Arlington Public Schools

GRADUATION TASK FORCE

BRIEFING PAPER

JUNE 2017

MID-YEAR REPORT

The Graduation Task Force was formed in April, 2010, in order to investigate causes and to form a practice to implement a framework to ensure that students graduate on time. Members included APS staff and community members. The Framework from the GW Mid-Atlantic Equity Center was initially used to identify early warning indicators for students at-risk of dropping out. Data reports were generated from this work to monitor student attendance patterns, enrollment, and risk factors.

By 2011, dropout prevention best practices were identified and a plan for the schools and the committee was developed. This plan was reviewed by the National Dropout Prevention Network and adjusted from that feedback. Continued work on identifying and implementing best practices resulted from smaller work groups within the Taskforce, with community support and services identified to target students. These interventions and supports were further refined through the implementation of the Arlington Tiered System of Support (ATSS) throughout all schools. Using ATSS, students will receive needed interventions and/or extensions as determined by school teams. Using the Data Warehouse, student progress is monitored and adjustments are made based upon the individual student needs. Specific community supports at targeted schools (based upon early warning indicators) were provided through the integration of Communities In Schools, Inc. at Arlington Community high School, Wakefield High School, Gunston Middle School, and Barcroft Elementary School.

Current Initiatives Related to Graduation

County-wide integration:

- Whole Child Activities
- Counselor & Principal Portal for individual support
- Attendance (daily report, monthly monitoring, county-wide committee, and school level supports)
- Achievement (tutoring, targeted assessments to identify supports, scheduled intervention time, and PLC)

Community Support: communication, engagement, collaboration

- Task Force Updates
- Whole Child Work Group
- FACE (Family and Community Engagement)
- Mental Health Connections
- Wrap around services
- Engaging community supports:
- Alumni, faith, non-profit, business, civic, local & national associations

Services and Supports

In alignment with the tenets of the Whole Child Working Group's recommendations, the following integrated services and supports are available for families across the district.

Sample of Services/Supports

- Food security support
- Tutoring Support
- Civic & leadership training program
- Dental Care
- Vision screening, care & eyeglasses
- Health study to target supports for chronic absences
- Business supports
- Clothing

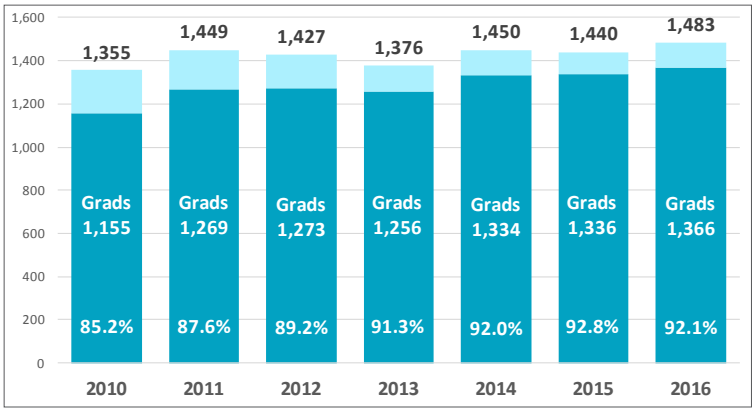
Sample of Agencies

- AFAC
- Alumni Association
- Faith Community
- Liberty's Promise
- Urban Alliance
- South Arlington Kiwanis
- Mission of Mercy
- VPS Global Vision Screenings & Eye Glasses
- School Health
- Boeing

