Fairfax County PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ENGAGE • INSPIRE • THRIVE

ACE Advisory Committee

FY26 Annual Report

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1. 2025-2026 ACEAC CHARGE

Explore how to create greater integration between Adult and Community Education (ACE) programs, the K-12 system, and the broader Fairfax community, focusing on Career and Technical Education (CTE), to create a greater pipeline of students into ACE.

2. STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The four (4) recommendations of the Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee (ACEAC) align with several of the Strategic Plan goals and pillars developed by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) as indicated in Appendix 1.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Committee continued to work with staff to support staff's ongoing efforts to expand program offerings to align with a focus on increasing net income to the program while ensuring that those community members who can most benefit from the programs are not limited by financial barriers. The staff worked with the Department of Strategic Planning, as recommended in last year's report, to develop a three-year strategic business plan for long-term modernization, operational agility, and sustainable growth. The plan will be in place beginning July 1, 2026.

In response to the committee's recommendation that staff conduct a study of the economic value of Adult and Community Education (ACE) programs to the larger Fairfax community, staff issued a request for quotes and contracted for a literature study of impacts of workforce programs on the local economy. The study found, among other trends, that similar programs, in Virginia and across the United States, generate strong return on investment, producing an estimated $3.10 to $3.90 in local economic activity for every dollar spent. The final report is attached as Attachment 5.

The staff also improved their communication efforts to the larger Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) community to include outreach to high school juniors and seniors and their parents. These efforts were supported through the use of Schoology groups, the "*News You Choose*" newsletter, prominent placement in FCPS social media posts, and targeted information about career opportunities

shared through school-based career centers. Staff continued to attend school and community events promoting the program and the benefit to students.

During the year, work progressed on the community survey, and promotional videos but these efforts did not produce finished products. Staff will continue to pursue completion of these recommendations during the 2026-2027 school year.

There have been no changes to High School Equivalency (HSE) programming for the 2025-2026 school year, and preparation opportunities continue to be available during the day, evenings, Saturdays, and in virtual formats. Diploma programming is offered in person and virtually. While in-person evening classes are not currently available at The Plum Center for Lifelong Learning, students who are unable to attend daytime classes can enroll in virtual courses through EDOptions Academy (EOA). EOA classes include both synchronous and asynchronous options, allowing students flexibility to participate at times that fit their schedules.

The committee was also briefed on the Adult ESOL programs and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grant requirements and regional fiscal agent responsibilities.

Adult education requirements for local school divisions are contained in the Code of Virginia. The main Virginia Code sections connected to adult education:

- **Title 22.1, Chapter 13, Article 3 — Adult Education**
  Especially:
  - **§ 22.1-223** — Adult education definitions and programs
  - **§ 22.1-224** — Requires adult education programs in every school division
    These sections align Virginia's adult education system with federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) requirements under WIOA Title II.
- **Title 2.2, Chapter 24 — Virginia Workforce System**
  Key sections include:
  - **§ 2.2-2470 et seq.** Virginia Workforce Development System
  - **§ 2.2-2471** — Establishes the Virginia Board of Workforce Development
  - **§ 2.2-2472** — Duties related to implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

4. APPROVAL

The record of approval of this report by the ACEAC voting members is included in Appendix 2.

The primary authors of this report are:
Holly Hazard - Summary and general editing
Aaliyah de Toeni Zhu - Marketing Subcommittee

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please see Attachment 5 for Economic Study.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 **Recommendation 1**: Based on the economic impact study findings, explore the possibility of collecting social security numbers from adult students enrolled in work readiness programs to support successfully tracking the economic impact of the program on the community.

6.2 Re**commendation 2**: The Superintendent and School Board should encourage the school division's Office of Communications to broaden the digital and print media support for the Adult and Community Education (ACE) community and Adult ESOL program.

6.3 **Recommendation 3**: The School Board should work with our representative (Michael Molloy) to the Virginia legislature to promote the inclusion of the Adult and Community Education (ACE) programs in a small state budget request related to workforce development.

6.4 **Recommendation 4:** The School Board should direct staff to evaluate the financial sustainability, community goodwill, and specific industry needs associated with each program area and report their findings and recommendations to the ACEAC for future consideration.

7. FUTURE PROPOSED ANNUAL CHARGE FY27

Building on prior work to strengthen alignment across ACE, K–12, and the community, the Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee (ACEAC) will focus on advancing ACE's workforce pipeline in skilled trades and healthcare. The committee will recommend strategies to expand participation, secure additional funding and/or create efficiencies in service, align programs with industry needs, and strengthen partnerships that lead to sustainable career pathways.

8. COMMITTEE WORK

The committee was composed of new and returning members which necessitated presentations by staff members to orient the members on the ACE program offerings. Staff provided information on each program including Fairfax County Adult High School and HSE, adult community and workforce programs, and adult ESOL including the AEFLA grant. Significant time was spent understanding the funding model, tuition, expenditures, and other sources of funding that comprise the ACE fund overall.

The committee spent time supporting staff as they drafted the Three-Year Strategic Business Plan (as recommended by this committee in our 2025 Annual Report) (Attached as Appendix 6) with a focus on an Incremental Growth Framework to stabilize, build and optimize the ACE fund programs. The staff will focus on Marketing and Communications, Technology Improvements, and Program Development over the next three years. The ACEAC will follow this work closely and provide support as the staff begin to implement the plan starting in July 2026.

