Community Builders - Demonstration Site Established

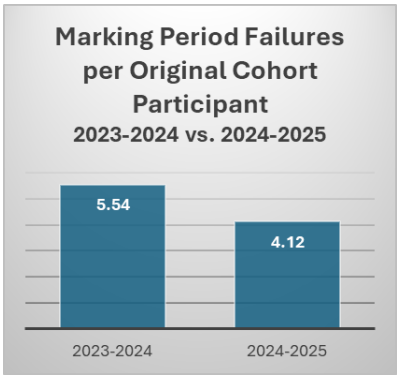
Empowering Youth, Strengthening Communities, and Saving Lives

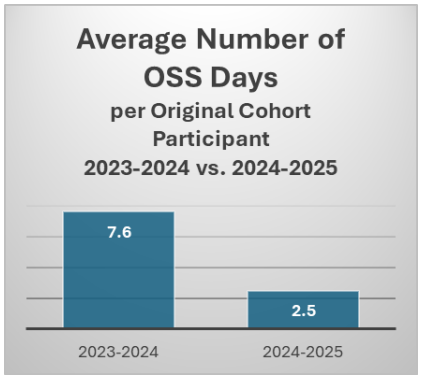
Current Reality: Gun violence among youth continues to be a concern within Roanoke and across Virginia. In particular, there is a troubling rise in incidents during the summer, often linked to a lack of structured engagement and opportunity. With bipartisan support from Governor Glenn Youngkin and the General Assembly, in 2024, Roanoke City Public Schools (RCPS) launched Community Builders, a pilot program aimed at disrupting the cycle of violence by investing in youth development and community collaboration.

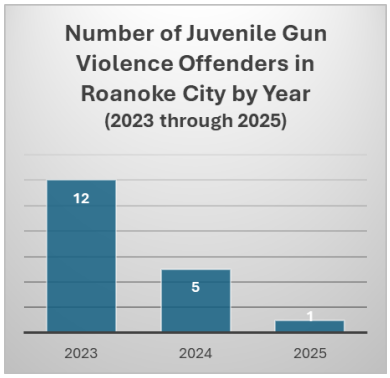
Program Highlights & Impact: Community Builders Pilot students from all five middle schools through year-round programming focused on:

- Workforce Development: Career and Technical Education (CTE) exploration and job shadowing
- College & Career Readiness: College tours and soft-skill development
- Community Engagement: Service learning with police, fire, healthcare, and other sectors
- Social-Emotional Growth: Restorative justice practices and mentorship
- Family Empowerment: Strengthening family-school partnerships

Evidence of Promise: Initial data from the pilot (June 2024-July 2025) indicates improvements in student attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Additionally, data suggest a reduction in youth involvement in gun-related incidents since the launch of the pilot. The Community Builders program is a strategic investment in youth and community safety. With continued funding, RCPS can lead the way in showing how schools and communities can work together to prevent youth gun violence and build a brighter future.







RCPS recommends that the General Assembly:
Provide sustained funding to support RCPS as a demonstration-model site for the Community Builders program. This investment will allow other school divisions to visit, learn, and replicate the model.

Funding Request & Timeline: To continue this impactful work and serve as a statewide demonstration site, RCPS requests $250,000 annually to grow the Community Builders Program and fund opportunities for other schools/divisions to visit, receive training, and program materials.