

Appendix A

Background Information

(A1)	English Language Arts Program Description	Pages 1 – 19
(A2)	Evaluation Methodology	Pages 20 – 26

English Language Arts Program Description

Program Overview

The APS ELA program seeks to develop students who are strategic readers, effective writers, engaging speakers, and critical thinkers. Work on this goal begins early in Kindergarten and continues in elementary school, into middle school, and throughout high school. Upon graduating from APS, students who have met course requirements and passed state tests have demonstrated that they have the literacy skills necessary for success in an increasingly information-based society.

In APS, we believe all children can learn, and that children learn best when they are recognized as individuals and appreciated for their different interests, backgrounds, and personalities. Teachers and families working together best help students reach their academic potential.

Literacy—the ability to read, write, and use language proficiently—remains at the center of the ELA program. Our students should be taught to become literate citizens, with the ability to think analytically, solve problems, communicate effectively, as well collaborate with diverse groups in their communities and workplaces.

In addition to teaching literacy skills, the ELA program also emphasizes the appreciation of literature. A wide variety of authors and genres are presented to students throughout the K–12 continuum. Students are taught content knowledge about significant literary eras, as well as notable authors. Students are also taught figurative language and other literary devices that enhance and enrich the study of literature.

Furthermore, students in ELA classrooms across grade levels are encouraged to create their own texts in a meaningful and supportive manner so that their individual voices and perspectives might be brought to a wider audience.

The ELA Office is devoted to creating rich classroom environments in which teachers provide a challenging and culturally responsive education for all students. Leadership for the ELA program begins with the Department of Teaching and Learning and is shared across offices and schools. The Offices of Early Childhood, English for Speakers of Other Languages/High Intensity Language Training (ESOL/HILT), Special Education, Gifted Services, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Title I, Office of Equity and Excellent, Library Services, World Languages, and Professional Learning collaborate to provide high quality curriculum, professional development, and instruction.

The ELA Office also assists in the management and coordination of the ELA elementary and secondary summer school programs, and ELA staff members participate in the hiring and monitoring of teachers and related instructional staff.

In addition to working with a number of offices within the Department of Teaching and Learning, the ELA Office works with school-based literacy leaders to implement a consistent, high quality instructional program. Specifically, the ELA Office works with teachers of English Language Arts; reading specialists and interventionists; Middle School Reading Teachers (MSRT); High School English department chairs; Content

Appendix A1

Lead Teachers; ESOL/HILT teachers, Special Education teachers, classroom teachers, and principals and assistant principals.

Resources

The APS ELA Office has been allocated four full time staff positions, including 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for a supervisor, two specialists, and an administrative assistant. The primary responsibilities of these four full-time positions are as follows:

Table 1: English Language Arts Office Staff and Responsibilities

Employee	Primary Responsibilities
<p>ELA/Reading K-12 Supervisor</p>	<p>The primary responsibilities of the ELA K-12 Supervisor include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote a common vision for a challenging, culturally responsive ELA program for all students; this includes oversight over curriculum development for K-12. ● Analyze data to inform decisions regarding the ELA instructional program. ● Plan necessary procedures to establish and attain goals for the school system in alignment with the APS Strategic Plan. ● Organize, facilitate, and present professional learning (face to face, blended, and online formats). ● Collaborate with the offices of ESOL/HILT, Special Education, Early Childhood, Office of Equity and Excellence, ATSS, Gifted, and Professional Learning to develop and execute program goals. ● Collaborate with the offices of ATSS, ESOL/HILT, and Special Education with regards to support district-wide assessment initiatives (universal screening, progress monitoring, as well as diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments). ● Collaborate and consult with school level administrators and school staff with regards to resources, curriculum, and instruction. ● Provide individualized school level supports through site-specific coaching, data analysis, professional development, and PLC/CLT facilitation. Conduct walkthroughs using Department of Teaching and Learning protocols. ● Collaborate with K-12 teachers and specialists to develop and refine APS curriculum aligned with Virginia Standards of Learning. ● Participate in the selection, hiring, training, and management of teachers ● Conduct teacher observations. ● Develop and oversee department budget. ● Serve as liaison to Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI) and English Language Arts Advisory Committee (ELAAC).
<p>ELA Elementary Teacher Specialist</p>	<p>The purpose of the ELA Elementary Teacher Specialist is to support high quality, consistent implementation of curriculum, instructional practices and resources, assessment practices, and professional learning across all elementary schools as it relates to English Language Arts. The ELA Elementary Teacher Specialist also provides school-based coaching and support for individual teachers, teacher teams, and literacy coaches. Primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support consistent curriculum implementation across 23 elementary schools. Write, revise, and update curriculum documents to align with Virginia Standards of Learning. Review curriculum feedback regularly and adjust documents as needed. Coordinate teachers across all elementary, middle, high schools who are actively writing curriculum throughout the summer/school year ● Support consistent implementation of instructional strategies across 23 elementary schools.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support district-wide assessment initiatives -- universal screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and formative. Serve as district-level administrator and help desk for problem-solving. Serve as point-person for all teacher/student login and data reporting issues. Disaggregate and report out on school-level and district-level data trends. ● Develops, plans, implements, and conducts professional learning including face to face, blended, and online formats. ● School-based coaching and PLC/CLT support. ● Supports the Elementary Strengthening Summer School Program.
<p>ELA Secondary Teacher Specialist</p>	<p>The purpose of the ELA Secondary Teacher Specialist is to support high quality, consistent implementation of curriculum, instructional practices and resources, assessment practices, and professional learning across all middle and high schools as it relates to English Language Arts. The ELA Secondary Teacher Specialist also provides school-based coaching and support for individual teachers and teacher teams. Primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write, revise, and update curriculum documents to align with Virginia Standards of Learning (and/or other such as Common Core State Standards, Gifted Programming Standards, etc.). Review feedback regularly and adjust documents as needed for accuracy before public consumption. Organize, vet, and monitor teacher teams in the revision of current documents in the summer. Coordinate teacher efforts across all middle and high schools to actively write new English and/or Reading curriculum documents throughout the school year. Create crosswalks and resource alignment guides. Appropriately integrate district-wide approved resources into curriculum documents. ● Support delivery of ELA instruction as it pertains to student learning across all middle and high schools. Meet with 6th-12th grade teachers of English and Reading to assist with the design of units, writing of lesson plans, presentation of content, and delivery of the instruction in the classroom. Assist with classroom management, provide relevant resources to teachers for use in their classrooms, conduct informal classroom observations of teachers, model and co-teach as appropriate, and provide feedback to teachers (and administrators, as requested). Indoctrinate new hires responsible for ELA instruction (English, Reading, SpEd, ESOL/HILT) at new employee orientation with an overview of best practices, expectations, curriculum, resources, and assessments. Share current research on instructional best practices during first and second Wednesdays when possible. Provide outreach, guidance, and support to school leads for development and implementation of best practices in English/Reading instruction. Interview potential candidates at job fair. Interview potential candidates at schools upon request. Interview candidates for summer school and recommends for hire/dismissal by HR. ● Coordinate, facilitate, articulate, and support district-wide assessment initiatives: universal screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and formative. Serve as district-level admin and help desk. Serve as district-level admin for assessment vendors. Serve as point-person for all teacher/student login and data reporting issues. Disaggregate and report out on district-level data trends, and school-specific data analysis upon request.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop, plan, implement, and conduct ongoing professional development offerings with the ELA Supervisor and ELA Elementary Specialist (while balancing needs of varied audience (middle/high school, English teachers, Reading teachers, Special Education teachers, ESOL/HILT teachers). Differentiation of in-person, blended, and online formats, as well as 1-hour, 3-hour, full-day, and multi-day timings. ● Provide site-specific coaching, data analysis, professional development, and PLC/CLT facilitation. Conduct walkthroughs using Dept. of Teaching and Learning form. ● Required attendance at meetings, collaborations, and other duties as assigned. Coordinate and facilitate middle and high school lead teacher and department chair meetings. Serve as T-scale representative on Program Evaluation, Career Advancement Program, Baldrige, internal hiring, and teacher evaluation committees. Responsible for public-facing responsibilities such as managing the APS ELA website, managing social media accounts, interfacing with parents and engaging with the larger school community via regular newsletters and emails. ● Manage resources specific to ELA content areas -- English, Reading, and publications electives. Identify, research, preview, order, inventory, and set up digital procedures/protocols for teacher/student access. Organize, facilitate, and review findings from resource adoption fairs or RPF meetings with Purchasing Office. Procure competing quotes and work with Purchasing Office to place orders. Liaise with Information Services to support digital resources. Update and review annual/consumable orders. Provide training on resources as needed.
<p>Administrative Office Assistant</p>	<p>Primary responsibilities of the administrative office assistant include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manage the English Language Arts Office. ● Encumber and disseminate funds, maintain records, oversee financial accounts and payroll information. ● Assist with preparation for office events/workshops. ● Correspond with teachers and other school staff regarding ELA matters. ● Manage resource ordering as a result of the adoption process (communication with school sites and vendors).

