



# ALEXANDRIA

## children & youth master plan

### 2014

Approved by the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission on March 14, 2014.  
Approved by the Alexandria School Board and the Alexandria City Council on June 19 and June 24, 2014, respectively.





This report was prepared through a partnership of the Alexandria Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission and the Forum for Youth Investment, using Ready by 21® strategies.

**THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION** advocates for Alexandria's children and youth, aged prenatal to 21 years, and their families by:

1. Advising City Council, the School Board, and City and School staff on policies that affect children, youth and their families;
2. Promoting the coordination, alignment and effectiveness of services provided to children, youth and their families by the City, Alexandria Schools and private organizations; and
3. Studying and promoting research and best practices.

**READY BY 21** is a set of innovative strategies developed by the Forum for Youth Investment to help communities and states make sure all young people are ready for college, work and life. The Forum is a nonprofit, nonpartisan action tank that forges ideas, tools and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them. Ready by 21 is a registered trademark of the Forum. [www.readyby21.org](http://www.readyby21.org).

This document was designed by the Forum for Youth Investment.

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# One City, One Plan: Alexandria's Opportunity

## ALL OF ALEXANDRIA'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUCCEED TODAY AND TOMORROW

In 2010, the Alexandria City Council created the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFCC, or the Commission) with the support of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). Establishing the Commission was a ground-breaking step toward addressing the needs of Alexandria's children in a more holistic manner, moving away from the age-based Commission structure that addressed needs in siloes. The Commission was charged with three distinct responsibilities:

1. Advising the City Council, the School Board, and City and School staff on policies that affect children, youth and their families;
2. Promoting the coordination, alignment and effectiveness of services provided to children, youth and their families by the City, ACPS and private organizations; and
3. Studying and promoting research and best practices.

While the Commission has been involved in several activities related to these responsibilities, its most significant accomplishment is the completion of the city's first Children and Youth Master Plan (the Plan).

This Children and Youth Master Plan provides a blueprint for Alexandria as it seeks to allocate resources to improve outcomes for children, youth and families who call Alexandria their home. The Plan is the result of hundreds of hours of discussion, debate and problem-solving that began with public forums of youth and adults, and continued with a Design Team that was comprised of community, school, faith-based, and parent and youth representation. (See Appendix III for a complete overview of the process and participants.) The Plan is aligned with several existing plans in Alexandria, including the City's Strategic Plan, the Alexandria City Public Schools Strategic Plan and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria Strategic Plan. (See Appendix VII for a full list of plans and the priority areas that they address.)

The Plan aspires to maximize taxpayer and private investment, and to improve outcomes for all children and youth regardless of where they live and what schools they attend. The Plan envisions an Alexandria with a youth-serving culture that is more than the sum of its parts – a city where each program and initiative collaborates to boost outcomes for individual children and families, while creating a culture of safety, social and civic engagement, and academic and vocational aspiration.

### Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision emerged early and centered on the idea that “All of Alexandria's children and youth can succeed today and tomorrow.” So often, a vision focuses on a future condition; many of the young people who participated in the process asked that everyone remain mindful that succeeding today is also important. The more the Commission discussed the barriers to progress from the community's perspective, the more evident it became that the Commission needed to identify a set of guiding principles to complete this work. Community members wanted to make certain that the Commission would craft a Plan that focuses on all young people from birth through 21 who reside in the City of Alexandria. In particular, the Plan:

- Recognizes and addresses the inequities that limit the life chances of some young people and the lack of services to address these inequities.
- Establishes a comprehensive, measurable set of cradle-to-career goals that include (but are not limited to) academic success.
- Identifies a range of solutions – from broad strategies that will increase economic opportunities to focused strategies that will increase youth resilience – all aimed at improving youth outcomes across the board.
- Requires commitment and collaboration across youth-serving organizations, systems and sectors, and accountability by the city's elected and public officials.

- Recognizes the need to collect useful data, as well as to better train service providers and officials to use the data to prioritize resources and improve services.
- Builds on and links to other plans in the city.

## Understanding the Structure of the Plan

The Commission generated five **Goals** designed to meet our vision that all of Alexandria's children and youth succeed today and tomorrow. Progress toward achieving these broad Goals will be reflected through improvement in key community indicators. The Children and Youth Master Plan also defines a specific set of **Strategies** for accomplishing each Goal. The Plan provides **Action Steps** to begin carrying out the strategies and, where appropriate, suggests stakeholders to lead those Action Steps.

To realize this vision, the Commission's plan presents these five Goals for children, youth and families, as well as the organizations that serve them in the City of Alexandria:

1. Every child will be physically safe and healthy.
2. Every child will be academically successful and career-ready.
3. Every child will be socially connected, emotionally secure and culturally competent.
4. Every family will be equipped and empowered to support the well-being of their children.
5. Alexandria's systems and institutions will be responsive, coordinated, efficient and effective in service to children and families.

These Goals cannot be achieved without implementing specific Action Steps to advance Strategies that are supported by research. The Commission identified a set of preliminary key indicators to understand progress towards these Goals (See Appendix I). Action Steps should be undertaken in a measurable fashion and only if they can have a material impact in furthering a particular Strategy.

## Accountability and Timeline for Action

The vision and goals identified in the Children and Youth Master Plan can be accomplished with a strong commitment from Alexandria's elected officials and senior staff, as well as with the support of nonprofits, the private sector and the community. To track success, an accountability framework is defined as part of Goal 5.

The successful implementation of this plan should result in material and significant, measured improvement in the headline indicators within five (5) years of this Plan's adoption. The Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission will monitor progress on every Strategy each year, including prioritizing and assessing each Strategy for feasibility. The Plan's intent is that each Strategy be fully implemented within four (4) years of this Plan's adoption.

The Action Steps defined in this Children and Youth Master Plan are considered "first steps," and unless specified otherwise, should be accomplished within one (1) year of this Plan's adoption. The Children Youth and Families Collaborative Commission will regularly monitor progress on completion of the action steps. It is expected that the listed Action Steps to be undertaken may change in light of changed circumstances, new information, and/or the accomplishment of an item.

The Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission will have an important ongoing role in monitoring and publicizing implementation of the Plan. Ultimately, however, the results will rely on the active, coordinated leadership of the people and institutions providing services to children, youth and families in Alexandria. Their efforts need to be fully supported by the entire community.

## The Profile of Children & Youth Well-Being in Alexandria

The Alexandria Children and Youth Well-Being Profile 2013 is a companion document to the Children and Youth Master Plan. The Profile contains data and research findings used to assess the well-being of Alexandria's young people and support the development of the goals, strategies and action steps of the Master Plan. The data comes from public records, including the 2010 U.S. Census, the Commonwealth of Virginia data, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and the Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors.



# Acknowledgements

The City of Alexandria gratefully acknowledges the leadership of the Alexandria Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission and the Children and Youth Master Plan Design Team for the countless hours of service devoted to the development of this document. The City is also thankful for the members of the City Council and School Board, other elected and public officials, residents – especially youth who participated in the planning sessions – community agency representatives and City staff for their commitment to supporting the well-being, success and achievement of our children, youth and families. Finally, the City is grateful to the staff of the Forum for Youth Investment, for their invaluable consultation and expertise.

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“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.”

- American Architect and City Planner Daniel Hudson Burnham

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**GOALS**



# Goal 1

## EVERY CHILD WILL BE PHYSICALLY SAFE & HEALTHY

Many city agencies, organizations, nonprofits and programs on the local, state and federal levels target the health and wellness of children and youth. This plan recommends that the City and youth-serving organizations support and expand these efforts. The City, ACPS and related organizations can support efforts to decrease child abuse, exposure to drugs and violence, and other factors that put at risk the healthy development of children and youth throughout the city. The comprehensive approach envisioned by this plan will identify risk factors and encourage enrollment in wrap-around, 360-degree services from the City and its partners. The Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria has been leading important work in this area and its work is strongly endorsed.

## STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

### 1.1 Support the related efforts of public and private entities to improve the health, wellness and safety of children, youth and families.

- 1.1.1 Endorse and support initiatives of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria and its affiliate subcommittees, such as the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network (ACOAN), that promote the health of children, youth and families, including nutrition awareness and physical activity.
- 1.1.2 Promote the resources provided to residents by the Substance Abuse Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA), the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP) and the Gang Prevention Community Task Force, and expand the offerings of the FACE Center to include education on healthy habits.
- 1.1.3 Promote and support ACPS' operation of its mobile health van.
- 1.1.4 Increase and support efforts to address unmet child oral health needs in Alexandria.
- 1.1.5 Support the efforts of organizations working to decrease and mitigate the effects of child abuse and exposure to violence, and to improve the safety of environments for children.

### 1.2 Increase access to services that support the health, wellness and safety of children, youth and families, particularly those most vulnerable.

- 1.2.1 Focus resources, particularly information about and access to prenatal care, in areas of the city where the percentages of births to single mothers, mothers with less than a high school education and mothers not receiving prenatal care are higher than the city, state or national averages.
- 1.2.2 Ensure that City-supported, out-of-school time programs include adequate access to health, wellness, sports and fitness activities in all areas of the city; are free or low-cost; and are located at neighborhood schools/ recreation centers.
- 1.2.3 Increase access to available public or subsidized health insurance for uninsured children.
- 1.2.4 Collect reliable demographic and outcome data for use in monitoring the impact of culturally and linguistically-appropriate health equity services and to inform service delivery.

### 1.3 Advocate for and endorse policies that promote the health, wellness and safety of children, youth and families.

- 1.3.1 Advocate for health promotion policies, including the Medicaid expansion option under the federal Affordable Care Act and smoke-free policies for multi-unit housing.
- 1.3.2 Increase the number of Alexandria farmers' markets that accept payments through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- 1.3.3 Work with Alexandria's business community to expand support for breastfeeding and awareness of its benefits.
- 1.3.4 Support and endorse policies that provide for safe and healthy housing for families in the city and that include mechanisms for supporting the healthy development of children who reside there.

# Goal 2

## EVERY CHILD WILL BE ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL & CAREER READY

This plan is designed to ensure that every child will be prepared to enter school, succeed academically and ultimately be prepared for a career. Preparing the children and youth of Alexandria to be academically successful and vocationally prepared has been the single-minded focus of ACPS and its leadership for many years. This focus needs to be augmented by a community-wide effort to support our children and youth in public, parochial and independent schools by promoting high expectations and achievement for all of the city's students. This plan emphasizes that ACPS, City programs, private schools and the business community must communicate, share data and work together to encourage parent engagement and student achievement for all of Alexandria's children and youth, from birth to 21.

## STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

### 2.1 Support the development and alignment of, and access to, an early care and education system that prepares young children to enter kindergarten.

- 2.1.1 Create an integrated and aligned early care and education strategy that focuses on access (no wrong door/single point of entry), quality (National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems) and public awareness (all who qualify participate, all parents understand the value of preschool, all parents are aware of the rating system).
- 2.1.2 Ensure that high-quality early care and education programs are both geographically and culturally accessible, particularly in areas of the city seeing higher than average increases in children ages 0–5 (i.e., West End).
- 2.1.3 Create a plan to strengthen early childhood/elementary school alignment to support the transition from pre-school to kindergarten for children, parents and educators. Examples might include regular meetings between early childhood program leaders and principals/district leadership on ways to improve curriculum alignment, assessment and professional development.
- 2.1.4 Provide parents with resources to support early literacy learning, starting when their children are born.

