

CHAPTER 1

A Classroom a Day

A latter-day Rip Van Winkle who fell asleep in Fairfax County in 1954 and woke up 20 years later would have found it hard to believe he was in the same place. A review of the county's schools and enrollment figures provides an explanation. In 1954 FCPS had 42 elementary schools and 6 high schools. The school division operated two systems, one for white students and one for African-American students. Six of the elementary schools and one of the high schools served African-American students. The one black high school, Luther Jackson, had just opened in 1954. Previously, African-American students from Fairfax County who desired a high school education had to commute to a vocational training center in Manassas, Virginia, or cross the Potomac River to attend a Washington, D.C. high school. Enrollment figures for Fairfax students ages 6 through 19 totaled 14,652, with half of this number consisting of students between 6 and 9 years of age (*Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction...*, 1953–54, pp. 242–243). Roughly 8 percent of the total enrollment were African-American students.

By 1974 the number of schools serving the youth of Fairfax County had climbed to 168, including 18 high schools, 18 intermediate schools, and 4 combined high school/intermediate schools. Enrollment had skyrocketed to 136,508 students, over 9 times the number of students 20 years earlier. African-American and white students no longer attended separate schools. At the height of the construction program required to keep pace with this rapid growth, Fairfax was erecting the equivalent of a classroom a day.

It is tempting to focus the story of Fairfax County Public Schools and its rise to educational prominence on enrollment growth and school construction. There is much more to the story, however. In the midst of a mushrooming school population, FCPS

had to confront the challenge of desegregation and state-sanctioned defiance of the U.S. Supreme Court. Close on the heels of desegregation came the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 with its emphasis on meeting the educational needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. No longer would the federal government's role in local education be a minor one. As Fairfax County Public Schools grew, organizational adjustments were necessitated. A Superintendent and small central office staff might have been able to oversee the operation of 48 schools, but not four times that number.

Chapter 1 covers the history of FCPS from 1954 until 1976, when school enrollments began to fall. The opening section looks at the school system's efforts to contend with surging enrollments during the '50s and early '60s. Subsequent sections address Fairfax's response to court-ordered desegregation, a process that consumed the entire decade following the *Brown* decision; the expanding educational role of the federal government and its impact on Fairfax; the proliferation of programs designed to meet the special needs of different groups of students; and Fairfax's growing interest in educational innovation and reorganization. The chapter closes with signs in the early '70s that two decades of growth and progress were coming to an end. The school system had demonstrated its ability to cope successfully with growing enrollments, desegregation, and pressures to address special needs. Whether it could preserve gains in the face of retrenchment remained to be seen.

Boomers by the Bushel

Schools are built to accommodate a certain number of students. When enrollments grow so rapidly that new schools cannot be built fast enough, school capacities are quickly exceeded, creating conditions that can foster a variety of problems, including overcrowded classrooms and corridors, increased behavior problems, reduced curriculum choice, and diminished instructional effectiveness. To avoid these problems, school systems try to estimate population growth and complete the construction of new facilities *before* existing facilities burst at the seams. Despite its best efforts, FCPS, like many school systems in the '50s and '60s, found it almost impossible to keep up with the pace of growth. Mary Musick (1999), a veteran of almost half a century with FCPS,

**KEY DATES FOR FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
1954-1975**

- 1954 U.S. Supreme Court strikes down school segregation in *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*
FCPS opens its first secondary school for African-American students
- 1955 Superintendent W. T. Woodson distributes first manual containing standard administrative practices
- 1956 Doctrine of “massive resistance” initiated by Virginia General Assembly
- 1958 FCPS School Board votes to switch from 7-5 to 6-2-4 grade-level configuration
- 1959 FCPS becomes the second Virginia jurisdiction to adopt a voluntary desegregation plan
- 1960 FCPS schools officially desegregate (freedom of choice plan)
- 1961 W. T. Woodson retires and is replaced by E. C. Funderburk
- 1964 FCPS opens its first elementary center for gifted students
- 1965 FCPS drafts plan to close remaining all-black schools
Congress passes Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FCPS receives Head Start funding
- 1966 FCPS enrollment surpasses 100,000
Adult Education Program begins
- 1967 FCPS receives federal grant to launch Center for Effecting Educational Change
FCPS begins to reorganize into “areas”
- 1968 Half-day kindergartens begin
- 1970 S. John Davis becomes Superintendent
- 1971 FCPS begins work on system-wide curriculum guidelines and objectives (Program of Studies)
- 1972 Virginia implements the Standards of Quality for all public schools
- 1974 In *Lau v. Nichols*, U.S. Supreme Court determines that school systems must provide special assistance to non-English-speaking students
FCPS launches its first English as a Second Language program
FCPS develops tests aligned to Program of Studies
- 1975 Congress passes PL 94-142, the Education of the Handicapped Act

recalled teachers having to conduct lessons on the auditorium stage or in windowless closets due to lack of instructional space.

Fortunately for the young people of Fairfax County and their teachers, local taxpayers displayed a willingness to support the expansion of school facilities. Many of these taxpayers were recent arrivals, having been drawn to the mostly rural county by war-related employment opportunities. Following World War II and the Korean Conflict, a large number of these individuals elected to remain in the Washington suburbs and raise families. The National Broadcasting Company (NBC), according to the official history of Fairfax County (Netherton, et al., 1978, pp. 577-578), "chose the county to serve as an example of county-financed school expansion in a series of ten broadcasts on matters regarding the nation's public schools in November 1955." To accommodate the 238 percent increase in school enrollment between 1951 and 1961, Fairfax taxpayers supported \$69,500,000 in bonded indebtedness (Netherton, et al., 1978, p. 577). It helped that a high percentage of Fairfax's population was 19 or younger and, therefore, in need of educational services. In 1950 roughly 38 percent of Fairfax residents were under 20 (Netherton, et al., 1978, p. 703). A decade later the percentage had soared to almost 45 percent. It was hard to find a Fairfax taxpayer who did not have at least one child and, consequently, a pressing reason to support the public schools.

As school enrollments climbed and new schools opened, the ranks of Fairfax educators swelled. Table 1.1 shows the total number of instructional positions, including supervisors, principals, head teachers, and teachers, in 1953-54, 1959-60, and 1963-64.

Table 1.1
Total Instructional Positions (Supervisors, Principals, Head Teachers, and Teachers) for Fairfax County Public Schools in 1953-54, 1959-60, and 1963-64

	WHITE			AFRICAN-AMERICAN			TOTAL
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1953-54	134.5	714.5	849	6	37.5	43.5	892.5
1959-60	495.67	1,651	2,146.67	21	75	96	2,242.67
1963-64	877.8	2,463.8	3,341.6	25.5	73.2	98.7	3,440.3

Statistics are derived from the *Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia* for 1953-54, 1959-60, and 1963-64.

Supervisors, principals, and head teachers accounted for 6 percent of the total instructional positions in 1953-54 and 1959-60, but the percentage dropped to 5.8 by 1963-64. The average teacher

salary steadily rose over this period, from \$3,693 in 1953-54 to \$5,109 in 1959-60 to \$6,575 in 1963-64. Vocational education teachers earned the highest salaries, followed by high school and then elementary schoolteachers.

