



ORIGINAL RESEARCH FROM
THE FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM



FACTSHEET

Cost in Translation

English Language Education in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area

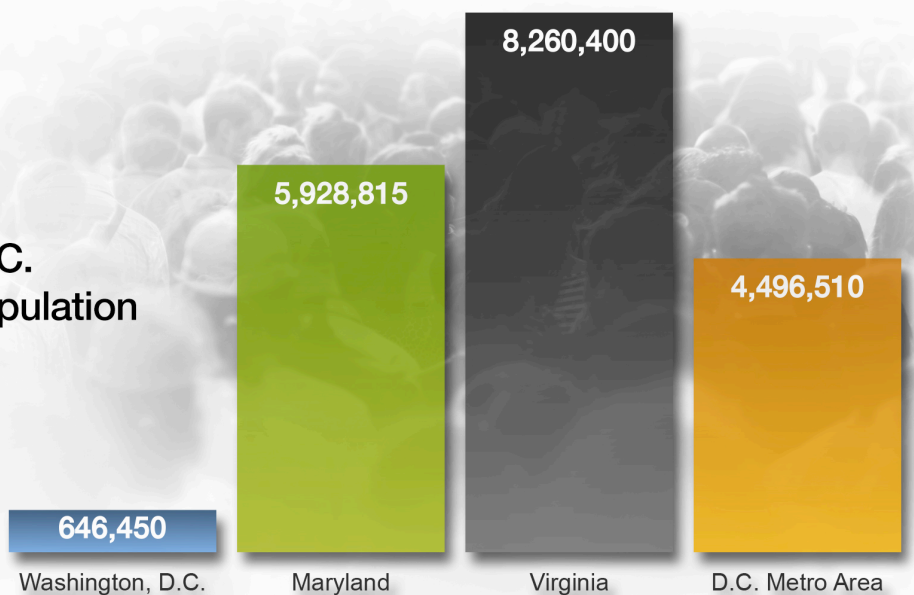
By Eric A. Ruark, Director Of Research | January 2015

INTRODUCTION

The high cost of educating K-12 public school students who are not proficient in English is well documented. So too, is the fact that most Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are children of illegal alien parents.¹ The recent “surge” of Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) and families with young children who poured across our borders in the spring and summer of 2014 exacerbated an already formidable and costly task for public school educators and administrators in many localities across the United States.

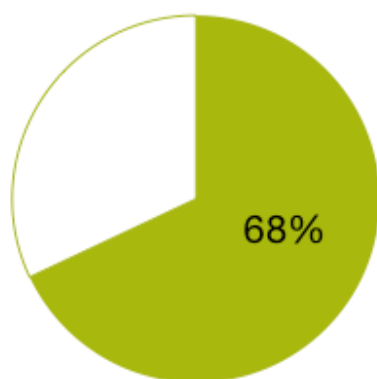
According to data from the Department of Health and Human Services, more than 55,000 UACs were released to relatives and other sponsors throughout the United States between October 2013 and September 2014.² Over 5,100 UACs were settled in the Washington, D.C. metro area, where there is a sizeable illegal alien population of approximately 438,000 with an additional approximately 100,000 U.S.-born children of illegal aliens. The illegal alien population in the D.C. metro area has grown steadily along with the overall foreign-born population. So, too, has the number of students in area public schools that are not proficient in English.

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area Population At A Glance



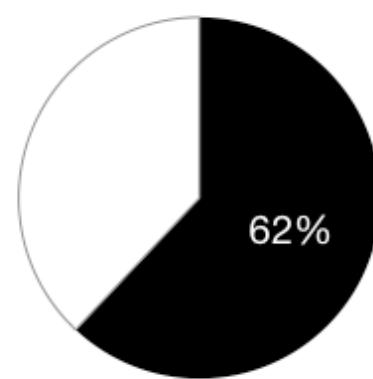
	FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION ³	ILLEGAL ALIEN POPULATION	U.S.-BORN CHILDREN ⁴
Maryland	818,200	295,000	68,000
Virginia	916,900	260,000	60,000
Washington, D.C.	106,665	35,000	8,000
D.C. Metro Area ⁵	1,121,220	438,000	101,000

In Maryland and Virginia, the majority of the illegal alien population is concentrated in the D.C. suburbs, disproportionately affecting the public school systems there.



