

Alexandria's Youth Needs Assessment

Priority Setting with the Children, Youth, &
Families Collaborative Commission

Welcome & Purpose

01
Introduce

- Introduce CYFCC to the Youth Needs Assessment (YNA)

02
Review

- Review priority-setting criteria

03
Identify

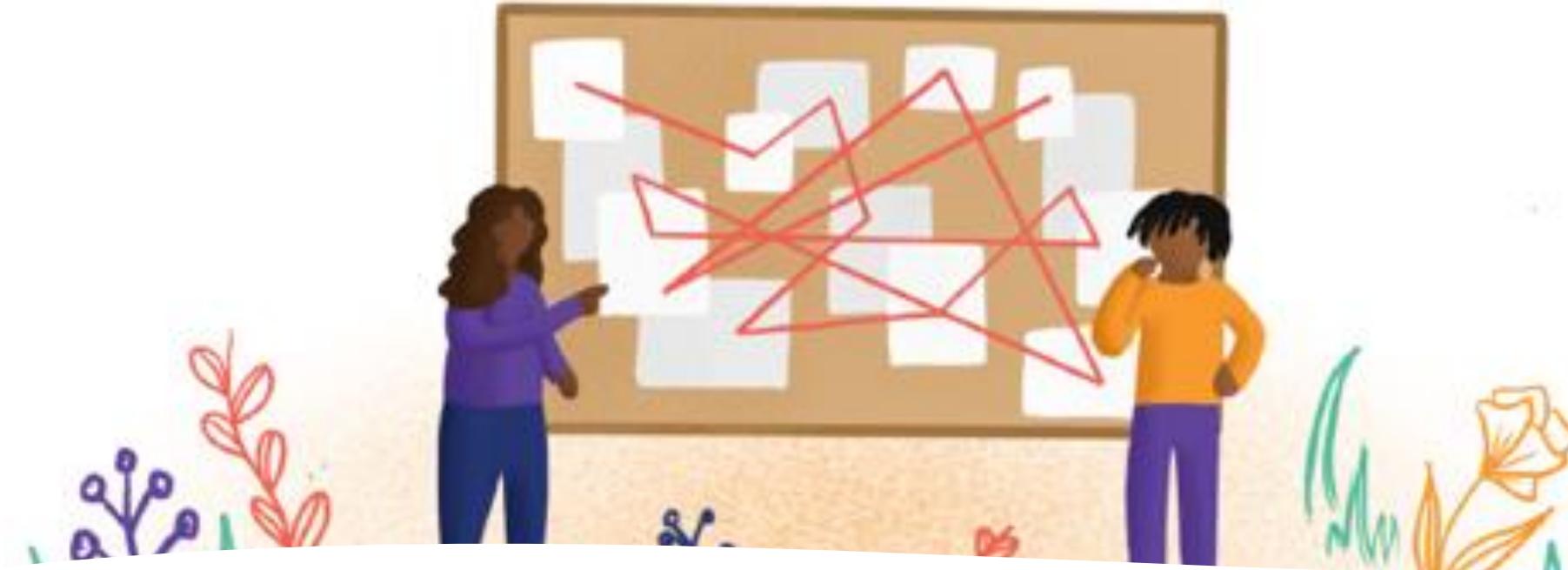
- Identify 3–5 focus areas for the next CYCP



What is the Youth Needs Assessment?

- Community-wide effort to understand youth needs
- Grounded in youth voice and lived experience
- Designed to inform the next Children and Youth Community Plan (CYCP)





How Was the Assessment Conducted?

- 1,140+ Youth Engaged in Youth Participatory Action Research
- 94 Listening Sessions Conducted by 33 youth & 30 adults
- 3,800+ Listening Session responses analyzed
- Round 1: Youth Issues Survey and Real vs. Ideal Community Activities
- Round 2: Data review, root causes, and solutions identified by youth
- Combined with local data and resident surveys

How Will It Be Used?

- Determine priorities, define scope, and set success measures
- Guide CYCP strategies and shape other city-wide initiatives



High-Level Themes



Basic Needs &
Relevant Resources



Educational Equity



Physical &
Psychological
Safety



Mental, Physical &
Behavioral Health



Social
Connectedness &
Belonging



Responsive & Just
Government



Environment,
Employment, and
Others



DEEP DIVE INTO THE FINDINGS

THEME: BASIC NEEDS & RELEVANT RESOURCES

82% of survey respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~680+ times during Listening Sessions





Cost of Living

Emerged 500+ times

Themes:

- **Economic Security** (~250+ mentions)
- **Food Security** (~45+ mentions)
- **Healthcare** (~80+ mentions)
- **Housing** (~95+ mentions)
- **Social Services** (~20 mentions)

What Youth Want

- Affordable or free access to housing, healthcare, food, and basic necessities
- Families able to meet basic needs without financial strain
- No one experiencing homelessness or poverty
- Resources distributed equitably across neighborhoods

“A community in which everybody has access to the things they need.”

“Minimum wage increased to a living wage.”

“Universal healthcare.”

“Healthy organic food that is affordable.”

“Affordable Housing”

“Lower rent for single mothers.”

“More free resources for youth.”

“More programs for low-income, homeless”

What Youth Experience

- High cost of living and economic inequality
- Significant barriers to accessing essential resources such as healthcare, housing, healthy food, and other basic needs

“A lot of people don’t get paid much and can’t afford a lot of things.”

“Cost of living here is extremely high...I can’t think of any young people planning on living here past high school.”

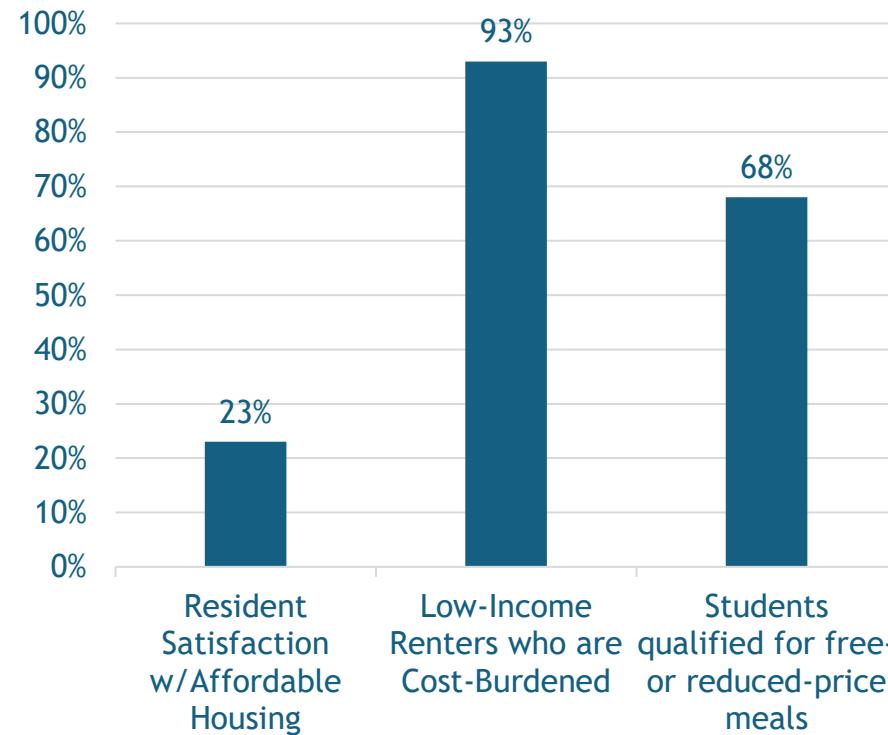
“The prices of food are very high.”

“Expensive healthcare.”

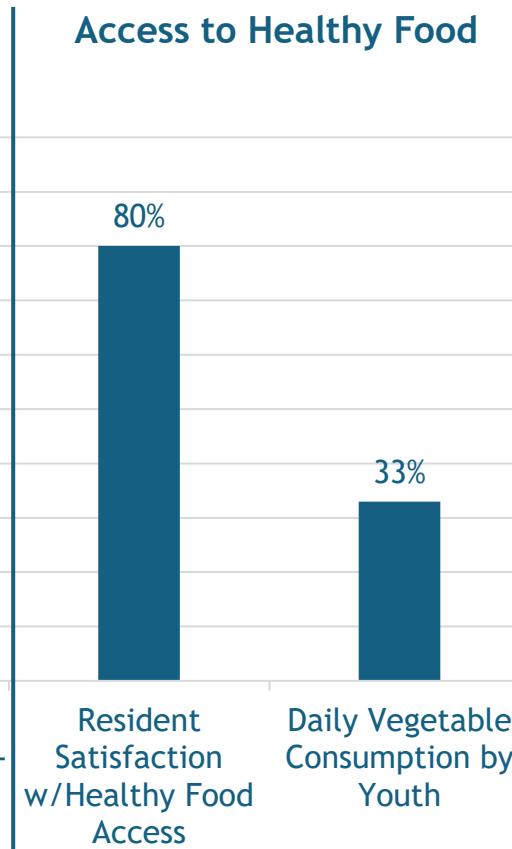


What existing Data Tell us about the Cost of Living

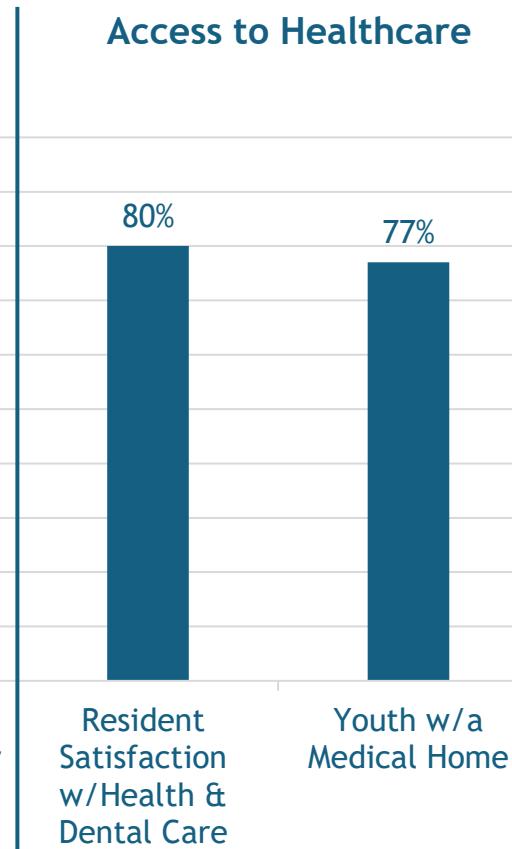
Economic Conditions & Access to Affordable Housing



