

Advancing Out of School Time: Creating Access for Student Success

A Report by NextUp RVA on the Pioneering Success in Richmond City Middle Schools (2014-2021)

About NextUp RVA

Richmond's middle school students are at a pivotal point in their life. The years from 11 to 14 have a lasting impact on a teenager's development and opportunities for success. Nearly a decade ago, a group of community and business leaders collaborated with Richmond Public Schools (RPS) to answer a bold question: what would it take to put more RPS teens on a path to success? The group devised a concept of an expanded-learning system, based on research and best practices, designed to make a tangible difference in the City's lagging middle schools outcomes and high-school graduation rate. This new initiative, now called NextUp RVA, focused on creating access to quality afterschool enrichment activities for middle schoolers, and the results have been nothing short of extraordinary.

The NextUp RVA Model

Research tells us that teens become engaged in learning through fun and structured activities. We know that out-of-school programs can enhance academic performance, improve behavior and attendance as well as develop healthy lifestyles and greater self-control and self-confidence. Building on these insights, NextUp RVA designed a model of coordinated, expanded learning services – first in 2014 at Henderson Middle School and later to four additional middle schools. NextUp started with its partners at RPS, Higher Achievement and Communities in Schools-Richmond, then grew into a network of more than 60 community-based enrichment providers.



Statistics Frame the Challenges

Many RPS students are not performing at their highest aptitude. This story is told by the numbers, half of all RPS students (51%) are economically disadvantaged. That reality means that they have limited access to learning resources outside of school. It's what educators call the "opportunity gap," a condition that contributes to these other statistics:

13.6

the percentage of Richmond City students who drop out of high school, a rate more than double neighboring counties

65

the percentage of RPS students in grades 3-8 that are not reading at grade level

90

the percentage of RPS 3-8 grade students who are not proficient in Math

81

the percentage of Richmond middle schoolers who DO NOT participate in afterschool programs

\$3

the amount of money saved by taxpayers for every \$1 invested in afterschool programs

Dropout Risk Factors: Moving the Needle

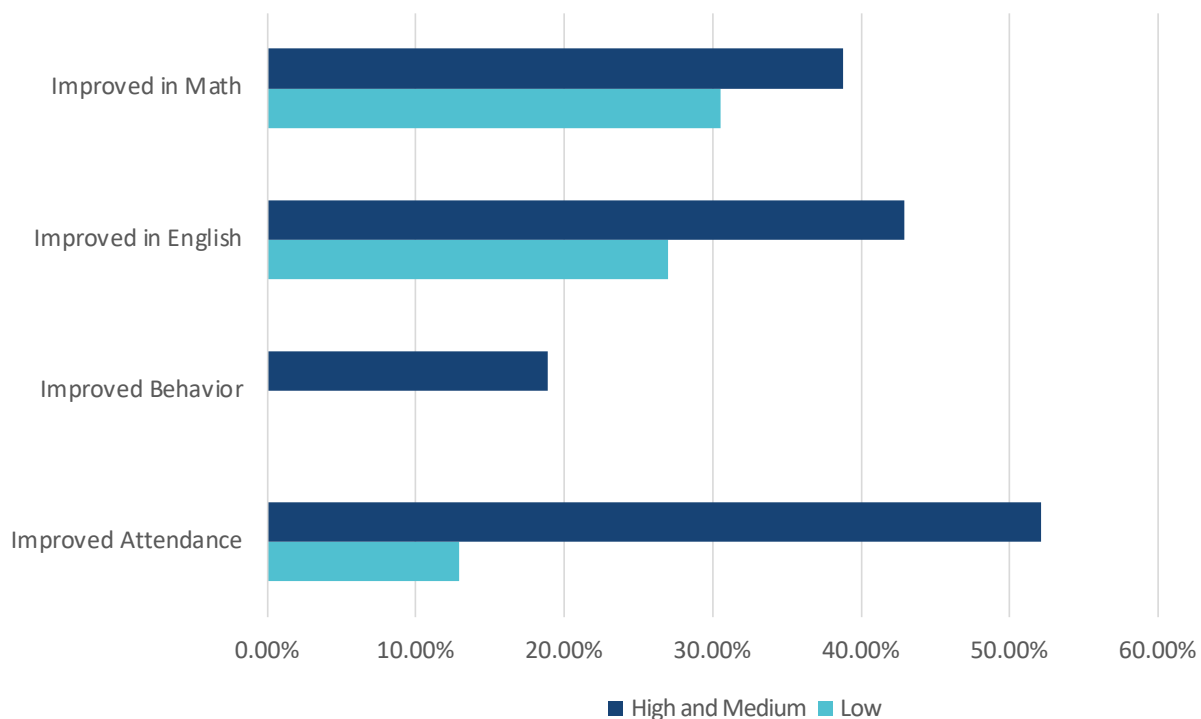
Why students drop out of school is not a mystery. There are a number of risk factors that contribute to students leaving school before they graduate. Here are a few factors that can contribute to an increased likelihood of dropping out:

