

Subject: Bright Stars Annual Report Policy Reference Strategic Plan Goal Reference <u>Goal 2 – Eliminate the Achievement Gap</u>	Date: Enclosures: REASON FOR CONSIDERATION: Action _____ Information <u> x </u>
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Background (Purpose)

The Bright Stars Program began in 1995 in Albemarle County Schools with the first classroom at Stone Robinson Elementary School. In 2011, the program served eight schools, two private pre-schools and one hundred thirty four children and their families (these numbers do not reflect the Title I and Special Education students also served in these classrooms). Elementary schools served included: Stone Robinson, Agnor-Hurt, Greer, Scottsville, Woodbrook, Red Hill, Stony Point and Cale. Private Pre-school settings included First United Methodist Pre-school and Piedmont Family YMCA. Bright Stars is an early intervention program for at risk four-year old children and their families that attempts to increase learning opportunities by addressing risk factors that affect school performance. At risk factors are based on a variety of criteria that include such things as parental illiteracy, poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse, chronic illness, criminal activity, developmental disabilities and behavioral, oral language, social or personal difficulties. Funding for the program is partially offset by state dollars from the Virginia Pre-School Initiative funds. The remaining funding for the program comes from local government, the schools and a small grant from Martha Jefferson Hospital that provides dental care support for the children.

Administrative Consideration (Rationale)

The annual report is presented as information for the School Board and requires no action.

Budget Implications (Short and Long Term)

None

Recommendation/Future Direction/Time Line

None

PREPARED:

REVIEWED: _____

ITEM NUMBER:

RECOMMENDED:



BRIGHT STARS

FY 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

A PROGRAM OF

THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY PRESCHOOL NETWORK

Presented to

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
The Albemarle County School Board





ALBEMARLE COUNTY
Department of Social Services
1600 5th Street, Suite A
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902



ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOLS
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

We are pleased once again to write this introductory letter to the FY2011 Annual Report for the Albemarle County Preschool Network/Bright Stars Program. In our sixteenth year of collaboration between the County Schools and Social Services we have continued to demonstrate and enjoy the benefits of a pre-school program for at-risk County children, to prepare them for success in the kindergarten year and beyond.

This report includes information on children in the Bright Stars classrooms within the Albemarle County Preschool Network and reflects on the successes resulting from the shared resources of ACDSS and the Virginia Preschool Initiative grant and the ACPS Title I and Early Childhood Special Education programs. In addition, we recognize the contributions of the local Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant as well as numerous other community "partners" and supporters who help us make a difference for our children and families.

Our enhanced collaboration provides for eleven preschool classes at eight County schools, including five Special Education inclusion classes. All classes offer a robust, academic learning experience with daily opportunities for children to develop critical social and personal skills. Family Coordinators invite and encourage active parent engagement through the year, and families are assisted in identifying and accessing community services to create stability, opportunity, and a network of support.

Parent engagement is an important strategy in helping children to make best use of the classroom experience. Parents consistently note a high degree of satisfaction in their evaluations of our program and speak in glowing terms about their children's participation. Parents' positive experiences with the school and involvement in their child's education will serve the child well in future years.

As you read through this report and take note of its many indicators of programmatic impacts and success, we are confident you will join us in applauding and supporting the community of learning - host schools, teachers and assistants, Family Coordinators, children and families - that comprises this unique collaboration on behalf of young children in Albemarle County.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pam Moran'.

Dr. Pamela R. Moran
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Ralston'.

