



**Governor's Office of  
Student Achievement**

## **GRASP: Graduates Ready to Attain Success in Postsecondary**

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Midyear Report

March 2020

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## Executive Summary

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Operated by GOSA and GaDOE, 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 a caseload of at-risk students identified with achieving academic, personal/social, and career development success. Currently, GRASP is in its second operational year. The grant expanded in the 2019-2020<sup>1</sup> school year to include the following 11 Georgia counties and 18 schools:

**Atlanta Public Schools**

Douglass High School\*

**Bibb County**

Southwest High School

**Clayton County**

Forest Park High School\*  
North Clayton High School\*

**Cobb County**

Osborne High School\*

**DeKalb County**

Clarkston High School\*  
McNair High School\*  
Stone Mountain High School\*  
Towers High School\*

**Dooly County**

Dooly County High School

**Fulton County**

Banneker High School  
Tri-Cities High School

**Gwinnett County**

Berkmar High School\*

**Richmond County**

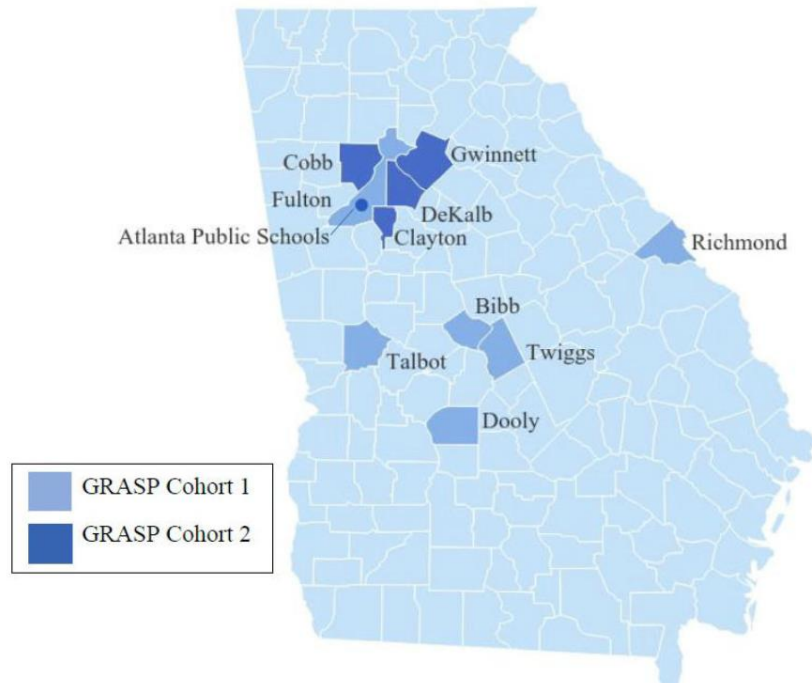
Butler High School  
Josey High School  
Performance Learning Center (PLC)\*

**Talbot County**

Central High School

**Twiggs County**

Twiggs High School



<sup>1</sup> \* denotes the school was added to the GRASP grant in the 2019-2020 school year and is part of Cohort 2.

Key midyear evaluation highlights include the following:

- *GRASP Cohort:*
  - The 2019-2020 GRASP cohort included 18 counselors and 1,128 students at the beginning of the academic year.
  - By the middle of the year, 264 students withdrew, which resulted in a smaller cohort of 864 students.
- *Caseload Numbers:*
  - At midyear, the average GRASP counselor's caseload includes approximately 48 students.
  - The smallest caseload includes 33 students, and the largest includes 64 students.
- *Demographics:*
  - Approximately 76% of the GRASP student population identifies as Black, and about 17% identifies as Hispanic.
- *Attendance:*
  - The average number of students' total, excused and unexcused absences decreased by 50% or more from the beginning to the middle of the 2019-2020 academic year.
- *Grade Level:*
  - At the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year, there were 698 students in the cohort who were behind grade level as determined by credits earned and year of high school entry.
  - By midyear, 328 (about 47%) of those students attained grade level status.
- *Credits Earned:*
  - The average number of credits earned increased from 9.2 at the beginning of the year, to 11.4 by midyear.
- *Attendance Interventions:*
  - About 34% of the GRASP student cohort had either a primary or secondary intervention related to attendance.
  - On average, students receiving attendance related interventions missed less total class periods or school days this semester than in the previous semester.
- *Academic Interventions:*
  - 85% 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 related interventions earned 3.1 credits.
  - Of the 614 students who received academic interventions and were behind grade level, 300 of them attained grade level status by midyear.
- *Behavior Interventions:*
  - About 9% of the GRASP student cohort received a primary or secondary intervention related to behavior or discipline.
  - By the midyear, the average number of total reported ISS and OSS incidents decreased by 50% or more.

## Introduction

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The 2019-2020 operational year of Graduates Ready to Attain Success in Postsecondary (GRASP) included 18 high schools, in 11 counties, throughout the state. At the beginning of the academic year, 1,128 students and 18 counselors participated in GRASP. By midyear, 264 students withdrew<sup>2</sup> from their respective schools, leaving 864 students in the sample. This report does not include withdrawn students in any of the subsequent analyses.

The GRASP Program aims to support selected Georgia high schools as they work to increase student success in achieving high school graduation, completing postsecondary programs, and productively participating in the workforce.

Operated by GOSA and GaDOE, the GRASP grants provide 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 additional counselor. Depending on personnel selection, grant funds may not be adequate to cover 100% of the salary and benefits. Grant amounts range between \$110,000 and \$125,000 each.

GRASP counselor duties will include, but are not limited to:

- 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.

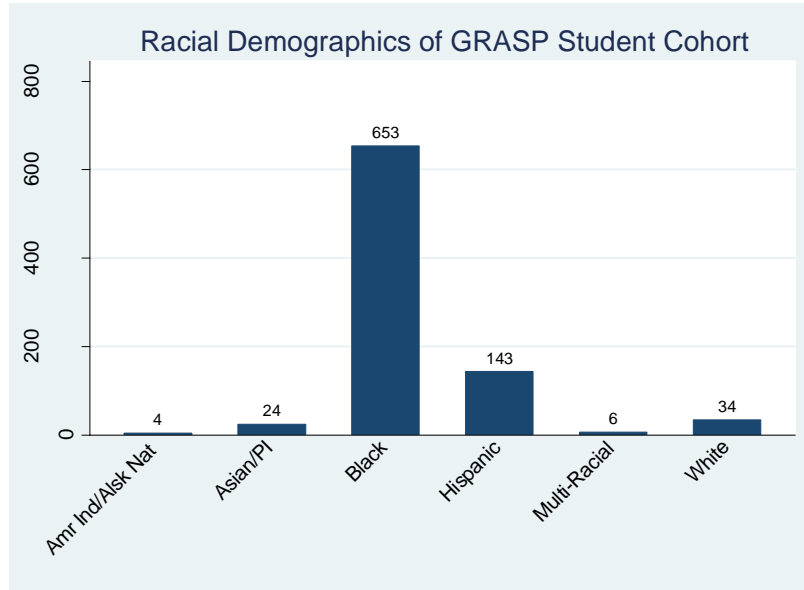
This mid-year report aims to showcase and analyze pertinent data related to the program. The first section, GRASP Cohort: Demographics and Caseload Characteristics, details pertinent descriptive information about the GRASP student cohort in the 2019-2020 academic year. The second section, GRASP Schools: Beginning of the Year Caseload Characteristics, shows participating schools' attendance, behavior and academic caseload data from the beginning of the year. The third 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. The fourth and final section, GRASP Cohort: Recommendations Moving Forward, presents data-driven strategies for GRASP counselors to implement in the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year.

