

FY 2010 QUESTION NUMBER: 2

QUESTION:

Referencing the testimony of the Watkins Mill Cluster, how many students are enrolled in the Watkins Mill International Baccalaureate (IB) program and what is the capacity? What would be the cost to split the Richard Montgomery High School (RMHS) program to create two catchment areas? What would be the process to start a Middle Years Program (MYP) in the Watkins Mill Cluster?

BUDGET PAGE REFERENCE: N/A

ANSWER:

Watkins Mill High School (WMHS) currently has about 30 diploma candidates in each graduating class and a total of 145 students in Grades 9–12. It is designed to handle all interested and capable students with no set capacity. The school is permitted and encouraged to enroll more local students in preparatory classes in Grades 9 and 10 to increase the program size in Grades 11 and 12. Given the staff currently trained at the school, a realistic immediate capacity would be about 50 diploma candidates per year without a needed increase in staff training.

Costs to split the IB program at Richard Montgomery High School (RMHS) include additional staffing, transportation, and efficiencies lost by reducing the program at RMHS to 50 students per year as well as the programmatic costs of splitting an existing program.

IB program costs vary from year-to-year based on the number of staff requiring professional development and the IB fees charged. Average nonposition costs of an IB program over five years of implementation are approximately \$51,000 per year. This average cost does not account for significant increases in professional development if a large number of students are added to a program. Most IB programs have a 1.0 full-time equivalent classroom teacher for coordination of the program. The budgeted cost of a classroom teacher for FY 2010 is \$62,994, bringing the total estimated cost of a single IB program per school to \$113,994.

The magnet IB program incurs additional costs through an additional staffing allocation to offset the impact of unique classes in the school schedule; however, this additional staffing could be split with the program and assigned to the new site. To handle the magnet recruitment, application, selection, and appeals processes the magnet IB program requires an administrative level magnet coordinator instead of the teacher level coordinator and additional clerical support. The budgeted cost of an N level administrator is \$116,681. The additional clerical support would cost approximately \$49,013 per year, bringing the additional staff cost of splitting the magnet IB program to \$165,994 per year. This would represent a \$102,700 increase to serve the same number of students at two sites.

Transportation costs would rise over the first four years of implementation as students matriculate through RMHS and begin at WMHS, but would return to the same cost for operating at RMHS only, as the same number of students would be involved.

It also is important to consider the program consequences of establishing split sites. RMHS has served as a magnet IB by distinguishing itself with the breadth and depth of IB course offerings taught by a large number of IB trained staff. A reduction to 50 students would mean a decrease in the variability and depth of course offerings. In addition a process would need to be put in place to allow teachers to continue at RMHS or relocate to WMHS. One option to consider to offset this effect would be to increase the overall enrollment of the program to 150 students with 75 students at each site. Combined with the local students in each program, the magnet IB programs would be able to maintain the current depth of program offerings.

However, this option comes with the cost of transporting 50 more students, which would mean adding two more bus routes. The cost of operating two magnet bus routes and leasing two more buses is \$69,992 per year. This option also has the disadvantages of pulling more students from their home high schools, further exacerbating the problem indicated by the Watkins Mill cluster.

IB has an application process that typically takes two years to complete. To demonstrate readiness for the program, schools are required to show commitment to the IB philosophy, professional development, curriculum and assessment, and financial support from the school district administration and school board.

To add a Middle Years Program in the Watkins Mill cluster several questions should be considered. Would a paired middle-high school model be developed? Would both feeder middle schools host MYP? What high school IB program would be available for students in the Clarksburg High School portion of the Neelsville Middle School area? Estimated costs for these different configurations are in the table below.

Program Configuration	Estimated Annual Cost
MYP at only Montgomery Village Middle School or Neelsville Middle School	\$113,994
MYP at Montgomery Village Middle School and Watkins Mill High School	\$202,790
MYP at Montgomery Village Middle School and Neelsville Middle School	\$227,998
MYP at Montgomery Village Middle School, Neelsville Middle School, and Watkins Mill High School	\$316,794

The Neelsville Middle School feeder pattern is split between Clarksburg and Watkins Mill high schools. Opening a program at Neelsville Middle School will create requests for students in the Clarksburg High School feeder pattern to continue in the IB program at Watkins Mill High School. If the magnet option is not available, it is important to note that approving transfers based on program is not permitted by the MCPS transfer policy. In addition, this would set a

precedent for expansion through student the transfers to the three other local IB programs at Rockville and Bethesda-Chevy Chase high schools and the developing program at Seneca Valley High School. The IB programs at Springbrook and Albert Einstein high schools and the developing program at John F. Kennedy High School are currently part of regional consortia.