

**Albemarle County Public Schools**

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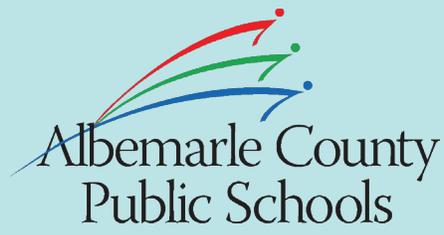
# EQUITY REPORT

Spring 2019

Prepared by

**Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee**

Albemarle County Public Schools



# THE PROCESS HAS BEGUN

Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) is well-known as one of the top performers in our Commonwealth and across our country. A national educational assessment organization, Niche, recently ranked our division as the second-best place to teach in Virginia and the best school district in the state for the quality of our athletic programming. Out of 132 school divisions in Virginia, our teachers ranked third and our division fifth, and nationally, ACPS ranked in the top 7.5 percent of all school divisions.

While these rankings are impressive, they do not tell a complete story. There are students in our school division who are not participating in these high levels of achievement. The purpose of this report is to shine a light on the weak links in our instructional practices that must change in order for every ACPS student and employee to reach their highest potential.

Evolving into an exceptional school system begins with owning our weaknesses. Our Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Haas, together with our School Board began this process through public commitment to improving our service to *all* students. From his first meeting with teachers as Superintendent, Dr. Haas made it clear that closing opportunity gaps is a top priority and carries great urgency. Over the past two years, our division has supported this commitment through the:

- **Hiring of three full-time equity education specialists.** We are changing the culture of how professional development is delivered to all teachers and setting the expectation that intentional instructional practices will improve student achievement.
- **Approval of an equity policy checklist.** Through collaboration with the families and communities we serve, we are working to ensure that all of our policies and practices meet a gold standard of inclusiveness and equal opportunity.
- **Adoption of an anti-racism policy.** We are elevating our ability to reach and teach all children through implementation of practices that remove systemic racism from our schools.
- **Establishment of an Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee.** We have united experts and leading educators from the University of Virginia, the Board of Supervisors, and the school division who advise the division on how best to address equity and opportunity gaps.
- **Development of an annual Equity Report.** The product of annual analysis of the effectiveness of our policies, practices and programs, this report identifies existing equity and opportunity gaps and offers solutions for maximizing the potential of each student and staff member.

This report was made possible by the insight and guidance of our Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee and the leadership of its Chair, Dr. Joanna Williams; Vice-Chair, Dr. Russell Carlock; and Equity Leadership Liaisons, Ben Allen and Adrienne Oliver.

It is now time to build upon these initial investments in the future well-being and prosperity of all students and communities.

Respectfully,

**L. Bernard Hairston**

Assistant Superintendent for School Community Empowerment

# MESSAGE TO THE BOARD

To the Albemarle County School Board:

It is with pride that we present the 2019 Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) Equity Report on behalf of the Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee.

Our approach has been one of ignited caution; it is, in our view, impossible to observe the trends herein without experiencing a fiery call to better serve all students, and yet we are keenly aware that the wheels of progress may be unhurried. When we see the data, we think like educators: Each decimal point is a child we have sat beside and guided; each slope is a parent phone call; and each percentage is a victory lap hand-in-hand with a young person. We ask that you see the same.

This reports exists in multiple parts designed to unpack related evidence and its implications. The first section provides background data and context that broadly compares feeder patterns and associated demographic shifts. The second section disaggregates data related to opportunity gaps, specifically highlighting internal ACPS practices and pathways. The third section points to equity gaps for students with disabilities and disproportionate disciplinary practices. The fourth section speaks to achievement gaps in connection with standardized assessments. Finally, section five discusses implications for district policy and practice, as well as areas where continued research and analysis is necessary.

We extend our gratitude to the entire Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee for their support and their continued work in pursuit of narrowing gaps for the county's students. Kind regards to Dr. Bernard Hairston, Assistant Superintendent for School Community Empowerment, as well as Leilani Keys and Lars Holmstrom, Equity Education Specialists. Thanks also to Chris Gilman and Mark Leach for help in compiling data.

Together, we represent a cross-section of school-based stakeholders. We are teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators from elementary, middle and high schools across the county. We are graduates of this division. We are transplants. We are educators of color. We are lifelong learners, engaged each day in the pursuit of transforming outcomes for our students. Within this report is the hope and concern of a diverse, growing community, and we share its contents with the sincere optimism born of daily work with young people.

As a district, we can be proud of much; however, it is our goal that Albemarle County be more and do better. We believe that ACPS can be a beacon of educational leadership, and throughout this report, we point out those areas of growth that demand our immediate attention. With this report as a guide, highlighting our most vulnerable students and the data that evidences our blind spots, we believe the path forward is clear.

On behalf of the Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee,

**Ben Allen**

Assistant Principal  
Cale Elementary

**Rusty Carlock**

ESOL & Social Studies  
Albemarle High School

**Adrienne Oliver**

Secondary Instructional Coach  
Southern Feeder Pattern

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# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## A CHANGING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Albemarle County schools are becoming more diverse, but also have more economic inequality with more students living in poverty. These trends provide both opportunities and challenges. Diversity brings greater cultural capital, entrepreneurship, and opportunities for students to learn across differences; however, economic inequality threatens the well-being of our children. Our schools must adapt to meet these changes.

## UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Students of color and those living in poverty are underrepresented in nearly every program for enrichment and acceleration in Albemarle County. From career academies to gifted programs, enrichment programs in our schools act as segregating forces that divide children by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

## INEQUITABLE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

Students of color and those in poverty perform below state averages across nearly all indicators of student learning in Albemarle County. In some cases, such as math performance for Black students, Albemarle County ranks among the worst in the state. From third-grade reading to the likelihood of attending college, our community fails to support students of color and those in poverty to achieve better than their peers in the state. Teachers and leaders must examine instructional practices and incorporate culturally responsive teaching into the everyday experience of all students.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The data throughout this report indicate that little change has occurred since the last report was published in 2016. Actions taken to address these issues must be tied to data, so that progress toward equity can be benchmarked and evaluated. This report should be produced by county staff in conjunction with the Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee.

## PERSISTENT SEGREGATION REQUIRES ACTION

Students in Albemarle County are segregated by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status due to districting across schools and tracking within schools. To build more diverse learning communities, policymakers can change zoning practices and consider diversity when redistricting. To address within-school segregation, leaders may eliminate intervention programs that remove students from the core curriculum and also build opportunities that support enrichment beyond the core curriculum, such as high-quality summer school. To diversify career academies and other elite programs, leaders may change the selection process for entry as well as build bridge programs to prepare students for success. Middle and high schools may eliminate the most egregious forms of tracking and, instead, unify students in heterogeneous, democratic learning communities.

# SEEKING EQUITY IN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

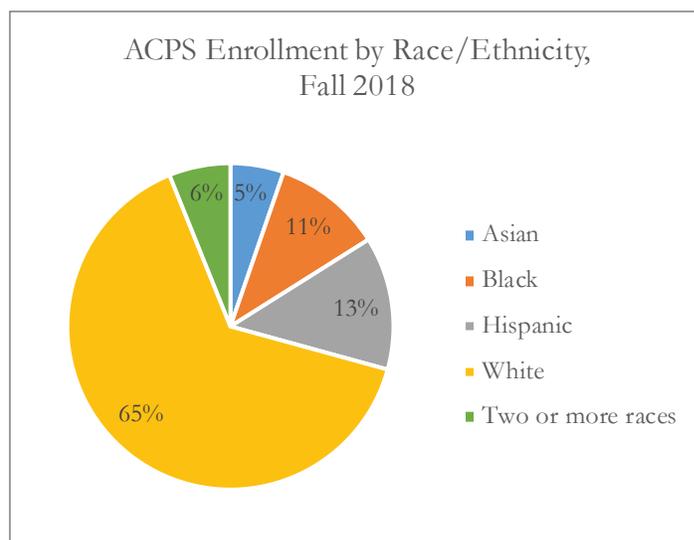
In the 2015-2016 school year, the Albemarle County School Board revised [Policy IGAK, Equity Education](#), to prioritize its commitment to the “tracking of existing disparities based on past institutional practices,” including, but not limited to, “enrollment in certain classes, discipline, graduation rates, and gifted identification.” Such equity reviews make up an important part of culturally responsive educational leadership at the district and school level ([Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016](#)).

As in schools across the country, Albemarle County’s ethnic diversity continues to increase, providing a rich opportunity to build multicultural competencies for all students as we build democratic and collaborative learning communities.

Let us not squander this opportunity, but embrace it with keen awareness. When a school district represents all students within data, and when all stakeholders are engaged participants within a learning community, student outcomes will improve and gaps may be narrowed. By providing current data on student academic performance and participation in programming by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, and special education status, this review demonstrates the growing achievement, equity, and opportunity gaps in ACPS, making apparent the inequities that inform and control our students’ educational journeys and making crucial the inclusion and prioritization of policies, professional learning, and support related to equitable outcomes.

A responsive district, unwavering in its commitment to establish a community of learners and learning, through relationships, relevance and rigor, one student at a time, must be bold in its examination of the systems and patterns that recreate these data annually. Leaders within such communities must evaluate collective readiness and willingness to serve learners and their learning, and to build relationships, unlock relevance, and raise rigor, so as to significantly interrupt reoccurrences of inequitable dynamics and outcomes, one student at a time.

