MACHINE TRANSCRIPT · CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Fairfax County School Board Budget Public Hearing, Monday, January 23, 2023

Date	Monday, January 23, 2023
Place	Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length	1h 25m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cU9HGN16ISA
- Official School Board page (FCPS): https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board

> Machine transcript (speech-to-text) produced by Coraggio Consulting. Not an official county record. Names and numbers may be misspelled; check the video at the timestamp before quoting.

Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-04. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:04:59] Good evening. Good evening and welcome to the FY24 budget public hearing. On behalf of the school board I would like to thank you for taking time this evening to come and talk to us about the budget. We have one housekeeping item. Ms. Seismerheiser has submitted a written request to virtually attend this evening's public hearing due to a medical conflict. All those in favor of approving this request. Okay that is everyone here in attendance. Ms. Marin is absent this evening.

[00:05:38] Tonight, 34 speakers have registered to address the board. When your name is called, in-person speakers should approach the podium and begin speaking, and virtual speakers should turn on their microphone and camera and begin speaking. Each speaker is allotted two minutes, and we ask that you stay within that time limit.

[00:05:59] The school board welcomes community members to provide comments at its regular business meetings and public hearings on school board deliberations, school board-related issues, or particular topics. This evening, your remarks must address the FY24 budget.

[00:06:16] If you have not registered to speak tonight, but would like an opportunity to address the board, please see the clerk to sign up for one of the five extra speaker slots. Your name will be called after the registered speakers have shared their comments.

[00:06:32] Madame Clerk, please call our first speaker. - Our first speaker is student number one. - Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

[00:06:49] My name is Matt Heider, and I'm currently a senior at W.T. Woodson High School. I play football, lacrosse, and I wrestle, and I've done so for all four years. Before practices, you know, I'll have to visit the trainer and get stuff looked at, and we can't practice until we've been seen by the trainer, and sometimes this can take 30, 40 minutes, even an hour waiting.

[00:07:12] And during football season, we can't practice until the trainer gets down to the field, and the trainer doesn't get down to the field until typically an hour 30 to two hours after school starts, which cuts a lot of time out of our practice schedule. When we have away games, the trainers will have to split time, and that just takes even more out of how much they can help us because there's only one trainer doing so.

[00:07:36] And during the fall of my junior year, one of our starting defensive linemen got injured out of Saturday practice when we only had one trainer at the school. And he was up at the school instead of out the field during practice. And the player, Chris, happened to break his leg during practice.

[00:07:55] and the trainer wasn't able to get down there until about 15 minutes after the injury occurred because he had to get everything good onto the field instead of having two trainers at the school and the trainer already being there.

[00:08:12] My freshman year, we didn't have enough coverage from trainers and the one game where we had to borrow a trainer, we had seven concussions that game and the trainer wasn't familiar with us so they had trouble helping us out because they didn't know us.

[00:08:30] Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is student number two. Hello, members of the Fairfax County School Board.

[00:08:46] My name is Sarah Kate George, and I'm a junior at Lake Braddock, and I run track and play soccer for the school. I'm here to talk about obtaining a second full-time athletic trainer for all the high schools in FCPS. I've spent a lot of my time with the ATs at our school by playing two sports, and I also spend every other day in my sports medicine class that is taught by Miss A, our part-time athletic trainer.

[00:09:07] I've learned a lot about the significance of having an athletic trainer at sporting events as well as hard as Miss A has to work. She comes in at school at 7 30 in the morning for her teaching job and usually doesn't leave until around 6 p.m. at the earliest and the occasional 9 10 and 11 p.m. depending on the sport. The part-time athletic trainers are only paid via stipend and without any benefits. I want to ensure that our athletic trainers in Fairfax County are not overworked to where they burn out and you have to find a new person to fill their position if anyone even applies for the position. Due to the current structure of pay and benefits for our part-time athletic trainers, they're forced to obtain a secondary job based on the cost of living

[00:09:47] in Fairfax County. This requires them to spend, to split their attention and time and their responsibilities between the two positions. For our ATC2, Ms. A, she's also a teacher who has to grade lots of work, plan, and attend different meetings, all of outside of her athletic training duties. The part-time position is no longer appealing to the newer workforce of athletic trainers. When the compensation no longer aligns with the qualifications of these medical professionals, we are going to lose out on the quality of care that our student-athletes deserve. During the school year, the Lake Braddock athletic trainers have to care for

[00:10:22] over 1,200 students per year. They can treat anywhere from 20 to 50 students every day. Based on guidelines created by the VDOE, every other job in the building has a student-to-employee ratio except for athletic trainers. They have no cap on how many students they can help, and it can become too much sometimes.

[00:10:42] I have friends in other schools in Fairfax County and some of them only have one AT who has double the workload. Thank you. Your time is up. You finished your two minutes.

[00:11:00] Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is student number three. Members of the school board, I appreciate the opportunity to address you here today.

[00:11:17] My name is Ellie Sudarth and I am a junior at Lake Braddock Secondary on the girls lacrosse team. I'm here today to ask the board to consider funding a second full-time athletic trainer for every FCPS high school in the upcoming budget. The funding structure for the part-time athletic trainer position in Fairfax County high schools has remained unchanged since it was introduced in 1989.

[00:11:37] The number of sports as well as the number of students participating in FCPS athletic programs has increased dramatically since that time. In the same breath, the roles, responsibilities, and quality of care our athletic trainers provide has evolved substantially since 1989.

[00:11:52] For example, the care, monitoring, and rehabilitation of students, athletes suffering from a concussion has become much more extensive over the past 30 years. Most people have seen the recent news of the Buffalo Bills' safety to Mar Hamlin and his sudden collapse on the football field.

[00:12:08] A Washington Post article dated January 10th, 2023, compared Hamlin's sudden cardiac arrest to that of Peter Lake, a Baltimore area high school lacrosse player, whose heart stopped when he was hit in the chest with a shot during a game. Lake was revived with an AED and made a full recovery, but as his father stated in the Washington Post article, If the trainer had been on the baseball field, Peter would not be here today.

[00:12:31] My high school, Lake Braddock, like many others in Fairfax County, is a sprawling campus with numerous athletic facilities and playing fields. On any given night during the spring, you could have games on the softball, baseball, stadium fields, as well as the tennis courts, all at the same time. In the case of Peter Lake and DeMar Hamlin, tragedy was narrowly avoided because of the athletic trainers being able to provide care almost immediately.

[00:12:55] To expect one full-time athletic trainer to provide immediate care across all athletic facilities is a disaster waiting to happen. Fairfax County is not only a top-notch school system, it is one of the greatest in the nation. And I hope you will all agree with me that the health and safety of our student-athletes should not be measured as an expense on a budget sheet, but as a top priority that is priceless.

[00:13:16] Thank you. Our next speaker is student number four. Hello, my name is Alex Miller. I'm a student-athlete at Fairfax High School. I'm a junior.

[00:13:34] I'm here to advocate for the funding of a second full-time athletic trainer. I'm a very injury-prone person. I'm in the trainer's clinic about as often as anybody. And there are many examples and stories I could give why it's helpful to me, very helpful.

[00:13:52] Time, it saved me from having to see doctors, having doctors point them I didn't need to see. It saved me time from being referred to a specialist or knowing if something could actually be a serious

problem. Like, once I had just a small cut, I didn't know it was infected, but luckily one of the trainers noticed it and it could have become something worse, something that was contagious, messing up a playoff run.

