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Fairfax County School Board Budget Committee of the Whole, Tuesday, September 8, 2026

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRCsBpX6YRI>
- Official School Board page (FCPS): <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board>

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[00:00:22] - Good morning, everyone. Hope you all had a great Labor Day weekend. The September 8th, 2026 public meeting will be, work session will be, oh, it's a public meeting. Work will be called at the order at 10:35 a.m.

[00:00:41] We will now discuss FY 2028 budget priorities. I call on Dr. Reed for a presentation.

[00:01:02] - Thank you, Dr. Anderson. So, no? - Miss Dixon. - Miss Dixon, thank you, Miss Dixon. sorry it must be Tuesday so it's my pleasure this morning to have our chief finance officer Lee burden and our executive director of office of budget services Matthew Norton share a budget update really at the request of miss Dixon and mr. moon our budget board team and we're very excited also just to well

[00:01:37] miss Alice this year we are want to congratulate Matthew on his promotion to executive director and yeah so miss Burton and mr. Norton have a short presentation and then I know the board wants to have a conversation a bit about priorities it's early in the budget season but it's never too early to talk about budget so miss Burton good morning we're referring to this as the FY 28 budget kickoff because as dr. Reed indicated it is extremely early for us

[00:02:15] to be able to have numbers we don't have enrollment yet we don't have you know number of factors that we will develop over the next couple of months but here's what we know so far we intend to

use this time to briefly kind of set the table for the coming budget season by discussing the fiscal environment in the timeline and but leaving most of the hour for your discussion about priorities so major milestones for the fiscal 28 budget development for FCPS are highlighted on the horizontal timeline and the fiscal forecast is on November the 10th that's when we officially I guess kick off the fiscal 28 budget

[00:02:54] development process of course the superintendent proposes her budget in January in February the school board will adopt that budget with or without amendments and then the county does its budget markup in the budget final budget is adopted in May and also it's probably worth mentioning that section 22.1 - 9 to the Virginia code mandates that it's the duty of the superintendent to prepare a budget with the estimate of the amount of money deemed to be needed to support the school division and that's commonly referred to as a needs

[00:03:32] based budget major milestones from the county our largest funder are detailed on this timeline at the culmination of last year's budget process the county provided guidance to agencies and the school division and at the joint forecast this coming December we will learn more about the county's revenue outlook that will be followed by the county executive advertising his budget in February including a recommended transfer for school operations all of this will culminate with the Board of Supervisors finalizing their budget in May well before the school in April actually late April before the school board amends the

[00:04:10] budget in May and you can see as you can see in the chart below the timeline generally there's been minimal changes between what the county executive steps out with and what we eventually get at the end of April when they do their appropriation and you should know that the guidance in the fiscal 26 carryover indicated that in advance in advance of next year's budget ended in recognition the fiscal environment the Board of Supervisors urged urged the school board and the superintendent to engage in a process to identify cost savings

[00:04:46] efficiencies and reduction opportunities at FCPS we're proud of our efficient operations as indicated from the data by the regional Washington area boards of education guide our ratio of a leadership team and management positions is the lowest in the region and our cost per pupil regularly ranks in the middle of the region indicating good value for our world-class school system additionally a ranking is in the middle of the region when it comes to class

[00:05:19] sizes and that's indicative of balanced and responsible staffing the salary comparison for beginning teachers with a master's for fiscal 27 we ranked third in the metropolitan area we are standing drop from second to third in beginning salaries this year mostly because I think Loudon jumped up above us by doing an additional increase at their beginning salaries we're just a little bit behind but we we do rank third now out of the the metropolitan

[00:05:54] jurisdictions early indications suggest that fiscal 28 will be a difficult budget year and the county has suggested as much of course in their budget guidance if you add inflationary pressures instability in Washington energy demands and being the second year the state biennium where we always get less funding than in the first year and you have a recipe for its insufficient revenue in the face of rising costs as indicated in this graph the percentage of county disbursements for schools has eroded from 52.8 percent in fiscal 20 to

[00:06:31] 51.1 percent in fiscal 27 the cumulative shift in funding over this period resulted of an erosion of nearly 340 million dollars with a nearly a hundred million in fiscal 27 alone average compensation

increases each of the last five years are detailed for both county and schools it's worth mentioning that the county began its collective bargaining journey with the fiscal 25 budget and we began in fiscal 26 both of us had additional bargaining

[00:07:07] units come online in fiscal 27 I also want to call your attention to the average fire and rescue uniformed was 7% over these five years sheriff 6.7% police uniform 9% DPSC uniformed 9.1% and general County employees 5.2% compared to our average for the FEA 5.9% the FEA operational piece 5.9% the PSA