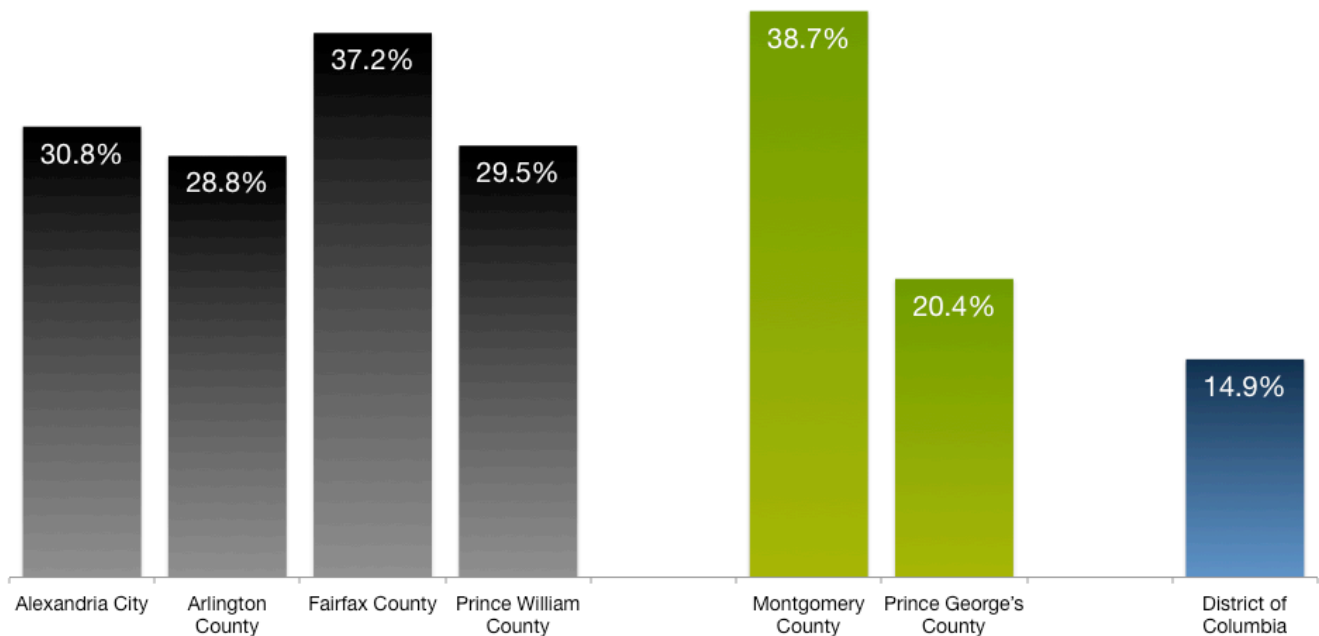
In Maryland, 68 percent of LEP students are in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

In Virginia 62 percent of LEP students are enrolled in public schools in Alexandria City; and Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William Counties.⁶



	TOTAL POPULATION	FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION	%
Alexandria City, Virginia	148,892	37,372	25.1%
Arlington County, Virginia	224,906	54,403	23.3%
District of Columbia	646,449	106,664	13.5%
Fairfax County, Virginia	1,130,924	331,360	29.3%
Montgomery County, Maryland	1,016,677	323,303	31.8%
Prince George's County, Maryland	890,081	178,016	20.0%
Prince William County, Virginia	438,509	92,101	21.0%

Other than English Spoken at Home⁷



The money spent on LEP education in the D.C. area is substantial. Most of that funding comes from local sources, usually from property taxes, with most of the rest coming out of state budgets. The federal government, which is primarily responsible for the influx of immigrant and children of immigrant into local school systems, contributes only a negligible amount of funding to offset the cost of LEP education.

