

## Community Q&A

### Part 2 – Posted Thursday 2/26/26

- (1) Pulse Studio – The specialized health & medical-sciences program has been housed at Monticello HS for many years, previously as “Health Medical Sciences Academy”. It will be moving to ACE: Lambs Lane (Center 2, next to AHS) in the fall (p. D-70). What is the specific anticipated enrollment change from this year to next year in Pulse, and how many MHS students are expected to not continue?**

We do not anticipate reduction in enrollment, and we will not know the makeup of where students are coming from until enrollment is closed.

- (2) Total FTE at ACE: Lambs Lane (aka Center 2) – We see that there are 43.2 FTE proposed for this site (p G-20), but also 48.0 total FTE (p G-25). Please clarify?**

G-20 includes only “school-managed” FTE. These are FTE that are hired and supervised by administration at ACE Lambs Lane. G-25 shows total FTE that are based at the site but may be managed centrally. These positions are listed on page G-25 under *Technology* and *Other Departments*: Learning Technology Integrator (LTI) 0.5, Technology Support Specialist (TSS) 0.5, and Custodian 3.8.

- (3) Impact on AHS Courses – We are hearing from AHS parents that the elective course offerings appear to be significantly decreased for next school year. In the budget, we see that the daily enrollment at AHS is decreasing due to the opening of ACE: Lambs Lane. And, thus the number of classroom teachers will also be decreasing. Could you clarify exactly how many fewer classroom teachers will be at AHS next year vs. currently? And, will this impact elective course offerings, both in CTE and non-CTE courses?**

The exact number of classroom teachers at AHS for next year is not yet finalized. Staffing will be determined after registration is complete and we have confirmed enrollment, including the number of students taking courses in the ACEL building.

Consistent with our annual scheduling process, course offerings—CTE and non-CTE—are based on student requests. If a sufficient number of students request an available course, it will be offered. If demand for elective courses is low, the course may be eliminated or not run as a standalone section.

- (4) Sustainability – The central office Instruction budget also includes \$200K for “Scholars Studio Sustainability”, which doesn’t appear to be FTE. What is this?**

This is presented as part of the *Scholars Studios* Proposal which represents additional operating budgets for field experiences, industry credentialing, and promotion.

**(5) STEP Program – What is the STEP Program? The only info we find is in a 2020 news story that it is meant to reduce out-of-school suspensions. (Maybe it’s great, but we just don’t know what it is.) According to the current budget proposal, it was introduced in FY20 by Kevin Kirst and is the only program from that year still marked in yellow as “Not fully realized and will continue to be reviewed regularly and modified as needed.” It was expanded in FY22 by Kevin Kirst, but is still marked in yellow as the only program from that year not reviewed.**

The Short-Term Education Plan (STEP) program was introduced to the County in 2016 and was piloted at Journey Middle School and Burley Middle School for the start of the 2017-18 school year. The original intention of STEP was to address the disproportionality of discipline sanctions in schools by providing a restorative, multi-disciplined alternative to Out of School Suspension (OSS). This opportunity focused on decreasing recidivism while increasing positive school behaviors by students who exhibited the need for intervention. Initially, the school day for those students was shortened to focus extensively on academic work with the provision of social and emotional supports. This practice was solidified when Journey figured out how to provide separate transportation to those students participating in the STEP program. Today, STEP is now housed in every ACPS secondary school.

STEP is a service that has been set up to be an alternative to ISS and certainly to OSS. Trained staff are expected to work with students in STEP to work on behaviors from a needs-based framework / perspective. That is to say, as all behavior is seen as purposeful, a plan to help students get their needs met, holds them accountable for their own behavior and that ultimately and explicitly include respect for individuals around them to get their needs met as well, including honoring school and classroom norms is the goal of the work in STEP.

