

# **Business and Community Advisory Council**

## **October 22, 2008**

### **Welcome**

Andrea Sobel opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and by introducing the newly appointed Vice Chair, Kahan Dhillon. She also invited all to send her any ideas or topics for discussion or possible speakers for future meetings.

Roundtable introductions began with Superintendent, Jack Dale.

### **Superintendent Update**

The purchase of the Gatehouse II Administration Building has been denied by the Board of Supervisors. FCPS will re-evaluate the options for distribution of space. With the changes in the economy and real estate market, FCPS will conduct a new analysis of the real estate market. They will take a look at the business model. A new process may mean more bidders. With the recent budget cuts, FCPS will re-evaluate the price cuts and continues to dialogue work with the School Board and Board of Supervisors. The current schedule is for Devonshire, and Lacey Center to vacate their properties by summer 2008. This would allow Graham Road Elementary School students to move into Devonshire.

There is still question as to where to move the personnel from Devonshire and Lacey. A suggestion was made to make space available in Gatehouse I but is not possible due to large number of personnel.

### **Budget**

There have been several community meetings throughout Fairfax County asking for input and feedback. There will be an evaluation of all factors to project the fiscal forecast. Currently there is a \$200 million deficit. Due to the drop in the stock market, people are not spending as much as before, and as a result, the sales tax shortfall is increasing. School enrollment is growing due to several factors. There is a rise in the number of students who are leaving private schools and enrolling in public schools. There were an additional 8,000 students coming into FCPS and only 6,500 leaving the county.

By cutting the cost of living increases, FCPS can save \$34 million. Currently, 85% of the budget is people. There may a need for a reduction in FCPS staff. Principals have been tasked to evaluate school staff and determine what reductions can be made by October 31.

Question: What will be done if taxes are raised?

Question: What is the cost of unfunded mandates?

Principals may need to address the PTA to decide how to keep money more evenly distributed and focus on the districts that are in more financial danger of providing services and programs to the students.

### **Susan Quinn - Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Food Services**

Susan Quinn addressed the topics of equitable distribution of resources to schools and the impacts of increased number of families living in poverty. The number of students in need of free or reduced meals (FRL) has increased at a rapid rate. There is a larger percentage of children at the ES and MS level on free or reduced meals than that of HS level. This is due in part to the fact that HS students do not want others to know that they may be of lower income or poverty level.

Remark was made that the FRL program is in need of more support. The allocation of funds for FRL is based on the ratio of the number of students in need of the program and the total student population per school. The number of HS students who utilize the program is significantly lower.

Schools which qualify as Title I schools are federally funded and supports additional staff and programs. There are currently five schools funded through 2014.

There are eight HS with special needs and services including ESOL and FRL. Other factors which are affected are schools that are on the modified school calendar. The intersession activities also are in need of additional financial support.

Some programs are funded by outside grants "Neediest kids" is given a \$20,000 grant and "Equal opportunities" is given a grant of \$200,000. Title I funding is between \$16 and \$17 million dollars.

Question: How do funds for special needs and GT factor into the ES?

Answer: The staffing would remain the same for GT program. Special needs funds are driven by the Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and are based on individual necessities. These needs vary from year to year.

Question: What are the sizes of the grants?

Answer: Equal opportunity - \$200,000  
Neediest Kids - \$20,000

Title I funding is between \$16 and \$17 million. Highest level of poverty is cut off at 40%.

Question: How do you identify qualified families?

Answer: The family needs to apply.

This enables the schools to re-direct funds to where they are needed the most. Standards of quality would be re-evaluated. Title I money does not change quickly and is based on the percentage of poverty though out the count. It is estimated that 5% of the total county population are children in poverty.

Question: FLES staffing is an additional expense. Transportation for the GT students is an added expense.

Question: How many students qualify for the GT program or is it a straight ratio?

Question: How is the cost for IEP determined?

Answer: Based on the level of needs per child as physical disabilities, speech, learning disabilities etc.

With the rising number of homeless students it has been determined that the originating county must provide transportation to the home school even if child has moved to another county. This drives up transportation expense by about \$5 million. How do we balance what is of the best interest to the students with that of the community.

Question: How much of the budget for non-profit funds are for the Neediest Kids grant?

Answer: \$30,000

### **Teddi Predaris - Director, ESOL Services**

The projects have evolved over time and require a reallocation of funds. The school support composite index is based on the demographics and the achievement results. The allocation of funds is based of the best instructional practices and school based interventions. There is an evaluation of the entire process to determine the schools that would benefit the most and boost the student achievement.

The combination of demographic and test results need to be considered to determine the neediest schools.

Question: There seems to be no incentive for a child to have these services. How do we support those who need it?

Answer: There are ways to assign the allocation of existing funds. The funds must go to the Title 1 school's first.

Some of the more affluent communities are sometimes penalized because it is believed that the funds are not needed. The fact is that there is poverty in every section of the county but is not as widely noted as other parts of the county.

The PTA can help reduce expenses in several ways. Although the PTA cannot pay for staffing, it can encourage more parents volunteer in areas where the mother does not work outside the home.

**William Oehrlein - Principal, Hayfield Secondary School**

There is a rapid increase in the number of families in poverty due to the recent changes in today's economy. The relationships between the counselor or teacher to the child can influence whether grants or other assistance from business partners are secured. The principals are noting that more students need to work to help support the family income and are signing up for full day waivers. The private schools are losing a large number of students and many are enrolling in the public schools.

**Pamela Jones - Principal, Stuart High School**

The Free and Reduced Lunch program (FRL) programs at all of the schools give a good interpretation of how many kids are needy. There is an increasing number of students who are falling into this category. Parents feel the stress due to the current economics and that stress is felt by students. Some of the children who are affected most by the bad economy are the ones who are on the "borderline" with receiving FRL. Their families do not qualify as poverty level or below, but remain financially strained.

**Michael Campbell - Principal, Centreville High School**

There is an increase in the number of students who are applying to be classified as homeless. The athletic booster clubs raise funds for the athletic programs and the dollar amount varies from school to school. Field trips are often partially funded from parents and fund raising activities so there is a have/have not scenario at play.

**Discussion:**

The business community may not be aware of the needs of the schools and may assume that because this is FCPS it does not need additional support. More businesses may be willing to contribute if they were more aware of the areas where their help would be most beneficial.

Comment was made that in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, through a meeting with Fairfax Families Care, people were asked to help others in need. Funds were raised and the corporate community matched those funds.

Comment was made to establish a foundation to support technology.

It was noted that there has been an 8%-9% increase in the number of children in poverty in the past 2 to 3 years.

Question: What are the requirements of a business partner?

Answer: The relationship is more about services and time donated with the schools rather than money. FCPS is open to working with business leaders. Jay Garant, Coordinator of Business and Community Partnerships was in attendance and helped explain his office's duties and processes.

**Conclusion:**

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Topics to discuss:

FCPS Grading Policies (looking beyond Fairfax County to the issue related to equitable grading systems across systems) is the scheduled topic for discussion. There was also an interest in a discussion on the Fairfax Families Care and the PTA Budgets from past 3 years.