

# Adult and Community Education

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Fairfax County Public Schools

## ACE Advisory Committee 2021 Annual Report

**ACE** | ADULT AND  
COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION

<https://www.fcps.edu/academics/adult-education-academics>

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*A World of Learning at Your Doorstep*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY2022 .....	4
Recommendation 1 .....	4
Recommendation 2 .....	4
Recommendation 3 .....	5
Recommendation 4 .....	6
Recommendation 5 .....	6
ACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – SUMMARY OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES.....	7
INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY .....	8
EXHIBITS .....	9
EXHIBIT 1. Adult and Community Education Enrollments .....	9
EXHIBIT 2. Adult and Community Education Current Financial Position .....	9
APPENDICES .....	10
APPENDIX 1. Advisory Committee Attendance .....	10
APPENDIX 2. Annual Report Voting Record .....	11
APPENDIX 3. ACE Instructor and Student Survey Detailed Analysis .....	12

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee (ACEAC) represents the community and advises the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) School Board on resource and programmatic issues related to adult education, including Community Education and Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in the Department of Instructional Services, and funded by the ACE Fund, and the Adult High School Completion program, located in the Department of School Improvement and Support. The Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee met monthly from August through June to collect information related to this purpose.

Our Committee was provided the following charge for this school year:

### 2020-2021 COMMITTEE CHARGE

Assess how the Community Education, Adult ESOL, and Adult HS Completion programs can be better positioned to serve the lifelong learning needs of Fairfax County given the new learning environment necessitated by COVID-19.

The past year has been challenging for the Adult and Community Education (ACE) programs, as with most educational programs within Fairfax County and across the country. Not all ACE programs can easily transfer to full virtual instruction, and many that could still be offered had reduced numbers of enrolled students. The experience with virtual instruction, however, provides new opportunities for fully virtual and hybrid programs to provide the flexibility needed by today's learners.

The Committee continues to believe that ACE programs provide valuable educational services and opportunities to the community, K-12 and beyond. The value of ACE aligns directly with the focus of the One Fairfax policy, to "(help) people reach their highest level of personal achievement" and to provide opportunities for improved literacy, workforce development, and lifelong learning.

As the result of our discussions over the past school year, the Advisory Committee makes the following **recommendations** to the School Board:

1. Consider additional Coronavirus relief funding to enable ACE to restore previous programs, moving toward full in-person classes, while maintaining a virtual option.
2. Ask the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for direct funding of the ACE Fund to demonstrate support of ACE program alignment with the One Fairfax policy and the draft Fairfax County Strategic Plan.
3. Continue to support virtual and hybrid instruction as a desirable class format using data-driven decision making to determine which programs can sustain enrollment and generate revenue as ACE adjusts to a post-pandemic academic setting.
4. Implement a curriculum that expedites the completion and opportunities that allow students to pursue specialized skills.
5. Expand outreach to community leaders, local human services organizations, and county agencies to increase the impact of ACE programs and inform the work of the ACEAC.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY2022

The Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee makes the following recommendations to the School Board:

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Consider additional Coronavirus relief funding to enable ACE to restore previous programs, moving toward full in-person classes, while maintaining a virtual option.**

### **Justification:**

Restoring programs and regaining public support is more challenging and costly than if the programs had been maintained without the interruption of the pandemic. We ask the board and staff to seek relief assistance, including CARES Act funds, and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, to support maintaining ACE resources and programs including staff, technical resources, and facilities. This additional funding could also be used to support instructor training for the new norm of hybrid education. The committee suggests that staff work to include an emphasis on continuing education in requests for the legislative appropriations packages.

### **Recommendation 2:**

**Ask the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for direct funding of the ACE Fund to demonstrate support of ACE program alignment with the One Fairfax policy and the draft Fairfax County Strategic Plan.**

### **Justification:**

Adult and Community Education continues to develop and design courses and programs responsive to the changing needs of the adults of Fairfax County. Over the years, and particularly in cost-constrained times, the needs of adult learners compete with the core mission of educating K-12 students when determining the funding transfer from the FCPS Operating Fund to the ACE Fund. It is the committee's belief that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors should be willing to directly provide a transfer from the County budget to the ACE Fund because of ACE's direct alignment with equity-driven goals and access to education.

