

High School Performance Report Card

Overview

The Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) system is ranked among the top public school systems in the country. Within the county, there has been considerable debate over school quality and school performance.

FairfaxCAPS has developed a grading system that will allow policy makers and members of the community to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of public schools within Fairfax County.

Methodology

The “report card” for each school is based on the school’s performance on Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. The SOL pass rates for tests in each of the four core subject areas—math, science, English, and social studies—are averaged. The resulting average is translated into a letter grade based on the FCPS grading scale.

In addition to the letter grade for the four core subject areas, schools are given a grade point average (GPA) based on the average of 11 individual SOL tests using a four point grading scale (A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0, F=0.0).

Schools are ranked based on the GPA for each school. Ties are broken using the average of actual SOL test scores.

School Rankings

There are 21 high schools and 4 secondary schools in Fairfax County. Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (Jefferson) achieved the top "report card" ranking. Jefferson is one of the 18 Governor's

Schools located in the state of Virginia and the only such school in Fairfax County. Admission to Jefferson is based on prior academic achievement and test results.

Among the remaining 24 schools, three schools received straight A’s—Langley, McLean, and Madison—but only Langley garnered a 4.0 GPA. This group was followed by Marshall and Woodson with three A’s each.

Schools ranked seven through nine—Oakton, Robinson, and West Springfield—shared a very similar profile with “A’s” in English and social studies, “B+’s” in math and science, and the same overall GPA of 3.64.

Ranked 10th overall, Fairfax was the final school on the list with an overall GPA above 3.5.

Of the 25 high and secondary schools in Fairfax County, 18 earned a GPA of 3.0 for their performance on the 2007 SOLs. Of the seven schools with GPAs below 3.0, six schools had at least two “B’s” and only two schools earned grades below a “C.” Hayfield had a “D+” in math and West Potomac had a “D+” in science.

Comparing AP and IB

At fifth place, Marshall was the highest ranking school offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Overall, only two schools—Marshall and Robinson—with IB programs ranked in the top half of Fairfax schools.

With three “A’s,” Marshall earned as many “A’s” as all other IB schools combined. Of the nine high and secondary schools with the lowest rankings, six offer the IB program.

Highlights

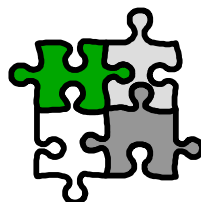
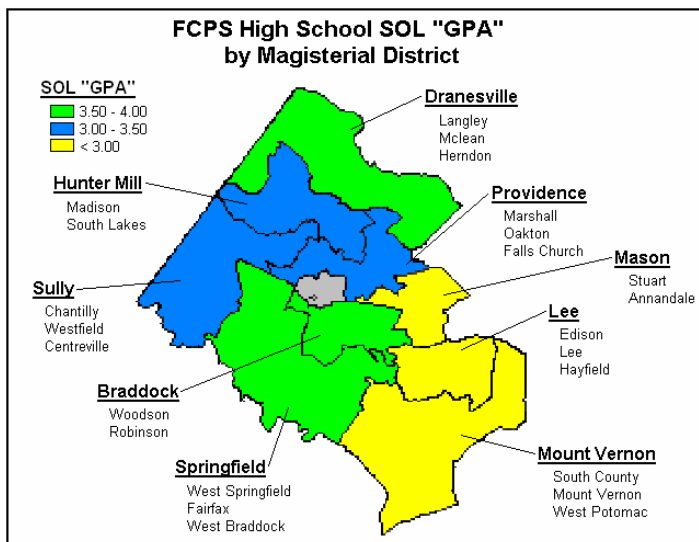
- ? Jefferson had a 100 percent pass rate on every SOL test in 2007.
- ? On average, schools with the AP program outperformed schools with the IB program by 4.0 percentage points on each SOL exam.
- ? High schools in the Dranesville magisterial district had the best SOL performance while schools in the Mount Vernon magisterial district had the lowest average pass rate on the SOLs.

| SOL Tests Used for Ranking |
|---|
| Math |
| Algebra I |
| Algebra II (2001 Revised) |
| Geometry (2001 Standards) |
| Science |
| Biology |
| Chemistry |
| Earth Science |
| English |
| English: Reading |
| English: Writing |
| Social Studies |
| Virginia And United States History (2001 Standards) |
| World History / Geography 1500 A.D. To Present (2001 Standards) |
| World History And Geography To 1500 A.D. (2001 Standards) |

