

Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction Minutes

Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction (SACI), Thursday February 9, 2023

7:00 p.m. - Welcome, Mrs. Vanessa Olson, Chair, SACI.

March meeting will be work session for annual report, will be selecting topics. April will be approving annual report. Writing committee will meet between March and April meetings. Motion to approve January minutes passed.

Dr. Babur Lateef, School Board Chair

Considers this the most important committee in the division. His wife served on SACI for many years. It's frustrating how much time he has to spend on things that don't directly involve what students are doing in classrooms. Thank you for all of the help with the strategic plan, and for the input the SACI provides through the annual report. While this year's budget is better than most historical budgets, it's less than last year. If we pay our teachers well, we'll be able to retain them. When he started in 2008, there was high turnover due to pay inequity between PWCS and nearby counties. We are now below the national average on turnover, though we are still at the bottom of the region on teacher pay. Working with numerous Universities on helping teachers earn advanced degrees. Feel free to email him with any questions or concerns—while he reads all emails, if he gets many emails on the same topic he won't be able to respond to them all. He thinks it's important to regain trust in the public school system.

Q&A

A lot of teacher frustration isn't pay, it's the additional workload. We are continuing to work with the teacher association on this. Our employees are among the happiest among the educational districts in Virginia. Dr. Lateef is an ophthalmologist. The special education services in Prince William are not at the level that they are in other systems, and we are trying to work on that. The incredibly low per pupil spending makes it very challenging to provide the quality of education our students deserve.

Top 2-3 problems that keep you up at night. Overdoses, students that are suicidal, and violence/fights. School security is at the top of everyone's minds. Artificial Intelligence

scanning will be rolling out as a demo. Charlotte-Mecklenburg implemented it, and not only did weapons go down, but so did drugs and vaping.

Organizational Coherence - FY24 Proposed Budget, Mr. John Wallingford, Chief Financial Officer

PWCS will ensure that our Strategic Priorities drive our investments. Joining via Zoom due to illness. The main foundations for school budgets in Virginia are in the state code. The school Division Superintendent submits to the governing body, with the approval of the School Board, and estimate of the funds needed during the next FY for support of the public schools. The BOCS prepare and approves an annual budget for educational purposes by May 15 or within 30 days of receipt by the county or municipality of the estimates of state funds, whichever shall later occur.

57.23% of all PWC General Revenue goes to PWCS due to the revenue-sharing agreement with the BOCS. There are pluses and minuses to this arrangement. PWCS is allowed to maintain balances at the end of the school year, unlike many school systems. The BOCS has the right to sweep back balances from the school systems, and it has happened in Loudoun County and Virginia Beach in the recent past. About 50% of PWCS funding comes from the state, in the way of aid and from sales tax, and 44% from the county. About 79% of what we spend goes to instruction. At the school level, salary and benefits/flex spending %s are 95/5 at ES, 93/7 at MS, and 91/9 at HS.

Budget development processes have changed since Dr. McDade joined PWCS. The strategic planning process now comes before the budget process, and that is where the budget priorities now come from. The commitments in the strategic plan direct how we build the budgets. In February the proposed budget and CIP are presented, and there is the first public hearing. In March there is a budget work session and School Board approval of budget and CIP. In April the School Board presents the budget to the BOCS, the BOCS sets tax rates, the BOCS does a markup, and the BOCS sets the final budget.

FY 2024 budget highlights: approximately \$1.6B, an increase of 6.9% over FY23, with projected enrollment of 91,631. There will be a \$32.5M investment in employee pay, including an average 5.0% pay increase (step + COLA). Learning and Achievement for All: new investment of ~\$13.2M, including 75 FTE special education teacher assistants, 14 FTE instructional coaches, and 9.5 FTE for three additional pre-K classes. Positive Climate and Culture: new investment of ~\$16.4M, including 73 FTE school safety and security, \$4.5M for international faculty, and \$3.3M for teacher residency program. Family and Community Engagement: new investment of ~\$4.5M, including 62 FTE parent liaisons, \$300,000 for

translation funding, and \$250,000 for additional robotics funding (which received cheers from the Council). Organizational Coherence: new investment of ~\$5.2M, including replacing school bus radios, budget adequacy study, comprehensive staffing study, 4 FTE transportation liaisons, and Board member salary increase.

Since 2017, enrollment has gone from 89,861 to 91,631. In the past 5 years there has been only a 1.6% growth in overall student population, but 7.2% increase in special education membership, 40.4% increase in English language learners, and 55.1% increase in “Direct Cert.,” a poverty measure, which used to be “free/reduced lunch. Adjusting for inflation, our per-pupil spending has only increased a little less than \$1,000 since 2009. PWCS still spends the least per student of local major school systems—the only system spending less per student in Northern Virginia is Manassas Park City. VDOE recently discovered errors in its projections for FY23 and FY24—we are hoping the legislature will mitigate that error and not reduce our budget by that amount.

