Extended School Year Program
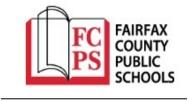
Interim Evaluation Report

(FY 2013, FY 2014 and FY 2015 data)

April 2015

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Program Evaluation

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Report Overview

The Extended School Year Program Year 1 Interim Evaluation Report, covering SY 2013-14, is organized into five sections:

Introduction provides background information about the program within Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and a description of the program's purpose and framework.

Purpose of the Evaluation details the context of the program evaluation request and the focus of the evaluation design.

Evaluation Findings presents the evaluation evidence gathered during the course of the evaluation in two general areas of program functioning: Program Definition and Program Costs. A report planned for September 2015 will include evidence gathered in the two other areas of program functioning covered by evaluation reports (Fidelity of Implementation, Outcomes).

Conclusions synthesizes evaluation findings into a discussion of major strengths and areas of challenge for the program in the areas evaluated.

Recommendations to Decision Makers details the Office of Program Evaluation's (OPE) recommendations to the FCPS Leadership Team, schools, and program staff for improving the Extended School Year (ESY) program.

In addition to the full report, an Executive Report that highlights key findings used for the overall judgment made about the program is available.

Introduction

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004 (PL 108-446; IDEA 2004) school districts are required to provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to each qualified person with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability. In order to support FAPE, school districts may be required to provide students with disabilities with additional services beyond the traditional school year calendar. Thus, the purpose of FCPS' Extended School Year (ESY) program is to provide special education and related support services to students whose educational progress during the school year would be significantly jeopardized if the students did not receive additional support during normally occurring breaks in the school year.

What are extended school year services?

Extended school year services include special programs provided for students with disabilities beyond the normal school year calendar, most commonly summer and winter breaks (Ahearn, 2000). The services are individualized to meet the students' needs as determined on an annual basis by the students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and documented on the student's IEP. IEP teams consider a range of criteria for deciding whether or not to recommend ESY services. The criteria used are shaped by federal and state requirements, as well as legal precedence. Once an IEP team has decided that extended school year services are needed, they identify the type and intensity of services, location, duration, and inclusion of related services (e.g., audiology services, physical or occupational therapy, psychological or social work services) to meet individual student needs. Extended school year services are offered primarily over summer breaks, though some school divisions also offer such services during other breaks in the school year (e.g., winter break), if needed, to ensure FAPE.

How is the Extended School Year (ESY) program designed in FCPS?

FCPS offers ESY services in two settings:

1. Class-based Sites. The majority of FCPS students receiving ESY services participate in a class-based program during the summer break. The number and location of sites varies each year based on the student population requiring ESY services, site availability, and transportation needs. During the period covered by this evaluation report (summer 2014), 26 sites (five preschool central sites, five combined preschool and elementary central sites, eight elementary sites, three secondary sites, and five special education schools/centers) offered ESY services to a total of 3,719 students. Although all sites operated for four weeks, they differed in the amount of programming provided to students based on school level served: preschool and elementary sites offered a total of 60 hours of instruction, while secondary sites offered 125 hours of instruction. Based on need, some students received additional services before and/or after the class-based program, as specified by their IEPs.

2. Home/Community-Based Sites. FCPS also offers instruction on ESY goals over the summer through home, community preschools, School Aged Child Care (SACC), and Therapeutic Recreation[1]. During the evaluation period, 109 students received ESY services through

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[1] Secondary students have the opportunity to participate in one daily block of supported recreation and leisure activity time offered collaboratively with Fairfax County Therapeutic Recreation (TR) summer camp. Activities focus on increasing physical fitness, socialization, learning new leisure skills, and having fun.

home/community-based sites. Home/community-based ESY sites use consult teachers to develop lesson plans for individual students and guide parents or other direct service providers on how to provide the programming.

A graphical representation of the program model can be found in Appendix A.