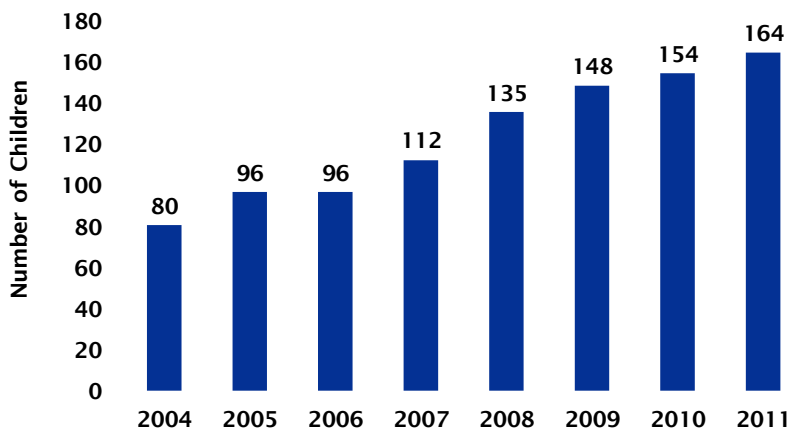
Kathy Ralston
Director



BRIGHT STARS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2010-11

Funding from the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the local Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant, ACPS Early Childhood Special Education and Title I programs, and local government matching funds supported the operation of 11 preschool classes at 8 Albemarle County schools and scholarship slots at 3 private preschools. Five classrooms served 3- and 4-year-old students with special needs within a blended inclusion model.

Preschoolers Served by Bright Stars

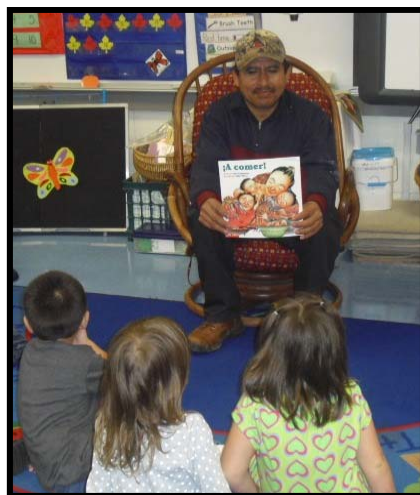


Includes VPI-funded Bright Stars and Early Childhood Special Education/Title I students served in blended preschool classes in years 2008-11.

In addition to 164 children served as preschoolers, 448 Bright Stars “alumni” from kindergarten through 5th grades continued to receive the support of their Bright Stars Family Coordinator. Over the course of the year, 1876 contacts were provided to Bright Stars alumni and their families.

Efforts to support and enhance child and family well-being and to improve access to services is demonstrated by the Bright Stars’ commitment to ensuring children receive adequate health and dental care and that families with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are provided necessary supports for meaningful communication and program participation.

- 23 children benefitted from intensive pediatric dental services provided by local specialists and funded by a Community Health Partnership award from Martha Jefferson Hospital.
- 29% of our preschoolers were from families with Limited English Proficiency and required the coordination of interpreter services.

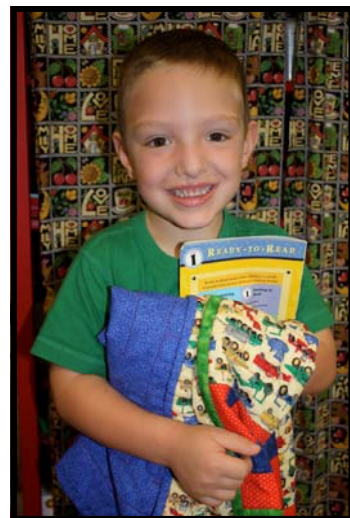


Señor Albarran, custodian at Red Hill, visits the Bright Stars class weekly to read to our students in Spanish.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BRIGHT STARS



PRESCHOOLERS, ALUMNI, AND THEIR FAMILIES



ABOUT OUR PARTICIPANTS

All children enrolled in the Bright Stars program are identified with individual or family risk factors that could result in poor school performance over the years. High risk points for Bright Stars children may include limited parental education or illiteracy, parents who were single and/or still a teenager at the child's birth, poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, incarceration of a parent, previous child protective services reports or foster care involvement, siblings having difficulty in school, and substance and/or mental health issues among family members.