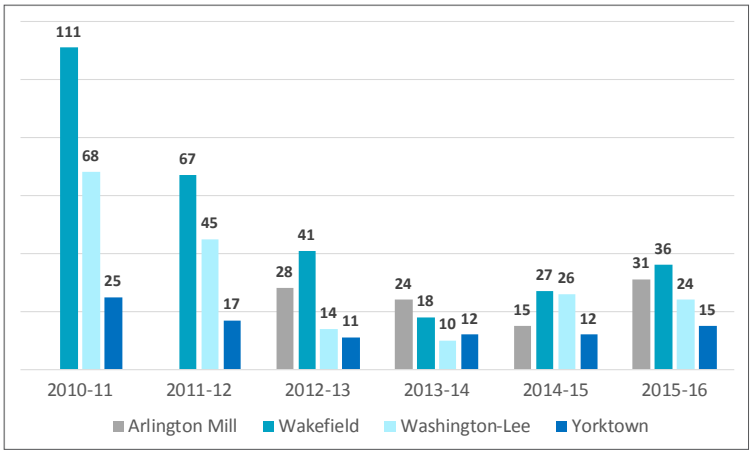
What the Data Shows

Using the Data Warehouse, individual meetings with students, regular Aspire2Excellence (A2E) academic planning information sessions, Arlington Tiered System of Support (ATSS) and integrated community services, APS had experienced a rise in on time graduation rates since 2010, and now a somewhat leveling of rates.

APS On-Time Graduation Rates

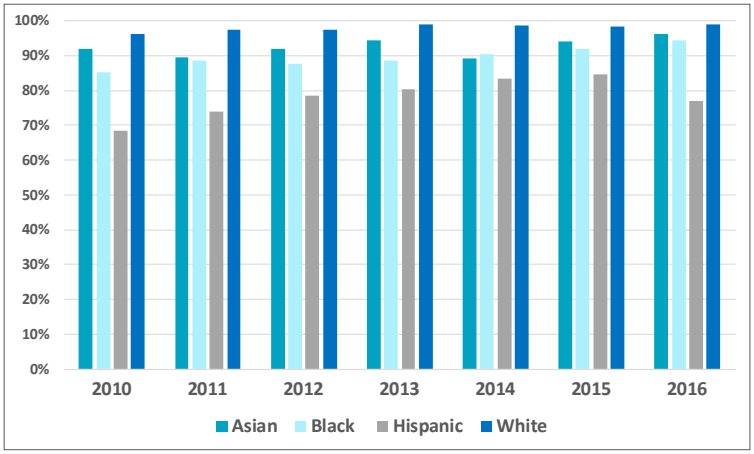


State Dropout Rates per School



When the data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, the rates for Asian, Black, and white students show a steady rise or fairly level. The rate for Hispanic showed a steady increase until last year with a slight downturn.

APS On-Time Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity



Communities in Schools

The Community in Schools (CIS) program offers additional targeted support in four schools: Arlington Community High School, Wakefield High school, Gunston Middle School and Barcroft Elementary School.

Communities In Schools, Inc. Integrated Services (as of 12/16)

CIS of NOVA - School Supports			
Area	Specific Support	School(s)	Participants
Academic Supports	School day/after school homework assistance	Barcroft, Gunston, Wakefield	210
	Evening/weekend homework assistance	ACHS, Wakefield	125
Basic Needs	Food assistance	ACHS, Barcroft, Gunston, Wakefield	217
	Basic resource support (clothing, health screening, school supplies)	ACHS, Barcroft, Gunston, Wakefield	40
Other Supports	College & Career Readiness Programs	ACHS, Gunston, Wakefield	105

CIS of NOVA - Case Management Progress (across all schools)			
Student Goals	# Students with Goal	% making Progress	Concerns
Improve/ maintain academics	156	93%	Recruiting additional volunteers to help with homework and study habits
Improve/ maintain attendance	120	93%	Individually working on attendance issues with students & families
Improve/ maintain school behavior	15	100%	
Improve/ maintain college & career readiness	70	100%	30 Seniors at ACHS and Wakefield are focusing on completing graduation requirements

CIS of NOVA - Community Engagement		
Area	#	
Volunteer engagement	62	130 hours
Community Organizations	11	9 Programs

CIS of NOVA - Summary of Services		
Service Level	# Hours	# Students
Tier I	91.0	494
Tier II	343.5	185
Individualized Supports	173.5	185

Additional Dropout Prevention Initiatives

Unique to APS, Dropout Prevention and Intervention Teams were created in October, 2016. Each comprehensive high school's and program's team include selected school-based and central office staff. The teams meet monthly to review current potential dropout indicators and data, divide the caseload, meet with and interview the students to determine how to match their school program or schedule to their individual interests and needs. This has resulted in enhancing opportunities for taking semester credit-bearing courses, flexible scheduling for working students, expanded program offerings at county-wide sites, and increased personalized options. These teams will continue to work closely to address the enrollment and success of every student in their schools and/or programs.

