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Fairfax County School Board Work Session, Tuesday, January 24, 2023

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPgXl_D7pko
- Official School Board page (FCPS): https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-04. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:30] - Get that, by the way, backed up.

[00:00:50] - Always have time for your health. - I think I'm all good. - I can do it well. - It's up at the lake. - Yeah, that's what I like about it.

[00:01:05] - A little lake, 5K. - Yeah, seeing another last one. - All right, team, it's after 11:00, so let's get organized.

[00:01:28] - I sure know. - I don't think about it. least it gives me a goal all right we are gathered here today for a discussion on continued discussion on our proposed budgets today the focus will be on the compensation portion of the budget however we do have you know plenty of time allotted for this work session so if there are other questions related to

[00:02:07] other sections of the budget feel free to also bring those forward we do have I think four hours allotted I'm not sure that we'll use up all of that time but we should have plenty of time for board member questions I do want to thank our budget team for sending out to board members just this morning the fact sheet set back up the proposed budget those are more in-depth background information on all these budget items not something that we expected board members to have you know gone through in any detail before the work session today so you do have that available as of this

[00:02:46] morning we also have the full proposed budget that i believe was posted on friday afternoon so that is out there on on board docs publicly posted so today we will get started with our presentation and information on compensation Ms. McCarthy did I forget anything you did great good morning everyone all right so with that I will turn it over to our budget team good morning

[00:03:23] if you can go ahead and go to page two that basically is the work session agenda we're going to provide fiscal 23 market comparisons for teachers at their career earnings the annual employer cost of teachers with salaries and benefits and then some comparative information about teachers bus drivers family liaisons and ias then we're going to talk a little bit about our retention strategies and then finally some recruitment and hiring strategies that will be provided by dr wilson so if you go to the next page this page reflects the fiscal 23 career

[00:04:00] earnings of a teacher with a master's degree. There's a lot of steps, so we've collapsed them into groupings of five for all of the surrounding divisions that participate in WABE, and we rank fifth out of nine divisions in career earnings looking at it this way.

[00:04:25] ERFC is not included in this because that is not salary. This is just a look at salary schedules in fiscal 23 for the surrounding divisions. If you go to the next chart in the Wavy Guide, which is also attached to the board item today, which is where largely most of this information comes from, there's a section on salaries and benefits. The assumptions are that a teacher salary of $65,000, of course FICA, VRS or Maryland Retirement System, when we're

[00:05:03] talking about Montgomery County, ERFC, it's got a 401A match that Prince William provides and a 403B match that Arlington provides to its employees, and we rank third of ninth in the wavy divisions if you look at salaries and benefits combined for a teacher making $65,000.

[00:05:27] The next chart is the fiscal 23 master's lane teacher scale market comparison. We are at 94% of the market midpoint, which is below the desired range of 95 to 105%, which was our stated range back when we first started looking at salary schedules, I think in 2015.

[00:05:54] At the max, we are at 92%, so we're outside our desired range there. And then at min, mid, and max, we rank 7th, 9th, and 8th out of 9 divisions. The next chart is the bus driver market comparison.

[00:06:11] We've done quite a bit of work on bus driver salary skills over the last couple of years. We enhanced the pay in 22 and redesigned the salary scale in 23. So they look pretty good. The starting salary is at 109% of the market, the midpoint is at 103%, and the max is at 99%.

[00:06:33] And we rank second, fourth, and fourth out of nine at the min, mid, and max. Family liaisons market comparison, we enhanced that salary scale in this current year as well. Their starting salary is 105% of the market, the midpoints at 102%, and the max is 100%.

[00:06:56] And at the min, mid, and max, we rank third, fourth, and fourth out of six because two divisions did not respond, and Montgomery County does not seem to have a like position. They probably have something similar.

[00:07:15] they just call it something else. And we can reach out to them and try to get that. But for now, we just have the six to compare to. The next chart shows the CIS market comparison or our instructional assistants. Recall that we had a strategy for the instructional aid skill enhancement to bring their salaries at 50% of the bachelor's lane of teachers.

[00:07:38] And the final phase of that was implemented in fiscal '22. At the max, we are below the 95% to 105% range, at 92%, and at the min, mid, and max, we rank 5th, 6th, and 6th out of 9. Also included in the fiscal 24 budget is a salary scale extension of one step at the top of all scales.

[00:08:04] We recognize that there are retention challenges everywhere, and definitely in public education, this will provide another year of step increase eligibility for employees at the top of the scales. The next chart shows the salary scale extension and the employees that are at the top of the scale and would not receive a step increase without this being included in the budget. It's about 9% of our total employees. About 50% of them are teachers. We do have fewer steps than the

[00:08:40] surrounding divisions. Loudon has 30 steps on its teacher scale. Prince William has 30 steps on its teacher scale, Arlington has 31 steps on its teacher scale. We have 24 in this current year and 25 that is proposed an additional step in fiscal 24.

[00:09:02] Also on the retention strategy for the salary scale extension, you know, we would like people to delay their decision to retire. Right now, we have about 2000 FCPS employees who are eligible to retire from VRS and FCERS, which are less than 1.0 employees participating in the county's retirement system of FCERS, our trades people, our food services people, transportation, family liaisons, all of those groups participate in FCERS.

[00:09:37] and about 1,100 of those members are eligible to retire by December of 2023. The state has also stepped in to try to help divisions retain their staff, and so the governor's budget, when it was introduced on December 15th, funded a 1% retention bonus.

[00:09:59] Employees are eligible for the bonus if they were employed by FCPS in fiscal 23 and remain with us in fiscal 24. It costs us about $19.9 million to provide a 1% bonus, retention bonus.

[00:10:15] We have about 24,000 employees that would be eligible for that. Of the $19.9 million, $4.3 million comes from the state, and $15.6 million is the local share. Another thing that we're looking at as far as retention strategy goes is reintroduction of the work-after-retirement program.

[00:10:37] We are exploring a potential work after retirement program. That program would only benefit legacy participants. Tier 1 ERFC and Tier 2, if ERFC would not be applicable, they would not benefit from this program.

[00:10:56] Right now, in the Legacy Plan, we have 544 individuals that would be eligible immediately. The average age of that group is 63, and they have an average service of 27 years. We have not yet calculated the cost impact to provide that.

[00:11:15] In fact, I was reluctant because we didn't have a cost to even talk about it, but I know there's great interest in that, so we thought we would at least tell you what we know, And we're still exploring with the actuaries what that would cost us if we provided a program to incent those that are eligible to retire to stay a few more years with FCPS.

[00:11:39] For fiscal 24, you know, divisions, what they're proposing for their compensation is a highly guarded secret in every division. And we have four divisions who have not yet released their budgets, and that's Arlington, which will come out on the February 23rd, Manassas City and Manassas Park City, both will be released on February 14th, and Prince William on February 1st.

[00:12:04] So we don't have any compensation information for fiscal 24 about those groups, but a few of the others we do. Alexandria is doing a 2.5% MSA and a 2% bonus. False Church is doing a 2% MSA and a step increase plus other compensation initiatives all combined will meet the 5% that the state introduced because, of course, nobody wants to leave any of that state money on the table.

[00:12:34] We, of course, are doing a 3% MSA, and the average step is 2.22% for a total of 5.22%. Loudon is revamping their salary schedules, so the step varies among employees depending on the changes that they've made, and they're also including a 2.5% MSA.

[00:12:53] And just for the record, steps are movement on the scale, and MSA is applied to the schedule. So if it says, you know, 3% for Fairfax, you could go to the fiscal 23 salary scale, multiply every line item by 3%, and you would get the fiscal 24 salary scale.

[00:13:12] Montgomery County, you know, they're subject to collective bargaining and union negotiations, and so they are at 3.35% MSA plus step increases. And regionally, divisions, I know Loudon especially, appear to be focused on top of the scale incentives as we are.

[00:13:32] And the next part is recruitment strategies. And I can talk a little bit about recruitment strategies. Dr. Wilson is on her way, her calendar, and inadvertently had Luther Jackson as the work session today.

[00:13:48] So she is at Luther Jackson, so a little grace for her as she comes in because I told her that we're here in Gatehouse, and so she'll be coming back here. But with our recruitment strategies, we have hired more than 200 teacher residents this year as we've tried to increase and ensure that we have individuals in front of our students at the beginning of the school year.

[00:14:12] And we'll be working to move those teacher residents from the teacher resident program into qualified positions. We're also beefing up our recruitment strategies. We've just begun and started the recruitment season this spring. We are at two different events today.

[00:14:30] We were talking with our recruitment director this morning, and he was part of a meeting and was actively getting off so that he could have conversations with candidates. We're working with Longsdale Publishing, the VCL Preparation Program, which is the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment Program to ensure that we have teachers who are qualified to work with our students.

[00:14:53] We've implemented a Food and Nutrition Services Career Opportunities Recruitment webpage we can increase our individuals coming to work with our students in our food nutrition services program. We've expanded our presence on social media and our advertising campaigns with clear communication plans to bring in more teachers and share more about the good things about Fairfax County with our candidates coming to us. We've begun the implementation of recruitment and hiring surveys so that we can get a better sense of what our candidates are looking for as they're

[00:15:28] thinking about and have many more opportunities and options to them today for teaching. As part of that conversation this morning, we're looking at a variety of candidates today at our fairs, and in speaking with our coordinator, he shared that the candidates that they're looking at today at the job fair can average between 12 and 13 offers from other school systems that are at the fair today. So it's a very different market than it was in the past where candidates have much more choices available to them. We have to be nimble in our ability to

[00:16:07] offer contracts to those individuals and follow through and to help them understand why it's important for them to teach and work in Fairfax County. We'll also talk a little bit more if there are questions about the FCPS teacher commitment program where teachers would talk about their commitment and express their commitment to continuing to work in Fairfax County. And we're also strengthening our partnerships with our Troops to Teachers program. Next slide. As part of the meeting that I talked about this morning, we were focused on our hiring strategies. And one thing that

[00:16:45] we're implementing this year which is different than what we've done in the past is implementing centralized hiring for our schools. Currently we have all of our principals have the ability to receive resumes from human resources, receive resumes from teachers outside of the system and we're trying to narrow that process so that there is a clear line of resumes going from HR to principals and so that's a piece that we're working on as well as working on those centralized hiring efforts we're creating a team of administrators from

[00:17:23] our title one and higher firm schools who will be working to hire as many individuals and teachers into the system as possible and then we'll have the first right for those individuals once we get them processed within the system we have prioritized hiring for our title one and hard to staff schools and centers, and as part of our process this year, there will be a point where we'll allow all of our principals to interview for staff, and then where we still have vacancies in our Title I and hard-to-fill schools, we'll be placing individuals in that second phase

[00:17:58] of the process, so that we don't have teachers remaining in our pool and have vacancies within our schools. I shared a little bit about those educator hiring teams that we're pulling together, and we'll be providing some training in the coming weeks for the hiring teams so that they have a better understanding of how the process works.

[00:18:19] We're currently working on an international hiring effort. We have a multi-pronged approach to our international hiring efforts and are finalizing a contract with a vendor, Participate Learning, who works with bringing international candidates to our school system, and they will remain with us for two years and work with our students.

[00:18:44] We're continuing our substitute incentives for those high-volume days. We've seen an impact, and we appreciate the board's focus on providing additional funds so that we could provide those additional funds and incentives for our substitutes on those days where we saw more of our staff taking days off.

[00:19:03] as well as we've implemented a site-based substitute program where in our schools where it's very hard to find substitutes and get substitutes to take jobs, we have permanent subs placed in those schools, and our principals are very grateful for that approach.

[00:19:21] I'll turn the presentation over to Dr. Wilson, who has joined us, and she wants to talk about this last slide on retention strategies. Thank you, Mr. Smith, and good afternoon.

[00:19:39] We are partnering with OPLE to plan supports for teacher residents. Many of our teacher residents are entering the profession with little to no preparation or experience in the classroom.

[00:19:55] And so along with OPLE, we are working to make sure that these individuals have the support and care that they need, you know, as they walk into our classroom. So, we're providing input into those supports and development that OPLE can offer our residents.

[00:20:17] For career ladders, career ladders are an organizational, formal process designed to encourage employees to move up in their careers. While there are currently career ladders in place for some positions such as AAs and custodians, We want to expand those opportunities and promote retention within various positions within the district.

[00:20:45] And for Administrator Succession Planning in partnership with OPLE, we're working with OPLE to create a process for Administrator Succession Planning to build and development of administrator candidates. HR is also participating in a leadership pipeline workshop on February 16th, sponsored by FAPSE, AEA, and HEA affinity groups to assist in bolstering the leadership pipeline with diverse administrator candidates.

[00:21:18] And we're going to return to the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging cohort work that we were doing prior to the pandemic. This cohort will assist schools in exploring ways to recruit and retain teachers of color.

[00:21:36] This work began, as I stated, a couple of years ago, but then it shifted to pandemic-related responsibilities, as many things did during that time. But we are excited to be picking up this work and moving forward to expand to additional schools within the county.

[00:21:56] So we're very excited about that. and then there's the development of operational employee onboarding we know that there's quite a bit of interest and need in that area and so we are working well we've already created a template for operational employees and we're expanding that to multiple operational employee groups

[00:22:22] And then finally, state interviews. State interviews, I remember this was a conversation that we had at a work session when I entered FCPS last school year in June, and there was quite a bit of interest in the use of state interviews, and we are implementing state interviews starting this year, and we do plan to keep these in place for the next school year.

[00:22:49] So that will, of course, inform us as to what things our employees feel are benefits and reasons that they choose to stay with FCPS. And we are looking forward to executing this, implementing, and getting this feedback so that we can make sure that we put those things in place for our employees and encourage retention of staff for the years to come.

[00:23:18] You know, the board members, you know, with a majority consensus would like to amend the budget.

[00:23:34] You maybe need help with language on your amendment, and of course we would need to cost it. So if you have any budget amendments, if you could get those to me via email by February 10th, we will help you write them and cost them out, and then we will post them to board docs by Friday, February 17th.

[00:23:56] And the last chart, of course, is just the budget development calendar. The next thing that comes up is the Fairfax County Executive will present his budget on February 21st. And then on February 23rd, we adopt the advertised budget and convey that to the county as our needs for the upcoming school year.

[00:24:19] That's it. Thank you. We have lots of questions. So we'll get started, I think, with Aaron Corby Sanders.

[00:24:36] No, it was me. Go ahead. Thank you very much, and thank you for really focusing on employee compensation today. I'm sure you're going to hear from my colleagues that it's more than just salary, and that we have to look at other conditions associated with it, which all result in an impact on the budget.

[00:25:01] I know that there's going to be some conversation about ERFC, so I will hold off on that conversation. But I do have a couple of questions. questions one what is the current vacancy rate we do we have for teachers IA each of the categories including principals and secondly when we look at this I'd like to better understand what the budget impact is on staffing when we look at something that is incredibly important for the success of every classroom which is having planning time for our teachers especially in

[00:25:39] elementary school and so if we were to add in a specific chunk of planning time either as a extension of working hours for employees in elementary school or by having additional staff in elementary schools that would be very helpful and then i have some other questions which really are regarding the retiree program and why tier one and tier two retirees of the

[00:26:11] new system are not eligible for the return to work program for them, for retirees. And my other question really pertains to the cohort model, which I think is important, but I'd like to understand or ensure that that cohort model also addresses the needs for attracting and retaining Hispanic teachers and Asian teachers, which have been underrepresented in the past.

[00:26:45] That's a good start. If you want to freeze my time and people can respond. I will begin with cohort work um and so um the cohort work does incorporate um any uh teachers of color so that would include hispanic um asian any uh teacher of color to expand on diversity within the the district so it's not directed in any one um particular group but it is across the board

[00:27:19] and i also wanted um to go back and also stress the importance of the belonging piece and that's why this work is directed um in our schools because that's indeed where the work real work um happens retention it's the it's definitely a retention piece and so um we're excited about the the start well going back to this work because it is indeed important and we can there was another

[00:27:56] question about vacancy rates we'll get those and provide the vacancy rates to the board as of today and we'll ask staff to pull that together you had a question about erfc and i know that they're going to be conversation with the rfc or about our retirement program for our tier one and tier two as the actuaries were looking at the calculations, it's actually more beneficial for our tier one and tier two retirees to remain in the retirement program and to remain

[00:28:29] working without pulling dollars out as you look at their ability to maximize their earnings over a lifetime. And so for those who are in the legacy plan who might see diminishing returns on their retirement the longer they stay within Fairfax County. If you're in the tier one and the tier as you stay in Fairfax County. I'm sorry that's not the question. I'm sorry. The question is regarding getting retirees to come back to our classrooms and what are we doing to create incentives for retirees to come back to our classrooms and that includes the conversation

[00:29:09] was about Tier 1 and Tier 2, retirees. Correct. And so for the work after retirement for the Tier 1 and Tier 2, we would recommend that those individuals not retire but then stay with us.

[00:29:25] So that's what I heard with the Tier 1 and Tier 2. I'm talking about people who have already retired. Oh, I see. So you're talking about encouraging those folks to come back.

[00:29:41] I know that we currently have some legislation in Richmond that's looking at shortening the time where folks have to separate from Fairfax County or from employment from six months to one month. And so that would be one thing that we'd be looking at for those recent retirees to encourage them to come back and work for us.

[00:30:04] The biggest issue with retirees is that once you do come back to work for us, you would still want to be able to receive your retirement. And there's another bill in Richmond now that would also look at allowing those individuals to continue to receive the retirement benefits while working for us full time.

