

BUDGET INPUT VIA WEBSITE

Subject Matter: Class-sizes

Comments/Suggestions: I think that class sizes are too large in the county. Learning is more effective with smaller class sizes. We pride ourselves as a county because we spend less money per student than almost any other county in the state. Why is that? Education is our future and the students need access to the best that money can buy- small class sizes, access to technology, buildings that are not falling apart.

Subject Matter: pay raises

Comments/Suggestions: The State requires districts to provide annual pay raises to teachers but non-teachers have largely been forgotten. Please find a way to give non-teachers a step and/or significant cost of living adjustment. Any non-teacher working for the district for less than 6 years has never had a step increase.

Subject Matter: drama teacher at East Aiken

Comments/Suggestions: East Aiken is proving that parents and students in Aiken County are interested and want an arts school alternative. If East Aiken is to become a "true" school of the arts, they need a drama teacher added to their staff. Please consider funding a drama teacher for this school, so that Aiken County Schools truly has an "arts school" alternative.

Subject Matter: pay raises and technology

Comments/Suggestions: All school employees need a raise to help keep current employees. Also, updates in technology for employees and students.

Subject Matter: pay increase

Comments/Suggestions: I am imploring you to give the non-teachers/non administrators a pay increase. It has been six years since we have had any kind of pay increase, and your non-classified employees are making less now than in the past due to increase in insurance, retirement , etc. and having no raise.

Some of us bring home \$600.00 a month after insurance and other expenses are taken out, yes you read that right \$600.00 per month, yet we work as if we make hundreds of thousands! It feels maddening to know that our administrators get their pay increase every year, and finally the teachers received their much deserved raise this year. We are the secretaries, attendance clerks, teacher aides, shadows, custodians, safety monitors just to mention a few. We are the "little people" behind the scenes that help our school run efficiently. We are the dedicated, loyal, committed and hardworking employees that haven't been compensated for six years. It is my understanding that administrative staff gets their raises every year...what's wrong with this picture?

Please consider at least giving us a cost of living or step increase this year...a lot of us work paycheck to paycheck, and have to work second jobs just to feed our families and pay the ever increasing bills and increase of the cost of living.

I do thank you for the one-time 1% bonus you gave us this year, and please know that I am truly grateful to have a job. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Subject Matter: technology and playoffs

Comments/Suggestions: Some improvements have been made recently with school district technology. The school district is currently about 5-10 years behind business, industry and post-secondary education. Another area of concern is why new software, computers and technology are installed first in elementary schools when high school students are going to need it for work, college, etc. first. Technology learned by an elementary school student will be

obsolete before they reach middle school. Technology should be funded, in addition there should be ways to use new and improved technology to cut costs in other areas like electronic text books, etc.

It is also interesting that coaches don't get paid for extra games, practices etc. as related to their teams participating in post season play. It would be a big morale booster if coaches received an additional stipend when they enter post season play. Coaches invest a large amount of their personal time and money in athletics and students. These programs are about more than winning, they help develop character, discipline and commitment. I haven't met a coach yet that was in it for the money, they love the game and the kids. When Aiken County School teams make into post season, the schools and the district receive coverage in the papers and on television. Free, positive, advertising!

Subject Matter: Pay increase

Comments/Suggestions: This is my 7th year as a Career Specialist (8th for the District) and I have been stuck on step one in regards to pay. Will the possibility exist for me to ever gain a few steps? I started at \$30,000 (approx.) and I think I'm at \$31,000 now. If you look at the cost of living now as compared to 2007-2010...I'm in the hole. Rent, utilities, groceries have all increased and my pay hasn't; it's almost as if I have taken a pay cut!

Subject Matter: IB

Comments/Suggestions: I really wish we could get the IB Program back at Aiken High.

Subject Matter: East Aiken

Comments/Suggestions: Support should be given to East Aiken School of the Arts. They have been given the designation and now should be given the funds to support a full ARTS staff. Dance and Drama should be included in the daily activities of students. The school is doing a great job of funding many opportunities for student learning through the arts but need to be able to hire a full time dance and drama teacher to be fully an arts school.

