

November 6, 2007

Fairfax County Public Schools

# Bond

## Referendum

# Facts



Fairfax County, Virginia



**Bond**

**Referendum**



## Who Uses Our Schools?

Students and citizens alike use Fairfax County schools. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) works with the Fairfax County Office of Community and Recreation Services and with the Park Authority to ensure that school facilities and athletic fields are available to the public after school hours. The following are examples of how our buildings are used.

### Students

During the school year, approximately 164,000 students use FCPS facilities daily for academic and extracurricular activities.

### Community

Most of the meeting places available in the county are FCPS facilities. In many cases, these facilities are provided free of charge to organizations such as homeowners associations, 4-H, scouting groups, county employee organizations, and cultural and civic groups. In addition:

- FCPS Office of Food and Nutrition Services provides more than 172,068 senior citizen meals annually at 38 school sites.
- 159 schools are used as polling places for general elections.
- 133 schools serve as sites for Fairfax County's School Age Child Care program.
- More than 4,000 applications to use school facilities were processed for FY 2007.

### Recreation

The Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services is the largest "outside" user of FCPS facilities. The result is an outstanding recreation program at minimum cost to Fairfax County taxpayers. For example:

- Last year, more than 300,000 individuals participated in recreation activities—the vast majority using FCPS facilities.
- Community groups used 242 school gymnasium courts during FY 2007 for recreational basketball, volleyball, and other indoor activities.
- 532 school athletic fields, representing 62 percent of all the fields available in the county, were used in last year's recreation program.
- Eight schools were used as teen centers during the school year.

**Park Authority**

More than 30,900 citizens attended classes, camps, and Rec-PAC programs run by the Park Authority in FCPS last year.

**Religious and Cultural Organizations**

95 religious and cultural organizations used FCPS facilities for regularly scheduled activities in FY 2007.

**Adult and Community Education**

Enrollment in FCPS Office of Adult and Community Education classes totaled 77,084 last year.

**What Is Included?****School Board Approved 2007 School Bond Referendum****New Construction: \$ 65,000,000**

## New Elementary Schools:

Laurel Hill site	\$ 22,000,000
Lacey site (Falls Church-Annandale)	\$ 23,000,000

## Elementary School Modulars:

TBD (12 rooms)	\$ 3,500,000
Rose Hill (10 rooms)	\$ 3,000,000
White Oaks (10 rooms)	\$ 3,000,000
Braddock (10 rooms)	\$ 3,000,000

## Elementary Additions:

Hybla Valley	\$ 7,500,000
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**Renovation \$ 160,800,000**

## Elementary Schools:

Beech Tree	\$ 15,300,000
Stenwood	\$ 15,100,000
Westlawn	\$ 20,000,000
Franconia	\$ 18,500,000
Oakton	\$ 21,900,000
Lake Anne	\$ 19,200,000
Clifton (additional planning)	\$ 1,000,000
Canterbury Woods (additional planning)	\$ 1,000,000

## Middle and High Schools:

Longfellow Middle School	\$ 40,800,000
Marshall High School (additional planning)	\$ 3,000,000
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (planning)	\$ 5,000,000

**Program Support** **\$ 18,500,000**

Pimmit Alternative High Adult Education	\$ 7,500,000
West County Adult Education Center (planning)	\$ 1,000,000
Full-Day Kindergarten	\$ 4,000,000
High Schools of the Future	\$ 6,000,000

**Infrastructure Management** **\$ 29,750,000**

Technology Network Upgrades	\$ 2,000,000
Americans With Disabilities Act Improvements	\$ 750,000
Roof Replacements	\$ 10,000,000
HVAC Replacement	\$ 14,000,000
Asphalt Paving	\$ 3,000,000

**Inflation Adjustment for Prior Bond Projects** **\$ 38,600,000**

Completion of 15 previously funded  
bond projects

**Bus Service Facility** **\$ 50,000,000**

Cooperative project with Fairfax County  
government, not counted against FCPS  
annual \$155 million capital improvement  
spending

**Project Subtotal Cost** **\$ 362,650,000****Bond Cost** **\$ 2,550,000****REFERENDUM TOTAL** **\$ 365,200,000**



## How Were Projects Selected?

Each year, the School Board and staff members, working with the community, develop an updated five-year capital improvement program (CIP) for schools. This document becomes part of the county's CIP. The school system's CIP assesses changes in expected enrollments, the Program of Studies, and facility conditions to determine priorities for new construction, renovations, and other capital facility projects. The School Board then evaluates the affordability of these school needs against other countywide requirements to determine how many of the highest priority school projects should be included in the bond proposal.

