

Budget Hearing Overview for CRS Parents

As you have probably already heard, Fairfax County is anticipating a significant decrease in revenues next fiscal year (7/1/09-6/30/10). Because Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) represents more than half of the County's (general fund) expenditures, the schools could be significantly affected.

Thus, CRS and many other FCPS PTAs and PTOs are encouraging their parents to become informed and engaged. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Review the budget materials on the County's website (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/budget/>).
- Attend a public hearing and participate in the break-out group discussions (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/budget/publicmeetings.htm>). The October 29 session will be at the McLean Community Center. Preregistration is requested.
- Submit comments on possible changes to balance future revenues and expenses. Comments can be made on ideas such as delaying programs, cutting programs, reducing costs by making programs more efficient, furloughing or firing employees, increasing taxes, increasing fees. Comments may be submitted either via the County website (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/survey/fy10suggestions.htm>) or by phone (703-324-9400).

In reviewing these materials, remember that the County is very large with extensive programs – more than 300 discrete “lines of business.” The anticipated \$500 million reduction in revenues represents about 15% of the County's general fund budget (\$3.3 billion). Schools receive a little more than half of the expenditures (53%).

FCPS's total budget is \$2.2 billion, with about $\frac{3}{4}$ of its revenues received from the County. Schools spend about 85% of their revenues on instruction. One way to think about the potential impact is that half of the County deficit (\$200 million) is equivalent to eliminating 2,714 school-based positions. Remember also, there are non-school programs that affect schools – for example, the clinic aide at CRS is a health department, not an FCPS, employee.

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This article reflects the views of the PTA, not CRS.