



# Comprehensive School System Summary

Volume 2 of 2

---

# 15<sup>TH</sup> PROGRESS REPORT ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



**Frederick County Public Schools**  
*Working Together to Educate Each Child and Promote Success*



# 15<sup>TH</sup> PROGRESS REPORT ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM SUMMARY 2003 VOLUME 2 OF 2

This is the second in a series of two volumes that comprise the Superintendent of Schools' report to the Board of Education and the community concerning Frederick County Public Schools' 2002-2003 progress toward the mission, *Working Together to Educate Each Child and Promote Success.*

### Board of Education of Frederick County

Ronald W. Peppe II, President

Jean A. Smith, Vice President

Daryl A. Boffman      Bonnie M. Borsa

Donna J. Crook      Linda S. Naylor      Michael E. Schaden

Jack D. Dale, Superintendent & Secretary-Treasurer to the Board

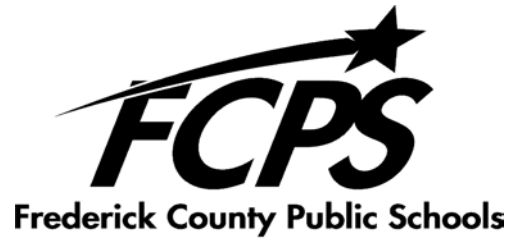
Michael T. Lapsa, Student Representative to the Board

Frederick County Public Schools

115 East Church Street ■ Frederick, Maryland 21701

301-644-5000

The Frederick County public school system does not discriminate in admissions, access, treatment or employment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability.



## MISSION

*Working Together to Educate Each Child and Promote Success*

## VISION

The Board of Education members adopted this statement in August 1998 to describe their vision of our school system, now and for the future. It serves as a guide for setting the goals and implementing the strategies that will provide the best education possible to Frederick County's students.

*Education is the foundation of our community. The Frederick County public school system educates its students to become caring, respectful and responsible citizens and family members.*

*Students look forward to school each day. They take full advantage of the rigorous academic curricula and strive to develop their talents. They utilize the power of technology to explore a world of new ideas and information. They acquire the knowledge and skills to achieve and the confidence to succeed, and are rewarded with a wide choice of offers from higher education and employers.*

*Outstanding applicants compete to join our system. Employees enjoy the respect of students and the community, opportunities for professional growth, and recognition for their contributions to our system. They value each student and create a learning climate where students can reach for their dreams.*

*Parents, public officials, businesses and citizens actively support our commitment to challenge all students to achieve their potential. The Board of Education and school system staff embrace the community's contributions and are responsible stewards of its resources.*

*Parents choose to send their children to our schools.*

*Businesses and families move to Frederick County because of our schools.*

*Other school systems emulate us.*

## **STRATEGIC GOALS**

The Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) will establish an environment that capitalizes on all children's natural curiosity, nurtures their desire to learn, and respects their individual learning styles.

1. All students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet graduation standards and achieve their potential.
2. All schools will be safe and inviting, with a climate that fosters learning and character development.
3. All employees will be highly qualified, motivated and effective.
4. All sectors of the community will be engaged in the education of our children.
5. FCPS will advocate for adequate resources to achieve these goals and manage these resources in a publicly accountable and cost-effective manner.

## INTRODUCTION

Maryland's *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act* requires each Maryland district to develop and submit for state approval a comprehensive master plan. Incorporating a number of previously separate plans and covering a five-year period, each district's plan must include goals and strategies that promote academic excellence for all students and eliminate any gaps in performance as a function of race, ethnicity, poverty, disability and native language. Maryland's legislation fully incorporates the accountability provisions of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* of 2001, which requires each state to establish proficiency standards to be met by all groups of students in all schools by 2014 and includes interim measures of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

The Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) system has a long history of strategic planning, goal setting and public accountability. In 1987, the Frederick County Board of Education adopted system improvement goals and key indicators and has annually published progress reports on district and individual school performance. The Board has periodically revised the goals and indicators since that time to address additional areas of focus and to accommodate Maryland's evolving testing and accountability programs.

Disaggregated performance and participation data have been the heart of those goals and yearly reports, providing educators and the Frederick community detailed information about progress and gaps in performance as a function of gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. With the implementation of the Maryland School Performance (MSP) Program, FCPS modified its yearly reports to incorporate state data elements and standards while maintaining and further refining its own local indicators.

Following a period of extensive input and feedback from a variety of stakeholders, FCPS completed a Master Plan and submitted it to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for approval. The action plan is focused on the strategic initiatives required to attain the district's goals and meet state and national accountability requirements. It will guide district and school improvement initiatives for the next five years.

*FCPS will continue to publish annual reports to provide all stakeholders with information about achievement toward the standards outlined in the Master Plan. For detailed information about progress to date at the state, county and local school levels, please refer to Volume 1 of the 15<sup>th</sup> Progress Report on Continuous Improvement. To gain a full appreciation of a particular school — its atmosphere, philosophy, approach to teaching and learning, and spirit of community — families are encouraged to visit and to talk with the principal, classroom teachers and parents of children who attend the school.*

*For other information about the public school system in Frederick County, call the FCPS Communications Office, (301) 696-6900. You may also wish to visit our web site, [www.fcps.org](http://www.fcps.org) or watch Cable Channel 18 in the Frederick County viewing area.*

## SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE TRENDS

The *15<sup>th</sup> Progress Report on Continuous Improvement* summarizes district performance during the 2002-03 school year.

The Frederick County public school system has established high standards for student and school performance, with the expectation that all student subgroups and schools will meet or exceed those standards. Achievement trends show substantial progress, with Frederick County students continuing to outperform their state and national counterparts on SAT and Advanced Placement (AP) tests and, in the aggregate, on Maryland's new Maryland School Assessment (MSA) tests. More Frederick County students are completing the rigorous requirements of the Maryland Certificate of Merit than ever before, and the number of AP examinations taken by high school students continues to climb dramatically. Baseline reporting for 2003 shows that more than four of every ten juniors and seniors are enrolled in college-level coursework while still in high school.

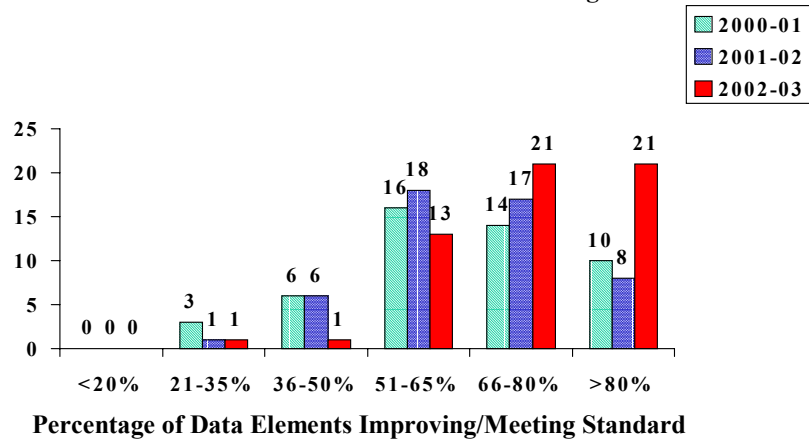
Substantial gaps between student subgroups continue to be apparent on tests of achievement, on local measures of academic readiness, and in access to rigorous coursework. Gaps are most apparent for African American students, children of poverty (those receiving Free/Reduced-Price Meals), special education students and students with limited English proficiency (LEP). NCLB requires that all student subgroups meet the same standards of proficiency in reading and mathematics. The increased accountability for two subgroups in particular, special education and LEP students, creates a substantial challenge for our district and schools. FCPS, along with other Maryland districts and the state of Maryland, did not demonstrate AYP for 2003, due to one or more student subgroups not meeting the state's Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) for MSA tests in reading or mathematics.

There is continued evidence that our schools provide a safe and inviting learning climate. Student attendance is up, dropout and suspension rates are down and no county school was even close to being identified as "persistently dangerous" under Maryland's criteria for the NCLB required reporting of unsafe schools. The 2003 graduation rate for Frederick County already exceeds the target established by the MSDE for 2014. While differences in dropout and graduation rates are apparent for certain student subgroups, they have been markedly reduced or virtually eliminated for all groups except LEP students.

To summarize the impact of improvement efforts, FCPS annually reports the percentage of indicators for each school that meets or shows improvement toward established standards. While the state's new MSA testing and federal accountability standards necessitated a number of changes to those indicators, overall progress is apparent in the growing number of schools in the upper ranges of improvement, as displayed in the following graph.

## FCPS Improving Schools Summary

### Number of Schools Within Each Range



There is a critical link between a high-quality workforce and student performance. FCPS is making progress in data collection and actions required to recruit, train and retain the “highly qualified” teachers specified by NCLB. Teacher applications increased 83% in 2003, thanks to aggressive efforts to expand the available applicant pool. Retention rates for experienced staff increased for 2003, and procedures were established to report the five-year retention rates for each successive cohort of newly hired teachers. While salary rankings have reached the goal of being within the top third of the state for experienced staff, funding constraints resulted in only modest gains in the statewide salary ranking for first-year FCPS teachers.

Community engagement remains both an area of system commitment and a work in continued progress. As previously referenced, the community was involved in the development of the FCPS Master Plan. In addition, the Frederick County Board of Education has formally adopted *Maryland’s Plan for Family, School and Community Involvement* and tasked staff with ensuring that all system committees have parent and community representation. The Community Agency School Services (CASS) Program operates in all school feeder areas, and its associated community councils exist in five of the nine feeders, with plans to expand to the remaining areas by July 2004.

The opening of Tuscarora High School did much to reduce classroom overcrowding at the high school level, and planned new facilities will have similar impact at the elementary and middle school levels during the upcoming year. Funds were insufficient to significantly improve the percentage of existing building systems (roofs, boilers, flooring, etc.) operating within industry life expectancies or the percentage of schools meeting library media collection standards. We remain fiscally efficient and accountable, with administrative costs and central office staffing among the lowest in the state.

# GOAL 1

**“All students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet graduation requirements and achieve their potential.”**

## **Introduction**

The first system improvement goal appropriately recognizes learning as our schools' primary purpose and student achievement as our chief focus. NCLB has increased this focus on achievement, with the requirement that all students and all subgroups attain proficiency in reading and mathematics (and eventually science) by the year 2014. All schools, districts and states must demonstrate AYP or face an increasing series of sanctions.

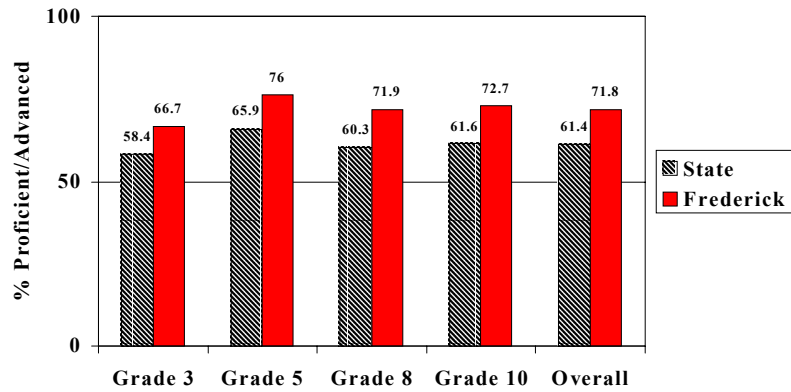
Evidence of progress toward attainment of Goal 1 includes all federal and state achievement indicators and a number of additional data elements and standards established by the Frederick County Board of Education.

