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Fairfax County School Board Work Session, Tuesday, February 20, 2024

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18rp9d9rM4U
- Official School Board page (FCPS): https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-02. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:23] In front of you today, you should have the budget presentation for today that I forwarded earlier, and it should also be posted on BoardDocs, and we do apologize for the short notice, but the budget staff has been really hard at work in preparing for all of the many budget things that we have going on, and we just had a work session last week, a presentation last week, and one this week, so please apologies for the late notice.

[00:00:54] but let's give some grace here because of this crunch time and next week, they're preparing for the joint work. So there's many. Please feel free, Ms. Burden, when it is your turn to illuminate to the board the entirety of what you have had to be dealing with in a very short period of time. But I do want to raise everybody's attention. I sent to you and texted you the link to the budget amendments. If you have any for this budget, please be sure that they

[00:01:22] are sent by today so that we can combine them for presentation on Thursday. Other than that the budget question link is the same and all of you should have that and it is also embedded in the email that I sent earlier today. We have lots to talk about because I do know there are a lot of questions from the documents that were distributed last week and so I want to make sure we have enough time to do that. And I want to remind everyone that the budget public hearing that is scheduled that was scheduled for this afternoon has been canceled

[00:01:59] because we don't have any registered speakers um so without any further ado dr reed thank you dr anderson um it's my pleasure to introduce the team that's going to share a brief powerpoint presentation which will kick off our conversation this afternoon uh so i'd like to turn it over to our chief finance officer uh lee burden thank you dr reed so today is the last budget work session prior to adoption of the advertised on Thursday night at the regular school board meeting and we're discussing salaries because obviously that is a

[00:02:36] huge driver of our budget increase and HR is also going to discuss some selected HR initiatives so we'll review the master's lane market comparison the proposed compensation increase comparison the master's lane beginning teacher the annual employer cost of teachers and then go into teacher recruitment strategies, the planned market review, the drop program, and then work after retirement.

[00:03:06] So if you see this next chart, it shows the min, mid, and max of teacher salaries in fiscal 24 this current year. In 2016, a previous school board set the target market at 95 to 105 percent, and we have used that as our guide for the last eight years. At the minimum, we do meet our target at 98 percent, But that is not enough to compete in this market at the mid point we pay 94.7 percent of the market average and at the max We're at 91.3 percent and at all levels min mid and max. We rank seven of the eight wavy participants

[00:03:42] So that's fiscal 24 the current year fiscal 25 Salary increases based on the budget proposals of wavy participants Arlington and Manassas City have not yet released their proposed budget, so we don't we don't know where they are But the increases proposed by surrounding divisions range from four point eight five percent to six point four percent Loudoun County has approved their budget with an average six point four percent including targeted adjustments to mid-career teacher salaries and Prince William has negotiated with their teachers through collective bargaining and landed on five point two percent overall

[00:04:21] With again targeted increases for mid-level teachers mid-career teachers So, if you move to the fiscal 25 proposed master's lane, that's what this shows. We typically compare master's step one of the teacher's lane because we want new teachers to have a master's degree.

[00:04:39] Again, in fiscal 24, we rank seven of eight in beginning MA lane teacher salaries, and we would like to be number one. The fiscal 25, 6% MSA increase propels us to the top based on surrounding divisions.

[00:04:57] budget proposals. And when recruiting at colleges and universities, we want to be able to say we pay the most because recent teacher graduates do not consider pensions and other benefits a priority when considering where they'll accept employment. It is all about the salary.

[00:05:15] So speaking of that, this chart shows the annual average employer cost of teacher salaries and benefits. Most of our benefits, except health care, are a percentage of salary so you have to use a teacher salary to drive what the cost of benefits are. The average teacher salary is typically calculated by the WABE participants in exactly the same manner using total teacher salaries divided by the number of teachers. We do fare better in comparisons at mid-career in average

[00:05:49] salaries of four of eight and if you add in employee benefits including erfc we are at rank four of eight with benefits as well and now i'm going to turn it over to dr agnew scott who will review hr initiatives including recruitment and the cyclical market review plans thank you miss burden while competitive salaries help to set the stage for an effective recruitment strategy there must be an intentional

plan based on available data to effectively recruit strategically. Dr. Agnew Scott, can you bring the mic a little bit closer please? Thank you.

[00:06:29] Excuse me. So ad campaigns are important as we work to recruit a diverse workforce. One example of a creative advertisement campaign that we're implementing, and this is new this year, is circa works under the umbrella of diversity jobs circa is a comprehensive job job board platform offering innovative dei and recruiting sas based software solutions the goal is to help

[00:07:01] fcps have an outreach to diverse communities and building our recruiting pipeline specifically for ethnically diverse minorities, older workers, individuals with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ, and college students from historically black colleges and universities. We will continue this campaign into the 24-25 school year and collect data to determine its effectiveness. We're also working to renew our web presence through the development of a recruitment webpage and expanded

[00:07:39] use of social media to advertise employment opportunities this year our efforts to recruit and hire diverse workforce helped us to receive the diversity recruitment certificate of partnership from diversity recruitment partners a dei centered workforce development agency through our use of job boards such as diversity in ed we've been able to effectively source a more diverse pool of candidates. Also new to FCPS is the use of centralized hiring teams to expedite the hiring and placement process throughout the hiring season. Centralized hiring teams consisting of

[00:08:17] LT members, administrators and EPs are able to make the biggest impact at our career fairs and thereafter. They're able to make district offers and assist with making placements in their respective regions which will assist in expediting the hiring process.

[00:08:34] Looking to school year 2025, we will continue our efforts to hire internationally. We're in the process of hiring international candidates for next school year through Participate Learning. We hired 31 ambassador teachers this year and we will be adding 100 more next year. There are currently eight countries represented and there are currently eight host schools primarily in region three but so far for the 24-25 school year we have 16 host

[00:09:09] schools participating with more being added but please keep in mind that participate learning teachers they're only able to teach certain subjects and that does exclude special education math and science per state department because they are on j1 thesis with fewer students entering traditional teacher prep programs districts are looking towards opportunities to grow their own teachers by providing low-cost options and expedited programming districts are able to invest in their own talent by encouraging paraprofessionals and

[00:09:47] other employees to transition to the classroom as a teacher our continued partnership with the vdoe and i teach program to offer affordable licensure options allowing us to recruit from within. We're also partnering with other colleges and universities that support career switcher programs and other expedited licensure avenues.

[00:10:11] And finally, speaking of an internal investment, we are seeking to strengthen our commitment to our Teachers for Tomorrow students by offering guaranteed contracts in high school and maintaining a connection with them throughout their college career to ensure their return to Fairfax County Public Schools as a teacher in one of our classrooms. And now we'll shift our attention to our efforts to retain our

employees. Employee Services and Operations Director, Micah Dunlap, will now share with you her team's work regarding cyclical reviews. Thank you very much. Hello. I'm here today to talk to

[00:10:51] you about cyclical reviews. On the one hand I'm going to talk to you about the cyclical review for the full year 23 that we recently conducted and we bring the results to you. And then secondly, I will talk to you about our five-year plan looking forward to ensure that we have equitable practices in context with compensation for all our staff members moving forward. I want to talk to you about why cyclical reviews are so important and why it is important to do them regularly. It is important because they support the division's classification and compensation goals by contributing to fair, equitable, and consistent

[00:11:26] pay practices. Dr. Agnew Scott and Lee Burden just talked about our current compensation philosophy where we always want all our staff compensation to be between 95% and 105%. We want to make sure that happens moving forward and we want to make sure we hold these goals for all of our positions. We also want to ensure regular updates of job descriptions and the maintenance of equitable and competitive salaries. At FCPS we have roughly 950 job descriptions and job positions. It is important to keep those updated because as we move with time the scope and the responsibilities of jobs change and we

[00:12:04] want to make sure that our job descriptions correctly reflect what our people are actually doing. We want to make sure that we align with best practices of local comparisons. Whenever we do cyclical reviews we do market benchmarks where we look at our neighbors to ensure that we compare our compensation rates with those around us and make sure that we are attractive to potential hirees. We want to encourage strategic and proactive reviews of organizational structures. That is very important. We want to make sure that the team works on value-aided work and not only on reactive work. We want them to

[00:12:40] proactively form and design what's important to our employees. We want to signal to our employees that their roles are valued and continuously assessed, fostering a sense of recognition and engagement and improving retention. And And then along the lines of that, we want to ensure guardrails to stay compliant with changing labor laws and regulations, which is something that we check with every signal career view.

[00:13:05] And then very lastly, we want to increase leadership awareness of annual signal career views and facilitate reserving mid-year funds to implement the recommendation. The last point is very important. Our recommendation to implement a five-year plan on signal career views will ensure that every year we talk about needed changes that we need to make for compensation to remain market competitive in the markets and we want to make sure that we reserve the money for that so let's have a look together at the cyclical review in 23 so for that year we looked at school-based and departmental positions mainly clerical

[00:13:41] technical classroom instructional support overall 17 positions that you currently see on the screen right from the office assistant to the school based technology specialists all of these position titles have been evaluated for the following actions should we update the job descriptions should we reclassify the positions because the scope of the job and responsibilities have changed more than 50% should we regrade the position because the position is not competitive in the market with the current pay and/or should we retitle the position because the retitle may not reflect the actual duties within that

[00:14:20] role anymore. The recommendation that we came up with was that we want to make substantial changes to five roles of these 17 that we have evaluated and you see here all of the 17 roles reviewed they will get an upgrade of the job descriptions right because since this work has been last done the jobs have changed so we want to make sure that the job descriptions correctly reflect the duties of the job so all the 17 positions will get a job description upgrade. Five of the positions we got upgraded to match financial needs of the

[00:14:56] markets. One position will be reclassified, the administrative assistant one at the academies. The scope has so much changed over the past year that we're actually saying this is partially a different job today and we need to reclassify it. And then when it comes to retitling we suggest that change to three positions to better match the title of the positions to the actual job duties. When you look at how the $251,000 are distributed across the 17 roles, you see that 60% of the money goes to the office assistants, where we

[00:15:33] recommend an upgrade from scale from scale 4 to 5 to all our office assistants as responsibilities have increased over the past years and we think that the grade of A5 is more suitable than A4. As of July 2023 we had 442 incumbents in that role. Accordingly we make that update for all of these people, for all of these incumbents in those roles, amounting up to $150,000. And you see here on the slide how we are planning to allocate 23,000 to the administrative

[00:16:09] assistance, 64,000 to administrative assistance 3, and then 5,000 and roughly 9,000 to the finance tax. The reason why you see this limited update for the finance technicians is that we decided to get rid of the career letters for these positions, as we have not found a significant change in the expectations towards the incumbents, depending on their level 1, 2, 3, or even 4.

[00:16:41] This is also the framework that you will continue to see over the next five years, where we will call out to you the main changes that we recommend as part of a cyclical review. Okay, let's move to the next slide. When we look at the next five years, as I briefly mentioned, we want to make sure that all of our positions, roughly 950, are looked on, evaluated, and reviewed every five years.

[00:17:07] And how have we come up with this list here? There were multiple criteria that we were looking at. we were considering what was the last time that the job descriptions and the classifications have been reviewed for these offices. That was criteria one. Second was, how many incumbents do we have for these different positions? How many exception requests do we receive from these offices? Because whenever we receive an exception request, that's a signal for us, ooh, maybe something is going wrong, right? So we are considering that when we are putting then into these rules.

[00:17:40] So you see here, we average around 200 positions every year that we will be looking at, and again we will be reviewing all of these for potential retitles, job classifications, upgrades in the markets, or what's the fourth one?

