# Memo

**To:**        Board of Education

**From:**    District Accountability Committee

**Date:**     January 23, 2018

**Re:**        Recommendations on District Spending Priorities for the 2018-19 School Year

> To fulfill the DAC responsibility:
>
> C.R.S. 22-11-302(1)(a) – *To recommend to its local school board priorities for spending school district moneys. Whenever the school district accountability committee recommends spending priorities, it shall make reasonable efforts to consult in a substantive manner with the school accountability committees of the school district. The local school board shall consider the school District Accountability Committee recommendations in adopting the school district budget for each fiscal year pursuant to article 44 of this title.*

**Process**

The District Accountability Committee considers a variety of data to guide its annual spending recommendations to the board. Sources include student academic achievement and growth data, the district Unified Improvement Plan, and consultation with the school accountability committees through the SAC Survey. DAC's analysis of the survey and observations of student performance trends are found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

**Recommendations**

The DAC recommends that BVSD continue to align its budget with stated goals and strategies. Particular attention should be paid to support equity and social-emotional learning, which schools have overwhelmingly designated as their top two spending priorities. Additionally, the district should further develop and publicize reliable measures of student performance and program evaluation.

1. **Equity and Supports for All Students:** Gaps in achievement and growth for special populations of students (e.g., FRL, children with disabilities, ELL) have seen little progress over time, and DAC continues to recommend more dedication to this problem. In particular, to reduce inequity, schools ask BVSD for allocations that better differentiate student needs and provide more equitable access to:

   a. Highly-skilled teachers and academic support staff
   b. Differentiated interventions across topics
   c. Full-day kindergarten

   DAC believes the most effective way to deliver academic support and differentiation is through an investment in licensed and certified interventionists in both literacy and math.

2. **Social-Emotional Learning and Supports:** Academic success is predicated on social and emotional well-being, therefore BVSD should strengthen social-emotional supports for students to optimize the learning environment. Elementary schools report that the addition of counselors has made a noticeable impact, and ask BVSD to implement Phase II of the three-phase plan to develop the school counseling program. With more counselors at all levels, the district will be better positioned to address the following high priorities:

   a. Identification of student SEL needs
   b. Improving family supports (e.g., community liaison, brokering external supports)
   c. Evidence-based SEL programs and curricula

3. **Transparency and Progress Reporting:** The lack of available performance data, particularly for special populations, has eroded the DAC and the public's ability to evaluate the district's progress. This stems from a variety of issues, including low participation rates on state testing, limited public reporting of local data (e.g., i-Ready), and few district-wide interim assessments. To be more transparent and build a culture of accountability, the DAC asks BVSD for modest investments and the necessary resources to:

   ● Provide information to families about state assessments (e.g., CMAS, SAT, PSAT) and their purposes, so they can make informed decisions.
   ● Select and administer common interim assessments, particularly in math.
   ● Provide public reports on state and local data at the school and district levels that are intuitive (e.g., graphs, parent-friendly explanations).
   ● Administer surveys that gauge and communicate stakeholders' perception of BVSD's performance, culture and climate.

**Appendices**
   A. SAC Survey Analysis
   B. Student Performance Trends