



**Governor's Office of
Student Achievement**

GRASP: Graduates Ready to Attain Success in Postsecondary

Midyear Report

April 2022

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Executive Summary

Operated by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and evaluated by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), Graduates Ready to Attain Success in Postsecondary (GRASP) provides grant funding to selected high schools for one additional guidance counselor. Each GRASP counselor is responsible for supporting a caseload of identified at-risk students with achieving academic, personal/social, and career development success. Currently, GRASP is in its fourth operational year. By midyear of the 2021-2022 school year,¹ GRASP operated in and had midyear data² for the four Georgia districts and eight public high schools shown below.

Atlanta Public Schools

Booker T. Washington High School
Douglass High School*

Bibb County

Westside High School

Clayton County

Forest Park High School*
North Clayton High School*

DeKalb County

Cross Keys High School
Miller Grove High School
Towers High School*

Key midyear evaluation highlights are described in the sections below.

- *GRASP Cohort*
 - The 2021-2022 GRASP cohort with midyear data included eight counselors and 638 students at the beginning of the academic year.
 - By midyear, 62 students had withdrawn,³ resulting in a smaller cohort of 576 students.
- *Caseload Numbers*
 - At midyear, the average GRASP counselor's caseload included approximately 72 students.
 - The smallest caseload included 59 students, and the largest included 81 students.
- *Demographics*

¹ * denotes the school has participated in the GRASP grant since the 2019-2020 school year and is part of Cohort 2. Schools without such a denotation were newly added to the GRASP grant during the 2021-2022 school year.

² Berkmar High School (Gwinnett), Clarkston High School (DeKalb), McNair High School (DeKalb), and Stone Mountain High School (DeKalb) did not have midyear data available due to post-midyear cohort creation.

³ The student withdrawal breakdown includes the following, 1 student expelled/enrolled in DJJ schools, 13 students dropped out, 37 students transferred schools, and 11 students withdrew for unknown/other reasons.

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- Approximately 77% of the GRASP student population identified as Black, and about 19% identified as Hispanic.
- *Attendance*
 - The average number of students' total and unexcused absences by class period decreased from the beginning to the middle of year.
- *Grade Level*
 - At the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, there were 476 students in the cohort who were behind grade level as determined by credits earned and year of high school entry.
 - By midyear, 209 (about 44%) of those students attained on-grade-level status.
- *Credits Earned*
 - The average number of credits earned increased from 10.39 at the beginning of the year, to 13.18 by midyear.
- *Attendance Interventions*⁴
 - About 30% of the GRASP student cohort had either a primary or secondary intervention related to attendance at the beginning of the year.
 - On average, students receiving attendance related interventions missed fewer total class periods this semester than in the previous semester in schools that calculated absences by class period. That trend did not appear among students receiving attendance related interventions in schools calculating absences by school day.
- *Academic Interventions*⁵
 - Ninety-two percent of the GRASP student cohort had a primary intervention related to academics.
 - On average, students receiving academic related interventions improved their GPA in GRASP schools that calculate GPA on a 4.0 scale.
 - On average, students receiving academic interventions earned 13.46 total credits by midyear.
 - Of the 443 students who received primary academic interventions and were behind grade level at the beginning of the year, 280 attained on-grade-level status by midyear.

⁴ Results should be interpreted with caution, as differentials in student data between the beginning and midyear could be associated with COVID-19 related reporting and instructional changes.

⁵ See footnote 3 above.

Introduction

By midyear of the 2021-2022 school year, Graduates Ready to Attain Success in Postsecondary (GRASP) operated in nine high schools, in four districts, throughout Georgia. At the beginning of the academic year, 638 students and eight counselors participated in GRASP.⁶ By midyear, 62 students had withdrawn⁷ from their respective schools, leaving 576 students in the sample. This report's analyses do not include missing or withdrawn student data.

The GRASP Program seeks to support selected Georgia high schools as they work to increase students' success in achieving high school graduation, completing postsecondary programs, and productively participating in the workforce. Operated by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and evaluated by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), the GRASP grant provides selected high schools with funding for one additional counselor to support a specific and limited caseload of at-risk students in achieving academic, personal/social, and career development success. Allowable grant expenditures include salary, benefits, and travel expenses to required training for the GRASP counselor.

GRASP counselor duties include, but are not limited to, the following elements:

- conducting in-depth student analyses to understand the population needs and establish an appropriate caseload;
- providing supportive one-on-one student collaboration to create individually tailored plans and programs of study for each student in his or her caseload;
- establishing a comprehensive team to provide student support for each student in his or her caseload; and,
- engaging his or her caseload students in discovering, examining, and exploring postsecondary options and possibilities.

This midyear report aims to showcase and analyze students' academic, attendance and behavioral data pertinent to the GRASP program. The report compares students' data from the beginning of the year to students' data at midyear. The types of data analyzed in this report are explained in additional detail below.

- **Academic Data** – Beginning of year academic data (ex. GPA and total credits earned) are cumulative and reflect students' performance up to and including the 2020-2021 school year. Some midyear academic data (i.e., GPA and total credits earned) are cumulative and reflect students' performance up to and including the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year. Other midyear academic data (i.e., credits enrolled/attempted and credits earned through credit recovery) exclusively reflect students' performance during in the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year.

⁶ This midyear report does not include data from Berkmar High School (Gwinnett), Clarkston High School (DeKalb), McNair High School (DeKalb), and Stone Mountain High School (DeKalb).