[00:30:26] So as a go back, I would just suggest that some of our neighboring jurisdictions are already having their retirees come back and receive their retirement funds. So I don't know how they're doing it, but we should be looking at how they're doing that to be able to be competitive or as a next step.

[00:30:46] And then additionally, you talked about how we attract and retain teachers. It's more than just salaries, as I mentioned, planning time and class size. So if you could provide us with a comparison of what air class sizes are and what our planning time provisions are compared to neighboring jurisdictions, that would be very helpful in understanding how we can be competitive there.

[00:31:12] And then my third area, once again on attracting and retaining, is in the principal pool. We had major changes to our principal pool several years ago. Many of us have expressed concerns on how that worked. Do we have, as you proceed in this area, what are we doing to take the lessons learned from that process?

[00:31:33] We're actually doing work on that as we speak. We're having conversations surrounding the principal pool process and also hiring. And so we're working across departments to work on that very thing.

[00:31:53] And then so we're expecting to have a product in place very shortly. So that's expected this school year. And one of the aspects of the principal pool was looking at those outside candidates. And so we're looking very closely at how we bring external candidates into the system and what those requirements would be.

[00:32:13] Had a very robust meeting yesterday with our region assistant superintendents and cabinet to focus on making immediate changes to that process so that we can recruit the best and brightest candidates for our principal pool. ships my time is up but i would expect that the board would have lessons learned shared with it on the principal pool and the other questions can you provide us that data on planning time and class

[00:32:48] size yes yes we will work with our uh thank you colleagues and other jurisdictions to get that information ms kees gamara thank you um i do appreciate the efforts to try to get us a lot of information I haven't had a chance to review what was posted I think this morning but the the overall category that I want to talk about is the

[00:33:26] strategy of how we present the budget and how we can make sure the community understands that so I'm going to start with those some of the goals of all of

[00:33:38] which I agree with what Ms. Corbett Sanders said, but rather than looking at this as a year-by-year process, have we thought about presenting, first of all, identifying these concerns such as planning

time, etc., but also putting together the budget in a three-to-five-year time period so that we can help the community as well as the people who are funding us, the board of supervisors, the state, etc.

[00:34:08] These are the goals that we have and this is the investment that it would take. So that's overall, that's as I looked at the documents that I do have, I wondered if in this particularly competitive environment, whether we may need to adjust how we're approaching these questions to try to make sure that we can present that. And so I'd like to ask Ms. Burden if that is something that is appropriate moving forward.

[00:34:36] Well, I mean, we include a fiscal forecast for a few years in the approved budget every year that does have a five-year look as far as that goal goes.

[00:34:55] We also, I'm not sure I'm answering your question, but we also hook up with the county and do community discussions about the budget with them where people can ask questions and we provide greater information.

[00:35:12] but those are by request and we don't actually have a schedule yet and those usually occur in March and what we present to the community is the advertised budget or what are the increases that are being proposed. So I guess I'm aware of that what I'm looking at for example I'm seeing compensation right now as as as a urgent need to address to make sure that we not only remain competitive, but that we can retain and attract staff members. And so if we were not only having

[00:35:45] a three to five year look at things, we would also have rationale as to those investments, right? And I would, Dr. Reed, would like to identify what some of those topics are. For example, we heard questions last night with respect to our STEM investments, right? And so it seems to me these two things go hand in hand the strategic plan which would say this is what we anticipate with our budget which would say to the people who are trying who were considering FCPS this is what I expect so I think it's a combination of

[00:36:20] what you are saying as well as what our superintendent can say I'm sorry yeah no I agree it's important I would also say that we have to look at the existing staff and how we can perhaps think about either expanding or re-aligning some of the duties right we've talked a little bit

[00:36:56] about the ability to do STEM which I mean who doesn't love STEM right and math and the science but we have all the aart teachers as well in classrooms or they're assigned to school so the ability for those staff maybe to support stem education as well you know so how do we layer the training the professional development and the expertise so we have all of our staff able to deliver but to your point i think miss keys gamara it's the idea of maybe rolling this out over time we heard a lot about athletic trainers last night as well i don't know if we

[00:37:32] can do all of that in one year but maybe we look at our largest schools to start or do you know what i'm saying like i think you're asking a great point what of this work is part of an ongoing plan right and so if if it helps i'm happy to ask some budget questions with respect to to some of that as i listened to that conversation last night as a mother of um three athletes right i know those injuries have a direct connection to coaching and I'm you know at what point do we want to talk about our compensation as well as training for our coaches

[00:38:07] which is integral to to that concern so and I would also add our theater and performing arts stipends right and how those line up with coaches and the amount of time put in to bring a production up

right I just think we see what we value by where we move our funds so I think there's a lot to be said for how we might be thoughtful about that so my point is as we look at that and let's say for example we heard this last night about coaches and we've heard about other areas at other times but have we put forward the rationale for one our

[00:38:47] community to understand why this budget is growing because it is a strategic plan throughout a longer period of time so that's kind of the idea i wanted to pitch this morning i'm happy to all offer questions to try to hone that out thank you all right thank you um miss cohen followed by mr frisch yeah happy to follow that i know i've got a budget question in about the cost for the 25 atc twos um so looking forward to that and seeing if we can work together either

[00:39:26] you all would be ideal but if not us to try to figure out how to do that and i think you know to your point about even having a long-range goal where we say these are the five schools where we start and the next will you know i i just having a plan going forward would be great um so i absolutely second that um some a few questions or and a couple of comments one i just um prince william's going to put theirs as a five percent increase in a and a step um so we're going to fall farther behind um prince william you know i think last night we heard a community member saying and

[00:40:03] we all feel it at this table about that we in fairfax county we have to lead and i think you know it certainly hit when he said that um about really being the best out there and i i think you you know, a question is, and I know Megan has mentioned a few times, ERFC. If we're recognizing that that is not attracting folks here, then maybe it's a conversation that we need to have with our staff about what that looks like. Obviously, if we contribute, what, 6.25 or

[00:40:37] something, what's our ERFC? So if you were to look at the employer contribution over a 30-year career, it's about $120,000 additional that Fairfax County provides for compensation.

[00:40:53] But yearly, we put about 6.4% or something. What's the? 6.44%. Okay. And so if we look at that, the cost to that is that then we can't use that money, obviously, for other things. Now, to us, as a system, we worked really hard to make sure that there were two streams of retirement, and people do very well. In fact, we have friends who retire and say, oh my gosh, I make like $300 more a month than I did when I was teaching.

[00:41:20] And that's wonderful. We want that. But do we need to have those conversations if salary, if that's what's keeping us so separate, if I am trying to find a job in Fairfax County, I am looking at these charts. And why would I go somewhere where we're fifth, ninth, eighth?

[00:41:39] So, you know, that's, I just think we're just going to keep shedding people. And the elementary planning time, I think, I don't know if it, Karen, Karen or Karen referenced that I think the idea too is that these districts are not created alike. We already know that we have FRM. Our FRM percentage alone would be the sixth largest school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia. So what our teachers are dealing with when they're in the classroom, when they're outside of the classroom, this is different than other places. Not to knock what those teachers are doing they're killing it too but we know that we have different expectations so on our teachers

[00:42:18] so we got to do something different um i did want to ask the bus driver um i don't know did we ever get the compression scale info that you were going to send to us um we did not provide a copy of that

it was an informal review of our scales and the outcome is that there is indication of compression across multiple scales not just one in particular um and so um you know that that was um evident

[00:42:53] i just when we're looking at those bus driver and we talk about the median driver median step um like most of the our median driver is actually on step four of 20. so it's not the median it's the median of the scale but not where most of our employees are i know i'm over time sorry miss tolin if i could just make a couple of comments just because this is of great interest and we have budget questions about it and we will answer those formally but just so you know

[00:43:31] currently we have 25 certified athletic trainers at a cost of 2.9 million in addition to that we provide a supplement or stipend for fall winter and spring at the high school's funding for that and that's at about a half a million dollars um so if we wanted to add a second at that would be another 2.9 million but perhaps we would not have to budget for the supplement that's about

[00:43:56] a half a million but that'd be an atc2 right which is a lower pay scale okay um so i think several of us have already talked about the need to think in a multi-year kind of time frame about what our goals and our priorities are when it comes to compensation also steps i'm curious have we ever done an analysis to see what ways we could use our funds to bring people up for missed

[00:44:35] steps well of course it's you know it's the cost that's prohibitive of course i know it's the cost but we can give people a step increase and that applies to everybody um but you know we heard from uh a educator last night who's missed five steps in his career is there any pathway that we could come up with that over time would recover those missteps while also slowly moving people forward i doubt it the cost of a step increase and everyone in fairfax missed step increases during

[00:45:13] those years i mean in the time that i've been here we didn't get step increases for two years But step increases average about 55 million, and so the numbers get really big fast. I mean, even if you assume average step about 2%, then at 55 million, just to try to even give two steps, you're already over 100 million in addition to what we've already assumed.

[00:45:41] What about at the end of their career? Is there a way to help recover some of that at the end of a career? Somebody may not miss as many steps as somebody else based on when they joined the division. And so maybe they retire with a larger income as a result of where they landed here.

[00:45:57] Is there a way to do this at the end of their career? Not necessarily the entire amount, but if I've missed five step increases because of when I started employment here and I was a loyal employee for my entire career, is there something to be done at the end of their career to increase their retirement benefit? No, it's just based on compensation.

[00:46:16] The steps, what we call it, doesn't matter. I mean, all of the divisions around us use step and grade philosophies for teacher salaries and other staff. I understand that. What I'm advocating is that is there another way of doing this, right?

[00:46:32] Is there something that could be done to somebody's end of year, those last three years that we peg things off of, to increase their retirement benefit based on missteps? It wouldn't be for everybody. It would just be for people who have X number, you know, whatever they've missed. I'm using a lot of my time on this question.

[00:46:49] But it's everybody because everybody missteps. Understand that it depends on where you started though, right is how many steps you've missed now I will I will send you a more detailed question laying out what I want rather than spending two and a half minutes on one question All right I'm considering a follow-on motion. What are we currently doing to assist educators and others?

[00:47:15] In the master's lane or who have previously received tuition reimbursements? What are we doing to help make sure that they are enrolled in and maintaining their eligibility for public service loan forgiveness through the Department of Education? That would be an HR question, and I'm not sure if we have the right people here to answer that.

[00:47:39] I will attempt to make an attempt at that question. So the federal loan forgiveness program is, of course, outside of FCPS.

[00:47:55] And so, you know, of course, if there's anyone who is eligible for loan forgiveness, then we do whatever is necessary on our end to verify their employment, which is required as a result of.

[00:48:13] So we do nothing to get them into the program other than what's legally required? Correct. All right. I will be talking to everybody about what we can be doing to elevate that as a possibility for our employees. Because most educators were denied admission into the program in the previous administration.

[00:48:31] inadvertently, it's become very difficult for them to be in the program, and it could save them a lot of money, which benefits the quality of life that they have in our system. On ERFC, I appreciate the comments about what we could be doing with that money.

[00:48:51] I would not be in favor of limiting or reducing the robust offerings, which have already been trimmed back quite a bit over the years, that we provide for retirement. But I am curious what we are doing to help sell this benefit as a boon to employees within our system.

[00:49:13] You know, I, for one, can tell you that naming something after the letters for an acronym is not the way to sell any product, you know, except for maybe OJ. Oh, God. But what are we doing to make sure that people are clear and aware that this is a huge benefit to them?

[00:49:37] And I realize that's not something you could tell somebody when they're 22 years old, but it's certainly something that gets more and more important the longer they're with us. So we can certainly ask Eli Martinez to provide an update when he does his annual review of ERFC with the board.

[00:49:55] Both Ms. Burden and I sit as trustees on the board and receive regular updates. With regard to their efforts to share information with our employees, they have a huge marketing campaign to help our employees understand that there are two scoops on the ice cream cone.

[00:50:14] So the first scoop is VRS and the second scoop is ERFC, which is that benefit. They work hard to explain the benefit of that through their advertising efforts. We've seen an increase in the number of employees who have logged in to review their ERFC benefits.

[00:50:32] They've changed much of their model at ERFC to provide retirement counseling and advice to employees throughout their entire employment with FCPS. Prior to some of these recent changes, you could only have that discussion within your last five years as you were close to retirement.

[00:50:51] So on that end, they've done quite a bit to help our employees understand the benefit, help employees understand what those dollars mean by logging into the ERFC direct. They're currently engaged

in an RFP to look at a new system that's a little bit more user friendly for people to understand and help with that retirement planning.

[00:51:12] We also have ensured that we have ambassadors in each of our schools and they're called ERFC ambassadors, their employees who can help employees within the building understand more about their benefits. They're highlighted. Everybody knows who they are. And so if you have a question, if I'm in the legacy plan and I have a question, I can go talk to the ambassador.

[00:51:38] New people, how do we use it as a recruiting tool? This is all for people that are already here. And so with that, we also use that language and that information. And it's with our recruitment teams today. We have a team at William & Mary and a team in Maryland and so they have information about ARFC and are able to share that information with new recruits coming in. You're exactly right that it's hard for a 22-year-old to see the benefits of retirement. I know that when I was that 22-year-old, I kind of liked that and now that I am 29 years in, yeah, now that I'm no longer

[00:52:15] 22 uh i i had wished and we've had these conversations i wished i had had somebody who was a little more my age help explain those benefits because at that time i didn't want to hear it from somebody who was you know telling me how i should spend my money and what i should do with it or what the benefit was so those are conversations we've had at erfc as well i want to go back thank you okay mr frisch dr anderson followed by miss mclaughlin thank you um i appreciate all this information on the retention and recruitment efforts so most of my first round

[00:52:54] questions would land there as we know it's a struggle to attract and retain the title one and special education teachers so I'd like to hear a little bit more in terms of the centralized hiring that speaks to that and I also want to revisit a question that I posed it seems like almost two years ago now how can we look at the packages for those individuals a little bit differently? Because as Ms. Cohen said, she's definitely right. There's a classroom and then there's a Title I classroom or a special education classroom where you have to run to the gauntlet before you get to the instruction. So is there any space for us to reconfigure or specialize

[00:53:33] the compensation packages to attract individuals in those two areas? We've had some of those conversations and are looking at what the impact might be for using those Title I dollars to provide stipends to individuals who work in Title I schools, and so there'll be more information to share with the board on that. Again, we've started those conversations. Amy Miller, who is our director for Title I, has been working very closely with HR and finance to see if that's something that we could do in terms of differentiated compensation. And the centralized hiring? And the

[00:54:11] centralized hiring, again, the focus is on our Title I and our high FRM schools. We are finalizing the hiring teams as we speak, a lot of as we speak because we're always working in HR, but we are getting the names of those administrators who will be part of those centralized hiring teams, and as I shared before, as they are bringing in candidates into the system and we're pushing those candidates out as part of the pool for hiring, those individuals who are on those teams will have first access to those candidates as we look at the vacancies within their schools.

[00:54:49] Okay, and I also wanted to share that here. I know last year, Dr. Reed, there was a premium placed on making sure that the classrooms were staffed first before all other positions. I hope we're taking the same approach to how we're filling all of these positions that are now entering the budget.

[00:55:09] I know you mentioned it just a little bit ago, the athletic trainers that we're looking at. In the proposed budget where we have some athletics for middle schools, would that also mean that we would need to include trainers at those levels? Traditionally, middle school sports, I think it's really mixed in terms of whether athletic trainers are required or not required.

[00:55:36] I think whatever the standard FCPS has for trainers would need to be implemented for middle school if there is a standard for athletic trainers at middle school. But since we haven't had middle school sports, there might not be. I just want us to be behind the eight ball on this because injuries are injuries and they could happen anywhere.

[00:55:54] Well, we did try to start with two sports that were non-contact, cross-country and track. So with the hope that, I mean, the sports with the higher injuries would be our contact sports, which then I think it's a moot. Clearly, we have to have athletic training support.

[00:56:11] We could be thinking a little bit ahead. Oh, okay, great. Is there any space for us to repurpose the 1% retention bonus? Because I know the bulk of it is coming from local funds, with 4.3 coming from the state.

