

Survey conducted by ASA in October 2024

55 total responses
73% School-Based
27% Central Office

Timestamp

Where do you see opportunities for cost savings ? Please be as specific as possible .

administrative assistants in Academics

Not sure

MS Sports

Teachers for the EL/Sped - dual identified students

I'm not sure if it's a cost savings statement. But, I'm not sure what the difference is between a director and executive director of things. It seems as if there's some redundancy in positions or at the very least unclarity around who does what. There does need to be specific criteria for what an exemplary project is at elementary schools and why some schools continue to get a lot more than others.

Non school based positions seem to be increasing.

APS All-Stars

REDUCE staff in CABINET - top heavy leadership that has no bearing on student learning

Eliminate Ultimate from both MS & HS athletics

Eliminate Crew programs from the HS athletics

Do Not pay for students to attend Thomas Jefferson Science & Technology HS - APS has plenty of quality HS programs

Eliminate PCard spending on food - including Cabinet!

HR Recruitment trips that don't provide APS candidates

Reduce the size of School and Community Relations - too many staff; schools and programs do their own PR

Eliminate number of Director positions in central office (Academics has 5-6! alone)

Eliminate the Professional Development Office - too many staff positions, schools and curriculum offices create/provide their own PD

Allow staff to have remote work opportunities especially if not in front of students! (losing good quality employees to other school districts/private sector because APS doesn't allow it; plus it's a savings on utilities, consumables, wear n tear on facilities, etc.

Stop using Consultants - Cabinet hires 'friends' to do work for big \$\$\$ when staff can do the work

Stop sending staff to PD/trainings if there are other opportunities with virtual options

Central Office positions, Consultants contracts.

Professional development sessions with outside consultants

Central Office specialists and supervisors that do not seem to have a direct impact on student achievement.

Administrative assistants.
high school deans, DEI staff. I'm sure the work is important but I've not seen any results from it that justify the expense.

Rethink the idea of hiring people in some of the positions which value doctorates as the gold standard although not necessarily critical to performance success. Bringing someone from the outside in with two advanced degrees increases the payroll expenses.

Would it be less expensive to bring back Kaiser since the premiums are lower and 58% of the APS staff use Kaiser?

The concept of chiefs, which the superintendent took from FFX, I'm sure, is expensive for a school system of this size. I don't think it has helped us organizationally. Do we need those stratosphere positions? I've not seen the integration of the various business units (HR, Facilities, Finance, IS,) united under one umbrella.

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We also have two lawyers and support staff. Are we really saving money on legal expenses compared to a few years ago when we employed the County attorneys? I don't see much value in terms of our area.

HR with its multitude of people hasn't functioned any better than when it went from Personnel to Human Resources with the attendant increase in staffing. They've removed decisions from the operations managers who were better equipped to make those types of decisions because the operations managers knew more technically. Neither are people being hired any faster or the quality of staff hired any more qualified.

Do we really need a policy position? What have we gained

I see no opportunities for cost savings. We are bare bones now.

APS has numerous "Executive" and "Director" positions that are not directly contributing to academic success or effectively supporting schools in closing opportunity gaps.

Too many supervisory positions at central office that are not providing an added benefit to school sites

Program evaluations. Eliminate the duplication of Directors and Executive Directors and Chiefs. It is not making us more efficient or reducing workload and reducing response times to requests. There are one too many offices/departments. we have almost doubled the staff that are P-19/20 and we are no better off. Worse to be clear. Eliminate summer school does the data shows it helps? Consolidate alternative/non-traditional programs especially programs serving ELs outside of comprehensive schools. Why do we have a chief of staff and a chief operating officer??? why do we reorganized every year? why are offices moved every year?? all of this costs \$. Eliminate elementary option schools except for immersion. consolidate Montessori in one location PreK-8. eliminate bus stops with few riders and consolidate. Arlington Residency checks for every grade every year. we have many students who do not live in Arlington.

