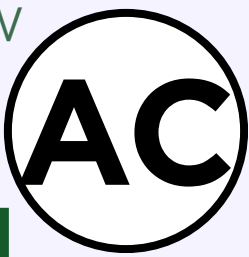




CHILDREN & YOUTH REPORT CARD REVIEW BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



Allyson Castillo

TOPIC

12th grade team- Academic Environments & Success

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

This project identifies declining student engagement and sense of belonging in ACPS. Recent student-reported data indicates decreases in how welcome students feel, how engaged they are in their learning, and the level of high expectations set by educators. These are factors that are strongly linked to academic success. While overall performance data, such as SOL pass rates, shows relative stability, it also shows widening gaps between student groups, suggesting that the current system is not effectively meeting the needs of all learners.

In response, this project proposes a targeted investment in instructional quality through increased funding for the Office of Instructional Support at Central Office. Specifically, it advocates for expanding teacher training in the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) framework across core subject areas. By equipping more teachers with strategies that promote high expectations, student engagement, and a strong sense of belonging, ACPS can move beyond maintaining average outcomes and instead create a more equitable and supportive learning environment where all students can succeed.

RESULT

The intended result is for both student engagement rates and and increased sense of community in school is increased.



SIGNIFICANCE

This project focuses on the conditions that actually allow students to succeed. When students feel less engaged, less welcomed, and perceive lower expectations from their teachers, it directly impacts their motivation, confidence, and long-term academic outcomes. By targeting instructional practices through expanded AVID training, this project aims to improve the daily classroom experience for students helping them feel supported and challenged at the same time. Its significance is in its potential to create lasting change.

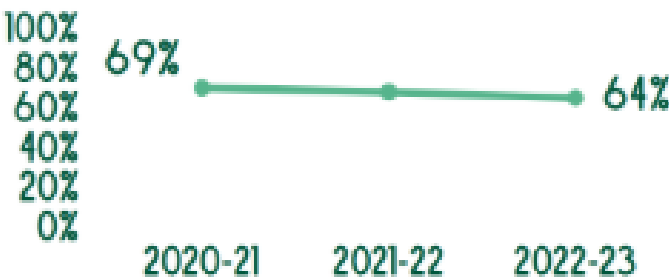
CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

Goal 2: Every Child will be Academically Successful and Career Ready (25).

Strategies for lighting pathways to college and careers (27).

ACPS SETS HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

SOURCE: ACPS CLIMATE SURVEY DASHBOARD

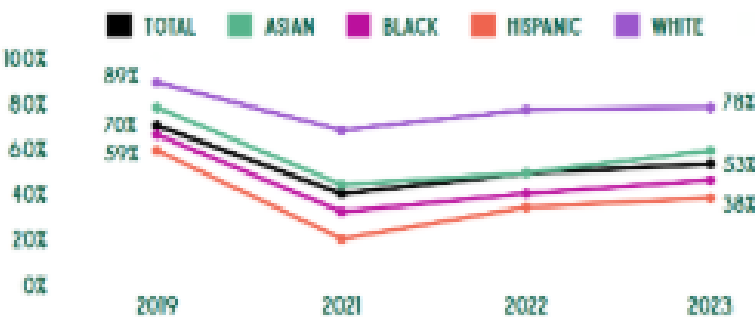


HOW ARE WE DOING?

In ACPS, student-reported data shows a decline in engagement, sense of belonging, and perceived levels of high expectations, even as overall academic performance remains relatively stable. While students are not performing poorly, there is significant room for improvement in the conditions that support their success. SOL pass rates indicate persistent gaps, with Black and Hispanic students being more affected due to factors such as socioeconomic disparities and access to academic support. This data shows that current systems are maintaining outcomes rather than actively enhancing them.

