Budget Narrative

(1) Include your school's budget narrative. The narrative should not exceed 3 pages and should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising)

Overview

The attached budget for The New Orleans Alternative High School (NOAH) is based on conservative assumptions of enrollment, funding, staffing and operating expenses, based on the extensive school leadership and operating experience of the ReNew and EQA teams. The key assumptions are outlined below. The base budget assumes 250 students in 9th – 12th grades, expanding to 275 students in Year 3.

Start-Up

NOAH has anticipated a $150,000 in start-up philanthropy. If this cannot be fundraised, EQA is comfortable donating this from their fund balance without affecting current EQA schools. The start-up expenditures will be used for a portion of the Executive Director's salary and benefits to cover the time spent on opening the new school, a Talent Management position to hire strong leaders and staff critical for high quality alternative programming, a Project Manager to transition IT systems, data systems, and facilities management, leadership coaching, and planning and staff training and development.

Per Pupil Revenue

(a) Use the figures in the Budget Template in developing your budget assumptions.

The school will operate on the per pupil and federal grant funding amounts for all OPSB schools. The board does not anticipate incurring any indebtedness. A high percentage of students will be eligible for special education and/or overage funding which is vital for offsetting the high costs of educating students who are significantly behind academically and face a variety of mental health, behavioral, and other challenges.

Anticipated Funding Sources

(b) Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends.

As an expansion of EQA's organization and as a transformation of a less successful school, NOAH will be eligible to apply for federal Charter School Program funding and Walton Family Foundation funding. While getting these are competitive grants and thus funding it not yet guaranteed, EQA has secured both grants for its current schools and the success of its programs has been noted by both the LDOE (which manages the CSP funding) and the Walton Family Foundation.

The budget also accounts for grants already secured by the school including YouthBuild NOLA, Carl Perkins, School Redesign. Conversations with the grant makers indicate that these dollars will follow the school during the conversion.

All EQA school budgets rely only minimally on general fundraising. NOAH's budget is based initially on only $20,000 in Year 1. EQA has consistently raised over $150,000 per year making this a conservative and attainable prediction.

Required Resources

(c) Describe the resources required to support they key elements of your program. What are the expected costs of key program elements (including staffing model)?

The key elements to NOAH's programming are:

- Relationship based interventions (including restorative practices, trauma-informed care, community building etc.)
- Intensive academic and behavioral intervention (including Special education, RtI, and mental health counseling)
- Career development (including CTE programming, internships, individualized planning and support)

For this reason, the majority of NOAH's budget it staffing related. This allows the school to hire, train, and retain strong teachers and staff to insure intensive supports, small pupil-teacher ratios, and effective interventions for student growth. As indicated in the revenue portion of the budget, NOAH will fund this model primarily through differentiated funding and the strategic use of grant funding-- particularly for the CTE programming.

Sustainability

(d) How will you finance these costs to keep the school sustainable?

EQA's financial model has been specifically developed to maintain small schools for high needs students. The core functions of the programs are covered by recurring revenue streams as described above. Whenever grants are received to increase programming, the school has worked to build a financial model that will allow the improvements or increase to continue after the grant funding ceases. This farsightedness has been critical to building financial stability.

Additional funding is continually sought, and programming is expanded as that funding becomes available. Examples include the extensive development of EQA's CTE programming with the support of Perkins, Jump Start, and YouthForce NOLA. In rare situations additional programming has to be cut back when funding shifts. For example, at The NET:Central City additional funding started and grew the Next Steps program from nothing to a full time position over four years. This year it has been cut back to a part time position. While this has meant a decrease in some Next Steps programming the structures developed over the four years have insured a high level of continued services for students.

As a small and nimble organization that started with no initial funding, EQA is well versed in budgeting conservatively and stretching resources. These accomplishments are the result of a disciplined approach to budgeting that has focused on conservative revenue estimates, contingency planning for expenses and a strategic approach to limiting expenses from the fund balance to an absolute minimum.

In the event of a budget shortfall, EQA will utilize this same disciplined approach to make the cuts necessary to ensure financial viability without compromising the mission of the school. A decision-making matrix based on the following questions will be used to insure students are supported at the highest levels possible:

- Which programs are most mission critical? (example: instruction would be prioritized over alumni support)
- Which positions are necessary to maintain these programs at quality?
- What adjustments to facilities and operations can be made without compromising safety and compliance?
- What adjustments to future position and salary projections must be made to maintain financial stability?

Simultaneously, the school would investigate additional funding streams and new and expanded partnerships to improve revenues.

Facility Plan

What is your facility plan? Include the following elements in your response: (a)Facility characteristics need to serve your model & (b) Associated costs and contingency planning.

NOAH will be housed in RAHS's current facility at 3649 Laurel street. This is an OPSB owned facility and the lease will be transferred from ReNEW to EQA. The facility location is centrally located and easily accessible via public transportation which are critical factors for the targeted student population.
The building is spacious and includes an annex with a daycare facility that is utilized by NOAH students with children. This facility has been recently renovated and includes new windows, HVAC systems, roof, and other critical infrastructure improvements. These improvements plus access to RAHS records means that facilities costs and facilities needs can be accurately predicted for budgeting and planning purposes.
For these reasons, EQA has opted to keep NOAH in the building. EQA and NOAH leaders have discussed the possibility of moving the school in the future if one or more of the following circumstances arise:

- Continued lack of options on the West Bank indicate that relocating there would be better for student enrollment
- The cost and/or size of the facility outstrips the school's needs and downsizing to a non-school building-- as EQA's other schools are housed in-- is more appropriate to maintain a high level of services for students