



Winchester's Campaign is Heating Up!

As we enter our 6th month of the Winchester city Campaign for Grade Level Reading initiative, it is exciting to reflect on the progress already being made, the strategic proposals being explored, and the roadmap for the future that is being written. This 2021-2022 school year was the first, full year of returning to in-person learning at our major educational programs (Winchester city schools, Head Start, and many of our daycare centers) and we are now able to see our student data: specifically where we are and the impacts from COVID-19. This information is now helping to better frame where we go from here.

As you'll read in this newsletter, the Campaign is beginning to roll out multiple district-supporting interventions and strategies, ranging from increasing access to quality education, programs designed to meet families where they are, improving the quality of existing organizations, and delivering professional development opportunities to our educators in the field. We want to take a moment and give a heartfelt thank you to all of our partners, community supporters, families, and most especially, to our teachers, staff and administrators working so hard everyday for our kids!

INSIDE INFORMATION

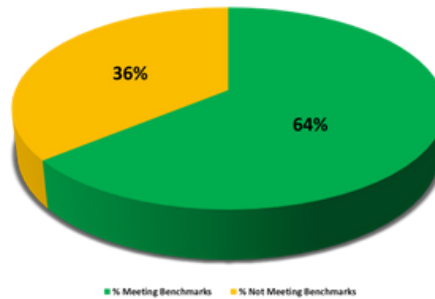
- 2021-2022 Baseline Data
- New Strategy Updates
- Campaign Announcements
- Thoughts from the Field
- Partners
- How to Help

SY 2021-2022 Baseline Data

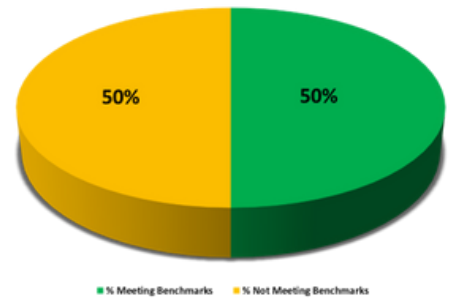


WPS recently closed out the School Year 2021-2022 and, with that, we now have a solid baseline from which to set goals and seek growth over the next 10+ years. COVID-19 set our students - and the nation - back and we, as a community of schools, parents, organizations, and citizens now have the opportunity to come together and work together to set a course forward.

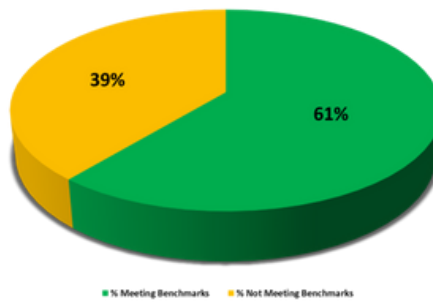
Kindergarten Readiness (PALS-K)
SY 2021-2022



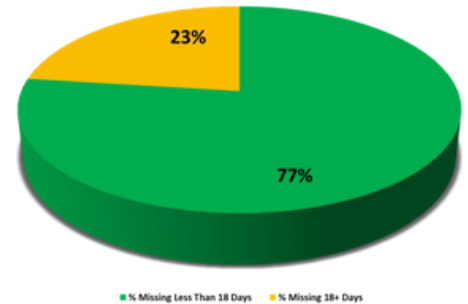
3rd Grade Reading Standards of Learning (SOL)
Assessment
SY 2021-2022



3rd Grade Reading Maze Assessment
SY 2021-2022



Chronic Absenteeism, Aggregated Elementary Schools
SY 2021-2022



Campaign Goals

Grade-Level Proficiency

Winchester's overarching vision is to increase the percentage of 3rd graders reading at or above the proficient level **to at least 75%** in the next 10 years based on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) ELA assessment.

School Readiness

Increase the number of children ready for kindergarten **to at least 80%** of children being ready based on their performance on the PALS-K. Focus will be on furthering develop high-quality preschool and daycare programs and offering families out-of-school options to further learning and growth.

School Attendance

Reduce chronic absenteeism **to rates at or below 10%** among K-3rd graders at all four elementary schools by 2025.

Summer and Afterschool Learning

Increase by 100% the number of K-3rd grade students who have access to summer and afterschool opportunities that focus on literacy-related learning and enrichment.

Campaign Announcements

Discovery Museum

- In partnership with Winchester Parks and Recreation, the Discovery Museum is working to build a sensory and movement-based story walk at Jim Barnett Park

Handley Regional Library System

- Children's Summer Reading Program ended on August 10th, with over 1400 children participating!
- HRLS recently established a new policy, waiving late fees for children's books, removing a critical barrier in book access in the home for low-income families

Healthy Families NSV

- Parent Education Classes are restarting this fall! 8 classes will be held over the next year at Handley Library to provide supports for our families. Goal is to reach up to 400 attendees!

Laurel Ridge Community College

- Recently launched the Community Literacy Training Professional Development course for local organizations to help improve teaching literacy to children. The pilot course provided 5 continuous education credits to 5 community educators.

Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area

- LVWA recently announced they are expanding Dolly Parton to both Frederick and Clarke Counties, in addition to covering Winchester. Since the expansion they have seen registrations go from 200 to over 1100 kids, all who will get a free book every month!

Summer Programming

- The Discovery Museum recently completed their 33 summer camps with 541 kids participating over 11 weeks
- The Kids Club recently completed their summer camp with 112 participants during their 8 week camp
- The YDC recently completed their summer camp with 45 participants during their 6 week camp
- The Hive Club at Winchester Parks and Rec hosted 125 kids.
- Shenandoah University hosted Camp Read-A-Lot for 94 Kids and have over 3,600 registered for Virtual Author Visits.

Winchester Little Libraries

- 13 new boxes have been built by Westminster Canterbury and installed by Parks and Rec, being placed in Winchester's pocket parks. This brings the total number of free libraries in the city to 40!



Why Does School Readiness (0-5 years) Matter?

80% of brain growth in the first three years

From birth to age three, a child's brain undergoes rapid development, producing more than 1 million neural connections per second.¹ By age three, the brain has achieved 80% of its adult size.²

Skill gaps clear by age two

Nationally representative data show clear skill gaps by the second birthday. One recent study found that by the age of two, less advantaged children were six months behind more advantaged peers in language processing skills.³

Too many missed opportunities

Many parents and caregivers have never had opportunities to learn the science behind The Basics Principles and how important they are to their children's brain development and wellbeing. A number of the greatest misunderstandings pertain to the first year of life, when doing The Basics Principles already makes a big difference.⁴

Lifelong consequences

Brain development during the first three years builds critical foundations for cognitive skills associated with academic learning, but that's not all. It also supports development of social and emotional skills, all of which confer lifelong benefits.

WPS Pre-K3 Pilot Class!

WPS will be offering the first ever 3-year old pre-kindergarten class for the 2022-2023 school year! This pilot class will be hosted at John Kerr Elementary School. Eligibility requirements include: living in WPS attendance area; children must be 3-years old by 9/30; and meet income guidelines OR local criteria. Please check with WPS to find out if your child qualifies!





Strategy Updates

School Readiness "Triple Stack" is Here!

The School Readiness Committee, focusing on helping our Winchester children and families get more kindergarten-ready during those critical birth to 5 years, recently developed the "triple stack" strategy to offer home-based interventions to better meet families where they are. As you will see in our overall stacked strategy plan for the Campaign in the graphic at the bottom of the page, our theory of change is that, if we offer multiple supports and programs to our families, we have a better opportunity to influence positive outcomes. If a family receives one or two interventions, we feel that will help. But, if a family receives five or six strategies that are synergistic and build upon one another, we believe the outcomes will be more impactful and will last. The triple stack consists of 3 key programs that will complement one another:

- Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL): hosted by Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area
- Ready4K: hosted by Handley Regional Library System
- ReadyRosie: hosted by Winchester Public Schools

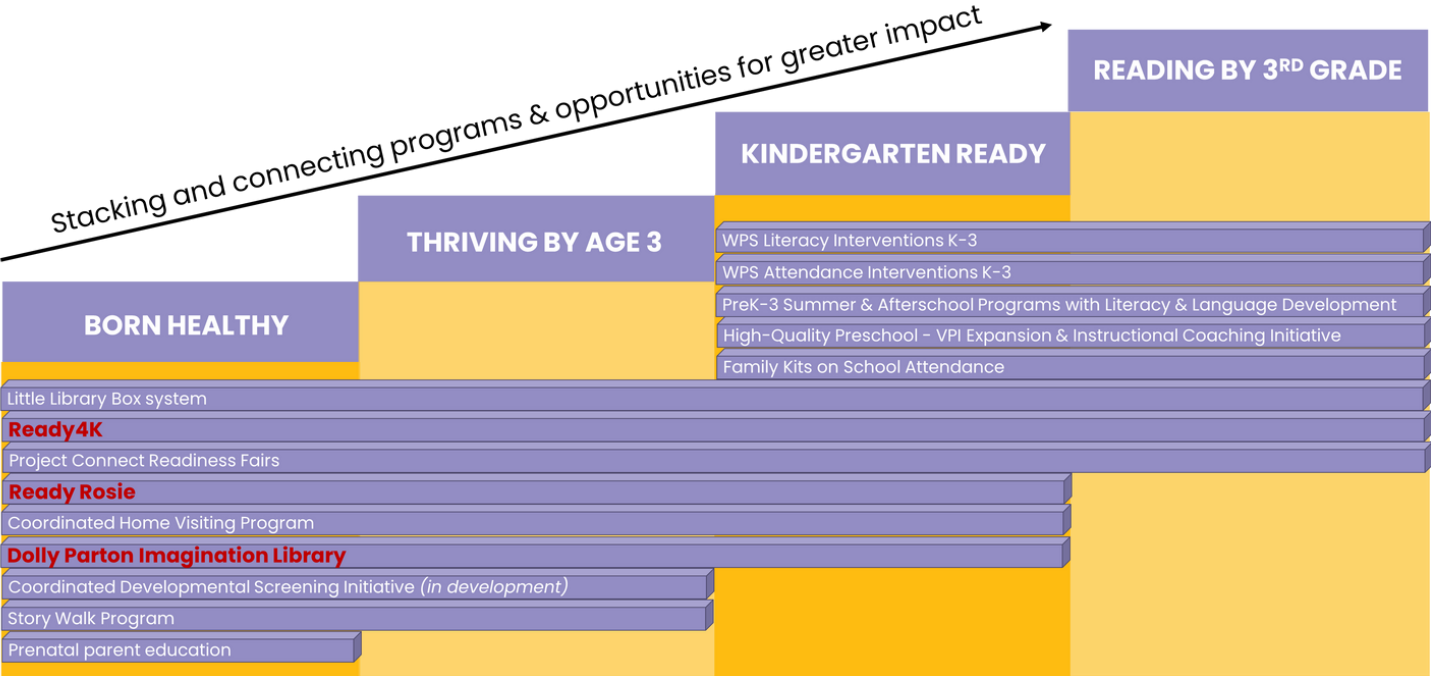
DPIL: Provides age-appropriate, curated books into the hands of families with children birth to 5. With parenting tips, DPIL increases access to quality reading material and adds more books into the homes of our youngest learners. Available to all Winchester (22601) families at no cost, in English and Spanish.

ReadyRosie: Provides age-appropriate, weekly emails at no cost, in multiple languages. Using videos and other resources, ReadyRosie builds capacity and confidence in families supporting the whole child. Available to all Winchester (22601) families at no cost, from birth to 5.

Ready4K: Provides age-appropriate, weekly text messages (SMS) at no cost, in multiple languages. The easiest way to deliver 52 weeks of evidence-based whole child support directly into families' hands. Available to all Winchester (22601) families at no cost, from birth to 4th grade.

THE JOURNEY TO READING PROFICIENCY

How the Winchester Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Supports Children and Families



Thoughts from the Field

Andy Gail, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area



For 37 years, Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area (LVWA) has been helping adults improve their literacy skills. Earlier this year, we expanded our mission to help all ages in our community. We thought if we could help both parents and kids, we could drastically improve the literacy rates in our community. We wanted to find new ways to have a real and meaningful impact on the children in our community.

Our organization is focused on strengthening our community through literacy, education, and advocacy via programs that teach adult classes in English, reading, citizenship, and computer, as well as programming aimed at bolstering early childhood reading and family literacy. The decision to expand to helping the youth in our area resulting from our recognition that the percentage of adults with literacy challenges in our area and the rate of 3rd graders who did not pass the reading SOL were similar at almost 1 out of 4. We began to explore partnership options under the premise that if the kids had literacy challenges, the parents also likely had challenges.

We joined Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a nationwide program founded by Dolly Parton. From the month they are born until the month they turn five every child are eligible to sign up to get a free, age-appropriate book in the mail. Since we started the program a year ago, 210 kids have registered and 1163 books have made it into the hands of the youngest in our community. Because of the generosity of the community we have now expanded into Clarke and Frederick Counties and have over 1,100 kids registered!

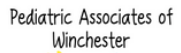
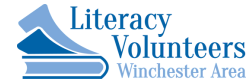
You may have also noticed little libraries popping up around town. Colorfully painted by local artists, there are 13 Little Libraries currently being installed in every city Park. Each Little Library holds over 100 books and were built by volunteers at Westminster Canterbury.

And finally, LVWA has taken the lead and is the backbone organization for the Winchester Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. Working closely with the John and Janice Wyatt foundation and over 16 coalition members, we are driving the efforts to remove barriers so that Winchester Public Schools (WPS) can do what they do best and teach. The Campaign partnered with WPS and others to take a wide-ranging approaches to enhancing community literacy: from partnering with Laurel Ridge to providing free continuing education for childcare providers to working with the Library to roll our Ready4K, a mobile text-based early lit program. We worked with the United Way on Project Connect to bringing all our services under one roof and finally we are partnering with the Schools and Department of Social Services to look at how we can improve attendance. It is our goal to to improve the 3rd-grade reading level to over 75% in the next ten years.

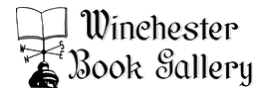
So, grab a book from a Little Library, register for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, or get involved with the Campaign. We believe the outlook for improved literacy for all members of our community is bright! Visit LVWA.org for more information.

Partners

- Bright Futures
- Community Foundation of NSV
- Handley Regional Library System
- Healthy Families of the Northern Shenandoah Valley
- Infant Toddler Connection (ITC)
- John & Janice Wyatt Foundation
- Kids Club of the Northern Shenandoah Valley
- Laurel Ridge Community College
- Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area
- Pediatric Associates of Winchester
- Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum
- STARBASE Academy
- Top of Virginia Regional Chamber of Commerce
- United Way of the Northern Shenandoah Valley
- Valley Health
- Winchester Book Gallery
- Winchester Department of Social Services
- Winchester Public Schools
- Youth Development Center



Dept of Social Services



1. **HELP** us spread the word about the Campaign and the importance of literacy for our youngest learners.
2. **PARTNER** with the Campaign for Grade Level Reading in Winchester and join one of our work groups centered on school readiness, attendance, or out-of-school time.
3. **VOLUNTEER** with our current partner agencies that are supporting the Campaign.
4. **DONATE** directly to our partner agencies to grow reach and improve quality.

To learn more, please contact Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area:

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Websites: <https://lvwa.org/campaign-for-grade-level-reading/>

<https://j2wfoundation.org/campaign-for-grade-level-reading-winchester/>