**(6) According to the FY20 budget, the Outcome was supposed to be: “By the end of three years, 100% of students will show decrease in time out referrals and In School Suspension referrals, an increase in achievement data, and an increase in student efficacy.” When it was expanded in FY22, the Outcome was to be: “By the end of three years, ACPS will have eliminated out of school suspension with the only exceptions being cases affecting student and staff safety.” Has the program been reviewed for effectiveness?**

Yes. Although administrators and staff have received professional development to implement this program, the needs at the schools have exceeded the staffing capacity as positions are also assigned disciplinary duties beyond the STEP Program such as lunch

detention, in school suspension, and other interventions where supervision is required for students who cannot be in the classroom for reasons related to behavior.

**(7) The proposed FY27 budget shows 9.0 FTE in middle & high schools, but what is the total cost?**

\$451,818 in compensation & benefits is budgeted for the 9 STEP teaching assistants.

**(8) Tech Devices – In FY23, there was \$2.8M expenditure on Student Laptops & iPads plus Teacher/Staff Laptops. The replacement cycle indicated that these devices would be scheduled for replacement in 4 years, which would be FY27. (FY23 Final Budget A-53)**

**In FY27 proposed budget, Technology Equipment Replacement (p F-15 and E-27) is budgeted for a 66.9% increase (\$1.48M) over prior year, for a total of \$3.7M. We also see a Transfer of \$1.48M to Technology Replacement (p A-31), which may be included or could be in addition.**

Page F-15 shows the planned replacement cycle costs, for all essential technology devices throughout the division (not simply laptops and ipads). The numbers are variable based on inflationary factors and enrollment and staffing changes. The FY27 projection is approximately a 5% increase over the FY24 device replacement costs, which is largely due to the significant increase in memory chips, servers, and computer devices.

**(9) iPad Q – The FY23 purchase was for 660 iPad replacements purchased for kindergarten students at 2:1 ratio for iPads/students. Is this ratio being maintained for kindergarten? For grades 1 and 2? We wonder about the impact of shifting to class sets of iPads instead of the current ratio.**

The current ratio for K-2 iPads is 1:1. The Department of Instruction and Department of Technology work collaboratively to establish device ratios based on curricular needs, instructional use of digital resources, and security best practices. Because K-2 students have different abilities in the use of technology, sharing devices across multiple students would reduce the amount of instructional time with each student. Instead, instructional staff would have to walk through sign-on processes each time the iPad transitioned from one student to another. Additionally, instructional staff would not be able to conduct full class instructional activities utilizing curriculum materials accessible with the iPad.

**(10) License – Lightspeed has a Parent Portal that could let families see weekly summaries of our kids' web browsing and even block a laptop's home access to YouTube & other distracting content. This was very popular at our Family Council meeting, and we understand why ACPS hasn't implemented yet. That said, we'd like to know if there is a cost to "turning on" this feature with Lightspeed?**

This option is still under consideration and investigation. However at this time, families can receive a report of their student's internet activity by requesting it from their principal.

**(11) Compensation Increases – ACPS summarizes the “Compensation Increase” of \$7.8M as due to a) Collective Bargaining negotiations and b) maintaining competitiveness in the adopted market. On the footnote on Salary increases (C-15), it's explained that the Collective Bargaining agreement includes licensed teachers plus a subset of classified employees, but that there are also “non-bargaining unit employees” who are also recommended to receive 3.75% or 4.25% increases. Are the “non-bargaining unit employees” school principals and district administrators? We are unclear which employees are not included in the CB agreements.**

This includes a range of employees from Office Associates to the Superintendent. They are staff who work in roles with decision-making authority over employment, financial authority and other matters. There are roughly 200 employees in the division. Employees in this category who are in paygrade 19 or below are slated to receive the ESP increase of 4.25% (as they would likely be in the ESP bargaining unit if they didn't work in their department or role) or Licensed increase of 3.75% for those in paygrade 20 or higher (namely assistant principals, principals, Division Services staff).

**(12) Salary Increases – Between FY23-26, the school board approved 23.2% increase in salary for teachers. Were these same increases also applied to all central office & departmental administrator salaries?**

In recent years, prior to Collective Bargaining, all employees received the same general wage increase. In FY 23, the teacher step distance was increased from 1.2% to 1.3%, which had the effect of cascading a slightly larger percentage increase on the higher steps in the scale. Note that employees on the top of all pay scales receive a smaller increase as they do not receive a step, or they are already at the paygrade max.