## **FCPS Evidence – Existing and Potential**

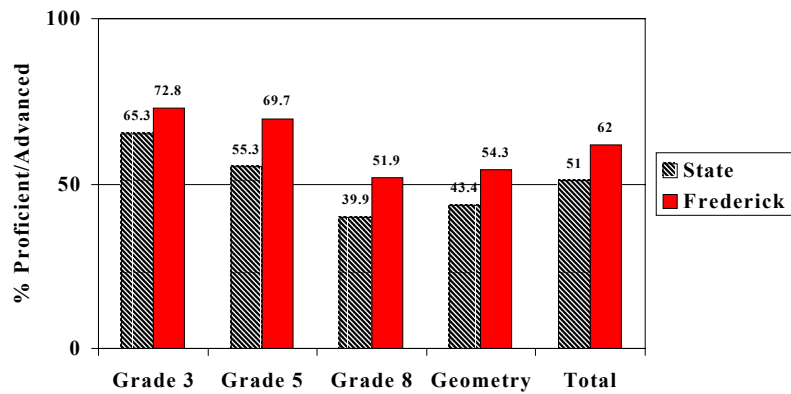
***Maryland School Assessment (MSA)*** Under the NCLB testing and accountability requirements, students in grades three through eight and one high school grade must be tested each year in reading and mathematics. During the 2002-03 school year, Maryland's new MSA tests were administered to students in grades three, five, eight, and ten. Fourth, sixth and seventh grade tests will be added during the spring of 2004, with science testing planned for 2005.

In the initial year of testing, Frederick County students in the aggregate outperformed their counterparts statewide in both reading and mathematics at all tested grades.

### MSA Comparison for Reading 2003 Data

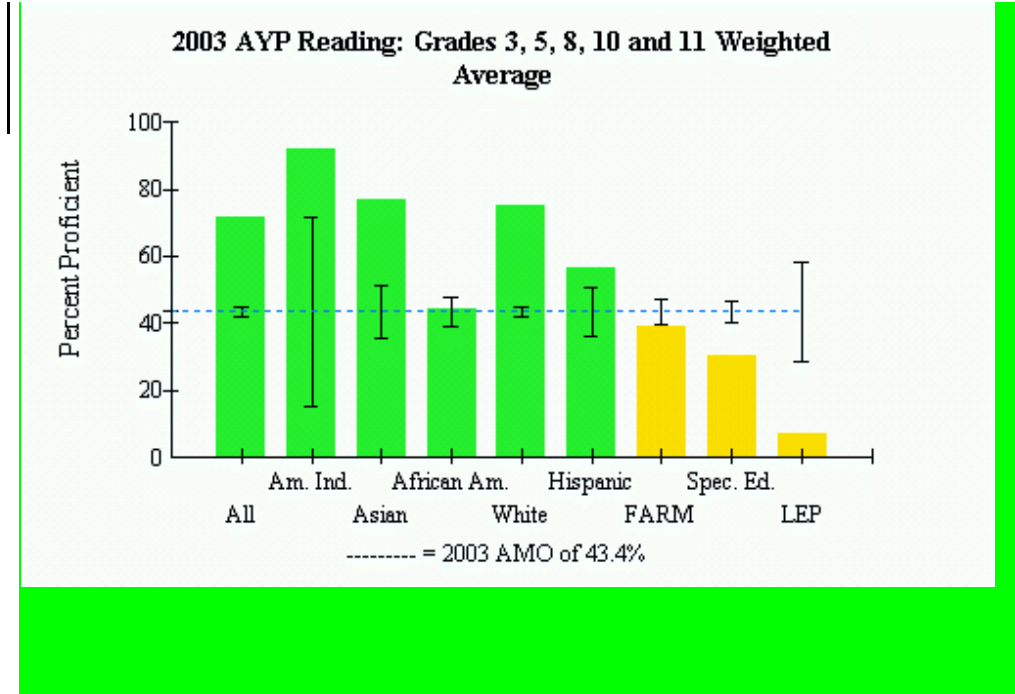


### MSA Comparison for Math 2003 Data



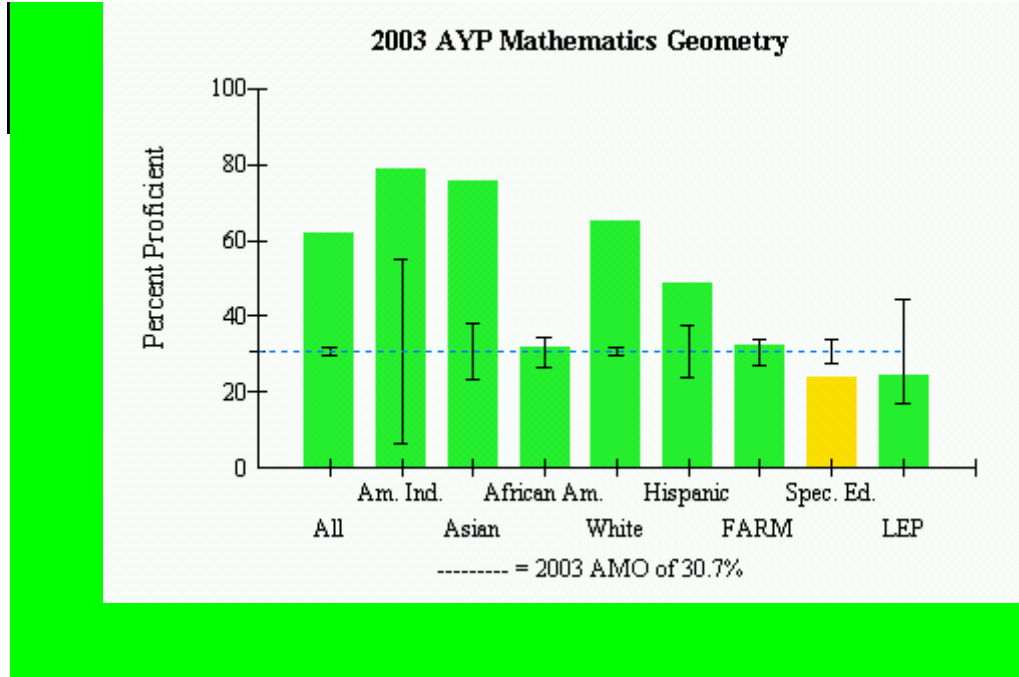
In order for a district, state or school to demonstrate AYP, all student subgroups must meet or exceed the AMO established for that year. The following two charts display the performance of each FCPS student subgroup in terms of meeting the AMO established by MSDE to determine AYP. To allow for meaningful comparisons to the target for each subgroup, Maryland’s accountability plan employs “confidence bands” to account for differences in population size. In the following graphs, vertical lines drawn above and below the horizontal dotted line illustrate confidence bands representing the AMO target for 2003.

### MSA Reading Totals for All Tested Grades



FCPS students receiving free and reduced-price meals (FARM), special education students, and students with limited English proficiency did not meet the state's AMO target for reading for 2003.

## MSA Mathematics Totals for Grades 3, 5 & 8 and Geometry



All FCPS subgroups except for special education met the state's AMO target for mathematics for 2003.

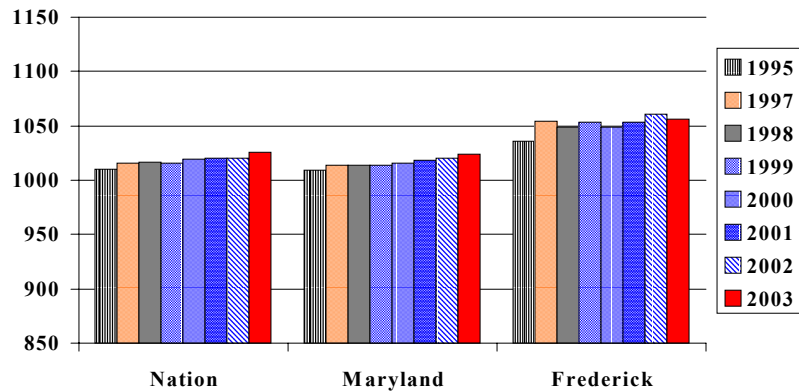
**High School Assessment (HSA)** MSDE has been in the process of implementing a series of end-of-course assessments designed to measure the degree to which high school students have mastered state content standards in designated English, mathematics, social studies and science courses. At present, students are required to take but not pass these tests in order to graduate. The MSDE has not yet decided which, if any, of these assessments students must pass in order to receive a Maryland high school diploma.

The Maryland Performance Reports for districts and schools do not presently contain HSA data for Algebra, Biology, English I and Government. The MSA incorporates the HSA geometry test, as summarized above.

**English as a Second Language (ESL) students attaining English proficiency** Under the NCLB accountability requirements, districts and schools must report the percentage of ESL students who have attained proficiency in English. The MSDE selected a language proficiency assessment (IDEA IPT) and required districts to begin testing students during the 2002-03 school year. However, the state will not report the percentage of ESL students attaining English proficiency until June 2004.

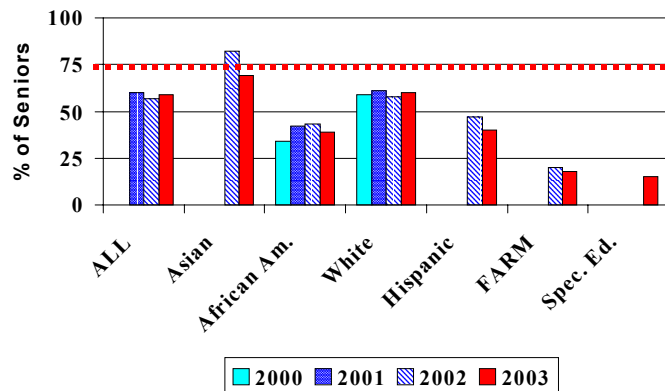
**SAT** While recognizing that this exam is part of the college admission process and not taken by all students, school systems nationwide have utilized SAT performance and participation as performance measures for many years. Frederick County students' average SAT scores continue to exceed national and state averages, as summarized below.

