



Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students: *Year-Two Outcome Evaluation*

October 2025

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Table of Contents

Introduction	7
Background	7
Purpose of Program Evaluation	9
Program Goals and Objectives.....	9
Evaluation Design and Methodology	10
Evaluation Design and Data Collection	10
Document Data Collection	11
Surveys	11
Interviews.....	13
Site Visits	13
Student Information From Data Warehouse	13
Evaluation Questions.....	14
Evaluation Results and Discussion	14
Familiarity with Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students.....	14
Selected Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students.....	17
Behavior Intervention Support Team Professional Learning and Strategies	17
Communities in Schools	34
Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program	55
Overall Perceptions and Divisionwide Trends in Student Behavioral and Mental Health	76
Perceptions.....	76
Divisionwide Trends in Student Behavioral and Mental Health	79
Summary	80
Behavior Intervention Support Team	81
Communities in Schools.....	82
Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program	83
Overall Perceptions and Divisionwide Trends in Student Behavioral and Mental Health	84
Recommendations and Rationales	85
Appendices	87
Appendix A: Demographics of BASE Cohort 1 Analysis Group and Comparison Group From 2023-2024	87
Appendix B: Demographics of BASE Cohort 2 Analysis Group and Comparison Group From 2024-2025	88
Endnotes	89

Tables

Table 1: Staff Survey Response Rates by Staff Group	12
Table 2: Number of Survey Responses by Staff Group and School Level	12
Table 3: Parent Survey Response Rates by Initiative	13
Table 4: Percentages of Staff Familiar With Divisionwide Initiatives by Staff Group in 2024-2025	16
Table 5: Staff Perceptions of Learning About Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students	16
Table 6: Staff Perceptions of Learning About Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students by Position.....	17
Table 7: Type of BIST Involvement Reported by Staff.....	19
Table 8: Behavior Intervention Support Team Professional Learning Opportunities.....	21
Table 9: Staff Perceptions of BIST Professional Learning.....	21
Table 10: Staff Perceptions of Common Language and Class/Morning Meetings Improving Student Behavior	23
Table 11: Staff Perceptions of Processing and Behavior/Think Sheets Improving Student Behavior	24
Table 12: Staff Perceptions of Safe Seats, Buddy Rooms, and Focus Rooms Improving Student Behavior	25
Table 13: Staff Selected Most Helpful Strategies to Help Students Improve Self-Regulation Skills	26
Table 14: Staff Perceptions of BIST Strategies	28
Table 15: Number of BIST Schools Showing Improvements on Various Behavior Measures.....	32
Table 16: Cost for Behavior Intervention Support Team in 2024-2025.....	34
Table 17: Communities in Schools Respondents by Staff Group and Involvement.....	36
Table 18: Type of Communities in Schools Involvement Reported by Staff.....	37
Table 19: Staff Perceptions of Communities in Schools Community Partnerships.....	38
Table 20: Staff Perceptions of Student Identification for Communities in Schools.....	38
Table 21: Staff Perceptions of Communities in Schools Providing Assistance to Staff.....	39
Table 22: Staff Perceptions of Communities in Schools Providing Resources and Support	40
Table 23: Percentages of CIS Schoolwide Goals With Progress Made by Goal Area in 2024-2025.....	41
Table 24: Percentages of CIS Attendance Schools With Progress Toward Attendance Measures.....	43
Table 25: Percentages of CIS Attendance Schools Exceeding Division Trends in Attendance Measures by Level	43
Table 26: Percentages of CIS Behavior Schools With Progress Toward Behavior Measures.....	45
Table 27: Percentages of CIS Behavior Schools Exceeding Division Trends in Behavior Measures by Level.....	46
Table 28: Percentages of CIS Family Engagement Schools With Progress Toward Family Engagement Measures.....	50
Table 29: Percentages of CIS Family Engagement Schools Exceeding Division Trends in Family Engagement Measures by Level.....	50
Table 30: Percentages of CIS Students Meeting Goal(s) by Goal Area in 2024-2025	53
Table 31: Directly Involved Staff Perceptions of CIS Helping Students in Various Areas.....	53
Table 32: Parent Perceptions of CIS Helping Students in Various Areas	54
Table 33: Cost for CIS in 2023-2024	55
Table 34: Staff Perceptions of the BASE Program Purpose.....	56
Table 35: Grade Levels of Students in the BASE Program During 2023-2024 and 2024-2025	56
Table 36: Demographic Characteristics of Students in the BASE Program During 2024-2025	57

Table 37: BASE Program Respondents by Staff Group and Involvement	58
Table 38: BASE Classroom Information.....	58
Table 39: Staff Perceptions of the BASE Program Referral Process.....	59
Table 40: Staff Perceptions of Students' Transition Process.....	60
Table 41: BASE Staff Member Perceptions of Program Components Providing the Support Students Need.....	61
Table 42: Staff Perceptions of the Transition Process From the BASE Program Back to the Students' Home School.....	62
Table 43: BASE Staff Perceptions of Training and Preparation to Teach in the Program	63
Table 44: Staff Perceptions of the BASE Program.....	64
Table 45: Percentage of Students With Lower Referral, Suspension, and Out-of-School Suspension Rates in Cohort 1 (2023-2024).....	67
Table 46: Percentage of Students With Lower Referral, Suspension, and Out-of-School-Suspension Rates in Cohort 2 (2024-2025).....	68
Table 47: Cost for the BASE Program.....	76
Table 48: General Staff Perceptions of Behavioral Supports for Students by Level	77
Table 49: General Staff Perceptions of Behavioral Supports for Students by Position	77
Table 50: General Staff Perceptions of Mental Health Supports for Students by Level.....	78
Table 51: General Staff Perceptions of Mental Health Supports for Students by Position	78
Table 52: Percentages of Staff by Level Who Selected Various Strategies Would Be Most Helpful for Behavioral and Mental Supports for Students.....	79
Table 53: Overview of Three Behavioral and Mental Health Supports Initiatives.....	81

Figures

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Referred At Least Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	29
Figure 2: Percentage of Students Suspended At Least Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	29
Figure 3: Percentage of Students Referred Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	30
Figure 4: Percentage of Students Referred Multiple Times at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 with Division Reference	30
Figure 5: Percentage of Students Suspended Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	31
Figure 6: Percentage of Students Suspended Multiple Times at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference	31
Figure 7: Percentage of Students Attending At Least 90 Percent of School Year at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference	44
Figure 8: School Attendance Rate at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	44
Figure 9: Percentage of Students Referred At Least Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	47
Figure 10: Percentage of Students Suspended At Least Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	47
Figure 11: Percentage of Students Referred Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	48
Figure 12: Percentage of Students Referred Multiple Times at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	48
Figure 13: Percentage of Students Suspended Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	49
Figure 14: Percentage of Students Suspended Multiple Times at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference.....	49
Figure 15: Parent Awareness of Events, Programs, and Resources at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference	51
Figure 16: Parent Satisfaction with Events, Programs, and Resources at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference	51
Figure 17: Discipline Data for BASE Students Before Attending the BASE Program and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 1: 2023-2024; N=26)	65
Figure 18: Discipline Data for BASE Students Before Attending the BASE Program and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 2: 2024-2025; N=26)	66
Figure 19: Discipline Data Per Day for BASE Students Before Attending BASE and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 1: 2023-2024)	66
Figure 20: Discipline Data Per Day for BASE Students Before Attending BASE and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 2: 2024-2025)	67
Figure 21: BASE Cohort 1 and Comparison Group Average Referrals Q1 and Q4	69
Figure 22: BASE Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Average Referrals Q1 and Q4	70

Figure 23: BASE Cohort 1 and Comparison Group Average Suspensions Q1 and Q4..... 70

Figure 24: BASE Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Average Suspensions Q1 and Q4..... 71

Figure 25: BASE Cohort 1 and Comparison Group Average Out-of-School Suspensions Q1 and Q4 71

Figure 26: BASE Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Average Out-of-School Suspensions Q1 and Q4 72

Figure 27: Cohort 1 BASE Students and Comparison Group Average Referrals for Year 1 and Year 2 73

Figure 28: Cohort 1 BASE Students and Comparison Group Total Average Suspensions for Year 1 and
Year 2..... 73

Figure 29: Year 1 and Year 2 of Cohort 1 BASE Students and Comparison Group Total Average Out-of-School
Suspensions..... 74

Introduction

Background

Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health.¹ As defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how individuals think, feel, and act. It helps determine how individuals handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. The importance of mental health exists at all stages of life from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.² In 2021, the US Department of Education published a document as a resource on social, emotional, and behavioral supports and other mental health services for children and students. According to the document, schools prioritize the three interrelated components of mental health: social (how individuals relate to others), behavior (how individuals act), and emotion (how individuals feel) to promote overall well-being.³ Aligning with federal recommendations, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) created the Office of Behavioral Health and Wellness in January 2024 aimed at helping schools address the rise in mental health and behavioral challenges facing Virginia students postpandemic.⁴ Even prior to the pandemic, Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) made student well-being a focus in the school division's strategic framework, *Compass to 2025*, with a goal to support the physical and mental health of all students and to strengthen the social-emotional skills they need to become balanced, resilient learners who are personally and socially responsible. Working towards that goal, VBCPS created and expanded several initiatives aimed to support students' behavioral and mental health. The new strategic framework, *Compass to 2030*, continues to prioritize student well-being, resilience, and responsibility in Goal 2. Several strategies were identified for VBCPS that work towards this goal including integrating instructional practices that support students to learn about, practice, and develop social-emotional skills; using the division's Integrated Systems of Support to identify and address the diverse academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students and developing a user-friendly resource outlining the supports available; and promoting mental health awareness and implementing procedures to systematically address identified mental health needs by connecting students and their families with appropriate support.

Mental health can change over time and is influenced by many factors. For example, in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in drastic changes to the daily life and activities of students. Through the National Alliance on Mental Illness organization, a poll of approximately 1,000 parents was conducted in November 2021, which found 44 percent of parents indicated they were very or somewhat concerned about their child's mental health.⁵ In 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Children's Hospital Association declared a national state of emergency for child and adolescent mental health.⁶ Since that time, these organizations have continued to emphasize that the youth mental health crisis remains ongoing. In regards to behavior, a survey conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences in May 2022 showed 83 percent of educators surveyed agreed the pandemic negatively impacted the behavioral development of students.⁷ This survey also showed 56 percent of survey respondents indicated classroom disruptions from student misconduct have increased (influenced by the pandemic), and 48 percent indicated rowdiness outside of the classroom (e.g., hallways, lunchroom) and student acts of disrespect have increased. In addition, students appeared less engaged in school with chronic absenteeism increasing (e.g., missing 10% or more of the school year). According to an analysis of national attendance data, approximately 28 percent of the student population was chronically absent in 2022, which was a substantial increase from the prepandemic rate of 15 percent in 2019.⁸

VBCPS was not immune to these mental health and behavioral challenges for students. Similar to nationwide data, the percentage of VBCPS students who were chronically absent increased since the pandemic from 9.4 percent of students who were chronically absent in 2018-2019 to 17.4 percent in 2022-2023.⁹ Behavior concerns for students in VBCPS also appeared to increase. Compared to a prepandemic year, there was an increase in the percent of students receiving a discipline referral at least once (from 16% in 2018-2019 to 18%

in 2022-2023) and suspended at least once (from 9% in 2018-2019 to 11% in 2022-2023).¹⁰ The severity of behaviors also increased as evidenced by an increase in disciplinary hearings, which are held for more severe incidents (i.e., long-term suspension or expulsion requests). There was an increase in disciplinary hearings from 765 during the 2017-2018 school year to 1,505 during the 2022-2023 school year.¹¹

Within this context, VBCPS ensured multiple supports were in place to address students' needs. VBCPS offers behavioral and mental health supports to all students throughout the division. For example, all schools have school counselors who provide services to students on personal and social development, and schools have access to behavior intervention specialists who work with teachers and school staff, as well as students and parents, to address student behavior.¹² Additionally, schools use the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework as a decision-making tool to provide students with tiered support in the areas of behavior, academics, social-emotional learning, and mental health. Within this framework, each school also uses the Student Response Team process where staff collaborate and use data to make decisions regarding students in need of additional support.¹³ Care Solace is another service offered at no cost to all students, staff, and families that helps facilitate locating providers and scheduling mental health appointments with community-based providers. VBCPS also provides a list of mental health resources on the [VBSchools website](#).

Along with supports available through the school counseling program and the behavior intervention specialists, VBCPS developed or expanded six initiatives in 2023-2024 that offered additional supports to staff, students, and parents to address students' mental health and behavior challenges: Responsive Practices, Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) Professional Learning and Strategies, Communities in Schools (CIS), Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program, Rapid Response, and Bridge Program. These six behavioral and mental health supports were the focus of an implementation evaluation during the 2023-2024 school year. The program evaluation was presented to the School Board November 12, 2024, and recommendations were approved November 26, 2024. Due to a shift in focus areas at schools implementing Responsive Practices in 2024-2025, that initiative was not continued in its current format and therefore, data collection was not continued in 2025-2026. In addition, one of the recommendations from the 2023-2024 evaluation was to continue to maximize the opportunities for students to participate in Wellness Up as part of the Bridge Program. According to the executive director of the Office of Student Support Services, due to budgetary restrictions, VBCPS elected to maximize the outreach of the Bridge Program by expanding it to include highly recommended elementary students to maximize early intervention benefits at elementary school. According to the executive director of the Office of Student Support Services, including highly recommended elementary students in the Bridge Program has had a significantly positive impact, therefore, the plan is to continue with this approach in the 2025-2026 school year. In addition, the Office of Student Support Services will continue to seek opportunities to conduct Wellness Up with secondary students throughout the 2025-2026 school year.

In VBCPS, behavioral and mental health supports generally operate within a tiered system. Tier 1 support includes providing support for all students within a classroom or school and includes strategies such as making connections with students and establishing consistent and predictable routines. Tier 2 support generally provides targeted intervention support in a small group format for students who, based on data, are not responding to Tier 1 supports. Tier 3 support generally includes intensive interventions for students with chronic or intense social, emotional, or behavioral needs. Tier 3 support provides intensive and individualized support.¹⁴ Students likely have needs that are met by supports within and across all tiers, and supports are layered. For example, a student who receives Tier 3 support should also have access to Tier 1 and 2 supports.^{15,16}

The focus of the current outcome evaluation is on the following three initiatives: BIST professional learning and strategies, Communities in Schools (CIS), and the BASE Program. The BIST initiative is available at five select elementary schools only and provides support to students at these schools at multiple tiers. The BIST initiative provides professional learning and strategies to teachers with the goal of supporting students in developing

skills that will reduce disruptive behavior. The Communities in Schools initiative is available at ten select schools across all three school levels and provides support to students at multiple tiers. Communities in Schools is led by CIS school coordinators who leverage community partnerships to work towards meeting both schoolwide and individual student goals. The BASE Program is accessible to elementary school students based on a referral process and provides support to students who participate at the Tier 3 level. It is a one-time intervention at Windsor Oaks for general education students with challenging behaviors. The goal of the program is to teach students coping strategies, problem-solving skills, and social skills needed for school and behavior management.

Purpose of Program Evaluation

Because the selected behavioral and mental health supports for students were primarily new or expanded initiatives and operated with local resources, evaluation of Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students was required for at least two years by School Board Policy 6-26. The year-one evaluation of Behavioral and Mental Health Supports during 2023-2024 focused on each initiative's purpose, target audience and participants, program components, goal areas, perceptions of the initiative, and cost to the school division. Additionally, the evaluation included data related to staff members' familiarity with the initiatives and general perceptions of behavioral and mental health supports for students.

The recommendations from the year-one implementation evaluation were approved by the School Board on November 26, 2024 and focused on publicizing the Behavioral and Mental Health supports more widely across the division to all school staff members along with the types of needs the initiatives address; improving the process for providing parents with information and resources about Behavior Intervention Support Team practices as implementation continued in selected schools during the 2024-2025 school year; prioritizing the identification of behavioral supports that can successfully be implemented after students transition from the BASE program back to their home school; and continuing to maximize the opportunities for students to participate in Wellness Up as part of the Bridge Program. The final approved recommendation was to conduct the outcome evaluation in 2024-2025 focused on progress toward meeting program goals for three initiatives where outcome data monitoring was feasible: Behavior Intervention Support Professional Learning and Strategies, Communities in Schools, and the BASE program. In addition, the current evaluation continues to provide information about the implementation of each of these initiatives and reports any actions taken related to the recommendations from the 2023-2024 evaluation. This year-two outcome evaluation provides the School Board, Superintendent, and central office staff overseeing the initiatives with information about implementation with an added focus on the initiatives' effectiveness and progress toward the outcome goals.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goals for the three student behavioral and mental health supports initiatives included in this evaluation report were identified after discussions with the central office implementation teams overseeing the three initiatives and based on a review of program documentation. Because the initiatives varied in their focus and purpose, specific goal areas were identified for each individual initiative. These specific goal areas are described in each initiative's section of this report, and the themes of the goal areas that emerged across the initiatives are listed below.

- student behavior and discipline
- social and emotional learning skills
- absenteeism
- empowering teachers to address student needs and manage the classroom learning experience

While the focus of this evaluation is on the behavioral and mental health supports for students, the Office of Research and Evaluation acknowledges the growing field of research focused on the interplay between mental health including behavior and academic outcomes. When students are experiencing mental health challenges, it can interfere with their ability to pay attention in class and participate in a meaningful way.¹⁷ Mental health challenges can negatively impact a student's problem-solving ability, standardized achievement test scores, and end-of-course grades.¹⁸ As previously mentioned, behavior is a component of mental health, and research has also shown that behavioral challenges hinder students' academic achievement. For example, externalizing behaviors, such as defiance or aggression, were related to lower GPA and fewer years of schooling completed.¹⁹ In addition, students who exhibit externalizing behavior experience negative long-term impacts on their academic performance.²⁰ Further, students in classrooms with higher rates of disruptive behavior may also experience lost instructional time or reduced engagement, which may lower achievement for all students.²¹

Furthermore, if mental health and behavioral challenges are not addressed, there is an increased potential for students to drop out of school.²² While not supporting students' mental health can have negative academic outcomes, the inverse is also possible; supporting students' mental health and behavior has positive academic outcomes. For example, early detection of mental health concerns leads to improved academic achievement and reduced disruptions at school.²³ Outside of a student's home, schools are the most likely place where mental health concerns will be detected.²⁴ Students spend a substantial amount of their day at school providing the opportunity to identify when help may be needed and to connect students and families with supports to help meet their needs.

Evaluation Design and Methodology

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

The evaluation included mixed methodologies to address each of the evaluation questions. Quantitative data were gathered through closed-ended survey questions and from the VBCPS data warehouse. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with program managers, document reviews, observations during site visits, and open-ended survey questions. Open-ended survey questions were analyzed using a Constant Comparative Method (CCM) based on grounded theory. CCM uses a systematic approach for coding that allows for patterns and themes to emerge through multiple coding iterations.²⁵

The Office of Research and Evaluation evaluators used the following data collection methods:

- Interviewed central office staff who oversee implementation of each initiative to gather information related to implementation and outcome goal areas. Staff were from the departments of Teaching and Learning and School Leadership, as well as the office of Student Support Services.
- Reviewed programmatic documents to gather implementation-related information.
- Conducted site visits at schools during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years to observe implementation of applicable initiatives (i.e., BASE Program and BIST).
- Administered surveys to teachers and teacher assistants, administrators, other instructional staff, student support staff, and other staff who were potentially involved in the behavioral and mental health supports for students, such as nurses and security personnel.
- Administered survey items to parents of students who participated in applicable initiatives (i.e., BASE Program, BIST, Communities in Schools).
- Obtained information regarding the students participating in the initiatives, which depending on the program, included either student demographic information or the total number of students participating in the program along with summary information.

- Collected data from the VBCPS data warehouse related to student demographic characteristics and discipline and referral information (i.e., BASE Program).
- Collected K-3 data from the VBCPS data warehouse related to student demographic characteristics and discipline and referral information to create a comparison group for analysis to investigate the effectiveness of the BASE Program.
- Collected school-specific data from the VBCPS data warehouse related to schoolwide goal areas, such as discipline referral and suspension information, attendance, and parent survey data (i.e., BIST, Communities in Schools).
- Collected school-specific information related to goal areas and implementation-related information from central office staff who oversee the initiatives (i.e., Behavior Intervention Support Team, Communities in Schools).
- Gathered divisionwide information from the educational data specialist regarding the number of suicide risk assessments conducted.
- Gathered divisionwide attendance data from the School Quality Profile information on the Virginia Department of Education website.
- Gathered divisionwide discipline referral and suspension data from the VBCPS data warehouse.
- Gathered cost data from the departments of Teaching and Learning, School Leadership, and Human Resources, as well as the office of Transportation and Fleet Management.

Within the Communities in Schools Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VBCPS, it was the expectation that “students and parents have the right to expect that all volunteers and CIS staff will keep information about them confidential.” Therefore, no student-identifiable information was collected for students who participated in the CIS initiative. For this program, only summary data were collected from program staff regarding students who participated, and survey efforts ensured confidentiality was maintained.

Document Data Collection

To gather implementation-related information, documentation was collected and reviewed for relevant information from each initiative. Documentation included: MOUs or Service Agreements, handbooks or playbooks, program or organization-specific websites, and additional programmatic information created or provided by staff (e.g., data monitoring files). Data from the September 30 enrollment file was also reviewed.

Surveys

Staff Surveys

The Office of Research and Evaluation invited teachers and teacher assistants, administrators, other instructional staff (e.g., reading specialists, instructional technology specialists), student support staff (e.g., psychologists, school counselors, student support specialists), and other related staff who could have been involved in the initiatives (e.g., nurses, security personnel) to complete a survey regarding their perceptions of the behavioral and mental health supports for students. Staff received an email invitation with a link to participate in the online survey in March 2025. Of the staff invited to complete the survey, 31 percent of staff responded to the first substantive item following the initial demographic items (i.e., position and school level). Approximated response rates by staff group and overall number of respondents are shown in Table 1.²⁶ Response rates by staff group ranged from 25 percent for other related staff to 45 percent for student support staff.

Table 1: Staff Survey Response Rates by Staff Group

Group	Overall Number of Invitations Sent	Overall Number of Respondents	Overall Response Rate
Teachers and Teacher Assistants	5,224	1,556	30%
Administrators	264	116	44%
Other Instructional Staff	741	240	32%
Student Support Staff	383	174	45%
Other Related Staff	445	112	25%
All Staff	7,057	2,198	31%

The numbers of respondents by school level are shown in Table 2. Response rates could not be calculated due to some positions not being exclusive to one school level.

Table 2: Number of Survey Responses by Staff Group and School Level

Group	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
Teachers and Teacher Assistants	655	362	550	1,556
Administrators	59	23	36	116
Other Instructional Staff	157	34	52	240
Student Support Staff	88	46	60	174
Other Related Staff	54	30	30	112
All Staff	1,013	495	728	2,198

Note: Staff could have selected more than one level; therefore, the individual levels do not sum to the total.

On the survey, staff were asked to indicate which of the five behavioral and mental health supports they were familiar with in the school division.²⁷ Familiarity was defined on the survey as ranging from hearing or knowing about an initiative to being actively involved in implementing the initiative. Due to some initiatives being available to students or staff at certain school levels, only the initiatives that were relevant to the staff member's selected school level(s) were shown as options to choose from in the survey. In addition, some initiatives only operated at select schools (i.e., BIST, Communities in Schools), whereas the other initiatives were available to students throughout the division at the specified school level (i.e., BASE Program, Rapid Response, Bridge Program). For the initiatives that only operated at select schools, these school names were listed on the survey within the descriptions of the initiatives; therefore, staff could determine whether they worked at a school where these initiatives were operating.

If staff indicated they were familiar with an initiative, they received additional questions about their level of involvement with the initiative and their perceptions of the initiative. Within survey sections about initiatives that operated at select schools only, staff were asked to indicate whether they worked at one of the schools where the initiative was operating. After answering initiative-specific questions, staff were directed to questions about general behavioral and mental health supports at their school. If staff indicated they were not familiar with any of the initiatives that are the focus of this evaluation, they were directed to the general questions about behavioral and mental health supports at their school.

Parent Surveys

In April 2025, parents of students who participated in the BASE Program during the 2024-2025 school year as of April 2025 received an email invitation to participate in the survey about the BASE Program. The overall response rate for parents of students who participated in the BASE Program was 22 percent (see Table 3).

For the Communities in Schools initiative, to align with the MOU and preserve confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, parents of all students at any of the ten schools implementing the initiative were invited to participate in the survey. The response rate for parents of students at the schools implementing Communities in Schools was 3 percent (see Table 3). A total of 34 parents who responded to the survey indicated their child worked directly with a Communities in Schools site coordinator. With a total of 552 students working with a CIS coordinator throughout the 2024-2025 school year, approximately 6 percent of parents whose child worked with a CIS coordinator responded to the survey.

For the BIST initiative, parents of students at any of the five schools implementing the initiative were provided one survey item related to BIST concepts on the 2025 VBCPS Annual Spring Survey. Parents received an email invitation with a link to participate in the VBCPS Annual Spring survey in April 2025. Of the parents at the five schools implementing the initiative who were invited to complete the survey, 5 percent of parents responded to the BIST-related item (see Table 3).

Table 3: Parent Survey Response Rates by Initiative

Initiative	Overall Number of Invitations Sent	Overall Number of Respondents	Overall Response Rate
BASE Program	37	8	22%
BIST	2,775	144	5.2%
Communities in Schools	8,732	304	3.5%

For all stakeholders, survey agreement percentages reported in the evaluation are based on those who answered the survey item (i.e., missing responses were excluded from the percentages).

Interviews

Central office staff who oversee the three behavioral and mental health supports for students were invited to participate in meetings regarding the initiatives in February and March 2025. Separate interviews were held for each initiative, and outcome goals and analysis plans were reviewed and discussed. In addition, updated information about implementation of each of the initiatives was gathered and discussed throughout 2024-2025. Central office staff were from the departments of Teaching and Learning and School Leadership, as well as the office of Student Support Services.

Site Visits

During the first year of the evaluation in 2023-2024, the Office of Research and Evaluation program evaluators conducted site visits at selected schools between March and May 2024 to observe the BIST and BASE initiatives. In addition, during March 2025, site visits were conducted at the remaining schools implementing the BIST initiative that were not visited during the first year of the evaluation. The purpose of these visits was to enable program evaluators to see the programs in operation to provide context for reviewing other documentation and data.

Student Information From Data Warehouse

Quantitative data collected from the VBCPS data warehouse varied by program. For the BIST and Communities in Schools initiatives, data were gathered at the school level. For the BIST initiative, schoolwide discipline data were gathered for the five schools implementing the initiative, such as referral and suspension rates. For Communities in Schools, schoolwide data focused on the school-identified goal areas for the ten schools implementing the initiative, which included attendance and discipline data for 2024-2025. In addition, several schools had a goal related to family engagement; therefore, parent agreement percentages for survey items

from the 2025 VBCPS Annual Spring Survey that focused on parent awareness of events and satisfaction of events were gathered.

For BASE, data were collected at the individual student level. A comparison group analysis was conducted to compare discipline outcomes for students enrolled in the BASE program to K-3 students who had similar discipline patterns.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions were created by the program evaluators after discussions with the central office implementation teams for the three initiatives during the first year of the evaluation. These evaluation questions were used for each of the three initiatives included in this outcome evaluation report.

The evaluation report has three primary sections noted below along with applicable evaluation questions.

1. Familiarity with Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students

- To what extent were staff aware of the divisionwide behavioral and mental health supports for students?

2. Selected Behavioral and Mental Health Support for Students

- What was the purpose and overview of the initiative, including the initiative location, implementation history, and oversight of the initiative?
- Who was the target audience and/or participants for the initiative?
- What were the components of the initiative, including how the initiative operates, professional learning related to the initiative, and family engagement efforts?
- What were the initiative's goals and objectives and what results were available related to the goals and objectives?
- What were the general perceptions of the initiative, including areas of strengths and challenges?
- What were the costs to the school division for the initiative?

3. Overall Perceptions and Divisionwide Trends in Student Behavioral and Mental Health

- What were the perceptions of staff regarding supports for student behavior and mental health available in the school division more generally?
- What are the divisionwide trends in data related to student behavioral and mental health before and after the initiatives were developed or expanded?

Evaluation Results and Discussion

Familiarity with Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students

This section of the evaluation report discusses a recommendation from the year-one evaluation which was to publicize the behavioral and mental health supports more widely across the division to all staff members. This was based on data from 2023-2024 that showed overall, 43 percent of elementary school staff indicated they were familiar with the BASE Program, while 28 percent were familiar with the Rapid Response Program. A lower percentage of secondary staff indicated they were familiar with the Bridge Program (16%). It is important that staff throughout the division have awareness of various initiatives to ensure that students are provided these supports when needed.

According to the executive director of student support services, actions taken regarding the recommendation during 2024-2025 included providing various professional development opportunities. Professional development opportunities included: Mental Health Crisis Protocols professional development, which helped

staff understand the signs of a mental health crisis and outlined the steps to follow; Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), which was expanded to nine sessions throughout the year and provided staff information about supporting students experiencing mental health challenges or crises; Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), which was adjusted to a “train the trainer” model that allowed for 15 sessions during the school year and provided staff with life-saving intervention skills; and various sessions related to mental health offered at the Summer Leadership and Department of Teaching and Learning conferences with the goal of ensuring leaders and staff were well-informed and equipped to handle mental health challenges. In addition, the Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) continued to meet regularly to review data and evaluate the effectiveness of current mental health initiatives; discussed available resources for students, families, and staff; and monitored the progress of work teams. The Mental Health Task Force is an ongoing dedicated group of professionals working to enhance the VBCPS mental health support systems. According to the executive director of student support services, additional steps included continued promotion of mental health awareness and resources through participation in various divisionwide events. There were also various family connections and outreach opportunities, including a Family Connection Webinar. This webinar was presented by school psychologists and answered the question “What is mental health?” as well as described typical mental health fluctuations and mental illness, and offered advice on promoting good mental health in children and adolescents. Additionally, a Celebrating Children Event was held in collaboration with GrowSmart to highlight child abuse prevention month, the month of the military child, and mental health awareness month. The Mental Health Task force members also participated in Together through Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE) Coalition at every high school by providing students with mental health resources. In addition, each month throughout 2024-2025, the VBCPS newsletter featured a dedicated Mental Health Corner, which offered families a curated selection of resources and expert tips designed to cultivate and support the emotional well-being of children and adolescents. Lastly, in preparation for the 2025-2026 school year, the executive director of student support services created a video available to all new staff during the New Educator Orientation that provided a brief overview of the mental health supports available for students in VBCPS, including the Bridge and Rapid Response programs.

In addition, resources are available for staff regarding various behavioral supports on the VBCPS intranet site. For example, there is a link to a VBCPS Behavior Intervention Services website that provides various tools, guides, resources, and checklists that help teachers support students with behavioral concerns.²⁸ Additionally, Office of Student Support Services staff have provided a list of VBCPS Tiered Resources for social-emotional and behavior support that details various types of supports across all three tiers. The file also includes the division contact person to connect with regarding each support.²⁹

In 2024-2025, staff were asked on the survey to select the divisionwide initiatives that were familiar to them. Familiarity was defined as ranging from hearing or knowing about an initiative to being actively involved in implementing the initiative. Because the BASE and Rapid Response programs were available to students throughout the division at the elementary school level, survey data for elementary school staff were analyzed. Because the Bridge Program was available to students throughout the division at the secondary level, survey data for secondary staff was analyzed. The percentages of elementary school and secondary staff who indicated they were familiar with the three divisionwide initiatives for 2024-2025 are shown in Table 4. Overall, in 2024-2025, 45 percent of elementary school staff indicated they were familiar with the BASE Program, and 31 percent were familiar with Rapid Response. In comparison to 2023-2024, there were slight increases in these percentages (increases of between 2 and 3 percentage points). At the secondary level, in 2024-2025, 19 percent of secondary staff indicated they were familiar with the Bridge Program, which was also a slight increase from 2023-2024 when 16 percent of staff indicated familiarity.

Consistent with results from 2023-2024, when further examining familiarity with the initiatives by staff group, results continued to show most elementary school administrators (88%-90%) and student support staff (70%-85%) indicated they were familiar with the BASE and Rapid Response programs (see Table 4). In

comparison to 2023-2024 survey data, there was a notable increase in the percentage of elementary school administrators who indicated they were familiar with BASE (from 78% in 2023-2024 to 90% in 2024-2025). Although lower percentages of elementary school teachers/teacher assistants (22%-37%), other instructional staff (20%-39%), and other related staff (41%-50%) indicated they were familiar with these elementary school programs, there were improvements for each group regarding familiarity with both programs (increases of between 1 and 10 percentage points). The most notable increases were the percentages of other instructional staff familiar with the BASE program (from 29% to 39%) and other related staff familiar with Rapid Response (from 31% to 41%). Similarly, most student support staff at the secondary level (78%) and more than half of secondary administrators (60%) were familiar with the Bridge program. Again, lower percentages of secondary teachers/teacher assistants (11%), other instructional staff (13%), and other related staff (24%) were familiar with the program, although there were improvements in familiarity for secondary teachers and teacher assistants and other instructional staff. There were increases in familiarity with Bridge for administrators and other instructional staff (increases of 6 percentage points each) and teachers and teacher assistants (2 percentage point increase). It is important to note that completing the referrals for some of the programs is designated to certain staff groups, but it is important for all staff to be aware of the resources available for students through these initiatives because other staff members can play a role in initiating early steps.

