



Health and Safety Coordinating Committee

January 6, 2023



Agenda

Topic Area:

1. Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center
2. Youth Safety and Resiliency
3. Health and Safety Reports

City Council Priorities: Support Youth and Families

3 Expand academic, social, and emotional support during out of school time to ensure that kids know where to safely go to be heard by a trusted listener and that the city can appropriately respond to their specific needs

MAJOR INITIATIVES

Support Out of School Time providers by offering access to training in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and Developmental Assets programs and sharing best practices for trauma-informed practice (RAISE) and develop training standards for all city-supported program staff

Recruit more mentors through the efforts of the new Alexandria Mentoring Partnership Coordinator, support enhancement and expansion of mentoring programs, and establish comprehensive training opportunities for caring adults

Implement recommendations based on the youth safety and resilience work

Conduct a Civics Academy for Youth this Fall, in partnership with U.S. Government and Civics teachers of ACPS. The Academy is seven weeks long and introduces a range of City departments to students. This program, which has the potential to reach hundreds of students throughout the year, will also be an opportunity to hear feedback from youth on what support they need

Pilot of a "Resource Corner" at George Washington Middle School, exploring the use of dedicated space at the school where middle school students can meet with service providers on a rotational basis to learn about the resources available to them. If successful, this model could be expanded into other schools and recreation centers after school.

Conduct a needs assessment of professional learning opportunities with staff involved in Division-wide after school programming to collaborate with ACPS for academic services during Out of School Time

“ Being a Peer Advocate for the past two years has helped me become adaptable to working with individuals in a different age group than me. I have learned to be empathetic with one’s situation and how I can make my stamp on my community!” Without this program I wouldn’t be able to connect with others like I do now. ”

- Yanelvis Gomez, 12th grade, Alexandria City High School





Select Youth Services Prevention and Intervention Resources

Provide Student, Parent & Family Support

Individual supportive counseling, mediation and referral services

Lunchtime skills building groups offered for elementary school students

Home visits to support Alexandria families and encourage the educational success of their children

CSU Court Staff and Treatment Team and Forensic Counseling Internship Program

Administer Educational & Leadership Programs and Initiatives

Evidenced-based and evidence-informed programming (Life Skills Training, Too Good For Drugs, Girls Circle and Decisions 101)

Youth engagement in leadership and mentoring programs.

Leadership program for students who mentor, tutor and support hundreds of elementary school student

Keep it 360 Peer Advocate program for teens who provided health education workshops to their peers

Provide Substance Use Prevention

Programs through Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA), including: Student surveys, Alexandria Youth Leadership Conference, Etc.

Opioid Prevention & Education Services

Build Developmental Relationships

Alexandria Mentoring Partnership to support over 400 mentoring relationships

Build on the 40 developmental assets (positive supports and protective factors that help young people succeed)

Use and expansion of existing positive relationships between youth and RPCA center staff

Intervene through Gang Prevention Programs

Intervention, Prevention, and Education Program aimed at ensuring that gang/crew involved youth and youth at risk for gang/crew involvement are able to make safe, productive choices to reduce or avoid gang/crew involvement

Gang Prevention through the Detention Center as part of curriculum

Address Foundational Community Conditions, including Access to safe and healthy housing, food, health care, transportation, and childcare



It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.

Nelson Mandela



Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center & Sheltercare Program of Northern Virginia

Introduction:
CSU Director, Mike Mackey
Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center Executive Director,
Johnitha McNair





Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center Key Information

- 1 of 24 such facilities in Virginia – in place since 1956 (renovated 1990s, several upgrades)
- Operated by Arlington, Falls Church, & Alexandria through a Juvenile Detention Commission (comprised of members from Arlington, Falls Church, Alexandria) – appointed by Council.
- 70 bed secure facility staffed for 46 beds – shared with Arlington & Falls Church – includes state programs. Does NOT accept federal youth. Closest similar facility is in Fairfax County.
- Regulated by Department of Juvenile Justice. Certified in December 2022.

Sheltercare Program of Northern Virginia Key Information

- Provides critical alternative to detention and placement for youth involved with child welfare
- 14 bed non-secure facility Currently staffed for 12 beds due to pandemic
- Regulated by Department of Juvenile Justice. Certified November 2022



Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center Utilization

- Over 70% decrease in utilization in over past decade continues, consistent with national and statewide trends.
- FY22 average daily population, 11.52 youth (all programs) 24% of 46 bed program:
 - Alexandria youth made up 54.71%, or 6.30 youth.
 - Arlington youth made up 22.42%, or 2.58 youth.
 - Falls Church youth made up .08%, or .02 youth.

