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Fairfax County School Board Budget Committee Meeting — Committee of the Whole, Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Date Tuesday, April 22, 2025
Place Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length 1h 50m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIPrKoo5aLg>
- 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 2026-10-30. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:04] budget committee meeting is called to order at 6:40 p.m. in accordance with the changes to code of the code of Virginia section 2.2-3708.3 B which occurred on July 1st 2024 members of a public body who have a disability or caregiving for someone with a disability now count towards quorum as if the individual was physically present in this case miss Sizemore-Heiser has notified the chair and the clerk of the board that she is using remote participation as she is caregiving for an individual with a disability. Thus, Ms. Sizemore-Heiser will be counted as in-person for the

[00:00:43] persons of quorum tonight and do not need to be voted in by the board. She is located in Boston, Massachusetts. Ms. Sizemore-Heiser, please check your audio and video. Hello, good evening everybody. Can you hear me okay? Yep. I now call on and Dr. Reed for a presentation on the FY26 budget.

[00:01:05] - Thank you, Ms. Anderson. And we have our budget team here as well, but I'll walk through the slides, many of which I believe you've seen as a board, and just as a reminder and really a kickoff to a conversation this evening.

[00:01:23] So I wanna share just a thought about the purpose really of a quality education. I think that when communities are at a crossroads, we have to look at what grounds us and what centers us and what really is going to be that, how do I, I would call it that propelling factor.

[00:01:52] And I've been in a community and I've shared this story recently outside the Seattle area. And early on, when Boeing was in the, actually even in the early 80s, when Boeing was experiencing layoffs and so forth and other companies were, there was one thing that always set our communities apart, and that was the quality of our schools.

[00:02:16] And in particular, on the east side, in Seattle, in the Seattle schools, the quality of the schools were very attractive, which inevitably led to a much more diverse workforce because the focus was on how to maintain and support the most exceptional quality education possible.

[00:02:43] So even as Boeing struggled, Microsoft, a new company, moved in. Amazon, a new company, HQ1, moved in. T-Mobile later moved in. A number of other startups.

[00:03:01] Starbucks became a household name. And those companies settled in that area. And when you got to have an opportunity to visit with leaders in those companies, The single reason they cited repeatedly for their move and to begin what became global enterprises was the quality of the schools.

[00:03:22] And so I think in referencing Tim Cook, our Apple CEO, I think that we are at a crossroads here in Fairfax County. We have a community that's impacted with federal contracts, federal workers, the impact of many decisions around us.

[00:03:42] and yet we still have a choice about the quality of our schools and it's at a time such as this that it's most important to invest in that because it is the reason that we're going to attract more diverse companies and a more diverse revenue sourced county because it's true we cannot continue to have a disproportionate impact on residential homeowners there has to be a more balanced commercial revenue stream and the key to that is the school system it's been that key

[00:04:21] whether it's been in the silicon valley area the seattle area or here in fairfax virginia that's the economic engine that will drive our future in this county and while it may be intuitive to cut back at such a time it is the wrong decision it's always been the wrong decision and it always will be it is time to invest in our schools so in thinking about that fairfax county's had a long tradition a long line of taxpayers who've made that investment and many of our community members no longer have children in schools and it's as important for our community

[00:05:01] members without children in schools currently as it is for those with children because it is the quality of our community that's improved when our schools maintain the tradition of excellence when i think about again just sharing a couple slides kevin please one of the things that i think we're very proud of here in fairfax county is the ratio of central management again very low compared to our po our peers our class sizes currently are sort of in the middle and when you think about that third sixth and fourth class sizes are something that may become a topic depending on

[00:05:42] the budget transfer decisions at this time and currently as i as you can see we rank fifth out of eighth when we look at all levels comparing beginning teacher salaries it's important to note that 79 of our educators have a master's degree so we only have 21 of our teachers that are a bachelor's degree so we did run those numbers for this evening but the vast majority 79 percent have a master's we look at what excellence drives and this is a data slide

[00:06:20] that came recently out of our goal 5 report in every single category 79 overall of fcps students enrolled in college within 16 months of graduating we are not only exceeding the commonwealth percentages but every other division in northern virginia those are the results that happen when we invest

in our schools when we invest in our schools we have welcoming schools in particular to our military families where we have almost 14 000 military connected youth and our military

[00:06:56] bases are part of the economic engine in this area as well as the contracts and we continue this work since 2018 we've expanded our purple star schools significantly to in the next two years having a hundred percent of our schools this is work that happens when we invest in our schools when we think about capital improvement and program planning it's unfortunate right now as we look at our funding for these projects and often we have to dip into our operating fund to cover project costs that are emergent I think of elevators some projects around air

[00:07:32] conditioning and coolant because when we're at an over 40-year renovation cycle, systems break down and we don't have a choice. We can't open school with partial systems running. So the total 10-year requirement and 5-year requirement are really significant in terms of unfunded needs exceeding a billion dollars. If we were actually to go back to a 25-year renovation cycle it would total the annual funding would need to be 1.4 billion to maintain the 25 year renovation cycle that's what happens

[00:08:10] when we invest in schools the capital funding per square foot that we shared in our CIP document again of the eight public school systems above we run rank last with a funding per square foot of \$8.54 the average funding per square foot of school divisions shown is \$21.80. It would be an additional \$195 million per two-year bond or referendum to have even a median-ranked system in this area.

[00:08:50] With over 28 million square feet and over \$8.7 billion in assets, that's a significant amount of money. And we have to recall as well that the Fairfax County government has 12 million square feet which is less than half of the square feet we're maintaining at the same ratio of funding in thinking about the budget summary I don't need to continue to repeat this I know as a board and those watching the document is posted and these summary numbers are there a reminder about the

[00:09:25] current county budget side decisions that have been made on the county side that actually do impact our schools and then the state budget update we're still waiting to hopefully have our governor sign the current General Assembly conference report this did provide an additional 28.3 million including some monies toward a one-time \$1,000 bonus and these dollars were hopeful this 28.3 million will come and we're hopeful that the governor will sign that a reminder

[00:10:02] about JLARC and the state funding I think we continue to hope that the assembly will see its responsibilities and make these right and then I just want to do a brief reminder of where we sit in the master's Lane beginning salary and what's at stake in terms of the full funding of our transfer if we were to be fully funded it would clearly place us in a tentative rank of number two and I'm not sure miss burden if this would change because the surrounding

[00:10:40] regions have agreed to salary increases and I believe have been fully funded by their counties so it may or may not land us in number two I don't know miss burden you have a an update on that yeah I mean at this point what is presented here is the fiscal 26 proposed beginning salary is what they included in their budget and to the best of my knowledge at least Prince William and Loudon I think are completed and they're fully funded so it should stay here I mean somebody could do something at the last minute because that's what

[00:11:17] Prince William did there we were number one or had hoped to be number one for fiscal 26 but at the last minute Prince William dropped in 6,000 and you can see that on onto their beginning ma step

one and that propelled them above us thank you miss Burton so just next slide the impact of the county and state budget and our projected gap continues to range anywhere anywhere between 121 to 149 million and again this funding gap does not include the 7.7 million in county

[00:11:55] agency reductions that also impact Fairfax County Public Schools so as we look at this list these are the areas that FCPS does in fact fund these topic areas at a greater rate than the SOQs or the standards of quality or that are funded at all in some cases by the Commonwealth so indeed we are at a crossroads and I think that this evening's conversation go ahead and hop

[00:12:31] to the next one this evening's conversation really is probably the last major conversation we're going to have on the budget prior to hearing what our transfer will be and prior to finalizing our budget for FY 26 so the next steps are on the screen I believe the Board of Supervisors is in the middle of a public hearing this evening and the following dates are on the screen and have been consistent so at this point that is the presentation this evening

[00:13:06] mrs. Anderson and the team here or I are happy to take questions and know that as a board maybe their comments you have to make as well thank you dr. Reed at this time we're gonna go ahead and kick things off with ms Sizemore Heiser

[00:13:22] Great. Thank you. And good evening, everybody. Thank you for the presentation and for your time. I just want to start my remarks by first thanking staff for all of your hard work, Dr. Reed, Lee, and the budget team, Matthew and Alice and Marty, of course, for all your hard work on the budget, on answering the budget questions, and just really in these very challenging times, working to maximize what we can do for our schools and students and teachers and staff and keeping the students at the center.

[00:13:52] So I appreciate all your hard work. The reality is that we are at, I agree with your statement, Doctor, we're at a crossroads here. Our county has not only come to expect excellent schools, but really our county's economy and our state's economy are dependent on having excellent schools.

