



CHILDREN & YOUTH COMMUNITY PLAN (CYCP) REPORT CARD



ALEXANDRIA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ENSURING EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS TODAY AND TOMORROW

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

This issue reports the progress made on promoting healthy eating between April 2021 - March 2022

CYCP GOAL

All Children, Youth, and Families will be Physically Safe and Healthy

YOUTH/CARING ADULT SPOTLIGHT

In honor of National Nutrition Month, we are celebrating Cynthia Hormel. Cynthia is the Director of the School Nutrition Service Team for the Alexandria City Public Schools. The Team is made up of 115 well-trained, dedicated staff members who provide high-quality, nutritionally balanced, and affordable meals to more than 16,000 students daily across our district. Her staff has described her as "the most forward-thinking school nutrition director," "innovative," and "creative." Cynthia encourages the Team to think outside the box as a way to strengthen their service delivery to ACPS students. She intentionally creates positive and supportive environments for the kids while making sure that the Team has state of the art equipment, kitchens, and other resources needed to be successful.



RESULT

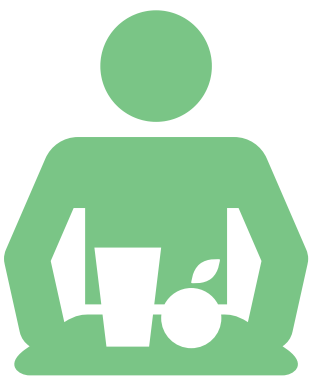
All young people establish healthy eating behaviors and make healthy choices

WHY THIS MATTERS

Healthy eating in childhood is important for healthy growth and development and prevents various health conditions later in life. Food insecurity, which affects almost 20% of families in the US, has long-lasting effects on young children's health and development, impacting their memory, social functioning, and ability to learn and gain new skills (University of Utah Health, 2018). Studies show that children who have food insecurity in early childhood are less likely to be ready to start kindergarten. Teens are at higher risk of mood disorders, behavior issues, substance use, and even suicide.

Because most children in the US consume as much as half of their daily calories at school, schools play an important role in addressing barriers to accessing healthy food and in helping students establish healthy eating behaviors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). A healthy school nutrition environment makes it easier for students to

make healthy choices by giving them access to nutritious foods, consistent and accurate messages about good nutrition, and ways to learn about and practice healthy eating.



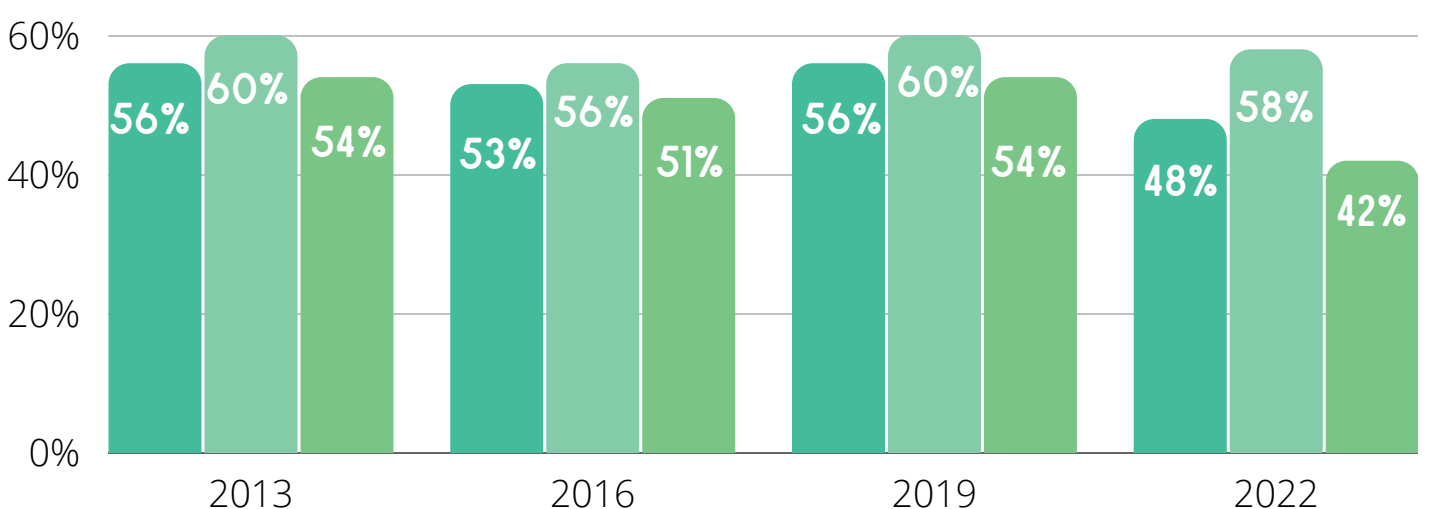
Healthy students are better learners. When young people have access to enough healthy food, we see better grades, less school absences, improved memory and moods, and reduced risk for negative health outcomes (World Health Organization, 2015).

