

AEL President Edie Picken's Presentation to the Board of Education on the first night of public testimony on the Superintendent's proposed budget

Board of Education Meeting January 5, 2021

Good evening. My name is Edie Picken and I am currently President of AEL which represents all Unit II employees.

1. With respect to the superintendents proposed budget, AEL can and will support a budget that provides for increased spending that enhances the education of our students, provided it embraces and recognizes the value of employees.
2. Any proposed budget's total requested amount should not be the focal point—the allocation of the request and the equitable distribution of those funds are of equal if not more important.
3. With respect to Unit II compensation, we are currently engaged in the negotiations process, and as usual compensation continues to be a formative topic. As a result, AEL is unable to specifically address with you this evening salary increases—those discussions will continue at the negotiating table.
4. What is important to note, the allocation of pay between the different employee units contemplates and produces a pay differential. Over the last several years, the last three more specifically, a continued erosion in that differential for Unit II employees as it relates to Units V & VI needs to be assessed.
5. Unit II consists of 342 employees, predominantly school based with a few positions at the Board. Between the 2018-2019 year and our current 2020-2021, Unit II overall has received approximately a 6% salary increase. On the other hand, Unit V, consisting of 440 employees, overall has received approximately between 10% and 14% increases in salary with 49 of those employees receiving a 20% or greater increase in salary resulting in some instances of job title reclassification and/or creation of new positions. This equates to those individuals potentially receiving anywhere between \$7,000 and \$10,000 or greater pay increases. Unit VI, consisting of 55 employees, overall, in this same time period has received anywhere between 15-18%, with approximately 6 members receiving between 18-20% increases in salary resulting in similar or greater pay increases.
6. I urge you to look closely at this category and to compare it to the percentage of actual pay increase paid to all other represented employees.

7. It will be important to identify growth, changes in position titles, or the creation of new positions allowing for increases in salary for Units V and VI. Units I and Unit II are not able to have title reclassifications, so there is no resulting potential for increased compensation.

8. Unit VI employees receive in large part the same benefits that Unit II receives under the Negotiated Agreement

9. So, in closing, the budget amount is one thing and any increase is welcome; but, the allocation of those dollars associated with all employee compensation should be reexamined and those that are involved in the daily and direct delivery of education and support to students at the school level should be given a higher and well deserved priority.