

Association of Educational Leaders (AEL) presentation to the AACo Council May 9, 2022

Presented by: Edie Picken, President AEL, Assistant Principal South River High School

First, let me thank the County Council for taking the time to hear from us, AEL, as it relates to the Superintendent's budget. As always, we appreciate any and all funding you can find to help the school system function.

On that note, there are a few issues I will present as it relates to that segment of the budget and salaries. Over the last four years, all bargaining units, including ours which is Unit II, have attempted to be compensated for that which we are owed and due. Last year, the superintendent made whole all other bargaining units except ours. We are still owed a step from 15-16...Yes I said 15-16 while all other bargaining units have been made whole. Currently we have 6 people who are on step 40, our highest step, that at the time of 15-16 were not what we refer to as stepped out. Currently, we are attempting to negotiate getting these employees paid for that school year. Our Board is saying there is not enough money in the budget to cover that. How unfair is that to not provide for these people who worked as hard then as they do now to not receive what they are owed yet the superintendent and his executive staff receive theirs. Something to ponder. With respect to negotiations, the Board of Education does not negotiate—they voluntell you what they are offering, then waste your time coming back to the table when you present a different offer only to be voluntold again "No, this is all there is." Asking for time to negotiate prior to the superintendent striking his budget is nonexistent. When dates are requested, all bargaining units are given excuses as to why negotiations are impossible prior to November; however, miraculously after the superintendent presents his budget to the Board negotiations are permitted. Unfortunately, the superintendent's placeholder becomes his last and final offer. This is a habit that has been in place for 8 years which has only de incentivised people remaining in the school system. This is unfortunate because we are losing incredible talent to other jurisdictions who respect the work we do. I am hoping that the County Council will take this into consideration.

Therefore, we are requesting that the County Council not only consider adding additional funds in order to compensate those 6 employees for what they are owed, but we are also requesting that the Council consider adding additional funding so that Unit II can increase the COLA amount from what is currently being offered at the negotiating table and to specifically earmark those funds for those purposes and no other.

Thank you.