

**Remarks of Nancy Trainer on Advertised FY 2025 FCPS School Budget  
on behalf of the Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens' Associations  
May 14, 2024**

My name is Nancy Trainer, speaking on behalf of the Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens' Associations.

We would like to begin our remarks by commending FCPS for communicating strong support for our teachers and other staff by focusing your Advertised Budget on compensation increases.

However, we are disappointed that a school system which emphasizes the "data-driven classroom" for its educators is seemingly not engaging in the same sort of rigorous, data-driven analysis in developing its budget. FCPS requires front-line workers to check in with their students, see if what they are doing is working, and if not, to pivot and do something else. We expect nothing less from FCPS in budget deliberations.

We are aware, for example, that FCPS continues to face challenges in both attracting and retaining in-school personnel. However, FCPS has not proposed or adopted significant changes to policies and/or regulations which aim to improve workforce satisfaction, nor has FCPS engaged in a root cause analysis regarding low teacher retention. FCPS staffs its schools more generously than its peer divisions but has not employed an efficiency analysis to determine whether those staffing standards are effective. We also continue to advocate that FCPS limit professional development and/or mandatory trainings to those with proven pedagogical impact, in exchange for expanded teacher planning time.

We support the Advertised Budget's multi-year investments in programs with a strong history of providing benefit to students, such as athletics and fine and performing arts. We also applaud FCPS' continued investments in early childhood education. These investments are based on strong, data-driven thinking about what we know works best for kids.

As you engage in a more analytical and targeted approach to future budgets, FCPS may consider elevating the importance of the Office of Research and Strategic Improvement (ORSI). ORSI can help FCPS "show your work" in the same way that our students and teachers are held accountable, through continual evaluation and proper oversight.

Thank you for your time this evening, and for all the time you spend on various school matters.