[00:07:41] principal supervisors and administrators 5.7% and the hourly band 5.6% the two most recent FCPS budgets included combined reductions and cost avoidance is in excess of 270 million the cost avoidance in fiscal 26 relates to the reopening of the collective bargaining agreement while fiscal 27 cost avoidance is related to leveraging alter alternate major maintenance funding by the county specific reductions are detailed in each of our budget documents should reminders be needed while reductions have been required in each of the last two budgets

[00:08:21] indications suggest that 50 to fiscal 28 will more closely resemble fiscal 26 fiscal 26 was the more difficult of the two budget years as far as reductions go that required 36 million more in reductions our fiscal forecast meeting on November 10th will provide the board with a more comprehensive estimate of the fiscal picture but we are expecting that the county transfer and state funding increased revenue will be less than what it costs us for our collective bargaining agreement health care retirement contractual multi-year investments and the special education

[00:08:57] extended day the list above is not intended to recommend any specific reductions but rather contextualize the magnitude of any deficit we have began initiating central office reductions for this budget season and will evaluate all recommendations as part of our budget process and these are just some metrics that you you know might might need in your day-to-day work as school board members 1% MSA would save approximately thirty two point six million we could reduced needs-based staffing a 1% would be would save 1 million 2% 2 million etc

[00:09:36] class sizes you know nobody wants to do that nobody wants to do any of these things but there will have to be things that are considered increasing class size by one student saves approximately 35 million and again as part of the fiscal 28 budget development we have already asked central office to prepare 5% reduction options you know we we pride ourselves on exceeding the state standards of quality but we may need to reduce to state levels in some areas if the deficit is as large as we are expecting it to be this concludes our budget kickoff and we look forward to the school board's discussion on

[00:10:14] priorities thank you miss burden at this time I now invite board members to ask any clarifying questions or provide comments and I see first dr. Anderson thank you can you set the context a little bit miss Dixon in terms of what is it that you're wanting from us for this part of the meeting that's only a half hour yeah so basically this is you know when you had a meeting with this burden mr. moon and I we thought of bringing this budget discussion to the tire board starting early and listen to board members for their board their

[00:10:53] budget priorities and then also seeing what the fiscal forecast and this is not a fiscal forecast is pre pre fiscal forecast so we just wanted to bring the numbers and what is coming so that we can make everybody aware as a board and then we can have a discussion about it and do we have beyond the 30 minutes or this is fixed yes miss lady so as chair I worked with the clerks because if we had if this ended early we would have to wait to start our next topic so we put an end time as 30 minutes but we planned an

hour oh okay thank you I just wanted to make sure all right I have a number of questions and thank you for this

[00:11:32] information on slide four the note at the bottom that says over the past four years there's been minimal changes now this is a new activity before the past four years what has occurred in terms of what has been proposed versus the actual appropriation I would have to get that for you I didn't bring earlier years to see what what the difference was between the county advertising the county adopt I'm not looking for the exact number I'm just looking for the

[00:12:05] general theme I don't know I'm gonna have to get back with you okay because noted here so I imagine you had some comparative information in order to identify what's happened over the past four years we'll look right now it won't take us long to okay also I can't remember the slide number but there's one where okay no this is FY 27 the approved the advertise is 99.2 the

[00:12:42] adopted is 98.8 I think typically we would look for it to increase and not decrease can you speak to that please I would have to go back and look at fiscal 27 why they adopted an amount that was slightly larger or slightly less than what the county executive approved I mean it's a difference of you know 0.4 million yeah they according to Matthew they changed the items that they were

[00:13:17] shifting to us slightly so if you recall in their process there were a number of items that they were shifting related to middle school after school programs in the VIP program so there was a slight shift there okay thank you so the last I think slide that you have here in terms of hypothetical reductions how are we how are you all I guess dr. Reed looking for us to be responsive to this slide

[00:13:56] are you looking for us to put stake in the ground today or is this general so my understanding is that the board members working on budget this year miss Dixit and mr. moon wanted to start the conversation earlier about what the possible scenarios could look like if the current resource efforts are that we're predicting occur so I think miss burden and mr. Norton provided some options there are obviously many more I think we're really hoping to hear from

[00:14:33] you this morning which options you'd like us to cost and how you would like us to proceed this is a much earlier conversation around this but I think that given the current budget horizon it's appropriate that we have that but I'm not recommending any decisions today other than getting clarity on the priorities the board has for our team to go back and cost thank you well I think there's some dollar amounts that that have already been indicated and rather than you know saying go look at this I'd like for something to not be a

[00:15:09] consideration which is the million dollar savings for needs-based staffing that's not a savings that's going to end up costing us way more in the long run given our students so I just want to put my stake in the ground for that needs based adjustment to be preserved and to not be part of the cut list if we end up getting to that position I think dr. Anderson that the what miss burden was indicating is there some factors that a 1% for every 1% adjustment the board