Purpose of the Evaluation

Context of the Evaluation

The ESY program was recommended for evaluation through a process that included input from central office departments, school-based administrators, and FCPS' Leadership Team. Following identification of the ESY program for evaluation, the Assistant Superintendent for the Department of Special Services requested that the evaluation focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of the program's design.

Focus of the Evaluation

Evaluations conducted by the Office of Program Evaluation judge the quality of FCPS programs across four core program characteristics:

> **Program Definition** – how the program is intended to be carried out and why;
> **Fidelity of Implementation** – how the program actually runs at schools or sites;
> **Outcomes** – the impact the program has on participants; and
> **Program Costs** – the program's costs and how staff optimizes the use of available funds.

This interim evaluation report focuses on answering questions related to program definition and program costs. The evaluation reports focus on the class-based program as the majority of students (97 percent) are in this service setting. The next report, scheduled to be available in September 2015, will focus on how well sites implement the program and whether ESY attains its intended outcomes. Taken together, the two reports will provide the FCPS School Board, Leadership Team and program staff with evidence-based judgments about the effectiveness of the program based on evaluation data and will make a summative recommendation to continue the program as is, continue it with modifications, or discontinue the program.

OPE staff developed the initial set of evaluation questions based on the information needs identified by the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services. The questions were validated and refined based on recommendations from a team composed of representatives from central office, school- and cluster-based staff, and a university expert (see Acknowledgements for a list of evaluation team members). Additional details about the design can be found in Appendix B.

Research questions answered in this report:

Program Definition
> Is the design consistent with research or best practices for assisting the academic growth of the targeted students?
> To what extent has the program articulated expectations for implementation at program sites (what is 'loose' and what is 'tight')?

Program Costs

> How are funds allocated for the ESY program?
> How do ESY costs in FCPS compare to other districts?
> To what extent do program staff engage in cost saving or cost minimizing efforts?

Research questions to be answered in report available September 2015:

Fidelity of Implementation

> To what extent is the program implemented with fidelity to the program model across sites (consider both site and student-level implementation)?
> Is staff development sufficient to support implementation with fidelity?
> Does the program have staff with the skills, background, and knowledge to meet their job responsibilities?
> Are the participating students those most reflective of the types of student for whom the ESY program is intended?

Outcomes

> To what extent are parents satisfied with the program?
> To what extent does the program meet its goals:
>   o Students meet their IEP goals at the end of ESY;
>   o Students maintained/extended their development on IEP goals by the end of the first quarter?

Data Sources

In order to answer the evaluation questions about Program Definition and Costs, data were collected during the evaluation period covered in this report (Summer 2014) from a review of the literature; from structured interviews with the current and former ESY program manager and staff, FCPS' finance officer overseeing ESY funds, ESY Administrators at all FCPS class-based sites, and ESY program managers in six matched school districts; and from a survey of ESY teachers. In addition, the evaluators collected and reviewed program and budget documents. For further information about the evaluation's methodology, see Appendix C.

Evaluation Findings

This section summarizes the evaluation findings for each evaluation question, followed by a discussion of the evidence used to address the question.

Program Definition

Evaluation Question 1a: Is the design of the ESY program consistent with research or best practices for assisting the academic growth of the targeted students?

Finding 1: **The ESY program's design aligns to federal and state laws and guidelines**.

A review of program documents and results of a program manager interview indicates that the ESY Program is aligned with federal and state guidance and regulations as evidenced by the following:

Determination of Eligibility. FCPS is in alignment with the federal eligibility guidance, which recognizes the importance of regression/recoupment considerations while also establishing that ESY eligibility cannot be determined solely based on this concern. The FCPS ESY Services Guidelines and Procedures Manual specifies that when determining a student's eligibility for ESY services, IEP team members' primary consideration is whether gains made during the school year are significantly in jeopardy. The manual advises IEP teams to consider the same six factors the state requires: regression/recoupment, degree of progress, emerging skills and breakthrough opportunities, interfering behaviors, nature and/or severity of the disability and special circumstances or other factors. Each factor describes what considerations should go into decisions; however, the determination is subjective and open to the interpretation of IEP teams.