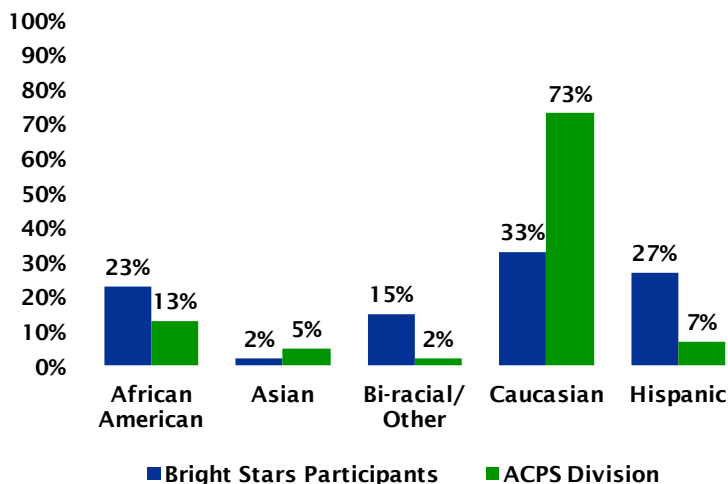
Despite these challenges, year after year the children enrolled in the Bright Stars program show considerable progress across a number of specific and measurable goals. Teachers, Teaching Assistants, and Family Coordinators work together assisting children and parents in meeting these goals.



Of the 164 preschoolers served by Bright Stars:

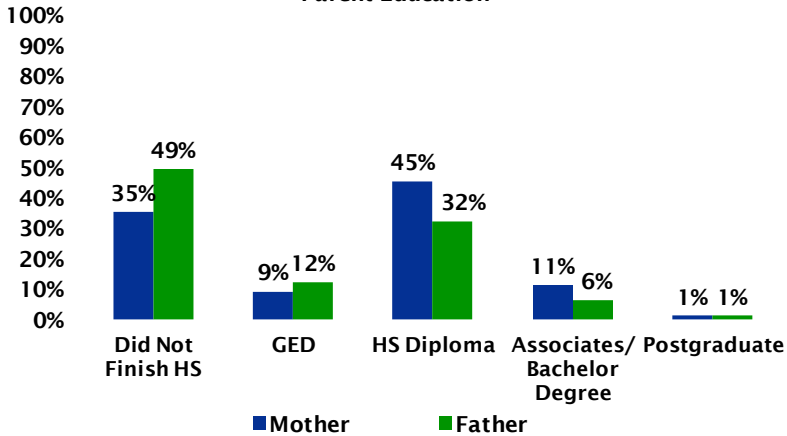
- 56% were female students and 44% were male students, compared to 49% female and 51% male in the ACPS Division overall
- 97% resided with one or both biological parents, the remaining 3% lived with grandparents or other relatives
- 78% were from families where one or more members of the household was employed
- 84% qualified for Free or Reduced Meals, compared to 26% for the Division overall

