

## **Chesterfield Recovery Academy Update Report**

### **Overview:**

Since September 8, 2022, the Chesterfield Recovery Academy has served Region One schools and communities to provide therapeutic and academic support for students in recovery. During our first school year, we had representation from Chesterfield County, Henrico County, and Colonial Heights. The highest enrollment was 15 students, and exceeded expectations for the first year. Our goal was to provide a blended model of therapy and academic coaching to reestablish stability within students' personal lives and regain their focus on completing school. Each day our students have a schedule that dedicates time to build their scholastic skills, receive individualized instruction, and participate in group and individual therapy. Overall, each student's day is built on individual needs and required support for their recovery journey.

Community support has been an integral part of our first year's success. Chesterfield Recovery Academy is supported by several foundations in the region. The JHW Foundation, 2 End the Stigma Foundation, and the Chesterfield Education Foundation ensured our students' barriers to transportation, academic success, and therapeutic options were removed. In addition, their financial support has given our students the opportunity to participate in art therapy, music therapy, and the implementation of their own group room for therapy.

Recognition for the program and staff contributions to the community has helped highlight our first year. The National Association of Counties awarded Chesterfield Recovery Academy the Achievement Award for our work in the area of Children and Youth. The Program Coordinator, Justin Savoy, was invited to participate in Governor Glen Youngkin's Right Help Right Now behavioral health plan to advocate for additional recovery high schools in the state.

### **Therapeutic:**

Over the course of our first year, the Chesterfield Recovery Academy Clinical Team has developed and implemented a framework for clinical supports to meet ongoing and developing programmatic needs. This framework was benchmarked with the Association for Recovery High Schools to align with best practices and future accreditation. The CRA clinical team engaged in individual supportive counseling, group therapy, and case management services. This involved actively supporting multiple pathways to recovery, providing trauma-informed care, and utilizing multiple modalities which included art therapy, music therapy, drama therapy, motivational interviewing, Cognitive-Behavioral therapy, and mindfulness. Animal-assisted therapy was delivered through our therapy dog, Lettie, who gave the students comfort, joy, and connection. The clinical team conducted Substance Use/Mental Health assessments to implement as part of the admissions process. Meaningful partnerships were developed with recovery schools across the country, local peer resources, Virginia RecoveryCorps, and Project Yoga Richmond to inform the program and provide additional support to the students. While many new students arrived with apprehension, distrust, or negative feelings about recovery and/or therapeutic treatment, over the course of the year, they developed connection and engagement with the clinical staff and recovery process. Students built positive therapeutic relationships and actively participated

throughout the year, including school breaks. The majority of our CRA students represent an at-risk population who were able to stabilize in this setting resulting in a significant decrease in psychiatric hospitalizations and residential treatment stays as well as no additional criminal charges. The clinical team has built a referral network of community support including recovery and mental health resources. Exciting opportunities to continue serving our students and build the CRA clinical program, peer recovery support, and community relationships are ahead in the 2023-2024 school year.

### **Academic:**

As of June 28, 2023, Chesterfield Recovery Academy (“CRA”) has academically served nineteen (19) students participating in a computer-based curriculum provided through a dynamic collaboration with CCPSONline’s PACE program. All students have had some level of illicit substance use history in addition to most of them having a co-occurring mental health diagnosis, prior hospitalizations, prior or ongoing juvenile court involvement, and/or a recent history of residential placements. The operational modality of CRA’s academic program delivers blended learning through structured in-person academic support of each student’s asynchronous instruction as well as allowing for at-home learning that is accessible 24/7. This allows students to accelerate through their coursework while providing them the time and space to access the therapeutic, recovery-focused supports necessary for transformative scholastic growth. Each course has a certified, content proficient educator available during office hours for 1:1 or small group academic instructional support in addition to CRA employing a full-time, in-person special educator for daily student academic progress monitoring, accommodations delivery, behavior support, academic guidance, content-specific support and remediation, and test coordination.

CRA students have collectively passed a total of fifty-eight (58) courses consisting of English 9-12, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Algebra Functions and Data Analysis, Trigonometry, Earth Science, Biology I, Biology II, Chemistry, Physics, World History I, World History II, VA and US History, US and VA Government, Art History I, Introduction to Psychology, Health and PE 9-10, and Economics and Personal Finance.

Many CRA students have become eligible to earn verified credits by collectively passing fifteen (15) Standards of Learning assessments in the first year of the program’s operation. These verified credits have consisted of End-of-Course (“EOC”) assessments in Algebra I, World History I, VA and US History, and Earth Science, in addition to Workkeys alternative assessments in Business Writing (alternative for EOC Writing) and Business Documents (alternative for EOC Reading).

Three (3) students have passed at least one Honors level course while enrolled at CRA during the 2022-2023 school year.

Two (2) students are completing independent study materials to prepare for and sit for at least one CLEP examination administered by The College Board in order to pursue college credit at their colleges/universities of choice.

One (1) freshman sat for the PSAT 8/9, one (1) sophomore sat for the PSAT 10, and two (2) juniors sat for the SAT.

One (1) term graduate student completed the testing requirements to earn the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate.

CRA graduated its first two (2) seniors in May 2023. Another two (2) seniors will be graduating in July 2023, one of which is graduating one year ahead of schedule with an advanced studies diploma due to the ability to accelerate through the curriculum while enrolled at CRA.

CRA students have the ability to utilize strategic partnerships between CRA and their zoned schools as well as utilize the auxiliary resources available to Chesterfield Recovery Academy in order to support and assist students on their paths towards early or on-time graduation. In the first year of the program, five students have encountered hospitalizations, residential placements, pregnancy, and/or juvenile detention while enrolled at CRA. CRA academic staff have been able to coordinate and provide a continuum of face-to-face and remote educational service linkage despite those off-site placements, which have allowed students to return to the program without any significant academic impact towards their diploma progress.

The CRA academic program is proud to have expanded to now include two (2) full-time special educators with plans to also onboard a full-time instructional assistant by August 2023. Additional academic program expansions include plans for CRA to offer a substance use recovery integrated Success I and II curriculum in the 2023-2024 school year. This curriculum will provide direct academic instruction in character building, study skills strategies, cross-curricular literacy improvement, functional math, organization, time management, healthy relationships, positive communication, and 21st century skills, in addition to customizing this content to the nuanced population served by Chesterfield Recovery Academy.