Table 4: Percentages of Staff Familiar With Divisionwide Initiatives by Staff Group in 2024-2025

Group	Administrators	Student Support Staff	Teachers and Teacher Assistants	Other Instructional Staff	Other Related Staff	Total Group
Elementary						
BASE Program	90%	85%	37%	39%	50%	45%
Rapid Response	88%	70%	22%	20%	41%	31%
Secondary						
Bridge Program	60%	78%	11%	13%	24%	19%

In 2024-2025, staff were also asked their agreement regarding learning about behavioral and mental health supports for students during the school year. Overall, 70 percent of staff agreed they learned about available behavioral supports and 60 percent agreed they learned about available mental health supports. Higher percentages of elementary school staff agreed they learned about these resources, while lower percentages of middle school staff agreed (see Table 5).

Table 5: Staff Perceptions of Learning About Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students

Survey Items	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
I have learned about behavioral supports available for students this year.	76%	64%	66%	70%
I have learned about mental health supports available for students this year.	62%	57%	61%	60%

Comparisons by position showed higher percentages of administrators (90%-92%) and student support staff (87%-88%) agreed they learned about available behavioral and mental health supports during 2024-2025. In addition, 70 percent of other instructional staff agreed they learned about behavioral supports, while 67 percent of teachers and teacher assistants and 63 percent of other related staff agreed (see Table 6). Regarding mental health supports, 66 percent of other related staff agreed they learned about mental health supports this year, while lower percentages of teachers and teacher assistants (54%) and other instructional staff (57%) agreed.

Table 6: Staff Perceptions of Learning About Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students by Position

Survey Items	Administrators	Student Support Staff	Teachers and Teacher Assistants	Other Instructional Staff	Other Related Staff
I have learned about behavioral supports available for students this year.	92%	87%	67%	70%	63%
I have learned about mental health supports available for students this year.	90%	88%	54%	57%	66%

In summary, relatively high percentages of student support staff at all school levels (70%-85%) and elementary school administrators (88%-90%) were familiar with the divisionwide behavioral and mental health supports initiatives at their respective levels. Although notably lower percentages of teachers at all levels (11%-37%) and secondary administrators (60%) indicated they were familiar with initiatives, there were improvements in familiarity for these staff groups during 2024-2025 (increases of between 1 and 6 percentage points). As previously noted, the new strategic framework, *Compass to 2030*, prioritizes student well-being, resilience, and responsibility in Goal 2. The division will continue to work toward this recommendation area regarding familiarity with these initiatives through the strategic planning strategies created for this goal, which include integrating instructional practices that support students to learn about, practice, and develop social-emotional skills; using the division's Integrated Systems of Support to identify and address the diverse academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students and developing a user-friendly resource outlining the supports available; and promoting mental health awareness and implementing procedures to systematically address identified mental health needs by connecting students and their families with appropriate support.

Selected Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students

This section of the evaluation report focused on three behavioral and mental health supports for students that were part of this outcome evaluation including BIST professional learning and strategies, Communities in Schools, and BASE. For each initiative, information is provided about the initiative's purpose, target audience and participants, program components, progress toward outcome goal areas, perceptions of the initiative, and cost to the school division.

Behavior Intervention Support Team Professional Learning and Strategies

Purpose and Overview

The Behavior Intervention Support Team Professional Learning and Strategies in VBCPS provides staff with professional learning and strategies that are grounded in the concepts of Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST). BIST was created by the Cornerstones of Care organization and is based on the idea that students' challenging or disruptive behaviors are rooted in traumatic experiences.³⁰ According to the Cornerstones of Care BIST website, BIST empowers educators to partner with students to develop emotional awareness and positive coping skills, which includes holding students accountable for their actions and teaching them skills.³¹ As part of BIST, students can learn replacement or missing skills to reduce disruptive behaviors. The BIST initiative offers a continuum of intervention strategies for teachers to use, which include a safe seat in the students' classroom, a seat in a buddy room, and the focus room, which is a room separate from the students' classroom. VBCPS began piloting the BIST initiative by providing professional learning to staff at five elementary schools during the 2023-2024 school year: Diamond Springs, Newtown, Parkway, Thalia, and Bettie F. Williams. These schools were selected by Department of School Leadership (DOSL) staff after reviewing academic and behavioral data and discussion with the school principals.³² The purpose of adopting the BIST initiative in VBCPS schools was to reduce the number of negative behaviors that impact instruction and

academic performance, as well as provide an additional layer of support for the schools implementing the initiative.³³ During 2023-2024, the primary focus of the initiative was professional learning for staff. The implementation during the first year was flexible, and building principals determined the level and timelines of professional learning their staff participated in and concepts of BIST that would be implemented at their schools. During 2024-2025, schools continued to progress with implementation by offering additional professional learning opportunities for staff and staff across the schools using more BIST-related concepts with students. In 2024-2025, when administrators were surveyed about the extent to which their staff participated in BIST-related professional learning, all administrators who responded to the item (N=5) estimated that most of their teachers and staff (between 76% to 100%) participated in BIST-related professional learning. In addition, when administrators were surveyed about the extent to which their staff were implementing various aspects of the initiative, four administrators estimated most of their teachers and staff (between 76% to 100%) were actively using BIST strategies with students, while one administrator estimated the majority of their teachers and staff but not all (between 51% to 75%) were actively using BIST strategies with students. Therefore, schools were continuing to show progress with implementation of BIST during 2024-2025.

The BIST initiative in VBCPS is primarily overseen by staff in DOSL with support from the Department of Teaching and Learning, including the Office of Student Support Services. The coordinator of behavior intervention, who works in the Office of Student Support Services, provides oversight of the behavior intervention specialists (BISs) who work at the five elementary schools implementing BIST (along with other schools across the division). Together, the coordinator and BISs at these schools internally monitor aspects of BIST being implemented across the five schools. The BISs also work closely with the building administrators to lead the BIST implementation at each individual school. In planning for the 2023-2024 school year, the school principals could select staff to be part of their school's Vision Team, which included school staff members who led the implementation of the BIST initiative at the schools in addition to the BIS. According to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs, all five schools implementing the BIST initiative established a Vision Team as of June 2025, which was an improvement from the previous year in which 60 percent of schools had a Vision Team as of June 2024. While VBCPS has historically had BIS positions, one additional position was established exclusively for the BIST initiative by converting existing allocations for a behavior intervention support team teacher assistant (BIST TA). With guidance and assistance from the BIS, the BIST TAs oversaw the focus room, which is a room separate from the classroom where students can go to practice replacement skills, calm down, prepare an apology, or create a plan to make better choices.³⁴ During 2024-2025, all five schools employed a BIST TA to assist with implementation, and all schools provided training and oversight of the BIST TA according to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs.

Target Audience/Participants

The participants of the BIST initiative during 2024-2025 were the teachers and staff at the following elementary schools: Diamond Springs, Newtown, Parkway, Thalia, and Williams. Professional learning opportunities were offered to teachers and staff prior to and during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, although building principals could determine the professional learning opportunities in which their staff participated. In addition, all five schools had a BIST TA who worked exclusively to implement the BIST initiative. As noted, these BIST TAs oversaw the focus room within each school and were classified as general assistants. According to DOSL staff, a stipend was created for the BIST TA position as an incentive received at the end of the school year due to potential difficulties of the job related to the extensive training and working with students with disruptive behavior. According to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs, four of the five BIST TAs (80%) employed during 2023-2024 returned for the 2024-2025 school year. In addition, four of the five BIST TAs (80%) employed during 2024-2025 were expected to return for the 2025-2026 school year.

The various supports provided through the BIST initiative were also available to students at these schools at multiple tiers, including Tiers 1, 2, and 3. Therefore, during the 2024-2025 school year, all students throughout the five schools could have participated in the Tier 1 aspects of this initiative, which were common language and class/morning meetings. Students at these schools who needed additional support for behavior could have been provided supports at the Tier 2 and 3 levels. These supports included several options for intervention strategies to help reduce disruptive behaviors and teach students replacement skills (i.e., safe seat, buddy room, focus room, processing, and behavior/think sheets). Schools monitored data related to the use of the focus room, which is considered a Tier 3 support.

According to the coordinator of behavior intervention, across the five schools during the 2024-2025 school year, students were referred to the focus room an average of 28 to 141 times per month per school, with a combined monthly total of about 464 referrals across the five schools. This represents a slight increase compared with 2023-2024, when the combined monthly total was about 435 referrals across all schools. While the overall total increased, at least one school may have continued to show a relatively low average number of referrals (with schools ranging from 37 to 133 referrals per month in 2023-2024), indicating that the change may not have been uniform across all schools.

Survey Respondents

On the Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students survey, a total of 398 staff members indicated they were familiar with the Behavior Intervention Support Team professional learning and strategies initiative. There were 109 respondents who indicated they worked at one of the five schools implementing the BIST initiative. This was an increase in the number of survey respondents from 2023-2024 when 67 respondents indicated they were familiar with BIST and worked at one of the five schools implementing the initiative. The remaining respondents indicated they worked at schools that were not implementing this specific initiative and were excluded from further analyses for this section of the report.

Of the 109 respondents in 2024-2025, 106 staff members (97%) indicated they were involved with the initiative to some extent, which included participation in professional learning, using the common language aspects of BIST, implementing a component of BIST (e.g., safe seat), or having a student who participated in a component of BIST (see Table 7). Only three staff members at the schools (3%) implementing BIST indicated they were aware of the initiative but had limited involvement (i.e., did not indicate being involved in any of these ways). When surveyed about how they were involved with BIST, 87 percent of staff indicated they participated in professional learning, 83 percent used the common language rooted in BIST, 80 percent implemented a component of BIST, and 71 percent had a student who participated in a BIST component (see Table 7). Overall, in comparison to survey data from 2023-2024, there were increases in the percentages of staff who indicated they were involved with BIST in each of these ways with notable increases in staff who implemented a component of BIST (from 60% to 80%) and had a student who participated in a BIST component (from 57% to 71%). This data further suggests that schools continued to make progress with implementing more components of BIST. The perceptions of the 106 staff members who indicated they were involved to some extent were included in this section of the evaluation report.

Table 7: Type of BIST Involvement Reported by Staff

Types of Involvement	2023-2024	2024-2025
Some involvement	93%	97%
Participated in professional learning	79%	87%
Used common language	82%	83%
Implemented a component of BIST	60%	80%
Had a student who participated in a BIST component	57%	71%
Limited involvement only	7%	3%

More than half of the 106 respondents involved in the BIST initiative were classroom teachers or teacher assistants (61%), whereas 19 percent were other instructional staff, and 11 percent were student support staff. Lower percentages of staff members indicated they were administrators (5%) or in another related position (4%).

To gather parent perceptions related to the BIST initiative, parents of students at any of the five schools implementing the initiative were provided one item related to BIST concepts on the 2025 VBCPS Annual Spring Survey. The response rate for parents of students at the schools implementing BIST who responded to the BIST-related item on the survey was 5 percent.

Initiative Components

Professional Learning and Support

Prior to the 2023-2024 school year, VBCPS prepared for the implementation of the BIST initiative by central office staff and school administrators visiting Kansas City to meet with Cornerstones of Care consultants and observe operations of BIST in schools. Throughout the spring and summer of 2023, to prepare school staff for implementation, multiple professional learning sessions were offered to the school principals and school staff at the five BIST schools (see Table 8 for a review of professional learning and support offered). Ongoing professional learning opportunities and support were provided to school staff throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

In preparation for the 2024-2025 school year, BIST Basics I, BIST Basics II, and Vision Team trainings were completed by Cornerstones of Care staff across three days at the end of June 2024 for staff at the schools implementing this initiative. A total of 43 participants attended the BIST Basics I training on the first day, 40 participants attended the BIST Basics II training on the second day, and 54 participants attended the BIST Vision Team training on the third day. Similar to previous years, in January 2025, 12 staff members attended the 2025 annual in-person Vision Team conference with the Cornerstones of Care organization in Kansas City. In addition, at four points throughout the year (September, December, February, and April), the BIST Cornerstones of Care consultant visited the five schools and delivered professional development throughout the day, with one school being visited per day. When staff were surveyed about resources and support, 87 percent of staff involved with BIST agreed the BIST or Cornerstones of Care staff provided them with helpful resources and support for implementation.

Similar to the previous summers, in preparation for the 2025-2026 school year, BIST-related trainings were provided in June 2025 by Cornerstones of Care over a three-day period for staff at the schools implementing the initiative. There was a total of 189 participants who took part in this training.

In addition, according to the coordinator of behavior intervention, the BISs at four of the five schools implementing this initiative also provided ongoing professional learning opportunities to school staff regarding BIST-related topics throughout the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years; however, the extent and content of these professional learning sessions varied by school.

Table 8: Behavior Intervention Support Team Professional Learning Opportunities

Professional Learning and Support	Target Audience
Meeting with Cornerstones of Care Consultant (March 2023)	Select administrative staff members
Two principal professional learning sessions (Spring and Summer 2023)	Building principals
5-day virtual professional learning session (July 2023)	Teachers and other staff depending on school (optional session)
BIST Basics I training (August 2023)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Additional training time specific to team (August 2023)	Administrators/Vision team
Additional training time specific to position (August 2023)	BIST TAs (in charge of focus room)
BIST Overview (August 2023)	Other teacher assistants
BIST Basics II training (October 2023)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
BIST Basics III training (March 2024)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Vision Team Conference (January 2024)	Administrators/Vision teams
Ongoing BIST-related professional learning from BISs	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Ongoing professional learning and support from BISs	BIST TAs (in charge of focus room)
Cornerstones of Care assistance during PLC meetings	School staff
BIST Basics I training (June 2024)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
BIST Basics II training (June 2024)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Vision Team Training (June 2024)	Administrators/Vision team
Site Visits with Consultant (September 2024)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Site Visits with Consultant (December 2024)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Vision Team Conference (January 2025)	Administrators/Vision teams
Site Visits with Consultant (February 2025)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Site Visits with Consultant (April 2025)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
BIST Basics I training (June 2025)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
BIST Basics II training (June 2025)	Teachers and other staff depending on school
Vision Team Training (June 2025)	Administrators/Vision team

When staff were surveyed about the effectiveness of the BIST professional learning they were offered, 81 percent of staff agreed the BIST professional learning provided them the necessary knowledge and tools to manage student behavior, which increased from 72 percent the previous year (see Table 9). In addition, 86 percent of staff involved with BIST agreed the BIST professional learning and strategies helped empower them with the language, systems, and structures to help support students with behavior concerns, which also increased from the previous year when 75 percent agreed with a similar item focused specifically on professional learning.

Table 9: Staff Perceptions of BIST Professional Learning

Survey Items	2023-2024	2024-2025
The BIST professional learning provided me the necessary knowledge and tools to manage student behavior.	72%	81%
The BIST professional learning and strategies helped empower me with the language, systems, and structures to help support students with behavior concerns.*	75%	86%

Note: *In 2023-2024, this item was phrased: The BIST professional learning helped empower me with the language, systems, and structures to help support students with behavior concerns.

To assist school staff with monitoring the implementation of various aspects of BIST, the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs created a BIST reflection tool. The BIST reflection tool is a high-level tool that

lists various objectives related to BIST. Example objectives include providing professional learning, acquiring materials, awareness and use of common language and expectations, and using various components of BIST with fidelity. Staff can use this tool to gauge their level of implementation of each objective on a scale of “Level 1” (Not Implemented) to “Level 3” (Implemented). In addition, the Cornerstones of Care organization provided central office staff overseeing the initiative with a BIST implementation guide. The BIST implementation guide is a more detailed tool that allows staff to assess themselves on a scale of “Successful” to “Concern” for various aspects of BIST. The implementation guide covers various aspects of BIST within the following areas: philosophical, training and staff buy-in, logistics, data collection, prevention, Vision Team, and parent information. During the 2024-2025 school year, school staff had the option to use these implementation monitoring tools to guide their implementation, although they were not required.

Tier 1 Schoolwide BIST Model

According to the Cornerstones of Care BIST website, BIST involves the following: intervening early and consistently with all students (early intervention – the “when”), using specific, caring language of partnering when intervening (caring confrontation – the “how”), identifying a missing skill and partnering with the students to develop the skill (protective plan – the “what”), and maintaining a relationship and providing restrictions when needed (outlasting the acting out).³⁵ An important aspect of the early intervention component is the expectation that students will only receive one verbal redirection per activity and teachers should take action to intervene if the behavior continues. During caring confrontation, staff are expected to intervene for any disruptive or hurtful behavior with specific, common language, including “I see... (referencing the disruptive behavior),” “Can you... (referencing the desired behavior),” “Even though... (referencing the student’s feeling).”³⁶

The BIST concepts also involve specific goals for life, which are goals students are helped to obtain “so they may have the life they want and deserve.”³⁷ Goals for life are rooted in the following three beliefs: “I can make good choices, even if I am mad; I can be okay, even if others are not okay; and I can do something, even if I don’t want to (or even if it’s hard).”³⁸ Further, within BIST, it is believed that students who are disruptive and have chronic behavior issues are missing skills related to these three goal areas and that these skills can be taught. The three skills that BIST views as potentially missing include “I can’t be mad without getting in trouble,” “I can’t be okay if others are not okay,” and “I can’t do something if I don’t want to.”³⁹ The BIST handbook offers suggestions for adults when working with students who are missing each of these types of skills. BIST also indicates that for students’ behavior to change, they must be met with grace, which includes adults accepting students as well as students accepting responsibility for their actions. When staff were surveyed about understanding the purpose of the BIST initiative at their school, 95 percent of staff who were involved agreed they understood the purpose.

One part of BIST is that staff should use specific language when interacting with students. This specific language is referred to as “common language” and should be used by staff with all students throughout the schools. Common language can include the language used during caring confrontation (i.e., “I see... [referencing the disruptive behavior],” “Can you... [referencing the desired behavior],” “Even though... [referencing the student’s feeling]”). In addition, common language includes the goals for life (e.g., “students can make good choices even if they are mad.”) and the missing skills (e.g., “students can’t be mad without getting in trouble.”). The Cornerstones of Care organization provides language reference cards for staff, which were purchased by VBCPS for staff at schools implementing this initiative. These language reference cards can be used to remind staff of the specific language to use. According to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs, four of the five schools (80%) provided the BIST language reference cards to staff as of June 2025. The remaining school opted for creating language reference cards that adapted the language to be more developmentally appropriate to their students. Of the four schools that provided staff with the BIST language reference cards, two schools

used the reference cards consistently building wide and two schools had staff who used the reference cards although not consistently. When staff involved in the implementation of BIST were surveyed about the extent to which common language helped improve student behavior at their school, 84 percent of staff who responded to the item indicated it helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent. In comparison to 2023-2024, there was an increase of 19 percentage points in the percentage of staff who indicated common language helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (from 65% to 84%).

Another component of BIST that could be implemented with all students throughout the school was class/morning meetings. Class/morning meetings are meetings facilitated by the teacher to help students solve problems, plan events, and maintain a positive classroom community. According to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs, as of June 2025, four of the five schools (80%) created lessons related to BIST that were being used in morning meetings, which was an increase from the previous year when two of the five schools (40%) had created BIST-related lessons for morning meetings. When staff involved in the implementation of BIST were surveyed about the extent to which class/morning meetings helped improve student behavior at their school, 82 percent of staff who responded indicated it helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (see Table 10). In comparison to 2023-2024, there was an increase of 9 percentage points in the percentage of staff who indicated class/morning meetings helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (from 73% to 82%).

Table 10: Staff Perceptions of Common Language and Class/Morning Meetings Improving Student Behavior

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following BIST tools has helped improve student behavior if they were used:	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	Not At All
Common language	34%	50%	13%	3%
Class/morning meeting	45%	37%	14%	3%

Note: Percentages exclude those who indicated “Don’t Know” or “Did Not Use.”

Tiers 2 and 3 Individual Student Support

As noted, BIST is based on the idea that students can learn replacement or missing skills to reduce disruptive behaviors. To help teachers intervene, BIST offers suggestions for a continuum of intervention strategies. These strategies are designed to increase teaching time for all students, facilitate lifelong change in skill sets for students with challenging behaviors, decrease disruptive behavior, and provide relief for adults working directly with students. BIST intervention strategies include a safe seat in the students’ classroom, a seat in a buddy room, and the focus room, which is a room separate from the students’ classroom. All five schools implemented the focus room and the safe seat during 2024-2025. In addition, four of the five schools (80%) implemented the buddy room throughout the school during 2024-2025. This was an increase from the previous year when only one school implemented the buddy room. When staff involved in the initiative were surveyed, overall 93 percent of staff agreed they understood the students who could benefit from the various BIST supports (e.g., safe seat, focus room), which was a slight decrease from 95 percent agreement in 2023-2024 but still high. According to the chief academic officer, school staff continued to follow the Student Code of Conduct, and students were referred to the office as appropriate based on VBCPS discipline guidelines.

As part of the intervention strategies, when students engage in disruptive behavior, teachers encourage students to engage in processing, which are questions the teacher asks the student so they can be held accountable and take ownership for their behavior, practice their replacement skills, and create a plan for better choices. When staff were surveyed about the extent to which processing helped improve student behavior at their school, 78 percent of staff who responded indicated it helped to a large or moderate extent. In comparison to 2023-2024, there was an increase of 13 percentage points in the percentage of staff who

indicated processing helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (from 66% to 78%). Teachers could also use target behavior or think sheets at any point when working with students. These sheets were intended for the student to visualize their goals and problem solve or help them to take ownership of the behavior they engaged in and create a plan for success. When staff were surveyed about the extent to which behavior/think sheets helped improve student behavior at their school, 64 percent of staff who responded indicated it helped to a large or moderate extent (see Table 11). In comparison to 2023-2024, there was an increase of 6 percentage points in the percentage of staff who indicated behavior/think sheets helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (from 58% to 64%).

Table 11: Staff Perceptions of Processing and Behavior/Think Sheets Improving Student Behavior

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following BIST tools has helped improve student behavior if they were used:	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	Not At All
Processing	40%	39%	14%	8%
Behavior/Think Sheet	26%	38%	23%	14%

Note: Percentages exclude those who indicated “Don’t Know” or “Did Not Use.”

When a student begins to exhibit repeated disruptive behaviors, the first intervention strategy is the safe seat, which is a desk or seat within the classroom. The safe seat is still within the student’s classroom to allow for the student to continue to participate in instruction but is intended to be away from other students to help the student regroup, process with the teacher, then rejoin the class. During site observations, school staff discussed that it was the expectation that students would not move from the safe seat before processing the incident with the teacher. According to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs, all five schools implemented the safe seat as of June 2025. In addition, of those who implemented the safe seat, all schools established a process for using the safe seat, which was an increase from the previous year when four of the five schools had established this process. When staff were surveyed about the extent to which the safe seats helped improve student behavior at their school, 72 percent of staff who responded indicated it helped to a large or moderate extent. In comparison to 2023-2024, there was a decrease of 2 percentage points in the percentage of staff who indicated the safe seat helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (from 74% to 72%).

According to the BIST continuum of intervention strategies, if students continue to have difficulty with disruptive behaviors when in the safe seat, they may be asked to move to a buddy room, which is a safe seat in another classroom. The buddy room is also intended to help a student regroup, complete a think sheet, and process with an adult in the new classroom so they may return to their classroom safe seat. According to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs, four of the five schools implemented the buddy room as of June 2025, while the remaining school had limited implementation and was working on a process for using the buddy room. This was an increase from the previous year when only one school implemented the buddy room. During site observations, school staff discussed that if they implemented a buddy room, they paired classrooms in advance to be buddy classrooms. When staff were surveyed about the extent to which buddy rooms helped improve student behavior at their school, 60 percent of staff who responded indicated it helped to a large or moderate extent. In comparison to 2023-2024, there was an increase of 8 percentage points in the percentage of staff who indicated the buddy room helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (from 52% to 60%).

If students continue to have difficulty with disruptive behavior when in the buddy room or safe seat (for schools that have not implemented the buddy room), then students may be asked to move to the focus room. The focus room is a room that is separate from the classroom where students can go to practice replacement skills, calm down, prepare an apology, or create a plan to make better choices. This room was staffed by the school’s BIST TA with support from the BIS and building administrators. When students were

asked to go to the focus room, they were escorted from their classroom to the focus room by an administrator, security guard, or the BIST TA. While in the focus room, BIST TAs worked with the students to calm down and process the incident. During the site visits, BIST TAs showed several examples of worksheets that were used for students to process and reflect on their missing skill. After the BIST TA determined that the student was ready to return to the classroom, it was the expectation that the student would continue back through the continuum of intervention strategies starting with the buddy room, then safe seat, then regular seat, depending on implementation. It is also important to note that the students were expected to process the incident with their teacher or staff member who referred them to the focus room prior to returning to their regular seat. Additionally, during the site visits, staff at all schools stressed that the focus room was not presented in a negative way, but that students should view it as a tool they could use while they were learning the missing skills. Some staff expressed the importance of this being a shift in mindset from discussing minor disruptions in a negative, punitive way. Staff also noted it was important to communicate with parents that the focus room was not intended to be punitive but an opportunity to learn and practice replacement skills.

According to data monitored internally by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISs, during the 2024-2025 school year, all five schools physically set up the focus room and were actively using it. In addition, all five schools established a system to collect focus room data. The data collected from the focus room included the student’s information (e.g., name, grade level, teacher) and current types of support the student was receiving (e.g., 504 plan, special education committee, behavior intervention plan), as well as information about what brought them to the focus room (e.g., time of day, the general reason for visit), the skill(s) the student was missing, and whether a think sheet and processing with staff occurred. Throughout the year, BIST TAs collected data through Google sheets. Collecting the data electronically allowed BISs, BIST TAs, and administrators to more easily summarize and monitor the focus room data. During the site visits, school staff discussed the benefit of analyzing which grade levels or teachers were utilizing the focus room to determine patterns, as well as buy-in throughout the school. When staff were surveyed about the extent to which focus rooms helped improve student behavior at their school, 81 percent of staff who responded indicated it helped to a large or moderate extent (see Table 12). In comparison to 2023-2024, there was an increase of 4 percentage points in the percentage of staff who indicated the focus room helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent (from 77% to 81%).

Table 12: Staff Perceptions of Safe Seats, Buddy Rooms, and Focus Rooms Improving Student Behavior

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following BIST tools has helped improve student behavior if they were used:	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	Not At All
Safe Seat	42%	29%	19%	9%
Buddy Room	30%	30%	24%	16%
Focus Room	49%	31%	12%	8%

Note: Percentages exclude those who indicated “Don’t Know” or “Did Not Use.”

One additional aspect of BIST is skill-based coaching or success plans, which may be used if a student is continuing to have difficulty with behavior. According to the Cornerstones of Care BIST handbook, if a student has moved within the continuum of intervention strategies three to five times within a month, they should be considered for a success plan. These success plans involve explicitly listing the skills that are missing for the students and a subsequent plan. According to one school principal implementing success plans, the students with these success plans took part in regular skill-based coaching with an administrator, teacher, or other staff member. According to the Cornerstones of Care BIST handbook, skill-based coaching involves daily adult check ins to practice replacement skills, assess emotions, focus on what it means to have a successful day, and formulate solutions to problems. In 2024-2025, when staff were surveyed about the extent to which skill-based coaching and/or success plans helped improve student behavior at their school, 71 percent of staff

who responded indicated it helped to a large or moderate extent, while 17 percent of staff indicated it helped to a small extent, and 12 percent indicated it did not help at all.

In 2024-2025, staff were also surveyed about which BIST strategies were most useful for helping students improve their self-regulation skills. Staff were provided a list of eight BIST strategies from which they could select; however, there was no limit to the number of strategies they could select. Overall, 94 percent of staff indicated at least one strategy was the most helpful strategy to help students improve their self-regulation skills, while 6 percent of staff indicated none of the strategies were the most helpful strategy. There was some variability in which strategy was selected. As shown in Table 13, the most frequently selected strategies were common language (64%), the safe seat (56%), and the focus room (53%). Lower percentages of staff indicated the following strategies were most useful in improving students' self-regulation skills: processing (41%), class/morning meetings (36%), skill-based coaching and/or success plans (31%), the buddy room (28%), and behavior/think sheets (24%).

Table 13: Staff Selected Most Helpful Strategies to Help Students Improve Self-Regulation Skills

Survey Items	Percent Selected
At least one strategy selected	94%
Common language	64%
Safe seat	56%
Focus room	53%
Processing	41%
Class/morning meeting	36%
Skill-based coaching and/or success plans	31%
Buddy room	28%
Behavior/think sheet	24%
None of the above	6%

Family Engagement

Regarding parent and family engagement, the Cornerstones of Care organization provides general information on their website about BIST concepts and practices as well as recommendations for parents, including the idea that predictability, consistency, communication, and parental support are essential for success. On the website, there is an example of a situation parents might experience when schools implement components of BIST, which is that students may return home with a think sheet. The website provides suggestions for parents moving forward when this occurs, including talking with their child about the incident, talking about the plan, reviewing the goal the child is working on, practicing the behavior, and discussing the plan with the teacher. In addition, there are suggestions to not be angry, punish or take away items, or feel guilty. Through the website, Cornerstones of Care also provides a free three-session virtual learning series about BIST practices for parents twice throughout the year. According to central office staff, these sessions have been leveraged by one school in the past, but based on other reports, these sessions may not currently be leveraged consistently across the five schools implementing the initiative.

One recommendation from the 2023-2024 evaluation focused on improving the process for providing parents with information and resources about Behavior Intervention Support Team practices as implementation continued. In 2023-2024, during site visits, staff implementing the initiative described variability across the schools in the information provided to parents. In addition, in 2023-2024, when staff were surveyed about parents' understanding, overall, 32 percent of staff agreed parents/guardians understood the school's approach to implementing supports and strategies to help students change unproductive behaviors. According to the director of elementary schools, actions taken regarding this recommendation during 2024-2025

included all schools offering a BIST Parent Night with the assistance of the BIST Cornerstones of Care consultant. These events included providing parents with information about the BIST process and philosophy. According to the director of elementary schools, one school hosted the BIST parent night in September, while the remaining schools hosted the BIST parent night in April.⁴⁰ The number of parents attending the events ranged from 20 to 40 parents. On the 2024-2025 survey, all administrators (N=5) who responded to the survey indicated their school provided information and resources to families to build their understanding of BIST support and strategies. This was an increase from the previous year when three of the four administrators who responded to the survey item indicated they did. In addition, in 2024-2025, when administrators were provided the opportunity to describe the information and resources provided to families, of the four administrators who commented, all reported they had a BIST parent night. Other comments from administrators included having discussions with parents about BIST during open house, including BIST-related information in the parent newsletter, and providing parents with a BIST parenting book and BIST parent talk cards.

In 2024-2025, when all staff involved with the initiative were surveyed, 56 percent agreed parents/guardians understood the school's approach to implementing supports and strategies to help students change unproductive behaviors, which was an increase from 32 percent the previous year. Although agreement remained relatively low regarding this item, 78 percent of staff also agreed parents were provided information and resources about BIST practices and strategies at their school. Further, although not directly referencing the BIST initiative, when parents of children at BIST schools were surveyed about understanding the approach their child's school used to help students make good behavior choices, 92 percent of parents who responded to the survey item agreed. Although this agreement was high, this was relatively similar to the agreement of parents at other non-BIST elementary schools who responded to this item (91% agreement).

Initiative Goals

According to an interview with central office staff overseeing the BIST initiative, goals of the BIST initiative were to reduce negative student behaviors and empower teachers. In addition, according to the Cornerstones of Care BIST website, goals of BIST are to increase teaching time for all students, decrease disruptive behavior in the classroom and at home, facilitate lifelong change in skill sets for even the most challenging students, and provide relief for adults who are working directly with youth. To assess the impact of BIST on these goal areas identified by Cornerstones of Care, staff were provided survey items related to BIST impacting these areas. In addition, schoolwide discipline data were examined before and after beginning the implementation of BIST for the five schools.

Survey Data

When staff were provided survey items related to these BIST goal areas (see Table 14), 60 percent of staff involved with the initiative agreed BIST strategies allowed them to increase teaching time for all students and 70 percent agreed BIST strategies allowed them to decrease disruptive behavior in the classroom or other school setting. In addition, 73 percent of staff agreed the BIST strategies allowed them to help students develop missing skills. More generally, 83 percent of staff agreed the BIST initiative provided them with strategies they can use to intervene before behavior escalates, and 88 percent agreed the BIST initiative provided a way to help teachers by offering an option to help support students with behavior concerns.