[00:14:15] You obviously already know the importance of the trainers, but they already pointed out that there's no ratio of trainers to students. yet the student population in Fairfax County has increased by about 53,000 since the athletic trainer position structure has been established in 1989.

[00:14:42] When our athletic leadership class found out that one of the trainers was part-time, it was very surprising, but most people were just frankly confused because both the trainers we have at Fairfax High School are very qualified, educated, hardworking people that we honestly talk about it regularly how hard-working and useful they are the fact that some schools are understaffed and don't have both athletic trainers was the craziest because it's something we see as a necessity like our like you was talking about earlier having both and readily accessible effects affects us

[00:15:22] greatly and if you wish to advance athletics for the sake of students you also have to advance the assets they have to thank you our next speaker is student number five. Good evening members of the board. I want to thank you for letting me speak tonight. My name is Matt Norski. I am a senior at Woodson High School and I am a three-sport varsity athlete. It is because I'm a three-sport varsity athlete that I have seen my fair share of injuries and through these injuries I've gotten to meet the wonderful training staff

[00:16:01] at Woodson High School and over the years I've gotten to meet them and it's just now coming to light how difficult their job has become. Currently there are three sports in season over the winter each of these sports have a girls team and a boys team each of these different categories have a varsity freshman and sophomore or a freshman JV and varsity level and we are putting the care of all these individuals in the hands of one person this is a huge workload that we are entrusting one person and it's easy to see how people can get burned out I've seen the line at the trainers go out the door and around the corner with kids

[00:16:38] wanting to be seen about injuries they have acquired and to get taken care of so they can continue playing the game they love. With a second full-time trainer, we can have these athletes be seen twice as fast and assure quality care to not only us but the future of our sport programs.

[00:16:55] Some trainers can have 14-hour days and their responsibilities have only been growing over the years. With the current pandemic, they have had to oversee COVID protocols, work multiple events in a single night, and these responsibilities have been growing exponentially.

[00:17:13] We are seeing firsthand why FCPS is having a problem being fully staffed since 2014, because we are expecting one person to do the job of several. It's not fair to the individual, and it's not fair to the athletes who depend on that individual for recovery and rehabilitation. The last thing this athletic program needs is burned out, overworked trainers.

[00:17:31] This is a recipe for disaster. Having only one trainer can have serious repercussions. For example, my school during the spring can have softball and lacrosse games at the same time. If a serious injury were to occur at one of these events and we did not have a trainer, we could see what happens. Thank you. Our next speaker is student number six.

[00:18:00] Good afternoon. My name is Nicholas Romalo. I'm currently a senior at Fairfax High School and I've played soccer for all four years. I'm here to advocate for the funding of a second athletic trainer

for full time at Fairfax County. Just like several other students, athletes at Fairfax High School have been lucky enough to have been treated by our athletic trainer assistant, Ms. Rhodes.

[00:18:17] The point of Ms. Rose's position is obvious that when students found out of the 15,000 stipend that she gets, I got over 200 students that signed a global form in support of two full-time athletic trainers instead of a part-time. If they could, all 200 students would be here tonight.

[00:18:33] Personally, Ms. Rose has helped me throughout the soccer season and even during the offseason for injuries such as small as turf burns, as big as a fractured finger. Seeing an average of about 40 to 60 student-athletes a day, depending on the season, shows the necessity of having a full-time athletic trainer assistant at all schools instead of just one full-time trainer. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Scott Peterson. Hi, my name is Scott Peterson and I'm vice chair of Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. I want to thank you for

[00:19:12] voting last year for the first of three multi-year initiatives to boost FCPS's environmental stewardship and I want to ask you to do it again this year by voting in favor of the year two initiatives. This is a critical step to fulfill recommendations from the Joint Environmental Task Force approved by the board in July of 2021. So we all know the story about the frog placed in water that's brought slowly to a boil, failing to perceive the danger until it's cooked to death.

[00:19:47] Today, we as a society are that frog. Most days, the water doesn't seem that hot yet. Last year, over 6,000 communities in the U.S. broke all-time temperature records. Just this month, Scottsdale, Arizona stopped supplying water to a neighboring community because there's not enough going around.

[00:20:11] According to Fairfax County government, very hot days at or above 95 degrees are projected to rise from seven days per year to more than 36 days a year in 2050. And by 2085, it's likely that most summer days will reach 95 degrees. Most young people, even if they don't know these facts, know what they're facing as they enter adulthood. In a recent survey of young people aged 16 to 25, 59% said they were extremely worried. They know the

[00:20:49] water in the pot is heading to a boil. So that's why it's so important to show that you get it, that you're taking action on behalf of our students. We can turn down the temperature. Please vote for the year two budget initiatives. Thank you. Our next speaker is Elizabeth Endy. Good evening school board members and Superintendent Reed. My name

[00:21:24] is Elizabeth Endy. I am also here as a member of FACTS to communicate the urgency of moving swiftly on climate action. Please vote in favor of the second year of the multi-year initiatives that enhance FCPS's environmental stewardship. I'd like to share my experience with Get to Green, which is one of the environmental programs slated for expansion this year. A decade ago, I met Elaine Tolan, the original Get to Green visionary, and attended meetings where schools across the county shared their environmental stewardship achievements. I always came away

[00:22:01] from those meetings charged up, having seen firsthand how students learned problem-solving skills that would enable them to better take care of our earth. Resources from Get to Green were critical in helping the Longfellow Middle School student team that I worked with earn a National Wildlife Federation Green Flag Award.

[00:22:22] The great thing is that the solutions students developed in school also made them better environmental stewards at home. Having a central group like Get to Green focused on developing,

educating, and promoting best practices to all FCPS students and staff is key to meeting the important JET directives you approved in June 2021. It's a big job to reduce FCPS's carbon footprint and lead the way to ensuring a more sustainable environment. Thus, it is essential that the board fully fund the Get

[00:22:58] to Green program and that FCPS promptly hire new staff to expand their ability to implement the program's critical goals. By continuing to fully engage with students, Get to Green will not only foster the development of young, dedicated environmental students, but it will enable all students' traditional AAP, ESOL, and special ed to become an in. Thank you. Our next speaker is Susan Stillman. Hi, my name is Susan Stillman. I'm a volunteer with the Virginia Chapter of the

[00:23:36] Sierra Club. Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening on the 2024 FCPS budget. I I spoke with an architect recently who does designs for FCPS and he said that they've been directed to no longer design to net zero because of the increases in the cost of construction.

[00:23:53] I know something about that. I'm building a net zero home. If that's the case, then additional funds need to be acquired through a bond referendum. That needs to be on the 2023 bond if FCPS has any hope of meeting their commitments to going net zero.

[00:24:12] As it relates to solar, there have been issues outside of FCPS's control that have obstructed the installation of solar, but these issues have been resolved, but yet the deployment is very slow. Only two schools have been approved by the board. I understand that a new process is being proposed which should expedite the installation of solar on FCPS schools.

[00:24:32] That's great. But why is that a budget issue? Savings that will be garnered through deploying solar can be folded back into operating funds. It's also a budget issue because the monopoly utility from which you all buy most of your electricity is in the General Assembly right now trying to prop up their stock price by locking in their profits.