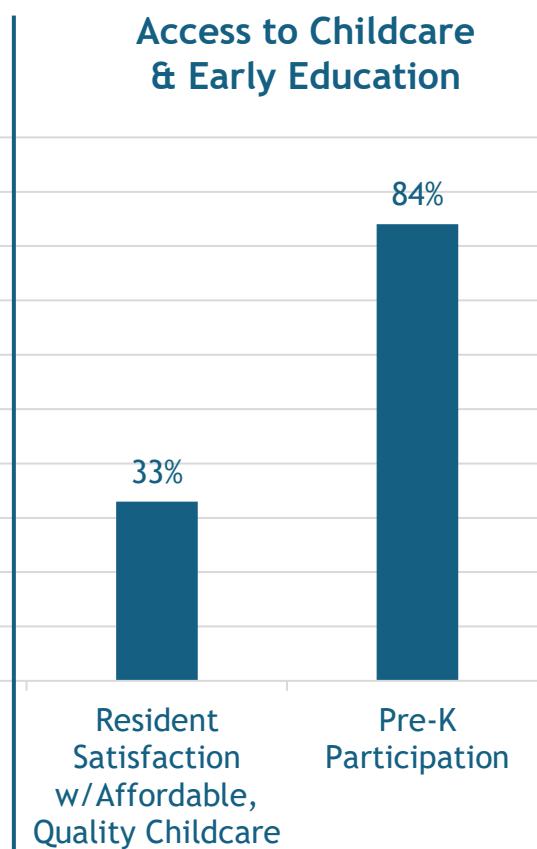
Access to Healthy Food



Access to Healthcare



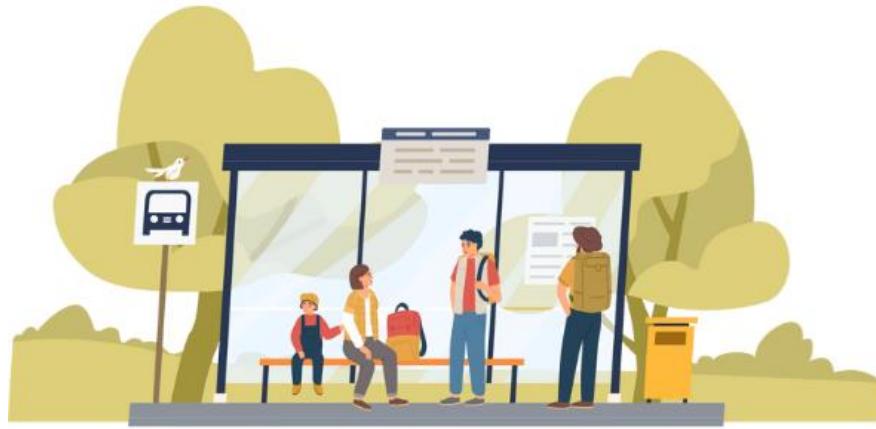
Access to Childcare & Early Education



Youth Recommendations:

Reduce Cost Burdens	Lower rent, utilities, and inflation to make Alexandria more affordable. Require companies to reduce prices on essential services.
Expand Financial Support	Provide tax relief and direct assistance for low-income families.
Increase Access to Resources	Make basic services like groceries more affordable or free for those in need. Improve outreach so more people know about and can access available resources.
Support Immigrants	Ensure access to housing, jobs, and services for newcomers.
Engage the Community	Ask those most affected about their needs and include them in decision-making. Encourage youth to advocate to leaders like the mayor.
Think Boldly	Students voiced a desire for ambitious solutions, like major economic investment, to address inequality.





Transportation & Mobility

Emerged 180+ times

Themes:

- Condition of City Infrastructure & Built Environment (~40+ mentions)
- Public Transit (~105+ mentions)
- Traffic Safety & Management (~30+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Well-maintained roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes
- Reliable, clean, and free public transit
- Walkable neighborhoods and safer traffic patterns

“Free metro!”

“Well-built roads, sidewalks, public parks, etc.”

“More parking at school and everywhere in Alexandria.”

“My ideal community has more bus drivers.”

“More public transportation of people who don’t have access to a car; most DASH buses are often very packed.”

What Youth Experience

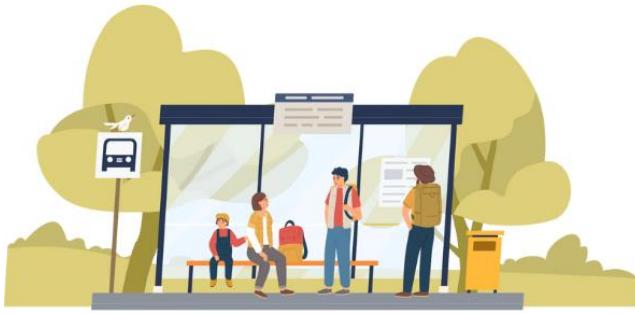
- Deteriorating Infrastructure
- Unreliable Public Transit
- Traffic Safety and Risk

“Broken sidewalks.”

“My bus just doesn’t show up sometimes.”

“People not driving safely - on their phones.”

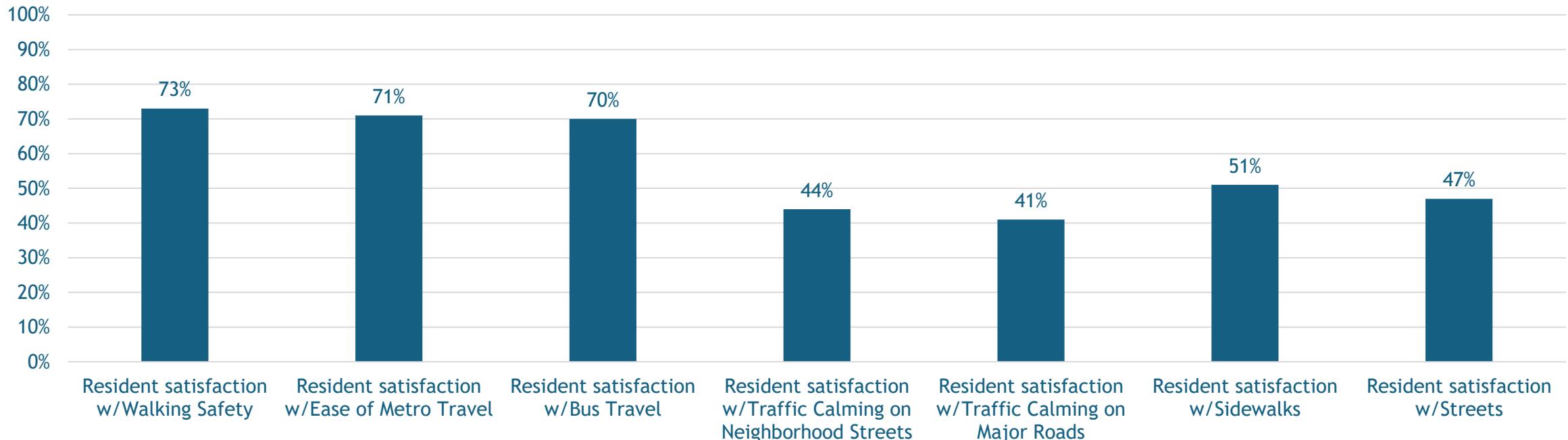
“Quaker/Braddock intersection is not safe.”



What existing Data Tell us about Transportation & Mobility

Transportation Services

Data Source: 2024 City of Alexandria Resident Survey



Data Source : Alexandria Resident Survey (2024)

THEME: EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

80% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~1,200 times during Listening Sessions





Academic Environment & Success

Emerged 260+ times

Themes:

- Learning and Engagement (105+ mentions)
- Relationships and Academic Encouragement (100+ mentions)
- Assessment Practices (30+ mentions)
- Access and Opportunity (25+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Hands-on, experiential learning
- Personalized support and strong teacher-student relationships
- Passionate, well-supported educators
- Fair, growth-focused assessments
- Equitable access to learning opportunities

“An ideal school looks like everyone getting the help that they need for learning.”

“Students deserve to learn from passionate, involved teachers.”

“Different ways of evaluating knowledge.”

“Provides the knowledge and skills students will need for their future.”

What Youth Experience

- Appreciate the variety of class options and the dedication of some teachers
- Many describe discouraging experiences, including teachers who “give up on kids easy”
- Limited one-on-one student-teacher interactions
- Insufficient encouragement from staff

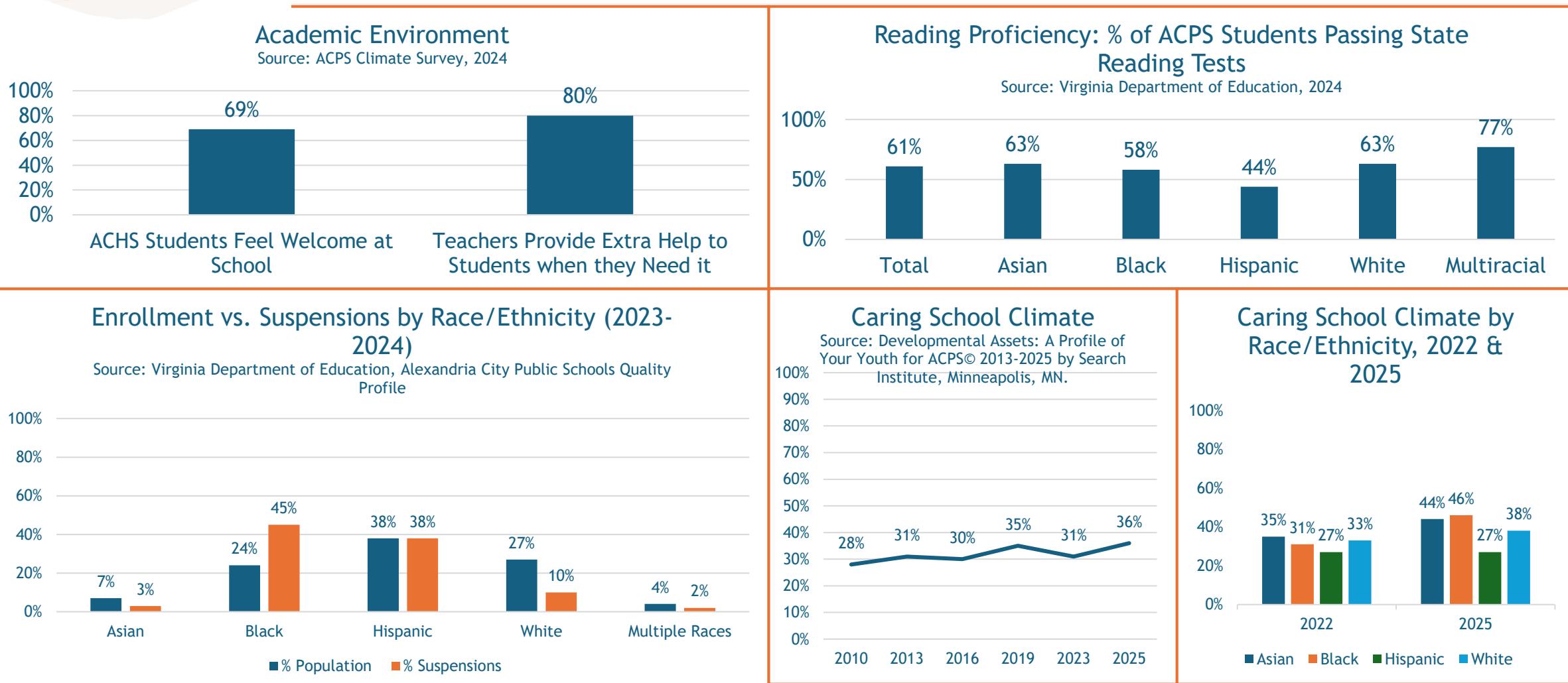
“Great variety of classes.”

“Haven’t been on a field trip since 9th grade.”

“Teacher retention - whatever we’re doing, it isn’t working.”



What existing Data Tell us about Academic Success & Environments





Youth Recommendations:

Build Stronger Teacher-Student Connections:

Suggestions include creating more free time during classes for students to interact with teachers.

Provide Enhanced Advising in Middle School:

By providing better guidance and more exposure to various academic pathways early on, schools could encourage a more diverse group of students to pursue advanced courses.

Focus Efforts on Equity:

Continue to ensure that advanced classes and academic support are promoted equitably across all demographics, addressing the systemic issues that leave Black and Hispanic students at a disadvantage.

Address Teacher Burnout:

Improving teacher retention through accountability measures and professional support may create a more consistent and passionate academic environment.

Create a Welcoming Environment:

Initiatives to make students feel more welcome are essential for long-term academic success.



School Facilities & Operations

Emerged 455+ times

Themes:

- Maintenance & Custodial Services (~70+ mentions)
- Physical Conditions & Infrastructure (~90+ mentions)
- School Bus Transit & Intercampus Transportation (~70+ mentions)
- School Lunch Services (~225+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Clean classrooms, bathrooms, and shared spaces
- Spacious school buildings that meet the diverse needs of its students
- Reliable and accessible school transportation
- Connected campuses to reduce lost learning time
- High-quality, culturally inclusive school lunches

“Bathrooms are always open and clean.”

