Response to Questions on the FY 2014 Budget

Request By: Supervisors McKay, Bulova, and Hudgins

Question: Please provide a report on the priority schools initiative, including how the FY 2014 budget impacts this program and what criteria were used when the program was established.

Response: The following response was prepared by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):

PRIORITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE (PSI)
Fairfax County Public Schools
April 10, 2013

Budget reductions for FY 2011 resulted in the loss of a number of longstanding FCPS initiatives. Among these initiatives was the EXCEL schools program that had been in existence since the late 1990's as a support to schools with substantial challenges. In order to provide some support to high needs schools beginning in FY 2011, and as part of Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) commitment to closing the achievement gap, thirty (30) elementary and middle schools were designated as Priority Schools in June 2010.

Since school demographics and school needs had changed significantly since the late 1990's, the Priority School Initiative (PSI) designation was based on current performance data-- the number of students not passing the Virginia SOL tests in reading and mathematics (grades 3-6), and the gap in student achievement between Black and Latino students and White and Asian students provided from the School Support Composite Index (SSCI). The PSI designation provided support to these 30 schools in order to improve student performance and close the achievement gap.

Expected outcomes for PSI were as follows:

- Continuous improvement in student performance on the SOL tests,

- Adequate Yearly Progress as designated by Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and

- Progress in closing the achievement gaps as measured by FCPS' School Support Composite Index (SSCI).

The initial selection of Priority Schools in May 2010 was based on one of two criteria:

1. School Support Composite Index (SSCI) is a ranking that provides equal weighting to the number of students not passing SOL reading and mathematics tests from a 3 year average and the percentage of the achievement gap between White/Asian subgroup and Black/Hispanic subgroup.

2. Schools identified by the Federal Title I legislation for School Improvement based on the Federal definition (Adequate Yearly Progress).

The FCPS School Board allocated funding of $4.3 million annually beginning in FY 2011 for the PSI as a three-year pilot project. Since educational research suggests that a 3-5 year time period is needed to

turnaround school performance, the intent of the PSI was to begin the process over a three-year period (through 2012-13), then review each school's rate of improvement to determine the future course of action. Additional Priority Schools could be designated in subsequent years of the three-year pilot.

PSI Support Components

Informed by national and local research on best practices in closing the gap, key components of the FCPS Priority Schools Initiative were developed. Each school was assigned a cross-functional team known as the School Support Team to consult with the principal and school staff regarding the needs of each school. Additional services were as follows:

Priority Staffing

Since the classroom teacher is of primary importance to student achievement, Priority Schools received preferential consideration in hiring new staff, as well as priority in the assignment of instructional resources, including:

- Early access to early hires

- No limit on the number of early hires placed in a priority school

- Principals can select de-staffs, but they will not be subject to the placement of destaffs from other schools in priority schools.

School Turnaround Training

Twenty PSI principals were designated to participate in the School Turnaround Specialist Program, a partnership of the Darden School (Business) and Curry School (Education) at the University of Virginia. The Turnaround Specialist program is a two-year program designed to address the leadership and performance needs of education leaders charged with making the changes necessary to have an immediate impact on student achievement. It included coursework, case studies, and discussions to analyze school achievement data and share information and practical experience in proven business and education turnaround strategies. Content areas included assessment of personal leadership qualifications, skills to lead change, data analysis, decision-making, setting targets, and creating action plans.

School Support Team

A cross-functional team with up to five-members was assigned to each Priority School. The School Support Team met on a regular basis throughout the school year to review the school's current data and planning processes, then leverage any additional resources from FCPS departments and Leadership Team. The School Support Team advocates for the school, and makes recommendations to the Leadership Team for additional resources (e.g. funds for additional learning time for students, parent education, teacher training, or other instructional support) that were needed to ensure continuous improvement in student achievement.

Principal Leadership Training

All PSI principals participated in a leadership assessment structured interview process based on *School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success* developed by Public Impact Group. This research-based interview technique is a formative assessment of principals in the following areas:

• Academic achievement	• Team leadership
• Initiative and persistence	• Developing others
• Monitoring and directiveness	• Analytical thinking
• Planning	• Conceptual thinking
• Impact and influence	• Self-confidence

The School Turnaround Specialist Program (STSP) included a summer leadership institute developed jointly by FCPS and UVA. A mid-year retreat for the principal and selected school staff members included assistance with change management, data analysis and monitoring. For Title I schools in School Improvement, the PSI and STSP were used to meet the Virginia Department of Education requirements.