In addition, the committee created the requirements for an economic impact study to solicit researchers to complete an initial research study of various studies showing the positive correlation between adult workforce readiness programs and improved economic outcomes. The consultant attended two ACEAC meetings to explain their methodology and gain insight from the members on the outline for the study. The final study was completed in March 2026 and presented to the ACEAC. The consultant concluded “that continued investment in FCPS ACE is economically justified, promotes equity, and strengthens Northern Virginia’s workforce and communities.” The report is attached as Attachment 5.

Over the course of several meetings, the chair and vice-chair of the committee worked with staff to review the financial health of the ACE fund, including revenue sources, tuition calculations, staffing costs, and instructor expenses. As noted in Recommendation 4, staff should further evaluate whether classes remain a sustainable line of business and consider the potential impact that eliminating this program area could have on the overall ACE fund and ACE brand.

The Committee invited school board member Karl Frisch to address the committee on opportunities for expanding our reach using social media. The Marketing sub-committee and new communications staff incorporated his remarks into their program plans.

Overall, the increased marketing effort described below expanded the ACE brand and helped increase enrollment and revenue for the ACE fund which contributed positively to the fund balance. Final FY26 enrollment numbers will not be finalized until June 30, 2026. Current enrollment levels have resulted in projected tuition revenue of $233K, which is 8% higher than the previous fiscal year. Business and Computer programs, as well as Adult ESOL, experienced decreases in enrollment. However, all other lines of business are projecting enrollment at or above last year's levels. At the same time, regular salaries are projected to increase by approximately $120K (5%) year over year, while employee benefits are projected to increase by $151K (12%) year over year.

Due to factors beyond staff control, such as market conditions, the availability of instructors and rising salary and benefit costs for central office staff and instructors, the ACE fund continues to be partially reliant on the school operating fund transfer and end of year financial support from the Instructional Services department to succeed in maintaining a balanced budget. The majority of funding for programs comes from grants and employer reimbursements, as well as tuition and fees.

Two sub-committees were established including Marketing and Annual Report.

9. MARKETING SUB-COMMITTEE

Members: Aaliyah de Toeni Zhu (Chair), Susan Beeman, Peyton Smith, Veronica Delaney (Staff)

The Marketing Sub-Committee reviewed and assessed staff responses to the FY25 recommendations in the following areas:

- Direct ACE staff and appropriate FCPS staff to establish a recurring (at least annual) streamlined method for communicating ACE program information to FCPS staff that provides post-graduation guidance to FCPS high school students. ACE staff is currently collaborating directly with schools and attending small group meetings organized by individual staff members. The committee is recommending a much larger, coordinated effort to allow ACE staff to brief all relevant FCPS staff, so as to empower FCPS staff to encourage graduating seniors to consider ACE programming as a viable post-secondary option for career and workplace training.

Based on this recommendation, coupled with changes to the structure of the ACE marketing department, significant inroads were made this year to align ACE marketing with the needs of the FCPS K-12 community and position ACE as a viable current and post-secondary option for career and workplace training.

Using the methods outlined below, direct connections and communication were established between ACE, other FCPS organizations, FCPS parents, and FCPS students.

9.1 Schoology/Naviance

ACE staff established partnerships with key FCPS personnel to distribute program information through school-based Schoology and Naviance platforms. Targeted broadcasts reached student groups with information on Driver Education, SAT Test Prep, CTE programs, Health and Medical career training, scholarship opportunities, and employee discounts. These outreach efforts generated measurable enrollment increases, and additional SAT Test Prep sections were added to meet resulting demand.

9.2 FCPS Newsletters

ACE program information featured in *FCPS This Week* and *Employee News* two to three times per month, reaching parents, students, and staff. Since August 2025, 22 articles have been submitted and published across these newsletters. Referrals and click-throughs have been tracked via Google Analytics, though firewall limitations currently prevent full visibility into the enrollment conversion journey.

9.3 SIS

The most notable advancement in aligning ACE with the needs of the FCPS Community is the targeted use of SIS to reach specific and verified audiences. Through partnership with the FCPS ESOL department, ACE gained access to an email list of 45,166 households of K-12 English Language Learner students. Within the first hour, the Adult ESOL department received significant interest with phone and email inquiries. Within the first day, the ACE website received more than 2,000 hits to the ESOL Landing Page. Additionally, total website click-throughs exceeded 4,500 within the first two weeks. Due to the success of this near-zero acquisition cost of this outreach, coupled with its high targeting capacity, future campaigns are planned.

9.4 School Board/Board of Supervisors

ACE expanded its engagement with elected officials by establishing regular communication cadence with the School Board and Board of Supervisors, who have graciously included ACE informational material in their weekly constituents' newsletters. Since August 2025, more than 15 program announcements, press releases, and promotional materials have been distributed to the School Board, Board of Supervisors, and local media outlets.

