



April 27, 2022

Dear Arlington School Board Members,

The Friends of Arlington's David M. Brown Planetarium ask you to allocate sufficient funds to hire a full-time science teacher to serve as Planetarium director. For approximately \$100,000, the facility can re-open for the 2022–2023 academic year, as scheduled. The Planetarium is a vital component of the Arlington Public Schools science curriculum and a visible sign of Arlington's commitment to ensuring science literacy and world-class education generally. You espoused these values when you voted to refurbish the projection system with state-of-art equipment capable of bringing the latest scientific discoveries to our students.

During your April 21st work session, staff estimated the cost of a full-time, 10-month teacher would be approximately \$100,000 and suggested another \$50,000 in operating costs would also be necessary. While the Friends cannot be certain what that \$50,000 includes, the Friends wish to reiterate our desire to partner with you to re-open the Planetarium this year. In particular, we previously declared our willingness to fund any items usually associated with the “program costs” and “equipment repairs” line items that are not otherwise covered by the projector purchase agreement. According to the “FY2023 Chief Academic Office Zero-Based Budgeting” document, these items total \$64,900; however, that document does not consider the special circumstances arising from the installation of a new projector. Although the Friends cannot underwrite operations on an on-going basis, we are willing to assist during this critical year. As David Priddy recommended, we are thinking about the 2022–2023 Planetarium expenses as one-time expenses rather than on-going ones given the School Board's stated intention to re-open the facility no later than the following year.

The Friends are committed to maintaining quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education for all Arlington students. To do so, we believe the Planetarium must re-open in September when physical conditions permit and be led by a capable and engaging director, who is a qualified science teacher. Restoring this single position allows the Planetarium to return to service as an integral and inspiring component of the STEM curriculum at minimal cost.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to educating our young people. Please let me know if you have any questions related to this request or our organization.

With Warm Regards,

Jennifer Lynn Bartlett, PhD
President, Friends of Arlington's David M. Brown Planetarium