Hundreds of APS teachers provide English language arts instruction at the elementary and secondary levels; the number varies from school to school depending on the population. Elementary classroom teachers, middle and high ELA teachers, other content area teachers, special education teachers, ESOL/HILT teachers, and Title I teachers are all responsible for the education of students in the areas of English language arts.

The budget for the Department of Teaching and Learning includes funds for approved curriculum and staff development. The FY 2018 budget includes funds shared among instructional programs to pay for the following:

- salaries for curriculum work done by teachers;

Appendix A1

- salaries and costs for in-service professionals, including outside consultants, contract courses, and staff participating in professional learning outside of their contract hours; and
- conference registration fees for both presenters and attendees.

Resource Allocation:

The APS Department of Teaching and Learning provides funds for English Language Arts as part of the resource allocation process. Currently, APS uses the following resources for elementary:

- Reading, K-5: *Units of Study for Teaching Reading*
- Writing, K-5: *Units of Study for Teaching Writing*
- Writing, K-5: *Step Up to Writing*
- Word Study, K-5: *Words Their Way in Action*
- Word Study, K-5: *Orton Gillingham*
- Handwriting, K-3: *Handwriting Without Tears*

The ELA curriculum encourages student choice and wide, diverse reading experiences connected to the curriculum. A number of trade books and texts are also used to supplement student learning.

The APS Department of Teaching and Learning provides funds for English Language Arts as part of the resource allocation process. Currently, APS uses the following resources for secondary:

- Writing, 6-8: *Units of Study for Teaching Writing*
- Writing, 6-12: *Step Up to Writing*

The secondary curriculum is also supplemented by a variety of novels and other original-source texts, as well as other texts needed for specific groups, such as ESOL/HILT students. If new ELA courses are added, funds are made available for additional materials. Also, school budgets provide resources to replace and supplement instructional materials every year as needed.

Curricular information is provided by the APS ELA Office to teachers in a variety of ways. At the elementary level, each school has an ELA Point of Contact, typically the Reading Specialist, who is responsible for providing other ELA teachers with the most up-to-date information on ELA programs. At the secondary level, middle school reading teachers and high school department chairs, with content lead teachers, are responsible for distributing information. Additionally, the ELA Office sends a monthly newsletter directly to all teachers of ELA via the Canvas Learning Management System, which includes timely information and opportunities related to curriculum, instruction, resources, assessment, professional learning, and VDOE updates.

Program Attributes

The ELA program serves both APS students and staff. The intended recipients of ELA services include more than 28,000 children who comprise the K–12 population of APS itself. As of the spring of 2018, APS students hail from 147 nations, speak 107 languages and have a richly diverse heritage.

The ELA Office strives to meet the varied curricular and instructional needs of our students, including those identified as gifted, learning English as a second language, or needing Special Education services.