**(13) In that same timeframe, the teacher salary increases were based on in-depth review of market rates. Have central office administrators and departmental staff salaries also been subject to analysis of comparable market salaries?**

We last engaged in a full Compensation Study with a consultant in 2021-2022. That study established our current comparative market and reviewed over half of our positions for market competitiveness. Annually, we review our teacher salaries and selected other positions in the division for market competitiveness. It is not possible to do a more comprehensive review without engaging a compensation consultant.

**(14) The School Fund Salary Expenditures (C-16) show proposed increases that are quite different by state-defined functional category. The Admin/Attend&Health functional**

**category shows 7.1% increase in salary, which is well above the CB increases that are recommended to be applied to non-bargaining unit employees. Why is this higher?**

The higher percentage increase in salary in the Admin/Attend & Health function is primarily due to the reclassification of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Coaches to Mental Health Support Specialists (MHSS). Also, about 45% of the employees on this functional area are in the Educational Support Professional (ESP) bargaining unit or are pay grade 19 and under, so are budgeted for 4.25% salary increases.

**(15) Economically Disadvantaged / Poverty – Could you please clarify whether the percentage of students from economically-disadvantaged families across ACPS is increasing or decreasing? Under “At-Risk Education” Revenues (p B-19) we see that the concentration of poverty rate is increasing to 10.18%, and percent identified as At-Risk is increasing to 34.19%. But, we also see that the projected enrollment of “economically disadvantaged students” is decreasing (p A-32), leading to a decline of 5.0 FTE.**

The data shows that the percentages are decreasing overall from 24-25 to 25-26.

**(16) Donations – We see that ACPS projects “Donations and Misc. Revenue” (p G-30) that varies by school, in some cases quite significantly (e.g., MoHS \$55K vs. AHS \$275K). Where do these amounts come from, and what does this category reflect? Does this match up with quarterly donation reports? We know those still do not include many PTO, Booster or DonorsChoose donations. Do these estimated donation amounts factor into the revenue provided to each school in any way?**

The budgeted amounts are calculations based on enrollment and economically disadvantaged rates. However, for the high schools, the amount reflect historical trends. No, this does not match up with quarterly donation reports as they are budget estimates. No, these estimates do not reflect actual funds provided to schools.

**(17) Special Education – General – We’re having a very hard time tracking whether a) funding in ACPS for special education is increasing or decreasing (state increase p B-10, federal decrease p F-24, plus many smaller funds), b) how many students are projected to receive services next year (?), and c) whether the staffing is increasing or decreasing (+20.3 FTE on p G-24?) aside from the C-Base and New Position proposals. It looks like the staffing standards (G-16 to 18) haven’t changed, so is the increase of staff due to growth of student population? Is that increase covered by the available state & federal revenue? IDEA Staffing – Why is there a proposed decrease in special education IDEA staffing from 40.5 FTE in FY25 and FY26 to 36.5 FTE in FY27? (p G-22)**

This will be covered in Work Session #2.

**(18) Holdbacks – Please clarify what Special Education “Holdback” (3.0) and “Growth” (3.0) mean (p D-76)? We know it’s meant to be a catchall fund to address changes that happen during the year, but would appreciate more clarity.**

At the time the baseline staffing budget was developed (November 2025), the 3.0 in holdback FTE had not yet been distributed to schools. The growth FTE will be distributed to schools in 26-27, if approved. Typically, FTEs are released when there are newly identified students or intensive behaviors.

**(19) Cont – Similarly for School-Based Services (p G-20), “Holdback” of 6.0 FTE is listed, an increase of 1.8 from prior year?**

This holdback is the 3.0 in holdback and 3.0 for growth as described in the previous response. This is variable year to year based on when special education needs arise during the year.

**(20) C-Base – In which schools are the additional 3.0 FTE being added? ACPS explains that these are being added for growth of the student population. What has been the specific growth in students requiring C-Base services?**

A growth in C-base at Albemarle High School will go from 2 to 3 C-Base classrooms due to student projections for next year.

**(21) New Positions – We applaud the proposal (p A-38) to add learning & behavioral specialists to serve students with diagnosed needs, as Family Council members have expressed strong support both due to benefit for special education and general education. For the Adaptive PE Teacher, is this also someone who will provide services division-wide?**

Yes, we currently have 1 Adaptive PE teacher and the additional APE teacher would partner with our current APE teacher to provide services to students division wide.

**(22) Specialized Academic Center – We hear great things! How many students does this program serve? We see that Post High, which is co-housed at Trailhead Learning Community (formerly called Ivy Creek School) is projected to enroll 31 students next year, and that the combined program (SAC & Post High) is also projected to serve 31 total students (p G-34) which seems incorrect. We also see that 68 “Centers Students” are projected for SAC, but wonder if that is meant to indicate something different than Studio enrollment?**

The label “Centers students” means that students attending the school are counted in their base schools. This count is an enrollment count of SAC students.

**(23) Continued – Related, the cost per pupil is \$50,509, but is it comparable for students at each of the two programs or significantly different?**

The budgets for Post High and SAC are now combined, so we no longer calculate per pupil costs for each program. They share overhead costs such as a program administrator, clerical, and custodial staffing.

**(24) Continued – Curious how this cost compares to the projection made when creating the Trailhead Learning Community?**

Thus far, the costs for the SAC are in line with the budget that was developed for it in the FY 26 budget process.

**(25) High School Enrollment – The difference between “Projected Enrollment” and “Adjusted Enrollment” (p G-23) is significantly changed from last year’s adopted budget. The explanation provided is: “High School enrollment adjusted for students attending centers and intra-high school attendance.” We had understood that very few students were leaving their base high school to attend a “center” every-other-day. Could you please clarify the new larger adjustments? We do see that CATEC was added this year, but are concerned about whether the assumptions of students leaving MoHS and WAHS for “centers” are too large. Does the “adjusted enrollment” indicate daily attendance at each base high school? This change seems to have a significant impact on the FTE allocated to MoHS compared to last year (see Q below).**

High School	FY27 Projected Enrollment	FY27 Adjusted Enrollment	FY 27 Difference
AHS	1848	1535	-313
MoHS	1133	1016	-117
WAHS	1317	1256	-61

	FY26 Projected Enrollment	FY26 Adjusted Enrollment	FY 26 Difference
AHS	1883	1811	-72
MoHS	1144	1130	-14
WAHS	1250	1216	-34

Yes, the “adjusted enrollment” indicates daily attendance at each base high school. The large change is driven by students projected to attend ACE Academy Lambs Lane.

**(26) CATEC – We see that CATEC enrollment is now 117 students (p G-23). What was the CATEC enrollment of ACPS students last year?**

24-25 Actual: 239 students or 120 daily students  
25-26 Actual: 225 students or 113 daily students  
26-27 Projection: 234 students or 117 daily students

**(27) We also see that the payment is increased to CCS which now runs & owns this program (p A-31): “\$193,245 is added for the CATEC payment due to higher tuition costs (Instruction).” That’s an additional \$1,650 per student. Is that increase due to CCS tuition increase? What is the full payment to CATEC? We do not find this in the budget, and would be interested in knowing the per-pupil cost.**

\$2,041,005, which is budgeted in the Department of Instruction. We recently received an update from the City of Charlottesville that the tuition amount for next year is corrected to \$7,797, which is a decrease from the Draft Funding Request. This will be incorporated as a technical adjustment.

**(28) Cont – The proposed budget makes an assumption that the enrollment of CLS is at division-average for economically disadvantaged students, which ends up providing more revenue to the program. However much we love the program, it does have the lowest actual % of students who are economically disadvantaged of any school in ACPS (4.4% as per p D-67), so we question the budget assumption.**

CLS does not receive differentiated staffing, so this number is only used for operating budgets, which is a small part of their budget.