9.5 Promotions and Sales

Periodic promotional pricing campaigns proved highly effective in generating enrollment and revenue. The Black Friday promotion generated $72,919 in revenue, an increase of 1,059% over the same period in the prior year. A January 26th promotion yielded $21,198 in enrollment revenue, an increase of 792% over the same period in the prior year. Additional promotions tied to President's Day, and spring enrollment periods also produced measurable increases in program registrations.

Black Friday Sale

The Black Friday Sale resulted in $72,919 in revenues, an increase of 1059% over the same period in previous years.

$26 Off on 1-26-26

January 26th, promotion resulted in $21,198 in class sales, an increase of 792% over the same period in previous years.

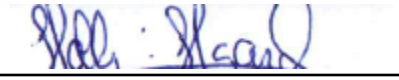
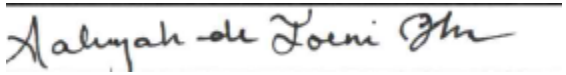
Other sales included a President's Day promotion and March Madness that resulted also in significant upticks in interest in ACE’s programs.

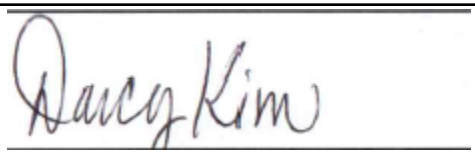
10. ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - ALIGNMENT OF FY 26 ACEAC RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FCPS 2023-30 STRATEGIC PLAN

		Goal					Pillar			
	ACEAC Recommendations	1 Start Strong: Pre-K-12	2 Safe, Supported, Included, and Empowered	3 Academic Growth and Excellence	4 Equitable Access and Opportunity	5 Leading for Tomorrow's Innovation	A Differentiated & Culturally Responsive Learning Environments	B Vibrant Home, School, and Community Partnerships	C Diverse, Adaptive, & Supported Workforce	D Culture of Equity, Excellence, and Accountability
1.	Based on the economic impact study findings, explore the possibility of collecting social security numbers from adult students enrolled in work readiness programs to support successfully tracking the economic impact of the program on the community.					X			X	
2.	The Superintendent and School Board should encourage the school division's office of communications to broaden the digital and print media support for the ACE community and Adult ESOL program.							X		

APPENDIX 2 - 2025-26 ACEAC ANNUAL REPORT VOTING RECORD

Committee Members	District	Date	Approve	Oppose	Abstain	Signature
Holly Hazard (Chair)	Mason	05/20/2026	X			
Brian Thoreson (Vice Chair)	(At-Large, Moon)	05/20/2026	X			
Susan Beeman	(At-Large, McDaniel)	05/23/2026	X			
Javier Caballero	(At-Large, McElveen)	05/22/2026	X			
Erin Swiatocha	Braddock	5/22/2026	X			*Erin Swiatocha*
Aaliyah de Toeni Zhu	Dranesville	05/20/2026	X			
Susan Wagoner	Hunter Mill	05/20/2026	X			
Peyton Smith	Mount Vernon	5/25/2026	X			

Anupriya “Priya” Krishna	Providence	05/25/2026	X			
Darcy Kim	Springfield	05/20/2026	X			
Molly Sullivan	Sully	05/25/26	X			Molly Sullivan
Tiffany Pryce	Franconia	05/22/2026	X			Tiffany Pryce

APPENDIX 3 - ACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Date	Activity
August 20, 2025	Conducted a brief review of Committee bylaws, the official charge, and the required report structure.
September 17, 2025	Reviewed the ACE Financial Report, discussed financial statements, and analyzed the direct and indirect budget.
October 15, 2025	Presided over the Adult High School presentation and reviewed the initial draft of the Economic Model.
November 19, 2025	Received presentations on Adult & Community Education ESOL, and Career & Outreach initiatives.
December 17, 2025	Provided quarterly updates on Health & Medical Careers and analyzed "Black Friday" enrollment results.
January 21, 2026	Evaluated the three-year Strategic Plan, the updated draft of the Economic Model, and the formal Business Plan.
February 18, 2026	Reviewed the direct and indirect budgets, the ACE Catalog, and the three-year Strategic Plan.
March 18, 2026	Discussed the Strategic Plan, the Marketing Committee Report, and the draft of the Annual Report.
April 15, 2026	Finalized the Marketing Committee Report and the End-of-Year Report.
May 20, 2026	Evaluated the final Economic Impact Study Report and Annual Report.
June 17, 2026	Review feedback from the presentation to the School Board. (*Planned Activity)*

Key:
P – Present
A – Absent
C – Canceled
NA – Not Appointed

APPENDIX 4 - 2025-26 ACEAC MEETING ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	AUG 20	SEP 17	OCT 15	NOV 19	DEC 17	JAN 21	FEB 18	MAR 18	APR 15	MAY 20	JUN 17
Holly Hazard, Chair, Mason	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Brian Thoreson, Vice Chair, At-Large (Moon)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Susan Beeman, At-Large (McDaniel)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Javier Caballero, At-Large (McDaniel)	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	
Erin Swiatocha, Braddock	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Aaliyah de Toeni Zhu, Dranesville	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	
Susan Wagoner, Hunter Mill	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Peyton Smith, Mount Vernon	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	
Anupriya “Priya” Krishna, Providence	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	
Darcy Kim, Springfield	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	
Molly Sullivan, Sully	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	P	A	P	
Tiffany Pryce, Franconia	NA	NA	NA	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	

Amanda Li, Student Rep, Sawant	NA	NA	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Devi Nirmalraj Hasene, Student Rep, Sawant	NA	NA	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	

ATTACHMENT 5- Economic Impact Study by Rick Clayton

Cost-Effectiveness and Economic Impact of Adult and Community Education (FCPS ACE) Programs

Fairfax County, Virginia

Prepared for the Fairfax County School Board's Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee
March 2026, Prepared by Richard Clayton

Executive Summary

This report examines the economic and social impacts of Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education (FCPS ACE) programs.

