



Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program: Year-Two Implementation Evaluation

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Table of Contents

Introduction	7
Background of Program	7
Alternative Education.....	7
Alternative Education in Virginia Beach City Public Schools.....	7
Background and Purpose of Program Evaluation	8
Program Goals and Objectives.....	8
Evaluation Design and Methodology	9
Evaluation Design and Data Collection	9
Student Survey	9
Staff Surveys.....	10
Parent Survey	11
Student Information From Data Warehouse	11
Evaluation Questions.....	11
Evaluation Results and Discussion	12
Alternative Education in VBCPS.....	12
Alternative Education Options to Meet Students' Needs	13
Renaissance Academy Middle and High School Program	13
Other Alternative Education Options to Meet Students' Needs	19
Student Characteristics	20
Referral and Transition Process.....	23
Entry Process.....	23
Transition Process	25
Reenrollment.....	26
Perceptions of Referral and Transition Process	27
Staff Characteristics and Professional Learning.....	28
Professional Learning	29
Family Engagement	31
Progress Toward Meeting Goals and Objectives	32
Build Relationships to Demonstrate Social-Emotional Competencies.....	32
Demonstrate Success While Attending Renaissance Academy	36
Transition Successfully to Home School.....	41
Graduate and Develop Postgraduation Plans	44
Stakeholder Perceptions.....	46
Stakeholders' Perceptions of Program Meeting Students' Needs.....	46
Program Strengths and Areas for Improvement.....	47
Additional Cost.....	48
Summary	49
Recommendations and Rationales	55

Appendix	57
Appendix A.....	57
Endnotes	58

Tables

Table 1: Renaissance Academy Student Response Rates by Grade Level	10
Table 2: Renaissance Academy Staff Response Rates	10
Table 3: Staff at Comprehensive Secondary Schools Response Rates.....	11
Table 4: Parent Response Rates by School Level	11
Table 5: Comprehensive Secondary School Staff Understanding of the Purpose of Renaissance Academy	13
Table 6: Students' Perceptions of Working with Student Support Specialist(s)	14
Table 7: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Mentor Experiences	14
Table 8: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Participating in Activities to Improve Student Relationships.....	15
Table 9: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Participating in Activities to Improve Self-Management Skills	15
Table 10: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Participating in Activities to Improve Decision-Making Skills	16
Table 11: Middle School Student Enrollment Numbers in CTE Courses	17
Table 12: High School Student Enrollment Numbers in CTE Courses	17
Table 13: High School Student Enrollment Numbers in Spanish Courses.....	18
Table 14: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Instructional Opportunities at Renaissance Academy	19
Table 15: Comprehensive Secondary Staff Members' Perceptions of Renaissance Academy Meeting Students' Needs	19
Table 16: Demographic Characteristics of Students Enrolled in Renaissance Academy Any Time During the 2023-2024 School Year.....	21
Table 17: Length of Student Enrollment at Renaissance Academy	22
Table 18: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Entry Process.....	25
Table 19: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Students Having the Support Needed to be Successful.....	26
Table 20: Percentage of Students Returning to Renaissance Academy During the School Year.....	27
Table 21: Staff Members' Perceptions of Referral Criteria and Transition Process.....	28
Table 22: Staff Characteristics for Renaissance Academy Instructional Staff and All Instructional Staff	29
Table 23: Renaissance Academy Staff Reporting Satisfaction Working at Renaissance Academy.....	29
Table 24: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Professional Learning	30
Table 25: Parents' Perceptions of Orientation Session.....	31
Table 26: Students' Perceptions of Building Positive Relationships With Students and Staff.....	32
Table 27: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Building Positive Relationships With Students	33
Table 28: Students' Perceptions of Feeling a Sense of Belonging and Feeling Welcome at School.....	33
Table 29: Students' Perceptions of Demonstrating Competency in Relationship Skills	34
Table 30: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Students Demonstrating Competency in Relationship Skills.....	34
Table 31: Students' Perceptions of Demonstrating Self-Management	35
Table 32: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Students Demonstrating Competency in Self-Management Skills.....	35
Table 33: Students' Perceptions of Demonstrating Responsible Decision-Making.....	36
Table 34: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Demonstrating Responsible Decision-Making.....	36
Table 35: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Gaining Tools and Strategies for Success.....	37

Table 36: Percentage of Students Demonstrating a Decline in Discipline Referrals and Suspensions After Enrolling in Renaissance Academy	37
Table 37: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Demonstrating Satisfactory Behavior at Renaissance Academy.....	38
Table 38: Percentage of Students With an Attendance Rate of 90 Percent or Higher	38
Table 39: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Attendance While Attending Renaissance Academy	39
Table 40: Percentage of Students Demonstrating Improvement in Core Course Grade Averages	39
Table 41: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Academic Performance at Renaissance Academy	40
Table 42: Percent of Students Passing Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests	41
Table 43: Students' Perceptions of Gaining Tools and Strategies to Transition Back to Their Home School	42
Table 44: Average Number of Referrals by School Level	43
Table 45: Percentage of Students With Attendance Rates Similar To or Better Than While at Their Home School.....	43
Table 46: Percentage of Students Who Maintained Their Academic Performance at Their Home School.....	44
Table 47: Percentage of Students Who Graduated in Four Years	44
Table 48: Students Reporting Academic/Career Planning.....	45
Table 49: Students Reporting Setting Goals for Their Learning and Future Plans.....	45
Table 50: Seniors' Who Graduated While at Renaissance Academy Postgraduation Plans	46
Table 51: Overall Satisfaction With Renaissance Academy	46
Table 52: Cost of the Renaissance Academy Program.....	49

Figures

Figure 1: Students’ Last Enrolled Home School 22

Introduction

Background of Program

Alternative Education

The U.S. Department of Education defines alternative education as, “a public elementary/secondary school that: (a) addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school; (b) provides nontraditional education; (c) serves as an adjunct to a regular school; or (d) falls outside the categories of regular education, special education, or career/technical education.”¹ Despite this U.S. Department of Education definition, within the educational community, there is no commonly used or accepted definition or classification of alternative education in school systems across the country. Two major reasons for the ambiguity surrounding alternative education are the fact that there are a wide variety of settings that school systems consider to be alternative (i.e., self-contained schools, residential facilities, etc.) and a myriad of reasons why students are placed in alternative settings.² The next section will explore how alternative education is defined and how it operates within Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS).

Alternative Education in Virginia Beach City Public Schools

VBCPS has a long history with alternative education settings. Several centers operated in VBCPS beginning in the 1960s including the Center for Effective Learning, the Career Development Center, and Open Campus. In 1993, School Board Policy 6-27 regarding alternative education was adopted and then revised in July 2022. The policy states “the School Board realizes that the needs of all of our students cannot be met within the formal school curriculum. Therefore, the School Board encourages alternative educational experiences that will enhance a student’s learning, and which will increase students’ ability to achieve success in the world of work. Alternative education programs will be provided where the needs have been identified, where the establishment of such programs is feasible, and where the proposed programs fall within the jurisdiction of this School Division.”³ In 1998, a five-year alternative education comprehensive plan was adopted by the School Board to support students’ educational and personal needs.⁴ The five-year plan stated the purpose of alternative education “is to restore an identified student to a level of academic performance and behavioral responsibility that supports the student’s educational and personal needs.” After the second year of implementation of the plan, the associate superintendent of the department of curriculum and instruction determined that a comprehensive review and evaluation of alternative education was necessary. As a result, in fall 2000, the superintendent recommended the appointment of an alternative education task force leader, which was approved by the School Board. The goal of the task force was to use a variety of information gathering techniques to effectively answer five specific questions: 1) What is the appropriate scope and authority of alternative education for VBCPS? 2) How effectively are existing programs identifying their purpose, missions, goals, and objectives? 3) How effectively are existing programs achieving their goals and objectives? 4) Are there areas of identified need that are not being addressed by alternative education? 5) How effectively are students being transitioned into, from, and between alternative education programs? The task force conducted surveys and interviews of personnel, students, and parents, and reviewed documents in schools. The task force reported their findings and recommendations designed to enhance services so that students participating in alternative education could overcome challenges and thrive. The task force identified four goals in its comprehensive five-year plan. They were as follows:

Goal 1: Improve the academic achievement of Virginia Beach Students.

Goal 2: Reduce the number of students needing alternative placement as a result of their behavior.

Goal 3: Reconceptualize and expand the focus of existing alternative education sites.

Goal 4: Develop the leadership skills of at-risk students.⁵

Since the alternative education plan's inception, the program has evolved in its various program offerings, but the purpose of meeting students' unique needs has remained. In 2010, Renaissance Academy opened as a special purpose center for students in grades 6 through 12 and combined alternative education services from two separate middle and high school sites into one location.⁶

Background and Purpose of Program Evaluation

Because The Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program is an existing program, it was selected by the Program Evaluation Committee for the Program Evaluation Schedule based on criteria specified in the School Board Policy 6-26. On September 14, 2021, the School Board approved the Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program for an evaluation readiness report to be conducted during the 2021-2022 school year and an evaluation plan was developed. The evaluation readiness report was approved by the School Board on September 13, 2022, with the recommendation that the Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program undergo a three-year evaluation during 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025. Years one and two of the evaluation plan during 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 would focus on the operation of the Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program, while the third year of evaluation in 2024-2025 would focus on program effectiveness in terms of student outcomes and the degree to which the program met its goals and objectives.

The year-one implementation evaluation was presented to the School Board on February 27, 2024. The year-one implementation evaluation focused on alternative education in VBCPS, options within alternative education, student characteristics, student referral and transition processes, staff characteristics and professional learning, family involvement opportunities, progress toward meeting student outcome goals, stakeholders' overall perceptions, and cost to the division. Based on results of the evaluation, the recommendations focused on methods for improving students' relationship skills with other students, increasing professional learning opportunities for staff, improving the transition process from Renaissance Academy to the students' home school, and enhancing instructional and academic opportunities to improve Renaissance Academy students' SOL performance and prepare them for the academic demands when returning to their home school. The recommendations were approved by the School Board on March 12, 2024.

This year-two implementation evaluation of Renaissance Academy provides the School Board, Superintendent, and Renaissance Academy stakeholders with information about the continued operation of the program, as well as progress toward meeting program goals and objectives. In addition, actions taken related to the recommendation areas are addressed where appropriate.

Program Goals and Objectives

Four goals and 18 objectives were developed for the evaluation of the alternative education program in collaboration with the director of alternative education, data specialist, and Department of School Leadership. The goals were focused on student outcomes and included the following:

1. Students in alternative education at Renaissance Academy will build relationships that help foster their ability to demonstrate social-emotional competencies,
2. Students in alternative education will demonstrate success in school while attending Renaissance Academy,
3. Students in alternative education will successfully transition to their home school following enrollment at Renaissance Academy, and

4. Students in alternative education will graduate and develop a post-graduation plan.

Specific objectives within each goal were assessed as part of the evaluation question focused on progress made toward meeting the student outcome goals and can be found in that section of the report. Operational or implementation aspects of the program were assessed as part of the planned program evaluation questions.

Evaluation Design and Methodology

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

The evaluation included mixed methodologies to address each of the evaluation questions, including providing baseline data and preliminary analyses for student outcome goals and objectives. Qualitative data were collected through meetings with Renaissance Academy staff, document reviews, and open-ended survey questions. Quantitative data were gathered through the VBCPS data warehouse and closed-ended survey questions. The Office of Research and Evaluation evaluators used the following data collection methods:

- Communicated with the director of the alternative education/Renaissance Academy, assistant principal, and data specialist to gather implementation-related information.
- Interviewed the director of student leadership about the student transition criteria and process.
- Reviewed Renaissance Academy program documentation.
- Conducted a site visit at Renaissance Academy to observe operational aspects of the program.
- Administered surveys to Renaissance Academy staff, staff at comprehensive middle and high schools, Renaissance Academy students, and parents of Renaissance Academy students.
- Collected student survey data through the VBCPS Annual Spring Survey.
- Collected data from the VBCPS data warehouse related to student demographic characteristics, program-related information, and student progress (e.g., enrollment, academic performance, attendance).
- Collected staff-related data from the Department of Human Resources.
- Collected cost information from the Department of Teaching and Learning, Department of Human Resources, Department of Budget and Finance, and Office of Transportation and Fleet Services.

Student Survey

Due to the transient nature of the students attending Renaissance Academy, there was a two-pronged approach to administering the student survey during the 2023-2024 school year. A link to the anonymous online survey was provided to administrators at Renaissance Academy in October 2023 to administer to students exiting the program at any time during the year. Then, the Renaissance Academy survey items were added as part of the 2024 VBCPS Annual Spring Survey given in April 2024 to all students at Renaissance Academy. Overall student response rates ranged from 21 percent to 56 percent depending on grade level (see Table 1). Response rates on the student survey were notably higher in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023. During the 2023-2024 school year, Renaissance Academy staff made a concerted effort to have students who transitioned out of Renaissance Academy and back to their home school complete the survey by including it as part of their exit process. More responses to the surveys may have been a contributing factor to changes in perceptions on survey items that will be presented throughout this report.

Table 1: Renaissance Academy Student Response Rates by Grade Level

Group	Number of Respondents		Response Rate	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
6 th Grade	13	13	22%	21%
7 th Grade	25	62	22%	56%
8 th Grade	41	61	37%	49%
Middle School Total	79	136	28%	46%
9 th Grade	21	56	15%	31%
10 th Grade	22	58	16%	44%
11 th Grade	13	48	15%	52%
12 th Grade	5	18	7%	25%
High School Total	61	180	14%	38%
Grand Total	140	316	19%	41%

Staff Surveys

Staff at Renaissance Academy, including administrators, school counselors/school psychologists, student support specialists, and teachers, received an email invitation to complete an anonymous survey in May 2024. Overall staff response rates ranged from 0 percent to 54 percent depending on staff group (see Table 2). Throughout the report, survey results were analyzed by school level. There were five staff members who indicated they worked with both middle and high school students. Therefore, they were included in both the middle and high school percentages. However, their responses were only included once in the total calculation. Overall, there was a lower response rate in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023 overall and for each staff group with the exception of Renaissance Academy middle school teachers (see Table 2).

Table 2: Renaissance Academy Staff Response Rates

Group	Number of Respondents		Response Rate	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Administrators	5	3	83%	50%
School Counselors/School Psychologists	2	0	33%	0%
Student Support Specialists	3	1	100%	17%
All Teachers	50	41	63%	49%
Middle School Teachers Only*	12	14	39%	50%
High School Teachers Only*	35	28	73%	54%
Total	60	45	64%	45%

*Note: This is an approximate response rate by school level. Only teachers that exclusively taught middle or high school were included in the response rate calculation by level. All other staff members could not be assigned a school level because they worked with both middle and high school students.

Staff at comprehensive secondary schools, including principals, assistant principals, school counselors, school psychologists, and student support specialists, received an email invitation to complete an anonymous survey regarding their knowledge and perceptions of the middle and high school alternative education program at Renaissance Academy. Overall staff response rates ranged from 4 percent to 44 percent depending on staff group (see Table 3). Of those comprehensive staff members who responded to the survey, 100 percent indicated they had experience working with students who attended the middle or high school alternative education program at Renaissance Academy. Perceptions in this report are based on comprehensive school staff members who indicated they had experience working with students who attended Renaissance Academy. In addition, throughout the report, comprehensive secondary staff members' results were analyzed by school level. Two staff members indicated they worked with students in both middle and high school; therefore,

totals do not equal the sum of middle and high school staff. The response rate was lower in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023 with fewer staff members taking the survey across all positions.

Table 3: Staff at Comprehensive Secondary Schools Response Rates

Group	Number of Respondents		Response Rate	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Principals	18	12	72%	44%
Assistant Principals	40	20	55%	27%
School Counselors	60	50	45%	37%
School Psychologists	2	1	11%	4%
Student Support Specialists	5	3	50%	30%
Total	125	86	48%	32%

Parent Survey

Parents of students who were enrolled at Renaissance Academy at any time during the 2023-2024 school year as of May 3, 2024, were emailed an anonymous survey in May 2024. Response rates were 8 percent at middle school and 5 percent at high school. There was a lower response rate among parents in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023.

Table 4: Parent Response Rates by School Level

Group	Number of Respondents		Response Rate	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Middle School	50	26	11%	8%
High School	62	28	14%	5%
Total	112	54	12%	7%

For all stakeholders, survey agreement percentages reported in the evaluation were based on those who answered the survey item (i.e., missing responses were excluded from the percentages). In addition, several items had response options such as “Don’t Know,” and these responses were also excluded from the percentages. Survey results are reported at the division level, but results were also disaggregated and examined by school level (i.e., middle and high). Open-ended comments were analyzed for common themes.