### 2.2 Provide every child access to consistent, high-quality K–12 learning experiences.

- 2.2.1 Coordinate with and support the efforts of ACPS and other schools to demonstrate that every student achieves at least one year of academic progress annually in reading, writing and math, and greater than one year of progress for each student who is below grade-level in those areas.
- 2.2.2 In instances where students are not meeting grade-level expectations, align in-school and afterschool programs that deliver academic/social enrichment with the school curriculum.
- 2.2.3 Develop community-based programs for children with special needs in order to reduce the number of children in out-of-community care and to increase opportunities for all students with disabilities.
- 2.2.4 Identify and eliminate the barriers that inhibit high expectations and achievement for all children and youth, regardless of ability, class, citizenship, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation.
- 2.2.5 Examine the assessment practices that lead to disproportionate rates of students of color in Special Education and in Talented and Gifted programs.
- 2.2.6 Establish mechanisms (such as working groups, conferences and dialogs) to allow educational leaders to coordinate their programs to ensure that children are appropriately prepared to move from one educational level to another. Provide cross-training for educators and others involved in supporting children and youth across these key transitions, focusing on developing cross-system communication, sharing/using data and strengthening/continuing parental engagement.

## 2.3 Ensure that all youth have access to the resources they need for educational and career success.

- 2.3.1 Identify and address barriers to successful transitions for secondary school students moving to higher education, career pathways and/or independent living.
- 2.3.2 Provide mentoring, coaching and leadership development for youth (including youth with disabilities) that foster job readiness/workforce skills and that help youth find and maintain employment. Engage the business community to support these efforts.
- 2.3.3 Increase the number of partnerships between businesses and public/private entities to create job opportunities and encourage entrepreneurship among youth, especially in employment sectors that might be growing (i.e., health/elder care and green housing audits).

## 2.4 Advocate for and endorse public policies that promote high-quality learning experiences across the age continuum.

- 2.4.1 Advocate at the city and state level for the recommendations offered by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation around the creation of an integrated early childhood longitudinal data system.
- 2.4.2 Support and advocate for efforts at the state level to ensure effective measurement of children's readiness and growth through a comprehensive kindergarten assessment.
- 2.4.3 Advocate for the City Planning and Zoning Commission to create viable incentives for developers to include early child care and education space in all new developments.



# Goal 3

## **EVERY CHILD WILL BE SOCIALLY CONNECTED, EMOTIONALLY SECURE & CULTURALLY COMPETENT**

Success throughout life depends upon a child becoming socially connected, emotionally secure and culturally competent. Our city cares about its children and youth, and the thousands of hours logged by volunteers to support children and youth in their “out-of-school” time is one of the best assets for supporting the personal development of young people. This Children and Youth Master Plan seeks to strengthen the city’s myriad out-of-school programs and to learn from the best practices of other communities in order to improve positive outcomes for children and youth.

### **STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS**

#### **3.1 Support the development and alignment of programs that foster social-emotional development of children and youth in and out of school.**

- 3.1.1 Create an integrated and aligned out-of-school time system that includes review of best practices/quality, assessment of needs and preferences, identification of service gaps, access (no wrong door/single point of entry), affordability and opportunities to develop civic responsibility.
- 3.1.2 Expand, coordinate and align youth mentoring programs to ensure that all children have a relationship with a responsible mentor.
- 3.1.3 Develop programs, in partnership between the City and schools, that build skills in healthy decision making, anger management, coping and problem-solving.

#### **3.2 Increase access to opportunities for social-emotional development, particularly for the most vulnerable children and youth.**

- 3.2.1 Create awareness of and promote therapeutic recreation services and sports programs for children with disabilities (e.g., the Miracle League).
- 3.2.2 Seek resources to expand mental health/substance abuse prevention and treatment programs in a variety of settings.
- 3.2.3 Train trainers in Youth Mental Health First Aid and develop a plan for educating the youth-serving community.

#### **3.3 Advocate for and endorse public policies that promote the social-emotional development of children and youth.**

- 3.3.1 Educate boards, commissions and neighborhood associations about the importance of involving youth in decision making.
- 3.3.2 Use education, recruitment and incentives to encourage youth participation in decision-making bodies.
- 3.3.3 Increase funding to support more accessible programs for children with special needs and other vulnerable populations.

#### **3.4 Cultivate cultural competence and connections among children and youth and those who serve them.**

- 3.4.1 Create a subcommittee of the CYFCC to focus on cultural competence. Activities of the committee could include: developing a report about what cultures exist in Alexandria; researching best practices for increasing cultural competence and equity in schools and other youth programs; identifying and evaluating measures of cultural competence and connection; and making recommendations about the use of those measures.

- 3.4.2 Promote awareness of opportunities for the community to support the special needs population, such as volunteering at Miracle League games or attending “Family Day” at therapeutic recreation programs.
- 3.4.3 Advocate for an expanded definition of culture beyond “color” to determine the culturally, linguistically, racially and ethnically diverse groups within the Alexandria community.
- 3.4.4 Provide diversity training for all City and school staff, focused on developing skills for cross-cultural awareness, understanding and communication.
- 3.4.5 Host a series of Courageous Conversation sessions to engage the Alexandria community in a dialogue about diversity and to promote an understanding of diversity.
- 3.4.6 Offer a variety of training programs for youth and families that focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and inclusion.
- 3.4.7 Support opportunities to diversify afterschool programs and intergroup contact for youth.

# Goal 4

## **EVERY FAMILY WILL BE EQUIPPED & EMPOWERED TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT THE WELL-BEING OF THEIR CHILDREN**

The well-being of children and youth in Alexandria begins at home – with strong, loving families who are supported by the community and equipped with the tools to advocate for their kids. A critical goal of the Plan is ensuring that the city, ACPS and private and nonprofit institutions are welcoming and supportive of Alexandria families, and strive to provide parents, grandparents, guardians and other caring adults with the services they need to raise healthy, strong and aspirational children. Achieving this goal of family engagement requires coordinated action and clear accountability.

