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May 20, 2008

Mr. Daniel G. Storck, Chairman  
Fairfax County School Board  
8115 Gatehouse Road  
Falls Church, VA 22041

Dear Mr. Storck:

I am pleased to transmit the Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee's report (MSAOC) responding to your charge to help increase parent involvement, education and awareness in support of improving minority student achievement. In addition we have included an update of our recommendations in our 12<sup>th</sup> Report Card.

The Committee has monitored the impact of the 2009 budget on minority student achievement programs and the staff interpretation of goal 2, essential life skills. We believe the actions taken in these two instances have damaged any credibility you may have had in improving minority student achievement. The reasons for our beliefs are as follows:

- The Redesign Task Force's (RTF) recommendations upon which you have relied will eliminate most programs supporting minority student achievement. RTF's assessments ignore objective QPAS reports and are based on subjective and unsound analytical techniques. This same group's recommendations for not paying for AP, IB and SAT tests were later overturned.
- By placing QUEST and CPP's middle school components into the after school program, this will jeopardize the quality of both programs. Both had stringent academic acceptance policies to insure that students can benefit from the program. In contrast the after-school program's intent is to serve all students and prevent gang activities. Many of these students will not participate in CPP or QUEST because they lack interest or academic ability.
- The CPP's high school component has been cut from \$850,000 to \$300,000. This program will operate with only \$125,000. One must ask why some GT components as well were not placed in the middle school after school program to save money.

- The student behavioral problems that warranted Time-Out and Summit programs have not been eliminated. We want to know what are the transition plans to ensure that minority suspensions and expulsions will not increase as a result of eliminating these programs.
- The staff report for Essential Life Skill (ELS), Student Achievement Goal 2 has failed to consider the community's desire to integrate selected ELS activities into the school program to help students cope with the real world.
- We objected using teacher ratings on report cards as a valid measure to assess students' morals and character. We think that staff must consider differences in language, culture and disability. Teacher expectation in rating student behavior was not addressed.
- MSAOC recommends that FCPS secure an outside consultant to assist with ELS implementation without assessment, designate HRAC, ASDC, and MSAOC to assist with developing oversight strategy, identify methods to assess teacher expectation, and delay ELS implementation until these and other recommendations can be implemented.

The report was approved by a consensus vote of the committee's members (see attached list).

Sincerely,

Ralph Cooper, Jr.  
Chair

Attachment

## MSAOC MEMBER MONTHLY ROSTER AND COMMUNITY FORUMS 2007-2008

		Retreat	10 Oct	7 Nov	1 Dec*	12 Dec	9 Jan	9 Feb*	13 Feb	12 Mar	27 Mar*	9 Apr	14 May	18 Jun
Last Name	First Name	14 Aug			Reston			Sacra		No Mtg	ANC			
Aldredge	Sharon	/	/	/	/	/	X		X			X		
Alexander	Maquita	/	/	X			X		X					
Barr	Kelly	/	/	X			X	X				X		
Brook	Michael	/	/	X										
Bussey	Larry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Campbell	Michael													
Chong	Baek	/	/	X	X		X						X	
Cooper	Ralph	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X		
Croghan	Gregory		X	X										
De Jesus	Angela	/	/	X	X		X						X	
Dickerson	Lavinia	X	X		X	X		X	X			X	X	
Eck	Maria													
Howard	Ted	X	X				X	X	X			X	X	
Howlette	Mary Frances	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	
Jenkins	Frank													
Johnson	John	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	
Johnson	Rick		X	X			X							
Lim	Hyunsik		X	X		X	X					X		
Lopez	Arthur				X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
Madry-Taylor	Jacqueline	/	/	/	/	/			X		X		X	
Moorer	Tyrone	X										resign		
Murphy	Patrick (Pat)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Quinn	John													
Rucker	Marc													
Samaniego	Nelly	X	X	X	X		X		X		X			
Scarboro	Burnette	X											X	
Tyson	Douglas											X		
Washington	Sylvia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Wical	Ernestine	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				X	
Yarborough	Terrance			X			X	X						
Young	Milton		X	X	X		X				X	X	X	
* = Community Forum														
/ = Not yet a Member														

**Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee (MSAOC)  
2007-2008  
Vote Results of MSAOC Annual Report**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Attendance Required</b>	<b>Agreed with Report</b>	<b>Disagreed with Report</b>
<b>Aldredge, Sharon</b>		X	
<b>Alexander, Maquita</b>		X	
<b>Barr, Kelly</b>		X	
<b>Brook, Michael</b>	√		
<b>Bussey, Larry</b>		X	
<b>Campbell, Michael</b>	√		
<b>Chong, Baek</b>		X	
<b>Cooper, Ralph</b>		X	
<b>Croghan, Gregory</b>	√		
<b>De Jesus, Angela</b>		X	
<b>Dickerson, Lavinia</b>		X	
<b>Eck, Maria</b>	√		
<b>Howard, Ted</b>		X	
<b>Howlette, Mary Frances</b>		X	
<b>Jenkins, Frank</b>	√		
<b>Johnson, John</b>		X	
<b>Johnson, Rick</b>	√		
<b>Lim, Hyunsik</b>		X	
<b>Lopez, Arthur</b>		X	
<b>Madry-Taylor, Jacqueline</b>		X	
<b>Moorer, Tyrone</b>	√		
<b>Murphy, Pat</b>		X	
<b>Samaniego, Nelly</b>		X	
<b>Scarboro, Burnette</b>	√		
<b>Tyson, Douglas</b>	√		
<b>Washington, Sylvia</b>		X	
<b>Wical, Ernestine</b>		X	
<b>Yarborough, Terrence</b>	√		
<b>Young, Milton</b>		X	

√ Did not attend 50% or more of the meetings

# REPORT OF THE MINORITY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IN RESPONSE TO THE SCHOOL BOARD'S CHARGE FOR 2007-'08 SCHOOL YEAR

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee (MSAOC) was charged with determining how to best establish a partnership between minority families and schools so that parents become informed advocates for their children. In response to the charge, the Committee sponsored three community forums across the County with the participation of parents and representatives from community organizations. The forums' purpose was to clarify what families and community stakeholders understand and can bring to this partnership with schools, while also determining the challenges that must be overcome to increase parent involvement in their children's education.