While more money is being spent in D.C. area schools on LEP education, these same school districts are cutting funding in other areas, or struggling to find ways to fund current ones, usually by proposing to raise property and transit taxes.⁸ As the number of LEP students in area schools continues to increase, the resources available for English-speaking students are diverted into programs for non-English speakers. More study is needed to determine the full effects that a large influx of LEP students into a school district has on the students already there, but it is clear there is an “achievement gap” between native English speakers and LEP students, which causes more funds to be devoted to LEP education.⁹

METHODOLOGY

Education experts have long realized that the cost of educating a student who is not proficient in English far exceeds the amount actually allocated for LEP education. Over the past decade, many studies have attempted to more accurately portray the true cost of LEP education. In 2004, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found the average cost of LEP education to be:

10 to 100 percent over usual per pupil costs; for students living in poverty (independent of ELL programs), the corresponding range of estimates is 20 to 100 percent. Bringing students characterized by both poverty and limited English proficiency up to average levels of achievement could potentially increase average costs by a larger amount — perhaps 30 to 200 percent over average per pupil costs.¹⁰

A 2001 study prepared by the Maryland Commission on Education, Finance Equity, and Excellence, the so-called “Thornton Commission,” which has become a model for future studies, found that the added cost of “adequately” educating English-language learners was equal to the base cost per student. In other words, it costs twice as much to teach an LEP student as it does an English speaking student.¹¹ In August 2006, an educational consulting firm that had participated in the Thornton Commission study in Maryland issued a similar report for Nevada, entitled “Estimating the Cost of an Adequate Education in Nevada.” This report found that the average additional cost of educating an LEP student in Nevada was 75 percent of the base cost per student, though the cost did vary by district.¹²

Several factors must be taken into consideration when estimating the cost of LEP education in a particular locality. Not all LEP students will be illegal aliens or the children of illegal aliens, but, consistent with other research, we assume that illegal alien students and U.S.-born students of illegal alien parents have a much greater likelihood of being enrolled in LEP classes. We also take into account research that has found that LEP students are more likely to come from low-income families and receive additional services from the school system, thus raising the overall cost of their schooling. These factors affect the amount of resources devoted to these students.

Calculating the cost of LEP education simply by looking at its line item in a budget does not measure the full cost. Students who are classified as LEP have a specific curriculum tailored to meet their educational needs. The total cost must include teachers, aides, administrators, translators, as well as the use of classroom space, textbooks, and educational materials.

Building on an earlier estimate of the LEP costs in Maryland, Nevada, and Utah, and the costs of educating recent UAC arrivals, this study examined the cost of LEP education in the D.C. metro area with the addition of UAC students calculated separately.¹³ Since public school systems in and around D.C. are among the highest average per pupil spenders in the country, we assumed that average LEP costs in the region would be at least 50 percent higher than the average per pupil cost, while the average LEP cost for UACS would be at least 75 percent higher. This means that the average per pupil cost is multiplied by 0.50 and 0.75 respectively to get the average LEP cost per pupil. Based on previous research and the many reports on the high cost of LEP education in the D.C. area, including the extra resources needed for UACs, it is likely that the estimates in this report are conservative and the actual cost is much higher.¹⁴

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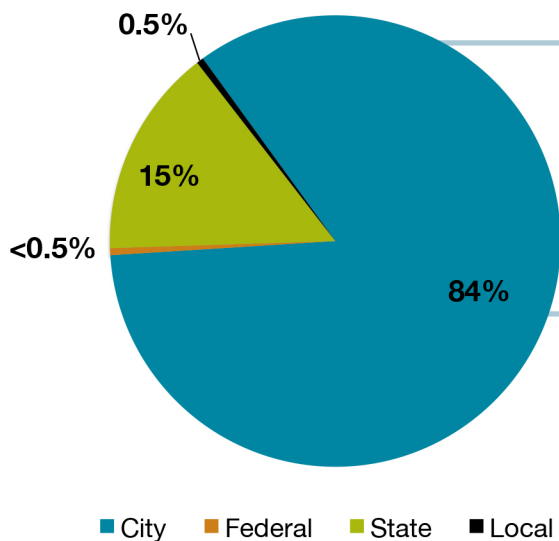
Alexandria City Public Schools

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	LEP%
2005-06	10,521	1,856	17.6%
2006-07	10,332	1,882	18.2%
2007-08	10,557	2,383	22.6%
2008-09	11,225	2,831	25.2%
2009-10	11,623	2,572	22.1%
2010-11	11,999	2,672	22.3%
2011-12	12,395	2,827	22.8%
2012-13	13,114	3,200	24.4%
2013-14	13,623	3,460	25.4%
2014-15	14,377	4,183 (210 UACs)	29.5%
% Increase	36.7%	125.4%	67.6%

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hispanic	33.0%
Black	31.8%
White	27.6%
American Indian	.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.8%
Unspecified	2.3%

TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET: \$232,292,599



Average Cost per Student.....\$17,025

LEP Cost per Student.....\$25,538

LEP Cost per UAC.....\$29,794

Students receiving free/reduced lunch...57.5%
Students receiving special education.....10.84%

Total LEP Cost
\$107,719,214 or **45.8%**
of the total budget.

