ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET AND FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 15, 2018

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, and central office.

Agenda

1. Partner and Charter Schools
2. Student Success Funding Update
3. District Wide Per Pupil Spending
4. Central Office Per Pupil Spending
5. GO Team Update
6. Wrap Up
7. Next Steps?

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Community** – Rosalyn S. Triplett, Mark Rebillot, Luke Denny, Tammy Dixon, Melissa Hughley, Tyronia Smith, Mia Thompson
- **Principals** -
- **Central Office** –Eugene Herrington, Alana Bethea, Shaquita Barnes, Jennifer Lang, Tammie Workman, Jessica Thompson

DISCUSSION

The meeting was called to order by Eugene Herrington with words of welcome, afterward the meeting was turned over to Gayle Burnett. Mrs. Burnett began her presentation speaking about charter schools. She discussed how charters are funded, its enrollment process as well as how charters deal with reimbursements. She then explained that the biggest driver for charter school funding is student enrollment. The following items are reimbursable: teacher salary and insurance costs and certain administrative and support staff.

Question: What is the difference between a Charter System and a Charter School?

Answer: Atlanta Public Schools is a **Charter System** that operates under the terms of a charter between the State Board of Education and the local school district. The system receives flexibility from certain state rules and regulations in exchange for greater accountability. Whereas a

Whereas a **Charter School** is a public school that operates under contract with a local authorizer such as Atlanta Public Schools. Charter schools are governed by their own independent, non-profit boards with oversight from the authorizer and the State Department of Education. Charter schools have district-wide enrollment zones and are allowed flexibility in their programming in exchange for specific performance goals.

Question: How are charter schools funded?

Answer: Like all public schools, charters receive a combination of federal, state and local funding. The State Department of Education calculates a funding sheet for each individual charter school, based on the school's student and employee composition. The local authorizer then develops a proportional local funding amount based on the average amount each student in the district receives from local dollars. The formula for each of these calculations can be found in Title 20, Georgia School Law.

See list of charter schools.

Question: How are charter services charged?

Answer: Charter services are estimated dollars for charges and services, averaging 2% of total funding.

Question: Are there currently any year end reports or state reporting?

Answer: At this point in time, the Office of Innovation are formulating reports. However they are currently brainstorming through what kinds of information will be reported out to inform stakeholder's updates and charter related findings.

Additional discussion led to partner schools. Partner schools are based upon the district's general fund budget and funding is provided like a traditional school; on a per pupil basis. Mrs. Burnett then discussed changes for FY2019 such as the addition of Carver Comprehensive High School, General Fund Budget, and Unfunded Pension Liability as well as the FY2019 estimated budget of $34.9 million. She ended the presentation encouraging attendees to access data using the APS Blog, APS Data Group and GADOE website.

Question: Are district employees moving from APS to Partner School?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Why are buyback services coming in lower than expected?

Answer: Departments may have overestimated; therefore, numbers must be reduced in order to comply with actuals.

The second half of the meeting was led by Ms. Alana Bethea, in which she spoke in depth about the Student Success Funding Allocation Model. The Student Success Funding is the new funding formula that will allocate funds based on the attributes of students. Its goals are to provide: equity, transparency and empowerment. Ms. Bethea then gave background on SSF, such as how it came about, its allocations, weights, and formula. For more specifics on SSF, please visit https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/55093. Heavy questioning led to the discussion about how this formula will look in future years. Ms. Bethea informed the group that this process will be ever changing and evolving to meet the needs of the district and its stakeholders.

She lastly showed a diagram which illustrated what moving towards equity and balancing stability would look like for the district. With this new model, we should start to see school allocations moving closer to a midline based on the challenge index. At some point, there will be a tilting of lines towards a more equitable distribution where schools with the greatest challenges receive additional funds. Although the tilt will be subtle due to the transition policy and because many "need-based" allocations such as ESOL, Special Education and Turnaround are outside of the new funding formula and allocated on top of an initial baseline allocation.

The final section of the meeting was led by Mr. Eugene Herrington. He went into discussions about per pupil expenditure comparisons, comparing APS with other school districts. In conversations, it was discussed that in order to reduce central office expenditures, the district has decided to push school related expenditures out to schools for reporting purposes. Mr. Herrington quickly went through the next couple slides demonstrating what you would get for the money - average per student cost. This included but was not limited to: General Administration, Staff Services, Transportation and Office of Engagement. Lingering discussions were centered on whether or not the district is receiving the best bang for its buck.

The meeting ended at 7:21 pm.

Conclusion

The group had a number of questions to be answered during the next meeting, which included but not limited to:

1. How are current programs being measured?
2. Are we getting the desired outcome from current programs?
3. Why were school districts from the north chosen to compare the district? Why not compare to local schools districts?
4. Were you able to find research on other school districts that support academic gains and improvements?
5. What departments are overlapping in duties?

Community members raised grave concerns as to if the advisory committee was on the same page as administration. It was advised that requested data to be presented during this month's meeting, was not what was presented. In addition, some members would like to receive a breakdown of what was discussed during SSF Taskforce meetings for additional clarity on mechanisms behind the new student formula.

Next Meeting – April 19th, 2018

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.