



Amherst County Public Schools
Comprehensive School Improvement Plan For:

Amherst Education Center
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2023-2024

The following individuals assisted in creating this plan:

**List the names and titles of each stakeholder who participated in developing this plan.*

Individual	Title
Ernest Penn	AEC School Administrator
Pennie Hartley	AEC School Counselor
Michele Stenman	AEC Math Teacher
Katherine Bowen	AEC Science Teacher
Stephanie Moehlenkamp	Supervisor of School and Community Outreach Counseling
Julianne Albert	Supervisor of Special Education and Early Childhood Programs



School Profile/Demographic Information

Status for Most Recent School Year		Student Population Percentages			
Total Enrollment	As of October 13, 2023 50 students	Poverty		Other	
Attendance Rate	Based on the 2022-2023 attendance data students starting AEC on August 16, 2023 missed an average of 22 days last year	White	34 students	Special Education	24% of the students have an IEP or 504 plan.
Graduation Rate		Black	16 students	English Learners	
Accreditation Status		Hispanic		Gifted	
Title I Model <small>Schoolwide Program (SWP) Targeted Assistance (TA) Not Applicable (N/A)</small>	N/A	Asian			

Faculty & Staff						
			Years of Experience by Content / Grade Level			
Grade Level/Content	Number of Teachers	0-3 Years	4-7 Years	8-15 Years	>16 Years	New To School (for most recent SY)
English	1		1			2023-2024
Social Studies	1				1	
Science	1			1		2021-2022
Math	1				1	
Business	1		1			
General Education Diploma (GED)	1				1	
Special Education	2				2	
Alternative Suspension Center	1		1			2021-2022
Total	9					

Executive Summary

Division Demographic and Curriculum Overview

Amherst County is a rural county with a small population of students who either drop out or consider dropping out of school due to various factors. Some of the factors that influence the dropout rate in Amherst County are socioeconomic conditions, poor attendance, lack of parental support, academic failure, and dysfunctional families. Being able to meet the needs of this at risk population of students is an important goal of Amherst County Public Schools.

Once these students develop a negative attitude towards education, they lose interest in their educational success. Being able to establish a positive relationship with these students can help reduce the possibility of the students dropping out of school. Along with this, having the ability to provide a support network to these students as well as their family can prevent some of the students from dropping out of school.

Amherst County Public Schools supports an option that meets the needs of these at-risk students in an alternative education school. Amherst Education Center (AEC) is a satellite school of Amherst County High School that serves approximately 70 to 100 students. The alternative education program continues to evolve and strives to meet the needs of students who are experiencing extreme difficulties in the traditional classroom environment.

Amherst Education Center has the following objectives: (1) to meet the needs of at-risk students of Amherst County Public Schools in grades eight through twelve; (2) to reduce the disciplinary referrals of the students; (3) to improve school attendance; and (4) to increase the overall academic performance of the student body.

Program Design

The school year at the alternative school is aligned with the official Amherst County Public School calendar and transportation is provided for all students. Core subjects that are aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning are provided at a pace that meets the needs of the students. The program also allows seniors to graduate with their class at the graduation ceremony for the high school.

Another option for students who are at least 16 years old is to participate in an Individualized Student Alternative Education Program (ISAEP). This program includes career guidance counseling, enrollment in a GED program, counseling on the economic impact of failing to complete high school, procedures for re-enrolling in regular high school programs, and an occupational training component. These options, along with community support, should positively influence students to complete a course of study at Amherst Education Center instead of dropping out of the high school.

Staff

The heart of any alternative school program is the staff; they are the most important factor in the success of the students. The students must recognize that someone at their school cares about them and that a caring and safe atmosphere is provided. The alternative school staff in Amherst County consists of individuals who are qualified and dedicated to the success of each student. The alternative school staff has experience in working with extraordinary adolescents, is practiced in patience, and can stimulate students to think and make good choices for themselves. They are certified by the State Department of Education to teach in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Their specific duties include providing classroom instruction, classroom management, completing progress reports, providing an environment that is conducive to learning, and writing individualized education plans for students if needed.

Staff development is provided to address professional development in the areas of classroom management, differentiation of instruction, and intervention strategies. These programs are offered to the Amherst Education Center teaching staff as well as all support personnel.

Extended Learning Opportunities - Before, During & After School

Embedded in Amherst Education Center's Master Schedule is an additional class period of remediation for each core content area (English, Social Studies, Science, Math).

All In Virginia Bridge Time for eighth graders needing intensive tutoring to support improvement/accelerated learning in Reading and Math weekly.

AEC has a part-time Math Tutor that reports to the building daily. The tutor helps students with their math assignments either individually or in small groups. The tutor along with the classroom teacher assesses what mathematical skills the students have mastered, where they need assistance, and how they learn best.

Needs Assessment Process

The Amherst Education Center Comprehensive School Improvement Planning Team reviewed various data points from the previous academic year to determine the areas of strength and improvement for the 2023-2024 school year. The CSIP Team members reviewed the AEC Spring 2023 Assessment Data and the AEC Spring 23 SDBQ Pivot Table Data.

