



**Amherst County Public Schools**  
**Comprehensive School Improvement Plan For:**  
**Amherst County High School**

139 Lancer Lane Amherst, VA 24521

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[www.amherst.k12.va.us](http://www.amherst.k12.va.us)

2021-2022

The following individuals assisted in creating this plan:

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

<b>Individual</b>	<b>Title</b>
Dr. Derrick Brown	Principal
Annie Terry	Assistant Principal
Donna Ratliff	Math Teacher
Kristin Atkins	English Teacher
Laura Casler	Head of Counseling
Jenifer Peters	Student Accountability Coordinator
Abigail Holman	SPED Lead



*Intentional Excellence*

### School Profile/Demographic Information

Status for Most Recent School Year		Student Population Percentages			
Total Enrollment	1210	Poverty	590	Other	131
Attendance Rate (chronic absenteeism)	25%	White	805	Special Education	158
Graduation Rate (on time)	94.4%	Black	217	English Learners	7
Accreditation Status	Accreditation waived	Hispanic	37	Gifted	115
Title I Model Schoolwide Program (SWP) Targeted Assistance (TA) Not Applicable (N/A)		Asian	5		

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)
Math	11	2	1	3	5	1
English	12	3	1	3	5	5

History	8	2	1	0	5	1
Science	9	1	0	1	7	0
Fine Arts	5	1	0	1	3	1
Special Ed.	13	1	2	6	4	1
World Lang.	5	0	0	4	1	0
Career and Tech.	15	2	3	2	8	2
Physical Ed.	7	1	1	0	5	1
Total	88					12

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Division Demographic and Curriculum Overview**

Amherst County High School (ACHS) is the flagship school for Amherst County Public School. As the single high school for this division, it is our vision to be a model community school that produces engaged and thriving citizens. At Amherst County High School, our mission to achieve this vision is to focus on more than academics, by creating engaged citizens, promoting community pride, and developing essential workforce skills.

ACHS is located in the scenic and rural Town of Amherst, Virginia. Amherst County has a population of 31,914 and ACHS has 1210 students enrolled for the 2021-2022 school year. Our rural/suburban high school serves students grades 9-12. As the only high school in the county, we strive to offer a balanced approach to secondary education that provides students with multiple post-graduate pathways to college and career options. We offer a comprehensive academic program that includes advanced placement (AP), dual enrollment opportunities, and other higher education opportunities through our partnership with the Central Virginia Community College (CVCC). Our school also offers a robust career internship program that allows students the opportunity to earn high school credit while completing career-oriented internships with businesses in our community and

surrounding areas. Our Jobs for Amherst Graduates (JAG) program helps introduce our students to post-graduate career opportunities as well as post-secondary technical training. In addition to these opportunities, our school has a comprehensive vocational-technical department that includes welding, auto mechanics, CNA nursing, EMT, culinary arts, business, building trades, teachers for tomorrow, and agriculture. Students have the opportunity to complete sequential programs and earn a certificate in their area of study.

At the center of our school is our revolutionary Future Center. At Amherst County High School, the Future Center strives to expose students to a variety of opportunities and activities associated with post-secondary options in order to encourage lifelong learning and success. The primary goal and emphasis of the program is to increase the number of students, especially first-generation and minority students, who enroll and succeed in some aspect of training or education after high school graduation. Students are exposed to information and opportunities that allow them to create a vision, set goals, and develop strategies that will direct them toward college and/or their career choices.

### **Extended Learning Opportunities - Before, During & After School**

Amherst County High School recognizes that learning can and should extend beyond the classroom. ACHS strives to provide an opportunity-rich environment for extended learning across several areas. Those areas have been highlighted below.

#### **Lancer Academy**

Lancer Academy is our in-house online academy used to help students recover the credits they need to graduate when they have failed a course, SOL test, or have a scheduling conflict. The program that is used to provide this self-paced learning is called Edmentum. This program also affords students the opportunity to take other courses that are not physically offered at ACHS such as sign language, criminal justice, and other world languages.

