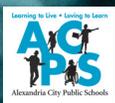


# ALEXANDRIA

children & youth well-being profile

2013



This report was prepared through a partnership of the Alexandria Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission and the Forum for Youth Investment, using Ready by 21<sup>®</sup> strategies.

**THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION** advocates for Alexandria's children and youth, aged prenatal to 21 years, and their families by:

1. Advising City Council, the School Board, and City and School staff on policies that affect children, youth and their families;
2. Promoting the coordination, alignment and effectiveness of services provided to children, youth and their families by the City, Alexandria Schools and private organizations; and
3. Studying and promoting research and best practices.

**READY BY 21** is a set of innovative strategies developed by the Forum for Youth Investment to help communities and states make sure all young people are ready for college, work and life. The Forum is a nonprofit, nonpartisan action tank that forges ideas, tools and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them. Ready by 21 is a registered trademark of the Forum. [www.readyby21.org](http://www.readyby21.org).

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# One City, One Plan: Alexandria's Opportunity

## ALL OF ALEXANDRIA'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUCCEED TODAY AND TOMORROW

The people of Alexandria are committed to supporting the well-being, success and achievement of their children, youth and families. This report reflects the determination of city leaders to fulfill that commitment by creating a comprehensive picture of how Alexandria's children and youth are faring.

The commitment of the City of Alexandria to its children and youth is best exemplified by its America's Promise designation as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People. That honor, which has been awarded for five consecutive years, is in recognition of such accomplishments as:

- The allocation of over one-third of the City's General Funds to programs and services for youth, including the school system. For example: The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) provides at-risk 4-year-olds not served by Head Start with preschool programs and wrap-around services such as family support, health screenings, parent education and social skills groups. Despite myriad critical demands on City funds, the Mayor and City Council approved the General Funds necessary to open two new school-based classrooms that serve 64 additional at-risk 4-year-olds for FY 13. Also approved in FY 13 were scholarships for homeless families and teen parents that enabled immediate access to preschool programs.
- The merger of boards, commissions and advisory committees charged with youth well-being into a single entity that advocates for youth and their families. The Children, Youth & Families Collaborative Commission is charged with advising the City Council, the School Board and their staffs on policies that affect children, youth and families; enhancing the coordination, alignment and effectiveness of the youth and family services provided by the City, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) and private organizations; and promoting research findings and best practices.
- The first task of the Children, Youth & Families Collaborative Commission is overseeing the development of a youth master plan – a process that is documenting the needs of the city's youth, prioritizing objectives and devising strategies.
- The merger of the Department of Human Services; the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse; and the Office on Women (all of which provide critical services for youth and their families) into a single department. This merger allowed for significantly improved alignment of services for children and families, resulting in better communication, coordination and integration of services. The emphasis on family strengthening led to a significant reduction in the number of children in congregate care and in foster care. Integration of early childhood services led to a higher level of coordination; families are better able to access all of the services they need.

Because of such a commitment, increasing numbers of the city's youth are thriving, as demonstrated by:

- An increase of 5 percentage points, between 2008 and 2012, in the on-time graduation rates of ACPS students.
- An increase of 12 percentage points, between the 2006-07 school year and the 2011-12 school year, in PALS-K scores, which measure a child's readiness for kindergarten.
- A decrease of 20 percent in the teen pregnancy rate between 2010 and 2011, marking the lowest teen pregnancy rate in the city in more than 15 years.

The City of Alexandria takes pride in the significant number of youth who excel. But the city will do what it takes to make sure all children in Alexandria are thriving. The Children and Youth Master Plan will serve as a blueprint for the services, supports and opportunities that the community provides for its young people.

The Alexandria Children and Youth Well-Being Profile is a statistical snapshot that marks an essential step toward the development of the City's first Children and Youth Master Plan. It indeed takes a village to raise a child. The successful execution of that mission mandates that all citizens be informed, consider the issues raised by this data, and lend their perspectives and expertise to crafting solutions.

### About the Data & the Analysis

Critical data points and the latest research findings were used to assess the well-being of Alexandria's young people. Much of the data comes from public records, such as the 2010 U.S. Census and the state of Virginia. Additionally, Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) students participated in two surveys in the past few years: the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors survey.

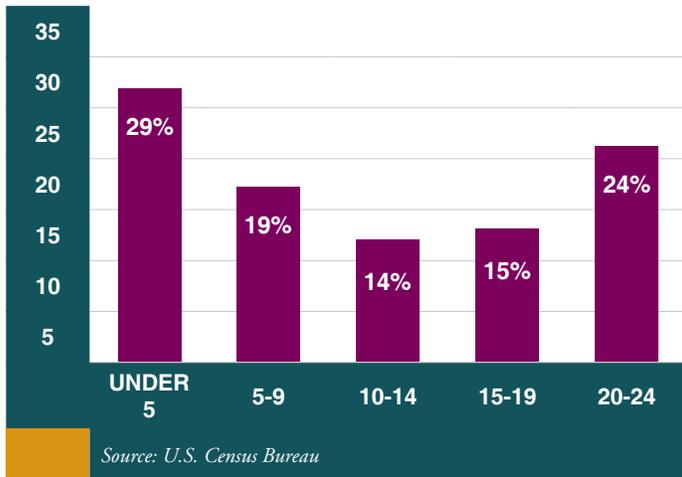
The YRBS is a nationwide school-based survey that focuses on health-risk behaviors and is coordinated through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It was administered to the ACPS middle schools and to the high school in 2011. The Attitudes and Behaviors survey is coordinated through Search Institute, a national nonprofit renowned for its expertise in youth development. The survey assesses young people's external supports and internal strengths (that is, their "developmental assets"), key non-cognitive skills, high-risk behaviors, indicators that they are thriving, and deficits that need attention. The survey was administered in 2010 to ACPS middle and high school students. The regular collection of the YRBS and developmental assets data will be crucial for tracking progress toward improved outcomes.

To put the city's data in context, this report provides comparisons over time and to the state and other local jurisdictions (usually Arlington County). Because there are so many significant demographic differences between Alexandria and Arlington – for example, Alexandria's child poverty rate is higher than Arlington's – the county is used as a reference point, not for a strict one-to-one comparison. As the city improves its use of youth-related data, it will broaden its comparisons to include similar communities.

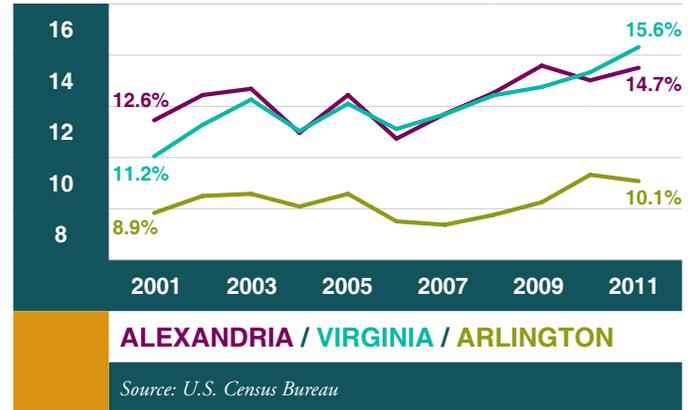
Each section includes observations about the need to develop more and better data. That data will help the city answer questions as it carries out its mission to promote healthy youth development.

City leaders look forward to ongoing measurement, course correction and celebrations of success in the years to come. Alexandria encourages all of its citizens to get involved in addressing the issues raised by this data and in crafting solutions.

### RESIDENTS AGES 0-24 YEARS, BY AGE GROUP



### CHILDREN AGES 0-17 LIVING AT OR BELOW 100% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

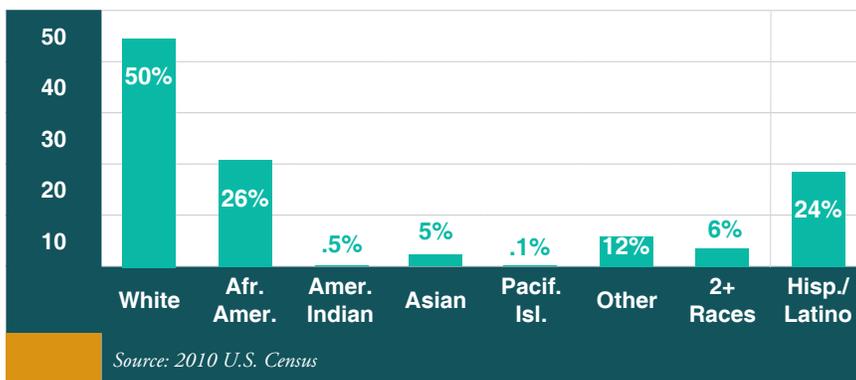


### Alexandria's Challenge

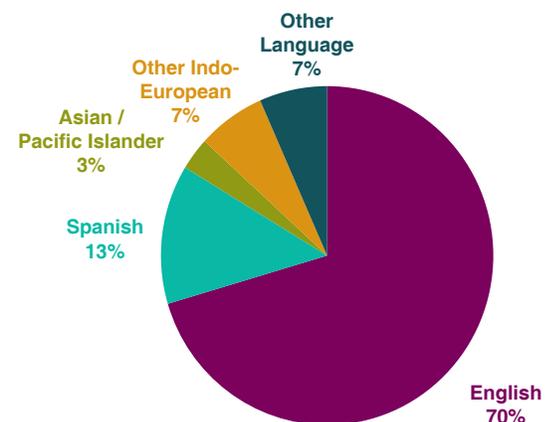
As this first profile of children and youth well-being in the City of Alexandria is released, it will be important to monitor not only changes in child well-being but changes in the demographics of the city. It is through observation and attention to both that residents can remain vigilant about ensuring that *all of Alexandria's children and youth succeed today and tomorrow.*

Alexandria is growing in both size and diversity, and the number of babies born to city residents has increased by 43 percent since 1995. According to the U.S. Census, 24 percent of the total residents in 2010 were under age 24. Half of the population is white and the remaining half are a combination of different racial groups (see bar graph below). Although the economic downturn affected most communities and Alexandria was not exempt, median income did not change much over the past five years, hovering at around \$50,000 (adjusted for inflation). It is important to acknowledge that Alexandria faces larger challenges than the neighboring counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun, because a significantly higher portion of young people live in low-income households.

### YOUTH POPULATION (AGES 0-24) RACE/ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN

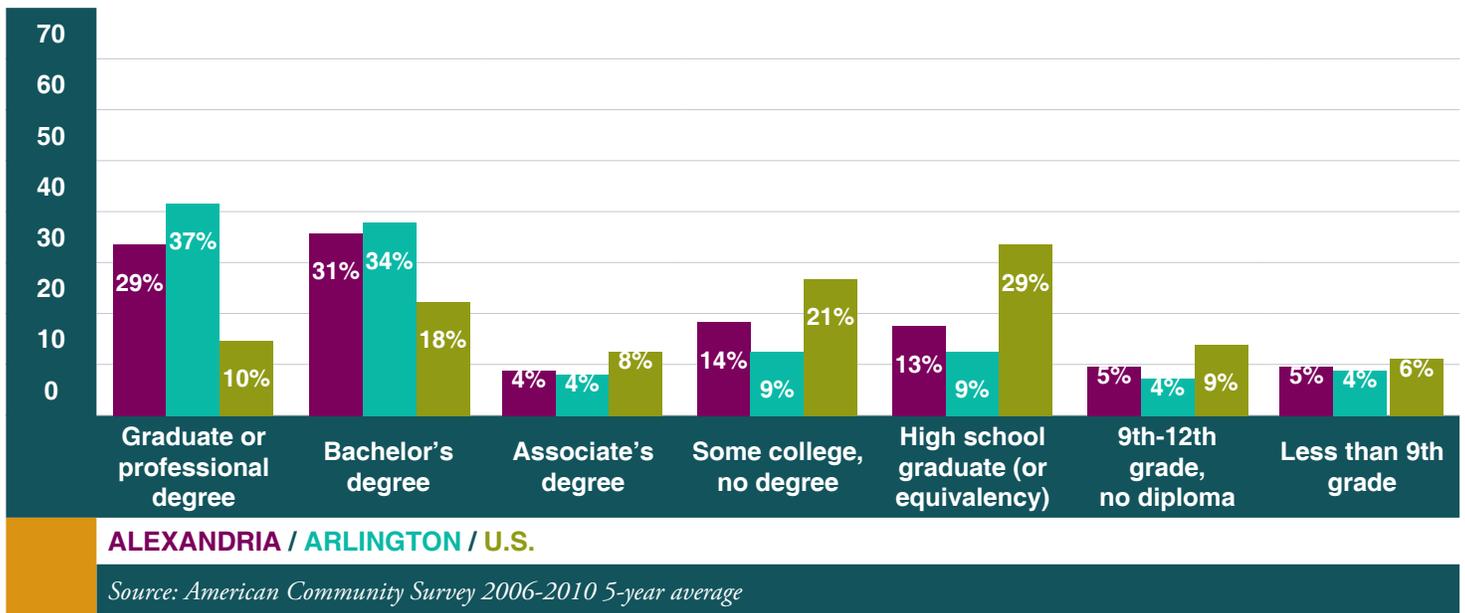


### LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

## EDUCATION ATTAINMENT FOR POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OLDER

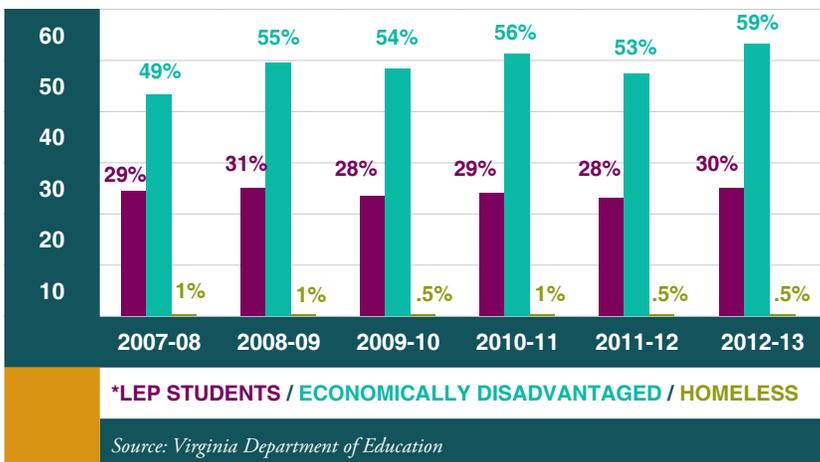


Population growth, paired with economic realities, creates pressing demands on Alexandria's schools, City services, the nonprofit community and faith organizations. Between the 2011-12 school year and the 2012-13 school year, there was a six-point jump in the percent of ACPS students who were economically disadvantaged. In FY 13, 56 percent of students at ACPS were eligible for free and reduced lunch. Almost one-third of families speak a language other than English at home. The schools reported 138 native languages for students in 2011. To illustrate, the number of residents speaking African languages at home is seven times higher than the national average. The mobility rates are higher than average, with 22 percent of residents moving in a given year.

Despite these challenges, the state of Virginia and the City of Alexandria remain among the best in educational outcomes. Educational attainment of residents in Alexandria is more than twice the national average. Another bright spot is that the number of homeless students decreased from 102 in 2007 to 73 in 2012.

The following pages hone in on more specific data to see how Alexandria children and youth are faring in developmental outcomes.

## SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENT POPULATION



\*Limited English Proficient



**DESIRED CHILD &  
YOUTH OUTCOMES**

# Physically Safe & Healthy

Our children and youth cannot succeed if their basic needs are not met. A healthy start and sustained access to safe and healthy environments have positive impacts that last a lifetime. Such factors as a healthy birth and having parents who are prepared to take on parental responsibilities are crucial for meeting fundamental needs – laying the foundation for growth and success<sup>i</sup>.

## THESE INDICATORS WERE USED TO SEE HOW WELL ALEXANDRIA IS DOING IN THIS AREA:

- Healthy Start
- Tobacco Use
- Physical Fitness
- Safe Environment
- Teen Pregnancy

### Key Findings

The physical health and safety of Alexandria's children and youth is mixed. Some indicators suggest improvement: Births to teens, the percentage of babies born with low birth weight and overall child abuse rates have decreased over the past several years. Other indicators, such as obesity and infant death rates, appear to be stalled or moving in the wrong direction.

Forty-four percent of Alexandria's preschool-age children are overweight or obese, as are more than one in three Hispanic youth (a rate higher than the national average for Hispanics)<sup>ii</sup>. Only 53 percent of middle school students and 33 percent of high school-aged youth achieve the recommended levels of exercise per week – a key element for maintaining a healthy weight<sup>iii</sup>.

### Data Considerations

We need an accurate indicator of obesity that is not self-reported data. There are some measures that may approximate obesity, but there is no current indicator that is based on public data that accurately provides a picture of how well kids in Alexandria are faring in this area.

The amount of time that young people spend in front of screens (TV, computer and phone) is a relatively new phenomenon. With the fast pace of technology, it seems that the screen categories change from year to year, making it difficult to quantify. Despite these difficulties, screen time is an important measure of how young people spend their time. In addition to health, it can also affect their social connectedness. This is a data consideration that needs to adapt as quickly as possible to understand young peoples' current screen usage. One measure is the Survey of Internet Use and Online Reading, available through the University of Connecticut. Another resource is the Pew Internet and American Life Project at [www.pewinternet.org/Topics/Demographics/Teens.aspx?typeFilter=5](http://www.pewinternet.org/Topics/Demographics/Teens.aspx?typeFilter=5).

