

BOARD BRIEF

Date: April 5, 2019
For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION X____
Board Agenda: Yes ___

No X____

FROM: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Outsourcing Custodial Services

SUMMARY:

The recommendation to outsource custodial services has been a topic of discussion within our community for the past several months. As superintendent of schools, I would like to acknowledge that the engagement with the school board regarding the custodial outsourcing could have definitely been presented differently and lessons have been learned from the process; however, the administration still recommends the proposed attrition plan for custodial outsourcing. The recommendation was made in response to the facilities audit conducted last school year. Unfortunately, the audit did not provide a clear plan for attrition nor has there been a clearly articulated plan for outsourcing custodial services in ACPS in previous years. The attrition plan recommended to the board through the superintendent’s budget was intended to provide a clear attrition plan for outsourcing custodial services by extending employment to custodians with 20 or more years of service with ACPS and working with an outside contractor to employ all custodians with less than 20 years of service with ACPS. It is and has always been our intention to provide all custodians impacted by this recommendation with the necessary supports during this transition to ensure that they continue to have employment as well as receive financial incentives for their years of service in ACPS.

The administration developed a severance package plan, established a RFP that requires the selected contractor to employ custodians impacted, conducted one on one consulting with our Human Resources staff, and held a job fair for those interested in other opportunities outside of custodial services. A significant amount of time, energy, and planning has been committed to making this very difficult decision a smooth transition. Our staff continues to balance these demands with the other educational efforts to ensure every student succeeds in ACPS. It is important that we do not allow this recommendation to create divisiveness within our community and that we continue to work together on behalf of our young people.

Furthermore, it is unfair to the custodians that we are not providing a clear understanding of what our intentions are regarding our custodial outsourcing. The budget was approved with the custodial outsourcing included as one of many budget items. As you know, the board has the authority to request for the superintendent to make changes to the proposed budget in May. I

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hope that we can afford the community and our staff a clearer expectation regarding any potential budget changes prior to the final budget meeting in June. Since the proposed budget was approved, there are additional financial obligations that have been identified. ACPS was informed that we will be receiving \$227,720 less from the state revenue due to the Governor's budget. We have identified a significant number of students in grades K-3 who are not reading on grade level and it will behoove us to extend their summer learning experience by two weeks to provide a jumpstart prior to the school year beginning (\$30K); we are refining our focus at Jefferson-Houston School which has not been fully accredited for 14 years to ensure our Jefferson-Houston staff have three additional professional learning days during the summer (\$39,600); and we plan to provide additional tutoring at elementary schools for students not reading on grade level in grades K-3 throughout the 2019-20 school year (\$116,200). If we choose to not outsource custodial services, it will cost (\$500K). The aforementioned budget items bring us to a budget gap of (\$913,520). In order to balance our budget, we will need to adjust the initial Market Rate Adjustment (MRA) for all employees in the proposed budget from 1% to 0.5% (\$817,248) and adjust our Medicaid reimbursement by (\$96,272).

Furthermore, we must keep in mind that due to our health benefits adjustments and increasing health insurance contributions for administrators; then some of our staff members may see a decrease in their take home income each pay period. As you know, there are significant financial implications for readjusting the budget. This decision and recommendation was challenging to make and I want to make it clear to our community that financial decisions related to our budget are made with every intention to ensure that our students succeed in ACPS.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the information provided on this brief.

ATTACHMENTS:

Summary of Adjustments

CONTACT:

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