## ISSUES TO OVERCOME

Organizations and parents who participated in the discussion groups listed many issues that inhibit their ability to advocate effectively for their children. Ideas for addressing these challenges include:

- **Breaking through economic barriers.** Parents with limited income, access to transportation, and access to technology in the home (such as cell phones or computers) can sometimes be more difficult for a school to reach. While schools can't change the economic situation of parents, they can support measures to engage low-income families by supporting Parent Liaisons and reaching out to families at neighborhood venues where they spend time.
- **Accommodating parent schedules.** Many parents work at night or have schedules that make it very difficult to meet during regular school hours. More options for meeting times (including weekends) could make it easier for parents to participate.
- **Supporting diversity training and representation.** Cultural differences can be at the root of confusion and missed opportunities for stronger partnerships between schools and parents. Cultural training for teachers, guidance counselors, and Parent Liaisons may address some of these gaps. Separately, finding a "champion" within each community to help recruit, host, and/or interpret at events can help bridge cultural barriers.
- **Informing and motivating parents.** Parents "don't know what they don't know." Improving conditions requires persistent parent advocacy, but many parents do not have adequate experience with the school system, do not feel comfortable coming forward, or are unsure if they will be welcomed. Projecting and communicating an open school climate that encourages parent involvement can

make a big difference. Continued promotion of the *Advocacy Handbook for Parents*, advocacy training for parents, and multiple, repeated events on educational opportunities (e.g., gifted and talented programs, student financial aid) and other topics can also help.

- **Sharing the burden.** No single part of the FCPS school-community can improve the situation alone. Neither teachers nor parent liaisons, administrators or the School Board can be solely responsible for communicating with parents. Solutions to improve minority student achievement should be integrated and holistic, with actions that are manageable for each member of the school system to take.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC ACTION**

To increase the effectiveness of efforts already underway—such as promoting the *Advocacy Handbook for Parents* or maximizing the impact of the new “Building the Future” initiative—MSAOC has identified a number of specific actions that the School Board can take to advance our goals:

- Ensure that the FCPS’s student goals are widely discussed and disseminated throughout the community in clear and easy format and can be accessed from the FCPS website in multiple languages.
- Support the recruitment and training of Parent Liaisons who can communicate with the minority parent community and extend the hours to full-time.
- Promote the *Advocacy Handbook for Parents* (and translate the Handbook into additional languages, including Chinese and Arabic).
- Encourage schools to offer meetings at a variety of times for parents (including weekends), and use as many communications means as possible to reach parents (e.g., “Keep in Touch,” email, FCPS 24/7, biweekly email reports, automated phone calls, phone trees, Parent Liaison networks).
- Support the development of free educational seminars and workshops for parents in multiple languages to help them become advocates for their children.
- Support the expansion of diversity training for school guidance counselors, teachers, administrators, and others in the school system.
- Continue to form partnerships with community centers, faith-based organizations, language-specific groups, and individuals and groups who already interact with hard-to-reach families. Participate in parent meetings or events such as those sponsored by MSAOC, CMSAC and *Nadar Por Vida*.

- Use visual, easy-to-understand formats for printed communication with parents in multiple languages.
- Support an open climate in schools so that parents feel more welcome and empowered to take ownership of their children's education. Help school administrators and teachers explain to parents why the School Board is important to their children.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For more than thirteen years, MSAOC has assumed a leadership role to advocate for improving minority student achievement. In its annual *Report Card* on minority student achievement, the Committee provides the School Board with information and recommendations on specific issues and areas of special concern where the minority community believes FCPS is falling short in providing *all* children with an equal educational opportunity.

In lieu of a formal *Report Card*, the Committee submits this report responding to the School Board's "charge" to increase parent involvement in schools and successful advocacy for their children and attaches an update to the School Board's response to the 12<sup>th</sup> Report Card.

The School Board adopted and approved the following charge to MSAOC:

*Determine how to best establish a partnership between minority families and schools so that parents become informed advocates for their children to be successful in school. In addition, the charge was expanded to address the following questions:*

- *What are the limits of what parents believe are their roles and responsibilities?*
- *What specific roles should parents be tasked with?*
- *What are the best methods of establishing trust, rapport and meaningful communication with minority parents?*
- *How can parents impact the new School Board's academic goals and student achievement?*
- *What are the challenges and opportunities in involving minority parents?*

## **MSAOC PARENT MEETINGS**

To address the School Board charge and to advance MSAOC's mission to increase parent involvement and outreach, the Committee convened three meetings at various locations throughout the County to hear from parents and share information about ways to improve parent involvement, communicate with the schools and how MSAOC can better address minority student needs.

The meetings were held at the following locations:

- Southgate Community Center, Reston, VA on December 1, 2007
- Sacramento Neighborhood Community Center, Alexandria, VA on February 9, 2008
- Annandale Neighborhood Center, Annandale, VA on March 27, 2008



Notwithstanding the varying numbers and diversity of attendees at each of the three events, participants provided responses to the following questions:

***What are the limits of what parents believe are their roles and responsibilities?***

- Parents' role is limited by economics, time, and access to public/private transportation (walkers?), can't take off from work; limited by lack of respect, language and culture. As to Information - *don't know what I don't know!*
- Parents need training on how to advocate and an understanding of the limits of advocacy organizations that can or cannot represent parents.
- Understanding of how schools operate and educational jargon. Need more varied times to interact with school staff because parents can't take off from work. Schools are not parent-friendly; often teachers are not interested in listening to parents. Not enough information from schools about programs and how they work, i.e. how GT evaluates children (52 percent of G/T kids are parent-referrals and GT centers are flooded with more than the top 5%. 10% of the student population is classified as GT) and information about the appeal process.
- There are no limits, but parents must be persistent.

