



VDOE Community Schools Grant: Year 1 Implementation Written Report

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Prepared For: Charlottesville City Schools School Board

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Executive Summary

Charlottesville City Schools began Year 1 implementation of the Virginia Department of Education Community Schools Grant during the 2025–2026 school year. The first year focused on building the foundational structures, partnerships, and planning processes necessary to support long-term implementation of a Community Schools framework across the division.

Pre-work began in Fall 2025 with foundational planning activities, including development of the Community Schools vision and mission, theory of change, advisory and working group structures, evaluation planning, and identification of key metrics and priorities. During November 2025, CCS focused on stakeholder engagement and infrastructure development through initial partner meetings, advisory board meetings, working group meetings, and broader community engagement efforts. In December 2025, CCS transitioned into early implementation preparation and soft-launch activities. This included division-level coordination and planning connected to several pilot and engagement efforts, including Bridge Builders, The LAB, the Confidence and Comprehension Club, and broader community engagement activities.

From January through May 2026, CCS moved into pilot implementation and calibration work. The division focused on refining systems, strengthening coordination between schools and community partners, supporting student engagement initiatives, and testing approaches for future expansion. Throughout this process, CCS continued aligning Community Schools implementation with existing priorities related to student wellbeing, belonging, family engagement, mentoring, enrichment, and school-community partnership development.



Year 1 was intentionally focused on infrastructure-building, collaboration, and implementation readiness rather than large-scale outcome reporting. Year 1 implementation emphasized responsiveness to student, family, school, and community voice, resulting in several partnerships and programming adjustments designed to better align supports with school-specific needs, existing community strengths, and long-term sustainability. Key accomplishments included:

- Establishing advisory and working group structures to guide implementation.
- Conducting ongoing partner, stakeholder, and community engagement meetings.
- Developing an evaluation and planning framework for future implementation.
- Launching and supporting pilot initiatives, including Bridge Builders, The LAB, and the Confidence and Comprehension Club.
- Building stronger coordination between schools, community organizations, and division leadership around student and family support efforts.
- Development of implementation planning, evaluation, and continuous improvement systems to support long-range sustainability.

Early indicators from Year 1 suggest increased student and family engagement across the division, reflected in over 2,600 participants in school and community events, relative growth in volunteer involvement, and expansion of pilot programs to additional school sites. These emerging trends signal growing community alignment and demand for relationship-centered supports. Overall, Year 1 emphasized strategic implementation planning, cross-sector coordination, and development of sustainable community-based infrastructure to support long-term Community Schools implementation. The year resulted in increased coordination across school and community systems, expanded access to mentoring and enrichment opportunities, and greater alignment between existing resources serving CCS students and families. These efforts established a more cohesive and responsive system of supports designed to improve student belonging, engagement, and long-term outcomes.



Introduction

Year 1 Framework & Assets/Needs Assessment

During Year 1, Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) focused on strategic planning, asset mapping, and development of foundational implementation structures engaged to develop the foundational framework necessary to support sustainable Community Schools implementation across the division. This work centered on establishing guiding structures, identifying priorities, strengthening partnerships, and assessing existing assets and needs within schools and the broader community. This process functioned as an ongoing community-informed asset mapping and needs assessment effort.

Beginning in Fall 2025, CCS worked to develop the core framework for Community Schools implementation, including the creation of a shared vision, mission, theory of change, implementation structures, and evaluation planning processes. The month of December featured coordination meetings between division leadership, school staff, community partners, and other stakeholders who participated in planning conversations designed to clarify priorities, identify gaps, and align Community Schools work with existing division goals related to student wellbeing, belonging, attendance, family engagement, and academic success.

As part of the Year 1 process, CCS conducted an ongoing assets and needs assessment approach through stakeholder engagement, school-based conversations, partner meetings, and review of existing school and community supports. Rather than creating an entirely separate system, the division focused on understanding and coordinating resources already available within schools and throughout the Charlottesville community. A central focus of Year 1 implementation was reducing fragmentation and duplication across youth-serving systems by strengthening alignment between existing school and community-based supports already serving Charlottesville students and families. CCS intentionally prioritized leveraging existing expertise and trusted relationships within the community, including work already being led by the Charlottesville Department of Human Services, literacy organizations, mentoring programs, family engagement teams, and youth-serving nonprofits. The aforementioned process identified several existing strengths and assets across the division, including:

- Strong relationships with community-based organizations and youth-serving partners.
- Existing student support and wellness initiatives within schools.



- Active family and community engagement efforts are already occurring across the division.
- Community partners are willing to collaborate around mentoring, enrichment, attendance, wellness, and family support efforts.
- School staff is committed to relationship-centered and whole-child approaches.

The assessment process also highlighted several ongoing needs and priority areas, including:

- Greater coordination between schools, community organizations, and service providers.
- Establishing processes to learn about community partner outcomes and impact data.
- Increased capacity for family engagement and resource navigation.
- Expanded student enrichment and mentoring opportunities.
- Additional support related to attendance, belonging, and student well-being.
- Stronger systems for communication, partnership alignment, and sustainability across initiatives.