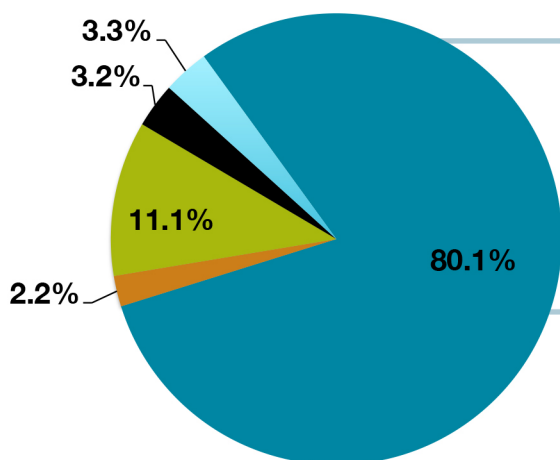
Arlington Public Schools

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	LEP%
2005-06	18,411	3,574	19.3%
2006-07	18,451	3,559	19.4%
2007-08	18,684	3,344	17.9%
2008-09	19,534	3,456	17.7%
2009-10	20,233	3,656	18.1%
2010-11	21,241	3,743	17.6%
2011-12	21,841	3,689	16.9%
2012-13	22,613	3,919	17.3%
2013-14	23,316	4,064	17.4%
2014-15	24,668	4,442 (125 UACs)	18.1%
% Increase	34.0%	24.7%	-6.2%

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hispanic	27.9%
Black	10.5%
White	46.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	9.4%
Multi-Racial	5%

TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET: \$539,421,080



■ County ■ Federal ■ State ■ Local ■ Carry Over

Average Cost per Student.....\$19,040

LEP Cost per Student.....\$28,560

LEP Cost per UAC.....\$33,320

Students receiving free/reduced lunch...32.1%

Students receiving special education.....13.0%

Total LEP Cost
\$127,925,000 or **23.7%**
 of the total budget.

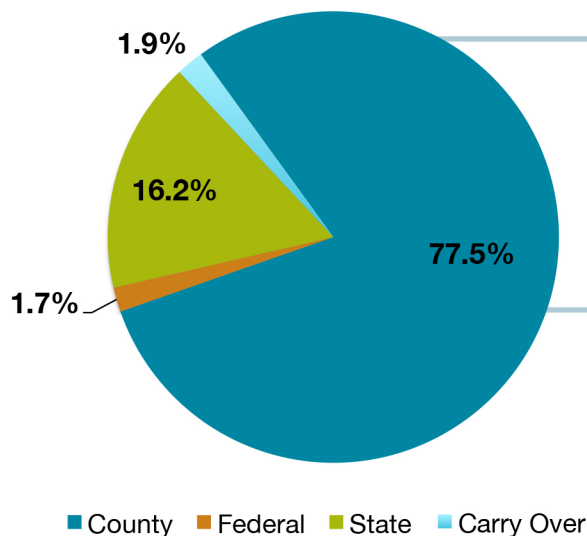
Fairfax County Public Schools

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	LEP%
2005-06	164,284	21,044	12.8%
2006-07	164,486	21,268	12.9%
2007-08	166,307	21,751	13.1%
2008-09	169,538	20,689	12.2%
2009-10	172,391	23,972	13.9%
2010-11	174,933	28,678	16.4%
2011-12	177,918	31,406	17.7%
2012-13	181,259	31,532	17.4%
2013-14	183,895	31,204	17.0%
2014-15	187,844	33,162 (1,059 UACs)	17.8%
% Increase	14.3%	57.6%	39.1%

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hispanic	23.6%
Black	10.3%
White	41.4%
Asian	19.5%
Multi-Racial	4.9%

TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET: \$2.498 BILLION



Average Cost per Student.....\$13,519

LEP Cost per Student.....\$20,279

LEP Cost per UAC.....\$23,658

Students receiving free/reduced lunch...24.8%

Students receiving special education.....8.4%

Total LEP Cost
\$676,070,559 or **27%**
 of the total budget.

