Summary

Arlington Public Schools (APS) currently uses design capacity to determine the number of available seats and the capacity utilization rate at each school. Design capacity represents the initial count of classrooms intended to support both general and specific educational programs when a building is originally designed or undergoes significant renovations.

Program capacity identifies how current spaces are used during a school year to meet core and specific educational program needs. APS believes that program capacity provides a more accurate and real-time view of capacity utilization and seat availability, showing how a school's general and specific educational programs impact capacity. Through this lens, APS can develop a more systematic process for program placement that avoids capacity challenges at schools.

APS employs an interdisciplinary teacher teaming approach to create smaller, more cohesive communities for middle school students. Students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 pursue a core curriculum of academic subjects, including English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, with Disciplinary Literacy in Grade 6[1]. The middle school model features a seven-period school day that includes both core curriculum and elective classes. The number of teams per grade level is determined by the Spring Update to enrollment projections for the following school year and APS planning factors[2].

Middle School's Design and Program Capacity Overview

Thomas Jefferson Middle School	Design	Program*
September 30, 2024 Enrollment	1064	1064
Capacity	1086	1095
Capacity Utilization	98%	97%
Available Seats	22	31

*Program Capacity is based on APS planning factors and adjusted for the number of classrooms undersized at Thomas Jefferson MS.

[1] APS Middle School 2024-25 Program of Studies
[2] APS Planning Factors

The following guidelines serve as the baseline for the middle school program capacity study:

- Three teams per grade level:
  - Grade 6: 5 core academic classes per team,
  - Grade 7: 4 core academic classes per team, and
  - Grade 8: 4 core academic classes per team.
- Specific classrooms to support students with disabilities[3]:
  - Two (2) special education self-contained classrooms per grade level,
  - One classroom to support functional life skills, and
  - One classroom to support interlude.

The following resources are used in this study:

- SY2024-25 planning factors[4],
- Current class schedules within Synergy,
- Current floor plan for each middle school, and
- Guidelines for School Facilities in Virginia's Public Schools[5].

Thomas Jefferson Middle School (TJMS) is undergoing a feasibility study as part of the long-range plan to renovate existing facilities because many of their core capacity generating classrooms do not meet APS or VDOE's minimum square footage threshold. Many of their classroom spaces are less than 660 square feet. Due to this deficiency, staff evaluated the program capacity based on the square footage of their core classrooms and reduced the capacity their core classrooms could accommodate.

Appendix A provides additional details on core[6], specific, resource, and specialized spaces at each school compared to VDOE's prototypical space program for middle schools.

[3] APS 2024-30 Strategic Plan: The expectation for all school levels is "By 2030, at least 80% of students with disabilities will have consistent access to general education curriculum by spending 80% or more their school day in a general education setting."
[4] FY2025 Adopted Planning Factors
[5] Guidelines for School Facilities in Virginia's Public Schools-2021
[6] APS uses 660 sf as the minimum design standard for core academic spaces. Some middle schools do not have enough core classroom spaces that meet this standard and have been identified as candidates for feasibility studies currently underway.