[00:24:54] If they're successful, they're going to pass those increases on to you all and to me, to everybody. We've got to lock in the price of energy by installing solar. You'll know what your costs are for the next 20 years. also passing on the increases in fossil gas right that they use as a fuel to generate electricity so if we don't get the solar installed we're going to have a lot of regret because we're paying a lot more than we need to for electricity we can't roll back the clock but

[00:25:28] let's get moving thank you thank you our next speaker is amy lacrosse hi my name is amy lacrosse and I am an Elementary Special Education Department Chair. First, I would like to thank Dr. Reed and the board for their support of the $2 million earmarked in the budget proposal for the Special Education Compensatory Services Fund.

[00:25:51] This amount is necessary, though likely inadequate, to meet the requirements of the OCR settlement. I would also like to acknowledge the continuation of the eight-hour contract for special education teachers and how, while insufficient, it provides much-needed acknowledgement of the incredible workload of our special education staff.

[00:26:09] Thank you, Dr. Reed, for prioritizing staff compensation and support. I do, however, feel the need to highlight that bonuses are short-term commitments that take away from long-term solutions. We need salary increases over highly taxed bonuses. Is FCPS aware of what neighboring counties are providing in an effort to retain highly qualified staff?

[00:26:31] In reviewing the budget proposal, I was struck by the multi-year investment of $1.6 million in funding to carry out the recommendations of the AAP external review. I don't understand why similar funding requests are not included in response to the AIR special education audit.

[00:26:47] The 19 recommendations in that report are clear, actionable, and would greatly improve special education if implemented as written. Instead of simply funding implementation of these recommendations, FCPS has chosen to proceed with a confusing and drawn-out process involving multiple committees whose makeup is not publicly known. Several of these recommendations largely concern teacher support. However, DSS decided to consolidate recommendations into four areas, none of which directly support our teachers. The Special Education Enhancement Plan Steering Committee has now been told that it will not write goals, but will instead review goals created by

[00:27:25] staff. These may or may not match the clear recommendations the researchers in the AIR review offered after two years of careful study. This is puzzling. Please explain why the AAP external review resulted in direct funding of those recommendations. Thank you. Our next speaker is Anne Marie O'Donnell. Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to address the school board.

[00:27:52] My name is Anne Marie O'Donnell and I currently have one child attending Hayfield Elementary School with two others waiting in the wind. When my husband received his final assignment in the Army, we made the deliberate decision to move to Fairfax County rather than remain in Maryland. We based our decision in no small part on Fairfax County Public School's great reputation.

[00:28:09] FCPS has the reputation for being the best in the nation. That is a reputation every teacher, administrator, board member, and principal should be proud of and in passion to continue. Overall, our experience at Hayfield has been positive. Our son Jack thrives there and has dreams of becoming a NASA engineer one day.

[00:28:24] He is fascinated by all things science and yearns to be challenged. Science and math are by far his favorite subjects, and on any given Sunday, He will be watching YouTube videos, watching Mark Rober demonstrating principles of engineering or learning about galaxy. He loves his STEM classes and so do all of his friends.

[00:28:40] We are at a pivotal moment in our nation's history. Technological evolutions have and will continue to change science fiction into science fact and along with it the world. As technology evolves, our children's education, especially in the STEM fields, is increasingly important. The U.S. was once the world's leader in technological innovation, however, we are falling further and further behind.

[00:28:59] We quite literally shot for the moon and landed. We created the internet, cell phones, smartphones, and life-saving vaccines. American ingenuity has changed the world and saved people's lives. From President Biden down to Supervisor Lusk, every single elected leader knows and agrees the importance of STEM education.

[00:29:15] Every single responsible parent in America agrees on the importance of STEM in their children's education. Fairfax County Public Schools openly takes pride in its STEM education across the country. Their number one school is a STEM school whose kids just put a satellite into space. So imagine my surprise when I recently found out that our STEM program, our part-time, our teacher is not only a part-time teacher now due to budget cuts, but that we are in danger of losing our STEM program altogether.

[00:29:39] I stand here today and ask you why this is even a consideration. I ask that you continue to invest in our children's future by giving them the tools needed to be successful on the world stage by continuing to fund STEM in our schools and increase our budget. Thank you.

[00:29:54] Our next speaker is Emily Vanderhoff. Good evening, Dr. Reed, Budget Chair Tolan, and members of the board. My name is Emily Vanderhoff. I'm a first grade teacher in FCPS and a proud member of my union, FCFT.

[00:30:13] I first want to thank Dr. Reed for prioritizing staff compensation in her proposed budget. I hope that the board will keep the step and 3% MSA in the advertised budget and advocate to the Board of Supervisors to fully fund the transfer. I would also like to advocate that you consider taking the funds budgeted for the retention bonus and applying it towards the salary scale to ensure that a greater portion of the investment goes directly to employees since bonuses are highly taxed.

[00:30:36] As an elementary teacher, I'm glad to see the parity with secondary staff in compensation for leadership roles. There are a lot of extra roles that educators are asked to take on, usually with no compensation. So I hope this is the first step in recognizing additional leadership responsibilities with appropriate compensation.

[00:30:53] I also support increasing pay at the top of the scale to promote retention. I understand that when the scale was revised in 2016 and shortened to 23 steps, the maximum salary at the time was moved to Step 23 to put employees at their highest pay sooner. It seems that over time, the counties with more steps have far outpaced our highest pay, and in the FY23 Way-B report, our maximum teacher pay ranks eighth out of nine in comparison to surrounding districts.

[00:31:17] Additionally, those at the top of the scale express feeling unvalued when their pay stays stagnant for up to 10 years before they're eligible to retire, making these employees consider leaving FCPS before planned. I hope the board can further research how to best balance honoring experience while also ensuring staff can all reach their highest pay. I'm also glad that special education contract will remain in FY24 with ESSER funds and I hope that the board keeps this budget item in mind in future budgets when ESSER funds are discontinued. I always say that for everything that I have to do as classroom teacher, my teachers have to do ten times more and so I fully support this

[00:31:54] being a continuing item in future budgets. Thank you for your consideration. thank you our next speaker is Cheryl Hyder good evening my name is Cheryl Hyder thank you first for the opportunity to address you all this evening we do appreciate sincerely everything that you guys are doing to give our kids safety and well-being the fourth you know the foremost thought coming out of COVID I think we all appreciated its importance just a little bit

[00:32:32] more than perhaps we did prior tonight I want to talk to you about risk not the risk that continuing without two full-time trainers at each school you know will cause more staffing difficulties for these positions I'm going to leave that to others to address with you instead I want to talk about managing the risks associated with participation in high school athletics overall and that's the risk of physical injury so now parents complete paperwork to confirm kids are healthy they're able to participate probably also sign a waiver of liability so fine you all have addressed the legal risk that covers the school it does not

[00:33:11] cover the kids. Not having the right resources, meaning the two full-time trainers who are not overwhelmed and who instead are able to focus on the athlete's care and feeding, the county essentially is

taking a passive reactive approach to ensuring their safety in these activities.

[00:33:28] For example, at Woodson, our trainers in the past three seasons saw 500 individual activities or injuries, excuse me, requiring care end-to-end, you know, rehab and putting them back on the field if they you know if they were able to that's in addition to the assorted bumps bruises you know and sadness you know triaging the incident immediate care coordinating with the athlete's doctor or parent or coach overseeing rehab coordinated coordinating the agreed upon return to play then you have to worry about hurting the kids onto and off of the field did I mention the

[00:34:02] seven concussions in one freshman football game what if that game was deprioritized because they

[00:34:10] were only freshmen and we had no trainer there. What would that have done? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Misha Chernov. Good evening Madam Chair school board members and Dr. Reed. My name is Misha Chernov. I'm an FCPS teacher and resident. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight regarding the FY24 proposed budget. I wish I could say this budget gives me confidence in the direction and future of Fairfax County public schools. But unfortunately

[00:35:02] it does not. Here are three reasons why I feel this budget comes up short. First a 3% MRA is not enough. It's simply not enough to keep up with the current rate of inflation. Second we have been telling you that we don't have enough teacher directed planning time. We don't have enough substitutes which means we find ourselves covering classes at the last minute thus losing the planning time we already don't have enough of. This budget does not address these issues. Third

[00:35:32] Health care. In my 27 years of employment with FCPS, I never once worried about having access to high quality health care at a reasonable cost. Until now. Colleagues of mine are learning that their current physicians do not accept Cigna and have told them they will not join the Cigna network.

[00:35:50] While I understand the division will be saving $70 to $90 million over the course of the five-year contract with Cigna, I am fully aware that this is coming at the expense of your employees, who will now have greater out-of-pocket costs with fewer health care providers in the Cigna network.

[00:36:08] There is no amount of spin or positive reframing from the division leadership team that can deny this truth. Before I leave, I want to share that I am opposed to funding school officers in elementary schools under the data-less pretense that it will help keep students safe.

[00:36:26] Direct this funding to school counselors, social workers, and psychologists. Our students need those safety supports. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Robert Rigby. Good evening.

[00:36:44] My name is Robert Rigby. I am an employee in my 40th year as an educator. Tonight, I speak for myself and do not represent the views of any organization. Budget is policy. How we spend our money affects children, family visitors, and staff safety.

[00:37:04] Some families at Waples Mill Elementary have asked me to relay a serious appeal for help around addressing a grave increase in worrisome incidents at their school. These concerns are similar to those around the county, state, and nation.

[00:37:22] My friends tell me they are truly serious at Waipos Mill. Note, they do not relay concerns that this is because of inclusion or teacher leniency, and they seem unrelated to that dreadful three strikes HB 1461 brought in the General Assembly.

[00:37:41] But it is a major uptick in incidents. The incidents include lockdowns, intruders, sexual harassment and assault, and serious threats. They express for themselves feeling left out on the ground for security because they're known as a quiet, peaceful background.

[00:38:00] They say they no longer are. They ask specifically for vestibules, cameras, better locks, and increased monitors to pay attention to outdoor places where children may be at risk. Thank you for listening. Thank you. Our next speaker is Deborah Vincent.

[00:38:20] Hello, everyone, the board. My name is Debbie Vincent. I'm here to support the funding for every Fairfax County public school high school to have two full-time athletic trainers.

[00:38:36] So that I'm not repeating what you've already heard, I'm just going to dive into my family's experiences with Ms. K, the full-time AT, and Ms. A, the part-time AT, and who happens to be a full-time teacher at Lake Braddock. My son, Dom, is a senior varsity football player, and I can't begin to describe how crucial both ATs were for Dom.

[00:38:57] Dom had numerous injuries over the years, including a torn ACL, two concussions, and a hamstring tear. Each injury was tended to by both ATs in a tag team effort, because other players needed help too. In fact, when my son tore his ACL on a Thursday, it was the AT, Ms. K, who was able to get him an appointment the very next morning with the team's surgeon.

[00:39:19] During Dom's recovery, once COVID hit and his PT got shut down, Ms. K would meet us outside in a park to make sure that his injury was healed correctly. I have personally observed both ATs evaluating injuries, providing treatments, and rehab services, and providing game coverage.

[00:39:35] The importance of having a highly educated, trained, and caring AT at all events is crucial to the health and well-being of not only students, but everyone in attendance. You never know when someone might sprain an ankle, tear an ACL, get a concussion, or God forbid, suffer cardiac arrest like we all saw with the NFL.

[00:39:53] We owe it to all Fairfax County students to have an appropriate number of athletic trainers available and on staff. I hope you can support this crucial need and allocate funding for a second full-time athletic trainer in the upcoming budget. Thank you.

[00:40:09] - Thank you. Our next speaker is Andrea Edelstein. - Good evening, Superintendent Reed, Budget Chair Tallinn, and members of the school board.

[00:40:26] I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you tonight to voice my support for prioritizing student safety by allocating funding in this 2024 budget for two full-time athletic trainers for each Fairfax County high school and secondary school. My name is Andrea Edelstein.

[00:40:42] I'm the parent of two FCPS students, a senior and a junior. My junior is a member of the Lake Braddock football team where I am an active volunteer. I also serve on the board of our athletic booster club. Those roles have given me the opportunity to get to know our athletic trainers and learn more about what they do to enhance safety for our student athletes and others.

[00:40:59] Many naively think that the extent of an athletic trainer's role is to tape injuries on the sidelines of a game. That does not even begin to scratch the surface of what they do. During 2020, our athletic trainers put protocols in place that allowed us to safely train during quarantine. In addition to being really

good at what they do, they also have a great rapport with our student-athletes and coaches, which puts athletes at ease when they're in situations where they need their support and guidance.

[00:41:24] Our athletic trainers are our unsung heroes that many people don't really know about until or unless their kids face serious injuries. Athletic trainers are required to have a master's degree from an accredited program, national certification, and be medically licensed to practice in Virginia, yet the current stipend pay structure does not align with payment for such qualified medical professionals.

[00:41:43] This impacts the ability to attract, hire, and retain athletic trainers to keep our students safe. While Virginia Department of Education has standards of quality ratios for most other positions, there are no such standards for our athletic trainers, who in a year may work with over 1,200 student-athletes, evaluate more than 1,600 injuries, and provide over 6,000 treatments.

[00:42:05] On many nights, the school might have multiple events going on. Our athletic trainer cannot be at the stadium and in the gym simultaneously. If a critical injury were to occur, response time is key, and the trainer would need to be notified and get from the stadium to the gym, costing valuable time.

[00:42:20] But the issue goes beyond coverage at events. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Dawn Martinez. Thank you, and good evening. You've heard a lot of this already. I'll try to go fast.

[00:42:44] Athletic trainers are nationally certified, state-licensed medical professionals. They are a necessary component to any athletic department, especially the programs caring for our student athletes. A master's degree, a national certification, and a state medical license are required for all ATs.

[00:43:03] Whether they're the main AT or the associate AT, they both need these same requirements. At FCPS, we are compensating our associate ATs at an annual stipend of merely $16,398, and that comes without any benefits at all.

[00:43:24] And I know you all know that already. They are paid probably less than $10 an hour by the time you factor in all of the hours they work beyond what they're expected to work. And we know that we need this for our student athletes to be safe and cared for when we have so much division of so many different athletic contests at the same time.

[00:43:46] I'm a parent since 2008 with Fairfax County Public Schools. My son is now wrestling in college. My daughter is a junior at South County High School, where she is also a triple athlete. We have been blessed to see a program with both trainer positions filled, and now we are one of the seven with only one trainer.

[00:44:11] The difference has gone almost unnoticed, but you can see the difference when you look at Ms. H's face. And the division and the pull in each different direction, I really hope that when you are looking this year to fund compensation to attract and retain you consider not only attracting a full-time at for every second position at every school but consider that you will also be retaining

[00:44:49] thank you our next speaker is emily yewens hello my name is emily ewens and i'm a class of 2022 Lake Braddock graduate. I was a student athlete at Lake Braddock, which is how I met our athletic trainers. My sophomore year, they encouraged me to join their athletic training student aid program where I could observe their duties day in and day out. I learned how to assess and treat athletes and helped out in any way that I could. After three years of enriching high school experience, I was inspired to sign up for the sports medicine student aid program at Virginia Tech this semester.