Amount and Duration of Services. Previous court decisions have established the need to provide individualized plans that determine the number of weeks, days per week, and hours per day that services are offered; thus programs cannot pre-determine their duration or intensity, unless they make additional provisions to serve students with varying needs. As required by law, FCPS develops an IEP for each qualifying student and the type, amount, and duration of ESY and related services are based on this plan. While FCPS' class-based sites only operate for a certain number of weeks, the program does have the flexibility to allow for students whose IEP indicates the need for additional ESY service time to receive services beyond the duration of the class-based site program.

Service Type. Beyond the above requirements, state and federal laws purposely allow flexibility for school districts to define service in ways that best meet the needs of a district's students. Thus, federal regulations do not specify how services should be delivered though Virginia provides some guidance. FCPS provides various mechanisms through which students can receive ESY services that are in accordance with state guidelines. Consistent with the state, FCPS services are provided by teachers and support staff who have met VDOE-approved certification, licensing, registration or other requirements that apply to their area. The division uses two of Virginia's suggested delivery models – home/community-based services and class-based programs. The state does not provide specifics about how to structure services in either a home or class-based setting. FCPS complies with the federal mandate to provide transportation to ESY services. As required by federal law, FCPS provides all services free of cost to parents.

***Finding 2:* While FCPS's ESY program design is aligned to general research on best practices for summer school, there is insufficient literature on extended school year services against which FCPS's program design can be benchmarked.**

When looking for research about best practices for ESY programs, the limited literature does not suggest the optimal amount of hours, days or weeks an ESY program should operate (see Appendix D for more details on available ESY literature). Thus, OPE relied on general summer school literature for information on optimal program duration and intensity. Utilizing the findings of a meta-analytic[2] study of remedial summer school (Cooper et al., 2000), FCPS' class-based ESY program fully incorporates three of four recommended practices. First, the study found the greatest academic effect on students was from programs lasting 60 to 119 hours. ESY is offered in FCPS for 4 weeks, 5 days a week, for 3 hours a day for pre-kindergarten and elementary FCPS students, totaling 60 hours of ESY instruction.

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[2] Meta-analysis is a statistical technique that combines and analyzes the results of a set of individual studies about a single topic. The technique allows researchers to uncover trends in the overall pool of studies that might not be discerned in the individual studies.

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For secondary students, FCPS' standard program is 5 weeks, 5 days a week, for 5 hours a day, totaling 125 hours of instruction. Second, results suggested that the more individualization in a program, the better, which aligns with ESY's individualization of the program through IEPs and placing together students with similar needs. Thirdly, findings from the Cooper study indicate that programs are most effective with 20 or fewer students per class. FCPS's ESY program typically utilizes class sizes below 20 to offer its services. The final practice recommended by the Cooper study refers to parent involvement in the program, which is only partially realized in FCPS' program. Parents of FCPS students participating in class-based ESY receive weekly progress reports and may be provided opportunities to work with their students on skills at home.

Finding 3: **Despite the flexibility granted to individual states to define ESY service provision, FCPS's ESY program is more similar in design to other districts than not.**

In addition to comparing FCPS's ESY program to summer school research, OPE gathered data from seven districts to understand similarities and differences in the use of five "common" definitions of ESY practices. (More specific information provided by the comparison districts is available in Appendix E):

Service Delivery Model. The two service delivery models used by FCPS for ESY services (direct instruction at class-based sites; consultative services where materials are provided to a parent or other adult and a professional guides and monitors instruction at home-based sites) were commonly found among the comparison districts. All the comparison districts offered school-based programs during the summer, and five of the seven also offered home-based services for select populations. Another model found at three comparison districts (cooperative service arrangements where districts work or contract with other programs/agencies to provide services) is not used by FCPS. Since there is no research base to determine whether one model is better than the others overall or whether some models are more effective depending on disability groups, age of the student, level of impairment or other characteristics, the selection of a particular model does not appear to be influenced by student characteristics. Rather school districts appear to select service delivery models based on the number of students in the district, available funds, and available resources beyond the school.

