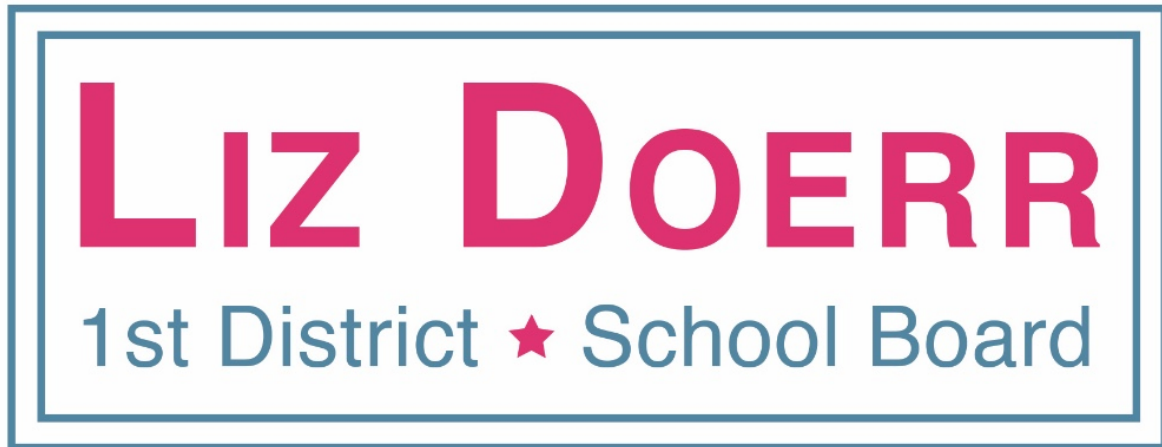


From: Liz Doerr edoerr@rvaschools.net
Subject: 1st District School Board Updates
Date: Apr 15, 2018 at 3:20:51 PM
To: [REDACTED]



Hello Richmonders and First District Residents,

Read below for updates on the School Board budget including how you can help advocate for our fair share of state funding and LOTS of other ways to get involved.

As always, please email or call me with any feedback, comments or ideas!

Liz

City/School Budget Updates

In early March, the Mayor released his [city budget](#) that City Council is now working through.

Exciting Things for Children in Richmond:

- \$12.5M surplus money reallocated back to RPS
- Additional city support for nonprofits that offer after-school activities for students including \$630,000 for a pilot program to expand the operating

hours at six city recreation facilities

- Higher contribution to the GRTC Transit system so RPS high school students can ride the bus for free

Challenges for RPS:

- No true operating budget increase for requested items in our budget. It is not fiscally responsible to use one time surplus funds for ongoing operating expenses.
- If you want to read my wonky surplus analysis continue reading....otherwise skip to What Can You Do.
 - RPS fund surplus is actually \$13.2M --- I would like an additional \$700K back from the city
 - \$7.1M of our fund balance is already reserved to pay for our local retirement program and specific education programs leaving only \$6.1M to allocate to new initiatives
 - It is best practice to keep some amount of budget surplus in reserve. A review of 20+ districts indicated that most boards have a specific policy to reserve some money for contingencies. Most districts reserve 1 – 3% of total budget. For RPS that would be about \$3 - \$9M. I worked with our Finance Committee to introduce a fund balance policy that is commensurate with other localities earlier this year (it is currently being reviewed by the Board.
 - Taking all of these things into account, we really only have less than \$3M in surplus to allocate to RPS needs.

What Can You Do:

1. **Review Items in our Budget Request** (click [here](#)) – there is some really great stuff in here including:
 - New “Parent Partner” pilot program
 - New “Living Room Chat” pilot program
 - RPS Welcome Center additional staffing

- Increased Advanced Placement course offerings in high schools
- Additional bi-lingual teachers, counselors and parent liaisons New “trauma-informed care and restorative justice” pilot programs
- Nurses required provide 1 health professional per school
- Additional Gifted and Talented teachers
- Teacher and support staff - 2% salary adjustment (cost of living)
- Needed improvements in our student transportation services
- RPS Auditor

Our additional budget line items are modest and include pilots to ensure we measure the efficacy of new programs before asking for more money.