Overseeing the operation of Fairfax County Public Schools during the baby boomer '50s was a central administration that seems skeletal in comparison with later years. It is important to remember, however, that this period predated the advent of federal and state legislation aimed at creating programs for students with special needs and the extension of school-based services to the community. In 1954 the central administration of FCPS consisted of the division Superintendent, W. T. Woodson, and the following positions:

- Assistant Superintendent
- Administrative Assistant
- Director, Building and Grounds
- Director, Maintenance
- Director, Personnel
- Director, Surveys and Information
- Clerk of School Board and Finance Officer
- Supervisor of Transportation
- Supervisors of Cafeterias
- Attendance Officers (3)

In addition to these positions, the central administration included a Department of Instruction with 26 professionals. These individuals were distributed as follows:

- Director of Instruction
- Supervisors of Secondary Schools (2)
- Supervisors of Elementary Schools (4)
- Supervisor of Negro Elementary Schools
- Supervisor of Speech Education
- Helping Teachers in Music (2)
- Helping Teacher in Art
- Chairman of Helping Teachers in Reading
- Helping Teachers in Reading (4)
- Visiting Teachers (6)
- Coordinator of Special Education and Juvenile Workers
- Psychologist
- Film Librarian

Superintendent Woodson recognized that the growth in enrollments, schools, and instructional staff required a measure of stan-

standardization that had been unnecessary previously. Toward this end, he issued an *Administrative Guide for Fairfax County Schools* in August of 1955. The handbook was intended for principals, the first effort to formalize expectations for Fairfax building leaders. In his foreword, Woodson acknowledged that the school system was entering a new era: "As our school system has grown and our operations have become increasingly complex, the need for standardizing our practices and procedures within the framework of adopted policy and such rules, regulations, and laws as may apply becomes more apparent."

Developed by a committee consisting of three principals, a teacher, two supervisors, and two members of the Superintendent's administrative staff, the handbook represented a compilation of a quarter century's policies and practices for operating schools. Duties for all central office administrators were spelled out, as was the role of principals. With regard to the latter group, the handbook noted that,

The principal is in direct control of the program of his school and is responsible to the Superintendent, through his staff assistants, for the proper performance of his duties. As the person responsible for the school and its program, it follows that everything that goes on in a school must be under his supervision and cognizance. Instruction, in-service training, supervision of instruction, special or extra-curricular activities, custodial and maintenance work, building and equipment care and use by school and non-school groups, business and accounting, provision for supplies, discipline of pupils, and the entire field of public relations are the responsibility of each school principal, and must be under his control and cognizance. (p. 2)

Several pages later the handbook specified additional responsibilities for principals. These included how to deal with salesmen and visitors, fund-raising drives, maintaining pupil records, and, in a sign of the times, overcrowding. The last duty included the following provisions:

In the event of serious overcrowding, half-day shifts or use of temporary classroom space may be resorted to. It is the policy of the School Board to employ double shifts in

grades one and two rather than rent classroom space away from the school... (p. 4)

Those familiar with contemporary expectations for principals will notice the absence of references to leadership, instructional leadership, leadership for change, or school improvement. The principal of the '50s, at least in Fairfax County, was an "organization man," to use the term made famous by William H. Whyte. He was expected to be a manager, not a change agent. Seeing that policies and regulations were enforced was valued far more than initiative and innovation.

In the *Superintendent's Annual Report* for 1956-57, Woodson spelled out the school system's mission:

The objectives of the public schools of Fairfax County are to promote and develop in each pupil basic knowledges, skills and understandings which enable him:

- To speak with understanding
- To speak fluently and correctly
- To write with clarity
- To perform with accuracy the basic mathematical processes and use them properly
- To search for knowledge effectively
- To reason and analyze
- To know his abilities, capacities and interests
- To know and understand the world around him
- To develop and maintain sound mental and physical health
- To know and appreciate the past

Perhaps more noteworthy than these objectives was the report's tone, which foreshadowed the school system's future emphasis on a high quality academic program and exceptional student achievement. Parents of first, second, and third graders, for example, were informed that their children would spend more than 400 hours, or an average of over two hours daily, in the study of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Older elementary students would average two-and-a-half hours each day. Meanwhile, students in need of assistance could expect to receive help from a reading specialist, be assigned to a "low mental group," or attend a special summer school. The performance of Fairfax students on the

Stanford Achievement Tests (grades 4 and 7) and the Iowa Silent Reading Tests (grades 7 and 8) exceeded national norms in all areas except arithmetic reasoning (where Fairfax students *only* equaled national norms). The report boasted that half of Fairfax's high school graduates in 1957 planned to attend college.¹ Woodson proudly reported that 85 percent of Fairfax's teaching staff held college degrees, including 16 percent with master's degrees.

In one area, however, Superintendent Woodson could not be boastful. Try as it might, FCPS's capital improvement program could not keep pace with population growth. When the fall semester began in 1958, Fairfax High School, built to accommodate 1,000 students, was stuffed with 2,100 students ("Fairfax High School . . .," *Fairfax Herald*, September 5, 1958, p. 1). Principal Coffey was forced to make arrangements to bus 529 eighth graders to Jermantown School for half their classes and lunch. Overcrowding confronted other Fairfax schools and would continue to do so for years to come.

In the midst of coping with surging enrollments, the Fairfax School Board decided to abandon the system's 7-5 format in favor of a 6-2-4 grade-level configuration ("6-2-4 Plan . . .," *Fairfax Herald*, July 25, 1958, p. 1). Instead of students attending elementary school for seven years and high school for five years, they would spend six years in elementary school, two years in intermediate school, and four years in high school. Eighth-grade work would continue to be counted toward high school graduation, a provision that was set by the Virginia Board of Education. In order to alter its grade-level organization, FCPS needed to launch a massive building program. Eight new intermediate schools opened in the fall of 1960 to inaugurate the new arrangement. Each of the million-dollar facilities consisted of 40 classrooms, including 6 science laboratories, 2 art laboratories, 2 homemaking rooms, and 2 industrial arts shops, plus a library, gymnasium, cafeteria, guidance rooms, and space for band, chorus, and health instruction. By 1964 Fairfax's school ranks swelled to 15 intermediate schools. Launching the 6-2-4 plan was W. T. Woodson's last major initiative as Superintendent.

An era came to an end when Woodson retired in 1961, after serving as Superintendent for 32 years. The only Superintendents Fairfax had known since 1886 were Woodson and his predecessor, Milton D. Hall, who served for 43 years. Their successors would spend far less time atop the school system's swelling bureaucracy. Woodson stepped down just as Fairfax County and the state of Virginia were compelled to face the consequences of the Brown decision.