Sheltercare of Northern Virginia Utilization

- Currently staffed for 12 beds due to pandemic
- 58% Utilization FY22



Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center: Studies to Consider

- In 2018, due to decreased utilization, participating jurisdictions commissioned a Cost-Benefit Analysis of Northern VA Juvenile Detention Center & Alternatives – completed 2020.
- No viable further regionalization alternative was determined.
- Fairfax County not interested.
- Recommendations for cost savings & use.
- Commission coordinating short-term normalizing & quality of life/operations upgrades which would ask for no additional funding.
- Long-term plans contemplated:
 - December 2021 - Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission Study on Juvenile Justice completed – Virginia has excess detention capacity, statewide.
 - General Assembly commissioned Commission on Youth to study further – end of 2022. Population projection study being considered, as well. Further conclusions expected December 2023.



Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center: Important Contextual Elements

What has occurred related to the Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Staffing levels have been continually adjusted while not compromising safety or service. Outsourced some administrative functions (Accounting & Payroll). Staffing levels have been decreased (from 70 full-time positions and 1 part-time to 35 full-time and 4 part-time)
- Completed facility assessment via Moseley Architects which provided recommended short & long-term facility enhancements, including normalizing & trauma-informed adjustments (population study being considered and pending)
- Continual programming enhancements (trauma-informed, responsive within pandemic & substance use) to impact safety, resilience & prevention
 - All basic needs met – e.g., safety, medical, psychiatric, education
 - Individualized resident and family care which focuses on behaviors which led youth & family to center – e.g., treatment team meetings, therapy, groups
 - Strong partnership with community providers to support seamless re-entry into community (e.g., school, mental health, employment, CSU)
- Continue discussions & exploration relative to repurposing; long-term efficient use of campus & facility use to benefit community



