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Fairfax County School Board Budget Public Hearing, Tuesday, February 4, 2025

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

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[00:03:00] The February 4th, 2025 public hearing on the fiscal year 2026 proposed budget is now called [00:04:15] to order. Good evening and welcome to the public hearing on the FY 2026 proposed budget. On behalf of the entire school board, I would like to thank you for sharing your comments with us. The hearing is being broadcast on channel 99 and live streamed on YouTube and our website fcps.edu forward slash live stream. We have 18 registered speakers who will address the board at this public hearing. Speakers are allotted two minutes and we ask that you stay within that time limit. The timer will start when you begin to speak and the timer will sound after two minutes.

[00:04:46] Please ensure that your remarks are limited to the budget and that your remarks adhere to the school board's expectations for community participation. If you have not registered to speak but would like to address the board please see the clerk or the deputy clerk to sign up for one of the five extra reserve speaker slots. Madam Clerk please call our first speaker. Owen Powell

[00:05:05] David Walrod. Good evening Budget Chair McDaniel Superintendent Reed members of the board. My name is david walrod and i'm the president of the fairfax county federation of teachers thank you for giving me a few minutes to speak today we've been waiting 50 years for collective

[00:05:42] bargaining to be a reality it's been the effort of many people over the past 50 years to get us to the point where we are i'm proud of the work that was done to get us where we are we got a resolution passed we have we now have all three bargaining units are certified and two of the units the operational and the certified instructional units have collective bargaining agreements that's taken quite a bit of effort not only on my part the part of other leaders of the union but

[00:06:20] also on the part of the district and folks you know sitting at this table um this is going to be the opportunity to show if Fairfax County actually does support collective bargaining because it's one thing to say oh yes we'll do this we will ratify a contract oh yes we'll ratify a contract and then it's another to actually put forward the money for it I very much appreciate the budget that Dr. Reed has put forward and I very much look forward to seeing the budget get passed as Dr.

[00:06:56] Reed put it forward if we end up in a situation where we need to relook at the budget if we end up in a situation where we need to look at um where there are parts of the budget that may not be funded i'm going to ask each and every one of you make our cba the very last thing that gets looked at look at everything else first please fund our contract thank you norman hall

[00:07:26] arthur purvis stand by i see mr hall has raised his hand on the zoom we can return to mr hall thank

[00:07:46] you mr hall you're muted let's try again can you hear me now yes please proceed okay thank you

[00:08:31] you very much. Chairman Frisch, Mr. McDaniel, the rest of the school board, and Dr. Reed, I appear tonight on behalf of the Fairfax County Employees Advisory Council, EAC. I serve as chair of a 10-member body representing all 16,000-some employees working under the merit system of Fairfax County government. Finding a path to collective bargaining has been an issue for three of our units, as I know it has been for three of years. While the employees we represent have many views about how to get to the bargaining table and negotiate on behalf of employees, there is

[00:09:08] general consensus that collective bargaining is essential for long-term employee retention and satisfaction. For this reason, I want to add our voices to those in support of this budget proposal, specifically as it lifts up contracts that were fairly negotiated most of you know my history of advocating on behalf of county and school employees who work in your schools in your health clinics and in child care spaces and you and i both know that resources that help our staff do their jobs well in the long run are investments that support the lives of children their families and the school

[00:09:47] communities of Fairfax County. Now, one minor issue, please. Do not advance arguments that are based on the historical share of the county's operating fund budget to finance future budgets. Such arguments pit FCPS employees against county employees. Instead, let us agree to focus budgeting based on community needs. No need to feed arguments about robbing Peter to pay Paul, not when the pay plans of Fairfax County employees were for many years more aspirational than actual.

[00:10:22] So thank you for your support on behalf of the EAC and Fairfax County employees. Arthur Purvis, Emily Vanderhoff.

[00:10:46] Good evening, Budget Chair McDaniel, Dr. Reed, and members of the board. My name is Emily Vanderhoff. I'm a second grade teacher in FCPS and now the proud president-elect of my union, FCFT. I

want to thank Dr. Reed for including funding to cover the financial aspects of our recently ratified FU collective bargaining agreement in her proposed budget.

[00:11:06] I expect that you all will keep these items in your budget that you advertised on February 20th. You all have been partners throughout this process, and so the audience I really need to direct my comments to is those responsible for our funding, primarily the Board of Supervisors and to a small degree our state legislators. I see that the Senate and House versions of the state budget include some steps towards funding JLAC recommendations, such as finally lifting the support cap and an add-on for students with disabilities.