[00:45:26] Because of the relationship I have built with our ITs, I feel I have a unique perspective on why it's so important to fund a second full-time athletic training position for all FCPS high schools. In my time as an ATSA, I came to learn that certified athletic trainers are highly qualified, multi-skilled healthcare professionals. I also learned that despite the fact our athletic trainers have the same education, certifications, and licensing, the structure of their positions is entirely different. While one of them is strictly a full-time athletic trainer, the other gets paid a seasonal stipend and works a second job as a full-time teacher in order to receive

[00:46:02] benefits and afford the increasing cost of living. I saw firsthand the toll this takes on our ATC2 Miss A. It's because of this model that several schools in the county haven't been fully staffed for nearly a decade. There are so many benefits to adding a second full-time athletic trainer at each high school for one students would have increased availability to at services which would increase the consistency and quality of care provided secondly there would be more presence on nights where there could be two to five events at the same time rather than wait for a tragedy

[00:46:39] to happen you all have the opportunity to be proactive in providing students with a more appropriate level of medical care and services thank you thank you our next speaker is maya Hi, my name is Maya Gossain. I was a student at Lake Braddock Secondary School for six years and a student athlete for five. My freshman year of high school, I was a football manager for the freshman football team. This is when I was introduced to two of the most hardworking women I've ever met in my life, Emily Huss and Kristen Wharton. These two women were the Lake Braddock athletic trainers and changed my life in more ways than one. Not only were they my family, but they encouraged me to pursue my dreams and go into the field of medicine.

[00:47:17] When Ms. Huss left our athletic training room family to start a family of her own, Ms. K was left with her student athletic trainers, a couple of Mason students studying athletic training, and tons of student athletes that needed her care. In August of 2020, I personally recorded 80 hours of service. 80 hours in one month out of the three years I spent as a volunteer in our athletic training room.

[00:47:36] The spring season that we had only one athletic trainer was a long one. Ms. K was exhausted, practically a walking corpse, because she was doing double of the amount of work she should have been doing. Her workload represented what two full-time athletic trainers could have and should be doing. The athletic trainers at Lake Battict helped me recover through many sprained ankles, a broken elbow, and a concussion.

[00:47:57] Even when I tore my ACL meniscus in college, these are the people who supported me. With a part-time ATC, student-athletes have limited access to care. If Ms. K wasn't there for me when I broke my elbow, I would have risked causing further damage to my ulnar nerve. These damages include numbness, tingling, and even complete loss of feeling in my right hand and fingers.

[00:48:18] As a student athlete, I trusted the athletic trainers with my life. That was only possible because Lake Braddock was staffed with two athletic trainers for most of my time being there. The second athletic trainer position is not attracted to those in this field because they're not paid for what they're expected to do. Additionally, the ATC2 position is no longer attracting competitive applicants, which is why many schools currently only have one ATC on staff.

[00:48:40] I hope that you can get behind this initiative in allocating funds in the budget for two full-time athletic trainers at each high school. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Theodore Geis. Our next

speaker is Mark Arbin.

[00:49:02] Members of the board, thank you very much for allowing me to speak to you tonight. I urge you to fully fund a second full-time athletic trainer position at each high school.

[00:49:19] I am Mark Arbin, and my daughter Maria is a student at Lake Braddock Secondary School. Raising a teenage daughter is not easy. After almost two years of at-home study because of the COVID pandemic, Maria seemed to have lost focus and passion.

[00:49:35] She likes sports, but we did not push her in that direction. She tried out for a sports team, but was not selected. She was devastated. While taking sports medicine, she learned about athletic training, and something clicked. She approached one of Lake Braddock's athletic trainers, who is also her PE teacher, since her athletic training position is not full-time.

[00:49:56] Through the support and guidance of Ms. Brittany Arndt, Ms. A, Maria found the courage to apply to the athletic training student aid program and is now flourishing. She has a passion. She has a focus. She has direction for the future. This would not have occurred without the support of Ms. Kristen Wharton, Ms. K, the full-time athletic trainer, and Ms. A.

[00:50:18] Hearing that Ms. A is not paid to be a full-time athletic trainer is a travesty. Her passion is athletic training, but because of budgetary issues, she must serve in other paid positions to make ends meet. Her focus should be on athletic training and not be divided.

[00:50:35] Ms. K and Ms. A's passion has rubbed off on my daughter. Maybe if Ms. A was able to focus fully on athletic training, that same passion can rub off on other students. Your job is to provide the resources that will help students grow and flourish, not only in the classroom, but on the athletic fields, in choral groups, and other after-school activities.

[00:50:58] In the 1970s and 80s, while growing up in Chicago, where my father was a senior executive with the Chicago Public School System, I continually heard of all the great initiatives the Fairfax County Public Schools were doing. We were the gold standard then. Thank you. Our next speaker is Avril Silva.

[00:51:17] Hello, everyone. My name is Avril Silva, and I'm a member of the women's soccer team at George Washington University. And most recently, I am a former FCPS Equity Ambassador and graduate of South County High School.

[00:51:36] I'm so excited to be here tonight to share a personal story of mine, one involving a soccer ball to the stomach. It was the first half of the state semifinal game of my junior year, and as always, I was flying around the field. And before I knew it was happening, one came straight to my stomach.

[00:51:51] As always, as I get winded, and before I knew it, when I opened my eyes, Miss H was right in front of me. And from that moment on, I knew no matter the injury, no matter what happened, she would always have my back. I'm appealing to the board here today to try and encourage the implementation of a second athletic trainer at all FCPS high schools because at the most pivotal moments of my high school athletic career, from cross-country to soccer, it was both Ms. H and Ms. Nagy, our part-time athletic trainer, that helped me to be the athlete I am today.

[00:52:22] Unfortunately, Ms. Nagy is no longer at South County because of the current part-time athletic training profession and the fact that it simply does not take into consideration the commitment and evolution of the AT position. Not only do athletic trainers like Ms. H personally work with students

through their mental health concerns, it's simply and have to work with administrative work that a second athletic trainer is a necessity in the training room in order to address each student's needs, not to mention the volume of sporting events in all seasons of the year.

[00:52:53] I remember playing a soccer game as a softball, a baseball, and a track meet were all happening at the same time. Ms. H had to run around, and that simply cannot be the case for all of our students. One athletic trainer and maybe one part-time trainer is simply not enough to meet the needs of our athletes today.

