



Fairfax County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Everything you wanted to know about opening an Office of the Ombudsman

Armando Peri, Ombudsman
Fairfax County Public Schools

Introductions

Armando Peri, Ombudsman

- Student
- Psychologist
- Principal
- Father

Participants

- What Virginia K-12 Divisions are represented?

Our Objectives

The role of the Ombudsman

The opportunities and challenges of creating the office of the ombudsman

The logistics of the office of the ombudsman

The benefits of the Office of the ombudsman

Answers to your questions

What is an Ombudsman

Swedish: a person who listens and helps to resolve concerns and problems

Organizational Ombudsman vs Advocacy Ombudsman

Four Principles (International Ombudsman Association) <https://www.ombudsassociation.org/>

- Confidential
- Independent
- Impartial
- Informal

Why create an Office of the Ombudsman?

Focus on Equity

- [One Fairfax](#)
- Rethinking how we do our work (PD, Curriculum, Family Engagement)

Responsiveness to the Community

- Support from the School Board
- Reduce the number of “formal complaints”

Large Bureaucratic System

- Lift the curtain on “The Rules of School”

How does a typical contact go?

- “Visitor” reaches out to our office through phone, email, or portal
- Staff member replies within 24-48 hours to schedule a meeting (phone or in person) at the visitor’s convenience (translation services are offered)
- Meeting begins with an explanation of our role and services
- The visitor is invited to share their question or concern
- The ombudsman may ask clarifying questions
- The ombudsman will ask for the visitor’s desired outcome
- The ombudsman will share information and options related to the desired outcome
- The ombudsman asks what further supports the visitor might need

What does an Ombudsman do after a call?

