

Budget & Finance Advisory Committee
Minutes - December 14, 2011

Attendees:

Aldophus Anderson
Stuart Berkowitz
Dustin Breithaupt
Marty De Leon
Elizabeth Dickey
Dee Dee Evans
Debra Haas
Rashaanne Lewis
LaDonna Massad
Kevin Nater
Mary Pietruzynski
Brad Thompson
Simon Tidd
Jordan Vexler
Melissa Wiginton
Nicole Conley-Abram
Bill Caritj
Shirley Heitzman
Alex Sanchez

Call to Order

Marty De Leon, presiding co-chair, opened the meetings at 6:07 p.m. by welcoming everyone to the meeting. He asked members to review October minutes for any revisions.

Approval of Minutes

Simon Tidd, BFAC committee member, moved to approve the November 16, 2011 meeting minutes. LaDonna Massad, BFAC committee member, seconded the motion. The committee members unanimously approved the prior meeting minutes.

Citizens Communications

Citizens Communication was not held. No participants registered to speak.

Annual Academic and Financial Recommendations – Nicole Conley-Abram

AISD administration focus has been on the annual academic facilities recommendations to be adopted later this month. There have been intense contract negotiations for the in-district charter schools. Continued work to develop the model and determine how the funds will flow. The in-district charter schools will be funded as if they are AISD campuses and will be entitled to Title I funding.

There is a potential revenue opportunity if retention is increased, however, this will not be realized until the students are in attendance. There are also some labor concerns. IDEA will interview AISD employees and we are confident that through attrition all current staff will have a position. IDEA does have more rigorous standards and a longer school day.

IDEA will pay for their computer hardware but the District is responsible for the infrastructure. There are opportunities to share systems, possibly health care. IDEA has been very open and flexible working through the issues with the District. IDEA will maintain the Allan attendance zone and require a minimum of 113 students per the contract. Parents may opt out of the charter school and attend other designated AISD campuses. IDEA leadership continues work within the community, providing information and opportunities for input.

IDEA also has external resources not available to AISD. In addition opportunities exist to share professional development.

At the secondary level, Responsive Ed Solutions will provide an alternative program for credit recovery. This provides the District with a win-win situation. Students are brought back and retained, providing increased revenue and completion rates.

Review of Fiscal Forecast for 2013-2015 – Nicole Conley-Abram

Preparing the fiscal forecast for the January Board meeting is in process. District is on a stable path. Several methods were used to increase reserve levels including reclassification of expenses to grants and revenue gained from the Pre-K tuition program. If State remains stable in their funding, projecting a \$14M deficit for 2012-13 and this may be reduced as additional information becomes available. The deficit is inclusive of anticipated student and special education growth.

The \$169M unreserved and undesignated fund balance allows us to comfortably draw down on the reserves without damaging our bond rating. The increase in the unreserved and undesignated total was carefully planned and is due to several factors, including State funding reduction was less than anticipated and the collection rate increased.

A concern is the out-year management of health care. In a stressful environment with an aging work force recommending that dollars be set aside for a wellness program. This will serve us well in the long term management of the health care program.

AISD is the only district who has frozen salaries for two years. District is examining a compensation package for staff. Will it just be a percentage of salary increase or do we use retention bonuses or other methods to compensate our employees?

District will not be seeking a TRE (tax ratification election) at this time. No relief from legislature is anticipated and District will continue an aggressive lobbying policy. Bond rating requires 14% of

unreserved, undesignated funds in the general account. We can maintain this percentage for the next couple of years. Any draw down will not be used for recurring expenditures.

Austin Public Education Foundation provides greater funding flexibility. This may be an alternative to a TRE. District should establish the ground work to solicit donations for the foundation. How do we create multiple pathways for giving?

Messaging is a key component to solicit funding. Corporations and the public are more apt to give if progress can be demonstrated.

Review Results of Budget Survey – Nicole Conley-Abram

Committee results were consistent with AISD administrators with a couple of surprises. The committee supports compensation and primary literacy.

Eliminating one of the planning periods would be challenging. Information was presented regarding the overwhelming data requirements that teachers are required to submit. Teachers must analyze the data and identify the needs of each student. Then document the plan to address the identified needs. It is time intensive. The extra planning period allows teachers to work collaboratively and receive additional training to support these endeavors. How the extra planning period is utilized should be communicated to the community. Messaging to the public is a key factor.

Will organize survey results for Board presentation and recommend that the Board take the survey.

Budget and Finance Advisory Committee (BFAC) Business

Nicole Conley-Abrams will meet with committee co-chairs to examine meeting schedule. Determine if monthly meetings are necessary and establish the most convenient meeting times. Still pending is obtaining the Superintendent's expectations.

Adjournment

An email will be sent to all committee members regarding any change in the meeting schedule. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.