

Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Budget

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: What were the implications to the Middle School After-School (MSAS) program of the \$200,000 reduction in county funding in FY 2014? How much is being charged to participants?

Response: The \$200,000 reduction in funding to MSAS reduced General Fund support for the program from \$3,263,173 to \$3,063,173 requiring the program to reduce the number of available activity offerings, ultimately leading to a lowering of overall participation rates. The reduction manifested itself in a \$7,700 cut in program operations in each of the 26 middle schools. Program operations include hourly staff, supplies and equipment, and snacks. To meet this reduction, 20 middle schools reduced the number of club activities and/or the frequency of club meetings; six middle schools eliminated the college visit which was part of the College Partnership Program; and across all 26 middle schools, 17 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) activities were eliminated. In addition, equipment was not upgraded or replaced and fewer snacks were offered to the students.

Both the scope and quality of the after-school initiative were impacted as student-centered project-based learning opportunities – which enhanced student engagement - were replaced by large student-staff ratio activities. Some teaching staff chose not to work in the after-school program because of the reduction in hours and or reduced pay scale. Personalized student attention with the counselors and teachers has been diminished resulting in fewer students not being directed to specific activities that would address their academic, social, and/or behavioral needs. Fewer clubs and activities are offered on non-late bus days which means that students who need to stay after do not. This also leads to less supervision and less opportunity to build a relationship with each student.

The after-school program specialists report a drop in after-school attendance this school year. The average student attendance for the 2012-13 school year was 21,126 students per week (duplicated number). Early estimates for the 2013-14 school year indicate a decrease of as much as 5 percent, or 1,056 students per week. It should be noted that attendance had been growing by about 4.5 percent per year over the previous five years.

No fees are charged to students.