Timeline/Next Steps

Moving forward, all schools will utilize the following options to support and enhance our students' opportunity for on-time graduation:

- Continue Targeted Interventions
- Further implementation of ATSS Framework
- Continue early identification through data attendance & dropout
- Additional opportunities to earn credits in semester courses for targeted students, including graduating seniors and HILT students
- Dropout Prevention Team Support
- Increase Social Work, Psychologist & ELL support
- Developing instructional and graduation options
- Develop individual support plans
- Assure transition of supports across schools
- Community Involvement
- Increase integration of community supports
- Partnering with county support services (mental health, employment, workforce)

Looking Ahead

Portrait of a Graduate

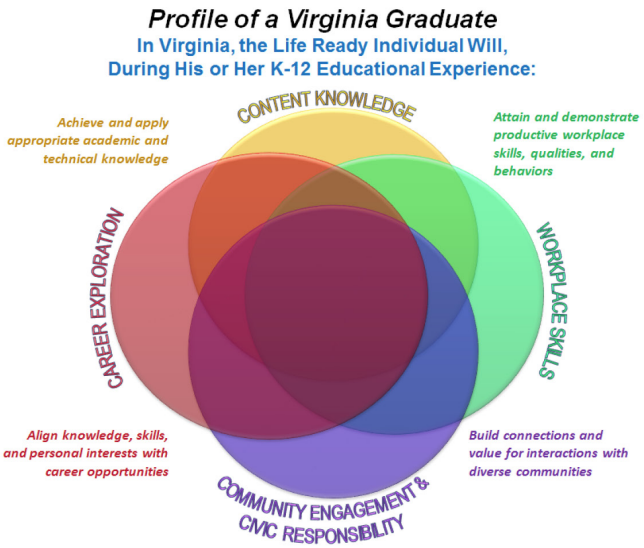
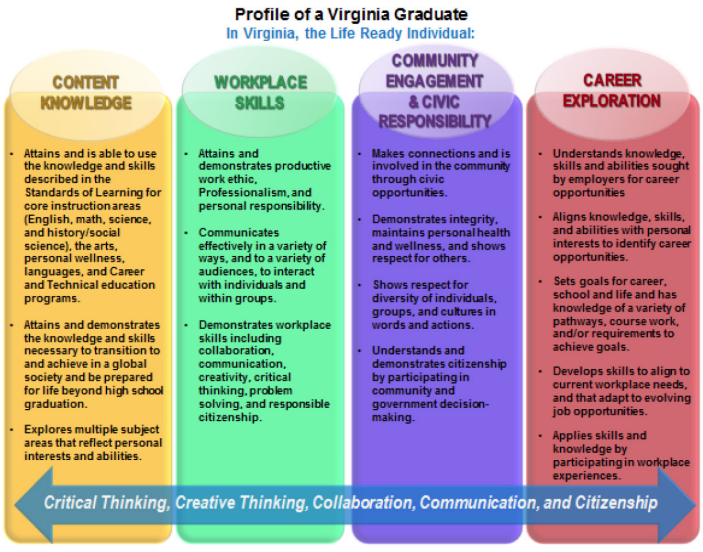
In the Summer of 2016, VDOE released the High School Redesign: *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*. Within the report, the Board stressed the importance of building capacity in schools to support the unique needs of all students, teachers and administrators. APS will include new requirements for graduation according to the knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences students should have in order to align with the expectations of higher education and businesses under the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*.

Areas of Board Consensus

- EXPAND the use of performance assessments and REDUCE the number of credits verified by SOL tests
- INCREASE internships and work-based learning experiences
- INCREASE career exposure, exploration, and planning
- EMPHASIZE the "5 Cs" (critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Requirements

State Plan to be submitted to U.S. Department of Education by March 2017. State Accountability Systems must address:

- Academic achievement,
- Academic progress,
- Graduation rates,
- Progress in English Learners gaining proficiency, and
- School quality.

It is anticipated that the implementation of these initiatives will have an impact on the graduation rate. The Dropout Prevention and Intervention Teams will be key assets to assuring that students complete the requirements and indeed graduate on-time.