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<sup>2</sup> The student withdrawal breakdown includes: 28 students expelled/enrolled in DJJ schools, 33 students dropped out, 130 students transferred schools, and 72 students withdrew for unknown/other reasons.

**GRASP Cohort  
Demographics and Caseload Characteristics**

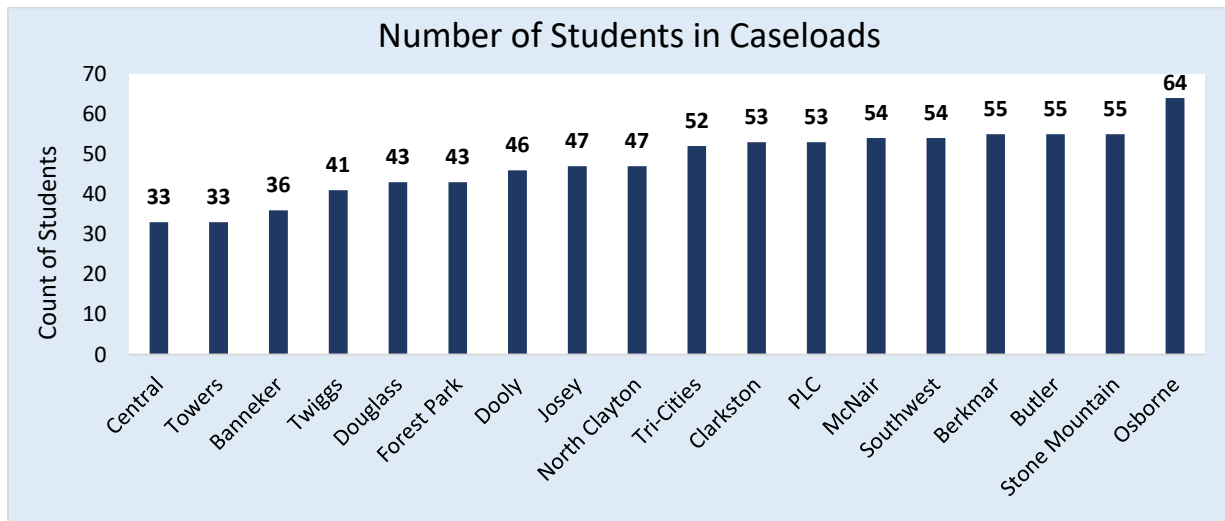
**Figure 1: Racial demographics of GRASP student cohort.**



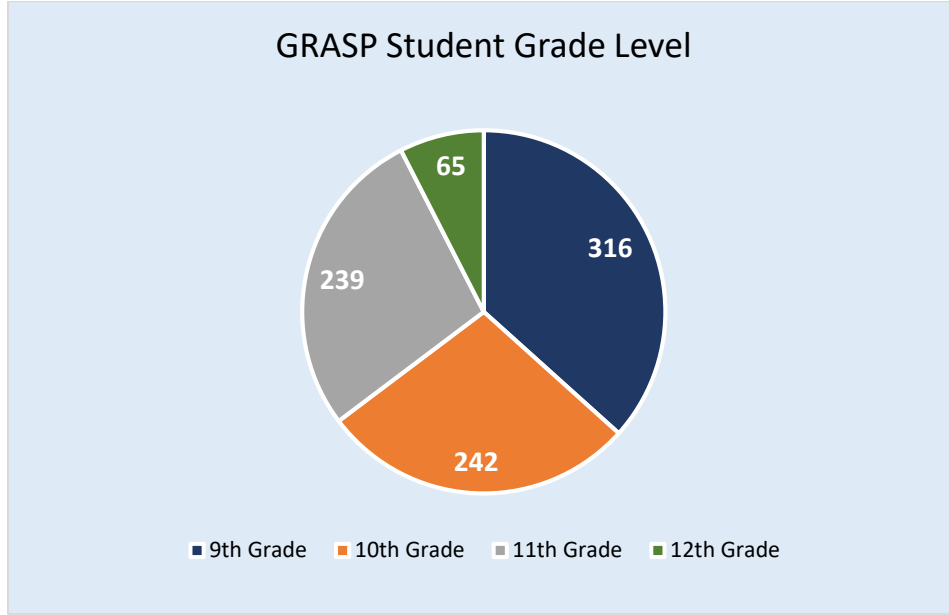
The 2019-2020 GRASP student cohort includes the following demographics:

- About 76% of students participating in GRASP identify as Black.
- About 17% of students participating in GRASP identify as Hispanic.
- About 4% of students participating in GRASP identify as White.

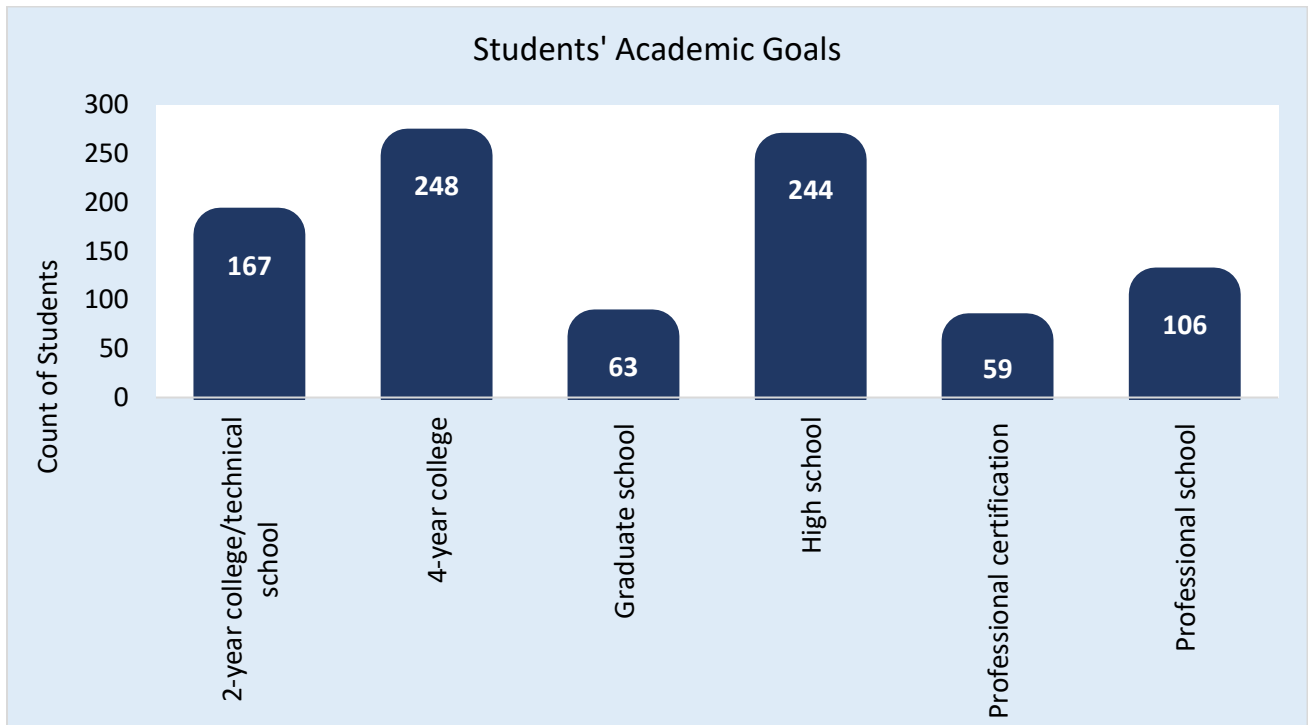
**Figure 2: Number of students in caseloads.** The GRASP student cohort for the 2019-2020 school year included 864 enrolled students by midyear. Schools’ caseloads ranged from 33 students to 64 students, with the average caseload totaling 48 students.