The 2024 Fairfax Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee report to the School Board recommended:

> *"Conduct an economic model study to assess ACE's impact on Fairfax County residents, guiding decisions on budgeting, resource allocation, and long-term support. The study will quantify ACE's community impact, demonstrating the program's value and supporting equity-driven decision-making."*

This study is in response that that recommendation. This study reviewed many research studies of public investments in workforce training including adult and continuing education across several states conducted by many disparate organizations.

Scope

The scope of this report is limited to the following lines of business (LOB) under the Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education umbrella: Apprenticeship, Business/Computer, Health/Medical and driver education. The following LOB's were not considered: Home/Personal Improvement (Adult Enrichment), Foreign Sign Language, K12 programming, and Adult ESOL.

Approach

This effort reviewed a series of economic research papers on workforce training programs involving many states. Many of these studies used very rigorous methods using participants' Social Security Numbers to track the actual "before and after" training earnings to estimate the overall effects. Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education Adult and Community Education does not collect the Social Security Numbers of class-takers so this approach could not be taken. This said, these relevant studies from across the country cover a variety of workforce programs not necessarily matching the Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education offerings. However, it is felt that the consistency of these studies from many states and regions conducted by a range of well-respected institutions and consultancies find very positive economic results that can be applied to the in-scope Adult and Community Education classes.

Summary of major findings

Evidence from MDRC, the Brookings Institution, American Enterprise Institute, The Urban Institute, Virginia Career Works Northern, SkillSource, and Arapahoe/Douglas Works consistently demonstrates that participants in workforce programs including adult education programs experience higher wages, increased employment probability, and broader community benefits.

Employer-sponsored training enhances these gains through improved retention, alignment with industry needs, and additional multiplier effects. About 47% of revenue for the in-scope classes are provided directly from local employers specifically looking to Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education for training for their workers.

The economic impact measured by the study most closely aligned to northern Virginia studies of workforce programs including adult education classes estimate that for every dollar spent 3.1 to 3.9 dollars were generated across the local economy. This benefit-cost ratio, in rough terms, is found consistently across workforce programs across the country.

Disadvantaged populations—including low-income adults, immigrants, English language learners, and adults without postsecondary credentials—benefit from Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education programs. Programs improve employability, earnings potential, and workforce attachment, reducing inequality and strengthening families and neighborhoods.

Given these findings, Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education programs are both economically justified and strategically important for Northern Virginia.

I. Introduction and Policy Context

Northern Virginia has a dynamic and diverse economy dominated by professional services, government contracting, technology, and healthcare sectors. Fairfax County is home to a highly skilled workforce, yet labor demand continues to exceed supply in several technical and service occupations. Many residents, particularly disadvantaged populations, face barriers to skill acquisition, credentialing, and employment due to lack of transportation, digital literacy, or prior educational attainment.

Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education programs help to address these challenges by providing residents with the tools to acquire new skills, increase employability, and align with local labor market needs. Courses range from workforce-focused certifications and digital literacy to Driver’s Education.

It is important to recognize that the citizens of Fairfax who apply for Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education classes are highly motivated. These people want and need to invest their own time and money to improve themselves, their families and by extension, our community. Adult and Community Education programs support their self-initiative.

Challenges

The northern Virginia economy is facing a new and largely unprecedented challenge. Over recent decades, the very large and relatively stable Federal workforce in Fairfax and surrounding counties largely insulated the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area from the worst impacts of economic swings. Now that underlying stability is threatened.

Large-scale US government job cuts and the associated reductions in contractor support for government operations is challenging many local companies and job seekers to review their skills, to improve them and look for new jobs. Adult and Community Education classes are a key part of supporting those motivated residents as they face these realities.

The rapidly evolving role of Artificial Intelligence in our businesses also present significant challenges to our residents. While every educational institution is wrestling with the current and future job characteristics flowing from AI, the existing Adult and Community Education infrastructure seems well-positioned to be a part of the response to changing needs.

Fairfax County Public Schools invests about $1,350,000 in the Adult and Community Education set of programs per year, including classes of some types outside the scope of this study. These funds cover the administrative costs of managing these varied programs and also partially subsidize the costs of the classes, keeping class costs reasonable for Fairfax residents. It will be shown that current class costs to participants likely price out some residents.

Recommendation

Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education currently does not collect Social Security Numbers (SSNs), which prevents the most rigorous studies using Unemployment Insurance wage records. I recommend Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education begin collecting SSNs to enable longitudinal analysis of actual participant wage changes, employment outcomes, and occupational shifts. Beginning in 2025, Virginia's enhanced wage record requirements will include occupational codes for all Unemployment Insurance covered employees, allowing Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education to study industry changes, occupation mobility, and wage growth among participants. Thus, future studies can be more finely tuned to cover Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education learners.