[00:15:45] might want to make in that content area it would be a million dollars I don't think it was a limit of or a suggestion to but more so if you will we're trying to give the board some I guess factors that they would look at if that was a topic they wanted to explore more deeply okay I'd like to go back to slides five and six in your analysis miss burden are you seeing some sort of correlation between the cost per pupil and class sizes across the way be

[00:16:24] schools well yes I mean in the sense that you know we know that Prince William has not had the financial difficulties for that we have had for a whole bunch of reasons you know tech centers they have revenue sources they're in a revenue sharing agreement but one of the but even before both of those things Prince William tended to have seem to have more money to spend than we have to spend and that is because their class sizes exceed the class sizes in

[00:17:04] the metropolitan area because if you are the things that cost a lot with school divisions k-12 very labor-intensive is salaries and class size so you're saying Prince William even with all of the extra revenue they have from data centers etc they're electing to have higher class sizes in order to achieve other things that's right okay because I think I was looking for a different correlation but I didn't find that do you also have any analysis of I guess Prince William maybe in that conversation as well in terms of the LCI of these

[00:17:37] different jurisdictions and class sizes well the LCI definitely Loudon and Prince William's local composite index is is better than ours as far as what they have to bring forward based on you know the components of the LCI and we're the same as Arlington and no I think Arlington's like at point a for LCI they're at the cap okay they just seem to have the I think some of the lowest class sizes and the highest per pupil I'm wondering in my last seven seconds how do we fare with school divisions that are similarly sized as us

[00:18:17] in terms of cost per pupil and class sizes that's a curiosity because we're so much bigger than everybody else on this chart right I mean we certainly you know there's we certainly achieve some economies of scale that the other divisions may that may not be available to them because we're so much larger I can't you know we would have to do an analysis of cost per pupil but when you move outside your state then people calculate things differently it's not necessarily going to be an apples to apples comparison but I can tell you that you know New York City's is over \$30,000 compared to ours at you know

[00:18:56] twenty thousand some twenty one thousand nine eighty six right at twenty two thousand and their class sizes are I don't know what their class sizes are but you know the whole point of speaking about our efficiencies is you know we are often characterized as being very generous with air spending here at FCPS and that is absolutely demonstrably false if we were over here being very generous with air funding then we would have the lowest class size we would have the highest salaries we would have the highest cost per pupil and none of that

[00:19:34] is true we rank in the middle with most of these things and that is a testament to air efficiency and how we are doing a good job here at Fairfax County Public Schools. Thank you. I feel like I'm being reprimanded. Did I ask a question? Like, I don't think I was leading that. I'd like to go back, too. Thank you. Sure, Ms.

[00:19:55] Merritt. Thank you, Ms. Burden, and welcome Mr. Norton. Can we pull up slides nine and then ten, please? I'd like to really understand this. So this has been a topic of you know tension for quite some time my understanding is that some jurisdictions will set a standard percentage this way every year it's known we all do our work and there's not a lot of heartache in Fairfax County what we've done is this annual dance turned debacle about how much the county is

[00:20:32] going to transfer the revenue it has to the school division because again we don't have purse strings to collect taxes so when we look at this I mean the difference of you know almost a percent and a half a little bit more than that doesn't seem like a lot but we know that that is millions and millions of

dollars and the public has been seeing this so I think this is a fantastic show of data that you know can have us be saying if the superintendent is budgeting on the past annual actions changing the percentage every year doesn't allow her to do her job effectively and then it sends everyone into a tailspin and we really don't need that it's sound efficient and it's it's It's very stressful.

[00:21:11] If you could go to slide 10, please, Ms. Clerk. Again, this is a chart that's been seen before. Now with collective bargaining, though, our tails are really on the line to make sure we honor the collective bargaining agreements. And so, again, having to constantly justify why we need to pay our people, this is a great chart that I think shows that.

[00:21:32] And I look forward to really analyzing that even further. What I want to focus on is I will renew my request for more purposeful and productive partnership with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors by our school board and between the two executives, our superintendent, Dr. Reed, and the county executive, Brian Hill.

[00:21:50] I do want to review the steps that this school board has taken to promote better collaboration and clarity. This school board sent a letter by the full board on April 24, 2025, with specific requests for collaboration and reinstatement of reductions.

[00:22:08] The school board received no official response from budget chairman Jeff McKay to that April 24, 2025 letter, in writing or verbally. One of the things in there literally states that we seek to engage in a more collaborative process, and the current method of budgeting has worn out its effectiveness, and a new way forward must be forged if Fairfax is to be financially healthy for the future.

[00:22:30] Again, that outreach was ignored by Jeff McKay. Further, that letter said, please, county supervisors, restore the proposed reductions, which included the middle school after school programs and the high school crossing guards. One thing I'd like to propose is a proclamation that we have done in the past on the board that states our priorities.