Throughout Year 1, CCS used this information to guide planning and early implementation efforts, including support for pilot initiatives at each level. CCS prioritized systems alignment and reduction of fragmented service delivery across youth-serving systems

Confidence and Comprehension Club (Elementary School)

The Confidence and Comprehension Club aligned with ongoing youth development and literacy-related work already being led by the Charlottesville Department of Human Services (DHS) before the launch of the Community Schools initiative. DHS established student clubs and engagement opportunities focused on confidence-building, literacy support, relationship development, and positive youth engagement as part of its existing scope of work with Charlottesville youth and families. This initiative leveraged retirees to facilitate a book club at Summit Elementary with great success.

This work also included partnership and coordination with the Boys & Girls Club of Central Virginia through the Power Crew program, which focuses on student engagement, social-emotional learning, and positive youth development opportunities. The Power Crew model is rooted in the principles and practices of the Compassionate Schools Project, which is implemented regularly across all elementary schools within Charlottesville City Schools to support student wellness, emotional regulation, relationship-building, and school connectedness. Implementation planning emphasized



leveraging existing community assets and aligning programming with broader division wellness and literacy goals. The program began at Sunrise Elementary School following an administrative request and was later expanded to Trailblazer Elementary School after a successful pilot demonstrated strong student engagement and interest. CCS looks forward to continuing collaboration with both DHS and the Boys & Girls Club while supporting implementation at a pace that aligns with partner goals, staffing capacity, and long-term sustainability.

Additional literacy-focused coordination during Year 1 included alignment with broader division and community literacy efforts, such as a community-based Literacy Hubs at First Baptist, and literacy materials for other community partners, including (The Jefferson School African American Center, The Point Church, and the Boys and Girls Club on Cherry Avenue). Additionally, the Just Right Readers initiative has been launched, providing books to 308 K-3 students who need the most reading support over the summer. Starting with a well-attended family kickoff event in May with over 100 attendees, students received sets of decodable books and will have opportunities to participate in activities every few weeks to support them in making reading progress, preventing the summer slide, and engaging in enrichment activities with their family. Additionally, the Community Schools grant funded school after-school programming with the YMCA for 80 students.

Lastly, we held a successful “Crack the Code” event focused on understanding school-based reports. These efforts helped reinforce the Community Schools goal of connecting existing academic, enrichment, and family engagement supports into a more coordinated system of student support. Year 1 implementation highlighted literacy as a major area of cross-sector collaboration, with schools, community organizations, faith communities, and youth-serving partners collectively supporting literacy engagement both during and beyond the school day.

Bridge Builders (Middle School)

Bridge Builders was developed as a relationship-centered student engagement and mentoring initiative designed to strengthen students’ sense of belonging, connection, and support within the school community. The program focused on connecting students with caring adults while creating opportunities for dialogue, mentorship, leadership development, and community-building. During Year 1, CCS focused on launching the initiative, building participation, developing partnerships, and collecting early qualitative feedback to assess student engagement and program effectiveness. Particular attention was given to understanding how mentoring and relationship-based supports could best



fit within the unique culture, schedules, and needs of Charlottesville Middle School students.

The initiative also included ongoing collaboration with school staff, including the ESL teacher and student support personnel, to support student participation, communication, and relationship-building across diverse student populations. Throughout the year, CCS worked to identify community mentors and partners who could support students through encouragement, transition planning, and trusted adult connection, particularly for students preparing for postsecondary transitions. Planning conversations also explored barriers related to attendance, scheduling, transportation, and consistency of participation in order to create a model that would be sustainable and responsive to student realities.

Monthly implementation reviews supported adaptive planning and continuous improvement throughout the pilot phase. The reviews allowed participants and school staff to reflect on challenges and successes, document lessons learned, and guide continuous change throughout the implementation period.

The LAB (High School)

The LAB was developed as an expanded learning and student engagement initiative designed to increase students' exposure to college, career, leadership, and postsecondary opportunities through relationship-centered programming and community partnership development at both Lugo-McGinness Academy (LMA) and Charlottesville High School (CHS). The initiative focused on connecting students with caring adults, workforce professionals, community organizations, and higher education partners while creating opportunities for dialogue, exploration, mentorship, and future planning. During Year 1, CCS focused on planning and launching the initiative, identifying community and workforce partners, building participation structures, and aligning programming with the broader CCS Community Schools vision and theory of change.

Early implementation efforts included support for activities connected to student transition planning, career exploration, leadership development, and postsecondary exposure, including planning around Senior Stay Day and other student engagement opportunities. Staff also took over 60 juniors and seniors to BCIC High School Day at Virginia State University and High School Day at Hampton University. The initiative included ongoing collaboration with LMA and CHS staff, including support and coordination with AdviseVA staff, to strengthen postsecondary planning infrastructure, student participation, communication, and relationship-building across diverse student



populations. Evaluation planning processes were used to monitor participation, document lessons learned, and guide continuous improvement and planning for expanded implementation during the 2026–2027 school year. Year 1 also included planning conversations with LMA staff regarding future implementation priorities, including mentorship structures, senior support efforts, and expanded community engagement opportunities for the 2026–2027 school year.

