

# Entrepreneurship and Business Academy (EBA): Status Update for 2019-2020



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## BACKGROUND

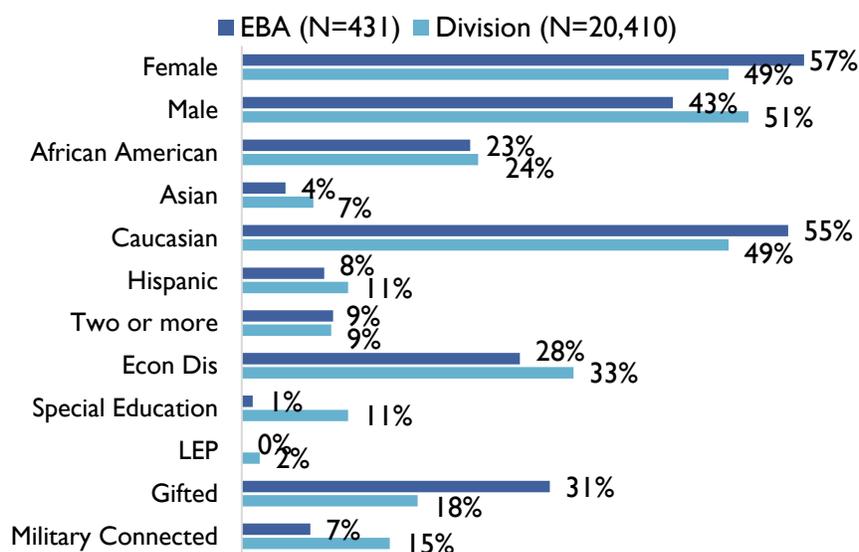
The Entrepreneurship and Business Academy (EBA) was designed to provide students with opportunities to study, understand, and explore business fields and the entrepreneurial ventures that exist in today's workforce. To achieve that goal, the EBA provides students with the opportunity to enroll in specialized course strands, earn certifications, earn an associate degree at Tidewater Community College (TCC), participate in job shadowing and mentoring programs, and complete a long-term project and/or senior internship.

On October 6, 2015, the School Board approved the EBA to be opened the following September as a school within a school at Kempsville High School. School Board Policy 6-26 requires that new programs be evaluated for the first two years of operation and during the year of full implementation across all grade levels. Full implementation across all grade levels was achieved during the 2019-2020 school year; therefore, a final comprehensive evaluation was underway during 2019-2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closure in March 2020, data collection was unable to be completed, and the final comprehensive evaluation was postponed to 2020-2021. As a result of the school closure, academic and assessment data were not available for the full school year, and the surveys that were planned to assess stakeholders' perceptions and progress toward goals were not administered. Although the evaluation was postponed, the Office of Research and Evaluation developed this status update to provide stakeholders a brief summary of information about the number and characteristics of students enrolled, selected program components and the impact of the school closure on program operations, and graduation data for the academy's first graduating class.

## ENROLLMENT

A total of 431 students were enrolled in the academy in grades 9 through 12 as of September 30, 2019. Figure 1 displays the percent of students enrolled in the EBA and in VBCPS by student group. The majority of students in the academy were female (57%) or Caucasian (55%). Compared to the division, the EBA had a higher percentage of female, Caucasian, and gifted students (i.e., more than a 5 percent difference) (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Percent of Grades 9-12 Students Enrolled in EBA and VBCPS by Student Group**



As shown in Table 1, students enrolled in the EBA were from all 11 VBCPS high school attendance zones during 2019-2020. The largest percentage of EBA students were zoned for Kempsville High School (28%) followed by Green Run (13%), Salem (11%), and Tallwood (10%) high schools.

