



# An Achievable Dream (AAD) Academy at Seatack Elementary School: *Evaluation Update*

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## Program Overview

The An Achievable Dream (AAD) Academy, which began in 1992 in Newport News Public Schools, conducts “a year-round, extended day public school program designed to close the achievement gap and allow all children to learn to succeed regardless of their socioeconomic background.”<sup>1</sup> The partnership between AAD and Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) began in 2013 when the contract between Achievable Dream Academies, Inc. and VBCPS was presented to the School Board on June 18, 2013 and approved on July 16, 2013. According to the contract, a new grade will be added each year until the year 2025 when there will be a full K-12 program. The AAD Academy was first implemented at Seatack Elementary School in the 2014-2015 school year across kindergarten through grade 2. The academy expanded to include third grade in 2015-2016, fourth grade in 2016-2017, and fifth grade in 2017-2018. The sixth-grade program was added at Lynnhaven Middle School in 2018-2019 and operates as a school within a school.

The AAD Academy offers an extended school day and year as well as additional opportunities for students, such as field trips and numerous clubs and extracurricular activities. Other opportunities are provided to students through AAD’s community partnerships, such as receiving indoor flying lessons and listening to guest speakers at iFly. Students also participate in a specialized Social, Academic, and Moral Education (SAME) social rotation curriculum that provides opportunities to “develop social, academic, and moral skills that help them become strong adults.”<sup>2</sup> The program stresses high expectations through student and parent educational contracts as well as a dress code for students. These expectations and beliefs are reinforced when students take part in banners, during which students recite daily positive affirmations.

An evaluation for the 2014-2015 school year was conducted by The College of William and Mary under contract with the Achievable Dream Academies, Inc., and as an approved research project in VBCPS. In addition, academic, discipline, and attendance outcomes from the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years were assessed by the VBCPS Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and presented in an Evaluation Brief to the School Board, AAD representatives, and the Superintendent’s Senior Staff.<sup>3</sup> The AAD Academy has also had two previous comprehensive program evaluations completed by ORE during its implementation period, with the School Board receiving reports on October 24, 2017 and November 13, 2018.

Based upon the School Board approved recommendations included in the November 2018 comprehensive evaluation, the purpose of this evaluation update was to focus on staff perceptions, matched group analyses for elementary students, and an update on the AAD Academy students who continued into the middle school program. Further, staff perception and student performance data will be presented for areas noted in the 2017- 2018 program evaluation recommendations, including academic performance in select areas; communication and application of discipline policies; and communication to staff and collaboration between VBCPS and the AAD Academy staff and administrators.

## Data Collection and Methodology

The Office of Research and Evaluation invited instructional staff from the AAD Academy at Seatack Elementary School to complete a survey regarding their perceptions of the AAD Academy. Staff received an email invitation with a link to participate in the online survey at the end of April 2019. Of the 52 instructional staff members, 27 (52%) completed the survey. Quantitative data regarding student demographics, discipline, and test scores were extracted from the VBCPS data warehouse using query statements and exported to SPSS files to allow for data analyses. Unless otherwise noted, to be included in the outcome analyses, students must have been enrolled in the academy during 2018-2019 for at least one-half of the school year, which was 89 days of the 177 days in the school year. Of the 394 students who were enrolled in the AAD Academy at Seatack at any point during the 2018-2019 school year, 370 students (94%) met this criterion. When making

comparisons to data from the previous years, enrollment criteria during those years were also implemented (i.e., enrolled for at least half the year). Standards of Learning (SOL) data for Seatack Elementary School as a whole were analyzed by the Office of Student Assessment, and the analysis adjusted for students who were included as recovery students from not passing the previous year.<sup>4</sup> Due to providing SOL data based on these adjustments, all students who took the test at Seatack were included in these analyses (i.e., no exclusionary criteria for days enrolled). SOL data used in the matched group analyses described below did not include these adjustments.

Two sets of matched group analyses were conducted to compare academic and discipline outcomes of the AAD Academy students to matched groups of students. The first set of analyses focused on the AAD Academy students in kindergarten through grade 5 during the 2018-2019 school year. These students were matched with a group of students from a school comparable to Seatack Elementary using demographic variables. The second set of analyses focused on the AAD Academy students in grade 5 during the 2017-2018 school year who also continued into the AAD program at Lynnhaven Middle School in grade 6 in 2018-2019. These students were matched with a group of grade 6 students from Lynnhaven Middle School who were not part of the AAD program using demographic variables. Outcomes were compared for AAD student groups and the comparison groups using t-tests and chi-square tests. Matched group comparisons are presented where appropriate throughout the report.

## Results

### Student Enrollment

Students from targeted attendance zones were automatically accepted into the AAD Academy at Seatack Elementary School. Families within the Seatack Elementary School attendance zone may decide to opt out of the program and attend a nearby school. The AAD Academy also accepted students from nearby attendance zones (i.e., Birdneck and Lynnhaven elementary schools). Students from other attendance zones could also attend if they met criteria based on social factors, such as free and reduced lunch status, single parent households, and public/subsidized housing. Students attending the AAD program at Lynnhaven Middle School were primarily those who attended the academy at Seatack Elementary School; however, students could apply to attend with acceptance based on the factors listed above. Tables 1 through 3 display AAD enrollment numbers each year based on the total numbers of students who were enrolled at any time during the year, numbers and percentages of 2018-2019 students enrolled at least half the year who were also enrolled in previous years, and numbers of students who opted in or out of the AAD Academy at Seatack.

- In 2018-2019, the AAD Academy student enrollment at any point during the year increased in kindergarten and grade 4 but declined overall from K-5 from the previous year.
- A total of 56 students enrolled in the grade 6 AAD program at Lynnhaven Middle School during 2018-2019 at any time during the year.

**Table 1: AAD Student Enrollment Each Year At Any Time During Year**

Grade	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Kindergarten	94	81	62	66	75
Grade 1	62	93	87	65	51
Grade 2	80	52	82	79	61
Grade 3	-	68	55	83	75
Grade 4	-	-	90	53	78
Grade 5	-	-	-	90	54
<b>K-5 Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>394</b>
Grade 6	-	-	-	-	56



- Of the students enrolled in AAD during 2018-2019 at any point during the year who remained enrolled at least half of the school year, between 67 and 82 percent were also enrolled in the AAD Academy the previous year during 2017-2018 depending on the grade.
- Additionally, between 40 and 53 percent of the grades 4 through 6 students enrolled in AAD during 2018-2019 were also enrolled in the AAD Academy during the first year of implementation in 2014-2015 (i.e., when they were enrolled in grades K through 2).

