



# Safety & Belonging Work Group Meeting #6

A Children & Youth  
Community Plan Initiative

August 27, 2026





# Agenda

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|                                                             |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Welcome, purpose &amp; where we are</b>                  | <b>5 min</b>       |
| <b>Review data, root causes, partners, &amp; what works</b> | <b>15 min</b>      |
| <b>Transform Strategic Direction into a Strategy</b>        | <b>15 - 20 min</b> |
| <b>Action Planning</b>                                      | <b>30 - 35 min</b> |
| • <b>Brainstorm realistic Year-One Actions</b>              | <b>10 min</b>      |
| • <b>Discuss and prioritize 1–2 Year-One actions</b>        | <b>20 - 25 min</b> |
| <b>Next steps, Announcements, &amp; Close</b>               | <b>5 - 10 min</b>  |



# Today's Purpose

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Begin building our Year-One Action Plan for strengthening adult roles, training & accountability. By the end of today, we hope to identify 1 - 2 promising actions for our work group to explore further.



# Where are we?

Meeting #1 (March)  
Launched Work Group

Meeting #2 (March)  
Developed Shared  
Understanding

Meeting #3 (April)  
Mapped our Efforts

Meeting #4 (May)  
Synthesized Map

Meeting #5 (July)  
Identified Strategic  
Directions



**Meeting #6 (August 27)**  
**Action Planning**  
Strategic Direction #1



**Meeting #7 (September)**  
**Action Planning**  
Strategic Direction #2



**Meeting #8 (October)**  
**Finalize & Commit**

**Implementation!**



# Start with the Result

The condition of wellbeing we want for children, youth, and families.



## Result

**All youth feel valued, supported, and safe in the school and community**

## Strategic Direction

**Strengthen adult roles, training, and accountability**



# What the data say about how we are doing



# How We are Doing?

All youth feel valued, supported, and safe in the school and community



## Relationships with supportive adults: **Stalled**



~2 in 5 youth (42%) report **supportive relationships with non-parent adults**, a rate that hasn't changed much since 2010

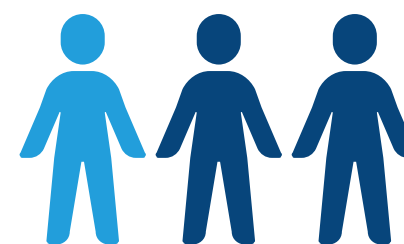
Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth for ACPS© 2013-2025 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN.

As of 2025, **White youth** are more than

**2x**

as likely than **Latino youth** to report a connection to supportive adults.

## School belonging: **Declining**



**Latino students** report the lowest levels of a **caring school climate** (27%)

Source: Developmental Assets, 2025

Since 2020, the #of ACHS students reporting that they **feel welcome at school** has decreased by

**11%**

The #of students saying **adults at ACPS care about all students** declined by

**10%**

Source: ACPS Climate Survey Dashboard, 2025

## Young people's sense of safety: **Declining**



~2 in 5 youth (39%) of youth report **feeling safe** in their homes, schools, and communities, a 20% decline since 2010

Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth for ACPS© 2013-2025 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN.



Since 2020, the #of youth reporting that they **didn't attend school due to feeling unsafe** at school or on way there in past 30 days increased by

**283%**

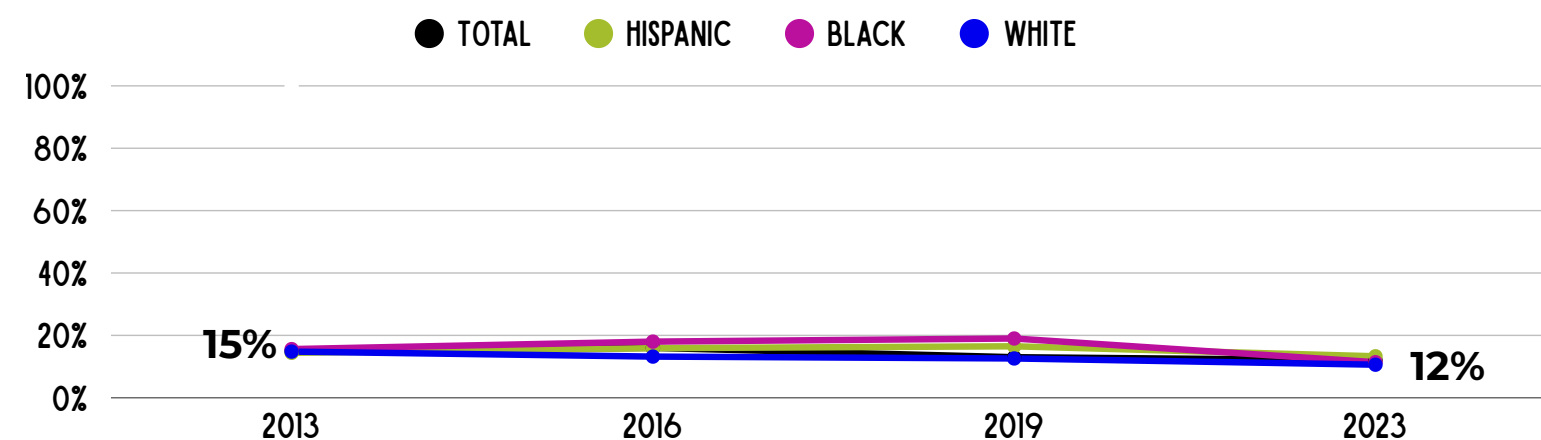
Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011-2023