For this reason, the ELA Office staff meet frequently with teachers at all grade levels and with those who work with special populations of students to disseminate information and discuss research-based instructional practices and resources as they relate to English Language Arts.

Curriculum

ELA Office staff work with teachers and other stakeholders to develop, implement, and evaluate the ELA curriculum, which is a cyclical process, becoming more complex as students become proficient and progress through their education. ELA Office staff support ELA teachers, department chairs, and lead teachers to align instruction to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL).

The ELA Office uses the following state documents¹ to guide classroom instruction:

- **The Virginia English Standards of Learning** (VDOE 2010, 2017) – These documents provide guidelines, by grade level, for what students are expected to know and do to prove proficiency in Reading, Writing, Research, and Communication and Multimodal Literacies.
- **The English Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework** (VDOE 2010, 2017) – These documents define the content knowledge, skills, and understandings that are measured by the Standards of Learning assessments. It provides additional guidance to school divisions and their teachers as they develop an instructional program appropriate for their students.
- **The Virginia Standards of Learning Test Blueprints** (VDOE 2010, 2017) – These documents serve as guides for SOL test construction and indicates the content areas that will be addressed by each test and the number of items that will be included by content area.
- **The English Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans** (VDOE 2010, 2017 in development) – These resources help teachers align instruction to the standards by providing examples of how the knowledge and skills found in the curriculum framework can be presented to students in the classroom.

The ELA Office also uses locally developed APS grade-level curriculum yearlong maps and units. The high school curriculum varies based on course and section enrollment.

In addition to these state documents, the ELA Office also follows the International Literacy Association's (ILA, formerly International Reading Association) recommendations, briefs, and reports in the support of literacy.²

A unique attribute of ELA instruction is that it is the only subject in APS required to be taught on a daily basis throughout a student's K–12 education. Because of the unique centrality of ELA skills to the K–12 curriculum as a whole, the ELA Office recommends that explicit instruction be allocated according to the following guidelines:

- Students in Kindergarten to 2nd grade participate in a minimum of 120 minutes of uninterrupted language arts instruction daily.
- Students in grades 3–5 participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of instruction daily.

¹ See http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/ for the state documents listed above.

² See <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/> for a variety of resources relevant to research in the area of literacy.

Appendix A1

- Secondary students in grade 6–12 participate in an average of 45 minutes of ELA instruction per day, or 90-minutes of ELA instruction every other day.³
- Opportunities to integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening are encouraged across all subject areas and in all grade levels.

Elementary Level

At the elementary level, a variety of teacher-developed units of study are used to guide instruction of Reading, Writing, Research, and Communication and Multimodal Literacies. These materials are supplemented with a wide variety of children’s literature that is curated into classroom libraries, used as mentor texts, and support individual and small-group instruction. English language arts are usually taught by the child’s classroom teacher; sometimes it is taught by another teacher on the grade-level team. The broad goals at this level are for students to:

- read fluently and to comprehend a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections that relate to all areas of the curriculum.
- effectively communicate and collaborate with others in a variety of ways.
- become aware of the structure of language and the writing process.
- engage in authentic writing using multiple forms, including narrative, expository, reflective, and persuasive/argumentative.

When new elementary classrooms are added, funds are made available for English Language Arts materials. Moreover, all school budgets provide some financial resources to replace and supplement instructional materials annually as needed. A list of ELA resources approved for use by APS may be found [here](#).

Secondary Level

At the secondary level, a variety of teacher-developed units of study are used to guide instruction of Reading, Writing, Research, and Communication and Multimodal Literacies. These materials are supplemented by novels, plays, non-fiction narratives, and other original-source texts, as well as short anchor texts needed for targeted groups of students, such as High Intensity Language Training/High Intensity Language Training Extension (HILT/HILTEX) students.

The secondary English Language Arts curriculum follows four strands of focus as identified by the Virginia English Standards of Learning: Reading, Writing, Research, and Communication and Multimodal Literacies. Middle school students continue to learn within the workshop model and are assessed with a Reading SOL test each of their three years, as well as a Writing SOL test in 8th grade.

When students enter high school, they elect to enroll in either regular or intensified English classes. The intensified classes are designated for students who excel in language arts and want the challenge of more rigorous assignments, often above their current grade level. The types of literature and writing taught within the various classes remain similar, but the materials and assignments vary to meet the needs of the learners. High school students who pursue Advanced Placement, and/or International Baccalaureate

³Due to block scheduling, some secondary students have 90 minutes of ELA instruction every other day rather than 45 minutes every day.

Appendix A1

English coursework will, additionally, be exposed to various rhetorical and literary analysis techniques. High school students are assessed with an End-of-Course Reading and Writing SOL test in 11th grade, which tests cumulative, spiraling skills practiced throughout 9th, 10th, and 11th grades.

At the secondary level, specific ELA courses include:

- grade-level required English courses for all middle and high school students;
- reading for all grade 6 students;
- reading strategies classes for grades 7 and 8 students, as needed;
- high school reading elective for students who have not passed grade 8 Reading SOL;
- intensified English/World History for grade 9 students, in select schools;
- intensified English course for grades 9 and 10 students;
- Advanced Placement (AP) English courses for grades 11 and 12 students;
- International Baccalaureate (IB) English courses for grades 11 and 12 students, offered as part of the IB Program at Washington-Lee High School;
- Dual-enrolled (DE) English courses for grades 11 and English 12 students, offered in conjunction with Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) at various locations;
- electives such as Newspaper, Yearbook, Literary Magazine, Broadcast Journalism, Film Study, Dynamic Communication, etc.;
- English courses for secondary summer school, including intense SOL Writing instruction, Make-Up and Strengthening for students who are repeating a course, Reading/Writing Labs for middle school students, and New Work for Credit for high school students who want to advance a year during the summer (restricted to grades 10, 11, and 12).

It should also be noted that students receive English credits for English 9 HILTEX and English 10 HILTEX, which are offered through the ESOL/HILT Office.