**SAT Comparison  
Combined Total (Verbal + Math)  
Mean Scores**

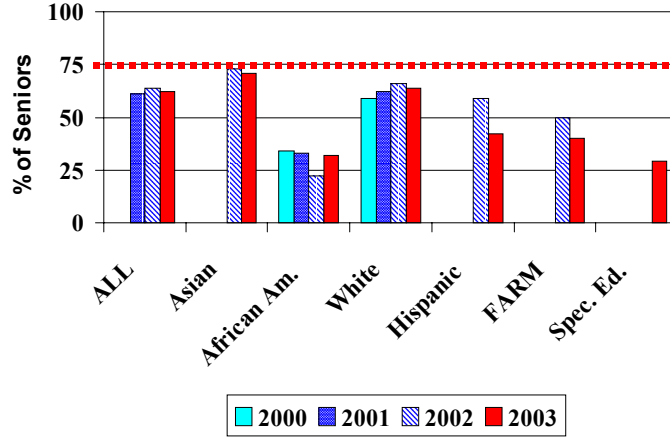


The percentage of FCPS seniors having taken the SAT during their high school years increased to 59% for 2003, with increased participation evident for males and white students. The overall percentage of students scoring at/above 1,000 decreased from 64% to 62% for 2003, a pattern often attributable to increases in participation. The percentage of males and African Americans scoring at/above 1000 increased in 2003. Our goal is to have 75% of our students take the SAT during their high school years and earn scores of 1,000 or higher.

**SAT Participation  
Percentage of Seniors Taking Test During High School**

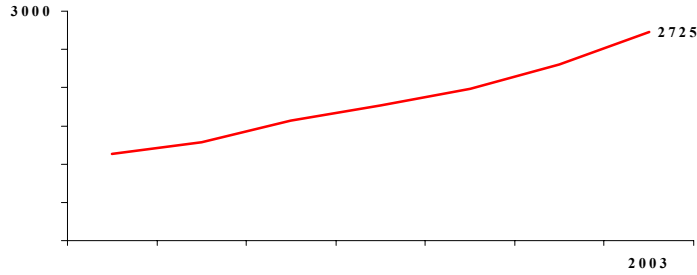


### SAT Scores At/Above 1,000



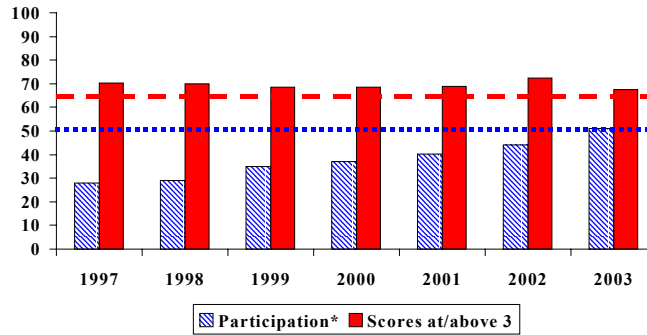
**Advanced Placement (AP) Tests** FCPS has reported AP performance and participation as indicators of a rigorous academic program for the past several years. AP results for 2003 show continued evidence of progress. County students took 2,725 AP examinations in 2003, an increase of 426 exams when compared to 2002 and the greatest single-year increase ever for Frederick County schools.

### Number of AP Exams Totals for FCPS High Schools



For the first time, the increase in the number of AP examinations resulted in the attainment of the 50% participation standard. In addition, the percentage of students scoring at/above 3 (the level accepted by many colleges for course credit) exceeded the locally established 65% standard for the seventh consecutive year.

**Advanced Placement (AP) Program  
Totals for All High Schools**

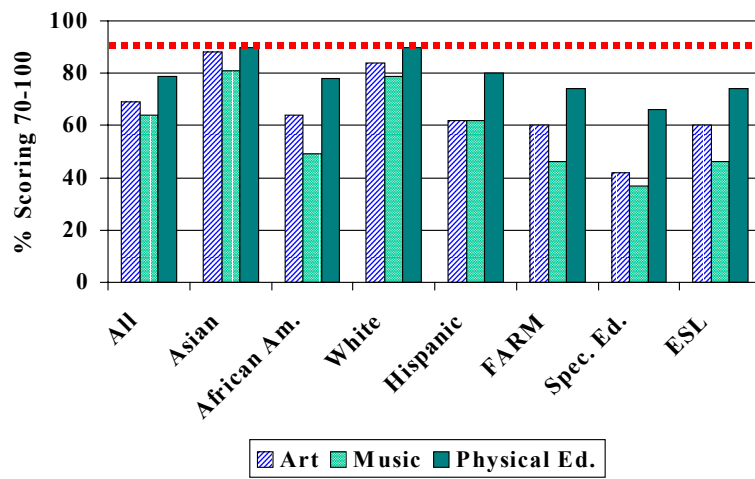


\* Exams divided by 11/12th grade enrollment

**Frederick County Criterion Referenced Evaluation System (CRES)** Our school system's CRES assessments are intended as companions to national and state testing programs, and FCPS has elected to utilize the yearly results as a local performance measure. FCPS teachers and administrators redesign the tests on an ongoing basis to ensure alignment with Maryland's various assessment programs, the developing "Voluntary State Curriculum," and changes to the county's essential curriculum.

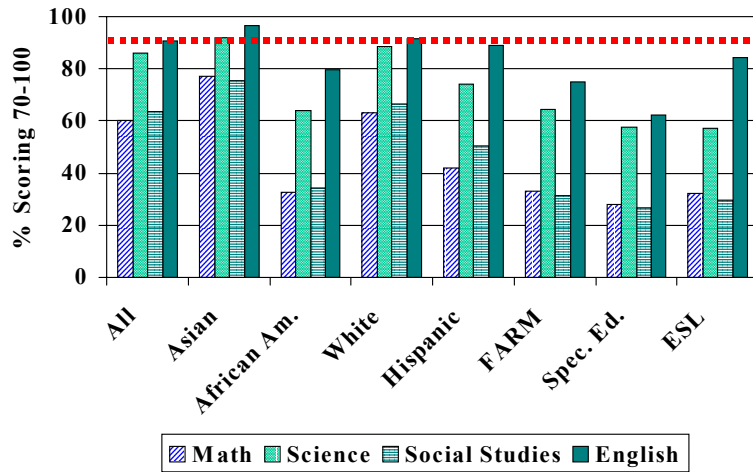
At the elementary level, CRES assessments are administered in art, music and physical education, and quarterly and unit assessments intended for internal school use are administered in the traditional academic subjects. Results for 2003 show a number of content areas and subgroups approaching the 90% standard. Gaps in achievement between subgroups are somewhat smaller in physical education than in the visual and performing arts, but are apparent in all three content areas.

**CRES Totals - Grade 5  
Special Programs for 2002-2003**

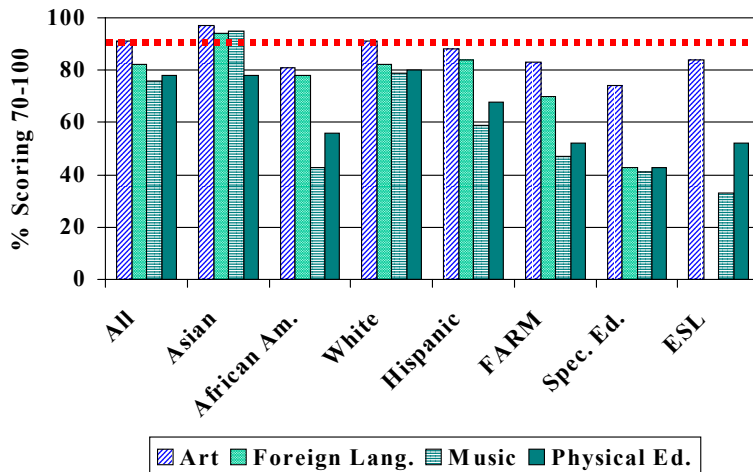


At the middle school level, CRES assessments are administered in the four traditional academic subjects, as well as in visual and performing arts, physical education and foreign language (Level I/II) courses. Results for 2003 show several content areas and subgroups meeting or approaching the 90% standard. Gaps in achievement between subgroups are somewhat smaller in language arts, science and art than in other academic and elective subjects, but are apparent in all content areas.

**CRES Totals - Grades 6 and 7  
Core Academic Subjects for 2002-03**

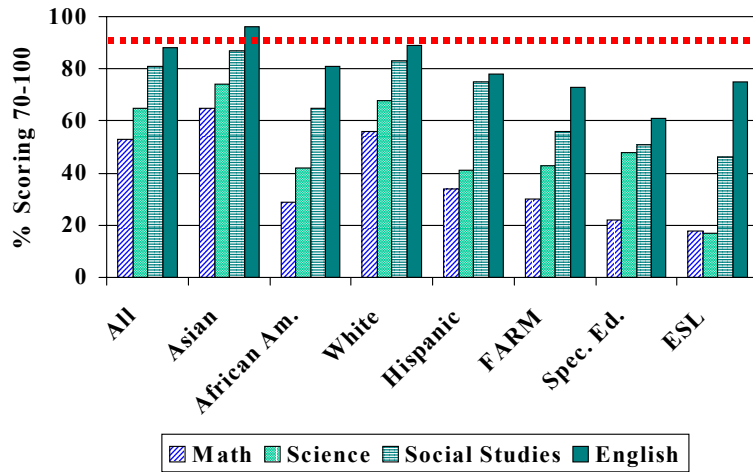


**CRES Totals for Middle School  
Elective and Exploratory Programs for 2002-03**

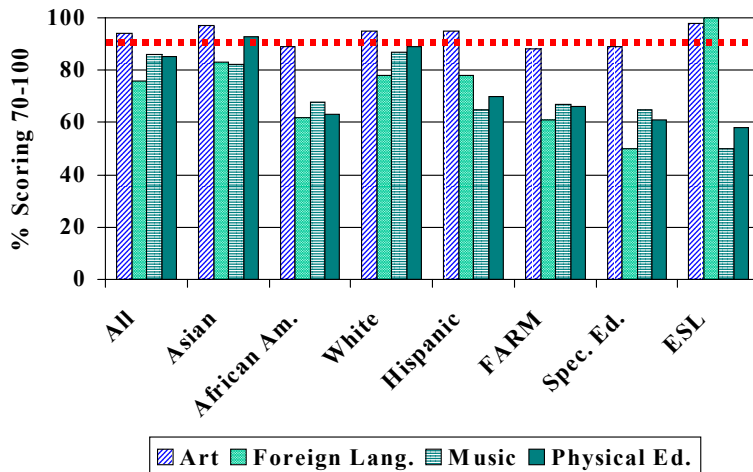


At the high school level, CRES assessments are administered in the four traditional academic subjects, as well as visual and performing arts, physical education and foreign language (Level I/II) courses. Similar to patterns evident at the elementary and middle school levels, 2003 shows several content areas and subgroups meeting or approaching the 90% standard. Gaps in achievement between subgroups are virtually absent in art and somewhat smaller in English than in other academic and elective subjects. With the exception of art, marked discrepancies between subgroups continue to be apparent.