***What specific roles should parents be tasked with?***

- Parents need skill training on the ways in which they can advocate for their children.

***What are the best methods of establishing trust, rapport and meaningful communication with minority parents?***

- Needs proactive strategies to reach out to parents to inform them and School Board should have small sessions and outreach like this to dialogue with parents rather than parents coming to school because they are intimidated.
- Need to empower parents so they feel ownership in this process and improve school climate so parents feel more welcomed at school. When you ask questions and are persistent, you are seen as loud and hostile, follow up from principals and teachers when they promise. Staff should answer my questions and "don't pass me around" to another person or office, consistent and informal communication sessions, like principal's coffee sessions. Provide information not just about student behavior but about their academic issues.
- Be approachable and provide suggestions, provide more flexibility for parent/teacher conferences. Have frequent and regular communication.
- Go to where parents are located. School Board members should participate in parent organization meetings or events like MSAOC, CMSAC, "Show up and Stay" and give parents more than 2 minutes to speak

- Using seminars, workshops and dissemination of information methods (bilingual) to involve parents and Advocacy Handbook for Parents. Implementing community-based suicide and depression prevention, personal, leadership development and community service programs.
- Distribute Information in home languages.

***How can parents impact the new School Board's academic goals and student achievement?***

- They need to do more presentations at schools on the goals – particularly, to explain the dual language requirement and parent sign-off on the individual education plan.
- They need greater effort to reach out to parents to inform them about the goals.
- Have parents sign to acknowledge receipt and understanding of student goal information - similar to SRR process.
- They need to explain why the school board is important for my child.
- Need to prepare a one page flyer of the student goals and give to parents.
- Place student goals information on FCPS web site so all can see.

***What are the challenges and opportunities in involving minority parents?***

**Challenges**

- Once issues are identified, create strategies to address how community organizations can provide support.
- We have one of the best public school systems, yet it needs to get to the root cause of why minority students are not reaping benefits and figure out who needs help and what can we do about it.
- Roots of American Public School System did not include needs of children of color—so it is important to focus on personal & leadership development. There is a national epidemic of black males not being challenged in school. Leadership needs to be honest about this fact and say, “*No more in FCPS*”. Need for more recognition of children who are not traditionally recognized.
- Communication with parents must be a priority. Every community does not communicate effectively the same way and some communities are less participatory because of this. Many families do not have computers. FCPS needs to realize there are multiple points of contacts for a student's issues. Fear about giving information to schools. Language barriers – need for multiple languages,

including outreach person for parents/teachers, families/community. Also use community and language schools as method to contact parents. Need for mutual cultural understanding. Schools need to know more about parent resources available and how to write parent-friendly information.

- Hearing about what organizations have accomplished helps MSAOC because getting information out to minority parents is a challenge. Need to determine commitment of community organizations to partner with MSAOC. Advocacy Handbook in Chinese. Obtaining more detailed information about MSAOC. Getting more information about what MSAOC does so that my organization can figure out how to contribute. One of the benefits of MSAOC is direct link to School Board. How much is School Board listening vs. giving MSAOC a charter?

## **Opportunities**

- Use different type of communication methods -- Personal face-to-face contact and Saturday's works best, stronger encouragement for teachers to use "24-7," bi-weekly reports/grade sheets via email and telephone calls about activities by principals. Provide more information in home languages.
- Use business advisory council to give out information, keep information parent-friendly and using buddy system with other parents with students of same age/grade.
- Create positive school climate and consistency within school with communication methods.
- Provide English language classes for parents and help parent and teachers understand and use "24-7."
- Use multiple ways to share information: Email, Blackboard, and Regional parent meeting in spring – get information to parents on Websites of other organizations, place flyers in public libraries and link with other FCPS Advisory committees.
- Provide more information on-line about learning disabilities, GT policies, TJHSST's diversity committee and admissions policies, Parent Compacts and tips on how to create positive school climate.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **ACCOMMODATING PARENTS' SCHEDULE**

Participants repeatedly focused on what they perceive to be the absence of a genuine partnership between their particular school and minority parents in terms of having the shared objective of maximizing parent involvement and creating equal educational opportunity for all children. Participants stated that they have no sense of a "we are all in this together to do well by our children" mindset. On the contrary, minority parents

participating in our meetings commonly related that they are made to feel like outsiders, or even adversaries, when they venture into schools in search of general information or consultation on a problem or issue involving their child.

This sense of alienation extends beyond the immediacy of the participant's particular school. Many of our participants could not name their School Board representative nor have an understanding of the functions that he/she performs. We repeatedly heard that the School Board needs to be more visible within the various communities through outreach efforts, conduct similar meetings to the MSAOC community forums, and that School Board members need to do a great deal more than they do currently (at least as perceived by our respondents) to demonstrate in concrete and consistent ways its commitment to minority student achievement in FCPS.

They said that administrators and teachers need to consciously and pro-actively address the "school climate" issues that make minority parents feel unwelcome and that project an "us vs. them" mindset in interpersonal interactions. Some also said that schools need to demonstrate greater sensitivity to the specific characteristics of certain minority populations, such as language and cultural barriers and socio-economic considerations that negatively effect minority parents' capacity to help their children succeed. Examples include how to use parent/teacher conferences more effectively particularly when there is a language barrier that may effectively deprive the parent of important information even the most caring, well-intentioned teacher seeks to provide. "Back to School Night," the timing of which fails to account for reduced off-hour public transportation upon parents who depend on public transportation or who work multiple jobs or have "nightshift" employment.

