

Reporting the Educational Equity in Alexandria City Public Schools

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TOPIC

Educational Equity in Alexandria City Public Schools

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Alexandria is a great city made up of residents from all over the world. This is reflected by the diversity of Alexandria City Public School students and the many cultures present in our school system. Educational equity is a priority of the city of Alexandria, but statistics prove higher-income students leave Alexandria City High School having gained more than others. This report card explores the demographics of students who perform better academically and why this is.

RESULT

The intended result of ACPS is for all students to receive an education that suits their personal needs. This would look like a 100% graduation rate and every student feeling like they are equipped to survive in the real world. The intended result would ensure equity by each student having their educational needs met, in order for them to academically thrive.

CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

Ensuring every student graduates aligns with Goal 2 of the Children and Youth Master Plan: Every child will be academically successful and career ready. This rationale hopes to advance educational equity regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic status.

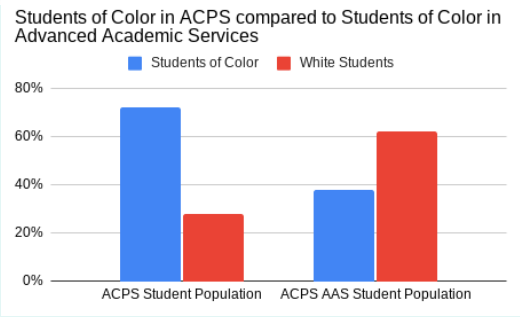
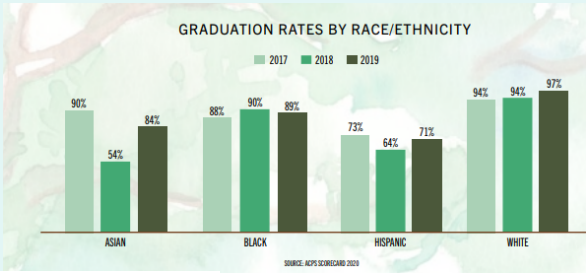
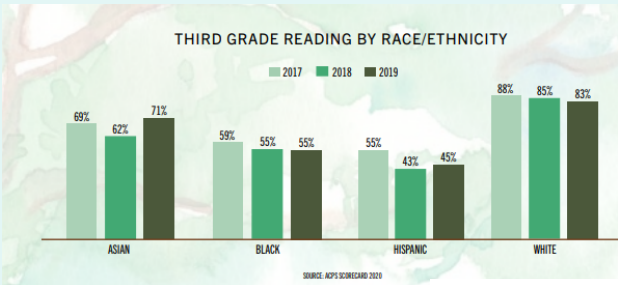
HOW ARE WE DOING?

ACPS is failing in their hopes to achieve educational equity based on the following statistics.

As of 2019, 97% of white ACHS students graduated, while only 71% of Hispanic students, 89% of black students, and 84% of Asian students graduated. This imbalance is also present in early education. 83% of white 3rd graders have efficient literacy rates, while only 71% of Asian students, 55% of black students, and 45% of Hispanic reported to having efficient literacy rates.

Students of color make up 72% of the ACPS student population, but only 38% of students in advanced classes.

These statistics are just examples of how certain demographics of students are more or less likely to excel in their academics.



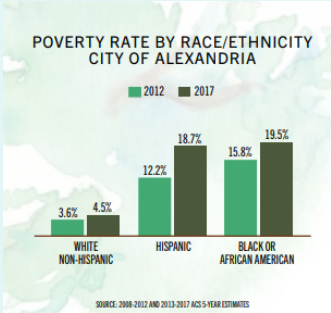
SIGNIFICANCE

Results are important because they are showing the connection that students from lower-income homes are students of color. Students of color are less likely to thrive in school compared to white students, shown in literacy rates, advanced classes enrollment, and graduation rates. This shows inequity because students from lower-income homes generally perform worse academically.

This is likely attributed to the fact that students from lower-income households have a higher priority of earning money than high-income students do. This means low-income students are more likely to spend time at work, not on school, and in turn are less likely to graduate high school.

Parents of lower-income homes are less likely to have the ability to be involved in their child's education because they spend more hours working. This impacts the child's education because there is no one ensuring a student is staying on track and completing homework. There is also likely less parent encouragement for the student to take advanced classes that will better set them up academically.

Students from lower-income homes are less likely to have their needs met, making passing classes a lower priority than getting a next meal.



IMPLEMENTATION

Many ACHS students don't view their counselor as a resource. Some students couldn't even tell you their counselors name and where to find them. With a large student population, it's difficult for counselors to connect with each student. However, when students don't have the parents who will encourage them to pursue advanced classes that will set them ahead, the counselors need to be the ones to advocate for them. Additionally, there should be mandatory one-on-one tutoring for students failing classes. This would ensure a student would receive focused help from a teacher or tutor. One-on-one help has proven to be a more efficient way for students to understand content, opposed to with an entire class.

PARTNERSHIPS



Communities in Schools - NOVA is an extensive resource for ACPS students from low income homes. Funded by donations from Alexandria residents, Communities in Schools provides free groceries, tutoring, mental and physical health assessments, and clothing for students in need. According to their website, a total of 53,932 of NOVA public school students received basic needs support and 2,291 students received weekly or monthly grocery assistance. Nationwide, Communities in Schools helped 1.8 million students achieve more academically. This is shown when 99% of potential dropouts stayed in school, 97% of students were able to proceed to the next grade, and 95% of students in the Dropout Prevention Organization graduated. This data proves Communities in Schools is a great partner in achieving educational equity.

PERFORMANCE EFFORT

Alexandria City Public Schools provides free or reduced price breakfast and lunches for students from low income households.

ACPS offers free tutoring resources like the Saturday Learning Academy and the Writing Center.

ACPS provides counselors, nurses, and the Teen Wellness Center for students whose health requires attention.

ACPS provides certain online summer courses.

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

ACPS students are able to have a need met, two meals each school day, allowing them to focus on their studies.

Students receive academic one-on-one help from a teacher or educated peer. This positively effects the grades of students.

Students needs are met by having access to healthcare. The effects of these resources are steps toward equitable health for every student, regardless of economic status.

This gives students who may have failed a class the opportunity to retake it in a shorter time period, providing opportunities for new classes in the school year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

My policy recommendation would be to consolidate student resources, making them more accessible for students in need.

This policy would ensure any resource a student needs in order to thrive would be found on Alexandria City Public School campuses. Programs like Communities in Schools are so great and effective, but it can be harder for lower-income students with no transportation to get the resources they are in need of. Lower-income students can get their needs met by easily receiving free healthy groceries, clean clothes, mental and physical health support, access to tutors, help with paying rent childcare for siblings or children, and the proper screening and resources for disabilities. This would fulfill the needs of a student, allowing them to make school a priority. In turn, this would lead to higher graduation rates, higher enrollment in advanced classes, lower dropout rates, and more involvement in extracurricular like sports and clubs for lower-income students.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- 1. The Communities in Schools - NOVA website provides information about the resources available for students and the data of what these resources helped students accomplish.
- 2. The Child and Youth Master Plan 2025 can be found online. The PDF provides all of the goals the city of Alexandria hopes to accomplish this year and how they plan on doing so. Detailed information about everything the Alexandria government controls is found in the master plan.

CITATIONS

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IN PERSON

- 1. Communities in Schools - NOVA is a resource found in northern Virginia public schools, city buildings, and at events that provides needed resources to students from donations.
- 2. At the ACHS Satellite campus, Executive Director of Equity and Alternative Programs Kennetra Wood is located. She is a great resource that provides students with the education program that best suits their needs