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ON THE LEVEL

FAIRFAX SCHOOL NEWS

BUDGET UPDATE

Superintendent Garza released the Proposed FY 2015 Budget to the FCPS School Board on January 9. The Budget of \$2.5 billion is a net increase of \$98 million from the FY 2014 Approved Budget. The increase in the budget is due to annual growth in student enrollment, an increase in health insurance rates, and an increase in the required contributions to the Virginia Retirement System. Student enrollment continues to grow at a rapid rate with 15,603 more students enrolling since 2010. The school division also developed a menu of potential cuts that will require many reductions in school system positions. Nearly every department will be affected. The coming months will bring many public hearings with the community, the School Board, and the Board of Supervisors to inform everyone about the budget and needs of the school system. Final decisions will be made in late May.

Special points of interest:

ERFC is continuing to offer Pre-Retirement Workshops for those who are within two to five years of retirement eligibility. Each workshop will discuss both ERFC benefit plan structures: ERFC Legacy and ERFC 2001. VRS benefits will also be discussed.

Registration for all workshops is online through MyPLT.

Find information at the ERFC Website. The site lists all of the workshops to be held this semester.

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EVALUATION UPDATE

January is also the time for the Mid-Year Performance Assessment. If you receive a 'Needs Improvement' or 'Ineffective', call the FCFT office at 703-451-6840 immediately for assistance. An FCFT Labor-Relations Specialist will help you. Remember that your call is confidential, but we need to know your name in order to verify membership to ensure that you are eligible to draw upon your FCFT benefits.



SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOU

Many of you have grown up with smart phones and social media. You are no longer a private person but a public employee subject to higher standards. The burden is on teachers to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Be very careful about oversharing personal information on social media. Students, who have more time than you do, will Google/Bing/Facebook and Pinterest you to see if they can find anything about you. Parents will see them, too. FCFT is urging you to be 'smart' about how you use social media. Any pictures you post or things you write **will be seen.**

DR. GARZA CONTINUES LISTENING TOURS

Dr. Karen Garza, FCPS Superintendent, is continuing her listening tours to each area of Fairfax County. She began the listening tours early in the fall, and the last one will be on February 24, 2014. The tours have given County residents an opportunity to meet the new superintendent and to voice their concerns over school programs, curricula, and educational policies. Most community members are appreciative of the opportunity to attend a meeting and feel a part of planning for the next School Budget. The meetings are open to everyone without prior registration. FCFT wants teachers to go!

Tuesday, January 21, 2014, 6:30 p.m. Lee District listening tour at Twain Middle School, 4700 Franconia Road, Alexandria with School Board Vice-Chairman Tamara Derenak Kaufax

Tuesday, February 4, 2014, 7 p.m. Springfield listening tour at West Springfield High School, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield with School Board member Elizabeth Schultz

Monday, February 24, 2014, 6:30 p.m. Braddock listening tour at Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke with School Board member Megan McLaughlin

If you need further information, call 571-423-1200.



KUDOS FOR THE WINTER DONATIONS!

In December FCFT conducted the annual hat, mitten, scarf and gloves drive for Fairfax County students in need of warm winter-clothing. Many donations were sent to the office. All of the donations were given to an organization that distributed them to underprivileged Fairfax County students.

We particularly want to thank the 2nd grade team and Robin Hottle of Union Mill Elementary School in Clifton. They donated so much, and we are very appreciative of their hard work and contributions. We thank everyone who sent in a winter item! You are the best!

BOND ISSUE APPROVAL IS GOOD NEWS!

In the November elections Fairfax County voters overwhelmingly approved the Fairfax School Bond Issue. That approval will help to update many schools in the County. The Bond Issue will renovate 17 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 3 high schools. Another part of the voter approval will fund \$25 million dollars for Infrastructure Management.

This is great news for students and teachers!

Thank you Fairfax County voters!