## **BARRIER ISSUES**

While many of the scheduling concerns addressed in the preceding section also were provided by participants in identifying factors that constrain their effective participation, other serious "limitations" were also noted. There is a fairly pervasive sense among the participants that racial and cultural factors have limited their capacity to be effective advocates for their children.

It was frequently observed that while mainstream parents who aggressively pursue a positive outcome for their child are characterized as "committed" and "persistent." Yet a minority parent engaged in essentially the same conduct is more often considered "loud," "hostile" or "threatening." A strong and shared perception exists within the minority community that mainstream parents are rewarded for "gaming the system" whereas minority parents generally lack the information to even know how to attempt to make the system work for their children.

Minority parents feel ill-informed to effectively advocate for their children especially the whole process of characterizing children as "gifted and talented" ("G/T") and transferring children from their community-based schools to G/T centers, as well as the Thomas Jefferson admissions process, were cited as examples of situations where minority parents feel ill-informed and "out of the loop" to effectively advocate for their children.

## **INFORMATION GAP AND MOTIVATING PARENTS**

Participants expressed particular concerns about their lack of adequate information about the specifics of new Student Academic Achievement Goals recently adopted by the School Board as an element of the Strategic Governance process. Minority parents urged that the School Board have more formal and informal presentations where parents can attend to hear about the goals—particularly about the dual language proposal, parent sign off on their student’s academic plan and about goal 2—life skills.

## **PARTNERSHIP AND USING COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

A recurring theme in all three meetings concerned the extent to which parent organizations -- churches, advocacy groups, social organizations (Sororities and fraternities) -- constitute natural intermediary between the school and minority parents and could be used to increase parent involvement. These organizations are willing to partner with FCPS, the School Board, MSAOC or individual schools to empower minority parents to be more effective advocates and partners through seminars, workshops or other kinds of outreach programs designed to better inform minority parents (in multilingual format) about the educational process in general, the G/T testing and admissions process and test-preparation strategies for TJHSST to empower minority parents to be more effective partners and advocates for their children.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The feedback provided by parents and community representatives attending the three meetings echo many of the same issues, concerns and problems highlighted to the School Board by MSAOC in its past *Report Cards*. Meaningful parent involvement in the educational process and their advocacy on behalf of their students are integral elements of improving minority student achievement and closing the achievement gap.

Parents said they generally feel that they lack the information and other tools needed to meaningfully assist their children in navigating the FCPS system. They also said they perceive little commitment on the part of FCPS, the School Board, or the administrators to remedying this deficiency. As a result, many minority parents appear to conclude that their efforts are not worth the time and trouble involved. Other parents who attempt to be proactive encounter a school climate in which they often feel unwelcome, disrespected and/or disregarded.

The cynicism resulting from these perceptions and experiences is hardly diminished when it appears that FCPS programs like College Partnership, QUEST and Summit that have yielded demonstrably positive results are almost invariably among those first targeted for budget cuts, despite their marginal cost to FCPS’ overall operating expenses. For these reasons, the School Board’s charge to MSAOC to develop strategies for increasing and enhancing minority parent involvement is not easily met. MSAOC looks forward to the opportunity to discuss the foregoing findings and conclusions and to engage the School Board in a positive dialogue regarding steps that can be taken to address these recommendations.

## ATTACHMENT

### UPDATE ON 12<sup>TH</sup> REPORT CARD RECOMMENDATIONS

MSAOC presented its 12<sup>th</sup> Report Card on minority student achievement to the School Board on June 1, 2006. In that report the Committee offered eight recommendations to improve minority student achievement. The following is a summary of the status of the recommendations:

- **Standard of Learning:** Black students have made modest progress but Hispanic students have fallen further behind.
- **Early Childhood Intervention Programs:** FECEP/Head Start program's increases in enrollment have not kept pace with the growth of poor children in the County.
- **High School Graduation and Dropouts:** A study of its low graduation and high dropout rates for Hispanic and Black students has not been undertaken but there has been a significant reduction in Hispanic and Black dropouts between 2004-05 and 2006-07.
- **Gifted and Talented Programs:** Hispanic enrollment in school-based more than doubled and Young Scholars program has been expanded to 68 schools in FY 2008 serving 4225 students—up from 4197 last year.
- **TJHHST:** Fewer Black and Hispanic students applied to TJHSST in 2007-08 than four years earlier and fewer were admitted—down from 31 to 19.
- **Academies:** Although enrollment in Academies program has not been significantly expanded, schedules between the sending school and Academy classes have been aligned to eliminate loss of instructional time.
- **AP/IB:** The proportion of Black and Hispanic 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in AP classes has increased but their scoring 3 or better on AP tests has not changed.
- **Parent Involvement:** Parent outreach sessions have been held throughout the County to garner parent input and the Advocacy Handbook has been widely used and requested.

The Committee has decided in its presentation to the School Board on June 4, 2008 to provide an updated on its previous recommendations. This update will compare actual against target indications, whether target was met and provide observations and recommendations for next steps.

