Albemarle County Public Schools

Center I Program Evaluation

Document Information

Document Title:	Center I Program Evaluation
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Document Revision History

Version	Date	Changed By	Items Changed Since Previous Version
1.0	Oct 31, 2022	Jamie Gellner	First Draft
2.0	Nov 22, 2022	Jamie Gellner with Design Team input	Moved items to a conclusion; added comparison data for Center I survey questions and absenteeism rates; created table for research pages to condense
3.0	December 28, 2022	Jamie Gellner	Added links and references; condensed research pages and rearranged content headings; Final Draft version for review*

*Notes: For some links in this document, the reader may need to copy and paste the link into their browser rather than CTRL + Click. All URLs are provided in the References section.

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Evaluation Design

Situation: The FY 2019-20 Budget includes a proposal for increased enrollment at Center I. The Specialty Center is the pilot for the Career Learning Communities model that was approved and adopted by the School Board.

"In August 2020, the Information and Communications Technology Academy opened, joining the three other ACPS academies (Math Engineering Science Academy (MESA), Health and Medical Science Academy (HMSA), and Environmental Studies Academy (ESA)). Like the other academies, the ICTA will serve a small community of students that are highly interested in a specific pathway. Also like our other academies, participating in ICTA is only a part of a student's schedule allowing them to continue to participate in many of the other great opportunities in Albemarle Schools. Beginning in 2022-23 the academy model will be replaced with the new Career Learning Community Model. Center I will be the site for the Information and Communication Technology Career Learning Community." (from centerone.k12albemarle.org)

Evaluation Purpose: to determine student experience at Center One and to inform continued planning of Career Learning Communities.

From the ACPS Career Learning Communities Research Support: Three bodies of research inform ACPS' creation of specialized learning environments: 1) equity of access to opportunity, 2) student motivation to learn and persist, and 3) readiness for post-secondary experience

Major Evaluation Questions will be:
Did the program meet the goals of the budget proposal?
Do students have equity of access to opportunity?
Are students motivated to learn and persist?
Do students demonstrate readiness for post-secondary experiences?

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Targets	Data Collection Instrument/Data Source	Limitations
Did the program meet the goals of the budget proposal? Do students have equity of access to opportunity? What were the processes that the Center Director used to recruit, schedule, and support students?	# of students each year at Center One and by demographic group Documented processes to recruit, schedule, and support students	Hire all positions to include Planner, Teacher/Director, Office Assistance, Maintenance Worker, Nurse/Nurse Coordinator Establish transportation plan	Document Review Interview with Center Director Survey developed for school counselors/principals PowerSchool Data for enrollment	Student survey limited by respondents May not be able to contact families/students who did not participate to find out why

What do high school principals and school counselors say about the processes for recruitment, scheduling, and support? Did enrollment increase and how? Are students from all demographics represented and do they reflect the division? What were the logistical plans (transportation, meal support, budget, staffing, facilities, etc.) and how can we replicate or learn from these? Were they equitable? Why didn't students participate in Center One?	Transportation plan with number of students utilizing service Staffing requirements documented Budget # of students who enrolled but did not continue with the Center, # of students who left mid-year or did not continue after one year	Develop budget and operating procedures for Center Academy enrollment to increase to 60 for 2019-20 with a diverse representation of students Enrollment to reach 150 for the 2020-21 school year	numbers to include student ID, base school, race/ethnicity/gender and growth over two years PowerSchool Data Transportation plan, staffing, budget book, etc. Student Survey Power BI data	
Are students motivated to learn and persist? Did students have an "enhanced" experience at Center One consistent with their career goals? Do students value the learning experience at Center One? Do students feel a sense of agency and purpose? Do students feel safe and valued at Center One?	Documented coursework available Partnerships with community/local businesses # of students who respond favorably to Center 1 experience Panorama questions relative to student engagement, valuing of education (can we	Student recruitment activities established All graduation requirements will be met Coordinate student schedules with high schools to balance Center attendance Enhanced student experiences and opportunities consistent with student career goals [as stated in Budget Proposal]	Survey developed for students, survey developed for families Panorama data on student engagement (none) Interview with Center 1 Director Document review	Could not disaggregate Center students from Panorama data Survey will be limited by respondents

