



Progress
Report
November 2023

Nov. 30, 2023

The Honorable Janet D. Howell

Co-Chairperson, Senate Finance
and Appropriations Committee
Virginia General Assembly
Pocahontas Building - Room E509
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable George L. Barker

Co-Chairperson, Senate Finance
and Appropriations Committee
Virginia General Assembly
Pocahontas Building - Room E513
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Barry D. Knight

Chairperson, House
Appropriations Committee
Virginia General Assembly
Pocahontas Building - Room W1312
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Madam and Sirs:

Chesterfield County Public Schools respectfully submits
this progress report pursuant to:

*Out of this appropriation, \$864,000 the first year and \$500,000
the second year from the general fund is provided to Chesterfield
County Public Schools to assist with establishing a recovery
high school as a year-round school with enrollment open to any
high school student residing in Superintendent's Region 1 who
is in the early stages of recovery from substance use disorder
or dependency. Students in the high school shall be provided
academic, emotional, and social support needed to progress
toward earning a high school diploma and reintegrating into a
traditional high school setting. Chesterfield County Public Schools
shall submit a report regarding the planning, implementation,
and outcomes of the recovery high school to the Chairs of the
House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and
Appropriations Committee by December 1 each year.*

This correspondence is the fulfillment of that request.
Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions
or require additional information.

Respectfully,

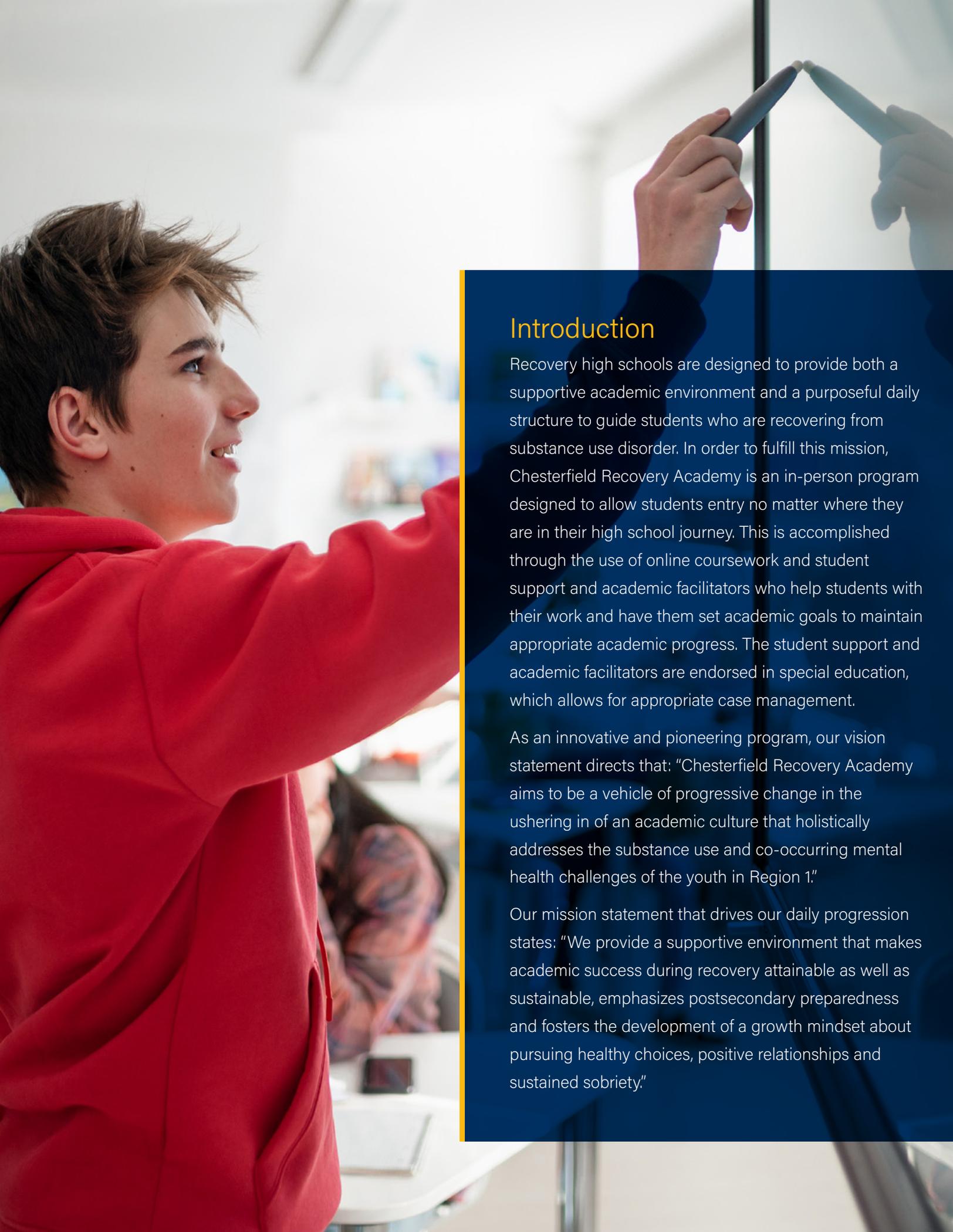


Dr. Mervin B. Daugherty
Superintendent
Chesterfield County Public Schools



Justin Savoy
Coordinator
Chesterfield Recovery Academy





Introduction

Recovery high schools are designed to provide both a supportive academic environment and a purposeful daily structure to guide students who are recovering from substance use disorder. In order to fulfill this mission, Chesterfield Recovery Academy is an in-person program designed to allow students entry no matter where they are in their high school journey. This is accomplished through the use of online coursework and student support and academic facilitators who help students with their work and have them set academic goals to maintain appropriate academic progress. The student support and academic facilitators are endorsed in special education, which allows for appropriate case management.

As an innovative and pioneering program, our vision statement directs that: "Chesterfield Recovery Academy aims to be a vehicle of progressive change in the ushering in of an academic culture that holistically addresses the substance use and co-occurring mental health challenges of the youth in Region 1."

Our mission statement that drives our daily progression states: "We provide a supportive environment that makes academic success during recovery attainable as well as sustainable, emphasizes postsecondary preparedness and fosters the development of a growth mindset about pursuing healthy choices, positive relationships and sustained sobriety."

Program Startup



Chesterfield Recovery Academy formally opened on Aug. 2, 2022, with a staff of two: a coordinator and an office manager. A student support and academic facilitator joined the staff at the end of August, which allowed the first students to begin on Sept. 8, 2022. Immediately, the coordinator began contacting schools in Region 1 through mailings, emails, virtual meetings, phone calls and in-person meetings, and by Nov. 10, 2022, enrollment had grown to 10 students. This outreach continues in order to boost awareness of the program and help schools be mindful of identifying students who would benefit from enrollment at Chesterfield Recovery Academy.

Screening and Enrollment

To be eligible for enrollment in Chesterfield Recovery Academy, the student must:

- abstain from drugs and alcohol for at least 20-30 days;
- be enrolled in a school within Region 1
- be participating or receiving some form of substance abuse treatment (outpatient /inpatient therapy, residential, etc.).

To be considered for enrollment, a referral form must be completed. This leads to an interview with the student and their family, followed by a clinical assessment to determine eligibility and willingness to commit to sobriety and the program.

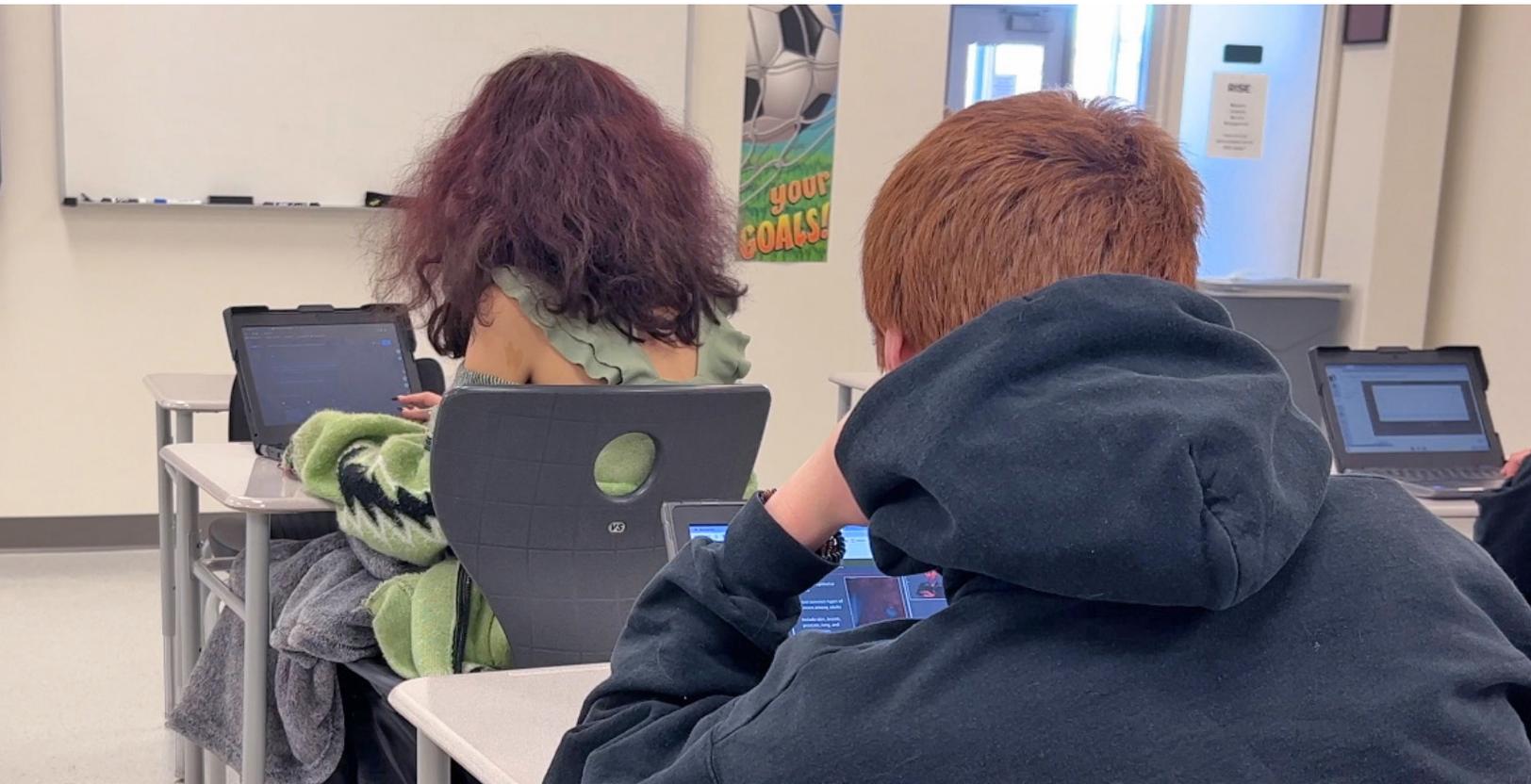
When accepted into the program, student academic records are requested from their home school and information is requested from their mental health or substance abuse providers. Staff works with the family and the transportation department to determine how the student will be transported to the program. Once this information is received, the student's academic standing is evaluated, and courses are scheduled through CCPSONline/PACE based on their needed requirements for graduation. The process from referral to full enrollment can take up to five business days.



How the Program Works

While participating in the program, Chesterfield Recovery Academy students have a scheduled routine of academic time and therapeutic sessions. Students are supported with scheduled group and individual therapy sessions on weekdays while participating in the program. Clinicians are on-site every day to provide this service to students.

Daily activities are based on students' scholastic and sobriety needs. To include community reintegration, our program provides students opportunities for engaging activities outside of the school that support their journeys while exposing them to community organizations. This instills a sense of community and a knowledge of growing resources from the local to state level.



Program Costs

The greatest program costs are related to personnel. Chesterfield County Public Schools funds the coordinator, student support and academic facilitators and office manager positions through state-appropriated funds. Currently, the senior clinician and the two additional clinicians are funded through grants provided by the Community Services Board.

A second key area of cost for the program is transportation. Students who are already enrolled in Chesterfield County Public Schools travel via existing routes. Students from elsewhere in the region are transported via CCPS transportation or parent transport. CCPS is fortunate to have a transportation department that is able to navigate the various options at a reasonable cost to the program and a foundation, the Chesterfield Education Foundation, that is also able to support students as needed.

Community Support

Chesterfield Recovery Academy continues to benefit from strong community support through donations and volunteers.

A few examples:

Principal Roger Oser of William J. Ostiguy High School,

a member of the Association of Recovery Schools, provided technical assistance as the program was being organized. Thanks to facilitation and funding through the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, he provided key information about organizing a recovery high school.

VCU Rams in Recovery helped educate students about healthy choices on the road to sobriety, community support networks and postsecondary support provided for students in recovery who attend VCU. Additionally, the organization provided training to staff on being recovery allies.

The Boys to Men provides a weekly inclusive therapy group that focuses on building confidence, recognizing accountability and understanding short- and long-term effects of maintaining sobriety.

Healing Sounds is a partner that conducts music therapy in group sessions. Twice each month, the music therapist conducts musical interventions geared toward accomplishing nonmusical goals (reduction of usage, full sobriety and healthy expression of emotions).

The 2 End The Stigma Foundation made a monetary donation to help create a mindfulness corner to give students a safe space for personal time and artistic expression.

The JHW Foundation supported the program by providing students an array of seating options for the classroom and the mindfulness corner. During group sessions, students use these accommodations that are designed to facilitate ease in participation and being open with struggles.

Year 2 Update

Enrollment

On Aug. 22, 2023, Chesterfield Recovery Academy began its second year of operation with an enrollment of 14 students in grades 9-12 from Chesterfield and Henrico counties.

Student Demographics



The staff continues with outreach to all Region 1 school divisions regarding enrollment processes.





Facility Update

Chesterfield County Public Schools has continued to improve facility space by adding a work area and additional offices next to the original facility footprint.

These new spaces better accommodate clinicians' work with students and include access to a larger room for group therapy, art therapy and drama therapy. In the future, program administrators would like to further expand facilities to include a sensory room and an exercise room to support general physical activity as well as physical activity requirements for health and physical education classes.

Academic Update

Chesterfield Recovery Academy began the 2023-24 school year with 14 students with a range of academic needs. Chesterfield Recovery Academy is able to meet these needs whether a student is looking to enroll in advanced coursework or is seeking to recover content/credits. The program's academic team is thrilled that at least eight students will graduate with a standard or advanced high school diploma by the end of the current school year.

Since June 28, 2023, Chesterfield Recovery Academy has expanded the academic team by hiring a full-time special education instructional assistant. Now with three highly skilled individuals on the academic team, Chesterfield Recovery Academy is more readily able to facilitate daily individualized academic supervision and content assistance for all students. The expansion also allows for more focus on individual needs including end-of-course test preparedness. As we near the end of the first 12 weeks of the 2023-24 school year, our staff is preparing to administer Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress Growth (NWEA MAP) assessments to all students as well as the first Standards of Learning assessments of the year.



In September 2023, Chesterfield Recovery Academy gained full recognition by the College Board as a Level Two organization, which allows program staff to administer the PSAT and SAT on-site. Staff administered the PSAT to eligible students on Oct. 24, 2023, and will administer the SAT to eligible students in the spring. Providing these assessments to students on-site at Chesterfield Recovery Academy enables students in recovery to test where they feel emotionally comfortable and safe.

Chesterfield Recovery Academy's lead academic facilitator received divisionwide recognition in October 2023 by receiving the Superintendent's Game Changer Award for her work over the course of the program's first year as "the ultimate Game Changer. She crafted educational plans for two students with insurmountable challenges and tirelessly helped them achieve their goals. She shepherded three seniors to graduate, as well as another junior who finished one year early with her guidance."

The academic team at Chesterfield Recovery Academy works diligently every day to help each student reach their full potential along the often emotional and unknown road of recovery.

Clinical Update

Two new positions have expanded the therapeutic services offered within the program. One of these positions is a clinician focused on counseling and art therapy. The second is a peer navigator brought onboard as part of a partnership with Recovery Corps, an AmeriCorps-affiliated program that offers peer support to expand capacity around substance-use disorder recovery efforts. Currently, program administrators are seeking to add a certified peer recovery specialist to the team.

The clinical team continues to build the routine of providing support through individual and daily group counseling. Returning students continue to participate in these services to support their recovery, while new participants experience firsthand the benefits of having these consistent, daily services in place. This quarter, the team is proud to share that no students have been referred to a higher level of care such as inpatient or residential treatment.

In the effort to increase the offering of services and community support, the clinical team has entered into new partnerships.

- VCU Rams in Recovery has agreed to conduct a weekly therapy group on-site at Chesterfield Recovery Academy. The group will be modeled after the Virginia Collegiate Recovery Scholars Program and adapted for high school students. These peer-led processing groups will help students continue to build their recovery identity by hearing college students tell their stories, practicing alternative coping skills and implementing a multiple-pathway approach that recognizes each person's unique needs and experiences.
- The Chesterfield Peer Recovery Outreach Team will provide additional peer support with a focus on transition-age youth and family support in both individual and group formats.

The Chesterfield Recovery Academy clinical team is excited for continued growth during the 2023-24 school year and the broader structures being developed to support adolescent recovery in Region 1.



Successes and Recognition

Since the spring update, Chesterfield Recovery Academy has been recognized on many fronts and platforms:

- ❑ Presented during a [White House summit for youth in recovery](#) in September 2023. Chesterfield Recovery Academy was the only program in the country to provide student participants.
- ❑ Won the Best Large County Achievement Award in 2023 from the Virginia Association of Counties.
- ❑ Won a 2022 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.
- ❑ [Featured in Showcases for Success](#) by the Virginia School Boards Association.
- ❑ Attracted news coverage: [60 Scripps TV stations including WTVR-Channel 6](#), [Richmond Family Magazine](#) and [RVA Parenting on Channel 12](#).



Conclusion

As the first recovery high school in Virginia, our staff is committed to creating hope and opportunity for students who need it most. Facilitating recovery through a structured environment and a network of support is our daily focus; ensuring the continued sobriety and success of the student population in Region 1 is the main priority. Understanding the substance-use crisis that plagues our community, educating diverse populations about substance-use disorder and creating resourceful partnerships focused on curtailing and eventually stopping the problem are the aims of this program. We continue working toward student representation from each district in Region 1 and setting a standard for the program to be replicated throughout the state.



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