If new ELA courses are added, funds are made available for materials. Moreover, all school budgets provide some financial resources to replace and supplement instructional materials annually as needed. A list of ELA resources approved for use by APS may be found [here](#).

Best and Current Practices

The ELA Program Office staff continually reviews the literature from the research field and attends relevant conferences to ensure that APS follows accepted best practices and current thinking about ELA instruction. While the ELA curriculum draws on many sources, including the Virginia SOL curriculum framework, APS also has worked to incorporate several major current theoretical concepts into its ELA instruction. The ELA instructional program integrates the recommended reading components identified in the *National Reading Panel Report (2000)*⁴ which are: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as well as best practices regarding writing, literary analysis, and oral communication.

⁴See <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/nrp/pages/smallbook.aspx> for the report from the National Reading Panel, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction (April 2000)*.

Communication and Multimodal Literacies

Communication and Multimodal Literacies⁵ covers listening and speaking skills, essential components of high-quality instruction. Although communication standards are outlined and addressed in the Virginia SOLs in English Language Arts, it is the expectation that teachers in all subject areas promote opportunities for students to engage in classroom discussion and collaborate within and among diverse groups to in order to achieve a common goal. In grades three through twelve, students learn to prepare, deliver, and critique oral presentations; in grades four through twelve, students both experience and creating multimodal presentations, as well as analyze, develop and produce media messages. Daily speaking opportunities, both formal and informal, are a part of every English curriculum. And, because our students' home language and cultural literacies are the starting point for language learning, competency in the use of Standard English is a goal for all students.

Teachers focus on three aspects associated with speaking and listening. First, they deliberately plan and implement opportunities for students to engage in listening and discussion around literature, non-fiction, and hands-on experiences. Second, students are introduced to the skills and strategies required for formal presentations such as speeches, debate, and Socratic seminar. Third, teachers from Kindergarten through high school model, extend, and formally teach the structures of language.

Word Knowledge

Word knowledge is a critical component of a high-quality English Language Arts program. At the elementary level, word knowledge begins with the development of phonological awareness, the ability to identify and manipulate sounds in the English language, as well as phonics, the ability to map or match conventional sounds with print. Young students acquire these literacy proficiencies through both explicit and implicit instruction in the classroom.

A developmental approach to teaching spelling, word recognition, and generative vocabulary is used in grades K–12. Instructional materials have been adopted to support this instructional approach in pre-K to Grade 6, while secondary teachers use a variety of other curricular resources to teach prefixes, suffixes, Greek and Latin roots.

Word study in the elementary and middle grades specifically addresses generative vocabulary study, the study of word parts versus the specific study of individual words. Both generative and specific vocabulary study are important, and a discussion of specific vocabulary is included in the next section.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is highly correlated with reading comprehension (Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003; Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). In other words, students with strong vocabularies tend to have strong reading comprehension, and those with strong reading comprehension tend to have extensive vocabularies. Broadly defined, vocabulary is knowledge of words and their word meanings.

⁵The Oral Language strand was part of the ELA standards of learning for all grade levels until 2009. In 2010, a strand called Communication was added for students in grades 4–12, which included skills in media literacy. The Oral Language strand was revised to encompass Communication and Multimodal Literacy in 2017.

In their 2002 book, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*, the authors suggest that a young child’s vocabulary should increase by 2,000-3,000 words a year in order to become an effective reader. Noting that children who do not read much outside the school day will subsequently fall far behind their peers in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, the authors recommend that about 400 of those new words should be taught directly. To help focus these instructional efforts, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan divide words into three “tiers,” as shown below.

Table 2: Vocabulary Tiers

Kind of Word	Explanation	Examples
Tier 1	Basic words, well known, often used	clock, baby, happy
Tier 2	High frequency words used by mature language users across several content areas	coincidence, absurd, hasty, perseverance
Tier 3	Low-frequency words often limited to specific content areas	nucleus, osmosis, archaeologist

Tier 2 words are words used by mature language users and are words that students do not usually include in their everyday conversation and writing. These Tier 2 words are dubbed “robust” vocabulary. Robust vocabulary-based curricula introduce five to seven of these words per week for further study and analysis. The use of robust vocabulary-driven word study has become a widely adopted best practice for ELA at the elementary level.

At the secondary level, both generative and specific vocabulary is taught. At the middle school level, teachers focus on prefixes, suffixes, and word parts derived mostly from Greek/Latin roots. At the high school level, focuses on Greek/Latin roots continues, as well as specific vocabulary identified in the context of written literature and non-fiction selections.

Fluency

The APS ELA instructional program includes work to ensure that all students are able to read accurately, with expression and meaning.

Rasinski, author of *The Fluent Reader: Oral Reading Strategies for Building Word Recognition, Fluency, and Comprehension* (2003), explains the importance of developing oral reading fluency because of its importance in developing silent reading fluency and comprehension. Rasinski (2003) promotes the following concepts as important for building reading fluency:

- Provide students a purpose for reading and rereading.
- Make reading appealing through engaging scripts and peer collaboration.
- Correlate fluency activities to both content areas and common literature.
- Incorporate full class participation with original poems and songs.
- Target instruction with strategies that focus on improving accuracy, automaticity, and oral expression.

Many opportunities to develop fluency are promoted at the elementary and secondary levels and include independent reading initiatives, reader's theater, the study of plays, and recitation and performance. At the secondary level, for example, students are encouraged to participate in two different community events which promote fluency and expression. *Poetry Out Loud* is a National recitation contest created by the National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation. For this program, students read, recite, and study poetry. Then they select a poem and engage in a recitation competition at the school level. Regional and state level competition is also involved. *Words Out Loud* is a locally developed competition in concert with the *National African American Read-In*, which advocates for students of diverse backgrounds to write and perform original pieces of work. Both initiatives promote fluency and performance.