**Table 1: Number and Percent of Students Enrolled by Zoned High School**

High School	# Enrolled	% Enrolled
Bayside High School	40	9%
First Colonial High School	28	6%
Frank W. Cox High School	21	5%
Green Run High School	55	13%
Kellam High School	13	3%
Kempsville High School	121	28%
Landstown High School	26	6%
Ocean Lakes High School	18	4%
Princess Anne High School	17	4%
Salem High School	47	11%
Tallwood High School	45	10%

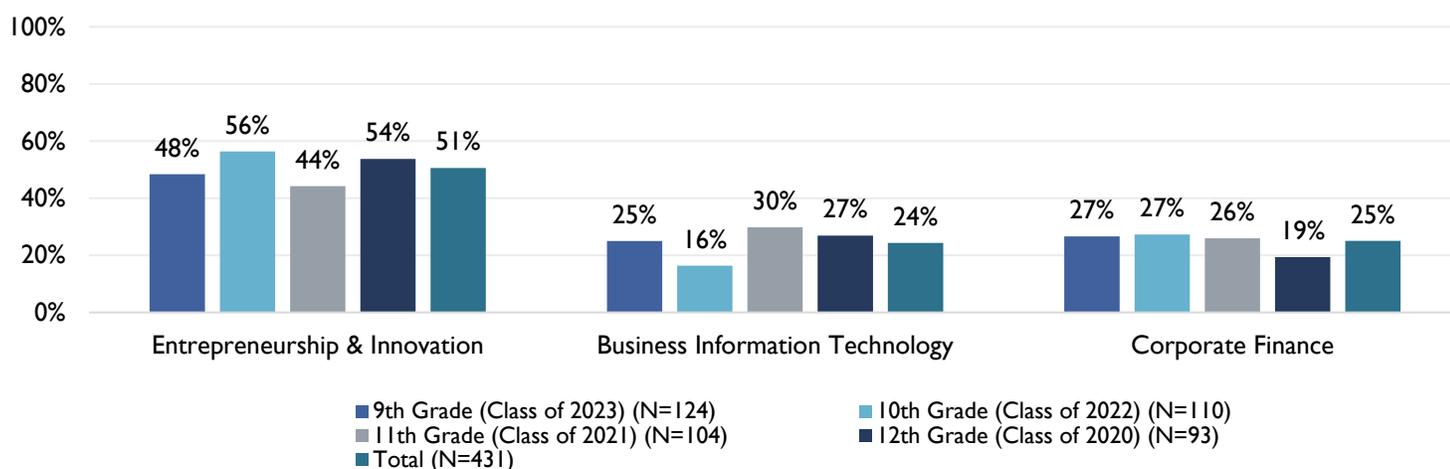
Additional data analyses showed that the ninth-grade EBA student population represented every middle school in VBCPS. The largest percentages of ninth-grade students had previously attended Larkspur Middle (17%), Kempsville Middle (16%), Old Donation School (11%), or Brandon Middle (11%).

At the end of their ninth-grade year, students enrolled in the EBA have the opportunity to select one of three specialized strands to guide their studies. Students may choose from the entrepreneurship and innovation, business information and technology, or corporate finance strand. Students enrolled in the:

- Entrepreneurship and Innovation strand take courses focused on design thinking and the Babson College approach to Entrepreneurial Thought and Action.
- Business Information Technology strand have opportunities to take courses at the Advanced Technology Center.
- Corporate Finance strand have multiple opportunities to study within the banking- and finance-related career fields.

Figure 2 displays the percent of EBA students enrolled in each strand by grade level during the 2019-2020 school year. Overall, approximately one-half of the EBA students were enrolled in the entrepreneurship and innovation strand, while 25 percent were enrolled in the corporate finance strand and 24 percent were enrolled in the business information technology strand.

**Figure 2: Percent of EBA Students Enrolled in Each Strand by Graduating Class**



## SELECTED PROGRAM COMPONENTS

This status update contains information about selected program components such as certification attainment, job shadowing and mentoring, and the long-term project and/or senior internship.

## Career and Industry Certifications

Students within the academy are expected to complete the VBCPS Technical and Career Education stackable credential model in which students complete the Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth assessment, the Microsoft IT Academy Specialist certification, and strand-specific certifications that lead students to become both career and college ready when they graduate from high school. Table 2 displays the percent of EBA students who attempted and earned an industry certification during 2019-2020 for the certifications with the largest number of participants. Across all certifications, 336 of 338 students (99%) who attempted any industry certification earned one during 2019-2020. Overall, the EBA students took 556 total industry certification exams with nearly all (99%) of those exams resulting in earning a credential.