[00:11:32] I urge any legislators watching to push for as much public school funding as possible in the final budget, especially in light of the threats to public education funding at the national level. And then the greatest responsibility for seeing through the funding of the FEU CBA falls to the Board of Supervisors. I know last year the CBAs for police and fire, each including higher raises than the 7% proposed and ours were treated as required expenses that must be funded, and so I expect the county executive will bring the same mindset regarding the cost to fund the FEU CBA as he develops his draft budget.

[00:12:02] I also expect that the supervisors, most of whom who had worn their support of labor and public education as a badge of pride, will prioritize funding the first CBA for FCPS staff in nearly 50 years. It's taken years for us to reach this point, and many FCPS staff have deferred retirement and resignation holding on to hope that things will finally improve once we reach the turning point of our first contract I fear the wave of people we might lose if we do not set a positive precedent with this first contract thank you again to this board for your willingness to support a budget that funds what we need to serve the students of Fairfax County our union members

[00:12:34] are ready to stand with you to get the funding that we need to see it through thank you Nancy Traynor my name is Nancy Traynor and I'm speaking on behalf of and as the co-chair of the education committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations we want to be on the record that we object to this year's budget process on two grounds. First, we object that the school board doesn't seem to be taking its public responsibilities seriously. You should have a crucial role in representing the public in the

[00:13:12] creation of a budget that reflects our community's priorities and values. This year the county executive will present the county's advertised budget before the school board has created its own advertised budget. So the full school board will have no meaningful role in the county's budget process. That means we, the public, are not being represented by you.

[00:13:33] This impression gets reinforced when the board unanimously ratifies a collective bargaining agreement which promises a 7% across the board raise knowing full well that the county faces a projected shortfall close to \$300 million this year. These are not serious conversations.

[00:13:49] Your simplistic negotiation tactic of anchoring high is backfiring. It makes you look unsophisticated and unreasonable. Yet you continue to do this year after year. You fail to represent the nuanced views of your community, which, by the way, you barely give us an opportunity to provide.

[00:14:07] This brings us to our second objection: the process for public input on the budget is disrespectfully performative rather than meaningful. We cannot provide meaningful input into a \$4 billion

budget when we're given less than two weeks to digest it. We cannot provide meaningful input in general when we're given less than two minutes to speak on any given matter.

[00:14:27] 2016 more than 90 individuals or organizations signed up with FCPS to testify regarding the advertised budget. How many are here tonight? We're not alone in rejecting this process as irrelevant. It would be great to see the public rise up and demand better funding from Richmond. If that's what you want then we need to believe that we're your partners. We don't. You can and you must do better.

[00:14:52] Kieran Barajas-Pow. Stephanie Lundquist-Aurora. Good evening. The district's proposed budget is not the product of responsible leadership. Rather, it resembles a child's wish list to Santa Claus. Despite a decreasing student population with a \$4 billion price tag of \$300 million from last year, and in the wake of a \$300

[00:15:29] million county deficit, the proposed budget is remarkably tone deaf. Even with the \$700 million increase from fiscal 2020, student performance on standardized tests has declined over time. Taxpayers are exhausted. We are screaming no to both meals taxes and even higher taxes on our vehicles and houses. Your revenue base is far from certain. Given the current national political climate, the future for federal workers is unclear. And as you well know, many of them live in Fairfax County. In addition, if you don't comply with President Trump's executive orders

[00:16:05] on DEI and gender, we are likely to lose federal funding. Do you expect the county's taxpayers to also pick up that tab? The ballooning education budget in Fairfax County further comes at the opportunity cost of public safety. The International Association of Firefighters Local 2068 warns that seven ambulances, one medic unit, three ladder trucks, and one engine are at risk of being caught because of the county's deficit. How many public safety necessities will be caught because of your flagrant spending and unreasonable demands for next year? Speaking of flagrant spending, Dr. Reed, remember how you took about three dozen senior district staff members on a taxpayer-funded trip

[00:16:44] to houston texas which by the way has a failing school district for professional development in november 2023 this is just the sort of waste we need to cut from our budget all indicators clearly suggest that it's past time for you to rein in spending the board of supervisors should laugh at your proposed four billion dollar budget and execute an external audit thank you rosie oakley

[00:17:12] once upon a time there was a public school system that was the gold standard for academic excellence. It attracted businesses and families from across the country because its students were so successful. Unfortunately, that wonderful school system, FCPS, now has a school board and superintendent who have lost their way.

