

Verbal Testimony on Draft Approved FY09 FCPS Budget
Presented at FCSB Hearing on May 14, 2008 by Dr. Charles Dane,
Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (Federation)

Good evening. These comments are presented on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations.

We appreciate the work of the Superintendent and the School Board in continuing to make the difficult budget choices while maintaining the essential programs necessary for continuing Fairfax County's excellent public education system.

We especially appreciate the effort that the County's Board of Supervisors has made in providing a reasonable transfer amount to the public schools under such severe budgetary conditions.

Now, it is the School Board's role to ensure that these funds are used to maintain the important programs for students of all academic abilities. Our recommendations are based on an estimated \$30M difference between funds available and the advertised budget, although we understand that there may have been some additional costs identified as well as some additional funds from the State.

We have presented several recommended reductions in our written testimony. Now, we wish to focus on agreements and differences with the Superintendent's draft approved budget. The Federation membership in their resolution on the County's proposed budget opposed any new programs or expansion of existing ones. Consequently, we are strong in our belief that no all-day kindergarten or FLES programs should be added to any additional schools in the coming fiscal year, and I believe that this is in agreement with the draft approved budget. However, we differ on the distribution of funds between the COLA amounts and the class size increases, albeit a very difficult choice. Thus, we recommend a further increase of one half student per class, and an increase in the COLA amount for teachers and staff to 2.5% with the additional caveats that some allowance be made for those teachers and staff that are not scheduled to receive

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a step increase in the coming fiscal year, as well as those receiving minimal step increases in their first couple of years.

Finally, we believe that the administrators are better financially positioned to absorb only the recommended 2% COLA increase.

In looking ahead to fiscal year 2010, we have included 4 recommendations in our written testimony, especially asking the school board to strongly consider the realignment of administrative, academic programs, and transportation on the basis of the present or modified Consortia arrangement

If the school board makes these difficult reductions and undertakes visible efforts to identify other areas for savings, the Federation is prepared to work with the board and the administration to raise the public's awareness of the need for adequate funding for next fiscal year.

Thank you for this opportunity.