Student Information From Data Warehouse

Quantitative data collected from the VBCPS data warehouse included student demographic characteristics and academic achievement as measured by Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments, discipline referral data, attendance data, core course grade averages, and data from the senior exit survey where postgraduation plans are collected for the Virginia Department of Education. Data were analyzed based on the specific evaluation question or objective that was developed for the purposes of the program evaluation. Because there is significant transition into and out of the alternative education program at Renaissance Academy during the school year based on the design of the program, appropriate groups of students needed to be determined for the data analyses. Specific criteria for including students in the data analyses are described in the appropriate sections of the report.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions for this report were developed by the program evaluators in consultation with the director of alternative education/Renaissance Academy, data specialist, and a representative from the

Department of School Leadership. The evaluation questions established for the year-two implementation evaluation are listed below. In addition, progress toward recommendation areas from the year-one implementation evaluation were addressed where appropriate in the following sections: Renaissance Academy middle and high school program, referral and transition processes, and professional learning.

- 1. What is alternative education in VBCPS?**
- 2. What options were part of alternative education in VBCPS to meet students' needs?**
 - a. Renaissance Academy middle and high school program
 - Staff support from school counselors, student support specialists, and mentors
 - Flexible schedule
 - Basic needs
 - Career development and credentialing
 - World language
 - Evening program
 - b. Other alternative education options to meet students' needs
- 3. What were the characteristics of the students attending the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program?**
- 4. What was the process and criteria for students to be referred to the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program and to transition back to their home school?**
 - a. Entry Process: Student discipline hearing process, principal placement, scheduling needs
 - b. Process to Transition to Home School: Criteria, transition plans for returning to home school
 - c. Reenrollment (i.e., returning to Renaissance Academy within the same school year)
- 5. What were the staff characteristics and qualifications and what professional learning opportunities were provided for alternative education staff?**
- 6. What opportunities were provided for parents and families of students in Renaissance Academy's middle and high school alternative education program to be involved and engaged?**
- 7. What progress has been made toward meeting the student outcome goals and objectives of the middle and high school alternative education program?**
- 8. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of the middle and high school alternative education program?**
- 9. What was the cost of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program to the school division during 2023-2024?**

Evaluation Results and Discussion

Alternative Education in VBCPS

The first evaluation question focused on operationally defining alternative education in VBCPS including the mission, vision, and purpose. The vision, as stated on the Renaissance Academy website is, "The 21st century Renaissance Academy student will be a compassionate, civic-minded, productive citizen who acknowledges the value of life-long learning." The Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program seeks to meet the needs of students who are not experiencing success in regular secondary (grades 6 through 12) settings. The mission of Renaissance Academy is, "to provide a quality education through shared responsibility in a safe supportive environment for all students to meet the challenges of a global society."⁷ The program offers students different opportunities to best meet their needs when traditional education interventions do not effectively remedy students' behavior and/or academic difficulties.⁸ Most students participating in the Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program are enrolled by assignment. Students enrolled at Renaissance Academy are recommended for placement by the Office of Student Leadership for behavioral concerns or recommended by school administrators through principal-to-principal placement to best meet students' needs.⁹ Parents can also initiate their student's enrollment at Renaissance Academy. The program

serves both regular education and special education students, and some students are enrolled short-term, while others are enrolled long-term.

Students enrolled at Renaissance Academy participate in general curriculum courses. This curriculum includes comprehensive instruction that merges life skills necessary for success in the 21st century with existing Virginia Beach City Public Schools curricula. The curriculum aims to promote the development of self-determination, responsibility, and integrity in a learning environment that fosters a sense of self-esteem and importance to society. The program provides flexible learning opportunities that address student social-emotional learning. In addition, leadership skills are embedded throughout the curriculum. Additional information about the Renaissance Academy academic program for middle school students indicated it builds on students’ strengths with the goal of remediating their academic needs through rigorous and relevant instruction. The environment is specifically designed to provide students with individualized attention and focused assistance based on their academic needs. The program operates as a school-within-a-school and focuses on developmental needs with the goal of grade-level performance. The class sizes are small, 15 students or less, which provides students the opportunity to form supportive relationships with fellow students and staff.¹⁰ The components that make up the Renaissance Academy’s alternative education program are explored in the following section.

Comprehensive secondary school staff who had experience working with students who have attended Renaissance Academy were asked about their understanding of the program. A high percentage of staff (94%) agreed they understood the purpose of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program in VBCPS.

Table 5: Comprehensive Secondary School Staff Understanding of the Purpose of Renaissance Academy

Survey Item	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
I understand the purpose of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program at VBCPS.	94%	93%	98%	93%	97%	94%

Alternative Education Options to Meet Students’ Needs

The second evaluation question focused on the options that are available at Renaissance Academy to meet students’ unique needs. These options include staffing and programmatic components within the Renaissance Academy middle and high school program, which is the focus of the current program evaluation, as well as other alternative education program options.

Renaissance Academy Middle and High School Program

Staff Support From School Counselors, Student Support Specialists, and Mentors

Students at Renaissance Academy are supported by various staff including school counselors, student support specialists, and mentors. School counselors meet with students and ensure they are meeting their scheduling and graduation requirements. In addition, school counselors conduct 504 meetings, self-harm assessments, and provide drop-out prevention and intervention support. Student support specialists at both Renaissance Academy and comprehensive secondary schools aim to provide effective and efficient transitions for students between alternative programs and home schools. All students transitioning from Renaissance Academy and alternative education programs are referred to the student support specialists at Renaissance Academy and/or their home school. Students may also be referred to a student support specialist by their home school’s support team. Student support specialists work collaboratively with the members of the school’s support team in each secondary school to determine appropriate interventions for students identified as being at-risk. Specialists address issues related to academics, attendance, and behavior. Students are released from direct

supervision from the student support specialist when they demonstrate improvements in attendance, academic performance, and behavior and receive positive feedback from parents and staff.

In 2022-2023, the decision was made to team student support specialists and school counselors with assistant principals and assign them to a cluster of home schools. This clustering system was continued in the 2023-2024 school year. In 2023-2024 two new survey items were added to the Renaissance Academy student survey to gather information about students’ interactions with student support specialists (see Table 6). Overall, 53 percent of students reported working with student support specialist(s) at Renaissance Academy. A higher percentage of middle school students reported working with student support specialists than high school students (61% vs 46%). A high percentage of students (99%) reported their experience working with student support specialists was useful.

Table 6: Students’ Perceptions of Working with Student Support Specialist(s)

Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Did you work with Student Support Specialist(s) at Renaissance Academy?*	61%	46%	53%
How useful was your experience working with Student Support Specialist(s)?**	97%	100%	99%

*This survey question included those who responded “yes.”

**Only students who indicated they worked with a student support specialist answered this survey item. Survey item includes those who selected their experience was “very useful” or “somewhat useful.”

Renaissance Academy also provides students with mentorship meetings scaled to meet students’ needs, and meetings typically focus on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making skills. In 2023-2024, survey items were added to the student and parent surveys to gauge perceptions of students’ mentorship experiences (see Table 7). Overall, 79 percent of students reported having an adult mentor while at Renaissance Academy. A slightly larger percentage of middle schoolers reported having a mentor than high schoolers (82% vs 77%). A high percentage (96%) of students reported the mentorship was useful. Parents were also asked their perceptions of their students’ mentorship experiences. Parents reported lower percentages (38%) of students having an adult mentor while enrolled at Renaissance Academy compared to students, although it is possible parents were less aware of the specific individuals their child worked with as part of the program. All parents (100%) who reported their student had a mentor reported the experience was useful.

Table 7: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Mentor Experiences

Group and Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Student – Do you have an adult mentor (trusted adult) while enrolled at Renaissance Academy?*	82%	77%	79%
Student – How useful was your mentorship experience?**	98%	95%	96%
Parent – Did your child have an adult mentor (trusted adult) while enrolled at Renaissance Academy?*	29%	50%	38%
Parent – How useful was your child’s mentorship experience?**	100%	100%	100%

*This survey question included those who responded “yes.”

**Only students or parents who indicated they or their child had a mentor answered this survey item. Survey item includes those who selected their or their child’s experience was “very useful” or “somewhat useful.”

Activities to Support Students’ Relationship, Self-Management, and Responsible Decision-Making Skills

One recommendation from the year-one evaluation was to identify and implement strategies or activities to improve students’ relationship skills with other students, self-management skills, and responsible decision-making skills especially at the middle school level at Renaissance Academy. While school counselors, student support specialists, and mentors incorporate activities to support students’ social emotional learning skills, these areas were identified for improvement based on data collected during the first year of the

evaluation. According to Renaissance Academy staff, one action taken toward this recommendation included the counseling department hosting the Phoenix Awards. At the award ceremony, students were recognized for achievement, perseverance, and growth. According to Renaissance Academy staff, the awards promoted the importance of academics, self-management, peer-to-peer interactions, and responsible decision-making. In addition, the school counseling department at Renaissance Academy hosted a career fair in February 2024. Attendees for the fair included: Air Force; US Army; Virginia Beach Parks, Recreation, and Tourism; Tidewater Community College; and Hardee's. Renaissance Academy hosted a college fair in February 2024. Another action taken toward this recommendation was hiring retired VBCPS teachers and coaches for the mentorship program and having them participate in a program titled Coaching Skills for Life Mentorship Program. In addition, Renaissance Academy staff reported the mentorship program was awarded the VBCPS Model Partnership Award. Other actions taken toward the recommendation about improving students' relationship skills with other students, self-management skills, and responsible decision-making skills included a Black History Month workshop with Renaissance Academy staff and student ambassadors and producing the first Renaissance Academy yearbook. Students collaborated to highlight the school and its activities and clubs.

Survey items were added as part of the year-two evaluation to gauge student, parent, and Renaissance Academy staff perceptions of students participating in activities to improve student relationships. Agreement percentages are shown in Table 8. Overall, 74 percent of students agreed they participated in activities at Renaissance Academy to help improve how they got along with other students. Lower percentages of parents and staff agreed students participated in these types of activities.

Table 8: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Participating in Activities to Improve Student Relationships

Groups and Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Student – At Renaissance Academy, I participate in activities to help improve how I get along with other students.	78%	70%	74%
Parent – At Renaissance Academy, my child participates in activities to help improve how he/she gets along with other students.	45%	53%	49%
RA Staff – At Renaissance Academy, students participate in activities to help improve how they get along with other students.	50%	31%	33%

Survey items were also added as part of the year-two evaluation to gauge student, parent, and Renaissance Academy staff perceptions of students participating in activities to improve their self-management skills (see Table 9). Overall, 74 percent of students agreed they participated in activities to improve their self-management skills. Lower percentages of parents and Renaissance Academy staff agreed students participated in activities to improve their self-management skills.

Table 9: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Participating in Activities to Improve Self-Management Skills

Group and Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Student – At Renaissance Academy, I participate in activities to improve my self-management skills (e.g., anger management, goal-setting, and positive problem solving).	81%	69%	74%
Parent – At Renaissance Academy, my child participates in activities to improve his/her self-management skills (e.g., anger management, goal-setting, and positive problem solving).	35%	69%	52%
RA Staff – At Renaissance Academy, students participate in activities to improve their self-management skills (e.g., anger management, goal-setting, and positive problem solving).	59%	44%	45%

New survey items were added as part of the year-two evaluation to gauge student, parent, and Renaissance Academy staff perceptions of students participating in activities to improve their decision-making skills (see Table 10). Overall, 76 percent of students agreed they participated in activities to improve their

decision-making skills. Lower percentages of parents and Renaissance Academy staff agreed students participated in activities to improve their decision-making skills.

Table 10: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Participating in Activities to Improve Decision-Making Skills

Group and Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Student – At Renaissance Academy, I participate in activities that help improve my decision-making skills (e.g., choosing right from wrong, stopping and thinking before making decisions, and seeking advice from someone when I need help).	81%	72%	76%
Parent – At Renaissance Academy, my child participates in activities that help improve his/her decision-making skills (e.g., choosing right from wrong, stopping and thinking before making decisions, and seeking advice from someone when he/she needs help).	47%	53%	50%
RA Staff – At Renaissance Academy, students participate in activities that help improve their decision-making skills (e.g., choosing right from wrong, stopping and thinking before making decisions, and seeking advice from someone when needing help).	50%	53%	49%

Flexible Schedule

Renaissance Academy has flexible scheduling to allow students to obtain the credits they need to obtain a high school diploma. For example, if courses they need are not offered at Renaissance Academy, students have the option to be placed in Edgenuity or Apex courses or students may be granted permission for concurrent enrollment with their home school to complete the course remotely.¹¹

Basic Needs

Renaissance Academy operates from the belief that students' basic needs should be met so they can focus on their academic tasks. All students who attend Renaissance Academy receive free and reduced meals. All students are provided a clear backpack, water bottle, school supplies, and basic toiletries for free. The school uniform is sold to students at cost with no additional increased cost, and those who are unable to purchase it are provided it for free.¹²

Career Development and Credentialing

One of the stated goals of Renaissance Academy according to the current administration is for students to "enroll, employ, or enlist." As reported in the year-one evaluation, during the 2022-2023 school year, staff at Renaissance Academy developed the RA Pathway Plan which is a five-year plan for career development. The goal is to offer programs and coursework for the following careers over the next several years: lawn maintenance, beekeeping, building maintenance, nail technician, and drone pilots. In the 2023-2024 school year, Drones and Unmanned Systems and Television Production I and II courses were offered at Renaissance Academy. A total of 16 high school students were enrolled in Drones and Unmanned Systems, 14 high school students were enrolled in Television Production I, and one high school student was enrolled in Television Production II. According to Renaissance Academy staff, Introduction to Landscaping I and II and Building Maintenance I and II courses were planned to be rolled out in 2024-2025 but these courses are currently on hold because they require building modifications and updates to be in operation. As reported in the year-one evaluation, the plan to offer Nail Technician coursework in the 2025-2026 remains.

Additional Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses offered at Renaissance Academy provide students with the opportunity to earn CTE credentials. As displayed in Table 11, five CTE courses were offered to middle school students at Renaissance Academy with a total of 165 students enrolled across the courses. Creative

Coding Solutions I had the largest number of students enrolled followed by Creative Coding and Computer Solutions II. Overall, 131 middle school students were enrolled in at least one CTE course (44%).

Table 11: Middle School Student Enrollment Numbers in CTE Courses

Course Title	Number of Enrollments
Creative Coding & Computer Solutions I	43
Creative Coding & Computer Solutions II	37
Teen Living Grade 7	33
Exploratory Teen Living 8	32
Career Skills	20
Total Enrollments	165
Students Enrolled in At Least One CTE Course	131

As displayed in Table 12, 13 CTE courses were offered to high school students at Renaissance Academy. A total of 301 students participated in these courses. Economics and Personal Finance had the highest number of students enrolled followed by Introduction to Culinary Arts and Independent Living. During 2023-2024, two students in grade 9 attempted a certification. The majority of students attempting credentials were in grades 10, 11, and 12. In total, 88 students in grades 10, 11, and 12 (29%) attempted to earn a certification, and of those who attempted, 36 (41%) earned a certification. Six certification tests were taken across grades 9 through 12 and 38 percent resulted in a certification. Overall, 200 high school students were enrolled in at least one CTE course (42%).

Table 12: High School Student Enrollment Numbers in CTE Courses

Course Title	Number of Enrollments
Economics & Personal Finance	90
Introduction to Culinary Arts	37
Independent Living	37
Construction Technology	25
Marketing Non-Coop	20
Parenting and Early Learning Careers	17
Drones & Unmanned Systems	16
Production Systems	14
RA Television Production I	14
Digital Applications & Multimedia	13
Computer Information Systems	11
Fashion Marketing	6
RA Television Production II	1
Total Enrollments	301
Students Enrolled in At Least One CTE Course	200

World Languages

Offering a world language credit allows students at Renaissance Academy to take courses that count toward graduation credit. In the 2022-2023 school year, Renaissance Academy received a staff allocation for a high school Spanish teacher. As a result, Renaissance Academy offers face-to-face Spanish I, II, and III courses, as well as facilitates online courses in advanced Spanish with in-person support. As displayed in Table 13, 22 high school students were enrolled in Spanish I, 16 were enrolled in Spanish II, and 10 were enrolled in Spanish III during 2023-2024. Overall, 44 students were enrolled in at least one Spanish course in 2023-2024. Additional

online courses allow students to take French and German. Students enrolled in world language classes at their home school may continue to pursue that course credit while enrolled at Renaissance Academy through the flexible scheduling options.¹³

Table 13: High School Student Enrollment Numbers in Spanish Courses

Course Title	Number of Enrollments
Spanish I	22
Spanish II	16
Spanish III	10
Total Enrollments	48
Students Enrolled in at Least One Spanish Course	44

Evening Program

The evening program is a tuition-based option available to students based upon student enrollment. The program is designed to encompass three sessions, meeting Monday through Thursday. Session 1 is a two-hour session that meets Monday through Thursday. Session 2 is a four-hour session that meets on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Session 3 is a four-hour session that meets Tuesday and Thursday evenings. There was no enrollment in the evening program in 2022-2023 and again in 2023-2024. According to staff at Renaissance Academy, there is potential to continue the evening program by offering certain CTE courses such as welding within the next two years.

