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City of Fairfax School Board Regular Meeting, Monday, January 13, 2025

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[00:00:00] all right good evening ladies and gentlemen tonight is monday january 13th of 2025 and this is the regular school board meeting of the city of fairfax school board um thank you to anybody who's here who came to the swearing-in who stuck around um we are now going to stand for the pledge of allegiance i pledge allegiance to the flag of the united states of america and to the republic for which it stands one nation under god indivisible with liberty and justice for all

[00:00:38] there are no changes to the agenda this evening and we have no other announcements uh the first item on the agenda is the adoption of the agenda may i have a motion please madam chair uh yes i move that the city of fairfax school board approve the agenda is written and distributed may have a second i'll second okay it's been moved by miss hickman and it's been seconded by Miss Sessori I'm gonna have to get used to all the new names now all those in favor signify by saying aye aye no members are opposed the motion is unanimous. Okay presentations to the school

[00:01:16] board we have citizen participation anybody signed up okay and we will move on to the student representative report. See ya. Hello everyone I hope everyone had a wonderful extended break and a happy new year. Our Fairfax City students had a busy month as they spread joy during holiday events while working to keep their academics strong over at daniel's run the choir team spread lots of holiday

cheer at the sunrise senior living home the fairfax city festival lights in fairfax town square and their concert yesterday at osborne park high school as we head into the new year

[00:01:53] they have an exciting program starting on january 14th called daniel's run komodo karate this will be an innovative way to get kids moving at providence the students were enthusiastic about participating in their winter break Spirit Week, which included themes like Candy Stripe Day and Wacky Tacky Sweater Day. Additionally, students have begun to sign up for their PES History Fair, which will allow them to explore history topics of their choice.

[00:02:19] Soon, on January 23rd, they will host their first ever Providence Book Festival, which will be an exciting time for students to discover new favorites. KJMS had an exciting month for both their academics and musical departments. Before their break, they handed out 686 honor roll certificates and honored 78 students at the Student of the Quarter ceremony.

[00:02:42] Additionally, KJMS held their first ever AQT Middle School Quiz Bowl tournament for FCPS. On the performing arts side, the chorus, orchestra, band, and theater departments all held their annual winter showcase and kept the school lively with many performances.

[00:02:59] On a larger scale, this past December, staff from Prismatic Services, Inc. presented information on an action plan to help the school board update the FCPS middle school start time to 8 a.m. or later. More updates will be out on this as Prismatic Services and FCPS continue to work together.

[00:03:19] At our high school, the students worked hard at many performance events and to plan volunteer efforts before the break. Their performance department continued to thrive as Fairfax High School hosted the Band and Orchestra winter concerts, the Academy MTAs Cabaret, and the FX Players Collaborate event.

[00:03:38] Meanwhile, the choir students spread carols around the city. FHS students came together to organize community efforts, including a music department food drive, SGA toy drive, and a KJMS Hour of Code event led by the FHS Girls Who Code Club.

[00:03:54] As we continue into January, there's a curriculum and community night that will help high school students make decisions about post-secondary plans. As everyone starts thinking about new goals around this time of year, don't forget to take a moment to reflect on what went well this past year and remember that the best goals are the ones that are sustainable.

[00:04:13] Thank you. Thank you, Sia. Do any board members have any questions for Sia? All right. We will move on to the superintendent's proposed 2026 budget. Before we begin this presentation. I'd just like to add that Staff and myself met today. So we do have some changes Some further changes that might be made. This is again a draft I think everybody was on most of the correspondence regarding the

[00:04:50] budget so With that mr. Pottenberg you can you might want to talk about the changes as you're going along to avoid the that's all suggesting things well thank you madam chair and members of the school board and I'm pleased to be presenting first out of the box and any of the school systems around the region as we do which has been pointing out is really a challenge for us because we do present our budget early on in comparison to our peer groups as chair pitches said that we do have a number of changes

[00:05:29] because as we evolve the budget process has evolved and we'll get into that a little bit further but there are so many intricacies and nuances and with the election this evening what better time to start

and identify some of those changes as Miss pitches mentioned we did have a discussion today and went into a lot of detail about the changes that we needed to make in fact I want to thank Miss Dorsey for all of her work and trying to make sure that we could get this done and make those changes. I know there will be changes. As Ms. Pitchett said, this is the proposed budget. The superintendent's usually just the preview, and it really is the kickoff for

[00:06:09] our budget deliberations and discussions. Starting out, we wouldn't be talking about the budget if we didn't talk about the school services agreement. With a little bit of background, the school Service Agreement was executed in the 60s, I think in 1962, and was ratified in, I think, 78.

[00:06:29] And what that agreement that started way back then did was develop a partnership, a four-way agreement with Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax Council, the Fairfax County Public School School Board, and most importantly, the City of Fairfax School School Board, in a partnership that has been an amazing example of what can work right for students when everybody's focused on the same thing. And for my budget, the reason why we say that this is really important is because the SSA lays out a formulaic approach for what our tuition computation would be.

