

Education

I. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW OF ISSUE

The following report is a strategic issue analysis for the topic of Education, addressing only those education-related topics that are beyond the scope of K-12 education provided through the PWC Public Schools. In addition, following the guidance of the Board of County Supervisors, this analysis addresses the Public Library System and the cultural arts, particularly as they relate to education.

To complete this analysis, the following subtopics were considered that encompass the broad scope of education beyond K-12. These subtopics are addressed throughout the following report:

- **Higher Education**
This includes post-secondary education through local colleges and universities and workforce education.
- **Leisure and Cultural Education**
This includes the array of educational opportunities available through the county's cultural arts, historic resources, museums and leisure programs.
- **55+ Lifelong Learning**
This includes educational programs and services for the county's growing active adult population, ensuring their ability to learn - and teach - throughout their lives.
- **Pre-School and School Aged Learning**
This includes child care, pre-K education, before- and after- school enrichment, and other educational services available beyond school walls.
- **Basic Education for Adults**
This includes basic literacy, equivalency diplomas, English language skills and life skills for adults.
- **Supporting Resources and Agencies**
This includes the education-related programs and services available through the Public Library System, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Park Authority.

As noted throughout the following report, these subtopics have distinct customer groups, issues, trends, community outcomes and potential strategies for success. However, there are also common threads that connect these subtopics into a more comprehensive picture of education in PWC. Common themes that will be addressed throughout the report include:

- Education beyond K-12 as a core value for PWC.
- Expanding partnerships and leveraging available volunteer resources as a foundation for success.

- The impact of increasingly diverse populations (age, ethnicity, language skill, disability, etc.) on delivery of educational programs and services.
- Higher education as a resource for economic development, economic health, post-secondary and lifelong education, and overall quality of life.
- The importance of leveraging technology to provide educational opportunities beyond K-12.
- The critical importance of providing opportunities at non-traditional times and locations to serve the county's population.
- The need to leverage resources beyond county government funding to advance these varied educational programs and services.

II. POPULATION/CUSTOMERS

Education is important to all residents of the County and at all ages. Whether you are looking for life-long learning opportunities for yourself, completing or seeking a degree, or contributing to the education of others, this issue impacts all residents. The attributes of this population are outlined in this section.

Race and Ethnicity

Prince William County is one of the fastest growing communities in Virginia. In addition, in recent decades, the population of PWC has become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. The county's racial and ethnic composition is outlined in the table below.

Table 1: PWC's Racial Composition¹

Race and Ethnicity					
	1990 % of Total	2000 % of Total	2003 % of Total	2005 % of Total	2006 % of Total
Reporting One Race					
White	83.3%	68.9%	64.6%	62.5%	59.7%
Black/African American	11.6%	18.8%	19.8%	19.4%	18.6%
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0%	3.9%	5.4%	6.8%	7.6%
Other	1.7%	4.3%	7.4%	8.1%	10.9%
Reporting Two or More Races	N/A	3.6%	2.4%	2.4%	2.8%
Hispanic Origin (any race)	4.5%	9.7%	14.5%	18.9%	19.1%
Non-Hispanic Origin (any race)	95.5%	90.3%	85.5%	81.9%	80.9%

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing 2000 Summary file

In addition, the percentage of the county's population born outside of the United States rose significantly during the 1990s and continues to rise in the 2000s. The 2006 American Community Survey indicated that 21.9% of the county's population was foreign-born in 2006, compared to 6.2% of the population in 1990. The largest proportion of foreign-born residents is from Latin America.

Furthermore, the 2006 American Community Survey also revealed that 29.2% of the county's population speaks a language other than English at home as compared to 9.0% in 1990 and 16.3% in 2000. In 2006, 14.5% of the population indicated that they speak English less than "very well." This last figure has increased significantly from 3.1% in 1990 and 6.7% in 2000.

Table 2: Language Spoken at Home (Ages 5 Years and Older), 2006

Language	% of Total Population
English	70.8%
Spanish	17.3%
Other Indo-European languages	4.9%
Asian/Pacific Island languages	5.0%
Other	2.0%

Age

The change in the area's population by age since 1990 is illustrated below. According to the Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey, 5.8% of the county's population is 65 years of age or older compared to 3.0% in 1990 and 4.8% in 2000. In addition, the median age of the population is now 32.8 years, illustrating that the county's population has aged slightly over the past two decades.

Table 3: Population Growth by Age

Age Group	1990 Percent of Total Population	2000 Percent of Total Population	2006 Percent of Total Population
Under 18 years	30.5%	30.4%	28.9%
18 - 64 years	66.4%	64.8%	65.3%
65 years and over	3.0%	4.8%	5.8%

The table below begins with Census 2000 data obtained from the Virginia Department on Aging (VDA); continues for the estimate from the 2006 *American Communities Survey* applying a simple mathematical progression using the baseline percentiles.

Table 4: Prince William County Population Breakdown

Year	Population	Baby Boomers (30.5%)	Age 60+ (7.6%)	Age 85+ (0.4%)
2000	326,238	99,373	24,633	1,367
2006	386,047	117,744	29,340	1,544

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that as of July 1, 2005 there are 78.2 million Baby Boomers (those aged 44-59) with 7,918 turning 60 each day in 2006. By the year 2030, the Baby Boomers will be between the ages of 66 and 84. Applying the estimate to the Prince William Area based on the Year 2000 actual population and percentages, there are an estimated 1,388 local Baby Boomers turning 60 each year.

The VDA forecasts that by 2020, 22% of the State population will be age 60+; by the year 2030 that percentile rises to 25%. The estimate for age 85+ is 8% of the population. It is difficult to predict at the date of publication of this paper the exact future number of older adults in the area because of the multiple variables which affect any given population - to include an increase in age 85+ because of “healthy aging” programs. In forecasting, the previous table’s percentile factors are not used; instead the VDA estimates are used (hence, the grey “block out” for the Baby Boomers in 2020 and 2030).

Table 5: Growth Forecast: Baby Boomers, Age 60+, Age 85+

Year	Population	Baby Boomers	Age 60+	Age 85+
2000 ²	326,238	99,373	24,633	1,367
2006 ³	386,047	117,744	29,340	1,544
2020 ⁴	491,456		98,291	7,863
2030 ³	555,012		138,753	11,100

Current demand for educational services by and for seniors includes:

- Cultural, educational, informational, and recreational opportunities for varying age levels and abilities
- Programs held in easily accessible locations
- Materials that meet special needs, such as large print books, audio books, etc.
- Opportunities to contribute to the community
- Varied opportunities for cultural and leisure education
- Free or low-cost meeting spaces in accessible buildings
- Information and access to services that focus on special needs, such as remaining independent

Income

The 2006 American Community Survey conducted by the United States Census bureau reported that in 2006 the average household income in Prince William County was \$96,888 and the median household income was \$80,783. This survey also indicates that less than 25% of the households in Prince William County have an income of \$49,999 or less. Almost 2 in 5 households (37%) have a family income between \$50,000 and \$99,999. And the same numbers of residents, 37%, have an income of \$100,000 or more.

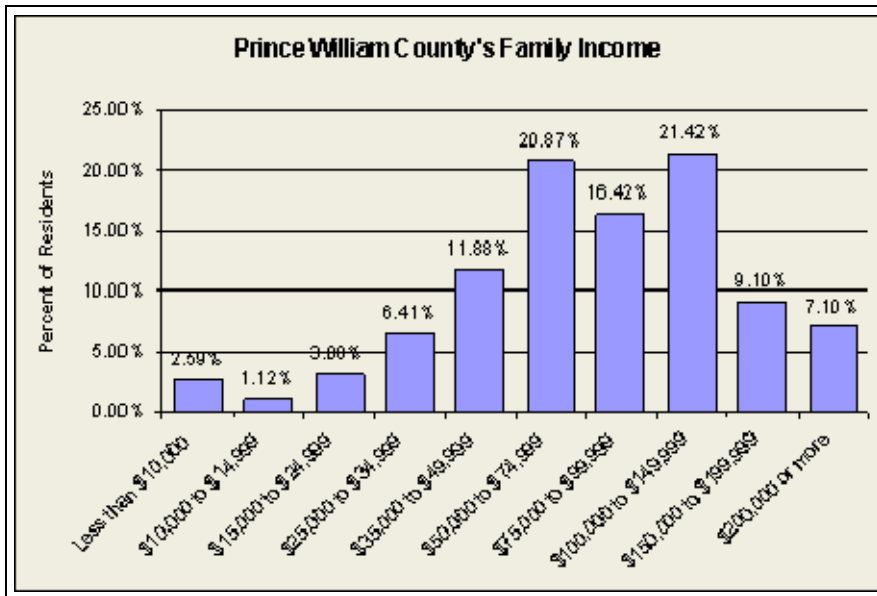
² Year 2000 Data & Out-Year Forecasts: Virginia Department for the Aging; Commonwealth of Virginia State Plan for Aging Services October 1,2007 - September 30, 2011; published July 10, 2007

³Year 2006 Total Population Estimate: 1. 2006 American Communities Survey available at www.census.gov

2. Prince William County Demographic Fact Sheet for Fourth Quarter 2007

⁴ Years 2020 and 2030 Total Population Forecast: 1. Prince William County Demographic Fact Sheet for Fourth Quarter 2007 2. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Round 7.1 Cooperative Forecasts, approved March 2007 (Technical Update May 7, 2007)

Table 6: PWC Family Income



PWC agencies also serve low income individuals and families. The expectation of families is that they can live and work in their community and become economically self-sufficient. According to the Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey, the poverty rate for PWC was 5.0% in 2006. As defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, the weighted poverty threshold for a family of four in 2006 was \$20,614; for a family of three, \$16,079; for a family of two, \$13,167; and for unrelated individuals, \$10,294. In addition, of the 202,389 individuals in the labor force according to the 2006 American Community Survey, 31.3% of all families have both parents employed, with the mean travel time to work 39.5 minutes.

