



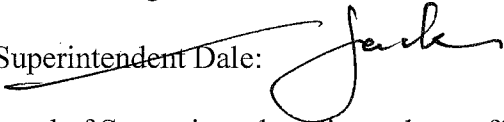
County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

MAR 02 2011

Jack Dale, Superintendent
Fairfax County Public Schools
Fairfax County School Administration Center
8115 Gatehouse Road
Falls Church, Virginia 22042

Dear Superintendent Dale:



The Board of Supervisors has directed my office to determine which Fairfax County agency should coordinate grant applications for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program and to draft a letter to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) to discuss collaborative efforts between both Boards in regard to transportation and sustainability efforts. After reviewing the complexities of this Board request as well as the requirements of the SRTS Program, I have concluded that in order for County SRTS applications to be successful, leadership in the community outreach and project prioritization aspects of the effort must come from within FCPS. This conclusion is based on the fact that FCPS is responsible for determining walking and bus route policy for every school facility and every student address and is most familiar with the stakeholders and leadership of the various schools within the County. The Board of Supervisors is prepared to direct the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) to provide support for transportation analysis, grant preparation, walkway project design, land acquisition, and construction. I believe that a collaborative effort between FCDOT and FCPS, each contributing information and technical expertise, will be the most effective manner in which to undertake SRTS grant application.

Pedestrian safety and access is a countywide challenge, and the Board of Supervisors would like to see more done to encourage children to walk and bike to school. The Board of Supervisors and the School Board need to address these issues more comprehensively, looking specifically at the areas of transportation, safety, and the environment. The Board believes that transportation and sustainability issues could be good starting points for future collaboration between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board. The mutual goals of both Boards are clearly aligned, yet there is room for an improved partnership.

BACKGROUND:

For many years, Fairfax County government in collaboration with FCPS has utilized many different funding mechanisms and programs to provide financial resources to complete sidewalks and trails needed for children to walk to schools. FCPS staff has regularly provided FCDOT

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Fairfax County Public Schools
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updated sidewalk and trail requests. Recently two major pedestrian projects at schools totaling \$1.1 million were completed. Currently the Fairfax County Pedestrian Program has five additional school-requested projects estimated at \$1.7 million under engineering design.

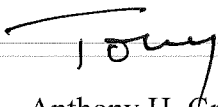
Different Fairfax County school groups have applied individually for direct SRTS funding. Staff has relied on these school-community originated requests in determining priorities and provided technical assistance on an ad-hoc basis. Typically these efforts have been led by a community champion (individual, group, PTA) in coordination with a supportive FCPS school principal. However, the updated SRTS grant process now requires the locality to be the applicant.

NEXT STEPS:

I am requesting that a meeting be set up with your office in the next several weeks, so that we can discuss how best to staff a Fairfax County SRTS Program grant application process. I strongly recommend that for the Fairfax County SRTS Program to be successful, you and/or the School Board need to direct FCPS staff "from the top down" to make the SRTS Program a FCPS priority. I believe that anything that has the potential to reduce vehicle congestion around schools due to kiss-and-ride activity and would allow more children to walk to school would seem to be a natural FCPS priority. The Board of Supervisors and I are prepared to direct FCDOT to also make the SRTS Program a priority and to provide the resources needed in the areas of transportation analysis, grant preparation and funding, project design, land acquisition, and construction; however, we will need your assistance in the areas that the school system is best positioned to undertake – prioritization of schools and associated projects to submit for grants, community outreach work, and determination of stakeholders.

I look forward to meeting with you and/or your staff to initiate this collaborative effort.

Sincerely,



Anthony H. Griffin
County Executive

cc: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Fairfax County School Board
Tom Biesiadny, Acting Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation
David Rohrer, Chief of Police, Fairfax County Police Department
Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director, Fairfax County Health Department
James Patterson, Director, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and
Environmental Services