[00:14:10] And for the long-term health of our economy and our democracy and society, we've got to continue funding that. So I really know that our board of supervisors have been strong partners in education. I know our state delegation from Fairfax, our strong partners in education, and I hope that they will see that if in these federal government times where we're not sure what's going to happen with the federal government, we're not sure what has federal contracting, we've got to do what it takes to bring other businesses here and diversify our economy.

[00:14:37] And we do that by giving our businesses a reason to come to Fairfax, and that's often the excellent schools. So I really hope that we can do that, because at this point, we walk through how efficient we already are, and I think it's going to be difficult to find more efficiencies in the numbers that we need to make up these gaps without really potentially impacting programs that make Fairfax what Fairfax is, all of the extras that we do beyond the state minimum requirements, including our music and arts and everything that we do here.

[00:15:07] And I think our community, whether you have kids in the school or not, really benefit from our schools. They benefit from the program. that we have, community events that take place in our schools, which are the community centers. When you look at the ratio of our central office staff to building staff at 1.1%, the next closest is Arlington at 2.2%.

[00:15:27] We've worked very hard to reduce our educator turnover, but if we can't maintain competitive salaries to our surrounding jurisdictions, I think that's going to be hard to continue to maintain, and we really cannot continue with our facilities at a 42-year renovation cycle and major maintenance backlog.

[00:15:44] So I hope that we'll find a way for the state to truly address the shortcomings from JLARC and the underfunding of special education. I hope we'll continue to get our traditional share of the county budget to keep our schools excellent and drive that economy and bring businesses here. And I'm hopeful that our Board of Supervisors are strong partners with us in public education and recognize that teachers need that competitive salary because without our excellent teachers, we can't have excellent schools.

[00:16:11] excellent teachers we can't have excellent schools. So thank you everybody and I look forward to the conversation. Thank you. Chair Frisch. Thank you. I had the pleasure of speaking at the Board of Supervisors this afternoon about the budget during the public hearing and while there I did get to hear some members of the community complaining about FCPS. So when we say that excellence is at a crossroads I think it's worth defining what that excellence is and so we've talked a little bit about the lack of support from our state partners that is the same average of

[00:16:47] other states despite that lack of sufficient support. In the past two years the school division has increased the number of students in preschool programs so much that the number of kids in our school system without preschool has dropped by almost 10 percent. Over the last year multilingual students have progressed year over year by an even more impressive number with the percentage of those meeting the state standard for progress toward English language proficiency increasing by 11 percent. Reading. Reading by third grade. In the last year, our numbers are up. Algebra by eighth grade. We've increased again by almost 10 percent in the last

[00:17:27] year to 58 percent. Eighty-five percent of our students are taking advanced coursework in high school and passing their AP exams. Our AP scores are higher than the state average. They're higher than the national average. Our ACT scores are higher than the state average and the national average college enrollment we lead the state in the nation again especially in critical demographics like economically disadvantaged students multilingual learners and students with disabilities we romp the numbers of other school divisions and so i think it's worth pointing out that we need

[00:18:04] resources to continue this great work this focused work anybody who tunes into our school board meetings week after week month after month sees that we are methodically measuring the progress towards our strategic plan goals that's what we're focused on meeting the needs of these students and those needs are more complicated every single year and they are deserving of the resources to meet those needs because if we don't we know that there are all sorts of tertiary expenses that come along with not meeting those needs societal expenses that are far more costly than the 3100

[00:18:40] per student that we're asking for in additional funds from the state just to be average so i want to thank our budget team for the work that they've done to get us this far thank my colleagues for you know engaging in this extended conversation and thank all of our educators out there who deserve the seven percent raise that the collective bargaining uh agreement uh stipulates and uh just how much we appreciate the work they've done to allow us to talk about the progress that we've

[00:19:09] made over the last several years thank you i see no other placards mr dunn thank you Well, I appreciate all the work that's been done by the budget team and our school board budget leads. I think we

face a critical crossroads for all the reasons that were articulated on the slides. And I think we have to face the fact that the federal government right now may be reducing

[00:19:46] support rather than increasing support. And we also have to be realistic about the increased state support we can expect. With the current tax structure of the Commonwealth, we're not going to get \$568 million in this year or next year. But we can certainly advocate strongly and we should continue to advocate strongly for the state to pay its fair share because when it doesn't, when the federal and state government underfund education, then we pay higher property taxes as a result. And so if the federal and state governments actually paid their fair share, we would have lower property taxes and thus likely more affordable

[00:20:22] housing but we also have to look at look at our own operations and say how can we act strategically to to transform this dynamic right we're in we're in facing a Gordian knot and we can try to untie it or we can take a sword and slice through it and when I look at for example the capital assets we have to look at available office space in our county we established a new school Bailey's upper and it's been operated successfully for 20 years I believe in a converted office building we have to not be attached to the sites of our existing schools but

[00:20:59] say where can we locate schools that in partnership with developers or with the county or both we might achieve efficiencies and be able to get you know assets at discounts right we can do exchanges we can do other things to to further address our capital asset requirements in the same way with the whatever funding we receive additional from the county in the state which right now we're anticipate to receive up to a hundred and seventy five million that that's not nothing that's that's a lot of money coming out of the pockets of

[00:21:36] Fairfax County taxpayers who pay 70% of our school budget and in this in this scenario we have to be strategic and say where should we invest that money and we have teachers and support staff who the data shows and the data is not perfect but the data shows that our teachers and support staff are underpaid relative to market and that's where we should be investing our money because it's great teachers great support staff in our daily in our public schools who provide the daily excellence the difference in educational outcomes and that's what I will be advocating for where we should invest the dollars we receive which may not be every dollar we want but will be every dollar we have and so we have to

[00:22:15] be strategic how we make those investments to make the most difference and being able to attract and retain great teachers, talented educators and support staff who make all the difference and are the people who interact on a daily basis with our students and our families.

[00:22:30] Thank you. Dr. Anderson. Thank you. Just very quickly, I just had one question. Can you put up slide 16 back up please?

[00:22:59] Thank you. would you be able to share the comparative data for teachers who have bachelor's degrees what is the current ranking and then the potential ranking if everything works out as proposed yes um we can get that for you and the reason we don't concentrate on the bachelors is i know yeah i mean 78 percent we do fare better at the bachelor's lane i think we're up near the top i don't know if we're at

[00:23:32] the top we might be with the seven percent um we're second uh it's right now so that would probably propel us to first with a bachelor's degree okay um but everybody kind of compares masters and and you know part of it too is uh all the education programs in the commonwealth have moved to a five-

year masters so many graduates come out with a master's so that's why this is the one that we use oh i definitely understand that i i want us to have the most prepared teachers possible but respectfully we have 21 of teachers without batch with bachelor's degrees and you know

[00:24:12] we're inviting more with tfas who have a bachelor's degrees teacher trainees who don't have necessarily the master's degree so while i know this is you know the the gold standard we still have a number of teachers who fall into the bachelor's category and that information is important to also disclose so thank you and just to reiterate you were second currently does that also work for beginning middle and end of career or because i know we have a little bit of a dissonance between where a teacher on the master scale may be on the mass at a master's level may be on the scale is that

[00:24:51] similar yeah it's probably similar in that i think we're seventh of eight at the midpoint in the max for the masters and matthew may know where we are in the bachelor's yeah i just want want to clarify that the quote that we gave for a second right now is it the starting teacher salary for someone with a bachelor's so we don't have the midpoint data handy for bachelor's degree because it's just again since it's such a lower number of teachers that we have it's not a focal point that we do when we do those compensation studies but we can certainly get it for you so I can only give you the answer for us the starting part not the midpoint of the

[00:25:27] max okay if we could just get that because 21% is still a good number of people I know I saw mr. Solomon what is that 21% of our teaching force what does that mean in terms of actual numbers 350 people 4,000 okay thank you that's very helpful miss Marin yes I just came from the county government center where there was the first day of public hearings there was first a public hearing about

[00:26:05] the meals tax one about the tax rate and then the general public budget hearing which was expected to continue on for several hours it was not a set end time which is tough because I know some teachers race there to be there right after school when things started at 4:00 and that didn't even start till 5:00 and students but it was good to see people there and lots of people supporting one another I have I have two buckets of questions and things I'd love for us to discuss and I'd love to hear from Dr. Reed one of them is this question about how much facilities cost us in our general fund and operating

[00:26:41] budget so that's one bucket the second actually this is three the second thing is about the collective bargaining process with the seven percent agreement there's really only two options either it's funded or it's not I think the board needs to understand what the not version is so I'm not asking for what would you reduce or whatnot but does that collective bargaining agreement just go back to the table is the budget passable do we have a staffing issue like that is something I think this board and the public need to understand just the

[00:27:17] process of that and then also the federal funding what's really coming at us at this point and what are we planning for and then the rest of my stuff I'll I'll save about the tenor of this point in time so again questions about facilities and funding so for instance and i we have a budget question question number 45 i believe that asks um about the purchase of this building the lease and uh it says you know the