Subject Matter: libraries

Comments/Suggestions: In times of low budgets, reducing library budgets often seems like a tempting option. The impact of that is extreme. Kids need to have a large variety of books to spur reading. Reading is the most important skill for success in life and slashing library budgets/library positions undermines students' ability to read. Librarians are also essential to support teachers in gathering materials for the common core. Please think about increasing their budgets so that they can more effectively support teachers. Books and E-books are expensive. Investing in libraries can improve test scores- more bang for the buck than spending the money elsewhere.

Subject Matter: Clearwater Elementary School

Comments/Suggestions: Please allocate money to replace the carpet in the Media Center at Clearwater Elementary School. It is worn, stained, and has holes in it. There are several outlets in the floor that no longer have safety covers on them because they don't make replacements anymore.

Subject Matter: NAMS Library Media Center

Comments/Suggestions: To supplement the Common Core Curriculum, we are in desperate need of updated nonfiction materials at NAMS. Also needed, will be STEM resources to accommodate the program if/when implemented at NAMS. It would be an asset to have a SMARTBOARD in the library. As the NAMS library media specialist, I would like to be able to have this interactive resource when teaching research skills in the library. Please consider this when allocating funds for the upcoming school year. Thank you so much for your consideration of these materials needed.

Subject Matter: Budget Input

Comments/Suggestions: We respectfully request an increase in funding for our school library, even if it is a one-time allocation. We lack a SmartBoard with projector and would love to install a flat-screen television with digital capabilities. We could also use additional funds to update our collection and purchase a new laser printer!

Subject Matter: Media Centers

Comments/Suggestions: Dedicated Media Assistants; Assistants that are in the media centers to help with the students (not have to keep classes and the media specialist cannot get the books back on the shelves for the next class, or used the class instructional time to check out books because there is not one to help with any of the tasks).

Subject Matter: SC History

Comments/Suggestions: Either new textbooks or Kindles to load the books on.

Subject Matter: Full-time Guidance

Comments/Suggestions: I am a parent of one of the elementary schools in Aiken County. I am military and I have lived in many countries and states. This is the first time I have encountered part-time counselors in schools. I find this frustrating because I can never reach the counselor in the morning or other times due to the counselor being in class. The counselors are great at returning calls which is great, but as a parent I would like the counselor available at all times. I would like to see full-time counselors in all schools regardless of the student population.

Subject Matter: Technology

Comments/Suggestions: We need to update computers/memory and all classes should have multiple computers or tablets. All students need to have the opportunity to work (produce actual documents) at some point during each school day. Right now, we have students coming out of elementary schools that do not know how to type. My own children are in college and graduate school and they learned keyboarding in elementary school, but it has since been taken out of the schools and children are suffering. Technology is not created equally across the State and Aiken County should be a leader in this area, and they are not.

Subject Matter: Technology

Comments/Suggestions: I recently attended the stakeholders meeting at Wagener-Salley High and was surprised how out of touch the community is when it comes to technology. I know that there are grants and initiatives available that help schools supply students with the latest technology. What the district needs to focus on are programs for students and parents that can help Aiken County compete with on global scale. The programs offered for careers through the district are good, but to build world class students we have to think about the advancements in technology that are reaching beyond our rural schools by giving students instance access to the world.

Subject Matter: Various

Comments/Suggestions: Full-Time Security Officer in schools, and or entrance door locking systems implemented in all schools.

Part-Time or Full-Time Chaplain for each district area in the Aiken County.

Family Literacy Employee for all Elementary schools in Aiken County.

Update the meal plan, to include a better variety of nutritious foods and foods that are appealing to children.

Provide more Reading/Literacy events in the schools.

Subject Matter: After school tutoring transportation

Comments/Suggestions: I think that the schools school provide after school transportation for those who would like to stay for tutoring.

Subject Matter: pay increase

Comments/Suggestions: It is understandable not receiving a raise when there are budget cuts, but it is very discouraging to see the District add items and programs to the budget instead of giving pay raises to all employees.