Table 14: Staff Perceptions of BIST Strategies

Survey Items	Agreement
BIST strategies have allowed me to increase teaching time for all students.	60%
BIST strategies have allowed me to decrease disruptive behavior in the classroom or other school setting.	70%
BIST strategies have allowed me to help students develop missing skills (e.g., make good choices even if they are mad, be okay even if others are not okay).	73%
The BIST initiative has provided me with strategies I can use to intervene before behavior escalates.	83%
The BIST initiative has provided a way to help teachers by offering an option to help support students with behavior concerns.	88%

Note: These survey items were new in 2024-2025.

Schoolwide Discipline Data

To further investigate the impact of BIST on students' disruptive behavior in the classroom, schoolwide discipline data trends for the five BIST schools were examined the year before beginning the initiative (2022-2023) to the most recent school year (2024-2025), which was the second year of implementing the initiative. Schoolwide discipline data included the percentages of students with disciplinary referrals and percentages of students with disciplinary suspensions. Changes in discipline data at the elementary school division level over this time period were also examined, which served as a reference group. In addition, analyses focused on students in kindergarten through fifth grade due to schools potentially varying in how they incorporated students at the prekindergarten grade level in the BIST initiative. Additional analyses were run for specific types of behavior leading to the referrals or suspensions, such as aggression, interfering with the educational setting, and noncompliance, as well as the severity of the infractions, such as referrals resulting in an in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension. However, these analyses did not provide additional insights beyond the overall referral and suspension data presented below. In addition, due to adjustments in divisionwide policies related to cell phone usage during this timeframe, which may have led to increases in referrals, all cell phone policy violations were excluded from the analyses.

To provide a high-level overview of the impact of BIST for the five BIST schools, results are first presented as aggregated data across the five schools along with the division for reference. Second, more detailed analyses focused on change over time for the five individual schools. To ensure individual schools were not identifiable, results were reported in two ways: the range and average change over time across the five schools as well as how many of the five schools showed larger improvement than the division on each measure. These analyses indicated whether schools implementing BIST were improving discipline outcomes at a faster rate than the division overall. It is important to note that decreases in the percentages of students referred and suspended reflected improvements.

The discipline data aggregated across the five BIST schools is shown in figures 1 through 2 along with the overall elementary school division data as reference. Although not surprising given these schools were selected for the BIST initiative in part based on a review of behavioral data, there were higher percentages of students with disciplinary referrals and percentages of students with disciplinary suspensions compared to the division. As shown in figures 1 and 2, from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 overall, BIST schools had decreases in the percentage of students referred at least once (decrease of 1.8 percentage points) and the percentage of students suspended at least once (decrease of 2.1 percentage points). Comparisons to the division level showed a notably larger decrease for BIST schools than at the division level regarding the percentage of students who were referred at least once (decrease of 1.8 versus 0.2 percentage points) (see Figure 1). There was also a notably larger decrease in the percentage of students who were suspended at least once at the BIST schools compared to the division (decrease of 2.1 versus 0.7 percentage points) (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Referred At Least Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference

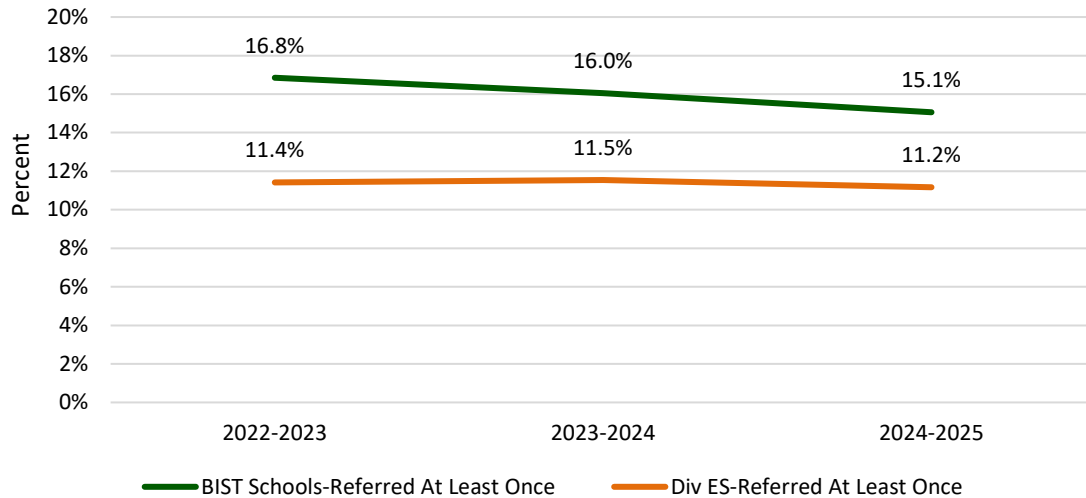
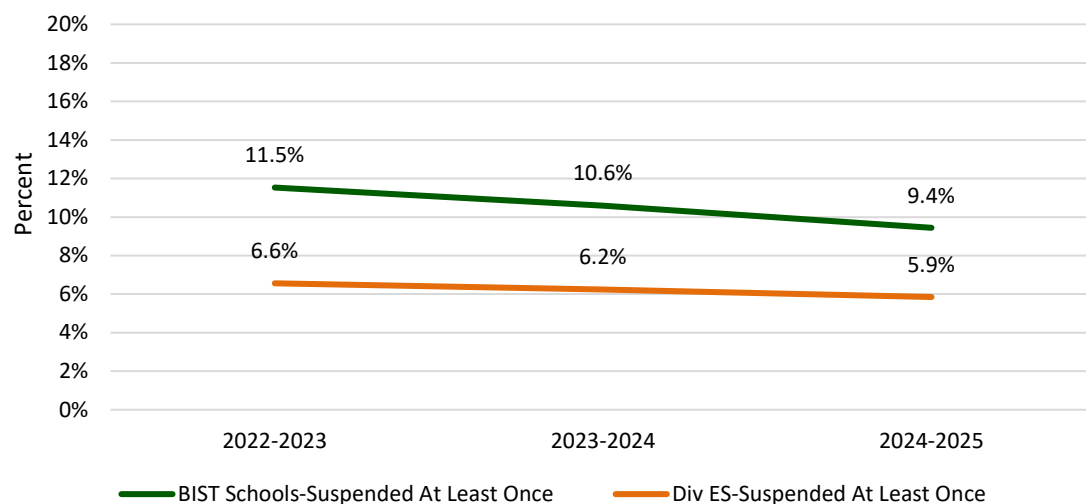


Figure 2: Percentage of Students Suspended At Least Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Beyond looking at the overall referral and suspension rates, data regarding the frequency with which students received disciplinary actions were also analyzed (e.g., students with one referral or suspension as well as students with multiple referrals or suspensions). The additional discipline data aggregated across the five BIST schools is shown in figures 3 through 6 along with the overall elementary school division data as reference.

As shown in figures 3 and 4, from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 overall, BIST schools had a slight decrease in the percentage of students referred once (decrease of 0.3 percentage points) and a larger decrease in the percentage of students referred multiple times (decrease of 1.5 percentage points). The decrease in the percentage of students referred once was larger the first year of implementation (from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024), while the decrease in the percentage of students referred multiple times was larger the second year of implementation (from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025). Comparisons to the division level showed a slightly larger decrease for BIST schools than at the division level regarding the percentage of

students who were referred once (decrease of 0.3 versus 0.1 percentage points) (see Figure 3). There was a more notable difference in the percentage of students who were referred multiple times at the BIST schools compared to the division (decrease of 1.5 versus 0.2 percentage points) (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Percentage of Students Referred Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference

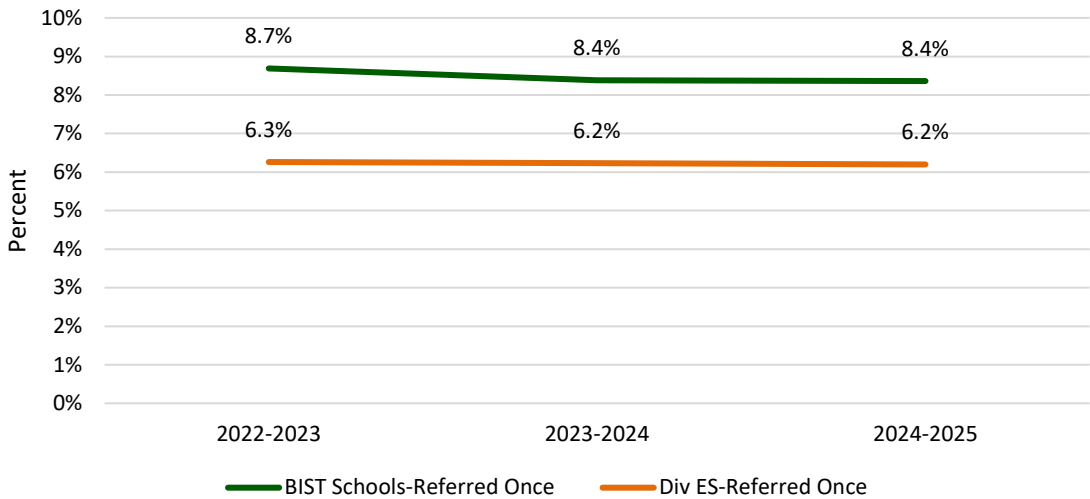
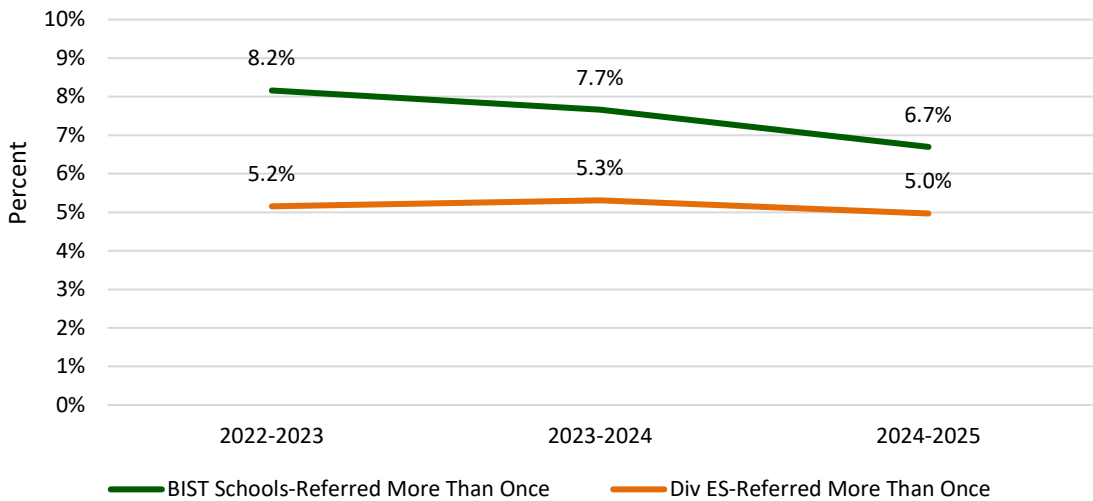


Figure 4: Percentage of Students Referred Multiple Times at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 with Division Reference



The aggregated suspension data across the five schools is shown in figures 5 and 6 along with the overall elementary school division data as reference. From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 overall, BIST schools had decreases in the percentage of students suspended once (decrease of 0.7 percentage points) and the percentage of students suspended multiple times (decrease of 1.4 percentage points). Similar to the referral data, the decrease in the percentage of students suspended once was larger the first year of implementation (from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024), while the decrease in the percentage of students suspended multiple times was larger the second year of implementation (from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025). In addition, comparisons to the division level showed a slightly larger decrease for BIST schools than at the division level regarding the percentage of students who were suspended once (decrease of 0.7 versus 0.3 percentage points)

(see Figure 5), while there was a more notable decrease in the percentage of students who were suspended multiple times at the BIST schools compared to the division (decrease of 1.4 versus 0.3 percentage points) (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: Percentage of Students Suspended Once at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference

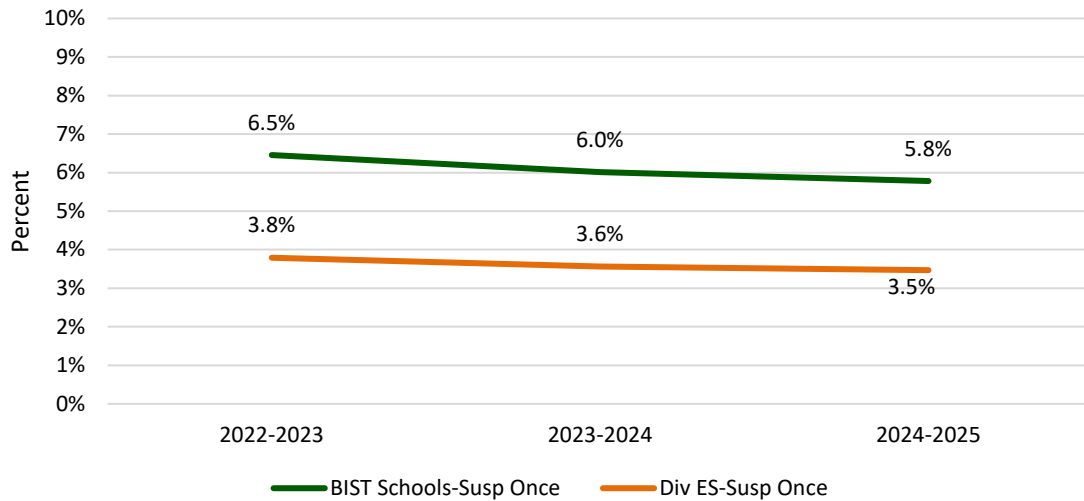
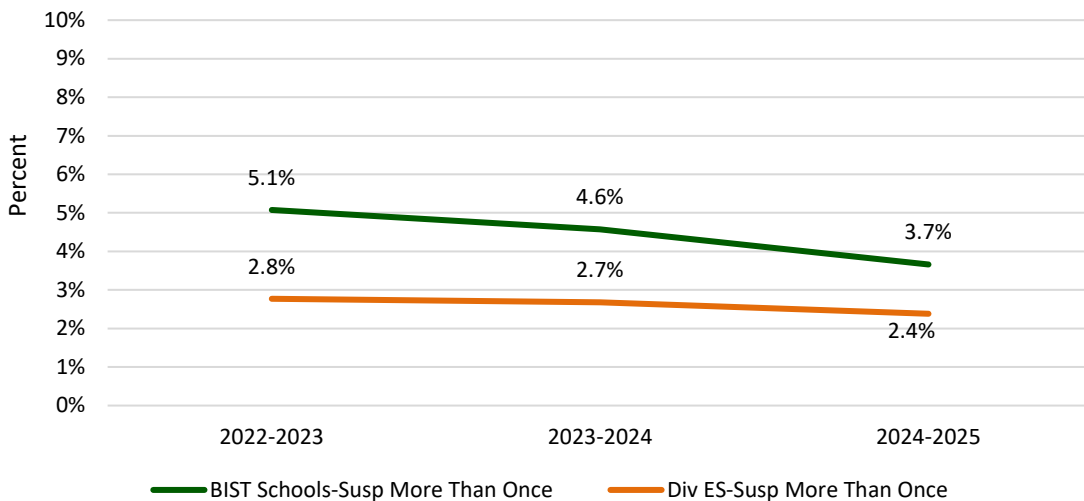


Figure 6: Percentage of Students Suspended Multiple Times at BIST Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



While the above analyses focused on the impact on BIST schools overall, aggregates may obscure individual school progress. More detailed analyses provided below show a different lens with additional information about the initiative's effectiveness at the individual school level. These more detailed analyses examined the change over time for the five individual schools. Data were analyzed to determine whether each school showed changes in the percentage of students with at least one referral or at least one suspension, which includes all students who had any disciplinary action. In addition, information about students with one referral or suspension as well as multiple referrals and suspensions were analyzed. It is important to note that all

schools that had improvements (i.e., decreases) in their discipline data exceeded any changes that were found at the elementary school division level.⁴¹

As shown in Table 15, overall, three of the five schools showed improvements from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 in the percentage of students with at least one referral, while four of the five schools showed improvements in the percentage of students with at least one suspension (with average decreases of approximately 2.2 and 2.3, respectively). Three of the five schools showed improvements from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 in the percentages of students with one referral and the percentage of students with one suspension, with average decreases of 0.4 and 0.8 percentage points, respectively. Four of the five schools also reduced the percentages of students with more than one referral and more than one suspension, with average decreases of 1.6 and 1.7 percentage points, respectively. Notably, one school had a decrease of 5 percentage points in their students with more than one referral, while another school had a decrease of 4.2 percentage points in their students with more than one suspension. Similar to data presented above, overall data regarding the impact of BIST on the discipline data was stronger for measures of repeat offenses. Across all five measures, one school did not show evidence of improvement and instead experienced increases in the percentages of students with discipline infractions. According to the implementation data provided by the coordinator of behavior intervention and BISTs, this school was at an earlier stage of implementation than the other schools, and information received from school leadership staff indicated that in some cases when the initiative is in early stages, discipline data can increase as a result of holding students accountable.

Table 15: Number of BIST Schools Showing Improvements on Various Behavior Measures

Measure	# of Schools with Improvements from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025	Schools Change Range (Average)
Referral rates		
Percentage of students with at least one referral	3 of 5	-7.8 to 4.5 (-2.2)
Percentage of students with one referral	3 of 5	-2.8 to 1.5 (-0.4)
Percentage of students with multiple referrals	4 of 5	-5.0 to 3.0 (-1.7)
Suspension rates		
Percentage of students with at least one suspension	4 of 5	-5.8 to 4.1 (-2.3)
Percentage of students with one suspension	3 of 5	-2.8 to 1.6 (-0.8)
Percentage of students with multiple suspensions	4 of 5	-4.2 to 2.5 (-1.6)

Note: Decreases in the percentages of students referred and suspended reflect improvements.

In summary, across the five BIST schools, discipline data from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 showed the initiative appeared to have the largest impact on students with more than one discipline offense. Four of the five schools showed decreases in the percentages of students with more than one referral and more than one suspension (average decreases of 1.6 to 1.7 percentage points). All decreases were larger than elementary school division-level changes. However, progress was less consistent for discipline data regarding students with a single referral or single suspension with three of the five schools seeing decreases in these percentages and the decreases were smaller on average (average decreases of 0.4 to 0.8 percentage points). In addition, one school saw increases in data for the five measures, although this school was at an earlier stage of implementation. According to school leadership staff, discipline data may worsen upon initial implementation due to the emphasis on student accountability with the BIST initiative, which may be an explanation for these results. Together, the data suggests that BIST has begun to show some evidence of impact on behavior, specifically for reducing repeated disruptive behavior.

General Perceptions

To gather general perceptions of the BIST initiative, staff at BIST schools were surveyed about their satisfaction with the initiative. Overall, 75 percent of staff involved with the BIST initiative indicated they were satisfied. In addition, through open-ended survey items, school-based staff who were involved with the BIST initiative at the five schools had the opportunity to provide comments regarding what worked well and what could make it more beneficial. Overall, 66 staff members made a comment related to what worked well, which was 61 percent of staff who responded to the BIST portion of the survey and were involved at one of the schools operating the initiative. Themes from staff regarding what worked well included using common, consistent language (i.e., a Tier 1 BIST strategy); having specific intervention strategies (i.e., focus room, safe seat, buddy room); and the benefits of processing for student reflection. A couple staff members added the caveat in their comments that these strategies are beneficial with consistent implementation throughout a school. Overall, 64 staff members commented about improvement areas, which was 59 percent of staff who responded to the BIST portion of the survey and were involved at one of the schools operating the initiative. The primary themes from staff regarding improvement areas focused on greater accountability for student behavior, which is aligned with BIST's general philosophy of student accountability. In addition, staff commented on lack of consistency, implementation fidelity, or buy-in from teachers throughout the school; and lack of parent information, involvement, and accountability.

Cost

The cost for implementation of the BIST initiative during 2024-2025 was collected from the departments of Teaching and Learning, Human Resources, and School Leadership. Any costs incurred by and paid by the schools implementing the initiative with school allocations that would have been spent even if the initiative had not been in operation were not considered additional expenses and were not included in the analysis. This may have included costs for initiative-related items that were purchased with school funds or the per pupil allocations schools receive.

Costs for the BIST initiative included staffing the BIST TA position. Although the BIST TA positions were converted from existing allocations and the additional staffing allocations were not added to the budget for the initiative, the BIST TA positions exclusively supported the BIST initiative. The total salaries for all BIST TAs overseeing the focus room was \$138,083. In addition, the cost of health insurance per employee was \$9,431 (total of \$47,155) and FICA and fringe benefits totaled \$37,034, which was 26.82% of employee's salary. DOSL also provided a staff stipend for the TAs, which totaled \$7,500. Therefore, the total staffing costs equaled \$229,772 (see Table 16).

According to the 2024-2025 contract with Cornerstones of Care organization, professional learning and support provided by the Cornerstones of Care organization totaled \$58,000 (see Table 16). This included on-site professional learning and training materials to build capacity and implementation of skills offered on site at the five schools during June 24-26, 2024, totaling \$18,000, which was paid during the 2023-2024 fiscal year and included in the 2023-2024 costs below. In addition, implementation support from the consultant was offered for 20 days at BIST schools and took place throughout the year (September, December, February, and April), totaling \$40,000. The registration and travel for the BIST Vision conference in Kansas City in January 2025 totaled approximately \$19,038 for 12 attendees. Title I funding paid for 10 of the 12 attendees, which totaled \$16,300, whereas local funds were used for two attendees, which totaled \$2,738. One final professional learning opportunity provided for staff during June 2025 in preparation for the 2025-2026 school year totaled approximately \$18,000, which was paid during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Of the professional learning and support costs, \$74,300 were funded by Title I funds.

Overall, the total cost for the BIST initiative was \$306,810. After taking into account the portion of the cost that was funded by Title I grants, the total cost to VBCPS was \$232,510 in 2024-2025. This was relatively similar to the cost during the previous year in 2023-2024.

Table 16: Cost for Behavior Intervention Support Team in 2024-2025

Cost Categories	Costs in 2023-2024	Costs in 2024-2025
Staffing (salary, benefits, stipend)	\$221,868	\$229,772
Professional Learning and Support	\$129,168	\$77,038
Resources or Materials (central office purchases for focus rooms or classrooms)	\$815	N/A
Total Cost	\$351,851	\$306,810
Total ESSER III Grant Funded	\$25,625	N/A
Total Title I Grant Funded	\$103,543	\$74,300
Total Cost to VBCPS	\$222,683	\$232,510

Communities in Schools

Purpose and Overview

Communities in Schools of Virginia is part of a national network delivering integrated student supports to 2 million students throughout the United States.⁴² Founded in 1999, Communities in Schools of Virginia is part of the national Communities in Schools network.⁴³ Within the Communities in Schools of Virginia organization, there are seven affiliate organizations that are localized within communities across Virginia. Virginia Beach is part of the Communities in Schools of Hampton Roads (CIS of HR) affiliate organization. As of the 2024-2025 school year, CIS of HR operates in over 30 schools across 7 cities in Hampton Roads.⁴⁴ The organization began operating in three VBCPS schools during the 2017-2018 school year: Williams Elementary, Bayside 6, and Bayside Middle. The initiative expanded to include three additional schools as of February 2023. During the 2023-2024 school year, the initiative operated in six schools: Newtown Elementary, Williams Elementary, Bayside 6, Bayside Middle, Larkspur Middle, and Bayside High. These schools were selected by DOSL staff after review of academic, attendance, absenteeism, and discipline data and discussion with the school principals.⁴⁵ During the 2024-2025 school year, the CIS initiative was expanded further to four new schools: Diamond Springs Elementary, Point O' View Elementary, Rosemont Elementary, and Green Run High. In addition, there were adjustments to the allocation of some coordinators. In previous years, there was one full-time coordinator allocated to each school operating the initiative. During 2024-2025, there was one full-time CIS coordinator allocated to each of the following six schools: Point O' View Elementary, Rosemont Elementary, Bayside Middle, Larkspur Middle, Bayside High, and Green Run High. There were two coordinators allocated to the remaining four schools (i.e., each coordinator was allocated to two schools): Diamond Springs Elementary and Newtown Elementary, Williams Elementary and Bayside 6. Therefore during 2024-2025, there was a total of eight CIS coordinators across the ten schools. According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, coordinators who were split across schools adjusted the number of students they supported, but there were no adjustments in the level of support they provided to ensure students received the amount of support based on student and school need.

According to the CIS of HR website, the CIS initiative connects students and families with community resources through a CIS site coordinator.⁴⁶ In addition, the CIS initiative uses a tiered approach to provide various supports to students. The CIS coordinator identifies students who need individualized support, as well as assesses overall resources and supports that are needed throughout the whole school. CIS coordinators then work to address these needs through providing support themselves and partnering with community-based organizations. According to the CIS of Hampton Roads contract with VBCPS, CIS coordinators are responsible for collaborating with school division staff as well as offering annual support planning with school teams. The

primary reason the Communities in Schools initiative was implemented within VBCPS was to leverage the services to help with chronic absenteeism.⁴⁷ However, each school principal may focus on different purposes with the assistance of the CIS site coordinators. When staff were surveyed about their understanding of the purpose of the Communities in Schools initiative, overall, 87 percent of staff familiar with CIS at the CIS schools agreed they understood the purpose, which was an increase from those surveyed in 2023-2024 when 81 percent of staff familiar with the initiative agreed. When focusing exclusively on staff who indicated they had direct involvement in the initiative at the CIS schools, 93 percent of staff agreed they understood the purpose of the initiative, which again improved from 90 percent in 2023-2024.

The CIS initiative is primarily overseen by the Department of School Leadership in partnership with the Department of Teaching and Learning. Staff in the Office of Student Support Services, as well as school counselors at the individual schools, also support the initiative. The CIS of HR has an executive director who oversees implementation across Hampton Roads and a program director who oversees implementation in Virginia Beach.

Target Audience/Participants

The CIS initiative supports students at multiple tiers, including Tiers 1, 2, and 3. All students throughout the ten CIS schools (Diamond Springs Elementary, Newtown Elementary, Williams Elementary, Point O' View Elementary, Rosemont Elementary, Bayside 6, Bayside Middle, Larkspur Middle, Bayside High, and Green Run High) had the opportunity to be supported by the Tier 1 aspects of this initiative, which included meeting basic needs and resources or supports related to schoolwide goal areas. According to data provided by CIS, in 2024-2025, across the ten schools, there was a total of 129 events in which CIS provided Tier 1 resources or supports related to their schoolwide goal areas. A total of 5,983 students participated in these 129 events throughout the 2024-2025 school year. In addition, during 2024-2025, there were 22 events in which CIS provided basic needs, supports, or resources to students, which reached a total of 1,557 students overall across all events.

Students at the CIS schools who received individualized support (i.e., were on the CIS site coordinators' caseloads) were provided supports at the Tier 2 and 3 levels, which included meeting in small groups or regular check-ins. According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, the number of students who were on the CIS coordinators' caseloads throughout the entire 2024-2025 school year ranged from 31 to 66 at the elementary school level, 27 to 71 at the middle school level, and 80 to 98 at the high school level. The coordinators allocated to two schools split the total number of students they supported across the two schools (i.e., worked with half the number of students at one school as schools with a full-time coordinator); therefore, schools with coordinators who were split across two schools in 2024-2025 had a range of 27 to 36 students per school, while schools with coordinators at one school ranged from 44 to 98 students.

Overall, there was a total of 552 students at the ten schools on the caseloads of all eight CIS site coordinators throughout the 2024-2025 school year, which increased from 383 students at the six schools on the caseloads of the six CIS site coordinators schools the previous year.⁴⁸ Students could have been referred to CIS services and have goals in the following areas: academics, attendance, behavior, or social and emotional learning. Students could have had a goal in more than one area during 2024-2025. Data regarding students' goals was available for 538 students. Overall, 52 percent of students (N=280) had a goal in the area of academics, 26 percent of students (N=140) had a goal in the area of attendance, and 24 percent of students (N=127) had a goal in the area of behavior, and less than 1 percent (N=1) had a goal in the area of social and emotional learning.

Survey Respondents

On the Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students survey, a total of 591 staff indicated they were familiar with the Communities in Schools initiative. There were 217 respondents who indicated they worked at one of the ten schools currently implementing the CIS initiative during 2024-2025. This was an increase in comparison to 2023-2024 when 96 respondents were familiar with the CIS initiative and indicated they worked at one of the schools implementing the initiative. The remaining respondents indicated they worked at schools that were not implementing this specific initiative and were excluded from these analyses.

Overall, 83 of the 217 staff members (38%) indicated they were involved with the initiative, such as identifying students to receive support through the initiative, collaborating with the CIS coordinator, assisting with a CIS event, or some other kind of involvement. An additional 134 staff members (62%) indicated they had limited involvement with the initiative although they were familiar with the initiative and worked at a school that is currently implementing CIS. The perceptions for these 217 staff members are included in this report as a whole in addition to being provided separately based on level of involvement (i.e., direct CIS involvement and limited involvement only).

As shown in Table 17, the majority of respondents who were familiar with the initiative were classroom teachers (59%). Of those who indicated they had involvement with CIS, half were classroom teachers (51%), 18 percent were administrators, and the remaining staff were either student support staff (24%), other instructional staff (5%), or another related position (e.g., nurse, security) (2%). Of those who indicated they had limited involvement, 65 percent were classroom teachers, 23 percent were other instructional staff, 6 percent worked in another related position (e.g., nurse, security), 5 percent were student support staff, and 1 percent were administrators.

Table 17: Communities in Schools Respondents by Staff Group and Involvement

Staff Group	CIS Involvement		Limited Involvement Only		Total Group	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
Administrator	21%	18%	N/A	1%	9%	7%
Classroom Teacher or Teacher Assistant	50%	51%	69%	65%	60%	59%
Other Instructional Staff	14%	5%	13%	23%	14%	16%
Student Support Staff	14%	24%	7%	5%	10%	12%
Other Related Staff	N/A	2%	11%	6%	6%	5%

When surveyed about the type of involvement, the majority of staff who indicated they were involved with the CIS initiative indicated they collaborated with CIS site coordinators regarding students (76%), identified students for the CIS site coordinator's caseload (46%), and assisted with schoolwide CIS events (41%) (see Table 18). In addition, 5 percent indicated they were involved in another way, such as being on a team with the CIS site coordinator. In comparison to 2023-2024, there was an increase in staff who indicated they collaborated with the CIS site coordinator regarding students (from 62 to 76 percent), although there was a decrease in the percentage of staff who indicated they were involved through identifying students (from 60 to 46 percent) or assisting with schoolwide events (from 50 to 41 percent).

Table 18: Type of Communities in Schools Involvement Reported by Staff

Types of Involvement	2023-2024	2024-2025
Collaborated with CIS site coordinator regarding students	62%	76%
Identified students for CIS site coordinator's caseload	60%	46%
Assisted with schoolwide CIS events	50%	41%
Limited involvement	17%	12%
Other	5%	5%

To gather parent perceptions of the CIS initiative, in 2023-2024, parents of students receiving individualized CIS services were invited to participate in a survey through a survey link distributed directly by the CIS coordinators. Overall, 13 parents responded to the survey in 2023-2024, which was an approximate response rate of 3 percent. In 2024-2025, parents of all students at any of the ten CIS schools were invited to participate in the survey. A total of 304 parents responded to the survey, which was a response rate of 3 percent (8,732 invitations sent). On the survey, parents were asked to indicate whether their child worked directly with a CIS site coordinator. Overall, 11 percent of parents who responded to the survey (N=34) indicated their child worked directly with a CIS site coordinator. Where applicable, summary data are provided for the total group of parents who responded to the survey and for those parents who indicated their child worked with a CIS site coordinator.

Initiative Components

Tier 1 Schoolwide Support

As part of the Communities in Schools tiered support model, site coordinators conduct a needs assessment for their schools in May to prepare for the upcoming school year. In collaboration with the principal, CIS site coordinators determine schoolwide goals for their overall school community. After the needs assessment is conducted, the site coordinator develops a School Support Plan that outlines the goals and planned supports for the school year. According to the 2024-2025 individual School Support Plans for the ten CIS schools, nine schools identified two goals for the 2024-2025 school year and one school identified one goal. Across all ten schools, schoolwide goals focused on the areas of attendance, family engagement, and student behavior. The most commonly identified goal areas were attendance (eight schools) and family engagement (eight schools). According to the executive director of CIS of HR, in February of each year, the site coordinator and principal meet to update the Student Support Plan and ensure they are on track towards meeting their goals.