**Figure 3. GRASP student grade levels.** Participating GRASP students spanned 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, with the highest number of students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and relatively equal numbers in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The 2019-2020 GRASP cohort included two students with enough total credits to graduate.



**Figure 4. GRASP student goals by categories.** Students' self-reported academic and personal goals, as recorded on the beginning of the year survey.



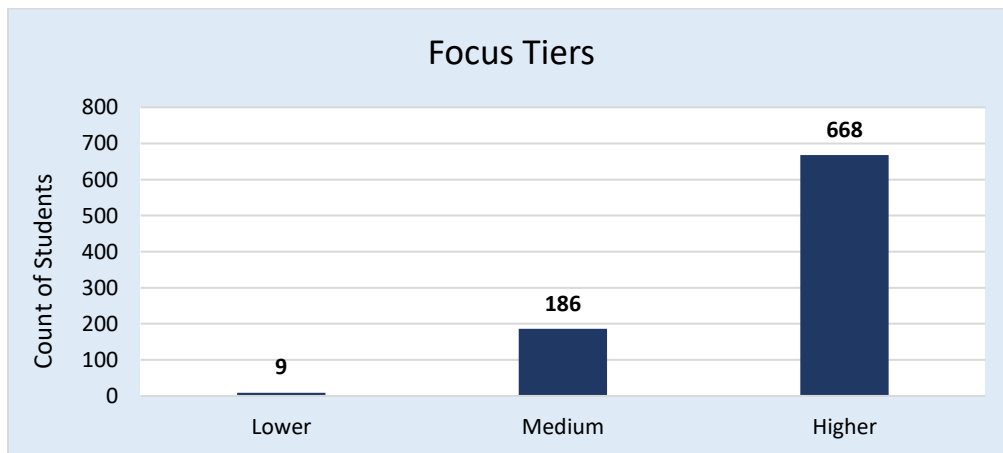
**Table 1. Primary and secondary interventions.**

Intervention	Primary Frequency	Secondary Frequency
Academic: Course/Credit Recovery	447	107
Academic: Progress Monitoring	244	205
Academic: Student Consultation	39	45
Attendance: Daily Communication/Monitoring	99	196
Discipline: Parent Consultation	4	3
Discipline: Student Consultation	31	43

In terms of interventions counselors reported, key takeaways from Table 1 include:

- Over half of the primary interventions conducted were related to course/credit recovery. This is particularly important considering 81% of students participating in GRASP are below grade level (Table 2).
- About 30% 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 1.4 on a 4.0 scale and 68.2 on a 100.0 point scale (Figure 5).
- Counselors assigned optional secondary interventions to about 70% of the GRASP student cohort.
- Counselors focused the majority of their secondary interventions on academic progress monitoring and attendance daily communication/monitoring.

**Figure 5. Focus tiers.** About 77% of students participating in GRASP were in the higher focus tier. Students’ focus designations dictated counselors’ practices and policies related to frequencies of check ins and severity of interventions.



**GRASP Schools**  
**Beginning of the Year Caseload Characteristics**

**Table 2. Students' grade level attainments.** This table illustrates the grade level attainments for each school's caseload of students. At the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year, there were 698 students in the cohort who were behind grade level as determined by credits earned, and six students above grade level as determined by credits earned. There were 160 students on grade level as determined by high school entry data and credits earned.

School	# Students On/Above Grade Level	# Students Behind Grade Level
Banneker	6	30
Berkmar	6	49
Butler	17	38
Central	31	2
Clarkston	1	52
Dooly	33	13
Douglass	2	41
Forest Park	5	38
Josey	22	25
McNair	0	54
North Clayton	0	47
Osborne	0	64
PLC	4	49
Southwest	12	42
Stone Mountain	4	51
Towers	2	31
Tri-Cities	17	35
Twiggs	4	37



GRASP Midyear Report

In terms of grade level attainment by credits, key takeaways from Table 2 include:

- 17 of the 18 schools participating in GRASP have caseloads with more students behind grade level, than students on or above grade level.
- Butler, Central , Dooly, Josey and Tri-Cities High Schools have the largest proportions of caseload students on grade/above grade level.
- McNair, North Clayton and Osborne High Schools have no caseload students currently on/above grade level.
- Clarkston, Douglass and Towers High Schools have two or less caseload students on/above grade level.

**Figure 6. Students’ total number of reported absences.** There are 13 schools participating in GRASP that count absences by class period, and five schools that count absences by the school day.

