

## Response to Questions on the FY 2019 Budget

**Request By:** Supervisor McKay

**Question:** Provide full explanation on how the schools address increasing student projections - for example when absorbed in classroom and when additional staff is required. Provide data points used to determine enrollment projections. How do offsetting decreases factor into the formula? (Financial Services)

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

FCPS produces two projection sets each school year. Once the school year begins, a five-year school-by-school projection set is produced. The last year of this set is used for the annual Capital Improvement Program. Additionally, FCPS produces a six-month projection set each spring for the upcoming school year. Page 28 of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) FY 2019-23 provides a detailed step-by-step process for the student membership projection. FCPS analyzes the following factors for student membership projection at the school system level, pyramid level, and school level: Historical patterns of student membership; birth to kindergarten ratios; kindergarten class membership to the previous school year's exiting 12th grade class; cohort progression; past cohort survival ratios; population and housing forecasts and trends; migration patterns; boundary phasing decisions. Modifications and adjustments are made, as needed, to account for other relevant information unique to a specific school or group of schools. Special program student membership projections are factored into projections as they may impact school specific membership.

The majority of positions (teachers, classroom assistants, office staff, custodians, etc.) allocated to schools are based on School Board staffing formulas detailed in the appendix of each budget volume. In general, schools with increasing enrollment, free or reduced-price meal (FRM) eligibility, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services, or special education services may see budget increases while schools with declining figures may see reductions in budgeted staff. However, in some instances, growth may be able to be absorbed and conversely, declines may not result in savings.

Consider an extremely simplified example of a low poverty school with 104 kindergarten students projected and 4 teachers budgeted in SY 2017-18. Assuming no other demographic changes impacting the staffing formula (e.g. increased eligibility for FRM), this school would be able to accommodate anywhere from 85 to 112 projected kindergarten students in SY 2018-19 without any change in kindergarten staffing. So, a decline of up to 19 kindergarten students projected would not result in any kindergarten savings while an increase of up to 8 kindergarten students projected would not result in any kindergarten cost. Expand the above example to each of the School Board formulas at each school and account for all of the changes that may impact the various formulas (e.g. projected enrollment, FRM, ESOL, building square footage in the case of custodians, etc.) and the result is the cost/savings that results from enrollment and demographic growth/declines.

Broadly speaking, the FY 2019 proposed projections resulted in a budget that accommodated an estimated increase of 702 students, significant special education and FRM growth, and moderate ESOL growth. Revisions to the projected number of students, as of spring, result in a budget that will accommodate 1,146 (an increase of 444 from the proposed) additional students without requiring significant adjustments for special education, FRM, or ESOL because the initial projections did not require as much updating in those areas.