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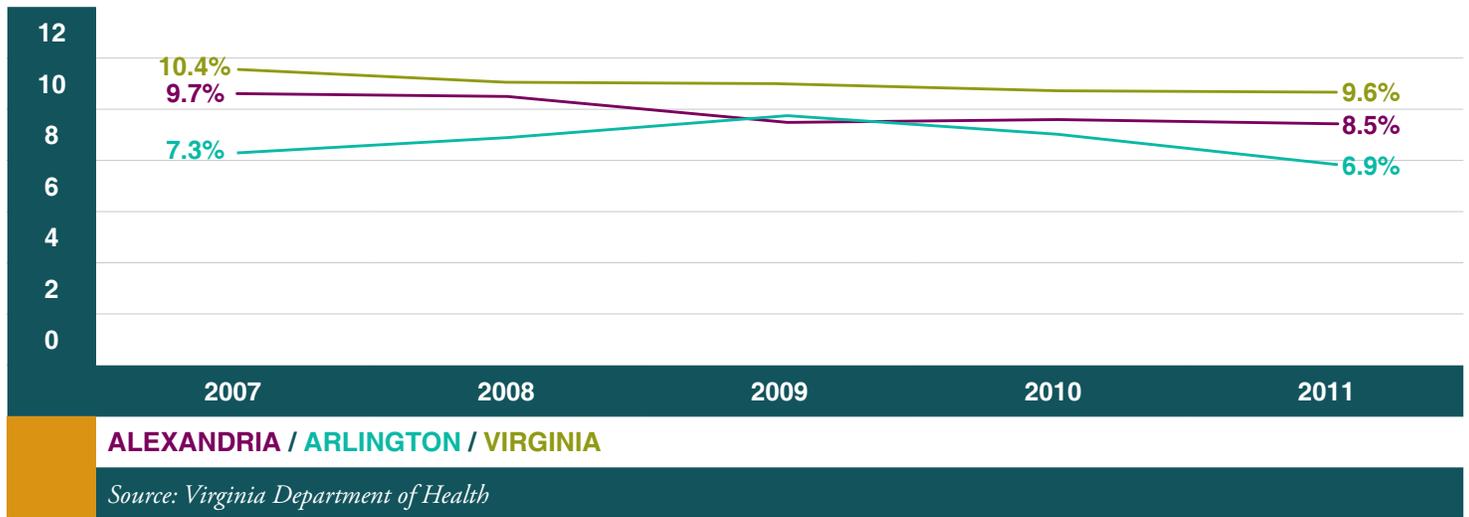
<sup>i</sup> Schorr, L. B., & Marchand, V. (2007). *Pathway to children ready for school and succeeding at third grade. Pathways Mapping Initiative.*

<sup>ii</sup> Inova Health System. (2007). *Healthy Weight Collaborative Survey. Inova.*

<sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2011). *Alexandria Youth Behavior Risk Survey. CDC.*

# HEALTHY START

## TOTAL LIVE BIRTHS WITH LOW/VERY LOW BIRTH WEIGHT



### Why is this important?

Healthy pregnancies and safe and successful births are critical to child well-being. Low birth weight can be an indicator of serious health problems to come. For example, low birth-weight babies are more likely to develop high blood pressure, diabetes and heart, lung and kidney problems later in life<sup>iv</sup>.

Infant mortality is the “tip of the iceberg” when it comes to child health problems<sup>v</sup>. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control notes, “Infant mortality is an important indicator of the health of a community, because it is associated with a variety of factors, such as maternal health, quality of and access to medical care, and socioeconomic conditions<sup>vi</sup>.”

### What does this graph show us?

This chart tracks the percentage of babies who were born either at a low or very low birth weight. The comparison points are Virginia and Arlington County.

### How is Alexandria doing?

The percentage of low birth-weight and very low birth-weight babies in Alexandria has been decreasing steadily since 2007. This is consistent with the statewide trend, although Alexandria fares better than the state as a whole. While showing a different trend, Arlington County has a lower percentage of low birth-weight babies<sup>vii</sup>.

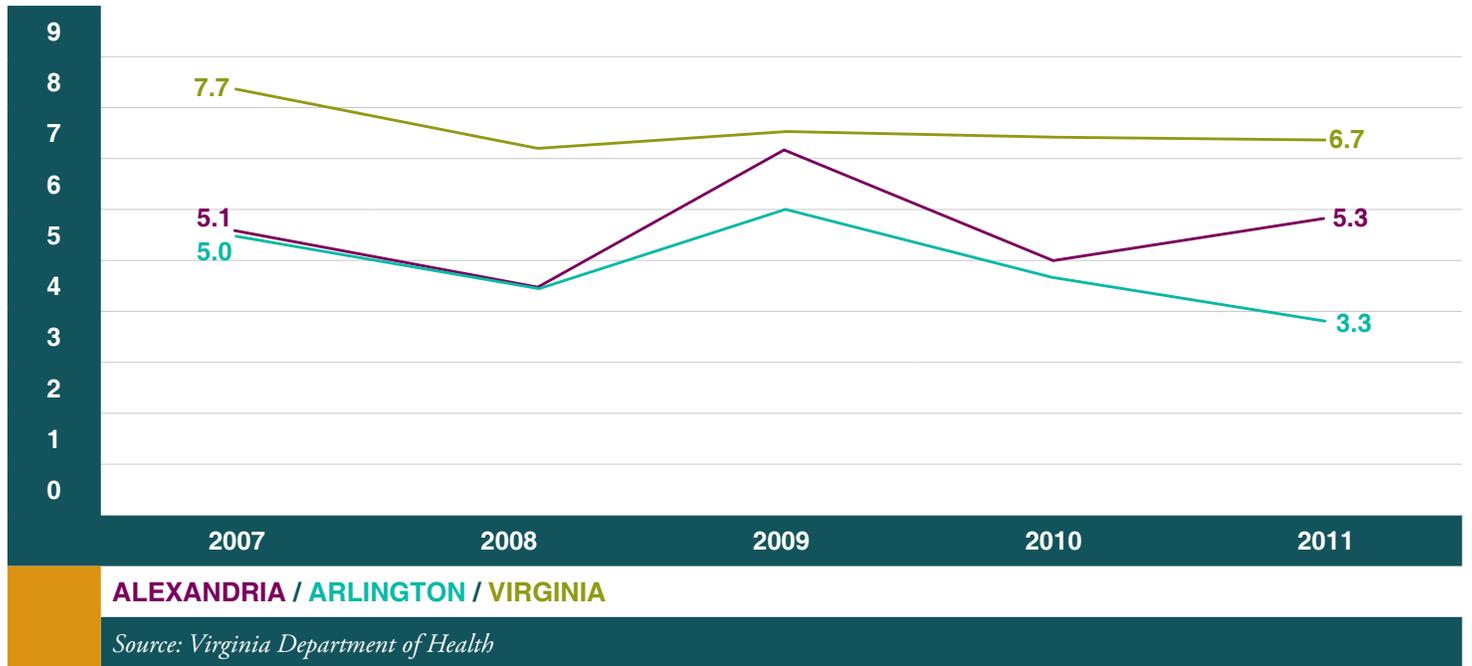
<sup>iv</sup> Barker, D. J. (1995). Fetal origins of coronary heart disease. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 311(6998), 171.

<sup>v</sup> Daniel, W. A., Cornely, D. A., & McCormick, M. C. (1986). Task Force on infant mortality: Statement on infant mortality. *Pediatrics*, 78, 1155-60.

<sup>vi</sup> Matteson, D. W., Burr, J. A., & Marshall, J. R. (1998). Infant mortality: a multi-level analysis of individual and community risk factors. *Social Science & Medicine*, 47(11), 1841-1854.

<sup>vii</sup> Virginia Department of Health. (2013, January 30). Statistical reports and tables on health. In Virginia Department of Health Division of Health Statistics. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/healthstats/stats.htm>.

## INFANT DEATHS (per 1,000 births)



### What does this graph show us?

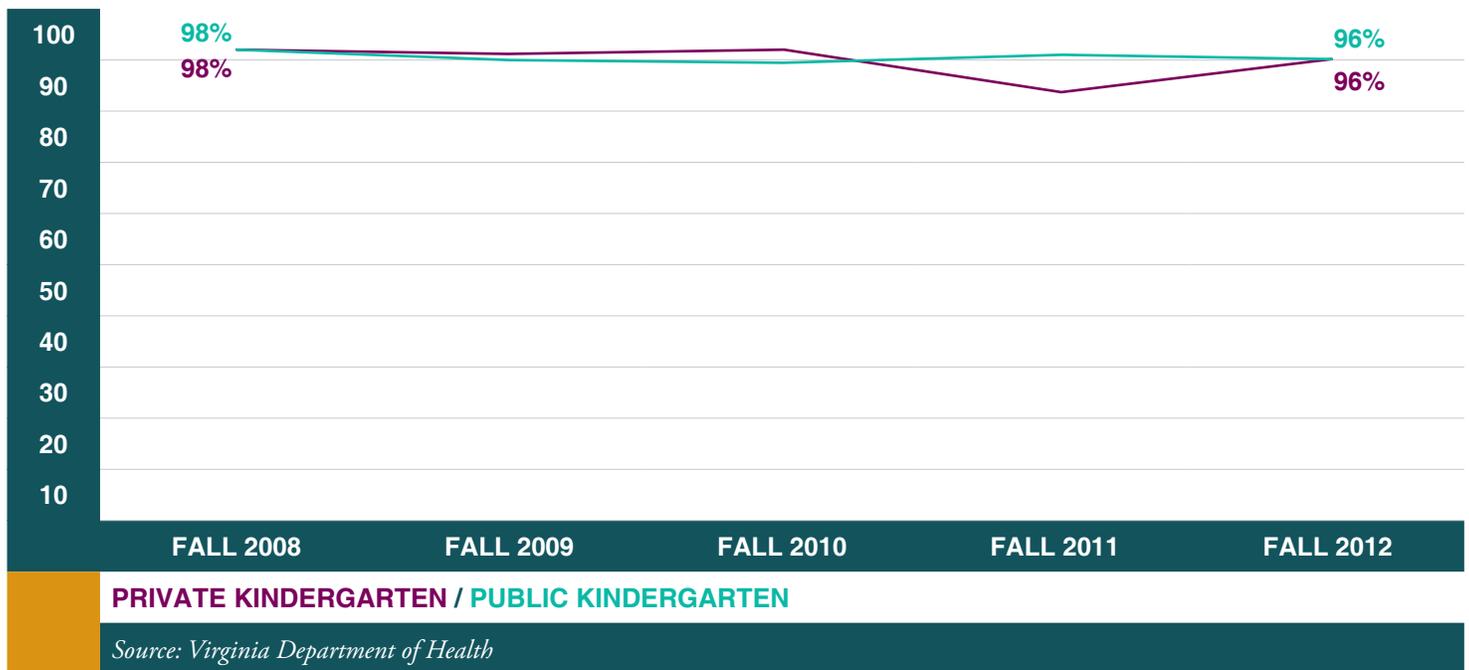
This graph details the number of infant deaths per 1,000 births from 2007 to 2011.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Alexandria has seen sporadic progress in this area. Although the rate has gone up and down quite a bit, the overall change from 2007 to 2011 is minimal. However, there is a critical racial disparity: The rate for African-American babies (8.8) is almost double the rate for white babies (4.9)<sup>viii</sup>.

<sup>viii</sup> Virginia Department of Health. (2013, January 30). Statistical reports and tables on health. In Virginia Department of Health Division of Health Statistics. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/healthstats/stats.htm>.

## KINDERGARTEN IMMUNIZATION RATE



### Why is this important?

Generally, immunization rates among children are very high in the United States, with most communities achieving rates of 90 percent or higher. However, despite progress toward controlling the spread of disease through immunizations, more than 2.1 million children nationwide are not adequately immunized. Even among immunized children, only about half receive their immunizations on time. In addition, while some populations have high immunization rates, other communities continue to struggle<sup>ix</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This graph shows the immunization rates for public and private school kindergarteners in Alexandria over a five-year period.

### How is Alexandria doing?

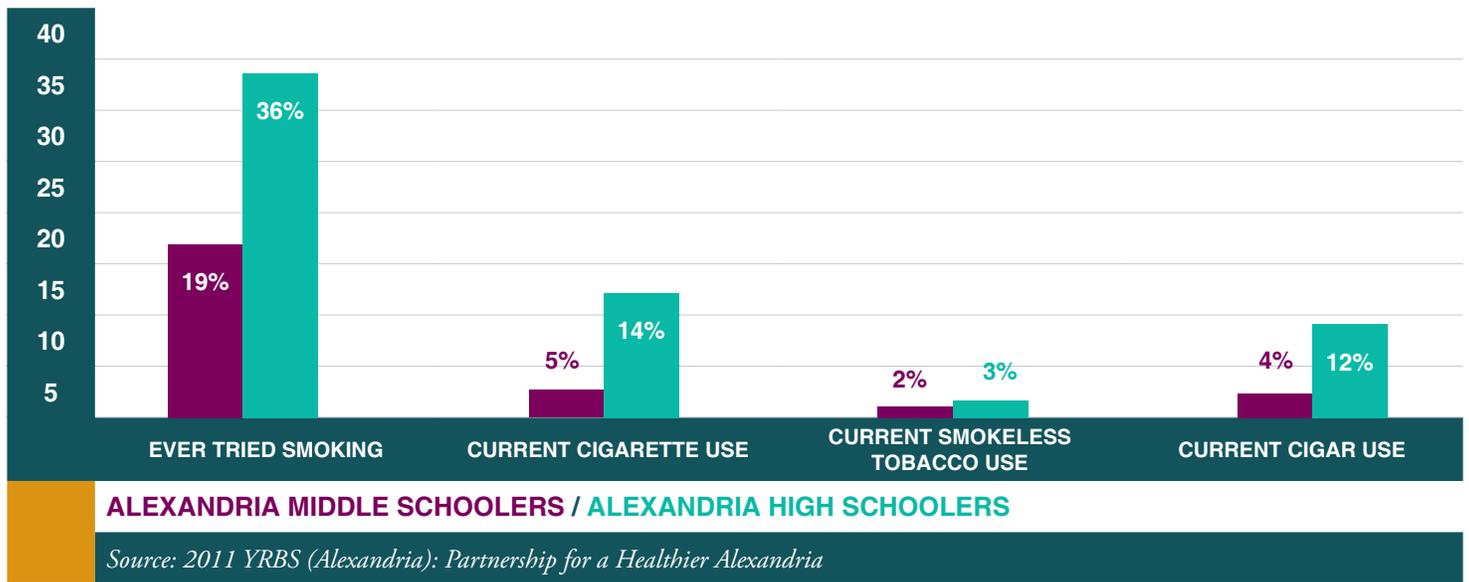
Alexandria experiences consistently high immunization rates for both public and private school kindergarten students. Data are not further broken down into subpopulations of kindergarteners<sup>x</sup>. Although this appears not to be an area of tremendous concern, it may be useful in the future to examine whether certain subpopulations have notably lower immunization rates than others.

<sup>ix</sup> Luthy, K. E., Sperbac, A. M., Faux, S. A., & Miner, J. K. (2010). *Improving immunization rates in the clinic and in the community*.<sup>ix</sup> Luthy, K. E., Sperbac, A. M., Faux, S. A., & Miner, J. K. (2010). *Improving immunization rates in the clinic and in the community*.

<sup>x</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2011). *Alexandria Youth Behavior Risk Survey. Alexandria Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria*.

# TOBACCO USE

## TOBACCO USE RATES



### Why is this important?

While tobacco use rates for teens had been plummeting from the 1990s through the early 2000s, in recent years that drop appears to have stalled. Between 2009 and 2011, there was no significant decline in tobacco use among Alexandria middle school students. Nationally, at least one in five high school students use some form of tobacco. A large majority of people who smoke started using tobacco in adolescence: 90 percent of smokers pick up the habit before they are 18. Smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable death and disability in the U.S., with nearly 443,000 deaths each year attributable to smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke<sup>xi</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This chart shows the percentages of Alexandria middle and high school youth who have ever tried smoking, currently smoke cigarettes, currently use smokeless tobacco or currently smoke cigars.

### How is Alexandria doing?

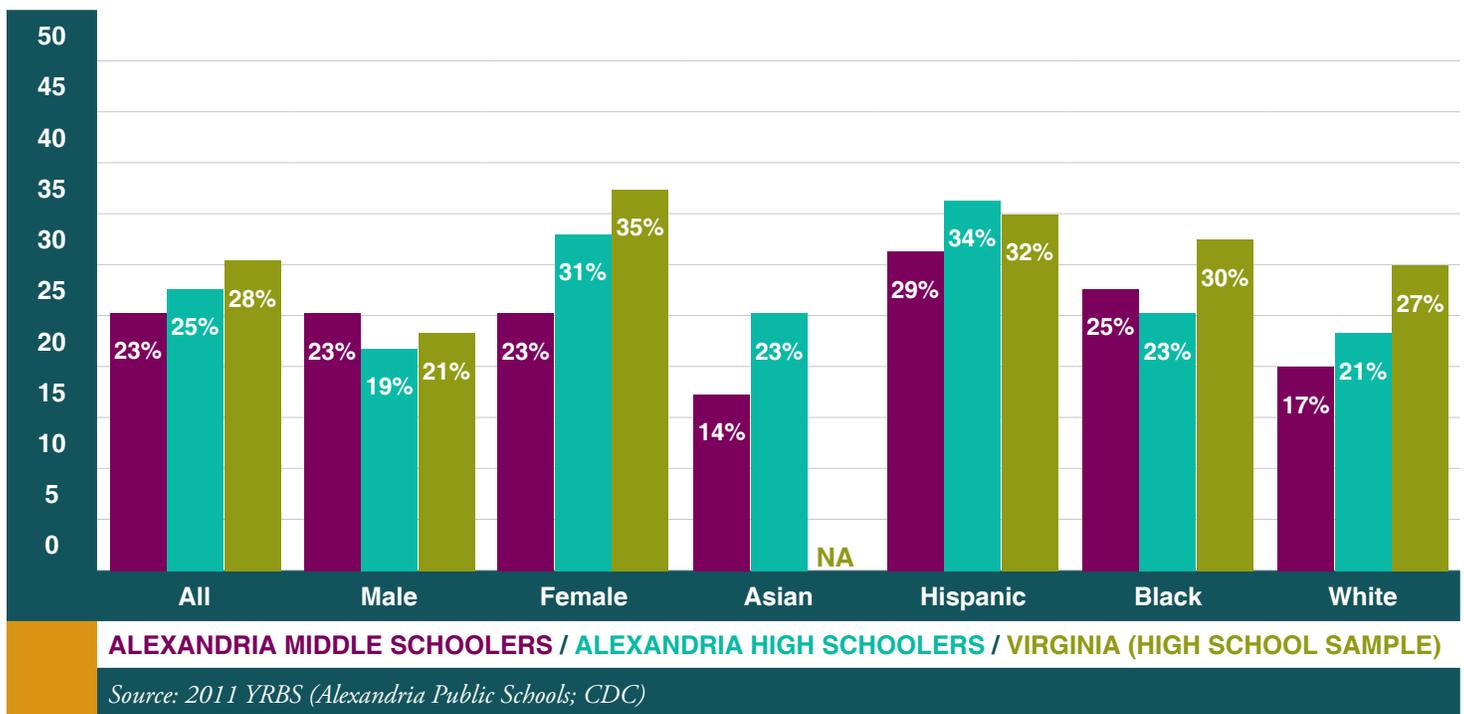
Alexandria's tobacco use rates appear lower than national percentage rates, though more than one in three high schoolers report having tried smoking. In middle school, close to one in five youth have tried smoking<sup>xii</sup>.