**CRES Totals for Grade 11  
Core Academic Subjects for 2002-03**

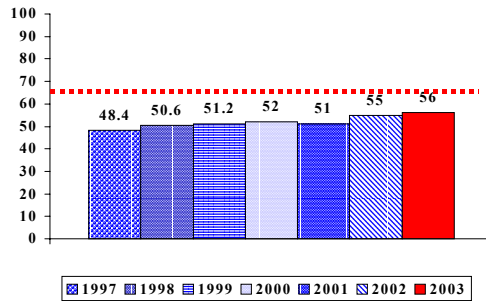


**CRES Totals for High School  
Elective Programs for 2002-03**

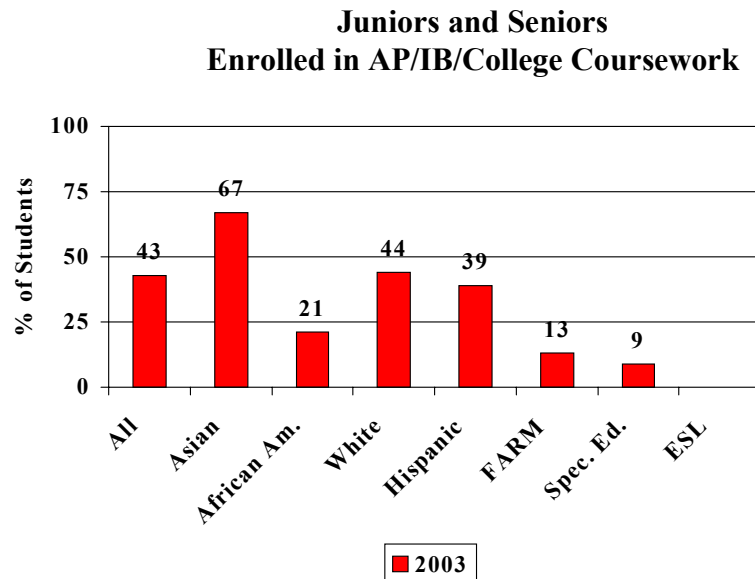


***Maryland Certificate of Merit*** Maryland's Certificate of Merit is intended to recognize high school graduates who meet performance and course criteria beyond those required for a Maryland High School diploma, and FCPS has elected to use the information as a local performance measure. The percentage of Frederick County seniors meeting requirements for the Maryland Certificate of Merit increased to 56% for 2003. It will be more difficult to earn this certificate in future years now that FCPS has upgraded the criteria for earning the Certificate of Merit to include the successful completion of Algebra II for students in the Class of 2006 and beyond.

**Maryland Certificate of Merit  
Percentage of Seniors**



**Enrollment in college-level coursework** FCPS uses the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in AP or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses or concurrently taking classes at area colleges as a measure of access to highly challenging coursework. (Urbana High School is in the initial stages of application and approval as an International Baccalaureate school.) We collected this information for the first time during the 2002-03 school year. The baseline year shows that more than four out of every ten juniors and seniors were enrolled in one or more of these rigorous courses. Marked differences between student subgroups were apparent for 2003.

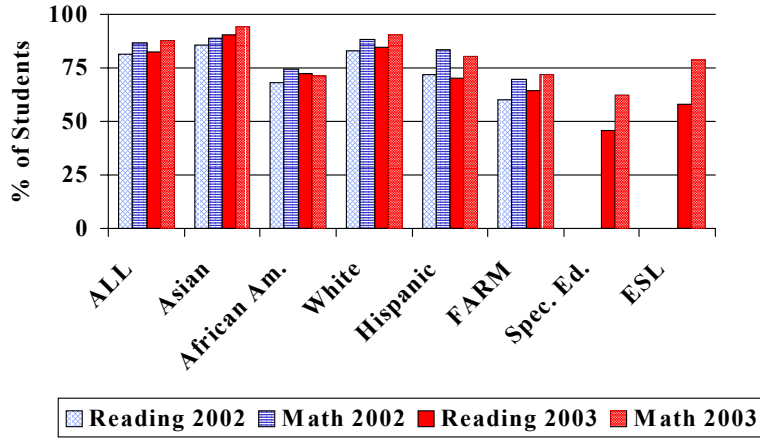


**Readiness standards** In response to Maryland’s PreK-12 Academic Readiness Program, districts are required to establish readiness standards at key grades of transition, so that intervention programs can be provided for students who do not meet the identified readiness criteria for the next grade. FCPS has established readiness criteria at the end of grades two, five and eight, and has elected to utilize the resulting information as a local performance measure.

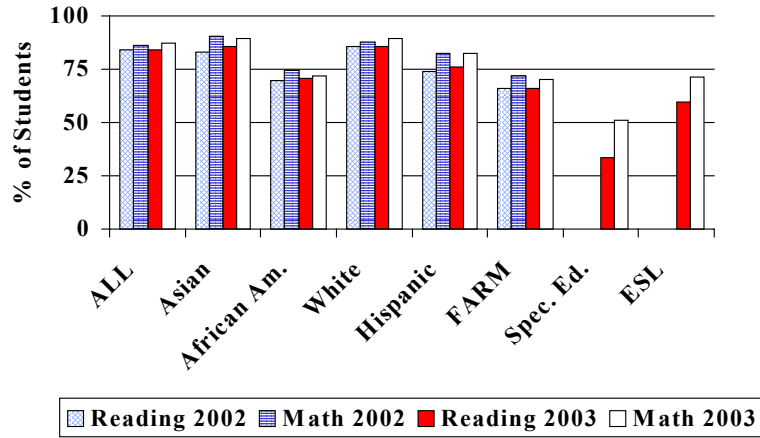
Readiness data for 2003 was based on the criteria in place for the past several years. With the implementation of the MSAs and the elimination of Maryland’s Functional Testing Program, we are substantively revising FCPS readiness standards. As a result, 2004 data will establish new baselines for further improvement at each grade.

Overall, readiness in reading and mathematics differs little in 2002 and 2003. Gaps in reading and mathematics readiness are apparent for student subgroups for both school years and at all three grade levels. (Data for special education and ESL students was not available for 2002.)

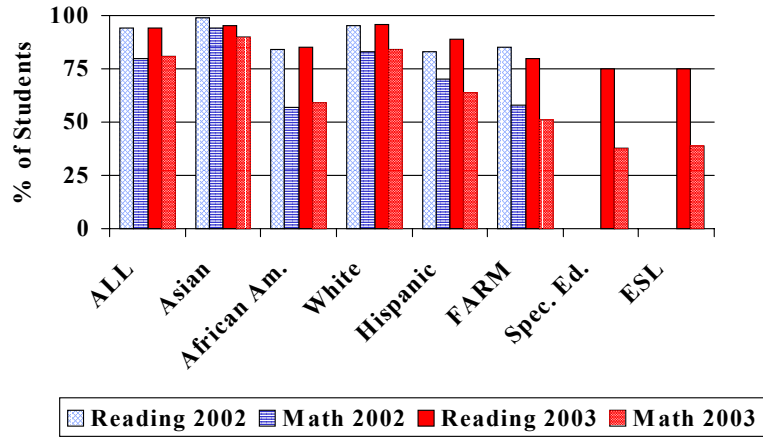
### Students Meeting Readiness Standards End of Grade 2



### Students Meeting Readiness Standards End of Grade 5



## Students Meeting Readiness Standards End of Grade 8



## **GOAL 2**

**“All schools will be safe and inviting,  
with a climate that fosters learning and character development.”**

### **Introduction**

A school's climate can have a major impact on the extent to which students can concentrate on learning and teachers can concentrate on teaching. All members of the school community must understand and practice the system's established core values, guided by respect and personal responsibility. NCLB includes attention to the learning climate, requiring districts to report “persistently dangerous” schools and include attendance and graduation rates in determining Adequate Yearly Progress.

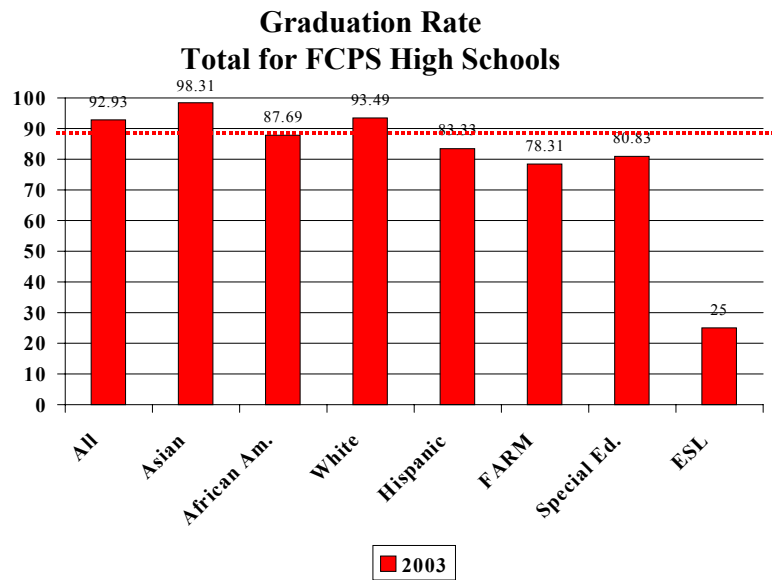
Evidence of progress toward attainment of Goal 2 includes all required federal and state indicators and a number of additional data elements and standards established by the Frederick County Board of Education.

### **FCPS Evidence – Existing and Potential**

*Number of persistently dangerous schools* NCLB requires each state to establish criteria for identifying persistently dangerous schools. No Frederick County school meets or even approaches Maryland's criteria, consistent with our goals to have no such schools.

**Graduation rate** Under NCLB, districts are mandated to report the high school completion rate for students four years after their initial entry into ninth grade. The overall completion rate is included in the determination of AYP for districts and high schools.

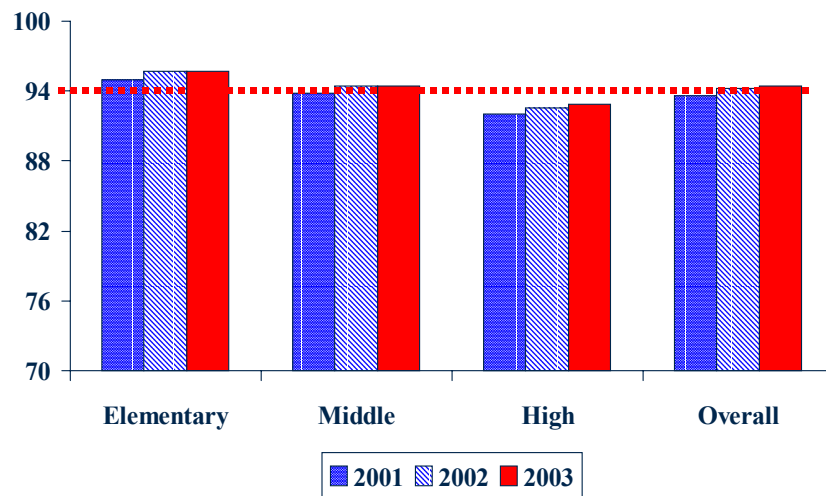
FCPS has elected to utilize the graduation rates of each student subgroup as a further measure of improvement. In the initial year of accountability, the district's overall graduation rate exceeded the state's 2014 goal of 90%. While differences by student subgroup are apparent, only ESL students are substantially below the state's 2003 AMO threshold of 80.99%. Given the relatively small number of such students in each senior class, the graduation rates for ESL students can be expected to fluctuate.