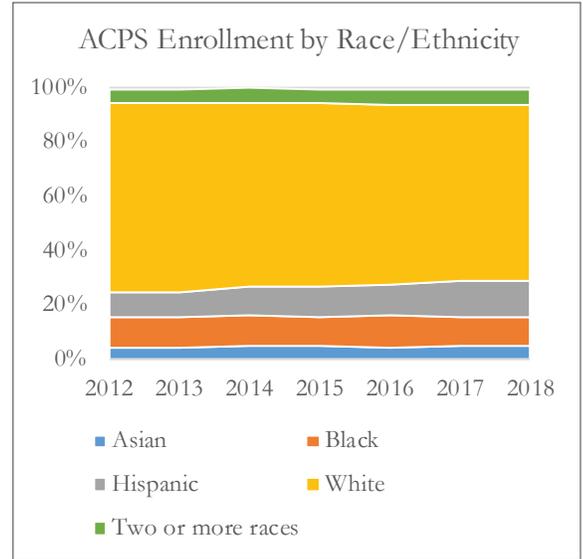
This review provides the raw insight to support our common mission. Its purpose is to provide data on student academic performance and participation in academic programs across several demographic markers. This information must guide decision-making on setting priorities and improving equity of opportunity for all students in ACPS. Let this be a catalyst to ignite leadership at all levels in support of all students. Let this be an invitation to make all mean all.



# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

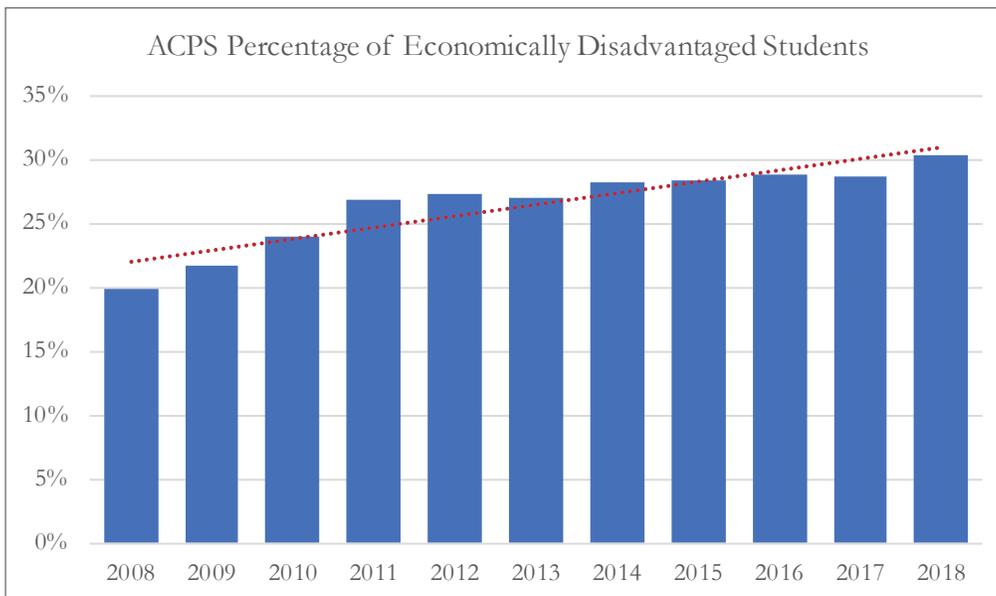
## INCREASING RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Racial and ethnic diversity in ACPS has increased in recent years. While the percentage of White students has decreased from around 70 to 65 percent of students during this time, the percentages of Asian, Hispanic, and multiracial students have increased. The fastest growing group is Hispanic students, increasing from nine percent of students in the county in 2012 to nearly 13 percent in 2018. In fact, 2016 was the first year in which Hispanic students were the largest ethnic or racial group other than White students in ACPS. The trend of increased diversity follows a national trend and promises to continue in Albemarle County, as the cohorts of younger students are more diverse than those of older students. Thus, in order to continue its success, the division *must* build a school system that promotes an ethnically pluralistic, democratic learning community.



## MORE STUDENTS GROWING UP IN POVERTY

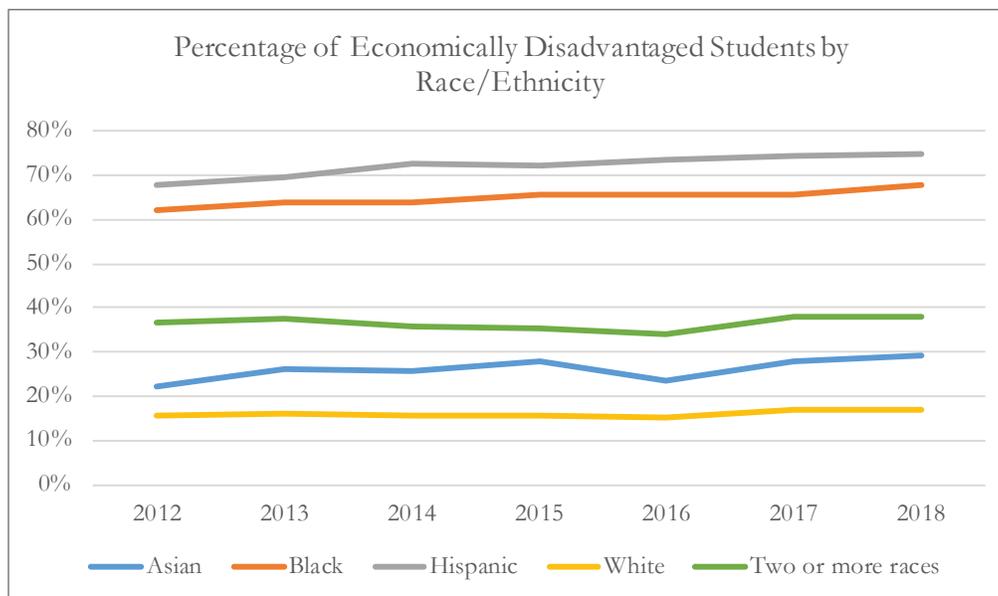
The percentage of ACPS students who are economically disadvantaged grew from 20 percent in 2008 to around 30 percent in 2018. This is an approximate 52 percent increase in the population of students who are economically disadvantaged, compared to an overall enrollment growth in the county of about nine percent. In other words, the economically disadvantaged population grew at about five times the rate of our overall population during this period. Given the increase in the number of students living in poverty, even during the economic expansion of the 2010s, the school division should be prepared to adapt to an



environment of even more students living in poverty, with a lower tax base, during the next period of economic retrenchment. Restructuring existing school funding and practices to support students in poverty, rather than adding programs with large budget impacts, would be one way to achieve this goal.

### Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students by Race/Ethnicity

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Asian	22.09%	26.19%	25.78%	28.05%	23.68%	27.98%	29.24%
Black	62.26%	63.79%	63.91%	65.65%	65.43%	65.67%	67.95%
Hispanic	67.66%	69.54%	72.82%	72.18%	73.60%	74.26%	74.96%
White	15.39%	16.04%	15.75%	15.80%	15.24%	16.87%	16.79%
Two or more races	36.77%	37.54%	35.55%	35.37%	34.17%	38.13%	38.04%



## DIFFERENCES IN RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY ACROSS FEEDER PATTERNS

Ethnic and racial diversity vary widely across the feeder patterns within ACPS. Despite the overall demographics changes in the country, demographics in the Western Feeder Pattern have been nearly unchanged in the last seven years. This means that the demographic trends we see in terms of a decreasing number of White students and more students of color are occurring disproportionately in the Southern and Northern feeder patterns. Residents and staff living and working in the Western Feeder Pattern may see that the demographics of their school today mirror those of nearly a decade ago, while families and staff living and working in the rest of the county will be aware of significant demographic changes. Additionally, the tendency to segregate students of color, even within the Northern and Southern feeder patterns, means that these changes are being concentrated even further into a set number of classrooms taught by a smaller number of teachers. These data suggest a need to evaluate the relationship of race and course enrollment practices.

**ACPS Feeder Patterns**

	High Schools	Middle Schools	Elementary Schools
Northern	Albemarle	Burley*	Agnor-Hurt** Stony Point**
		Jouett	Agnor-Hurt** Broadus Wood Greer Woodbrook
		Sutherland	Baker-Butler Hollymead Stony Point**
Southern	Monticello	Burley*	Cale** Stone-Robinson** Stony Point**
		Walton	Cale** Red Hill Scottsville Stone-Robinson**
Western	Western Albemarle	Henley	Brownsville Crozet Meriwether Lewis Murray

\*Student body splits at the high school level.

