

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 27, 2007

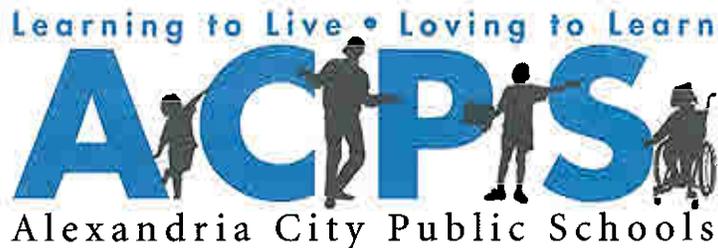
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #16: RESPONSE TO BUDGET QUESTIONS FROM
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (ACPS)

Enclosed are responses from ACPS to questions about the School Board's FY 2008 Operating and Capital Improvement Program Budgets. A cover letter from Superintendent Rebecca Perry is accompanied by a 12-page attachment replying to nine specific questions posed by City Council members and a 12-page attachment of "Frequently Asked Questions" about the School budget. This material is provided in preparation for the joint work session with the School Board scheduled for Wednesday, March 28, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at Samuel Tucker Elementary School.

Enclosures



March 23, 2007

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The Honorable William D. Euille, Mayor
And Members of the Alexandria City Council
Room 2300, City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of the City Council:

Attached are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) developed from conversations with City Council members and others about the FY 2007-08 School Operating Budget. We hope this information will be helpful to you.

We received nine questions from City Council members, and the responses to these questions are also attached. We will do our best to answer any additional questions that you have before the joint work session on March 28.

Questions from School Board members can be found on the ACPS web site at the following link:

<http://www.acps.k12.va.us/budgets/op2008/packets.php>

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Perry
Superintendent

cc: Mr. Jim Hartmann, City Manager
Alexandria City School Board

Attachments (2)

Superintendent of Schools
Rebecca L. Perry

School Board

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Arthur E. Peabody Jr.

Vice Chairman
Blanche D. Maness

Members
Ronnie Campbell

Claire M. Eberwein

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Scott Newsham

Eileen Cassidy Rivera

Charles H. Wilson

1. Analysis of teacher salary competitiveness in the region compared to Alexandria. How does this change if we were to add in a 1% COLA? (Councilman Krupicka)

Answer: The charts below show how ACPS ranks in teacher salary competitiveness currently and how ACPS would rank next year based on no COLA and a 1% COLA.

FY 2007 Teacher Salary Comparison

Locality	Minimum Amount	Rank	Step 5 Amount	Rank	Max Amount	Rank
Teacher - BA Scale						
Loudoun	\$ 43,500	1	\$ 47,379	3	\$ 82,840	1
Fairfax	\$ 42,400	2	\$ 46,891	4	\$ 75,284	3
Arlington	\$ 42,040	3	\$ 47,758	2	\$ 65,641	5
Alexandria	\$ 42,040	3	\$ 48,705	1	\$ 72,551	4
Prince William	\$ 40,788	5	\$ 44,301	5	\$ 81,284	2
Teacher - MA Scale						
Alexandria	\$ 48,220	1	\$ 55,195	1	\$ 88,944	1
Fairfax	\$ 47,279	2	\$ 51,770	3	\$ 84,765	5
Arlington	\$ 46,350	3	\$ 52,654	2	\$ 87,965	2
Loudoun	\$ 46,109	4	\$ 51,122	4	\$ 85,544	4
Prince William	\$ 45,571	5	\$ 49,084	5	\$ 86,067	3
Teacher - MA30 Scale						
Alexandria	\$ 50,280	1	\$ 56,864	1	\$ 91,633	2
Loudoun	\$ 50,097	2	\$ 53,976	4	\$ 91,094	3
Fairfax	\$ 48,969	3	\$ 55,401	2	\$ 88,394	4
Arlington	\$ 48,668	4	\$ 55,287	3	\$ 92,363	1
Prince William	\$ 47,258	5	\$ 50,771	5	\$ 87,754	5

**FY 2008 Teacher Salary Comparison
No COLA for ACPS**

Locality	Minimum Amount	FY08 Rank	Step 5 Amount	FY08 Rank	Max Amount	FY08 Rank
Teacher - BA Scale						
Loudoun	\$ 43,500	1	\$ 47,379	4	\$ 82,840	1
Fairfax	\$ 43,247	2	\$ 47,828	3	\$ 76,790	3
Arlington	\$ 42,881	3	\$ 48,713	1	\$ 66,954	5
Alexandria w No COLA	\$ 42,040	4	\$ 48,705	2	\$ 72,551	4
Prince William	\$ 40,788	5	\$ 44,301	5	\$ 81,284	2
Teacher - MA Scale						
Loudoun	\$ 48,777	1	\$ 52,656	4	\$ 89,774	1
Fairfax wo Scale Adjustment	\$ 48,225	2	\$ 52,806	3	\$ 86,460	4
Alexandria w No COLA	\$ 48,220	3	\$ 55,195	1	\$ 88,944	3
Arlington	\$ 47,277	4	\$ 53,707	2	\$ 89,724	2
Prince William	\$ 45,571	5	\$ 49,084	5	\$ 86,067	5
Teacher - MA30 Scale						
Alexandria w No COLA	\$ 50,280	1	\$ 56,864	2	\$ 91,633	2
Loudoun	\$ 50,097	2	\$ 53,976	4	\$ 91,094	3
Fairfax wo Scale Adjustment	\$ 49,949	3	\$ 54,530	3	\$ 88,183	4
Arlington	\$ 49,641	4	\$ 59,214	1	\$ 94,210	1
Prince William	\$ 47,258	5	\$ 50,771	5	\$ 87,754	5

**FY 2008 Teacher Salary Comparison
1% COLA for ACPS**

Locality	Minimum Amount	FY08 Rank	Step 5 Amount	FY08 Rank	Max Amount	FY08 Rank
Teacher - BA Scale						
Loudoun	\$ 43,500	1	\$ 47,379	4	\$ 82,840	1
Fairfax	\$ 43,247	2	\$ 47,828	3	\$ 76,790	3
Arlington	\$ 42,881	3	\$ 48,713	2	\$ 66,954	5
Alexandria w 1% COLA	\$ 42,461	4	\$ 49,192	1	\$ 73,277	4
Prince William	\$ 40,788	5	\$ 44,301	5	\$ 81,284	2
Teacher - MA Scale						
Loudoun	\$ 48,777	1	\$ 52,656	4	\$ 89,774	2
Alexandria w 1% COLA	\$ 48,703	2	\$ 55,747	1	\$ 89,833	1
Fairfax wo Scale Adjustment	\$ 48,225	3	\$ 52,806	3	\$ 86,460	4
Arlington	\$ 47,277	4	\$ 53,707	2	\$ 89,724	3
Prince William	\$ 45,571	5	\$ 49,084	5	\$ 86,067	5
Teacher - MA30 Scale						
Alexandria w 1% COLA	\$ 50,783	1	\$ 57,432	2	\$ 92,550	2
Loudoun	\$ 50,097	2	\$ 53,976	4	\$ 91,094	3
Fairfax wo Scale Adjustment	\$ 49,949	3	\$ 54,530	3	\$ 88,183	4
Arlington	\$ 49,641	4	\$ 59,214	1	\$ 94,210	1
Prince William	\$ 47,258	5	\$ 50,771	5	\$ 87,754	5

As you can see from the charts, if no COLA was granted, ACPS would drop in the rankings on the first step (minimum amount) on the BA and MA scales. This drop could significantly hurt our recruiting efforts as this step is where new graduates who are hired are placed on the salary scale.

A 1% COLA would allow ACPS to remain at or above the ranking it currently has on the MA scale but ACPS would fall in the rankings on the BA and MA30 scales.

2. Cost of new programs in the approved budget. (Councilman Krupicka)

Answer: There are no "new programs" in the FY 2008 operating budget. There are improvements to existing programs designed to address specific, identified problems in student achievement and to make sure we continue to increase performance to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Because of the tight budget year, some of these improvements use existing resources in new ways.

Literacy for the 21st Century is an intensified focus on reading and writing instruction for all students, in all disciplines, and at all grade levels. Our students' proficiency in comprehending complex text from a variety of sources will impact their college and career opportunities. Basic technical manuals for "blue collar" jobs have a reading level comparable to college material. Research has shown that reading instruction must continue throughout the K-12 experience, as reading material increases in difficulty and complexity.

Four literacy coaches will provide embedded staff development to enable all teachers to acquire skills in teaching reading. Some current reading teachers will be trained and transitioned to reading coaches, with the potential to enhance the teaching of many classroom teachers. The

increase of 4.0 reading coaches is offset by a decrease of 3.0 PEP specialists, **for a net increase of only 1.0 FTE (and a net cost of \$115,711).**

Literacy instruction should be ongoing and in all classes. The additional reading coaches will work initially with teachers of special education students and teachers of English-as-a-Second Language students. Increasingly high benchmarks set by No Child Left Behind make it necessary for us to intensify support for these groups of students to accelerate their progress.

Differentiated reading material and reading intervention programs (\$348,000) for high school students and for Jefferson-Houston students will enable every student in a class to read the same high-interest material at the appropriate reading level to enhance learning. These programs were piloted successfully this year at TC Williams and have proven success records in other school divisions.

The budget includes minimal enhancements to the staff development and instructional materials to increase rigor and differentiated instruction at the middle schools (\$117,766) and in elementary science instruction (\$55,480). For a number of years parents have requested that we add science specialists at each school. Although these requests were considered, due to the tight budget they are not included in this budget.

3. How does our administration size, dollar spent per child, administrators per child and other relevant benchmarks compare to the region? (Councilman Krupicka)

Answer: ACPS measures on size of administration, dollars spent per child, and the number of administrators per child are comparable to Northern Virginia school divisions when factors such as the size of the school division and the demographic make-up of the school division are taken into account.