“Less crowded hallways.”

“One connected campus - transportation issues solved.”

“Longer lunches”

“Beter school food.”

“We need halal food in schools.”

What Youth Experience

- Unsanitary restrooms
- Overcrowded spaces
- Insufficient transportation between campuses
- Inadequate lunch accommodations

“Bathrooms are disgusting.”

“The hallways are so packed in.”

“The campus switching is awful and takes so long.”

“Lack of lunch and learn = lack of equity”

“The food is bad and sometimes gets me sick.”

Youth Recommendations:

Transportation & Scheduling Adjustments:

Consolidating classes on one campus to minimize intercampus transportation issues.

Adding more buses and permitting walking between campuses when safe.

Restructuring the school day (e.g., shifting Titan Time to the lunch block) to allow longer and less crowded lunch periods.

Facility Improvements:

Unlocking or removing barriers in bathrooms and hallways.

Enhancing maintenance by ensuring that restrooms are regularly cleaned and stocked with necessary supplies (including feminine hygiene products).

Physical upgrades such as installing additional security features (like bulletproof glass where needed) and addressing overcrowding in critical areas.

Enhanced Communication & Engagement:

Instituting clearer, more open lines of communication between students, teachers, and administrators so that issues are understood and addressed promptly.

Encouraging student input on facility-related concerns.

Funding & Policy Adjustments:

Advocating for more funding to improve school facilities and maintenance.

Reevaluating policies that restrict student movement or exacerbate scheduling conflicts.



School Leadership & Student Engagement

Emerged 175+ times

Themes:

- Digital Access Policies & General Policy Clarity (~75+ mentions)
- Communication and Shared Decision-Making (~60+ mentions)
- School Climate and Interpersonal Respect (~35+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Transparent, two-way communication
- Student voice valued and included in decisions
- Fair, clear, and consistent policies
- Respectful, safe, and inclusive school climate

“Better communication between school board and students and teachers.”

“More access points for student input.”

“More trust between students and administration.”

“Listen to students and do what they ask. Not say you listen and do the opposite.”

“Transparency around changes in procedures/rules.”

What Youth Experience

- Feeling unheard or dismissed by school leadership
- Frustration with phone and internet restrictions
- Inconsistent or unclear policies
- Disrespect, favoritism, discrimination, and lack of trust between students and staff

“School doesn’t listen to students’ concerns.”

“I think the School Board and Central Office should communicate with both students and teachers more. I feel like they make many decisions without consulting the people who are affected by their decisions.”

“Students get the opportunity to speak out but were still looked as children. We deserve to get the chance to be taken seriously.”

“Some teachers straight up discriminate certain students.”

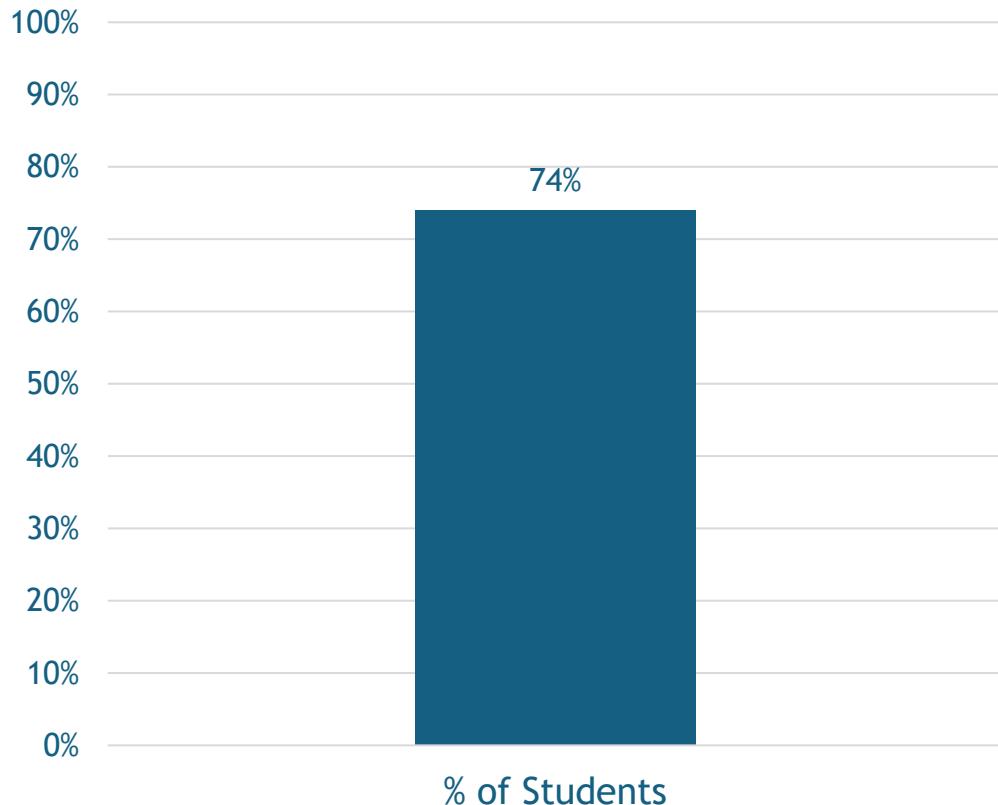
“In my school, being a part of LGBTQIA is looked down upon.”



What existing Data Tell us about School Leadership & Student Engagement

Adults at ACPS Care about All Students

Source: ACPS Climate Survey, 2024

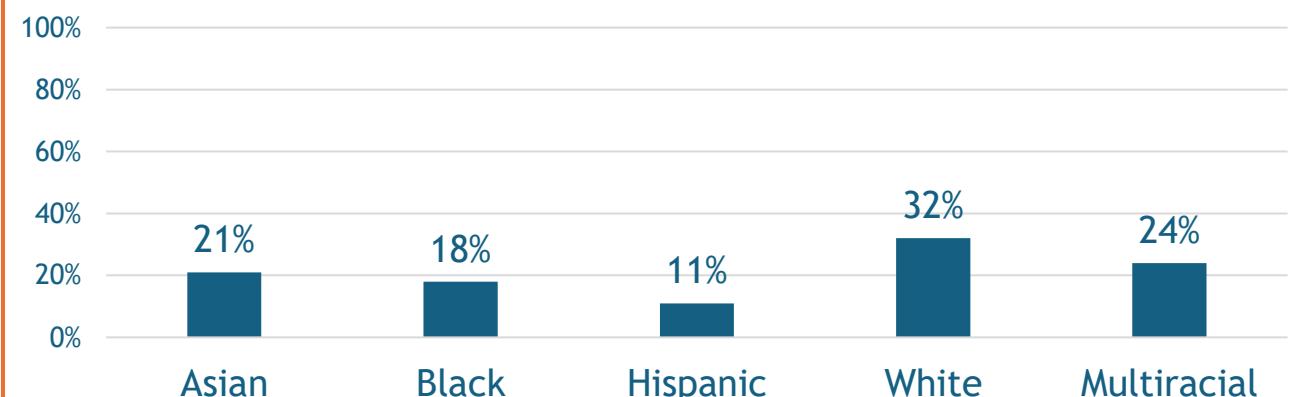


Community Values Youth

Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth for ACPS



Community Values Youth by Race/Ethnicity



Youth Recommendations:



Policy Development:

- Students want to understand the rationale behind rules and see them applied equitably. Involving youth in shaping and reviewing policies could increase trust.

Authentic Communication:

- Students are asking for real-time updates, clarity around school-wide decisions, and honest, two-way conversations.

Student Voice and Power Sharing:

- Youth are not only willing but eager to participate in shaping their school experience. Creating meaningful structures for student input can deepen engagement and ownership.

Climate and Belonging:

- Respect, safety, and fairness remain essential. While many students feel supported, others are still navigating environments where bias or exclusion persist.



Student Wellbeing & Support Services

Emerged 305+ times

Themes:

- Mental Health and Emotional Support (~55+ mentions)
- Workload Balance and Restorative School Schedules (~240+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Accessible, culturally responsive mental health care in school
- Supportive relationships with trusted adults
- A school culture that normalizes mental health, balances workloads, and provides time for breaks, outdoor activity, and physical wellbeing.

“More mental health support for students.”

“Lighter workloads.”

“I think they should bring recess back as it was a time for us to take a chill pill from the rest of the day, and it was a nice mental break.”

“I would want the classrooms to be more decorated so it looks more welcoming.”

What Youth Experience

- While some students reported positive experiences with mental health staff, others faced barriers to access, privacy concerns, and inconsistent support
- Many also felt chronically stressed and fatigued by long days, short breaks, early start times, and heavy workloads.

“Lack of connection between students and counselors.”

“Little to no care about students' mental health.”

“Not enough breaks in school.”

“A lot of time sitting in class instead of going outside.”

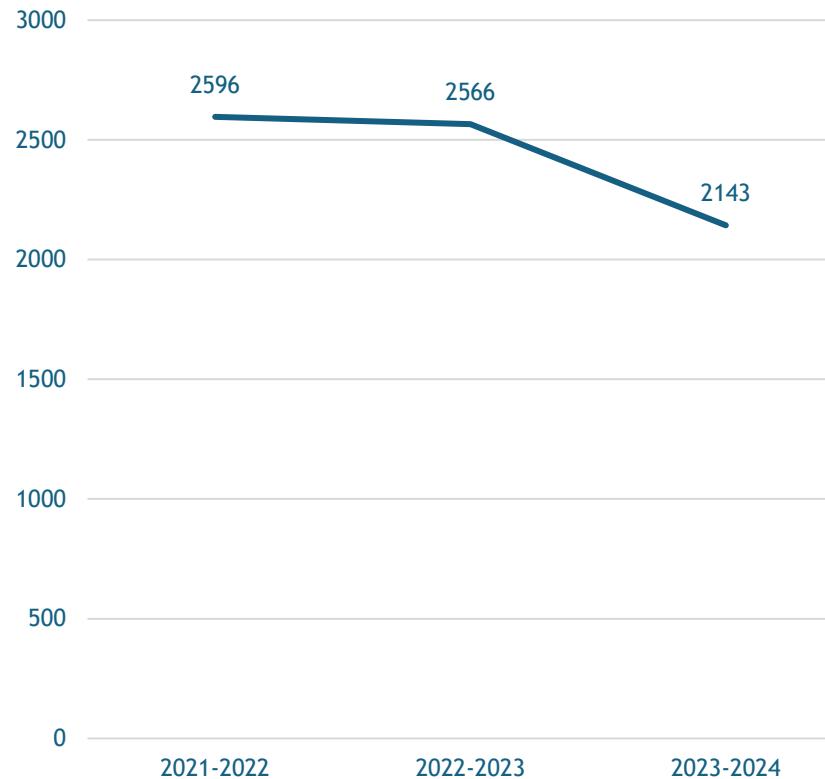
“There is too much pressure and expectation on students.”



