

Chesterfield Recovery Academy



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Program Coordinator



Chesterfield County Public Schools

Vision



Chesterfield Recovery Academy aims to be a vehicle of progressive change for the ushering in of an academic culture that holistically addresses the substance use and challenges of the youth in Region One.



Mission Statement



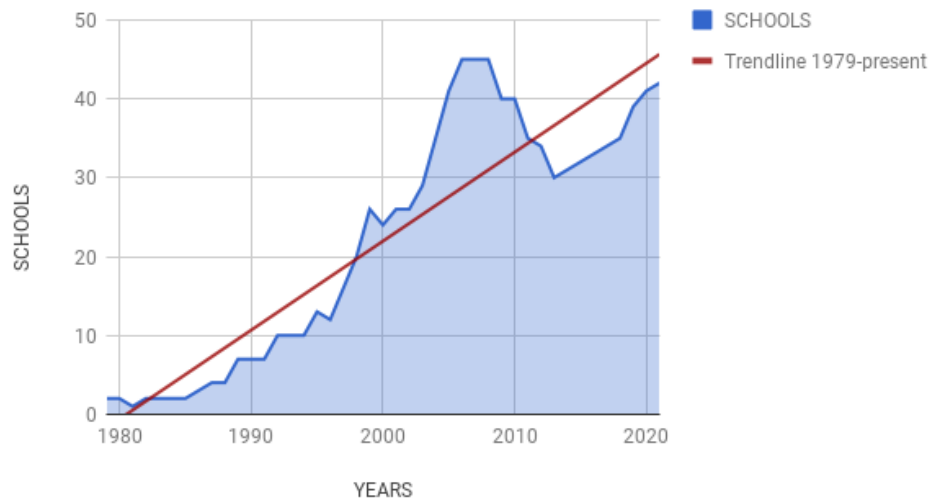
We provide a supportive environment that makes academic success during recovery attainable as well as sustainable. Emphasize postsecondary preparedness and foster the development of a growth mindset towards pursuing healthy choices, positive relationships, and sustained sobriety.



Recovery High Schools in the United States

First recovery high school opened in 1979

RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOLS BY YEAR



Recovery High Schools Today

- Currently 42 recognized recovery high schools in 20 states
- Almost half recovery high schools located in only three states - Texas, Minnesota, and Massachusetts
- According to one study of adolescents who received specialty SUD treatment, comparing students who attended a recovery high school and their peers at traditional high schools, recovery high school students displayed:
 - Double the 3 and 12 month abstinence rates
 - 21-25% higher graduation rates
 - Increased attendance
 - Reduced numbers of reported days of illegal behavior and likelihood of arrest

Weimer DL, Moberg P, French F, Tanner-Smith EE, Finch AJ. Net Benefits of Recovery High Schools: Higher Cost but Increased Sobriety and Educational Attainment. J Ment Health Policy Econ. 2019 Sep 1;22(3):109-120. PMID: 31811754; PMCID: PMC6901088.



Recovery High Schools in Virginia

Only school in Virginia

Nearest schools are in
MD and NC

Possible future locations:
Loudoun County, Virginia
Beach, Waynesboro
County

Addressing a State Issue

Adolescent drug use is
at an all time high
fueled by ease of
access

Increase the amount of adolescent SA resources

Within Virginia limited
resources (treatment
facilities, detox,
alternative peer groups
etc.) are available for
adolescents



Our Journey

- Funded through legislation approved by the Virginia General Assembly and Gov. Glenn Youngkin in June 2022
- Ribbon Cutting: August 2, 2022
- First day of school: September 8, 2022



Current Staff Positions:

- Program Coordinator
- Lead Clinician
- Two Clinician I
- Two Academic Facilitators
- Instructional Assistant (SPED)
- Certified Peer Specialist
- Office Manager
- Recovery Corps Peer Navigator