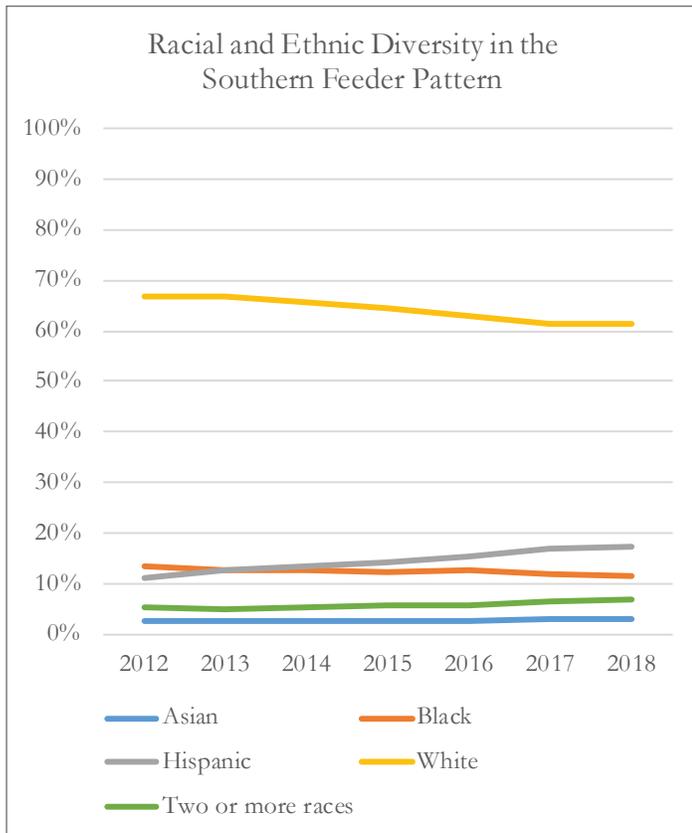
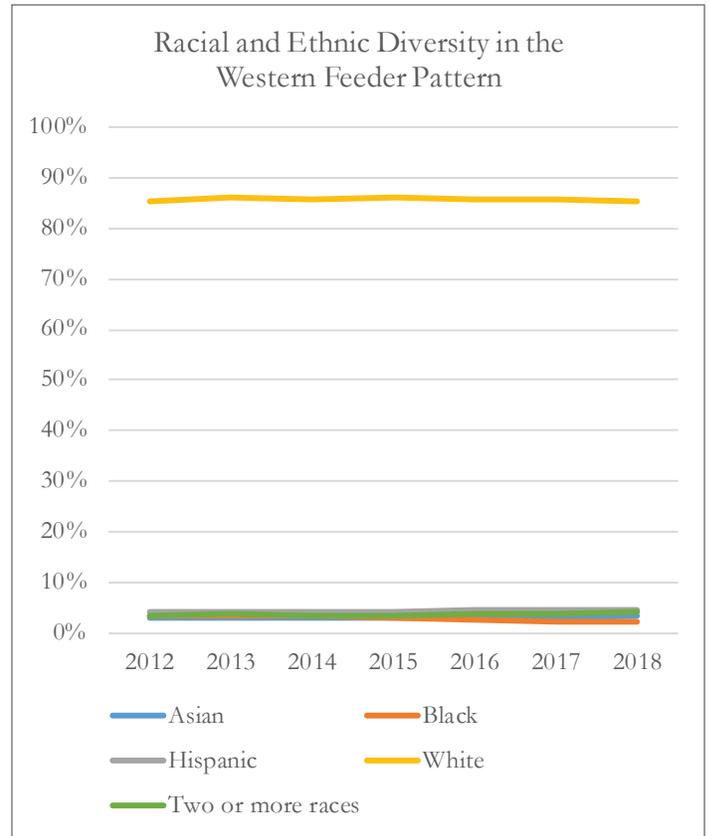
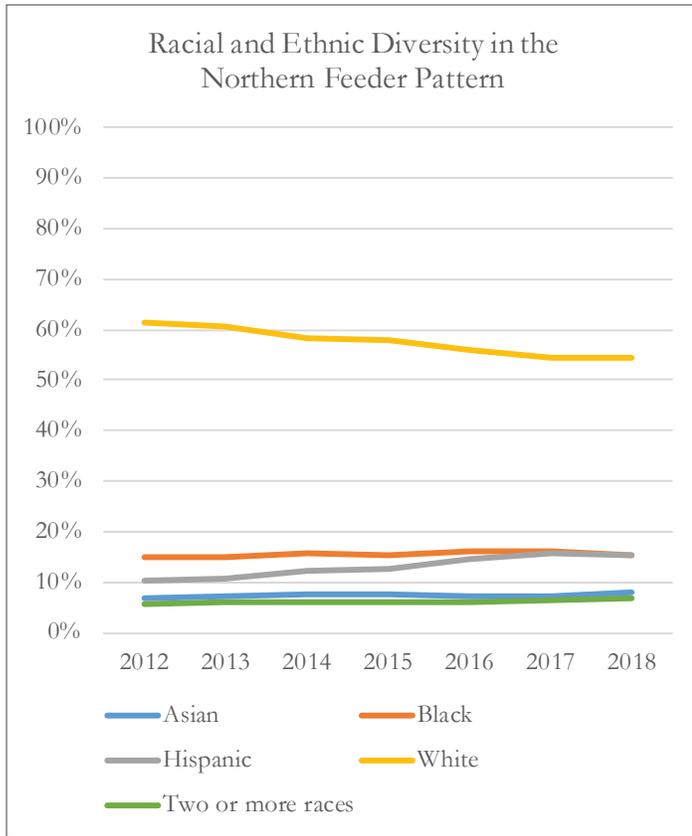
\*\*Student body splits at the middle school level.

### Student Demographics by Feeder Pattern

Northern Feeder Pattern	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Asian	6.80%	7.10%	7.40%	7.50%	7.10%	7.30%	7.90%
Black	15.10%	15.00%	15.70%	15.30%	16.20%	16.00%	15.50%
Hispanic	10.30%	10.70%	12.10%	12.70%	14.40%	15.60%	15.40%
White	61.40%	60.70%	58.40%	58.10%	55.90%	54.30%	54.40%
Two or more races	5.80%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.10%	6.50%	6.70%
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>5,549</b>	<b>5,687</b>	<b>5,917</b>	<b>6,031</b>	<b>6,037</b>	<b>6,063</b>	<b>6,131</b>

Southern Feeder Pattern	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Asian	2.50%	2.60%	2.50%	2.80%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%
Black	13.50%	12.60%	12.70%	12.20%	12.50%	12.10%	11.40%
Hispanic	11.30%	12.50%	13.50%	14.40%	15.40%	16.90%	17.20%
White	67.00%	66.90%	65.70%	64.60%	63.10%	61.40%	61.50%
Two or more races	5.30%	5.10%	5.40%	5.70%	5.80%	6.40%	6.70%
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>3,926</b>	<b>3,895</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>3,878</b>	<b>3,898</b>	<b>3,872</b>	<b>3,855</b>

Western Feeder Pattern	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Asian	3.00%	2.90%	2.90%	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.30%
Black	3.40%	3.40%	3.30%	2.90%	2.60%	2.30%	2.20%
Hispanic	4.30%	4.10%	4.20%	4.20%	4.50%	4.60%	4.70%
White	85.40%	86.10%	85.90%	86.00%	85.90%	85.80%	85.20%
Two or more races	3.20%	3.60%	3.40%	3.40%	3.80%	3.90%	4.20%
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>3,509</b>	<b>3,541</b>	<b>3,522</b>	<b>3,602</b>	<b>3,680</b>	<b>3,745</b>	<b>3,823</b>

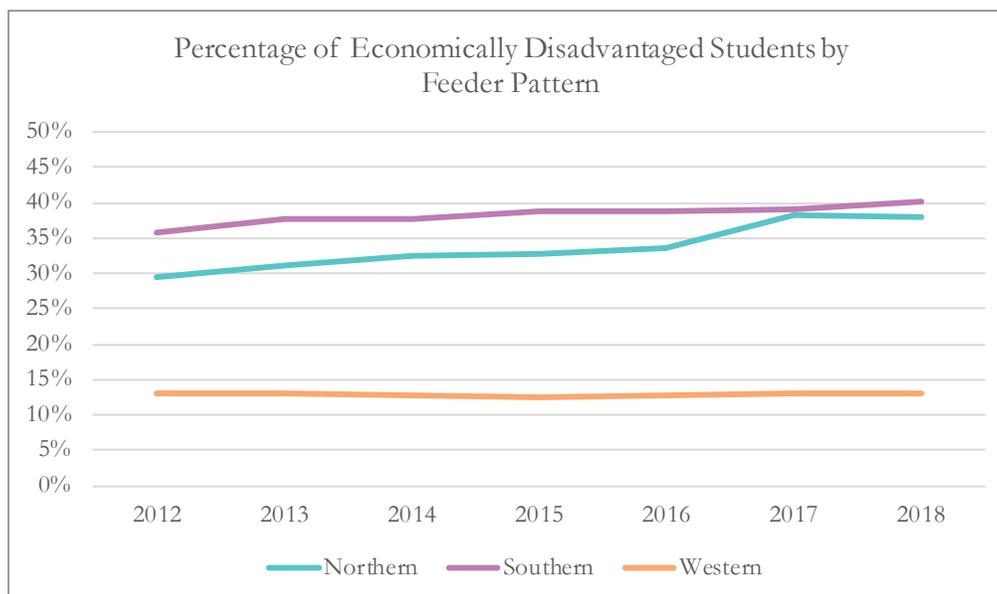


## FEEDER PATTERN DIFFERENCES IN SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY

The following table and chart show the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in each of the three feeder patterns. Patterns of development and school districting have concentrated poverty into the Northern and Southern feeder patterns, with rates increasing particularly quickly in the Northern Feeder Pattern. Child poverty rates have increased by 50 percent in the county over the last decade, yet the Western Feeder Pattern has been sheltered from these changes, meaning that increases in poverty have been disproportionately channeled to impact families and staff who reside and work in the southern and northern parts of the county. What is most striking is that these changes have occurred during one of the greatest economic expansions in the post-World War II period. This brings up an important question of how the next economic recession will impact these trends. This challenges policymakers in both schools and the county to confront how development over the next two decades will either mitigate or exacerbate increasing socioeconomic segregation in county schools.

**Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students by Feeder Pattern**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Northern Feeder Pattern</b>	29.6%	31.0%	32.5%	32.8%	33.6%	38.2%	38.0%
<b>Southern Feeder Pattern</b>	35.8%	37.6%	37.7%	38.8%	38.9%	39.2%	40.2%
<b>Western Feeder Pattern</b>	12.9%	13.0%	12.8%	12.6%	12.8%	12.9%	13.1%



