



# ALC Plus Evaluation Report

*An overview of the metrics of the  
ALC Plus program*

**D E C E M B E R   2 0 1 3**

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# Background

The Alternative Learning Center (ALC ) Plus program is an alternative education model that utilizes a highly integrated service model to provide a wide array of enriched educational programming, mental and chemical health, correctional, and social supports to meet the needs of youth in grades 7-12 who qualify for the program and their families. Partners include Hennepin County (HSPHD), the be@school program and Juvenile Corrections, Intermediate District 287 (ISD 287), and Minneapolis Public Schools (via an ISD287 subcontract). The ALC Plus program serves students from all parts of Hennepin County's service systems – Juvenile Corrections, HSPHD, and the County Attorney's be@school initiative.

The ALC Plus program was designed to serve students who are involved in the county and who are not regularly attending school (typically because of excessive truancy) or who need to enroll in a new school following a county placement or stay in a correctional facility.

The program has four primary goals:

1. Youth will increase attendance
2. Youth will graduate high school or earn credits towards graduation
3. School placement disruptions will be reduced
4. Youth who do not graduate from the program will learn job skills and/or obtain GED to help with employment after graduating

In order to qualify for enrolling in an Area Learning Center (ALC) program, a student must be under the age of 21 and meet one of the following legislative criteria to be eligible to choose a non-traditional education program<sup>1</sup>:

- Performs substantially below the performance level for pupils of the same age in a locally determined achievement test
- Is behind in satisfactorily completing coursework or obtaining credits for graduation
- Is pregnant or is a parent
- Has been assessed as chemically dependent

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<sup>1</sup> From the State-Approved Alternative Programs Resource Guide (Revised August 2011).

- Has been excluded or expelled
- Has been referred by a school district for enrollment in an eligible program
- Is a victim of physical or sexual abuse
- Has experienced mental health problems
- Has experienced homelessness sometime within six months before requesting a transfer to an eligible program
- Speaks English as a second language or has limited English proficiency
- Has withdrawn from school or has been chronically truant
- Is being treated in a hospital in the seven-county metropolitan area for cancer or other life-threatening illness or is the sibling of an eligible pupil who is currently being treated, and resides with the pupil's family at least 60 miles beyond the outside boundary of the seven-county metropolitan area

ALC Plus programs serve students who are eligible for Area Learning Center enrollment and are receiving Hennepin County services. ALC Plus programs provide enrollment until graduation or if students return to their resident school district, if they prefer. Students are served in small and safe educational settings with case coordination support (contact between home, county staff, and school) and the option of counseling with a clinician. Educational support for ALC Plus student may also include:

- Core curriculum designed to fill educational gaps and meet MN Grad standards
- Part-time Special Educational services
- Behavior supports
- Online learning opportunity
- Career and technical education

### **ALC Plus core staff**

Once a student is identified as someone who may benefit from the ALC Plus program, the county case worker contacts the System Navigator, who helps them determine the best placement for the student. If enrolled in an ALC Plus program, the student has

access to a variety of supports including on-site case coordination, mental health and chemical health services.

There are 4 core positions in the ALC Plus program, which include:

- **System Navigator:** Accountable for facilitating appropriate educational placements for youth who are involved in Hennepin County services such as juvenile corrections, truancy, and children's mental health. The System Navigator works closely with probation, be@school, and other county staff to assist in determining the appropriate educational programming for county involved youth. They also serve as the liaison to school districts for students returning from out-of-home placements, transitioning from other educational settings.
- **Case Coordinators:** Responsible for the day to day oversight and management of assisting enrolled ALC Plus students to achieve success in reaching educational goals. The Case Coordinator will consult with the ALC Plus Educational Team, System Navigator, Hennepin County Probation and Court Staff and parents to assure student success in the program and assist with problem solving student participation/attendance and behavioral issues, and assist with coordination of other supportive mental/chemical health referrals services. They also transport youth as needed.
- **Chemical Health Specialists:** Provide guidance to youth with emphasis on prevention by working with individuals and groups to promote optimum mental and emotional health. In addition, they help individuals deal with issues associated with substance use/abuse; family, stress management, self-esteem and pro-social decision making. They also provide advice, guidance and support to students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders around chemical health issues.
- **Community-based Mental Health Therapists:** Provide support to youth with emphasis on mental health issue and work with referred students to promote optimum mental and emotional health. They also assist students in understanding issues associated with their mental health issues, stress management, self-esteem and pro-social decision making by providing therapeutic support and guidance to referred students concerning mental health issues. Therapists also collaborate with program staff on various aspects of mental health and participate in the integrated/multi-disciplinary intake team to assist in the development of a complete student plan including mental health support.

During the duration of the program, ALC Plus has been present each year in two ISD287 schools. For the south region, South Education Center (SEC) has been the only site. For the north region, Edgewood was a site during the first two years of the program and the North Education Center (NEC) has been a site since September 2012. Full time equivalents (FTE) by program position can be found in Figure 1.



