Student Support Services
Evaluation Readiness Report

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August 2015

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Evaluation Readiness Report is to comply with School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach on September 5, 2007. According to the policy, "Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually." On September 3, 2014, the School Board approved the 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Schedule, in which Student Support Services (SSS) was recommended for an Evaluation Readiness Report. Based on School Board Policy 6-26, for programs scheduled for an Evaluation Readiness Report, the Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability (PIA) will "assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes." According to the policy, an Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and recommendations regarding continued evaluation of the program will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board.

Results of the Evaluation Readiness Process

✤ The SSS evaluation readiness team and staff from PIA's Office of Research and Evaluation met to discuss the evaluation process. Measurable goals and objectives were developed, along with a proposed evaluation plan for SSS during the 2015-2016 school year.

✤ The first goal is that students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory behavior during and after the time of services. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory behavior by receiving no more than four discipline referrals during the time of services and demonstrate satisfactory behavior by reducing the number of in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of-school suspension (OSS) instances. Additionally, stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in student behavior after receiving services from SSS.

✤ The second goal is that students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory attendance during and after the time of services. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will attain satisfactory attendance rates during the time of services and will persist in school. Additionally, stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in student attendance after receiving services from SSS.

✤ The third goal is that students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory academic performance during and after the time of services. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will demonstrate improvement in academic performance following the time of services and stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in academic performance after receiving services from SSS.

✤ The fourth goal is that students receiving SSS will become successful members of their schools upon release of direct supervision from SSS. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will demonstrate overall success in school, students' recidivism rate will be below 10 percent, and students will report an increased sense of self-awareness and increased levels of self-esteem.

✤ The fifth goal is that students completing the Choices program will develop the skills necessary to make appropriate choices and understand the impact of antisocial behavior on their lives and the lives of their families and communities. Specific objectives include students completing Choices will demonstrate an improvement in their ability to make appropriate choices by reducing the number of discipline referrals, ISS, and OSS instances. Further, students will indicate increased self-efficacy in their problem-solving, anger management, and decision-making abilities, and indicate making appropriate choices and understanding the impact of their behavior on their lives and the lives of others.

✤ The sixth goal is that students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will be adequately prepared to enter a higher education institution upon graduation from high school. Specific objectives include students completing Spartan Prep Academy will demonstrate success by graduating from high school, obtaining a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.3 upon graduation, and enrolling in a postsecondary institution during the fall following graduation. Further, students will indicate that the completion of Spartan Prep Academy led to a stronger desire to enroll in an

institution of higher education and understand the importance of their high school academic performance on their enrollment in a higher educational institution.

✧ The evaluation plan includes five overarching evaluation questions and six specific goals that will serve as the focus of the comprehensive evaluation proposed for the 2015-2016 school year.

<div style="background-color:green; color:white; text-align:center; font-weight:bold;">Recommendation and Rationale</div>

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation during the 2015-2016 school year focused on SSS implementation, student demographic characteristics and academic outcomes, stakeholders' perceptions, and cost. *(Responsible Group: Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability)*

Rationale: It is proposed that a comprehensive evaluation of SSS be conducted during the 2015-2016 school year to assess the effectiveness of SSS. The comprehensive evaluation will include an assessment of operational components, student characteristics, progress made toward meeting SSS goals and objectives, stakeholders' perceptions, and cost to the school division. Student Support Service's goals are centered on behavior, attendance, academic performance, and successful transition into a traditional school. Further, PIA has not conducted an evaluation of SSS since it was implemented in Virginia Beach City Public Schools in 2003. Having successfully completed the evaluation readiness process, which resulted in the development and refinement of specific goals and objectives, a comprehensive evaluation is now recommended.

Background

Program Description and Purpose

Student Support Services (SSS) in Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) is designed to facilitate student transitions between alternative education programs/alternative centers and home schools, as well as provide support services for at-risk youth, according to the Alternative Education Programs website. Specifically, services are provided to middle and high school students by specialists who work with individuals to address behavioral, academic, and attendance issues; mediate between student and teacher; and provide resources to parents and teachers to help improve student behavior. The specialists also serve to conduct, support, and facilitate the Choices program and the Spartan Prep Academy, among other alternative education programs. Services are available to middle and high school students referred by a multitude of sources including the school administration, Student Support Team, an alternative education facility or program, or a correctional facility.[1] Student Support Services is available to all middle and high schools within VBCPS[2]. During the 2013-2014 school year, SSS served more than 1,800 students in 26 school sites within VBCPS.