[00:56:29] Do we have any flexibility to accept that and kind of repackage it to kind of meet some of the concerns that are being raised around the table? I don't think so. the the language is very clear that you have to be employed by the school division in the current year and and retained in in fiscal 24 in order to receive that one percent bonus so it's pretty prescriptive um as far as the state goes but you know the general assembly you know may make changes

[00:57:02] to that we're we're a long way from a state budget too so we'll see okay thank you we could just kind to keep that in mind my next set of questions are around the troop to troop teachers the international teachers the teacher residents one of the things that we're beginning to hear from parents is that they're not feeling the confidence in the preparation of those individuals to stand in front of their children and deliver instruction can you speak to what are the requirements how are we ensuring that they're high quality teachers and i know the resident teachers are slightly

[00:57:36] different because they work with a licensed professional thank you for that question so the the minimum requirement of qualification is a bachelor's degree and that would enable an individual to at least go back and take the coursework that's required for provisional license and that's what we're working to assist these individuals in in doing with the troops to teachers in many many cases colleges and universities have a

[00:58:12] partnership with troops of teachers and so they provide coursework for those individuals so that they are actually coming into classrooms with the necessary coursework needed for a license these are already licensed individuals some are some are already licensed individuals so and the ones that are not licensed are still able to deliver instruction without that license and without a teacher to be working alongside of them? If they have a bachelor's degree then we would treat the individuals the same as we would a teacher resident which they would have a teacher, a certified licensed

[00:58:51] teacher working alongside them and making sure that you know they have what they need and this in terms of support in the classroom but for all of these situations where individuals are coming into our our buildings into our classrooms without a license they at least have the minimum requirement so

that we can get them into coursework that would get them to the place of of licensure for example there are some teachers or some teacher candidates who would like to perhaps teach

[00:59:28] math all that would be required of that individual is to pass the praxis for elementary on the other hand an elementary program is much longer and so that individual may have to take an um maybe six courses so with the teacher resident program we are placing them in the classroom and while they're taking the coursework and getting um preparation for um that's necessary or the taking the course

[01:00:03] work necessary to become licensed or to receive the provisional license which is what our goal is to get them to the place of provisional licensure which is the same as not the same as a 10-year license but it's the next step towards a 10-year renewable license if any of that made sense it does i the point of it is i want to be sure that we i know that this is a teacher shortage i know that there are a lot of challenges we still have to have highly qualified teachers in front of our

[01:00:38] kids and I'm also worried in terms of how we're being strategic in terms of placing these less experienced persons I've seen the turnovers at title one schools I've seen the turnovers at schools that need the better teachers so Dr. Reed I would love to hear your ideas in terms of how do we place our better best teachers in front of our neediest students? So one of the directives in place right now is we're hiring early and first for our Title I schools and Mr. Smith reported

[01:01:13] yesterday that we've hired 51 teachers last week and the direction from my desk is that they go in our highest need schools first. But are these qualified teachers or are these? They are. Because These are licensed graduates in education. That's not just the body, but is it the most expert body? Right. These are, we're hoping, effective bodies and licensed educators.

[01:01:33] I will say, if our salary lags and we get later in the hiring season, we're going to struggle to find highly effective educators to hire. But we're out hiring early right now, far earlier than we have previously, with the intent of placing staff in our Title I schools first.

[01:01:55] And in terms of that early season, so here we are in January, and we have filled the pool with at least 40 qualified candidates today. So we've hired 51 last week. We have 40 in the pool. We have the first of our spring recruitment trips started today.

[01:02:13] Our hiring teams are coming on board. We are focused on always be hiring in Fairfax County, and we're going to hire every qualified teacher that we can. And then at the end of the day, as we think about providing principals the opportunity to interview those candidates, if at a certain point they have not filled the vacancy within their school, we'll begin placing those candidates.

[01:02:39] We also understand that enrollment changes happen during the course of the year, so we'll have de-staffs that we'll place in vacant positions, as well as the ability to place those teachers who are transferring from one school to another. So you've got all of that happening at the same time, And our focus is to not say no to those teachers who are qualified.

[01:03:00] We want to grab you as soon as we can, have you in a pool, and then ensure that you are in a classroom come July 1 with the priority being our Title I and high FRM schools. - Dr. Anderson, I also wanna share that one of the other strategies we're looking at is the distribution of our student teachers.

[01:03:20] And as we began looking, many of our student teachers are not student teachers in Title I or hard to staff schools. And we know that the likelihood, if we can support our student teachers and they get

to know our staff, they're more likely to want to stay in the school they student teach.

[01:03:38] So another project we're looking at is making sure we're distributing our student teachers in some of our toughest to staff schools as well. - Okay, I have follow-up questions with that, but I see that my time is up.

[01:03:54] - Ms. Wachlan. - First of all, I really appreciate the questions that everyone, my colleagues are presenting, but I would hope that maybe we can focus back on the budget first because this is a more robust conversation we need to have about premier workforce, no question, but Dr. Reed, I have to tell you, I am continuing to struggle and figure out where in your administration there's a focus on analytics.

[01:04:29] When I look at slides 3 and slides 5 in particular, and you can even go with 4, if we take the 6.44%, which thank you, Ms. Cohen, for putting a fine point on because your staff should have done that, as my basic back of the envelope shows me, we become number one in first-year teacher salary.

[01:04:54] We become number one in overall career earnings. when you add in the 6.44% that we are giving to our employees every single year. We just put it in ERFC instead of into their paycheck. I would really like to understand why it's taking a school board member with a background in social work to look at these things because we are really harming employee perception, employee morale.

[01:05:25] People are talking about wanting to leave us, and we're not putting out numbers to help them understand whether you're here for us for a year, whether you're here for us for a career. Secondly, we did, as a prior board, survey our employees. What do you want to do about ERFC?

[01:05:41] Because it is 6.44% a year. That can go directly in your paycheck. And the response we got back with the prior board was people did not want us to touch it. They wanted us to keep it because it's like a 401k. So, we have to help our employees understand that we are giving you the most competitive pay in the region.

[01:06:03] Whether you're a single high school district like Alexandria and Falls Church, which frankly is another conversation I keep having, the heavy hitters right now are Loudon and Prince William. The charts that myself and others asked are proving the point that Loudon is not in our area of competition.

[01:06:24] Prince William, but when you add in your RFC, now we're the number one dog in the business. I don't understand why your team doesn't see that this is so crucial. Help me understand what am I missing here, because this is the second budget discussion in a row that we're going to not only be talking about just our budget and the salary scale, but to every question around the table, how do we continue to track the best?

[01:06:53] it won't be from these PowerPoint slides okay thank thanks Ms. McLaughlin Mr. Smith you indicated you had a response to that I think the the question is if the salary charts on the PowerPoint don't include EF ERFC and ERFC is a benefit a salary benefit then we're missing an opportunity to be you know to excuse me demonstrate our competitiveness certainly and so when we look at ERFC it is a retirement benefit and so when when you look at overall compensation with a carve out for

[01:07:33] erfc yes the what fcps pays per employee is their overall paycheck and then a carve out for a contribution to erfc many have talked about it like a 401k and it is it's a defined benefit plan that we pay into just as we pay into VRS the the thing that I've heard from from staff and from the the gentleman who

spoke last night who we've had conversations with in several meetings there's the difference between the dollars that people have in their pockets currently versus the dollars that

[01:08:09] they're going to receive down the road and that's that's the biggest question that's out there and And so we can highlight the overall compensation and the overall dollars that FCPS is investing in employees.

[01:08:27] And while we have that conversation on a regular basis, what we still hear is that, yes, and I'm looking for more dollars in my paycheck versus that overall compensation because I don't understand what that looks like for me down the road. And so we're working to help educate employees about that ERFC benefit and what the value of them will be for that ERFC benefit as they retire.

[01:08:52] But I hear what you're saying, Ms. McLaughlin, because you're talking about what FCPS is investing in that particular employee. They just don't have access to that $4,000 on average per year that we're investing in them and won't have access to that until they retire.

[01:09:11] Is there a way, Marty, to demonstrate? Because that's, I'm guessing if it operates like a 401k, it's before taxes that it's taken out. Or am I mistaken about that with the ERFC? Because there may be a tax savings as well that we're, you know, that we're not calculating.

[01:09:27] Yeah, that is pre-tax. Okay. I wonder, I think we all understand what is happening. I wonder how to portray it in a way that makes more sense.

[01:09:44] So it is, to Mr. Frisch's point earlier as well, more of a recruiting tool. Because it's money in the bank, right? But I hear what you're saying too, Marty, that it's not in my pocket today. It's not in my pocket. And for those mid-career teachers who are coming from other jurisdictions, they get it because they're at that point of, oh, I have that better understanding of I am paying 3% into a retirement plan.

[01:10:10] employer is paying. What we do annually in March is we provide an annual compensation statement to all employees so that you can see what the employee contribution is to their benefits and then what FCPS's contribution is to their benefits. So in March when you get that, I can see that Fairfax County is paying me this salary and they've also paid this much money toward my retirement plan and we provide that to all of our employees. We've been doing that now for maybe six or seven years.

[01:10:40] that's one way that we help inform employees of what that employer contribution is again for those employees that are coming to us directly out of college it's hard for them to understand what that benefit might be down the road so Marty I know this is probably a question that's been asked but I wonder I wonder if there's a way to give an employee a choice right because regardless the 4,000 ish that we're putting in as a budget I mean that's a serious budget consideration so we can't but it's kind of this quiet silent behind the

[01:11:15] scenes allocation that people aren't recognizing so i'm wondering is there a way if i'm a new staff member i could say i'd like to participate in the rfc or i would prefer not to until xyz year or i'd like to only participate in it to this point not to the right like i just wonder if there's any flexibility because we're putting the money in and if there's a different way to put the money in that's more attractive to staff I think we're all in on that right it's the finite sum of money that we have to distribute that we're sitting with at this moment and so I think that

[01:11:53] down the road you'd be looking at plan design changes and so we currently within ERFC have three particular plans we have the legacy plan tier one tier two if that's a direction that the board would want to entertain, you would then have a possible tier four plan, or we'd have to go back and look at the overall plan documents that by the decree and the resolution that allowed and the ordinance that created ERFC was an employee shall participate. We do know that for VRS, as we have different tiers of ERS, that employees have the ability

[01:12:32] to put more money into their VRS retirement. They can choose in the hybrid plan how much of their salary that they would want to put in. We don't currently have that option within ERFC as the employee gets to choose.

[01:12:49] But those are discussions that we could certainly entertain with Eli Martinez and have that conversation when we have the ERFC presentation. So if the ERFC was salary and not ERFC, where would we sit on the chart? Well, do other systems have ERFC?

[01:13:11] No, we're the only ones. Yeah, the chart on page four shows the value of ERFC because, you know, if you look at the other charts, we don't compare as well as we do if you include employee benefits in.

[01:13:27] And we jumped to number three out of the nine divisions displayed here, if you include employee benefits on page four. Yes.

[01:13:44] It includes all benefits, retirement, retiree health, other retirement. As I said, Arlington has a 403B match. Prince William has a 401A match. Life insurance, health, dental, vision, all of those items are included in the chart on page four.

[01:14:03] And because of that ERFC contribution, which is about $4,000, we do rise to a rank of three in that review. But, I mean, the documents, the other documents, are purely based on other school divisions and our salary schedules.

[01:14:25] So, you know, we have a huge desire to have great integrity around our data. We can't just add $4,000 in and say, oh, we're not really paying $61,000. we're paying 65 because you're getting this 4,000 ERFC. I think the other divisions would protest our characterization of that because it's not salary, it's an employee benefit. Right, but it's significant, right? I mean, and it's something if we're going to use as a recruitment tool, I wonder how best to show it in a transparent way. Yeah, we do, I mean, we, you know, making it

[01:15:03] voluntary would certainly have an impact on the fund and the level of of funding they get to invest it would also result in us having two two salary schedules for each group one with the one where they opted not to take erfc and at the end of the day we want them to take erfc it is a good thing Taking that money, I mean, you may, you would probably very well have a bunch of 22-year-olds would say, no, give me my $4,000 now.

[01:15:38] But in this instance, I think that it's a good thing if the division takes a paternalistic approach. The ERFC provides a great benefit on the back end. They just don't see it at a young age. And I've been around long enough to know individuals who were able to opt out of ERFC when it was first offered.

[01:16:00] they were half-time teachers or they chose to opt out at the beginning of ERFC and then as they were getting closer to retirement they were ruining that decision because they didn't understand the

benefit at the time and were having to work longer in their career because they'd been in Fairfax for many years but started their careers and I remember quite frankly or vividly a kindergarten teacher who was half-time at the beginning of the career for 10 years and didn't opt in when she had the opportunity to and had to work longer because

[01:16:37] of that. So I only have six seconds left. I'm just going to say that I will talk about this more in the go back, but Dr. Reed, this is where again I'm concerned about how our administration does the analytics and provides the crucial analytics for employees to understand this, and the bottom line is taxpayers are saying to us why are we falling behind and we're not when you take everything it costs us to hire

[01:17:11] an employee that chart alone shows that besides alexandria a single high school district we're pretty much right there with loudon county as the top for total salary and benefits there's so much more here i hope we can dig deeper you guys because this has huge impact not just on the budget but but attracting and retaining employees.

[01:17:38] - Ms. Sizemore Heiser, followed by Ms. Somesh. - Thank you, and many of my questions have been asked, but I wanna pick up a little bit where Ms. McLaughlin left off, and it sounds like there's a clear need to have more of a conversation. I know we have a report on the ERFC every year, but maybe time to revisit the conversation around.

[01:17:57] I think you mentioned Ms. McLaughlin that our employees have been surveyed some time ago to ask about their opinions about ERFC, and they were in favor of it. wondering if that conversation needs to be reopened you know given the change in teachers and the need for teacher staffing maybe that would be I don't know but it may be something to look into I don't know if we're gonna solve that today but I think you know and when you look at ERC can they have three lines opt-out full opt-in half opt-in I don't know it is difficult because let me ask a question it's not a match contribution from my understanding it is approximately and he said 4,000 that's regardless of how much the employee puts

[01:18:36] in so yeah are they required to put in a certain amount no it's based on income the example that we gave is average but it's six point four four percent okay so if you're making more than 65,000 then it would be more than that that's what I thought I was want to clarify when so you know I think for the conversation here the budget conversations I think it would be helpful to the chart I mean I did see the chart about total compensation it might be helpful to have some more narrative around that you know around both the chart on page 3 and the chart on page 4 because it is a huge benefit that Fairfax County provides

[01:19:14] that does that is a little more unique although I hear you saying that Prince William and have some sort of contributions I don't know how they compare but it might be helpful to have a narrative on what we provide and then

[01:19:28] comparison, a retirement comparison, if other jurisdictions do that. So maybe an apples to apples comparison around benefits as well as salary. So people can see here's your career earnings just salary, however, here's the difference in benefits, let's break it down. Here's how much your average health insurance, you know, health insurance, here's your average retirement, what we contribute. So then, and then a slide that kind of shows salary and benefits together, because I think it is difficult with this narrative if we're trying to recruit and retain teachers and they see these slides, I think they're going to say, well, why am I not going to Loudoun?

[01:20:04] And Loudoun's not going to tell them, well, you know, you're leaving ERFC, right? Like they're not incentivized to do that. So I think it's important to break this down because our public is looking at this. It doesn't mean that we don't have this conversation given the change in the economy, the change in teacher staffing.

[01:20:21] I would love to see some numbers around, I've heard anecdotally of teachers leaving for Loudon and Prince William, an administrator is leaving as well, and I've heard anecdotally about fewer teachers going into teacher prep programs, but I'd love to see some numbers around that, right, because that can then help bolster what we need to do around compensation that may be related or unrelated to our surrounding jurisdictions, but mostly related to the fact that we -- the supply and demand issue.

[01:20:47] So I think that's an important piece to talk about when we're looking at salary increases. And then with my -- I'll need to go back, so I'll just give my four seconds up and go if I go back. It's hard for us to know where people are going when they leave us. We did provide some information about or have talked about the number of individuals who may have just left and taken their ERFC retirement but not taken their VRS and so you can assume that perhaps they've gone somewhere else. But we do know that we have individuals who are eligible at different times and so they may take their ERFC and leave and then perhaps a month or two later take their

[01:21:25] VRS. So it's hard for us to know where they've gone. We do have some data on our retention rates, our turnover and retention. And so we're looking at about an 8.7 percent turnover rate for our teachers for the 21-22 school year, about a 3.6 percent for school-based administrators, and 7.5 percent for our operational staff and so and we've seen those numbers increase for teachers since the 2019 we had less turnover at that time many people were

[01:22:02] sort of staying in place the pandemic was a was upon us coming in 2019 2020 we had a 4.8 percent then we saw a 7.3 percent and we can provide this information to the board but that gives you a sense of increases that we've seen over time it is just hard for us to know where they're going I'll take my four seconds say that's fair but whatever you can provide that helped to that narrative would be helpful and going back maybe 10 years even thank you thank you staff as always and I want to shout out dr. Wilson also and her work on the

[01:22:39] HREC to to really be collaborative in trying to identify retention and recruitment strategies with that I guess I want to build on some of the points made. I do think part of it is a perception issue, not selling what we have in clarity and pervasively enough. But I think some of it's also a reality issue. And that's kind of where we have an opportunity here to think of how we might change. The employee compensation piece does strike me as a place where our system is bleeding. And the more we kind of prolong it and push it, the worse off we're going to be. It's like five years from now

[01:23:17] if we look back and we're like, what happened to the FCPS brand? How did we break? COVID was a moment, but really I think that our decisions in the aftermath of that, including this piece right now, are important. And as I'm reflecting on this conversation and what I've heard from the community, it's dawned on me that perhaps even in looking at our budget, choosing that this year we're going to just invest most in this and increasing even the percentages we have now, especially compared to what other divisions are doing, is worth it. I mean, this is a pivotal moment. It's something that will mark probably the next five, ten years in FCPS, and I think it's

[01:23:54] worth it. If we compare, like, look at Prince William. Their strategy has been to steal our staff, right? Like, they're paying up and up. They've decided to invest there, and yeah, that's come at a shortcoming. Like, we've chosen to invest a lot in building up our systems of supports and whatnot in our schools, but that's something I think is worth doing at this moment, so I wanted to just kind of put that as a big picture. Not to mention, and I was just talking to Ms. Cohen, cost of living in a lot of these counties is actually lower than ours. So that's even worse if you consider how expensive it is to live in Fairfax. So with that being said, I did want to

[01:24:31] ask a question about the ERFC piece. Is the rationale here that it has a retention component, that we're trying to keep people in longer because they're going to access that money if they choose to retire? At some point, there is a retention quality of ERFC when you get to a certain point in your career that your eventual retirement benefit will be higher if you stay until your retirement eligibility date. And so there is a retention portion of ERFC. Then there's a point when you are eligible for retirement. We find employees who then choose to retire from Fairfax,

[01:25:09] move to a neighboring jurisdiction, continue to pay into the VRS system while still receiving full salary in the other jurisdiction, their retirement benefit from Fairfax County Public Schools, paying into VRS. And so the work after retirement program that we were looking at would allow employees to continue to work with Fairfax County Public Schools and receive their retirement benefit, which would be that money in their pocket when they get to retirement eligibility.