Although the PWC poverty rate is well below the Virginia rate of 9.6% and the U.S. rate of 13.3%, it still represents 17,900 individuals, based on the 2006 American Community Survey population of 358,000. In analyzing the 5.0% poverty rate for PWC, 7% of related children under 18 years of age were below the poverty level, with 9% of people 65 years old and over below poverty level.

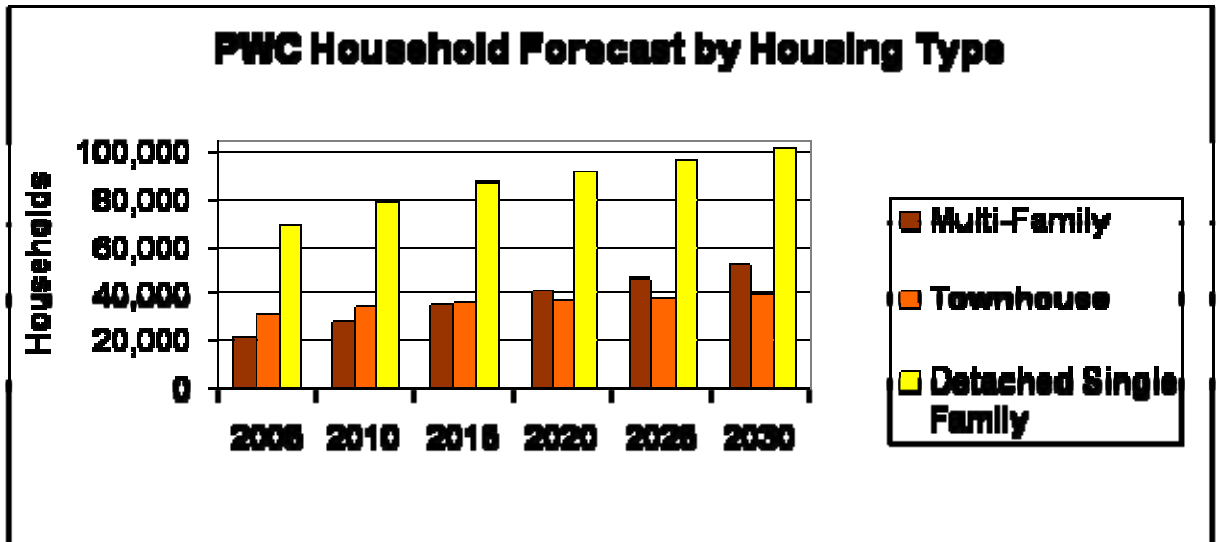
Current demand for educational services by and for low income residents includes:

- Information and access to free or reduced-cost services to assist an individual or family while allowing them to remain economically self-sufficient
- Life skills training and materials
- Greater availability and accessibility of ESOL and GED classes
- Access to post-secondary educational opportunities for free or reduced costs
- Quality pre-K opportunities to ensure their children enter school with appropriate skills
- Tuition and/or scholarship assistance

Families/Parents and Guardians

Prince William is a community of families.

Table 7: PWC Household Forecast by Housing Type



Source: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Round 7.1

In 2006, 66% of the housing units in the U.S., 67% in Virginia, and 77% in Prince William County housed families. Of those families, 81% in the U.S., 82% in Virginia, and 77% in Prince William County did not have children under the age of 18.

In addition, of the 202,389 individuals in the labor force according to the 2006 American Community Survey, 63,520 have children under the age of 17. Of the 63,520 individuals with minor children, 48,792 (or 76.8%) of all employed individuals with children have all parents employed. In addition, the mean travel time to work has increased to 39.5 minutes.

Current demand for educational services by and for parents includes:

- Specialized instruction which focuses on parenting skills
- Quality day care and preschool programs
- Quality after-school enrichment programs
- Homework help and supplemental support of the K-12 curriculum
- Information on emergency preparedness
- Free or low-cost programs such as story times, community events and other services
- Flexible times and locations for educational programs for themselves and their children

Physically and Mentally Challenged Residents

PWC agencies provide education, information and other services to physically and mentally challenged residents. These citizens can be of any age, race or gender. The needs for this population group are very diverse, dependent upon the type and nature of the disability. According to the 2006 American Community Survey, 8% of individuals at least five years old in 2006 reported a disability as compared to 4% for ages 5 to 15 years, 7% for ages 16 to 64 years, and 32% for those 65 years and older.

Table 8: Disability by Age Group:

Year	Age 0-5	Age 5-14	Age 16-64	Age 65+
2006	8%	4%	7%	32%

Community Services has seen an increase in the number of clients with severe mental retardation and other handicaps. Community programs are further challenged to serve clients that pose significant behavioral issues that require an intervention plan to address. The local community has also seen an increase in private vendors that serve clients with mental retardation from Prince William and also recruit residents from other parts of the Commonwealth. This increase may be due to the inability of programs that have developed a formal relationship to develop new resources, due to the slow increase in Medicaid waiver rates.

Current demand for educational services by and for physically and mentally challenged residents includes:

- Programs held in accessible locations
- Adaptive technology to allow individuals with various disabilities to use electronic and other information resources
- Information, materials, and services that focus on special needs
- Advocacy programs
- Culturally diverse programs for all ages and varying abilities

Preschool and Home School Residents

The preschool and home school residents of PWC have unique needs and requirements. According to the 2006 American Community Survey, 31,214 residents are under the age of five. Of the population over the age of 16 who are currently employed (202,389), 36,172 have children less than 6 years of age. Of this number, 56.08% have both parents in the family working in the labor force (20,287). As a result, day care and preschool options are a priority to this segment of the population.

According to the Virginia Department of Education report, "Home-School Students and Religious Exemptions 2007-2008", compiled November 19, 2007, PWC has 1,107 children home-schooled, the third largest in the state, next to Fairfax County (1,608) and Chesterfield County (1,188). Of that number, 591 are in grades K-5, 273 in grades 6-8 and 243 in grades 9-12. Curriculum support and extracurricular activities are among some of the needs for this group.

Table 9: PWC Homeschooled Population by Grade Level

Year	Grade K-5	Grade 6-8	Grade 9-12
2006	591	273	243

Current demand for educational services for preschool and homeschooled residents includes:

- Access to quality pre-K services and day care for a diverse population and varying income levels
- Information, materials, and services that focus on early childhood programs
- Information, materials and services that support home school needs
- Programs offered in the evening or weekend for preschool parents and children
- Varied educational programs, including cultural and leisure education, offered during the day for home school children and parents
- Culturally diverse programs for all ages
- Recreational and extracurricular opportunities for home-schooled students

Businesses

The education and information expectations of the business community are focused on services that will help establish businesses in the county and/or to achieve long-term success. Businesses are also interested in the educational process as a means of assuring job-readiness skills.

In spite of the slowdown in the economy, the county continues to add new jobs. From January - September 2007, 4,255 new jobs were added, 1,178 of which were non-retail, according to the 2007 Annual Report on Economic Development by the PWC Office of Economic Development. Twenty-seven new and expanding businesses were announced in calendar year 2007, bringing the total number of new and expanding businesses in PWC to 261 since 1997.

Current demand for educational services by and for local businesses includes:

- A skilled workforce which is tailored to the needs of local businesses
- English language proficiency in the available workforce
- Access to information and resources that will assist with starting or expanding a business in PWC
- Access to relevant county services 24/7
- Ongoing training, education and certification programs for employees

III. DESIRED RESULTS

The final report of the *Future Commission 2030* is a “collective vision of what the citizens want life to be like in PWC in 2030 for ourselves, our children and grandchildren, our co-workers and neighbors.” The many ideas gathered during the Future Commission process were communicated in seven common themes, two of which relate directly to education.