[00:17:41] When FCPS adopted the One Fairfax policy in 2017, it abandoned its its mission of academic achievement in favor of politics, specifically equity over success since then FCPS students and parents have been academic results have seen academic results plummet enrollment decline mental health become a crisis and an explosion in spending if this were merely fiction it would be a horror story but instead it's a real life tragedy the board authorized spending 5.8

[00:18:17] million dollars on an equity office with 52 administrators instead of hiring a 125 new teachers the board has lost about 10,000 students roughly five high schools worth of enrollment the board and superintendent destroyed Thomas Jefferson high school when high school's winning formula with TJ dropping from number one to number 14 nationally teachers are no longer allowed to give students failing

grades or zeros when work isn't turned in how does that prepare our children for adulthood? Will they show up for their jobs only 50% of

[00:18:56] the time? This board named activists to the Family Life and Curriculum Advisory Committee who want teachers to start talking to first graders about gender ideology. The board needs to understand that more money does not correlate to better results. Refocus on academic excellence, merit, and parent input. Cut

[00:19:19] your budget and Rio Caligate Jeffrey Shapiro Joe Miller Luke Williams good evening members of the school board my name is Luke Williams I'm a full-time science educator department chair and proud Fairfax County Federation of

[00:19:55] Teachers Executive Board member tonight I stand before you to urge the board to fully fund our first collectively bargain contract in over 40 years finding this agreement sends a powerful message to our dedicated staff we hear you we see you and we value you it is no secret educators across the nation are facing unprecedented challenges. Teachers are overwhelmed, under-equipped and stretched thin as they navigate the ever-expanding demands of their roles. With over a decade of experience teaching on multiple continents, I have witnessed firsthand the ever-evolving needs of students. Today's school-aged children often struggle with shorter attention spans and poorer social-emotional regulation, a reality which makes teaching ever more complex. Compounding these challenges is also

[00:20:34] a troubling trend in the teacher preparation in the United States. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education has reported that teacher training programs across the United states are closing down downsizing or eliminating the undergraduate programs due to declining enrollment between 2010 and 2018 enrollment in these programs dropped by 33% and completion rates fell by 22% at the same time Virginia is grappling with failing teacher retention rates and rising vacancies as an educator I deeply invested in these issues but I'm also here as a father of two young daughters a third grader and a kindergartner who were just beginning their educational journey in our schools I worry about the future they will inherit if we fail to act. Fairfax County Public Schools is already competing with

[00:21:13] neighboring counties offering higher pay to attract and retain staff. Without greater competitive compensation we risk losing more top-tier educators, particularly in critical areas like special educational needs, to other districts and states. As the potential for a new cost-of-living crisis grows more likely in the United States in the coming years, it is time to put our money where our mouth is and take meaningful action to support public education by fully funding our contract. Doing so sends a clear message to instructional staff that Fairfax County Public Schools values your work, respects your dedication and is committed to sustaining excellence in education for future

[00:21:46] generations. Thank you. Colleen Boucher. Good evening Dr. Reed, FCPS school board members. My name is Colleen Boucher and I'm the mother of three Fairfax County Public School students, a graduating senior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, a freshman in Justice High School and an 11 year old sixth grader at Glasgow Middle School. My two older students had also attended

[00:22:25] middle school from 6th through 8th grades. We've been in the school system so long our new Glasgow principal, Lee Severo, was our principal at Sleepy Hollow Elementary when my now graduating senior was in kindergarten. I've been a PTA volunteer. I've run after-school programs. I volunteer with PTA auctions.

[00:22:40] I've been a PTA president, have served two years on the TJ PTSA board, and I've traveled down to Richmond for the Virginia PTA Conference. I've got stories. Since this is a budget meeting, I'm here to state there is a pending emergency developing and we need to get ahead of it as a STPS community. The emergency is that after being ignored from the budget standpoint for years Glasgow Middle School finally got title one designation late last year the title one federal grant program is in the Trump administration's crosshairs and it has stated its goal of dismantling title one in the Department of Education the Fairfax County School Board approved the fiscal year 2025 budget of the meeting in May 2024 3.7 billion dollars which is a six and a