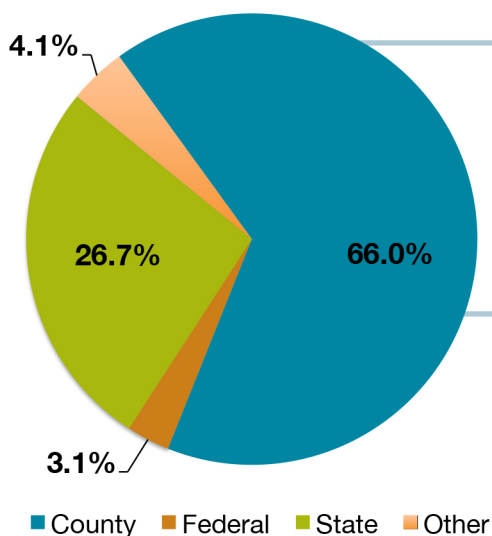
Montgomery County Public Schools

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	LEP%
2005-06	139,387	13,200	9.5%
2006-07	139,936	13,714	9.8%
2007-08	137,007	14,797	10.8%
2008-09	137,763	15,980	11.6%
2009-10	140,500	17,000	12.1%
2010-11	143,309	17,887	12.5%
2011-12	146,497	19,047	13.0%
2012-13	148,779	19,192	12.9%
2013-14	151,289	19,819	13.1%
2014-15	155,031	21,418 (853 UACs)	13.9%
% Increase	11.2%	62.3%	46.3%

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hispanic	27.4%
Black	21.4%
White	32.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	15.0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<5.0%
Multi-Racial	<5.0%

TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET: \$2.317 BILLION



Average Cost per Student.....\$14,414

LEP Cost per Student.....\$21,621

LEP Cost per UAC.....\$25,225

Students receiving free/reduced lunch...34.3%
Students receiving special education.....11.7%

Total LEP Cost
\$466,152,790 or **20.1%**
of the total budget.

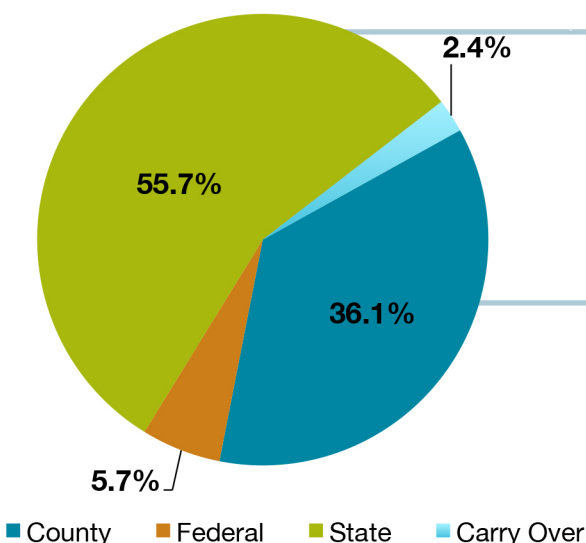
Prince George's County Public Schools

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	LEP%
2005-06	134,916	8,200	6.1%
2006-07	132,273	11,198	8.5%
2007-08	131,231	13,825	10.5%
2008-09	129,752	13,753	10.6%
2009-10	127,977	13,681	10.7%
2010-11	126,673	14,298	11.3%
2011-12	123,833	15,099	12.2%
2012-13	123,741	16,604	13.4%
2013-14	125,136	18,234	14.6%
2014-15	129,058	20,527 (1,003 UACs)	16.0%
% Increase	-4.3%	150.3%	162.3%

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hispanic	25.8%
Black	64.7%
White	4.5%
Asian	2.8%
Other	2.2%

TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET: \$1.795 BILLION



Average Cost per Student.....\$13,581

LEP Cost per Student.....\$20,372

LEP Cost per UAC.....\$23,767

Students receiving free/reduced lunch...61.8%

Students receiving special education.....12%

Total LEP Cost
\$421,581,229 or **23.5%**
 of the total budget.