There are multiple ways to compare the size of the **ACPS administration:**

- Only 10.7% of ACPS staff are considered “non-school-based”, compared to 12.7% in Arlington, 12.3% in Prince George’s, 9.7% in Prince William, and 7.2% in Fairfax. These latter three school divisions have much greater economies of scale than ACPS.
- When comparing ACPS to school divisions that are comparable in size, urban/rural status, and demographics, of the 10 comparable school divisions in the US, ACPS has among the highest percentage of teachers compared to total positions; among the highest percentage of funds spent on direct instruction, and a comparable level of central office administrative personnel.
- WABE information from FY 2007, shown in the table to the right, shows that ACPS’ school-based positions as a percent of total positions is greater than Arlington Public schools, the school division most similar to ACPS; and is not significantly lower than Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William school divisions, all of which have significantly greater economies of scale.

School-based Positions as a Percentage of Total Positions

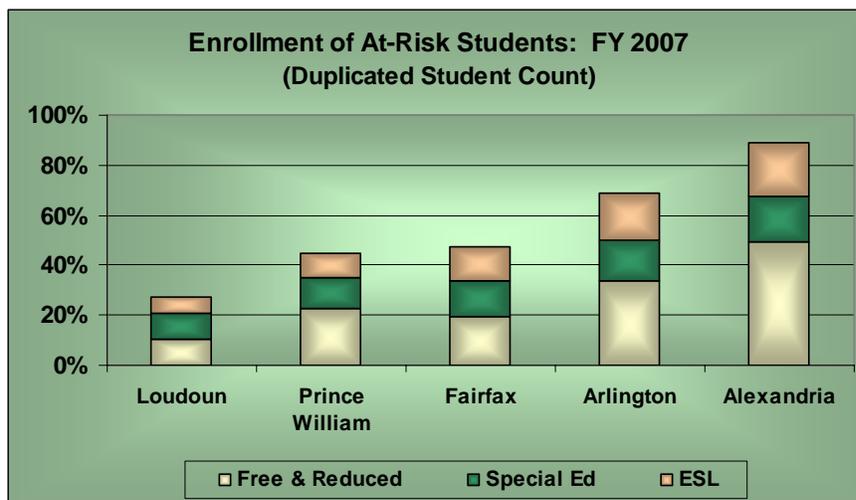
	FY 2007
Alexandria	89.3%
Arlington	87.3%
Fairfax	92.2%
Loudoun	93.0%
Prince William	90.3%

- Non-school-based positions compared to school-based positions, a measure of how many people each central office staff person supports, are shown in the table to the right. (This table is also based on WABE guide information.) The data show that ACPS central office staff support one-fifth (about 20%) more school staff than in Arlington, and is very close to Prince William ratio. Fairfax and Loudoun have substantially higher ratios, but benefit from greater economies of scale.

School-based Positions per Non-School-based Position

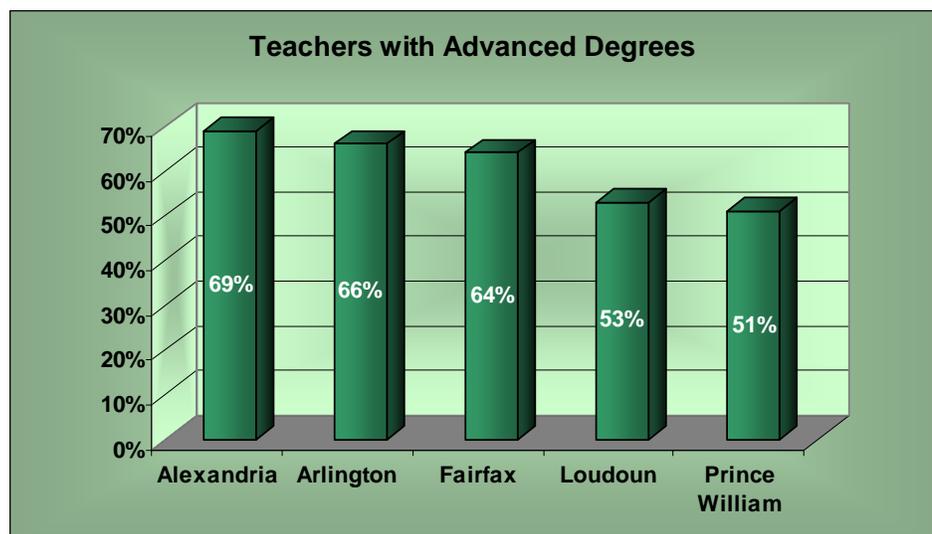
	FY 2007
Alexandria	8.4
Arlington	6.9
Fairfax	11.9
Loudoun	13.2
Prince William	9.3

Many factors contribute to cost differences among school divisions, including: 1) the demographics of the school population; 2) class size staffing ratios; and 3) the structure of the labor force. For example, school divisions with higher percentages of employees with advanced degrees will have higher costs than school divisions with lower percentages of employees with advanced degrees. The size of a school division also impacts cost per student, as larger school divisions can take advantage of economies of scale.



ACPS' demographic characteristics compared to other school divisions are shown in the chart to the right. ACPS clearly has a higher share of students with at-risk factors (low income, special education, and ESL) than any of the surrounding school divisions. As noted in the response to question 6, at-risk students are more expensive to educate than other students.

ACPS' teacher work force is also more highly educated than in other Northern Virginia school divisions, as shown in the chart to the right.



The Alexandria community has always valued the small class sizes in ACPS schools. These class sizes are shown in the chart to the right, taken from WABE data for the FY 2007 budget year.

Students per Classroom Teacher

	Elementary	Middle/ Intermediate	Secondary/ High
Alexandria	18.8	16.0	17.5
Arlington	19.2	19.5	18.5
Fairfax	20.7	23.1	23.9
Loudoun	22.8	19.6	23.3
Prince William	18.6	21.3	21.9

Based on these factors, one would predict that the ACPS cost per student would be higher than others in Northern Virginia, even if there were no other differences, such as the size of the school division, and costs shared with the local government body. For example, in Alexandria the cost of the school health staff is in the school budget; in Fairfax these costs are in the county budget. The cost per student data, based on the FY 2007 approved budget and calculated using the WABE methodology, is shown in the chart below.

Cost per Pupil WABE Guide Data FY 2007 Approved Budget	
Alexandria City	\$ 18,232
Arlington County	\$ 17,958
Fairfax County	\$ 12,853
Loudoun County	\$ 12,023
Prince William County	\$ 10,378

Alexandria has the highest cost per student, but it is only 1.5% higher than our closest peer, Arlington. Alexandria schools have smaller class sizes, a higher percentage of highly educated teachers, and a higher percentage of at-risk students than Arlington.

4. Please show us the School's base-line funding numbers. When you take City and State revenues, how much of an increase does the School budget start with? It looks like it is about \$2.5 million in increases? (Councilman Krupicka, Councilman Smedberg)

Answer: You are correct. The chart below shows the amounts for FY 2007 and for FY 2008 for each of the different categories of revenue received by ACPS. The City appropriation amount for FY 2008 has been shown at the target level.

Comparison of FY 2007 and FY 2008 Revenue
FY 2008 City Appropriation at City Target

Revenue Type	FY 2007 Final Approved	FY 2008 City Target	\$ Change	Percent Change
Beginning Balance	\$ 4,305,319	\$ 1,781,367	\$ (2,523,952)	-58.62%
State Funds	\$ 27,149,125	\$ 26,508,553	\$ (640,572)	-2.36%
Local Funds	\$ 570,875	\$ 517,984	\$ (52,891)	-9.26%
Federal Funds	\$ 192,220	\$ 204,443	\$ 12,223	6.36%
City Appropriation	\$ 149,873,621	\$ 155,500,000	\$ 5,626,379	3.75%
TOTAL	\$ 182,091,160	\$ 184,512,347	\$ 2,421,187	1.33%

As shown above, ACPS started from behind for FY 2008. Our beginning balance declined over \$2.5 million, state funding decreased over \$640,000, and local fee funds are projected to decrease over \$52,000 which is projected to be slightly offset by a small increase in federal funds. These declines in revenue total over \$3.2 million. As a result, even though the City

appropriation would increase \$5.6 million at the target level, the net increase to ACPS is only \$2.4 million.

5. Please clarify the School Board's approved budget (both Operating and CIP) with regard to costs for moving into the new TC Williams, including contingent funds set aside in the TC Williams CIP project budget. (Councilman Krupicka, Councilwoman Pepper)

Answer: Funds are earmarked in both the operating and CIP budgets for costs associated with moving into the new TC Williams building. In addition, as with every construction project, there is a contingency fund in the TC Williams project budget. Each of these funding sources is discussed below.

Funding in Operating Budget for TC Williams Move - \$290,000

The request for \$290,000 for the move from the old TC Williams to the new facility is separate and apart from the construction contingency account.

A staff committee has been meeting regularly since the beginning of the school year to plan for the move to the new facility. The committee is presently meeting every two weeks and plans to do so through May 2007. This planning process has resulted in the development of an eight page, thirty-nine item logistical plan for this move, one the size of which the system has not had to address in the past. While a number of the areas addressed were funded from the project budget or FY07 operating budget, several one-time items related to the projection completion need to be accomplished after July 1, 2007 and prior to the opening of school in September. The logistical contingency funding request is in response to these issues.

Below is a more detailed listing of the areas for which the contingency request will be used.

Non-Personnel Items

1. Telephone programming contract work
2. Abatement activities in old TC building
3. Xerox equipment relocation
4. Removal and relocation of existing auditorium sound system and TV production studio
5. Tipping fees at landfill/dumpster rental
6. Truck rental
7. Supplies associated with move-in
8. Temporary signage

Personnel Items

1. Security services
2. Temporary hires to supervise receipt and placement of FF&E
3. Teacher/staff time to unpack and prepare rooms

In addition, there are funds set aside for unanticipated expenses.

Funding in CIP Budget for TC Williams Move - \$210,000

Funding of \$210,000 for the dismantling and relocation of Titan Village and the construction trailers was originally requested in the operating budget. The School Board, during the budget approval process, decided to fund this request from the CIP budget rather than from the operating budget, deleting funding from the "Replacement Buses" project in order to accommodate this request.