Before the development of the Fairfax County Strategic Plan being placed on hold during the pandemic, it was clear that ACE programs currently support many of the plan's indicators of success. Through comprehensive programming, ACE is already focusing on three of the nine priority areas outlined in the draft plan's framework:

- **Lifelong Education and Learning** – ACE serves Fairfax residents at every stage of life and is foundational in the portfolio of lifelong learning programs offered by Fairfax County. ACE activities are diverse and range from K-12 programs and SAT prep, to technology classes geared toward seniors. Academic attainment, career-based education, technology, and language proficiency are core to the programming provided by ACE and additionally have clear connections to the mission of the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT).

- **Economic Opportunity** – With Adult ESOL, Certificate Programs, Apprenticeship, and Workforce training, ACE programs provide opportunities to learn fundamental workforce competencies as well as develop workforce skills at low cost relative to comparable programs.
- **Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability** – The language and career-based programs from ACE provide empowerment opportunities for vulnerable residents with fewer access barriers. Additional investment could be made to make ACE programming available to residents facing vulnerability at little or no cost. ACE has previously demonstrated the ability to support such programs, notably “Education for Independence” which provided economically disadvantaged single parents with career-based ACE classes.

The ACE Advisory Committee suggests that direct funding of the ACE Fund be requested from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, advancing the recognition of ACE as a county instructional service provider. Based on ACE’s experience in developing and implementing educational and training programs that meet the needs of the Fairfax County community, it has been proven that ACE has the capacity and commitment to integrally support Fairfax County learners in areas important to the Board of Supervisors and the community at large.

### **Recommendation 3:**

**Continue to support virtual and hybrid instruction as a desirable class format using data-driven decision making to determine which programs can sustain enrollment and generate revenue as ACE adjusts to a post-pandemic academic setting.**

#### **Justification:**

While the Coronavirus pandemic has presented many challenges, it has also provided opportunities to attempt new instructional delivery methods, such as fully virtual live instructor-led courses, self-paced virtual courses, and hybrid courses. The Advisory Committee believes that ACE programs should consider keeping these additional formats where appropriate to allow for increased availability of courses across the County while providing options that suit student preferences. As we transition into a post-pandemic academic setting, we suggest that data-driven decision making be used to help determine desirable class formats that can sustain or potentially increase enrollment.

The instructor and student surveys attached in APPENDIX 3 provide detailed evidence to reinforce our recommendation. The findings of both surveys paralleled one another, though the variance in data for the instructor survey was more statistically significant than those of the student survey.

The Advisory Committee believes that offering additional virtual and hybrid courses can offer cost savings for ACE in terms of spatial needs while also providing students a greater opportunity to attend classes they may not have previously been able to because of geographic, scheduling, or other reasons. The Advisory Committee also realizes that this recommendation should be considerate of a digital divide that may exist among ACE students and may prevent them from becoming students of virtual programs.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Implement a curriculum that expedites the completion of ACE career pathways, providing opportunities that allow students to pursue specialized skills.**

**Justification:**

Data from the NOVA Workforce Year in Review and NOVA's analysis of in-demand occupations suggests growth trends in several industries that require credentials and certifications obtained through specialized career training. These in-demand occupations can be identified through an analysis of job postings and growth in postings over time. To allow community members to seek employment in these high-demand fields as quickly as possible, a focus on implementing a curriculum that creates the most expeditious pathway to these certifications and credentials is necessary. With an increased focus on expeditious completion, students' access to specialized courses that further expand their employment opportunities will increase as well. This dual focus benefits both community members seeking employment and meets the needs of the business community.

