

BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



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ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT & SUCCESS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND COLLEGE READINESS

What can our school implement to engage students and get them ready for college and there future.

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Our topic focuses on college/career readiness. We aim to help rising high-school students to feel ready for their next step into adulthood by having more volunteering opportunities giving them life experience. We find this to be important due to the lack of concise information. Our school has some opportunities but they are not communicated well. Offering more and to all will help students focus on there future.

RESULT

We want to increase our college readdress rates and our student engagement. We could not find a solid survey over time that asks students how they feel about college/preparedness for there future so hopefully that will be implemented to so we can see if were improving.

SIGNIFICANCE

Others should care because the youth are the people of tomorrow. If they don't know how the world works they will not understand how to work together.

When looking at graduation/drop out rates it seems POC and males are the most impacted at ACHS.

If we did nothing to address the gap in college readiness our school will continue to fall behind Virginia's standard and our rates will keep going down in all categories.

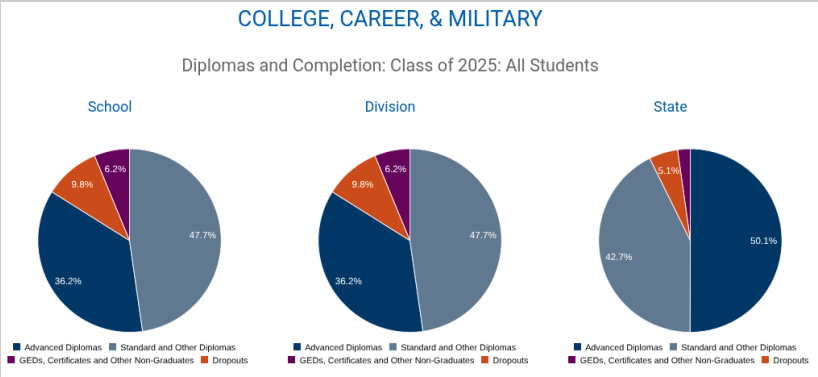
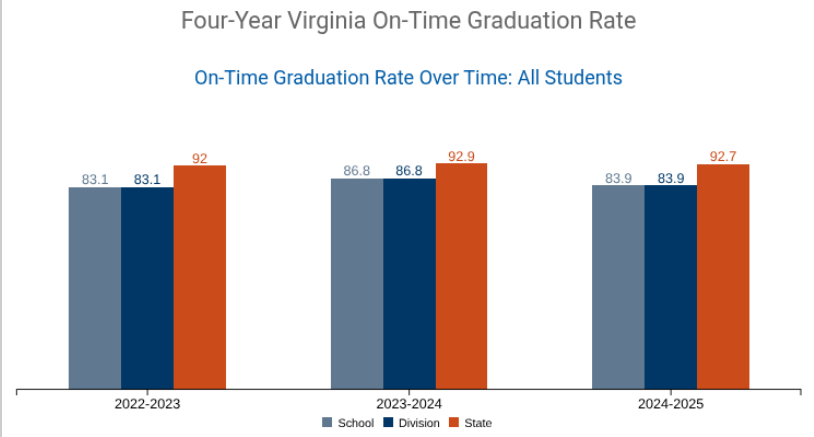
CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

We fall into goal two
All Children will be Academically Successful & Career Ready College and Career
All young people are supported by an equitable education system that promotes their success in school, career, and life

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Our school and the city of Alexandria has organizations meant to help the community and some encourage youth to participate. ACHS has programs in place to help students with college readiness such as AVID and an open college/career center.

Our school is below average in graduating rates and graduating on time. Our school has a drop out rate at 9.8 compared to the state average of 5.1 and the amount of GEDs, Certificates and other non graduates is 6.2 compared to the states 2.2 average.



IMPLEMENTATION

As stated earlier we want to implement a positive incentive rewards system along with a volunteering organization to get more students engaged and give them experience helping them know what they want to do in the future.

Volunteer organisations would get more help and colleges could get more students enrolled as it would give students insight on the colleges encouraging them to explore it as a future option.

Our community has lots of small businesses, I'm referencing old town as that is where I live and I have seen the community in action, if we try to connect with these businesses they could have interest following the day to day actions of workers and help with what is allowed.

PARTNERSHIPS

Some organisations that are active in volunteering in Virginia There organisations could be our partners if the school is able to connect with them.

- ALIVE!
- Senior Services of Alexandria
- Inova Alexandria Hospital
- Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
- The Campagna Center



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

Currently, in ACHS there is a pathway system that every student has to join, which gives them opportunities relating to what group there designed to connect core studies with career preparations. Starting in 2024-25, this model uses small learning communities to help students identify interests for future employment or higher education, including options like the Governor's Health Sciences Academy.

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

From a students' perspective, this system hasn't done anything yet.

Majority of the peers we have talked to don't know what academy they are in. If this system did what was promised and provided opportunities I think it could work hand-in-hand with our volunteer organization to build students knowledge on vast subjects of their interest and future goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our plan is to provide a multitude of experiences and opportunities for students connecting them to businesses in our community along with colleges like NOVA hopefully leading students to their dream path. Our city has tried to involve students with the summer employment programs but I think if we brought an organization that starts from our school branching out to the community instead of the other way around it will get students engaged and prepared for their future. Volunteer organisations would get more help and colleges could get more students enrolled as it would give students insight on the colleges encouraging them to explore it as a future option.

EXPLAINING SOURCES

There are several volunteering programs in Alexandria to help students prepare for future opportunities.

The YES program is a free initiative designed to prepare and engage students in grades 6-12 through volunteering. While also learning about social issues in their community in a non profit organization.



CITATIONS

Volunteer Alexandria: Youth Opportunities
Volunteer Alexandria. (2026). Youth opportunities. <https://www.volunteeralexandria.org/youthopportunities#:~:text=12%20and%20older,%2C%20and%20Sunday%2C%20May%2017>

Alexandria City High School: School Quality Profile
Virginia School Quality Profiles. (2026). Alexandria City High School: School quality profile. <https://schoolquality.virginia.gov/schools/alexandria-city-high#fndtn-desktopTabs-college>
T.C. Williams High School: School Overview
GreatSchools. (2026). T.C. Williams High School: School overview. <https://www.greatschools.org/virginia/alexandria/80-T.C.-Williams-High-School/#:~:text=ACADEMICS-,College%20Prep,Enrollment%20classes%20grades%209%2D12>

Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Program
Volunteer Alexandria. (2026). Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Program. <https://www.volunteeralexandria.org/yes>