Construction Contingency Fund in the TC Williams Project in the CIP Budget - \$4.1 million

The status of the contingency account for the TC Williams construction project is still dynamic. The project, including the movement of programs out of the career center, has been ongoing for thirty-three months with twenty-six months of construction on the main building. There are seventeen months remaining until the final completion of the entire project. During these past two and one half years, there have been significant challenges in the administration of the project and the actual construction of a very complex project. These challenges, while anticipated, could not be quantified and are the basis of a contingency within the overall project budget. The balance in the contingency remains high and those funds will be carefully monitored during the remainder of the project time.

Expenditures from the original contingency fund of \$4.1 million currently total approximately \$3 million. The largest category of expenditures has been change orders to the construction contract. These change orders can be grouped in three categories as follows:

1. Unknown site conditions
2. Mandated changes
3. Owner requested changes

Unknown conditions including the re-routing of the sanitary sewer, the additional foundation support in a debris-laden area, and the asphaltic soils that were removed from the site totaled \$1,515,606. An additional mandated loop for the electrical service required by Dominion Virginia Power cost \$44,887. Owner requested changes total \$316,575 representing approximately one third of one percent (.36%) of the original contract amount. All change orders for the Construction Contract represent 2.1 percent of the contract.

It should be noted in this explanation of change orders that these change orders have not resulted from errors and omissions from the design documents. ACPS negotiated a contract wherein the contractor has assumed responsibility of these issues and the resultant schedule impacts. This contract provision has relieved ACPS of this potential burden that has significantly impacted previous school construction projects.

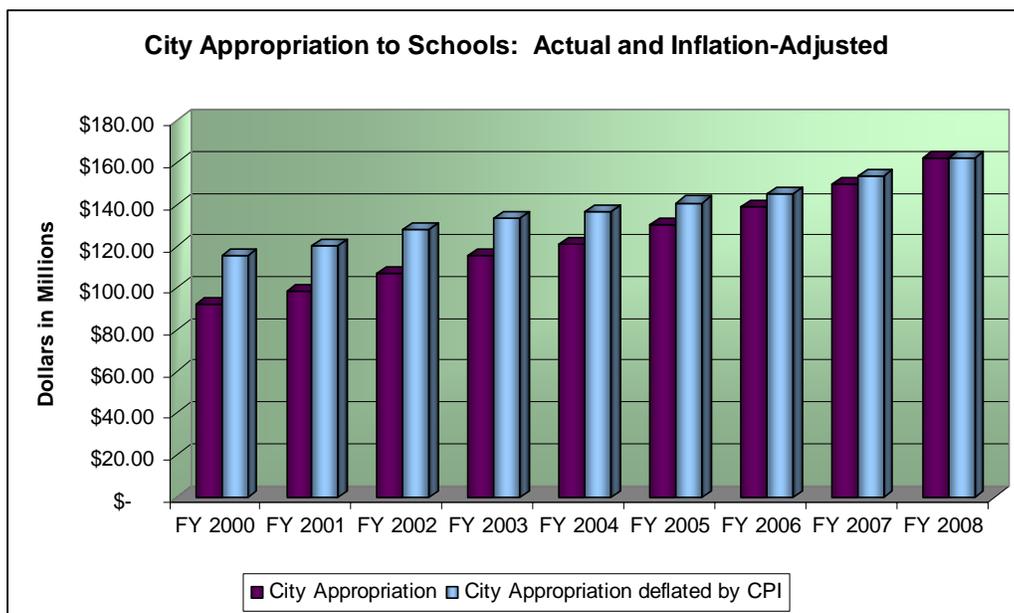
These three categories comprise a total of \$1,877,068 million in change orders to the contract for construction and account for two thirds of the contingency expenditures. Other contingency expenditures include such items additional professional services during the contract negotiation, plan review process, and administration of the contract. These included a scheduling consultant, testing and monitoring of construction, ESI fees, cost estimating, and value engineering consultant. New utility connections for the building including telephone and electrical services are another category of expenditures both from the contingency and included in the construction change order under mandated changes. Miscellaneous and modular classroom expenses comprise the balance of expenditures from the contingency account.

ACPS continues to apply diligent oversight to this most important public project. We have overcome significant hurdles and eagerly anticipate the opening of the new building. However, we remain cautious in our approach to the next phase of the project including the demolition of the old building with the potential unknowns beneath this structure. We are confident that the contingency will provide that insurance necessary to mitigate these unknowns and hopeful that there will be a significant balance remaining in the contingency account at the end of the project.

6. How much the City has contributed to the schools over this decade (from 2000 to 2007 year-by-year) and any information we can access about total ACPS expenditures and enrollment during those years. (Councilman Lovain)

Answer: Over the past eight years (FY 2000 through FY 2008), the city appropriation to ACPS has provided an average of 83.7% of its operating budget. It has ranged from a low of 80.8% in FY 2001 to a high of 85.5% in FY 2005. The School Board's FY 2008 budget includes a City appropriation request that would fund 84.8% of the budget.

The chart below shows the comparison of the actual City appropriation to a real (deflated by the Baltimore-Washington Consumer Price Index) City appropriation. The growth rate in the actual City appropriation is 7.3% per year; the growth rate in the real (adjusted for inflation) City appropriation is 4.3% per year.



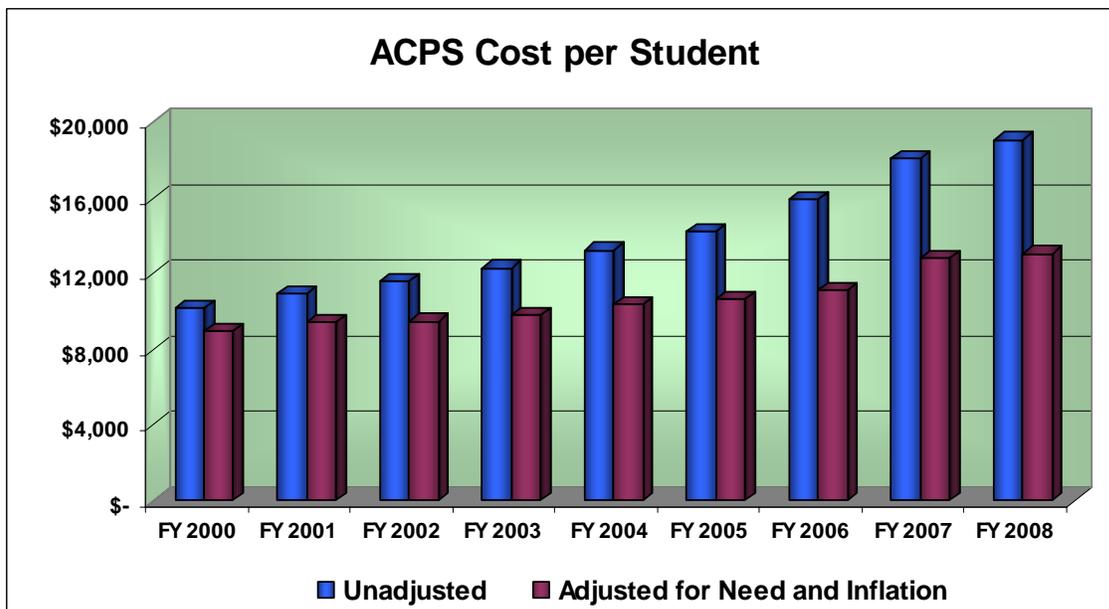
Enrollment in ACPS was 11,297 in FY 2000, and is projected to be 10,365 in FY 2008, a decline of 1.1% per year. During this period, special education enrollment has increased by 0.7% annually; ESL enrollment by 4.3% annually; and free and reduced price lunch (low income) enrollment has decreased by 1.7% annually. At-risk students are more expensive to educate than other students. The US Department of Education estimates the cost multipliers for these students as follows:

- Special education students: 2.1 times more
- Low income students: 1.35 times more
- ESL students: 1.2 times more

Total expenditures in ACPS were \$112.28 million, unadjusted for inflation, in FY 2000. In FY 2008, the School Board's requested budget is \$191.33 million. The annual rate of growth, unadjusted for inflation, is 6.9%; adjusted for inflation the annual rate of growth is 3.9%. Expenditures have grown significantly less than the growth in the City appropriation. The increase in the City appropriation has compensated for lower rates of growth in revenue

sources. For example, state revenues have increased by only 1.0% per year, when adjusted for inflation, and actually declined for FY 2008.

The real story however is in total expenditures per student, and the performance improvements resulting from the City's investment in ACPS. Total expenditures per student in ACPS should be analyzed in two ways: 1) unadjusted for inflation or student need and 2) adjusted for both inflation and student needs. The chart below shows this comparison. Growth in the unadjusted cost per student averages 8.2% per year; growth in the adjusted cost per student averages only 4.8% per year.



The bulk of the increase in the adjusted cost per student measure is attributable to merit-based salary increases (step), market-scale adjustments to make ACPS salaries competitive with other Northern Virginia jurisdictions, and operating cost increases such as fuel, utilities, and rent.

During this period ACPS has:

- increased the number of accredited schools from 2 to 14
- increased student achievement for all categories of students: black, white, Hispanic, special education, ESL, and economically disadvantaged
- increased the number of schools making AYP from 5 to 12
- increased SAT scores by more than any of the surrounding school divisions, at a rate of 1.1% annually
- decreased the gap between minority student and white student achievement
- decreased drop out rates from 4.5% in 2003-04 to 3.2% in 2005-06

Details on these achievement trends are available on the ACPS website at the following address:

<http://www.acps.k12.va.us/budgets/index.php>

This has been done by investing in teachers, by adjusting the salary scale to make ACPS more competitive in the Northern Virginia teacher labor market; by providing targeted and embedded

staff development to help teachers and their administrators improve their use of data for student assessment and develop differentiated instructional techniques; and by designing and implementing specialized programs to meet the unique needs of the student populations in each school.

