel students are being left behind? If so, how can the district improve in meeting their needs?* Common themes for student answers included a request for focus on students as individuals, because it was easy to 'hide' during distance learning, including more opportunities for tutoring. Students requested efforts and funding for activities and extracurriculars to create connections after being unconnected due to the pandemic. Several mentioned that many students lack motivation and need teachers who love their subjects and are willing to engage them personally.
3. *How has the past year changed your perspective on education and what suggestions do you have for success in the future?* Student responses to this question were insightful and memorable. They were more grateful for normal life events and less willing to take them for granted. They were grateful for the teachers that really care and were willing to change their teaching methods to be more effective during distance learning. They recognized they could change and adapt to difficult circumstances and take on more responsibility for their own learning. They also recognized that distance learning was hard on students who struggled to be personally responsible. They also noted how they recognized that cheating is prevalent and how this needs to be addressed.

**The Committee would like to see:** **1)** Expanded services for catching up, including tutoring programs in various formats; **2)** Sufficient financial and administrative/school board support for extracurricular activities and schoolwide activities to foster connectedness; **3)** Funding to support more training for professional staff in cultural competence, and **4)** Creative efforts to address mental health and wellness even for students not in crisis.

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MAY- Budget Update related to Covid Funding: We had a thorough discussion with Shannon Hayes about the evolving and increasing funding from state and federal sources. Committee members provided 2-3 funding priorities and the information was shared with the Board in the 5/28/21 meeting. It is also attached here if you would like to jog your memory.

**The committee funding priorities from 5/2021 are attached.**

JUNE- Curriculum and Professional Learning: Jennifer Avey and Jerrilyn Ewing presented about how their work changed during the pandemic, including how the District helped teachers pivot to distance learning. They reported on efforts to support VAPA in the District and on the new Illuminate assessment tool.

**The committee:** **1)** Supports funding for VAPA for all students, and especially efforts to change VAPA from an elective to become part of the core curriculum. **2)** Supports the continued funding and development of the Illuminate assessment program, and **3)** Applauds the large number of staff development workshops that were held but requests additional funding for staff development since most sessions filled and had waitlists.

SEPTEMBER-Family and Community Engagement: Lisa Levasseur introduced the FACE office and personnel and presented about their vision, budget, and department programs, including the home visits program, the website for parents, their support of newcomer families and welcome centers, and the family workshops.

**The Committee:** **1)** Applauded department efforts to maintain and even increase family visits virtually during the pandemic; **2)** Requests further expansion of use of the Talking Points app to help schools communicate with families in an efficient way, and **3)** Requests continued effort to increase school communication with all families in the District.

OCTOBER- Student Representatives Fall: We invited Student Representatives from all high schools in the District and asked them four questions. Students gave answers and feedback on a variety of issues affecting their schools. Eight students attended the Zoom meeting.

*1) Do you think students who may need support (either academically or emotionally) are receiving it? If not, what do you think are the barriers to them getting the support they need?* Students said there is a need for extra academic support. The need for tutoring that fits in a student's schedule was a common theme. Several students had the impression that counselors are too busy to meet with them unless they are seniors. They also suggested that counselors need more "advertising", because students need the help but don't always know where to go.

*2) What resources could the district use to help students who are struggling in specific subjects? Do you have any outside the box suggestions that you haven't seen implemented yet?* Students suggested more training for teachers on implementing different teaching strategies for various styles of learners and on using more technology tools. Several had specific suggestions for creative tutoring solutions like online tutoring, department level or subject level tutoring, and students tutoring other students.

*3) Do you feel safe at school? Please briefly address safety at your school (i.e., campus security, restroom safety, the way the school handles security threats, etc.) and any suggestions you may have.* Most students said they feel safe at school and many specifically expressed that campus security is present and good. Two students felt their schools needed more security, or that security and COVID rules need to be taken more seriously.

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OCTOBER- Student Representatives Fall (continued)

4) *Since returning to school, what do you think is your school's greatest strength and area for growth?* Strengths: Students listed a variety of school strengths including more technology focus, better focus on mental health, and more focus on academic support. Areas for Growth: Students requested more communication from teachers and administrators, equity for different student activities, and more academic help.

**Addressing the feedback from students, the committee suggests:**

- 1) More funding for tutoring, and district-wide collaboration on tutoring programs that are working (i.e., students helping students, online tutoring, and outside partnerships for tutoring)
- 2) Prioritizing normalcy for students when creating policies
- 3) Assuring adequate funding for online learning tools
- 4) Funding an adequate number of counselors and social workers
- 5) That funding spent on communication is money well spent. Saturating the school community with different methods of communication is important.

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***Angee Wangsgard, Chairperson  
2021 Finance Committee***

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**ON STATE & FEDERAL COVID-19 FUNDING**

The Elk Grove Unified School District Finance Committee met on May 24, 2021, and reviewed the funding summary related to the State and Federal response to COVID-19. The committee would like to share the following considerations for funding:

- Student academic testing
  - Implement robust testing (above and beyond what has been done in the past) that can be analyzed quickly
  - Train staff on how to better use data to support student learning, with district follow up on results
- Training for PLCs to implement successful new curriculum and instruction strategies for transition back to full time, in person school
- Safety in return to school (bullying, hostility, active shooters, suicide, anxiety, depression)
  - Consider additional security practices during transition back to on campus learning
  - Explore adding cameras
  - Prevention programs
- More awareness of and support for student mental health
  - Need measured approach
  - Counseling available separate from academic counseling
  - Dedicated staff formulating support tools for students
- Facility improvements
  - HVAC
  - Interactive technology- Consider investing in more classroom technology advancements and also technology resources that can be used at home
- Extra support for Academies
  - Funding for additional supplies/activities/support to make up for missed time
- Extra support for VAPA
  - Funding for additional productions/activities/supplies to make up for missed time
- Tutoring available for all students, including AP and Honors
  - Programs to allow academic catch up and enrichment during the school year
- Support transition of students from distance learning to on campus learning- Especially 7th and 9th graders from both 2020-21 and 2021-22 who may not be familiar with the campus
- Social and emotional learning professional development for all staff
  - Student led social emotional advisory skills taught to students that are focused with curriculum goals and objectives
  - Use of multi-tier support system
- Extra support for Homeless and Foster Youth
  - Clothing drive or other community help
- Study whether to offer extended kindergarten day to assist with transition to 1st grade
- Provide funding for sites that desire to hold graduation ceremony for 2020-21 graduates