[00:23:20] half percent increase from the previous year I'm a parent of a kid at TJ and a kid at Glasgow. And I've seen firsthand the unbelievable disparities in these two Fairfax County schools. One feels like a private school with limitless pockets and one feels like an inner-city school that's gotten left out of the budgetary process. Title I funds are making a difference. Regardless of what happens with Title I funding this year or the next 47 months of the administration, we need to keep funds to keep, we need funds to keep kids safe in our after-school program. We need funds for the theater arts. Our beloved theater director asks for donations every show for costume sets, snacks. Our art teacher has to beg parents to send in art fees since only 10 out of 80 students had sent the fee in by mid-December and on and on and on but my ultimate

[00:23:59] point tonight and the reason I signed up to speak is actually a budget neutral item that doesn't cost us anything at all and it's such an obvious choice to make our students feel better learn better Jaron Avazadeh Mark Welsh good evening please put an end to the board's long-standing practice of

[00:24:37] approving disingenuous school budgets specifically I'm referring to the practice of inflating current year expenses in this case fiscal year 25 low ball available funds for the budget year in fy25 is fcps really going to spend 340 million more than the approved budget and two and 520 million more than fiscal year 24. are materials and supplies alone really going to be 225 million 100 million more than the amount included in the approved budget and 140 million more than what was spent in fiscal year 24 why does the revised estimate include an increased staffing reserve

[00:25:17] with the year more than half over i could speak for another 10 minutes providing these kind of examples over the last three years real estate taxes have increased 20 percent the requested 268 million by itself would equate to about a seven percent increase the budget presentation you received stated that fcps was serving the county by understanding taxpayer fatigue fatigue how about anger over rising taxes and anxiety about meeting growing day-to-day expenses the mounting real estate burden is not sustainable and will make housing for families increasingly unaffordable

[00:25:53] i urge you to take a hard look at the fiscal year 25 estimate and approve a school budget that honestly and accurately estimates the amount available for the fiscal year 26 beginning balance in closing let me say that i have three children who attended county schools and went on to graduate from public virginia universities i appreciate the education they they received and support the necessary funding to maintain school excellence for the next generation.

[00:26:19] But you should recognize that the condition of taxpayer support for the school system is honest and transparent budgets that don't underestimate expenses by hundreds of millions of dollars. Thank you for your time and consideration and thank you for your service as school board members.

[00:26:39] - Vanessa Hall. - Hi, my name's Vanessa Hall and I'm a parent of FCPS students and the Vice President of For Public Education. We'd like to thank you for your investments in education they're clearly paying off increases in eighth fifth and eighth graders taking advanced math growth and successful supports for students increased enrollment those are all some things you guys have done and we agree with your priorities including increasing staff pay because we can't lose any more of our teachers to other districts that pay better also we have the highest ratio of

[00:27:16] school-based employees and lowest ratio of central management positions versus other local school districts. That being said, it's obvious that 21st century education and expectations require significant support from central office staff for school-based staff. Nevertheless, it seems to be in fashion to bash the central office on the local and national stage. In fact, recent attacks on the FCPS equity office staff by far-right media outlets involved doxxing employees and attacking their jobs without knowing what they actually do.

[00:27:48] Yet the Equity Office is committed to fostering a responsive, caring, and inclusive culture where all feel valued, supported, and inspired to thrive within FCPS. How can that be controversial? So here's a shout out to the Equity Office. I've seen their work firsthand with my own kids who are as different as kids from one family can be.

[00:28:08] Whether students are neurodiverse, disabled, multilingual, lower income, LGBTQIA+, and/or advanced in math or STEM the equity office is here to ensure that each student gets the support and challenges they need to succeed and honestly I'd hope we could all agree that seeking the best for each and every one of our students is essential to preparing them for positive life experiences in and out of school so thank you and one last thing I see there's six million dollars for outside legal costs is there any way to get America first legal a hobby other than suing our schools goodness gracious thank you

[00:28:43] Duran Thompson more than five years ago I stood before this body talking about being overworked and underpaid and I'm here today doing the same thing what has changed collective bargaining and I thank you for ratifying our contract however the problem remains the same today as it did more than five years ago being overworked underpaid lack of funding and the blame game the school board says the Board of Supervisors doesn't give them enough money the Board

[00:29:20] of Supervisors says the school board needs to tighten their budget and both the Board of Supervisors and the school board accurately say the state under funds FCPS. While all these things may be true what I do know is that not enough has been done. What I do know is that this is the time for change and let me suggest that that change can start by no longer normalizing teachers lack of pay by saying we appreciate teachers and we know you don't get paid enough.