**Recommendation 5:**

**Expand outreach to the community leaders, local human services organizations, and county agencies to increase the impact of ACE programs and inform the work of the ACEAC.**

**Justification:**

To meet the needs and interests of the diverse demographic residents of Fairfax County, the ACE Committee and the ACE staff must seek community input and engagement beyond the 12 School Board members' appointees. By expanding outreach to organizations and agencies that are embedded in the many diverse communities, the program will be more closely connected to Fairfax County residents.

ACE staff may have limited bandwidth to connect with the large number of organizations that support the community. Combined efforts of staff with the School Board and the Advisory Committee can engage and connect the community with the opportunities provided by ACE programs. The Committee invites the Board to help promote ACE programming through Board member newsletters, social media, and other constituent outreach.

During the spring 2021 semester, the ACE Advisory Committee piloted "visitor" outreach. Committee member Lois Passman connected the committee to United Community (UC), a human services agency supporting the vulnerable population in the Mount Vernon and Lee Magisterial Districts. UC Director Alison DeCoursey and Program Administrator Steve Luteran participated in the March 18 Advisory Committee meeting. The purpose was to determine what ACE can offer as UC begins the new "Family Achievement Program" as part of UC's goal to end multi-generational poverty. Since that meeting, ACE and UC have continued the collaboration, resulting in UC registering three students in the ACE Pharmacy Technician and Certified Nursing Assistant courses.

The Adult and Community Education Program will benefit a new client demographic and tap into a potential new source of tuition revenue. The served residents of Fairfax County will have access to a new educational opportunity. An additional desired outcome of increased outreach is that the ACE connections with resident needs will further achieve the alignment outcome of the draft Fairfax County Strategic Plan.

## ACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – SUMMARY OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date	Activity
September 23, 2020	ACEAC Meeting: Welcome and Introduction of 2021-21 Committee Members and ACE staff; Review of Committee Charge and Responsibilities; Program Overview; Review of 2019-20 ACEAC report; Establish nomination committee; Discuss election protocol and meeting schedule
October 21, 2020	ACEAC Meeting: Election of Officers; Staff-led presentation of Financial Model and Budget
November 18, 2020	ACEAC Meeting: ACE program updates from staff; ACE Marketing Plan; Brainstorming Breakout Sessions
December 16, 2020	ACEAC Meeting: ACE program updates from staff; ACE Foundation Update; Committee Expansion; Data necessary to assess Digital Divide and Fairfax County Needs
January 27, 2021	ACEAC Meeting: Program updates from ACE Staff; Digital Divide; Draft Survey Questions
February 17, 2021	ACEAC Meeting: Program updates from ACE Staff, including revenue update; Review and Approval of Survey Questions; External Organizations for Input
March 11, 2021	Survey released to ACE instructors
March 18, 2021	ACEAC Meeting: Presentation from United Community; ACE program updates from staff; Adult ESOL / AEFLA grants update; Initial Brainstorming of Annual Report Recommendations; Organizations for potential membership/outreach
April 21, 2021	ACEAC Meeting: Election of ACE Secretary; ACE program updates from staff; Overview of Fairfax Adult High School Completion; ACE Instructor Survey results and recommendations; Recommendations for ACEAC Annual Report; Outreach to Community organizations and agencies
May 10, 2021	Survey released to adult ACE students
May 19, 2021	ACEAC Meeting: ACE program updates from staff; Work session on Annual Report; Review of ACEAC By-laws; Review of organizations to be considered for nomination to ACEAC; Process of reappointment to AC
June 2, 2020	ACEAC Meeting: Review Annual Report; Suggest draft charge to school board for 2021-2022 committee

## INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

The ACEAC over multiple meetings devised a set of questions to be asked of ACE Instructors and Students to assess their adjustment to and the success of the new learning environment necessitated by COVID-19. Ken Balbuena, ACEAC member from the Braddock District, performed a statistical analysis of the survey results as summarized below.

### **Instructor Survey**

#### **Summary of Quantitative Findings**

Instructors prefer to teach in person vs. virtually. The preference for hybrid vs. virtual depends on whether the courses are classroom-based or tech/lab-based. Instructors who had the necessary tools to teach online preferred to teach virtually and also saw a higher level of perceived student engagement. When looking at a combination of variables, whether a course was classroom-based or tech/lab-based had the greatest influence on perceived student engagement.