[00:22:51] And if I could finish this point, I think we need to ask for honesty about what the county is funding, because we know that last year the middle school after school programs was cut from their side of the house and put into our transfer, dropping our total transfer amount asked for and here we are with crossing guards and I see from the email from Mr. Brian Hill to Dr. Reed that he's saying something like we should talk about how we are going to split the cost of the crossing guards not 400,000 as the board matter says it says 200,000 in writing from a Brian Hill we have to put a stop to that thank you for the extra time thank you miss Marin miss

[00:23:28] lady thank you thank you miss burden Mr. Norman so Mr. Norton I want to go to slide six because this creates it's so much angst in me wait slide six maybe I got the wrong slide it's the per classroom size oh yeah that's six okay so here's my concern the fine print is students per classroom teacher not students per class so folks need to understand this because we have bulging

[00:24:04] classes I mean I have at McLean lots of core classes over 30 I have first grade classrooms at 29 I have we're bulging and so what folks need to understand so I don't like this data point is because folks look at this and think that's the average kids in a room and it's not it's the average students in the school per classroom teacher so I just think we need to revise the slide and make it clear and in the why to this is because we have instructional folks who are behavior specialists who are specials teachers who are and so they don't have

[00:24:43] the class all the time and people need to understand this is just we have an SBIT we have other certified educators in a building who are tapped to the max I'm not I'm not in saying at all they are not tapped out they are tapped out because of all the special needs of our student population so I just might recommend that this is to students per classroom I just needs to revise the language because I have a lot of constituents who point this out to me and it's very hard to articulate what that issue is so that was one thing and

[00:25:17] then I just want to elevate slide 9 again so the the erosion that's happening is I mean 330 almost 340 million dollars that the the Board of supervisors has like they gained the 340 million since 2020 and we didn't and then if you look at slide 10 at the CBA we know why because of what what was bargained from their bargaining units which were higher percentage than our bargaining units and they have the ability to pull the purse strings and

[00:25:54] honor their their agreements so I just want to put that out there and then you know the scary thing about slide 13 is the cuts because you talk about the the biggest saver is classroom size but to add a student doesn't change it to 26 because that's a misleading data point it changes it to 32 or 33 and we have situations right now if teacher if a high school teacher has over 150 students on their roster they get paid an AT contract so we're paying one of my schools has 12 of these AT contracts because they can't keep

[00:26:31] their average class size under 150 I mean under 30 so that they're under the 150 thank you thank you miss lady miss st. John gunning well first of all thank you to staff for bringing this and thank you also to our budget chair and vice chair for bringing this on early because I think we've often been accused of waiting too long and I really appreciate that we're going to have time to look at this and looking at this slide is what really concerns me it's interesting that two of my colleagues have brought up the two things that I highlighted is from this slide in terms of the reduction on need-based staffing

[00:27:11] and class size because I in my district - I'm getting tons of letters from why our class size is so big and we're not even talking about what could happen in the future if you can just for the general public explain what needs based staffing is so that people can understand what that kind of a reduction and who that would impact yes so here here at FCPS we use the FRM rate of the school to enhance the number of staff positions that are allocated to a school

[00:27:49] it includes mostly just classroom teacher positions schools obviously have the flexibility to use some of those extra teacher positions to in a variety of ways to help enhance delivery of instruction we also even allocate assistant principals using a smaller needs based factor so there's there's a variety of extra resources that go to schools with basically higher frm rates can you please say what frm is oh sorry frm is free and reduced price meals okay so thank you so we're talking about some of our more marginalized students I have

[00:28:25] primarily no I've primarily worked in title one schools and these students and families are amazing they're resilient they're willing to come to school they're willing to work but there definitely are barriers and needs that some of these students and families are confronting that the schools have to address so that our students can access the incredible instruction that we provide so this is something that's very concerning to me which then also leads into the class size because the class size would also be impacting all of our

[00:29:00] schools and if you have an increase in class size particularly in schools where there are high need students then we're just going to see a cascade of issues that are in the long run not just going to cost

the school system more but I believe our society at large more so I think it's important that we look at this closely now again I think our budget team chairs and vice chair for bringing this to us so that we can start having conversations so that the public can weigh in so that our teachers and staff can weigh in and I would love

[00:29:38] to get the numbers of how many students are in those classes and and really desegregate that data because as one of my colleagues pointed out there are experts there are behavior specialists there are different people in there that are put into that equation that are really not in the class at all times and that's not painting the true picture thank you mr. Godfish thank you can we

[00:30:12] go to slide six please so I think one of the reasons that we're looking at this data is because this is how we can compare it apples to apples miss burden is that right yes and to miss the chair lady lady's point I'm curious if we're capable of getting granular with surrounding jurisdictions data in the way that we are with our own so that we could compare the number of students in

[00:30:47] a classroom to the number of students in a classroom elsewhere is that something that we have access to okay so this is by classroom teacher not by students in classroom with a teacher right and so if that's the case are we capable of getting the same apples to apples comparison with surrounding jurisdictions for students in a classroom with a teacher so that we're not necessarily counting towards the average other licensed professionals who I'm trying to check right now I think this is just classroom teachers we do

