

Youth Recommendations for Improvement

Connect Students the Academic Help They Need Early

Expand tutoring and one-on-one academic support. Students recommended offering more tutoring before or after school, teacher office hours, and personal or small-group help from teachers, tutors, or educated peers. They emphasized that some students need more time or a different explanation when classes move too quickly. Schools should also schedule support at times students can attend and make tutoring easier to find and more comfortable to use, since some students are busy or feel shy or afraid to ask for help

> ***"Some teacher go to fast or need more time on one on one."***
>
> *~ Christopher Rubio Sanchez, 2026*



Sources: Christopher Rubio Sanchez, *Academic Support & Student Success*, 2026; Melvin Argueta, Increasing One-on-One Support, 2026; Trudy Hardman, *Educational Equity in Alexandria*, 2025; and Mohammad Barak Zaimo, *Supportive School Environment*, 2025.

Reach out to struggling students before they fall too far behind. Students recommended using early-intervention programs and having school leaders track students' academic progress so concerns can be addressed sooner. Counselors should proactively contact struggling students rather than waiting for them to ask for help. Students also called for help completing assignments and earning credits, advice for creating an easier and more manageable plan, encouragement not to give up, and strong relationships that help young people feel wanted, supported, and able to see their own vision for success.

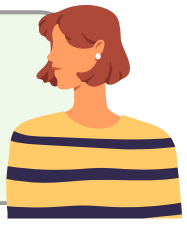


> ***"Raise student awareness before they fall too far behind."***
>
> *~ Tsion Bogale, 2026*

Sources: Diamond Watkins, *Student Success & Equity*, 2025; and Tsion Bogale, *ACHS Credit Recovery & Academic Flexibility*, 2026.

Make counselors easier to find and more proactive in supporting students' academic success. Students noted that some young people do not know their counselor's name or where to find them. They recommended that counselors reach out to struggling students, clearly explain credit-recovery options, and advocate for students who may not have a parent or another adult encouraging them to pursue advanced classes

> ***"Many ACHS students don't view their counselor as a resource."***
>
> *~ Trudy Hardman, 2026*



Sources: Trudy Hardman, *Educational Equity in Alexandria,* 2025; Aya M, Maxi G, Citlaly P, Ash O, *Academic Environment & Success*, 2026; and Bogale, *ACHS Credit Recovery & Academic Flexibility*, 2026.

Offer more flexible credit-recovery options during the school year. One student recommended after-school and self-paced online options so students do not have to rely on a short summer program. They also called for sharing information earlier, extending registration deadlines, reducing strict attendance requirements, and making credit recovery more accessible to students who work or have family responsibilities.

> ***"Students want flexibility. The demand is there. ACPS just needs to supply it."***
>
> *~ Tsion Bogale, 2026*

Sources: Bogale, *ACHS Credit Recovery & Academic Flexibility*, 2026.



Youth Recommendations for Improvement

Create Equitable, Inclusive & Engaging Learning Experiences

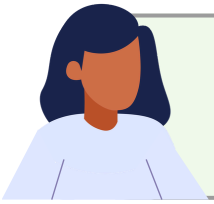
Strengthen teaching and academic support for English Learners. One student recommended hiring more bilingual or ELL-certified educators, using more speaking and visual materials in class, and closely following students' English-language growth so assistance can be adjusted as their needs change. They emphasized that English Learners need teaching strategies and classroom settings that allow them to understand lessons and participate fully in learning.

> ***"56% of students feel unsupported and 72% of students do not fully understand the lessons being taught."***
>
> *~ Emely Baten Grave, 2026*



Sources: Emely Baten Grave, *Improving Academic Support for ELL Students*, 2025.

Create positive, engaging, and supportive learning environments. Students recommended connecting instruction to students' interests, giving young people meaningful voice in their learning, maintaining high expectations, and helping every student feel supported and capable of succeeding. One student specifically proposed expanding AVID training across all core subjects so more teachers use instructional strategies that strengthen engagement, critical thinking, organization, academic confidence, and belonging.



> ***"...helping them feel supported and challenged at the same time."***
>
> *~ Allyson Castillo, 2026*

Sources: Diamond Watkins, *Student Success & Equity*, 2025; Dylan Barrios, *Welcoming School Environment*, by 2025; Allyson Castillo, *Academic Environments*, 2025; and Barak Zaimo, *Supportive School Environment*, 2025.

