Arlington Public Schools

EVERY STUDENT COUNTS EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

APS Strategic Plan 2024-30



Bullying & Harassment Prevention & Intervention Update

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Student Support

February 5, 2026

Tonight's Agenda

Student Well-Being

- Introductions
- Defining Bullying
- Data Review
- Updates on Recent Work
- Next steps



Key Takeaways

Student Well-Being

- To understand present data.
- To understand how APS has improved reporting mechanisms and other efforts to prevent and interrupt bullying.
- To understand future work.



What is Bullying?



Student Well-Being

According to Virginia Law:

Bullying is any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma.

- Bullying includes cyber bullying.
- Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

What is Interrupting Bullying?



Student Well-Being

Interrupting bullying means taking intentional action to stop harm, support those targeted, and shift behavior using empathy, prosocial behaviors, and upstander strategies. Through T.H.I.N.K and cooperative and competitive approaches, we create and sustain safer, more inclusive environments.

- **Train** students and staff through prosocial behavior scenario-based exercises that build empathy and response skills.
- **Embed** T.H.I.N.K. posters in classrooms/common areas to promote mindful communication and behavior.
- **Practice** cooperative and competitive dialogue in advisory or homeroom sessions to explore different intervention styles.
- **Build** peer teams that model and reinforce upstander behavior school-wide.

A safe, respectful culture starts with knowledge, self-awareness, daily practice, visible values, and empowered peers.

APS Strategic Plan



Student Well-Being



Strategic Plan Performance Objective

By 2030, at least 90% of APS students will report feeling safe at school. (PO – SWB-5)

(2023-24 YVM)	3-Year Performance Goals (YVM)	Present (Feb 2025 YVM)
• Grade 4-5: 66% favorable responses • Grade 6-12: 67% favorable responses	• Grade 4-5: 78% • Grade 6-12: 79%	• Grade 4-5: 88% favorable responses • Grade 6-12: 85% favorable responses

Where We Were → Approaching Expectations → **Where We Are**

2023-24 YVM data not directly comparable to 2024-25 due to changes in YVM Survey

Source: Your Voice Matters Surveys

Bullying: Arlington Youth Survey Results

The Results of the November 2024 Arlington Youth Survey noted:

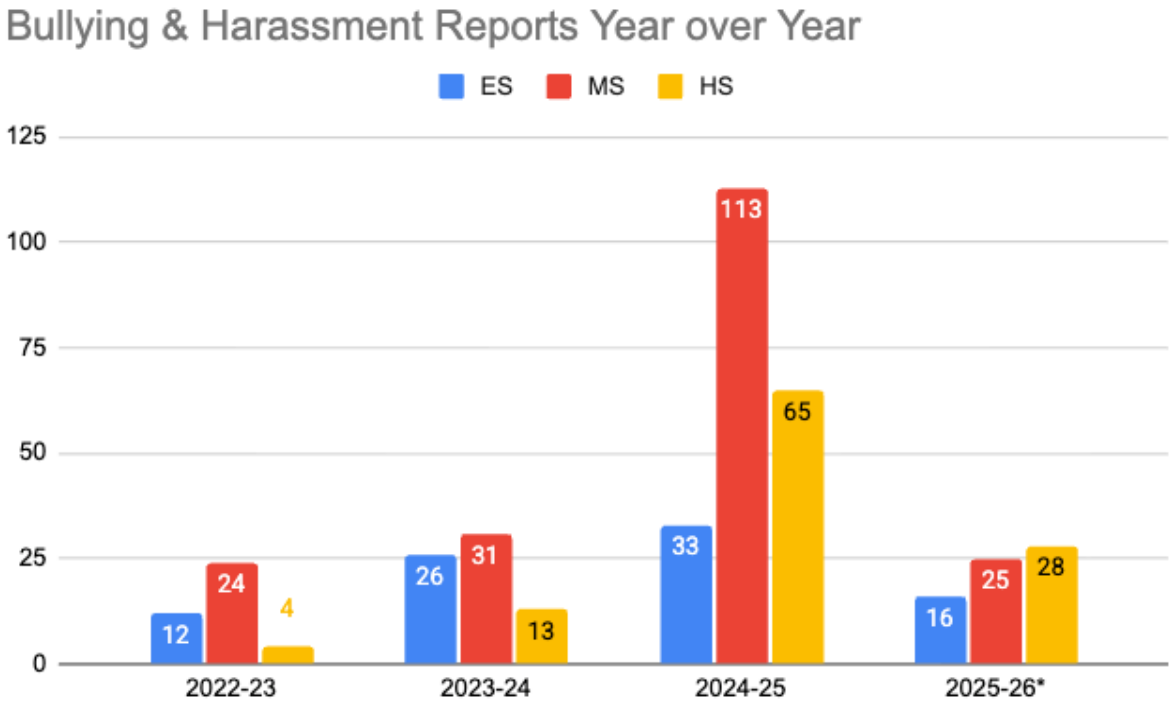
Bullying affects students at all grade levels:

- 6th and 8th grade students experiencing bullying (on school property and electronically) at higher rates compared to 10th and 12th grade students.

- LGBTQ+ youth reported missing school due to feeling unsafe. For example,
  - 1 in 5 students identifying as non-binary
  - 1 in 11 students identifying as transgender students

Full results of Arlington Youth Survey

Student Reports - Year to Year Comparison



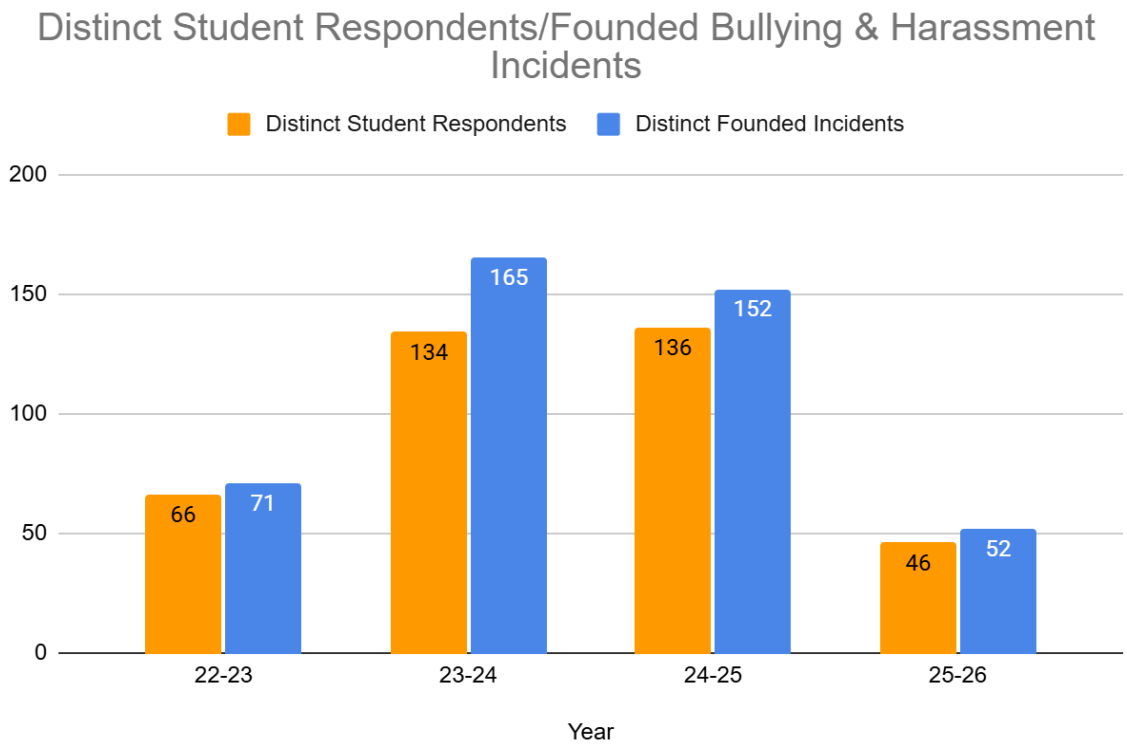
In 24-25:

- The APS Bullying Form was made available on all school websites and digital QR codes in school building.
- New reporting/ documentation procedures were implemented across K-12 through:
  - The Discipline Framework
  - Synergy Incident entries
  - Threat Assessment form

*As of 1.18.26

Source: Bullying Report Form & Reports@apsva.us

Founded Student Incidents



ALL bullying & harassment reports and school incidents are investigated at the school-level by an administrator.

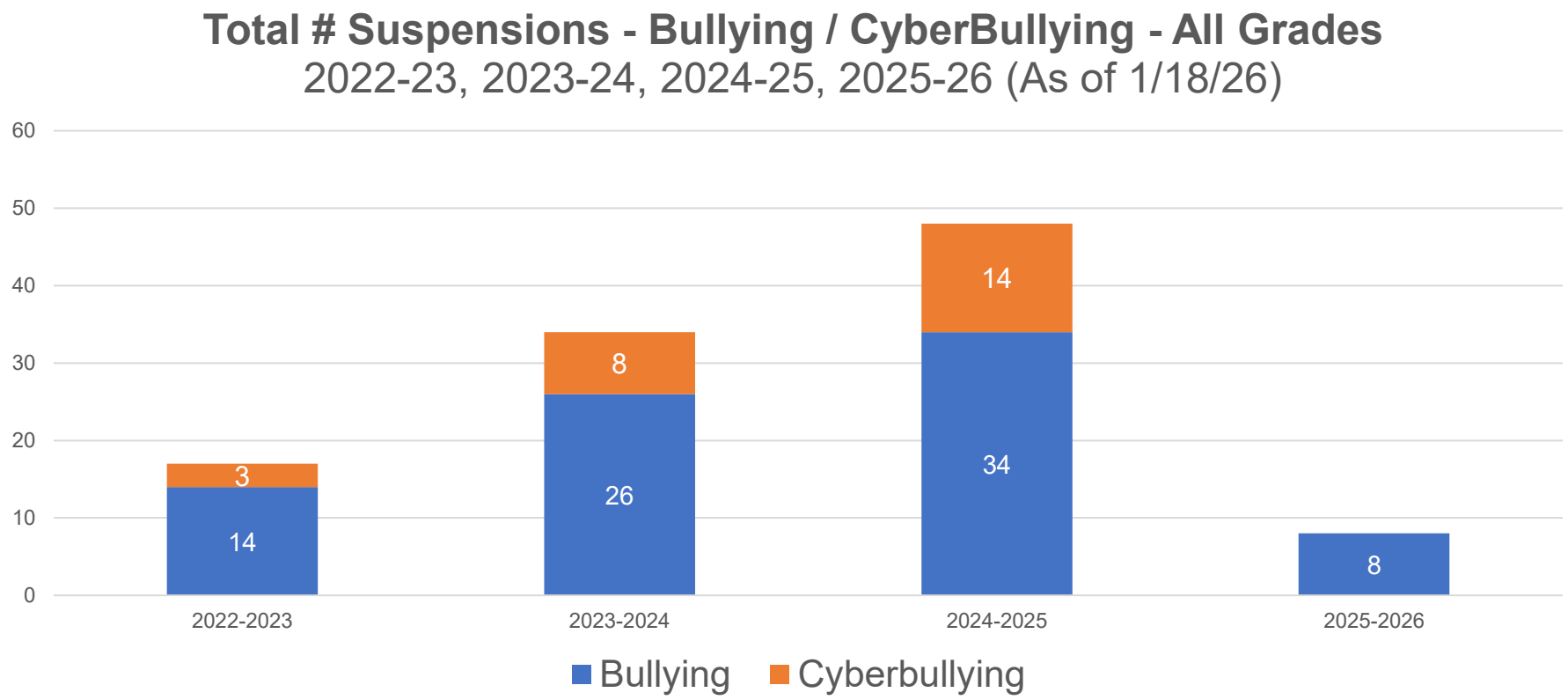
Regardless of substantiated or unsubstantiated findings, **ALL** reports/incidents require an administrative response which may include:

- ❑ Supportive measures;
- ❑ Behavioral interventions; and/or
- ❑ Disciplinary action

25-26 data as of 1.18.26

Source – APS Insight

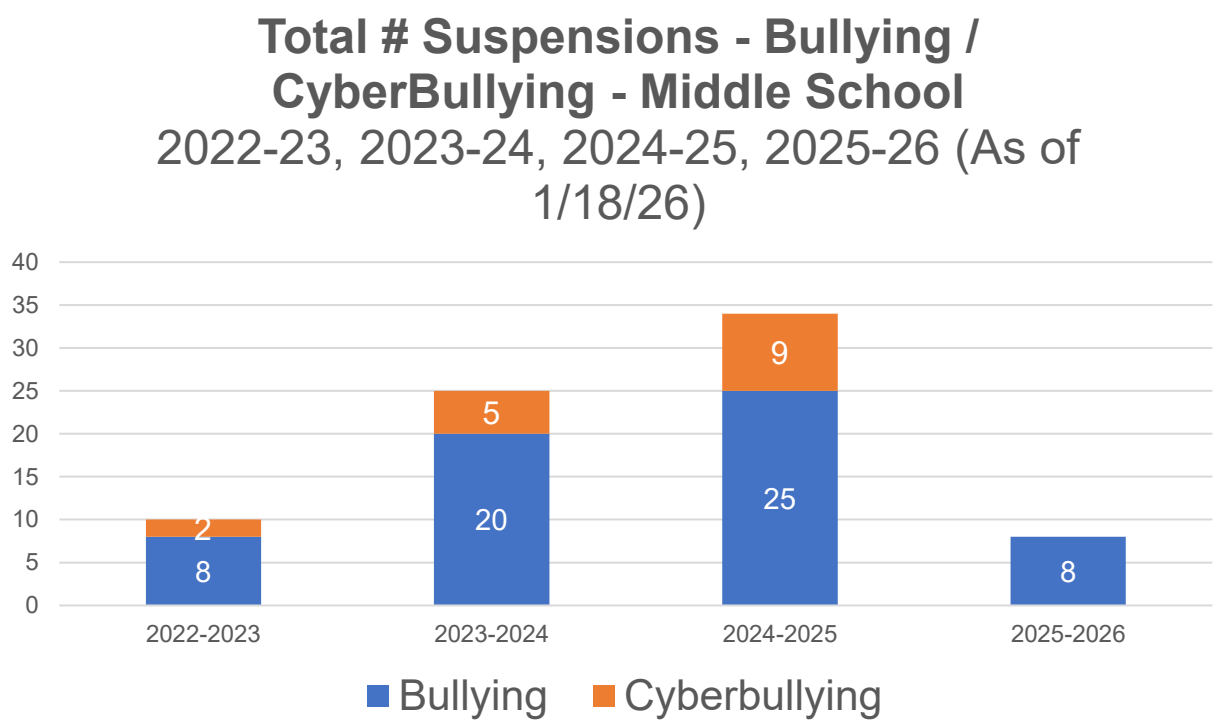
Student Suspensions - Year by Year



*As of 1.18.26

Source – APS Insight - Combined in-school and out of school suspension data

Student Suspensions - Year by Year

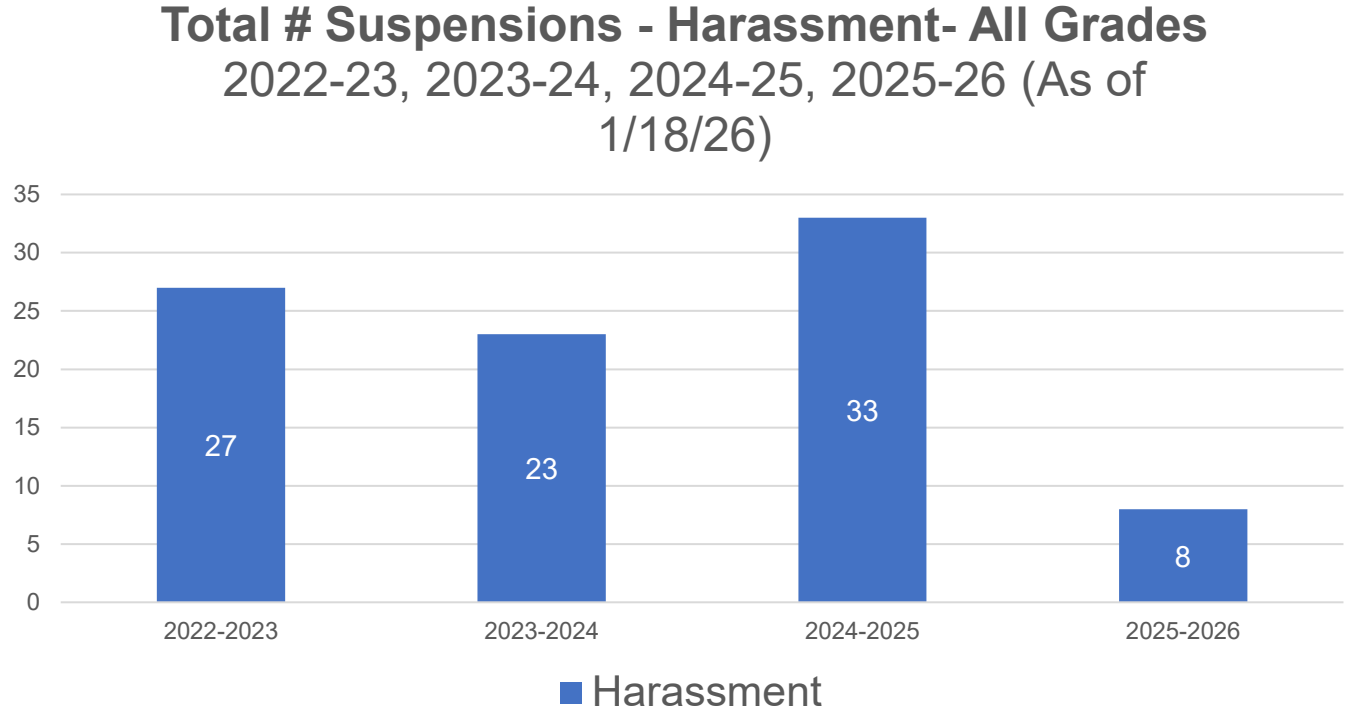


- **Restorative Practices**
  Circles, conferences, and mediation to repair harm and rebuild relationships.
- **Alternatives to Suspension**
  Structured time in alternative spaces with academic work, counseling, and reflection activities.
- **Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)**
  Individualized strategies to address root causes of behavior.
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Interventions**
  Targeted skill-building in self-regulation, conflict resolution, and decision-making.

*As of 1.18.26

Source – APS Insight - Combined school and out of school suspension data

Student to Students - Harassment



Harassment is **unwanted conduct** that targets a person based on a **protected characteristic** and **creates a hostile or intimidating environment**.