[00:18:02] Job description updates. Thank you so much. With that, back to you, Leigh Burden. Okay, the next item is the DROP program, and that is a retirement benefit program that allows eligible employees to continue working beyond their retirement eligibility while accumulating the monthly retirement benefits in a separate account.

[00:18:24] This plan would be available to active ERFC legacy members only for a term of five years and the legacy plan folks were hired before July 1 of 2001 and they have to meet the minimum eligibility for

full retirement which is age 55 and 25 years. While in drop, members would not pay the 3% employee contribution to ERFC although the employer share of 6.48% would be maintained. Members would continue to receive all of their active employee benefits plus continue to build

[00:19:02] their VRS service years. At the end of the drop period participants would receive a one-time lump sum of their drop account balance or their pension that had been contributed there during the period and then they would just receive their ongoing monthly pension thereafter and their accounts will earn

[00:19:22] 4% interest annually. And this retirement benefit program is designed to retain an experienced workforce, maintain continuity of operations, and ensure a seamless transition through succession planning and knowledge transfer. And just so y'all know, we have about 2,700 people. It's a closed plan, the legacy plan. And we have about 2,700 people in that legacy plan. And about 531 of them would be eligible for the drop program in this upcoming year. 75 percent of those individuals that would that meet that minimum

[00:20:00] requirement of 55 or 25 years, 75 percent of them are school-based. And just to give you, and of course the majority of them are teachers, and just to give you a little flavor of what we're talking about, 19 of them are ESOL teachers, 10 of them are librarians, 18 of them are foreign language teachers. 16 of them are high school math teachers. 58 are special ed, could be teachers, could be instructional assistants. 10 APs, 8 principals. I mean, these are pretty big numbers to have

[00:20:39] walk out of FCPS and go work somewhere else, purely because the ERFC legacy program requires 25 years and VRS requires 30, which is why we've seen lots of people leave FCPS and go work for another division because they can collect their ERFC pension while building their additional five years for VRS so that they get an unreduced benefit or full pension from VRS. We don't know how many people have left FCPS to go work for another division because, as you know, although

[00:21:16] we do exit interviews, people often don't want to tell us what they're doing or where they're going. Some people do, some people don't. So we don't have a lot of good data on that. But I did ask ERFC to run a report for how many people have left in recent years that they retired from ERFC, but we have no documentation that they retired from VRS.

[00:21:41] So that's kind of a hint that they probably went somewhere else to be able to get that full year's service that you need for VRS, and it's 450 people that have left in recent years, retired with an ERFC legacy pension, but did not retire from VRS.

[00:22:02] And they could have later, I mean, they could have sent their, you know, two years after they left us, they could have sent their paperwork into VRS, and we wouldn't necessarily know about it. This isn't a great number, but it does tell you how many people in recent years have left us with a full ERFC pension, but not yet eligible for a full VRS pension.

[00:22:22] Another thing that we are doing and in the drop program, you know, and the critical shortage employees, both of these changes will come to the board in the next month or so because the ERFC Board of Trustees have already approved these because they require a plan design changes.

[00:22:47] And we have to file our pension plans with the federal government, and that kind of identifies all of the details on how we're going to conduct that plan. So these changes will require a change to those plans. So it was presented to the Board of Trustees on January 26th.

[00:23:03] They've already signed off of that, but the school board has to sign off on it as well. So we'll bring you all the information about that then. So the critical shortage employees, the Code of Virginia, another change proposed is alignment between the VRS return to work program and ERFC.

[00:23:23] School divisions may hire eligible retirees into certain full-time critical shortage positions. And back in the day, critical shortage was very specific kinds of positions. But these days, if you go on to VRS and look at the war programs, the war program that they offer, they identify critical shortage positions as just about everything.

[00:23:45] I mean, I've never seen the critical shortage positions identified that are this broad. And it says elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, and assistant principals and principals. So only those positions deemed critical by the state are what would be eligible for this.

[00:24:06] they're designated for one year only but can be renewed and the only requirement is that eligible retirees must have a break in service of at least six consecutive months between the retirement and the date of the of working in a critical shortage position. It still it requires the employers to submit the employer contributions to VRS for these positions and so we want to allow employees in critical positions to draw their ERFC pension as well as their VRS.

[00:24:35] currently we do have a very limited number of staff they're working in critical shortage positions like less than less than a dozen I think and but currently they're they still continue to receive their VRS pension but if we hire them as critical shortage under that they have to start paying back into ERFC so there's a disconnect there so if you retire from us and then later in receiving your ERFC pension and receiving your VRS pension and then decide to come back a year later,

[00:25:09] you have to rescind your ERFC pension, although you continue to receive the VRS. So we would like that to be aligned as well, that if you are in a critical shortage position and you are coming back that you don't rescind your ERFC, that both of those you can continue to. So this just aligns the plan for critical shortage positions in ERFC with those of the RS and again this already was put in front of the ERFC Board of Trustees they are recommending these changes they'll come to the school board at a later date and

[00:25:47] we'll talk about it in more detail then and then the last thing that we have is next steps if you have budget amendments that require costing you I skipped over the budget calendar but this tells you the same stuff i'm going to tell you so move on to the next one um if it if it requires costing you need to get those to me by tomorrow i mean you may have asked a budget question or you may know just based on the documents that we've provided you what the

[00:26:22] cost of something is and so you don't need to check with us first you can send that directly to the school board office for posting as part of the agenda item but if you need costing then you need to get it to us by into close of business tomorrow thursday morning at the latest assuming it's something not really complicated so that we could cost it out for you the board amendments will be posted to board docs prior to the adoption and you all are scheduled to adopt on thursday night at your regular meeting thank you so much ms burden appreciate all the details that you've provided folks just a reminder that last time we were here ms burden did give us a pretty

[00:27:01] significant stack of papers the fact sheets and some of you had had some questions but you were not ready for those yet because of when we received it. So please be sure to include that as part of

this discussion today. We'll start with Mr. Moon. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the presentation. I am going to unfortunately, regrettably, start with a sour note that I

[00:27:32] was quite shocked to hear this morning that county executive in his advertised budget proposed to County Board of Supervisors only recommending a transfer increase of $165 million, which is about $90 million short of our superintendent's proposed budget. $90 million, that is a huge amount.

[00:28:06] You know, when 90% of our budget go into paying for people, that's going to affect our staff's compensation. So I am not going to come up with an amendment to reduce the request. At least I am not. But at the same time, we need to be prepared to deal with this. I know that it starts with lobbying the county board of supervisors, but ultimately, if the county board of supervisors comes very short of our request, we have to have a plan. And I don't know what the plan will look

[00:28:44] like, whether it's going to be just overall decrease in the amount of increased compensation we are planning for, or it could also include maybe differentiated a compensation structure as far as providing a MSA is concerned, overall changing the salary scale is concerned.

[00:29:08] but i you know have to urge my colleagues to consider start a thinking about a what the plan b and it should look like that's what i have for right now yeah i mean and you're correct although i would probably look at the silver lining and that is that they've come out with 165 million but at the fiscal forecast they stepped out with 75 million for us so 165 million is um 90 million

[00:29:40] more than that. So, additionally, the House and Senate, I mean, the House budget does not provide any additional funding for us. However, big round numbers, because, you know, Budget Sunday was a couple days ago, so we're still looking at all of the detail for that, but the Senate budget would provide an additional $30 million for us. We, everything, of course, if we do not get full funding will be on the table. Historically, over the last four or five years, we have had to reduce

[00:30:15] the budget, and that usually comes in the form of a superintendent's recommendation to the school board. But it's early days. We got plenty of time to talk about all that. We won't know our final funding until the state continues its work and the county finishes up its work on their budget, And that's usually all done by the first week of April, and we don't adopt until May, so we have plenty of time.

[00:30:44] It's early days, but we will figure it out. I am confident of that. Thank you. Thank you for your optimistic note after my sour note, but I must caution my board members that I am still quite shocked and very, very disappointed that a county executive didn't even wait until school board takes a formal action on the superintendent's proper budget.

[00:31:11] Who knows? You may come up with an additional amendment asking for even more money. Thank you, Mr. Moon. Mr. Dunn, please go ahead. Thank you, Dr. Anderson.

[00:31:29] Can you go in one second, please, Mr. Dunn? I'm sorry. Ms. Marin, did we need to do another confirmation for this session to allow him to virtually participate? I believe it's a separate meeting. If the clerk could verify, I believe it's a separate meeting. It is a separate meeting, so let's go ahead and certify those who will allow Mr Dunn to participate virtually because of a professional conflict is that what it was earlier personal conflict.

[00:31:58] Please raise your hands at this point, and I believe that is unanimous with all of those at the table. Thank you, Mr. Dunn, please proceed. Thank you. I really appreciate the the excellent presentation

by Miss Burton and the superintendent today.

[00:32:15] I had a question about the drop program, and I apologize if I'm missing something that was shared in another document, but have you costed out this proposal, both in the near term, what it will cost for this year, and then what it will be projected to be 10 years from now?

[00:32:44] I believe from looking on the internet, my good friend Google, that Fairfax County has a similar program in place. So I'd like to understand if we're modeling our program on their program, and if you're able to provide any data to show what it has costed them whenever they instituted it, Both in the beginning and I'd also like to see what they initially projected and then what it's actually Cost them and in the year since they instituted it

[00:33:22] Yes, the the drop program has 6.5 million budgeted in the superintendent's proposed budget to address the costs of this program But that is the highest cost that would be if every single person that is eligible in the legacy plan to drop opted to do so so once we you know propose this and get a little bit further further down the road with it that number will

[00:33:54] will likely come down because generally speaking 100 probably wouldn't desire that as far as the long-term effect, the actuaries have costed that at about 0.3 percent, 0.3 of 1 percent, as far as potential rate increases, the contribution rate, because the 6.5 million is just funds to be able to propose this plan and implement it in this first year. We do a rate calculation every two years, the

[00:34:30] actuaries do with the ERFC plan and they're slated to do that for the fiscal 26 budget and so this drop program will be factored into the contribution the regular contribution rates in future years and is expected if everybody participated that is eligible is expected to have a point three of one percent impact on the contribution rates at the same time at this point the rates are actually expected to drop in fiscal 26 the contribution rates so

[00:35:05] there'll be that offset as well it is very similar to the county's program a lot of school divisions and public entities have deferred retirement opportunity programs and my understanding is that the county's plan cost them about 0.2 of 1% and they have had that plan for many many years is my understanding and can you just explain briefly I'm sorry I didn't quite

[00:35:39] understand the idea is if just paraphrasing but please correct me if where I'm wrong that under our current retirement system we're forcing people to retire who want to keep working so this is an option to enable them to continue working while earning retirement is that right no this plan we have had a number of teachers principals central office staff who are in the legacy plan which requires a minimum age

[00:36:15] of 55 and 25 years of service in order to receive your pension vrs has different requirements and and they require 30 years of service in order to be eligible for a full unreduced pension.

[00:36:34] So employees in the Legacy Plan who reach age 55 with 25 years service, financially, it is advantageous to them to go work for another VRS entity, receive, you know, build those five more service years that they need to get to the 30 while collecting their ERFC pension, which they only need 25 for.

[00:36:57] So this drop plan that we have proposed will allow them to participate in a drop plan so that their ERFC pension goes into an account for them during those five years so they lose nothing and then

they will receive a lump sum payment that they accrued during the term of their drop plan when they reach their 30 years of service with VRS and decide to retire fully.

[00:37:28] And to add to that, Ms. Burden, and good afternoon, everyone. To add to that, we've seen more employees wanting to maximize their retirement benefit. And so just as Ms. Burden said about the maximization of that retirement benefit, there was a time. And so I look back at my 30 years on Fairfax, where we would have individuals who would forego that maximization because of wanting to work for Fairfax County Public Schools.

