



## WHY THE SCHOOL BOARD HAS DEVELOPED A SET OF BELIEFS, VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS

The Fairfax County School Board approved beliefs, vision, mission, and student achievement goal statements for Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) as part of its new strategic governance initiative, **Building the Future ... Child by Child**.

The student achievement goals—developed with community input—along with the other documents provide a framework for the school system’s operation and for the School Board’s future work.

So why did the School Board decide to undertake this ambitious, multiyear project? Some answers follow below:

- It’s the Fairfax way. The best stay the best by always working to get better. In the words of U.Va. Prof. Daniel Duke, “Fairfax rarely waits for circumstances to compel reluctant action. Anticipating change, or ... being ‘ahead of the curve,’ has been highly valued for years in the school system and the community.”

- Meeting the demands of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is necessary, but not sufficient, for Fairfax County. Critical thinking, creativity, social competence, the ability to explore ideas, and understanding the value of diversity must also be learned.

- The Board spent much of 2006 seeking input from the community on the goals. These are the community’s goals, not just the Board’s goals.

- Strong academics, already a hallmark of FCPS, are at the core of the new goals. Ability to communicate in at least two languages with competence is a new emphasis.

- The goals increase emphasis on personal character including focus on qualities such as honesty and integrity, respect for others, conflict resolution, lifelong learning, identification of personal goals, critical thinking, work habits, and financial competence.

- The goals increase emphasis on community involvement, including understanding and participating in communities at all levels—school, county, nation, world.

- The goals represent the “The Four R’s”—reading, writing, arithmetic, and preparation for real life.