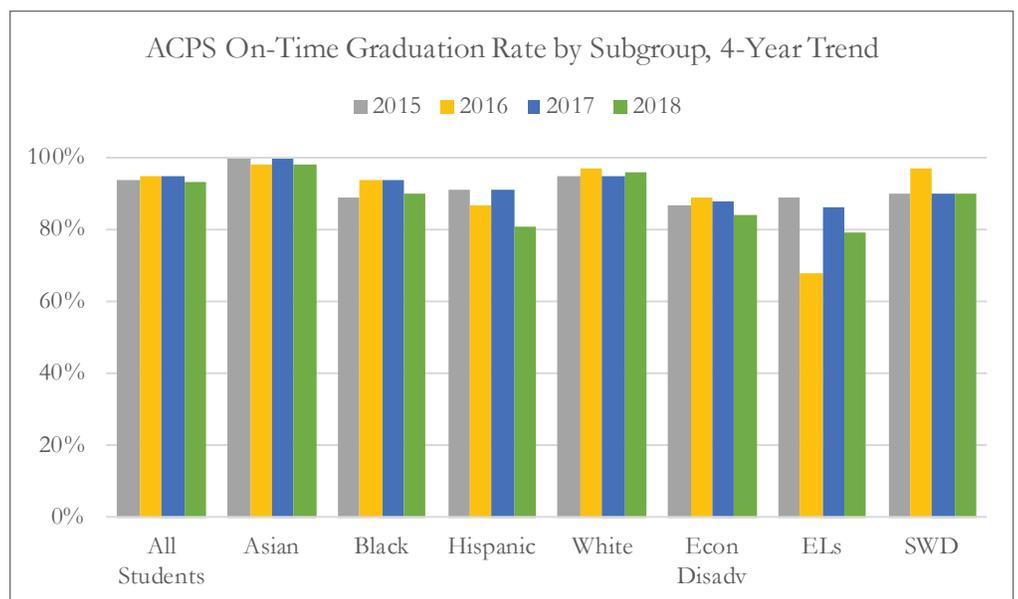
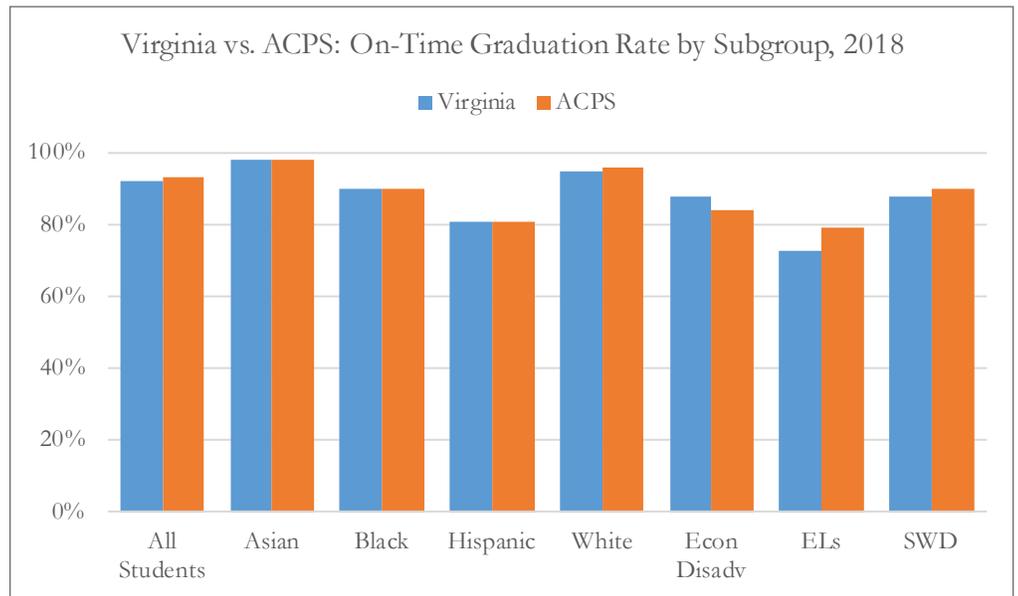
# OPPORTUNITY GAP

An opportunity gap represents differences in extracurricular and academic opportunities offered to students that contribute to different outcomes in learning (Darling-Hammond, 2013). For this report, an opportunity gap is reported as four or more percentage points of difference between a group’s representation in the district and in a specific program.

## GRADUATION RATES

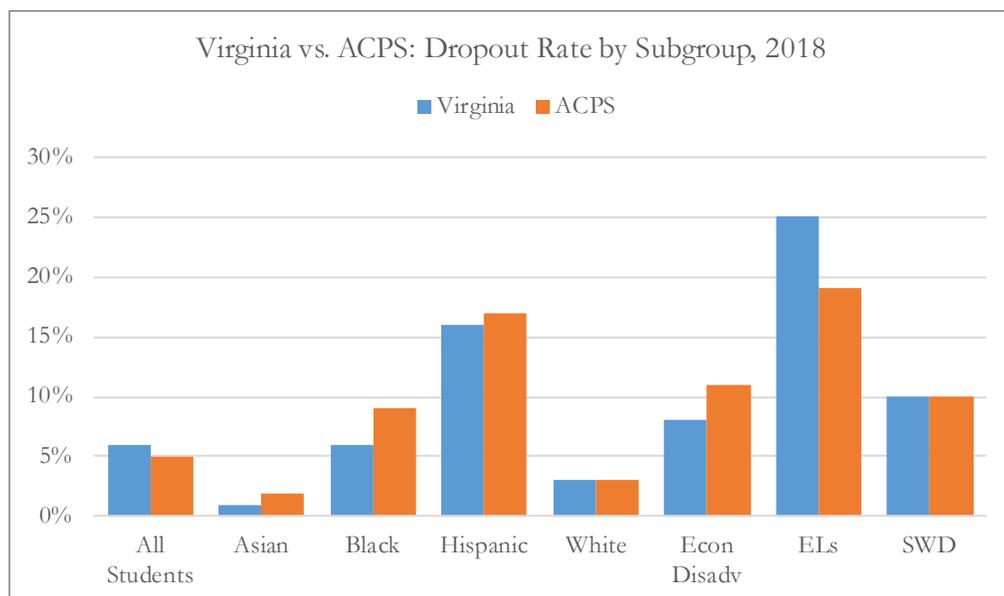
In 2018, ACPS graduation rates were similar to those at the state level for Asian, Black, and Hispanic students. ACPS outperformed the state average for White students as well as English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities (SWD). The County underperformed compared to the state average for its economically disadvantaged (Econ Disadv) students.

While ACPS maintains parity with or outperforms Virginia state averages for all groups in terms of graduation rates, over the last three years the County’s graduation rates have declined for all membership groups except English Learners (ELs) and Asian students. Further, there continues to be a gap in graduation rates between White and Asian students and their Black and Hispanic peers. If this current trend is not addressed, then the overall graduation rate for ACPS students will soon fall behind Virginia’s average.



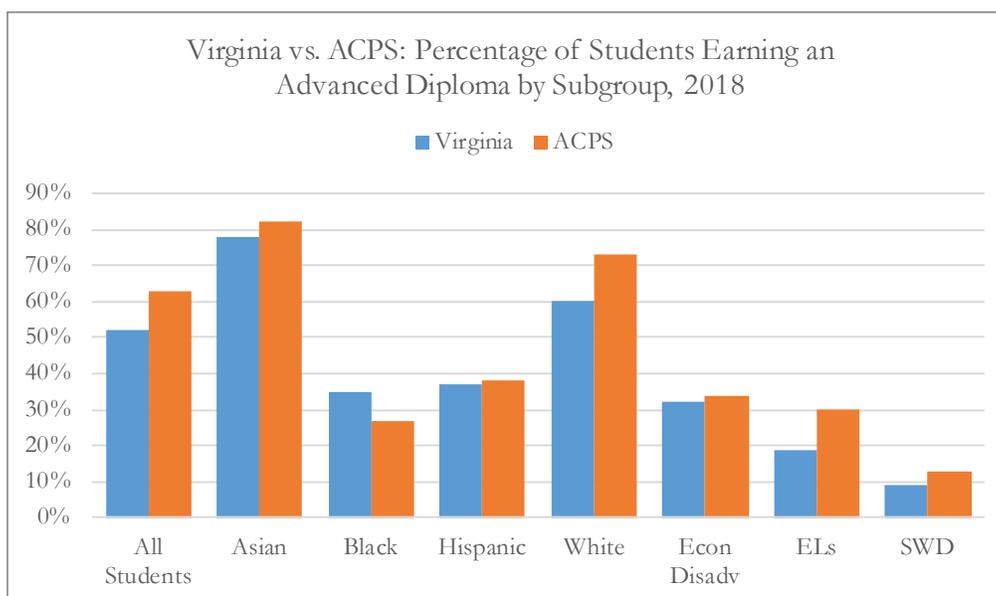
## DROPOUT RATES

The overall dropout rate for ACPS is slightly better than the state average; however, for most membership groups, ACPS has a higher dropout rate than the state average. ACPS has higher dropout rates than the state average for Asian, Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged (Econ Disadv) students. Our dropout rate for English Learners (ELs) is better than the state average, with 19 percent of English Learners dropping out, compared to 25 percent statewide.



## ADVANCED VERSUS STANDARD DIPLOMAS

ACPS outperforms the state in the percentage of students earning advanced diplomas for all groups except Black students. This indicates that while ACPS meets or exceeds the state average for offering a more rigorous curriculum to most of its students, it offers a lower level of academic rigor in terms of graduation requirements for its Black students.

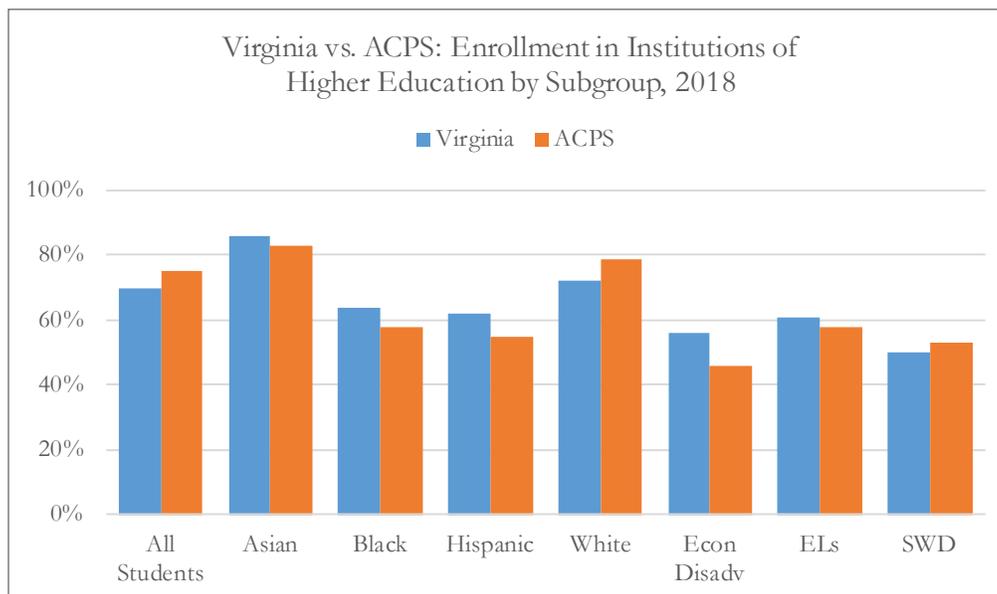


## ATTENDANCE AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The overall percentage of ACPS graduates enrolling in institutions of higher education exceeds the state average; however, this is because there are more White students in ACPS than other membership groups, and White students, as a group, perform better than the state average. Students of color and students in poverty in ACPS enroll in institutions of higher education at a *lower* rate than Virginia students overall.

