

Instructional Program or Service Name: Interagency Alternative School programs

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Program Overview

The Interagency Alternative School (IAS) programs are a group of small programs in the continuum of the Nontraditional School Programs in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). IAS programs provide staff, materials, and direction to nine types of programs at various locations in Fairfax County. Some of these programs are co-funded with other public agencies. This cooperative interagency effort meets the needs of the whole learner. Each school program is designed to meet the needs of a specific student population. IAS teachers are supervised by one administrator and three assistant administrators. They are also supported by a variety of resource staff members.

Students served in these programs have exhibited problems in the following areas: truancy, serious delinquency, poor school performance, substance abuse, criminal behavior, abuse and neglect, depression, anxiety, school refusal, conditional expulsion, and family dysfunction. Because of the IAS commitment to promising youth, IAS uses an open enrollment model and accepts both electively-placed students and students who have been referred by the Hearings Office, the School Board, or an individualized education program team following a discipline hearing due to serious violations of the code of conduct outlined in the Student Rights and Responsibilities booklet (Regulation 2601). Through the use of research-based teaching methods, data driven instruction, textbooks and materials, small class size, and informal, yet structured environments, these programs facilitate students' positive growth and development, both academically and socially. Special education services are provided on a monitor and consult basis. Classroom and testing accommodations are provided.

Types of Interagency Alternative School Programs

Each IAS program is designed to target specific student populations:

- The **GED® Readiness and New Technology Skills (GRANTS)** program provides an opportunity for eligible FCPS students, aged 16 years or older, to take the high school equivalency test at an earlier age and receive career education instruction. All students also learn skills that will improve their workplace behavior. This program is partially funded by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) as an Individual Student Alternative Education Plan program.
- The **Transition Support Resource Center (TSRC)** is a short-term intervention program, typically one semester to one year in length. Electively placed students who demonstrate success in this learning environment may remain enrolled through graduation. Electively placed students may also choose to return to their base school or transition to another nontraditional school program. Teachers at each site use a combination of small group instruction and online learning to provide access to content. The TSRC focus is to improve each student's academic performance and help with a successful re-entry into his or her next educational placement.

The TSRC located at the Historic Courthouse in Fairfax City exclusively serves students in grades 7-12 who have been referred by the Hearings Office, the School Board, or an individualized education program team following a discipline hearing due to serious violations of the code of conduct outlined in the Student Rights and Responsibilities booklet (Regulation 2601). These students have been deemed a safety and security risk to other students.

- The **Nontraditional Career Readiness Academies (NCRA)** partner with Career and Technical Education (CTE) to provide students with opportunities to explore their passions through career preparation programs. These programs are co-located at FCPS Academy sites. The NCRA program supports students by offering a smaller class size for core classes and a structured learning environment, while facilitating students' positive growth. The opportunity to participate in CTE programs provides a link to business and industry that starts the students down the path toward their career field of choice.
- **Agency-sponsored programs** are specifically designed to meet the needs of the student population of the host agency and enrollment is determined by the host agency. Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, United Methodist Family Services, the VDOE, and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, in partnership with IAS, provide comprehensive services to youth who require intensive assistance and often long-term interventions. Agency-sponsored programs include:
 - Fairfax County Adult Detention Center
 - Shelter Care
 - Stepping Stones and Foundations
 - Court schools
 - Independent Study Programs
 - Leland House

IAS Initiatives

IAS has developed a number of initiatives that promote academic achievement, development of essential life skills, and responsibility to community. These initiatives were developed independently by IAS staff members or in partnership with sponsoring agencies.

- **Kids at Hope:** IAS is supported by the Kids at Hope cultural framework which creates an environment where all students are capable of success, no exceptions! Students explore and develop a roadmap to experience success in life's four major destinations: Home and Family; Education and Career; Community and Service; and Hobbies and Recreation.
- **Creative Arts Contest:** This is an annual poetry, essay, and art contest co-sponsored by the Springfield Rotary Club and IAS. This event recognizes outstanding student poetry, essays, and artwork within IAS.
- **IAS Literacy Initiative:** As a collaborative team, IAS staff members aim to expand their knowledge and resources, promote their practice, and apply their findings to content literacy strategies to increase student engagement. Teachers model and provide students with an opportunity for daily reading and weekly discussions, based on

students' interests, in order to encourage reading and promote lifelong learners. Each site sets specific reading goals and reviews the progress quarterly.