- Missing at least 10 percent of instructional school days
- Getting poor grades (D or F) in English and Math
- Being involved in one or more behavior-related incidents

At least half of the students who participated in NextUp's coordinated afterschool system demonstrated one or more of the dropout risk factors.

While all participating students – whether at a low-risk or high-risk for dropping out of school – improved school outcomes during the 2014-2021 academic years, high-risk students made the greatest improvement.

Average percentage of students who improved in each school outcome between 2014 - 2021



Outstanding Outcomes

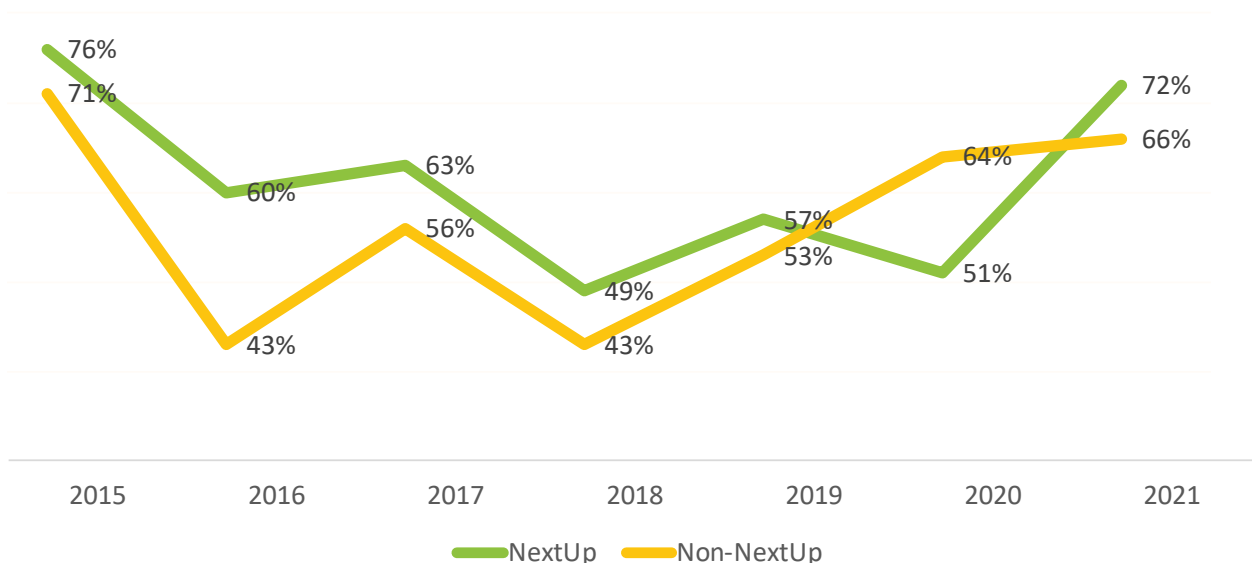
Since the initial pilot launch of NextUp RVA in 2014, some 1,950 RPS middle schoolers participated in NextUp RVA coordinated programs, including sports and health, STEM, arts and humanities, and mentoring and leadership. That widespread participation has led to a range of tangible outcomes, including higher levels of engagement among students, leading to improvements in school performance and personal development.

And student feedback shows that participants feel involved and appreciated in the afterschool programs.

- 97% of participants had fun after school
- 89% of participants liked coming to programs after school
- 83% of participants believe that attending NextUp's coordinated program(s) helped them find out what they were good at and what they liked to do

NextUp RVA also strives to ensure youth are supported by the instructors who work so hard to provide quality afterschool enrichment. 100% of NextUp participants said there was an adult in the afterschool programs who they will listen to and respect.

