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Educator Unions Urge FCPS to Continue Distance Learning

Fairfax County, VA — On Tuesday, June 23, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) issued an updated “return to school” [plan](#) that appeared to provide employees and students with the option to work and learn in the environment that they feel is most safe for the 2020-2021 school year. FCPS has asked employees and families to select their personal preferences for returning to school for face-to-face instruction or remaining at home for virtual instruction by July 10th. Without providing much more detailed information about each of these options, neither group is able to make an informed decision at this time.

Due to lack of consistency and transparency in the FCPS plan, unions that represent Fairfax County Public Schools employees are calling on FCPS to work with union leadership to develop much more detailed clear and concise implementation plans for both scenarios, well in advance of any selection deadlines for employees and families. When finalizing its plan, FCPS should follow four basic principles, and prioritize: health expertise, educator voice, access to protection and a focus on equity. Success must be measured far beyond the first few weeks of the new school year.

Given overwhelming educator concern with the ability of FCPS to keep employees and students safe, Association of Fairfax Professional Educators, Fairfax County Federation of Teachers and Fairfax Education Association encourage our respective union members to clearly state their preference for continued virtual learning until such time as adequate information is made available for employees and families to make informed decisions about returning to face-to-face instruction.

“Our educators are overwhelmingly not comfortable returning to schools. They fear for their lives, the lives of their students and the lives of their families,” said **Tina Williams, President of Fairfax County Federation of Teachers**. “We call on FCPS to put workers and students first by listening to the employees on the frontlines of this crisis. Due to FCPS’ lack of consistency and transparency, we encourage our members to continue with distance learning to keep our community safe.”

“It is absolutely unacceptable that FCPS has established an arbitrary deadline for employees and students to make decisions about the next school year without adequate data or specific information regarding their options,” stated **Becca Ferrick, President of Association of Fairfax Professional Educators**. “Asking our employees to make such an uninformed decision is akin to asking them to sign a blank check. We will not do that.”

"We believe our community as a whole should not return to in-person learning until a vaccine or treatment is widely available for COVID-19. All staff should be provided the ability to continue virtual

instruction as long as there is community spread of this virus," stated **Kimberly Adams, President of the Fairfax Education Association**. "We will continue to make every possible effort to assist FCPS in developing a plan that keeps health and safety first."

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