Resources and supports offered schoolwide generally leverage community partnerships and are aligned with one of their schoolwide goals. For example, during the 2024-2025 school year, aligning with their attendance goal, many schools held attendance initiatives such as 3v3 basketball tournaments that students could participate in if they showed improvement in their attendance. Aligned with their behavior goal, two schools had reward systems that offered students incentives for positive behavior, such as providing video games for students to play. Aligned with family engagement goals, CIS events were held, including parent workshops, such as PTA Bingo Night, SOL Review in the form of Jeopardy, Donuts with Grown Ups, and a Student Expectations Paint Night. Other examples of events held by CIS included one school partnering with Family Connections during the holiday season to ensure that gifts were provided to families in need at their school and another school partnering with Kenneth Dorsey Jr. to provide a STEM night for students and families. In addition, all schools offered students and families resources to ensure basic needs were being met, such as providing hygiene products, clothing and shoe drives, and food banks. According to CIS staff, CIS coordinators attempted to provide any resources or supports that students and families within their community needed. When staff at the CIS schools were surveyed about the CIS community partnerships, 97 percent agreed the community partnerships as part of the Communities in Schools initiative were valuable for their school. In

comparison to 2023-2024, there was a notable increase in the agreement with this item for staff who indicated they had limited involvement with the initiative (from 89 to 97 percent) (see Table 19).

Table 19: Staff Perceptions of Communities in Schools Community Partnerships

Survey Item	CIS Involvement		Limited Involvement Only		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
The community partnerships as part of the Communities in Schools initiative are valuable for my school.*	95%	98%	89%	97%	92%	97%

*Agreement percentages do not include those who indicated Don't Know/Not Applicable.

On a monthly basis, CIS coordinators provided school principals with progress reports, which detailed the types of supports the CIS coordinator provided for every schoolwide goal they set and the resources provided for basic needs. Within these reports, coordinators could also include information regarding concerns/challenges and additional needed supports for the future. During the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director also met with the site coordinators monthly to monitor data and met with the school principals at the beginning and end of the school year.

Tiers 2 and 3 Individual Student Support

Another part of the Communities in Schools tiered support model is providing individualized supports and resources to a smaller number of students. CIS site coordinators worked with school staff to identify students who could benefit from individualized CIS supports, which generally occurred at the beginning of the school year. According to the CIS site coordinators, students could be referred by any school staff member, such as teachers or administrators, parents, students themselves, or the CIS site coordinator. As noted, students were generally referred for services if they were having difficulty in one or more of the following areas: attendance, behavior, and/or academics. According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, students could also be referred due to mental health or social-emotional reasons, although there was only one student with a goal in this area during 2024-2025.

Overall, when surveyed, 71 percent of staff familiar with CIS at the ten CIS schools agreed they understood the process for identifying students who may benefit from support through the Communities in Schools initiative, which increased from 66 percent the previous year. As shown in Table 20, consistent with 2023-2024, as may be expected, a higher percentage of staff who had CIS involvement at their school indicated they understood the process for identifying students (90%) compared to staff who had limited involvement only (58%).

Table 20: Staff Perceptions of Student Identification for Communities in Schools

Survey Item	CIS Involvement		Limited Involvement Only		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
I understand the process for identifying students who may benefit from support through the Communities in Schools initiative.*	83%	90%	52%	58%	66%	71%

*Agreement percentages do not include those who indicated Don't Know/Not Applicable.

According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, there is a CIS guide for CIS site coordinators to determine goals for students. The CIS goal guide includes information related to whether students need support and how much support is needed. First, coordinators can determine whether students are low, moderate, or high risk. Data ranges are provided for the areas of attendance, behavior, and academics for each

risk level. For example, if students had an average daily attendance rate of 95 to 100 percent, they would have been considered low risk; whereas if students had an average daily attendance rate of 91 to 94 percent, they would have been considered moderate risk; and if students had an average daily attendance rate of 90 percent or below, they would have been considered high risk. The CIS goal guide also includes information related to establishing criteria or targets. For attendance, it was suggested that the criteria include increasing the average daily attendance percentage to ensure the student is not chronically absent by 2 percentage points.

Within the monthly reports that CIS coordinators provided school principals, data related to monitoring students’ goals were also provided. The student data section of the monthly report was organized by goal area (e.g., attendance, behavior) with the total number of students working towards each goal and the percentage of students who were making progress or who met their goal. Site coordinators could also provide principals with information regarding concerns or challenges and additional supports needed within each goal area.

When a student was referred for services, a cover letter from the CIS coordinator and consent form were sent home to the student’s parent/guardian. The cover letter introduced the coordinator and the services provided by CIS, including examples of resources offered at the student’s specific school. The consent form included consent for participation in the general CIS program/service, as well as other services that could be specified in the student’s Individualized Service Plan (ISP). The signed consent form was valid for three years from the date the form was signed; therefore, students could continue to remain on a coordinator’s caseload across multiple school years.

After obtaining consent for individualized CIS services, students were then considered to be on the CIS site coordinator’s caseload for the school year. When on their caseload, coordinators worked with students individually and in small groups, conducted regular check-ins, and served as mentors for the students. According to VBCPS CIS site coordinators, they often served as a safe, trusted adult in the building for the students. Coordinators also leveraged community partnerships for individual students on their caseloads. For example, during 2024-2025, two schools worked with the Teen Outreach Program (TOP), which offered students the ability to conduct service-learning projects, while another school partnered with the Boule’ Scholars Program, which assisted students with pursuing dual enrollment opportunities. VBCPS CIS site coordinators also emphasized the importance of providing students and families with a safe space and being external to school staff. In addition, CIS site coordinators may be leveraged as a bridge between the school staff and families. VBCPS CIS site coordinators expressed the importance of having ongoing and open communication with the parents of students on their caseload.

According to central office staff, CIS allows schools to provide a layered approach for meeting students’ needs, including working closely with the school counselors and other support staff, and the coordinators providing support when there are gaps in students’ services. Overall, when surveyed, 93 percent of staff familiar with CIS at the CIS schools agreed the CIS initiative provided assistance to staff by helping support students who may be at risk and in need of support, which increased from 90 percent the previous year. As shown in Table 21, consistent with 2023-2024, a higher percentage of staff who had CIS involvement at their school agreed (97%) compared to staff who had limited involvement only (89%).

Table 21: Staff Perceptions of Communities in Schools Providing Assistance to Staff

Survey Item	CIS Involvement		Limited Involvement Only		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
Communities in Schools has provided assistance to staff by helping support students who may be at risk and in need of support.*	93%	97%	86%	89%	90%	93%

*Agreement percentages do not include those who indicated Don't Know/Not Applicable.

Family Engagement

As previously noted, CIS coordinators offered schoolwide events for students and families; however, these events may not be advertised directly as CIS-related events. When parents of students at the ten CIS schools were surveyed about the CIS initiative, 35 percent indicated they were familiar with the CIS initiative at their child’s school. Of those who indicated they were familiar with the initiative, 95 percent agreed they understood the purpose of the initiative and 82 percent agreed the resources provided through the initiative were helpful for their family.

At the Tier 2 and 3 levels, according to the VBCPS CIS site coordinators, they communicated with parents of students who were referred to the individualized services, such as calling before or after sending home the information and consent forms to answer any questions. During these conversations, coordinators also discussed any issues the student was having at home and any potential goal areas. According to the CIS site coordinators, parents are viewed as valuable partners who are active in the services offered through this initiative. When parents were surveyed about the consent process, 96 percent of parents who responded to the survey and indicated their child worked with a coordinator agreed the information provided during the consent process was clear and easy to understand. In addition, 91 percent of parents who responded to the survey and indicated their child worked with a coordinator agreed they understood the purpose of the CIS initiative at their child’s school. According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, students’ ISPs, which included student-specific goals and suggested resources or supports, were created upon looking at students’ baseline data in their areas of concern. Overall, 92 percent of parents who responded to the survey and indicated their child worked with a coordinator agreed they participated in the development of their child’s ISP. When parents were surveyed about the helpfulness of resources provided through the CIS initiative, 97 percent of parents who responded to the survey and indicated their child worked with a coordinator agreed the resources provided had been helpful for their family and that working with the initiative helped meet their child’s needs. In addition, when surveyed about the level of helpfulness, 79 percent of parents indicated the initiative was very helpful for their child and family, while 17 percent indicated the initiative was somewhat helpful and only 3 percent indicated it was not helpful.

When staff were surveyed about providing resources to families, most staff (95%) agreed the CIS initiative provided useful resources and support for families, and agreement increased in 2024-2025. As shown in Table 22, there was a slightly higher agreement percentage for those staff who indicated they were involved in the initiative.

Table 22: Staff Perceptions of Communities in Schools Providing Resources and Support

Survey Items	CIS Involvement		Limited Involvement Only		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
The Communities in Schools initiative has provided useful resources and support for families at this school.*	93%	97%	90%	94%	91%	95%

*Agreement percentages do not include those who indicated Don’t Know/Not Applicable.

Initiative Goals

Schoolwide Goals

According to the 2024-2025 individual School Support Plans for VBCPS schools, nine of the ten schools identified two schoolwide goals related to Communities in Schools and one school identified one goal. For the 2024-2025 school year, eight schools had a goal related to improving parent engagement, eight schools identified a goal related to attendance, and three schools had a goal related to behavior. In these school

support plans, schools also identified the type of data they would use to measure their goal as well as an established target (e.g., reduce the percentage of chronically absent students by 2 percentage points). Across all schools with an attendance goal, the measurement was the percentage of students who were chronically absent. Across all schools with a behavior goal, the measurement was the total number of suspensions. The schoolwide parent engagement goal was measured by the number of parents who signed into parent engagement events. Some schools also had measures related to the number of events offered. The targets established varied for each school and goal.

According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, schoolwide goal data were analyzed at the end of the year to determine whether goals were met or progress toward the goals was made. The goals were determined to have been met if the data met the criteria established by the schools, whereas progress toward the goals was determined by whether data improved from baseline but the criteria were not met. If schools stayed at baseline or fell below baseline, the goals were determined to not have been met, and no progress was made. According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, the CIS site coordinators obtained schoolwide data directly from the VBCPS Student Information System, from the school’s school counselor, or through publicly available data on the Virginia Department of Education website.

When staff directly involved with the initiative were surveyed about the impact of the CIS initiative at the overall school level, 97 percent of staff agreed the Communities in Schools initiative had a positive impact helping their school reach its goals.

Data obtained from the CIS initiative showed that eight of the ten schools met at least one of their schoolwide goals during the 2024-2025 school year. Five of the ten schools met all their goals, while three other schools met only one of their goals (one of these three schools showed progress was made toward the other goal, while the other two schools did not show progress toward the other goal). In addition, two schools did not meet any of their goals and no progress was made. It’s important to note that there were no notable differences in these results based on schools that had full- or part-time site coordinators.⁴⁹

Schoolwide data analyzed by goal area showed similar percentages of schools met their goals across all goal areas (from 63 and 67 percent of the schools met the goal depending on goal area) (see Table 23).

Table 23: Percentages of CIS Schoolwide Goals With Progress Made by Goal Area in 2024-2025

Goal Area	Schools With Goals Met	Schools With Goals Not Met, Progress Made	Schools With Goals Not Met, No Demonstrated Progress	Total Goals
Attendance	63% (N=5)	n/a	38% (N=3)	8
Behavior	67% (N=2)	n/a	33% (N=1)	3
Family Engagement	63% (N=5)	13% (N=1)	25% (N=2)	8
Overall	63% (N=12)	5% (N=1)	32% (N=6)	19

Additional Analyses for Schoolwide Goals

To further investigate the impact of CIS on schoolwide goal areas, schoolwide data trends for the ten schools implementing the CIS initiative were examined. As a reminder, nine of the ten schools identified two schoolwide goals related to Communities in Schools and one school identified one goal. To examine the full impact of the initiative across the two years of implementation during this program evaluation period, goal areas were also examined for the 2023-2024 school year. All six schools who implemented the CIS initiative in 2023-2024 kept at least one of their goals the same from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 (i.e., five schools kept one goal the same, one school kept both goals the same).⁵⁰

To evaluate the impact of the CIS initiative on the goal areas across all implementation years, baseline data were compared from the year before a school set the goal (i.e., baseline data) to the most recent school year. If schools kept the same goal for the CIS initiative from the previous year (2023-2024), data were examined from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025, whereas if schools had a newly identified CIS goal in a certain area in 2024-2025, data were examined from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025. Analyses presented below are provided for students in grades K through 12 due to the potential for variability in the extent to which schools involved students in prekindergarten.

Attendance Goal

Eight schools created a CIS goal related to attendance for the 2024-2025 school year. Four of these schools also had an attendance CIS goal the previous school year (2023-2024), while attendance was a newly identified CIS goal for the remaining four schools. The measure selected by schools to assess their attendance goal was related to the percentage of students who were chronically absent (i.e., defined as being absent for 10 percent of the school year). To align with this measure, the percentage of students who attended at least 90 percent of the school year was analyzed. To be included in this analysis, students must have been enrolled at least half the school year. Although the CIS school attendance measure primarily focused on chronic absenteeism, data for an additional attendance measure, average school attendance rate, was included for additional information. The average school attendance rate was calculated based on the total number of days each student attended school divided by the total number of days each student was enrolled, which reflects the actual percentage of instructional days attended across the whole school.

To determine whether each school showed evidence of improvement for these measures, data were compared before and after working towards the attendance goal through CIS implementation. In addition, to inform whether improvements were related to work of the CIS initiative, improvements were examined relative to the division for reference. For these analyses, a school was considered to have “exceeded the division trend” when improvement from the baseline year to 2024-2025 was greater than improvement observed for the same grade span at the division level. In contrast, a school was considered to have shown improvement but “did not exceed the division trend” when improvement was smaller than the division’s improvement over the same timeframe. This provides context for whether a school’s improvement reflected progress beyond the division-wide trends. Because these measures may vary by school or grade level, all division comparisons were matched to each school’s specific grade span. Schools that had exclusive grade levels were compared to division level data with these grade levels only (e.g., a school with only students in kindergarten and first grade was compared to division data for kindergarten and first grade students).

From the year before their CIS attendance goal was established (i.e., either 2022-2023 or 2023-2024) to the most recent school year, 2024-2025, all eight schools showed improvements in the percentage of students attending at least 90 percent of the school year and their average school attendance rate. With the additional context of comparing individual school increases to improvements found at the division-level, 63 percent (N=5) of the schools showed improvements over this time period that exceeded improvement at the division-level regarding the percentage of students attending at least 90 percent of the school year, while 38 percent (N=3) showed improvements that did not exceed improvement at the division-level (see Table 24). Additionally, 75 percent (N=6) showed larger improvements in the average school attendance rate, while 25 percent (N=2) showed improvements that did not exceed improvement at the division-level.

Table 24: Percentages of CIS Attendance Schools With Progress Toward Attendance Measures

Measure	Improvement, Exceeded Division Trend	Improvement, Did Not Exceed Division Trend	No Improvement
Percentage of students attending 90 percent of the school year	63% (N=5)	38% (N=3)	n/a
Average School Attendance Rate	75% (N=6)	25% (N=2)	n/a

Note: Division comparisons are matched to each school's grade span.

Additional analyses were conducted to examine whether there were any differences by school level in the percentage of schools that showed evidence of improvement that exceeded the division-level for these measures. It is important to note that there were five elementary schools with an attendance goal, two high schools with an attendance goal, and only one middle school with an attendance goal. As shown in Table 25, all three secondary CIS schools with an attendance goal showed improvements that exceeded the division at their respective levels using both measures, while 40 to 60 percent of the elementary CIS schools, depending on the measure, showed improvements that exceeded the division at the elementary school level.

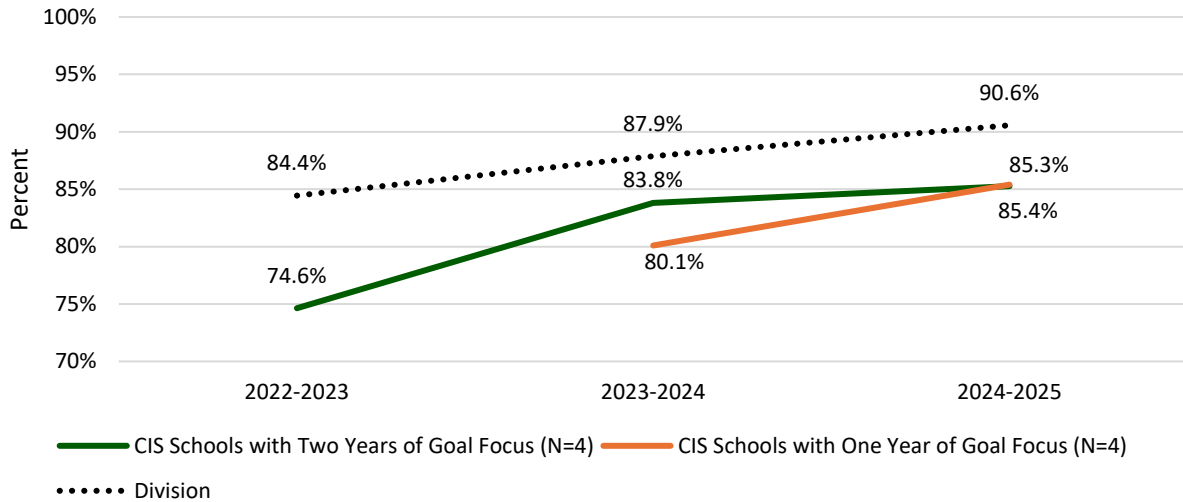
Table 25: Percentages of CIS Attendance Schools Exceeding Division Trends in Attendance Measures by Level

Measure	Elementary School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=5)	Middle School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=1)	High School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=2)
Percentage of students attending 90 percent of the school year	40% (N=2)	100% (N=1)	100% (N=2)
Average School Attendance Rate	60% (N=3)	100% (N=1)	100% (N=2)

Figures 7 and 8 provide additional context regarding the average change over time in these measures for the CIS schools relative to the division overall. Data are provided separately for schools that worked toward their CIS attendance goal for two years versus one year. The division data presented in the graphs represents all grade spans of all CIS schools with an attendance goal.

As shown in Figure 7, regardless of the length of time working towards their CIS attendance goal, on average, CIS schools had increases in the percentage of students who attended at least 90 percent of the school year from baseline (i.e., either 2022-2023 or 2023-2024) to 2024-2025 (increase of 10.6 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for two years and increase of 5.3 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for one year). Comparisons to the trend at the overall division-level showed the changes from baseline to 2024-2025 for the CIS schools exceeded improvements at the division-level. Most notably, compared to the division level, there was a large improvement in their first year of working towards the attendance goal (i.e., from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024) for schools focusing on the goal for two years (increase of 9.2 versus 3.4 percentage points).

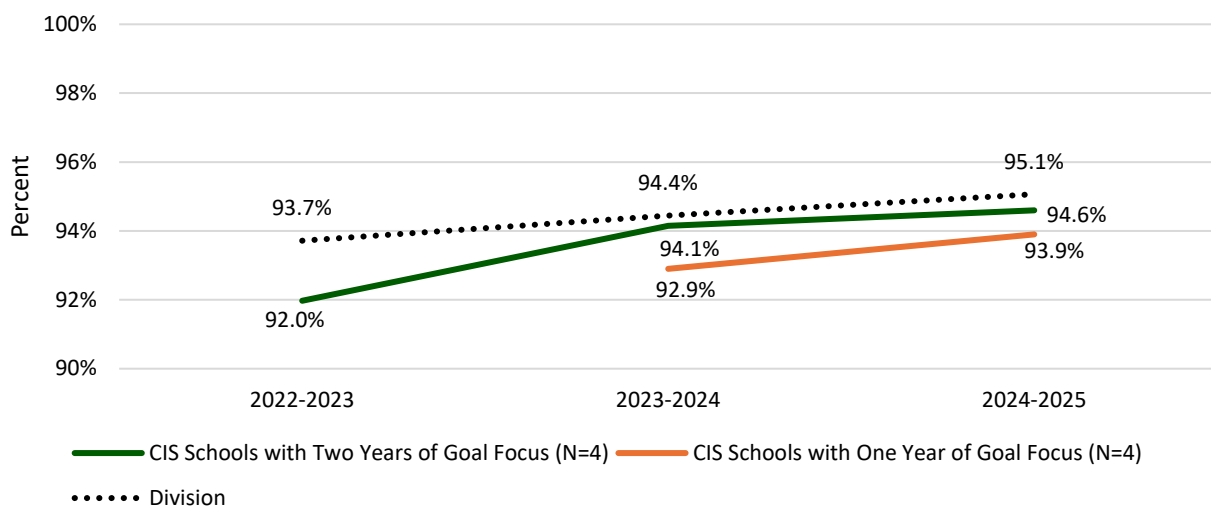
Figure 7: Percentage of Students Attending At Least 90 Percent of School Year at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

Similarly, regardless of the length of time working towards their CIS attendance goal, on average, CIS schools had increases in their school attendance rate from baseline (i.e., either 2022-2023 or 2023-2024) to the current year (increase of 2.6 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for two years and increase of 1.0 percentage point for schools focusing on the goal for one year) (see Figure 8). Comparisons to the trends at the overall division-level showed the changes from baseline to the current year for the CIS schools exceeded improvements at the division-level, although improvement for CIS schools focusing on the goal for one year was only slightly larger than the division (increase of 1.0 versus 0.6 percentage points). Similar to the previous attendance results above, compared to the division level, the most notable improvement occurred in the first year of working towards the attendance goal (i.e., from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024) for schools focusing on the goal for two years (increase of 2.2 versus 0.7 percentage points).

Figure 8: School Attendance Rate at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

Behavior Goal

Three schools created a CIS goal related to behavior for the 2024-2025 school year. Two of the three schools also had a behavior goal for the previous year (2023-2024), while behavior was a newly identified CIS goal for the other school. The measure set by schools to assess their behavior goal was the total number of suspensions. Aligned with this measure, suspension data (i.e., the percentage of students who were suspended) was examined. Although the behavior goals were focused on suspensions, data for additional behavior measures were included for additional information (i.e., the percentage of students who were referred). Due to adjustments in divisionwide policies related to cell phone use during this timeframe, which may have led to increases in related referrals, all cell phone policy violations were excluded from the analyses.

To determine whether each school showed evidence of improvement for these measures, data were compared before and after working towards the behavior goal through CIS implementation. In addition, to inform whether improvements were related to work of the CIS initiative, improvements were examined relative to the division for reference. Similar to analyses for attendance goals, all division comparisons were matched to each school's specific grade span.

As shown in Table 26, when comparing data from the year before their CIS behavior goal was established (i.e., either 2022-2023 or 2023-2024) to the most recent school year, 2024-2025, two of the three schools showed improvement that exceeded the division in the overall percentage of students who were referred at least once and the percentage of students who were suspended at least once. Further analyses of the impact on the frequency of disciplinary infractions (i.e., students with one referral or suspension as well as with multiple referrals or suspensions) was highly variable depending on the behavior goal measure. In particular, all three schools (100%) showed improvement larger than the division with a decrease in the percentage of students with one referral from the year before their CIS behavior goal was established to 2024-2025, while two schools showed improvement larger than the division with a decrease in the percentage of students with multiple suspensions. However, only one school showed improvement larger than the division for the other measures (i.e., percentage of students with more than one referral and percentage of students with one suspension).

Table 26: Percentages of CIS Behavior Schools With Progress Toward Behavior Measures

Measure	Improvement, Exceeded Division Trend	Improvement, Did Not Exceed Division Trend	No Improvement
Referral rates			
Percentage of students with at least one referral	67% (N=2)	n/a	33% (N=1)
Percentage of students with one referral	100% (N=3)	n/a	n/a
Percentage of students with more than one referral	33% (N=1)	n/a	67% (N=2)
Suspension rates			
Percentage of students with at least one suspension	67% (N=2)	n/a	33% (N=1)
Percentage of students with one suspension	33% (N=1)	33% (N=1)	33% (N=1)
Percentage of students with more than one suspension	67% (N=2)	n/a	33% (N=1)

Note: Division comparisons are matched to each school's grade span.

Additional analyses were conducted to examine whether there were any differences by school level with regard to evidence of improvement. It is important to note that there was one elementary school with a behavior goal, and two middle schools with a behavior goal. As shown in Table 27, the elementary school showed evidence of improvement larger than the division for the percentage of students with one referral and the percentage of students with more than one suspension. At the middle school level, both schools showed evidence of improvement larger than the division in the percentage of students with one referral, while one middle school showed evidence of improvement larger than the division for all other measures.

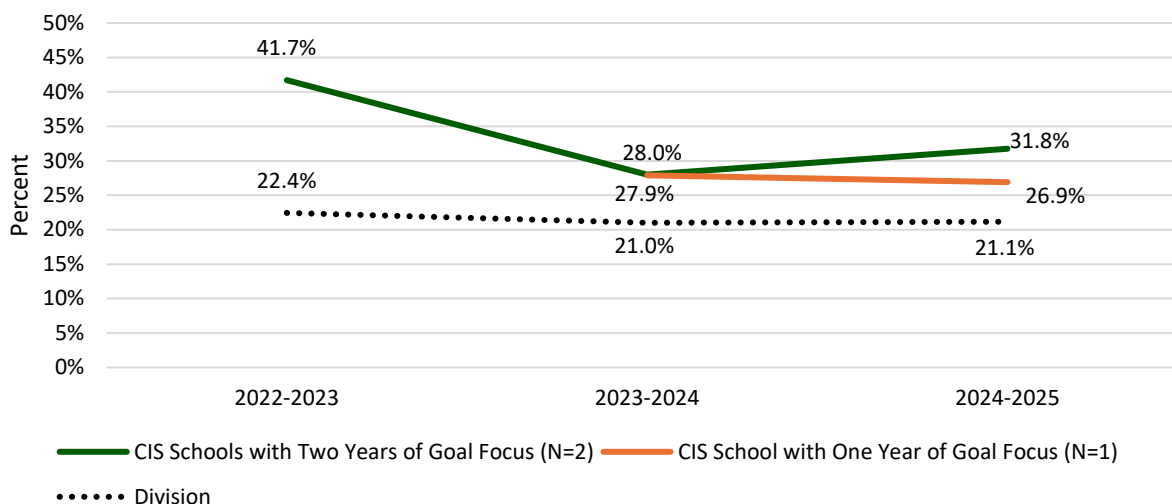
Table 27: Percentages of CIS Behavior Schools Exceeding Division Trends in Behavior Measures by Level

Measure	Elementary School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=1)	Middle School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=2)
Referral rates		
Percentage of students with at least one referral	100% (N=1)	50% (N=1)
Percentage of students with one referral	100% (N=1)	100% (N=2)
Percentage of students with more than one referral	0% (N=0)	50% (N=1)
Suspension rates		
Percentage of students with at least one suspension	100% (N=1)	50% (N=1)
Percentage of students with one suspension	0% (N=0)	50% (N=1)
Percentage of students with more than one suspension	100% (N=1)	50% (N=1)

Figures 9 through 14 provide additional context regarding the average change in these measures for the CIS schools over time relative to the division overall. Data are provided separately for schools that worked toward their CIS attendance goal for two years versus one year. The division data represents the grade spans of all CIS schools with a behavior goal.

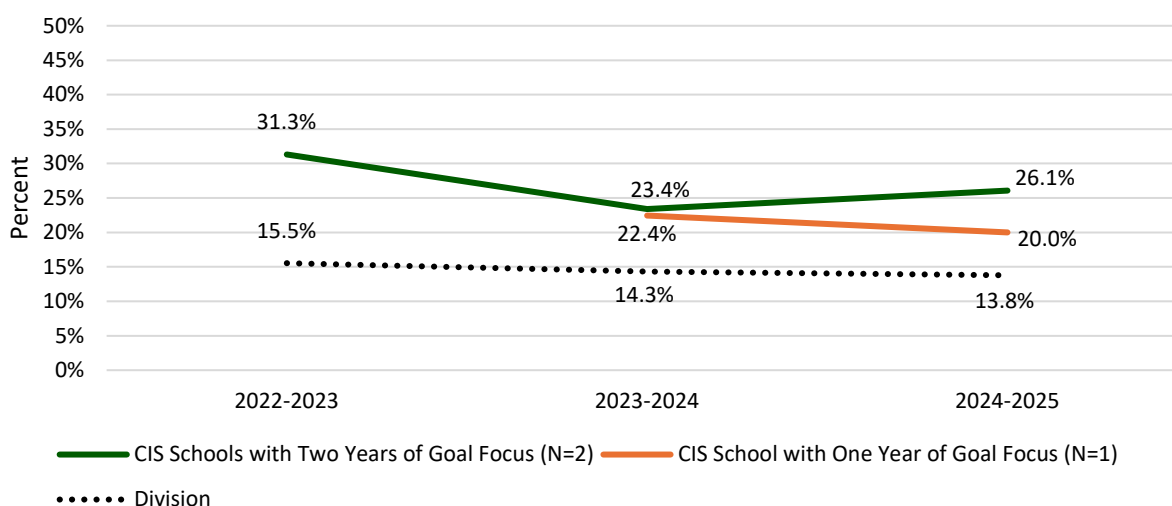
As shown in figures 9 and 10, regardless of the length of time working towards their CIS behavior goal, on average, CIS schools had a decrease from baseline (i.e., either 2022-2023 or 2023-2024) to the current year in the percentage of students who were referred at least once (decrease of 9.9 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal two years and decrease of 1.0 percentage point for schools focusing on the goal one year) as well as the percentage of students who were suspended at least once (decrease of 5.2 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal two years and decrease of 2.4 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal one year). Comparisons to the trend at the overall division level showed the changes from baseline to the current year for the CIS schools exceeded the changes at the division level. A similar pattern emerged as with the attendance data analyses, with a larger decrease in the first year of working towards the attendance goal (i.e., from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024) for schools focusing on the goal two years compared to the division (decrease of 13.7 versus 1.4 percentage points for referrals and decrease of 7.9 versus 1.2 for suspensions).

Figure 9: Percentage of Students Referred At Least Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

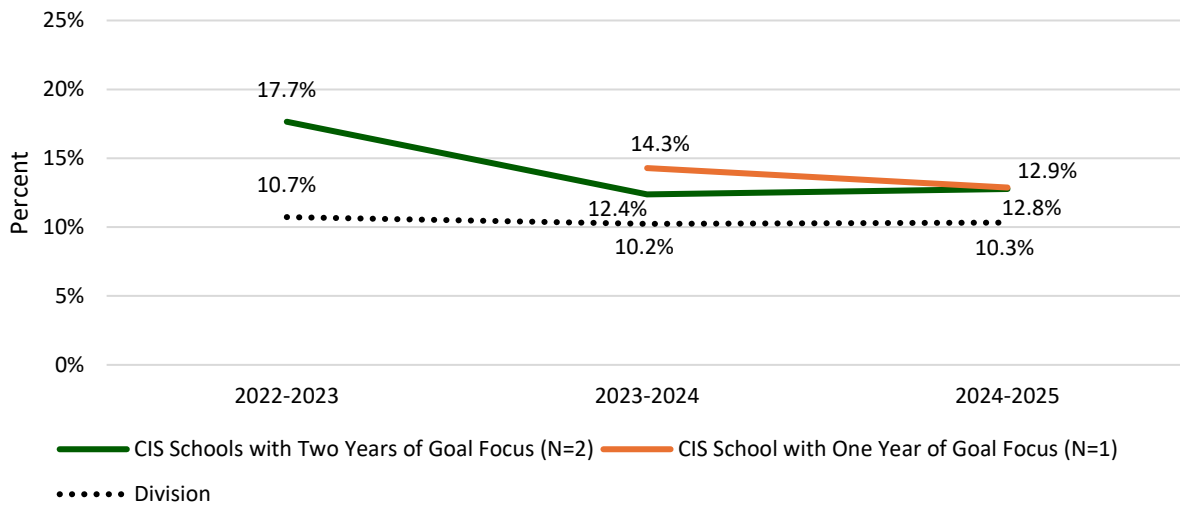
Figure 10: Percentage of Students Suspended At Least Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

As shown in Figure 11, regardless of the length of time working towards their CIS behavior goal, on average, CIS schools had a decrease from baseline (i.e., either 2022-2023 or 2023-2024) to the current year in the percentage of students who were referred once (decrease of 4.9 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for two years and decrease of 1.4 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for one year). Comparisons to the trend at the overall division-level showed the changes from baseline to the current year for the CIS schools exceeded the changes at the division-level. A similar pattern emerged as with the attendance data analyses, with a larger decrease in the first year of working towards the attendance goal (i.e., from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024) for schools focusing on the goal for two years compared to the division (decrease of 5.3 versus 0.5 percentage points).