[00:07:08] And there are a number of different benefits that this provides us. And really the bottom line is when you have a close to \$4 billion operation and everything that goes in the pedagogy, the staff development the training the amount of staff the amount of resources that are available it provides us with things that a city our size couldn't afford reasonably unless we really burdened the taxpayers so there's a benefit to scale of leveraging that but in addition to that what I always say that is the beauty of the city of Fairfax is that we are able to in the school

[00:07:47] board's vision and leadership to add to the best in class public education system I believe in the country if not in the world and and what I mean by that is if you take a look at this slide it has a number of different things number different offerings our students have not only from the social emotional supports with the ramp certification designation of all of our schools have the avid program the advancement via individual determination and it closes opportunity gaps for struggling students but the the ap programs that we have all of these vertically articulated what that means is we have them at every level every elementary school every middle

[00:08:25] our middle and our high all that with and our comparison with the city of falls church who has less students than we do but a higher tax rate and you'll see in a little while that they pay a lot more for their schools and don't have near the offerings that we have in addition to our academy at the high school level and the other academies that we are exposed to have our students city residents have the opportunity to enjoy so moving on what I'm talking about here in terms of the cost per pupil if you take a look at where we sit in that this is really the major formulaic

[00:09:02] approach of your bang for the buck your investment your tax dollars the city of Fairfax it costs us twenty thousand one hundred eighty dollars and the last year's approved budget per pupil that's what the actual tuition bill, which has been going up considerably, and I'll get to that in a minute, what it costs. But we're still among the top five lowest. And in fact, we're still better than Falls Church, which is over \$3,000 more per student. And that's a significant amount when you talk about the number of students we have that we'll be getting to in just a minute.

[00:09:35] This chart reflects the tuition history, just giving a little perspective about how things have gone up. You'll see the ADM, that's average daily membership, and I'm going to get into what that really

means versus our September 30th enrollment in just a minute. But what it shows is that we've had fluctuation in enrollment, but we're on the rise. One of the things the board chair and members of the board have been saying is with all the development that has been approved and in fact constructed, we have seen a lot of enrollment from those developments. Mr. Foreman comes and speaks to us from the city demographer's office and does a really good job of articulating

[00:10:14] that but we have really challenged him to refine his his tools because we have seen the impact of a lot of the development and the increase whereas Fairfax County Public Schools is contracting we are expanding it's a healthy problem to have it's a good problem to have it's great for our students but it also puts a burden on all of us so what are the budget components I mentioned the the SSA and the tuition expense because that's the most even though that's number two on this list it's the most important in terms of the actual highest cost we have a school board and a ministerial which

[00:10:52] is a small portion of the budget we have the tuition expense we have the debt services cost which is still retiring refinance debt for prior bond referendum for the middle school and the high school then we also have turf replacement improvements and then our capital improvement program that the board previous board just approved as we continue to move forward and in the school board administration cats it really just has the salaries benefits and office supplies in that in that actual account and as I said it's a small portion of it there are two primary there are two factors there are primary

[00:11:30] factors and secondary factors that impact this tuition bill the average daily membership and I'll get to why that's important the average daily membership is a reflection of, and you'll hear me say this again and again and again, because a lot of people wonder, well, what's September 30th enrollment? And that's used for capital improvement planning. That's used for when you look at the capacity of a building, when Fairfax County Public Schools does theirs, they incorporate the September 30th data in comparison from prior year September 30th. Why do we talk about average daily membership when it comes to our tuition?

[00:12:04] Because that's what the state uses as far as the state reporting for the calculation formula for how revenues are distributed to school divisions. What's the difference? The difference between the September 30th data are that the data for the March period include absenteeism and include the data that's then reported in December, whether it's special education students, and also early childhood, there are other elements that are included in January that are not in the September 30th data.

[00:12:38] So long story short, there's huge ads and huge subtractions about age of students that are included in those calculations, et cetera, that can be found on the state website. But the bottom line is it's a more accurate reflection of the enrollment that we have, and that's why it's called the Average Daily Membership.

[00:12:57] That's why it's used in the formula for our financing, and that's why we use it in not only the original agreement that was done in the 60s and ratified in the 70s, But that's why it's used every year for the calculation that FCPS does in that formula for our tuition bill.

[00:13:13] Secondary factors are the city's average daily membership as a percent of the total FCPS school enrollment. And you'll hear me talk a little more about that because, as I mentioned, our enrollment is going up. Fairfax County Public Schools enrollment is stagnant.

[00:13:30] And in fact, they have a presentation tomorrow that is online currently at their work session, which I will be at, where they'll be talking about their CIP. And in reading that document, it shows that they are not only predicting a contraction, a reduction in their enrollment, but also a reduction in their birth to kindergarten ratio.

[00:13:50] What that means is the number of students born in one year, aged up to when they would actually attend school, that birth to kindergarten, when they would attend a kindergarten, ratio is decreasing for them. It is not decreasing for the city as we have discussed previously and as was presented to us by Mr. Foreman.

[00:14:08] So I'll get into that a little bit more. And then the numbers of city students at different levels because the formula is broken out, elementary, basically middle, and then high. And then the Fairfax County students attending city schools. We get what a revenue element is called a classroom rental adjustment.

[00:14:25] And that rental agreement is great when there are more county students that are attending our schools, but as I just mentioned, it's going in the inverse direction, which is problematic and challenging us financially in our budget. Factors that are also continuing in this, and I'll get into this in more detail later, and that's one of the things Ms. Pitches had brought up this morning that was very relevant and germane to this conversation.

[00:14:50] The FCPS operating costs, they had increased over the years, and I'm going to restate this, time and time again. There is a slide that will show how they had increased past years \$50 million a year. Then we had the pandemic, and we had some kind of weird fluctuations here for a while.