**Student attendance** NCLB requires districts to report the attendance rates for elementary and middle schools, and the district's overall attendance rate is included in the determination of AYP. FCPS has elected to analyze and report attendance rates for all three levels of school, and also to establish 96% as the eventual target, a rate higher than Maryland's 2014 goal of 94%.

Elementary and middle school attendance rates already exceed the state's goal, and elementary attendance is approaching our own higher target of 96%. High school attendance has continued to improve over the past several years, but remains below the 2014 state goal.

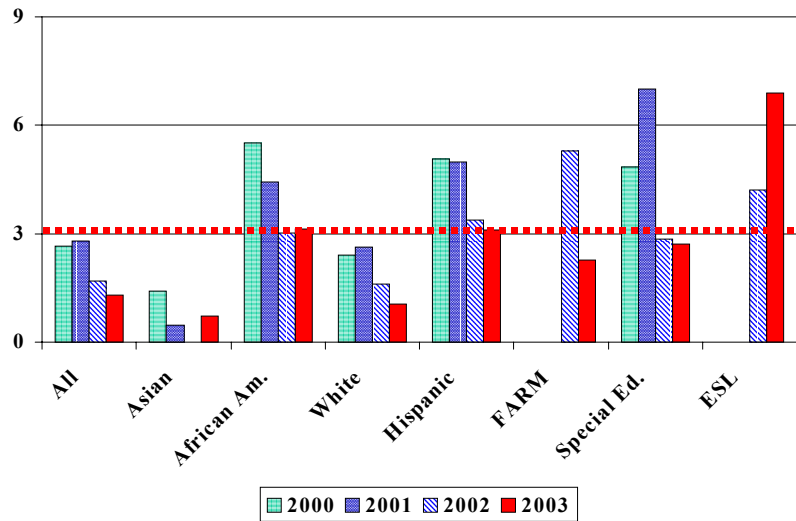
**Annual Attendance Rate**



**Annual dropout rate** While the NCLB accountability provisions focus on the graduation rate for each cohort of students, Maryland also requires districts to report the annual dropout rate for students in grades 9-12.

FCPS' student dropout rate for 2003 declined to the lowest point ever recorded, well below the maximum 3% "satisfactory" standard previously established by MSDE and approaching the "excellent" standard of 1.25%. This achievement is even more significant given the continued increases in high school attendance noted above. Substantial reductions in dropout rates are evident for all subgroups except ESL students in the past two years. Gaps between previous dropout rates and the 3% standard have been virtually eliminated for African American, Hispanic, FARM and special education students.

**Annual Dropout Rate**



***Suspension and expulsion rate*** MSDE requires districts to report the number of suspensions and expulsions on an annual basis, and FCPS has elected to utilize these data points as local performance measures. As the following table clearly shows, the suspension/expulsion rate for 2003 was the lowest on record. In addition, the number of incidents and the number of suspended students declined noticeably for 2003, despite growing student enrollment.

**Summary of Disciplinary Action – Totals for All Schools**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Number of Students Suspended/Expelled</b>	<b>Suspension/Expulsion Rate</b>
1996-97	5,637	2,797	8.2%
1997-98	5,938	2,789	8.0%
1998-99	5,509	2,542	7.3%
1999-00	5,393	2,638	7.3%
2000-01	5,198	2,637	7.1%
2001-02	5,568	2,518	6.6%
2002-03	4,955	2,429	6.4%

***Individual meetings with guidance counselors*** Recognizing the importance of ongoing educational and career planning, middle and high school students are expected to have at least one individual meeting with their assigned guidance counselors each school year. FCPS utilizes the percentage of secondary students having such individual meetings as a local performance measure. Collection procedures and adjustments to the computerized student information system are still under development for future reporting and analysis.

***Participation in extracurricular activities*** Participation in school activities beyond the regular classroom provides one measure of the “connectedness” between students and their high schools. FCPS has elected to utilize the percentage of high school students participating in one or more extracurricular activities as a local performance measure. Collection procedures and adjustments to the computerized student information system are under way, with baseline reporting planned for the 2004-05 school year.

## GOAL 3

**“All employees will be highly qualified, motivated and effective.”**

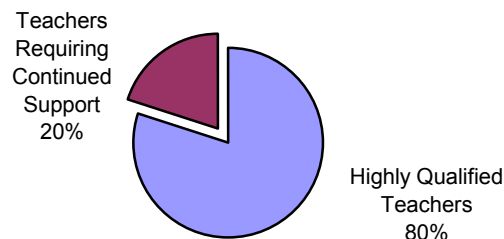
### Introduction

Goal 3 acknowledges the critical link between student achievement and teacher quality as well as the need to have a high quality, well-trained and motivated employee base to support the FCPS mission and ensure an effective business operation.

### FCPS Evidence – Existing and Potential

***Percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers*** NCLB calls for highly qualified teachers in the nation’s classrooms. To achieve “highly qualified” status, teachers must hold at least a bachelor’s degree as well as the professional certificate issued by MSDE. Beginning in the 2002-03 school year, all new teachers placed in schools designated as Title I schools must be “highly qualified.” By the end of the 2005-06 school year, *all* teachers teaching core academic subjects at *any* school must be highly qualified.

During the 2003-03 school year, “highly qualified” teachers taught 80% of our core academic classes. This initial reporting year provides baseline data and serves to identify the gap FCPS must address to meet the target.



An analysis of the remaining 20% pinpoints four groups of teachers that require our immediate and continued support in obtaining “highly qualified” status:

- Early childhood teachers holding less than an Advanced Professional Certificate
- Secondary teachers working out of field (such as a social studies-certified teacher teaching a foreign language)
- Middle school teachers holding less than an Advanced Professional Certificate and assigned to teach core academic subjects for which they lack content endorsements
- Teachers holding Conditional or Provisional Certificates

Teachers in the above groups may need to add endorsements to their current certificates, take a PRAXIS test in a content area or meet specific MSDE certification requirements to be deemed highly qualified. The “highly qualified” status is dynamic because it is linked not

only to a teacher's professional certification but also to the specific classes to which the teacher is assigned.

**Percentage of teachers receiving high-quality professional development** Although federal requirements and state guidelines have not yet been established to report this information, FCPS is able to provide data on some aspects of certain professional development initiatives. Of particular note is the level of participation of our first-, second- and third-year teachers in School Accountability Funding for Excellence (SAFE) Grant-funded MSDE workshops offered in 2002-03.

<b>SAFE Grant MSDE Credit Workshops Offered in 2002-03</b>			
	<b>Number</b>		<b>Participants</b>
Elementary Workshops Offered	10	Minimum of 1 Workshop	276
Secondary Workshops Offered	13	Minimum of 1 Workshop	315
K-12 Workshops Offered	7	Minimum of 1 Workshop	138
<b>Number of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Teachers Attending a Minimum of 1 Workshop</b>			<b>729</b>

These workshops presented information on classroom management, curricular strategies and classroom technology applications, filling an important need in the induction/training program for teachers new to Frederick County.

The FCPS Office of Professional Development also provided a variety of Professional Development Courses during the 2002-03 school year. The number of participants is noted on the chart below.

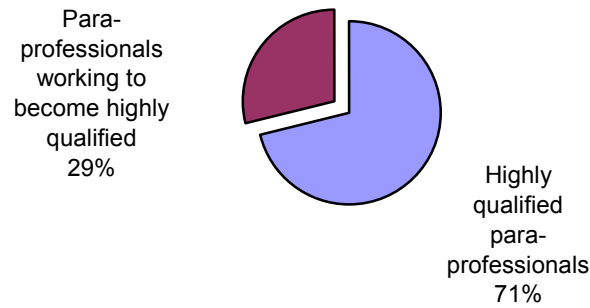
<b>Number of Participants Receiving Credit for Professional Development Courses 2002-03</b>	
Fall 2002	482
Spring 2003	638
Summer 2003	315
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,435</b>

Teachers, administrators, substitute teachers and instructional assistants attended these classes and received MSDE credit for coursework completed to obtain initial teacher certification, renew an existing certificate or expand skills/knowledge in an education-related field.

**Percentage of paraprofessionals who are qualified** NCLB challenges FCPS to develop a plan to ensure that all paraprofessionals (instructional assistants) working in our Title I programs are highly qualified. To be "highly qualified," an instructional assistant must hold a high school diploma or GED *and* complete 48 semester hours of college *or* obtain an associate's or higher degree *or* achieve a passing score on the ParaPro Test sanctioned by the

MSDE. These requirements apply to new hires after January 8, 2002. Paraprofessionals hired prior to that date have until January 8, 2006 to complete the requirements.

During the 2002-03 school year, Parkway, South Frederick and Waverley elementary schools were designated schoolwide Title I schools. A profile of the paraprofessionals assigned to those schools reveals that 71% of these employees are highly qualified.

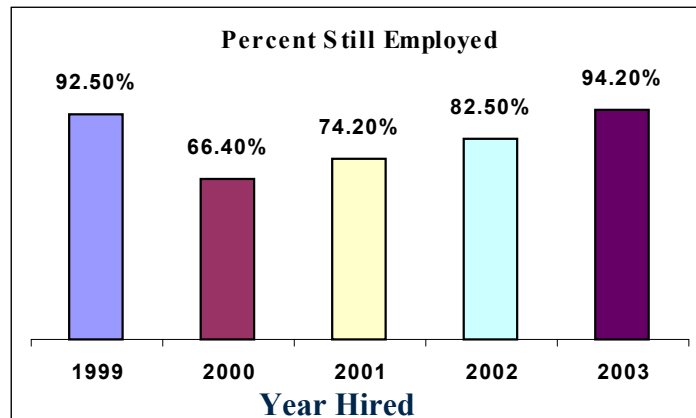


The employee base that must be “highly qualified” will change with the number of schools designated as schoolwide or “planning year” Title I programs. Our challenge will be to monitor targeted groups of employees for compliance with these new requirements. It is anticipated that current instructional assistants who have yet to earn “highly qualified” status may achieve the designation by successfully completing the ParaPro Test. Last spring thirteen FCPS instructional assistants served as “beta” test takers for the ParaPro Test. All earned a rating at or above the MSDE cut score.

It will be important in the years to come for FCPS to provide support to employees in the form of test-taking preparation and/or tuition assistance for the required 48 semester hours of college coursework.

**Percentage of newly hired staff still employed with FCPS five years later** A recent University of Pennsylvania study found that “33 to 50 percent of our nation’s teachers are leaving the profession within the first three years of employment.” National trends report that more than 70% of teachers who complete their fifth year remain in the profession. The retention rate for newly hired FCPS teachers by year employed is displayed on the following graph.

### **Cohort Retention Rate for Newly Hired Teachers**



Nurturing and retaining teachers during the early stages of their careers demands a commitment from both the central office and the site-based staff. A comprehensive induction program and formal mentoring initiatives as outlined in the *Guide for Continuous Professional Development* will help this segment of the FCPS workforce to grow in proficiency and confidence.