[00:53:10] And it especially increased the rates of burnout in Ms. H, as I've seen to this day. I am indebted to the work of the athletic trainers, and I think it is about time that pay them back justly to fund second at each fcps high school thank you thank you our next speaker is kevin hickerson good evening i'm kevin hickerson a special education english teacher at chantilly high school and i'm speaking as an individual first and foremost all employees deserve a living wage bus drivers custodians cafeteria workers instructional assistants

[00:53:47] should not have to work second or third jobs to survive in the community or take government assistance just to make ends meet jobs that are paid by local tax dollars should not subsidize poverty secondly a few years ago the fcps school board had the wisdom to reduce the amount of steps effectively from 29 to 23 for teachers for far too long educators would work their whole career and not reach the top because of multiple years of missing step increases due to various factors it became a running joke in our school and it was no laughing matter by reducing it to 23 the salary scale turned into something that was realistic to get to the top instead of a lottery ticket never

[00:54:24] to be reached folks were able to have a little bit more faith that they could reach the top of the scale and maximize their earnings in fcps and their future retirement the proposed budget this year continues a disturbing practice from last year of putting more steps on the salary scale if you vote to do this again you are forcefully extending the careers of your educators rather than them actually wanting to be here for instance i'm on step 17 but remain seven years out from getting to the top step if you add an additional step i'm still seven years out from getting to the top steps it only takes a couple of times of missing out on the on the step in the next 11

[00:55:01] for me to not maximize the final three years of my retirement knowing that steps have been missed multiple times over the last 11 years this disheartens me do the folks at the top of the scale deserve to be valued for their commitment to fcps absolutely are there folks that are below the top step that need to be valued for their time commitment to fcps absolutely so i have to ask why we are prolonging to wait to get to the top of the scale for over 90 percent of your employees the simple solution is to take the 4.3 million dollars and put it at the top step furthermore the top of the scale for all employees should revert back to what it was in fiscal year 2020.

[00:55:37] thank you our next speaker is joshua school good evening and thank you for your time one of the beauties of going near near the bottom is everybody gets to take your talking points uh so i'm here to support a second athletic trainer i've had three children graduate from centerville high school and a fourth who's a senior now all of them have played sports throughout that time and all have needed unfortunately athletic training that's not just during the work day

[00:56:12] that's weekends after hours and in one case in the middle of the night i've been fortunate enough to watch my kids graduate from high school and go on to play college athletics to include one at

the professional level the athletic training system at each of those levels far surpasses what we have now fairfax county is not just the gold standard in education but when you look around they are very competitive athletically and that is something that you need to continue to embrace and while our children's safety is paramount in that i balanced a large budget i've been you having

[00:56:46] to make those tough decisions competing priorities are hard but i cannot imagine that our children's priorities and our children's health is not a risk analysis that you are going to go through and prioritize appropriately lastly i've seen some horrific injuries on the football field i've seen some horrific injuries in the basketball arena i've seen some horrific injuries in women's sports and i cannot imagine being a parent on that sideline and not having the requisite athletic training staff attending to my child i implore you to to fund this position for 2024 thank you

[00:57:23] for your time thank you our next speaker is chandler galant good evening school board and community members. My name is Chandler Galant and I'm currently a sophomore exercise science major at Shenandoah University with the intention of becoming an athletic trainer someday.

[00:57:41] I'm also a product of FCPS and went to Lake Braddock where I played varsity soccer and ran varsity track. I had the opportunity to shadow Kristen Morin and Brittany Arndt at LB for the past month. In that time I had the chance to witness Kristen and Brittany's daily routines.

[00:57:56] Right after school there could be anywhere from 30 to 50 kids that come in for treatment every day all with new or existing injuries as a former athlete i know the personal relationships that they build with each and every student they encounter fcbs is losing so many good athletic trainers due to only having one full-time position a second position would create more or equal distribution of workload and prevent burnout less turnover would create stability for students in developing and maintaining trusting relationships with their athletic trainers in the superintendent's budget presentation she touched on wanting to provide competitive compensation for all employees

[00:58:32] to assess with recruitment and in retention as someone with a plan to become an athletic trainer i would love to come back to fcps but that reality will be difficult if the structure remains the same my hope is that you all can get behind the need for the second full-time position so that i can come home after graduation and get back to this community thank you thank you our next speaker is stephanie lundquist aurora it's an excellent idea to prioritize middle school sports in the budget and it sounds like we need more ags as well on the other hand sdps has spent

[00:59:11] almost 17 million dollars in legal fees in the last three years and the torrential flood of taxpayer dollars continues to flow to your lawyers here's the shocker you're paying hunting the law firm that fought to maintain school segregation in brown v board to argue your case for equity over of merit in TJ admissions.

[00:59:31] Clinton was on the wrong side of history then, and the same is true for today, save merit. Sadly, you continue to defend your anti-Asian admissions process in TJ in order to, as you say, racially balance the school.

[00:59:47] As eighth grade students, including my son, sit for your equity admissions essays to TJ in the upcoming weeks, I wonder, have you already determined your racial quotas for the incoming class? We're paying an 8% tax increase of property taxes for you to hire lawyers to discriminate against our children.

[01:00:05] With your antics, how would anyone trust that your failure to distribute commended student awards was anything but intentional? You also need to chill out on your spending for administrators. I've seen proposed spending will increase to $3.5 billion for even fewer students as Fairfax families continue to flee to private schools and homeschooling.

[01:00:28] This mass exodus of more than 10,000 students is a direct result of the board institutionalizing its equity agenda with special administrators, inappropriate surveys, and an insane FLE curriculum. Teachers are also fleeing in droves. So consider this. Eliminate your multiple equity indoctrination officer positions and that sole source contract for half a million dollars with Dr. Reed's friends at Performance Inc.

[01:00:53] and shift that money to more athletic trainers and teachers, the ones that actually educate our children. Speaking of corruption, transfer that $400,000 you allocated for your own office space to help move children out of trailers and into... Thank you. Our next speaker is Sarah Robles.

[01:01:12] Good evening, school board members. My name is Sarah Robles, and I'm speaking to you tonight as a teacher and resident of Fairfax County. I'm very concerned by the item in the budget that proposes to spend $400,000 on creating five school security officer positions at the elementary level with the intent to expand in the future.

[01:01:34] What exactly is the scope of this position? The only description I could find was in the budget highlights stating their purpose was to patrol the school. What are they patrolling for? Will they be involved with students and in what capacity? Will they be armed? I can only imagine this budget item is a reaction to the recent tragedy at Richneck Elementary where a six-year-old student shot their teacher.

[01:01:55] While at first it may seem logical that a security officer would provide additional safety, there is no evidence where one has prevented or stopped a school shooting. In both Parkland and Uvalde shootings, officers waited outside for backup. At Richneck Elementary, they have a security guard which is shared between schools, much like FCPS proposes.

[01:02:14] However, officers did not arrive on the scene until after a student had been restrained by the school staff members. Furthermore, there is evidence to show that the presence of police or security personnel in schools has real consequences for our students. Students are more likely to be suspended, expelled, arrested, or even assaulted.

[01:02:33] Just last year, an officer at Stone Middle School was arrested for assaulting a student. The likelihood of these outcomes are increased for students of color and students from low-income areas. FCPS even acknowledges in the SRNR that, quote, "It is recognized that marginalized communities and those that have experienced trauma may have concerns with law enforcement members being present in school environments.