**Table 2: Number and Percent of 2018-2019 Students Enrolled At Least Half the Year Also Enrolled Previous Year**

2018-2019 Grade	2018-2019 Enrollment	Also Enrolled 2017-2018	Also Enrolled 2016-2017	Also Enrolled 2015-2016	Also Enrolled 2014-2015
Kindergarten	71	^	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grade 1	51	37 (72.5%)	^	n/a	n/a
Grade 2	56	46 (82.1%)	33 (58.9%)	^	n/a
Grade 3	71	49 (69.0%)	43 (60.6%)	42 (59.2%)	^
Grade 4	73	60 (82.2%)	50 (68.5%)	45 (61.6%)	39 (53.4%)
Grade 5	48	32 (66.7%)	25 (52.1%)	18 (37.5%)	19 (39.6%)
Grade 6	52	39 (75.0%)	34 (65.4%)	25 (48.1%)	25 (48.1%) <sup>5</sup>

Note: ^ Students may have been retained from the previous year(s). These numbers are less than 10. Table includes students who may not have been enrolled in consecutive years.

- There were 135 students who lived in the designated Seatack Elementary zone but opted out of Seatack and were enrolled at a different elementary school in 2018-2019. The number of students who opted out increased by 35 students from 2017-2018. Of the 95 students whose listed reason was “other,” 85 attended a nearby school, Birdneck Elementary School.
- For the 2018-2019 school year, there were 79 students who attended Seatack Elementary but were zoned for another elementary school. There were 68 students who had an opt-in reason for “Academy,” which was consistent with the reason code that the AAD Academy enters when students opt in to the academy. The total number of students who opted in to the program also increased by 14 students from 2017-2018.
- In addition, there were 315 students who lived in the designated Seatack Elementary zone and were enrolled at Seatack Elementary in 2018-2019. This number declined from 371 students in 2017-2018.

**Table 3: Number of Students Who Opted-In or Opted-Out of the AAD Academy at Seatack With Reasons**

Reason Provided for Opt-In or Opt-Out	2016-2017 (K-4)	2017-2018 (K-5)	2018-2019 (K-5)
<b>Opt-Out Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>135</b>
Childcare hardships	21	15	26
Extenuating circumstances	-	-	1
In area (i.e., Lynnhaven)	1	-	-
Medical reasons	-	-	2
Moving within school year	8	4	4
Other reasons	67	76	95
Required courses or programs	6	3	1
No reason provided	-	2	6
<b>Opt-In Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>79</b>
Academy	14	62	68
Childcare hardships	-	2	1
In area (i.e., Birdneck)	5	-	-
Other reasons	1	-	4
Required courses or programs	-	1	6

Note: Table includes any student enrolled during the year.



## Academic Performance

Following the AAD Academy program evaluations in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, an area of recommendation was related to declining AAD Academy student academic performance and lower AAD Academy student academic performance than matched comparison groups. The recommendations were to analyze academic data to investigate reasons for declines (2016-2017) and review academic performance in specific areas, including grade 4 math and grade 5 science and social studies (2017-2018). The administration took the following actions during 2018-2019 related to the 2017-2018 recommendation:

- To address grade 4 math performance, students were identified by the previous year's SOL scores, quarterly benchmarks, and teacher recommendations, and remediation plans were developed by math coaches for Saturday School. Additionally, during the extended day, math coaches provided enrichment activities to identified groups of students based on quarterly benchmarks and teacher data.
- Two online math programs, Reflex and Tenmarks, were utilized by teachers to provide students additional lessons in math. A tutor also met with students daily to remediate math skills and strategies.
- For grade 5 science, the instructional technology specialist created hands-on instruction on a weekly basis in conjunction with teachers' lessons. Additional actions for grade 5 students included having a parent volunteer teach students a lesson on electricity; hands-on experiences through a weekly outreach program called Mad Science; gifted resource teacher co-teaching about plants; two outreach programs through the Virginia Air and Space Center; and use of an internet-based program reinforcing science knowledge, called Education Galaxy.
- For grade 5 social studies, the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art held outreach programs concentrating on social studies objectives.
- Additional actions taken to address academics generally included weekly grade-level meetings in March to review data, identify weak areas, and create individualized remediation as well as providing students with training on test-taking strategies.

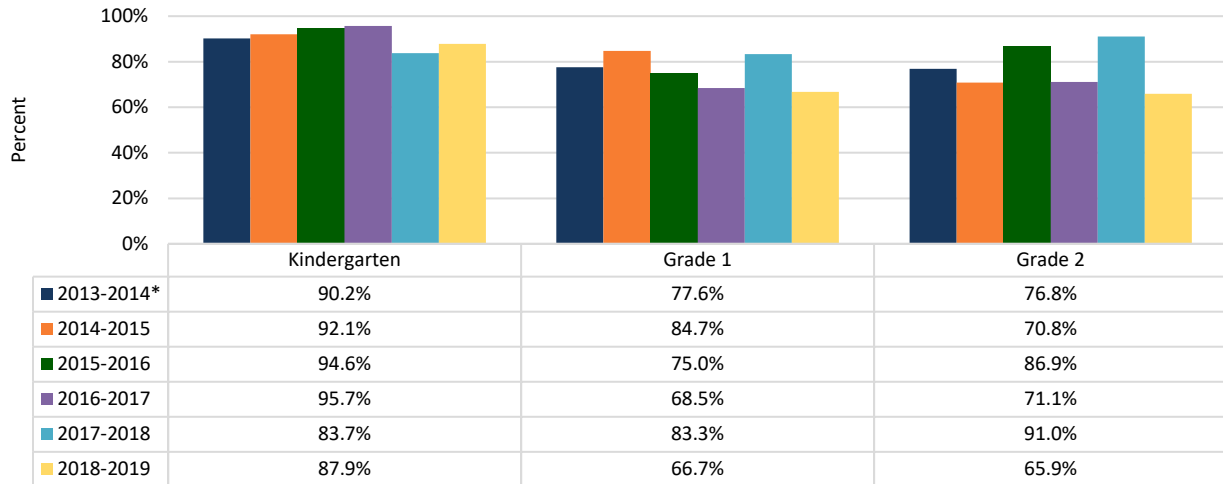
In the following sections, student academic achievement data are provided with comparisons over time and with the matched group. Additionally, staff perceptions are provided for academic-related items from the staff survey.