[01:25:40] Yeah, so I think our internal narrative on ERFC might be that that's a retention strategy, but not really a recruitment one, right? Because people might not want to stay as long as retirement in our system. Is that fair? That is a fair statement. And so with that recruitment strategy, for those who were on the board when we adjusted our scales and had the philosophy of providing more money up front, We compressed the scale, so we went from 29 to 23 steps.

[01:26:09] We then front-loaded those dollars. Same pot of money, but you front-loaded those dollars to the beginning of your career so that teachers would see more in the first five years of their career, and then the pot changed for your increases as you stayed with us.

[01:26:27] That was the philosophy for retention. It's hard to go to a fair when the neighboring table has starting salary of $55,000, $57,000 when our starting salary isn't there. That's the piece that a lot of those teachers are looking at directly out of college.

[01:26:46] And again, our principals and administrators who are at these fairs sit down and talk about the benefits of Fairfax. There is a training that all of our recruiters go through to talk about the importance of living in this area, the benefits of professional development, so that we can make Fairfax County as attractive as possible.

[01:27:08] Yeah, I mean, folks, you know, colleagues, I think that we're in a place now where it's not even just about premier workforce. It's also reputational risk. And to reverse that is going to be extremely hard, you know, to clean that up when we've already, like, we're already there.

[01:27:24] let's not lose that. But with that being said, I do wanna ask, taking a step back, what adjustments have been made to the budget or the items in prioritizing since our last conversation, based on the last conversation, but also based on some of these findings and the reflection from them?

[01:27:44] - So we haven't made any changes to the budget. Dr. Reed presented her budget and we are still using that as the bones for our conversation. We've provided some additional information in terms of what we've done in the past with compensation, we talked about the enrollment increases to help facilitate that conversation with the board as we think about possible amendments to the advertised budget.

[01:28:08] - So I guess that being able to implement some of the strategies you all outlined, where is that coming from? - In terms of the strategy we've outlined, we've talked about, so we're providing some information to show that where we are with including our benefits into the calculation for overall compensation.

[01:28:35] But as you think about the folks who came to the hearing last night and who were talking about some of the issues that they're facing, that's part of the conversation that the board could consider and ask us through budget questions to cost so that we can provide more information to you as you're making those decisions on possible amendments.

[01:28:55] So there are no recommendations outside of Dr. Reed's budget that we have from the last presentation or from this presentation. - Okay, I mean, is that something, Dr. Reed, that you plan to do? There are things that have come up, like we all know they've come up.

[01:29:11] Last conversation, some folks brought things up. I brought up ESOL, language and translation and other, and we heard about the athletic trainers. We now know of the challenges we're discussing today, and we're all gonna come up with some thoughts around it. We don't have to come up with amendments to address each of those, right?

[01:29:26] We all know that's-- - Right. so i'm still i'm doing the budget while i'm learning your budget process so one of the things that um we staff is costing for example the athletic trainer piece um we also have a topic that i think i'm more keenly aware of too in terms of our most experienced principals and where they sit on the salary schedule um because there's a significant gap there as well on annual income at that experience level so i'm not entirely sure about the mechanics of writing amendments

[01:30:03] or the mechanics of adjusting the budget i've had to rely a bit on lee and marty for that but i think it's a process and we have questions and if there are things we need to include then we have to figure out how to how to do that so i'm open to that for sure i appreciate that i know that's my time we don't have another work session on this right i have one more we've got to go back yeah it's the whole day no i know but i'm responding to this like if they're going to be changes that are responsive to everyone's feedback to the budget before we have to vote on it you

[01:30:37] want to speak to yeah yeah i hear they advertised we do have another work session i don't know maybe lee do you want to talk a little bit about how the process works yeah the you know the virginia code says that the superintendent shall propose a budget and with the school board's approval convey that to the local governing body as an estimate of the needs to be for the school division in the upcoming year. So the way this is supposed to work is the superintendent proposes,

[01:31:17] the school board makes amendments to things they'd like to add or take away from the budget, and then that is you know adopted as the advertised budget and that is what is conveyed to the county as an estimate of our needs. In my time with Fairfax, there has been a tendency to not do that at the advertised level to do it at the adoption level in may which oftentimes ends up being that you know if we if

we don't get full funding then we have to recommend reductions to align our budget with what the funding is and then we have to cut it

[01:31:54] even further to be able to fund items that school board members would want to see in the budget and there's majority consensus. So we really should do the amendments now because to do them at the end means we're not really conveying the estimate of our needs to the local governing body. But I'm not asking about the amendments piece right. I'm asking we had an entire conversation about the proposed budget last time and we had all kinds of thoughts about how it could be improved or whatever and today we have this whole presentation about additional areas that could be improved.

[01:32:27] Could not the superintendent give that reflection and come back with a better version of it as opposed to 10 amendments when we vote on it? She certainly could propose something, and if a majority of you all supported her proposal, then that would be an amendment to the superintendent's propose.

[01:32:53] But yeah, it doesn't necessarily have to come from you all. You just have to, a majority has to vote for it. That's my time I know but yeah but I would just say in my experience over the last several years the where we have had amendments right the most successful amendments are those that have been prepared in conjunction with the superintendent and the budget staff and then you run by everyone in the board so everyone on the board understands what we're talking about so we've already discussed so much no no so I understand where you're going so you know I'm in the process of taking

[01:33:31] last week's information we've got mr. Carson I have everything written down from today we can compile all of that and have a conversation with dr. Reed and our budget team and figure out are there particular amendments or whatever that we want to propose or move forward with of course if there are other you know board members that have very specific things please alert us to what those are that's what you know this burden is saying in that slide if you

[01:34:00] have budget amendment ideas, please get them to us as soon as possible. Right. I mean, I'd rather not bring it as an amendment. Like, if it's an oversight, I completely understand what you're saying. Thanks. Yeah, you mentioned that you're taking notes to bring back and to have additional discussions. I just want to be sure that there will be some sort of consensus with what you're providing in the budget team conversations. I'm just worried that each of us have talked about a number of things. Just because I mentioned, you know,

[01:34:38] paint all the buildings yellow, it makes your list doesn't mean that this is what everybody wants. So I just want to be sure that there's some consensus with whatever it is that you're going to be proposing as you have the finance team discussions. I'm very concerned about that. I think we would act similarly to what we did in October when we prepared our budget motion for the superintendent. I mean, that was all by consensus. Remember, we had our October work session where we got information from each person what they were interested in and what their priorities were and then we put that together and then everyone had an

[01:35:15] opportunity to review it before we brought it to the board table but we did bring that to the table I don't know if I would agree that it was necessary consensus but everybody got their input into the document that is different for me than consensus around a very specific topic and I could speak with you a little bit more later if you like so here's the way i understand how this process works and we've done it for the last few years you've proposed a budget based on what you see as the operational

[01:35:51] needs and what your vision is right now based on you know what we've talked about what the prior strategic plan is etc etc and this is your budget now we are talking and discussing and maybe we've got some other ideas we'd like to add into that, those are an amendment process because us sitting around the table, you know, I think one thing, you think one thing, well that's not consensus and that leaves, I think, the superintendent to be in a place of like what, you know, and it becomes disjointed at the end of the day, so I think we need to be careful

[01:36:25] with that and I think we need to talk amongst each other, offer those amendments, garner support and they pass or they fail but I do not hear any consensus over any one single thing here so I don't know that this gets pushed back to Dr. Reed's arena clarification it's just that when Elaine was talking about taking what she heard here and bringing it back that's where I had some concerns that we did not have the opportunity to really reach consensus on the discussions of this

[01:37:01] afternoon and last week no I and I don't want to speak for Elaine but I think you know we share those things just to remind you know staff that these things may be coming down the pike as amendments be ready or you know here's what has been discussed but mr. Karski some of those are oversights like carryovers from previous years and I recall the previous superintendent would do that he would bring back something that was a little bit more responsive in the following work session that had slight modifications based on the conversation or things that arose in the hearing. I don't know if he did but for me that's definitely not a good way to proceed in the budget process so unless there's consensus that we want to do

[01:37:41] something differently I think we need to kind of stay on on the path that has been you know laid out. Oh yeah okay we still have a few more people and you'll have a go back so you know you can talk more about that Ms. Omesh if you'd like. Ms. Marin do you want a turn? Sure I appreciate all the questions and thank you Ms. McLaughlin for also your analysis it was helpful I have a question it's kind of adjacent to compensation but it's something I've been thinking about so when we talk about the number and percentage of students in special education that we serve

[01:38:20] I've confirmed with staff that that only includes our students who are on individualized education plans that does not include the students who are on the 504 which of course there are identified needs they're just addressed in a different way and legally what we're responsible to do but those students do require an extra level of intensive support and so when I'm looking and thinking about staffing and competent I don't know if it's exactly rate of compensation but it is related into how we budget because you know our total expenditure on special ed is 20% of the of the whole budget six hundred

[01:38:59] and eighty nine point seven million I did want to share something that I I believe I shared earlier, a few months back, I was in an educator finance workshop held by Georgetown University, and they pointed out that if you have more, if a school division has more than 13 to 14 percent of their budget dedicated to special education, it requires a real thorough look.

[01:39:19] Now, I'm not saying we don't need that amount, that 19 percent, and in fact, what I'm wondering is if we have more need, because we're not including the 504 staffing, so that's just a wondering that I've been having, and I just want to put it out there formally, because I think it's worth addressing, regardless of how the law treats funding for the category of special education.

[01:39:44] So I'd love to just hear any thoughts on that and how that might be considered for this budget cycle. So I'm trying to, I know that we have enrollment, like a projected enrollment increase, which which

then drives a certain number of teachers for special education, ESOL, and general ed.

[01:40:16] So I think that's where we take it into consideration. I don't know that the percentages in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where that sits, do we get funded regardless of the percentages? In the state I came from, we were capped at a certain percentage for funds.

[01:40:35] So we do get state funding for special education. That's part of our SOQ formula that runs through our LCI, and that's based on just our average ADM, like, you know, system-wide. So it's not specific. I'll look at the funding formula.

[01:40:51] Just at a high level, we do get some money there to support special education. Regardless of the percentage? Yes. Okay. And that's true for a bunch of things, right? Our counselors are, you know, we go above and beyond with the state funds, even though the state sometimes doesn't even fund its own, you know, the standard.

[01:41:11] So, you know, I'd like just to do more. know and this is another case where are we really looking at the numbers in a way that makes sense our students who have special needs whether their IEP or 504 are going to require more intensive services so how are we staffing you know and compensating and hiring the people that we need so I think that's to be continued the other thing I was really impressed by the list of recruitment strategies and all of those updates and I'm eager to share that with the public because as been said you know where we need to share our story more and you know I know that the Board of Supervisors continues to be our most critical partner, and I'm just

[01:41:46] wondering about a formal way to keep them up-to-date and for them to push out that information. When I look at the teacher residencies and all these strategies for recruitment, that came to mind. So, I guess my comments are budget-adjacent today in some ways to compensation, but certainly related.

[01:42:04] Oh, the other thing I just wanted to mention, though, once again, I would prefer that when we talk about the 1% state bonus that we that it always include that it is a required match because if I understood your numbers miss burden I think we're paying 75% to the state's quarter percent so I think it's really giving a lot more credit and we need to say you know we are providing the bulk of that

[01:42:28] thank you no comments okay thank you miss Marin mr. not kofax do you want to turn or okay and we have our student rep here today welcome go ahead mr. thank you okay so I have a few so I saw a bit about our retention strategies and it

[01:43:04] had me thinking about retention on a school-by-school basis so something that I was thinking about so title one teachers like they most likely leave because they feel like they're disproportionately they have a disproportionately higher workload and might not feel supported by their department chair their admin etc and they might not feel like they're what is it called their destination workplaces isn't really like their dream place to work so is there any chance this might be a bit out there but it's just one of my immediate thoughts we could help offset them by paying them

[01:43:41] more than the teachers at non title one schools that was a budget question that was asked by Dr. Anderson a couple of weeks ago and as and it's basically staff was asked to do a national survey of incentives for title one teachers and so the HR team is working on that so hopefully we'll get some good data about what others are doing for and providing incentives okay and then of course like something to keep in mind like if that's not possible then how do we make our

[01:44:20] other schools more destination like you know you hear schools like Oakton and things like that that are like kind of not pitch perfect but kind of mapped out like that and then something else I was thinking about was so what was mentioned was our ER FC ambassadorship and I was wondering is that a current leadership position or is that something that's about to be implemented that's a current position in all of our buildings and so it's a position it's not a stipended position. But they've identified a teacher or a staff member within the building who can answer

[01:44:58] questions about ERFC and then direct individuals back to ERFC if there are questions about how much money am I going to make when I retire? And what am I paying into? And what is a secondary retirement program? And should I leave to go to another county? That's one of the things that our ambassadors do.

[01:45:16] If they hear that Dr. Ivey's going to leave, if I'm an ambassador, I'm going to say, before you go, you need to contact ERFC to find out what that impact's going to be. Yeah, and then do those ambassadors receive any sort of support from, like, let's say central office with that position, like, pretty much?

[01:45:33] Because I almost want to say they're kind of on their own, I guess. They receive support from the ERFC staff. So there's a training for that. They meet regularly as updates are given. they provide that training from the ERFC staff. All right, thank you. And then another question I have is, so personally, I understand that it might not be feasible to have a completely covered second AT position, but something that I was thinking about, because with my own personal experiences with my school's AT, you know, her office doesn't open until like 2 or 1.30 because

[01:46:08] she doesn't teach any classes at my school, and most athletics are after school. And then it had me thinking, okay, if we have that second position full time, that full time would pretty much be from the afternoon to late in the evening. So it's almost as if it's a second job, if that makes any sense. Like maybe they might have a day job and this might be their other job. So maybe would it be a good idea to think about increasing the pay because at some point maybe we should show that we're actually listening to the people throughout the county who are saying that we need more attention for that second AT position maybe a pay increase might be a good incentive to have

[01:46:45] them stay with us because I last night what I heard was a trend was other second AT positions leaving rather than staying. So I can say about the AT position I know that board members we all heard the same conversation last night and it was for me the first time that I was hearing some of that conversation and so we haven't had the opportunity to delve into that in these few hours that we've had this morning but that is an area that that we can look at and as Dr. Reed said that not only looking at those secondary stipends for AT positions but then other stipends that we have stipended positions within

[01:47:25] the system for those who are doing additional work one thing that we added to the budget this year was the additional dollars to have parity for elementary teachers with middle and high school teachers with as it relates to being department chairs and getting a stipend for that that's something we heard but again that conversation last night hadn't heard that at that level and so have some opportunities to look into that awesome and then kind of on that note on stipends or something I'm not really sure how this position works but I know at my school we have a tech office so we have IT's that are I want

[01:48:04] to say there are three or four of them that are a tech specialist so if like a teacher can't get our what is it called presenters working or like a student's laptop isn't working you get sent down there and I know for sure that they're more than two and it had me thinking is that a full-time position if so how does

that position kind of compare to AT's then because you know we have more than one of those IT specialists when to be completely honest like yeah exactly our T specs are formula driven in all of our schools and as we heard last night the AT position for that secondary stipend I'd again have to look into it not

[01:48:42] sure if that is necessarily formula driven but the T-spec positions are formula and SBITs are formula driven so we have two folks in the schools who are focused on trend on technology those who are ensuring that the technology is working and those who are working with teachers to use it as part of

[01:49:00] instruction. All right. Thank you so much. Ms. Toland, do you want to go? Hi there. A couple of questions. I wanted to maybe change the tactic a little bit. I wanted to talk about particularly our employees that are paid by that hour. So for example, when you had a chart on the bus drivers showing, you know, the hourly rate in comparison to other districts. And I was remiss in not asking this question.

[01:49:37] maybe during our calendar discussions, because the number of days that we, you know, are not in school, but we're still paying the bus drivers or they're, you know, they're also taking PD or whatever, I think in comparison to other districts is something that we need to look at, too, to compare the overall compensation.

[01:50:01] So the contract length for those individuals? The contract length or the days that are off throughout the school year, I think we have to compare that amount to other districts as well. Just multiply it by the hourly rate to figure out what their overall compensation is.

[01:50:17] We can take a look to see what other contract lengths are for some of these, for our contracted hourly. Yeah, and then, you know, I guess that's even, is that part of our calendar discussion as well? In, you know, looking at the days that we have for, you know, professional development, you know, work days, days off, how many of those days are actually offered for professional development for hourly workers, you know, food and nutrition services, bus drivers, etc.?

[01:50:49] So we have that breakdown. I don't have it right in front of me, but for the, based on the number of days that we have in the school year with the 15 professional workdays that we have for our teacher-level staff. Based on the individual contract, we ensure that if it's not a paid non-workday for our bus drivers, that they are in receiving professional development.

