

My campaign is based on concepts as easy as the A B Cs.

Accountability Behavior Curriculum

While it is critical that the school system have effective and challenging curriculum and that the school environment be conducive to learning, the primary role of the elected school board member is to ensure that the school system is **accountable** to the parents that entrust their precious children's education to the public schools and to the taxpayer for the \$2,200,000,000 they provide the schools to educate the next generation. This accountability is exercised in three manners; the budget, setting policy and monitoring the effectiveness of the programs.

Programs that are effective

Talk to any teacher and they will tell you that there are plenty of programs in FCPS. They will also tell you that while new ones are implemented all of the time, none ever seems to go away. Without true program accountability focused on effectiveness there is no mechanism to justify the removal of a program. When a program does not fix what it was intended to address, then a new program is created to address the same issue.

We have been investing a great deal of time and effort to create a new strategic governance model for the School Board. The intent of this model is for the Board to review how well the Superintendent is achieving the operational and academic goals instead of reviewing each program. It relies on the Superintendent to determine if a program is effective and moving the school system toward the goals set by the Board. The key to the entire system is the set of indicators used to determine if the system is achieving or moving toward the goals. Most of the indicators presented by the school system to date will not provide something that is measurable and comparable to previous measurements at the level of achievement that will be useful in determining if the system is moving in the right direction. Consequently, they will not be useful in determining if programs are effective and the parade of new programs will continue. That is, unless the 2008 Board puts significant measurements of effectiveness in place.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is an attempt by the Federal and State (through the Standards of Learning) Governments to create an accountability system. It is designed to assess the effectiveness of the school, not the individual accomplishment of the children. It is the only thing that has resulted in the closing of the minority achievement gap since the schools were integrated. Virginia did a study and found that the average cost of NCLB not covered by the Federal Government was \$53 per student (FCPS spends \$13,500 on average per student). The millions of dollars that schools are attributing to NCLB are the funds required to bring children up to the minimum standards that the schools should be doing without NCLB. If the school systems truly monitored their programs for academic achievement, there would be no need for NCLB.

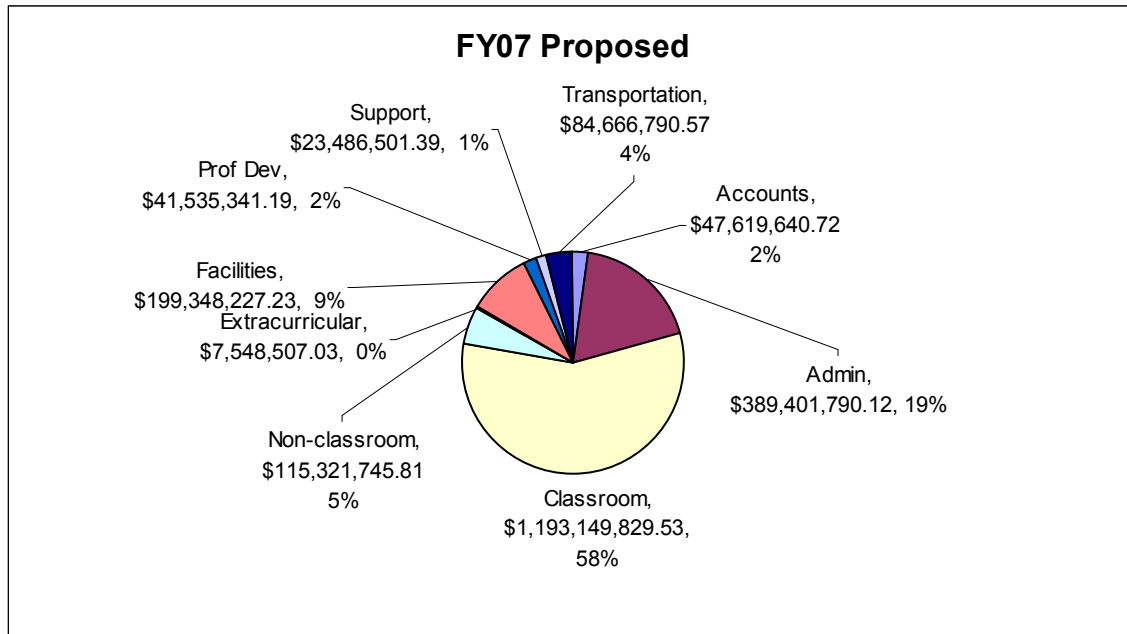
Budget

The School Board should budget to real needs, with the transparency to determine that it was allocated to the budgeted amount and purpose and not to responding to national myths and educational sound bites. To develop a true needs based budget, there must be a mechanism to determine the need. Without the data driven guidance, Fairfax County Public Schools has a wants based budget because it does not have a process to determine what the needs truly are.

The primary mechanism that the Board could use to remove an ineffective program is to de-fund the program in the budget. Without measurements of effectiveness upon which to base those decisions, that option does not really exist.

The greatest challenge is determining where the \$2,200,000,000 is being spent. There is an award winning published budget that provides the total budget and speaks in general terms as to where the funds are going. The details are limited to any new programs. Increases or decreases to existing programs are not well defined. A second document lists the programs and the funding

for each program. I have requested for my own use the budget line item level of data that lists how much is allocated to each location for what type of expense. These three documents are not cross referenced. Funds listed in one document will be in numerous funds in another document. I have worked on my own analysis to determine where the funds are going and have determined that 57% of the budget goes to the classroom. 63% is related to the student. And 19% is in administrative costs.



The transparency of the budget and the true measurement of program effectiveness on the challenges facing the FCPS does not enable the board to do much except play with the fringe of the budget and approve the staff vision as opposed to setting a budget that matches the Board's.

Policy

Through establishing policy, the Board ensures that the school system is functioning on the course that the Board sets. It is through its policy that the Board can hold the schools accountable to how the system interacts with students, parents, school personnel and the general community. The second element of this is to hold schools accountable for acting in accordance with the School Board policy and related school regulations. I believe that it is a school board member's role to ensure that the community concerns are addressed, not to just send a response with the explanation from the school staff.

Audit committee

This School Board has put an audit committee in-place to ensure that the audit process throughout the school system is focused on important areas, has the support of the Superintendent and provide periodic reports to the Board. I have been the chairman of this committee for two Board Chairmen.

I have been very focused during my first term on holding the school system accountable. I have done my own analysis and found the school analysis lacking. I have become known for "Steve Hunt questions" that get to the heart of whether a new program has been well thought out and designed. I have attempted to develop budget visibility. With your help, I can continue to provide this much needed accountability to the school system. Please vote for Steve Hunt for Fairfax County At-large School Board member. Thank you.