[00:27:51] board of supervisors paid 45.8 million on january 27 2005 and as i understand it it seems that we are being funded from the board of supervisors to then pay the board of supervisors the debt service and so can you explain about how the debt service figures in are we paying that out of general funds or things like when we approve a playground like we did last week or a new track is that from operating funds

or is that from capital funds because the thing I want to distinguish is are we using our annual operating budget which is supposed to be focused on instruction on

[00:28:30] these capital projects thank you thank you so miss burden since 2005 the gatehouse debt service funds or are those coming from a debt service fund here or operating fund or capital dollars it comes from the operating fund but it's transferred into the construction the end payment I think it originates with us and not capital bonds right yes okay so that would be the answer for gatehouse it comes out of our general operating fund budget which otherwise could be expended towards instruction teaching and learning and so

[00:29:09] forth wow so that's a big deal yes even with a fantastic interest rate that was previously refinanced as recently as 2022 we are using instructional dollars to pay the board of supervisors back on debt service that seems like a big problem and something that we must figure out but now at least we know that can you share about the playgrounds the tracks things we approve not part of the capital improvement plan miss burden playgrounds and tracks i know yeah go ahead

[00:29:45] you know i'm going to tell you the truth i have all of your questions that you sent answered but it is an eight page document with a really small font so i can't go over that here tonight but we'll be glad to answer all of those in writing if i would like us to to know i'd like everyone to know this is a question and i'd like for other board members to be able to talk too that's very

[00:30:18] impressive i only asked yesterday so thank you go ahead and i just got it like an hour ago so yeah so to touch on some of your questions i mean i really think it's a mixture of the two right and so when we think about things like um you know recently we've been bringing bringing non-ada compliant playgrounds up to ada compliance with year-end funds right when the board votes to do that that's money coming from the operating fund um but in other instances you know we may be using construction fund money for you know something similar to that it just kind of depends on the

[00:30:55] process by which we go about voting on it and bringing it to you so again that's one example where the operating fund is being used um but but certainly that's not the only way that it can be done um again i i think that because it's kind of a mixed nature it's hard to talk about each specific instance without kind of you know going through the whole document um but but we can certainly kind of give you an idea you know one way or the other on some specific things if you want without kind of necessarily you know plowing through the whole whole thing and taking the full two hours this meeting to do well

[00:31:34] let me let me summarize a minute Matthew I think in general Matthew's right I mean the money kind of comes from multiple sources when it's planned and part of the CIP when something's part of a formal renovation project then capital dollars are used for playgrounds or equipment that type of thing but we have such a long renovation cycle over 40 years that there are times students enroll in schools that don't have an ADA accessible playground we can't not support that student or that school so then we'll have to dip in at that time

[00:32:10] often to operating fund dollars to remedy a situation that's in a more immediate form because it's not going to be a school that's going to be eligible for a renovation for quite a little while right so it's really been I think the operating fund often gets tapped for emergent issues that are not part of a formal recycle or not recycle but a formal renovation a lot of our elevator issues recently they're in schools that are not slated for renovation for quite

[00:32:44] while but we can't wait to not have the elevator work until the renovation comes so this elongated renovation cycle has created more of a need to dip into dollars whether it's at year end or during the year that otherwise could go to teacher salary classroom instruction and so forth so matthew did you have something to add yeah and maybe this helps in some way so on our on our construction fund statement you can also see the funds coming to the construction fund from the school operating fund and so like I can tell

[00:33:21] you you know over the years you know back in FY 20 the actual amount that the school operating fund contributed to the construction fund was twelve point four million dollars for instance that number as of the FY 25 revised budget is twenty point two million dollars and so you know you can see the magnitude kind of from that way it was actually higher in FY23 at 25.5 million but again when you think about you know the 230 million dollars in bond sales and then you know the roughly 20 million dollars that we have there you know that just helps give you a kind of an order of magnitude well I would love if the superintendent

[00:34:01] could answer my other two questions please and and it would be great if we could have iterative discussions I know we're all for timing and I'll stop after My other two questions were about if the 7% is not met, what is the logistical process of that and really what is happening to prepare for any kind of federal funding cessation.

[00:34:24] So we are watching the federal funding accounts and again we have federal funding that comes in the form of grants that are competitive and grants that are not.

[00:34:41] So we're keeping a close eye on those and making sure that we're thoughtfully planning as thoughtfully as we can. I think what Ms. Burden has said several times is it's very difficult to have a clear plan with the federal dollars because there's so little detail and really almost no one answering the phone that has any information when you call for clarification.

[00:35:07] we're planning based on you know what we read in the news primarily so having said that the funding that we've expected in our major three grants title one IDEA in our food nutrition have continued as we would expect so without interruption with regard to collective bargaining at this point until we know what the county transfer is I'm not going to speculate on what we may or may not consider because if we're not fully funded then we there is a clause within

[00:35:43] the original board resolution to authorize collective bargaining as well as in the bargain itself that there is a re-opener and we would go back to the table to discuss wages and salary at that time and I don't want to speculate about what that could lead to one of my questions how does that impact the budget the passing of our budget if we have to go back and bargain well we'll have a very short time to bargain we've already have tentative meetings scheduled should they be required and we'll have to go to the table with whatever information about whatever money is

[00:36:21] transferred and whatever monies the governor does or doesn't sign there are a lot of variables still and then i'll need to have a pretty quick turnaround to bring a budget to you on thursday night i believe may 8th mr moon uh just one comment on what you know doctor we had just stated that's uh that's an area of my grave concern. It's a short period of time, you know, we have that in as much

[00:36:58] as we need to be hopeful for full funding by county board of supervisors, at the same time, we need to be prepared for the potential huge cuts that we have to deal with. And in a board, not having that

opportunity after this until you propose your final budget, and then we have a public and we have just one work session and by that time it may be too late for the board to provide the meaningful input uh into adopting next year's budget so that's one comment second

[00:37:34] i a thinking about what miss marion asked about gatehouse administration building purchase that was what back in 2005 time frame long ago long ago that my recollection is this at the time a we We wanted to, in a school board, wanted to get out of Burkholder building, which was in the Fairfax City.

[00:37:55] It was a small, really old building. And at the time, we were looking at both. We were looking at, you know, initially, we were looking at renting, leasing a space somewhere. Then this building came up, and then we compared rental cost versus acquisition cost.

[00:38:17] For two, be able for us to acquire this outright, we need to have a copy of funding, which we didn't have, which we didn't have. The only way to acquire this, it was through EDA bond, with the help from the county board of supervisors at the time, and when you talk about money coming out of instructional budget, if we were to lease a building, the money was gonna come out of instructional funding anyway.

[00:38:44] So we, the board, compared all those numbers, and at the time, the board decided it was wiser to purchase through that means than leasing a space somewhere. Hopefully, that helps them.

[00:39:03] - Okay, so we're gonna move to go backs. I think, Mr. Jackson, I think we're gonna keep it at three minutes for now, and then we'll tighten up if we need to do that. Mr. Dunn. - Dr. Reed, I heard you say something about class sizes.

[00:39:21] Can you please elaborate on your comments during your opening remarks? - Sure, we can. Kevin, do you wanna go back to the class size slide, please? So, I was essentially referring to the fact FCPS ranks fifth of eight and that at elementary school third middle school sixth and high school fourth but did you imply that if we don't receive full funding then class sizes will necessarily increase in size it's one of the things that could if you go back to the SOQ chart and I believe slide 16

[00:40:00] 18 sorry it's one of the topics class sizes on the left side they're alphabetical examples where FCPS exceeds minimum state standards so any one of these topics as we've discussed multiple times are plausible or possible topic areas where we're going to have to make some budget decisions and in what scenario would you choose larger class sizes versus for example reduction in

[00:40:36] school-based office staff or technical business and educational specialists I - I don't have a scenario currently. I'm just saying all of these are possible or at play. - All right, I would just like to register that I will oppose under any circumstances an increase in class sizes.

[00:40:54] I think our classes are large enough as is, and I think there are other options on the table. I appreciate your emphasis, Dr. Reed, on balancing commercial and residential revenue because we face a situation where some of our neighboring counties have a large number of data centers, and so they have significant revenue they generate from that.

[00:41:16] And Arlington County has significant commercial office space, so it can derive significant revenue from that source. Unfortunately, Fairfax County is a largely a residential county, so we do need to explore as a county, and that's not a school board issue, but certainly we can support any projects that seek to provide new revenue to the county outside of higher property taxes.

[00:41:42] In terms of budget decisions, I'd just like to understand, if we do not receive full funding and you receive, let's say the current amount is \$175 million additional from the county and the state, you have proposed an across-the-board pay raise.