**(29) Cont – We’ve been told that CLS benefits from grant funding via its partnership with UVA, but we’re not sure if or how this is integrated into the budget?**

There is no grant funding that CLS receives via its partnership with UVA.

**(30) Talent Development – Families have expressed significant concern in our surveys and fall meeting about the lack of availability of services for students who are high-achieving. Specific questions: In the proposed FY27 budget (p C-11), the expenditures for Talent Development are proposed to increase 23.9%, much higher than other categories, for increase of \$525K. Seems to be the result of changed staffing ratio for elementary school (below), which reflects changes that will be welcomed by the much-larger elementary schools who have had far less access to services/student. Does**

**this new staffing investment reflect ACPS intention to increase services? Our understanding is that while the state plan reflects the framework, the actual implementation plan is not yet finalized.**

An indirect result of the collective bargaining agreement was to create more consistency in the Elementary Schedule to allow for planning time for all teachers to be continuous and daily. A result of that was for schools to agree to schedule time with TDRTs in each classroom K-5. This will provide consistency to services for all students in K-5 when the local plan is focused on exposure and extension. In analyzing the impact that this consistent implementation would have on the TDRTs in elementary, a decision was made to update the standard to make sure that each school could meet this requirement, that students and caretakers would have access to a TDRT each day (if a parent needs to speak to a TDRT at a school, they will be there), and to provide stability to the role across the division for these valuable staff members.

FY26 Adopted: Elementary		FY27 Proposed: Elementary	
0.5 FTE	Per school	1.0 FTE	Per school
0.6	Per school >200 students	1.5	Per school >575 students
0.7	Per school >250 students	2.0	Per school >625 students
1.0	Per school >300 students		<i>Including preschool enrollment</i>

**(31) Elementary Specials – The staffing formulas for elementary art, music, PE (p G-9) and library/media (p G-10) are proposed to change, resulting in a net addition of 4.0 FTE for art/music/PE and 3.4 FTE for media. We love our specials & appreciate the effort to ensure that our two largest elementary schools (Baker-Butler & Woodbrook) are adequately staffed. We also feel obligated to point out that this change isn’t included as a new initiative, while the addition of 3 special education staff members is an investment that the school board is asked to debate.**

This cost is included in the non-discretionary proposal *Workforce Investments*, as the changes are related to the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**(32) Cont – On the same page (G-26) there are “Title I” staff FTE identified. Are these unique staff not included on previous pages or just indicative of the funding source?**

These are staff not included on previous pages. Title I staffing has to supplement local staffing, and so all local formulas are applied evenly. The six Title I schools receive additional staffing on top of the already differentiated formulas that are in place. The title I schools use these positions for a variety of positions based on individual school needs. In FY 26, the positions utilized were Reading and Math specialist, SEL support, and an additional school counselor.

**(33) EDEP TAs – How will the reduction in TAs impact the availability of services for children with disabilities?**

There will be no impact on services for students with disabilities. Part-time Special Education Teaching Assistants will continue to support students with IEPs, and all required services and accommodations will remain in place.

**(34) EDEP – The text (p F-8) says “After School Program tuition increases are outlined in the table below”, but the table itself is unchanged from the approved FY26 adopted budget. Please clarify if there are tuition increases and if so, what they will be?**

This text needs to be updated. There are no tuition changes proposed for next year.

**(35) Continued – The budget proposes “a restructure of the program by combining programs at Agnor, Greer, and Woodbrook to a new urban ring site at Agnor Elementary.” Please share more information, including whether transportation will be provided to Greer & Woodbrook families? And, whether this will result in net change of spaces available? Continued – The budget says that “Red Hill and Scottsville programs are planned to be provided by a service contract.” Please explain?**