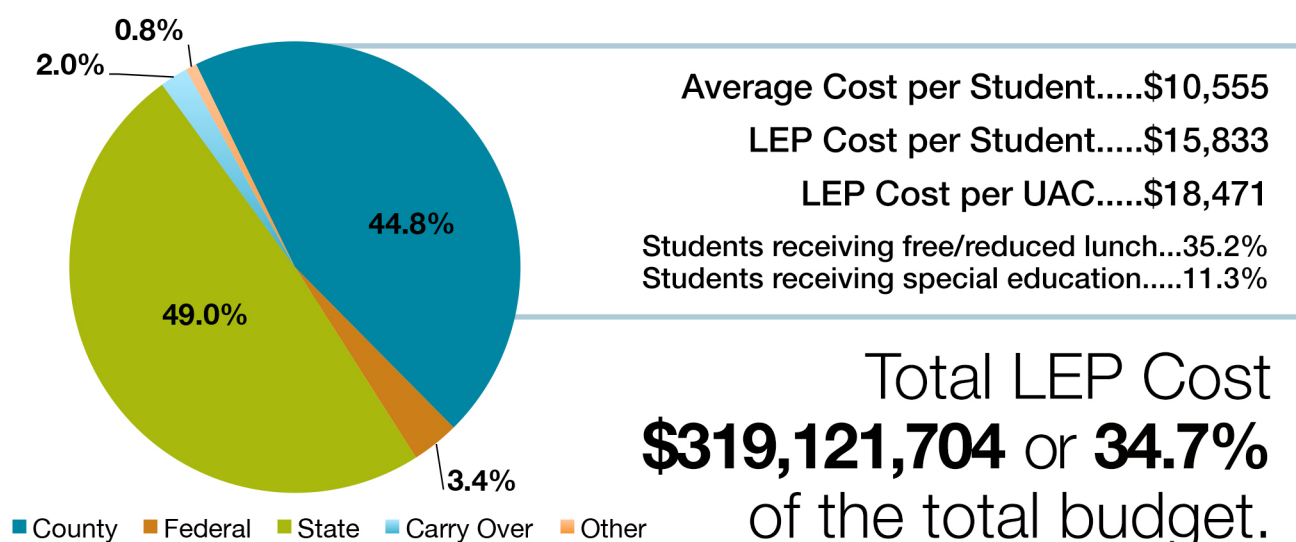
Prince William County Public Schools

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	LEP%
2005-06	68,285	7,547	11.1%
2006-07	70,723	8,414	11.9%
2007-08	72,654	9,980	13.7%
2008-09	73,657	10,386	14.1%
2009-10	76,656	11,737	15.3%
2010-11	79,117	12,026	15.2%
2011-12	81,635	13,745	16.8%
2012-13	83,551	13,663	16.4%
2013-14	85,055	18,287	21.5%
2014-15	87,501	20,090 (393 UACs)	22.6%
% Increase	28.1%	166.2%	103.6%

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hispanic	30.4%
Black	20.6%
White	34.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	8.0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	.32%
Multi-Racial	6.5%

TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET: \$919,386,668



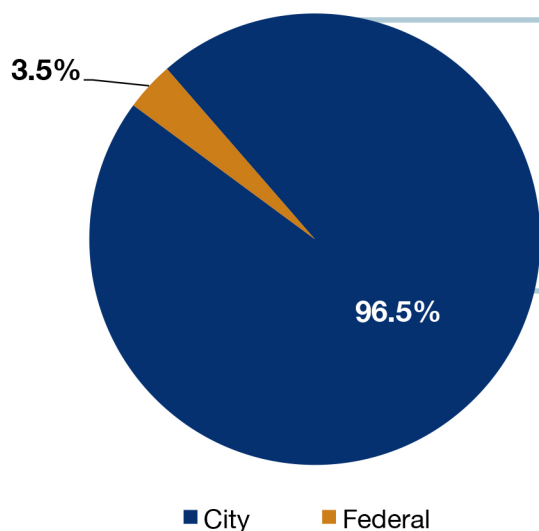
Washington, D.C. Public & Charter Schools

YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	LEP%
2005-06	73,115	4,855	6.6%
2006-07	72,378	5,063	7.0%
2007-08	71,369	5,372	7.5%
2008-09	70,919	5,939	8.4%
2009-10	72,335	6,466	8.9%
2010-11	74,986	6,993	9.3%
2011-12	76,753	7,520	9.8%
2012-13	80,230	8,047	10.0%
2013-14	82,958	8,575	10.3%
2014-15	86,231	9,389 (278 UACs)	10.9%
% Increase	17.9%	93.4%	60.6%

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hispanic	16%
Black	68%
White	14%
Other	4%

TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET: \$1.543 BILLION



Average Cost per Student.....\$18,735

LEP Cost per Student.....\$28,103

LEP Cost per UAC.....\$32,786

Students receiving free/reduced lunch...76%

Students receiving special education.....15%

Total LEP Cost
\$265,160,941 or **17.2%**
 of the total budget.