2. **Write or Call City Council** - encourage them to consider allocating operating dollars to our budget requests
3. **Write or Call City Council** - ask them for the additional \$700K in surplus dollars
4. **Communicate Your Budget Priorities to Your Elected Officials** - this budget request does not include all of our needs. I outlined several additional requests in my initial proposal including additional funding for elective teachers. Please email me to let me know what you want to see in next year’s budget.
5. **Advocate for More Funding from the State** (see state legislative update below)

What Will I Do:

1. **Continue to Advocate for Better Budgeting - I strongly believe that in order to be effective at requesting additional funds for RPS we must demonstrate that we are good custodians of tax payer dollars and I believe that the city has work to do here.** I’ve been advocating for zero/school based budgeting (which we introduced this year) and I’ve conducted my own analysis on opportunities to redirect inefficient funds to more effective programs. I’m looking forward to continuing to digging into our budget with the Board's new budget audit.

2. **Work with City Council to Hire an RPS Auditor** – The School Board included a request for an auditor in our budget request. I believe this oversight is a necessary function and I was glad to learn that the city is considering adding additional budget oversight with two new auditor positions one for the city and one for RPS. Note that the [current plan](#) is to have the RPS auditor reside under the city payroll. I'd like to see that position on RPS' payroll so he/she can work directly with the board.
3. **Continue to Work with the SB to Advocate for our Full Budget Request**
4. **Continue to Lobby the State for our Fair Share of Funding** (see below)

Also, the city is considering a cigarette tax. Read [here](#) and [here](#) for more info. Make your voice be heard on April 23rd at the City Council Public Hearing.

State Budget

LCI Rebenchmarking

The Local Composite Index is the formula that is used to determine Richmond's allocation of the state's funding formula. This formula puts Richmond at a disadvantage as it makes us look wealthier than we really are (e.g. Fairfax County, one of the wealthiest counties in VA, receives more per pupil state funding than Richmond). Inflation adjusted per pupil spending has decreased 10% below pre-recession levels in Virginia and The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis [reports](#) that budget cuts have impacted Richmond even further, resulting in 16% less per pupil spending since the recession. This year the state re-benchmarked the LCI and determined that Richmond will lose approximately more than \$5.5 million over the next two years.

So what do we do? First we must continue to work on a longer term strategy to revisit the LCI formula. The Board has been working with our lobbyist and other partners to continue to push this issue. Second, I believe we must advocate for other opportunities to secure state funding (see below on the Medicaid expansion).

Medicaid Expansion

We have the opportunity to increase access to healthcare for 400,000 Virginians AND use the additional federal money to allocate more money to schools. The Virginia Education Association estimates the expansion would allocate \$169 million more to VA public schools and \$2.6M more to RPS! As Senate Republicans like Frank Wagner and Emmett Hanger have voiced their support for a commonsense approach to healthcare expansion, I believe we must hold our own local officials accountable. Republican Senator Glen Sturtevant promised to govern as a moderate, like Sen. John Watkins who came before him. He also promised to advocate for our schools, but has not indicated his support for the House budget which would mean millions of additional dollars for RPS. Sign the petition today by clicking [here](#). To read more click [here](#).

Upcoming Meetings and Priorities

Upcoming SB Timeline and Priorities:

- Read the Superintendent's 100 Day Plan [here](#)
- Build Four New Schools read more [here](#)
- Engage the Council on Great City Schools to Conduct an Audit of the RPS Budget – Anticipated Completion Date July 15th
- Equity Audit of All RPS Functions – Anticipated Completion Date July 15th
- Launch a Strategic Planning Process for a New Five-Year Plan –
Launching April 23rd

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

April 16th – School Board Budget Work Session @ 6pm City Hall

April 23rd – School Board Meeting @ 6pm City Hall

April 24th - Join STAY RVA for an Introduction to Thomas Jefferson High School. Hear from Principal Darin Thompson about his vision for the school, the many successes that already exist within the school, and how the community can work to further support Thomas Jefferson High School. Talking points will include academics, athletic programs, enrichment programs, and clubs. Ms. Cady, the IB coordinator, will also share about the IB program.

