

MEMORANDUM

To: Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) School Board
From: Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) through Michael Herbstman, CFO
Re: Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force Memo and FY 2019 CIP Proposal Feedback
Date: December 12, 2017

The purpose of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) is to advise and support the School Board regarding the budget.

The BAC has reviewed Deliverable 1 from the Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force and the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2019-2028 Capital Improvement Program Budget and has prepared the feedback below for the School Board

A. Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force Memo

1. It is evident the Task Force has invested a great deal of time, effort and expertise in the short time since it was formed in June. The prioritization criteria and process that emphasizes addressing the greatest needs and that projects be ready for implementation is fair and efficient. The concepts of adding funds for land acquisition, planning and a master plan will all help in the long term to ensure the CIP plan is proactive vs reactive.
2. Of the Facilities Capital Improvement Plans, Program A is the option that best addresses the timing of the needs of ACPS. The bulk of the capacity work clearly needs to happen in the next three years and will require significantly more money than was allocated in the prior year's CIP plan. Program B is very problematic for school capacity, pushing the first additional elementary capacity to FY 26, which is not sustainable in the environment in which we expect school enrollment to continue growing.
3. Program A rightly prioritizes swing space in FY 2019-2020 for ACPS projects as it will be critical to the long term modernization plan. Delaying the beginning of construction to FY 2020 is problematic because of the urgency of the need. However, as the plan makes the swing space a permanent addition to the schools' facilities instead of an investment that will only serve for a few years, the delay is understandable.
4. Recognizing the need for an extended exploration time for a high school construction project is also prudent. We have not had adequate time as a city or school community to decide how to execute by far the largest projected expenditure. The debate about whether the city should have one high school or two

has not yet begun formally and, given long standing community concerns, will be a very long conversation. However, the enormity of that conversation will require resources in FY 2019. The \$100,000 allocated in FY 2018 does not seem up to the task. The Superintendent's proposal takes comparable planning dollars that the Task Force puts exclusively in FY 2020 extensive staff and spreads them over FY 2019 and 2020 to give adequate time and resources to this challenging task.

5. With projected delays on the availability of elementary swing space until FY 2021 and additional elementary capacity until FY 2023, the result will be continued overcrowding of elementary schools across the division. It also will create a need to invest in additional maintenance projects that will not enhance capacity at these schools, but will instead do the bare minimum necessary to maintain HVAC and other systems to keep the schools operational. In addition, funds for relocatable classrooms to bridge the gap will need to be identified.
6. It is unfortunate that the analysis on Lee Center found that it is not an option for ACPS. It is not clear whether all options for sharing space were explored, but regardless, decisions like ruling out using Lee Center as a swing space need to be made much more quickly in the future to ensure projects progress at an efficient pace.
7. A few recommendations warrant additional discussion. The memo does not cite any data on land purchase, and with land in Alexandria expensive and hard to come by, a \$50 million investment seems like it may be inadequate for both city and school needs. Also, while the Task Force suggested building on school sites while existing buildings remain in-service, a robust assessment should be completed to address whether this is indeed feasible.

B. FY 2019 CIP Proposal Feedback

1. Although not explicitly called out, the Superintendent's proposed plan times its funding in between the Task Force's Program A and Program B with the first new elementary capacity coming in FY 24. As discussed above, due to the delay in acquiring swing space and additional capacity projects, capacity issues at the schools will be exacerbated and funding for maintenance and relocatable classrooms will need to increase. The timely reconciliation of these two programs will be important to the success of the upcoming year's plan.
2. BAC sees the benefit of the inclusion of funds for a master plan and land acquisition as recommended by the Joint Task Force. A clear timeframe for the development of the master plan as well as priorities for land acquisition will be important, as will the communication of a plan for how the acquisition funding will be utilized if a suitable property cannot be found.

3. Although it is listed as a budget priority, no mention is made of the Pre-K capacity additions in the CIP plan. The Joint Task Force memo calls out the Pre-K Center as an unfunded project, but given the emphasis on this in the last budget, it would be beneficial to discuss the plan for Pre-K given the lack of CIP funding, if not in the CIP plan then in the Combined Funds plan
4. There are some minor differences in project costs between the ACPS plan and the Joint Task Force documents which may cause confusion if not clarified for updates etc.