[01:51:16] But it's really based on the contract length. So we can get that information to the board to show how many days those individuals are working. But again, we have two plans for bus drivers. We have the older plan, previous plan, which has pay that's balanced out over the course of the year.

[01:51:34] And then we have a newer plan where you have a certain number of paid non-work days because those employees chose to take a higher salary and not have their salary stretched over the course of the year. But we can provide that information to the board. Yeah, that would be good.

[01:51:50] And how it compares to Loudon and Prince William in particular would be useful. I wanted to go back to this whole conversation around the compression, salary compression, and the work that was done years ago to, you know, compress the salaries and give people more of an upfront, you know, pay.

[01:52:17] You know, we had a couple people that made comments last night that, you know, we have put in this budget a step on the end of the scale as a method to retain, you know, people that have been you know are at that level um but they were saying that it's not it doesn't really work so i i'm interested in the

math i guess around the idea for the adding this step you know how does that really work for employees and then you know just a conversation around that compression work that was done earlier why it was done why are we thinking of changing that

[01:52:56] at this point in time, you know, do we want to talk about doing an overall, you know, Dr. Wilson, you mentioned this the other day to me, looking at a whole re-look at our compensation. And that may fit into what some of the other people have brought up as far as, you know, we need to just do a multi-year real look at our compensation and where we fit and have a multi-year plan for being where we want to be. What you heard last night, there were two perspectives on that

[01:53:32] additional step. And so when we talk about that it doesn't work for some employees, it really means that it doesn't necessarily work for me. And so when we try to provide additional compensation, we look at how it might impact employees across the board. The two perspectives last night, one was we, you know, that additional step, I don't want that because it has an impact on my ability toward full retirement. And then the other was, well, the value of that additional step doesn't really help me overall with my overall compensation. There are different ways that we

[01:54:09] can keep up with neighboring jurisdictions. And so as Prince William, and we don't want to highlight schools, but we know that from their scale, they have more steps than we do, and they continue to add steps. One way to keep up is to continue to add steps so that employees don't choose to go to a neighboring jurisdiction. That's one way. I'm not saying that that is the way, but that is one way. Another way that we can look at ensuring that our scales are higher than our neighboring jurisdictions is to have a higher MSA than they do, because as Ms. Burden said, the MSA raises

[01:54:47] the entire scale and that keeps us competitive in the market. Market scale adjustment raises the entire scale. Steps are something that every jurisdiction is stepping employees and so whatever the value of that step is, if everyone steps and we're at number two in the market and if everyone steps we're going to continue to be at number two in the market. If you want to improve your market condition, it's ensuring that we also have that market scale adjustment. Employees at the top of the scale, if you're at the top of the scale, the only increases that you receive is through market

[01:55:23] scale adjustment if there's no place for you to go. And so by adding this 1%, it's giving our employees the 3% market scale adjustment as proposed in the budget, and then an additional one percent depending on that's the value of those steps at the end about an additional one percent that you wouldn't have gotten um if we wouldn't add that additional step at the end no i appreciate that explanation and so i'm just maybe i need to see a specific example

[01:55:58] to make see how the math works so can you repeat your question i mean the the bottom line is is if we don't add a step at the top, we will remain, you know, at 24 steps compared to Prince William's 30, Loudon's 30, and Arlington's 31 steps. And in addition to that, those employees would only receive the MSA. They would not receive a step increase. We've had different strategies in the

[01:56:36] time that I've been here. You know, sometimes we've given a bonus because you all generally get a lot of conversation from employees who are not going to get that step increase because they're at the top. Sometimes we've given them a bonus. Sometimes in this current year we added a step. We want to do that again in fiscal 24. Again, because we have a short schedule compared to Prince William and Loudon. And Marty is absolutely right. You know, 10 years ago, Loudon was behind us in salaries

[01:57:08] And there was a purposeful, intentional effort to not give step increases, but to give big MSAs because it propels your salary schedule forward and so that you compare more favorably with surrounding divisions. But in Fairfax, you know, step is king.

[01:57:27] So evidenced by the number of comments about steps that were not received. So that might not be a good strategy for us, but it definitely works. So it is 1:05. We're five minutes late for our break. Let's take 30 minutes and we'll come back and do go backs and go from there.

[01:57:50] All right, folks, I think we have enough people here. We've got to get started.

[01:59:13] Okay, I'm going to go ahead down the go back list. And if you don't want to go back, just say no, thank you. Ms. Karen Keyes, are you ready to begin? Oh, okay. I'm sorry, Ms. Karen Corbett.

[01:59:30] You know what? I think it's a free-for-all. It's a budget work session, and if you have other things to say, you should feel free to do that. But that's my own personal idea.

[01:59:50] A couple of things, and I will be very brief. Our alternative school programs are down by 30% enrollment. Our budget for them is not down by 30% enrollment, and the language in the budget document says we're looking at it, but we don't look at cost savings or trying to be more to optimize our approach that so I would like that we look at that in more detail okay that's that's that's why it's referenced in the

[02:00:26] yeah budget document that they are taking a look at that that enrollment is down although I believe that the instructional people think that that is going to rebound but they're not the staffing and for that program is not governed by staffing standards so we are taking a look at the enrollment and the level of staffing for that currently it just wasn't in time for the proposed I appreciate that but the write-up does not indicate that we're looking at it for efficiencies but more for additional outcomes and I think we have

[02:01:04] to look at it for both because when you're talking about a 30 percent decrease in numbers of students that is significant similarly our young scholars program I have raised this to you I am concerned I don't see it explicitly called out in additional allocations there are others that are called out so I would like to see us have a very specific and intentional response to our young scholars because we do know um that that is a nationally recognized program and one that does

[02:01:42] have a significant impact on outcomes um and because i didn't know i was going to be first up i will reserve the rest of my time to come back at another point okay um miss keys gamara yes um i want to start with erfc because i i hear the conversation and i understand the need to identify the benefit and make sure that all of our potential staff members understand that benefit.

[02:02:11] I think probably part of the problem may be is that there are perspectives that we may not be accounting for. There may be some people who don't. They just don't want to think in a long range way and we have to take that into account. And if we're considering making it an option, then I am going to need to know what impact that might have on that program and I think employees would want that a heads up on that as well so I'm all for exploring I just want to make sure we're asking all of those questions with respect to since some of the wishes that I have

[02:02:50] in terms of making sure that we identify the rationale for our budgets and and what decisions we are making. I have no doubt that these conversations are taking place, but I do have some doubt as to whether others outside of these discussions here internally understand those reasonings. And so for that

reason, I'd like to see if we can get more specific information about our STEM programs. I was concerned when I heard last night that there are some schools that may be considering discontinuing those programs if i don't know if that is true dr reed

[02:03:30] we always hear information that we have to do a fact check on but if that is the case then certainly that's something we want to talk about i'll take a pause it looks like you're reaching for your light yeah the um the issue about stem that was spoken about last night um we've already researched that and that particular school was choosing to take one of their resource teachers and make that a half-time position for the stem program but their enrollment pre-covid to current is 150

[02:04:03] students down so they received less resource classroom teachers because of that loss of enrollment and have opted to not or don't believe they're going to be able to fund that half-time STEM teacher as a result of their enrollment loss and how they were funding it before.

[02:04:21] I do understand those details, but if we as a system identify STEM education all the way through from elementary school through high school, then that perhaps changes how those decisions should be addressed. If it is a board priority for us, as we have discussed, to make sure that all students have access to advanced math, have access to the science levels that allows them to participate at the higher levels of thinking when they get to high school, then that's the kind of rationale that I'm talking about and hope that we can identify going forward.

[02:04:57] Thank you. Ms. Cohen, followed by Mr. Frisch. Well, and then also maybe lobby the state to try to get it. Like, if we're going to identify, we haven't changed the Triple T formula in a million years of what are the things that your child must access, you know, maybe I agree with you wholeheartedly.

[02:05:16] And I promise you it's not just that one school. I'm not gonna call any of my schools out today, but privately I would be happy to share my schools who made that same. And some of them, to be honest, made it because they needed to put money into the reading specialist to support our change of literacy, which again, I wholeheartedly agree with.

[02:05:33] So it's not like they're utilizing it in a wasteful way, but to Ms. Keyes-Gamara's point, we keep emphasizing STEM, STEM, STEM, and we see all of this, then we gotta be talking the walk, or walking the walk if we're talking the talk. So I agree with that.

[02:05:48] Do we still only recognize up to step 14 if somebody's transferring here as a teacher? It's interesting. We're having a conversation about actually have a meeting scheduled this week to talk about what the impact might be if we would accept more years of service.

[02:06:05] We know that neighboring jurisdictions have adjusted some of theirs. Prince William has gone up to 20 years of service. Everyone else is generally in that 13 to 15 years of service, but we're having a conversation about that. And then would the, our retirement program that you were looking at, would it be similar to Prince William, that ROP, the Retirement Opportunity Program that they have for retirees?

[02:06:31] So I'm not sure about the retirement opportunity for retirees that they have. And coming from me at the table here, I'm not making the recommendation that we change the ERFC program. That's a conversation for the board.

[02:06:47] Not ERFC, the return to work for retirees. Return to work. Oh, I'm sorry. I've got ERC on the brain. So we can take a look at that. I'm not familiar with the program, and we can ask Dr. Wilson to work

with the HR lead there.

[02:07:08] I'm familiar with the program and the benefits, specifically to teachers, also bus drivers. So we're very familiar. It's a matter of marketing. And so as you noticed on this one of the slides, that that is one of our strategies. And so that will be included in our marketing strategy.

[02:07:28] I think that's awesome. I'm really excited that you guys are looking at that. You know, one thing I would say, I guess my frustration around the trainers piece, and i i do want to just take a second to say how outstanding our students every time we have something like this happen even if they're upset about something the amount of pride this is my i shared with the folks next to me last night that this is my second kiddo that i got to teach in preschool who's come to testify in front of the school board while i've been here and man my heart was just bursting out of my chest so proud of those kids but i i do we've had this conversation

[02:08:04] as a board about what I guess opportunity cost is the best thing but but what are we not funding because we don't ever see that and so when I reached back out about the athletic trainers I found out that it had been an internal budget ask in 2020 2023 and now 2024 so I guess part of my worry is if we say like you know we don't see this as a necessity but but somebody who knows more collectively than the board does about what's happening on the field on the ground has identified it as an issue. How does it rise? This is the first we're hearing about it as a

[02:08:42] board. So again, it just speaks to that loss of connection that we've talked about of what doesn't get funded. So I know I'm over time, but I just wanted to raise that issue. Let's see. Anybody want to? So I would say that there are a variety of requests that come forward from departments through assistant superintendents and chiefs annually and when we look at that that set of requests there are items that we look at to possibly table for upcoming years it's really

[02:09:20] about looking at the priorities that we have before us looking at the revenue stream that we foresee before us and working to work with the superintendent to present a budget that meets those priority needs and also take a look at and adhere to directives from the legislature so when you look at the five percent increase want to ensure that we follow through with that when we have the one percent uh bonus we those are things that we shall do so when you carve out that much money uh and then when you see what's left over we then have to prioritize and uh the items that were brought forth were those items that were prioritized and yes there are then things that

[02:10:01] that that fall off uh and you know we would love to be able to do everything we know that we have principals who have uh all of our principal associations work together to provide uh requests as part of the budget process our teacher associations did that that same thing and we've had to go back then and have conversations about why certain things were added and why certain things weren't but you know dr reed has said it that it's uh it's dollars in dollars out and it's either um and dr you said it so well about more pay fewer people fewer people more pay it but

[02:10:37] okay there we go those are the things we consider as part of the budget process first thank you um i've submitted a budget uh question during our break um that i put out there now i'm specifically asking for slides three and four to be recalculated with the cost of living um taken into consideration uh because i'm interested to know where we would fall um on the value of those dollars if we considered the cost to live in the community

[02:11:14] um i think uh as as strong as we are we would probably fall down a little bit um and you know as evidenced by the you know nearly a third of our staff who live in other jurisdictions uh and work for us to make their dollars go further have we ever looked at the cost of living related to this data and if so what can you tell us about it just from top of mind no i mean it's

[02:11:48] it's just based on the salary schedules that are adopted by the surrounding divisions is the data that's presented here um we we do do some cost of living looks at stuff but we haven't done it in any kind of holistic way for yeah a formal way with uh all the divisions i i can say that when we benchmark for salary studies we do uh in some positions take into account cost of living so that we're doing apples to apples comparisons and then do an adjustment based on that cost of living to

[02:12:22] to take that out so that you could see what that benchmarking would look like okay i'll be be interested to see that data come back in the budget questions. I appreciate it. One thing on the subject of ERFC, I want to be clear that I don't think anybody on our board wants to jeopardize the solvency of our retirement programs and certainly would never advocate for anything that would jeopardize the solvency. I think what we want is we're all trying to come up with different ways to retain people and get people here and looking for different ways of understanding what

[02:13:02] we're offering is how is that a benefit to entice people here and so um looking at the uh the chart on i believe it's page which is page four that has the benefits included no sorry yes page four where we are basically tied for second separated by a couple hundred bucks I think it's important that that our efforts around retention and recruitment stress why we are here in this

[02:13:38] position and that we lead with this information as opposed to the dollars in pocket but we can't discount what it means to have dollars in pocket and so another budget question that I submitted which I spoke to Dr. Wilson about relates to my time is up that was quick okay well just to speak to thank you for the sort of entree and I don't know what the rest of your question is I thought you were gonna answer the mighty Karnak let's see so I did provide some information around the

[02:14:16] table with some documentation and pamphlets that with that ERC provides our employees regarding the tier one, tier two, and legacy plans. Very quick explainers to talk about the benefits. And interestingly enough, when I went upstairs for lunch, one of my colleagues received an email in her email inbox today.

[02:14:38] ERFC has been working to develop an explainer of benefits, and we've posted that on my PDE. At some point, it will be something that we ask all employees to watch, but in this year of mandatory trainings, we've decided not to do that but it's a very good explainer of what ERFC is in three minutes and what that benefit is to you and that's been pushed out to all employees who are eligible for ERFC that went out today so it was fortuitous as part of the conversation that that information is being shared so those who are watching and then got the email might think wow we were having that

[02:15:15] conversation but I do want to explain that and also want to ensure the board that we are committed to working with the RFC and can certainly ask Eli Martinez to answer any questions that the board might have prior to the budget process coming to culmination about the RFC and he'd be happy to do that dr.

[02:15:38] Anderson followed by miss McLaughlin thank you want to get through all four of my things on slide six you're talking about the bus driver market comparison I think similarly to miss tollen I would be

interested in the

[02:15:54] number of work days, the number of unpaid days during the year. Pretty much I'd like to get a sense of the earning potential for the year to get that comparison across the divisions. Similarly, for slide seven, which speaks about the family liaisons, this again has the hourly rate, and I think this impacts a small subgroup of our parent liaisons. We've had a lot of conversation, and I know there's some data still yet to be provided to us in terms of how many

[02:16:25] many parent family liaisons are not contracted with benefits and how many are, whether it's their choice or not, I think that information will be very helpful. I would also like to ask a question. This is from the document we had last week, and that may be included in the things you sent to us this morning, Ms. Burden, but I did not get a chance to peruse it. The high school counselor extended contract, this is 0.2 million, where the counselor, they will run from 204 to 219. Can you speak a little bit in terms of what the expectations are of those

[02:17:02] additional work days, particularly since students are not there? High volume. Yeah, our understanding is it was to help with master schedules and work in the summer that falls upon them. And I'll just read verbatim. The counselors will provide additional support to the director of student services in managing the high volume of work that must be completed in the summer before students return to school. High schools receive an average nine counselors each, and with our smallest school

[02:17:40] receiving seven counselors and the largest school receiving 11. I appreciate that, but I'd like to get a better sense. I mean, obviously the volume of work is high for everyone, but why is this one more crucial than maybe something else? So I'd like some additional information, but I'll come back to that. The other piece that I will be sending some questions about just to give you a little bit of a preview is regarding FLESS I know this is something that has come and gone but I believe that at this point we have 55 schools that have FLESS 17 with dual um with

[02:18:17] immersion programs so that leaves about a hundred odd schools without any programming what is our thinking here um I don't know is Dr. Presidio here I saw him earlier Is he on? He was here. Well, Dr. Reed, then it's your question.

[02:18:34] The foreign language in the elementary schools, and so we can get an answer for you, but I know that Dr. Presidio would be able to write all those numbers off very easily. Sure, and I have a report that gives me the numbers.

[02:18:50] What I'm looking for is some intent. What is our plan? Some of our schools have it, some don't. What are we wanting to communicate regarding language at the elementary level and what is it that we're doing and how do we close that gap between intent and actual practice?

[02:19:06] So I think what we are communicating is that we have inequitable experiences for elementary students with regard to learning a second language, period, right? So if we want to make that equitable and provide language at every school, we need a commitment to do that and a budget resource allocation to do that.

[02:19:27] I kind of wonder, I don't kind of, I wonder if a second language might be a space that connects to elementary planning time as well. Because one of the things, you know, that our elementary principals and staff for years have done is they've traded that general planning time for time with specialists.

[02:19:50] Again, though, that's a commitment that's pretty significant. So I don't know. We have a number of certificated staff assigned to schools that are not in classrooms, and we may need to look at what are we currently doing with those assignments. If we say that a second language is critical, then maybe that's more important than a different reason we have a staff member assigned to a building.

