

Board/ Superintendent	Strategic Goal	Goal 3: Recruit retain and develop a diverse cadre of the highest quality teaching personnel, staff, and administrators.
	Board/ Superintendent Priority	Ensure there is a high performing, innovative, and creative teacher in every classroom.
Superintendent/Assesment Staff	Yearly Measurement Indicators	All teacher applicants will be given an assessment that will help to identify high-performing, innovative, and creative candidates. 90% of all new hires will successfully meet this criteria. At least 30% of new hires will receive early contracts (based on vacancy trend data). (Priority) The assessment is under development. The Division is evaluating the possible use of a new survey tool, K-12 Insight, to deliver the assessment.
		Current teachers will complete the high-performance assessment in order to identify developmental opportunities. This information will be the focus of individual professional development plans for TPA. (Priority) The status of this indicator is pending the identification of a delivery tool.
		Identify, follow, and recruit 100% of area high school graduates pursuing a career in teaching. (Goal) Working with high school counselors and colleges, HR will begin tracking graduates pursuing a career in teaching beginning with the graduating class of 2008.
		Identify hard to fill vacancies by February 1. (Goal) Hard to fill vacancies were identified and early contracts offered.
		10% of all new hires at each school will be minorities. 10% of all new hires in administration will be minorities. Will hire a minimum of 25 minority teachers for the division every year. (Goal) Data from 2007-08 indicate 5% of new teacher hires were black, 2% were Hispanic, and 1% were Asian. A total of 9% of new teacher hires were minority teachers.
		Reduce voluntary teacher turnover by 10%, excluding natural attrition (retirement). In addition in the future, 90% of all minority teachers and administrators that are hired will stay within the system for at least 3 years. (Goal) Data from (2007-08) indicate that the percentage of teachers leaving the Division within three years has decreased slightly from 6% to 5%.
Superintendent/Staff	Division-level High-yield Strategies July 2008 - June 2009	
		Status
	Create and pilot an assessment tool to identify high-performing, innovative, and creative teachers as a benchmark for new hires and existing employees.	On-going. Human Resources staff have met with IT on the feasibility of such an instrument and possibilities of including as part of our current on-line application process. Additionally, Human Resources staff is collaborating with Dr. Benson to create classroom/instruction video.
	Develop a local recruitment plan to identify and attract local high school graduates interested in teaching as a profession.	Albemarle graduates have been identified through applications and recruitment fairs. Five alum have submitted applications and considered/interviewed for elementary, physical education, middle school and high school social studies positions.
	Develop and implement strategies to encourage current employees to submit letters of resignation or retirement prior to April 1.	With the VERIP incentive, retirees were required to submit letters of retirement by April 1.
	Increase the diversity of Division teaching and administrative staff through enhanced recruitment efforts, including building strongpartnerships with schools of education serving diverse student populations or significant numbers of minorities.	Visits and meetings have been made with Hampton and Norfolk State Universities to reestablish our relationships. A presentation was made at Hampton in a Foundations of Education class collaborating with AATF and Charlottesville City Schools. The Hampton annual teacher fair was also attended by the three groups as another partnership. HR is currently working with Community Engagement to create an action/follow-up plan for Norfolk State. Future plans include working Hampton student-teachers to complete their requirements in the Division with the University of Virginia to provide housing. To date, the first and second early contract was given to minority applicants. Both will be placed at Cale Elementary. Others will be considered by Albemarle High for an English position and WAHS will consider a candidate for a Social Studies position.
	Investigate additional avenues for increasing retention rates that may include: 1) Retention bonuses, 2) Child care or similar incentives, 3) Expanding Novice Teacher Network programs 4) Employer matching and 5) Tuition reimbursement for advanced degrees.	The Division developed an Instructional Coaching Model to support retention efforts. A worksession on alternate compensation models was conducted and a committee established to study possibly changes to Division compensation strategies. Additional options were explored, but due to the current budget constraints plans will not be made at this time.

Goal 3

Artifact Portfolio Materials

Human Resources SPQA Application

Listening Tour Information

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE - DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

application for
2009

UNITED STATES SENATE
PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY
AWARD FOR VIRGINIA





SPQA
UNITED STATES SENATE PRODUCTIVITY AND
QUALITY AWARD FOR VIRGINIA

2009 Award Intent to Apply

Submission of this form signals your organization's intention to apply for recognition during the 2008 award cycle. Please complete and return (if returning electronically, please add your organization's name or acronym in the file name) along with your "intent to apply fee" by December 10, 2007 to:

Mr. Robert Bowles, Executive Director
U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia
P.O. Box 6099 Suffolk, VA 23433
Director@spqa-va.org

Contact Information

Organization Name: Albemarle County Human Resources Department

Highest Ranking Official: Ms. Kimberly L. Suyes

Title: Director

Point of Contact (POC): Dr. Carole A. Hastings

POC Title: Special Assistant for Quality Systems, Planning and Superintendent Support

POC Phone: 434-296-5877, ext. 3393

POC E-mail: hastings@k12albemarle.org

Organization Address: 401 McIntire Road

City, State, Zip: Charlottesville, VA 22902

Business Information

Organization Category: ☐ Manufacturing/Service ☒ Education ☐ Healthcare ☐ Government

Organization Structure: ☐ Profit ☒ Not-For-Profit # of Employees in VA or DC: 23

Main Product or Service: K-12 Public Education & Local Government Human Resources Management

SPQA Information

Your application is for: ☒ 2009 SPQA ☐ 2009 ACE

Have you applied before? ☐ Yes ☒ No If "yes" what years? _____

The "intent to apply fee" is: ☒ Enclosed ☐ Being sent separately

In the event of a site visit, please identify two tentative days between April 13-17, and/or April 27-May 1, 2009: First Choice, April 30, 2009 Second Choice, May 1, 2009

Important: please retain a copy of this form as it will need to be resubmitted with your application package

P. Organizational Profile

P.1 Organizational Description

The Albemarle County Human Resources Department (ACHR) provides human resources support for the county's public school division and all local government departments. Surrounding the independent city of Charlottesville, Albemarle is the fifth-largest county in the Commonwealth of Virginia and is home to more than 93,000 residents.

Most counties in Virginia have separate human resources departments for local government and the public schools. ACHR is unique, however, in that it supports both the school division, made up of 26 schools and additional central office administrators, and all 27 local government departments and related agencies. In FY 06-07, ACHR provided services to 853 local government employees and 2,300 school division personnel.

P.1a Organizational Environment

P. 1a(1) ACHR provides services in seven key human resources functional areas to meet the current and emerging needs of County employees (Fig. P.1-1) In recent years, existing HR programs have been greatly enhanced and several new ones, including organizational development and employee wellness programs, have been created. ACHR strives to provide excellent customer service to County employees and works closely with administration and staff to ensure that their human resources needs are met in a manner that exceeds expectations.

Service	Delivery Mechanisms
Recruitment/Staffing Support	Advertising vacancies; interviewing, testing, selection of applicants; completing pre-employment requirements ; processing employment changes; exit interviews
Classification and Compensation	Creating/revising job descriptions; departmental and individual classification reviews; market research; forecasting salary increases; administration of County compensation policies
Administering Benefits and Leave	Selection of benefits providers; administration of benefit programs; administration of FMLA, leaves of absence, disability, and military leave; coordinating retirement programs; counseling employees on benefits, leave, and retirement issues
Training and Development	New employee orientation; develop and deliver competency-based training programs; conduct comprehensive training needs assessments; manage tuition reimbursement program
Employee Relations	Conduct incident investigations, disciplinary procedures, grievances, and mediation;
Workplace Safety	Insure compliance with federal, state, and county safety regulations; provide training on workplace safety; administration of worker's compensation; development and expansion of employee wellness program; employee assistance program; overseeing OSHA compliance.
Teacher Licensure and Certification	Transcript evaluation; maintenance of teacher certification records; ensuring compliance with federal and state teacher qualification regulations

Fig. P.1-1. Service and Delivery Mechanisms

P. 1a(2) ACHR's senior leaders have established an organizational culture that values employees, emphasizing innovation, creativity, and team work. Staff view themselves as partners with their customers. This allows ACHR to deliver customized HR services that meet the differing needs of the school division and local government. Staff are cross-trained, however, in order to enhance understanding and familiarity with the services the department provides. Teamwork, both within and among the client groups teams, is frequent, communication is open, and there is an established practice of shared decision-making.

As part of the strategic planning process begun in 2002, ACHR adopted its vision statement: "To be a premier customer service focused Human Resources Team dedicated to aggressively providing excellent human resource support to Albemarle County Public Schools and Local Government" and its mission: "To

proactively provide services and solutions to all our customers' human resource needs.”

ACHR supports the core values identified by the County leadership as vital to providing excellent public service: Integrity, Innovation, Stewardship, and Learning.

P. 1a(3) ACHR is comprised of 23 employees, including senior managers, professional, and support staff. The department is organized into five client groups, three school-based groups (elementary schools, secondary schools, and support services) and two local government:

1. Community Services (Fire/Rescue, Police, Emergency Communications, Housing, Parks & Recreation, Social Services, Regional Jail, Commonwealth Attorney, Voter Registration/Elections)
2. Community Development, Fiscal & Management Services (Co. Attorney, Community Development, Co. Executive, Finance, Information Technology, General Services, Facilities Development)

Each client group is served by an HR manager and an HR generalist. A number of additional employees in the department work across two or more client groups. These include professionals in the areas of compensation, benefits, occupational health and wellness, teacher certification, and organizational development.

Sixty-one percent of the ACHR staff have at least a bachelor's degree; thirty-five percent have a master's degree; and one staff member holds a Ph.D. Three members of ACHR have earned the Senior Professional in Human Resources designation, the highest level of certification from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM); one has earned the designation of Professional in Human Resources. In addition, two members of the compensation team are Certified Compensation Professionals. The department's Occupational Health, Safety, And Wellness Manager is a registered nurse and Certified Occupational Health Nurse Specialist. Overall department demographics are shown below in Fig. P.1-2

Female	83%
Male	17%
White	83%
African American	17%
Average length of service with County:	6.23 years

Fig. P.1-2. ACHR Demographics

All HR staff in the county are required to complete a criminal background check, a Child Protective Services Central Registry check, and a tuberculosis test prior to employment.

P. 1a(4) ACHR is located in the County Office Building (COB) in central Albemarle County. This building is shared by school division administration as well as the majority of local government departments, making human resource services accessible to both entities. The remaining local government departments are housed in a separate office approximately three miles from the main County building. ACHR maintains a small office there that is staffed one afternoon a week in order to provide more direct access for employees at that location.

Communication with County employees is greatly enhanced by ACHR's external web page, that provides access to forms, procedures, benefits information, and other valuable resources. ACHR staff also use an internal intranet to share information and collaborate on documents and other projects. The County's job application process, administered by ACHR, is entirely electronic.

P. 1a(5) Human Resources is a highly regulated field. The many services that ACHR provides (Fig. P1-1) are governed by numerous federal, state, and local regulations, including:

- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Civil Rights Acts
- Consolidated Omnibus Benefits Reconciliation Act (COBRA)
- Consumer Credit Protection Act of 1968
- Employee Retirement Income Security Act
- Equal Pay Act of 1963
- Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act
- Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1969
- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996
- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- National Labor Relations Act of 1947
- Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970
- Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994

The Code of Virginia places additional regulations on many employment issues, including payment of wage, minimum wage, child labor, right to work, wage garnishment, use of polygraphs, worker's compensation, and unemployment insurance. ACHR employees working with elementary and secondary schools must also follow all regulations regarding teacher certification, including the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) as well as all state requirements on teacher education and licensure.

ACHR is also governed by and charged with upholding county local government and school division personnel policies. While these two entities maintain separate policies, the School Board and County Board of Supervisors try to maintain commonality in both policy and practice.

P.1b(1) ACHR is overseen by both the County Board of Supervisors and the School Board. On the local government side, county residents elect a six-member board who appoint an executive to administer government operations. ACHR's director reports to one of the two Assistant County Executives. Leadership Council, made up of all department directors, county executive, and assistant county executives, meets monthly to establish priorities and provide strategic direction.

The school division has a similar organizational structure: an elected seven-member school board appoints a superintendent as the chief school executive. ACHR's director reports to the Superintendent's direct subordinate, the Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning. The school Leadership Team, comprised of department directors and top administrators, serves a purpose similar to the local government's Leadership Council.

Reporting to two different boards presents ACHR with a unique set of challenges. Both groups make a concerted effort to maintain commonality in such areas as compensation, benefits, and personnel policies and procedures. Policy changes that affect all employees (i.e. school and local government) must be approved by both boards. During the budget process, the boards have several joint meetings in an effort to align compensation and benefits for all county employees. There are times, however, when the two boards have differing priorities, requiring ACHR leadership to balance the needs and directions of both entities.

P.1b(2) ACHR's primary customer group is the 3,100 employees in the county government and public schools. Overall customer requirements and expectations are centered in three key areas:

Strategic: ACHR is required to have a broad, long-term focus. Examples include forecasting human capital needs required to achieve strategic goals, talent management, organizational and departmental restructuring, and developing performance management systems that support strategic objectives.

Operational: ACHR is expected to provide efficient and effective services, such as recruiting, classifying positions, and communication to facilitate fulfillment of the county and school division's strategic goals.

Administrative: ACHR is required to comply with many federal and state employment regulations, keep all required employment records, and maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Specific requirements of the two main customer subgroups (local government and schools) often vary. For example, teachers and school administrators require guidance and assistance in obtaining licensure and their status as “highly qualified” under NCLB. Other departments, such as Transportation and Child Nutrition, need ACHR to effectively recruit and retain employees who are willing to work part time. Still other departments, such as Fire/Rescue, Police, and Emergency Communications, need HR to recruit and retain employees who are willing to work extended shifts around the clock.

Other customer groups include potential county employees, who require an efficient application and hiring process, timely communication, and fair treatment; and retired employees, who rely on HR for effective coordination of retirement benefits.

ACHR has three key stakeholder groups: the Board of Supervisors, School Board, and County residents. The two boards depend on ACHR to help inform their strategic direction by providing accurate information regarding market salary trends and thorough analyses of program and policy initiatives that might affect employees. County taxpayers depend on ACHR to be effective stewards of the public trust and to recruit and retain the best personnel to provide county services. Students in the county’s public schools also depend on ACHR to assemble a diverse cadre of highly-motivated, well-qualified teachers and administrators.

P. 1b(3)/(4) There are several external organizations that ACHR depends on for resources or for support for HR programs and processes. Key suppliers and partners include the following:

Organization	Resource/Support Provided	Requirements
World at Work	Public sector salary data	Accurate and timely forecasts
KSPH	Benefits consultant	Expert market analysis, informed recommendations
Southern Health & UCCI	Health and dental insurance coverage	Excellent customer service, timely and accurate claims administration
Healthy Roads	Online wellness program	Innovative and effective health improvement programs, customer service, confidential counseling
External Trainers (various)	Contracted training provider	Effective training development and delivery
Other Virginia localities	Market data, classification information	Accurate information, timely responses
Various media outlets	Vacancy announcements	Effective advertising design at a reasonable cost

P.2 Organizational Challenges

P. 2a(1) The main responsibility of ACHR is to recruit and retain qualified staff for the local government and school division. As such, ACHR competes with surrounding jurisdictions, local private employers, and private schools for top employees. Albemarle County government and schools is the area’s third largest employer, behind the University of Virginia and the University of Virginia Medical Center. The unemployment rate in the county is lower than that in the larger labor area and the state as a whole (3.74% vs. 4.2% and 4.4% respectively). Job growth in the county during the period 2000-2007 outpaced that of the area (4.64% vs. 2.1%).

As part of the county’s compensation strategy, the County Board of Supervisors and School Board have identified a group of 30 local employers, both public and private, as its “competitive market” for salary and benefits benchmarking purposes. Based on survey data that ACHR collects annually, the county targets salaries for classified staff to be at the median of this market and benefits to be slightly above the market median. As a response to difficulties in recruiting teachers several years ago, the compensation strategy was altered to target teacher salaries at the 75th percentile of the adopted market.

P. 2a(2): ACHR's success depends on meeting customer requirements to enhance the reputation of the County public sector as a "great place to work." Key contributing factors are retention rates, time to fill vacancies, competitive compensation, and customer satisfaction ratings. The primary changes influencing ACHR's competitive situation are population and demographic changes; increasing benefits costs; declining property values forcing budget constraints; and the changing demographics of the workforce.

P. 2a(3) Regional benchmark salary data is provided by World at Work and the Virginia Education Association (VEA). Local data is gathered annually by ACHR via its competitive market survey. ACHR also conducts customer satisfaction surveys and climate surveys to measure organizational performance relative to established strategic goals. Aggregate employment data is also available from the Charlottesville Area Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development.

P. 2b ACHR currently faces significant strategic challenges in several key areas:

Recruitment and retention – National shortages in the teaching field impact the Department's ability to recruit the best talent available, particularly in hard-to-staff subjects like special education, math, and science. Similar shortages impact recruitment of public safety personnel. These pressures are exacerbated by the aging workforce. Albemarle is also at a competitive disadvantage in hiring new employees due to the high cost of housing compared to surrounding counties. Recruiting a racially and ethnically diverse staff presents unique challenges as well.

Regulatory Compliance – Recent changes to federal and state regulations, particularly the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, have added an additional layer of complexity to the already confusing guidelines regarding teacher certification and licensure. Maintaining records and ensuring compliance with regulations surrounding fair hiring practices, employee relations, labor standards, and occupational health and safety places a large administrative burden on the department, particularly with changing regulatory requirements.

General Operations – One of the most significant and unique challenges that ACHR faces is the difficulty in maintaining commonality in policies and procedures between local government and school division given the often divergent thinking of the School Board and County Board of Supervisors. This challenge is further compounded by the inevitable changes in strategic direction that result from shifting political agendas and the changing makeup of these two elected boards. Albemarle County is currently facing a large budget shortfall due to decreased property tax revenue. The need to maintain organizational agility is paramount in order to meet the customer and stakeholder needs in a rapidly evolving financial environment. The increased public and media scrutiny that often follows tough budget situations only adds to this challenge.

P. 2c. ACHR maintains focus on improving performance via established continuous improvement cycles based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act model. Using a cyclical approach ensures that ACHR is constantly monitoring the outputs of its efforts and making any corrections necessary to attain its strategic objectives. It also helps facilitate the transfer of knowledge across the organization.

Plan: Design processes, select measurements, establish requirements. Review vision, mission, values, strategic goals, and update action plans.

Do: Action plans are deployed throughout organization; progress against defined goals is monitored and any necessary corrective action taken; training and development is provided.

Check: Progress is analyzed and evaluated using survey and other data.