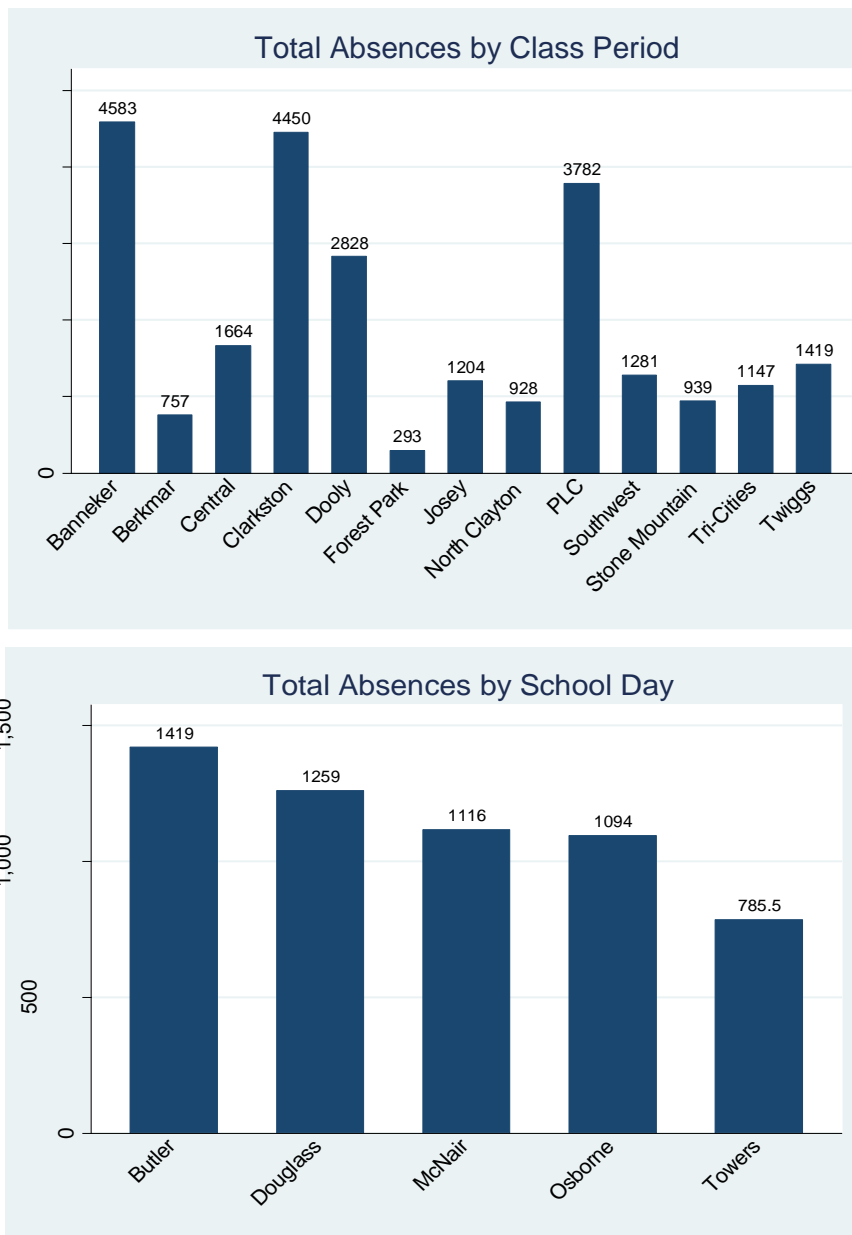


Figure 6 (above) indicates that at the beginning on the 2019-2020 school year:

- Banneker (4,583), Clarkston (4,450), and PLC (3,782) High Schools had the highest number of total reported absences by class period.
- Forest Park (293) High School had the lowest number of total reported absences by class period.
- The average number of total reported absences by class period was about 44. The largest number of total reported absences by class period was 430.
- Butler (1,419) and Douglass (1,259) High Schools had the highest number of total reported absences by school day.
- Towers High School (786) had the lowest number of total reported absences by school day.
- The average number of total reported absences by school day was about 25. The largest number of total reported absences by school day was 104.

**Figure 7. Students' total number of reported ISS.** There are four schools participating in GRASP that count ISS by class period, and 14 schools that count ISS by the school day.

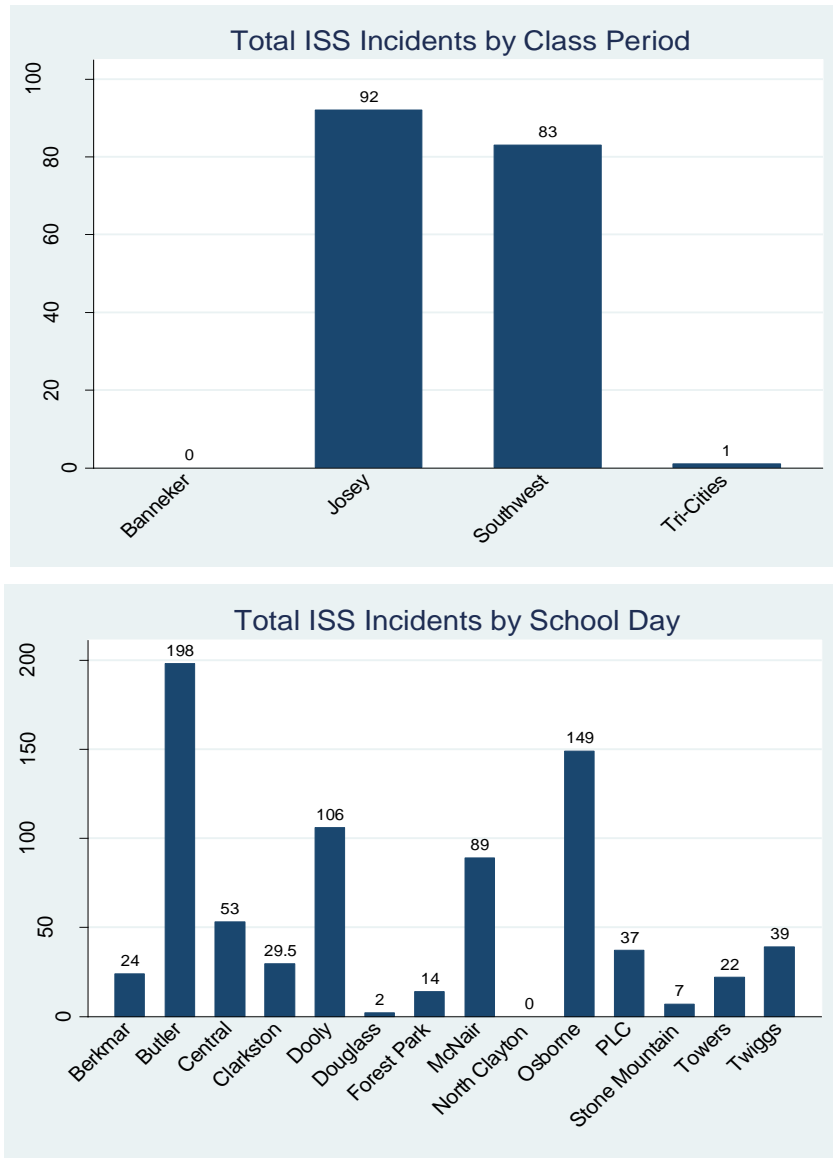


Figure 7 (above) indicates that at the beginning on the 2019-2020 school year:

- Josey High School had the highest number (92) of total reported ISS by class period.
- Banneker High School (0) had the lowest number of total reported ISS by class period.
- The average number of total reported ISS by class period was about .93. The largest number of total reported ISS by class period was 15.
- Butler High School had the highest number (198) of total reported ISS by school day.
- North Clayton (0) High School had the lowest number of total reported ISS by school day.
- The average number of total reported ISS by school day was about 1. The largest number of total reported ISS by school day was 36.

**Figure 8. Students' total number of reported OSS.** There are three schools participating in GRASP that count OSS by class period, and 15 schools that count OSS by the school day.

