



Kids' Achieving Progress 2016-2017 Program Evaluation

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Executive Summary

Out-of-school time (OST) programs are a vital component of children’s academic and social development. Nationwide, 6.5 million school age children participate in OST programs that seek to ensure their safety, develop and nurture their talents, improve their academic behaviors and help them form bonds with adults and youth who are positive role models. Youth who participate in afterschool programs can reap positive benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas — academic, social-emotional, prevention, and health and wellness. These are the skills that many suggest are necessary for youth to succeed in the 21st century global economy and world.

The Kids’ Achieving Progress Program (K.A.P.) focuses on academic support, but also offers other enrichment activities. Balancing academic support with a variety of structured, engaging, and enjoyable extracurricular activities appears to improve academic performance. Focus is also placed on improving young people’s social and developmental challenges, such as social skills, self-esteem and self-concept issues, initiative, and leadership skills. Research has shown that participation in these programs is associated with decreased behavioral problems, improved social and communication skills, better relationships with peers and teachers, increased self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficiency, lower levels of depression and anxiety, development of initiative, and improved feelings and attitudes toward self and school.

Improving school attendance is one of the larger goals of the program. The hours from 2 to 6 p.m. are the peak time for juvenile crime and victimization. Participation in an afterschool program gets youth off the streets, under supervision, and potentially prevents some risky behaviors. Youth who engage in activities after school are more likely to avoid court involvement. Research suggests youth who have a supportive and healthy relationship with a mentor have a decreased likelihood of becoming involved in risky behaviors. Young people experience greater gains if they participate in afterschool programs with greater frequency and

in a more sustained manner. They also benefit from programs tailored to their interests and needs, as well as providing exposure to new ideas, challenges and people.

The K.A.P. program emphasizes physical fitness, and wellness of participants by keeping them active, fostering the importance of healthy behaviors, and providing nutritious snacks. Youth learn to make better food choices, and increase their physical activity, as well as their knowledge of nutrition and health practices. The CDC states, "...physical activity can have an impact on cognitive skills and attitudes and academic behavior, all of which are important components of improved academic performance. These include enhanced concentration and attention as well as improved classroom behavior."

Also, youth benefit by developing positive relationships with the program's mentors, who in turn model good behavior, actively promote student mastery of skills or concepts in activities, listen attentively, provide feedback and guidance, and establish clear expectations for mature, respectful interactions with peers. Mentoring can help youth navigate through challenges and transitions. Youth who attend well-supervised afterschool programs display better work habits, task persistence, social skills, pro-social behaviors, academic performance, and less aggressive behavior at the end of the school year.

The philosophy of the Kids' Achieving Progress program, centers on working to enhance positive youth development in all arenas of a youth's life. The program simultaneously promotes community responsibility. K.A.P. develops and maintains strong partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, especially families, schools and community partners. "It takes a village to raise a child" is an African proverb which means that it takes an entire community to raise a child. A child has the best ability to become a healthy adult if the entire community takes an active role in fostering the development of our children.

Seventy-one youth were enrolled during the 2016-2017 school years. A budget of \$27,000 was used for the salaries of four site supervisor and five support workers. Nearly 4000 volunteer hours were contributed from students at VSU, JTCC, Matoaca High School, CHHS, Prince George High School and Liberty University. The Value of Volunteer Time is made available by Independent Sector. The current Independent Sector rate is \$23.56 per hour (2016). If calculated using this rate, the economic impact is \$94, 775.00.



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Introduction

Background Information

The Kids' Achieving Progress Program began in 1999 with a grant from the Cameron Foundation. The program has been funded by the City of Colonial Heights since 2001. The Office on Youth and Human Services received funding in the amount of \$27,000.00 for the 2016-2017 school years. These funds were appropriated to pay personnel salaries as well as program costs. This program is provided at no cost to those enrolled. According to data provided by the Wallace Foundation, programs of similar parameters have a median cost of \$8101.42 annually per enrollee.