Ethnicity



DEMOGRAPHICS 2010-11

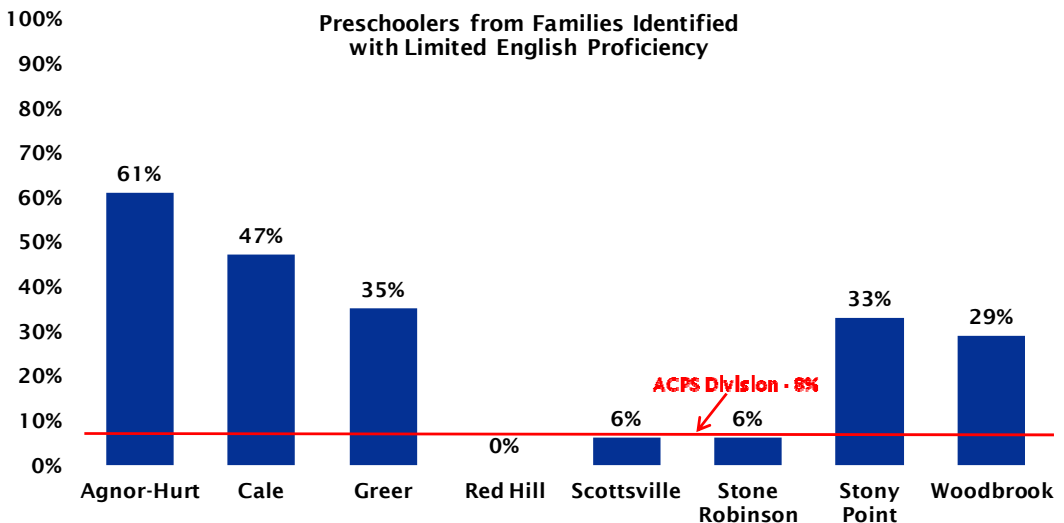
Parent Education



Parent Status at Child's Birth

Single Parent	49%
Teen Parent	43%
Both Single and Teen Parent	26%

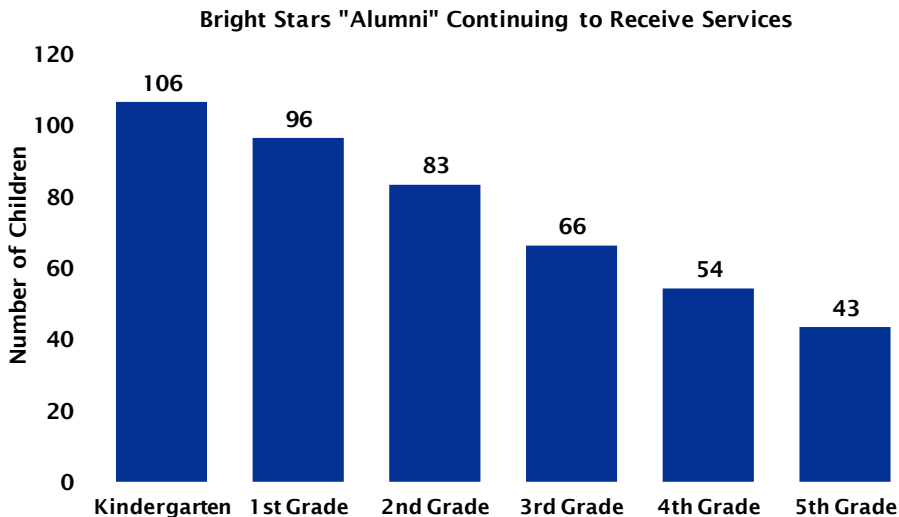
Preschoolers from Families Identified with Limited English Proficiency



Statistics for the ACPS Division indicate 8% of students were classified as English As Second Language (ESL) students in 2010-11

BRIGHT STARS "ALUMNI" WHO CONTINUED TO RECEIVE SERVICES 2010-11

Bright Stars Family Coordinators work with families to encourage regular and timely school attendance, participation in parent-teacher conferences, engagement in school events, prevention of dental and medical problems, and improved housing and employment. Family Coordinators are able to provide on-going services to eligible children and families past the preschool year and many continue to receive services, as needed, throughout elementary school.



These services are entirely voluntary and Bright Stars parents agree to participate or not depending on their circumstances.

448 Bright Stars alumni and their families were served in 2010-11.

Each of the Family Coordinators made an average of 156 contacts per month to her alumni families.

This continuity of care and support is a unique characteristic of the program. Facilitating links between home, school, and community services and ensuring that families have the means to be safe, secure, and self-sufficient throughout the elementary school years are the ways the Bright Stars Program enhances education, workforce development, and the health and well-being of our community.

"They really have a love of learning. They're not afraid to take risks. They're excited about books and will get very excited if I read a book that was given to them in Bright Stars."

~Kindergarten Teacher



A Bright Stars parent volunteers in the classroom

BRIGHT STARS PROGRAM OUTCOMES



"Every single one of my students that went to Bright Stars all come to kindergarten with a strong sense of Concept of Word, an essential part of learning to read. Bright Stars is an amazing program! Keep up the good work!"

~Kindergarten Teacher



"I feel that all children should have an opportunity to attend Bright Stars - it really prepares them for kindergarten."

