

February 21, 2013

Dr. Dale, Chairman Moon and Esteemed School Board Members,

My name is Steve Greenburg, and I come before you this evening representing the over 4,300 members of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, in regards to the agenda item: Spotlight on Learning: 5,000 Square Feet of Authentic Assessment - Teaching Through "Real World" Experiences.

I appreciate Dr. Presidio presenting this tonight, and the focus on this component of providing a truly world class education system that meets the needs of all of our students, and our community. Mr. Maclin and Mr. Rubio should be commended for their work and partnerships between the Foundation for Applied Technical Education, Inc. (FATE), FCPS, and the construction industry to provide needed and relevant vocational education opportunities for our students, as well as summer residential construction employment for young people to earn and learn.

Programs like this, and the partnerships we have with many of our middle and high schools during their career fairs provide access for students to learn more about possible job opportunities right here in Fairfax County that are important and necessary for our local economy to thrive.

As the president of an AFL-CIO local, and member of the NoVA Labor Federation Executive Board, I want you to know that our union members are always happy to partner with you to further expand these opportunities for our students.

To be clear, our job (as a school system) is not to send every student to college. Our job is to educate and support our students so they can be productive and successful members of our community who can contribute and provide for themselves. 'To inspire and empower students to be responsible and innovative global citizens...'

Our focus should really be on that, and not making the system look successful by only posting press releases on AP scores, or IB participation, or 'who went to what college'

(which actually have less to do with life success than is often 'spun' by those who are competing with each other for recognition in that area.... or whatever).

A brief story (my brother)....

I would also suggest that in order to support our students with the 'life-skills' they need to do business, we must move beyond just training them with vocational and academic skills; they need social and emotional support and systems in place to guide them. We need to re-invest in guidance counselors, social workers and school psychologists, as well as vocational education. Being there to help our young adults plan their future is important, and making sure they have the social, emotional, and physical strength to focus on their learning is critical.

We need students who are well-rested, fed, socially adept, and feel internally secure so they can achieve at the highest levels.

Finally, I want to thank those of you attending the Town Hall on work load this coming Monday. I appreciate that you care so much. Although both FCFT and FEA brought forth the issue and three recommendations (define the 7.5 hr. day; provide more unencumbered planning time to teachers, and establish the 4510.3 committee) to deal with this two years ago, we will always be willing to sit and discuss varieties of solutions collaboratively. You (as a new board) have taken action on several occasions to assist with this already. I have confidence that our continued dialogue will be productive.

Let's keep the main people the main people.

Every student, parent, and teacher matters.

Every day.

Thank you for your time this evening, and your service to Fairfax County.

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"FCFT members educate, protect, and love our children. They are the BEST, and DESERVE the BEST."