Act: Plans are revised based on assessment findings; results and lessons learned are shared across the organization, and opportunities for improvement and innovation are identified.

1. Leadership

1.1 Senior Leadership

1.1a Vision and Values

1.1a(1) Albemarle County Human Resources (ACHR) director Kimberly Suyes began her tenure with the department in September 2001. Not long after, under the guidance of the new director, senior leaders began to develop a strategic plan for the department. A needs analysis was conducted and current work processes were evaluated to identify gaps in service delivery. Based on this work along with customer input, ACHR's developed its mission and vision statements.

As a department within the larger County government structure, ACHR embraces the County's identified values that were adopted during the County's strategic planning process in 1998. To support these values, ACHR's senior leaders assembled a cross-functional team that identified a set of core competencies and descriptors that are aligned with the organization's values. This competency-based management system serves as the foundation for an integrated set of Human Resources (HR) processes and tools which are used in employee recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, and succession planning.

Senior leaders display their commitment to the organizational vision and values on a daily basis by using a Competency-Based Management (CBM) system that is based on the organization's values. Leadership has identified a set of eight core competencies that are aligned with our values and performance principles. Four additional leadership competencies apply to employees in a management position. Each competency has descriptors and associated performance anchors. CBM integrates all of ACHR's activities around these core competencies that support the organization's overall goals. ACHR's recruitment and retention processes, performance management, merit pay, training and development programs, and succession management are all centered around the core competencies. ACHR's identified competencies are:

Core Competencies		Leadership Competencies
▪ Functional Expertise	▪ Learning and Development	▪ Strategic and Visionary Leadership
▪ Customer Service	▪ Innovation and Initiative	▪ Tactical Planning and Execution
▪ Communication	▪ Results Oriented	▪ Influence
▪ Integrity	▪ Teamwork	▪ Coaching

This commitment to values is integral to ACHR's operations. New staff members are trained in the organization's mission and values during the first few days of employment through one-on-one meetings with the director as well as their supervisor. In addition to explaining the vision and values and how they were developed, new employees are given the opportunity to provide feedback and make suggestions. Our values are reinforced weekly at all-staff meetings where colleagues informally recognize one another for actions that show a commitment to "living the mission." All recognitions are noted on large posters that hang from the conference room walls, serving as a visual reminder of value-driven behaviors. Senior leaders also frequently share communications they receive about an employee's exemplary actions. The County's Total Rewards Program, developed by ACHR, allows for more formal recognition of employees who make exceptional contributions to the department and/or County. The recognition criteria are, again, based on the organizational values.

1.1a(2) Integrity is not only a stated value of Albemarle County government, it is also one of the core competencies on which ACHR senior leaders are evaluated. They, in turn, evaluate their staff on the degree to which they “demonstrate the ability to consistently provide fair and honest treatment to customers and coworkers” and “apply uncompromising ethical standards to all aspects of the work, both personally and in guiding others.”

ACHR has demonstrated its commitment to creating an ethical workplace by offering a three-hour ethics training course that has been taught twice a year since 2006. To date, over 100 County and School Division employees have completed the ethics training. The course covers general ethics considerations, as well as ethical issues particular to government employees.

Furthermore, ACHR leaders collaborated with the contracted ethics trainer and the County Leadership Council to draft an “Ethics Framework” to help guide employee decision-making. The framework was adopted into administrative policy earlier this year. New County employees learn about the Ethics Framework during required orientation training.

On a more informal basis, senior ACHR leaders help to promote an environment that values ethical behavior by creating an open, safe culture for employees. Mistakes are not treated as something to be hidden or covered up, but instead as opportunities for learning and improvement. Further, as the human resources providers for the County and School Division, ACHR is charged with upholding and enforcing a variety of regulations designed to guarantee ethical behavior in such areas as fair hiring, equal treatment, discrimination, and sexual harassment. Built-in checks and required reporting help ensure that these ethical standards are upheld.

1.1a(3) ACHR creates sustainability through an organizational structure that promotes agility and open communication, and emphasizes results-based performance. Our director oversaw a complete restructuring of the department subsequent to the development of the strategic plan. This restructuring focused on four key elements:

- *Culture.* The overall culture of the department was shifted from an administrative focus to a strong strategic focus. To fulfill a more strategic role, it was vital that ACHR leadership understand the organization’s business. Staff were broken into teams based on client groups (elementary schools, secondary schools, local government, support services) in order to build stronger internal knowledge of customer needs and to facilitate quick decision-making. Aligning the department into client-based teams has allowed ACHR leaders to move from a “one size fits all” approach to a customer-centered approach that recognizes the diverse needs of our customers. This, in turn, has facilitated a shift from reactive management to proactive management. ACHR leadership meets weekly to discuss current issues and events that are or may in the future affect our customers. The focus is on anticipating potential problems before they occur. Department (i.e. customer) leaders are encouraged to communicate any anticipated change in their needs so that ACHR can provide support. Plans and objectives are reviewed throughout the year and are measured against performance. The strategic plan is available for all ACHR employees to view on the department’s intranet. It is very much a living document that can be easily adjusted when circumstances dictate.
- *Physical Environment.* The change in organizational structure of the department mirrored a change in the physical office structure. Prior to the restructuring, the office space was highly compartmentalized. Individual employees were closed off from one another and tended to have a narrow focus. To help drive the culture change, ACHR’s office was physically opened up; internal windows were installed, some doors removed, and the reception area completely redesigned to create a warmer and more inviting atmosphere. This more open environment encourages face-to-face communication and teamwork.

- *Process Improvement.* As part of the restructuring, senior leaders evaluated all internal processes. They recognized that there were many cumbersome, disjointed processes, and inconsistent HR procedures across all County departments. To increase efficiency, key processes were identified and teams were assigned to develop improvements. Teams reworked processes such as hiring substitute teachers, benefits open enrollment, creating and sorting new personnel files, job applications, and processing payroll during particularly busy times of the year. Solutions were developed and implemented. For example, the job application process was streamlined from 13 separate forms down to one. These items are continually reviewed on a semi-annual basis.
- *Technology.* ACHR leaders make a concerted effort to leverage technology resources whenever possible to help the department achieve its mission. They recognize that in order to “live the mission” of being a premier customer service focused human resources team, staff have to physically *be* with their customers often. Accordingly, ACHR managers were given laptops so that they could visit and work with customers more easily. A department intranet site was created to facilitate communication and knowledge-sharing. Many internal and external processes were moved from a paper-based format to an electronic format. Senior leaders are given cell phones and Blackberries so that they can be easily contacted by their staff and customers.

ACHR leaders create an environment that encourages learning by including learning and development as one of the core competencies on which all employees are evaluated. Specifically, employees are evaluated to the extent they demonstrate “the ability and desire to continuously learn and develop new skills in order to add more value to self and the organization.” Performance anchors detail the specific behaviors associated with exceptional ratings in this area. Additionally, senior leaders are further evaluated on their coaching ability, i.e. “the extent to which they help others succeed by setting clear expectations and giving developmental feedback, guidance and support; as well as their ability to improve others’ performance by providing opportunities for continuous learning.”

A commitment to learning is further evidenced by ACHR’s leaders allocation of resources toward that goal. In 2007, ACHR’s organizational development team secured a dedicated classroom and a 12-station computer lab to provide technology training for all County employees. Leadership strives to provide multiple formal and informal learning opportunities for staff. Monthly staff meetings always include an instructional component, such as training on ethics, generational differences, and customer service. ACHR employees are encouraged to take advantage of the department’s own organizational development classes. There is also support for employees wishing to pursue professional certification through the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the world’s largest professional association devoted to human resource management, and World at Work, the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to knowledge in compensation and benefits.

Recognizing that the most effective leaders often come from within the organization, ACHR senior leaders began developing a succession plan in 2008 to ensure continuity in key positions and to retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital. As part of this process, senior leaders work with the director to develop Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to help facilitate knowledge transfer and build leadership capacity. Leaders work with their staff to develop Standard Operating Guides (SOGs) that are available for all employees to review on the department intranet. Leaders also provide opportunities for members of their staff to develop leadership skills. For example, a mid-level employee may be given the chance to strengthen their executive recruiting skills by participating in the selection process for a senior-level County vacancy.

1.1b Communication and Organizational Performance

1.1b(1) ACHR's relatively small size and open physical environment facilitates face-to-face communication and the exchange of ideas.

Senior leaders communicate with and engage the workforce using a variety of methods, both formal and informal. Structured meetings include the following:

Weekly	Monthly
• Briefing – all staff meet 9:00 – 9:30 to provide updates, share information, and offer peer recognitions • Managers' Meeting – senior leaders meet as a group with director • Senior leaders meet individually with director • Senior leaders meet with their staff (client group based) • Generalists – representatives from each client group meet to discuss common issues and share best practices	• All staff meeting – monthly 2-hour meeting with instructional component • One-on-ones – every employee in the department meets individually with the director

Frank, two-way communication is achieved through daily contact with colleagues, leadership, and customers. All ACHR employees, including senior leaders, have an open door policy. Email, phone, and face-to-face contact is frequent. The department maximizes the use of technology for communication through its intranet which provides employees a way to post announcements, share information, and collaborate on projects. The intranet site also hosts the department's strategic plan and all associated action plans. ACHR's external web site offers customers access to information on HR programs and procedures, compensation and benefits information, job descriptions, vacancies, as well as electronic forms to complete most HR-related transactions, such as applying for a job or changing benefits information. Electronic access to these resources is particularly important to the department's customers (e.g. teachers, police officers) whose work schedules make in-person visits to the ACHR office difficult.

Senior leaders are also measured on their ability to effectively communicate and to model effective communication to the workforce. This core competency includes effective listening, keeping others informed, managing conflict effectively, being approachable, and using technology to manage communication. Training on using MS Outlook effectively, writing, public speaking and presentation skills are examples of topics offered to employees to further develop and strengthen communication among the workforce.

Reward and recognition for high performing employees is an ingrained part of ACHR's culture. Senior leaders and their teams recognize one another informally for exceptional behavior at each weekly briefing. Leaders may also formally reward an extraordinary contribution made by an employee through ACHR's Total Rewards program. To receive this award, an employee must be nominated with an explanation not only of their action(s), but also how those actions tie in to one or more strategic goals.

1.1b(2) Senior leaders create a focus on action to accomplish the department's objectives, improve performance, and attain its vision through frequent use and monitoring of action plans. ACHR's strategic plan includes four goals:

1. Align Human Resources as a strategic partner with customers
2. Attract, Staff, and Retain the best talent
3. Improve HR-related processes, policies and procedures
4. Provide excellent customer service

Each of these goals has a set of specific objectives and one or more associated action plans that establish what must be accomplished to achieve the objective, the person(s) responsible, due date, and current status. This electronic document is housed on the department's intranet and is easily updated so that priorities can be reviewed easily and quickly and progress can be assessed. Managers can view action plans by goal, status, due date, or person(s) responsible to help align workflow and staffing resources.

The success in meeting these goals is assessed using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are measured and reviewed on a quarterly basis. Senior leaders also review monthly reports that detail key organizational benchmarks such as the number of new hires, terminations, retirement requests, policy and procedure changes, learning and development activities, and safety and wellness figures.

A focus on performance is also maintained through ACHR's Competency-Based Management (CBM) approach which aligns the department's people management systems with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that lead to superior individual and organizational performance.

1.2 Governance and Social Responsibilities

1.2a Organizational Governance

1.2a(1) Understanding and demonstrating ethical principles is essential to our mission; doing the work of public service can be a difficult task and having the trust of the public is vital. This requires careful ethical consideration in every aspect of our work to ensure we earn and keep that trust.

Our local government has an enormous impact in the lives of those we serve; unfortunately, there are rarely clear-cut answers to many of the decisions that we face. Since public servants often make judgments that involve ethical considerations, ACHR has worked with County leadership to develop a framework for making ethical decisions. When faced with difficult dilemma, employees are encouraged to consider the framework and engage in meaningful discussion with their peers and leaders before taking action. By holding ourselves to the highest ethical standard, we can continue to improve the quality of service we provide our citizens. The framework includes the following questions to help guide ethical decision-making:

- *If I were on the receiving end of my conduct, would I approve or would I take offense?*
- *If I had to justify my conduct in public tomorrow, would I do so with pride or shame?*
- *Can I take legitimate pride in the way I conduct myself and the example I set?*
- *How would my conduct be evaluated by people whose integrity and character I respect?*
- *Does my conduct give others reason to trust or distrust me?*

While the framework provides a general guidance of ethical principles for the workplace, County personnel policy establishes the ethical parameters and requirements to which all local government employees are required to adhere. In addition, Virginia law -- the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act -- declares that one of its primary purposes is to ensure that citizens maintain the "highest trust in their public officers and employees" and to that end the law both defines and prohibits inappropriate conflicts that all local government employees need to recognize as part of their overall responsibilities.

In addition to the ethics framework, in 2006 ACHR worked with an outside consultant to develop an ethics

training course. This class has been offered twice a year since 2006. To date, more than 100 County and School employees have completed the training.

Key aspects of ACHR's governance system and how they are deployed are listed in Table 1.2-1.

Key Aspect	Approach/Deployment
Accountability for management's actions	- Senior leaders' performance reviews and Department Director's review by Assistant County Executive and Assistant School Superintendent - Review of KPIs by County Executive and Superintendent's Office - Leaders evaluated on ethical behavior in 360° Feedback
Fiscal accountability	- Revenue and expenses reported annually - County Board of Supervisors oversight of budget and expenditures - Monthly Budget Expenditure Reports - Budget Initiative Report required for new funding requests
Transparency in operations	- All financial information subject to FOIA requests. ACHR responds to all requests. - Annual report published in print and online - Compliance with all federal and state regulations regarding fair hiring, employee relations, teacher certification
Independent internal and external audits	- Finance Dept. audits requests for payments each week and petty cash funds annually - Certified public accountant conducts comprehensive county financial audit annually
Protection of stakeholder interests	- Oversight from Board of Supervisors and School Board - Annual Report published in print and online - Leadership Council meets monthly – senior county leaders updated on ACHR activities

Table 1.2-1. Key Aspects of ACHR's Governance System

1.2a(2) Senior leaders' performance is evaluated in several ways. The director conducts annual performance reviews on the assistant director and all HR managers. The director's performance is reviewed by the Assistant County Executive and the Assistant Superintendent. The instrument used to evaluate performance is part of the Competency-Based Management system. Leaders are evaluated on the same eight core competencies that all employees are evaluated on as well as four additional leadership competencies. Each competency has associated objective performance indicators to remove as much subjectivity as possible and to ensure consistency across evaluations. The director meets with each manager to discuss their performance appraisal and discuss future goals.

In addition to the performance review, all ACHR managers also participate in a 360° Feedback evaluation process. The focus of this process is on personal development. Leaders receive feedback from not only their manager, but also their peers, customers, subordinates, and other stakeholders. Each leader uses this information to create development plans and goals for themselves.

ACHR's organization-wide Climate Survey provides department heads with some additional feedback from their staff. While not expressly designed as a performance evaluation, the survey contains several questions regarding employees' opinions on their supervisors. This survey is distributed to all County classified employees on an annual basis.

1.2b Legal and Ethical Behavior

1.2b(1) ACHR addresses potential adverse affects of its services and operations, particularly hiring employees for County service, through a proactive pre-employment screening process. A criminal background check using state and federal databases is conducted on all new employees before they begin working for the County. School Division and Social Services employees also are checked against the Central Registry of the state Child Protective Services Department. Personal and professional reference checks are conducted prior to any offer of employment.

In 2004 ACHR began to develop a loss control program. The goals of this program are to ensure County

and School employees are afforded a safe and healthy working environment by planning, organizing, administering and directing the Albemarle County/Schools Safety and Health Program; performing responsible safety engineering, inspection and accident prevention work; and working toward reducing costs associated with safety and health.

Four primary areas of responsibility have been designated as being under the auspices of Loss Control: Workers' Compensation, Safety, Wellness, and Unemployment Claims. The County has begun to realize both tangible results and a more clearly developed vision for each facet of the program.

(1) Worker's Compensation – This focus area includes maintaining compliance with applicable law and County policy, collecting and analyzing data such as loss ratio and severity rates, claims management, incident investigations, cooperative involvement with the insurance carrier, and overall process improvement. The underlying objective of each of these is to reduce expenditures related to Worker's Compensation.

(2) Safety – ACHR has made marked strides in promoting safety in the workplace. As part of the loss control program, ACHR has developed compliance specific training matrices, joined the Blue Ridge Safety Association, and formed a Safety Team in the Fall of 2005. The Safety Committee meets monthly and is charged with defining what constitutes a safe work environment for all departments; identifying both mandatory and non-mandatory safety compliance issues and develop prioritized objectives against achieving or maintaining that compliance; assisting in the performance of basic inspections; and following up on accidents in order to develop preventive measures and developing a culture of awareness around safety for the entire Division. A sample safety training schedule is presented in Table 1.2-1.

Training	Frequency
Hazcom	Annual
Bloodborne Pathogens	Annual
Lockout/Tagout	Initial/As needed
Mobile Equipment	Triennial
Access to medical Records	Annual
Confined Space	Annual
Safe Lifting	As needed
PPE	Initial/as needed
Noise	Annual
Electrical safety	Initial/as needed
Emergency Action Plan	Annual
Respiratory protection	Annual
Fall protection	Initial/as needed

Table 1.2-2 Sample Safety Training Schedule

The Safety Team has focused on several key areas:

- Hazard recognition training
- Establishing a medical response team for the County Office Building
- Improving the hazard communication program using an electronic material safety data bank
- Enhancing driver safety programs
- Analyzing accident trends
- Availability of automatic external defibrillators throughout the County Office Building
- Creation of a safety audit program which incorporates accident prevention

As part of the orientation program, all new employees receive training in safety, hazard communication, blood-borne pathogens, and universal precautions. In recognition of ACHR's proactive efforts towards

reaching risk management goals, the department was awarded the Virginia Municipal League's Risk Management Excellence Award in 2008.

(3) Wellness – In 2005, County leadership tasked ACHR to develop a wellness program as a proactive response to rising healthcare costs. ACHR's Wellness Program encourages employees to change unhealthy behavior with the goals of reducing healthcare costs and absenteeism, and increasing productivity. The Wellness Program is comprehensive and multi-tiered and includes health risk assessments, individual wellness coaching and behavior change programs (nutrition, weight management, smoking cessation), onsite medical services (mobile mammography, flu vaccination, blood pressure screening) and a rewards and incentives program (discounted gym memberships, wellness-related contests).

Part of ACHR's Wellness Program involved the formation of a Wellness Team to help guide the County's wellness efforts. The team promotes wellness-related activities at their work locations.