[00:37:57] And what we're finding more and more is that because people are trying to maximize those retirement benefits, they are taking that leap and actually retiring so that they can bring those dollars in and work for another school system. But years ago, you would find individuals who would continue to work for Fairfax and forego those additional dollars that they would receive from ERFC because they wanted to stay working with us.

[00:38:24] We're in a very different work environment today, and we're experiencing those individuals wanting to go to other school divisions so that they can maximize that benefit. Thank you, Dr. Anderson. Thank you, Mr. Smith. Also, I think historically, Fairfax County, on the pay comparison, salary comparisons, generally was higher on the salary than our regional counterparts.

[00:38:50] So leaving to go to another division didn't have as much of an advantage financially, but currently where we sit comparably, it's not only a potential loss of the ERFC, but the wages, as you saw in the master's lane in particular, we're running seven of eight.

[00:39:09] So it's not as great an incentive financially salary wise to stay either. Would this solve the problem that I've been told about anecdotally by a couple of principals and teachers, where if they stay within FCPS, they said that if they stay past year 26, they actually get penalized by that financially.

[00:39:31] Is this a solution to that? Yes. I guess, I'm sorry, I'm still new to this, but why does FCPS have in place a system that penalizes people for staying beyond 25 years?

[00:39:51] It's because the legacy plan was originally intended to work together with VRS, as well as provide a bridge from age 55 to Social Security age.

[00:40:08] So the people in the legacy plan, their pension is much higher between the ages of 55 and 60, depending on how old they are, 65, 67, depending on what their Social Security age is. It is a much higher amount during that period, and then it drops down once they reach Social Security age to a far lesser amount, and I know anecdotally I've been told it's about 25-30%, so it's a pretty big hit.

[00:40:39] If you're a $100,000 employee and you're collecting $4,000 a month from your ERFC pension, then when you hit Social Security age, it drops to about $1,000 a month. And those are funds that you will never recover. They are just gone.

[00:40:56] And this drop program will prevent that because as soon as you are eligible, you can start accessing those funds. They will be going into account. You won't have access to them right then, but you aren't losing anything.

[00:41:09] Thank you. Can you point me to any documentation that shows for, you know, the WABE regional peer competitors? I've seen comparisons of salaries, but I haven't seen comparisons to see if, you

know, Loudoun, Prince William County, D.C., Montgomery County, Prince George's County have ERFC similar programs to that or drop programs.

[00:41:37] and i'm just trying to see you know is fairfax county the only one offering erfc or something similar and the job program or something similar or does everyone have the same retirement benefits no fairfax county public schools is the only entity in the commonwealth who provides a supplemental retirement program to to its participants none of the others do i think Arlington provides a small match and to its 403 B program and Prince William also offers they have a retirement opportunity program where employees can

[00:42:14] come back and work 20% of their time for 20% of their income but as far as an actual pension plan only Fairfax has this what about DC and Maryland I don't know about DC and Maryland we can certainly find out but to my knowledge knowledge, no. Is there any survey data showing that you've surveyed the teachers joining either mid-career or new and asking them, you know, ranking their priorities of what's important to

[00:42:50] them, pay, health insurance, retirement benefits, showing that the ERFC is something that teachers coming to FCPS actually value more highly than other things? I don't believe that we've done a survey. However, I think that the recruitment folks would tell you that they mention the ERFC Supplemental Retirement Plan on every recruitment trip to every single person that shows any interest in Fairfax whatsoever. But as I said before, there is not great interest

[00:43:26] in pension information from individuals who are 22, 23 years old. There's just not. Now, 10 years later, I think that's a different kind of analysis on the part of new teachers. But when they are straight out of school, it is all about salary. Thank you, Miss Burton. Mr. Dunn, if you have any additional questions, we're happy to put you on the go back as your time has expired. Thank you. Mr. Frisch, followed by Miss Lady. Thank you. As a former 22-year-old not too long ago,

[00:44:02] I will underscore that my friends and I never talked much about pensions or retirement, but the same friends and I at 32 said things like, I wish I'd paid more attention to this when I was 22. So it is not as if it is not important to a 22-year-old, it's just a matter of perception, right? And as our country has walked away from retirees, it is heartening to know that Fairfax County remains a place where we believe that people should be able to retire with dignity so they continue to live a life you know that's relatively comfortable after they finish

[00:44:40] giving their entire life of service to our school system. Couple questions for you and I want to lean in on the the salary question because that is at the heart of this budget. It's also at the body of the budget. It is the entire entirety of the budget. Can you talk a little bit about how this places us in a competitive environment in a, you know, you call it a sweet spot of being in the middle, but can you address that more fully than the presentation lays out or just

[00:45:13] re-emphasize that fact? Well, we want to be the first. When we go out to colleges and universities, I mean, there are 47 colleges and universities in the Commonwealth that provide education programs, And we want to be able to tell each and every education graduate that we pay the most because we know that that is what is important to them, that is what their priority is.

[00:45:39] Now, we'll still tell them about our great benefits, health care, the ERFC pension. We still tell them about all that, but they are interested in the salary. And it doesn't really seem to matter much,

whether it's $200 more or $500 more. We just want to be able to say we pay the most.

[00:45:57] Because, Dr. Agnew Scott can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that our needs based on air vacancies means that we could hire almost every education graduate in the Commonwealth if we could just get them to come here. And it is a great place to live as well as teach if they can afford to live here.

[00:46:17] Looking at the rest of the budget, we don't have any new programming in here. Can you talk about how that centers the focus on the compensation we're offering our educators? with an acknowledgment that we understand that resources are finite and that we're focusing on what's most important?

[00:46:36] Well, obviously that was the priority of the superintendent in this year's budget because, again, we did not have any new resource. We did not allow new resource consideration, new initiatives, none of that. That's the message that we sent to our program managers and principals when we first started developing the budget because we knew that we need to address vacancies recruitment.

[00:47:02] That is our number one thing is to have a certified teacher in front of every kid's classroom at Fairfax County Public Schools. And that is something that everyone around this table is dedicated to. And the way to do that is for us to pay the most.

[00:47:17] 90% of any K-12 or labor-intensive industry is salaries and benefits, and that's what we have put our focus on. Some would say, well, last time you said it would be the most, or last time you said it would make you more competitive.

[00:47:35] Does this not evolve every single year as other jurisdictions raise their salaries? It does evolve every single year because we have to try to, you know, when we're trying to figure out what we're doing, we have to try to predict what they're going to do so that we end up where we want to be.

[00:47:53] But luckily this year, or fiscal 25, everybody did kind of what we thought they would, that they landed around 6%, but they did, their strategy was to provide step increases plus MSA.

[00:48:08] And as you all know, step is movement on the salary scale, and MSA is applied to the salary schedule. So 6%, nobody at FCPS loses anything because the largest steps that we have are at 4%, and that's on the teacher scale.

[00:48:29] We use a 4-3-2-1 strategy with the teacher scale. Some steps are worth 4%, some are 3%, some are 2%, some are 1. And typically we would give a 2% in MSA, you know, something modest, and so we opted to go with MSA instead of step increases because that improves your standing in comparison to neighboring divisions.

[00:48:55] And can you remind me where in aggregate this has FCPS falling in terms of the percentage increase request among other regional school divisions? Yeah, I think the lowest one is four and a half and the highest one is six and a half.

[00:49:14] Not for raises, just for the overall requested increased funds. I believe it has us roughly in the middle.

[00:49:32] So you're correct. So we asked for about a 10.5% increase from our local body. Loudon asked for 11.3%. Prince William asked for 10.6%, with Alexandria and Manassas Park City being the lowest at 3% and 4% respectively.

[00:49:52] so we're we're in the in the middle of it um can you speak to how the uncertainty in richmond you know several of us were down there lobbying our legislators for increased funding it's unclear when they will come to any agreement can you speak to what position that puts local school divisions in the uncertainty around what we will be getting well i mean we just have to wait and see i mean i'm like i said they're supposed to finish in the next couple of weeks so i'm i'm going with that

[00:50:31] They may not, and it's early days, we'll adjust, but for now, I'm just hoping that the Senate prevails and that we get additional funds. I appreciate your optimism. And finally, can you speak to the average that we typically receive from the Board of Supervisors in terms of a percentage of their budget?

[00:50:58] Yes. Historically, we have received, over the last five or six years, we've received 52.6% of the county revenue. Is it county revenue or county disbursements? county disbursements and last year um or this year last year's budget development process but for fiscal 24 was the first year that we did not receive 52.6 percent but the amount that was shared

[00:51:27] with us was something less at 51.6 percent um that additional percent is worth about 50 million dollars and in the current budget that the county administrators stepped out with this morning we are slated to get 51.4% if we received the 52.6 that we have seen historically that would be another 55 60 million dollars thank you

[00:52:00] Miss Lady thank you as someone who's spent 30 years in Virginia 27 here I I didn't realize we had a four, three, two, one percent model on our scales. Can you talk to me about where the four percent lies versus the one percent? Well, if we were doing steps. The salary schedules are the purview of human resources, checks and balances thing. Four percent is at the early years, the step one, step two, step three, step four, but I don't really know where the break

[00:52:37] is or where three starts or two or one. I don't know if you are. That's good enough for my next question, thank you. I just read an article recently in the Post that talked about it as an op-ed about how, given how educated, overly educated if you will, very educated educators are, let's say that a few more times, we're making 72 cents on the dollar for people who have the same amount of education for the most part. I also want to lift up Dr.

[00:53:04] Moon's remarks earlier around the reality of us probably perhaps being asked to come back and find ways to penny pinch here on what we're asking and I also want to lift up the fact that every argument that we are putting forward at this table has to do with retaining quality school-based people as someone who actually lost some money because I retired at 54 instead of 55 although I had 25 years in a drop I'm curious to know how many people are going to hit their 25th year this year up through their 29th and will not be 55 because

[00:53:41] we're losing those people. That's who I'm hearing from. The people who are 55 are over the moon, they're not going anywhere. If drop passes, they're all in. I don't know a single person who's going to walk away from that. The other thing I just kind of want to throw out there is this reality of, and again, I realize I'm in a room full of central office people, so with all due respect to you, the idea that perhaps we should do 6% school-based and 2% MSA for those that are not school-based. This, again, comes from constituents' concerns.

[00:54:14] I got very frustrated on the campaign trail because they kept using the word administrators. I wasn't administrators in school. I capped out at $139,000 with a master's plus 30 and 30 years in a school

system. In Fairfax County, that's pretty embarrassing, in my opinion. I don't know. I was not aware of what my colleagues at central office make until I got in this seat, and I am quite aware of some of those, and kudos, and congratulations to you all. I just don't know what that would look like in the budget if we just did 6% school-based and 2% MSA for people that are not school-based. Again, having said that,

[00:54:48] maybe it would be offset by my folks that are at 25 years in ERFC but are not 55. Again, they would be choosing to get a reduced benefit. I understand that. It's not a guaranteed 100% jump on that if it were available, but some perhaps would consider it.

[00:55:08] So those are just some of my thoughts in the sense that while I think you just made a very profound statement, Mr. Fresh, regarding the county releasing a budget today of offering to give us 51.4 percent versus the 52.6 percent, and that's 60 million.

