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Fairfax County School Board Budget Public Hearing, Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Date	Tuesday, May 14, 2024
Place	Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length	18m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sxep_jXbGdQ
- 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 2026-11-01. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] - School board members, we will be starting shortly as soon as we have seven.

[00:00:37] - Board members, please take your seats. - Yes, ma'am. We are going to go ahead and get started.

[00:00:52] Good evening, everyone. The May 14th, 2024 public hearing on the fiscal year 2025 budget is now called to order. Ms. Dixon has submitted a written request to attend virtually this evening's public hearing due to medical reasons.

[00:01:13] Oh, this is going so fast. All those in favor of granting this request, please raise your hand. All those opposed? Seeing none, that request is granted. Ms. Dixit, can you be heard?

[00:01:28] - Yes. - Welcome. In order to comply with section 2.2-3712 D of the Code of Virginia, it is necessary for the board to certify that since the Fairfax County School Board convene a closed meeting on May 14, 2024, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered by the board during the closed meeting do i have a motion thank you miss

[00:02:05] anderson second thank you mr mckelveen all of those in favor and that is unanimous with everyone present miss dixon voice vote please yes i can't see it thank you good evening all and welcome to to the public hearing for the fiscal year 2025 budget.

[00:02:25] On behalf of the school board, I would like to thank you. I would like to thank you for sharing your comments with us. This hearing is being broadcast on channel 99 and live streamed at fcps.edu/tv/ch99.

[00:02:44] We have 10 registered speakers who will address the board at this public hearing. Please ensure your remarks are limited to the FY 2025 budget. If you have not registered to speak but would like to address the board, Please see the deputy clerk to sign up on one of the five extra extra seats, reserve.

[00:03:04] I'm sorry, five extra reserve speaker slots. Lots of S's. Madam clerk, please call our first speaker. Nancy Treanor.

[00:03:21] Good evening. My name is Nancy Treanor, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations. We'd like to begin our remarks by commending FCPS for communicating strong support for our teachers and other staff by focusing your advertised budget on compensation increases.

[00:03:38] However, we are disappointed that a school system which emphasizes the data-driven classroom for its educators is seemingly not engaging in the same sort of rigorous data-driven analysis in developing its budget. FCPS requires frontline workers to check in with their students, see if what they're doing is working, and if not, to pivot and do something else.

[00:03:59] We expect nothing less from FCPS in budget deliberations. We're aware, for example, that FCPS continues to face challenges in both attracting and retaining in-school personnel. However, FCPS has not proposed nor adopted significant changes to policies and/or regulations which aim to improve workforce satisfaction, nor has FCPS engaged in a root cause analysis regarding low teacher retention.

[00:04:23] FCPS staffs its schools more generously than its peer divisions, but has not employed an efficiency analysis to determine whether those staffing standards are effective. We also continue to advocate that FCPS limit professional development and/or mandatory trainings to those with proven pedagogical impact in exchange for expanded teacher planning time.

[00:04:44] We support the advertised budget's multi-year investments in programs with a strong history of providing benefit to students, such as athletics and fine and performing arts. We also applaud FCPS's continued investment in early childhood education. These investments are based on strong, data-driven thinking about what we know works best for kids.

[00:05:03] As you engage in a more analytical and targeted approach to future budgets, FCPS may consider elevating the importance of the Office of Research and Strategic Improvement or ORSI. ORSI can help FCPS show your work in the same way that our students and teachers are held accountable through continual evaluation and proper oversight. Thank you for your time. Jennifer Ives, Emily Vanderhoff. Good evening Budget Chair Anderson, Dr. Reed and members of the board. My name is Emily

[00:05:43] Vanderhoff. I'm a first grade teacher in FCPS and a proud member of FCFT. I first want to thank you you for introducing a strong needs-based budget that focused on competitive compensation. I know that you all are not at fault for the large shortfall we're facing. I'm disappointed in the decisions by the

board of supervisors and state leaders that have left us here. I know the state budget deal was passed yesterday and I'm eager to see how the final amount may reduce some of the shortfall. As I'm sure you know, reducing the initially planned 6% MSA to 3% has been difficult for employees to hear. I know some on this board have asked to look at differentiating the pay increase to be more targeted. I read the response to Mr. McDaniel and Supervisor

[00:06:20] Bierman's budget questions and realized there may be issues outside of my understanding to these suggestions, but I want to offer three considerations for differentiated increases. The staffing shortages are going to be felt differently across different positions. I would like to suggest taking into consideration the positions most hard hit by shortages for stronger increases to help with recruitment and retention. As a school system focused on serving students and knowing that student facing roles are some of the hardest to fill, I would suggest prioritizing those roles who directly impact students' school experience, including those who transport them to school, serve them a meal, keep the facility safe and comfortable, and provide instruction and services.

