

## Interagency Alternative School programs

### 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 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 four 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. IAS is committed to promising youth, using an open enrollment model and accepts both electively placed students and students who have been referred by the Hearings Office, the Fairfax County 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, 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 **Montrose Alternative Learning Center (ALC)** serves students in grades 7 and 8. ALCs provide educational services for students who are experiencing behavioral challenges, are experiencing academic difficulties, need a nontraditional learning environment, or are involved in serious disciplinary incidents.
- The **Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP)** 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

programs located at Bryant High School and the Graham Road Community Building also serve students in grades 7-12 who have been referred by the Hearings Office, the School Board, or an individualized education plan team following a discipline hearing due to violations to the code of conduct outlined in the Student Rights and Responsibilities booklet (Regulation 2601)

- 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 Virginia Department of Education, the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, 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
  - 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.

- **At Hope:** IAS is supported by a cultural framework which creates an environment where all students are capable of success, no exceptions! Rather than label students "at risk," students are "at hope." IAS recognizes the importance of positive labels, positive relationships, and a growth mindset supported by this philosophy.
- **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 and Phoenix Scrolls:** 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. The Phoenix Scrolls is a quarterly electronic newsletter that highlights student work throughout the school year.
- **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 an FCPS Nontraditional School program. 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 (three 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 2022-2023 SY, the Interagency Alternative School programs (IAS), served 541 students:

- Minority 78% (625/798)
- Eligible for Special Education Services, 27% (212/798)
- English Language Learners, 25% (203/798)
- Male, 53% (427/798)
- Over-age for grade level, 27% (218/798)
- Graduates/Completers, 117 (includes concurrent students)

**Current and Future Areas of Focus**

IAS will continue to focus on graduation and ensuring that students are making sufficient progress in reading, writing, and mathematics. We will continue to teach executive functioning skills and focus on improvements in baseline wellness and school attendance. We believe that every student has strengths that need to be fostered.

IAS

<p><i>Goal 1:</i></p> <p><i>By the end of the 2023-2024 school year at least 86% of students, who are eligible, will graduate, increasing our graduation rate by 4%</i></p>
<p><i>Goal 2:</i></p> <p><i>By the end of the 2023-24 school year, Honors EPF curriculum will be offered at all IAS sites.</i></p>
<p><i>Goal 3:</i></p> <p><i>By the end of the 2023-24 school year, IAS will reduce our school’s chronic absenteeism rate to below 25% as evidenced by our school chronic absenteeism data.</i></p>

Montrose

<p><i>Goal 1:</i></p> <p><i>By the end of the 2023-2024 school year each student will make progress on their initial and final math inventory assessment.</i></p>
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## **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 overarching 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 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 2022-2023 Goals**

**Outcome Goal 1:** During the 2022-23 School Year in IAS, at least 90% of students who are eligible, will graduate by August 2023, increasing our graduation rate by 2%.

**Outcome:** This goal was not met. By the end of August, 2023, 82% of Seniors met their graduation requirements.

**Outcome Goal 2:** During the 2022-2023 school year, Algebra 1 and Geometry CT teams create and administer a pre and post common assessment once per quarter to 100% of the students enrolled in that course. Each quarter assessment will be made up of the most significant essential skills for that quarter as determined by the CT teams. Content teams will use the data to collaborate for the implementation of innovative interventions. 100% of IAS students requiring a verified credit in math will achieve their goal.

**Outcome:** This goal was not met. While the Algebra 1 and Geometry CT teams created and administered pre and post common assessments per quarter, not all students earned their verified credit.

**Outcome Goal 3:** By the end of 2022-23 school year, IAS English teachers will administer pre- and post- common assessments for reading and writing to all students for each quarter. The purpose of these assessments is to measure student growth and differentiate instruction, as well as to support data-dialogues around proficiency, enrichment, and remediation. 100% of IAS students will make progress to reading on grade level and eligible students will earn the verified credit in ELA Reading and Writing.

**Outcome:** This goal was not met. While English teachers administered pre and post common assessments for reading and writing, not all students earned the verified credit in ELA Reading and Writing.