### Academic Performance Over Time

#### *Reading Performance in Grades K Through 5*

- As shown in Figure 1, in comparison to 2017-2018, there was improvement in the percentage of kindergarten students who met or exceeded the DRA grade level benchmark. However, there were declines in the percentages of students in grades 1 and 2 who met or exceeded the DRA grade level benchmarks.<sup>6</sup>
- In comparison to 2013-2014, the year prior to the AAD Academy implementation in grades K through 2, there were small declines in the percentage of students who met or exceeded the DRA grade level benchmarks in kindergarten and larger declines in grades 1 and 2.

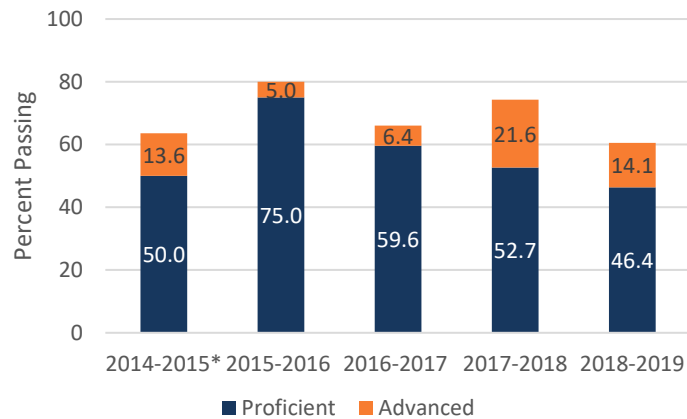
**Figure 1: Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding DRA Grade Level Benchmarks**



\*2013-2014 was the year prior to implementation in grades K through 2.

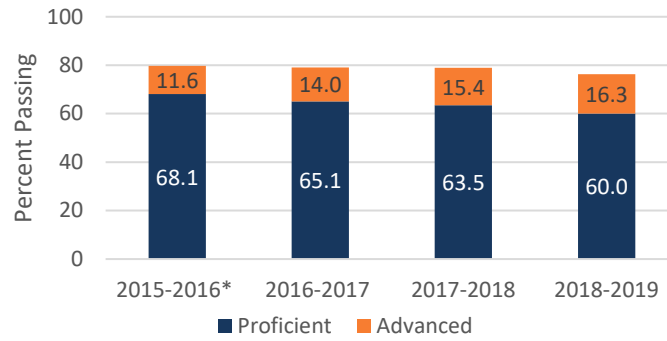
- As shown in Figures 2 through 4, in 2018-2019, there were declines in the overall percentages of students passing the reading SOL in grades 3 through 5 in comparison to 2017-2018 and to the years prior to implementation in the grade levels. The amount of declines varied by grade level (see Figures 2 through 4).
- The declines in the overall percentages of students passing the reading SOL in grades 3 through 5 at Seatack Elementary from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 were larger than declines seen at the division level.

**Figure 2: Grade 3 Reading SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**



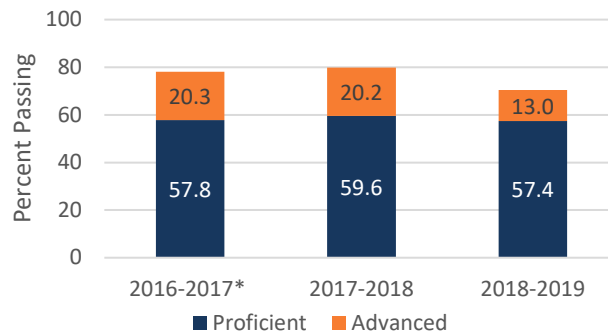
\*2014-2015 was the year prior to implementation in grade 3.

**Figure 3: Grade 4 Reading SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**



\*2015-2016 was the year prior to implementation in grade 4.

**Figure 4: Grade 5 Reading SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**

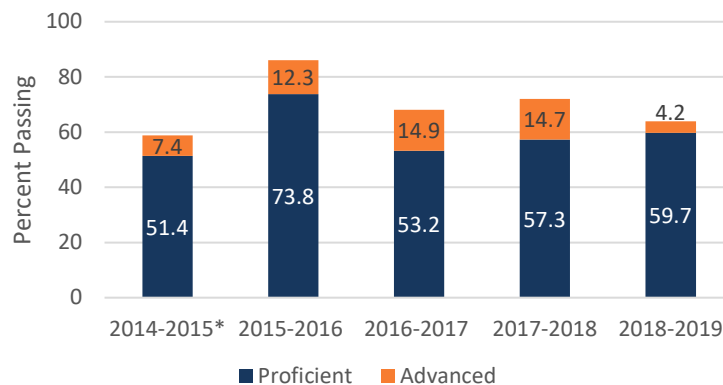


\*2016-2017 was the year prior to implementation in grade 5.

**Math Performance in Grades 3 Through 5**

- As shown in Figures 5 and 7, in 2018-2019, there were declines in the overall percentages of students passing the math SOL in grades 3 and 5 in comparison to 2017-2018; however, there were improvements in comparison to the years prior to implementation in the grade levels.
- Declines in the overall percentages of students passing the math SOL in grades 3 and 5 at Seatack Elementary from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 were in contrast to increases seen at the division level.

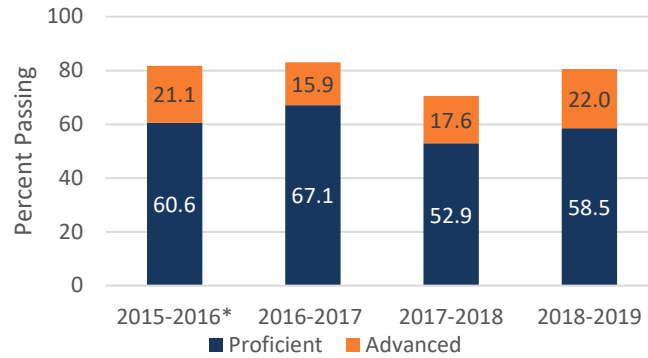
**Figure 5: Grade 3 Math SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**



\*2014-2015 was the year prior to implementation in grade 3.

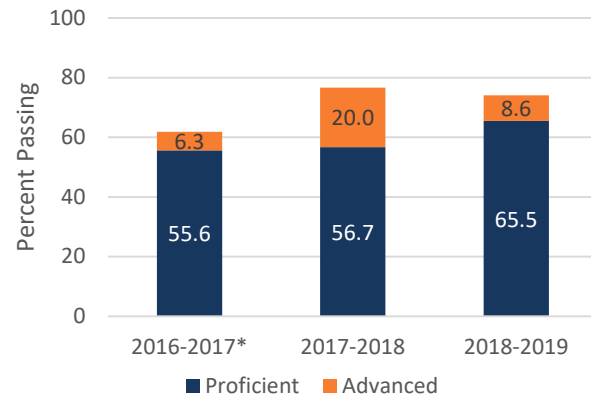
- In 2018-2019, there was improvement in the overall percentage of students passing the math SOL in grade 4 in comparison to 2017-2018 (see Figure 6).
- The increase in the overall percentage of students passing the math SOL in grade 4 at Seatack Elementary from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 was larger than the increase seen at the division level.