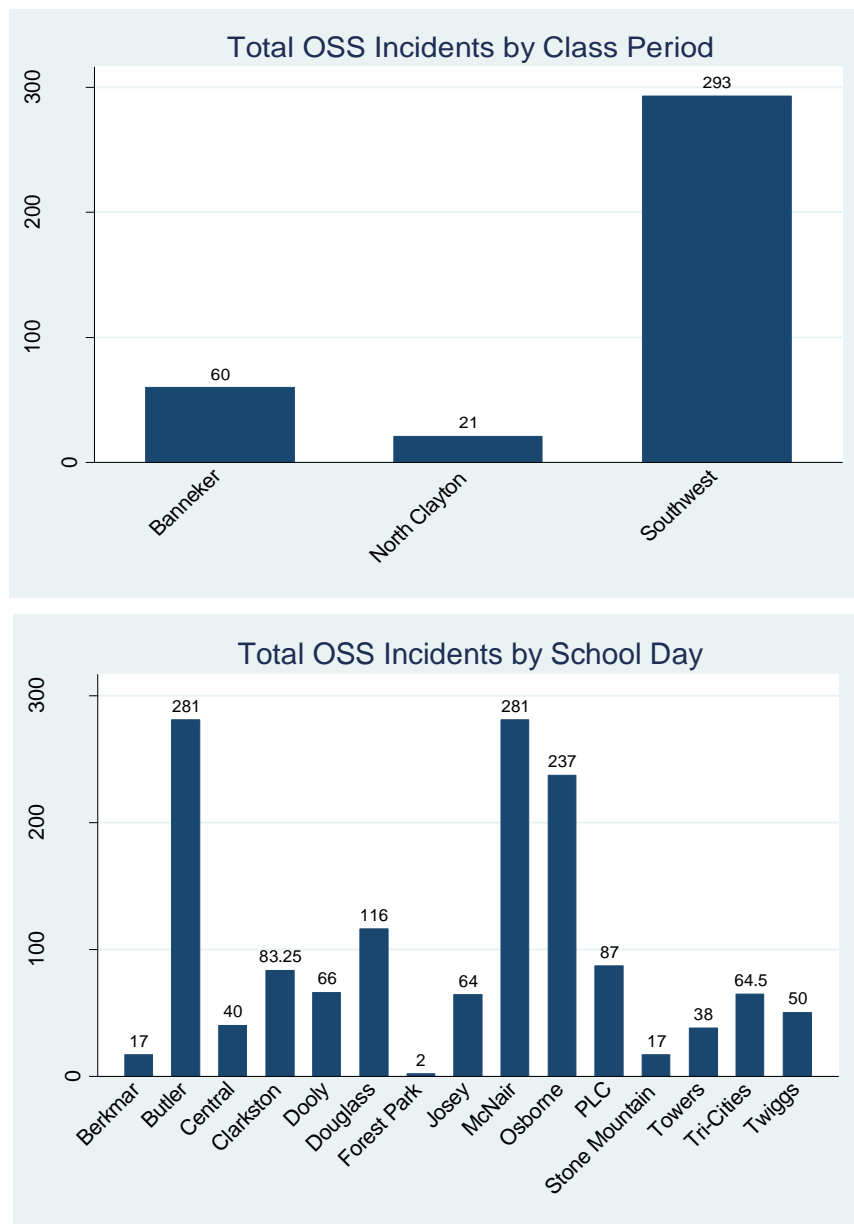


Figure 8 (above) indicates that at the beginning on the 2019-2020 school year:

- Southwest High School had the highest number (293) of total reported OSS by class period.
- North Clayton High School had the lowest number (21) of total reported OSS by class period.
- The average number of total reported OSS by class period was about 2.7. The largest number of total reported OSS by class period was 28.
- Butler and McNair High Schools had the highest number (281) of total reported OSS by school day.
- Forest Park High School had the lowest number (2) of total reported OSS by school day.
- The average number of total reported OSS by school day was about 2. The largest number of total reported OSS by school day was 34.

**Figure 9. Students' reported GPA.** There are fifteen schools participating in GRASP that calculate GPA on a 4.0 scale, and three schools that calculate GPA on a 100.0 scale.

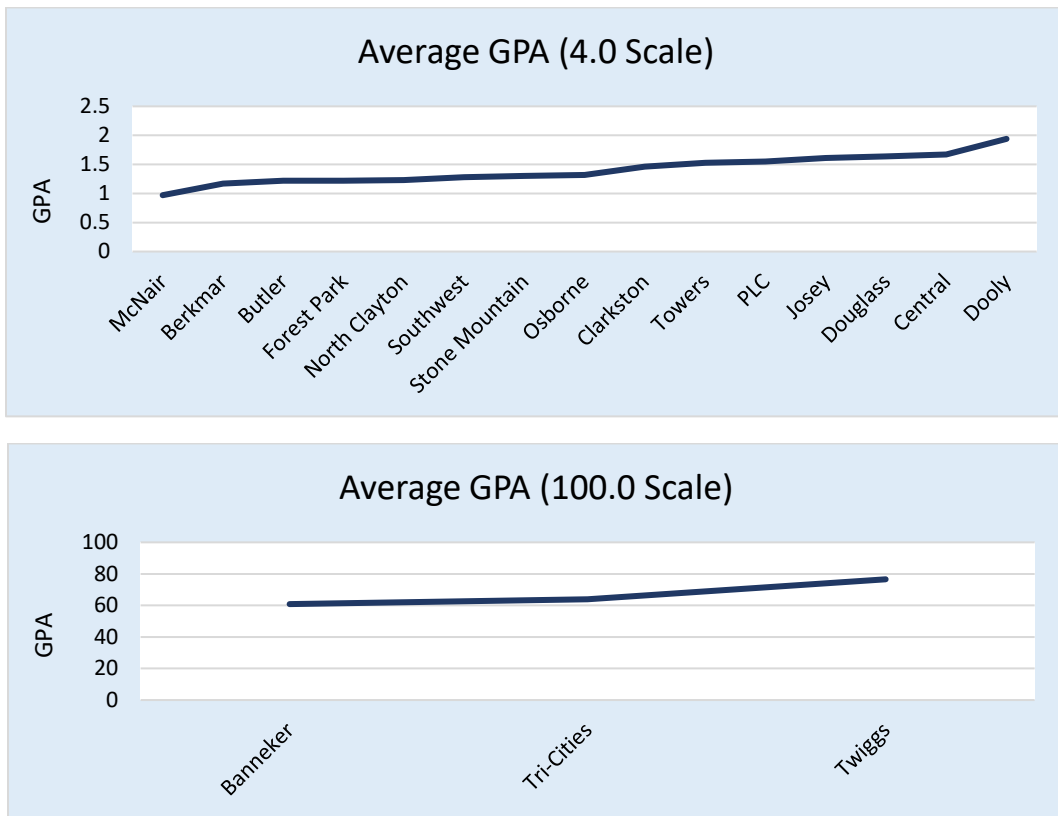


Figure 9 indicates that at the beginning on the 2019-2020 school year:

- Students at McNair High School had the lowest average GPA (0.9) in comparison to the other schools calculating GPA on a similar point scale.
- Students at Banneker High School had the lowest average GPA (60.8) in comparison to the other schools calculating GPA on a similar point scale.
- Students at Dooly High School had the highest average GPA (1.9) in comparison to the other schools calculating GPA on a similar point scale.
- Students at Twiggs High School had the highest average GPA (76.6) in comparison to the other schools calculating GPA on a similar point scale.