Choices

An additional component to SSS is Choices, a behavioral intervention program. The purpose of the Choices program is to assist at-risk students in developing the skills to make appropriate choices through relevant information and activities. The program also serves to educate students on the impact of antisocial behavior on their lives and the lives of others. Choices sessions occur twice a week for a time period of five weeks (10 sessions) and are led by a student support specialist. The curriculum includes content areas such as problem solving, anger management, decision making, and communication. For middle school students, the Second Step curriculum model is implemented, and for high school students, the Reconnecting Youth curriculum is used. The Choices program is available to VBCPS students enrolled in traditional home schools.

Spartan Prep Academy

In an attempt to increase the number of VBCPS minority students enrolling in higher-education institutions after graduation, the Spartan Prep Academy was established in 2005.[3] The Spartan Prep Academy serves as a college awareness program for minority high school students. Students are either self-referred or selected to participate in the program by middle school administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, or student support specialists.

While in the program, students are exposed to various components of college life, the advantages of continuing their education, and postsecondary programs that are available through Norfolk State University (NSU). Students in the Spartan Prep Academy program work in conjunction with student support specialists to maintain appropriate grades, attendance, and behavior and acquire techniques for dealing with various life skills such as goal setting and teamwork.

Schools That Utilized SSS

Student Support Services is available to all middle and high schools within VBCPS. During the 2013-2014 school year, more than 1,800 students in 26 sites, including 1 elementary school, 14 middle schools, and 12 high schools, completed SSS.[4]

Table 1: 2013-2014 Schools Served by SSS

Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools
King's Grant	Bayside	Bayside
	Brandon	Cox
	Corporate Landing	First Colonial
	Great Neck	Green Run
	Independence	Kellam
	Kempsville	Kempsville
	Landstown	Landstown
	Larkspur	Ocean Lakes
	Lynnhaven	Princess Anne
	Plaza	Renaissance Academy
	Princess Anne	Salem
	Renaissance Academy	Tallwood
	Salem	
	Virginia Beach	

Student Selection

Student Support Services is a service intended for students who are considered to be behaviorally at-risk. Individuals can be identified for services based on a variety of referral sources including the school administration, Student Support Team, an alternative education facility or program, or a correctional facility.[5] In some instances, the student can also be self-referred or referred by a parent/guardian.

There are essentially three groups of students that are selected to receive SSS: (1) students currently attending their home school who have never been to an

alternative school or alternative center, (2) students currently attending Renaissance Academy, which is an alternative school, and (3) students attending their home school who are transitioning from an alternative school or alternative center. The referral source and types of services received differ depending on the group in which a student is classified. For example, if a student is currently attending the Renaissance Academy, he/she will work very closely with a student support specialist for the duration of his/her enrollment. This is in contrast to a student who has transitioned back to his/her home school. Students transitioning to their home school also work with a student support specialist, but not as closely as those attending the Renaissance Academy. After a nine-week period, students who have transitioned back to their home school are evaluated and a decision to continue or discontinue services is made depending on their success status. A student's success status is based on the SSS Rubric for Evaluating Student Success, which incorporates attendance, behavior, and academic criteria. Students receiving services who have never attended an alternative school or been placed in an alternative center are generally either enrolled in Choices, the Spartan Prep Academy, or are receiving preventative services on a case-by-case basis. During 2013-2014, 1,821 students received services for at least a portion of the school year, representing approximately 5 percent of the combined middle and high school student body in VBCPS.[6]

Choices

Students are generally referred to Choices by a principal, parent or guardian, hearing officer, or School Board Discipline Committee after interventions from the Student Support Team have been unsuccessful or prior to a student's suspension. The program was designed to serve 8 to 10 students at a time in an after-school setting. Prior to enrollment in the program, students and their parents/guardians must first meet with their principal or assistant principal to review the requirements of the program and accept the placement responsibilities. Before entering Choices, both the parent/guardian and student must sign a contract and then the relevant staff are contacted to reserve the next available placement date.