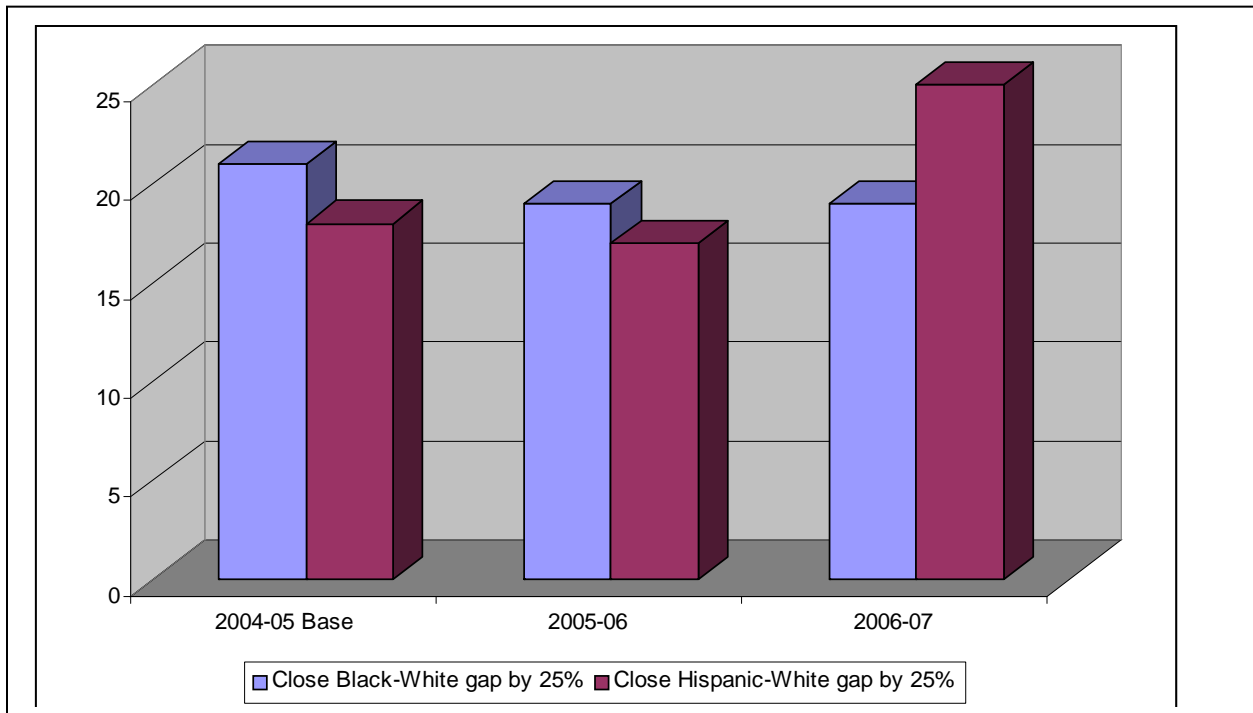
## A. Standards of Learning

**Recommendation:** Tailor strategies to unique needs of the subgroups. Close Black-White and Hispanic-White gap by 25 percent and increase English pass rate by 5 percentage points annually.

**Discussion:** A 25 percent decrease would bring the achievement gap to 15 points for Black and 13 for Hispanic students. Between the base year and 2006-07 the gap closed to 19 points (9.5%) for Black students but increased to 25 points (38.8%) for their Hispanic classmates. In 2006-07 there was a significant increase in the number of LEP students required to take SOL tests. The SOL pass rate increased by 6 percent for Black students—exceeding MSAOC’s recommendation but decreased by 6.7 percent for Hispanic students.

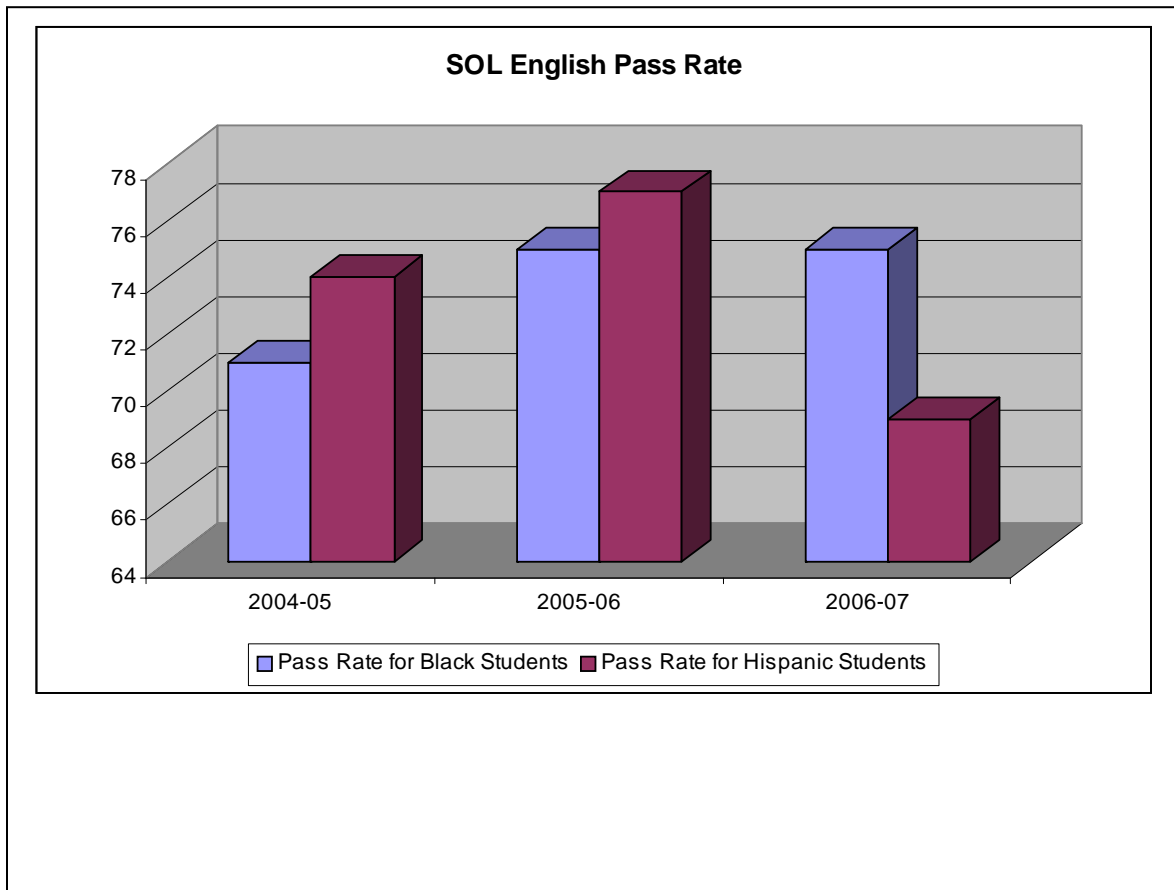
Target	Base 2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	% change
Close Black/White gap by 25 %	21 points	19 points	19 points	-9.5