**Figure 6: Grade 4 Math SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**



\*2015-2016 was the year prior to implementation in grade 4.

**Figure 7: Grade 5 Math SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**

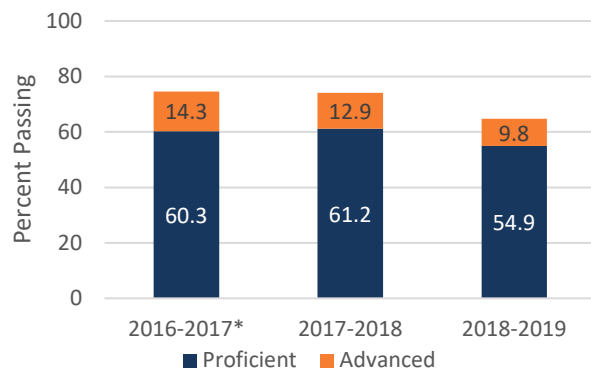


\*2016-2017 was the year prior to implementation in grade 5.

### **Science & Social Studies Performance in Grade 5**

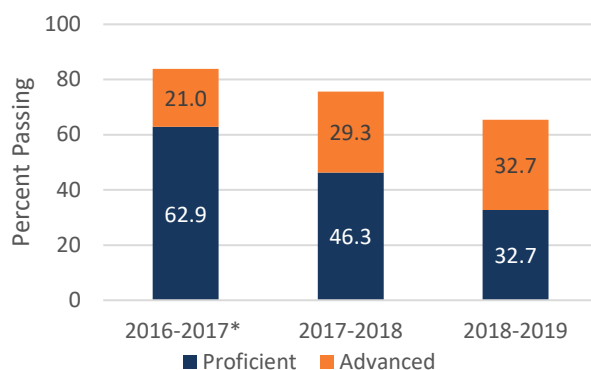
- In 2018-2019, there were declines in the overall percentages of students passing the science and social studies SOLs in grade 5 in comparison to 2017-2018 and to the year prior to implementation in grade 5 (see Figures 8 and 9).
- Declines in the overall percentages of students passing the science and social studies SOLs in grade 5 at Seatack Elementary from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 were larger than declines seen at the division level.

**Figure 8: Grade 5 Science SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**



\*2016-2017 was the year prior to implementation in grade 5.

**Figure 9: Grade 5 Social Studies SOL Proficient and Advanced Passing Scores**



\*2016-2017 was the year prior to implementation in grade 5.

### Matched Group Analyses

Demographic variables were used to construct the comparison group with students from a school that was comparable to Seatack Elementary School. Outcomes were compared for the AAD Academy students and the comparison group using t-tests and chi-square tests. Statistically significant findings are reported when  $p < .05$ . Marginally significant findings are noted within the tables when  $p < .1$ . Demographic characteristics for the AAD Academy students and the matched comparison group are shown in Table 4.

- There were no significant differences across the AAD Academy and matched comparison groups regarding any demographic characteristics.

**Table 4: Demographic Characteristics for the AAD Academy Group and Matched Comparison Group**

Characteristics	AAD Academy Group Grades K-5 (N = 370)	Comparison Group Grades K-5 (N = 370)
Male	54.1%	51.9%
Female	45.9%	48.1%
African American	51.4%	50.8%
Asian	1.4%	5.4%
Caucasian	18.6%	17.8%

Characteristics	AAD Academy Group Grades K-5 (N = 370)	Comparison Group Grades K-5 (N = 370)
Hispanic	20.5%	14.9%
Other	8.1%	11.1%
Economically Disadvantaged	76.2%	77.8%
Gifted	10.0%	7.6%
LEP	5.7%	3.0%
Special Education	9.2%	7.8%

**Reading Performance in Grades K Through 5**

- As shown in Table 5, in comparison to the matched group, the AAD Academy had higher percentages of students meeting or exceeding the spring DRA grade level benchmarks in kindergarten and grade 2, although these differences were not statistically significant. However, the AAD Academy had lower percentages of students meeting or exceeding the spring DRA grade level benchmarks in grades 1 and 3 through 5. The difference between the percentages of students meeting or exceeding grade level benchmarks at grade 3 was statistically significant with a lower percentage of students meeting the benchmark at Seatack.

**Table 5: Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Spring DRA Grade Level Benchmarks**

Grade	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Kindergarten	87.9%	87.3%
Grade 1	66.7%	68.6%
Grade 2	65.9%	54.5%
Grade 3	50.7%*	71.8%*
Grade 4	80.3%	84.1%
Grade 5	61.3%	68.4%

Note: Spring DRA participation rates were lower than 80% for the AAD Academy group in grade 2 (73%), the comparison group in grade 4 (60%), and both groups in grade 5 (the AAD Academy: 65%, comparison group: 79%). Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

- In comparison to the matched group, the AAD Academy had lower percentages of students passing the reading SOL and had lower average reading SOL scores (see Table 6). The differences between the percentages of students passing the reading SOL at grades 3 and 4 were statistically significant.

**Table 6: Comparison of Performance on Reading SOLs**

Grade	Percent Passing Reading SOL		Average Reading SOL Score	
	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Grade 3	63.2%*	81.7%*	421.1+	440.0+
Grade 4	76.4%*	93.1%*	439.7	444.4
Grade 5	68.8%	80.9%	436.6	443.2

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

- In comparison to the matched group, the AAD Academy had lower percentages of students reading on grade level on the spring RI and had lower average RI Lexile scores (see Table 7). The differences between the percentage of students reading on grade level and average RI Lexile scores at grade 3 were statistically significant.

**Table 7: Comparison of Performance on Spring RI**

Grade	Percent Reading on Grade Level		Average RI Lexile Score	
	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Grade 3	53.8%*	72.1%*	536.1*	649.6*
Grade 4	56.9%	58.6%	744.9	806.5
Grade 5	60.9%	73.9%	852.6+	928.7+

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

### Math Performance in Grades 3 Through 5

- In comparison to the matched group, the AAD Academy had lower percentages of students passing the math SOL in grades 3 through 5 and had lower average math SOL scores (see Table 8). All differences were statistically significant except for the difference between average math SOL scores at grade 4, which was marginally significant.

