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

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

May 16, 2007

Good evening – 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 proposed to be only $10M.

When the proposed budget for FY08 was prepared, a $44M carryover was anticipated. The projected $10M carryover for FY09 thus represents a reduction of $34M. Thus, assuming the County again provides $17M less in the FY09 (as they did for the FY08 budget) and carrying forward the increased State income offset by the increased State retirement bill and the increased FY08 expenses all of which equals another $4.8M, results in a $56M shortfall 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 saving 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. Furthermore, expansion of foreign language programs, even beyond what was proposed, is warranted to achieve strategic governance goals, but at this time, is even the proposed expansion fiscally prudent. And we would take a hard look at the other proposed expansions except for the indicated compensation and benefits, membership adjustments, and GASB45 fund and a few other enhancements.

Thus, we did, and still do, support the alternative school program, the custodial supplies and the computer maintenance items, and we would support the ABA/VB expansions. Then, there are two other issues that we support, and these are:

(1) A 3% COLA for those teachers and employees who will not receive a step increase in this budget - It seems to be counterproductive to believe that the salaries of those with advanced training should be increased to be competitive with surrounding jurisdictions, and at the same time to be limiting salary increases for those with more than 20 years of experience,

(2) Expanded funding for parent liaisons and translation/interpretation services - there is an increasing need to communicate and involve those difficult to reach families, most of whom are learning English as a second language.

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