Perceptions of Instructional Opportunities

One of the recommendations from the year-one evaluation was to enhance instructional strategies and academic opportunities to improve Renaissance Academy students’ SOL performance and readiness for academic demands when returning to their home school. According to Renaissance Academy staff, one action taken related to this recommendation was to increase course offerings at Renaissance Academy. Other actions taken included SOL Kick-Off Assemblies at middle and high school levels to motivate students for the upcoming SOL assessments. According to Renaissance Academy staff, the assemblies provided opportunities to engage students in preparation for the upcoming assessments. The final action toward this recommendation included administrative meetings on Fridays for faculty and staff. These meetings provided staff with the opportunity to discuss student progress and strategies for student success. In 2023-2024, as noted previously, six new courses were offered at Renaissance Academy which included Television Productions I and II; Drones and Unmanned Systems; and Spanish I, II, and III. Also, during 2023-2024, Renaissance Academy received an allocation for an instructional specialist for the 2024-2025 school year. According to Renaissance Academy staff, an instructional specialist was hired for the 2024-2025 school year to work with staff and students. The instructional specialist assists teachers with developing skills in the preparation of effective learning plans, presentation of content, classroom management, and school and community communications. The individual also works with gifted students to ensure their needs are met.

In 2023-2024 new survey items were added as part of the year-two evaluation to gauge parents’ and Renaissance Academy staff members’ perceptions of students’ instructional opportunities while at Renaissance Academy (see Table 14). Overall, about half of parents (51%) and 73 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed the instructional opportunities at Renaissance Academy prepared students to meet the academic demands when returning to their home school. Renaissance Academy staff who taught at the high school level had higher agreement percentages than those who taught at the middle school level (80% vs. 63%). Renaissance Academy staff were asked their perceptions regarding instructional strategies and tools. A high percentage of Renaissance Academy classroom teachers agreed (98%) they had useful instructional strategies and tools to help them meet students’ academic needs in the classroom. Data from the

student survey showed that 84 percent of students agreed they gained the tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their homeschool.

Table 14: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Instructional Opportunities at Renaissance Academy

Group and Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Parents – The instructional opportunities my child had at Renaissance Academy prepared him/her to meet the academic demands when returning to their home school.	52%	50%	51%
RA Staff – The instructional opportunities students have at Renaissance Academy prepare them to meet the academic demands when they return to their home school.	63%	80%	73%
RA Staff – I have useful instructional strategies and tools to help me meet students' academic needs in the classroom (classroom teachers only).	93%	100%	98%

Comprehensive Secondary Staff Perceptions of Renaissance Academy Meeting Students' Needs

Comprehensive secondary staff have a unique perspective of the Renaissance Academy program because they are involved with both the referral of students to Renaissance Academy and the transition of students back to the home school. Comprehensive secondary staff members were asked their perceptions of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program meeting students' needs, improving students' behavior, and improving students' academic achievement. As indicated in Table 15, 65 percent of comprehensive secondary staff agreed the program met students' needs, 54 percent agreed the program was effective at improving students' behavior, and 57 percent agreed the program was effective at improving students' academic achievement. In 2022-2023, middle school staff from comprehensive schools had higher agreement levels than high school staff on each of the survey items; however, in 2023-2024, the opposite pattern emerged with high school staff having higher agreement percentages on all survey items except the item about meeting students' needs. Renaissance Academy staff members, students, and parents were also asked perceptions of the program meeting students' needs including improving behavior and academic achievement, and these results are presented in the student outcome goal section of the evaluation.

Table 15: Comprehensive Secondary Staff Members' Perceptions of Renaissance Academy Meeting Students' Needs

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
The Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program meets students' needs.	79%	70%	60%	63%	68%	65%
The Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program is effective at improving students' behavior.	59%	51%	50%	59%	53%	54%
The Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program is effective at improving students' academic achievement.	61%	56%	57%	61%	57%	57%

Other Alternative Education Options to Meet Students' Needs

Due to the personalized nature of alternative education, VBCPS provides several additional options for students based on their needs. While these program options are available at Renaissance Academy, they are not specifically part of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program that is the focus of this evaluation. The information is provided to illustrate the scope of alternative education options within VBCPS.

The Substance Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP) is a ten-day instructional program designed for students who are first-time violators of School Board policies regarding drug and alcohol use and abuse. Students are

offered this substance abuse program in lieu of long-term suspension from school. Students may also volunteer to participate in this program. SAIP takes place at Renaissance Academy and transportation is provided.¹⁴ According to Renaissance Academy staff members, the Anti-Tobacco Use Program has been integrated within the SAIP program.

Choices is a ten-session instructional program for students in grades 6 through 12 who consistently demonstrate inappropriate behaviors that interfere with learning, excluding truancy. Students are referred to the program by the principal, parent/guardian, discipline hearing officer, or School Board Discipline Committee as an alternative to suspension. Choices is designed to serve eight to ten students at one time during the regular school day and takes place at the students' home school.¹⁵

The Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEPP) is a Commonwealth of Virginia initiative to provide an opportunity for students ages 16-17 to work toward a General Education Development (GED) certificate and a vocational/career skill without dropping out of school. Students must be referred and must qualify to be admitted to the program. ISAEPP will only be considered for students after all measures to maintain students in a diploma program have been exhausted. To be referred to the program, students and/or parents contact a teacher, counselor, or administrator at their child's home school.¹⁶

Comprehensive secondary staff were surveyed about their familiarity with the purpose of the various alternative education programs at Renaissance Academy. A list of these results can be found in Appendix A.

Student Characteristics

The third evaluation question focused on the characteristics of the students attending Renaissance Academy. During the 2023-2024 school year, 774 students were enrolled at Renaissance Academy at any time during the school year, with 295 students in grades 6 through 8 and 479 students in grades 9 through 12. These students include those enrolled in Renaissance Academy's middle or high school alternative education program where they received instruction in the general curriculum. These data do not include students who participated in other alternative education options. Table 16 displays demographic data for these students based on information from the VBCPS data warehouse.

Table 16: Demographic Characteristics of Students Enrolled in Renaissance Academy Any Time During the 2023-2024 School Year

Characteristic	MS (N=295)		HS (N=479)		Total (N=774)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender						
Female	119	40%	187	39%	306	40%*
Male	173	59%	291	61%	464	60%**
Ethnicity						
American Indian	^	^	^	^	^	^
Asian	^	^	^	^	9	1%
Black	177	60%	284	59%	461	60%**
Hispanic	35	12%	46	10%	81	10%
Multiracial	32	11%	48	10%	80	10%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	^	^	^	^	^	^
White	44	15%	94	20%	138	18%*
Economically Disadvantaged	240	81%	305	64%	545	70%**
Identified Special Education	77	26%	106	22%	183	24%**
Identified Limited English Proficiency	^	^	^	^	5	<1%
Identified Gifted	13	4%	14	3%	27	3%*
Military Connected	17	6%	37	8%	54	7%*

*More than 5 percent **below** the percentage at the division level based on cumulative enrollment.

More than 5 percent **above the percentage at the division level based on cumulative enrollment.

The majority of students enrolled at Renaissance Academy were male (60%). Overall, across both levels, the majority of the students were Black (60%), and 18 percent of the students were White. The majority of students at Renaissance Academy were economically disadvantaged (70%). At the middle school level, a higher percentage of students enrolled at Renaissance Academy were identified as economically disadvantaged than high school students. About one-quarter of students at Renaissance Academy were special education students (24%), 7 percent were military connected, 3 percent were identified gifted, and less than 1 percent were identified English Learners (EL). There were notably higher percentages of male, Black, economically disadvantaged, and special education students at Renaissance Academy compared to students at the overall division level. There were notably lower percentages of females, White, gifted, and military-connected students at Renaissance Academy than students at the overall division level. These demographic patterns in the 2023-2024 school year represented the same pattern as students enrolled in the 2022-2023 school year. Additional data showed that a total of 67 of 774 students (9%) were retained in their grade level during the 2023-2024 school year, and 146 of 707 additional students (21%) were retained at some point during their academic career, but not during the 2023-2024 school year.

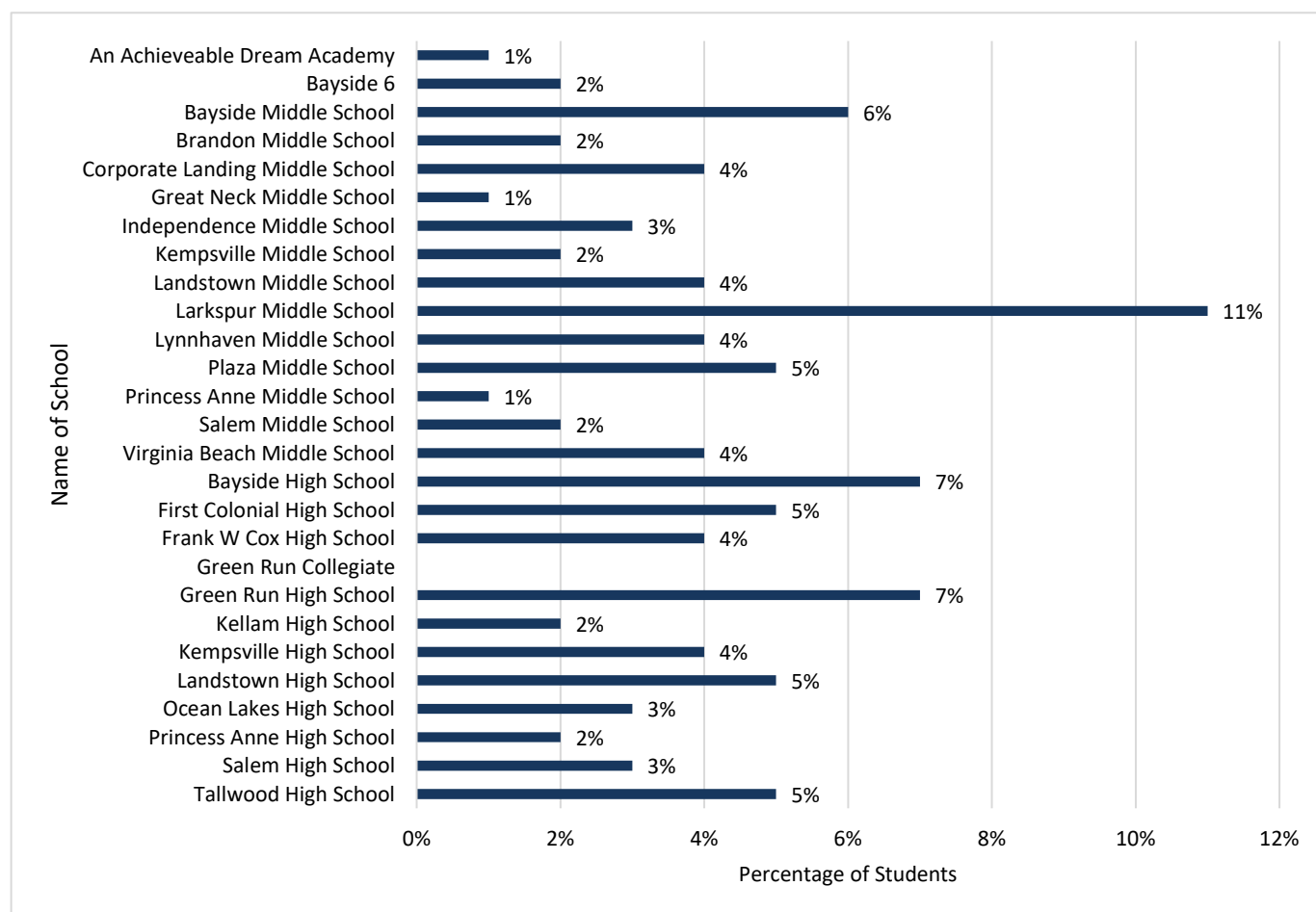
Of the 774 students enrolled at some time during the 2023-2024 school year, 50 percent (N=388) were enrolled in Renaissance Academy for the first time. The median number of days students were enrolled at Renaissance Academy was 70 days. Table 17 displays information about the length of student enrollment at Renaissance Academy in greater detail. When examined by grade level, a larger percentage of high school students were enrolled at Renaissance Academy for 90 percent or more of the school year than middle school students. A majority of the students enrolled at Renaissance Academy during 2023-2024 were there less than half of the school year (58%), while 42 percent were there for at least half of the year. Additionally, 13 percent (N=97) were enrolled the entire 2023-2024 school year or 181 days.

Table 17: Length of Student Enrollment at Renaissance Academy

Percent of Days Enrolled During the School Year	Percent of Enrolled Middle School Students	Percent of Enrolled High School Students	Percent of Total Enrolled Students
90% or more	13.6%	17.1%	15.8%
50%-89%	21.7%	28.4%	25.8%
10%-49%	62.0%	49.7%	54.4%
Less than 10%	2.7%	4.8%	4.0%

Figure 1 displays the students' last enrolled VBCPS home school for any student enrolled in Renaissance Academy during the 2023-2024 school year. The home school listed was the students' last enrolled school prior to being enrolled in Renaissance Academy, which may have been in a school year prior to 2023-2024.¹⁷ The largest percentage of students had Larkspur Middle School listed as their last enrolled home school with 11 percent of students. The second most represented home schools were Bayside High School and Green Run High School with 7 percent.

Figure 1: Students' Last Enrolled Home School



Note: N=714. This includes students who had a VBCPS middle school or high school listed as their last home school. There were 62 students who had their home school listed as another center or program, including SECEP Tidewater Regional Alternative Education Program, the VB Juvenile Detention Home, FAPT, or their previous school location was unknown.

Referral and Transition Process

The fourth evaluation question focused on the process and criteria for students to be referred to the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program and to transition back to their home school. This section of the report focuses on the Renaissance Academy entry process, the process for students to transition back to their home school, and reenrollment. One of the recommendations from the year-one evaluation was to review and strengthen the transition process from Renaissance Academy to the students' home school including evaluating the criteria and procedures for return to support student success. Actions taken regarding this recommendation will be discussed throughout this section.

Entry Process

There were three avenues by which students enrolled at Renaissance Academy including referral by the Office of Student Leadership (OSL), principal-to-principal placement, or parent request. According to a summary of data provided by Renaissance Academy, based on student registrations, most students (98%) were referred by the OSL due to behavior concerns during 2023-2024. Two percent were at Renaissance Academy as a result of principal placement. No students attended Renaissance Academy during the 2023-2024 school year due to parent requests.

According to the VBCPS Discipline Guidelines, there are five levels of responses to student behavior which are enforced by school personnel with students who exhibit inappropriate behavior that is in violation of school rules; *Code of Student Conduct*; School Board Policies and Regulations; and/or local, state, or federal laws. Responses to student behavior are progressive in nature; that is, the level of response increases as the number of instances of similar inappropriate behavior increases. Level 4 behaviors may require a student to report to the director of the Office of Student Leadership and result in a referral to Renaissance Academy. Level 5 behaviors are reserved for the most serious behaviors and these result in a report to the director of the Office of Student Leadership. Once a student is referred to the OSL, a hearing takes place with a hearing officer. The hearing includes an administrative statement that includes a recommendation for the outcome of the student behavior (e.g., long-term suspension, alternative education placement, etc.). However, the final decision or outcome of the OSL hearing is made on a case-by-case basis by the hearing officer. If the decision is appealed by the student, the decision goes to a committee that consists of three school board members. These members will determine the outcome.

Part of the entry process includes a new student orientation which is a mandatory session for all students attending Renaissance Academy and their families. According to the director of student leadership, an action taken toward strengthening the entry process was made in the 2023-2024 school year regarding the orientation. In 2023-2024, Renaissance Academy directly contacted schools to schedule orientation for families rather than having families contact Renaissance Academy to schedule orientation. Shifting the responsibility from families to the school about attending orientation allowed for less time to elapse between students exiting their home school and attending Renaissance Academy. In 2022-2023, orientation was held once a week, but in 2023-2024 Renaissance Academy increased their orientation offerings by holding them on Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment. Another action toward this recommendation included concurrently enrolling students at their home school and Renaissance Academy. This allowed staff at the home school to monitor students' progress and have access to student information while they were attending Renaissance Academy. According to the director of student leadership, within 48 hours of placement at Renaissance Academy, the school registrar would withdraw the student and concurrently enroll the student at Renaissance Academy and their home school.