Appendices

Appendix A: SY2024-25 Program Capacity by Program

THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL Design Capacity 1086 9/30/20204 Enrollment 1064		APS Classroom Usage in 2024-25					Virginia Department of Education			APS Teaming Approach Based on 3 Teams		
		No. Of Classrooms	Capacity Based on Avg Room SF	Program Capacity (Building)	Planning Factor	Program Capacity (Planning Factor)	Prototypical Space Program for MS	Planning Factor	Program Capacity	No. of Classrooms	Planning Factor	Program Capacity
PERMANENT SPACES (CAPACITY GENERATING)												
General Education	Grade 6	17	20	340	25.15	428	13	25	325	15	25.15	377
	Grade 7	12	22	264	25.15	302	13	25	325	12	25.15	302
	Grade 8	13	23	299	25.15	327	13	25	325	12	25.15	302
	Flex (Unscheduled, Combined, Other)	4	20	80	25.15	101	0	0	0	0	25.15	0
	TOTAL CORE - GENERAL ED	46		983		1157	39		975	39		981
Special Education	Self-Contained	9	8	72	8	72	3	8	24	6	8	48
	FLS	1	10	10	10	10				1	10	10
	Interlude	0	10	0	10	0				1	10	10
	MIPA	0	6	0	6	0				0	6	0
	SPSA	1	10	10	10	10				0	10	0
	Flex (Unscheduled, Other)	2	10	20	10	20						
	TOTAL CORE - SPECIAL ED	13		112		112	3		24	8		68
TOTAL CORE CAPACITY GENERATING		**59**		**1095**		**1269**	**42**		**999**	**47**		**1049**
NON CAPACITY GENERATING SPACES												
Art Rooms (Visual)		1					1			1		
Music Rooms		4					2			2		
Resource (EL, Pull-Out, SGI)		2					6			7		
PE (Gym, Aux, Weight Room)		2					1			2		
Health		0					2			2		
CTE (Bus/IT, F&CS, TechEd, Journalism)		4					6			4		
World Languages		8					0			4		
Auditorium/Stage		1					1			1		
Theater Arts		1								1		
Flex		1										
TOTAL NON CAPACITY GENERATING SPACES		**24**					**19**			**24**		
TOTAL CLASSROOM SPACES		**83**					**61**			**71**		

Appendix B: Relocatables

Relocatable classrooms are modular, movable structures placed on school grounds to provide additional space when permanent facilities are at or over capacity. Relocatables serve as a flexible, short-to-medium term solution for schools experiencing capacity pressures, supporting enrollment growth, programmatic needs, and swing space during construction or renovation. Relocatables do not count towards a school's program capacity.

There is one utility relocatable onsite at Thomas Jefferson MS.

Appendix C: Definitions

Capacity – How many students a building can support based on the general and specific educational programs.

- Design Capacity – Original spaces assigned during construction or major renovation to meet the core and specific educational programs for students.
- Program Capacity – Current spaces assigned during a school year to meet the core and specific educational programs for students.

Capacity Generating Classrooms – Classrooms identified to meet core and specific educational requirements and used to calculate the number of seats available in a school.

- Examples include K-5 in elementary schools, core curriculum classes in middle schools, PreK VPI, PreK Special Education (SE), MIPA or self-contained special education classes.
- Classrooms that do not contribute to capacity would be small group instruction, English Learner (EL) classes, Speech.

Capacity Utilization – School enrollment divided by a building's capacity. A building can have a design capacity utilization and program capacity utilization.

Core Educational Spaces – General learning environments such as Grades K-5 and at secondary levels English, Math, Science or Social Studies.

Flex Spaces – Classrooms identified to be capacity generating but assigned as a resource space.

Specific Educational Spaces – Focused self-contained learning environments such as Pre-K special education (SE), Interlude, or Life Skills.

Appendix D: Space Classifications and Descriptions

Administrative – Spaces that support administrative staff (e.g., office, guidance, counseling, clinic).

Auxiliary – Spaces that support building operations (e.g., cafeteria, storage, custodial, maintenance, toilets).

Core – General learning environments (e.g., grades K-12, science, math, social studies).

Resource – Enriched learning environments to support educational plans (e.g., English Learner, small group instruction, math coach, OT/PT).

Specialized – Specialized instructional environments (e.g., library, gym, art, music, exemplary projects, STEAM).

Specific – Focused learning environments (e.g., PreK, Special Education, MIPA, Interlude, Life Skills).

Appendix E: Capacity Formulas

$$Program\ Capacity\ = (Total\ \#of\ specific\ educational\ classrooms\ \times class\ size\ planning\ factor) + (Total\ \#\ of\ general\ educaitonal\ classrooms\ \times class\ size\ planning\ factor)$$

$$Design\ Capacity\ Utilization = \frac{School's\ September\ 30th\ Membership\ Enrollment}{Design\ Capacity}$$

$$Program\ Capacity\ Utilization = \frac{School's\ September\ 30th\ Membership\ Enrollment}{Program\ Capacity}$$

Appendix F: Additional Resources

1. November 19, 2024, School Board Work Session Presentation on Program Capacity
2. September 30, 2024, Membership Enrollment
3. SY2023-24 Class Size Report