II. Evidence from State Workforce Programs

Sector Based Programs

These types of programs provide training for occupations with strong local demand, with the training designed to match workers' skills with local business needs. Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education offers classes and certifications designed for specific occupations in demand including nursing aides, clinical medical assistant, and dental assistant in the medical sphere. In the computer and information technology occupations, certificates are offered in software, network and analytical supporting top software platforms such as CISCO, AWS, Microsoft and more.

The MDRC 10-year evaluation of WorkAdvance shows that participants in high-performing sector-based programs experienced sustained earnings gains. This detailed 10-year follow up study of four WorkAdvance programs across three states found: “the benefit-cost analysis were positive from the perspective of WorkAdvance participants, the government and society as a whole at all four programs over a 5-to 10-year follow-up period. For example, people in the WorkAdvance group made substantial financial gains of $5000 to $15,000 during the follow-up period, even though they paid higher taxes and received less in government assistance (like food stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and housing assistance)”.

Further, within these four locations, “high-performing locations found significant wage increases relative to control groups, along with increased workforce attachment and somewhat reduced reliance on public support programs. Work Advance programs targeted sector-aligned skills, employer engagement, and follow-up support with participants, which contributed to longer-term economic impact. “

In a 2024 paper, a large-scale study by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University, based on about 24,000 working-age adults in the Virginia Community college system found that “earning an industry-recognized credential, on average, increases quarterly earnings by approximately $1,000 and the probability of being employed by 2.4 percentage points, although there is substantial heterogeneity in economic returns across different program fields.” Further, “the earnings gains associated with the industry credential obtained through the noncredit workforce training would exceed program costs in just over half a year on average.”

A detailed study of the net impact and cost-benefit of Washington State workforce programs found that “The direct social impact of these programs…is a net gain of $14.5 billion over 5 years, for a social ROI of $5.60 for $1.00 spent.” This was the highest benefit: cost ratio found among these research studies. This study, like the MRDC study, included reduced government expenditures for a small set of support programs, suggesting that workforce programs not only lead to better wages and employment outcomes, but the cost of government support programs is reduced.

From these studies, it is clear that focused industry-facing skill building is effective in furthering both workers and local businesses.

Employer-sponsored training generates additional benefits beyond standard adult education programs. These benefits include:

- Enhanced skill alignment with industry needs, improving productivity.
- Increased retention and employee loyalty, reducing recruitment and training costs.
- Wage gains and career advancement opportunities for participants.
- Broader community-level economic impacts through higher local spending and tax contributions.

Studies from Virginia, Washington, and other states demonstrate that employer-sponsored programs often achieve higher benefit-cost ratios (up to 3.5:1) compared to participant-funded or solely public-funded programs. These programs also foster stronger connections between training curricula and workforce demand, resulting in long-term alignment between local labor supply and industry needs.

Employer-sponsored classes in FCPS ACE

About 47% of Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education funds collected for the in-scope classes are paid for by local businesses, totaling about $539,000 in 2025. These are clearly hitting the mark.

One consistent customer said:

> *We are a plumbing company specializing in new home construction. Our work includes installation, service, project management, purchasing, and administrative operations to support field production for local, regional and national homebuilders. We have utilized ACE classes for professional and workforce development. Trade-related coursework-Plumbing 1-4*
> *In the past year, we sponsored approximately 4 employees. Participation has included both new hires seeking foundational skills and existing employees pursuing advancement opportunities.*
> *Trade-related classes have supported employee growth.*
> *We have partnered with ACE for approximately 15+ years and have consistently found the programs accessible and practical for working adults.*
> *We selected ACE because:*
> - *The programs are affordable and accessible.*
> - *Schedules are designed for working adults.*
> - *Instruction is practical and immediately applicable.*
> - *The program supports workforce development at a local level.*
>
> *ACE has provided meaningful workforce development support for our company. The classes have improved communication, technical skills, and career advancement opportunities for our employees. This directly strengthens our operations and supports long-term employee retention and growth. Programs like ACE are a valuable investment in our local workforce and business community.*
>
> *Amy Audin, Director of HR and Administrative Services*
> *Capital Mechanics*

Further, a former student and now a business owner and ACE teacher says:

> *ACE has honestly been one of the best things that ever happened to me.*
>
> *In high school, I had already completed electrical Levels 1 and 2, but ACE gave me the opportunity to keep going and finish Levels 3 and 4 after high school. After that, I also took the Journeyman and Master's prep classes through ACE, which helped me get ready for both tests.*
>
> *Because of ACE, I was able to take my Journeyman's exam and pass it, and later take and pass my master's exam too. Getting my Journeyman's license definitely helped me move forward in my career and earn bigger raises when I was working for the union and the white*

house. Then once I got my Master's license, it gave me the confidence and qualifications to open my own business. I've been in business since 2019.

What means the most to me is that ACE helped me come full circle. It opened doors for me, and now I've been able to do the same for others. I've hired employees, encouraged them to take ACE classes, and helped give them the same opportunities I had to get licensed and grow in their careers.

