

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of January 20, 2005
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached.)

President Carol Hawn introduced Dr. Jack Dale, Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools. Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Chairman of the School Board, was also in attendance.

Program — Dr. Dale said he had been asked to speak on the budget, consolidation of the system's central offices, and strategic targets. In regard to the budget, he noted the process this year included earlier involvement by the Board of Supervisors, both in meetings and in contacts among the schools leadership team, School Board, and Supervisors. He noted the state had earmarked additional resources for education with the intent of reducing the local property tax burden. He also noted that the Fairfax school enrollment is still growing, but not as rapidly as projected, which has reduced projected costs somewhat.

He addressed the effects of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which includes subscores for reading and math at different grades for the following student groups: white, black, Hispanic, Asian, special education, limited English proficiency, and from poverty. In general, the poorest performance has been in math subscores for special education students and reading subscores for children from poverty and those with limited English proficiency. Two Title I schools have had to offer transfers; nearly all who transferred had passed the tests, so the schools' scores dropped immediately. He said the value of NCLB is that it draws closer attention to individual students rather than group averages, and tries to move from "equal access" to "equal outcomes."

The schools continue to stretch the top students, he said, and IB or AP (or both) is available in every high school. The leadership team hopes to have high-school students achieve the graduation requirements by the end of grade 11 and surpass them in grade 12, because the graduation requirements fall short of college entrance requirements, especially in math and science.

There is a proposed \$1.9 billion total budget for the program. The budget proposal has a tiered approach. The lowest tier matches guidance from the Board of Supervisors for a 6.8 percent increase; the top tier is at 9.7 percent. There is a list of 25 items, with costs, that makes up the difference between the two funding levels, so that choices can be made.

Among the changes is an addition of four more full-day kindergarten programs; at this time 62 out of the 138 or so elementary schools have full-day kindergarten. It has been most successful where 25 percent or more of the students are in poverty or have limited English proficiency, so the system is targeting those schools. Some of the elementary schools also do not have the space for full-day kindergarten. It is up to the School Board whether it philosophically prefers all elementary schools to have full-day kindergarten.

The budget continues to make up more of the teachers' VRS contributions, to match every other Virginia school system. The new South County Secondary School and West Fairfax Elementary (opening the year after next) are also accounted for. It reflects increasing requirements for special education and English for Speakers of Other Languages, and a 3 percent cost of living increase for employees. Proposed starting salaries for new teachers represent an increase from \$38,000 to \$39,000, still below Loudon and Montgomery County.

The planned central offices consolidation avoids a variety of costs such as upgrades, maintenance, leases, and transportation. In addition, it will eliminate 40 positions, a figure that

the schools system has committed to. The result should be \$40 million in savings in addition to the regained time now lost to travel. The issue of disposal/use of various regional administrative buildings is important. The Pohick site was unique because of the clause requiring it to be sold if not used for a school. The schools need to assess future needs for land and keep land that may be needed. One program that shows promise is the community schools concept, as at the Graham Road site and Lacey Center. The Dunn Loring site will probably go to the county. The Board of Supervisors and Park Authority agree, however, that the playing fields at Dunn Loring must be preserved.

Dr. Dale also answered questions on twice-exceptional students; teacher turnover; parents' role; changes in targets; changes in how budget is presented; need for more schools in the western part of the county; and limited review time between CIP and budget proposals and Board of Supervisors action.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes for the December 16 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved as written.
- b. President Carol Hawn reported that a letter had gone out to associations that have allowed their Federation membership to lapse. The plan is to follow up with calls and to identify other active associations through the District Councils.
- c. Sally Ormsby reported on a variety of recent bills in the Virginia legislature related to the Federation's positions, including bills on Standards of Quality (SOQ), affordable dwelling units, zoning reform, transfer development rights, transportation, hotel taxes, zoning ordinance amendments (establishing when the Board of Zoning Appeals can grant variances, in the wake of a recent court case), landfills (allowing them within 3 instead of 5 miles, and possibly within 500 feet, of a surface water supply), governing powers for counties vs. cities, photo red lights, and car tax relief, as well as several constitutional amendments.
- d. Flint Webb reported on the League of Conservation Voters lobby day, where one goal was to incentivize counties to do build-out analysis on transportation needs, as in the Dulles corridor. He also noted that the Dulles EIS was being released to the public and hearings would be held February 22 and 23.
- e. Charles Dane reported the Education Committee would have a draft resolution on the budget for the Federation Board.
- f. Jeffrey Nolan reported from the Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities that an FCPS position for functional behavioral analysis had been eliminated and that this was resulting in more disruptions, expulsions, and suspensions.
- e. Bill Hanks reported that the Affordable Housing Preservation Task Force was completing its work and would have proposals to the Board of Supervisors the next Monday.
- f. Jeffrey Nolan reported the Braddock District Council had conducted a workshop for civic associations with 80 attendees, and the Parking Garage Task Force was being organized.

Next Membership Meeting: Thursday, February 17, 2005. Next Board meeting January 27, 2005. REMINDER: Citizen of the Year banquet March 13, 2005.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.