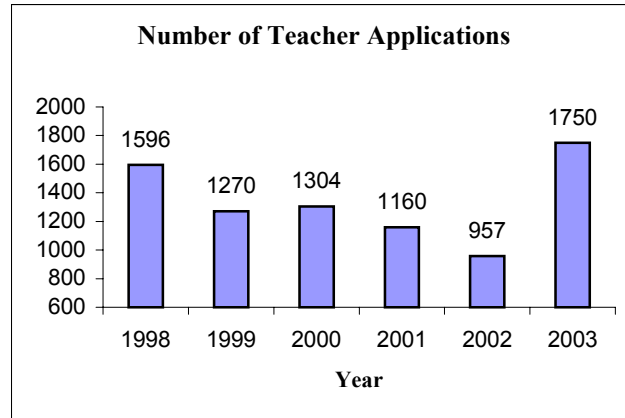
**Annual retention rate of staff with 5+ years FCPS employment** The overall retention rate for those who hold teaching certificates continued to show a slight increase from 92.0% in 2002 to 92.7% for 2003. The current rate represents a five-year high by exceeding 1999's 92.6% overall retention rate. Contributing factors may include modest gains in compensation, staff development opportunities, employee support programs and career path opportunities. It is anticipated that a planned employee satisfaction survey will reveal factors that positively impact retention rates in all sectors of the FCPS workforce.

<b>Retention Rates: Certificated Employees</b>				
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
First Five Years	89.8%	90.1%	91.5%	90.5%
More Than Five Years	94.0%	92.7%	92.4%	94.8%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>92.0%</b>	<b>91.4%</b>	<b>92.0%</b>	<b>92.7%</b>

The overall retention rate for support employees covers a broad range of job classifications. A slight decrease in the rate for those with both less than and greater than 5 years experience resulted in an overall retention rate of 96.4%. The challenge to retain support employees can best be met by coupling competitive salaries with quality training and career path opportunities. Human Resources plans to implement both initiatives in future years.

<b>Retention Rates: Support Employees</b>		
	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
First Five Years	94.6%	95.4%
More Than Five Years	99.1%	97.4%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>96.9%</b>	<b>96.4%</b>

**Adequate applicant pool** During the recent recruiting season, the Human Resources Division gathered 1,750 new teacher applications to address its 259 vacancies (106 elementary; 73 middle; 80 high school). This total reflects a significant increase in the number of new teacher applications received in recent years.



The increase in applications could be linked to one or more of the following:

- the ease of accessing applications on the FCPS web site,
- the flood of applicants now on the job market as a result of the economic downtrend,
- implementation of the resident teacher program
- a more aggressive recruiting campaign by personnel officers.

With the swell in teacher applications, we exceeded our target of having at least three applicants per vacancy. Specifically, we were able to consider 6.8 applications for each vacant position. Even so, there continued to be a shortfall of applications in the critical shortage areas of mathematics, physics, chemistry, family and consumer science, technology education, foreign language, ESL and special education. With nationwide shortages in these same areas, FCPS must compete not only with Maryland's school systems but also with neighboring states, many of which pay higher salaries.

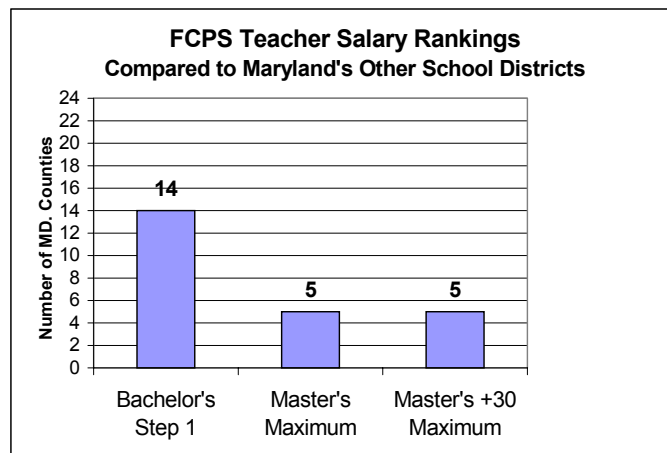
A review of the intake of applications reveals an average of 7.6 applications for each of the 219 posted support positions during the previous hiring season. A challenging task for the Human Resources Division is to expand the applicant pool for our custodial positions. The local job market and our current wage structure for this group negatively impact our ability to offer an adequate slate of candidates for custodian positions. This group also has a higher turnover rate than other job classifications.

**FCPS workforce comparable to minority composition of community** As the racial and cultural diversity of Frederick County evolves, it is our goal to have the employee workforce mirror that profile. The chart below illustrates the community base and student enrollment as compared to our employee workforce.

<b>Minority Representation</b>				
<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage of Population</i>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Frederick County Community</b>	11.1%	10.7%	10.7%	10.7%
<b>FCPS Total Employees</b>	6.0%	5.5%	5.5%	6.3%
<b>FCPS Professional Employees</b>	5.4%	4.8%	5.0%	4.9%
<b>FCPS Support Employees</b>	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%	7.6%
<b>FCPS Student Enrollment</b>	13.7%	14.5%	15.8%	17.0%

Although minority representation among our support employees and the total employee base realized a slight gain, a gap remains. The new teacher diversity initiative showed a 3% increase during this hiring season. Of the 259 new hires, 23 represented the minority groups of African American, Hispanic or Asian. FCPS faces a challenge in recruiting and retaining minority educators, but we remain committed to success because of the positive impact a diverse workforce has on the lives of all children.

**Competitive salary and benefits** The commitment to position FCPS certificated salaries in the top third in the state remains a challenge in the current fiscal climate. Eligible employees received a 2% salary increase effective July 1 and will get an additional 2% increase effective February 16, 2004.

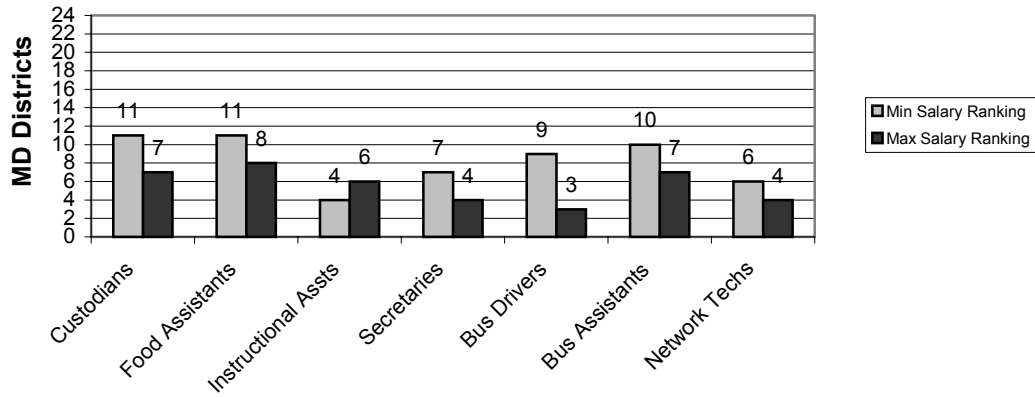


The previous chart illustrates the salary ranking for the teaching workforce using February 2004 compensation figures. While our ranking on the Bachelor's degree scale made modest gains from 18<sup>th</sup> in 2002 to 14<sup>th</sup> for 2003, it remains distant from our goal to be in the top third in the state. We have reached that target for more experienced teachers.

The salary ranking for support positions varies little from the previous year. Starting salaries for instructional assistants, secretaries and network technicians fall in the top third in the state.

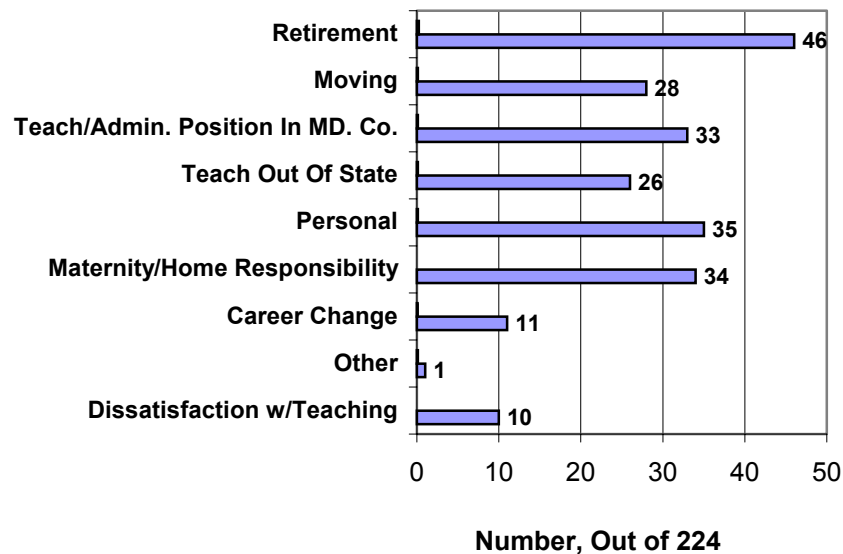
It is particularly important to review local trends when evaluating support salaries, since the local job market plays a prominent role in our ability to recruit and retain support employees. Human Resources will be armed with rich data on the viability of support salary scales when results of a wage and compensation study are made available later this year.

### FCPS Support Salary Rankings Compared to Maryland's Other School Districts



**Reasons for resignations** Resignations for certificated and support employees were down slightly over last year. As the following chart indicates, fewer employees retired from FCPS, but more resigned for personal and family reasons. This trend is not surprising since a proportionately higher number of employees are women of childbearing age with fewer than ten years of teaching experience. The data also reveals a continued tendency for employees to accept positions in surrounding counties and states where salaries are higher.

**Reasons for Resignations**



The Human Resources Division in collaboration with the Frederick County Teachers Association has designed an exit interview instrument yielding additional information to assist in the identification of retention initiatives. We tested the instrument this past year and will fully implement it in the 2003-04 school year.

Also in development is a survey, to be conducted during the 2003-04 school year, to gather information about employee satisfaction, quality of training for new employees and the effectiveness of newly established programs. Schools and central office staff will use the survey data to shape and improve program initiatives, and Human Resources will use it to drive retention initiatives.

## GOAL 4

**“All sectors of the community will be engaged in the education of our children.”**

### **Introduction**

Goal 4 acknowledges that a public school system cannot educate its children alone. A number of research studies demonstrate that when parents and the community are involved, students achieve at significantly higher levels. Businesses, elected officials and governmental agencies must also be involved in order for us to be successful.

Several premises underlie Goal 4. The first is that in order for a child to achieve, barriers to achievement must be removed. The Community Agency School Services (CASS) program, located in each feeder area, links school and community resources to assist families with children who are facing challenges.

The second premise is that school buildings are not the only places children learn. FCPS offers a variety of opportunities for students to extend their learning through work-based learning, student internships, college coursework in the senior year and the use of mentor experts from the community.