I also started teaching with ACE. Last year I taught Level 4, and this year I'm teaching both Level 1 and Level 4 again. That's been really meaningful to me because now I get to pass on what ACE gave me. Most of my classes have around 25 to 27 students, and I always try to be a role model for them and show them what's possible if they stay focused and put in the work.

ACE didn't just help me learn the trade. It helped me build my career, increase my income, open my own business, and now it's giving me the chance to help the next generation do the same thing.

Brian Rioja, owner of Ultra Lighting

Other State-Level Return on Investment Analyses

Studies from Washington State, Texas, and Colorado also confirm positive returns:

Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board reported: "Benefit-cost ratios for workforce development programs consistently exceed one, indicating positive returns to taxpayers and participants."
Texas Adult Education programs improved workplace literacy and foundational skills, translating into higher employment probability.
Colorado Skills Builder programs reported $938 average quarterly wage gains for short-term career training participants.
Colorado Arapahoe/Douglas Works! The program yielded about $8 in participant earnings for every $1 of public funds invested. "By four years post-exit, individuals who received Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Staff-assisted services were earning 145% of what there were earning two quarters prior to entry".

III. Virginia-Specific Evidence

In a 2025 published study of the 2024 Virginia Career Works Northern Region workforce programs and services, a benefit: cost ratio of 3.1:1 to 3.9:1 depending on the composition of the programs included. These results were similar to the prior year's report which found the benefit: cost ratio as 2.7:1 to 3.5:1. These programs include Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) adult program, Dislocated Workers program, Ticket to Work, Talent up Fairfax and One-Stop Center job placement among others.

SkillSource programs reported average perspective wage gains of $2,800–$3,200 per year, with benefit-cost ratios between 2.8:1 and 3.5:1. FCPS ACE is as approved provider with Skillsource.

IV. Disadvantaged Populations

Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education serves participants who face structural and systemic barriers. These include low-income adults, immigrants, English language learners, and individuals with limited prior education. Evidence shows that:

- Digital literacy and language acquisition programs increase employability.
- Workforce-aligned training improves occupational mobility and earning potential.
- Family and community benefits include reduced reliance on public assistance, greater household stability, and intergenerational impact.

“Community-based digital skilling programs increase workforce participation and earnings potential among Latino adults, particularly when instruction is culturally and linguistically aligned.” — Hispanic Federation

In a study of the Latino Digital Divide, the Hispanic Foundation’s Digital Accelerator program established many sites for occupational training. When asked what types of curricula they wished to add, 57% wanted Technical Certificate programs in such software as Cisco, AWS, Google -- exactly the kinds of classes and certificates that FCPC ACE provides.

The previously mentioned benefit of job and skills training increases employment outcomes and secondary effects of reduced reliance on other government support programs.

V. Drivers Education and Workforce Access

Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education Driver’s Education helps about 4,000 to 5000 people each year.

Driver’s Education plays a critical role in workforce access and mobility. Research demonstrates that obtaining a driver’s license increases the probability of employment by approximately 1%, enabling participants to access higher-paying jobs that may otherwise be unreachable due to transit limitations. For Northern Virginia, where transit coverage is limited and commuting distances can be long, this effect is particularly pronounced.

A Brookings Institution study “High Cost or High Opportunity Cost? Transportation and Family Economic Success,” cited results of a Vermont subsidized car ownership program for low-income residents, “earned income increased by about $220 per month, approximately two-and-a-half times higher than earnings prior to receipt of the car.” Clearly, access to a car and thus the need for Driver’s Education can be a key to getting and retaining jobs and the income that follows.

In another study by the Brookings found that in Philadelphia, “only 20 percent of jobs in the region were accessible via transit.” For the Washington area, “only 37 percent of jobs are accessible to the

typical commuter". Access to reliable transportation remains a critical barrier for workforce participation. Driver's Education programs directly address this gap and contribute to employment opportunity and stability.

In addition to employment probability, Driver's Education indirectly contributes to economic activity: participants gain flexibility to attend training, access better-paying jobs, and reduce absenteeism due to transportation issues.

Driver's Education also complements other Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education program components, such as workforce certifications, digital literacy, and English language instruction, by removing transportation barriers and increasing overall program effectiveness.

VI. Cost Sharing and Price Elasticity

Price elasticity measures how sensitive program demand is to changes in cost. Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education program experience demonstrates significant responsiveness: small reductions in tuition or fees result in notable surges in applications, while higher costs can create barriers for motivated participants.

Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education's current cost structure is partially funded by the county and partially by tuition paying students. Evidence suggests that some residents are effectively priced out at current tuition levels, though grant programs and discounted classes allow many to participate. Recent data from Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education programs show:

- Tuition reductions of 10% can increase enrollment by 12–15%.
- Competition for even small grants indicates strong demand and high motivation among applicants and significant price sensitivity.

  This dynamic suggests that:

- Reducing Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education's contribution or increasing fees for participants may reduce enrollment and economic benefits.
- Offering sales, grants, or discounted tuition allows a wider pool of motivated participants to access programs, maximizing both economic and social returns.

High demand and limited financial resources among participants indicate that cost-sensitive strategies, such as tuition reductions and grants, directly influence participation rates and resulting economic outcomes.

Maintaining access to Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education programs for financially constrained participants ensures that the county maximizes the ROI of public investments and supports community equity goals.

