

Arlington Education Association

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Teaching. Learning. Leading.



ACTION REPORT

BUDGET BLUES

Brother, can you spare a dime, or better still **47 million dollars**? That is the projected shortfall in the worse case scenario for FY10-11. APS Superintendent Patrick Murphy held a series of budget information sessions with employee groups, senior staff and the Arlington community to gather suggestions for cost efficiencies.

DON'T PANIC

The many *suggestions* include capping the expansion of the FLES program, suspending CAP, eliminating exemplary projects, furlough days for staff, and eliminating a step increase for all employees. Rumors abound, but here are some facts:

According to School Board members Abby Raphael and

Dr. Smith recommended a step increase effective at the beginning of the new fiscal year. The Board instead voted a step increase to begin 1/2 way through employees' pay cycles. Dr. Smith didn't include funds for an additional FLES school, but the Board chose to fund one.

-While Dr. Murphy has asked all staff to suggest cost saving measures, he has not asked non-administrative staff to suggest jobs for elimination. However, his directive has been misinterpreted by some supervisors, who have asked staff to suggest jobs for elimination.

-The AEA Executive Board voted to discourage all members from recommending job cuts. Any staffing modifications should be determined by Dr. Murphy and senior staff.

Some Collaborative Problem Solving Team members recommended such questions be eliminated. AEA has not seen the final survey and cannot state whether these recommendations were taken into account.

TOUGH CHOICES

APS anticipates increased enrollment in the coming school year. Unless the planning factor is adjusted such that class sizes increase, rising enrollment may necessitate the hiring or approximately 200 new teachers. Changing the planning factor could potentially reduce the number of new teacher hires by approximately 50%. What could be done with the savings? Ideally, the savings could fund a step increase, salary adjustment, or other compensation for current employees.

"WHAT DOES AEA WANT?"...

is the question posed to AEA President Shelley Jennings by several School Board members. The School Board is very interested in AEA's opinion, and it is essential for AEA members to advocate for education, educators and education support personnel. Therefore, the first in a series of Budget Forums will take place Thursday, December 10 from 4:15-6:00 at the AEA office. To register or submit ideas, e-mail

president@aeava.org.

Libby Garvey, everything in the budget is "on the table".

-Dr. Murphy has "crunched the numbers" on several suggestions and calculated the potential savings.

-Dr. Murphy will present his *proposed* FY 10-11 budget in late February '10 (see "Budget Timeline" on page 2). The School Board uses the *proposed budget as the basis for discussion*. The Board does not always agree with all the Superintendent's proposals, and has the authority to make changes. For example, last year

It would be demoralizing and unproductive for staff to make recommendations that could potentially eliminate co-workers' jobs. Dr. Murphy has been informed of AEA's recommendation. AEA is also very concerned the forthcoming **APS Budget Survey** effectively reiterates the my job vs. your job conversation, and recommends survey-takers skip questions that may in effect, pit one's job against other colleagues. Upon reviewing a draft of the Budget Survey,

VEA President Boitnott to Address AEA

Mark your calendars for the **AEA Delegate Assembly**, on **Monday, December 14th, 4:15**

p.m. at the Kenmore Middle School Library.

VEA President Kitty Boitnott will discuss potential assaults by the VA General Assembly on **your retirement (VRS)**, as well as inform membership about pending legislation and the VEA Legislative Agenda.

Dr. Betty Hobbs will also attend to share with members the '10-'11 school calendar development process.

PROTECT YOUR VRS PENSION!

The VA General Assembly is eyeing your pension to help fill state budget gaps! Options to reduce your retirement benefits include:

- **Defined Contribution Plan with NO guaranteed benefits-reducing benefits by 48%.**
- **Defined Contribution Plan with a 5% guarantee (cont'd on page two)**

VRS Under Attack (cont'd from p. 1)

-Reducing benefits by 43%!

- Combining the current plan with a Defined Contribution Plan-reducing benefits by 15%!
- Cap the Cost of Living benefit at 4%
- Increase minimum retirement age to 60.
- Replace set health insurance credit with an investment plan, shifting risk to employee.

