

Alexandria City Public
Schools (ACPS)
Continuous
Improvement Update

December 2010

Role and Value of Great Public Schools

- Create literate, participating, productive citizens to sustain and enhance our democracy
- Education and individual student achievement is the 21st century civil right
- Contribute to U.S. economic competitiveness in the world
- Strengthen social and economic fabric of Alexandria
- Path to a better life for all
- Attract people to Alexandria to purchase homes, start businesses, and contribute their talents to the community

ACPS Facts and Trends

- 20 schools: 12 elementary, 1 K-8, 5 middle school, 1 high school, 1 alternative high school
- Rich diversity and inclusive student population
 - Black: 36.5%, Hispanic: 27.0%, White: 24.7%, Asian Pacific: 6.2%, Native American: 1.4%, Unspecified: 4.2%
 - Countries of birth: 128; Students born outside the U.S.: 2,125; Native language 75; Students eligible for free or reduced price meals: 54%; Students requiring English Language Learner (ELL) Services: 22%; Students receiving special education services: 15%
- ACPS made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in math under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2009-2010, but did not in English; students increased performance across all NCLB subgroups over the past 2 years
- 13.5% increase in student enrollment over the past four years (FY08-11) while the total operating budget has increased only 3.7%
- Budgeted cost per pupil has fallen from \$19,341 in FY08 to 16,983 in FY11
- Salaries have increased by 3.3% while benefits have decreased by 10.3%

ACPS Strategic Plan 2010-2015

- *VISION:*
Alexandria City Public Schools will set the international standard for educational excellence, where all students achieve their potential and actively contribute to our local and global communities.
- *MISSION:*
Alexandria City Public Schools will provide the environment, resources, and commitment to ensure that each and every student succeeds — academically, emotionally, physically, and socially.

ACPS Strategic Plan 2010-2015

- *Goals:*
 - 1. *Ensure all students demonstrate significant academic growth, and dramatically improve achievement outcomes for students below grade level.*
 - 2. *Provide a rigorous, relevant, and internationally benchmarked education to enable all students to succeed as citizens in the global community.*
 - 3. *Create an exceptional learning environment.*
 - 4. *Implement a focused, transparent governance model which incorporates effective communication and evidence-based decision making.*
 - 5. *Provide clean, safe and conducive learning environments that utilize best practices for energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.*

Foundation for Achieving Goals: Focus on Students

- Individual Achievement Plans (IAPs) for students K-5, as needed; all second students, grades 6-12, will have IAPs in Math and English
- Secondary schools reform (T. C. Williams transformation and new middle schools model); “Remember the Titans, Imagine the Titans, Fulfill the Promise, but, to keep perspective, recall that T.C. Williams is in the top 6% of all U.S. high schools, according to Newsweek
- Policy IFA, Curriculum Design and Assessment: “Do you know what the consequence for not doing your homework is? Doing your homework!”
- Columbia Teachers' College Writing Project program implementation (e.g., dramatic increase in SOL writing scores)
- Implementation of leadership programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and Intel Science
- Student enrollment in Algebra I or higher in 8th grade increased to 361 students or 49%.
- Enrollment in ACPS Pre-K programs located at the new John Adams Early Childhood Center, Mount Vernon Community School, and Jefferson-Houston Elementary School increased by 63 children; ACPS has a waiting list of 57 children seeking Pre-K; Head Start has 116 children (ages 2-4 years) on the waiting list; ACPS is moving toward preparing as many children for success early as possible
- Beginning of cultural shift: “This is important; you can do it; I won't give up on you ... even when you have given up on yourself”

Foundation for Achieving Goals: Family and Community Involvement

- Students are most successful in school and life when parents are an essential part of the learning triangle (students, teachers, parents)
- School staff, community members/organizations and parents/families create powerful and sustainable alliances to "promote" and "own" student Individual Achievement Plans (IAPs)
- New "Parent Portal" gives parents a new tool to help students
- ACPS offers the Family Academy to provide classes to empower parents as partners, advocates and leaders in their children's education and to support students' academic, emotional, physical and social success
- The ACPS Partners in Education and Volunteers in Schools programs has over 100 partnerships with community members, non-profit organizations, government agencies (city/state/local) and businesses providing hundreds of volunteers to support the success of students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in the areas of tutoring, mentoring, leadership, college and career preparation and more

Foundation for Achieving Goals: Instructional Excellence

- First phase of development of new ACPS curriculum completed, emphasizing teaching of 21st Century skills
- Transition to having special education students and English Language Learners spend 80% of their day in the regular classroom
- Pilot implementation of Response-to-Intervention (RtI) strategies in regular classroom to provide a continuum of services for every student
- All licensed staff (i.e., every teacher and administrator) to have a Professional Learning Plan tying their annual evaluations to professional learning in terms of student learning; creation of the Alliance for Learning and Leading to provide aligned training, especially the Skillful Teacher professional development program
- Addition of specific math strategies and tactics to improve math instruction and raise math proficiency in middle schools
- Implementation of Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes of the International Baccalaureate and Elementary Exemplary programs to integrate instruction and strengthen instructional practice

Foundation for Achieving Goals: Responsible Governance and Budgeting

- Entire division implementing Baldrige criteria for effective governance, continuous improvement, and accountability; emphasis on customer service culture
- Well-functioning Board and energetic Superintendent working together toward common goals (e.g., Strategic Plan implementation)
- Board/Superintendent for first time worked with a 2% reduction in the City appropriations in FY10; 0.3% decrease in the City appropriation over the past three years (FY09-11)
- ACPS has reprogrammed \$41.1 million of existing funds to align spending with Strategic Plan, 21% (one-fifth) of total operating budget of \$196.2 million
- Policy JCD, Modified Open Enrollment implemented to cap class size and maximize use of available classrooms across division
- ACPS Budget staff won prestigious Association of School Business Officers (ASBO) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awards 2010 for budget management excellence

Foundation for Achieving Goals: Future Needs

- Predictable and adequate funding stream, prudently managed – from local, state, and federal sources
- Additional facilities and staff to educate growing student population for 21st century citizenship
 - Growth in student population of 477 students per year over the past four years, or the equivalent of about one elementary school
 - Projected growth of 377 students each year over the next 5 years (over per year); from FY08 to FY16, a total growth of 3,315 students is anticipated
 - There is no more space for elementary students without building new schools or adding to existing schools
 - Middle schools will soon feel the impact of the increased growth; by FY11 the larger classes will reach high school
 - Projected need for replaced K-8 schools for Cora Kelly, Patrick Henry and Jefferson-Houston; ACPS staff continue to study facility space requirements in light of anticipated decreases in drop-out rates and increasing demand for preschool services; the current facility needs projections will be updated as this work progresses
 - Contemporary compensation and evaluation system for ACPS to attract and retain best and brightest teachers, administrators, and support staff
 - 86.3% of ACPS's budget is personnel costs; education is a service-intensive profession