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Summer school for elementary schools should be cut. Hire more bus drivers at a decent rate for high school sports that happen before five pm. Stop using expensive charter buses for these runs.

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Using charter busses in high school.

do we need program evaluation and the three year process now that we have data at our fingertips?

Eliminate e-days and make instructional specialists' contracts 11 months.

There are roles at Syphax that are not connected to data that proves the role is more effective than someone in a school. Elementary math specialist. We have 2 now. What evidence shows that those positions did more for the data?

Central office - eliminate 1/4 positions. Resume work during winter/spring breaks..

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Review projections weekly/monthly, adjust staffing accordingly through the summer.

Central office staffing as there appear to several layers that could be consolidated. For example, what is the difference between an Executive Director and and a Director position?

Curriculum resources, ITC positions, get rid of the 1 to 1 initiative for pre K-2nd grade. They really only require a shared set for classrooms - maybe 10 per classroom to work.

I know this isn't going to be popular but we should cut funding for the outdoor lab, planetarium, food, office/school t-shirts, tuition at TJ HS, paying for every AP exam, over the top construction, etc., exemplary projects- we are no longer a district that can have it all. We have to make tough calls on what we prioritize but won't be popular with many.

Shorten the calendar, give back snow days that weren't used

Cut cabinet and director positions. No food purchases on the P card. Cut travel and only go to local professional learning.

Staffing at Syphax, increasing fees, instructional materials/adoptions, program evaluation costs/cycles.

Central Office Staffing

- * Coordinator DEI,
- * T Scale position: title unknown in Office of DEI
- * Coordinator of student services, admin services temporary staff
- * Information Services - Director OR Asst Sup of Information Services
- * Manager of School Community Relations
- * T Scale Homebound Services Coordinator
- * T Scale Professional Learning Specialist
- * Redundant Staffing in Facilities - Director and Assistant Director of Operations and Facilities

Professional Development Conferences for Central Office staff - i.e., Professional Leadership Conferences for TAM in Seattle

Finance Trainings in New Orleans

AUDIT OF ALL TRAVEL!

This is so hard to determine for a Title I school.

Would cutting summer school create a meaningful cost savings?

none at this time

Cell phone pouches

Limiting the ordering of food except under very specific circumstances; Increasing class size by 1 where feasible;

Central office t-scale positions that complete "walk-throughs" for SEL and DEI

Double staffing in IS

reduced central office positions, eliminating ms sports, summer school,

less curriculum writing... teachers need standards and frameworks, but not daily objectives and slides

Decrease number of outside consultants that we hire.

Kindergarten does not really need one to one devices. 1st grade could utilize a set of 10 or 12 devices rather than one to one. Support students in APS schools rather than paying tuition to Fairfax for students to attend TJ high school.

Some ideas include reducing the outdoor lab time to possibly one day and no overnight. Consultants for EL instruction.

Offer retirement buyout options or offer early retirement incentives
Restructure Bus driver contracts to allow for athletic trips as early as possible during the week and on weekends so we don't have to rely on charter busses so often

Automate Routine Processes: Invest in automation tools for tasks like attendance, grading, scheduling, evaluation, absences/leave, and sub request to reduce the administrative burden on staff, thereby lowering overtime or the need for additional clerical staff. Use Open Educational Resources (OER): Transition from traditional textbooks to free or low-cost digital educational resources that can be customized by teachers. This reduces the need for frequent textbook purchases. Leverage E-Books and Digital Subscriptions: Instead of purchasing print copies of textbooks, APS could invest in district-wide digital subscriptions, which can often be more cost-effective over time. Right-Size Staffing Levels: Conduct periodic staffing reviews to ensure that the number of teaching and support staff aligns with student enrollment trends. Cross-Training Staff: Train staff to perform multiple roles, such as administrative assistants handling minor IT support tasks or paraprofessionals assisting in multiple departments. Promote Green Transportation: Transitioning to electric or hybrid school buses may have higher upfront costs but could result in long-term savings through reduced fuel and maintenance costs.