Were families engaged by Center One? What do students say about the processes for recruitment, scheduling, and support? What do teachers say about the student experience?	identify the Center students in the data?) # of families who say they had an enhanced experience and respond favorably to Center procedures			
Are students ready for a post-secondary experience? Did students take higher level courses? Did students receive industry credentials or other specialized experiences? What pathways did students explore and are they aligned with post-secondary programs? Where do we have partnerships with outside businesses or community agencies? What do high school principals and school counselors say about the student experience?	# of students taking higher level courses and types of courses # of industry credentials earned	Students are earning industry credentials from the Center Business partnerships grew over the two years	PowerSchool data CCRI data from Power BI (none) Document review Interview with Center Director Survey developed for counselors and school principals	Survey of opportunity for all surveys--limited by responses Able to retrieve work-based learning numbers and industry credentials from the Director

Key Findings

1. The program at Center I reached the enrollment goals stated in the budget proposal in the 2022-23 school year and continues to work towards the goal "that student demographics at the Academy will match the school system's high school demographics."
2. Students and families report having equity of access to opportunity. Areas for improvement that emerged from staff, student, and family surveys include master scheduling, special education staffing and accommodations, and transportation.
3. Students and family surveys, as well as course enrollment and grades, indicate that students are motivated to learn and persist at Center I. It is clear from the student surveys that students value the school "atmosphere" at Center I.
4. There is not enough data to conclude if students demonstrate readiness for post-secondary experiences; however, partnerships in the community have increased and some students will earn industry certifications in the 2022-23 school year.
5. Research indicates that three components of Career Learning Communities or Academies make them successful: the small learning community structure, curriculum that combines career focus with college entrance requirements, and partnerships with employers and higher education.

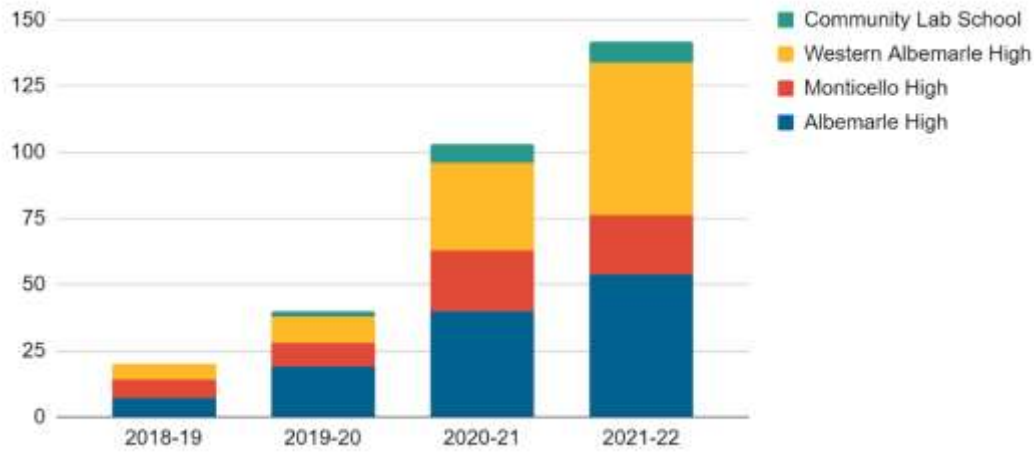## Did the Program Meet the Goals of the Budget Proposal?

When the High School Centers Expansion was placed in the budget (From Budget Book, p. 31) for $470,793, the following metrics, activities, outputs, and outcomes were established.

INPUTS By the end of the first semester, the following deliverables will be completed to get the proposal started: • Hire all positions by August 1, 2019 • Establish transportation plan for students attending the center by August 1, 2019 • Develop budget and operating procedures for Center **[Completed]**
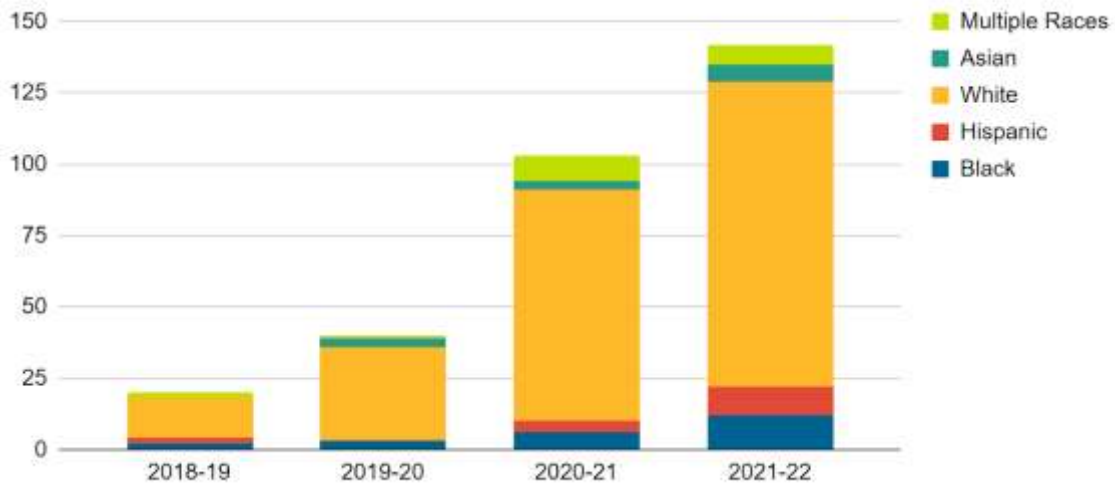
ACTIVITIES By the end of 2019/20 school year, the following deliverables will be complete to demonstrate the proposal is in progress: • Student recruitment for 2019/20 School Year • Work with counselors to make sure all student graduation requirements will be met • Coordinate student schedules with high schools to balance Center attendance **[Completed]**