[00:15:08] Then it was about \$110 million. Well, now it's up to close to \$300 million a year, anywhere from \$210 million up to \$298 million. Those trends are going to continue, and that is problematic for us in terms of funding our budget. Because when we get the actual bills, no matter what our projections are, when we actually get the tuition bill, it's based upon all the state-reported data that we monitor, but you'll see later that it's had some significant increases, especially recently.

[00:15:39] We take a look at the current fiscal year approved budget, as I said, and you'll hear me say it was \$3.7. It's a \$3 billion budget. We took a look at a prior fiscal year, what they call the year-end budget, and any indicators of upcoming impacts.

[00:15:54] We listen to their fiscal forecast, and we'll get into what they've spoken about, collective bargaining. It was at 12% that the collective bargaining unions were trying to get as an increase in pay. They settled on 7%, but that directly impacts us.

[00:16:10] We have not had an increase in salaries on FCPS side of that size for quite some time. that has a direct adverse impact in other words cost it's good for the employees it's good for us staying competitive with other school divisions that are trying to recruit but it does have a huge impact and then we take a look at any other things that may be going on they have some ongoing elements and I'll describe them in much more detail as they're listed in a future slide again that was discussed this afternoon we were able to incorporate some of that in

[00:16:45] yeah then the Fairfax cities I'm sorry I'm sorry I was gonna say before we move on that these two slides this we're gonna move these right to where the to what we talked about the two actual tuition wherever the board would like I'd be happy to move them so if you can give just the feedback we'd go

ahead and somebody take notes we'll go ahead and make sure we make those changes yeah and I and I would say that this slide these two sides are they're they're very similar maybe we could just combine it into one side the same absolute ones

[00:17:21] just more like this is the detail absolutely be happy to the detailed one which would you prefer the detailed one I would prefer the detailed one where and when we're talking about primary factors the FCPS operating costs and the current fiscal approved operating budget you could maybe combine that like and just say the typical is one to two hundred million we're looking at the approved operating budget being at 300 million but then we can combine those two bullet points there and same with under the secondary factors I think we can

[00:17:56] combine the third and fourth bullet points and the fifth and sixth bullet points does that make sense and then I had suggested earlier that we move this information to when and when mr. Plattenberg gets when he gets to the budget the actual budget preview right before that he talks about the numbers that's what we talked about earlier today okay go ahead mr. Pontenburg sorry I just wanted to just so we don't so as was stated here's the history that we

[00:18:33] were just talking about so you can see and it's in your presentation that we've gone from where we had two million eight hundred fifty thousand two I mean two billion eight hundred fifty million to two billion nine hundred eighty a difference there and then a slight increase of 24 million above that up to the top one where we have 3.5 billion to 3.7 billion so you see it's significant increase over time that miss pitch has mentioned so so that's important in terms of framing the conversation to get a general understanding of we begin

[00:19:08] with this SSA we talk about the history of operating expenditures and then we get into the membership that I mentioned before. It plays both an important role in the primary and secondary factors, and we're going to show the city enrollments. Here you'll see our September 30th enrollment data provided to us by the Department of Information Technology for Fairfax County Public Schools when they came and presented to the school board. This shows that our city membership on September 30th was 2,992, and you'll see that that's a pretty big increase when I get

[00:19:45] to that up from last year of 2,922. So although they're close, 2,992, 2,922, it's 70 students above. And when you look at the cost per pupil, it becomes considerable at that amount. And that's a pretty big increase, and we'll show more about that later. Here's the history of the average daily membership, which is different than the September 30th enrollment. Remember I gave the depiction of what the difference is and as I've stated we've had an increase in membership and on this slide depicts the ADM as a March of each year again

[00:20:22] different than the September 30th there are a number of reasons for this growth and as I mentioned the new development transfers in and transfers out during the school year additional special education reported data and so forth the dates as I mentioned for student membership projections and the official budget counts include special education special education preschool and that comes December 1st, which gets back to why we don't use September 30th data. And then the non-traditional sites data is reported January 31st. That's why we don't use September 30th data.

[00:20:54] I can't stress that enough. And then FCPS pre-K is March 31. Anyway, as we continue on the ADM additions, there's a whole litany of information on the state website. And if anybody's really interested in delving into a lot of those details, I can forward you the reference points, the additions and

the subtractions that go into ADM because some of the elements of that are the students in special education, pupils ages 20 and 21. Those are additions, pupils in alternative education programs, non-public school pupils, pupils in ISAEP, and I'll get the definition for

[00:21:31] those who want them, homeschool students and so forth, and the list goes on. And the deductions or postgraduate students pre-k students and age under five students age over 20 etc so it's very involved and that's why we don't spend too much time and we just tell you what the ADM is and if I might we also use a September membership because we know September membership is generally higher than what our ADM is gonna come in at so it sort of gives us an idea that we're at least gonna be 10 to 40 kids lower than usually than what the September membership says so it

[00:22:09] gives you an idea of what's to come which is an excellent point and it's graphically represented absolutely miss pitches and represented here on this chart and when I say that we have more city students than County and that adversely impacts the amount of revenue we get increases the amount of cost we have in terms of our tuition this shows you graphically when we had that gap back in 2016 2017 and now how tight it's getting between the September and the ADM being 29 22 and

[00:22:43] 29 13 basically nine students it's really closing that gap and that's making our situation more and more challenging so with that context we then get into the superintendent's preview budget in looking at this what we what was mentioned before is our operating budget we talked about that and we talked about the ADM going into our tuition number we talked about the city enrollment versus the county enrollment we spoke about the mid-year looking at third quarter of FCPS looking at the year-end and all those budgetary iterations we