The orientation familiarizes students with the support team and provides them with information to help them successfully transition into their new educational experience. The orientation includes information about

expectations, procedures, policies, and other pertinent details. In addition, families are provided with contact information of staff members who are directly supporting the students like the school counseling team and administrative team. Families are also provided with the name of the individuals who comprise the student support team for each middle and high school. The student support team includes an administrator, student support specialist, and counselor. The orientation also includes the screening process to enter the building each day which includes going through a metal detector and search of items. Students are not allowed cell phones or any other electronic device. All students are provided a clear backpack where they can store approved personal items. Families are provided with the hours of operation for both schools: high school hours are from 7:20 AM-2:00 PM and middle school hours are from 9:45 AM to 4:15 PM. Orientation includes information about transportation, which is provided to all students. Orientation includes school-wide expectations which are “Be Kind, Show Respect, Act Responsible,” and the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) matrix is discussed. The uniform policy is included which is required to enter the building every day. Staff members discuss the cost of the uniform which includes a polo shirt or sweatshirt and khaki pants (full length). High school students wear gray and black polos while middle school students wear green and white polos. The orientation concludes with mandatory forms that must be completed: student registration, parent acknowledgement, media form, psychological services consent form, school search policy acknowledgement, and uniform policy acknowledgement.¹⁸

Parents were asked an open-ended question regarding any suggestions to better understand expectations for students while attending Renaissance Academy. Overall, 20 parents provided a comment which was 37 percent of those parents who responded to the survey. The most common response was to provide more information at orientation including handouts, maps, and potentially having a separate orientation for middle school and high school families. The second most common response was to improve communication between families and Renaissance Academy staff. In addition, families requested clear rules and consequences in terms that families and students can understand.

In 2023-2024, survey items were added as part of the year-two evaluation to gather additional information about students’ entry and exit from Renaissance Academy (see Table 18). All stakeholders, including students, parents, Renaissance Academy staff, and comprehensive secondary staff, were surveyed about students being able to continue with their schoolwork while waiting to transition from their home school to Renaissance Academy. During this time period, students are typically on a long-term suspension and not physically attending their home school. Overall, comprehensive secondary staff agreed (80%) that students were able to continue their schoolwork while waiting to transition from their home school to Renaissance Academy. Students and Renaissance Academy staff had lower agreement percentages (59%-61%) regarding students being able to continue their schoolwork while waiting to transition from their home school. Across school levels, stakeholders at the middle school level had higher agreement percentages on this item compared to high school stakeholders.

Renaissance Academy staff and comprehensive secondary staff were asked their perceptions about the communication efforts regarding student information when transitioning either to Renaissance Academy from the home school and from Renaissance Academy back to their home school. Overall, 36 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed during the students’ transition process from their home school to Renaissance Academy, communication efforts provided them with needed information to meet students’ needs. Renaissance Academy staff members at the middle school level reported higher agreement percentages compared to high school staff members (50% vs. 31%). Overall, 45 percent of comprehensive secondary staff agreed that during the students’ transition process from their home school to Renaissance Academy, communication efforts provided them with needed information to meet students’ needs. Similar to Renaissance Academy staff, middle school staff at the comprehensive schools reported higher agreement percentages than comprehensive secondary staff at the high school level regarding communication efforts to meet students’ needs.

Table 18: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Entry Process

Group and Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Student – I was able to continue with my schoolwork while waiting to transition from my home school to Renaissance Academy.	64%	54%	59%
Parent – My child was able to continue his/her schoolwork while waiting to transition from the home school to Renaissance Academy.	48%	44%	46%
RA Staff – Students are able to continue their schoolwork while waiting to transition from their home school to Renaissance Academy.	80%	62%	61%
Comprehensive Secondary Staff – Students are able to continue their schoolwork while waiting to transition from their home school to Renaissance Academy.	80%	81%	80%
RA Staff – During the students' transition process from their home school to Renaissance Academy, communication efforts provide me with needed information to meet students' needs.	50%	31%	36%
Comprehensive Secondary Staff – During the students' transition process from Renaissance Academy to their home school, communication efforts provide me with needed information to meet students' needs.	50%	38%	45%

Transition Process

According to Renaissance Academy orientation documents, students have the ability to transition back to their home school once they meet the following three criteria: good grades (C or higher in all classes), good attendance (no more than six unverified), and good behavior (no in-school or out-of-school suspensions or other related behavior concerns). Once these criteria have been met, the OSL serves as the main conduit for communication between Renaissance Academy and the home school by providing a letter with information regarding the status of the students' return.

The letter from OSL includes directions regarding the administrative process that needs to take place for students to withdraw from Renaissance Academy and re-enroll in their home school. A copy of this letter is given to the following stakeholders: the superintendent, the principal of the students' home school, the director of alternative education, school counseling department chair, and mailed to the student's parent or guardian. Each school is responsible for communicating the information regarding the students' return to their staff.

Integral to this process is the transition specialist and the student support specialist (SSS) team. The transition specialist provides comprehensive information about returning students to the SSS team. Upon receiving the names of returning students, the SSS team members will introduce themselves and work toward establishing a rapport. They will work with students for at least nine weeks, monitoring their progress and providing necessary support to ensure a successful transition to the home school. Students' progress is monitored through a SSS protocol. This internal report assesses their performance after a marking period. Once a student demonstrates success through the established criteria, they "graduate" from these services with the team. If students do not meet the criteria, the SSS will extend the support for another nine weeks, repeating the review process until the student demonstrates they are able to transition to their home school successfully.

In 2023-2024, new survey items were added to the year-two evaluation to gather additional information about perceptions of student support once they return to their home school (see Table 19). Students, parents, and comprehensive secondary staff were surveyed about the support students had to be successful after their return to the home school (e.g., academics, attendance, or behavior). Across all levels and all stakeholders,

about three-quarters agreed after students returned to their home school, they had the support they needed to be successful.

Table 19: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Students Having the Support Needed to be Successful

Survey Items	MS	HS	Total
Student – After I return to my home school, I think I will have the support I need to be successful (e.g., academics, attendance, or behavior).	78%	73%	75%
Parent – After my child returned to his/her home school, my child had the support needed to be successful (e.g., academics, attendance, behavior).	75%	75%	75%
Comprehensive Secondary Staff – After students return to their home school, they have the support they need to be successful (e.g., academics, attendance, or behavior).	75%	74%	74%

Parents were asked on the survey to share any comments they had about their child's preparation or readiness to return to their homeschool. Overall, 14 parents provided a comment about their child's preparation or readiness to return which was 26 percent of those students who responded to the survey. The most common response was their child was not academically prepared to return to their home school because Renaissance Academy was less academically challenging. The second most common response was related to alternative options for students beyond Renaissance Academy.

As previously stated, one of the recommendations from the year-one evaluation was to review and strengthen the transition process from Renaissance Academy to the students' home school including evaluating the criteria and procedures to return to support student success. According to Renaissance Academy staff, actions taken regarding this recommendation included an administrative meeting with Green Run High School administration to discuss students' transition process and a one-hour presentation at the VBCPS Leadership Workshop presented by Renaissance Academy and senior executive director of high schools focused on the transition from the home school to Renaissance Academy and Renaissance Academy back to home schools. In the summer of 2023, Renaissance Academy held an orientation for families of students who ended the school year at Renaissance Academy and were starting their next school year there to review the school policies, procedures, and process for returning. In December 2023, 11 VBCPS middle and high schools' administration teams visited Renaissance Academy to tour the building, receive an overview of the programs, discuss the transition process, and meet with students from their home schools. In addition, Renaissance Academy staff held return letter assemblies for middle and high school students who met the criteria to return to their home school. During these assemblies, staff would discuss student expectations upon return, strategies for success, and making responsible decisions. Finally, the director of alternative education attended a Middle School League Meeting to discuss the Renaissance Academy transition process with all middle schools.

Reenrollment

Students who do not successfully transition back to their home school may be referred again to Renaissance Academy. Reenrollment is defined as the percentage of students who attended Renaissance Academy and transitioned back to their home school or school within VBCPS and then attended Renaissance Academy again all within the same school year. The students included in the analysis were those who were enrolled in Renaissance Academy during the 2023-2024 school year, exited Renaissance Academy at some point during the 2023-2024 school year and went back to their homeschool or another school within VBCPS and then reentered Renaissance Academy again within 2023-2024. As displayed in Table 20, 10 percent of students who attended Renaissance Academy during 2023-2024 went back to their home school or another school in VBCPS and then reenrolled at Renaissance Academy again during 2023-2024. There were no notable differences across school levels. When comparing 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 reenrollment, overall, the percentage of

students reenrolled decreased 4 percentage-points in 2023-2024. However, when examining the school levels across the two school years, the percentage of middle school students reenrolling in 2023-2024 declined from 34 percent to 11 percent and the percent of high school students reenrolling increased from 5 percent in 2022-2023 to 10 percent in 2023-2024.

Table 20: Percentage of Students Returning to Renaissance Academy During the School Year

Criteria	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Students who exited Renaissance Academy to go back to their home school or another school in VBCPS	56	93	120	131	176	224
Students who went back to Renaissance Academy	19	10	6	13	25	23
Total	34%	11%	5%	10%	14%	10%

Perceptions of Referral and Transition Process

Staff members were asked survey items related to student referral criteria and the transition process. As indicated in Table 21, 88 percent of comprehensive secondary staff members agreed they understood the criteria for students to be referred to the alternative education program. Seventy-nine percent of comprehensive secondary staff and 84 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed they understood the transition process for students moving from their home school to Renaissance Academy. Sixty-five percent of comprehensive secondary staff and 84 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed they understood the transition process for students moving from Renaissance Academy back to their home school. On this transition item, middle school comprehensive secondary staff members reported lower levels of agreement percentages (60%) than high school staff members (69%). Eighty-nine percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed they understood the criteria students must meet to be eligible to return to their home school. On the criteria item, middle school Renaissance Academy staff members (83%) reported lower levels of agreement than high school Renaissance Academy staff members (94%).

Table 21: Staff Members' Perceptions of Referral Criteria and Transition Process

Group and Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Comprehensive Staff – I understand the criteria for students to be referred to the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program.	87%	90%	90%	86%	88%	88%
Comprehensive Staff – I understand the transition process for students moving from their home school to the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program.	85%	83%	79%	74%	83%	79%
Comprehensive Staff – I understand the transition process for students moving from the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program back to their home school.	61%	60%	68%	69%	65%	65%
RA Staff – I understand the transition process for students moving from their home school to the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program.*	--	89%	--	84%	--	84%
RA Staff – I understand the transition process for students moving from the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program back to their home school.*	--	83%	--	88%	--	84%
RA Staff – I understand the criteria students must meet to be eligible to return to their home school.*	--	83%	--	94%	--	89%

*Note: New survey item added to 2023-2024 Renaissance Academy Staff survey as part of year-two evaluation.

Comprehensive secondary staff members were also asked an open-ended question regarding any comments about the processes related to the students attending Renaissance Academy. Overall, 13 staff members provided a comment on this survey item which was 15 percent of those staff members who responded to the survey and indicated they worked with students who have attended Renaissance Academy. The most mentioned comment was related to transition processes. Staff members suggested there be a transition meeting when students return to their home school to include administrators, counselors, teachers, and a case manager. Other staff suggested reenrollment in the home school should only occur at term breaks.

Staff Characteristics and Professional Learning

The fifth evaluation question focused on the characteristics of the staff at Renaissance Academy and professional learning opportunities. Demographic characteristics were examined for full-time instructional staff at Renaissance Academy in comparison to the division instructional staff. In comparison to all instructional staff throughout the division, there were higher percentages of male Renaissance Academy instructional staff as well as instructional staff who were Black, while there were lower percentages Renaissance Academy instructional staff members who were White (see Table 22). The average number of years teaching was lower for instructional staff at both the middle and high school levels at Renaissance Academy compared to the division instructional staff, while there was a larger percentage of teachers who were new to the division at the division level in comparison to instructional staff at Renaissance Academy.

Table 22: Staff Characteristics for Renaissance Academy Instructional Staff and All Instructional Staff

Group	Renaissance Academy Instructional Staff (N=89)	Division Instructional Staff (Middle and High) (N=2,621)
Female	69%	71%
Male	31%	29%
American Indian	0%	0%
Asian	2%	4%
Black	29%	12%
Hispanic	0%	5%
Multiracial	6%	2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	0%
White	63%	76%
Percentage New to the Division	20%	9%
Average Years of Experience		
Middle*	11 years	14 years
High*	10 years	16 years
Percent Graduate Degrees	54%	53%

*This is an approximate average years of experience by school level. Only teachers who exclusively taught middle or high school were included in the years of experience calculation. All other staff members could not be categorized by school level because they worked with both middle and high school students.

Staff at Renaissance Academy were surveyed about their satisfaction with their experience working at Renaissance Academy. As displayed in Table 23, approximately 77 percent of staff members indicated they were satisfied working at Renaissance Academy. High school staff members reported higher satisfaction levels (84%) than middle school staff members (71%). Overall, staff satisfaction was 9 percentage points lower in 2023-2024 than in 2022-2023.

Table 23: Renaissance Academy Staff Reporting Satisfaction Working at Renaissance Academy

Survey Item	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience working at Renaissance Academy?	86%	71%	86%	84%	87%	77%

Professional Learning

Renaissance Academy staff members were asked their perceptions of professional learning. Overall, 89 percent of Renaissance Academy staff members reported they had participated in professional learning related to being a staff member at Renaissance Academy within the last three years. All staff were asked their perceptions of the opportunities. Overall, 67 to 80 percent agreed the professional learning helped prepare them to teach or provide services to students, enabled them to better meet students' needs, and that it was sufficient (see Table 24). Middle school staff members had lower agreement percentages on all survey items related to professional learning.

The third recommendation from the year-one evaluation was to increase the availability of professional learning opportunities for staff related to managing student behaviors in the classroom and teaching students strategies for anger management. One action taken toward this recommendation included providing an eight-hour Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training for staff at Renaissance Academy in March. Of the Renaissance Academy staff members who participated in the survey, 43 (98%) reported they participated in the CPI training. Of those who indicated they participated in the training, 57

percent agreed the training provided them with useful training strategies and tools for managing students' behaviors. Renaissance Academy staff members who taught at the middle school level had higher agreement levels (65%) about the usefulness of the CPI training compared to staff members who taught at the high school level (53%). The Renaissance Academy team took other steps toward this recommendation including a book study on the book *Roadmap to Responsibility* by Larry Thompson with the director of Renaissance Academy. Approximately 25 staff members participated in the book study. In addition, there was a six-hour professional learning seminar featuring Larry Thompson on Responsibility-Centered Discipline-Basic Skills for Working with Difficult Students, and approximately 104 staff members participated. About half of the staff participated in this opportunity. In February, the assistant principal and student support specialist attended Strengthening Connections: The Power of Prevention Summit held by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. There was a four-part training titled Conversations with Ourselves: Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation Skills training for staff in April-May, and approximately 22 middle school staff members attended, and 25 high school staff members attended. Every Friday beginning in May and through the end of the school year, administration held Open Forums for faculty and staff to discuss student progress, strategies for student success, responsible decision-making, student interactions, self-management skills, professional learning opportunities, the transition process, and classroom instructional strategies for student growth and improvement. Finally, in June, three administrators attended AVID Summer Institute. This institute included implementation of AVID college and career readiness system and instructional strategies to provide students with academic, social, and emotional support to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Overall, 87 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed they had useful strategies to help them manage students' behavior in the classroom/at school. Renaissance Academy staff members who taught at the high school level reported higher agreement levels (94%) on this item compared to staff members who taught at the middle school level (78%).

Table 24: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Professional Learning

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Professional learning helped prepare me to teach and/or provide services to the students at Renaissance Academy.	71%	65%	70%	81%	73%	75%
Professional learning enabled me to better meet the needs of students at Renaissance Academy.	75%	65%	72%	88%	72%	80%
I received sufficient professional learning related to being a staff member at Renaissance Academy.	76%	59%	67%	77%	70%	67%
Did you participate in the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training During 2023-2024?	--	94%	--	100%	--	98%
The CPI Non-Violent Crisis Intervention provided me useful strategies and tools for managing students' behaviors.	--	65%	--	53%	--	57%
I have useful strategies to help me manage students' behavior in the classroom/at school.	--	78%	--	94%	--	87%

Renaissance Academy members were also asked an open-ended question regarding professional learning topics they would be interested in learning more about. Overall, 13 Renaissance Academy staff members provided a professional learning topic they would be interested in learning more about which was 28 percent of those staff members who responded to the survey. The most mentioned topic was trauma-informed practices, social-emotional learning skills particularly related to getting along with other students, classroom management specific to managing student behavior, more CPI training, and instructional strategies specific to students in alternative education.

Family Engagement

The sixth evaluation question focused on opportunities for parents or families to be involved and engaged in their child’s education at Renaissance Academy. As previously mentioned, new student orientation is a mandatory session for all students and families attending Renaissance Academy. This orientation familiarizes students with the support team and provides them with information to help them successfully transition into the building. The orientation includes information about staff members, policies including uniforms and procedures for entering the building, behavior expectations, and required forms. In 2023-2024 Renaissance Academy started a new Parent/Guardian Group. The purpose of this group was to empower the parents and guardians of Renaissance Academy students to become greater advocates for themselves and their children in seeking and accessing resources related to their child’s safety and academic success. The group had its first meeting in June 2024 and discussed grading practices at Renaissance Academy. In 2024-2025, the group continued and meets every fourth Tuesday of the month from 6:00 PM-7:00 PM. Information related to the group is provided at new student orientation.¹⁹

As displayed in Table 25, a high percentage of parents (92%) reported the orientation session at Renaissance Academy was very helpful or somewhat helpful in helping their family understand the program’s expectations for their students. Following the same pattern as 2022-2023, high school parents reported higher agreement percentages than middle school parents in 2023-2024.

