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## CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Marcus J. Newsome, Ed.D., Superintendent

January 27, 2009

Dear colleague,

Later tonight, I will present my proposed FY2010 operating budget to the School Board. With a commitment to keep employees informed, I want to share with you more about the presentation. To say this is the most difficult budget process I have overseen as a Superintendent would be a dramatic understatement. I have received much guidance about what decisions to make. I thank the community members and staff members who served on the Budget Advisory Committee and made recommendations for best serving our students; their task was excruciating.

As you know, the school division faces a \$52 million funding cut. Tough decisions were made. The proposed budget includes a reduction of 525 *positions*. I stress these are *positions* and not necessarily employees, because some of the cuts are currently vacant positions. We also plan to use the natural attrition to reduce the number of employees who will not have a job with us next year. We are hopeful the number of people displaced will be half of that total.

Included in an e-mail you will receive later today is a budget overview and a question-and-answer document about Reduction in Force (RIF). While proposed positions for elimination are listed in these documents, the ongoing budget process will not allow us to identify specific positions and employees affected by a RIF until mid April at the earliest.

We are committed to working with our employees during this difficult process. While there is no guarantee, we will try to retain as many people as possible in positions for which they are qualified. Meanwhile, the Human Resources Department has sought guidance and assistance on behalf of any displaced employees from the Workforce Council, which is administered through the Virginia Community College System. Human Resources also is working collaboratively with other school divisions in our region to identify hiring opportunities for our displaced employees. In addition, my proposal recommends the Board ask that the county make available one-time funding to assist our employees with unemployment benefits, required leave payouts, transition services and job training.

Our commitment to supporting employees also includes meetings to better inform them about the RIF process. Three informational meetings will be held: Jan. 29 at 4:30 p.m. in the Monacan High School auditorium, Feb. 2 at 4:30 p.m. in the Bird High School auditorium and Feb. 5 at 4:30 p.m. in the Midlothian Middle School auditorium. These meetings will consist of a review of the RIF policy and provide an opportunity for staff members to ask additional questions about RIF. For those who are unable to attend, the presentation and a brief video will be available on the intranet. You may also call the Human Resources Department if you have questions regarding RIF.

Again, this is not information I enjoy sharing. I would much rather be writing about our success on SOLs, the Governor's VIP awards, or about the recent announcement that our school division has won its 16<sup>th</sup> *What Parents Want award*. Though we face challenging times ahead, we remain focused on our students and increasing achievement levels of all students. I ask for your continued support in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Marcus J. Newsome, Ed.D.

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