# How We are Doing (Behavior & Incidents)

## Been in a physical fight in past 12 months

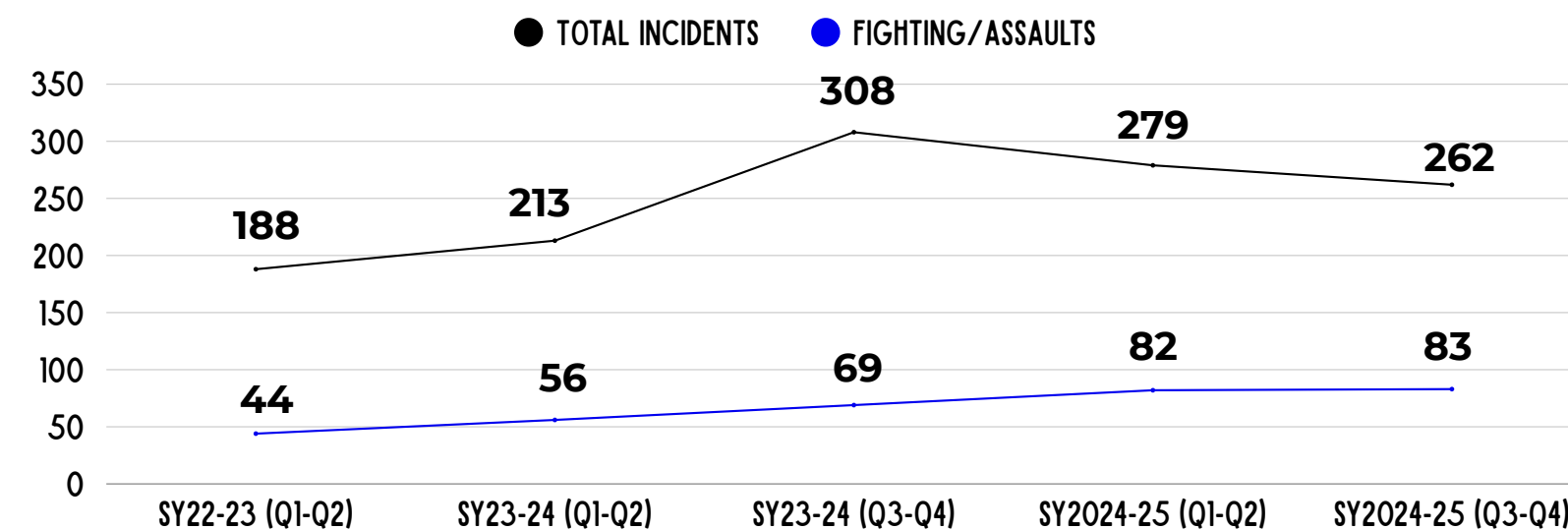
Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2013-2023  
# of Survey Respondents: 996



- Overall trends improved by 33%
- Fighting rates decreased for all groups from 2019 to 2023.
- Hispanic students report being involved in fights slightly more often (13%) than Black and White students (11%).

## Incident Reports by Type (Fighting/Assaults)

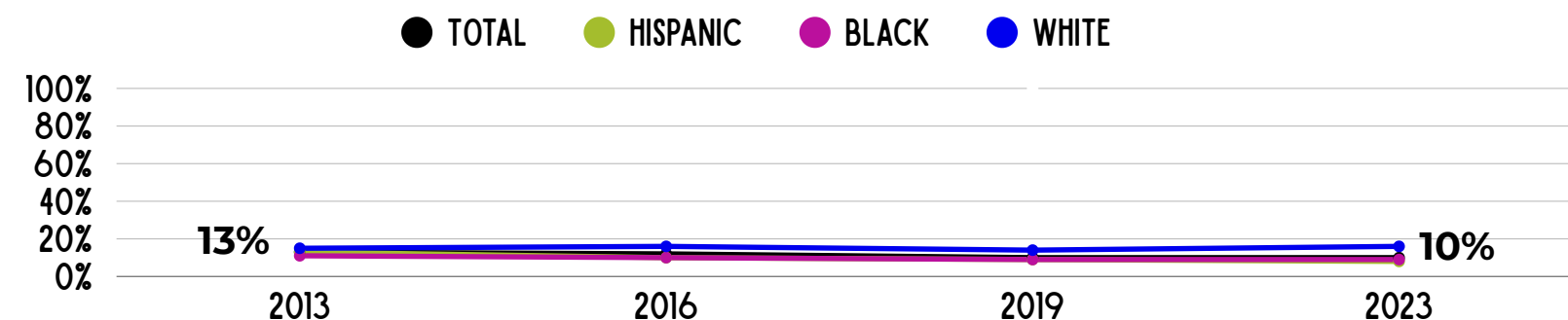
Source: ACPS School Safety Data Reports, 2022-2025



The data show **progress in reducing overall incidents** but a **persistent rise in interpersonal conflict**, highlighting the need for **prevention strategies** that address relationships, stress, and school climate, not only enforcement.