The recommended changes are driven by enrollment patterns and long-term sustainability. Several smaller EDEP sites operate with low enrollment but must maintain minimum staffing levels, resulting in higher per-student costs and limiting our ability to serve students at schools with waitlists. By consolidating smaller programs and realigning staffing, we can expand access division-wide while maintaining quality programming. For Agnor, Greer, and Woodbrook, the proposal combines the three programs into a single Urban Ring Site at Agnor Elementary. Current enrollment across the three schools fits within the consolidated model, and transportation will be provided from Greer and Woodbrook to Agnor to ensure continued access for families. Staffing efficiencies from this 2 model allow us to reassign personnel to larger programs with waitlists, creating additional seats overall. At Scottsville and Red Hill, the proposal transitions after-school programming to community partners for SY 2026–2027. An MOU is currently in development and more information will be provided to the community once approved. Next year’s MOU will operate as pilot programs. During that time, we will evaluate participation, quality, and financial sustainability. In addition, next year, the division will conduct a formal RFP process to determine long-term contracting options. Our goal is to maintain access for families in Scottsville and Red Hill while implementing a more sustainable model that allows us to serve more students across the division.

**(36) Albemarle Foundation for Education – Family Council enjoyed learning about the org’s efforts to fundraise at our Feb meeting. What is the total amount of \$ raised in each year?**

**AFE has been active? Where are these funds reported? Is there an annual report available for this non-profit org?**

This is the revenue for each year according to the 990 filing: SY 2022-2023, \$9,696; 2023-2024, \$35,586; and 2024-2025, \$29,898. The funds are reported in the 990 yearly. The annual report is presented to the Albemarle County School Board after the close of the Albemarle Foundation for Education (AFE) fiscal year which ends June 30th.

**(37) Communities in Schools – We love this program! Where in the budget does the expense show up?**

The Communities in Schools (CIS) expense is reflected in the budget through funding for five Site Coordinator positions serving Greer Elementary, Journey Middle, Red Hill Elementary, and Albemarle High School (two positions). The three-year total cost is \$1,722,855, supported by a blended funding model: 50% from the CIS Scaling for Success (Ballmer Group) grant, 26% from ACPS, and 24% from the Albemarle Foundation for Education (AFE) and other philanthropic efforts. For the current year, attendance grant funding is being utilized to offset the AFE/philanthropic portion, allowing time for fundraising in future years. The ACPS portion is funded through the Learning Recovery Fund (Fund 3310 fund balance). If continuation beyond three years is recommended, it would return through the formal budget process to identify ongoing funding.

**(38) School Libraries – We have been told by ACPS in the past that there is no centralized fund for purchasing books & materials for school libraries, and that principals use school-based budgets at their discretion. We also know that librarians count on revenue from book fairs (eg, family purchases of books which lead to credits that can be used by the school libraries). These events are often organized in part by PTOs and staffed by volunteers, but time is a precious resource for families & varies significantly by school. We are worried about the equity impacts of not having centralized funding for purchasing books & materials for school libraries. Is this something ACPS has reviewed or could please review?**

The Department of Instruction tries to support school libraries when they need to purchase books or materials, however with the reduction of the Division's Learning Resource budget over the past 10-15 years there were no funds to purchase division wide textbooks and resources and support school libraries. The purchase of division wide resources was prioritized to ensure equitable access to core curriculum which we have done over the past three years. For fiscal year 2027 we have written a budget proposal for an additional \$800,000 which would allow us to begin purchasing core curriculum, and once those purchases are completed, the plan will be to return to supporting school libraries as we can in a manner that is equitable across the division.

**(39) Summer School – Where does this expense appear in the budget? We realize there are different programs offered, including high school credit recovery & PE/health plus programs for younger students intended to catch them up academically. Each year we submit a request for the program to be advertised much earlier in the year so that families can make summer plans, and we worry that the cost is quite high & not reaching its potential, but could be greatly improved given the high need locally.**

Learning Recovery Fund, page F-35

**(40) Intervention Tutoring – ACPS had received funding from the state last year for tutoring & was required to implement intensive tutoring by Youngkin, but we don't see state revenue listed now? We see \$822,000 in expenditures for grades K-12 (p G-31). Is this using the same software or in-person? We were told there was supposed to be an analysis of whether this was an effective intervention, but was that completed?**

The money on G-31 is the annual amount provided to schools for tutoring and intervention hourly salaries and materials that was provided prior to All-In and is scheduled for FY 27.