Participants are 4th-8th graders attending Tussing, Lakeview, North and Colonial Heights Middle School. These students are referred to K.A.P. by parents, teachers, administrators, and/or Office on Youth staff. Students are referred to improve academic performance, promote positive behavior, enhance social skills, and/or increase physical activity. These areas of referral are the goals of K.A.P and are implemented through the use of tutors/mentors who are actively involved with the students. These areas were measured by report cards, interims and interviews with teachers and parents to determine outcomes. Academic help remains the primary reason for enrollment with 76% percent enrolled, followed by social skills at 62%, positive behavior at 57%, and physical fitness at 49%. Most students are referred for multiple reasons.

Findings suggest that stakeholders in the K.A.P. program agree that it is a positive program for participants. Parents surveyed indicated satisfaction with the program regarding content and also that having their child in a safe place after school allowed them peace of mind. They are appreciative that the program is offered at no cost. Teachers recognized children enrolled in the program may not get the support at home to complete assignments.

Stakeholders

There are nine stakeholders in the K.A.P. program. The first stakeholder is the City of Colonial Heights because it currently provides funding for the program. Each year a budget request is submitted to the City of Colonial Heights by the Office on Youth and Human Services. This budget must be approved by the City Council. Therefore, the City has a financial interest in seeing the program succeed in order to continue offering funding.

The Office on Youth and Human Services is another stakeholder because of its involvement and interest in the children of Colonial Heights. The Office on Youth and Human Services identifies the needs of youth and their families. The office serves as a referral agency linking young people and their families to appropriate services.

Student participants are the primary stakeholders. Students are referred to the program to improve academic performance, enhance social skills, increase physical fitness, and/or promote positive behavior. It is a goal of K.A.P. to assist children in meeting those needs by providing strategies to promote positive outcomes.

Clearly, parents are also stakeholders because of their desire to have their child be successful in school. They not only want their child to be successful academically, but also socially, emotionally, and physically. K.A.P. strives to impact all of these areas.

Teachers, school support staff, and school administrators are equally vested in K.A.P. These stakeholders understand that children have needs other than academics. It is important that children are offered a well-balanced program like K.A.P.

Tutors/mentors are an integral component of K.A.P. because of their direct involvement with the students. Their involvement directly impacts the children. They help guide and influence development in all areas. It is important to establish a rapport with the students to

facilitate positive change. The supportive, healthy relationships formed between mentors and mentees contribute to a host of benefits for both.

A very important stakeholder is the site supervisor at each school. This person is responsible for implementing the program to meet program goals. Additionally, the site supervisor is responsible for the supervision of students, staff, and volunteers. It is imperative that a positive environment be maintained at all times. Good communication skills are crucial to meet the needs of all involved with K.A.P.

The final stakeholder is the program coordinator. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to actively support student's engagement by embedding instruction within routine, planned, and play or extra-curricular activities while providing encouragement to promote skill learning and development. The coordinator develops strong, collaborative partnerships with families/schools/communities. Additionally, provides support and guidance to families/program staff in establishing responsive and nurturing interactions that promotes social development. This person has the responsibility of recruiting and training staff and volunteers to effectively implement the program. Additionally, the program coordinator is the key contact between the parents, school, and the City of Colonial Heights.

Survey Instruments

The surveys were designed to address whether program goals are being met. The following areas were measured: improved academic performance, social skills, positive behavior, and increased physical activity. The surveys were distributed to parents, students, tutors, site managers, and teachers. The surveys are designed to determine if program goals are met relative to student needs.

Rationale for the Program Evaluation

Does participation in afterschool programs make a difference, and if so, what conditions appear to be necessary to achieve positive outcomes? Program goals were evaluated to determine program effectiveness. Based on these goals, the questions to be evaluated are as follows:

1. Did academic performance improve for students participating in K.A.P.?
2. Does K.A.P. provide opportunities for increased physical activity?
3. Have student participants improved social skills while participating in K.A.P.?
4. Are students given opportunities to facilitate positive behavior?

