

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 19, 2021

TO: Members of the Alexandria City School Board

FROM: Budget Advisory Council
Erin Dahlin (Chair); Nancy Drane (Secretary); Sean McEneaney; Sukumar Rao

SUBJECT: 2020-2021 Scope of Work

CC: Dominic Turner, ACPS Chief of Financial Services
Robert Easley, ACPS Director of Budget, Financial Systems, and Reporting
Kathy Stenzel, Alexandria 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.

During the 2019-2020, BAC surveyed School Board members for input on the scope of BAC's activities and desired outcomes from the perspective of the School Board. One clear issue that arose during the interviews with School Board members was a deeper look into the sequencing of the City and ACPS' Budget Calendar and, in particular, concerns around the alignment between City and School Board budget review and approval. The most prominent concern voiced by School Board members is the fact that historically, the City Manager releases his proposed budget (including the ACPS appropriation) *before* the School Board has formally approved the Superintendent's proposed operating funds budget.

Between now and May 2021, BAC will explore the City and ACPS budget calendar timelines with the goal of developing a set of recommendations for addressing the set of concerns that have been raised by School Board members in the past. While the sequencing of decision-making is the one point that has garnered the most focus, there could be other things BAC will discover about the sequencing writ large. BAC's effort will include an analysis of surrounding and/or comparable jurisdictions.

BAC's Scope of Work will include the following:

- an overview of the ACPS budget calendar process and the identification of any and all sequencing concerns with the City budget calendar;
- identification and exploration of the most significant impediments to aligning the School Board and City budget calendars;
- comparisons from other neighboring or comparable jurisdictions;
- consideration of potential adjustments that could be made to align the sequencing, with an exploration of the pros and cons of each adjustment; and

- exploration of the efficacy of other budget-related events (e.g., Community Budget Forum) (as time allows).

In order to advance this Scope of Work, BAC members will endeavor to study other jurisdictions in neighboring or comparable jurisdictions. In addition, recognizing that there is additional coordination that happens outside of the published calendar, BAC members will interview ACPS and City staff to explore relevant issues.

BAC has received guidance that having its memo available to the School Board in May 2021 will be sufficient to allow for its consideration before the 2021-2022 budget calendar is proposed by ACPS in approximately June 2021.

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.