**Table 8: Comparison of Performance on Math SOLs**

Grade	Percent Passing Math SOL		Average Math SOL Score	
	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Grade 3	68.1%*	90.1%*	421.1*	472.7*
Grade 4	80.6%*	97.2%*	454.1+	475.1+
Grade 5	75.0%*	97.9%*	433.9*	465.9*

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

### Science & Social Studies Performance in Grade 5

- In comparison to the matched group, the AAD Academy had lower percentages of students passing the science and social studies SOLs in grade 5 and had lower average science SOL scores (see Table 9). The difference between the average science SOL scores in grade 5 was statistically significant.

**Table 9: Comparison of Performance on Science and Social Studies SOLs**

Test	Percent Passing SOL		Average SOL Score	
	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Science	68.8%	78.7%	422.6*	447.7*
Social Studies	69.6%	80.9%	462.6	460.5

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

### Staff Perceptions

- In comparison to 2017-2018, there were improvements in the percentages of staff who agreed that students improved across all academic areas (see Tables 10 and 11) and that students were provided academic support (see Tables 11 through 13).

**Table 10: Staff Percent Agreement Regarding Students' Academic Growth**

Area of Academic Growth	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Reading	96.6%	78.1%	92.0%
Mathematics	86.7%	75.0%	87.5%
Science	92.9%	80.7%	87.0%
Social Studies	85.2%	76.7%	82.6%



**Table 11: Staff Percent Agreement Regarding Students' Academic Support and Growth**

Area of Academic Growth	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Provided the level of academic support students needed.	83.9%	65.7%	88.5%
Established a schedule of daily activities which met students' needs.	73.3%	60.0%	80.8%
Enhanced study skills.	71.0%	51.5%	68.0%
Enhanced the ability to manage time.	65.5%	48.4%	72.0%
Enhanced the ability to set goals and achieve them.	71.0%	65.6%	76.0%

**Table 12: Staff Percent Agreement Regarding Students' Academic Support**

Area of Academic Support	2017-2018	2018-2019
Provided resources and time to enhance my students' study skills.	73.3%	84.0%
Provided resources and time to enhance my students' ability to manage time.	54.8%	80.0%
Provided additional opportunities to learn during the extended day.	73.3%	88.0%
Provided additional opportunities to learn through the Summer Intersession.	87.5%	92.3%

**Table 13: Staff Percent Agreement Regarding Additional Opportunities**

Additional Opportunity	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Provided field trip opportunities to learn outside of school.	100%	93.9%	100%
Increased my students' desire to attend school.	87.5%	63.6%	79.2%
Developed a sense of structure through school uniforms.	87.5%	68.8%	83.3%

## Discipline

Another recommendation area resulting from the previous AAD Academy program evaluations was related to student behavior and discipline due to referral and suspension rates that were higher than the matched groups (2016-2017) and staff survey responses that indicated concerns about student behavior and implementing discipline policies (2017-2018). This resulted in recommendations to leverage program components to provide an environment that will improve student behavior (2016-2017) and ensure consistency in communicating and applying discipline policies (2017-2018). The administration took the following actions during 2018-2019 related to the 2017-2018 recommendation:

- A Dreamer Discipline Culture Committee was created with the purpose of unifying procedures and policies throughout the school. Regular meetings were held each month, during which individual student concerns were discussed amongst the committee members and alternative suggestions were offered.
- Students who had behavioral concerns were able to be referred by their teachers to meet with a member of the discipline team, principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, security, director of operations, and student enrichment coordinator. These meetings provided students the opportunity to discuss behavior.
- Administration held discipline assemblies with all grade levels in September and January to review expectations, norms, rules, and consequences for behavior.

In the following sections, student discipline data are provided with comparisons over time and with the matched group. Additionally, staff perceptions are provided for discipline-related items from the staff survey.

### Over Time

- In comparison to 2017-2018, there were declines in the number of students with a single suspension and multiple suspensions (see Table 14). There was an increase in the number of students with a major offense suspension from 2 to 3, although this measure is based on a very small number of students.

**Table 14: Number of Students by Suspension**

Number of Students	2017-2018 (K-5)	2018-2019 (K-5)
Single suspension	14	8
Multiple suspensions	4	2
Major offense suspension(s)*	2	3

Note: \*A major offense included: firearms, sexual offense, or more than one incidence of a suspension for fighting or aggression.

- In comparison to 2017-2018, there were declines in the number of students referred and number of referrals as well as the referral and in-school suspension rates (see Table 15). The rate of out-of-school suspensions was consistent with 2017-2018.

**Table 15: Referral and Suspension Numbers and Rates**

Number or Rate	2017-2018 (K-5)	2018-2019 (K-5)
Number of Students Referred	21	16
Number of Referrals	32	20
Referral Rate	5.4%	4.3%
In-School Suspension Rate	3.1%	0.5%
Out-Of-School Suspension Rate	2.3%	2.4%

### Matched Group Analyses

- As shown in Tables 16 through 18, in comparison to the matched group, the AAD Academy had lower referral and suspension rates except for the in-school suspension rates at grades 1 and 4 and out-of-school suspension rates at kindergarten and grade 4. Statistically significant differences are noted in the tables.

**Table 16: Comparison of Referral Rates by Grade**

Grade	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Kindergarten	4.2%	5.6%
Grade 1	2.0%+	9.8%+
Grade 2	0.0%*	8.9%*
Grade 3	5.6%+	14.1%+
Grade 4	8.2%	11.0%
Grade 5	4.2%*	25.0%*
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.3%*</b>	<b>11.9%*</b>

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

**Table 17: Comparison of In-School Suspension Rates by Grade**

Grade	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Kindergarten	0.0%	0.0%
Grade 1	2.0%	0.0%
Grade 2	0.0%	0.0%
Grade 3	0.0%+	4.2%+

Grade	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Grade 4	1.4%	0.0%
Grade 5	0.0%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

**Table 18: Comparison of Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Grade**

Grade	AAD Academy Group	Comparison Group
Kindergarten	1.4%	1.4%
Grade 1	2.0%	3.9%
Grade 2	0.0%	3.6%
Grade 3	1.4%	1.4%
Grade 4	6.8%+	1.4%+
Grade 5	2.1%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

### Staff Perceptions

- In comparison to 2017-2018, there were improvements in the percentages of staff who agreed that students showed improvement in their behavior and that strategies were provided to improve students' behavior (see Table 19).
- As shown in Table 19, in 2018-2019, 64 to 75 percent of staff agreed that the AAD Academy helped improve students' behavior at school, self-control, conflict management, and collaboration. In addition, 84 percent of staff agreed the AAD Academy provided effective instruction in manners and etiquette.