[00:23:21] work with the director of budget services for the city Gwen Riddle who's here in the audience this evening and also JC Martinez the chief financial officer for the city and we work together to take a look at not only what our budget forecast has been what our plan is for our budget but then also all of these different iterations and as Ms. Pitches has pointed out previously we're approximately 1.7 percent of the entire FCPS operating budget so if you take a look at what our costs have been historically over time

[00:23:55] and you see the increase well that 1.7 approximate increase is a good correlation to the increases that we have. In fact, last year in FY24 that we just paid the tuition bill, we had a significant increase that was well over, when the tuition bill came in, over \$2.6 million that was funded by the city in anticipation of what we had been monitoring, but clearly significantly higher than we had ever received before. What do I mean? It was 13.71% over prior year tuition bills that we

[00:24:32] had received from Fairfax County Public Schools and as I said it's a healthy problem but when you look at it from a cost perspective it's definitely unhealthy and it's adverse because it hit the budget pretty hard well over our forecast and all of these things that we monitored we were aware and ready when it came in but it still came in significantly higher and that 1.7 is a perfect example and then working again hand-in-hand with the budget director director and also the chief financial officer, we were able to go ahead and identify the city identified funding to go ahead and address that. And I'll be getting into some of the other

[00:25:08] components as well. When we look at by the numbers, and I mentioned what we have, the superintendent has in working with the city forecast is an 8.25. You heard me say it was 13.71. Well, historically, we have been only 3.4 percent on average per year. Some years we went down, some years we went up, but on average we were at 3.4 percent. So this 8.25 percent forecast increase by the

superintendent is based upon what we collectively have been monitoring, what happened in FY24 that I just

[00:25:47] expressed, what we know in 25 we feel we're going to be short based upon the 24 actual as it came in, and what we now have to forecast to predict for FY26. So what that means is we're in challenging times.

[00:26:05] We've projected the ADM to be average daily membership to be 2026. For 2026 to be 3,074 students. And the operating budget, we currently are seeing that we believe it's going to be well over \$4 billion.

[00:26:22] And that 8.25%, if you'll think about what I mentioned, about a 7% salary increase, That's a direct correlation to what's going to be passed on in terms of our tuition bill. And there are other factors as well that are included in that. So when you look at the actual budget summary document, this is a legacy document that includes all the cost centers that are utilized in the financial system.

[00:26:47] The tuition amount has increased considerably. In fact, it's been historical increases from the 24 based upon the increase of the city Fairfax enrollment that I mentioned. The significant increases in the FCPS operating budget annually, which I've mentioned and shown, and approximately over \$300 million a year to increase 10.3% from FY15 to 18, 7.96% from FY18 to 21, and 20.33% from FY21 to 24.

[00:27:20] In fact, our tuition bill before classroom rental was \$60,955,083, well over, as I mentioned, for FY24 what we had budgeted for. And due, again, to the process of us implementing new procedures, working collaboratively and closely with the City of Fairfax, as I mentioned, Chief Financial Officer and Budget Director, we were able to fund the significance for what was a historical 13.71% increase.

[00:27:47] We've developed this budget, utilizing approaches included above and what I previously mentioned, and working in close partnership, as I mentioned as well, and in the new budgetary process that the city has. What they have is every director has to come give a forecast, even before I'm able to brief the school board.

[00:28:08] We did mention to the board chair and vice chair that these were new processes that were being put in place by the city that we were in partnership complying with. But it allowed us to have deeper conversations and collaborations about what the superintendent's projection would be.

[00:28:25] So we agreed that the 8.25% increase in this amount is what we should expect for FY25, or \$65,983,877, and to continue monitoring the FCPS budget and reviewing their expenditures and revenues.

[00:28:44] In FY26, we also collectively agreed that the 8.25% on the current forecast for FY25 of 65,983,877, or 71 million as you see here, 427,547 is an appropriate forecast, especially with that 7% collective bargaining that I mentioned, the projections for FCPS.

[00:29:09] Again, the sudden account for the classroom rental, which is accounted in revenue and is not an expense however as I mentioned it's growing smaller and smaller in summary if you multiply the current FCPS operating budget of over four point one billion by 1.7 the tuition would be close to what it is and with what we anticipate it going up in the placeholder amount that we've been that the superintendent's including and presenting to you this evening of seventy one million four hundred twenty seven thousand five hundred forty seven

[00:29:40] And lastly, when you look at surrounding jurisdictions and the local funding effort, one of the things that is really important to have contextual awareness, the JLARC study by the state of Virginia had said that the local funding for public education is not appropriate.

[00:30:02] And therefore, the way the formula is depicted that the state is underfunding public education. Well, what does that mean? What that means is that localities are having to basically share the burden and carry the burden of that cost.