Proportion of Participating Students. FCPS is in line with five of seven districts in terms of the number of students, relative to population, identified for ESY. At the other two school districts (Dallas with only 300 ESY students and Wake County with 200) referral is based on data collected before and after the winter break to assess the extent to which students regressed in their learning (regression) and how long it took for students to regain their prior skill level (recoupment).   Only those students with data indicating significant regression without recoupment within six weeks of returning to school following winter break are eligible for ESY services.

Number of Service Hours. Four of the seven comparison districts offered ESY services ranging from 60 to 120 hours, as recommended by the meta-analytic study of remedial summer school and, thus, matched FCPS in the number of hours of service. The other three districts offered less than 60 hours to some or all of their ESY students, though one offered 80 hours to most students.

Staff Training. FCPS, like other districts, offers specialized training for various staff members involved in the ESY program. Similar to five of the comparison districts, during the school year, FCPS offers training to staff involved in the IEP team's identification of students for ESY and development of quality ESY goals. In preparation for the summer sessions, FCPS and all other

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districts offer training to staff who will be responsible for implementing ESY; like FCPS some districts offer training specifically for ESY, though a few offer more general training for special education. Comparison divisions indicated training was being offered both in-person and online, approaches also used by FCPS.

Measuring Student Outcomes. None of the comparison districts followed guidelines in the literature for assessing the effectiveness of ESY services by monitoring both regression and recoupment into the school year. While all school divisions, including FCPS, assess student progress on students' ESY goals, only one district reported processes for monitoring regression/recoupment among ESY participants and none aggregated the outcomes to understand overall effectiveness of the ESY program. The individualized nature of the program and measurement challenges may explain why there has not been more attention paid to program outcomes.

Evaluation Question 1b: To what extent has the program articulated expectations for implementation at program sites (what is "loose" and what is "tight")?

Finding 4: **The ESY program is designed with general expectations and an intentional reliance on site-based staff to implement the expectations flexibly.**

Program staff articulated both what activities class-based staff are expected to conduct and the degree of flexibility staff have in implementing program expectations. The ESY program has six expectations for instruction at class-based sites:

- *Individualized instruction* based on IEP goals
- Focus on *critical life skills* designed to build independence
- Implementation of a simplified *school-wide positive behavior approach system* at service sites
- Student participation in a *service learning project* to build a sense that everyone can contribute to the community.
- Direct instruction in *social/interaction skills* embedded into academic instruction.
- Participation of teachers in *collaborative learning teams* at each site.

The program utilizes a multi-tiered comprehensive approach to communicating the expected activities and responsibilities to ESY school-based staff. Since the ESY administrator is the primary person responsible for implementing the program at each site, they are the focus of most of the communication provided by the ESY office. ESY administrators participate in a training meeting before ESY starts, receive supplementary information by email to clarify expectations before the program starts, and during the ESY session, receive a site visit from ESY staff to support understanding of the program's expectations. There is also an ESY Administrator manual that lays out required activities and responsibilities for site-based staff. ESY program staff revisit the training, manuals, and other communication materials annually to make improvement, with recent changes focused around clarifying roles and responsibilities of different staff at the class-based sites to ease confusion that had surfaced in prior years. Less communication is directed toward the center principals because they are continuing their role from the regular school year.

Though the program communicates all six of the expectations to all administrators at ESY sites, program staff indicated during an interview that they do not hold all class-based sites to the six expectations. Specifically, all sites are expected to provide instruction based on ESY IEP goals and receive instruction in critical life skills and social/interaction skills. However, the centers and pre-school centers are not

expected to have students complete a community service project. Program staff make this expectation known, but several ESY administrators at the preschool sites and principals at the centers reported they felt this expectation did not apply to them (see Table 1). They cited challenges in developing service learning projects for preschoolers or students with severe disabilities as reasons for not implementing this expectation. Nonetheless, some preschool and center sites reported they felt service learning was an expectation to be met.

