

Memorandum

To: APS School Board Members

CC: Patrick Murphy, Superintendent; John Chadwick, Asst. Superintendent -Facilities

From: Multimodal Transportation and Student Safety Special Committee

Date: 12/13/13

Re: 2014/15 Budget Guidance

The APS Multimodal Transportation and Student Safety Special Committee (“Committee”) offers the following recommendations for School Board consideration as it provides budget guidance to the Superintendent for the 2014-15 school year. These recommendations are made with the intent to build a sustainable APS transportation program that will use resources more effectively and efficiently and that can adequately coordinate with County staff to maximize available resources.

To ensure a transportation program that meets the needs of the APS community and addresses APS strategic goals, the Committee has identified three areas of focus for these near-term budget recommendations: **institutional capacity building, improving transportation service delivery, and planning for enrollment growth**. Each of these focus areas is supported by the recommendations outlined in our June 2013 report. The specific recommendations below seek to support the foundation for these key areas.

1) Staffing:

In order to improve the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of APS transportation, APS needs to not only improve bus operations but also develop the capability to actively engage in multimodal transportation planning and demand management. This increase in capability requires adequate staffing.

- a. Increase the responsibility of the current Director of Transportation position to also include multimodal transportation planning and demand management. The Superintendent should consider making the Director position a direct report. Salary should be commensurate for a position with this level of responsibility and similar to that of other senior Director positions (e.g. position moved to P-Scale Classification like Dir. of Employee Relations, Dir. of Planning & Evaluation). Active recruiting for this position should begin in earnest, with a goal of filling it with a highly-qualified candidate as soon as possible.
- b. Fund a new Assistant Director of Transportation that will support the addition of multimodal transportation planning and demand management as well as bus operations.

- c. Fund a new Transportation Demand Management position responsible for using data to help support long-term multimodal transportation goals.
- d. Ensure permanent funding for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Coordinator that includes a competitive salary and funding for SRTS related events and communication. This position is critical to making walking and biking safe and attractive transportation options at each school as well as ensuring that walk/bike access needs and programs are identified and supported by APS and the County.
- e. Continue to address bus driver shortages.

2) Maximize and plan for internal resources:

In order to plan for and promote an integrated multimodal transportation program, APS should align the budget and work programs for departments such as IT and Communications with the Transportation department to:

- a. Ensure sufficient web and mobile application resources to combine information related to SRTS, bus transportation, transit, walk/bike/bus statistics, safety and other related concepts for parent and student one-stop shopping.
- b. Conduct surveys and data collection efforts
- c. Provide communications materials in a variety of formats (e.g. brochures, newsletters)

3) Studies:

APS should undertake the following studies to help address and resolve the continued concerns with the bus system to improve school bus transportation safety and efficiency:

- a. Evaluate the school bus program from its various levels including neighborhood schools, choice schools and special education. The study should evaluate the effectiveness of the program from each level, but also combined.
- b. Evaluate school bell times. The 2011 study of the transportation system notes several inefficiencies resulting from school bell times.

4) Equipment/Technology:

- a. Ensure there are a sufficient number of buses and the right type of buses to address current bus riders and growth from new riders.
- b. Licenses for effective school bus routing and management software should be maintained, or obtained if the current software is not effective.
- c. Equip every bus with the ability to accurately track both buses and students and improve bus efficiency (utilization rates). The system must be sophisticated enough to address safety, security, route optimization, data collection and efficiency the first time.

5) Capacity Planning: As APS works to create additional capacity to meet enrollment growth, it should ensure that both capital and non-capital options consider transportation impacts and the financial implications for students and faculty.