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## 1. ALC Plus program position and FTE by School Year

School Year (SY)	ALC Plus locations*	Program positions and FTEs
SY 10-11	SEC Edgewood	- System Navigator – 1.0 FTE - Case Coordinators – 2 FTE - Chemical Health Specialists – .6 FTE - Community-based Mental Health Therapists – 1.2 FTE
SY 11-12	SEC Edgewood	- System Navigator – 1.0 FTE - Case Coordinators – 4 FTE - Chemical Health Specialists – 1.2 FTE - Community-based Mental Health Therapists – 1.2 FTE
SY 12-13	SEC NEC	- System Navigator – 1.0 FTE - Case Coordinators – 4 FTE - Chemical Health Specialists – 1.2 FTE - Community-based Mental Health Therapists – 1.2 FTE

## Methodology

This evaluation includes many data collection methods, including:

- Analysis of ALC Plus program data
- Analysis of ISD 287 academic data
- Analysis of Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation recidivism and out of home placement data
- Staff focus groups (N=3, with 25 people)
- Partner surveys (N=35)

The methods above were selected to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, in order to capture the outcomes of the program. The following report provides an overview of metrics, collected by ALC Plus staff, Hennepin County, and Wilder Research. In some of the sections, data reported will represent an overview of the ALC Plus program since inception, while other sections provide information exclusively for school year 2012-2013, when data components were consistently operationalized and collected.

Due to limited access to some data (mainly academic data), there are different sample sizes illustrated in the charts and tables throughout the report. In other words, some of the students' data pre-ALC Plus data were not made available to program staff and therefore could not be analyzed.

## Key Findings by goal

Key findings of the evaluation are listed below and detailed in the report.

- Goal of increasing attendance: Over half (56%) students attendance improved once they became part of the ALC Plus program. While none of students had attendance rates higher than 85% before enrolling in ALC Plus, one in five students attended school at least 85% of the time once enrolled in the program. Almost all (96%) of the referring partners reported that their ALC Plus enrolled clients increased attendance while enrolled in ALC Plus.
- Goal of graduating or earning credits: Over half (56%) of students earned at least 50% of the credits they attempted. Statistical analyses indicated that percentage of credits earned was positively associated with attendance rates, with higher attendance rates correlating to greater percentage of credits earned. Two in three referring agencies reported that their clients obtained adequate credits while enrolled in ALC Plus.
- Goal of reducing school placements: Nearly two of every three students (63%) who were referred to the program were enrolled in NEC or SEC and a third (30%) of those enrolled remained in the program for more than one school year. Nearly all (88%) of referring partners felt that their ALC Plus enrolled clients tend to do better in school than before they were enrolled in ALC Plus.
- Goal of obtaining skills or a GED: Students seem to become more engaged the more time that they spend in the program (e.g., an increase in the numbers of completion in certification programs). Additionally, three-quarters (73%) of referring partners stated that participating in vocational or certificate programming was "moderately" or "extremely helpful" for their clients.

# Metrics overall

Since the 2010-2011 school year, when the program began, ALC Plus has received 418 referrals. Nearly two of every three students (63%) who were referred to the program were enrolled in NEC or SEC and a third (30%) of those enrolled remained in the program for more than one school year. The remaining thirty-seven percent were referred elsewhere, including to their home district, a charter school, a special education level IV setting, in out of home placement OR were not enrolled because their family moved or they have dropped out of school.

A total of 263 students have enrolled in ALC Plus since the program began. Most (63%) of the students referred ALC Plus have been placed into either NEC or SEC and a third (30%) of those enrolled remained in the program for more than one school year (Figure 2).

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## 2. Overview of referrals since ALC Plus began

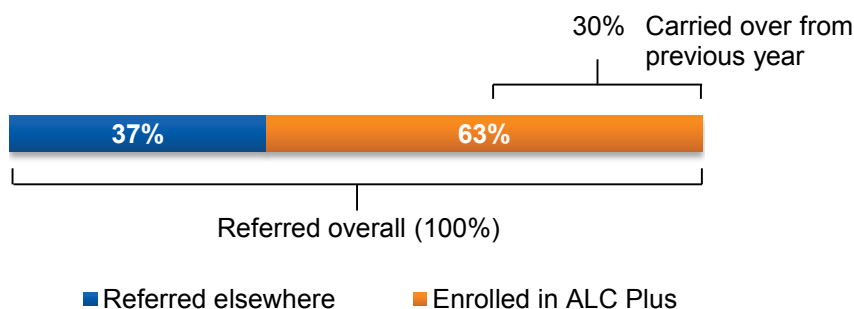
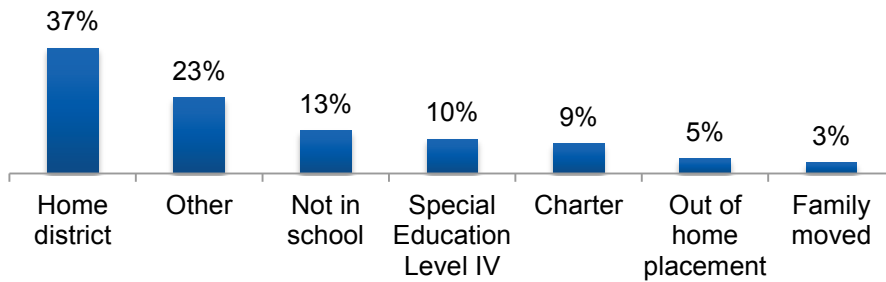


