

## Executive Summary

The modified school calendar (MSC) was implemented at Samuel Tucker Elementary School (Tucker) in 2004-05 and at Mount Vernon Community School (Mount Vernon) in 2005-06. This report briefly summarizes some of the relevant literature on the MSC, recapitulates discussions with Tucker and Mount Vernon school staff, and compares student test scores for MSC schools with the division and the state. The student data are also disaggregated by the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) subgroups outlined in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. While this report provides an overview of the two MSC schools and offers a snapshot of current performance and some insight into the differences, a more extensive evaluation is highly recommended. The report concludes with a list of recommendations intended to improve planning, operations, and implementation of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) division-wide initiatives at the two MSC schools.

Staff at both MSC schools indicated the importance of having ACPS Central Office support for intersession planning and operations and throughout the entire year. Both MSC schools had participation rates of over 96 percent of all students in the fall 2010 intersession.

Review of test results indicated that Tucker tended to outperform the division and state in nearly all measures. For Mount Vernon, the White subgroup tended to outperform the division and state in nearly all indicators; however, the Hispanic, Meal Status, and Limited English Proficient subgroups tended to be roughly on par with the division and well below Tucker and the state. Given the demographics at Tucker and Mount Vernon, it is all the more impressive that Tucker tended to outperform the division and the state and that Mount Vernon was roughly on par with the division. It is also helpful to consider that Mount Vernon had larger proportions of Hispanic, Special Education and Limited English Proficient students than Tucker or the division. These AYP subgroups tend to have greater proportions of at-risk students (i.e., students who fail the SOL tests).

With the three intersessions included, most MSC students benefit from having an additional 25 days of instruction. However, challenges tended to arise due to MSC schools being out of sync with the rest of the division (see Appendix 1 for a side-by-side comparison of the MSC and traditional school calendars for the 2010-11 academic year). In conclusion, there are a number of key differences between the two MSC schools, which include the student populations, the staff culture, and school facilities.

### Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Modify the calendar to eliminate a five-day intersession.
- Recommendation 2: Have ACPS Central Office develop an intersession policy and procedures manual.
- Recommendation 3: Increase ACPS Central Office awareness of MSC schedules and support needs.
- Recommendation 4: Increase ACPS Central Office support for planning and running intersessions.
- Recommendation 5: Coordinate and plan professional development to include the MSC staff.