[00:31:26] two requests for data from the surrounding divisions one is a all teachers whether you're a classroom teacher or not resource teachers you know certified experts you know all teachers and then there is a classroom teacher and this represents classroom teachers so it doesn't have all of those others in it but of course it's an average so you know we need to see maybe a bell graph or something that shows a propensity of classroom sizes

[00:32:01] right the median yeah so I'd be interested in having a little bit more other ways to visually represent the data so that we have a clearer picture if that's possible in comparison to other school systems yeah we'll take a look at it thank you can we go to slide 13 so in terms of I try not to have

[00:32:31] non-starters but if there are things that I am far more likely to resist it would be reductions to the MSA and reductions to need-based staffing we can't solve the problems with our budget on the backs of our collective bargaining agreement and perhaps with the next round of bargaining coming up we can revisit how we come to those agreements in collaboration with our

[00:33:06] county partners but this is not a place that I would like to see us finding savings because at the end of the day it's not savings it's it's a denial of bargained compensation and that's not something I'd vote for on the needs based staffing question dr. Anderson's right I mean this is people who need it the most and also it's not that big of a savings right and I do want to talk a little bit about central office budgets as we've said repeatedly in budget conversations and I think mistakes that has circulated this information on email

[00:33:42] as well our budget chair mistakes it we continue to be the most central office efficient school division in the region with the lowest ratio of central office staffing is that really my time did we get a lower than three minutes time or am I just that wordy today okay I'm gonna finish my question if that's okay I'd like to know obviously this would further cement our status as more efficient because of the cuts

but given our work around Baldrige I assume that the superintendent is not saying a 5% across the board everywhere cut it's that

[00:34:21] Department programs would bring you suggested cuts for their programs and you would decide what the most efficacious Grouping of cuts would be to propose to the board. Well, the 5% cuts We would count on each chief in charge of their department to bring the 5% cuts that they felt they could I Mean I that they could sustain I we've continued to cut year over year. I don't know that there will be 5% That won't have an impact. I mean, it's gonna have an everything up. There's gonna have an impact

[00:34:57] my point is that five percent here is going to be could be potentially more negatively impactful than five percent there and that would be on you to judge what collection of cuts you end up proposing to us based on that assessment.

[00:35:14] Yes sir that's correct. All right I appreciate it. Thank you. Mr. Dannon? Thank you. I'm gonna skip ahead my questions and just build off of what my colleague was asking. So I recognize sometimes when you ask each department to identify that five percent sometimes it's Maybe not the most efficient five percent. So can you speak to has there been a review of program changes just to see strategically?

[00:35:42] What programs are offering Obviously the most valuable maybe keeping in most in line with our strategic plan and so forth to look at it from that perspective versus across the board That'll all be part of the conversation. This is early days. I think we just sent that guidance out Last week and it within the last two weeks. So certainly that'll be part of the conversation Okay, and I'm sorry. I mean when would these options be presented to the board miss Burton?

[00:36:13] Typically superintendents proposed budget You know again, we have to balance that off with her code requirement to present a needs-based budget But you can see by the chart that shows what the county executive steps out with and what we eventually get essentially the same number and so that basically means we need to start the conversation now that we cannot wait to see what the county executive might propose because there's not any at least in these four years that we looked at

[00:36:49] there's not really much of a change between what he steps out with so the conversation about what we might reduce or what we might do needs to start much earlier. You're setting me up well. I want to thank my colleague Ms. Dixit and Mr.

[00:37:06] Moon for starting this conversation early again this year. I think that really helped avoid what we saw a few years ago and it gives us time to have those thoughtful conversations with our counterparts. So I know the state budget was really overdue this year. Can you provide just a brief overview of the state funds that we actually received and how they compare to the previous years? For fiscal 20, well I don't know why I'm asking fiscal 27 or 28 either way I don't have that detail with me so but which for fiscal to the biennium budget is for fiscal 27 and fiscal 28 in fiscal 27 I think we

[00:37:44] ended up getting 70 million more of which you know then there was the late adoption and we got another 30 million but 10 million of that was for the bonus that we use to offset our reductions and in addition to that we so we're gonna carry that over to help support the next year and the next year I think we're expected to get an additional 40 million it's a much lesser number than the first year of the biennium I appreciate is there any update on the progress towards the JLARC recommendations or have you heard anything

[00:38:20] lately I have to ask we well we all keep talking about it but there's not been much movement on it I think the state's grappling with some other difficult issues yeah okay for slide nine do you have something or can you share afterwards maybe what the enrollment numbers are for each of those years and how those compared to that transfer amount that would help I think provide a little more context and I know you all have done some really good work in recent years I know that the joint IT committee was one of those can you speak to that a little bit and how much we saved through that work or how much