OUTPUTS The following short-term SMART goal will help demonstrate successful implementation of the proposal: • Academy Enrollment to increase 60 (30/day) for 2019-20 School Year with a diverse representation of students. The student demographics at the Academy will match the school system's high school demographics. **[The enrollment goal was completed in the 2020-2021 school year.] See this School Board update from the Center Director on the details of the demographics.**

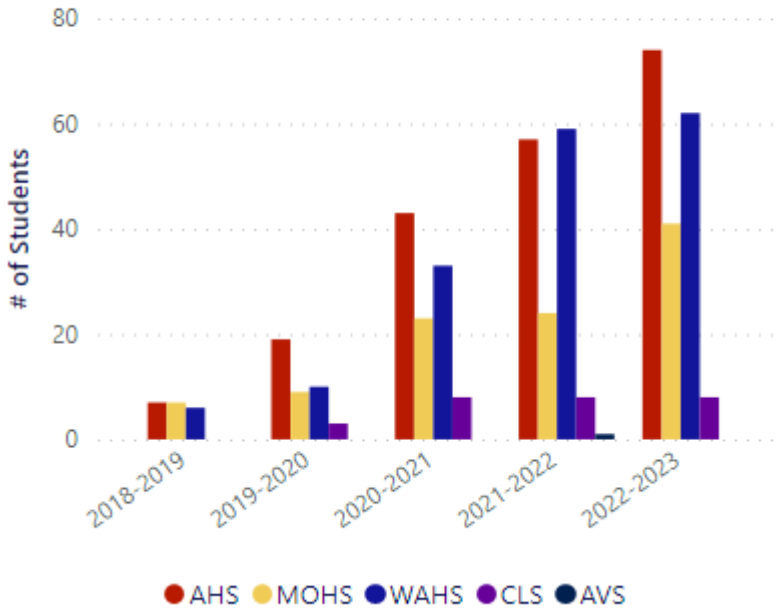**Enrollment, Center 1, 2018-19 to 2021-22 by School**

Enrollment, Center 1, 2018-19 to 2021-22 by Demographic Group

OUTCOMES The following long-term SMART goal will help determine success/effect/impact of the proposal: • For the 2020/21 school year, enrollment to reach 150 (75 students per day). Enhanced student experiences and opportunities consistent with student career goals. **[The enrollment goal was met in the 2022-23 school year.] The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted schooling in the 19-20 and 20-21 school year.**

