

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of continuing efforts by ACPS to communicate with families and to improve services for Alexandria students, parents were invited via the ACPS web site to complete an Internet-based survey about issues that arose during the first few weeks of the 2007-2008 school year, especially ACPS bus transportation services. To inform families of this opportunity to communicate with ACPS, printed flyers were distributed via elementary students' backpacks during the first week of October. The survey offered was an updated version of a parent survey previously administered during the fall of the 2006-2007 school year<sup>1</sup>.

### Method

Beginning on October 4<sup>th</sup>, for 23 days, parents could elect to complete an online survey. Those who clicked a link on the ACPS web site were presented with a series of questions that flowed from their response selections. For parents without computer access, the printed flyer directed them to call Monitoring and Evaluation to complete their survey responses by telephone.

### Results

By October 27, 2007, 184 parents had responded. Two thirds (67%) reported that their children rode an ACPS bus to school, of these 58% were from parents of elementary school children. Two thirds (46 of 71) of parents reported that their elementary school children had not experienced any problem with ACPS bus transport to school during the first few weeks of school.

The survey supplied types of problems that may occur and parents were permitted to select more than one. A total of 74 responses were received from the 53 parents who noted that their elementary, middle or high school children had experienced problems with ACPS bus transport. For the 74 responses received, 60 dealt with scheduling issues, such as pickup times, arrival times, duration of journey and communication of schedule changes. Other concerns noted were overcrowding (n = 10), and inappropriate driver behavior (n = 4).

Problems with after-school transport were reported less frequently than morning concerns; two-thirds (41 of 60) of parents replied that their children had not experienced any problems with the ride home from school. Only 32 parents reported contacting an ACPS office; the largest number (22) contacted the Transportation Office. Parents were invited to elaborate on that experience communicating with ACPS staff. Of 25 parents who commented, 11 were satisfied with the response. However, nine parents reported that the ACPS staff member was not courteous. Courtesy was identified as a division-wide issue arising from the 2006 survey of parents. Similarly, crowding on buses was again cited by ten parents in 2007. However, results from the 2007 survey of parents suggest that the ACPS has made progress towards improved school startup compared to the previous year. Two other monitoring issues from 2006 received only one parent comment in 2007 and no comments were received about the safety issue of a driver speeding. Examination of these concerns can inform ACPS communication with parents and continue to guide improvements in service.

<sup>1</sup> The full survey text is available at: [http://www.acps.k12.va.us/mes/reports/20070201\\_transportation\\_full.pdf](http://www.acps.k12.va.us/mes/reports/20070201_transportation_full.pdf)