What existing Data Tell us about Student Wellbeing & Support Services

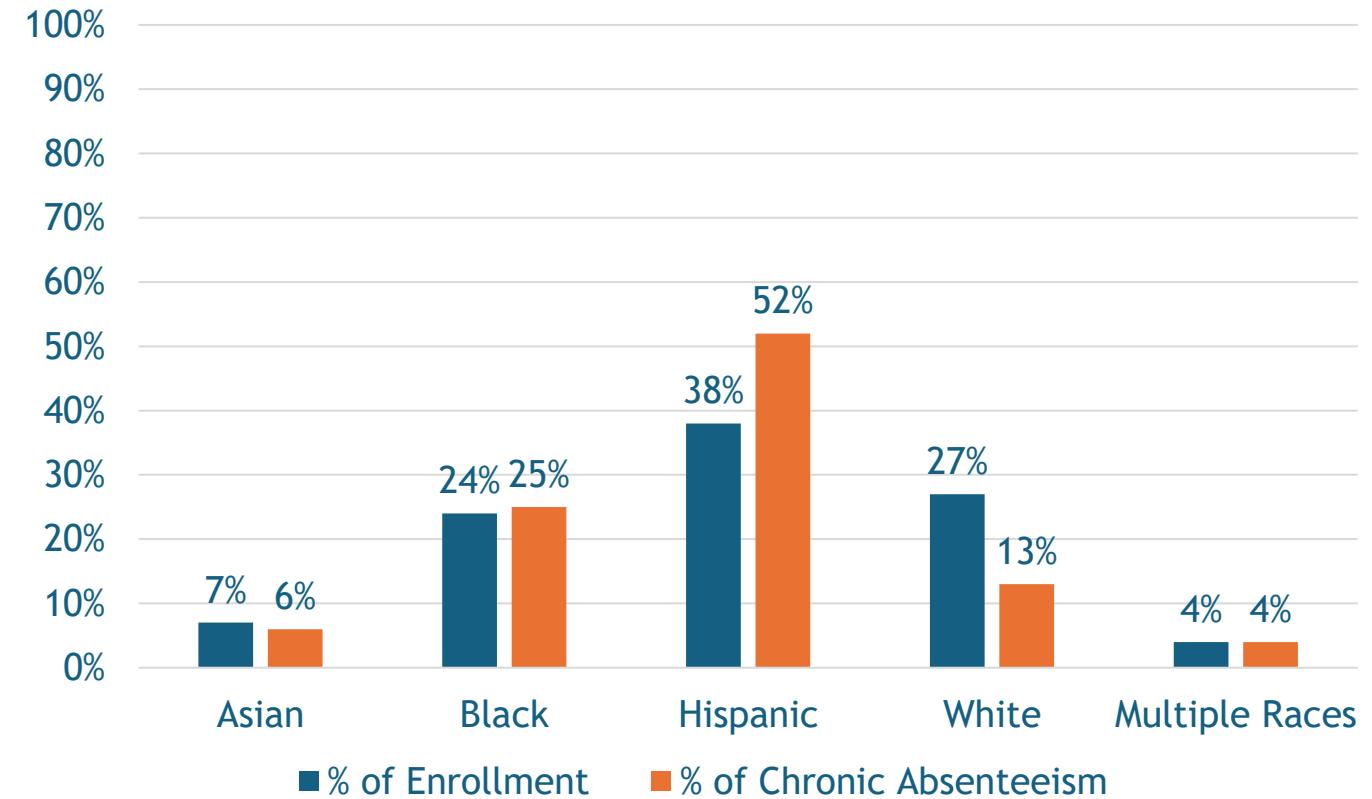
Chronic Absenteeism

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Alexandria City Public Schools Quality Profile



Chronic Absenteeism by Race/Ethnicity, 2023-2024

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Alexandria City Public Schools Quality Profile



THEME: PHYSICAL, MENTAL, & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

81% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~325 times during Listening Sessions





Mental, Physical, & Behavioral Health

Emerged 325+ times

Themes:

- **Mental Health Access & Supports** (70+ mentions)
- **Physical Activity & Recreation** (70+ mentions)
- **Substance Use Prevention** (170+ mentions)
- **Relationships, Sexual Health, and Risk Behaviors** (~10+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Free, confidential mental health services in and out of school
- Inclusive, clean, and well-funded recreation and sports programs
- Drug- and alcohol-free environment with prevention, education, and treatment
- Comprehensive sex education and healthy relationship support

“Normalize mental health help/therapy”

“Free and inclusive youth sports”

“100K for free rehab centers”

“No drugs and vape pens”

“A support group for troubled teens”

What Youth Experience

- Limited availability of mental health services, with ongoing stigma around seeking help
- Recreational facilities that are outdated, inaccessible, or cost-prohibitive
- High rates of vaping and marijuana use in schools
- Inconsistent or insufficient sexual health education

“Not enough therapy.”

“Expensive sports.”

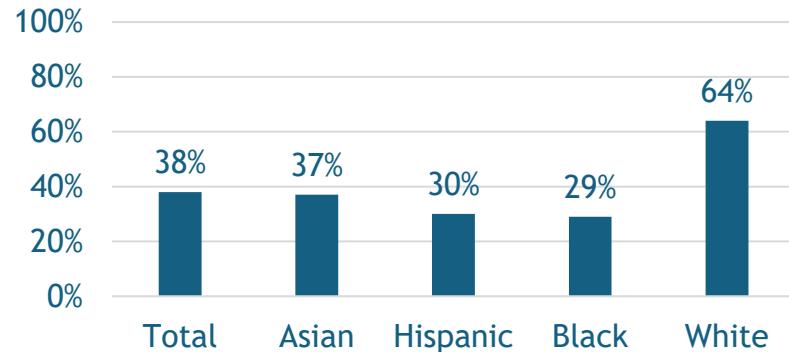
“Our school has a major problem with locking all of the bathrooms to stop people vaping in them but instead it just makes it so that there’s only one bathroom where everyone is vaping.”

“Mandatory sex ed.”

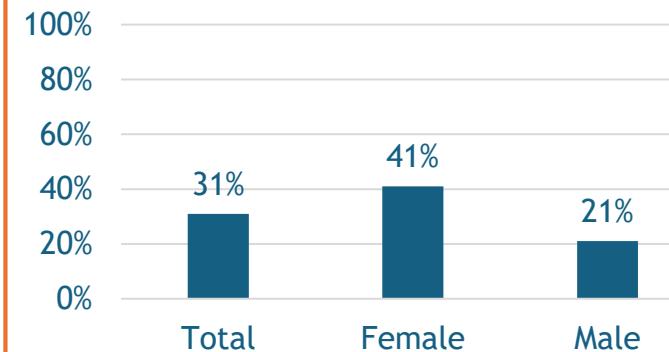


What existing Data Tell us about Mental, Physical, & Behavioral Health

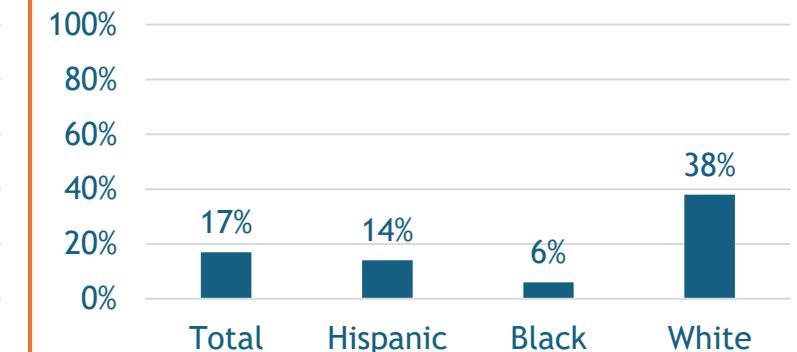
5+ Days of Exercise/Week by Race/Ethnicity



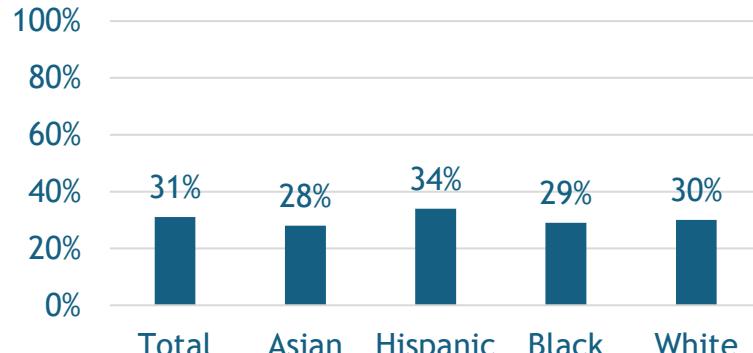
Feeling Hopeless or Sad by Gender



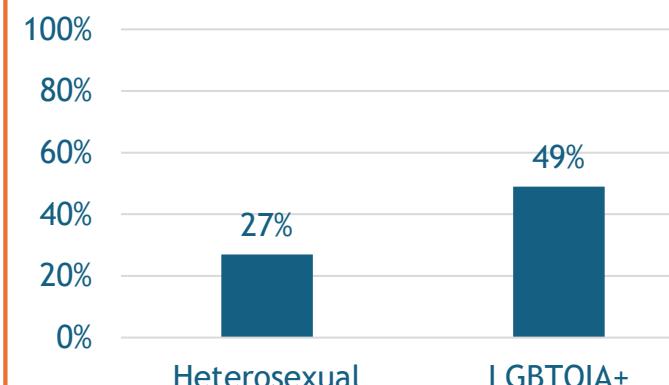
Past 30-Day Alcohol Use by Race/Ethnicity



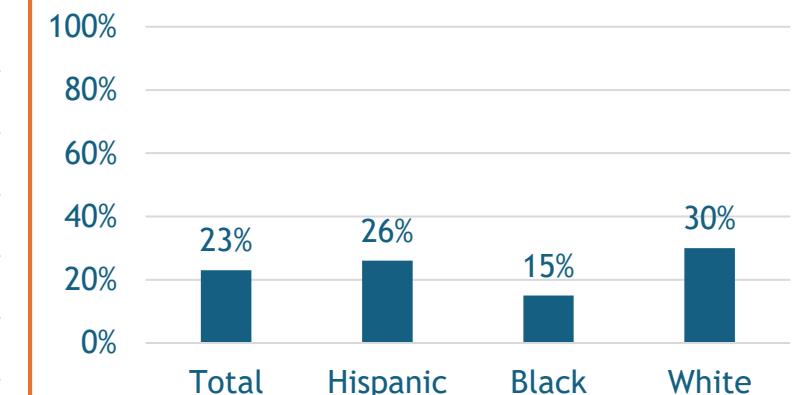
Feeling Hopeless or Sad by Race/Ethnicity



Feeling Hopeless or Sad by Sexual Orientation



Ever Tried Vaping by Race/Ethnicity



Youth Recommendations:



Enhanced Mental Health Support:

- Increase funding for mental health services, provide easier access to counselors, and institute regular check-ins (e.g., bi-weekly) by social workers or counselors.

Improved Physical Health Opportunities:

- Offer free public gyms and better access to recreational facilities (fields, pools) that are especially accessible to minority groups.

Supportive School Policies:

- Develop policies that allow students to take mental health days, reduce fear of retribution when seeking help, and foster a culture of trust between teachers and students.

Resource Allocation:

- Redirect resources toward programs that focus on “correction and support rather than punitive measures” - this could include more mental health and behavior resources, as well as dedicated programs for stress management.

Community and Government Engagement:

- Advocate for more government focus on youth mental health, greater community involvement, and clearer communication channels between all stakeholders.

THEME: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & CLIMATE CHANGE

72% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~195+ times during Listening Sessions





Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Emerged 195+ times

Themes:

- Ecological Health of the City (90+ mentions)
- Waste Management (105+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Clean water, air, and green public spaces
- More trees, gardens, and nature-friendly areas
- Infrastructure that promotes walking and biking
- Easy access to recycling and composting services

“Better biking-accessible roads to promote biking.”

“More walkable access to everything.”

“More open spaces like parks and gardens.”

“More farmers markets”

“More people oriented infrastructure.”

“There would be more ways to eliminate plastic and help the environment.”

“Fight against climate change.”

What Youth Experience

- Dirty streets, polluted waterways, and limited green space access
- Inadequate infrastructure for biking, walking, and recycling
- Concerns about flooding and water management
- Visible litter and limited municipal waste services

“Bad water system.”