7. Data re: salaries for central office/administrators, including a breakdown of the percentage of these salaries as part of the overall school budget. (Councilman Gaines)

The table below shows actual total expenditures on central office and school-based administrators' salaries in FY 2000 and projected expenditures on these areas in FY 2008. Central office administrators made up 2% of the total budget in FY 2000, and 2.1% of the budget in FY 2008. School-based administrators made up 2.4% of the total cost in FY 2000, and 2.5% of the total cost in FY 2008.

**Comparison of Central Office and School-based Administrator Costs
FY 2000 to FY 2008**

Item	FY 2000		FY 2008	
	\$	% of Total Budget	\$	% of Total Budget
Total Central Office Administrator Personnel Costs	\$ 2,300,042	2.0%	\$ 4,089,109	2.1%
Total School-based Administrator Personnel Costs	\$ 2,743,259	2.4%	\$ 4,772,939	2.5%
Total Expenditures	\$ 112,280,629		\$ 191,335,630	

Central office administrators include the superintendent, assistant superintendents, executive directors, directors, and supervisors. All central office sites are included (Stonewall Jackson, Burke, and Beauregard Street offices). School-based administrators include principals, assistant principals, and guidance directors. All school sites are included.

Central office administrators' salary costs are a small portion of the total school division budget; their percentage of the total budget has increased only slightly over the past nine years. School-based administrators salaries are a slightly larger portion of the budget, and have also increased only slightly over the past nine years. Please see question number 9 in the attached FAQ for additional comparisons.

8. Please explain on one page why you were not able to meet the City Council's target. (Councilman MacDonald)

Answer: As previously outlined in the response to Question # 4, ACPS started from behind when building its budget for FY 2008 because of declines in revenue totaling over \$3.2 million. With the City appropriation increase target of \$5.6 million, this amounted to a net increase of only \$2.4 million or a total budget of \$184.5 million.

On the expenditure side, the FY 2008 budget was not built with the FY 2007 final budget as the starting point. Each year, all non-recurring costs are removed from the budget, base allocations to schools and department are recalculated based on projected enrollment, and differentiated resources and at-risk allocations to schools are also recalculated based on projected enrollment. The base budget totaled \$181.7 million (target = \$184.5 million).

Next, we made significant reductions to the base budget – over \$6.2 million including 74.6 FTE positions. Reductions were made as follows:

- Central office reductions - \$2.88 million, including 19.0 FTE
- School-based non-instructional reductions - \$700,000 million, including 15.0 FTE
- School-based instructional reductions - \$1.85 million, including 32.6 FTE
- Non-departmental reductions - \$240,000
- Staffing adjustments based on projected enrollment - \$530,000 and 8.0 FTE

These reductions brought the total budget down to \$175.5 million (target = \$184.5 million).

We then determined what our mandatory expenditure increases for FY 2008 would be – over 5.6 million and 17.5 FTE positions. These mandatory expenditures include:

- Virginia Retirement System increase - \$1.12 million
- Increased participation in health and dental plans - \$0.92 million
- Staffing reserve - \$1.04 million and 15.0 FTE. See question number 16 in the FAQ for additional details.
- Operating cost increase (utilities, fuel, insurance, rent) - \$0.41 million
- Tuition for special education students - \$285,000
- Transportation services for homeless and special education students - \$100,000
- Computer replenishment – state revenue pass-through - \$466,000
- Facility maintenance supplies - \$125,000
- TC Williams outsourced custodial contract - \$690,000 and 2.5 FTE; offset by reductions in base budget – net increase only \$140,000
- TC Williams move contingency fund - \$290,000

These mandatory increases brought the total budget to \$181.2 million (target = \$184.5 million).

We then added \$3.8 million for a step increase for eligible employees. This addition brought the total budget to \$184.9 million, over the target of \$184.5 million. Even if we had determined that we needed no additional funding for FY 2008, we would have been over the target. However, we did include essential funding needed for improvements to existing programs designed to address specific, identified problems in student achievement and to make sure we continue to increase performance to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Essential funding requirements include:

- Literacy for the 21st Century - \$690,000 including 4.0 FTE Literacy coaches
- Improving middle school rigor - \$117,000
- Improving science instruction - \$55,000
- Social worker and teacher for TC - \$150,000 including 2.0 FTE
- Hold-harmless health benefit cost increases - \$0.90 million
- Instructional technology trainer for teachers - \$86,000 including 1.0 FTE
- Instructional supplies for schools - \$51,000
- Network operations and maintenance - \$316,000
- Salary scale adjustments - \$628,000
- Assistant principal at George Mason - \$60,000 including 0.5 FTE
- Homework clubs at 2 schools - \$21,000

- o School board training and software - \$49,700

These essential funding requirements bring the total FY 2008 budget to \$188.55 million, or \$4 million above the City Council's target of \$184.5 million. If we had not started from behind with a \$3.2 million decline in revenue, we would only be \$800,000 over the target, not including COLA.

9. Please provide a breakdown of health insurance coverage by employee group. (Councilman Smedberg)

Answer: The chart below provides the cost of each plan and coverage type as well as the School Board's contribution for each employee group.

TYPE OF PLAN	EMPLOYEE GROUP	INDIVIDUAL				TWO-PARTY			
		TOTAL PREMIUM COST	COST TO EMPLOYER	EMPLOYER SHARE, PERCENT	COST TO EMPLOYEE	TOTAL PREMIUM COST	COST TO EMPLOYER	EMPLOYER SHARE, PERCENT	COST TO EMPLOYEE
HMO-Mamsi	Administrators	\$369.96	\$369.96	100%	\$0.00	\$710.52	\$710.52	100%	\$0.00
	Teachers	\$369.96	\$268.24	73%	\$101.72	\$710.52	\$545.90	77%	\$164.62
	Support	\$369.96	\$369.96	100%	\$0.00	\$710.52	\$710.52	100%	\$0.00
	Support 25+	\$369.96	\$355.60	96%	\$14.36	\$710.52	\$703.14	99%	\$7.38
POS-Mamsi	Administrators	\$414.34	\$414.34	100%	\$0.00	\$795.74	\$795.74	100%	\$0.00
	Teachers	\$414.34	\$274.00	66%	\$140.34	\$795.74	\$556.00	70%	\$239.74
	Support	\$414.34	\$377.66	91%	\$36.68	\$795.74	\$725.82	91%	\$69.92
	Support 25+	\$414.34	\$361.36	87%	\$52.98	\$795.74	\$713.24	90%	\$82.50
HMO-Kaiser	Administrators	\$350.50	\$350.50	100%	\$0.00	\$672.16	\$672.16	100%	\$0.00
	Teachers	\$350.50	\$298.96	85%	\$51.54	\$672.16	\$604.82	90%	\$67.34
	Support	\$350.50	\$350.50	100%	\$0.00	\$672.16	\$672.16	100%	\$0.00
	Support 25+	\$350.50	\$350.50	100%	\$0.00	\$672.16	\$672.16	100%	\$0.00
POS-Kaiser	Administrators	\$438.12	\$438.12	100%	\$0.00	\$840.21	\$840.21	100%	\$0.00
	Teachers	\$438.12	\$312.42	71%	\$125.70	\$840.21	\$629.67	75%	\$210.54
	Support	\$438.12	\$416.06	95%	\$22.06	\$840.21	\$799.49	95%	\$40.72
	Support 25+	\$438.12	\$399.78	91%	\$38.34	\$840.21	\$786.91	94%	\$53.30
FAMILY									
TYPE OF PLAN	EMPLOYEE GROUP	TOTAL PREMIUM COST	COST TO EMPLOYER	EMPLOYER SHARE, PERCENT	COST TO EMPLOYEE				
HMO-Mamsi	Administrators	\$987.19	\$987.19	100%	\$0.00				
	Teachers	\$987.19	\$606.57	61%	\$380.62				
	Support	\$987.19	\$975.27	99%	\$11.92				
	Support 25+	\$987.19	\$871.63	88%	\$115.56				
POS-Mamsi	Administrators	\$1,105.60	\$1,105.60	100%	\$0.00				
	Teachers	\$1,105.60	\$620.20	56%	\$485.40				
	Support	\$1,105.60	\$988.90	89%	\$116.70				
	Support 25+	\$1,105.60	\$885.24	80%	\$220.36				
HMO-Kaiser	Administrators	\$935.50	\$935.50	100%	\$0.00				
	Teachers	\$935.50	\$690.40	74%	\$245.10				
	Support	\$935.50	\$935.50	100%	\$0.00				
	Support 25+	\$935.50	\$935.50	100%	\$0.00				
POS-Kaiser	Administrators	\$1,166.89	\$1,166.89	100%	\$0.00				
	Teachers	\$1,166.89	\$722.49	62%	\$444.40				
	Support	\$1,166.89	\$1,091.19	94%	\$75.70				
	Support 25+	\$1,166.89	\$987.53	85%	\$179.36				

Alexandria City Public Schools Budget Frequently Asked Questions

1. What did ACPS do to try to meet the target?

ACPS administration took the challenge of meeting the target very seriously.

We started from behind, with a decrease of \$3.21 million in other revenue sources. The City's target provides a 3.75% increase to the City's portion of the revenue, which adds \$5.63 million. These two combined gave ACPS only a \$2.42 million overall increase. We didn't have the benefit of the full \$5.63 million in increased funds from the City because of the other declines in revenue.

We cut many, many items from the ACPS budget. Reductions consist of:

- Non-recurring items eliminated from the FY08 base, saving approximately \$400,000
- Central office departments budget reductions of \$2.88 million and 19.0 positions
- Non-departmental account reductions of \$243,951
- Non-instructional reductions to schools of \$697,454 and 15.0 positions
- Instructional reductions, focused on non-core-curriculum positions, of \$1.84 million and 32.63 positions
- Reduced staffing to account for decreases in enrollment saved \$526,424 and 8 positions

Altogether, the amount reduced from central office was 5 percent of the central office budgets. Reductions from schools were 2 percent of school budgets. A summary of the budget reductions can be found on pages B-31 to B-33 of the FY 2008 Approved Budget; details are shown in Section D.