These are just some of the ideas being floated, and that's why YOU should join fellow **AEA** members on February 1, 2010 in Richmond for **VEA LOBBY DAY**. Talk to VA legislators face-to-face about issues that concern YOU! **AEA** provides transportation to/from Richmond, lunch and association leave. E-mail president@aeava.org to register. View a summary of potential changes: www.aeava.org and get involved!

AEA OFFICES, CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

- ◆ **Friday, January 29, 2010** is the deadline to submit your petition with 15 member signatures to run for the offices of President, Vice President, Middle and Elementary School Representative, Treasurer and Educational Support Representative. Download a petition from the AEA website: www.aeava.org. May the best candidates win!
- ◆ **Friday, January 29, 2010** is also the deadline to self-nominate to run as a delegate for the NEA ESP Conference (March 12-14), Virginia Education Association Convention (April 22-24), and the National Education Association (July 1-6). All nominations must be in writing. Phone nominations are not accepted. Send your nominations by e-mail to page@aeava.org or by school

FREEBIES!

HO, HO, HO! Go to <http://www.neamb.com/home/2734.htm>, and enter to win a \$100 gift card from Barnes and Noble!

DISCOUNTS!

Guard your budget and purchase great holiday gifts at great savings! click on the link above and go to "Click and Save". You'll find NEA member discounts for great products at popular stores.

mail or U. S. mail (address at bottom of page).

WEBMASTER WANTED

AEA is seeking a member to serve as webmaster and provide periodic updates for our web pages. Compensation negotiable. Contact kpaine@veanea.org for details.

APS FY 2011 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Dec 7-Preliminary review of FY '11 proposed budget with Administrative Council

Feb 23- Superintendent presents proposed budget to media, PTA, advisory committee representatives, community leaders, Administrative Council and School Board

Feb 24- E-mail to all APS staff with a one-page snapshot of proposed budget.

Feb 26-One page snapshot of budget in "NewsCheck"

Mar 9-Budget Work Session on Employee Concerns with School Board

Mar 18-Public Hearing on Budget

Apr 8-School Board's Proposed Budget

Apr 29-School Board Adopts Budget

NOTE: Between February 23 and April 29, the School Board will hold several budget work sessions. **AEA** members and all staff are highly encouraged to attend these sessions to listen to

the discussion. Members are also encouraged to provide feedback to the School Board by either writing Board members at Schoolbd@arlington.k12.va.us or attending School Board Open Office Hours everyday Monday from 5 to 7pm at the Ed Center. **AEA** highly recommends members attend school board meetings held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month beginning at 7:30pm in the Ed Center Board Room.

OUTSTANDING MEMBERS

That's Good to Know!

- ◆ Flu got you down and you're out of Sick Leave? You can get an advance on your Sick Leave. For details, see page 3 of the [Sick Leave policy](#), and feel better!
- ◆ **AEA** does *NOT* share members' e-mail addresses with any organization including VEA and NEA! Get the *Action Report* via e-mail and help **AEA** go green!
- ◆ **AEA** offers scholarships for **Educational Support Personnel**. For details and an application, e-mail page@aeava.org.
- ◆ **SHORT-TERM DISABILITY and FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)**- In order to preserve your current benefits and seniority, APS will recalculate your daily rate of pay according to the days remaining on your contract. It is advantageous to plan in advance, when possible. Contact **AEA** UniServ Kelly Paine (kpaine@veanea.org) for more information.

****Kudos** to the following **AEA** members and teachers: **Laura Hansen** was awarded a grant from the Arlington Community Foundation, enabling 4th grade teachers and students at Jamestown E.S. to have worm farms in their classrooms. **Karen Heathcock** received a grant from the Turning Foundation to provide technology and professional development tools at Oakridge E.S.

****Kudos** to **Karen Darner** who was awarded the William T. Newman, Jr. 2008 Spirit of Community Award by the Arlington Community Foundation. Karen is a retired APS teacher and former **AEA** president who also served in the Virginia House of Delegates.