Youth Safety and Resiliency Update

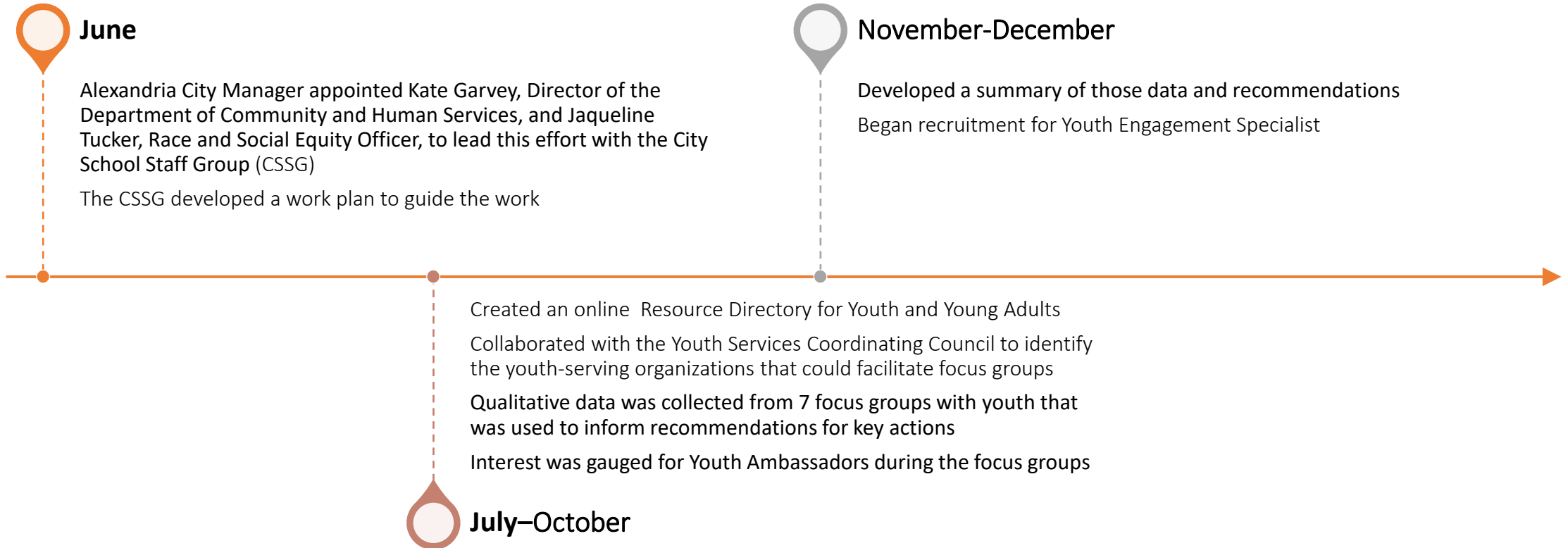


Youth Safety and Resiliency Background/Response to Bradley

- On May 12, 2022, Alexandria City High School student, Luis Mejia Hernandez lost his life after being stabbed in a large fight at Bradley Shopping Center
- In response to this violence, Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson and Councilwoman Alyia Gaskins issued a memorandum, known as the Youth Safety and Resilience Concept, that calls upon City staff to coordinate across sectors to promote youth safety and resiliency



Youth Safety and Resiliency Efforts Thus Far:





Youth Safety and Resiliency Partners

- Alexandria Library
- Campagna Center
- City and Schools Staff Group
- Court Service Unit
- City Manager's Office
- Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities
- Department of Community and Human Services
- Liberty's Promise
- Youth Services Coordinating Council

Youth Safety and Resiliency Methodology

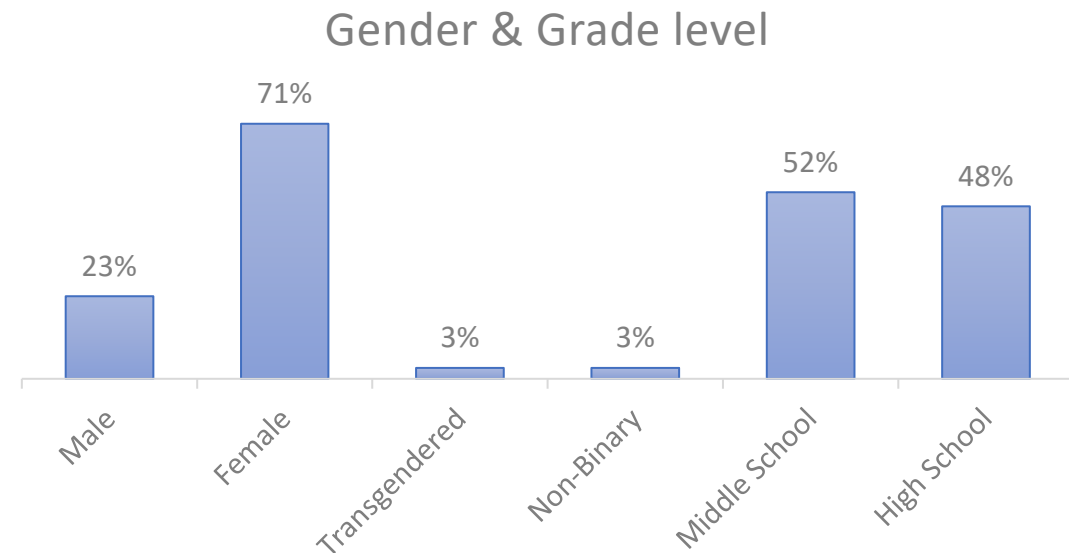
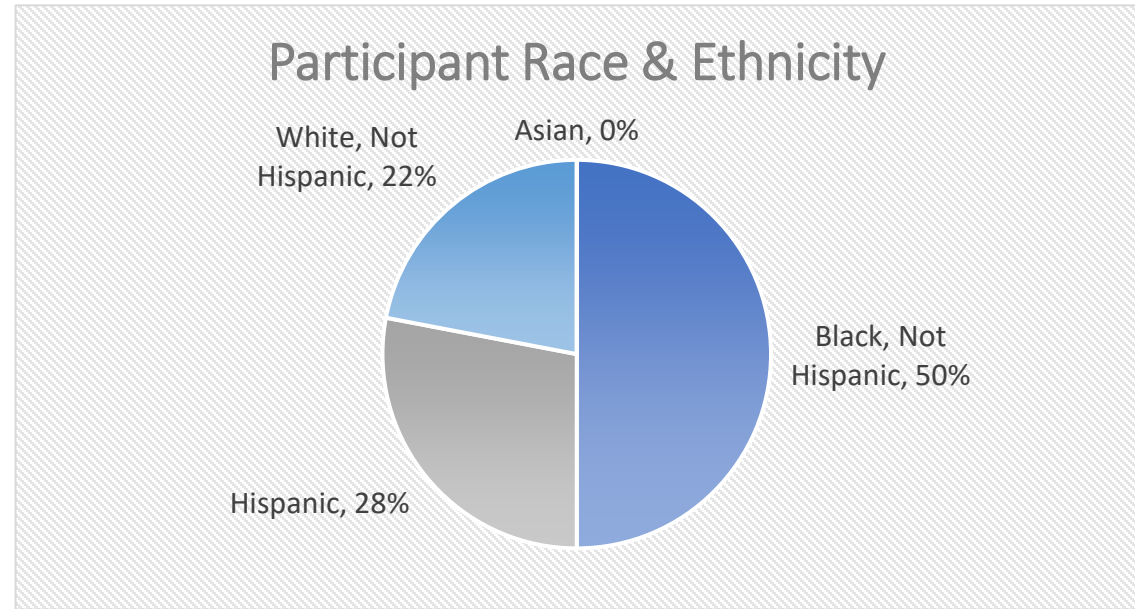
Focus Groups (7 total)

