

BAC SURVEY RESULTS

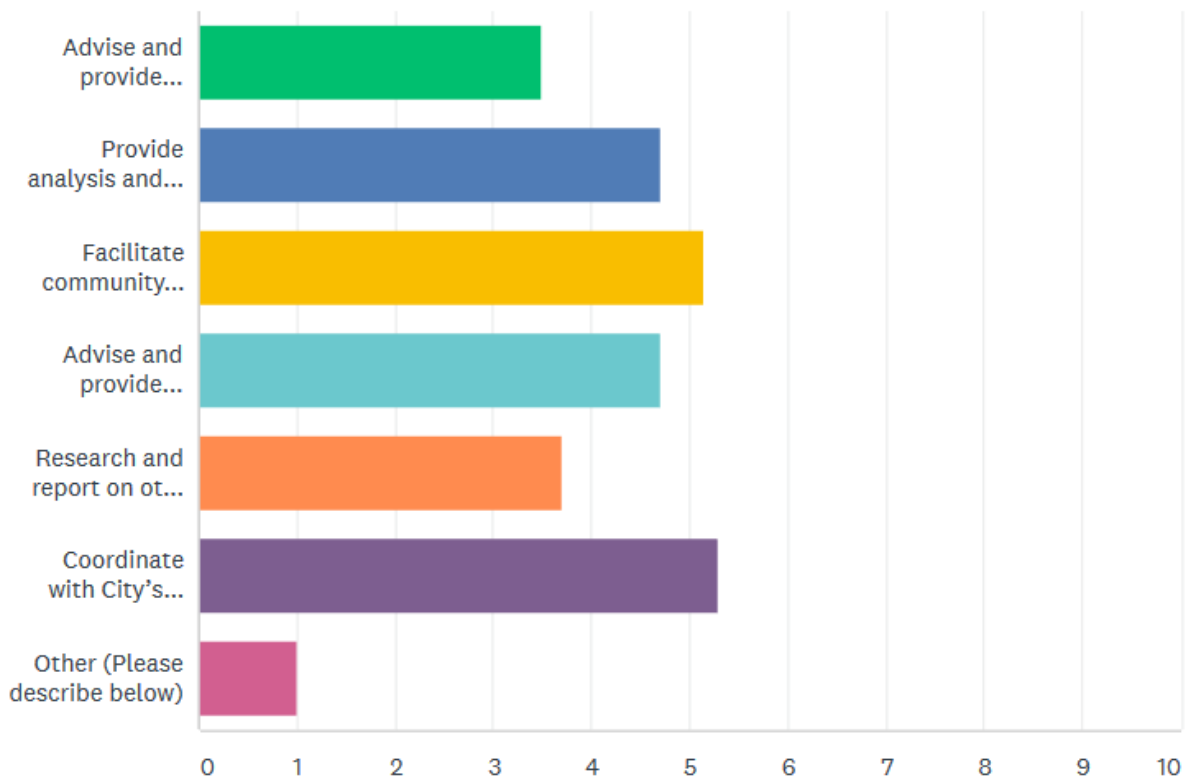
The following is a summary of responses received by 7 of 9 School Board Members. Survey results are listed separately from feedback generated through in-person discussions.

Potential BAC Focus Areas [Survey Results]

BAC's goal is to ensure that its work is practical, useful, and of help to School Board members. We would be most grateful for your informal feedback on the following as we develop a best practices memo on BAC's strategic focus. Please rank the following focus areas from 1-7 according to greatest impact/usefulness to the School Board.

- Advise and provide recommendations on the development of ACPS budget priorities
- Provide analysis and/or recommendations on ACPS capital and combined fund budgets upon release
- Facilitate community budget engagement during budget process
- Advise and provide recommendations on the ACPS budget process
- Research and report on other budget and finance-related topics
- Coordinate with City's Budget and Financial Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC) and other school district BACs to provide recommendations on budget and finance-related topics
- Other (Please describe below)

Responses (Weighted)



Individual Rankings (Attached)

It is important to note that the individual rankings demonstrate the diversity among Board Members as to how they ranked the listed priorities.

“Other” (Above)

“Other” included three responses:

(1) N/A

(2) It would be really helpful to determine the effectiveness of our Budget calendar/timeline, especially in consideration of the City's budget calendar. The Board has discussed the fact that we may want to consider moving our budget calendar up in order to ensure that we have a Board approved budget before the City Manager presents his budget recommendations to City Council. As it currently stands, the City Manager presents the Superintendent's proposed budget BEFORE the School Board has approved it.