Key Pillars of Implementation & Impact Data

Pillar 1: Integrated Student Supports

Focus Area	Year 1 Activities	Impact / Early Data
Student Wellness & Relationship-Based Supports	CCS strengthened coordination between schools, families, and community-based organizations to better support student wellbeing, belonging, and engagement. Planning and implementation work emphasized trusted adult relationships, mentoring, literacy support, social-emotional learning, and resource coordination.	Approximately \geq 2,616 students, families, and community members participated in school and community engagement activities connected to Community Schools efforts during the reporting period.
Power Crew / Boys & Girls Club Partnership	CCS partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of Central Virginia to support the implementation of the Power Group program, rooted in the Compassionate Schools Project framework already used across all CCS elementary schools.	Program piloted at Sunrise Elementary School and later expanded to Trailblazer Elementary School following positive student engagement and school interest. Expansion to an additional school site following initial implementation reflects strong student engagement and school-level demand for relationship-centered programming.



<p>Literacy & Academic Support Coordination</p>	<p>CCS coordinated literacy-focused efforts through Literacy Hubs, Just Right Readers, and literacy material distribution with community partners, including First Baptist Church, Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, The Point Church, and the Boys & Girls Club.</p>	<p>308 Just Right Readers were distributed to launch the summer literacy initiative for K–3 students needing additional reading support; additional literacy materials were distributed across multiple community partner sites, including a full literacy hub at First Baptist.</p>
<p>Mentoring & Belonging Supports</p>	<p>Bridge Builders' planning and implementation efforts focused on increasing student connection, trusted adult relationships, and transition support opportunities for students at Lugo-McGinness Academy.</p>	<p>Mentor recruitment, partnership development, and implementation planning occurred throughout Year 1, with expansion planning underway for 2026–2027. Implementation decisions were informed through stakeholder engagement, participation trends, qualitative feedback, and implementation monitoring data.</p>

Pillar 2: Expanded & Enriched Learning Time

Focus Area	Year 1 Activities	Impact / Early Data
<p>The LAB Initiative</p>	<p>CCS launched planning and early implementation of The LAB at LMA and CHS to expand college, career, leadership, and postsecondary exposure opportunities for students.</p>	<p>Student engagement opportunities included career exploration, leadership conversations, through Senior Stay Day. Planning occurred with staff (41 CHS seniors and 4 LMA seniors attended)</p>



		<p>12 LMA seniors postsecondary readiness coordination.</p> <p>*13 mentors matched to student backgrounds and future goals were recruited for 12 LMA/Knight School seniors</p>
<p>Student Enrichment & Opportunities</p>	<p>CCS collaborated with schools and community partners to support enrichment programming connected to mentoring, literacy, wellness, student leadership, and relationship-building.</p>	<p>Community engagement reached over 2,500 students, families, and community members across school and community settings. These opportunities included literacy events, cultural celebrations, family engagement activities, wellness initiatives, and community-building events.</p>
<p>Literacy & Summer Learning Supports</p>	<p>CCS coordinated literacy engagement opportunities and summer reading support through community-based literacy partnerships and the Just Right Readers initiative.</p>	<p>308 K–3 students identified as needing additional literacy support received books and ongoing reading incentives over the summer.</p>
<p>Community-Based Student Events</p>	<p>CCS supported or coordinated multiple student and family-centered events, including Crack the Code, International Night, Black History Month programming, and additional school-community engagement activities.</p>	<p>Events included Crack the Code (19 participants), International Night at Trailblazer (300 participants), Greenbrier Title I Night (150 participants), and Jackson-Via Soulfeast/Black Business Expo (300 participants).</p>



<p>College Mentors for Kids Expansion</p>	<p>Conversations with Tall Oaks Elementary School specifically highlighted the need for more structured after-school opportunities for students. In response, CCS helped coordinate the addition of a pilot with Tall Oaks, and now there are plans to have full implementation of a Tall Oaks day for the 26-27 school year.</p>	<p>Expansion planning now includes approximately 40–45 students from Tall Oaks, Trailblazer, Summit, and Jackson-Via Elementary Schools participating in College Mentors for Kids programming with university student mentors. The partnership is currently seeking funding support to assist with transportation and long-term sustainability efforts.</p>
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Pillar 3: Active Family & Community Engagement

