Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: Please provide a breakdown of all costs associated with the eCart program across all schools and departments in FCPS.

Response: The following response was prepared by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):

eCART is a key component of the technology-enhanced instructional model used in FCPS that enables differentiated instruction, reinforces learning, and addresses individual needs of students. eCART also supports the work of collaborative teams. eCART includes a Curriculum Repository used to manage and share the program of studies, assessment items, and instructional resources. Currently the repository includes the standards, benchmarks, and indicators for 212 content areas (subjects), 101,487 instructional resources (including lesson plans), and 40,749 assessment items. eCART also includes the Horizon assessment system that provides for teacher-created, as well as, district-created assessments. In SY 2012-2013 students completed 4,797,106 assessments—only 20 percent were district mandated assessments. Further, EDSL provides for the longitudinal data reporting of student assessment results in alignment with the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.

The eCART budget covers the costs for the Curriculum Repository, Horizon, and EDSL. The budget is differentiated between recurring maintenance funds necessary to use eCART and development funds to cover enhancements requested by the schools. The maintenance and development budgets are detailed below.

The annual maintenance and support budget for FCPS eCART effective in FY 2014, including budgeted positions, is $2.7 million. The annual maintenance budget breaks down as follows:

- Hosting and maintenance costs for FCPS eCART applications: $1.4 million

    - Horizon assessment application hosting and maintenance

    - eCART Resource Search and Retrieval tool software maintenance

    - EDSL eCART data warehouse and reporting application software maintenance

    - Curriculum Repository software maintenance

- Application support staff funding: Hourly - $0.1 million

- Processing assessment results for the more than 950,899 paper and pencil assessments administered: Contracted - $0.1 million

- Printing and distribution of over 66,000 booklets supporting the two district assessment administrations each year: Contracted - $30,000

- Budgeted positions (8.0 FTEs including benefits): $1.1 million

    o 4.0 Instructional Services FCPS 24/7 Learning curriculum area specialists

    o 1.0 Instructional Services eCART Program Manager

    o 1.0 PLA psychometrician supporting assessment and assessment item analysis

    o 2.0 IT technical specialists providing support for EDSL eCART

In addition to the annual maintenance budget, there is $1.1 million for development. The development budget addresses mandatory overhaul of the curriculum to align with the Standards of Learning, as well as enhancements requested by the schools. The FY 2014 development budget breaks down as follows:

- Instructional Services curriculum development to align with state standards and to refresh assessments and instructional resources for the new school year: $0.4 million

- Curriculum Repository enhancements to support new question types that students will experience on SOL tests and to provide a more "Google-like" instructional resource search: $0.1 million

- EDSL enhancements to support reporting longitudinal assessment results, to provide enhanced dashboards to support cumulative standards, benchmarks, and indicators performance, and provide reports on school public and private assessments: $0.4 million

- Northrop Grumman and Blackboard support for the items above: $0.2 million

The total FY 2014 budget, including maintenance and development, is $3.8 million. Note that the FY 2015 advertised budget includes a $0.3 million budget reduction for eCART.

In addition, Project Management Oversight Committee (PMOC) funding of $0.2 million was used in FY 2014 to support eCART; however, this funding is not part of the annual eCART budget. PMOC funding is not dedicated to a specific project and may be allocated to other initiatives in future years.