

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Board Budget Work Session #2

Item C-1-e

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 5:02 PM. The meeting was held by electronic communications due to the Covid-19 Pandemic emergency, using Microsoft Teams.

Present were:

Monique O’Grady, Chair
Barbara Kanninen, Vice Chair
Cristina Diaz-Torres, Member
Reid Goldstein, Member
David Priddy, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
Raj Adusumilli, Assistant Superintendent, Information Services
Jeannette Allen, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Catherine Ashby, Assistant Superintendent, School and Community Relations
Cathy Lin, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
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
Brian Stockton, Chief of Staff
Tameka Lovett-Miller, Budget Director
Alvera Wilson, Budget Analyst
Jorge Velazquez, Budget Analyst
Brianna Cobbins, Director, Employee Relations
Endia Holmes, Executive Administrative Assistant
Rodney Callands, Building Supervisor
Susan West, Extended Day Supervisor
Wayne Snider, Teacher
Belinda Folb, Teacher
Katherine Willet, Teacher
Carlos Ramirez, Principal

Ms. O’Grady called the work session to order at 5:02 PM and reviewed the agenda.

The Board met first with representatives of the Employee Advisory Committee (EAC) which represents the A, C, D, E, G, M and X employee scales, and the Collaborative Professional Strategies Team (CPST), to hear their suggestions and input on the proposed budget. Ms. Cobbins summarized the EAC feedback on the budget, confirming their support for the Superintendent’s compensation proposal of a 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) as well as a proposal of a one-

time compensation payment of \$1,000 be provided to all APS employees if a COLA is not given. Ms. Holmes then presented the EAC consideration to add \$25,000 in one-time funds to the proposed budget to pilot a professional development (PD) program for support staff. The EAC also recommended hiring a PD consultant to develop a comprehensive professional learning plan for support staff employees. Ms. West then shared the consideration for increasing the Professional Standards Stipends budget to provide stipends to support staff who achieve certifications related to their work.

Mr. Redding introduced CPST representatives Ms. Folb, Mr. Snider, Ms. Willet and Mr. Ramirez. Ms. Willet shared the CPST's recommendation to maintain current class size. Ms. Folb presented the CPST recommendation to comply with Board policy and provide a STEP, which has not been given several times in the last 10 years. Mr. Snider presented a recommendation for testing coordinators at all schools. Mr. Ramirez suggested areas for savings in the proposed budget, including reducing the hiring of consultants; analyzing, assessing and reducing redundancy of resources; and reducing summer school except for students receiving interventions or in need of graduation credits. Ms. Willet then shared ideas for future cost savings, including promoting neighborhood schools to reduce busing needs, eliminating transportation to options schools, and reducing the number of High School credit courses offered in Middle Schools.

Board members appreciated the recommendations. Ms. Cobbins responded to questions about increasing professional development opportunities for support staff. The group discussed concerns about the lack of STEP increases and how virtual learning is affecting class size and instruction. Also discussed was current professional learning management, and it was noted that the Office of Professional Learning is being moved as within APS as part of the planned reorganization to better serve all staff. Mr. Ramirez explained staff consideration of the recommendation to adjust summer school instruction and how summer school interventions will be targeted to meet student need.

The Board and Superintendent thanked the participants for their input and ideas, and Ms. O'Grady called for a dinner recess at 5:56 PM.

The Board reconvened at 6:59 PM to continue the work session, focusing on compensation and Human Resources.

Ms. Peterson briefly reviewed the agenda. She confirmed that the largest item in the budget is compensation, and she reviewed compensation increases that have been provided over the last 5 years. She also summarized the pay scale descriptions and provided a chart highlighting the cost for a step increase on each scale. She confirmed that some employees will not receive an increase if only a STEP is provided. She also shared data on the cost for a COLA. Dr. Durán confirmed that further discussion of compensation will take place at a future work session.

Ms. Peterson responded to questions about the STEP schedule and longevity of the staff population. Staff also provided additional information on the number and roles of hourly positions and employees, and how APS salaries compare to other local jurisdictions. Other topics discussed included a comparison of the costs of a COLA, a STEP, or a one-time bonus. Also discussed was the impact on the pay scale of not providing compensation adjustments, and how that affects recruitment and retention. In closing, Dr. Durán confirmed that APS is committed to focusing on

compensation and professional development, and although compensation will not be increased significantly, a 2% COLA is in the proposed budget.

The group then focused on Human Resources (HR). Mr. Redding reviewed the HR organizational chart and staffing, and shared important statistics, metrics and data. He also provided an overview of the HR budget for FY 2020, for the current year, and the proposed budget for 2022. Also reviewed were items reinstated in the proposed budget that had been put on hold in FY 2021, and new funding requests. In closing, he summarized tiered reductions that have been identified for consideration if needed.

The group discussed the presentation, including plans for the Professional Learning Office to be incorporated into HR. Staff provided additional information about the proposed reduction in postage funding and the funding in the HR budget for interpretation to accommodate staff needs. Also discussed was why the FY 2020 employee benefits figure was significantly smaller than the amount in the FY 2021 budget or the proposed FY 2022 budget, plans for the recruiting budget, and how the spring enrollment update contingency is used.

Board members appreciated the presentation and information provided.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Monique O'Grady, Chair
Arlington School Board