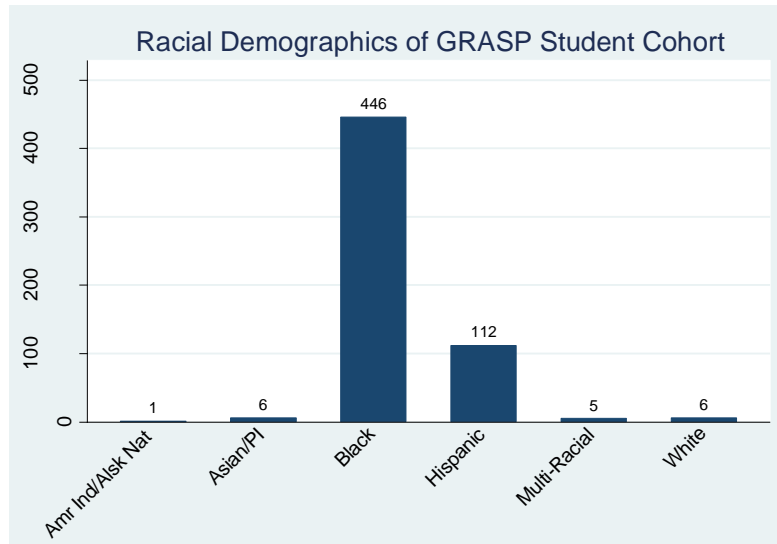
⁷ The student withdrawal breakdown includes the following, 1 student expelled/enrolled in DJJ schools, 13 students dropped out, 37 students transferred schools, and 11 students withdrew for unknown/other reasons.

- **Attendance Data** – Beginning of the year attendance data (i.e., total, excused and unexcused absences) reflect students’ total number of absences, disaggregated by type, during the 2020-2021 school year. Midyear attendance data (i.e., total, excused and unexcused absences) reflect students’ total number of absences during the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year.
- **Behavioral Data** – Beginning of the year behavioral data reflect students’ total number of appearances in In School or Out of School Suspension (ISS and OSS respectively) during the 2020-2021 school year. Midyear behavioral data (ex. ISS and OSS) reflect students’ total number of appearances in ISS or OSS during the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year.

The remainder of this report provides specific analyses on the following topics. The first section, “GRASP Cohort: Demographics and Caseload Characteristics,” details pertinent descriptive information about the GRASP student cohort in the 2021-2022 academic year. The second section, “GRASP Schools: Beginning of the Year Caseload Characteristics,” shows participating schools’ attendance, behavior, and academic caseload data from the beginning of the year. The third and final section, “GRASP Cohort: Midyear Results by Intervention Type,” analyzes changes in cohort data, according to intervention type, from the beginning to the middle of the academic year.

GRASP Cohort
Demographics and Caseload Characteristics

Figure 1. Racial demographics of GRASP student cohort.



The 2021-2022 midyear GRASP student cohort (N=576) demonstrates the following demographic characteristics:

- About 77% of students participating in GRASP identify as Black.
- About 19% of students participating in GRASP identify as Hispanic.
- About 1% of students participating in GRASP identify as either White or Asian/Pacific Islander.

Figure 2. Number of students in caseloads.

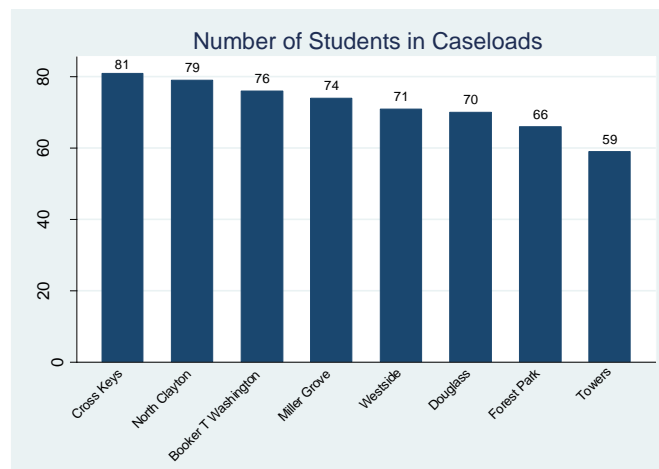


Figure 2 above depicts the caseload size for all GRASP counselors. The midyear GRASP student cohort for the 2021-2022 school year included 576 enrolled students by midyear. Counselors' caseloads ranged from 81 students to 59 students, with the average caseload totaling approximately 72 students.

Figure 3. GRASP students' grade levels.