## **Project Graduation**

Project Graduation is a program that typically runs during the summer but can also be used during the school year for students who failed the SOL test(s) needed for graduation. They work with teachers/tutors who provide one-on-one and small groups remediation to help them pass their SOL test.

## **Leadership Opportunities**

- Student Government
- Junior Class Council
- Senior Class Council

## **National Honor Society**

The National Honor Society (NHS) elevates a school's commitment to the values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. These four pillars have been associated with membership in the organization since its inception in 1921. Our chapter holds students to a high academic standard and engaged students with community service opportunities.

## **Athletics**

Students are able to participate in a total of 33 varsity sports teams and extracurricular activities. Those that participate on these teams must maintain a certain level of academic success in order to continue to compete. These guidelines are not only established by the VHSL but also with our individual coaches of each team. Many of these sports and activities have after-school tutoring available for the students.

## **IRON Lives**

IRON Lives provides leadership and character-building programming for any student at ACHS. They engage students in the positive youth development model which seeks to identify and develop students' positive attributes. Participation in this program has been shown to increase students' academic awareness and scholarship.

## **Future Center**

Amherst County High School has started the new Future Center through Beacon of Hope. The idea and concept behind this program is to support students and help them through the college application process as well as students seeking employment after high school. This center guides students through the decision process and helps them make decisions that will positively affect their futures.

## **Needs Assessment Process**

To identify the needs for ACHS the School Improvement Team completed a review of the data from multiple reliable data sources. The team reviewed data from SOL testing results from the 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 school years, MAPS Data, SWIS, PowerSchool attendance, and the Virginia School Quality Profiles.

## **Needs Assessment Findings – Areas of Strength**

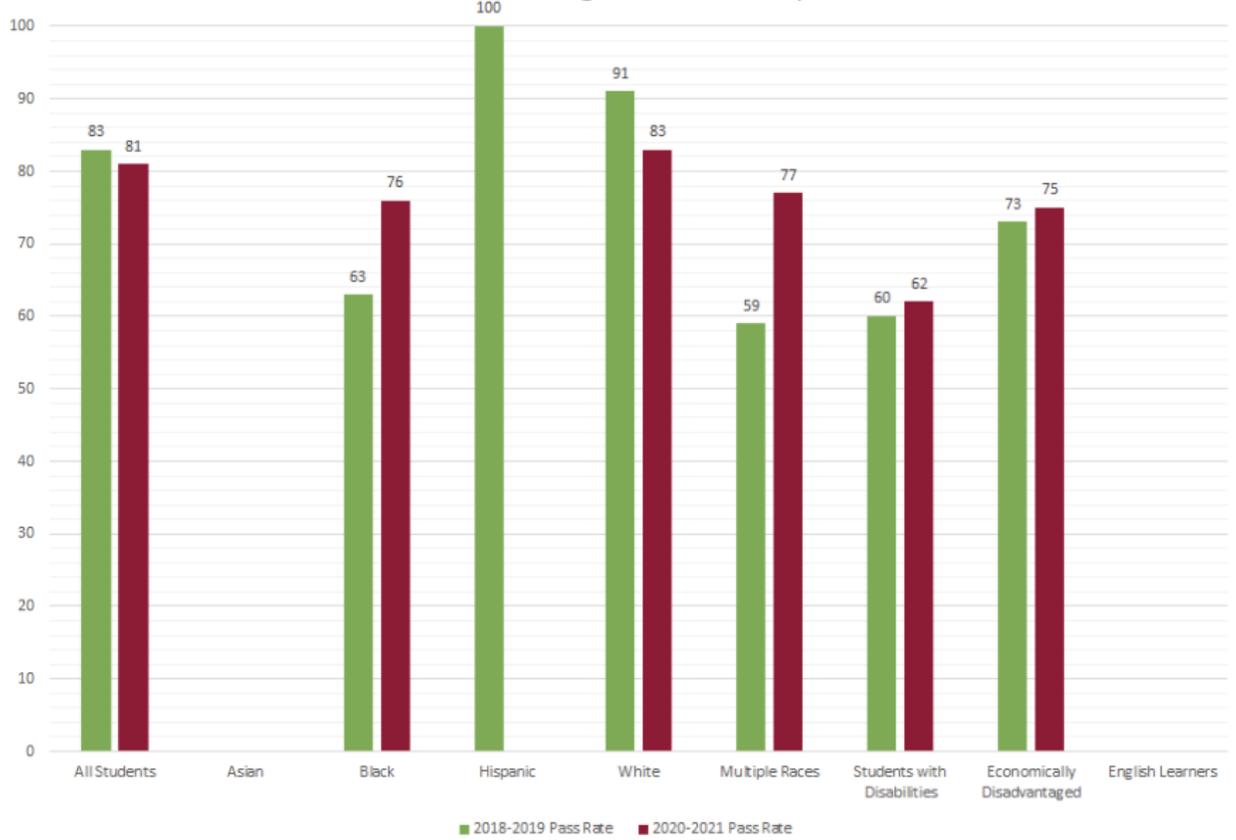
Though the last two school years have been incredibly challenging, there are multiple areas to celebrate and have been identified as strengths. Through a thorough review of achievement data, the ACHS School Improvement Team was able to identify several areas of academic strength.