[00:06:56] And finally, I know the responses in budget questions mentioned a delicate balance in the spacing between pay scales, but this board has also acknowledged in the past that support staff pay is not sufficient. For example, the three-year plan to raise the CIS scale to 50% of the teacher scale was noted at the time as just the start for improving pay for support staff.

[00:07:14] While 3% across the board seems fair on the surface it results in a vastly different dollar amount from employee to employee, advantaging those with higher salaries. I would suggest finding a way to raise the percentage of the lowest paid workers to begin to close the gap and provide a more equitable distribution of the amount that we have.

[00:07:29] Thank you for the time to share my thoughts. I know that the decisions before you are not easy and I appreciate the thought and care you are giving to the process. Thank you.

[00:07:46] Duran Thompson. Good evening. I am here tonight to speak to you about the budget for fiscal year 2025. We are all aware of Dr. Reed's commitment to recruit and retain teachers as there is a nationwide short teacher shortage.

[00:08:08] One way of addressing this concern is by making salaries competitive with surrounding school systems. And although 6% is a far cry from the almost 11% pay raise, the police who work in this very same county were given, it is better than the 3% approved last week.

[00:08:24] When I first heard about the approval of Dr. Reed's second plan, I was frustrated, but realized I was hurt hurt and sick and tired of the excuses being given for why school teachers aren't treated with the same respect as other public employees it has long been my belief that the teachers are underpaid because it is a female-dominated profession hence the inequity and pay with that of police and other county employees a member of the Board of Supervisors said in a meeting that the police got such a great deal because they went to contract under collective bargaining first and that they had a great negotiator and we

[00:08:59] should think about using that very same negotiator really so whoever is first to the bargaining table gets a better deal if this is the mindset of those who hold the purse strings then we fcps fcps employees the school board and the community need to work together to move the minds of the board of supervisors and the state as schools in virginia have been underfunded for far too long and the impact is

teacher dissatisfaction which has led to the teacher shortage we are currently experiencing We can't retain new teachers as they are overwhelmed with mounting job responsibilities and underwhelmed by the pay.

[00:09:36] One of my favorite educators was Rita Pearson, who talked about teachers being a champion for children. This is how we do that by not just honoring teachers with words of appreciation, but by working together to fully fund schools because our students deserve better. Thank you. Mary Atonat.

[00:09:59] Hello, everyone. My name is Mary Atonat.

[00:10:27] I'm a registered nurse, been a nurse for about 14 years, been doing public policy work for a very long time from the Midwest. And back in December of 2020, me and my children became victims of targeted crimes by those kind of posing as government employees.

[00:10:45] They worked for the police department. It was a very, very trying time. But what I do know is that my children were not safe. We begged for help from Fairfax County Public Schools. They were children receiving special education services.

[00:11:01] So now what I've done is, since I've been going around the state and been doing so much advocacy work, I'm bringing to your attention some areas where you guys can implement some policies and hopefully try to keep our children safe when the perpetrators are internal to the system and not external.

[00:11:18] So with the first document that you guys are looking at is a recommendation that I made and I attack. I currently serve on the Virginia Behavioral Health Advisory Council and I made a recommendation for needed training on how to identify human trafficking within a person's where they work.

[00:11:35] So it could be teachers, nurses, what have you, and how to report it. And I'm hoping, fingers crossed, that we get something like that done at the state level. I also included, this is the program that is done, it's called the Blue Campaign. It's done by the Department of Homeland Security.

[00:11:53] It's the best human trafficking program that I've seen that I've done training on. I hope that you guys would implement that in your own, maybe create and put the budget around that to kind of train your teachers. I will tell you that if you look at the last one, I provided public comments at the budget hearing for our county's budget hearing.