ENDNOTES

¹ Other terms sometimes used are English Language Learners (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESL), or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). For the correlation between of illegal immigration and high concentrations of LEP students in public schools see: Jack Martin, “Limited English Proficiency Enrollment and Rapidly Rising Costs” (Washington, D.C.: Federation for American Immigration Reform, 2007), pp. 3-4, (http://www.fairus.org/site/DocServer/LEP_Special_Report.pdf?docID=1581); Michael Fix and Jeffrey Passel, “U.S. Immigration: Trends and Implications for Schools,” (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, January 2003), p. 12, (http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410654_NABEPresentation.pdf). See also, Lawrence Hardy, “The Divided Line,” *American School Board Journal*, vol. 195, no. 09 (September 2008): p. 33; “A Review of the Public Education Cost of Undocumented Children,” A Report to the Utah Legislature, Number 2007-07, May 2007, p. 6 (http://le.utah.gov/audit/07_07rpt.pdf).

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, “Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors By State,” <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/ucs/state-by-state-uc-placed-sponsors>; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors by County, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/unaccompanied-children-released-to-sponsors-by-county>.

³ Total population and foreign-born population figures taken from “State & County QuickFacts,” U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>, accessed December 10, 2014.

⁴ Illegal alien and U.S.-born children of illegal alien estimate taken from Jack Martin, Eric A. Ruark, “The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on United States Taxpayers,” Federation for American Immigration Reform, FAIR Horizon Press, July 2010 (revised July 2011),

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⁵ D.C. Metro area is defined in this study as: District of Columbia; Montgomery County and Prince George’s County, Maryland; Alexandria City, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Prince William County, Virginia. This comprises a smaller area than the U.S. Census Bureau’s Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, which also includes Calvert County, MD; Charles County, MD; Clarke County, VA; Culpeper County, VA; Fauquier County, VA; Loudoun County, VA; Rappahannock County, VA; Spotsylvania County, VA; Stafford County, VA; Warren County, VA; Fairfax city, VA; Falls Church city, VA; Fredericksburg city, VA; Manassas city, VA; Manassas Park city, VA; Jefferson County, WV. Office of Management and Budget, “Revised Delineations of Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Micropolitan Statistical Areas, and Combined Statistical Areas, and Guidance on Uses of the Delineations of These Areas,” OMB Bulletin No. 13-01, February 28, 2013, p. 51

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b-13-01.pdf>).

⁶ “Fact Book,” Maryland State Department of Education, 2012-2013, p. 30

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⁷ All figures in chart taken from “State & County QuickFacts,” U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>, accessed December 10, 2014.

⁸ “Overcrowding has Arlington officials debating plans for middle school expansion,” *The Washington Post*, December 7, 2014 (http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/arlington-school-officials-grapple-with-overcrowding-plan-for-new-middle-schools/2014/12/07/3f8ef2ee-70f4-11e4-ad12-3734c461eab6_story.html); “D.C. spending plan cuts programs and staff at dozens of schools,” *The Washington Post*, May 2, 2013 (http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/dc-spending-plan-cuts-programs-and-staff-at-dozens-of-schools/2013/05/01/e973b7c4-b1a9-11e2-bbf2-a6f9e9d79e19_story.html); “Keep our schools relevant,” *FairfaxTimes.com*, <http://www.fairfaxtimes.com/article/20141205/OPINION/141209423/1065/keep-our-schools-relevant&template=fairfaxTimes>, accessed December 11, 2014; “Fairfax schools chief to propose deep cuts,” *The Washington Post*, October 20, 2013 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/fairfax-schools-chief>

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⁹ Ballantyne, et. al., *Dual Language Learners in the Early Years*, p. 1. The Fact Book for 2007-2008, released by the Maryland State Department of Education, which touts “Maryland Public Schools: #1 in the Nation,” demonstrates the disparity between the general student population and LEP students on High School Assessment tests. While 90.2 percent of all students met the requirements on all four tests by 11th grade, only 63.7percent of LEP students had met the same requirements, p. 14