- Race
- Sex or gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity or expression
- Disability
- Religion
- National origin

*As of 1.18.26

Source – APS Insight - Combined school and out of school suspension data

Update: Ways to Report

Student Well-Being

***New*: APS 24-hour Confidential Tip Line 703-228-2997**

Implemented in October 2025 – Bullying and any other suspicious or concerning behavior can be reported confidentially. This 24-hour confidential line is monitored by School Safety, Security, and Emergency Management.

Additional ways to report:

- Reports@apsva.us Created in Fall '24
- Report Bullying online form posted on all school websites
- Printed flyers with QR codes in schools
- In-person



Report Bullying

Update: Ways to Report



Student Well-Being

Student Services Bullying Prevention Site Web Traffic

2025-26: (Aug-Jan)

- 1202 Page views
- 884 Unique Visitors

2024-25

- 2,895 Page views
- 2,207 Unique Visitors

2023-24

- 1,778 Page views
- 1,084 Unique Visitors



Report Bullying

Reminder

Student Well-Being

What should I do if I think my child is being bullied or harassed?

WHAT IS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT?

Actions or words, done on purpose, that hurt another person physically or emotionally. It can happen in-person or online.

SAY SOMETHING!

Report the situation.

Contact your school or go to the APS website and complete the Bullying and Harassment Report form.

website:
apsva.us/bullying-prevention
email:
report@apsva.us
report form:
bit.ly/APS-report-bullying

What happens next?

The report will be sent to your child's principal or school-based administrator. They will let you know they have received it within 24 hours.

The principal or school-based administrator will investigate the report and contact the parents/guardians of the student(s) within 2 school days. They will either share the results or provide an estimate of how many more days the school will need.

After the investigation...

Both parties will be contacted in writing with the result of the investigation, any policy violations, and how they may appeal a decision.

For more information, contact your school or visit apsva.us/bullying-prevention



Update: New Electronic Tracking System

- All school administrators were trained on paper process in February 2025.
- A NEW electronic system is currently in beta-testing stage with a small group of administrators across elementary and secondary levels. The goal is to train all administrators prior to SY 2026-27.

Improves

- **Compliance of how bullying & harassment reports are managed:**
  - Parent contact
  - Investigation and decision-making process steps
  - Documentation of supportive measures and interventions

Improves

- **Uniformity across the school district with consistent language**
- **Documentation practices with date stamps and checkpoints**

Improves

- **Alignment with APS Code of Conduct, Administrative Discipline Framework, and all other possible required protocols for bullying (i.e., Serious Incident Report, Title IX Referral, Threat Assessment)**
- **School and district level tracking of data and trends**

New Electronic Tracking System – Feedback from School Administrators

- Feedback from the beta-testing group has been **very** positive across elementary and secondary. Pilot users report:

Improved efficiency, documentation, and accountability (significant improvement over prior Microsoft Word-based process).

Drop-down options which guide administrators through decision-making and best practices.

Ability to revisit open and completed cases to make updates.

Linked decision letters for parents/caregivers.

Administrative protection when parents contact Central Office with concerns or appeals.

Update: Bullying Prevention Curriculum

The school-based student services team facilitates **bullying prevention lessons to all K-12 classrooms.**

- New bullying curriculum was developed by a sub-committee in summer 2024.
- Lessons were enhanced in summer 2025 in collaboration with staff to include scaffolds for English Learners and Students with Disabilities, and pre- and post-surveys to assess skills, knowledge, and attitudes.
- Families were notified of APS developed lessons via Student Services letter in early October.
- First lesson for all grades was delivered in October in alignment with Bullying prevention month and additional lessons are delivered at times selected by the individual schools.
- All lessons can be viewed are on the APS Bullying Prevention webpage.