[00:12:17] And the one I specifically want you guys to take a look at is number two, I requested THAT THERE BE A OFFICE IN THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT DIVISION CREATED IN THE OFFICE OF RISK MANAGEMENT. WELL, YOU GUYS GET THE POINT. I'M HOPING YOU GUYS CAN KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE AND MAYBE CREATE SOME PROCESSES. THANK YOU. DAVID WALROD. VANESSA HALL.

[00:12:51] THAT'S REALLY FAST. SO HI, MY NAME IS VANESSA HALL AND I'M SPEAKING AS VICE PRESIDENT OF FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AS THE PARENT OF TWO CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN FCPS. Our mission for public education is to champion public schools as the cornerstone of a healthy democracy and the right for every child to an exceptional education, which is why we support fully funded schools and associated equity initiatives that ensure each student receives the support and resources that they need to succeed.

[00:13:22] Thus, we ask that greater funding be directed to those who are most vulnerable and underserved like Title I schools, lower-income students, English language learners, and students requiring

special education services. The families of the most vulnerable students, as you know, often have the quietest voices, so please listen closely and respond to their needs.

[00:13:46] Another equity issue is that recent literacy initiatives in elementary may be leaving a lot of secondary school students behind. We have so many smart, capable high schoolers whose poor literacy skills may make college inaccessible. Please don't shut them out from a lifetime of opportunities.

[00:14:03] Finally, the proposed 3% pay raise still leaves Fairfax teachers behind. Being underpaid combined with the actions of a few bad actors, some of which are parents, operatives, and even some who are administrators, will have short and long-term consequences in attracting and retaining amazing teachers.

[00:14:22] I've heard many complaining about taxes, especially on Nextdoor, and how much money is allocated for our school students and educators. Those complaints really fail to recognize the long-term consequences of an undereducated Fairfax County population, which means fewer and or less qualified doctors, nurses, medical technicians and health aides, all of which we need with a rapidly aging population in Fairfax County.

[00:14:49] I've met Fairfax graduates in the ER at enumerable times because we're an accident-prone family. And they are the best they can be because they came from this school system. And I'd hate for that to change. Thank you.

[00:15:09] Arthur Purvis. Superintendent Reed and members of the board. I'm Arthur Purvis, President of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance. This year's three cent increase in the real estate tax rate is actually a six cent increase due to the three percent increase in residential assessments the cost per household is 550 when car taxes are included since 2021 my real estate taxes have increased seventeen hundred dollars while my income was flat i don't think i'm alone since fy 2000 the average annual increase in real

[00:15:45] estate and car taxes in fairfax county is 4.8 percent compared to the 2.3 average increase in homeowner income. If real estate taxes had increased at the same rate as homeowner income since FY2000, the taxes would be $4,000 less. It would be worth it if the taxes made things better.

[00:16:09] They don't. In education, it is game over by third grade. Children who haven't mastered reading and arithmetic by third grade are socially promoted. They rarely catch up and are condemned to lifelong poverty instead of fixing the curriculum standards are lowered teachers who must prepare on who must teach unprepared students are also victims in history students are turned against our constitution by attacking the founding fathers do students learn for example that john jay our first chief justice was an abolitionist as was benjamin franklin the portrait of a student omits making

[00:16:43] students self-sufficient even the federally mandated high carb low-fat school meals contribute to the pandemic of early onset diabetes 2 in American youth. There is no evidence that we are losing teachers to the private sector due to pay. The problems are shrinking workforce due to depopulation and teacher frustration. Freeze salaries until the curriculum is fixed. Use some of the savings to increase police salaries whose job is made more difficult by the school's failure

[00:17:15] to teach reading and arithmetic by third grade thank you kevin hickerson karen borisov going again with those individuals who didn't show jennifer ives david walrod kevin hickerson karen borisov dr anderson that's our last public speaker thank you on behalf of my budget committee vice

[00:17:52] chair mr mcdaniel and the entire school board thank you for sharing your comments this evening The Board is scheduled to vote on the FY 2025 approved budget at our regular meeting on Thursday, May 23, 2024. If you wish to provide any feedback to the Board before this vote, please do so by sending your comments to communityparticipation@fcps.edu.

[00:18:19] Thank you for your participation and have a nice evening. This public hearing is now adjourned.

