

The Business Alliance for Fairgrade

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- “The Business Alliance for Fairgrade” Announces Lobbying Strategy- Warns Revision of FCPS Grading Policies Is Necessary for Economic Growth

Fairfax County, VA –Wednesday, October 15, 2008– Top Fairfax County business leaders today appeared at a press conference at the Tower Club in Tysons Corner to voice concerns about the potential economic impact of Fairfax County Public Schools’ (FCPS) current grading policies on students’ competitive viability, Fairfax County’s property tax base, and the business community’s plan to lobby Fairfax County officials to change existing grading policies.

Andrew Robinson, Senior Vice President of ICF International in Fairfax and leader of *The Business Alliance for Fairgrade*, said the Alliance represents the major business sectors that help drive Fairfax County’s economy and they organized to present a united position on the grading policies issue.

“*The Business Alliance for Fairgrade* has contacted over 100 peers with whom we work and serve on several professional Boards, Associations and Councils for Information Technology, Government Contracting and Real Estate. We have the pulse of the business community. To date, the response has been unanimous - FCPS’ current grading policies hurt students and families in their wallets and inaction on this issue could impact real estate values and business location decisions which may, in turn, affect property tax collections for Fairfax County,” Robinson warned.

Jon Wolford, another member of *The Business Alliance for Fairgrade* and a real estate broker in charge of several Long & Foster residential sales offices who also serves on the Board of Directors for the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors said, “The impact of this issue is a big and genuine concern for me and my colleagues in real estate. It handicaps our ability to sell FCPS as an advantage for moving to Fairfax County. Our strong schools will be helped - not harmed - by grading policy changes because businesses and families will be encouraged to locate here rather than other counties.”

Deepak Hathiramani, President & CEO for Vistrionix, Inc., said *The Business Alliance for Fairgrade*’s lobbying efforts would focus on FCPS School Board members and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

“Survival in business means adjusting to new realities. We’ll convey the message that FCPS needs to do the same and adjust their grading policies to reflect the changing college admissions and scholarship landscape. From a business perspective, this makes sense not only for students and families but for the economic well-being of Fairfax County,” Hathiramani said.

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