

## **APS Operating Budget: School Board Requested Potential Cost Savings and Reallocation Ideas to Study Fall 2024**

Context: APS is looking to close a FY26 budget gap of \$43-55M (exact amount depends on the % COLA built in for staff compensation). Additionally, we would like to free up funds to invest in priorities like planning factor adjustments (an estimated \$30M over three years) and expanded opportunities for PEP, CTE, and Arlington Tech at the Grace Hopper Center beginning in 2026-27 (an estimated 81 FTEs needed over four years, a percentage of which might be offset by reductions in staffing at other high schools if students elect to attend Arlington Tech instead).

More revenue is needed to fully fund all APS needs and opportunities. While we work to secure additional funding through state advocacy, grants and more, we will need to live within our current financial reality and identify cost savings in our operating budget.

The School Board is requesting analysis of several potential cost-cutting measures. At this time, no decisions have been made to adopt any of these measures: we are simply requesting information in order to weigh options and exercise responsible decision making. This list is informed by cost-cutting measures that have been implemented in other school divisions.

### **Staffing: Cost Cutting Measures to Study for FY26 (in no particular order)**

1. Establish class size minimums for low-enrollment offerings.
2. Reduce ITC contracts to 10 months.
3. Identify additional efficiencies in admin staffing in the central office.
4. Reduce staffing/layers in the Office of Academics.
5. Reduce / streamline the number of stipends.
6. Transition most/all bus drivers to a 10-month contract.
7. Eliminate the free period for department chairs or the stipend.
8. Reduce school testing coordinators.
9. Reduce Assistant Principal contracts to 11 months.
10. Reduce the number of residency confirmation staff.

### **Academics: Cost Cutting Measures to Study for FY26 (in no particular order)**

(For these items, we suggest initial analysis by the Office of Academics. Are these delivering value, and are they aligned with our current strategic plan? Academics would then pass the torch to Finance.)

1. Evaluate funding for Exemplary Projects
2. Eliminate all summer school except for HS credit recovery and ESY; provide remediation to other students via other means and at other times.
3. Run AP courses with larger, college-like “lecture” class sizes and either a stipend or aide to acknowledge the extra workload.
4. Increase class sizes.
5. Implement strategic increases in certain class sizes, adopting certain planning factor study adjustments as a tradeoff. Eliminate 1:1 devices for grades PreK-2; utilize class sets instead

[Mary's note following 9/24 work session: could we work with teachers to confirm how many are needed in a "class set" at each of these grade levels?]

6. Move from Apple to Chromebooks [Mary's note following 9/24 work session: could we get figures representing the total cost of ownership of Apple devices vs. Chromebooks for grades 3-12, and some more detailed analysis of Alexandria's use of Chromebooks including its cost and any instructional impacts (e.g., ACPS students are not able to do X,Y,Z that APS Office of Academics believes are core to instruction).]
7. Reduce the number of software/apps we license for instructional use.

**Contracted Goods/Services: Cost Cutting Measures to Study for FY26 (in no particular order)**

1. Reduce the number of consulting contracts in the central office.
2. Limit/cap payment of AP testing fees.
3. Discontinue the EverDriven contract; explore safe and less costly alternatives.
4. Discontinue or modify the Hazel Health contract (if there is a way to change the payment terms) and/or share the cost with the County.

**Cost Cutting Measures to Study for FY27 and Beyond (in no particular order).**

(Because these will not be things we can implement for the 2025-26 school year, study of these items is a lower priority but would be warranted, perhaps beginning later in this school year or next summer.)

1. Eliminate buses for general education high school students.
2. Utilize public/private partnerships for major renovation and construction projects.
3. Utilize energy savings performance contracts for major renovation and construction projects.
4. Identify alternative funding sources for the Planetarium and Outdoor Lab.
5. Identify efficiencies in how we offer alternative programs.
6. Identify how APS could share the cost of ACHS with the County, in light of its adult enrollment and connection to workforce development.
7. Cap the number of TJHSST spots funded by APS and/or fund the tuition on a sliding scale.
8. Consolidate the number of elementary schools, factoring in the program capacity study and most current enrollment projections.
9. Audit costs of compensatory services for SWD when special education vacancies can't be filled in a timely way.
10. Reduce the amount of leased space required by APS (excluding Syphax).
11. Create larger walk zones within our APS transportation system.

**For each of the FY26 ideas listed above, please provide the following:**

**Estimated Cost Savings Per Year:**

**Basis for Cost Savings Estimate:**

(Please briefly explain how you came to this figure. Comparables from other school divisions? A calculation involving existing APS line items? etc.)

**Blockers and Dependencies:**

(Are there *other* changes that would need to be made before this change could be implemented? If so, please describe.)

**Rationale:**

(Briefly, given the info above and the priorities in our APS strategic plan, what would be the reason(s) to make this change? Not to make this change? Is this in fact something we could implement in FY26, or are there timing considerations we aren't taking into account?)