

**Remarks of Nancy Trainer on Proposed FY 2021 FCPS School Budget
on behalf of the Board of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
January 27, 2020—Fairfax County School Board Meeting**

My name is Nancy Trainer, and I am co-chair of the Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations.* Tonight I am speaking on behalf of the Federation's Board.

We would like to commend the Proposed Budget's continued focus on maintaining instructional quality by improving teacher and staff compensation. We agree that FCPS must place priority on attracting and retaining the finest educational personnel, and so we must pay our staff like the professionals they are.

Since salaries comprise just one element of employees' total compensation, however, we also urge you to explore options to create more flexible compensation packages. Younger employees may have different needs than employees close to retirement, and creative compensation packages could help recruit and retain staff without any additional spending. This is a suggestion we have offered in the past, but with so much new energy on the School Board, we hope you will engage anew to ensure the entire bundle of employee benefits remains responsive to an evolving marketplace.

On this subject of our evolving marketplace, we would like to renew our suggestion that you establish a Department of Strategic Planning and Innovation to support "Ignite," which is the name for FCPS' strategic plan. We believe it is essential that FCPS keep abreast of market challenges and trends, and also create a system to measure and monitor strategic success, so that our schools' investments are made well. Such an office could help ensure that strategic thinking and innovative programs are implemented consistently and in a relevant way within the organization, that we are thinking at a higher level than budgets often inspire.**

We continue to appreciate FCPS' support for the Federation's Legislative Package. Our joint work in Richmond during the last legislative session helped provide FCPS with the freedom we had long sought to determine our own starting date for the school year. In 2020 we are both seeking to equalize the revenue-generating authority of counties with that of cities. Such authority could help diversify the County's revenue base, which could, in turn, improve funding for our schools. We will also work to increase the state's funding for students who receive Free and Reduced-Price Meals, asking the commonwealth to provide such funding on a per-student basis.

Given the vast sums that the Proposed Budget requests, we hope this Board will continue the previous Board's commitment to fiscal responsibility. We commend Dr. Brabrand and his staff for working closely with County Executive Bryan Hill and his staff to jointly plan budgets, and we call on all of you to intensify such collaborative work between FCPS and the County. In the past we have seen great benefits flow from a close relationship built between each district's Supervisor and his or her School Board counterpart, and we hope that our new School Board members will engage in such a spirit of partnership.

Thank you for your time this evening, for your collective service to the children in our community, and for all the time you spend on various school matters. We look forward to working together to help support our schools.

* The two co-chairs of the Education Committee are Nancy Trainer and Ed Saperstein.

** The Federation passed a resolution concerning this issue in December, 2018 which is attached for your reference.