

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 17, 2020

TO: Members of the Alexandria City School Board

FROM: Budget Advisory Council
Erin Dahlin (Chair); Nancy Drane (Secretary); Emily Brock; Sean McEnearney;
Sukumar Rao; Lillian Vagnoni

SUBJECT: 2020 Scope of Work

CC: Dominic Turner, ACPS Chief Financial Officer
Robert Easley, ACPS Director of Budget and Financial Systems
Kathy Stenzel, City Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee

The School Board Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) has developed the following scope of work document for the School Board's review. BAC would like to use this year to develop a series of memoranda focused on recommendations and best practices that will guide future BAC work. BAC's primary goal is to ensure that, consistent with [its bylaws](#), it is providing practical information to the School Board that supports the School Board's budget-related activities and is responsive to School Board members' needs. Within these best practices will be recommendations around ensuring timely information flow between BAC and School Board members on potential areas for BAC to explore and, subsequently, opportunities for feedback on BAC's work. In developing these best practices, BAC plans to incorporate the City Council Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee's (BFAAC) model of providing shorter, tactical memos throughout the year rather than delivering one comprehensive report annually. Finally, BAC will provide recommendations around BAC membership and recruitment to ensure that BAC membership is sufficient to support its important work. (Currently, BAC membership is just above the minimum required, at six (6) members, far short of the maximum allowed of seventeen (17) members.)

Memo #1: Preliminary Memo Soliciting Input on BAC Best Practices [January 2020]

Today we are also submitting a preliminary memo to School Board members soliciting informal feedback on BAC activities. School Board members are asked to share preliminary thoughts on areas where BAC could support the School Board's work, opportunities for BAC-School Board engagement, topics that could benefit from BAC research and review, and the like. BAC members will follow up with School Board members individually for short interviews to gather additional, informal feedback. BAC will also interview other relevant stakeholders. This will be important feedback to then incorporate into Memo #3 on BAC Best Practices.

Memo #2: Joint Memo with BFAAC on Status of the Recommendations of the Joint Task Force [March 2020]

This memorandum mirrors the [BFAAC's FY 2021 Scope of Work](#) and will be filed jointly.

Memo #3: Memo on BAC Best Practices [June 2020]

This memorandum will: (a) suggest procedures and a timeline for BAC's annual activities and communication with the School Board, to include a time frame for soliciting feedback from School Board on potential topics for BAC memos for the upcoming year and engagement opportunities between BAC and the School Board as needed; (b) list potential topic areas identified by BAC, School Board members, or other stakeholders that could be a focus on BAC's future activities; (c) provide recommendations on adjustments to the ACPS budget process and/or calendar, based on feedback and BAC observations of the FY21 process; and (d) list and discuss other BAC engagement opportunities (e.g., Community Budget Forum).

Memo #4: Memo on Budget Communications Recommendations [July 2020]

BAC believes that it is important that accessible budget-related information be made available to members of the public and that there be a greater focus on communications around ACPS budget development and priorities. BAC will develop a set of recommendations around budget-related communication opportunities that might be pursued with school and broader community stakeholders. This may include an analysis of budget information available on the ACPS website. BAC will also hope to build on the ACPS Communications Audit recently conducted by BetsyOS PR LLC.

Other Memos as identified by the School Board

Once at its full complement of members, BAC will be available to support the School Board throughout the year as matters may arise, welcoming requests from the School Board on matters where guidance can be helpful.

BAC appreciates the School Board's support of its work and will endeavor to continue to provide the best recommendations possible on the budget and fiscal affairs of Alexandria City Public Schools.