[00:30:18] As I mentioned, we work closely with the city staff on everything we do, and our cost, when you look at it, is 35 percent. But with these increases, we'll be going up to close to 40 percent of the budget, if not more. and that the impact of that generally speaking results in the inability for the city to fund other projects or other initiatives because there's so much heavily because of the school tuition that is handed to us based upon the conditions I mentioned before so looking what's coming up next look ahead we have our timeline it reflects our being very early as I mentioned

[00:30:55] the beginning and proposing a budget especially when the state budget is usually wrapped up in March FCPS presents their budget in January later than us later than I'm doing now then we also the state budget is usually wrapped up in March that's when we know the revenues that we're going to be receiving we've been monitoring and we're working with miss Riddle with Glenn we've been working on looking at what the forecast is for the state revenue she has mentioned as recent as this evening that she's made some adjustments because the revenue

[00:31:28] pictures looking a little bit better there. But again, it's woefully short. Recruitment and retention of employees expected remain a significant challenge. The cost of collective bargaining remain a significant challenge. And we must continue to monitor the economic changes that are occurring that are impacting our budget as well. And with that, Madam Chair, that concludes my brief budget presentation. I'm sure, as you mentioned at the beginning, there'll be a lot of comments and recommendations to change the format of this and we

[00:32:05] appreciate and encourage you providing us any feedback you can this evening and also follow up in writing with anything that you may contemplate after you walk away from here tonight so thank you madam chair Lauren do you want to start do you have any questions or comments doesn't have to be a question you can also if you if you want more time I can come back to

[00:32:32] you. Okay. Ms. Kelsey? Yeah, I have a couple questions. The fact that FCPS is staying pretty much stagnant with their numbers and we're going up, what does that do to the cost per pupil then?

[00:32:55] Well, because will theirs go up with that and then will ours automatically have to go up because theirs went up or even though we're rising? It's one of the factors, but the biggest factors I mentioned is the operating budget. So even if they, for example, if they go ahead and, you know, They call them multi-year investments, expenditure category changes that they look at that are beyond that, just the individual that are part of the operating.

[00:33:21] You know, I mentioned the collective bargaining, salaries and benefits, but there are also required adjustments that they have, primarily special education services increase, retirement rate changes, health care rate changes that they have to accommodate.

[00:33:37] There's ongoing needs about their substitute incentive, their test fees, and those are additional operational costs that add to it that impact us. Madam Chair, will you? Yeah, I was just going to say, like, if

their numbers go up, then typically they have to spend a little bit more money to educate those students, so it affects us, but just a tiny bit.

[00:33:57] It's really for us, like, when they have a huge increase in spending for whatever it is a program. Well, I was just thinking if there's, but if their numbers are going down and ours are going up. Well, as far as it goes up, we have to pay more.

[00:34:13] Okay. That's what I'm like, I'm trying to think the cost per pupil does, like, there's. The cost per pupil really doesn't have much to do with how many students they have necessarily. I mean, it's a little piece because if they have more students, their costs go up. But if they have less students, then their cost for whatever it costs them to educate their students goes down.

[00:34:36] I said they're their numbers don't really affect it doesn't it's not I would say it's not a big driver okay I would say it's mostly gonna be things like salaries benefits any programming like their CI all that stuff is split correct okay I just wanted to double check that um then this is more clarification um on your budget for the 2026 I just want to make sure I'm I heard it Right. For the 2026, it's also the 8.2% increase from the 2025?

[00:35:11] That's correct. Okay. So we're increasing the 2025 as well as the 2026? Both of those are the same? I'm seeing Gwen Riddle nod her head, but that's correct. And the thing is, we've approved our budget. It's working in partnership with the city.

[00:35:27] They're increasing the budget stabilization fund. They're increasing what we eat. Good evening. So yeah, we're based on what we saw come in for 24 and information we've received from Fairfax County. We are anticipating an 8.25% increase for the 25 and then another 8.2 on top of that for 26. Okay. And so hopefully we're covering all the bases. Gotcha. I just wanted to make sure because I heard 8.25 twice and I'm like, wait. Okay. And then this is a quick one. Just remind

[00:36:05] me what was our projected ADM for 2025 the number I can provide it I don't know if that's fine I just in my head when I was like 20 or 29 something okay you follow up I can thank you that's it so on I think on the same slide that miss Kelsey is talking about the school board budget summary I think my suggestion would be if possible because it's hard to wrap your yeah it's hard to wrap your head about rounds

[00:36:43] that those were adopted so long ago right so we've talked about this a million times right we are essentially looking at a budget that won't even begin for a year and a half we don't even have the actuals for fiscal year 2025 and won't until august so we have 20 but we have 2024 so my suggestion would be can we add actuals because i think it might make more sense because when you see 55 and then you see 71 without knowing that it really wasn't 55 that was what we adopted but that's not what the number the actual numbers that came in because of that large you know increase in

[00:37:18] the budgeting overall so i don't know if that would be helpful i think for people who don't understand it because right now it looks like such a big jump and i mean yeah 8.5 and 8.5 is a really large jump but we're not jumping off of adopted it we are technically but it's we need need to look at the actuals themselves. I think it might help people a little bit. Absolutely. I think that's great feedback because it is misleading when you take a look at what, if you go back in the slides and you take a look at the one that I have here, and it shows that it was 58, 575, and then you go back to the adopted, you'll see a huge difference. So yeah, I think that's

[00:37:57] excellent feedback, and we definitely can put in this category the approved for all of that, They actuals rather for FY 24 because we haven't right and I think even something along the lines of saying Actuals for FY 2025 will not be out until August 2025 Right context context of how best I think yeah budget obviously you said right We're gonna have ours approved on February 3rd when the FCPS budget only comes out on January 23rd so an amazing thing about what you say miss Hickman is

[00:38:31] Spot on, the timing of when, you know, here we are talking in January, right, and normally the budget preview, let's say, has been, and you've been very vocal about it, it's inappropriate to have a December 24 when we don't even have the 25 actuals, we only have the 24 actuals, they are going to come in in August of 25, and we're talking about a budget that is for 26.