(4) Unemployment claims management – The County has identified the potential for cost savings by closely managing each unemployment claim submitted to the Virginia Employment Commission by former ACPS employees.

ACHR works in a highly regulated field and seeks to meet or exceed all regulatory compliance standards. Regulations fall into three major categories: employment, teacher accreditation, and health, safety and wellness. Examples of key compliance measures are shown in Table 1.2-3.

Regulatory Area	Requirement/Measures	Regulatory Agencies	Goals
Employment	EEOC reports EEO Plan I9 Fair Labor Standards COBRA HIPPA	EEOC, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, U.S. Dept. of Labor, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services	100% compliance on all measures
Health, Safety, Wellness, Loss Control	Worker's compensation claims Work-related injuries Unemployment claims HIPPA Wellness Program participation	U.S. Dept. of Labor, Virginia Employment Commission, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Svcs., Virginia Dept. of Labor and Industry, Virginia Dept. of Health, Virginia Unemployment Commission	10% reduction in worker's compensation costs, 100% score on VML risk management assessment 50% participation in Wellness Program, 75% participant satisfaction
Teacher Accreditation	Instructional Personnel Verification Report Instructional Survey Data Report Supply and Demand Report	U.S. Dept. of Education (NCLB), VA Dept. of Education	100% highly qualified teachers

Table 1.2-3. Examples of key compliance measures.

1.2b(2) ACHR uses a multifaceted approach to both promote and ensure ethical behavior. First, ACHR has established ethics/integrity as one of the core competencies that lead to superior individual and organizational performance. ACHR defines integrity as "Demonstrating the ability to consistently provide fair and honest treatment to customers and co-workers and applying uncompromising ethical standards to all aspects of the work, both personally and in guiding others." Descriptors associated with this competency include:

- Honest and ethical in all aspects of job performance
- Maintains confidentiality as the job necessitates.
- Dependable, trustworthy, honors all commitments, and follows through.

- Share complete and accurate information
- Shows consistency between stated beliefs and actions
- Acts in accordance with organizational values

In accordance with ACHR's Competency-Based Management, potential new employees are screened and interviewed on ethics. All employees are evaluated in regard to ethics as part of their annual performance appraisal.

ACHR provides ethics training as well. All new employees receive sexual harassment training during orientation. ACHR's organizational development team offers classes in preventing sexual harassment and discrimination, workplace ethics, and fair job interviewing techniques.

ACHR's Personnel Policies, to which all County employees are subject, also contain specific guidelines prescribing ethical behavior. Personnel policies govern topics such as:

- Conflict of interest
- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination
- Effect of criminal conviction or arrest
- Employee relations
- Harassment
- Standards of conduct

In the event of a breach of ethical conduct, the Personnel Policies contain clear and specific procedures for disciplinary action. Disciplinary measures include oral and written reprimands, suspension, and dismissal. There is also policy detailing how and under what circumstances an employee can file a grievance.

1.2c Support of Key Communities

ACHR's key communities are determined through input from customers and County residents. One item of concern that citizen surveys have identified is affordable housing. In 2007, ACHR partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville in its effort to provide affordable housing for low-income families. ACHR devoted over 140 person-hours to this cause. Another area of concern expressed in citizen surveys is education for at-risk students. In response, ACHR identified an elementary school with a large at-risk population and partnered with them to provide literacy remediation for first grade students. Over the course of eight months, ACHR employees made over 50 visits to provide one-on-one tutoring as part of the school's "Book Buddies" program.

Support provided to key communities also includes:

Community	Support Provided
Thomas Jefferson Area United Way	Participation in Day of Caring. ACHR helps complete service projects for nonprofit organizations across the area.
Virginia Blood Services	ACHR coordinates several on-site blood donation events.
American Heart Association	ACHR promotes and participates in annual Heart Walk
Albemarle Health Department	Participation in Pandemic Flu Vaccination program

2. Strategic Planning

2.1 Strategy Development

2.1a Strategy Development Process

2.1a(1) In 2001, ACHR began a systematic approach to developing a strategic plan. The initial strategic plan was written and refined over a period of several months due to the extensive information-gathering that was involved as well as the training and education needed for employees who were unfamiliar with the strategic planning process. The plan is reviewed annually by senior leaders. Maintaining the plan on the department's intranet site, coupled with ACHR's small organizational size, also allows management to make adjustments to the plan more frequently if needed.

ACHR's strategic planning process is shown in Figure 2.1-1. The process begins with a review and reaffirmation of the vision, mission, and values of the organization. While these guiding principles typically do not change significantly from year to year, adjustments can be made based on changing circumstances and conditions. For instance, several years after the development of the initial strategic plan, a fourth strategic objective was added, based on input from employees, customers, and other stakeholders.

All ACHR employees are involved in the planning process, under the guidance of senior leaders. A concerted effort is made to solicit input from customers and stakeholders. ACHR's strategic plan is the result of focused internal assessments (e.g. SWOT, task analyses) and external data gathering (SWOT, environmental scans, needs analyses) done during Phase 2. SWOT analyses are conducted by department senior leaders based on input from their subordinates. Gaps between current performance and stated goals are identified, discussed, and plans are developed to close them. Plans include both short and long term objectives, responsibilities, and a timeframe for completion. During Phase 4, resources are allocated toward achievement of goals, the plan is communicated to County and School Division senior leadership, ACHR customers, and other stakeholders, and specific action plans are developed and executed. Performance is then tracked and measured, and mid-course corrections are made if needed.

ACHR's strategic planning process identifies potential blind spots in several ways. First, the SWOT analysis, environmental scanning, and needs assessment conducted during Phase 2 provide leaders with both internal and external (customer and stakeholder) input, enabling them to spot potential blind spots. Second, the information gathered and reviewed throughout the year (see Figure 2.1-2) provides additional insight into gaps that may not have been previously considered. Third, using the client-based service model, ACHR employees communicate frequently with customers so blind spots can be revealed and dealt with before they actually emerge as problems.

Strategic challenges and advantages are determined through the SWOT analysis and external needs assessments conducted with customer and stakeholder groups. When the strategic plan was first being developed, these analyses allowed ACHR to identify some gaps that could be closed quickly, the so-called "low-hanging fruit". These were viewed as opportunities for the department to improve processes and, perhaps more importantly, to build credibility as it moved into a more strategic role for the County. Subsequent iterations of these analyses have provided ACHR with information and insights that have allowed the department to build on the momentum established by these early successes.

Information reviewed during Phase 5, which includes ACHR's Climate Survey, Customer Satisfaction Survey, and data gathered for preparing the department's Annual Report, provide additional resources for determining organizational challenges and advantages. Continual environmental scanning provides a way to identify changing trends and issues in human resources, education and local government administration, technology, and the regulatory environment.

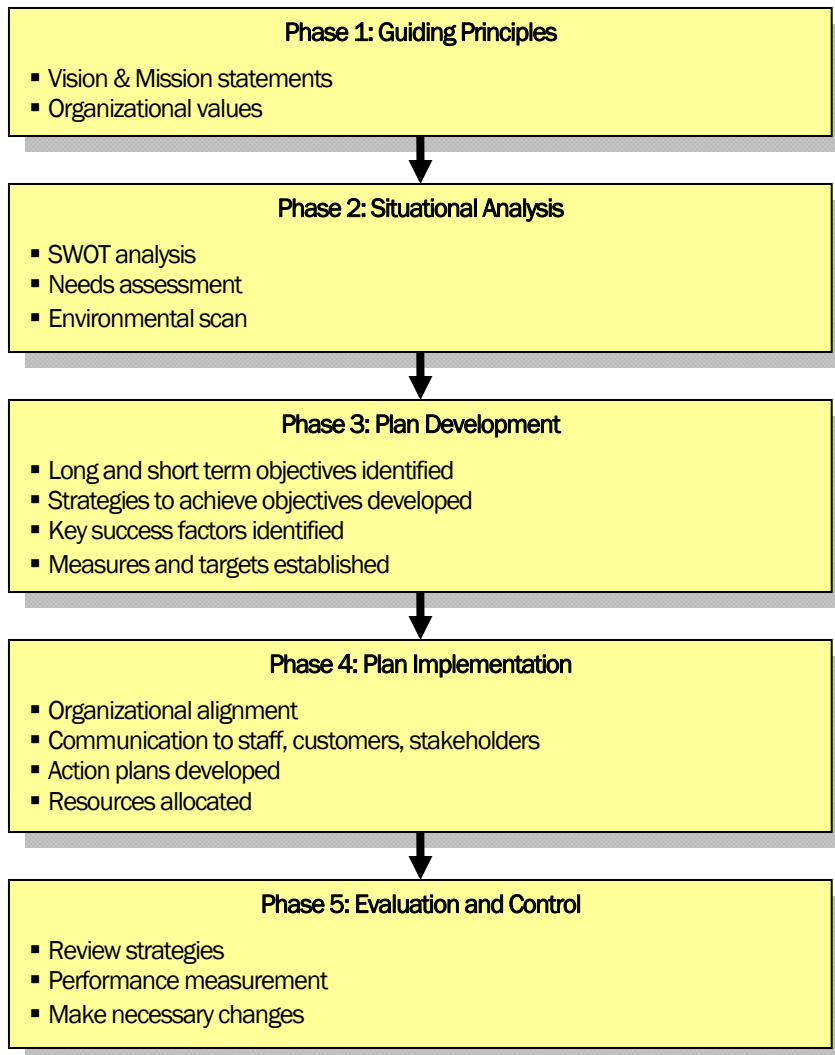


Figure 2.1-1 Strategic Planning Process

There are several time horizons relative to the strategic planning process. The short-term horizon is generally one year to coincide with the fiscal year budget process, school year calendar, and the department planning calendar, which tracks all of ACHR's recurring responsibilities and activities. This time frame allows for the allocation of resources to achieve strategic plan objectives, complete daily operations, and fulfill monthly and annual obligations. ACHR uses a long-term planning horizon of two to three years for larger projects that may require larger allocations of time, funds, and/or staffing. These projects typically involve cross-functional teams and, often, the development of a new program or the major revision of an existing one. Examples would include revision of the pay-for-performance system and the institution of ACHR's Total Rewards program.

2.1a(2) Key factors involved in the strategic planning process are shown below in Figure 2.1-2. Senior leaders are held accountable for routinely reviewing the information sources that influence the planning process. Much of the data listed in Figure 2.1-2 is included in reports to the School Board and/or County Board of Supervisors during their regular meetings and work sessions.

2.1b Strategic Objectives

2.1b(1) ACHR's mission is to be a premier customer service focused Human Resources Team dedicated to

aggressively providing excellent human resource support to Albemarle County Public Schools and local government. Key strategic objectives designed to achieve this mission are presented in Figure 2.1-3. In addition, Figure 2.1-3 outlines the action plans (tactics), key indicators, goals, and relevant strategic challenges associated with ACHR's strategic objectives.

2.1b(2) ACHR's strategic objectives are designed to address its challenges and capitalize on its advantages. The connections between strategic objectives and challenges is shown in Figure 2.1-3. These connections were built through the SWOT analysis conducted during the initial strategic planning process. Identified strengths were matched with opportunities and threats (i.e. challenges). This coincided with ACHR's shift from an administrative role to a more strategic one. Customer feedback and stakeholder input was a significant part of this process, to help ensure that the organization's strategic goals are aligned not only with our challenges and opportunities, but also with the needs of all key stakeholders.

Strategic Planning Key Factor	Source and Type of Data	ACHR Staff Responsible	Customers/Stakeholders Involved
Strengths and weaknesses	HR Customer Satisfaction Surveys, HR Climate Surveys, HR managers 360° feedback, focus groups, face-to-face meetings with customers, Board of Supervisors and School Board reviews	Organizational Development Mgr., Dept. Director, senior leaders	County Board of Supervisors and School Board, Superintendent, County Executive, Customer group leaders
Technology	Leadership Council meetings include updates from Director of Information Technology; Learning Needs Assessment; Technology training course evaluations	Director, Technology Trainer	Information Technology Director,
Regulatory environment	SHRM monthly magazine, email updates, annual conference, and monthly local chapter meetings; periodic environmental scanning; consultations with County Attorney's Office	Support Services Manager	County Attorney's Office
Market, Competition	Annual market compensation survey; Charlottesville Area Compensation Survey; Virginia Association of School Personnel Administrators (VASPA) meeting	Asst. Director; Elementary and Secondary School HR Managers	State and local employers;
Customer Preferences	HR Customer Satisfaction Survey; face-to-face meetings with customers; customer feedback cards; Leadership Council meetings; Learning needs assessment	Organizational Development Mgr., Dept. Director, senior leaders	All customer groups
Threats/Risks	Health care claims utilization review; health insurance budget rate projections; health insurance benchmark comparisons; worker's compensation and workplace safety data; health risk assessment aggregate data	Director, Asst. Director, Occupational Health and Wellness Manager	KSPH, senior County leadership, Finance Dept. leadership, Southern Health, United Concordia, Virginia Municipal League, Healthy Roads
Long-term sustainability	Data on employee retention, retirement projections; HR Customer Satisfaction Surveys	Director, senior leaders	Customer groups; County and School leadership
Executing strategic plan	Funding requests/budget initiative approval by Board of Supervisors and School Board; ACHR Annual Reports; Baldrige Self-Assessment	Senior leaders	Board of Supervisors, School Board

Figure 2.1-2 Strategic Planning Key Factors

2.2 Strategy Deployment

2.2a Action Plan Development and Deployment

2.2a(1) Action plans are developed during Phase 4 of the strategic planning process (Figure 2.1-1). As each action plan is created, a lead is assigned and a timeframe is established. During this process, alternatives are evaluated and consideration is given to costs, risk, and implications for stakeholders. Once the plan is adopted, it is written into the strategic plan online. This allows staff to easily refer to the action plans and makes relationships between action plans and the strategic objective they support evident. Employees can see very clearly how the work that they do, be it a recurring task or a special project, contributes to the fulfillment of the strategic plan. It also allows action plan leads to communicate progress updates with the entire team.

Action plans are reviewed monthly by the Director and her supervisors. They are also reviewed each month during all-staff meetings and on a more frequent basis by HR client-group teams. This ensures that not only are the outcomes of action plans achieving strategic objectives but also that the outcomes are sustained.

2.2a(2) ACHR ensures that adequate financial, personnel, and other resources are available to support the accomplishment of action plans in Phase 4 of the strategic planning process which is coordinated with the County and School Division budget process. The department receives the bulk of its funding directly from the County and School Division. Once funding levels have been established, ACHR aligns resources with workflow toward completion of the action plans. Working closely with customer groups allows the department to predict changes in customer needs and budget proactively to meet demands.

In some instances, County and School Division funds may be insufficient to complete a particular ACHR project or initiative. In these cases, alternative funding sources are sought. An example is ACHR's effort to expand the health and wellness program initiatives. In the current economic conditions, County funds are not available to support this goal. Instead of shelving the idea, ACHR is developing a cost-shifting program for medical tests needed for employment (e.g. tuberculosis tests for school employees, physicals for Fire/Rescue staff). Currently ACHR pays an external provider for these services. Under the new proposal, these services would be provided in-house in an on-site clinic, which would also offer other medical services to employees, such as blood pressure screening, etc. Such a proposal would allow ACHR to offer expanded health and wellness services while not using any additional funds from the County or Schools.

2.2a(3) ACHR's strategic plan is very much a living document that can be revised easily if warranted. Environmental scanning provides information that helps senior leaders determine if plans need to be modified. Working closely with customers allows ACHR to anticipate changing needs and modify plans appropriately. The organization's relatively small size and flat structure allow changes to be made and communicated quickly.

2.2a(4) Key action plans are outlined in Figure 2.1-3. Current economic conditions are forcing ACHR, along with all County and School Division departments, to scrutinize current operations and planned activities. (At the this writing, the state is facing a \$2.5-3 billion shortfall; Albemarle government and schools predict a combined \$15 million shortfall). ACHR leadership is focusing on ways to maintain current levels of service despite current financial constraints.

2.2a(5) ACHR's human resource plans and strategies are developed as part of the overall strategic planning process and focus on the following elements:

Performance management: ACHR's performance management system reinforces a customer perspective by focusing on the core competencies that lead to superior individual and organizational performance. Employee's salary increases are directly tied to their performance rating. The performance management

system also encourages retention by accelerating employees to the midpoint of their pay grade (i.e. the competitive market rate for their position), the point at which they will be less likely to leave the organization.

Training and development: As part of the annual performance review, employees work with their supervisors to identify knowledge gaps and develop a training plan to strengthen their skill set. Training is provided based on the established core competencies.

Building leadership capacity: Employees with leadership potential work with their supervisor and the Director to create a professional development plan. This plan outlines professional goals and specific strategies to achieve them. Opportunities for formal and informal training are provided.

2.2a(6) and 2.2b Key performance indicators are shown in Figure 2.1-3. Identifying these measures during the strategic planning process (Figure 2.1-1) ensures that they are aligned with the overall organization of the department and cover key deployment areas and stakeholders.

3. Customer and Market Focus

3.1 Customer and Market Knowledge

ACHR's largest customer group is current Albemarle County School Division and Government employees. Additional customer groups are potential new employees and retired County employees. ACHR segments current County employees into four subgroups: (1) Local Government; (2) Elementary School staff; (3) Secondary School staff; and (4) School Support Services. While the subgroups share some characteristics, each has its own unique set of needs. For instance, local government employees work twelve months per year, sometimes with an unconventional schedule (twelve-hour shifts, weekends, etc.). Most elementary and secondary school staff work ten months, but each group has very different licensure requirements. School support employees often work part-time hours, which presents its own unique set of human resource needs. Aligning ACHR staff into teams based on these subgroups allows the department to provide informed, customized support and solutions to their customers. Key requirements and associated delivery mechanisms are shown in Figure P.1-1.

These customer segments were identified during the initial SWOT analysis conducted in 2001. The results of this analysis provided the foundation for the department's organizational restructuring into teams based on the four primary subgroups. Subsequent SWOT analyses and ongoing environmental scanning help ACHR determine if any potential customer groups are being overlooked. The strategic planning process, particularly the review of ACHR's goal of aligning the department as a strategic partner with the customer, provides another opportunity to examine identified and potential new customer groups.

ACHR uses a multifaceted system to determine customer needs and changing expectations, as shown in Figure 3.1-1.