VII. Conclusion

Research shows that workforce training programs across the country similar to Fairfax County Public Schools Adult Community Education programs, consistently produce positive economic and social returns. Motivated participants leverage these programs to improve skills, employment, and household income. Employer partnerships, Driver's Education, and pricing strategies amplify benefits. Continued investment in Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education is economically justified, promotes equity, and strengthens Northern Virginia's workforce and communities.

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ATTACHMENT 6- ACE Strategic Plan

FCPS Adult and Community Education (ACE)
Three-Year Strategic Business Plan

7/1/2026 - 6/30/2029

Plan uses an Incremental Growth Framework: Stabilize → Build → Optimize

This plan aligns with the Strategic Plan of Fairfax County Public Schools and supports divisionwide priorities for innovation, fiscal stewardship, data-driven decision-making, and outreach. Specifically, this plan is aligned with Goal 5: "Every student will graduate ready to thrive in life after high school and with the skills to navigate, adapt, and innovate for a sustainable future."

Recommendation Received from the Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee (ACEAC) – Basis for Planning Document

- *Recommend the School Board request the assistance of the Department of Strategy, Planning and Learning to work with ACE staff to develop and align a three-year strategic business plan for ACE's marketing & communications, technology, and program development, following an incremental growth framework. The plan should be endorsed by the School Board as a roadmap for long-term modernization, operational agility, and sustainable growth.*

II. Purpose

The purpose of the three-year strategic business plan is to establish a structured, phased roadmap for the modernization and sustainable expansion of FCPS Adult and Community Education (ACE). The plan aligns marketing & communications, technology, and program development to strengthen visibility, operational agility, enrollment growth, and long-term financial sustainability.

The plan is designed to:

- Improve data integrity and use data for decision-making.
- Strengthen public trust and promote the positive economic impact on the community.
- Enhance and continually modernize ACE's digital infrastructure.

- Provide a framework for providing programming that supports the needs of recent graduates, alumni, and members of the community.
- Create an operating model for the ACE funded programs that can be self supporting within three years.

III. Strategies

1. **Marketing & Communications**
   Unify brand messaging, expand community reach, and engage adult learners through data-driven campaigns, multilingual communications, and strategic partnerships to increase enrollment, revenue,

   KPIs: Enrollment growth overall, enrollment growth of recent high school graduates in workforce development courses, enrollment growth in FCPS families, cost per lead/enrollment, measurable ROI, engagement metrics, advertising reach.

   Primary Measure: Qualified Enrollment Conversion Rate from Marketing Efforts.

2. **Technology**
   Enhance newly modernized registration system and infrastructure to support data-driven continuous improvement and innovation, registration, data analytics, and user experience while improving operational efficiency and instructional innovation.

   KPIs: Registration completion rates and satisfaction, system uptime, staff digital competency, data accuracy.

   Primary Measure: Registration completion rate

3. **Program Development**
   Enhance and expand ACE's educational offerings through strategic recruitment, retention, and development of instructors and programs. Program Development includes:

   - Hiring and retaining qualified instructors who reflect the diversity of students, families, and the community.
   - Adding more sections of existing class offerings that are popular.
   - Introducing new courses based on demand and capability.
   - Utilizing Program Specialists to identify evolving educational interests and growth opportunities.
   - Creating targeted programming for neighborhoods surrounding key locations using latest demographic data, interest inventories and community outreach.

KPIs: Number and innovation of new classes, waiting lists, instructor retention, student outcomes (e.g. class completion, successive enrollments), enrollment, program success, profile of instructors by race, ethnicity, and language.

Primary Measure: Percentage of Programs Meeting Enrollment and Retention Viability Thresholds for each course defined by the pricing and enrollment tool and entered in Modern Campus.

IV. Incremental Growth Framework

Year 1 – Stabilize & Assess (in progress – complete by June 30, 2026)

Objective: Use improvements in staffing and registration systems to make data-informed decisions that lead to increased enrollment.

Marketing & Communications – Actions

- Utilize recent market research and analysis (demographics, competition, workforce demand, adult learner behaviors) to improve marketing efficiency.
- Expand usage of newly implemented ACE brand standards, messaging guidelines, and communication templates across all ACE communicators.
- Implement low-cost, high-impact, targeted marketing initiatives through social media campaigns, direct mail, email list acquisition, transit advertising, and FCPS staff email and Schoology outreach. Market ACE internally through the Parent Resource Center, the Welcome Center, and family liaisons.
- Transition from external marketing retainers to internal management with project-based vendor support, if needed.
- Expand analytics tracking with Google Analytics for enrollment trends and content engagement.
- Use the FCPS senior survey to identify prospective students for the ACE program upon graduation.
- Use alumni surveys/ National Student Clearinghouse data to identify and target communications to students who may be interested in ACE and not otherwise enrolled in postsecondary education.
- Systematic outreach through Schoology, Naviance, Talking Points, and Student Services Departments.

  Measure: Percentage of enrolled students who can be attributed to a tracked marketing or outreach channel (digital ads, email campaigns, community partners, multilingual outreach, etc.).

Technology – Actions

- Audit ACE's current systems, including student information systems, scheduling, registration, and instructor tools to eliminate redundancies, and identify necessary infrastructure upgrades.