[02:20:13] So much to unpack here, but it makes me wonder about the 55 sites that currently have FLESS. Do those sites have additional planning time that the other elementary schools do not? that's a great question marty so they do not have additional when we created the formula initially and provided the 300 minutes of planning time for our teachers those schools that had fless we use that fless staffing as part of their allocation so that they could create that time so that they don't have additional time but we have used that fless staffing so that they can meet that 300 minutes of planning time for their teachers that that was part of the overall calculation

[02:20:51] initially so i will be sending a budget question but i would like to have a conversation in terms of the division's purpose and commitment or to what is it that we're going to do with elementary language so marty i want to make sure i understand what you just said you said they don't get extra staff but they're able to meet the 300 minutes of planning time so they receive additional staffing for fless and when we were when we created the formula so that our schools could use their triple T time to cover the 300 minutes of planning time for teachers. We included that FLESS staffing as

[02:21:29] part of the individual school's overall staffing to meet the 300 minutes. So I would infer from that that our 55 schools that have a second language, the teachers in those schools get their elementary planning time. I would say that the calculation is that all of our teachers get their planning time. We just added the FLES staffing as part of that overall calculation.

[02:21:55] So we didn't give the FLES staffing as an add-on. So other schools have just triple T staffing to create that 300 minutes. Schools with FLES have the triple T time and FLES to provide that 300 minutes for their teachers. Thank you. Just to be very clear and sorry Marty was saying it correctly but I have another way to say it that I think might helpful. We have a differentiated formula whereby FLECH schools get an amount of triple T based on a higher divisor and non-FLECH schools have a lower divisor and so they get more triple T than a FLECH school.

[02:22:29] Ms. McLaughlin. Thank you. I want to revisit again, Dr. Reed, that everything we do is going to impact retention as well as recruitment in this work related to the salary scales and total compensation annually, total career earnings and you know I want to just draw attention again to slide four because so much discussion was about retention we're not going to benefit and put our best foot

[02:23:09] forward and in fact I think it's a self-inflicted wound that if you look at slide four this should be done by rank order not alphabetical because the brain for most people first thing they're going to see and what's going to imprint on their mind is where they're going to see the different schools and understand things. So the rank is instead it was just done alphabetical and that was on the prior slides as well and so I you know in fact what was really difficult was on slide three

[02:23:45] they did all the divisions we compared against and then FCPS was down at the bottom which again And I don't think that's helpful because it requires, whether it's a board member or a member of the public, to now have to, on especially slide three, start self, you know, doing the ranking yourselves.

[02:24:04] Yeah, and then because we're doing stovepipe proposals as opposed to a holistic analysis, we have board members who are even confused about the fact that when you take the 6.4% annually that we are paying to our employees that's just going directly into ERFC versus into their paycheck, we're number one.

[02:24:30] So anytime I hear a board member say, or a member of the public, that we're not competitive, it's because of how we're presenting this information. And I don't know how we combat against ourself in the self-inflicted wound.

[02:24:46] And there goes two minutes, so I will want to go back because I think we still have a decent amount of time. We have an hour and a half before you move on to the next person. And, I mean, Dr. Reed, do you have any thoughts on this, not just for me, but for board members or the public listening?

[02:25:07] How can we do this better? Well, I think the career earnings, maybe there needs to be another column that's the ERFC column, but it would only be for us, right, Fairfax? Although, if it's significant, I don't know, it's step 20 or step 30, how many 4,000s would we have gone through-ish?

[02:25:30] Would it be 30 times 4,000? so adding that what does that do to us i mean like if it puts us at the top then wouldn't we want to um you know like maybe have a with erfc additive asterisk this is what the career earnings would be yeah we can do that um we can you know include a note on this um and if you added the 120 000 we would still fall below prince william okay number two 120 plus 2702

[02:26:07] is still less than 2834 that's why we need the actual numbers in the calculation because i didn't get 120 000 extra so it'd be good to see staff's calculations on that 6.4 over the course of a career okay it's about 4 000 times 30 years 4 000 times 30 years is 120 000 yeah this is i think okay It's taken. Thank you. Ms. Sizemore-Hyser, followed by Ms. O'Mesh.

[02:26:42] Thank you. I wanted to pivot to one of the topics I had up earlier and to Ms. Cullen's point of things that internally are asked for for many years, but maybe it doesn't rise to our level, although it has come, I think, to several of us in terms of performing arts stipends.

[02:26:57] And it's something I've been hearing about for over a year from our performing arts staff. And especially critical now that Loudoun has significantly changed its performing arts stipends. So just as a comparison between and I can send you this but between what we are doing for a band director at the high school level is about $44.75 and Loudon's is $12,000. Just as one example, assistant band director we're $3241, Loudon is $3357. When you look at theater, they're giving a stipend just for the admin costs of producing not just physical directing of $69.19 and then directing there's multiple categories of directors.

[02:27:37] $1,250, $1,500 for the technical director, I could go on. We give one year stipend of $47,48. And I'm happy to find the comparisons to our athletic coaches as well. But this is for multiple months. That's for three productions a year, multiple months of rehearsals and shows, and does not include the trips, competitions. So I'm very worried about our performing arts stipends. And again, I know this is something that's risen internally. So I wanted to kind of flag that as I know we didn't hear about that as much as the athletic trainer stipends, but given what Loudon is doing, I think we are going to lose some of our really good staff.

[02:28:15] I just wanted to bring this up as an issue, and I'm happy to send on some of this data. I put in a budget question, but this is just something that staff have brought to several of us over the last year. So I just wanted to flag that as we are looking at stipends and looking at equity between arts and sports, which I

know you guys have heard me mention since the pandemic hit about equity between arts and athletics, we need to look at how we are stipending our folks who are spending many, many hours in the evenings working and putting on performances.

[02:28:39] So having said that, I see I have six seconds left, so I'll just pause and see if anyone wants to comment on stipends and where that's looking in our budget. So I'm absolutely committed to having competitive stipends for our fine and performing arts and our coaches.

[02:28:57] I think the work staff does outside the classroom often is as valuable as the work they do inside the classroom, right? It's teaching across the board. so we'll take a look at that um i think i've gotten an email from is it tara yes so um with the comparative so we'll take a look at them yeah and with my two seconds i just want to talk about when we talk about belonging and connection and portrait of graduate skills performing arts and fine performing arts is one of the best places for students to find that place so i'll stop yes ma'am

[02:29:32] okay um so i i mean i guess i'm i'm happy to follow only to say i mean first of all it's It's good that this is being elevated, the performing arts piece. But once again, you know, here's a performing arts thing. We heard about athletic directors. I just continue to, I guess, have frustration about how we do this and how we choose what's a priority and how we assess needs to begin with before we start a budget process.

[02:29:56] So I said this every year, but hopefully, you know, in our strategic planning, we can figure something out. But we've got to develop some kind of needs assessment process before the budget process as a part of the cycle. And then a prioritization process that we agree on that ensures fair outcomes.

[02:30:13] But with that, I actually want to go back to the steps, a conversation that was way earlier in the beginning of this. Ms. Burden, I remember seeing that in our last work session, there was a $36.4 million number saved because of just staffing.

[02:30:29] I guess my question there is, is it beyond what we predicted in terms of how much we would save on, like, retirements and things like that? Yeah, you're talking about base savings, which is lapse and turnover. So what is your question?

[02:30:46] How much does that number deviate from, like, the average of what we had seen in years before? It's a little higher in the fiscal 24 budget than it has been historically because we have greater vacancies than we've had previously.

[02:31:02] But in the wavy guide that we included on the board item today, In the back of the document is the lapse in turnover assumptions that the divisions around us make. What negative number do they throw into their budget to account for that?

[02:31:20] And they usually range from 1% to 2% of your annual salary, although people may be running a little high like we are for the current year, just because there are vacancies everywhere in public education.

[02:31:36] Right, yeah. No, and I figured it was higher than our prediction, I guess, right, in what it's reflecting. Yeah, I point that out because this is, again, another indicator, red flag, whatever, of where we're bleeding for us to reflect, which brings me to the steps piece.

[02:31:53] I really would, and if this is a follow-on, I know Mr. Frisch mentioned it, it's been something I've been considering as a follow-on, then so be it. But in thinking about how we can do right by our employees, I just want to clarify, looking at page 7, I saw, you know, four years that steps weren't listed.

[02:32:09] I believe it may have been five, though, right, Ms. Burden? Can you help me remember? Since 2013, there are four steps missing. Okay. That's all the historical we have with us. Yeah. Do you know, like, for some of our longest serving staff members, how many years they may have missed their steps?

[02:32:47] And we have people with us that have been serving from then. Since 1990. Yeah. No, I appreciate that. And the honesty is difficult, but it is, right? It's 10. And when our staff have started as teachers, they didn't anticipate that they'd be 10 years behind on increases that they were otherwise planning for.

[02:33:14] So if we can't do it every year to do right by folks now, I'd like us to at least give some thought, reflection, and analytics around correcting that for retirement. So if they retire, at least they're getting in retirement what the number of years they've served reflects as opposed to just steps that ended up being cut by 10.

[02:33:34] The steps are not related to retirement. Retirement is just about creditable compensation. So the state doesn't, VRS doesn't really care what step you're on. It's the total amount of salary for the three highest years.

[02:33:52] But the salary reflects how many steps are being counted, right? that's the issue. That's what I want to clarify, right? Because so they could have been 10 steps ahead in what that salary is when they retire. Right. So even if we can't pay them at that step right now, can they when they retire? Let Ms. Omesh speak. Your time's actually up. Can we have staff answer what they think her question is? If not, we'll put you on a go back. I do wonder, Ms. Omesh,

[02:34:30] while they're grabbing somebody to answer the question maybe more in more detail, given the compression of the salary schedule I would question whether there are 10 more steps to put them on before retirement so especially if they're a long-term employee but I will defer to our budget person. Yeah so at some point with those 10 steps they would have gotten to the top of the scale and the only way that those individuals would have gotten any additional compensation would have been through market scale adjustment so it might be hard to sort of figure out where individuals would be and as we think about all the employees who have missteps since 1999 you'd have to do an

[02:35:09] individual look at those employees to see where they would have landed what increases they received over that time and then when you look at how ERFC is calculated or I'm sorry VRS and ERFC are calculated for retirement it's based there are different amounts for different employees and so for different tiers of ERFC it's based on three or five years of service and it's your highest years of service. And so if you were to add either a bonus or a lump sum, it would be hard to figure out how we would add that lump sum. But I'm going to let Ms. Holly Brown speak to it because she is

[02:35:44] our benefits expert. Sorry. Marty did a really great job of kind of stepping into the individual income aspect of this. For both VRS and or the majority of VRS participants who are not in hybrid And for folks who are in ERFC and FCRS, those are traditional pension programs.

[02:36:10] And those pension programs are operated on a trust, and the trust is funded based on cost assumptions for providing benefits into the future. And I know that sounds a little bit like gobbledygook,

but it's based on earnings. And so what happens is there is a funding requirement to provide benefits into the future.

[02:36:31] In the hybrid program, there's a component that is deferred compensation and that's based on investments and earnings on investments that employees make. So that's a portion of the hybrid program for the VRS. The reason I took the time to explain that is that when you have somebody's compensation and they are not stepping, in this case, a number of steps over the course of an employment, really not a way that i'm aware of to make up for step loss because that's over a long period of

[02:37:09] time so marty was correct the pension programs that we have today take into account high five earnings and so you would have to have an analysis for folks individual situations and think about rather large investments towards the end of their career if that was the interest of the board.

[02:37:34] And to add to that, the reason why the county's portion or the school's portion for employees is 6.44% is because actuarially that's been mapped out based on our current earnings and where we think individuals might go. And so if we were to make those steps up, then our actuarial calculations would be redone, and then the employer contribution, we would see an increase in the employer contribution in addition to the dollars that we made up with STEP.

[02:38:08] - I know that's my time, but I'll follow up after. - Thank you, Ms. Somesh. Ms. Marin followed by Ms. Dernak, go ahead. - Okay, Ms. Dernak. - Hi, thank you for this. You know, just listening to the comments and hearing what Dee, you were just saying, I think we really have to do some soul searching, and this can't be something we do even think about this year, but we have to talk about this pension plan.

[02:38:39] And if we feel like young people want to invest in another way or it's not a big bonus for us in recruitment or retention, that is going to anger a lot of people who came here, who were there.

[02:38:56] I don't even know how that works if you but there has to be a complete full and total analysis as to what this would look like if we were to restructure this in such a major way. So I go ahead, Marty.

[02:39:12] Mr. Kopecks, you remember when we added the tier two and the many school board meetings that we had with our consultant, the ERFC consultant Aon, sitting through multiple board discussions about the impact of some of those decisions.

[02:39:29] So if the board were to go in that direction, ERFC would engage in that work to provide that update. Fairfax County or staff and ERFC would provide detailed information around the impacts of those changes. Well thank you for that Mr. Smith but I that was different that was more so the pension could sustain itself and we still had the tier one I forget what they're called but we still had the legacy plan right the legacy plan and yes here we go and the legacy plan and the tier one and the tier two and there was a lot of consternation about leaving everyone without the

[02:40:09] legacy plan so i think we have to think long and hard about how we do that and um if it's and i think if it continues to be a want that can then that does have to be identified as some of my colleagues have said as a portion of compensation for our employees when we're looking across the board i think that that's necessary we currently have about 3 000 employees in the legacy plan and so as we see attrition we'll see fewer employees being eligible for retirement 55 currently employees in the tier 2 plan your retirement you're eligible at 67 when social

[02:40:49] security age kicks in so we do have employees who are eligible today for retirement at 55 but again as those employees retire we will see a change to that for our tier two and tier three 67 for both i forget for tier two at 67 for and for tier one it's a combination of age and service agent service years years of service and age 60 plus 30. 60 plus 30 90 right okay thank you um my last comment is about and dr reed you and i have talked about this a lot we've talked about

[02:41:27] some of the inequities that exist on all levels and you've walked into this um this isn't something that you can solve overnight and this is something that strategic plan miss omesh you talked about this the strategic plan will help us prioritize these but we we around the table we've mentioned performing arts stem language programs where are they um i've spoken to you about uh you know sports where equipment itself is not funded at all you know cross country you buy you buy your hundreds and hundreds of dollars to participate in cross country because nothing is given to us

[02:42:02] at the school level whereas opposed to some of the larger sports um or more revenue drawing sports have their entire equipment given to them so those inequities have to be looked at and they have to be prioritized um i'm saying what some of my colleagues have said and i think as we as you go into this next year while you are navigating through this budget process may i respectfully say that perhaps what you should be doing is gathering with staff some of these things which

[02:42:37] are not equal across the board or and when we develop our priorities for the for the strategic plan as well as for budgeting these will all come to the service because there's lots of them i think uh mr knack kovacs the what i'm also keenly aware of is that a lot of those inequities sit underneath the new ask in other words what we often talk about is this additive ask year over year for the county transfer and i think a lot of the inequities sit in this larger budget underneath

[02:43:12] So I think over the course of the next year, sitting down and thinking about not what new monies are required to resolve these inequities, but how do we repurpose monies that are already budgeted? Right, because the ask is always for employees, and we want to maintain, like you said, MSAs and steps.

[02:43:30] And I'm sorry I'm over, but I didn't get my first turn, so that's why you're letting me go. All right, so thank you, and I'm glad you truly recognize that, so thank you. To add, we're already taking a look, and I've had some conversations with Ms. Neal, who's headed up a lot of our strategic planning work, in looking at some of the formatting that other strategic plans that were from North Shore and other school systems that have gone through the same processes that we have,

[02:44:06] And their final process is built on sort of this circle that comes out from the center. And you have pillars at the center that go all the way out to strategies. And as we think about what that budgeting process looks like, ensuring that it's attached to the strategies that we have around the outer circle will be important for us.

[02:44:28] I was just going to follow up on one thing I brought up in my previous turn. And I apologize. I had to step out a bit if this was brought up again. But as part of this sort of overall view and strategic look, if we could, we just talk a little bit more about the idea of we really want to look at compensation across the board, like what that would take and what we need to do.

[02:44:54] And so I'll let Dr. Wilson talk a little bit about compensation. She's familiar with doing compensation studies and her work in other school systems, but it would involve us identifying a

consultant who could work us through a process to do benchmarking across other divisions, thinking about cost of living and some of the other things we've talked about, and taking a full look at our scales.

