
Committee Resolutions

EDUCATION

EDUC-2011-001: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD FY2012 ADVERTISED BUDGET

(1) **WHEREAS** the Fairfax County School Board (School Board) has approved its Advertised Budget for Fiscal Year 2012 (FY2012 School Budget) which requires a fund transfer increase from Fairfax County (Requested Transfer) of \$48.8Million or 3% above FY2011 levels; and

(2) **WHEREAS** the Fairfax County FY 2012 Advertised Budget Plan (County Advertised Budget), presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) on February 22, 2011, for the fourth straight year proposes no increase in school transfer, under funding the FY2012 School Budget by at least \$48.8Million (Schools Shortfall); and

(3) **WHEREAS** Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) from FY2009 through FY2011 reduced costs by more than \$465Million, and reduced per pupil spending to FY2008 levels despite the continued impact of underfunded educational mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Virginia Standards of Quality (SOQ); and

(5) **WHEREAS** these reductions, compounded by several years of County "hold harmless" flat school transfers which did not even cover the cost of a 10,000 student enrollment growth, have already significantly impaired FCPS' continued ability to provide a quality education to all children by:

(a) Increasing class size;

(b) Eliminating non-mandated after school and summer school programs, and eliminating or reducing funding for programs aimed at diverse populations including Young Scholars, College Partnership, Project Excel and Focus schools;

(c) Reducing staffing of psychologists, social workers, office staff and assistant principals;

(d) Cutting school supply accounts and textbook accounts;

(e) Holding all baseline budgets to FY2007 levels except for mandated changes;

(f) Imposing test and activity fees;

(g) Cutting central administration staff and budget share to less than 1%, the lowest in the region, reducing the ability to respond to the School Board, public and individual school needs and adequately manage responsibilities; and

(6) **WHEREAS** schools in the area represented by the MVCCA are among those most at risk, most heavily affected by the growth in population of students who require additional services and staffing consideration, most likely to suffer from school service reductions and imposition of fees, and whose progress toward fulfilling community expectations in addressing achievement gaps and meeting mandated benchmarks is most fragile and most threatened by reductions already suffered;

(7) **WHEREAS** teacher and staff salaries have also been held to FY2009 levels, eliminating both step and market scale adjustments, even though workload has increased due to class size increases and responsibilities have multiplied due to staff reductions in support areas;

(8) **WHEREAS** the contractual "step" is the only monetary recognition of service available to classroom teachers, unlike other public positions where promotions or transfers to other departments can provide advancement in compensation; and

(9) **WHEREAS** effective compensation for teacher leaders has also been actually reduced by the elimination of Teacher Leadership programs, summer school, stipends for National Board certification and tuition and by reduced contract length; and

(10) **WHEREAS** freezing of teacher salaries has also put FCPS at a further competitive disadvantage to other local systems which continue to have higher pay scales, especially at experienced teacher levels, and is not conducive to attracting quality staff to FCPS or to the profession; and

(11) **WHEREAS** additional factors negatively affect the School Budget including: the likely need to rollback and/or refund test fees (\$2-4Million); new mandates for computerized SOL testing potential (\$8Million), possible new mandates with respect to Physical education (\$18-23Million), possible reductions in Title 1 funding for neediest schools, changes in Virginia school funding levels, and the need to address the long overdue rollout of full day kindergarten to all FCPS schools; and

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(12) **WHEREAS** the County and FCPS in the fall of 2008 and 2009 conducted a number of County-wide citizen dialogues (Dialogues) to inform FCPS and the BOS about citizens' views on budget priorities and the appropriate balance of services to property tax burden, and citizens at the Dialogues clearly indicated that maintaining the service levels and quality of schools was a top priority and that revenue including property tax rates would need to rise to preserve schools and other services; and

(13) **WHEREAS** public education is a priority core mission of local government, the BOS has recognized that obligation in its historically strong support of the schools and citizens have reiterated that primary core mission status in the strong support for schools voiced in the Dialogues; and

(14) **WHEREAS** satisfaction of a priority core responsibility is not demonstrated by a particular budgetary percentage but rather through meeting its legitimate budgetary needs through available funds, or, in the alternative, to raise revenue sufficient to all priorities; and

(15) **WHEREAS** the County Advertised Budget projects a general fund revenue increase of 3.1% (\$103Million) in FY2012 which would be more than adequate to fully fund the School Shortfall (applying the BOS' oft recited pledge that more than one-half the budget supports schools would generate in excess of \$50million) and moreover includes a \$30Million discretionary balance (Fund Balance), assuming no change in the recommended residential real property tax rate of \$1.09 which was also the maximum advertised rate adopted by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on February 22, 2012; and

(16) **WHEREAS** the 1.09 maximum advertised tax rate would cost the average taxpayer less than \$10 more per month in FY2012, after several years of minimal or no increases (indeed the total increase in average tax bill from FY2006 through FY2012 is only about \$29 per month) even though school enrollment and need for school and County services was burgeoning; and

(17) **WHEREAS** FCPS made significant and detrimental cuts during periods when County revenues were flat or decreasing in expectation that when revenue recovered, critical cuts could begin restoration in the order of priority as determined by the School Board which has sole authority as to expenditures; and

(18) **WHEREAS** holding FCPS to a flat transfer even though enrollment and County revenue is increasing, does not satisfy the County's priority core mission nor express the will of citizens, particularly given cuts already suffered and those which would be necessitated by such failure of adequate funding; and

(19) **WHEREAS** the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA) recognizes that increased revenue predictions, particularly should there be a decrease in tax rate, may

not be adequate to fully fund the Schools Shortfall and meet other responsibilities,

(A) **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA), in consideration of all of the above and in recognition of significant reductions already made, fully supports the FY2012 School Budget as presented, including the Transfer Request; and

(B) **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the MVCCA urges the BOS, in adopting a Budget for FY2012, to fully fund the School Shortfall but in any event and, at a minimum, to provide an increased transfer to Fairfax County Public Schools which at least compensates for the cost of enrollment growth in FY2012 (\$17.8M, whether by employing a portion of the Fund Balance or otherwise providing funds from expanded County revenues; and

(C) **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the MVCCA urges the BOS to establish a residential property tax rate of \$1.09 for FY2012 in order to minimally satisfy its stewardship obligations to meet core needs, protect important County assets, and preserve quality of life and hope for the future, and to actively consider for employment such other revenue enhancement opportunities which may be available by law.

END: MVCCA RESOLUTION EDUC-2011-001