Presentation will be posted on the website.

Q&A

Do instructional coaches come out of school budgets? *Currently they are funded from central money, but ARPA money runs out in September, so schools will have to fund them if they want to keep them.*

How are special education students funded? *Students are funded based on level of services required—services more than 50% of the day are “self-contained” and are funded by a whole section (class size). Resource students (those requiring services <50% of the day), they are funded on a per student basis—so you get the amount of money for a student with their level of disability, times the number of students.*

Is pre-K funded by student? *Those are largely funded by Head Start and special state funding on a per pupil basis.*

If a school housing multiple programs has unique facility needs (for instance toddler restrooms at a high school hosting a pre-K), how are those funded? *Currently those are covered by the schools—unless they are brought forward during the budget process for direct request for special funding.*

8:00 p.m. Break

8:10 p.m. - Capital Improvement Program FY 2024 - Mr. Vernon Bock, Chief Operating Officer.

PWCS facilities will be welcoming, safe, and sustainable. About Mr. Bock: diagnosed with ADHD in 1977. Started as a math teacher, moved up through administration. Came to this position in August 2022. Inflation, supply chain, and workforce issues make CIP planning very challenging. CIP is about buildings, planning, and maintaining your assets. If you do a better job of preventative maintenance, you prolong the life of your assets.

CIP is a 10-year plan. 3 to 5 years we're pretty good at planning, the further out the less sure. Looking at student enrollment trends is critical. Then look at available funding. Focus on maintaining existing facilities and structures. Incorporate the strategic plan—making strategic investments, and reflect the School Board's sustainability initiative. Projecting enrollment growth to stabilize over the next few years.

New school construction includes additions at Gainesville and Reagan Middle, a new "Rosemount Lewis" ES, and a Woodbridge area ES to bid next to Fred Lynn ES. Renovation recently completed at Bennett ES. In progress completing summer 2023 at Hylton HS, Parkside MS, and Signal Hill and Bristow Run ES. To bid Cedar Point and Swans Creek ES, and a MS. Lots of other improvements, renovations. Replacing lighting with LED, starting with elementary schools, along with other sustainability programs. Plenty of roofing and HVAC projects.

Construction and building costs have been a major problem, as have supply chain anomalies. HVAC and electrical lead times have been 50 to 70 weeks, greatly delaying project completion. Cost uncertainty is big right now.

Policy changes are also impacting cost—High Performance Building Design (the energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives, 20% cost increase per project up front), and prevailing wages (15% cost increase on new construction, 10% on renovation). High Performance Building Design includes reduced carbon footprint. Higher efficiency windows and insulation, etc. More energy efficient, so some long-term cost savings. Prevailing wage rates are established regionally by the US Department of Labor, and help ensure a living wage for those working on our programs. We already have experience with prevailing wage rates due to the requirement that comes with certain Federal funding.

Bonds can help fund capital improvements, and we have a AAA bond rating because we manage them well. But we have to pay interest if we use bonds to fund, and those interest payments are money we'd rather be paying to teachers.

Planners like schools to run at 95 to 97% capacity, so we don't want to build one until it's really necessary. No, we don't have to build MSs very often. Renovations and additions, boundary adjustments, and trailers (not ideal, but we can use them) can help mitigate crowding until there is enough population to necessitate a new school. On the PWCS CIP website they have the data with enrollment projections.

Bid for Woodbridge area ES came in lower than feared, which has helped the long-term CIP outlook. Ways to manage cost increases include selling debt (bonds), value engineering (inequity in building quality, etc.), drop some of the High Performance Building Design aspects (therefore not following strategic plan), etc. Some CIP changes have included putting off construction for a year in areas where enrollment increases have leveled out, delaying Kelly Leadership center improvements, etc.

PWCS is bringing in an objective outside group to evaluate the condition of schools, which may change renovation schedule due to priority based on actual condition.

Q&A

You're such good planners, how did Colgan wind up with trailers 2 years later? *Opening at 95% capacity means that there isn't a lot of room for error, and the projections were off.*

Are we looking at schools being over capacity and closing them to transfer students? *It's up to principals; some will close to transfers, some are trying to get enough to get that one more teacher.*

Leasing buildings? *We own one empty building we are trying to sell, and given the specialized needs for a school, it's not feasible to lease a school to put kids in.*

How long for solar to pay for itself? *Generally around 20 years.*

Next Meeting: Annual Report.

Ms. Olson will email you homework. Please gather areas you would like covered, especially aligned with the strategic plan. Will be looking for volunteers to serve on the report writing committee.

9:08 p.m. - Adjourned