- 125 youth engaged
- 2 groups were held with 70 youth from the Teens Work! Program
- 5 focus groups were held with existing youth groups that were recruited through the YSCC:
 - Liberty’s Promise
 - Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities
 - Library Teen Advisory Group
 - Campagna Center
 - Keep It 360

Questions (19 total)

- 6 questions pertained to their knowledge and participation in youth programs;
- 5 questions were asked about the places and elements that make them feel safe or unsafe;
- 6 questions were about youth outreach, engagement, and working with adults; and
- 2 questions sought their interest in participating in future youth engagement initiatives.

Demographics



Youth Safety and Resiliency Focus Group Findings

Ideas for Enhancing Youth Programs

- Build community and positive relationships.
- Provide access to a variety of creative and flexible programs.
- Understand the mental health needs of youth and provide them with support.
- Focus on the needs of immigrant youth and provide them with opportunities to feel heard and make friends.

Youth Safety and Resiliency Focus Group Findings



Ideas for Strengthening Outreach and Engagement

- Use local institutions – especially schools - as a resource hub for youth.
- Develop a communication strategy that uses a variety of methods to ensure that youth are aware of programs that are available to them.
- Collaborate with schools, businesses, sport venues, nonprofits, community sites, and youth organizations to communicate resources, programs, and opportunities with youth.
- Ensure that all schools have robust health services on-site or accessible to the students.
- Engage youth in developmentally appropriate activities and topics that are important to them and relevant to their lived experiences.
- Conduct outreach during afterschool hours and use school announcements throughout the school day to provide students with information.
- When collecting input from youth, use methods that they deem effective.
- Provide youth with food and stipends and/or volunteer hours.
- Listen and respond to youth.

Youth Safety and Resiliency Focus Group Findings



Ideas for Promoting Youth Safety and Resilience

- Build developmental relationships.
- Create leadership and mentoring opportunities.
- Establish strong support systems at school.
- Facilitate open dialogue with students about “police presence” at school. Create access to quiet spaces for youth.
- Talk with young people and provide them with the tools needed to manage their fears.
- Avoid passing anxiety on to children and youth.
- Involve youth in reviewing, revising, and creating school policies.
- Stop the spread of misinformation.
- Avoid exposing youth to guns and weapons in schools and community settings.

Youth Safety and Resiliency Focus Group Findings

Ideas for Building effective Youth-Adult Partnerships

- Prepare adults to effectively support young people.
- Build relationships with youth by treating them with respect, listening to them, and getting to know them by engaging in activities that build assets.
- Connect youth with decision- and policy makers.

Youth Safety and Resiliency Focus Group Findings

When asking youth for their input and feedback:

- Do something with youths' recommendations.
- Empower young people to decide on the topics and issues that matter most to them.
- **Hold Youth Summit (topics to include):**
 - mental health
 - preparing for adult life and college
 - anti-racism
 - how to effect social change and be a community change agent
 - education system and teacher quality
 - increasing organizational capacity to meet youth needs





Current Progress on Key Recommendations



Current Efforts/Recent Accomplishments in this area:

- **Dozens of youth participated in City-Sponsored Teen Block Parties, Teen Pool Nights, and quarterly Titan Takeovers** – all events for teens to have dinner and a night fun with their friends.
- **100+ resources for helping youth cope** with uncertainty and traumatic events are included on [RAISE's webpage](#).
- **21 workshops on ACES, trauma, and resilience** have been delivered to 545 community members this past year.
- **4 school-based mental health professionals have been added** to the Children and Family Behavioral Health Services Team which is based in every ACPS school campus.

