

January 26, 2015

Members of the School Board and Dr. Garza:

As you continue to engage in discussions to refine the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Long-Range Strategic Plan, the Board of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (FCFCA) would like to contribute our thoughts to your efforts. We are pleased that FCPS is engaging in this type of analysis, as the Strategic Plan will help crystallize FCPS' thoughts about its biggest challenges as well as its largest ambitions. With that in mind, we suggest a focus on the schools' most important/pressing needs that includes the following priorities:

- Adjust the FCPS curriculum toward meeting the goals embodied in the Portrait of a Graduate, piloting innovative pro-grams where appropriate. We hope the Strategic Plan will provide guidance and be adjusted accordingly regarding this project for years to come.
- Correspondingly, adjust professional development toward achieving the different methodologies needed to achieve this goal.
- Develop a strategy to procure alternative sources of funding, including an increased focus on business partnerships. Our schools engage in annual battles with both Richmond and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to increase funding for our schools. We believe the strategic plan must provide guidance on how to help ameliorate this problem.
- Improve access to high-quality early childhood education, and ensure Kindergarten readiness. Excellent public preschools may attract paying families as well as serve our low-income population. We know that addressing our children's needs as early as possible helps reduce remediation costs, may help reduce the achievement gap, improves graduation rates, and prepares our children for success.
- Attract, develop, and retain a superior workforce. This large idea requires many smaller projects in order to be realized, as strategic thinking often does. The Federation hopes FCPS will continue to place central emphasis on this issue.
- Emphasize a creative approach to solving infrastructure problems. Our capital needs have long outstripped the available funds, we hope the strategic plan will help guide us toward new solutions, such as the recent project to repurpose an existing office building for use as Bailey's Upper Elementary School.
- Accentuate our commitment to integrating cutting-edge technology into the classroom and throughout FCPS. To implement the ideas embodied in the Portrait of a Graduate will require investments in technology to customize learning experiences, extend learning outside of "traditional" school parameters, improve communication among all stakeholders within FCPS, and provide technological access for all students.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our priorities with you, and look forward to working with you as you embark upon this important project.

Sincerely,

Nancy Trainer, FCFCA Education Committee Co-Chair  
Ed Saperstein, FCFCA Education Committee Co-Chair  
Tim Thompson, FCFCA President