[00:38:56] So for us to be able to forecast on budgetary adaptations that Fairfax County will do, year-end budget, mid-year, third quarter, and their approved operating budget, it really is a guess.

[00:39:12] In fact, I think Ms. Pitches had said it best when she had said it's a guess upon a guess upon a guess upon a guess. We have these formulas. We have what the impact is when they come back and they break them down. And I think, to your point, putting more context would definitely help people have a deeper understanding of what we do.

[00:39:30] Thank you. Ms. Cessary. Yeah, I was looking at the slide that you have, the cost per pupil, and I was just wondering if you could perhaps remind me why our per pupil cost is often a little bit higher than the county cost.

[00:39:55] Five to eight, 500 to about 1,000.

[00:40:18] Yeah, and I'll just, do you want me to answer it? We'd love to tell you why, but the formula that they use, nobody understands. The multiplier, they have this multiplier that they developed back in the 60s, and everybody's dead.

[00:40:37] And we can't ask anybody, but for whatever reason, I'm being 100% honest, it works out that we come in around \$500 more which seems reasonable and then the county pays us for students that take up space in our buildings it's just the way the only option would be to open up the contract which is not at this time a favorable undertaking so there's really no reason that there's nothing

[00:41:16] that we can say oh it's because you know this is their profit or it it's it's just the formula that they use to calculate students student cost and if you take a look that's why we use false church as a comparator because if you take a look at that now they have they have less students in there 24 approved they had 2,500 students and they're \$3,000 more and we have 2,900. So considerably swaying and it's considerable difference. We talk about our tuition bill and yeah, it hurts when it goes up

[00:41:55] as significantly as what Ms. Kelsey mentioned and what we've been talking about. But it still is the best bang for the buck and a lot better than we could do if we were not in this partnership that has this bizarre formula. I have one more question if that's okay. Yeah, yeah absolutely I I would like to know or perhaps we can follow up later on just having a better understanding not only of ADM but also program capacity within each of the schools as we you know from this school year and as we move into 25

[00:42:34] and 26 budgets I'll be happy to and I'll be happy to forward you in fact for the entire board the information I have on ADM and it goes through those iterative ads and dducks and then if you look at the JLARC study when it talks about the local composite index and all these other fun things that if you really

like delving down in the data you can look at and some of it doesn't make sense like what we're talking about this formula but it is what it is and the JLARC study does a really good job of analyzing that and I'll go ahead and give you a link to the JLARC study as well because it's actually very good

[00:43:08] information. And then in terms of capacity, so program capacity is reflective of the different programs you have within a building. When you design and you build a facility, you build it, generally speaking, based upon the educational specifications or what you want to see it have in that building. When the actual use of what is designed, gone through the public process and then built, how it's occupied, and the different programs, and I usually use special needs programs

[00:43:44] because whether it's specialized programs that a couple may have been planned for, but then you have a lot more, well, your program capacity then impacts your physical capacity within that building. So your school capacity is as it was designed. Your program capacity is as it's being used. Now, each year, FCPS polls every principal to identify every program within their facility to analyze, and then they report. And I mentioned that's CIP. In that, you'll see a chart that says

[00:44:22] all the different schools, all the different pyramids, and in the Fairfax Pyramid, it'll have building capacity, program capacity, but then it will show each and every one of the additional programs so you can see what is added to and that is it's currently online but I can also include that and what I send you for easy reference I would love that absolutely all right so the slide where how we get here I'm thinking that where

[00:44:58] it says city enrollment versus County maybe we're looking at things obviously all these things affect our tuition number the classroom rental might be a better because and we can talk because the county looks at it as a discount so when they give us their tuition number it's already taken out and then we put it back in so that the city can record it as revenue but that that rental number affects our tuition bill so I yeah so I'm you know that might be

[00:45:34] something to put there this the slide the school board budget summary slide I'm thinking about what miss Hickman said about putting the actuals for 2024 which when we have the adopted for 2025 gonna look a little funny so I'm thinking and we can talk about this at the work session if that's a better place if

[00:46:06] if we're going to have the we would my suggestion would be for FY 2024 we have adopted slash actual and then FY 2025 would be adopted slash expected so that or forecasted and that way when it's presented to mayor and council they can sort of sort of tells a little bit of a story like they can see that it's not like oh it came in at 65 and why did you know why would

[00:46:40] we put 58 it it just will make I we can talk about that that doesn't have to be set in stone and then the two slides like I said the ones to combine the primary and secondary factors I I like that you're talking about how FCPS is when we talk about historical trends and fluctuations with enrollment mentioning at that point that FCPS is flat and we're growing and if they look

[00:47:19] at the predicted they're looking at the birth rates right now the prediction for kindergarten Fairfax City takes the cake for all surrounding jurisdictions we are well above everyone else for birth rates right now so we're gonna in five years we are going to see a big increase as long as you know well people will move but for the most part we will see an increase and then the cost actually the classroom rental Jeff I would say it's pretty good even though their

[00:47:57] numbers are down because typically we're under two million dollars historically we've been mostly under two million so I would say that's a and the number of city students at different levels if we combine that with each level is calculated separately we can talk about that elementary middle and high all chart we are charged differing different amounts for each different level you can elementary is that the most or is it high school but I always reverse

[00:48:30] elementary is the most and then then high school then middle right just but other than that I don't have I don't think I have any other comments for now does anybody have any go backs yeah and we every year as a part of our CIP program we go through in detail in the presentation showing what the birth to