Strategic Objectives	Key Action Plan Tactics	Key Indicators	Goals	Related Strategic Challenges
Align Human Resources as a strategic partner with customers	- Work with customer in his/her workplace to understand their specific needs - Build customer understanding of how HR can support their goals	- HR County Climate Survey results - HR Effectiveness Survey results	10% improvement in "staff availability" survey score 5% increase in "Staff is knowledgeable" survey score 500 responses to "Operation Apple" survey; 90% favorable results	- Creating a strategic role for the department - Providing proactive support and services in an environment of changing funding patterns - Recruitment and retention
Attract, staff, and retain the best talent possible	- Increase diversity of workforce - Align recruitment strategies with best practices - Provide competitive compensation and benefits package - Increase employee retention - Develop the talent and build required skills necessary for future success - Develop a comprehensive wellness program for employees	- Minority recruitment data - Hiring rates of highly qualified employees - Salary and benefits comparison to competitive market - Participation in training - Wellness participation; associated cost savings	- Workforce diversity that matches that of community 100% of teachers hired are "highly qualified" - Retention rates equal to or higher than national average - Salary ranges at 100% of market median - Benefits at 105% of market median - Favorable return on investment for wellness initiatives 50% employee participation in wellness program	- Recruiting and retaining a racially and ethnically diverse workforce - Current and future labor shortages - High cost of living relative to salaries - Regulatory compliance - Changing employment patterns Generational differences - Providing proactive support and services (e.g. training) in an environment of changing funding patterns
Improve HR people systems and processes	- Utilize technology to maximize organizational effectiveness - Review policies and procedures for consistency and compliance - Prevent and minimize loss - Ensure a safe workplace - Cultivate continuous performance improvement - Develop succession planning program and tools - Enhance staff's customer service skills - Increase size and scope of Organizational Development	- Cost savings from process improvements - Costs of unemployment insurance claims - Worker's compensation claims - HR staff with professional certifications - HR Effectiveness Survey results - Training usage and effectiveness data	- Improved scores on VML risk management guidelines - Lower incurred costs for worker's compensation - Increased training class offerings - Reduce printing costs through use of electronic processes	- Funding shortfalls - Maximizing use of technology Regulatory compliance - Rising health care costs - Retention - Creating a strategic role for the department - Maximizing efficiency in times of fiscal restraint - Current and future labor shortages Changing employment trends;

Figure 2.1-3 Strategic Objectives, Indicators, and Challenges

Needs Determination Method	Information Collected And Shared	Frequency
Climate Survey	Measures elements that have been established as strong indicators of employee satisfaction and high organizational performance	18 months
Customer Satisfaction Survey	Indicators of customer satisfaction with ACHR's professionalism, knowledge, responsiveness, availability, and handling of sensitive matters.	18 months
Learning Needs Assessment	Identify customer training needs to guide ACHR's Organizational Development programs. Needs are measured in technology, leadership, communication, project management, team building, supervisory, and career development.	Biannually
Customer Satisfaction Cards/Operation Apple	Gathers discreet and open-ended feedback on ACHR's customer service.	Ongoing
Exit Surveys	Tracks factors that induce employees to leave so that improvements can be made in areas such as career development, recruitment and retention efforts, and training needs.	Ongoing
Focus Groups	Conducted systematically with all customer groups to determine their needs and requirements. Information gathered led to the restructuring of the department and the development of many new programs and procedures. Also conducted on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis to gather information about a particular issue or program. Examples topics include employee recognition, benefits, learning needs, and employee schedule changes.	<i>Ad hoc</i>
Standing Meetings	Several standing meetings between ACHR leaders, School Division leaders, and local government leadership exist to provide opportunities for customers to share information with ACHR.	Biweekly

Figure 3.1-1. Customer Needs Determination Mechanisms

Customer feedback information gathered via the methods listed in Figure 3.1-1 is evaluated by ACHR senior leadership. Gaps in service are identified and potential solutions are discussed, among the senior leadership team and among work groups. Agreed-upon solutions are then implemented via a *plan, do, act, check* cycle. Examples of improvements made based on analysis of customer feedback data are shown in Figure 3.1-2.

Based on results gathered from ACHR's Effectiveness Survey and in support of our vision of being a premier customer-serviced focus organization, ACHR has adopted customer service standards for which all employees are held accountable. Standards are established for service *in person* (e.g. "We will take ownership."); *by phone* (e.g. "We will respond to all voicemails within one business day."); *by email, letter, or fax* (e.g. "If we cannot personally handle your email request, we will forward to the appropriate employee and advise the sender to whom the request is forwarded to so they can follow up if necessary."); and *online* (e.g. "We will provide downloadable forms and applications that will help our customer to do business with us more efficiently.")

Feedback Received	Solution
The employment application process is inconsistent and takes too long.	Developed a streamlined application to replace multiple forms. Implemented applicant management system.
Sometimes difficult to reach HR staff on the phone	Phones reprogrammed so that callers can be connected to reception area; staff update outgoing voice mail greeting when out of the office; customer service standards regarding timely response to messages.
Benefits open enrollment process is confusing and not “user-friendly”.	Open enrollment process moved online to facilitate easy access, particularly for 10-month employees; began providing opportunities for customers to meet with benefits staff in person to answer questions; redesigned communication strategy.
Employment actions (e.g. hours changes, location changes) take too long.	Worked with Information Technology to develop streamlined electronic process for submitting and processing employee changes.
Learning needs assessment	Additional courses added to learning catalog, including survey design, technology classes, time management.

Figure 3.1-2 Examples of Improvements Made Based on Customer Feedback

3.2 Customer Relationships and Satisfaction

Customer Relationship Building. ACHR views the process of building customer relationships as a critical element of the organization’s success. In fact, one of the department’s key strategic objectives is to align the organization as a strategic partner with customers. Action plans developed to fulfill this objective focus on HR representatives having frequent personal contact with customer groups. These activities allow HR staff to learn the customers’ business and their needs, and helps educate customers about the services that HR can provide them to help them achieve their goals.

Examples include:

- Attending customer group staff meetings
- Having open “office hours” at off-site locations to provide face-to-face service
- Spending time with customers in their workplace (e.g. riding along with Police or Fire/Rescue)
- Focus groups with staff to hear their views on a particular issue, such as schedule changes

ACHR helps to build customer loyalty by consistently meeting and exceeding expectations. This is accomplished by embracing the customer service standards discussed above and by providing timely, accurate, and thorough service. Customer loyalty is strengthened by the department’s low turnover rate, which provides several benefits. Customers develop comfort and familiarity dealing with the same HR representative(s) over time, and HR staff develop in-depth knowledge of the customers’ needs.

A number of access mechanisms are deployed for customers to locate information, conduct business, and provide feedback (Figure 3.2-1). Work schedules and locations spread across the County make it difficult for many customers to visit the ACHR office. Providing multiple means for customers to communicate with the department and conduct business is therefore vital.

Access Mechanism	Service or information provided
In person	Office staffed 8:00AM -5:00 PM for walk-in visits. Set schedule for off-site visits.
Online	Website provides 24/7 access to information (job openings, benefits, job descriptions, pay scales, policies) . Many processes can be conducted (apply for a job, change benefits information, change personal data, register for training classes, submit personnel action request). Benefits open enrollment also conducted online.
Phone	Standards set for response time, greetings. Option for callers to speak to a “live person” . Senior leaders can be reached by cell phone during off-hours.
Email	All staff email addresses clearly listed online. Standards set for timely response. Leadership all carry Blackberries so they can be reached via email when off-site and during off-hours.
Alternate Accommodations	Job vacancies posted online, in print at County Office Building, and advertised in newspaper. Computers made available during office hours for job applications (assistance is available). Open enrollment process can be conducted online from home or on-site by appointment.

Figure 3.2-1: Customer Access Mechanisms

ACHR manages customer complaints by proactively working to prevent them in the first place. ACHR’s small size allows any complaints that do arise to be handled quickly and provides multiple ways for customers to express any concerns they may have. Staff are trained to acknowledge receiving complaints or questions within one business day. If they do not have the necessary information to provide a response or solution, they will inform the customer what they are doing and when a response can be expected. If needed, the appropriate manager or senior leader will provide assistance and follow-up to ensure that the matter is handled to the customer’s satisfaction. If the matter cannot be resolved through these means, a formal grievance process is in place.

The department’s flat organizational structure provides many access points for customers. Aligning the department as a strategic partner with customers allows HR staff to anticipate and handle problems before they escalate. Frequent contact between HR staff and customer groups via phone, email, and face-to-face meetings, provides numerous opportunities for customers to ask questions or raise issues. In addition, the Climate and Customer Satisfaction Surveys provide a means for customers to share issues or concerns with HR staff. These communication channels help ACHR maintain strong relationships with customers and keep customer access current with business needs and direction.

Customer Satisfaction Determination. As discussed above, ACHR utilizes different tools to determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and loyalty. Satisfaction is gauged daily on an informal basis through close customer contact. More formal evaluations are achieved via customer comment cards, the Climate Survey, Customer Satisfaction Survey, and exit interviews. Data from these surveys is reviewed and analyzed by the leadership. Gaps are then identified, solutions are developed and implemented, and improvement measured via a *plan, do, act, check* cycle. Communication among staff and with the customer is paramount to the success of this process.

Additional information about customer satisfaction was gathered through a recent ACHR initiative called “Operation Apple.” The program was designed not only to provide quantifiable customer data, but also to re-energize staff’s commitment to customer service. Over a three month period in 2008, staff were

challenged to obtain customer feedback via reply cards and invitations to an online satisfaction survey. To generate enthusiasm, staff was divided into teams and competed to get the highest return rate. Signs promoting the program and its motto “Service is at our core.” were hung throughout the building and staff wore buttons to build support. Good natured competition and rewards provided incentive and excitement. The program exceeded its goal of 500 responses by more than 100 percent.

4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

4.1 Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

4.1a Performance Measurement

4.1a(1). ACHR collects data through a variety of means to measure progress relative to strategic goals, to enhance current programs and processes, and to identify the need for additional services. Key data collection methods include surveys, internal tracking and audits, external reports, and other various *ad hoc* means (Fig. 4.1-1).

Data Collection Instrument	Frequency
HR Climate Survey	18 months
HR Customer Satisfaction Survey	18 months
Exit Surveys	Monthly
Total Rewards Survey	Annually
Medical Utilization Review	Annually

Figure 4.1-1 Key Data Collection Methods

Since the department does not produce a product *per se*, but rather provides support services, the majority of measures collected are indicators of customer satisfaction. Senior leaders regularly evaluate the measurements and data collection system as part of the AIIM model (Fig. 4.1-2).

A	Asses the situation and/or current services using performance measures
I	Identify improvements needed
I	Implement solutions
M	Measure the outcomes

Figure 4.1-2 AIIM Model

Key organizational performance measures are shown in Figure 4.1-3 grouped by major service provided. Many of the statistics collected are direct measurements (e.g. number of courses offered through Organizational Development), while others are indirect indicators (trends in annual merit scores reflect, in part, focused training provided by the department).

Performance measures are used by the leadership team to support organizational decision making and innovation through the AIIM model. For example, data indicated to ACHR leaders that, consistent with national trends, the highest turnover for teachers is within the first three years of service. Leadership assessed this problem and identified and implemented a solution to target recruitment efforts on individuals more likely to stay in the profession, e.g. mid-career switchers and experienced teachers. Since implementation, the percentage of teachers leaving the Division with 0-3 years experience has decreased.

Service	Performance Measures	Frequency of Review
Recruitment/Staffing Support	- Number of new hires - Job referral sources - Turnover - Minority distribution - Avg. years of service - Number of retirements	- Monthly, Annually - Annually - Annually - Monthly, Annually - Annually - Monthly, Annually
Classification and Compensation	- Classifications completed - Market competitiveness - Employee satisfaction with salary/benefits	- Monthly, Annually - Annually - Monthly, Annually
Benefits and Leave	Benefits comparison to market	Annually
Training and Development	- Number courses offered - Class attendance - Merit score trends - Employee evaluations of training	- Annually - Monthly, Annually - Annually - Ad hoc
Employee Relations	- Employee Recognition Program usage - Number of Grievances	- Semi-annually - Monthly
Workplace Safety	- Wellness program participation - Number flu immunizations - Unemployment claims - Worker's compensation costs	- Annually - Annually - Monthly, Annually - Annually
Teacher Licensure and Certification	- Number of new teachers hired - Percent of teachers highly qualified	- Monthly, Annually - Monthly, Annually
Customer Service Indicators	Perceptions of HR Staff's: - Knowledge - Courtesy and professionalism - Response time - Availability	Every 18 months

Figure 4.1-3. Key Performance Measures

As further example, after analyzing data on employee grievances, ACHR leadership identified that the primary cause of the disputes was management issues, particularly with communication. As a response, the department developed the Leadership Foundations course (See 5.1b(2)). Subsequent to deployment of this training, the number of grievances filed has shown a steady decline. The training is now mandatory for all management-level positions.

4.1a(2) In 2000, the Board of Supervisors and the School Board jointly adopted an identified competitive market for the County government and schools. The market is made up of thirty jurisdictions around the state as well as several large employers in Albemarle County (Fig. 4.1-4).

Augusta County	City of Virginia Beach	James City County	Roanoke County
City of Charlottesville	City of Williamsburg	Loudoun County	Rockingham County
City of Chesapeake	Buckingham County	Louisa County	Spotsylvania County
City of Danville	Chesterfield County	Madison County	Albemarle Co. Svc. Authority
City of Harrisonburg	Fauquier County	Montgomery County	Martha Jefferson Hospital
City of Lynchburg	Fluvanna County	Nelson County	UVA Health Systems
City of Roanoke	Greene County	Orange County	
City of Staunton	Hanover County	Prince William County	

Figure 4.1-4. Albemarle County Competitive Market

ACHR conducts a formal annual survey of the competitive market for benchmarking purposes in areas of compensation and benefits (Fig. 4.1-5). In addition, ACHR staff will survey the market on a more informal basis throughout the year to collect data on emerging issues.

Data item	Target
Classified staff salaries	100% of market median
Teacher salaries	25 th percentile of market
Employee benefits	105% of market median

Figure 4.1-5. Competitive Market Targets

4.1a(3) ACHR's performance measurement and data collection system is reviewed annually during the strategic planning process in order to keep it current with customer needs and strategic direction. The primary data sources the department uses to set strategic goals and priorities are the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, conducted annually by the County Executive's Office, and the HR Customer Satisfaction Survey, conducted by ACHR every 18 months. The County citizen survey is used by the Board of Supervisors and School Board to set the overall strategic plans for the County government and school division. ACHR considers the needs identified through this survey as well as the results from the HR satisfaction survey to set priorities for the fiscal year. Reviewing this data systematically (Fig. 4.1-2) keeps ACHR sensitive to rapid or unexpected organizational or environmental changes.

4.1b Performance Analysis, Review, and Improvement

4.1b(1), (2), (3) ACHR leadership reviews performance data relative to the strategic plan to track progress, identify potential problems, set priorities, and budget resources. This process occurs throughout the year, based on the frequency of data collection (see Fig. 4.1-3). Many of ACHR's performance measures are analyzed and presented in the department's Annual Reports (one produced for local government and one for the school division). This data is presented to the Board of Supervisors and School Board to inform their decisions relative to planning and funding.

A focus on continuous improvement and innovation is a critical element of ACHR's organizational culture. Staff is committed to identifying potential improvements or innovative solutions and the department's small size and flat structure mean that these ideas can be communicated, discussed, approved, and deployed quickly without numerous administrative hurdles. This process occurs based on daily communications with customers, weekly staff briefings, weekly leadership team meetings, and during the annual strategic planning process. Decisions in all cases are based on data, using the AIIM model (Fig. 4.1-2) in a continuous cycle of organizational improvement that balances agility with informed decision-making.

An example of this approach is the restructuring of the benefits open enrollment process. Based on feedback from the HR Customer Satisfaction Survey, it became apparent that the process was too cumbersome, insufficiently staffed, and led to many errors. The following solutions were implemented: (1) The entire process was moved to a month when more staff would be available to assist; (2) The enrollment process was moved entirely online to reduce errors and make it more convenient to 10-month employees; (3) HR staff as well as contracted client representatives met with employees to walk them through the new process. As a result, the process is more streamlined, more transparent, and less prone to errors.

A further example: based on survey data, in 2005 ACHR leadership determined that the compensation system was not aligned with performance objectives and employee preferences. At that time, compensation was based on a model that rapidly accelerated employees to the midpoint of their pay grade. The incentive to perform at a high level was not as great once employees passed this point. Due to the low turnover rate, this became a widespread issue. In response, ACHR implemented a pay-for-performance plan that more

closely tied an employee's salary increase to their annual performance assessment. As a result, employees now have a greater understanding of the link between performance and their salary. Performance scores have increased, and satisfaction with the compensation system is high.

4.2 Management of Information, Information Technology, and Knowledge

4.2a Management of Information Resources

4.2a(1) Needed data and information is made available to ACHR's workforce, suppliers, partners, collaborators, and customers through a combination of electronic information systems and paper-based reports (Fig. 4.2-1). The department has made significant investments in moving many processes and data sources online so that employees located in schools and offices throughout the county can access them easily and conveniently. ACHR has several computers available in the reception area for employees who may not have access to online resources at work or home, and will also make information and forms available in print format as well.

Information Resource	Information Provided
HR Public Internet Site	All HR forms (benefits, leave, retirement, payroll-related, performance appraisal, probationary, goal-setting, transfers, job changes, teacher certification, tuition reimbursement); benefits information; benefits calculator for part-time employees; benefits open enrollment; holiday schedule; new employee orientation; personnel policies; job vacancies; job descriptions; salary and pay grades; job application; recruitment fairs; annual reports.
HR Intranet Site	Announcements & events; strategic plan and associated action plans; Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs); forms for internal use; technology how-to's; interview question templates; orientation scheduling; office associate handbook; survey data; wellness and safety information; Organizational Development information (course catalog, workshop schedule, customer service guidelines, team development tools, technology training library).
HR Annual Report	Organizational performance data; program descriptions; survey data; reports on compensation & benefits, wellness, safety, training; future goals and plans.

Figure 4.2-1. ACHR Information Resources

4.2a(2) ACHR works with the county Information Technology Department (IT) to ensure that its hardware and software systems are reliable, secure, user-friendly. IT provides administration, technical support, and custom programming for the county's mainframe, LAN, WAN, Internet, and Intranet., as well as centralized processing, off-site security, and backup for mainframe and LAN applications. Engineers, programming and operations staff address the long-term goals of high performance, easier functions, and reliability. IT also provides ACHR with help desk services (i.e. troubleshooting), hardware and software installation, and support services for the desktop. ACHR's Organizational Development team offers numerous technology training classes to increase employees' knowledge and skills in productivity software applications.

4.2a(3) IT provides the following services to ensure the continued availability of information systems in the event of an emergency.