### 2018 Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education

	Virginia	ACPS
All Students	70%	75%
Asian	86%	83%
Black	64%	58%
Hispanic	62%	55%
White	72%	79%
Economically Disadvantaged	56%	46%
English Learners	61%	58%
Students with Disabilities	50%	53%

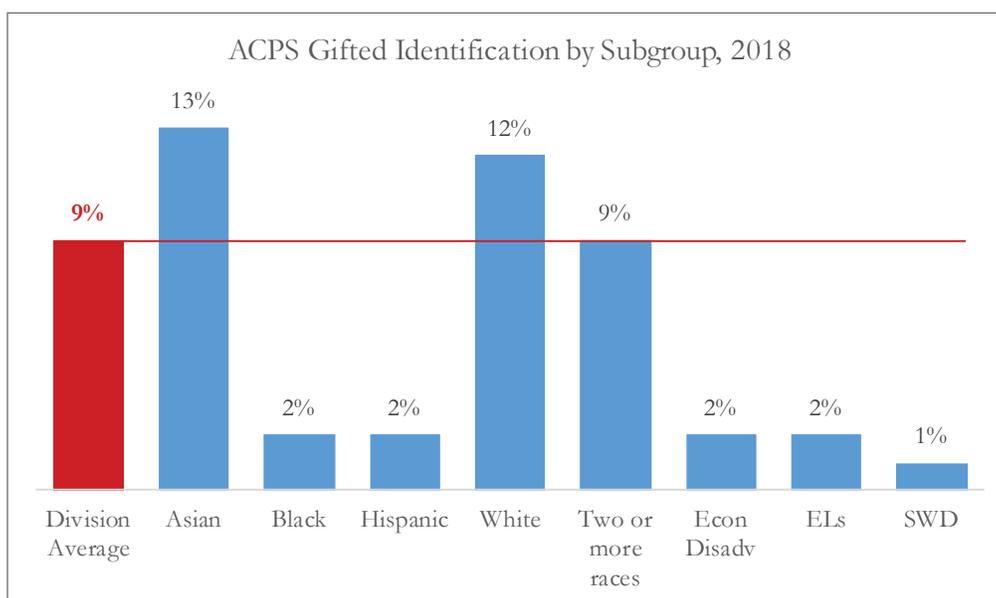


## GIFTED IDENTIFICATION

The table below shows the percentage of each membership group that is identified as gifted. An opportunity gap continues to exist in gifted identification for Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students, as well as English Learners. While nine percent of all ACPS students are identified as gifted, only two percent of Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students are identified. In ACPS, Asian and White students are more than six times as likely to be identified as gifted compared to Black and Hispanic students. These numbers have not improved over the last two years, with the exception of English Learners, whose participation rate has doubled from one to two percent.

**Gifted Identification in ACPS, 3-Year Trend**

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
All Students	10%	9%	9%
Asian	15%	15%	13%
Black	2%	2%	2%
Hispanic	2%	2%	2%
White	12%	12%	12%
Two or more races	9%	10%	9%
Economically Disadvantaged	2%	2%	2%
English Learners	1%	1%	2%
Students with Disabilities	1%	1%	1%



## ENROLLMENT IN CAREER ACADEMIES

There is a large opportunity gap in enrollment in the school division's career academies. These academies offer greater rigor in instruction; college level courses; opportunities to build workforce readiness skills in well-remunerated and high-need industries; and an advantaged path to competitive colleges and scholarships. Currently, the school division disproportionately denies these opportunities to Black and Hispanic students, poor students, students who are learning English as a second or other language, and students with disabilities.

The Math, Engineering & Science Academy (MESA) at Albemarle High School offers the starkest example of these disparities. While Albemarle hosts the largest population of Black high school students in the county, it has a lower percentage of Black students enrolled in its academy than Western Albemarle High School, the high school with the smallest population of Black students in the county. This demonstrates that transportation is not the most salient issue in ameliorating equity gaps in the career academies; rather, the division must consider recruitment and selection processes to achieve greater equity.

### 2018-2019 Academy Enrollment

	All Academies	All High Schools	MESA	Albemarle High School
Asian	9%	5%	18%	8%
Black	3%	10%	1%	15%
Hispanic	5%	12%	4%	15%
White	78%	68%	72%	56%
Two or more races	5%	5%	5%	6%
Economically Disadvantaged	5%	25%	5%	30%
English Learners	0%	7%	0%	11%
Students with Disabilities	1%	12%	1%	11%

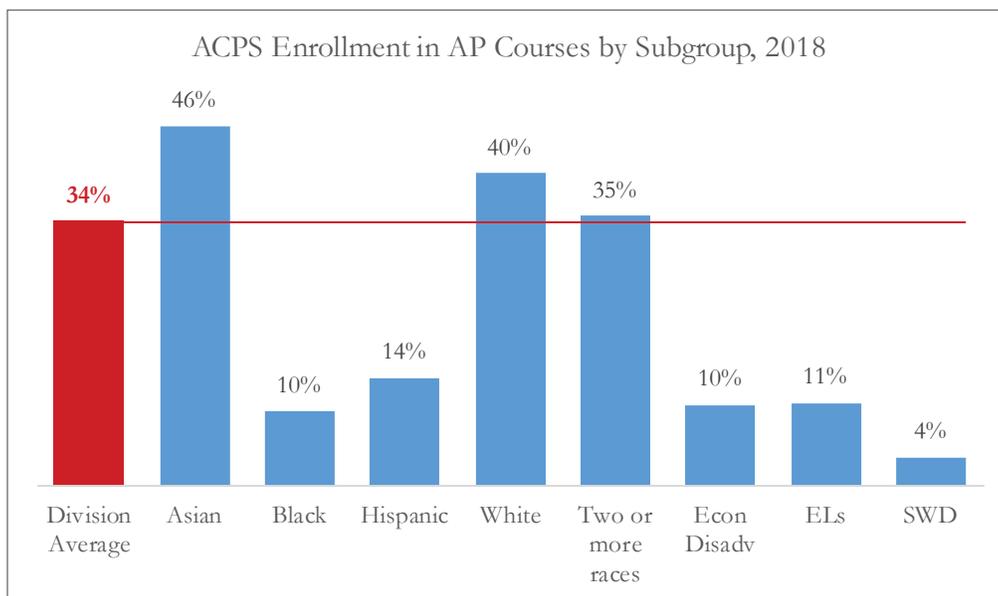
## ENROLLMENT IN ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES

[An opportunity gap exists in Advanced Placement \(AP\) course participation](#) for Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged (Econ Disadv) students, as well as English Learners (ELs). While 34 percent of all ACPS students participated in AP courses, only 10 percent of Black students and 14 percent of Hispanic students took at least one AP course in 2018. In ACPS, Asian and White students are four times more likely to take AP courses than their Black peers. The disparities in AP enrollment have worsened in the last two years for Black and Hispanic students; they have stayed the same for students facing poverty. These disparities have improved for English Learners, with 11 percent of ELs enrolled in an AP course in 2018, compared to seven percent in 2016.

These data should be interpreted along with Dual Enrollment data that show gains for Black and Hispanic students. This suggests that more Black and Hispanic students are opting for Dual Enrollment rather than AP courses. Overall, enrollment in college credit courses has improved for ACPS in the last two years, though there is much room for continued improvement.

### Enrollment in AP Courses

	2016	2018
All Students	34%	34%
Asian	47%	46%
Black	12%	10%
Hispanic	17%	14%
White	39%	40%
Two or more races	30%	35%
Economically Disadvantaged	10%	10%
English Learners	7%	11%
Students with Disabilities	6%	4%

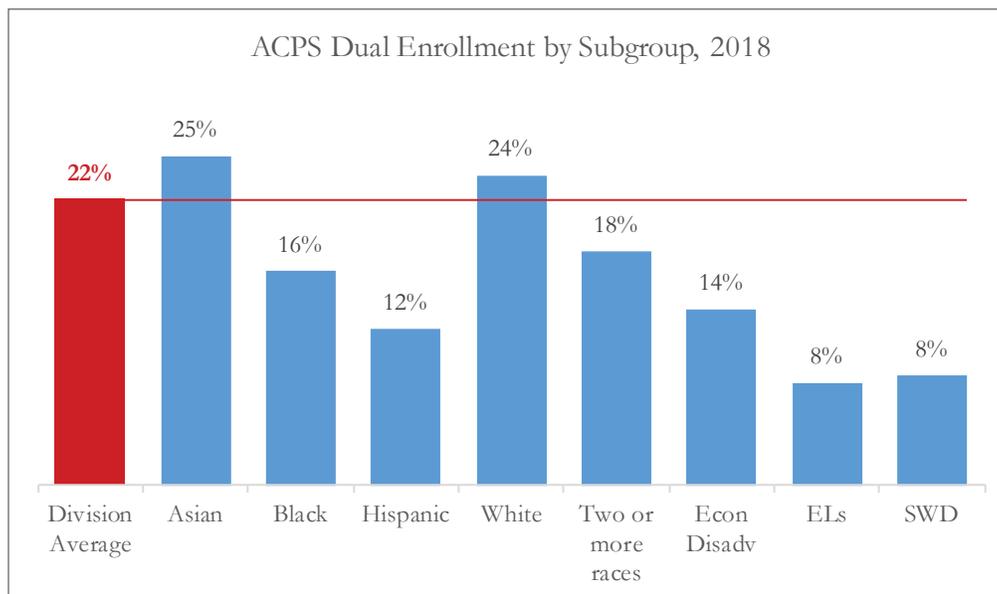


## ENROLLMENT IN DUAL ENROLLMENT (DE) COURSES

An equity gap exists in dual enrollment (DE) participation for Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged (Econ Disadv) students, as well as English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities (SWD). While 22 percent of all students in ACPS took at least one dual enrollment course in 2018, only 16 percent of Black students, 12 percent of Hispanic students, and eight percent of English Learners took one of these courses. These gaps notwithstanding, enrollment in DE courses is one of the brightest spots of success for the school division in terms of reducing equity gaps. The last two years saw increases among almost all membership groups and a reduction in the equity gap for economically disadvantaged students and English Learners, even while these groups maintained or increased their enrollment in AP courses.