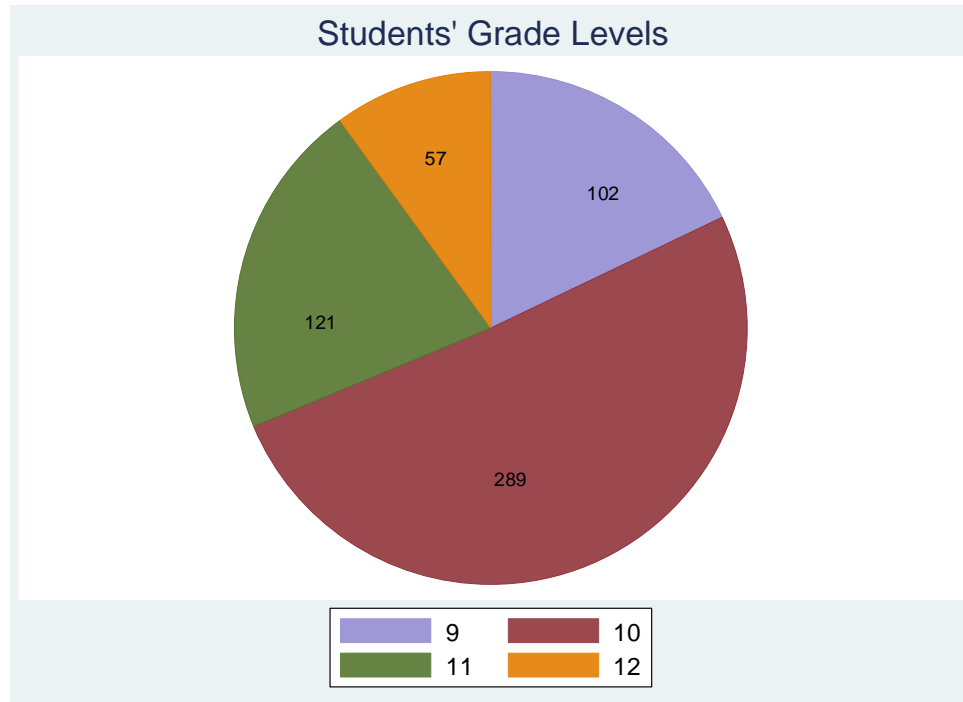


Figure 3 shows the number of students included across participating schools by grade level. At the beginning of the year, participating GRASP students spanned ninth through twelfth grade, with a relatively similar number of students in ninth and 11th grade. The cohort had the smallest number of students in twelfth grade. The midyear 2021-2022 GRASP cohort included five students with enough total credits to graduate and two students with missing grade level data.

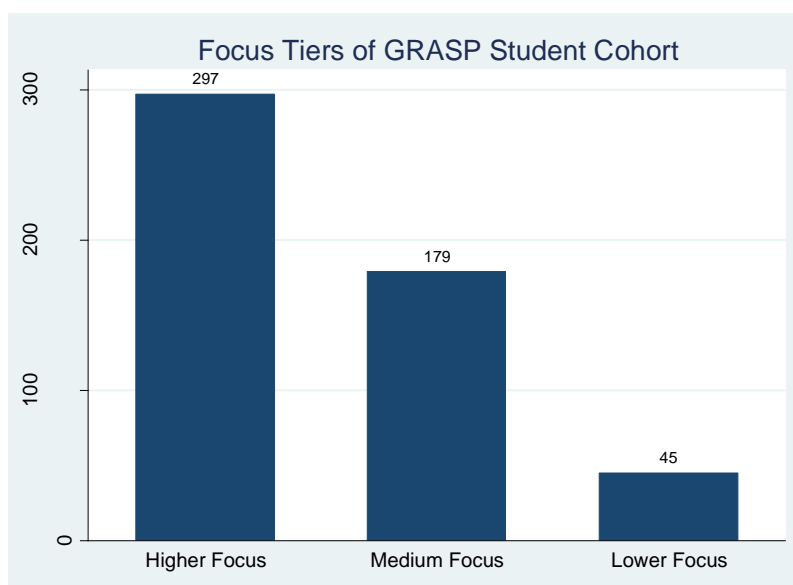
Table 1. Primary and secondary interventions.

Intervention	Primary Frequency	Secondary Frequency
Academic: Course/Credit Recovery	326	8
Academic: Progress Monitoring	146	58
Academic: Student Consultation	58	35
Attendance: Daily Communication/Monitoring	24	142
Discipline: Parent Consultation	0	1
Discipline: Student Consultation	2	5

In terms of interventions counselors reported, key takeaways from Table 1 (above) are listed below.⁸

- The majority (59%) of primary interventions counselors conducted were related to course/credit recovery. This is particularly important considering about 83% of students participating in GRASP are below grade level (see Table 2 below).
- About 26% of primary interventions focused on academic progress monitoring. This is particularly important considering students participating in GRASP began the school year with an average GPA of 1.51 on a 4.0 scale (see Figure 8 below).
- Counselors assigned optional secondary interventions to 43% of the GRASP student cohort.
- Counselors focused the majority (57%) of their secondary interventions on attendance and daily communication/monitoring.

Figure 4. Focus tiers.



Students' focus designations dictated counselors' practices and policies related to the frequency of check-ins and severity of interventions.⁹ Students in the high focus tier demonstrate the highest need and require daily check-ins. Students in the medium focus tier have a moderate need for support and require frequent but not daily check-ins and progress monitoring. Students in the lower focus tier have made substantial progress in their identified areas of support and require occasional check-ins. In terms of the focus tiers to which counselors assigned their students at the beginning of the year, key takeaways from Figure 4 (above) are listed here.

- The majority (52%) of the GRASP student cohort are in the high focus tier.
- Within the high focus tier, about 3% of students participated in GRASP last year.
- The minority (8%) of the GRASP student cohort are in the low focus tier.
- Within the low focus tier, about 18% of students participated in GRASP last year.

⁸ There are 20 students with missing primary intervention data from the beginning of the year.

⁹ There are 55 students with missing focus tier data from the beginning of the year.

GRASP Schools
Beginning of the Year Caseload Characteristics

The following section provides information on characteristics of the student caseload at each participating school. Table 2 (below) illustrates the grade level attainments for each school's caseload of students. At the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, there were 476 students in the cohort who were behind grade level as determined by credits earned, and 10 students were above grade level as determined by credits earned. There were 90 students on grade level as determined by high school entry data and credits earned.

Table 2. Students' grade level attainments.

School	# Students On/Above Grade Level	# Students Behind Grade Level
Booker T. Washington	2	74
Cross Keys	1	80
Douglass	31	39
Forest Park	18	48
Miller Grove	8	66
North Clayton	30	49
Towers	3	56
Westside	7	64

In terms of grade level attainment by credits, key takeaways from Table 2 (above) are provided here.