[00:55:24] And if we get the 30 million perhaps from the Senate budget, we're getting closer. I just you know just for consideration because again we are trying to retain a world-class teaching you know staff and we know that the other thing I'll talk about real quickly is the fact that we have a much more diverse student body and then we had five years ago ten years ago fifteen years ago and the cost per pupil for us yes colleagues and taxpayers in preference County is high but what we need to do to meet the needs of our students and uplift the

[00:56:03] strengths of our students cost us more every day. Thank you. Happy to put you on a go back. We've got time. We will go with Miss Anderson and then Miss Marin. I wanted to start by saying thank you to Mr. Frisch for reiterating the fact that I've had a lot of concerned emails related to the lack of step increase and And I have been trying to explain that it's still more money.

[00:56:34] So if you consider the fact, and if I understood you correctly last time, I want to make sure, that if a 4% increase would be the equivalent of another step and then a 2% MSA on top, then they're at the same point that they would be. Am I understanding correctly that retirement is also figured off the money, not off the step?

[00:56:54] That's correct. The high steps we have, again, are at that beginning teacher's schedule, and that's 4%. So if we did our normal modest COLA, 2%, that's 6%. So nobody loses anything. I didn't think so. It's all about creditable compensation, and that is the salary, not the step, not the grade.

[00:57:16] I mean, some divisions, I mean, steps just generally don't equate to experience, even though everybody thinks that steps equate to experience. I'm coming from a background in the military system. I got you. Yeah, they don't. I mean, due to a whole bunch of things, compression of salary scales, you know, years that we didn't give, step increases, and then you have people co-located on the same step, but they have differing or varying levels of experience. The fact that all the divisions around us pulled placement caps um because of the the shortfall in in teachers um

[00:57:55] in general steps do not equate to experience but that kind of philosophy still um is is bandied about but yeah it's six percent and all that your pension cares about is the dollar amount not the step not the grade not how many steps you have available um you're absolutely right

[00:58:14] Perfect. Got it right. Okay. So I was really happy to see that we are reviewing positions. And I know that within secondary schools, they're frequently using IAs as administrative in an administrative role. And I saw that they were on the list. Those are people who don't typically work with students, but

they are definitely they provide administrative support to special education offices. And they're typically at a significantly different pay scale than an

[00:58:45] administrative assistant would be. And I notice that they're on the list, but I notice, and so I have a couple of questions. When we're considering following actions, are we, so that would be one instance where job duty definitely didn't necessarily align. And then the second one is, are we considering attrition within actions at all? So like frequency of attrition, maybe to be able to look at those issues to see whether or not that is, is a reclassification that's necessary to ensure that we have a better throughput for, for

[00:59:15] Yeah, thank you. Let me start with the last question. So we continuously need to get better in using data for our decision making, but we are already able to look at attrition data for the different groups, and we are able to look at how long does it take to fill a position, because that's also an important lever, right, that tells us how are we doing.

[00:59:37] We need to be more systematic, though, in putting that data in our reports that we have. Whenever we do cyclical reviews, a standard thing to do is surveys towards the impacted incumbents by the cyclical review.

[00:59:53] And in that survey, in the past, in this cyclical review particularly, we asked them 40 different questions around, amongst other things, what should be part of that job description or or what does your job entail, right? And then we ask for the incumbents and their supervisors feedback on, well, does the job description reflect what this person is actually doing, where do you see the main challenges, what do you spend most of your time on?

[01:00:19] And that gives us then the data that we need to assess, do we need to update a job description or not? So for yours, I'm looking here at the data of the report, so for the instructional assistant, The data did not support the fact that the job description did not wholly, that did need to be reclassified or retitled.

[01:00:39] However -- Is that possible because so many different people are serving in an IA role and the consistency with how long they're in each position is so short that they wouldn't actually be able to answer those questions effectively? That's a risk with every survey.

[01:00:55] It is. I think how we can limit that risk also moving forward is to make sure that we raise the participation risk participation rates of the surveys that was a challenge for this particularly one and I think we need to become better in communicating to the people how important it is that they contribute sometimes when we send out these surveys this particular one we send out just before Christmas we gave a we gave a longer time like four or five weeks but still sometimes it's harder to reach people you know during their Christmas breaks etc so I think we need to do more work in making sure that people contribute and take the chance that they understand the importance of the surveys hey if you

[01:01:34] don't speak up now the next time we will ask you is five years from now and with that survey it's particularly concerning to me when we have positions that are such high turnover rates particularly when you're considering any of our eyes kindergarten assistants that kind of thing so these are some of our lowest paid staff that are that are working with children all mostly working with children all day in addition to the fact that we do have some of them that are being pulled into administrative roles. That is particularly concerning to me because I would think that we would want to spark based on attrition look at those positions that we can't keep people in we should probably be paying

[01:02:12] attention to why and so that's usually driven by either job duties or pay and so in those circumstances it would make sense to me that we would be pushing a little harder not focusing solely on the material that we're receiving back from the incumbents but other other factors as well. And we do that right so the survey gives us a lot of qualitative information of course we do the external benchmarks where we compare us with other school districts on these positions we compare the job descriptions of other school districts we so the scope so that we can then make the comparison of the salary levels so that is all done automatically and you know whenever we you don't see a

[01:02:52] change or a recommended change it's where we are meeting our goals that we We are between the 95 and 105 percent. Now you can argue, is 95 good enough? That's just salary though, right? Yes. It's not job description. It's just salary.

[01:03:07] That's correct, yes. That's correct. So I think that what I'm putting forward is that I'm concerned about people that are in these IA positions that are actually being given administrative tasks, and that is being done from what I understand at the secondary level at a pretty consistent rate, particularly when we're talking about IAs that are working within the special ed community.

[01:03:26] And so I am particularly concerned that we would not be looking at that again for five years related to that particular subsection of IAs. Okay. Yeah, thank you. I would like to speak to that as well. There are cases where, you know, you may have isolated cases across the division where someone might be working out of class.

[01:03:49] And if that's indeed the case, and the cyclical review is complete, then those individuals can certainly report that to our ESO office or to my office, and then we can investigate further to find out exactly what's happening at the school and what we need to do to resolve the issue.

[01:04:11] Ms. Anderson, happy to put you on a go back. Looks like you've got more there. Ms. Marin followed by Ms. Eismelheiser. Dr. Reed, can you refresh my memory? I believe you said that it was best practices in HR to have like one side, one part of the shop focused on your school-based or your instructional staff and another part focused on operations.

[01:04:30] Is that correct? Maybe I'm misremembering. I've shared that it's often, school divisions of any size often have part of their HR department focused, as you indicated, on what we would characterize as certificated personnel. Those requiring a particular type of professional license or certification and those that do not and so that's correct because they're very different ways that different recruiting fairs different evaluations required the different criteria for

[01:05:06] the jobs honestly that's not to say that some things aren't the same right like background checks everyone would be background checked similarly but there are some unique licensure requirements that often hr departments differentiate thank you i'm glad i remembered a semblance of that and our instructional assistants family liaisons pretty much everyone in the right column would they all they're all certificated no they would not be on the right well i don't know about a school-based technology specialist i think those are teachers often here but um when you see

[01:05:40] instructional assistant often that does not require um a license it requires some level of certification but often not a license so so here's the thing and i really appreciate miss anderson raising the point our school-based staff are doing a very different job than even perhaps our administrative staff in schools and to treat everyone like it's the same kind of thing i know when i've been in the schools and i

spent an hour or two in there i'm it's a completely different experience than when i'm here for an hour or two so regarding the questioning that

[01:06:17] miss anderson was asking about our instructional assistants who might change or um our principals or anybody else providing input about what they think the position is are you taking that kind of 360 data in yes okay great i also wanted to know where the whole report is of this it is on the shared drive it has not been shared publicly yet because it hasn't been approved officially by whom the superintendent or the board this is from

[01:06:54] the superintendent included it in the proposed budget in the book yes the whole report I actually there was one sentence that I know because a reporter asked me about it actually it was one paragraph yes now that's this point three million that funds the proposal for fiscal fiscal 25. Dr. Reed how can the board receive this report of the cyclical review that has some of these that perhaps might answer some of our questions? I'd be happy to have it sent

[01:07:31] to you in either a Friday letter or a JFBB but happy to have that provided. Great thank you I would think too as each year goes forward it would automatically be presented as part of the executive limitations would that be a good assumption absolutely it would be included in the human resources um el would essentially and i think um the team presented this thoughtfully what this does is put into place um a system that was in place honestly here in fairfax county for a number of years which provides a scaffolded schedule of constant review right so it's not just a group maybe that has a loudest voice at

[01:08:10] any particular time but rather we review all um positions on a regular basis so i i'm really thrilled that the team saw this as a priority and has they've worked really hard to put together wonderful you know a report on that so we can make sure you receive that annually thank you one last thing i'll say about ias before i move to a different subject is i've been contacted by ias or teachers who are saying that ias are often pulled to be substitute teachers that's instruction so there is something again obviously the board is interested about the ias In particular, we know what a backbone they are in our schools, so I think this needs to be further discussed and thought about.

[01:08:49] Okay, I got a minute left. Dr. Reed, are you able to share, or perhaps your team, of our general education teachers that we're bringing on pre-K to six? Is there an understanding of how many of them have been trained in the science of reading? Our instructional assistants?

[01:09:05] No, no, just our gen ed pre-6. Oh, our gen ed teachers. or special ed, or pre-K-6 educators, how many of them are coming in from their educator program knowing the science of reading? Oh, well, coming in from their educator program, it really, honestly, it will depend on where they're coming from. I know the University of Virginia has been sort of the cornerstone, and Dr. Presidio's nodding, of the Virginia initiative, so I would expect that an education or a teaching candidate coming from the University of Virginia would be very aware. I don't know, I'm assuming the other universities, but we have candidates from all over the country that apply here.

[01:09:44] So I don't think there's a guarantee, but there's a hope that more are coming with that background than not. So I'm just wondering what benefit there is to collect data on that, because we are incurring the cost of retraining teachers if they don't know the science of reading, and that is such a foundational thing.

[01:10:01] So is it worth it to know that information? what does that tell us about our recruitment process or the onboarding process um so yes ma'am i mean i think it's a it's a critical part of data not so much for recruitment but certainly for onboarding um and as quite uh this fall i think in the very next couple weeks we're going to see a request for a new basal curriculum for our elementary school students and all staff are going to need professional development as this will be new material and we haven't had a basal curriculum in close to 30 years here in fairfax county i can't wait to see it fourth floor willow

[01:10:38] oaks i'm told we can review it um that the reveal that no to review oh i think they're available i hope that's public um i think it is i believe so i believe it is yeah um the well the question i had though is we could have data that says how much the school division spends to re-educate educators coming from say Virginia schools other than UVA because they're not teaching them per the Equitable Literacy Act and I think that's valuable information to know. Well and I want to correct myself here I just know that University of Virginia graduates likely would there may also be and I know George Mason University has a new person in their education department around

[01:11:15] science of reading so I think our new candidates likely are but I do think it's data worth collecting and i can see micah and sherry making a note of that right now and krista as well if you could hold on just one second i'm not sure if mr smith wanted to add to the questions that are being asked right now no no i'm fine okay thank you okay one question i have for um the hr team is what what is the money that's being spent to reclassify why is that that 2500 251 000 what's

[01:11:49] that spend for? That is looking at the how many people do we have on them and if we change the grade from for the office assistance for example we recommend to change the grade from A4 to A5 multiplying that by the number of incumbents how much would that cost? So you're saying that's a salary difference? It is, correct. So that is salary, great. I thought that was an internal cost.