- **Backup and Recovery:** All production servers are backed up daily. Full backups are done on a weekly basis and incremental backups are done daily. Tapes are stored offsite weekly for disaster recovery purposes.
- **Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS):** All production servers/hubs/routers/firewalls are supported by UPS protection.
- **Hardware redundancy:** All infrastructure hardware configured and purchase to offer redundancy where feasible.

4.2a(4) IT stays abreast of technological changes through frequent communication with peers and participation in pilot programs with hardware and software vendors. An example of the collaborative efforts between IT and County departments are weekly core business system meetings with County leadership to discuss successes, plans, and issues around core business systems implementation.

4.2b Data, Information, and Knowledge Management

4.2b(1) ACHR maintains the accuracy, integrity, timeliness, security, and confidentiality of organizational data in the following ways:

Audits: Staff conduct regular audits on personnel file contents to ensure that contents are accurate and complete and that all state and federal requirements are met. Employment Eligibility Verification forms (I9s) are maintained in separate files, as are all medical related documents per federal regulation. As part of the county Finance Department's annual audit process, HR personnel files are checked for proper documentation of payroll-related matters.

Edit Reports: In conjunction with the Payroll office and IT, ACHR runs numerous monthly and annual reports on employee data for error checking purposes. These reports are used to monitor accuracy of data regarding salary, leave usage, and benefits eligibility.

Confidentiality and Security: Personnel files are maintained in a storage area that is locked 24/7. Only HR staff have access to the room and any files must be signed-out before they are removed. Non-HR staff are not allowed inside the file room. ACHR's offices are locked outside of business hours. Staff maintain strict confidentiality of personnel information following state and federal regulations, as well as industry best practices. Access to electronic employee data is managed by the county IT department. Recently, in an effort to protect employee privacy and reduce exposure to identity theft, ACHR removed employee social security numbers from all non-essential forms (social security numbers are required on some documents, such as the I9).

4.2b(2) Workforce knowledge is captured and transferred via Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) housed on the department intranet. Work teams within the department (for example, office associates, compensation) maintain work process manuals to ensure consistency in operations and to facilitate training new employees.

The process of capturing and sharing workforce knowledge with customers begins with new employee orientation, which ACHR conducts on a weekly basis. Each orientation session includes important information for new employees regarding employment, benefits, and personnel policies. New employees also receive training on sexual harassment prevention and workplace safety. The knowledge-sharing process is supplemented through supervisor training and the Leadership Foundations training, both provided by ACHR's Organizational Development team. Other HR staff members provide training and information sessions on retirement planning, mediation, interviewing techniques, and increasing personal productivity. ACHR also shares knowledge through mentoring employees. For example, when there is an employee relations issue, HR staff will partner with the manager(s) involved to coach them through the dispute resolution process, rather than simply settling the matter themselves. Relevant knowledge is also shared with customers, partners, and other stakeholders via the Annual Report, as well as the department's comprehensive website (Fig. 4.2-1).

Best practices are identified through professional associations, such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and its state and local chapters; World at Work; International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA); and the Virginia Association of School Personnel Administrators (VASPA). ACHR also partners with the University of Virginia and other local experts to

address issues such as teacher compensation practices and diversity. The department shares best practices with other localities and school divisions through meetings, professional presentations, and workshops.

5. Human Resource Focus

5.1 Workforce Engagement

5.1a Workforce Enrichment

5.1a(1) As a team of human resource professionals, ACHR is keenly aware of the important role that employee engagement plays in an organization's success. Research in this field has identified factors in the workplace that directly and indirectly contribute to employee engagement. Recognizing that these factors have little to do with an employee's tenure, gender, or role in the organization, but more with the organization itself and management strategies, ACHR leadership has created a culture that emphasizes the following elements in order to increase engagement:

- Frequently speaking to the value of the department's work
- Involving people early in making decisions that affect their work
- Giving people choices
- Providing frequent updates and highlighting successes
- Delegating decision-making as much as possible
- Asking for and acting upon employees' ideas
- Promoting innovation

5.1a(2) Integrated into this culture are a number of formal and informal systems (see Figure 5.1-1) which promote cooperation, communication, and skill-sharing throughout the department. The most important of these elements is frequent, open communication among employees. The department's small size and open physical environment promote the development of close working relationships among co-workers. Additionally, the department's relatively flat organizational structure facilitates communication between senior leaders and staff. All managers have an "open-door" policy and are accessible not only to their work teams, but to any staff member. Knowledge is openly shared because the environment is not one of competition, but rather one where employees feel safe to think creatively, develop innovations, and work together to accomplish common goals. Innovation is encouraged because failures are not viewed as a cause for punishment, but rather as an opportunity to learn. (Great innovations are often the result of many failures.)

System	Enhancing Effects
Weekly all-staff briefing	Communication of important news and successes to the entire team; Employee recognition
Monthly all-staff meeting	Each meeting includes a training or development component, often stressing teamwork
Weekly HR Generalists meeting	Generalists in different work teams share information, knowledge, best practices
Cross-functional teams	Developed as needed for various purposes. Examples: Teacher compensation work group; Internal assessment team; Safety team; High-level position interview panels
Intranet	News, information, and best practices shared online

Figure 5.1-1. Elements Contributing to Communication & Cooperation

5.1a(3) ACHR employs a comprehensive performance management system designed to promote high performance. This system is based on the department's established core competencies and strategic

objectives. The first element of the performance management system is the annual performance appraisal. This process begins with the employee conducting a self-evaluation of their accomplishments over the course of the year. It continues with the employee meeting with their supervisor to review the previous year's goals and assess the employee's recent achievements. An evaluation instrument is used for all reviews so that consistency and fairness is ensured. Employees evaluations are based on the following elements and rating scale:

Performance Evaluation Criteria

1. Job knowledge/expertise
2. Communication
3. Customer service
4. Initiative
5. Ethics, integrity, & professionalism
6. Learning and development
7. Quality results
8. Teamwork

Rating Scale

- Consistently Exceeds Expectations (Exceptional Performance)
- Meets and Often Exceeds Expectations
- Successfully Meets Expectations
- Meets Minimum Expectations (Improvement Needed in Key Areas)
- Fails To Meet Expectations (Plan of Assistance is Required)

To aid the supervisor in the evaluation process, descriptors are listed for each rating and evaluation criterion. The evaluation process concludes with the employee and supervisor setting new goals for performance and/or development in one or more of the competency areas. A "Goal Setting" form helps ensure the objectives are **SMAART** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Agreed-upon, Realistic, and Time-oriented).

The second element of the performance management system is merit, or performance-based, pay. Under this system, employee's annual salary increases are tied directly to their performance. Salary increase amounts are based on that year's market increase percentage (which is approved by the Board of Supervisors and School Board), the employee's current salary position relative to the midpoint of their pay grade, and the performance review score (see Figure 5.1-2). Employees' salaries are accelerated to the midpoint of their pay grade in order to quickly get them to the point where they are equivalent to the competitive market rate, thereby reducing the likelihood that the employee will leave the organization for another employer.

Position in pay grade	Performance Rating				
	Fails To Meet Expectations	Meets Minimum Expectations	Successfully Meets Expectations	Meets and Often Exceeds Expectations.	Consistently Exceeds Expectations
Below midpoint	No increase	Market Increase -1%	Market increase +1%	Market increase +%1.5	Market increase +2%
Above midpoint	No increase	Market Increase -1%	Market increase	Market increase +0.5%	Market increase +1%

Figure 5.1-2. Performance-based Pay Matrix

The third element of the performance management system is the Total Rewards Employee Recognition program. Under this program, employees can receive recognition for demonstrating exceptional performance or behavior, as defined by the core competencies and strategic objectives. Flexible rewards can be customized to suit the recipient. For example, an employee may receive a gift certificate to their favorite restaurant or shopping location; or a new employee who has not accumulated much leave may be given a day off with pay.

5.1b Workforce and Leader Development

5.1b(1) ACHR’s Organizational Development team offers more than forty unique courses each fiscal year (many courses are offered twice each year). Each course is developed around one or more of the eight core competencies, ensuring that content is relevant to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Highlights of competency-based offerings include:

Competency / Topic	Courses Offered
Results-oriented	The Times Have Changed, Are You Keeping Up?; Managing Your Boss; Getting Things Done; Effective Email; Getting More from Meetings; “What Did You Say?”: Developing Great Listening Skills; Presentation Skills;
Communication	Talking About the Elephant in the Room; Intro to Myers Briggs; Business Writing 101
Customer Service	Exceeding Customer Expectations; Dealing with Difficult Customers; Beginner and Intermediate Spanish classes; Superior Customer Service: Beyond The Basics
Leadership / Management	Leadership Foundations; Coaching for Job Satisfaction; Advanced Coaching Skills; 5 Dysfunctions of a Team; Leadership Speaking; Leadership Roundtable; Performance Management and Evaluation
Miscellaneous	The Importance of Ethics; The Creative Mind; Sexual Harassment Prevention; Interviewer Training; “Getting to Know Albemarle County”
Technology	Basic and Intermediate Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel , and PowerPoint; Mail Merge; Working with Graphics; Excel Pivot Tables

Figure 5.1-3: Course Offerings Highlights

To further ensure that learning activities are aligned with customer needs, ACHR conducted a comprehensive learning needs assessment. Customers were asked questions such as:

- What types of training would allow you to be most effective in your job?
- What way do you learn most effectively?
- What classes/workshops would you like to see offered?
- Are you willing to teach a class to other employees?

ACHR staff met with each department head to discuss any specific training needs they have that are not currently being offered. Staff also conducted two focus groups with County employees to discuss questions including:

- How can we make it easier for employees to attend training? (e.g., shorter courses, multi-day courses?)
- What are the current strengths of our training program?
- How do you best learn? (classroom, online, from peers) (Think about how you learned the skills necessary for your job)
- What training topics would you like to see added? (specific needs—not just “communication” or “teamwork”)

Results of this assessment are used to plan classes for future semesters, and also to identify internal training resources that could save money. Additional feedback is gathered via course evaluations sent electronically to every course participant.

Recognizing that employees have different preferred learning methods and styles, ACHR’s training a supports a broad range of educational activities by providing access, time, and/or funds as appropriate (Fig. 5.1-4).

Activity	Competency				
	Functional Expertise	Communication	Customer Service	Technology	Leadership
Classroom	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-study	✓				✓
University course reimbursement	✓			✓	
Structured OJT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mentoring	✓	✓	✓		✓

Figure 5.1-4. ACHR's Development Opportunities

A key element of the learning process for any organization is the effective management and transfer of knowledge, particularly in light of current and impending changing workforce demographics. ACHR employs a multi-faceted strategy for knowledge management. One element is ensuring that staff are cross-trained, so that the departure of any single employee does not leave a large knowledge void. To assist in this, the department maintains a comprehensive database of "Standard Operating Guidelines" online. A more comprehensive and systemized knowledge-management system is currently in development.

5.1b(2) ACHR's learning system for leaders is anchored by the "Leadership Foundations" training that the department developed and has offered to County managers and future leaders for the past five years. This customized, discussion-based, eight-week course is offered twice a year and covers the following topics:

- Change management
- Qualities of effective leaders
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Ethics & integrity
- Time management
- Performance management/giving feedback/being a role model
- Increasing readiness
- HR-related issues: FMLA, recruiting and interviewing, workplace safety, and salary administration.

To further support the transfer of knowledge and to ensure continuity in key positions, ACHR has developed a "Success Model" for building leadership capacity (see Figure 5.1-5) with a proposed implementation of January 2009. The focus of this program is not on grooming one single replacement for each key position, but rather on developing many people with capacity to be effective leaders in any number of positions. The major elements of this program are detailed in Figure 5.1-6.

Phase	Steps Completed
Identify key positions	This process will begin with the director and assistant director and eventually include all manager-level positions. Both current and future functional needs are considered
Inventory key requirements for positions	Key position holders (KPHs) highlight and summarize all requirements for their position on a "Knowledge Transfer Form."
Identify talent	KPHs identify interested/high-potential employees
Talent review meetings	KPHs identify how knowledge/skills will be transferred in the coming year. This plan requires approval from the KPH's supervisor, and will be reviewed on an annual basis at the same time performance evaluations are completed.
Create Individual Development Plans (PDPs)	KPHs and employees have the <i>option</i> of creating an "Individual Development Plan" to include training and individualized coaching.

Figure 5.1-6. Success Model Steps

The Success Model has the added benefits of aiding in recruitment (candidates see that the organization offers career development opportunities) and retention (employees are provided with growth opportunities, challenges, and a path for career advancement).



Figure 5.1-5. Proposed Success Model

5.1b Assessment of Workforce Engagement

ACHR assesses workforce engagement in several ways:

- Climate survey: built on questions developed by the Gallup organization which have been found to be strong indicators of employee engagement.
- Employee retention: engaged employees are much more likely to stay with the organization, despite opportunities elsewhere.
- Overall productivity: engaged workers tend to be hard-working, customer-centered performers.
- Exit surveys: provide insight into the reasons why decide to leave the organization.

5.2 Workforce Environment

5.2a Workforce Capability and Capacity

5.2a(1) In 2001, ACHR conducted a needs assessment with all its customer groups. The results of this assessment drove a reorganization of the department based on logical client groups. ACHR staff were aligned into teams that maximized available resources (i.e. skills, competencies, and staffing levels) to provide customers with superior service. Workforce capacity is assessed regularly to ensure that resources are allocated most effectively. Staff are reorganized as business and customer needs shift. Workload is assessed continually by managers, and is mapped against the strategic objectives, action plans, and the annual work calendar. This helps to ensure that current and future needs are met.

Workforce capability is managed through the utilization of competency-based management. Core competencies have been identified and serve as the basis for interviewing potential new employees and for evaluating current employees' performance. Skills required for particular jobs are assessed via a Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ) which documents the tasks and challenges of each position, as well as the necessary training, knowledge, skills, and abilities. As part of the County's position classification process,

ACHR evaluates PAQs for all of its positions every three years to ensure that they are current.

5.2a(2) Given ACHR’s relatively small size and low turnover, it is rare that the organization finds itself recruiting for an internal vacancy. This is ironic because recruitment is one of the main services that ACHR provides its customers. The department engages a wide variety of recruitment strategies to support the hiring of over 250 new employees for the County schools and local government each fiscal year. When ACHR does have a vacancy, it benefits from this experience and from the positive reputation established by participating in numerous recruitment activities throughout the Commonwealth.

Typically, vacancy announcements are advertised on the ACHR website and in local newspapers. Perhaps due to Charlottesville’s small size, word of mouth plays an important role in job leads as well. Data collected for all County local government new hires indicates that nearly one third of new employees learn of vacancies by word of mouth or from a referral from a current County employee. All job applications are submitted online, which allows the hiring manager to review, sort, and screen them quickly and efficiently. The interviewing process is designed to select a candidate who not only has the necessary job skills, but also will fit in with the organizational culture and values. Potential new ACHR employees are interviewed by a panel comprised of at least one manager, several staff members, and often one or more external stakeholders. Interview questions are based on the core competencies. In addition, most candidates will submit a writing sample or take a skills test to further assess their qualifications. All potential new hires have a final interview with the director before an offer is made.

ACHR’s retention strategy is multifaceted and is focused on the following elements (Fig. 5.2-1):

Retention Element	Description
Wellness Program	Provides free health risk assessments, coaching, disease prevention (blood pressure screening, mammograms, flu vaccinations), subsidized health club membership
Employee Recognition Program	Recognizes employee contributions with meaningful rewards
Promoting Work/Life Balance	Flexible schedules, support for telecommuting, part-time schedules
Encouraging professional growth	Ongoing performance feedback, personal development plans, mentoring, cross-training, support for internal and external training, support for professional certification, providing opportunities for professional growth
Valuing communication	Open-door policy, weekly briefings (open forum), listening to employees (Climate survey, exit interviews, informal, frequent face-to-face conversations)

Figure 5.2-1. Retention Strategy Elements

ACHR engages in a variety of activities and practices to recruit and retain a workforce that represents the diversity of the Albemarle County population. Efforts include:

- Identifying and utilizing websites and print publications with high female or minority readership for advertising and recruiting;
- Training all new employees on the County’s Equal Employment Opportunity and Sexual Harassment policies;
- Encouraging minority participation on County interview teams;
- Recruiting at minority career fairs and colleges;
- Developing new recruitment materials designed to show women and minorities in leadership and professional roles.
- Use regional/national searches for higher-level positions where minorities will not be available locally.

5.2a(3) ACHR’s workforce is organized into client-based groups (elementary schools, secondary schools, school support services, and two local government groups). A sixth team focuses on compensation and benefits – issues that are universal for all employee groups. Section 1.1a(3) explains the organizational

restructuring that led to this model. The decentralized division of the department into these groups allows staff to develop close working relationships with their customers. It also facilitates teamwork and empowers employees to develop creative solutions and improvements. Work teams are largely self-directed which promotes flexibility and employee involvement.

5.2a(4) In order to prepare the workforce for changing needs, ACHR plans for situations that can be anticipated and maintains a flexible and agile staff that can respond to situations that are not anticipated. An example of planning for anticipated changes is ACHR's contingency plans for a pandemic flu. In conjunction with County government and school leadership, ACHR has developed a plan to provide for the continuation of essential services should a flu pandemic occur and result in large-scale employee absences. The plan requires leadership to identify essential services for both internal and external customers; determine the minimum number of staff needed to provide them; consider whether there is sufficient cross-training among staff to provide essential services if key staff are unavailable; identify any federal or state mandates, including reporting requirements, that must be met; and determine what resources (e.g. laptops with remote access) that staff would need to provide services if the office building was closed.

As a local government/public schools entity, ACHR is subject to the same budget constraints that all jurisdictions face, particularly in recent months. The current recession has forced all County government and school departments to tighten their belts. ACHR is well-equipped to handle changing circumstances such as these for several reasons: (1) Every effort is made to hire and train the best people possible resulting in a staff that is capable, works well together, and can respond to changing demands quickly and ably. (2) The department is small and the organizational structure is relatively flat, which means that staff can more rapidly adjust to meet changing needs. (3) ACHR's client-based structure allows staff to anticipate changing customer needs and respond appropriately. An example of this is the recent proposal developed by ACHR, in consultation with its customers, to offer an early retirement incentive program as a way to reduce operating costs in light of recent budget constraints. ACHR was able to quickly assemble data, gather input from customers and stakeholders, and develop several options in response to changing circumstances.

5.2b Workforce Climate

5.2b(1) ACHR takes a proactive approach to managing workplace health, safety, and security. These efforts are overseen by the department's Occupational Health, Safety & Wellness Manager.

Safety: ACHR led the development of a County-wide Safety Team whose mission is to research, develop and promote a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. The team's efforts in support of this mission continue to result in a safer environment for employees. This year the team has focused on several key areas:

- The development of a medical emergency response team for the County Office Building
- Availability of automatic external defibrillators throughout the County Office Building
- Creation of a safety audit program which incorporates accident prevention.