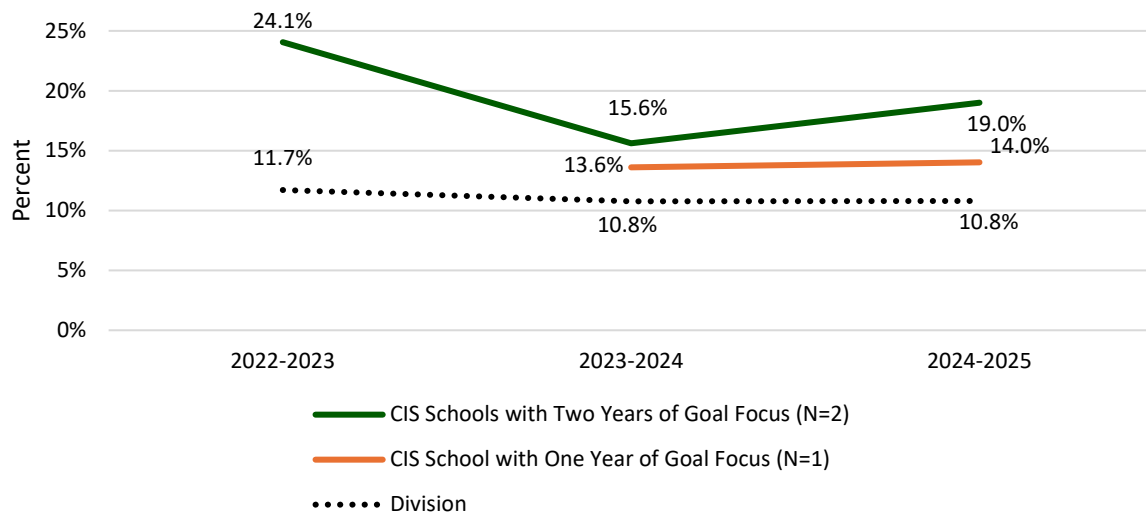
Figure 11: Percentage of Students Referred Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

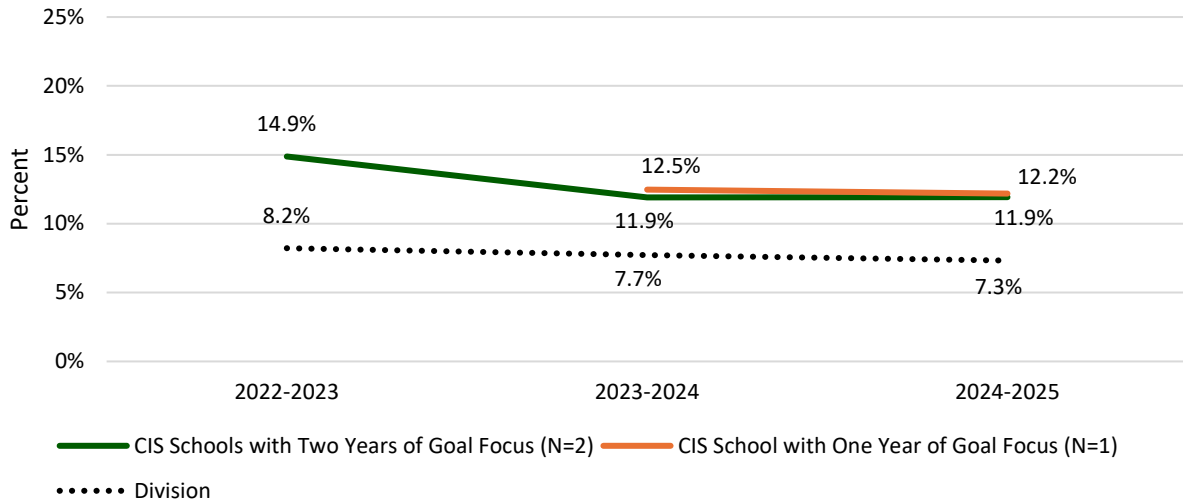
As expected, based on data presented above, the results were more variable for the other three behavior measures, although a similar pattern emerged for the schools focusing on the goal for two years compared to the division (see Figures 12 through 14). Overall, there were notable decreases from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 in the percentages of students who were referred and suspended multiple times as well as the percentage of students suspended once. Alternatively, there was a notable decrease for the school focusing on the goal for one year compared to the division from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 in the percentages of students suspended multiple times.

Figure 12: Percentage of Students Referred Multiple Times at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



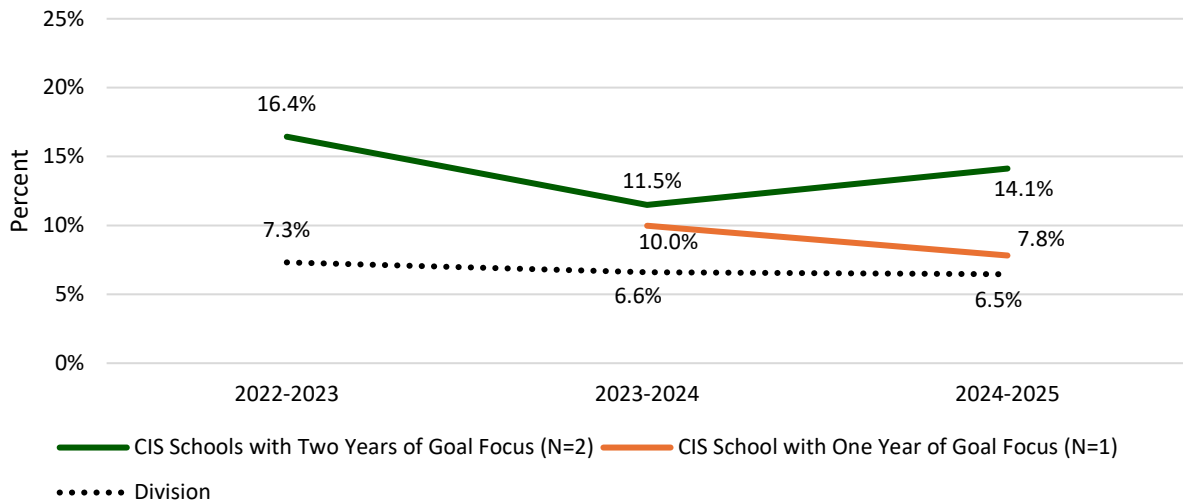
Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

Figure 13: Percentage of Students Suspended Once at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

Figure 14: Percentage of Students Suspended Multiple Times at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown. The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

Family Engagement Goal

Eight schools created a goal related to family engagement for the 2024-2025 school year. One of these eight schools also had a CIS-identified family engagement goal during the prior school year (2023-2024), while family engagement was a newly identified CIS goal for the remaining seven schools. The most frequently identified measure set by schools to assess their family engagement goal was the number of parents who signed into family engagement events. To align with this measure, the additional analyses presented here focused on parent perceptions from the 2023, 2024, and 2025 VBCPS Annual Spring Surveys. Parent perception data included the percentage of parents who indicated they were aware of events, programs, and resources that VBCPS provided for parents to support their child's education as well as the percentage of parents who indicated they were satisfied with the events, programs, or resources provided by VBCPS to help them support

their child's education. For the survey item related to satisfaction, parents who indicated they did not attend events were excluded from those analyses.

To determine whether each school showed evidence of improvement in these measures, data were compared before and after working towards the family engagement goal through CIS implementation. In addition, to inform whether improvements were related to work of the CIS initiative, improvements were examined relative to the division for reference. All division comparisons were matched to each school's specific school level. Due to divisionwide parent survey data not being available for individual grade levels, schools with specific grade levels (e.g., kindergarten and first grade) were compared to the division level that most closely aligned (e.g., elementary school).

As shown in Table 28, 63 percent (N=5) of the schools with a family engagement goal showed improvements in the percentage of parents who indicated they were aware of events, programs, and resources, while 75 percent (N=6) showed improvements in the percentage of parents who indicated they were satisfied with events, programs, and resources. All of these schools had improvements that exceeded divisionwide trends at their matched school level. The remaining schools did not show improvements in the percentages of parents aware or satisfied with events, programs, or resources.

Table 28: Percentages of CIS Family Engagement Schools With Progress Toward Family Engagement Measures

Measure	Improvement, Exceeded Division Trend	Improvement, Did Not Exceed Division Trend	No Improvement
Percentage of parents aware of events, programs, and resources	63% (N=5)	n/a	38% (N=3)
Percentage of parents satisfied with these events, programs, or resources	75% (N=6)	n/a	25% (N=2)

Note: Division comparisons are matched to each school's grade span.

Additional analyses were conducted to examine whether there were any differences by school level with regard to evidence of improvement. It is important to note that there were four elementary schools with a family engagement goal, three middle schools with a family engagement goal, and only one high school with a family engagement goal. As shown in Table 29, higher percentages of secondary CIS schools with a family engagement goal showed improvements that exceeded the division at their respective levels (67%-100%), while half of the elementary CIS schools (50%) showed improvements that exceeded the division at the elementary school level.

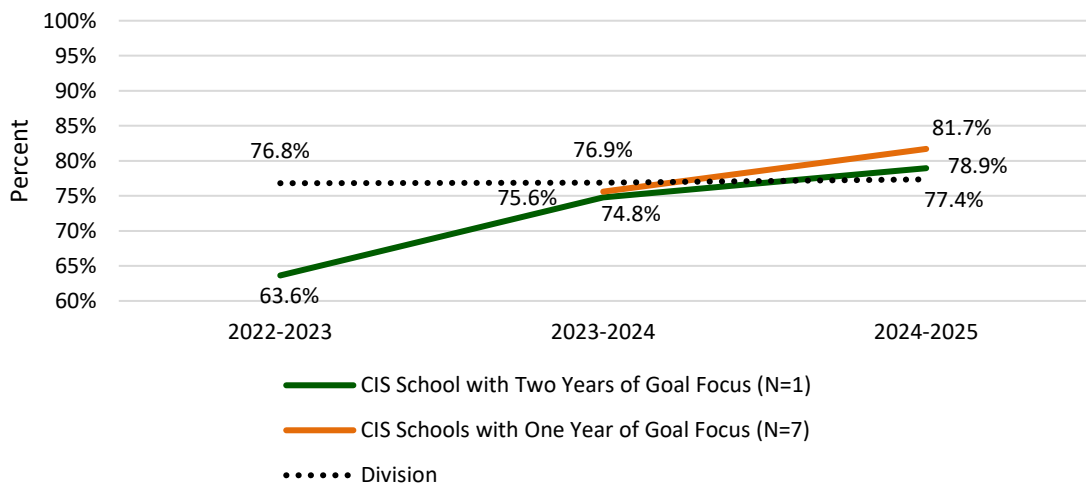
Table 29: Percentages of CIS Family Engagement Schools Exceeding Division Trends in Family Engagement Measures by Level

Measure	Elementary School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=4)	Middle School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=3)	High School CIS Schools Exceeded Division Trend (N=1)
Percentage of parents aware of events, programs, and resources	50% (N=2)	67% (N=2)	100% (N=1)
Percentage of parents satisfied with these events, programs, or resources	50% (N=2)	100% (N=3)	100% (N=1)

Figures 15 and 16 provide additional context regarding the average change in these measures for the CIS schools over time relative to the division overall. Data were provided separately for schools that worked toward their CIS family engagement goal for two years versus one year. Only one school had a family engagement goal over two years. The division data represents the grade spans of all CIS schools with a family engagement goal.

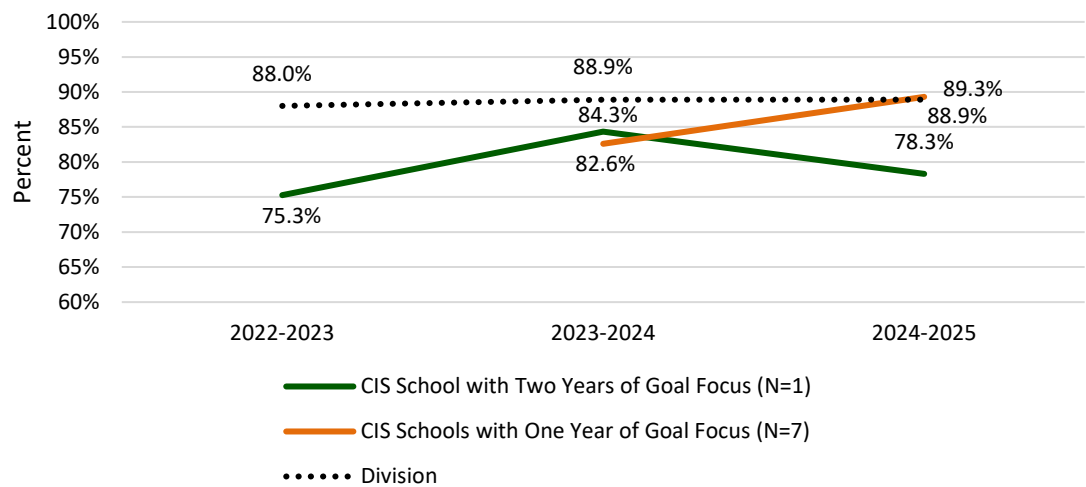
As shown in figures 15 and 16, regardless of the length of time working towards their CIS family engagement goal, on average, CIS schools had increases in the percentages of parents who were aware of events, programs, and resources from baseline (i.e., either 2022-2023 or 2023-2024) to the current year (increase of 15.3 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for two years and increase of 6.1 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for one year) as well as increases in the percentages of parents who were satisfied (increase of 3.0 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for two years and increase of 6.6 percentage points for schools focusing on the goal for one year). Comparisons to the trends at the overall division-level showed the changes from baseline to 2024-2025 for the CIS schools exceeded the changes at the division-level. Again, most notably, compared to the division level, there were large increases in the first year of working towards the family engagement goal (i.e., from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024) for schools focusing on the goal for two years (increase of 11.1 versus 0.1 percentage points in awareness; increase of 9.1 versus 0.9 percentage points in satisfaction).

Figure 15: Parent Awareness of Events, Programs, and Resources at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



Note: Division averages reflect only the grade spans of the CIS schools shown (e.g., elementary only). The line for one-year schools begins at their first year of implementation.

Figure 16: Parent Satisfaction with Events, Programs, and Resources at CIS Schools From 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 With Division Reference



In summary, in 2024–2025, the CIS initiative supported schools in addressing three primary schoolwide goal areas: attendance, behavior, and family engagement. Data provided from CIS showed that most schools (80%) met at least one of their goals. Overall, 63 percent of schoolwide goals were met by schools. Additional data analyses showed CIS schools made gains not only in meeting their formal goals but also for broader measures, especially in the areas of attendance and family engagement. Attendance improvements were evident across all schools with this goal, with the majority (63%-75%) exceeding the divisionwide trends and the majority of schools with a family engagement goal (63%-75%) had increases in parent awareness of and satisfaction with events, resources, and supports. Results from behavior goal analyses were more varied but still showed some improvements in the percentage of students with one referral. Of note, schools with goals over two years saw the largest gains during the first year of focusing on the goal. These findings suggest that CIS is contributing to meaningful improvements across schools, although levels of improvement may vary from year to year.

Student Goals

Individual student goals were also created for all students on the CIS site coordinators' caseloads in the areas of academics, attendance, behavior, and/or social and emotional learning. According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, similar to schoolwide goals, data were monitored for progress systematically. Student academic goals were measured through standards-based grades for elementary school students and grade-point averages for secondary students. Student attendance goals were measured through absences in comparison to the previous school year, while behavior goals were measured through the number of suspensions in comparison to the previous school year. Social and emotional goals were measured through pretest and posttest scores on the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) through the Aperture Education platform.

According to the CIS of HR Virginia Beach program director, student data were analyzed regularly and at the end of the year to determine whether goals were met or progress toward the goals was made. Similar to schoolwide goals, individual student goals were determined to have been met if the data met the criteria established by the CIS site coordinator, whereas progress toward the goals was determined by whether data improved from baseline but the criteria was not met. If students stayed at baseline or fell below baseline, the goals were determined to not have been met and no demonstrated progress was made.

Overall, there was a total of 552 students on the caseloads of all six CIS site coordinators throughout the 2024-2025 school year. A total of 538 students had data regarding their goals and end-of-year performance. Students may have had more than one goal during the 2024-2025 school year. Overall, 52 percent of students (N=280) had a goal in the area of academics, 26 percent of students (N=140) had a goal in the area of attendance, and 24 percent of students (N=127) had a goal in the area of behavior. To ensure student confidentiality consistent with the CIS MOU, individual student data were not collected or analyzed by the program evaluation staff. Summary data regarding goal attainment were gathered from CIS staff.

Data available from the CIS initiative showed the majority of students who had goals in the areas of behavior (80%) and attendance (55%) met their goal (see Table 30). A lower percentage of students who had an academic goal (45%) met their goal during 2024-2025, but an additional 9 percent of students with an academic goal made progress toward their goal. Similar to data presented for the schoolwide goals, there were no notable differences in these results based on schools that had site coordinators across two schools.⁵¹

Table 30: Percentages of CIS Students Meeting Goal(s) by Goal Area in 2024-2025

Goal Area	Percent With Goal Met	Percent With Goal Not Met, Progress Made	Percent With Goal Not Met, No Progress
Academic achievement	45%	9%	46%
Attendance	55%	9%	36%
Behavior	80%	2%	18%

Note: SEL goal data are not provided due to only one student having a goal in this area.

In comparison to similar baseline data from 2023-2024, there were improvements in the percentages of students who met their goals in the areas of academic (from 39% to 45%) and behavior (from 69% to 80%), while there was a decrease in the percentage of students who met their goal in the area of attendance (from 71% to 55%). However, for the three goal areas, there were increases in the percentages of students who did not meet their goal and did not make any progress (16% to 27% in 2023-2024 to 18% to 46% in 2024-2025).

Staff at CIS schools who were directly involved with the initiative were surveyed about CIS helping students who received individualized services improve in related goal areas. Overall, the highest percentages of staff indicated that CIS helped students improve their sense of belonging (76%) and behavior (74%), followed by attendance (72%) and well-being (70%) (see Table 31). A lower percentage of staff indicated CIS helped students improve their academic achievement (61%). In comparison to 2023-2024, there were increases in the percentages of staff who indicated CIS improved students' academic achievement and attendance, while there were decreases in the percentages of staff who indicated CIS improved students' sense of belonging and well-being and the percentage who indicated behavior was improved remained the same (see Table 31).

Table 31: Directly Involved Staff Perceptions of CIS Helping Students in Various Areas

Improvement Areas	2023-2024	2024-2025
Sense of belonging	90%	76%
Behavior	74%	74%
Attendance	64%	72%
Well-being	74%	70%
Academic achievement	56%	61%
Other	8%	2%
None of the above	0%	0%

Note: Percentages exclude respondents who selected Don't Know.

Parents were also surveyed about the areas in which CIS helped their child improve. As shown in Table 32, overall, the majority of parents who responded to the survey and indicated their child worked with a CIS coordinator also indicated that CIS helped improve their child's academic achievement (72%), well-being (62%), sense of belonging (45%), and behavior (41%). Lower percentages of these parents indicated that it helped improve their child's attendance (31%) or another area (10%). There were increases in the percentage of parents who indicated the CIS initiative helped their child in the area of academic achievement (from 69 to 72 percent) and well-being (from 46 to 62 percent).

Table 32: Parent Perceptions of CIS Helping Students in Various Areas

Improvement Areas	2023-2024	2024-2025
Academic achievement	69%	72%
Well-being	46%	62%
Sense of belonging	54%	45%
Behavior	77%	41%
Attendance	31%	31%
Other	15%	10%
None of the above	0%	0%

When staff were surveyed more generally about the impact of the CIS initiative at the individual student and family level, 97 percent of staff agreed the CIS initiative had a positive impact on students and families at their schools. Consistent with other results, a higher percentage of staff who were directly involved with CIS agreed (99%) than staff who had limited involvement although their agreement was also high (96%).

General Perceptions

When staff were asked about their satisfaction with CIS, overall, 92 percent indicated they were satisfied. A higher percentage of staff who were directly involved with CIS indicated they were satisfied (96%) than staff who had limited involvement although their satisfaction was also high (89%). Through open-ended survey items, school-based staff had the opportunity to provide comments regarding what worked well and what could make the CIS initiative more beneficial. Overall, 101 staff members provided comments about what worked well, which was 47 percent of staff who responded to the CIS portion of the survey and was familiar with the initiative at their school. Themes from staff regarding what worked well included developing relationships with students and parents and providing general support for students (e.g., emotional, academic, and social support) as well as resources for families and students (e.g., basic resources, connections to resources). Overall, 85 staff members provided comments related to improvement areas, which was 39 percent of staff who responded to the CIS portion of the survey and were familiar with the initiative at their school. The primary theme from staff regarding improvement areas focused on needing more staff, resources, and support, which included some staff directly referencing the changes in allocations, such as commenting on their school needing a full-time coordinator to make more of an impact, which was mentioned predominately at the elementary school level. Staff also commented on the need for greater awareness of the program (e.g., communicating clear expectations of roles and responsibilities) as well as stronger communication with staff about students on the coordinator's caseload. Although comments regarding communication were prevalent at all levels, the comments were more frequent at the secondary level.

Cost

The cost of implementing Communities in Schools during 2024-2025 was gathered from the CIS MOU and discussions with central office staff overseeing the initiative. The total cost for services related to CIS per school was \$557,857 (see Table 33). For the 2024-2025 school year, the total cost for the initiative at the seven Title I schools was \$390,500. According to the CIS MOU, CIS of HR funded the coordinators for the non-Title I schools, which totaled \$167,357. According to the executive director of student support services, CIS has funding that can assist school divisions similar to VBCPS, who are looking to expand the program. The total cost billed to VBCPS for the 2024-2025 school year was \$390,500. This total cost was covered by the 2024-2025 Title I funds; therefore, there were no costs paid by VBCPS for CIS.

Table 33: Cost for CIS in 2023-2024

Cost Categories	Costs in 2023-2024	Costs in 2024-2025
Total Program Cost	\$398,640	\$557,857
Total Title I Grant Funded	N/A	\$390,500
Total ESSER Grant Funded	\$199,320	N/A
Total CIS of HR Grant Funded	\$199,320	\$167,357
Total Cost to VBCPS	\$0	\$0

Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program

Purpose and Overview

The Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program is a short-term (6-9 weeks) intervention for general education elementary school students who have limited educational experiences or social skills that lead them to engage in challenging behaviors. The program is housed at Windsor Oaks Elementary School and available to all elementary schools throughout the school division based on a referral process. The program was piloted in 2017-2018 at Brookwood Elementary School and the following elementary schools were able to refer students: Christopher Farms, Green Run, Holland, Rosemont, White Oaks, and Windsor Oaks. Brookwood was chosen as the initial host site because it was centrally located and near the office location of Student Support Services. The schools that were selected to refer to the BASE Program at Brookwood Elementary were chosen because they were geographically close to Brookwood Elementary, and those schools' administrations expressed an interest in being involved in the program. In 2018-2019, the program expanded to include access to all 56 elementary schools. The program was moved to Windsor Oaks in 2021-2022 because the building was identified to be better suited for the space the program needed. The BASE Program primarily enrolls students in grades K-3 but students in grades four and five may be enrolled on a case-by-case basis. The program is overseen by the Office of Student Support Services within the Department of Teaching and Learning.

The BASE Program is not an alternative school, change of placement, or discipline placement. The program is an intervention for improving elementary school students' skills when they demonstrate aggressive, disruptive, or defiant behavior or poor social skills across multiple environments.⁵² These behaviors may include but are not limited to being argumentative/talking back, inappropriate gestures/language/comments, disrespect to peers/staff, defiant behavior/refusing to work, challenging authority, leaving classroom without permission, destruction of property, throwing things, verbal threats, or pushing/tripping/kicking peers/staff. The focus of the BASE Program is to teach elementary school students coping strategies, problem solving skills, and social skills needed for school and behavior management.⁵³

According to the Office of Student Support Services, enrollment in the BASE Program has evolved to include students with extenuating circumstances that are not always categorized as excessive behavior concerns. An extenuating circumstance would be students who have experienced intense trauma. Schools will sometimes refer students with extenuating circumstances to the BASE Program because the general education setting is not adequately meeting their needs. Staff at the BASE Program consider these students on a case-by-case basis and make decisions for enrollment based on what the BASE Program can offer these students.

In 2024-2025, overall, 84 percent of staff who were at least aware of the program agreed they understood the purpose of the BASE Program and in 2024-2025, 82 percent of staff agreed the BASE Program provided a way to help teachers by offering an option to help support students with significant behavior concerns. These two survey items had similar agreement patterns in 2023-2024 (see Table 34). In 2024-2025, 100 percent of parents who responded to the survey agreed they understood the purpose of the BASE Program. This was an increase from 2023-2024 when 90 percent of parents agreed they understood the purpose of the BASE Program.

Table 34: Staff Perceptions of the BASE Program Purpose

Survey Items	BASE Staff Member at Windsor Oaks		Referred a student to BASE and worked with student who attended BASE		Worked with student who was in BASE but did not refer		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
I understand the purpose of the BASE Program.	100%	100%	98%	99%	86%	87%	85%*	84%*
The BASE Program provides a way to help teachers by offering an option to help support students with significant behavior concerns.	100%	100%	88%	82%	73%	80%	83%	82%

*Total includes additional respondent group "I have not been involved in the BASE Program, but I am aware that it is an option for students with behavioral concerns."

Target Audience/Participants

The BASE Program is a Tier 3 intervention intended for general education students who have had minimal responses to other documented Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 interventions including support from a behavior intervention specialist. Students with 504 Plans are eligible to attend the BASE Program, while students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are not eligible and are provided other supports available to them.⁵⁴ Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year and continuing in the 2024-2025 school year, students referred to the Special Education Committee can be referred to the BASE Program during the 65-day timeline while eligibility for special education services is being determined. If the student is identified with a disability, data collected during their time at BASE may be used to help develop the IEP, and the student will be transitioned back to their home school in a timely manner. In addition, according to the director of student support services, the BASE Program has been working with the Office of Student Leadership (OSL) to better serve students who were given out-of-school suspensions due to behavior difficulties. In some cases, students may benefit from learning coping strategies for behavior management by attending the BASE Program before returning to their home school after completing their out-of-school suspension.

During the 2024-2025 school year, 29 students were enrolled at the BASE Program at some time during the school year. Almost half (48%) of the students enrolled in the BASE Program were in kindergarten with a total of 14 students (see Table 35). The second most represented grade was first grade with 10 students. Four students from second grade were enrolled. In 2024-2025, there was one student in third grade in the program. This is the first student to be enrolled in the program with the expansion of grades 3-5 in 2024. Grade level patterns in 2024-2025 followed similar representation from 2023-2024. According to BASE staff, the preference was to have no more than seven students in each BASE classroom at one time, but the maximum number can vary based on the behavior of the students in the class. The BASE Program consisted of one classroom until February 2024 when more staff were hired and was then reconfigured to two classrooms. In 2024-2025, this two classroom configuration remained.

Table 35: Grade Levels of Students in the BASE Program During 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

Grade Level	Number		Percentage	
	23-24	24-25	24-25	24-25
K	13	14	45%	48%
1	11	10	38%	34%
2	5	4	17%	14%
3	0	1	0%	3%
Total Number of Students	29	29	100%	100%

Table 36 displays demographic characteristics for students enrolled in BASE during the 2024-2025 school year and students in grades K-3 as of September 30 across the division for reference. The majority of students enrolled in the BASE Program were male (86%). Approximately half the students were Black (45%), 38 percent were White, and 10 percent were Hispanic. Forty-eight percent were economically disadvantaged, and 21 percent were military-connected. The BASE Program had a higher percentage of male students (+35 percentage points) and Black students (+23 percentage points) than divisionwide K-3 students. In addition, the BASE Program had a lower percentage of White students (-6 percentage points) and Hispanic students (-5 percentage points) than divisionwide K-3 students. In addition, of the 56 elementary schools in VBCPS, 24 (43%) had a student attend the BASE Program in the 2024-2025 school year, which is the same number of schools that had a student attend the BASE Program in 2023-2024. Twelve of the 24 schools were the same schools that had a student attend the BASE Program in 2023-2024 and half of the schools were different and did not send a student in 2023-2024.

Table 36: Demographic Characteristics of Students in the BASE Program During 2024-2025

Characteristic	Students in the BASE Program N=29		VBCPS Students in K-3 N=18,691	
	N	%	N	%
Sex				
Female	4	14%	9,076	49%
Male	25	86%	9,611	51%
Ethnicity				
American Indian	0	0%	44	<1%
Asian	0	0%	1,032	6%
Black	13	45%	4,170	22%
Hispanic	^	^	2,863	15%
Multiracial	^	^	2,190	12%
Native/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%	67	<1%
White	11	38%	8,325	44%
Economically Disadvantaged	14	48%	7,373	40%
Identified Limited English Proficiency	0	0%	1,115	6%
Military Connected	6	21%	4,379	24%

^To protect students' privacy, number is too small to report.

Survey Respondents

On the Behavioral and Mental Health Supports for Students Survey, a total of 460 staff indicated they were familiar with the BASE Program in 2024-2025. This was an increase from 2023-2024 when 331 staff indicated they were familiar with the program. The survey results were disaggregated by the level of involvement in the program. In 2024-2025, overall, seven respondents indicated they were BASE staff members at Windsor Oaks, equating to an estimated response rate of 78 percent. In addition, 109 respondents indicated they had referred a student to BASE and worked with a student who attended BASE, 76 indicated they had worked with a student who had been in BASE but had not referred a student, and 257 indicated they were aware of the program but had no direct involvement. Unless otherwise noted, the survey results are presented and disaggregated by the three primary stakeholder groups (N=192): BASE staff members at Windsor Oaks, staff members who referred a student to the BASE Program and worked with a student who attended the BASE Program, and staff members who worked with a student who attended the BASE Program but did not refer a student to the program (see Table 37). As shown in Table 37, the majority of respondents who were involved with the initiative were either classroom teachers or teacher assistants (40%) or student support staff (26%). In

addition, parents of students who were enrolled in the BASE Program anytime during the 2024-2025 school year as of March 17, 2025 were emailed an anonymous survey in March. The parent response rate was 22 percent (N=8).

Table 37: BASE Program Respondents by Staff Group and Involvement

Staff Group	BASE Staff Member at Windsor Oaks		Referred a student to BASE and worked with student who attended BASE		Worked With a Student Who was in BASE But Did Not Refer		Total Involved		Not Involved But Aware	
	23-24 (N=7)	24-25 (N=7)	23-24 (N=90)	24-25 (N=109)	23-24 (N=43)	24-25 (N=76)	23-24 (N=140)	24-25 (N=192)	23-24 (N=176)	24-25 (N=257)
Administrator	0%	0%	38%	34%	0%	7%	24%	22%	1%	4%
Classroom Teacher or Teacher Assistant	29%	29%	30%	33%	42%	50%	34%	40%	67%	62%
Other Instructional Staff	0%	0%	3%	6%	14%	13%	6%	8%	15%	17%
Student Support Staff	71%	71%	28%	27%	40%	21%	34%	26%	10%	9%
Other Related Staff	N/A	N/A	1%	1%	5%	9%	2%	4%	7%	7%

Initiative Components

BASE Program Classroom Staffing

The BASE Program consists of two classrooms. Each classroom included one behavior intervention teacher, one student support specialist, and two teacher assistants (see Table 38). However, one teacher assistant resigned at some point in 2024-2025, leaving the program with three teacher assistants for most of the 2024-2025 school year. Students are placed in a classroom based on academic level, enrollment numbers, and behavior concerns.

Table 38: BASE Classroom Information

Criteria	BASE Classroom Information
Number of Classrooms	2
Grade Level	Based on enrollment/academic level; Fluid
Staff	1 Behavior Intervention Teacher 1 Student Support Specialist 2 Teacher Assistants

Referral Process and Enrollment

Prior to referring a student to the Base Program, the student must have documented Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 interventions in place with little to no documented success. The BASE Program is typically shared as an option to families during a Student Response Team (SRT) meeting. During the SRT meeting, parents/guardians are provided a BASE Program pamphlet that shares information about the program. In order to start the process, parents must give written consent to have a school psychologist from the BASE Program conduct an observation or consultation. In addition to a student observation, the school social worker schedules a time to complete a brief social history with the family, which includes information about students' home life, medical status, educational history, and social and emotional functioning. If a parent/guardian gives consent, then a staff member will complete a BASE referral form, which includes student information (e.g., name, address, school, age, teacher, school counselor, school psychologists, etc.), student history (e.g., relevant disciplinary actions and previous interventions), target behaviors, and administrator authorization. Eighty-one percent of

staff who were involved with the program agreed they understood the process for identifying or referring a student who could benefit from attending the BASE Program. Similar to last year’s pattern of results, staff members in the group that had never referred a student reported lower agreement about understanding the process for identifying and referring a student who could benefit from the BASE Program (See Table 39).

Table 39: Staff Perceptions of the BASE Program Referral Process

Survey Items	BASE Staff Member at Windsor Oaks		Referred a student to BASE and worked with student who attended BASE		Worked with student who was in BASE but did not refer		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
I understand the process for identifying or referring a student who could benefit from attending the BASE Program.	100%	86%	90%	91%	51%	66%	78%	81%

A school psychologist or doctoral intern conducts the informal observation. Upon completion, they will schedule a follow-up SRT/Section 504 update meeting with key members including the parent, teacher, administrators, school psychologist, social worker, director of student services, and BASE Program psychologist. If it is determined that the student is a candidate for the BASE Program and the parent agrees to the BASE Program participation, the orientation is scheduled. The student and parent(s) attend orientation, which typically lasts 30 minutes to 1 hour. The family is introduced to Windsor Oaks (i.e., the host site of BASE) school administrators. During the orientation, the student gets acquainted with classmates while the parents are presented with information about the program. Parents are given a Welcome Letter, which includes the names and contact information for the BASE team. In addition, parents are given the Parent Acknowledgement form, which includes parent expectations and student expectations for the program. The BASE team reviews the components of the program including the daily feedback document and explains goal setting, the token economy system, preferred activity time, Zones of Regulation, and social emotional group. In 2024-2025, 100 percent of parents who responded to the survey agreed the BASE Program orientation helped them understand the program and its components, which was an increase from 2023-2024 when 80% of parents agreed.