## **English**

The ACHS School Improvement Team discovered that English scores improved throughout the pandemic school years. Not only did they improve, but the ACHS team met and exceeded all their goals from the 2019–2020 school improvement plan. In the area of Reading, while the overall score decreased from 83% to 81% the focus of the plan was on subgroups. These subgroups improved in the following ways:

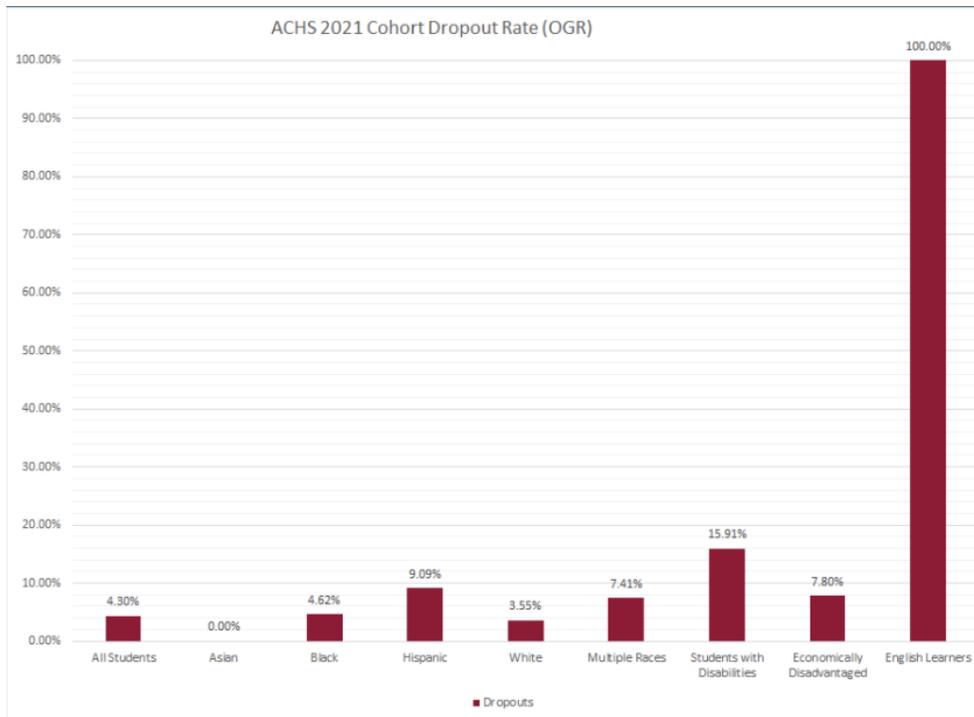
- Black students improved from a 63% pass rate to a 76% pass rate.
- Multiracial students improved from a 59% pass rate to a 77% pass rate.
- Students with Disabilities improved from a 60% pass rate to a 62% pass rate.
- Economically disadvantaged students improved from a 73% pass rate to a 75% pass rate.