Comprehension: Reading Strategies

In addition to robust vocabulary word study, the APS ELA curriculum draws on the work of Harvey and Goudvis (2000) who note that reading is much more than simply decoding a text. For true comprehension, a student must think about and interact with a text. Their work lays out seven thinking strategies that, when taught explicitly, can help students become engaged, thoughtful, independent readers:

- **Connect to the text** by comparing the text to the reader's past experiences and background knowledge, to another text, or to events in the world.
- **Ask questions** before, during, and after reading to give a purpose for reading and to monitor understanding of the material.
- **Visualize** creating pictures in the reader's mind, making comparisons, and noting words that appeal to senses.
- **Decide what's important** in a text by activating prior knowledge; noting characteristics of text; skimming text; reading bold print, graphs, tables, and illustrations; reading the first and last line of each paragraph carefully; and taking notes or highlighting text.
- **Summarize and synthesize information** by retelling information, adding personal responses, making comparisons and contrasts, attempting to answer questions about the text with no clear answer, and making applications of the text to the real world.
- **Check understanding** to make sure the text has been accurately comprehended.
- **Make inferences and draw conclusions** by using background knowledge and experiences as well as details noted in the text to point to a conclusion about an underlying theme or idea.

At the secondary level, students have internalized many, if not all, of these explicit strategies, and the focus of instruction is critical reading and analysis of literature and non-fiction.

Writing

Reading and writing are integrated not only in ELA classrooms but also across the content areas. APS promotes a workshop approach to the explicit teaching of writing with an emphasis on writing as a process. This model requires teachers to provide short, deliberate lessons to students and to differentiate practice through both small group instruction and individual student conferences.

As students develop their writing skills, they are required to write for increasingly sophisticated purposes and produce a variety of writing such as essays (expository, narrative, persuasive, argumentative, literary commentary, etc.), prose, poetry, articles, research papers, and formal reports.

Adopted program materials include *Units of Study in Writing, K-8* published by Heinemann in collaboration with Lucy Calkins and colleagues at Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) and *Step Up to Writing, K-12* published by Voyager Sopris.

Professional Learning

The ELA Office provides on-going professional learning opportunities, by working extensively with classroom teachers to ensure students are receiving the best possible English Language Arts instruction. The breadth of ELA support among schools makes professional learning efforts provided by the ELA Office particularly important as they may affect teachers at all grade levels and in all content areas.

Many teachers who are not English teachers, by training, are responsible for teaching language arts, whether it is a kindergarten teacher helping children learn reading strategies, a 5th grade teacher helping with writing strategies, a middle school science teacher introducing terms like *osmosis*, or a high school social studies teacher scaffolding a research project on a particular global conflict. In addition, language arts is taught on a daily basis by High Intensity Language Training (HILT) teachers and those responsible for Title I and Special Education classes. Resource Teachers for the Gifted may also provide input into ELA instruction.

The ELA Office collaborates with all teachers, directors of counseling, assistant principals, and principals who may have questions about ELA courses and initiatives. As part of this effort, the ELA Office:

- facilitates elementary and secondary professional learning communities;
- facilitates leadership meetings with middle school reading and English lead teachers;
- facilitates leadership meetings with high school English department chairs and content lead teachers;
- communicates regularly with secondary leadership teams digitally and in-person;
- collaborates on an ongoing basis with the departments of ATSS, ESOL/HILT, and Special Education
- coordinates on an ongoing basis with Gifted Services and Office of Equity and Excellence;
- sponsors regular professional learning opportunities in the areas of reading and writing workshop, ELA resources, and word study. As well, we have utilized resources and facilitators from the *Northern Virginia Writing Project*, *Teachers College Institutes for Reading and Writing Workshops*, and *Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol (SIOP)* training.

Goals and Objectives

The APS ELA Office operates within the Department of Teaching and Learning to meet APS Strategic Plan goals, process goals, and student achievement goals established by the Virginia Standards of Learning in compliance with *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) legislation. Student achievement is also measured with additional tools as the APS ELA program seeks to ensure a rigorous and responsive education for all students.

APS develops six-year strategic plans with staff and community involvement to identify focus areas for school system improvement. Each year the School Board and the public receive reports on the progress made within each Strategic Plan goal area during the preceding year, with the opportunity for modifications to the Strategic Plan as warranted.

The current strategic plan runs through 2018-2024 and focuses on five important goal areas:

- **STUDENT SUCCESS:** Multiple Pathways to Student Success
- **STUDENT WELL-BEING:** Healthy, Safe, and Supported Students
- **ENGAGED WORKFORCE**
- **OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** Strong and Mutually Supportive Partnerships

In addition to and in support of the division goals, the ELA Office also works toward meeting the following seven core values:

- **Excellence:** Ensure all students receive an exemplary education that is academically challenging and meets their social and emotional needs.
- **Equity:** Eliminate opportunity gaps and achieve excellence by providing access to schools, resources, and learning opportunities according to each student's unique needs.
- **Inclusivity:** Strengthen our community by valuing people for who they are, nurturing our diversity, and embracing the contributions of all students, families, and staff.
- **Integrity:** Build trust by acting honestly, openly, ethically, and respectfully.
- **Collaboration:** Foster partnerships with families, community, and staff to support the success of our students.
- **Innovation:** Engage in forward-thinking to identify bold ideas that enable us to be responsive to the expectations of our organization and community while cultivating creativity, critical thinking, and resourcefulness in our students.
- **Stewardship:** Manage our resources to honor the community's investment in our schools; create safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable learning environments; support civic and community engagement; and serve current and future generations.

The ELA Office is responsible for communication of the curriculum, student achievement data, the process of monitoring student progress, professional learning opportunities, best practices in classroom instruction, and the alignment and effective implementation of interventions. In order to initiate and sustain consistent communication, the ELA Office meets routinely with a variety of stakeholders, including a citizen advisory committee. Additionally, the ELA Office maintains a Canvas space for teachers of ELA, a website for the public, monthly newsletters, two twitter handles, and employs APS communication vehicles such as *School Talk*, *News Check*, and *Snapshots* to provide clarity and purpose to our work.