## Bullied on school property in past 12 months by Race/Ethnicity

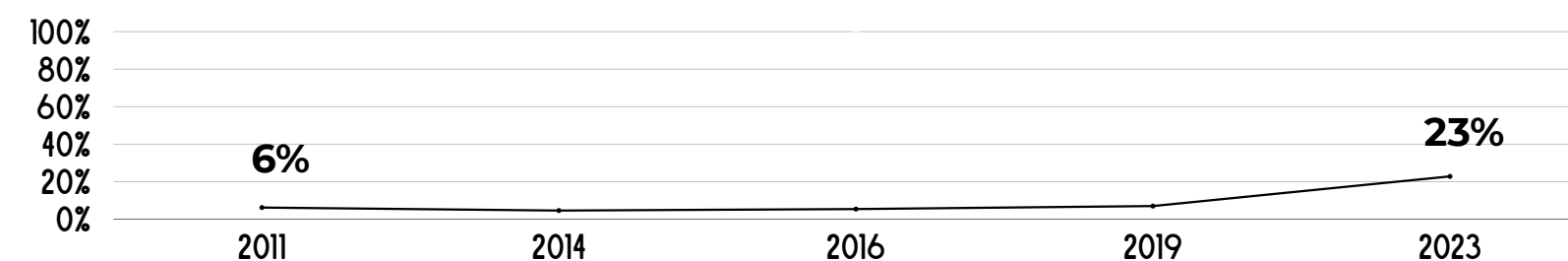
Source: YRBS, Alexandria, 2013-2023



- Overall trends improved by 23%.
- White students consistently report the highest rates.

