

BOARD BRIEF

Date: May 8, 2020
 For ACTION _____
 For INFORMATION X
 Board Agenda: Yes X
 No _____

FROM: Erika Gulick, Director, Capital Programs, Planning & Design

THROUGH: Mignon R. Anthony, Chief Operating Officer
 Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
 Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Enrollment Projections: High School

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:
 Goal 6: Effective and Efficient Operations

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:
 Focus Area 2: Budget Process
 Focus Area 3: High School Project

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:
 Optimal and Equitable Learning Environments

SUMMARY: This brief is the first in a series of three enrollment projection board briefs focusing on enrollment projections for the next ten years. This brief presents the ten-year high school projections, attached. Below, for reference, is a summary.

School Level	School Name	Grade	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
HS	Minnie Howard Center		908	989	1,101	1,038	1,070	1,159	1,126	1,107	1,172	1,122	1,166
	TC Williams HS		3,210	3,287	3,479	3,792	3,935	4,064	4,125	4,208	4,273	4,277	4,281
HS Total			4,118	4,276	4,580	4,830	5,005	5,223	5,251	5,315	5,445	5,399	5,447

Key Points About High School Enrollment Projections

These projections have significantly increased from the projections last year. This is largely due to growth from last year that can be attributed to drastic changes in our T.C. Williams International Academy enrollment. The International Academy’s enrollment dropped by almost 200 students from Sept. 2016 to Sept. 2018 and increased this year by almost 100 students from Sept. 2018 to Sept. 2019. These trends in the International Academy will have to continue to be monitored and The High School Project needs will continue to be evaluated through the pre-design and design phases of the project.

Also driving high school enrollment growth are large cohorts with high retention rates rising up to the secondary level. Our two largest Kindergarten cohorts experienced in the last few decades will be entering into 8th grade and 1st grade next year. For perspective, our 2020 T.C. Williams graduating class started as 1,059 Kindergarteners; our 7th graders this year started as 1,516

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Kindergarteners, representing an increase in cohort size nearly 150% in just 5 years.

NOTE: certain course requirements drive which grade level a student is counted in, which is why some grade levels may seem high or low.

High School Capacity

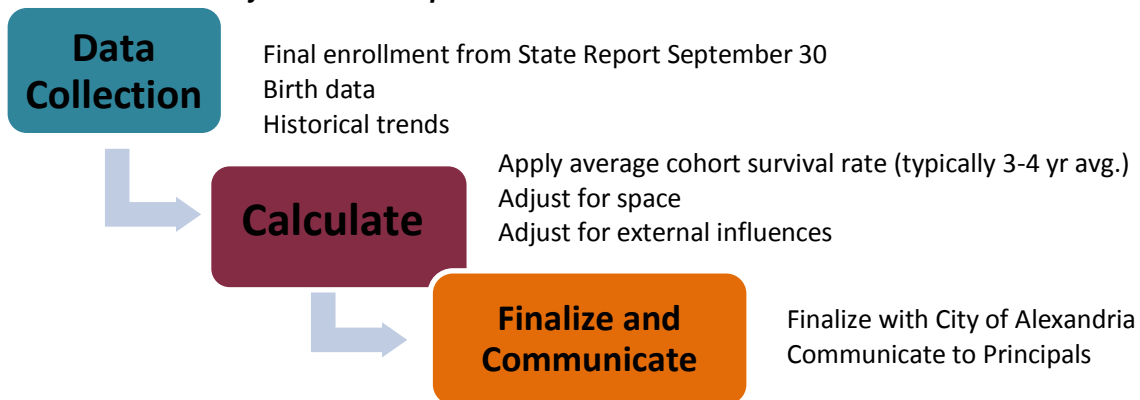
Capacity at the high school level is based on the size of classroom spaces and the schedule. The calculation for all school capacities is based on a standard set in the educational specifications. Based on the formula, current capacity of both T.C. Williams: King Street and TC Williams: Minnie Howard buildings is 3,781.

Plan to Address

Given our enrollment is expected to reach 5,000+ students within the next five years, the High School Project and interim solutions will need to be pursued to provide an adequate learning environment for students. Initial planning for The High School Project indicated that TC Williams' expanded building/campus at the Minnie Howard site should support 1,600 students; however, as is industry best practice, the appropriate capacity will continue to be evaluated during the pre-design and design phases of The High School Project. Interim solutions involving a different approach to scheduling configuration and greater use of remote instructional technologies must be explored prior to the final design and delivery of the new expansion building on Minnie Howard is even completed.

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

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ACPS is based on and is commonly the Enrollment Projection Accuracy Rate referred to by the public.

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: FY 2021-2030 High School Enrollment Projections

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