[00:49:09] kindergarten ratio is so we look at actual data students that were born five years ago and who enrolled in kindergarten that gives us our percent our birth decay ratio scps had been around 85 percent meaning 85 percent that those were born ended up in our schools um and it's decreasing and as miss pitches said we were through the roof when mr. forming came and presented um and what i'll do is um i'll go ahead and include a link to his presentation that i think it has it there's also a chart though that chart was in

[00:49:45] this presentation wasn't it no oh okay I sent it from somewhere else I'll find it okay all right I'm sorry I thought it might have been in that presentation but anyway when he speaks to us about that it's an excellent time to delve deeper but for some reason you know it normally fluctuated very slightly in my years at FCPS and it was pretty steady but then as Ms. Pitchett said they started having a decline and we just we busted a move i mean through the roof of the city yeah we have a lot of development too so we have people moving yeah to the city and you know we

[00:50:23] have a we have a huge or we had a huge um older population i think that we're seeing some turnover from that young families moving in and having children so um which i think is typical for older communities when that sort of starts to change so there's probably a lot of different

[00:50:44] components to the birth rate increase had a lot come back actually

[00:51:12] the challenge with that is exactly what you said and what miss pitches was alluding to there's so many different variables between neighborhoods that are aging up and out and new families moving in. People who left for economic reasons. When there's a change in administration at the federal level, the presidency, et cetera, there are fluctuation

[00:51:50] and changes. Usually those lag a year, but there are impacts in certain populations, especially in this region. And so there's so many different variables, but we're seeing a more robust return than others. Now, again, as you mentioned, it could be because of that new development. It could be because of a number of variables but there's also barb i think you can speak to this when a kid leaves it's coded so they might leave to go to a private school or something else but we right

[00:52:22] well the county has it um it was very i think we talked about this but once they're they're gone we can't really track them anymore like we never know how many kids in the city are actually in private school. That was the other thing we've tried to track in the past because they're not registered in our schools and you could ask you know back then it was Paul VI. You can ask Paul VI to give you their numbers but they don't have to. St. Leo's and they're not all city kids either

[00:53:00] so it's it's kind of a difficult component of the population to locate at any given moment but But most of, yes, go ahead. I had the same question, and I went down a rabbit hole back in September or October time frame.

[00:53:20] They're laughing. The issue is that children are only coded based off of where they went if they leave during the school year. So if they don't return back to school in August, there are not those records of essentially where did they go in the same way.

[00:53:36] And you also don't know where they came from. The one thing that I was able to somewhat determine is it looks like if students left in that 2020 year and they were older, like middle school, high school age, they did not return as much as the younger students did, which makes sense.

[00:53:53] Or people are returning at kind of those transition points, like maybe they continue elementary school, either homeschooling or the private school, but then they begin again in middle school. So I think for the elementary school, at least, it'll be really interesting to see because we're right five years, we've got fifth graders who were kindergartners, like, is in the next two years, will there be a big jump in middle school attendance while those children come back to public schools?

[00:54:20] But that was, I was on the same wing. It's really hard to determine that information for sure. And then I'm even curious, just this, like, what happened in 2015? Like, why? It was big. Well, I will tell you, when I came on the board in 2010, like, we were always, like, over 3,000, always.

[00:54:45] And then, like, I mean, if you look, we were over 3,000 basically until 2020. So, yes, we will be over 3,000, I think.

[00:55:06] Okay. Does anybody else have any questions? I did have one clarifying question. Is there a way of getting this ADM charts broken down by school? over the last 10 years just so we can see maybe there's enrollment drops at certain schools what I'll do is I'll ask DIT for FCPS if they have that data I don't know that they do but I'll ask them they will have enrollment data for each of our schools they will tell us how many elementary how many middle how many high for the last you know however many years you want typically we ask for

[00:55:44] five to seven years when we talk to them um ADM is different because ADM is ADM is not actually an exact number it's an average so like your child might come in as 0.8 of a child because they use a formula with absences and absences yes that makes like if you're you're in school this many days you're out this many days you count as 0.9 right and if you and if once you get the formula for adm and look through some of what miss pitch is talking about will jump out at you but i'll

[00:56:20] still ask yeah yeah i was just thinking you know just thinking about um miss hickman's questions around like you know some of the enrollment drops like is it school specific or is it is it city-wide specific is it some of the programming that we might offer like just thinking through some of the maybe the rationale of why i know in 2020 2021 that's definitely a covid dip and then the sort of repercussions of that is showing up up until now things are starting to turn a little bit more to normal with enrollment but even just moving forward just kind of understanding if there's drops within a certain you know enrollment of a school would be helpful to know as we are

[00:57:00] moving through city because in the city quite honestly the numbers in our schools have stayed pretty steady with the exception of katherine johnson's been on the rise again and the high school's back on the rise so what's happening is that we have less we've had more county kids come in certain years and

less city kids but back then it was we were I wouldn't say we're more evenly matched but we were not like 60 40 we were more like 45 55 ish so but what so when you ask for

[00:57:37] the data I would say specifically we don't want the county kids in the data we just want to see with the city kids with the membership look like in the elementary middle and high just city that it okay so we have a public hearing anybody okay nobody is here to speak on the superintendent's proposed budget so we will move on to action items and the first one is the approval of the December 2nd 2024 meeting regular meeting minutes the clerk has provided everybody with these

