

Principles of an Alternative FCPS Budget

1. FCPS should make a minimum 10% cut to administrative overhead first before cutting popular programs or increasing class size

In the past six years, FCPS enrollment has increased nearly 5% while FCPS Administrative spending has increased nearly 29%. Despite FCPS' claims, growth has not been proportional to spending increases.

The public wants to move forward in partnership with FCPS on the budget, but FCPS administration must share more of the pain first. Dr. Dale has proposed cutting many of the programs that make Fairfax County Public Schools the best in the nation. Rather than cutting these programs, the FCPS Administration needs to share more of the pain before asking the public to advocate for more funds from the Board of Supervisors.

FCPS' claims on proposed Administration cuts are misleading. FCPS central administration cuts have been 15% over the past two years - 5% in 2009 and 10% in 2010. Add in the proposed 5% for 2011 and that is how the Superintendent is publicly claiming 20% over three years. Importantly, Dale's proposed 5% central administration cuts simply bring central staffing figures down to roughly FY04 levels.

Furthermore, the 5% proposed cut a 5% cut to the number of central staff positions – not a 5% cut in FCPS actual dollars budgeted.

Close examination of Dr. Dale's proposal further reveals that proposed cuts are actually less than the 5% Dr. Dale claims because most of the central staff office positions being eliminated are lower-paid employees. Of the 70 central staff positions the Superintendent has identified for elimination, over 1/3 are blue collar workers who keep our schools repaired - not the six-figure paid, middle managers whose impact on the classroom is of dubious value.

2. This issue is about spending priorities

The Superintendent's Operating Expenses budget, which does not include salaries, has seen inexplicable and enormous growth:

FY 2008: \$2.4 million

FY 2009: \$5.3 million

FY 2010: \$4.1 million

Many elementary classrooms are already at the tipping point with over 33 students per class. FCPS needs to RE-SIZE not SUPER-SIZE classes. Parents and teachers want resources focused on teachers and the classrooms first.

Dr. Dale has proposed cutting indoor winter track, which serves nearly 3000 students and would be an almost cost-neutral program once the proposed \$100/per student participation fees are implemented. Why is a nearly cost-neutral program that serves so

many students on the chopping block?

The Superintendent is taking a chain saw to the programs parents and taxpayers want - sports, languages, music, full-day kindergarten. This isn't selective pruning. Dale is taking down the entire tree and threatening FCPS' reputation.

3. A lean regime is possible at FCPS Headquarters

FCPS Central Administration has 2000 employees in 11 departments whose salaries and benefits account for \$400 million of the \$2.2 billion budget.

- Cutting just 10% of these central staffers would save FCPS \$40 million.
- Cutting 15% of these central staffers would save FCPS \$60 million.
- FCPS has more assistant principals than surrounding school districts.
- We have a communications department with 11 dedicated communications personnel. Contrast that number with the fact that each of our own US Senators has just two communications people to our entire state.
- Our instruction services department has hundreds of staffers that teachers say have limited to no impact on the classroom.
- FCPS has twice as many assistant principals as Virginia accreditation standards require.

4. FCPS comparisons to neighboring school districts no longer apply

FCPS officials say we are in line neighboring school districts for administration/student ratios. In fact, we have more assistant principals than surrounding jurisdictions. Furthermore, we really can't continue to compare apples to apples with Montgomery County. We're facing a \$176 million budget gap. Montgomery County is not.

5. Fight for the LCI

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and FCPS School Board are rightfully advocating for the state to recalculate the Local Composite Index (LCI), as was scheduled, so that Fairfax County receives the \$61 million it is owed. Obtaining these funds will significantly reduce the FCPS budget gap. Furthermore, Fairfax County is affected, to a greater extent than the rest of the state, by factors including high special ed and immigrant/ESOL populations whose needs strain resources. Historically, Fairfax County has argued that the LCI formula should be revised to consider these factors. We ask Governor McDonnell and the state to take these factors into account when making their decision.

6. FCPS must develop a long-term budget strategy

A recent survey conducted for FCPS by the District Management Council demonstrated that stakeholders are concerned about FCPS' spending priorities and the public wasn't pleased with how officials resolved last year's budget. At a time when the

Superintendent was claiming budget difficulties, Dale actively pursued spending \$130 million for a second building to house FCPS Administrators – a plan later voted down by the Board of Supervisors due to public outcry and a poorly prepared FCPS business case.

The process and strategy adopted by this Superintendent of pitting programs and parent groups against each other is also ineffective. The public wants a transparent plan that demonstrates sound fiscal leadership and lays out expectations, spending projections and obligations for the following year.