Spartan Prep Academy

Eighth-grade students interested in attending Spartan Prep Academy must submit an application and be accepted prior to signing a four-year contract. Students can be recommended for the program or elect to participate. Admission into the program is based on

the following selection criteria: (1) obtaining a 'C' or better in at least five subjects, (2) identified minority, (3) first generation, college-bound student, (4) principal recommendation, (5) exhibits acceptable behavior, and (6) rising ninth-grade student.[7]

Staff Selection

Positions for student support specialist are advertised on the VBCPS website and applicants are required to complete an application from the Department of Human Resources. Once selected and hired, student support specialists receive school assignments based on a collaborative agreement between the executive director of alternative education and renaissance academy, the building principal, and the executive director of secondary teaching and learning. During the 2013-2014 school year, VBCPS had 12 student support specialists in 14 middle schools and 12 high schools. Each specialist was assigned to anywhere from one to three schools, with some specialists assigned to additional programs not included in this evaluation.[8]

Selection and Approval of Program for Evaluation

Student Support Services was selected and approved for the 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Schedule based on criteria specified in School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board on September 5, 2007. The following excerpt is from School Board Policy 6-26:

Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually. On a yearly basis, the Program Evaluation Committee will present a list of programs recommended for evaluation to the Superintendent and the School Board. This listing will include the rationale for each recommendation based on an approved set of criteria. All programs will be prioritized for evaluation based on the following factors:

1. Alignment with the school division's strategic plan and School Board goals;
2. Program cost;
3. Program scale;
4. Cross-departmental interest;
5. Community/stakeholder interest in the program;
6. Availability of information on the program's effectiveness; and
7. Date of most recent evaluation.

On July 22, 2014, members of the Program Evaluation Committee were asked to review the programs that were rated during the 2013-2014 school year. The majority of committee members agreed with the rankings, which listed SSS as the top program to be evaluated during the 2014-2015 school year. Student Support Services was selected for evaluation primarily due to program cost, community/stakeholder interest, and the lack of a formal evaluation by the Office of Research and Evaluation. The final list of programs recommended for evaluation was presented to the School Board on August 19, 2014 and approved on September 3, 2014. Student Support Services was approved to undergo an evaluation readiness review during the 2014-2015 school year in order to further define its goals and identify measurable objectives.

Overview of Current Goals and Objectives

A review of SSS documentation revealed three general overarching goals for each service/program: (1) provision of transition and support services for at-risk youth, (2) development of skills necessary to make appropriate choices and understand the impact of antisocial behavior on their lives and the lives of their families and communities, and (3) increase in the number of VBCPS minority students who enroll in postsecondary institutions. No specific measurable objectives were identified. The next section of this report describes the process taken for developing revised goals and creating specific measurable objectives. In revising the goals and objectives, the focus was on keeping the key components of the existing goals while also addressing other components of the services/programs and identifying the expected specific outcomes.

Process for Developing Revised Goals and Objectives

According to School Board Policy 6-26, for programs selected for an Evaluation Readiness Report, PIA will "assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes. An Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and baseline data (if available) will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board …." The process to complete the Evaluation Readiness Report began in February 2014 with a review of existing

documentation for SSS (history, purpose, and available goals) by program evaluators from the Office of Research and Evaluation.

An initial meeting was held on March 5, 2015 with the SSS Program Evaluation Readiness Committee and the Office of Research and Evaluation. The committee consisted of student support specialists, principals, and assistant superintendents, among others. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss further the evaluation readiness process and to define the goals and measurable objectives for SSS. The discussion also centered on the proposed scope of the evaluation, including the development of the Evaluation Readiness Report. During the meeting, the committee was divided into focus groups of four and asked to answer and discuss questions posed by the Office of Research and Evaluation. After each group conferred, the committee as a whole discussed each item and the committee's answers were recorded. It was decided that the Office of Research and Evaluation would work collaboratively with the SSS leadership team and Program Evaluation Readiness Committee to utilize the existing data and information to develop goals and measurable objectives for the proposed comprehensive evaluation.