[01:12:11] Last thing I'll just say quickly about subs and retention. I've heard that some substitutes after they are people they retire they're being asked to reapply as like brand new staff with resumes and so you know I've had a teacher who teaches 25 years and is told please submit your resume well that teacher has been teaching for 25 years so what can we do to make it easier for our veteran staff who want to return and keep serving FCPS thank you Dr. Agnew Scott yes thank you so we are looking at all of those factors and determining what we can do to reduce the

[01:12:51] amount of time it takes for an individual to actually apply from the time they applied to the time that they're hired we do have our our director of talent acquisition here Krista Simpkins and she can give us more information regarding their work on reducing that time hi all again I'm Krista Simpkins. Typically when someone retires there has to be a break-in service. So when there's a break-in service we do have to take them, run their background again. I understand that they

[01:13:27] have been a part of the county for 25 years but anytime there's a break we have to put them through the regular process as to anyone that has been here before. I know that there have been some cases that I've seen just coming on board this past July where we had folks who were teaching in the classroom for quite some time. They had a three-month break in service and then we found that there was something that may have come up on their background in the three to six months that they were separated. As far as them submitting a resume, it is a part of the process. We're not asking them to submit a new resume, but we knew we do need it for documentation

[01:14:06] in the event that there is some sort of audit. We do have audit processes that we have to go through and so we can't submit that ourselves as an HR department. that's part of what the candidate is going to have to do as far as far as their process like they would do here or any other organization and I'm sure you have a follow-up with that so if I could ask you to stick a pin and just FYI everyone I'm putting everybody on a go back so when we go to the second round and you do not want to turn just say pass but otherwise I'm just assuming everybody would like a second turn. Ms. Seismohiser followed by Mr. McElveen. Thank you and I appreciate

[01:14:43] all the conversations about recruiting and retaining staff. I appreciate Mr. Moon lifting up the concern about what's our plan B. Before we get to the plan B, I'd like to know what's our plan to really lift up why our ask is what it is. Some of my questions are going towards that end because I think we really need to help our community and our allies understand why our ask is. My first question is do we know what percentage of the advertised budget ask is sort of the costs that we don't have a lot of control over. Increased benefits,

[01:15:19] what percentage of our advertised ask is that or is it in comparison to increased salary beyond the percentage this year? Well if you look at salaries and then for the purposes of this question I'm going to think about the salaries which is 170.7 million included in the proposed budget. And then the 2% that we did in fiscal 24, the late increase by the General Assembly, but then we have to add that $55 million into this year. That plus the salaries and the salaries

[01:15:58] and benefits is over 6% of our 8.6% request. It's about 6.6%. And then the cost of enrollment is about 1% more and then everything else is that last percent. So that 6.6% that you mentioned, that's the 6% salary increase plus benefits plus the increase the 2% from last year. So and then 1% for the cost of just more students, right? Which obviously we're public school, we educate

[01:16:34] everybody. It's you know and again what you asked was the percentage of the total advertising. Yes absolutely yeah but the 46 million 47 that is enrollment a very small piece of that is for the actual overall enrollment increase the need right it's the the supports that are needed for ESOL students FRM and special education thank you I appreciate that clarification so it's really I guess I should say we educate everybody for what they need right so we have a higher needs population coming in and that's going to cost us more so if we look at

[01:17:12] six percent salary increase which is very much in alignment with what our surrounding jurisdictions are doing so if we want to keep our staff and retain staff we need to do that plus the cost of our enrollment that's seven point six percent of our eight percent ask so yeah I mean most of our budget the the main things are salaries and benefits the cost of enrollment and a lack of state funding so if we didn't do six you said about one percent increases about fifty million dollars approximately is that did I hear that correctly no one percent of our budget sorry

[01:17:51] one percent of the salary increase so we're doing a six percent salary increase so each percent is about 50 million is that correct no about 30 30 okay so 55 is the cost of the two percent that was implemented in this year and then moving forward into fiscal 25 is the cost is 55. I ask that because if we can't let me ask another question so do we have any percentages on our teacher retention in terms of I need so we don't know how many are going to us trying jurisdictions but in terms of our vacancies this year and last year in comparison to a percentage of vacancies the years before and

[01:18:29] especially in some higher needs positions we do have that data and there is not a lot of difference from year to year that we're seeing in terms of vacancy miss simpkins do you have that specific data available um i have uh excuse me i have the data on vacancies from this year not comparisons to the past three years however when i did look at the numbers of the folks that we brought in and some of our turnover data there has been an

[01:19:02] increase in our turnover for teachers so however what i can say is that us being able to start recruitment earlier allows us to try to keep up with those vacancies now the team is not going to always be able to keep up one-to-one with every person that leaves with every um everyone that comes into the division for example we had hired since september another 335 teachers since the start of the school year and those 335 teachers offset the number of folks that we lost

[01:19:40] in attrition this year for various reasons that we see in the hr2s another thing we see more data in our hr2s when folks say they're going to leave the division versus the surveys that they complete so we are starting to take a closer look at that information to build out our recruitment plan for For example, we saw that we are losing a number of foreign language teachers, so the recruitment team has put together a number of different trips.

[01:20:08] BYU, for example, they have a really large language program where we're going to be going there in the next few weeks to recruit those teachers. So we are using that data to help us keep up, but from a year-to-year perspective, we do notice that we look at other factors other than people just leaving the division as far as why they're leaving because we had covid things changed before covid and now after covid people are looking at work a lot differently so we want to look at all the factors the cost of living increases those different things when we're talking about attrition it's not just one thing that we can look

[01:20:47] at and we just try to be as thoughtful as possible but i think i appreciate that explanation ryan i appreciate the thoughtfulness but what i think i heard you said the turnover rate has increased in the last few years than previously i can speak to that and just looking at where we are in the middle of the year this time of the year for teachers from 2020 at 2022 there were 106 teachers who separated in comparison to 111 in 2023 and then we're actually down this year for 2024 to 104

[01:21:26] for this time of the year so it's trending downward i was kind of trying to get an idea from like five or six years ago pre-covid right like what the difference is between you know our teacher recruitment and retention five six seven years ago maybe ten years ago to where it is now right and i think covet has changed things significantly but i'm trying to get an idea from before right because if i'm trying to figure out if we need a six percent salary increase because we're having a shortage in teachers i want to get some ideas what those numbers are we can get those those pre-COVID numbers for you thank you I

[01:22:00] appreciate that and then I want to get back to your the IA question that Miss Anderson raised in terms of the cyclical review because the position she's talking about are just an IA I should say adjustment an IA at a secondary school so the numbers are very small in comparison to overall the numbers of IA IA's. So I don't know how many responses you might get from the people doing that particular administrative job. So my question is, when you're doing these cyclical reviews, what else are you doing to look at the needs of the job, right, beyond just sort of the incumbent

[01:22:38] and the principal? And what are you doing to compare job classification or what someone actually does in a job to another job? So, for example, at the secondary -- and now my My time is up, I may finish. There are some IAs who are being used as administrators in the special education office who are

doing very similar job duties to administrative assistants in the front office, but getting paid very differently and classified very differently.

[01:23:02] It's a small number. So how would you catch that is what I'm asking. And we'll add you to the go back list, Ms. Eisemolheiser. Dr. Agnew Scott, or I'm not sure who was responding to this. Yeah, I was just thinking, yeah, I'm responding.

[01:23:19] The objective of a cyclical review is to understand, the main objective is to understand what is part of a specific job, how do we define a job description, how do we define a position, and how do we make sure that we benchmark it in context with our neighbors and in context with the environment that we are acting within.

[01:23:45] We will never hit 100%, we will never 100% capture what all of the people are doing within these job descriptions, right? Because there is always flexibility that supervisors are getting in how they interpret a role and how they can make what they ask people to do.

[01:24:04] So when it comes to duties that people are asked to perform that are outside of the scope of a job, we want that person to speak up using the mechanisms in place through the office of employer relations right to address these and i just chatted with my team to make sure that we communicate that a bit better because these are also signals that we can use as a team to understand how big is the problem around incorrect scoping of jobs when it comes to your second question how do we make sure that we hear from all the people that need to hear about

[01:24:43] the surveys that we are doing and how we are collecting inputs what we need to do better moving forward is to explain to people the significance of their feedback and their importance to make sure that we communicate in time and provide people with enough time to provide their responses and i take it very seriously that we do that thank you mr mckelveen followed by miss st john honey so i i agree with mr moon and others who have expressed their

[01:25:18] frustration about the need to talk about a plan B already. As we parents might say, I'm not surprised, but I'm disappointed. So I just want to raise one philosophical question, and it deals with the steps. So, you know, I think over the past couple of decades, we can count on less than two hands the times we've been able to afford a step. And so in many ways, it's become a false promise so at a philosophical level can you tell us why we have a step scale more generally and

[01:25:59] the purpose of going forward with one when you know it's a promise that we can barely ever keep well i looked at the last um 10 or 12 years and step increases were not included in the budget in fiscal 13, fiscal 14, fiscal 21, fiscal 22, and now fiscal 25. I wouldn't characterize that as a promise because of course it's always due to the fiscal environment that we're in.

[01:26:33] It's not guaranteed. Oftentimes we have folks talk about how that it's referenced in their employment agreement with FCPS. That is false. That's inaccurate. It's not. But that is the way that school divisions, all school divisions across the Commonwealth have salary skills with step increases and then MSAs that they apply to it. That is just the strategy that historically is

[01:27:03] used by all divisions in the Commonwealth and many outside of Virginia. But again, steps are movement on the schedule and so they have a pretty big cost the same cost as MSA really the same it's the same 1% it's just it's spread across you know a bunch of different steps but it doesn't improve your your salary schedule only MSA improves your salary schedule or you know some other adjustment that

[01:27:36] required a percentage increase to the salary scale so that's a good way to to quickly compare better in the rankings because we could do it across more years but it would take forever if we did step plus whatever modest cola we could provide it would take us years and and you know honestly we've tried to do that and we haven't we've gotten further behind at seven of eight right i think just from from an outside perspective the expectation would be that the

[01:28:12] step would be you know the base and an msa would be the cream on top right but i think we've gotten away from that so it is what it is but anyway i just wanted to kind of give folks an opportunity to think about it because i know as you mentioned many years i've been on the board we just haven't been able to do the step and we focused on the msa which i think is is good because it benefits everyone right so and just so you know it also addresses the top of the scale because those at the top of the scale are not scheduled to get step increases

[01:28:49] because they're at the top of the scale so at least the last three four years that I've been here at Fairfax we have added a step at the top and that's because those people wouldn't get step increases otherwise as well as we have short schedules compared to our neighboring divisions, which have 30, a full VRS and reduced benefit or more. I think Prince William has more than 30 steps. And so doing this MSA across the board also acknowledges that those at the top of the scale are our most tenured, most experienced

[01:29:24] employees, and we would like them to get a similar raise to those that are not at the top of the

[01:29:30] scale. Okay, thank you. Ms. Angel Cummings, Cunnings, followed by Mr. McDaniel, think of cutting ham without the ham. So my question in terms of the cyclical reviews, and you mentioned that you did the surveys and had a hard time getting responses, and I wanted to know if you could offer us the percentage of responses that you received, and I know you take it seriously, but I think that's important when you're

[01:30:07] restructuring the job descriptions from again for my boots on the ground experience what I can tell you is that IA's office assistants family liaisons administrative assistants and even custodians are all doing things that are quote unquote not in their job descriptions or other duties as assigned I know custodians are acting as interpreters sometimes I know office assistants and administrative assistants are in the classroom IAs are in the office this speaks really well to

[01:30:42] the fact of the people that we do have on staff that are so committed to our children and to doing what has to get done and I applaud what they do but that also leads to burnout that also and i'm happy that this budget is addressing getting a fully staffed school that this budget is recognizing the need for fully staff fully fully staffed schools from teachers down to the custodians because i think once we solve that then we can everything else flows from that if

[01:31:21] we don't have a fully staffed schools with qualified personnel we cannot have strong academic strong athletics program strong anything and that's that's the key the key is our personnel and the fact that our personnel are willing to do the work that is other duties as assigned is laudable but it's also exhausting and so when you do these surveys i really would like to have the numbers in terms of percentage-wise how much you're getting back what the barriers are to get some of those surveys back because we need a true reflection of what work hard work our staff

[01:31:58] is doing in our schools for the cyclical review 23 i do not have the exact number of the response rate but i know it was below 20 percent um and your other question was what do we what do we do to make sure that we capture what everyone um is doing we need to be very conscious about how how we are communicating with the staff the importance of their input when we're going out for input collection and also to making clear what the expected action items are It is important to enable our employees to know that they need to speak up and they need to review critically.