~Greer Parent

"[Our son] made friends, learned new things, and learned to communicate with others."

~Agnor-Hurt Parent



"Thank you so much, our life has been enhanced by this program."

~Greer Parent



"My child learned so much this year, I am very proud of him. We look forward to next year."

~Red Hill Parent

"This year has been amazing for our daughter, she had the most nurturing, warm, child centered experience we could have ever hoped for. She has grown academically, socially and emotionally under [Bright Stars] care - we'll forever be grateful."

~Scottsville Parent

PERFORMANCE ON PROGRAM GOALS

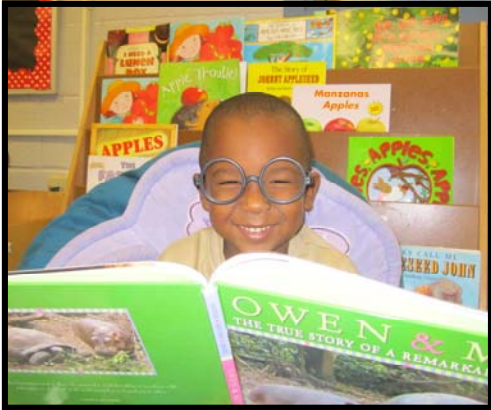
The following table shows our performance on key program goals over the past four years.

OUTCOME MEASURE	MEASUREMENT	GOAL	ACTUAL
Preschool Literacy Skills Preschoolers who are in Bright Stars for at least six months achieve literacy benchmark scores for the preschool developmental range at the end of the school year	PreK Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Summary Report	FY11Target: 80% Previous Target: 80%	FY 11 Actual 81% FY 10 Actual 80% FY 09 Actual 68% FY 08 Actual 75%
Kindergarten Literacy Skills Bright Stars alumni achieve literacy benchmark scores for the kindergarten developmental range at the end of the school year	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten	FY11Target: 85% Previous Target: 80%	FY 11 Actual 94% FY 10 Actual 78% FY 09 Actual 85% FY 08 Actual 86%
Family Events Parents of Bright Stars preschoolers attend at least three Bright Stars/school functions during the school year	Bright Stars database	FY11Target: 90% Previous Target: 85%	FY 11 Actual 88% FY 10 Actual 88% FY 09 Actual 93% FY 08 Actual 86%
Parent-Teacher Conferences Parents of Bright Stars preschoolers attend two parent-teacher conferences during the school year	Bright Stars database	FY11Target: 90% Previous Target: 85%	FY 11 Actual 85% FY 10 Actual 91% FY 09 Actual 88% FY 08 Actual 91%
Parent Goals Parents of Bright Stars preschoolers make progress on goals that support their child's success during the school year	Family Needs Assessment	FY11Target: 80% Previous Target: 80%	FY 11 Actual 92% FY 10 Actual 85% FY 09 Actual 91% FY 08 Actual 71%

"It is no longer the case that school begins in Kindergarten. The majority of children, especially those from middle class and upper middle class families, attend preschool. I think that the Bright Stars program, particularly using the High/Scope approach, puts kids on a more level playing field with these more affluent peers. Without Bright Stars the gap would be even wider."

~Principal

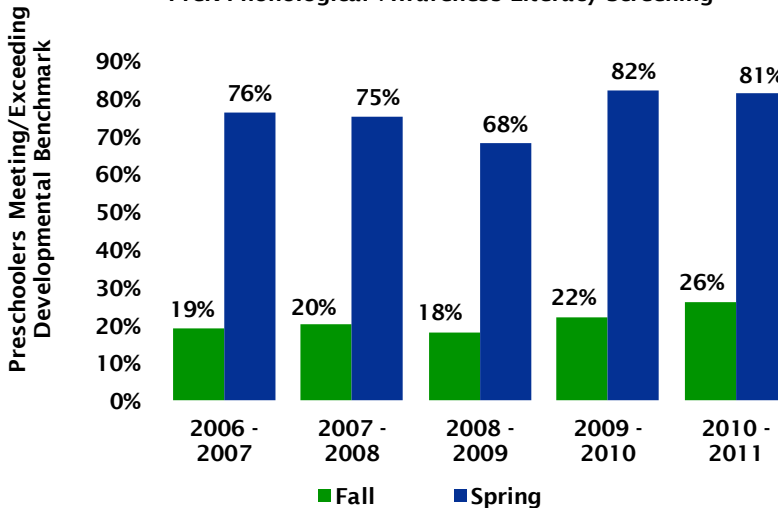
EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS



Pre-kindergarten language and literacy screenings are administered by classroom teachers in fall and spring. The screenings include questions about letters of the alphabet, letter sounds, rhymes, and awareness of how pictures and words work together in a story. Children who obtain the developmental benchmarks by the end of preschool are more likely to achieve benchmark levels in kindergarten and first grade because they have mastered the basic skills that contribute to “reading readiness.”

Our children show substantial improvement between the beginning and end of the preschool year, with 55% more students passing the benchmarks by spring. Moreover, 55% percent of our preschoolers attained a “high-pass” score for their spring performance.

PreK Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening



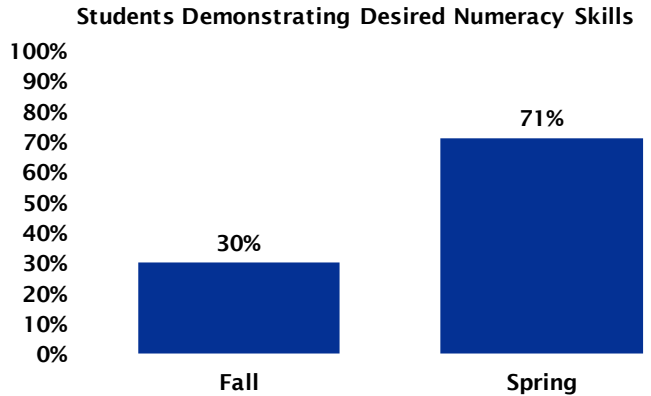
Children participating in Bright Stars carry their progress forward into the start of the following year. In the fall of kindergarten, 89% of Bright Stars alumni passed the fall literacy benchmarks, on par with their non-Bright Stars peers across the Division, who had a 90% pass rate in the fall.

Alumni score favorably on more general kindergarten-level assessments of reading skills as well. As kindergarteners, 94% of our students passed the spring grade-level standard, again performing comparably with peers Division-wide, 93% of whom passed the spring standard. Considering performance on average across 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, it is notable that 81% of Bright Stars alumni passed the Reading SOL, compared with 89% of students across the Division.

EARLY NUMERACY SKILLS

Preschoolers' abilities in areas of numeral identification, sequences, patterns, shapes, and colors are assessed in the fall and spring using the *Math Quick Screen*, which is based on the *Student Numeracy Assessment Progressions™*. In the fall, only 30% of students demonstrate the desired skills (averaged across the 9 subtests), however, 71% of students demonstrate the appropriate skills by spring.

Also of note, students pass on average only 2.7 of the 9 subtests in the fall assessment. By spring, students pass 6.4 subtests on average, an increase of 137%.



Moreover, Bright Stars alumni across kindergarten through 5th grades show performance comparable to their peers in the Division on both general grade-level math skills assessments and the Math SOLs. The percent difference between Bright Stars alumni and Division peers in mean Math SOL scores is only about 9%. Likewise, there is only a 9% difference between the Division-wide students' and the Bright Stars alumni passing rates on the Math SOLs.

"The preschool program helps to prepare them for kindergarten—the kids learn a lot from others and have fun too."

~Scottsville Parent

"Everything was wonderful — great structure, creative ways of teaching."

~Red Hill Parent



PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers and early childhood researchers know that readiness for kindergarten is about knowing how to get along with others, to share, take turns, follow directions, and to be curious and excited about learning. With this foundation, children will be more open to learning new skills and more likely to be successful. *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2007)* specifically includes expectations for personal and social development in addition to those for Literacy, Science, History, Math, and Physical/Motor Development.