Type of Evaluation

A summative evaluation with an objectives-based approach will be used. This approach will be used to analyze program data collected for the 2016-2017 school years at the following schools: Tussing, North, Lakeview and Colonial Heights Middle School. The goals/objectives of K.A.P. will be examined to determine if the needs of participating students are being met: academically, socially, behaviorally, and physically. The evaluator will identify the quality of the existing program by the use of surveys completed by parents, students, teachers, staff, and tutors. Additionally, information will be gathered from client intake forms and student enrollment information.

Findings

The evaluator completed an evaluation of the Kids' Achieving Progress program based in Colonial Heights, Virginia. The purpose of this program is to offer services to 4th-8th grade students in the areas of academic performance, improving social skills, promoting positive behavior, and providing physical activity. The data was collected from several sources: surveys, student enrollment forms, report cards, and interviews. K.A.P. enrolled seventy-one students for the 2016-2017 school years. Enrollment fluctuated slightly each month at each school due to students moving, transportation issues, etc.

Survey responses were received from 57 tutors, 63 students, 4 site supervisors, 11 teachers and 59 parents. The first question addressed in the evaluation: *Did academic performance improve for students participating in K.A.P.?* The evaluator collected data from the student enrollment forms to determine how many students were referred for academic help. These forms indicated that fifty-four students were referred for this reason. Report cards were assessed to determine if grades improved, declined or stayed the same. Report cards indicated that 83% of students improved academically and/or maintained the same grades. None of the student grades reduced significantly. These findings suggest that through consistent tutoring and homework help, students are able to maintain current grades and/or improve.

The second question addressed in the evaluation: *Does K.A.P. provide opportunities for increased physical activity?* Data collected from student enrollment forms indicated that thirty-five students were referred for physical fitness. Data collected from surveys indicated that the students were pleased with the physical activities provided but did want them to last longer. K.A.P. offers thirty minutes of physical activity each day. The Presidential Physical Fitness Challenge suggests sixty minutes a day for children to lead healthy lifestyles. Teachers indicated that physical fitness was the lowest priority of the program goals. However, principals

and parents indicated satisfaction with the physical fitness portion of the program. Students enjoyed yoga, basketball, kickball and relay games. Good nutrition combined with physical activity leads to a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states proper nutrition promote the optimal growth and development of children. A nutritious, balanced snack was provided to students through a partnership with Colonial Heights Schools Food Services Program.

The third question addressed in the evaluation: *Have student participants improved social skills while participating in K.A.P.?* Data collected from student enrollment forms indicated that forty-four students were enrolled for enhancement of social skills. Student surveys indicated that most students felt K.A.P helped them have a better attitude about homework. They also made new friends. Parents indicated that positive changes were made with attitudes towards schoolwork. Many parents expressed their relief at the homework being completed during K.A.P. which allowed for more family time during the evening. It allowed some students to participate in sports and dance classes among other things. Older students helped the younger ones with study skills which gave them added confidence and practice in using leadership skills. Older students were given tasks to perform such as game leaders, snack leaders etc. which also boosted self-esteem.

The fourth question addressed in the evaluation: *Are student participants given opportunities to facilitate positive behavior?* Data collected from student enrollment forms indicated thirty-seven students were enrolled to promote positive behavior. Report cards and K.A.P. student log sheets were assessed to determine if improvements were made in this area. The following areas were measured: cooperation, respect, and responsibility, listen and follow directions. The categories were (N) needs improvement, (S) satisfactory, (U) unsatisfactory. Most students scored satisfactory in this area. Students are encouraged to do their best at all

times and if having a difficulties to find a quiet space to gain their composure. The mentoring component of K.A.P. helps youth have a better attitude about school. Forming bonds leads to a sense of accomplishment for the mentor and mentee. The mentors benefit by increasing supervisor skills and gaining insight into child and adolescent development. Those who volunteer their time for the program impact the students in such a meaningful way. Mentors teach the children new skills while cultivating positive relationships that allow opportunities to gain confidence. This year, mentors contributed 4010 hours. The Value of Volunteer Time, which is updated annually, is made available by Independent Sector. The current Independent Sector rate is \$23.56 per hour ([2015](#)). If calculated using this rate, the economic impact is \$94, 775.00.