When students attend the BASE Program at Windsor Oaks, they remain concurrently enrolled at their home school. VBCPS provides transportation for students to attend the program. In 2024-2025, overall, 88 percent of staff members agreed the process for transitioning a student from their home school to the BASE Program was communicated clearly in the SRT/Section 504 meeting (see Table 40). Staff agreement on this survey item was similar to last year’s. In 2024-2025, 100 percent of parents agreed the information about the BASE Program shared in the Student Response Team (SRT)/Section 504 meeting was clear and easy to understand, and 100 percent of parents agreed their child’s transition from his/her home school to the BASE Program was successful. This was an increase from 2023-2024 when 80 percent of parents agreed their child’s transition from his/her home school to the BASE Program was successful.

Table 40: Staff Perceptions of Students' Transition Process

Survey Item	BASE Staff Member at Windsor Oaks		Referred a student to BASE and worked with student who attended BASE		Worked with student who was in BASE but did not refer		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
The process for transitioning a student from their home school to the BASE Program is communicated clearly in the Student Response Team (SRT)/Section 504 meeting.	100%	83%	86%	89%	78%	85%	85%	88%

Daily Schedule

BASE staff are with students the entire school day at Windsor Oaks. BASE students remain together in the classroom throughout the day except during lunch and physical education (P.E.) when they are with other students at Windsor Oaks. In 2024-2025, the structure of the day typically included: Arrival/breakfast/morning work, morning meeting/goal setting, calendar, academic block, social emotional learning, structured movement, academic block, preferred activity time (PAT), lunch, self-regulation/goal review, academic block, P.E., academic block, PAT, debriefing/goal setting/daily feedback sheet, and dismissal. The structure of the day in 2024-2025 was very similar to the structure of the day in 2023-2024 with the addition of an additional academic block that was added based on feedback BASE staff received from schools who have had students attend the BASE Program. According to BASE staff, schools have expressed that students needed more rigorous academic demands while attending BASE. All students are monitored using a daily feedback document. On the document, students identify daily goals and teachers give students feedback on each of the day's activities. The document is sent home for parents to sign every day. The classroom operates using a token economy system, which allows students to "earn" things such as toys, games, books, computer/iPad time to use or play with during morning and afternoon PAT. This is documented using an earning tracking sheet. Each day, students participate in social emotional learning with direct instruction focused on skill deficits such as recognizing emotions, problem-solving, and self-regulation strategies such as positive self-talk and breathing exercises. The curriculum for the social emotional learning lessons is guided by the Zones of Regulation and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum. The Zones of Regulation is a way to help students think and talk about how they are feeling. The Zones of Regulation organize students' feelings, states of alertness, and energy levels into four colored zones—Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red. The Blue Zone consists of feeling sad, bored, tired, or sick. The Green Zone consists of feeling happy, focused, calm, or proud. The Yellow Zone consists of feeling worried, frustrated, silly, or excited. The Red Zone consists of feeling overjoyed/elated, panicked, angry, or terrified.⁵⁵ The PATHS curriculum aims to promote self-control, emotional understanding, positive self-esteem, relationship, and interpersonal problem-solving skills among children aged 4-11 years.⁵⁶ While there are two different academic blocks during the day, the BASE team does not provide report cards, and the students do not receive grades while in the program.

BASE staff members were asked the extent to which the different BASE Program components helped provide the support students needed. As shown in Table 41, about 70 percent of staff members indicated social emotional learning groups, goal setting, self-regulation, and debriefing/goal/daily feedback sheet helped support students' needs to a large extent. Additionally, a little over half of staff indicated the following also helped support students' needs to a large extent: PAT, token economy system, PATHS, behavior tracking sheet, and academic block. Twenty-nine percent of staff indicated structured movement helped support students' needs to a large extent. In 2023-2024 staff expressed somewhat more favorable perceptions of the BASE program components providing the support students needed. For example, in 2023-2024, all staff members (100%) indicated social emotional learning groups helped support students' needs to a large extent.

Additionally, 80 percent of staff indicated the following also helped support students' needs to a large extent: morning meeting, goal setting, PAT, and self-regulation. Parents were asked their perceptions of two program components. Overall, 100 percent of parents agreed the daily feedback sheet was helpful in improving their child's behavior, and 100 percent of parents agreed the token economy was helpful in motivating their child.

Table 41: BASE Staff Member Perceptions of Program Components Providing the Support Students Need

Program Components	Large Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	Not At All
Social Emotional Learning Groups (N=7)	71%	14%	0%	14%
Goal Setting (N=7)	71%	14%	0%	14%
Self-regulation (N=7)	71%	0%	14%	14%
Debriefing/Goal/Daily Feedback Sheet (N=7)	71%	14%	0%	14%
Preferred Activity Time (PAT) (N=7)	57%	29%	0%	14%
Token Economy System (N=7)	57%	29%	0%	14%
Promoting Alternative Thinking (PATHS) (N=7)	57%	29%	0%	14%
Behavior Tracking Sheet (N=7)	57%	29%	0%	14%
Academic Block in the AM and PM (N=7)	57%	29%	0%	14%
Morning Meeting (N=7)	43%	43%	0%	14%
Structured Movement (N=7)	29%	43%	14%	14%

Transitioning from the BASE Program Back to the Student's Homeschool

At the six to eight week mark, the BASE team begins to share information with the home school about the date the student will transition back to the home school. The director/designee communicates with the student's home school to schedule a follow-up transition SRT or 504 meeting. The BASE team creates a transition plan detailing the program and the progress the student made and any supports the student may need. One recommendation from the 2023-2024 evaluation was to prioritize the identification of behavioral supports that can successfully be implemented after students transition from the BASE Program back to their home school. As part of this recommendation, the BASE team updated their transition report that is shared with the team and the student's home school classroom teacher. As part of this recommendation, the BASE team and the behavior interventionist at the home school met and discussed what was going well and what support home schools needed in the student transition process. As part of this meeting, the BASE team developed a new transition report template. The new report has some of the same components including the student's referral reasons, interventions used, progress observed, and recommendations for continued support when returning to their home school; however, the new report is more focused on specific triggers, strategies, and outcomes for the individual student. For example, the new report emphasizes fine-grained, student-specific applications that are outcome-driven with clear metrics. This was a purposeful shift from the BASE team who wanted to focus on more specific interventions that were purposeful and intentional for the home schools. Staff continue to receive the Daily Feedback sheet as part of the transition process. The Daily Feedback sheet is shared with the teacher to help support the transition. Additionally, the BASE staff supports the student through an on-site transition for a minimum of two days, and BASE staff assists the teacher/teacher assistant. According to the Office of Student Support Services, after the student has transitioned back to the home school from BASE, a behavior intervention specialist can provide necessary support for the student. The BASE Program is a one-time intervention. Therefore, once students return to their home school, they are ineligible to return to the BASE Program.

Overall, 79 percent of staff agreed the process for transitioning a student from the BASE Program back to the home school was communicated clearly in the SRT/504 meeting. In 2024-2025, there was an increase in agreement for this survey item for staff who worked with a student who was in BASE but did not refer and a

decrease among BASE staff and staff members who referred a student to BASE and worked with a student who attended BASE (see Table 42). Two new survey items were added as part of the outcome evaluation of the BASE Program (see Table 42). Overall, 57 percent of staff agreed after students returned to their home school, they have the support they need to be successful, and 55 percent of staff agreed after students return to their home school, the interventions provided by the BASE team to support their success are feasible. BASE staff perceptions were higher on both survey items compared to the other staff groups.

Table 42: Staff Perceptions of the Transition Process From the BASE Program Back to the Students' Home School

Survey Items	BASE Staff Member at Windsor Oaks		Referred a student to BASE and worked with student who attended BASE		Worked with student who was in BASE but did not refer		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
The process for transitioning a student from the BASE Program back to their home school is communicated clearly in the Student Response Team (SRT)/Section 504 meeting.	100%	86%	80%	75%	75%	87%	80%	79%
After students return to their home school, they have the support they need to be successful (e.g., academics, attendance, behavior).*	--	71%	--	55%	--	58%	--	57%
After students return to their home school, the interventions provided by the BASE team to support their success are feasible.*	--	71%	--	56%	--	53%	--	55%

*New survey item added to the 2024-2025 Behavioral and Mental Health Support Survey as part of the outcome evaluation.

In 2024-2025, 88 percent of parents agreed their child's transition from the BASE Program back to his/her home school was successful, and 88 percent of parents agreed their child had the support he/she needed after returning to his/her home school. This was an increase from 2023-2024 when parents had less favorable perceptions of the transition process from the BASE Program back to students' home school. In 2023-2024, 25 percent agreed their child's transition from the BASE Program back to the home school was successful and 25 percent of parents agreed their child had the support he/she needed after returning to his/her home school.

Professional Learning

According to the Office of Student Support Services, nine BASE staff members received Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training from the school division's coordinator of behavior intervention. The training included a variety of verbal and nonverbal interventions designed to recognize and respond to defensive behaviors, understand what is behind challenging behavior, and address the needs of the individual student. The coordinator and psychologist conducted training related to de-escalation strategies, data collection, and the Zones of Regulation. Staff members reported their perceptions of the CPI training. In 2024-2025, of those who attended the training, 100 percent agreed the training provided them with the necessary knowledge and tools to recognize and respond to student behavior, which was an increase from 2023-2024 when 75 percent of staff agreed. In 2024-2025, a new survey item was used to assess BASE staff members' perceptions of the in-house professional learning they received, and of those who participated, 80 percent of BASE staff agreed the in-house professional learning centered around scenarios provided them with the necessary knowledge and tools to recognize and respond to student behavior.

In addition, 86 percent of staff members reported feeling prepared to teach or provide support to students as part of the BASE Program. This was also an increase in agreement from 2023-2024 when 60 percent of staff members reported feeling prepared to teach or provide support to students as part of the BASE Program (see Table 43).

Table 43: BASE Staff Perceptions of Training and Preparation to Teach in the Program

Survey Items	Number		Agreement	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
The Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training I received as a BASE staff member provided me with the necessary knowledge and tools to recognize and respond to student behavior.	4	5	75%*	100%*
The in-house professional learning centered around scenarios I received during 2024-2025 as a BASE staff member provided me with the necessary knowledge and tools to recognize and respond to student behavior.**	--	5	--	80%*
Overall, I felt prepared to teach or provide support to students as part of the BASE Program.	5	7	60%	86%

*Agreement percentage does not include those who indicated they did not participate in the training.

** New survey item added to the 2024-2025 Behavioral and Mental Health Support survey as part of the outcome evaluation.

Family Engagement

According to the Office of Student Support Services, parents or guardians are involved in the initial aspects of the program because parent/guardian permission is required for students to attend the BASE Program. Additionally, daily feedback sheets were sent home each day, and parents were expected to sign and return them. According to BASE staff members, there were supplemental, at-home activities that extended the SEL curriculum that were shared with families, and community resources were provided as needed including parent-child interaction therapy. In 2024-2025, 86 percent of BASE staff members at Windsor Oaks agreed the BASE Program provided helpful resources and support for families. This was a decrease from 2023-2024 when all BASE staff members (100%) at Windsor Oaks agreed with this survey item. In 2024-2025, overall, 100 percent of parents who responded to the survey agreed the BASE Program provided helpful information for their family to support their child's behavioral needs. This was an increase from 2023-2024 when 70 percent of parents who responded to the survey agreed the BASE Program provided helpful information for their family to support their child's behavioral needs.

Initiative Goals

Survey Data

According to the BASE Playbook, the goal of the BASE Program is to decrease aggressive/disruptive/defiant behaviors that lead to out-of-school suspensions. Another goal is for students to acquire self-regulation skills that can be generalized to their home school learning environment. Staff perceptions related to the goal areas are shown in Table 44. In 2024-2025, overall, 75 percent of staff agreed the BASE Program provided students with useful strategies to help their emotional regulation and behavior. Additionally, 69 percent of staff agreed the BASE Program helped improve students' emotional regulation, and 61 percent agreed the program helped improve students' overall behavior. Overall, 59 percent of staff agreed the BASE Program helped improve students' aggressive, defiant, or disruptive behavior. There was a pattern of decrease across all survey items in Table 44 from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025, ranging from 1 percentage point to 9 percentage points. Similar to 2023-2024 patterns, across all survey items assessing perceptions of the program's goals, BASE staff members had the highest agreement percentages, followed by staff members who referred a student to BASE and worked with a student who attended BASE, and then staff who worked with a student who was in BASE but did

not refer a student. Overall, 64 percent of staff indicated they were satisfied with the BASE Program. BASE staff members who worked at Windsor Oaks had the highest percentage with all (100%) who responded to the item agreeing they were satisfied. All other staff members involved in the program had similar satisfaction rates ranging from 62 percent to 64 percent. In 2024-2025, of the parents who responded to the survey, 100 percent agreed the BASE Program was helpful for their child and their family. This was an increase from 2023-2024 when 70 percent of parents who responded to the survey agreed the BASE Program was helpful for their child and their family.

Table 44: Staff Perceptions of the BASE Program

Survey Items	BASE Staff Member at Windsor Oaks		Referred a student to BASE and worked with student who attended BASE		Worked with student who was in BASE but did not refer		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
The BASE Program provides students with useful strategies to help their emotional regulation and behavior.	100%	100%	77%	75%	70%	72%	76%	75%
The BASE Program helps improve students' emotional regulation.	100%	100%	74%	70%	72%	66%	74%	69%
The BASE Program helps improve students' behavior overall.	60%	100%	68%	60%	63%	59%	66%	61%
The BASE Program helps improve students' aggressive, defiant, or disruptive behavior.	80%	86%	70%	59%	62%	56%	68%	59%
How satisfied are you with the BASE Program?	--	100%	--	62%	--	64%	--	64%

Behavior Data

Discipline data for students in the BASE program were analyzed at two points in time to determine how the BASE Program influenced students' discipline as it related to the student outcome goal of decreasing aggressive/disruptive/defiant behaviors that leads to out-of-school suspensions. Data from two different cohorts were analyzed including students who participated in the BASE Program at some point in the 2023-2024 school year (Cohort 1) and students who participated in the BASE Program at some point in the 2024-2025 school year (Cohort 2). Because the number of students in the program each year is relatively small, examining two cohorts of students provided a stronger basis for evaluating the outcome of the BASE Program. Students included in this analysis were those who were enrolled at BASE at some point during the 2023-2024 or 2024-2025 school years and had discipline data prior to and after attending the BASE Program. For example, if a student was still enrolled in the BASE Program at the end of the year or did not have any days of enrollment at their home school because they left VBCPS after completing the BASE Program, they were excluded from the analysis. Figure 17 displays the average number of referrals, average number of suspensions, and the average number of out-of-school suspensions for students in 2023-2024 or Cohort 1 prior to attending the BASE Program compared to the average number of referrals, average number of suspensions, and average number of out-of-school suspensions after completing the BASE intervention and going back to their home school. As displayed in Figure 17, prior to attending the BASE Program students in Cohort 1 had an average of 7.96 referrals. After participating in the BASE Program, their average number of referrals decreased to 1.62. Prior to attending the BASE Program, students in Cohort 1 had 5.23 average suspensions. After completing the BASE Program their average number of suspensions decreased to 1.08. Prior to attending the

BASE Program, students in Cohort 1 had 4.27 average out-of-school suspensions. After participation in the BASE Program, their average number of out-of-school suspensions decreased to 1.00. Overall, students had fewer average number of referrals, average number of suspensions, and average number of out-of-school suspensions after returning to their home school after completing the BASE Program.

Figure 17: Discipline Data for BASE Students Before Attending the BASE Program and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 1: 2023-2024; N=26)

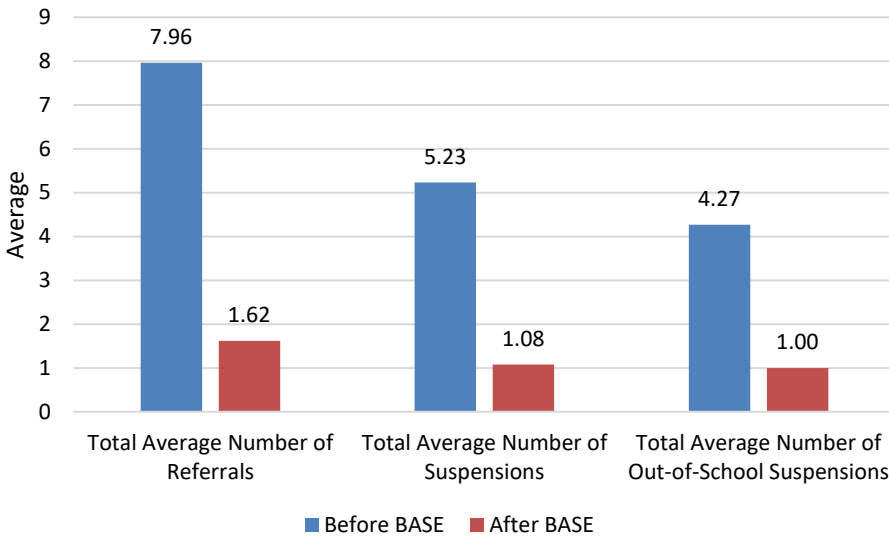
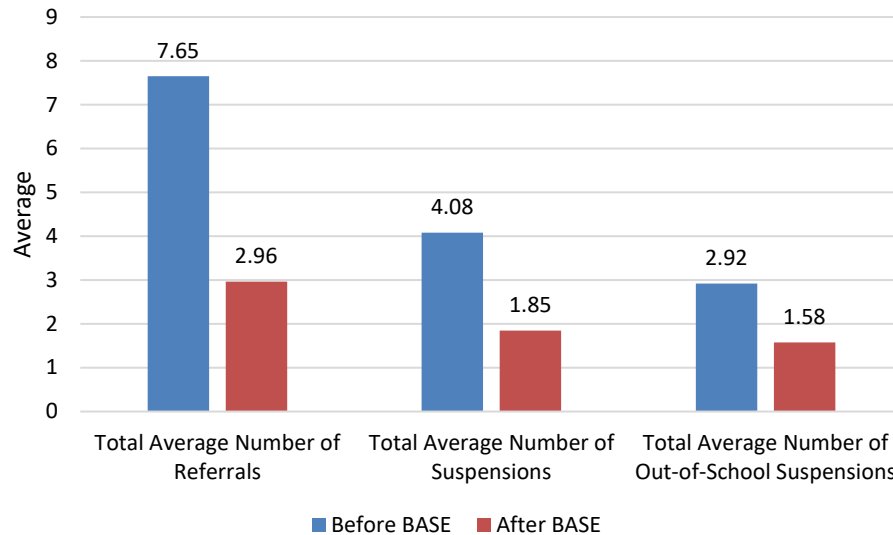


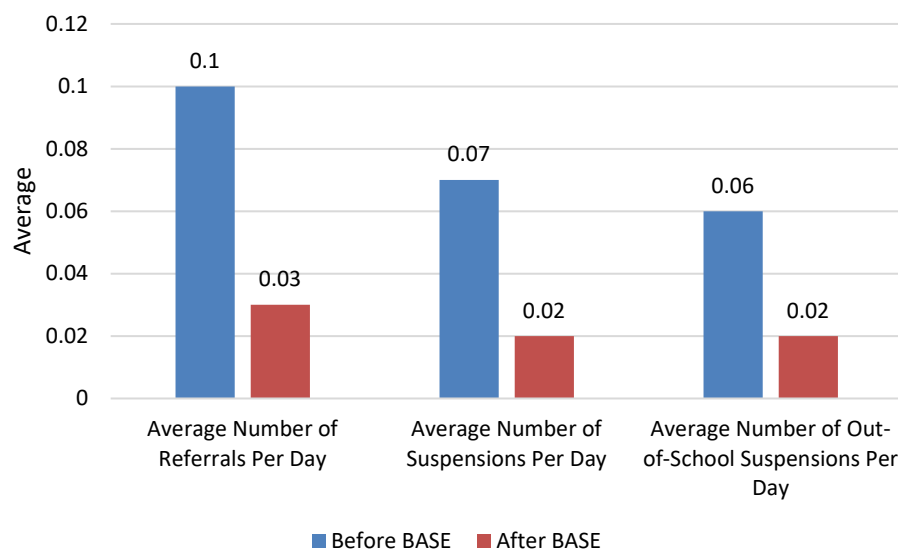
Figure 18 displays the average number of referrals, average number of suspensions, and the average number of out-of-school suspensions for students in 2024-2025 or Cohort 2 prior to attending the BASE Program and after completing the BASE intervention and going back to their home school. This analysis only included students who had discipline data prior to and after enrolling in the BASE Program. As displayed in Figure 18, prior to attending the BASE Program, students in Cohort 2 had an average of 7.65 referrals. After participating in the BASE Program, their total average number of referrals decreased to 2.96. Prior to attending the BASE Program, students in Cohort 2 had 4.08 total average suspensions. After participating in the BASE Program, their total average number of suspensions decreased to 1.85. Prior to attending the BASE Program, students in Cohort 2 had 2.92 total average out-of-school suspensions. After participation in the BASE Program, their total average number of out-of-school suspensions decreased to 1.58. Overall, across both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, on average, students had fewer referrals, suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions after returning to their home school after completing the BASE Program.

Figure 18: Discipline Data for BASE Students Before Attending the BASE Program and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 2: 2024-2025: N=26)



Another approach for analyzing the data was by calculating daily averages for the discipline data. Using this approach accounts for differences in enrollment length before and after BASE. This was done by dividing the total number of referrals, suspensions, or out-of-school suspensions by the total number of student enrollment days. As displayed in Figure 19, when adjusting for enrollment, students in Cohort 1 averaged fewer referrals and suspensions per day after participating in the BASE Program. Referrals decreased from 0.10 to 0.03 per day, suspensions from 0.07 to 0.02, and out-of-school suspensions from 0.06 to 0.02.

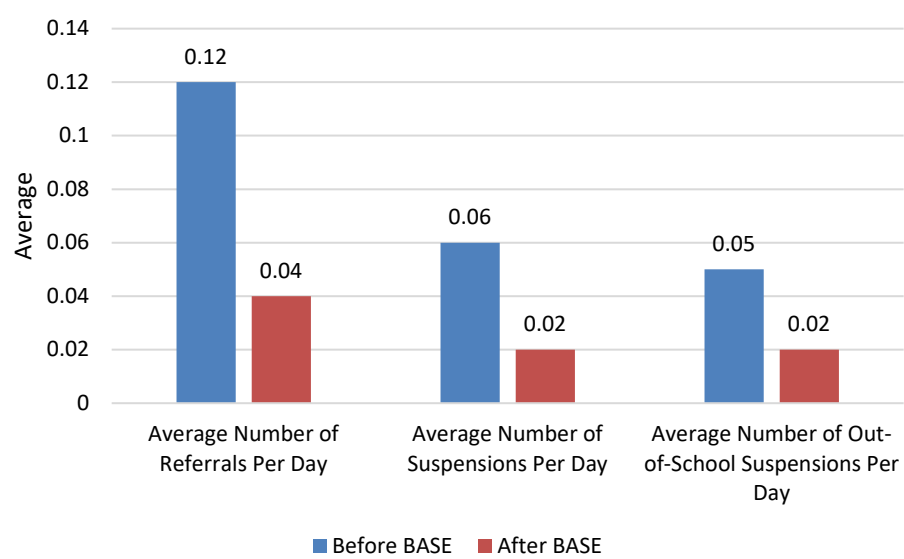
Figure 19: Discipline Data Per Day for BASE Students Before Attending BASE and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 1: 2023-2024)



Cohort 2 displayed a similar pattern. As displayed in Figure 20, when adjusting for enrollment length before and after BASE, students in Cohort 2 averaged fewer referrals and suspensions per day after participating in

the BASE Program. Referrals decreased from 0.12 to 0.04 per day, suspensions from 0.06 to 0.02, and out-of-school suspensions from 0.05 to 0.02.

Figure 20: Discipline Data Per Day for BASE Students Before Attending BASE and After Attending the BASE Program (Cohort 2: 2024-2025)



The next analysis determined the percentage of students who had lower rates of referrals, suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions after returning to their home school. Students included in this analysis were those who had discipline data prior to attending BASE and after exiting the BASE Program. Students who had zero referrals or suspensions were excluded from the analysis because they would not have had an opportunity to demonstrate a decrease.

Table 45 summarizes the percentage of students in Cohort 1 who demonstrated reductions in average daily referrals, suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions after returning to their home schools during the 2023-2024 school year, disaggregated by grade level. Overall, 88 percent of students had a lower average rate of referrals per day, while another 88 percent had a reduction in suspensions per day. Similarly, 84 percent of students had a lower average rate of out-of-school suspensions per day. In summary, a high percentage of students had lower average rates of referrals, suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions across all grade levels.

Table 45: Percentage of Students With Lower Referral, Suspension, and Out-of-School Suspension Rates in Cohort 1 (2023-2024)

Description	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Total
Students Who Had Lower Average Rate of Referrals Per Day After Returning to Home School	82% (N=11)	100% (N=10)	80% (N=5)	88% (N=26)
Students Who Had Lower Average Rate of Suspensions Per Day After Returning to Home School	80% (N=10)	90% (N=10)	100% (N=5)	88% (N=25)
Students Who Had Lower Average Rate of Out-Of-School Suspension Per Day After Returning to Home School	70% (N=10)	90% (N=10)	100% (N=5)	84% (N=25)

Note: Does not include students who showed no improvement (0 to 0) or those who were still enrolled at BASE at the end of the school year.

Table 46 summarizes the percentage of Cohort 2 students who demonstrated reductions in average daily referrals, suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions after returning to their home schools, disaggregated by grade level. Overall, 85 percent of students had a lower average rate of referrals, 67 percent had a lower average rate of suspensions, and 63 percent had a lower average rate of out-of-school suspensions. In summary, a majority of students in Cohort 2 displayed a decrease in disciplinary incidents after returning to their home schools, with the largest decline observed in referral rates. A higher percentage of first grade students appeared to display gains compared to kindergarten and second grade students.

Table 46: Percentage of Students With Lower Referral, Suspension, and Out-of-School-Suspension Rates in Cohort 2 (2024–2025)

Description	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Total
Students Who Had Lower Average Rate of Referrals Per Day After Returning to Home School	83% (N=12)	90% (N=10)	75% (N=4)	85% (N=26)
Students Who Had Lower Average Rate of Suspensions Per Day After Returning to Home School	70% (N=10)	70% (N=10)	50% (N=4)	67% (N=24)
Students Who Had Lower Average Rate of Out-Of-School Suspension Per Day After Returning to Home School	60% (N=10)	70% (N=10)	50% (N=4)	63% (N=24)

Comparison Group Analysis

To determine if the BASE Program impacted students’ discipline patterns more than interventions at other schools, a comparison group of non-BASE students was created for both Cohort 1 (2023–2024) and Cohort 2 (2024–2025) students who attended the BASE Program. Students were selected for the comparison group using several criteria. First, each student had to attend a school that sent at least one student to the BASE Program during the respective year. This criterion addressed differences in school-level practices related to referrals and use of the program. Second, students with special education status were excluded, consistent with BASE Program eligibility requirements. Third, students had to be enrolled in the same grade levels represented in the BASE cohort (grades K–2 for Cohort 1 and grades K–3 for Cohort 2). Finally, discipline data were considered: students were selected for the comparison group if they had at least a total number of referrals equal to the BASE cohort’s average for the year (at least eight referrals for Cohort 1 and at least eleven for Cohort 2). Because the BASE Program served students with significant behavioral challenges, including those with high numbers of discipline referrals, the BASE Program total average referrals for the year was used as criteria for identifying the comparison group. Using the average total referrals for the whole year created a comparison group that captured the full scope of discipline events and ensured that BASE students were compared to peers with a similar overall level of discipline challenges across the same time period. The last criterion ensured that both groups exhibited comparable behavioral patterns, which is the primary focus of the BASE Program. Students in this analysis group included students who were enrolled in VBCPS from at least September to May.⁵⁷

Demographic characteristics were not used to identify comparison group students due to the relatively small numbers of students who had high numbers of discipline events. As a result, the groups differed demographically, and these differences could influence how students experience discipline. This limitation should be considered when interpreting results. Even with this caveat, the selection approach provides evidence of program impact on discipline outcomes by aligning the comparison group closely with the behavioral profiles of BASE participants.

Appendix A includes the complete demographic characteristics for Cohort 1 BASE students in 2023–2024 and the comparison group. The most notable differences appeared for sex and ethnicity. Cohort 1 was predominantly male (87%) whereas the comparison group was evenly split 50 percent female and 50 percent

male. In Cohort 1, 61 percent of the students were White compared to the comparison group where 7 percent of the students were White (54 percentage point difference). Appendix B includes the complete demographic characteristics for Cohort 2 BASE students in 2024-2025 and the comparison group. Demographic characteristics for both groups differed. The most notable differences appeared with ethnicity and economic status. Of the Cohort 2 BASE students, 42 percent were Black whereas 69 percent of students in the comparison group were Black (27 percentage point difference). White students accounted for 38 percent of Cohort 2 BASE students compared to 15 percent of the comparison group (23 percentage point difference). In Cohort 2, 54 percent of the BASE students were economically disadvantaged, and in the comparison group 69 percent were economically disadvantaged (15 percentage point difference).

Figure 21 displays the average referrals for quarter 1 and quarter 4 for BASE Cohort 1 students compared to their comparison group in 2023-2024. Because the timing of the BASE intervention varied and students could enter BASE at various points during the year such as in quarter 2 or 3, the focus for this analysis was the trends from quarter 1 to quarter 4. In quarter 1, BASE students averaged more referrals than the comparison group (3.04 versus 1.64). In quarter 4, BASE students experienced a sharp decline in referrals, dropping to 0.87 which is the lowest point across the year and the comparison group’s referrals increased from 1.64 to 2.64.⁵⁸

Figure 21: BASE Cohort 1 and Comparison Group Average Referrals Q1 and Q4

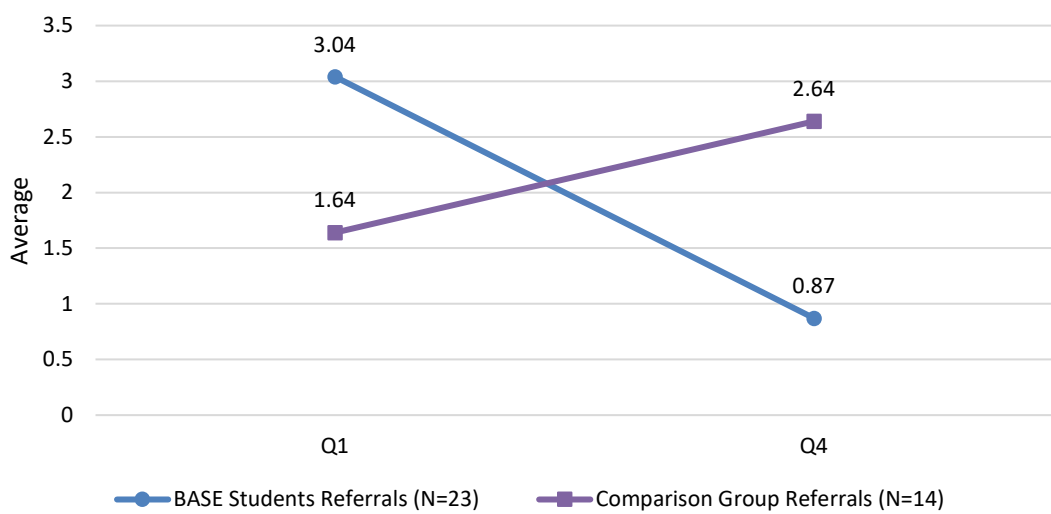


Figure 22 displays BASE Cohort 2 and the comparison group average total referrals in quarter 1 and quarter 4. At quarter 1, BASE students reported higher total average referrals than the comparison group (4.33 versus 3.46). Referrals fell sharply in quarter 4 to an average of 1.46 for students in the BASE Cohort 2. However, the comparison group increased to 4.00 in quarter 4.