[00:41:59] What would make you decide an across-the-board pay raise of below 7% versus fulfilling the terms of the CBA, which call for a 7% pay raise just for teachers and support staff who are bargaining unit members?

[00:42:17] - So I want to be clear that I haven't proposed a plan, I've proposed a budget. And it's a statutory requirement that I provide a needs-based budget that this board then approved, which became the advertised budget. And it's that budget that includes a 7% across-the-board raise.

[00:42:34] There isn't some other plan, it's the budget as it's currently written. So I want to be clear about that. Secondly, I am not this evening going to bargain outside the bargaining process to discuss what I may or may not do with the bargaining agreement that would not be a prudent decision on my part so at this point I'm going to wait till I see what the county transfer is and then abide by the collective bargaining agreements and the board's resolution and then make a decision about whether we're going to need to go back to the table or not depending on that funding having said that I also

[00:43:13] want to acknowledge for the board and for all those watching this is a first for this board the school division in this community to be engaged in collective bargaining and it's not something that we have great joint collaborative experience with and it's something we're learning as we move through it so we're gonna have these moments where we want to do X but then we are like oof we're in this new space and we're gonna have to move in the Y direction so I just I want to also make sure that I'm true to the process and we

[00:43:47] all I know every one of us the board the staff and the union leadership want to make sure we have integrity in that collective bargaining process so anyhow I think that's the best answer I can provide at this point on that well thank you I I do think given you know needs based budget looking at where are the the needs in terms of employees who are paid below market, the data we have shows that's in our school-based employees, our teachers and support staff.

[00:44:20] And so I would strongly encourage and taking whatever funding we receive additional from the county and the state and investing in those employees to make sure they're paid at least at market. And if they can be paid above market, all the better, because we wanna make sure that Fairfax County is the destination of choice among all the employers in this region for the best and brightest, whether they're school counselors or teachers or cafeteria workers.

[00:44:50] We wanna make sure those people are coming here, staying here and supporting our students in the classroom every day of the week. - I appreciate hearing that and I think we all agree that we want exemplary educators. I also wanna make sure that as I look at other school-based staff who are not part of FEU, such as our principals, our assistant principals, DSS's, DSA's, we need excellent school-based leadership across the board as well.

[00:45:17] And I would argue as we've looked that there are, as principals move through the arc of their career, there are other divisions in the region that pay better. And that's why we've lost some of our experienced principals. So I wanna always think about and balance the needs of all of our employees as we meet the needs of all of our students.

[00:45:39] So it's a complex task right now, and any time we have fewer resources than we have needs, I think we're gonna find ourselves in a situation that requires really some critical and thoughtful problem solving. So I appreciate the dilemma we're in.

[00:45:55] - Yeah, I agree, we need to be strategic, and certainly we don't wanna leave everyone out, but we can't solve every problem in every year. Just as with the school boundary review, we're not gonna solve every problem that exists. We're gonna focus on the ones that are most critical now, and then later on at a future year, address the other problems that may exist.

[00:46:14] And with principals, we can adjust that next year and focus on teachers and support staff this year. - Ms. Dixit. - Thank you Dr. Reed for your opening session.

[00:46:30] It was very impressive to hear all about the companies who are the part of the Silicon, I should say the Silicon Valley of the Pacific. I wanted to address a couple of things.

[00:46:45] I hear, my colleague also said that Fairfax County is not generating enough commercial revenue, and this has to change. We're competing with neighboring counties which have far more commercial space and revenue, and we are struggling, and we cannot keep increasing the rate or the taxes on our citizens, our property tax.

[00:47:10] So it's definitely, it's something as a county, we have to think about how we can increase the revenue. And I'm not saying, you know, that we have to build a casino, but I'm just saying there has to be other ways to do it.

[00:47:26] And also we really wanted to see if we can, you know, get some of the meal tax funds over to school, which, you know, hopefully that's gonna come through. You know, we'll see. But I do see that every single employee who's working with FCPS contribute to our students and their success.

[00:47:47] And even if it's a bus driver who takes them to school or a teacher in the classroom, assistant, IA principal, assistant principal, I know they're the more, very hardworking group as well. So I feel like they all deserve this raise and anybody who works for FCPS should be, we are honored to have them.

[00:48:10] So I wanna support each and every employee of FCPS and their commitment to the school. And the request for the county would be to really consider this because, like you said, we are in a very uncertain situation environment right now.

[00:48:27] There's a lot of impact happening on households. They have the funds and they definitely can, you know, put it to the use for school. And I definitely wanna advocate for our middle school after school programs and other programs which are being proposed to cut because that is not okay, those programs need to run.

[00:48:49] So I'll stop here and probably I'll talk later with my other thoughts, thanks. - Dr. Anderson. - Thank you. Matthew, just a little while ago, you talked about moving funds from the operating budget in order to cover some construction or not construction, but renovation, some of that work.

[00:49:18] Can you speak a little bit to in recent years when we've engaged in that practice, what have we not taken care of? If we're moving funds out of the operating budget in order to take care of the elevator, what has not happened? - I don't know that I can name a thing, but I will say that over the last number of years, I don't know if it's decade maybe, or last number of years, I guess I'll leave that there.

[00:49:46] - I think there have been years we haven't done step increases for staff. There have been years we haven't done a percentage across the board increase. - I don't think that's my question, because when we make these changes, let's take the elevator question for an example.

[00:50:04] We already had the budget, it was already made, and then it was found out over the summer that we had elevators, I know it was a Justice, it was at Addendale, and it was one more school that's escaping me, that the elevators were not working. So you had to pivot and deal with that emergency. And so you use funding for that.

[00:50:21] Where did that funding come from? It had to have come from someplace because the budget was already determined at that point. - So I'd have to refer to Ms. Burden in terms of where dollars, I think much of these came at year end. So it's probably the unfilled positions, which isn't ideal because we want to fill our teaching positions.

[00:50:41] But I think the dollars, for example, being paid to pay off gatehouse would be in the budget so those would be in as an alternative to other things that would be ongoing funds so then when we're dealing with emergencies that typically just comes out of year-end okay so and I think I know the answer to this question but I would love for you to put a finer point on it what flexibility do we have with year-end funding in terms of earmarking them for I guess I'm trying to say how can we hold on to them as a savings. I don't think we are able to.

[00:51:20] - Generally speaking, all of the year-end funds or surplus funds have to be allocated to a specific purpose. And we do everything we can to make sure that those year-end funds are primarily going to items that are one-time cost. So that's why year-end a lot of times you'll see safety and security items, you'll see facilities items, because we can't use those funds to do positions, because that has a recurring cost in the next year.

[00:51:54] So then we have a funding shortfall from the start in the next year. So that's why you see with year-end a lot of things that are one-time things, because that's really all we can spend those funds on. So then the question is, if we were to have already expended year-end funds, we earmarked them for a certain purpose and and this usually happens in September because we've moved that from July to September and let's say in December we have I don't know 20 elevators go down and we had to deal with them where would those funds come from to deal with them or are we just unable to

[00:52:34] well something like that that I assume would be really expensive we would in the past what we would do is we would come back to the school board and ask to access the school board flexibility reserve because that's what that 8 million is for to address any unanticipated items or emergencies that occurred during the year that we don't have a funding source for thank you for that reminder I completely just forget about that flexibility reserve my lap my next question I guess it's more of a comment and I'm looking for a confirmation from you looking at this

[00:53:09] list that is on slide 18 one of the things that you've said many many many many times is given how we're structured in order to raise significant amounts of dollars the quickest and best place to do that is class sizes not best that's not the right word just the place where yeah I'm pretty sure I've never said best definitely not best definitely not best but but you know any any labor intensive industry which k-12 is always very labor-intensive with 90 90% of our

[00:53:45] budget being salaries and benefits only 10 percent everything else when you have a labor intensive budget like that you know you can tweak around the edges a little bit if you need to find you know 10 million dollars i mean the budget's you know 4 billion you can you know work around the edges a little bit and get 10 20 million that kind of thing but 150 million it's got to be compensation or your class sizes because that's the only way you get big dollars okay thank you and the last point that i wanted to make you know we just had this conversation in cpdc just last

[00:54:22] week it feels like a hundred years ago where staff was presenting about projects and a question that i had raised was in the replacement of hvac systems like major systems outside of the outside of the renovation cycle which we have to do because the cycle is so lengthy it also creates almost the double expenditure because once the school does get up to renovation if they're a little bit outside then that system again has to be redone or re or um or updated or changed so

[00:55:01] we're not having any um benefit by not contracting the renovation cycle and i just thought i wanted to offer that as one more issue that speaks to the slide that just that was offered earlier Ms. Mairn yeah so I think it'd be an interesting piece of data to have over how much money we've spent from the general fund general fund and operating fund are synonymous is that that's true general fund operating fund municipalities use general fund to talk about their main budget

[00:55:41] school divisions use operating fund thank you so I think it would be helpful to have a chart that shows what we've been paying including um you know the 12 million and fy 20 and not right the second but i think like that kind of data is really helpful for us to know um so from what i've been learning especially around facilities is there's really four fiduciary entities in the county there's the county board of supervisors the school board the park authority and the Economic Development Association. And it seems like there's different processes or ownership,

[00:56:17] and I don't know if that's the exhaustive list, but it does seem like they have places at the table that impact how we're able to do work. So that's something that I would like to learn more about. I also wanted to, let me just, you know, I've been trying to share publicly and just one or two conversations with the county leadership that if we could get more efficiencies as one system we could find money and today when i was at the public hearing there were a lot of residents there opposing the real estate tax increase and i don't support the increase either because i do

[00:56:56] believe that there is money available on the county side it might not be readily available but i think some of it could be and when i look at this um presentation that i believe it was as Mrs. Seismarheiser and Mr. Dunn attended with the planning commission of the county about this process called 2232.