**Table 19: Staff Agreement Regarding Students' Behavioral Improvement**

Area of Behavioral Improvement	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Helped improve behavior at school.	78.8%	34.4%	64.0%
Helped improve the ability to demonstrate self-control.	68.8%	31.3%	72.0%
Helped improve the ability to manage conflict.	75.0%	36.4%	72.0%
Improved ability to collaborate and work with others.	78.1%	61.3%	75.0%
Provided effective instruction in manners and etiquette.	75.0%	65.5%	84.0%

- In 2018-2019, 58 to 68 percent of staff agreed that the AAD Academy provided strategies that improved students' behavior (see Table 20), which were notable improvements from 2017-2018.

**Table 20: Staff Agreement Regarding Providing Strategies for Students' Behavioral Improvement**

Area of Behavioral Support	2017-2018	2018-2019
Provided strategies and consistency to improve my students' behavior at school.	41.9%	57.7%
Provided strategies and resources to improve my students' ability to demonstrate self-control.	46.7%	68.0%
Provided strategies and resources to improve my students' ability to manage conflict.	53.1%	68.0%

- Approximately 46 percent of staff agreed that consequences for breaking the rules were applied consistently to all students and 67 percent agreed that the AAD Academy provided clear information to school staff regarding discipline policies (see Table 21). Although approximately one-third of staff indicated improvement in these areas, the majority of staff indicated there was no change from the previous year (see Table 22).

**Table 21: Staff Agreement Regarding Discipline Policies**

Survey Item	2018-2019
Consequences for breaking the rules were applied consistently to all students.	45.8%
The AAD Academy provided clear information to school staff regarding school discipline policies.	66.7%

**Table 22: Staff Perceptions Regarding Change in Discipline Policies From Previous Year**

Survey Item	Better	No Change	Worse
Consequences for breaking the rules were applied consistently to all students.	38.1%	61.9%	0.0%
Communication with school staff regarding discipline policies.	33.3%	57.1%	9.5%

## AAD Academy Communication

Another recommendation area following the AAD Academy program evaluations was related to providing clear and consistent communication between staff, administrators, and AAD due to low staff agreement on communication-related survey items and declines in staff agreement levels from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. The recommendations included increasing opportunities for clearer and more consistent communication (2016-2017) and to implement new strategies to provide timely and informative communication to staff and to improve collaboration (2017-2018). The administration took the following actions during 2018-2019 related to the recommendation:

- Schoology has been utilized to provide staff with a calendar of events for the school, which includes important events and dates for the staff newsletters.
- In September 2018, staff were surveyed regarding communication. The Communication Committee held meetings in October and January to discuss results of the staff survey as well as to revise the newsletter and discuss steps for ensuring clear communication. A text service, Remind, was set up for staff to receive reminder texts about events for the school.

### Staff Perceptions

- In comparison to 2017-2018, a higher percentage of staff agreed that the AAD Academy has been consistent and clear in its communication with staff; however, there was a decline in the percentage of staff who agreed that the AAD Academy provided sufficient professional development.

**Table 23: Staff Agreement Regarding Communication With the AAD Academy and Professional Learning**

Survey Item	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Been consistent and clear in its communication with me.	61.3%	55.9%	75.0%
Provided me sufficient professional development.	83.9%	72.7%	58.3%

- In 2018-2019, from 63 to 67 percent of staff agreed that the collaboration between the AAD Academy and school staff was effective and that the AAD Academy communicated information in a timely manner and communicated clear information about expectations for enforcing the school uniform policy.

**Table 24: Staff Agreement Regarding Communication With the AAD Academy**

Survey Item	2018-2019
Collaboration between the AAD Academy and school staff is effective.	65.2%
Communicated information in a timely manner to school staff.	66.7%
Communicated clear information about expectations for enforcing the school uniform policy.	62.5%

- Regarding the AAD Academy’s communication with staff, the majority of staff indicated that there was an improvement in 2018-2019 compared with the previous year. While 27 to 41 percent of staff indicated communication in specific areas was better in 2018-2019, the majority of staff indicated there was no change regarding communication with staff about the uniform policy, providing information in a timely manner, and collaboration between the AAD Academy and staff.

**Table 25: Staff Perceptions Regarding Change in Communication From Previous Year**

Area of Communication	Better	No Change	Worse
Communication with staff.	54.6%	45.5%	0%
Communication with staff about expectations for enforcing the school uniform policy.	27.3%	63.6%	9.1%
Provided information in a timely manner.	40.9%	54.6%	4.6%
Collaboration between the AAD Academy and staff.	31.8%	54.6%	13.6%

## School Schedule

A recommendation following the 2017-2018 AAD Academy program evaluation was to investigate the feasibility of changing the school from a “B” schedule school to an “A” schedule school. Parent and staff comments on the survey from 2017-2018 focused on concerns about the length of the extended day, including that students return home from school late in the afternoon, especially during day light savings time. It was recommended to investigate whether switching the schedule would be plausible. According to the chief schools officer, adjusting the school schedule was not pursued due to logistics and potential impact on other schools.<sup>7</sup>

In response to the open-ended survey item about areas of improvement on the 2018-2019 staff survey, only a couple staff members commented on adjusting the schedule. Therefore, the recent data suggests this was not a main theme that emerged from staff comments regarding areas of improvement for the AAD Academy.

## Middle School Program Update

A final recommendation from the 2017-2018 AAD Academy program evaluation was to conduct an evaluation update that included an update on the AAD Academy students who continued into the middle school program as a result of the program expanding to sixth grade in 2018-2019. According to the director of operations for the AAD program at Lynnhaven Middle, the main operational components of the program are consistent with the academy offered at Seatack Elementary.<sup>8</sup> In particular, the day is extended for students and a four-week summer intersession is offered prior to enrollment in the middle school grade levels. Female students are required to wear a uniform and male students are required to wear business attire. Additionally, the AAD program students participate in the Social, Academic, and Moral Education (SAME) social rotations (e.g., meditation and ethic lessons), take extra field trips, and take part in the Dream Merit Program where they can earn dream dollars for following the dress code. Additional opportunities included review and discussion of the banners each morning, meetings with community partners (e.g., police officers and lawyers), and Saturday School for remediation. The AAD program sixth-grade students took their core classes together with a teacher who taught exclusively as part of the AAD program. The AAD program students had opportunities to take elective courses with other Lynnhaven Middle school students and core courses if they were in advanced courses.