Discussion during the initial meeting focused on reviewing the available information regarding SSS's background and purpose and identifying additional components that would provide useful information about student outcomes. In addition, stakeholder perceptions were identified as a primary component that would need to be included as part of the comprehensive evaluation. The SSS leadership team indicated there was no formalized mechanism in place to collect data from all administrators, staff, students, and parents regarding perceptions of SSS. In order to address this need, a stakeholder perception survey will be developed and administered as part of the evaluation process.

As a result of the initial meeting and review of various documents, 6 goals and 19 specific measurable objectives were developed. Particular attention was given to ensure that both Choices and the Spartan Prep Academy were included in the developed goals and objectives. In addition, wording for each objective states explicitly the manner in which the objective will be measured and evaluated during the evaluation process. A draft of the goals and objectives was sent to the Program Evaluation Readiness Committee for feedback before finalization.

Revised Goals and Objectives

As a result of the evaluation readiness process, 6 goals and 19 objectives were established for the evaluation of SSS. These focused on student behavior, attendance, academic performance, becoming successful members of their school, and the Choices and Spartan Prep Academy programs.

Goal #1: Students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory behavior during and after the time of services.

Objective 1: Students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory behavior by receiving no more than four discipline referrals during the time of services as measured by a score of 2 or above on the Rubric for Evaluating Student Success.
Objective 2: Students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory behavior by reducing the number of ISS or OSS instances as measured by the number of times a student receives ISS or OSS three months before placement in SSS and three months after release from SSS.
Objective 3: Stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in student behavior after receiving services from SSS.

Goal #2: Students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory attendance during and after the time of services.

Objective 1: Students receiving SSS will attain satisfactory attendance rates following the time of services as measured by six or fewer absences during the semester following their participation in SSS, not to exceed the end of the current school year.
Objective 2: Students receiving SSS services will persist in school as measured by the percent of students who demonstrate continued enrollment into the next academic year without dropping out.
Objective 3: Stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in student attendance after receiving services from SSS.

Goal #3: Students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory academic performance during and after the time of services.

Objective 1: Students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory academic achievement following the time of services as measured by the passing of the requisite number of courses needed to advance to the next grade in the semester following their participation in SSS, not to exceed the end of the current school year.
Objective 2: Stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in academic performance after receiving services from SSS.

Goal #4: Students receiving SSS will become successful members of their schools upon release of direct supervision from SSS.

Objective 1: Students receiving SSS will demonstrate overall success in school as measured by a cumulative score of "successful" on the Rubric for Evaluating Student Success.
Objective 2: Students' recidivism rate will be below 10 percent as measured by the percent of students who re-enter SSS during the academic year.
Objective 3: Students will report an increased sense of self-awareness and increased levels of self-esteem.

Goal #5: Students completing Choices will develop the skills necessary to make appropriate choices and understand the impact of antisocial behavior on their lives and the lives of their families and communities.

Objective 1: Students completing Choices will demonstrate an improvement in their ability to make appropriate choices by reducing the number of discipline referrals, ISS, and OSS instances received as measured by the number of times a student receives a discipline referral, ISS, or OSS three months before placement in a given year and three months after completion of Choices.
Objective 2: Students completing Choices will indicate increased self-efficacy in their problem-solving, anger management, and decision-making abilities.
Objective 3: Students completing Choices will indicate making appropriate choices and understanding the impact of their behavior on their lives and the lives of others.

Goal #6: Students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will be adequately prepared to enter a higher education institution upon high school graduation.

Objective 1: Students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will graduate from high school as measured by the percent graduating on time.

Objective 2: Students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will demonstrate success by obtaining a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.3 upon graduation.

Objective 3: Students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will enroll in a postsecondary institution during the fall after high school graduation as indicated by the percent enrolled in college.

Objective 4: Students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will indicate that the completion of Spartan Prep Academy led to a stronger desire to enroll in an institution of higher education.

Objective 5: Students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will indicate an understanding for the importance of their academic performance in the ability to enroll in a higher educational institution.

Baseline Data

Data regarding SSS participation for the 2013-2014 school year were extracted from the Student Support Caseload Analysis Summary and served as a baseline measure. Table 2 displays the numbers and percentages of total students served by school level and by individual schools.