[00:57:16] So this is how projects get reviewed by the county. And it used to be that a project, up until 2022, a project would take 30 to 90 days for the county to approve it. So this process changed and instead of 30 to 90 days, now the time takes 220 days.

[00:57:38] and you cannot tell me that that's saving money. Time is money, and we know that construction costs are constantly escalating. So it's an over 250% increase in approval times. So what I don't understand is, why offer a tax increase when it's clear that there's money to be saved here based on this change that happened three years ago?

[00:58:02] So that's something that I want to put out there, and I would love if our board tonight come up with some agreement about what statement and information we want to say because at the end of the day our executive has given her professional opinion on what it takes to run this school system and for whatever reasons the funders do not accept that and have not offered to help us find a solution and that's incredibly sad but unless we figure out what the plan is to fill that gap I don't think we're going to be able to do anything.

[00:58:41] So I have more thoughts on that, but I'd really like a statement. Can we do that? Mr. Moon? I'm sorry, Miss Meron. I'm not responding to your call for a statement, so I'm not being helpful in that regard.

[00:59:01] But since a couple of board members mentioned about class size, let me ask you a couple of questions. When we want to step teacher position, let's say the teachers, Since class size is related to teacher positions, what's the amount we allocate budget for one teaching position?

[00:59:23] Is it \$120,000 or \$110,000? About \$110,000. \$110,000. About \$110,000. Valories and benefits. Correct. Okay. So if the gap is potentially anticipated, potentially \$121,000 to \$150 million, I mean, we don't know what the federal government will do.

[00:59:45] We don't know what the governor or general actually will do. But let's say that if it is 121, 150 million divided by 110, that's like more than 1,000 positions out of 16,000 teachers, which is 7%, 7, 8% of the teaching force.

[01:00:17] That's very alarming. That's very alarming. I just want my colleagues to know the magnitude of that. And also, as we are hiring, maybe this goes to Dr. Reed or Mr. Smith, as we are hiring teachers right now, can we even not hire 1,000 teachers?

[01:00:42] - Can we not hire 1,000 teachers? - Hire 1,000 teachers at this point? Because we are making commitment to people who are applying for jobs, unless we are laying off teachers. - Currently, we are not fully staffed for next fall.

[01:00:57] - Okay, so how many are we not? - I didn't bring that data this evening. Okay, because I'm just trying to see as we go further and further into late spring, summer, we'll be hiring more and more, filling those positions. So don't even know whether we have a luxury of letting go of 1,000 positions.

[01:01:18] Yeah, and before 1,000 position number gets out in the ether. I'm just saying because class size we mentioned. It would be very unusual if we tried to handle the entire \$150 million cut with class size.

[01:01:36] I'm confident that it will be a variety of strategies that protect the classroom as much as possible. That is exactly what I'm trying to say, is that's something unfathomable to think that it can be handled with a class size while letting teachers' positions go.

[01:01:53] And if we tried to do it all on class size, we would be outside of the state SOQ compliance. So that, yeah. I want to be really clear too that this conversation, if someone only listens to part of it, we are not this evening making any decision or any plan to move in a direction of eliminating 1,000 teaching positions at this time.

[01:02:20] So I just want to be very clear about that. So, I think the danger in speculation is that bits of conversations get taken potentially out of context. And I want to be very clear that that -- and I think, Mr. Moon, you're also trying to make sure that's part of the statement.

[01:02:37] Absolutely. Because that cannot be a part of the discussion. That's what I'm saying. At that magnitude. That magnitude. Yes. Thank you. Ms. Seismerheiser. Thank you. And I appreciate the discussion and listening to my colleagues.

[01:02:53] And I do think -- Hold on one second for us. I'm sorry? I couldn't. Ms. Anderson, I think I heard you pause, asked me to pause, but it cut out for a second, so I want to make sure I heard you.

[01:03:08] One second for us. We're just turning your volume up. Got it. Thank you. Ms. Eisemarheiser, can you just hold on a second? We're having volume issues. Absolutely. Ms. Eisemarheiser, can you try again?

[01:03:37] Yeah, absolutely. Can you hear me okay? Yeah, we were having feedback issues with another mic, so we had to lower things. Apologies for that. That's okay. No worries. Is everything good? May I start? Yes, go ahead. Okay, thank you. I appreciate the conversation and the thoughtful conversation from my colleagues and from staff as well.

[01:03:57] And I wanted to ask Dr. Reed, I think you had said something earlier about, you know, depending on what our funding we get, we may have to go back to the bargaining table. And if I recall, the collective bargaining agreement we originally signed had that contemplated, that if we needed to, we'd go back to the bargaining table.

[01:04:17] And one of the things that I'm wondering about is that because when we are going to talk to our staff, we need to talk to, you know, kind of make sure their voice is represented as we're making our budget decisions. I think we need to do everything we can for our staff to, and I talked about earlier, we can't have excellent schools without excellent staff.

[01:04:35] But, Dr. Reed, is that kind of what you were getting at earlier about needing to make sure that the staff's voices are part of this process, which is why a lot of us, I think, supported collective bargaining in the first place is to give our staff a table. Sorry, a seat at the table, excuse me.

[01:04:51] - Thank you, Ms. Sizemore-Heiser. I think what I was attempting to clarify was that if there is a clause within the collective bargaining agreement, or an agreement, that if we're not fully funded, that there would be a, there's potentially an opener that's within the wage section of the bargaining agreement that we've currently signed.

[01:05:15] It's a limited opener to wages, but that there is that opener if we're not fully funded. So my comment was, depending on what the county transfer ultimately is determined to be, that may necessitate a return to the bargaining table for that limited opener to discuss how to resolve that.

[01:05:38] Okay. I understand what you're saying, and I think what I'm hearing from my colleagues is the importance of our employees. I also want to make sure that our employees' voices are part of this process as we're grappling with the realities of what may be a pretty significant budget shortfall from what we were hoping from the state and from the county.

[01:05:55] So I think at this point, what I heard from the presentation, and please correct me if I'm wrong, is that a lot of things above the SOQs are potentially on the table, right? The state's SOQs are the minimum that they expect schools to be able to staff to run schools.

[01:06:12] And in my understanding, Dr. Reed, is that most school systems spend a few billion dollars more than the SOQs would fund to, you know, to actually staff schools at levels that schools feel are

necessary to function for the education of the students. Is that correct?

[01:06:28] I don't know if most schools spend billions more, but most schools in the Commonwealth spend more than the Commonwealth provides based on the SOQ, for sure. And I think each school's context is unique. And here in Fairfax County, as it's been mentioned, our county actually supports, I believe, 70 percent of our budget here locally uh that's an incredible investment in our schools for sure yeah and that's what i think it's important to lift up that is it is really appreciated that this that when the state part of the issue of the state funding is how low it sets the number if most of

[01:07:07] the school systems in the state are spending more than what the state says is sufficient to operate a school system then we really do have to count on our locality to um to make up that difference and it shows where the lacking of the state funding is but we also i think need to recognize that the schools bring a lot of value to our county as well and so how do we um really make sure we're operating the spirit of one fairfax where we are working with our county partners to do what's best for the county in a lot of areas and part of that is making sure our schools are strong to big bring businesses and uh people to our county to keep it an economic powerhouse

[01:07:43] of virginia so thank you for clarifying that i appreciate it miss st john cunning thank you um so first of all i want to say that um thank you to everyone that's done this work and i really want to respect the collect the collective bargaining unit and not speculate about what we can or can't do here today because i know that there are legal implications for us about discussing any of that and I respect what the work that they are doing one thing that I do want to