Attributes of Success

The ELA Office is responsible for

- identifying, developing, and monitoring both formative and summative assessments,
- monitoring the progress of students, and
- evaluating the achievement of the ELA program and system.

APS students take a variety of assessments to measure student growth, as shown in the table below. In addition to meeting benchmarks for locally set goals, APS must also meet state goals for accreditation purposes and prove adequate yearly progress (AYP) as defined by *Every Student Succeeds Act* legislation.

Appendix A1

APS sets a number of benchmarks to track student success in ELA instruction. All students are expected to meet or exceed a measure of grade level reading and writing proficiency as well as meet or exceed a passing score on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments in Reading and Writing.

Tables 3 and 4 show the reading and language arts tests administered to students by grade level.

Table 3: Elementary ELA Tests Administered to Monitor Student Progress by Grade Level

Grade Level	Test
Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-K) ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments
Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments
Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments
Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading SOL ● PALS Plus ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PALS Plus ● Reading SOL ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments
Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PALS Plus ● Reading SOL ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments* ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments

*Also serves as the Grade 5 VDOE Alternative Writing Assessment

APS also has access to a variety of additional assessments that are used at the discretion of the teacher, including but not limited to Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Running Records, Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), and other classroom-based formative assessments.

Table 4: Secondary ELA Tests Administered to APS Students by Grade Level

Grade Level	Test
Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Inventory (RI) ● Reading SOL ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments
Grade 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Inventory (RI) ● Reading SOL

Appendix A1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments
Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Inventory (RI) ● Reading SOL ● Writing SOL ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments
Grade 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Inventory (RI) ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments
Grade 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Inventory (RI), as needed ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments
Grade 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Inventory (RI), as needed ● Writing On-Demand Formative Assessments ● Power School (PS) Quarterly Benchmark Assessments ● End-of-Course Reading SOL ● End-of-Course Writing SOL

APS uses additional measures of program success including nationally normed assessments such as the PSAT and SAT. For program evaluation, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and locally developed classroom observation checklists have been used to measure the quality of student-teacher interactions and program fidelity within ELA classrooms, respectively.

Through successful implementation, the APS ELA program should accomplish the following at the elementary level:

- Students will master the early learning-to-read basics by the end of Grade 2.
- Students will continue to gain knowledge and internalize the use of early skills beyond Grade 2 so that they reach a stage of automaticity in recognizing common words.
- Students will read successfully at grade level or above.
- Upper elementary students will use reading to gain content knowledge.
- Students' reading will gain in sophistication so that they are reading with literal and inferential comprehension by upper elementary grades.
- Students will begin to develop critical comprehension strategies.
- Students will write successfully for different purposes and in different forms.
- Best practices instruction will be reflected in all language arts classes in all schools.

Through successful implementation, the APS ELA program should accomplish the following at the secondary level:

- Students will read successfully with literal, inferential, and critical comprehension in fiction and non-fiction texts at grade level or above.
- Students will write successfully for different purposes, in different formats, and in different organizational patterns.
- Students will communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Students in intensified/AP/IB/DE English classes will represent the demographics of the school district.
- Best practices will be reflected in all English and reading instruction across all schools.
- Secondary English and reading teachers will maintain effective communication with students and parents.

Status of Recommendations Made in Previous Evaluations

The English Language Arts Program was last evaluated in 2013 and had seven recommendations. Recommendations and status reports are described below.

Recommendations Specific to the ELA Office

Recommendation #1: Provide and communicate a **K—12 curriculum framework** that outlines ELA expectations for classroom instruction (e.g., amount of time writing, reading) and research-based best practices at the elementary, middle, and high school level in order to strengthen the core instructional program.

Status: The ELA Office has produced a written a curriculum for English language arts K-10, with ongoing work on Reading 6, and English 11 and 12.

Recommendation #2: Develop APS **curriculum** that aligns with the Standards of Learning and promotes a rigorous, culturally responsive instructional experience for APS students.

Status: In the past, the ELA Office has provided two main sources for curriculum: the VDOE SOL Curriculum Framework/Enhanced Scope and Sequence and School Board adopted curriculum resources. Individual teachers and schools have maintained autonomy in most areas of curriculum. In order to reduce the duplication of curriculum development initiatives, promote the use of research-based best practices, provide support to new and less experienced teachers, and maximize the use of veteran curriculum experts, the ELA Office has worked with teams of teachers for the following:

- Written a curriculum for ELA K-10 (with Reading 6 and ELA 11th and 12th grade creation ongoing).
- Composed grade-level yearlong maps to provide at-a-glance scope and sequence of alignment to SOLs, timeline, and thematic foci for each unit.

Recommendation #3: Develop and implement professional development opportunities focused on improving instruction in English language arts, particularly reading and writing proficiency. In addition, identify and implement professional development opportunities in coordination with the Department of Teaching and Learning.

Status: The ELA Office is devoted to providing high quality professional learning opportunities in concert with offices in the Department of Teaching and Learning. Highlights of the professional learning focus since program evaluation is below:

- Participated and led professional learning opportunities related to effective professional learning communities (PLC), collaborative team meetings, and data-driven decision making.
- Worked with ATTS to plan and implement the Arlington Tiered System of Supports.
- Facilitated Early Literacy Partnership with George Mason University.
- Created and facilitated online, self-paced word study course for K-12.
- Provided Orton–Gillingham trainings for K-12.
- Facilitated annual Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training at the secondary level.
- Facilitated a reading masters’ degree cohort in reading through The University of Virginia.
- Sponsored Struggling Reader Academy professional learning for teachers through The University of Virginia
- Coordinated professional learning with the Northern Virginia Writing Project consultant network for the secondary level.
- Facilitated professional learning around Leveled Literacy Intervention and Benchmark Assessment System.
- Developed and implemented K-12 professional learning on Dyslexia (2015-2016) and provided follow up course for selected individuals (Mind Play).
- Developed and implemented online, self-paced professional learning related to all components of the reading and writing workshop model.
- Coordinated professional learning Summer Institute with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project consultant network for K-8.
- Facilitated K-12 training on Step Up To Writing resources.