The *Future Commission 2030*’s overall statement about Education sets a high standard for the community to work toward:

“Our education system is the premier system in the nation. Education curricula and physical infrastructure are seamlessly integrated to accommodate the entire citizenry, from pre-K through graduate programs, workforce training and continuing education. Reflecting the community’s level of commitment, education is PWC’s predominant public service. Combined with the community’s institutions of higher education, PWC’s schools continue to give students the keys to a successful life. With the values, skills and knowledge from this joint partnership, these new adults are the community’s most valuable resource.”

The vision statements outlined in the Future Commission 2030 report identify amenities, characteristics and opportunities which citizens want in relation to education. Highlights include:

- **Higher Education:**
 - Range of Opportunities
 - Connecting to Businesses
 - Accessible Learning
 - Reasonable Cost
 - Research and Development
- **Leisure & Cultural Education:**
 - Recreation Centers Countywide
 - Accessible County, State and Federal Parks
 - Community-Based Activities
 - Center of Cultural Arts
 - Artists at Work
 - Tourism Attractions
 - Expanded Opportunities
 - Historic Resources

- **Lifelong Learning**

Opportunities are widely available for lifelong learning.

- **Community Use of School Facilities**

County residents have access to school facilities, including libraries and sports venues, during daytime, evenings and weekends.

- **Supporting Resources & Agencies**

Libraries are another identified vision and are reflected in the following statement:

- **County Library System**

The PWC Public Library System is state-of-the-art and nationally recognized. Libraries are gathering places within our communities and are not just warehouses for books. As such, they require a physical space. The public library system is integrated with the school system, county government and local business. All citizens have access to any library through a variety of physical and virtual means.

- **Library Community Centers**

Community meeting places within libraries encourage the organization of citizen groups for various purposes such as homeowners' association meetings, hobby groups and intellectual discussions.

- **Library Availability**

All library materials and services are accessible from home, using electronic readers, voice technology or other current technologies. In addition, our public libraries make the resources of other regional, national and international libraries available to all users. Whatever its original location or format, information is accessible without constraint.

- **Countywide Bookmobiles**

Bookmobiles, and enhancement to the traditional service, will deliver reserved books to local residents. Books can be returned to the bookmobile or to a library. Patrons can reserve books by computer, and the bookmobiles deliver materials to those who are homebound or are physically disabled.

IV. OUTCOMES/BASELINE TRENDS

Trends in education are influenced by factors such as demographics, industry demands and local economic forces. Interviews with representatives of the major educational institutions in our community, including NOVA and George Mason, revealed trends that have been incorporated into the SWOT analysis. There is also data that reveals information about the use of higher education, libraries, cultural education in the community:

V. THE STORY BEHIND THE TRENDS

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

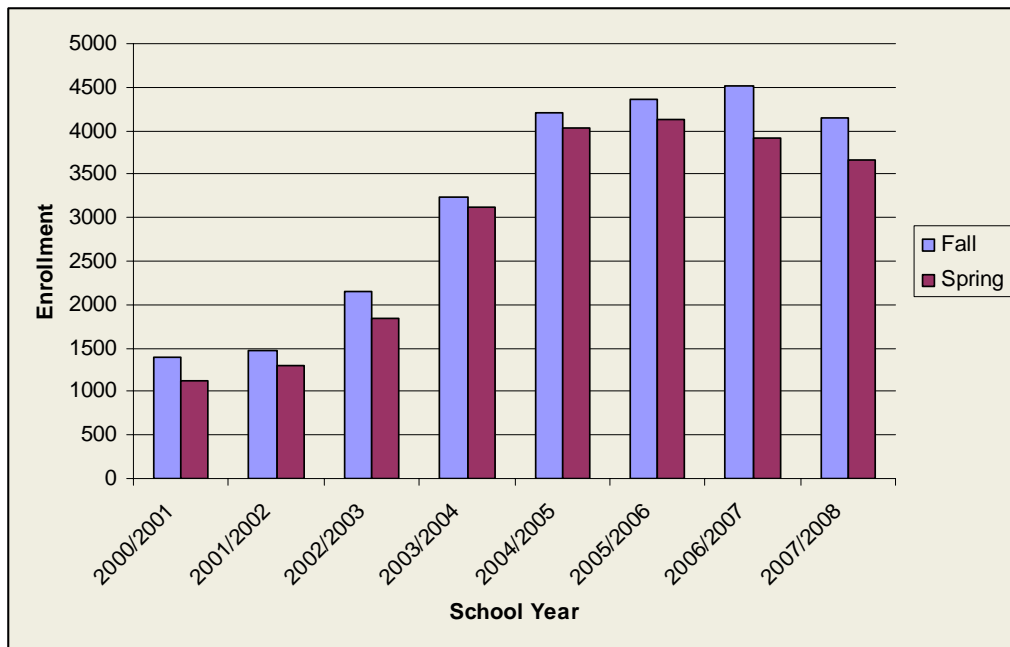
Institutions of Higher Learning in the County

There are a wide variety of opportunities for degree programs, continuing education and personal enrichment education in PWC. The Prince William Campus of George Mason created more opportunity for residents to acquire education locally that is close to home and that is geared to local job needs. Northern Virginia's two campuses of NOVA (Manassas and Woodbridge) make higher education very accessible to both population centers in the community. In addition, students can access any campus in NOVA's network.

The expansion of higher educational opportunities in the Prince William Community has created more choice for students seeking to prepare themselves for the work force.

The following charts provide a glimpse of higher education trends in Prince William.

Figure 1: Prince William's George Mason Campus Enrollment Trends



On-line education and virtual classrooms

Not long ago, the only alternative for students who could not go to a campus were less-than-demanding correspondence courses. Today, students have a myriad of options to acquire knowledge and skills through internet-based education. On-line education is delivered through all the major educational institutions and is the primary delivery mode for the many for-profit educational institutions that offer degrees to residents. The traditional communication boundaries are being enlarged. NOVA, for example, not only offers the Extended Learning Institute as a distance-learning campus, but also offers hybrid classes. These classes combine both classroom and online instruction.

Figure 2: NOVA Annual Distance Learning Unduplicated Headcount & FTE (2000-2005)⁵

Year	College Enrollment	Total DL Students	% DL Students	Annual FTE's	DL FTE's	%DL FTE's
2004-05	59,439	11,770	19.8%	24,048	2,139	8.9%
2003-04	59,707	11,517	19.3%	24,021	2,021	8.4%
2002-03	62,416	11,219	18.0%	24,767	1,952	7.9%
2001-02	63,504	10,674	16.8%	24,548	1,818	7.4%
2000-01	60,884	10,021	16.5%	22,876	1,695	7.4%

Public-Private Partnerships

Universities and colleges are seeking ways to meet the educational needs of business by developing public-partnerships. Along with their students and resources, the private sector brings connections that can translate into research dollars and business development. Examples in the community include a dedicated MBA program for Lockheed Martin employees and a forensics nursing program designed specifically for staff at the FBI academy. The Department of Early Childhood Education works with city and county Departments of Social Service to provide fundamental training to home-based and corporate childcare providers to meet state and national standards.

Technology Education

Technology education has grown beyond computer science in to fields such as biotech; bioinformatics, computational biology, and applied information technology - all very specialized fields that are in demand both in the Washington metro region and in the Prince William community.

Education Directed at Adult Learners

Higher education is not limited to students just leaving high school. More programs are geared to adults who want a career change, who want to advance in their jobs or who never had the chance to pursue a degree the first time around. Consequently, local universities and colleges offer more night classes, programs that lead to certification or credentialing and programs that integrate work and school together. All the major educational institutions offer Continuing and Professional Education courses. For example, George Mason University offers non-credit courses in Geographic and Information Systems and Facility Management in addition to academic programs. NOVA offers multiple certificate programs such as Federal Contract Management, Web Design and Wedding Coordination. Employers seek potential hires with qualifications and specific technical experience, not just a degree.

Commercial or For-Profit Educational Institutions

Several factors have contributed to the growth of commercial or for-profit educational companies that appeal especially to adult learners who are already in the work force. First, changes in federal laws made financial aid available for students enrolling in for-profit schools and increased student incentive to enroll. For-profit institutions market themselves to students who may not have a strong academic record or who may be intimidated by traditional colleges. They rely heavily on part-time and adjunct faculty so can tailor their programs to market needs and flex more quickly than institutions that are research-oriented. There are at least nine for-profit companies with campuses in Prince

⁵ From the Northern Virginia Community College Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment

William. Many more are available in adjoining communities such as Fairfax or Loudoun. This does not include those that are available only online such as the University of Northern Virginia or University of Phoenix.