Wellness: ACHR has also established a Wellness Team to provide opportunities that will promote and improve the overall wellness of employees and their families. Wellness-related initiatives are listed in Figure 5.2-2:

Additional discussion of ACHR's workplace safety and wellness efforts can be found in section **1.2b(1)**.

Phase	Activities Involved	Status
Phase One	Health Risk Assessments, Biometric Screenings at 33 locations, 556 participants,	Completed
Phase Two	Data review & program development	Completed
Phase Three	Coaching program: 280 initial coaching sessions, avg. duration was 4-7 weeks; Educational & Prevention programs: Stressless Challenges, Presidential Challenge, 4 Milers – Women & Men, Jazzercise at work, Yoga at Work, Weightwatchers, Starting an Exercise Program, Nutrition 101; Formation of a County-wide Wellness Team	Completed
Phase Four	On-site medical services; Wellness membership subsidies; Prevention Programs – flu vaccinations and mobile mammograms	In progress

Figure 5.2-2. Wellness Initiatives

5.2b(2) Based on recommendations from ACHR, the County Board of Supervisors and School Board have adopted a Total Compensation Strategy for salary and benefit administration for all government and school employees. Under this strategy, ACHR targets employee salaries to be at 100% of the market median and benefits to be slightly above the market. To maintain competitive compensation based on the adopted strategy, two separate, but related actions are required:

- (1) Ensure a competitive salary scale so that the County is able to attract and recruit new employees.
- (2) Ensure current employees are rewarded for performance by maintaining internal equity in their pay range and also maintaining market competitiveness for similar skills.

To adhere to the Boards' adopted strategy, the following processes are implemented each year:

- Step 1:** Annually survey the adopted market to determine the salary scale adjustment implemented in those localities/schools for the current fiscal year.
- Step 2:** Annually survey the adopted market to determine the average total salary increase granted to employees in those localities/schools for the current fiscal year.
- Step 3:** This market data is analyzed to ascertain where the salary scales (both classified and teacher) for Albemarle County stand relative to the adopted market and arrive at recommendations for next year's salary increases.
- Step 4:** Obtain data on what other organizations are projecting for salary increases for the next fiscal year through a compensation database (WorldatWork, Eastern Region). This data is used to project the merit increase percentage and develop the teacher scale, including step increases.

In March 2004, based on recommendations from ACHR, the Joint Boards adopted compensation strategies for different positions to address competitiveness in certain areas as follows:

Teachers - Target market position at top quartile of adopted market.

Positions recruited from outside of our adopted market - Identify competitive market as the specific localities within our adopted market that may also be competitors for those positions. This subset of our adopted market should address cost of living issues and target competitive market position. These localities represent areas that are in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) both above and below Albemarle County in cost of living and currently include: Hanover County, Loudoun County, City of Charlottesville, Prince William County, Spotsylvania County, Chesterfield County, City of Chesapeake, James City County, and City of Roanoke.

ACHR has also assembled a rich benefits package to support all County employees, including:

1. Medical insurance (County pays 93% of employee-only high-level coverage)
2. Dental insurance
3. Retirement: All full-time employees are automatically enrolled in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and are vested after 5 full years of covered service. An early retirement program is also available to employees under 65.
4. Life insurance: free group coverage offered to all full time employees
5. Leave : paid holiday, sick, and annual leave. Employees may also apply to take a leave of absence of up to one year.
6. Flexible spending account: available for medical and dependent care costs
7. Employee Assistance Program
8. Roadside Assistance coverage (optional)
9. Employee discounts: discounted rates at local health clubs, retailers, and banks

6. Process Management

6.1 Work Systems Design

6.1a Core Competencies

NOTE: ACHR's Competency-Based Management Plan, described throughout this application, uses the term "core competencies" slightly differently than Baldrige. ACHR uses the term to refer to *individual* skills or traits that contribute to excellent performance. Baldrige defines the term as the "*organization's* areas of greatest expertise." In Section 6 of this application, use of the term "core competencies" will refer to *organizational* capabilities, per the Baldrige definition.

6.1a(1) As part of the initial strategic plan development process, ACHR conducted both SWOT and needs analyses. Based on this data, along with input from customers and other stakeholders, four key organizational qualities were identified and established as the department's core competencies (Fig. 6.1-1). During subsequent strategic planning cycles, these competencies are assessed to determine if they are still relevant and meeting the needs of ACHR's customers, stakeholders, and partners. These competencies, listed below, support the organization's mission by enabling it to provide excellent human resources support and solutions in a proactive manner that is directly aligned with the requirements of its key customers and community segments. ACHR ensures that they are aligned with customer needs because they were developed with direct input from customer groups.

Core Competency	Relationship To Mission
Customer service	Customer service is the very core of our mission, not only in providing human resources support, but in a larger sense, to serve the citizens of Albemarle County. The foundation of all of the strategic goals and action plans is excellent customer service.
Strategic focus	As stewards of the public trust, maintaining a strategic, "big picture" focus allows ACHR to maximize resources and work smart. It results in working proactively to anticipate changing needs and provides the basis for goals and action plans.
Innovation	Innovation and creative thinking have allowed ACHR to provide services that are beyond the scope of many similar organizations (e.g. comprehensive wellness, employee recognition, organizational development).
Organizational flexibility	ACHR's strong sense of teamwork, communication, along with the deep functional knowledge base and a multi-skilled staff have enabled the organization to respond quickly to changing customer needs and dynamic external circumstances, such as major unanticipated budget shortfalls. This agility allows the organization to continue to provide excellent customer service despite changing, and often difficult, conditions.

Figure 6.1-1 Core Competencies

6.1a(2) Overall work systems were established during the initial strategic planning process. Multiple inputs were used to determine what systems and associated processes were required, including customer needs analyses; input from other stakeholders, such as the School Board, Board of Supervisors, Superintendent, and County Executive; and federal and state requirements. Work systems are reviewed each year during the strategic planning review to ensure that they are still maximizing resources and fulfilling customer needs effectively. Example are shown in Fig. 6.1-2.

Process	Problem(s)	Improvements Made	Results
Recruitment Fairs	Considerable time and money spent travelling to numerous recruitment events	Staff identified six universities and formed partnerships with them; provide students with training on resumes, interviewing, etc.	Strong relationships forged with partner universities give ACHR a recruiting advantage; savings in time and funds
Benefit Open Enrollment	Occurred during busiest time of year for staff; numerous, redundant paper forms used; process was confusing for all	Process moved to slower time of year; employee self-serve model implemented with online enrollment	Reduced errors; greater transparency in process; positive feedback received

Figure 6.1-2 Work System Improvement Examples

6.1b Work Process Design

6.1b(1), (2), (3) Key work processes, along with the associated customer requirements and key measures, are shown in Figure 6.1-2.

ACHR used data gathered from needs analyses, focus groups, and personal interviews to determine customer requirements. ACHR validates the requirements and measures the extent to which they are met on a formal basis using the HR Effectiveness Survey. More informally, ACHR tracks the alignment of its processes with customer requirements by maintaining close working relationships with customers. Value is created for the customer because the processes were designed to fulfill their needs as they have communicated them to ACHR and because, given the frequent communication with customers, they can be refined and adjusted to meet changing circumstances. They also help to strengthen ACHR as an organization and contribute to long-term sustainability by helping to create the perception that ACHR is credible, effective, and efficient in its operations.

Key Services Provided	Major Work Processes	Key Customer Requirements	Key Measures
Recruitment and Retention	▪ Advertising vacancies; attending recruitment fairs ▪ Interviewing/testing applicants ▪ Coordinating pre-employment requirements ▪ Maintaining all required employee information/documents ▪ Creating/administering retention efforts (e.g. Total Rewards) ▪ Conducting exit interviews ▪ Fulfilling EEO Requirements	▪ Consistent process ▪ Vacancies filled ▪ Employee diversity ▪ High retention	▪ Positions filled/vacancies ▪ Retention rate ▪ Minority staffing ▪ Total Rewards participation
Employee Relations	▪ Counseling/dispute resolution ▪ Providing employment/policy information ▪ Investigating grievances ▪ Communicating to employees ▪ Coordinating performance evaluations ▪ Creating individual development plans / career coaching	▪ Confidentiality ▪ Functional knowledge ▪ Timeliness	▪ Customer satisfaction ratings
Classification and Compensation	▪ Conducting departmental classification reviews ▪ Processing employment changes ▪ Analyzing market data; forecasting trends; establishing salary scales	▪ Correct classifications ▪ Competitive salaries	▪ Employee satisfaction – salary/benefits ▪ Classifications completed ▪ Salary scales to target
Benefits Administration	▪ Managing benefits open enrollment ▪ Counseling employees on benefits and retirement ▪ Coordinating retirement programs ▪ Administration of leave (disability, military, FMLA)	▪ Timeliness of enrollment ▪ Accurate enrollment changes ▪ Effective compliance	▪ Number of retirements ▪ Customer satisfaction ratings ▪ 100% compliance
Training and Development	▪ New employee orientation ▪ Conducting needs assessments ▪ Providing comprehensive competency-based training ▪ Surveying employees (Climate Survey, HR Effectiveness Survey)	▪ Relevant and accessible training ▪ Increase in employee skill set ▪ Performance improvement	▪ Employee satisfaction – training ▪ Courses offered ▪ Increase in productivity ▪ Performance ratings
Workplace Safety	▪ Providing safety training ▪ Administering worker's comp. and unemployment claims ▪ Creating and enhancing employee wellness program ▪ Establishing proactive safety programs ▪ Overseeing OSHA compliance	▪ Safe work environment ▪ Employer-sponsored wellness programs ▪ Effective worker's compensation claims management	▪ Unemployment costs ▪ Worker's compensation costs ▪ Days away from work ▪ Wellness program participation
Teacher Licensure	▪ Evaluating transcripts ▪ Maintaining records ▪ Advising teachers ▪ Ensuring compliance with all state and federal standards ▪ Collect and submit required reports	▪ Highly qualified staff ▪ Functional knowledge of complex processes	▪ Meet all NCLB requirements for highly qualified teachers ▪ Customer satisfaction ratings ▪ Regulatory compliance

Figure 6.1-2 Major Work Processes

6.1c Emergency Readiness

6.1c In conjunction with County government and school leadership, ACHR has developed a plan to provide for the continuation of essential services should a flu pandemic or other emergency situation occur and result in large-scale employee absences. Under the plan, ACHR leadership has identified essential services for both internal and external customers; determined the minimum number of staff needed to provide them; considered whether there is sufficient cross-training among staff to provide essential services if key staff are unavailable; identified federal and/or state mandates, including reporting requirements, that must be met; and determined what resources that staff would need to provide services if the office building was closed. ACHR leadership, along with most of the staff, have been issued laptops with remote access to the internal network. Leaders also have cell phones and blackberries to allow remote communication in the event of a building closing.

In the specific case of pandemic flu or other similar medical-related crises, ACHR has established specific policies and guidelines governing administration of sick and personal leave; infection control; and return to work. ACHR has also worked with County leadership on the development of safety protocols for the County Office Building. Following U.S. Department of Homeland Security guidelines, policies are in place governing security and access to the building should a disaster strike. In addition, ACHR has worked to establish an Emergency Medical Response Team for the building. This team has been trained in CPR, the use of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), which are available on all floors, and basic first aid. A special phone number has been established to contact the Response Team should the need arise. Team members will respond and provide care and assistance until the rescue squad arrives.

6.2 Work Process Management and Improvement

6.2a Work Process Management

6.2a(1) As a human resource service provider, ACHR's work processes are almost entirely dependent upon human behavior. A variety of control strategies are used by the department to ensure that the requirements for these behavior-dependent processes are met (Figure 6.2-1). ACHR incorporates input from customers in the management of these processes through the HR Effectiveness Survey and through the establishment of close working relationships. Key measures for work processes are shown in Figure 6.1-2.

Control Strategy	Effect on Filling Process Requirements
Selection of appropriate personnel	Devoting extensive time and resources during the hiring process ensures that new staff members are qualified and will fit in well with the organization's culture. This extends also to selection of staff members for particular projects or assignments where skills and interests are matched with process requirements.
Documentation	All personnel-related policies are available online. Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) have been developed for key work processes (also available online).
Training	New employees' supervisors develop a thorough training schedule. Many opportunities are available for cross-training. Organizational Development offers training in many skills that impact processes (e.g. using Excel, PowerPoint, customer service).
Feedback	Employees receive feedback on their performance relative to standards on a formal basis (six-month probationary review, performance evaluation) and informal basis, through frequent communication with supervisors. Performance reviews also establish rewards and consequences for good and poor behaviors. Employees whose performance is not meeting standards will be placed on a Plan of Assistance with closer supervision. All supervisors meet with their staff regularly to ensure that work processes are meeting requirements.

Figure 6.2-1 Work Process Control Strategies

6.2a(2) In an effort to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of its work processes, ACHR has participated in several external audits. ACHR was included in a Resource Utilization Study commissioned by the School Board in June 2007. The study was conducted over a five-month period by the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) at Virginia Commonwealth University and was led by Dr. William Boshier, a former Virginia superintendent of schools. The study included a review of human resource components, such as recruitment, training, professional development, salary and benefits and systemic leadership and collegial participatory opportunities. CEPI gathered and validated data, and conducted extensive interviews with key county and school division officials and administrative staff, school principals and teacher representatives, parents, community leaders, and stakeholders. A similar study is being conducted by CEPI for local government operations.

Earlier this year, ACHR engaged an external consultant to assess the department's customer service skills and processes as customer service is paramount to the organization's success. The review included observation and personal interviews, as well as a review of the findings with the entire staff. ACHR also arranges internal and external audits of personnel files to be sure that they are accurate, complete, and meet all state and federal requirements. By participating in Division-wide audits (i.e. ones paid for by the Division and not HR), using local consultants, and conducting internal audits, ACHR is able to minimize overall costs associated with these processes. Proactive control strategies (Fig. 6.2-1) are employed to reduce errors and ensure that all services are high quality.

6.2b Work Process Improvement

During the initial strategic planning process in 2001, ACHR conducted needs analyses with customer groups and task analyses to determine if internal work processes were meeting customer needs effectively and efficiently. These studies identified a number of processes that were disjointed, inconsistent, redundant, and/or too lengthy. Teams were established to review individual processes and make suggestions for improvements. Throughout, the Plan-Do-Check-Act process was used.

In 2003, the County hired Innovative Management Concepts, Inc (IMC), a private consulting firm, to conduct a business process and key systems review for several local government departments as an initial step in the design of a new HR/financial information system. IMC developed "as-is" models for key HR processes and made recommendations to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The work processes evaluated were:

- Processing New Hires
- Processing Pay/Benefit Changes
- Processing Terminated Employees
- Annual Staffing Process/Plan, Teacher & Administrative Contracts
- Entering/Tracking Employee Leave
- Processing Benefit Open Enrollment Changes
- Preparing Reports
- Completing Employee Merit Raise Computations and Performance Reviews
- Training and Tracking Employee Training and Certifications
- Completing Teacher Substitute Process

Each improvement addressed the process enabler(s) such as workflow design, information technology, motivation and measurement, human resources, and policies and procedures that would impact the business process through that improvement.

ACHR keeps processes current with business needs and direction through continual environmental scanning and building productive relationships with customers and other stakeholders. This allows the department to anticipate changing needs and make adjustments to processes or strategic direction as appropriate. Lessons learned from these improvements are shared internally during staff meetings, and externally with County government and School Division leadership during regularly scheduled meetings.

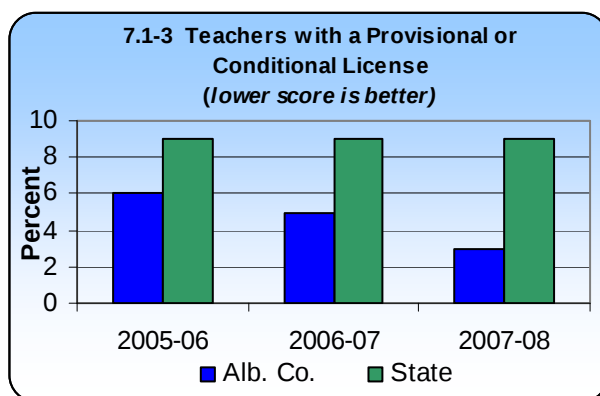
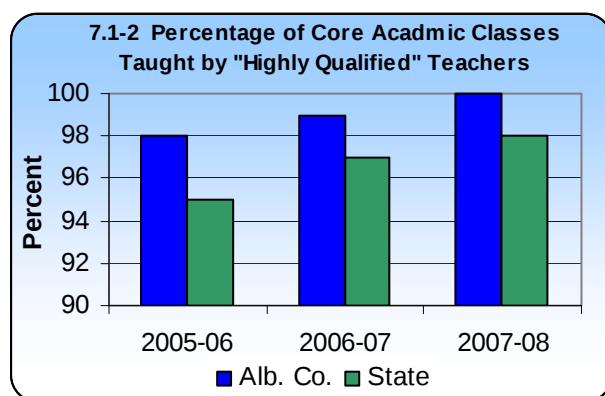
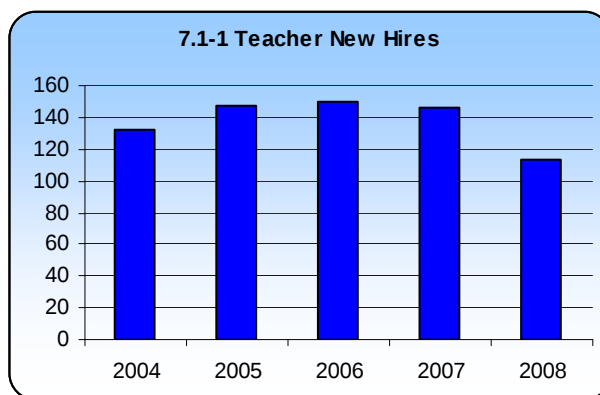
7. Results

7.1 Product and Service Outcomes

Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting and retaining a diverse, talented staff is one of ACHR's critical functions. This process is particularly challenging in regards to hiring teachers given the national shortage of qualified applicants, state and federal requirements regarding "highly qualified" staff, and the short time window during which all teachers must be hired. ACHR hires over 130 new teachers each year between July 1 and September 30 (Figure 7.1-1).

While it is important that ACHR has been able to successfully fill teacher vacancies, the School Division has established as one of its main strategic goals to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse cadre of the highest quality teaching personnel, staff, and administrators. ACHR has focused recruitment and selection efforts to support this goal. The No Child Left Behind Act requires that 100% of the teachers in core academic subject areas meet specific criteria in order to be considered "highly qualified". The percentage of core academic classes taught by highly qualified teachers in the Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) has increased each of the past three years, to over 99% in 2007-08 (Figure 7.1-2), exceeding the overall rate in Virginia.