[01:02:53] I work in a Title I school where the majority of my students are from those communities. How will my students feel safe in their school? If not to prevent shooters or make arrests, what is the security officer's purpose? fcps already employees counselors social workers psychologists and many other staff who are better equipped to support students and deal with crises why not spend the money on them at best this initiative is a waste of money and at worst this could seriously thank you our next speaker is

[01:03:21] joanne walton joanne walton our next speaker is sondra davis here now in 2023 we can't kick the budget can any longer we're facing a severely underfunded capital improvement program and

wondering if students will be learning in trailers with mushrooms growing in the

[01:03:57] carpet for years to come. We owe per a resolution agreement with the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights tens of millions of dollars in compensatory services to students with disabilities. How many times did parents appear here to beg to reopen schools in a timely manner and how many hours did we spend in the streets to collect over 20,000 signatures for your recall to send the message that students with disabilities were suffering. I implore the public to listen to the school board budget working session from january 17th where the spin the numbers game and tweaking continues in an effort to cover up direct responsibility for this

[01:04:33] mess we do not forget and what about our moral obligation to remedy the learning loss for the 85 percent of the student body that does not have a documented disability as of right now our third second and first graders and kindergartners have had every academic year disrupted by your policies it is still not back to pre-covid standards and sadly most parents of littles don't even know to question things a year and a half from now the federal covid relief money will run out the loss of that windfall combined with long-term declining enrollment also your responsibility will be disastrous our special education teachers got a well-deserved seven percent raise out of federal

[01:05:09] relief funds in september 2024 that money will run out are we going to cut their salaries risk them leaving are we going to ask the board of supervisors for for for more tax money to make up for the shortfall are we going to expect richmond to save you when you ignore just about everything they say what will you do when the bills come due i'm aware of too much and sometimes i can't sleep thinking about it can you throwing millions down the lawyer rat holes now it's not a time for nice to haves and political wants start making decisions that make sense to most of us like a second athletic trainer in school sounds good to me thank you our next speaker is

[01:05:47] Cameron Ward. Good evening. I reviewed some of the proposed budget and I am concerned that there are 476.4 more positions funded for 2024 and 290.2 of them are non-school based meaning they aren't classroom teachers. Teacher compensation is directly related to teacher retention. I see a proposed 3% raise for teachers across the board. This doesn't begin to compensate teachers for the years of salary freezes and benefit erosion.

[01:06:31] I did the math. For a teacher earning $70,000, that's a raise of about $150 a month after taxes over 10 months. Why aren't our teachers valued more than that after years of salary freezes? The new Cigna insurance plan saves FCPS a lot of money, but its implementation has actually eroded employee benefits. I've heard complaints about co-pays for weekly allergy shots that didn't exist under the old plan. I've also heard a teacher has to pay out of pocket for an EpiPen.

[01:07:01] an EpiPen. Really? A doctor's prescription should be enough for that. It's the little things that are going to drive teacher retention. When teachers can get higher pay and better benefits in other school districts, they will leave FCPS for more attractive compensation packages and often a lower cost of living. It hurts to see the student enrollment down and the cost per pupil up with a small increase in teacher compensation. I believe that you can do better for our teachers and keep the cost per pupil lower and place the education of our

[01:07:38] children at the center of our budget. Thank you. Our next speaker is Leslie Houston. Good evening. Budget Chair Tolan, Vice Chair Pekarski, members of the school board, and Dr. Reed. I am Leslie Houston, President of Fairfax Education Association, a union representing thousands of your employees.

[01:08:00] The FEA advocated for a singular priority in this budget among a multitude of needs. The main priority was compensation for your employees, and 90% of this budget is focused on compensation, making sure the focus remained on hiring, recruiting, and retention.

[01:08:19] We brought our proposal to the superintendent and the school board advocating for the continuation of the extended contracts for special education teachers. Salary step increases for all employees and a market scale adjustment of at least 9% for all employees.

[01:08:38] Our budget priority was designed to restore employees' faith in FCPS's commitment to pay its workforce. By providing compensation that is commensurate with the experience we provide, FCPS will attract and retain qualified school employees.

[01:08:55] Meeting student needs is directly correlated to the value placed on our workforce. Within the salary conversation, FEA would highlight a variety of needs that should also be incorporated. Provide restoration of the past three missteps.

[01:09:13] Examine the living wage issue again, and incorporate a minimum salary of $43,972 for every full-time employee in FCPS. Evaluate all employee scales with specific focus on support employees including transportation custodial food service and instructional technology support this budget brought by the superintendent begins to address our compensation needs but there is still work to be done as this budget is before you and within your scope thank

[01:09:52] you our next speaker is marcus lee good evening ladies and gentlemen my name is marcus lee and and I'm a proud Hayfield Elementary School dad, where two of my four daughters attend.

[01:10:09] You've heard that Hayfield Elementary School leadership is facing budget constraints that may force our school to make choices to drop STEM courses that are already at 50%. And this may be widespread throughout the county. Now I know this choice is a tough one, one combined with overcrowding school classes that need instructional aids.

[01:10:30] Excuse me, instructional aids. Now the Fairfax County Public School System mission statement calls for a well-rounded education. And while there is no requirement under state law that STEM must be provided for, our federal education law notes that a well-rounded education should include STEM courses, even at the elementary school and especially for young girls.

[01:10:56] Girls already face the self-perception challenges of gender roles, that they're not good enough are not smart enough to be in a STEM related education or in a STEM related job in science, math, or technology.

[01:11:11] And this can start at the earliest ages and go to all backgrounds, all races, and economic status. And it gets worse at the boardroom, in the research lab, and in all throughout our jobs. The top five jobs or salary out of college and trade schools are all STEM related.

[01:11:31] And that's something I hope our stellar students here can learn while they pursue their educational studies. Now I travel all over the world and I talk to energy ministers and heads of state about integrating women into education and into energy.

[01:11:46] And how can I look at my kids in the eye if I can't do that here at our own home? So let me leave you with this. The only way for our daughters are going to break through that glass ceiling is if we teach them how to build the hammer to do it. Thank you.

[01:12:02] Thank you. Our next speaker is Nikki Fulton. My name is Nikki Fulton, and I'm a parent of many athletes at Lake Braddock. As a parent, I saw firsthand why the athletic trainers at Lake Braddock are invaluable.

[01:12:23] I saw how my daughter, Joy, needed our athletic training staff to get through many tough injuries. She tore her ACL three times. Ms. Kay, our trainer, was there every step of the way. Joy would go to see her every day after school as she rehabilitated after each surgery.

[01:12:39] She was determined to keep playing soccer with the hopes of playing in college. When she tore it for the third time, she knew her dream was over, but Ms. K was there to help her physically and mentally. Joy ended her soccer career February of her senior year, therefore missing her most anticipated time to play at Lake Braddock.

[01:13:00] She had her third ACL repair and a meniscus transplant. Joy could have mentally gone to a negative place, but with Ms. K and all her knowledge and encouragement, Joy ended up being a better leader from the bench and encourager to all the girls who were getting injured.

[01:13:18] We owe it to the Lake Braddock Athletic Training staff for that. Joy was so grateful for all that the staff did and Ms. K that she organized a GoFundMe to raise money for the Lake Braddock Athletic Trainers. She raised four thousand dollars on her own for our trainer. Our athletes play harder and tougher than most counties because our competition is tougher than most counties in the whole country.