### Enrollment in DE Courses

	2016	2018
All Students	19%	22%
Asian	21%	25%
Black	14%	16%
Hispanic	11%	12%
White	22%	24%
Two or more races	15%	18%
Economically Disadvantaged	10%	14%
English Learners	3%	8%
Students with Disabilities	N/A	8%



# EQUITY GAP

The equity gap is defined as disparities in the implementation of school-based practices that contribute to unequal achievement (Duke, 2011). For this report, an equity gap is defined as four percentage points or more difference between the category of all students and a particular membership group.

## CHRONIC ABSENCES

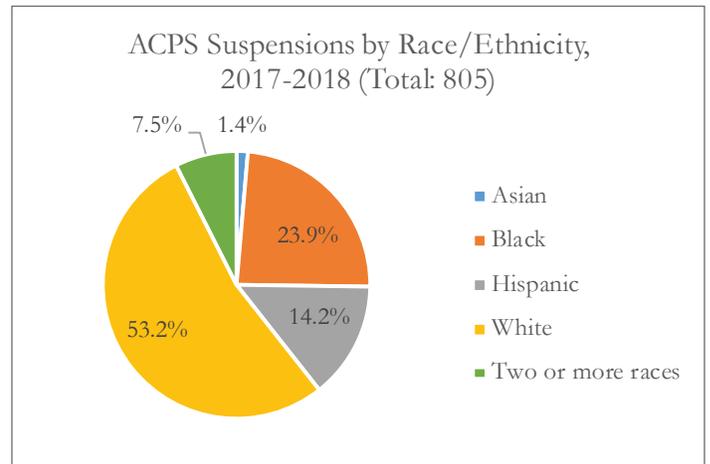
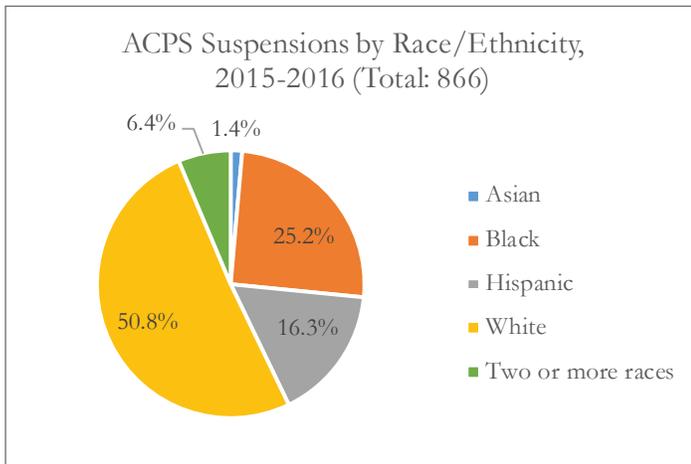
A student who is chronically absent is one who misses 15 or more full days during the school year. According to data from the ACPS Equity Dashboard, every membership group except for White students experienced an increase in the percentage of students chronically absent. Equity gaps exist for Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

### Chronic Absenteeism

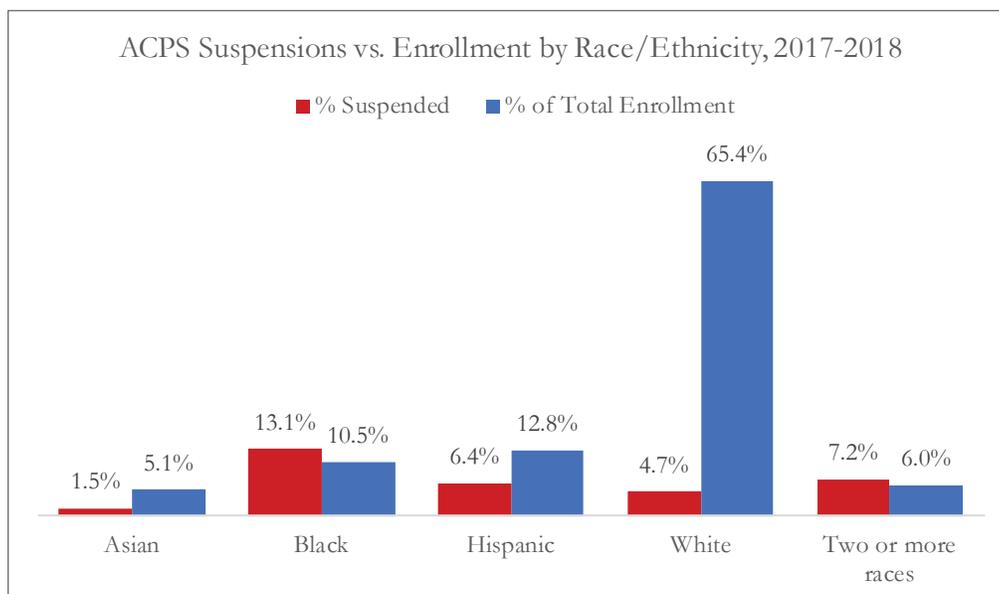
	2016-2017	2017-2018
All Students	10%	11%
Asian	7%	8%
Black	9%	11%
Hispanic	14%	15%
White	10%	10%
Two or more races	12%	14%
Economically Disadvantaged	17%	18%
English Learners	10%	13%
Students with Disabilities	17%	18%

### SUSPENSION DATA

Compared to the data reported in 2016 by the Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee, the division has seen an overall decrease in suspensions. Although there has been a downward trend in suspensions across all membership groups, Black and Hispanic students still make up a disproportionate number of total suspensions. In 2015-2016, Black and Hispanic students made up over 41 percent of all suspensions while only constituting 23 percent of the total student population. Based on 2017-2018 data, the percentage of suspensions among Black and Hispanic students decreased to 38.



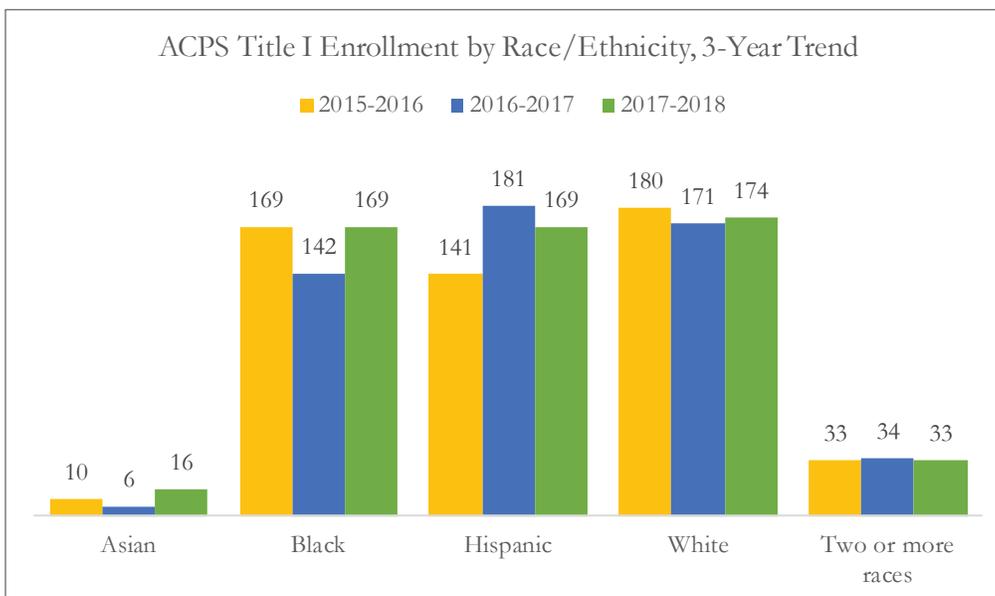
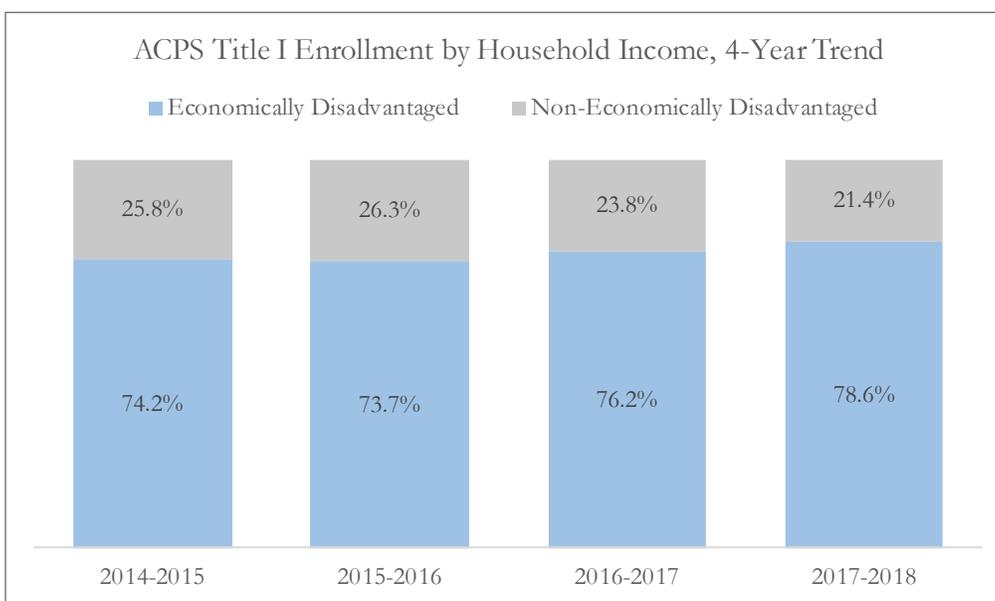
In the 2017-2018 school year, 5.8 percent of the ACPS student population received suspensions. More than 13 percent of Black students were suspended that school year, while less than five percent of White students received an out-of-school suspension. Black students still make up a significant portion of suspended students and are disciplined at higher rates than their peers in ACPS.