Children in the Bright Stars classrooms are assessed in fall and spring in areas of Self Concept, Self Control, Approaches to Learning, Interactions With Others, and Social Problem-Solving. While in the fall only 55% of the 30 assessed items are demonstrated "Usually or Consistently", by spring 92% of items are noted as such. Early in the year, children have the poorest performance in areas of Social Problem-Solving, which includes appropriate expression of feelings, conflict management, sharing, and social play. This area shows the greatest gains by spring, with preschoolers essentially doubling the number of items demonstrated "Usually or Consistently" at year's end.

Percentage of Children Who Usually and Consistently Demonstrate Desired Behaviors in the Spring				
Self Concept	Self Control	Approaches to Learning	Interaction w/ Others	Social Problem-Solving
The child will demonstrate self-confidence and self-reflection	The child will demonstrate self-direction and responsibility	The child will show eagerness and persistence as a learner	The child will interact easily with other children and familiar adults	The child will learn and use non-physical ways to resolve conflicts
97%	95%	90%	96%	96%

"They're very comfortable in the classroom, self-directed and good leaders."

~Kindergarten Teacher



"The personal, social and behavioral competence of young children is a strong predictor of academic performance in the early grades."

Appropriate and supportive learning experiences provide an important foundation for personal and social growth."

~Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The engagement of a child's family in the school community is emphasized as key to long-term success in school. Measures of Parent Engagement include attendance at Parent-Teacher Conferences and school events such as Open House and Back-To-School Night and participation in Bright Stars Family Events and class field trips held frequently throughout the year.

"I like the way that they come in settled and ready to learn. And parents seem to be more willing to come to school."

~Kindergarten Teacher

Overall, parents engaged in nearly half of all possible opportunities for family involvement - a very significant statement in support of their child's entry to the school community. Other indicators of Bright Stars' parent involvement include:

- 85% of parents attended both fall and spring Parent-Teacher Conferences
- three schools had 100% attendance for both fall and spring conferences
- 99% of families attended at least one school function, excluding conferences
- 88% of families attended 3 or more functions besides conferences

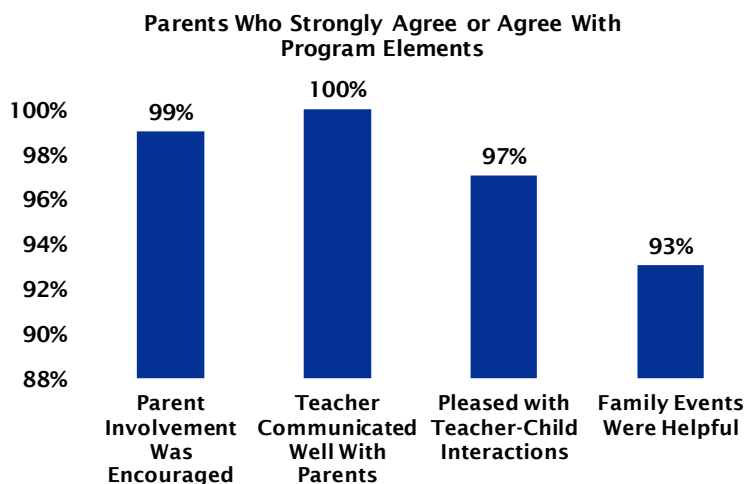


In addition, the Bright Stars Family Coordinators monitor and assist parents' work toward goals they identify for themselves and their families. By the end of the school year, 92% of our parents had demonstrated meaningful progress or fully achieved their personal goals.

Some of the areas of focus for our parents included completing GED testing successfully, moving into a nicer apartment with a small yard for the children, improving speaking and reading skills in English, reducing television time and increasing outdoor play and other physical activities, reading together regularly, and securing employment as a first step to dealing with a partner's violent behavior and substance abuse.

PARENT SATISFACTION

In keeping with previous years' outcomes, parent satisfaction with the preschool class and Bright Stars experience was consistently high, with 98% of parents indicating they felt their child benefitted from the preschool program and 99% affirming that they would recommend the program to others.



