

**Superintendent's Community Advisory Council
Minutes
Meeting May 1, 2007**

Todd Rowley opened the meeting and called on Superintendent Dale for updates.

Dale said the School Board members have been working to identify their linkages with community members, focusing on "key communicators." In this context, they are looking at SCAC and a few other groups.

Dale noted that FCPS has many different connections with Virginia Tech, so the recent shootings there have particularly affected FCPS. He mentioned the memorial ceremony for killed and wounded FCPS graduates the previous Friday and noted that students, through the Student Government Association, had suggested most of the elements in the ceremony, which had been put together by his chief of staff, Christine Donohue.

On the budget, he noted that county revenues are down and that the Board of Supervisors had no additional money for schools. He had asked the teachers whether they preferred more money for teachers with master's degrees or for beginning teachers with bachelor's degrees; they recommended more money for holders of master's degrees but were split on this. Without the support of the Board of Supervisors, it would have been difficult to provide any salary enhancements.

On SOL testing of students just learning English, Dale said that the state provided additional clarity on what "giving a test" means, which allows FCPS to humanely test these students. At the meeting called by the U.S. Department of Education, they had a list of technical assistance possibilities. Dale said that Virginia school divisions' concern with this issue has provided great visibility to the issue. However, he has tried to pull together several national education organizations to agree on a framework for lobbying for changes in the NCLB but has so far been unsuccessful. The actual progress of early language learners in learning English needs more reporting and publicity, and FCPS will work to make this happen.

Dale mentioned that Ann Monday, assistant superintendent for the Instructional Services Department, will be retiring from that position and taking the job of superintendent of the Fairfax City Public Schools.

Charlie Dane asked whether the new practice for testing students just learning English would increase the number of FCPS schools not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) under federal law. Dale said it would, but that that increase would also be affected by the fact that the percentage of students in a

school who must "pass" tests is increased every year.

Jennifer Van Perris asked about the SELP test that the USDOE had allowed to be given to these students in past years. Dale said it or its equivalent is still used to test English language acquisition. Van Perris said that level 3 LEP students do not want to take this test. Dale said its use is required by federal law.

Nell Hurley said that too many movies are shown during class time and that not enough families use the V-chip in their television sets. Hurley asked about possible changes in high school start times and how that would affect rush hour. Dale said he was working to free up staff members to develop new start time models to take to the public.

Ellie Ashford asked if the Langley High School construction schedule had been moved up. Dale said that additional bond-selling authority had made it possible to move up this project. Ashford asked if this could be a "green" project; Dale said this would cost more.

Dick Reed said that a good topic for SCAC discussion next year would be "twice exceptional" students (both GT and special education). He said that the community needs to have all costs of transportation options (for example, time on the bus) in order to provide input on various options. He said that every high school that offers AP courses ought to list all AP courses for which the Advanced Placement organization offers exams so that parents can see what might be available even though a particular school does not offer all the possible courses. Some of these courses could be offered online. Bill Oehrlein said that his school sends parents a list of all AP courses offered in FCPS schools.

Dale said that the Leadership Team is now looking at five "consortia" of high schools to implement his "high schools of the future" initiative, which could make it possible to do what Oehrlein described within each consortium. Dale said he would like to see entrepreneurial creation of new courses within consortia.

Hurley said that the Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee found large differences in the ways that schools support particular classes.

Dale said he would like to see more courses on international relations.

Ray Worley said that there are many American-born students who are limited-English-proficient. He said this shows that parents need to be trained. He asked about the theoretical framework for USDOE requiring all early language learners to take the regular SOL exams. Dale said that he had asked them this question, and they had no answer.

Ann Rodrigues said art needs to be integrated into instruction in other areas. She said the Arts Council wants to visit individual School Board members to push this

approach. Dale said schools are actually adding fine arts programs because of the school day structure.

Joseph Bury asked about the cost of teaching students in the ESOL program, which he thought was one and one half to two times the cost of educating regular students, mostly because of the smaller class sizes needed for teaching these students. He asked for the total costs for educating ESOL and special education students.

Rowley asked about the time line for the boundary process involving the Oakton, Chantilly, and South Lakes pyramids. Dale said it would be next fall. He said he would get more details out on this soon.

Andrea Sobel said the parent liaison at Annandale High School has redefined what a parent liaison does. She said we need to have more liaisons who speak more languages and who work better with parents. Rich Moniuszko, deputy superintendent, will be meeting with the liaisons to discuss this.

Emeka Ezdinmo said he had read the Post article about the SOL testing issue and wondered why FCPS backed down. He also said that some parents of students just learning English do not want testing differentiated. Dale said that FCPS decided to accommodate the federal demand on testing because the clarification of the Virginia DOE's definition of giving a test allowed FCPS to do so humanely.

Luke Chung said that the elementary school practice of half-day Mondays caused problems for parents. He suggested moving the early closing to Friday or having the half day of planning time on Monday morning instead of Monday afternoon. He also said that while most software prices have gone down over the years, educational software prices have remained high.

Johnie Miles said that instruction in health and physical education needs to do more about childhood obesity, which she said is increasing. She also said that, though diversity among students was increasing, diversity among teachers is not. Dale said that FCPS employee diversity has increased slightly, but that Asian and Hispanics are still underrepresented among employees.

Toby Sorensen asked if the curriculum for full-day kindergarten had brought up test scores in schools that have full-day kindergarten. She said there needs to be more rigor in language arts instruction. She said teachers needed training in how to use Smart boards. She asked if eighth grade algebra was harder than ninth grade algebra. She said a better transition needed to be made between elementary school and middle school.

Brenda Greene said there needs to be more visibility of the wellness issue; we

need to involve parents. Physical activities beyond physical education classes need to be emphasized. She said SCAC needs to be briefed on where FCPS is on the wellness issue, including staff wellness.

Rick Baumgartner said it was good that Dale had taken on the issue of working conditions. He said that time is the key issue here. He hopes that the "organized abandonment" committee reduces the tasks employees have. He said that we need to take another look at the 1986 elementary school study. He said that the salary structure needs to be looked at, with the possibility of fewer steps, more money sooner, and incentives. He said that external issues, like affordable housing, need to be considered.

Giving his personal views, Baumgartner prefers a longer school year and day--a 12-month year.

Bury said student mental health could be a topic. Dale said that Columbine was a wake-up call on this. He also said that students should identify things they see as wrong.