Focus Area	Year 1 Activities	Impact / Early Data
<p>Family & Community Events</p>	<p>CCS partnered with schools, nonprofits, churches, and community organizations to host engagement opportunities focused on literacy, wellness, culture, school connection, and resource access.</p>	<p>Approximately 2,500 participants engaged in school-community events during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Volunteer & Mentor Engagement</p>	<p>CCS worked with the FACE Team and community partners to strengthen volunteer recruitment and mentor engagement across the division.</p>	<p>CCS volunteer totals increased from 1,137 volunteers in 2024–2025 to 1,218 volunteers in 2025–2026. This increase reflects strengthened community engagement infrastructure and growing interest in supporting CCS students through mentoring, volunteering, and community-based partnerships.</p>



Community Partnership Development	CCS strengthened relationships with organizations, including DHS, Boys & Girls Club, UVA partners, literacy organizations, faith communities, and youth-serving nonprofits to support coordinated family and student engagement efforts.	While advisory meetings stalled, ongoing stakeholder and partner meetings helped strengthen communication and collaboration across agencies and organizations.
Family Literacy	CCS supported literacy-focused engagement opportunities and family learning efforts through literacy hubs, reading initiatives, and events designed to help families better understand school systems and student support tools.	The Crack the Code event focused on helping families better understand school-based reports and student progress information. This was followed up with a successful Just Right Reader Launch, where over 100 students and families were in attendance.

Pillar 4: Collaborative Leadership & Practices

Focus Area	Year 1 Activities	Impact / Early Data
Community Schools Leadership Structure	CCS designated leadership and implementation support roles to coordinate Community Schools planning, partnership development, evaluation, and stakeholder engagement efforts.	Division-level coordination structures, advisory groups, and working groups were established during Year 1.
Advisory & Working Groups	CCS established advisory and collaborative planning structures involving school staff, division leadership, community partners, and stakeholders.	Groups supported implementation planning, partnership alignment, evaluation development, and sustainability discussions throughout the year.



<p>Evaluation & Continuous Improvement</p>	<p>CCS developed evaluation planning processes, implementation tracking methods, monthly reporting structures, and early qualitative feedback systems for pilot initiatives.</p>	<p>Monthly implementation updates and planning reflections informed continuous improvement and Year 2 planning efforts.</p>
<p>Community Partnership Alignment</p>	<p>CCS strengthened coordination with community organizations, UVA partners, DHS, literacy organizations, and family-serving agencies to better align existing supports and reduce duplication of services.</p>	<p>Increased collaboration and cross-sector communication supported stronger integration of school and community efforts.</p>
<p>Family & Community Engagement Infrastructure</p>	<p>CCS purchased a Family and Community Engagement Van to strengthen outreach, community visibility, resource distribution, and engagement efforts across schools and neighborhoods.</p>	<p>The van will support future outreach events, family engagement activities, community resource coordination, and school-community partnership efforts during Year 2 implementation.</p>

Additional Impact

In addition to direct programmatic and partnership efforts, Year 1 implementation focused heavily on building the long-term infrastructure necessary to sustain and expand the Community Schools model across Charlottesville City Schools. Several foundational investments and organizational shifts were made during the year to strengthen outreach capacity, partnership coordination, communication systems, and long-term sustainability planning.

Family and Community Engagement Van

During Year 1, CCS purchased a Family and Community Engagement Van to strengthen the division’s ability to engage students, families, and community members directly within neighborhoods and community spaces. The van is intended to support:

- Family outreach and engagement activities across the division.
- Transportation and distribution of literacy materials, school resources, and community support items.



- Participation in school and community events.
- Mobile engagement efforts connected to attendance, literacy, wellness, and student support initiatives.
- Increased visibility and accessibility of CCS family engagement efforts within the broader community.

The van is expected to play an important role in supporting future Community Schools outreach, especially in strengthening school-community connections and increasing accessibility for families who may face transportation or participation barriers. The Family and Community Engagement Van represents a long-term investment in accessible, community-based engagement infrastructure designed to reduce participation barriers and strengthen CCS's visibility and connection within neighborhoods and community spaces.

Sustainability & Leadership Transition Planning

Year 1 implementation also included intentional planning around sustainability and long-term leadership capacity. As part of this effort, CCS began transitioning day-to-day Community Schools coordination and implementation responsibilities from Dr. Sherica Jones-Lewis, who served in the initial Director role during the planning and launch phase, to Abigail Ferguson, Family Engagement and Outreach Specialist. This transition was designed to strengthen long-term sustainability, deepen integration with existing family engagement systems, and ensure continuity of implementation moving into Year 2.

Throughout the year, Abigail Ferguson participated in implementation planning, partnership coordination, stakeholder engagement efforts, evaluation discussions, and pilot initiative development in order to support continuity and shared institutional knowledge. The transition process emphasized relationship continuity, sustainability of partnerships, and alignment between Community Schools implementation and broader division family engagement priorities.

In the upcoming year, Abigail will continue to organize and facilitate family and community activities, while Dr. Denise Johnson will take on the leading role and supervise the Community Schools model for the division.

This approach reflects CCS's broader commitment to creating a sustainable Community Schools framework that builds upon existing strengths, trusted relationships, and community expertise rather than relying solely on temporary grant-funded structures.