- All of the eight schools with midyear data participating in GRASP have caseloads with more students behind grade level than with students on or above grade level.
- All eight schools have a portion of their students currently on/above grade level.
- Douglass High School has the largest (44%) proportion of caseload students on /above grade level.
- Booker T. Washington, Cross Keys, Miller Grove, Towers and Westside have 10 or fewer caseload students on/above grade level.

In Georgia, schools can report student absences by the entire school day or by the individual class period. There are seven schools participating in GRASP that count absences by class period, and one school that counts absences by the school day. Figure 5 (below) includes two separate graphs separating the reporting structures of participating schools.

Figure 5a. Students' total number of reported absences.

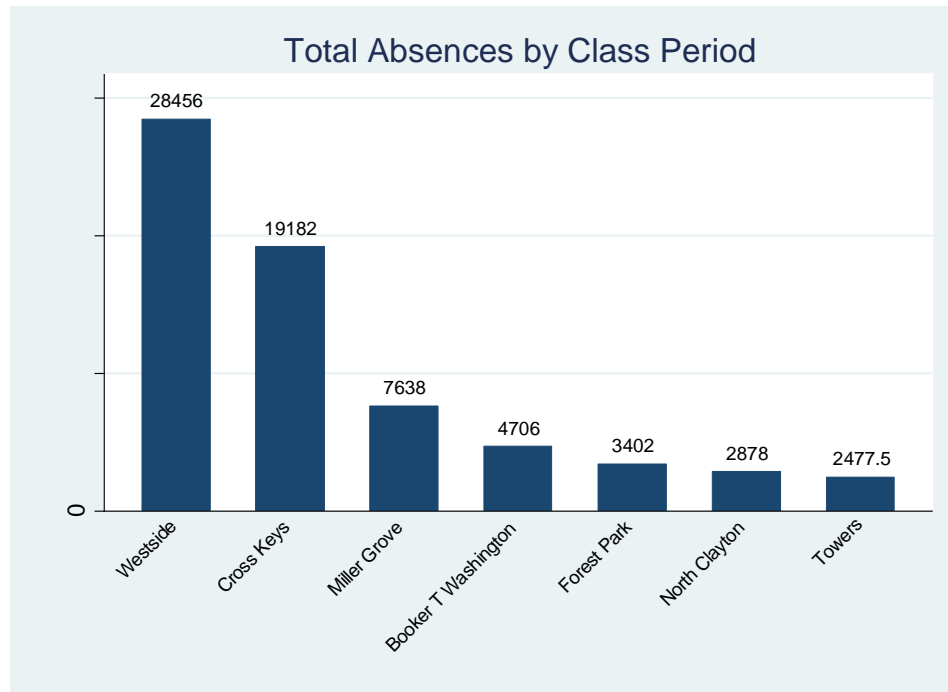
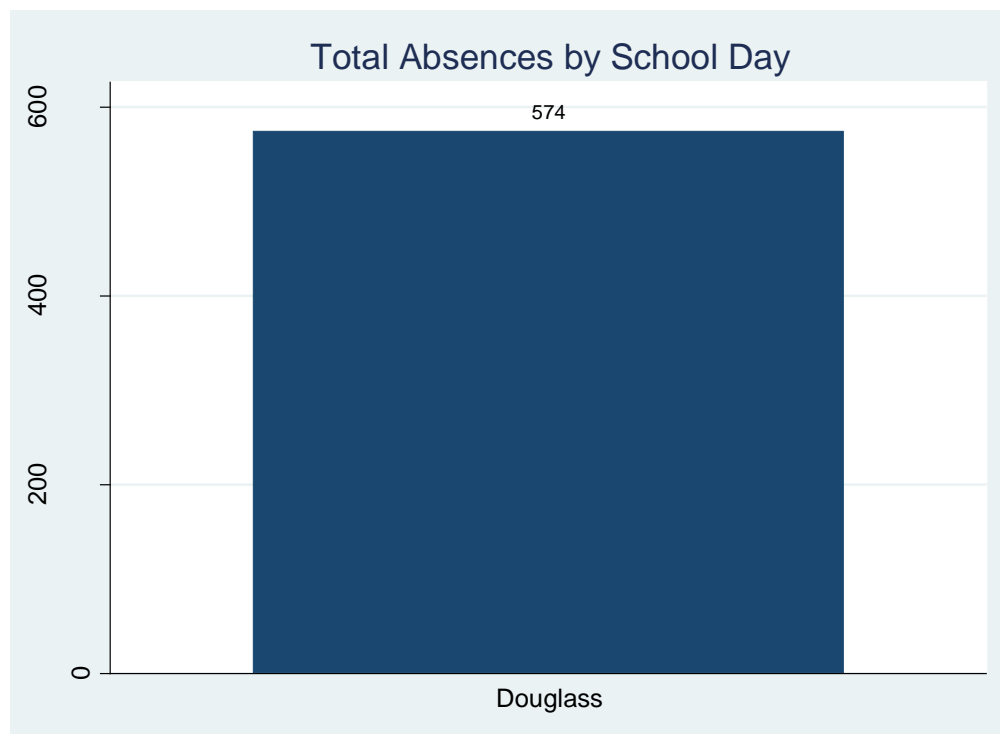


Figure 5b. Students' total number of reported absences.



Figures 5a and 5b (above) illustrate the following points from the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year;

- Westside (28,456) and Cross Keys (19,192) High Schools had the highest number of total reported absences by class period.
- North Clayton (2,878) and Towers (2,477.5) High Schools had the lowest number of total reported absences by class period.
- The average number of total reported absences by class period, by student was about 157. The largest number of total reported absences by class period for a student was 956.
- Douglass High School was the only high school in the report that calculated absences by school day (574 total).
- The average number of total reported absences by school day, by student was about 11. The largest number of total reported absences by school day for a student was 36.

As with absences, schools can report assignment to ISS and OSS by the full day or by individual class period. Figure 6 and Figure 7 below also separate schools by reporting structure. There are four schools participating in GRASP that count ISS incidents by class period, and four schools that count ISS incidents by the school day.

Figure 6a. Students' total number of reported ISS incidents.

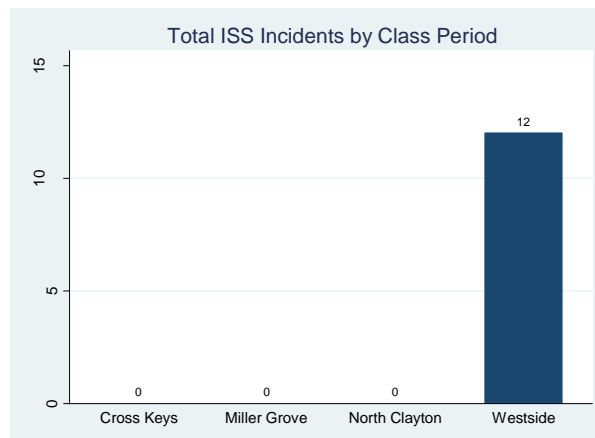
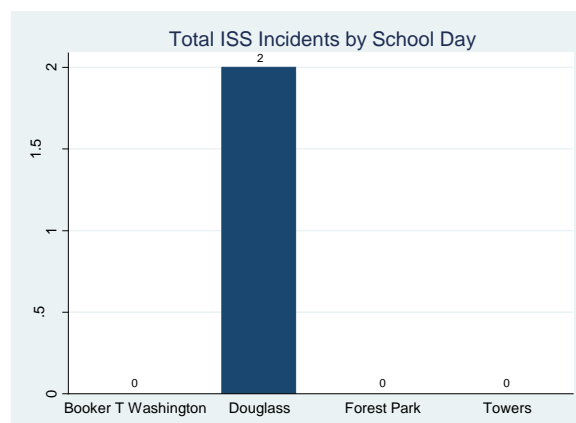


Figure 6b. Students' total number of reported ISS incidents.



Figures 6a and 6b (above) illustrate the following points relative to the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.¹⁰

- Westside High School had the highest number (12) of total reported ISS incidents by class period.
- The average number of total reported ISS incidents by class period was 0.04, and the largest number of total reported ISS incidents by class period for a student was 6.
- Douglass High School had the highest number (129) of total reported ISS incidents by school day.
- The average number of total reported ISS incidents by school day was 0.01, and the largest number of total reported ISS incidents by school day for a student was 2.

Figure 7a. Students' total number of reported OSS incidents.

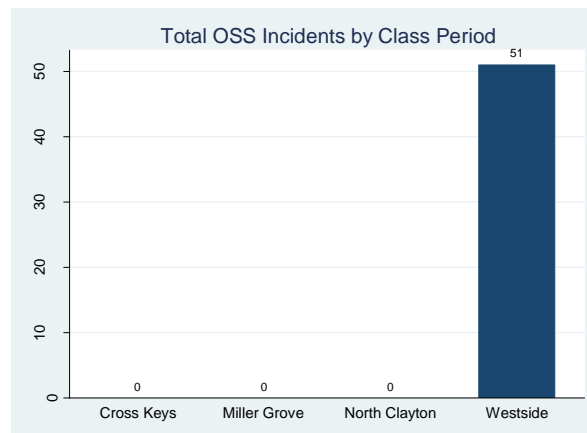
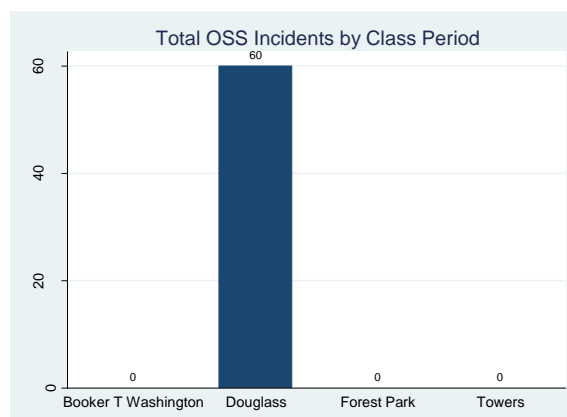


Figure 7b. Students' total number of reported OSS incidents.



¹⁰ Results should be interpreted with caution, as differentials in student data between the beginning and midyear could be associated with COVID-19 related reporting and instructional changes.

Figures 7a and 7b (above) illustrate the following points from the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

- Westside High School had the highest number (51) of total reported OSS incidents by class period.
- The average number of total reported OSS incidents by class period was about 0.18, and the largest number of total reported OSS incidents by class period for a student was 30.
- Douglass (60) High School had the highest number of total reported OSS incidents by school day.
- The average number of total reported OSS incidents by school day was about 0.22, and the largest number of total reported OSS incidents by school day for a student was 12.

Figure 8. Students' reported GPA at the beginning of 2020-2021.¹¹

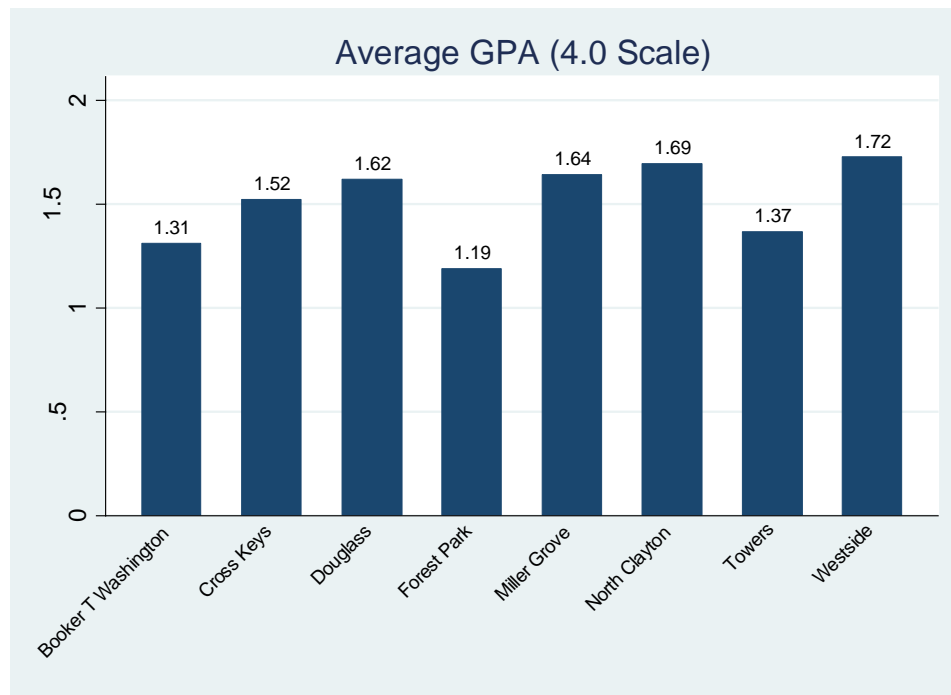


Figure 8 illustrates the following points from the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year:

- Students at Forest Park High School had the lowest average GPA (1.19) in comparison to the other GRASP schools.
- Students at Westside High School had the highest average GPA (1.72) in comparison to the other GRASP schools.
- Students at Booker T. Washington (1.31) and Towers (1.37) High Schools and students at Douglass (1.62) and Miller Grove (1.64) High Schools had similar average GPAs among GRASP schools.
- The average GPA at the beginning of the school year for GRASP schools was 1.51, with the lowest GPA being 0.00 and the highest GPA being 3.87.

¹¹ All schools participating in GRASP with midyear data calculate GPA on a 4.0 scale.

GRASP Cohort
Midyear Results by Intervention Type¹²

There were 166 GRASP students who received primary or secondary interventions related to attendance. The data visualizations below depict students' absences by type from the beginning of the year (BOY) to the middle of the year (MOY).¹³ These visualizations are also separated by the reporting structure of the school (by day or by period).

Figure 9a. Average absences after one semester of attendance interventions.

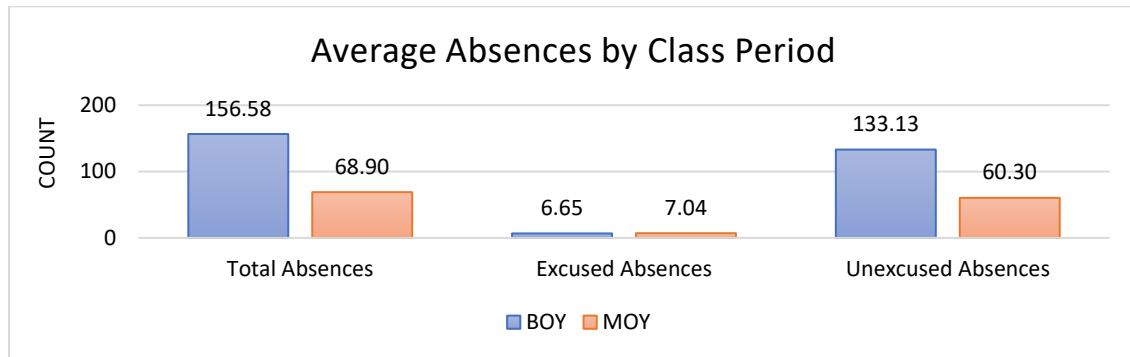
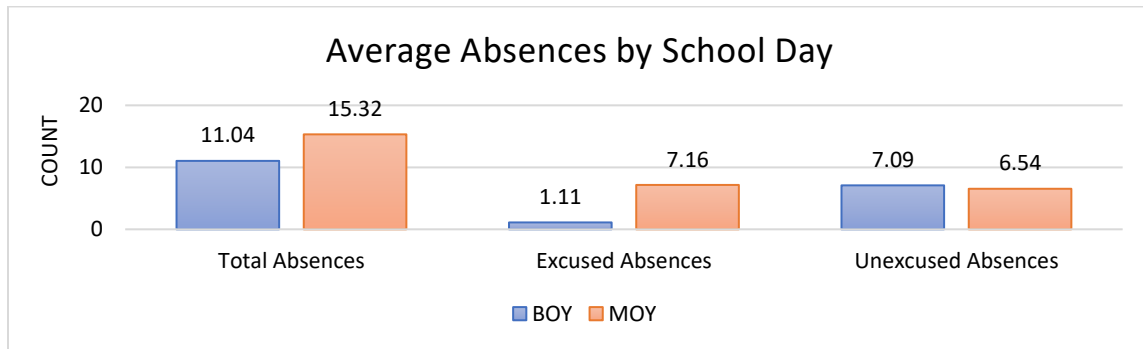


Figure 9b. Average absences after one semester of attendance interventions.