## TITLE I ENROLLMENT

Over the past four school years, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students receiving Title I services has increased slightly. Three out of every four students who receive this intervention are economically disadvantaged. Also, in a recurring trend, Black and Hispanic students have just as many students in Title I intervention as their White peers, despite making up a smaller percentage of the total enrollment.

Data analysis is recommended on how Title I students, who receive early reading intervention, perform on their end-of-year Reading SOL. As articulated in the next section of this report (Section IV: Achievement Gap), economically disadvantaged students demonstrate a 55 percent pass rate on this assessment.

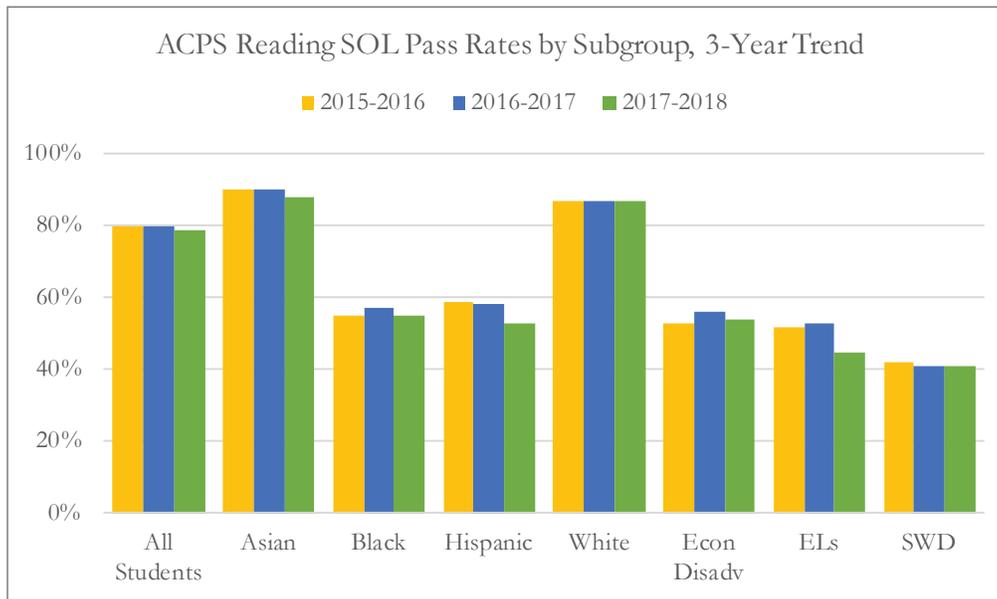


# ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The achievement gap is the difference in academic performance across race and socioeconomic status, generally demonstrated on standardized tests such as the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL), AP Tests, and SATs<sup>1</sup> (Reis & Smith, 2013). For this report, an achievement gap is defined as four or more percentage points of difference between pass rates for all students and those of a particular membership group.

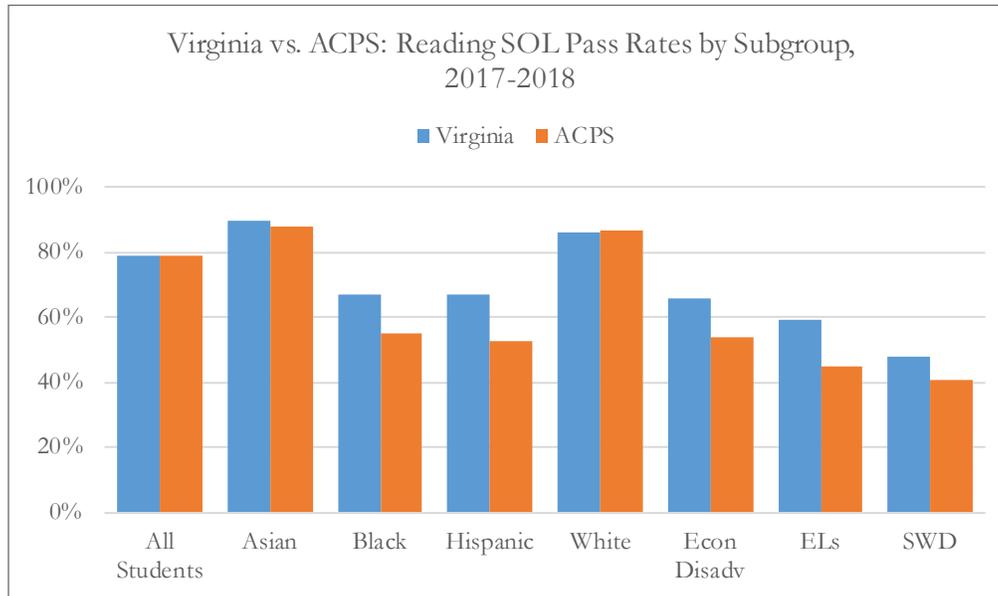
## READING SOL PASS RATES BY MEMBERSHIP GROUP

Gaps in achievement persist in reading in Albemarle County. There remains a 33 percentage point difference between Black students and their White peers. Achievement for Hispanic students has decreased from 2016, with only 53 percent of this demographic demonstrating proficiency on the Spring 2018 SOL. Moreover, a significant drop occurred for English Learners (ELs). In 2018, 45 percent of these students passed their SOL in ACPS, which is 42 percentage points lower than their White peers and 14 percentage points lower than the state average.



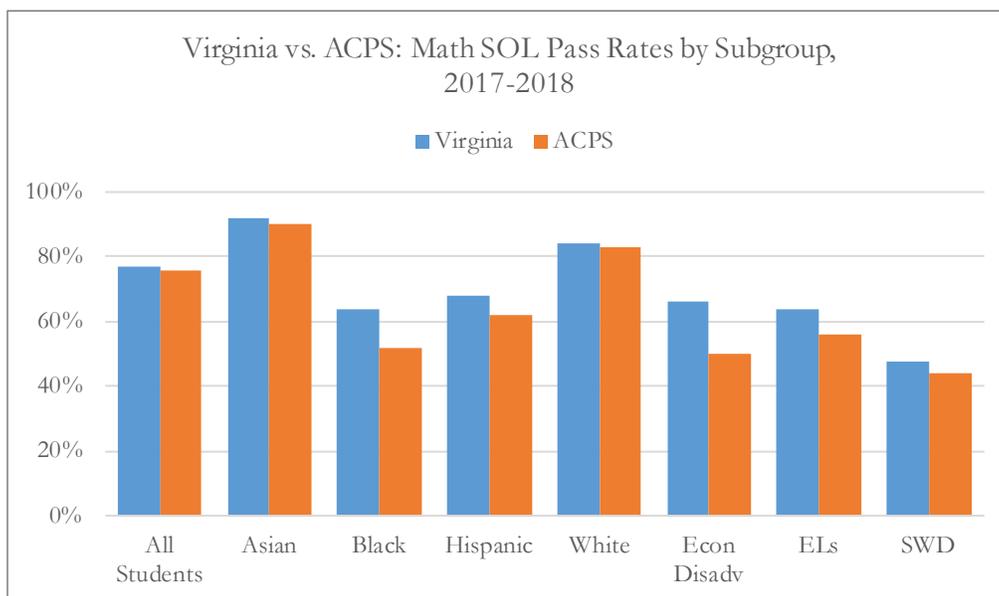
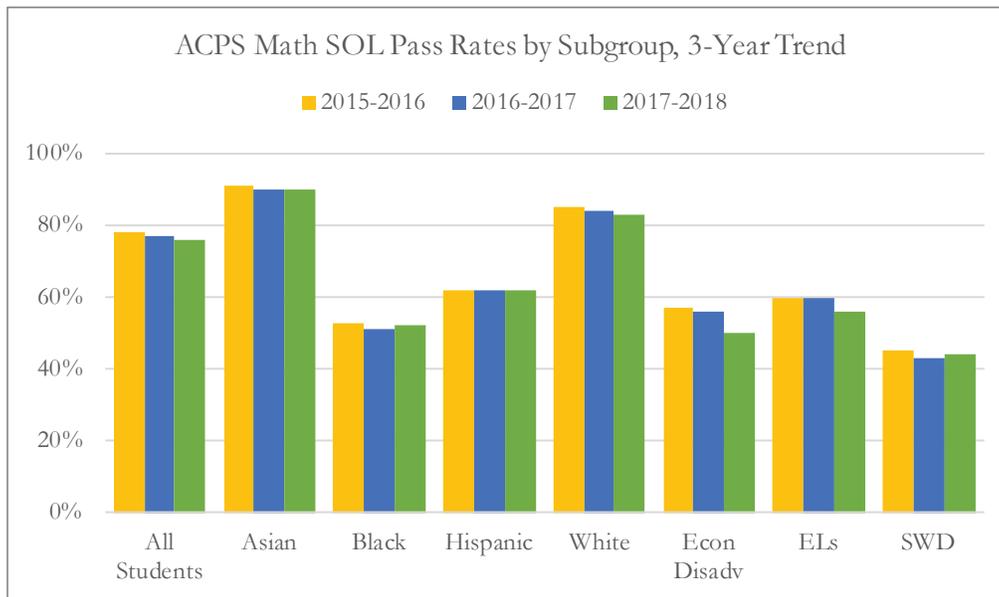
<sup>1</sup> Reis N., & Smith A., (2013). Rethinking the Universal Approach to the Preparation of School Leaders from: Handbook of Research on Educational Leadership for Equity and Diversity. Routledge.

