

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET AND FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 12, 2015

PURPOSE

The Superintendent has established the Budget and Finance Advisory Committee (BFAC) for the purpose of providing guidance and counsel on matters of budget and finance as may be determined by the district administration. The Committee is comprised of representatives from the community, charter schools, principals, at-large, and central office.

Agenda

1. Opening Remarks
2. Staffing Formulas
3. Budget Update (including Enrollment Projections)
4. Questions and Discussion

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Community** - Tammy Dixon, Mark Rebillot, Robert Stockwell, Youlanda Carr, Tammy Dixon, Felicia Josey, JaTawn Robinson
- **Charter Schools** -
- **At-Large** - Marshall Norseng, Cynthia Mickelbury
- **Principals** - Tony Burks II, Clara Taylor, Buck Greene, Joseph Salley
- **Central Office** - Linda Anderson, Chuck Burbridge (CFO)

Committee Members Absent

- Nicole Lawson, Chandra Selles, Cynthia Dumas, Clay Elrod, and Tony Terry

DISCUSSION

Chuck Burbridge began the meeting with opening remarks and then provided an overview of the meeting agenda, which consisted of the Board of Education presentation, enrollment projections, and then introduced the guest speaker for the night, Dr. Linda Anderson, who would be leading a discussion around staffing formulas that the district utilizes to allocate specialty positions to schools. Chuck Burbridge and Terry Dukes then agreed to email individual APS school QBE data out to BFAC committee, given the fact that this data has been historically used for modeling purposes.

Dr. Anderson began by clarifying two popular misconceptions:

- 1) State earnings are distributed via FTE's, however, this funding doesn't fully pay for the cost of the entire teacher. Our school district pays for the remaining cost of that teacher.
- 2) There are also some teaching positions that the State doesn't fund at all. Elementary band, orchestra, and world languages are not included in the State allocations.

Dr. Anderson concluded this point by stating that "We want students to have these opportunities (i.e. band, orchestra, world languages) that may not be afforded to them otherwise. "

At-large Committee member, Marshall Norseng posed a question about fixed resources and school need. Who makes the decision on funding needs when no resources exist?

Chuck Burbridge answered by stating that our district tries to do what's right for the kids. We will push and shove budget to make sure resources align to need, especially as it pertains to serving EIP students and our special education population.

The conversation around staffing transitioned to the significance of the first day of school and how attendance impacts learning. APS has an influx of students after Day One so the district traditionally has had to make subsequent adjustments due to enrollment increases. Dr. Carstarphen has made a major push to make sure all students are present and ready to learn on day one to maximize learning from the start of the school year.

The Teacher and Learning Expanded Learning Opportunities: 2014 -15 Allocation Guidelines document was examined by the BFAC next. Dr. Anderson revealed that APS has both EIP teachers (Early Intervention Program) to serve students in grades K-5 and REP teachers (Remedial Education Program) to serve students in grades 6-12. These teachers are state-funded and can be used to reduce class size, as well as to provide a double dose of instruction.

Robert Stockwell voiced his concern for school composition, whereas schools use previous year EIP numbers for staffing current year programs and this process creates a yearlong lag which is confusing and creates a funding issue.

Dr. Anderson clarified by answering that APS programs are funded based upon prior year FTE counts that occurs in Oct of the previous school year.

Chuck Burbidge revealed that there are caveats that should be considered:

- 1) How do you identify an EIP student? You use previous year test result data, so later on in the year you can learn that you have more EIP students.
- 2) From a funding perspective, state controls are turned off, so you may or may not place an EIP teacher in a school even though you may have earned this position.

The status of ESOL, Fine Arts, Gifted and Talented, Health/Physical Education, and World Language teachers were then discussed. ESOL teachers are divided up amongst schools and each day of the week is a .2 allocation. Fine Arts is an enhancement to program offerings and creates exploratory opportunities at the lower levels. Gifted and Talented teachers are also itinerant and are allocated to schools with more than 30 gifted students for at least 2 days per week. The State does not fund PE teachers and at IB schools, beginning in the second grade, students will be offered world languages.

The methodology behind principal allocations were then visited. One principal is allocated per school. Assistant principals are allocated depending upon school size. Every school has at least one. For example, at a large school like Sutton, there is a school population of 1475 and there are four assistant principals.

Chuck Burbidge discussed the 2015-2016 Enrollment Projections (2/11/15) handout. The overarching take-away from this document is that enrollment is growing across elementary, middle, and high school levels overall but this enrollment growth is being witnessed in some schools, while other schools are displaying population declines. In summation, charter schools are growing but traditional schools are witnessing most of the declines.

Chuck Burbidge then provided an overview of the Budget Development Status Update including Enrollment Projections presentation that was delivered to the Board on February 2, 2015. The presentation agenda consisted of six areas:

- 1) Revenue Assumptions
- 2) Budget Strategy
- 3) Resource Challenges
- 4) SPLOST IV & Budget Implications
- 5) Enrollment Projections
- 6) Budget Calendar & Next Steps

This presentation was a snapshot that was taken at a point in time, so local and state revenues are being reconsidered. The budget strategy is a multi-year right-sizing strategy that was created in preparation for the implementation of a Charter System model. The district is evaluating all funding requests for alignment to the district's mission and vision, identifying resources required to implement strategic priorities, reducing general administration costs to redirect resources to support strategic priorities, and accelerating full-funding of pension benefits.

Voters have approved up to \$519M to support capital outlay projects and APS expects to collect 80% of the authorized amount (\$415M). Over \$200M in needs for capital resources has been identified and APS has \$71M available in the SPLOST budget, so, similar to the overall FY' 16 budget, needs will be prioritized. Some will be met, while others will not be financially feasible.

The top five winners and losers for enrollment were then illustrated. Traditionally there is no appetite for closing schools, but if schools approach enrollment numbers where it is not financially responsible to fund them, then district administrators must consider making tough decisions because per student expenditures at small schools are much higher than at large schools.

Conclusion

The BFAC committee expressed a keen level of interest in how QBE funding dictates staffing and school program offerings. More specifically, they are interested in how resources will be allocated to clusters because course offerings dictate interest in particular schools. Parents are asking these types of questions because the requirements of their children may be met at some schools that have resources to offer specific courses and programs, while others schools without the required level of resources will not be able to.

Next Steps

Terry Dukes will email individual APS School QBE data out to the BFAC committee.
Dr. Linda Anderson will provide a presentation to the BFAC committee that illustrates increasing AP course offerings.
Robert Stockwell will provide an article to BFAC on funding.

Next Meeting –March 26, 2015

We look forward to working with you and your support in our efforts to improve community involvement and transparency in the District's budget process.

Thank you.