I think there are too many people in Syphax, to the point that several people seem to have the same responsibilities in different offices

To identify opportunities for cost savings in APS, we recommend reviewing administrative staffing levels and considering ways to streamline non-instructional roles through attrition or merging roles, without impacting student outcomes. Offering early retirement incentives could also create savings by hiring new staff at lower salary levels. Implementing energy-saving measures like LED lighting and smart thermostats could reduce utility costs. Additionally, optimizing transportation routes and consolidating underutilized programs would help maximize efficiency. Shifting to cloud-based technology and centralizing purchasing for bulk discounts could further reduce expenses, allowing funds to be directed toward higher-priority areas.

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summer school - elementary; some secondary
Outcome data does not indicate that it's an academically impactful intervention. It's not currently a very feasible model, with significant challenges even to secure basic staffing. It's a large expenditure. It's operationally a heavy lift, and therefore, eliminating it creates opportunities for improved efficiency in refocusing on the services that support the school year (across all departments and schools). Aligns APS practice to current practices in other districts. Creates opportunity for community partners to step up enrichment offerings. Supports improved organizational culture and morale for staff and students.

11-month staff / operations

What savings might the system realize annually if it shuttered or went essential/remote for 4-6 weeks in summer?

Community optics and fundraising/partnership opportunities aren't supported by some specific items that have caught widespread attention, and the budget holistically could benefit from an optics review for items that might be undercutting mission success or revenue-building success in current context even if not inherently unaligned with the mission. These items might be strategically eliminated now with the possibility for another review/reincorporation in a later year after APS is no longer in structural deficit. For example:

- APS tab for dining out (one-on-ones; working lunches)
 - recruitment travel - opt for more impactful and less expensive retention and recruitment strategies for critical-need, hard-to-fill positions; focus on strategies that build sustainability - these trips have been openly described as travel perks, which highlights the associated optics of excess
 - APS-purchased staff meals (PL, celebrations) - the current ad hoc approach to limitation is undermining efforts to improve
- Can APS request a partial rent rebate for Sequoia's failure to provide building services over the past many months?

Nonfunctioning garage elevators, building elevators, building entrance doors (creating ADA noncompliance), and HVAC systems? Not to mention the lack of sufficient pest control.

not sure

Advanced Academics Office, I would need to review current budget to give a quality answer

Central Office

Offices with more than one teacher specialist need to reduce to one teacher specialist.

None at the time

Central office redundancies especially at the top layer
Just gauging from the building I work in, it seems like there are opportunities for utility savings through some conservation measures.

Discontinue tuition payments for Thomas Jefferson. Reduce the number of new Executive Directors, Chiefs and high level cabinet positions and given enrollment has not increased proportionally. Increase audit focus on special education funding. Maintenance of Effort include stable or increase in SPED funding. Determine if this has been properly allocated to SPED needs, or diverted elsewhere in the budget (i.e hiring APS lawyers that do not work directly with students). Also, consider a group insurance plan to lower costs for employees and APS by partnering with Fairfax, Arlington County and/or Alexandria.

We need to be more mindful of electric power usage. The building lights, TVs, Smart Boards, and other electronic devices that require power are often left on overnight and during weekends.

What roles, resources , or initiatives are delivering significant benefit in your school or for schools through your office and therefore you would like to see them protected in the FY26 budget?

Welcome Center (lotteries)

Math coaches, Reading specialists, SPED teachers, EL teachers, testing coordinator

Resources and staff focused on meeting the needs of students with disabilities
MS Teams - funding to support this is working, even with intensified classes

Not sure.

STC, math coach, literacy coach, AAC

Athletic Trainers - funding needs to be increased
More remote work opportunities
Blended programing - offering school in both in-person and online models

Reading Specialist in Spanish.

Coaches for math- would be great to have a dedicated one for literacy;

Student Services related to MTSS

County-wide special program staffing.