[00:29:46] No one would say that to the police or fire or someone working in IT. We We appreciate you and the work you do, but we know you don't get paid enough. What I am saying is that this is a time for change. Let's work together by lobbying the state, educating the community, and working with the Board of Supervisors to do something different.

[00:30:03] They found a way to give the police an 11% raise, and they found a way to give themselves a 43% raise. Let's see if they can use that same energy and fund our contract. I'll end like I did more than five years ago by sharing a story by an amazing teacher, Rita Pearson. She talked about how a student got a 2 out of 20 on a test.

[00:30:21] She put a plus two and a smiley face on the paper and gave it to the student. The student said, Ms. Pearson, is that an F? And she said, yes. He said, well, why did you put a smiley face on it? She said, and I quote, you on the road. You didn't miss them all. You got two right. She said, negative 18 can suck all of the life out of you.

[00:30:40] And plus two says, you're not all bad. She said, every child needs a champion. As I said more than five years ago, we need you to be our champion as we work toward funding this contract. Thank you. Maurice Carolo.

[00:31:05] Good evening my name is Maurice Carollo from Liberty Middle School. Thank you for supporting FCPS staff both in the past and here today. I'd like to share my story one reflecting the challenges newer teachers face. My first year teaching was 2020. COVID hit and our world changed overnight but even in the midst of that uncertainty I saw firsthand the profound impact teachers can have on their students. We all saw it. We saw teachers became lifelines for their communities. We saw they use their creativity to keep learning alive for millions and we've

[00:31:41] continued to see it as teachers combat the lingering impacts of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. When the time came for me to make my decision on whether to remain a teacher or go to law school, I could not look away from what I saw. It ignited a passion within me to dedicate myself to the craft and continue to serve my students. To the great displeasure of my mother, I even turned down a position in Loudoun County where I could have made \$10,000 more than I am now. But I took a risk coming to FCPS. I wanted to give back to the community that had given so much to me. However, if I wanted to save for my future, if I wanted to achieve my dream of owning my own home, I realized I would have to live at home. The minimum two hours I

[00:32:17] spent traveling daily began to chip away at me, and frankly, it made it more difficult to be the leader I knew I could be for my students. And that's just the commute. Like many teachers, my work extends far beyond the school day. I'm a CLT lead, department chair, SCA sponsor, interventionist, coach, avid teacher, mentor, friend, and even at times a therapist. All vital roles, often with no compensation or little compensation. This isn't a complaint, it's a plea. Teachers are in the public crosshairs now more than ever. And the reality is, if we want to retain talented educators, especially those just starting out, we need to invest in them. We need to acknowledge the countless hours they dedicate beyond the classroom. Investing in our teachers

[00:32:55] isn't just about keeping good people in the classroom, it's about the future of our country. It's about the strength of our economy, vitality of our civic values, and well-being of our children. It's about ensuring that every child in Fairfax County has access to the dedicated, passionate educators they deserve let's get this thing over the hump we're counting on you thank you george

[00:33:18] becerra i don't have any plan written out for my 120 seconds so here it goes first one is uh the federal funding freeze let's not fool ourselves it's going to come next fiscal year so let's have a plan i have no doubt dr reed that you already have a plan you've already seen it left and right let's have an action plan potential loss of jobs other classifications dr reed you've had the last

[00:33:55] several years you've done a lot of reorgs i think at the same time we can plan ahead for things that that might occur that we can be some of these employees to other other positions other departments federal Title II II there are different areas the ladies talked about Glasgow I'm not familiar with that, but you you pretty sure you and the board know what it is out there and coming down the pike today You

talked about the food assistance. Well at the same time This also has employees the work culture that scared folks who are under that department the chief equity office department Right that does many great things except for that title that catches everyone's lives nowadays

[00:34:30] DEI I'm not going to tell you here that I've known every budget for the last six 17 years with a hundred and some pages now Because I know at the same time not every board member the last 17 years have known all the intricate details But I do know that there's programs and there's people staff in there that comes out down the path Let's make sure we don't lose the path forward if we're going to treat everyone Equally and with respect Let's keep that budget that's in there that most people won't see what's in the each is in the items that are in there that we don't know and move forward with that, especially as a board that's committed to that in the last several years of equity, equity policy, the trust policy.