Limitations and Biases

Funding and mentor retention and consistency are some of the more pressing limitations of the program. This evaluator is appreciative of the funds generated by the City of Colonial Heights. However, it is necessary to seek funds from other sources to provide scholarships for youth unable to pay for field trips. Funds are also sought to pay for necessary program supplies. Each school needs paper, pencils, flashcards among other things to provide the students with the necessary tools to complete homework and studying. The city of Colonial Heights funding pays the salaries of 4 site supervisors (one per school), and one support worker for each school. Additional staff is funded through the Federal Work-Study program at John Tyler Community College and Virginia State University. The limitation with the work-study students is their availability. Ideally, a work-study student for each school is desirable. K.A.P. requires a minimum ratio of 2 staff for 20 students. Maximum enrollment at each site is 20 students. Volunteer mentors are recruited to work with the students. Usually mentors are available one day per week. Therefore, it is not consistent. It is the opinion of this evaluator that the program

would benefit from 4 paid staff at each location on a daily basis. The consistency and continuity would allow for optimal growth and development of the students in all areas.

Recommendations

Developing programs intentionally, with a focus on target outcomes through well-organized and engaging activities is a critical component for achieving high quality afterschool settings. It entails having a clear vision and goals for the program, as well as directed leadership and sustained training and support to staff. It is the recommendation of the evaluator that K.A.P. should continue to create and sustain an environment that contributes to social well-being and academic success. A coordinated approach with program and school staff in communication and collaboration proves beneficial. Collaboration allows the ability to coordinate across programs and improve outcomes. It is recommended to use a Social Emotional Framework (SEL) as a coordinating framework as a lens to focus on students' social and emotional development. Exploring new funding sources through community partners and grants is recommended. It is recommended to design an incentive program for volunteers to encourage retention. Finally, incorporate stem learning into the program; and collaborate with teachers to target S.O.L objectives. K.A.P. should continue to help young people develop strong, positive relationships with adults, to build on strengths rather than focus on his/her weaknesses, provide an environment that helps young people develop positive relationships with peers, and to give youth opportunities to develop leadership and decision-making skills.

Special Activities

The students enrolled in K.A.P. have the option of participating in Friday field trips. The cost of the field trips is generally less than \$10.00 per student. Field trips for this school year included: Sky zone, Swaders, The Bowling Alley and Holiday Bowl. These trips were for recreational purposes with the underlying goal being to foster social/emotional learning opportunities. Parents were asked to pay the cost of the Friday field trips. Scholarships were available for those that needed them. Students enjoyed a cookout with relay activities on the last day of KAP. They participated in sack races, egg toss, tug of war and other fun games.

Community service develops a sense of social responsibility, a global view of society and heart for giving back and helping others. It builds relationships and social connectedness with peers and adults who share a common interest. The students used donated t-shirts to make dog toys for the Colonial Heights Animal Shelter. The project was easy to do and did not cost anything. Youth learned a new skill and had real sense of accomplishment on learning over 300 toys were made, Officer Arehart accepted the donation at the shelter; the children were given a tour and learned how the shelter functions.