### **STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS**

- 4.1 Support high-quality, coordinated services for parents and guardians to be leaders in the learning and development of their children.**
  - 4.1.1 Support parenting programs, services and support groups by helping to eliminate barriers to participation (i.e., transportation, child care, interpreter services, outreach and facilities) and to coordinate joint efforts.
  - 4.1.2 Implement a cross-agency performance management system to assess quality, share data, monitor progress, manage referrals and report outcomes of family-focused programs.
  - 4.1.3 Develop an early warning system among schools and other child-serving/social service agencies to identify problems early and engage families in addressing such problems.
- 4.2 Increase awareness of and access to programs and services for families**
  - 4.2.1 Implement a cross-agency outreach campaign to increase awareness among underserved populations of local, state and federal supports available to them.
  - 4.2.2 Explore ways to identify early those children most at risk (i.e., those with multiple risk factors) and enroll them in all services for which they are eligible.
  - 4.2.3 Provide the families of students with special needs with the information they need to access services, programs, activities and supports.
  - 4.2.4 Implement a comprehensive language support system for all city programs.
- 4.3 Endorse and advocate for public policies and economic opportunities that equip and empower families.**
  - 4.3.1 Establish and fill seats on relevant city commissions for youth and their families, improve recruitment strategies for those seats, promote participation, and provide appropriate orientation to new members and returning commission members.
  - 4.3.2 Designate members of various city-wide committees – including the CYFCC, the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and the Alexandria Transportation Committee – to serve as liaisons to each other's committees in order to ensure coordination in planning and advocacy.
  - 4.3.3 Promote the expansion of current economic development opportunities for youth and families by supporting the work of other city commissions focused on economic development, economic opportunity and housing.



#### 4.4 Ensure that services and programs for families are client-centered, culturally responsive and welcoming to all families.

- 4.4.1 Provide professional development and customer service training for all staff across ACPS and City programs that serve families. Training should include the idea of “no wrong door,” so staff are prepared to offer excellent customer service beyond their specific departments.
- 4.4.2 Develop and adopt a Parent’s Bill of Rights and Responsibilities to be posted in all ACPS and City facilities, reflecting the City’s commitment to parental engagement and parents’ value as partners in their children’s education and healthy development.
- 4.4.3 Identify meaningful metrics to evaluate City programs and services for families to ensure that they are client-centered, culturally responsive and welcoming to all families.
- 4.4.4 Create an annual satisfaction survey of City-provided and City-funded services, with results incorporated into all relevant performance metrics.

# Goal 5

## **ALEXANDRIA'S SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS WILL BE RESPONSIVE, COORDINATED, EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE IN SERVICE TO CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

No single entity has the resources or authority to bring about the improvements envisioned by this Children and Youth Master Plan. Alexandria can be a community that celebrates and honors organizational initiative and innovation. However, in a climate of diminished financial resources and urgent need, efforts must be focused and cumulative in their impact. Coordination, collaboration and accountability will be the key to the success of the Plan.

The experiences of other communities that have sought to improve outcomes for children, youth and families in ways similar to those in this Youth Master Plan show the need for highly structured and persistent collaborative efforts. Research points to the need for public and private agencies working in Alexandria to have a common agenda, shared measurement processes and organizational support in order for the goals of this Children and Youth Master Plan to be fully realized.

The City and ACPS must first become better aligned and coordinated to provide better outcomes. Alexandria is taking significant steps to improve the accountability of its publicly supported programs, through the efforts of the City Manager to align the budget process with performance expectations of the City government. Program and service alignment toward the common goals defined in this Youth Master Plan needs to be expanded in a structured, supported fashion to include nonprofit organizations, private enterprise and other governmental agencies.

## **STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS**

### **5.1 The City Council and ACPS School Board, by approving and adopting this Children and Youth Master Plan, take responsibility for its timely implementation and the positive outcomes for children, youth and families.**

- 5.1.1 City and ACPS staff shall use the Youth Master Plan goals, objectives and strategies to modify their work plans and determine the amount of outside support needed to implement the strategies.
- 5.1.2 City Council should direct the City Manager to incorporate the Goals, Strategies and Action Steps in this Youth Master Plan as part of the Healthy and Thriving Residents Focus Area of the City Manager's Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2015, and work with all City departments and agencies to develop and to report on a schedule for implementing this Plan.
- 5.1.3 The School Board should direct the Superintendent to fully implement this Children and Youth Master Plan and to develop a schedule for its implementation.
- 5.1.4 The City Council/School Board Sub-Committee – which includes the Alexandria Mayor and the Chair of the ACPS board, and the City and Schools Staff Group – should prioritize the implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan and monitor the related progress.
- 5.1.5 The City Manager and the Superintendent of Schools should work together to ensure timely and effective cross-department coordination and collaboration to carry out this Plan, and commit to inviting, learning from and collaborating with nonprofit youth and family-serving programs in the city.
- 5.1.6 The Children, Youth and Families Commission should report on a regular basis and in its Annual Report to the public and the City Council on the progress made on the action steps contained in this Youth Master Plan.

### **5.2 Utilize incentives and build capacity for alignment and collaboration among public and private organizations and systems serving children, youth and families in Alexandria.**

- 5.2.1 The City should offer a competitive opportunity to select an entity or entities responsible for facilitating and structuring an approach that fosters collaboration among public and private agencies serving Alexandria children, youth and families. Such an entity or entities should have the ability to raise funds from public and private sources to support the collaborative efforts in this Plan, as well as to conduct research and hire skilled staff.

- 5.2.2 Require that private organizations that receive funds or support from the City or ACPS, and that serve children, youth and/or families, review and support the implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan.
- 5.2.3 Advocate for federal and state reporting requirements that allow cities to be more flexible in the use of funding and in reporting results.
- 5.2.4 Strengthen the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission to ensure it has the capacity and expertise to effectively support and monitor the implementation of this Plan.