- Launch standardized staff training on core digital tools used by ACE.
- Establish a dedicated technology staff role for Modern Campus site development, Google Analytics expansion, and systems optimization. To support a more efficient use of
- Develop automated data dashboards for enrollment, completion, budget, and program demand. These dashboards will be built to monitor these different areas so you can be strategic and responsive to emerging trends.

  Measure: Percentage of users who begin registration and successfully complete enrollment without staff intervention.

Program Development – Actions

- Review and assess current program offerings, enrollment trends, and instructor capacity. To determine which programs to expand, which to sunset, and which to retool.
- Identify gaps and opportunities for new courses aligned with community demand.
- Continue recruitment of instructors for high-demand programs Partner with businesses and explore pro-bono instructors.
- Encourage Program Specialists to monitor emerging educational trends and workforce needs.
- In partnership with CCCR, conduct a review of emerging adult education and workforce trends to inform ACE course offerings.

  Measure: The proportion of new and expanded classes that meet predefined benchmarks for enrollment, course completion, and instructor continuity within their first offering cycle.

Year 2 – Build & expand – complete by June 30, 2027

Objective: Expand reach, improve digital experiences, and strengthen cross-system partnerships.

Marketing & Communications – Actions

- Launch refreshed ACE brand across digital and print platforms.
- Scale paid advertising campaigns and optimize response channels gleaned through Google Analytics reports.
- Expand use of purchased email and direct mail contact lists for community reach.
- Develop video testimonials and program highlight reels for social media and presentations.
- Increase proactive engagement and multilingual outreach through partnerships with Parent Liaisons, FCPS Student Services, Facebook, and FCPS Communications and Community Engagement offices.
- Annual SIS data pulls for targeted outreach (Sophomores, Seniors, CTE students, Graduates, ELL families).

- Quarterly promotion of adult ESOL based on registration dates, Driver's Ed based on FCPS Quarter-end dates, Apprenticeship Registration deadlines, and other high-demand courses.

  Measure: Year-over-year percentage increase in enrollments that can be attributed to tracked marketing channels and community partnerships.

Technology – Actions

- Enhance capabilities and tracking within Modern Campus as the primary platform for information, registration, and marketing.
- Expand the use of digital tools embedded in course offerings (e.g., using Gemini AI) tools and hybrid instructional options.
- Expand automation for registration reminders, scheduling, and follow-ups.
- Begin integrating predictive and workflow analytics for operational efficiency.
- Establish a dedicated technology and analytics position.

  Measure: Percentage decrease in registrations requiring manual staff intervention compared to baseline.

Program Development – Actions

- Launch new courses and increase program offerings across high-demand areas based on Year 1 analysis.
- Expand instructor recruitment and professional development programs.
- Redefine Program Specialists roles to focus on industry trends, program expansion, and educational development.
- Begin structured evaluation of program success and student outcomes.

  Measure: Percentage of newly launched or expanded programs that are sustained into subsequent terms based on enrollment, completion, and instructor availability. Analysis of student outcomes.

Year 3 – Optimize & Innovate – complete by June 30, 2028

Objective: Achieve financial sustainability, maximize operational efficiency, and scale proven initiatives.

Marketing & Communications – Actions

- Conduct marketing ROI studies and optimize campaigns based on data from Years 1–2.
- Expand digital and community-based outreach strategies to include print and broadcast advertising.
- Expand employer- and community-linked marketing strategies with district workforce and adult learning initiatives.

- Strengthen public sector engagement (County Board, School Board, agencies) and publish annual ACE Impact and Communications Report, highlighting learner outcomes and program impact.

  Measure: Net revenue generated from marketing-attributed enrollments relative to marketing expenditures.

Technology – Actions

- Implement predictive analytics for enrollment, workforce demand, and capacity planning.
- Pilot emerging technologies: AI-assisted tutoring, adaptive learning platforms, automated translation tools.
- Fully integrate ACE's technology ecosystem with district systems and strategic initiatives so graduating seniors seamlessly flow into the ACE instructional environment.
- Expand mobile-first user experiences for registration, payments, and communication.

  Measure: Percentage of programmatic, marketing, or operational decisions that explicitly reference system-generated data or analytics.

Program Development – Actions

- Introduce additional classes based on predictive enrollment trends and community needs.
- Strengthen instructor retention and mentorship programs.
- Expand programs leveraging Program Specialists' research into educational trends.
- Continuously evaluate program effectiveness and community impact.

  Measure: Percentage of programs demonstrating positive student outcomes aligned to program intent (e.g., skill attainment, credential completion, educational progression, or employment-related outcomes where applicable).

VIII. Governance & Oversight Structure

Consultative Partner: Department of Strategy, Planning and Learning
Implementation Roles:

- ACE Leadership – operational execution, accountability, and program reporting.
- Cross-functional team:
  - Marketing & Communications Lead
  - Vendor Relationship Lead
  - Program Development Lead
  - Data & Analytics Lead

- Workforce and Community Liaison

Quarterly performance reviews monitored through the department team action plans and presented to the Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee at least once per fiscal year. Annual ACEAC reports to the School Board will include data pertaining to the three-year strategic business plan.