### Student Enrollment

- Of the 86 fifth-grade students who were enrolled at least half the year in 2017-2018 at the AAD Academy at Seatack Elementary, 39 students (45%) continued to stay enrolled in the AAD program at Lynnhaven Middle in 2018-2019 for at least half the year.
- Of the 86 fifth-grade AAD Academy students in 2017-2018, 33 students (38%) did not continue in the AAD program in 2018-2019, but remained enrolled at a school within VBCPS in 2018-2019, including 5 who were enrolled at Lynnhaven Middle but not in the AAD program, and 28 students who were enrolled at another middle school in the division.

**Table 26: 2018-2019 Status of the 2017-2018 AAD Academy Seatack Graduates**

Status	2017-2018 AAD Academy Seatack Graduates
Also Enrolled at VBCPS in 2018-2019 at least half year	<b>72</b>
AAD Program at Lynnhaven Middle School	39
Non-AAD Program at Lynnhaven Middle School	5
Other VBCPS Middle School	28
Was Not Enrolled at VBCPS in 2018-2019 at least half year	<b>13</b>
Left VBCPS prior to 2018-2019	9
Left VBCPS during 2018-2019 (did not attend a school more than half year)	4*
Enrolled in more than one school during 2018-2019 (did not attend a school more than half year)	1*
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>86</b>

Note: \*One student from each group was enrolled in the AAD program for less than half the year in 2018-2019.

**Table 27: Other Schools the 2017-2018 AAD Academy Seatack Graduates Attended in 2018-2019**

Middle School	2017-2018 AAD Academy Seatack Graduates Who Did Not Continue in AAD
Virginia Beach Middle	11
Old Donation	4
Plaza Middle	4
Corporate Landing Middle	3

Middle School	2017-2018 AAD Academy Seatack Graduates Who Did Not Continue in AAD
Independence Middle	2
Brandon Middle	1
Great Neck Middle	1
Kempsville Middle	1
Renaissance Academy	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

- There were 52 students enrolled in the AAD program at Lynnhaven Middle, which consisted of 39 students who graduated from the AAD Academy at Seatack Elementary and 13 new students (one student was enrolled at Seatack Elementary in 2017-2018 for less than half the year).

**Table 28: Students Enrolled in the AAD Program at Lynnhaven in 2018-2019 At Least Half Year**

Sixth Grade AAD Program	Enrolled in the AAD Program Lynnhaven in 2018-2019
Graduated from Seatack 2017-2018	39
New to Program	13*
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

Note: \*One student was enrolled at Seatack in 2017-2018 for less than half the year.

### Matched Group Analyses

To provide an update on the AAD Academy students who continued into the middle school program, matched group analyses were conducted. The AAD Academy students who continued into middle school were matched with similar peers at Lynnhaven Middle School who were not part of the AAD program and had not been part of the AAD Academy in the past based on demographics. Outcomes were compared for the AAD program students and the comparison group using t-tests and chi-square tests.

- There were no significant differences across the AAD program grade 6 group and the comparison group regarding any demographic characteristics.
- In addition, demographic characteristics and outcome data are provided for the students who graduated from the AAD Academy Seatack in 2017-2018 but did not continue with the AAD program in 2018-2019. These students included students who attended middle schools throughout the division, including the non-AAD program students at Lynnhaven Middle. The Seatack graduates who did not continue had a higher percentage of gifted students and a lower percentage of special education students. Because this group of students was not demographically similar to the AAD program grade 6 students, no statistical tests were run to compare outcomes from the two groups.

**Table 29: Demographic Characteristics by Middle School Group**

Characteristics	AAD Program Grade 6 Group (N = 39)	LMS Grade 6 Comparison Group (N = 39)	Seatack Graduates Who Did Not Continue (N = 33)
Male	46.2%	43.6%	54.5%
Female	53.8%	56.4%	45.5%
African American	53.8%	43.6%	42.4%
Caucasian	7.7%	7.7%	15.2%
Hispanic	23.1%	35.9%	36.4%
Other	15.4%	12.8%	6.1%
Economically Disadvantaged	82.1%	84.6%	78.8%
Gifted	7.7%	2.6%	24.2%
LEP	5.1%	7.7%	3.0%
Special Education	25.6%	25.6%	6.1%



## Academic Performance

- There were higher percentages of the AAD program students who earned advanced and proficient passing scores on the English SOL test than the matched comparison students in grade 6, although the differences were not statistically significant.
- There were similar percentages of students who were reading on grade level based on the spring RI.
- There were more AAD program students (n = 16) who took the Math 8 SOL test than the matched comparison students (n = 2).
- Most AAD program and comparison group students who took the Math 8 SOL test earned a proficient score.
- However, there was a higher percentage of comparison group students (68%) who passed the Math 6 SOL than the AAD program students (32%). This difference was statistically significant.
- Of the Seatack graduates who did not continue in the AAD program, approximately 76 percent passed the English SOL and 55 percent were reading on grade level based on the spring RI. Of those students who took the Math 6 SOL test, 77 percent earned a proficient score. All students who took the Math 8 SOL test earned proficient scores.

**Table 30: Proficiency Level on Grade 6 Tests**

Test	AAD Program Grade 6 Group (N = 39)	LMS Grade 6 Comparison Group (N = 39)	Seatack Graduates Who Did Not Continue (N = 33)
English			
Advanced	10.5%	5.3%	15.2%
Proficient	52.6%	50.0%	60.6%
Fail	36.8%	44.7%	18.2%
Spring RI ROG	43.2%	44.4%	55.2%
Math 6	n = 22	n = 37	n = 22
Proficient	31.8%*	67.6%*	77.3%
Fail	68.2%*	32.4%*	18.2%
Math 8	n = 16	n = 2	n = 9
Proficient	93.8%	100%	100%
Fail	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. +p < .1, \*p < .05.

- In comparison to the AAD middle school program students, the comparison group had higher average SOL scores on the English and Math 6 and 8 tests, although differences were not statistically significant at  $p < .05$ .

**Table 31: Average Scores on Grade 6 SOLs**

Test	AAD Program Grade 6 Group (N = 39)	LMS Grade 6 Comparison Group (N = 39)	Seatack Graduates Who Did Not Continue (N = 33)
English	400.2	403.3	441.7
Math 6	359.3+	402.0+	424.1
Math 8	433.1	451.0	455.3

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

### Discipline

- In comparison to the AAD middle school program students, the comparison group had lower referral and in-school suspension rates, although the differences were not statistically significant. The out-of-school suspension rates were the same.

**Table 32: Comparison of Referral and Suspension Rates**

	AAD Program Grade 6 Group (N = 39)	LMS Grade 6 Comparison Group (N = 39)	Seatack Graduates Who Did Not Continue (N = 33)
Referral Rates	46.2%	35.9%	39.4%
ISS Rates	28.2%	20.5%	24.2%
OSS Rates	17.9%	17.9%	15.2%

Note: Asterisks denote statistically significant differences from comparison group. + $p < .1$ , \* $p < .05$ .

