



# COST OF LIVING REPORT CARD



BY : ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL'S



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## TOPIC

### HEALTHY EATING IN ACPS SCHOOL DISTRICTS

## TOPIC DESCRIPTION

IN ALEXANDRIA, 60% OF RESIDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED MEALS IN ACPS SCHOOLS, ACCORDING TO A STUDY DONE IN 2017. 8% OF KIDS ARE FOOD INSECURE. THESE KIDS OFTEN DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY EATING OPTIONS, INCLUDING FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, WHICH TEND TO BE MORE EXPENSIVE. THE GOAL OF THIS PROJECT IS TO MAKE HEALTHY FOOD MORE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE TO ALEXANDRIA YOUTH, ENSURING THAT EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUAL CHANCE TO SUCCEED.



## RESULT

ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND, HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY MEALS, BOTH AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL.



44%

OF FOOD-INSECURE ALEXANDRIA RESIDENTS DO NOT QUALIFY FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

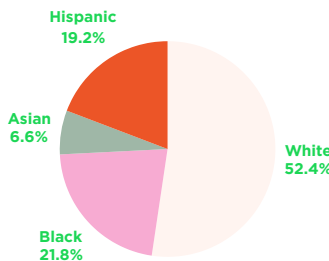
## SIGNIFICANCE

### WHAT IS COST OF LIVING & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

THE COST OF LIVING INCLUDES EXPENSES SUCH AS FOOD, HOUSING, HEALTHCARE, TRANSPORTATION, AND MORE. THE COST OF LIVING VARIES BASED ON WHERE YOU LIVE AND THE LOCATION.

ESPECIALLY NOW WITH INFLATION GOING UP, THE COST OF LIVING IS INCREASING, AND WAGES ARE LOW. THIS CAUSES FAMILIES TO BE UNABLE TO KEEP UP WITH RENT AND OTHER EXPENSES. ADDITIONALLY, IT CAN COST STUDENTS NOT HAVING ACCESS TO RESOURCES LIKE BOOKS, SUPPLIES, AND NUTRITIOUS MEALS.

IN ALEXANDRIA, VA, ALMOST HALF OF THE POPULATION IS BLACK AND HISPANIC. DATA HAVE SHOWN THAT THE MAJORITY OF HISPANICS AND BLACKS EXPERIENCE FOOD INSECURITY, AND THAT IS A PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE TO FIX. THE COMMUNITY SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TO HELP FIX THIS PROBLEM.



## CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

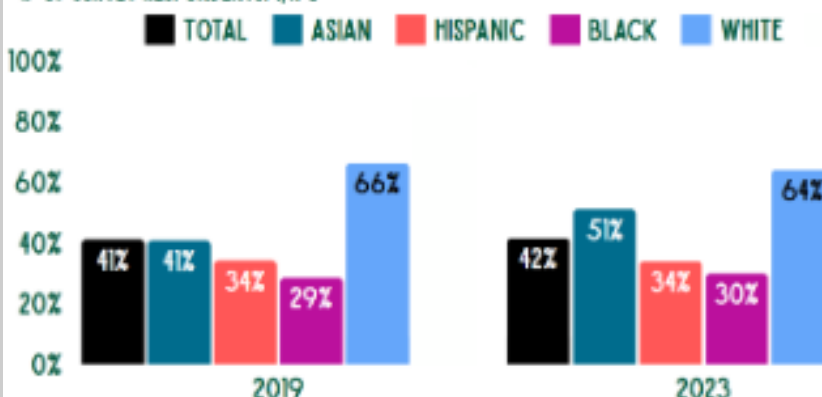
THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IN ALEXANDRIA CAUSES MYRIAD PROBLEMS, INCLUDING FOOD INSECURITY THAT 8% OF ADULTS FACED OR WERE CONCERNED ABOUT IN 2024. CONSIDERING THE HIGH INCOME OF MOST OF THE AREA, THESE RESIDENTS ARE OFTEN IGNORED, AND THE STUDENTS WHO FACE FOOD INSECURITY ARE AT A DISADVANTAGE AT SCHOOL.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

FROM 2019 TO 2023, WE DON'T SEE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR WHITES, BLACKS, AND HISPANICS; ASIANS WENT UP BY 10%. THE TWO LOWEST PERCENTAGES ARE BLACK AT 30% AND HISPANIC AT 34%. WHITES ARE 2.15% MORE LIKELY TO EAT VEGETABLES COMPARED TO BLACK PEOPLE. IT INDICATES THAT WITH ALL THE HIGH COSTS OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, LOW-INCOME FAMILIES ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE HEALTHY MEALS FOR THEIR KIDS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE ACTION AND HELP IMPROVE THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SPECIFIC BLACK AND HISPANIC RACES.