Delayed Desegregation

By the time the Supreme Court handed down its ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, Fairfax County was well on its way to completing construction of Luther P. Jackson High School, the county's first high school for black students.² No longer would black students desiring postelementary schooling have to make arrangements to attend segregated Manassas Regional High School, a vocational training center in Prince William County, or travel across the Potomac River to one of several Washington, D.C. high schools available to black students. When Jackson first opened on September 1, 1954, it included elementary as well as high school classes in order to take maximum advantage of available space. Enrollment growth was challenging black as well as white elementary facilities. Black parents who had lobbied for years to get their own high school under the dual system of separate schools for blacks and whites must have been struck by the ironic timing of Luther Jackson's opening.

In November of 1954 the Fairfax School Board received a letter from the Women's Club of Franklin Park urging the creation of a committee to study the effect of desegregation on Fairfax school children (Lee, 1993, p. 74). At the same time the Board also received a petition signed by 80 county residents requesting a "smooth changeover from segregated to non-segregated schools" (Lee, 1993, p. 74). The School Board President indicated that the Board was unprepared to act on either suggestion. Years would pass before decisions regarding implementation of the Brown decision were handled by individual school systems in the Commonwealth.

Virginia's political and educational leaders may have extolled the virtues of local control of education, but when the U.S. Supreme Court declared segregated schooling to be unconstitutional in 1954, they had no intention of leaving the decision of whether or not to desegregate to localities. The official position, one that eventually would lead to the doctrine of massive resistance, began to take shape in the *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* for 1953-1954. Published soon after the Brown decision, the report opened with reference to "a new challenge":

As the 1953-54 Report goes to the printer the citizens of Virginia are faced with the impact of a Supreme Court

decision handed down on May 17, 1954, declaring unconstitutional the plan of segregated schools in operation in Virginia with public funds for nearly eighty-five years. The separate but equal doctrine was prescribed by the Supreme Court in 1896...

The Court has asked specifically for advice on whether it should permit gradual adjustment or should order Negro children admitted immediately to schools of their choice within normal district lines...

A brief has been submitted to the Court stating that an indefinite period of time for adjustment to its anti-segregation ruling must be granted if public education in any form is to survive in Virginia.

It has been pointed out that government still derives its foundation from the consent of the governed and that custom, beliefs, and feelings of individuals cannot be legislated, nor can a Court decree or executive order force a result basically contrary to the wishes of a people.

A sharp contrast to this declaration, attorneys representing the Negro have urged the Court to order an end to racial segregation as promptly as administrative changes can be made. (pp. 25-26)

Whether local school systems such as Fairfax County, left to their own, would have moved forward to implement desegregation in the late fifties will never be known. Richmond removed any possibility of local option, when members of Virginia's General Assembly, with the strong support of U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, adopted a series of bills in August and September of 1956 that came to be known as the Stanley Plan.³ The cornerstone of the massive resistance doctrine, the Stanley Plan called for the creation of a statewide Pupil Placement Board. All local requests for student transfers between schools had to be handled by this central board. It soon became clear that the chief purpose of the Pupil Placement Board was to preserve segregation. To their credit, legislators from Northern Virginia went on record opposing the Stanley Plan and massive resistance (Ely, 1976). Along with many business leaders, they urged Governor J. Lindsay Almond to convene a special session of the General Assembly to repeal the measures. Their pleas went unheeded.

Meanwhile black students across Virginia began to petition for transfers to white schools, citing the closer proximity of white schools to their homes and inequities between the programs and resources available in black and white schools. When 22 black students from Warren County had their petitions rejected by the Pupil Placement Board, they sought redress from the courts and won. Under court order to desegregate, Warren County became the first jurisdiction in Virginia to shut down its public schools rather than comply. In the fall of 1959, a year after Warren County's dramatic action, 26 black students from Fairfax County petitioned the School Board to be transferred to white schools. The School Board rejected three of the requests on technicalities and forwarded the other 23 requests without recommendation to Richmond ("Pupil Placement Unit Rejects All Requests for School Transfers," *The Washington Post*, August 4, 1959, p. B-1). The Pupil Placement Board rejected all 23 petitions along with every petition from other jurisdictions. By this time, however, Virginia's brief flirtation with civil disobedience was coming to an end. Both the Virginia Supreme Court and federal district court had declared school closings intended to prevent integration to be unconstitutional. Two weeks after these rulings, on February 2, 1959, 21 black students entered previously all-white schools in Norfolk and Arlington (Pratt, 1992, p. 11). Desegregation at both locations occurred without incident.

On August 8, 1959, Fairfax County became the second jurisdiction in Virginia to adopt a voluntary plan for desegregating its schools. Only Arlington had preceded it, but its 1956 plan had been scuttled, when Virginia opted for massive resistance. Drafted in closed sessions by the School Board, the details of the Fairfax desegregation plan were not immediately made public. The plan was rumored to call for a gradual approach, beginning with the integration of first grade in the fall of 1960 and continuing with an additional grade each year until all 12 grades were integrated (McBee, 1959). Frustrated over the secrecy surrounding the School Board's plan, lawyers for the 26 black students who earlier had their petitions for transfer denied brought suit in federal district court to immediately attend all-white schools in Fairfax County.

Adopting the secret plan for desegregation did not prevent the Fairfax County School Board from continuing to support segregationist policies. Superintendent Woodson sent a memo to all high school principals informing them that, in light of House Joint Resolution 57, no Virginia school could participate in athletic

events against teams that included both whites and blacks. Also in accordance with state policy, the School Board mailed out tuition grant applications in August of 1959 to parents who did not want their child to attend an integrated school. The *Fairfax Herald* ("School Board Integration Plan . . .," August 21, 1959) reported that more than 100 requests for the \$250 grants were received. The grants could be used at any public or private nonsectarian school.

On September 22, 1960, Federal Judge Albert V. Bryan issued a court order for Fairfax County Public Schools to admit some of the 26 black students to previously all-white schools, thereby initiating the process of desegregation in Fairfax County. For the next five years, FCPS followed a gradualist policy referred to as "freedom of choice." Under this arrangement, the burden for seeking transfers to white schools was placed on black parents. Requests for transfer were not always granted, and black parents complained about unnecessary red tape and arbitrary denials (Lee, 1993, p. 76). Black parents, for example, were required to measure the distance between their residence and the nearest black and white schools in order to prove that the white school was closer. Initially, if a transfer request was granted, the black student's parents had to provide transportation to the white school.

By the fall of 1962, 214 black students were enrolled in previously all-white schools in Fairfax County. In March of the following year, the School Board received a report indicating that more than a million dollars in construction costs could be saved by abolishing its dual system of schools ("Dual School Setup Hit as Costly," *The Washington Post*, March 31, 1963). All-black schools at this point were not filled to capacity. Allison W. Brown Jr., chairman of the schools committee of the County Council on Human Relations and the author of the report, put his argument thusly:

Since, of the 73,000 children in County schools, only 2200 or about 3 percent, are in Negro schools, it is obvious that residents of the County are allowing themselves a substantial extravagance by keeping these 2200 Negro children in segregated schools.