Plant Operations and Maintenance are two of the smallest departments in terms of Management. Two positions each. Bang for the buck, they deliver a great deal. The custodial staff, part of AEA, each are assigned 21,000 square feet to clean every day. And yet, they are the first suggestion that Finance makes whenever the cost savings discussion starts.

Math Coaches and Math Interventionists

Every position is essential at Gunston, where we serve a diverse student body with varying needs, opportunities, and programs. To meet these needs, we require additional supports, including staffing positions such as a 6th Grade Math Interventionist, EL resources, and Special Education Resource Teachers to ensure maximum inclusion. These roles are critical in providing the targeted instruction and support necessary for all of our students to succeed.

math coaches

None so far it seems like they give us more work to do then actually help us DO the work. Jonathan Turrisi is the only one that actually helps to the work and will sit with us to work on solutions. others just email us to fix stuff without support.

Math and Reading Coaches and interventionists. These people are key to student progress. Same with special education teachers and assistants.

Bilingual family liaisons

Advanced Academic Coaches as instructional leaders in their schools to support increased rigor and engagement in Tier 1 instruction of all students; support in terms of personnel in the Academics Office to begin to mirror EL and SPED offices

instructional specialists

Interventionist positions. Having people in the building working to delivery direct instruction benefits students

Actually providing enough staffing - projections aligning with actuals.

School Safety Coordinators, ITC's, Technicians, 3 AP's at the middle school level regardless of the 1,000 student planning factor

The tech positions (those who fix technology hardware), deans, testing coordinators, summer school administrator positions at the elementary level.

SPED and inclusive practices. We need to keep these going so we can see a true impact a few years from now.

Having instructional coaches

The sub days, which are used for professional learning and grade calibration.

Math coach and STC positions have made a significant impact for students and staff.

all school-based staff

Every position at Randolph is in charge of something that matters to our daily operations and instructional support.

Student Deans and Alternative Programs

Staffing aligned to schools based on the data. Schools who are almost Title 1 do not benefit from Title 1 resources, but still have needs for additional coaches and interventionists and mental health supports. Resources need to be allocated based on the data not the same across schools.

Our Early Childhood Specialists are delivering direct to support to CLTs and providing required CLASS observations. We need a one time cost of a new curriculum as required by VDOE for PK

Intervention counselors, attendance specialists, school social workers

Flex positions, Exemplary Project

added EL and Special Education Teachers

Helpful and need more: Special education assistants, substitutes, school-based subs, long-term subs, English language development teachers (4.5) per immersion elementary school (Claremont and Escuela Key). These teachers have been trained on delivering ELD and English phonics instruction aligned to the science of reading. We need these teachers for the 80:20 model to be effective in elementary immersion.

Reading specialists, math coaches, advanced academic coach, 95% phonics, reflex math, lexia, CKLA, PreK, Student Climate Coordinator(Ivan Lopez)

Highest priority: ITC. Delivering instruction and tech support is crucial for learning, especially with the introduction of A.I!!!! EL staffing, special education staffing are crucial for our programs and we still need more.

security officers

Everything related to Athletics & Activities

Wakefield's counselors and social workers play a key role in supporting student mental health, college and career readiness, and social-emotional learning. Given the increasing mental health challenges faced by students, maintaining and expanding these services should be a top priority. Wakefield's CTE programs, including vocational training and career pathways, provide students with essential skills and opportunities for post-secondary success. Continued support for hands-on programs in areas like technology, health sciences, and trades ensures that students are prepared for both college and careers.

Math interventionist and reading teachers are providing the most benefit

Protecting essential roles and resources is critical to supporting our diverse student population. Special education staffing and resources are vital for students with learning differences, as they depend on individualized attention from teachers, aides, and specialists to succeed. Any reduction in these supports would significantly impact their progress. Similarly, English Language Learner (ELL) programs must remain a priority due to the growing number of students who need language instruction to thrive academically and socially. Counseling and social-emotional support, provided by school counselors and social workers, is equally important, helping students manage mental health, behavior, and emotional challenges. Lastly, investing in professional development for teachers is key to maintaining high-quality instruction, enabling educators to stay current with best practices and effectively meet students' evolving needs.