Table 2: Number and Percentage of Students Receiving Services by School and School Level During the 2013-2014 School Year[9]

School	# of Students	% of Total	% of School Level
Elementary School	**1**	**<1%**	**100%**
King's Grant	1	<1%	100%
Middle School	**686**	**37%**	**100%**
Bayside	80	4%	12%
Brandon	53	3%	8%
Corporate Landing	39	2%	6%
Great Neck	17	1%	2%
Independence	37	2%	5%
Kempsville	37	2%	5%
Landstown	42	2%	6%
Larkspur	52	3%	8%
Lynnhaven	46	3%	7%
Plaza	25	1%	4%
Princess Anne	26	1%	4%
Renaissance Academy	138	8%	20%
Salem	36	2%	5%
Virginia Beach	58	3%	8%
High School	**1,147**	**63%**	**100%**
Bayside	72	4%	6%
Cox	74	4%	6%
First Colonial	132	7%	12%
Green Run	66	4%	6%
Kellam	32	2%	3%
Kempsville	64	3%	6%
Landstown	114	6%	10%

Table 2: Number and Percentage of Students Receiving Services by School and School Level During the 2013-2014 School Year[10] (continued)

School	# of Students	% of Total	% of School Level
Ocean Lakes	69	4%	6%
Princess Anne	40	2%	3%
Renaissance Academy	322	18%	28%
Salem	106	6%	9%
Tallwood	56	3%	5%
Total	**1,834**	**100%**	**100%**

Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
*Includes Young Parents Program (YPP) and Father's in Training (FIT) students.

Approximately 63 percent of the individuals receiving services were high school students, 37 percent were middle school students, and less than 1 percent were elementary school students during the 2013-2014 school year. Overall, high school students enrolled at Renaissance Academy contained the largest percentage of students served with approximately 18 percent.

Table 3 displays demographic data for students served by SSS during the 2013-2014 school year. Data are based on the Student Support Caseload Analysis Summary.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Students Served by SSS During the 2013-2014 School Year[11]

Ethnicity	Female #	Female %	Male #	Male %	Total #	Total %
African American	375	64%	669	54%	1,044	57%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	2	<1%	6	<1%	8	<1%
Asian	6	1%	21	2%	27	1%
Caucasian	122	21%	369	30%	491	27%
Hispanic	43	7%	87	7%	130	7%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1	<1%	1	<1%	2	<1%
Two or More Races	37	6%	82	7%	119	7%
Total	**586**	**32%**	**1,235**	**68%**	**1,821**	**100%**

Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

The majority of students served by SSS were male (68%) and African American (57%). The reader is reminded that data presented in this section are baseline. The proposed comprehensive evaluation will include additional data regarding grade, socioeconomic status, special education, and gifted status.

Table 4 displays the numbers and percentages of students who were referred to and completed Choices in the 2013-2014 school year.

Table 4: Numbers and Percentages of Students Participating in Choices by School Level for the 2013-2014 School Year

| School Level | Referred | | Completed | |
	#	% of Total	#	% of Referred
Middle School	230	81%	179	78%
High School	54	19%	42	78%
Total	**284**	**100%**	**221**	**78%**

Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Approximately 81 percent of the students referred to SSS for Choices during 2013-2014 were in middle school and 19 percent were in high school. Out of the 230 middle school students referred, approximately 78 percent completed the program. High school students had approximately the same completion rate (78%), and thus the average percent of students completing Choices from all those referred was 78 percent.

Table 5 displays demographic data for students referred to Choices during the 2013-2014 school year. Data are based on the Student Support Caseload Analysis Summary.

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of Students Referred to Choices During the 2013-2014 School Year[12]

| Ethnicity | Female | | Male | | Total | |
	#	%	#	%	#	%
African American	43	64%	116	53%	159	56%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0	0%	1	<1%	1	<1%
Asian	1	1%	4	2%	5	2%
Caucasian	14	21%	70	32%	84	30%
Hispanic	7	10%	15	7%	22	8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	<1%	0	<1%	0	<1%
Two or More Races	2	3%	11	5%	13	5%
Total	**67**	**24%**	**217**	**76%**	**284**	**100%**

Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

A total of 284 students were referred to the Choices program for the 2013-2014 school year. The majority of students were male (approximately 76%). Approximately 56 percent of students referred were African American, followed by Caucasian students at 30 percent.

Table 6 displays Spartan Prep Academy participation information for the 2013-2014 school year.