ACPS performance on the reading SOL is lower than state averages for all demographic subgroups. This gap in achievement is significant for Black and Hispanic students in ACPS, who are performing 12 points and 14 points below their same-demographic peers at the state level, respectively.



### MATH SOL PASS RATES BY MEMBERSHIP GROUP

Since the 2015 school year, there has been little change in the Math SOL pass rates of Black students. Approximately half of the Black students in ACPS fail their end-of-year Math assessment. Other membership groups with consistently low achievement rates are economically disadvantaged (Econ Disadv) students and students with disabilities (SWD). Achievement rates for Black and economically disadvantaged students are 12 and 16 points behind the state average, respectively. This gap has been a trend for the past five years. Although the performance of students with disabilities is similar to state averages, the 44 percent three-year average continues to be an area of growth for ACPS.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on ACPS data and gaps in opportunity, equity and achievement addressed within this report, this final section summarizes recommendations for district policy and practice, as well as areas where continued research and analysis are necessary. Many of these recommendations were made after the 2016 equity report, but have not yet been fully implemented.

## INTEGRATION

- Build a beloved community that lives up to Dr. King’s description of integration when he described it as “the positive acceptance of desegregation and the welcomed participation of [all people] in the total range of human activities.”<sup>2</sup> We must ensure that all groups of students are fully welcomed and participating in all aspects of our schools.
- Break down barriers between classes and programs that segregate students, and end tracking practices that segregate students by race and class.
- Build more diverse communities through critical considerations of county zoning practices.
- Ensure that diversity is distributed across schools in redistricting decisions.
- Ensure that textbook costs and exam fees are never a barrier to taking college credit classes.
- Build bridges to the most rigorous classes through course recommendation practices and mentorship support that build social capital among diverse students in challenging classes.

## SUSPENSIONS

- Following the practice of Loudoun County Public Schools, provide schools and teachers with their own data on behavioral referrals/suspensions, so teachers can compare their own rates to their peers (e.g., using a simple “disproportionality calculator”) and schools can compare to the division as a whole.
- Consider implementing division-wide Restorative Practices. This requires thorough professional development; training; and buy-in from administrators, teachers and staff.<sup>3</sup>
- Invest in intensive professional development in culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed care, and support for teacher-student relationship-building at the beginning of each year.

<sup>2</sup> King, Martin Luther. (1962). The ethical demands of integration.

[http://www.faculty.umb.edu/lawrence\\_blum/courses/318\\_11/readings/king\\_ethical\\_demands.pdf](http://www.faculty.umb.edu/lawrence_blum/courses/318_11/readings/king_ethical_demands.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Gregory, A. Bell, J. & Pollock, M. (2015). How educators can eradicate disparities in school discipline: A briefing paper on school-based interventions. Bloomington, IN; The Equity project at the University of Indiana. Retrieved from

[http://www.indiana.edu/~atlantic/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Disparity\\_Interventions\\_Full\\_031214.pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~atlantic/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Disparity_Interventions_Full_031214.pdf). U.S. Department of Education (2014).

Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline. Retrieved from

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>

## ABSENTEEISM

- Use an early warning system to identify students who are chronically absent or at risk for chronic absenteeism with a focus on prevention. An implementation guide is available from the Institute of Education Sciences.<sup>4</sup>
- Collaborate with school stakeholders (parents/families, students, school staff, community partners) on a root cause analysis to identify trends in chronic absenteeism, and involve community partners in providing support to chronically absent students and their families.<sup>5</sup>
- Follow the previous two recommendations to implement positive discipline strategies that promote school engagement.

## EARLY LITERACY

- Recruit and hire K-2 classroom teachers with an expertise in early literacy development to ensure high-quality Tier I reading instruction.
- Offer professional development in the area of culturally responsive teaching to new and veteran teachers. In addition, recruit and hire teachers who have demonstrated expertise with culturally responsive instruction.
- Strengthen parent engagement through interactive family literacy experiences that occur with frequency throughout the year.
- Increase professional development opportunities that lead to high-yield results in the areas of language acquisition and literacy development.
- Explore and design an alternative Response to Intervention experience (also known as Multi-Tiered System of Support) that shifts from intervention to enrichment services that spark curiosity, provide purpose to student learning, and offer enriching life experiences.

<sup>4</sup> Frazelle, S. & Nagel, A. (2015). A practitioner's guide to implementing early warning systems (REL 2015–056). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/rel\\_2015056.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/rel_2015056.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Justice (2015).

## **DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING**

- Study uses of differentiated staffing across schools and provide analysis on practices connected to improving outcomes for students in poverty.
- Increase emphasis on uses of differentiated staffing in conversations with principals.
- Connect hiring practices with differentiated staffing to hiring staff with certain experience, licensure or backgrounds that link to improving outcomes for students in poverty.
- Provide extended learning time for students who need additional support by staggering contracts or providing 11-month contracts for some staff members.
- Use a portion of funding from differentiated staffing to support student activity materials fees (e.g., dual enrollment textbooks, AP exams, field trips) and enrichment opportunities for economically disadvantaged students.

## **TIER 1 INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

- Develop deliberate and explicit professional development for administrators and teachers on culturally responsive teaching that closes achievement gaps within the core instructional program.
- Consider alternatives to removing struggling students from core instruction in the Tier 1 setting and provide more unleveled classes in secondary schools.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Utilize instructional specialists to support efforts.
- Return to implementing Rick DuFour's Professional Learning Community (PLC) work in the schools, facilitated with fidelity and monitored by trained administrators across the division.
- Provide professional development (ongoing as well as event-based) that reflects a balanced approach to work on division initiatives (e.g., technology integration and direct instructional approaches; student-based learning and teacher-directed instructional practices; problem-based learning and specific strategies for economically disadvantaged students, English Learners, and children with disabilities in the Tier 1 setting).

<sup>6</sup> Burris & Garrity (2008). *Detracking for Excellence and Equity*. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.

<sup>7</sup> Blankstein, Noguera, & Kelley (2016). *Excellence through Equity: Five Principles of Courageous Leadership to Guide Achievement for Every Student*. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.

# TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following terms and abbreviations are used throughout the 2019 Equity Report where appropriate. Given varying interpretations of these terms, the intent is to provide the reader with a common understanding of how the authors of this work use them throughout the document.

## **Achievement Gap**

Reis and Smith (2013) identify the achievement gap as the difference in academic performance across race and socioeconomic status, generally demonstrated on standardized tests such as the Standards of Learning (SOL), AP exams, and SATs.<sup>8</sup> For this report, an achievement gap is defined as four or more percentage points of difference between pass rates for all students and those of a particular membership group.

## **Advanced Placement (AP)**

Defined by the Virginia Department of Education as college-level courses or programs that are available to high school students and may allow students to earn college credit.

## **Dual Enrollment (DE)**

Dual Enrollment courses allow high school students to earn college credit through simultaneous enrollment at Piedmont Virginia Community College.

## **Economically Disadvantaged (Econ Disadv)**

Defined by the Virginia Department of Education as a student who is a member of a household that meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals (less than or equal to 185 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines).

## **English Learners (ELs)**

Students who are learning English as a second or other language and who are not yet fluent in English, based on Virginia's assessment of English language proficiency called the WIDA ACCESS test.

## **Equity Gap**

The equity gap is defined as disparities in the implementation of school-based practices that contribute to unequal achievement (Duke, 2011).<sup>9</sup> For this report, an equity gap is defined as four percentage points or more difference between the category of all students and a particular membership group.

## **Feeder Pattern**

ACPS schools are divided into three "feeder patterns" according to geographical area: Northern, Southern and Western. A feeder pattern consists of the elementary, middle and high schools through which students progress.

<sup>8</sup> Reis N., & Smith A., (2013). Rethinking the Universal Approach to the Preparation of School Leaders from: Handbook of Research on Educational Leadership for Equity and Diversity. Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> Duke, D. L. (2011). The Challenges of School District Leadership. New York: Routledge.

**Gifted**

Defined by the Virginia Department of Education as programs that provide advanced educational opportunities and an enriched curriculum for students who are endowed with a high degree of mental ability.

**High School Academies**

Each comprehensive high school in Albemarle County hosts an academy that is focused on preparing students for high-demand careers. These academies offer many benefits to students and can only be accessed through a competitive application process.

**Opportunity Gap**

The opportunity gap represents differences in extracurricular and academic opportunities offered to students that contribute to different outcomes in learning (Darling-Hammond, 2013).<sup>10</sup> For this report, an opportunity gap is reported as four or more percentage points of difference between a group's representation in the district and in a specific program.

**Math/Reading SOL Pass Rates**

The percentage of the total number of students who received a 400 or above on their end-of-year Math or Reading SOL.

**Standards of Learning (SOL)**

The Standards of Learning (SOL) for Virginia Public Schools establish minimum expectations for student learning and achievement. Students in grades 3-8 take SOL tests in Reading and Math.

**Students with Disabilities (SWD)**

Students identified for special education services, from speech pathology and learning disabilities to severe and profound disabilities.

**Suspension Data**

The percentage of the total number of students who have had at least one out-of-school suspension during the school year. For the purpose of this report, students with multiple suspensions are not calculated.

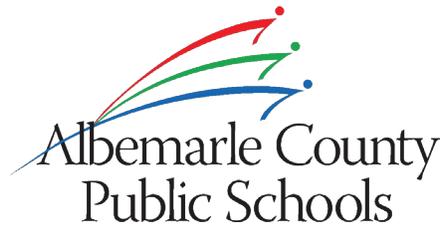
**Tier 1**

Defined by the Virginia Department of Education as a core instructional program that uses a scientifically-based curriculum for all students at their instructional level.

**Title I**

Defined by the Virginia Department of Education as a federal funding program to support the instructional needs of students from low-income families to ensure that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach (at a minimum) proficiency on state academic achievement standards and assessments.

<sup>10</sup> Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). Inequality and school resources. Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance, 77.



# EQUITY REPORT

Spring 2019