

GO Team Budget Vote meeting, January 31, 2017 7:30am
Mary Lin Elementary

Submitted by Melanie Levs, acting secretary

Present: Victor Hicks, Colin Heydt, Kimberly Dick, Karin Dusenberry, Sharyn Briscoe, Stephanie Shumacher, Leda Everett, Melanie Levs, Galit Levitin

Absent: Emily Fuller (maternity leave)

Also present: Alana Betchea, senior budget analyst, APS; Nora, a French grad student working on a dissertation about public education in America

Minutes from the January 23 meeting had been read by members and were approved unanimously.

Before Principal Sharyn Briscoe submitted three budget scenarios to the Go Team, she said she met with the Grady cluster principals the previous week and, because the APS charter is binding for five years, we do not have the ability to change the funds or structure for how we as a cluster handle band, orchestra and music (therefore we cannot entertain the possibility of having two music teachers full- or part-time, as we discussed at the last meeting).

Sharyn explained that she also learned that, as part of the "one big bucket" that the schools receive for our Signature theme, each school's budget goes in part to the Signature Program Coordinator, which comes out to \$14,503 per school. Each school also pays \$2,000 to P21 (the framework for the College and Career Readiness theme) and \$5,000 to the P21 conference, which takes place this year in Atlanta. This decreases our non-staffing budget to \$33,675.

Several Go Team members expressed frustration to Alana that we are being asked to vote on a budget that has so many holes in it, including knowing whether or not we will get another fifth grade teacher (if we get one more student from our projected enrollment of 90 enrolled for next year), as well as whether we will receive back our austerity money (see notes from previous meeting). Alana did not have a response to that, other than to reiterate that the Go Team is tasked with voting on the budget as-is, and we can make changes if we want to do so in the future.

Based on our previous discussion and recommendations, Sharyn shared the following three scenarios for the Go Team to vote on:

Scenario 1:

Having 3 fifth-grade teachers with 30 students per class

Having 5 second-grade teachers

Having 1 dedicated teacher to do half-time SST/RTI and half-time EIP

Scenario 2:

Having 4 fifth-grade teachers (one of which would replace a full-time EIP teacher)
NOT having a dedicated SST/RTI teacher

Scenario 3:

Having 4 second-grade teachers

Having 4 fifth-grade teachers

Increasing one EIP teacher's salary to make her a dedicated instructional coach (the person currently doing this coach job is paid as an EIP teacher because she's also doing that work, Sharyn explained; offering her the increased salary gives job security in the coach role)

The Go Team went back and forth on whether we preferred having an extra fifth-grade teacher or an extra second-grade teacher; without an extra in both grades, class sizes will be maximized. Galit, Melanie, Victor and Colin preferred the extra fifth-grade teacher, as it is currently in keeping with the way classes are departmentalized there, as well as offers the students extra support and preparation (with smaller class sizes) as they near middle-school. Sharyn and Karin made the argument that class sizes in middle school are in the 30-32 range, and having fifth-grade classes sized that way would help the students acclimate to middle school. Stephanie, who is a fifth-grade teacher, did not have a preference over three or four teachers but stated she felt strongly that there be added support in the form of an EIP teacher, if the fifth grade had just three classroom teachers.

The Go Team also realized that, if we get just one more student enrolled for fifth grade, APS will provide funds for a fourth teacher, so this discussion would be moot. This again brought up the frustration with the process of voting on a budget that still had so many variables.

After the discussion, and the realization that we did not have to make a set-in-stone decision, the Go Team unanimously voted to approve the budget using either scenario 1 or scenario 3.

The motion to adjourn was made by Victor Hicks. Colin seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 8:50am.