Current Enrollment by Base School as of December 28, 2022 (22-23 school year) [Total 21-22 = 142 while Total 22-23 = 185]
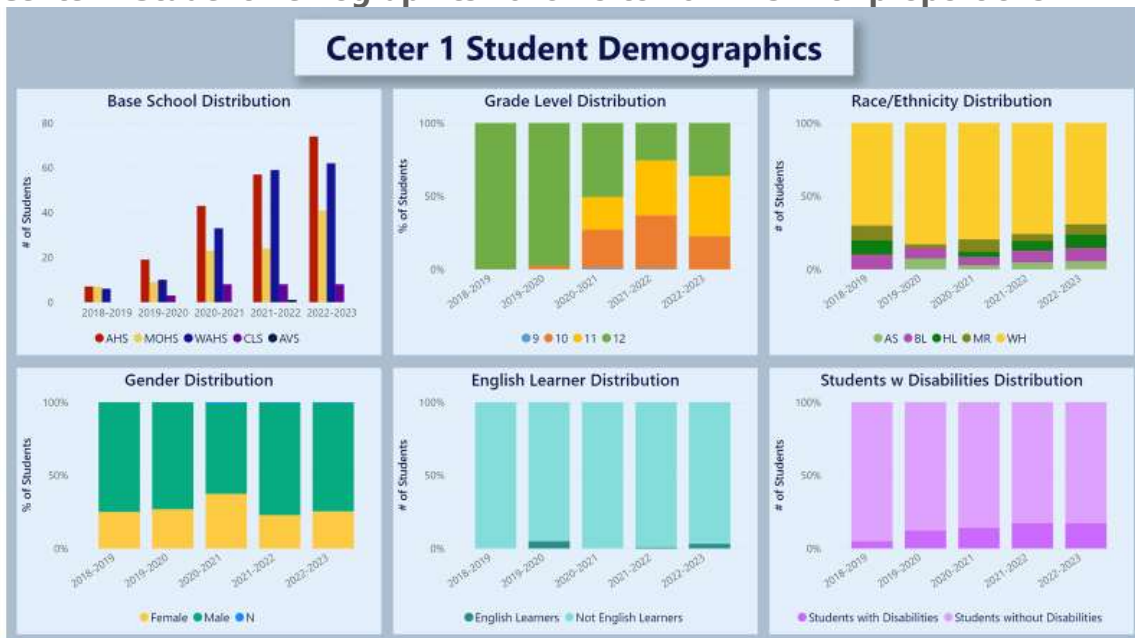

Base School Distribution

Open in Power BI
Center 1
Data as of 12/28/22, 6:04 AM

Center 1 Student Demographics 2018-19 to 2022-23 with proportions

Center 1 Student Demographics

The stated inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes metrics in the initial budget goal were completed, although there is still some work to do with the student demographics. Center I opened as a pilot in 2018-19 and only enrolled twenty (20) twelfth grade students to begin the program. In the 2019-20 school year, the COVID-19 pandemic shut the school division down to in-person learning and, in the 2020-21 school year, the program expanded despite these challenges.

Student demographics show that each year, including during the COVID19 pandemic, additional students from the other high schools enrolled in the program at Center I. The current center director will continue to work to encourage students of all demographics to come to the center, but it should be noted that proportionality has increased each year in the race/ethnicity categories. More and more "students with disabilities" are enrolling in the center, so having the appropriate academic and behavior support, including access to their data and IEP/504 information as well as staffing, will be important.

The transportation plan adopted for Center I is a shuttle from each high school. Students arrive to their base high school at the normal time, and then take a shuttle to Center I. This requires a modified schedule for Center I. The first year that transportation was necessary was the 2021-22 school year. In 2021-22, 46 Albemarle High students requested the bus to Center 1, 62 Western Albemarle High students, and 23 Monticello High students. However, approximately 20 Western Albemarle students, 15 Albemarle students, and 10 Monticello students actually rode the bus.

In the 2022-23 school year, of the 185 enrolled, ten (10) students ride the shuttle bus from Western Albemarle High, 12 students ride from Albemarle High School, and 15 students ride from Monticello for a total of 37 students, or 20%.

Student meals are made at Journey Middle School and brought over. This can be evaluated further, as necessary, if improvements are needed, but it did not emerge as an issue.

The budget proposal for Center I required additional staffing to include 1.0 FTE Teacher/Director, 1.0 FTE Office Assistance, 0.5 FTE Maintenance Worker, and 1.0 FTE Nurse.

In 2021-22, a counselor position was also added to Center I. New career learning communities may require additional staffing, namely the Teacher/Director FTE in order to promote the pathways in the particular CLC. Additional facilities, i.e., Center II, will require this same staffing allocation, and the additions, to work well.

Do Students Have "Equity of Access to Opportunity?"
This question was answered using the student survey, the family survey, and the staff survey as well as interviews with the current and former Director of Center I.

The student survey garnered 56 total responses, with 51 students responding who currently attend Center I and five (5) students responding who do not. The survey was sent to all students who had registered for Center I at some point in the 2021-22 school

year and was open in September of 2022 for responses. The survey questions were the same questions students answered on the Panorama survey and/or the High School Working Conditions survey. Since Center I students are assigned to the base high school in PowerSchool, students answer these surveys at their base high school. In order to get this data for students at the Center, the Center Director can give the survey again and the students take it twice, or, a modified version like the one in this evaluation can continue.