- **Literary Magazine:** Developed and published by IAS students who are enrolled in a desktop publishing elective, the literary magazine showcases academic and creative accomplishments by compiling student writings and artwork from all IAS sites.
- **Virtual Writing Lab:** This virtual peer tutoring program partners “sister” sites so that students are able to provide feedback to each other on writing assignments from all curricular areas.
- **Career Discovery Fair:** IAS students visit Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) and participate in workshops held on campus, including an NVCC campus tour, College Success workshop, and Financial Aid workshop. Students are provided an opportunity to take their placement tests at the conclusion of the visit. The target audience is juniors and seniors, but all grade levels are invited.
- **Dream-Catchers:** This is a partnership between George Mason University and Nontraditional School Programs that targets capable at-risk students enrolled in alternative education programs. This unique program identifies and supports students whose life goals and postsecondary plans include attending and graduating from college.
- **Goal Setting:** As part of the positive behavior approach process, teachers participate in academic, behavior, and personal weekly goal setting with students as an initiative designed to model and practice goal setting behavior and to build relationships with students.
- **Responsibility to the Community and Individual Service-Learning Projects:** Teachers at all sites coordinate with students to determine one community service class project each quarter. Teachers and students collaborate to determine a community service project that is within the scope of the school program and the agency parameters. All IAS sites educate students to understand and model the important attributes of an ethical and global citizen. Students develop a plan with their teachers in which they participate in at least 12 hours (3 hours per quarter) worth of independent activities over the course of the school year that demonstrate that the student:
 - Contributes to solutions that benefit the broader community
 - Understands the foundations of our country and values our rights, privileges, and responsibilities
 - Demonstrates empathy, compassion, and respect for others
 - Promotes environmental stewardship
- **Education for Employment Job Fair:** Students have an opportunity to participate in two job fairs (one in the fall and one in the spring) to demonstrate mastery of career competencies by networking and interviewing with a variety of local employers at one time and place, in an effort to secure seasonal employment. Prior to the event, students build a resume as well as review and practice job interview skills. The Education for Employment teacher provides upper grade-level students classroom instruction to develop students' employment skills and coordinates with local businesses for internships and employment opportunities.

- **Restorative Justice Attendance/Community Circles:** IAS staff members function within the restorative justice framework, with many trained facilitators who lead community building circles to build relationships at the site. Data has shown that by building community buy in, attendance in school increases and discipline referrals decrease.

Details

During the 2019-20 school year, 715 students received instruction in Interagency Alternative School programs.

- Minority (non-white), 69 percent
- Eligible for special education services, 31 percent
- English Learners (1-4), 19 percent
- Male, 55 percent
- Over-age for grade level, 34 percent
- Graduates/Completers, 258

Locations:

Adult Detention Center
 Foundations
 GRANTS Central
 GRANTS South
 GRANTS West
 Gunston Alternative School
 Independent Study Program–Fairfax
 Independent Study Program–South
 Leland House
 NCRA Edison
 NCRA Falls Church
 Sager School
 Shelter Care
 Stepping Stones
 TSRC Alexandria
 TSRC Fairfax
 TSRC Graham Road
 TSRC Justice HS
 TSRC Marshall HS
 TSRC Robinson SS
 TSRC South County HS
 TSRC South Lakes HS
 TSRC Vienna
 TSRC West Potomac
 TSRC Westfield HS

Assessments

IAS adheres to the FCPS division-wide assessment schedule.

Approved Instructional Materials

IAS adheres to the FCPS Program of Studies using FCPS approved textbooks and ancillary materials for middle and high school students. In addition, IAS uses a VDOE approved digital curriculum.

Current and Future Areas of Focus

Current Focus

Process Goals:

Based on data from SY2019-20, IAS will focus on the following goals for SY2020-21:

- increasing graduation rate
- strengthening student engagement, hope, connectedness, and investment in school and local communities
- increasing family engagement, so that all families feel respected at IAS

During SY2020-21, the IAS instructional council will focus on authentic instruction to increase student success. The council will leverage the expertise of subject-matter experts to improve program-wide instructional capacity by developing a resource tool which will provide standards-based digital curriculum, blended lessons, and provide supplemental resource correlations for the most frequently taught four core courses (English, math, social studies, and science).

Teachers will build relationships and develop a tailored set of targeted strategies to motivate at-risk students to attend class and develop a plan that focuses not only on education and career, but also on the areas of home and family, hobbies and recreation, and community and service. IAS staff is committed to providing a welcoming environment and caring culture by increasing family engagement.

IAS curriculum resource teachers will provide targeted intervention and remediation in literacy and all content areas. The English for Speakers of Other Languages itinerant teachers will target English learners who have not previously passed the required reading and writing Standards of Learning tests needed to meet graduation requirements. Additionally, with support from the IAS school-based technology specialist, teachers will incorporate technology into lessons to promote creativity and student driven Project Based Learning. In addition, IAS teachers will participate in collaborative learning visits (CLV), in which teachers engage in peer observations and collaborative learning as part of their job-embedded professional development.