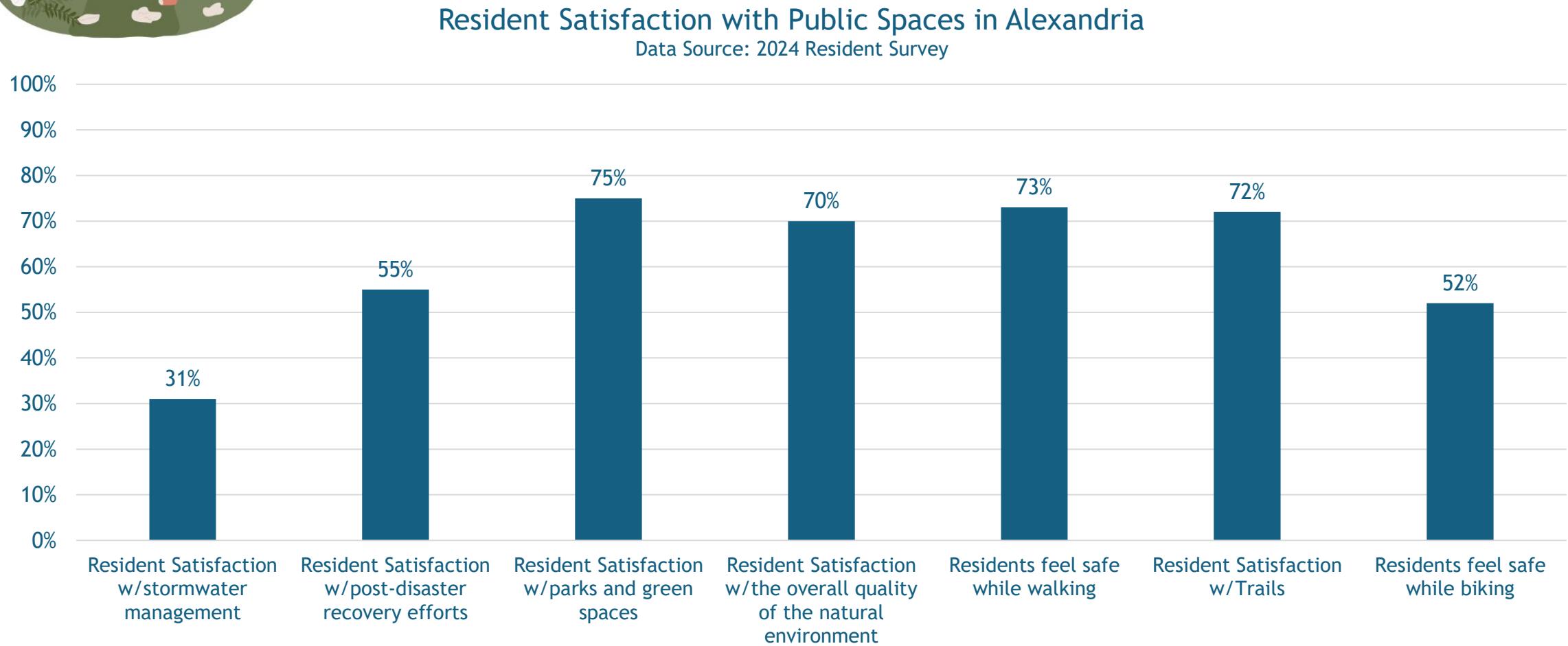
“Lack of bike lanes.”

“Trash everywhere.” / “Lots of littering.”

“No recycling services (you have to do it yourself).”



What existing Data Tell us about Environmental Protection & Climate Change



THEME: SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS & BELONGING

69% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~355+ times during Listening Sessions





Social Connectedness & Belonging

Emerged 355+ times

Themes:

- Constructive Use of Time (140+ mentions)
- Supportive Relationships and Environments (210+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Affordable afterschool programs, sports, clubs, and creative activities
- Neighborhood events that build connection and belonging
- Inclusive, respectful school and community environments
- Trusted adults and mentors for support
- Safe, screen-free spaces for authentic relationships

“Somewhere I feel included.”

“More safe community spaces for kids to hang out.”

“Everyone gets along and supports each other.”

“More coaches and mentors.”

“More high school and middle school relationship.”

What Youth Experience

- Limited Access to Programming
- Social Disconnection
- Lack of Trusted Adults

“I'm struggling making new friends.”

“There are almost no places for kids to hang out with friends.”

“Fun activities only occur in East Alexandria.”

“Not enough mentors/trusted adults at school.”

“Communities are not united.”

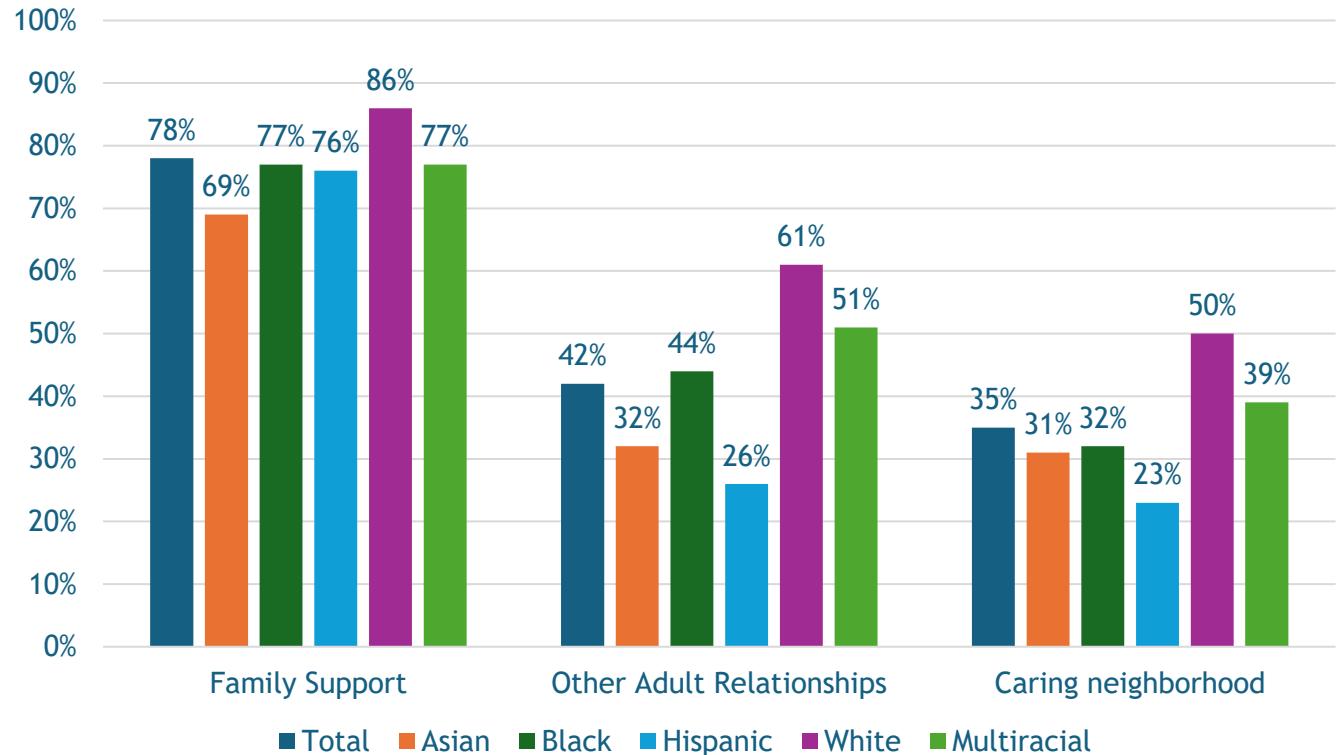
“Diverse but not connected.”

Positive mention: “My community likes to be kind to people. They are honest with each other and they like to dance and they really like enchiladas.”

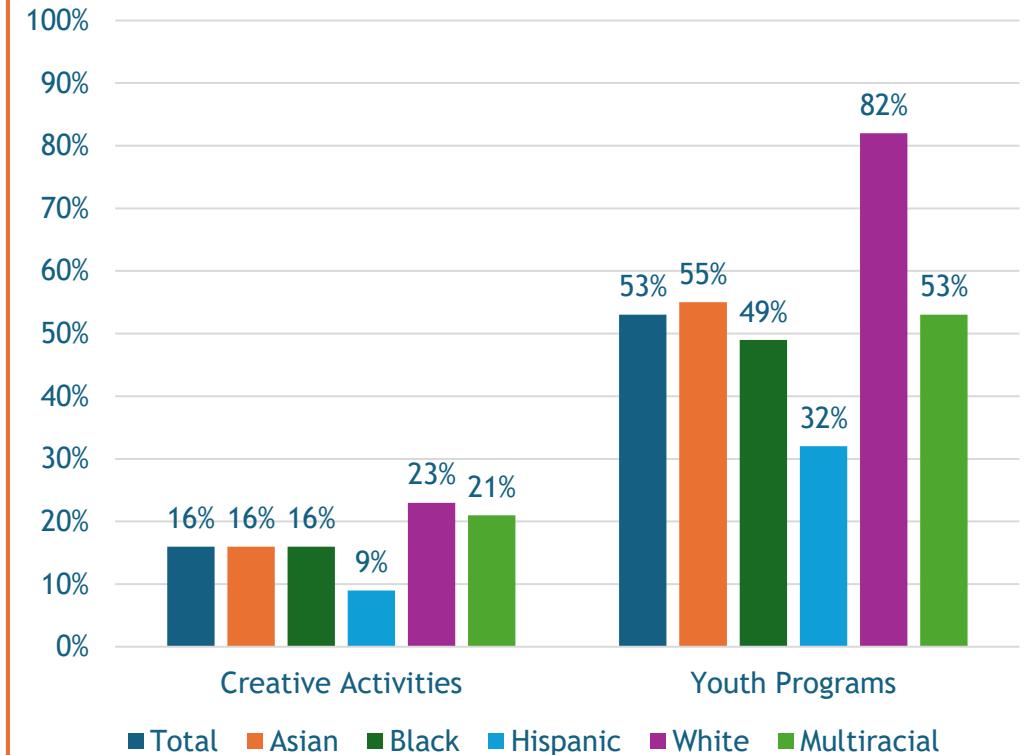


What existing Data Tell us about Social Connectedness & Belonging

Supportive Relationships & Environments Measurements by Race/Ethnicity
Source: Developmental Assets, 2025



Constructive Use of Time Measurements by Race/Ethnicity
Source: Developmental Assets, 2025



THEME: PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

78% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~675 times during Listening Sessions





Physical and Psychological Safety

Emerged 675+ times

Themes:

- Bullying Prevention (100+ mentions)
- Safe & Walkable Neighborhoods (210+ mentions)
- School Safety & Security (140+ mentions)
- Violence & Abuse Prevention (225+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Schools free of bullying, harassment, and judgment
- Caring adults who listen, believe them, and respond consistently
- Peaceful neighborhoods with well-lit streets, safe crosswalks, and walkable infrastructure
- Emergency protocols that protect safety while preserving student dignity
- Prevention of violence through proactive systems, not just after-the-fact discipline

“More safe spaces for queer/trans youth.”

“My ideal Alexandria is for school shootings and bullying to be more of a concern to schools so kids feel safer going to school.”

“More afterschool clubs so kids can be in a community and have a safe space.”

What Youth Experience

- Cyberbullying and discrimination often unaddressed or inconsistently handled
- Neighborhood safety concerns: poor lighting, vandalism, theft, lack of pedestrian infrastructure
- Exposure to or fear of gun violence, fights, intimate partner violence, and sexual assault
- Mixed feelings about school safety measures

“Bullying isn’t taken seriously.”

“My school community is like a prison.”

“Glass walls - what about active shooter?”

“Many kids go to an abusive and toxic home.”