### ACHS SOL Reading Pass Rate Comparison



## Dropout rate

The school's dropout rate also improved significantly during the pandemic. 7.24% of ACHS students in the 2019 graduation class dropped out of school. However, during the 2020–2021 school year that number dropped to 4.30%.



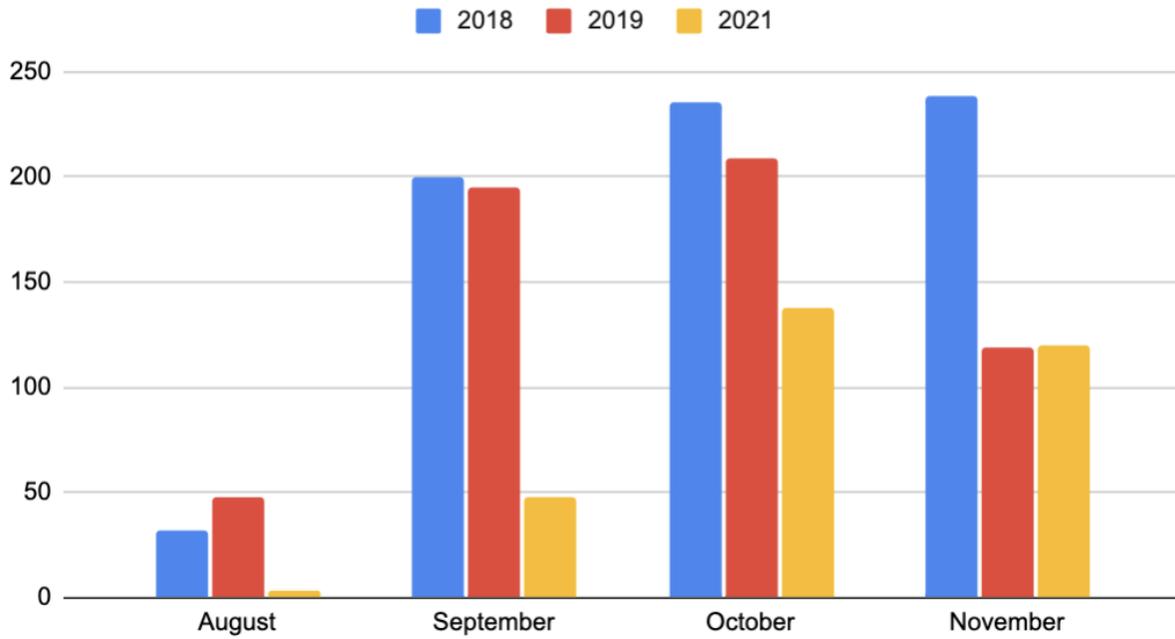
## Advanced Opportunites –AP, STEM Academy, Governor’s School, Early College, CTE Enrollement

ACHS currently offers 11 Advanced Placement (AP) courses that have 134 students enrolled. ACHS offers a variety of college level opportunities including the STEM Academy (7 enrolled students), Central Virginia Governor’s School (16 enrolled students), Early College (CVCC) (45 enrolled students), and Dual Enrollment Courses (159 enrolled students). During the 2020–20201 school year 112 students completed their credentials in their Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

## Behavior

While some students have been challenged by the transition back to face-to-face learning, overall, the number of referrals for students has decreased or remained steady from normal school years (See chart below).

