



Progress Report from the  
**Chesterfield  
Recovery Academy**  
December 2022

Nov. 30, 2022

**The Honorable Janet D. Howell**

Chairperson, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee  
Virginia General Assembly  
Pocahontas Building - Room E509  
900 East Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

**The Honorable Barry D. Knight**

Chairperson, House Appropriations Committee  
Virginia General Assembly  
Pocahontas Building - Room W1312  
900 East Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Madam and Sir:

Chesterfield County Public Schools respectfully submits the Report to the Legislature: Chesterfield Recovery Academy pursuant to:

*Out of this appropriation, \$864,000 the first year and \$500,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to Chesterfield County Public Schools to assist with establishing a recovery high school as a year-round school with enrollment open to any high school student residing in Superintendent's Region 1 who is in the early stages of recovery from substance use disorder or dependency. Students in the high school shall be provided academic, emotional, and social support needed to progress toward earning a high school diploma and reintegrating into a traditional high school setting. Chesterfield County Public Schools shall submit a report regarding the planning, implementation, and outcomes of the recovery high school to the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee by December 1 each year.*

This correspondence is the fulfillment of that request. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully,

*Mervin Daugherty*

**Mervin Daugherty**

Superintendent, Chesterfield County Public Schools

*Justin Savoy*

**Justin Savoy**

Coordinator, Chesterfield Recovery Academy



## Introduction

Recovery high schools are designed to provide both a supportive academic environment and a purposeful daily structure to guide students who are recovering from substance use disorder. In order to fulfill the above mission, Chesterfield Recovery Academy is an in-person program designed to allow students entry no matter where they are in their high school journey. This is accomplished through the use of online coursework and a Student Support and Academic Facilitator who helps students with their work and has them set academic goals to maintain appropriate academic progress.

The Student Support and Academic Facilitator is endorsed in special education which allows for appropriate case management.

As an innovative and pioneering program, our vision statement directs that: *"Chesterfield Recovery Academy aims to be a vehicle of progressive change in the ushering in of an academic culture that holistically addresses the substance use and co-occurring mental health challenges of the youth in Region One."*

Our mission statement that drives our daily progression states: *"We provide a supportive environment that makes academic success during recovery attainable as well as sustainable, emphasizes postsecondary preparedness, and fosters the development of a growth mindset about pursuing healthy choices, positive relationships, and sustained sobriety."*



### Program Start-Up

Chesterfield Recovery Academy formally opened on Aug. 2, 2022, with a staff of two, a Coordinator and Office Manager. The Student Support and Academic Facilitator joined the staff at the end of August which allowed the first students to begin on Sept. 8, 2022. Since coming on board, the coordinator has been making contact with schools within the Superintendent's Region 1 through mailings, emails, virtual meetings, phone calls, and in-person meetings. This outreach will continue in order to boost awareness of the program and help schools be mindful of identifying students who would benefit from enrollment at Chesterfield Recovery Academy. The goal is to reach a total of 20-25 students; as of Nov. 28, there are 10 students enrolled from the following localities: Chesterfield and Henrico.

### Screening and Enrollment

To be eligible for enrollment in Chesterfield Recovery Academy, the student must:

- abstain from drugs and alcohol for at least 20-30 days;
- be enrolled in a school within Region One
- be participating or receiving some form of substance abuse treatment (i.e., outpatient /inpatient therapy, residential, etc.).

To be considered for enrollment, a referral form must be completed. This leads to an interview with the student and their family followed by a clinical assessment to determine their eligibility and willingness to commit to sobriety and the program.

When accepted into the program, student academic records are requested from their home school, and information is also requested from their mental health or substance abuse providers. Staff works with the family and the transportation department to determine how the student will be transported to the program. Once this information is received, the student's academic standing is evaluated, and courses are scheduled through CCPS Online/ PACE based on their needed requirements for graduation. The process from referral to full enrollment can take up to five business days.





## How the Program Works

Chesterfield Recovery Academy students are supported with scheduled group and individual therapy sessions each day of the week while participating in the program. A Senior Clinician and two additional clinicians are on site every day to provide this service to students. Each clinician is specialized in different areas. The Senior Clinician is a registered Art Therapist, one clinician is a certified Yoga instructor and the other is trained in LGBTQIA+ therapeutic practices. As needs are identified within the program and the population, the Senior Clinician will implement a family support group and a parent group. These groups are focused on developing healthy relationships and creating a support network for parents in the program.

