

August 2009

Fellow Educators:



We all begin the 2009-10 school year on tenterhooks as we await the impact of the budget cutbacks that impact many facets of life in FCPS.

Veteran teachers will remember the days of largesse as well as the grim years in the early 1990's when salaries were frozen. Despite AFPE's and other organizations attempts to avoid the current "freeze" the cold hard fact remained that the dollars were just not there.

AFPE's position is that planning for next year's budget had to start at the beginning of the current fiscal year in July. It is obvious that freezing compensation and increasing class size are the two easiest ways to balance a budget as we have found out to our dismay. The county transfer remained static, and it was only the federal stimulus package that helped preserve certain programs and positions. Many conversations with FCPS school board members focused on the morale and welfare of teachers and employees, so we are hopeful that they take our imprecations to heart and work to take care of educators in the future.

Despite this grim fiscal outlook, we are in much better shape than other jurisdictions and states. I encourage all of you to relentlessly advocate for our schools with not only school board members, but with members of the board of supervisors. "Put a face" on what cutbacks mean to you personally and to your students. Words can provoke action. Let your words be read and taken to heart.

As AFPE members, know that our organization will provide support. In these hard economic times, our modest dues offer the same liability coverage as the other national organizations, and we also offer professional development grants to include partial tuition reimbursement. Check out our website: www.afpefairfax.org for details.

I hope that you all have a productive school year, and spread the word about the benefits of AFPE membership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Kay Downes".

Mary Kay Downes

President - Association of Fairfax Professional Educators