Bullying Prevention Curriculum Staff Feedback

Elementary	Middle	High
"Overall, have gone well K-5. Identity lessons are short and concise with good information included. Visuals are helpful. Need more scenarios for 4th grade." *"Want to see more empathy built in before for 3rd grade (i.e.,: showed video and students were laughing)."* *"K-2 students remained engaged with bullying and diversity lessons."*	*"For SWD, we do a modified bullying lesson for FLS students (i.e.,: kinder/1st grade APS curriculum)."* *"Counselors had great discussions in their classes, though some students shared that this was "stuff" they had already learned about many times, and some of the pictures were the same." Repetition is good for learning, for sure – but can we vary up the activities/experiences more? We don't want students to tune out of this important conversation."*	*"The lesson for 10th grade students was age-appropriate, students were engaged in both the lesson and the corresponding iceberg worksheet."* *"Students enjoyed the short videos and allowed for engaged group discussion."* *"The lessons are succinct and to the point which is good, as students attention span isn't always so accommodating."* *"Review of pre-test survey data found an overwhelming percentage of respondents answered the objective questions correctly!"*

*As of October 2025

Reminder: "SEL for ALL" APS Students



Student Well-Being

- Newly adapted lessons for Elementary and Secondary students in our self-contained programs- Functional Life Skills (FLS) and Multi-intervention program for autism (MIPA)-version)
  - Focuses on skills directly related to anti-bullying:
    - Asking for Help
    - Saying No (Refusal/Protesting Skills)
    - Requesting/maintaining Personal Space
    - Recognizing Emotions of self
    - Recognizing Emotions of Others
- Lessons developed by multidisciplinary group of specialists, psychologist, counselor, and teachers.
- Delivered by program teachers and student services staff support this facilitation

Update: Training Students & Consultations with Staff

Total # of Student Rights & Responsibilities / Prevention Programs with Students (By Request) 2025-26		
	Total Schools	Total # of Presentations
Elementary	**21**	**84**
Secondary	**5**	**26**

Total # of Staff Consultations	
Elementary	**256**
Secondary	**208**



DEI Staff continue to provide Unconscious Bias training to staff.

Update: Training with Staff & Students

- The Title IX Office conducts trainings and presentations with administrators and stakeholders on sexual harassment and reporting. The trainings include compliance with Title IX regulations and discuss sex-based bullying behaviors and sex-based harassment.
- Recent Offerings:
  - New Administrator Title IX Training (Required)
  - Randolph ES School PTA Title IX Introduction (Requested)
  - Focused Washington-Liberty Title IX Review



Update: Training with Staff & Students

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Climate and Culture Teams - School/Office requested trainings:

STAFF

- School-based administrators & Dean of Students
- Transportation staff
- Extended Day staff
- Food Services staff
- School Safety Coordinators
- PTA Groups



STUDENT

- Kenmore Middle - Class presentations on Interrupting Hate Speech and Using Prosocial Behaviors to all 6th Grade students. The entire student body was trained last year and will continue with each rising 6th grade class.
- Ashlawn ES & Fleet ES – Class presentations on Prosocial Behaviors.

PRE-POST CLASS STUDENT SURVEY DATA *(Kenmore)*

- Increase in students who know what hate speech is.
- Increase in students who know what prosocial behaviors are.
- Increase in students who would either say something to the person, tell a trusted adult, or report it - if they heard or saw hate speech.
- Decrease in students who would ignore it or pretend they didn't hear it - if they heard or saw hate speech.

Next Steps



Student Well-Being

- Full roll-out of online bullying & harassment management system and reporting platform
  - Regular monitoring of discipline data including bullying reports and investigations
- Measuring effectiveness of bullying lessons using pre- and post-survey results
- Continued training on recognizing and interrupting bullying for staff and parent groups

Questions



Appendix

School: All | Grade Range: All | Grade: 4, 5 | Gender: All | Race: All | Special Education Status: All | WIDA/ELP Level: All | Gifted Status: All