**GRASP Cohort  
Midyear Results by Intervention Type**

**Figure 10. Average absences after one semester of attendance interventions.** There were 295 students who had either primary or secondary interventions related to attendance. (Note: The graphs are disaggregated by absence type (total, excused and unexcused) and reporting characteristic (class period or school day)).

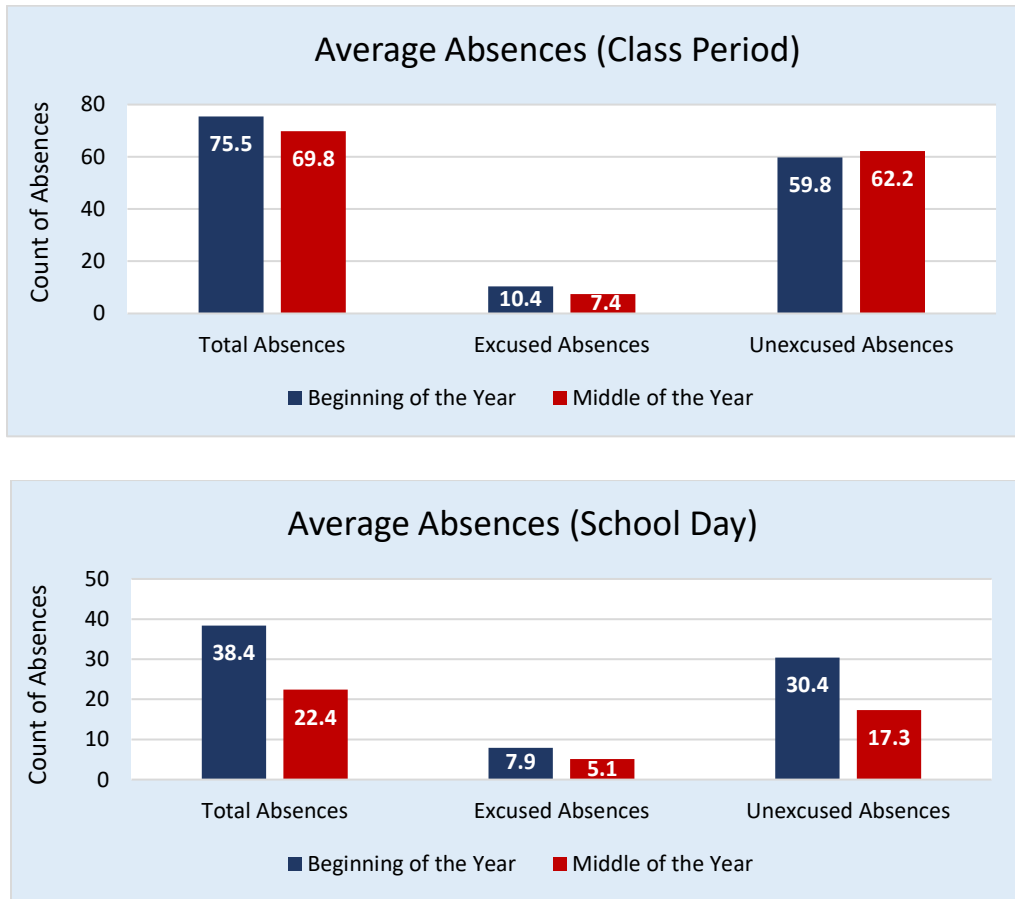
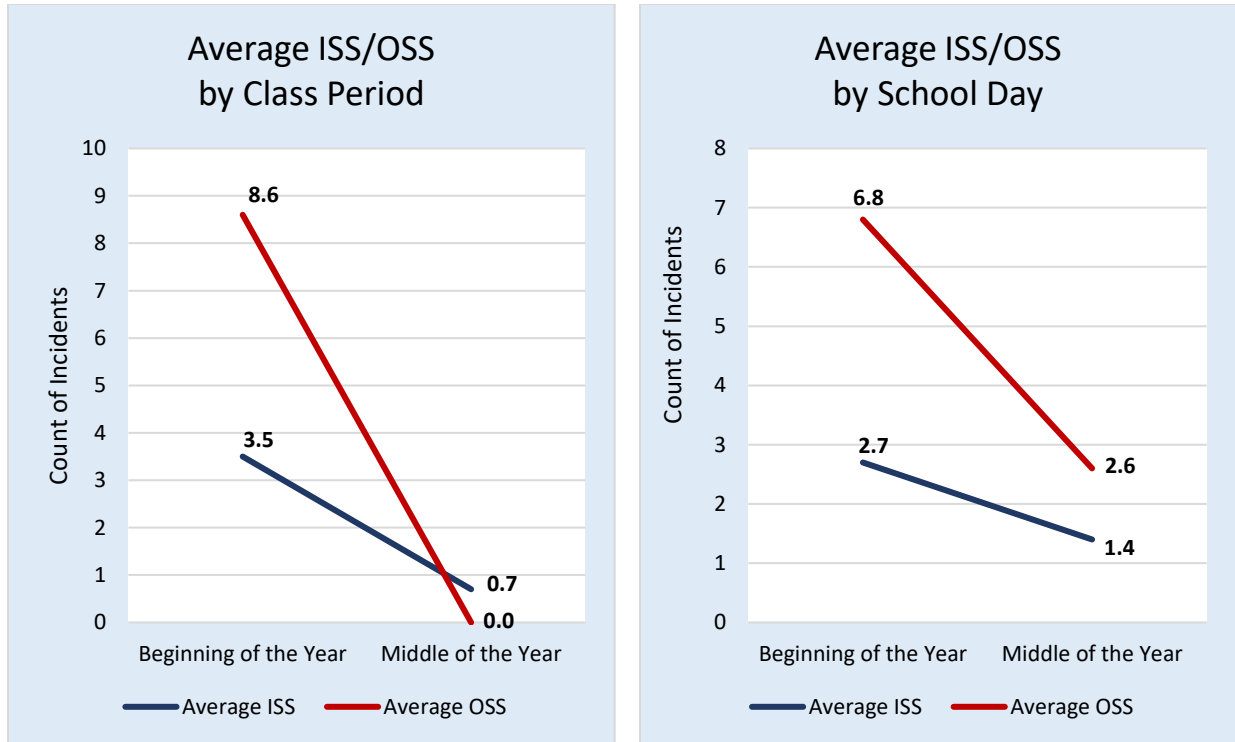


Figure 10 indicates the following:

- From the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, the average number of students absences decreased in every category except unexcused in schools that calculate absences by the day.
- From the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, the average number of absences decreased in every category in schools that calculate absences by the day.
- On average, students receiving attendance related interventions missed less total class periods or school days than in the previous semester.

**Figure 11. Average ISS/OSS incidents after one semester of behavioral interventions.** The line graphs below depict the average incidents of ISS and OSS amongst students who had interventions (primary or secondary) related to discipline. In this sample, 35 students had a primary intervention related to discipline, and 46 students had a secondary intervention related to discipline. (Note: The graphs are disaggregated by incident type (ISS or OSS) and reporting characteristic (class period or school day)).