Table 1: ESY Administrator Understanding of Expected Program Components

Expected Program Component	ESY Administrator (n=24)
Individualized instruction	100%
Critical life skills	100%
School-wide positive behavior approach system	96%
Service learning project	80%
Social/interaction skills	100%
Collaborative learning teams	96%

Implication of Findings about Program Definition:

Program Model Design. The evaluation confirms that FCPS' ESY program is well within the scope of mandated guidelines from the federal and state government, as well as precedents set by the courts. Thus, the program is less vulnerable to legal action than if it were not aligned. Further support for the strength of the design is found in the extent to which it is aligned with practitioner knowledge of good programs as reflected by the commonalities FCPS' program shares with ESY services in comparable school districts. Thus, based on currently available practitioner knowledge, more so than research, ESY is designed in a way that could lead to desired outcomes for students. The final ESY evaluation report, which will include evaluation of student outcome data, should provide data-based evidence about the strength of the model FCPS has designed.

Program Model Understanding. Program staff have described a set of six expectations for site-based implementation of the program; however, they are not required at all site-types. Thus, students at different sites are not experiencing all aspects designed into the program. To clarify understanding of program expectations, the program could create a differentiated approach to the program design that identifies the program's vision of what the program should look like at each site type (center, preschool, elementary, secondary).

Program Costs

Evaluation Question 4a: How are funds allocated for the ESY program?

Finding 5: **Per student expenditure for ESY has decreased over the last three years.**

Based on FCPS' Program Budget books, Table 3 shows that the ESY program costs approximately $5 million to operate each year. In fiscal year (FY) 2015, the program cost approximately $1,561 per student, which was approximately 10 percent less than the cost per student in FY 2014 ($1,736) and 25 percent less than the cost in FY 2013 ($2,132**)**. The large decrease in cost per student within two years is attributable to serving about 550 more students with a budget that is $500,000 smaller.

Over 90 percent of the program's budget supports school- and non-school-based salaries and benefits, primarily paid to hourly employees. Less than ten percent of the program budget targets operating expenses. Each year, the budget allocation is divided between the Department of Special Services (i.e., the program) and the Department of Facilities and Transportation Services (FTS). In FY 2015, this division resulted in program staff overseeing approximately $4 million of the budgeted funds, while FTS oversaw approximately $1 million, which supported transportation-related program costs.

Table 3: ESY Program Budget in Fiscal Years 2013 through 2015

	FY 2013		FY 2014		FY 2015	
	School-based	Nonschool-based	School-based	Nonschool-based	School-based	Nonschool-based
Contracted Salaries	$517,142	$192,537	$0	$199,597	$0	$323,151
Hourly Salaries	2,821,269	1,106,328	3,183,640	891,464	3,109,500	747,024
Employee Benefits	376,140	417,525	358,175	360,127	237,877	354,988
Operating Expenses	49,292	400,489	35,500	352,219	40,853	338,414
	$3,763,843	**$2,116,879**	**$3,577,315**	**$1,803,407**	**$3,388,229**	**$1,763,577**
Total Budgeted[a]	**$5,880,722**		**$5,380,722**		**$5,151,806**	
Offsetting Revenue	$378,965		$378,965		$0	
Net Cost	**$5,501757**		**$5,001,757**		**$5,151,806**	
Number of Sites	24		23		25	
Number of Students Served	2,758		3,100		3,300	
Cost per Student[b]	**$2,132**		**$1,736**		**$1,561**	

[a]Total budgeted includes transportation costs.
[b]Cost per student is based on budgeted cost divided by the number of students served.

