

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations, The Packard Center, 4022 Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003

*Verbal Presentation on the FCPS FY08 Budget Situation by the
Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
By Dr. Charles W. Dane*

Good evening. I am speaking for the Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations.

You have some important decisions to make about the year after next year's budget. Let me begin with the big picture and then mention some specifics.

The additional money from salary savings in the FY08 budget is fortuitous because of the lower than expected funding from the County. However, forecasts do not look much better for County revenue next year. And, the projected FY09 carryover is only \$10M.

When the proposed budget for FY08 was prepared, a \$44M carryover was anticipated. With less money from the County than requested, but with additional savings and some additional expenses that carryover has increased significantly. However, if you implement all of the originally approved FY08 budget you may face a shortfall of \$56M in FY09. **And** this, I think, assumes that the County will again provide at least an increase in the transfer amount to cover minimum compensation and benefits increases, as well as other inflationary increases.

Of course, the extra \$20M salary savings this year, because of hiring difficulties, may continue and this could reduce the shortfall.

However, your decision is - spend now and hope for the best, or take action now, and at least develop the perception of being fiscally responsible. The latter would place the board in a better position to request the additional funding that will be needed next year.

So, does including all of the originally proposed enhancements make good fiscal sense? No!

Of course, you cannot makeup all of the shortfall by not funding these enhancements, and in fact, we would support some of these. However, take a hard look at what is most important from an educational standpoint, versus what is popular, and limit expenditures on those necessary enhancements.

For example, all-day kindergarten is a desirable goal for all, but I understand that it is most important to English as a second language students and Title I students. Most, but perhaps not all, of those schools with significant populations of these students already have all-day kindergarten, so from an educational standpoint, perhaps adding only the few such schools that do not, would be fiscally prudent. Also, we question the foreign language expansion at this time. And we would take a hard look at the other proposed expansions except for the indicated compensation and benefits, membership adjustments, the GASB45 fund and a few other enhancements.

*Verbal Presentation on the FCPS FY08 Budget Situation by the
Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations*

In the written testimony, I have indicated these additional enhancements that we would consider supporting.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views on what will be difficult but hopefully forward looking decisions.