

## BOARD AGENDA ITEM

August 9, 2022

### SUBJECT:

Head Start Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Funding Application

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The school district was approved for a five-year Head Start/Early Head Start grant in May of 2020, and the 5-year project period began on July 1, 2020, and extends through June 30, 2025. Governing bodies have a legal and fiscal responsibility to administer and oversee the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The governing body is responsible for activities specified in section 642(c)(1)(E) of the Head Start Act. Based on community needs, the grant program may need to be modified, and board approval will be sought for these changes. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 contains an increase for Head Start of approximately \$289 million over the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 level. This includes a cost of living adjustment (COLA) of 2.28% for grant recipients to provide for HS/EHS employees.

The school board initially denied the receipt of these funds when they were originally required as a separate application of Head Start and required to be retroactive to November 2021. Since the HS/EHS program became part of Aiken County Public Schools, salaries for these employees follow the same approved salary schedule as other ACPSD employees.

### ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The Office of Head Start has now included these funds as part of the continuing grant application and as part of the budget process. The school board approved a COLA for all employees; therefore, these grant funds can be included to assist with covering the raises for Head Start/Early Head Start employees. The school board's approved COLA of 3.25% to all employees meets the provisions of the Program Instruction guidance that requires at least a 2.28% increase to Head Start staff. Adjustments were made to the budget to cover salary increases in excess of 2.28%; therefore, ACPSD can use all of the COLA funds in the amount of \$81,820.00 for fringe benefits costs or offset increased operating costs in rent, utilities, facilities maintenance and insurance, contractual arrangements, vehicle fuel and maintenance, and supplies for the Head Start/Early Head Start programs.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the submission of the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) funding application, and receipt of funds, if awarded.

### PREPARED BY:

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