Expanded Partnership Infrastructure

Additional Year 1 impact included the development of stronger cross-sector coordination systems between CCS, community organizations, local government agencies, faith communities, higher education partners, and youth-serving nonprofits. This included:

- Increased coordination with UVA and UVA Health partners around student and family support needs.
- Alignment of volunteer and enrichment supports connected to the Innovation Hub and other school-based opportunities.
- Strengthened literacy partnerships through Literacy Hubs, Just Right Readers, and community-based reading initiatives.
- Expanded communication and planning structures between schools and external partners to reduce duplication and improve alignment of services.

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement Systems

Year 1 also established foundational systems for implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement. Internal reports, stakeholder meetings, evaluation planning processes, and implementation reflections were used to:

- Monitor pilot initiative progress.
- Identify barriers and emerging needs.
- Track participation and partnership development.
- Refine implementation structures for future iterations.
- Support data-informed decision-making and sustainability planning.

Together, these efforts helped establish the organizational infrastructure necessary to support deeper implementation, stronger partnerships, and continued expansion of the Community Schools model across Charlottesville City Schools in future years. Across initiatives, CCS observed a consistent pattern of increased participation, program expansion, and community partner engagement, reinforcing the value of coordinated, relationship-based approaches to supporting students and families.

Stewardship of Grant Funds

During Year 1, Charlottesville City Schools intentionally approached Community Schools implementation with a focus on sustainability, partnership alignment, and responsible stewardship of public funds. Rather than duplicating services already available within the community, CCS prioritized leveraging existing expertise,



relationships, programs, and infrastructure already operating across Charlottesville. This approach allowed the division to maximize impact while minimizing unnecessary redundancy and building a stronger long-term ecosystem of support for students and families.

A central principle of implementation was recognizing that many community organizations were already doing important work connected to youth development, literacy, wellness, mentoring, and family engagement prior to the launch of the Community Schools initiative. As a result, CCS focused on coordination, alignment, communication, and infrastructure-building rather than attempting to replace or replicate existing community-based efforts.

Overall funding was used to support materials, supplies, transportation costs, program related fees, and other implementation needs. Funds were not used to subsidize the ongoing operational or staffing costs of external organizations, allowing CCS to focus resources on coordination, infrastructure, and direct student-centered implementation support.

High-Level Fund Allocation

Year 1 grant expenditures primarily supported:

- The Director of Community Schools
- Developing Community Schools and Family and community engagement infrastructure.
- Costs associated with pilot initiative support and development.
- Student and family engagement materials and events.
- Purchase of the Family and Community Engagement Van to support outreach and mobile engagement efforts.
- Just Right Reader materials and literacy supports
- After-school access to the YMCA for extended day programming

The majority of Year 1 efforts emphasized building sustainable systems and partnerships that could continue beyond the initial grant cycle rather than creating high-cost standalone programming structures.

Leveraged Community Resources & Partnerships



CCS significantly expanded the impact of grant funding through collaboration with existing community partners, volunteer engagement, and alignment with already-established community initiatives. Key examples included:

- Coordination with the Charlottesville Department of Human Services around existing youth development, literacy, and family support programming.
- Partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Central Virginia through the Power Crew initiative.
- Collaboration with literacy-focused community partners through Literacy Hubs
- Partnership development with UVA, UVA Health, faith communities, nonprofits, and youth-serving organizations.
- Volunteer and mentor recruitment efforts coordinated through the FACE Team and community partners.
- Community-based event support, donated engagement space, volunteer time, and in-kind participation from local organizations and stakeholders.

This collaborative approach allowed CCS to expand impact without unnecessarily duplicating existing services or creating parallel systems. By leveraging organizations already deeply embedded within the community, CCS was able to strengthen coordination while allowing community partners to continue leading work aligned with their expertise, staffing structures, and long-standing relationships with Charlottesville families.

Success Story / Spotlight

The PowerCrew program was so successful during the Sunrise Elementary School pilot that Trailblazer Elementary School reached out to become an expansion site. After just weeks of implementation, school staff shared the following feedback:

“Walter (PowerCrew Staff) is such a pleasant person! Thank you for sharing him with us!”

PowerCrew staff, through post-engagement forms, also documented several observable shifts in student engagement and peer interaction during recess programming, particularly around belonging, inclusion, and relationship-building.

“Members engaging with new friends or friends they do not usually play with.”



“Students were open to expanding their game to include other classmates who wanted to join.”

These observations suggest that the program helped create more inclusive play environments while strengthening students’ social-emotional skills, peer relationships, and sense of connection during the school day.

Progress Toward Grant Objectives & Implementation Refinement

The following table summarizes how Year 1 implementation aligned with the original objectives outlined in the Virginia Community Schools Grant proposal, including key accomplishments, implementation refinements, and lessons learned that emerged throughout the pilot and infrastructure-building phase of implementation.

