



December 7, 2009

Dear SHES parents,

Please take some time during this busy month to read and digest the information attached. The Sleepy Hollow PTA has put together this information to help you comprehend a large volume of information about (a) the budget crisis that Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) are facing for the next school year (fiscal year 2011, or FY2011), and (b) the process through which the budget gets approved.

First things first: As you have likely heard in the news or from previous communications from the Sleepy Hollow PTA, **FCPS is facing a projected deficit of \$176 million to its FY2011 budget**. As a result, the Superintendent, elected School Board members, and our elected Board of Supervisors are all taking a comprehensive look at budget expenditures to determine which FCPS programs will be cut to balance the budget.

All public schools in Fairfax County are in jeopardy of losing integral programs and instruction that make FCPS a top-tier school system. The FCPS Superintendent has released documents that detail potential cuts (visit <http://www.fcps.edu/news/fy2011.htm> to download this document). See the attached documents for cuts that may directly impact your children at Sleepy Hollow ES.

This year the projected deficit is so deep, that even with these published proposed cuts, the budget will still reflect a deficit. The Board of Supervisors will likely need to increase the property tax mileage just to collect the same amount of revenue as last year; this is a way the budget will have a chance to be balanced and to save some of the important programs on the proposed list of cuts.

If you are interested in expressing your concerns about these potential cuts and the amount of money that is being provided to FCPS by the state, the attached document will help you. The information illustrates the process that the budget goes through to get approved, as well as the timeline for approval. There are public hearings on the budget throughout the process where you can register to speak, or just go to listen. I urge you to attend these public hearings to hear firsthand the issues FCPS is facing and what other residents of Fairfax County are voicing to our elected representatives about the budget.

Another avenue to voice your concerns is to directly contact our District's School Board Member, Kaye Kory, and our Board of Supervisors Representative, Penny Gross. Their contact information is in the attached information.

Voicing your concerns and opinions WILL make a difference, and the timeline goes by quickly, so please note the timeline and the dates and take any action before critical decisions are made.

The Sleepy Hollow PTA encourages you to get involved in your child's education. Our PTA has no political role in the budget process, and hopes that by providing this information to you, we are helping to provide our SHES community with useful information that will help each family decide how it would like to get involved. If you have any questions, or are interested in participating in a budget work group with other parents at Sleepy Hollow ES, please contact me at the email address below.

Thank you,

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