What APS seems to be shortest on across all schools and departments is the man-hours, the workforce, to do the work that is needed to fully achieve its goals. Recently expanded layers of executive leadership roles seem to be providing robust goal- and direction-setting; while build-out and implementation functions seem consistently time-limited, indicating need for the one feasible way to expand time - more staff. That being the case, failing to preserve the staff currently on board and trained (and thus most efficiently performing) the lift would be detrimentally unaligned to APS' strategic plan, vision, mission, and goals. Beyond significant organizational cultural and morale impacts, high turnover hobbles APS' efficiency and ability to elevate systemwide practices.

Families regularly indicate that they need more support to complete forms, surveys, and applications than APS is currently providing (Back to School Packet, ParentVue access, Your Voice Matters, Free Meal Application, Medicaid Application, etc.). Staffing/funding the after-contract-hour support sessions and individual support time needed to ensure families are able to respond, and particularly those families currently underrepresented in the responses, is an easily overlooked component of APS' Family Partnerships Performance Objectives, which include increasing response rates such that response demographics mirror the population's. There is also the possibility of increasing revenue to cover or partially cover this need, such as in the case of billing Medicaid for staff/time spent building awareness of Medicaid program and supporting family applications.

Free Meals - The food security and efficient delivery of food services accessible through the CEP program is good for students and now an APS Strategic Plan goal (free breakfast and lunch for all students). The continuation and expansion of that program to all schools requires that APS increase its strategic actions to ensure all eligible families apply for programs such as SNAP in School and Medicaid. This is worthy of directing sufficient resources to that effort, particularly since the funding can be recaptured in Medicaid revenue. Raising APS' application rates (and thus identification rates) is critical to elevating revenue in state share formulas, multiple existing grant formulas, and competitive grant and donor opportunities.

Acknowledge, protect paid time for, and elevate through clear articulation the role of annual APS curriculum-writing committees comprised of diversified expert faculty contributors. Quiet cutting of this work in recent summers has created significant downstream impacts that APS is

na

2 ITCs per high school

Special Education, English Learner Staff, Student Services (Mental Health Support and continuation of DHS in schools)

Student Support Coordinator All SPED teachers Math Coach Librarian

All instructional staff, assistants and lunch attendants.

n/a

Protect and increase school based staffing allocations. Keep class sized stable.

Interventionists, school-based substitutes, and cafeteria staff need to remain or increase in number. The focus should be on prioritizing instruction and retaining staff.

What criteria do you think APS should prioritize in making the FY26 budget decisions?

Full time, vs. Part time.

Supporting interventions and required academic requirements for students

-limiting the program of studies to ensure funding of core and elective classes (over 20)

Getting infrastructure in place so that we dont need to be so people heavy.

Sped and EL staffing

Instruction.

Direct impact on student achievement, school climate or teacher retention.
Data driven decisions please.

Maintaining current service levels and not adding new initiatives. Hold faculty staffing based on enrollment to prevent increases in faculty hiring. Keeping budgets levels within inflation.

Students and schools should always be the priority. Instead of focusing heavily on accelerated learning and intensified courses, more emphasis should be placed on in-class interventions and support structures. When students are continuously pulled out for interventions, it can reinforce a fixed mindset, making them feel as though they may never achieve the academic success needed to navigate post-secondary life. Additionally, facilities and safety should be a priority to include needed repairs, more cameras and Safety and Security Coordinators.

100% at the schools. stop funding central office positions. they are not helping as evidenced by our data not improving.

School based learning

planning factor study

Where does the data show the most need is? Put people in school buildings and be more hands on. Staff schools partially based on need and size.