[00:38:56] we plan to save through the joint IT committee with the county I don't believe we've been able to put a number to savings from that joint committee yet I know we've provided the notes for each of the meetings but I don't I haven't seen that we've realized a budget savings based on those recommendations or outcomes I'm eternally hopeful are there there other areas like that where we could be having conversations with our counterparts on the Board of supervisors where opportunities for shared services and things like that I think it's a target rich environment and any area that you might name we could

[00:39:33] certainly have a conversation with our counterparts about okay we're going to CBA again I want to echo my colleagues point that that's something that you know if we made these agreements I think we really need to stick to them there's a CBA set the pay increase for fiscal year 28 it does and the increase it's last year the CBA and it is step increases which range between two and two and a half percent depending where you are on the salary schedules and the MSA is three percent so in general about five point five percent and the price tag on

[00:40:08] that is about 180 million dollars okay and I just want to clarify to that when we bargained a three-year agreement we didn't anticipate the percentage of revenue going down over the third year so I think a slide we're going to work to create is how the bargaining agreement would have sat within what had been a previously anticipated percent of revenue but right now given the current 51.1 percent that I think puts our ability to meet that CBA requirement in

[00:40:47] a bit of jeopardy at this point and that's what miss burden is sharing Appreciate that and to that extent to it I really would love to see as much as we can engaging with the the county board as a funder as we enter into those negotiations right and I heard a lot of feedback from some supervisors that you know having paying for these things they should be a have a seat at the table in some fashion right so that we can know what to expect and not making something making agreements without being able to come be confident we can fund it right so and again I'm happy to help have conversations with my counterpart going back to fiscal year 27 what percentage of the budget was spent on health care

[00:41:24] and retirement expenses and do we expect that to trend in any specific direction yeah I mean health care costs are going up nationally double digits we would expect ours to be the same just so you know we are self-funded which is the most efficient way to manage a health care program and so basically the premiums just cover the claims and so as claims go up premiums go up but that's and it's not just Fairfax that's the county's experiencing the same thing as my understanding nationally we're seeing the same thing so we would expect those

[00:42:02] costs to go up as well okay last set of questions just around that the Baldrige review process which we keep hearing about can you clarify but does this encompass both the budget formulation and budget execution and I should say to I recognize we've we've received some recognition for this I just want to understand more if that framework covers both ends of the budget I believe it does it more so looks at

allocation of resources and outcomes as well and just want to remind our board in our community that may be watching that we

[00:42:40] are the ninth largest division in the country and as we looked at in particular our student body I know that we also educate one-fourth of our multilingual children in the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as recently we have over 70,000 of our students qualifying for free and reduced lunch or free and reduced meals I think as Matthew pointed out and we had more on track and distinguished schools in Fairfax County than the rest of the Commonwealth of Virginia so the outcomes that we're seeing really illustrate the laser-like focus we have

[00:43:17] with the resources we do receive so part of the Baldrige work is matching that allocation of resources to outcomes and both efficiently planning and managing the ongoing budget appreciate it and the last thing I'll just put a plug in for it to that end is I would love to still have to see the recommendations from that where we can continue to do better so thank you very much thank you mr.

[00:43:42] Dunn and miss Anderson I just have a few things that I want to say here first I want us to be very careful when we're talking about county transfers as a locked in things that other counties have because talking with many of the school board chairs over the last year that is that is at risk in lots of counties so that is being questioned in a number of places that it's already being done or revenues being excluded from the county transfer so it is the same it's the same situation that we are in in a lot of ways if we could go to slide 10 I do want to bring back the issue of us comparing our staff to the

[00:44:21] staff in the county these are all noble professions these are all people that are required to provide services for our for our area they have very different tasks and it is not an apples to apples comparison we don't know where their pay stood in comparison to other jurisdictions at the time that this all started we have lots of circumstances so I'm never going to say that we shouldn't adequately pay our staff and I want to make sure that we defend our collective bargaining agreement the same way the rest of the board does but this is a dangerous path to take because we don't want to necessarily compare our

[00:44:57] staff to the county staff and so and pitting our noble professions against each other is not an effective way to govern so I am NOT a fan I think that this is great for informational purposes but I don't want it to be necessarily a comparison the last thing I'll say is for slide 9 do we know what's happened with county revenue during this time because I think that this is an important picture of the circumstance that we find ourselves in but I do want to know what's happening with the overall county funding as well so if we

[00:45:35] if you guys could get back to to the rest of us I think that mr. Dan's question about how our cost per person or you know how many people's we have during this time is helpful too I just would like us to look at it in terms of how this is working along with the rest of the county transfers and the rest of the county revenue during this time so I would appreciate it thank you we have that information with us yeah so from FY 2020 the county's adopted