<sup>xi</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2012). Current tobacco use among middle and high school students – United States 2011. In *CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6131a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6131a1\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6131a1.htm?s_cid=mm6131a1_w)

<sup>xii</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2011). *Alexandria Youth Behavior Risk Survey*. Alexandria Public Schools.

# PHYSICAL FITNESS

## DESCRIBE SELF AS SLIGHTLY OR VERY OVERWEIGHT



### Why is this important?

Obesity is a growing concern in communities across the United States. According to the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network, “32 percent of Virginia’s low-income children, ages 2-5, are overweight or obese<sup>xiii</sup>.”

Being overweight relates to other health risks in children, including asthma, diabetes and early signs of heart disease<sup>xiv</sup>. A healthy weight and a healthy body image are both desirable goals for young people. In addition to reducing obesity, regular exercise and sports participation are linked to better social skills and to better coordination and balance<sup>xv</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This is self-reported data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered in 2011 to 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in Alexandria City Public Schools. The question asked if the students would describe themselves as slightly or very overweight. This data does not determine how many students are actually overweight; the survey measures self-perception.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Alexandria middle schoolers experience lower rates of reported obesity than highschoolers in the city and in the state of Virginia overall. Notice, however, the high percentage of Hispanic high school students who consider themselves obese<sup>xvi</sup>.

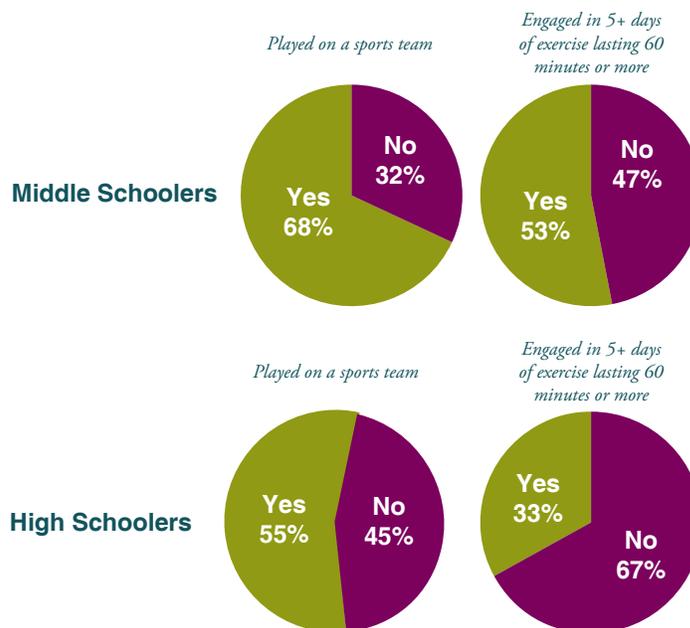
<sup>xiii</sup> Alexandria Obesity Action Network, n.d. Web. Childhood Obesity Action Network & Get Healthy Alexandria homepage. Retrieved March 27, 2013 from <http://healthieralexandria.org/HealthyLifestyles/content.aspx?id=29890>

<sup>xiv</sup> Daniels, S. R. (2006). *The consequences of childhood overweight and obesity. The future of children*, 16(1), 47-67.

<sup>xv</sup> University of Michigan Health System. (2010). *Research shows link between physical activity and social skills in children* [Press release]. Retrieved March 27, 2013 from <http://www2.med.umich.edu/prmc/medial/newsroom/details.cfm?ID=1513>.

<sup>xvi</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2011). *Alexandria 2011 Youth risk behavior survey. Alexandria Public Schools*.

## INVOLVEMENT IN SPORTS CAN ENCOURAGE HEALTHY BEHAVIOR



Source: 2011 YRBS (Alexandria Public Schools; CDC)

### What does this graph show us?

This is self-reported data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered in 2011 to 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in Alexandria City Public Schools. It measures self-reports for exercise levels and sports participation. Regular exercise is defined as “five or more days of 60+ minutes of exercise in the last week.” Sports participation is defined as “played on 1+ sports team in the past 12 months.”

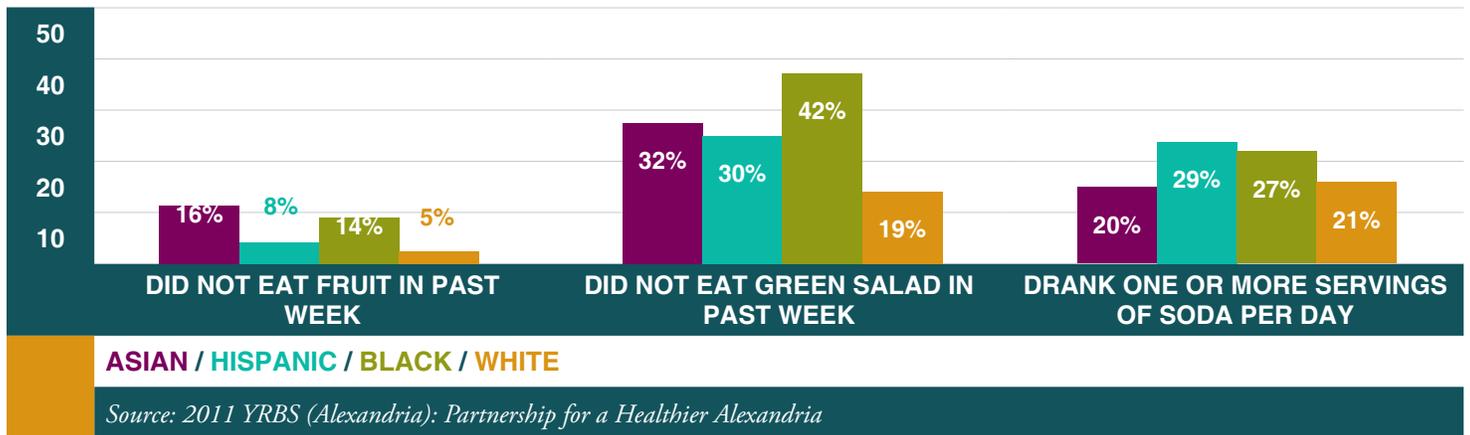
### How is Alexandria doing?

Based on the 2011 survey, the percent of high school students in Alexandria reporting regular exercise is significantly lower than the national benchmark of 50 percent.

When it comes to sports team participation, the 2008 and 2011 surveys found that 54.5 percent of high school students had played on one or more sports teams in the past 12 months. This is slightly lower than the national benchmark of 58 percent. Between 2008 and 2011, the percentage of middle school students reporting that they had played on one or more sports teams in the past 12 months increased from 57 percent to 68 percent<sup>xvii</sup>.

<sup>xvii</sup> Alexandria Obesity Action Network, n.d. Web. Childhood Obesity Action Network & Get Healthy Alexandria homepage. Retrieved March 27, 2013 from <http://healthieralexandria.org/HealthyLifestyles/content.aspx?id=29890>

## DIETARY CHOICES BY ETHNICITY



### Why is this important?

Increasing fruit and vegetable intake is associated with decreased intake of fats and sugars, making it a useful strategy in combating childhood obesity and promoting overall health. However, many children and adolescents do not consume the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, sugary drinks (e.g., sodas) appear to comprise an increasing share of children's total number of calories, and research suggests that children may not be compensating at meals for calories they have consumed through sugary drinks<sup>xviii</sup>. Strategies that encourage the consumption of healthier foods such as fruit and vegetables and decrease the intake of sugary drinks might help to address childhood obesity<sup>xix</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This graph shows the percentages of Alexandria children and youth who did not eat fruit or eat green vegetables, or who consumed soda within the past week. Data are broken down by race.

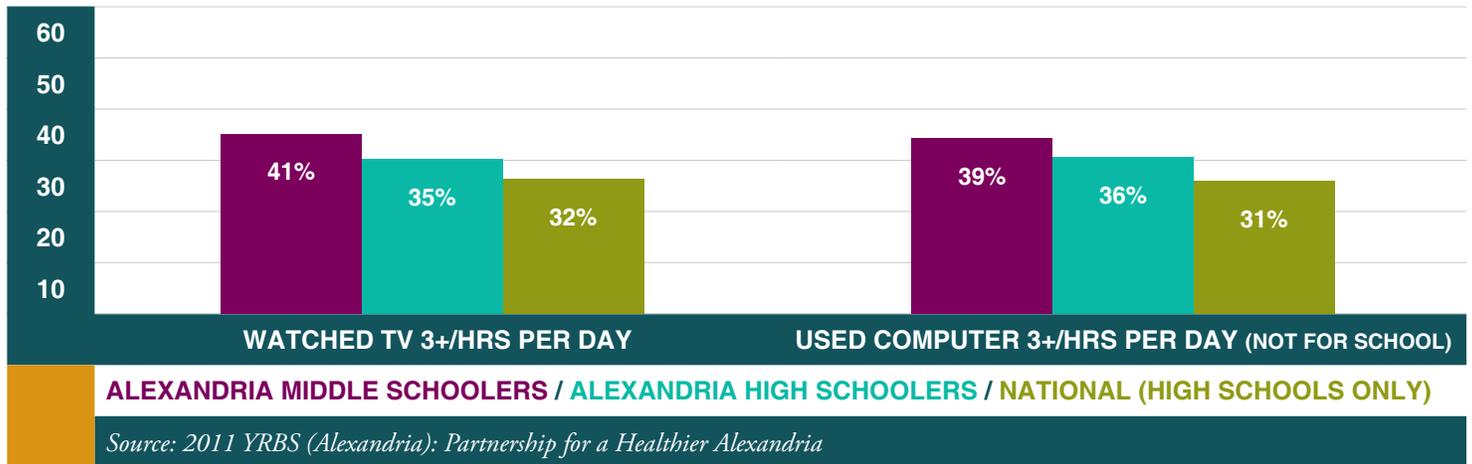
### How is Alexandria doing?

There are notable racial disparities in the consumption of fruits and vegetables, and significant minorities of young people across all races report eating no fruits or vegetables within the course of a week. African-American and Asian-American youth display lower levels of fruit and vegetable consumption than white and Hispanic youth. Hispanic youth have the highest rate of soda consumption.

<sup>xviii</sup> Ogden, C., Carroll, M. D., Curtin, L. R., Lamb, M. M., & Flegal, K. M. (2010). About childhood obesity. *JAMA*, 303(3), 242-249.

<sup>xix</sup> Qian, Y., Nayga Jr, R. M., Thomsen, M. R., & Rouse, H. (2013). The Effect of the fresh fruit and vegetable program on childhood obesity. In 2013 Annual Meeting, August 4-6, 2013, Washington, DC (No. 150778). Agricultural and Applied Economics Association.

## SCREEN TIME



### Why is this important?

Watching television and spending time on computer screens are associated with childhood obesity<sup>xx</sup>. The amount of time spent watching television and/or at the computer appears to influence obesity by replacing time that might otherwise be spent engaging in more active pursuits. Additionally, many of the commercials marketed to children advertise foods that are of low nutritional quality, influencing youths' food habits and desires<sup>xxi</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This chart shows the percentage of Alexandria children and youth who watch TV and use computers three or more hours a day. These data are compared with national data on the television-watching and computer use habits of high schoolers.

### How is Alexandria doing?

The percentage of Alexandria middle and high school youth who spend three or more hours watching television or at the computer is higher than the national percentage. Alexandria middle schoolers spend three or more hours engaged with screens (TV or computers) at a higher rate than do high schoolers. It is not known how much time youth spend texting or online using smartphones<sup>xxii</sup>.

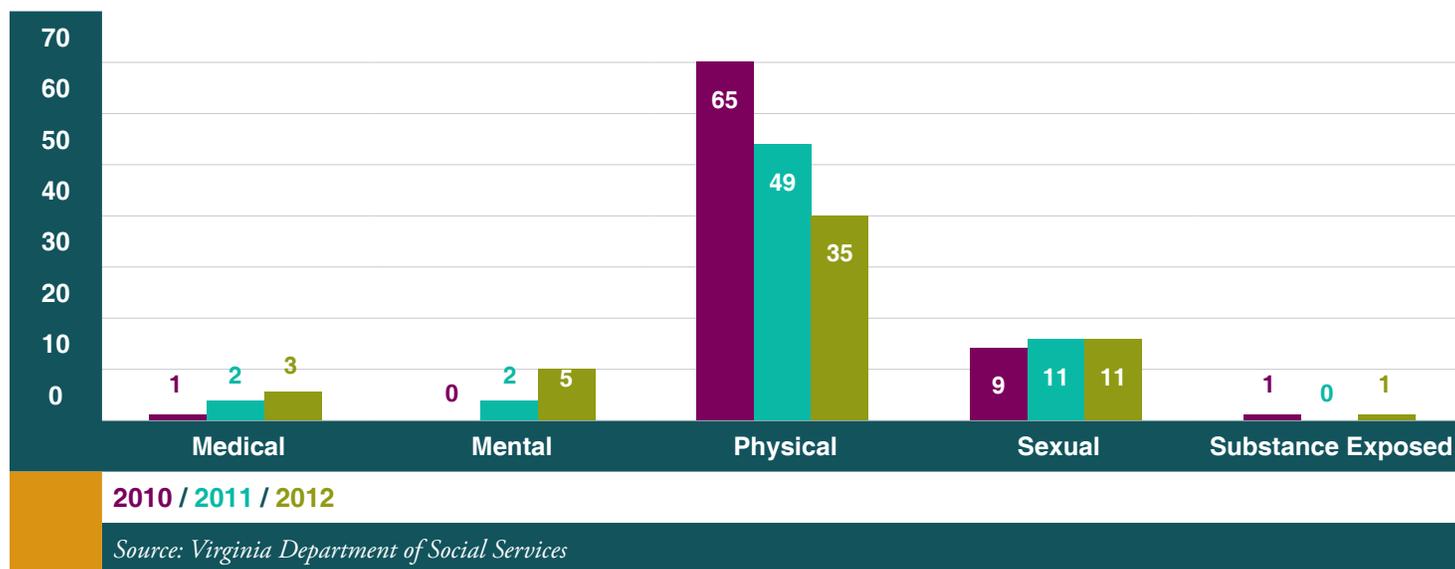
<sup>xx</sup> Zimmerman, F. J., & Bell, J. F. (2010). Associations of television content type and obesity in children. *Journal Information*, 100(2).

<sup>xxi</sup> Sherwood, N. E., Senso, M. M., Fleming, C. K., & Roeder, A. M. (2012). Behavioral Risk Factors for Overweight and Obesity. *Nutrition in the Prevention and Treatment of Disease*, 479.

<sup>xxii</sup> CDC. (2011). Alexandria 2011 Youth risk behavior survey. Alexandria Public Schools.

# SAFE ENVIRONMENT

## FOUNDED ABUSE AND NEGLECT BY CATEGORY – CITY OF ALEXANDRIA



### Why is this important?

Children thrive in safe homes, free from abuse and neglect. Positive and consistent caregiving can buffer the effects of other negative factors, including poverty<sup>xxiii</sup>. Family instability and stress – stemming from such factors as homelessness and single-parent households – can make it difficult for parents to provide that kind of care and can add to the risk of abuse and neglect.

### What does this graph show us?

This graph shows trends over time in the types of abuse and neglect founded (by a preponderance of evidence) in the City of Alexandria.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Founded cases of child abuse declined from 2010 to 2012. The reduction in physical abuse over two years is notable. There was a slight increase in mental (e.g., humiliation, chaotic lifestyle), medical (e.g., neglect to seek medical care) and sexual abuse<sup>xxiv</sup>.