### 5.3 Develop and use a common system of measurement to improve the delivery of services.

- 5.3.1 CYFCC, with the support of its Data Subcommittee, will prepare a report of best practices from other communities and recommend strategies for moving forward with a common system of measurement.
- 5.3.2 Advocate and work with state level agencies to improve both access to and quality of key metric data.
- 5.3.3 Support and advocate for ACPS (and other schools when possible) to administer the Developmental Assets and Youth Risk Behavior surveys on a recurring basis.

### 5.4 Engage with the public to ensure long-term successful implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan.

- 5.4.1 To create maximum transparency for all stakeholders, by Fiscal Year 2016 the City Finance Department shall create a section of the City and ACPS budgets that clearly enumerates all funding streams and expenses that support services for children, youth and families. The Commission shall work with the City Manager, City budget officials, ACPS budget officials and the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee to develop a recommended structure for the Children and Youth Budget and regularly recommend a clear set of priorities that aligns with the Children and Youth Master Plan for the use of funds allocated to public and private agencies.
- 5.4.2 The Commission shall communicate regularly with other Boards and Commissions, community groups and the public regarding the status of implementation of this Plan and the impact of implantation on key indicators, using all available means of communication.
- 5.4.3 The Commission should hold regular hearings regarding the status of Plan implementation by the City, ACPS and private agencies.

### 5.5 Provide effective, equitable, understandable and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural beliefs and practices, preferred languages, levels of literacy and other communication needs.

- 5.5.1 Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in Alexandria.
- 5.5.2 Partner with the community to design, implement and evaluate policies, practices and services to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness.
- 5.5.3 Implement a measure of cultural competency across all city departments and schools in order to demonstrate organizational capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve.





# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1

## DASHBOARD: TRACKING DATA

In order to realize the vision “All of Alexandria’s children and youth succeeding today and tomorrow,” the Design Team developed goals to make the process more manageable. They began the process by creating two work groups: one focused on crafting broad goal statements that conveyed the community’s desires for Alexandria’s children and youth, and one charged with reviewing and assessing the data available to measure progress toward these goals.

The Design Team selected data in key areas based on 1) ability to track data over time, 2) the data’s significance in representing achievement of an outcome, and 3) the data’s resonance with community concerns. The headline indicators associated with these areas will be tracked by the CYFCC using the following dashboard. The companion document, the Alexandria Children and Youth Well-Being Profile 2013, provides a baseline, a summary of the research behind the goals and measures, and a broader set of indicators.

Measures may be added and replaced as better measures are identified.

The dashboard provides a statistical snapshot of information on the well-being of children and youth in Alexandria. It shows “headline data” based on current and historical trends of key indicators. The dashboard is provided here to show conditions that the Plan is designed to improve. To gain a fuller perspective of the status of children and youth, and to review the data considered by the Design Team, see the Alexandria Youth Well-Being Profile 2013, which served as a reference for the Design Team.

The dashboard, through color coding, provides two pieces of information on each indicator:

- Based on the most recent data, how well are Alexandria’s children and youth doing?
- Is the trend getting better or worse?

## DATA CODING

Where there is trend data, the data point is color coded:

**Red:** Moving in the opposite direction of desired result

**Yellow:** Staying about the same

**Green:** Moving in the desired direction

For example, the first data indicator in the dashboard illustrates the percentage of students who demonstrated readiness for kindergarten. The **Green** (87%) indicates that the figure has increased over the past few years (i.e., trending in the right direction).

# CHILDREN & YOUTH MASTER PLAN DASHBOARD

	Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Youth	Young Adult
<b>Academically and vocationally successful</b>				
Kindergarten Readiness	87%			
3rd Grade Reading Proficiency*		76%		
Student Attendance for Middle Grades**		94-98%		
Algebra I Proficiency*		63%		
High School Dropout Rate*			12%	
Mean SAT Score for Low-Income Students			1242	
Unemployment			21%	11%
Enrolled in any institution of higher education within 16 months of earning a high school diploma				60%
<b>Culturally competent and connected</b>				
Cultural Competence		53%	53%	
<b>Emotionally secure, hopeful and resilient</b>				
Made a plan about how they would attempt suicide*		12%	10%	
Caring Adult		47%	45%	
Planning and Decision-Making		36%	37%	
<b>Physically safe and healthy</b>				
Low/Very Low Birth Weight	8.5%			
Rate of Teen Pregnancies Per 1,000 Girls Ages 1-19				33
Founded Child Abuse		1.8%		
Engaged in 5+ Days of Exercise Lasting 60 Min. or More		53%	33%	
<b>Socially and civically engaged and empowered</b>				
Service to Others		47%	45%	
Number of Group A Juvenile Crime (Serious Crimes)		229		
Afterschool Program Participation (comparison to region)		84%		

\*This data point will be disaggregated and reported by race.

\*\*Historically, Alexandria City Public Schools middle schools displayed little variance on the student attendance measure, with ranges varying from 94 to 98 percent from 2008 to 2011. The latest data will be published when it is available.



# Appendix 2

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

**Children and Youth Master Plan:** a document detailing the Outcomes, Community Priority Areas and Strategies as selected by the Child Youth and Families Collaborative Commission and its appointed Design Team.

**Goal:** a desired condition of well-being (e.g., children born healthy; clean environment) for children, youth, families and Alexandria's institutions.

**Strategy:** an overarching intent; a measurable approach the city can rely on to make a meaningful contribution towards a goal.

**Action Step:** something the city can do as part of a strategy, with specific activities and timeframe.

**Indicator:** a way to measure progress toward a result (e.g., rate of low birth weight; air quality index).

**ACAP:** Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy

**ACHSO:** Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations

**ACPS:** Alexandria City Public Schools

**ACT:** ACT for Alexandria

**ARHA:** Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority

**CAC:** Center for Alexandria's Children

**CYFCC:** Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission

**DCHS:** Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services

**DSS:** Virginia Department of Social Services

**FACE Center:** Family and Community Engagement Center

**NOVA:** Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College

**NVCC:** Northern Virginia Community College

**RPCA:** Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

**SAPCA:** Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria

**SCAN:** Stop Child Abuse Now

**VDH:** Virginia Department of Health

# Appendix 3

## ABOUT THE ALEXANDRIA CHILDREN AND YOUTH MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Relationships. Relevance. Rigor. These words were evoked throughout the process of designing the Youth Master Plan. The CYFCC selected the Forum for Youth Investment (Forum) to guide and support the planning process using its field-tested Ready by 21<sup>®</sup> approach. The Design Team— an interim team appointed by the CYFCC—worked with the Forum to create a process to ensure that the planning was grounded in data, informed by a diversity of perspectives and structured in a way that encouraged meaningful and sustained participation by a wide array of residents and existing partnerships.