Well-known, thriving Center for the Arts

With the growing diversity of the community there are many new demands being placed on cultural arts and leisure education county-wide. The benefit of the growing interest in these areas is that it has helped generate more education, overall awareness, and some outside funding for these respective areas. The arts programs in PWC reflect a wide range of opportunities such as for-profit and non-profit groups. These programs provide a diverse offering such as:

- Public performances, exhibits and concerts for residents and tourists;
- Community workshops and classes for the general public;
- Arts education in schools, universities and private studios;
- Therapeutic art programs for at-risk youth;
- Volunteer opportunities and jobs for artists, actors and musicians.

Seniors Desire to volunteer

With the growing number of Baby Boomers retiring, they still desire to learn but also contribute back to the community in one form or another. The county benefits from this population by continuing to support lifelong learning opportunities and ensuring it supports new ventures as they come along from other sources while ensuring it addresses the senior populations concerns of cost and transportation restrictions for them. Similar to the higher education workforce, seniors want to live and continue education in the same community in which they live.

AARP Survey on Lifelong Learning

In 2000, AARP, a nonprofit membership organization for adult's ages 50 and older conducted a "Survey on Lifelong Learning". The survey results show that the older generation is "interested in learning so that they can keep in touch with themselves, their community, and the world". The top three reasons stated for wanting to learn were

- 93% to keep up with what's happening in the world
- 92% for spiritual or personal growth
- 91% for the joy of learning something new.

In addition, 50-plus adults "are most interested in learning about subjects that would improve the quality of their lives, build upon a current skill, or enable them to take better care of their health". From this survey six topics generated the greatest response: (% that were extremely or very interested in)

- 62% learning more about a favorite hobby or pastime
- 52% learning more about advanced skills
- 51% getting more enjoyment or pleasure out of life

- 49% having a healthy diet and nutrition
- 48% measuring personal health status
- 46% managing stress

New Teaching Formats for Seniors

Growth in technology and computer savvy senior population enables new teaching formats for seniors, reduces and need to travel.

Preschool Education Providers

The trend has been and continues to be to provide preschool education in private childcare settings and in the setting of schools. The trend for long commutes for working parents continues and the need for preschools close to home or close to work remains an issue. In PWC, the average one-way commute is 42.3 minutes. Childcare programs cater to the time crunch of working parents. The possibility of preschool education in the corporate work setting is a future trend for PWC.

Focused programs geared to specific community and industry needs

Educational programs are geared toward local business needs. “Innovation at Prince William” is a prime example of government’s targeted effort to integrate business needs with educational program offerings.

George Mason University has grown programs that focus on targeted communities in business and government. Some examples include:

- Administration of Justice Program
- Forensic Nursing Program
- Initiative in Educational Transformation (for public school teachers)
- National Center for Bio-Defense
- The Visual and Performing Arts Center
- The School of Recreation, Health and Tourism (offers certificate programs for coaches, trainers, and others in the community.)

NOVA Manassas campus offers specific programs, many of which are transferable to four year institutions and career certificate programs:

- Early Childhood Education
- Biotechnology
- Diesel Technology
- Teacher Education
- Construction Trades

- Information Technologies
- Forensic Sciences (investigation, biological, computer)
- Dual-Enrollment opportunities with area high schools

The growth of educational institutions has created jobs

Jobs will be created for additional faculty and staff to teach the increasing student body. College campuses employ a huge variety of support personnel and they purchase materials and supplies that support the local economy. Businesses and industry seek locations near campuses to take advantage of the exchange of information.

Educated Labor Force

Economic development is one of the key influences on education in PWC. Government has actively sought to expand the community's tax base beyond residential and has courted businesses that could bring high wages for the residents and attract other businesses which would ultimately bring community prosperity. A key ingredient to the success of this plan is an educated and dynamic work force. Government has actively partnered with the education community, especially with George Mason University and both campuses of Northern Virginia Community College, to develop and expand programs that would target workforce needs.

Cultural and Leisure education opportunities are recording a growing number of visitors/participants

Awareness of opportunities for cultural and leisure education continues to improve through increased and improved marketing. Participation in Park Authority programs has increased by 24% in the last five years. In FY 07, Virginia Cooperative Extension reached 8,500 participants. The National Museum of the Marine Corps recorded 500,000 visits during its first year. The Manassas National Battlefield documented 700,000 visitors each year. These numbers demonstrate that people, regardless of whether they are local citizens or tourists, are interested in what PWC has to offer.

Lifelong Learning Opportunities

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLI) is an example of a university or college linked program network. Since 2000, the Bernard Osher Foundation has awarded grants to establish 41 such institutes at colleges and universities in 11 states, to expand programming for adults ages 50 and older. George Mason University participates in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) and has over 750 members, most of whom are retired residents of Northern Virginia. Volunteer instructors and speakers, including George Mason faculty and OLLI members, present over 250 educational programs a year to seniors who desire to learn. The participation fees are generally low cost at university or college programs. This helps encourage learning and work within all income levels. For example, George Mason University and the OLLI charges an annual fee of \$350 and covers all four terms. Additional resources in the county currently exist such as the Lifelong Learning Institute. This non-profit organization sponsors classes, speakers and events for people 50 and older. It is affiliated with the Manassas campus of Northern Virginia Community College. Membership cost \$100 a year.

After-School Enrichment Programs

There is an increase in programs in the county for after school enrichment. They can be found in schools, martial arts studios, dance studios, the Park Authority, churches, and Boys and Girls Clubs. Parents want more than just care for their children, they want educational programming that is fun and enhances their children's lives. For example, parents want homework help for their children since often they come home late. Many programs are responsible for not only the mental development of a child's life, but their social and emotional development as well. After -school educators need to be well trained in order to deliver high-quality programs to youth. Training and programming is in need of funding, and monies are often scarce. Many families can not afford the most reasonable priced programs, and the lower income population needs programming that is subsidized.

LEEP (Local Environmental Education Partners)

This program is an example of an alliance of organizations providing environmental education to county youth, and other partnerships.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

Expectations for Arts/Culture Opportunities

Many of the new residents who have moved into PWC expected that cultural and leisure education would be easily accessible and available to them.

Growth in the number of housing developments in the county for ages 55+

Numerous developments have been constructed throughout the county that are designed for the senior population, independent living and assisted living. Residents of these developments still desire to be educated in a non-threatening environment that is created within their developments or are easily accessible for them.

Barriers to Senior Learning

The AARP survey revealed the three things that discourage older adults from pursuing education activities:

- **Situation barriers**: due to reduced mobility (physical disability, ill health, lack of adequate transportation or time) and cost of transportation
- **Dispositional barriers**: , i.e., a negative education experience that leaves someone feeling as though he or she is too old to learn
- **Institutional barriers**: caused by difficulty in registration systems, inconvenient program times or inaccessible locations.

Demand for Preschool Education

Kindergarten became full time in all PWC schools in 2007-2008, making pre-school education more "early education" than childcare. Parents now want more formalized preschool education for their children. Preschools and Head Start programs are delivering programs geared to preparing youth for kindergarten. Many childcare centers

offer formalized early education curriculum, and staff receives extensive training in instruction geared for preschoolers. Increasing access to high-quality preschool programs will mean that more of Virginia's children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten, giving them a better chance of success throughout their K-12 experience.

An increased need for Adult Basic Education and General Equivalency Diploma programs

It is in the best interest of the community to make sure its residents have the most fundamental education to equip them for employment. As the population has increased, so has the number of individuals who could benefit from basic educational services.

Increased need to provide educational services for many languages and cultures

Businesses in the community need a work force with English language proficiency. Prince William is becoming more culturally diverse and those new residents who do not have English proficiency are at an economic disadvantage. Educational outreach to the non-English speaking community will benefit both new residents and the community at-large by creating a capable work force which can fill skilled and unskilled jobs.

More demand for services because of an increasing population

More people are utilizing the services of educational agencies such as Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Park Authority and the Libraries. For example, the Library system has seen a 9% growth in customers in the past 12 months alone. The increase in the community's population means not only a greater demand for existing services, but a need for a wider variety of services. The Park Authority reports that there are more requests for service from diverse audiences such as parents of young children, teens, and residents with special needs.

Delivery of education through technology

The technology boom has, in some ways made the delivery of community-based education easier, but brings with it associated challenges. Where once the library was the storehouse for books and periodicals, today it is a center for dozens of different tools of information. The library must make available books on CD, downloadable books and video, internet and computer-based services to name a few. Keeping up with current technology - including equipment and software requires constant updating and staff training. New delivery modes require new marketing to let the community know how the county's services are changing.

Access to Technology

Technology changes very rapidly and not everyone keeps up at the same pace. Some of the county's residents do not have access to computer technology or choose not to use it, so it is necessary to maintain older methods of teaching and communications while still expanding services.

INTERNAL STRENGTHS

Significant historic resources

PWC's historic resources encompass most of America's recorded history and are increasingly available to the public.