In terms of discipline changes after one semester, Figure 11 indicates:

- Students with primary and secondary interventions related to discipline experienced less incidents of ISS/OSS this semester, on average.
- Average incidents of ISS decreased by 2.8 in schools that calculate ISS by class period, and 1.3 in schools that calculate ISS by school day.
- Average incidents of OSS decreased by 8.6 in schools that calculate ISS by class period, and 4.2 in schools that calculate OSS by school day.

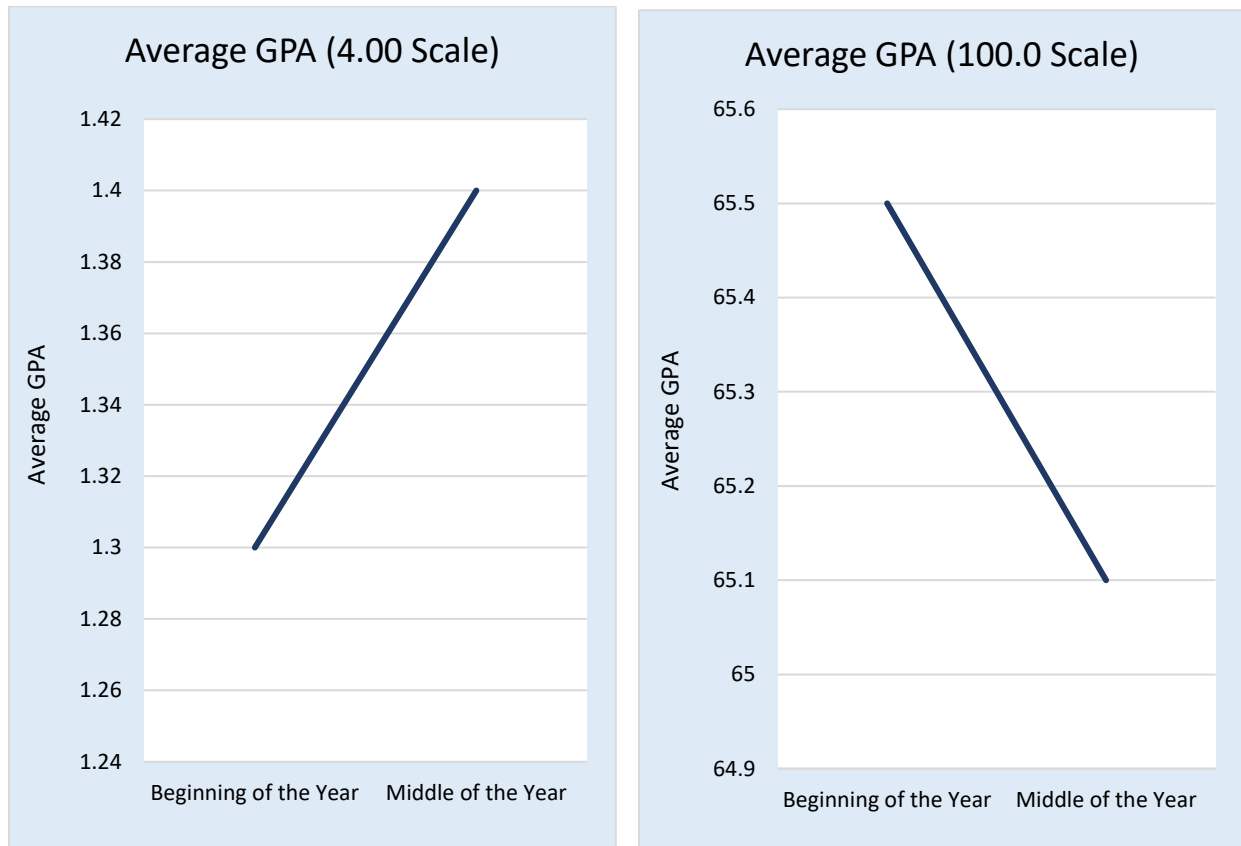
For schools that calculate ISS/OSS by class period:

- The largest number of ISS incidents decreased from 15 to 4 over the course of one semester.
- The largest number of OSS incidents decreased from 28 to 0 over the course of one semester.

For schools that calculate ISS/OSS by school day:

- The largest number of ISS incidents decreased from 36 to 13 over the course of one semester.
- The largest number of OSS incidents stayed the same (33) over the course of one semester.

**Figure 12. Students' GPA after one semester of academic interventions.** The line graphs below depict the average GPA of students whose primary interventions related to academics. The first line graph represents the near 85% of students participating in GRASP with GPAs calculated on a 4.0 scale. The second line graph represents the near 15% of students participating in GRASP with GPAs calculated on a 100.0 scale.<sup>3</sup>



In terms of GPA changes after one semester of academic interventions, Figure 12 indicates:

- For students attending schools with GPAs calculated on a 4.0 scale, the average GPA increased by 0.1 of a point.
- For students attending schools with GPAs calculated on a 100.0 scale, the average GPA decreased by 0.4 of a point.

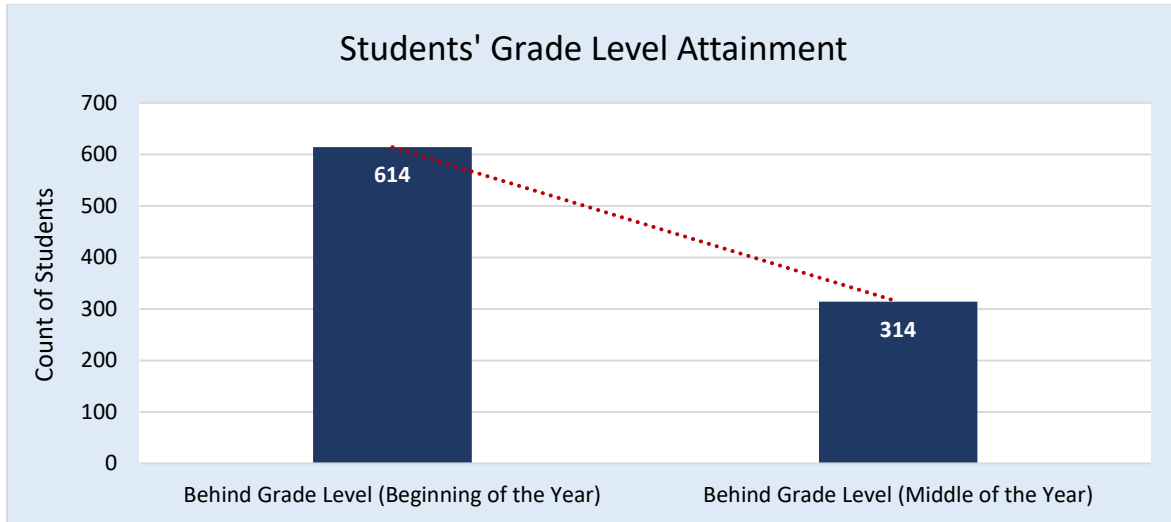
Notwithstanding for the type of intervention:

- Students attending schools with GPAs calculated on a 4.0 scale had an average GPA of 1.4 at both the beginning and middle of the year.
- Students attending schools with GPAs calculated on a 100.0 scale had an average GPA of 67.1 at the beginning and 64.6 at the middle of the year.