HOW WE ARE DOING

Maintains Good Health

% of ACPS Students who Pay Attention to Nutrition and Exercise
Source: Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth, 2019

■ Total ■ Male ■ Female



STRATEGY

Increase students' access to fresh, healthy, and multicultural food in school settings

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Progress with promoting healthy eating:

1 Strategy, 2 Action Steps,



50%
are in progress or fully implemented

CHAMPIONS

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) School Nutrition Services

PARTNERS

- [ALIVE!](#)
- [Kirby Farms](#)
- [Fresh Impact Farms](#)
- [ACPS Family and Community Engagement Center](#)
- [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#)
- [USDA Food and Nutrition Service](#)

WHAT DID WE DO?

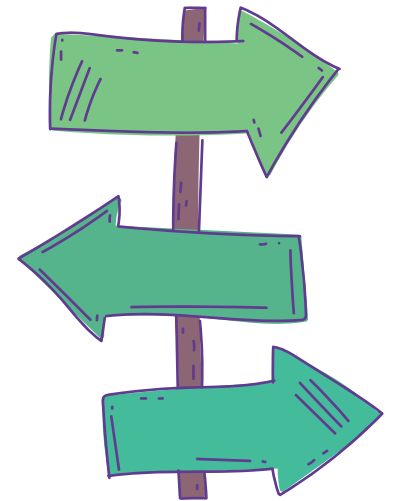
- The **ACPS School Nutrition Service Team** provides high-quality, nutritionally balanced, and affordable meals to more than **16,000 students every day** through their Lunch and Breakfast programs, After School Snack programs, Supper programs, and several summer feeding programs
- For the 2021-22 school year, **all ACPS students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch every day** through June 30, 2022
- ACPS families are eligible for meals, which will include breakfast and lunch, over **winter breaks**.
- The **Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign** awarded a grant of **\$120,000 to ACPS Office of School Nutrition Services** to support the division's critical work to **end childhood hunger**
- Mount Vernon, Cora Kelly, and John Adams Schools recently underwent **kitchen renovations** to allow for faster and more efficient purchasing of food
- **Nutrient-dense produce** like microgreens, mushrooms, and pea shoots are brought from local growers into ACPS schools
- Nearly every school in the district has their own **School Garden**
- Through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, ACPS is **expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables available to children and aims to inspire lifelong healthy choices**. Students at Cora Kelly and William Ramsay can now enjoy free samples of fresh produce during the school day
- **The longest line in any ACPS cafeteria is at the "build your own bowl" salad bar** where students get to make their own healthy choices



WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Between now and 2025, the ACPS School Nutrition Services will implement:

- A pop-up of globally inspired dishes that are plant-forward
- An iced coffee bar with pastries to help students at Alexandria City High School start their day off right and learn life skills
- A composting and food waste program at every school



RESOURCES

- [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020](#)
- [Free and Reduced Price Meal Application](#)
- Free food available to families through the [ALIVE! Food Distribution](#) sites and [ALIVE! Food Hub](#), located at the Van Dorn Shopping Center
- Information on how to apply for [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) to receive a card for the purchase of food
- [COVID-19 Food Assistance Programs in Alexandria](#)