



GOVERNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM AMPHITHEATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10

DATE OF MEETING: November 9, 2021

TITLE: Review of Enrollment Projections and Actual Enrollment for Current (2021-2022) School Year

BACKGROUND:

Each year, the District projects enrollment for the subsequent fiscal year as a key component for budget planning resource allocations. This agenda item provides the Governing Board an opportunity to review the enrollment projections used to determine the number of staff and funding for non-staffing needs at each school site and to provide guidance on those processes. In addition, it gives the Governing Board information about how current enrollment aligns with those projections so the Board can be prepared to address the state-mandated budget review required in December.

Why Enrollment Projections are Important

Arizona school districts are funded using a “current year funding” model based on each district’s enrolled student’s average daily attendance, a.k.a. Average Daily Membership (“ADM”), during the first 100 days of the current school year.¹ In other words, a school district’s annual funding is determined by the average number of days that each enrolled student attends² school during the first 100 days of the school year. Every day of attendance counts toward the student’s ADM allotment, and every student’s attendance counts toward the school district’s annual budget. Accurate daily attendance records from classroom teachers are key factors for current funding allotments from the State.

An unfortunate drawback to the “current year” funding model is that Arizona school districts have to plan for the fiscal year (FY) using an *estimated* student enrollment based on *anticipated* attendance during the first 100 days. In Arizona, the fiscal year is July 1 through June 30, encompassing two (2) calendar years.

Arizona school districts must *estimate* ADM for each student *at the beginning of the FY* to be able to propose their FY budget and tax rates by each July 1. ADM funding distributions also account for student attendance in any online instruction programs in the state, and the state funds online programs based on attendance through the last day of the FY (June 30). Because the state allocates ADM proportionately between school districts and online programs for students who enroll in both instructional programs during the same fiscal year, school districts must wait until all online programs end on June 30 to know their final budget allocations for the current FY.

This year, the Amphitheater District proposed its budget for FY 2021-2022 on June 22, 2021 to be ready for the first day (July 1) of the current FY. Because students can be enrolled in traditional brick-and-mortar

¹ Before 2016, the State of Arizona funded school districts based on the district’s attendance on the 100th day of school of the *prior* school year. This “prior year” funding model made it much easier for school districts to plan since they could build their budget based on a finite and known amount.

² Arizona law expressly requires public school districts to count attendance for students who are physically present at school. Prior to this pandemic, the sole exception to this was for students enrolled in an approved Arizona Online Instruction program like Amphi Academy Online. On July 23, 2020, Arizona Governor Ducey issued Executive Order 2020-51 that authorized public school districts to submit and obtain approval from ADE for plans to permit remote attendance during SY 2020-2021. That option does not exist this school year, and therefore, students must physically be present at school or be enrolled in Amphi Academy Online for their attendance to count.

schools and online schools in the same year, Amphitheater will not know its final budget for the current FY until June 30, 2022, when the online enrollment ends for the current FY.

Despite not receiving *final* allocations until June 30, 2022, the Arizona Department of Education (“ADE”) provides school districts with periodic payments based upon each school district’s *projected* 100th day ADM, SpEd, and ELL numbers up to the 100th day of instruction. The projected ADM is calculated by reporting our schools’ student attendance to the state each day through the 40th day of school this year. This agenda item is provided to permit the Governing Board to study how the District’s projected enrollment compares to the actual enrollment on the 40th day of the current FY.

Process Used to Project Enrollment for the Current FY

Because the budget is based on enrollment projections, it is important that the projections be as precise as possible. Amphitheater projects student enrollment through review of student cohort information, expected property development in neighborhoods served by individual schools, anecdotal data from schools on population trends, and regular review of applications for open enrollment, etc.³

The District began planning for FY 2021-2022 in January 2021. Administration started efforts to project student enrollment for FY 2021-2022 in January 2021 after the 100th day ADM information from FY 2020-2021 was known. Schools began registering students for School Year (“SY”) 2021-2022 in February 2021, and schools accepted open enrollment as early as fall 2020 to determine anticipated enrollment as early as possible to be able to offer teacher contracts in April 2021 for SY 2021-2022.

When this planning process started, students were attending school remotely by necessity since community transmission of COVID-19 was high. Enrollment fluctuated widely during spring 2021 as the District’s learning modalities adjusted to account for fluctuations in COVID-19 transmissions in Pima County. Students registered for in-person instruction in the traditional brick-and-mortar schools attended school via a hybrid model beginning in February 2021, and as vaccinations became more widely available, fully in-person instruction beginning the final quarter of SY 2020-2021.

Because enrollment increased with each instructional model change, Administration did not rely solely on the ADM numbers from SY 2020-2021 to estimate enrollment for this FY. Instead, enrollment was reviewed multiple times during the spring of 2021. Meetings were held throughout the spring with District and School Administrators, and every registration considered throughout spring semester, and even in early summer, to determine the District’s staffing and non-staffing allocations for FY 2021-2022.

Important Information about How Changes to The District’s Fully Online School Affect This Year’s Budget

Last year, the District expanded the instructional offerings at Amphi Academy Online to include elementary students. That option continued again this year. There are currently approximately 373 students enrolled in the Amphi Academy Online.

It is important to remember that the State of Arizona funds Arizona Online Instruction (“AOI”) programs differently than traditional brick and mortar schools. The first issue is that the state funds AOI programs based upon actual instructional time over the course of the fiscal year. As explained in further detail in the above section, this means that actual funding is not known until after June 30, 2022. However, Administration

³ Amphitheater Public Schools previously used growth studies to predict enrollment expectations. However, that method proved unreliable during the recession that began in 2009 when economic and demographic changes in the community made growth studies applicable to the Amphitheater District boundaries inconsistent with the actual trends. Administration switched to the current methodology a few years back and find it more reliable.

implemented changes to the Amphi Academy Online (“AAO”) instructional program this year to follow a more traditional school calendar with a goal of being able to end AOI instruction earlier than June 30th in the Amphitheater District.

