

BOARD BRIEF

ACPS kindergarteners; note that this is in numbers only, not the actual same babies who become Kindergartners, this is known as the “K Capture Rate.” In 2012, ACPS had a high “K Capture Rate” of 66%, which resulted in 1,516 Kindergartners. Last year, we had 1,516 Kindergartners as well, however this only represented a “K Capture Rate” of 57%. This year, our “K Capture Rate” dropped to 54%, the lowest since 2007. Births in Alexandria have grown through 2016, but then decline for the next two years, meaning that, even with a declining “K Capture rate,” we may expect growth in elementary enrollment or, at least, a continued level of enrollment through 2027, when the 2016 babies reach 5th grade. And this growth would continue throughout the division until 2034, when those students graduate high school. After that, however, it will be critical to monitor ongoing birth and Kindergarten enrollment trends, as well as impacts of any new development, to determine capacity needs beyond 2030.

Elementary School Capacity

Capacity at the elementary school level is based on the amount and size of classroom spaces. The calculation for all school capacities is based on a standard set in the educational specifications. The addition of Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School and redistricting helped alleviate overcrowding in some of our elementary schools but did not solve it.

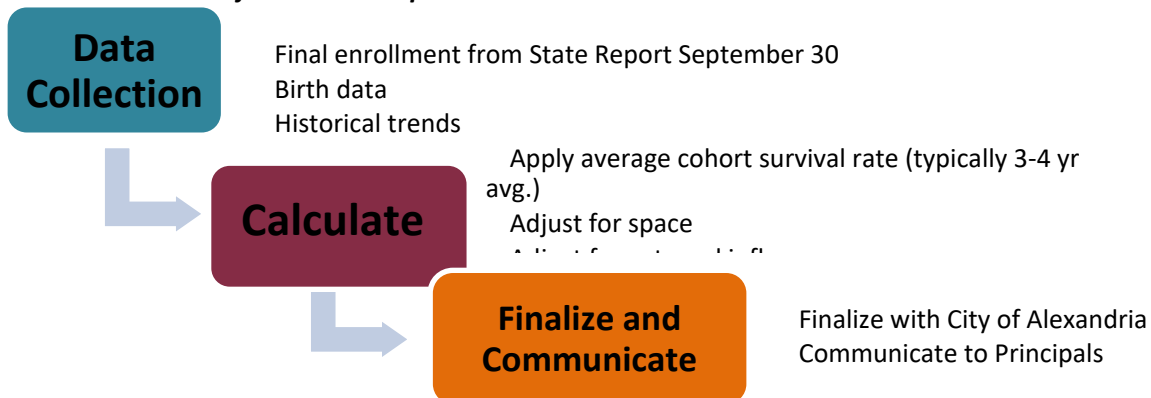
Plan to Address

There are a few approaches that ACPS will explore to expand elementary school capacity:

- Modernization of at least three elementary schools including added capacity in ten-year CIP
- Review of boundaries every five years or with each school opening to help mitigate school by school overcrowding
- Consideration for smaller sites designated for ACPS use in City planning processes

BACKGROUND: Following significant enrollment growth in the 2012-2013 school year, ACPS and the City of Alexandria worked collaboratively to develop an enrollment projection process that follows school planning industry best practice and enables ACPS and the City to plan more accurately for future operating budgets and capital needs. This background information will help explain the overall enrollment projection process and expected outcomes:

Annual Enrollment Projection Development Process:



Based on the above process, enrollment projections are calculated annually for ten-years out and will reflect the most recent growth or decline in enrollment. This is why each year, enrollment projections in the out-years may change significantly; however, data shows us that we tend to be more accurate the closer we get to the actual enrollment year. See below.

Annual Accuracy

This is the accuracy we have experienced from annual projection to enrollment, meaning, how accurate the projection for 2015 enrollment in 2014 was, and 2016 enrollment in 2015, etc. Since this work also informs the ACPS operating budget, that is what a key performance indicator for ACPS is based on and is commonly the Enrollment Projection Accuracy Rate referred to by the public.

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| Calendar Year (Sept.) | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Projection | 14,685 | 15,209 | 15,473 | 15,884 | 15,948 |
| Actual | 14,670 | 15,056 | 15,493 | 15,737 | 16,062 |
| Difference | 15 | 153 | -20 | 147 | -114 |
| Percent of Projection | 99.9% | 101.0% | 100.1% | 99.1% | 100.7% |

Ten-Year Projection Accuracy

ACPS, especially with the recent aggressive capital improvement program, has been asked how accurate the 2-10 year-out projections are given how much they inform ACPS plans. Based on the enrollment projection methodology that has been used for the past five years, ACPS estimates that on average, enrollment projections become 0.5% more accurate, or closer to the actual number, annually. See below.

| Projection Years in Advance | Average Difference from Actual | Range | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|---------|
| | | From | To |
| 1 | 0.53% | 99.47% | 100.53% |
| 2 | 0.96% | 99.04% | 100.96% |
| 3 | 1.26% | 98.74% | 101.26% |
| 4 | 2.55% | 97.45% | 102.55% |
| 5 | 2.20% | 97.80% | 102.20% |

Major Enrollment Influencers

- Development and Affordability: More Alexandrians and more houses lead to more ACPS students, generally speaking. While our students do not tend to live in new multi-family, market-rate developments, increased development does impact the affordability of other housing and overall population growth.
- Retention: The likelihood that ACPS students will stay ACPS students appears to be increasing. For example, 5 years ago, GW Middle School had 75% of rising 6th graders attend GW, this year they had 86%.
- Political and Economic Climate: At national, regional and local levels, the political and economic environment has significant influence on enrollment growth. For example, babies born during the recession became part of large ACPS cohorts with higher retention rates than previously experienced. We might expect a similar growth as a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the attachment and brief.

IMPACT:

Guides capital planning process and budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

200522_Board_Brief_Attachment1_FY2021-2030_Elementary_School_Enrollment_Projections

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