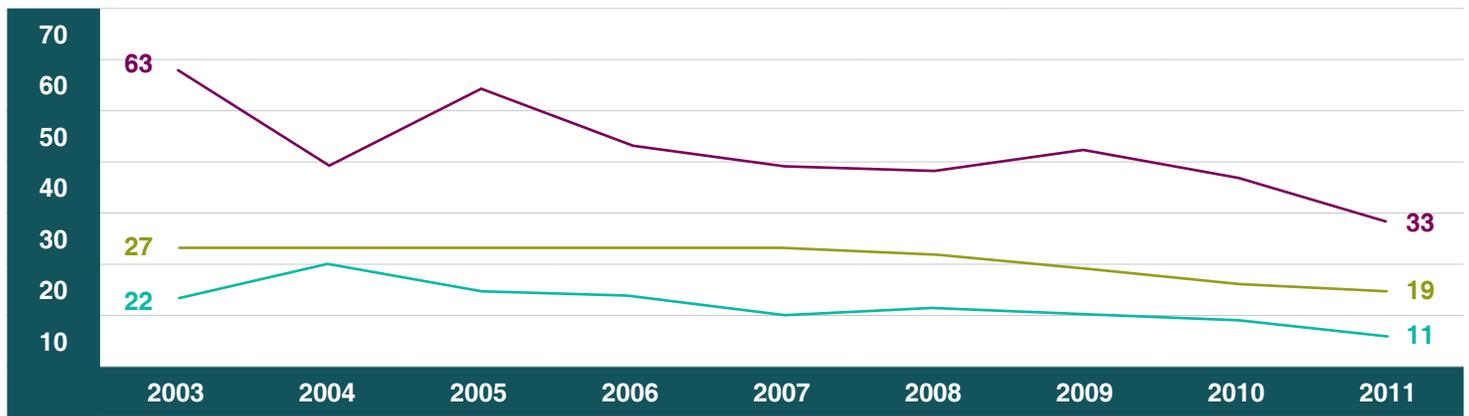
Alexandria has a lower rate of child abuse than the state as a whole, and Virginia has a lower child abuse rate than most other states.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Harden, B. J., (2004, Winter). *Journal issue: Children, families, and foster care*, 14(1).

<sup>xxiv</sup> Virginia Department of Social Services (2012). *Child protective services accountability system reports*. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from <http://www.ds.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/cps/accountability.cgi>.

# TEEN PREGNANCY

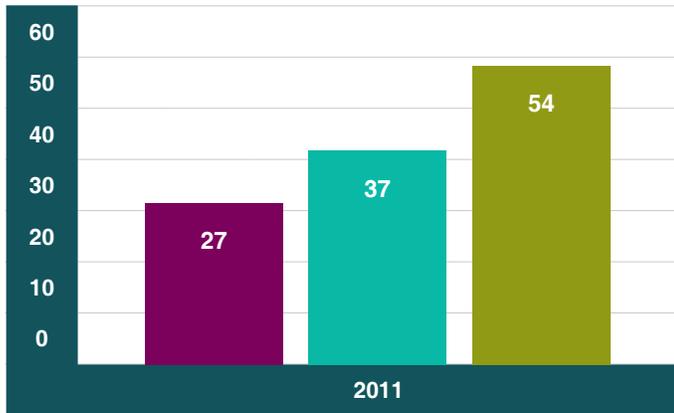
## TEEN PREGNANCIES PER 1,000 GIRLS AGES 10-19



ALEXANDRIA / ARLINGTON / VIRGINIA

Source: Virginia Dept. of Health Division of Health Statistics

## TEEN PREGNANCY RATE PER 1,000 GIRLS AGES 10-19 YEARS, 2011



WHITE / BLACK / HISPANIC

Source: Teen Pregnancy: Virginia Department of Health

### Why is this important?

Teen pregnancies are more likely than later pregnancies to result in low birth-weight babies and are linked to higher levels of infant mortality<sup>xxv</sup>. Teen mothers are less likely than non-parenting teens to graduate from high school, and are more likely to remain in poverty for years to come<sup>xxvi</sup>. Teen fathers who strive to fulfill their duties as parents are also at risk of not finishing school and of struggling to meet financial obligations.

### What do these graphs show us?

This measures the rate per 1,000 girls of births by teens (ages 10 to 19) from 2003 through 2011. The second chart shows the 2011 data broken down by race/ethnicity.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Nationally, births to teen mothers have decreased<sup>xxvii</sup>, and that trend holds true in these three jurisdictions.

Looking at the Alexandria data by race shows that the rates among Hispanic youth are significantly higher than the rates among black and white youth. The rate is 26.9 per 1,000 among white teen girls, 36.5 among black teen girls and 54.3 among Hispanic teen girls<sup>xxviii</sup>.

<sup>xxv</sup> Roth, J., Hendrickson, J., Schilling, M., & Stowell, D. W. (1998). The risk of teen mothers having low birth weight babies: implications of recent medical research for school health personnel. *Journal of School Health*, 68(7), 271-275.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Levine, J. A., Pollack, H., & Comfort, M. E. (2001). Academic and behavioral outcomes among the children of young mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63(2), 355-369.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Hamilton, B. & Ventura, S. (2012, April). Birth rates for U.S. teenagers reach historic lows for all age and ethnic groups. *National Center for Health Statistics*.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Virginia Department of Health. (2013, January 30). Statistical reports and tables on health. In Virginia Department of Health Division of Health Statistics. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/healthstats/stats.htm>.

# Academically & Vocationally Successful

Alexandria is committed to getting all children and youth ready for each stage of academic life, ensuring that all students graduate from high school and guiding them toward postsecondary training that equips them to succeed in the workplace.

## THESE INDICATORS WERE USED TO SEE IF ALEXANDRIA'S YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO BE PRODUCTIVE IN SCHOOL AND IN CAREERS:

- School Readiness
- School Achievement
- School Safety
- College & Career Readiness & Attainment

### Key Findings

School readiness rates are up and are on par with state percentages, but achievement rates for older students are down overall. Third-grade reading levels and eighth-grade algebra scores are down from a few years ago, but trending back up. Algebra scores will require a new baseline for measurement and steady tracking over the next several years, because the standards for algebra changed in the past year (creating a dramatic dip in scores).

The four-year on-time graduation rate has increased from 79.2 percent to 81.9 percent, with six of seven subgroup populations showing increases. Rates declined for students receiving special education services. The overall graduation rate remains below those for the state and for Arlington.

Physical safety at school is a concern. The number of in-school offenses is down overall, but trending up over the past few years. More than half of Alexandria students reported being in a physical fight one or more times (in both school and non-school settings).

### Data Considerations

Attendance is the first step toward student achievement, especially for subjects with multi-step components, such as mathematics. ACPS reports that attendance has ranged from 94 percent to 98 percent for all students across all school days during the course of each academic year from 2008 to 2011<sup>i</sup>. However, a fuller understanding of attendance rates and trends, especially during the middle school years, will be very important for ensuring that all students succeed academically. Chronic absenteeism, starting in middle school, has been linked with dropping out of school<sup>ii</sup>.

In a similar vein, fully grasping how well the City of Alexandria is preparing children for school requires a more comprehensive understanding of the city's preschool enrollment and attendance.

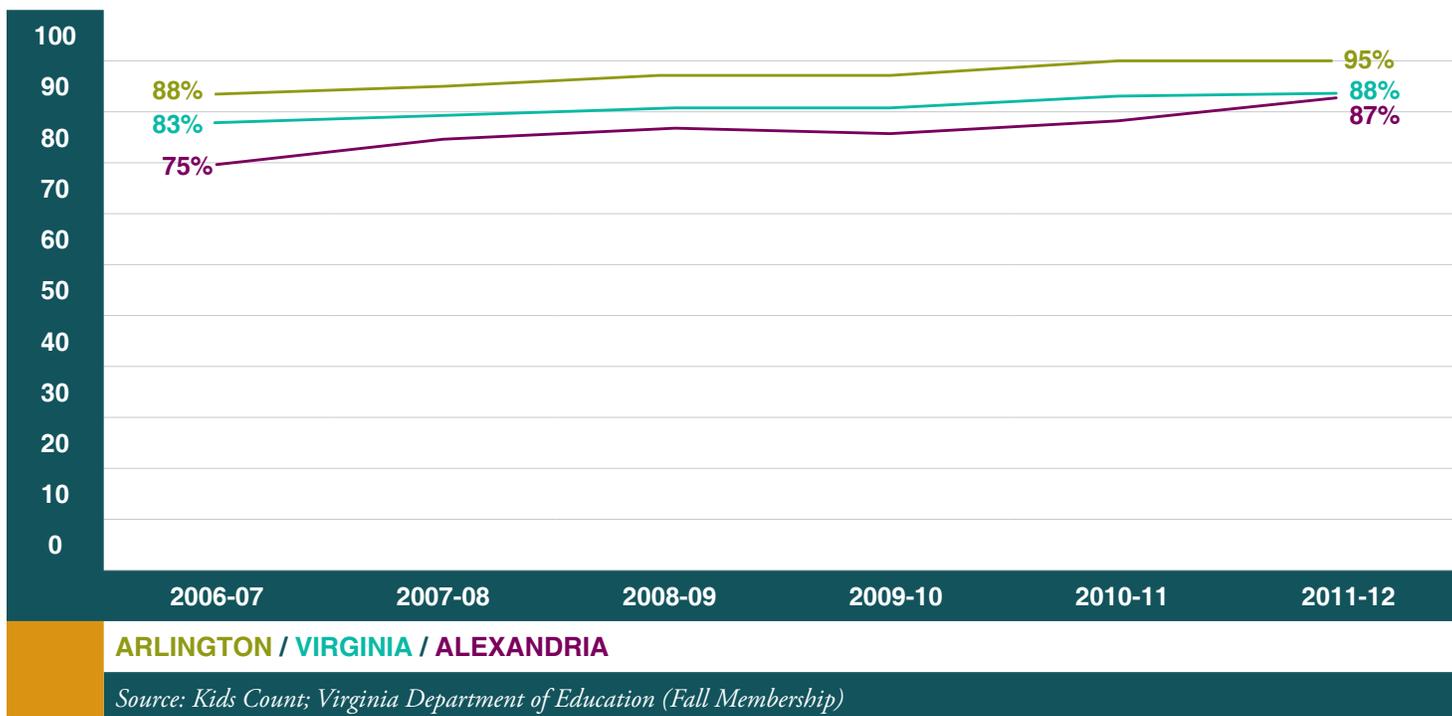
To achieve a greater understanding of the well-being of children and youth, the community needs data about each child. Sharing individual student data between schools and other providers will offer the best means for ensuring that each child gets consistent, appropriate learning opportunities and assistance.

Although the City has data about college enrollment, it does not have data on how many of its students graduate from postsecondary institutions. The City needs to track persistence and success rates as well as enrollment.

Virginia's Algebra I Standard of Learning changed in 2011, so it will be a few years before scores can be accurately compared over time.

# SCHOOL READINESS

## KINDERGARTENERS WHOSE PALS-K SCORES WERE AT OR ABOVE KINDERGARTEN READINESS LEVELS



### Why is this important?

School readiness means more than preparing for the year ahead. True readiness sets young people on a path to success throughout their academic development. Research shows that preparedness as far back as kindergarten increases the odds that a student will graduate from high school<sup>iii</sup>.

If a child starts school behind his or her peers, that gap is likely to widen with age. A child who does not learn to read in kindergarten will probably still struggle to read in the third grade<sup>iv</sup>. Tracking the outcomes for children in terms of readiness, attachment to school and achievement can help to target areas that need intervention and monitor changes in readiness.

### What does this graph show us?

PALS-K scores measure a child's readiness for kindergarten. The focus of the PALS measure is phonological awareness (recognition of separate speech sounds), alphabet recognition, concept of words, knowledge of letter sounds and spelling. This measure provides insight into the percentage of students who enter school prepared for kindergarten literacy instruction. These data are from the fall of each year.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Alexandria is steadily improving. The rate of improvement has been higher than in both Arlington and Virginia. Alexandria's overall scores are now on par with the state of Virginia<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> Alexandria City Public Schools (2011). 2011 SAT Report. Retrieved on September 16, 2013, from <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/mes/sat/2011-sat-report.pdf>.

<sup>ii</sup> Attendance Works, n.d. Web. Attendance Works Talking Points handout. Retrieved September 17, 2013 from <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/AAMMessages.pdf>.

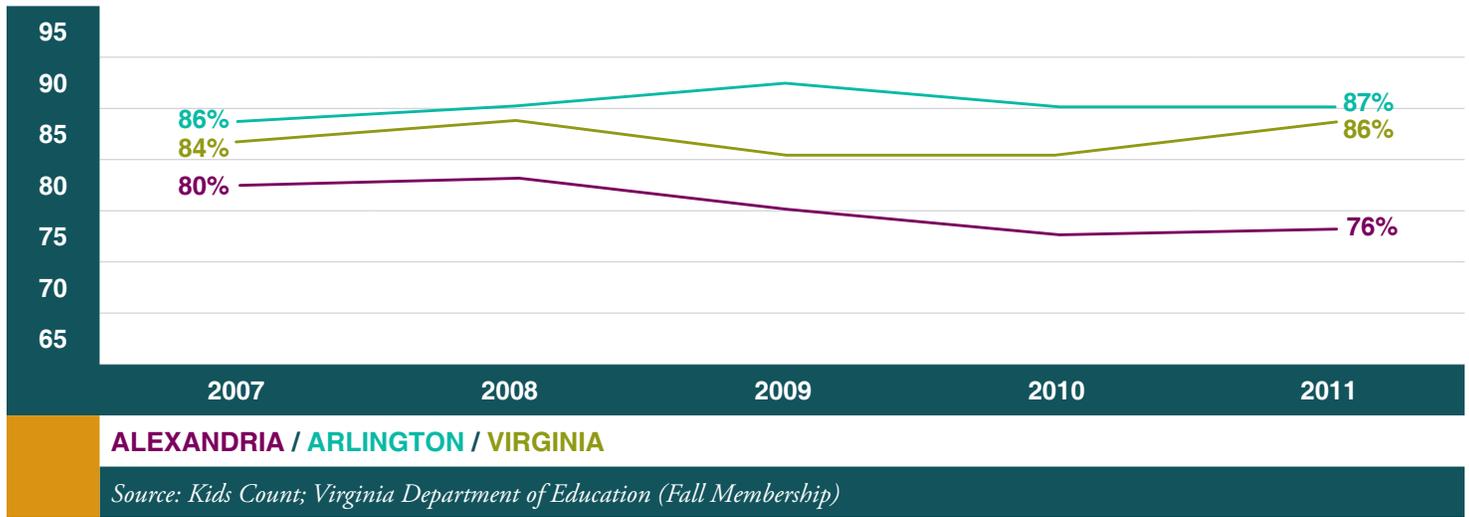
<sup>iii</sup> United Way Worldwide. (2011, April). Education research overview. United Way.

<sup>iv</sup> United Way Worldwide. (2011, April). Education research overview. United Way.

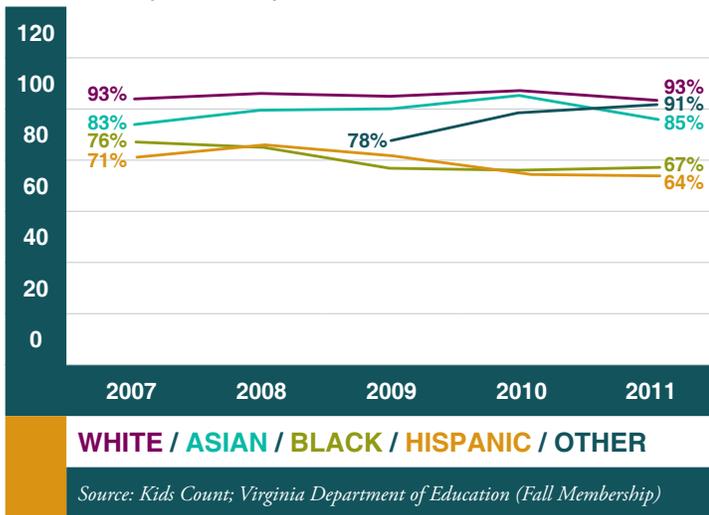
<sup>v</sup> Kids Count Data Center. (2013). Virginia main page. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/StateLanding.aspx?state=VA>

# SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

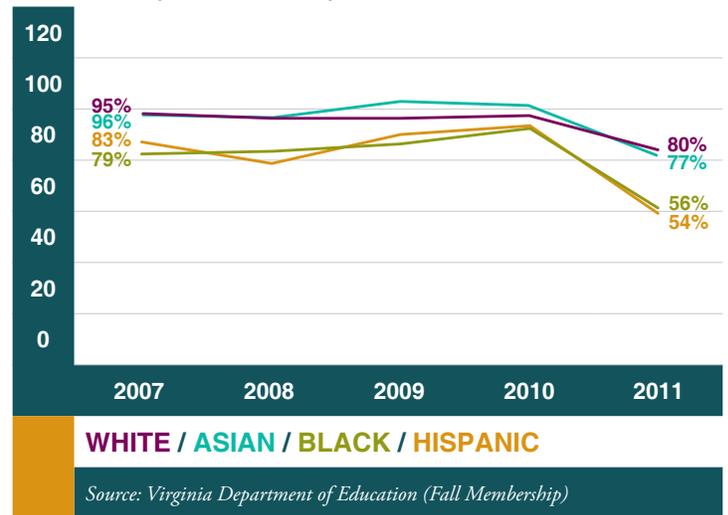
## PASSAGE RATE FOR THIRD-GRADE STANDARDS OF LEARNING (READING)



## PASSAGE RATE FOR THIRD-GRADE STANDARDS OF LEARNING (READING) BY RACE



## PASSAGE RATE FOR ALGEBRA I STANDARDS OF LEARNING (ALL GRADES) BY RACE



### Why is this important?

Cognitive development and academic achievement include everything from knowledge to problem-solving to abstract thought. Tracking success by assessing skills and behavior can help identify children who need extra supports, as well as overall school trends.

This can forestall future problems. For example, children with low grades in third grade, coupled with high absenteeism, are more likely to drop out of high school without intervention<sup>vi</sup>.

