

August 1, 2000

Dear FCPS Middle School Civics Teacher:

The concept of the "office of citizen" is one of the most important aspects of your job as an 8th grade civics teacher. Young people need to be aware of their job as a productive, informed, and involved citizen of their community at an early age. For many years, your focus has been on the office of citizen as it relates to national and state government. Now you have a unique opportunity to expand that focus to the level of government that affects your students on a daily basis--Fairfax County government.

Closest to the People is a comprehensive series of lessons and activities designed to help students better understand and appreciate Fairfax County government and their role in it. The lessons in this guide will help to enhance your local government units, providing you and your students with new and exciting ways to examine the organization and function of county government, the many services--from animal shelters to zoning--provided by Fairfax County, and the role citizens play in making it all happen.

County Executive Anthony H. Griffin and his staff have worked with Fairfax County Public Schools teachers and curriculum specialists to provide this resource to our middle school teachers. Their work reflects the commitment of the county to this project. I believe you will find the lessons in this curriculum guide useful additions to your ongoing efforts to bring government and citizenship alive for your students. I wish you the best of luck in the coming year and continued success.

Sincerely,

Daniel A. Domenech, Ph.D. Superintendent of
Schools