



412 S. Sweigle Avenue
P.O. Box 188
Molalla, Oregon 97038
503-829-2359

Tony Mann, Superintendent

Budget Message 2020-21

May 12, 2020

Dear Molalla River School District Community,

Never before in modern times have we experienced a set of circumstances so far outside of our control as those we are experiencing today. The doorways to our brick-and-mortar schools have been closed for nearly two months and will remain so for the duration of this academic year, and in spite of this challenge, our teachers and educational support staff have done what they always do. They have risen to the opportunity to lead and learn, on behalf of their students and in support of our mission, in ways we may have never imagined as necessary. Remaining focused on the whole child – socially, emotionally and academically - has never been more important, and while our work has changed, our educators in all roles remain focused on supporting each individual student in this Distance Learning context.

Our high school team is working to ensure our seniors' accomplishments over their 12 years and 7 months of school are not diminished by this unprecedented closure during the last two months of their K-12 school career, and all district schools will continue engaging all students in the MRSD Distance Learning Framework through June 11th while we maintain a position of nimble readiness navigating the uncharted waters ahead.

In the face of the many uncertainties, our Board Adopted (Dec. '17) core beliefs have never been more important than now:

IN THE MOLALLA RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

WE BELIEVE EVERY STUDENT . . .

- Can demonstrate personal and academic excellence
- Deserves a vibrant, self-empowered life
- Starts each day with a desire to be successful
- Can graduate ready to control their own destiny
- Ought to be empowered as confident citizens, ready to influence their world

WE BELIEVE EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOLS, TOGETHER WITH THE COMMUNITY . . .

- Build partnerships with parents and know their children as individual learners
- Provide systems of support for each student, personalizing the way children's needs are met
- Educate the whole person – intellectually, emotionally, physically & ethically
- Are foundational in our democracy
- Teach for a future we can't yet imagine

THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO . . .

- Pursue exceptional academic achievement for ALL students in positive, engaging, safe learning environments
- Recruit, hire, develop, support and retain the very best educators for our students
- Assure effective communications, positive relationships throughout the community, and active engagement of our public
- Maintain responsible stewardship of all public resources
- Pursue the very best for ourselves and every student, working from the heart and the intellect to improve our world and the lives of others

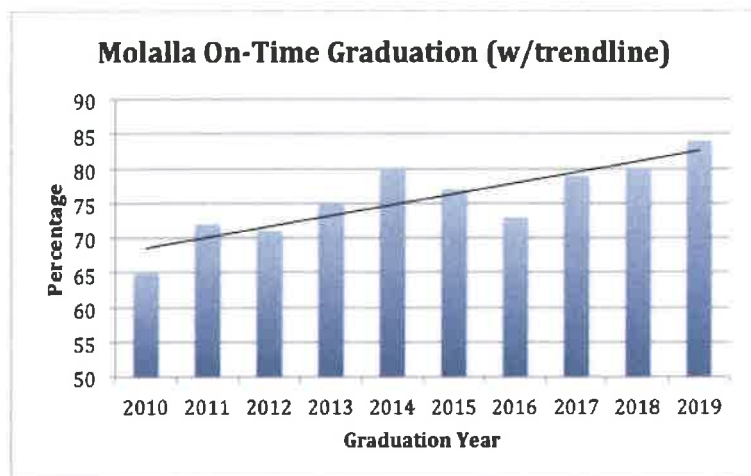
Financial Uncertainties

At the time of this budget message, it is important to note we are unable to include in our 2020-21 proposed budget any specific financial impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In fact, it is likely we will not know the financial impact of COVID-19 in time to alter the budget prior to the legally required deadline of June 30, 2020. We will get our first substantive glimpse of the adverse financial impact on May 20, 2020.

Therefore, this budget is built on the official estimate issued by the Oregon Department of Education on February 26, 2020. The 2019-21 biennial budget and State School Fund distributions are predicated on a \$9.0 billion State appropriation, and this amount has not yet been amended by the legislature as of the date of this document. There are certainly reasons to believe this funding level may change based upon the current economic factors as a result of the health crisis; however, we have no way of determining what the impact may be at this time.