### 2018, 2019 and 2021

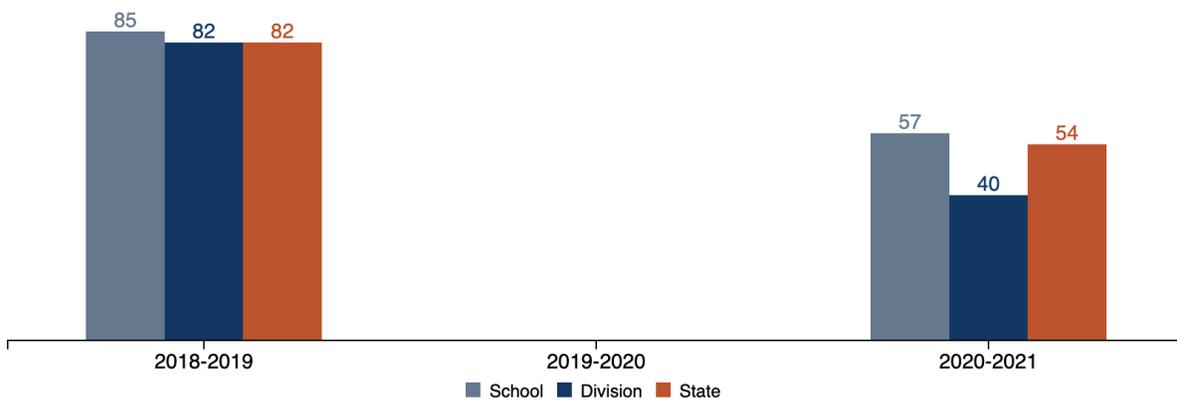


## Needs Assessment Findings – Areas of Improvement

Through a thorough review of achievement data, the ACHS School Improvement Team was able to identify several areas of opportunities for academic improvement. Due to the lack of reliable academic data caused by the pandemic and school closures, the team thought that the most reliable academic was SOL test data.

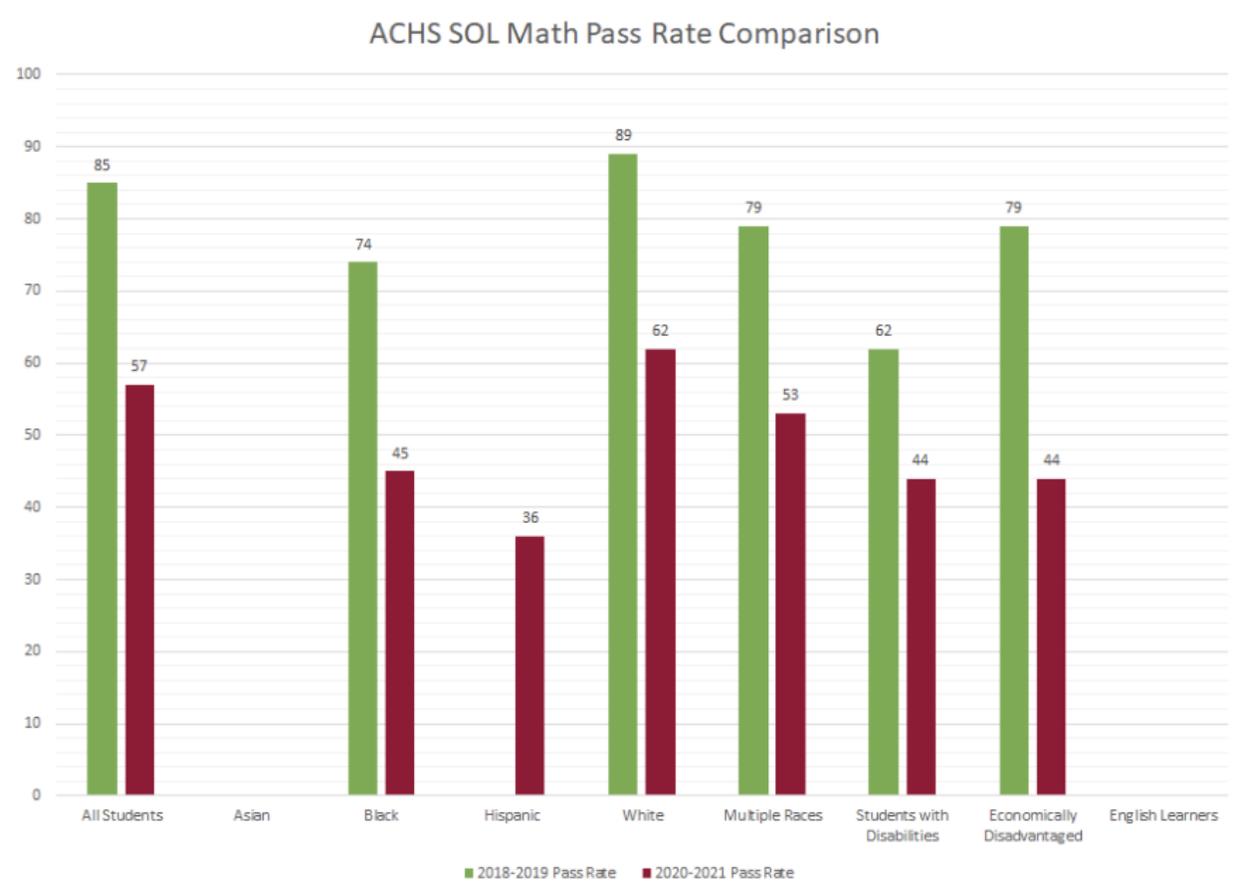
### Academic

The team discovered there was a significant learning loss in the area of Math. As seen in the charts below, Math SOL scores decreased across the commonwealth from an 85% pass rate to 57%. Our scores at ACHS decrease from 82% in 2019 to 54% during the 2020-2021 School Year.



This decrease was even more evident across every subgroup (see ACHS SOL Math Pass Rate Comparison chart below)

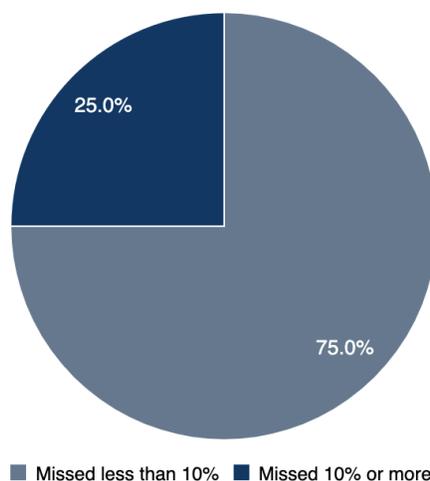
- White students experienced a 27 point drop in Math SOL scores.
- Black students experienced a 29 point drop in Math SOL scores.
- Economically Disadvantaged students experienced a 35 point drop in Math SOL scores.
- Students with disabilities experienced an 18 point drop in Math SOL scores.
- Multiracial students experienced a 26 point drop in Math SOL scores.



## Attendance

Attendance has been an area of concern for ACHS pre-COVID and that area continues to remain a concern. Due to COVID concerns, quarantining, and other external factors the rate of chronically absent students remains a concern. During the 2020-2021 school year ACHS experienced a 25% rate for chronic absenteeism. This was a 5% increase from the 2019-2020 school year where the rate was 20.2%.

### Chronic Absenteeism 2020-2021 School Year: All Students



## Schoolwide Reform Strategies

In order to address the needs of our school as well as maintain and accelerate our successes, ACHS has engaged with several research-based strategies.

### VTSS

ACHS has adopted the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS) model. VTSS is a data-informed decision-making framework for establishing the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students.

The VTSS systemic approach allows divisions, schools, and communities to provide multiple levels of support to students in a more effective and efficient, clearly defined process. Implementing the VTSS requires the use of evidence-based, system-wide practices with fidelity to provide a quick response to academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs. The practices are progress-monitored frequently to enable educators to make sound, data-based instructional decisions for students.

VTSS functions under the anchoring process of integrating data, practices and systems to affect outcomes. The essential elements of an effective VTSS framework are:

- Aligned Organizational Structure
- Data-Informed Decision-Making
- Evidence-Based Practices
- Family, School, and Community Partnerships
- Monitoring Student Progress
- Evaluation of Outcomes and Fidelity

### **PLC**

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve. *PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.* Our teachers work in collaborative teams and focus on student learning as evidenced by achievement data.

### **Professional Development**

ACHS Administrators work collaboratively with teachers and central office administrators to create a needs-specific and comprehensive professional learning plan to help our teachers gain the most effective skills to help improve student achievement and behavior.

### **Relationship Building**

It is well known that authentic meaningful relationships are at the core of great schools and great classrooms. Our faculty and staff use several positive strategies to help improve our school and create a welcoming environment for our students. Our teachers make positive phone calls, engage students with team-building activities, provide positive behavior-specific praise, as well as write positive referrals.