

Community Q&A

Part 5 – Posted Thursday 3/12/26

(1) Overhead Etc Costs at ACE: Seminole (aka Center 1) – Has ACPS considered moving Link Studio to ACE: Lambs Lane?

Very early in the budget process, there was some consideration given to this idea. With a projected freshman cohort over capacity at ACE Lambs Lane, we feel this solution would be temporary. Moving Link studio for a short period of time did not seem to be in the best interest of students at this juncture.

(2) Studios Admin – The proposed budget includes new staff for ACE: Lambs Lane (p G-23 to G-24) that makes us wonder: Principal – “Center 1” previously had a “Director” but now has a “Principal”. This new “Center 2” also has a Principal. Are these in addition to the central office “Career and Technical Education” curriculum coordinator and the “Health & Science” curriculum coordinator who have led the Scholar Studios until now?

Principals require administrative licensure and evaluate teachers and instruction, so this title makes the most sense for the Centers. Yes, the CTE Curriculum Coordinator and Science Coordinator assisted in the development of the Scholars Studios in the absence of a designated principal for ACE Lambs Lane. Now that the principal has been hired, those staff members will return to their designated roles and responsibilities.

(3) Custodian (3.8 FTE) – This is more than Hollymead, for example, and it’s a gorgeous new building, but we’re not sure why it’s so high?

Hollymead has 4.0 custodial FTE. While the custodial FTE count in the budget document is accurate at the bottom line, it may not be fully updated by school. What is budgeted may not be what is allocated. This will get updated in the next version of the budget document.

(4) Child Nutrition – Could you share a breakdown of the revenue paid by families, specifically for breakfast & lunch “meals” vs. the “Smart Snacks”? We have been told previously that the revenue from snacks is necessary to ensure that the budget is balanced. While these snack items must meet nutritional guidelines, they are less healthy overall especially when our kids purchase these competitive items instead of meals. We can see our kids’ individual purchases on MySchoolBucks, but don’t have a picture across the division.

Revenue from paid meals: \$1,345,000

Revenue from a la carte: \$768,000

(5) School Resource Officers – We see a Transfer to Local Government of \$399,912 (p C-12), which reflects a proposed increase of \$21,309 (p A-31). What is the increase in funding for? Our understanding had been that a presentation to the school board would be scheduled to discuss outcomes & data, but the Budget Proposal Dashboard (p A-41) shows that the expansions are “Fully Implemented as Intended” and now “operationalized as part of ACPS programming.” Please clarify.

The proposed increase is due to increasing compensation costs, as proposed by Local Government. A mid-year overview of the SRO program will be presented to the School Board to address the program activities and accomplishments for the first half of the school year. Subsequently, there will be an end of year review of the program as well. Numerous sources of information and data are being used to draft this report. Once completed the report will be presented to the School Board and made available for public access on the ACPS website.

(6) Staffing for high school performing arts seems slim given out-of-school responsibilities. For example, one drama teacher is expected to coordinate multiple out-of-school performances with literally months of evening rehearsals. Same for band with one teacher covering a whole marching band season plus multiple concerts. Both coordinate competitions as well. We are aware that there are stipends paid to teachers who act as leads, but on an hourly basis these clearly amount to very little. What is the status of reviewing these stipends? Does this have an impact on performing arts teacher turnover?

ACPS significantly increased these stipends two years ago, in trying to better align with the market. We also shifted at the time to align rates with a set percentage of the Teacher Scale Step 0, so that Academic Leadership Compensation Program (ALCP) rates would scale with yearly increases as well.

Our ALCP rates are tiered and aligned to percentages of the Teacher Scale Step 0, not based on tying each stipend with the market. Additional increases would require an increase in the budget. We are not aware of the ability to retain staff related to this issue.

(7) For entry to high schools, in addition to having dedicated safety/security staff, principals have had to pay extra (overtime?) to teachers & staff to ensure flow through new weapons screening systems in the mornings. What has been the incremental cost to ACPS for this staffing?

ACPS has taken various steps to ensure increased security measures were put in place to support our goal of creating a safe environment for our students and staff. One of those measures was to employ weapons screening systems at our high schools. The weapons screening process started the second week of September and has continued to provide their purpose of deterrence and detection.

To date, ACPS has incurred the cost of approximately \$55,000 toward extra pay for staff and overtime to effectively monitor and run the weapons screening process during school day.

(8) For events in high schools, what has been the expense increase of providing security this year? It seems that additional staffing has been required. Athletics.

Weapons screening is not systematically employed at our high schools for other events with the exception of athletic events. As a result, existing staffing has been used to support these events and the athletic department employs staff members and police officer support as needed to support the event. The cost incurred to support athletics is provided for in the athletic budget allocated to the departments of athletics.

(9) We've noticed that weapons screeners and staff are also provided now at school board meetings (but not at Supervisor meetings which have much higher attendance). Is this a substantial cost?

The cost to support school board meeting has not been substantial to date. The weapons screening unit used is provided by one of the high schools for use during board meetings so there is no equipment cost to date. Weapons screening at School Board meetings began in November of 2025 following increased concerns for security. The initial cost at the first meeting was approximately \$2,500. Since the first meeting, the screening process is staffed by school security officers (SSO) who work additional hours and at times receive overtime pay. The cost incurred to date for staffing has been approximately \$800.