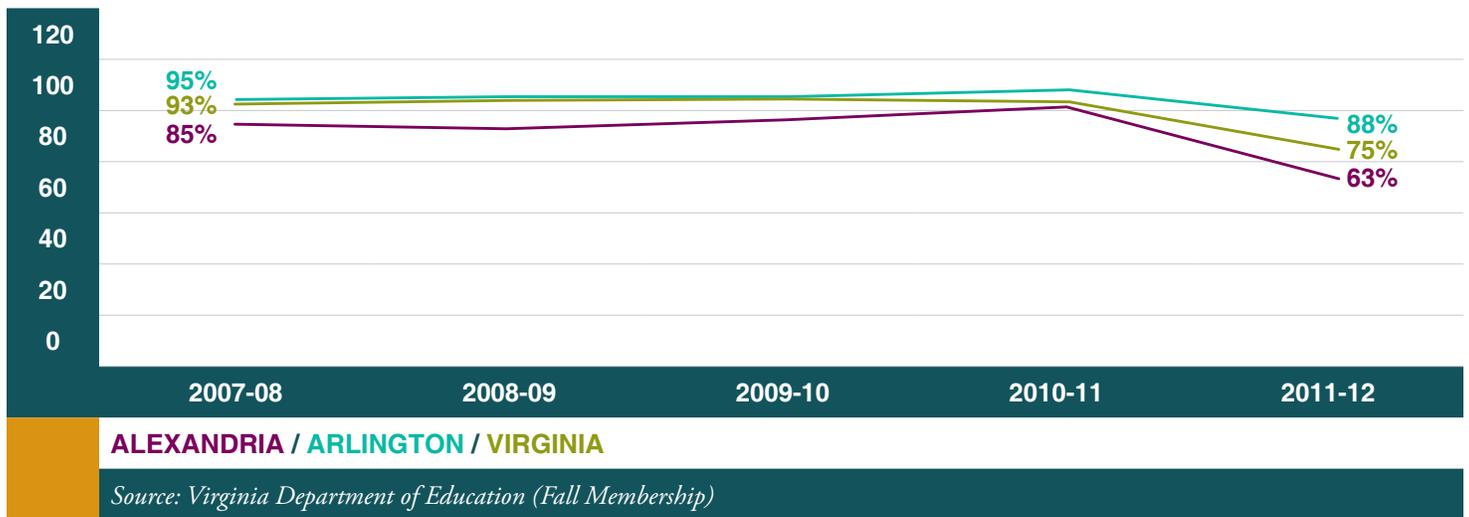
Two important predictors of future success were selected as benchmarks. Third-grade reading has been shown to be a predictor of high school graduation and college attendance<sup>vii</sup>. Success in Algebra I relates to college readiness<sup>viii</sup>.

<sup>vi</sup> United Way Worldwide. (2011, April). Education research overview. United Way.

<sup>vii</sup> Lesnick, J., Goerge, R., Smithgall, C., & Gwynne, J. (2010). Reading on grade level in third grade: How is it related to high school performance and college enrollment. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>viii</sup> Texas Schools Project, et. al. (2012, May). High school predictors of college readiness: Determinants of high school graduates' enrollment and successful completion of first-year mathematics and English college courses in Virginia. College and Career Readiness Initiative.

## PASSAGE RATE FOR ALGEBRA I STANDARDS OF LEARNING (ALL GRADE LEVELS)



### What do these graphs show?

The Standard of Learning assessments (SOL) measure end-of-course assessments for students in the third grade and eighth grade for math and reading. The results provide insight into whether students have attained the appropriate knowledge and skills, based on standards set by the state of Virginia. The overall results are provided, as well as differences by race.

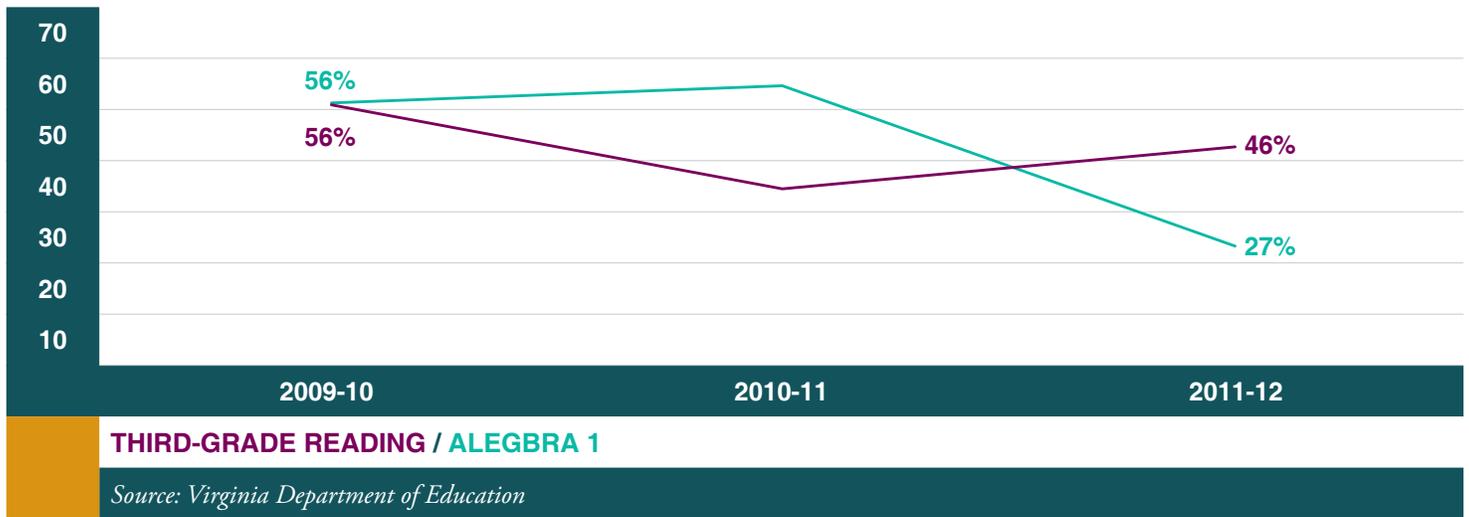
### How is Alexandria doing?

The passage rates for third-grade reading are lower in Alexandria than in both Arlington and Virginia. The city's scores have dipped in recent years but saw a recent upswing, mirroring the state trend. Hispanic and black students consistently achieve the lowest passage rates for third-grade SOL reading<sup>ix</sup>.

Note that the measurement standards for the Algebra SOL changed in the past year, affecting the scores. Given the changes in measurement, it will be a few years before this indicator can be steadily tracked.

<sup>ix</sup> Virginia Department of Education. (2013). Customized student achievement reports. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/achievement\\_data/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/achievement_data/).

## ACADEMIC SUCCESS: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, ALEXANDRIA



### Why is this important?

As Congress stated in the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), “disability is a natural part of the human experience<sup>x</sup>.” Children with disabilities, just like all children, have the potential to thrive, lead fulfilling lives and contribute to their community’s cultural, economic and social opportunities. The ability of children with special needs to reach their potential is related to a number of factors, including access to services that meet their health, social-emotional and educational needs and support for their families<sup>xi</sup>. Positive outcomes for children with special needs benefit the entire community and the children around them. For example, improvements for children with disabilities in the classroom have been related to positive outcomes for non-disabled students in the classroom as well<sup>xii</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This graph shows the academic success of students with disabilities, for 2009 to 2012, as reported by the Virginia Department of Education.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Alexandria has seen an overall drop in both third-grade reading and Algebra I scores of students with disabilities. Please note that the Algebra I scores likely reflect a change in testing, and the drop is also reflected in the overarching scores for all students. More time will be needed to accurately assess trends in this area. Although the scores have dropped overall for both third-grade reading and Algebra I for students with disabilities, it should be noted that graduation rates have steadily increased for students with disabilities, from 36 percent in 2009 to 44 percent in 2011<sup>xiii</sup>.

<sup>x</sup> Title I – Amendments to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Pub. L. No. 105-17, § 601, Stat. 37 (1997).

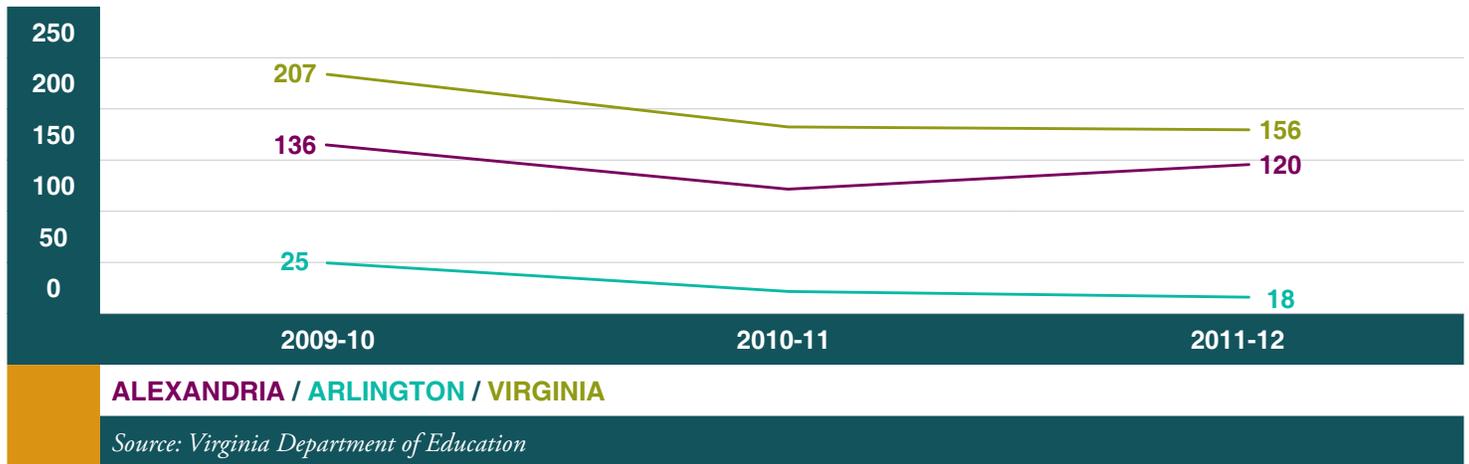
<sup>xi</sup> Rhode Island Kids Count. (2003). *Improving outcomes for children with special needs*. Rhode Island Kids Count.

<sup>xii</sup> Staub, D. (1999). *On inclusion and the other kids: Here’s what research shows so far about inclusion’s effect on nondisabled students*. Educational Development Center.

<sup>xiii</sup> Virginia Department of Education. (2013). *Customized student achievement reports*. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/achievement\\_data/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/achievement_data/).

# SCHOOL SAFETY

## TOTAL SCHOOL OFFENSES (PER 1,000 STUDENTS)



### Why is this important?

Students should feel attached to their school. Those who do are more likely to succeed academically and less likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as drug use, smoking and violence. There is a strong tie between engagement in school and academic achievement<sup>xiv</sup>.

Safe classrooms and hallways promote a culture of learning and an environment for successful development. In addition, a school culture that promotes respect and defines behavioral expectations teaches students interpersonal skills that will serve them in school and beyond.

### What does this graph show us?

This graph shows the number of school offenses per 1,000 students in Alexandria City Public Schools, as well as schools in Arlington and Virginia. These include weapons offenses and offenses against another person.

### How is Alexandria doing?

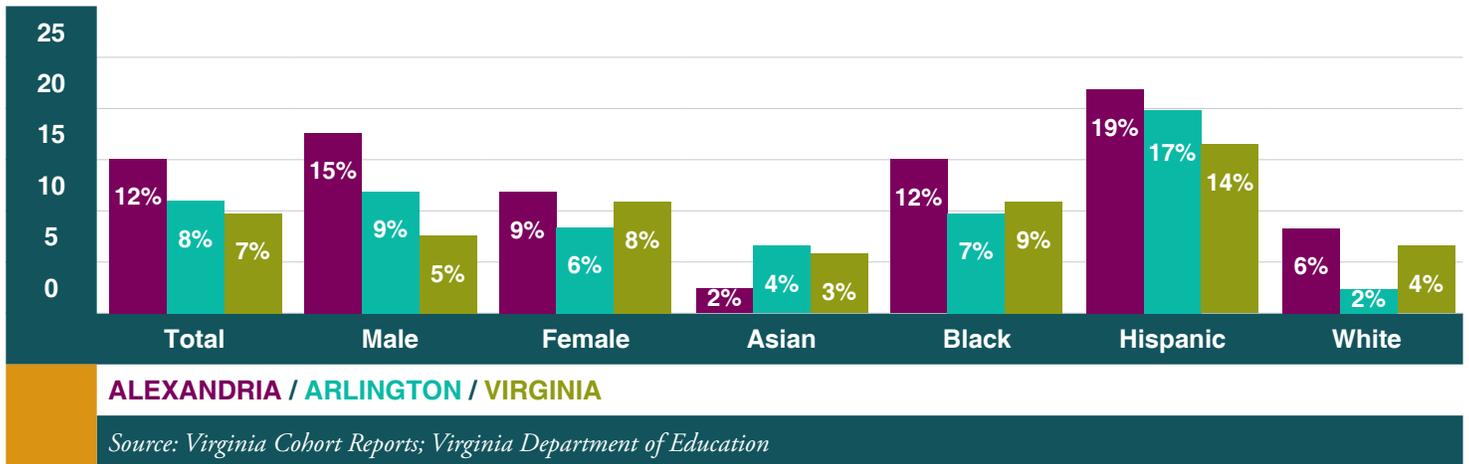
The numbers declined from 2009-10, but went back up after 2010-11. Alexandria compares better to the state overall, but Arlington has a much lower number of school offenses<sup>xv</sup>.

<sup>xiv</sup> Catalano, R. F., Oesterle, S., Fleming, C. B., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). The importance of bonding to school for healthy development: Findings from the social development research group. *Journal of School Health, 74*(7), 252-261.

<sup>xv</sup> Virginia Department of Education. (2013). Customized student achievement reports. Retrieved March 27, 2013, from [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/achievement\\_data/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/achievement_data/).

# COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS & ATTAINMENT

## CLASS OF 2012 DROPOUT RATE



### Why is this important?

High school graduation is a critical indicator of future success. Tracking dropout rates enables the city to help individuals (by seeing which students need extra supports) and to improve collectively (by seeing how well the community is doing overall).

Young people who graduate from college are more likely to be healthy and to work full time than are their peers with only a high school diploma; they also earn more<sup>xvi</sup>. Tracking college enrollment shows how many of our youth are taking the first step toward a post-secondary degree.

Beyond education, young people seek meaningful employment. A working student faces a tricky balancing act. Studies show that students who work more than 20 hours a week often have lower grades, are less likely to graduate, take more time to complete their post-secondary degrees and have more mental health problems than other students. For many students, however, a positive work experience can facilitate, rather than derail, educational and vocational progress<sup>xvii</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This is the percentage of Alexandria students for the graduating class of 2012 who dropped out of high school. The graph shows the overall rate, as well as percentages by gender and race.

### How is Alexandria doing?

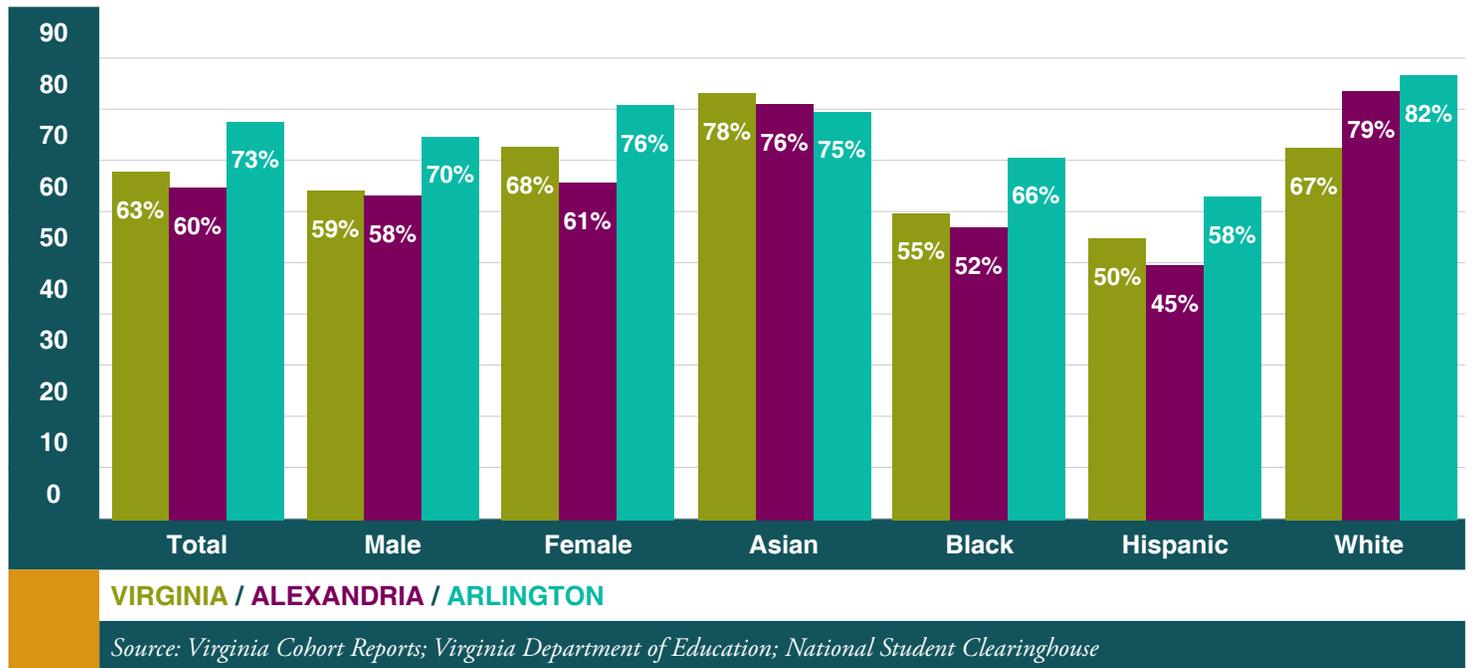
Alexandria's dropout rate needs attention. The total is higher than both Arlington and Virginia. Specific concerns include male students, black students and Hispanic students<sup>xviii</sup>.