One question asked on the student survey to answer the evaluation question, **"Do students have equity of access to opportunity?"** was "Why did you choose to not attend Center I?" There were very few responses but it seems that students either changed their mind about their level of interest in the coursework or there was a scheduling conflict. One of the two "other" comments was also related to schedule. None of the students who chose not to attend Center I after registering chose "transportation" as a barrier.

All of the students were offered a chance to write in comments about the Center. There were very few suggestions for improvements from students. The survey and ideas shared were all given to the Center Director and his staff for review and exploration.

In the comment section, a student said that, "It would be nice if Center I had more IEP accommodations like co-op teaching" (11th grader from Albemarle High). This idea [that Special Education accommodations/staffing should be improved] was also reflected from interviews with the former Center Director, school counselors, and the family survey.

Here is a comment from one family member on this topic and there was one other related comment, "My child has a 504 plan. It seems like because they attend Center I the school feels they might not need it, or maybe they should quit attending center I. My child does need it and Center I had their favorite classes" (parent of 10th grade Albemarle High student).

Parents and family members were asked directly on the parent/family survey, "Were there **any barriers** to your child being able to attend Center I?" There were 76 responses to the parent and family survey. The majority answered no barriers. The top three barriers identified by this stakeholder group in the order of most responses to least responses reflecting this topic are the following: scheduling conflicts, transportation, and special education accommodations.

When the evaluator interviewed the Center I Directors, former and current, both indicated scheduling conflicts as potential challenges. Some areas that provide conflict include students who are ESOL or students in the AVID program. Centers have limited options within classes because all courses are advanced or academic. The Center does not offer the variety that the large high schools are able to offer. For example, the students in programs like AVID, Special Education, or English Language Learners may have required coursework or specialized variations of courses that are not offered at the Center.

Both directors (Michael Craddock, former; Jeff Prillaman, current) worked closely with school counselors to get students into the Center I program who wish to be there. Anecdotally, sometimes the teams who make the master schedule (principals, assistant

principals) are not the same teams who schedule students (school counselors) and therefore some challenges occur after students register for courses. A master scheduling team and/or a future centralized master scheduler could help in this way as well.

Fifteen (15) staff members responded to the staff survey. We sent the survey to all of the high school principals and assistant principals, Center I staff, and high school counselors via a Google Survey.

When asked, "What do students say about their experience at Center I," 13 out of 15 responded with a version that said students "loved" the experience at Center I, including the learning environment and project-based work or other aspect of the "program." Only one (1) said that core classes were not popular but said electives were very popular. And one (1) said that they did not have enough information to share.
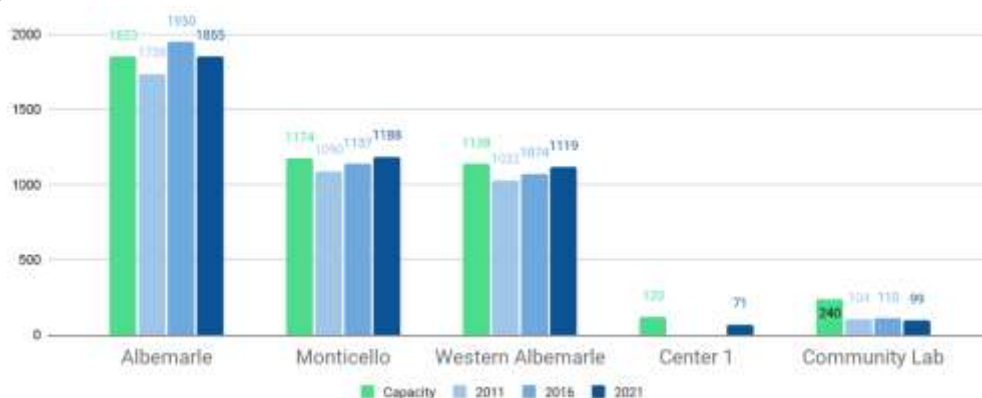
When asked if there were any barriers to students attending Center I similar challenges emerged in this order:
1. Scheduling
2. Special Education and ESOL support
3. Transportation
4. Communication between base school and Center I (about students and about the program)
5. Capacity of Center I

From the staff comments, it appears that the school counselors would benefit from visiting Center I and hearing about its current state or receiving more detailed information about the program in order to share the program accurately with base school students.

One other barrier for future consideration is capacity. Students do want to attend Center I. During some of the years it's been open, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. The facility capacity is listed at 120 which means 240 students can attend (120 each day). Eventually, there may be a need to develop a lottery system or other plan to address building capacity. As the Career Learning Communities expand, this will surely be a consideration for all facilities, particularly at Albemarle High School. [As a reminder, the Center model was first designed to alleviate overcrowding at Albemarle High School.]