Reset to Default

↑ Back to top

Student Well-Being: School Safety

Questions are organized into the following two subpages: Rules and Bullying

YOUR VOICE MATTERS – SCHOOL SAFTEY FULL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA REPORT

2025 Avg Percent Favorability i...



Student Well-Being: School Safety ⚠



Appendix

School: All | Grade Range: All | Grade: **7 selected** | Gender: All | Race: All | Special Education Status: All | WIDA/ELP Level: All | Gifted Status: All

Reset to Default

All

4
5
✓ 6
✓ 7
✓ 8
✓ 9
✓ 10
✓ 11
✓ 12
77

↑ Back to top

S ll-Being: School Safety

Quest to the following two subpages: Rules and Bullying

YOUR VOICE MATTERS – SCHOOL SAFTEY FULL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA REPORT

2025 Avg Percent Favorability i...

ool Safety ⚠

80%
Percent Favorable



Appendix

Bullying & Harassment Supportive Measures

- Counseling support through the investigation/interview process and subsequent concerns
- Participation in daily tier 1 SEL instruction aimed at teaching kindness and reinforcing positive relationship skills (morning meeting)
- Conference with student to review:
  - APS Student Code of Conduct
  - APS Bullying & Harassment Policy
  - Explicit instruction and expectations on gateway behaviors (eye-rolling, prolonged staring, gossiping, laughing, stalking, etc.)
  - Expectations when incidents or misunderstandings occur
- Facilitating restorative circle with group of students or class to explicitly reinforce classroom expectations
- Modification within classroom environment: take a break space, sensory tools, visuals, etc.
- Restriction of classroom privileges (ex: assigned seat, partner, supervised bathroom breaks, etc.)
- On-going parent communication
- Behavior chart
- Use of buddy classroom when student is dysregulated, upset, and/or needs a break
- Short-term individual counseling
- Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)
- Staff member accompanying student to class (short-term)
- Social stories and reflection activity
- Assistance identifying at least 2 trusted adults
- Peer mediation
- Tier 1 intervention (ex: morning meeting to explicitly discuss/teach conflict resolution)
- Targeted behavior intervention or skills modules (i.e. anger management, coping, friendship skills, positive decision-making)
- Social skills/friendship peer group counseling
- Alternative lunch or recess period
- Additional support/flexibility in class (ex: "Handle With Care" email)
- Behavior contract/signature sheets with positive behavior incentives (signed by student, teachers, parents)
- No contact order
- Additional staff supervision during lunch/recess/unstructured time
- Schedule/class change
- Collaborative team meeting with parents to develop Safety Plan which may include:
  - Check-in with administrator/counselor
  - Backpack searches (if related to weapons)
  - Increased supervision (lunch, recess, locker/bathroom use, transitions, etc.)
  - Alternative class routes
  - If/then agreements
  - Access to trusted adult, flash pass
  - Alternative calm down space/breaks
- Consultation with school-based mental health team to develop short/long-term plan of action (may include Tier 2/3 SEL/Behavior Intervention)
- Referral to Student Support Team
- Referral to IEP/504 team to review concerns, additional services, accommodations, goals, etc.
- Referral to Behavior Specialist Team
- Referral to community-based services (Family interventions, wrap-around support, FAPT, DHS, CR2, Arlington Juvenile Courts, etc.)
- Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)
- Conduct Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and develop Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Referral to Office of School Climate & Culture (OSC&C) for Discipline Hearing
- Threat Assessment (as required)
- Consultation with Office of School Safety & Emergency Management (SS&EM)
- Referral to law enforcement as required

Appendix

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

BSC6 – Bullying (Non-Physical)

- Bullying behavior without physical injury that continues after intervention
- Bullying that results in physical injury must be classified as Assault and Battery

BSC7 – Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying behavior that continues after intervention
- Cyberbullying involving threats to the safety of students or staff requires higher-level intervention and consequences

BSC8 – Harassment (Non-Sexual)

- Repeatedly annoying, intimidating, or attacking a student, group of students, or staff
- Creates an intimidating or hostile educational or work environment