[00:46:12] budget was four billion four hundred and sixty six million dollars and by FY 27 their adopted budget was five billion nine hundred and sixty three million dollars so it's been about a 1.5 billion dollar increase I think what I would say is obviously the pie as far as the amount of dollars that the county has at its disposal has grown that's simple to say and then when we talk about this shared declining it doesn't mean that the amount of funding that the school system has is declining but it is a lower share of that pie as it has grown

[00:46:50] that is coming to schools from my perspective when we are talking within and I've started talking to some folks related to just things that are going on in the county and the the suggestion that we're receiving less money is I understand why we're doing this but it is it can be seen as dangerous when when you're talking about folks that are being taxed at a much higher rate when we're still complaining like and look I understand why we are I just want us to be careful on the wording that we're using with this when we're talking about it because the people who are paying the taxes don't feel it and so I want to

[00:47:27] make sure that we are I've also explained to many people that no matter how well we're funded we're going to find other things that we need money for because that's the way education works there are new initiatives there are things that we want to do with kids that are effective there is always going to be an opportunity for us to ask for an increase so I just want to keep all of that in mind. Thank You Ms. Anderson, Vice Chair, Budget Vice Chair Mr. Moon.

[00:47:55] Thank you Chairman Dixit, you know first of all I want to thank you know Chairman, Chairman Dixit and Dr. Reed and finance staff agreeing to have this conversation earlier to start earlier that I will always consider a in addition to hiring a superintendent which really happens once number of years that you know working on the budget is the most important thing that a school board does

[00:48:27] and that's that budget work has to be 12 months a year it's not it's not from February to February to the May time frame so once you adopt the budget for one year the next day the following fiscal year's budget work begins the next day so I'm really glad to see that my board members taking on interest and appreciating having this opportunity to start the conversation much earlier and I hope that since we are going to be presenting our fiscal forecast in

[00:49:04] November which has to be you know based upon a superintendent's best projection of revenue versus best projection of needs-based expenditures. For her to be able to come up with that, I think board needs to provide her our input, whether individually or collectively, that has to take place.

[00:49:30] In order for us to be able to do that, also community engagement has to take place, because after all, we are representing the community, And we are trying to reflect where the community stands on these. So I'm hoping that with this September's kickoff, that we'll have a more frequent conversation on the budget going forward.

[00:49:54] That is for the chair and vice versa consideration to put this conversation on the future world calendar. You know, with that said, as far as some of the specific items that are shown on the slides are concerned, and I agree with my colleagues about honoring CBA, then if we did that, if we did that, we'd have to have potential areas of cuts.

[00:50:31] We cannot wait until again February of next year after, or even worse, in the worst case, April, when a county board of supervisors gives their markup and realize, know that now really we're gonna have to make a big, huge adjustments, huge adjustments, we cannot wait that long.

[00:50:59] So we wanna have, next time we have this work session, we wanna have that conversation, how we should guide this community engagement, how to prepare for our serve and the county board of supervisors so that when they deliver it on their budget, when their county executive comes up with his own proposal budget, they should reflect our conversation, our input as well.

[00:51:29] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Moon. Mr. McDaniel? I read a-- I saw a quote on social media a couple of weeks ago that I really think was fitting for this conversation. Tell me your values, and then show

me your budget, and I'll tell you what your values are.

[00:51:48] Fairfax County values public education. I want to make that very clear. Despite what that downward trend shows in the percentage, the County Board of Supervisors has given us a billion dollars extra in that same timeline. So I want to make it very clear because I think the implication is the opposite, and that's certainly not true.

[00:52:08] You know, in terms of priorities, my top priority is very simple, the in-classroom experience of our 177,000 students. That's a very nebulous thing to say, but in my opinion, the backbone of that priority is fully funding our collective bargaining agreements.

[00:52:25] That was a historic agreement. I think it was fair, and we owe it to our workers. We owe it to our community to fully fund that. Now, that's going to inherently mean, to Mr. Moon's point, that if that's the benchmark and we start working our way down the priority list, things are going to inevitably fall off that priority list.

[00:52:42] And I do agree that we have to have community engagement, and we have to get ahead of that early. And that takes partnership not just with our own stakeholders, but with the Board of Supervisors and their stakeholders as well because to Ms. Anderson's point, these are all noble professions, whether it's a teacher or a police officer or an espet or a social worker or someone in our custodians or the plan reviewers trying to get buildings built.