- Manassas National Battlefield Park - 700,000 visitors per year
- The National Museum of the Marine Corps - 500,000 visitors during its first year.
- PWC Historic Properties - Rippon Lodge, Brentsville Courthouse Complex, Ben Lomond Historic Site, Lucasville Schoolhouse, Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park
- Local historic resource and heritage groups
- The museums offer a variety of exhibits and public programs that interpret a particular aspect or period of history.
- Most local museums incorporate content that connects with the Virginia SOL's.
- The larger museums offer educational materials for children and teachers.
- The two planned museums have already established educational partnerships with George Mason University and the PWC Schools.
- Local historic facilities and organizations offer educational programs, workshops, re-enactments, etc.

Increased focus on preserving historic properties

Beginning with the restoration of the Brentsville Courthouse complex and then the purchase of historic Rippon Lodge, the County has successfully focused resources on the preservation of many historic local properties. This effort includes:

- Rippon Lodge, the colonial home of Richard Blackburn built in 1745
- Bushy Park, part of a land tract given to Robert Carter from Thomas Lord Fairfax that included sections of Loudoun, Fairfax and Prince William Counties
- Brentsville Courthouse Complex, the fourth County seat of Prince William County
- Bennett School, a public agricultural school built in 1908
- Ben Lomond House, a farm built in 1832 that housed a field hospital during the Civil War
- Barnes House, an important home of a family of African American and American Indian descent built in the nineteenth century
- Old Manassas Courthouse, the fifth County courthouse and County seat built in 1897

- Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, the newly acquired 133-acre Civil War battlefield located in Bristow
- Barns at Innovation

Planned development

Additional education opportunities are planned with the development of the SciencePort (Belmont Bay Science Museum) in addition to the National Museum of Americans at War (county property adjacent to Broad Run VRE Station)

Partnerships Between PWC and GMU for County Employees

GMU has a cohort program for a Master of Public Administration degree for eligible county employees. This program enhances the professional environment of the county government; this, in turn, benefits the citizens for whom it provides services. National Louis University currently offers a discount to all county employees and interested citizens. They offer this discount in exchange for the use of the facility at the Judicial Center in Manassas.

Local support for Higher Education

- There is a strong partnership between the school system and local government to link economic development and educational opportunities.
- The GMU campus in Prince William continues to develop through local and state support, and NOVA maintains a strong place in higher education efforts in the county.

Hylton Performing Arts Center (at GMU)

The Hylton Performing Arts Center, a \$40 million dollar partnership of George Mason University, Prince William County and the City of Manassas, will contain three state-of-the-art performance and rehearsal venues, along with support facilities to showcase music, dance, theater, and choral productions from across the community and around the world. The center will also contain gallery space to present the work of regional visual artists.

Curriculum-based arts programs in area schools will present student performances in all venues of the Center, hold competitions, utilize the production capacity of the CPAC for building sets and costumes and attend professional concerts, master classes and related activities.

Multi-purpose meeting spaces will accommodate the conference, social and special event needs of community, business, civic and service organizations, with formal banquet seating for 300+ and reception space for over 600. The planned George Mason Student Center complex, adjacent to the CPAC, will make it possible for local organizations and corporations to host large meetings and conferences.

George Mason University will bring student and faculty music, dance, theater and multi-media productions into the community. The Center will also provide a hands-on training site for students preparing for careers in the arts.

County funding for Arts Council grants

Under the auspices of the Park Authority, the PWC Arts Council provides financial aid through grants totaling \$238,000 to 30 different arts groups, such as:

- Bull Run Cloggers
- Cabin Branch Quilters
- Gray Ghost Theater Company
- Manassas Ballet Theater
- Prince William Symphony Orchestra
- Youth Orchestras of Prince William

Improved Opportunities for Marketing Cultural/Leisure Opportunities

The County is making good use of technology to market its services

- Web based marketing on the county Internet site
- Public service announcements and programming on Channel 23, the local government cable channel
- Publications such as Infocus which provide information on local government issues and services.

Geographically diverse locations for cultural and leisure education

Although there are still areas of the county that are underserved, there are a number of facilities across the county which provide cultural and leisure educational opportunities:

- The Park Authority has over 40 parks and facilities offering programs and services for all ages
- The Library System has 10 facilities offering story hours, book clubs, reading enrichment programs, musical performances, movies, basic computer classes, etc.

Figure 3: Prince William County Park Authority Measures

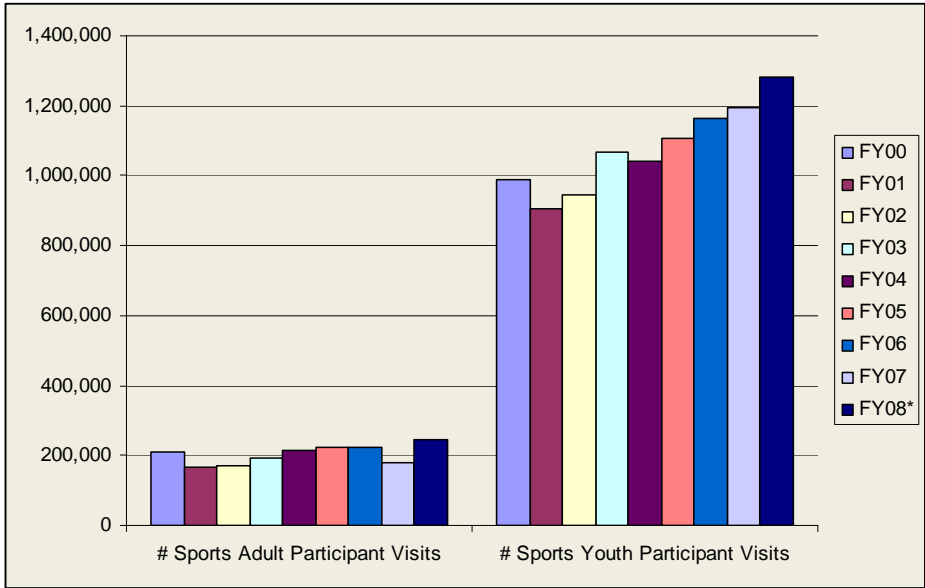
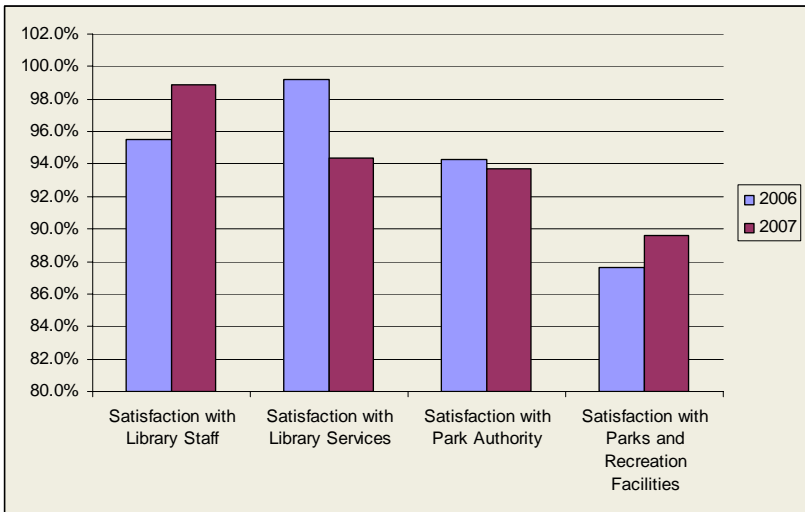


Figure 4: Citizen Satisfaction with Library and Park Authority Services



Virginia Cooperative Extension Opportunities

There is strong programming of educational activities/classes by the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Approximately 8500 people participate in VCE classes, workshops, clubs, camps and other educational activities. Over 60,000 people have contact with VCE through public events, newsletters, phone calls and email

Figure 5: Virginia Cooperative Extension Actual Fiscal Year Participates (FY00-FY08)