[00:58:15] minutes is there a motion madam chair miss Kelsey I move that the city of Fairfax school board approve the minutes of the December 2nd 2024 regular meeting is printed and distributed may I have a second all second second okay so Miss Kelsey has moved Miss Barley is seconded the city of Fairfax school board approved the minutes of the December 2nd 2024 regular school board meeting as printed and distributed are there any changes additions or modifications okay being none all those in favor signify by saying aye aye aye

[00:58:50] no members are opposed the motion passes unanimously the next item on the agenda is the approval of the school board committee assignments the clerk has provided the assignments may have a motion please yes miss Hickman I move that the city of Fairfax school board approve the school board committee assignments as printed and distributed may have a second I'll second okay miss Hickman has moved necessity a seconded City of Fairfax school board approved the school board committee assignments as printed and distributed any changes

[00:59:26] modifications additions I'm sorry we actually don't thank you and those are you know they're there but we can adjust and because there are some committees on there that can be a little bit dacier than okay if there's no additions or corrections everybody who's in favor signify by saying aye aye no member any

[01:00:01] members opposed no okay the motion passes unanimously all right we will move on to superintendents matters thank you manager as I mentioned before if the Ferris County Public Schools have a work session tomorrow they're gonna talk about student walking safety and then also their capital improvement program that I plan on attending and then the only other thing I'd like to say is having family members out in California is that you know just our hearts go out to all of those people who are going through such tragic conditions right now and just know that they're definitely in our thoughts and we care

[01:00:40] for them and just wanted to shout out and just say how much how much devastation that they're going through and that we're all in this world together and we're only here as I say you'll hear me to say this frequent basis for such a short time so I just want to take a minute to just recognize what the folks are going through out there thank you mr. Plottenberg we will move on to board matters I'll start with

[01:01:09] this okay we'll do us I'll do miss Kelsey then Miss Hickman and then I'll come back to you so there's not a whole lot right now because we're coming back from the holidays but typically this is a time where you might speak about something that's going on in a school that you went to or something you're looking forward to right now we're

[01:01:44] kind of in limbo but go ahead Miss Kelsey um I'm gonna steal this from Miss Hickman because I know she'll say it too is um i'm looking forward to the mtas winter musical once upon a one more time

um i i just don't know what's coming and it's kind of got me on the edge of my seat and uh heard great things and so i'm kind of looking forward to it um you have dates for that yes it is oh it's the last weekend in january so january 31st to february 2nd i think and then it is also So the first full weekend in February, which is like the 6th through the 9th, I think.

[01:02:23] 8th through the 9th, something like that, yeah. Yeah, it's the last weekend of January into February and then the first full weekend of February. So, yeah, hopefully maybe we should get a night together and I'll go. And then also looking forward to Fairfax High School and Katherine Johnson are both having their own separate curriculum nights coming up, which, you know, those always tend to draw a good crowd and inform lots of families of things and resources that are in the community to help them out.

[01:02:57] And then I'd also like to thank everybody who came out tonight, and then I'll just say ditto to what Mr. Plattenberg said about the people in California. Thank you. Ms. Hickman? I just want to welcome our new board members. We're really excited to work with you.

[01:03:12] If at any point you have any questions, just let us know. Two years now feels like 25. So, Carolyn must have been here for 55. So, I did, it feels, it was, at this point, it feels like forever ago, but I've really appreciated our joint meeting with the FCPS school board.

[01:03:30] I thought it was really beneficial for everybody, really informative, and I'm glad that we had the opportunity to do so, and then had a little bit more of a casual conversation hosted at Madison High School, and their amazing culinary, right, where in Madison? Their culinary, Marshall, see, that's it.

[01:03:46] I was like, I know I'm in the wrong place. Marshall and their culinary school. And same with Miss Kelsey. I'm looking forward to the curriculum nights this Thursday. And then I cannot wait for the show. I'm really excited for the MTA musical.

[01:04:04] Okay, so if you have anything, you may go ahead and say it now. Otherwise, you can pass until next young time. Okay, well, I would like to thank two of my friends who came, Michelle and Chris. but Chris decided to stay for the whole meeting to earn a Boy Scout badge that required staying at a public meeting.

[01:04:28] And then I appreciated that Christina and I got to go to the conference in Williamsburg in November and kind of get our head around some school board stuff before we started. So that was a highlight. Glad you enjoyed it.

[01:04:43] All right. Accessory. I just want to first start by saying thank you to the returning board members who have been so welcoming to both me and I'll speak for Lauren too but just including us in the VSBA conference in November where we really got our feet wet in this process it was also a pleasure to be able to meet our county reps in the city county dinner that was really nice to attend and get to know people there. And I also want to just take a shout out for a second and thank the custodial staff

[01:05:20] of our schools who did a phenomenal job cleaning. I drove down on Wednesday and looked at all the school sites and saw how amazing our sidewalks and parking lots look. And one of the staff members that I'm still friends with messaged me when they returned on Friday saying how amazing um our uh facilities looked um just compared to other places and such so really big and it's a big push to do um yeah so and i'm looking forward to the curriculum night at um fairfax high school and yeah and all the lovely events that are coming up in the winter time um so yeah okay so i won't

[01:05:59] repeat what everybody said but i agree i do think we should all maybe find a night um to go see once upon one more time together I think that would be a great first outing for the board I will I also will say that thank you to everybody who came this evening I this was probably the best turnout I've ever seen in terms of Fairfax County school board members coming out to support us past board members past a yeah council past superintendents so thank you to everyone who came and if

[01:06:38] there's nothing else before the board I will adjourn the meeting at 8:09



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