(http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/FCB60C1D-6CC2-4270-BDAA-153D67247324/18996/FACT_BOOK_20072008_12309.pdf)

A 2008 report by the Pew Hispanic Center found that English language learners “are much less likely than other students to score at or above proficient levels in both mathematics and reading/language arts.” Richard Fry, “The Role of Schools in the English Language Learner Achievement Gap” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, June 26, 2008), p. i;

¹⁰ “Illegal Alien Schoolchildren: Issues in Estimating State-by-State Costs,” United States General Accounting Office, GAO-04-733, June 2004, pp. 9-10 (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04733.pdf>); See also “The Impact of Unauthorized Immigrants on the Budgets of State and Local Governments,” Congressional Budget Office, Pub. No. 2500, December 2007, p 2. (<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/87xx/doc8711/12-6-Immigration.pdf>). This report cited a study that “the costs of educating students who did not speak English fluently were 20 percent to 40 percent higher than the costs incurred for native-born students.”

¹¹ “Calculation of the Cost of an Adequate Education in Maryland in 1999-2000 Using Two Different Analytic Approaches,” prepared for the Maryland Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence (Thornton Commission), p. 2.

¹² John Augenblick, et. al., “Estimating the Cost of an Adequate Education in Nevada,” (Denver CO: Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates), August 2006, p. 35, 60

(<http://nevadalabor.com/barbwire/barb10/barbxdoxpix/acr10/FINAL%20REPORT%20complete%208-28.pdf>). The cost calculations are as follows: For a “Small” school (under 780 students) the cost is 1.21 times the base cost of per pupil spending, or 121% of the base cost. The LEP cost is then added to the base cost to get the total cost of educating an LEP student. For a “Moderate” school (under 6,500) the cost is .56 times the base cost (56%). For a “Large” school (over 6,500) the cost is .47 times the base cost (47%).

¹³ Eric A. Ruark, “English Learners and Immigration: A Case Study: Prince George’s County, Maryland,” FAIR Horizon Press, November 2009 (http://www.fairus.org/site/DocServer/pgcounty_final.pdf?docID=4061); Eric A. Ruark, “English Language Learners and Immigration: A Case Study: Clark and Washoe Counties, Nevada,” FAIR Horizon Press, August 2010 (http://fair.thinkrootshq.com/docs/NEV_LEP_final.pdf); Eric A. Ruark, “English Language Learners and Public Education in Utah,” FAIR Horizon Press, November 2012 (http://www.fairus.org/DocServer/Utah_LEP_final.pdf); Eric A. Ruark, “Estimated Cost of K-12 Public Education for Unaccompanied Alien Children,” Federation for American Immigration Reform, August 25, 2014, http://www.fairus.org/DocServer/research-pub/AlienMinors_EducationCosts_Aug2014.pdf.

¹⁴ “Counties look at cost of educating unaccompanied minors who crossed border,” The Washington Post, October 9, 2014 (http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/counties-look-at-cost-of-educating-unaccompanied-minors-who-crossed-border/2014/10/09/1f883fdc-4e6c-11e4-8c24-487e92bc997b_story.html); “Area schools scramble to meet the emotional needs of undocumented children,” The Washington Post, September 7, 2014(http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/area-schools-scramble-to-meet-the-emotional-needs-of-undocumented-children/2014/09/07/863cf9fe-3380-11e4-9e92-0899b306bbea_story.html); “For another year, Hispanic enrollment grows in Montgomery County schools,” The Washington Post, October 3, 2014 (http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/for-another-year-hispanic-enrollment-grows-in-montgomery-schools/2014/10/03/e4ff959e-4a52-11e4-a046-120a8a855cca_story.html?hpid=z3); Prince George’s NAACP opposes schools for English-language learners,” The Washington Post, September 24, 2014 (http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/prince-georges-naacp-opposes-schools-for-english-language-learners/2014/09/24/35591cfa-4359-11e4-b437-1a7368204804_story.html); “Texas schools pressed to accommodate influx of young immigrants,” Los Angeles Times, September 10, 2014

(<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-texas-immigrants-school-20140911-story.html#page=1>); "As Nashville's immigrant population grows, Metro public schools are straining at the seams," Nashville Scene, October 16, 2014, <http://www.nashvillescene.com/nashville/as-nashvilles-immigrant-population-grows-metro-public-schools-are-straining-at-the-seams/Content?oid=4738332>, accessed December 11, 2014.