



# Arlington School Board

## FY 2023 Budget Direction

The mission of the Arlington Public Schools is to ensure all students learn and thrive in safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments. The School Board is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students and our aim with this budget direction is to ensure that APS financially supports its mission in the FY 2023 budget and lays the groundwork for success and sustainability in the future.

The School Board therefore directs the Superintendent to prepare a needs-based FY 2023 budget that focuses on the 2021-2022 School Board Priorities:

- Ensure student well-being and academic progress
  - Identify, report, and address all students' social-emotional and academic needs
  - Focus on literacy and math
- Advance 2018-24 Strategic Plan goals with focus on innovation and equity
- Recruit, hire, and invest in a high-quality and diverse workforce to ensure APS is the place where talented individuals choose to work
  - Develop phased plan to ensure all salary scales and benefits are market competitive and sustainable
  - Establish plan and timeline to begin the collective bargaining process
- Improve operational efficiency
  - Strengthen and improve system-wide operations with focus on financial sustainability
  - Collaborate across departments to plan innovatively, cost effectively, and within budget to meet student seat needs

Due to the economic downturn and increased student needs presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the School Board needed to make deep cuts in the FY 2022 budget. The School Board also needed to use almost \$40 million in one-time funds to balance the budget—\$18.9 million in federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act plus \$21.7 million in reserve funds. As a result, APS faces significant pressures when entering the FY 2023 budget process.

The School Board therefore also directs the Superintendent to:

- Provide recommendations for strategic changes to service delivery, adjusted enrollment projections, use of reserves, changes in fee schedules, phased in additions, and additional reductions to balance the budget.
- Identify and provide timelines and costs for updating and/or revamping internal systems including human resources, transportation and routing, budgeting and financial management, etc., to ensure systems are sustainable for the future and to allow for zero-based budgeting in future years.
- Present a transparent budget that provides details for significant changes in a major expenditure category (FTEs, salaries, benefits, purchased services, etc.).
- Provide three-year forecasts of revenues and expenditures to gauge long-term financial sustainability.
- Ensure that APS complies with all federal, state, and local laws and legally binding agreements.