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Councilman Davis,

Thank you for your question.

Question: "If we pass the 2nd substitute budget, and the additional funds to Metro Schools results in \$55 million as we have proposed ... would the School Board at least assure us that we would see a 5% COLA AND the Step adjustments for Metro Schools employees that have been discussed?"

Short answer: Yes. As Chair of the School Board's Budget Committee, I assure you that your substitute budget will result in at least a 5% cost of living increase plus the step adjustments.

Full Answer: Employee compensation remains the School Board's top priority for the FY2020 budget. The Board voted for a 10% pay increase because we believe it is a reasonable and necessary first step toward adequately compensating MNPS employees. However, if MNPS is allocated less than the Board request, the Board will take steps to assure that as much of the funding goes to employee compensation as reasonably possible, consistent with the Board's priorities.

To specifically address the question: The proposed \$55 million additional allocation would fund a 5% COLA plus the step increase if the school board reduces other parts of the board approved budget request by \$3.5 million. Although we insist that a 10% increase is the appropriate and reasonable pay increase, I am confident that my colleagues on the board will join me in taking the necessary steps to give employees at least a 5% pay raise plus the step increase if an additional \$55 million is allocated to MNPS.

Please do not consider this letter as conceding or requesting an amount less than the April 9, 2019 budget approved by the School Board. This letter reiterates that employee compensation remains the Board's top priority. And, at the least, as chair of the school board's budget committee, if the proposed additional \$55 million is approved, I will not support nor accept any MNPS budget that provides anything less than a 5% raise and steps.

Anna Shepherd  
School Board District 4  
Chair, Budget Committee