Recommendation #4: Provide a **literacy coach at every school** who can support teacher development and the implementation of APS instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

Status: Although APS is fortunate to employ a number of reading specialists at the elementary and middle school levels, the majority of their job responsibilities focus on teaching struggling students. Literacy coaches, in contrast, have a primary responsibility for supporting teacher learning through job-embedded professional learning and support. Coaching promotes ongoing teacher learning more than curriculum, teacher evaluation, or stand-alone professional learning. Additionally, research studies have indicated that a) teacher quality is the single most important factor in a student’s achievement, and b) coaching has positive effects on student achievement and teacher performance⁶. ELA has worked with the Department of Teaching and Learning to promote reading specialists/interventionists participation in Cognitive Coaching, and to implement and utilize those strategies within CLTs and their work with teams and

⁶ Hightower, Delgado, Lloyd, Wittenstein, Sellers, & Swanson, 2011; McCaffery, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003; Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2010

individual teachers. We believe that literacy coaching positions would build the capacity of APS teachers to better support all learners in various classroom settings.

Recommendation #5: Identify, implement, and **monitor common assessments** in K–5, 6–8, and 9–12 to ensure adequate student progress and promote effective intervention. Provide a reading proficiency measure that is consistent across individual school levels: elementary, middle, and high school.

Status: In order to tailor instruction to specific student needs and proficiencies, it is critical that teachers, administrators, and students have access to useful, valid, and reliable measures of formative assessment. Additionally, administrators and teachers must build the capacity and expertise to analyze student achievement data and to respond to the data through enhanced classroom instruction and the use of effective intervention strategies and approaches. They are the following:

- Identified and implemented universal screening in reading K-5 with the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-K, PALS 1-3, PALS Plus 4-8) and Reading Inventory grades 6-9.
- Created and implemented PowerSchool quarterly assessments in reading, K-12.
- Provided training on developing and using formative assessment tools with grade-level teams.
- Facilitated online training for PALS Plus and the use of the data

Recommendations beyond the ELA Office

Recommendation #6: Work with Information Services to capture ongoing performance data as well as participation and progress in interventions.

Status: The ELA Office has worked with Information Services to develop the specifications for data dashboards accessible to teachers, administrators, and members of the Department of Teaching and Learning. Our office has also supported the work of ATSS in gathering data, information, and feedback regarding information systems regarding interventions and progress monitoring.

Recommendation #7: Develop a multi-tiered process to identify, implement, and monitor effective Reading interventions for students at all levels with the Department of Teaching and Learning.

Status: The ELA Office has worked closely with ATSS to accomplish the following:

- Developed an elementary intervention guide which is published on the APS website to guide school personnel and parents with the identification of the most appropriate approaches for individual students.
- Developed a secondary intervention guide which is published on the APS website to guide school personnel and parents with the identification of the most appropriate approaches for individual students

English Language Arts Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of the English Language Arts program began in 2016-17 with the development of an evaluation design. A planning committee met regularly throughout the year to develop the evaluation questions that would guide data collection for this report. Committee members included staff from Planning and Evaluation, the English Language Arts Office, and schools; as well as two members of the ELA Advisory Committee. Data collection for the evaluation occurred during the 2017-18 school year. This evaluation employed various methodologies to collect data with which to examine the success of the English Language Arts program. In particular, this report addresses the following three components outlined in Arlington Public Schools (APS) policy and procedures (A-6.31) for accountability and evaluation:

1. A description of the department, program, or service (**Appendix A1**)
2. Evaluation questions that ask:
 - a. How effectively was the English Language Arts program implemented?
 - b. What were the outcomes?
3. Recommendations

The executive summary and appendices are located online at www.apsva.us/evaluationreports

Evaluation Design and Questions

Table 1 displays the English Language Arts evaluation design

Table 1: English Language Arts evaluation design

Program/Service Objective	Program/Service Question	Data Source(s)
Evaluation Question 1: Implementation – How effectively was the ELA Program implemented?		
<p>Objective 1: Best instructional practices for emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support, and student engagement are evident across instruction in ELA classrooms.</p>	<p>1a To what extent are best instructional practices evident in ELA instruction?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations ● Student survey (engagement)

<p>Objective 2: ELA instruction in APS aligns with best instructional practices specific to ELA.</p>	<p>2a To what extent are best instructional practices specific to reading, writing, word study, and oral language, evident in ELA instruction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● time dedicated to elementary instruction ● teacher feedback on student work ● use of resources and curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELA Observation Tool ● Student survey ● Teacher survey
	<p>2b What are the various ELA instructional delivery and grouping models (co-teaching, self-contained, small group, push in, pull out, etc.) employed in all APS schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observations ● Delivery model data
	<p>2c To what extent is time for ELA instruction consistent for elementary students at each grade?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Survey
	<p>2d To what extent does literature used in ELA instruction reflect the diverse world students live in? 2e To what extent are fiction and non-fiction texts included in ELA instruction?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher survey ● ELA observation tool ● Student survey
<p>Objective 3: APS students are appropriately challenged and supported in ELA instruction.</p>	<p>3a To what extent do ELA teachers differentiate instruction for students?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CLASS ● ELA observation tool ● Teacher survey ● Student survey
	<p>3b To what extent do ELA teachers at all levels plan based on universal screening information? (including Intervention in reading and writing) (PALS, RI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher Survey ● Principal survey
	<p>3c What specific scaffolds (visuals, multi-level texts, graphic organizers, sentence frames, etc.) are in place for LEP and special</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher survey ● ELA observation tool ● Student feedback? (focus group, survey)