Target	Base 2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	% change
Close Hispanic/White gap by 25 %	18 points	17 points	25	+38.8



Target	Base 2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	% change
Increase English pass rate for Blacks	71 percent	75 percent	75 percent	+6.0

Target	Base 2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	% change
Increase English pass rate for Hispanics	74 percent	77 percent	69 percent	-6.7





## B. Early Intervention Program

**Recommendations:** Establish funding priorities to allow all eligible children to participate and double enrollment to 2200 children. Partner with Fairfax County Office for Children and Fairfax Futures to promote training for and certification of all day care providers. Assist parents identify quality preschool and childcare programs.

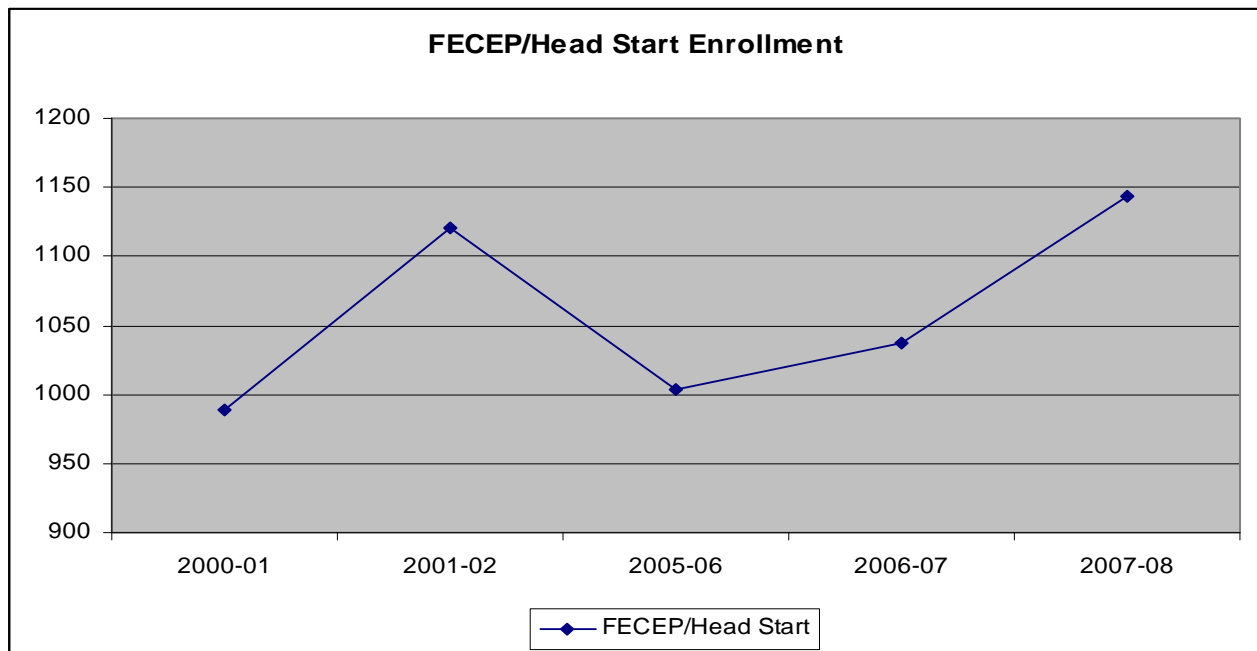
Target	2000-01	2001-02	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
FECEP/Head Start *	1001	1120	1004	1037	1144

\* Membership as of March each year

**Discussion:** Between 2000-01 and 2006-07 FECEP/Head Start membership increased by only 4.8 percent while the number of poor children under five years old grew by 50.3 percent.<sup>1</sup> In addition there is a waiting list of 500 children.

FCPS has participated in conferences with Fairfax Futures and the Office for Children. The MSAOC, through our Advocacy Handbook orientation sessions with parents has been promoting the importance of quality childcare and preschool programs, .but this has been with a relatively small group of parents.

The pilot program to train childcare providers has been expanded to four additional school but we have yet to meet the number of poor and limited English speaking children who could benefit from the program.