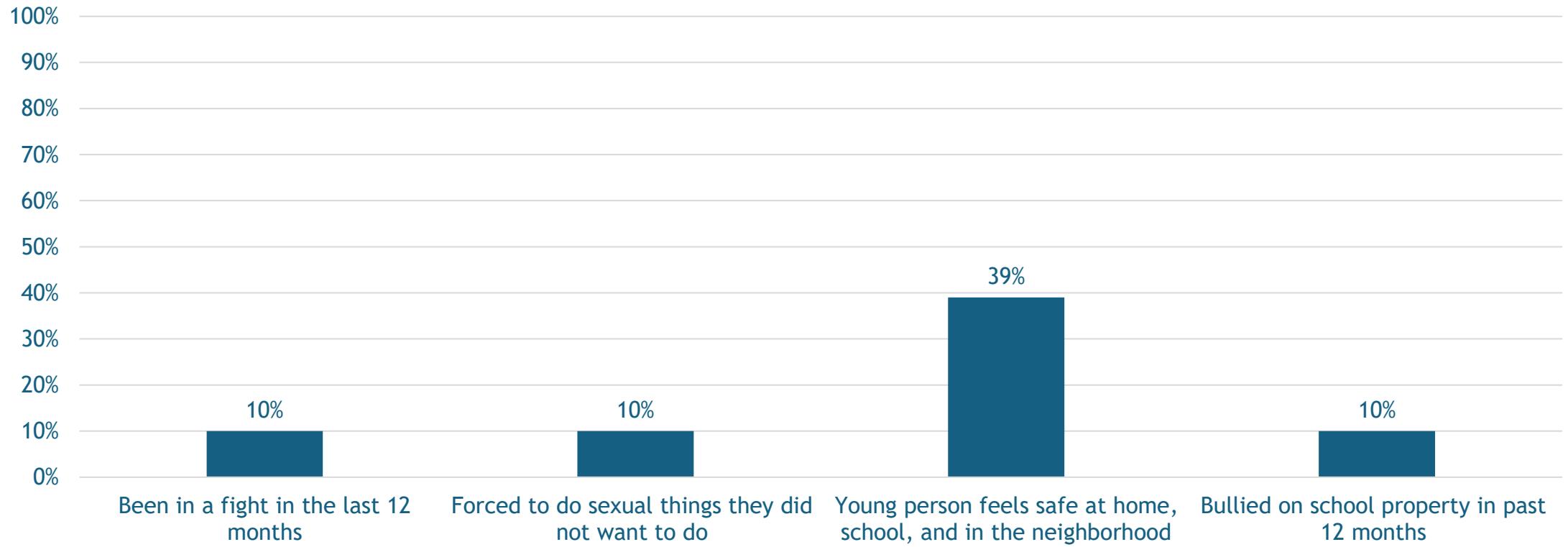
“Sexual harassment in school.” / “People are sexually assaulted in bathrooms and cannot report.”



What existing Data Tell us about Physical and Psychological Safety

Youth Safety Measures

Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Alexandria, 2023



Youth Recommendations:

Enhanced Security and Training

Suggestions included hiring stronger resource officers, providing better security training (with an emphasis on relationship-building rather than just enforcement), and even installing improved metal detectors that truly deter contraband.

Improved Infrastructure and Protocols

Ideas ranged from installing bulletproof glass in key areas to rethinking the design of entryways and evacuation routes. Some students advocated for clearer, more effective security procedures developed in consultation with students

Greater Student-Staff Communication

Many stressed the importance of involving students in safety discussions - creating feedback channels so that students can report issues and contribute ideas.

Balanced Policies

Some proposed that while safety is paramount, the school environment should not feel restrictive or “prison-like.” Instead, measures should enhance security without impinging on student freedom.

Community and Administrative Engagement

Additional proposals included increased police presence where necessary, but with an emphasis on building trust, as well as more direct communication from administration regarding security policies.



THEME: PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE & CAREERS

80% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~85+ times during Listening Sessions





Pathways to College & Careers

Emerged 85+ times

Themes:

- Equity, Access, & Affordability (70+ mentions)
- Guidance & Counseling (10+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Affordable or free college options and robust scholarship access
- Equal opportunity regardless of income, background, or immigration status
- More hands-on support from college and career counselors
- Culturally responsive guidance for first-generation students
- Broader definitions of success
- Exposure to real-world experiences like internships, apprenticeships, and job training

“Make college free; not a lot of people can get into college because of money.”

“More career readiness - welding, 3-D modeling.”

“Less pressure to go to college (more ways to be successful).”

“Everyone should have their own personal college advisor.”

What Youth Experience

- Not all students feel adequately guided, especially those pursuing alternatives to four-year colleges or who are the first in their families to navigate the system.
- Youth feel there is a dominant narrative that equates success with college admission, which can exclude or stigmatize other valuable career paths.

“People have to pay A LOT OF MONEY for college causing people to end school at 12th grade.”

“Not everyone gets to go to college.”

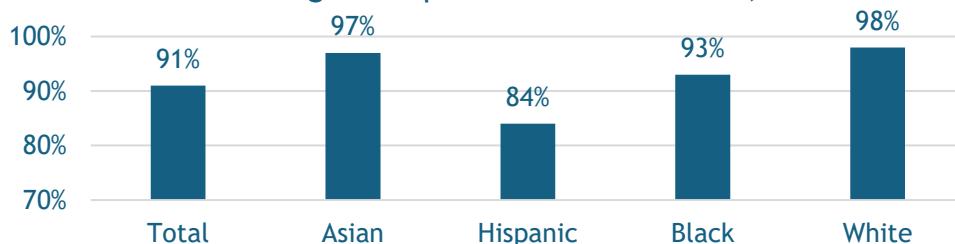
“Lack of scholarship access.”

Positive mention: “The scholarship fund of Alexandria is super helpful.”

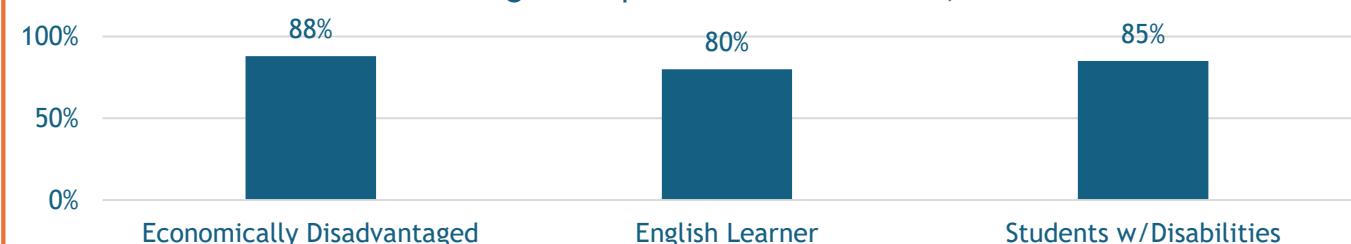


What existing Data Tell us about Pathways to College & Careers

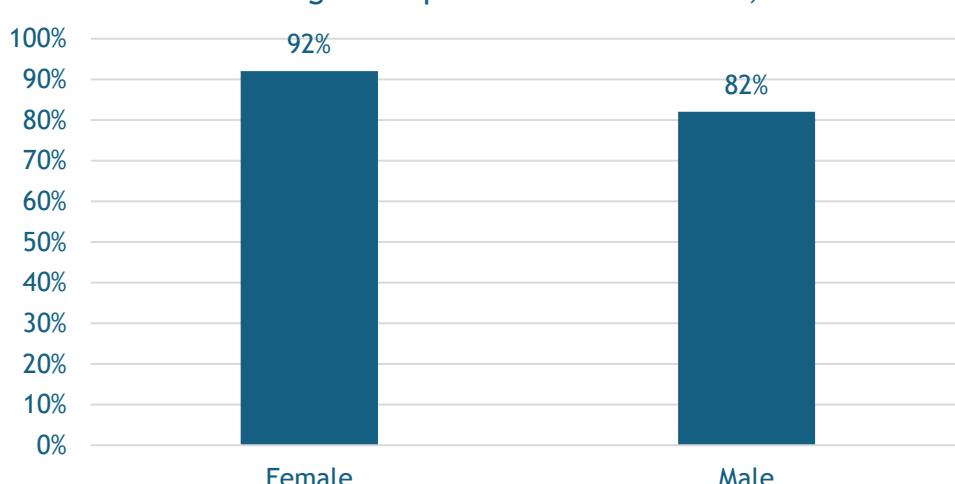
Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity
Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2024



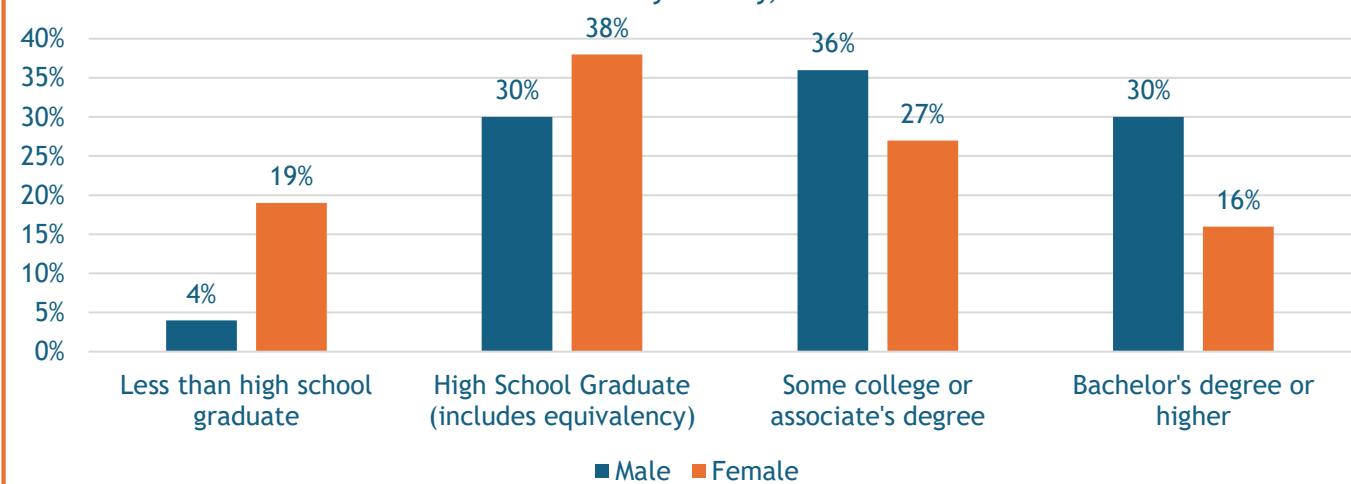
Graduation Rates by Subgroup
Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2024



Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity
Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2024



Educational Attainment of 18-24 Year olds by Gender
Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates



THEME: YOUTH AGENCY, LEADERSHIP & CONTRIBUTION

70% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~30 times during Listening Sessions





Youth Agency, Leadership & Contribution

Emerged 30+ times

Themes:

- Feeling Valued or Heard (25+ mentions)
- Volunteer or Service Opportunities (5+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Adults to take youth ideas seriously and respond with action
- Structures for youth leadership in schools, government, and community spaces
- Ongoing conversations with decision-makers where youth are respected and understood
- More events like Youth Speak Up that prioritize student voice
- Inclusive civic engagement opportunities, including volunteering and service projects

“Lower voting age.

“More chances for teens to have a voice in the community.”

“More opportunities for teens to volunteer in programs outside of school. Like volunteering in a library or helping out in hospitals”

What Youth Experience

- Students feel adults often ignore or downplay their perspectives, particularly in school settings.
- When youth do speak up, they rarely see their ideas acted on, leading to disillusionment or disengagement.
- Students mentioned limited access to volunteer programs or service-learning experiences where they can make a difference.

*“Don't feel heard, teachers don't hear you out or let you speak.
We're spoken at instead of with.”*

“Adults listen to other adults more than they listen to kids.”