<sup>3</sup> 45 students' GPAs were not reported and are therefore missing from this analysis.

**Figure 13. Students' grade level attainment after one semester of academic interventions.**

At the beginning of the academic year, GRASP counselors identified 730 students as needing a primary intervention related to academics. Of these 730 students, 614 began the year behind grade level, as determined by the year of their high school entry and credits earned to date. Figure 13 shows grade level attainment data for these 614 students, after one semester of academic-based interventions with their GRASP counselors.



In terms of grade level attainment changes after one semester of academic interventions, Figure 13 indicates:

- 300 students earned enough credits to get on grade level, as determined by the year in which they entered high school and the total number of credits earned.
- 314 students are still 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 grade level status:

- Students took an average of .34 credits through credit recovery efforts.
- The largest number of credits recovered was 8.
- 242 students recovered 0 credits through credit recovery efforts. 300 students earned more than zero and less than five credits through credit recovery efforts. 6 students earned five or more credits through credit recovery efforts.
- Students earned an average of 3.1 credits over the course of the semester.
- The largest number of credits earned was 15.

Notwithstanding for the type of intervention:

- 698 students 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.
- 328 students attained on grade level status by the end of first semester.
- 370 students are still behind grade level.



**Figure 14. T-Tests by intervention type.** A t-test describes if there is a significant difference between two groups. The following t-tests analyze the means of student groups, which are divided into those who received a specific intervention first semester, and those who did not receive that intervention. (*Note:* t-tests are disaggregated by intervention type.)

**Academic Interventions**

In this t-test, we are testing to see if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean GPAs of students who received primary academic interventions, and the mean GPAs of students who did not. (*Note:* A *p*-value of 0.05 or lower is considered statistically significant.)

Academic Intervention T-Test

	GPA Scale	P-Value
Students' GPA	4.0	0.02*
	100.0	0.35

**Note:** \* denotes statistical significance at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

The *p*-value of 0.02 for students on the 4.0 GPA scale is statistically significant. This means that students who received primary academic interventions in schools with 4.0 GPA scales had a statistically significant different mean GPA than students who did not receive primary academic interventions. In other words, there were statistically significant differences in students' mean GPA because of GRASP counselors' primary academic interventions.

**Behavioral Interventions**

In this t-test, we are testing to see if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean number of ISS/OSS incidents among students who received primary/secondary behavior interventions, and the mean number of ISS/OSS incidents among students who did not. (*Note:* A *p*-value of 0.05 or lower is considered statistically significant.)

Behavioral Intervention T-Test

	Reported	P-Value
ISS	Period	0.67
	Day	0.00**
OSS	Period	0.48
	Day	0.00**

**Note:** \*\* denotes statistical significance at  $\alpha = 0.00$ .

The *p*-value of 0.00 for students at schools that record ISS and OSS by day is statistically significant. This means students who received primary/secondary behavioral interventions in schools that record ISS/OSS by day had a statistically significant different mean number of ISS/OSS incidents than students who did not receive primary/secondary behavioral interventions. In other words, there were statistically significant differences in the mean number of ISS/OSS incidents because of GRASP counselors' primary/secondary behavioral interventions.

**Attendance Interventions**

In this t-test, we are testing to see if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean number of absences for students who received primary/secondary attendance interventions, and the mean number of absences for students who did not. (*Note*: A *p*-value of 0.05 or lower is considered statistically significant.)

Behavioral Intervention T-Test

	Reported	P-Value
Total # Absences	Period	0.00**
	Day	0.00**
Excused Absences	Period	0.22
	Day	0.00**
Unexcused Absences	Period	0.00**
	Day	0.00**

**Note:** \*\* denotes statistical significance at  $\alpha = 0.00$ .

The *p*-value of 0.00 for students at schools that record absences by period or day is statistically significant. This means students who received primary/secondary attendance interventions had a statistically significant different mean number of total and unexcused absences than students who did not receive primary/secondary attendance interventions. Students who received primary/secondary attendance interventions had a statistically significant different mean number of excused absences (reported by day) than students who did not receive primary/secondary attendance interventions. In other words, there were statistically significant differences in the mean number of total, excused and unexcused absences because of GRASP counselors' primary/secondary attendance interventions.

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**GRASP Cohort  
Recommendations Moving Forward**

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During the first semester of the 2019-2020 school year, students participating in GRASP have experienced marked growth along attendance, behavioral and academic lines. Comparisons of students' data from the beginning to the middle of the academic year indicate the program's positive benefits on a range of cognitive (eg. increased GPA and credits earned) and non-cognitive (eg. decreased incidents of ISS/OSS) outcomes. Students showed particular growth in areas related to their GRASP counselors' primary or secondary intervention(s), indicating a positive relationship between intervention type(s) and outcome(s).

After first semester, GRASP counselors were able to reassess their primary and secondary interventions based on the data they reported. In terms of **primary** intervention changes moving into the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year:

- Every student participating in GRASP is still receiving a primary intervention.
- There are 36 fewer students receiving academic course/credit recovery interventions.
- There are 41 more students receiving academic progress monitoring interventions.
- There is 1 more student receiving an academic student consultation intervention.
- There are 4 less students receiving an attendance daily communication/monitoring intervention.
- There is 1 less student receiving a discipline parent consultation intervention.
- There is 1 less student receiving a discipline student consultation intervention.

In terms of **secondary** intervention changes moving into the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year:

- There are 22 more students participating in GRASP receiving an optional secondary intervention.
- There are 32 more students receiving academic course/credit recovery interventions
- There are 7 fewer students receiving academic progress monitoring interventions.
- There are 2 more students receiving academic student consultation interventions.
- There are 7 more students receiving an attendance daily communication/monitoring intervention.
- There are 2 more students receiving a discipline parent consultation intervention.
- There are 14 less student receiving a discipline student consultation intervention.

## *GRASP Midyear Report*

With the findings of this midyear report in mind, GOSA recommends GRASP counselors do the following to continue spurring student growth:

### *Attendance*

- Focus on decreasing the number of unexcused absences in the 13 schools that report absences by class period.
- Continue intervention strategies that have contributed to the overall decrease in absences by class period and school day.
- Pay particularly close attention to the attendance patterns of students who are new recipients of attendance-based interventions.

### *Behavior*

- Continue intervention strategies that have contributed to the overall decrease in ISS/OSS incidents by class period and school day.
- With less students receiving discipline student consultation intervention, pay particularly close attention to any increases in the rates of ISS/OSS incidents.

### *Academic*

- Focus on increasing the GPA of students attending the three schools that use a 100.0 scale.
- Continue intervention strategies that have contributed to the overall increase of students' GPA in the 15 schools using a 4.0 scale.
- With more students receiving academic course/credit recovery secondary interventions, pay particularly close attention to the number of credits these students earn through credit recovery over the course of the semester.
- With more students receiving more students receiving academic progress monitoring primary interventions, pay particularly close attention to the number of credits these students earn, in addition to their GPA at the beginning and end of second semester.