[00:53:06] these are all things that have to be done in Fairfax County so I want to get very clear to the public and those watching at home that everybody in Fairfax County is on the same page in terms of our priorities because the budget of the county shows that their top priority is public education thank you thank you Miss McDaniel I'll take a turn and we'll go for go backs and I think we'll keep it to two minutes we only two to go back so so today we are starting our budget development process we're starting earlier because the financial challenges before us are substantial FCPS absorbed as an average

[00:53:45] of approximately 135 million of annually in reductions and cost avoidance over the last two budget cycles at the same time school division must meet its compensation commitment address rising health care and retirement cost maintain manageable class sizes and protect the services our students rely on this discussion is not about deciding specific directions right now it is basically to understand board priorities and what the consequences will be of different funding levels so we can give a direction to mr. dr. Reed to propose the develop the proposed budget I want to be transparent the

[00:54:24] information here is for the community and all our stakeholders to kind of see where we are at it is not to you know say somebody's not doing the job and not giving us money it is simply the fact of the matter where we stand and I'm a small business owner I'm an employer and my horizon my small company the rise of healthcare cost is 59% for next year so and FCPS can bargain much more than me I as a you know as a large division but it is a real issue it's all over the country if you can ask any employer they'll sell the same thing also I agree

[00:55:02] the five percent does not will work out the from the central office for every division I was looking at actually dr. King and I was and mr. Seti division size very different right like you know obviously your budgets are different too so I would just we you know be mindful about not cutting anything important which is crucial especially in our you know our important departments which really keep our

con our county and our school systems safeguards and with all the attacks happening especially in our cybersecurity world and at the end I

[00:55:40] would just say that I would like to hear what your top priorities are if we can do a maybe a consensus today or we could go and do a survey and we would like to get your feedback on that as well so thank you and I'll go to go back dr. Anderson I agree with the statements that have been made because this is a conversation we've had for a long time since Megan McLaughlin has been on the board but I think with the advent of collective bargaining it really makes it irrelevant at this point because each of these entities are bargaining separately

[00:56:18] So I'm not sure I still continue to see the utility of that slide. We kind of lost the window, I believe, several years ago. What I did not notice on the last slide, I think it's 13, I know that we make significant investments into pre-K, and for the most part, we don't have any funding for that.

[00:56:39] And again, this is another space where there's an investment early to avoid what's happening down the line in a few years. but I wonder how come this is it's not part of what's on the list here I believe this was a starting point that was developed with mr. moon miss Dixit and the budget offices input to start the conversation I think there are a number of other things that could be added to this chart that weren't this is a starting point later further I'm sorry you're looking for us to populate it further I believe miss Dixit shared that it would be great to get the board's

[00:57:18] input on the priorities because that'll be important as we work forward to develop the budget okay thank you and I think just kind of moving forward I can save the rest of my questions for another conversation two things I slide the slide that has the master scale slide 7 I ask this all of the time I know that we have most of our teachers with a master scale but I think it's important to offer the same information with those that do not have a master's and maybe where we

[00:57:56] fall because i know there's a difference between starting and beginning and middle career so if we're going to provide the information let's be as comprehensive as possible um again masters non-masters beginning middle and end i think that comparison will be helpful and lastly we're in a space where we are really going to need to have information be provided to us for us to make a decision and I raise this because I still have two outstanding budget questions from last year I'm not going to be at a space where I'm going to be able to prove it a budget with outstanding budget questions so I'd like to have a little bit more fidelity to the priority of the budget questions

[00:58:36] being responded to in a timely manner because I'm looking at 428 and 624 not answered thank you miss Marin yeah I'd appreciate my colleagues help in sussing through some information so you know as stated the the Board of Supervisors ignored our request to save just under two million dollars in order to keep the crossing guards there so when school started and a student was hit by a car at South Lakes which was dreaded but expected unbudgeted costs

[00:59:12] have been incurred and I'd like to share what I've seen and understand what we could be doing better so the crossing guard who was a police department employee was removed from her assignment, which she'd had for 20 years. One reason for the cut that I'm aware of to crossing guards is that there aren't enough uniformed police officers to conduct crossing guard duties and also respond to the emergencies and other public safety needs.

[00:59:34] We have an excellent police force in Fairfax County, and like our FCPS employees, they can only do so much. But on the seventh day of school, after the student was hit, I was there, and I observed an ambulance and one police car. So those were unbudgeted, or they were removed from those other duties that apparently the police needed to respond to those other emergencies.

[00:59:54] The lack of a crossing guard created an emergency. Then in the afternoon, the crossing guard was returned for the afternoon. She was paid. So the money came from somewhere, although not budgeted for. So that's some emergency payment of some kind. The following day, uniformed police officers were assigned to high schools where the crossing guards had been removed.

[01:00:14] Now, this is confusing to me because, again, If our officers are stretched thin, and that's the argument made in May, why are they now assigned to these high schools? And why aren't the crossing guards back? Understanding that crossing guards aren't full time employees, I don't understand why the county is paying for police officers to do crossing guard duties when surely it's less expensive to have those crossing guards back.

[01:00:39] So the public is asking, where are these crossing guards? They're not there. So again, if the county wants to tell us they need to corral their services for some reason of budget savings it's just not clear how it's shaking out and I'd love any further help understanding that thank you I think this is the end of our session for this budget discussion and I think we'll take a five minutes recess to get to our next like a routine work session



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