#### **Summary of Qualitative Findings**

The majority of the positive comments were about having the opportunity to be challenged to convert courses to a virtual format. Negative comments from instructors pertained to some courses not being optimized for an online format. This, therefore, impacted the instructors' income earnings, including the number of sections they can teach. The positive comments focused on students being more engaged; however, the negative student impact comments also pertained to student engagement as well as a lack of course offerings in a virtual/hybrid format. There were some suggestions on how to make the use of technology better.

### **Adult Student Survey**

#### **Summary of Quantitative Findings**

The findings of the student survey greatly mirror the instructor survey. Students prefer to take classes in-person vs. virtually, but differing from the instructor survey, there is no evidence of a correlation between the format preference and whether the courses are classroom-based or tech/lab-based. Students who had the necessary tools to take classes online preferred a virtual format versus in-person or hybrid and also had reported higher engagement.

#### **Summary of Qualitative Findings**

Students seemed very grateful for the work of ACE and appreciated their instructors. Students were vocal about wanting to return to in-person classes and offered suggestions on how to virtual and in-person classes better.



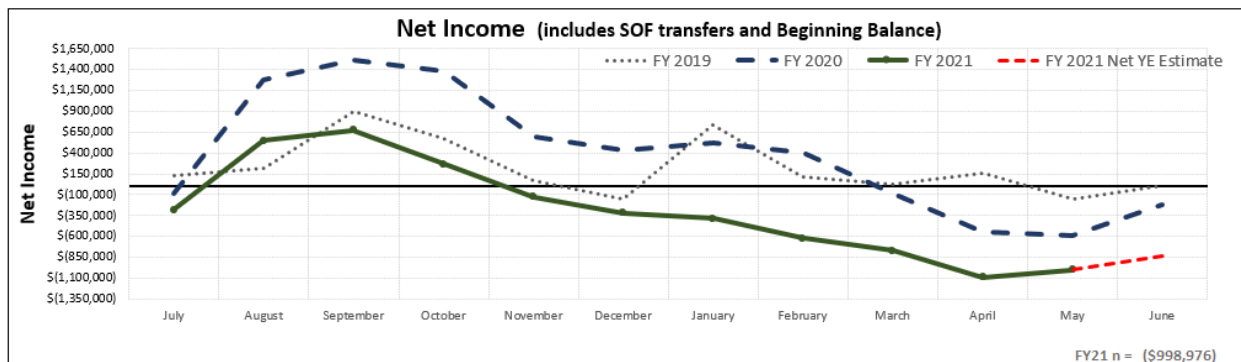
**EXHIBITS**

**EXHIBIT 1. Adult and Community Education Enrollments**

**ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION ENROLLMENTS  
FY2019, FY2020, and FY2021 for classes starting on/before 5/21/21**

LOB (including Career Readiness enrollments)	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021		
	Year End Enrollment	Year End Enrollment	Classes To Date		Avg/Class
			# Classes	Enrollments	
Apprenticeship	719	705	51	587	11.5
Trade & Industry	952	595	47	223	4.7
Business & Computer	2,280	1,338	169	616	3.6
Workplace Training	148	122	-	-	-
Foreign/Sign	2,282	1,962	156	1,036	6.6
Home/Personal Improvement	1,796	1,266	27	164	6.1
Health & Medical	1,494	882	61	391	6.4
<b>Adult Programs Subtotal</b>	<b>9,671</b>	<b>6,870</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>3,017</b>	<b>5.9</b>
AEFLA FX Tuition/FX Grant	4,426	2,845	60	822	13.7
IELCE Tuition & Grant	449	361	35	443	12.7
ESOL Tuition (non grants)	181	157	8	86	10.8
<b>ESOL Subtotal</b>	<b>5,056</b>	<b>3,363</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>1,351</b>	<b>13.1</b>
<b>Behind-The-Wheel Subtotal</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>2,735</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>2,493</b>	<b>3.9</b>
K-12 Languages (Global)	727	165	-	-	-
Elementary Enrichment	177	81	-	-	-
Secondary Enrichment	565	401	-	-	-
<b>K-12 Programs Subtotal</b>	<b>1,469</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>ACE Subtotal</b>	<b>18,881</b>	<b>13,615</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>6,861</b>	<b>5.5</b>
Registration Services	19,803	25,721		1,148	
<b>Enrollment &amp; Registration Grand Total</b>	<b>38,684</b>	<b>39,336</b>		<b>8,009</b>	