Figure 22: BASE Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Average Referrals Q1 and Q4

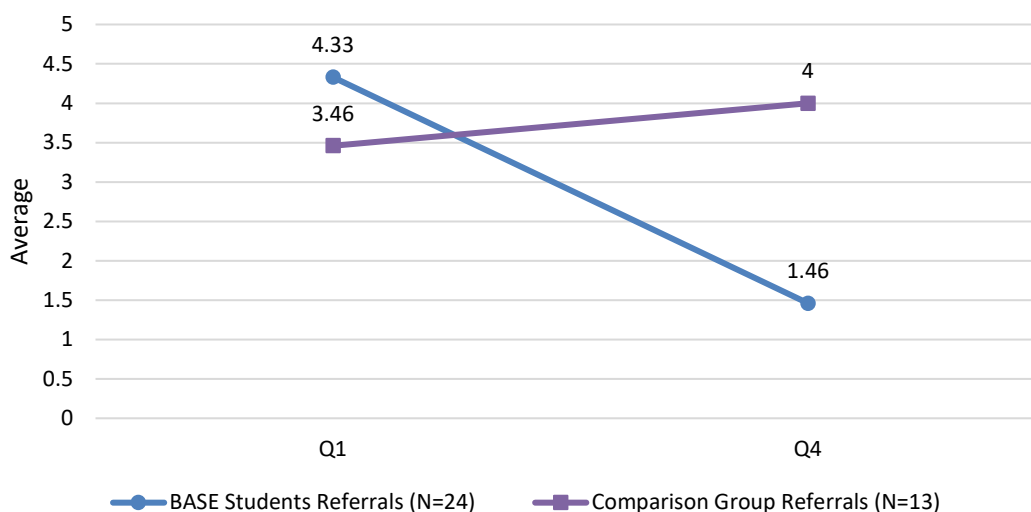


Figure 23 displays average suspensions in quarter 1 and quarter 4 for BASE cohort 1 students and the comparison group. In quarter 1, BASE students in Cohort 1 had a higher suspension rate than the comparison group (1.87 versus 0.43). Average suspensions for students in BASE Cohort 1 dropped sharply to 0.61 in quarter 4. By contrast, the comparison group saw an increase in their average suspensions in quarter 4.

Figure 23: BASE Cohort 1 and Comparison Group Average Suspensions Q1 and Q4

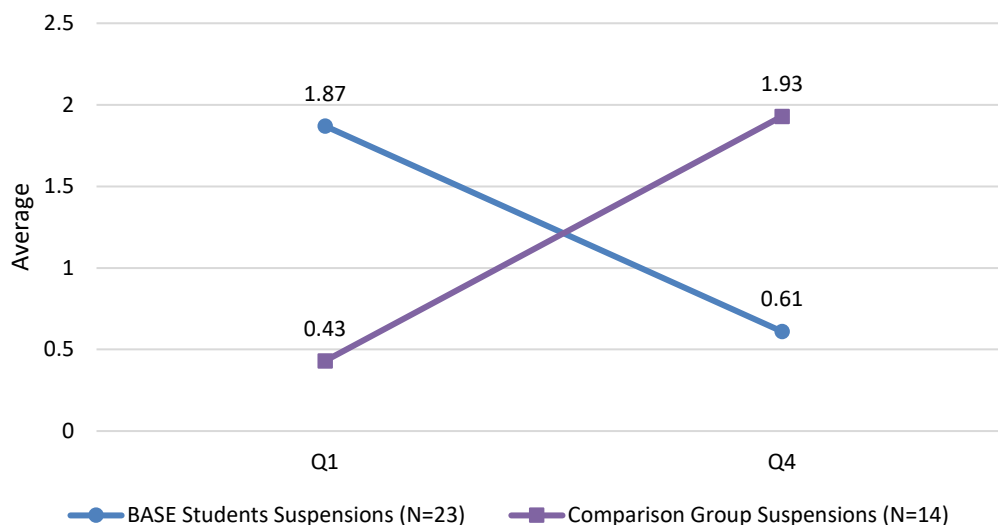


Figure 24 displays the average total suspensions in quarter 1 and quarter 4 for BASE Cohort 2 students compared to students in the comparison group. For BASE students, suspensions began relatively high (1.96), then dropped sharply in quarter 4 to 1.17. By contrast, the comparison group shows a consistent upward trajectory. Average suspensions began lower than BASE students in quarter 1 (1.23) but increased to 2.77 average suspensions in quarter 4.

Figure 24: BASE Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Average Suspensions Q1 and Q4

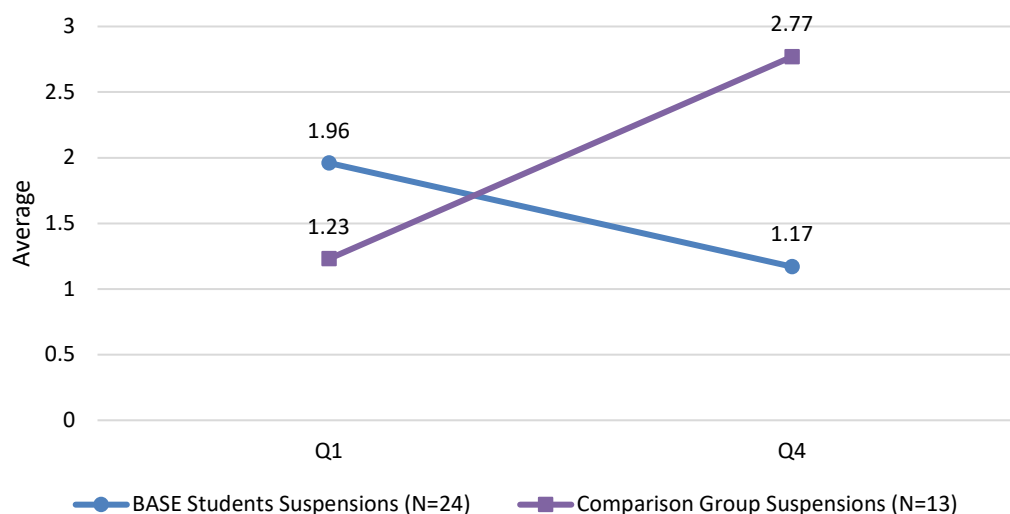


Figure 25 presents the average total out-of-school suspensions in quarter 1 and quarter 4 for BASE Cohort 1 students compared to students in the comparison group. For BASE students, out-of-school suspensions began at 1.48 and in quarter 4, suspensions drop sharply to 0.52. The comparison group displayed somewhat of a different trend. The comparison group had lower quarter 1 average out-of-school suspensions compared to BASE (0.29), however, by quarter 4, their average out-of-school suspensions rose to 1.21.

Figure 25: BASE Cohort 1 and Comparison Group Average Out-of-School Suspensions Q1 and Q4

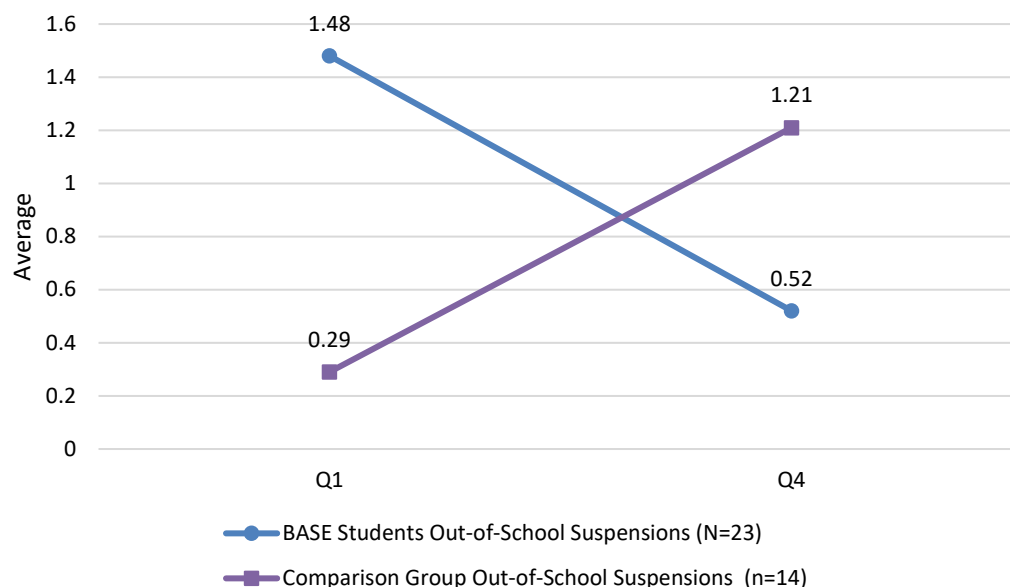
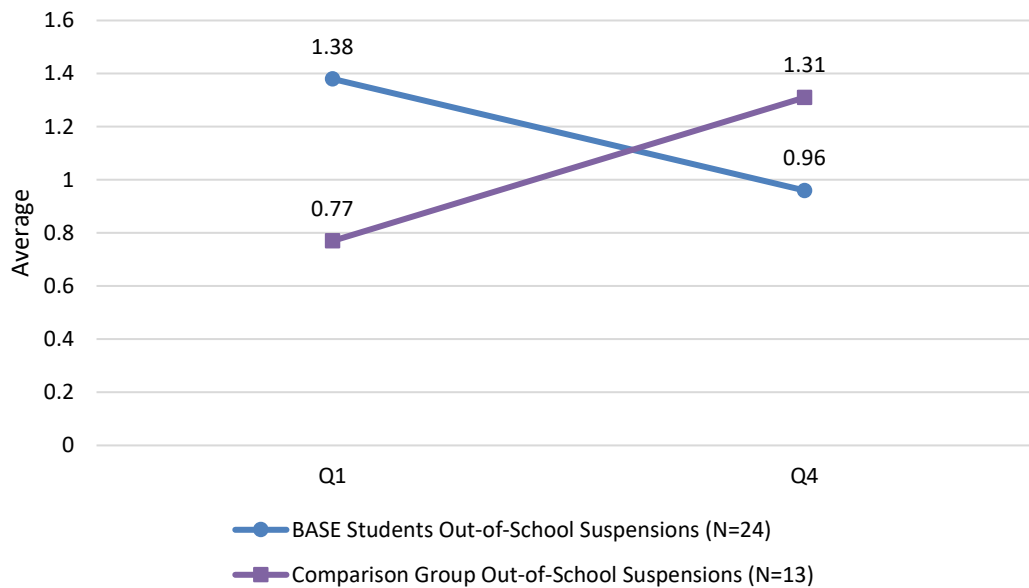


Figure 26 displays the average total out-of-school suspensions in quarter 1 and quarter 4 for BASE Cohort 2 students compared to the comparison group. For BASE students, out-of-school suspensions began higher in quarter 1 (1.38) than the comparison group (0.77) but declined to 0.96 in quarter 4. In contrast, the comparison group increased to 1.31 average out-of-school suspensions in quarter 4.

Figure 26: BASE Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Average Out-of-School Suspensions Q1 and Q4



Across BASE Cohorts 1 and 2, students began the year (quarter 1) with higher levels of referrals, suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions than both comparison groups. However, consistent patterns emerged showing that BASE students improved over time while comparison group students' discipline patterns trended upward or remained elevated.

Longitudinal Analysis

A longitudinal analysis for BASE students in Cohort 1 from 2023-2024 and the comparison group was conducted to examine longer term trends in discipline events through the school year following their BASE participation. Students included in this analysis were those who were enrolled in the division for the entire year in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. This included 17 BASE students and 11 students in the comparison group. With this smaller group of students, the Year 1 data varied slightly from the larger group, but the pattern remained the same with a decrease in the referral data in quarter 4.

Figure 27 displays the average total referrals for BASE students in Cohort 1 and students in the comparison group in quarter 1 and quarter 4 across two academic years. As discussed earlier in the report, Year 1 (2023-2024) highlights a reduction in BASE Cohort 1 students' referrals by the end of the year compared to the comparison group. In Year 2, BASE students in Cohort 1 began the year with 1.76 referrals, which a substantial increase from the low of quarter 4 the previous year. By contrast, the comparison group started the year lower than they ended the previous year. Of note, both groups see a decline in average referrals in quarter 4.

Figure 27: Cohort 1 BASE Students and Comparison Group Average Referrals for Year 1 and Year 2

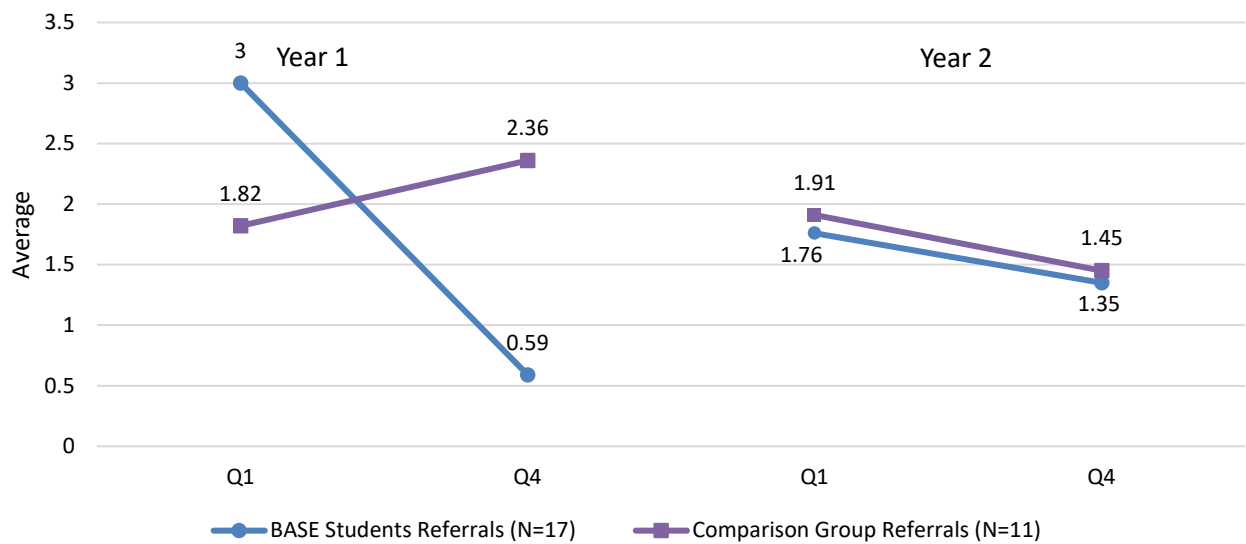


Figure 28 displays the average total suspensions for students in BASE Cohort 1 and the comparison group in quarter 1 and quarter 4 across two academic years. BASE students end quarter 4 with a sharp decline in the average number of suspensions while students in the comparison group show a moderate increase. In Year 2, quarter 1, BASE students in Cohort 1 begin the year with higher average suspensions than the comparison group (1.18 verse 0.55). By quarter 4, BASE students in Cohort 1 demonstrated a decline in suspensions while students in the comparison group demonstrated a slight increase in suspensions.

Figure 28: Cohort 1 BASE Students and Comparison Group Total Average Suspensions for Year 1 and Year 2

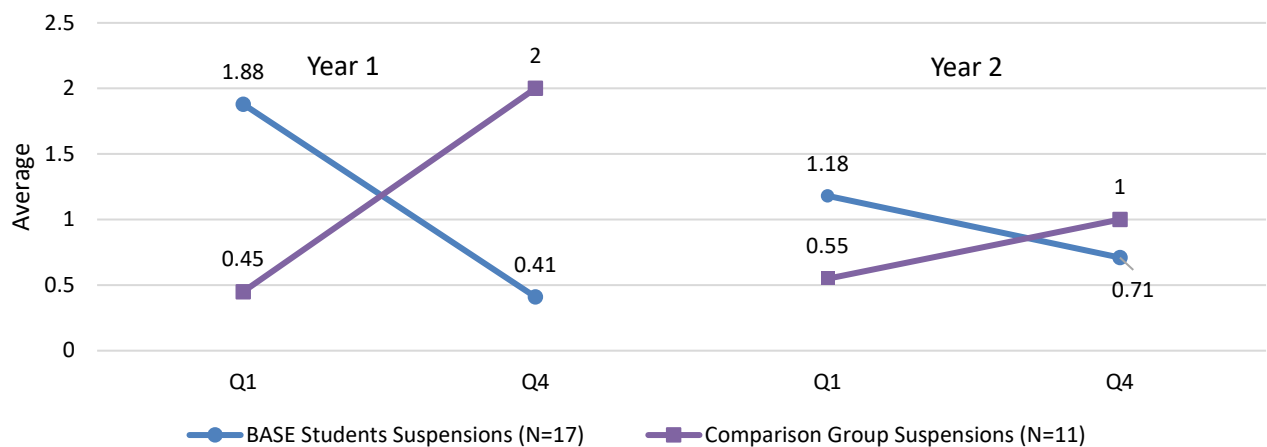
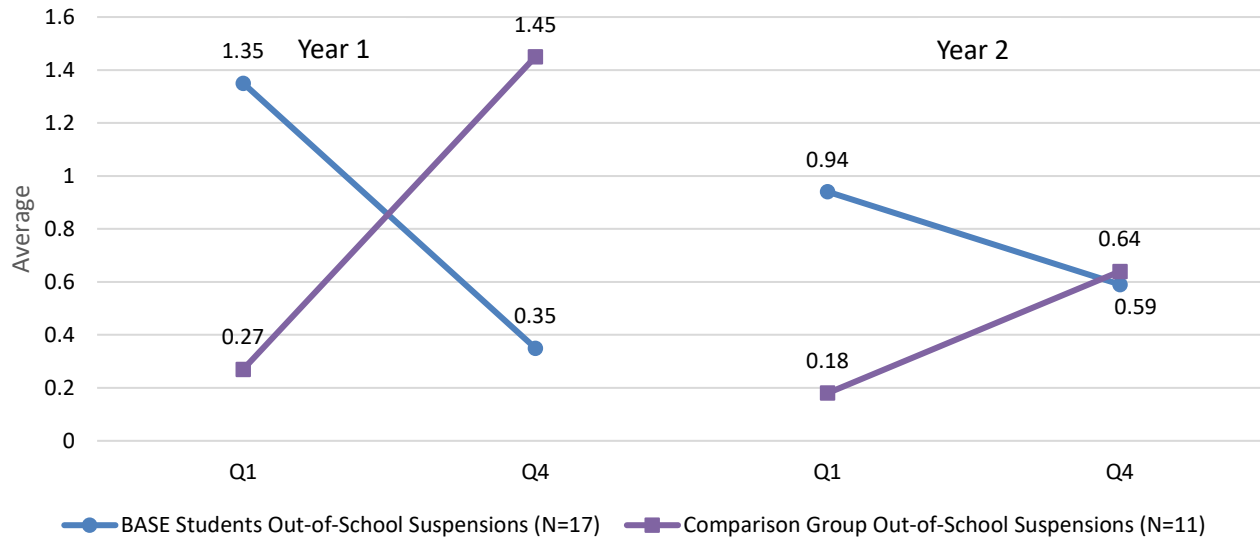


Figure 29 displays average total out-of-school suspensions for students in BASE Cohort 1 and the comparison group in quarter 1 and quarter 4 across two academic years. In Year 2, BASE students in Cohort 1 began with higher out-of-school suspension rates (0.94) compared with the comparison group (0.18). In quarter 4, BASE students in Cohort 1 demonstrate a decline in out-of-school suspensions while the comparison group demonstrates an increase.

Figure 29: Year 1 and Year 2 of Cohort 1 BASE Students and Comparison Group Total Average Out-of-School Suspensions



Across the three disciplinary measures, after discipline events improved in quarter 4 of the year students enrolled in BASE relative to the comparison group, BASE students began Year 2 (2024-2025) with higher levels of disciplinary events, particularly in suspensions and out-of-school suspensions. In addition to beginning the year with higher averages than the comparison groups, BASE students often began the year with large increases from the positive gains they made the year before. For example, Cohort 1 BASE students' average number of referrals demonstrated a sharp increase from 0.59 in quarter 4 of Year 1 to 1.76 in quarter 1 of Year 2. By quarter 4, BASE students in Cohort 1 were generally equal to or below the comparison group on each measure. This suggests that while students showed a sharp year-end decrease in the average number of referrals, adjusting to a new school year poses challenges to these students.

Summary

Analysis of discipline outcomes for students in the BASE Program showed consistent improvements across two consecutive cohorts. For the 2023–2024 school year (Cohort 1), students' average referrals decreased from 7.96 to 1.62 after completing the program. Suspensions dropped from 5.23 to 1.08, and out-of-school suspensions declined from 4.27 to 1.00. When daily averages were considered to account for different enrollment lengths, referrals fell from 0.10 to 0.03 per day, suspensions from 0.07 to 0.02, and out-of-school suspensions from 0.06 to 0.02. Cohort 2, which attended the program in 2024-2025, showed the same positive pattern of results. Average referrals declined from 7.65 to 2.96, suspensions from 4.08 to 1.85, and out-of-school suspensions from 2.92 to 1.58. Their daily rates also decreased, with referrals dropping from 0.12 to 0.04 per day, suspensions from 0.06 to 0.02, and out-of-school suspensions from 0.05 to 0.02.

On an individual student level, progress was also demonstrated. In Cohort 1, 88 percent of students had lower daily referral rates after returning to their home schools, 88 percent had fewer suspensions, and 84 percent had fewer out-of-school suspensions. Cohort 2 demonstrated a similar, though slightly more modest, pattern. Eighty-five percent of students had a reduction in their daily referrals, 67 percent had a reduction in suspensions, and 63 percent had a reduction in out-of-school suspensions.

Two comparison groups were created to further analyze the program's impact. Although BASE students started the school year with higher levels of referrals and suspensions than their closest peers in terms of

discipline events, their rates declined by the end of the year, while the comparison groups' rates generally remained steady or increased. For example, among Cohort 2 students, average suspensions fell from 1.96 in quarter 1 to 1.17 in quarter 4, whereas the comparison group's suspensions more than doubled over the same period.

A longitudinal follow-up of a subset of Cohort 1 students who remained enrolled in VBCPS one year after completing BASE showed that students appeared to have had difficulty transitioning at the start of the school year. Their Year 2 discipline data was higher than the comparison group data, but by the end of the second year, their referral, suspension, and out-of-school suspension rates were equal to or lower than those of their comparison group peers.

General Perceptions

Through open-ended survey items, school-based staff had the opportunity to provide comments regarding what worked well and what could make the BASE Program more beneficial. Overall, 115 staff members provided a comment about what worked well with the program, which was 25 percent of those staff members who indicated they were familiar with the BASE Program. Themes from staff regarding what worked well included the following: the advantages of a small-group setting, the program targets student-specific behavior, and having the program as an option for students.

Overall, 116 staff members provided a comment about what could make the program more beneficial, which was 25 percent of those staff members who indicated they were familiar with the BASE Program. The primary themes from staff regarding improvement areas focused on the difficulty with the transition back to the traditional classroom setting. Staff members reported students had a difficult time with the academic demands, and some of the support systems or strategies used in the BASE Program were not feasible in the traditional classroom. Other areas for improvement included the referral process, such as more clarity about how students qualified for the program. In addition, staff members reported wanting more parent involvement to better support parents in their capacity to support their students. Finally, some staff suggested expanding the program to include more openings and, when appropriate, allow students to attend for longer periods of time.

Parents of BASE students also had the opportunity to provide comments about the BASE Program in an open-ended survey item. A total of four parents provided a comment about the BASE Program, which was 50 percent of those who responded to the survey. The majority of parents expressed very positive experiences with the BASE Program and commented positively about their experience with the staff. Parents reported the interventions at the BASE Program were effective and staff were uniquely qualified to meet their students' needs. The next most common theme focused on challenges with the students' transition back to the home school with some parents noting their student had a difficult time transitioning back to the home school.

Cost

This section focuses on the cost to the school division to implement the BASE Program. Cost data were collected from the Office of Student Support Services, Office of Transportation and Fleet Services, Human Resources, Budget and Finance, and Benefits. Costs were totaled from the following areas: staff costs, transportation, instructional materials, token economy system, and professional learning. The total cost for the 2024-2025 school year was estimated to be \$542,408 (see Table 47). The largest expense in 2024-2025 was staffing costs, which totaled \$460,451. This included salaries and benefits costs for two behavior intervention teachers, two student support specialists, and three teacher assistants. Staffing costs were higher in 2024-2025 due to full year costs for student support specialists, but were somewhat offset by three teacher assistants in 2024-2025 rather than four who worked with the program during 2023-2024 due to the resignation of one teacher assistant. Staff costs did not include the psychologist or doctoral intern who were assigned to the

program because their responsibilities were not exclusive to the program and extended to other schools and/or programs in the division. A \$1,500 stipend from DOSL was also provided for each of the three teaching assistants totaling \$4,500. The second largest cost was for transportation, which increased in 2024-2025. Transportation costs included \$46,503 in driver costs and \$33,120 for operational costs such as fuel, maintenance, and vehicle depreciation at \$2.50 per mile. The third largest expense included instructional materials, which totaled \$1,548.

Table 47: Cost for the BASE Program

Cost Categories	Costs in 2023-2024	Costs in 2024-2025
BASE Staff Costs	\$423,158*	\$460,541
Transportation	\$68,056	\$79,623
Instructional Materials	\$2,080	\$1,548
Token Economy System (e.g., incentives purchased for students)	\$912	\$696
Professional Learning	\$315	\$0
Total Cost to VBCPS	\$494,521	\$542,408

*In 2023-2024, student support specialists’ salaries were prorated to include the months spent in the BASE Program (February-June).

Overall Perceptions and Divisionwide Trends in Student Behavioral and Mental Health

The last evaluation question focused on staff perceptions and divisionwide data related to behavioral and mental health supports for students more generally. This section includes perceptions of behavioral and mental health supports for students from all staff at all schools who responded to the survey. In addition, divisionwide data related to behavioral and mental health were examined, including the total number of suicide risk assessments completed, attendance, and discipline data. As the initiatives included in this evaluation were developed or expanded during the 2023-2024 school year, data were reviewed before and after implementation, which may provide insight into potential impacts of the initiatives at the division level. However, because the data reflect divisionwide trends and are influenced by multiple factors, they cannot be used to directly attribute changes to the specific initiatives included in this evaluation.

Perceptions

On the survey, staff were provided general questions about behavioral and mental health supports for students at their school, which could include staff, programs, or services to assist students. As noted previously, although not the focus of this evaluation, VBCPS offers other behavioral and mental health supports to all students throughout the division, such as through school counselors, behavior intervention specialists, MTSS framework, Student Response Team (SRT) process, and Care Solace.

When surveyed about their general perceptions of supports for student behavior at their school, 79 percent of staff agreed there were supports at their school to help students who misbehaved demonstrate positive behavior, which increased from the previous year when 76 percent of staff agreed (see Table 48). Analyses by school level showed there were larger increases at the elementary school and middle school levels with improvements of 3 to 5 percentage points compared to the high school level, which had a slight decrease. Overall, lower percentages of staff indicated they were satisfied with the supports at their school to help students demonstrate positive behavior (66%), although there were improvements from the previous year (from 61% to 66%). There were improvements in satisfaction with the supports at all school levels (between 5 and 7 percentage point increases). In addition, in 2024-2025, 82 percent of staff agreed they felt like they knew what to do when a student needed behavioral supports, with little variability by school level.

Table 48: General Staff Perceptions of Behavioral Supports for Students by Level

Survey Items	Elementary		Middle		High		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
There are supports at my school to help students who misbehave demonstrate positive behavior.	74%	79%	77%	80%	78%	77%	76%	79%
How satisfied are you with the supports at your school to help students demonstrate positive behavior?	60%	67%	59%	64%	62%	67%	61%	66%
I feel like I know what to do when a student needs behavioral supports.	--	82%	--	82%	--	83%	--	82%

General perceptions of behavior supports for students were analyzed by staff group (see Table 49). Overall, administrators had the most positive perceptions of the supports for students who misbehaved (90%-94%), followed by student support staff (79%-88%), and other instructional staff (68%-83%). Staff in other related positions (65%-80%) and teachers and teacher assistants (63%-76%) had lower agreement and satisfaction percentages. Nearly all staff groups showed improvements in their agreement and satisfaction compared to the previous year with the exception of administrators (see Table 49). When surveyed about feeling like they knew what to do when a student needed behavioral support, nearly all administrators (98%) and student support staff (90%) agreed and from 80 to 81 percent of staff in the other staff groups agreed.

Table 49: General Staff Perceptions of Behavioral Supports for Students by Position

Survey Items	Admin		Teacher or Teacher Asst		Other Inst		Other Related		Stud Supp	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
There are supports at my school to help students who misbehave demonstrate positive behavior.	97%	94%	74%	76%	76%	83%	80%	80%	86%	88%
How satisfied are you with the supports at your school to help students demonstrate positive behavior?	90%	90%	57%	63%	60%	68%	64%	65%	71%	79%
I feel like I know what to do when a student needs behavioral supports.	--	98%	--	80%	--	80%	--	81%	--	90%

When surveyed about their general perceptions of mental health supports at their school, 80 percent of staff agreed there were supports at their school to help students access mental health services, which was an increase from 75 percent the previous year (see Table 50). Analyses by school level showed higher percentages of secondary staff (80%-83%) agreed with this item than elementary school staff (78%), although there was a larger increase in agreement from the previous year at the elementary level (increase of 10 percentage points). Overall, lower percentages of staff indicated they were satisfied with the supports at their school to help students who may have mental health needs (68%). Agreement by level ranged from 66 percent at the elementary school level to 72 percent at the high school level. Again, there was a larger increase in satisfaction at the elementary school level with an increase of 7 percentage points. In 2024-2025, overall, 77 percent of

staff agreed they knew what to do when a student needed mental health supports with higher agreement at the secondary levels (79%-81%) than the elementary school level (74%).

Table 50: General Staff Perceptions of Mental Health Supports for Students by Level

Survey Items	Elementary		Middle		High		Total	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
There are supports at my school to help students access mental health services.	68%	78%	75%	80%	83%	83%	75%	80%
How satisfied are you with the supports at your school to help students who may have mental health needs?	59%	66%	63%	67%	70%	72%	64%	68%
I feel like I know what to do when a student needs mental health supports.	--	74%	--	79%	--	81%	--	77%

Table 51 displays general perceptions of mental health supports for students analyzed by staff group. Overall, administrators had the most positive perceptions (81%-91%), followed by student support staff (85%-93%), and other related staff (70%-89%). Instructional staff, including teachers and teacher assistants, had the lowest agreement and satisfaction percentages (63%-78%). Similar to the findings for behavioral supports, nearly all groups showed improvements in their agreement and satisfaction compared to the previous year (see Table 52). In addition, when surveyed about feeling like they knew what to do when a student needed mental health support, nearly all administrators (97%) and student support staff (93%) agreed, while from 74 to 78 percent of other staff groups agreed.

Table 51: General Staff Perceptions of Mental Health Supports for Students by Position

Survey Items	Admin		Teacher or Teacher Asst		Other Inst		Other Related		Stud Supp	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
There are supports at my school to help students access mental health services.	92%	91%	73%	78%	76%	77%	81%	89%	80%	93%
How satisfied are you with the supports at your school to help students who may have mental health needs?	79%	81%	62%	66%	62%	63%	71%	70%	69%	85%
I feel like I know what to do when a student needs mental health supports.	--	97%	--	74%	--	74%	--	78%	--	93%

In 2024-2025, staff also responded to a survey item asking them to select the resources that would be most helpful for their school to address students' behavioral and mental health needs. Staff could select three of the ten response options provided or an "other" option with an opportunity to provide a comment. The response options provided were based on comments provided from an open-ended survey item from the previous year's evaluation, which asked staff to provide any thoughts they had about the behavioral supports offered to students and provide any thoughts they had about the mental health supports offered to students.

Overall, the top three resources selected by staff that would be most helpful to address students' behavioral and mental health needs were more behavior intervention specialists (39%), more school counselors (34%), and more student support specialists (28%) (see Table 52). Analyses by school level showed the top two most selected options remained the same across all levels: more school counselors and behavior intervention specialists. However, there were slight variations in the third most selected option. At the elementary school level, the third most selected option was more student support specialists and specialized programs. At the

middle school level, the third most selected option was more student support specialists, and at the high school level, the third most selected option was more awareness of existing mental health supports. When analyzing data by position, the top two most selected options remained more school counselors and behavior intervention specialists for nearly all staff groups.

Comments provided by the respondents who selected the “other” response option were analyzed for themes. Overall, respondents who selected this option most frequently provided comments that reiterated areas from the other response options. Other comments focused on clearer disciplinary expectations/more consistent implementation (including administrative follow-up and holding students accountable as well as increased partnership with outside mental health agencies).