Then we had mandatory increases to fund, including retirement benefits, utility, insurance, and rent increases, transportation cost increases, facility maintenance supplies, and other items totaling \$5.66 million. Adding just step increases for employees (\$3.77 million), the mandatory increases, and the budget reductions put us above the target.

Essential increases, including costs for continued improvement of instructional gains for minority and at-risk students, added \$3.63 million. The final piece was the addition of a 2% COLA to keep ACPS teacher salaries competitive with salaries in Northern Virginia.

This left us \$6.8 million above the target. Without the decline in revenue (\$3.21 million) and without COLA (\$2.77 million), the budget would have been only \$0.8 million above the target.

2. If enrollment is down, why hasn't the budget decreased?

Positions have been cut as school enrollments decline. Details are provided in the next question. Nevertheless, costs continue to increase in spite of position reductions, because schools are labor intensive enterprises that hire highly educated personnel.

Salaries and benefits for employees make up 86% of the ACPS budget. (The majority of ACPS employees -- 67 percent -- are teachers and paraprofessionals.) As a result, even

with declining enrollment and commensurate reductions in staffing, salary adjustments such as step increases and cost-of-living adjustments will increase the budget, all other things being equal. Salary increases also mean an increase in benefits paid as a percentage of the salary such as FICA/Medicare, VRS retirement, city retirement, and long-term disability insurance. In addition, over the years the School Board has chosen to improve the health insurance contributions for employees, particularly for the lowest paid support employees.

For illustration purposes, if we compare the FY 2001 budget with the FY 2008 budget, the overall budget increased a total of \$68.7 million during that time. If we had kept the exact same staffing level that we had in FY 2001 but applied the step increases, cost of living adjustments, health insurance increases, and state-mandated Virginia Retirement System increases to that staffing level, we would account for \$63.8 million of the total increase or 93%. Of the remaining \$4.9 million increase, \$4.2 million, or 86%, is accounted for by increased costs of utilities, insurance, gas, rent, legal services, testing services for students, and tuition and transportation costs for special education students.

3. Where have cuts been made to account for the decreasing enrollment?

All costs directly related to enrollment are adjusted to reflect projected enrollment for the next budget year. Schools are staffed based on the projected enrollment, differentiated resources allocations, at-risk allocations, and the per pupil allocations for the coming year are all recalculated based on enrollment. As enrollment has gone down, the number of regular classroom teachers and paraprofessionals has also gone down. Since FY 2002, when enrollment first started to decline, regular classroom teachers and paraprofessionals have gone down 76.1 FTE. Enrollment has declined from 11,104 to a projected enrollment of 10,021 next year, a decline of 1,083 students.

4. Are there new initiatives in the budget?

There are no “new initiatives.” There are improvements to existing programs designed to address specific, identified problems in student achievement and to make sure we continue to increase performance to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Because of the tight budget year, some of these improvements use existing resources in new ways.

Literacy for the 21st Century is an intensified focus on reading and writing instruction for all students, in all disciplines, and at all grade levels. Our students' proficiency in comprehending complex text from a variety of sources will impact their college and career opportunities. Basic technical manuals for “blue collar” jobs have a reading level comparable to college material. Research has shown that reading instruction must continue throughout the K-12 experience, as reading material increases in difficulty and complexity.

Four literacy coaches will provide embedded staff development to enable all teachers to acquire skills in teaching reading. Some current reading teachers will be trained and transitioned to reading coaches, with the potential to enhance the teaching of many classroom teachers. The increase of 4.0 reading coaches is offset by a decrease of 3.0 PEP specialists, **for a net increase of only 1.0 FTE.**

Literacy instruction should be ongoing and in all classes. The additional reading coaches will work with teachers of special education and English-as-a-Second-Language students. Increasingly high benchmarks set by NCLB make it necessary to intensify support for these groups of students to accelerate their progress.

Differentiated reading material and reading intervention programs for high school students and for Jefferson-Houston students will enable every student in a class to read the same high-interest material at the appropriate reading level to enhance learning. These programs were piloted successfully this year using funds from the Curriculum Department budget.

The budget includes minimal enhancements to the staff development and instructional materials to increase rigor and differentiated instruction at the middle schools and in elementary science instruction. For a number of years parents have requested that we add science specialists at each school. Although these requests were considered, due to the tight budget they are not included in the budget.

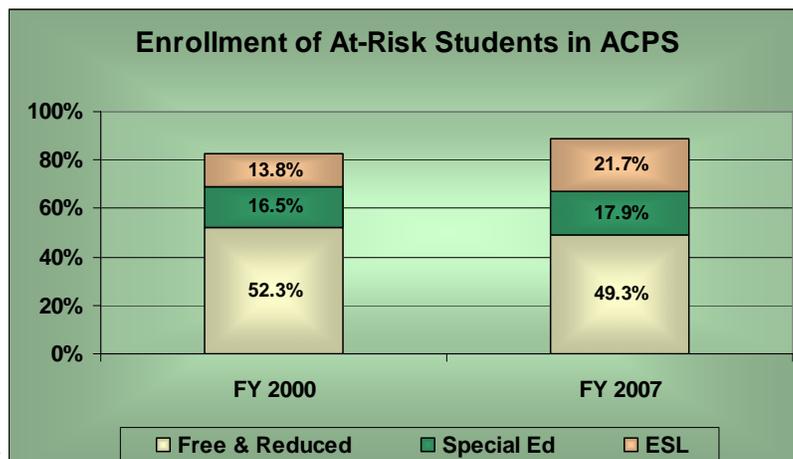
5. How much more does it cost to educate at-risk students and why? What does “cost more” mean? What about English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and special education students?

Students who are “at-risk” include low income students, students whose first language is not English, and special education students. The US Department of Education has found that at-risk students cost more than a general education student (receiving no special services) by the following ratios:

- ESL students: 1.2 times more
- Low income students: 1.35 times more
- Special education students: 2.1 times more

Costs for ESL students are greater because:

- ESL students require additional teachers for up to five years of specialized instruction
- ESL class sizes are smaller
- Specialized instructional materials and textbooks are required
- Level 1 ESL students are often not literate in their own language, so transfer to another language is more difficult. Students from war-torn areas may not have attended school at all in their own country



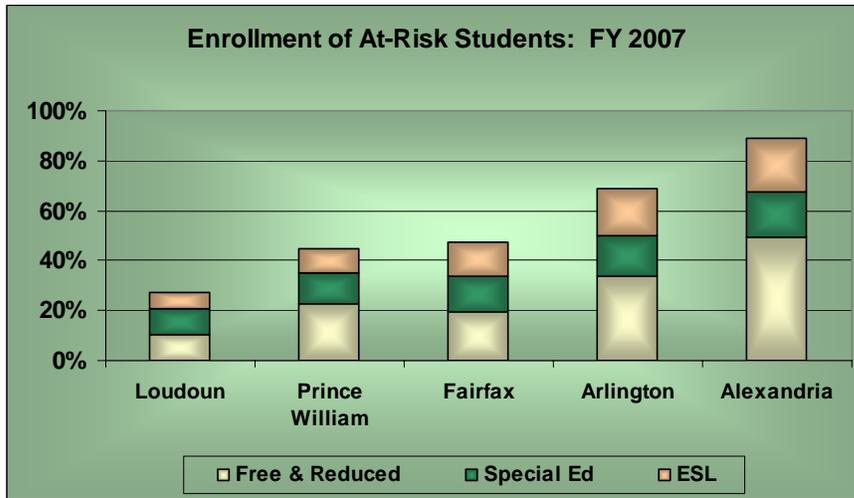
Costs for special education students are greater than costs for other students because:

- Students are served from age 2 through 22 (if they have not graduated with a standard diploma)
- Student-staff ratios are lower, and require teachers and paraprofessionals
- Some students with disabilities require additional specialized support services (such as speech services, occupational and physical therapy), additional specialized equipment and materials, and specialized transportation services
- Tuition to specialized schools may be required

For all at-risk groups of students, **the most significant contributor to higher costs is smaller class sizes.** Academic research supports the effectiveness of small class sizes in

increasing student achievement for at-risk students. ACPS' commitment to small class sizes in all schools, at all school levels, reflects this research-based policy decision.

The ACPS population of at-risk students has increased from FY 2000 to FY 2007, as shown in the chart on the previous page. The ESL population has risen the most, and now represents over one-fifth of the total student population. No other school division in Virginia currently has a similar demographic profile, with the combination of high poverty (free & reduced), high ESL, and high special education students.

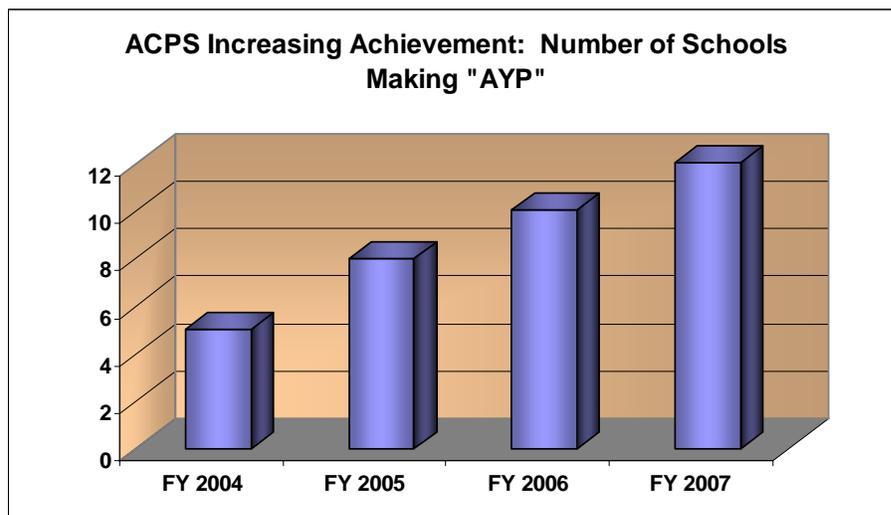


reduced), high ESL, and high special education students.

