

**(SPEECH GIVEN BY MARIAN FLICKINGER, NFT PRESIDENT, AT THE FEBRUARY 17, 2009 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING)**

Chairman Tonelson, school board members, Dr. Jones, ladies and gentlemen. As President of the Norfolk Federation of Teachers I want to share with you some of the priorities we would like to see you consider as you make the difficult decisions about what cuts will be made to the NPS budget. First, we want you to know that we understand that you are being forced to make cuts because of the loss of nearly 50 million dollars in funding for NPS schools. We also want you to know that we are continuing our lobbying efforts with our elected officials at the state level as well as with our elected officials in the city of Norfolk. As you know, the Federation has 2000 plus members and our members are directly involved with our lobbying effort.

As you consider what cuts you will make, please look at first cutting positions where individuals have no student contact and begin with administrators, first. We do not want to see anyone lose their job, but if it must be, we want you to look carefully at the Standards of Quality requirements and cut positions that are beyond what the standards require. We want to see that positions that are administrative and not required are all cut first before you begin making cuts that impact those who work daily with our students. Please make certain that careful analysis is done on programs before you decide to cut them. We want you to be able to tell us and the public why one program is cut over another. The Federation asks you to consider consolidating programs rather than completely eradicating programs.

The Federation asks that you look at current proposed renovations, furniture purchases, etc that are slated for the central office and postpone them before you make cuts that impact our school buildings. We also ask that you analyze our current school buildings and determine which schools are being under-utilized. Is it possible to consolidate some schools and close others? Could we save money doing this and if so, how much could be saved. Can we postpone capital projects, like Crossroads, and use that money to offset some of the cuts. We know this is non-recurring money, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

The Federation asks that you look at the money being spent on outsourcing services, such as our custodial contract with GCA. According to the budget there is something like 8 million dollars being spent on contracts with services provided by outside contractors. Can we do without these services? Once again, desperate times require desperate measures.

One employee said that her school had purchased large screen TV's and they have been placed in the school hallways. Are we using the money we have as wisely as we should? Employees received no raises this year, but we had the money to purchase large screen TV's for a school's hallways. This does not sound like responsible spending.

The bottom line is this – we know you have to make difficult decisions. We simply ask that you analyze how the money we have is being used and make certain to cut the personnel, programs and resources that will least impact our students, our teachers and our hourly-waged personnel.