

BOARD BRIEF

Date: September 23, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Jennifer L. Whitson, Ed.D., Evaluation and Assessment Analyst

THROUGH: Clinton Page, Ed.D., Chief Accountability Officer
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D. Interim Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Preliminary 2022 Virginia On-Time Graduation and Dropout Rates

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

SY 2022-2023 FOCUS AREA:

Social Emotional and Academic Learning Hispanic Males

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Address Chronic Absenteeism & High School Graduation Rate Among Hispanic Male Students
Social and Emotional Supports for Students

SUMMARY:

This brief and the attached figures are intended to provide the preliminary Virginia On-time Graduation and Dropout rates for students who entered ninth grade in SY 2018-19 and were thus scheduled to graduate in the 2022 cohort within Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). In comparing this year’s graduation rates to the previous year, it is important to note that the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) issued emergency guidelines that allowed additional diploma pathways for students in the previous year’s cohort based on the impact of the pandemic. Overall, the On-Time Graduation rate decreased by eight percentage points to 83% from the all-time high seen last year and returned to rates seen in previous years. The overall cohort Dropout rate increased by four percentage points returning to a level still below the combined average of the dropout rates seen from 2013-2020. Student groups with the greatest one year decline in On-Time Graduation rates and increases in cohort Dropout rates were the English Learner (EL) and Hispanic student groups.

BACKGROUND:

Starting with the graduating class of 2008, the state of Virginia began calculating “On-Time” graduation and dropout rates. The “on-time” rates, reported annually, are the official state recognized graduation and dropout statistics. The Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate takes into consideration student mobility, changes in student enrollment, and the needs of special education and English learners (EL) students. An “on-time” graduate for 2022 is a student who entered ninth

BOARD BRIEF

grade for the first time during the 2018-19 academic year and, in four years or less, earned one of the Virginia Board of Education recognized diplomas: Advanced Studies, Standard, Modified Standard, Applied Studies, and General Achievement diplomas.

Attached, please find two figures capturing the Virginia On-Time Graduation data for 2022 to be released by VDOE on September 29, 2022. Figure 1 displays ACPS graduation rates reported for all students and by student groups historically. Figure 2 shows the dropout rates reported for all students and by groups within ACPS for the past several years.

ACPS saw an On-Time Graduation rate of 83% for the 2022 cohort, which represented a decrease of eight percentage points compared to the historic highs seen in the previous year. Decreases from the previous year were experienced across all student groups with the largest decreases seen for EL (-19 percentage points), Hispanic students (-16 percentage points), and economically disadvantaged (-10 percentage points) student groups. Graduation rates for black students, SWDs and white students decreased by six, one, and three percentage points, respectively.

The dropout rate for the 2022 cohort also showed group differences when compared to the previous year. Dropout rates increased overall and for ELs (+12 percentage points), Hispanic (+9 percentage points), and economically disadvantaged students (+4 percentage points). There was no change in the dropout rate for black and white students compared to the prior year. The students with disabilities group was the only one that had a decrease in dropout rate from five to three percent.

In comparing this year's graduation rates to the previous year, it is important to note that in January 2021 the Virginia Board of Education issued emergency guidelines regarding locally-awarded verified credits (LAVC) for the 2020-2021 school year based on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which have since expired. The emergency guidelines allowed students passing a course leading to a verified credit to earn a LAVC with a SOL score between 350 and 399 creating additional diploma pathways. Looking at historical data prior to these guidelines, the division on-time grad rates for the 2020 cohort and five years prior ranged between 80 percent and 83 percent suggesting that the current rate is consistent with pre-COVID cohorts.

RECOMMENDATION: The Interim Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the 2022 Virginia On-Time Graduation and Dropout figures for possible planning, procedural, programmatic, and/or budgetary changes.

IMPACT:

Last year, ACPS saw historic graduation and dropout indicators for the 2020-2021 cohort. The 2021-2022 graduation and dropout indicators show that there is the need for continued targeted focus as the division works to engage and support students for college and career readiness as part of the Equity for All 2025 Strategic Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

ACPS 2022 On-Time Graduation and Dropout Figures

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