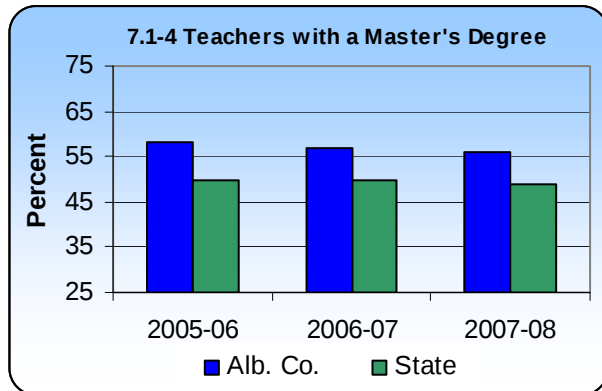


Another indicator of instructional staff quality is the number of teachers in the classroom who have only a provisional or conditional teaching license, indicating that they have not yet fulfilled all state requirements for a full teaching certificate. In the past three years, the percentage of teachers with provisional licenses in Albemarle County Schools has gone from six percent in 2005-06 to only three percent in 2007-08 (Fig. 7.1-3). The state average is noticeably higher, at nine percent for the past three years.

ACHR's success in attracting and hiring a highly-qualified teaching staff is further evidenced by an examination of the percent of teachers with advanced degrees. As Fig. 7.1-4 shows, the percentage of teachers in ACPS with a master's degree outpaces the state average rate.

A key element of the School Division's strategic plan is hiring a teaching staff that reflects the racial diversity in the community, which according to U.S. Census Bureau data, hovers around 16%.

While this goal has not yet been reached, it is important to note that ACHR's minority recruitment efforts are showing a positive effect. In each of the past three years, the percentage of applicants for teaching positions varied from 6-7 percent. The percentage of minority teachers *hired* by ACHR, however, ranges from 11-13%, significantly higher than the applicant pool (Fig. 7.1-5).

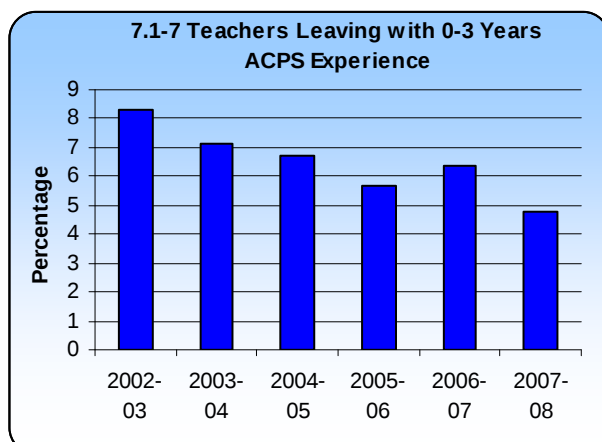
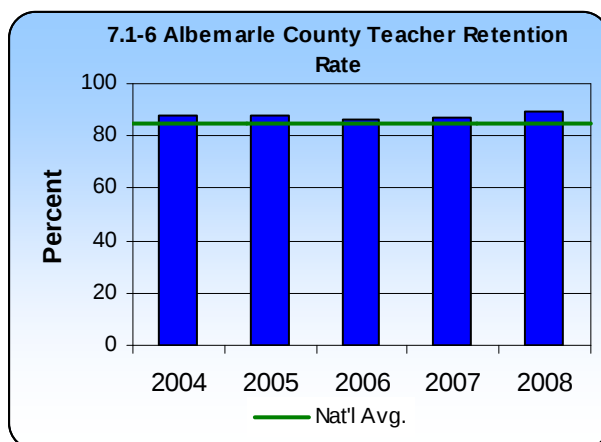


	2006	2007	2008
Total Applicants	828	806	877
Minority Applicants	7%	6%	7%
Total New Hires	150	146	114
Minority New Hires	11%	13%	11%

7.1-5. Minority Teacher New Hires

Support of Division's strategic goal also requires ACHR to focus on retaining high-quality teachers. Teacher retention rates in ACPS have been higher than the national average of 85% in each of the past five years, to a high of 90% last year (Fig. 7.1-6).

Turnover is typically highest among new teachers. Studies indicate that half of new teachers leave within the first five years of teaching. This represents not only a financial loss, but also one of time and resources. ACHR's efforts to reduce the turnover rate of newly hired teachers has seen positive results. From 2002 to 2007, the percentage of teachers leaving the Division with 0-3 years of ACPS teaching experience has dropped by almost half (Fig. 7.1-7)



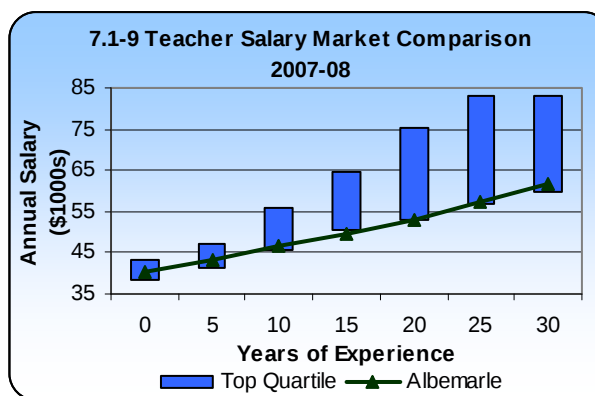
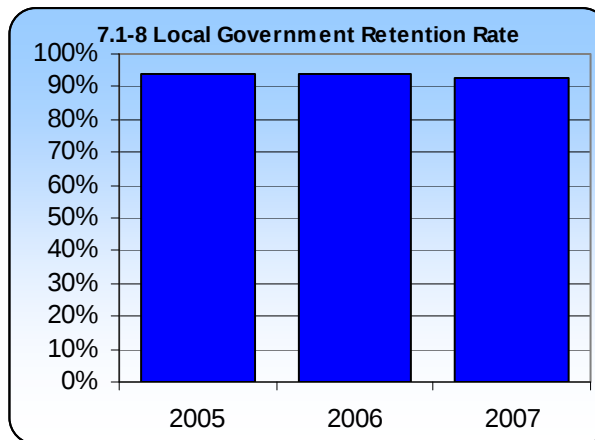
Many of the positions in the County government, such as police officers and firefighters, are experiencing similar shortages across the country, making retention all the more important. As Figure 7.1-8 shows, however, Albemarle County's retention rates for local government employees is quite high.

Compensation and Benefits

One of the key services ACHR provides to customers is providing competitive compensation and benefits. These are critical to recruitment and retention efforts, as well as overall job satisfaction.

ACHR's compensation strategy for teachers is to target salaries to be at the 75th percentile (i.e. bottom of the top quartile) of the adopted competitive market. Figure 7.1-9 shows how accurate ACHR's market analysis and trend predictions were in 2007-08. In this chart, the blue bars represent the salary range of the seven highest-paying school divisions in the competitive market (i.e. the top quartile) at seven different benchmark pay levels (based on years of teaching experience). Albemarle teacher salaries, shown by the dark line, are at or near the bottom of this range, showing accurate forecasting by ACHR compensation staff.

Providing above-average benefits is a key component of ACHR's compensation strategy. A 2006 survey of Albemarle's competitive market shows that the benefit plan developed by ACHR compares very favorably to competitors. Figure 7.1-10 shows that Albemarle County outpaces its competitors in employer contributions to health insurance, as well as plan deductibles. Figure 7.1-11 shows additional benefits offered through ACHR's program and the percentage of competitors who offer the same benefits.



	Employer Contribution		Annual Deductible	
	Albemarle	Market Average	Albemarle	Market Average
Individual	93%	89%	None	\$320
Individual+Child	87%	69%	None	\$640
Individual+Spouse	67%	60%	None	\$640
Family	60%	55%	None	\$640

Figure 7.1-10 Comparison of Benefits

Benefit	Percent of Market Offering	Offered by Albemarle
Employee Assistance Program	60.9%	Yes
Long-Term Disability	59.1%	Yes
Full Flexible Benefit Program	52.2%	Yes
Wellness Program	47.8%	Yes
Short-Term Disability (other than paid leave)	43.5%	Yes

Figure 7.1-11 Comparison of Additional Benefit Program Offerings

Organizational Development

ACHR has invested considerable resources in building and expanding its Organizational Development program to provide training to County employees based on established core competencies. As Figure 7.1-12 illustrates, the course offerings have grown significantly in just the past year. Moreover, the effectiveness of the training outpaces targets by a considerable margin.

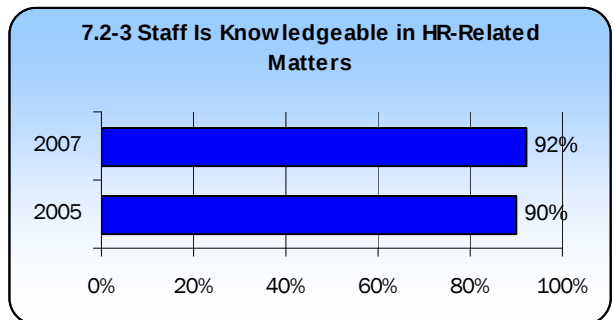
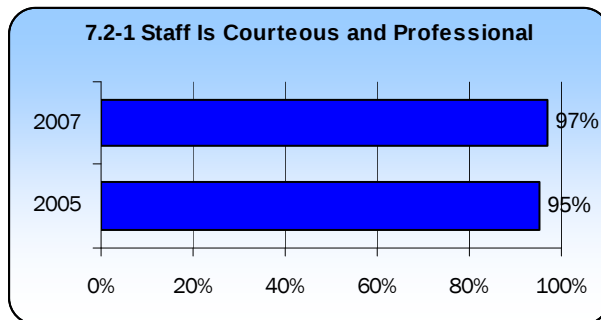
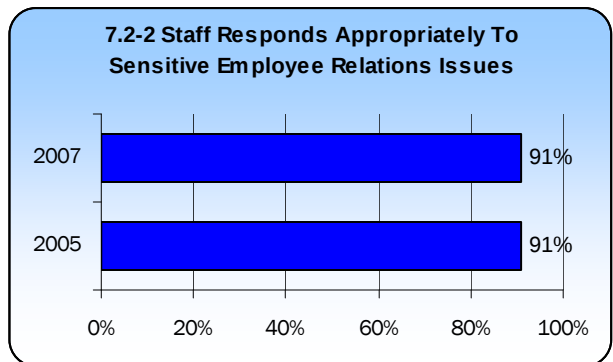
Measure	FY 2006-2007		FY 2007-2008	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Number of unique classes offered each semester	48	47	82	53
Total class sessions offered	97	90	137	90
Percent of employees indicating that HR-provided training helped them with their career	83	78	90	85
Percent of attendees reporting an increase in technical knowledge after attending technical training	93	80	97	85

Figure 7.12 Organizational Development Program Results

7.2 Customer-Focused Outcomes

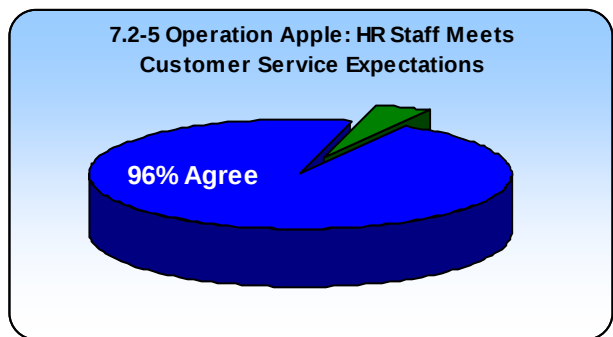
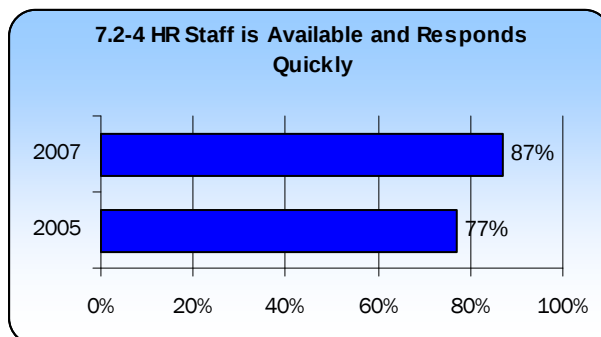
ACHR gathers customer satisfaction data through a variety of mechanisms (see Fig. 3.1-1). The HR Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted in 2005 and 2007 and is scheduled to be conducted every 18 months in the future to provide comparative trend data. As Figures 7.2-1 through 7.2-3 illustrate, over 90% of ACHR's customers give the department high marks in the following:

- Courtesy and professionalism (97% favorable)
- Responding to sensitive matters appropriately (91% favorable)
- Professional knowledge (92% favorable)



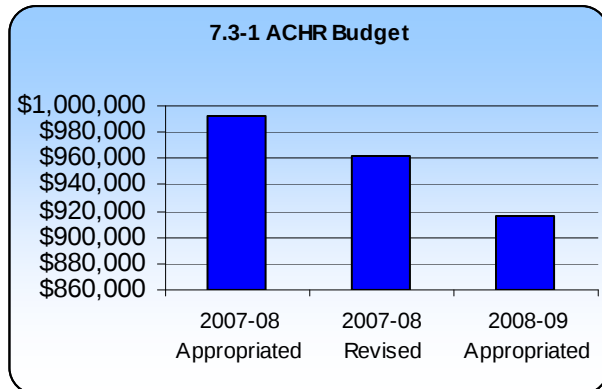
One area that ACHR identified as an opportunity for improvement based on previous survey results, was in customers' perceptions of staff availability and responsiveness. As Fig. 7.2-4 shows, ACHR's score in this area has increased from 77% favorable in 2005 to 87% in 2007. This clearly shows positive results of the department's initiatives to improve communication with customers and availability in providing customer service.

ACHR gathered additional customer service feedback via the first "Operation Apple" customer service survey, conducted July 1 to September 30, 2008 (see section 3.2). Over 1000 customer responses were collected via online and paper forms distributed by all HR employees to individual customers. The response rate greatly exceeded the goal of 500 responses. Survey results indicated a high degree of customer satisfaction: over 96% of respondents agreed that staff met their customer service expectations (Fig. 7.2-5).

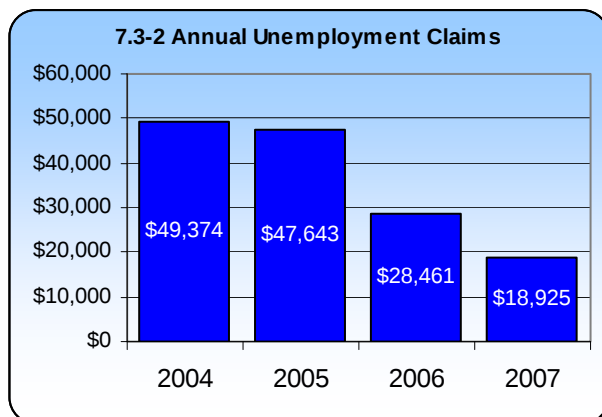


7.3 Financial and Market Outcomes

As one department within a local government/public school system, ACHR is not charged with generating revenue, nor does it have ultimate control over its operating budget, which is set by the County Board of Supervisors. Typical indicators of financial performance (e.g. profitability, debt ratios, etc.) therefore are not particularly relevant to ACHR, but there are several measures which indicate ACHR's commitment to being effective stewards of the public's financial resources.



The budget constraints that are challenging localities across the country have affected Albemarle County as well, forcing the Board of Supervisors to reduce funding for all government and school division departments. As property values continue to fall, the primary source of revenue for the County is significantly impacted. As Fig. 7.3-1 shows, ACHR's budget has been reduced significantly in just the past two years. Despite these financial constraints, however, the department has not reduced services and continues to meet and exceed customer expectations (see 7.2).



While it does not generate revenue, several of ACHR's programs have resulted in significant cost savings. As part of an enhanced loss control program, ACHR has focused efforts on managing unemployment insurance claims more effectively.

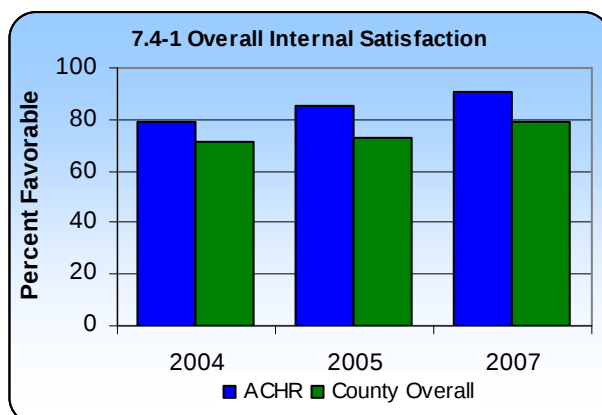
This has resulted in a 60% decrease in unemployment costs since 2004, a savings of more than \$30,000 (Fig. 7.3-2). ACHR's loss control workplace safety initiatives have also resulted in significant cost savings (see Fig. 7.4-5).

Cost savings have come from other areas in the department as well. This year, ACHR's Organizational Team began using qualified County employees to teach some of its courses rather than hiring an external contractor. This has saved the department approximately \$5,750 this year.