Table 6: Numbers and Percentages of Students Participating in the Spartan Prep Academy During the 2013-2014 School Year[13]

Grade	# of Students	% of Total
9	48	31%
10	48	31%
11	28	18%
12	30	19%
High School		
Bayside	16	10%
Cox	8	5%
First Colonial	22	14%
Green Run	15	10%
Kellam	13	8%
Kempsville	10	6%
Landstown	20	13%
Ocean Lakes	11	7%
Princess Anne	7	5%
Salem	19	12%
Tallwood	13	8%
Total	**154**	**100%**

Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

A total of 154 students participated in the Spartan Prep Academy during the 2013-2014 school year. The majority of students were in grades 9 and 10 (approximately 31% per grade). First Colonial (14%) and Landstown (13%) high schools had the largest percentages of students represented in the Spartan Prep Academy.

Table 7 displays the demographic information of Spartan Prep Academy participants for the 2013–2014 school year.

Table 7: Demographic Characteristics of Students Participating in the Spartan Prep Academy During the 2013-2014 School Year[14]

| Ethnicity | Female | | Male | | Total | |
	#	%	#	%	#	%
African American	73	89%	60	88%	133	86%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%
Caucasian	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Hispanic	2	2%	2	3%	4	3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Two or More Races	6	7%	5	7%	11	7%
Total	**82**	**54.7%**	**68**	**45.3%**	**150**	**97%**

Note. Four students were not included in Table 7 because their gender was unknown. Of these students, three were identified as African American and one as 2 or more races.

The majority of students participating in the Spartan Prep Academy program were female (89%) and African American (86%). The reader is reminded that data presented in this section are baseline. The proposed comprehensive evaluation will include additional data regarding grade, socioeconomic status, special education, and gifted status.

Evaluation Plan and Recommendation

According to School Board Policy 6-26, an Evaluation Readiness Report will focus on the outcomes of the evaluation readiness process and "will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board with a recommendation regarding future evaluation plans for the program. If appropriate based on the evaluation readiness process, the program will be scheduled for a comprehensive evaluation." In accordance with this policy, a comprehensive evaluation is recommended and the proposed plan of action for the evaluation of SSS is described as follows:

Scope and Rationale of Proposed Evaluation

The Office of Research and Evaluation recommends that a comprehensive evaluation be completed during the 2015-2016 school year in order to assess implementation of SSS and determine the extent to which it is meeting its goals and objectives. The comprehensive evaluation will provide information on five areas related to SSS.

(1) Implementation/Operation
   ❖ Rationale: It is standard practice within an evaluation framework to examine issues related to implementation.
(2) Characteristics of SSS Students (demographics, referral and completion rates)
   ❖ Rationale: The purpose for identifying characteristics of students participating in SSS is to better understand the population of students being selected for participation. Persistence rates will be examined to determine if further services are needed.
(3) Meeting Goals and Objectives
   Rationale: Progress made toward meeting the outcome-related goals and objectives will be assessed to determine the extent to which the service is successful. Student participation in the service/programs will be tracked and performance on learning outcomes will be measured.

(4) Stakeholder Perceptions
   ❖ Rationale: Assessing principals', assistant principals', teachers', parents', student support specialists', and students' perceptions of SSS will identify strengths of the service and possible areas for improvement.
(5) Cost
   ❖ Rationale: The additional cost of SSS will be determined in order to provide information about the benefit of the service in relation to its overall cost.

Proposed Evaluation Method

The proposed evaluation will include mixed-methodology in order to address each of the evaluation questions, including the goals and objectives adequately. Data collection will occur during the 2015-2016 school year and include both quantitative (e.g., student demographics, graduation rates, rubric ratings, survey ratings, etc.) and qualitative data (e.g., open-ended survey questions). The majority of quantitative data will be extracted from the VBCPS data warehouse, including college enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse, and from the SSS Rubric for Evaluating Student Success. Surveys will also be administered to all stakeholder groups (i.e., principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, student support specialists, and students) to gather perception data. Information garnered from SSS documentation, mandated report data, and perception surveys will be utilized in the evaluation.

Evaluation Design and Questions

The planned evaluation questions that will be addressed in the 2015-2016 comprehensive evaluation and submitted to the School Board in 2016 are listed below.