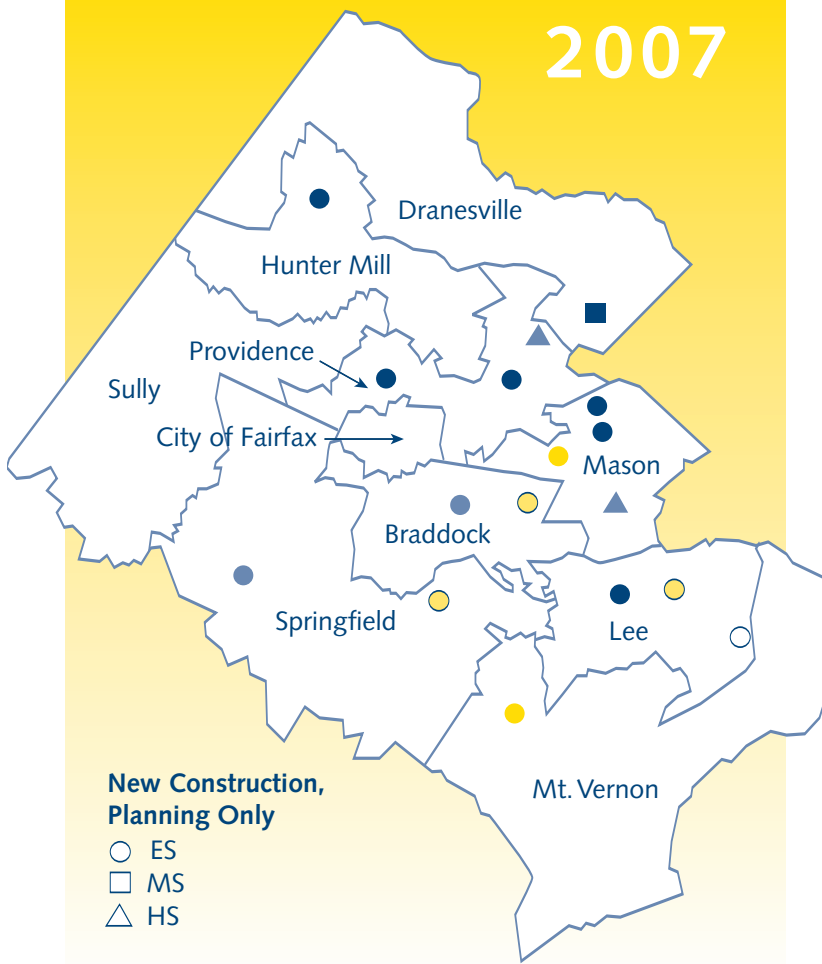


## Why Are Bonds Needed?

The building and renovation of schools are not financed through the school system's operating funds, but through bonds. The sale of municipal bonds is a form of long-term borrowing that spreads the cost of major capital improvements over the years the facilities are used. This method of financing ensures that both current and future users help pay for the improvements. Similarly, individuals obtain mortgages on their residences to spread the major costs of home buying over a number of years. Financing these improvements with current operating funds instead of bonds would take much-needed resources away from instructional programs. The law requires that voters approve bonds since they are a future obligation for taxpayers. If approved, these bonds will probably be sold to large investment banking syndicates that will have competitively bid for them. These syndicates sell bonds to other financial institutions, which then sell to individuals and to group investors.

# Bond Referendum

2007



**New Construction,  
Planning Only**

- ES
- MS
- △ HS

**Renovations,  
Planning Only**

- ES
- MS
- ▲ HS

**New Modulars**

- ES
- MS
- ▲ HS

**New Construction**

- ES
- MS
- ▲ HS

**New Renovations**

- ES
- MS
- ▲ HS

**KEY:** ES = elementary school MS = middle school HS = high school



## How Will Passage Affect Your Tax Rate and the County's Bond Rating?

Of the nation's more than 3,034 counties, Fairfax is among only 22 that have the highest credit rating possible for a local government: Aaa from Moody's Investors Service, AAA from Standard & Poor's, and an AAA rating from Fitch Investors Service. Because of these ratings, Fairfax County's bonds always sell at exceptionally low interest rates.

If approved, the bonds will be sold when needed to meet cash requirements for projects included in this referendum. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors controls all county bond sales within financial guidelines drawn to ensure that the coveted triple-A bond ratings are not jeopardized. The Board of Supervisors' financial guidelines provide that the annual cost of the county's debt service (principal and interest payments) be no greater than ten percent of annual combined general fund disbursements. The Board of Supervisors also maintains the county's net long-term debt at, or below, three percent of the total market value of taxable property in the county. As long as debt service costs do not increase significantly as a percentage of combined general fund disbursements, the county's bonded debt will not be a contributing factor to any increase in local taxes.



## Why Add More Classrooms and Modular Units?

Increases in the number of children born to county residents have resulted in a significant and nearly steady enrollment growth at the kindergarten level since 1985, with subsequent corresponding increases in enrollments at all levels. Construction money is included in the bond for new elementary schools at the Laurel Hill site in southern Fairfax County and at the Lacey Center site in the Falls Church-Annandale area. Four modular additions are planned: at Rose Hill, White Oaks, and Braddock Elementary Schools and at another location to be determined. Modular units are factory-built structures that include conventional-size classrooms that meet the current educational specifications and are wired and equipped to accommodate technology requirements. They can be installed in half the time and realize a 50 to 60 percent cost savings over conventional structures.