<sup>1</sup> US Bureau of Census, American Community Survey, 2000 and 2006

## C. GT Program

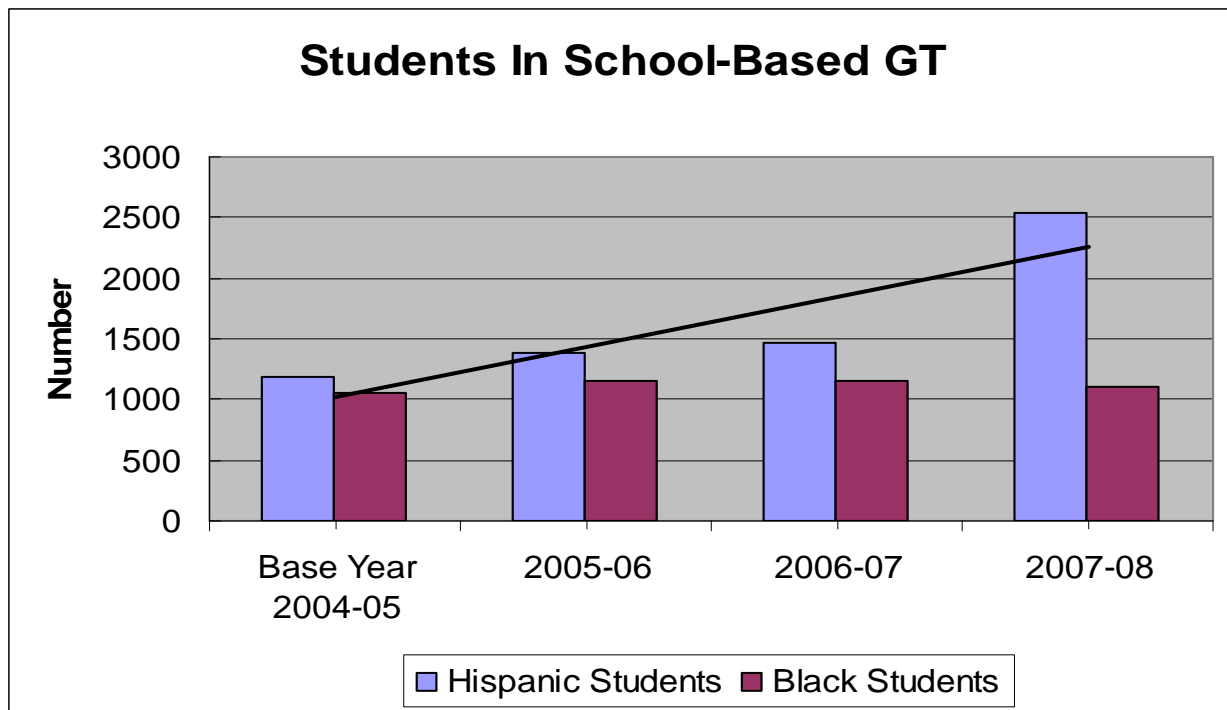
**Recommendations:** Double the enrollment of Hispanic students in school-based GT. Expand the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI) to additional schools. Increase the number of Black and Hispanic children screened for G/T.

**Discussion:** Hispanic student enrollment in school-based more than doubled between 2004-05 and 2007-08. The Young Scholars program has been expanded to 68 schools in FY 2008 and will serve 4225 students—up from 4197 last year.

### Students in School-Based GT. 2004-05 to 2007-08 Levels 2 and 3\*

	Base Year 2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	% Change
Hispanic Students	1188 (7.4)	1379 (8.9)	146 (9.9)	2532 (18.0)	113%
Black Students	1049 (6.5)	1161 (7.5)	1151 (7.8)	1106 (7.8)	5%
Total GT Membership	15925	15466	14705	14049	-11.7%

\*GT Levels 2 and 3 based on November/December membership each year.



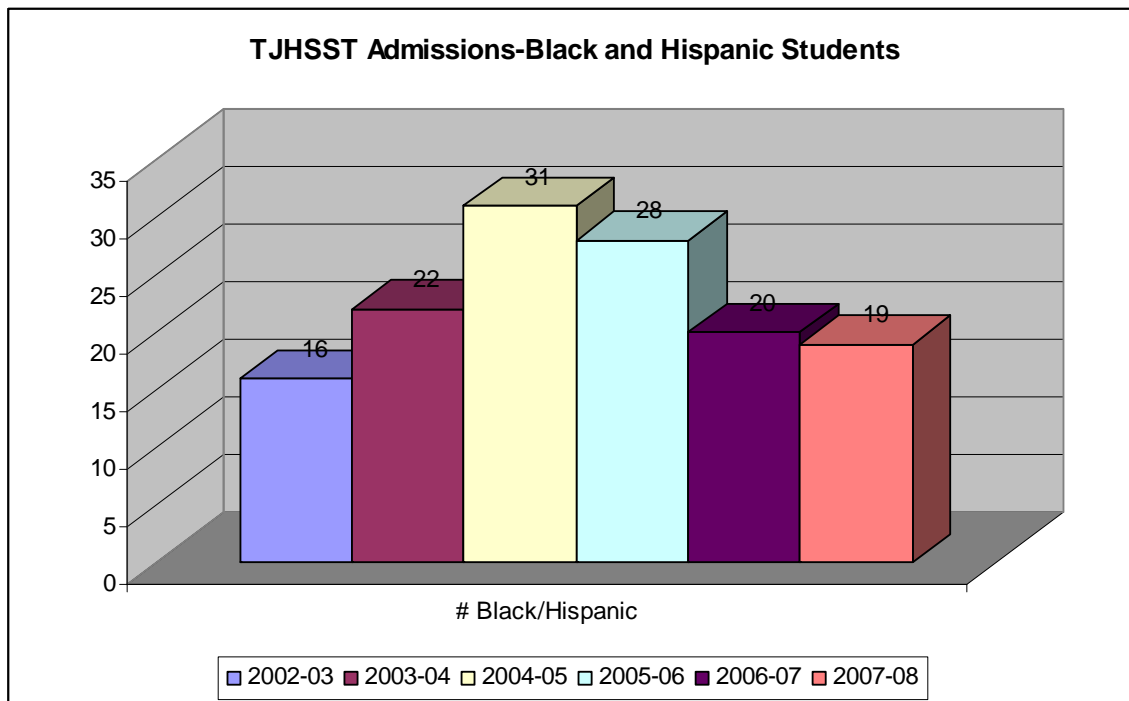
## D. TJHSST

**Recommendations:** Expand outreach to elementary school Black and Hispanic students and parents to consider TJHSST. Encourage more Black and Hispanic students to apply and take Algebra 1 by 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Target	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Change
# Black/Hispanic	31	28	20	19	-38.7%
Applicants	403	331	323	288	-28.5%
Admission/applicants	7.6	8.4	6.1	6.5	

**Discussion:** The Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) recommendations for changing the admission policies and procedures for Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology went into effect in 2004-05. In 2004-5 there were 403 Black and Hispanic applicants and 31 were admitted—7.6 admission rate. By 2007-08 Black and Hispanic applicants had dropped to 288—a 28.5 percent decrease and 6.5 admission rate. The changes in policies and procedures have little to no effect on the number of Black and Hispanic students admitted to TJHSST.