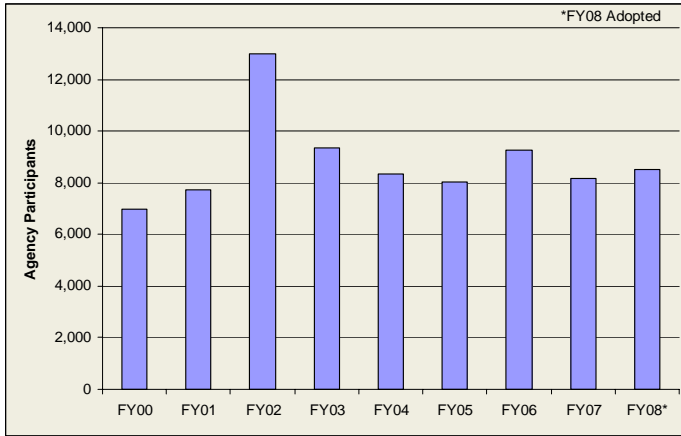
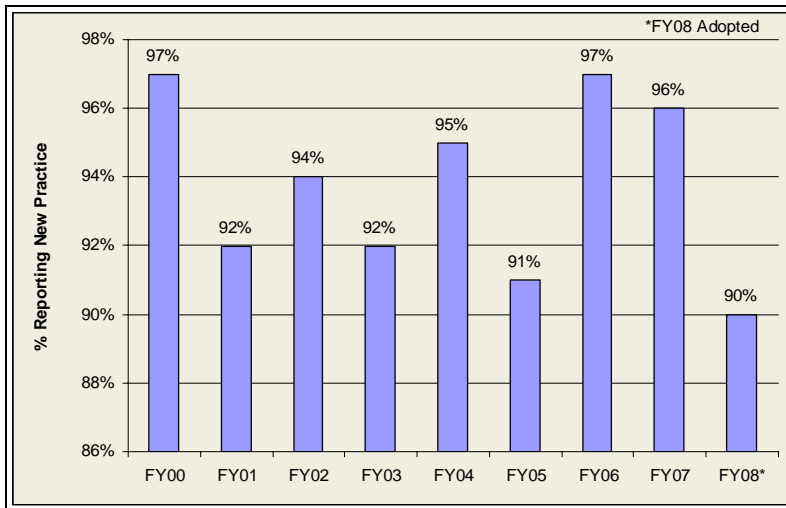


Figure 6: Percentage of Participants Who Report Learning Skill or Implementation of New Practice



Prince William Public Library System

The Prince William Public Library System has 10 facilities offering many state-of-the-art services to the community in a wide variety of formats. The system has a book collection of over 800,000 volumes. Over 3,000,000 books are circulated each year, ranking the library in the top tier of the nation. Two specialty information services programs, the Management and Government Information Center (MAGIC) and the Ruth E Lloyd Information Center (RELIC) are recognized throughout the region. MAGIC provides research for local businesses and provides access to statistics, demographics, laws, legislation and government officials; and provides specialized online services, including links to pertinent web sites. RELIC is a local history and genealogy service specializing in the history of local Civil War battles.

The library system focuses on the development of reading skills through story hours and other reading-based programs for children. They provide the highly popular Summer Quest and Teen Summer Reading programs designed to help kids maintain reading skills during their vacation months. Staff also provides educational and cultural programming for adults, including basic computer classes, book discussion groups, poetry readings and musical events.

Figure 7: Prince William County Library Trends

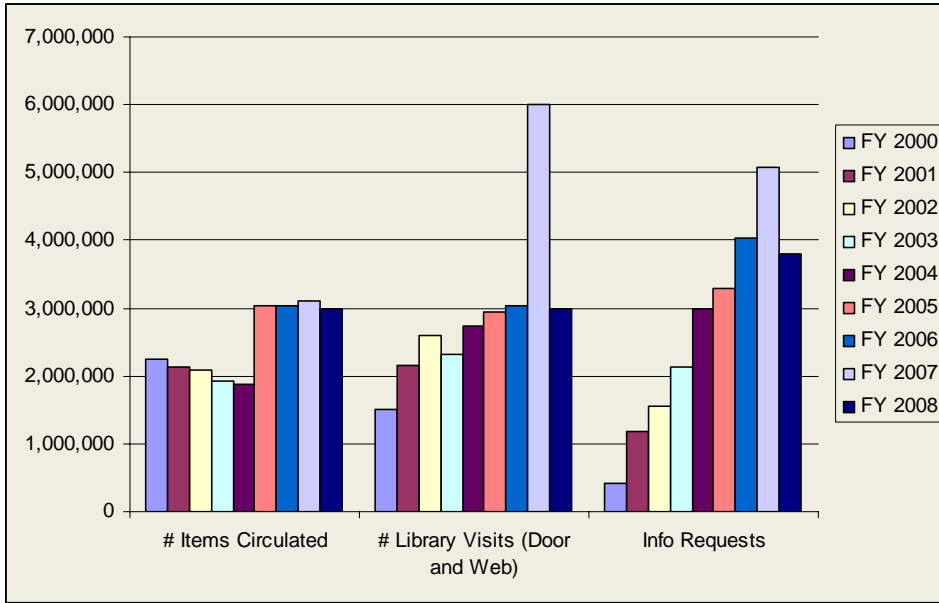
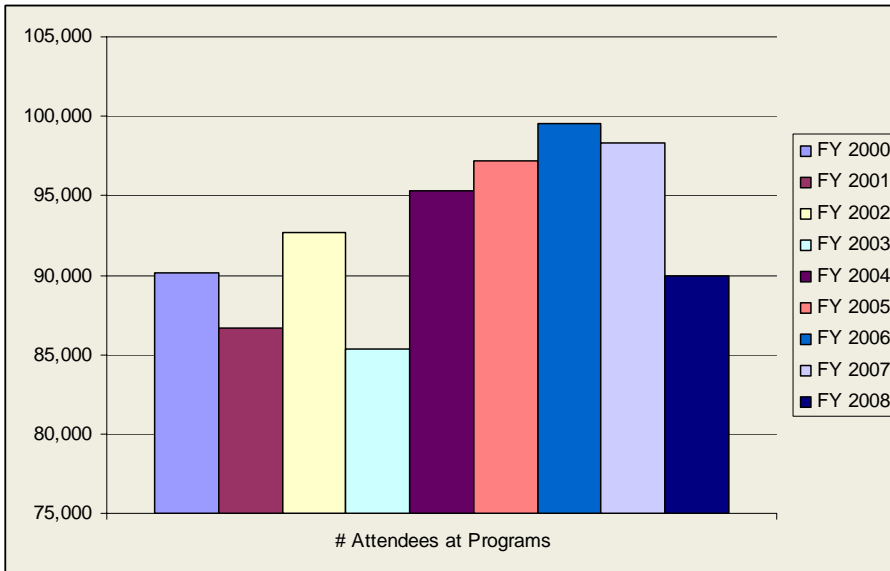


Figure 8: # of Attendees at Prince William County Library Programs



INTERNAL WEAKNESSES

Inadequate Facilities and Services

- Diminishing dollars for all services, including education. The rate of population growth exceeds the capacity for infrastructure growth in the County. And in a rapidly changing educational environment established educational institutions cannot “ramp up” as fast as private or for-profit institutions.

- Museums and non-profit arts organizations generally receive construction or small operational grants but struggle to maintain operation without county funding or a significant fund raising campaign.
- Indoor programming space is needed for performances, rehearsals, set building and public art displays.
- Transportation remains a significant barrier.
- Library facilities are below both state and local standards and inflation costs in the publishing arena continue to erode the ability of the library to provide responsive levels of materials for the public. In addition, state aid to libraries continues to be reduced.

VI. PARTNERS

This chapter of the Strategic Issue Analysis describes the county’s community partners and how they impact educational services. The partners include county, state and federal government agencies; non-profit organizations; individual volunteers and businesses, among others. This chapter answers the question of who the county’s community partners are, how these partners achieve the results sought and what trends are being seen in these partnerships.

Strong partnerships are at the core of PWC’s success in providing educational services. These partnerships are essential elements in achieving future goals and vision. Partners identified by subtopic are:

Partners	
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) in Manassas and Woodbridge • George Mason University (GMU) • Strayer University in Manassas and Woodbridge • Act College of Allied Health in Manassas • University of Northern Virginia. • In 2005, a satellite campus for National Louis University (NLU) was established at the PWC Judicial Center. • The Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (NVWIB) is the local Workforce Board for the counties of Prince William, Fairfax, and Loudoun, and the cities of Manassas, Manassas Park, Falls Church, and Fairfax.
Leisure and Cultural Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Museum of the Marine Corps • Freedom Museum • Mill House Museum • Weems-Botts Museum • Manassas Museum System • SciencePort (Belmont Bay Science Museum) - planned • National Museum of Americans at War- planned • Manassas National Battlefield Park

Partners	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantico National Cemetery • PWC Historic Commission • PWC Historic Preservation Foundation • Historic Prince William • Friends of the Brentsville Trust • Friends of the Battlefield • Historic properties throughout PWC • Local businesses which serve on boards and provide funding
55+ Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osher Lifelong Learning Institute • Local chapters of advocacy groups such as the American Association for Retired Persons and National Association of Retired Federal Employees.
Non-Profit Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Cooperative Extension • Voices for Virginia’s Children (Northern Virginia Chapter) • Infant/Toddler Family Day Care of Northern Virginia • National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center • Boys and Girls Clubs to provide before and after school child care for children in the county • The Office of School Age Care partners with Minnieland Day Care to provide before- and after-school care in 44 elementary schools. • Private non-profit and for-profit child care centers
Basic Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PWC Public Schools offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) Instruction, General Educational Development (GED) Test, GED Preparation Classes, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Classes, the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) and the Workplace Skills Program. • Northern Virginia Community College offers English as a Second Language (ESL) courses as well as an online program for youth and adults preparing for GED tests • The ESL Institute provides accessible, high quality ESL instruction at all levels, to speakers of other languages.
Other Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of the Library Groups • Prince William Library Foundation • Flory Small Business Development Center

VII. *ACHIEVING THE FUTURE VISION*

Strategies That Have Worked In The Past

Partnerships

No other single strategy has been more effective in advancing education (outside a K-12 classroom setting) than partnerships between the county government and other entities. Many of the community partners were outlined in the previous section. The following list highlights successful strategies undertaken by these partners:

- **Higher Education**

The County was a founding partner in establishing a Prince William Campus of George Mason University and advancing its bio-science programs, in particular. The county participates in councils and committees associated with the university and community colleges; offers opportunities for county employees to obtain advanced degrees at these facilities; and continuously promotes these educational institutions to prospective businesses.

Partnerships are a core value for the Prince William Campus of George Mason University, from courses that support local enterprises (e.g. biotechnology, criminal justice, arts management) to major initiatives like the Freedom Aquatic and Fitness Center, which is a partnership of the university, county and City of Manassas. Workforce education is another area where partnerships have been integral to progress. The county participates in CORE 2 (Consortium of Regional Employers and Educators) to recruit, train and retain new workers, and local higher education institutions participate.

- **Leisure & Cultural Education**

Partnerships are the single most important factor in the growth of these programs. The Park Authority connects with community partners to expand its diverse offerings for summer camps, including an outdoor adventure camp at Prince William Forest Park and programs at PWC Public School facilities. PWC, Manassas and George Mason University have a tripartite agreement that supports the new Hylton Performing Arts Center, scheduled to open in 2009. County government grant funding for local arts organizations has supported theater, symphony, chorale, photography, dance and other arts programs and performances throughout the community. Individual arts groups provide classes and workshops to reach students beyond the traditional school day. The county has provided funding for current and planned museums, provided land and other infrastructure for museums, and supported applications for some cultural facilities for Transportation Enhancement Grant funds.

- **55+ Lifelong Learning**

The Area Agency on Aging's two Senior Centers offer numerous educational programs in the county, often in partnership with organizations like the AARP, the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Northern

Virginia Legal Services, the Virginia Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) for programs in driver safety, health insurance, legal issues and other topics of interest to seniors. George Mason University participates in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, with over 750 members and volunteer instructors.

- **Pre-school and School Age Learning**

Public-private partnerships are used to provide activities for children beyond the classroom. The School Age Care contract with Minnieland Private Day School provides quality before- and after-school care without the need for additional transportation since care is provided in school facilities. County support for non-profit organizations like the Boys & Girls Clubs and joint efforts between public sector agencies, such as the New Horizons therapeutic summer camp at Forest Park High School, also expand offerings for the school-age population.

- **Basic Education for Adults**

The Adult Education Advisory Council brings together numerous partners from county government agencies, businesses and the community to assess needs and programs for adult education, including GED, ESOL and literacy. The Literacy Volunteers of America partners with the Public Library System to provide space and recruit volunteers for adult literacy programs.

- **Supporting Resources and Agencies**

The Public Library System's pre-school story times teach school and reading readiness skills for students who will be attending public or private schools or will be home schooled. The Library System partners with the schools to provide space and materials for literacy and GED classes and for the Summer Quest and Teen Reading programs. The Virginia Cooperative Extension leverages its resources by partnering with the public schools, libraries, community colleges and faith institutions to provide programs in more locations and to recruit volunteers.

Technology

The expansion of technology has improved the community's ability to access lifelong learning and community education opportunities. Additionally, local learning opportunities are increasing for students and employees who are interested in enhancing their science and technology skills. Successful examples include:

- **Higher Education**

GMU has developed an intensive "wired campus" approach as well as providing library services for distance learners. Northern Virginia Community College provides a special "NovaConnect" online service that allows its far-flung students to search for and enroll in classes, access their records, make payments, gain access to the library catalog, find distance classes, and take online tutorials. E-NOVA is a real-time, online learning

environment for community college students and faculty. Major local businesses, such as Micron and ATCC, can leverage the local presence of technology certification and degree programs, ranging from automotive technology to biotechnology. The county and City of Manassas present annual Technology Innovation Awards to recognize businesses which have used a creative, technology-enabled solution to solve a business problem.

- **Leisure & Cultural Education**

The Park Authority now offers online course and day camp registration, making it much easier and more flexible for families to sign up for available recreation and educational programs and services. The Park Authority and Arts Council are authorized users of the school division's online scheduling system, increasing their ability to schedule recreation and arts programming in facilities across the county without the old paper-based system.

- **55+ Lifelong Learning**

The Senior Centers offer computer courses for seniors, allowing them to learn new skills and increase their experience with technology. These courses and the computer areas are popular at both centers.

- **Pre-School and School Age Learning**

The 4-H SET Program, offered through Virginia Cooperative Extension, provides youth with hands-on learning experiences that foster exploration, discovery and passion for science, engineering and technology. The Public Library System's web page offers distinct areas for kids and teens, allowing them to access age-appropriate electronic resources. The youngest learners can access TumbleBooks, which offers animated, talking picture books, online puzzles, games and language learning. Teens can use their MP3 players to select and download audiobooks, and they can access electronic resources directly related to their schoolwork.

- **Basic Education for Adults**

Both the Adult Basic Education program operated by the PWC Public Schools and the regional Northern Virginia Workforce System provide websites to direct prospective users to the available courses and related resources.

- **Supporting Resources and Agencies**

The Public Library System has successfully expanded its virtual presence while maintaining high-quality services within library facilities. According to the 2006 SEA Report, virtual visits increased by 432 percent between FY2000 and FY2005. The increased remote usage of library resources through web access, coupled with in-house usage, results in reaching more citizens and service availability that is 24/7. Virginia Cooperative Extension is expanding its educational services through the development of a national, internet-based extension system.

Diversified Funding

Many successful strategies in education, libraries and cultural resources have broadened their funding sources beyond county government in order to expand their reach and achieve specific goals. Examples:

- **Higher Education**

Like other public entities, George Mason University and other higher education institutions in PWC have had to rely on diverse funding sources. As state support has declined, these organizations have combined traditional sources like student tuition and fees with major sources of grant funding, like the \$25 million in the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) funding for Mason's Biomedical Research Lab, which is currently under construction. The Skill Source Group is a non-profit organization set up under the general direction of the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (NVWIB) to expand its resources by identifying appropriate contribution and investment opportunities that will sustain, enhance and create workforce development initiatives ... throughout the region."

- **Leisure & Cultural Education**

The Park Authority's P.L.A.Y. (Parks and Leisure for Adults and Youth) Foundation provides scholarships that allow some area youth to attend summer camps and classes as well as recreational opportunities for families. Individuals, organizations, and local business provide financial support for the P.L.A.Y. Foundation. The Historic Preservation Foundation was established as a 501(c) 3 organization and raises private funds for county-owned historic properties. Grant funds from public and private sources also expand the program offerings at historic properties. The Brentsville Historic Trust was a crucial supporter of the successful renovation of three buildings at the courthouse complex. At least two local arts organizations offer competitive scholarship opportunities for local school students, offering an opportunity to expand their educational and artistic education. Local arts groups receive funding and support from a variety of sources beyond county government, ensuring a healthy and diverse funding base.

- **55+ and Lifelong Education**

The Friends of the Prince William Senior Center of Manassas connects the generations with an annual scholarship program for grandchildren or great grandchildren of active Senior Center members.

- **Supporting Resources and Agencies**

The Library Foundation is a 501 C (3), non-profit organization which solicits and accepts tax-deductible gifts. Successful projects include supporting the design and construction of The Potomac Community Library Garden and cosponsoring the annual Corporate Book and Author Seminars. The Friends of the Library volunteer groups use proceeds from book sales to underwrite many of the free programs available through the Library System. Virginia

Cooperative Extension has successfully obtained grant funding that allows local residents to attend home-buying seminars, workshops and classes as well as mortgage default and rent delinquency counseling. These services are particularly important to assist residents dealing with the current foreclosure crisis.

Strategies That Have Not Worked In The Past

- **Higher Education**

Relying solely on traditional classroom settings and schedules is no longer feasible. In previous years, higher education was primarily available in PWC on weekdays in classrooms. Today, a growing, increasingly diverse and technologically savvy education population expects more than daytime classes in a centralized bricks-and-mortar facility. The county's strained transportation network, lengthy commutes and limited public transit also limit students' ability to rely on traditional educational models. Higher education institutions are still working to meet the challenge of educating "Generation 1.5," those who were born in the U.S. of immigrant parents or who immigrated here as young children. Also, while job fairs are good for developing broad-based contacts between employers and employees, they are not sufficient for workforce recruitment, which is why a more focused educational approach is now being used by the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (NVWIB).

- **Leisure & Cultural Education**

For arts and historic groups, they have learned that working 'in silos' has not been an effective strategy to expand the visibility of the cultural arts. The groups are increasingly working as partners in developing programs, offering performances and marketing to the community.

- **55+ Lifelong Learning**

Relying solely on traditional college noncredit courses is not sufficient to meet the needs. Older learners often feel uncomfortable in classes that may be dominated by much younger students, and such classes have primarily been held at night, a problem for older citizens who do not wish to travel at night for a variety of reasons.

- **Pre-School and School Age Learning**

The private sector has not fully met the need for alternative child care options for special needs children and diverse populations. Training for home child care providers in the private sector is limited, making it difficult for providers to develop and expand their skills and knowledge. Language can be a barrier in providing activities for pre-school and school age children, particularly if parents and children lack basic English skills. Increased financial support would allow all eligible children to participate in Head Start.

- **Basic Education for Adults**
Relying solely on ABE classes through the school system. Organizations such as the Literacy Volunteers of America now provide more one-on-one teaching at more accessible times.
- **Supporting Resources and Agencies**
 - **Libraries** In the past, the county has considered closing some public library facilities or limiting their hours. This strategy has been poorly received by the community. In addition, the Library System has recognized the growing importance of bricks-and-mortar facilities for patrons during difficult economic times, when usage of the libraries increases, possibly because patrons are no longer willing or able to use discretionary funds on retail book stores. At the same time, it is no longer possible to focus solely on facilities-based services.
 - **Grant Policies** The county government’s existing grant review and approval policies limit agencies’ ability to seek and apply for grants in a timely fashion.

Achieving the Vision

The following section outlines some proposed strategies for the county to consider during the next few years in higher education, leisure and cultural education, lifelong learning, pre-school and school age learning (outside the formal classroom), basic education for adults, and supporting educational resources. These strategies were developed during the course of the Strategic Issue Analysis through research of county documents, discussions with local educational entities and a review of the *Future Commission 2030* report, which outlines the community’s vision for the future.

While staff identify specific strategies for each subtopic in the following section, several common strategies are recommended for achieving the community’s vision as it relates to education. As emphasized by the *Future Commission 2030*, these strategies will require coordination and cooperation by entities beyond the county government:

- **Partnerships**
Achieving the community’s vision will require an expanded network of community partners, including the county government, educational institutions, businesses, non-profit organizations and many individual volunteers. One proposed strategy is to develop a comprehensive clearinghouse for local educators to share resources and access information without ‘reinventing the wheel.’
- **Funding**
Community partnerships will need to be supported by sufficient funding for the staff and technology infrastructure to meet the diverse educational needs which have been identified in this report.

- **Accessibility**

The community partners must provide programs and services that are accessible to an increasingly diverse population, including residents of varied ages, ethnicities and special needs. In some cases, this will mean providing services at non-traditional hours and locations. In other cases, it will mean adapting services to those with special learning needs.

- **Technology**

PWC will increasingly rely on technology to deliver higher education, lifelong learning and community education opportunities. Strategies to increase cooperation and coordination among the community partners in order to leverage technology will allow the county to use its resources most effectively.

- **Going Green**

As environmental awareness increases, local education will increasingly focus on “going green,” requiring future changes in curriculum and degree opportunities, public programming, and even the construction of facilities.

Following are strategies to achieve the community’s vision in specific topical areas:

- **Higher Education**

- As curriculum demands for student internships increase, the county can serve as a bridge between the local business community and higher education to expand local internships and externships. County agencies can also be encouraged to offer their own intern/extern programs.
- To meet the changing needs of current and prospective students, the county’s higher education entities should offer more decentralized higher education facilities with expanded class hours and times, technology-driven instruction, programs for senior learners and programs for dual enrollment of high school students.
- The county should explore opportunities to expand partnerships with newer higher education institutions based in the community, including the University of Northern Virginia and American Military University, which has a specialized security focus in homeland security, national security and public safety.
- Support current and expanding technology-based academic programs and initiatives through county participation on various advisory boards.
- The county should consider additional ways to leverage the presence of NOVA’s two campuses as part of the comprehensive education system and as a vital asset for economic development. Consider increasing the county’s promotion and financial support for the community colleges, which will be expanding their capital facilities and will train and supply an increasing proportion of support personnel for local businesses.

- Ensure NOVA has ‘a seat at the table’ in order to provide assistance on issues relating to county governance, such as planning, economic development and support services.
- The county and its educational partners need to continue and expand their efforts to work with local businesses in order to identify needed job skills and provide adequate workforce training.
- More work needs to be done to reach into the schools to provide an educational path for jobs that do not necessarily require a college degree but demand some form of accreditation, especially in the medical field. The county also needs to continue its support of the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (NVWIB).
- **Leisure & Cultural Education**
 - Recognize that quality of life is the primary reason people stay in or leave a community, and that the Park Authority provides reasons to stay with their components of education, safety and recreation.
 - Develop innovative solutions to address the demand-versus-capacity limitation for summer day camps, in which interest substantially exceeds current capacity. The Park Authority can explore non-traditional alternative spaces for these day camps, such as vacant storefronts, churches and additional school space.
 - Provide educational services that address the growing problems associated with obesity. The Park Authority and other county agencies will need to examine alternatives, such as recreation and fitness programs, nutrition and cooking classes for residents of all ages.
 - Develop an open space plan for the county and explore a Comprehensive Plan amendment to require new development to provide a community gathering place such as open space, park land or picnic areas.
 - Utilize the county government’s expertise and resources to support local arts and cultural organizations beyond funding:
- Hosting workshops and training sessions to help these groups become stronger in terms of finances, marketing and organizational development.
- Expanding the visibility of the local arts through cooperative use of county facilities for performance, rehearsals and public art displays.
- Promoting special discounts for county employees to attend local arts performances or visit historic facilities.
- Promoting cultural and historic events via county government public information outlets, such as Channel 23 and pwcgov.org.
 - Continue the county’s partnership with the City of Manassas and George Mason University to open and operate the Hylton Performing Arts Center, with opportunities for local arts groups.
 - Advance Connaughton Plaza as a venue for community events.

- Historic, cultural and arts organizations should enhance their visibility and outreach to all local school systems, allowing the schools to take full advantage of local cultural education resources.
 - Historic entities and museum need to increase their focus on interactive exhibits and programs, hands-on activities, etc. that will enhance the visitor experience for the video-game generation and increase opportunities for return visitation.
 - Through the Arts Council, establish a community-wide arts calendar and web site, as well as a community arts festival, to familiarize new and long-term residents with the available arts activities in PWC.
 - In order to expand access to historic and cultural education programs, the county should explore trails and other ways to link legacy areas and historic sites by car, bus, bike or foot.
- **55+ Lifelong Learning**
 - Expand partnerships between the county government and higher education in order to provide more lifelong learning opportunities for the aging Baby Boomer generation.
 - Leverage the presence of the county's growing number of active-adult residential communities to provide facilities, qualified instructors, interested students and diverse programs for lifelong learners.
 - Provide more class options county-wide, particularly focusing on options and locations that don't force seniors to drive far beyond their neighborhoods.
 - Adapt programs in response to the changing needs and demographics of citizens looking for lifelong learning opportunities.
 - Increase availability of adult vocational programs.
- **Pre-School and School Age Learning**
 - Expand county's involvement in providing and/or overseeing options for training child care providers, particularly for at-risk and special needs population.
 - Explore how current partnerships and collaborations can be strengthened in order to establish more opportunities for child care and pre-K delivery systems.
 - Continue to develop partnerships that expand after-school enrichment, where demand currently exceeds available programming.
 - Provide alternative options to traditional education for at-risk youth.
 - Develop proactive preventative programs for at-risk youth and their families.
 - Increase training opportunities and support for day care providers.

- **Basic Education for Adults**
 - Expand the county's support of alternative ABE and literacy organizations, such as the Literacy Volunteers of America.
 - Provide more basic adult education, ESOL, parenting skills training/support and information about community resources.
 - Increase the availability and access to ESOL classes.

- **Supporting Resources and Agencies**
 - Consider alternatives to address the limited physical capacity for library educational programs such as pre-school story times, for which demand substantially exceeds capacity.
 - Explore ways for libraries to remain competitive, including through some of the value-added services patrons find in the retail environment, such as cafes, audio sampling technology and babysitting services.
 - Develop and maintain a systematic approach to planning and building new library facilities in conjunction with population growth rather than after the growth has occurred.
 - Recognize the value of lifelong learning and adult education through funding support of the Virginia Cooperative Extension services.