[01:13:47] Our injuries can be and are often major. We can't risk having just one athletic trainer at our competitions anymore. Our children are worth more than that and I ask you to see how priceless our athletic trainers are and the need for two full-time positions at each high school. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Lee Kaiser. Good evening. My name is Lee Kaiser and I'm a proud 29-year employee of FCPS as a sixth-grade classroom teacher and school counselor. I actually add a lot of data

[01:14:27] to validate my concerns regarding the proposed budget but I can easily share that in an email. Instead I will share this. My eligibility date for retirement is March of 2024. However, I have no desire to retire, believe I have many years more to give and do not feel as though 55 years of age is too old to continue to do this work. Additionally, Fairfax County Public Schools is faced with a shortage of staff and in fact have hired unqualified people to educate our students. I am here to say that the budget does not provide any incentive for those of us at the upper end of the pay scale. Based on our existing pay scale, I imagine the additional step proposed would be that to equate of a

[01:15:05] thousand dollars pre-tax and my ERFC monthly pension payment would only go down thus the added step is not an incentive yet in looking at Prince William County Schools their pay scale includes 30 steps and the latter steps increase approximately $3,800 a year note their scale goes up to 30 also to note again I've devoted 29 years to FCPS yet I'm only at step 24 that's five years of frozen salary the bottom line is that if I and others take my passion to support young people to for instance Prince William County Schools in 2024 I

[01:15:41] would earn two hundred seventy thousand more dollars than if I stayed in FCPS through 2031 I know that Fairfax County students deserve the very best and this budget does not provide incentive to those of us who are dedicated to do so if you want quality educators you need to compensate them appropriately if we are supposed to be a premier district, then compensation should not be competitive, but rather premier. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is John Purvis. Thank you very much for

[01:16:21] having us here tonight. Appreciate all of the student-athletes who came out here and supported a second athletic trainer position. So I am a father of four two-sport athletes from Centerville High School. I have also served for the last seven years as the president of the athletic boosters. So I work very closely with athletics at Centerville High School. I firsthand have seen what our trainers do on a daily basis for our athletes, for our school, for the parents.

[01:16:53] It's tremendous. Most of it is done by one person. Our school, we have had a flurry of people come in through the second AT position and they just don't stay. And they don't stay because they can't afford to stay. You can't live in Fairfax County and work for that amount of money. I'm advocating today for the second full-time person to be there, pay them a fair wage, offer them the same benefits and let's keep our students firsthand. We live in a very competitive area. Our student athletes

[01:17:29] are some of the best in the country. We go to one of the best schools and school systems here in the country. We consistently, the county puts out state championship teams at all levels at, you know, every sport there is that's offered throughout the county. We need to support them at the highest level. So thank you very much for your consideration. Thank you. Our next speaker

[01:17:52] is student number seven. Good evening, board. Today, I'm here to talk to you about the funding of the AT2 positions at FCPS. I don't play sports. I've never had any injuries, but yet I'm here talking to you about athletic training a profession focused on sports and injuries i was a junior when i first met the athletic trainers at my school i just started as a football manager and it was my

[01:18:28] second day when i met miss k shortly after i met miss a the associate athletic trainer at lake braddock i continued to learn more about athletic training seeing the trainers at my school work during the football practices and after the athletic training room the work they do daily treating kids rehabilitation and other administrative things inspired me to help them in the training room. From that point on, I volunteered as an ATSA in the following winter and spring seasons and learned so much. I saw daily the monumental work that athletic trainers have to deal with.

[01:18:55] It requires a large time commitment and was especially hard on the AT2 trainer at my school, Ms. A. Because she has only given a small stipend for the work she does as the AT2, in order to provide for herself, she is forced to work as a teacher at Lake Braddock. I say forced because Ms. A is an extremely qualified as an athletic trainer, earning a master's degree, passing a board certification process, and getting licensed in the state of Virginia. This degree along with qualifications to become an athletic trainer are not rewarded or fairly paid by her benefitless stipend. Forcing AT2s to work other jobs and only giving them a small stipend with no benefits sets a dangerous precedent for FCPS. A county as large

[01:19:31] as Fairfax County Public Schools with an operating budget of over $3 billion, not prioritizing the health of student-athletes by not adequately paying the licensed medical professionals that help them is the grim reality we face. FCPS takes pride in its dedication to students. On the website it states, quote, students come first in Fairbanks County Public Schools, unquote. Prioritizing adding a second full-time athletic trainer across the county puts students first. It ensures safety and increases access to care for all students in FCPS. The choice is clear. If you truly put students first in FCPS, then adding the position should be an obvious choice. If you don't, you force students to face a decreasing demand for AT2 positions, limiting accessibility of care and ultimately

[01:20:09] prioritize the greed over the well-being of students. Thank you. Our next speaker is student number eight. Hello, my name is Maria Sophia Arbin and I'm currently an ATSA at Lake Braddock

Secondary School. Ms. K, Kristen Wharton, and Ms. A, Brittany Arndt, are some of the best people that I've known for my duration at Lake Braddock Secondary School. I joined the ATSA program freshman year. I joined during the winter season, so I got to really get to know the trainers during

[01:20:47] a pretty chill season and then really got to learn during the spring season. I'm here to talk about the AT2 position. The AT2 position is a very, very important job that many athletic trainers take, especially if they are beginning their work as an athletic trainer in the state of Virginia.

[01:21:06] Sorry. Miss A, I first knew her because she was my PE teacher. This year, she is both an AT2, a PE teacher, and a sports medicine teacher. should not be happening. Her pay is so little and now she has to take on three jobs. Think about that. Somebody who has to have a medical license to practice in the state of Virginia and to maybe care for your children has to take on three jobs to pay for stuff. That should not be happening which is why we deserve an AT2

[01:21:44] position to be permanent for both the AT1 and the AT2. Not only does it not put but stress onto the AT1 to take up both responsibilities of both athletic trainers. It also allows the AT2 to fully grow into the job.

[01:22:00] Athletic training is a very, very competitive environment. Even with how new the profession is, it is still very, very important for the health and sake of your students and athletes, including the student-athletes. And also, this isn't just go towards the student-athletes.

[01:22:15] It also goes towards those who are in the performing arts and just anyone in student activities. thank you sorry thank you and our final speaker is student number nine hi my name is haley roth and i'm here representing chantilly high school as both an athlete who spent countless hours utilizing atc expertise and an atsa working alongside chantilly's amazing atc miss bishop i've witnessed firsthand the necessity for atc twos in high schools like my own

[01:22:53] since the beginning of 2022 i've had the amazing opportunity to work alongside miss bishop an ATSA aiding her in athlete treatment rehab and safety while on campus. To say it's been a life-changing opportunity that has not only influenced my future educational plans as well as shaping who I am as an individual today would be an understatement. Through my experience as an ATSA I've witnessed and experienced the times when athletic training can be so overwhelming it's unbelievable. As a student there's only so much I can do to help out and I can see the toll working insane hours and seeing incredible incredibly large amounts of students has on the ATC's I've encountered. Expecting one ATC to efficiently and effectively care for the high

[01:23:31] volume of students that walk through the athletic training room's doors each day is illogical and impractical. For example, during football season, ATC's will work multiple hours before heading to football games on Thursdays and Friday nights. This fall, when I volunteered, I worked four days a week max in the athletic training room after school and from 3 p.m. till the end of games on Thursday and Friday nights, and let me tell you, I was exhausted. That means, additionally, during spring sports seasons there are multiple weeks with games every single night of the week once again having ATC's work midday till late at night. The issue here is that they are being depended on by countless individuals to evaluate treat and rehab athletes while simultaneously being responsible for the safety of

[01:24:11] athletes on campus as well as the safety of patrons. The amazing ATC's that staff our high schools have incredible responsibility on their shoulders and they deserve some help for everything they

do. The introduction of ATC 2's to high school like Chantilly will not only decrease overworking of ATC 1's it It would present the opportunity for more learning experiences for students like myself to immerse themselves into the medical field.

[01:24:31] It would offer higher quality care and attentiveness to athletes. As an athlete in ATSA who has taken advantage of my school's ATC, I ask that you please think about how... Thank you very much for attending tonight's public hearing and for sharing your comments and concerns.

[01:24:55] The board will hold a budget work session tomorrow at Gatehouse beginning at 11 a.m. And action on the budget is scheduled for February 23rd. Have a nice evening. The hearing is adjourned.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com