The School Board had postponed their review of BRC recommendations in 2007 but should take the matter up in June 2008. Staff is considering changes to the admission test and procedures for the Class of 2013.



## E. Dropouts

**Recommendations:** Assess the low graduation and high dropout rates for Hispanic students. Develop dropout prevention program for at-risk 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. Expand and support adult high school completion programs. Expand the High School (HS) Academies program.

Target Indicator	Base 2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Hispanic	9.3	5.0	5.0
Black	3.8	2.8	2.7

**Discussion:** FCPS has not undertaken a study of its low graduation and high dropout rates for Hispanic and Black students. Many schools are implementing their own school-based programs to identify ninth graders who might be at risk of dropping out.

There has been a significant reduction in Hispanic and Black dropouts between 2004-05 and 2006-07. There were 1050 Hispanic students dropped out of school in 2004-05 representing a 129 percent increase since 2001-02 school-year. In 2005-06 the upward trend in dropouts was reversed with number of Hispanic students falling to 583 and bringing the number of Black students down to 233.

The Alternative high school program served 1,080 students in 2007 and will serve 1027 in 2008 and therefore has not been expanded. The Academies enrollment (as noted below) has not significantly been expanded. The Summit program that served 168 at risk elementary school children who have not been successful at their base school because of behavioral problems has been eliminated in the FY 2009 budget.

## F. HS Academies

**Recommendations:** Expand program and align sending school and Academy class schedules. Counsel early and expand outreach to minority parents.

**Discussion:** Although the enrollment in the Academies program has not been significantly expanded between 2004-05 and 2006-07, the schedules between the sending school and Academy classes have been aligned to eliminate loss of instructional time. We have not seen any evidence about special outreach to minority students and parents.

### Academies Enrollment and Percent Black and Hispanic

Target Indicator	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Total Enrollment	3319	3296	3333
Percent Black	11.2	12.1	11.8
Percent Hispanic	13.8	14.4	15.9

## G. Advanced Placement/ International Baccalaureate

**Recommendations:** Continue the AP/IB summer institutes but collect data by subgroups. Support program to increase scores 3 and over and target Black and Hispanic students and their parents to inform them of the benefits of AP and IB programs.

**Discussion:** The Summer AP/IB Institutes.... The proportion of Black and Hispanic 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in AP classes has increased by 7.5 and 12.1 percentage points respectively between 2004-05 and 2006-07. The percentage of Black and Hispanic students scoring 3 or better on AP tests has not changed.

### Advanced Placement—Participation Rate for Black and Hispanic Students

Target Indicator	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Black Participation	15.5	18.2	23.0
Hispanic Participation	17.1	19.5	29.2

### Advanced Placement—Scores 3+ for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Graders

Target Indicator	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Black students	45	46	44
Hispanic students	60	60	61

### IB—Percent of Black and Hispanic Students Participating in IB

Target Indicator	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Black Participation	26.5	25.1	NA
Hispanic Participation	26.7	28.1	NA

### IB—Percent of Tests Scoring 4 or Better for Black and Hispanic Students

Target	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Black students	65.6	70.1	NA
Hispanic students	85.2	75.5	NA

## H. Parent Involvement

**Recommendations:** Implement the ESOL Summit in 2006-07. Support funding of the *Advocacy Handbook for Parents*. Implement Parent Compacts in all Title I schools.

**Discussion:** MSAOC has held a series of meetings throughout the County to carry out the School Board charge and to solicit comments and ideas from parents. Listed below are the dates, locations and number of attendees at each session.

### Community Forums

Date	Place	Location	Approximate # Of Attendees
12-1-07	Southgate Community Center	Reston, VA	45
2-9-08	Sacramento Neighborhood Community Center	Alexandria, VA	20
3-27-08	Annandale Neighborhood Center	Annandale	30

Three regional meetings were held during school year 2006-07 involving diverse parent groups. This was a collaborative effort between Instructional Services, Special Services and the Department of Accountability. . In addition the Office of Community.... held three community forums for parents as well where copies of the *Advocacy Handbook for Parents* were displayed along with posters as part of the outreach campaign.

The *Advocacy Handbook for Parents* was first published in May 2007 with the financial support of the School Board and since that time MSAOC members have been conducting orientations sessions, in response to requests, at schools, community centers and faith organizations. In addition to English, the Handbook is published in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese and is listed on MSAOC webpage. In order for a parent to receive a Handbook they must attend an orientation session. These sessions have been sponsored by PTAs, faith and community organizations and schools. Parent Liaisons have been trained to conduct orientation sessions at their schools as well. Listed below is a summary of the number of Handbooks distributed at orientation sessions.

### Advocacy Handbook for Parents and Posters

Language Copies Printed	English (5,000)	Spanish (2,000)	Korean (500)	Vietnamese (500)	Posters (300+)
Requests and orientation sessions	3,784	1,608	353	281	529

MSAOC believes that a basic foundation of a welcoming school climate is the school's *family involvement policy*. This policy is a written statement that establishes a school's commitment to partner with parents to become involved in the school at whatever level they are able to participate. Although this policy is for all Title 1 school parents, it is particularly important for minority parents in all FCPS. It emphasizes how a school accommodates parents work schedules when creating parent-involvement activities and also provides opportunities for parents to voice their comments in their home language, if needed.

All Title I schools are required to develop a family-school learning compact, not unlike *Student Responsibilities and Rights*. Such a compact defines the goals, expectations, and responsibilities of schools and families in educating children and parents would have to acknowledge and sign.

In March 2008 parent compacts have been implemented in all but two title 1 schools and none in non title 1 schools. While conducting handbook orientations at a few title 1 schools we have inquired from PTA officers whether they were familiar with the federal requirement or aware of implementation at their school. Few if any parents were familiar with the family involvement policy or the family-school learning compact. Although our efforts were not a formal or scientific survey, we did conclude that FCPS must redouble its efforts to inform title 1 parents of this requirement.