<sup>xvi</sup> Baum, S. & Ma, J. (2007). *Education pays: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society*. College Board.

<sup>xvii</sup> Orszag, J. M., Orszag, P. R., & Whitmore, D. M. (2001). *Learning and earning: Working in college*. Commissioned by Upromise. Accessed at <http://www.brockport.edu/career01/upromise.htm>.

<sup>xviii</sup> Virginia Department of Education (2013). *Virginia cohort reports: Class of 2012*. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/).

## STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN ANY INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION WITHIN 16 MONTHS OF EARNING HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



### What does this graph show us?

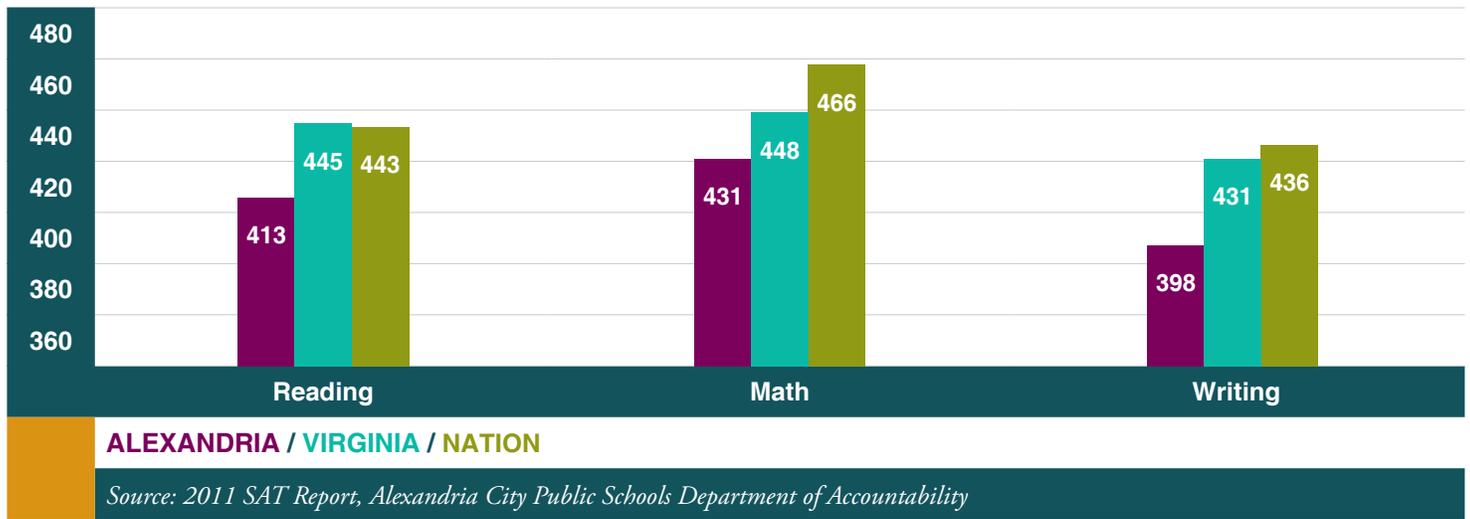
This shows the percentage of students who enrolled in a higher education institution (such as college, university or community college) within 16 months after graduating from high school in 2012. The graph gives the overall figures, then provides a breakdown by gender and race.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Alexandria lags behind Virginia and Arlington. The lowest percentages are for black and Hispanic students (52 percent and 45 percent, respectively). There is a noted disparity between the percentages for female students throughout the state (68 percent) and in Alexandria (61 percent)<sup>xix,xx</sup>.

<sup>xix</sup> Virginia Department of Education (2013). Virginia cohort reports: Class of 2012. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/).  
<sup>xx</sup> Shapiro, D., et. al. (2012). Completing college: A state-level view of student attainment rates. National Student Clearinghouse.

## MEAN SAT SCORES FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS



### What does this graph show us?

This graph shows us the Mean SAT scores for Reading, Math and Writing for Alexandria City Public School students whose families earn less than \$30,000 per year. Comparison data is provided for the state and the nation<sup>xxi</sup>.

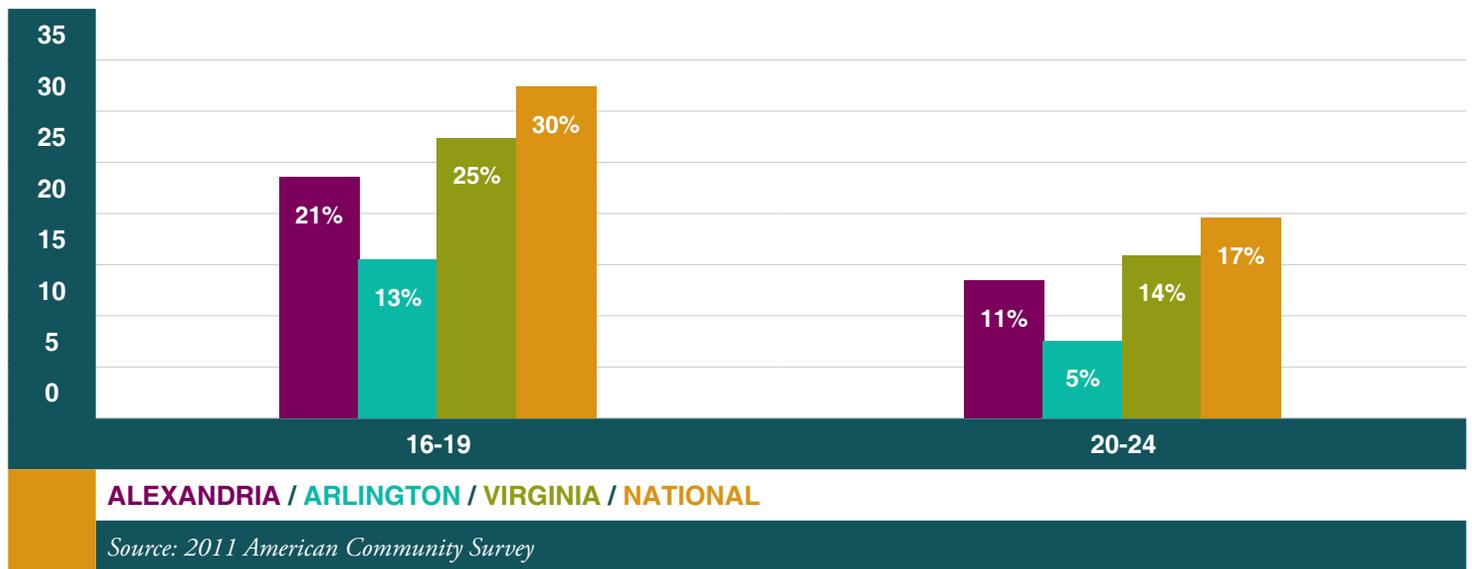
### How is Alexandria doing?

A total SAT Score of 1550 is associated with a 65 percent probability of achieving a GPA of a B- or higher in the first year of higher education. This, in turn, increases the odds of college success overall<sup>xxii</sup>. Across all subject areas, students from low-income backgrounds in Alexandria score lower on the SAT than do students in Virginia and the nation as a whole. This points to an opportunity for Alexandria to improve the test scores of its most vulnerable youth.

<sup>xxi</sup> Alexandria City Public Schools (2011). 2011 SAT Report. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/mes/sat/2011-sat-report.pdf>.

<sup>xxii</sup> College Board, n.d. Web. SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark homepage. Retrieved September 9, 2013 from <http://press.collegeboard.org/sat/sat-college-and-career-readiness-benchmark/>.

## YOUNG PERSON UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



### What does this graph show us?

These are the unemployment rates for two age groups: 16 to 19, and 20 to 24. Young people who are jobless, looking for jobs and available for work are considered unemployed.

### How is Alexandria doing?

A high unemployment rate indicates a mismatch between the needs of employers and the skills of the workforce. Unemployment often decreases as young people transition to adulthood, as seen here. Alexandria's rates for these age groups are on par with the state's, lower than the national rates and significantly higher than Arlington's<sup>xxiii</sup>.

<sup>xxiii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). 2011 American community survey: Alexandria. U.S. Census Bureau.

# Culturally Connected & Competent

Cultural competence refers to people's awareness of their own cultural view and their ability to "understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures<sup>1</sup>." Children and families need to learn and share their own cultures with others, and form positive relationships with people from other cultures. This improves their personal growth and that of the community at large.

## ONE INDICATOR WAS EXAMINED FOR THIS AREA:

- Cultural Competence

### Key Findings

Only half of Alexandria youth report knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

### Data Considerations

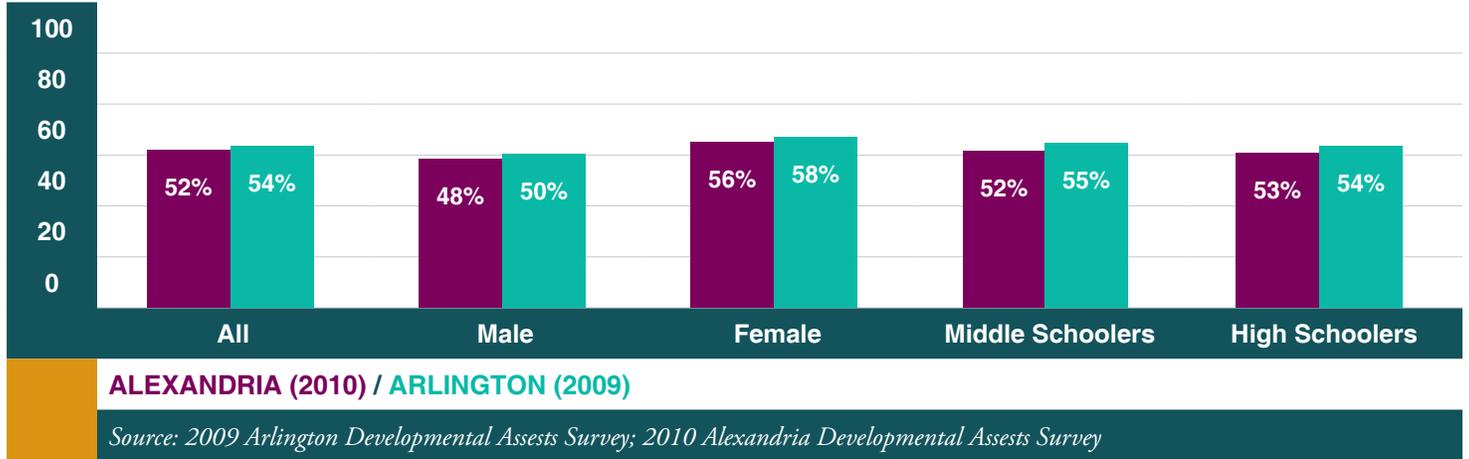
A basic respect for the dignity of others is at the heart of cultural competence. The Human Rights Research Center provides a way to take the temperature of human rights in your school. This survey is at [www.hrusa.org/hrmaterials/temperature/interactive.php](http://www.hrusa.org/hrmaterials/temperature/interactive.php). In future years, this or other surveys may be necessary to implement to get a fuller picture on cultural competence in Alexandria.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, M. & Vaughn, B. (2007.) *Strategic diversity and inclusion management magazine*, pp. 31-36. DTUI Publications Division: San Francisco, CA.

# CULTURAL COMPETENCE

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE: KNOWLEDGE OF AND COMFORT WITH PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT CULTURAL, RACIAL & ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS



### Why is this important?

Cultural competence is especially important as Alexandria grows more diverse. Prejudice and discrimination have lasting effects on young people and on the community as a whole. Youth who are discriminated against because of their identity or their life experiences are more likely than other youth to experience teen pregnancy and to contract HIV/STI infections<sup>ii</sup>. This includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth (GLBTQ), youth of color, immigrants and youth from low-income backgrounds.

### What does this graph show us?

These are results from one question in Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Survey, administered in 2009 in Arlington and 2010 in Alexandria. That difference in years for administration of the survey impedes comparisons between jurisdictions. The survey covered 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-graders.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Alexandria has room for growth. Only half of Alexandria students report “knowledge and comfort with people of different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds.” This is slightly lower than in the reports from Arlington youth. Also of note: There is only a slight increase from middle school to high school, and females reported this asset more frequently than males<sup>iii,iv</sup>.

<sup>ii</sup> Upadhyay, K. K., & Ellen, J. M. (2011). Social disadvantage as a risk for first pregnancy among adolescent females in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 49*(5), 538-541.

<sup>iii</sup> Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets survey. The Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth & Families.*

<sup>iv</sup> Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets: A profile of your youth. Alexandria City Public Schools.*

# Emotionally Secure, Hopeful & Resilient

Children who have the opportunity to develop emotionally and learn to solve problems, cooperate with others and make transitions between tasks and experiences are on their way to becoming healthy adults. Emotional security, hope and resilience involve more than having a positive outlook; they require skills that set a young person on the path to success in relationships, school and work. Business leaders say that, aside from needing basic hard skills in such areas as writing, math and typing, young people need to master soft skills like critical thinking, working in collaboration and interpersonal relations.

## THESE INDICATORS WERE USED TO SEE HOW WELL ALEXANDRIA IS DOING IN THIS AREA:

- Caring Adults
- Mental Health
- Bullying
- Resilience
- Substance Abuse

### Key Findings

The sense of connectedness and support among Alexandria youth needs attention. Less than 50 percent of youth can identify three or more non-parental adults as supportive. Nearly one in eight middle schoolers and one in 10 high school-aged youth indicate having made a plan to attempt suicide<sup>i</sup>.

Alexandria has made great strides in the area of foster care and congregate care, reducing the number of placements significantly over the past few years<sup>ii</sup>.

Bullying rates follow national trends, with 37 percent of middle school students and 15 percent of high school students reporting that they have been bullied on school property. Consistent with national data, rates are higher among males. High school bullying rates, however, are lower than the state average<sup>iii</sup>.

Only one-third of all students report knowing how to plan ahead and make choices – a critical skill for transitioning into young adulthood<sup>iv</sup>.

Substance use, including alcohol and marijuana, appears lower for Alexandria middle schoolers than among comparative cohorts. However, the rates for high school students fall in line with national averages: a 30 percent use rate for alcohol in the past 30 days and a 33 percent experimentation rate for marijuana.

### Data Considerations

Measuring youth social and emotional well-being goes beyond preventing negative behavior. Some indicators, such as caring adults and problem-solving, measure positive assets. Alexandria can continue to push for attention toward measurements such as these.

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<sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2011). *Alexandria 2011 Youth risk behavior survey*. Alexandria Public Schools.

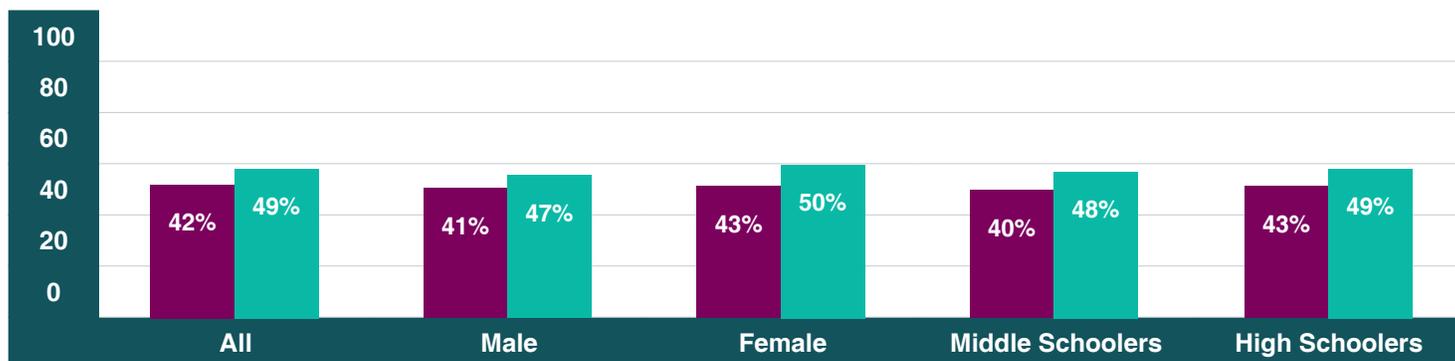
<sup>ii</sup> D. White (personal communication, June 4, 2013).

<sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2011). *Alexandria 2011 Youth risk behavior survey*. Alexandria Public Schools.

<sup>iv</sup> Shann, M. M. (1999). *Academics and a culture of caring: The relationship between school achievement and prosocial and antisocial behaviors in four urban middle schools*. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 10(4), 390-413.

# CARING ADULTS

## THREE OR MORE NONPARENT ADULTS PROVIDE SUPPORT



ALEXANDRIA (2010) / ARLINGTON (2009)

Source: 2009 Arlington Developmental Assets Survey; 2010 Alexandria Developmental Assets Survey

### Why is this important?

Close, positive relationships with adults can affect school performance and attendance<sup>v,vi</sup>. “Resilient children, the ones who thrive despite obstacles, typically have caring adults present and active in their lives<sup>vii</sup>.” These relationships fulfill a vital human and developmental need in young people: a sense of belonging.

