

Response to Questions on the FY 2009 Advertised Budget Plan

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: What are the school costs for the following and what savings might be realized by consolidating these with County functions? (i.e., grounds and building maintenance, phone systems, printing services, computer contracts and other technology services, purchasing)

Response: Fairfax County Public Schools have provided the following information:

FCPS and Fairfax County Government have achieved efficiencies and savings by working collaboratively to combine operational activities and reduce duplication of services in the following areas:

- Combined financial accounting and purchasing systems
- County provides service and maintenance to FCPS buses and vehicles
- Combined print shops
- Submitted a joint RFP for health plan bids resulting in more favorable pricing
- A joint rebate program has been negotiated with Office Depot
- The county and schools warehouses work collaboratively. For example, the school system warehouse delivers voting machines to schools on behalf of the Electoral Board.

Other consolidation opportunity areas have been examined by both FCPS and the County over the past several years, including building and grounds maintenance; however, it has never been determined that consolidation in these specific areas would be more efficient, lead to cost savings, or benefit either FCPS or the County due to differences in service levels and staffing ratios.

FCPS and the County collaborate on many procurement contracts that benefit both entities; examples are contract awards for IT Professionals, Dell computers, Verizon, Oracle, and webMethods. In addition, FCPS works collaboratively with the County to award joint contracts that bring services to the benefit all County agencies, such as for services related to building, grounds, and equipment maintenance. FCPS and the County also utilize many procurement vehicles from the Commonwealth of Virginia and other purchasing cooperatives to maximize purchasing.

The FCPS CIO is a member of the County's Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC). FCPS and the County continue to collaborate on the implementation of the Instructional Network, I-net, and the Electronic Accounts Payable System (EAPS) which will improve payment turnaround time.

FCPS and the County are also collaborating on a multi-year joint initiative that will modernize major enterprise systems that support finance, human resources, budget, and procurement. As is the current methodology, the County and Schools will operate on a unified financial and procurement system and will consider future use of a joint human resources system.

FCPS participates in the federal E-rate program which discounts telecommunication services at 47 percent. The cost to FCPS for local, long distance and cellular service is approximately \$2.9 million. FCPS aligns its telecommunication initiatives with the E-rate program in order to take advantage of the discounts available. Through recent bond referenda phone systems in many schools have been upgraded. It does not seem prudent to change the equipment out at this time and invest in different equipment. The County has implemented a voice over IP (VoIP) strategy for its business needs. School calling patterns are different with more calls to the outside community than internal to the school division. This business model does not lend itself to savings using VoIP.

In addition, FCPS and the County are in the process collaborating to create a “real time” interface between our two facility-use/scheduling systems. This is a jointly funded initiative that will benefit FCPS and County staff, as well as community users.

FCPS and Fairfax County Government have discussed consolidating additional activities over the course of time. In order to evaluate potential savings from additional consolidation activities, a study would need to be conducted to evaluate potential business models, determine efficiencies, and implement best practices to ensure the needs of both FCPS and Fairfax County Government are met.