Recommendation #1:

Offer creative, inclusive, and flexible youth programs that foster social connection and a sense of belonging and promote youth behavioral health.



Current Efforts/Recent Accomplishments in this area:

- **255 people follow Alex Teen Life**, the City's Social Media accounts dedicated to communicating information, resources, and facts with youth about health, relationships, and more.
- [Resource Directory for Youth and Young Adults](#) includes hundreds of resources that promote youth well-being in Alexandria.
- **Through workshops and trips to college campuses, Project Discovery** provides vital information to low-income and first-generation youth about how to prepare for college.
- **A Community Resource Corner** will be piloted at George Washington Middle School to introduce students to local resources.

Recommendation #3:

Use a variety of methods and partnerships to creatively engage young people and ensure that they are aware of the resources and programs available to them.

Recommendation #4:

Build effective Youth-Adult Partnerships by providing adults with ongoing trainings and technical assistance to promote positive youth development, and by providing youth with a strong foundation and opportunities to participate in decision and policy making with adults.



Current Efforts/Recent Accomplishments in this area:

- **Hundreds of students are connected directly to decision and policy makers** through a partnership between ACPS teachers and City staff.
- **Boards and Commissions interested in working with youth** are provided with a Youth-Adult Partnerships training.
- **Mentoring Partnership** continues extensive outreach and engagement to potential mentors across the City.



Current Efforts/Recent Accomplishments in this area:

- **1,800+ youth in Alexandria were engaged** in an hour-long workshops and weekly planning sessions where they were encouraged to share their dreams for their future and ideas for how to make those dreams a reality. The result is a [plan](#) that centers equity while preventing trauma and promoting their health, safety, and wellbeing.
- **Youth Speak Up Event on Youth Mental Health** will be held in January to engage dozens of parents, youth, service providers, and local leaders in a youth-led forum about mental health.

Recommendation #5:

When asking youth for their input and feedback, it is critical that adults listen, take their ideas seriously, and hold themselves accountable to respond to their concerns.

Youth Safety and Resiliency

Key Next Steps

Phase 2: Launch Youth Ambassador Program

- Hire and onboard a Youth Engagement Specialist
- Hire and onboard Youth Ambassadors
- Provide orientation to the goals of initiative, share youth feedback, current plans, and resources
- Begin planning future youth engagement

Phase 3: Design

- Youth design Summit and Surveying Instruments
- Develop communication strategy
- Identify resources and partnerships

Phase 4: Peer to Peer Engagement

- Host Youth and Parent Summit
- Share programs and City resources
- Listen to youth concerns
- Invite youth to remain involved as community partners

Phase 5: Analysis and Resource Mapping

- Identify immediate next steps for implementation or revision
- Overlap with youth serving plans, identifications of programs/supports, creation of new programs and supports

Phase 6: Implementation

- Implement immediate next steps
- Present recommendations to City Council and School Board
- Identify resources needed
- Create plan for assessment

Phase 7: On-going Engagement

- Monthly engagement with youth ambassadors
- Discuss integration of youth ambassador program within school structure
- Ongoing opportunities to engage with parents



Health and Safety Report



FY23 Workplan

Note: The workplan is set prior to the first meeting in September to guide the discussion for the year ahead, though topics may change to reflect the most relevant community needs.

September 2022 (Combined with CCJB)

Topic Area: Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Collaboration

- 1) Marcus Alert System
- 2) ACORP
- 3) Opioid Work Group

November 2022

Topic Area: Healthy and Stable Housing

- 1) Healthy Homes Initiative
- 2) Rental Inspection Program
- 3) Eviction Prevention

January 2023

Topic Area: Justice System

- 1) Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center
- 2) Youth Resiliency (check-in)

March 2023

Topic Area: Crime and Re-Entry

- 1) Proactive Part 2 Crime Initiatives
- 2) Alexandria Treatment Court Implementation
Re-entry initiatives
- 3) Recidivism

May 2023 (combined with CCJB)

Topic Area: Planning for FY24

- 1) Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)
- 2) Data needs
- 3) Year ahead, topics, and trends