The demise of the dual system of schools in Fairfax County would take another three years, additional litigation, and a court order from the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. In 1965 the School Board adopted a three-stage process for closing the remaining all-

black schools or converting them to integrated schools. The U.S. Commissioner of Education certified in April of 1965 that Fairfax County Public Schools was in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Despite years of foot dragging on the road to desegregation, Fairfax County could boast that it was among the first school systems in the nation to receive the Commissioner's certification (Eacho, 2001).

Fairfax and the Feds

Today it is easy to forget that the federal government's active role in public education is a relatively recent development. Prior to the sixties, the primary link between Washington and Fairfax County Public Schools involved impact aid. Public Law 815 and Public Law 874, both passed in 1950, assisted local school systems with substantial numbers of federal employees, including military families, by providing financial assistance for school construction and operation. In the 1953-54 school year, for example, FCPS received \$764,200 from the federal government to assist in school construction and a total of \$1,468,128 in federal aid (*Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction . . .*, 1953-54, p. 194).

In April of 1965, a new era of federal involvement in education began with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). President Lyndon Johnson hailed the bill, predicting that "this is just the beginning, the first giant stride toward full educational opportunity for all of our school children" (Carper, 1965). Since 1965 billions of federal dollars have been allocated to school systems across the United States to support the various titled programs of the ESEA. Fairfax County's share of the funds has been substantial.

Because Fairfax County responded more rapidly than other school systems in Virginia to the requirement for an approved desegregation plan, it qualified immediately for the funds provided under the ESEA. Other school systems in Virginia had to wait to apply for federal assistance until their desegregation plans could be drafted, submitted, and approved. The major component of the ESEA was Title I, which allocated millions of dollars annually to raise the quality of education for poor children. The bill originally earmarked \$349,000 for Fairfax, based on the number of students from families earning \$2,000 or less a year.

The formula subsequently was changed to include families on welfare, thereby increasing the allocation for which Fairfax qualified.

Less than a week before the U.S. Senate approved the ESEA, Fairfax County learned that it would be one of the first school systems in the nation to receive a federal grant under the Civil Rights Act to aid school desegregation (Grant, 1965). The \$54,000, along with additional local funds, were used to finance inservice training for teachers, a summer workshop, speech classes, and improved guidance services. Inservice training familiarized teachers with different language patterns among white and black students, introduced strategies for communicating effectively, and helped teachers analyze their own communications. Home economics teachers attended a one-day summer workshop on personal care and grooming, presumably so they could assist students involved in desegregation ("A Guide to Intergroup Education," 1965, p. 7). Staff development also aimed to help teachers "discuss the abilities of Negro students, maintenance of school standards, curriculum adjustments and ways to encourage student acceptance of members of other races" (Grant, 1965). The school system's application for federal funding noted that the advent of full desegregation meant that for the first time white teachers would be working in previously all-black schools under black principals and vice versa.

The spring of 1965 also found Fairfax County receiving its first Head Start funds. When Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act (Public Law 88-452) in 1964, it approved federal support for child care centers as a weapon in the War on Poverty. In February of the next year the first lady officially launched Project Head Start. Aware of a growing number of poor families, FCPS already had initiated pilot child care projects in three "culturally disadvantaged areas" (Larson-Crowther, 1966). With federal funds available to support an expansion of child care services, the school system quickly prepared proposals for full-year and summer Head Start programs. The summer program proposal was approved on May 15, 1965, thereby enabling 24 centers serving 686 preschool-age children to operate for six weeks. On September 30, 1965, the proposal for full-year programs received the green light, allowing 24 full-day and 2 half-day child care centers to join the existing pilot programs. The regular school-year programs enrolled 716 children in their first year. Of these, 659 came from disadvantaged backgrounds (Larson-Crowther, 1966, p. 8). The 7 goals of Fairfax's Head Start programs included the following (Larson-Crowther, 1966, p. 2):

1. To raise the children's level of aspiration.
2. To help them to develop into happy, well-adjusted, socially responsible children.
3. The development of improved communicative skills by the children.
4. The promotion of better health among the children.
5. The encouragement of better attitudes by the parents toward the educational attainment of their children.
6. The development of teacher understanding and respect for under-privileged children.
7. The development of neighborhood and community concern for the underprivileged child.

The War on Poverty helped sensitize suburban communities like Fairfax to the fact that privation was not just an urban and rural problem. Amidst its growing affluence, Fairfax was home to a substantial number of poor families. In 1959 Fairfax had 4,534 families (7.7%) earning under \$4,000 annually (Netherton, et al., 1978, p. 706). A decade later the number had risen to 5,103, though the percentage had dropped to 4.5 percent. Fairfax was gaining well-to-do families at a much faster rate than poor families, a fact that would foster the illusion for the uninformed that Fairfax had no poverty problem. The School Board acknowledged that the county had an obligation to address the special needs of the poor, when it responded to a study of poverty in Fairfax at its February 4, 1974, meeting (School Board Agenda Item IV-A, February 4, 1974). Conducted by the Anti-Poverty Commission of Fairfax, the study noted that the plight of the county's poor had been investigated a number of times, but little of consequence had resulted. A "countywide definitive plan for groping with the problems caused by poverty of the underachiever, the under-motivated" was recommended to replace the existing collection of "separate and distinct programs having no overall plan for coordination."

Fairfax County Public Schools again benefited from the new federal commitment to public education when, on July 27, 1967, a Title III (ESEA) grant of \$396,000 was received to establish the Center for Effecting Educational Change (CEEC). Premised on the belief that most of the problems faced by the school system were "too complex for one individual's competence," the center was structured to facilitate a team approach to problem solving and planning (Proposal for the Operation of a Center for Effecting Educational Change, January 12, 1967). The four primary purposes of the

CEEC were (1) to study and research the change process itself, (2) to develop and initiate a systematic change procedure, (3) to provide special services, including assistance to teachers in promoting change, and (4) to serve as an exemplary center. Among the CEEC's initial activities were studies of pilot kindergarten classes at 7 elementary schools, performing arts in Fairfax schools, and the needs of students with "special learning problems." One Fairfax educator recalled the CEEC's invaluable assistance in moving her elementary school from its traditional "self-contained" instructional model to a more up-to-date format characterized by cooperative teaching, family-type groupings, miniclasses, and learning centers (Musick, 1999). Among its services to the school, the CEEC solicited input from parents regarding the instructional improvement initiative. With the creation of the CEEC, FCPS's commitment to cutting-edge innovation was firmly established. That commitment has remained strong ever since.

A day after learning of its federal grant for the CEEC, FCPS was informed that it had been chosen to administer a \$97,000 grant for Fairfax, Arlington, and Alexandria to set up the Center for Adult Basic Education Learning (CABEL). The center's mission included the creation of adult basic education materials, the demonstration of new instructional techniques for adult basic education, and the evaluation of adult basic education programs. At this time Fairfax was serving over 16,000 adult learners each year.