***Finding 6:* While per pupil expenditure has decreased over time, the program's expenditures have exceeded its budget allocation.**

The program's financial records indicate that ESY program expenditures have exceeded the transfer of funds to the program during each of the last three years (see Table 4), with the excess costs paid for out of a reserve fund the program had built up in prior years. According to staff overseeing the program's budget and accounting, the program has spent more than the allotted funding due to increasing staff costs needed to support an influx of students requiring ESY. Although it is critical for the program to bring annual expenditures in line with the transfer of funds, the program is not optimistic about being able to do so unless funding increases because it expects continued growth in student participation in the program. Program staff have projected that ESY will exhaust its reserve funds and face a shortfall in FY 2018 if annual funding remains flat and student growth continues at the recent 6.7 percent.

Table 4: Difference Between Funding Transfer and Expenditures

	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Funding Transfer[a]	$3,313,322	$3,600,783	$3,979,747
Actual Expenditures[b]	4,650,414	4,039,663	4,727,037
Difference	-$1,337,092	-$438,880	-$747,290

[a]Based on ESY program records; differs from Program Budget Book because it excludes funds covering transportation-related costs, which are transferred to FTS
[b]Based on ESY program records

Evaluation Question 4b: How do ESY costs in FCPS compare to other districts?

Finding 7: **The ESY program costs less per pupil than ESY programs offered by other school divisions.**

FCPS' cost per student is less than four of five school districts that provided sufficient cost information to compute per student cost. The one school district that had a lower per student cost (Montgomery County: $1,379), did not include transportation as part of program costs, which effectively placed it into a similar or higher cost level than FCPS' cost per pupil of $1,561. The FCPS ESY program costs about 50 percent less than the most expensive comparison program (Prince Georges County: $3,540) which uses more sites for fewer students than FCPS. The other three districts cost about 15 percent more (San Diego: $2,066; Dallas Independent: $2,050; Alexandria $2,023), though the reasons for their higher costs were difficult to pinpoint based on available information. (See Appendix E for further details).

Evaluation Question 4c: To what extent do program staff engage in cost saving or cost minimizing efforts?

Finding 8: **Staff actively reflect on and take actions to minimize program costs**.

Staff reported reflecting on and implementing a number of cost-saving measures over the last several years. For example, despite increasing numbers of students and requests from central office to expand the number of ESY sites, the program has maintained approximately the same number of sites over the last several years, since each additional site would require expending additional funds to cover administrative, custodial and other costs. Furthermore, the program has been working with the finance staff in DSS to see where it could reduce or share building costs to minimize the net financial impact of opening more sites. During the evaluation period covered by this report, $100,000 in cost savings were achieved by reducing the amount of custodial days and by cutting training days for teachers (from four to three) and paraprofessionals (from three to two). The program also achieved cost savings by purposely hiring a mix of less expensive junior and more expensive senior teachers, providing online rather than face-to-face training, and using a low-cost delivery service for lunch rather than staffing cafeterias. In addition, program staff closely monitors supplies sent to schools and have a streamlined process in place that reduces redundancy and excess. Furthermore, the program engages in ongoing monitoring of student attendance and seeks ways to reduce cost by eliminating unnecessary bus stops, consolidating classes/sites, and reducing staff.

With expenditures outpacing funding, the program needs to find additional ways to minimize costs and optimize the use of funds. Such approaches may include those used by comparison districts, such as paying ESY teachers a flat salary and more favorable sharing of administrative and custodial costs when co-located with general education summer school sites. Given concerns about the program's long-term solvency, the program will need to implement every cost-saving measure it has discussed and find additional ways to work within its allocated funds or increase them.

Implication of Findings about Program Costs:

Maximizing the Use of Funding. Though the ESY program reflects on costs and has attempted to reduce them, program costs continue to exceed available funds. Thus, the program will need to find additional ways to maximize the use of the funds it has available. This may require the program to let go of some current aspects or structure the program in a different way so that it can be supported within the funded budget. As a federally mandated program, ESY may have fewer options than many FCPS programs in what can and cannot be changed to align funding and expenditures. However, the program will need to consider all possible changes to maximize the use of its funds, especially strategies employed by other districts that are currently not used by FCPS (e.g., site-sharing with other remedial

summer school programs to reduce administrator and operational costs; careful selection of sites to reduce transportation costs; monitoring of sites and enrollment to decide whether some should be closed and staff released).