Table 25: Parents' Perceptions of Orientation Session

Survey Item	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
How helpful was the orientation session at Renaissance Academy in helping your family understand the program’s expectations for students?	90%	85%	97%	100%	94%	92%

In addition to the new student orientation, Renaissance Academy holds an open house every September to provide students, families, and teachers with opportunities to discuss current academic performance, attendance, and behavior. Renaissance Academy shares a quarterly newsletter with the community to share pertinent information including calendar updates, school and division-wide announcements, and showcase students’ academic endeavors (i.e., 3D drawings, field trips to First Landing State Park and Chrysler Museum of Art). In 2023-2024, students took a field trip to the local food bank which counted as community service hours. In 2023-2024, Renaissance Academy began working with the Office of Family and Community Engagement with the plan to hold monthly parent/guardian meetings in the 2024-2025 school year.

Renaissance Academy also engaged with the community in a variety of ways. Tidewater Community College representatives and ACCESS counselors visited Renaissance Academy four times between December through May in support of the division-wide Future Ready goal. Renaissance Academy participated in the following divisionwide or school-sponsored activities: African American Male Summit (January 2024), Black History Month Workshop (February 2024, hosted by Renaissance Academy), Official for the Day (March 2024), parent and review meeting for a grant application (April 2024), Maud Lewis Open House and Fundraiser for Juvenile Arthritis (April 2024, hosted by Renaissance Academy), and African American Music Month Juneteenth Celebration (June 2024, hosted by Renaissance Academy). In 2023-2024, Renaissance Academy also hosted a fall and spring Blood Drive in partnership with the American Red Cross.

Progress Toward Meeting Goals and Objectives

The seventh evaluation question focused on progress toward meeting the student outcome goals and objectives of the middle and high school alternative education program. Although the focus of the current evaluation was on implementation, data for student outcome goals and objectives were analyzed to provide information about progress toward meeting the program's goals and objectives. The results are organized by goal area with data represented for each objective.²⁰

Build Relationships to Demonstrate Social-Emotional Competencies

Goal #1: Students in alternative education at Renaissance Academy will build relationships that help foster their ability to demonstrate social-emotional competencies.

Objective 1: Students will build positive relationships with students and staff at Renaissance Academy as measured by student and staff survey responses.

Students were surveyed about their perceptions of building positive relationships with students and staff at Renaissance Academy. As displayed in Table 26, overall, students reported positive relationships with the different staff members at Renaissance Academy including teachers, administrators, student support specialists, and counselors ranging from 85 percent to 88 percent. Similar agreement percentages on these survey items were found in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. High school students reported lower agreement on having positive relationships with teachers and with student support specialists in 2023-2024. Middle school students reported high agreement on having positive relationships with the director/principal and assistant principals and student support specialists in 2023-2024. Students reported lower agreement ratings on getting along well with other students (79%). In 2023-2024, middle school students reported high agreement ratings on getting along with other students compared to 2022-2023.

Table 26: Students' Perceptions of Building Positive Relationships With Students and Staff

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
I have positive relationships with teachers at Renaissance Academy.*	85%	88%	95%	87%	89%	87%
I have positive relationships with the director/principal and assistant principal(s) at Renaissance Academy.*	81%	94%	88%	84%	84%	88%
I have positive relationships with student support specialists at Renaissance Academy.	75%	92%	87%	79%	80%	85%
I have positive relationships with school counselors at Renaissance Academy.	86%	92%	89%	84%	88%	87%
I get along well with other students at Renaissance Academy.*	68%	80%	88%	79%	77%	79%

*Note: These survey items are repeated in Objective 3 as part of the items in the Relationship Skills competency aggregate rating.

Staff at Renaissance Academy were surveyed about their perceptions of building positive relationships with students. As displayed in Table 27, 93 percent of staff agreed they had positive relationships with students at Renaissance Academy, 82 percent agreed students had positive relationships with the staff, and 44 percent agreed students at Renaissance Academy got along well with other students at Renaissance Academy. Staff members' perceptions of students' relationships with staff and other students were lower at middle school than high school, and perceptions of students getting along well with other students decreased compared to 2022-2023.

Table 27: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Building Positive Relationships With Students

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
I have positive relationships with students at Renaissance Academy.	100%	94%	98%	94%	98%	93%
Students have positive relationships with the staff at Renaissance Academy.	76%	72%	86%	91%	84%	82%
The students at Renaissance Academy get along well with other students at Renaissance Academy.	43%	28%	61%	56%	57%	44%

Objective 2: Students will feel a sense of belonging and feel welcome at their school as measured by student survey responses.

Students were surveyed about their perceptions of feeling a sense of belonging and feeling welcome at Renaissance Academy. As displayed in Table 28, students reported lower agreement percentages on items related to feeling like they belonged or that they felt a sense of belonging at Renaissance Academy ranging from 49 percent to 51 percent. Students reported higher agreement percentages on items related to feeling valued and welcome at Renaissance Academy with 71 percent agreement, respectively. Across all items, high school and middle school students reported similar agreement percentages. Analyzing agreement percentages across the two years, high school students in 2023-2024 reported lower agreement percentages across all items compared to 2022-2023 ranging from 9 percentage points to 22 percentage points.

Table 28: Students' Perceptions of Feeling a Sense of Belonging and Feeling Welcome at School

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
I feel like I belong while I am at Renaissance Academy.	48%	51%	60%	51%	53%	51%
Renaissance Academy provides a welcoming place for me to learn.	67%	69%	89%	73%	77%	71%
I feel a sense of belonging at Renaissance Academy.	54%	48%	71%	49%	62%	49%
I feel valued and included at Renaissance Academy.	67%	72%	84%	71%	74%	71%

Objective 3: Students will demonstrate competency in Relationship Skills as measured by aggregate ratings on survey items that are part of the Relationship Skills social-emotional competency on the student survey, as well as staff survey responses.

The Relationship Skills competency includes areas such as communication, social engagement, relationship building, and teamwork. As displayed in Table 29, aggregate ratings on the Relationship Skills social-emotional competency were calculated by dividing the total number of agreement responses by the total number of responses across all items within the competency. Overall, 74 percent of the student responses to the Relationship Skills items were agreement responses, which was the same as the prior year. Middle school students had higher aggregate ratings on survey items (76%) than high school students (72%).

Table 29: Students' Perceptions of Demonstrating Competency in Relationship Skills

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Relationship Skills Competency	68%	76%	81%	72%	74%	74%
Items Within Relationship Skills Competency:						
I have positive relationships with teachers at Renaissance Academy.	85%	88%	95%	87%	89%	87%
I have positive relationships with the director/principal and assistant principal(s) at Renaissance Academy.	81%	94%	88%	84%	84%	88%
I get along well with other students at Renaissance Academy.	68%	80%	88%	79%	77%	79%
I feel like I belong while I am at Renaissance Academy.	48%	51%	60%	51%	53%	51%
I care about other students at Renaissance Academy.	59%	76%	71%	62%	64%	68%
I work out disagreements with other students by talking with them.	56%	67%	80%	69%	66%	68%
I can work with someone who has different opinions than mine.	76%	86%	89%	84%	82%	85%

Staff at Renaissance Academy were surveyed about their perceptions of students demonstrating competency in relationship skills. As displayed in Table 30, 20 percent of staff agreed students demonstrated competency in relationship skills. Overall, 31 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students' relationship skills improved while attending Renaissance Academy, with a large decrease in agreement at the high school level.

Table 30: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Students Demonstrating Competency in Relationship Skills

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Students demonstrate competency in relationship skills.	19%	22%	20%	22%	21%	20%
Students' relationship skills have improved while attending Renaissance Academy.	33%	39%	53%	38%	47%	31%

Objective 4: Students will demonstrate competency in Self-Management as measured by aggregate ratings on survey items that are part of the Self-Management social-emotional competency on the student survey, as well as staff survey responses.

The Self-Management competency includes areas such as impulse control, stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal setting, and organizational skills. Aggregate ratings on the Self-Management social-emotional competency were calculated by dividing the total number of agreement responses by the total number of responses across all items within the competency. Overall, 82 percent of the student responses to the Self-Management items were agreement responses, which was an increase from the prior year. High school and middle school students had similar agreement responses on the self-management competency as displayed in Table 31. Overall, middle school students' agreement percentages increased, and high school students' agreement percentages decreased across all self-management items when comparing 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 results.

Table 31: Students' Perceptions of Demonstrating Self-Management

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Self-Management Competency	72%	83%	88%	82%	79%	82%
Items Within Self-Management Competency:						
I am able to find positive ways to deal with problems in my life.	79%	88%	93%	82%	85%	85%
I take action to reach the goals I set for myself.	85%	91%	93%	87%	88%	89%
I finish tasks even if they are hard for me.	81%	86%	89%	87%	85%	86%
I stop and think before doing anything when I get angry.	51%	74%	82%	73%	65%	73%
I can disagree with others without starting an argument or a fight.	74%	81%	88%	82%	80%	82%
I can control myself when I am upset.	60%	77%	84%	82%	70%	80%

Staff at Renaissance Academy were surveyed about their perceptions of students demonstrating competency in self-management skills. As displayed in Table 32, 20 percent of staff agreed students demonstrated competency in self-management skills. However, 40 percent of staff agreed students' self-management skills improved while attending Renaissance Academy. There were no major differences in staff members' perceptions between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

Table 32: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Students Demonstrating Competency in Self-Management Skills

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Students demonstrate competency in self-management skills.	14%	28%	18%	22%	18%	20%
Students' self-management skills have improved while attending Renaissance Academy.	48%	50%	48%	44%	46%	40%

Objective 5: Students will demonstrate competency in Responsible Decision-Making as measured by aggregate ratings on survey items that are part of the Responsible Decision-Making social-emotional competency on the student survey, as well as staff survey responses.

The Responsible Decision-Making Skills competency includes identifying and solving problems, analyzing situations, evaluating, reflecting, and ethical standards. Aggregate ratings on the Responsible Decision-Making social-emotional competency were calculated by dividing the total number of agreement responses by the total number of responses across all items within the competency. Overall, 87 percent of the student responses to the Responsible Decision-Making Skills items were agreement responses, which was an increase from the prior year. High school and middle school students had similar agreement responses on the Responsible Decision-Making competency as displayed in Table 33. Overall, middle school students' agreement percentages increased, and high school students' agreement percentages decreased across all responsible decision-making items when comparing 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 results.

Table 33: Students' Perceptions of Demonstrating Responsible Decision-Making

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Responsible Decision-Making Competency	74%	88%	88%	85%	80%	87%
Items Within Decision-Making Competency						
I know how to decide right from wrong.	90%	89%	86%	90%	88%	90%
I am able to make good choices that lead to success.	83%	95%	93%	90%	87%	92%
I think about what might happen before I make a decision.	67%	83%	89%	80%	77%	81%
I ask for advice when making an important decision.	70%	88%	88%	85%	78%	86%
When I need help, I find someone to talk with.	61%	86%	84%	83%	71%	84%

Staff at Renaissance Academy were surveyed about their perceptions of students demonstrating competency in responsible decision-making skills. As displayed in Table 34, 22 percent of staff agreed students demonstrated competency in responsible decision-making skills. A higher percentage of staff who responded to the survey (36%) agreed students' responsible decision-making skills improved while attending Renaissance Academy.

Table 34: Renaissance Academy Staff Members' Perceptions of Demonstrating Responsible Decision-Making

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Students demonstrate competency in responsible decision-making skills.	14%	33%	16%	22%	16%	22%
Students' responsible decision-making skills have improved while attending Renaissance Academy.	48%	44%	52%	41%	50%	36%

Demonstrate Success While Attending Renaissance Academy

Goal #2: Students in alternative education will demonstrate success in school while attending Renaissance Academy.

Objective 1: Students will gain tools and strategies to demonstrate success in school as measured by student, staff, and parent survey responses.

All stakeholders including students, parents, Renaissance Academy staff, and comprehensive secondary school staff were surveyed about their perceptions of students gaining the tools and strategies for success in school while attending Renaissance Academy. As displayed in Table 35, 85 percent of students agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, they gained the tools and strategies for success, which was an increase from the prior year. In general, middle school students' perceptions about gaining tools and strategies increased from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024. Overall, lower percentages of parents (55%) agreed that while attending Renaissance Academy, their child gained the tools and strategies for success. Parents of high school students had a higher agreement rating than middle school parents (54% vs. 46%). Overall, about half of staff at Renaissance Academy and comprehensive secondary staff (51%) agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, students gained the tools and strategies for success.

Table 35: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Gaining Tools and Strategies for Success

Group and Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Student – While attending Renaissance Academy, I have gained the tools and strategies for success.	67%	90%	82%	81%	74%	85%
Parent – While attending Renaissance Academy, my child gained the tools and strategies for success in school.	33%	46%	68%	65%	52%	55%
RA Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students gained the tools and strategies for success in school.	52%	61%	59%	53%	59%	51%
Comprehensive Secondary School Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students gained the tools and strategies for success in school.	63%	50%	46%	54%	54%	51%

Objective 2: Students at Renaissance Academy will demonstrate satisfactory behavior as measured by a decline in the number of discipline referrals and referrals resulting in in-school and out-of-school suspensions after enrolling in Renaissance Academy, as well as student, staff, and parent survey responses.

The data analyzed for this objective included all students who attended a school in VBCPS prior to Renaissance Academy because student data outside of VBCPS is not maintained in the data warehouse.²¹ A decline was defined as having fewer referrals or suspensions when enrolled at Renaissance Academy than when they were enrolled at their home school during 2023-2024. In addition, to be included a student had to have had at least one referral or at least one suspension at their home school prior to attending Renaissance Academy. Without a referral or suspension, a student would not be able to show a decline for the purposes of this objective.

Overall, 77 percent of students demonstrated a decline in discipline referrals after enrolling in Renaissance Academy. This is a 7-percentage point improvement from 2022-2023. When examining data by school level, a higher percentage of high school students demonstrated a decline (85%) than middle school students (68%). This is the same pattern as in 2022-2023. Overall, 76 percent of students demonstrated a decline in the number of in-school suspensions and 78 percent demonstrated a decline in the number of out-of-school suspensions. When examining data by school level, a higher percentage of high school students demonstrated a decline in both in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions.

Table 36: Percentage of Students Demonstrating a Decline in Discipline Referrals and Suspensions After Enrolling in Renaissance Academy

School Level	Decline in Number of Discipline Referrals		Decline in Number of In-School Suspensions		Decline in Number of Out-of-School Suspensions		Decline in Total Number of Suspensions	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Middle School	100	68%	59	71%	100	72%	100	67%
High School	112	85%	31	84%	109	83%	109	83%
Total	212	77%	90	76%	209	78%	209	75%

Stakeholders including students, parents, and Renaissance Academy staff were surveyed about their perceptions of students demonstrating satisfactory behavior. As displayed in Table 37, 89 percent of students agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, they demonstrated satisfactory behavior, and 88 percent of students agreed their behavior improved while attending Renaissance Academy. Middle school students had slightly higher agreement percentages than high school students for both survey items. Overall, 66 percent of parents agreed while attending Renaissance Academy their child demonstrated satisfactory behavior with high school parents having a notably higher agreement percentages than middle school parents and 52 percent

agreed their child's behavior improved. The improvement survey item was a new item added in the 2023-2024 survey to obtain parents' perceptions of students' improvement while attending Renaissance Academy. Overall, 38 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, students demonstrated satisfactory behavior with higher agreement levels at the high school level than the middle school level. Overall, 35 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed while at Renaissance Academy, students' behavior improved with higher agreement at the middle school level than high school. Compared to 2022-2023, Renaissance Academy staff agreement perceptions decreased regarding students' behavior improving while attending Renaissance Academy.

Table 37: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Demonstrating Satisfactory Behavior at Renaissance Academy

Group and Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Student – While attending Renaissance Academy, I have demonstrated satisfactory behavior.	81%	90%	89%	88%	84%	89%
Student – While attending Renaissance Academy, my behavior has improved.	85%	89%	90%	88%	88%	88%
Parent – While attending Renaissance Academy, my child demonstrated satisfactory behavior.	48%	58%	74%	75%	62%	66%
Parent – While attending Renaissance Academy, my child's behavior has improved.*	--	42%	--	65%	--	52%
RA Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students have demonstrated satisfactory behavior.	25%	39%	45%	47%	38%	38%
RA Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students' behavior has improved.	50%	47%	54%	39%	53%	35%

*Note: New survey item added in 2023-2024 parent survey as part of the year-two implementation evaluation.

Objective 3: Students at Renaissance Academy will consistently attend school as measured by the percentage of students with an attendance rate of 90 percent or higher.

The percentage of students at Renaissance Academy who consistently attended school was based on those with an attendance rate of 90 percent or higher. Analyses were limited to students who were enrolled for at least one quarter or approximately 45 days.²² As displayed in Table 38, overall, 21 percent of students had an attendance rate of 90 percent or higher while at Renaissance Academy. A higher percentage of middle school students (24%) had an attendance rate of 90 percent or higher than high school students (20%). Results in 2023-2024 decreased slightly from 2022-2023.