By the late sixties, Fairfax's education empire was alive and well. From preschool child care centers to adult basic education, there was hardly any age-group or aspect of educational service in which the district was uninvolved. The school system's elementary and secondary enrollment passed 100,000 in 1966, and the numbers would continue to climb, though not as dramatically as during the preceding decade, for another 10 years. In addition to well-to-do newcomers seeking the privileges of suburbia, Fairfax attracted a number of nontraditional pilgrims, including the poor and the culturally diverse. Spurred by the availability of surging local revenue and ample federal aid to education, FCPS expanded the number of programs designed to address the special needs of various groups of students.

Program Proliferation

America's educational gift to the world presumably is the common school, an institution where, as the name implies, all stu-

dents regardless of family circumstances receive the same education. As Fairfax County and other school systems began to confront growing student diversity in the mid-'60s, they realized that the basic academic program needed to be supplemented, if the needs of different types of students were to be addressed effectively. Public education was not well served by a "one size fits all" mentality. In his annual report for 1964-1965, Superintendent E. C. Funderburk, who succeeded W. T. Woodson in 1961, signaled the new era by noting the range of new initiatives being introduced in Fairfax schools. Programs for gifted students were started in elementary schools, pilot programs for preschoolers from poor families were launched, and vocational education to prevent students from dropping out was expanded. In 1968 FCPS launched a county-wide kindergarten program.

Programs for gifted students

Concern that American schools were not doing enough to cultivate their most talented students surfaced in the wake of the Soviet Union's successful launch of Sputnik on October 4, 1957. Fears arose that America was falling behind the U.S.S.R. in the preparation of scientists and mathematicians. In order to promote academic excellence, reformers urged the development of honors and Advanced Placement courses. Calls for the consolidation of small high schools were prompted by a desire to attain enrollments sufficiently large to sustain special tracks for the brightest students (Conant, 1959, pp. 77-85). Highly acclaimed scientists became involved in projects to develop state-of-the-art curricula for high school students.

Located in the shadow of the nation's capital and populated by a large number of government and military officials, Fairfax County could not escape pressure to develop programs geared to the needs of gifted young people. Advanced Placement courses were introduced in the late '50s. In the fall of 1964, FCPS opened its first elementary centers for "superior learners" (Lamont, 2002; McClain, 2001). A total of 35 students, all in grades 4 through 6 and with IQs of 140 or higher, participated in the initial program, co-located at Bailey's and Hollin Hills Elementary Schools. Students were drawn from all parts of the county. Parents had to provide transportation to the half-day, self-contained centers.

Perhaps because of the egalitarian spirit of the '60s or the fact that the concerns of policymakers had shifted to promoting equal educational opportunity, Fairfax's gifted program grew slowly over

the next few years. By 1967 only 108 students in grades 3 through 6 were participating in self-contained classes for “superior learners” at 6 elementary schools. The school system, however, had assumed responsibility for transporting gifted students to their programs. The purpose and design of the gifted program was laid out in a 1967 report, “Programs for the Gifted Child.” A gifted student was defined as a young person in the top 1.5 percent of the population in intellectual ability as measured by an individual intelligence (IQ) test.

Gifted education was expanded to include two intermediate schools (Kilmer and Mark Twain) in 1969. Unlike the elementary centers, the intermediate program focused on specific subjects. In 1970 eighth graders who were judged to be gifted in mathematics were allowed to take algebra. Soon the demand for gifted offerings compelled the school system to provide programs at every intermediate school.

As the gifted program expanded, parents of gifted students began to exert more influence (Lamont, 2002). In a paper submitted to district officials in 1970 they lobbied for a program director and secure funding. They also indicated that only a quarter to a third of the eligible students in Fairfax were being served. Complaints were expressed regarding irregularities in the identification of eligible students. The paper addressed the two primary options for delivering gifted education—center-based programs and enrichment opportunities provided at each child’s neighborhood school. Parents came down decidedly in favor of center-based programs:

A small minority of educators suggests that the regular elementary school can meet the needs of gifted children through acceleration and enrichment. The consensus of experts in education of the gifted, however, is that such a program slights the emotional needs of the child without adequately meeting his intellectual needs.... We know from our own experience the loneliness and boredom of our children before they entered the County program.... We are convinced that the problems created by grouping our children—transportation time and removal from their immediate neighborhoods—are more than outweighed by the benefits of the special class. (“Strengthening the Fairfax County Program of Education for Gifted Children,” April 9, 1970)

Following the report from parents regarding their desires for gifted education, FCPS conducted an evaluation of its offerings. The evaluation found that the more established programs functioned more effectively than the newer programs. When the possibility of expanding gifted education into high school was investigated, it was determined that high schools already provided gifted students with sufficient opportunities for advanced work. All that was needed, the evaluation concluded, were better mechanisms for directing gifted students to the most challenging courses. The evaluation also suggested that a program director was needed to advocate for resources, coordinate activities, and plan staff development of gifted education teachers.

The federal government began to play a more assertive role in gifted education in the early '70s. As a result of a congressional mandate to study the needs of gifted students and determine how the federal government should be involved in gifted education, a large study was conducted. The findings appeared in 1972 in a report titled *Education of the Gifted and Talented*. The report recommended that gifted education be better regulated and that terminology and procedures be standardized. A federal Office of Education for the Gifted and Talented was established, and a government-sponsored clearinghouse for information on gifted and talented programs was located in Reston (Fairfax County). In response to the federal initiative, FCPS promulgated standardized screening and identification procedures, developed a district plan, and created an advisory committee for gifted and talented students (Lamont, 2002).

Close on the heels of federal efforts to promote gifted education were initiatives from Richmond. When the General Assembly approved a set of Standards of Quality (SOQ) in 1972 to guide Virginia school systems, it endorsed a provision for special education that called for the identification of gifted students and the development of appropriate educational opportunities for them (McClain, 2001). When the SOQ were updated in 1973, school systems were required to provide special services designed to enrich the educational experiences of gifted and talented students. The following year the General Assembly appropriated \$30 per student, up to a total of 3 percent of each school system's student population, to support gifted and talented programs.

Federal and state efforts played a pivotal role in the expansion of services for gifted students in Fairfax. By 1973 FCPS had extended full-time gifted education to students in grades 3 through 8. Participation in center-based programs rose to 454 students.

Targeted interventions

Many of Fairfax's gifted students would have succeeded in school even if special programs had not been made available. Other students, however, required targeted assistance if they were to stand a reasonable chance of benefiting from their schooling. FCPS had long recognized the individual needs of low-achieving students, but it was not until the late '60s that the range of interventions available to them broadened. As noted earlier, much of the impetus for expanded services derived from the unprecedented availability of federal funds.

In the '50s, when Fairfax students experienced academic difficulties, there were three basic options other than dropping out of school. They could receive assistance from a small cadre of specialists, including special education teachers, helping teachers in reading, helping teachers in speech, visiting teachers who worked "with the school, home, and community to discover and eliminate causes which may prevent boys and girls from making satisfactory achievement in school," and homebound teachers for students with physical disabilities. According to the *Superintendent's Annual Report* for 1956-1957, 897 students (2.4%) received special assistance in reading and 180 students (.5%) were placed in "low mental groups." Students also could attend remedial summer school programs. In 1956-1957, 171 elementary students received remedial reading help, 60 elementary students received remedial mathematics help, and 697 secondary students re-took courses in which they had not performed well.