Alternatively, harm from an adult can have traumatic impacts. Children in foster care, who might have been exposed to unsafe conditions, neglect, or physical or sexual abuse, are more likely to experience behavioral and emotional problems, be suspended or expelled from school, and be in poor or fair health<sup>viii</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

These results are from one question in Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Survey, administered in 2009 in Arlington and 2010 in Alexandria. That difference in years for administration of the survey impedes comparisons between jurisdictions. The survey covered 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-graders.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Fewer than half of Alexandria Public School students can identify three or more nonparent adults who provide them with support. The number is lower for middle school students in particular. Arlington hovered at about 50 percent across the demographic categories<sup>ix,x</sup>.

v National Middle School Association. (2003). *This we believe: Successful schools for young adolescents: A position paper of the National Middle School Association*. National Middle School Association.

vi Howard, S., Dryden, J., & Johnson, B. (1999). *Childhood resilience: Review and critique of literature*. *Oxford review of education*, 25(3), 307-323.

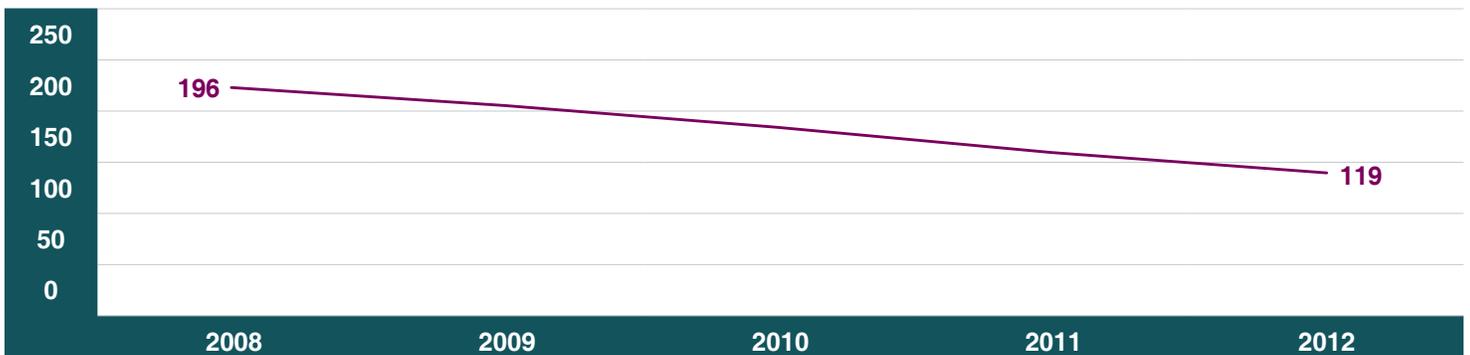
vii Schofield, G., & Beek, M. (2005). *Risk and resilience in long-term foster-care*. *British Journal of Social Work*, 35(8), 1283-1301.

viii Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets: A profile of your youth*. Alexandria City Public Schools.

ix Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets: A profile of your youth*. Alexandria City Public Schools.

x National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices. (2009). *Safe reduction of children in foster care*. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-issues/page-ebsw-issues/col2-content/main-content-list/safe-reduction-of-children-in-fo.html>.

## FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS



Source: Center for Children and Families (City of Alexandria)

## TOTAL CSA\* CONGREGATE CARE PLACEMENTS AND DISCHARGES CSA PAID RESIDENTIAL, GROUP HOME, OR DIAGNOSTIC PLACEMENTS



### TOTAL PLACED / TOTAL DISCHARGED

Source: Center for Children and Families (City of Alexandria)

\*Comprehensive Services Act

### What do these graphs show us?

This is City of Alexandria data regarding the number of congregate care placements and discharges from 2008 to 2012. Congregate care consists of residential care, group homes or diagnostic placements. This chart includes children in congregate care that receive Comprehensive Services Act funds. This does not include children who receive Medicaid, private insurance or out-of-pocket funding.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Foster care placements have gone down steadily and significantly since 2008. While foster care is essential for some children, outcomes worsen for children the longer they are in foster care and the more placements they experience. Safely reducing the number of children in foster care has been associated with improved child outcomes<sup>xi</sup>. Alexandria has recently shown success in this area.

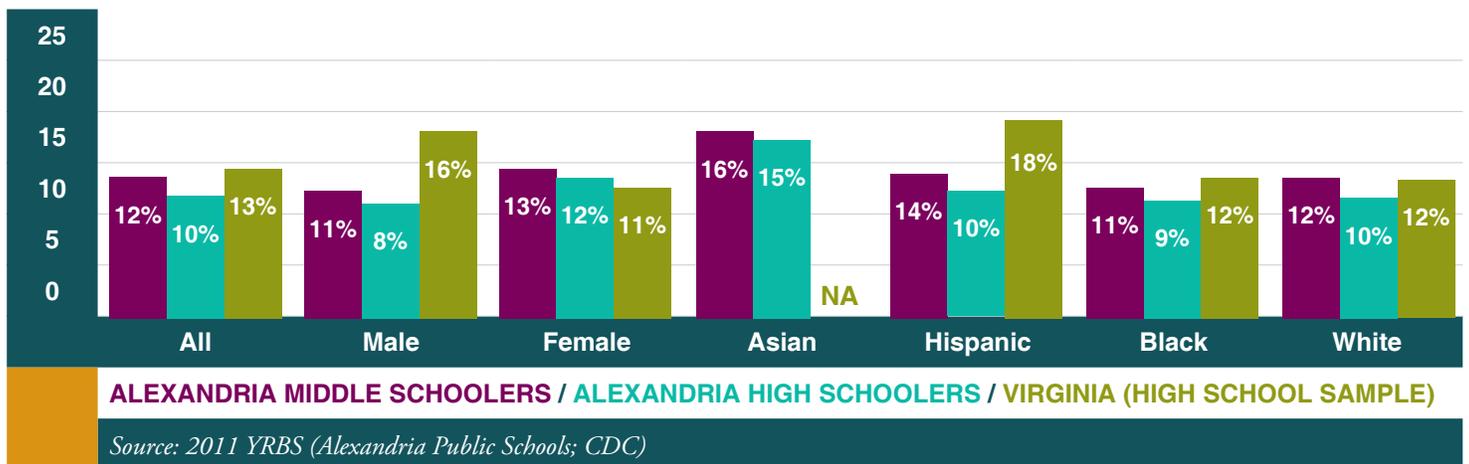
Congregate care placements have gone down overall since 2008 while discharges have increased overall. This is in line with an overarching goal to reduce placements. As reported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, “For children who are being protected through the city, no research proves that children fare better in congregate facilities than family care and some studies have shown the outcomes are worse<sup>xii</sup>.”

<sup>xi</sup> National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices. (2009). *Safe reduction of children in foster care*. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-issues/page-ehsw-issues/col2-content/main-content-list/safe-reduction-of-children-in-fo.html>.

<sup>xii</sup> American Psychological Association. (2013). *Children’s mental health*. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from <http://www.apa.org/pifamilies/children-mental-health.aspx>.

# MENTAL HEALTH

## MADE A PLAN ABOUT HOW THEY WOULD ATTEMPT SUICIDE



### Why is this important?

Now more than ever, society recognizes the importance of the mental health of our children and young adults. The American Psychological Association says that the management of mental health issues has “long-term implications on the ability of children and youth to fulfill their potential, as well as consequences for the health, education, labor and criminal justice systems of our society<sup>xiii</sup>.” In 2007, suicide was the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24<sup>xiv</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This is self-reported data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered in 2011 to 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in Alexandria City Public Schools. The question asked if the students had made plans about how they would attempt suicide in the 12 months before the survey. In addition to overall totals, the data are divided by gender and race.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Twelve percent of all ACPS middle school students and 10 percent of all ACPS high school students have made a plan about how they would attempt suicide. The highest reports came from Asian students, in both middle school and high school. The figures for Hispanic middle school students were also noticeably high. Female middle and high school students reported higher incidences than did female students in the Virginia sample<sup>xv</sup>.

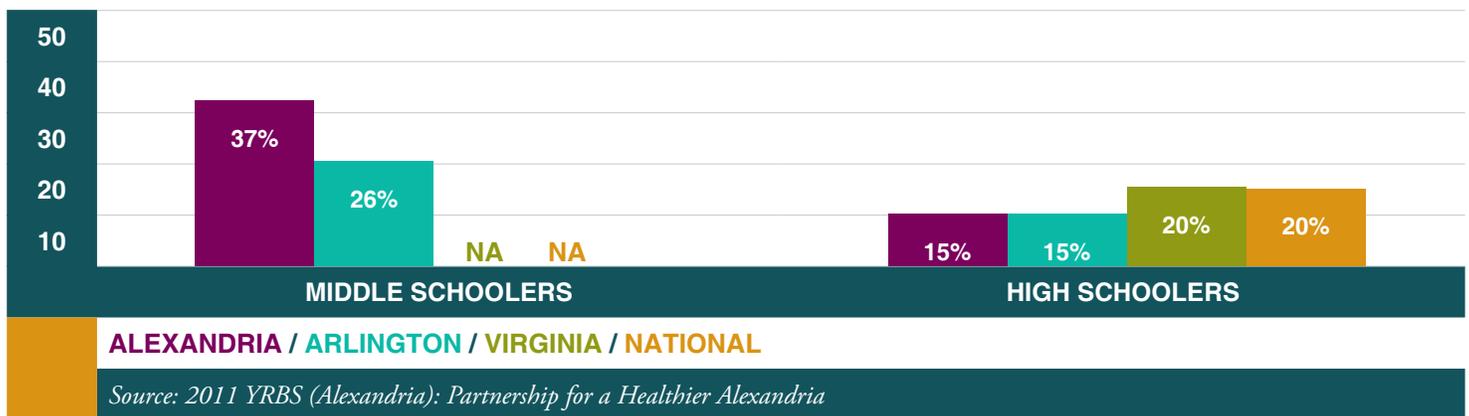
<sup>xiii</sup> Virginia Department of Education (2013). Virginia cohort reports: Class of 2012. In *Graduation, Completion, Dropout & Postsecondary Data*. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/).

<sup>xiv</sup> American Psychological Association. (2013). *Children's mental health*. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/children-mental-health.aspx>.

<sup>xv</sup> CDC. (2011). *Alexandria 2011 Youth behavior risk survey*. Alexandria Public Schools.

# BULLYING

## BULLIED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY



### Why is this important?

Being a target or victim of bullying has long been recognized as having short- and long-term psychological effects on youth, and can affect young people's academic achievement, educational aspirations and psychological well-being, as well as their psychosocial adjustment as adults<sup>xvi</sup>. Public health officials cite school bullying as one of the most significant public health concerns facing children and youth today<sup>xvii</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This chart shows the percentage of middle and high school youth who report being bullied at school, and displays comparative data for Arlington at both the middle and high school levels, in addition to statewide and national data for the high school level only.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Bullying seems to occur at a much higher rate among Alexandria middle schoolers than high schoolers, with more than one in three middle school students reporting being bullied at school. Alexandria middle school students appear to experience more bullying than their Arlington counterparts. Bullying rates at the high school level appear to be the same for students in both places, but are significantly less than the state and national rates<sup>xviii</sup>.

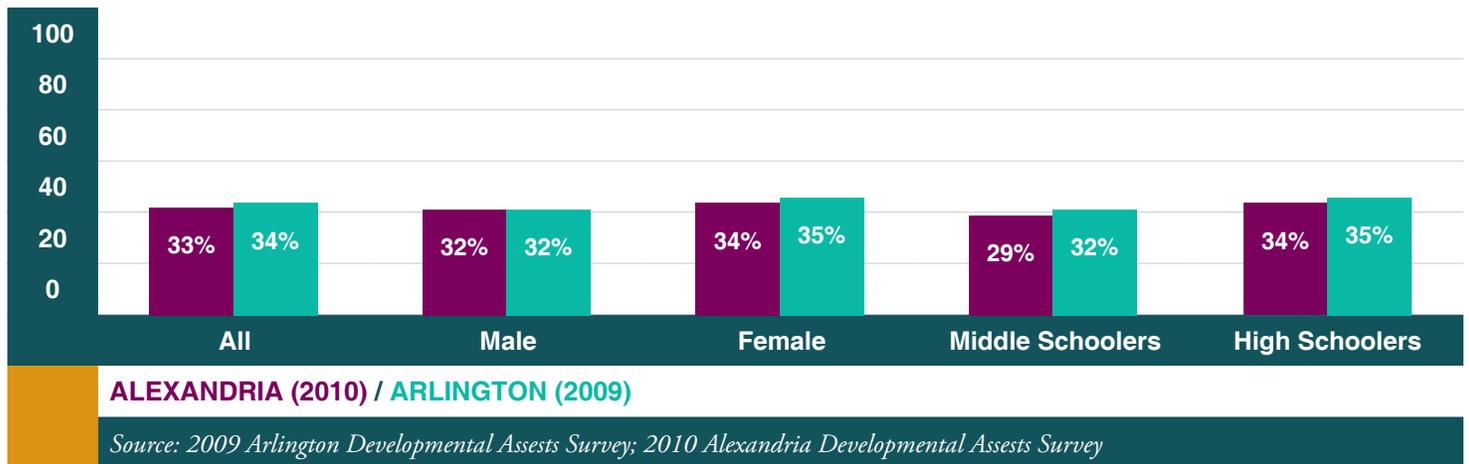
<sup>xvi</sup> Trofi, M. M., Farrington, D. P., Lösel, F., & Loeber, R. (2011). The predictive efficiency of school bullying versus later offending: A systematic/meta-analytic review of longitudinal studies. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 21(2), 80-89.

<sup>xvii</sup> Espelage, D. L., & De La Rue, L. (2012). School bullying: its nature and ecology. *International journal of adolescent medicine and health*, 24(1), 3-10.

<sup>xviii</sup> CDC. (2011). *Alexandria 2011 Youth behavior risk survey*. Alexandria Public Schools.

# RESILIENCE

## YOUNG PERSON KNOWS HOW TO PLAN AHEAD AND MAKE CHOICES



### Why is this important?

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from setbacks. It includes such skills as problem solving and decision making, which affect a child's ability to succeed in school, work and society. Increasing a child's resilience and ability to solve problems can improve that child's day-to-day experiences as well as long-term success<sup>xix</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

These are results from one question in Search Institute's Developmental Assets Survey, administered in 2009 in Arlington and 2010 in Alexandria. That difference in years for administration of the survey impedes comparisons between jurisdictions. The survey covered 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-graders.

### How is Alexandria doing?

Overall, problem-solving skills tend to grow from middle school to high school, as they do in Alexandria. That said, only one-third of all students in ACPS report knowing how to plan ahead and make choices<sup>xx, xxi</sup>.

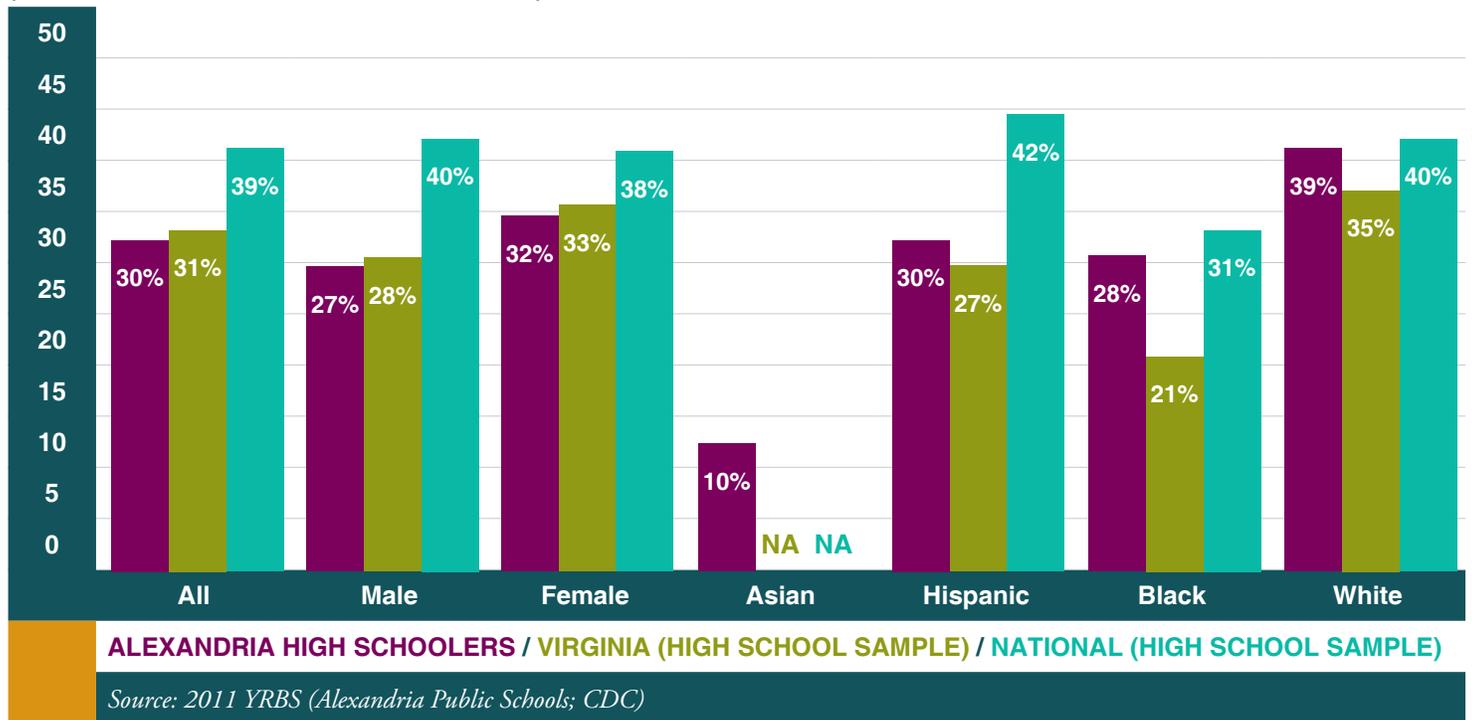
<sup>xix</sup> Gordon E.W., Song L.D. (1994). Variations in the experience of resilience. In *Educational resilience in inner-city America: Challenges and prospects*. Erlbaum: Hillsdale, NJ: 1994. pp. 27-43.