Program Solvency. The program's ability to meet its costs is threatened as it relies on a decreasing reserve fund to support its activities. Based on the program's own budget forecast, it expects to have insufficient funds for operations in FY 2018. Since this is a federally mandated program, the school system will need to find a way to continue operating the program. There may be further actions the program could take as described above, but it is unclear if those actions would be sufficient to balance the budget long-term, especially in the face of increasing student enrollment in ESY. At a minimum, FCPS needs to fund the program at a level that will maintain compliance with federal and state regulations and court decisions.

Conclusions

This section of the report highlights major program strengths and challenges based on the findings from the evaluation.

Program Strengths (Based on Definition and Costs)

The ESY program is well-designed based on meeting federal and state requirements, limited research, and practitioner expertise. A review of program documents demonstrated that the program follows guidance from the state for identifying students and providing a program of the appropriate type, duration and intensity. Program characteristics, such as the proportion of students served, amount of service, type of service delivery, etc., are similar to other ESY programs offered in comparison districts, suggesting that it is designed in a way that aligns with practitioner knowledge.

The program has detailed documentation that describes expected activities for various staff at the site level. Through the ESY administrator and teacher trainings, a school-based manual and emails to ESY administrators, the program has clearly defined the expected program activities and the role of staff in carrying out the activities. Overall, both ESY administrators and teachers seem to understand the majority of the program's key expectations.

The program evidences a commitment to continuous improvement in their ongoing reflection on the program and actions to improve program understanding by staff at class-based sites.

The program is able to meet the needs of an expanding ESY population despite a budget that has stayed approximately the same[3]. The program has found ways to support more students without increasing overall costs, thus per student costs have decreased over the last several years.

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[3] While Table 4 indicates a $4.7 million expenditure in FY 2015 compared to a $4.0 million expenditure in FY 2014, the FY 2015 spending included a one-time cost of $.5 million to purchase a computer program designed to improve language learning, social skills, communication, and emotional development for students with disabilities and autism. Thus, costs for the same services offered in FY 2014 amounted to $4.2 million in FY 2015.

Program Challenges (Based on Definition and Costs)

Half of the six program components are not universal expectations across all program sites. Both program and site-based staff provided evidence about one expectation (service learning project) not consistently considered critical to implement at ESY sites. Program staff also identified two additional components (school-wide positive behavior support system, collaborative learning teams) considered less critical for ESY. In particular, the service learning component of the program has not been reinforced as necessary for preschool or center based programs, even though some administrators at these sites were aware it is a component of ESY.

With expenditures exceeding funding over the last three years, the program has not yet established means to address what they have forecast as an impending budget crisis. If the program's FY 2018 projection is accurate and the program does not have sufficient funds to operate, this would jeopardize FCPS compliance with federal and state regulations. The program has begun to explore a range of cost-cutting measures but has not finalized actions.

Recommendations to Decision Makers

Information in the Conclusions section guided the development of a summative recommendation for Leadership, as well as recommended actions for various stakeholder groups to improve the program.

Summative Recommendation for Leadership:

___ Continue program as is

✓ Continue program with modifications

___ Discontinue program

Action Recommendations for FCPS Staffs (Modifications)

Leadership Team

- Ensure the solvency of this mandated program.

Program Staff

- Implement cost-saving strategies, considering both those identified by other districts, as well as those identified by the program.

Note: The Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) invites program managers to respond to recommendations presented in evaluation reports in order to gauge the level of understanding of, agreement with, and commitment to proposed next steps. Program management responses are written by and represent the perspective of the program management office and/or parent department. Department of Special Services' (DSS) program management response to the final evaluation findings and recommendations for the OPE is available as Appendix F to the *Extended School Year Services Program Interim Executive Report*.

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Fairfax County Public Schools, Office of Program Evaluation   *April 2015*

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