[01:08:16] say is that I do support the seven percent raise for all staff members as someone that's worked in the school there's a lot of people that are not considered a school-based staff but they spent a large amount of time in our schools we have our behavior intervention teachers our applied behavior analyst coaches and these are supports that are called to assist when schools have used a number of strategies to support students with behavior communication or other skills and have had limited success these coaches come and work with the teachers and they support the students until they get to

[01:08:56] where they can with a student some of our centrally connected staff like physical therapists occupational therapists and speech language providers provide services directly to schools on a daily basis and maybe itinerants because they support more than one school while the staff above work with students and teachers we also have various educational specialists from central office that come out directly to the schools of particular importance to me are our multilingual specialists that help support and build capacity to serve our students in the most effective matter matters parent liaisons language interpreters equity leads these are all central office positions

[01:09:34] and so I think there's a misnomer that because you're in central office you're not in schools. The majority of our central office people are in schools or are providing immense support to our schools. Our HR department is hiring and vetting all of these teachers to make sure that we have great teachers and great staff. So although I cannot talk about collective bargaining, I can say that all of these people are doing the hard work every day and deserve those raises. The other thing that I would like to say is that, again, I said this before and I'm gonna use the same language we can speak dollars and cents

[01:10:11] all we want but during this climate the issue of a free and inclusive public education becomes a moral imperative that addresses the very foundation of our democracy we all know an investment in the education of our children is a promise and hope for a better future it is an investment in our community

and demonstrates that we value the importance that education plays as a corner stone of democracy and it is time for one Fairfax to be more than just lip service mr fresh thank you um i wanted to circle back to something miss marron raised just

[01:10:47] for clarification uh there was a discussion about gatehouse as the example of the fees that we pay for the loan that was structured over time and i think mr moon was trying to explain the history there but i think and miss marron can correct me if i'm wrong but i think what miss marron was getting at is why on earth are we paying fees for something to the people who are facilitating you you know, that work. It's similar to the conversations that the board has had about the extended time for zoning changes and permitting in our school system, knowing that the delays

[01:11:24] only end up costing us money, which is the money that they've provided us. So it's, you know, anything we can do to mitigate those types of fees. And that's not to say that there wouldn't be a fee associated facilitating work for us, right? They still have staff who have to do things but we should be minimizing those things and if at all possible eliminating them so I support any efforts that we can do to address that especially in the work that we're going to be doing with the joint committees in the year ahead on the collective bargaining front I want to be very clear that I support the budget that the board adopted I support the

[01:12:03] resolution that the board adopted allowing for collective bargaining which basically said we empower the superintendent to engage a process of collective bargaining interest based bargaining with our uh certified associations certified unions um and that they will hopefully come to agreement on a on a bargaining agreement the board will vote yes or no on that that is where we weigh in in that process we say yes we say no we said yes and now we are committed to that path and as part of that path if we get to a point where we are not able to meet the

[01:12:41] obligations of that agreement we have also given direction the superintendent will initiate bargaining through her team with the bargaining units to try and find an alternate path to agreement that is on them our next step in the process there is to say yes or no to the solution that they come up with if we have an issue with the solution that they've come up with you can vote no. You can also in the executive limitations conversations we have throughout the year you can say I did not like the approach to reaching consensus here and the superintendent can say well here's why we had to do it

[01:13:19] that way right that's how we engage in this and it's different than we've done in the past but collective bargaining is a different world for everybody in the system not just the employees who benefit from it it's different for us as well as policymakers. Thank you. Okay we're going to the next round of go So we're going to go to two minutes for this one.

[01:13:42] Mr. Dunn. Ms. Burden, how much funding would it require to provide the 7% pay raise to FEU members? About \$190 million of \$210.

[01:14:06] And I see that the gap from between the \$297 million that was requested in the proposed budget and what we anticipate receiving from the county and state is 122 so that means we're receiving 175 is that right I don't know I'd have to look at my numbers okay it sounds right yeah that assumes that we will get the 28 million

[01:14:39] if this governor signs off on the budget and the government came back with the budget amendments already right yes but the General Assembly overrode him and he's got 30 days to decide okay

I don't think he's said he's not going to give of the 28 million to us though.

[01:14:58] Bazzi, any public indication? - No, but he vetoed or amended the support cap piece, which is the bulk of the 28 million. 20 million of it, I think, was the support cap.

[01:15:14] And he pulled that down to seven or eight million, I think. He reduced it by 12 million. - Okay. - So, yeah. - So assuming we get the 28 million, we're at 175.

[01:15:29] So \$175, difference between that and \$190 is \$15 million or so. So I was really happy to hear that you said earlier that if you needed to find \$10 or \$20 million in a \$4 billion budget, you probably could.

[01:15:45] So has that happened in the past where you've had to find \$10 or \$20 million in a \$4 billion budget for other priorities in previous budget years? No. I mean, I've only been here seven years. the first five years we got essentially full funding for all of those years it's only this year that you know the number is really large compared to other years you but last year you proposed 300 million dollars we didn't get 300 million dollars extra last year right but last year god that seems like so long ago um i think we took two percent right off that i think we had to cut

[01:16:24] like 60 70 million but we took two percent right off the top and that so that provided about 60 million all right thank you miss marin okay so again i'm trying to get to like what are we doing and um here's where i'm at you know the facts of the matter are that the transfer amount that the county has provided has gone down percentage-wise over years and that chart is somewhere the county does not show an appetite for helping to figure out a solution for the problem that is a

[01:17:00] shortfall I don't I'm perplexed at why the county board is gambling with the best thing there is about this county and its economic engine so can we say that you know we need to have the same amount of transfer okay that's one thing is there something we can say about you know we did our bargaining and so that's got to stick just like they did theirs and any quips about well the school board didn't include the county board well we're our own authority and we could spend our money and bargain as we see fit and we welcome their help at this point now since

[01:17:32] we are where we are so the the wasted time and money that happens with some of our our projects and I guess I'm just distracted because I'm looking at this list of the crossing guards to be cut from high schools and Oakton High School is on this list and in 2022 three students were plowed down by a high school student with a learner's permit and now the county is proposing to remove the crossing guard that serves Oakton High School because quote this is the justification given only it's Fairfax is the only neighboring jurisdiction where crossing guards are placed at

[01:18:11] high schools that's the justification so I'm trying I say this because I'm trying to understand how do we try and partner when this is just so far from like what's really happening in our community and the responsibility that our school system carries how do we in the next few weeks I'm holding out hope until May 6th how do we get somewhere that funds the budget that our professional executive has proposed can

[01:18:41] we talk about that please I'd love to hear input Dr. Anderson okay thank you one of the questions that I had and this really kind of piggybacks on some of the things that Miss Marin has said is kind of asking for our position what is our intention clearly I'd like to think we had a hand and resurging the meals tax conversation and now that it's literally knocking on the door potentially becoming a becoming a reality I would love to get a better

[01:19:21] understanding and that part of the question is not for us just generally I'd like to get a better understanding of whether or not we could benefit in any way current conversations have not led me to believe that so I'm wondering this is the part that's for us what would be how collective position on that matter I would love to hear about that because I think there's a space for us to articulate some percentage some amount again not wanting to take the credit for bringing the conversation back up but we did have a substantial

[01:19:55] role in that so that's one just to make sure that i understand clearly the needs-based staffing that was also on page 16 that is primarily from title one funds correct or do we have that coming out of other of other funds no that's operating fund because the our staffing formulas our staffing standards for classroom teachers that elementary middle and high have a free and reduced factor that's weighted in

[01:20:33] so that schools with high levels of free and reduced receive additional classroom teachers. And that's in addition-- - That'd be as many as Title I schools per se, but there's still some-- - And that's in addition to the Title I schools that's separate from that. - Thank you.

[01:20:48] And my last question, just because I don't remember, and Mr. Smith not wanting to put you on the spot, but putting you on the spot. Can you just kind of share again, the FEU covers which employee roles? Because I know we had long discussions about parent liaison, so I remember that one, but what other roles does it cover for employee types?

[01:21:12] - Good evening, everyone. So FEU represents our licensed instructional employees as well as our operational employees. And I do remember the board having conversations around family liaisons. And so there are a portion of our family liaisons who are represented by FEU, and then there are a portion around 116, I believe, and Mr. Solomon helped me out with those numbers earlier tonight, who are hourly employees, and they are not represented by FEU.

[01:21:45] So that's the breakdown for those employees. - Thank you. Is that the same case for any other positions where we have people sitting in two buckets? I'd have to check on that and phone a friend, but I don't believe that we have any other category of employee.

[01:22:02] I think it's not so much categories of employees, but it's the wage bands and salary scales that we have. That's my understanding, Ms. Burden, that are both in FEU and in, I can't remember, Marty, the other name of the other.

[01:22:22] FCFPSA. PSA, and then the even non-represented group. I'm so sorry, I need for you to unpack that a little bit for me. Wage bans, I'm not following.

