



## VOICE School Issue Brief Fall 2019

In the Spring of 2019 VOICE worked together with five Prince William County Schools, four of which are Title I, to conduct face-to-face listening sessions with over 350 Prince William parents about their priorities for their school communities and neighborhoods. From those conversations emerged a clear set of priorities from these parents.

Over the summer, teams of principals, teachers, and parents then created specific proposals for each issue area. VOICE will be asking candidates for Board of Supervisors chair and School Board chair to commit to support this issue agenda at our 400-person October 20<sup>th</sup> assembly.

1. **After School Programs** – the need to provide high-quality after-school programs for families who cannot afford the pay-to-participate programs. Before-school and summer programs also emerged as priorities.
  - ***Proposal:** create a \$3-\$4 million after-school fund within PWCS/SPARK to support after-school programming for low-income students, with a focus on elementary and middle schools. Individual schools would competitively apply for funding and would come in larger block amounts.*
2. **Safe Walking Routes to School** – provide safer walking routes to school for children who cross or are in proximity to busy streets. This could include various traffic-calming and/or pedestrian safety supports.
  - ***Proposal:** support from Board of Supervisors and/or VDOT to work with the 5 individual schools around their walking safety problem hotspots, and help address those problems.*
3. **Mental Health** – building upon PWCS's important investment in mental health resources in the current year's budget, expand funding to move PWCS closer to the ASCA-recommended 1:250 mental health professional-to-student ratio.
  - ***Proposal:** invest an additional \$3.74 million to allow each elementary and middle school to hire full-time social workers.*
4. **ESOL Opportunities for Parents** – opportunities for parents to learn English through their child's school.
  - ***Proposal:** provide funding for individual PWCS schools to teach ESOL to parents at their child's school.*