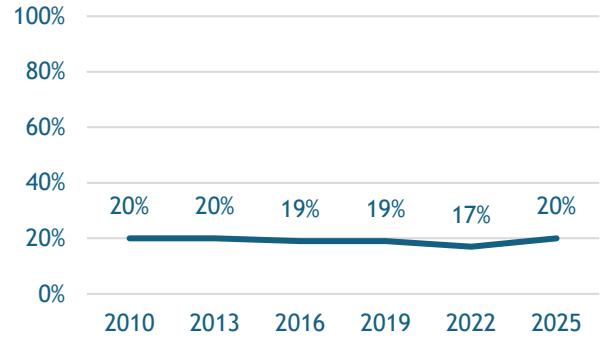
“Some students don't feel they have a say or that anything will change. Ideal community is impossible.”

Positive mention: “My community listens to my opinions”

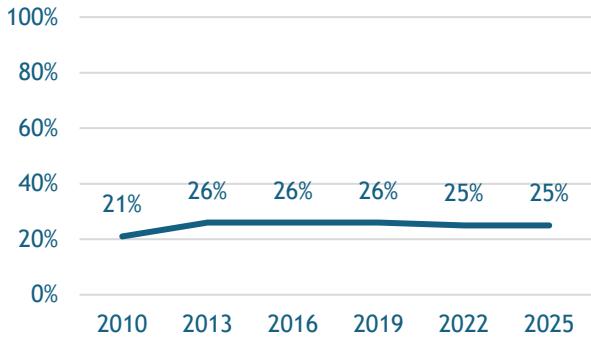


What existing Data Tell us about Youth Agency, Leadership & Contribution

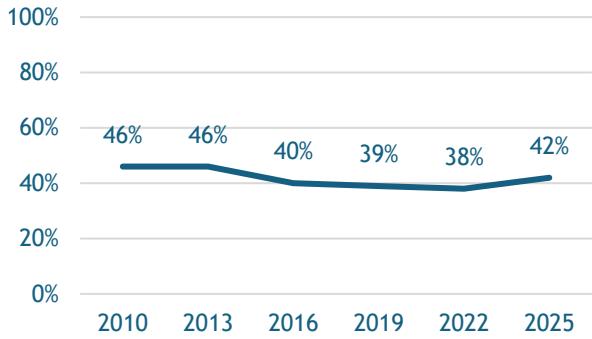
Community Values Youth



Youth as Resources



Service to Others

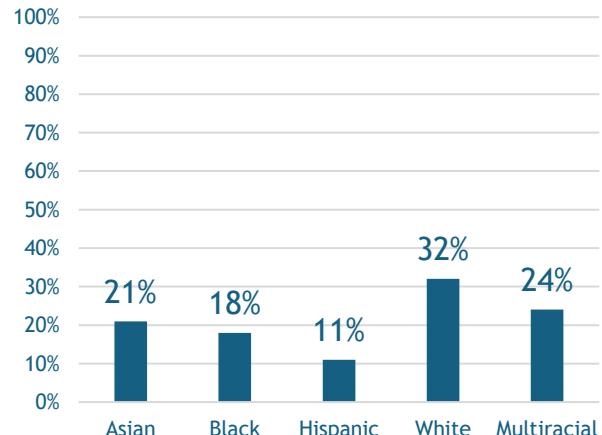


Exhibits Leadership

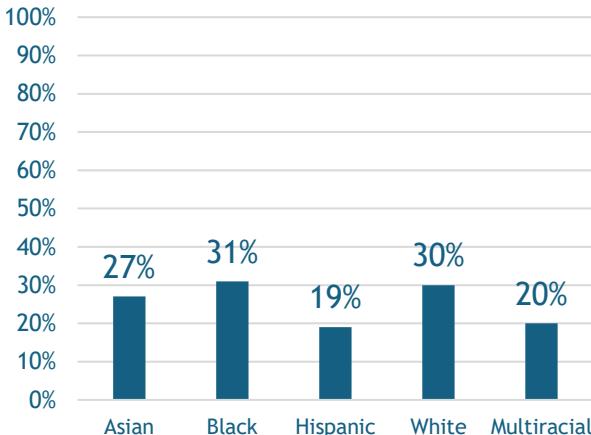
Has been a leader of a group or organization in the last 12 months



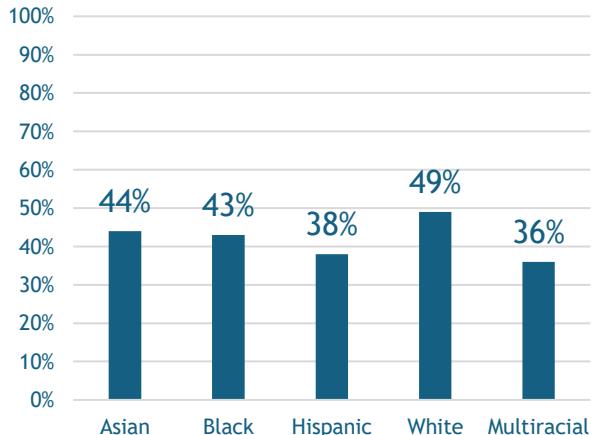
Community Values Youth by Race/Ethnicity



Youth as Resources by Race/Ethnicity



Service to Others by Race/Ethnicity



THEME: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

77% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~30+ times during Listening Sessions





Youth Employment

Emerged 30+ times

Themes:

- Access & Opportunities (30 mentions)
- Quality & Pay (3 mentions)

What Youth Want

- Access to jobs that are welcoming to teens
- Entry-level positions that offer skill-building and mentorship
- Programs that support workforce development and connect students to employers
- Opportunities that prepare them for long-term career success
- Fair wages that reflect the value of youth labor

“There needs to be way way more job opportunities and more jobs for kids 13+.”

“More available retail jobs for youth.”
“More teen internships.”

What Youth Experience

- Limited access due to limited experience and age-based restrictions that exclude motivated younger teens.
- Not knowing how to get started or where to find available positions.
- Low Compensation

“Not much chances for employment.”

“Less jobs for 14- and 15-year-olds.”

“Not getting job opportunities due to lack of history or experience.”

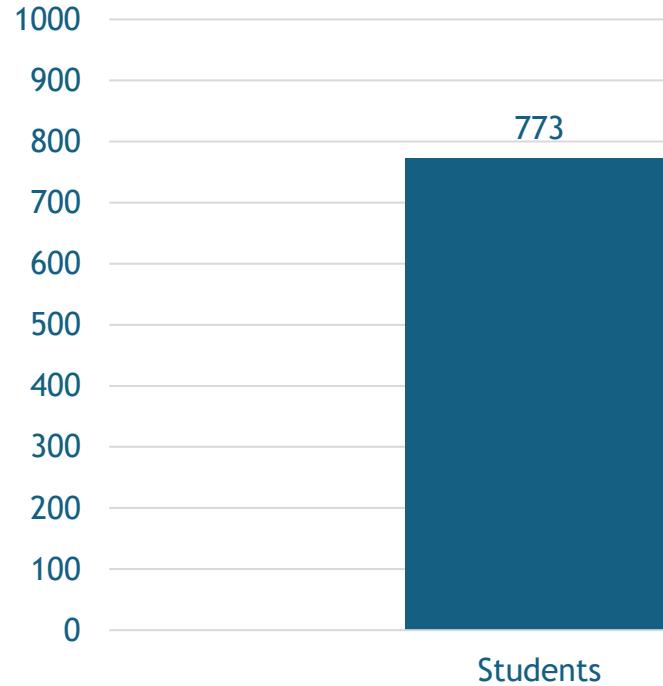
“Not a lot of high paying jobs for kids.”



What existing Data Tell us about Youth Employment

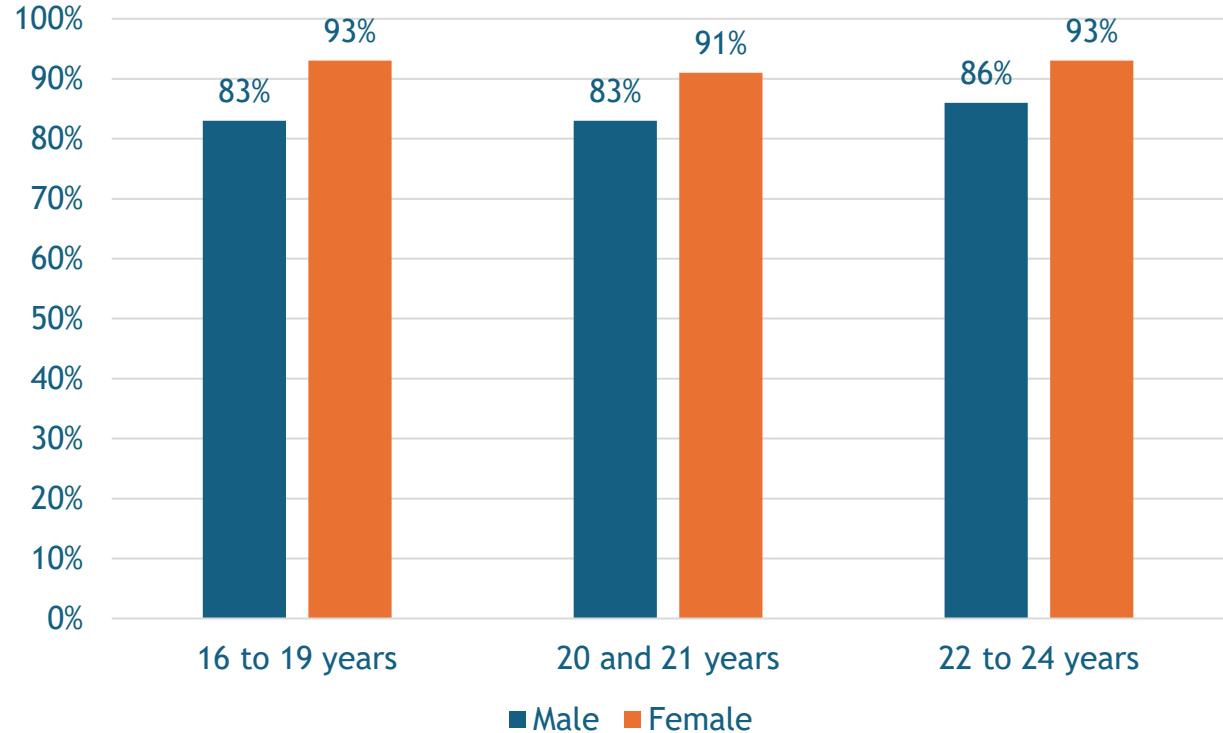
ACPS Students Earning One or More Career & Technical Education Credential

Source: VA Department of Education, 2023-2024



Employment Rate among Labor Force Participants by Gender and Age (16-24)

Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates



THEME: RESPONSIVE & JUST GOVERNMENT

80% of respondents rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important

Emerged ~245 times during Listening Sessions





Responsive & Just Government

Emerged 245+ times

Themes:

- **Responsive & Effective Government**
(35+ mentions)
- **Economic Growth & Development**
(20+ mentions)
- **Advancing Race & Social Equity**
(190+ mentions)

What Youth Want

- Equitable investment in public services and infrastructure
- Local government that listens to and acts on youth feedback
- Strong civil rights protections for all
- More local businesses, entertainment, and community spaces
- Public systems that address discrimination and systemic inequities
- Accessible, youth-friendly communities with vibrant gathering spaces

“My “perfect” community is a community where everyone is treated equally and has an equal opportunity in almost everything.”

“Children of all backgrounds are accepted by the community”

“Better relationship between community and officials”

“More entertainment facilities”

What Youth Experience

- Frequent experiences of discrimination, including racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia
- Lack of youth representation in leadership and decision-making

“Not enough public-school funding.”

“Not enough renovation and new buildings.”

“No representation for West Alexandria.”

“Bigotry, racism, homophobia, sexism, etc.”