(1) What were the operational components of SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy implementation?
    a. What types of activities occurred in SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?
    b. What were the criteria for student participation in SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?
    c. What were the referral sources for students participating in SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?
    d. What were the staff selection processes and staff responsibilities for SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?
    e. What was the role of the Student Support Team? Student Support Specialist?
    f. What professional development was offered regarding SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?
    g. Were there opportunities for students to participate in SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?

(2) What were the characteristics of the students participating in SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy during the 2015-2016 school year?
    a. How many students were referred to SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy during the 2015-2016 school year?
    b. How many students completed SSS, Choices, or Spartan Prep Academy and what were the reasons for students not completing the service or program?
    c. What were the demographic characteristics (e.g., grade, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education, gifted status) for students enrolled in SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?

(3) What progress was made toward meeting the goals and objectives of SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy?

(4) What were stakeholders' perceptions of SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy (i.e., principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, student support specialists, and students)?

(5) What was the additional cost of SSS, Choices, and Spartan Prep Academy to the school division during 2015-2016?

Table 8 outlines the process for collecting data to address Evaluation Question 3 noted above. For reference, the goals and objectives can be found on pages 10 and 11.

Table 8: Data Collection Process for Program Objectives

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 1	Number of discipline referrals received.	Percentage of students with a score of 2 or above on the Rubric for Evaluating Student Success.	SSS Rubric for Evaluating Student Success
Goal 1 Objective 2	Number of pre- and post- SSS suspensions.	Number of times a student receives ISS or OSS three months before placement in SSS and three months after release from SSS.	VBCPS Data Warehouse
Goal 1 Objective 3	Data regarding perceptions of improvement in students' behavior.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 1	Student attendance rates.	Percentage of students with six or fewer absences during the semester following their participation, not to exceed the end of the current school year.	SSS Rubric for Evaluating Student Success

Table 8: Data Collection Process for Program Objectives (continued)

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 2 Objective 2	Enrollment data.	Percentage of students who demonstrate continued enrollment into the next academic year without dropping out.	VBCPS Data Warehouse
Goal 2 Objective 3	Data regarding stakeholder indicated improvement in student attendance.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 3 Objective 1	Number of core courses passed.	Percentage of students passing the requisite number of classes required to advance to the next grade level.	SSS Rubric for Evaluating Student Success
Goal 3 Objective 2	Data regarding stakeholder indicated improvement in student academic performance.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 4 Objective 1	Data regarding students' overall scores on SSS Rubric for Evaluating Success.	Percentage of students with a score of "successful" on the SSS Rubric for Evaluating Success.	SSS Rubric for Evaluating Student Success
Goal 4 Objective 2	Number of students who re-enter the SSS caseload after previously exiting within the academic year.	Recidivism rate.	VBCPS Data Warehouse
Goal 4 Objective 3	Data regarding student indicated increased sense of awareness and levels of self-esteem.	Percentage of students agreeing.	Survey
Goal 5 Objective 1	Data regarding discipline referrals and suspensions.	Number of times a student receives referrals, ISS, or OSS three months before placement in a given year and three months after completion of Choices.	VBCPS Data Warehouse
Goal 5 Objective 2	Student indicated increased self-efficacy in problem-solving, anger management, and decision making abilities.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 5 Objective 3	Student indicated making appropriate choices and understanding the impact of their behavior.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 6 Objective 1	Graduation rate.	Percentage of students graduating on time.	VBCPS Data Warehouse
Goal 6 Objective 2	GPA at graduation.	Percentage of graduates obtaining at least a 2.3 GPA.	VBCPS Data Warehouse
Goal 6 Objective 3	Postsecondary enrollment.	Percentage of graduates enrolling in a postsecondary institution the fall following graduation.	National Student Clearinghouse
Goal 6 Objective 4	Student indicated desire to enroll in a postsecondary institution.	Percentage of respondents indicating a desire to enroll in a postsecondary institution following graduation.	Survey
Goal 6 Objective 5	Data regarding Spartan Prep Academy students understanding the importance of academic performance.	Percentage of respondents indicating an understanding of importance of academic performance in their ability to enroll in a postsecondary institution.	Survey

Results of the Evaluation Readiness Process

❖ The SSS evaluation readiness team and staff from PIA's Office of Research and Evaluation met to discuss the evaluation process. Measurable goals and objectives were developed, along with a proposed evaluation plan for SSS during the 2015-2016 school year.