[02:45:22] But Dr. Wilson. Thank you. this board could be as large or as narrow as we want it to be it can be as large as looking at salaries and our competitiveness across the market and also it can be as narrow enough to look at the stipends that we currently have and looking at how those look in terms of competitiveness with other districts

[02:45:56] either of our size or just in the area however we would like to have that work done but it is a very extensive process I think the last one that was done here in Fairfax was 2015 and so the standard is the market of course changes very quickly and so as a standard you know a lot of organizations look at this work

[02:46:28] being done every three years our office does do some type of work with benchmarking and looking at other districts to determine how competitive we are but in terms of looking at our scales because that that is also included in this work as well they can make proposals a vendor can make proposals or recommendations based on what they feel needs to happen so that there's equity and pay across the board internally it's time intensive work for

[02:47:08] staff it's time intensive work for the board there are many presentations to the board about the work that the consultant would bring forward that staff undertakes, but it is a comprehensive look and again we would go out to RFP, we would identify a company who could provide that compensation study for us, we would look at the parameters and get feedback on what we think those parameters should be, and then work with the board during the course of the year to help the board make a decision about where they want to fall. Thank you and I so Dr. Reed I guess that's something I would defer to you and you know I know

[02:47:47] you have some experts in looking at hr in general um so maybe just bringing that information forward to the board and what you what reviews you think are necessary or not necessary okay i'll take a turn because i didn't um i was just listening to everything um you know i think i agree i mean we are in a different time and place right now um and uh you know post covid and even before covid

[02:48:18] right this this with um staff and um you know finding folks good folks uh for our classrooms have has been kind of slowly happening through the years so one of my questions is have we looked at incentive structures to maybe tap into those teachers that are just really excellent teachers who may be in our gen ed classrooms and say hey well how about if we had this bonus or that bonus would you consider maybe going into our high needs or getting certified to teach special ed

[02:49:01] our office has done some work to encourage employees to go into other areas and so we've provided some workshops and things of that nature to give information on how an employee might perhaps become dually certified um so that perhaps they might be more marketable and go into some other areas um and i know where you're going with that in terms of those who are within the um the district who may not be teachers may aspire to be then you know we also

[02:49:36] provide workshops i think we have some plan for the spring to assist those and who are interested and go into into the profession from other careers they would have information on what they would need to do to get to that point and then of course we would do what we needed to to do to support them and get them to where they want to be so i'm asking us to actually just dig a little deeper than that

because i think it's different than just having workshops that are available that's different than your administrators and other teachers identifying you know what this is a

[02:50:14] master teacher this is exactly the kind of person we need to put into these high needs spaces in the title ones in special ed in esol and making it lucrative for them to take that path instead of maybe going on to get an admin license say and just leave the classroom completely we have got I believe, and I'm not an HR expert, but I think that type of approach will be much more impactful than just saying, oh, if you're interested, come.

[02:50:46] There's just something different about that. So I want to put that out. We've got to start doing that, especially if we are bringing people in who just have a bachelor's degree. And my worry is, and I'm sure you have the background, the data, which I'd love to see, where do we see the highest concentration of these folks?

[02:51:06] Is it in our Title I's? Is it in our special education? Is it in our ESOL? My guess would probably be yes, because those are critical areas of need. So we, I just, for me, this isn't enough. I think we need to do more, and I'm very worried about that because, you know, the trajectory of putting in people into these spaces where kids have the greatest needs that are not the best of the best.

[02:51:35] I mean, that just means for us year after year, more funding needed to make up the gap. Forget about what it does, you know, to kids. So, you know, I know Dr. Anderson started that. I am very worried about that as well, and I would like to see where these folks are. But at the same time, we've got to build people up.

[02:51:53] You know, and I didn't take my time, so I'm going to maybe go over a little bit as well. But we also talked about sinking more funds into Teachers for Tomorrow. We've got very diverse, you know, student body here.

[02:52:09] So what are we doing to expand that and make it lucrative for these kids to want this career? We know we are educating these children on a different level than many across the nation. So we would love to have them back.

[02:52:24] I know we all agree with, but again, another place where I think we need to be focusing. In regards to the conversations around the slides, the compensation versus ERFC, I mean, the way I look at it, right or wrong, and I think of myself when I was 21 and what I did and the choices I made then and, you know, when I left FCPS at that time, I don't know that saying to people, here is your total compensation package, I think that is important for us. I think that is

[02:53:00] a conversation for us to have, but to somehow think that that will move people at the beginning of their careers or throughout. Honestly, I just don't think that it does. I just disagree with you on that. So what I'm saying is it's not a topic of education, period.

[02:53:25] I do not believe it is. I do not believe that will work. So I see ERFC as a retention strategy, As a bonus strategy, but we cannot, I believe, it cannot be an either or.

[02:53:42] I mean, I think we have to look at compensation head on. We may not be the first, we may not be the second, but you cannot bring in ERFC and say, well, look at the total package. I just don't think that sells to people. Maybe I'm wrong, but that is what I believe and wanted to share.

[02:54:03] And we have time for triple backs, so we'll start with Ms. Corbett-Sanders. Yeah, sorry. I just wanted to follow up on the For Tomorrow program. So the Teach for Tomorrow, we have Trades for Tomorrow.

[02:54:19] Some things that you've made me think about is that as we provide, we do give contracts to our Teach for Tomorrow teachers when they've gone through the program and can show that they have successfully completed a college program, that they have a contract with us. But you've made me think about the possibility of adding a signing bonus with that contract for our teacher tomorrow.

[02:54:39] And then also possibly think about using one-time funds to provide some kind of signing for our own students who come back to work for us for our Trades for Tomorrow program as well. I like that. That's the kind of stuff I'm thinking about. That's something to think about.

[02:54:55] And then, again, we are having that conversation with our Title I office, along with finance and HR, to look at how we might provide differentiated compensation for individuals who work in Title I schools, because it is a different kind of work.

[02:55:12] Thank you. Ms. Herbert Sanders. And I'll be very brief. First, regarding the alignment of the budget with our strategic priorities, many of you will remember that that is an initiative that is a direction that this board gave to to the staff and the previous superintendent that there was that expectation and I see that we over time have done that more and more but I would urge that this is a priority because our budget reflects our

[02:55:48] values. And if we just pay lip service to the values and then look at the budget and see a disconnect, that's a problem. In one area in particular, we've expanded our footprint over the past several years and with all of our renovations and modifications. But I note that we have not kept up to date with our staffing for our tradespeople. I think we've only added two additional trades people uh to the budget and so i'd like to better understand is that because

[02:56:26] we can't find them or because we're using funds elsewhere so so are you talking you can come back to me we'll come back i'll send you uh we'll reference we'll come back to you on that and no and i will say that you were um uh the one of the architects of helping us uh figure out how we did that better alignment with the budget process and again with some of the models that i've seen

[02:57:02] being able to tie the budget to that strategy ring of what actually happens to get to that work can see it specifically for instruction and those student outcomes and then to see how that also supports what happens within the cip and other budgets that support other areas of the budget that support the overall work and the overall strategic plan so well i would just suggest that when you go line by line through the budget you'll see certain areas that have had decreases in funding and other areas that have had increases in funding and it's not quite clear how those

[02:57:38] decisions were made based on the priorities that have been espoused by this board and others and so i think it's really important that you know our budget tells our story well and i think you guys do a great job of preparing a budget but we only look every year at the increases to the budget versus having a reflective approach that says what are the things that staff have looked at and said no we don't need to do those anymore or you know we need to do more of this to get where

[02:58:13] we're at and a good example is the alternative schools where the language doesn't reflect that we're planning on cutting back thank you if i might i think the bottom line is that we did have that

conversation with department leads and no department lead came back and said they were planning to make any cuts so i think that human nature is that we keep doing what we've done so we're going to need to take a deeper look starting much sooner this coming year with a new strategic

[02:58:47] plan about where must we strategically deploy resources if we're going to get different outcomes That was a perfect segue to what I wanted to say, because I want to emphasize, and I do think I'm hearing some agreement on how do we communicate the strategy through our budget if we didn't use words, would people understand what we're really about, right.

[02:59:19] And so for that reason, I asked our HR person when we last did our surveys for our employees, because I would like to see those results connected to what concerns we are having in our compensation.

[02:59:37] I'm assuming that there would be a connection. I think that helps us tell the story, first of all, that we're listening to our employees. we're concerned about how they perceive their ability to be successful in the workplace and then we're attempting to use whatever resources we have it may not cost but in any case I do think there should be some connection so I'd like to ask that we take the time to do that and I think you said that the last time was November of 22 correct so we have some very recent surveys to look at

[03:00:12] am I correct yes that was our engagement survey okay okay so if I mean it seems to me that that that makes sense I also wanted to echo what Miss Corbett Sanders said with respect to alternative schools we spent a lot of years at least my time on the board and also with this board talking about the need for more restorative justice as opposed to punishment for our students giving people an opportunity to learn and to grow and as a result I think the numbers in our alternative schools have gone down. What can that mean? How can we

[03:00:48] reimagine that opportunity? We've heard our student talk a little bit about, you know, well can these things be available online? They're not available in my school. So I'd like to see if we're having new investments, I'd like to have it result in new opportunities for our students.

[03:01:08] Ms. Marin mentioned identifying 504 funds with the special education identification within the budget. I think that's actually a more accurate way of conveying the story of our investment.

[03:01:25] As far as long as I have worked with children in Northern Virginia, Fairfax County Public Schools has been known in providing excellent special education services. But perhaps it will be helpful to include I think a more accurate way of identifying how we are investing By including that in the numbers In our budget, and I think I had oh and then the last thing had to do with what I mentioned a little bit earlier And that is and I can have further conversation with you dr. Reed is I know we've identified You know the science of reading that is ongoing work certainly we need to monitor that

[03:02:04] that, but we've also had extensive conversations about making sure that advanced math opportunities are available at the elementary level, as well as improving our science. What does that look like? And I do think all of this would have to be a long-range plan as opposed to just this year. So I'm hoping that all of this conversation comes into something that we're building upon per year and we are actually asking our staff members to

[03:02:33] step into agreement with what that strategic plan is. Ms. Cohen? Yeah thank you for that. I think you know one question that we some of us have mentioned about teachers for tomorrow as an incentive is helping pay for college.

[03:02:53] I mean the contracts great except not to be a jerk but every place in the world is looking for teachers right now. So the incentive that used to be hey you're gonna have a guaranteed job guess what you walk out of any school right now with the teaching degree and can pass a practice exam, you can get hired wherever you want to right now.

[03:03:12] But on the other side of that is a family like ours is paying for the VCU, the cheapest public school in the Commonwealth, $31,000 a year. So my kid's gonna walk out with $120,000 worth of debt to start a job that pays $50,000.

[03:03:30] So maybe help pay for some schooling as scholarships instead of signing bonuses, like maybe help pay. And you have to pay it back if you don't come back here and teach. I mean, we have models certainly in our system to look at what it looks like to come back and pay some service.

[03:03:53] And again, I think when we talk about apples to apples, and I know that Ms. McLaughlin was getting frustrated, But I think we also have to be careful to look at, like Prince William, also their teachers work 90 hours less than ours do. They have a half hour shorter contract.

[03:04:09] Another school system has where they get to use their sick leave for retirement or where they have incentives where they can pull sick leave and donate it to other. So I think there's never going to be a real apples to apples. So I hear what you're saying, but I'm saying when eggs are $8.99, what does my paycheck look like when I get home?

[03:04:31] And that's what people are thinking. I agree, there's a sales job that needs to be done, and I know ERFC has been working their buns off to try to really be ambassadors of what an amazing program this is. But if you can't buy eggs at the grocery store, it doesn't matter. I have one second, so.

[03:04:54] Get off my high. I'll donate it graciously back. Oh, God, you're so nice. She gets it, like. Oh, my God. Mr. Frisch, do you want to go? Music to my ears about the strategic plan and what that spells for our budget next year.

[03:05:17] I will say that every year during these budget conversations, I start the conversation, at least my part of it, talking about how disappointed I am that we're not digging into the non-new money that we're being asked to approve.

[03:05:33] And so hopefully the strategic plan will help us realign, find savings, and invest in the actual goals of that strategic plan. I think one common thread that's kind of through a lot of the conversation here about compensation and benefits is making our employees feel like we want them to be here and stay here.

[03:05:55] And part of that is basic customer service, right? So what are the things we can do to make people feel like, if it's not increased pay, that we know we're helping them? One thing I've already talked about today is helping them sign up for public service loan forgiveness through the Department of Education.

[03:06:18] That's going to save them a lot of money down the road. um another might be um giving them money on their way in the door there are any number of things that we could be doing that have negligible cost ramifications that show we're hearing them and that um we care right uh it doesn't just have to be a conversation about the brass tax of what the the paycheck is and what the benefits that go along with that paycheck are because there are a number of things that we could be doing so um i will certainly have a um

uh i have a budget question in about the public public service loan forgiveness question and about how some ideas of helping to

[03:06:57] make that happen uh for our employees what those costs would be that may result in a follow-on motion i don't think it'll be a budget amendment but i will be in touch with colleagues as we move forward and if i may mr frisch it's it's kind of like a chicken and egg conversation when we're talking about overall compensation for employees because in order for us to provide that level of that concierge service i think to our employees when we look at the number of vacancies that we have across our operational departments it's important for us to be able to fill those vacancies so that we can provide that level of service that our employees deserve

[03:07:37] there's a recent book and i don't have the the title in front of me but a friend sent it to me the other night about the hospitality industry and about those individuals who, you know, feel the need to go beyond, and it's, there's an innate need in individuals in that particular industry, and we see that in our HR staff as well, and all of our staff to go beyond and give more than what people expect.

[03:08:04] And so I think that raising the boat for everybody in terms of overall compensation, I'm not talking about additional staff, I'm just talking about filling the vacancies that we have will help us bring those staff members on board who can provide that concierge service that you're talking about. Dr. Anderson followed by Ms. McLaughlin. Thank you not to continue to belabor the point I do want to echo what Ms. Corbett Sanders shared which is what I asked last week we've got to provide that additional information but I want to jump in and follow up on what Ms. Cohen

[03:08:42] said I would it be possible for this kind of stipend to help with college needs be a good educate Fairfax type of initiative or effort I mean who could speak to that it could certainly be something that educate Fairfax takes a look at in terms of providing scholarships for individuals who go through our Teach for Tomorrow program and come back that's a conversation that I can have with Lisa Youngblood Hall and also talk with our executive director

[03:09:19] for the educate Fairfax okay thank you and also the storytelling of our work here because I know very soon we're going to go present this to the Board of Supervisors and we've already heard about this from some of our public they still do not understand why is it that we're still requesting more dollars when we have a reduced enrollment they're not getting the nuances of our needs being greater and I know last time we talked about some sort of executive summary to kind of sell sell the story not sell the story tell the

[03:09:49] story are we going to be doing that is that something we need to take consensus on yeah there's a a flyer that basically unpacks enrollment of the the different numbers the cip number the budget number um and the other groups and occr is working on that with budget right now thank you and dr reed something you said just kind of stuck with me that none of the departments came to you and said that there's a space to cost savings i i would encourage you

[03:10:26] to challenge them to challenge themselves in some deeper reflection because there's got to be something that they at least want to repurpose if not necessarily let go of. I find it hard to believe that as much as we're putting in that nothing can be taken out and that's just not the funds that's also the workload. Yeah I think that when we have our new strategic plan in place to do the work that the community commits to us doing with the measurements you're going to agree on we're going to have to

repurpose those dollars. So there's no question about that. We'll probably have to take a department at a time and, as a cabinet, go through that. What are we currently

[03:11:04] doing? Who's doing it? What is the ROI? Return on investment for it? And if it's not getting us the ROI we want, then what do we do different? Because the challenge for us, people continuously say, you have a $3.5 billion budget, and yet you're asking for more. We don't get a chance dig into the rest of it just the new money family liaisons I know last time we talked about doing some audits because for me that will inform my next steps in the budget process any ideas as to where we are with that information we'll have that information I know that we have the numbers of who are in which categories and we'll have I've seen it if it hasn't been pulled together it will be

[03:11:43] presented okay and the advanced academics the year three phasing of 1.6 now that this will have completed the entire project I would love to get a sense of what are what are going to be the expectations what are going to be the mandatory non-optional expectations of what these local level four initiatives will look like at the schools not guidance because guidance to me is optional I can take it or leave it but what is it that we're going to require what are going to be our measurements how we're going to say this is a successful investment of funds

[03:12:17] those are good questions and i would want to query dr presidio on those okay i think that's my time i first want to make sure all my colleagues understand dr reed i absolutely understand that erfc is not how you're going to attract new young teachers absolutely what i want us to talk about is 6.4 percent annually is money per employee plain and simple and it doesn't go away because

[03:12:54] we've got staff recommending layering on a new step to a scale that the prior board in 2015 and the prior superintendent did all the analytics as noted with a consultant for more than a year because you have to make responsible decisions. Layering on this step without all the analysis and conversation that even happened today is irresponsible. It's fiscally irresponsible because you cannot take it away. It's going to be $4 million this year and every year from then on out.

[03:13:24] and that's what's got me so fired up you guys today because I look at this 3.5 billion dollar budget and if I can look at one line item that has been presented by our superintendent and her team and the lack of looking into the fact that this is going to put us way above where we're trying to meet the market but we're going to keep trying to meet the market every year and that we're not not having a holistic conversation about all the money that we pay an employee every single year, we didn't present it for them to understand it and see it, please know I am not fighting to say

[03:14:03] we just have to keep ERFC as is locked in, you know, perpetuity. It's just you don't add a step onto the end of the scale until you've done this analysis, you engage your employees, and you figure out what to do. That's my advocacy for today. And in terms of getting another consultant to come in and do our work for benchmarking, being competitive in the marketplace.

[03:14:25] Dr. Reed, please go talk with our county executive, Brian Hill, because to my knowledge, the board of supervisors in the county government, they're doing this every year to stay at and competitive with the market. And I'm not aware that they go out and pay hundreds of thousands of dollars with consultants.

[03:14:41] So I think we need to know that first. And if it turns out, since we're going to 3:30, is that correct? Then I'd like another go back.

[03:14:57] Ms. Seizmoorheiser followed by Ms. Omesh. We should have just done three minutes. - I appreciate what Ms. McLaughlin is saying as well. I think it isn't, I mean, I do think it's one of our jobs, right, is to kind of look at the market each year and meet the market or make sure we're competitive in our market.