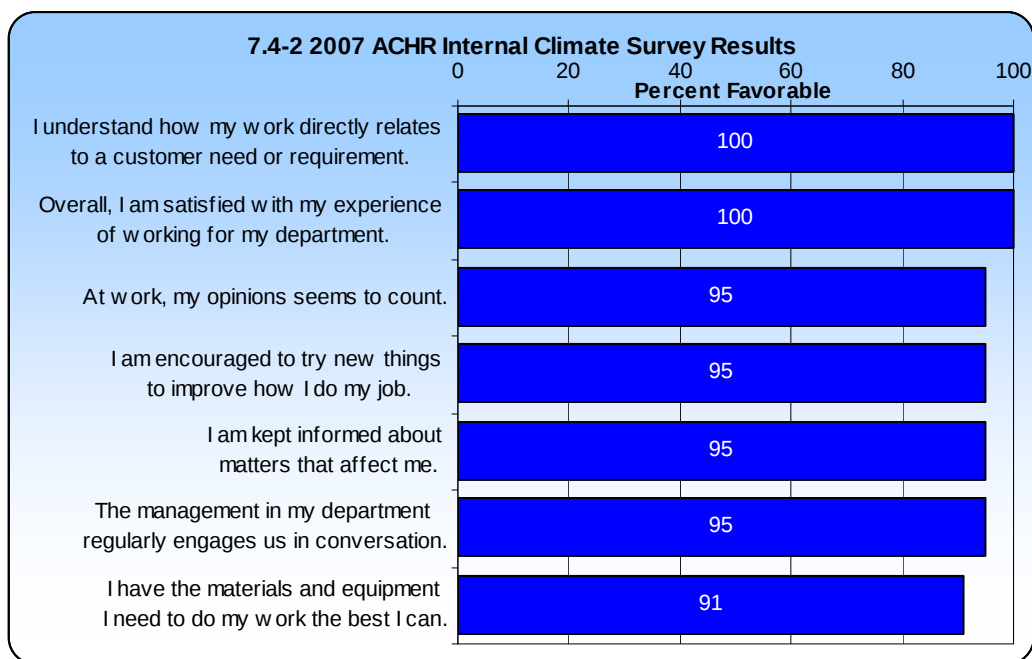
7.4 Workforce-Focused Outcomes

Workforce Engagement & Development

Every 18 months, ACHR conducts a Climate Survey for Albemarle County local government. This 41-question survey measures a number of factors related to workforce engagement. As Fig. 7.4-1 shows, ACHR's average number of favorable responses has increased from 79% in 2004 to 91% in 2007. Internal satisfaction was also higher compared to the County average. Figure 7.4-2



shows results from the 2007 ACHR survey indicating a high level of workforce engagement within the department.



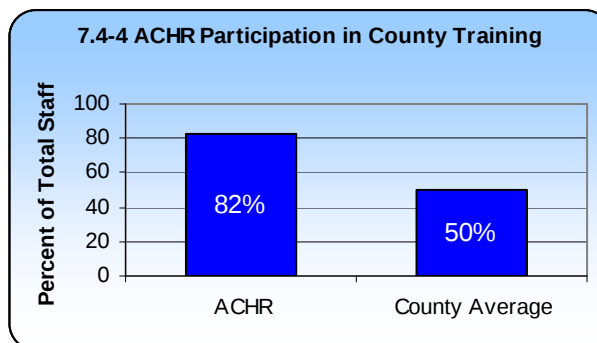
Workforce Capability

Capability Indicator	Percent of ACHR Staff
Hold at least a bachelor's degree	61%
Hold a master's degree	35%
Hold one or more professional certifications	35%

Figure 7.4-3. ACHR Workforce Capability

Indicators of ACHR's workforce capability are shown in Fig. 7.4-3. Staff is well-educated, with nearly two-thirds holding at least a college degree and one-third holding a master's degree. A significant percentage of staff also hold certification from relevant professional associations, such as The Society for Human Resources Management, World at Work, and The American Society for Training and Development.

A commitment to training and professional education is another important indicator not only of workforce capability, but also of workforce engagement. Figure 7.4-4 shows ACHR's comparatively high participation in County-offered training courses: 88% of staff took at least one class. The average participation for all County government departments was 50%.



Workforce Climate

Maintaining a safe workplace is a primary responsibility of ACHR. The department's increased efforts in this regard, which include the formation of a Safety Team, enhanced training, and focused communications, have had significant impacts on workplace safety over the past three years. Figure 7.4-5 shows the dramatic decrease in total worker's compensation costs incurred by the County and School Division since 2005. Despite annual increases in the cost of medical care, Albemarle's worker's compensation costs have dropped by nearly 30%.

Figure 7.4-6 shows another indicator of workplace safety – the number of OSHA reportable incidents per 100 employees for the local government and school division compared to the national average. In the past two years (most recent data available), Albemarle's scores have compared quite favorably.

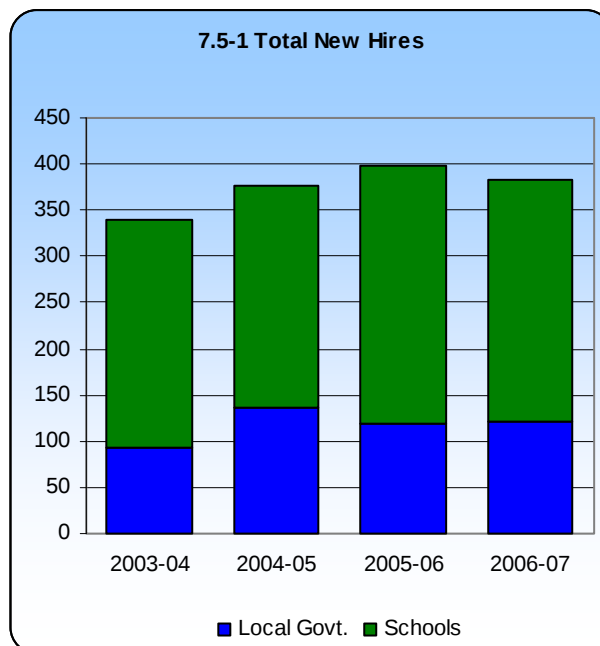
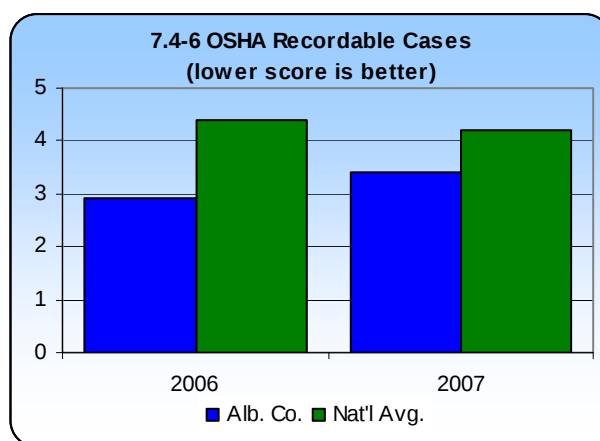
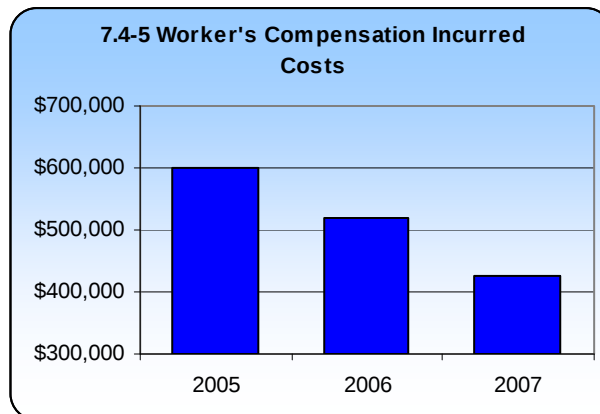
7.5 Process Effectiveness Outcomes

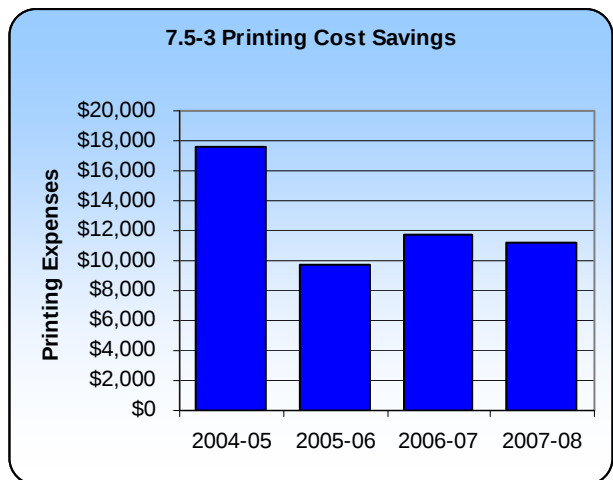
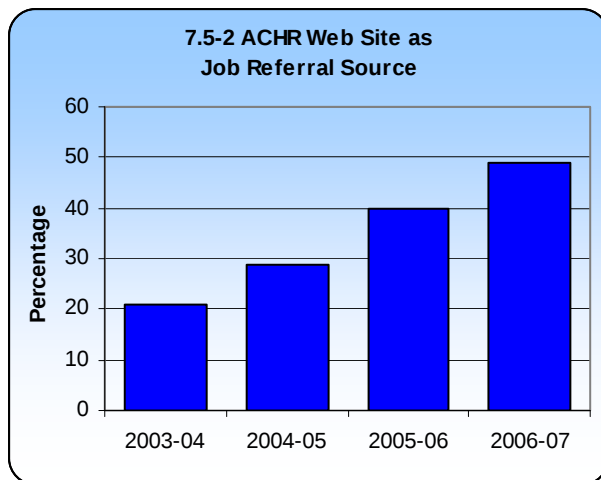
Recruitment and Staffing Support

One of the key operational results for any human resources department is the number of new employees hired each year, which serves as an indicator of overall productivity and demand on staff time. As seen in Fig. 7.5-1, for the past three years, ACHR has hired over 350 new employees. It is important to note also that approximately 35% of all new hires each year are teachers, the majority of whom are hired during a four-month period.

To support recruitment efforts, ACHR has made significant improvements to the department's web site. An indicator of the success of this process is the percentage of new applicants citing the web site as their job vacancy source. Fig. 7.5-2 shows the steady increase in this number.

Another process improvement in the area of recruitment was the development and deployment of an online job application. ACHR partnered with the County Information Technology department to create an electronic application database and submission process to





replace the paper-based system then in use. At that time, applications were submitted by the applicant in paper form and were centralized in ACHR's offices. Hiring managers had to come to Human Resources to review applications and large volumes of paper were used to make copies, all of which placed a significant demand on staff time and the department's operating budget.

ACHR's application process is now entirely electronic. Managers can submit requests online, applications can be screened by ACHR staff, and sent to the managers for review. The reduction in printing costs alone are a measure of the savings associated with this improvement (Fig. 7.5-3).

Wellness

ACHR's employee wellness efforts have shown positive results (Fig. 7.5-4, 7.5-5). These programs included biometric screenings, individual wellness coaching, and disease prevention and management programs.

An investment of \$136,575 in wellness initiatives has resulted in an estimated savings of \$167,754 (smoking cessation, obesity & inactivity) for a total return on investment of \$1.23 saved for every \$1 spent.

Plans for additional wellness initiatives include a dedicated space offering weight and blood pressure monitoring, on-site medical services, wellness member subsidies, and additional prevention programs.

Measure	2007	2008
Employee Participation in Wellness Program	48%	49%
Flu Vaccine Immunizations	1500	1670
Mobile Mammograms	70	113

Figure 7.5-4 Wellness Program Measures

Measure	Savings
Tobacco Cessation Estimated Cost Savings	\$68,000
Estimated Cost Savings from Increased Physical Activity	\$18,534

Figure 7.5-5 Wellness Program Savings

7.6 Leadership Outcomes

Strategic Plan Outcomes

ACHR's vision is to be a premier customer service-focused human resources team dedicated to aggressively providing excellent human resource support to the county government and school division. As discussed in Section 2, the department has identified three key success factors to achieving this vision:

1. Align Human Resources as a strategic partner with customers.
2. Attract, staff, and retain the best talent possible.
3. Improve HR people systems and processes.

Indicator	2007 Favorable	2005 Favorable
I know who to contact in HR when I need assistance.	78%	72%
The HR staff provides expert advice and direction on sensitive employee relations issues.	81%	84%

Figure 7.6-1 Customer Partnering

Progress on the first key success factor is measured by ACHR's Effectiveness Survey (Fig. 7.6-1). Figure 7.2-5 provides an additional indicator of HR's progress towards this goal.

Progress on the second key factor is evidenced by charts found elsewhere in this section, specifically:

- Recruiting best talent (Fig. 7.1-2, 7.1-4)
- Increasing diversity (Fig 7.1-5)
- Increasing retention (Fig. 7.1-6)
- Providing competitive compensation and benefits (7.1-8, 9, 10)

Progress on the third key success factor is shown in Figure 7.6-2 and in other areas, such as:

- Loss control and safety (Fig. 7.4-5, 7.4-6)
- Use of technology (Fig. 7.5-2)

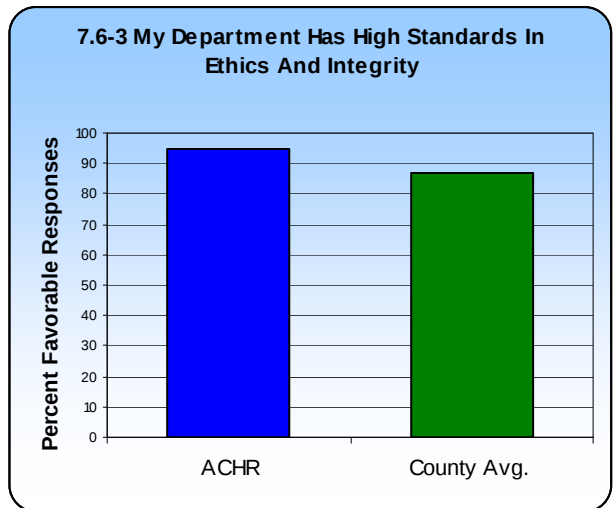
Indicator	2007 Favorable	2005 Favorable
HR provides opportunities for solicited and unsolicited feedback.	85%	85%
HR uses feedback when making improvements and/or changes within their department.	73%	81%
The HR website is a valuable resource for me.	75%	n/a

Figure 7.6-2 Improving People Systems

Ethical Behavior

One of the questions asked in ACHR's Climate Survey states "My department has high standards in ethics and integrity." According to the 2007 survey results, 95% of ACHR respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared to the county average of 87% (Fig. 7.6-3).

An additional indicator of ACHR's commitment to ethical behavior can be seen in responses to the HR Effectiveness Survey question "The HR staff responds appropriately to sensitive employee relations issues requiring confidentiality, tact, and professionalism." As seen in Figure 7.2-2 above, the department consistently receives high marks for its handling of sensitive matters confidentially.



**Albemarle County Public Schools
2009 Listening Tours**

Division Leadership & School Board Participation

	Wednesday, May 6	Thursday, May 7	Friday, May 8
Pam Moran		Cale, MoHS	Red Hill, Walton
Bruce Benson	Crozet, WAHS		Brownsville, Henley
Luvelle Brown		Woodbrook	Greer, Jouett
Debbie Collins		Hollymead, Sutherland	Stone-Robinson
Billy Haun	Murray Elementary	Broadus Wood	Stony Point
Matt Haas	Meriwether Lewis	Baker-Butler	Murray High/Enterprise
Jamie Endahl	Scottsville	Yancey	
Bernard Hairston	Agnor-Hurt, Burley/CPCS	AHS	CATEC
Brian Wheeler	Crozet, WAHS		Murray High/Enterprise
Ronnie Price	Scottsville	Baker-Butler, Sutherland	Stone Robinson, Murray High/Enterprise
Diantha McKeel	Murray Elementary	Hollymead, Albemarle	Greer, Jouett
Pam Moynihan	Agnor-Hurt, Burley	Woodbrook, Albemarle	CATEC
Barbara Mouly	Murray Elementary	Broadus Wood	Brownsville, Henley
Jon Stokes	Meriwether Lewis	Cale, Monticello	Red Hill, Walton
Steve Koleszar		Yancey	Stony Point
Brian Wheeler	Crozet, WAHS		Murray High/Enterprise

Recurring Themes & Questions Compiled by Division Leadership

Providing Resources to Support Student Achievement

- Additional support/resources to pre-school and K-3 literacy
- Continue to support instructional strategies that address multicultural education to meet changing student populations: Culturally responsive teaching practices; addressing the gap
- New Comers Program: Provisions are not in place for students to return to their base schools if the program does not work out; no scheduling options at home school
- A lot of students are being promoted without basic skills (math and literacy); even upper-level students struggle with basic math
- Need to promote the fact that many students are dropping out of college the first year; need a concentrated focus on students taking advantage of career and technical education
- Early release is a big problem; students leaving campus during the day, when they could be taking elective, remedial or enrichment classes; told early release supports staffing
- High schools should not have to offer remedial classes; students need to be on grade level before leaving elementary and middle schools
- Pushing students up into classes such as honors and AP is a concern; students are not willing to accept the challenge
- Suggestion: After-school program for students at-risk
- Importance of beefing up and providing pre-school services for all children
- Examining the way students are grouped for reading and whether this practice is effective

- Discussion about managing and improving student transitions from elementary to middle school and then from middle to high
- The use of multiple-choice assessments for end-of-course and grade-level testing, and the overwhelming (for students) amount of testing we do
- Concerns about student attendance
- Can we look at how we support ESOL populations in school? Differentiated staffing?
- Why is financial literacy in the 8th grade curriculum?

Concerns with Transiting to the Coaching Model

- Continuing to serve specialty programs with quality support, including physical education, gifted, and fine arts programs
- Need continuous support in core and specialty areas for ongoing instructional support; e.g., pacing guides, curriculum guides, benchmark work, use of SchoolNet
- We want this person to come into the classroom and teach kids; teacher assistance should not be cut
- Loss of literacy specialist and CTIP support: Who is going to do this?
- Loss of coordinators, especially Guidance and PE; content not represented in the people selected
- Coaching Model design is not very clear and does not promote confidence building
- Discussion about the new structure for the central office and how we will transition from the current model to the new model
- How will the coaching model be evaluated to avoid obstacles experienced in the previous model?
- Need more communication about the model
- Schools need SchoolNet help
- How will implementation of the instructional coaching model help us close the achievement gap?

Professional Ethics for Staff

- New teachers sign a contract and begin work in August, but do not get paid until the end of September—this does not send a caring message. Perhaps new teachers should have the option of a 13-month pay schedule rather than a 12-month schedule
- Suggestion: Keep five years of health benefits in place for retiring staff
- Revisit middle school start and ending times—teachers are in the buildings from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., an extremely long day for students and staff—cannot plan extended day activities, a need for middle schools
- School calendar: (1) appreciation for the three half-day exam support, and (2) align Spring Break to other school divisions, with the following Monday off as well
- Important to support staff compensation next year
- Problems with attending the last 3 days of work
- Last day of school should be early release for elementary teachers

Miscellaneous

- Southern Feeder Pattern small schools: Lack of trust in the process; perception that Central Office staff and the Board have already made up their minds; perception that the repeated theme of “Wouldn’t you like a nice big new school with all the amenities?” is insulting; response from teachers is, “We have the technology and other amenities that all Albemarle County schools have. Our work is about the pedagogy, not the ‘stuff’.”
- SOL Testing
- Address retirement guidelines regarding teachers retiring during a school year and the hardship this places on students and the staff at the school
- RIFing procedures that cause the Division to lose younger talent to other divisions
- Current policy related to tuition for the children of ACPS employees to attend Albemarle County schools with residence outside Albemarle County
- Concern about new principal at MoHS: Low staff involvement in the selection process; communication about the process
- Can we revisit the way we mark determine unexcused/excused student absences?