<sup>xx</sup> Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets survey. The Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth & Families*.

<sup>xxi</sup> Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets: A profile of your youth. Alexandria City Public Schools*.

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE

## HAD AT LEAST ONE DRINK OF ALCOHOL ON AT LEAST ONE DAY (DURING THE 30 DAYS BEFORE THE SURVEY)



### Why is this important?

The consequences of substance abuse play out in both adolescence and adulthood, from injury, addiction and exposure to infections (like HIV) to long-term psychiatric disorders, habitual aggression and even death<sup>xxii</sup>.

### What does this graph show us?

This is self-reported data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered in 2011 to 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in Alexandria City Public Schools. The question asked if the student had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one day during the 30 days before taking the survey. In addition to overall figures, the data are divided by gender and race.

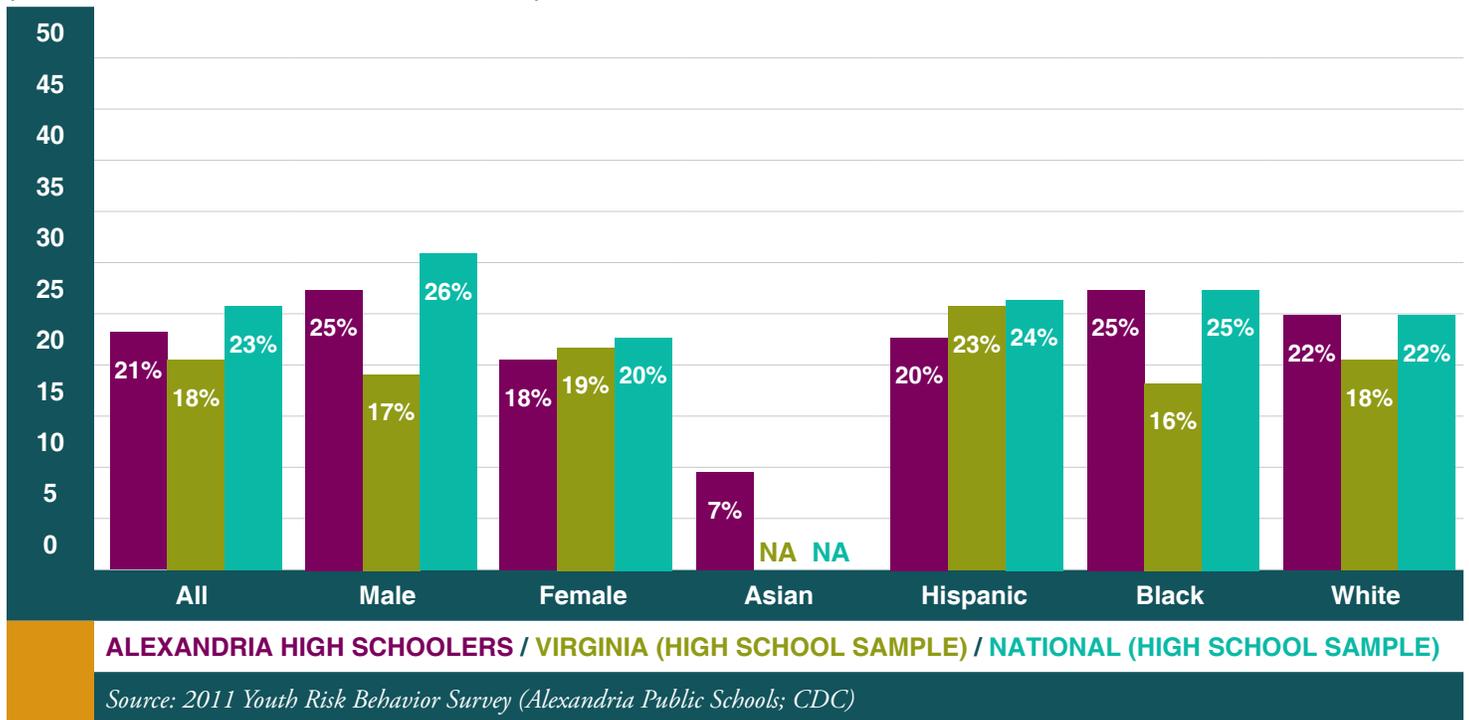
### How is Alexandria doing?

Lifetime and current alcohol use is lower among students in Alexandria when compared with the nation. However, 30 percent of all ACPS high school students had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one day in the prior month. The figures are highest for females and for white students<sup>xxiii</sup>.

<sup>xxii</sup> A framework for promoting mental health and reducing risk behavior in children and youth. *Journal of school health*, 70(5), 179-185.

<sup>xxiii</sup> CDC. (2011). *Alexandria 2011 Youth behavior risk survey*. Alexandria Public Schools.

**USED MARIJUANA ONE OR MORE TIMES  
(DURING THE 30 DAYS BEFORE THE SURVEY)**



**What does this graph show us?**

This is self-reported data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered in 2011 to 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in Alexandria City Public Schools. The question asked if the student had used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before taking the survey. In addition to overall figures, the data are divided by gender and race.

**How is Alexandria doing?**

Twenty-one percent of high school students report current use of marijuana. The rate in Alexandria is highest among male students and lowest among Asian students<sup>xxiv</sup>. However, the rate among the most recent cohort of high school students has remained consistent, with 33 percent reporting that they have tried marijuana. Although not shown above, it is also promising to note that the recent cohort of middle school students in Alexandria was less likely to report having used marijuana one or more times in their lifetime than was the cohort of middle school students surveyed in 2008.

<sup>xxiv</sup> CDC. (2011). Alexandria 2011 Youth behavior risk survey. Alexandria Public Schools.

# Socially & Civically Engaged & Empowered

Young people who are socially and civically connected are more likely than others to succeed in school and to stay emotionally and physically healthy. What's more, the benefits extend to adulthood: Connectedness provides the foundation for healthy relationships and social support for individuals, and builds a community of engaged and knowledgeable citizens.

## THESE KEY INDICATORS WERE EXAMINED TO HELP SEE HOW WELL ALEXANDRIA'S YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED:

- Juvenile Justice
- Youth Engagement

### Key Findings

The most serious crimes committed by youth (e.g., theft, assault) have decreased significantly (over 60 percent) in recent years, while status and lesser offenses (e.g., running away, trespassing) have risen by almost 40 percent.

Many Alexandria youth are engaged in community service opportunities, although at a slightly lower rate than in nearby communities. Close to half of surveyed students serve the community one or more hours per week. Students report steady involvement in service activities from middle to high school.

The percentage of Alexandria youth who participate in out-of-school activities is comparable to other communities in the region.

### Data Considerations

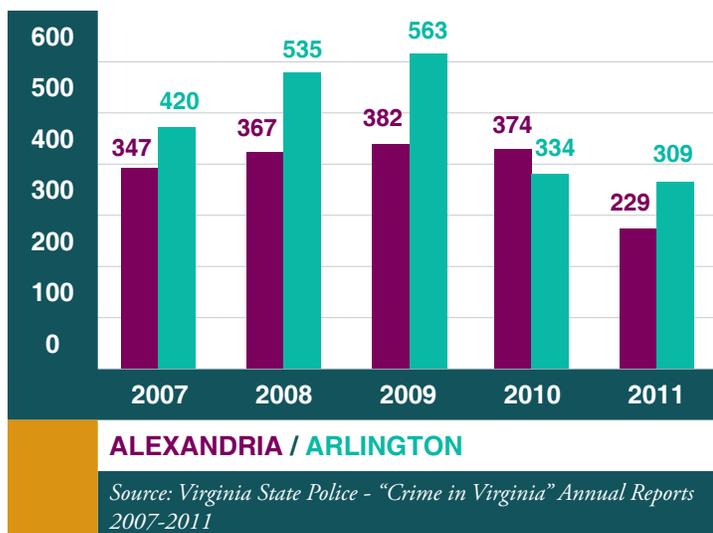
Developmental scientists characterize positive youth development by psychological, behavioral and social characteristics known as the "Five Cs." The "Cs" include competence, confidence, connection, character and caring/compassion. These are all correlated with well-being and resilience. Further understanding of the Five "Cs" in Alexandria's children and young people would help track their experience of engagement and empowerment.

Also, simple measures such as voting rates and civic participation in boards and commissions can provide insight into this outcome.

Finally, population-adjusted rates for juvenile crime statistics would provide a better understanding of the patterns in Alexandria and Arlington.

# JUVENILE JUSTICE

**GROUP A JUVENILE CRIME BY YEAR**



**GROUP B JUVENILE CRIME BY YEAR**



## Why is this important?

Both young people and their communities feel the consequences of crime. Offending young people suffer the potential loss of freedom and opportunities, as well as strains on school work and family life. The community suffers economic costs and a decline in the well-being and connectedness of its residents.

## What do these graphs show us?

In Virginia, the most serious offenses are designated as Group A, which includes arson, assault, homicide, kidnapping, forcible and non-forcible sex offenses, and weapon violations. Group B includes offenses such as writing bad checks, driving under the influence of alcohol, drunkenness, Peeping Tom offenses, running away from home and trespassing. These graphs use data on offenses in Alexandria and Arlington from 2007 to 2011.

Group B offenses have increased by 39.7 percent since 2007. Runaways account for the largest percentage in this category, with 263 reported in 2011. Arlington reported no runaways in this category, which is probably a function of different reporting requirements<sup>1</sup>.

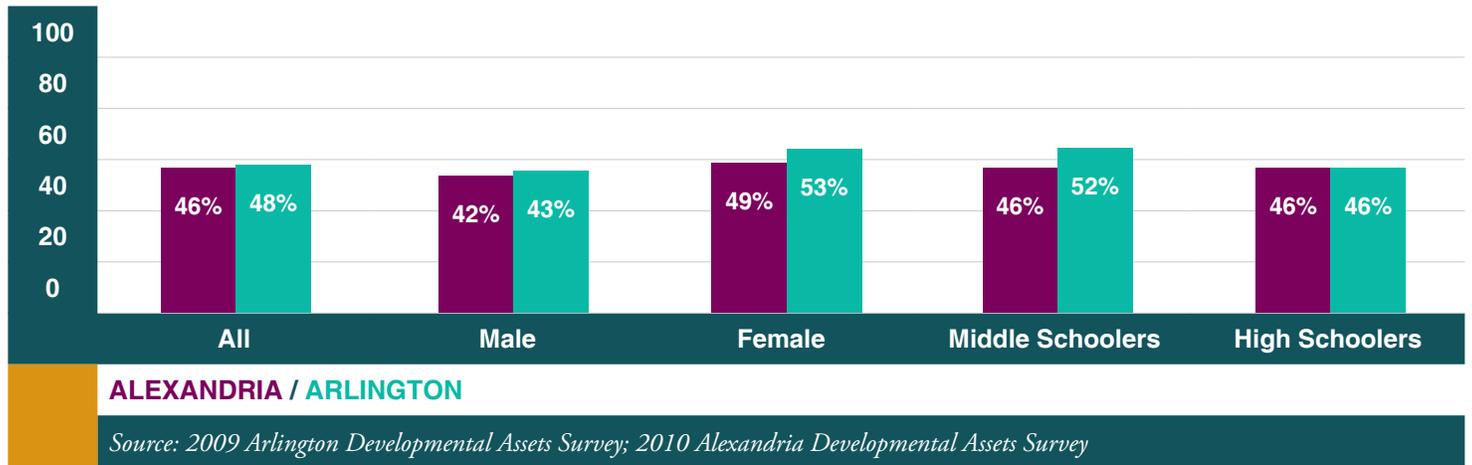
## How is Alexandria doing?

It is important to understand the limitations of crime statistics. Crime statistics are often better indicators of law enforcement response to crime and resident willingness to report crime than actual prevalence of crime. Furthermore, analysis of the comparative data above is limited as the population-adjusted rates are not available. That said, generally, the trend in reported juvenile crime in Alexandria has shown a decrease recently. Further consultation with the Alexandria Police Department is recommended to gain a valid understanding of the juvenile crime trends and the story behind them.

<sup>1</sup> Virginia State Police. (2011). Crime in Virginia. Department of State Police.

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

## SERVICE TO OTHERS: YOUNG PERSON SERVES IN THE COMMUNITY ONE HOUR OR MORE PER WEEK



### Why is this important?

Children and youth need meaningful opportunities for connection and leadership<sup>ii</sup>. Service and out-of-school time activities can be the perfect setting to gain these experiences and learn new skills. These opportunities can give young people the developmental boost they need to grow into responsible and engaged citizens.

### What does this graph show us?

These are results from one question in Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Survey, administered in 2009 in Arlington and 2010 in Alexandria. That difference in years for administration of the survey impedes comparisons between jurisdictions. The survey covered 6<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-graders.

### How is Alexandria doing?

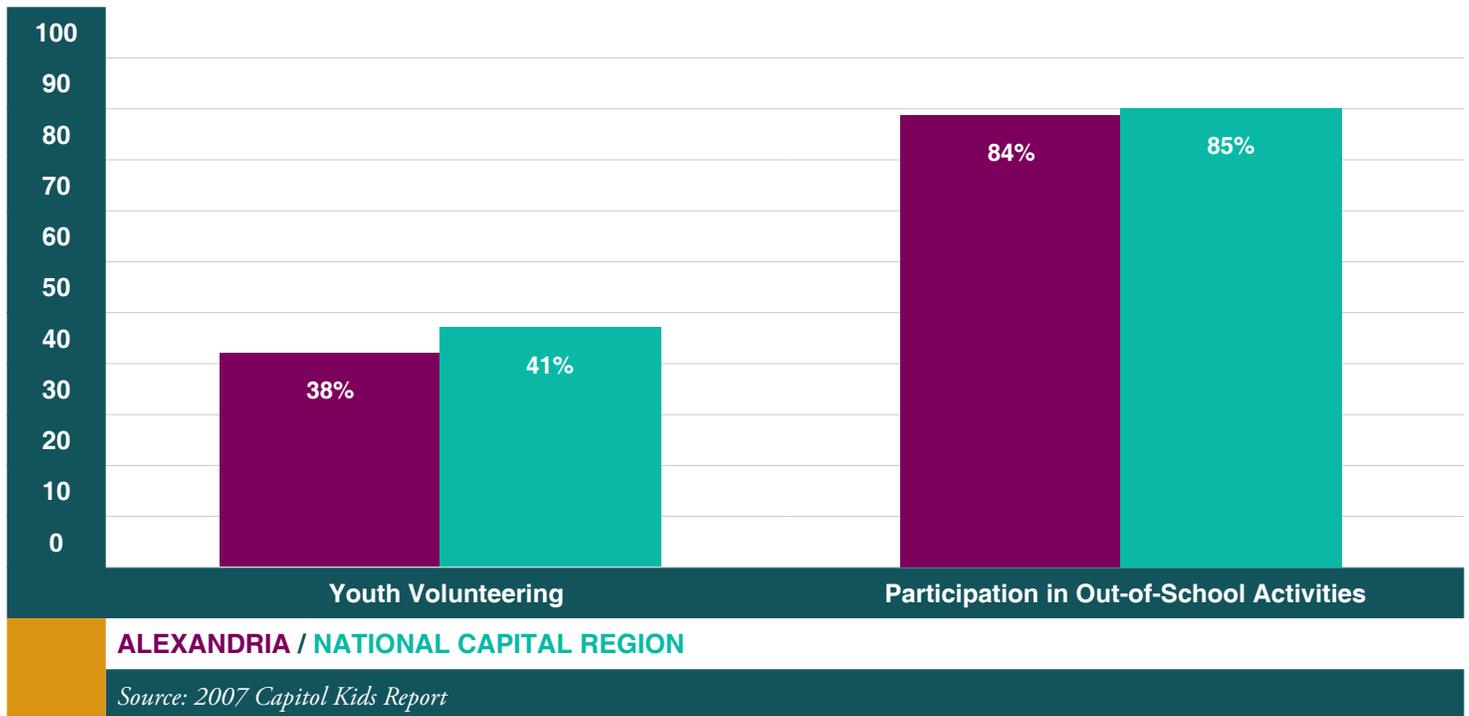
Close to half of the surveyed students served the community one or more hours per week, with a slightly greater percentage of girls doing so. ACPS students keep their service steady as they transition from middle school to high school<sup>iii,iv</sup>.

<sup>ii</sup> Eccles, J. S., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. National Academies Press.

<sup>iii</sup> Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets survey: The Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth & Families*.

<sup>iv</sup> Search Institute. (2012). *Developmental assets: A profile of your youth*. Alexandria City Public Schools.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



### What does this graph show us?

This graph, from the 2012 National Capital Kids Report, shows self-reported volunteerism (ages 12 to 17) and afterschool participation data (ages 6 to 17). The percentages were calculated by Child Trends, using the 2007 National Survey of Children's Health and the 2007 American Community Survey<sup>v</sup>.

### How is Alexandria doing?

The percentage of youth in Alexandria who participate in out-of-school activities is comparable to other communities in the region, while the percentage who report volunteering in the community is slightly lower than in other areas<sup>vi</sup>.

<sup>v</sup> Venture Philanthropy Partners. (2012). 2007 national capital kids report. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from <http://capitalkidsreport.org/opportunity-divide/>.

<sup>vi</sup> Venture Philanthropy Partners. (2012). 2007 national capital kids report. Retrieved on March 27, 2013, from <http://capitalkidsreport.org/opportunity-divide/>.



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