

April 23, 2020

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and
Fairfax County School Board Members

Dear Board Member,

Much has changed between County Executive Bryan Hill's proposed 2021 County budget of February 25, 2020, and his updated proposed budget of April 7, 2020. Consequently, the Federation has updated its initial March 28, 2020, assessment of the proposed budget with this expanded letter.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic impact on our economy, we agree with the necessity of drastically reducing revenue projections for income and spending.

We recommend the two Boards continue to review their respective budgets each quarter. As the impact of Coronavirus decreases, we encourage the Boards to appropriately increase funding for LOBs that received pandemic-forced budget cuts.

The Boards should frequently reconsider the priorities of the following:

- The health of Fairfax citizens and employees and the prevention of deaths from COVID19.
- Continuity of operations for County government and FCPS.
- Softening the economic impact on the most vulnerable populations of the county.

Updated considerations

Education Committee:

The Federation commends FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand and County Executive Bryan Hill for nimbly collaborating on the revisions of their respective budgets. Each made tough decisions quickly, pragmatically and thoughtfully. Their essential coordination ensures that both FCPS and Fairfax County are setting priorities in the best interests of our community at large.

We agree that FCPS must prioritize the salaries of its existing employees, preserve school-based positions and, as much as fiscally feasible, maintain existing programs. This pandemic-caused economic downturn of undetermined depth and length may cause unexpected enrollment increases. This would further burden our public schools. Since we value our teachers, administrators, and counselors, the maintaining of stability and

continuity of operations will, we believe, position FCPS to better move through this crisis as strongly as possible.

We also encourage FCPS to immediately engage in extensive contingency planning. The FCPS budget and strategy in FY 2021 must allow quicker reaction to possible additional changes to operations this summer and fall—including the likelihood of changes to summer school. This includes the potential that the 2020-2021 school year may require distance learning for many students for some length of time. Our schools must continue to honor their responsibility to provide a superlative education to our children. We believe FCPS' ability to innovate and remain flexible during these unusual times will be critical to our community's recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Public Safety Committee Update:

Even though new positions have been reduced from 177 to 20, we concur with one of these new positions being directed to the Health Department to boost the County's efforts in combating the pandemic.

We recommend comprehensively reviewing the FY 2021 budget each fiscal quarter. Since these reviews are very critical this year, the Department of Management and Budget should consider if delays in public safety enhancements can be diminished.

Human Service Committee Update:

The Federation concurs with the updated proposed budget to prioritize the fiscal support for our most needy residents, older adults, the Health Department, and maintaining County staffing levels. This budget also maintains funding levels for our human services programs, which the Federation supports as important to help address the impacts of the pandemic on our most vulnerable residents. The Federation agrees that predicting the full impact of the pandemic is challenging and acknowledges that further revisions to this budget may be needed.

The Federation suggests the both Boards should maximize the revenue we can receive from the Federal and State Governments. The County should consider seeking all available funding resources in this crisis. Additional funding could be used to address emerging needs in vulnerable populations.



William Barfield, President
Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations

Cc: County Executive Bryan Hill and Superintendent Scott Brabrand