[01:22:38] Ms. Burton, please. Our salary scales. Yeah, our salary scales, if you look at the unions and what salary scale people are in, The FEU instructional has people in it that are on scale B and the teacher's scale, but the operational has people in it from the IA scale, instructional A, the A scale, the B scale, the C scale, the H scale, H scale is food services and transportation, and parent

[01:23:17] liaisons that are FTEs. And then you have the hourly group, which is the people that are on the hourly pay scale, they're not FTEs. They're not? They're not a full-time equivalent, like a 1.0 position in budget. Oh, I'm sorry, but you said they're not FTEs.

[01:23:33] So would those individuals be covered by FEU or not covered? The hourly people, no. Yes, hourly employees are not covered by FEU. Thank you. Ms. St. Junkun.

[01:23:49] So as we're talking about all of this, and I just want you to repeat for the general public, Dr. Reed, about the fact that the school division has been intentional in reducing costs over the past 10 years, and you had offered that information before, and I'm just asking you to repeat it because it's not as if those efforts haven't been made.

[01:24:13] - Thank you, Ms. St. John Cuning. Over the last decade, through cost avoidance and efficiencies, the school division has saved, I believe it's \$858 million over the last 10 years, over the last decade.

[01:24:32] - Mr. Moon. - Thinking about a And Mr. Don's question about finding 10 to \$50 million in order for us to be able to fully support 7%.

[01:24:49] If we did that, does that mean that other necessary, maybe it's not even necessary then at that point, other increases that are contained in our advertised budget will not be able to be supported, such as contractual increases, additional needs for special education.

[01:25:18] And I was just going through some of these, you know, transportation, food service, contract adjustments. There will seem to be quite a few items with increased cost expenditure that were being expected.

[01:25:35] And there was a part of the budget, advertised budget, the board passed back in February timeframe. asking whether it's not just 10 to 15 million dollars but they have to be frozen rather than being increased. I'm not understanding your question. I think what Mr. Moon's asking is going back to Mr. Dunn's question originally and I'm not sure that the transfer number was accurate in that question but I think the underlying question is if everything that the county transfers is

[01:26:12] used to just fund the feu contract and we have to still find more money because that won't be enough if it stays at the current level am i still tracking here yes yes you're correct and also there are additional expenditure increase that we were expecting and put into our advertised budget and and those increased expenditures would not be able to happen so i think to that scenario that we're speculating about if all of the monies transferred from the county and whatever other

[01:26:51] monies we would have to find the other 20 million i think was and that would all go to the feu contract then you're correct there would be no other funds to either pay any contractual increases or salary increases for any other staff member principals assistant principals et cetera, in the FCFPSA group or the non-represented group, as well as the contract adjustments you're looking at, Mr. Moon, we'd still likely have to go back to slide 18 and still make

[01:27:27] cuts, I think, to answer your question. Because we did have contractual increases, there is a cost escalation to certain expenditures that we have to budget for. And enrollment. - That's what Mr. Moon's talking about.

[01:27:44] I think he's got the summary of that. - Special education, I think that was twice. Special education. - And we're legally required to make those. - I'm gonna rethink the question I just asked, but just Mr. Dunn's question prompting me to start thinking about those items.

[01:28:00] So, thank you. - Okay, so we are going to a third round of go-backs, and so can we make sure that we're at two minutes, please? And, okay, Mr. Dunn.

[01:28:16] - Thank you. I know that, I appreciate the figure, \$858 million. I have not seen that in any Friday letters or public communications. I searched the website. I couldn't find it.

[01:28:32] Where can I find information? Where can the public find information about the \$858 million in cost avoidance that you referenced? Thank you, Mr. Dunn. It's been in several PowerPoints. So I know that it's a chart.

[01:28:47] And perhaps Ms. Burden has its current location. We can certainly include it in this Friday letter. That's a chart that we developed. But all of the items that have been reduced, efficiencies found, cost avoidance, those kinds of things are all detailed in every single approved budget document in the appendix.

[01:29:07] And it's probably 50, 60 pages. And there's a paragraph for every cut, the number of positions that were cut, number of dollars that were cut over the last I think it actually has more than 10 years in the appendix it goes back to 2009. but if I search on the website and I type in 858 million dollars that doesn't come up so is there is there so if it's in 50 or 60 pages of the budget is there somewhere where someone does them where it you know it's by year in the appendix it's by year

[01:29:42] So you could add up all 10 years, 2024, 2023, and it would equal the 850 that's the basis for that chart. Ms. Burden, I think what Mr. Dunn is asking, and I think it's a good idea, is for us to put that slide on the budget page by itself, right?

[01:30:00] So that people don't have to search for it and the explanation for it to be there. I think some of the really good work we've done has not been as transparent to our community. and I think putting that on the page with an explanation is what you're requesting we can do that that's exactly right yeah just I mean I've said before and I'll say again FCPS is a fantastic school system but historically has done a poor job of marketing the daily excellence of our schools and to the extent that FCPS has been achieving cost efficiencies year over year if I'm not aware

[01:30:35] of it I doubt anyone else in my community is um and you know to extend I can definitely dig through the budget but consolidating making easy to understand and referencing maybe supporting materials just like footnotes so if people you trust but verify I want to go and dig into the budget and just understand the pages and the citations so they can do the math on their own even though you make it easy for them I think that would build public trust and then help us to make the case that hey we deserve the bald rich award you know and which we're up for right um because we're making that case and 25 page submissions which I've read and are are good but

[01:31:14] but something simpler for those of us without a lot of free time and running around as a parent you know being a dad taxi or mom taxi at various soccer games or other athletic events um thank you Ms. Marin okay so I'm wondering could we have a statement that says can you know the school board asks that one a portion of the meals tax be dedicated to fcps ideally perhaps an amount matching the percent transfer we have not said that as a board publicly and remember in 2016 I believe it was 75 percent was going to go to the schools 70 so that's one ask can we agree

[01:31:54] to a statement that says we ask that a portion of the meals tax be dedicated to the schools the second thing that the proposed 7.7 million in county reductions not to be included in their budget the data the facts are is that february 18th the county executive presented the proposed budget the county did not yet have our request because we made it two days later so brian hill presented the proposed budget with

the money he already intended to give us on february 18th and then on february 20th our school board our school board approved the superintendent's proposal

[01:32:31] to send that over to the board of supervisors so it would really be i think a reparation of faith and a sign of continued collaboration if they not cut what we weren't even given the courtesy of knowing about in advance i think that's a pretty basic level of a working partnership and then finally you know i would like to put something in a statement that says we ask the super the board of supervisors to do whatever they can do to find the money on their side to fund our proposed budget because we have done the valuation work um we have seen the data

[01:33:09] about our central office costs about our place in the competitive salaries i have not seen that valuation from the county like i just looked at my fairfax park and rec magazine over the weekend and there's concerts all summer i love a free concert do we need to have them in nine locations this year? Maybe not. What's the data about who goes to those concerts? How often they are? Could we have a few central? There are things that are going to have to be cut and our teachers and staff are not on the chopping block. So again, I would love to hear people's thoughts about a statement that includes any one

[01:33:43] or all three of those things. Mr. Moon, did you have another? I was supposed to say something about mirrors, mirrors tax. Since, since I have a microphone, I may even venture to request a board of supervisors give us whatever the percentage that they think is the right percentage in terms of our transfer. That's a 51.5%. It's a 51 point, if it is a 51.5%,

[01:34:18] 51.5% of surplus at the end of the year. They are, yeah, they are surplus. You're in funding, Erin. Share with us. They used to share with us. Dr. Anderson. Just one question and I guess maybe this didn't dawn on me regarding the timetable as to when our budget was presented which was after.

[01:34:53] That is not normal practice. What is this what we've done every year where our present our budget is our proposed budget is completed after the county executive presents his budget.

[01:35:12] is that our normal practice or was this year some sort of anomaly it depends it depends i mean it's usually around the same time sometimes we're right after sometimes we're right before but either way they don't use you know the superintendent proposes her budget in january but they don't use our number for anything they use their number and we react to it so whether or not we know so pretty much what I think I'm hearing is once we have our proposed budget whatever is

[01:35:49] presented it's a material to what they're going to do true but you have to remember that last year they told us that they were going to give us 75 million and then by the time it was all said and done we got 90 million more but when did they do that did they what the reason why I'm asking is I'm trying to figure out the utility of us completing our budget in the time frame that we provided if it is in no way being utilized to inform what the county does and the reason why I'm asking this it's because I've been to be honest a little

[01:36:24] bit more than annoyed with the middle school after-school programming because the ripple effect of not having those individuals in place now has impacted VIP camp and so many other things that a reasonable person would think that a a conversation would have revealed some of those things and it would have been a more informed decision.

