

- First, I want to thank the budget staff for the quick turnaround and the thoughtfulness of the ELT, principals and staff in working to present a new proposed budget that honors our commitment to students and preserves our highly qualified team in these extraordinary times.
- I also want to thank the School Board for its support to provide a new budget direction and guidance as we drafted a new budget with timeline constraints.
- Additionally, I want to thank our partners in Arlington County for the continued dialogue and flexibility as we have worked toward developing a new budget that maintains the integrity of our system while retaining our team that we have worked so hard to recruit and attract to APS.
- In the last month, our community and our country has endured a new lifestyle, new work spaces and technology, and in our division, the introduction of a distance learning model. We were expected to implement changes on a daily basis because the situation is fluid. I am particularly proud of the adjustments and creativity of our APS team to make it all work to continue supporting our community.
- In developing this budget, I reflected on the start of the school year where I visited every school and shared a presentation that ended with an image that said, “We are all in this together.” Little did I know at the time that this would be a trending phrase today.
- It has been one of my pillars this year and has provided me with the strength to lead this division during this challenging time. As you will see, decisions were made with an equity mindset and this

budget provide opportunities for all staff to contribute to closing the deficit in a variety of ways. I was glad to know that I had spread this message early on as we will all need to pull together to make this budget work.

- When I presented my original budget, I outlined the continued commitment that we have to students, staff and the community and that commitment still stands. Our goal is clear: continue delivering educational excellence, addressing the social and emotional well-being of our students and maintaining our high-quality staff that drives our organization.
- Over the past weeks, I have tapped into the thinking and expertise of my team to deliberate and consider efficiencies and identify realignments to creatively address our significant budget needs. We used the following guiding principles in developing the revised budget:
 1. What are efficiencies identified?
 2. What can we stop doing (non-core services)?
 3. What can we do differently or in a new innovative way?
 4. What are additional factors that we want to acknowledge? (equity, stakeholder voice, policy and protecting our infrastructure)
- What has changed since I presented my original proposed budget just seven weeks ago is that the world looks different, our schools and buildings are closed, our staff is supporting the system remotely and our budget pressures have increased immensely.
- We continue to be very fortunate to live in a community that is committed to meeting the educational needs of our students in

partnership with the county and yet we are all impacted by the pandemic.

- However, as we all know, the economy has been hit hard including our local economy resulting in a significant reduction in tax revenues for our county.
- The ripple effects of COVID-19, the economic shock being felt everywhere and the full impact of COVID-19, is yet unknown, and has led to my need to now present a new budget proposal.
- The pandemic has changed our budget direction but has not changed our needs.
 - we continue to be a growing school system;
 - we still need to remain competitive and in recent years we have lost our competitive edge when compared to our neighboring jurisdictions;
 - we want to retain highly qualified staff;
 - we still have the increased needs stemming from the Special Education Program Evaluation and English Learner Evaluation and DOJ Settlement Agreement mandates; and,
 - we need to maintain our commitment to infrastructure.
- We also understood that it was imperative to find opportunities to realign our service delivery in areas where this was feasible while maintaining the excellent instructional program that we deliver for our students to grow and thrive academically. This budget includes this approach to assist with our budget deficit in addition to the use of reserves.

- In order to close this new gap, we have made tough decisions that will impact everyone.
- We are hopeful that the budget outlook over the coming weeks will shift in our favor and today's budget presents our best thinking based on the information we have at this time.
- This budget continues to align our work with the APS Strategic Plan and with the mission to ensure all students learn and thrive in a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment.
- And, it highlights our commitment to our core values of excellence, equity, inclusivity, integrity, collaboration, innovation and stewardship.
- We will continue to monitor this health crisis over the coming weeks and rely on our continued partnership with the School Board, staff and the County to adopt a budget that is balanced while maintaining our quality instructional program and operational excellence.