Instructional Coach
In order to ensure high functioning teacher teams (Collaborative Teams), each PSI school was provided with a full-time Instructional Coach.

Regular School Visits with Feedback
Cluster Assistant Superintendents or Cluster Directors used a formal process to visit PSI school classrooms on a weekly basis (Year 1) and regularly in Years 2 and 3. In addition, teams of UVA faculty visited each PSI school participating in STSP and provided both the school and FCPS Leadership Team with written feedback.

Teacher Release Time for Data Analysis
Each PSI school was provided a budget so that teachers could meet each quarter to review the progress of every student in reading and mathematics.

The following chart details PSI expenditures and was previously included as part of the response to Budget Question #24
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Priority Schools Initiative Expenditures FY 2011-FY 2013 ($ in millions)						
Year	Leadership Development	Professional Learning and Coaching	Direct Intervention	Intervention Materials	Parent Involvement	Total
Examples:	Univeristy of Virginia	Instructional Coaches/DRA	Resource Teachers	Instructional Supplies	Parent Liaisons	
FY 2011	$0.8	$0.6	$1.0	$0.4	$0.0	**$2.8**
FY 2012	$0.5	$0.9	$2.6	$0.0	$0.0	**$4.1**
FY 2013 Projected	$0.1	$2.2	$3.3	$0.4	$0.1	**$6.0**
Total	**$1.4**	**$3.6**	**$6.9**	**$0.8**	**$0.1**	**$12.9**

Does not add due to rounding

Priority Schools for 2013-2014 (PSI-2)

Monitoring the results from the PSI pilot, the Leadership Team reviewed effective practices and lessons learned in designing PSI-2 for 2013-14. The funding for PSI of $4.3 million remains in the FY 2014 Advertised Budget. We have reviewed a comprehensive amount of student achievement data and determined which schools should continue in PSI, which schools have sustained improvement, as well as schools that should be included in PSI-2.

Identification of schools for the original PSI was determined using a School Support Composite Index (SSCI), based on the number of reading and mathematics SOL test failures at each school as well as each school's achievement gap. The information used to identify PSI-2 schools includes a wider range of student achievement data with emphasis on early reading and math performance, as well as student characteristics, school leadership and school climate.

The following data were used to Identify PSI -2 Schools

1. Kindergarten Achievement
   This measure is the achievement level of students in reading as they enter kindergarten, based on the DRA Word Analysis assessment. Three years of data were used (SY 2010, 2011, and 2012).

2. End of Grade 2 Achievement
   This measure is the achievement level of students in reading and math at the end of grade 2. The information represents the results of a school's efforts to have students meet grade-level reading (DRA2) and mathematics (MRA) performance at the end of grade 2. Three years of data were used (SY 2010, 2011, and 2012).

3. SOL Achievement (grades 3-6)
   This measure reflects the achievement level of all students taking reading and mathematics SOLs within the school, including the average number of students failing the SOLs in comparison to all other FCPS schools. For most of the elementary schools, the SOL achievement values include students in either grades 3 through 5 (when feeding into Glasgow, Holmes, and Poe) or grades 3 through 6 (when feeding into all other middle and secondary schools).[1]

4. Student Progress by Grade 2
   This measure represents the progress schools made in reading and math from kindergarten to the end of grade 2, addressing the challenges of underperforming students at kindergarten entry. This value indicates whether schools are able to perform comparatively better or worse than expected based on the number of failures that incoming kindergartners demonstrated.

5. Achievement Gaps
   Two types of gaps were used to identify PSI-2 schools. The "ethnicity gap" is the difference in the average performance levels for White and Asian students versus Black and Hispanic students on all reading and mathematics SOLs in SY 2009-10, SY 2010-11, and SY 2011-12. The special populations gap is the gap between the overall student membership at a school and the performance of students with limited English proficiency, economically disadvantage, or disabilities on all reading and mathematics SOLs in SY 2009-10, SY 2010-11, and SY 2011-12.