High School Enrollment and Capacity, from Albemarle County Public Schools, 2021

Are Students Motivated to Learn and Persist?

The student and family surveys were the primary resources for answering this evaluation question. All questions were stated in the same way as previous versions of the Panorama survey or the Virginia Working Conditions Survey. However, for comparison purposes, ACPS does not have recent secondary student data for all questions.

In response to the evaluation question, "are students motivated to learn and persist," we used the following survey questions from the student survey:

Q9. How would you rate the atmosphere at Center 1?				
Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Very negative	0	1	0%	
2	0	2	0%	
3	0	3	0%	
4 - Neutral	2	4	4.00%	
5	7	5	14.00%	
6	16	6	32.00%	
7 - Very Positive	25	7	50.00%	
Total Responses: 50				Weighted Score: 6.28

Q10. How does the atmosphere at Center 1 impact your learning?				
Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Very negative	0	1	0%	
2	0	2	0%	
3	1	3	1.96%	
4 - Neutral	3	4	5.88%	
5	8	5	15.69%	
6	20	6	39.22%	
7 - Very Positive	19	7	37.25%	
Total Responses: 51				Weighted Score: 6.04

The "atmosphere questions" were rated using a 7-point scale with all students rating the atmosphere of Center I at least a "4," with a weighted score of 6.28 for that question. In the most recent Working Conditions survey, reported in May 2022, the division scored a **4.2** on the question, "How does the school atmosphere impact your learning?"

All other questions were asked on a 5-point scale with weighted scores ranging from 4.12 to 4.78. Students feel very safe at Center I. They also feel cared for by adults at Center I and a sense of belonging at the school. The lower score, "teachers at Center I often connect what I am learning to life outside the classroom" had the most variation in responses which could be due to answering for different classes and/or different teaching styles. The score was still weighted very positively towards strongly agree. The only recent question that can be compared on the May 2022 Working Conditions survey is the question, "Adults at my school care about me." The division scored a **4.5** out of 5 across the secondary schools.

11(a): Adults at Center 1 care about me.

Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Strongly Disagree	0	1	0%	
2	1	2	1.96%	
3	6	3	11.76%	
4	13	4	25.49%	
5 - Strongly Agree	31	5	60.78%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.45**

11(b): I respect the adults at Center 1.

Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Strongly Disagree	0	1	0%	
2	1	2	1.96%	
3	5	3	9.80%	
4	10	4	19.61%	
5 - Strongly Agree	35	5	68.63%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.55**

11(c): I feel like I belong at Center 1.

Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Strongly Disagree	1	1	2.00%	
2	3	2	6.00%	
3	3	3	6.00%	
4	11	4	22.00%	
5 - Strongly Agree	32	5	64.00%	
Total Responses: 50				**Weighted Score: 4.40**

11(d): Teachers at Center 1 often connect what I am learning to life outside the classroom.

Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Strongly Disagree	1	1	1.96%	
2	2	2	3.92%	
3	13	3	25.49%	
4	9	4	17.65%	
5 - Strongly Agree	26	5	50.98%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.12**

11(e): Teachers at this school want me to think about different ways to solve problems.

Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Strongly Disagree	0	1	0%	
2	3	2	5.88%	
3	12	3	23.53%	
4	11	4	21.57%	
5 - Strongly Agree	25	5	49.02%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.14**

11(f): I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms at Center 1.

Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Strongly Disagree	0	1	0%	
2	0	2	0%	
3	3	3	5.88%	

4	5	4	9.80%	
5 - Strongly Agree	43	5	84.31%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.78**
11(g): I feel safe traveling to and from Center 1.				
Answer	**N**	**Value**	**%**	**Percentage of total respondents**
1 - Strongly Disagree	0	1	0%	
2	2	2	3.92%	
3	4	3	7.84%	
4	12	4	23.53%	
5 - Strongly Agree	33	5	64.71%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.49**

Michael Craddock had asked in an earlier survey "how connected to teachers students felt" compared to their base school." We asked the question again on this survey for comparison. More than two-thirds of the responses indicated a stronger connection with teachers at Center I.