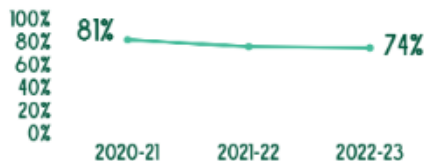
SOL PASS RATES FOR MATH BY RACE/ETHNICITY

SOURCE: "SOL TEST PASS RATES & OTHER RESULTS" VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



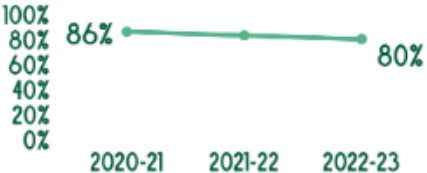
ADULTS AT ACPS CARE ABOUT ALL STUDENTS

DATA SOURCE: ACPS CLIMATE SURVEY DASHBOARD, 2024



TEACHERS PROVIDE EXTRA HELP TO STUDENTS WHEN THEY NEED IT

SOURCE: ACPS CLIMATE SURVEY DASHBOARD



IMPLEMENTATION

Based on *The Children and Youth Master Plan 2025*, ACPS' proposed implementation focuses broadly on improving educational equity through supportive learning environments, resource allocation, and extensive opportunities for students. The district plans to engage students and families in identifying needs and improving supports for several underserved groups, including English learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students. It also includes enhancing instructional practices by encouraging more supportive classrooms that encourage critical thinking. Overall, ACPS' approach is a more broad, equity-driven mission.

PARTNERSHIPS



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

ACPS is making progress towards the outcome the 2025 CYMP proposes, but has definitely not fully achieved them. There are signs of success such as relatively high graduation rates across groups and evidence that all student groups have shown some academic improvement from years past. However, the data also shows persistent gaps by race and ethnicity, particularly among Black and Hispanic students. This suggests that while ACPS has the right goals and some positive momentum, current efforts are not yet strong or consistent enough to fully deliver the equitable, high-engagement experience being proposed.

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

The actual level of performance leads to mixed outcomes. On the positive side, stable graduation rates and gradual academic improvement show that many students are successfully progressing through the school system, and the CYMP goals around equity and support are having some impact. However, the achievement gap for certain groups show an obvious flaw in distribution. Negative consequences include students being less likely to feel supported, which directly affected engagement, confidence, and long-term academic success. Without more heavy and targeted instructional strategies, ACPS will not see the results they could be seeing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project recommends a focus on strengthening instructional practices by expanding the use of the AVID framework and practices across all classrooms throughout ACHS. This would involve the school board allocating additional funding to the Office of Instructional Support to provide ongoing and quality professional development as well as increased participation in AVID Summer Institutes where teachers can also participate in content area focused training. Rather than limiting AVID to elective courses at ACHS, the plan emphasizes training more teachers, across all subject areas, in strategies that promote student engagement, critical thinking, organization, and a strong sense of belonging.

Implementation would include structured trainings and coaching throughout the school year as well as district-wide participation in AVID Summer Institute and follow-up support. By implementing these strategies school-wide, students would consistently experience higher expectations and a more supportive learning environment, equally across all classes.

ONLINE

[What is AVID Schoolwide?](#)

This link explains how schools go about implementing AVID throughout their school buildings and not just as an elective.

[AVID-VA Data](#)

This link shows the data AVID Center has collected from the entire state of Virginia.

CITATIONS

AVID Center. (2025, October). VA snapshot v2025 [PDF].

<https://assets.contentstack.io/v3/assets/blt4a1ad00a59faaf50/bltf3b6e4a7e92e247f/VA%20Snapshot.pdf>

The Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission. (n.d.). Children and youth master plan 2025 [PDF].

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ne_y23a_kbKPnFnVBPFI6a_fOgJbCbMqa/view
Eickert, C. (n.d.). Titan Changemaker Listening Session Handout [Google Document].

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LR_L9OMnAxns6_ferlDpsEgjn7KEBnSgZ/edit
What is Advancement Via Individual Determination schoolwide? (n.d.).

Columbia Public Schools. Retrieved May 4, 2026, from <https://www.cpsk12.org/departments/avid/schoolwide>

IN PERSON

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Ms. Jodie Kuleck is the AVID District Director in ACPS and can further explain the framework and why investing in it would raise all of the discussed statistics.

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Ms. Erin Triplett is the head of the AVID elective at ACHS.