Figures 9a and 9b illustrate the following points from the beginning to the middle of the 2021-2022 school year:

- The average number of students' total and unexcused absences decreased among schools that calculate absences by the class period.

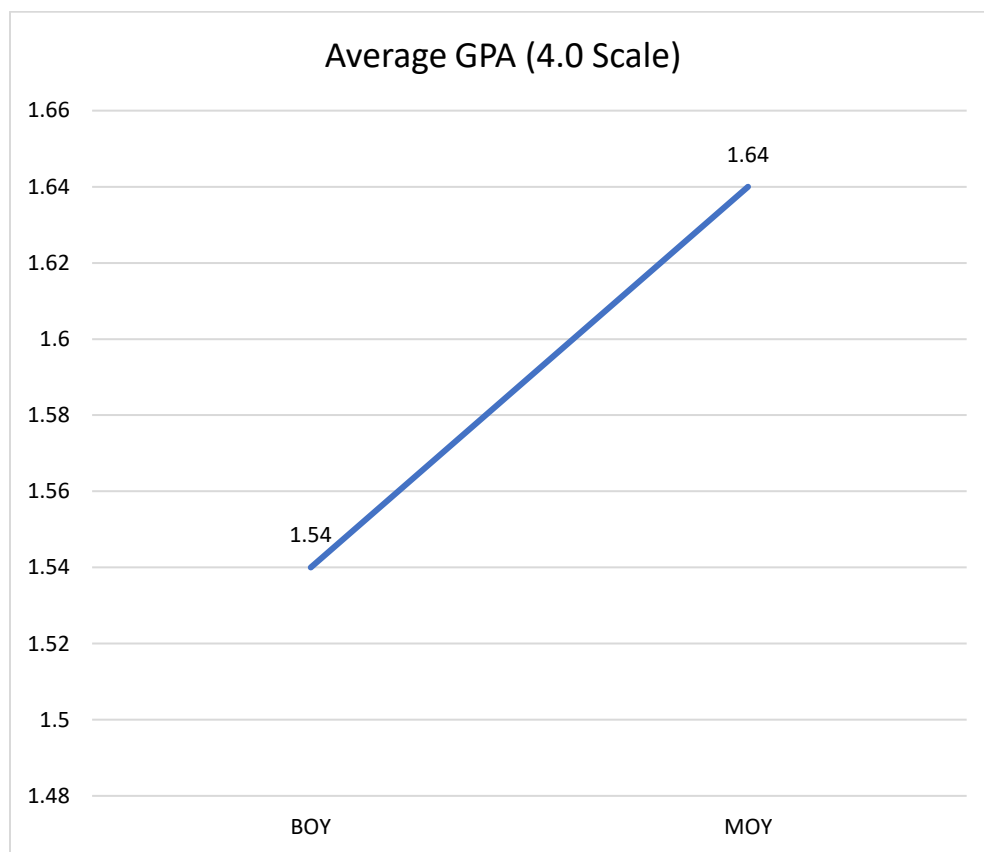
¹² Due to only eight students in the sample having primary and secondary interventions related to behavior, this section of the report does not include a behavior analysis (the analyses of the average number of ISS/OSS incidents from the BOY to the MOY among students with a behavioral intervention).

¹³ Due to complications stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, schools participating in GRASP varied in their techniques and requirements around reporting students' absences. Therefore, it is important to cautiously interpret the following data on changes in students' absences between the beginning and middle of the academic year.

- The average number of students' total and excused absences increased in the school that calculates absences by the day.
- Students receiving attendance related interventions missed fewer total class periods or school days on average than in the previous semester (last semester of the 2020-2021 school year).

The line graph below depicts the average GPA of students whose primary interventions were related to academics. All students had GPAs reported on the 4.0 scale. There were 530 students participating in GRASP with primary academic interventions and GPAs on the 4.0 scale. Only 520 of these students had beginning of the year GPA data reported.

Figure 10. Students' GPA after one semester of academic interventions.



Key takeaways from Figure 10 are listed below:

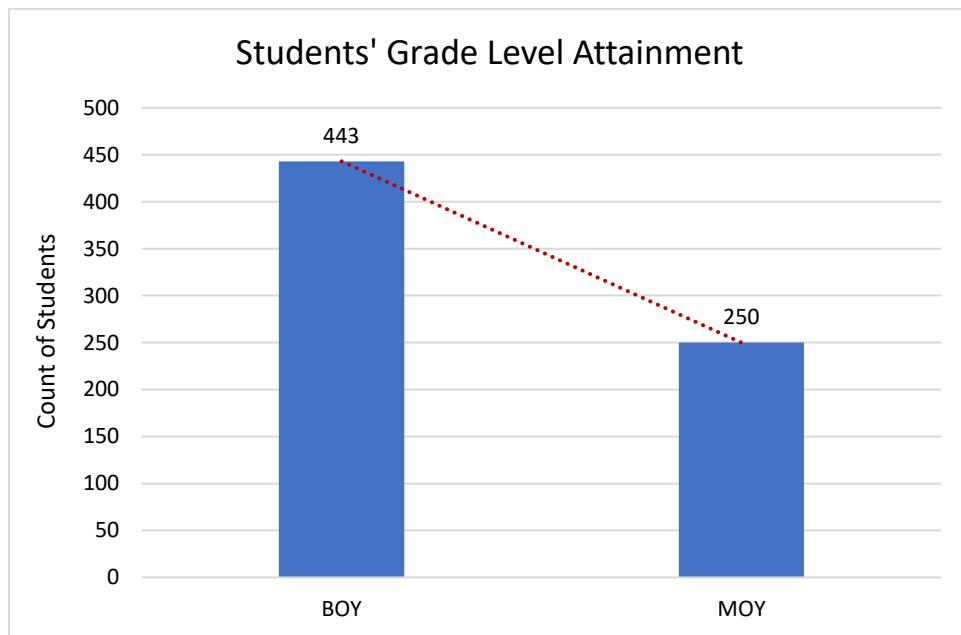
- After one semester of academic interventions, the average GPA for GRASP students increased by 0.10 of a point.
- The lowest GPA among students receiving academic interventions at the beginning of the year was 0.00. By midyear, the lowest GPA among students receiving academic interventions remained at 0.00.
- The highest GPA among students receiving academic interventions at the beginning of the year was 3.87. By midyear, the highest GPA among students receiving academic interventions was 3.89.

Notwithstanding the type of intervention, data support the following findings:

- Over the entire sample, students had an average GPA of 1.51 at the beginning of the year, and an average GPA of 1.62 at midyear.
- The highest GPA at the beginning of the year was 3.87. By midyear, the highest GPA was 3.89.

At the beginning of the academic year, GRASP counselors identified 530 students as needing a primary intervention(s) related to academics. Of these 530 students, 443 (about 84%) began the year behind grade level. Figure 11 below shows grade level attainment data for these 443 students after one semester of academic-based interventions with their GRASP counselors.

Figure 11. Students' grade level attainment after one semester of academic interventions.



In terms of changes in grade level attainment after one semester of academic interventions, Figure 11 illustrates the following points:

- There were 193 students who earned enough credits to be considered on-grade-level, as determined by the year in which they entered high school and the total number of credits earned.
- There were 250 students who were still considered behind grade level, as determined by the year in which they entered high school and the total number of credits earned.

In terms of credits earned and students who attained on-grade-level status after one semester of academic interventions, Figure 11 illustrates the following points:

- Students earned an average of 0.24 credits through credit recovery efforts.
- The largest number of credits recovered was 3.5, and the smallest was 0.
- On average, students earned a total of 14.91 credits by midyear.
- The largest total number of credits a student earned by midyear was 24.50.

Notwithstanding the type of intervention, Figure 11 illustrates the following points:

- There were 476 students who began the academic year behind grade level, as determined by the year in which they entered high school and the total number of credits earned.
- There were 209 students who attained on-grade-level status by the end of first semester.
- There were 272 students who were identified as behind grade level at the midyear check in, as determined by the year in which they entered high school and the total number of credits earned.

For the following analyses, t-tests were applied to the data by intervention type to determine if students receiving interventions were showing different levels of progress than students who did not receive interventions. A t-test is used to determine if there is a significant average difference between two groups. The following t-tests analyze the averages of student groups. The groups being analyzed are divided into those who received a specific intervention first semester and those who did not receive that intervention. The two interventions examined in this section are academic and attendance.

Figure 12a. T-Tests by intervention type.

Academic Interventions

In this t-test, GOSA tested to see if there is a statistically significant difference between the average GPAs of students who received primary academic interventions, and the average GPAs of students who did not.

Academic Intervention T-Test

Student Group	GPA Scale	Average	P-Value
Students Without Academic Intervention	4.0 Scale	1.39	0.0042**
Students With Academic Intervention	4.0 Scale	1.65	

Note. ** denotes statistical significance at $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

The p -value of 0.00 indicates that a statistically significant difference exists between the two groups. This difference indicates that students who received primary academic interventions had a statistically significant different average GPA than students who did not receive primary academic interventions.

Figure 12b. T-Tests by intervention type.**Attendance Interventions**

In this t-test, GOSA tested to see if a statistically significant difference existed between the average number of absences for students who received primary/secondary attendance interventions, and the average number of absences for students who did not.

Attendance Intervention T-Test

	Student Group	Reported	Average	P-Value
Total Absences	Students Without Attendance Intervention	Period	47.33	0.0000***
	Students With Attendance Intervention	Period	111.78	
	Students Without Attendance Intervention	Day	13.36	0.0624*
	Students With Attendance Intervention	Day	24.50	
Excused Absences	Students Without Attendance Intervention	Period	6.83	0.6603
	Students With Attendance Intervention	Period	7.46	
	Students Without Attendance Intervention	Day	0.95	0.5913
	Students With Attendance Intervention	Day	0.33	
Unexcused Absences	Students Without Attendance Intervention	Period	39.47	0.0000***
	Students With Attendance Intervention	Period	101.95	
	Students Without Attendance Intervention	Day	4.89	0.0001**
	Students With Attendance Intervention	Day	24.17	

Note. *** denotes statistical significance at $\alpha \leq 0.00$ ** denotes statistical significance at $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

* denotes statistical significance at $\alpha \leq 0.10$.

The p -value of 0.00 for students at schools that record absences by day indicates that a statistically significant difference exists relative to total and unexcused absences. This difference indicates that students who received primary/secondary attendance interventions had a statistically significant different average number of total and unexcused absences than students who did not receive primary/secondary attendance interventions. In the school that reported absences by day, students who received primary/secondary attendance interventions also had a statistically significant different average number of total and unexcused absences relative to students who did not receive primary/secondary attendance interventions. Students who received primary/secondary interventions by period and day showed no statistically significant average differences in the number of excused absences relative to students who did not receive primary/secondary attendance interventions.