While participating in the program, students have a scheduled routine of academic time and therapeutic sessions. Students' daily activities are based on their scholastic and sobriety needs. Each student completes three hours of academic time where they work to recover missed credits or maintain their current grade level. Scheduled therapy groups from in-house clinicians and outside organizations are conducted daily. As additional therapeutic support, individual sessions are scheduled to address each student's recovery goals, the creation of a support network, and establishing long-term sobriety goals. In order to increase student support, a parent group will be implemented in the beginning of the spring semester to further the education and understanding of

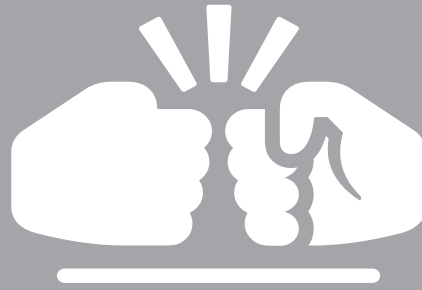
students' recovery goals, parental/family support, and creating a support network in the community.

To include community reintegration, our program provides students with the opportunity for engaging activities outside of the school that support their journeys while exposing them to community organizations. This instills a sense of community and a knowledge of growing resources from the local to state level.

## Program Costs

The greatest program costs are related to personnel. Chesterfield County Public Schools funds the Coordinator, the Student Support and Academic Facilitator, and the Office Manager positions through the state-appropriated funds. Currently, the Senior Clinician and the two additional clinicians are funded through grants provided by the Community Services Board.

A second key area of cost for the program is transportation. Students who are already enrolled in Chesterfield County Public Schools travel via existing routes. Students from elsewhere in the region are transported via CCPS transportation or parent transport. CCPS is fortunate to have a transportation department that is able to navigate the various options at a reasonable cost to the program and an education foundation, the Chesterfield Education Foundation, that is also able to support students as needed.



## Community Support

Chesterfield Recovery Academy is already benefiting from strong community support through both donations and volunteers. A few examples:

1

Principal Roger Oser of William J. Ostiguy High School, a member of the Association of Recovery Schools, provided technical assistance as the program was being organized. Through calls facilitated and funded through the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Mr. Oser provided key information about organizing a recovery high school.

2

VCU Rams in Recovery helped educate students about healthy choices on the road to sobriety, community support networks, and post-secondary support provided for students in recovery who attend VCU. Additionally, the organization provided training to staff on being recovery allies.

3

The Boys to Men mentoring program provides a weekly inclusive therapy group that focuses on building confidence, recognizing accountability, and understanding the short- and long-term effects of maintaining sobriety.

4

Healing Sounds LLC is a partner that conducts music therapy in group sessions. Twice each month, the music therapist conducts musical interventions geared toward accomplishing nonmusical goals (i.e. reduction of usage, full sobriety, and healthy expression of emotions).

5

The 2 End The Stigma Foundation made a monetary donation to assist with the creation of a mindfulness corner created to give students a safe space for personal time and artistic expression.

6

The JHW Foundation Inc. supported the program by providing the students with an array of seating options for the classroom and the mindfulness corner. During group sessions, students use these accommodations which are designed to facilitate ease in participation and being open with struggles.



## Looking Forward

Chesterfield Recovery Academy is committed to supporting high school students in recovery with substance use disorder throughout the Superintendent's Region 1 area. In the coming months, the coordinator will continue with active outreach to all Region 1 schools to share information about the program and to help enroll students who would benefit from this programming. Administration has set the goal of 25 students with representation from all partnering districts by May 2023.

Currently, transportation is provided through CCPS as most costs are consistent with traditional student routing. However, we estimate costs will increase as more students enroll in the program and travel from greater distances. As a result, requiring additional buses/routes and possible private car transportation. This is in addition to the gas cards that are provided for students and their families that provide their own transportation.

Career and technical education programming and work-based learning opportunities will be added to help students determine their path after high school. Additionally, the Academy staff will continue to build upon the current community partnerships to provide wrap-around services for students and to cast light on the recovery process.



## Conclusion

As the first recovery high school in Virginia, our staff is committed to creating hope and opportunity for students who need it most. Facilitating recovery through a structured environment and a network of support is our daily focus; ensuring the continued sobriety and success of the student population in Region 1 is the main priority. Understanding the substance-use crisis that plagues our community, educating the diverse populations about substance-use disorder, and creating resourceful partnerships focused on curtailing and eventually stopping the problem are the aims of this program. We are working toward having representation from each district in our region in the near future and setting a standard for the program to be replicated throughout the state.



**Justin Savoy, Coordinator**  
13900 Hull Street Road, Midlothian, VA  
Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Email: [recoveryacademy@ccpsnet.net](mailto:recoveryacademy@ccpsnet.net)  
Phone: 804-639-8722  
[www.bit.ly/recoveryacademy](http://www.bit.ly/recoveryacademy)