[01:32:36] That is nothing that we have been doing over the past years, as this is also quite a new concept. So I think we need to help enable our employees to do that job and to provide them with some examples on how they should be reviewing it, with also providing them with a time estimate on how much we expect this work to take them.

[01:32:56] A quick question. Who actually compiles all the data in the Wavy Guide? Well, Fairfax takes the lead, as you might imagine.

[01:33:16] But the finance, the chief financial officers or, you know, their budget directors meet every fall because the most important part of the Wavy Guide is that everyone agrees on the formulas and we're calculating everything exactly the same, so it's apples to apples.

[01:33:32] So, we have a huge, like 20-page, maybe bigger, survey document where we send it out to, after we meet in August, we send it out to all of the surrounding divisions, and they complete the surveys, and then we compile the document.

[01:33:49] We check their stuff, you know, we want to make sure that people have, that there's some data, some integrity to the data. So if somebody, you know, like I think one year we had one division who jumped to the top of the cost per pupil, like out of nowhere, and it turns out they had an error on their employee benefits.

[01:34:08] And so we do check to make sure that everything kind of, and we'll query if something doesn't seem right, so we kind of ride herd on that. But all of the data is developed in collaboration with the other chief financial officers or budget directors, and that results in the Wavy Guide.

[01:34:28] Gotcha. Okay. No other questions on my end. In the interest of time, I'll be very brief. So thank you for the breakdown on the drop of school-based versus non-school-based. It's very helpful. I want to go back to something that Ms. Lady said, retaining quality school-based people, and that's my priority.

[01:34:51] in this budget. If we're not going to get the full ask, or if the state's not going to step in, certainly my priority goes to that, and that's how I view the conversation regarding compensation, regarding drop, and regarding everything else with this budget, is retaining quality school-based people. That's all. And we will cost that out for you all, but you should know that of the 25,000 employees we have about 1900 are non school based and all the rest are school based so we can calculate the you know differing amounts but the

[01:35:30] savings will likely not be significant thank you I will now take my turn just to kind of piggyback on that because this is one of the points that I know we discussed at our very first budget meeting even when Miss Corbett Sanders was the budget vice chair which is how do we differentiate um in terms of um staff that is school-based and staff that is not because we do know the majority is at the schools and that's where we're kind of bleeding people so we i we want to focus on that i want to focus on that but we also know that percentage-wise a six percent for central off for some central office

[01:36:07] folks is a very different number than six percent than most um school-based folks so i'm very interested in that as a continuing item particularly if we have to make some decisions I do want to go back to the steps a little bit and I think the heartburn is this and please correct me if I'm wrong miss burden if I'm a teacher that is currently in the system right now this is my first year I will be making the same amount as somebody who's coming in next year is that accurate if we don't make any changes on the steps and just have MSA that is accurate and

[01:36:39] And that is also true at step three, where we have employees who have two years, three years and four years experience. It's also true at step 11, which is where teachers have 12 and 13 years of experience on step 11.

[01:37:01] The elimination of placement caps result, if we hire a teacher that is above the placement cap someone who was hired when the placement cap was in place will be at one step a teacher hired after that was eliminated would be at a higher step and so it's it's pretty much true all across the board that steps do not equal equate to experience and i think that's the heartburn and i hope that we can investigate that and just to be a little bit more creative so that people feel that their experience is valued because that's been the conversation that we've had here which is the drop program is being put in place to value the experience, we kind of have to show

[01:37:38] that as well along the way. And I kind of want to go back to the drop program and thank you for that information. I want to lean into this a little bit, I think it's slide 14, where you've talked about that the legacy plan members who are hired who would now be eligible for this drop program were those that were hired before 2001. So in 2027, should we expect a precipitous drop? What is going to be the plan at that point to retain those teachers? That's just, you know, three years from now. I don't anticipate the landscape is going to change significantly. What will be the thinking at that point where we are going to lose a number of teachers who

[01:38:14] are not in the legacy program but will have reached their 25 years? Is there a light drop plan? The second ERFC plan, tier one, the 2001 plan, you get full benefits at 30 years of service. So there is not a disconnect with VRS. So this is a short term address of this issue. Yeah, once the 2,700 or so people that are in the legacy plan all reach age 55 and 25 years. I mean, we might need the drop plan then for the 2001 group. I

[01:38:53] don't know. But for now, it is just for the legacy folks. And once those 2,700 people make their decisions about whether they'd like to stay or leave, we'll be done with that. Okay, thank you. What is the health insurance increase for this coming year?

[01:39:14] Yeah, it's, you know, anytime you have a self-insured plan, which we do, which is the cheapest, most efficient way to manage a health care program, then basically your claims drive your premiums. And so it is utilization by employees that are pushing our premiums up.

[01:39:34] So what is the expected increase for the coming year? In terms of the rate, it was about an 8% premium increase for employees that went effect January 1.

[01:39:52] So our plan changes go January, go calendar year as opposed to fiscal year along with our budget. So with a 6% increase, and let's just be generous and add the 2% from January, it's essentially just going to cover the insurance premium for our employees.

[01:40:07] No, the salaries are great. The value of the 6%, depending on what job you hold, is going to be more than an 8% increase on the employee share of health care.

[01:40:27] By how much? I don't know, but I have the family plan. I'm kicking in about $500 a month, and so my premium will go up 8%. And I could just put this as a budget question. I just want to get a sense of how much are we offsetting just the insurance costs for our employees.

[01:40:51] ERFC, what is that percentage again that we're adding? We added $6.5 million, and that is... Oh, no, I'm so sorry. What is the percentage that FCPS pays for each employee? We pay 6.48%, and that is developed by the actuaries every two years, and the employee kicks in 3%.

[01:41:17] So the drop participants would no longer have to kick in the 3%, but we still have to pay the 6.48%. And then the rates will go up the next time they calculate it, and the drop plan will be factored into that. we expect it to be a really small amount and the rates are expected to go down so it'll be offset by that in future years. And what is the employer contribution for VRS? Five percent. You know as somebody who as a new teacher you know somebody told me just start putting it away started putting it away and never looked back. I think we can do better. I appreciate Mr. Frisch's comments but I

[01:41:57] think there's a space here where we could tell our folks we have an additional 11 percent if you come here to Fairfax County. And I see my time, so I'm going to stick to the VRS. How do we decide which employee groups participate in ERFC and VRS? Because one of the questions that I've been receiving for the past year and a half, probably longer, is our family liaisons are not part of those two systems. Yeah, the VRS and ERFC go together. So if you are in VRS, then you are in

[01:42:29] ERFC. If you are a trades person or cafeteria, bus drivers, maybe custodians, you're in the county's plan of FCERS and their employer contribution rate for this year is 30% because there is a desire to have the FCERS plan be comparable to ERFC and VRS combined. So you have a much greater percentage there. There just seems to be a want by at least. And also family

[01:43:08] liaisons have always been in FCERS because they weren't 1.0 FTEs. So if you're a teacher that's a 0.5 teacher, you're also in FCERS. If it's less than 1.0 FTE, then it's FCERS, not ERFC. But they're comparable plans so that if somebody is in FCERS, and of course the employer contribution is far greater at 30%, then when you leave employment 30 years later, it is expected to be comparable to ERFC and VRS combined. Okay, because I've had a lot of advocacy from family

[01:43:47] liaisons, I'm not sure if you've heard, about wanting to be part of VRS and ERFC, and I see that's my time so I will wait for my go back and for go back so work I've got the list here that we have the order that we went through so we'll just go back through that what that's okay and then for I think we're on two minute timer for go back so mr. moon oh thank you I think as I stated earlier that we need to do some advocating lobbying of a county board of supervisors we also need

[01:44:23] educate ourselves and also educate the community as well so in that regard I would like to ask a superintendent a share with the board members about points of advocacy and especially a try to you know you know compare some of our numbers with the counties advertised budget and as part of that if I want to give you some data points I was just going through a quickly going through a counties advertised budget you know for example we are putting in 171 million

[01:44:58] dollars to enhance our compensation in the superintendent proposed budget versus 148 million dollars the county executives advertised budget but we have a much larger employees larger

number of employees than county employees I think counties bring proportionally higher amount into enhancing their compensation.

[01:45:23] And I see that a, you know, what the county executive is proposing to do with the police and fire and rescue and safety communications, their compensation enhancement goes anywhere between 7.85% to 10.69%.

[01:45:41] It's much higher than our six percent. So some of those are very relevant points of information that we need to have. I think regarding number of employees, it's better to say that we have 25,000.

[01:46:01] They may have less than half of that. So I would like to have-- I could not-- I could not find the number of county employees in quickly going through our county executive advertise about that. So, again, as we may be all preparing for Plan B individually, I think it's right now, we need to have all those information to go out, not necessarily to fight, but help county supervisors to make wise decisions.

[01:46:32] Thank you. Mr. Dunn, you're up next for a go-back if you would like. Okay, we'll come back. All right, Mr. Frisch. Chairman Frisch. Excuse me. All right, there's fine. Carl's good too.

[01:46:49] I want to talk a little bit about the non-compensation money here. I realize that the focus of this work session is primarily compensation, but I think it bears repeating why some of our requests reflects increased costs. Can you address a little bit about the increased cost of educating the students that we have?

[01:47:12] We talked a bit about that in the previous work session as it relates to various communities and the increasing cost and something that might be more at fingertips is benefits and other items that are going up in cost regardless of whether we want them to and our need to pay for those so to harken back to last week's long ago work session the the 46.6 million dollar increase in costs for student needs and and the enrollment change, about 8 million of that

[01:47:51] is for the raw student number change, which was 1,749 additional students. The other approximately 38 million was student needs, with the bulk of that being driven by special education student needs, to the tune of about 24 million, if my memory serves me correctly.

[01:48:07] And then we have the balance roughly split between free and reduced price meals and English first because of other languages services. - And then as it-- Let me take the benefits portion of it. Okay. So for the benefits portion of it, kind of back to Dr. Anderson's question about that 8% increase, I was able just to find for, you know, our Cigna plan.

[01:48:32] For the family plan, it's about a $40 increase per month for employees. That's what they'll see. So, you know, over 10 months, about $400 per year. For employee plus one plan, it's about a $32 increase. And then if you're an individual, it's just a little under $10 a month.

[01:48:49] So just to give you a sense of that, I mean, that's our premium increases of about 8%. And so that was a significant rate change for our employees, as well as our employer contribution. As Ms. Burden said, FCERS is our employees who participate in the Fairfax County employee retirement system.

[01:49:08] That rate change actually was a tad bit higher. They're currently 30% and it's going up to 32%. So that was a significant increase. And then for our VRS employer, we actually were able to capture a little bit of savings there to offset some of our benefit costs because our current rate is about 16.6%.