As Issues Arise

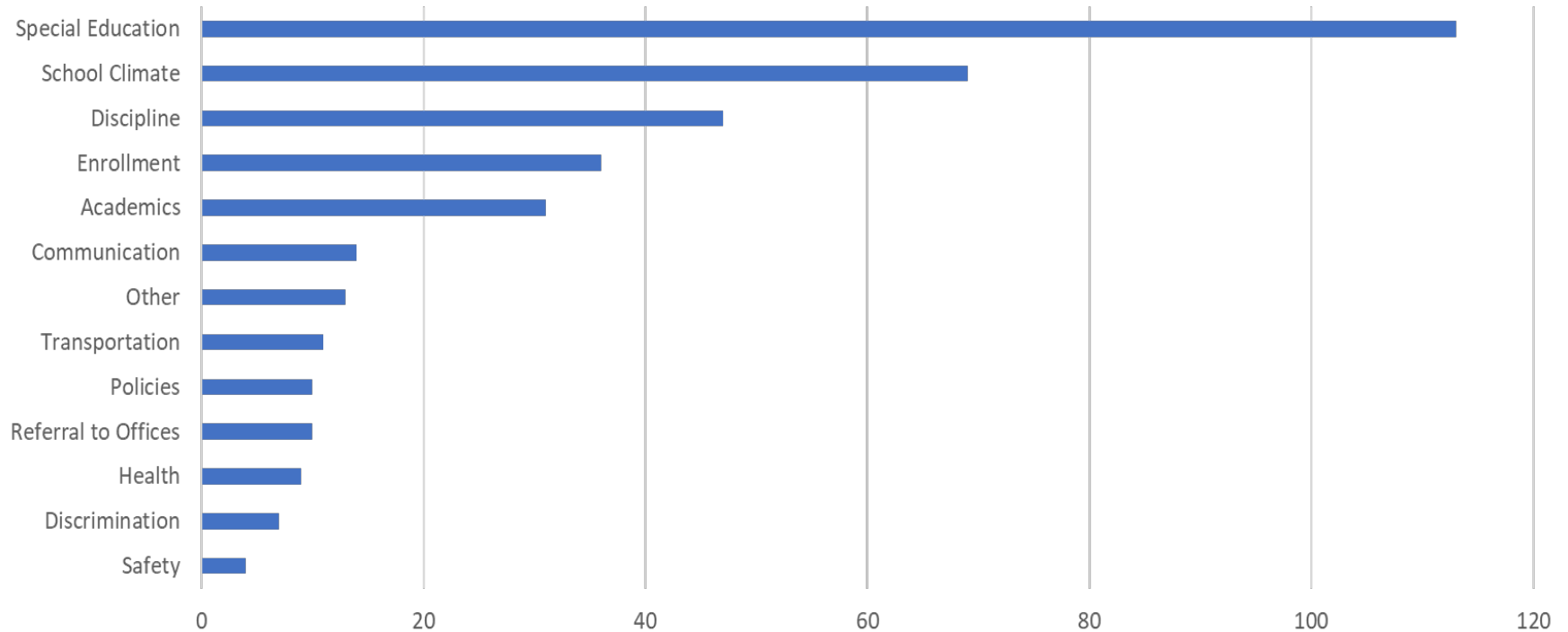
- Report to the Chief Equity Officer

Reports

- Quarterly updates for the Superintendent and School Board
- Annual Report to be published each Summer
 - Compilation and analyzation of data/trends
 - No identifying information
 - Number of contacts (phone, email, portal)
 - Topics
 - Elementary/Middle/High
 - Regions

What kind of calls does the Ombudsman get?

2018-2019 Cases by Category



What does an Ombudsman cost?

Positions

- Principal/Director Level Position
 - Experience, Contacts, Status
- Administrative Assistant
 - Scheduling, technology, production

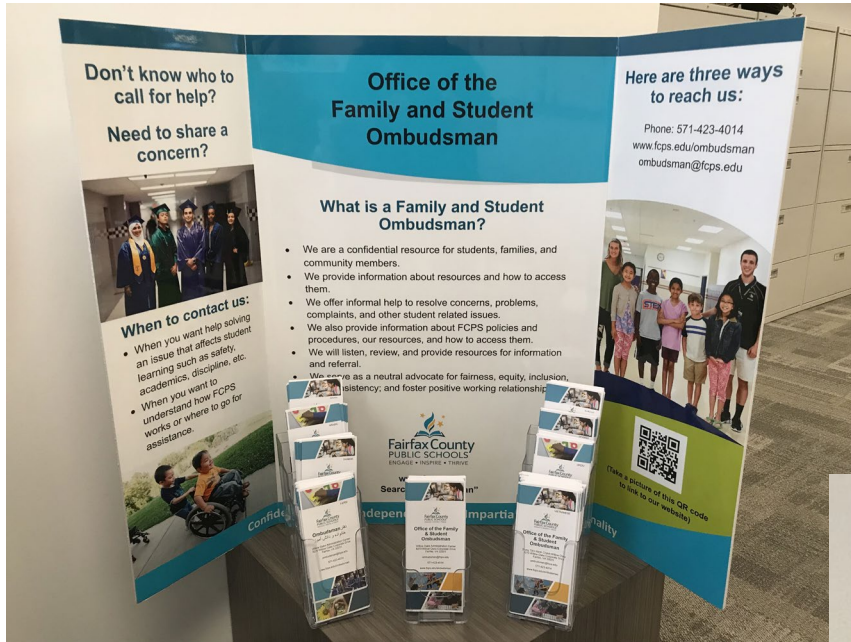
Professional Development

- Principles of professional conduct, Networking

Logistics

- Offices, Communications, Resources

What does an Ombudsman cost?



How do we advertise the work of the Ombudsman?

Community Presentations

- Parents and Students
 - PTAs/PTSOs
 - Parent advocacy groups
 - Student Advisory Councils
 - Places of worship
- Employees
 - School-based Administrators
 - Employee Associations
 - Parent Liaisons
- Community
 - Local Government
 - Shelters

Division Strategies

- Website
- Newsletters
- Social Media



How do we support the Ombudsman?

Change of Mindset

- Where/How does it fit in the organization?
 - Role
 - Parents/Students
 - Employees
 - Friend or Foe?
 - Confidentiality

Reporting structures

- Superintendent or School Board?
- Data Collection

Questions

Thank you for joining this webinar!

Feel free to contact me at alperi@fcps.edu or 571-423-4014.

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