



FY 2020 Recommended Budget Budget Question

Board Question #: 3

BUDGET QUESTION: What are the details of the basis for the estimated increase for student enrollment? Specifically, what is the basis for the statement on page 4 of the Schools' CIP: "Despite the fact that there were actually 140 fewer students enrolled in the school division on October 1, 2018 than the preceding school year at that time, we are anticipating serving an additional 1,066+ students in the next three years." Does the estimate factor in the decrease in the birth rate between 2013 and 2018?

RESPONDING DEPARTMENT/OFFICE: Schools

RESPONSE: The Introduction of the division's CIP addresses an anecdotal perception that new residential construction is occurring throughout the County. However, it is clear as one continues to read this section of the Schools' Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that future enrollment growth affects identified schools whose attendance zones are located in areas of the County where large developments have been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The school division utilizes a comprehensive student enrollment projection methodology, which includes regular collaboration with the County's Planning Commission team.

The basis for our student enrollment projection estimates begins with the current year baseline and graduating each class by one year to take into account each class's progression through the school system. From there we look at the birth rate data provided by the Virginia Department of Health and compare historical births to the actual number of Kindergarten student enrolled five years later. Based on the most recent three year trends, we applied a factor of 1.029 to the children born during 2014 to 2016 for entry into the system during the fall of 2019 to 2021. As referenced at the top of page 5 of the CIP introduction, immediately following the line referenced in the question, we adjusted the kindergarten classes entering in the Fall of 2022 and 2023 by 100 each to account for the increases in population growth. (To clarify, the school division's student enrollment projections do include the referenced downturn in Spotsylvania's live births. This is one of the main reasons why the school division has not incorporated the construction of any new schools into its Capital Improvement Plan. Historically, the Kindergarten class will increase by 2.6% when entering in the first grade level and this factor was applied.

Other known trends include:

- Between the eighth and ninth grade year we have historically seen an increase of nearly 9%, this factor was applied.
- Between ninth and tenth grade we have seen a historical drop of nearly 6%, this factor was applied.
- Between tenth and eleventh we have seen a historical drop of nearly 5%, this factor was applied.
- Between eleventh and twelve grade we have a historical increase of 1%, this factor was applied.

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After the base data was adjusted for known historical anomalies, we applied our projected increases for new construction on a prorated basis between grades at the elementary, middle, and high level for the schools which are projected to absorb the impact of the new construction. Construction projections and the corresponding impact were based upon information obtained while meeting with the County Planning department as referenced on page 8 of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Spotsylvania County Government Planning officials met with school staff to review each subdivision which was either under construction or were at some phase of their approval process. It was from this information that the school division based their assumptions on each planned community and applied an absorption factor based upon the type of housing to be built. Adjustments were made to the upcoming tax credit housing to reflect a doubling of the absorption rate of non tax credit homes. Student enrollment projections are updated annually.

ESTIMATE OF STAFF TIME SPENT ON RESPONSE: