

Children in Crisis:

Statistics, Facts, and Figures

**The District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and
Management Assistance Authority**

November 1996

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) are underperforming neighboring school districts with similar student populations. The District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (the “Authority”) recently analyzed DCPS’ performance to determine the extent of its shortcomings and found that:

- **Children are being cheated out of a quality education**
- **DCPS is mismanaging its money**
- **DCPS’ student and teacher records are inadequate**
- **Children are forced into unsafe environments**
- **DCPS is not providing the instruction, guidance, and leadership our children need and deserve**

A commitment to children should be the driving force behind DCPS’ mission. Yet, despite the significant amount of funds spent on DC’s public education system—indicated by high per pupil spending and low student to teacher ratios—DCPS’ students are not receiving the instruction and support they need to succeed. Instead of directing funds and resources to the students’ classrooms, DCPS allocates much of its resources to functions outside the classroom.

The Authority benchmarked DCPS’ academic and management performance against the national average, peer districts, and neighboring school systems. The selected peer districts—Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Memphis, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Newark—share critical enrollment and demographic characteristics and provide comparisons to other inner city schools, while neighboring districts—Fairfax and Montgomery Counties—and the national average provide targets for performance. The following pages detail our findings and highlight the inadequacies of the District’s public schools—through *statistics, facts, and figures*.

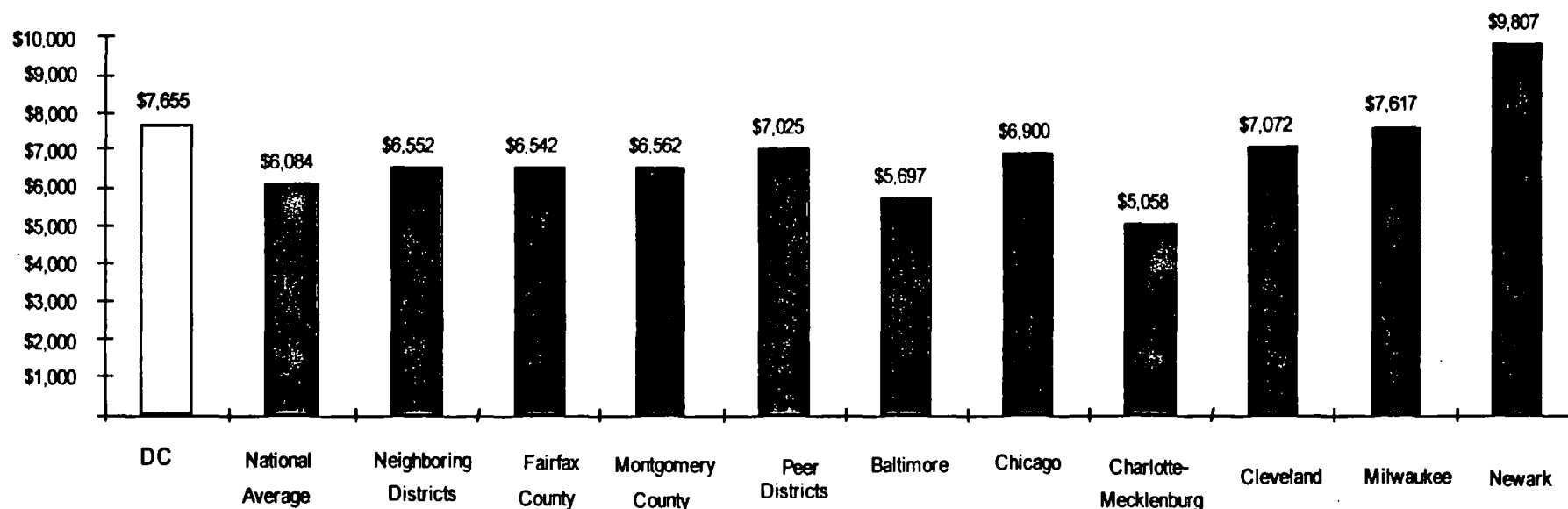
CHILDREN ARE BEING CHEATED OUT OF A QUALITY EDUCATION

The following graphs illustrate the fact that mismanagement of DCPS' resources has resulted in Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, National Assessment of Educational Progress Trial State Assessment, and Scholastic Aptitude Test scores that fall well below the national averages and that students continue to leave the system at an alarming rate.

DCPS' per student spending is among the highest in the nation

DCPS spends 26% more per student than the national average. When compared to the rest of the nation, peer school districts of similar size and demographics, and neighboring districts, DCPS' per pupil expenditures are significantly greater. DCPS outspent the national average by \$1,571, its peers by \$630, and its neighbors by \$1,103 on a per pupil basis in fiscal year 1994-95.

Average Per Pupil Expenditures, 1994-95



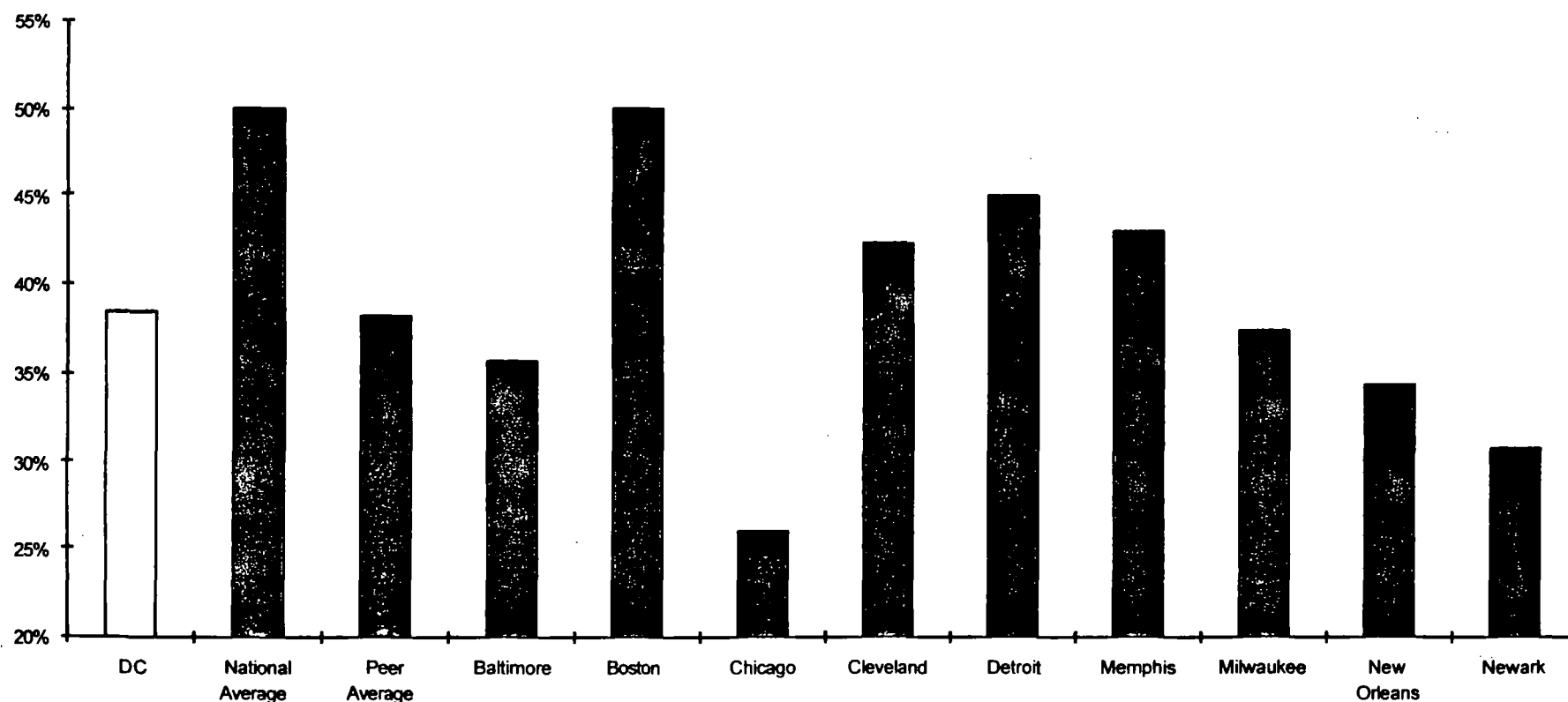
Source: FY 1996 Budgets; Center for Education Statistics

Note: DC expenditure per pupil assumes 80,450 pupils and expenditures totaling \$615.8 million (includes food services, continuing education and federal education costs).

Only 39% of DCPS students score *above* the national average on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)

Results from the CTBS—a standardized test given every spring to sixth, eighth, and eleventh grade students—demonstrate DCPS' inability to turn dollars into results.

Percentage of Students Scoring Above 1993 CTBS National Average

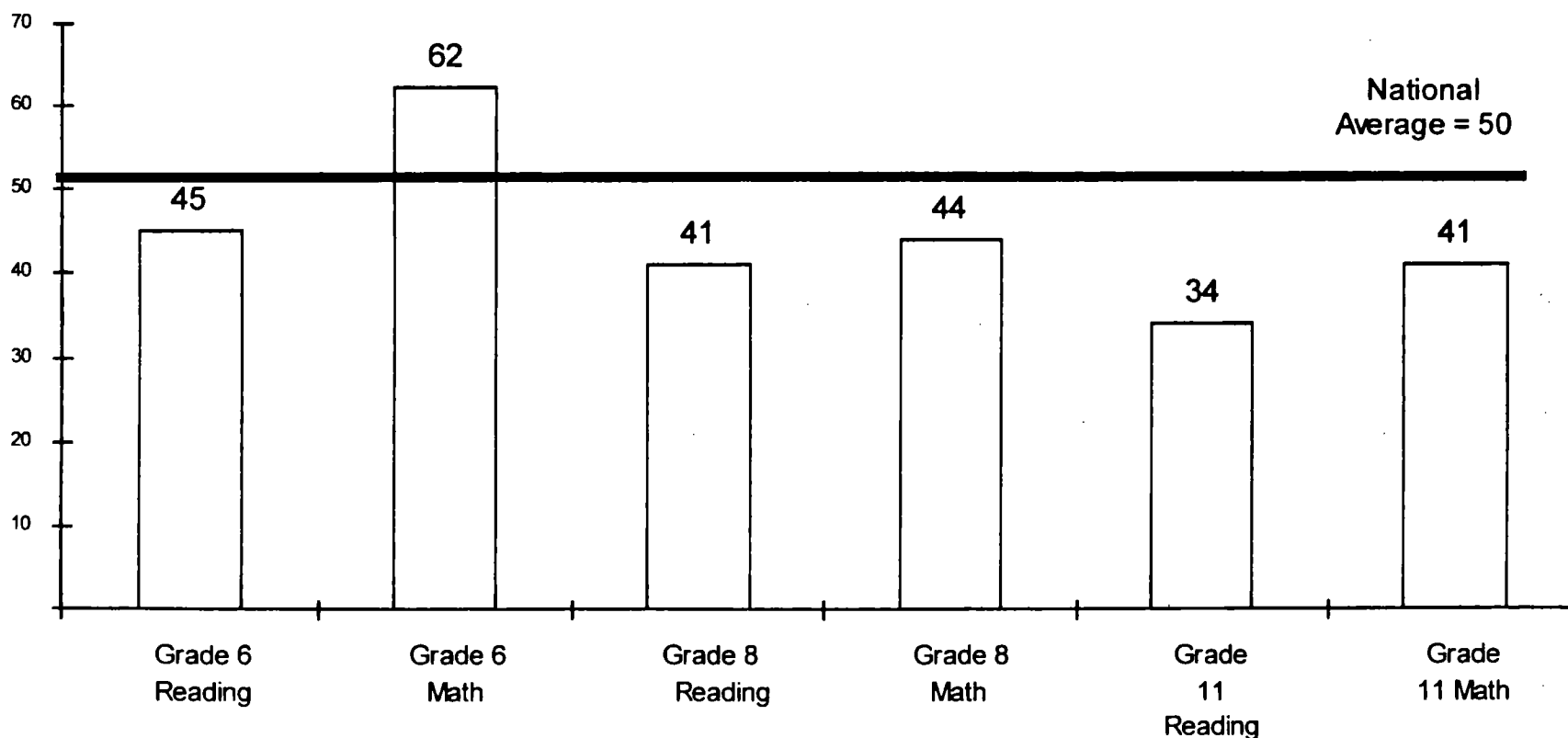


Source: National Urban Education Goals: 1992-1993 Indicators Report (Council of Great City Schools)

DCPS students on average consistently score *below* CTBS national norms

According to DCPS' Office of Educational Accountability, DCPS consistently falls short of national norms in reading and mathematics. Of the three grade levels that took CTBS in 1996, none surpassed the national average reading scores. Only sixth graders scored above the national average for mathematics.

DCPS' Average 1996 Reading and Math CTBS Scores

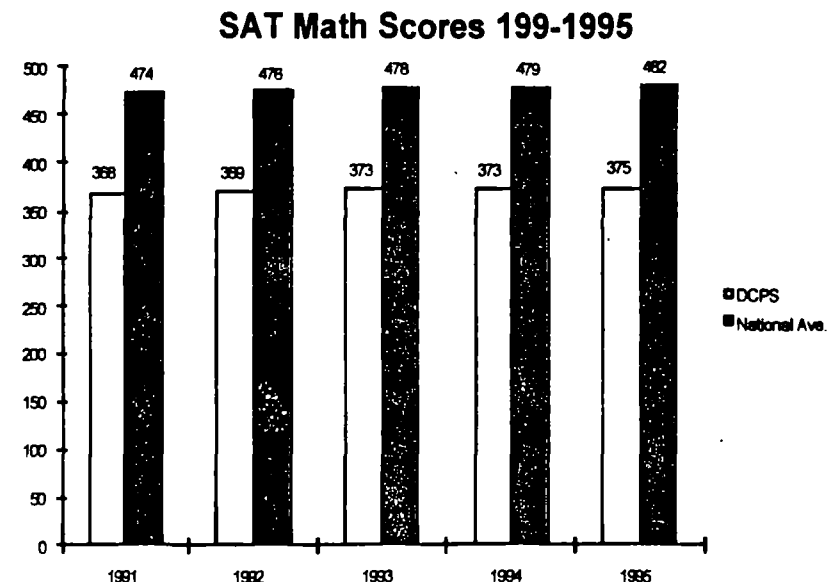
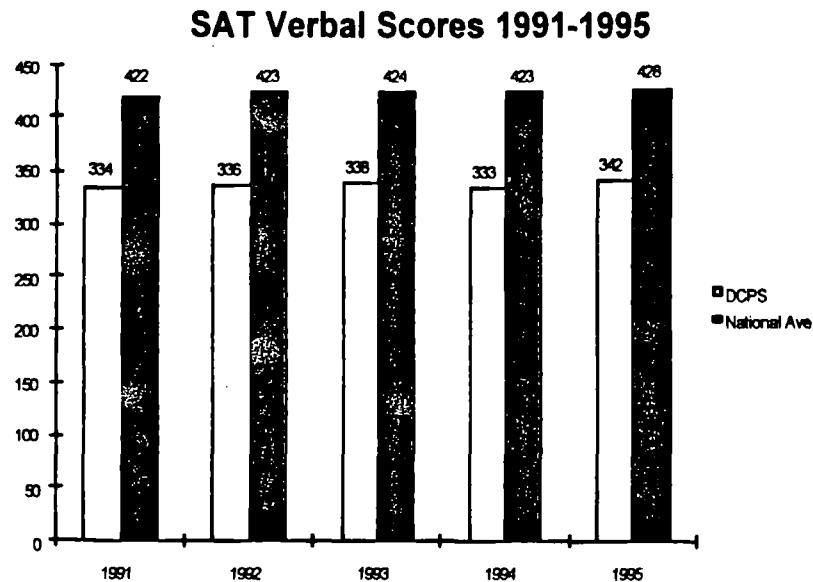


DCPS Office of Educational Accountability

Source:

DCPS' students consistently scored *below* the national Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) verbal and math averages over the past five years

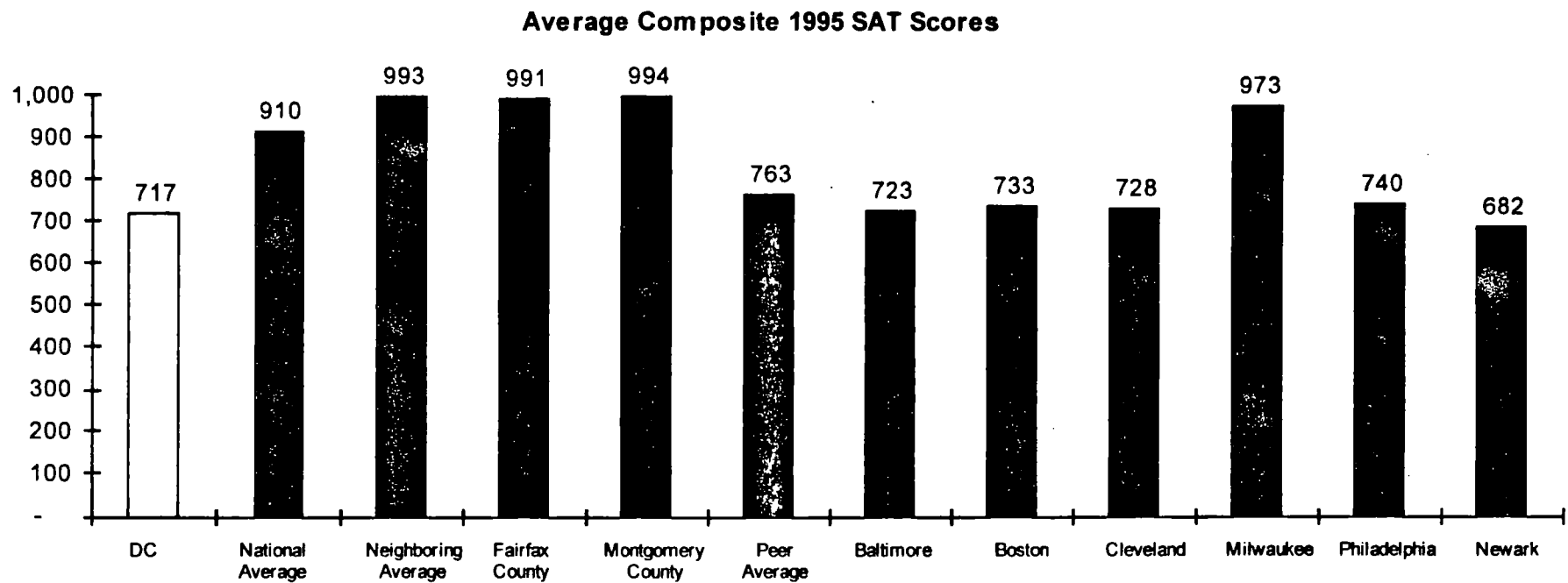
The SAT is administered to students interested in pursuing higher education. Results are used to indicate how well students are prepared for college. As the charts below indicate, DCPS students scored 87 points below the national verbal average and 106 points below the national math average on the SAT from 1991 through 1995.



Source: DCPS Office of Educational Accountability

Average SAT scores of neighboring districts exceed DCPS by nearly 40%

The charts on the previous page indicate one positive trend: DCPS' combined SAT Verbal and Math scores increased by 2.1% from 1991 to 1995, surpassing the 1.6% growth in the national average. However, even with this improvement, the average DCPS 1995 SAT composite score of 717 falls well short of the national average of 910. When compared to neighboring Fairfax and Montgomery Counties, the results are even more bleak. System-wide averages in Fairfax and Montgomery Counties exceeded 990—almost 40% higher than DCPS' average scores.



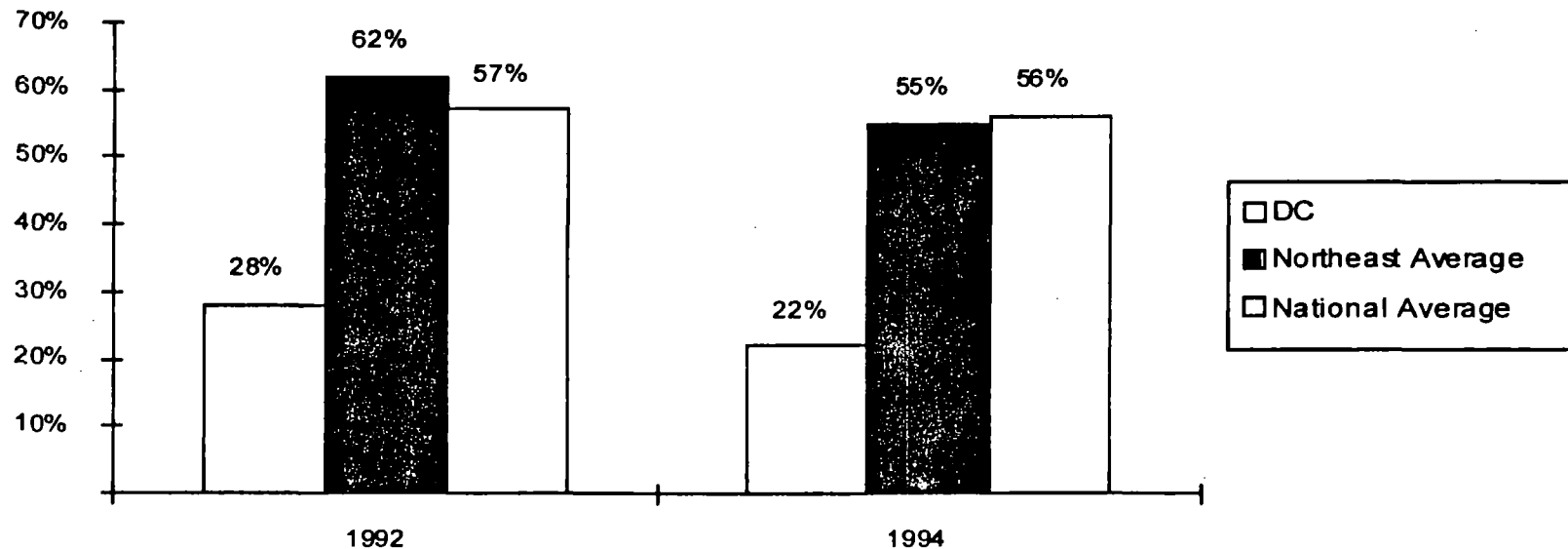
Source: Information reported by individual districts

Notes: The SAT is not administered in Chicago and New Orleans.
Information on SAT scores in Detroit was unavailable.

Only 22% of DCPS fourth-grade students scored at or above basic reading achievement levels in 1994—a decrease of 6% from 1992

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Trial State Assessment in Reading was administered to a national representative sample of fourth grade students. According to NAEP, students performing at the basic level should be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of text, make inferences and draw conclusions. DCPS' student performance lagged behind both the national and northeastern United States averages. In 1994, only 22% of DCPS' fourth grade students tested at or above the basic level—a decline of 6% from 1992.

Student Reading Achievement: Percentage of Fourth Grade Students at or above Basic Level

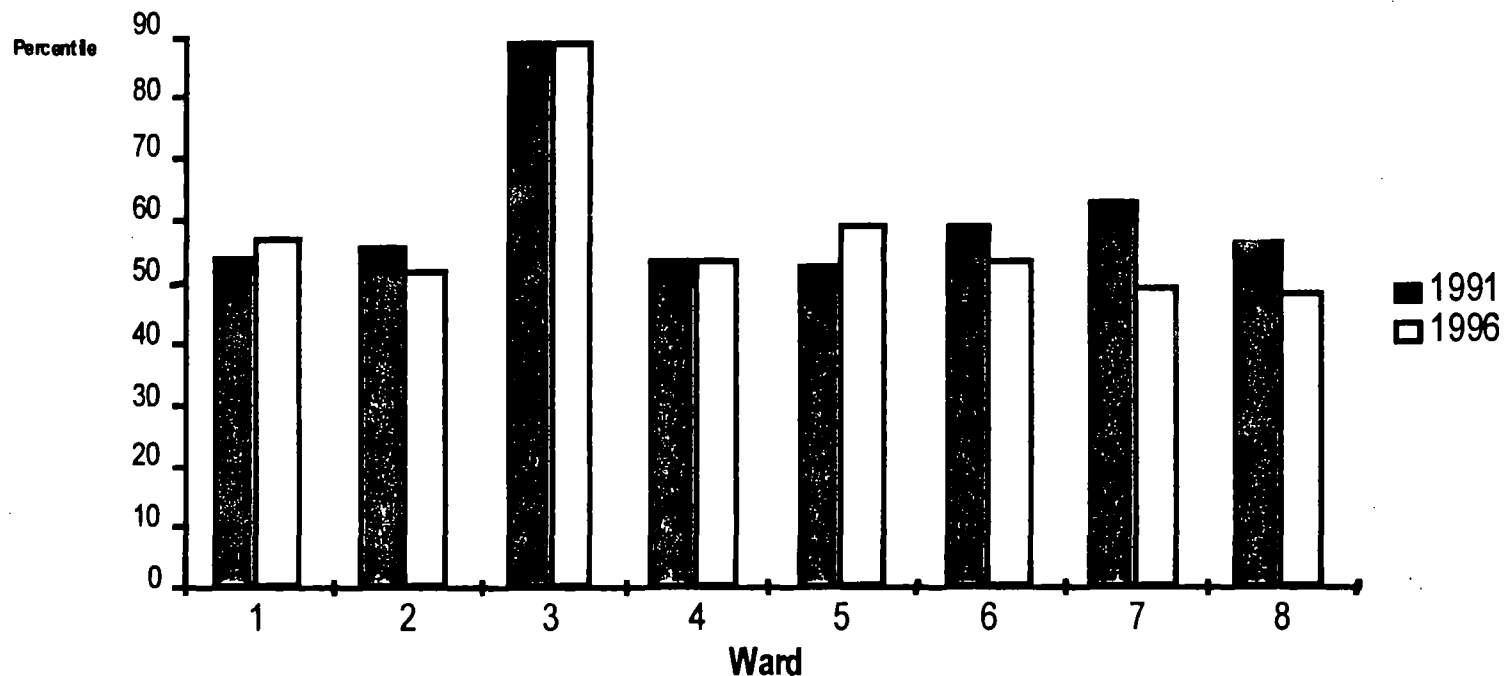


Source: National Association of Education Progress

Wide disparities exist in student performances among wards

While test scores in wards one, three, and five have remained the same or improved slightly, scores in wards two, seven, and eight have declined significantly. Several schools in wards seven and eight have seen significant declines in test scores of 10 to 15 percentage points or more. Ward seven, for example, declined 13 percentile points on average in reading and 14 percentile points in math between 1991 and 1996. The low achievement levels attest to the fact that thousands of children, especially in wards two, seven, and eight are not acquiring the fundamental skills necessary to succeed after they leave DCPS.

Changes in 6th Grade Test Scores, 1991-96

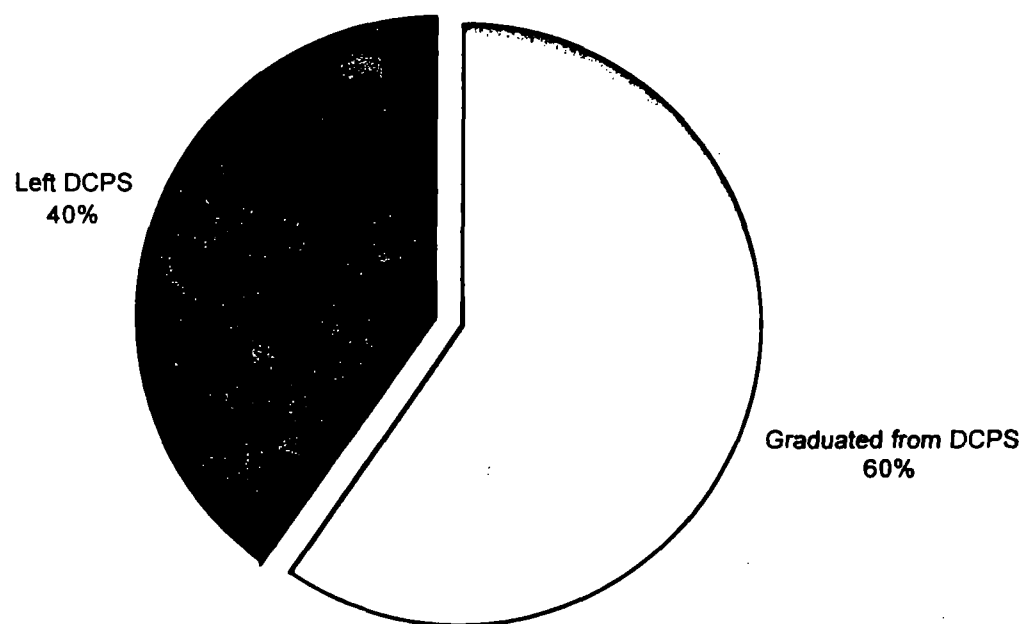


Source: Office of Educational Accountability, DCPS

Over 40% of DCPS students on average leave the school system between ninth grade and graduation

As academic performance continues to decline, many students are dropping out or leaving DCPS for neighboring districts and private schools. The following graph illustrates the dramatic migration of students out of the public school system—40% of high school students either dropped out or left the District's public schools between 1989 and 1995.

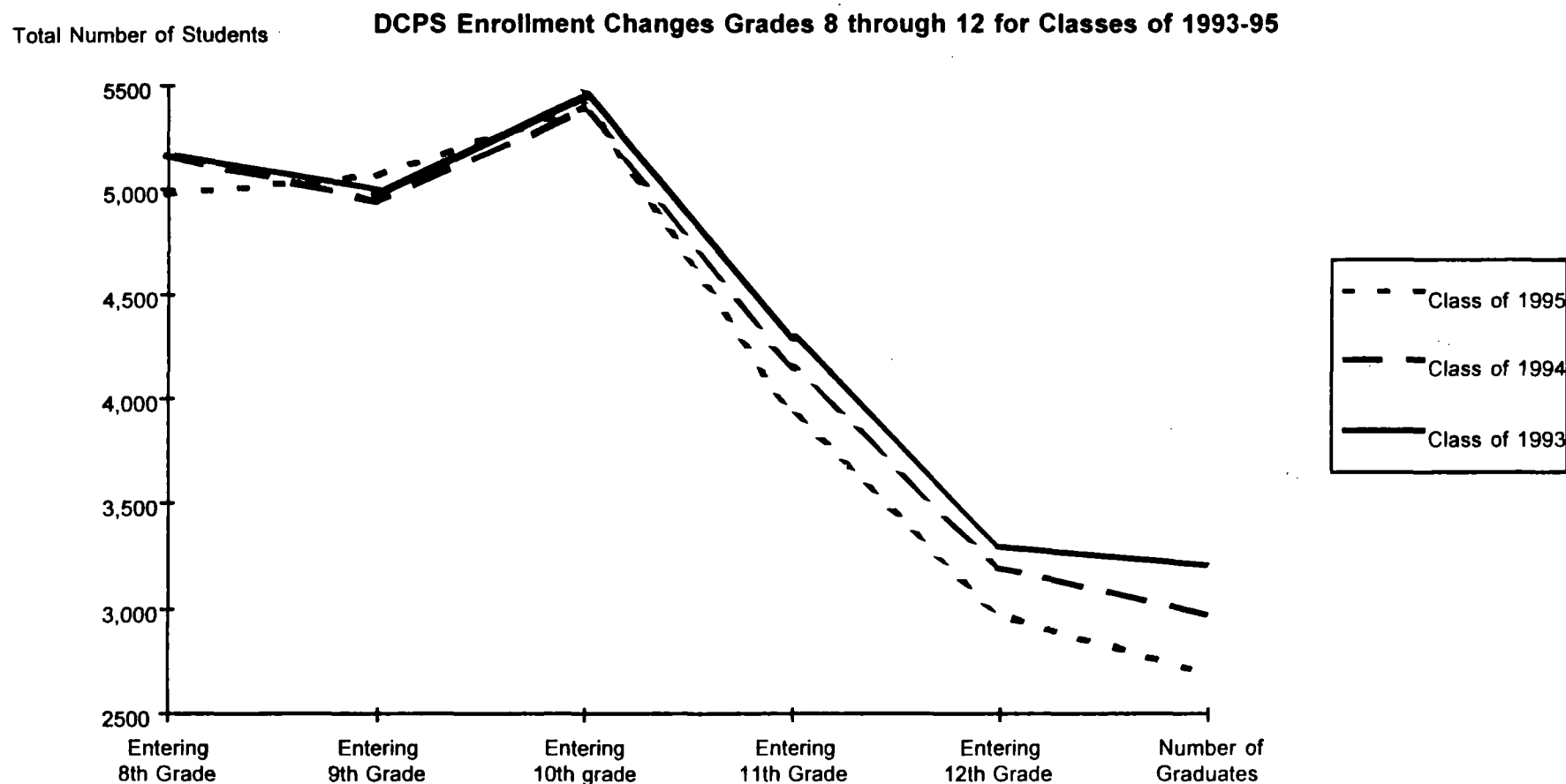
**Percent of Students Beginning Ninth Grade and Graduating from DCPS
(1989-1995)**



Source: DCPS Dropout and Migration Statistics 1991-1995

Over the last three years, 53% of DCPS students dropped out or left the system after tenth grade

An increasing number of high school students left DCPS between 1993 and 1995. The graph below shows the annual attrition for the classes of 1993, 1994, and 1995. On average, 24% of students left their class in 10th grade, 23% in 11th grade, and 6% in 12th grade.

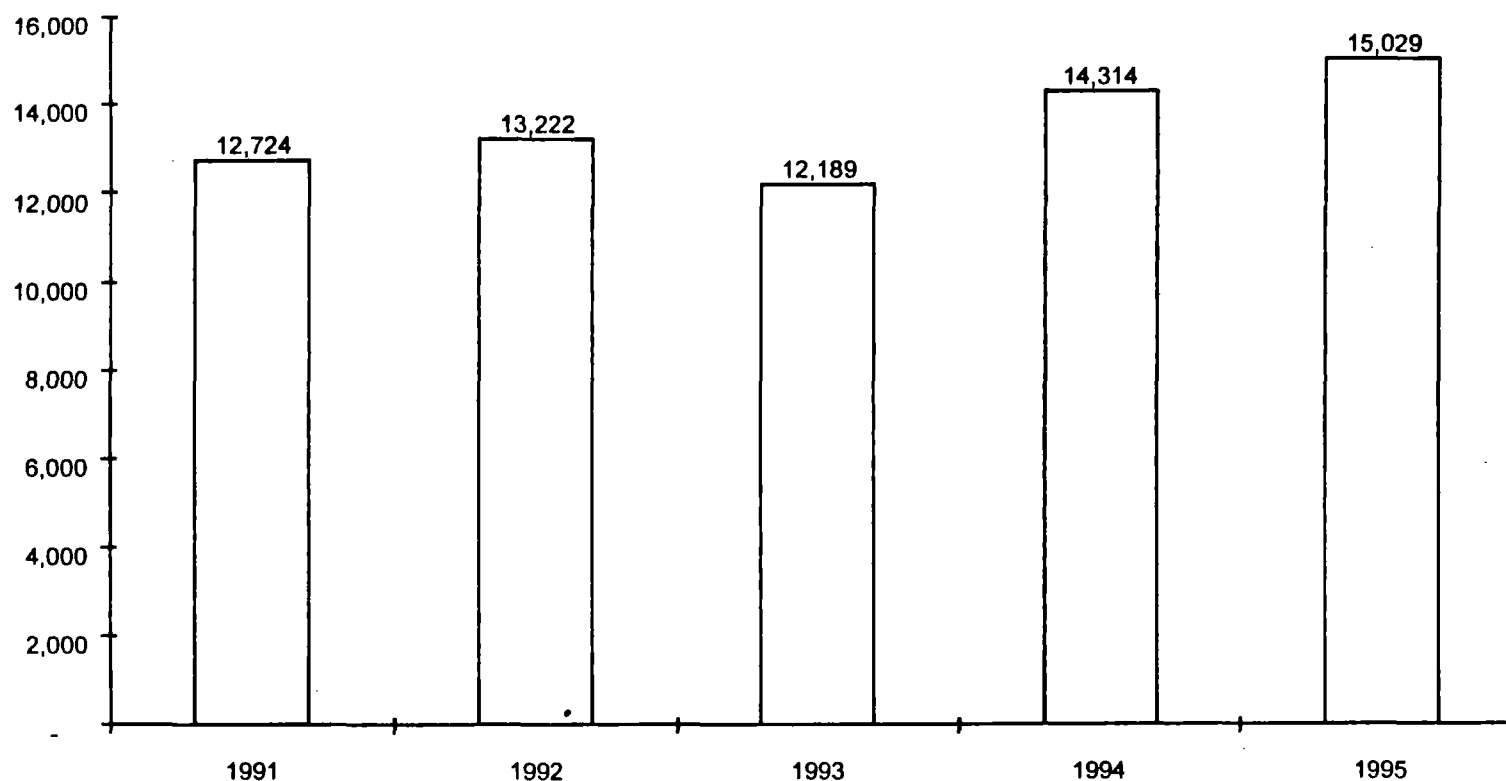


Source: DCPS Dropout and Migration Statistics (1991-1995)

Private and parochial school enrollment has increased by 18% since 1991

Greater numbers of students and parents are deciding to enroll in private and parochial schools rather than attend DCPS. In 1995, non-DCPS enrollment was over 15,000 students—the largest non-public school enrollment in the District since 1986.

More DC Children are Attending Private or Parochial Schools



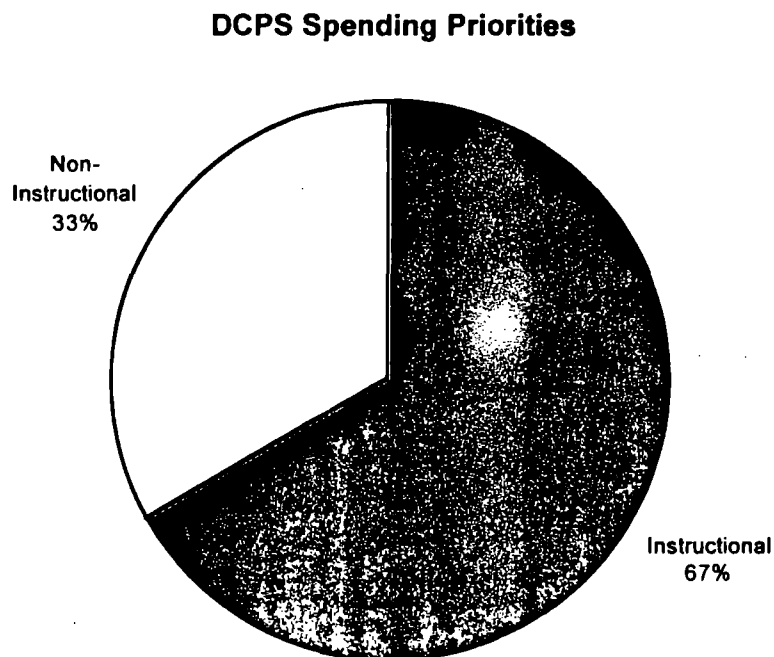
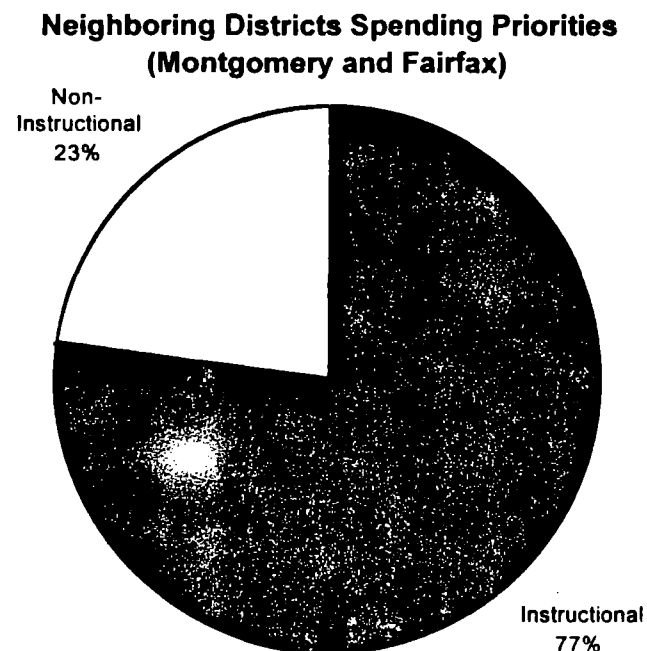
Source: DCPS Dropout and Migration Statistics (1991-1995)

DCPS IS MISMANAGING ITS MONEY

Although DCPS spends more per student than other districts, DCPS does not manage its resources efficiently or effectively. It spends a larger portion of its budget on administration and overhead than its peers and neighbors.

DCPS spends a smaller percent of its budget on instruction than neighboring districts—67% compared to 77%

The 1992 report of the DC Committee on Public Education (COPE) found that DCPS spends “less than other districts on instruction and more on central administration and overhead.” Four years later, DCPS expenditures toward classroom instruction continue to lag behind that of its neighbors. The following graph compares DCPS’ to Fairfax and Montgomery counties’ instructional spending.

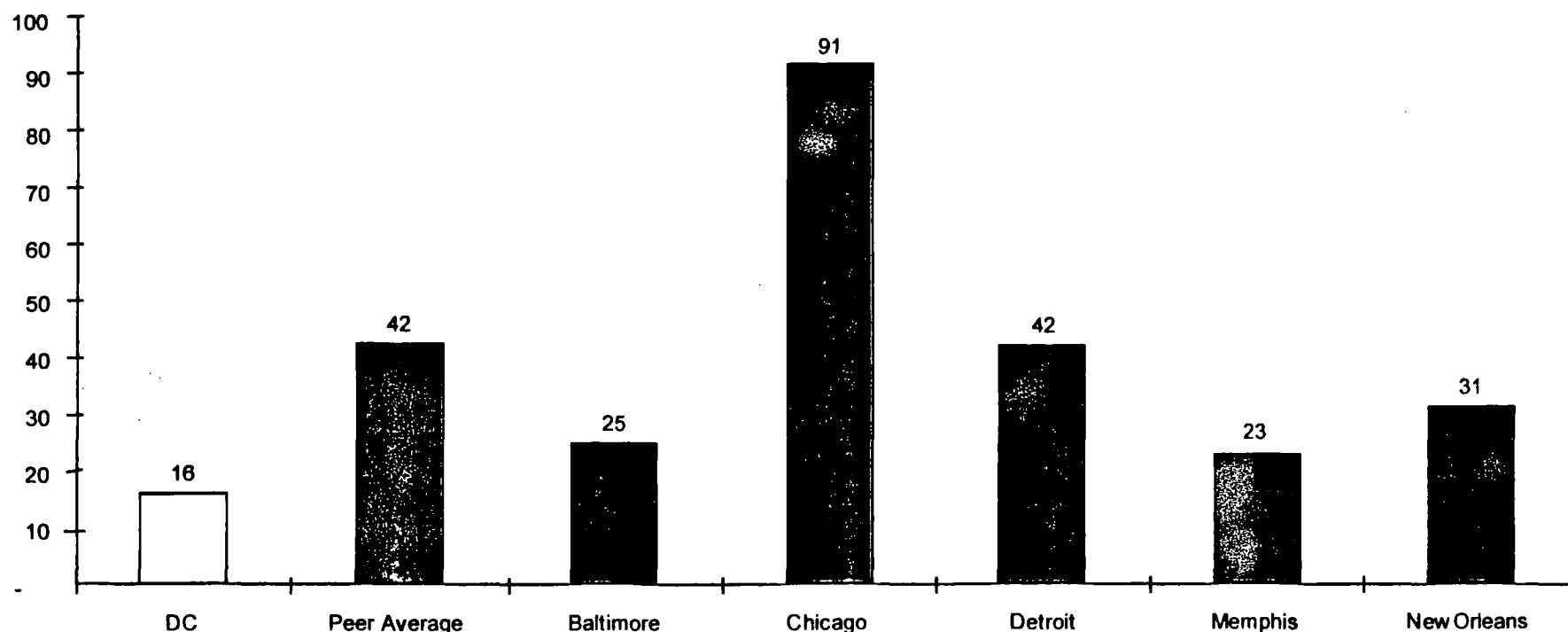


Source: FY 1997 Budgets

DCPS employs fewer teachers for every central administrator than its peers by almost 50%

DCPS' large administration and high central office spending means that fewer resources and funds are directed toward instruction, the central focus of any school system. DCPS teacher to central administrator ratio highlights the size of its administration. DCPS employs 16 teachers for every central administrator employed compared to its peers, which employ 42 teachers for every central administrator.

Total Number of Teachers Per Central Administrator



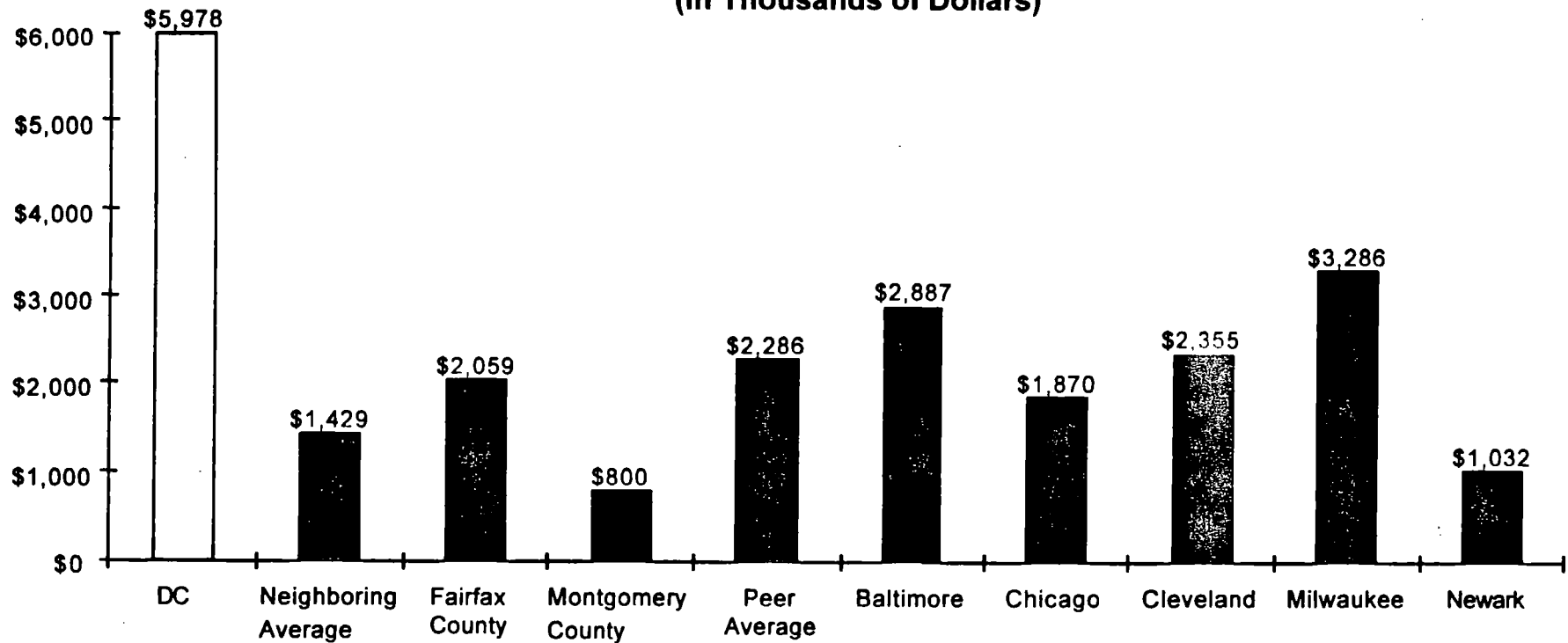
Source: National Urban Education Goals: 1992-1993 Indicators Report (Council of Great City Schools)

Note: Peer districts data is not available for Boston, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Newark.

DCPS spends almost three times as much on its Office of the Superintendent than the peer and neighboring district average

In 1996, DCPS allocated more toward its Office of the Superintendent than the Fairfax County, Montgomery County, and Baltimore City public school systems *combined*. DCPS exceeded its neighbors' average allocation by \$4.55 million and its peers' by \$3.38 million.

**Office of the Superintendent (or Equivalent) 1996 Adopted Budget
(In Thousands of Dollars)**

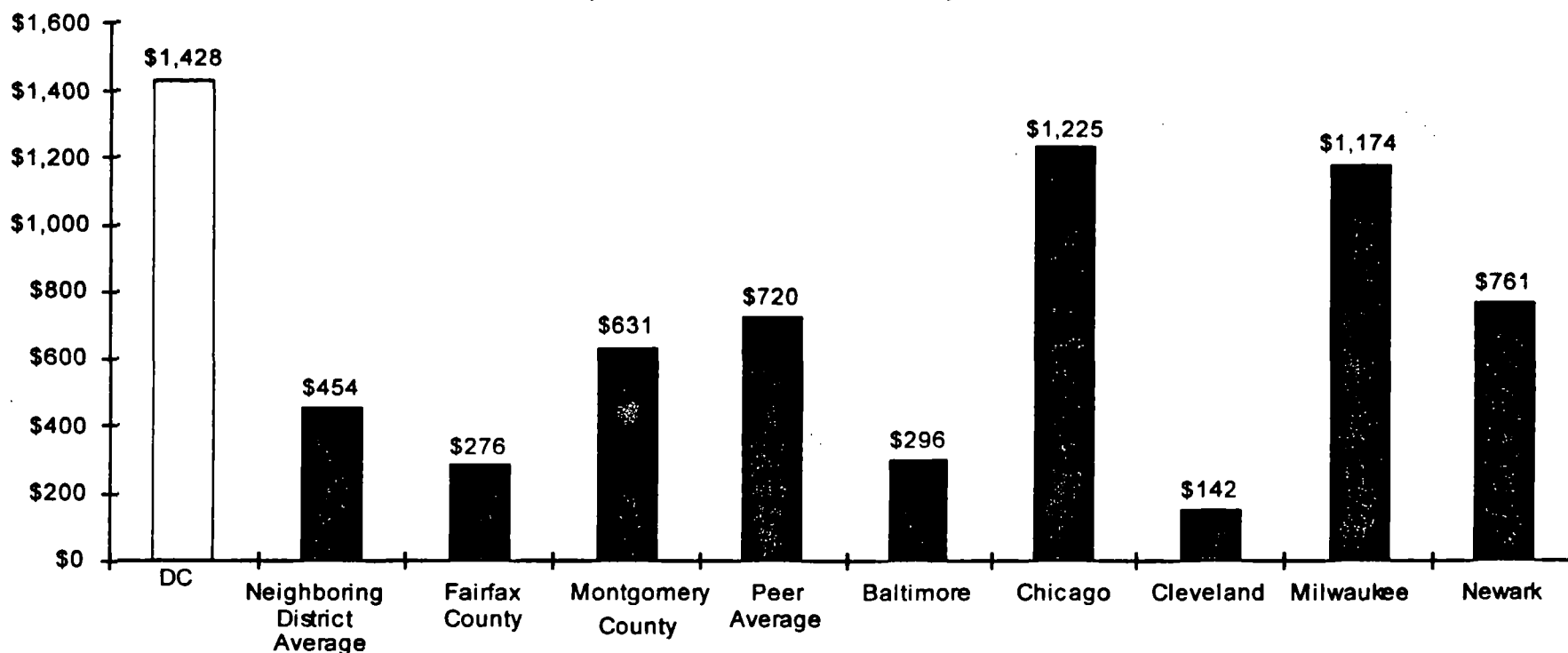


Source: FY 1996 Budgets and Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports

DCPS spends more than twice as much on its Office of the Board of Education than peer and neighboring districts

In FY 1996, DCPS allocated over \$1.4 million to the Office of the Board of Education—more than three times the average \$454,000 of neighboring Fairfax and Montgomery Counties. DCPS even allocated \$203,000 more than Chicago Public Schools (CPS), despite the fact that the CPS board was responsible for overseeing a district with 400,000 students—five times as many as DCPS.

**Board of Education (or Equivalent) 1996 Adopted Budget
(In Thousands of Dollars)**



Source: School District Budgets or Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, FY 1996

DCPS lost science grants worth \$18.5 million this school year

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently revoked a \$13.5 million grant from DCPS. Foundation officials cited the administrative “implosion” of District schools, inadequate training, the lack of required investment in science kits, and a failure to partner with the private sector as the major reasons for ending assistance. DCPS lost an additional \$5 million from other federal agencies that, taking NSF’s lead, revoked their grants.

DCPS’ TEACHER AND STUDENT RECORDS ARE INADEQUATE

External reviews of DCPS’ personnel and student records found significant mismanagement and inadequacies in record keeping. Out-of-date, incomplete and inaccurate data can negatively affect the quality of the education students receive.

A review of DCPS’ Personnel Office records showed that 19% of DCPS’ classroom staff either had no certifications or had been determined ineligible to teach

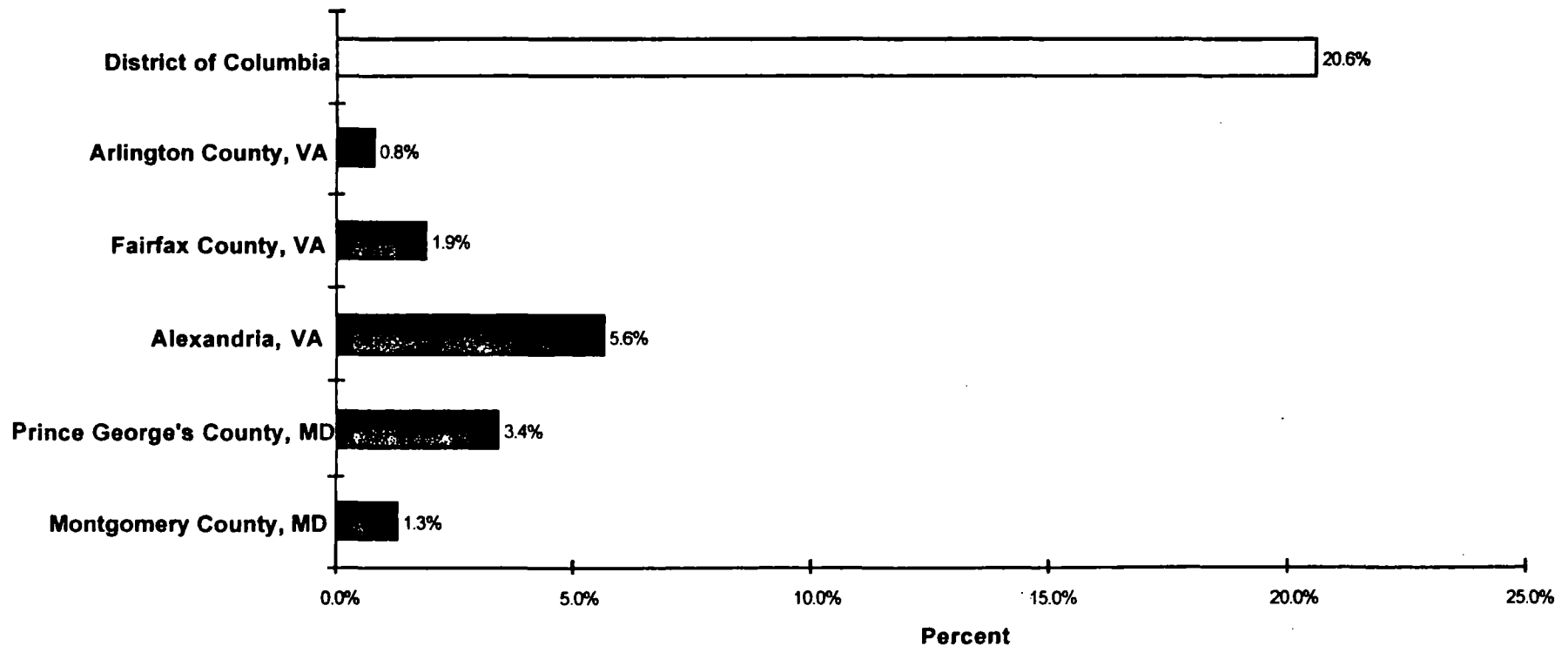
A September 1996 DCPS school readiness review of 295 classes at 19 school sites included a certification review at DCPS’ Office of Personnel. The review found that 45 teachers (15%) had expired certifications and 11 (4%) were ineligible for certification. Additionally, the results noted that 39 teachers (13%) had misplaced certification records because of “poorly organized, haphazardly maintained, and [what] appear to be substantially incomplete” certification records.

DCPS does not know how many children attend its schools

DCPS does not have an accurate count of its students. Estimates vary between 75,000 and 81,000 students. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found a discrepancy of 20.6% between the 1990 census and the number of students reported by DCPS. This discrepancy is significantly greater than any of the other major jurisdictions in the Greater Washington Metropolitan area.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) also has questioned DCPS' record keeping. After the 1995 sample student enrollment count authorized by the Superintendent identified 80,450 students, the GAO stated that its usefulness for validating enrollment was "limited because of mistakes made in selecting the sample." GAO estimated that DCPS' Student Information Management System may contain approximately 5,000 obsolete or duplicative student records.

Discrepancy Between Public School Enrollments as Reported by School Systems and by 1990 Census



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

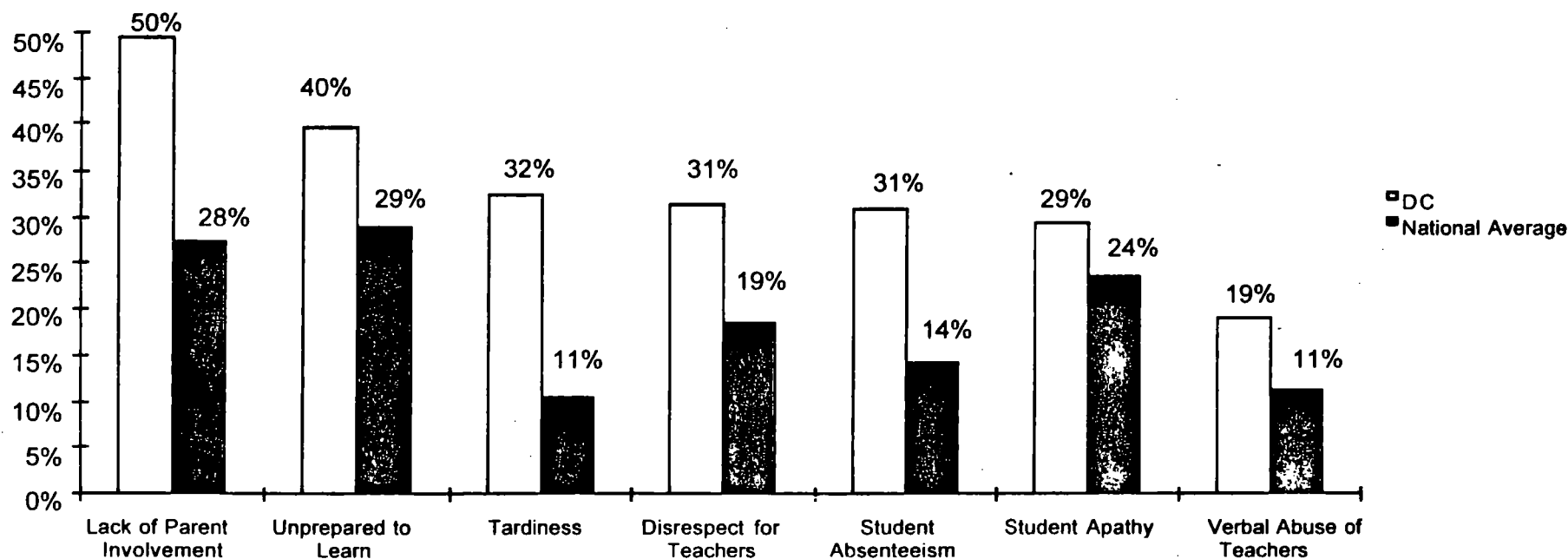
STUDENTS ARE SUBJECTED TO UNSAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Teachers have reported that there are many issues which detract from DCPS' educational environment. Throughout DC's public schools, violent behavior persists, negatively affecting teachers' ability to teach and students' ability to learn. In addition, deteriorating facilities further hamper students' ability to learn.

A greater percentage of DCPS teachers report serious problems in their schools than instructors from schools in other states

A NCES survey of teachers revealed that a significant number of DCPS instructors perceived that a variety of serious problems were seriously affecting their schools. Problems included: lack of parent involvement, unpreparedness to learn, tardiness, disrespect for teachers, student absenteeism, student apathy, and verbal abuse of teachers.

Percentage of Public School Teachers Perceiving Issues as Serious Problems Affecting their Schools

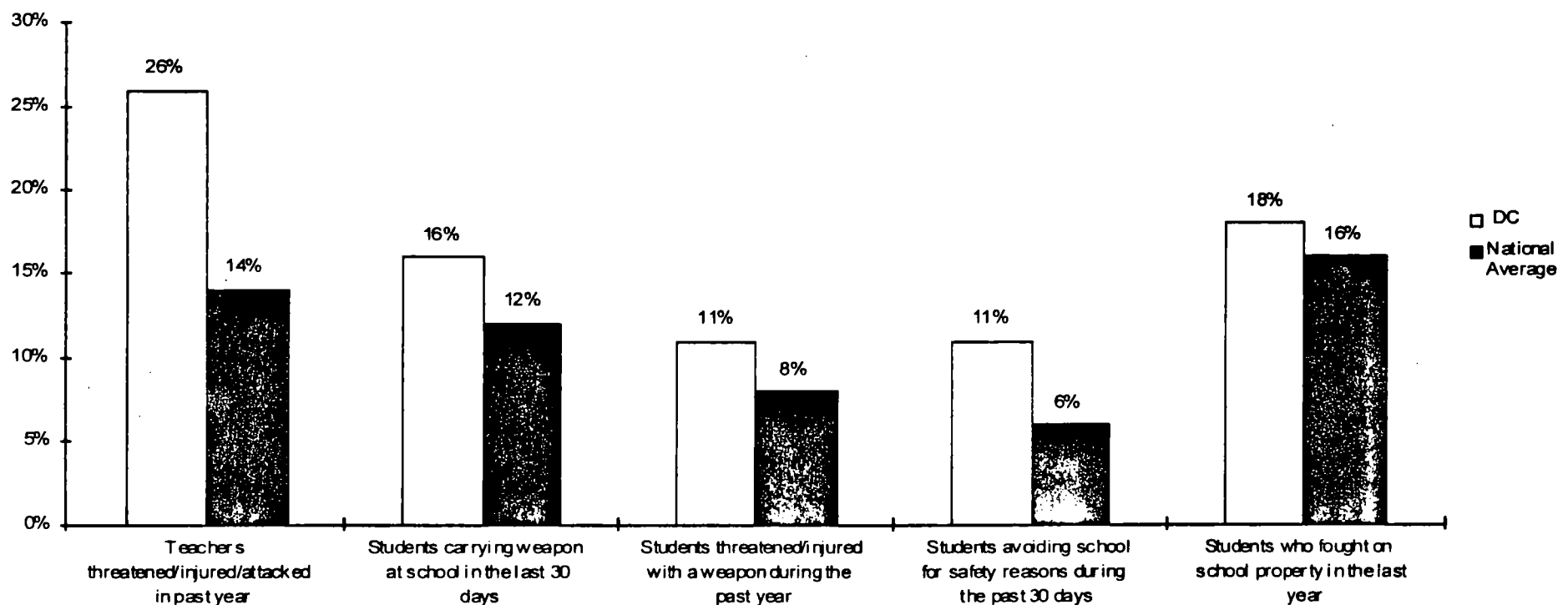


Source: Schools and Staffing in the United States 1993-1994

Compared to the national average, more DCPS high school teachers and students report being threatened with violence

According to the 1995 National Education Goals Report, 26% of DCPS teachers reported that they were threatened, injured or physically attacked by a student in the past 12 months. This compares with a national average of 14%. Other state-level violence statistics are also bleak, as DCPS exceeded the average for states reporting the following percentages:

Percentage of High School Teachers/Students Reporting Violence/Safety Issues

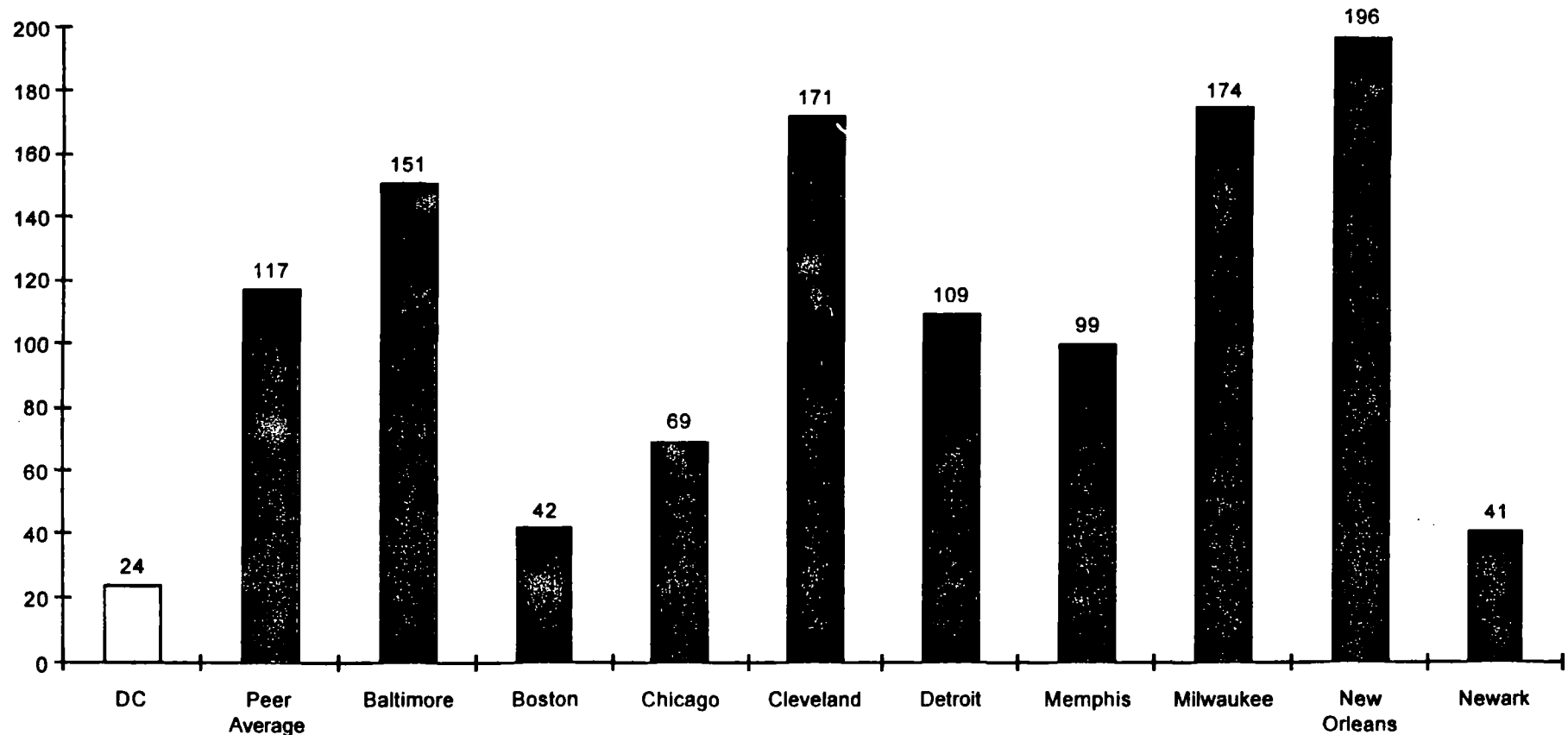


Source: Data Volume for the National Education Goals Report (Volume Two: State Data)

Despite the high violence rates, DCPS reports fewer suspensions than its peers

Compared to other urban school districts, DCPS reports the fewest number of suspensions per 1,000 students—despite having higher teacher reports of student behavioral disruptions and violence.

Suspensions Per 1,000 Students

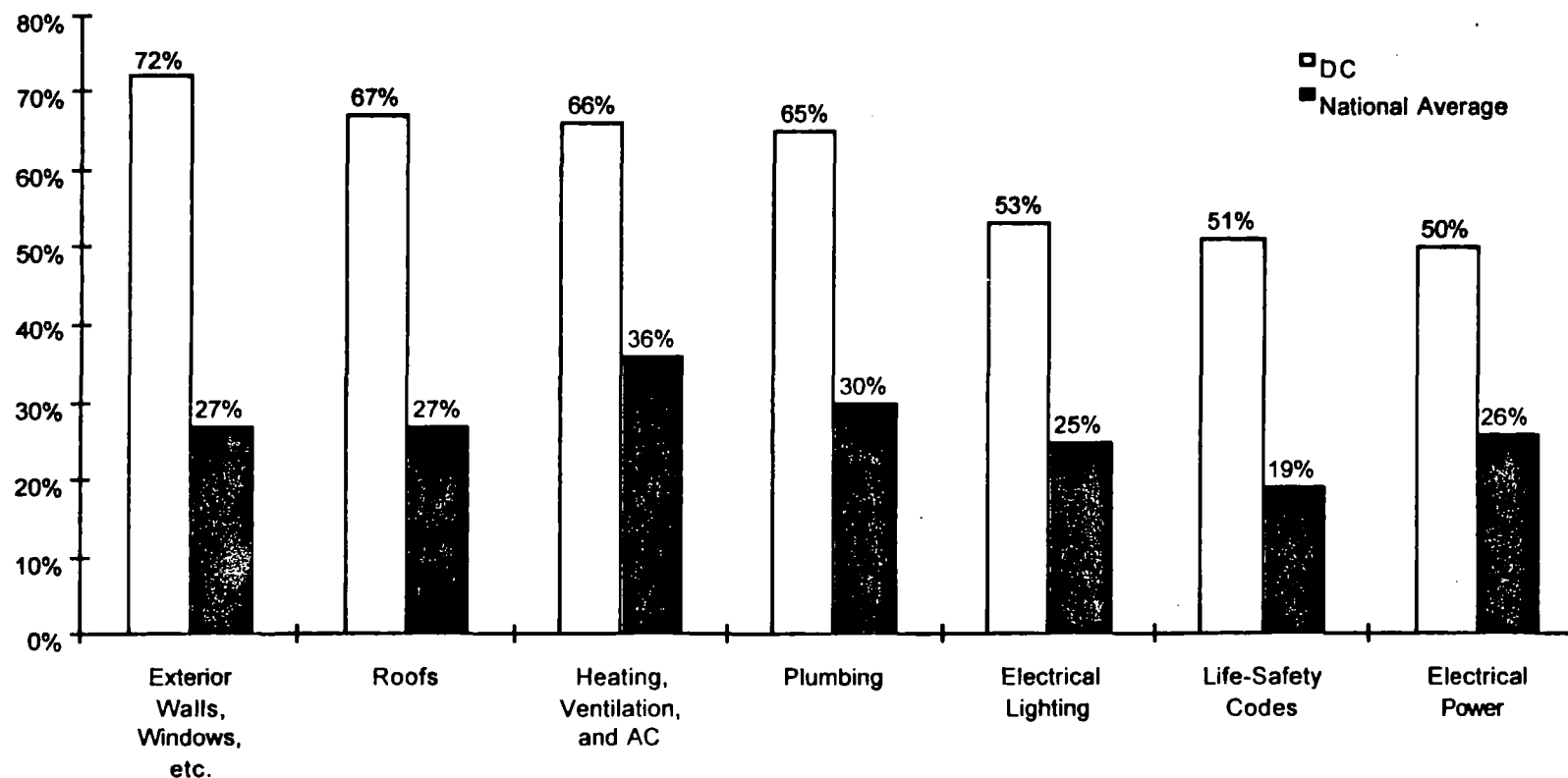


Source: National Urban Education Goals: 1992-1993 Indicators Report (Council of Great City Schools)

DCPS' facilities have more hazardous deficiencies than the national average

GAO analyzed the condition of America's school facilities by developing profiles for each state. The results for DC showed that DCPS had a larger percentage of inadequate conditions than the national average.

Percentage of Schools with Inadequate Features



Source: GAO Reports—School Facilities: Profiles of School Conditions by State; Condition of America's Schools

An engineering firm identified over 16,000 physical deficiencies in DCPS buildings

According to the Superintendent's Task Force on Education Infrastructure, the engineering firm 3DI/AEPA (3DI) was retained by DCPS in 1991 to produce a comprehensive facilities assessment of 189 school system buildings. 3DI found over 16,000 physical deficiencies costing \$584 million to repair. In 1996, GAO reported that 91% of DCPS schools had at least one inadequate building feature. Examples included leaky roofs, damaged exterior walls, inadequate lighting, and inadequate plumbing. 73% of schools had at least one unsatisfactory environmental condition, including improper lighting, heating, ventilation, and acoustics.

Fire code violations have caused every District student to miss at least three school days during the past two years

On June 10, 1995, a DC Superior Court judge issued an order preventing schools from opening on time because of existing fire code violations prevalent in District schools. Because DCPS did not abate violations expeditiously, the 1995-1996 school year began three days late. Ten schools were closed for even longer periods of time, including two schools that were closed for eight days.

In the 1996 school year, the following incidents occurred in September and October:

- 16 schools remained closed because of fire code violations, despite 31 previous court orders, two years of notice, and regular hearings to abate them.
- 65 schools reported roof leaks between August 27 and September 20.
- 1 special education building was closed after being re-opened due to flooding and a collapsed ceiling.

Source: D.C. Superior Court Orders; Memorandum "Roof Leaks Reported to Date"

DCPS IS NOT PROVIDING THE INSTRUCTION, GUIDANCE, AND LEADERSHIP THAT OUR CHILDREN NEED AND DESERVE

DCPS is failing its students by managing resources inefficiently, overspending on central administration at the expense of classroom instruction, and failing to prepare students to succeed after graduation. The results of DCPS' mismanagement are evident in virtually every educational, management, and safety performance measure. Compared to national averages, urban peers, and neighboring districts, DCPS places last in those areas in which it should place first and first in those areas in which it should be last.

The time has come to revive and improve the District's school system. Our most precious resource—our children—deserve a better education. Teachers and aides must be given the tools and resources required to teach—including textbooks, supplies, and computers. Central administration must focus on achieving results and improving educational outcomes.

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Attachment D

Divider Title: _____

Areas of Needed Assistance from the Department of Education for the District of Columbia Public Schools

J.W. Becton, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer
December 20, 1996

Special Education

Assistance in identifying the best person in the country to come in and provide leadership to do a complete overhaul of our Special Education program.

Assessment Systems

We need additional support and technical assistance in the development of student assessments that are aligned with our curriculum frameworks.

Bilingual Education Program

We are seeking technical assistance in this area to ensure the delivery of quality programs for our linguistically diverse student population, and to ensure compliance in program delivery.

Best Practices

We would appreciate some assistance in identifying and bringing together individuals and groups with whom we might interact who have already worked through or who are currently tackling some of the issues we are struggling with around improving teaching and learning and the management systems necessary to support it.

We would hope that over the course of the next three years that this could be an ongoing process of learning and sharing.

I understand that you provided a similar service to the school district not long ago in the area of curriculum and assessment.

Parental Involvement

We would appreciate some assistance in the development of strategies and programs at the local schools to increase the opportunities for meaningful parental involvement with their children's education.

In addition, the creation and/or strengthening of learning opportunities for our parents in support of family literacy.

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DC Public Schools Initiative Status Report

April, 1996

Background: Three years ago in April the U.S. Department of Education launched the DC Public Schools Initiative on the premise that the Department should be a better neighbor to the school in Washington, DC. Since then the Department has worked closely with DCPS leadership and with a variety of partners in the school system to support systemic reform.

Key components of the DC Public Schools Initiative include (1) the DC Desk, (2) Safe and Drug Free School Activities, (3) Partnership with Amidon School, and (4) a new activity, READ*WRITE*NOW at Garrison Elementary School.

Current and continuing activities of the DCPS Initiative include the following:

DC Desk: This is the linchpin of the DC Public Schools Initiative and sets a standard for customer service in the Department by providing one-stop shopping access to Department resources. A primary function of the DC Desk is that of brokering requests for help from DCPS, including those for expert or technical assistance, information about successful programs and practices, research-based information, and information about federally funded programs. Many of the activities described below have been carried out by the DC Desk.

Professional Development: Staff of the department's National Library of Education planned and held a workshop for the 32 member collegial consultation team (CCT) of the Center for Systemic Educational Change. These are teacher-leaders who provide support and technical assistance to classroom teachers at the elementary level. The workshop gave CCT members hands-on opportunities to become familiar with OERI data bases, technology, and resources and brought them together with department experts in areas of interest to them. This helped promote a dialogue that continues among OERI staff and CCT members who were workshop participants.

Additionally, the Department's *Principal-In-Residence* is working with DCPS staff to plan and host a seminar series for middle school principals. The first of six weekly seminars is scheduled for April 11.

Performance Based Assessment: In October, the Department planned and co-hosted a meeting to help move the school system toward more performance based assessment that is aligned with new content standards and curriculum objectives. National experts and practitioners working in urban districts and state departments of education that have moved ahead in transforming their

assessment systems were invited in. They participated in panel discussions and met in small group sessions groups of DC Public School practitioners, policy makers, community representatives, and parents to introduce them to alternative forms of assessment in the context of school reform. This was particularly pertinent since the school board had recently passed a resolution requiring that third grade transition gates be operational in the DCPS in 1996.

The DCPS now has begun to meet with smaller groups of experts to develop and implement transition gates. As of February 1996, DCPS was exploring the feasibility of utilizing outside help with performance assessment and public engagement.

Charter Schools: In October 1995, the Department and DCPS convened a meeting of key stakeholders in the Washington, D.C. education community for the purpose of initiating a conversation about charter schools. Participants included union leaders, school board members, parents, teachers, lead principals, the superintendent's management team, members of the DCPS Goals 2000 Panel and congressional staff. Joe Nathan, a nationally recognized expert on charter schools, led the discussion.

In February 1996, the DC City Council passed a charter school measure and forwarded it to the Mayor for approval. The mayor did not act on the measure and returned it to the Council in March. His action indicates that he did not approve or disapprove the measure which now will go into effect.

School Safety: The Department's Safe and Drug Free Schools Program staff continues to offer to DCPS security personnel, expert technical assistance and opportunities to confer with top security professionals across the country. Most recently, the Associate Superintendent for School Support Services requested assistance in developing a comprehensive plan to improve security and safety in all city public schools. As a result, staff from OERI, OM, OESE, and OCR are helping to provide logistical support to the DC Task Force on School Safety, Security, and Violence Reduction.

The current task force resulted from the merger of two groups established for the same purpose: one by the mayor and another by the superintendent. Department staff are members of the task force steering committee, taking notes during all formal sessions, and working with Associate Superintendent Constance Clark to draft a final report and recommendations for presentation to the mayor and superintendent. The draft report is scheduled to be completed by May 17, 1996.

Under the 1994 Safe Schools Act, \$1 million was earmarked for the DC Public Schools to plan and implement a comprehensive program to reduce violence in schools and among youth.

A collaborative of education practitioners, parents, federal and city officials, community based organizations, as well as social and medical service professional organizations designed the Marshall Heights' Safe Schools Program. The program operates under the guidance of this collaborative and is in six schools in the Marshall Heights area of the city. Program components include:

- o alternative dispute resolution training for staff, students, and adults, particularly parents, in the community;
- o enhanced school security;
- o mental health profiles to screen for anxiety and depression for 200 junior high students;
- o a summer leadership institute to develop critical thinking, mediation, and public speaking skills;
- o student painting of murals that were exhibited in the Rayburn House Office Building and that are now on tour;
- o community linkages among local civic/tenant associations, churches and community groups and associations.

The memorandum of understanding under which funds were awarded by the department provides a period of a year and a half for operation of the Marshall Heights' Safe Schools Project. The project's current end date is April 30, 1996. Request for a six month no-cost extension is being prepared by DCPS for submission to the Department. Written evaluation/documentation of the project is expected to be available soon after the project ends.

Facilitating Partnerships: In late February 1996, teachers and administrators from Ballou High School in southeast Washington, DC visited Patterson High School in Baltimore, Maryland. The two schools share similar demographic characteristics and until recently shared the label, "troubled school." Patterson with the help of the OERI sponsored Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR) has turned around. After a tour of the building that is now divided into separate academies, Ballou and Patterson faculties met for the type of intense, productive session that can occur when parties share similar concerns and problems. Since that visit, conversations among teachers and administrators of the two schools are continuing and the DC Desk is receiving calls requesting follow-up assistance. Another meeting is anticipated, as is the development of a relationship between Ballou and CRESPAR.

Last year similar connections were facilitated between Title I schools in Washington and those in Philadelphia. Teachers and administrators from Washington visited Philadelphia and later communicated with them via teleconference. The purpose of these meetings was to share ideas about implementation of school-wide Chapter I programs, successful practices, and problem solutions.

AMIDON: This year, reading was the primary focus of the Department's partnership with Amidon Elementary Schools. Last year Superintendent Smith identified Houghton Mifflin Reading: The Literature Experience as the single reading series to be used in all DCPS elementary schools. In September of the 1995-'96 school year, more than 50 Department of Education volunteers were trained by Houghton Mifflin to tutor using their materials.

Initially, there were 3 tutors for every classroom, grades one through six, with tutors spending at least one hour per week in the classroom. As of today, there are about 38 volunteers in the program. For various reasons, several tutors are no longer volunteering at Amidon. While most Amidon teachers are pleased with having trained tutors, some are not. Amidon, because of its location, has partnerships with six federal agencies. This translates into an abundance of help. As one teacher put it, "I have 17 tutors and 18 mentors in and out of my classroom every week. If one doesn't show up, it's o.k. with me." It should be noted here however that Amidon's principal and parents are supportive of the Department's efforts to provide tutorial assistance.

The Houghton Mifflin representative who worked with the department to train tutors and launch this effort has been reassigned and no longer has responsibility for this area of the country. However, the Department's Amidon Coordinator is working to arrange additional training and another session with tutors and teachers.

In response to a request from Amidon's principal, the Department sponsored a one-day workshop for teachers with a trainer from Jeff Howard's Efficacy Institute in Lexington, Massachusetts. Efficacy is defined by Dr. Howard as a method for operationalizing the idea that "all kids can learn"; taking it from a hope to a set of concrete approaches that teachers can use in classrooms. Workshop participants examined traditional ways of thinking about development and offered an alternative theory based on the process of development. Confidence, effective effort, moderate risk taking and the management of obstacles to development are key components of this process..."Kids aren't born smart; they get smart."

The Department's National Library of Education "adopted" Amidon's Library and the Information Resources Group adopted its computer laboratory. Amidon is on the Department's LAN. Older/surplus computers are being repaired by department staff for Amidon.

Thanks to the generosity of Department staff, the holiday gift for Amidon totaled \$1,700. An OCR auction raised an additional \$1,300 making the total amount of the Department's gift to Amidon \$3,000. About \$600 of this amount went toward the purchase of a small refrigerator, a TV, and a VCR that were presented to the school by the Deputy Secretary during a holiday party. The principal of Amidon plans to use the remaining funds for staff development. [Recently, all professional development funds were cut from the school system's budget.]

Additionally, we collected a total of \$100,916 in Giant and Safeway cash register receipts. This amount is five times the amount collected last year. These cash receipts will help Amidon to obtain educational supplies and equipment, including computer equipment and software.

In March more than 70 department employees served as judges for science fair competitions at Amidon and Murch elementary schools.

READ*WRITE*NOW program was launched at Garrison Elementary School in March. About 30 Department employees travel to Garrison on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings to spend 30 minutes helping students improve their reading and writing skills. More than 70 volunteers volunteered to participate in the READ*WRITE*NOW effort. We hope to be able to take volunteers to other schools in DC in the future but, are confronted with the problem not having the means to transport them to schools where the need is greatest.

Student Financial Aid: Staff in the Department's Student Financial Assistance Program are conducting a pilot program with DCPS high schools around the theme of promoting access to college. The main focus is on increasing students' awareness of federal scholarship and loan programs. SFA staff report that only 17% of DCPS college bound students make use of federally financed student loans. A workshop for all of the counselors is scheduled for March 14 at Carver School in DC. Following the workshop SFA staff will visit every high school in DC to speak to students and counselors about federal loan and scholarship programs.

Etc:

1. Corporate Liaison staff are seeking a sponsor to provide transportation for department volunteers wishing to tutor in DC schools.
2. DCPS requested assistance/information from the DC Desk on downsizing of staff. The Department's Human Resources Group provided information and materials.
3. Plans are for the next issue of INside EDucation to include an insert on the DCPS Initiative.
4. Staff report that DCPS is having problems with complying with requirements for language minority children (OCR), special education (OSERS), and adult education (OVAE). While Department staff are trying to help DCPS correct problems, the financial and management problems of the system often serve as barriers to progress.
5. The Secretary's Technology Advisor and the Deputy Superintendent/ Director of the Center for Systemic Educational Change will meet in April to discuss the feasibility of having a NETday in Washington, DC.