The 2022-2023 attendance data for all students who started Amherst Education Center on August 16, 2023 was reviewed. These students missed an average of 22 school days during the 2022-2023 school year. Historically, students attending or placed at Amherst Education Center have been chronically absent from their home based school. When students are habitually absent from school it affects their grades as well as their overall behavior. Which may lead to student discipline.

Needs Assessment Findings - Areas of Strength

Based on the 2022-2023 School Assessment Data for the Reading 11 EOC assessment white students were able to successfully pass the SOL test (83.3%)

Smaller class sizes and low student/teacher ratio allows for more individualized instruction for students struggling academically. Teachers have more flexibility to use different instructional approaches. Also, most classes have a Special Education co-teacher in the classroom.

Students taking an Edmentum course are given an expected weekly progress rate. The Lancer Academy 2 teacher conferences with students on Fridays to discuss progress and expectations.

The Madeline Centre Day Treatment Program supports students in the school setting who may struggle socially and/or behaviorally.

Needs Assessment Findings - Areas of Improvement

It was found that based on the 2022-2023 School Assessment Data from reading and math performance of middle school and high school students placed at Amherst Education Center that both the (SWD) students with disabilities and black students did not meet the benchmark of 75% passing in reading and 70% passing in math.

Of the current student population, it is noted that many factors might impact chronic absenteeism such as mental health issues and behavioral concerns.

Schoolwide Reform Strategies

The ATSS Tiering Framework

Amherst Education Center will be implementing a multi-tiering framework to support students' attendance, behavior, and academics. The tiering framework of interventions will help assist students who may need additional support in order to be successful here at Amherst Education Center. This tiering of interventions will help lead to fewer discipline problems and increased academic success.

The AEC Phoenix Points Program

The AEC Phoenix Points Program has been an innovative program to proactively help students develop positive behaviors, enabling them to become better citizens and students. It has been effective for more than 12 years.

Positive reinforcement builds positive actions and the Phoenix Points support positive outcomes for all students. Through the incentive program, AEC encourages students to succeed academically and socially by reinforcing desired behaviors. The program helps reduce disciplinary problems as the school is transformed into a safer and respectful environment. The process of transforming student behavior is through rewarding students with "Phoenix Points" for positive interactions with each other and individual academic effort and progress. In turn, students can cash the Points in for a variety of rewards.

The purpose of the program is to show students they can be rewarded for positive actions (extrinsic rewards guiding them to value intrinsic rewards). Some of these actions may be volunteering to help other students, achieving high grades on assessment, cleaning a classroom, sitting quietly when they are

normally disruptive, or many others any staff member may deem worthy. The effects of positive reinforcement are lasting.

Amherst Education Center Attendance Incentive Program

Regular school attendance is critical to student success and directly correlated to obtaining passing grades. When students are habitually absent from school, he/she falls behind in his/her classwork and requires extra time and attention from the teacher in order to catch up. This may require the teacher to slow down the pace of the instruction in order to reteach material and neglect students who may need his/her assistance. Therefore, in order to encourage school attendance Amherst Education Center will implement an Attendance Incentive program.

H.U.G.S. Mentor Program

Help, Understand, Guide, and Support Mentor Program provides consistent support and guidance to students throughout the school year. Students involved in the mentoring program may be going through a difficult and/or challenging situation, a period of life in which they need extra support in school. The goal of H.U.G.S. is to help students involved in the mentoring program to gain the skills and confidence necessary to be successful students.

Goals and Action Steps

By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, all students will meet their individual projected growth goal for English, mathematics, and science. (These goals will be based on students who attended AEC for at least a full semester).

Mathematics Goal: By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, 100% of Amherst Education Center mathematics students will meet their individual projected growth goal as measured by a teacher created Diagnostic Assessment.

English Goal: By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, 100% of Amherst Education Center English students will meet their individual projected growth goal as measured by a teacher created Diagnostic Assessment.

Science Goal: By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, 100% of Amherst Education Center science students will meet their individual projected growth goal as measured by a teacher created Diagnostic Assessment.

*** Academic data will be reviewed from Diagnostic Assessments to analyze classroom and individual student strengths and areas of growth.

*** Student learning data will be utilized to develop differentiated lessons to address students' knowledge and skill gaps.

Attendance Goal: By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, Amherst Education Center's daily attendance rate will be at 85%. This will be based on students who started the school year at AEC on August 16, 2023.

During the 2023-2024 school year Amherst Education Center's weekly student attendance will average 75% or higher through the first semester and increase 10% during the second semester. This goal will be based on students who started the school year at AEC on August 16, 2023.

- Amherst Education Center's Attendance Team will meet monthly to analyze student attendance. Attendance data will be reviewed regularly on all students and attendance plans will be developed if needed. Phone calls will be made daily by the Administrative Assistant to the parent/guardian of any student who is absent. This will be documented in PowerSchool.
- Implementation of AEC Attendance Incentive Plan to recognize students for outstanding attendance. Weekly and/or monthly incentive awards will be given to students in order to encourage others to set goals for themselves.