“I have experienced people being racist to me and it’s not fun.”

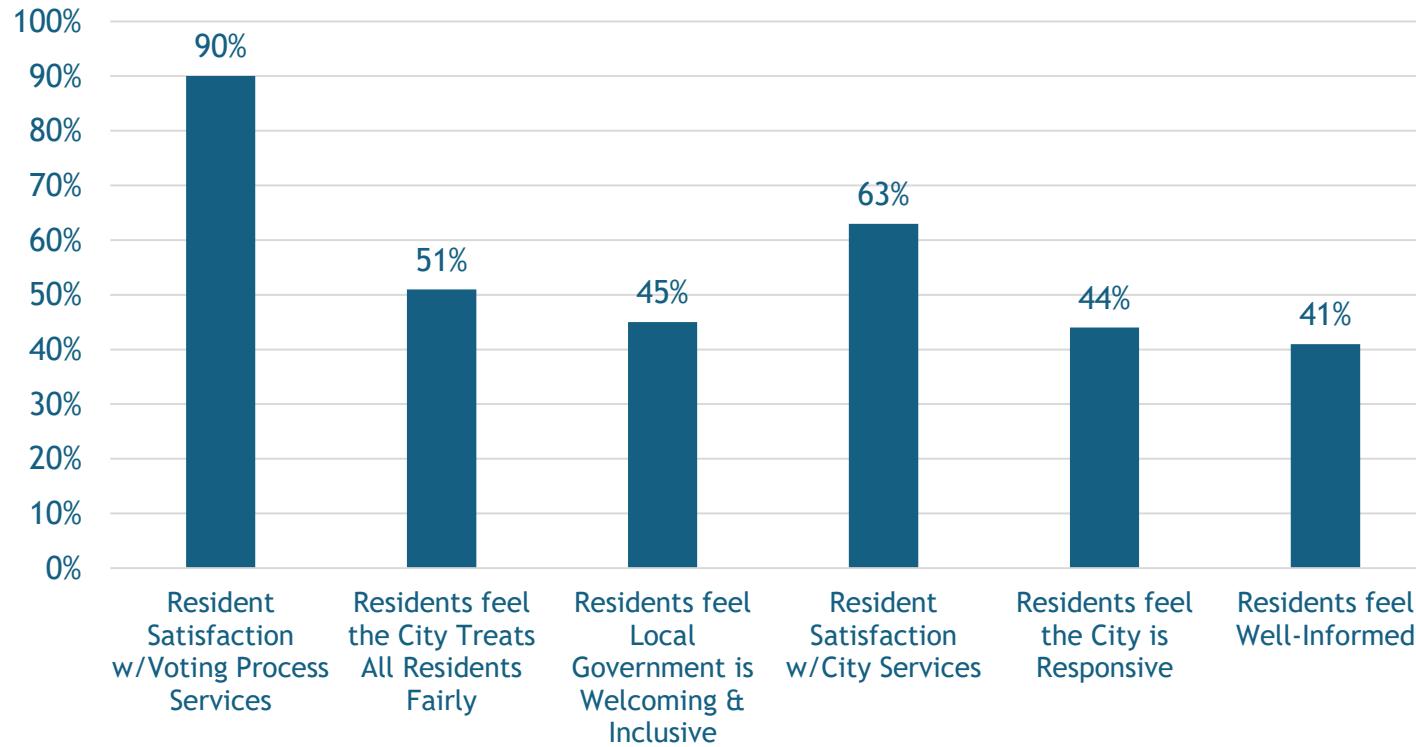
“No deportation/no fear of deportation.”

“Help immigrants.”

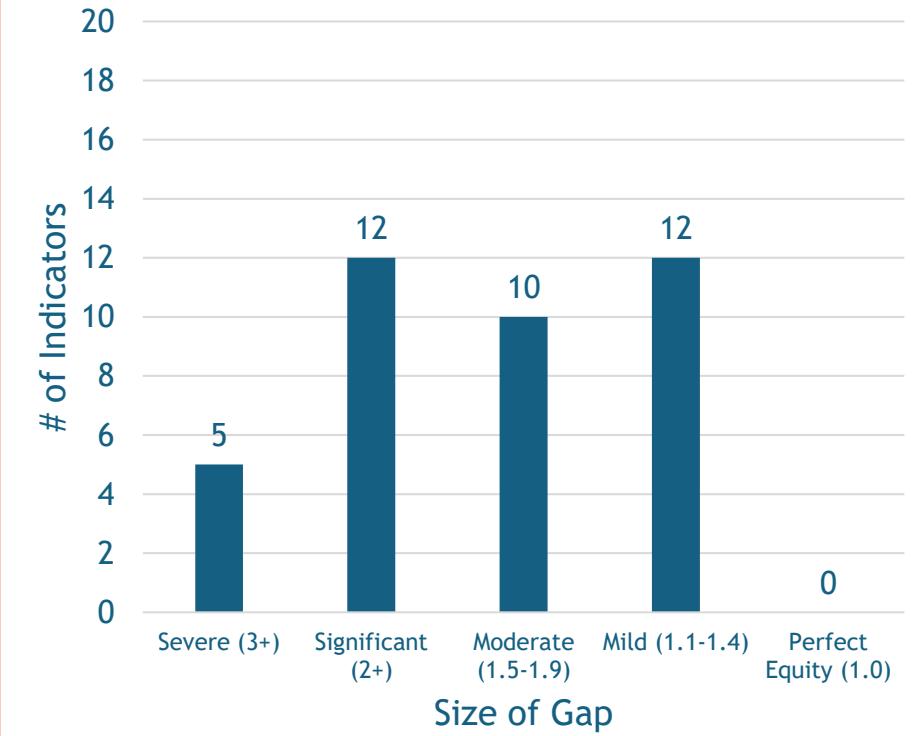


What existing Data Tell us about Responsive & Just Government

Resident Satisfaction with Government Services
Source: 2024 City of Alexandria Resident Survey



Size of Health Disparities among Youth Groups
Source: City of Alexandria



Criteria for Identifying Priorities

- 1. Equity Impact
- 2. Youth & Community Voice
- 3. Magnitude & Urgency
- 4. Feasibility & Leverage
- 5. Gaps in Ownership



Recommended Criteria for Identifying Priorities

Equity Impact	Youth Voice & Community Demand	Magnitude & Urgency of the Issue	Feasibility & Leverage	Gaps in Ownership	What's missing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will addressing this issue advance racial and social equity?• Does it have the potential to reduce disparities for historically marginalized groups (e.g., youth of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ youth, youth with disabilities, etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was this theme highly rated on the Youth Issues Survey?• Did it emerge frequently in the Listening Sessions?• Have parents, caregivers, and other community members also raised this as a pressing concern?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How widespread or severe is the issue, based on qualitative and quantitative data?• Does it reflect a foundational need that must be addressed to support youth wellbeing in other areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there momentum, political will, or available resources (staff, funding, partnerships) to act on this within the next 5 years?• Are there programs, policies, or practices that could be scaled, piloted, or improved quickly with high impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is this issue currently not the focus of another plan, task force, or cross-sector initiative in Alexandria?• Would the CYCP be uniquely positioned to take the lead or fill a gap in coordination?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What criteria would you add or change? What should be driving our decisions?

Use the Criteria to Rate Each Theme

- **Instructions for Using the CYCP Priority-Setting Rubric**
 - The rubric is designed to help identify 3–5 priority areas to address in the next Children and Youth Community Plan (CYCP).
 - Each subtheme should be scored across the five criteria listed below, using a scale of 1 to 3, where:
 - 1 = Low alignment or limited potential
 - 2 = Moderate alignment or potential
 - 3 = Strong alignment or high potential
- **Step-by-step:**
 1. **Review** each subtheme listed in the rubric.
 2. For each subtheme, **assign a score** of 1, 2, or 3 for each of the five criteria (equity impact, youth voice, magnitude, feasibility, and gaps in ownership.)
 3. **Tally the total score** for each subtheme (maximum = 15).
- After scoring all subthemes, we will discuss the subthemes with the highest total scores and determine which 3–5 subthemes should become priorities in the next CYCP. This helps ensure a transparent, collaborative, and data-driven approach.
- Keep in mind that, while scores are helpful, they're not the only consideration. We will use this as a structured guide, while also letting youth voice and strategic judgment shape final decisions.



CYCP Priority-Setting Rubric: A Prioritization Tool

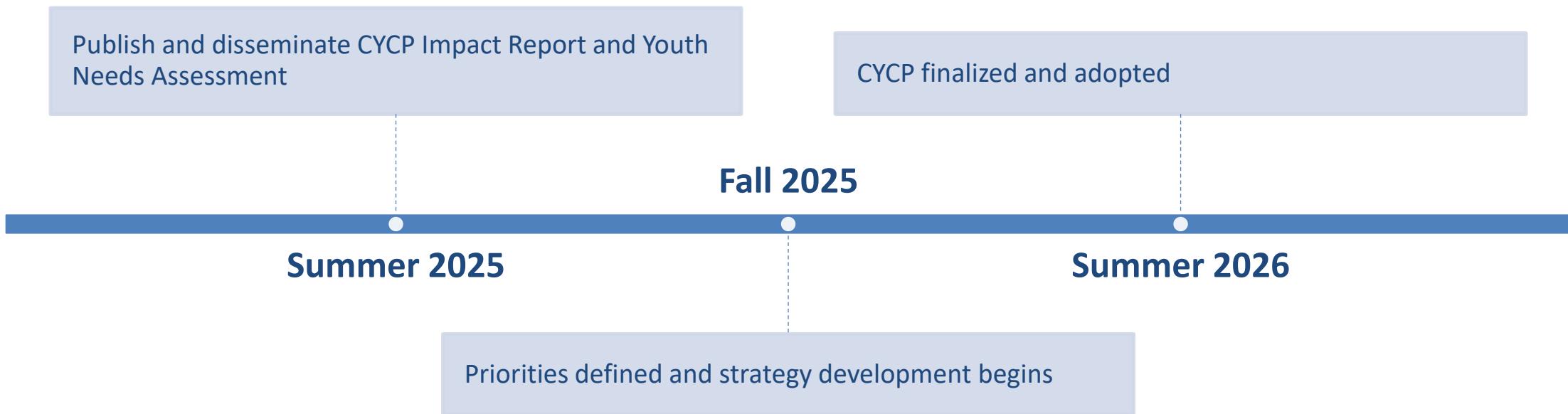
Subtheme (Potential Priority Area)	Equity Impact	Youth Voice & Community Demand	Magnitude & Urgency of the Issue	Feasibility & Leverage	Gaps in Ownership	Total Score
Basic Needs & Relevant Resources						
• Cost of Living						
• Transportation & Mobility						
Educational Equity						
• School Facilities & Operations						
• Academic Success & Environments						
• School Leadership & Student Engagement						
• Student Wellbeing & Support Services						



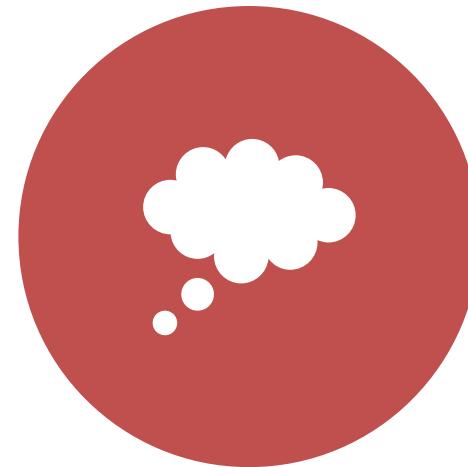
Discussion: What Should Be Prioritized?

- What themes meet the most criteria?
- Where can CYCP lead and fill gaps?
- What are the risks of not addressing key issues?

Next Steps & Timeline



Q&A and Closing



FINAL THOUGHTS OR
QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT!