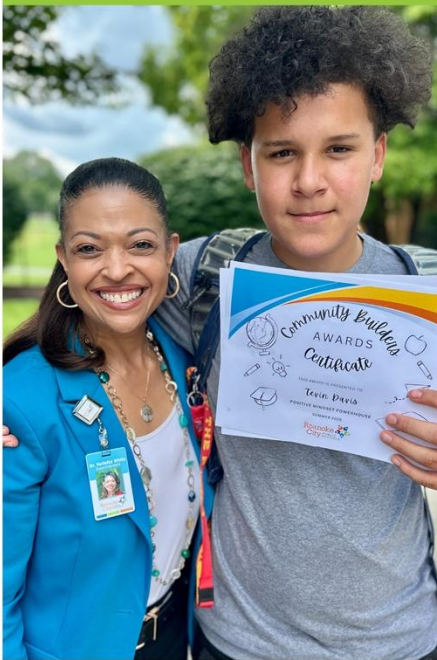


Roanoke City Public Schools

NOV. 1, 2025

COMMUNITY BUILDERS PILOT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT



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Roanoke, VA 24011
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Overview and Authority

The 2024 Virginia Assembly amended a section in the Code of Virginia numbered [22.1-211.1](#) to establish the Community Builders Pilot Program, supporting [HB626 and SB484](#). The purpose of this program is to reduce youth involvement in behaviors that lead to gun violence and increase community engagement among public school students enrolled in Roanoke City Public Schools (RCPS) and Petersburg City Public Schools.

The legislation provides for the following:

This program will provide opportunities during the school year, after regular school hours, and during summer months for community engagement, workforce development (including career and technical education exploration and soft-skill development), postsecondary education exploration, and social-emotional education and development (including instruction on the role and importance of restorative justice in the community). The Community Builders Pilot Program shall be offered during the school year after regular school hours and for one summer session. Up to 100 students can be served during each session.

The Community Builders Program will be administered by Roanoke City and Petersburg City school boards, and the school boards may collaborate with other entities as appropriate. Program administration includes establishing referral and application processes; students who are entering 8th grade can apply or be referred for program participation. In addition, the school divisions must develop an application and hiring process for program staff, including a program coordinator. A program curriculum and itinerary for the after-school hours sessions and the summer session must be developed and implemented. Each school division was allocated funding based on student enrollment; funding for 2025-2026 will be based on this year's average daily membership.

Lastly, data must be collected and reported to the Governor, the Senate Committee on Education and Health, and the House Committee on Education by Nov. 1 of each year on the progress of the program, including the number of students participating in the program as a whole and by session (after-school and summer), and the number of students participating in the program who are enrolled in the aforementioned school divisions. The report should also include data relating to the progress of participating students, including a comparison of pre-participation and post-participation absenteeism rates, disciplinary incidents, and academic performance. The number and rate of reported incidents of gun violence involving program participants should be included in the report, in addition to the reported incidents of gun violence in the City of Roanoke as a whole and the City of Petersburg as a whole, in comparison to previous years.

Executive Summary

As directed through the amended Code of Virginia section [22.1-211.1](#) in 2024, RCPS has established and is currently implementing the Community Builders Pilot Program in an effort to reduce youth involvement in behaviors that lead to gun violence and increase community engagement among public school students in our city.

RCPS has received two funding allocations totaling \$604,469.60 to support programming, services, and resources during the two-year pilot program, beginning in the summer of 2024 and concluding in the summer of 2026. Funding has supported staffing, supplemental pay, enrichment activities, instructional materials, and community events, enabling mentorship, hands-on learning, and structured support. RCPS continues to implement targeted supports for rising 9th graders, including mentoring, counseling, peer support groups, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programming, and safe spaces.

The RCPS Community Builders Pilot Program is guided by a set of eight SMART goals that direct implementation and target key student outcomes, including reductions in chronic absenteeism, out-of-school suspensions, failing grades, and the reduction of juvenile gun violence. This Nov. 1, 2025, report includes comprehensive data and information regarding the school division's experience with the pilot program, with the following serving as key takeaways for division leaders and policymakers at all levels:

- **Signs of Positive Impact:** Data available as of Nov. 1, 2025, indicate improvements in the areas of chronic absenteeism, out-of-school suspensions, and academic performance, as well as a significant decrease in juvenile-involved gun violence as compared to the 2023-24 school year, prior to the implementation of the pilot program. While it is difficult to confidently identify the Community Builders program as the cause of these improvements, RCPS is encouraged by this data as a sign of success.
- **VDOE Support for Implementation:** Participation as a member of the Community Schools cohort, guided by the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Office of Behavioral Health and Student Safety, has been valuable to the RCPS team by providing a collaborative learning community that allows space for feedback and support.
- **Commitment to the Process:** Moving forward, through the remainder of the pilot program, RCPS will continue the process of planning, implementation, data collection, and reflection, and adjusting as appropriate in an effort to meet the established goals.

Upon completion of the pilot program, RCPS will provide a final report that includes detailed program information as well as a set of recommendations for consideration by legislators and policymakers.

Financial Data Analysis

Year 1 Budget: 2024-2025

Award amount (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025): **\$379,259.60**

- Total grant funds spent: **\$303,533.94** (snapshot as of Sept. 15, 2025)
- Total unspent: **\$75,725.66** (snapshot as of Sept. 15, 2025)

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS	OBJECT CODE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND TOTAL AMOUNT
Personal Services	1000	\$131,525.00 <i>Supplemental pay for school-based program coordinators and staff</i>
Employee Benefits	2000	\$10,151.35 <i>Benefits for program staff</i>
Purchased Services	3000	\$146,876.79 <i>Purchased services including transportation for field trips related to college/career exploration, community engagement, and related activities.</i>
		<i>Purchased/contracted services with community partners related to student growth, mental/behavioral health, and engagement in positive self-development activities.</i>
Other Charges	5000	\$19.92 <i>Internal services such as printing of program materials and other materials needed for students.</i>
Materials/Supplies	6000	\$14,961.88 <i>Instructional materials and program supplies</i>
TOTAL		\$303,534.94

Year 1 Budget: 2024-25 to 2025-26 Carryover

Remaining Award Amount as of Sept. 15, 2025: **\$75,724.66**

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS	OBJECT CODE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND TOTAL AMOUNT
Personal Services	1000	\$15,715.00 <i>Supplemental pay for school-based program coordinators and staff</i>
Employee Benefits	2000	\$1,112.51 <i>Benefits for program staff</i>
Purchased Services	3000	\$26,831.21 <i>Purchased services including transportation for field trips related to college/career exploration, community engagement, and related activities.</i> <i>Purchased/contracted services with community partners related to student growth, mental/behavioral health, and engagement in positive self-development activities.</i>
Other Charges	5000	\$980.08 <i>Internal services such as printing of program materials and other materials needed for students.</i>
Materials/Supplies	6000	\$31,085.86 <i>Instructional materials and program supplies</i>
TOTAL		\$75,724.66

Year 2 Budget: 2025-2026

Year 2 Award amount (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026): **\$225,210.00**

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS	OBJECT CODE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND TOTAL AMOUNT
Personal Services	1000	\$130,600.00 <i>Supplemental pay for school-based program coordinators and staff</i>
Employee Benefits	2000	\$9,990.90 <i>Benefits for program staff</i>
Purchased Services	3000	\$71,821.40 <i>Purchased services including transportation for field trips related to college/career exploration, community engagement, and related activities.</i>
		<i>Purchased/contracted services with community partners related to student growth, mental/behavioral health, and engagement in positive self-development activities.</i>
Other Charges	5000	\$1,500.00 <i>Internal services such as printing of program materials and other materials needed for students.</i>
Materials/Supplies	6000	\$11,297.70 <i>Instructional materials and program supplies</i>
TOTAL		\$225,210.00

SMART Goals

SMART Goal #1

By July 1, 2026, Roanoke City Public Schools (RCPS) will design, implement, and evaluate a “Community Builders” pilot program that provides opportunities for students related to community engagement, workforce development, postsecondary education exploration, and social-emotional education and development. The pilot will consist of programming that occurs during the school year, after regular school hours, and during the summer months, beginning in the summer of 2024 and continuing through June of 2026:

This goal remains in progress, with completion deferred until July 1, 2026. Evidence of being on track includes:

- Program design completion in 2024
- Successful implementation of summer 2024 programming
- Successful continuation of programming during the 2024-25 school year
- Successful implementation of summer 2025 programming
- Current programming during 2025-26 school year
- Engagement with critical partners throughout the duration of the pilot, including the Roanoke City School Board, Roanoke City Council, the Roanoke Gun Violence Prevention Commission, the VDOE, the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA), elected officials, more than 25 local agencies, offices, organizations, businesses, colleges, and universities.

Supplemental pay ensured that school-based program coordinators and staff were available to facilitate Community Builders activities during the school year and summer. This funding allowed for consistent student engagement, mentorship, and program oversight, ensuring a structured and supportive environment for participants.

Purchased services funding supported key enrichment opportunities, including transportation for field trips focused on college and career exploration, community service, and leadership development. Additionally, partnerships with community organizations provide students with access to mental and behavioral health resources, personal development workshops, and skill-building activities.

Internal services, such as the printing of program materials, supported outreach and engagement efforts by ensuring students, families, and staff had access to necessary information and resources related to the program.

Instructional materials and program supplies were purchased to enhance student learning and engagement in Community Builders activities. These resources helped facilitate hands-on

learning experiences, creative projects, and discussion-based workshops.

Through this funding, the Community Builders pilot program was able to create meaningful opportunities for students, strengthening their academic, social-emotional, and career readiness skills while fostering connections between schools, families, and the broader community.

Current Data:

- **Number of participants in Summer 2024 program (*Original Cohort*): 55**
- **Number of participants in SY24-25 Afterschool Programming:** 112 students (this includes 88 students with available data points for both the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school year)
- **Number of participants in Summer 2025 program:** 99
 - A total of 99 students participated in the Community Builders program during the reporting summer 2025 period.
 - Of these, 40 students (40%) were classified as Active Participants, meaning they attended 50% or more of sessions (defined as at least 8 out of 16 dates).
 - Emerging Participants made up 25 students (25%), reflecting those with 25-49% attendance.
 - An additional 34 students (34%) were categorized as Minimal Engagement, having attended less than 25% of the dates.
- **Current number of participants in SY 25-26 Afterschool Programming as of Oct. 15, 2025:** 92

This report provides a snapshot of student enrollment and fund spend-down. Figures are subject to change as new students are added or removed and as financial withdrawals are processed.

SMART Goal #2

By July 1, 2024, principals of the division's five middle schools will identify students to be prioritized for participation in the Community Builders pilot program. This list of students will be submitted to the RCPS Community Builders program coordinator.

This goal was met, as evidenced by the list of students identified by principals as priority participants and by the launch of the summer 2024 Community Builders pilot program, which included 55 students representing all five of the division's middle schools. RCPS will carry this goal forward with schools enrolling students in the program throughout the 2025-26 school year.

The original Community Builders cohort, which emerged from the priority participant list,

included students with a range of backgrounds, school experiences, neighborhoods, strengths, and needs. The following list of characteristics of the original cohort illustrates the group's diversity and range of school experiences and needs:

- 31% identified as female
- 69% identified as male
- 44% had 30 or more absences over the previous two years combined
- 17% had fewer than 10 absences over the previous two years combined
- 47% failed all Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in all content areas for the previous three years
- 15% passed all SOL tests in all content areas for the previous three years
- 18% had 15 or more discipline incidents reported over the previous two years combined
- 51% had fewer than 5 discipline incidents reported over the previous two years

SMART Goal #3

RCPS will submit a Community Builders progress report to the Virginia Department of Education by each of the following dates:

- **November 1, 2024, March 1, 2025, July 1, 2025, November 1, 2025, March 1, 2026, July 1, 2026**

Each report will include data and follow-up actions resulting from the corresponding summer and regular school year pilot programs.

This goal remains in progress, with progress reports submitted on Nov. 1, 2024, March 1, 2025, and July 1, 2025, serving as evidence of being on track. Data and follow-up actions are included in each of these progress reports.

SMART Goal #4

By July 1, 2026, RCPS will submit a Community Builders pilot comprehensive summary report to the Virginia Department of Education. This comprehensive summary report will include:

Data relating to:

- The progress of participating students, including a comparison of pre-participation and post-participation absenteeism rates, disciplinary incidents, and academic performance.
- The number and rate of reported incidents of gun violence involving program participants.
- The reported incidents of gun violence in the City of Roanoke as a whole in comparison to previous years.

An analysis of the pilot program to include:

- Student outcomes based on the collected data
- Feedback from students, staff, family members, and community partners
- Recommendations for continuation, expansion, or modification of the program for the Virginia Department of Education's consideration

This goal is deferred until July 1, 2026, when the Community Builders pilot program is expected to conclude, though data collection and analysis are in progress.

A current area of growth is the frequent, consistent collection of feedback from students and families on programs and needs.

SMART Goal #5

By the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year, RCPS Community Builders participants will demonstrate a 10% reduction in chronic absenteeism as compared to the 2023-2024 school year.

This goal was met, with the original cohort of Community Builders participants experiencing a reduction in chronic absenteeism from 13.2% to 11.5% in 2024-25 school year as compared to the previous school year. This represents a reduction of 12.6%. RCPS will carry this goal into the 2025-26 school year, adding additional chronically absent students to the program and putting additional actions and incentives in place to improve school attendance.

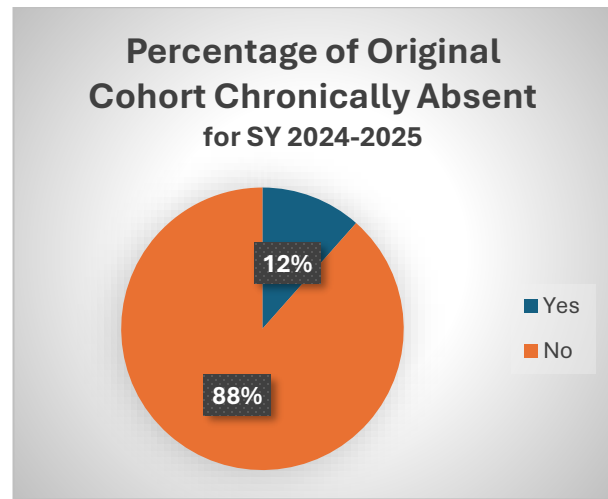
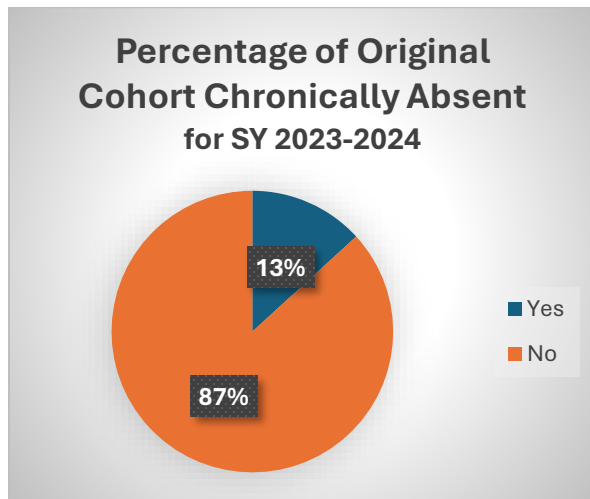
Funds have been allocated toward staffing, materials and supplies, and community events to foster student engagement and reduce chronic absenteeism.

- **Expanding Student Participation:**
 - Additional students have been identified and enrolled through **school counselors, administrative staff, and teachers who recognize** those needing academic and behavioral support.
- **Fostering Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs):**
 - The program intentionally builds **protective factors** by engaging students in activities aligned with four key PCEs:
 - Participating in community traditions
 - Developing a sense of belonging in school
 - Building supportive peer relationships
 - Connecting with trusted, non-parental adults
- **Community Builders Clubs & Activities:**
 - Community Builders Clubs have been established in all five middle schools for SY25-26, providing consistent support and engagement opportunities.

- Participating Middle Schools: James Breckinridge Middle School, Lucy Addison Middle School, Woodrow Wilson Middle School, James Madison Middle School
 - Expansion programming is planned at Patrick Henry High School and William Fleming High School.
- Lunch and Learn sessions with school staff and community leaders foster relationships with trusted adults, enhancing students' sense of belonging and support.
- **Participation in Community Events & Service Projects:**
 - Engaging in traditions & service projects strengthens student connections to their community, further supporting attendance and engagement:
 - School Site Leaders are finalizing programming, field trips, and activities for SY25-26.
 - Students attended two empowerment conferences at Hollins University and the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.
 - Art workshops and art show with the Oliver W. Hill Justice Center's Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court team.
 - Visit to Roanoke College for a football game.
 - Writing and handing out letters at the Salem Veteran Affairs Medical Center for Veterans Day.

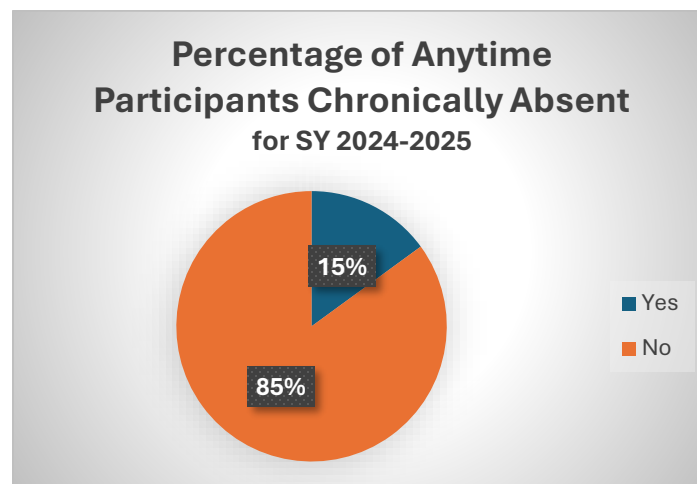
By investing in these targeted strategies, Community Builders is creating meaningful connections for students, reducing absenteeism, and reinforcing positive school and community engagement.

Chronic Absenteeism Data for Original Community Builders Cohort Summer 2024 (52 eligible participants)



- Current data indicates a positive trend in attendance data for the Original Cohort of Community Builders participants, with a 12.6% decrease in the percentage of students identified as chronically absent in SY 2024-2025 vs. SY 2023-2024.

Chronic Absenteeism Data for Anytime Community Builders Participants SY 2024-2025 (147 eligible participants)



- The percentage of anytime participants in the Community Builders program chronically absent in SY 2024-2025 is 15%. This is higher than the 12% chronic absenteeism rate for the original cohort, reflecting the addition of participants who stand to benefit from supports and interventions.

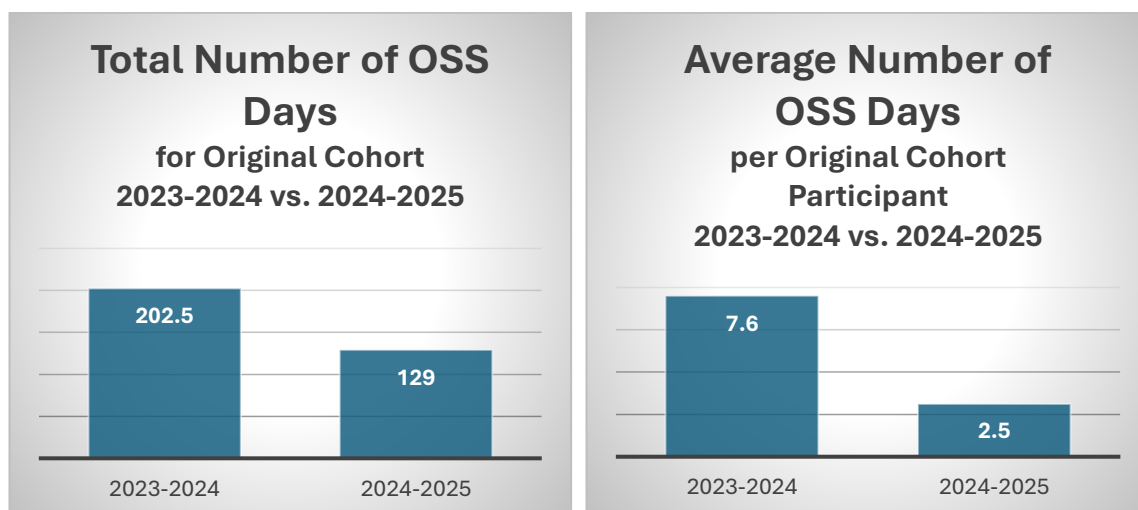
SMART Goal #6

By the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year, RCPS Community Builders participants will demonstrate a 10% reduction in out-of-school suspension days as compared to the 2023-2024 school year.

This goal was met, as evidenced by a 36% reduction in the total number of out-of-school suspension days and a 67% reduction in out-of-school suspension days per original cohort participant in 2024-25 as compared to the previous year. RCPS will carry this goal forward into the 2025-26 school year, working to reduce participants' out-of-school suspension days by another 10%.

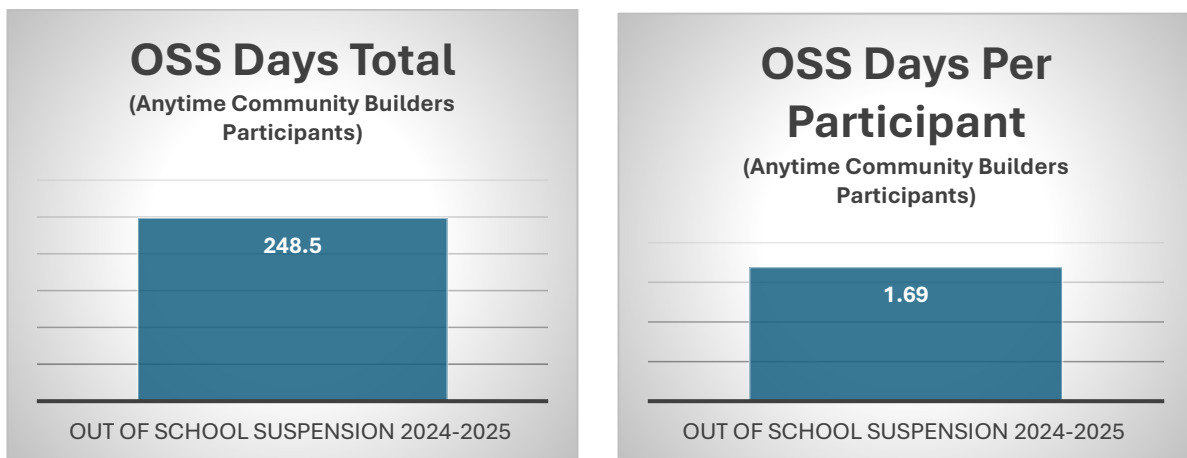
- Staffing & Behavioral Support: Funds have been allocated to staffing, allowing dedicated personnel to provide behavioral interventions, mentoring, and SEL support.
- Community Builders Site Leaders are provided monthly data reports on students to monitor student progress, intervene early, and provide suggestions for alternative disciplinary measures to suspension if the need arises.
- Funds have supported training and implementation of direct counseling services and conflict resolution workshops to address behavioral issues proactively.
- Community Builders clubs at all five middle schools provide a structured environment where students receive positive reinforcement and character development, reducing behavioral incidents.
- Through these initiatives, Community Builders is fostering a positive, structured, and supportive school environment, with the goal of improving student behavior and a reduction in out-of-school suspension days.

Current Out-of-School Suspension Data for Original Cohort (52 eligible participants)



- Current data indicate a positive trend in out-of-school suspension (OSS) data for the Original Cohort of Community Builders participants, with a 36% reduction in total OSS days for the 52 participants combined in SY24-25 vs. SY23-24. Additionally, the Original Cohort experienced a 67% reduction in OSS days per participant year over year.
- RCPS met the goal of reducing OSS days by 10% for program participants and will continue efforts to improve in this area.

2024-2025 Out-of-School Suspension Data for Anytime Participants (147 eligible participants)



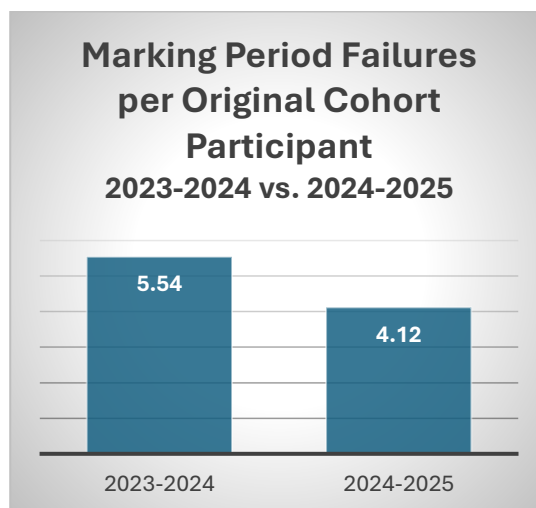
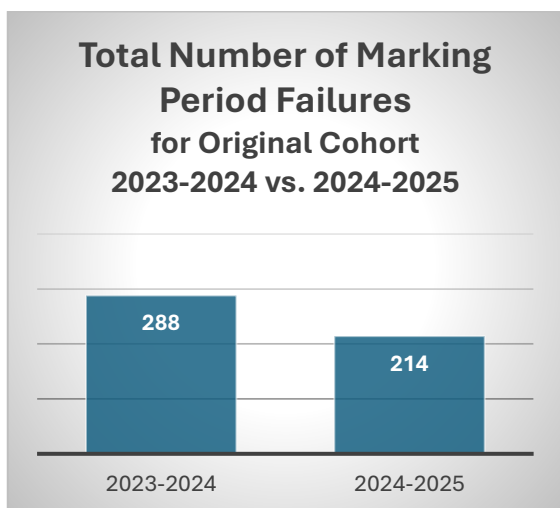
- The total number of OSS day for 147 eligible anytime participants in the Community Builders program for SY24-25 is 248.5. The average number of OSS days per participant is 1.69, indicating that the original cohort began with and continues to experience a higher number of OSS days per participant than the group of anytime participants in the Community Builders program.

SMART Goal #7

By the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year, RCPS Community Builders participants will demonstrate a 10% reduction in report card failures as compared to the 2023-2024 school year.

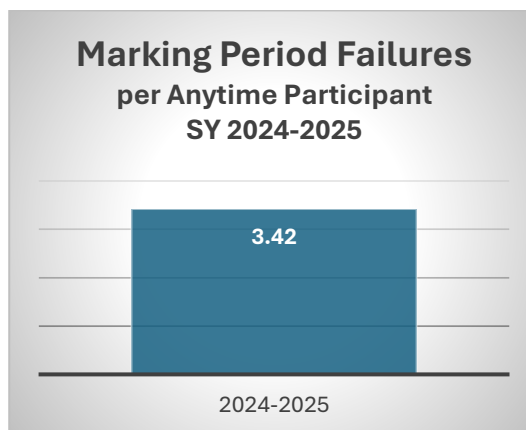
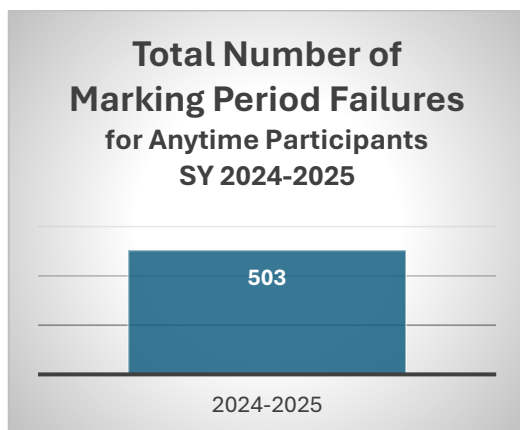
This goal was met, as evidenced by a 26% reduction in the number of report card failures per original cohort participant in the 2024-25 school year as compared to the previous year. RCPS will carry this goal forward into the 2025-26 school year, working to reduce the' number of participants' report card failures by another 10%.

Current Report Card Data for Original Cohort (52 eligible participants)



- Current data indicate a positive trend in report card data for the Original Cohort of Community Builders participants, with a 26% reduction in total marking period failures and a 26% reduction in marking period failures per participant in SY24-25 vs. SY23-24.
- RCPS met the goal of reducing report card failures and will continue efforts to improve in this area.

2024-2025 Report Card Data for Anytime Participants (52 eligible participants)



- The total number of marking period failures for 147 eligible anytime participants in the Community Builders program for SY24-25 is 503. The average number of marking period failures per participant is 3.42, indicating that the original cohort began with and continues to experience a higher number of report card failures per participant than the group of anytime participants in the Community Builders program.

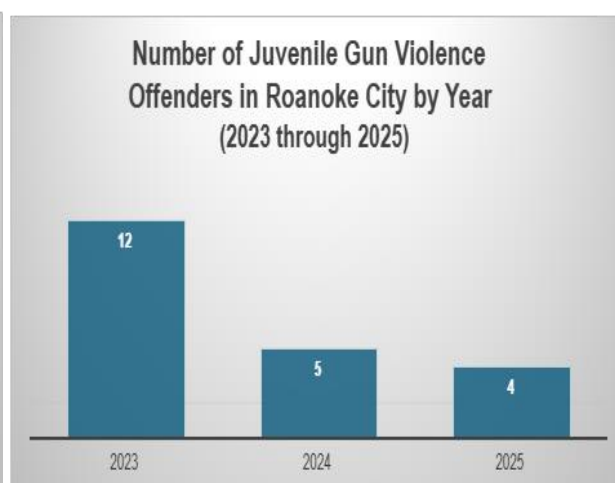
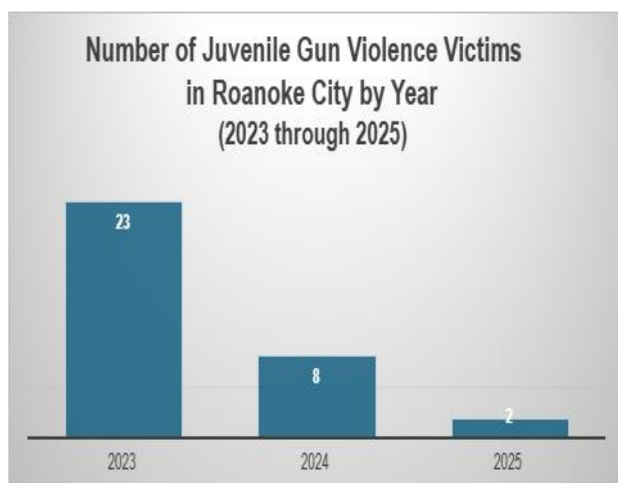
SMART Goal #8

By the July 1, 2025, the City of Roanoke will reduce or maintain the number of incidents of juvenile gun violence involving program participants and in the city as a whole as compared to the previous year.

This goal was met, as evidenced by an 80% reduction in the number of juvenile (offender) gun violence incidents in Roanoke City in the current year as compared to the previous year. RCPS will continue to monitor data pertaining to juvenile gun violence throughout the remainder of the pilot program.

- RCPS Community Builders Program Coordinator Joshua Johnson coordinates and facilitates the monthly Social Services Coordinator for the City of Roanoke's Gun Violence Intervention Program. This program is housed in the Roanoke Police Department's (RPD) Community Engagement Center. This role has strengthened the relationship with RPD, RCPS, and Social Service agencies from the Roanoke area. One of the main goals is to create multi-disciplinary teams comprised of different agencies to address target interventions for youth and adults who are susceptible to being a victim or offender of gun violence.
- This appointment has increased awareness of the Community Builders program and helped identify additional community partners who can provide mentorship, resources, and intervention strategies.
- The program continues to work closely with the Roanoke Police Department (RPD) Crime Analyst team to obtain updated data on juvenile involvement in gun violence.
- Due to RPD's current data collection format, reporting is limited, reinforcing the need for continued collaboration and improved data-sharing mechanisms.

Current Community Gun Violence Data



Summary of Reduction in Juvenile Gun Violence

The City of Roanoke continues to make significant progress in reducing juvenile gun violence. Year-to-date data for October 2025 indicates continued reductions in both juvenile offenders and victims compared to previous years.

From 2023 to 2025, the number of juvenile offenders involved in gun violence has decreased from 12 in 2023 to four in 2025 — a 67% reduction over the two-year period and a 20% reduction from 2024 to 2025.

Similarly, the number of juvenile victims has dropped from 23 in 2023 to two in 2025 — representing a 91% reduction since 2023 and a 75% reduction from 2024 to 2025.

These outcomes demonstrate continued success in prevention, intervention, and community collaboration efforts aimed at reducing youth involvement in gun-related incidents across Roanoke City.

Data for 2025 as compared to 2024:

- **Juvenile Offenders (Under 21):** Decreased by 20% (from 5 in 2024 to four in 2025).
- **Juvenile Victims (Under 21):** Decreased by 75% (from 8 in 2024 to two in 2025).
- Available data provides no indication of Community Builders program participant involvement in gun violence, either as an offender or a victim.

As mentioned previously, limitations regarding relevant data prevent RCPS from definitively attributing reductions in violence to the Community Builders program. This decline, however, does suggest that collaborative efforts between RCPS, the RPD, and community partners are making a meaningful impact in reducing youth involvement in gun violence. Continued focus on mentorship, intervention programs, and information sharing will be essential in maintaining and furthering this progress.

Additional Program Data Summary

The following information includes an analysis of program participation, levels of student engagement, indications of individual growth, and identified supports to boost Community Builders participants' success as they transition into high school during the 2024-25 school year. In addition to informing our immediate division-level actions to support program participants in Roanoke City, this data stands to benefit VDOE staff, legislators, and policymakers when considering the extension of Community Builders programming beyond the pilot years.

School-based teams collected data on 132 program participants with varying levels of engagement, growth, and needed support. Key highlights and takeaways from this data include:

- 70 students (53% of those in the available data set) were regularly engaged in school-based Community Builders programming. Examples of Community Builders activities during the school year included:
 - Afterschool programs
 - Lunch and learn sessions
 - Mentoring groups
 - Fitness training sessions
 - Weekend camping and outdoor activities
 - Community service projects
- 102 students (77%) were at least intermittently engaged, balancing Community Builders programming with other school and community engagement activities such as:
 - School sports (basketball, cheer, baseball, soccer, wrestling, softball, etc.)
 - Travel sports
 - Student government
 - National Junior Honor Society
 - Band
 - School clubs
- Staff indicated that 53 participants (40%) demonstrated exceptional growth and another 56 participants (42%) demonstrated modest growth, with the following examples provided as evidence of the demonstrated growth:
 - Improved academic performance, particularly from the original cohort where:
 - 3 participants passed the Reading SOL test for the first time ever as 8th graders in 2025.
 - 18 participants scored their personal best on the Reading SOL test in 2025.
 - 65% improved their score on the Reading SOL test compared to the previous year.

- 11 participants scored their personal best on the Mathematics SOL test in 2025.
 - 48% improved their score on the Mathematics SOL test compared to the previous year.
- Reduction in disciplinary actions (classroom, bus, etc.)
 - Social improvements and improved confidence
 - Growth in empathy, respect, and emotional regulation
 - Increased self-awareness, resilience, and perseverance
 - Noticeable positive shift in response to conflict
 - Setting and reflecting on personal goals
 - Improved expression of thoughts and feelings
 - Support and encouragement for peers
 - Reduced suspensions/eliminated suspensions
 - Growth in leadership, volunteering, and model behavior
- Staff recommend general or specific support for 37 participants (28%) as the transition to high school. Examples of these recommended supports include:
 - Mentoring
 - College-based counseling
 - Positive behavior interventions and supports
 - Access to safe spaces and wellness rooms
 - 1:1 counseling with community-based partners
 - Connections with trusted adults
 - Peer support groups
 - Behavioral check-ins
 - Social-emotional learning (SEL) groups or programs
 - Needs-based therapy
 - Cool-down space

Challenges and Barriers to Implementation

Additional Actions Taken

Ongoing Student Identification & Support:

- Continuously working with school counselors, administrators, and teachers to identify and enroll students needing additional academic, behavioral, and truancy interventions.
- Expanding programming to ensure students receive the necessary support for positive engagement and personal growth.
- Partnering with community organizations and vendors to enhance programming, provide enrichment activities, and expand access to resources that support student success.
- Flexibility in Programming:
 - Adjusting Community Builders activities to accommodate student schedules and needs, ensuring a balance between school commitments and program participation.
 - Offering varied engagement opportunities, including school day check-ins and alternative meeting times, to support students unable to attend in-person events.