In addition, the state only provides a potential of 95% AOI funding if a student submits enough annual online time to reach the required amounts. Historically, most students have not submitted enough annual time and are funded at 85% of their prorated annual time. However, programmatic changes have been implemented this FY to assist students to be able to meet the state’s mandatory time requirements to advance in their AOI program and graduate with their class. These changes should also help the District to recover AOI funds at higher levels than in the past.

Projected vs. Actual Enrollment for SY 2021-2022

The District had experienced consistent decreases in student enrollment for the past several years, largely in part due to a decline in the birth cohort during the past decade. Unfortunately, no one foresaw the substantial effect that the COVID-19 pandemic would have on schools across the state and even throughout the nation. Students did not return to schools at the same pre-pandemic levels, and despite repeated efforts to locate them last year, a large population of our students have not been located in any Arizona school to date.

This problem sadly is not limited to Amphitheater Public Schools. On October 30, 2020, the Arizona Republic reported that an *“estimated 50,000 students vanished from Arizona’s public district and charter schools over the summer.”*⁴ The article entitled “50,000 Students are gone from Arizona public schools. Where did they go?” reports that Arizona has lost 5% of its students during the pandemic. Most importantly, the article confirms the frustrations that administrators across the state have been voicing since the pandemic started:

“Because the figures are early, it’s unclear where students have gone. The state’s population has not shifted enough for enrollment to plummet so dramatically. The number of families filing for homeschool has increased, but not by 50,000.

Education advocates fear some school-age students are not in school at all, and that the lag in kindergarten enrollment means that children in Arizona are losing out on early lessons vital to a child’s learning experience.”


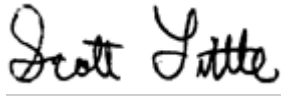
Attached is a “Comparison of Projected vs. Actual ADM for Fiscal Year 21-22” table, which provides a “snapshot” view of how the projected student enrollment for each school site last year for purposes of staffing and resource allocations (with consideration given to school specific student cohort information, open enrollment applications, etc.) compared to enrollment at each of those schools on October 15, 2021, which is the 40th day. The number of enrolled students included in this “snapshot” contain tuition students from other school districts, primarily from Oracle but also from other school districts, for whom the District does not receive ADM from the State. The District accounts for these students in the staffing and resource allocations, but it does not account for these students for budgeting of ADM.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is presented solely for the Board’s information. No action is requested at this time.

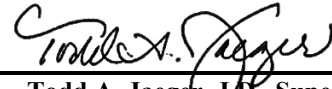
⁴ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2020/10/30/arizona-public-school-enrollment-down-50-k-where-did-students-go/6084062002/> (November 7, 2020).

INITIATED BY:

Michelle H. Tong, J.D.,
Associate to the Superintendent and General Counsel
and
Scott Little
Chief Financial Officer

Date: November 2, 2021



Todd A. Jaeger, J.D., Superintendent

Comparison of Projected vs. Actual ADM for FY 21-22

	SY 20-21 40th Day ADM	SY 20-21 100th day ADM	SY 21-22 Enrollment Projections	SY 21-22 M&O Teacher FTE Allocation Based on Enrollment Projections	SY 21-22 40th day ADM	Difference Between SY 21-22 Enrollment Projections Vs. SY 21-22 40th Day ADM
Amphi Academy Online	633.61	734.21	376.00	17.45*	218.98	(157)
Amphitheater High School	997.07	961.38	1,214.00	37.00	1,158.39	(56)
Canyon del Oro High School	1,503.03	1,463.22	1,608.00	50.20	1,617.34	9
Ironwood Ridge High School	1,460.49	1,422.52	1,649.00	50.60	1,638.57	(10)
Amphitheater Middle School	576.74	538.66	678.00	22.84	631.29	(47)
Cross Middle School	671.80	656.49	759.00	25.67	754.10	(5)
La Cima Middle School	430.13	399.74	444.00	15.00	434.24	(10)
Coronado K8 School	605.66	591.48	679.00	26.00	637.87	(41)
Wilson K8 School	834.03	805.69	909.00	34.50	879.66	(29)
Copper Creek Elementary School	258.32	259.36	284.00	12.00	291.22	7
Donaldson Elementary School	225.98	214.63	208.00	12.00	194.92	(13)
Harelson Elementary School	425.41	421.67	446.00	20.00	441.48	(5)
Holaway Elementary School	246.96	247.38	300.00	14.00	286.04	(14)
Innovation Academy	360.81	334.32	454.00	18.00	375.79	(78)
Keeling Elementary School	247.01	243.24	290.00	12.00	268.25	(22)
Mesa Verde Elementary School	310.30	296.09	318.00	14.00	293.38	(25)
Nash Elementary School	254.09	237.26	275.00	12.00	269.74	(5)
Painted Sky Elementary School	281.69	280.76	350.00	15.00	298.20	(52)
Prince Elementary School	414.70	399.27	463.00	20.00	421.58	(41)
Rio Vista Elementary School	239.83	234.49	291.00	15.00	281.50	(10)
Walker Elementary School	257.78	265.79	347.00	16.00	333.40	(14)
Rillito Center	59.60	60.32	75.00	12.00	65.95	(9)
Total	11,295.02	11,067.99	12,417.00		11,791.87	(625)
				*includes SPED FTE		