Table 38: Percentage of Students With an Attendance Rate of 90 Percent or Higher

Criteria	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Total Number of Students	233	217	372	379	605	596
Percentage With Attendance Rate of 90 Percent or Higher	29%	24%	22%	20%	25%	21%

Stakeholders including students, parents, and Renaissance Academy staff were surveyed about their perceptions of students' attendance. As displayed in Table 39, 83 percent of students agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, their attendance was satisfactory, and 87 percent agreed their attendance improved while at Renaissance Academy.

Overall, 75 percent of parents agreed while attending Renaissance Academy their child demonstrated satisfactory attendance, and 55 percent of parents agreed their child's attendance improved while attending Renaissance Academy. Parents of middle school students were more likely to agree their child's attendance

improved than parents of high school students. Overall, 47 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, students had satisfactory attendance, and 42 percent agreed while at Renaissance Academy, students' attendance improved. For both attendance survey items, middle school staff had a higher agreement percentage than high school staff. Overall, there were 4 to 5 percentage point increases in students' perceptions regarding improving their attendance and RA staff and parents' perceptions regarding satisfactory attendance when comparing results from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024.

Table 39: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Attendance While Attending Renaissance Academy

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Student – While attending Renaissance Academy, my attendance has been satisfactory.	83%	82%	91%	84%	87%	83%
Student – While attending Renaissance Academy, my attendance has improved.	81%	90%	83%	85%	82%	87%
Parent – While attending Renaissance Academy, my child's attendance was satisfactory.	71%	83%	71%	65%	71%	75%
Parent – While attending Renaissance Academy, my child's attendance improved.	48%	58%	60%	50%	54%	55%
RA Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students' attendance was satisfactory.	60%	78%	35%	34%	42%	47%
RA Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students' attendance has improved.	63%	69%	42%	39%	48%	42%

Objective 4: Students at Renaissance Academy will demonstrate improvement in academic performance as measured by improvement in core course grade average after enrolling in Renaissance Academy, as well as student, staff, and parent survey responses.

The data analyzed for this objective included students who had the opportunity to have quarterly grades at their home school and quarterly grades at Renaissance Academy. Students had to have been enrolled at Renaissance Academy for at least one quarter (45 days) to be included. In addition, this objective included all students who attended a school in VBCPS prior to Renaissance Academy and who had valid quarterly core course grade averages at both their home school and Renaissance Academy (e.g., courses that were missing or had Pass/Fail grades were not included in the analyses). Finally, students who had the same core course grade averages at their home school and Renaissance Academy were not included in the percentage who showed improvement because maintaining the same core course average was not considered improvement for this objective.

Overall, 68 percent of students demonstrated improvement in core course grade averages after enrolling in Renaissance Academy. When examining the results by school level, a higher percentage of high school students (78%) demonstrated improvement than middle school students (58%). There were no notable differences among students' percentages in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023.

Table 40: Percentage of Students Demonstrating Improvement in Core Course Grade Averages

Criteria	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Total Number of Students	70	69	88	72	158	141
Percentage With Improvement in Core Course Grade Averages	59%	58%	78%	78%	68%	68%

Stakeholders including students, parents, and Renaissance Academy staff were surveyed about their perceptions of students' academic performance. As displayed in Table 41, 90 percent of students agreed while

attending Renaissance Academy, their academic performance was satisfactory, and 87 percent of students agreed their academic performance improved. For both academic performance survey items, high school and middle school students had similar agreement percentages.

Overall, 68 percent of parents agreed their child's academic performance was satisfactory while attending Renaissance Academy. Overall, 57 percent of parents agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, their child's academic performance improved. Overall, 56 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed while attending Renaissance Academy students' academic performance improved, and 44 percent agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, academic performance had been satisfactory. In 2023-2024, there were percentage point increases for all items at the middle school level for all stakeholders. Items at the high school level remained relatively constant across all stakeholder groups.

Table 41: Stakeholders' Perceptions of Academic Performance at Renaissance Academy

Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Student – While attending Renaissance Academy, my academic performance has been satisfactory.	76%	90%	91%	90%	83%	90%
Student – While attending Renaissance Academy, my academic performance has improved.	79%	86%	88%	89%	83%	87%
Parent – While attending Renaissance Academy, my child's academic performance has been satisfactory.*	--	71%	--	65%	--	68%
Parent – While attending Renaissance Academy, my child's academic performance improved.	43%	54%	64%	60%	55%	57%
RA Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students' academic performance has been satisfactory.*	--	50%	--	47%	--	44%
RA Staff – While attending Renaissance Academy, students' academic performance improved.	40%	53%	68%	66%	62%	56%

*Note: New survey item added in 2023-2024 parent survey as part of Year-2 Implementation Evaluation.

Objective 5: Students who attend Renaissance Academy will demonstrate academic proficiency as measured by the percentage passing the applicable Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.

Students included in this analysis were any student who took an assessment while at Renaissance Academy and had a valid scale score on the SOL test (e.g., zeros were not included in the analysis). No students who took alternate tests were included in this analysis because they did not take alternate tests while at Renaissance Academy. The total number of students included in the analyses are noted in Table 42. Overall, 66 percent passed the Writing: End-of-Course test, and 57 percent passed the English: End-of-Course test. Less than half of the students taking the other SOL tests earned a passing score. The remaining percentages of students passing each test are displayed in Table 42. When comparing students' SOL results from 2022-2023 to the SOL results in 2023-2024, the top three SOL tests with the highest percentage of students passing were the same in both years. In 2023-2024, there was a higher percentage of students passing seven (41%) of the SOL tests as indicated by the asterisks.

Table 42: Percent of Students Passing Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests

Test	Total Number of Students Who Took Test	% Pass
Grade 6		
Grade 6 English	47	17%
Grade 6 Math	48	6%
Grade 7		
Grade 7 English	58	36%*
Grade 7 Math	56	11%*
Grade 8		
Grade 8 English	63	25%
Grade 8 Math	49	4%
Grade 8 Science	56	14%*
Grade 8 History	61	33%*
End-of-Course Test		
Algebra 1	103	36%
Biology	109	24%*
Earth Science	28	29%
English	74	57%
Geography	41	12%
Geometry	11	18%*
Virginia History	45	11%
World History I	79	10%*
Writing	35	66%

Note: SOL tests were excluded if less than 10 students took the test.

*Note: Indicates percent of students passing increased from 2022-2023.

Transition Successfully to Home School

Goal #3: Students in alternative education will successfully transition to their home school following enrollment at Renaissance Academy.

Objective 1: Students will gain tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school as measured by student, staff, and parent survey responses.

Stakeholders including students, parents, and Renaissance Academy staff were surveyed about their perceptions of students gaining tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school. As displayed in Table 43, 84 percent of students agreed they gained the tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school or school they attended prior to Renaissance Academy. Middle school students had somewhat higher agreement percentages than high school students. Eighty-three percent of students agreed they felt prepared to return to their home school, and 81 percent agreed they felt ready to return to their home school.

Overall, 46 percent of parents agreed their child gained tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school or school they attended prior to Renaissance Academy. Overall, 68 percent of parents agreed their child was prepared to return to their home school and 73 percent agreed their child was ready to return to their home school. Overall, 64 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students have gained tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school or school they were enrolled in prior to Renaissance Academy. Renaissance Academy high school staff had higher agreement percentages than middle

school staff. Overall, 68 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students were prepared to return to their home school.

Table 43: Students' Perceptions of Gaining Tools and Strategies to Transition Back to Their Home School

Group and Survey Items	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Student – I have gained tools and strategies to successfully transition back to my home school or the school I was enrolled at prior to attending Renaissance Academy.	82%	89%	89%	81%	85%	84%
Student – I feel prepared to return to my home school.	86%	87%	87%	81%	87%	83%
Student – I feel ready to return to my home school.*	76%	81%	72%	81%	74%	81%
Parent – My child gained tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school, or school they were enrolled in prior to attending Renaissance Academy.	38%	43%	67%	50%	55%	46%
Parent – My child is prepared to return to their home school.**	--	78%	--	56%	--	68%
Parent – My child is ready to return to their home school.	62%	83%	72%	61%	68%	73%
RA Staff – Students have gained tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school, or school they were enrolled in prior to attending Renaissance Academy.	57%	61%	61%	72%	59%	64%
RA Staff – Students are prepared to return to their home school.	52%	60%	53%	77%	53%	68%

*Note: Student response options included: Yes/No/Don't Know

**Note: New survey item added in 2023-2024 parent survey as part of the year-two implementation evaluation.

Objective 2: Students who return to their home school will demonstrate satisfactory behavior as measured by discipline referrals that are less than or consistent with the home school's average referral rate.

The data analyzed for this objective included students who had exited Renaissance Academy and returned to their home school. Students who exited Renaissance Academy in September or June were excluded from this analysis because they did not spend a sufficient amount of time at Renaissance Academy or at their home school to adequately assess their behavior through discipline referrals. The total number of students included in this analysis is noted in Table 44. Students were grouped by the home school where they enrolled after exiting Renaissance Academy and the former Renaissance Academy students' referral data were compared to their home school's average. This method allowed the school context for discipline referrals to be taken into account given there is variability within schools related to referral rates. Discipline data from the home schools came from the annual discipline report for 2023-2024.

Overall, after enrolling in a home school upon exiting Renaissance Academy, former Renaissance Academy students had a higher average number of referrals (1.8) compared to the students' home school's average referral rate (0.6). When examining data by school level, former middle school Renaissance Academy students had a higher average number of referrals (2.0) than high school students (1.7). There were three individual middle schools and one individual high school where former Renaissance Academy students had, on average, a lower number of referrals compared to their home school's average number and therefore, demonstrating success for the purposes of this objective. When comparing the average number of referrals in 2022-2023 to 2023-2024, there were slight decreases in the school average number of referrals for Renaissance Academy students. In 2022-2023, the average referral rate overall was 2.1 and the average number of referrals for middle school was 3.6 and high school was 1.6.

Table 44: Average Number of Referrals by School Level

School Level	Cumulative Enrollment	Referrals Per Total Number of Students: Home School*	Average Number of Referrals	Number of RA Students At School	Referrals Per Total Number of Students: RA Students	Average Number of Referrals
Middle School (N=12)	11,759	9,021	0.8	71	142	2.0
High School (N=12)	21,178	10,840	0.5	100	166	1.7
Total	32,937	19,861	0.6	171	308	1.8

*Note: Middle school and high schools in these data were based on the schools where Renaissance Academy students enrolled after leaving Renaissance Academy.

Objective 3: Students who return to their home school will consistently attend their home school as measured by attendance rates that are similar to or higher than their attendance rate while at Renaissance Academy.

The data analyzed for this objective included students who had exited Renaissance Academy and returned to their home school. Students who exited Renaissance Academy in September or June were excluded because they did not spend a sufficient amount of time at Renaissance Academy or at their home school to adequately assess their attendance. Assessing whether a student's attendance rate was similar to or higher than his or her attendance rate at Renaissance Academy was based on whether the percentage of days in attendance at the home school was the same or better. Students with zero percentage attendance rate at Renaissance Academy or at their home school were not included in the analysis.

As displayed in Table 45, overall, 42 percent of Renaissance Academy students had attendance rates similar or better once they returned to their home school. There were no notable differences across attendance rates at the middle and high school levels. There was an 8 percentage-point decrease in the overall percentage with attendance rates similar or better while attending home school in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023 driven by a decrease in the middle school level.

Table 45: Percentage of Students With Attendance Rates Similar To or Better Than While at Their Home School

Criteria	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Total Number of Students	27	65	84	86	111	151
Percentage with Attendance Rate Similar or Better	67%	42%	44%	42%	50%	42%

Objective 4: Students who return to their home school will maintain their level of academic performance at their home school as measured by core course grade averages at the end of the year that are similar to or higher than their grade average while at Renaissance Academy.

The data analyzed for this objective included students who had exited Renaissance Academy and returned to their home school. Students who exited Renaissance Academy in September or June were excluded because they did not spend a sufficient amount of time at Renaissance Academy or at their home school for course grades to represent their academic performance at the site. Students who had the same or better core course grade average they had at Renaissance Academy were determined to be successful for the purpose of this objective, but this does not include those who had a zero as their core course grade average at Renaissance Academy and a zero as their core course grade average at their home school. The total number of students included in the analyses is noted in Table 46.

As displayed in Table 46, 21 percent of middle school students maintained or improved their core course grade averages after returning to their home school, and 10 percent of high school students maintained or improved their core course grade averages after returning to their home school. The total percentage of students who

maintained their academic performance in 2023-2024 was similar to the total percentages in 2022-2023. However, in 2023-2024 there was a 21-percentage point increase at the middle school level compared to 2022-2023.

Table 46: Percentage of Students Who Maintained Their Academic Performance at Their Home School

Criteria	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Total Number of Students	21	43	77	81	98	124
Percentage Maintained Academic Performance	0%	21%	21%	10%	16%	14%

Graduate and Develop Postgraduation Plans

Goal #4: Students in alternative education will graduate and develop a postgraduation plan.

Objective 1: Students who attended Renaissance Academy during middle or high school will graduate in four, five, or six years as measured by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on-time graduation rate data.²³

The data analyzed for this objective included students who were part of the 2023-2024 on-time graduation cohort who attended Renaissance Academy at any point during their middle school or high school years. In addition, students must have attended Renaissance Academy for at least 45 days in middle school, high school, or anytime. As displayed in Table 47, 95 percent of students who attended Renaissance Academy only during middle school graduated in four years, 66 percent who attended Renaissance Academy only during high school graduated in four years, and 44 percent who attended Renaissance Academy during middle and high school graduated in four years. Of all students who were enrolled at any point during middle or high school, 64 percent graduated within four years. This was a higher four-year graduation rate than the previous year’s cohort in 2023.

In addition, students from the 2023 graduation cohort who did not graduate in four years were examined based on 2024 data. Eighty-one percent of students who attended Renaissance Academy only in middle school graduated in five years, and 54 percent who attended Renaissance Academy only in high school graduated in five years. Of all the students from the 2023 cohort who attended Renaissance Academy at any point during middle or high school who did not graduate in four years, 61 percent graduated within five years.

Table 47: Percentage of Students Who Graduated in Four Years

Cohort	Graduated in 4 Years				Graduated in 5 Years			
	RA in MS Only	RA in HS Only	RA in MS and HS	RA Anytime (Total)	RA in MS Only	RA in HS Only	RA in MS and HS	RA Anytime (Total)
2023	81%	55%	64%	61%	81%	54%	62%	61%
2024	95%	66%	44%	64%	--	--	--	--

Note: Data only includes students who attended Renaissance Academy for at least 45 days in total and excludes students who were only enrolled in ISAEP.

Objective 2: Students who attend Renaissance Academy will report the academic/career planning process helped them to make informed decisions about college, employment, or military service as measured by student survey responses.

Students were asked their perceptions of their academic and career planning process. Overall, 81 percent of students agreed they received assistance, resources, and information at Renaissance Academy that helped them make informed decisions about their options after high school graduation. Middle school students reported higher levels of agreement at 86 percent than high school students at 74 percent. As displayed in

Table 48, a higher percentage of students reported receiving assistance, resources, and information to help make informed decisions in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023.

Table 48: Students Reporting Academic/Career Planning

Survey Item	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
I received assistance, resources, and information at Renaissance Academy that helped me make informed decisions about my options after I graduate from high school [e.g., college (enroll), employment (employ), or military service (enlist)].	67%	86%	83%	76%	74%	81%

Objective 3: Students who attend Renaissance Academy will report they set goals for their learning and future plans as measured by student survey responses.

Students were surveyed about setting goals for their learning and future plans. Overall, 88 percent of students agreed as part of their experience at Renaissance Academy, they set goals for their learning and future plans. Middle school students reported higher levels of agreement at 90 percent than high school students at 77 percent. As displayed in Table 49, a higher percentage of students reported setting goals for their learning and future plans in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023.

Table 49: Students Reporting Setting Goals for Their Learning and Future Plans

Survey Item	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
As part of my experience at Renaissance Academy, I set goals for my learning and my future plans.	71%	90%	84%	86%	77%	88%

Students were asked an open-ended question on the survey about the assistance, resources, information, or activities they had at Renaissance Academy to help them make decisions about their future. Overall, 137 students provided a comment which was 43 percent of those students who responded to the survey. The most common response among middle and high school students was that staff at Renaissance Academy provided them with encouragement or support. Several students named specific staff members they made connections with. The second most common response was class activities; however, students did not elaborate on what they meant by these activities. The third most common response was field trips, particularly to the zoo and Tidewater Community College.

Objective 4: Seniors who graduate while at Renaissance Academy will report they have postgraduation plans as measured by VDOE student exit survey responses.