Challenges & Barriers

Fluctuating Data in Discipline, Attendance, and Grades: As more students with significant needs are added to the program, data in these areas may fluctuate before showing long-term improvement. Progress tracking requires continuous adjustments and monitoring.

Transportation Limitations: Limited transportation options sometimes prevent students from participating in off-campus activities, restricting access to experiential learning and community events.

Conflicting Student Commitments: Student participation fluctuates due to involvement in school sports, fine arts, and other extracurricular activities. Working on scheduling flexibility and communication strategies to increase engagement while respecting students' other commitments. Some of these changes have included hosting "Lunch and Learn" sessions during the school day or before-school activities. These adjustments allowed students to remain engaged with Community Builders programming despite their busy extracurricular schedules.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to expanding opportunities, refining support strategies, and building sustainable solutions to enhance student success and engagement.

Additional Information: Leadership Development

During RCPS' Needs Assessment phase, staff identified Community Builders as a valuable avenue for developing emerging leaders within Roanoke City Public Schools.

Both Summer 2024 site leaders, who were classroom teachers at the time, utilized this opportunity to enhance their leadership skills by managing the Community Builders program. They later applied and were selected to serve as Assistant Principals at their respective middle schools for the 2025-26 school year.

Building on that success, both Summer 2025 site leaders are continuing this strong tradition of professional growth and leadership development. One is currently enrolled in Radford University's educational leadership cohort, while the other is pursuing a doctoral degree in education at Radford University. Both are using their experiences with Community Builders to strengthen their leadership skills and knowledge, deepen community engagement, and positively impact student outcomes.

Due to changes in funding requirements that affected the structure of RCPS' summer programming in 2025, RCPS experienced delays in both student enrollment and staff hiring, which in turn pushed back our recruitment efforts for the 2025 summer program by over a month. These delays also affected transportation logistics, with bus routes being posted only two days before programming began, which caused confusion for some students and families and resulted in many students missing the first few days of Community Builders.

Despite these challenges, Community Builders received 259 staff applications, compared to just 67 in 2024, and 104 student registrations, up from 76 the previous year. We attribute this growth to the strong relationships built by school site staff throughout the academic year and increased advertising of the program through word-of-mouth, social media, news stories, and intentional recruitment. Additionally, six students from the 2024 summer cohort have returned to serve as mentors, and we are exploring ways to expand their responsibilities within the program.

Summary of VCSI Stage 1–5 Self-Reflection

This summary provides an overview of Community Builders’ progress across the Virginia Community Schools Initiative (VCSI) Stages 1–5. More detailed analysis, ratings, and evidence can be found in the full VCSI Stage 1–5 Self-Reflection Document.

Stage 1–2: Foundational Development and Initial Implementation

Overview: The Community Builders program has established a strong foundation through data-informed decision-making, growing community partnerships, and collaborative leadership structures. Site Leaders utilize Student Needs Assessments and Synergy Data Reports to monitor attendance, academics, and behavior, adjusting support as needed. RCPS’ Community Resource Manual, featuring over 80 local partners, enables schools to address student and family needs efficiently.

Highlights:

- Strengthened stakeholder engagement through family events, such as the March 2025 Family Engagement Night.
- Increased program visibility through presentations to VSBA, Roanoke City School Board, and City of Roanoke’s Gun Violence Prevention Commission.
 - VSBA recognized Community Builders as the 2nd Place recipient for school divisions with an enrollment of over 10,000 students for its inaugural Showcasing Innovation Award.
- Shared leadership emerging through consistent communication, site-level autonomy, and data-informed planning.
- Partnerships formalized through MOUs ensure consistent support in areas such as mental health, crisis response, and physical needs.

Next Steps: Refine data reflection practices, formalize shared leadership structures, and enhance multilingual and equitable family engagement strategies.

Stage 3: Deepening Implementation

Overview: At this stage, RCPS has built strong partnerships to meet basic needs and support students’ mental health and motivation. Schools provide access to food, clothing, and hygiene resources, as well as mentoring and trauma-informed support. However, outreach and systematic evaluation practices remain in areas for growth.

Highlights:

- Expanded partnerships with health and wellness providers.
- Implementation of SEL practices and counseling opportunities.
- Increased enrichment and engagement opportunities for students.

Next Steps: Increase student and family feedback loops, create student and staff advisory panels, and strengthen systems for measuring engagement and emotional well-being.

Stage 4: Sustaining the Work

Overview: Leadership roles and data systems are well-established, but long-term sustainability planning and integration into district strategic goals are still developing.

Next Steps: Formalize leadership succession planning and embed community school practices into district strategic planning and budgeting.

Stage 5: Scaling and Continuous Improvement

Overview: Community Builders has expanded into additional schools with promising results. While strong structures exist, a formal continuous improvement cycle and long-term funding strategy are in progress.

Next Steps: Develop a multi-year sustainability plan, diversify funding sources, and implement a continuous improvement framework aligned with VCSI standards.