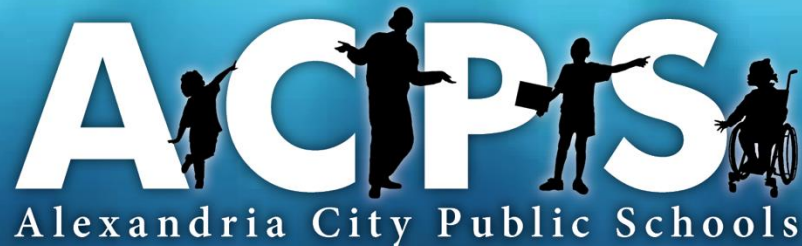# Grade Level Feasibility Study Update

School Board Meeting

October 12, 2017

Essential Questions

1. What is the purpose of the grade level feasibility study?
2. What progress has been made to date?
3. Does research support any specific grade level configuration?
4. How could supported configurations be applied at ACPS?
5. What considerations should be made when pursuing a grade level re-configuration?
6. What are the next steps of the study?

Purpose

Grade level reconfiguration is one option pursued by school districts/divisions to address capacity needs. Alternatives to grade level reconfiguration include:

- Altering existing spaces for added classrooms
- Adding portable units
- Expanding/reconfiguring existing facilities
- Adjusting school boundaries
- Offering more online or off-site learning opportunities
- Restructuring the class schedule

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Purpose

The purpose of the grade level feasibility study is to provide ACPS with **research** of different grade level configurations and **options for ACPS** to reconfigure its schools, if feasible and desired.

Progress To Date

October 2016: contracted Hanover Research Group (HRG) to complete the study

Completed:

- Benchmarking Study
- Analysis of Elementary and Secondary Grade Span Configurations – Update

Ongoing:

- Survey Instrument
- Environmental Scan for Grade Level Feasibility
- Executive Summary of Findings

Summary of Findings: Key Points

- Each school district or **division is unique** and different configurations may result in different student outcomes

- In general, **minimizing transitions** will result in higher levels of achievement

- Ultimately, student achievement is typically a result of **classroom quality** and/or **social environment**

Summary of Findings: Elementary

- Pre-K: Based on the research, students do not benefit from being in isolated early childhood centers; however, they have been used to minimize overcrowding, increase access or provide services specific to the population

- Pre-K-3: Comprehensive alignment from Pre-K/K-3 is critical to student achievement in later grades

- Pre-K/K-5: Most common grade configuration; however, research indicates that students in 6th grade benefit academically and behaviorally from being in an elementary setting

Summary of Findings: Secondary

- K-8: Research surrounding behavior and academic achievement for students in the K-8 model found conflicting results

- 9th Grade Academy: Research is inconclusive on student achievement of 9th grade academies

- 9-12: Most prevalent type of high school configuration; research on alternatives is limited

Current Grade Level Capacity Scenario at ACPS

Grade Level	FY 2023 Projected Enrollment	Schools Included in Capacity	Capacity	Seat Surplus/ Deficit
Pre-K-5	9,046	Current Pre-K-5 Capacity*	8,181	-865
6-8	3,552	Current grades 6-8 Capacity	2,981	-571
9-12	4,924	Current high school capacity	3,787	-1,137

*Includes new Patrick Henry and new west end elementary school capacity

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Preliminary Analysis: Example Grade Level Reconfiguration Scenario at ACPS

Grade Level	FY 2023 Projected Enrollment	Schools Included in Capacity	Capacity	Seat Surplus/ Deficit
Pre-K-6	10,285	All elementary and K-8 capacity*	8,619	-1,666
7-8	2,313	Both middle schools	2,546	233
9-12	4,924	Both high school campuses	3,787	-1,137

*Includes new Patrick Henry and new west end elementary school capacity

Considerations for Grade Level Reconfigurations

- Operating and capital cost implications
- Student wellbeing and the impact of transitions
- Stakeholder values
- Ability of facility to meet the grade level configuration
- Impact to staffing and administration
- Need to adjust school boundaries

Next Steps

Fall 2017:

- HRG will be conducting ACPS based research of the 9th grade academy model and potential reconfiguration for high school

- HRG will finalize the environmental scan and executive summary

Winter 2018:

- HRG will update and administer the survey based on final outcomes and ACPS input

- ACPS will use the results to scope community engagement process for high school capacity

Questions/Comments

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