(3) BAC could also provide analysis and/or recommendations related to financial reporting and accountability. For example, the Arlington School Board employs an internal auditor who reports directly to the board and is independent from APS administration. I'm interested in learning more about how this came about and what it accomplishes. I have observed community members complain about capital projects exceeding their initial budget, questioning if facilities and maintenance improvement work was completed, etc. I want our community to feel confident that we are being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. This probably reflects the need for improved communications more than anything.

Additional Comments on BAC Focus Areas [In-Person Discussions]

1. BAC members should participate in the School Board's budget priorities setting exercise. During this exercise, various sets of data are shared with the School Board and in turn, inform where the School Board will set its budget priorities for the coming fiscal year. BAC could also facilitate an effort to secure community feedback or information that could also be considered in the development of budget priorities. It was suggested that it should be standard practice to have BAC on the agenda for one of the School Board's August meetings, prior to the budget retreat. BAC could do community surveying in May, reporting in June, that might inform budget priority setting. BAC could perhaps provide a more objective assessment of community needs and concerns as it relates to the budget. Community feedback is often skewed by who comes to the Board during public comment or writes to School Board members; it may not be a true or accurate reflection of community concerns.
2. BAC may be able to uniquely identify system-wide issues where there needs to be further time spent developing measures to assess effectiveness vis-à-vis investment.

3. [PLEASE ADD ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS THAT CAME OUT OF ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS.]

Special Topics for BAC Input [Survey Results]

BAC Bylaws direct that, upon the School Board's request, BAC may provide studies and recommendations on special topics and issues. Please list any topics that in your view might benefit from BAC consideration (e.g., policy on student lunch debt balances; academic return on investment; etc.)

1. types of audits board might consider
2. fees for out of school programs/facilities use
3. school lunch debt issue
4. comparison of funds (e.g., Medicaid, reimbursement we receive versus similar jurisdictions)
5. how to address concerns re: equity through the budget. See research done by Professor Marguerite Roza with Georgetown's Edunomics Lab <https://edunomicslab.org/about-us/>
6. through community engagement, identify issues that may come up that need to be addressed within the budget that may be overlooked
7. ongoing employee benefits analysis and recommendations
8. learning more about Academic Return on Investment; some members mentioned particular areas, including:
 - a. investment in text books in light of decision to make text book purchases part of the CIP – yet there is sometimes feedback that funds are spent on textbooks that were never used, or used for a year and then discarded in favor of a different text book – how do we know we are making a sound investment?
 - b. return on investment for the Young Scholars Program, specifically in its ability to identify underrepresented groups into the Talented and Gifted program.
9. best practices around the budget process, timeline and policies
10. best practices around fund balance/reserves
11. best practices around employee retirement funds
12. how the board's priorities can be reflected in the budget and measured for effectiveness
13. city-schools collaboration
14. innovative ideas for increasing community engagement in the budget process
15. cost-benefit analysis of direct hire school custodians vs. contracted out custodial services
16. school libraries are under-utilized as they are only open during the school day; analysis of what it would cost to keep school libraries open to the public after school and into the evening
17. Translation/Interpretation Services (e.g. cost implications for underutilized services, equipment costs, are we getting the best "bang for the buck?")

18. Potential cost savings for environmentally conscious changes in ACPS (i.e. eliminating single-use Styrofoam trays in cafeterias, utilizing electric school buses, ensuring all light bulbs are energy efficient, etc.)

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1. Academic Return on Investment study.
2. Measure the effectiveness of the budget vis-à-vis equity and achievement.
3. Examine budget-related efficiencies of co-location between schools and government operations.
4. Identify best practices from other jurisdictions and share with the School Board.
5. [PLEASE ADD ANY ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS THAT CAME OUT OF ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS. NO NEED TO REPEAT THOSE THAT ARE ALREADY INCLUDED ABOVE.]

Specific Comments on Budget-Related Changes [In-Person Discussions]

The following are some specific recommendations for changes to the budget process or schedule.

4. Adjust the calendar so that the School Board approves the Combined Funds Budget before the City Manager releases his proposed budget. The fact that the School Board approves the budget after the City Manager releases his budget undermines and diminishes the hard work done by the School Board, and the School Board's role in approving the budget (one of its primary functions).
5. Allow School Board members to submit questions to ACPS staff after the Budget Public Hearing.
6. Provide answers to School Board questions before the next Work Session.
7. It should be standard practice to have BAC on the agenda for one of the School Board's August meetings. BAC could do community surveying in May, reporting in June, that might inform budget priority setting (*see above*).
8. [PLEASE ADD ANY ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS THAT CAME OUT OF ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS.]

Q1

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Facilitate community budget engagement during budget process	3
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Advise and provide recommendations on the ACPS budget process	2
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Research and report on other budget and finance-related topics	5
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Coordinate with City's Budget and Financial Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC) and other school district BACs to provide recommendations on budget and finance-related topics	1
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Other (Please describe below)	7
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