The third premise recognizes the vital role of parents and community members in decision making at every level, from schools to the superintendent’s office. The Board of Education has adopted *Maryland’s Plan for Family, School and Community Involvement* for systemwide implementation. The plan embraces six standards: communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making and advocacy, and collaborating with the community.

The final premise underlying Goal 4 is that relevant, timely, two-way communication is imperative to engaging the community. A comprehensive plan has been developed to enhance significantly the means by which FCPS communicates and receives input from the whole community.

## FCPS Evidence – Existing and Potential

***Parent/community membership on decision-making committees*** Parent and community members are included on a variety of system decision-making committees:

- Superintendent’s Advisory Council
- Technology Advisory Committee
- Curriculum & Instruction Committee
- Career & Technology Education advisory committees
- Feeder Improvement Teams
- School Improvement Teams
- Professional Development School Coordinating Councils
- Multicultural Education Committee
- Family Life Advisory Council
- School Health Council
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- CASS Community Councils (currently, Councils exist at 5 out of 9 CASS sites — Brunswick, Catocin, Linganore, Middletown and Walkersville; all will have Councils by July 2004)
- Ad hoc committees focusing on areas such as redistricting or community field use

The challenge is to broaden the base of committee members to involve all sub-groups of the school communities and assure more diverse representation. Other challenges are to assure meetings are held at times convenient for community members and to provide meaningful ways for them to serve.

***Annual report from each school concerning success of efforts to engage all subgroups of the school community*** At this time a minimum of one parent and one community member serve on each School Improvement Team. In some schools, parents and community members are actively involved in other decision-making committees. Although schools do not currently collect and report data concerning their success in this area, the *Guide for Continuous Improvement* is being revised to include reporting procedures. It will take a concerted effort by every school and every system committee leader to reach out to all facets of the community.

Secondly, the work parents and community members are asked to do must be meaningful. *Maryland’s Plan for Family, School, and Community Involvement* details the areas in which these groups should be involved and provides guidelines and examples that will be very helpful as our schools and divisions implement this initiative. One of our elementary schools, Orchard Grove Elementary, has already received the *National PTA Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification*; several other schools have announced they are organizing to qualify for this award also.

A Parent Involvement Implementation Team composed of parents and school system personnel has been formed and is working actively at the system level. The team has presented workshops on parent involvement at the FCPS Summer Institute and has worked

with individual school improvement teams to develop plans to meet the standards and include all subgroups. This group is working to expand its membership and increase efforts to reach all schools.

## GOAL 5

**“FCPS will advocate for adequate resources to achieve these goals and manage these resources in a publicly accountable and cost-effective manner.”**

### **Introduction**

This goal addresses efforts by FCPS to provide adequate classroom space for students, enough teachers and resources for schools and programs, and fiscal accountability.

The need for adequate classroom space is both a quantity and quality issue. Quantity relates to the need for enough classrooms to instruct students enrolled in the school. Quality relates to the environmental conditions of the classroom and other areas of the building where instruction takes place. Adequate school facilities are important to individual student success as well success of the system as a whole. Given Frederick County’s rapid enrollment growth in the last 15 years, providing adequate school facilities continues to be a major ongoing challenge. Targets have been set for Goal 5 to determine FCPS’ success in meeting this challenge.

Just as important as the need for adequate school facilities is the need for enough teachers and other staff to provide instruction and administrative support. Classroom teachers are at the center of FCPS efforts to provide a top-quality instructional program for students. They are supported in the classroom by school administrators, instructional assistants, reading specialists, curriculum development specialists, psychologists, pupil personnel workers, guidance counselors, special education instructors and aides, school secretaries and so on. Standards have been set to establish how many of these positions are needed across the system and at individual schools. If staffing is inadequate, the other four goals contained in the Master Plan are compromised.

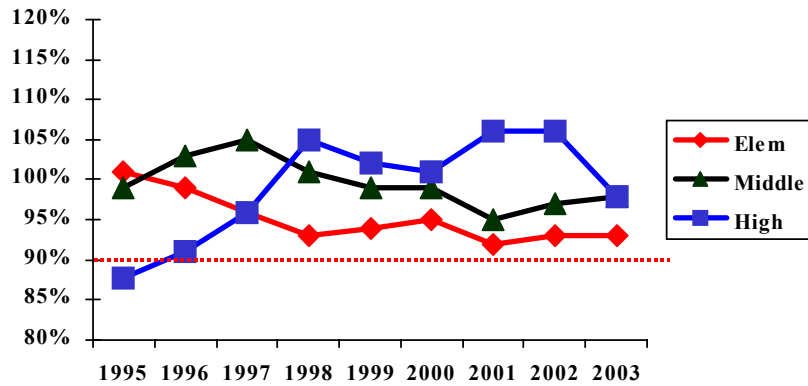
FCPS is a large public organization with a substantial budget. Staff recognizes that efficient management will cost-effectively direct available resources to classroom instruction. FCPS will measure success at meeting Goal 5 by independent fiscal and program audits and comparative measures with other school systems.

### **FCPS Evidence – Existing and Potential**

***Enrollment within 90% of capacity at each level*** FCPS made progress with this measure for the 2003-04 school year, operating 20 K-12 schools at or over 100% of enrollment capacity. This is down from the average of 22-23 schools operating at or over capacity during the last 5 years. The opening of Tuscarora High did much to reduce overcrowding at the high school level. At the elementary and middle school levels, the capacity remained almost the same as last year. However, with the opening of Tuscarora Elementary and Crestwood Middle next school year, the percentage of schools operating over capacity at both these

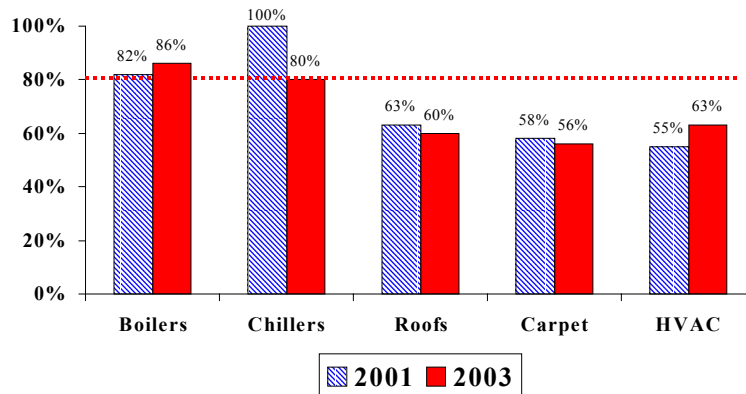
levels will improve. Long-range plans for school construction are outlined in the FCPS Educational Facilities Master Plan.

### Enrollment Within 90% Capacity At Each Level



**Percent of major building systems meeting industry standards for life expectancy** Major building systems include boilers, AC chillers, HVAC equipment (air handlers and other elements of the air distribution systems), flooring (carpet, tile and other finishes) and roofs. The FCPS Facilities Services Division maintains inventories on all these systems. The Master Plan sets as a target that 80% of schools will meet industry standards for major building systems. For the current year, only boilers and chillers meet the target.

### % of Major Building Systems Meeting Industry Age Standards



Note: Boilers and chillers are actual units, roofs, carpet and HVAC are schools

Our ability to move closer to the target will require more funding than has been provided in recent years. Specific project requests are annually updated in the FCPS Educational Facilities Master Plan.

***Customer satisfaction surveys*** Customer satisfaction surveys are important tools to determine how well staff is meeting the needs of “customers” within and outside of the FCPS organization. In the recent past such surveys have been specific to particular functions or programs. For example,

- The Maintenance Department has conducted customer satisfaction surveys to obtain feedback from principals on the quality of maintenance services provided.
- The Construction Department has asked for faculty’s and administrators’ opinions on the layout and design of new school buildings.
- The Food Service Department has surveyed high school students to determine their opinions and preferences about food products offered
- CASS has surveyed families that utilize their services as a way of evaluating program success.
- Technology Services asks teachers and administrators for feedback on the value of different hardware and software.
- A survey on custodial services is scheduled for the 2003-04 school year.

Other surveys will be conducted on an as-needed basis.

***Staffing standards fully funded*** FCPS uses different school staffing standards for different positions. For example, at the elementary level, classroom teachers are allocated to each school using a ratio of 1 teacher per 24.58 students. In a similar way, we have ratios for art, music and physical education teachers, special education teachers, assistant principals, secretaries, instructional assistants, media assistants and targeted intervention positions (reading, guidance, Renzulli, media and school support). For the current school year, at both the secondary and elementary school levels, staffing meets the standards at all schools.

FCPS has not established standards for all positions, particularly those that are non-instructional. Where no standards exist, positions must be approved based on need and anticipated funding. In the past this has resulted in deficits in the number of employees available to perform key functions in departments such as in Pupil Personnel, Maintenance and Finance. No decision has been made as to whether staffing guidelines should be established for these types of positions and what the standards should be.

***Curriculum audits*** A curriculum audit is a comprehensive evaluation of the instructional program being provided by FCPS in a given content area. The audit is intended to determine if the instructional program will allow students and teachers to achieve the academic outcomes desired. Major content areas audited on a regular cycle include math, social studies, language arts and science. Other content areas periodically audited include physical education/health, visual /performing arts, foreign language and career and technology.

A comprehensive math audit is under way, consistent with the cycle established for major content areas. Findings and recommendations will be presented in spring 2004. Completion of future audits is in part dependent on availability of funding to implement audit recommendations.

***Percent of library/media centers meeting state standards*** In 1992, the PreK-12 Library Media Program created a quantitative collection development process based on MSDE’s *Standards for School Library Media Programs in Maryland* recommended guidelines for the size of a basic collection. An annual report indicates the percent of schools “meeting” and “not meeting” state- recommended basic collection standards. Schools not meeting the standards have received additional funds from local initiatives and the School Library Media Enhancement Grant (1999-2003).

Our target is that 100% of library media centers will meet state standards. As the following chart shows, a small positive change is evident at the elementary level from 2001-02 to 2002-03. Because we continually “weed” our library media collections of outdated and worn books and other materials, progress toward the target will occur over time.

**Library Media Collection Standards  
Percentage of Schools Meeting MSDE Standards**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Elementary</b> (MSDE Standard 12,000+ Items)	<b>Middle</b> (MSDE Standard 15,000+ Items)	<b>High</b> (MSDE Standard 18,000+ Items)
2001	52%	20%	0%
2002	56%	18%	0%
2003	61%	18%	0%

***Financial audits in compliance with law, regulations and industry standards*** FCPS contracts with independent audit agencies to assist us in determining how effectively we utilize assets and funds allocated for school system operations. Such audits are fundamental to ensuring trust in the FCPS’s ability to administer public funds in compliance with approved accounting principles, standards and practices. Each year, an independent CPA firm conducts external audits of the BOE financial statements as required by law. Other audits are performed by the Inter-Agency Internal Audit Authority (IIAA) and by state agencies, including MSDE and the Maryland State Retirement System.