All-In tutoring was provided by the state in resources such as Ignite, Lexia and Zearn. Money has been spent on procuring additional licenses for students who qualified for the program but did not receive funding for it. Schools also implemented during and after school tutoring programs to supplement what is allocated to them each year. All-In money was also used to lower summer school class sizes at our most at risk schools, and to expand the program in the summer of 2024. It also paid for the Spring Break Intersession in Spring 2024 and 2025 that was both for academics and attendance. Some analysis and collaboration with other Divisions is ongoing to determine the programming that is worth continuing now that all All-In money is spent, and what other grant opportunities exist.

**(41)Building Services – How much is spent on outside consulting annually for new and improved school buildings? A few years back, there was a shift to bringing planning staff internal... could you please remind us of that rationale & explain how outcomes have been impacted as a result?**

Consulting fees vary significantly year to year, depending on needs and requests from the School Board. As a baseline, however, Building Services carries a little over \$25k annually in its operating budget for professional services for long-term planning needs, evaluations, and feasibility studies that may arise in the course of a year. This does NOT include Architecture/Engineering (A/E) consulting fees for CIP Maintenance projects or standalone CIP projects, which vary significantly based on the size, scale, and scope of services for each individual project. A/E fees for those projects are paid using CIP funds.

Project management services were brought in-house in Fall 2022 as part of ACPS' CIP request. Prior to that time, those services were outsourced to local government at the same staffing standards with similar overhead costs (excluding inflation). While the data is a few years old, the [Summer 2023 Building Services Summer Project Update](#) (see slides 7-8) showcased the immediate benefits of having these services brought in-house, by showing that ACPS was able to more fully utilize the CIP funds it received from the Board of Supervisors. Additionally, having these services in-house has significantly improved communications and customer service to school administrators. ACPS is able to better coordinate construction services around other programmatic needs, such as summer professional development programs and community use. There has also been a streamlined operational impact, in that the ACPS maintenance team has had more direct input on the design and construction phases of CIP maintenance and standalone projects and how design decisions impact long-term operations. Lastly, in-house staff are dedicated to ACPS' core mission to serve our students to a degree that external resources are not.

**(42) There are two new FTE for Building Services (p G-21) that don't seem to be explained elsewhere. Thanks for sharing what these are?**

These are related to new school opening costs for Mountain View and ACE Academy Lambs Lane and are based on ACPS Staffing Standards described on page G-15. There are 3.0 FTE added for new schools (grounds and maintenance workers), and 1.0 FTE was reduced as part of Central & Department based reductions.

**(43) We are curious why school maintenance workers (who we think of as "custodians") are not included in the school budgets, but instead in the departmental office along with central administrative positions? It makes it hard to understand the costs for central admin vs. school-based expenditures.**

Maintenance and custodians are two separate employee groups. Custodians are school-based from a budgeting perspective since they are assigned to specific schools and report there daily. Our maintenance team is further subdivided into individual trades, which allows Building Services to have better trained staff than if each school were to have its own general maintenance employee. Because of this, it is far more efficient for these trades to be centrally located to be able to respond to trade-specific maintenance needs across the entire division.

**(44) Legal – We have been working with SEAC to articulate the inconsistencies across schools re: access to special education services, and are concerned about continued disproportionality of suspensions & discipline. We know there have been legal cases in the past, but these are not public info. One way Virginia school divisions address these issues proactively is via an Ombuds position, which also supports important family/community relationships with a school division. See [Fairfax](#) and [Loudon](#) for**

**examples. Has ACPS examined whether its expenditures on legal fees exceed the potential cost of an Ombuds position?**

Outside of Special Education, the Division has spent less than \$10K on legal fees in the past two years. We have very good insurance, and in most of the cases we have defended, our deductible has been either \$0 or \$5K. Our HR team handles dozens of potential employment claims and third-party claims each year, and through their good and thorough work, they prevent the overwhelming majority of those issues from becoming a formal dispute.

We use highly specialized outside counsel to help with our SPED litigation, and I do not believe that an Ombudsperson could effectively prevent or manage those issues.