## Didn't attend school due to feeling unsafe at school or on way there in past 30 days

Source: YRBS, 2011-2023



Overall trends increased by 283%

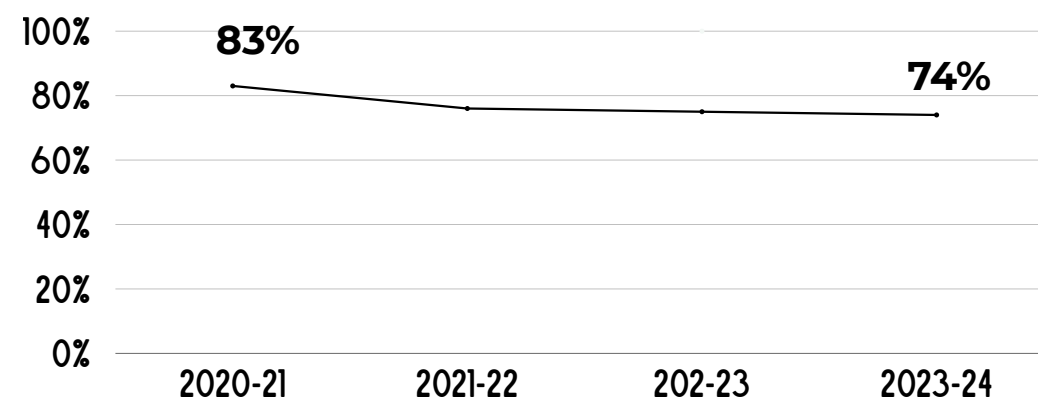


# How We are Doing (Belonging & Climate)

## ACHS Students Feel Welcome at School

Source: ACPS Climate Survey Dashboard, 2025

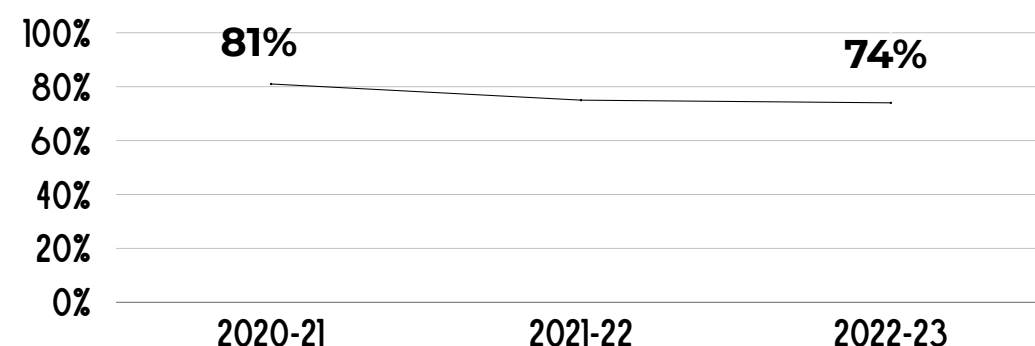
Overall trends declined by 11%



## Adults at ACPS Care About All Students

Source: ACPS Climate Survey Dashboard, 2024

Overall trends declined by 10%

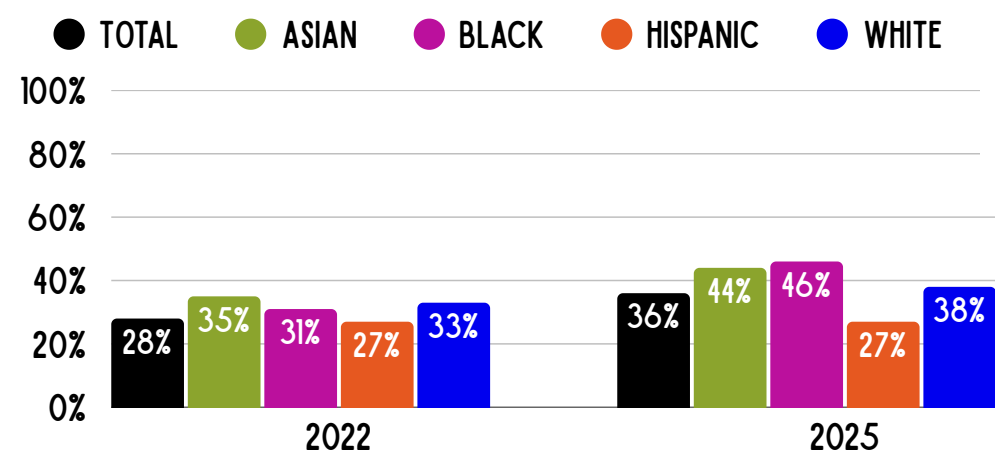


## Caring School Climate By Race/Ethnicity

Source: Developmental Assets Survey, 2025

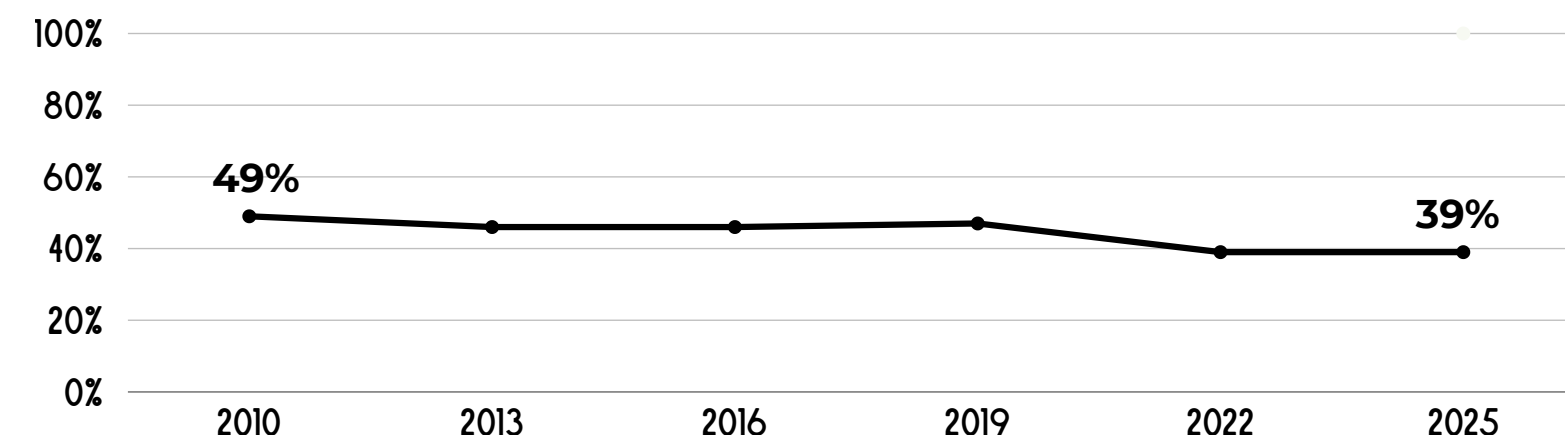
Overall trends improved by 29%

Hispanic students consistently report the lowest levels.



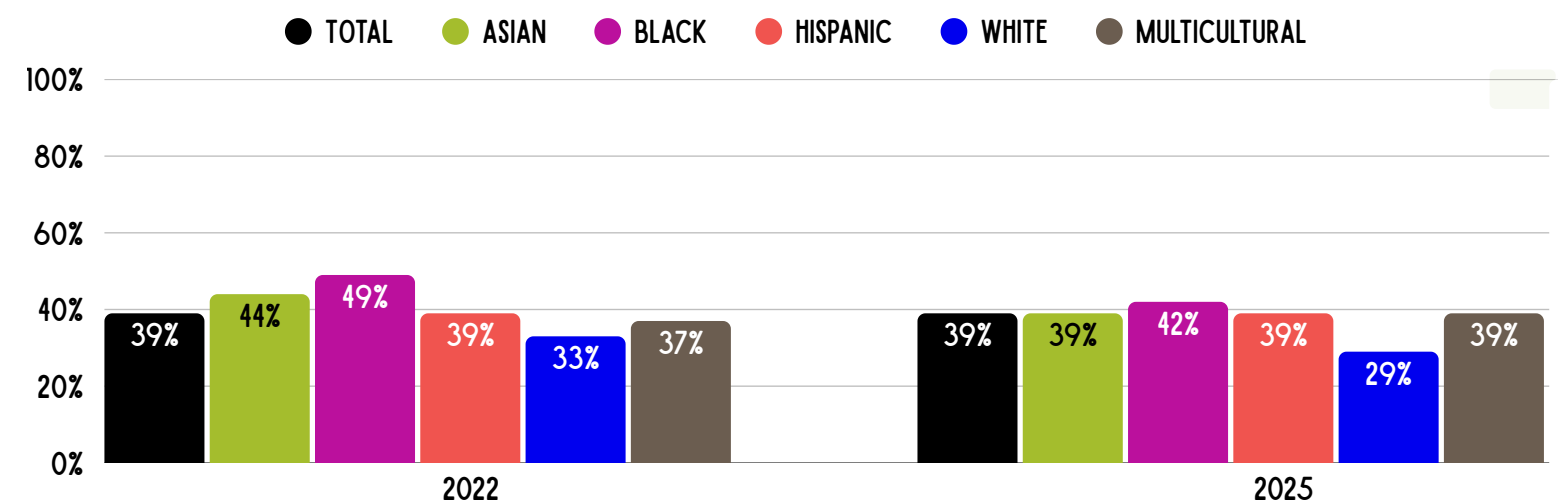
## Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood

Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth for ACPS© 2013-2025 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN.