Quick Glimpse



Region Partners

Charles City County

Hanover County

Powhatan County Chesterfield County

Henrico

County

Prince George County

Colonial Heights

Hopewell

City of Richmond

Dinwiddie County

New Kent County

Surry

County

Goochland County

Petersburg

Sussex County



Chesterfield County Public Schools

Eligibility



- Region One (15 Districts) High School Students
- Primary requirement for admission is an internal motivation for recovery and a genuine desire to attend the school
 - Students should feel as though attending is their decision, not mandated or pressured. Being forced into our recovery environment can be detrimental for the student as well as their peers in recovery.
- Received some form of prior substance abuse/mental health clinical treatment



Intake Process



- Rolling year-round admissions
- Interest form completed by student/parent/guardian/school official/counselor/social worker and reviewed by CRA
- Student and parent/guardian participate in an intake interview. During the interview the Clinician conducts the clinical assessment
- Request of student files (home district and MH/SA service providers)
- For accepted students, school files are requested and transportation is submitted for routing. Once complete the student is given a start date (approximately 3-5 days)
- Two start dates per month



Program Costs



Funding from the State of Virginia, there is no cost to students, guardians, school districts, or insurance to attend Chesterfield Recovery Academy.

*State report due December 1st to the legislature.



Transportation



- Chesterfield County provides transportation to and from CRA for students from all 15 districts at no cost to families or cities/counties.
- Families or students who chose to provide their own transportation are reimbursed with gas cards (\$100-\$200/bi-weekly depending on distance travelled).



Program Length



- Students have the option to remain at CRA until graduation to ensure continued success. However; they are also able to transition back to their home school when/if appropriate.

Individuality is the goal as it pertains to program completion.



Enrollment and County Representation



- 27 students currently enrolled (Spring 2025)
- 8 districts represented (Hanover, Henrico, City of Richmond, Petersburg, New Kent, Charles City, Powhatan, and Chesterfield)
- Grade Levels 9-12
- Over 60 students served since September 2022



Organization Partnerships

Chesterfield Education Foundation

Provide funding for gas cards and therapeutic expenses

2 End the Stigma Foundation

Donated funding for student mindfulness corner (Scott's Corner) and showcasing their Emotion Wheel

JHW Foundation

Donated items for flexible student seating and electronics for the classroom





CRA Academics



Overview



Individualized curriculum and academic support

- Offer all courses required for graduation
- CCPS Online - seat time requirements lifted
- SOL/ SAT/PSAT/W!SE testing conducted on site
- Students able to participate in Career & Technical Education programs and home school activities and extracurriculars



Continuity of Academics



- Students' courses are based on their diploma track
- Home school counselors are updated at the end of each semester of credits earned and SOLs passed
- Home schools maintain IEPs/504s
- Transcripts only show CCPS online



Classroom Composition



- Mixed grade levels
- Mixed abilities
- General education along with mainstreamed special education students
- 45%+ students with an IEP/504



Student Life



While attending CRA:

- Can participate in after school activities and sports
- Attend school dances
- Graduate with their class

*Students must be allowed on campus to participate.





CRA Clinical Program



Clinical Funding and Support



Chesterfield Mental Health and Support Services received funding via a grant from Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental services to hire and support the Clinical and Peer Recovery staff.



Clinical Overview

- Substance use treatment to address and support recovery
- Group and individual supportive counseling
- Case management and coordination with outside providers

It is our mission to provide all our students a safe place to learn and develop healthy coping skills while reflecting on their individual relationships with substance use. While encouraging our students to work towards sobriety and recognize that recovery often follows a non linear path.



