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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 19, 2021

**City of Norfolk School Board Approves Budget for the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year**

NORFOLK, VA – In a meeting held Wednesday, May 19, 2021, the City of Norfolk School Board adopted a \$468.41 million operating budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. This action followed Norfolk City Council’s May 11, 2021, approval of its municipal budget, which includes funding for schools.

The newly adopted budget provides \$5.57 million more than the budget request the School Board originally submitted to City Council in March. This increase is the result of the General Assembly adopting a biennial budget that contains more funding for public education than what was originally included in the Governor’s proposal and a \$374,450 increase in city funding.

In light of the availability of additional state and local funding, Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong recommended further enhancements to the starting salary for new teachers and employee salary increases above that originally submitted to City Council in March. Effective July 1, 2021, the new starting salary for teachers will be \$47,200 (originally proposed at \$47,000) and the average salary increases will be 6.1 percent for teachers (previously 5.1 percent); 6 percent for classified staff (previously 5 percent); and 4 percent for administrators (previously 3 percent).

“I was especially pleased to be able to make this recommendation to the School Board this year. The school division’s staff has performed in exemplary fashion during a pandemic that deservedly could be labeled the “worst of times.” These very respectable salary increases acknowledge their hard work and also lay the groundwork for future expectations. Undoubtedly, in the new school year we will be addressing new challenges - ones associated with learning loss and the negative impact of the pandemic on the social-emotional wellness of children,” said Dr. Byrdsong.

Dr. Byrdsong also pointed to many other supports the FY2021-2022 budget will provide for schools and students. These include additional staff and/or material resources to improve reading and mathematics instruction, gifted education, English language learner instruction, special education services, foreign/world language instruction, student wellness, student attendance support, extended day and summer school programs, and programs to address the social-emotional needs of students, to name a few. The budget also includes improved funding for the professional development of teachers, technology resources for students, technology infrastructure, and personal protective equipment.

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Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) is on a mission to ensure that all students maximize their academic potential, develop skills for lifelong learning, and become successful contributors to a global society. We believe Norfolk Public Schools is the cornerstone of a proudly diverse community with highly qualified teachers and staff dedicated to providing diverse teaching and learning opportunities for all students.