High School Level Performance* by High/Secondary School

| Rank | School | Math | Science | English | Social Studies | "GPA" Based on all SOLs |
|------|------------------|------|---------|---------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Jefferson | A | A | A | A | 4.00 |
| 2 | Langley | A | A | A | A | 4.00 |
| 3 | McLean | A | A | A | A | 3.91 |
| 4 | Madison | A | A | A | A | 3.82 |
| 5 | Marshall | A | B | A | A | 3.73 |
| 6 | Woodson | A | B+ | A | A | 3.64 |
| 7 | Oakton | B+ | B+ | A | A | 3.64 |
| 8 | Robinson | B+ | B+ | A | A | 3.64 |
| 9 | West Springfield | B+ | B+ | A | A | 3.64 |
| 10 | Fairfax | B+ | B | A | A | 3.55 |
| 11 | Lake Braddock | B+ | B | A | A | 3.45 |
| 12 | Chantilly | B+ | B+ | A | A | 3.36 |
| 13 | Westfield | B | B | A | A | 3.27 |
| 14 | Herndon | B+ | B | A | A | 3.27 |
| 15 | Centreville | B | B | A | B+ | 3.18 |
| 16 | South County | B | B | A | A | 3.00 |
| 17 | Stuart | B+ | C+ | B+ | B | 3.00 |
| 18 | Edison | B | B | B+ | B+ | 3.00 |
| 19 | Lee | B | C | A | B+ | 2.91 |
| 20 | Falls Church | B | C+ | B+ | B+ | 2.73 |
| 21 | Annandale | C+ | C | B+ | B | 2.64 |
| 22 | South Lakes | C+ | C | B+ | B | 2.45 |
| 23 | Hayfield | D+ | C | B+ | B+ | 2.36 |
| 24 | Mt. Vernon | C | C | B | C+ | 2.36 |
| 25 | West Potomac | C | D+ | B+ | B | 2.18 |

* School performance based on Fairfax County Public Schools grading scale applied to SOLs
 ■ Denotes High Schools with International Baccalaureate Programs



closest alignment of high school performance to magisterial district, high schools were assigned to the magisterial district from which the greatest proportion of the school's population is drawn. Test scores are then averaged for all schools in each magisterial district.

Advanced Placement (AP) program schools (excluding Jefferson for purposes of comparison) consistently outperformed IB schools in every subject area. The performance gap was most pronounced in social studies and science, where AP schools outperformed IB schools by 5.0 and 4.2 percentage points respectively, on average. In English and math, the difference in performance was narrower. Still, on average, AP schools had pass rates 2.5 percentage points higher than IB schools in English and 2.2 percentage points higher in math.

Translating this performance to letter grades, the gap becomes more evident. In social studies, for example, 13 of 17 AP schools got an "A" while only 2 of 8 IB schools earned an "A." In science, only four schools received "A's," none were IB schools. In English, 14 AP schools and 3 IB schools earned an "A." In math, five AP

schools got "A's." Marshall is the only IB school with an "A" in math. The performance differences between AP and IB schools on the SOL tests warrants further study.

Geography of Performance

Although boundaries for Fairfax County schools are not aligned with the administrative borders of magisterial districts, the school board is composed of 12 members, nine of which are elected from magisterial districts. To create the

The Dranesville magisterial district, at the north end of the county turned in the best results with a 3.82 GPA. The south-central districts of Braddock and Springfield followed in second and third place each with a 3.55 GPA. The Providence, Sully, and Hunter Mill Districts, cutting a west-east band through the center of the county followed in the rankings with GPA's above 3.0.

The three magisterial districts with the lowest GPA's sit at the south-east end of the county. Working down the county, Mason magisterial district ranks seventh with a 2.73 GPA, Lee magisterial district ranks eighth with a 2.64 GPA and Mount Vernon ranks ninth with a 2.36 GPA.

Providing a report card for each magisterial district creates an opportunity for school board members and the public to see how schools perform in their areas.

High School Level Performance* by Magisterial District**

| Magisterial District | Math | Science | English | Social Studies | "GPA" Based on all SOLs | School Board Representative |
|----------------------|------|---------|---------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dranesville | A | B+ | A | A | 3.82 | Strauss |
| Braddock | B+ | B+ | A | A | 3.55 | Wilson |
| Springfield | B+ | B | A | A | 3.55 | Bradsher |
| Providence | B+ | B | A | A | 3.36 | Niedzielski-Eichner |
| Sully | B+ | B | A | A | 3.36 | Smith |
| Hunter Mill | B | B | A | B+ | 3.18 | Gibson |
| Mason | B | C | B+ | B | 2.73 | Kory |
| Lee | C+ | C+ | B+ | B+ | 2.64 | Center |
| Mount Vernon | C+ | C | B+ | B | 2.36 | Storck |

* School performance based on Fairfax County Public Schools grading scale applied to SOLs.
 ** Based on largest attendance at high school / secondary school in 2007-08 academic year.