## Why Renovate Our Schools?

The School Board is committed to protecting its investment in schools and other buildings that have a combined present value approaching \$4.5 billion. Not only do these facilities wear out over time, but they also become outdated, both technologically and instructionally. Thus FCPS needs to renovate its schools to ensure that students, countywide, have effective and efficient learning environments. Fairfax County public schools are expected to be usable for 20 to 25 years from the date of construction. Renovations undertaken at the end of that period extend the useful service life of the school building another 20 years. Renovations also help to relieve crowding by providing spaces for required small-group and specialized instruction. These activities must otherwise occupy conventional classrooms, reducing the working capacities of existing schools.

Examples of the other improvements completed in renovations include: upgrading basic systems such as heating, air conditioning, lighting, and plumbing; remodeling media centers; upgrading science and technology laboratories; refurbishing general classrooms; upgrading wiring for cable television and computers; and providing upgraded furnishings and equipment, where appropriate. Schools are renovated in a sequence determined by published rankings of priority need. These priorities are established by independent professional assessments of each school's physical condition. The 2007 school bond referendum proposes construction funding for the renovation of six elementary schools and one middle school.



## Why Include Funding for Planning?

The 2007 school bond referendum includes planning money for four school renovations. Preplanning will position FCPS to rapidly move ahead with construction of new schools and renovations when funding becomes available. Putting funds for project planning into one bond issue and actual construction money into a later bond issue allows timely implementation of the projects without committing the county's bonding authority for construction costs earlier than necessary. Some projects need added time for land acquisition; other projects may require complicated construction designs or lengthy government approval procedures. With preplanning, such complicated projects can be completed earlier than they otherwise would have been had planning and construction been authorized concurrently.



## What Will the Infrastructure Component Accomplish for Schools?

Upgrading technology networking infrastructure in Fairfax County schools continues to be critical to enable information sharing, instructional delivery, and administrative support for student learning both in the classroom and beyond. The use of the Internet for student research and communication continues to grow exponentially and is an essential element of the instructional program. Improving the wireless infrastructure will allow schools to take full advantage of this emerging technology. Growth in computer availability and use by students and teachers, along with new federal and state-mandated programs for reporting and online assessment, has created new requirements for infrastructure and electrical upgrades to our networks.



## Are There Other Requirements?

The life cycles of some major building systems (e.g., selected roofing components and heating and air conditioning plants) are shorter than the 20 to 25 years expected of their host facilities. The School Board's commitment to protect the school system's investments in these buildings requires a separate capital program to sustain this infrastructure. These additional needs have also been addressed in this bond referendum proposal. The proposal also provides for improvements required by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

The cost of providing staff members to maintain quality control over contractor work on all projects funded by this bond proposal is included in their bonded costs. The estimated expense related to underwriting and issuing bonds is reflected in the bond referendum total as well.



### Inflation Adjustment for Prior Bond Projects:

The rapid escalation of construction costs has resulted in the need for additional funding to complete 15 projects approved in previous bonds. The 2007 school bond referendum proposes funding of approximately \$38.6 million for the completion of these projects.



### Special Programs:

FCPS has undertaken several special program initiatives, such as full-day kindergarten and high schools of the future, that will enhance educational opportunities for FCPS students. This bond referendum proposes funding of \$18.5 million that will be used to provide capacity or facility modifications to accommodate these programs. Included in this amount is funding to support an addition to Pimmit Alternative High School and planning for a West County Adult Education Center.



### Bus Garage:

Renovation of the Newington Maintenance Facility updates a 1964 facility that has had three additions. The current facility is approximately 60,000 square feet with 37 usable repair and inspection bays. The renovated facility will be approximately 88,400 square feet with 41 usable bays. The proposed renovations will increase the size of each bay to accommodate the larger size of today's school buses and provide more efficient workspaces for mechanics. The facility maintains a total of 1,823 vehicles, primarily school buses and other school vehicles, as well as a mixture of light, medium, and heavy county vehicles. Also, the renovation will provide for increased school bus parking and electrical hookups for faster starting of diesel engines.



### How Do I Find Out More About the Bond Referendum?

To find out more about the bond referendum, you may go to the Fairfax County Public Schools web site at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) or call the FCPS Office of Community Relations at 571-423-1200.

## Fairfax County School Board

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**Kathy L. Smith**  
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**Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner**  
Providence District

**Janet S. Oleszek**  
Member At Large

**Jane K. Strauss**  
Dranesville District

**Judith (Tessie) Wilson**  
Braddock District

**James Rosenquist**  
Student Representative

## Voting Details

The school bond referendum will be on the general election ballot Tuesday, November 6, 2007. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Residents of Fairfax County may vote if they are 18 years of age or older on Election Day and have registered to vote 29 days prior to the election (by October 8, 2007, at 5 p.m.). For further information about registering or voting, call **703-222-0776**.