Overall trends declined by 20%

## Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood By Race/Ethnicity, 2022 & 2025





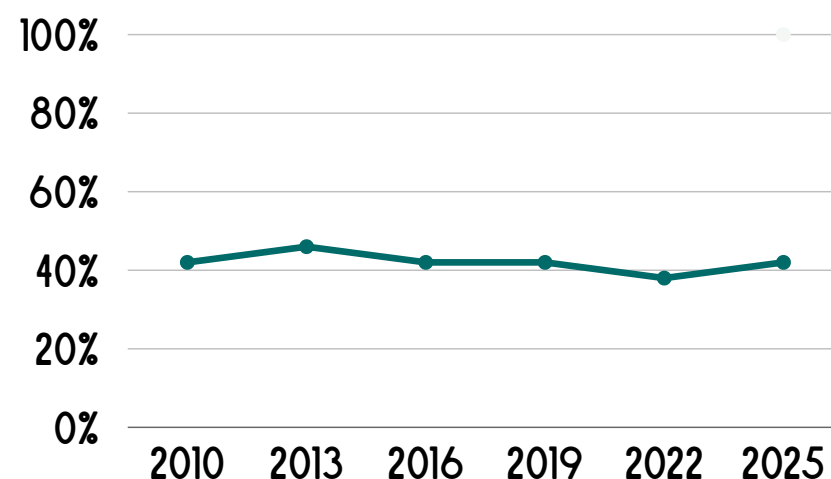
# How We are Doing (Belonging)

## Other Adult Relationships

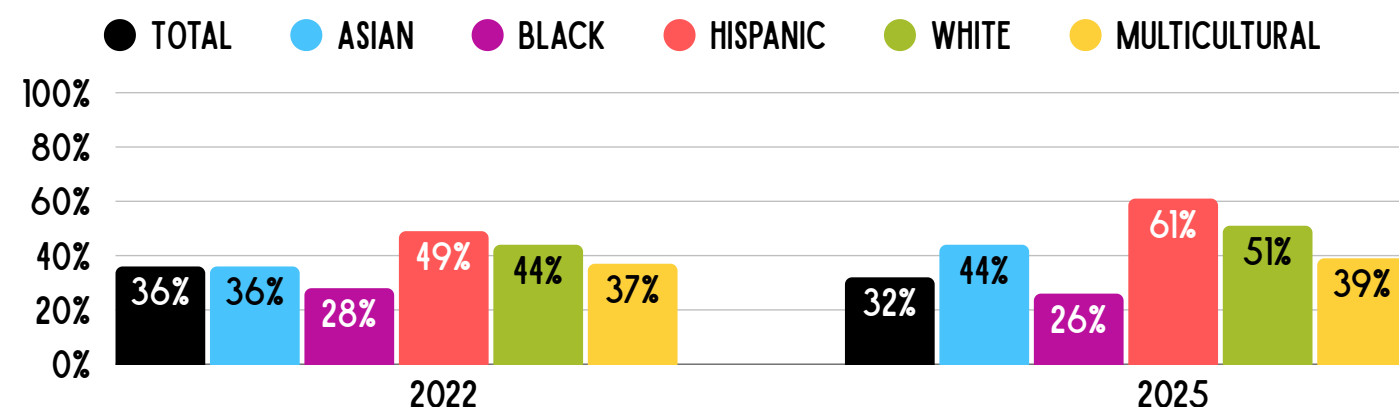
Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth for ACPS© 2013-2025 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN.

### Overall Trend

The proportion of youth who report having relationships with supportive, non-parent adults has remained relatively flat at 42%, showing no meaningful progress since 2010.



