

STATEMENT

April 1, 2022

Fairfax County Parents Association (FCPA)

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FCPS's Military Children Deserve More Support

(Fairfax, VA) – As we enter the “**Month of the Military Child**,” the Fairfax County Parents Association celebrates our military children and calls on Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) to honor students and families who sacrifice for our nation by consistently providing military children with the resources they need. With increased conflict in the world today, we ask FCPS to increase its active awareness and support for the almost 15,000 active-duty military children and thousands of National Guard and Reserve children in FCPS.

Our military children carry with them firsthand knowledge of service and sacrifice. They are often asked to change schools every 1-3 years and say goodbye to a parent on a deployment or extended duty assignment. They also bring with them the need for extra support and resources to take advantage of their guaranteed free and appropriate education, even though their time within FCPS might be short. Military children often move to FCPS in the middle of a school year or too late to be considered for special programs and extracurricular activities. They may need additional support including proper class placement, particularly when parents get orders to move to the area months after application deadlines. We strongly believe that FCPS should recognize and overcome these obstacles by prioritizing efforts to address the needs of military children, from advanced academic placement to special educational resources, regardless of paperwork deadlines in the bureaucracy. Special care must be given to ensure military children have timely 504 and IEP plans and services.

Additionally, FCPS should follow the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission by ensuring credits from one school in one state transfer to another school in another state. FCPS schools should continue to participate in the Purple Star Schools program and have trained school Military Family Life Counselors available.

Many of these services are paid for through government funding, grants, military nonprofits, and through the Federal Impact Aid that each military child brings to a school district regardless of whether they live on a military installation (notably, most military families in Fairfax County do not live on base). **Given the financial resources military children bring to FCPS, and in honor of the sacrifice they and their families make, FCPS needs to ensure these children are given every opportunity to have a full and meaningful education while in Fairfax County.**

Finally, although military families move frequently and often do not vote in Fairfax County, we believe that they should still be afforded a voice when it comes to their children’s education. We urge FCPS to provide military families with a representative seat at the school board table to ensure the school system is following state and federal laws designed to protect this special class of children and helping these children make the most of their time in FCPS.

Fairfax County Parents Association (FCPA) is a volunteer-led, non-partisan, grassroots coalition of over 2,400 parents who came together as #OpenFCPS starting in June 2020 to advocate for a choice to return to in-person education in Fairfax County Public Schools. The group’s participants include parents from all areas of Fairfax County who come from across the political spectrum, cultural backgrounds, and economic strata. The group advocates for student-focused, student-prioritized implementation of education and education policies in Fairfax County, VA.