



The FY23 School Budget Development Process Using *The Strategic CFO Guide*

Select Components of Strategic CFO Core Functions	Strategic CFO Practice <i>See the full guide here.</i>	FY23 Pain Points	Adaptations for Approaching FY23 School Budget Development
<p>4.1 Annual School Budgeting: Strengthen School Support</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The district has outlined a set of school design practices that align with systemwide strategic priorities — for example, a model for teacher collaboration time that schools could use to address a goal around improved instructional practice. ✓ The school budget process is intentionally designed to help school leaders implement school design practices. For example, principals use a scheduling and staffing template that enables them to design what the district’s recommended form of teacher collaboration time looks like in their school. ✓ Central office departments — including HR, budget, academics, and school support — provide coordinated feedback to help principals achieve district priorities through common budget review meetings, common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To best support their schools, districts must have a vision for what they want their school to look like, and what student and teacher experiences they’re designing toward, including after ESSER funds expire. • Demands associated with the pandemic and addressing students’ learning and social-emotional needs mean that district and school leaders have had varying degrees of capacity to identify and align on systemwide strategic priorities. 	<p>Identify and clearly communicate about which resources you plan to deploy centrally in support of your district’s “big bets,” with a focus on equity.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has my district outlined specific school design practices that align to our strategic plan? • Is my district’s budget process organized in ways that encourage principals to implement these school design strategies? • Do principals receive consolidated budget feedback from all relevant departments?



	<p>feedback forms, or designated coordinator staff. Principal supervisors are able to build on this feedback in their own work with principals.</p>		
<p>4.2 Annual School Budgeting: Clarify Flexibilities</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The district has created clear guidelines for principals, including which resource decisions are “tight” vs. “loose” — and how these may vary based on school leaders’ needs or school performance. ✓ The finance team works with other departments to resolve any policy or process barriers that hinder full, meaningful exercise of principal flexibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals may feel overwhelmed by the investment options, particularly if they are already facing a high number of vacancies or turnover at their school this year. Without clear guidance from finance and other central office departments, capacity constraints may make it more difficult for school leaders to plan. 	<p>Create a streamlined budget form that brings together revenue from all funding sources (including ESSER and general fund), explicitly connects design choices to your “big bets,” and identifies associated investments and reallocations that may be needed.</p> <p><i>Consider:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has my district articulated clear guidance for principal flexibility? • How are flexibilities clearly communicated with school leaders? How many principals last year exercised a given flexibility (for example, position conversion)? • In what ways has my district aligned our policies with our theory of action for principal flexibility?
<p>4.3 Annual School Budgeting: Integrate Decision-Making Inputs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The school planning process integrates all of the resources available to schools. Any centrally-controlled resources that will play out in schools — such as a centrally-based itinerant coach or therapist — are clearly communicated so school leaders can make informed decisions. ✓ Decision-making tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate inputs across departments. For example, combining generally-funded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the infusion of ESSER funds (and in some cases, other state funds), districts have more revenue sources to integrate across departments this year. • Many schools are facing declining enrollment. Therefore, districts need to “right-size” to lower enrollment levels in a way that does not create fiscal cliffs for schools, especially schools with higher needs. 	<p>Make steps toward sustainability by planning for how to staff down schools that experienced enrollment declines or have a significant number of students in virtual models — and communicate these plans with school leaders.</p> <p>Reach outward to collaborate with other district leaders, your school board, principals, and families to build joint accountability around resource decisions</p>



	<p>positions and Title-funded positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately reflect the district’s enrollment and revenue projections. • Benchmark any data against best practices or district expectations. • Help principals tie resource allocation decisions to school goals and needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current labor market and hiring environment makes it challenging for schools and districts to allocate resources. Schools may know what they want to do and how they’d like to allocate positions, but may be having trouble filling those positions. 	<p>and to provide schools with visibility and guidance around multiyear trajectories.</p> <p>Create a streamlined budget form that brings together revenue from all funding sources (including ESSER and general fund), explicitly connects design choices to your “big bets,” and identifies associated investments and reallocations that may be needed.</p> <p><i>Consider:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my district provide principals with integrated data on student performance and school resource-use — such as staffing, scheduling, and student grouping — to inform strategic resource allocation? • Do principals receive consolidated information on all staff and funds that will play out during their next school year — including grant funds and any centrally-located funds or positions? • Do school budgeting tools inform strategic decision-making (for example, benchmarks against best practice or prompts to tie decisions to the strategic plan)?
<p>4.4 Annual School Budgeting: Coordinate Timelines</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Budgeting, staffing, and scheduling conversations are cohesive so principals can continually adjust across all three areas as they develop their school designs. ✓ Budgeting starts as early as possible (after strategic planning and financial forecasting are complete) to enable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are facing staffing shortages and uncertainty. Budget processes must be able to adapt and evolve as more pain points reveal themselves, as enrollment trends become more evident, and as staffing levels begin to solidify. 	<p>Have a clear plan for retaining talent, while addressing vacancies and continuing hiring.</p> <p>Deliberately plan for how to navigate — and communicate about — uncertainty.</p> <p><i>Consider:</i></p>



	<p>sufficient time for district feedback and a more competitive teacher hiring timeline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instead of one clear timeline, districts might be better served by multiple review cycles that allow for input from budgeting, staffing, and scheduling to inform decisions in other areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the school planning process integrated from needs assessments, priority setting, and strategy development to resource allocation via budgeting, staffing, and scheduling?• When do principals confirm their final budget? Is this early enough to start hiring staff on competitive timelines relative to local and national peer districts?• Do we need to provide principals moment(s) to adjust their budgets have “normal” timelines as more information becomes available through the year?
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