## Other Adult Relationships By Race/Ethnicity, 2022 & 2025

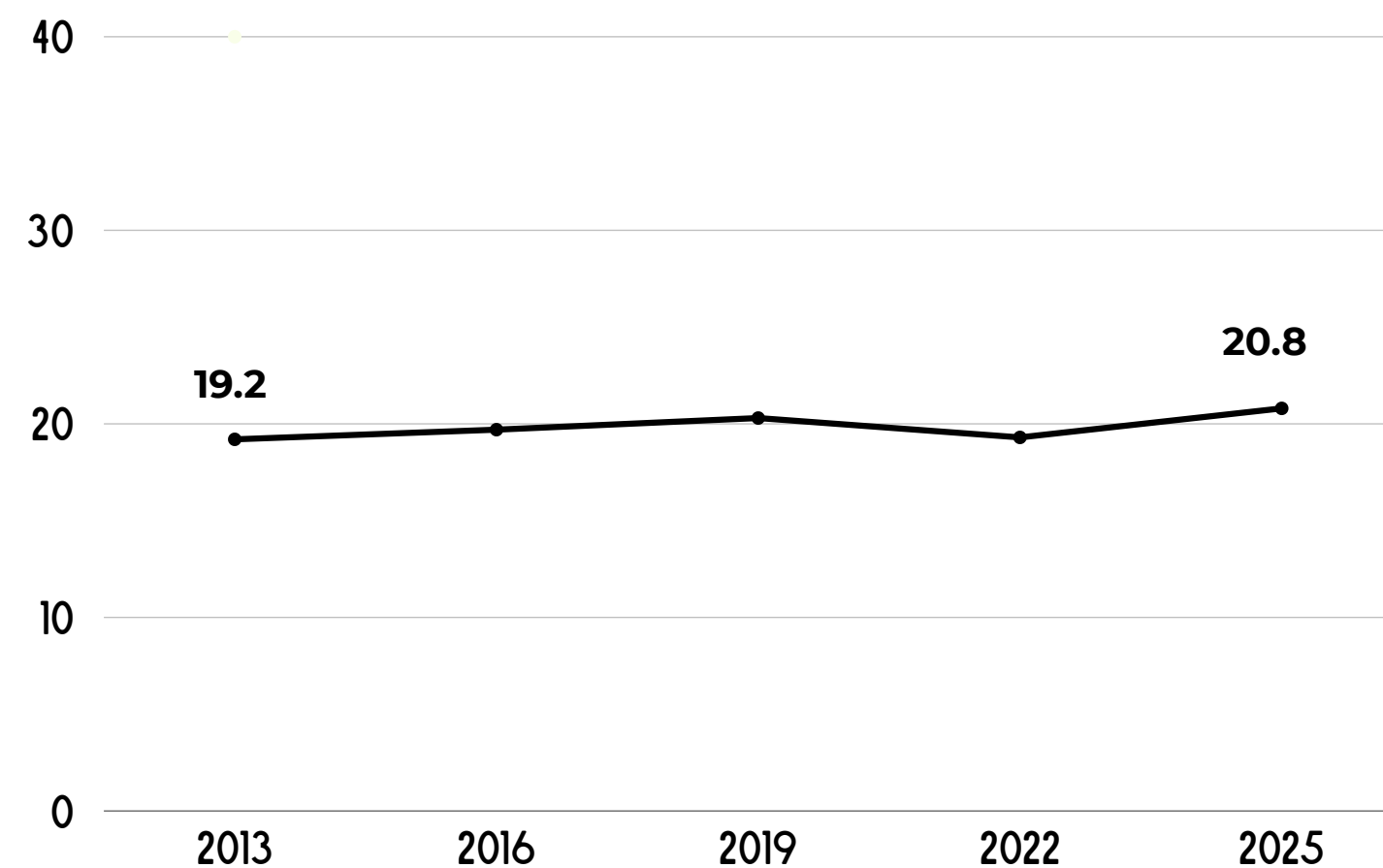


### Key Equity Trends

White youth report the highest rates of connection to other supportive adults, rising from 49% in 2022 to 61% in 2025. Compared to Hispanic youth, White youth are more than twice as likely to report a connection to supportive adults.

## Average Number of Assets Reported by Youth

Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth for ACPS© 2013-2025 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN.



**Overall Trend:** Since 2013, Alexandria youth have consistently reported having an average of 19.6 out of 40 developmental assets. Disaggregated data for this metric is not available.



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# What's the Story Behind the Curve?

What's driving current conditions?





# What's the story behind the curve?

Root causes related to strengthening adult roles, training & accountability



Students shared that:

- They don't always trust adults to listen, respond fairly, or protect their privacy
- Reporting concerns can feel risky or pointless if nothing changes
- Rules and enforcement can feel inconsistent or unfair
- They have been in situations where adults, like school counselors or security guards, have escalated conflict, rather than calmed it

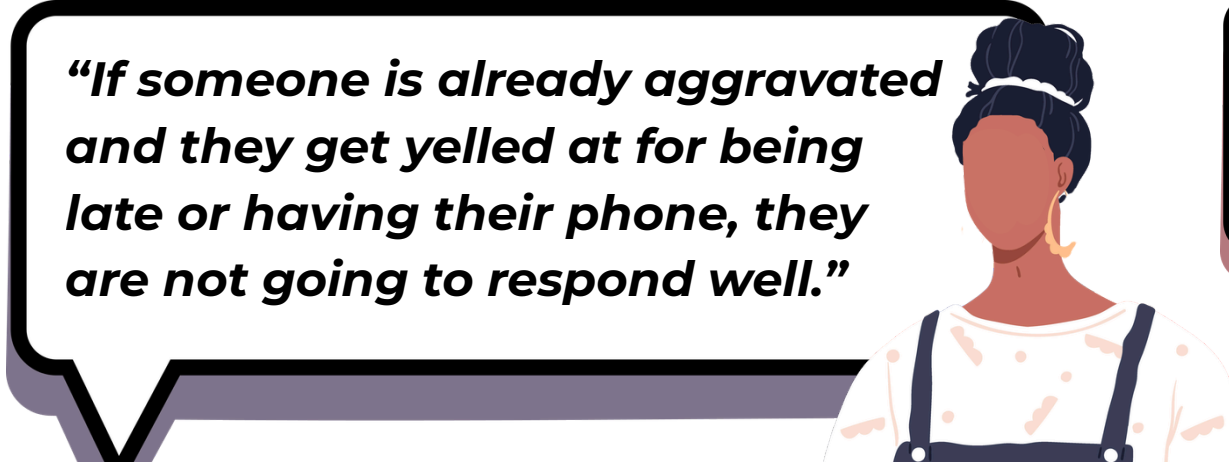
All this results in youth turning to their peers for help instead of adults.