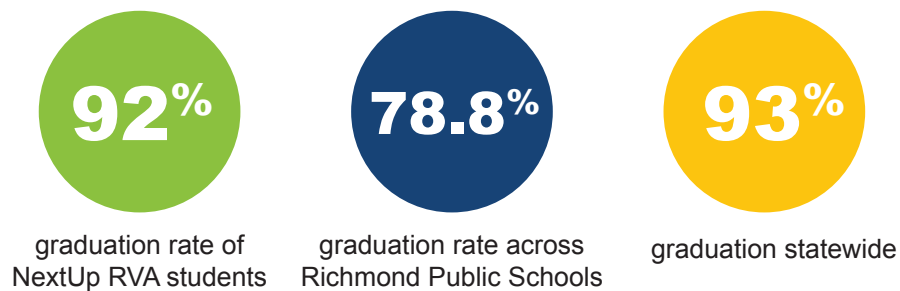
Percent of RPS Participants attending NextUp coordinated programs who improved or maintained positive attendance compared to Non-participants



Student Success

NextUp measures performance through a variety of metrics. In 2021, NextUp reached a critical milestone - its inaugural 6th grade class was scheduled to graduate from high school. It was, in effect, a moment of reckoning, an opportunity to quantify whether NextUp and the leaders that created it were right, would creating greater access and participation to afterschool learning programs improve high school graduation rates?

The results were compelling and unequivocal: **NextUp's Class of 2021 students graduated on-time at a greater rate than their peers – by a staggering 14 percentage points**



But that's not all. Another 8% of NextUp students are expected to graduate in 2022 or 2023, which means that **ZERO students – not a one – dropped out of high school.**

What It All Means

The data sends a powerful message, that the collective work put in by community leaders in devising NextUp has borne exactly the kind of fruit that was envisioned. In practical terms, it means that expanding students' learning in middle school with high-quality, well-organized enrichments together with wrap-around services dramatically increases the likelihood that students will graduate from high school.

Thank You!

The growth of afterschool programming in Richmond for middle school students wouldn't be possible without the program providers and middle schools that significantly impact students. Their hard work and dedication have improved students' academic outcomes and achievements. Thank you for your continued commitment to RPS students and the afterschool programming!

Program Providers:

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Ambassadors Of Virginia
- ART 180
- Avail Outpatient Counseling LLC
- AVID@Boushall
- Axiom Educators, LLC
- Barbara Haas
- Blue Sky Fund
- Bravo and the Dream Catcher, Inc.
- Chess RVA, LLC
- City Singers Youth Choirs
- FinLit
- FIRST Chesapeake
- First Tee of Richmond
- Flawless Imperfections, LLC
- Focus Our Future, Inc. Girls for a Change
- Girls for a Change
- Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Greater Richmond Fit4Kids
- Heart of VA Boy Scouts of America
- IBY Yoga and Mindfulness (a division of Itty Bitty Yogis)
- Inspire RVA, LLC
- JumpStarz DBA Youth Entrepreneur Start-Ups
- Kids In Crisis
- Kidz -R- Cookin'
- Latin Ballet of Virginia
- Level Up Battlesports (formerly Gamer Events RVA)
- Little Scholars
- Love My Credit Consulting Firm
- M. H. West & Co., Inc
- Mary and Frances Youth Center
- Metropolitan Business League/MBL Foundation
- Mind & Movement Dance Academy
- Music is U
- Andrea Bryant
- Nu Collar Solutions
- Project Yoga Richmond
- R.E.A.L. Learning Academy, LLC
- Richmond Performing Arts Alliance
- Richmond Volleyball Club
- Richmond Young Writers
- Roots Holistic LLC
- Scholarship Chess Business Center
- Science Museum of Virginia
- Speech for Public Education, Action, and Knowledge (SPEAK)
- Sports Backers
- The Build Forward Foundation
- The Leadership and Achievement Academy
- The Live Red Foundation
- The Men of Barton Heights Youth Organization
- Podium RVA
- Trinity Village Center
- VCU Dept of Forensic Science
- Victoria's Kitchen LLC
- Virginia Outside
- Virginia Repertory Theatre
- Virginia Squash
- Visual Arts Center of Richmond
- Work of Art
- YMCA of Greater Richmond

Site Coordination Partners:

- Higher Achievement
- YMCA

Integrated Services Partner:

- Communities in Schools-Richmond

Richmond Public Schools:

- Albert Hill Middle School
- Lucille M. Brown Middle
- River City Middle School
- Thomas C. Boushall Middle School
- Thomas Henderson Middle School