	<p>education students in all ELA classes (general education, SPED, ESOL/HILT) at all levels?</p> <p>3d Placeholder: specific question about extension/materials/etc. used for gifted students</p>	
	<p>3e To what extent do all students and student groups have access to higher level ELA courses?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secondary enrollment data disaggregated by demographic variables
	<p>3f What is being done to prepare students for advanced-level ELA coursework?</p> <p>3g What support do teachers receive in preparing students for advanced-level ELA coursework?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher Survey ● Student Survey ● Principal Survey
	<p>3h To what extent do students in higher-level ELA courses receive the support they need to succeed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher Survey ● Student Survey
<p>Objective 4: APS manages ELA resources effectively.</p>	<p>4a To what extent are all classroom libraries and school reading rooms sufficiently resourced and updated?</p> <p>4b To what extent are appropriate resources available to teachers to support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● instruction of students who need extra support? ● Instruction of students who need extra challenge? ● personalized learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher Survey ● Principal Survey ● Resource inventory?
	<p>4c How extensive and effective is PD offered by the ELA Office?</p> <p>4d How extensive and effective is PD offered by entities external to the ELA Office...(including all other sources of PD; e.g. schools, other content offices, CLT, coursework, self-accessed outside of APS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher survey ● Principal survey

	4e How effectively do ELA teachers integrate technology in their instruction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation Tool ● Teacher Survey ● student survey
	4f What technology/digital resources are being used (apps, etc.)? How is this being paid for? (allocations, grants, PTA, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher survey ● Principal survey ● Observation tool?

Program Service/Objective	Program/Service Question	Data Source(s)
Evaluation Question 2: Outcomes – What were the outcomes for the targeted population?		
Objective 5: APS students develop the skills and strategies to be proficient readers and writers.	<p>5a To what extent do elementary students master the early learning-to-read basics (early literacy) by the end of grade 3?</p> <p>5b To what extent do all students and student groups read successfully at grade level or demonstrate a year or more of growth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PALS ● PALS Plus ● Reading Inventory ● 5th grade writing tasks, scored by a rubric ● SOLs ● SAT ● ACCESS for ELLs writing ● Alternate ACCESS for ELLs <p><i>3-5 years of data, disaggregated by demographic groups</i></p>
	5c To what extent are all students and student groups successful in higher-level ELA courses (high school intensified, AP, IB, dual enrollment)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AP/IB test scores ● Course grades (marks) ● Continuation on advanced pathway (how many students in intensified take intensified/AP/IB, dual enrollment next year?) <p><i>Disaggregate by prior English class – intensified or regular</i></p>

<p>Objective 6: Students will communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.</p>	<p>6a To what extent do students write successfully for different purposes and in different forms (elementary), formats (secondary), and organizational patterns (secondary).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● SOLs (8, 11)● Elementary writing assessments (rubric) - <i>5th grade 3rd quarter rubric is collected centrally</i>● ACCESS for ELLs writing● ESOL/HILT writing sample● student survey - ask about helpfulness of teacher feedback on their writing● Teacher survey - what percentage of your time do you spend teaching x type of writing?
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Study Measures

Data sources used to inform this evaluation are described in detail below.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

Arlington Public Schools uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation tool to assess the quality of interactions between teachers and students for all program evaluation areas. It was developed by the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education as an early childhood observation tool, and later expanded to include other grade levels. CLASS observations were conducted in K-5 elementary classrooms during ELA instruction and secondary English Language Art classes throughout the 2016-17 school year at all grade levels. The domains and dimensions of the CLASS tool are described in detail in **Appendix B1**. **Appendix B2** describes the alignment between CLASS dimensions and APS best instructional practices. A summary of CLASS observations conducted for this evaluation is available in **Appendix B3**.

APS-Developed Observation Tools

The English Language Arts Office, the Office of Planning and Evaluation, and the English Language Arts evaluation planning committee adapted and developed observation tools (separate tools for Elementary, Middle School and High School) to assess the prevalence of best instructional practices specific to the disciplines of English Language Arts.

Recently retired English Language Arts teachers from Virginia school districts were hired to observe classes. Observers were assigned to either Elementary, Middle School or High School and participated in an all-day training. Observations occurred during the 2017-18 school year.

Full results for these observations can be found in **Appendix B4**.

Secondary Delivery Models and Enrollment

Secondary delivery models were provided by the ELA office to address the question related to various ELA instructional delivery and grouping models. Delivery model data can be found in **Appendix C1**. Secondary enrollment data was accessed through the data warehouse to answer questions related to advanced ELA course enrollment and continued enrollment in advanced ELA courses. Data reports related to advanced course work and continued enrollment in advanced coursework can be found in **Appendix C2** and **Appendix C3**.

Surveys

A survey was administered to students, staff and administrators in the spring of 2017. This data is available in **Appendix D1**.

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) provides a comprehensive assessment of young children's knowledge of the important literacy fundamentals that are predictive of future reading success. PALS results were obtained from the data warehouse. The full analysis of the PALS data can be found in **Appendix E1**.

Appendix A2

Reading Inventory Assessment

The Reading Inventory (RI) is computer-adaptive reading assessment that measures reading comprehension using Lexile measures. Lexile measures indicate a student's reading level and can be used to match readers with appropriately leveled text. An analysis of growth on the RI for students in grades 6- 9 is included in **Appendix E2**.

Grade 5 Writing Assessment

This assessment is based upon an open-ended writing prompt, scored by an APS approved rubric. The VA DOE mandates this assessment to demonstrate that students are making adequate academic progress in the area of writing and that the Standards of Learning content is being taught. A summary of this data can be found in **Appendix E3**.

Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessments

The Commonwealth of Virginia measures academic achievement through annual Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. SOL results for reading and writing exams were extracted from the data warehouse. This data is summarized in **Appendix E4**.

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

Advanced Placement (AP) is an intensive program developed by the College Board that offers students an opportunity to develop their academic strengths through rigorous college-level curricula and challenging national exams. An analysis of AP exam scores for AP English Language Composition and AP English Literature Composition tests is included in **Appendix E5**.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams

International Baccalaureate (IB) is an academic program licensed by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) that, upon successful completion, results in the awarding of a high school degree. IB courses are available at Washington Lee High School. IB HL English Literature exam scores are summarized in **Appendix E6**.