[00:35:08] Last item is, Ms. Mehring got my mind moving today when you talked about middle school programs. At the same time, the DSAs and the Office of Student Activities and Athletic Programs. Everyone thinks essays mean student athletics. Look at FCPS, it means student activities and never hear about that.

[00:35:25] They need to refocus more money on that instead of transfers as money. There needs more bodies in that department also needs more money for all our kids thank you Jane Lewis good evening my name is Janie Lewis and I work at Liberty Middle School and I'm a member of Fairfax Fairfax County Federation of Teachers first and foremost I want to thank you all for your support and partnership with FCPS staff I've been encouraged by your support when you voted in favor of collective bargaining five

[00:36:05] years ago and I appreciate your ratification of the contract it is a demonstration of your support respect and faith in us as employees. I'm here tonight to encourage you to continue your advocacy with the Board of Supervisors. It was disheartening last year when the Board of Supervisors did not vote to fully fund the budget especially when news broke in March that the Board of Supervisors voted to increase their own salaries of part-time positions by 36 to 45 percent with the chairman upgrading from 100,000 annually to 140. It is a pattern that the Board of Supervisors does not

[00:36:39] fund the full FCPS budget request each year. The school board has frozen step increases and or market scale adjustments consistently since I joined the division in 2016 because of those disapprovals or partially funded requests. However, they received more in one year than I have cumulatively in nine. Since I started in Fairfax County, freezes on step increases and market scale adjustments have hampered our competitiveness of neighboring districts. In 2016, FCPS used to pay more than LCPS, Loudoun County. But the freezes have cost me six grand just in

[00:37:17] this county with the Frozen Steps. It has cost me 10 grand annually by not going to Loudoun County. And when I came, I came from Montgomery County Public Schools. Currently I am making \$17,000 less each year that I stay here, over nine years.

[00:37:38] I have a master's degree, I have two bachelor's degrees, and I am an expert in the fields I have taught. I love my job here. Kendra Grogan. Hi, school board members. My name

[00:38:13] is Kendra Grogan. I'm a fifth grade teacher at Keen Mill Elementary School and a proud union activist with Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. I didn't prepare anything to come here today. I just want to speak to you from my heart and keep it short and sweet. I also want to thank you, of course, for your service as school board members. I support the collective bargaining agreement. I think especially

the 7% raise is the most important to me. As a new teacher, sometimes I honestly have to think, can I afford to go to the doctor and pay my copay for the

[00:38:48] nerve in my arm that hurts? Or can I pay my grocery bills? So I just wanted to say thank you for ratifying our contract our collective bargaining agreement thank you for allowing to hear the community um speak on this and thank you for your service okay going back through the names of

[00:39:13] individuals who weren't here owen powell arthur purvis superintendent reed members of the school board i'm arthur purvis president of the fairfax county taxpayers alliance in 2021 the fairfax NAACP sent FCPS a letter demanding in the name of racial justice that the whole word-based balanced literacy elementary school reading curriculum be replaced by a structured literacy curriculum based on teaching systematic and intensive phonics. Now nearly four years later,

[00:39:53] there is no improvement in the third grade 2024 SOL minority student achievement gap. While 20 percent of Asian and white students were at the past advanced level, only 8 percent of blacks and four percent of hispanics were a one fairfax program that ignores reading mastery not only for third graders but for students in upper grades that had balanced literacy produces division exclusiveness and inequity there should be no spending increase for fcps until this gap is closed your strategic goal to wait until 2030 for all third graders to read at the 90 level

[00:40:32] radiates indifference more money does not bring higher achievement between fy 2019 and 2024 the fcps operating budget increased 30 percent from 2.9 billion to 3.8 billion while sat scores fell 30 points and have not recovered finally the reason for the high real estate taxes is that the schools and county want 300 million dollars of new revenue every year for five percent raises. If we got an additional \$600 million from the state, which we won't, that would cover only

[00:41:09] two years of raises, after which the supervisors would return to increasing real estate taxes three times faster than household income. Thank you. Karen Barajas-Powell, Jeffrey Shapiro, Joe Miller,

[00:41:46] Jaron Evezadeh. Mr. McDaniel, that was our last public speaker. Thank you. And thank you for sharing your comments this evening. The board is scheduled to consider moving forward with approval of the FY2026 proposed budget at our regular meeting on Thursday, February 20th of 2025. If you wish to provide any feedback to the board before this vote, please do so by sending your comments to communityparticipation@fcps.edu. Thank you for your participation and have a nice evening. This public hearing is adjourned as of 6:41 p.m.



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