Strategic plan, direct student support over non-student-facing staff.

Direct contact with students should be prioritized

Staffing our buildings: t-scale and a-scale staff should be priority...recruitment needs to happen starting in February or March.

Academic Outcomes and social emotional well-being for all students.

The needs of students struggling academically needing the correct resources to support their instruction.

Keep students at the center of decision making. Which positions and funds have the most direct impact.

Staffing allocations for an option school should be fixed not based on enrollment. Other option schools are staffed with a fixed ratio. Montessori needs to be staffed at 1:1 teacher and assistant in each room in order to use the model correctly. We have multiple grade levels and higher class sizes.

School-based t-scale staffing should not be cut, specialists in the school should be based on need and not school enrollment number - anything that directly supports student learning should be maintained

Instructional positions must come first! Anyone who works directly with students or supporting instruction must be prioritized, such as coaches, interventionists, sped assistants, etc.
Student well-being.

recruiting SPED staff early

Students, families and staff retention

Direct services to students; direct services to schools, including contracts, curriculum, and stipends for staff; legal, federal, & state mandated services. If there is a plan to continue to cut central office FTEs and budgets, an indication of reduced expectations for work, funds, and response times for the Board, Cabinet, schools, and representation at community events needs to be communicated as part of any cuts.

Elementary teachers and staff should remain in the building

Direct student benefits, cut those added mid management positions at central office, student facing services should be the top priority and how these services impact instruction

school-based staff for direct support with students

Support for students and schools.

special education staffing - in order to support students in more inclusion we need more staffing to be able to support students successfully being in the general education setting

1. Technology Specialists are crucial to education in this day and age. If we want to teach students to think critically and be able to use the technology responsibly, we need ITC's full time at every school. 2. Increase in Special Education and English Learner staffing for non-Title I schools. 3. I would like to see two Assistant Principals or the addition of one Dean for every elementary school.

Systematic upgrades to athletic facilities that need attention

Professional development for administrators, retaining and recruiting highly qualified staff, Funding for school security, mental health professionals, and restorative justice programs, Funding outreach and engagement efforts to reengage students post-pandemic and to combat chronic absenteeism, adequate funding for the expansion or renovation of facilities and resources for additional teaching staff to maintain favorable student-teacher ratios.

We have to retain staff- we cannot maintain academic success with ever changing staff

APS should prioritize student equity and access, ensuring that all students, particularly vulnerable populations like students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL), and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, receive the support they need. Protecting instructional quality is also crucial, maintaining investments that directly enhance learning, such as teacher professional development, instructional resources, and smaller class sizes. Additionally, it's important to safeguard mental health and well-being services, recognizing the growing need for counseling and social-emotional support. Budget decisions should focus on long-term sustainability, balancing immediate needs with cost-effective solutions to prevent future financial strain. Finally, the broader impact on the community, including students, families, and staff, should be considered, ensuring cuts do not disproportionately affect any group or limit opportunities for engagement and academic success.

(1) Impact. (2) Workforce. (3) Transparency.

Transparency

A vacuum in the organization's institutional knowledge and culture of collaborative inquiry has created space for assumptions to take hold, making this a good transitional point for the pendulum to swing back from large-bucket budgeting/document shortening/"we'll take care of that" culture to the more articulated, albeit longer, "this is how that is addressed" line-item-level budgeting. For example, many central office budget lines actually include all the funding for waiving student fees that are now unseen and thus misunderstood. It's time to rearticulate so that it's clear to everyone what is included and impacted where.

na

not sure

EL, SPED, Mental Health

Fully staffed schools

Items that promote a healthy workload for administrators (i.e. deans)-- especially at the elementary level where there are only two administrators in the building.

Student needs and staff support

Address misuse and overspending on certain CIP projects, while other smaller project needs are left unmet in aging school buildings.

Prioritize instruction and special education teaching support. In terms of operations, we need to improve the HVAC units. As for Human Resources, how can this department enhance its effectiveness?