



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 11, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Tom Arnold *TA*
Deputy County Executive

SUBJECT: Crossing Guards

BACKGROUND:

As part of the FY 2027 budget, the Board of Supervisors eliminated dedicated crossing guard positions at the County's high schools. During the August 25, 2026 Board of Supervisors Meeting, Supervisor Herrity submitted a Board Matter jointly with Supervisor Lusk and Supervisor Alcorn to direct the County Executive to work with the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) to identify the issues that have been created by the removal of the high school crossing guards, if and how they can be mitigated, the resources required to address them, and report back to the Board with the findings via a memorandum.

Following discussion at the Budget Policy Meeting on September 1, 2026, the Fairfax County Police Department temporarily restored crossing guards where they were eliminated and had staff develop objective criteria to guide any broader or permanent restoration of the program. This memorandum focuses on the specific issue of high school crossing guards; it also highlights a broader challenge facing the County. Over the past three budget cycles, Fairfax County has implemented significant reductions and position eliminations across public safety and other County services to maintain fiscal balance while minimizing impacts to taxpayers.

As the Board begins discussions on the FY 2028 budget and beyond, it may be appropriate to revisit certain service reductions and assess whether community expectations, operational demands, and safety considerations warrant the restoration of selected programs or positions. The crossing guard program serves as one example of how budget reductions can create unintended service impacts that may require future reinvestment. A broader review will help ensure the County continues to balance fiscal stewardship with the level of service our residents expect and deserve.

SITE SURVEY FINDINGS:

- All high school locations that had crossing guards eliminated during the FY2026 Budget Reduction process were analyzed for the need for a Level 2 crossing guard. The primary responsibility of any police officer or Level 2 crossing guard is to safely cross students, not to alleviate traffic congestion. Traffic direction is performed with the intent to help students cross the roadway safely. No locations were identified where directing traffic is necessary to safely cross students.

- FCPD recommends that traffic pattern and congestion concerns be addressed in a bifurcated manner, as any assistance provided by the presence of a Level 2 guard or police officer is ancillary and not tied to the mission of ensuring students cross safely.
- No specific immediate safety concerns were noted at the high school crossing locations beyond the number of students and vehicles. Specific design improvements are listed below.
- Kiss and Ride operations and student driver volume at all affected schools contribute to congestion in the areas surrounding these crossings. While the volume of school-generated traffic is largely outside FCPD's control, its effect on sightlines and safe crossing conditions at specific locations is a relevant safety factor and is reflected in the criteria below.
- In almost all evaluations, numerous instances were noted of students being dropped off at locations other than the designated Kiss and Ride area, resulting in students crossing at unmarked locations and being put at risk. The primary contributors to congestion and safety concerns are student drop-offs and student drivers.
- There are significant day-to-day variations in findings at high school crossings driven by school events (e.g., sporting events), which do not occur at other school crossings in the community. This variability makes high school crossings harder to evaluate consistently, whereas middle school and elementary school crossings are governed by the more stable conditions addressed under FCPD General Order 611.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Availability of a safe, signalized alternate crossing (e.g., an existing signalized crosswalk within a defined walking distance of a parking or drop-off area that students can reasonably be expected to use)
- Absence of signalization combined with multiple or complex turn lanes – crossings with dual/triple turn lanes or heavy right-turn-on-red conflicts at an uncontrolled or partially controlled location
- Sight distance – measured from both the driver's and student's vantage point at actual (not posted) operating speed; note any obstructions, including Kiss and Ride queuing
- Vehicle speed – posted speed limit
- Adequacy of existing traffic control – full signal with pedestrian phase, RRFB/PHB (rapid flashing beacon/pedestrian hybrid beacon), marked crosswalk only, or no control.
- Distance to nearest alternate controlled crossing
- Documented crash or near-miss history at the crossing
- Overlap between school arrival/dismissal times and AM/PM commuter peak traffic on the adjacent roadway

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS:

- Installation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons at all high school locations.
- Install a HAWK/Pedestrian Hybrid beacon or traffic signal at West Springfield High School.

- The following 3 locations were noted as having marked crosswalks. FCPD recommends an additional crosswalk based on pedestrian patterns.
 1. McLean
 2. Oakton
 3. South Lakes

FEEDBACK FROM OFFICE OF SCHOOL SECURITY (OSS):

- Dedicated crosswalk lighting — some crossings occur when it's still dark outside in winter months (**All HS**)
- Illuminated overhead pedestrian crossing signs (**Centreville HS**)
- Radar speed feedback signs (**All HS**)
- Restricting parking at corners near crosswalks (**All HS**)
- Turn restrictions during specific times (e.g., no left turn 0630-0830) (**West Springfield HS**)
- Raised crosswalks (**Annandale HS**)
- Pedestrian fencing when appropriate (**Chantilly HS**). Channel students from Library overflow to the crosswalk

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COST ESTIMATES:

The recommendation is to restore the 11 crossings (10 schools) that were eliminated as part of the FY 2027 budget at an annual cost of \$707,908 for 11 school crossing guard positions. FCPD will maintain temporary coverage of these crossings while efforts are made to reconnect with and rehire former crossing guards who previously served at these locations. The FY26 Budget reduction included 13 positions, but coverage can be accomplished with 11.

Where former crossing guards are unavailable or choose not to return, FCPD will recruit, hire, and train new crossing guards or utilize contracted resources as necessary to ensure continuity of coverage.

The 10 High Schools are:

1. Annandale
2. Centreville
3. Chantilly
4. Edison
5. McLean
6. Oakton
7. South County
8. South Lakes
9. West Springfield
10. West Potomac

- FCPD will train any FCPS staff they identify to be Level 1 or Level 2 crossing guards which would allow FCPS to supplement any crossings they desire.
- FCPS should evaluate bus utilization which is a safer option for student transport and alleviates congestion around the schools by reducing the student drivers and drop offs.
- FCPD will continue to work collaboratively with the OSS and school administrators to identify concerns and quickly address.

cc: Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
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