[01:36:49] But what I think I'm hearing is none of that matters. Is that what I'm hearing? Dr. Reed, jump in, please. - Well, I can't, again, I don't know what does or doesn't matter to the county board of supervisors

or county executive in terms of middle school after school activities.

[01:37:13] What I can say is you're accurate. that we found out about that recommendation when that budget was made public and not before. And I think that, Kevin, could you put up the county cut slide, please?

[01:37:31] I think it's very difficult because those programs were created for very specific reasons, and those reasons still exist today. The other piece I want the board to note the one two three four fifth line down actually also cancels the VIP camp program that was one of the board of supervisor that's one of the county budget decisions to cut and they the conversation has been very difficult to ascertain that it actually was cut right because there's some discussion

[01:38:09] that says we're going to provide the money and it's like but you aren't you you canceled it well and you canceled the collaboration with our staff to plan it in February I believe prior to even the budget coming out so it is a little bit hard to be honest when I think Miss Marin was talking about the partnership I do think we have some work to do to better partner because our students and families and staff are counting on that and ultimately our community expects it so two quick points I think the VIP camp has created a lot of chaos because we had it funded for this year but when you don't have the

[01:38:46] personnel to make it happen essentially it doesn't matter this you know would impact next year's budget having said that just moving forward I would love for us to get a better sense of what does that collaboration look like because it is something that is thrown around every table that I've been when we've had that joint when we have the joint discussions with the Board of Supervisors but clearly I think I could articulate something that I would like to to be a little bit more specific.

[01:39:14] So maybe in our list of asks that we really specify, what does that collaboration look like? So we can walk away feeling heard as part of the budget process, because as one of the people who they fund, it's important for us to have that space, because I'd like to think that's what we do here.

[01:39:32] When you're getting your budget, you talk to this department, that department, this other department to get a really good sense. I'd like to know that they're capturing our things as well in a manner in which it could actually have input into what they convey eventually.

[01:39:48] - Yes, ma'am, and I would also add that actually this year and last year we didn't go to the departments and say what would you like to spend. I think I've got our chiefs here. We said we're not going to initiate new programs other than those that connect directly to our strategic plan because we're gonna commit our resources to improving salary because we've honestly neglected that for several years and we have ground to make up.

[01:40:15] So we've really tried to stay laser focused on that. - Ms. Dixit.

[01:40:31] - I'm going to just continue this conversation about middle school after school programs and in our budget town hall, Ms. Liebertson, you were there too. There was a lot of students asking for it, advocating for it. And the supervisor Smith was just taking, she said, I'm gonna take the information discuss with other supervisors and and and make an informed decision so that was kind of nice that she was there to listen but then in one of the emails I read from the supervisor's office that they're actually being asked by the

[01:41:10] neighborhood program that the middle school after school programming should be cut the funding should be cut and the reason was cited is because now we have sports after school sports now after middle school after school sports program is very you know a few sports program it's not all as comprehensive as the middle school other programmings we offer in speech and debate and programming and robotics and so much so much more students have so many green you know projects so I don't know how that compared and what what was the

[01:41:47] why this reasoning was given so I I just wanted to share that with the community members that that middle school sports program does not equate to the after-school programming and supervisors are we are requesting them to reconsider this because it's affecting a lot of students who need this and as much as we are advocating for teachers we would like to advocate for our students and their families to are really counting on us thank you okay we are in our final

[01:42:26] round of go back so we're going to give everybody a minute because we're going to get staff out of here on time tonight so mr frisch thank you i just want to um kind of add on to what dr anderson was talking about with the middle school after school programs just for some clarity for people may not understand how the timing impacts that discussion as well dr reed can you talk about the timing that's required for the placement of staff for those programs and where that falls in the budget timeline, which precluded the school division from being able to hold off on that until budgets were finalized.

[01:43:02] Secondly, how finding an alternative way of funding, et cetera, is complicated by the fact that because we're in such a tight budget situation, we would have difficulty finding the money if a prediction of student enrollment in say a needs-based program did not bear out what we committed in funding.

[01:43:26] In other words, if it was a million dollars more than we anticipated, we'd have no money to pay for that. - Thank you, Mr. Frisch. Right now we really are in a very tight financial situation. Any which way you look, I think Mr. Moon, Mr. Dunn, each of you have raised issues.

[01:43:48] There are competing needs and we're not gonna be able to meet all of them if the transfer isn't fully funded. To the point around the middle school after school activities program, we have 26 full-time staff that that program on the county side funds.

[01:44:05] If we're not going to be able to receive those funds, which the county budget has stated, then we have a responsibility to those staff to give them time to select other positions while they're still open positions.

[01:44:21] A number of our 26 staff are actually long time Fairfax County employees and have rights back to positions that will then potentially create a domino effect because they would have a right back to a position that someone might be in today who then would have a right to a position.

[01:44:39] So it creates a division-wide domino effect which we can't wait till the first week in May to initiate because the school year ends in June. So as we reviewed the human resources timeline, we have to give those people that notice prior to a formal budget decision by the Board of Supervisors.

[01:44:59] Just as Brian Hill stated that a number of positions in the county that were cut or re, I don't know, rehomed isn't the right word, but a number of positions where staff were moved and the open positions closed, they stated they'd already been engaged in that work, which is the same work we're talking about.

[01:45:23] It can't wait 'til after May. - The question about funding for an alternative approach? - Oh, the idea that we're gonna find money to pay for the middle school after school program when we're really still looking at being able to fund collective bargaining agreements is not likely.

[01:45:44] - Ms. Sizemoreheiser. - Thank you, and I appreciate the conversation, and I'm glad that this conversation has come up around some of the additional funding that the county provides to things such as the middle school after-school programming, crossing guards, transition support personnel, and others to the tune of about 7.7 million, which is in addition to the funding request that Fairfax County public schools had.

[01:46:09] I think this is a great conversation about what can we do? Do we have a joint statement? How do we bring up, you know, specific ideas specific ways to have better collaboration along the way so we don't get to this point where we are putting out a budget perhaps after the other budget we're proving a budget after um the county's budget is approved and i think that's really to we need to start a project plan for the budget process in the summer to really help educate our community about the importance of the schools the realities of our budget um i think the years of fully funding

[01:46:47] budgets have sort of made everybody sort of used to that's what it's going to be so i would say that starting next year's process we need to start much earlier with sort of a plan um around how to lift up what our needs are so i know my time is up i'll stop there yes mary okay so for a statement so far the input i've heard is a portion of the meals tax we dedicated to fcps um and then relatedly the surplus could also be dedicated um proportionally to the transfer rate which also then could even lead to us just having a set percentage rate who

[01:47:20] knows but anyway um the proposed 7.7 million reduction from the county goes back in um and i want to also say i mean i've seen communications from the county talking about some sliding scale being proposed that is not that is not happening that's been tried in the past and it didn't work and again we're trying to pay teachers so again so a statement that says portion of the meals tax we dedicated the 7.7 million in reductions not remain in their budget a surplus we could talk about that as well i can't wait to start collaborating better i don't think we have the time right now to do that but we could certainly put that in the letter here but can we somehow get

[01:47:58] some consensus on this i'd be happy to to draft a letter for everyone but this would be an action step this doesn't get at the big 150 million piece but at least it gets us a little bit of of something to defend what we are charged with defending.

[01:48:22] - Ms. Marin, I think there's maybe hesitancy to sign onto something that's not yet written, but I think we could probably nail down something in the next 24 hours that we could turn into a letter and get out to the Board of Supervisors. Happy to partner with you and the budget team on that. And then we can go from there.

[01:48:37] We can ask colleagues to provide comments and feedback like we do on other statements. Is that something you're open to? All right, well, consider your phone lighting up tomorrow for me. And obviously board members will chime in on various elements of it in that process.

[01:48:54] It'll give them more time to think about those things as well. - Just 30 seconds. Ms. Anderson, thank you so much. As far as sharing with surplus funding is concerned, school board used to use the funding for one-time purposes.

[01:49:13] Could it be a major maintenance? Could it be a playground? Something like that, that we are able to do it. and then when somebody left the chair's position and somebody else came in, that stopped.

[01:49:33] - Ms. Sizemore-Hizer, do you have your hand up again? - Yeah, just very quickly, I wanted to comment on Ms. Marin and Mr. Frisch's statement about the joint statement. I'm happy to help coordinate that as well. And I'm happy to reach out to Ms. Marin and Mr. Frisch. It's just part of the budget team here.

[01:49:49] I'm happy to do that. So I'll be reaching out to you both tomorrow. - I will make sure staff has teed up to review any data or provide any data that you request. - And with that, this meeting of the budget committee is adjourned as of 8:30 exactly PM.



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