[01:49:28] The employer share, it dropped to about 15.39. So we're able to offset some of those increases with those savings. - There are other increased costs as well as it relates to water, power, those types of things as well.

[01:49:43] And that's not quite as big a chunk of the proposal here. But what it comes out to is, you know, tens of millions of dollars in increased fees that we don't have any control over or increased costs that we don't have any control over. And these are the types of things that will likely be more expensive next year and so on, so long as our student population continues to grow as it has.

[01:50:06] Yeah, but I think you're talking about the contractual increases like utilities, and that is what's included as an increase in the budget for that is $12.3 million. Right. So, I mean, that alone is more than $50 million right there, closer to $60 million in increased costs alone, not raises for staff, not investments in programs, simply maintaining the status quo and making sure that all of our students get the services they need. It's food for thought. Thank you.

[01:50:39] Okay, Ms. Lady, you're up next. I want to thank Mr. Fresh for those questions. If I could elevate them, I won't repeat them. I won't repeat the answers But I do think that it needs to be duly noted that just the cost of doing business Increases year after year. I also wanted to in light of Mr. Moon's Comments regarding the county budget. I do believe the county employees were given a higher raise last there than school board employees

[01:51:13] At least over 1% higher. I'm not sure I didn't drill down on this at what percentage they're offering them for next year But just food for thought I just want to make a comment on the IA's and the sped Situation someone who worked in a high school for 27 years in Fairfax County I never worked in one where the IA was basically not an administrative assistant in the sped office And so there's a sense of urgency to address this issue Those folks work their tails off And they have to have a high high skill set related to scheduling 2,900 kids at Chantilly, you know

[01:51:51] 16% special ed, IEPs, re-evales. We had two people doing this And again, there are a lot of IAs. So those are people who are not in classrooms or supporting instruction And I do believe that these folks have gone through these channels But it's been my experience in Fairfax when you're one or two of Twenty five or six people out of how many thousands who work you don't get hurt And I can say that as a former director of student services there We had one in every high school one every middle school. We often had issues with DIT changing how we used

[01:52:28] Tools in insist to build master schedules are like well, but there's only like 55 people use that report like yeah, it's us The second a teacher complains about a report not working BAM. It's fixed So that's all I'm gonna say is that you're a lone voice when you're a one-of in Fairfax County and you're not very you're not heard So I'm gonna elevate that For what that's worth they need to become we need to what we need to create a positions for that purpose And the last thing I wanted to say is I'm curious to know how many IA how much IA turnover we've had Given the higher demands in the classroom setting and also how many IA vacancies we have at the moment

[01:53:05] Thank you. Good end. We get a response. Did you want a response now? Or do you want to come back as a budget question? Can you respond to that now? We don't have the specific information by Position, but we can get that great. Thank you. Perfect. And miss Anderson I actually do have information on the instructional assistance when it comes to turnover data I just have here with me the December data

where we look at it a Decreasing trend luckily over the years. I do not have the data pre covered with me today

[01:53:40] but I understood that's an ask. If we are comparing 22 to 24, we're looking at going from an overall of 28 per month to 20 per month. Still too many, but we are on a downward scale and I will make sure that we'll get the data from pre-COVID to add to that. And number of current vacancies? That's separations. No, I cannot talk to vacancies. We'll get a response for that. Ms. Anderson followed by I just have a quick question I was also scrolling through the county presentation one of the things that's mentioned is that this is the largest

[01:54:16] operating request since 2007 is that correct by percentage plus has a percentage in terms of dollars yeah I don't know the percentages because I wasn't here okay but the dollar amount is certainly the largest ask the largest yes okay thank you miss moon yes I'd like to know how or see is involved in in the cyclical review, our office of research, since we're doing surveys of staff, and that's research.

[01:54:52] - As of today, they are not involved, but it's a great thought in order to scale it out. We are current, no. So we're currently not collaborating with them on that. - Yeah, I just, you know, this question about how we do research in the school division needs to extend to our own internal work, and when we talk about surveying staff and understanding there are best practices and quantitative and qualitative so i really think that it should be included um the the question i appreciate our director of

[01:55:24] TAM um answering some questions about helping retired or departed staff return so i'm talking about the staff that have been here for decades and then want to come back and substitute teach every now and then so i'm thinking of people in particular who have said this to me and said you know why do i have to prepare a resume showing you what i did now i can appreciate that there's a pause and that's needed for retirement all these things but if it's our process that makes staff do this then we have control to improve it one thing i want to mention about the background

[01:56:01] checks is that superintendent reid has made sure that we are regularly doing background checks so let's say that runs as annual correct dr reid we are getting caught up and i believe it is our intent to be annual so let's say that happens in like may someone retires so you're telling me you're going to spend the time and money to re-background check them in August or September.

[01:56:21] Like there's an economy of scale here. Again, we need to think about how to make it easier because telling someone who's taught in the classroom and invented a classroom future for 25 years to make a resume, it's something they haven't done. And also, it's like aren't we going to honor what they did? I'm not saying let anyone in, but what's the system? And And we just also, the board just approved a very robust human management resource system, an HR management system.

[01:56:49] Isn't there a way to check and say, okay, 20-year veteran, this, and get them through a path. Like, not everybody has to go on the same path. So I think we need to differentiate if we really want to make people want to stay in return. So I wanted to share that for consideration. You raised a number of good points, and I'll take those back to staff.

[01:57:07] So thank you. Yes, ma'am. Thank you. and then Mr. McIlvaney. Thank you very much. I wanted to sort of pick up on where Mr. Moon left off, right, so in terms of the advocacy, because while I think, I think, Mr. Moon, you mentioned you were surprised to see the county budget before we even passed our

advertised budget, and I don't recall in the past whether the county has released its budget before we've passed our advertised budget. No, it's typically always after. It's the Tuesday after President's holiday,

[01:57:44] typically. But they don't, they don't, like I said, I think I said this last time, they don't use the super intense proposed budget or the advertised budget. They use their revenue projections to drive what their allocation is. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that we've actually adopted the advertised budget after the county's proposal, because, you know, we had to, heirs was originally scheduled for January the 25th and we had to move that two weeks forward so February 8th is where we landed as far as the

[01:58:22] superintendent's proposal but that's that's a little later than we normally do it okay so I guess what I would say is that from what I heard earlier you know 7.6 percent is of our ask is related to compensation if that's correct no about six point six percent and then another one percent for enrollment that's seven point six and then everything else is I was adding the one percent for the two percent from last year from the state oh yeah no the six point six includes that okay so six point six plus the one percent federal seven point six is enrollment and compensation out of a ten point five

[01:58:59] percent ask or is it that because that's the number I'm seeing from the county documents I want to clarify that number yes yes so two-thirds or more is is compensation and enrollment so you know and i heard i think the county document said this is the highest number increase we've asked is that correct we just checked and in 2007 the increase was 11.1 so it's it's it's been since then that we've had this kind of ask so i think we need to

[01:59:33] maybe do some strategic communications to better understand why right i think we have a good idea at the table right in terms of the increased cost to do business the need to its market demand right supply and demand for our staff in terms of recruiting retaining good teachers what our surrounding jurisdictions are doing I believe ten years ago the board did a lot of good work on salaries to get us sort of at the top of our salaries and since then our surrounding jurisdictions have caught up if not surpassed us and so I think we needed to put package that together and we look at the increased cost of our student needs and educating

[02:00:09] our student needs um so i guess i'd ask is while we can talk about plan b i think right now we need to do a better job of showing people why plan a so what would be the plan for lack no pun intended dr reed to really succinctly and easily explain the why of plan a so i know the budget team is going to be working with our communication team tomorrow to fine-tune uh that plan because i think Given the no new program initiatives, it's a fairly simple and straightforward budget, quite honestly.

[02:00:49] And so I think we felt like we had bullet points that were pretty clear, but I think making it more clear is certainly in everyone's best interest because I know our board of supervisors also support education here in Fairfax County.

[02:01:07] So I think it's important that we're able to very clearly share why this is reasonable because if not this budget and this commitment to salary for our educators, our regional colleagues are going to continue to move ahead and it's going to make the recruitment and retention even more difficult here.

[02:01:29] I think it's important to mention that the superintendent's proposed budget absolutely reflects a needs-based budget. It is based on what we think we need for the support of schools in the upcoming school year.

[02:01:44] If I could make a suggestion, I'm glad to hear you're working on it tomorrow, but I think the connection between the data and the ask, I think, needs to be made clearer. I think the why, again, as opposed to the what and the how. And if I could just finish my thought on that, I think it's also really important to lift up the importance of public education for a strong economy, for why companies come here, for why it's really valuable to the county as a whole, right? But that connection between what and why, I think could be a little tighter.

[02:02:16] yes ma'am and i i think um our enrollment alone the growth in our enrollment i just scanned that again today because we're monitoring that very closely we're now at 182 364 and we continue to rise since the beginning of the year it's our largest enrollment in several years and the trend continues to increase which a it's good for our students it's good for our community and it's good for our county and to your point fairfax county has long been a leader in public education in this country and this needs-based budget as Ms. Burden stated is necessary for us to

[02:02:52] maintain that front-runner status as we set the the tone and model for our country and public education is critically important not just here in Fairfax County but across this great nation. Thank you and Mr. McAveen is next he is out so I will leapfrog. Ms. St. John Cunningham did you want a second round?

[02:03:12] Okay. All right. Seems not here. I do not want one. Dr. Anderson? Yes, I still have a bunch of questions. I'm going to just start off here because I think we'll have enough time for a third round for those of us who want it. I'm like Mr. Moon. I'm disappointed, but I'm also frustrated. I agree with you, Ms. Vernon, that we have a needs-based budget, but as I shared last time, we did not even put forward all of our needs.

[02:03:38] I think we already cut ourselves off at the knees to begin with, and now we're here. And last time, I was talking about adding an amendment for the extension for our special education teachers because we know that there's still a lot of vacancies in that area.

[02:03:54] We know those teachers continuously talk about how much work it is. So that is part of our need. But now I'm thinking, well, should I put that forward? We kind of already have seen the tea leaves a little bit. So I just, and I say this because I want us to be clear and to come forward with all of our needs, no matter what the landscape is, because we could always make decisions, but I think we're not communicating to the community, to the Board of Supervisors, or even honoring what we're hearing from our own staff.

[02:04:26] that 24 million dollars I am still debating in terms of putting it forward when I woke up this morning I was not debating that but it is part of our need it's something that we know our teachers are struggling with so I think I'm talking myself into putting it forward so I just want to make sure that we're not in this place again where we have already cut ourselves off for things that we know we require, so that's one. One of the other things that I wanted to ask is, I wanted to talk about the statistical review. I'm a big fan. I just wanted to honor that in this conversation. I think

[02:05:03] this is very much overdue. Just like other things, I don't think we need to wait for advocacy in order to do reviews that we know we need. But I'm also wondering, I was side-side-barring with the superintendent here, when you mentioned that we had 950 different job classifications. Holy moly.

[02:05:21] How does that work comparatively, because I know we're larger than everybody else, with our other divisions? Do we have a similar percentage of classifications? I would imagine our lives would be easier if we had fewer. And I'll take a go back. Thank you. I do not have an exact answer on how many classifications or job positions our neighbors have in comparison, But I know that my team has that overview so I'm happy to provide that.