The third option for Fairfax students who struggled academically was to enter a nonacademic diploma track. The choices in the '50s included a commercial, a vocational, and an elective track. Regardless of the track, students had to fulfill the state's graduation requirements, which included 4 years of English and 1 year each of science, mathematics, U.S. and Virginia history, and U.S. and Virginia government (for a total of 8 credits). In addition, Fairfax County Public Schools required students earning an academic diploma to take an additional year of social studies and an additional year and a half of mathematics. Students working in the other tracks also needed a year of social studies, but they were required to take only two semesters (rather than three) of mathematics.

With the advent in the mid-'60s of federal legislation and funding aimed at providing equal educational opportunity for all students, the focus of assistance expanded to include early child-

hood education and new instructional programs. The *Superintendent's Annual Report* for 1964-1965, for example, cited three pilot programs:

1. Classes for the "Culturally Different": These classes include the precursors to Head Start preschool classes as well as Head Start classes.
2. Classes for "Highly Gifted" Children.
3. Extended learning time: Algebra I was expanded from a one to a two-year course for "below average" students. FCPS sought to determine whether this arrangement was preferable to assigning less able students to general mathematics.

In addition, FCPS expanded its training centers for special education students to accommodate 120 students (up from 70 the previous year) and created a pilot program for mildly mentally handicapped boys at Edison High School. Six additional classes for boys were scheduled to begin in the fall of 1965 with newly acquired federal funds. Superintendent Funderburk noted that 2,300 elementary students received special instruction in reading, though he pointed out that another 400 students were on a waiting list to receive supplementary services. Almost 15 percent of all Fairfax high school students were involved in some form of vocational education.

As enrollments climbed, the number of students receiving special education services grew, though perhaps not as much as one might imagine. By the standards of the post-Public Law 94-142 (1975) era, when school systems often identified 10 percent or more of their students as eligible for special education, Fairfax in the early '70s served relatively few disabled students. Of 135,839 students in 1973-1974, 2,103 (1.6%) were involved in special education (Eacho, 2001). Furthermore, there was little evidence of the diversity that would lead to a variety of targeted interventions in the decades to come. In 1973-1974, blacks represented the largest minority group in Fairfax with 3.4 percent, followed by Hispanic Americans (.7%), Asian Americans (.6%), and Native Americans (.05%).

Despite their relatively small numbers, students from other cultures were not overlooked by Fairfax County Public Schools. As early as 1965, Superintendent Funderburk, in his annual report, recognized teachers' need for professional development related to other cultures:

In years ahead we need to step-up the professional growth and development of the entire staff as well as continue to develop and make use of new teaching materials, different approaches to teaching, emphasis not only on our own culture and heritage, but also on the teaching of the cultures of Central America, South America, and the Far and Near East—(It is imperative that we learn as much as possible of the culture of those people whose ideologies are different from ours but with whom we must learn to communicate and live.)

He could not have known that by 2001, 31 percent of Fairfax residents would live in a household where English was not spoken (Whoriskey and Cohen, 2001). Of the 226,800 foreign-born Fairfax residents in 2001, half came from Asia and 31 percent from Latin America.

On July 27, 1973, the School Board approved a new policy intended to sensitize schools to non-Christian religions and religious holidays. The policy, which at least one board member feared would spawn lawsuits, allowed each of the county's 169 schools to determine if and how it would observe religious holidays (Whitaker, 1973). Principals were directed to appoint a committee "to review and guide the school's thinking, planning, and implementation of educational programs relative to religion and religious holidays." The following year FCPS initiated its first English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. The 375 students initially involved in ESL tended to be well-educated children from diplomatic corps families (Eacho, 2001). By 1976 ESL programs had skyrocketed to 2,800 students. The impetus for ESL programs was the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974. As a result of the case, which involved the claim that the San Francisco school system had failed to provide adequate instruction to students of Chinese ancestry who did not speak English, public school systems across the nation were expected to provide sufficient assistance to non-English-speaking students to enable them to succeed in school.

Perhaps the greatest impetus for new programs for students with special needs came the year after the *Lau* decision, when Congress passed Public Law 94-142, the Education of the Handicapped Act. In 1975, the year PL 94-142 was adopted, FCPS provided service to 1,875 special education students. A decade later, during a period when overall school enrollments were declin-

ing, the special education population had risen to 5,292. If the scope of FCPS's education empire was expanding, much of the credit belonged to the federal government.

A Commitment to Innovation

Just because a school system is large and blessed with abundant resources does not mean that it is necessarily innovative. During the '60s, however, the actions of Fairfax policymakers and educational leaders demonstrated that they wanted their school system not only to be high-performing and well-organized, but innovative as well. A special report released by Superintendent Funderburk in September of 1966 proudly cited 30 innovative programs that recently had been implemented (Proposal for the Operation of a Center for Effecting Educational Change, January 12, 1967). Among the listed programs were the following:

Academic subjects taught in foreign language	New intermediate building concept
Adult basic education	New physical science program
Automatic data processing	Nongraded programs
Dining room hostesses	Pilot math program
East Asian civilization	Replacement teacher pool
History of Russia	School services division
IBM student scheduling	School-within-a-school
Language experience approach in reading	String music program
Latin American civilization	Three new home economics courses

So heavily invested in educational change and improvement had Fairfax become, in fact, that the Superintendent felt compelled to apply for a Title III grant to better coordinate new initiatives. As noted earlier, his effort was rewarded with funding to create the Center for Effecting Educational Change in 1967.

Between 1962 and 1972, FCPS experimented with ungraded primary programs, programmed teaching materials, individualized instruction, open education, open-space design schools, and classrooms organized around learning centers (Kheradmand, 2002). When Dr. S. John Davis became Superintendent in September of 1970, he promoted team teaching, a thematic

approach to teaching high school English, heterogeneous grouping for instruction, and curriculum-based district tests (Program of Studies tests).