Table 52: Percentages of Staff by Level Who Selected Various Strategies Would Be Most Helpful for Behavioral and Mental Supports for Students

Survey Item: Please select which of the following would be most helpful for your school to address students' behavioral and mental health needs. <i>Top three selected</i>	Elem	Middle	High	Total
More school counselors	38%	35%	29%	34%
More behavior intervention specialists	42%	43%	32%	39%
More psychologists	12%	21%	28%	19%
More student support specialists	30%	30%	24%	28%
Specialized programs	30%	21%	17%	23%
More communication or involvement with parents	28%	22%	22%	25%
More staff training/professional learning related to mental health	18%	17%	19%	18%
More awareness of existing mental health supports	19%	25%	31%	24%
More staff training/professional learning related to behavioral supports	19%	16%	13%	16%
More awareness of existing behavioral supports	19%	20%	26%	22%
None	2%	3%	4%	3%
Other	11%	8%	8%	9%

Divisionwide Trends in Student Behavioral and Mental Health

Divisionwide data related to behavioral and mental health were examined, including the total number of suicide risk assessments completed, attendance, and discipline data. To provide insight into potential impacts of the initiatives at the division level, data were reviewed the year before (2022-2023) and the two years after the initiatives were developed or expanded (2023-2024 and 2024-2025). However, because the data reflects divisionwide trends and are influenced by multiple factors, they cannot be used to directly attribute changes to the specific initiatives included in this evaluation.

Mental Health

There was a total of 1,378 suicide risk assessments conducted for VBPCS students during the 2022-2023 school year. In comparison, there were 1,149 suicide risk assessments conducted during the 2023-2024 school year and 908 suicide risk assessments in 2024-2025. Over the three-year period, there has been a decline in the number of students who have needed to be assessed for suicide risk, which was a 34 percent reduction.

Attendance

The percentage of VBCPS students who were chronically absent (i.e., missing at least 10 percent of the school year) was 17.4 percent in 2022-2023.⁵⁹ More recent data suggest there have been declines in the percentage of students who were chronically absent with 11.7 percent of students in VBCPS being chronically absent in 2023-2024 and 10.1 percent in 2024-2025.⁶⁰ An additional attendance measure, average school attendance rate, is calculated based on the total number of days each student attended school divided by the total number of days each student was enrolled, which reflects the actual percentage of instructional days attended across the schools. Across the division, there was an average school attendance rate of 93.6 percent in 2022-2023. This increased to 94.3 percent in 2023-2024 and 95.0 percent in 2024-2025.

Behavior

Due to adjustments in divisionwide policies related to cell phone use during this timeframe, which may have led to increases in related referrals, all cell phone policy violations were excluded from the analysis. The percentage of students who received at least one discipline referral remained relatively consistent from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 with approximately 18 percent of students receiving at least one discipline referral. In addition, from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 approximately 9 percent of students received a discipline referral only once and 9 percent of students received multiple referrals. Suspension data showed the percentage of students suspended at least once showed a slight decrease from 11 percent in 2022-2023 to 10 percent in 2023-2024, which remained the same at 10 percent in 2024-2025. While the percentage of students suspended once remained the same at 6 percent of students from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025, the percentage of students suspended multiple times remained relatively consistent from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 with approximately 5 percent of students receiving multiple suspensions, then had a slight decrease in 2024-2025 to 4 percent. The severity of behavior has appeared to decrease since 2022-2023 as evidenced by the number of disciplinary hearings, which are held for more severe incidents (i.e., long-term suspension or expulsion requests). There have been decreases each year in disciplinary hearings from 1,505 during the 2022-2023 school year to 1,149 in 2023-2024 and 1,088 in 2024-2025.⁶¹

In summary, although not assessing the direct impact of the initiatives included in this evaluation, overall, divisionwide data suggest positive trends in student behavioral and mental health measures, with decreases in suicide risk assessments, chronic absenteeism, and disciplinary severity, alongside improvements in average attendance. While these trends are encouraging, they reflect multiple influencing factors and cannot be directly attributed to any single initiative, rather, this suggests that the school division has been taking steps towards addressing these areas.

Summary

As the country entered the “postpandemic” era, schools across the country witnessed an unprecedented rise in mental health and behavioral challenges. In 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Children’s Hospital Association declared a national state of emergency for child and adolescent mental health.⁶² Mental health influences how an individual thinks, feels, behaves, and interacts with others.⁶³ VBCPS recently created or expanded several initiatives aimed to support students’ behavioral and mental health with this current evaluation focused on assessing outcomes of three of them including Behavior Intervention Support Team, Communities in Schools, and the BASE Program. These initiatives offered supports within a tiered system as part of the VBCPS Integrated Systems of Support framework. Across the initiatives, the following areas were identified as themes of goal areas: student behavior and discipline, social and emotional learning skills, absenteeism, and empowering teachers to address student needs and manage the classroom learning experience. The initiatives are summarized in Table 53.

Table 53: Overview of Three Behavioral and Mental Health Supports Initiatives

Initiative	Tier	Participants	Purpose
Behavior Intervention Support Team	Tiers 1, 2, and 3	Five elementary schools	Reduce negative behaviors that impact instruction and academic performance, provide layer of support for schools
Communities in Schools	Tiers 1, 2, and 3	Ten elementary, middle, and high schools	Leverage community resources to reduce chronic absenteeism, although each school has a specific focus
Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program	Tier 3	General education elementary students, primarily K-3	Teach coping strategies, problem solving skills, and social skills needed for school and behavior management

Behavior Intervention Support Team

The BIST initiative in VBCPS provides staff with professional learning and strategies that are grounded in the concepts of BIST. During the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school year, the BIST initiative was implemented with staff at five elementary schools: Diamond Springs, Newtown, Parkway, Thalia, and Bettie F. Williams. The initiative involved multiple professional learning opportunities and support through the Cornerstones of Care organization. In 2024-2025, when administrators were surveyed about the extent to which their staff were implementing various aspects of the initiative, four administrators estimated most of their teachers and staff (between 76% to 100%) were actively using BIST strategies with students, while one administrator estimated that the majority of their teachers and staff (between 51% to 75%) were actively using BIST strategies with students. The various supports provided through the BIST initiative were also available to students at these schools at multiple tiers, including Tiers 1, 2, and 3. One component of BIST involves staff using common language when working with students. For example, staff should use specific language when talking about the goals for life (e.g., “students can make good choices even if they are mad”) and the missing skills (“students can’t be mad without getting in trouble.”). Students who needed additional support due to disruptive behavior were provided opportunities to learn replacement or missing skills. BIST offers intervention strategies for students who engage in disruptive behavior, which can include the safe seat (a separate seat within the classroom), the buddy room (a seat within a partner classroom), and the focus room (a room separate from the classroom). All schools (N=5) implemented the focus room and safe seat, while four schools implemented a buddy room. When using these strategies, students are supported in learning appropriate skills and held accountable for their behavior by processing the situation with staff. When staff who were involved with the initiative were surveyed, overall 81 percent of staff indicated the focus rooms helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent and 72 percent indicated safe seats helped improve student behavior to a large or moderate extent. In addition, when surveyed about which BIST strategies were most useful for helping students improve their self-regulation skills, the most frequently selected strategies were common language (64%), the safe seat (56%), and the focus room (53%). One recommendation related to BIST from the 2023-2024 evaluation focused on improving the process for providing parents information and resources about Behavior Intervention Support Team practices. During 2024-2025, all schools offered a BIST Parent Night with the assistance of the BIST Cornerstones of Care consultant. When staff were surveyed, 78 percent of staff involved with BIST agreed parents were provided information and resources about BIST practices and strategies at their school.

To assess the impact of BIST on the goal areas, staff were provided related survey items and schoolwide discipline data were examined for the five schools implementing BIST. Overall, 60 percent of staff involved with the initiative agreed the BIST strategies allowed them to increase teaching time for all students, while from 70 to 73 percent agreed BIST strategies allowed them to decrease disruptive behavior and allowed them to help students develop missing skills. More generally, 83 to 88 percent of staff agreed the BIST initiative provided them strategies they can use to intervene before behavior escalates and provided a way to help teachers by offering an option to help support students with behavior concerns. Examinations of schoolwide

referral and suspension data showed the initiative appeared to have the largest impact on students with multiple referrals. Four of the five schools showed decreases in the percentages of students with more than one referral and more than one suspension (average decreases of 1.6 to 1.7 percentage points). All decreases were larger than elementary school division-level changes. However, progress was less consistent for discipline data regarding students with a single referral or single suspension with three of the five schools seeing decreases in these percentages and the decreases were smaller on average (average decreases of 0.4 to 0.8 percentage points).

Overall, 75 percent of staff involved with the BIST initiative indicated they were satisfied with the initiative. Themes from staff regarding what worked well included using common, consistent language; having the specific intervention strategies (i.e., focus room, safe seat, buddy room); and the benefits of processing for student reflection. The primary themes from staff regarding improvement areas focused on greater accountability for student behavior; lack of consistency, implementation fidelity, or buy-in from teachers throughout the school; and lack of parent information, involvement, and accountability. The total cost of the BIST initiative for the 2024-2025 school year was \$306,810. With Title I Grant funding included, the total cost to the school division was \$232,510.

Communities in Schools

During 2024-2025, the Communities in Schools (CIS) initiative operated in ten VBPCS schools: Diamond Springs Elementary, Newtown Elementary, Point O' View Elementary, Rosemont Elementary, Williams Elementary, Bayside 6, Bayside Middle, Larkspur Middle, Bayside High, and Green Run High. The CIS initiative uses a tiered approach to provide various supports to students, including connecting students and families with community resources through a CIS site coordinator. There were eight CIS site coordinators allocated to the schools with six schools having one coordinator at their school, and four schools having coordinators split across two schools. CIS site coordinators worked with school administrators to identify two schoolwide goal areas for the school year, such as attendance, student behavior and discipline, or parent engagement. Resources and supports offered schoolwide generally leveraged community partnerships to work towards these goal areas. At this schoolwide level, a total of 5,983 students participated in 129 events across the ten schools throughout the 2024-2025 school year. When staff were surveyed about the impact of the CIS initiative at the overall school level, 95 percent of staff familiar with the initiative agreed the Communities in Schools initiative had a positive impact helping their school reach its goals. Data obtained from the CIS initiative related to schoolwide goals showed that eight of the ten schools met at least one of their schoolwide goals during the 2024-2025 school year. Five of these ten schools met all their goals, while the other three schools met only one of their goals (one of the three schools showed progress was made toward that goal). In addition, two schools did not meet either of their two goals and did not demonstrate progress towards meeting them based on CIS monitoring of goals. Additional data analyses showed CIS schools made gains not only in meeting their formal goals but also in broader measures, especially in the areas of attendance and family engagement. Attendance improvements were evident across all participating schools, with the majority (63%-75%) exceeding the divisionwide trends. The majority of schools with a family engagement goal (63%-75%) had increases in parent awareness of and satisfaction with events and supports that exceeded the division trends. Behavior goal analyses were more varied but still showed some improvements in the percentage of students with one referral. Of note, schools with goals over two years saw larger gains in some years than others. However, the findings suggested that CIS is contributing to meaningful improvements across schools.

Another part of the Communities in Schools tiered support model is providing individualized supports and resources to a smaller number of individual students who are considered to be on the CIS site coordinators' caseloads. There was a total of 552 students on the caseloads of all eight CIS site coordinators throughout the 2024-2025 school year. Students were referred for CIS services and had goals in the areas of academics, attendance, behavior, or social and emotional learning. When on the CIS site coordinators' caseloads, CIS site

coordinators worked with students individually and in small groups, as well as conducted regular check-ins and served as mentors or as a safe space for the students. When staff were surveyed about the impact of the CIS initiative at the individual student and family level, 97 percent of staff familiar with CIS agreed the initiative had a positive impact on students and families at their schools. Data available from the CIS initiative showed the majority of students who had goals in the areas of behavior (80%) and attendance (55%) met their goal. A lower percentage of students who had an academic goal (45%) met their goal during 2024-2025, although an additional 9 percent focusing on academics made progress toward their goal.

Overall, 92 percent of staff familiar with the CIS initiative indicated they were satisfied with the initiative. Themes from staff survey responses regarding what worked well included developing relationships with students and parents and providing general support for students (e.g., emotional, academic, and social support) as well as resources for families and students (e.g., basic resources, connections to resources). The primary themes from staff regarding improvement areas focused on more staff, resources, and support, which included some staff directly referencing the changes in allocations, such as commenting on their school needing a full-time coordinator to make more of an impact, as well as comments related to more awareness of the program. The cost of the CIS initiative for the 2024-2025 school year was \$557,857, all of which was funded by Title I Grant funds and the CIS of HR funds. Therefore, there was no cost to the school division for the CIS initiative during 2024-2025.

Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program

The Behavior and Social Emotional (BASE) Program is a Tier 3, short-term (6-9 weeks) intervention designed to help elementary students who exhibit aggressive, disruptive, defiant behavior, or poor social skills across multiple environments. The program is housed at Windsor Oaks Elementary School and available to all 56 elementary schools in Virginia Beach City Public Schools. It is not a disciplinary placement or alternative school; rather, it focuses on teaching coping strategies, problem solving, and self-regulation. It was piloted in 2017-2018 for grades K-2 and expanded in 2024 to serve grades 3-5. However, the program primarily serves K-3 students.

During the 2024-2025 school year, 29 students participated, and about half were in kindergarten. The group was 86 percent male, 45 percent Black, 38 percent White, and 10 percent Hispanic. Almost half were economically disadvantaged and about one-fifth were military-connected. Students remain enrolled at their home schools while attending BASE and are referred only after other Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions have failed and parents have consented. Orientation for families includes detailed expectations and an introduction to daily feedback forms and the program's token-economy system. Each school day features a consistent routine with academic blocks, social-emotional learning guided by the Zones of Regulation and PATHS curricula, and positive-reinforcement activities. Parents of students who attended the BASE Program express high levels of satisfaction and staff reported that the program gives schools a helpful tool for their most challenging cases.

In 2024-2025, 84 percent of school staff familiar with BASE said they understood its purpose and 82 percent agreed it provided a valuable option for students with significant behavior concerns. Among parents, 100 percent said they understood the program and found it helpful for their child and family, up from 70 percent the previous year. Staff identified social-emotional learning, goal setting, and daily feedback sheets as particularly effective program elements. However, only 57 percent of staff believed that students consistently received the supports they needed once they returned to their home schools, underscoring the continuing challenge of post-program transitions.

Discipline data indicated short-term declines in discipline outcomes for students in the BASE Program. For students in the 2023-2024 cohort, average referrals fell from 7.96 before BASE to 1.62 afterward, suspensions dropped from 5.23 to 1.08, and out-of-school suspensions declined from 4.27 to 1.00. In the 2024-2025 cohort,

referrals decreased from 7.65 to 2.96, suspensions from 4.08 to 1.85, and out-of-school suspensions from 2.92 to 1.58. Daily discipline-related averages followed a similar pattern: referrals per day dropped from 0.10 to 0.03 in the first cohort and from 0.12 to 0.04 in the second. Most students showed measurable gains where up to 88 percent had fewer daily referrals after returning to their home schools. A comparison group, matched on school, grade, and high referral counts, showed higher or rising discipline rates across the year, while BASE participants' rates showed a decline from the beginning to the end of the year. Longer term outcomes during the year after BASE participation showed while students ended the school year (quarter 4) with a decrease in discipline incidents, they started the next year with an increase. These upticks suggest that some students experience renewed behavioral challenges when transitioning to a new school year.

The program is staffed by two behavior-intervention teachers, two student-support specialists, three teacher assistants, a psychologist, and a doctoral intern. All staff received Crisis Prevention Institute training, and in 2024-2025, all participants in that training reported feeling well prepared to recognize and manage challenging behaviors, a notable gain over the previous year. Program costs for 2024-2025 totaled approximately \$542,400, with staffing accounting for the majority of the cost.

Overall Perceptions and Divisionwide Trends in Student Behavioral and Mental Health

The final section of the evaluation focused on staff perceptions and divisionwide data related to behavioral and mental health supports for students more generally. On the survey, staff were provided general questions about behavioral and mental health supports for students, which could include staff, programs, or services to assist students. Although not the focus of this evaluation, VBCPS offers other behavioral and mental health supports to all students throughout the division, such as through school counselors, behavior intervention specialists, and Student Response Team (SRT) process.

When surveyed about their general perceptions of supports for student behavior at their school, 79 percent of staff agreed there were supports at their school to help students who misbehaved demonstrate positive behavior, and 66 percent indicated they were satisfied with these supports. When surveyed about their general perceptions of mental health supports, 80 percent of staff agreed there were supports at their school to help students access mental health services, and 68 percent of staff indicated they were satisfied with these supports. In comparison to survey data from 2023-2024, there were improvements of 3 to 5 percentage points in agreement/satisfaction percentages for all items. In addition, in 2024-2025, from 77 to 82 percent of staff agreed they felt like they knew what to do when a student needed behavioral supports and when a student needed mental health supports.

Analyses of these general perception items by staff group showed more positive perceptions for administrators (81%-98%), followed by student support staff (79%-93%). Instructional staff, including teachers or teacher assistants and other instructional staff (63%-83%), along with other related staff (65%-89%) had the lowest agreement and satisfaction percentages.

In 2024-2025, on the survey staff selected the resources that would be most helpful for their school to address students' behavioral and mental health needs. Overall, the top three resources selected by staff that would be most helpful to address students' behavioral and mental health needs were more behavior intervention specialists (39%), more school counselors (34%), and more student support specialists (28%).

Although not assessing the direct impact of the initiatives included in this evaluation, overall, divisionwide data suggested positive trends in student behavioral and mental health measures, with decreases in suicide risk assessments, chronic absenteeism, and disciplinary severity, along with improvements in average attendance.

Recommendations and Rationales

Recommendation #1: Continue the BIST initiative, Communities in Schools, and the BASE Program with modifications noted in recommendations 2 through 4. (*Responsible Groups: Department of School Leadership, Department of Teaching and Learning*)

Rationale: The first recommendation is to continue the BIST initiative, Communities in Schools, and the BASE Program with modifications noted in the recommendations 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. Overall, the three initiatives appeared to show evidence of success in multiple areas. At a cost of \$232,510 to VBCPS in 2024-2025, overall, schools implementing BIST showed decreases in the percentages of students with more than one referral and more than one suspension (average decreases of 1.6 to 1.7 percentage points across schools). In addition, relatively high percentages of staff involved with BIST agreed the BIST initiative provided teachers with an option to support students with behavior concerns (88%) and strategies to intervene before behavior escalated (83%). At no additional cost to the school division in 2024-2025, the CIS initiative data showed 80 percent of schools implementing CIS met at least one of their schoolwide CIS goals during 2024-2025. Additional analyses using broader measures showed 63 to 75 percent of schools showed progress toward their goals in the areas of attendance and family engagement. At the individual student level, 80 percent of students working with a CIS coordinator on a behavior-related goal met that behavior goal. Additionally, 97 percent of staff involved with CIS indicated the initiative had a positive impact helping their school reach its goals and 96 percent indicated they were satisfied with the initiative. Although the BASE Program cost the school division a total of \$542,408 in 2024-2025, based on several measures, there was evidence of short-term declines in discipline outcomes for students in the BASE Program, which was not found for a comparison group that was based on school, grade, and high referral counts as identifying criteria. In addition, 82 percent of school staff familiar with BASE agreed it provided a valuable option for students with significant behavior concerns, and 100 percent of parents of students in the program who responded to the survey agreed they found the program helpful for their child and family.

Recommendation #2: Continue to support schools in consistently implementing BIST strategies and using them effectively. (*Responsible Groups: Department of School Leadership, Department of Teaching and Learning*)

Rationale: The second recommendation is to continue to support schools in consistently implementing BIST strategies and using them effectively. While two primary goals of the BIST initiative are to increase instructional time for all students and decrease disruptive behavior in the classroom, staff survey data showed 60 percent of staff involved with BIST agreed BIST strategies allowed them to increase teaching time and 70 percent agreed BIST strategies allowed them to decrease disruptive behavior. When staff were surveyed about the effectiveness of specific strategies in 2024-2025, from 60 to 64 percent of staff indicated the buddy room and behavior/think sheets improved behavior to a large or moderate extent. In addition, from 71 to 72 percent of staff indicated the safe seat and coaching/success plans improved student behavior to a large or moderate extent. Although higher percentages of staff (at least 78%) indicated the other strategies, such as common language and the focus room, were effective in improving student behavior, BIST may be more effective if the available strategies are implemented together. When staff were provided the opportunity to comment on areas for improvement, one of the most commonly identified themes focused on consistency of implementation. For example, some staff commented on the need for consistency from all staff within a building, while others commented on the need to follow the BIST model more consistently.

Recommendation #3: Strengthen communication between CIS coordinators and school staff to support individual student success in their goal areas. (Responsible Groups: Department of School Leadership, Department of Teaching and Learning)

Rationale: The third recommendation is to strengthen communication between CIS coordinators and school staff to support individual student success in their goal areas. During the 2024-2025 school year, 552 students received individualized Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports with goals in the areas of academics, attendance, behavior, and social-emotional learning. Although student outcome data for 2024-2025 showed 80 percent of students with a behavior goal met that goal, lower percentages of students with an academic goal (45%) and attendance goal (55%) met their goals. Further, from 36 to 46 percent of students with an academic or attendance goal did not make documented progress toward their goal. For the three goal areas, in comparison to 2023-2024, there were increases in the percentages of students who did not meet their goal and did not make documented progress (16%-27% in 2023-2024 to 18%-46% in 2024-2025). In addition, somewhat lower percentages of staff involved with CIS indicated CIS helped improve students' progress on goals such as behavior (74%), attendance (72%), and academic achievement (61%). When staff were provided the opportunity to comment on areas for improvement, one of the most commonly identified themes focused on stronger communication about students on the coordinator's caseload. For example, some staff expressed lack of clarity regarding which students were receiving services as well as the supports being provided. Strengthening communication between coordinators and the school staff working with the students may help improve student success.

Recommendation #4: Ensure staff who work with former BASE students have information from students' transition plans at the beginning of the next school year about their needs and recommended strategies to help sustain behavioral gains made during the BASE Program. (Responsible Groups: Department of School Leadership, Department of Teaching and Learning)

Rationale: The fourth recommendation is to ensure staff who work with former BASE students have information from students' transition plans at the beginning of the next school year about their needs and recommended strategies to help sustain behavioral gains made during the BASE Program. Longitudinal analysis showed that students who completed the BASE Program in 2023-2024 began the following school year with elevated discipline outcomes after having experienced declines the year they participated in BASE. For example, 2023-2024 BASE students' average number of referrals demonstrated an increase from 0.59 in quarter 4 of the year they participated in BASE to 1.76 in quarter 1 of the next school year. This pattern was evident for multiple discipline-related measures and suggests that the transition to a new grade and teacher, combined with a summer break, could temporarily impact the self-regulation skills students learned in BASE. To reduce these initial setbacks and preserve the program's impact, implementing structured supports during the beginning of the school year based on previously identified BASE strategies is recommended.

Appendices

Appendix A: Demographics of BASE Cohort 1 Analysis Group and Comparison Group From 2023-2024

Characteristic	Cohort 1: 2023-2024 (N=23)		Comparison Group 1 (N=14)	
	N	%	N	%
Grade				
K	11	48%	4	29%
1	9	39%	7	50%
2	3	13%	3	21%
Sex				
Female	3	13%	7	50%
Male	20	87%	7	50%
Ethnicity				
American Indian	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	0	0%	0	0%
Black	4	17%	7	50%
Hispanic	5	22%	3	21%
Multiracial	0	0%	3	21%
Native/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
White	14	61%	1	7%
Economically Disadvantaged	10	43%	11	79%
Identified Limited English Proficiency	1	4%	0	0%
Military Connected	5	22%	5	36%

Appendix B: Demographics of BASE Cohort 2 Analysis Group and Comparison Group From 2024-2025

Characteristic	Cohort 2: 2024-2025 (N=24)		Comparison Group 2 (N=13)	
	N	%	N	%
Grade				
K	13	54%	4	31%
1	6	25%	5	38%
2	4	17%	3	23%
3	1	4%	1	8%
Sex				
Female	4	17%	3	23%
Male	20	83%	10	77%
Ethnicity				
American Indian	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	0	0%	1	8%
Black	10	42%	9	69%
Hispanic	3	13%	1	8%
Multiracial	2	8%	0	0%
Native/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%
White	9	38%	2	15%
Economically Disadvantaged	13	54%	9	69%
Identified Limited English Proficiency	0	0%	0	0%
Military Connected	4	17%	2	15%

Endnotes

- ¹ Center for Disease Control Prevention. About Mental Health. <https://www.cdc.gov/mental-health/about/index.html>
- ² Center for Disease Control Prevention. About Mental Health. <https://www.cdc.gov/mental-health/about/index.html>
- ³ US Department of Education. Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>
- ⁴ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/Home/Components/News/News/340/227>
- ⁵ National Alliance on Mental Illness. Poll of Parents Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic (2021). <https://www.nami.org/support-education/publications-reports/survey-reports/poll-of-parents-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic-2021/>
- ⁶ AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>
- ⁷ Institute of Education Sciences, School Survey, Student Behavior, May 2022 Survey, <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/spp/>
- ⁸ N. Malkus, January 2024, Long COVID for Public Schools, <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Long-COVID-for-Public-Schools.pdf>
- ⁹ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/data-policy-funding/data-reports/data-collection/special-education>
- ¹⁰ Annual Discipline Presentation, VBCPS School Board Retreat, 2023.
- ¹¹ Annual Discipline Presentation, VBCPS School Board Retreat, 2023.
- ¹² Behavior Intervention Specialist and School Counselor VBCPS Job Descriptions, <https://www.vbschools.com/careers/jobs>.
- ¹³ Responding to Students' Needs: Student Response Team 2.0. A Guide To Support The Student Response Team Process. (August 2024).
- ¹⁴ <https://sites.google.com/vbschools.com/vbcpsrt/tier-3-intensive-interventions?authuser=0>
- ¹⁵ <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>
- ¹⁶ <https://mtss.org/overview/>
- ¹⁷ National Association of School Psychologists. The Relationship Between Mental Health and Academic Achievement. Research Summaries
- ¹⁸ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Mental Health and Academic Achievement. Issue Brief. [mental health and academic achievement.pdf \(nh.gov\)](https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health-and-academic-achievement.pdf)
- ¹⁹ J. D. McLeod, R. Uemura, & S. Rohrman (2012). Adolescent mental health, behavior problems, and academic achievement. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 53(4), 482–497. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146512462888>
- ²⁰ K. P. Kremer, A. Flower, J. Huang, and M. G. Vaughn. (2016). Behavior problems and children's academic achievement: A test of growth-curve models with gender and racial differences. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 67, 95-104. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0190740916301803?via%3Dihub>
- ²¹ C. Blank and Y. Shavit. (2016). The association between student reports of classmates' disruptive behavior and student achievement, *AERA Open*, 2 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858416653921>
- ²² K. D. Michael and S. L. Crowley. How effective are treatments for child and adolescent depression? A meta-analytic review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 22, 247-269, 2002.
- ²³ T. W. Baskin, C. D. Slaten, C. Sorenson, J. Glover-Russell, and D. N. Merson. Does psychotherapy improve academically related outcomes? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 57(3), 290-296.
- ²⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Mental Health and Academic Achievement. Issue Brief. [mental health and academic achievement.pdf \(nh.gov\)](https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health-and-academic-achievement.pdf)
- ²⁵ J. M. Corbin and A. L. Strauss. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, California. 2003.
- ²⁶ To calculate response rates, staff positions were identified as being in one of these groups; however, staff may have selected a different group on the survey.
- ²⁷ As a reminder, due to a shift in focus areas at schools implementing Responsive Practices, the initiative was not continued in its current format and therefore, data collection was not continued. For internal purposes, staff could select

morning meetings as an initiative in which they were familiar; however, familiarity data with morning meetings will not be included in the current evaluation report.

²⁸ <https://sites.google.com/vbschools.com/vbcps-bis>

²⁹ VBCPS Tiered Resource Map for Social Emotional and Behavioral Support, VBCPS SharePoint.

³⁰ <https://bist.org/about-us/>

³¹ <https://bist.org/model-concepts/>

³² T. Breaux, Personal communication, August 26, 2024.

³³ Central office team interview, March 26, 2024.

³⁴ <https://bist.org/model-concepts/>

³⁵ <https://bist.org/model-concepts/>

³⁶ Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) Handbook. A Program of Cornerstones of Care.

³⁷ <https://bist.org/model-concepts/>

³⁸ Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) Handbook. A Program of Cornerstones of Care.

³⁹ Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) Handbook. A Program of Cornerstones of Care.

⁴⁰ Diamond Springs, Newtown, and Williams held on parent night for all Tricampus families.

⁴¹ Schools that had specific grade levels at their school were compared to only division data for those specific grade levels.

⁴² <https://www.communitiesinschools.org/our-impact/>

⁴³ <https://cisofva.org/about-us/>

⁴⁴ <https://cisofhamptonroads.org/who-we-are/>

⁴⁵ T. Breaux, Personal communication, August 26, 2024.

⁴⁶ <https://cisofhamptonroads.org/who-we-are/>

⁴⁷ M. Delaney, Personal communication, March 26, 2024.

⁴⁸ There were only two prekindergarten students during 2024-2025 who received individualized support through the CIS initiative.

⁴⁹ Two of the four schools with a coordinator split across schools met all their goals, while the other two schools met at least one of their two goals.

⁵⁰ Three schools have been involved in the initiative since 2017-2018; therefore, it is possible that these schools may have had the same goal in previous years; however, with the evaluation of the program beginning in 2023-2024, data were not analyzed prior to the 2022-2023 school year.

⁵¹ Although the school with the lowest percentage of students meeting their goal was a school that had a shared coordinator, the other schools with a coordinator across schools had higher percentages of students who met their goals compared to the remaining schools.

⁵² BASE Playbook.

⁵³ The Base Program (BASE Pamphlet).

⁵⁴ A. Day, Personal communication, March 21, 2024.

⁵⁵ <https://zonesofregulation.com>

⁵⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519670/?scrllybrkr=3e37665a#:~:text=The%20Promoting%20Alternative%20Thinking%20Strategies,children%20aged%204%E2%80%9311%20years>

⁵⁷ The purpose of including students for the whole year was to have enough enrollment days for each of the quarters used to analyze data. The first day of school was August 28, 2023 and the last day of school was June 14, 2024. One student who enrolled September 18, 2023 was included in the analysis and another student who left the division on May 23, 2024 was also included in the analysis cohort.

⁵⁸ Additional analyses were run to take into account students who were still in the BASE Program in quarter 4. When this analysis was run without students who were in the BASE program in quarter 4, the pattern of decline remained.

⁵⁹ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/data-policy-funding/data-reports/data-collection/special-education>

⁶⁰ <https://schoolquality.virginia.gov/divisions/virginia-beach-city-public-schools#desktopTabs-3>

⁶¹ Annual Discipline Presentation, VBCPS School Board Retreat, 2023.

⁶² AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

<https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>

⁶³ Mental Health Disorders. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22295-mental-health-disorders>

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For further information, please call (757) 263-1199

Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy

Virginia Beach City Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation/gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, disability, marital status, age, genetic information or military status in its programs and activities, employment, or enrollment and provides equal access to the Boy or Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups. School Board policies and regulations (including but not limited to, Policies 2-33, 4-4, 5-4, 5-7, 5-19, 5-20, 5-44, 6-7, 6-33, 7-48, 7-49, 7-57 and Regulations 2-33.1, 4-4.1, 4-4.2, 4-4.3, 5-7.1, 5-44.1, 7-11.1 and 7-57.1) provide equal access to courses, programs, enrollment, counseling services, physical education and athletic, vocational education, instructional materials, extracurricular activities, and employment.

Title IX Notice: Complaints or concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual harassment should be addressed to the Title IX Coordinator, at the VBCPS Office of Student Leadership, 641 Carriage Hill Road, Suite 200, Virginia Beach, 23452, (757) 263-2020, Robin.Resse@vbschools.com (student complaints) or the VBCPS Department of School Leadership, 2512 George Mason Drive, Municipal Center, Building 6, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23456, (757) 263-1088, Robert.Wnukowski@vbschools.com (employee complaints). Additional information regarding Virginia Beach City Public Schools' policies regarding discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment, as well as the procedures for filing a formal complaint and related grievance processes, can be found in School Board Policy 5-44 and School Board Regulations 5-44.1 (students), School Board Policy 4-4 and School Board Regulation 4-4.3 (employees) and on the School Division's website at Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/Title IX. Concerns about the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be addressed to the Section 504 Coordinator/Executive Director of Student Support Services at (757) 263-1980, 2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23456 or the Section 504 Coordinator at the student's school. For students who are eligible or suspected of being eligible for special education or related services under IDEA, please contact the Office of Programs for Exceptional Children at (757) 263-2400, Plaza Annex/Family and Community Engagement Center, 641 Carriage Hill Road, Suite 200, Virginia Beach, VA 23452.

The School Division is committed to providing educational environments that are free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Students, staff, parents/legal guardians who have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or bullying should contact the school administration at their school. Promptly reporting concerns will allow the school to take appropriate actions to investigate and resolve issues. School Board Policy 5-7 addresses non-discrimination and anti-harassment, Policy 5-44 addresses sexual harassment and discrimination based on sex or gender. Policy 5-36 and its supporting regulations address other forms of harassment.

Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write Nikki Garmer, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone 263-1199 (voice); fax 263-1131; 263-1240 (TDD) or email her at angarmer@vbschools.com.

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October 2025

Version July 18, 2023