**EXHIBIT 2. Adult and Community Education Current Financial Position**



*Note: the FY 2021 Net Year-End Estimate is notional and is not an official estimate.*

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1. Advisory Committee Attendance**

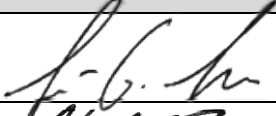
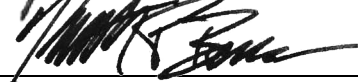


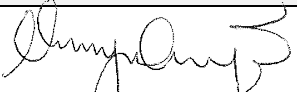

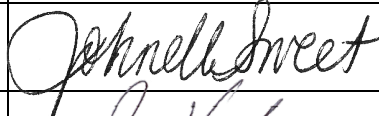
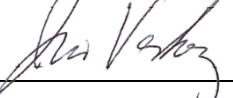

**Key:**  
**P** – Present  
**A** – Absent  
**NA** – Not Appointed

<b>2020-2021 Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee Attendance*</b>										
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>	<b>SEP 23</b>	<b>OCT 21</b>	<b>NOV 18</b>	<b>DEC 16</b>	<b>JAN 27</b>	<b>FEB 17</b>	<b>MAR 18</b>	<b>APR 21</b>	<b>MAY 19</b>	<b>JUN 2</b>
Bryan Graham, Chair, At-Large (Keys-Gamarra)	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Irvin Varkonyi, Vice Chair, Providence	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ken Balbuena, Secretary, Braddock	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Sean Arthurs, Lee	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Susan Beeman, At-Large (Sizemore Heizer)	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Helen Cole, Hunter Mill	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Akshay Deverakonda, Sully	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	P	P	P	P	P
Kelly Guzman, Student Rep.	P	P	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nonye Oladimeji, At-Large (Omeish)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lois Passman, Mt. Vernon	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jessica Strelitz, Mason	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Johnelle Sweet, Springfield	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Helen (Dolly) Whelan, Dranesville	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P



\*All Meetings held virtually on Blackboard Collaborate

## 2020-2021 ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## APPENDIX 2. Annual Report Voting Record

Committee Member	District	Eligible to Vote?	Date	Approve	Oppose	Abstain	Signature
Sean Arthurs	Lee	YES	6/9/2021	✓			
Ken Balbuena	Braddock	YES	6/7/2021	✓			
Susan Beeman	At-Large (Sizemore Heizer)	YES	6/9/2021	✓			
Helen Cole	Hunter Mill	YES	6/9/2021	✓			Electronically Signed
Akshay Deverakonda	Sully	YES	6/9/2021	✓			Electronically Signed
Bryan Graham	At-Large (Keys-Gamarra)	YES	6/7/2021	✓			
Kelly Guzman	Student Representative	NO					
Nonye Oladimeji	At-Large (Omeish)	YES	6/8/2021	✓			
Lois Passman	Mt. Vernon	YES	6/9/2021	✓			
Jessica Strelitz	Mason	YES	6/7/2021	✓			Electronically Signed
Johnelle Sweet	Springfield	YES	6/9/2021	✓			
Irvin Varkonyi	Providence	YES	6/9/2021	✓			
Helen (Dolly) Whelan	Dranesville	YES	6/8/2021	✓			

**APPENDIX 3. ACE Instructor and Student Survey Detailed Analysis**

Type	Analysis Document
Instructor	 Survey Analysis 2.pdf
Student	 Survey Analysis Student.pdf