Innovation was not limited to instructional practice, student grouping, and curriculum content. As Fairfax grew and new programs proliferated, the need for improved ways of organizing the school system became apparent. Before W. T. Woodson stepped down as Superintendent in 1961, he pointed out the “need for a study of the organization and operation of the Fairfax County School System exclusive of curriculum and instruction” (Hinkle, 1971, p. 191). When management consultants were commissioned to prepare a report in 1964 on the school system’s efforts to keep pace with school construction needs, they also recommended that serious consideration be given to district reorganization:

Seven persons report directly to the superintendent. The recommended planning unit could be an eighth. This appears to be an unreasonable span of control, and therefore the total organization of the schools should be carefully considered in the near future. (“School Plant Planning and Organization Audit,” 1964, p. 34)

A year later Superintendent Funderburk, in his annual report, added his voice to calls for district reorganization: “In the next few years, a means to decentralize our large and sprawling school division must be found, to the extent that outside professional consultation may be necessary to accomplish this.” (Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1964-65)

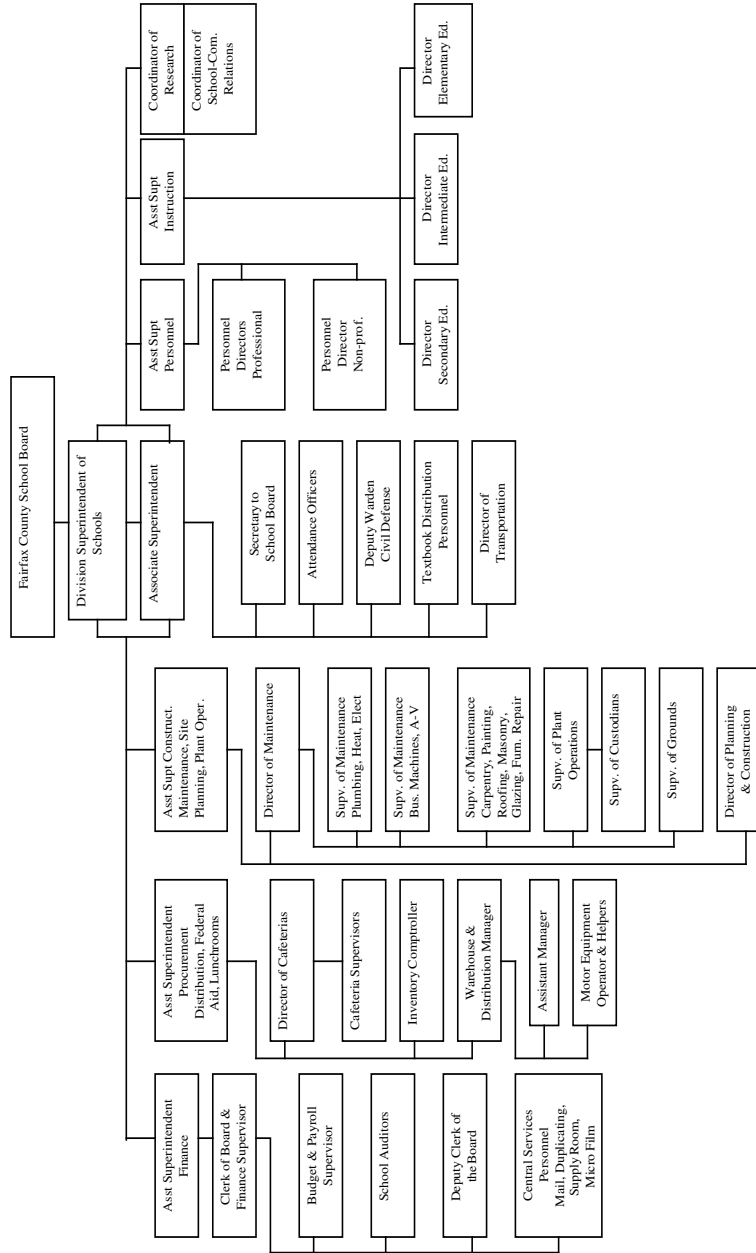
Fairfax County Public Schools added 7,500 students in the 1963-1964 school year, a growth rate of 8.5 percent. The operating budget jumped from \$33.1 million to \$39.2 million, with \$4.3 million required simply to accommodate enrollment growth. Besides growing numbers of students, Fairfax was adding new programs and services. In 1965 Head Start centers were created, and the School-Community Relations Division was established, in part to handle the transition from a dual to a unitary school system. In 1966 the Adult Education Program was initiated. Two years later, half-day kindergartens were launched. The expansion of special programs and services contributed to organizational complexity and increased the possibility of communication and coordination problems.

During the mid-'60s, FCPS attempted to handle complexity by adding supervisory personnel and new organizational units. Figure 1.1 presents the organization chart for Fairfax County Public Schools in 1963. In 1964 the Department of Instruction sought to "provide better coordination between schools and central office" by adding new supervisors of social studies and industrial arts, a new helping teacher in mathematics, and a full-time coordinator of adult education and summer school, as well as upgrading a supervisor of vocational education to a director. The following school year was marked by the creation of a Department of Construction and a Department of School Services, which coordinated custodial duties, distribution, warehousing, maintenance, plant operations, and food services (Berry, Chamberlin, and Goodloe, 2001). Supervision of instruction also was enhanced that year by the addition of 10 assistant principals, whose primary responsibility was to work directly with teachers on instructional improvement. These stop-gap measures, however, were no substitute for the fundamental reorganization called for by Superintendents Woodson and Funderburk.

The first step toward reorganization took place in 1967, when the School Board endorsed a plan drafted by Funderburk that by 1970 would divide the school system into five separate operational areas, each with an Area Superintendent responsible for supervising the schools in his area. Funderburk was careful to distinguish his decentralization plan from those that had created considerable controversy in large cities like New York (Funderburk, 1969; Jacoby 1968). While the latter were prompted by demands from minority groups for greater community control, the Fairfax plan constituted, at least in the Superintendent's thinking, an "internal administrative reorganization" intended to improve the efficiency of key supervisory personnel and narrow the distance between the schools and top-level leadership.

In 1967 the School Board retained the services of Cresap, McCormick & Paget to conduct a management audit of the school system's organization and operations. By the time the audit was completed in early 1968, Funderburk had appointed his first two Area Superintendents, and he was preparing to select a third. The consultant's report found that school board members were "too involved in detailed operating problems and as a result there are major gaps in Board policies and long-range planning" ("Decentralize School Setup, Fairfax Told," *The Washington Post*,

Figure 1.1
Organization Chart of Fairfax County Public Schools—1963



February 15, 1968). Among the other conclusions drawn in the final report were the following:

The present organization . . . is cumbersome and unwieldy. The central office staff has not given adequate attention to broad policy and long-range planning problems. There is an overlapping of functions among the Assistant Superintendents.

The central office staff, including the majority of the instructional assistance resources, has tended to concentrate on headquarters duties; consequently field efforts have been reduced. There is a lack of coordination among central office staff activities. (Cresap, McCormick & Paget, 1967)

The consultant's report went on to make a variety of recommendations, including the establishment of only three Area Administrative Offices, rather than the five called for in Funderburk's plan. Five Area Administrative Offices, each with an Area Superintendent and staff, would be inefficient and produce coordination problems, according to the consultant. The report also called for the creation of an Assistant for Planning, who would report to the Division Superintendent, and Citizens' Advisory Committees appointed by the School Board to advise the Division and Area Superintendents. Instructional and support personnel would be assigned to Area offices, thereby placing them in closer organizational proximity to schools. The central office, meanwhile, would concentrate on systemwide planning, analysis, coordination, and control.