The Design Team was comprised of 30 administrative and community leaders with expertise in the child and youth sector, including:

ACPS School Board	NAACP Education Committee, Alexandria Branch
Center for Alexandria's Children	Workforce Investment Board
Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services	Alexandria Parent Teacher Association
Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria	Public Health Advisory Commission
Alexandria Tutoring Consortium	Montgomery Street Family Resource Center
Alexandria Gang Response Intervention Team	Local private businesses
Tenants and Workers United	Faith-based community

These leaders met regularly, building relationships with each other, delving into the data and creating opportunities for the community to explore and engage with the issues.

Between November 2012 and July 2013, the Design Team worked with the Forum to:

- Define a vision statement and core principles to guide the work.
- Codify the five broad goal statements that now serve as the City's definition of child and youth success.
- Review and compile the data and research on these goals into the Alexandria Children and Youth Well-Being Profile, the companion document to this report.
- Engage more than 400 youth and adults in six public forums that provided opportunities to elicit input from community members, examine the data about Alexandria's youth, identify priority indicators, discuss the root causes and local conditions behind the data and suggest solutions.
- Engage nearly 200 middle and high school students in nine forums in which they created and reviewed their own data. The students responded to 12 multiple choice statements about the quality of the experiences they have in their schools and neighborhoods, as well as the extent to which they feel prepared for their futures and then discussed the reasons behind their responses.
- Pinpoint the community priorities for action that emerged from these forums to identify cross-cutting themes to address in work groups.
- Lead work groups charged with reviewing relevant research and practices, reviewing other relevant city plans and developing action recommendations.

With the publishing of the Plan, the CYFCC adds four Rs to the list: Responsibility. Reporting. Resources. Responsiveness.

- Responsibility— This Plan will come to fruition through ongoing stewardship from the CYFCC and community stakeholders.
- Reporting—Utilization of a clear process for reporting and tracking progress and setbacks.
- Resources— While there are proposed action steps that require few resources, additional funding will be needed to accomplish the agenda.
- Responsiveness—The framework of the Plan provides structure, yet the Plan will be nimble to accommodate course corrections, innovations and other changes.

THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE PROCESS

The CYFCC chose to partner with the Forum for Youth Investment to guide the Plan development process because of its experience and its step-by-step whole child/whole community approach to achieving collective impact.

Like the Forum, Alexandria’s residents affirm that academic progress is a critical yet insufficient indicator of whether children are thriving and successful. The Forum uses three gears to describe the relationship between youth outcomes, community supports and community leadership. Using this Master Plan to begin moving “the small gear” will make the biggest difference for youth outcomes.



The Design Team developed the following core principles that guided the work at every step:

How We Lead	How We Improve Our Community Supports	How We Approach Our Children & Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage all sectors and stakeholders.</li><li>See youth and families as change agents, not clients.</li><li>Inspire and inform the public.</li><li>Value diversity and acknowledge its impact.</li><li>Coordinate efforts and align resources.</li><li>Establish real, reasonable expectations and metrics to assess progress.</li><li>Learn from the success of others.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognize that children don’t grow up in programs, but in families and communities.</li><li>Support a full range of learning opportunities – formal and informal, in school and out.</li><li>Assess and improve quality, reach and impact across all of the places young people spend their time.</li><li>Recruit, train and retain good staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support the whole child.</li><li>Invest in the early years and sustain those investments over a child’s development.</li><li>Build on strengths; don’t just focus on problem reduction.</li><li>Focus attention on those most in need.</li><li>Address gaps in preparation in order to reduce gaps in achievement.</li></ul>

# Appendix 4

## COMMUNITY INPUT

More than 400 residents participated in six public forums to help inform this plan. At each forum, adults and youth broke into workgroups to examine data found in the Children and Youth Well-Being Profile, identify priority issues, discuss the root causes and local conditions behind those issues and suggest solutions. The discussions affirmed the five desired goal areas that make up the Children and Youth Master Plan.

The participants voted for the indicators that were most important to them, then separated into workgroups to discuss specific issues such as truancy, substance abuse and participation in community activities. The purpose of this discussion was to understand the root causes behind these issues. All of the participants then came together to compare the root causes. What they found was striking. From issues impacting early childhood to young adults, there were common barriers identified as consistently impeding the healthy development of Alexandria's young people.

In order to comprehensively address these barriers, a number of community priorities were developed:

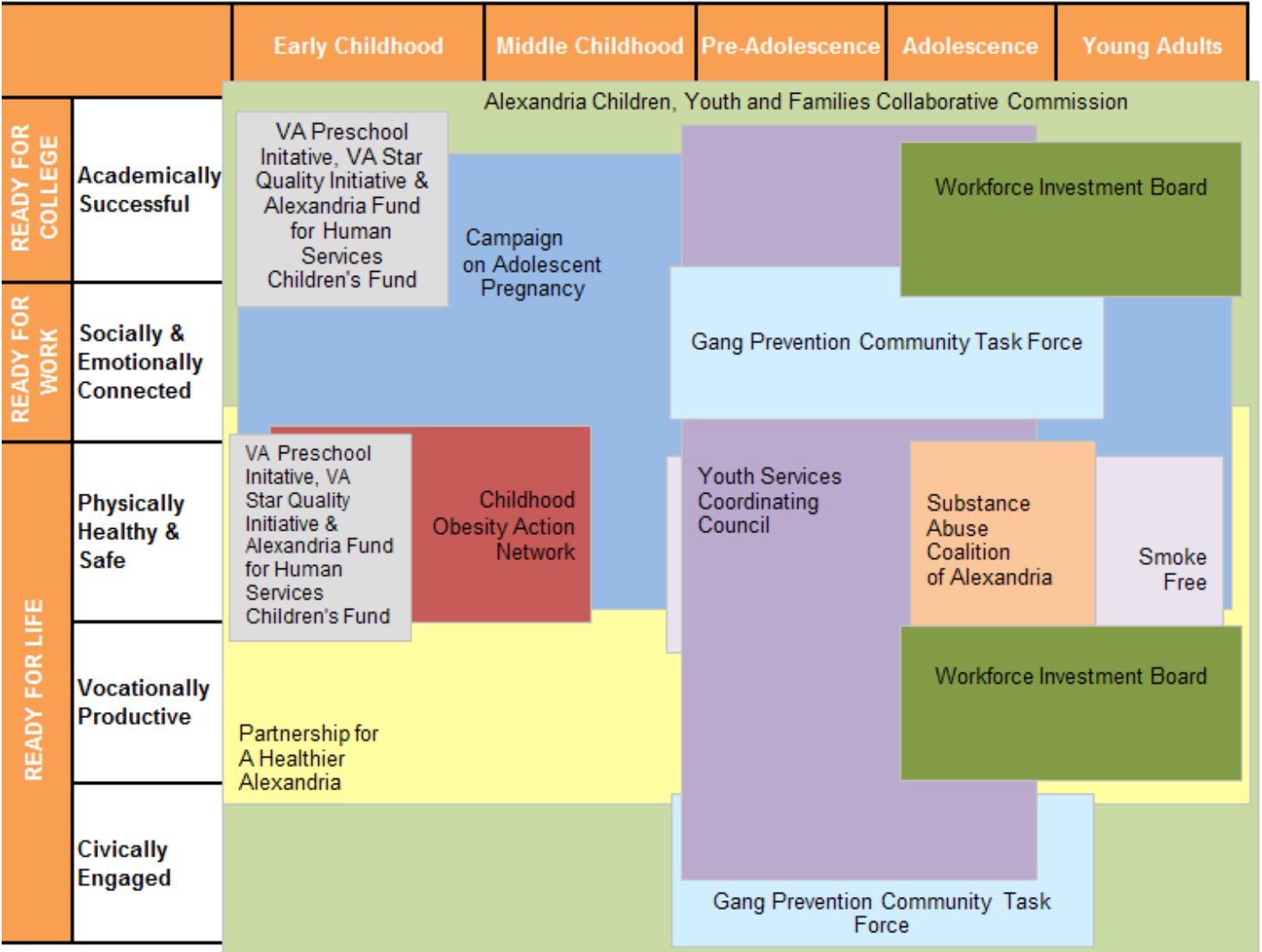
- Supporting Social, Emotional, Intellectual and Physical Growth
- Empowering and Equipping Families
- Creating Caring Networks and Systems
- Promoting Equity and Nurturing Cultural Connections
- Improving Economic Opportunities
- Data, Implementation and Fiscal Accountability

These priority areas served as the framework for the planning and development process for the Children and Youth Master Plan, with workgroups of the Design Team developing initial strategies and potential action steps to address each of the priority areas. During the next stage of the Plan development, the CYFCC decided to reorganize the strategies and action steps around each of the Plan Goals, while ensuring that the community priorities remained at the core of the plan.

# Appendix 5

## ALEXANDRIA'S MOVING TRAINS

The Forum reviewed the work of a number of coalitions and networks (i.e., moving trains) to better understand their outcome focus and age focus. The chart below provides a glimpse of the many active endeavors in Alexandria. One goal of a master plan is to leverage opportunities to align efforts working toward the same goals.





# Appendix 6

## YOUTH FORUMS SUMMARY

Nine youth forums were held in May 2013; three each at George Washington Elementary School, Hammond Middle School and the Interim Education building. Guidance counselors and administrators at each site selected forum participants, assuring a representative sample of the respective student bodies. Using keypads that immediately tabulated and visually displayed the results, 191 ACPS middle and high school students responded to 12 multiple choice statements/questions. Here is a sampling:

### I enjoy coming to school.

46% of the students strongly agreed or agreed. Support was highest among GW 6th graders (68% strongly agreed or agreed). A significant number of students (29%) were neutral, including 42% of 6th graders and 36% of 7th graders at Hammond, and 36% of 7th graders at GW.

### I feel prepared to go to high school.

Two-thirds of all the students felt prepared for high school. The percentage was higher for GW 8th graders (79%) and Hammond 8th graders (74%). More than one-third of those enrolled in the Interim Education high school program strongly disagreed or disagreed. The number of neutral responses was high: 21% overall, 27% for GW 7th graders and 32% for Hammond 6th graders.

### I am struggling with my school work.

Of the total number of students participating in the forums, 46% strongly disagreed or disagreed with that statement. The highest incidence of students who said they were not struggling was among GW 6th graders (52%) and Hammond 8th graders (55%). Almost one-third of all students (32%) chose “neutral.” Choosing neutral were 60% of Interim Education middle school students, 44% of GW 7th graders and 42% of Hammond 6th graders. Over one-third (37%, or 10 students) of Hammond 7th graders indicated they are struggling. Five (42%) Interim Education high school students and nine (27%) of GW 8th graders indicated they are struggling.

### I have considered dropping out of school.

The vast majority of students (83%) indicated they had not considered dropping out of school. However, 44% of the students in Interim Education did agree with the statement, as did five Hammond 6th graders (26%).

### The City of Alexandria provides meaningful out-of-school time activities for youth.

While only 45% of all the students supported that statement, 73% of GW 8th graders did. However, 67% of the students in Interim Education and 64% of Hammond 7th graders strongly disagreed or disagreed. One-fifth of all students were neutral.

