

Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Budget

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: How does the new School-Age Child Care model impact capacity? Please provide an update on how fees are structured.

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 138 SACC centers located in 137 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. Below is an update on the new SACC staffing model and SACC fees.

New SACC Staffing Model

The SACC school year program is offered on a schedule that corresponds to the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) schedule. Traditionally, a new SACC room was opened utilizing merit employees. Beginning in FY 2010, new SACC rooms were opened using a modified staffing model which utilized a combination of merit and benefits-eligible employees. Based on the success of the new model, along with the implementation of full day kindergarten at all remaining elementary schools, staff is now implementing the new model in all SACC rooms. The new staffing model is being implemented as merit positions become vacant. Based on the current rate of attrition, it is anticipated that 30 merit positions will be converted in FY 2014 and the remaining positions in FY 2015. The new staffing model does not impact capacity as the number of staff is not changing, just the combination of merit and benefits-eligible employees.

SACC Fees

Fees are collected from parents as payment for child care services. SACC parent fees are reviewed annually and are typically adjusted based on increased program costs (primarily driven by annual compensation increases to employees). Parent fees are assessed on a sliding scale adjusting for household income and are estimated to cover approximately 80 percent of SACC program costs. The net cost to the County is less than \$9.0 million. Costs not recovered through fees 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 2015 Advertised Budget Plan includes a proposed fee increase of 1.3 percent which is consistent with the proposed compensation increases for employees and will generate \$0.5 million in additional revenue.