The FCPS School Board supported the consultant's decentralization plan, eventually deciding to create four Area Administrative Offices, each headed by an Area Superintendent. Funderburk expressed reservations with the revised decentralization plan and what he regarded as the erosion of central office leadership (Berry, Chamberlin, and Goodloe, 2001). While supportive of placing "front line" personnel in the field, where they could be more responsive to school-based educators and the community, he preferred his version of "centralized decentralization" to the divided leadership threatened by the creation of the four semiautonomous Area Superintendents called for in the School Board's plan. Each Area Superintendent would be responsible for more

schools, school personnel, and students than most Division Superintendents in Virginia. Displeasure with School Board support for the new decentralization arrangement was cited as the primary reason for Funderburk's retirement in 1969 (Berry, Chamberlin, and Goodloe, 2001).

The Area Administrative Offices with their Area Superintendents remained the basic organizational structure of Fairfax County Public Schools until the turn of the century. Reflecting back on his lengthy tenure with Fairfax County Public Schools, Deputy Superintendent Alan Leis identified the division of the school system into four areas as one of the pivotal events in the district's history. Decentralization enabled supervisory personnel to maintain close and effective contact with school-based personnel despite rapid growth. In Leis's words, "The school system was just growing too rapidly to meet the needs of schools from Mt. Vernon to Great Falls. There was a real feeling that central administration was getting too detached from most schools." As the decade of the '70s unfolded, however, it became clear that coping with enrollment growth would not continue to be the central challenge facing county educators. Instead, the new decade brought with it slowing growth and eventual enrollment decline, budget problems, and growing concerns about student performance.

Sinking into the '70s

As the Vietnam War wound down and the scandals of the Nixon presidency heated up, the mood of America lost much of the exuberance that had characterized the '60s. Where once possibilities ruled, problems prevailed. The economy began to sputter, the victim of deficit spending to sustain the war, a plethora of costly new social programs, and overdependence on foreign oil. Though still well-off compared to many localities, Fairfax County and its schools did not escape hard times.

The rapid growth rate of school enrollments slowed considerably in the early '70s. Had all parts of the county shared equally in the slowed growth, the school system could have begun to reduce its capital improvement and building initiatives. Unfortunately, the western part of the county continued to grow at a rate rivaling the '60s, while the eastern part of the county lost school-age population. As a consequence, new schools still were needed, despite an overall stabilizing of FCPS enrollments and an economic down-

turn. Overcrowding became a substantial enough concern that school officials considered switching eight schools to year-round schedules (Landres, 1973). Voter approval of bonds for building new schools and adding to existing schools, once considered virtually automatic in Fairfax, no longer could be counted on. A \$60 million school bond referendum in November of 1974 was soundly defeated (Sims, 1974). Even tougher times lay ahead.

At the same time that education funds were becoming less plentiful, student achievement started to decline. Scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Tests began to fall. Educators were accused of grade inflation and neglect of the “basics.” While Fairfax County students still out-performed their counterparts in other Virginia school systems, they slipped in the early ’70s when compared to national norms (Division of Research and Testing, Information Memo #2, 1973). *Commitment to Education*, a Fairfax County Public Schools report published in 1973, reported that the number of students reading below grade level was rising. Some Fairfax intermediate schools reported between 30 and 40 percent of eighth graders were reading below grade level. A 1974 opinion poll of Fairfax County parents found that 73 percent believed the top priority for the school year should be finding improved ways to teach reading (Kheradmand, 2002).

Declining student achievement and a tightening economy caused many people to question rising education expenditures and demand more responsible action on the part of educators. *Accountability* became the new watchword for politicians, policy-makers, and pundits. The term had been introduced into the public debate over education by President Richard Nixon:

In his March 3rd (1970) Education Message, President Nixon stated, “From these considerations we derive another new concept: *Accountability*. School administrators and school teachers alike are responsible for their performance, and it is in their interest as well as in the interest of their pupils that they be held accountable.” (Lessinger, 1971, pp. 62–63)

Soon after Nixon’s remarks, states began enacting policies designed to increase educational accountability. Virginia was no exception. Drawing on a 1968 amendment to the state constitution that mandated “high quality” public schools, the Virginia Board of Education ordered Standards of Quality (SOQ) to be developed

(Duke and Reck, 2003). Modeled after business benchmarks, the SOQ provided guidelines regarding education personnel, materials, programs, and management. School systems were required to develop planning and management objectives aimed at bringing them into line with the SOQ. Enacted by the General Assembly in August of 1971 and implemented on July 1, 1972, the SOQ foreshadowed the increasing role of the state in local education.

Responding to the need for greater quality control over what was taught, FCPS developed grade-level objectives for the basic academic subjects in 1971 (Lecos, 1980, p. 6). These objectives constituted the basis for the school system's Program of Studies, which served as the foundation for all instructional policy in Fairfax County. In 1974 assessment experts from the county's Division of Research and Testing, in collaboration with curriculum specialists from the Department of Instructional Services, developed county tests aligned with the Program of Studies. This ambitious initiative predated by more than two decades the state of Virginia's effort to promote educational accountability through the use of standards-based testing. It would not be the last time Fairfax County found itself ahead of the curve.

When W. T. Woodson retired in 1961, he could feel confident that his school district was making good progress on the highway to educational excellence. By the time S. John Davis took over the superintendency in 1970, it had become apparent that there would be detours along the way.⁴ In one area, however, Fairfax County Public Schools would be spared the disruptions that confronted many other school systems in the new decade. As a result of having desegregated relatively early, FCPS did not have to deal with court-ordered busing, as did Richmond and many other large school systems, nor did it have to face the virulent white backlash that marked the desegregation of Boston's schools.

The ability of Fairfax to desegregate its schools relatively early and with little turmoil may have been due as much to the small size of the black population as to enlightened local attitudes. In 1971 about 3 percent or 4,000 of the county's 136,000 students were black. The percentage of black students had dropped substantially since 1954. The reason why the number of black students was low probably had a lot to do with restrictive housing policies. Robert E. Frye, the third African-American school board member in Fairfax County and the first to be elected, remembered the difficulties faced by blacks trying to move to Fairfax County in the '60s and '70s. Shortly after he and his family moved to Reston,

a planned community and one of the first areas in Fairfax to advertise an open housing policy, the original developer was forced to go out of business. The new developer, under pressure from lending institutions, abandoned ads picturing blacks and whites living together in Reston.

Aware that race had not disappeared as a social issue with the cessation of segregated schools, the Fairfax County School Board unanimously adopted a human relations policy in the fall of 1971 (Whitaker, 1971). The policy pledged to fight all vestiges of racism and guarantee equal rights for students and employees. Further, the School Board committed to helping students and staff members understand and value all minority groups. It is worth noting, however, that prior to the School Board's vote, several board members "expressed doubt that the board has the authority to enforce all the 'guarantees' outlined in the policy statement" (Whitaker, 1971).

Less than a year later, representatives of Fairfax's black community, led by Mona Blake, the School Board's first black member, were back before the board calling for "immediate improvement" in matters related to race (Landres, 1972). Among their proposals were sensitivity training for school personnel, a course in black history that would serve as an alternative to the required course in Virginia history, and attention to the high expulsion rate for black students. In the years to come the voices of black residents would be joined by growing numbers of immigrants to form a chorus calling for a more equal distribution of educational benefits.