

**Arlington County Civic Federation
Schools Committee**

Report & Recommendation on the 2008 School Bond Referendum

The Arlington Public School system (“APS”) is requesting approval of \$99.425 million in bond funding on the 2008 ballot.

The vast majority -- \$82.975 million -- is slated for construction of Yorktown High School. Final designs have been approved for the project and construction has already been somewhat delayed by the decision not to begin the next phase of construction unless and until the voters approve all or substantially most of the funding it is expected to require. Approximately \$27 million in bond funding has been spent on earlier phases of Yorktown to build a 31-classroom addition. This final phase will renew and replace the rest of the building (the auditorium will be renewed; a new aquatics facility will be added). Construction is expected to last 4.5 years and begin in the winter of 2009.

The next largest project in the bond package is \$11.1 million in design funds for Wakefield High School. Some controversy has been associated with when Wakefield’s actual construction could or should begin. Whatever the relative merits of those arguments, it would be difficult for APS to begin the detailed designs and schematics necessary for construction without the funding this year’s bond package would provide. While it is true that, in the past, APS has sometimes used general funds and PAYG funds to begin or complete projects without resort to bond funding, contingency reserves are lower than in some past years and most of the money in them has been budgeted for other projects, such as Reed School.

The last project in the package is \$5.35 million for the school system’s share of major capital improvements at the Career Center (including major mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems). These improvements have been proposed because major system repairs and upgrades are needed and the adopted six-year CIP does not contemplate a full scale reconstruction of the Career Center. APS staff has stated that the systems purchased are expected to have a useful life of approximately 20 years.

The Civic Federation’s Schools Committee voted to support passage of the proposed bond.

William Barker	Gerry Collins	Barbara DePauw	John DePauw	Reid Goldstein
Herschel Kanter	Roye Lowry	Roger Meyer	Tim Wise	Beth Wolffe, Chairwoman