

Response to Questions on the FY 2013 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Gross

Question: Please review the inequities in salaries for Head Start teachers that are school-based versus independent operators (e.g., Gum Springs). How and why did this occur?

Response: The Department of Family Services, Office for Children (OFC) is the administering agency for Head Start and Early Head Start and directly operates the Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start programs (at Gum Springs Children's Center, Gum Spring Glen, and in family child care homes). Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and Higher Horizons Day Care Center, a private non-profit organization, also provide Head Start and Early Head Start services through a contractual delegate relationship with the County.

In accordance with federal regulations, Head Start/Early Head Start teacher salaries in each of the three programs are subject to the pay scales and personnel policies/regulations approved by the governing body of each respective program (i.e., the Board of Supervisors for Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start, the School Board for FCPS, and the Higher Horizons Board of Directors for Higher Horizons Day Care Center). Consequently, to the extent that differences in pay scales and personnel policies/regulations exist between these three governing bodies, salaries may differ accordingly.

Staff is preparing a comparison of salary scales for teaching positions which will consider variables such as teacher education requirements, experience and program models. The salary scale comparison of the three Head Start programs will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at the May 2012 Human Services Committee meeting.

Please note that, when granted by the federal government, all programs receive federal cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) funds to be used for compensation increases, subject to the federal provisions governing such increases. In addition, when contractual rate adjustments are included in the County's Adopted Budget, increases in local funds are provided to the programs, to be used for such purposes as determined by each program's governing body.