6. Student Characteristics
   This information is a composite of three demographic factors:
   - Number of students living in poverty
   - English-language learners
   - Student mobility during the last three school years

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[1] The exception to this is Kings Park (which depicts only grade 3 reading and mathematics SOLS) and Kings Glen (which depicts grades 4 through 6 reading and mathematics SOLs).

7. <u>School Culture</u>
    This information is a standardized composite of the current functioning of each school on four school culture factors as rated by cluster superintendents:
    - Instructional practice
    - Working conditions
    - Leadership development
    - Collective efficacy and collaboration

A combination of each of the above factors was ranked for all elementary and middle schools, and placement was based on the highest ranked schools for inclusion in PSI-2. Student achievement outcomes were weighted 60 percent, school culture factors 30 percent, and student characteristics 10 percent in determining the rankings.

<u>PSI -2 Schools</u>
The final recommendation for PSI 2 schools was determined by FCPS Leadership Team based on the rankings. The following 15 schools were recommended to continue from PSI to PSI-2:

Brookfield ES	Crestwood ES	Dogwood ES
Dranesville ES	Glasgow MS	Herndon ES
Herndon MS	Hollin Meadows ES	Hybla Valley ES
Mt. Vernon Woods ES	Riverside ES	Rose Hill ES
Sandburg MS	Whitman MS	Woodlawn ES

The following 14 schools will be new PSI-2 schools for 2013-14:

Annandale Terrace ES	Bailey's ES	Braddock ES
Coates ES	Deer Park ES	Forestdale ES
Fort Belvoir ES	Fort Hunt ES	Glen Forest ES
Hutchison ES	Kings Park ES	Parklawn ES
Saratoga ES	Woodley Hills ES	

The following 15 schools will no longer be considered a PSI school but will be provided with an instructional coach in 2013-2014:

Beech Tree ES	Bull Run ES	Bucknell ES
Centre Ridge ES	Clearview ES	Cunningham Park ES
Hughes MS	Hunters Woods ES	Kings Glen ES
London Towne ES	Lorton Station ES	Poe MS
McNair ES	Twain MS	Washington Mill ES

PSI -2 Support Services
Based on the PSI 2010-2013 model and lessons learned, the following services will be provided to these 28 schools beginning summer 2013 utilizing the $4.3 million annual budget for PSI:

Priority Staffing
Since the classroom teacher is of primary importance to student achievement, Priority Schools will receive preferential consideration in hiring new staff, as well as priority in the assignment of instructional resources, including:

- Early access to early hires

- No limit on the number of early hires placed in a priority school

- Principals can select de-staffs, but they will not be subject to the placement of destaffs from other schools in priority schools.

Leadership Assessment and Development
All PSI-2 principals will participate in a leadership assessment structured interview process based on _School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success_ developed by Public Impact Group (if they have not done so already). Each school also will participate in leadership development for principals and school teams with data analysis training provided by FCPS staff.

Instructional Coach
In order to ensure high functioning teacher teams (Collaborative Teams), each PSI school will be provided a full-time Instructional Coach.

Teacher Release Time for Data Analysis
Each PSI school will be provided with release time for reading and math teachers, so they can meet at least each quarter to review the progress of every student in reading and mathematics.

Parent Involvement Program
FCPS will assist PSI-2 schools to expand parent education and support services to improve student achievement.

Summer Instructional Unit Development
A team of PSI-2 teachers from each grade level (K-8) will be employed summer 2013 to develop a set of instructional units for each grade level, so that PSI-2 Collaborative Teacher Teams can "hit the ground running" at the start of the school year.

Additional Time for Teachers
Each reading and mathematics teach at PSI-2 schools will receive an additional day prior to the opening of school to receive training on the instructional units developed for their grade level in preparation for the school year.

Additional Preschool or After-School Classes
Based upon the kindergarten readiness data used to identify PSI-2 schools, selected elementary schools will be provided funding and resources to serve 4-year old students who need a quality preschool program. PSI-2 middle schools may be provided additional resources for an after-school instruction program.

Intervention Teams
PSI-2 schools with the greatest needs will be assigned an Intervention Team to assist with planning and implementation of the instructional program. The Intervention Team will provide access to other resources, as needed, for the school to make substantial achievement gains.