**Table 2: Number and Percent of EBA Students Who Attempted and Earned Selected Industry Certifications**

Certification	# Attempted	% Earning
ADVANCED Customer Service and Sales Certification	28	89%
Customer Service and Sales Certification	59	100%
Microsoft Office: Excel 2016	18	94%
Microsoft Office: PowerPoint 2016	84	100%
Microsoft Office: Word 2016	122	100%
Microsoft Office: Word Expert 2016	18	100%
W!SE Financial Literacy Certification	84	98%
Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth	108	99%

It should be noted that the ability for students to attempt industry certifications was impacted by the school closure in March. Due to the closure, students who studied for the NOCTI accounting certifications were unable to take the exam, and ninth-grade students working on their Microsoft certifications were unable to complete the PowerPoint module.

## Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programs

Job shadowing and mentoring is one of the hallmark components of the EBA and was structured to commence during the EBA's second year of operation after the EBA students had selected their strand and completed their year-one coursework. The students learned by observing and asking questions, and it provided the students with an opportunity to network and begin establishing a relationship with a possible mentor with whom they might intern or receive guidance and even funding for their own entrepreneurial endeavors. According to the academy coordinator, all seniors in 2019-2020 met the requirements for job shadowing the prior school year and job shadowing for other students was completed before the school closure. The mentoring program continued with students finalizing their proposals and pitching their business ideas they had been working on during the year. According to the academy coordinator, partners were accessible via Zoom meetings during the school closure, and students had access to the mentoring experience virtually.

## Senior Internship and Long-Term Project

Another component of the EBA is the completion of a long-term project or internship during students' senior year. It was proposed as on-the-job training that would provide each student an opportunity to identify real-world applications of what they learned in school. The experience was designed to culminate with each student presenting for an audience of peers, school staff, and people from the business community. According to the academy coordinator, all of the hours for student internships and long-term projects were completed as planned utilizing Zoom and other virtual meeting platforms to conduct meetings and complete the panel reviews for the long-term project video presentations.

## IMPACT OF CLOSURE

During an interview with the academy coordinator regarding the effect the COVID-19 school closure had on the EBA's operation, the coordinator indicated that programmatically, there was minimal impact for the students during the 2019-2020 school year and that components such as mentoring and the long-term project were able to be completed virtually. However, as mentioned previously, there was some impact on students completing their certification exams.

While the programmatic disruptions were somewhat minimal for the senior class of 2020, there were disruptions to curriculum and activities that have the potential to have a larger impact on students in the classes of 2021, 2022, and 2023. The most impactful disruption that occurred was the inability to host the annual “pitch night” where students can receive funding for their business ideas. The staff hosted a virtual pitch night and ran the process as close to past experiences as possible with students pitching their ideas to the board of advisors, but not for funding.

In spite of the closure, the EBA was able to maintain partnerships through the use of the virtual environment to connect students to their master classes and community partners. According to the academy coordinator, the virtual environment allowed staff to “think outside of the box” about how to enable continued learning and help the EBA form connections with community partners who wanted to learn more about the EBA program.

## **GRADUATION**

The 2019-2020 school year was the academy’s first graduating class of students. All 91 twelfth-grade students enrolled in the EBA at the end of the 2019-2020 school year graduated on time and earned an advanced studies diploma. For reference purposes, 56 percent of VBCPS on-time graduates earned an advanced studies diploma. In addition, of the EBA students who graduated, 17 were able to complete the requirements to earn an associate degree from TCC according to the academy coordinator. Although the school closure impacted the traditional graduation experience, the EBA parent association celebrated the Class of 2020 EBA graduates with extra scholarships, gifts, and a socially distanced graduation ceremony in which graduates received their diplomas from the principal of Kempsville High School. The academy coordinator also presented the graduates with a medallion.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The School Board approved the 2020-2021 Program Evaluation Schedule September 9, 2020, which included the EBA. During 2020-2021, the comprehensive evaluation of the EBA’s full implementation across all grade levels is planned to include a review of the academy program components, characteristics of students enrolled in the academy, progress toward meeting goals and objectives, stakeholders’ perceptions, and the additional cost of the EBA to the school division. Particular emphasis will be placed on the outcome goal and objectives. The context of the COVID-19 pandemic will be considered as the academic and assessment data, programmatic data, and stakeholder perceptions obtained through surveys are collected and analyzed as part of the 2020-2021 evaluation.

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