Seniors who graduated while at Renaissance Academy were asked their postgraduation plans on the senior exit survey to collect data for the Virginia Department of Education. As displayed in Table 50, over half of students (56%) indicated they planned to continue their education, 26 percent indicated they planned to enter employment, 15 percent reported they had no plans or were undecided, and 3 percent indicated they planned to join the military. When comparing 2022-2023 postgraduation plans to 2023-2024 postgraduation plans, there was an 18-percentage point increase in those reporting they planned to continue their education, and a 30 percentage-point decrease in those reporting they had no postgraduation plans.

Table 50: Seniors' Who Graduated While at Renaissance Academy Postgraduation Plans

Postgraduation Plans	2022-2023 (N=29)*	2023-2024 (N=39)**
None (No plans indicated or Undecided)	45%	15%
Total Continuing Education***	38%	56%
Two-Year College	17%	33%
Four-Year College	14%	18%
Other Education Plans (Business, Technical, Apprenticeship, or Other Educational Opportunity)	7%	5%
Employment	14%	26%
Military	3%	3%

*Note: Includes 23 students who graduated while enrolled at Renaissance Academy and 6 students who graduated during the summer in 2022-2023.

**Note: Includes 32 students who graduated while enrolled at Renaissance Academy and 7 students who graduated during the summer in 2023-2024.

***Note: Two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and other included in Total Continuing Education.

Stakeholder Perceptions

The eighth evaluation question focused on stakeholders' perceptions of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program. The evaluation included satisfaction perceptions, what students gained from the program, and areas of program improvement based on comments made by students, parents, and staff on the surveys.

Stakeholders' Perceptions of Program Meeting Students' Needs

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Table 51 displays the results for the survey item assessing overall satisfaction. Overall, 80 percent of students expressed satisfaction with their experience at Renaissance Academy. High school and middle school students reported the same level of satisfaction.

Overall, 60 percent of parents expressed satisfaction with their students' experience at Renaissance Academy. Parents of high school students were more likely to indicate they were satisfied than parents of middle school students (72% vs. 48%). Overall, 63 percent of comprehensive secondary staff expressed satisfaction with Renaissance Academy. Middle school staff members were more likely to indicate they were satisfied than high school staff members (68% vs. 61%). The majority of Renaissance Academy staff (64%) were satisfied with the experience students had at Renaissance Academy. High school staff at Renaissance Academy were more likely to indicate they were satisfied than middle school staff members (72% vs. 59%).

Table 51: Overall Satisfaction With Renaissance Academy

School Level	Students		Parents*		RA Staff**		Comprehensive Secondary Staff	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Middle School	74%	80%	42%	48%	65%	59%	76%	68%
High School	94%	80%	62%	72%	64%	72%	50%	61%
Total	83%	80%	53%	60%	65%	64%	61%	63%

*Note: Parents were asked the following survey question, "Overall, how satisfied are you with your child's experience at Renaissance Academy?"

**Note: Renaissance Academy Staff were asked the following survey question, "Overall, how satisfied are you with the experience students have at Renaissance Academy?"

Program Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Students were asked two open-ended questions on the survey about what they gained from enrolling in Renaissance Academy and improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy. Overall, 237 students provided a comment about what they gained from the program, which was 75 percent of those students who responded to the survey. The most common response regarding what they gained included improving their behavior, improving academically, personal growth, and forming friendships and relationships with those at Renaissance Academy.

Overall, 220 students provided a comment about improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy, which was 70 percent of those students who responded to the survey. Students' responses encompassed a variety of areas. The most common response among students was that they had no suggestions for improvements or that they were unsure and did not know what could be improved. The second most common theme was a general comment about improving the overall program without specific details. The third most common response appeared to be about ways students improved while in the program with students commenting about getting better grades and improving their behavior. Some students commented on discipline and student conduct, having someone to talk to, and school uniforms.

Renaissance Academy staff were also asked two open-ended questions on the survey about what students gained from attending Renaissance Academy and improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy. Overall, 32 Renaissance Academy staff members provided a comment about what students gained from the program which was 71 percent of those staff members who responded to the survey. The most common response regarding what students gained included students having access to smaller class sizes which provided them with more individualized and/or personalized instruction. The second most common theme included the program providing students with a new environment and/or a new opportunity to be successful.

Overall, 32 Renaissance Academy staff members provided a comment about improvements they would suggest, which was 71 percent of those staff members who responded to the survey. The most common response among staff members was a need for better consistency among staff regarding holding students accountable for their actions. The second most discussed topic was a need for more support including more staff and better support for students with disabilities and difficult behavior. Staff also mentioned providing mandatory classes related to anger management and self-regulation.

Comprehensive secondary staff were also asked two open-ended questions on the survey about what students gained from attending Renaissance Academy and improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy. Overall, 52 comprehensive secondary staff members provided a comment about what students gained from the program which was 60 percent of those staff members who responded to the survey. The most common response among comprehensive secondary staff members was students gained individualized learning opportunities complemented by small class sizes and structure. The second most common response was access to additional support and resources like counselors, psychologists, and student support staff. There were some staff members who commented on mixed outcomes from students leaving Renaissance Academy; some students improved while others did not.

Overall, 54 comprehensive secondary staff members provided a comment about improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy which was 63 percent of those comprehensive secondary staff members who responded to the survey. The most common response was related to improving communication between Renaissance Academy and the home schools related to student transitions. The second most common response was improving the transition process for students to go back to their home school. Staff suggested a gradual reintroduction to the home school, additional resources, and ensuring students are academically and behaviorally prepared to return.

Parents were also asked two open-ended questions on the survey about what students gained from attending Renaissance Academy and improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy. Overall, 24 parents provided a comment about what students gained from the program which was 44 percent of those parents who responded to the survey. The most common response was positive support from role models and staff at Renaissance Academy. The second most common response was strict policies and a structured environment. The third most common response was better academic support through small class sizes.

Overall, 18 parents provided a comment about improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy, which was 33 percent of those parents who responded to the survey. The most common response among parents related to more and better supports for their child's unique needs including mental health supports or therapy. The second most common response was better communication between Renaissance Academy staff and families.

Additional Cost

The final evaluation question focused on the cost of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program to the school division. This section of the report summarizes the total additional costs for Renaissance Academy from the 2023-2024 fiscal year. To the greatest extent possible, costs included in this section were for the middle and high school alternative education program and did not include costs for other alternative education options (e.g., ISAEP). Cost data were collected from the departments of School Leadership, Budget and Finance, Human Resources, and School Division Services. Costs for 2023-2024 related to Renaissance Academy were totaled from the following areas: instructional supplies, technology, office supplies, professional learning, recognition/community building, local travel, staff costs, and transportation. Building costs were gathered but were not included in the total additional cost because they could not be isolated for the middle and high school program only due to other programs using the building such as ISAEP, the Adult Learning Center, and Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP).

The total cost for the 2023-2024 school year was estimated to be \$14,964,958 (see Table 52). The largest expense was staffing costs which totaled \$13,800,626. The next largest cost was for student transportation which included approximately \$460,268 in driver costs and \$512,703 for operational costs which included fuel, maintenance, and vehicle depreciation at \$2.50 per mile. An additional \$91,710 that Renaissance Academy received in School Allocations funding is not included in Table 52 because it could not be determined those funds were additional costs based on the per pupil school allocation funding process. To calculate the school allocations, the budget office uses projected student membership based on reports from the demographer and bases the Renaissance Academy school allocation on an enrollment number of 1,000 students and a set per pupil amount for each category of funding.²⁴ To the extent that a home school's projected membership numbers do not include students who were enrolled at Renaissance Academy, the home schools would not receive a per pupil allocation for those students.

Table 52: Cost of the Renaissance Academy Program

Cost Category	Cost 2022-2023 Fiscal Year	Cost 2023-2024 Fiscal Year
Instructional Supplies	\$45,421	\$77,133
Technology	\$414,724	\$11,665
Office Supplies	\$8,882	\$8,302
Professional Learning	\$2,716	\$9,811
Recognition/Community Building	\$18,062	\$8,169
Local Travel	\$1,630	\$931
Staff Costs	\$11,650,410	\$13,800,626
Substitutes	\$125,722	\$75,350
Transportation	\$997,462	\$972,971
Total Annual Operating	\$13,265,029	\$14,964,958

Note: The building costs for utilities and building maintenance totaled \$797,405 in 2022-2023 and \$736,883 in 2023-2024 but were not included in the total additional cost because these costs could not be isolated for the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program only.

Summary

School Board Policy 6-27, adopted in August 1993 and updated in July 2022 recognizes that the needs of all students in VBCPS cannot be met within the formal school curriculum. Therefore, alternative educational experiences, like Renaissance Academy, have the potential to meet students' unique needs. The focus of this year-two evaluation was the implementation and operation of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school program as well as providing initial progress toward meeting student outcome goals. The evaluation examined alternative education in VBCPS, options within alternative education, student characteristics, student referral and transition processes, staff characteristics and professional learning, family involvement opportunities, progress toward student outcome goals, stakeholders' overall perceptions, and cost to the division.

The Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program aims to meet the needs of students in grades 6 through 12 who are not experiencing success in regular secondary settings. Most students attending Renaissance Academy are recommended for placement by the Office of Student Leadership for behavioral concerns, but students can also be recommended by school administrators through principal-to-principal placement, or by parent request. The program serves both special education and regular education students, and some students are enrolled short-term while others are enrolled long-term. A high percentage of comprehensive secondary school staff (94%) agreed they understood the purpose of the Renaissance Academy program in VBCPS.

Students enrolled at Renaissance Academy participate in general curriculum courses, and the program includes instruction regarding life skills to promote the development of self-determination, responsibility, and integrity that fosters a sense of self-esteem. Students have learning opportunities that address social-emotional behavior and character components. Components of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program during 2023-2024 included staff support from school counselors, student support specialists, and mentors, flexible scheduling options, basic needs, career development and credentialing; and world languages. About half of the students (53%) reported they worked with a student support specialist, and almost all (99%) reported the experience was useful. A majority of students (79%) reported having a mentor or trusted adult while attending Renaissance Academy, and 96 percent of students who reported they had a mentor indicated the experience was useful.

A recommendation area in the year-one evaluation was to implement strategies or activities to improve students' relationship skills with other students, self-management skills, and responsible decision-making skills. One action taken toward this recommendation was having the counseling department host the Phoenix Awards to recognize students' achievement, hiring retired VBCPS teachers and coaches for the mentorship program and having them participate in training. In addition, other actions included a Black History Month workshop with Renaissance Academy staff and student ambassadors and producing the first Renaissance Academy yearbook. Stakeholders reported perceptions on participating in activities related to improvement areas outlined in the recommendation. Overall, students reported higher agreement that they participated in activities to help them have a good relationship with other students (74%), activities to improve self-management skills (74%), and activities to improve decision-making skills (76%) compared to parents and Renaissance Academy staff who had agreement percentages ranging from 33 percent to 52 percent.

Another recommendation from the year-one evaluation was to enhance instructional strategies and academic opportunities to improve Renaissance Academy students' SOL performance and readiness for academic demands when returning to their home school. According to Renaissance Academy staff, actions taken toward this recommendation included SOL Kick-Off Assemblies at middle and high school levels to motivate students for the upcoming SOL assessments and administrative meetings on Fridays for faculty and staff. This recommendation was also supported by the addition of six new courses offered at Renaissance Academy in 2023-2024. In addition, an instructional specialist was hired in 2024-2025 to support teachers in meeting students' academic needs. Other opportunities included a total of 18 CTE courses for students at Renaissance Academy. There were 165 total enrollments in middle school across five courses and 301 total enrollments in high school across 18 courses. In total, 88 students in grades 10, 11, and 12 (29%) attempted to earn a certification and of those who attempted, 36 (41%) earned a certification. In addition, Renaissance Academy received an allocation for a world languages teacher, and there were 48 total enrollments across Spanish I, II, and III in 2023-2024. Overall, 73 percent of Renaissance Academy staff and 51 percent of parents agreed the instructional opportunities students had at Renaissance Academy prepared them to meet the academic demands when returning to their home school. In addition, almost all Renaissance Academy staff (98%) agreed they had useful instructional tools to help meet students' academic needs in the classroom. Overall, 84 percent of students agreed they gained the tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their homeschool.

During the 2023-2024 school year, 774 students were enrolled at Renaissance Academy at some time during the school year, with 295 students in grades 6 through 8 and 479 students in grades 9 through 12. The majority of students enrolled were male (60%), over half of the students were Black (60%), and 18 percent were White. The majority of students at Renaissance Academy were economically disadvantaged (70%). Twenty-four percent were special education students, 7 percent were military connected, 3 percent were identified gifted, and less than 1 percent were identified English Learners (EL). There were higher percentages of male, Black, economically disadvantaged, and special education students at Renaissance Academy compared to students at the overall division level.

About half of the students enrolled at Renaissance Academy were there for the first time during 2023-2024. Approximately half of students were enrolled for less than half the school year (50%), and 13 percent were enrolled for the entire school year. The median number of days students were enrolled was 70 days. The largest numbers of students listed Larkspur Middle School, Bayside High School, or Green Run High School as their last enrolled home school prior to enrolling at Renaissance Academy. Overall, the reenrollment rate at Renaissance Academy during 2023-2024 was 10 percent based on students who attended Renaissance Academy during 2023-2024, went back to their home school or another school in VBCPS, and then returned to Renaissance Academy again during 2023-2024.

The evaluation also focused on the criteria and process for students to be referred to Renaissance Academy and to transition back to their home school. Almost all of the students (98%) attending Renaissance Academy during the 2023-2024 school year were referred by the Office of Student Leadership due to behavior concerns. The criteria for students to transition back to their home school included good grades (C or higher in all classes), good attendance (no more than 6 unverified absences), and good behavior (no in-school or out-of-school suspensions or other related behavior concerns). Integral to the transition process are the student support specialists who support students for at least nine weeks during their transition period. A recommendation in the year-one evaluation was to strengthen the transition process. One action taken toward this was having Renaissance Academy reach out to schools to schedule student orientation rather than waiting for families to schedule the orientation. In addition, orientation was expanded to be held twice a week and by appointment. Another action was to have students be concurrently enrolled at their home school and Renaissance Academy to help teachers be informed about student progress.

Renaissance Academy staff and comprehensive secondary staff members were asked their perceptions of the referral and transition process. When asked their perceptions about students moving from the home school to Renaissance Academy, high percentages of comprehensive staff (at least 79%) agreed they understood the referral criteria and transition process to Renaissance Academy and Renaissance Academy staff agreed (84%) they understood the transition process for students moving from their home school to Renaissance Academy. When asked perceptions about students transitioning from Renaissance Academy back to their home school, 65 percent of comprehensive staff agreed, and 84 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed they understood the transition process for students moving from Renaissance Academy back to their home school. In addition, 89 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed they understood the criteria for students to be eligible to return to their home school. Both Renaissance academy staff and comprehensive secondary staff had low levels of agreement regarding communication efforts during students' transition process (36%-45%). Overall, about three-quarters of students (75%), parents (75%), and comprehensive secondary staff (74%) agreed students had the support they needed to be successful when they returned to their home school.

Regarding staff and professional learning, Renaissance Academy instructional staff had on average a lower number of years of teaching experience than instructional staff throughout the division, and there was a larger percentage of Renaissance Academy instructional staff who were new to the division in comparison to instructional staff throughout the division. Overall, 77 percent of staff reported being satisfied with their experience working at Renaissance Academy. The majority of staff members (89%) reported participating in professional learning related to being a staff member at Renaissance Academy in the past three years. Overall, 67 percent of staff members who participated in professional learning agreed it was sufficient, and 75 to 80 percent agreed it helped prepare them to teach or provide services to students and enabled them to better meet students' needs. Renaissance Academy staff were asked an open-ended survey question regarding professional learning topics they would be interested in learning more about. The most mentioned topics were trauma-informed practices, social-emotional learning skills particularly related to students having a good relationship with other students, classroom management specific to managing student behavior, more CPI training, and instructional strategies specific to students in alternative education. Based on staff and student comments from the prior year's evaluation, a recommendation from the year-one evaluation was to increase the availability of professional learning opportunities for staff related to managing student behaviors in the classroom and teaching students strategies for anger management. In 2023-2024, actions were taken toward this recommendation and included numerous professional learning opportunities such as CPI Nonviolent training, Responsibility-Centered Discipline, Strengthening Connections, Conversations with Ourselves, and a book study. In addition, administrators attended AVID training.

Renaissance Academy provided opportunities for families to be involved and engaged. New student orientation provided information about expectations, procedures, policies, and other pertinent details, and it was mandatory for all students and families attending Renaissance Academy. A high percentage of parents

(92%) agreed orientation was helpful in helping their family understand the program's expectations. Renaissance Academy also holds an open house every September and shares a quarterly newsletter with the community. In 2023-2024, Renaissance Academy started a Parent/Guardian Group to empower parents, and the first meeting was held in June 2024.

Data for student outcome goals were analyzed as part of the year-two evaluation to provide additional information about progress toward meeting program goals and objectives. The student outcome goals focused on building relationships, demonstrating success in school while attending Renaissance Academy, transitioning to their home school following enrollment at Renaissance Academy, and graduating and developing a postgraduation plan.