### ATE VEGETABLES AT LEAST 1X PER DAY IN THE PAST 7 DAYS

SOURCE: YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY, 2023  
# OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS: 1,473



## IMPLEMENTATION

- MORE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE FOOD
- OFFER FREE FOOD/LOW-COST MEALS FOR STUDENTS IN SCHOOL
- MORE NUTRITION AND FRESH MEAL PLAN
- MORE FOOD OPTIONS AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE MEALS
- IMPLEMENT MORE SCHOOL GARDEN
- CREATE A CARD FOR YOUTH TO GET DISCOUNTS ON FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.
- MORE HEALTHY OPTIONS IN THE SCHOOL VENDING MACHINE
- MORE FOOD BANKS FOR LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS AND AREAS THAT HAVE A HIGH POPULATION OF BLACK AND HISPANIC RACES.
- SCHOOLS SHOULD OFFER GRAB-AND-GO HEALTHY SNACK BAGS FOR STUDENTS TO ENSURE THEY ARE NOT HUNGRY DURING CLASS TIME.
- ENSURE THAT FOOD IS PROPERLY INSPECTED BEFORE BEING GIVEN TO STUDENTS TO AVOID HOSPITALIZATION AND HEALTH PROBLEMS.

## PARTNERSHIPS

ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL (ACPS)



ACPS STUDENTS



ACPS NUTRITION SERVICES



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES (DCHS)



CITY COUNCIL



NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION



## PERFORMANCE EFFORT

WE SEEK TO IMPROVE HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE MEAL PLANS FOR STUDENTS IN ALEXANDRIA, VA. THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY HAVE WORKED TO HELP ENSURE FAMILIES HAVE THE RESOURCES AND MEALS THEY NEED. THIS YEAR, ACPS HAS WORKED TO ALLOW ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF INCOME, TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS (BREAKFAST AND LUNCH) EVERY DAY. ADDITIONALLY, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES HAS WORKED TO IDENTIFY FAMILIES WITH LOW INCOME, AFFECTED BY FOOD INSECURITY, FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS OF COLOR. THEY WORK TO HELP PROVIDE RESOURCES LIKE HEALTHCARE, SNAP, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, DENTAL, VISION, AND HEARING PROGRAMS.

## PERFORMANCE EFFECT

SOME BARRIERS AND CONSEQUENCES THAT ACPS STUDENTS IN ALEXANDRIA FACE ARE THE OVERPOPULATION OF FAST FOOD NEAR BUS STOPS, SCHOOLS, AND LOW-INCOME RESIDENT HOUSING. MOST LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND STUDENTS RELY ON FAST FOOD AS A QUICK AND AFFORDABLE WAY TO ACCESS FOOD. CONSUMING HIGH AMOUNTS OF FAST FOOD OFTEN CAUSES AN INCREASE IN HEALTH PROBLEMS, AND STUDENTS ARE AT RISK OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND DIABETES. DATA HAVE SHOWN THAT WHITE CHILDREN ARE 2.15 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO EAT VEGETABLES THAN BLACK CHILDREN. AS A COMMUNITY, WE HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER TO REDUCE HUNGER AND ENSURE ALL RACES HAVE THE SAME RESOURCES THEY NEED.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

MY POLICY RECOMMENDATION IS TO CREATE A LONG-TERM POLICY TO EXTEND THE FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH POLICY IN ALEXANDRIA, VA. IT CAN INCREASE SCHOOL LUNCH PARTICIPATION AND RAISE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. FURTHERMORE, SCHOOLS SHOULD PROVIDE FREE AFTER-SCHOOL MEALS FOR STUDENTS STAYING AFTER SCHOOL FOR SPORTS OR CLUBS. ANOTHER POLICY IS TO REDUCE THE COST OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES IN FARMERS' MARKETS AND GROCERY STORES BECAUSE THEY ARE EXPENSIVE. THAT IS OFTEN THE REASON WHY FAMILIES ARE NOT BUYING VEGETABLES. SIMILARITIES, ADDING MORE GROCERY STORES NEAR SCHOOL AREAS, BUS STOPS, AND LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS CAN HELP REDUCE THE PRESSURE OF EATING FAST FOOD. IN ADDITION, I WANT TO CREATE A POLICY TO HELP EXPAND COMMUNITY GARDENS IN SCHOOLS AND LOCAL RESIDENCES. THIS WAY, ALL FAMILIES CAN PICK UP SOME FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AT NO COST.

## ONLINE

- ACPS OFFICE OF SCHOOL NUTRITION SERVICES WEBSITE
- SCHOOLCAFE ALEXANDRIA ACPS
- FOOD ASSISTANCE (CITY OF ALEXANDRIA VIRGINIA)



## IN PERSON

- TEACHER/STAFF
- STUDENTS
- ALIVE (FOOD HUBS)
- SCHOOL CAFETERIA STAFF



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