## Summary

The An Achievable Dream (AAD) Academy at Seatack Elementary is a kindergarten to grade 5 program that began in 2014-2015 and graduated the first group of students to middle school following 2017-2018. This evaluation update was conducted to document and assess actions taken regarding the School Board approved recommendations from the 2017-2018 comprehensive evaluation as well as to provide an update on staff perceptions, matched group analyses for elementary students, and an update on the AAD Academy students who continued into the middle school program. Data for the evaluation update were collected from the Virginia Beach City Public Schools data warehouse and surveys for instructional staff at the AAD Academy at Seatack Elementary.

Overall, in 2018-2019, 394 students were enrolled in the AAD Academy at Seatack at any time throughout the year. Of those 394 students, 370 students (94%) were enrolled for at least half the school year. Additionally, 56 students were enrolled in the AAD program at Lynnhaven Middle School. Of these 56 students, 52 students (93%) were enrolled for at least half the school year. These 52 students included 39 students (75%) who graduated from the AAD Academy at Seatack the previous year and attended at least half the year. To assess program outcomes, only students who were enrolled at least half the year were included in the analyses. Student outcome analyses were examined over time and in comparison to a matched group that was similar based on demographics.

The first recommendation area was related to academics. When examining 2018-2019 scores on reading assessments and reading, math, science, and social studies SOL results, improvement from the 2017-2018 school year was found for the percentage of students reading on grade level based on the DRA in kindergarten and for the percentage of students passing the math SOL test in grade 4. Declining percentages of students reading on grade level on the DRA were found in grades 1 and 2, and declining percentages of students passing the SOL test were found for reading in grades 3 through 5, math in grades 3 and 5, and science and social studies in grade 5. When comparing the AAD Academy student academic performance to the matched

comparison group, it was found that the AAD Academy students outperformed the students in the matched comparison group on the DRA in kindergarten and grade 2 as measured by the percentage of students reading on grade level, although the differences between the groups were not statistically significant. However, statistically significant differences favoring the matched comparison group included the percentage of students reading on grade level on the DRA and RI in grade 3, and percentage of students passing the SOLS for reading in grades 3 and 4 and math in grades 3 through 5. Staff perceptions in 2018-2019 regarding student academic growth improved from 2017-2018, with at least 83 percent of staff agreeing that students improved in the core academic areas.

The next recommendation area was related to discipline and student behavior. The percentages of students who were referred or suspended as well as referral and suspension rates in 2018-2019 declined in comparison to 2017-2018. When comparing the AAD Academy student discipline rates to the matched comparison group, it was found that the AAD Academy students had lower referral and suspension rates at each grade level except in-school-suspension rates at grades 1 and 4 and out-of-school suspension rates at kindergarten and grade 4. There were also improvements in the percentages of staff who agreed that students showed improvement in their behavior from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019. While 64 percent of staff agreed that the AAD Academy helped improve students' behavior at school, at least 72 percent of staff agreed that the AAD Academy helped with students' self-control, conflict management, and collaboration, and that the AAD Academy provided effective instruction in manners and etiquette.

An additional recommendation area was related to communication between VBCPS and the AAD Academy staff and administrators. Staff agreement percentages regarding the AAD Academy providing clear and consistent communication with staff improved from 56 percent in 2017-2018 to 75 percent in 2018-2019. Between 63 and 67 percent of staff agreed that the collaboration between the AAD Academy and school staff was effective and that the AAD Academy communicated information in a timely manner and communicated clear information about expectations for enforcing the school uniform policy. However, there was a decline in the percentage of staff who agreed that the AAD Academy provided sufficient professional development, with 58 percent agreement in 2018-2019. When asked about any changes in the communication in comparison to the previous year, although the majority of staff indicated that overall communication with staff was better, the majority of staff indicated that there was no change regarding communication with staff about the uniform policy, providing information in a timely manner, and collaboration between the AAD Academy and staff.

The last recommendation area involved changing the school schedule from a "B" schedule school to an "A" schedule school. Adjusting the school schedule was not pursued due to logistics and potential impact on other schools.<sup>9</sup> Comments regarding the school's schedule were not a main theme that emerged from staff on the open-ended survey item asking about areas for improvement for the AAD Academy.

The evaluation update was also conducted to assess the progress of the AAD Academy grade 5 students who continued into the AAD middle school program in 2018-2019. Of the 86 students who graduated from Seatack in 2017-2018, 39 students (45%) continued into the AAD middle school program and were enrolled at least half the year. In comparison to a matched group, there were higher percentages of the AAD program students who passed the English SOL, although differences were not statistically significant. Additionally, more AAD program students took an advanced math class (i.e., Math 8 vs. Math 6). Most AAD program and matched group students who took Math 8 also passed the SOL test, and similar percentages of students were reading on grade level on the spring RI. However, there was a significantly higher percentage of comparison group students who passed the Math 6 SOL test than the AAD program students. Although not statistically significant, the comparison group had lower referral and in-school suspension rates, and the out-of-school suspension rates were the same.

Results from this update suggest that there are two areas that the AAD Academy should continue to address including student academic achievement and communication and collaboration with staff, including professional development. Data indicate that AAD grades 1 through 5 student achievement has declined in comparison to the previous year and is lower in comparison to the matched group. Additionally, the majority of staff indicated no change in specific issues related to communication with AAD (e.g., regarding the uniform policy) and there was a decline in perceptions regarding professional development.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Source: VBCPS and An Achievable Dream Academy Partnership contract.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://achievabledream.org>

<sup>3</sup> Brief obtained on the VBCPS website: <https://www.vbschools.com/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=284809>

<sup>4</sup> Adjustments for SOL data analyses are aligned with accreditation rules from 2016-2017. These adjustments were used due to the AAD Academy setting program goals that followed these accreditation rules.

<sup>5</sup> Additional data for these smaller groups of students with more sustained enrollment in the AAD Academy were analyzed. Results did not differ markedly from those of the total group of the AAD Academy students.

<sup>6</sup> In 2018-2019, spring DRA participation rates were lower than 80 percent for the AAD Academy students in grade 2 (73%). In 2017-2018, all spring DRA participation rates were above 80 percent.

<sup>7</sup> Source: D. Robertson, Personal communication, August 22, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Source: R. Sadler, C. Middleton, Personal communication, July 23, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Source: D. Robertson, Personal communication, August 22, 2019.

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