

CENTRAL LINN SCHOOL DISTRICT 552C
2021 BUDGET MESSAGE

To say that the last year has been different than anything I have been asked to navigate a school district through would be an understatement. It has been difficult for the staff, the kids, the parents and the community as a whole. We have tried to do it with our learners at the center of every decision we made. No one has been satisfied with the situation or the tough decisions that were thrust upon us. As a community we have done the best we can.

This will be my last budget message as your Superintendent, and I thank you for the privilege of serving you. Thank you for entrusting my team with your children. We have made great strides in developing a quality and stable education system for your children. This has only been possible because of a diverse group of citizens who have served on the Central Linn School Board from all walks of life and all political persuasions who have set aside their own ego and have focused on our children: KIDS FIRST, NO MATTER WHAT. I know we live in divisive times, but I pray that we can still come together in the service of our children. I know that it can be done because I have been a witness to it for the last ten years. This community loves its children, and we are all Cobras when it comes down to it.

School funding for the next few years is a two-edged sword. On one side, we will be receiving an unprecedented amount of federal funding that will allow us to cope with the increased costs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and for that we are thankful; on the other side, this has led the state to propose a K-12 funding level that will not even maintain pre-pandemic levels of programming. This inadequate state funding level will only compound in years to come as we lobby for rollup costs from an inadequate base. In other words, we have a short term cash influx, but it creates a cliff when that money runs out. For that reason this budget is the first step in a three-year strategy to build reserves in order to avoid that sharp funding cliff, so we can maintain a stable educational model. You will see that we are proposing to utilize a budget line item entitled "unappropriated ending fund balance". This is funding that we will recognize, but will not have the authority to spend. Kind of like a certificate of deposit; it is there, but we cannot withdraw it until it is approved by a future Budget committee. I encourage the committee to repeat this process for the next two budget cycles.

We are also building in a contingency that reflects lower student enrollment. If students return in the fall as expected, this contingency will not be needed for operations and will contribute to our reserves. If student enrollment does not return to a pre-pandemic level, this contingency will be used to maintain consistent programming through the 2021-22 school year and avoid midyear layoffs.

The budget summary sheet offered at the first budget meeting outlines the details of major changes in this year's budget as compared to years past, and I will make sure that document is readily available after the proposed budget is presented. That being said, I think it is appropriate to highlight a couple of key expenditures that have been asked for by the community:

- A maintenance position without daily custodial duties that can concentrate on repairs and small construction projects.
- The addition of one CTE teacher (Career and Technical Education) at the High school.
- The addition of a new Science/Math teacher 7-12.
- A return to normal staffing levels at the Elementary school, despite uncertain enrollment.
- The replacement of the HVAC systems in the gym at the Elementary school and the CTE building at the High School.

Going forward, we will be able to offer Elementary PE and Music, Jr High Sports, a Jr/Sr High School Agriculture program, full funding of High School Sports, Choir and Band, as well as activities such as Friday School, Friday Enrichment, FFA, summer programs for all learners and Outdoor School.

This budget celebrates and supports our accomplishments as well as moves us forward in developing the organizational capacity to propel us towards our vision.

This is not a perfect budget; but I do believe that it is a budget built around the needs of our learners and reflects the input that I have received from the Central Linn Community. I want to remind the community that I consider this document still fluid based on conditions we as a district do not control, but I will always honor its intentions. This proposed budget is balanced.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Gardner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "G".

Brian Gardner