

October 24, 2023

Dr. Durán and Members of the Arlington School Board:

We are writing concerning the decision set forth in the upcoming [budget presentation](#) regarding how APS intends to spend the additional funding received from the State. As you know, the state passed a budget amendment providing an additional \$418 million to combat learning loss. VDOE set a [goal](#) (also reflected on the [application itself](#)) that 70% of the funds be allocated to high-intensity tutoring, 20% be used to implement the Virginia Literacy Act, and 10% be used to address chronic absenteeism. Three of our [neighboring](#) districts, including Falls Church and Fairfax County, have already had their tutoring proposals approved. State-wide, [35 districts](#) have already submitted their plans and [26 of them have been approved](#).

We are pleased to see APS launch an intensified tutoring program in response to the State's direction. However, the budget presentation raises several questions which could delay VDOE approval. First, has APS already submitted its application? Second, is APS relying on "all-in" funds for compensation or is it relying on separate funds for compensation, or both? Lastly, why is APS adding these funds to reserves; does APS intend to use those reserves to provide tutoring in future years, as allowed in the application, or is it merely shoring up reserves? To elaborate on these questions:

1. **Has APS already submitted its application?** Will the Board review that application, which would allocate APS budget spending? As noted, neighboring districts' plans have already been approved and there will be substantial competition for tutoring resources as they expand on their existing tutoring programs.
2. **Is APS relying on "all-in" funds for compensation or is it relying on separate funds for compensation, or both?** We have repeatedly advocated for increased compensation for student-facing teachers, but compensation is not the primary intent of the "all-in" funds. The [legislation](#) provided \$418 million for specific purposes, including remediation of learning loss and implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act. Separately, funds were provided for a 2% compensation increase. Does APS intend to use "all-in" funds for compensation? Further, does APS intend to also provide for implementation of the literacy act and chronic absenteeism, as indicated in VDOE application guidance?
3. **Finally, why does APS propose adding \$1 million to reserves?** Does APS intend to offer tutoring merely for one year and augment reserves or is it setting aside funding in order to provide tutoring in future years, as allowed in the application? We are concerned that if APS tucks these funds into reserve, contrary to its intended purpose, that may risk the application being denied or delayed. We would like to remind the board that APS has previously put one-time funding into reserves that was otherwise intended to help address student learning loss, including \$8.4 million from the County in 2022.

We know the Board is well aware of the once-in-a-lifetime learning loss suffered by our children due to the decision to close schools. And, as we have [previously written](#), business as usual has not been sufficient to address that learning loss. We urge APS to use the funding from the State for the goals set



forth by VDOE, and, consistent with the Board's stated goal, to "invest with urgency in improving educational outcomes for our students."

Thank you,

Alison Babb  
Reg Goeke  
Sheila Kelly  
Katie Sunderland  
Arlington Parents for Education Board Members

CC: Arlington County Board, Arlington County Board Candidates, School Board Candidate