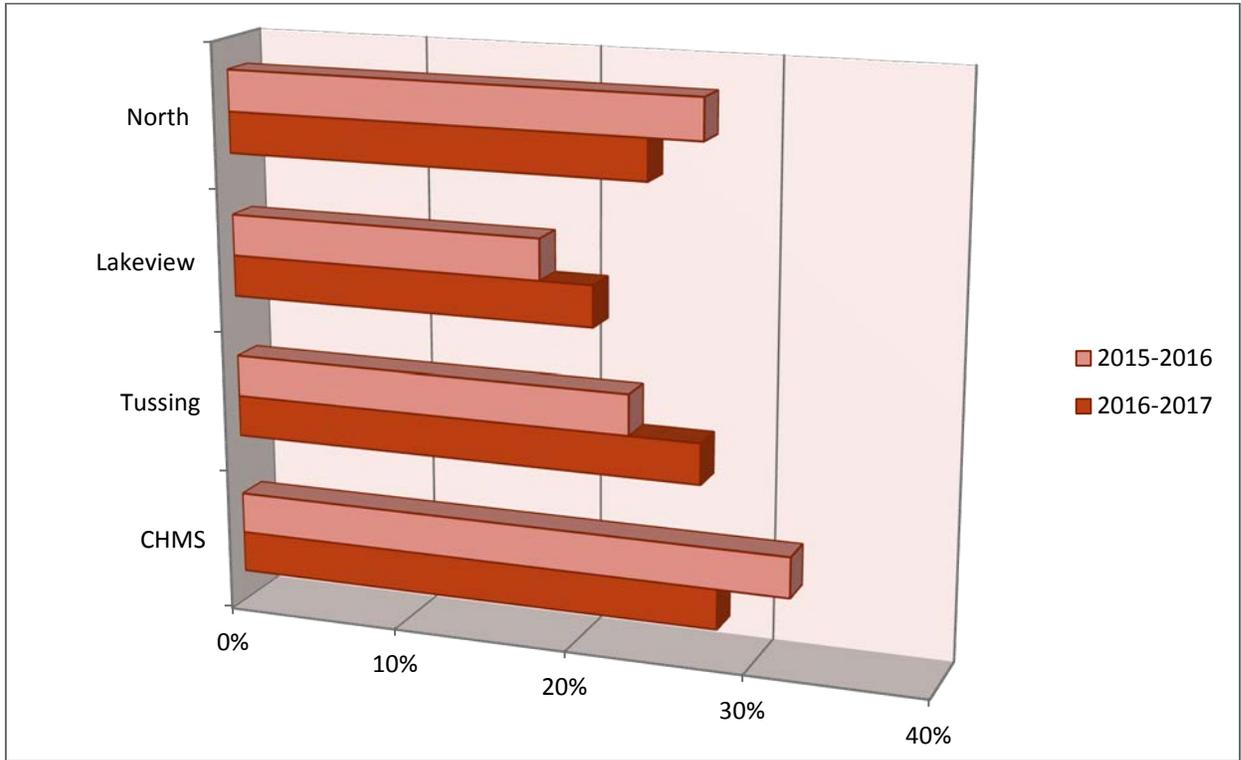
Summary

In summary, K.A.P. is a valuable resource for all stakeholders. Working families and businesses derive benefits from afterschool programs that ensure youth have a safe place to go while parents work. Parents concerned about their children's after-school care miss an average of eight days of work annually. Decreased worker productivity costs businesses up to \$300 billion annually (Brandeis University, Community, Families and Work Program, 2004). Parents are pleased that their children are able to receive help with homework in a safe, supervised environment. Parents are appreciative that the program is offered at no cost. The Wallace Foundation published a study in 2009 stating the low to high cost of out of school time programs. Using the data provided, each student enrolled in K.A.P. has an annual cost of \$2580 on the low side and \$8100.00 is the median cost. This data is based on an enrollment of 80 students attending twelve hours per week for 40 weeks.

