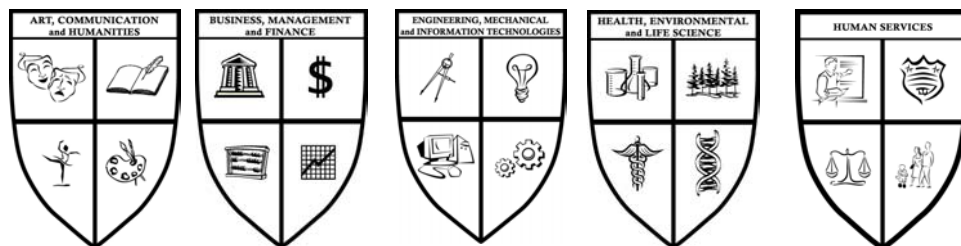


## SLC Fact Sheet #1 - Smaller Learning Communities



The Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) grant is a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to Anne Arundel County Public Schools to restructure five high schools into smaller units, or Smaller Learning Communities. The goals of the project are to enhance academic achievement, increase academic rigor, and create a better school climate. The five schools implementing smaller learning communities are: Arundel, Glen Burnie, Meade, North County, and Old Mill Senior High Schools.

### How will SLCs be implemented in Anne Arundel County?

Five high schools are being reorganized into smaller units (called clusters) within each school. The five AACPS senior high schools involved in the SLC grant program are: Arundel, Glen Burnie, Meade, North County and Old Mill. Each cluster will focus on one broad interest area:

- Arts, Communication and Humanities
- Business, Management and Finance
- Engineering, Mechanical and Information Technologies
- Health, Environmental and Life Sciences
- Human Services

The SLC's aim is to change instruction, not the curriculum. In other words, the SLC schools will focus on *how* something is taught, not change *what* is taught. Required academics will be taught in every cluster, but examples that support the curriculum will be drawn from the industries related to each career cluster. Math classes taught in Arts, Communication and Humanities, might use the example of The Golden Ratio as used by the great painters in a lesson on ratios and formulas. Engineering, Mechanical and Information Technologies, might use the concept of gear ratios as an example for the same lesson.

### Why this strategy? Why now?

SLCs represent cutting edge educational technology. Fifteen years of research proving the superiority of smaller schools over larger ones is inspiring schools all over the country to reorganize into smaller formats.

### Outcomes typically produced by SLCs, in contrast to large schools

- Higher achievement
- Reduction of the negative effects of poverty on achievement
- Increased student affiliation with their school community
- Greater safety and order
- Much less truancy and many fewer dropouts
- Similar college entrance exam scores, acceptance rates, GPAs and completion
- Higher levels of extracurricular participation in traditional small schools; role of extracurricular participation differs across SLCs
- Higher levels of parent and community involvement and greater satisfaction
- More positive teacher attitudes and satisfaction
- Comparable core curricula
- Lower costs per student graduated

*Source: Cotton, K New Small Learning Communities: Findings from Recent Literature.* Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, December 2001.

This fact sheet is brought to you by the Smaller Learning Communities grant project of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401 (410) 674-7710 x277.

**Project Manager:** Lise Middleton Foran [lforan@aacps.org](mailto:lforan@aacps.org)  
**Communications Consultant:** Andrea Price  
[andrea@projectheadquarters.com](mailto:andrea@projectheadquarters.com)

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