Original Grant Objective	Year 1 Accomplishments	Implementation Pivot / Lesson Learned
Establish a division-wide Community Schools leadership and coordination structure	CCS established advisory structures, working groups, implementation planning systems, evaluation processes, and leadership coordination across schools and partners.	CCS learned that sustaining collaborative structures requires more ongoing coordination capacity, clearer role definition, and stronger communication systems than initially anticipated.
Launch the Community Mentorship Coalition (CMC) across grade levels	CCS launched and supported pilot initiatives connected to literacy, mentoring, belonging, enrichment, and postsecondary readiness, including Bridge Builders, The LAB, literacy hubs, and Power Crew partnerships.	Rather than immediately scaling division-wide, CCS shifted toward phased pilot implementation to better understand school-specific needs, scheduling realities, transportation barriers, and participation patterns.



<p>Expand mentoring and volunteer engagement through a Community Talent Bank</p>	<p>CCS strengthened volunteer engagement and community partnerships across schools, with volunteer totals increasing from 1,137 to 1,218 participants during Year 1.</p>	<p>CCS found greater success leveraging and coordinating existing community relationships and volunteer systems before building entirely new standalone structures.</p>
<p>Increase literacy engagement and family-centered literacy supports</p>	<p>CCS supported literacy hubs, Just Right Readers, literacy material distribution, family literacy engagement events, and afterschool literacy supports through community partnerships.</p>	<p>Literacy efforts became more community-embedded than originally envisioned, with schools, churches, nonprofits, and community organizations collectively supporting implementation.</p>
<p>Strengthen student belonging, engagement, and wellness supports</p>	<p>CCS implemented relationship-centered pilot initiatives focused on mentoring, belonging, social-emotional learning, and expanded enrichment opportunities. Approximately 2,500 participants engaged in school-community events and initiatives during the reporting period.</p>	<p>CCS furthered its understanding that relationship-based initiatives require flexible implementation structures responsive to student attendance, scheduling, staffing capacity, and school culture.</p>
<p>Develop stronger coordination between schools and community organizations</p>	<p>CCS strengthened alignment with DHS, Boys & Girls Club, UVA partners, literacy organizations, faith communities, and youth-serving nonprofits to improve coordination and reduce duplication of services.</p>	<p>Year 1 reinforced that Community Schools implementation is most sustainable when focused on strengthening and aligning existing community assets rather than rapidly creating parallel systems.</p>



<p>Build systems for evaluation, implementation monitoring, and continuous improvement</p>	<p>CCS established monthly implementation reviews, qualitative feedback systems, evaluation planning processes, and ongoing implementation reflections.</p>	<p>CCS learned that continuous improvement processes were essential for adapting implementation in real time and supporting more sustainable long-term planning.</p>
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Overall, Year 1 remained strongly aligned with the original goals of the Virginia Community Schools Grant proposal while also functioning as a learning and refinement year. CCS intentionally prioritized infrastructure-building, partnership alignment, implementation calibration, and sustainable growth to support stronger long-term implementation in future years.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Year 1 implementation reinforced that building a sustainable Community Schools framework requires significant coordination, relationship-building, flexibility, and long-term planning across schools, community organizations, and partner systems. As CCS moved from planning into pilot implementation, several important lessons emerged that will help strengthen Year 2 implementation efforts.

One challenge involved maintaining consistent follow-through and coordination across advisory structures, partner meetings, and implementation teams while balancing the realities of school schedules, staffing demands, and competing organizational priorities. Although CCS successfully established advisory and collaborative planning structures during Year 1, sustaining momentum and communication across all groups required more ongoing coordination capacity than initially anticipated. Moving into Year 2, CCS plans to strengthen meeting structures, role clarity, communication systems, and implementation timelines to improve consistency and accountability across collaborative efforts.

Another challenge was timing. Because the initiative started midyear the time needed for deeper school-level asset mapping and implementation planning was not available. Doing this would ensure that Community Schools' efforts are responsive to the unique culture, staffing realities, student needs, and existing supports within each school building. While Year 1 successfully identified many strong partnerships and existing assets across the division, the implementation process highlighted the importance of



more detailed school-based planning and clearer alignment between division priorities and school-specific needs.

Implementation efforts connected to the LAB provided particularly valuable lessons regarding flexibility, student engagement, and relationship-centered programming. CCS learned that mentoring, enrichment, and transition-focused initiatives require adaptable structures that account for changing student schedules, attendance patterns, transportation barriers, and individualized student circumstances. Several initial plans related to mentoring, postsecondary engagement, and participation structures required recalibration throughout the year in response to student needs and operational realities. These experiences reinforced the importance of collaborative planning with school staff and students and helped shape a more responsive implementation approach moving forward.

Year 1 also highlighted challenges related to sustaining and coordinating college, career, and postsecondary engagement opportunities across multiple partners and institutions. Some anticipated university-connected collaborations and career exposure opportunities evolved differently than originally planned due to scheduling limitations, staffing capacity, semester timelines, and shifting organizational priorities. These experiences also reinforced the importance of building implementation timelines that align with the realities of both school-year and university calendars when coordinating partnership-based student opportunities.

At the same time, Year 1 demonstrated several important strengths that CCS plans to build upon moving forward. One of the strongest aspects of implementation was the intentional focus on evaluation planning, implementation tracking, and continuous improvement processes throughout the year. CCS established monthly reporting structures, implementation updates, stakeholder feedback processes, and early qualitative assessment methods to monitor progress, document lessons learned, and support reflective planning across initiatives.

Overall, CCS learned the importance of establishing clearer partnership structures, earlier planning timelines, and stronger sustainability planning for initiatives involving external organizations and higher education partners. The division also learned the importance of balancing innovation with the operational realities facing schools and community organizations already engaged in this work. Rather than attempting to rapidly build entirely new systems, CCS found greater success when focusing on current school-based needs, coordination, relationship-building with families and partners, and strengthening existing community-based efforts already supporting



Charlottesville students and families. This lesson reinforced the value of pacing implementation thoughtfully, leveraging existing expertise within the community, and building sustainable structures that can continue beyond the grant cycle.

Looking Ahead: Year 2 Goals & Sustainability

As Charlottesville City Schools moves into Year 2 of Community Schools implementation, the division is well-positioned to build upon the strong foundation established during the planning and pilot year. Year 1 successfully created core structures for partnership development, implementation coordination, evaluation planning, and collaborative leadership that will allow CCS to move from early pilot work into deeper and more sustainable implementation across schools and community partnerships.

Year 1 highlighted the need to reevaluate how the division partners with community organizations and families. Historically, organizations interested in partnering with the school system would approach either the division or an individual school to propose an idea, initiative, or activity.

However, feedback and evaluation gathered throughout the year revealed a need for a more intentional approach aligned with the division's strategic plan, internal goals, and the needs of families and the community. For the first time in recent history, conversations and surveys grounded in the Community Schools model enabled principals, division leaders, educators, and families to communicate the supports students need to strengthen student achievement clearly. As a result, the division is now better positioned to connect and collaborate with community partners based on identified and informed needs. Dr. Johnson will meet with partners in early June and ask all organizations to complete the necessary agreements, including Memoranda of Understanding, facilities use forms, and data and privacy agreements. Additionally, partners will be asked to annually provide a school board presentation on their work.

One major focus for Year 2 will be building common language and understanding around the CCS Community Schools model. In general, this includes developing and disseminating information about community schools. Additional areas of focus include strengthening and expanding the systems within each Community Schools pillar already put into place before and during Year 1, deepening relationships with existing community partners, increasing school-based coordination, including the addition of Community School liaisons, with excess funding from Year 1, and asset mapping, refining implementation structures within schools, and continuing to align Community



Schools efforts with broader division priorities related to student wellbeing, literacy, belonging, attendance, enrichment, and postsecondary readiness.

In addition to the initiatives CCS currently has in place that are not funded through the Community School grant, the following are the Year 2 focus areas we will implement and request funding through the upcoming Community School grant cycle.

Community Schools Year 2 Implementation Focus Areas

Community Schools Domain	Year 2 Focus Area
<p>Integrated Student Supports (Basic Needs and Emotional/Mental Health) Strengthen coordination of academic, behavioral, wellness, and family supports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporating school-level Community Schools Liaisons within schools that need additional support. ● Transportation costs to support walk to school initiatives, afterschool programming, health services, college, and career experiences ● Snacks and food for academic and enrichment activities
<p>Family & Community Partnerships Deepen authentic family engagement and community partnerships through the use of a coordinated approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quarterly resources fairs ● “Meet me at the bus stop” community and family engagement events ● Monthly family engagement activities within the community ● Materials and supplies for family engagement outreach activities and resource mapping.
<p>Student Engagement & Motivation (Expanded & Enriched Learning Opportunities) Increase access to enrichment, mentoring, and out-of-school learning with a focus on after-school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supplies and oversight for school-based after-school tutoring and enrichment Programming ● Recess and Lunch mentorship programming through the Power Crew and Bride Builders



<p>and summer opportunities. Additionally, creating meaningful, relevant, and engaging experiences that increase belonging, leadership, attendance, academic engagement, career exposure, and overall student connection to school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After summer-school enrichment programming in partnership with the YMCA ● Project-based learning, experiential field trips, and Internships that align with the Confidence and Comprehension Club and The Lab initiatives. ● Mentorship programming during lunch and recess.
<p>Collaborative Leadership & Shared Decision-Making</p> <p>Crosscutting priority that builds sustainable leadership and implementation structures at the school and district levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding to cover family/caregiver costs for participating in Community Schools advisory groups. ● Not funded- continued creation of opportunities for family participation in decision-making and feedback. ● Not funded- Community Schools calendar that partners can access to add their community events, so the school community can be aware.

Ongoing key priorities include:

- Expanding and refining Power Crew, Bridge Builders, The LAB, Confidence and Comprehension Club (including PowerCrew) literacy-focused partnership efforts, and after-school programming.
- Strengthening school-specific implementation planning and asset mapping processes.
- Deepening collaboration with community organizations, literacy, and faith-based partners.
- Increasing mentor, volunteer, and family engagement opportunities across the division.
- Expanding literacy supports, enrichment opportunities, and postsecondary exploration efforts for students.
- Continuing to strengthen communication and coordination systems between schools and community partners.
- Increasing consistency and sustainability of implementation structures across schools.



- Strengthening data-informed planning and implementation monitoring systems

CCS also plans to continue partnering with organizations that can expand after-school programming, relationship-centered mentoring, and postsecondary exposure opportunities. Year 2 efforts are focused on leveraging CCS facilities, securing transportation, and sustainability funding to support long-term program access and participation.

Year 2 will also include a continued emphasis on evaluation, implementation tracking, and continuous improvement. CCS developed foundational evaluation structures during Year 1, including implementation tracking systems, monthly reporting processes, stakeholder feedback methods, and qualitative reflection tools. The division also developed surveys designed to better understand student, family, partner, and stakeholder experiences connected to Community Schools implementation. CCS is currently working to increase response rates and strengthen participation in these feedback processes in order to better inform Year 2 planning, decision-making, and future outcome measurement efforts. These evaluation structures position CCS to make increasingly data-informed implementation decisions while continuing to center student, family, staff, and community voices in future planning efforts.

Importantly, CCS enters Year 2 with stronger sustainability structures already in place. Rather than building isolated programs dependent solely on grant funding, the division intentionally focused on leveraging and strengthening existing community assets, partnerships, and staff capacity throughout Year 1. Community Schools efforts have been embedded within existing family engagement, literacy, wellness, mentoring, and youth development systems already operating across Charlottesville.

The transition of implementation leadership responsibilities within CCS further supports long-term sustainability by embedding Community Schools coordination within existing division infrastructure and family engagement systems. CCS also continues to strengthen cross-sector partnerships that allow community organizations to continue doing what they do best while increasing alignment, communication, and coordinated support for students and families.

Looking ahead, CCS remains committed to building a sustainable, relationship-centered Community Schools model that reflects the strengths, needs, and voices of Charlottesville students, families, staff, and community partners. Year 1 established the foundation; Year 2 will focus on strengthening, refining, and expanding that work in ways that are thoughtful, collaborative, and built for long-term impact.



Acknowledgments

Charlottesville City Schools gratefully acknowledges the many community partners, school-based teams, division staff, families, students, and local organizations who contributed to Year 1 Community Schools planning and implementation. This work is only possible because of the existing commitment, expertise, and care already present throughout the Charlottesville community. Our partners helped support literacy, mentoring, student engagement, family outreach, college and career exposure, basic needs coordination, volunteer alignment, and community-based listening efforts during Year 1.

Note: Participation figures reflect sign-in sheets, school estimates, event registration data, volunteer records, and program participation records collected during the 2025–2026 implementation period. Some participation totals may include repeat attendees across multiple events. Counts are intended to provide a conservative estimate of reach rather than a unique participant count.



Appendices

1. [Community Schools Brochure](#)
2. [CCS Family and Community Engagement Team - Post Engagement Forms](#)
3. [CCS Event Attendance](#)
4. [Community Schools Vision, Mission, and Theory of Change](#)
5. [Advisory Board Materials](#)
6. [Working Group Materials](#)
7. [Year 1 Implementation Timeline and Major Milestones](#)
8. [25-26 Community Schools Evaluation Framework](#)
9. [Summary of Pilot Initiatives](#)
10. [Secondary School Climate Survey Results](#)
11. [Family and Community Trust and Relationships Survey](#)
12. [First Baptist Literacy Partnership and Literacy Hub Overview](#)
13. [College Mentors for Kids Expansion Planning Summary](#)
14. [Year 2 Priority Goals and Sustainability Planning](#)
15. [Financial Summary and High-Level Resource Allocation Overview](#)
16. [Bridge Builders One Pager](#)
17. [Bridge Builders Co-Design Training and Lunch Engagement](#)
18. [Bridge Builders Post Engagement Form](#)
19. [Bridge Builders Lunch Engagement Semester Summary and Reflections](#)
20. [PowerCrew One Pager](#)
21. [PowerCrew Framework](#)
22. [PowerCrew Post Engagement Form](#)
23. [LMA Mentoring Ideation Session](#)
24. [LMA Mentorship Pilot \(Plan\)](#)
25. [Student Mentor Match and Growth Survey \(Pre and Post\)](#)
26. [Bridge Builders: Student Voice & Community Engagement Summary](#)
27. [Virginia Community Schools Implementation Stage 1 Planner](#)
28. [Virginia Community Schools Implementation Stage 2 Planner](#)
29. [Virginia Community Schools Implementation Stage 3 Planner](#)
30. [Virginia Community Schools Implementation Stage 4 Planner](#)