❖ The first goal is that students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory behavior during and after the time of services. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory behavior by receiving no more than four discipline referrals during the time of services and demonstrate satisfactory behavior by reducing the number of in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of-school suspension (OSS) instances. Additionally, stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in student behavior after receiving services from SSS.

❖ The second goal is that students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory attendance during and after the time of services. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will attain satisfactory attendance rates during the time of services and will persist in school. Additionally, stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in student attendance after receiving services from SSS.

❖ The third goal is that students receiving SSS will demonstrate satisfactory academic performance during and after the time of services. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will demonstrate improvement in academic performance following the time of services and stakeholders (principals, assistant principals, teachers, parents, and students) will indicate improvements in academic performance after receiving services from SSS.

❖ The fourth goal is that students receiving SSS will become successful members of their schools upon release of direct supervision from SSS. Specific objectives include students receiving SSS will demonstrate overall success in school, students' recidivism rate will be below 10 percent, and students will report an increased sense of self-awareness and increased levels of self-esteem.

❖ The fifth goal is that students completing the Choices program will develop the skills necessary to make appropriate choices and understand the impact of antisocial behavior on their lives and the lives of their families and communities. Specific objectives include students completing Choices will demonstrate an improvement in their ability to make appropriate choices by reducing the number of discipline referrals, ISS, and OSS instances. Further, students will indicate increased self-efficacy in their problem-solving, anger management, and decision-making abilities, and indicate making appropriate choices and understanding the impact of their behavior on their lives and the lives of others.

❖ The sixth goal is that students completing the Spartan Prep Academy will be adequately prepared to enter a higher education institution upon graduation from high school. Specific objectives include students completing Spartan Prep Academy will demonstrate success by graduating from high school, obtaining a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.3 upon graduation, and enrolling in a postsecondary institution during the fall following graduation. Further, students will indicate that the completion of Spartan Prep Academy led to a stronger desire to enroll in an institution of higher education and understand the importance of their high school academic performance on their enrollment in a higher educational institution.

❖ The evaluation plan includes five overarching evaluation questions and six specific goals that will serve as the focus of the comprehensive evaluation proposed for the 2015-2016 school year.

Recommendation and Rationale

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation during the 2015-2016 school year focused on SSS implementation, student demographic characteristics and academic outcomes, stakeholders' perceptions, and cost. *(Responsible Group: Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability)*

Rationale: It is proposed that a comprehensive evaluation of SSS be conducted during the 2015-2016 school year to assess the effectiveness of SSS. The comprehensive evaluation will include an assessment of operational components, student characteristics, progress made toward meeting SSS goals and objectives, stakeholders' perceptions, and cost to the school division. SSS's goals are centered on behavior, attendance, academic performance, and successful transition into a traditional school. Further, PIA has not conducted an evaluation of SSS since it was implemented in Virginia Beach City Public Schools in 2003. Having successfully completed the evaluation readiness process, which resulted in the development and refinement of specific goals and objectives, a comprehensive evaluation is now recommended.

Endnotes

1 Alternative Education: Student Support Specialist Guide, p.8.

2 In 2013-2014, SSS served one elementary school student.

3 Alternative Education Highlights 2008-2009.

4 Although listed in both the "Middle School" and "High School" columns, Renaissance Academy is only counted as one site.

5 Alternative Education: Student Support Specialist Guide, p.8

6 Total serving count for 2013-2014: 36,877

7 https://www.nsu.edu/provost/vbhec/spartan-prep/about

8 Student Support Specialists SY 13-14 School Assignments Schedule

9 Table adapted from SY 2013-2014 Student Support Caseload Analysis Summary

10 Table adapted from SY 2013-2014 Student Support Caseload Analysis Summary

11 Table adapted from SY 2013-2014 Student Support Caseload Analysis Summary

12 Table adapted from SY 2013-2014 Student Support Caseload Analysis Summary

13 J. Fayton Jr. (e-mail communication, July 8, 2015)

14 J. Fayton Jr. (e-mail communication, July 8, 2015)