[03:15:13] So I think it is important to re-look at our market and look at how we're gonna be competitive with our market. And it's hard because it's not a, you know, it's not, well, they pay tens, we need to pay 10, right? It's salary and benefits, as we all know, and we've all heard, is very, very complicated. So it's hard to find that apples to apples comparison.

[03:15:30] But, you know, I think Mr. Frisch made this point, but I apologize if it wasn't you. But, you know, part of this meeting the market is what does a dollar buy you in our market versus the other markets, right? You know, what is the cost of a house?

[03:15:45] What is the cost of eggs or the cost of living in Fairfax County versus Prince William or Loudoun County? And I think that's part of looking at our compensation package, right, to be market competitive. So I think that's, these are important analysis, and I appreciate Ms. McLaughlin's questions, but what does it take to be competitive in our market, and what does it take to be competitive in a new environment where our demand is much greater than our supply?

[03:16:13] And both those things, you know, that's, for me at least, in my time on the board, this is a newer area and a growing need. So I just, you know, I think that is important to look at. I love the idea of looking at public loan forgiveness or other ways of incentivizing teachers. I wanted to mention, it's brought up a couple of times about funding for our strategic plan, set asides for us.

[03:16:33] I brought this up last time, but what about set asides or identification for AIR and our special education enhancement plan? Is the idea that we're going to re-look at our special education budget as part of that, or do we need to set aside funds? What is the plan for that?

[03:16:48] Because that's supposed to be coming to us in the spring. I'm sorry, I missed that. Not that there aren't others, but if you could just restate that. I not have my time go while I restate the question? That would be helpful. Yeah, I can restate the question. It was, is there money set aside for the AIR special education plan in addition to the two million at mid-year and the two million moving forward for next year? Well, if I could clarify, actually, what's the plan to implement it more than just what's set aside? Like what is, the two million is not for this AIR report, if I understand you, it's for the OCR. Correct. So, what's the plan? Go ahead, go ahead, Alice.

[03:17:27] Just to make a clarification on the budget piece for the AIR review, in the current year's FY23 budget, there was a $2 million placeholder. So that's recurring money. It's still been sitting there. It was pending the report that was coming to AIR.

[03:17:43] There were multiple work sessions for that. So that is there to make some determinations. That's what's been in the budget. But is that also for the enhancement plan? Because there's a strategic, is it for both of those or just one? No. Because they may not be the same. That's my question. So then in this year's budget proposal is the special ed compensatory services, which was another $2 million.

[03:18:02] And then we did one-time money in the mid-year budget review of, I believe, $1.6 off the top of my head. So they are two separate things. So there will continue to be that $2 million is part of the base moving forward for the AIR recommendations.

[03:18:20] And I don't know if Dr. Boyd is on to talk about what that plan looks like, but we added that last year. That is part of the base for the coming year, and that $2 million will always be in there. But that still may not be from the enhancement plan, right? Because we have OCR, we have AIR, and then we have what Dr. Boyd's work is.

[03:18:39] And so my question was specifically around Dr. Boyd's work. They may overlap, but they're not the same. And we can get that. I don't have Dr. Boyd here with us today, but we can provide an update. I asked for it last time, too, so just as a reminder.

[03:18:57] Just having said that, what I don't want to get to, and we did this, I think we're very thoughtful with our AAP to put in a multi-year plan. Something I've been advocating for years is looking at staffing and special education programming. For many, many years, it's been to look at, I don't want to do this work and then not have a thoughtful plan around it.

[03:19:17] My time is up, thank you. - Ms. Omesh. - Okay, thanks. I'm happy to follow some of the living wage conversations and I'm definitely leaning more into the fact that we still have to do something bigger here. And yes, we have to wait for our strategic planning process to get there, but I don't know that we have to wait for everything to be fixed through our strategic planning process.

[03:19:40] I think it might be kicking the can on things we could resolve now. So I guess I go back to the process conversation we were having earlier where I really would urge that staff can spend some time reflecting on the themes that have come out of today and last work session and just thinking about where we might want to move the budget differently.

[03:19:59] I'm inclined to make this a year where we just recommit to our staff and the nice to haves that are on the budget like maybe we need to reevaluate the urgency of some of those pieces. I just, you know, so I offer that for big picture thinking. And colleagues, I think we need to reconsider. Ms. Burden, did I hear you correctly in saying that typically the board would improve upon their budget before presenting that to the board of supervisors? No, in Fairfax, we have not done that. Right, right. But typically. But yes, I'll the other divisions I've worked in it's usually done because we want to you

[03:20:36] want to make sure that you're truly conveying your needs to the board of supervisors so it's usually done between the superintendent's proposed and the school board proposed or advertised which is what we call it right so if we decide to align ourselves with what's best practice or what's common in the division it would make sense it's otherwise it's a full waste of our time to spend two work sessions and potentially a third discussing what we think should be changed but we're gonna keep it and then we're gonna ask the the Board of Supervisors for money to reflect something we know is not even going to be our final product. So I'd really urge our budget team to maybe give some thought. And even if it's not, ideally it wouldn't be formal amendments, but maybe another creative way

[03:21:12] to do it, something, I'd really appreciate that. The other thing, just my remaining 30 seconds, I don't want to lose some of the conversation around the security officers. I was looking in this packet, I didn't find an explanation sheet for that specifically, but can someone please elucidate that? I didn't have time last time, but gosh, I don't know that I'm supportive without more understanding.

[03:21:36] And so we're looking at five additional positions for our safety and security office so that we can add to our individuals who are out on regular patrols, and then those five individuals would be focused on supporting our elementary schools, and so when there were calls coming in from elementary schools,

they would be working very directly with the elementary schools, and then proactively they would also work with our elementary schools and helping with their safety and security plans within their buildings.

[03:22:06] I know that there are some who have characterized them as SROs in the buildings, and they are not SROs in the buildings. I've had that conversation with our chief of police and with his staff, and he understands that we are not putting SROs in the buildings.

[03:22:22] We're not putting armed individuals in our elementary schools, But we are providing additional security staff so that we can be more responsive to the needs of our elementary schools when there are situations that might arise. Are they from FCPD? Oh, because you just said you were talking to the chief, right?

[03:22:44] I explained to the chief because there has been swirl in the community that people have said that we're putting SROs in. And I was very clear. The chief didn't ask, but we were having a meeting. And I want to be very clear and proactive to say that you may have heard that we're putting SROs in, and we are not.

[03:23:00] There were no recommendations to add SROs to the budget, and he was thankful. He had heard that, and of course we hadn't had any conversations, but it was important for him and his staff to hear that we are not adding those SROs. They are not FCPD. Yeah, I appreciate the clarification.

[03:23:18] I think I'd add that to the category of just reevaluating urgency, you know, and we're bleeding on staff here. but um so that brings me to my final point on the steps going back to what we were just discussing i know it's going to be expensive we all know it's going to cost money can we have some options in considering what possible paths forward even if it's going to take 10 years uh to to consider how we might remedy that and we might decide none of them are feasible but at least to understand and do the intentional work there but thank you that's my time yeah the frozen steps um miss Ms. Barrett, did you want another go?

[03:23:53] Okay. Ms. Dana-Kofax did not. Ms. Tolan? So I just wanted to kind of pull some of this stuff together. It's sounding to me like we have our strategic planning process well underway.

[03:24:09] We are hoping for our new strategic plan, May, time frame. Whatever day that is in May, I'm just going to make one up, May 14th. sounds like may 15th we should start the overall budget review and how it links to the strategic plan for the following years right not it's it has to be out you know in addition to our regular budgeting process um and you know i'm just throwing that out there for something to keep in mind for timing because it's a lot of work um you know i'll just throw it as a member of staff i'm not

[03:24:49] not gonna remember what year it was but there were a number of times where we were just told here's your budget figure out if you had to do your work and you were reducing your budget by 20% what would it look like what would you be giving up we had to explain everything if you reduce it by 10% I mean that's not unheard of you know we've done it before we can do it again but that doesn't get at the prioritization that's just across the board right I think we want to be more thoughtful about which areas maybe we reduce more than others, etc. But anyway, that's a lot of conversation. And we are asking people to look

[03:25:28] and talk very heavily over the next month about potential amendments based on the discussions that we've been having so that we can do what Ms. Burden is asking is to really try to have the amendments squared away during this portion of our budgeting process and not wait until the advertised

budget. So I just wanted to clarify that. With my few seconds remaining, I would just ask, can you talk a little bit about the budget questions? I've had a number of board members just ask, you know, we submit budget questions. What's the time frame for generally turning the requests

[03:26:04] around? You know, what can we be expecting over the next couple weeks? Well, it depends on the complexity of the question. I mean, basically, we get the questions from you all that are entered in the budget question, Google Doc, or your aide does it, and then we distribute it to the appropriate leadership team member to provide an answer.

[03:26:25] Some of them are really complicated and have multiple parts, those are gonna take a while. Some are pretty simple, like what's the costing of athletic trainers, we were able to, you know, get that pretty quickly. It depends. Yeah, and we work based on the prioritization.

[03:26:44] Even if it's complicated and it has multi-parts, if it says priority one, for you know an upcoming vote then we'll then everybody knows that you know we no lollygagging get that done okay thank you i think you know there's many things that have been talked about from you know maybe even re-looking at the rfc which i mean these are these are big big questions and i think i just kind of want to bring us back to this year and where we are and those things are not going to get done i or nor are we going to have those conversations

[03:27:24] And we are in this transition year, and Dr. Reed is looking and trying to learn about the system, the needs, assessing everything. So just wanted to remind everyone of that because we just had so many ideas today, and I know those people who are listening maybe online could be wondering, too, where are we going to go with all of this.

[03:27:49] let's do i would suggest a one minute if you want it if you don't want it but um we don't have much more time than that today so with that ms corbett sanders okay ms keys gamara okay ms cohen she's taking it whenever we're ever going to pass um really quickly one thing that i think uh dr reed referenced but i would um like to bring up is our high school our principal and assistant principal salaries i know i had the opportunity to be in one of my schools with somebody who happens to be

[03:28:27] on the elementary school principals association board and for all of you who haven't seen it we should get it sent i think it went to ruchna but not to all of us so maybe the salary scales that they gave a comparison for principals you would have just gotten it but principals and aps across and the difference in number of days worked um difference in how many um like vacation days they're giving difference in salaries i mean oh my gosh it's huge so i know that we're in the

[03:29:03] weeds right now with all everybody everybody needs it but i also want to make sure we're not forgetting our principles in the conversation too and i understand what stella's saying about keep it focused but to a bra's point you know i think and maybe strategic planning will be a piece of that but if we say this is what if we want fy 24 to move us forward instead of chipping away in an iceberg a little bit at a time are we making budgets that really try to eat because all the work you guys did to get us and now we're behind again like do we need to have those years where

[03:29:39] we're just taking a big bite of the elephant anyway I don't know mr. Frisch followed by dr. Anderson just very quickly when you're putting together that one-page summary I would love to get a sense of kind of what we've been talking about here again it's not going to be as significant as it could be in

outward and out years but something in terms of what was our approach with this budget because there's a little bit of this a little bit of that there's not a

[03:30:16] a deep investment into any other section but if you could at least give a little bit of that information in terms of what the overall approach was in getting to this budget for this year thank you no sorry we're not paying attention i thought somebody was gonna answer oh to answer yes we

[03:30:50] i thought it wasn't me so no yes we i shouldn't be you know touching the button i guess but uh yes we will we will work on that we we talked at that last work session and said that budget staff does a good job of bringing the facts forward the numbers and all that but it takes all of us to create that narrative for why we're here and that will be part of that one pager agree um mclaughlin thank you um ms pokarski to your point i do want to make sure in case there's any

[03:31:24] question about why i've persisted the entire work session on this issue on the adding a step to the scales it's because it is a four million dollar decision this year it will be a four million dollar decision next year and it you it doesn't go away and I've hammered at this because without a holistic comprehensive analysis of how we're going to make this fiscal decision for employee compensation we the board and I believe the superintendent and I believe this division will be fiscally

[03:31:58] irresponsible for not having been doing the analysis before we leap and add it to the end. So, I know it's been painful for some of you to listen to me hammering it, it's because I am still in shock that you cannot make a decision of adding an extra step to the scale and not have done the other comparative analysis to determine, are we going to do both?

[03:32:22] Are we going to then be compensating and at a cost to the system, at a cost to the other things that so many of us say we also need to invest in it all matters so i really appreciate everybody's patience today thank you mr glachlin miss size moheiser other than the same i have not seen that email yet but i'll share it with the board if i see it about um that ms cohen mentioned about principles and assistant principal compensation um i think i think we're in a real crossroads here because um with the new superintendent and in the middle of a strategic

[03:33:01] plan I think the board is hungry for a lot of re-envisioning and I think that's what you're hearing Dr. Reed is is the need for a lot of re-envisioning and a need for understanding if we're layering on top why and what are we doing and understand for the bigger picture that's in the document that was posted I think last night and so um I think that would help in this budget process you know I and I've talked to you earlier this year that I feel like this is this hybrid years i keep calling it right as we're bringing you on as we're um you know reimagining fcps you know with a strategic plan trying to build towards that but yet still keep the ship afloat

[03:33:38] what does that look like this year and i think i feel like you know some of these questions are trying to understand how does what we're adding how is this keeping the ship afloat but it's going to impact us longer term and how does this fit with the sort of grander vision of what we're doing and how do we make sure what we're doing this year can fit with the vision we haven't finished creating yet without adding obligations that we may not want in the future right but also addresses i think what many of us have addressed is long-standing needs that need to be addressed i think you'd be a magician to answer my question so i'm not going to ask you to answer it but i

[03:34:16] think that's what i feel that feel the tension here is i don't quite know how to get us there but that's the tension i see i just wanted to name it miss omesh followed by go ahead miss omesh Okay. So I guess we're 36.4 million in savings above what we had expected because of employee leave or empty positions, et cetera. We ought to reinvest that amount in our employees because the reason these positions are empty is part of the problem. So with that said, I just, I guess I want to hear from staff, like, what are the next steps from this conversation? I really hope,

[03:34:54] again, that we're reflective on the conversations and then rethinking where we're moving forward in a tangible way. Like I don't want to show up for the next work session and start off where we again in the same place. So that's number one I'd like to hear about before I stop and then number two we might benefit from even just pausing and doing a little bit of analytics around like the in and out flow of staff and whether we've seen when we've seen dips and ups and tracking that against like when we've done step freezes or when we've done increases in MSA or other things and just looking at so that the data can speak to us. I mean we're making assumptions about like what's

[03:35:30] beneficial for recruiting and retention and what's not. And sure, our intuition will take us far. I think that certain things are obvious, but that might also be useful. I don't know, staff, if that's something you guys have, look at, or perhaps is something we can work on. Those are my two pieces. I'd love to hear feedback, and that's my time. Well, the lapse and turnover or the base savings are already reinvested without that negative number in the budget reducing salaries um and benefits our ask would be 36 million dollars more so those are already reinvested

[03:36:09] but in everything right not just staff that's what my point was like in all kinds of programs that we're trying to support like that money is being used for everything that's on the list right it's just reducing the the ask yeah yeah yeah because of you know i'm just saying since it came from staff should go to staff but i hear you obviously it's part of the full amount of money yeah and it reduces air compensation i mean if you look at air i don't have the numbers right with me but i think our compensation package is like 120 130 and if you if you didn't have that

[03:36:47] then air ask would be like 160 yeah 128 so it would be 36 million more it's that base savings that's working against the top no i hear you on that and then there was the other piece And again, the other piece again, I'm sorry.

[03:37:16] Oh, just doing a reflective look at what point have we had in and out flow of staff compared to like when we've made certain adjustments. So we're going to take that look at the retention over time and that turnover data, and then we can do a crosswalk between that turnover data and then what happened in that particular year.

[03:37:41] Yeah, just might help us know what levers, you know, matter. Okay, thank you. Okay, and with that, I think we have concluded the budget work session, and I'll give it back to Chair Toland to give us some reminders and close us out.

[03:38:01] Yes, so I think what we'll do from here is we talked earlier, you know, we'll take this information. We'll speak with Dr. Reed again and with our budget team and figure out, you know, some of the best ways to move forward and getting everyone's amendments and taking a look at everything.

[03:38:19] What I do want to just remind people again, I think Ms. Karski did a pretty good job earlier. And Chair Sizemore-Heiser talked a little bit about this too. We need to keep in mind that, and this is how

we constructed our work in October and in November.

[03:38:36] We need to keep in mind that this is kind of sort of a bridge year with a new superintendent. And while we are constructing a strategic plan. so a lot of the very specific kinds of things that we talked about today will fall into those various buckets strategic buckets that we talked about whether it's you know workforce hiring and retention student wellness student academic success and so we will want to be at a strategic

[03:39:10] level with this budget in particular and hit on some of these big topic areas and then that we'll We're going to have to continue to think strategically on how these very specific items are taken care of in budgets as we move forward in the future.

[03:39:27] So with that, I appreciate everyone's time today. Yes, I just have a quick process question. So, Dr. Reed, today we got presented the total career earnings for master's level teacher scale, but it's my understanding from talking to the board members that your team is proposing a step at the end of every pay scale.

[03:39:53] Is that correct? So, has the board been provided that data on total career earnings for each of the scales that you want us to approve the $4 million, and if not, can we get that? yes we will provide that those the data for all scales absolutely thank you thank you okay thanks again to everyone for your um thoughtful participation and we will adjourn this particular board budget hearing