

**Fairfax County Federation of Citizens' Associations
Resolution on the Use of Technology in FCPS**

WHEREAS, the FCPS On program to provide laptops for every student in grades 3-12 was greatly accelerated due to the urgent need for remote learning during the Coronavirus pandemic; and

WHEREAS, FCPS' virtual and hybrid/concurrent learning programs from March 2020 – July 2021 resulted in significant learning loss which the Virginia Growth Assessment tool is helping schools to evaluate; and

WHEREAS, FCPS began the school year with nearly 200 teacher vacancies, which may indicate problems with recruiting and/or retaining teachers, a measure of higher stress levels among FCPS staff, or both; and

WHEREAS, families' experience during the pandemic with the use of computers in schools may make them wary of the value of technology as an educational tool; and

WHEREAS, enrollment figures for FCPS in 2021-2022 are down more than five percent from pre-pandemic levels, which may indicate diminished community support; and

WHEREAS, the cost of providing FCPS laptops for every student in grades 3-12¹ will be ongoing, requiring significant expenditures to ensure that devices and software stay up-to-date; and

WHEREAS, FCPS waived its technology support fee of \$50 per laptop for 2020-21 and 2021-22; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's Standards of Learning for Digital Learning Integration as well as FCPS On's philosophy with regard to the use of technology in classrooms² accept that technological skills are essential for students but do not specify the components of technological literacy,

¹ Grades K-2 have been issued older laptops this year. FCPS is considering providing touch screen devices for younger students.

² See, for example, <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/technology/fcpson>.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Federation:

1. We urge FCPS to issue a system-wide plan that details both the extent of student learning loss as measured in the fall of 2021 and its approach to remediation, including specific instructional programs, metrics, and a timeline;³ and
2. We suggest FCPS engage in a formal evaluation of the appropriate use of technology in the classroom at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, including lessons learned internally from FCPS' virtual and hybrid/concurrent programs, which could consist of a task force or a commissioned study; and
3. We renew our suggestion to establish a Department of Strategic Planning and Innovation, which could among other things help direct inventive uses of technology that promise to improve educational opportunities for students despite geographic barriers; and
4. We urge FCPS to reinstate an annual technology support fee (with waivers for those who cannot afford such a fee) in order to ensure that families of means are helping to defray the costs of repairing and replacing equipment; and
5. We urge the County to take greater responsibility in certain areas where FCPS has been stretched during the pandemic, particularly in public health policy, social and emotional health, and food assistance.

³ Charles County Public Schools have already presented such a plan; we also note that Virginia's "Onward Upward Virginia" grant program targets remediation; in announcing these grants the Virginia Department of Education encouraged divisions to "focus on unfinished learning and acceleration to mitigate the impact the pandemic has had on student results." See https://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2021/index.shtml, August 26, 2021 and October 19, 2021.