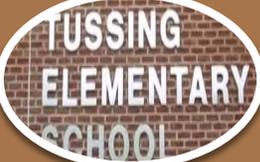
The students indicated through surveys an appreciation for the help received and acknowledged an improved attitude towards school. The students also recognized feeling a kinship with other K.A.P. students. Tutors overwhelming were satisfied with the volunteer experience and will encourage others to participate. Tutors gain practical experience which allows them to use it on their resume. They appreciate having the opportunity to work with the children and make a difference. Many express being able to relate to the children and acknowledge the impact mentoring had on them as children.

Teachers were appreciative of the assistance students received with homework as many realize support is limited at home. Staff endeavors to determine classroom strategies to help the children so that K.A.P. is supporting classroom learning. All stakeholders agreed that K.A.P. provides a safe and positive learning environment.

Total Enrollment Comparison

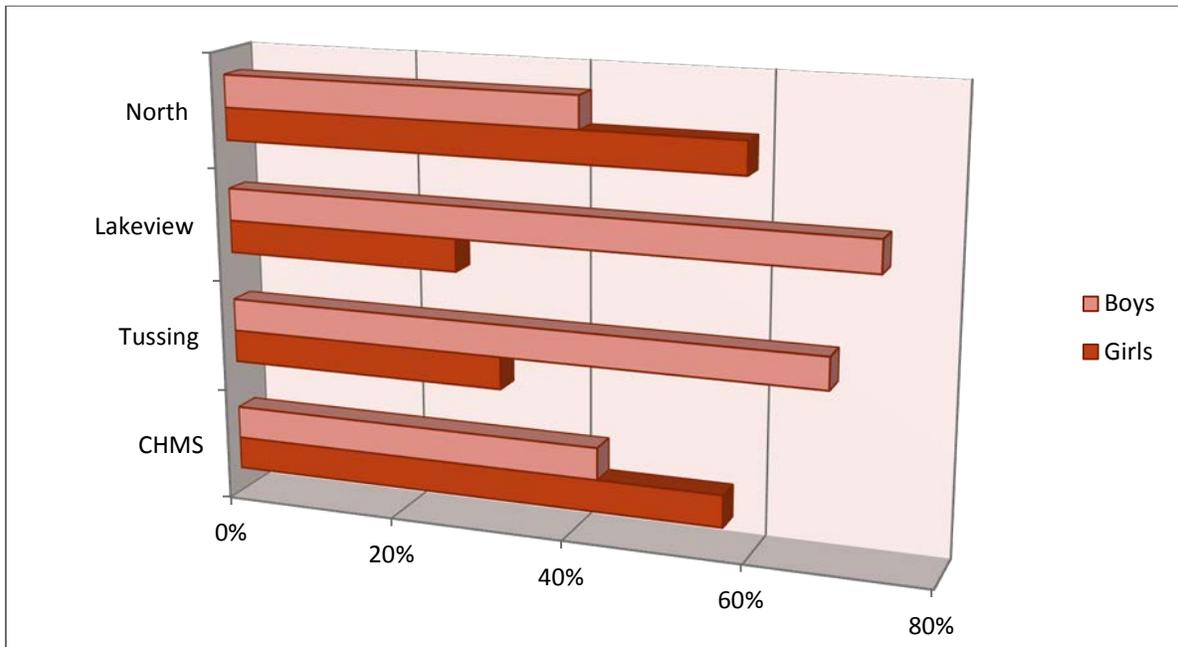


2016-2017 Total Enrollment 71 2015-2016 Total Enrollment 83

			
ENROLLMENT 17	ENROLLMENT 15	ENROLLMENT 19	ENROLLMENT 21

*Data based on 2016-2017 enrollment

Enrollment/Gender





Gender

- girls 10
- boys 7



Gender

- girls 4
- boys 11



Gender

- girls 6
- boys 13

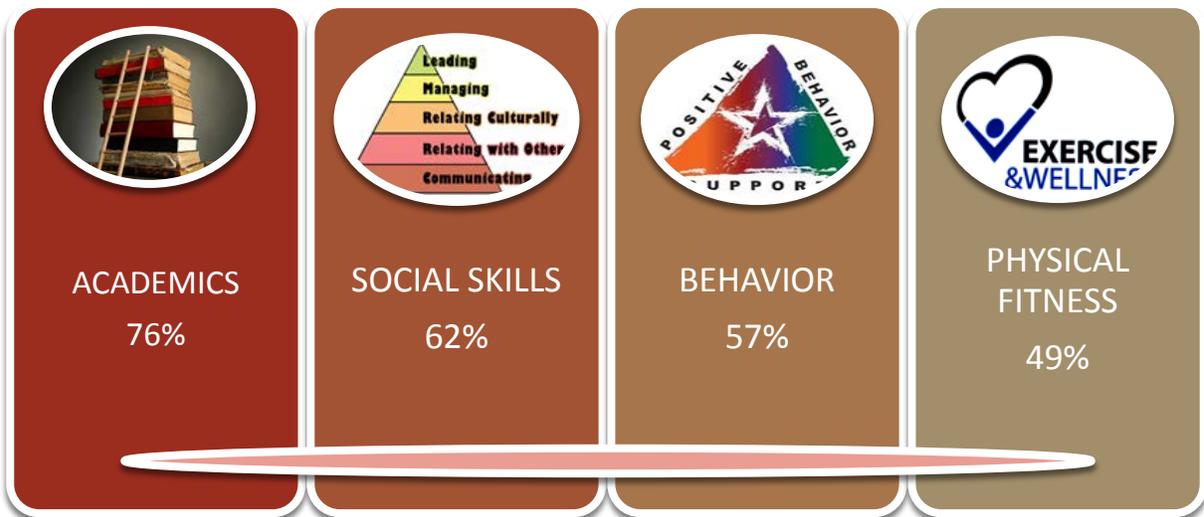
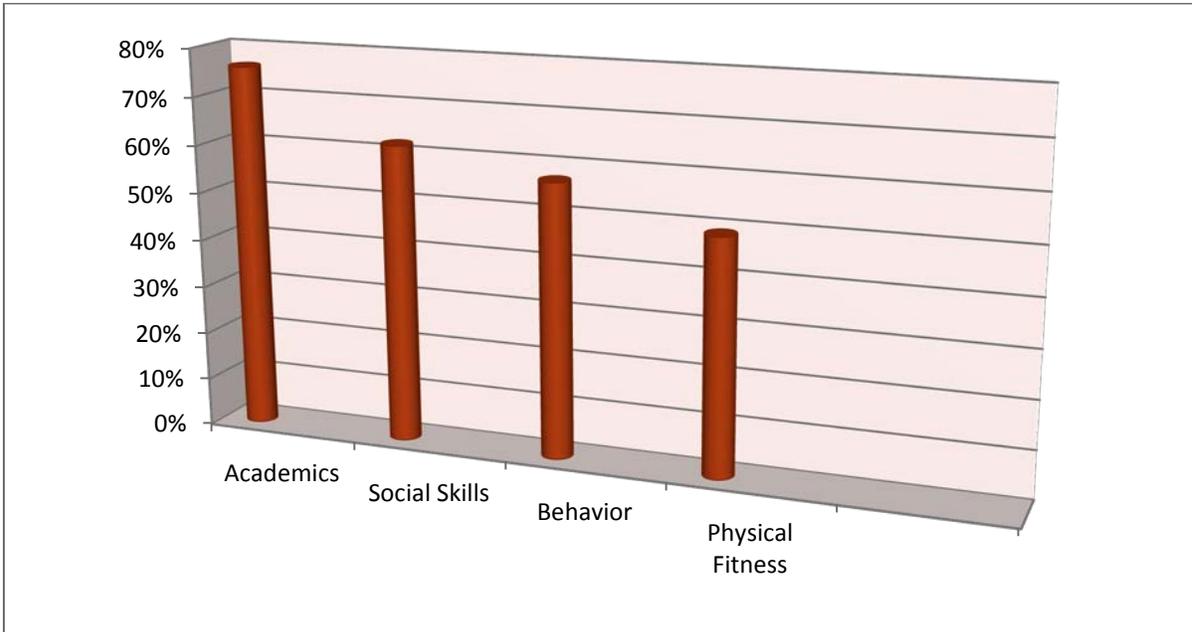