Make curriculum more representative of students' histories, cultures, and communities. Students recommended adding meaningful instruction about Latin American history and Latin Americans' influence on the United States, while more clearly promoting existing Latin American Studies courses and student organizations. They emphasized that educators should be knowledgeable, respectful, and genuinely engaged when teaching the material so students feel proud of their backgrounds and all students gain a fuller understanding of American history.



> ***"...more Hispanic students learn about their culture and are not afraid to express their backgrounds."***
>
> *~ Ashley Antero Gonzalez & Cynthia Mercedes-Lopez, 2026*

Sources: Ashley Antero Gonzalez & Cynthia Mercedes-Lopez, *Latin American History Unit*, 2025.

Help more students from lower-income families and students of color pursue advanced classes. One student emphasized that counselors should actively encourage and advocate for students who may not have a parent or another adult helping them understand and pursue advanced academic opportunities. They highlighted the need for greater support because students of color were underrepresented in advanced classes and students from lower-income families may have less guidance at home about these options.

> ***"...the counselors need to be the ones to advocate for them."***
>
> *~ Trudy Hardman, 2025*



Sources: Hardman, *Educational Equity in Alexandria*, 2025.



Youth Recommendations for Improvement

Surround Students with Support

Bring academic and basic-needs support together on school campuses. One student recommended making the resources students need to thrive available at ACPS schools so lower-income students are not prevented from getting help because they lack transportation. They envisioned students being able to receive tutoring, healthy groceries, clothing, mental and physical healthcare, disability screening and support, and help with rent and childcare in one accessible place.

Sources: Hardman, *Educational Equity in Alexandria*, 2025.



> ***"...consolidate student resources..."***
>
> *~ Trudy Hardman, 2025*

Work with community organizations to give students more support and learning opportunities. Students identified Communities in Schools of NOVA, the Boys & Girls Club of Alexandria, the National Honor Society, Casa Chirilagua, Alexandria Library, LINK Club, Liberty's Promise, museums, and educational centers as possible partners for tutoring, mentoring, language development, basic-needs support, career preparation, and hands-on learning. They also recommended working with local museums and educational centers to provide field trips and hands-on learning. One student identified the Capital Youth Empowerment Program as a possible partner for helping young people prepare for the workforce.

Source: Hardman, *Educational Equity in Alexandria*, 2025; Rubio Sanchez, *Academic Support & Student Success*, 2026; Melvin Argueta, *Increasing One-on-One Support*, 2026; Bogale, *ACHS Credit Recovery & Academic Flexibility*, 2026; Baten Grave, *Improving Academic Support for ELL Students*, 2026; turaymariama, *Field Trips*, 2025; and Barak Zaimo. *Supportive School Environment*, 2025.

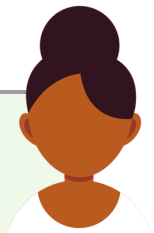


> ***"...providing tutoring, mentoring, study support, and learning opportunities..."***
>
> *~ Melvin Argueta, 2026*

Expand Learning, Leadership & Future Pathways

Give all students opportunities to participate in field trips and hands-on learning. One student recommended identifying museums, parks, and educational centers; securing funding for transportation, admission, and activities; and planning trips that connect with classroom learning. Schools should also arrange transportation and chaperones, protect students' safety and well-being, and gather feedback from students and staff to improve future trips. The report emphasized that field trips should give all students equal opportunities to learn through engaging experiences outside the classroom.

Source: turaymariama, *Field Trips*, 2025.



> ***"...all children have equal opportunities to learn through hands-on experiences outside the classroom..."***
>
> *~ turaymariama, 2025*

Expand equitable access to college, career, volunteer, and real-world learning opportunities. Students recommended creating a school-based organization that connects young people with volunteer experiences, local businesses, community organizations, and colleges such as NOVA. They also proposed incentives to encourage participation and emphasized that opportunities should be clearly communicated and available to all students

Source: Aya M, Maxi G, Citlaly P, Ash O, *Academic Environment & Success*, 2026.

> ***"...provide a multitude of experiences and opportunities for students connecting them to businesses in our community along with colleges like NOVA..."***
>
> *~ Aya M., Maxi G., Citlaly P. & Ash O., 2026*