Volunteers and Donations Needed

View the 1st District Schools' Budgets [here](#)

There may be some items on these budgets that we can procure from community resources/grants. Please contact me with any ideas.

Volunteer for Fox Elementary's Kiss and Ride

Keep our children safe during morning drop-off and get to enjoy seeing all those smiling faces coming in to school by signing up [here](#).

Support Fox Elementary's 39th Annual Strawberry Street Festival

Saturday, May 12th from 12PM – 4:30PM

This fun-filled event needs the support of the entire school. The proceeds fund many of the curriculum enhancements we are able to offer our children. It's never too early to consider joining the team of volunteers for 2017. We encourage every parent and community member to volunteer. SSF has many volunteer opportunities, including face painting, selling strawberries shortcake, or helping with games. There is something for everyone. If you are a student looking for volunteer hours, this is the place to be.

Please sign-up here: [Strawberry Street Festival Volunteer Sign-Up](#)

Volunteer at Mary Munford International Night, Tuesday, 4/17/18

On April 17th from 6:30pm to 8:00pm we need your help at Munford International Airport. We have booked flights departing for many exciting and

intriguing destinations. The airport is understaffed and these fabulous trips cannot take off without your help! Come support a super fun evening of learning and adventure. Can't volunteer your time? Consider volunteering to send in food for the International Café. Always a fun event each year! Sign in to the school wide volunteer page on www.nlisthelp.com and register to help
Questions? Email munfordvolunteer@gmail.com

Thank a Teacher at Mary Munford

Help the PTA celebrate Teacher appreciation week (May 7-11, 2018) by sending a thank-you note to an inspiring teacher. They joined the Virginia Lottery's "Thank a Teacher" campaign and their pledge to thank as many public school teachers in the Commonwealth as possible--and they need your help to do so! All teachers who receive one of our thank-you notes can enter a drawing for a chance to win one of four prizes courtesy of the Virginia Lottery. Please visit www.thankateacherva.com and send a digital thank-you note to a deserving teacher by email.

Albert Hill STEAM Picnic Needs Sponsors

Spring STEAM Picnic on April 29 thanks to the 2018 STEM + Families Tech Night Grant, sponsored by Microsoft. If you own a business that may like to donate a product or service (do you cook, sing, paint, or engineer?) to the picnic, or have a friend/relative that does, have them get in touch with Meghan McSweeney at meghan@meghanmcsweeney.com or Shannon Dowling at shbennet@hotmail.com. We would love for this to be a large event that showcases the best of the Hill so we will need your help. And yours, and yours, and yours!

Earth Day Playground CleanUp

Where: Westwood Playground 5409 Marian Street, RVA

When: Saturday, April 21th

Time: 10 – 2pm

Education Policy in the News

In each newsletter I plan to pass along articles that you share with me on education. I present these articles without an agenda with the goal of sharing some thought provoking ideas on education. Please continue to send me interesting articles!

[Making School-Spending Data Transparent and Accessible Is No Easy Lift](#)

[East Boston's Schools Have a Blueprint for Teaching English](#)

[When White Parents Won't Integrate Public Schools](#)

About RPS

I learn new things every day so I've introduced a section to my newsletter to share information about RPS.

Did you know we send a weekly email? [Subscribe](#) to RPS Direct, Superintendent Kamras' weekly newsletter to the Richmond community.

To Subscribe to this Email:

Please email edoerr@rvaschools.net

Thanks for reading!

Liz



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You know Liz and/or are interested in RPS!

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