***"Respect goes both ways. We don't feel like we get any."***



***"Counselors shouldn't escalate the problem."***



***"If someone is already aggravated and they get yelled at for being late or having their phone, they are not going to respond well."***



***"Why are security guards fighting with students?"***



***"Students do not trust adults at school so they do not tell anyone about problems or conflict."***



***"Different students – like Hispanic students – get stopped all the time and treated differently. That's racial profiling."***



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# Partners

Who has a role to play?





# Who has a role to play in strengthening adult roles, training, and accountability?



Youth want adults they can trust to notice when something is wrong, know how to respond, intervene before problems escalate, treat them with respect, and follow through when they ask for help.

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**Caring adults & frontline staff who interact with youth:** teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers, school security, coaches, mentors, afterschool providers, recreation and youth development staff, youth-serving nonprofit staff, behavioral health providers, law enforcement/youth engagement staff, etc.

**Organizations that set policies, protocols, or expectations:** ACPS leadership, City departments, City Manager's Office, youth-serving organizations, ALX Beyond, CYFCC and other boards/commissions.

**Organizations that train those adults:** ACPS, DCHS/Youth Development Team, RPCA/CaringU, City's Race & Social Equity Office, RAISE/trauma-informed community networks, ALX Beyond, LGBTQ+ Task Force

**Young people who are at the center:** youth help define what a supportive adult response looks like, identify where adults aren't responding effectively, and can provide feedback on whether things improve.



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# What Works

What could help  
improve conditions?





# What works to strengthen adult roles, training & accountability?



Youth want adults they can trust to notice when something is wrong, know how to respond, intervene before problems escalate, treat them with respect, and follow through when they ask for help.

| Youth Want:                                                       | Youth recommendations for what could help improve conditions:                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adults who notice when something is wrong and know how to respond | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Train and support teachers, counselors, security staff, and other adults to recognize distress, de-escalate conflict, respond to bullying, use trauma-informed approaches, and connect youth with help.</li></ul> |
| Trusted adults youth can turn to                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure every student can identify a trained, supportive adult who listens, responds respectfully, and follows through.</li></ul>                                                                               |
| Stronger adult presence & response in places youth feel unsafe    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen trained adult presence in hotspots and improve the quality, consistency, supervision, and accountability of security responses.</li></ul>                                                              |
| Safe reporting & accountability/follow-through                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give students private or anonymous ways to raise concerns and make sure they know what happened afterward.</li></ul>                                                                                              |



# Let's make our Strategic Direction sound more like a strategy

*Youth want adults to know how to share power with them and meaningful opportunities to help prevent conflict, support their peers, shape safety decisions, and hold systems accountable for whether changes are actually making things better.*



## Strategic Direction

**Strengthen adult roles, training, and accountability**

**What are we trying to change and how?**

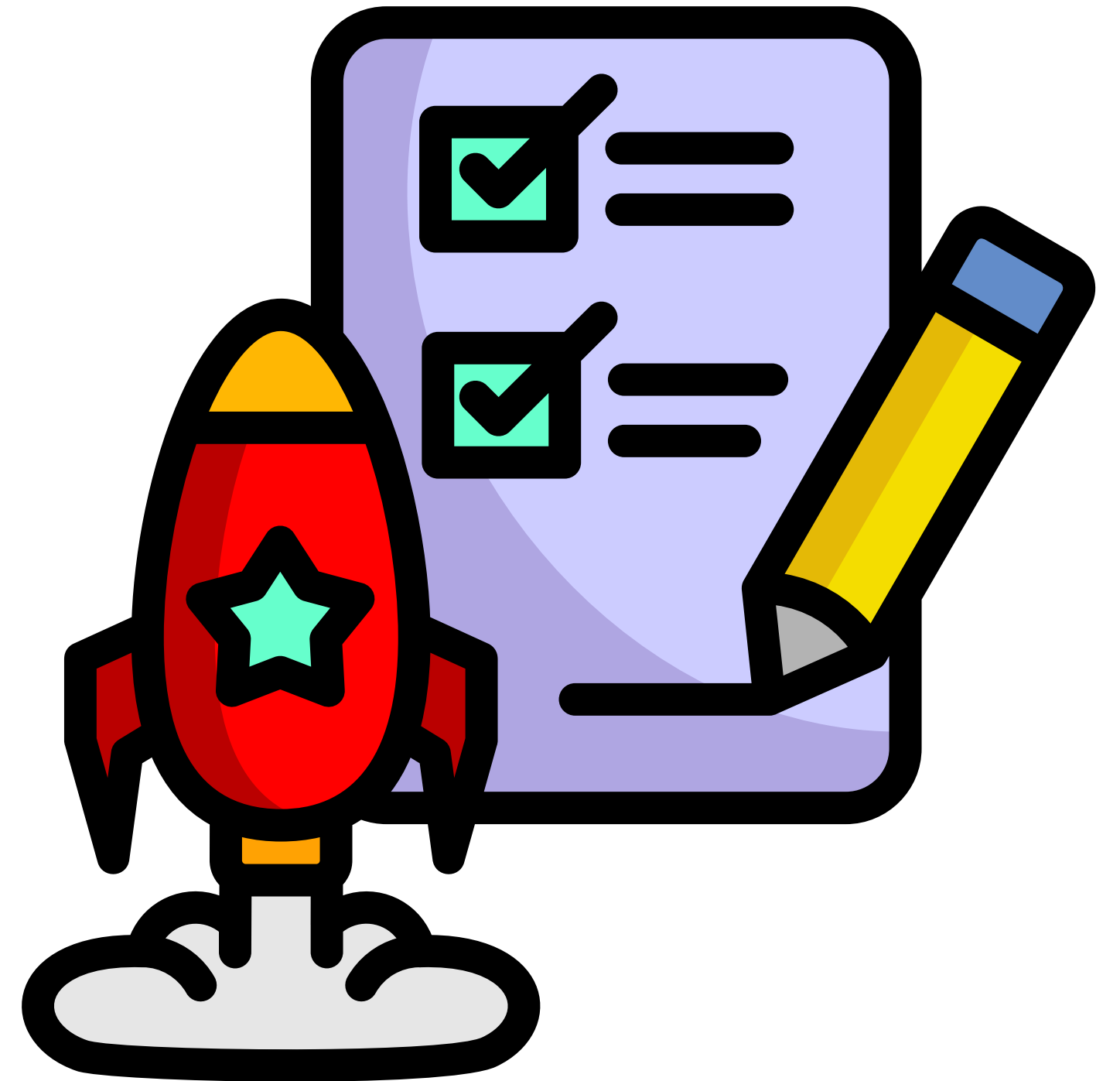
**Over the next 4–5 years, we will strengthen \_\_\_\_\_ so that young people \_\_\_\_\_.**