Our Population



- The majority of CRA students represent an at-risk population
 - Significant trauma histories
 - Co-occurring disorders including: depression, anxiety, PTSD, ADHD
 - 10% of our current students involved in the foster care system
 - Over half of our students have parents with significant current or previous substance use disorders
- Many students have previous psychiatric hospitalization or residential stays
- Court-involved youth
- Initial apprehension, distrust, or negative feelings about recovery and/or therapeutic treatment



Clinical Practice



- Compared to traditional school counselors CRA Clinical Team is able to provide more focused and dedicated counseling and case management services
- True multi-disciplinary approach integrating peer support with evidenced based clinical practices
- Year-round support
- Unique model among recovery high school community to offer this level of specialized clinical treatment



Clinical Approach

- Actively support multiple pathways to recovery
- Working to help students understand the root causes of substance use vs. only treating the symptoms
- Addressing co-occurring mental health disorders
- Trauma-informed approach utilizing techniques that include:
 - Stages of Change Model
 - Motivational Interviewing
 - SMART Recovery
 - Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
- Integration of art therapy, music therapy, peer support, and mindfulness



Supportive Counseling



Defined by our program as:

- 2-3 thirty minute sessions per week with assigned Clinician
- Students able to access clinical supports as needed
- Daily groups with diverse approaches: recovery, psychoeducation, mental health, activity-based, discussion and processing, etc.
- Linking students to local recovery and mental health community resources



Collaboration



- With other recovery high schools
- With schools (counselors, teachers, case managers)
- With treatment providers (outpatient therapists, case managers, social workers)
- With courts and probation staff



Clinical Partnerships

Virginia Commonwealth University Rams in Recovery

Collaborative effort to bridge gap between high school and college, create connections for our students to the community, introduced our students to collegiate recovery. Leading weekly groups at CRA and introducing our students to a variety of recovery pathways

CCMH PRO Team

Provide Peer Recovery Specialists to share their experiences with students as well as community supports for our transition-age youth

Project Yoga Richmond

Assist us with integrating mindfulness practice into the program as well as introducing our students to Yoga of 12-Step Recovery



Clinical Partnerships: Recovery Corps

- AmeriCorps members trained to serve in recovery organizations to offer peer support and project management to help expand capacity and make recovery possible for more people
- Operating in three states, new to Virginia in 2022
- Year-long term
- Service and training allows members to complete the requirements for the Peer Support Specialist certification



2024-2025 Clinical Progress, and Outcomes

- Over the course of the year, students developed connection and engagement with the clinical staff, recovery process, and each other
 - Participated in over 1500 individual clinical sessions and over 200 clinical/recovery groups
- Built positive therapeutic relationships and actively participated throughout the year (including school breaks)
- Significant decrease in psychiatric hospitalizations and residential treatment stays
 - No additional criminal charges





Celebrations and Goals



Student Accomplishments



2022-2023:

- Over 60 Credits hours earned, four high school graduates
- 48 months of sobriety
- Five students started their first part time jobs/re-entered the workforce

2023-2024

- Eleven high school graduates
- 79 months of sobriety
- 50% of students maintaining part-time employment
- 100% standardized test pass rate



Student Accomplishments



2024-2025

- Seven graduates
- Two perfect scores on SOL exams
- Over 100 months of sobriety
- 89% SOL pass rate



Completion Ceremonies



Program & Staff Achievements

- 2025 Wall Street Journal (Summer 2025)
- 2025 British Broadcasting Corporation (America) BBC Documentary “Fentanyl Crisis in America”
- Awarded “2023 *Achievement in Youth and Children’s Programs*” - National Association of Counties
- Recognized as the “2023 Best Large County Achievement Award - Virginia Association of Counties
- Received the 2024 Rams in Recovery Community Partner Award



2023 National Recovery Month Summit



Chesterfield Recovery Academy was one of two programs in the country invited to the White House to participate in the inaugural 2023 National Recovery Month Summit, and the only school to have student participants. Two students and the Program Coordinator Participated in a panel to share their perspectives on the impact of recovery schools.



Future Goals

Enrollment Expansion

- Goal One: Maintain enrollment of 25 students by the end of May 2026
- Goal Two: Student representation from 70% of the region's districts by May 2026

Program Recognition

- Start accreditation process through the the Association of Recovery Schools in Fall 2025
- Regional growth through partnership expansion and community education



Contact Information

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Questions