Q12. Compared to teachers at your based high school, do you feel _____ with your Center 1 teachers?				
Answer	**N**	**Value**	**%**	**Percentage of total respondents**
1 - Less Connected	1	1	1.96%	
2	1	2	1.96%	
3 - About the Same	9	3	17.65%	
4	14	4	27.45%	
5 - More Connected	26	5	50.98%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.24**

We also asked students "how interesting" they found their classes at Center I:

Q13. How interesting do you find the things you learn in your classes at Center 1?				
Answer	**N**	**Value**	**%**	**Percentage of total respondents**
1 - Not Interesting	0	1	0%	
2	3	2	5.88%	
3	4	3	7.84%	
4	18	4	35.29%	
5 - Very Interesting	26	5	50.98%	
Total Responses: 51				**Weighted Score: 4.31**

On the Panorama survey in the Fall of 2022, 63% of students across the division responded favorably with a four or a five, compared to the 86% here.

In addition to the questions listed above, students were given an open comment question, "What would you change about Center I (These comments were shared with staff at Center I)?" Here are a few responses:

"I wouldn't change anything as of right now the entire school is such amazing and modern ways of how schools should be it's not only better for students but for the

teachers as well but as the ACPS technology Department is next door we should not have to take our computers back to our base school for the TSS at our base school to deal with our computers or other issues" (10th grade Monticello High student).

"Literally nothing. This is the best education I've ever had" (10th grade Western Albemarle High student).

Families also highly weighted questions related to their students being **motivated to learn and persist.**

Q4. How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at Center 1?				
Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - No Belonging	1	1	1.33%	
2	2	2	2.67%	
3	10	3	13.33%	
4	23	4	30.67%	
5 - Tremendous Belonging	39	5	52.00%	
Total Responses: 75				**Weighted Score: 4.29**
Q5. How well do the activities/classes offered at Center 1 match your child's interests?				
Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Not Well	0	1	0%	
2	0	2	0%	
3	8	3	10.53%	
4	25	4	32.89%	
5 - Extremely Well	43	5	56.58%	
Total Responses: 76				**Weighted Score: 4.46**
Q6. How motivating for your child are the classroom lessons at Center 1?				
Answer	N	Value	%	Percentage of total respondents
1 - Not at All	0	1	0%	
2	3	2	4.00%	
3	9	3	12.00%	
4	24	4	32.00%	
5 - Extremely	39	5	52.00%	
Total Responses: 75				**Weighted Score: 4.32**

Families had a few suggestions for improving the program at Center I, but overall, many highlighted the small class sizes and the learning environment as being excellent. Here are a few comments from parents about Center I:

"I would recommend this school and these teachers with all of my support. My son didn't want to go to college and now he does. He didn't have any friends, now he does. He got alright grades and now gets great grades. This school and its size literally changed my son and our family's life tremendously" (parent of 11th grader at Western Albemarle High).

"The teachers, administrators, and staff at Center I are amazing and have consistently gone above and beyond for my child. They've created an inclusive high school environment for kids with similar interests. Having the same teachers for multiple years allows students to build relationships with their instructors" (parent of 11th grader at Western Albemarle).

"My child thrives at center 1. Every day she goes there, she comes home happy and excited to tell me about her day and what she is learning from cyber security. The staff is amazing. She wants to go everyday" (parent of a 10th grade Albemarle High student).

[All comments taken from survey in the manner in which they were written.]

Are Students Ready for a Post-Secondary Experience?

The stated measures for this evaluation question are the number of students taking higher level courses, the number of industry credentials earned, and the number of business partnerships (are growing).

The program has grown its offerings since the first year of implementation in 2018-19. The first elective was a Senior Capstone. In 2019-20, the school added Dual Enrollment English and Government to provide rigor and so that students had a full complement of courses to take at the Center. In the 2020-21 school year, six additional electives were added to Center I as well as six additional academic offerings, including a Dual Enrollment US History course. In the 2021-22 school year, three new elective courses were added and three new academic courses to include AP World History (Albemarle County Public Schools, 2021).

Currently, the center offers a rigorous curriculum with a variety of advanced courses as well as the ICTA pathways courses. Nine (9) students take Advanced Placement World History (10th grade); 26 students take Advanced Placement English Language (11th grade); 49 students take Dual Enrollment Virginia History (11th grade); and 41 take Dual Enrollment Government (12th grade).

The former Center Director reported that Center I partnered with the Music Resource Center and Computers for Kids for internships and job shadowing opportunities. The only industry credential earned in the 2021-22 school year was the "Workplace Readiness Skills" credential.

In the current school year (2022-23) the new Center Director shares that several students are going after other industry certifications including: Security+ (CompTIA); Certified Associate in Python Programming, ACIS Cloud Practitioner; ISC2 Certification in Cyber Security; Maya, Autodesk Certified User; Photoshop, Visual Design Using Adobe Photoshop; and Unity, Certified User-Artist and Certified User-Programmer.

