

Response to Questions on the FY 2016 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Cook

Question: How much revenue would be realized by charging a \$100 annual fee for Middle School After School (MSAS) programs, with an exemption for children on free and reduced lunch?

Response: The 2013-14 school year MSAS program had approximately 13,000 students that were considered regular attendees (i.e., U.S. Department of Education term denoting students who attend 30 or more days of after school programming in a school year). The extent to which a new fee will reduce participation is hard to predict, but it is assumed the regular attendees would be the most likely students to stay in the program in the event a fee is implemented. Assuming the current broader school population free and reduced price meals (FRPM) rate of 28 percent applies to the regular attendees, 9,360 students would pay the \$100 fee, for a total revenue generation of \$936,000. However, as a result of outreach efforts, the percentage of after-school attendees who receive FRPM is higher than the cited school-wide 28 percent. Therefore, revenues are very likely to be less than \$936,000.

It should be noted that the MSAS program has been a key element in the County's and school division's initiatives to not just combat gangs but to improve student behavior, improve academic performance, and develop healthy and successful youth. The MSAS program provides safe, engaging, and enriching activities to students who do not have access to such opportunities otherwise. These students often come from a background where funding is not available for extracurricular activities. As such, significant effort was put into encouraging participation among as many middle school youth as possible. The decision not to implement a fee from the beginning of the program was a part of those efforts.

While the MSAS program receives the majority of its funding from the County's General Fund, the program is officially a Fairfax County Public Schools program and as such any adoption of a program fee requires the approval of the Fairfax County School Board.