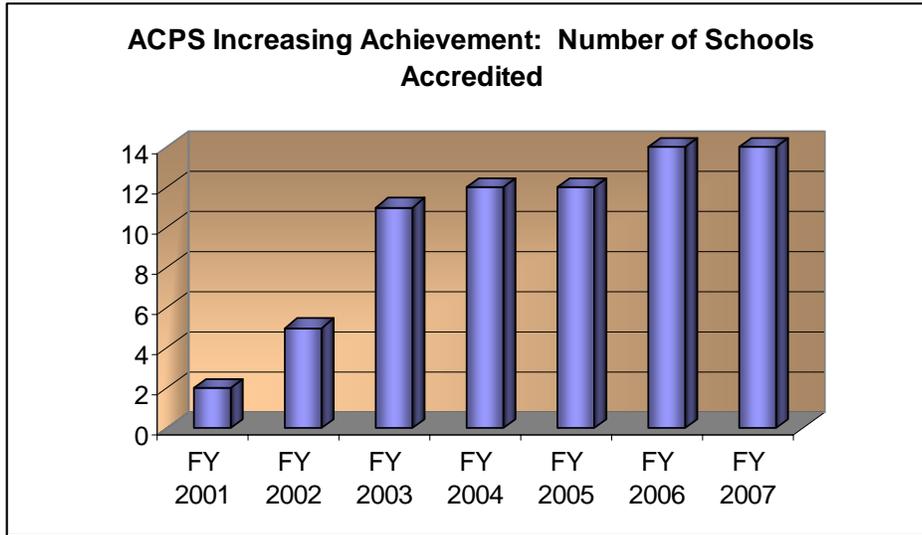
The chart to the right clearly shows that ACPS at-risk population is greater than any other Northern Virginia school division.

6. How successful has ACPS been in meeting the federal “Adequate Yearly Progress” requirements of NCLB, and the state accountability requirements of its Standards of Learning (SOL) testing?

ACPS is required by federal law, and committed to, judging its schools by one measure: whether every student is learning, regardless of race, family background, or disability status. ACPS has been very successful in improving achievement on SOL testing and in meeting AYP requirements. SOL test results for all student sub-groups increased, leading to an additional seven schools meeting AYP in FY 2007 (an increase from 5 schools in FY 2004 that made AYP to 12 schools making AYP in FY 2007).



The chart below shows that increases in ACPS SOL test scores have resulted in 12 more schools meeting state accreditation requirements (from 2 schools in FY 2001 to 14 schools in FY 2007).



7. What are the factors you consider most important in the increase in test scores?

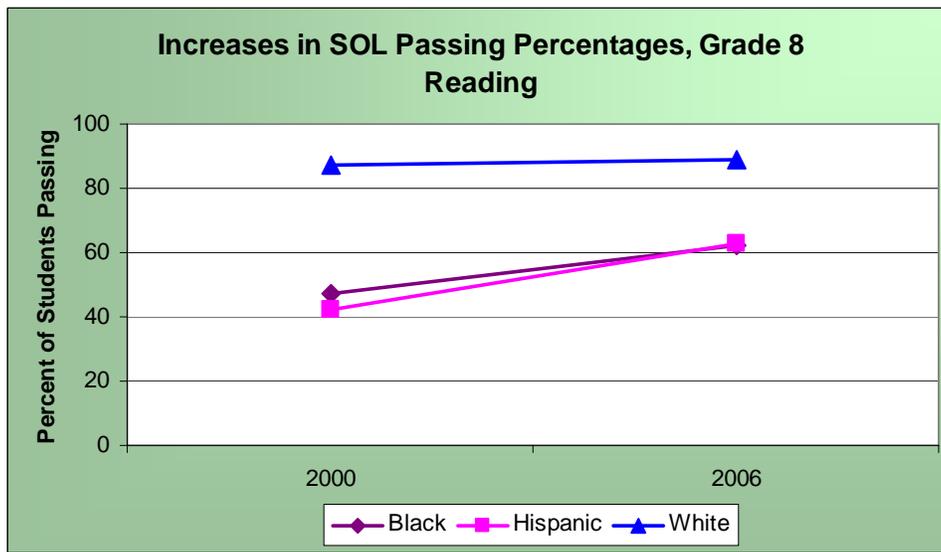
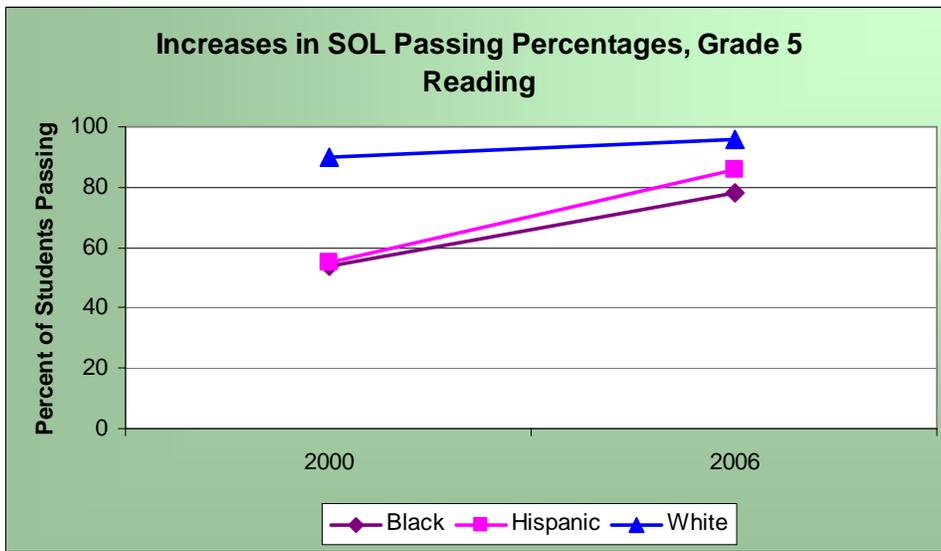
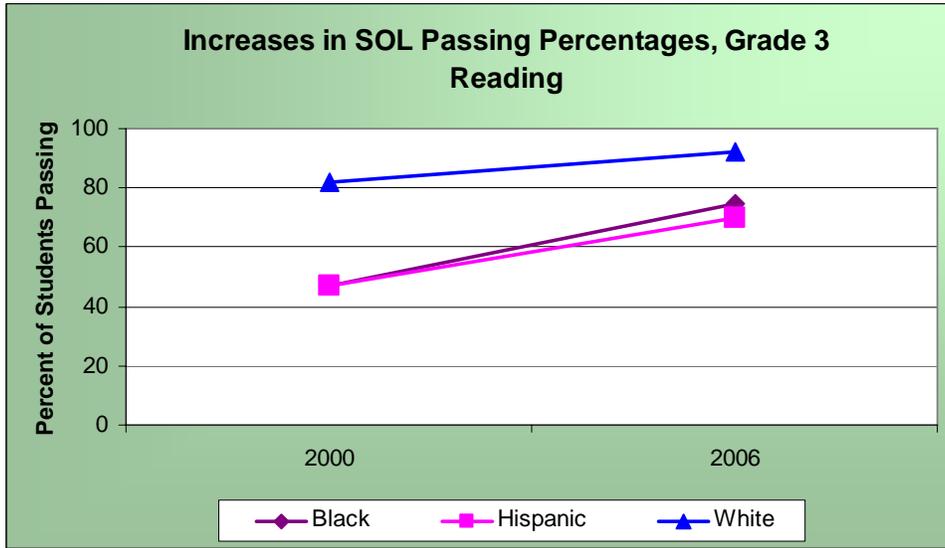
Overall, the improvement in scores is due to a substantial improvement in scores among Blacks and Hispanics, who comprise the majority of the student population. A focused attention from administration on the performance of each sub-group has been important in bringing about these improvements. Staff development on the effective use of data, improved instructional methods, and differentiated instruction has also contributed to the improvement in scores.

Among a total of 175 SOL scores monitored from 2000 through 2006 (25 scores a year), with only four exceptions, the pass rate for White students was always above 70% (exceptions: EOC Earth Science and US History in 2000, EOC US History in 2001, and Grade 5 English:Writing in 2006). Contrast these results to the scores for Black students, who in 2006 (still) had nine of 25 scores below 70% – a slight improvement over the ten scores in 2005 and a vast improvement over the 24 (of 25) scores below 70% in 2000.

The charts on the following page illustrate a few of the many positive accomplishments in improving student achievement over the past seven years.

8. How do we know our programs are effective?

Our programs are highly effective, as demonstrated by the increases in student achievement, school accreditation, and compliance with AYP requirements noted in the responses above. SAT scores increased by 45 points from 2003 to 2007, the largest increase of all the Washington area school divisions. Student drop-out rates have declined from 4.5% in 2003-04 to 3.2% in 2005-06. Attachments 1 and 2 provide more details on improvements in student achievement. The charts on the following page provide a graphic illustration of just a few of the achievement improvements made since FY 2000.



In addition, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation continually evaluates specific programs for effectiveness, using both quantitative and qualitative measures. Data show that our programs are making a difference in student achievement. For example:

- **Modified School Calendar:** Evaluation after the first year of MSC at Tucker showed SOL pass rates increased 2 to 6 percentage points in all subtests. Black students (42% of Tucker's population) had increased pass rates of 8 to 13 points. Scores of Black students in 3rd grade improved significantly more than those of 3rd graders in other schools.
- **Kindergarten Prep:** Participants had fewer absences, fewer retentions and more promotions to first grade, better work habits and greater social-emotional development.
- **Technology Initiative:** For School Year 2004-05, 72% indicated the computer made it easier to do research projects. The laptops address the very real digital divide in Alexandria. Eighty-seven percent of students on free/reduced price meal status indicated that the computer helped with research. Data shows that increased numbers of teachers are requesting Blackboard training and using it in significant ways.