We are proposing a budget based upon our core beliefs and time-held priorities that guide the District to continue delivering a high quality education aligned with our continuous improvement plan.

*We cannot give up on our success to-date. With a **nearly 20% increase** in on-time graduation at Molalla High School over the last ten years, our communities deserve that we keep our resources aligned with the results we expect for our students and their dreams of a vibrant vision for themselves in the future.*



The spending plan within this proposed budget prioritizes certain outcomes, and because of our historically prudent financial practices,

we are envisioning certain new spending priorities, setting them as place holders should the economic climate allow us to proceed as planned. The District will carefully measure any new spending against the reality of actualized revenue, remaining responsive as the economic story in Oregon continues to unfold.

Staffing Levels

Our district priorities have led us to increase course offerings at the secondary level while generally decreasing class size, particularly at the elementary level. The additional elementary classroom teacher FTE added in 2019-20 (current service level) is maintained in this proposed budget, and we expect class sizes to remain in the mid-twenties as enrollment remains relatively static K-5.

At the secondary level, increases to the middle school general fund FTE that were made in the last budget cycle remain in place. Enrollment at the high school level, however, warrants a general fund increase of 1.0 teacher FTE to core subjects.

Prioritized District Improvements

- Safety and security - Last year's budget provided for district-wide installation of security cameras at all sites. It also provided for jointly funding our school resource officer position with the City of Molalla. This year's proposed budget expands on this work by continuing to fund the school resource officer position while also leveraging grant funds to enhance safety at Clarkes Elementary School with seismic upgrades targeted specifically to that building in a statewide grant process.
- \$2.1 million in new Student Investment Account (SIA) funding under the Student Success Act is assumed in this budget. Though we will delay any spending until revenue is certain, this grant fund prioritizes class size, after-school programs, summer and enrichment programming, translation services, community engagement and much-needed mental health supports for students.

- High School Success Act funding (Measure 98) has been critical in our work to increase our graduation outcomes. Our proposed budget continues this work and presumes a near doubling of funding for an increase funding level of \$775,000. We have targeted the new spending strategies known to improve freshmen on-track outcomes, specifically in mathematics. We have also prioritized funding for a new bilingual community liaison position, further supporting our Spanish speaking students and their families at the high school level.
- Based on \$9.0 billion funding statewide, our proposed general fund proposes commensurate increases in spending. Aligned with District priorities and a tremendous volume of community input that came through the Student Success Act design process, we've made plans for these additional investments in our students from the general fund:
 - +2.4 FTE new licensed elementary PE specialists
 - +1.0 additional school counselor FTE
 - +1.0 additional HS Core subject FTE.
 - +1.0 additional school nurse FTE – maintaining the addition that came after budget adoption in 2019
 - +1.0 additional teacher on special assignment supporting the teaching & learning department
 - The conversion of our Elementary Lead Teacher position supporting Clarkes and Rural Dell to an Elementary Associate Principal position.
 - Strategic school and district improvement planning remains a priority, including:
 - Language Arts curriculum renewal process
 - K-5 curriculum alignment in all core subjects
 - District Improvement Leadership Team - teachers and administrators from all schools conducting data analysis and improvement design
 - K-12 professional development
 - High School Athletics - During this most recent school year, the District's work to envision the Ideal Athletic Program (IAP) has included the voices of nearly forty community stakeholders, including parents, coaches, business leaders, students, volunteers and other staff. In support of

priorities established through this process, this budget includes funding for:

- Five additional assistant coach positions
- Contract services for an athletic trainer
- Restored full-funding funding for high school cheer that was reduced over a decade ago
- A strength and conditioning coaching position

(The work of the IAP program will be extended in to the future, and the priorities that rise in the process will further refine improvement plans into the future.)

Readers of this message should not expect that all of the new spending described in this budget moves forward operationally as we start the 2020-21 school year because it may not. We will continue making principled decisions in this uncertain environment, knowing we will carefully respond as revenue conditions get clearer. Regardless of what the future holds and no matter what the funding situation might look like, students will always come first in our decision-making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Mann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tony Mann
Superintendent