

## Response to Questions on the FY 2013 Budget

**Request By:** Supervisor Cook

**Question:** For the SACC program, how much is currently spent on subsidizing the fees and what are the criteria for eligibility for the subsidized fee? What is the monthly charge for participation in SACC? How does that charge compare to the market rate cost for similar after school care? Assuming SACC fees are lower, how much additional funding would be raised if SACC fees were increased to that market rate?

**Response:** The School Age Child Care (SACC) program supports working families by providing child care services (both during the school year including spring, summer, and winter vacations and during the summer) to children in kindergarten through sixth grade, as well as older children with disabilities. During the school year, approximately 10,000 children are served in SACC centers located in 136 Fairfax County Public Schools and one recreation center. The school year SACC program operates a before-school program, operating from 7:15 A.M. until school begins, as well as an after-school program running from the end of the school day until 6:15 P.M. SACC winter, spring, and summer programs are provided in consolidated school sites throughout the County. Separate fees are paid for each of the SACC programs.

For FY 2013, parent fees are currently estimated to cover approximately 79 percent of SACC program costs, with a net cost to the County of less than \$10.0 million. This subsidy provides much needed child care services for working families on the sliding fee scale and addresses the higher costs associated with serving children with special needs.

The FY 2012 monthly fee (September through June) for the after school program is \$309. Families with an adjusted household income of more than \$51,000 pay the full fee (i.e. a full paying parent will pay the full \$309). Families with adjusted household incomes of less than \$51,000 are eligible for reduced fees. Approximately 18 percent of SACC families are eligible for reduced fees on the sliding fee scale. Historically, SACC parent fees have been adjusted based on increased program costs (primarily driven by annual compensation increases to employees); however, in recent years, in an effort to address the budget shortfall, fees have been increased based on a flat percentage. Over the past few fiscal years, fees have increased nearly 17 percent. The most recent annual fee increases are as follows:

- FY 2010: 5 percent
- FY 2011: 3 percent
- FY 2012: 3 percent
- FY 2013: 5 percent (proposed)

It should be noted that a 3 percent SACC fee increase generates approximately \$1 million in revenues.

### Monthly After-School Fees Across the Region

Staff is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of SACC fees and the sliding fee scale as well as reviewing the program designs of other after school child care programs within the surrounding jurisdictions and in the community. Since many variables may be included when setting a rate, most notably personnel and overhead costs, the use of a sliding fee scale, serving special needs children, geographic location, hours of operation, and profit status, it may be difficult to compare the County’s program to other jurisdictions and community programs. The table below represents a strict rate comparison (i.e., it does not account for the variables discussed above that may or may not be included in the rates) of the current after-school monthly fees for the municipal programs in the region:

Jurisdictions	Fairfax County SACC	Prince William County	Arlington <sup>1</sup> County	Falls Church City	Loudoun County	Alexandria <sup>2</sup> City
After School Monthly Fee	\$309	\$280	\$248- \$332	\$306	\$321	\$386

<sup>1</sup> Fees vary per site. Full fee at income above \$100,000

<sup>2</sup> Full fee at income above \$165,000

Upon completion, the comprehensive review of SACC fees and the sliding fee scale as well as the review of program designs of other after school child care programs within the surrounding jurisdictions and in the community will be shared with the Board of Supervisors. In addition, updated SACC fee recommendations are anticipated to be made as part of the FY 2014 budget process.