Copies of the evaluations are available on the ACPS website at the following address:

<http://www.acps.k12.va.us/mes/reports.php>

9. How do our central office costs compare with similar school divisions? How do our administrative costs compare with other school divisions?

Research on effective schools has found that school divisions with strong central administrations are more effective in improving student achievement and in managing resources than school divisions without strong central administrations. A strong central administration provides for a uniform curriculum, instructional pacing, and formative assessment across all schools; consistent standards of hiring and evaluation; consistent standards of student performance; and consistent standards of financial management.

ACPS expenditures classified as "school-based" are about 85% to 86% of the total, and have remained in this range since FY 2000. This includes costs in central office department budgets, as well as items in school budgets. Many school divisions centralize some portion of school-based costs to achieve cost efficiencies. ACPS has centralized student transportation, facility management and utilities, copier rentals and maintenance, textbook and library book purchases, and computer leases and maintenance, to name just a few areas. Other school divisions in the Northern Virginia area are comparable. Fairfax, with much greater economies of scale, spends 88 percent of its funds directly on schools.

Comparison of costs and positions across school divisions is complicated by different accounting structures, cost variances for different geographic regions, and many other factors. To make an accurate comparison, a data source that has adjusted the raw data must be used. The US Department of Education Common Core of Data (CCD) adjusts for accounting and administrative cost differences across school divisions; the most recent data available is for FY 2004.

ACPS FY 2008 Budget Frequently Asked Questions

The chart below shows the 10 school divisions in the United States (of almost 15,000 school divisions) that had comparable demographic characteristics in FY 2004. (Since this time, Arlington Public Schools ESL enrollment has declined significantly and is no longer considered comparable.)

STATE	AGENCY NAME	FRPL % 2004	ESL% 2004	SE% 2004	Combined At-Risk	Tchr % 2004	LEA Admin% 2004	Instr of Total % 2003
NM	Santa Fe Public Schools	53.3%	19.7%	17.7%	90.7%	48.6%	1.1%	71.2%
NM	Farmington Municipal Schools	46.0%	26.6%	16.6%	89.2%	48.5%	0.2%	66.8%
VA	Alexandria City Public Schools	47.3%	21.6%	18.0%	86.9%	59.0%	1.5%	67.8%
IN	Elkhart Community Schools	51.9%	18.6%	16.2%	86.7%	46.2%	0.4%	59.5%
AZ	Flagstaff Unified District	44.5%	16.3%	25.7%	86.6%	48.1%	0.1%	58.9%
VA	Arlington County Public Schools	37.7%	29.2%	16.6%	83.4%	50.9%	3.1%	64.1%
WI	Green Bay Area	41.8%	12.2%	18.9%	72.9%	59.0%	0.3%	69.8%
ME	Portland Public Schools	41.3%	14.0%	15.5%	70.8%	48.8%	3.5%	75.4%
IA	Sioux City Comm School District	42.0%	12.7%	15.6%	70.4%	59.1%	0.9%	67.7%
IN	MSD Pike Township	39.6%	10.9%	17.8%	68.2%	45.3%	0.5%	59.8%

The data show that ACPS is third highest in all three demographic measures – percent of special education (SE) enrollment, free-and-reduced price lunch (FRPL) enrollment, and ESL enrollment. Other schools may be high in one or two measures, but not in all three. ACPS is **second highest** in the percentage of total staff that are teacher positions, and third highest in the percentage of total staff that are division-wide administrators. Arlington Public Schools have a lower teacher share and a higher administrator share; Portland (ME) Public Schools have the highest administrator share. ACPS' percent of total expenditures that go directly to the classroom (Instr of Total %) is also among the highest.

This data indicates that ACPS central office staffing is in line with comparable school divisions, even when compared on a national basis.

Among other Northern Virginia school divisions, ACPS is also comparable. Only 10.7% of ACPS staff are considered “non-school-based”, compared to 12.7% in Arlington, 12.3% in Prince George’s, 9.7% in Prince William, and 7.2% in Fairfax. These latter three school divisions have much greater economies of scale than ACPS.

10. Is it more expensive to operate small schools, as we do in Alexandria, or are larger schools more cost effective?

There are often effectiveness vs. cost efficiency trade-offs between small and large schools. Small schools are generally more effective at improving student achievement for all groups of students, but capital, operating, and some staffing costs are greater in small schools. Alexandria's commitment to small community schools increases the overall operating cost for each school building. Costs savings could be realized by consolidating some of the smallest schools, but this is a decision that would have significant impact on the affected communities and current capacity at schools would not allow for a simple solution.

11. What federal or state mandates must we comply with?

School divisions have numerous federal and state mandates they must comply with, and ACPS is no exception. As mandates have been implemented, funding for the additional costs has not been sufficient to meet the associated cost increases.

The following is a partial list of the mandates:

- **No Child Left Behind: Elementary and Secondary Education Act.** The various acts of the NCLB act require provision of services to ESL students and at-risk students and school divisions and operation of safe-and-drug-free youth programs. Testing requirements under NCLB have added end-of-year testing for 4, 6, and 7th graders in addition to the end of year SOL tests for 3, 5th, and 8th graders, and end-of-course tests for high school students.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act,** requiring provision of special education services to all students ages 2 through 22 identified in need of services. IDEIA requires provision of transportation services to all special education students in the boundaries of the school division, regardless of where they receive their services. School divisions are responsible for the education portion of private residential placements for students with severe disabilities. School divisions are responsible for providing free summer services when the student's progress would be jeopardized by not participating in summer activities. Homebound services must be provided to special education students under certain circumstances even when they have been expelled.
- **McKinney-Vento Act** requiring provision of services to homeless students, including continued enrollment in their original school and provision of transportation to that school.
- **Virginia Standards of Learning** curriculum, testing, remediation, and accreditation requirements
- **Virginia Standards of Quality** including staffing and curriculum standards
- **Homebound** services for students who have long-term illnesses or are hospitalized
- **Virginia Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening** assessment and remediation requirements
- **Virginia ESL** identification and testing requirements
- **Public health** vaccination and tracking requirements
- State notification requirements, including opt-in and opt-out requirements and students rights and responsibilities notifications
- **Virginia Superintendent's Memos:** In calendar 2006 there were 257 informational memos; 53 administrative memos; and 12 regulatory memos. This is more than one memo per work day. Each of these must be read, reviewed for applicability and

- impact on the school division, then implemented. In most cases they also require a response to the state.
- **State attendance and truancy** reporting requirements
 - **USDA School Food Program** requirements for the administration of school breakfast and lunch programs and record keeping on free-and-reduced price lunch students
 - **State recordkeeping and records management** requirements
 - **GASB and GAAP** financial management, accounting, and reporting requirements
 - **State purchasing requirements**, including certification of non-offender status for outside vendors with contact with students.
 - State and federal **student transportation and vehicle regulations**
 - **Emergency planning regulations**
 - **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** governing student records.
 - **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** and **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)** requirements for all personnel.
 - Monitoring and assessment of home-schooled students

12. How do you know that the Laptop program is increasing student achievement?

“Research shows that when technology is used appropriately, children learn more, even as measured by conventional tests (Newmann, Bryk & Nagaoka, 2001; Weglinsky, 1998).”
--Lemke and Coughlin, 2005

There are numerous elements that influence academic achievement. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to identify laptops as the sole variable that explains the increases in student achievement that have occurred at the high school level in ACPS over the last three years.

However, we do know that the laptop computers are invaluable electronic resources that provide students with individualized instructional software, increased access to a wealth of web based resources, and tools for communication, collaboration, and enhanced organization. We also know that technology is the engine that has propelled us into the global, information-based society in which we live today. Technology integration creates instruction that is more engaging, personalized, and meaningful for our students. All of these contribute to higher academic achievement.

The evaluation of the High School Technology Integration Project that is currently being conducted by The Metiri Group will provide additional data on the impact that the ACPS laptop program has had on teaching and learning in grades 9 through 12.

13. Is the lease contract for laptops the most cost effective?

Leasing laptops is a generally accepted practice that is more cost effective for ACPS for the following reasons:

- Leasing spreads the cost of the laptops over four years, avoiding a huge supplemental request to the budget every few years.
- Terms of the lease include extended warranties, protection for theft and loss and substantial support that are not included in a purchase.
- Leasing establishes a life-cycle for equipment which provides teachers and students with up-to-date tools for instructional programs. This steady cycle of updated

- technology ensures a stable infrastructure to support a one-to-one computing environment.
- o Leases provide for the disposal of out-dated equipment. Storage, maintenance and disposal of out-dated equipment is costly.

14. How are step increases figured and how do they relate to merit?

Step increases are given each year to employees who earn a "Satisfactory" performance evaluation based on our Performance Evaluation Program. The amount of the step increase is determined by the salary scale, grade, and current step of the employee as each salary scale (teacher, support, administrative) is configured differently. Step increases across all salary scales range from 2.5% (teacher and administrative scales) to 5% (teacher scale).

15. How do the testing requirements impact the budget?

Testing requirements impact the budget in two ways. One, it increases the total cost of testing because of greater numbers of tests being given and more grade levels being tested. As an illustration, the budget for testing services in FY 2001 was \$146,362; for FY 2008, the budget is \$337,818, an increase of 131%.

Two, it impacts the use of staff time. For example, each separate type of test and each separate administration of each type of test requires training of the Monitoring & Evaluation Department staff, school test coordinators and their assistants, and all examiners, proctors, and teachers. Each test also requires audit and monitoring time and time to follow up on problems and alerts. After test results are received, time is required for merging test data with data in the student information system, checking the test manufacturer's file to ensure accuracy, and interpreting individual results.

There are two additional testing requirements in addition to the standard tests. The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP), designed for students with significant cognitive impairments, is given in addition to state and federally mandated SOL assessments. It will be administered to approximately 64 students this school year but will require 54 days of training and administrative task time. This does not include the time teachers spend assessing the students or assembling the comprehensive portfolios of student achievement required by this assessment program. The Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) serves a similarly small population of students and requires about the same amount of staff time to administer. Both programs require central office staff to administer the program overall as well as continual, additional support from other central office departments such as ITS.

