

**2015 – 2016 BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Monthly Meeting – February 10, 2016**

**Education Center, Room 101**

**7:30 PM - 9:30 PM**

1. Introductions
2. Review and approve January meeting minutes
3. Public Comments
4. INFORMATION ITEMS
  - A. Reports from Liaisons to BAC (FAC; CCPTA; CivFed; ACI)
  - B. Staff Update & Schedule for Budget Books Distribution (Deirdra McLaughlin, APS)
5. DISCUSSION ITEM
  - A. CIP Framework, Funding Sources, Bond/Reserves Issues
6. ACTION ITEM
  - A. BAC Questions for APS Departments on FY2017 Budget

**Upcoming events**

Community Forum on CIP – February 17<sup>th</sup> @ 7 PM, Wakefield HS

Community Forum on CIP – February 24<sup>th</sup> @ 7 PM, Washington-Lee HS

Superintendent's Proposed Budget & School Board Work Session #1 – February 25<sup>th</sup>

NOTE The work session is preceded by a presentation at 5 PM for advisory committees

School Board Work Session #2 on Budget – March 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 5 PM

School Board Work Session #3 on Budget – March 8<sup>th</sup>

**Upcoming BAC meeting dates are:**

March 9, 2016

May 11, 2016

March 16, 2016

June 8 or 15, 2016

April 13, 2016

\*\* All BAC regular meetings are on Wednesdays. All meet at the Education Center during the first half of 2016.

**Arlington Public Schools  
Budget Advisory Council  
Minutes—February 10, 2016 Meeting**

Present: BAC Chair Michael Shea, BAC Co-chair Matt DeFerranti, Heather Jones, Bob Ramsey, Daniel Rosman, Kathryn Richard, Ainsley Stapleton and Tina Kuklenski-Miller; APS Staff - Deirdra McLaughlin, Leslie Peterson; AEA – Josh Folb, Gerry Collins. Liaisons: Don Weinstein (FAC), Allan Gajadhar (CivFed), Ted Black (ACI).

The meeting began at 7:40 PM with unanimous approval of the minutes from January.

**Public Comments**

Josh Folb from AEA spoke about the proposed calendar where teachers were asked to return to school 8 working days before the first day of school for professional development, instead of returning 5 working days before the first day of school as was the case in August 2015. AEA is recommending an alternate flex plan where teachers: (1) can pick 3 days for professional development, to be completed by the end of January 2017; and, (2) report 5 working days before the first day of school. Josh did not believe this would have a budget cost and could even result in a small savings.

Gerry Collins from AEA questioned the methodology to compute the cost of a step increase. He thought the estimate of \$8.8 million for this year seemed high. We will see a revised number when the budget is presented later this month.

**Liaison Reports:**

Donald Weinstein from FAC reported that the FAC met on February 8<sup>th</sup> at Patrick Henry ES. The FIMS database which shows the square footage of APS buildings and how the buildings are currently used should come online shortly. High School capacity issues were discussed as well as the possibility of phasing students into the new Stratford Middle School once construction is underway. The following project updates were given:

- Abingdon ES – addition beginning in June
- Ashlawn ES – almost finished
- Discovery ES – working on playing fields
- McKinley ES – one story addition and four new classrooms ready shortly
- Washington-Lee HS – phase 2 of interior renovations to increase capacity to begin soon
- Wilson site – reviewing design including parking issue

Ted Black from ACI said that there will be a work session on March 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss their recommendations and an ACI meeting on February 17<sup>th</sup> where the monitoring report from ESOL/HILT will be presented.

Allan Gajadhar from CivFed reported that the Civic Federation has been discussing the following items:

- Reopen looking at a new comprehensive High School include converting the Career Center into a comprehensive High School
- Cost per seat for new construction is higher than surrounding jurisdictions
- 1:1 Devices - sufficiency of tech support and training

**Staff Update:** Deirdra McLaughlin reported that the budget will be presented by the superintendent on February 25<sup>th</sup>. There will be a presentation specifically for advisory groups at 5 PM. The budget

will also be available online. There was one significant change to the closeout proposal where \$2.5 million was reallocated from future reserves to various activities including staff development, family and community engagement plan, ESOL/HILT, 1:1 device training, and the Arlington history project.

**Budget Calendar:** Michael Shea gave a high level overview of the budget calendar:

- Budget presented on February 25th
- BAC meeting on March 9th
- Budget Work Session #4 with advisory groups on March 15th
- BAC Meeting on March 16th
- School Board presentation to County Board on April 8th
- BAC Meeting on April 13th
- Public hearing on the budget on April 21st
- Budget adopted by school board on May 5th

**CIP Framework:** Deirdra McLaughlin gave us an overview of the CIP Framework process. The key financial takeaways are:

- In the updated CIP, \$38.2 million less of bond funding is needed resulting in a decrease in the peak debt capacity going from 9.96% to 9.51%
- Cumulative debt service is reduced by \$3.8 million
- The 10% debt service limit is usually applied separately to APS and the county although on occasion when APS has needed additional debt capacity, the county has agreed to issue less debt.
- APS estimates the cost of debt based on the rate the County uses. The estimated rate for bond issuance was reduced from 5.0% to 4.5% which is still very conservative since that last bond was issued below 3.0%
- Largest change in CIP is a reduction of the projected funding for the Career Center and high school placeholder from \$153.4 million to \$128.4 million

Bond referendums can be used for any school capital expenditures including school construction. Total budget reserves have increased from \$48.6 million to \$65.2 million due to FY15 closeout funds of \$16.6 million being allocated to reserves. BAC members are encouraged to attend the CIP forms on February 17th or February 24th and to consider filling out the online survey.

Questions for APS on FY17 Budget: BAC will submit a short list of questions to APS staff in advance of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget as a way to better prepare for the March 9th BAC meeting. There were a few additions to the initial questions proposed by Michael Shea:

- Is there any data that can be provided on the success of the program to verify Arlington residency of APS students?
- Is there any data on the 1:1 Device program in terms of utilization (both amount of time used and type of things used for) and downtime when devices need to be repaired?

The BAC adjourned at 9:30 PM.

*The questions submitted to APS in advance of the budget are included as an attachment to these minutes.*

## MEMORANDUM

February 19, 2016

To: Deirdra McLaughlin, APS  
From: Michael Shea, BAC Chair  
Re: Initial BAC Questions on APS Budget

The BAC is looking forward to the release of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for FY 2017 and appreciates the hard work being done by your team and the rest of APS on getting the Proposed Budget together.

We are sending over a list of initial questions that we are confident the Superintendent's Proposal will raise for us. Some, or possibly all, of the questions we have raised will be answered by the text of the Proposed Budget. For those questions that are not answered by the text, we would hope to have some data or a non-data response by March 9th, the date of our first BAC meeting to review the Proposed Budget.

We look forward to working with you and your team on the new budget!

### **Questions for APS Related to Proposed FY2017 Budget: Pre-release**

#### 1. Positions added or changed in Adopted FY2016 Budget

Last year, APS proposed and BAC supported, the shifting of capital fund positions to the bond fund (a trade-off but an appropriate use of bond fund). BAC also supported the proposal to create a central administrative position to better coordinate Medicaid reimbursement.

BAC will be looking at any non-teaching positions proposed for addition or change in FY 2017, but we also wanted to ask questions about past position changes.

Q. For the shifting of capital fund positions to bond fund positions, has that been completed and are there positive effects so that there should be additional shifts of this type?

Q. For the creation of a position to improve Medicaid reimbursement, what has been the impact on revenues?

#### 2. Cuts to maintenance budgets at community centers and other facilities

Last year, as a way to reduce expenditures without a direct impact on instructional quality, BAC supported a reduction in the maintenance budget for community centers, while warning of the long-term risks. Over the past several years, APS has been creating new data and tools to monitor facility conditions and needs.

Q. Have any cuts in maintenance budgets been restored in the Proposed FY2017 Budget?

Q. Does the data on equipment/facility life cycles support decisions being made on maintenance budgets at particular schools and facilities?

#### 3. Technology: Personalized device initiative (We note that APS info on this initiative is on the web, among other places, at <http://www.apsva.us/Page/27092>)

APS is in the second year of a personalized device initiative (third year if you count the initial pilot), being rolled out so that by the 2017 SY all APS students have equal access to digital learning and will be supported in their individual learning.

Q. What is the training budget for teachers to integrate digital learning/devices into the curriculum?

Q. What percent of teachers have been trained in digital learning?

Q. Is the cost per unit of devices stable during the 2014-2017 roll out period, and would the next round of rollouts be subject to market conditions, new technology, and negotiations with the provider?

Q. Is the four year expected lifetime for the devices proving to be accurate?

Q. Is there data on the utilization rate of the personal devices?

Q. Is there data on the downtime for students, i.e., the periods when device is unusable and needs tech support?

Q. Does APS have an estimate of the cost of textbooks as an alternative to the personalized devices? Presumably, an estimate of costs saved.

4. Consistency of FLES. Last year, the School Board extended FLES to those elementary schools which had not yet adopted the program, eliminating the Early Release Wednesdays at those elementary schools. In adopting the FY 2016 Budget, the School Board identified the consistent delivery of FLES instruction as a topic for future budget study.

Q. Has there been a study of, or have data been generated for, the areas which the School Board identified as in need of consistency? These were:

- improve consistency of amount of time identified for FLES in existing FLES schools
- improve consistency of times per week students receive instruction
- ensure consistency of student proficiency as they transition into middle school
- ensure articulation of curriculum as students continue their studies in middle school

5. Verifying residency in Arlington. A few years ago, APS added a position to verify the residency of APS students and to identify students from out of the district enrolled in APS schools.

Q. Is there any data on the success rate of the position?

Q. Is it possible to quantify the impact on expenditures that that verifying residency has had?