

2017 – 2018 BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Notes – October 11, 2017

Education Center, Room 101

The meeting started at 7:07 PM.

1. Introductions

- a. Eleven members were present: Matt deFerranti, Heather Jones, Jennifer Wagener, Daniel Rosman, Lars Florio, Robert Ramsey, Michael Shea, Heather Wathington, Matt Hochstein, Gianmaria Vanzulli, Ilda Anestidou; APS staff member Leslie Peterson; and School Board Liaison Tannia Talento. Also attending was Dr. Tara Natrass, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning.
- b. Cecilia Ciepiela-Kaelin was attending the JFAC meeting.
- c. Tina Kuklenski-Miller (former BAC member) joined representing ACI.
- d. Aaron Wajsgras has moved to Seattle so he has left the BAC. Replacement of the open slot will happen soon.

2. Dr. Tara Natrass, Teaching and Learning Department

- a. Teaching and Learning is the new department name – merged with a couple other areas
- b. The Department is looking at base line budgets and whether there are efficiencies to gain
 - i. How do all the various support staff interact and work with the schools – can this be streamlined?
- c. Update on technology, personalized learning and 1:1 devices
 - i. Personalized learning website – students having voice and choice in their learning. This is achieved with and without devices.
 - ii. Technology and devices – this provides timely feedback on progress; a tool to support personalized learning
 - iii. County recently moved from shared devices to a 1:1 device model
 1. Each student saves their items on their device, rather than on the cloud. Staff was spending a lot of time getting devices when they were shared – this was inefficient. iPads were cheaper devices and we could put out more devices without an increase in cost (versus less, more expensive devices)
 - iv. Staff is working to update and redo the Technology acceptable use policy
 1. Will build outcomes into this so there is clarity into the reason for who has devices
 2. Policy work starting in October with Board action in January
- d. Planning factors discussion – intent is to provide equitable staffing
 - i. Has it been considered to vary the planning factors based on school or teacher experience?
 1. Not aware of other school systems that do it this way, mostly due to perception. Usually it is more based on special needs, ESOP and/or title 1.
 - ii. Planning factors help determine budgets and staffing that go to each school entity - Principals have some flexibility to tweak their actual hiring, but they can't mess with special education or related items

- iii. Have not done a comparison of actual staffing versus the planning factor/assumptions – would be really challenging based on the current HR system
 - iv. There is no process or incentive to “give money back”
 - v. Due to the flexibility the principals have, they aren’t really asking for other things that they don’t have; other than testing coordinators (in Elementary Schools)
 - vi. Haven’t done a comprehensive review of the planning factors since they were put in place 10 years ago – but specific areas have been reviewed and updated
 - vii. With the \$20+ million expected budget deficit, the staff needs to look everywhere for opportunities. To make large reductions, people costs will need to be considered, which are the vast majority. Can we find efficiencies in the planning factors somewhere that can help?
 - viii. Finance owns the document; the actual planning factors are owned by the School Board. There isn’t a specific process for making updates; just part of the overall budget process
 - ix. November 7th work session on planning factors
 - e. Can we tie spending to performance?
 - i. SOLs are the main way to gauge performance – in most categories APS does outperform other school systems. Also measure graduation and attendance rates.
 - ii. Don’t believe we can tie a 10% higher investment to a 10% higher SOL result
 - f. Open discussion:
 - i. Have we mapped capabilities of existing staff to see if they can fill open roles or cover some of the educational needs in the schools/system?
 - ii. Can we expect to pass some of the technology costs to families? State law requires us to have a technology initiative and we can’t charge for it
 - iii. Canvas is replacing Blackboard for the county’s LMS capabilities – in a transition until January
 - 1. Recommended that an update be provided to all the parents so everyone is all aware – this is in process
 - iv. What does the County view to be the best for teacher quality?
 - 1. Verbal SAT scores have been co-related with teacher effectiveness, as well as knowledge of strategies, years of experience and master’s degree (to a lesser extent)
 - 2. There is a lot of national conversations about whether there is a better way to build pay scales, rather than using Bachelors versus Masters, for example
 - 3. If we are the first district in our area to implement more outcomes-driven compensation, does that negatively impact our recruitment or retention?
 - 4. This is a longer-term initiative that shouldn’t be tied to the budget process or budget savings plan
 - g. **Follow up:** – Tannia to get copies of the County’s new “accordion” initiatives document for the next meeting
3. Minutes - Approval of September minutes
4. Public Comments: Josh Folb – Arlington Education Association and member of Compensation Committee

- a. AEA is very concerned with the budget - they will be discussing efficiencies in their upcoming meeting
 - i. Follow-up: Josh to share with the BAC any ideas they come up with
 - b. Josh shared his annual graph of salary scales and there was some discussion by the group
 - c. AEA re-shared their desire to see an area index to use around compensation
 - d. AEA requested to have a non-voting member on the BAC
5. Liaison Updates (ACI, FAC, JFAC, ACTC)
- a. FAC – Cecilia Ciepiela-Kaelin is at the meeting tonight
 - i. Insert link to meeting notes/presentation from FAC
 - ii. FAC and JFAC reviewing the recent motion (that approved the additional seats at the Career Center) so that a Career Center working group can be formed
 - 1. Working group could consider whether this campus should be considered as an official 4th high school
 - 2. Would like to have a BAC member on this working group – please notify Matt if you are interested
 - iii. For the Ed Center, they are looking at instructional options – staff is pulling all of this together and a charge/working group will be put forward in November
 - 1. Follow-up: Matt will distribute the updated September presentation on this topic
 - b. ACI – Tina Kuklenski-Miller
 - i. There are inconsistencies across schools for the use of technology – up to each Principal
 - ii. No clear best practices and those that exist aren't shared
 - iii. Inconsistencies with apps and platforms
 - iv. Improvements in these areas could greatly improve success
6. Staff Update
- a. Reviewed the budget direction from the School Board to the Superintendent –
 - i. The overall direction is to reduce per-pupil spending and/or develop long term strategies to reduce per-pupil spending across future budget years
 - ii. Virginia code requires Superintendent to develop a budget that meets the needs of the students
 - b. School Board wants to find efficiencies in the Planning Factors, but they believe the tax dollars are spent efficiently
 - i. Reviewing the Planning Factors should provide some validation that the organization is already run well
 - 1. What are the KPIs to compare ourselves against? How to “prove” efficiency?
 - ii. Specific areas of cuts will challenge the outcome to our students
 - iii. Are some of our specialized programs (HB, Montessori, etc.) more expensive to us?
7. Working Group on Planning Factors – Lars Florio
- a. A draft charter was briefly presented and discussed
 - b. The working group will re-synch with Leslie after the November 7th working session (on

Planning Factors)

- i. What will be presented is still being finalized, largely based on what data is available
- c. It was discussed the school busing is not included in the Planning Factors
- d. It was discussed that BAC members should re-look at the compensation study from last year to see how APS manages their pay scales and philosophy
- e. Meetings are subject to regulations and we need to post notices and such for working group gatherings

The meeting concluded at 9:23pm.

November 6th meeting (Monday) is a joint meeting with FAC.