Subject Matter: Intervention

Comments/Suggestions: Ridge Spring- Monetta Elementary desperately needs another Reading Interventionist. We have the highest population of free and reduced lunch in the district and we now only have one Reading Interventionist. There are so many children who need the additional help who are just not getting it this year because the current Reading Interventionist is only able to do so much. Please, please, please consider finding a way for us to have an additional Interventionist!

Subject Matter: Foreign Language

Comments/Suggestions: Leavelle-McCampbell would benefit from a foreign language offering to their students. It will only serve to benefit the students if they are exposed to a new language. (3 other similar comments)

Subject Matter: allocations

Comments/Suggestions: I respectfully request that the Board consider funding a Reading Interventionist for Millbrook Elementary. I had one last year, but did not get funding for this year. In addition, I do not get enough Title I money to fund any additional salaries. Our kindergarten and first grade data indicate that the absence of a Reading Interventionist has had an adverse effect on the academic progress of our at risk students.

Subject matter: Adult Ed

Comments/Suggestions: There is a need for full time adult education teachers during the day in order to meet the needs of adults who would like to get an education/GED but have to work at night when many of the classes are offered.

Subject matter: IT positions

Comments/Suggestions: Hire a technician to deal with LCD projectors...because repairs are so costly and bulbs cost so much and burn out so frequently, some schools find it easier to dispose projectors and buy new ones

Subject matter: SRO

Comments/Suggestions: Middle schools needs to have a SRO on site – that would get rid of a lot of the major discipline issues.

Subject matter: A.E.D.

Comments/Suggestions: Automated external defibrillators should be made available in every school. They are the first line in an emergency situation and can save a life of a student, employee, or visitor to our school.

Subject Matter: High School Guidance (a sampling; received multiple similar comments from the same school)

Comments/Suggestions: A few years ago all high schools were given an allocation to have a yearlong registrar. All of us deeply appreciate that. We were working during the summer without pay. However, we are still not using our

counselors and registrars efficiently. Much of the registrar's job revolves around data entry. Counselors and career specialists spend many hours doing data entry. Data entry does not require a masters degree in counseling. We do have training in analyzing data and test scores. Counselors are also trained to implement strategies to cope with academic and social-emotional needs. As a registrar, I am so busy keeping up with entering transcripts of new students, coding for testing, ordering tests, making tests schedules for ELDA, HSAP, MAP, EOC, AP, PSAT, and PLAN, making sure we follow EEDA by getting parents involved by coming for their yearly IGP, general coding of GT, free lunch, ESOL, etc. These are only some of my duties. Please consider allowing a data entry clerk at all high schools. I am going to even ask it be a year round person who can assist with the paperwork involved in graduation rate. I also ask that our counseling allocation not be cut. Please add a data clerk as a supplemental position in guidance.

**ADDITIONAL BUDGET INPUT
(NOT VIA WEBSITE)**

Step increases for non-teachers

Restore frozen teacher step

Increase administrative salaries for recruitment/retention

Reduce class sizes

Create a science curriculum position

Fund two additional ESOL positions

Provide schools with a discretionary substitute budget to cover absences for professional development. Currently schools have to fund subs out of local dollars if no other funds such as Title II, etc. are available.

Increase schools' budgets for janitorial supplies and copier supplies (local funds collected from snack sales and vending that had been used to supplement these purchases once a schools' district-budget had been exhausted are expected to decrease with changes in USDA guidelines)

Increase substitute pay

Revise middle and high school assistant principal allocations to provide additional AP's at larger schools.

Revise small school formulas at middle and high schools to ensure that the formulas provide a sufficient number of exploratory teachers.

Supply each school with epi-pens. [Estimated cost of \$20,000 per year. Epi-pens expire after one year, so this would be a recurring cost.]

Create new HR classified position for tracking of Affordable Care Act requirements

Restore athletic playoff supplements

Fund other .50 FTE for seven schools receiving only half reading coaches (under governor's plan) so that elementary schools would have at least one reading coach