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# Action

What are we going to do?





# What are we going to do to strengthen adult roles, training & accountability?



Youth want adults they can trust to notice when something is wrong, know how to respond, intervene before problems escalate, treat them with respect, and follow through when they ask for help.

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## Directions:

1. **Brainstorm! (5 minutes)** On your own: Write down as many possible Year-One actions as you can. Brainstorm actions we could do together over the next year to help young people experience adults as more supportive, prepared, and accountable. One idea/sticky note.
2. **Share! (10 minutes)** Share your ideas with the group. Together we will group & combine similar ideas.
4. **Prioritize! (25 minutes)** Which 1-2 ideas should we pursue in Year One?

Link to Whiteboard: [canva.link/4xnqn522lcv8bjw](https://canva.link/4xnqn522lcv8bjw)



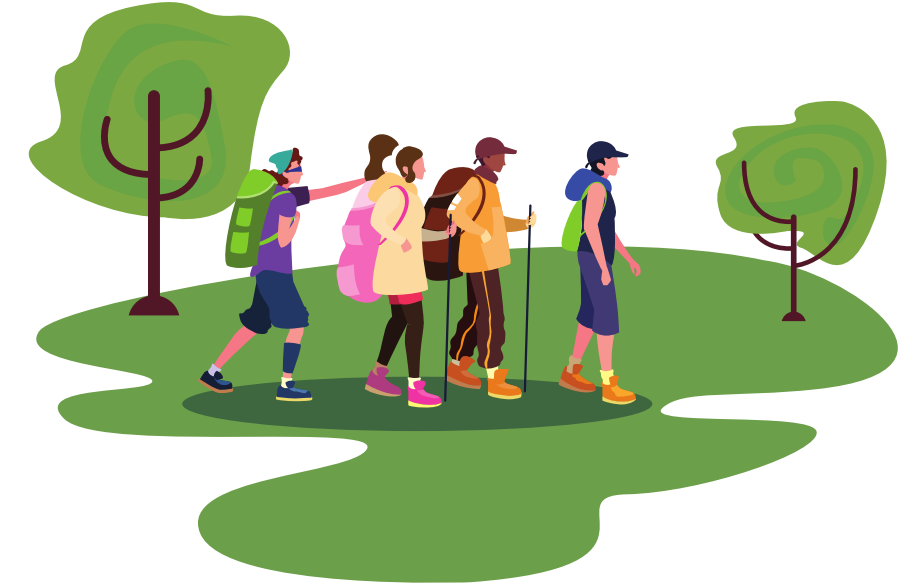
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# Next Steps





# Next Steps



## August Strategic Direction #1

- Identify Year-One actions for one strategic direction

## September Strategic Direction #2

- Identify Year-One actions for 2<sup>nd</sup> strategic direction
- Confirm the group is comfortable with staff drafting the remaining details

## In Between Meetings Draft Action Plans

- Using the data, youth recommendations, and existing efforts we've already reviewed, flesh out the actions the group prioritized
- Identify potential partners and roles
- Draft performance measurements

## October Finalize & Commit

- Review drafted plans together
- Make revisions
- Confirm roles and commitments
- Approve the Year-One Action Plans

## November Celebrate & Launch Implementation!

- Celebrate in person over lunch?!

Are you comfortable with this approach?