He also shares that staff at Center I continue to partner with MRC (Music Resource Center) as well as Lighthouse Studios, Custom Ink, Loaves and Fishes, and Rivanna Trails. In addition, multiple students are working with elementary schools and have

presented to 4th and 5th grade students at Agnor-Hurt, Meriwether Lewis, and Stone Robinson.

Additional data from Power BI was shared with the Center Director, including SOL scores, attendance, and grade distribution data.

This chart reflects the grade distribution for the 2021-22 school year, from Power BI.

Grade Distribution 21-22 School Year

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F ■ I ■ P

There are sixteen (16) F's and one (1) Incomplete out of 537 total grades or 3% of grades. At the base schools, 14% of Albemarle High School students has at least one failing grade; 13% of Monticello students had at least one failing grade; and 7% of Western Albemarle students had at least one failing grade in the 2021-22 school year.

Data tracking for this area can be improved. The evaluator did not receive data for the number of students who have experienced work-based learning, job shadowing, or internships or the number of students who had received and industry credential. Business partnerships were reported via interview and it will be important to track these as well as to maintain close relationships with staff and partners. There is a College Career Readiness Indicator report that has been developed in Power BI that tracks some of these metrics; however, the data aligns to the base school and not the Center/Academy.

Research and Support for Career Learning Communities

The instructional team provided a research-driven theory of change for the development of Center One and the Career Academies, now "Career Learning Communities," in ACPS. The career learning community model in Albemarle County Public Schools is grounded in "three bodies of research" about "equity of access to opportunity, student motivation to learn and persist, and readiness for post-secondary experience" (Dudley, K., 2020).

Additional research into "career learning communities" yields a wealth of support for career academies that include the structure of a small learning community within a larger high school, a curriculum that combines a career focus with meeting college entrance requirements, and partnerships with supporting employers, community members, and

institutions of higher education ([Career Academy Support Network, 2010](#)). The structure that ACPS adopted aligns with this model and includes an advisory component. Some unique structures to the ACPS program include having the student attend both the base school and the Career Learning Community, as most "career academy structures" either do "wall-to-wall" academies where all students must choose an academy and a pathway, like the Academies of Hampton, or they set them up as "schools within schools" and students from the school attend. Either way, the student attends the school where the academy is located. The structure that ACPS is setting up is different from both of those and will necessitate unique scheduling considerations. It will also be important to keep the small learning community structure within the high school.

There are other school divisions in Virginia who have Career Academies in which the student attends a "base high school" one day and the Career Academy the other. One such school division is Fairfax County Public Schools. The evaluator spoke with the current principal of Chantilly Academy and he advised that transportation continues to be a challenge for them because students miss instructional time. It will be important for pathway administrators in the Career Learning Communities model to consider the range of times a student may arrive to school and leave the school building for purposes of instruction and classroom management.

The principal at Chantilly Academy, [much research](#), and the surveys conducted for this evaluation show that scheduling can be a unique challenge with this model, and, scheduling while students *potentially* attend two schools, will be even more challenging without a master scheduler.

The EAB provided research for establishing Career Academies and it is [attached here](#). Research suggests career academies can provide students with important technical and social skills necessary for employment. However, for career academies to be successful, districts must provide proactive support and guidance for students and teachers during and after the transition to this new model. Additional resources from the Career Academy Network in California have been provided to the instructional team for reference, including the one above, on scheduling.

Conclusion

This evaluation sought to determine student experience at Center I and to inform continued planning of Career Learning Communities. The instructional team has created another academy, the Information and Communications Technology Academy, that students want to attend as shown by the increases in enrollment despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Students are motivated to learn and persist as evidenced by the student and family survey—students are engaged in the coursework and by the teachers at Center I.

Internal presentations to the School Board show the progression of Center I offerings that would demonstrate readiness for post-secondary experiences including adding rigorous coursework like Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment classes, having guest speakers from industry professionals, and increasing the number and kinds of industry credentials that students attempt.

Surveys of staff, students, and families identify a few areas for improvement that could improve "equity of access to opportunity" with the most common being scheduling for students who wish to attend Center I and improving Special Education and ESOL support at the Center.

As Albemarle County Public Schools moves into the Career Learning Communities structure, some elements of this evaluation may inform that work. However, the structures put into place for Center I have evolved annually since implementation and will evolve again in the 2023-24 school year when the CLC model is put into place.

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Attachments

[Link](#) to Student Survey given September 2022

[Link](#) to Family Survey given September 2022