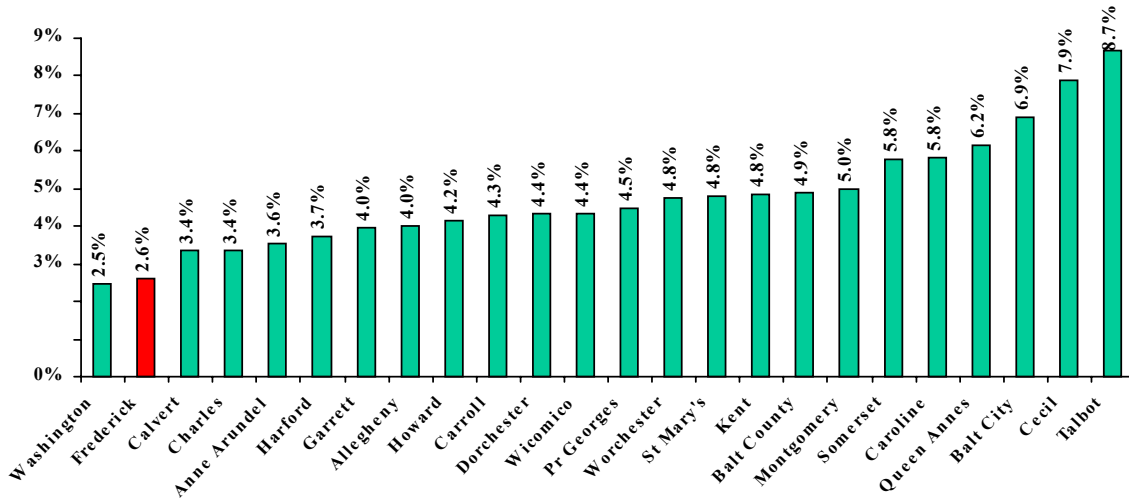
The purpose of the annual audit of the Board of Education’s Financial Statement is to determine if it fairly presents the Board of Education’s financial position for that fiscal year. The most recent external, independent audit resulted in a “clean, unqualified” opinion by the auditors that such statements did fairly present our financial position for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003. As part of the audit opinion, there were no material findings relating to applicable provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants.

Other periodic audits have focused on various FCPS programs, including audits by the IIAA on the FCPS School Construction Fund, the procurement card system, and the Self-Insurance fund (now under way). The State Public School Construction Program has also performed audits of the School Construction Fund. Audit recommendations have resulted in procedural changes that strengthen administrative, managerial and accounting controls.

**Administrative costs in the lowest third of the state** One way to measure administrative efficiency is to evaluate costs associated with this management function, i.e. accounting, budget, purchasing, human resources, warehouse, maintenance and operations, school construction, technology services, special education administration and the secondary and elementary curriculum offices.

Traditionally, FCPS has ranked in the bottom third of the state for administrative costs, consistent with targets established for this indicator. Since the state is no longer collecting this data, FCPS may wish to consider comparing the percentage of total staff employed in professional, nonsupport positions at the central office level as a measure of administrative efficiency. Data from the MSDE *Fact Book* for 2001-02 follows.

### Central Office Staff as Percentage of Total Employees



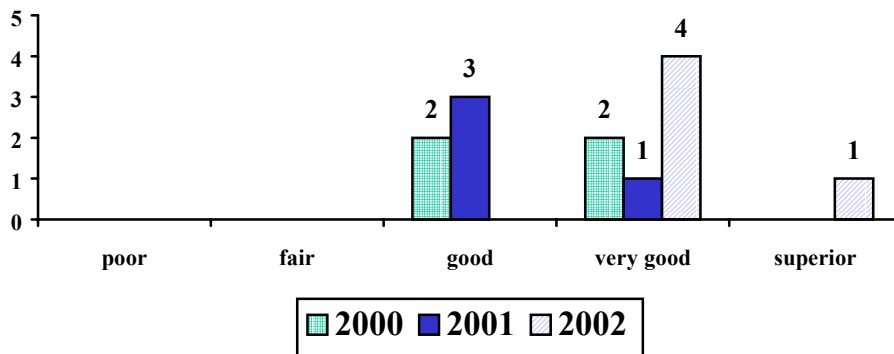
**Program performance audits demonstrate cost-effective support functions** Performance audits, generally conducted by outside consultants, evaluate program effectiveness and compare FCPS performance with other jurisdictions or to nationally recognized standards. Audit findings assist FCPS administrators in modifying current operations as needed.

FCPS has as yet developed no standardized plan for conducting program performance audits. Nor have we identified functions appropriate to audit in the future or earmarked funds to hire auditors. In recent years, only two FCPS programs have been the subject of performance audits. The Maintenance Department was audited in 2000 by Engineering Associates, Inc. using FCPS funds. An audit of the Construction Department of the Facilities Services Division was performed in 2003 by KPMG, Inc. using funds provided by the Board of County Commissioners. Both audits were generally supportive of management practices currently in place, and we have instituted some of the recommendations for improvements.

**State DGS facility inspections will result in ratings of “good” or better** Each year a team of experts from the State Department of General Services (DGS) visits schools across the state to evaluate them for maintenance and housekeeping practices against an extensive checklist of state standards. Ratings of poor, fair, good, very good or superior are given.

FCPS has met the target of achieving a “good” or better rating for all schools inspected annually. In their most recent series of inspections, DGS surveyed 124 schools across Maryland, including five in Frederick County. Of the five selected for survey locally, four were rated very good, and one was rated superior. (Across the state, only three schools surveyed achieved the superior rating.)

**Maryland Department of General Services  
Inspection Ratings of Selected Schools**



***Grants received*** Grants have proven a valuable funding source for FCPS, for functions as varied as landscaping, equipment purchases and specialized learning opportunities.

No specific goals have been established for future grant acquisition. Measures of progress could include both the number and the dollar value associated with grants. In the last three years, the level of grant funding received has grown from \$1.25 million in FY 2001 to \$2.0 million in FY 2003. This increase speaks positively of the efforts of FCPS staff to research and win available grants.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** — A gain that schools, school systems and states must make each year in the proportion of students achieving proficiency in reading and math. To make AYP in Maryland, schools and school systems must meet the annual measurable objective in these subjects for students in the aggregate and for each student subgroup, in graduation rate for high school or attendance in elementary and middle school for students in the aggregate, and meet the testing participation requirement of 95%.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** — A program of challenging college-level courses available to students in high school.

**Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO)** — State-established annual performance targets that assess the progress of student subgroups, schools, school districts and the state. This objective of this annual measurement is that 100% of students achieve proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics by the end of the school year in 2013-14.

**Attendance Rate** — The percentage of enrolled students present in school for at least half the average school day during the school year. The Maryland State Department of Education considers a 94% attendance rate to be satisfactory.

**Certificate of Merit** — Awarded in addition to the Maryland High School Diploma to students who meet additional specified graduation requirements and maintain at least a 3.00 cumulative grade point average on a 4.00 scale throughout the high school years.

**Community Agency School Services (CASS)** — An FCPS program that facilitates collaboration and cooperation among schools, private and public agencies, communities and families to provide support and access to needed services.

**Criterion-Referenced Evaluation System (CRES)** — FCPS' local testing program administered to students in grades 2-12, designed to measure student achievement of our essential curriculum.

**Dropout Rate** — The percentage of students in grades 9-12 who withdrew from school before graduation or before completing a Maryland-approved educational program. The state standard is 3%.

**Disaggregated Data** — Data reported by subcategory, for example grade, level, gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES).

**Early Childhood Education (ECE)** — A Board-adopted early identification and intervention initiative targeted to students in kindergarten through second grade.

**Enrollment** — The number of students enrolled as of September 30 in grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including nongraded special education students.

**Essential Curriculum** — Defines skills and competencies that all FCPS students are expected to achieve by high school graduation: effective communication, problem solving and critical thinking, social cooperation and self-discipline, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. FCPS' system for effective instruction defines how the essential curriculum will be developed and delivered.

**Free/Reduced-Price Meals (FARM)** — Category of students whose applications meet the United States Department of Agriculture's family size and income guidelines to qualify them for school lunch and/or breakfast at no or low cost.

**Feeder Area** — Refers to the high school and those elementary and middle schools whose students will ultimately attend (“feed into”) that high school. Provides FCPS a way to coordinate and improve delivery of instruction and other services such as bus transportation.

**Grade-Level Proficiency** — The level of academic performance sufficient for a student to succeed at the next level of school or next level of a course.

**Graduation Rate** — An estimated cohort percentage of students who received a Maryland high school diploma during the reported school year. It is calculated by dividing the number of high school graduates by the sum of the dropouts for grades 9-12, respectively, in consecutive years, plus the number of high school graduates.

**High School Assessments** — End-of-course tests produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, aimed at raising academic standards in all Maryland public high schools.

**International Baccalaureate (IB)** — A demanding and comprehensive two-year international curriculum for a pre-university diploma program, the IB has earned a reputation for rigorous assessment and helps students gain access to the world’s leading universities

**Individual Developmental English Activity IDEA Proficiency Test (IDEA IPT)** — A test of English language proficiency administered to English language learners upon their entry into the school system and annually during a testing window in the spring. The test measures a student's English language ability in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Schools use the results to make decisions as to each student's participation in English As a Second Language (ESL) programs.

**Interventions** — A series of research-based strategies designed to assist students with specific academic difficulties.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** — Students with a primary or home language other than English and limited or no age-appropriate ability to understand, speak, read or write English.

**Maryland School Assessments (MSA)** — State assessments that use both multiple-choice and short-answer questions, these tests were first administered in spring 2003 and included reading and math tests for grades 3, 5 and 8 and reading and geometry tests for high school. In 2004, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders will also take the tests. The state plans to add science tests for third, fifth and eighth graders in 2005.

**Maryland School Performance Program (MSP)** — Focused on offering an excellent education to all students, the MSP collects data annually and reports performance of school systems and individual schools against their own growth year to year to provide accountability on the state, school system and school levels. The analysis and interpretation of the data provide the basis for school improvement efforts and consequences on each level.

**No Child Left Behind Act** — This landmark legislation signed into law in January 2001 redefines the federal role in education and is designed to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. Its basic principles include greater accountability for schools, more

tests to determine student progress, expanded options for parents whose children are not making progress, and an emphasis on proven teaching methods. The law requires all 50 states to set high standards for achievement in reading and math and directs that every child in grades 3 through 8 be tested to ensure they are making progress.

**Renzulli** — An enrichment program available to FCPS elementary and middle school students.

**Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)** — A national college entrance examination designed to measure verbal and mathematical reasoning skills.

**School (or Site) Improvement Team (SIT)** — A group of employees, parents, business partners and/or other representatives of a school or division's constituency that is responsible for developing and facilitating accomplishment of a clear, measurable, attainable improvement plan for that school or site. Plan goals are linked to the FCPS vision, mission and strategic goals.

**Student Information System (SIS)** — A computerized student database containing a variety of data and information, including enrollment, attendance, academic grades and test scores.

**Title I** — A federal initiative to provide supplemental instructional services, with emphasis on reading and mathematics, to meet student needs in schools with a high concentration of low-income families.