Outcome Goals:

Outcome Goal 1: During the 2020-21 school year, at least 85 percent of IAS students who are eligible will graduate by August 2021, increasing the graduation rate by two percentage points.

Outcome Goal 2: During the 2020-21 school year, all students who attend IAS for at least one quarter will mark a 4 or 5 (agree or strongly agree) on three out of four Kids at Hope focus indicators as measured by the student's most recent survey. If initial survey indicators are marked as a score of 4 or 5, the student will maintain that score. The scale will be on a 1-5 scale: strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, strongly agree.

Outcome Goal 3: During the 2020-21 school year, all parents who complete an initial and post IAS Family Engagement Survey and do not initially indicate a 4 or 5 (agree or strongly agree) will strengthen their opinions of their family's school experiences on the post survey in five out of ten questions in the following survey categories: Welcoming Environment, Communication, Student Success, Advocacy, and Family and School Partnerships. If initial survey indicators are marked as a score of 4 or 5, the parent will maintain that viewpoint. The scale will be on a 1-5 scale: strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, strongly agree.

Future Focus

IAS believes that a student-centered environment that is focused on hope is fundamental to academic success in all areas as well as post-secondary success. Therefore, IAS will continue to focus on improving student relationships through culturally responsive teaching and an equity lens.

The over-arching goal of IAS is to graduate students on time; therefore, grade level promotion is essential. In order to achieve grade level promotion, IAS will continue to monitor credit acquisition and refine the responsive instruction process so that staff members can intervene effectively with struggling students. IAS will also expand industry credential opportunities so that the IAS students achieve this industry credential at a 100 percent rate.

IAS also believes wholeheartedly in high quality instruction; therefore, IAS staff members will continue to assess and analyze attendance rates, refine strategies for attendance intervention, and develop capacity to provide continued incentives for students to attend class.

IAS believes in developing a sense of civic responsibility in students and will continue to expand the service-learning programming and provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop a responsibility to the community.

Finally, IAS believes in high quality professional development. IAS teachers will continue to participate in professional development opportunities in the following:

- effective use of Education Decision Support Library (EDSL) and eCART to target student learning
- development of instructional strategies to engage all students
- in-depth discussions around Portrait of a Graduate and how IAS embeds those tenets into instructional practices across the curriculum
- ongoing use of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- coaching conversations with teachers, which will include specific feedback, to expand their capacity as instructors
- peer observations through CLV
- opportunities to collaborate around the design of innovative lessons infused with technology and critical/creative thinking strategies

- restorative justice practices and training to increase the number of teachers who are able to implement community circles at their site with the hope of building a stronger sense of community and improve student attendance

Data Narrative

Outcome Goal 1: During the 2019-20 school year, at least 83 percent of IAS students who are eligible will graduate by August 2020, increasing the graduation rate by ten percent.

Outcome: This goal was met. At the conclusion of August 2020, 83 percent of seniors completed and/or graduated.

Outcome Goal 2: During the 2019-20 school year, all students who attend IAS for at least one quarter and do not initially mark a 4 or 5 (agree or strongly agree) will reach a 4 or 5 in three out of four Kids at Hope focus indicators as measured by the student engagement survey. If initial survey indicators are marked as a score of 4 or 5, the student will maintain that score. The scale will be on a 1-5 scale: strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, strongly agree.

Outcome: *Due to the Covid-19 impact on SY2019-20, this outcome goal has been adjusted to measure data through the end of the first semester.* This goal was not met. At the conclusion of the SY2019-20, 293 students had taken the entry and exit survey. Eighty-three percent of those students met the goal.

Outcome Goal 3: During the 2019-20 school year, all parents who complete an initial and post IAS Family Engagement Survey and do not initially indicate a 4 or 5 (agree or strongly agree) will strengthen their opinions of their family's school experiences on the post survey in five out of ten questions in the following survey categories: Welcoming Environment, Communication, Student Success, Advocacy, and Family and School Partnerships. If initial survey indicators are marked as a score of 4 or 5, the parent will maintain that viewpoint. The scale will be on a 1-5 scale: strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, strongly agree.

Outcome: *Due to the Covid-19 impact on SY2019-20, this outcome goal has been adjusted to measure data through the end of the first semester.* This goal was not met. By the end of the first semester, 294 parent entry surveys were administered and only 14 exit surveys were completed. Seventy-one percent of parent results met the goal of either improvement or preservation of original scores showing agreement with the engagement statements. For all entries that did not meet the goal, except for one, a score of a 4 or 5 was selected in at least seven categories in their post-survey responses. One parent went from a belief of strongly disagree to strongly agree in all engagement identifiers