Gender

- girls 12
- boys 9

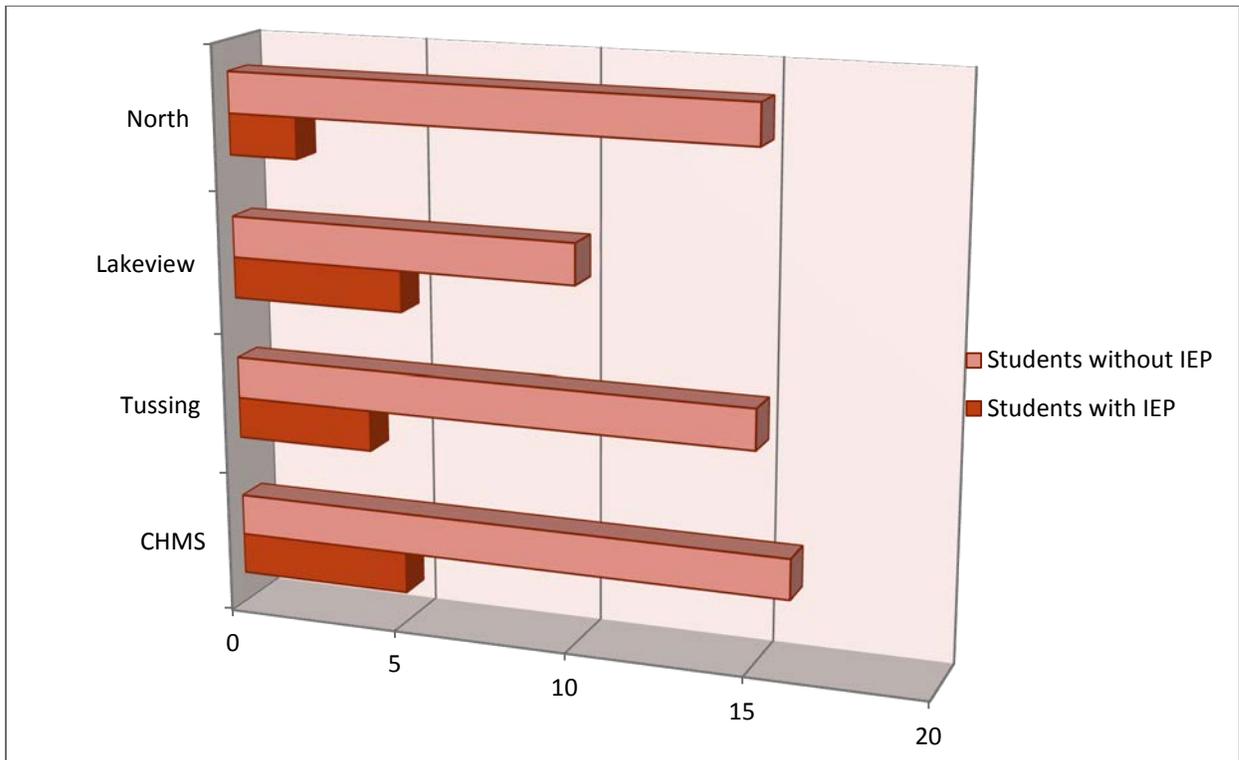
2016-2017 Gender Demographics

Referral Basis



*Most students are referred for multiple reasons

Individualized Education Plan





Individualized
Education
Plan

2



Individualized
Education
Plan

4



Individualized
Education
Plan

4



Individualized
Education
Plan

5

***The Individualized Education Program, also called the IEP, is a document that is developed for each public school child who needs special education.**