



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998

<http://www.mvcca.org>

Dear Supervisor Dan Storck and Chairperson Karen Corbett-Sanders,

Ref: FY 2022 County Budget Related to School Transfer Funds

March 28, 2021

The MVCCA is proposing a property tax to support our schools. This resolution was debated at our recent MVCCA General Council meeting. We hope that you take notice of what the citizens are thinking regarding FY2022. We will be testifying at the budget hearings.

Katherine Ward

Katherine Ward
Cochair
MVCCA

Attached: MVCCA (EDUC 2021-4) Resolution -School Transfer in FY 2022 County Advertised Budget

MVCCA (EDUC 2021-4) Resolution -School Transfer in FY 2022 County Advertised Budget

WHEREAS the Fairfax County Executive's FY2022 Advertised Budget Plan, released on February 23, 2021, (County Budget) proposed an operating fund increase (Proposed Transfer) for Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) of \$13.07M compared to the \$104.4M (Transfer Request) requested by the Fairfax County School Board (SB) in its Advertised Budget (School Budget) resulting in a shortfall of about \$90.3M (School Shortfall); and

WHEREAS about \$60M of the Transfer Request was intended as a required match for announced Commonwealth of Virginia school salary increases to provide a 3% compensation increase for teachers, who otherwise would receive no compensation increases for two consecutive years (and some would actually receive less pay than in FY2020 due to insurance increases) while local competing jurisdictions have announced compensation increases and will take advantage of Commonwealth funding; and

WHEREAS the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the SB recognized the need to provide competitive compensation for teachers in order to attract and retain a highly qualified staff and had adopted a data driven multiyear plan for targeted increases to ensure FCPS could maintain its value as a critical County asset, but failure to provide competitive compensation for the second consecutive year will disrupt that plan, and, as it has in the past, cause the loss of experienced teachers to surrounding jurisdictions which continue to pull ahead in competitive advantage; and

WHEREAS the Transfer Request includes about \$42.7M in necessary spending primarily for rising contractual obligations, health insurance costs, mandated retirement contributions and preschool special education enrollment, but the Proposed Transfer is inadequate to fund these largely nondiscretionary needs by about \$29M even without any compensation increases; and

WHEREAS the pandemic continues to create many financial uncertainties about revenue and expenses, but also about additional relief funding which may be received by the County and/or FCPS and, depending on conditions or restrictions imposed, could be used to directly provide funds to FCPS or permit reallocation of County funds to fund the Transfer Request in whole or in part; and

WHEREAS homeowner real property taxes provide the bulk of County revenue and some homeowners have seen spendable income decline while the increasing value of homes, while desirable, creates higher tax liability; yet homeowners realize that to maintain home values and economic recovery future, County assets and infrastructure must be preserved, that FCPS is the single most important asset to the County's future, and a highly qualified and motivated school staff is the most critical asset to FCPS; and

WHEREAS based on an average assessed home value of \$607,000, holding the FY2022 tax rate at FY2021 rates would raise almost \$70M while costing the average homeowner less than \$25.00 per month while each penny thereafter would raise \$27M at a cost to the taxpayer of \$5.00 per month; thus at homeowner cost of less than \$30.00 per month, or \$1.00 a day, the County could have raised nearly \$100M for schools and other critical priorities to preserve the County's economic future but the BOS chose to truncate that possibility by setting the FY22 Maximum Tax Rate at FY21 rates (\$1.15),

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, to protect our institutions and encourage future growth, urges the BOS to adopt a real property tax rate for FY2022 of \$1.15 per \$100, and to fund the Transfer Request from that revenue increase or otherwise.

Adopted by the General Council on March 24, 2021