"[Our teacher] was amazing — she truly understood the kids and took the time to help them."
~Red Hill Parent

An overwhelming number of parents (93%) noted they felt their child was more likely to be comfortable and successful in kindergarten than if they had not participated in the preschool program. Besides this general assessment of impact, parents noted many specific areas of improvement as well.

"I love [our Family Coordinator] - she was and still is most helpful. I don't know where I would be without her help."

~Greer Parent

"I would love to thank the teachers and [our Family Coordinator] for so much help and guidance with so many things. Bright Stars is an amazing program and I recommend it to anyone who has a child starting out."

~Stone-Robinson Parent

Parents Indicating Improvement in Growth Domains		
Growth Domain	Definition	Improvement
Language	understanding and using oral speech	86%
Social	getting along with other children and adults	93%
Self Care	meeting own needs such as feeding, toileting, dressing, etc.	89%
Motor	moving large muscles and using small, fine muscles	82%
Pre-Academic	recognizing colors, letters, numbers, songs, etc.	95%
Positive Problem-Solving Skills	using cooperation, asking for help, etc.	86%

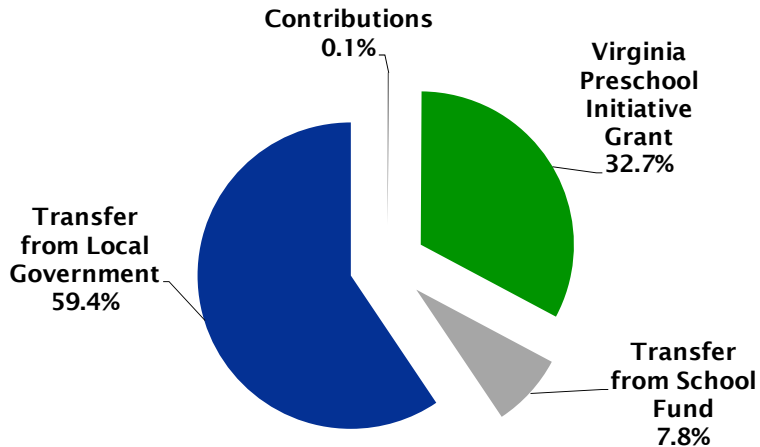
"The teacher was incredible, my child talked openly with her and felt very comfortable with her. Great communications and learning."

~Scottsville Parent



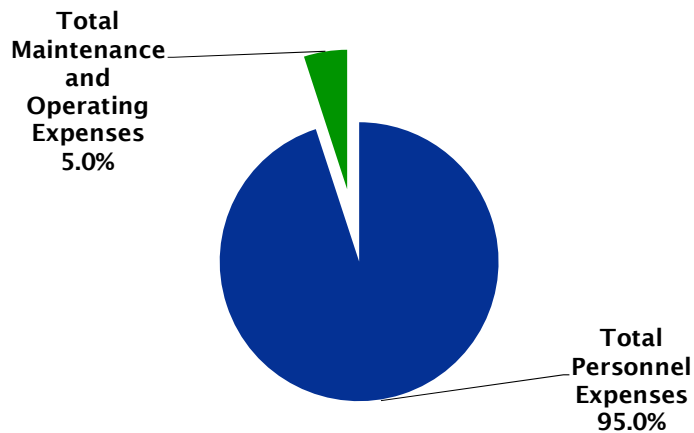
BRIGHT STARS FISCAL REPORT

FY 2011 Revenues



Bright Stars Revenues FY 2010-2011	
Contributions	1,000
Virginia Preschool Initiative Grant	400,500
Transfer from School Fund	95,535
Transfer from Local Government	727,746
Total Bright Stars Revenues	1,224,781

FY 2011 Expenditures



Bright Stars Expenditures FY 2010-2011	
Total Personnel Expenses	982,798
Total Maintenance and Operating Expenses	52,007
Total Bright Stars Expenditures	1,034,805

