

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Joint School Board/County Board Budget Work Session  
October 21, 2020

The Arlington School Board convened in a joint work session on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 5:04 PM. This meeting was held by electronic communications due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, using Microsoft Teams.<sup>1</sup>

**Present were:**

**School Board**

Monique O’Grady, Chair  
Barbara Kanninen, Vice Chair  
Reid Goldstein, Member  
Tannia Talento, Member  
Nancy Van Doren, Member  
Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent  
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

**County Board**

Libby Garvey, Chairman  
Katie Cristol, Member  
Matt de Ferranti, Member  
Christian Dorsey, Member  
Takis Karantonis, Member  
Mark Schwartz, County Manager  
Kendra Jacobs, Clerk

**Also present were:**

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent  
Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services  
Catherine Ashby, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources  
John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations  
Cintia Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services  
Bridget Loft, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning  
Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Management  
Dan Redding, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources  
Lisa Stengle, Executive Director, Planning and Evaluation  
Arron Gregory, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Garvey called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. She summarized the agenda and acknowledged the challenging budget year that both Boards are facing due to the pandemic. Ms. O’Grady appreciated the opportunity to meet and confirmed the School Board has been updating the County Board regularly on the status of the APS budget. She recognized the financial support the County has provided to help with COVID-related expenses and acknowledged the importance of ongoing communication and collaboration. She also outlined APS efforts to address anticipated funding shortfalls and highlighted actions taken to reduce costs, such as a class size increase, delayed maintenance, no staff compensation increase, and the significant use of reserves to close a budget gap. She looked forward to working with the County to move through the upcoming budget process.

2. Internet Access Update

- Superintendent Dr. Francisco Durán

Dr. Durán provided an update on technology, sharing data about supports provided by APS to ensure that students have the technology and the access to the internet that they need for virtual learning. These include such efforts as providing students with MiFi devices, exterior wireless at some schools, and wi-fi hotspots in neighborhoods.

- County Manager Mark Schwartz

Mr. Schwartz shared information about hot spots being placed throughout the county to enhance connectivity for students using the MiFi devices. He also highlighted county facilities that have wifi functionality accessible to students throughout the county.

3. FY 2021 Arlington Public Schools Budget Update— Superintendent Durán

Dr. Durán provided an update of the APS FY21 Revenue projections from County, State, Local and Federal revenues, noting that there are significant revenue losses due to the pandemic. He also shared FY21 cost projections for health and safety needs, technology needs, instructional needs, and mental health and wellbeing. Saving projections for the year were also highlighted, as well as additional funding received from the County. In closing, he shared a preliminary look at the FY20 closeout, as well as a summary of FY21 projections with the FY20 preliminary closeout.

4. FY 2021 Arlington County Government Budget Update—County Manager Schwartz

Mr. Schwartz provided a COVID Operations update, noting that the main focus is on health and safety. He then outlined the tax revenues expected to be most significantly impacted by the pandemic and economic crisis. He also highlighted specific areas where there are revenue gaps. He summarized the approach the County is taking to balance the FY21 revenue loss.

Richard Stevenson reviewed how the County has used CARES Act funding and outlined additional County funding that has been provided to the schools. He also shared a preview of the FY 22 outlook, anticipating continued costs related to COVID-19 and a continued slow economic recovery. He then shared County Manager recommendations for possible use of FY 20 Closeout funds.

Board members shared questions and comments related to the budget. Mr. Goldstein noted his primary concern of providing adequate compensation to school staff, noting that salaries lag behind other local jurisdictions and how there have been no cost of living adjustments in recent years. Ms. Van Doren appreciated County support and shared thoughts on how to manage reductions, suggesting that the County consider using funds that have been set aside as a rainy day fund. Ms. Talento appreciated County collaboration, but also shared concerns about the impact of recent actions on recruiting and retaining staff. Dr. Kanninen also spoke to areas that APS has had to cut back. Mr. Schwartz responded to a questions possible sources of revenues that are considered.

Responding to questions, Dr. Durán explained how Extended Day staff are being reassigned to assist during virtual learning. He also spoke to the drop in enrollment, explaining that the drop averages only one or two students per class, so does not impact staffing. Ms. Cristol spoke to the urgent health and safety needs of citizens at the top of the County's considerations. The Boards further discussed how APS is planning to use the reassigned staff including to support safety measures such as cleaning and screening.

Ms. Garvey appreciated the discussion and expressed interest in providing County space for childcare if APS can provide staffing. She encouraged taking advantage of this unusual situation to consider different approaches to managing schools.

In closing, Ms. O'Grady recognized the concerns on both Boards and appreciated the opportunity to meet and discuss these issues. She pledged to continue to collaborate and communicate to work together to address these issues.

The meeting adjourned 6:36 PM.

**ATTEST:**

---

Melanie Elliott, Clerk  
Arlington School Board

---

Monique O'Grady, Chair  
Arlington School Board