Regarding the goal focused on building relationships, relatively high percentages of students agreed they had positive relationships with staff including teachers, the director/principal and assistant principals, student support specialists, school counselors, and school psychologists at Renaissance Academy (85 to 88%). High percentages of Renaissance Academy staff agreed they had positive relationships with students (93%) and students had positive relationships with staff (82%). Staff had a somewhat lower percent of agreement (44%) about students getting along well with other students. Students were surveyed about their perceptions of feeling a sense of belonging and feeling welcome at Renaissance Academy. Overall, 71 percent of students agreed Renaissance Academy provided a welcoming place to learn, yet 51 percent of students agreed they felt like they belonged while at Renaissance Academy. On the Relationship Skills competency aggregate rating, 74 percent of students' responses to multiple survey items were agreement responses. Overall, 20 percent of staff agreed students demonstrated competency in relationship skills, and 31 percent of staff agreed students' relationship skills improved while attending Renaissance Academy. On the Self-Management competency aggregate rating, 82 percent of students' responses on multiple survey items were agreement responses. Overall, 20 percent of staff agreed students demonstrated competency in self-management skills, but 40 percent agreed students' self-management skills improved while attending Renaissance Academy. On the Responsible Decision-Making aggregate rating, 87 percent of students' responses on multiple survey items were agreement responses. Overall, 22 percent of staff agreed students demonstrated competency in responsible decision-making skills, and 36 percent agreed students' responsible decision-making skills improved while attending Renaissance Academy. In 2023-2024, students' aggregate Relationship Skills competency rating was maintained, while students' Self-Management competency aggregate, and Responsible Decision-Making aggregate ratings increased 3 to 7 percentage points.

Regarding the goal focused on students demonstrating success in school while attending Renaissance Academy, 85 percent of students, 55 percent of parents, 51 percent of Renaissance Academy staff, and 51 percent of comprehensive secondary school staff agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, students gained the tools and strategies for success in school. Overall, 77 percent of students demonstrated a decline in discipline referrals, and 75 percent of students demonstrated a decline in the total number of suspensions after enrolling in Renaissance Academy. Eighty-nine percent of students, 66 percent of parents, and 38 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, students demonstrated satisfactory behavior. Additionally, 88 percent of students, 52 percent of parents, and 35 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed while attending Renaissance Academy, students' behavior improved. Overall, 21 percent of students had an attendance rate of 90 percent or higher. When asked about students' attendance while attending Renaissance Academy, 83 percent of students, 75 percent of parents, and 47 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students' attendance was satisfactory. Additionally, 87 percent of students, 55 percent of parents, and 42 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students' attendance improved while attending Renaissance Academy. Overall, 68 percent of students demonstrated improvement in core course grade averages after enrolling in Renaissance Academy. When asked about academic performance, 90 percent of students, 68 percent of parents, and 44 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students' academic performance was satisfactory. Additionally, 87 percent of students, 57 percent of

parents, and 56 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students' academic performance had improved while attending Renaissance Academy. Students' academic proficiency as measured by the percent passing applicable Standards of Learning (SOL) tests was examined. Overall, 66 percent passed the end-of-course Writing SOL test, and 57 percent passed the end-of-course Reading SOL test while enrolled at Renaissance Academy. Less than half of students passed the other SOL tests taken while at Renaissance Academy. However, in 2023-2024, there was a higher percentage of students passing seven (41%) of the SOL tests in comparison to 2022-2023.

Regarding the goal that students will successfully transition to their home school following enrollment at Renaissance Academy, 84 percent of students, 46 percent of parents, and 64 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students gained tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school or school they had enrolled in prior to attending Renaissance Academy. When asked if students felt prepared to return to their home school, 83 percent of students agreed they were prepared to return, and 68 percent of parents and 68 percent of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students were prepared. When asked if they felt ready to return to their home school, 81 percent of students felt ready along with 73 percent of parents. When examining the extent to which students demonstrated satisfactory behavior after returning to their home school, overall, former Renaissance Academy students had a higher average number of referrals compared to students' home school's average referral rate after returning. Overall, 42 percent of middle and high school students had attendance rates similar or better once they returned to their home school compared to when they were at Renaissance Academy. In terms of students maintaining their academic performance at their home school, 21 percent of middle school students and 10 percent of high school students maintained their core course grade averages after returning to their home school.

Another goal was that students will graduate and develop a postgraduation plan. Based on students who were enrolled at Renaissance Academy at any time during middle or high school, 64 percent graduated within four years from the 2024 cohort. The percentage of students who graduated in four years varied based on their enrollment patterns at Renaissance Academy. Of students who only attended Renaissance Academy during middle school, 95 percent graduated in four years, and of students who only attended Renaissance Academy during high school, 66 percent graduated in four years. When asked if students received assistance, resources, and information at Renaissance Academy that helped them make informed decisions about their options after high school, 81 percent of students agreed, and 88 percent of students agreed they set goals for their learning as part of their learning experience at Renaissance Academy. Students were asked an open-ended question on the survey about the assistance, resources, information, or activities they had at Renaissance Academy to help them make decisions about their future. The most common response among middle and high school students was that staff at Renaissance Academy provided them with encouragement or support.

Renaissance Academy seniors who graduated were asked about their postgraduation plans. Over half of students (56%) indicated they planned to continue their education, 26 percent indicated they planned to enter employment, 15 percent reported they had no plans or were undecided, and 3 percent indicated they planned to join the military. When comparing 2022-2023 postgraduation plans to 2023-2024 postgraduation plans, there was an 18-percentage point increase in those reporting they planned to continue their education, and a 30 percentage-point decrease in those reporting they had no postgraduation plans.

Stakeholders were asked their overall perceptions of the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program and provided an opportunity to comment on what students gained from enrollment and areas for improvement. When asked about their overall satisfaction with the Renaissance Academy alternative education program, 80 percent of students, 60 percent of parents, and 63 percent of comprehensive secondary staff indicated they were satisfied. The majority of Renaissance Academy staff (64%) were satisfied with the experience students had at Renaissance Academy, which was similar to the satisfaction rate (65%) in 2022-2023.

When students were asked what they gained from enrolling in Renaissance Academy, the most common response included improving their behavior, improving academically, personal growth, and forming friendships and relationships with those at Renaissance Academy. The most common responses from Renaissance Academy staff members included students having access to smaller class sizes which provided them with more individualized and/or personalized instruction. The most common responses among comprehensive secondary staff members were individualized learning opportunities complemented by small class sizes and structure. The most common responses among parents were positive support from role models and staff at Renaissance Academy.

Regarding how the middle and high school alternative education program at Renaissance Academy could be improved, the most common responses among students was no suggestions for improvements, unsure, or not knowing what to improve. The most common responses for improvement among Renaissance Academy staff members focused on a need for better consistency among staff regarding holding students accountable for their actions. The most common responses for improvement among comprehensive secondary staff were related to improving communication between Renaissance Academy and the home schools related to students' transitions. The most common responses among parents for improvement focused on the need for more and better supports for their child's unique needs including mental health supports.

The cost for the Renaissance Academy middle and high school program during the 2023-2024 school year totaled \$14,964,958. The two largest expenses included staffing costs (\$13,800,626) and transportation (\$972,971).

Recommendations and Rationales

Recommendation #1: Continue the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program with modifications as noted in recommendations 2 through 4. (*Responsible Group: Renaissance Academy*).

Rationale: The first recommendation is to continue the Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program with modifications noted in recommendations 2 through 4 below. Based on School Board Policy 6-26, following an evaluation, a recommendation must be made to continue the initiative without modifications, continue the initiative with modifications, expand the initiative, or discontinue the initiative.

Recommendation #2: Continue working on the recommendation from the year-one evaluation focused on implementing strategies or activities to improve students' relationship skills with other students, self-management skills, and responsible decision-making skills along with strategies for anger management and self-regulation at Renaissance Academy. (*Responsible Group: Renaissance Academy*).

Rationale: The second recommendation is to continue working on the recommendation from year-one focused on implementing strategies or activities to improve students' relationships skills with other students, self-management skills, and responsible decision-making skills along with strategies for anger management and self-regulation. There was some improvement on students' ratings of their Self-Management Skills and Responsible Decision-Making Skills ranging from 3 percentage points to 7 percentage points. However, Renaissance Academy staff members reported low agreement percentages regarding whether students demonstrated competency in relationship skills (20%), self-management skills (20%), and responsible decision-making skills (22%). Renaissance Academy staff reported low agreement percentages, 28 percent at the middle school level and 57 percent at the high school level, regarding students at Renaissance Academy getting along well with other students. In addition, 31 percent to 40 percent of staff reported students' relationship skills, self-management skills, and responsible decision-making skills improved while attending Renaissance Academy. Additionally, about one-third (33%) of Renaissance Academy staff agreed students participated in activities to help improve how students got along with other students, 45 percent agreed students participated in activities to improve their self-management skills, and 49 percent agreed students participated in activities that helped improve their decision-making skills. When Renaissance Academy staff were provided an opportunity to provide suggestions for improvement, the most common response was providing mandatory classes for students related to anger management and self-regulation.

Recommendation #3: Continue working on the recommendation from the year-one evaluation to strengthen the transition process from Renaissance Academy to the students' home school including incorporating communication strategies between Renaissance Academy and the home schools to support student success. (*Responsible Groups: Department of School Leadership, Office of Student Leadership, and Renaissance Academy*).

Rationale: The third recommendation is to continue to strengthen the transition process from Renaissance Academy to the students' home school including incorporating communication strategies between Renaissance Academy and the home schools to support student success. When comprehensive secondary staff who worked with students who had attended Renaissance Academy were asked about understanding the transition process for students moving from Renaissance Academy back to their home school, 60 percent of

middle school staff and 69 percent of high school staff agreed they understood the transition process. Overall, parents (46%) and Renaissance Academy staff (64%) had relatively low agreement levels when asked about students gaining the tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school, with lower agreement among parents and staff of middle school students. In addition, 68 percent of Renaissance Academy staff reported students were prepared to return to their home school. In addition, based on behavior, attendance, and academic measures, both middle and high school students appeared to have a challenge maintaining their performance once they transitioned from Renaissance Academy back to their home school. On average, former Renaissance Academy students at both levels had more referrals than their home school average referral rate, less than half the students maintained their attendance rate (42%), and 14 percent maintained or improved their course grade average. Additionally, when Renaissance Academy staff and comprehensive secondary staff were asked about communication efforts during students' transition process, 36 percent of Renaissance Academy staff and 45 percent of comprehensive secondary staff agreed communication efforts provided them with the information they needed to meet students' needs. When comprehensive secondary staff provided comments about improvements they would suggest for Renaissance Academy, the most common response was improving communication between Renaissance Academy and the home schools related to student transitions.

Recommendation #4: Continue working on the recommendation from the year-one evaluation to enhance instructional strategies and academic opportunities to improve Renaissance Academy students' SOL performance and readiness for academic demands when returning to their home school. (*Responsible Groups: Renaissance Academy and Department of Teaching and Learning*).

Rationale: The fourth recommendation is to continue working on the recommendation from the year-one evaluation to enhance instructional strategies and academic opportunities to improve Renaissance Academy students' SOL performance and readiness for academic demands when returning to their home school. There was some improvement on seven or 41 percent of the SOL tests taken in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023. However, of the 17 SOL tests taken by middle and high school students, only 2 tests (Writing: EOC, English: EOC) had a majority of students pass the test (57% to 66%). The remaining 15 tests had pass rates ranging from 4 percent to 36 percent. When students returned to their home school, overall, 14 percent of students maintained or improved their core course grade averages compared to when they were at Renaissance Academy. When examined by school level, 21 percent of middle school students maintained or improved their core course grade averages after returning to their home school, while 10 percent of high school students maintained or improved their core course grade averages. Although students generally agreed (84%) they gained the tools and strategies to successfully transition back to their home school, parents and Renaissance Academy staff had lower agreement rates to the same survey item ranging from 46 to 64 percent.

Appendix

Appendix A

Comprehensive secondary staff were asked their familiarity with the alternative education program at Renaissance Academy. As displayed in the table below, 88 percent of staff indicated they were familiar with the purpose of the middle and high school Renaissance Academy program, 86 percent indicated they were familiar with the purpose of student support specialists, 83 percent indicated they were familiar with the purpose of SAIP, and 79 percent indicated they were familiar with the purpose of Choices. In addition, 69 percent of comprehensive secondary staff indicated they were familiar with the purpose of ISAEP, and 53 percent indicated they were familiar with the purpose of the online learning program. Middle school staff members had higher familiarity agreement percentages about the purpose of the middle and high school program at SAIP, Choices, student support specialists, and online learning, but high school staff members had higher familiarity agreement percentages about the purpose of Renaissance Academy and ISAEP.

Comprehensive Secondary Staff Members' Perceptions of Familiarity With Alternative Education Programs at Renaissance Academy

I am familiar with the purpose of the following alternative education programs at Renaissance Academy:*	MS		HS		Total	
	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24	22-23	23-24
Renaissance Academy (middle/high school program)	89%	87%	87%	88%	88%	88%
Substance Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP)	81%	87%	90%	78%	86%	83%
Choices	87%	95%	71%	66%	79%	79%
Student Support Specialists	78%	95%	71%	78%	75%	86%
Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP)	22%	47%	89%	88%	58%	69%
Anti-Tobacco Use Program**	46%	--	53%	--	50%	--
Online Learning	28%	53%	32%	51%	31%	53%

*Note: Results of these survey items include all staff members who engaged with the survey, including those who indicated they had not had experience working with students who attended Renaissance Academy.

**Note: According to Renaissance Academy staff members, the Anti-Tobacco Use Program has been integrated within the SAIP program, therefore, it was removed as an option choice on the 2023-2024 survey.

Endnotes

- ¹ Mark Glander, “Selected Statistics From the Public Elementary and Secondary Education Universe: School Year 2014–15” (NCES 2016-076). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016076.pdf>, 2016, p. B-1.
- ² Skip Kumm, Sarah Wilkinson, and Sara McDaniel, “Alternative Education Settings in the United States,” *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 2020, pp. 1-4.
- ³ Source: <https://schoolboard.vbschools.com/policies/section-6/6-27>
- ⁴ Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Alternative Education Task Force Report (draft).
- ⁵ Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Alternative Education Five-Year Plan, 1998-2003, March 1998.
- ⁶ Source: <https://www.vbschools.com/about/data/historical-overview-of-vbcps>
- ⁷ Source: <https://renaissanceacademy.vbschools.com/>
- ⁸ As cited in Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program: Evaluation Readiness Report, August 2022.
- ⁹ Source: <https://vbcoursecatalog.vbschools.com/renaissance-academy-alternative-programs-grades-912>
- ¹⁰ Secondary School Curriculum for Students of Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2019-2020.
- ¹¹ A. Livingston, personal communication, October 23, 2023.
- ¹² A. Livingston, personal communication, October 23, 2023.
- ¹³ A. Livingston, personal communication, October 23, 2023.
- ¹⁴ Source: Page 52
<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1691005313/vbschoolscom/p2ppsczg6jdvzksloosp/CodeStudentConduct.pdf>
- ¹⁵ Source: Page 51
<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1691005313/vbschoolscom/p2ppsczg6jdvzksloosp/CodeStudentConduct.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Source: <https://vbcoursecatalog.vbschools.com/renaissance-academy-alternative-programs-grades-912>
- ¹⁷ The year that students were last enrolled in their VBCPS home school varied. For example, the last home school enrollment for students was as follows: two students in 2018-2019, five students in 2019-2020, 61 students in 2020-2021, 282 students in 2022-2023, and 425 students in 2023-2024.
- ¹⁸ A. Livingston, personal communication, October 23, 2023.
- ¹⁹ Renaissance Academy Orientation PowerPoint.
- ²⁰ In the year-one evaluation in 2022-2023, survey results were analyzed for two groups of students: “Exited/Planned to Exit” and “Planned to Stay.” “Exited/Planned to Exit” students included Renaissance Academy students who had either exited the program at some point during the 2022-2023 school year or intended to exit Renaissance Academy at the end of the school year and start the 2023-2024 school year at their home school. “Planned to Stay” included students who indicated they would be attending Renaissance Academy at the start of the 2023-2024 school year. In 2023-2024, data were analyzed by the same two groups, but the pattern of differences did not continue in year-two. Therefore, data were not presented in this format.
- ²¹ Students who attended SECEP and Juvenile Detention Center are not included in the analysis. The data warehouse maintains some data points on these students including demographic information, but it does not include discipline data.
- ²² This analysis was conducted with student attendance of 7 days, 30 days, and 45 days. All percentages remained constant at 25% at all three attendance numbers.
- ²³ The on-time graduation (OTG) cohort includes students who earned a Board of Education approved diploma within four years of entering high school for the first time. The cohort includes special education and English Learner (EL) students who took additional years to graduate on time based on the formula approved by the Virginia Board of Education.
- ²⁴ C. Armstrong, personal communication, January 25, 2024.

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