### A number of boards and commissions in the City of Alexandria have seats for youth representatives that too often go unfilled. What would increase civic engagement among teens?

The option selected by most students (36%) was to better publicize opportunities; 80% of Interim Education middle school students indicated a need for more publicity. The second-most popular option was creating a City Council youth advisor (33%, or 60 students). A number of comments spoke of the challenge that transportation poses for youth who want to participate.

### What can be done to help teens better appreciate and value different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds?

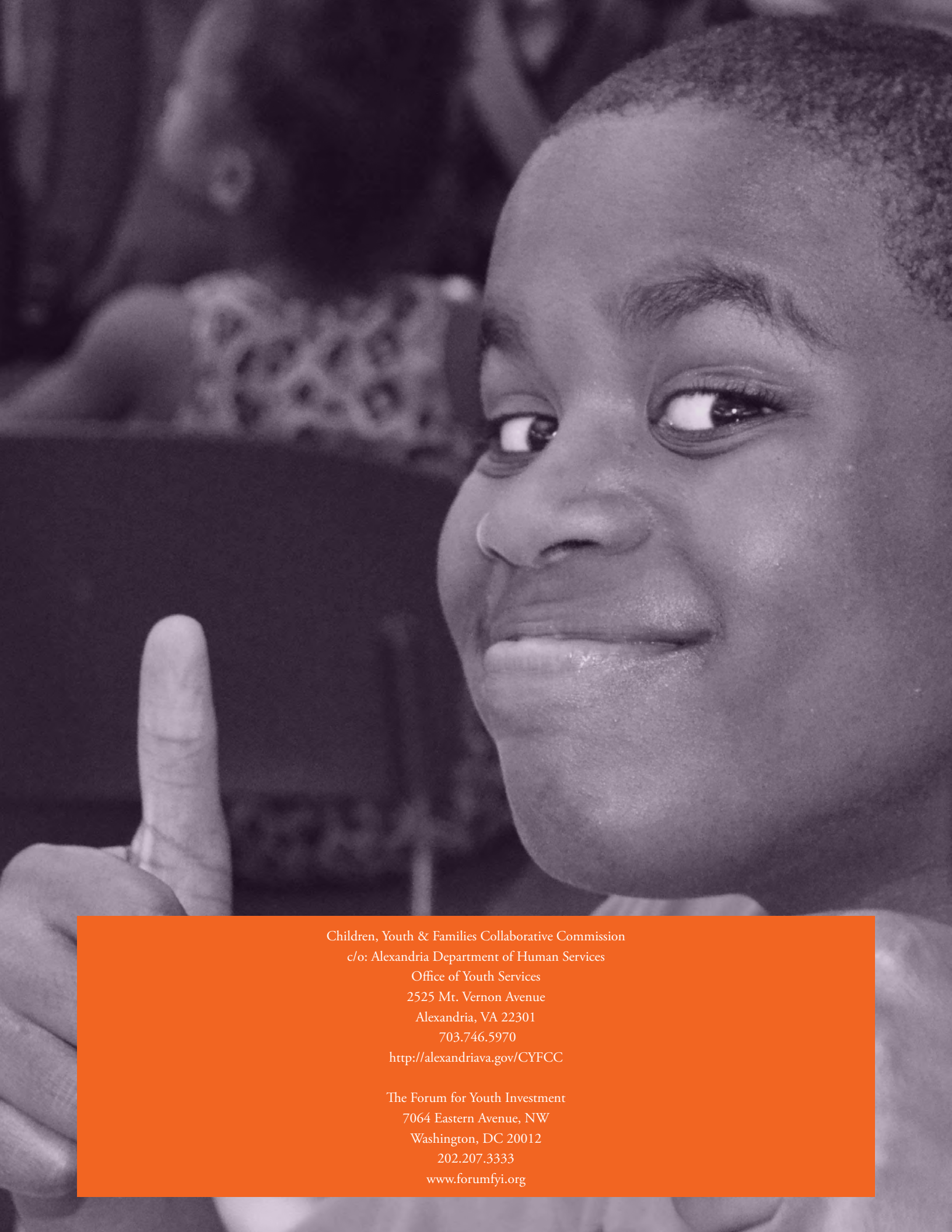
Many students (36%) recommended more opportunities for youth of different backgrounds to socialize; 28% suggested sponsoring more events that promote the importance of diversity. The idea of a diversity council was popular at GW and Hammond (33 students each), but received no support from Interim Education students.

# Appendix 7

## STRATEGIC PLANS & NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The Strategic Plans and Needs Assessments below were reviewed and incorporated into the Children and Youth Master Plan. These are the community priorities that are addressed in those plans.

Plan	Community Priority Areas				
	Developing Resilience	Empowering & Equipping Families	Creating Caring Networks & Systems	Promoting Equity & Nurturing Cultural Connections	Improving Economic Conditions
Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy Action Plan, 2011		X	X		
Alexandria City Council Strategic Plan, 2010			X		X
Alexandria City Public School Strategic Plan, 2010-2015	X	X	X	X	
Alexandria Coalition for Clean and Smoke Free Air Action Plan, 2011-2012			X		X
Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations Needs Assessment, 2008		X	X	X	X
Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services Plan, 2013-2015	X	X	X	X	X
Alexandria Gang Prevention Community Task Force Strategic Plan, 2012	X	X			
Alexandria Housing Master Plan, 2012					X
Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Needs Assessment, 2011		X		X	
Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority Strategic Plan, 2012			X	X	X
Alexandria Strategic Plan on Aging, 2013-2017	X				X
Recommendations for an Action Plan on Childhood Obesity, 2013		X	X		
Recommended Action Plan for Tobacco Cessation and Prevention in the City of Alexandria, 2013			X		X
Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria Plan, 2012-2013	X	X	X	X	



Children, Youth & Families Collaborative Commission

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