[02:05:50] I know that there are some of our neighbors who have significantly fewer positions and that's because they follow a different mechanism than we do, where others have a lot more general job descriptions than we do and then individualize them really per incumbent while we have a more detailed approach to our job positions that we have which is why we have so many but that's a great question i will get back to you on that and how we compare to others thank you and uh mr mckelving did you want a second round okay all right so third round same rules apply two minutes

[02:06:28] mr moon thank you i'm not going to take about two minutes but i'm sure that many of us will be meeting with county supervisors i have my meeting coming up with a mr a budget vice chair this Friday with chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

[02:06:47] So I would love to have some communication points or advocacy points from superintendent before I have the meeting with chairman of the Board of Supervisors. And also a couple other points I want to make is this, maybe just one, that somewhere I saw this in the county executive advertised budget, that county side, county executive is even acknowledging that full market rate adjustment itself is 4.1%.

[02:07:21] They may not be providing all 4.1% to county staff as a market scale adjustment, but certainly it is acknowledged that it is fairly large percentage for just a market scale adjustment. And also, I said one, but I'm going to have to say one more.

[02:07:40] What was that? The $90 million delta between superintendent's request versus county executive proposal. That's 3% of compensation increase. 3% out of six, that's 50%.

[02:07:58] Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Moon. And Mr. Dunn did not wanna go back, so Chair Frisch, if you would like. - I'm good. - Okay, Ms. Lady, if you would like. - Just brief, I'm gonna go back to Ms. Marin's comments regarding former employees.

[02:08:14] I might recommend, if possible, that maybe when you're reapplying to be a substitute some other position that you can click a button that says pull my last eval and perhaps then I don't need a resume and also that we let those people work while perhaps we're waiting for their background check.

[02:08:33] When I was down in Richmond, I watched the Education and Health Committee and I saw a number of childcare bills put forward around the fact that the background checks are a huge barrier to them having full capacity in terms of their staff on any given day and and allowing people to start while the background check is taking place. I found that interesting because you think, "Wow, do we want to do that?" But if that's how bad the need is, and I do believe we're backlogged right now for people who want to sub who have the credentials, but they're waiting to hear back from HR to get through that piece.

[02:09:08] The other thing I wanted to say was in terms of employee classifications, yes, we have way too many, and they are so rigid that at times the best candidates are not getting through the filter to be interviewed so I do think that that is something that needs it's gonna take time but needs to be that way at some point thank you I'm glad we were we talked at length about instructional assistance but I'd be remiss if I also didn't raise about our family liaisons I remember seeing family liaisons advocating at a school

board meeting years ago just to get full-time benefits I mean that is a role talk about doing your work above and beyond

[02:09:48] and again you know I had just find it hard to believe that they weren't reclassified at all in fact it would be an interesting exercise to look at the current job descriptions and see if they kind of match with what we know what the community knows I just it feels like we're undervaluing these kinds of positions that really are the heartbeat of our schools and if we want the community to understand the value of our schools shortchanging positions like family liaisons I mean we could even be asking the family liaisons hey share this information out it's I just it's been a long time that we keep kind of kicking down the can with

[02:10:27] these this staffing group and I think it deserves another look thank you thank you Miss Sizemore Heiser thank you and I just wanted to sort of finish my thoughts I'll just very quickly I really think this is vital what Dr. Anderson mentioned but I wanted to lift up one other additional piece when we talk about a needs based budget right this doesn't look at some of the things that we even basic things that i think we need to expand to continue to be not a premier school system just a regular school system like steam right we talked about steam expand i'm going to talk about one thing that you know is near and dear to my heart the special

[02:11:03] education enhancement plan that was the result of a two-year air study costs according to the last thing i saw about 43 million dollars and we've allocated what three or four million to that so And we are, what, it's been 30 years since we've looked at programming and staffing models.

[02:11:20] So we're 30 years probably out of date on how we actually program and staff for special education, which is why we have issues with 2E students and all sorts of other issues. That's not in this budget, right? Our English language learners or the population is increasing, right? We provide them extra supports on our old staffing models.

[02:11:39] All of these extra services that we need are on 10 to 20 to 30-year-old staffing models. They're not on current best practices staffing models because we haven't had the funding to do that. So when we talk about, yes, this might be the greatest increase since 2007, we want to talk about why and how we got to needing in this year and this time and space to ask that and what we're not even asking about when we talk about that, right?

[02:12:08] And I wanted to really emphasize that piece of it. And one last question I want to ask is, do we know what the staff increase is? It was 3% pay increase for our staff last year. What was the county average staff increase last year? Do you remember? Their funded MRA was at 5.44%.

[02:12:24] For their general county employees, it's about 2% for what they call performance rates, so a little over 7%. I don't know what it was for uniformed and police and fire, but I could probably give that for you. Were they higher or lower? Do you know the uniformed and police and fire? It would have been higher. So the low end was 7.5% essentially and higher.

[02:12:54] AN AIR INCREASE LAST YEAR COMPARED TO THE SEVEN POINT, WHATEVER IT IS, WAS SIX POINT TO SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND IT'S, YOU KNOW, WE'RE ONE COUNTY, RIGHT? WE WANT TO MAKE SURE ALL OF OUR COUNTY STAFF, SCHOOL AND COUNTY STAFF, ARE COMPENSATED AS BEST WE CAN, RIGHT?

[02:13:09] BUT I THINK WHEN WE REALIZE THE CRISIS AND TEACHER SHORTAGE, WE NEED TO EXPLAIN THAT. WE ALSO NEED TO EXPLAIN THAT THIS IS A MULTI-YEAR ISSUE THAT WE NEED TO, IT'S A BREAKING POINT NOW.

[02:13:20] And so I just wanted to lift that up that this is a basic bare bones budget to keep our staff in our county. And we need to explain that better. Thank you. Mr. McElveen. Okay, I'm just going to keep going on the list. Miss St. John Cunning. Thank you. I really don't have a go back. I just want to lift up what Miss Lady said and just lift up about the fact that this is really a needs based budget. And to what Dr. Anderson said, I

[02:13:57] I kind of wish we would have done the Mexican style of negotiating where you start high and then bargain low. I mean, that's what regateando is the way you do it. But we have integrity, I mean, and we're being honest.

[02:14:13] Because we're not addressing the mental health issues faced by our students, by our staff. We're not addressing the higher special ed needs, the higher ESL needs. not addressing the fact that we want more and the community wants more counselors and more social workers, as well as STEAM programs, as well as technological, you know, programs for beyond the, you know, 21st century.

[02:14:45] So it's kind of disheartening to think that we're in a begging mode instead of in a negotiating from a very high point and coming down. So in terms of family liaisons, I've been one for over 26 years, a community school coordinator, and I led the fight to get those benefits.

[02:15:03] It's also the way we're funded. And so we have to look at the way we're funded in order to get that position to where it has to get to. And I do agree that, you know, that it is a critical position in our school system that can be lifted up to help lift up the rest of our families.

[02:15:22] So I know that I would appreciate talking points. I know we're all passionate about it. I know the Board of Supervisors have children in our schools. They understand it. We just have to be clearer about it because I think we all want the same thing. That's just what I want to say.

[02:15:40] I wish we would have started with all the programs that we need. Thank you. I have nothing to add. So Dr. Anderson, the last word. Oh, I just had kind of my questions. I went off on a little soliloquy there, but I wanted to ask about, I think on slide seven, Dr. Scott, you talked about providing access to a diverse pool of candidates.

[02:16:05] Do we have a goal in terms of what we want our workforce to look like, and how far are we from that goal currently? We do have a goal. We are working off of the goal that was set prior to my arrival, and within that goal, there was an expectation for there to be a minimum of one minority employee per building, And since that time, we have moved beyond that, and we have five.

[02:16:38] Okay, so we're moving in the right direction. We still have a ways to go in some buildings, but we are looking specifically at each of our buildings. My time is going while she's speaking. I'm so sorry. Oh, I'm so sorry. No, no, not you.

[02:16:54] It just has been going like, that's not me. Okay. But we have been really making strides to look at each building, each school individually to determine exactly what the needs are and to source a diverse pool of candidates and work to move those candidates towards those schools so that we can improve the diversity across the district.

[02:17:22] Thank you. And I'm glad that you've talked about going beyond that single because we know that model doesn't work. you're a single minority person in the building you tend to not stay because there's no community there's no support it's really really challenging for that to be a successful model which brings me to something else that you had on slide 15 which is the strategies um for retention and um i think you had the the thing about the bucket that needs to be filling um that cannot be filled because it it has holes in it also on slide nine. What I'm not hearing in this is kind of some of the other

[02:18:01] impacts that cause attrition. Yes, compensation is a big part of it, but climate and culture and environment is the other part of it. I would love to hear what are some of those strategies to retain folks at our buildings, in our buildings. Well, I can speak to, you know, of course, as you stated at the beginning of your comments, retention lives across the district. It's not in HR. HR's

[02:18:32] responsibility is to collect data and provide input and show exactly where we are in terms of retention. Are we able, is there a high turnover rate? All of those factors are provided so that it will inform our schools and departments in the way that it should go research does show that the number one factor behind why a teacher decides to stay or go is the principal it's it's the

[02:19:10] leadership and so we are striving to just make sure that our principals that our leaders have exactly what what it is that they need to provide the teachers there and they're not not just teachers all employees what they need to be successful so I think that that indeed is the key is what's happening in our schools and departments we we do engagement surveys every year we're looking at incorporating some other types of surveys to give us more information more data regarding you know

[02:19:46] what's actually happening within our our buildings and how can that inform us to provide even better support and service to our employees so that they do want to to stay I would definitely be interested in hearing more I don't know if you had anything else to add to this question Dr. Reed the other issue that I wanted to raise oh shit I lost it oh teachers for tomorrow I know we've talked about this quite a bit we've been talking about this since

[02:20:24] my first term on the board and those of you who are returning you know this we've been talking about growing our own what data can you show us in terms of the progress on that effort I don't have any any data but I can you know I can pull that together our point here is that in the past we've we've promised teachers We've committed to them and the teachers for, I'm sorry, the students and the teachers for tomorrow guaranteed interviews or guaranteed, you know, well, mainly interviews.

[02:21:01] But there were some who received guaranteed contracts. What we want to go to is that every graduating student who is coming out of Teachers for Tomorrow program, that they are guaranteed a contract if they come back to FCPS.

[02:21:18] we want to guarantee that because we want to invest in of course our own students right and i think that's been in place for a while i guess my question was mostly around are we growing our teachers for tomorrow pool uh that i'll have to i'll collaborate with our cte program and we'll be able to get back with you on that information thank you and my final question this is on slide 15 where we're talking about eligible retirees coming back and having a break of service

[02:21:50] Is there any additional cost to the division in this process here, Ms. Vernon? No. Okay. Because, you know, if they leave and we hire somebody else, then we'd be paying benefits and all that for whoever the new person was.

[02:22:10] So pretty much this is awesome, experienced people that cost us nothing. So getting it to a place where we could facilitate the application just kudos is benefits to us. Yeah, and this is a VRS change. And we just want to align ERFC with VRS so that employees that are a critical shortage and opt to participate in the work after retirement or war, which is what VRS calls it, that we don't make them rescind their ERFC retirement when they do that, that they still continue to receive both pensions.

[02:22:45] Okay, thank you for that. That was also one of my final questions. Are there any more speakers? Okay, seeing that there are no other speakers, I just want to remind everyone that your amendments are due this afternoon. So please take a look at those. I am still submitting mine. Sorry.

[02:23:03] That's where I stand. I'm just giving you all notice because I think we need to show them warts and all. And I appreciate your comments, but that is something that I think I'm going to put forward and we'll see what that yields. Ms. Burden, is there anything else that we need to remind the group of before Thursday?

[02:23:21] no if you have an amendment that you want to propose and you require costing then you need to get that to me as quickly as possible um other than that nope uh miss eismal heiser i see your placard is still up do you have another um and also mr dunn we never got him back so i think we're good all right thank you all so much have a good afternoon