16. Why do you need 15.0 FTE as reserves? How does this compare with other school divisions?

This reserve is the smallest ever and is based on actual usage. Reduction of the staffing reserve below its budgeted level would leave ACPS with extremely limited capability to respond to any unknown events or unanticipated changes in enrollment. A sufficient staffing reserve needs to be maintained to address unexpected shifts in population and to ensure the division's ability to comply with state-mandated class size ratios for the general education population and case-load requirements for special education students.

All school divisions maintain some combination of staffing and contingency reserves:

- Fairfax County Public Schools maintains a staffing reserve equal to 1.2% of its instructional staff. The FCPS total reserves, with staffing and contingency reserves combined, equal 1% of the total operating fund budget.
- Prince William County Public Schools maintains reserves equal to 1.3% of their operating fund budget.
- Arlington County maintains staffing and contingency reserves equal to almost 1.3% of their total budget.
- Falls Church City Public Schools maintain reserves equal to 1% of their operating fund budget.
- ACPS will have the 15.0 FTE staffing reserve and the \$50,000 materials reserve in FY 2008. These two combined equal 0.47% of the total operating fund budget, substantially less than the reserves of our surrounding school divisions.

17. What will be cut if the school budget is not fully funded?

If the School budget target had to be met, the School Board would, in essence, have to begin the budget deliberations again. All items would be reconsidered. However, some additional items that the Superintendent would recommend for serious consideration include:

- Eliminating COLA
- Increasing class sizes by 2 students
- Increasing class sizes by another 2 students, to a total of 4 students
- Eliminating 2.0 FTE in central office
- Eliminating parent liaison positions and volunteer coordinator stipends
- Reducing the number of Talented and Gifted (TAG) teachers
- Eliminating 0.5 FTE assistant principal at George Mason
- Eliminating new literacy coaches
- Eliminating homework club funding
- Reducing paraprofessionals at CK and MV
- Eliminating elementary computer lab paraprofessionals and assistants
- Reducing TCW guidance office administrative support positions
- Reducing social workers

Q&A prepared by ACPS staff

SOL Spring Results
Alexandria City Public Schools
Historical Data and Trends

SOL TEST	2000 Passing Rate (%)	2001 Passing Rate (%)	2002 Passing Rate (%)	2003 Passing Rate ^c (%)	2004 Passing Rate ^c (%)	2005 Passing Rate ^c (%)	2006 Passing Rate ^{c,e} (%)	Change 2000 to 2006	Percent Change, 2000 to 2006
Grade 3									
English	59	63	72	73	72	81	81	22	37%
Mathematics	66	77	81	89	87	87	91	25	38%
History	53	62	71	74	81	82	88	35	66%
Science	64	66	71	74	79	82	87	23	36%
Grade 5									
English: Reading	68	73	78	80	81	82	86	18	26%
English: Writing	82	84	87	84	84	91	87	5	6%
Mathematics	64	66	72	72	75	80	85	21	33%
History	41	58	67	75	88	84	82	41	100%
Science	59	71	78	75	77	74	80	21	36%
Computer/Technology	85	79	87						
Grade 8									
English: Reading	62	67	67	66	76	72	73	11	18%
English: Writing	74	69	77	66	80	72	90	16	22%
Mathematics ^b	57	65	68	78	88	80	64	7	12%
History	43	49	79	78	74	74	84	41	95%
Science	70	79	79	76	87	81	78	8	11%
Computer/Technology	73	75	74						
High School									
English: Reading	68	64	74	92	82	80	85	17	25%
English: Writing	79	75	78	88	82	85	84	5	6%
Algebra I	54	58	70	75	76	76	76	22	41%
Geometry	71	62	72	76	73	71	71	0	0%
Algebra II	64	75	79	81	87	90	91	27	42%
Earth Science	40	48	52	60	57	76	78	38	95%
Biology	67	70	79	83	69	68	69	2	3%
Chemistry	59	79	80	90	94	95	96	37	63%
World History I	70	72	83	84	71	80	85	15	21%
World History II	49	59	79	80	77	81	79	30	61%
VA & U.S. History	31	34	61	75	87	84	89	58	187%

^a Includes Remediation Recovery passing percentage bonus, which was higher than the adjusted total.

^b Includes students in grades 6 and 7 who took the grade 8 mathematics SOL.

^c Includes students in special situations.

^d Represents the combined average of the three content specific history tests.

^e Passing rates in 2006 reflect the following: 1) All are adjusted scores with no Remediation Recovery included; 2) All are scores from the Spring Administration; and 3) only tests with prior years' comparables are shown.



ACPS SOL RESULTS
Unadjusted Passing Percentages of African-American
and Hispanic Students, 2000 - 2006

BLACK	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	HISPANIC	00	01	02	03	04	05	06
Grade 3	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Grade 3	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
English	47	44	48	49	47	60	75	English	47	45	49	58	58	65	70
Math	53	57	61	67	71	72	82	Math	57	66	67	78	81	83	83
History	41	47	59	60	68	74	84	History	39	48	60	63	80	76	76
Science	55	53	61	59	67	73	83	Science	50	50	54	64	72	80	74
Grade 5								Grade 5							
English/Reading	54	61	66	70	73	73	78	English/Reading	55	63	73	71	80	77	86
Writing	71	77	77	75	74	85	78	Writing	79	78	84	80	81	89	79
Math	49	53	60	59	64	70	71	Math	57	58	68	67	75	79	79
History	47	52	51	63	82	73	73	History	42	52	49	68	83	77	80
Science	65	58	62	60	68	62	71	Science	55	53	58	66	68	65	79
Grade 8								Grade 8							
English/Reading	47	52	51	52	59	61	62	English/Reading	42	52	49	51	64	65	63
Writing	65	58	62	51	68	61	86	Writing	55	53	58	59	72	58	85
Math	36	48	46	62	72	67	50	Math	37	53	54	65	85	77	52
History	26	29	68	68	71	76	61	History	25	37	68	71	80	72	70
Science	56	66	70	65	83	72	68	Science	56	73	64	71	80	73	71
High School End of Course								High School End of Course							
English/Reading	52	44	59	90	77	66	74	English/Reading	56	52	69	86	76	76	77
English/Writing	66	58	64	77	68	76	74	English/Writing	71	68	73	81	72	81	78
End of Course Math								End of Course Math							
Algebra 1	39	44	60	64	67	71	69	Algebra 1	49	45	61	65	65	69	80
Geometry	54	49	56	59	54	58	56	Geometry	59	55	58	65	66	52	62
Algebra II	46	61	70	67	82	81	85	Algebra II	54	48	80	79	76	87	90
End of Course Science								End of Course Science							
Earth Science	35	41	41	47	44	61	63	Earth Science	34	47	36	48	39	71	60
Biology	56	52	65	71	54	57	56	Biology	61	63	64	64	57	57	57
Chemistry	35	66	66	81	82	91	92	Chemistry	54	63	70	80	87	91	96
End of Course History								End of Course History							
World History I	54	63	74	73	59	68	75	World History I	63	55	70	71	58	70	78
World History II	29	41	67	68	65	75	68	World History II	32	50	69	70	70	72	63
U. S. History	13	14	40	57	80	71	81	U. S. History	7	15	41	60	81	85	87



ACPS SOL RESULTS
Unadjusted Passing Percentages for White Students
and for All Students, 2000 – 2006

WHITE	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	ALL	00	01	02	03	04	05	06
Grade 3	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Grade 3	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
English	82	86	87	85	84	85	92	English	55	55	58	61	60	68	79
Math	85	89	91	91	94	95	96	Math	61	68	71	76	80	81	87
History	79	83	90	87	94	93	97	History	49	57	67	68	78	80	86
Science	84	86	88	86	91	92	95	Science	60	61	66	68	75	80	84
Grade 5								Grade 5							
English/Reading	90	87	95	93	93	93	96	English/Reading	64	69	75	76	80	80	85
Writing	94	91	94	91	95	93	93	Writing	80	81	83	81	81	89	83
Math	85	82	88	86	89	93	91	Math	61	63	69	69	83	79	79
History	87	89	89	90	92	94	94	History	38	53	63	71	86	80	81
Science	94	90	88	91	92	90	92	Science	56	67	74	70	74	70	79
Grade 8								Grade 8							
English/Reading	87	89	89	88	91	94	89	English/Reading	57	62	61	59	71	69	69
Writing	94	90	88	87	92	94	96	Writing	71	66	68	62	75	68	89
Math	86	92	85	88	96	94	81	Math	52	62	60	70	83	77	60
History	77	80	92	91	99	99	95	History	40	45	75	74	83	79	82
Science	91	94	93	95	94	99	93	Science	66	75	76	74	86	78	76
High School End of Course								High School End of Course							
English/Reading	88	89	91	98	96	94	93	English/Reading	67	63	71	92	82	77	78
English/Writing	93	95	94	99	92	98	94	English/Writing	77	74	76	85	77	85	82
End of Course Math								End of Course Math							
Algebra 1	74	84	89	88	88	90	89	Algebra 1	51	57	68	72	73	76	77
Geometry	89	78	84	94	92	90	89	Geometry	70	61	67	73	69	68	69
Algebra II	79	88	87	90	93	96	94	Algebra II	63	74	77	80	86	89	90
End of Course Science								End of Course Science							
Earth Science	56	75	76	74	73	91	91	Earth Science	39	47	44	50	47	72	70
Biology	87	91	96	97	90	90	93	Biology	65	67	74	77	64	66	64
Chemistry	71	87	86	93	96	97	99	Chemistry	58	77	77	87	92	95	96
End of Course History								End of Course History							
World History I	92	92	93	96	90	94	97	World History I	44	70	78	80	67	76	81
World History II	75	89	94	97	90	93	95	World History II	44	57	76	77	75	80	76
U.S. History	56	60	80	94	96	97	97	U.S. History	26	31	54	68	86	83	88