Figure 3 provides information about where referred students were placed. One in three (37%) students is placed back into their home district. Nearly one quarter (23%) are categorized as “Other” because they are only receiving transportation services from the program, but not any other programmatic assistance. Others decide not to be in school (13%), or are placed into special education (10%) or a charter school (9%). A small number of students were put into out of home placement (5%) or had a family who moved (3%).

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### 3. Referred student placement (not enrolled in ALC Plus)



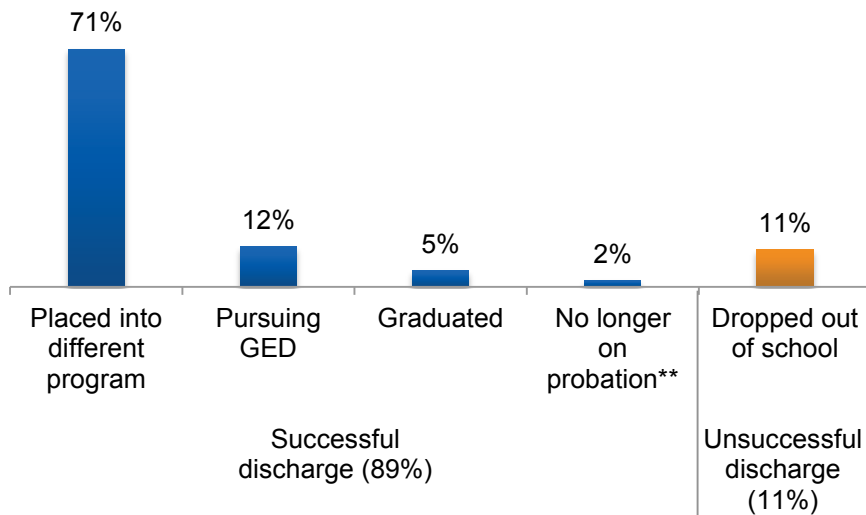
**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

### Discharge

Of the 263 ALC Plus students, 147 have been discharged. A discharge can occur for a number of reasons. Successful discharges include students who move into a different program (or back to their resident district), are no longer on probation or have graduated or are pursuing their GED. These account for 89 percent of all discharges. Unsuccessful discharges happen when students drop out of school and account for 11 percent of all discharges (Figure 4).

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### 4. Discharge information



**\*\***Most students do not discharge if they are no longer on probation.

**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

## Certification Programs

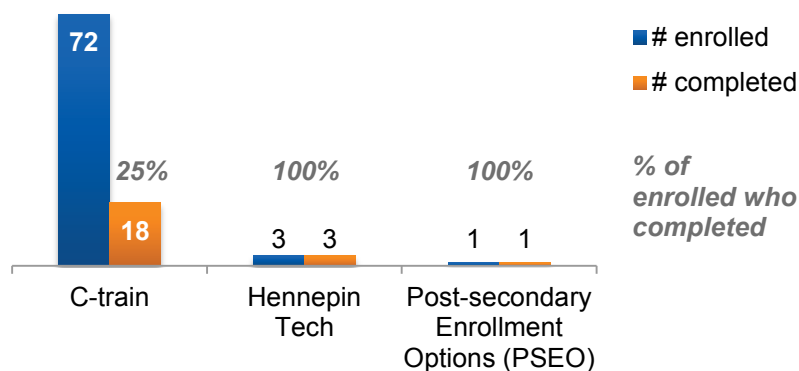
Certificate programs are made available to ALC Plus students, and include C-Train, which trains in industry-recognized certificate employment preparation programs in high job demand fields. Other programs include Hennepin Tech preparation and post-secondary enrollment. Certification programs provide an extra advantage to ALC Plus students who take advantage of them, but they are not mandatory. Programs provided include *job skills* (a class for students to get them prepared for getting and keeping a job) and *work experience* (credits for students who have a job), as well as:

- Microsoft Office Certification
- Certified Nursing assistant
- Medical terminology
- First responder
- CPR/First Aid
- Culinary Arts
- Auto body
- Welding

Of the 263 ALC Plus students, over one in four (28%) is enrolled in or has completed a certification program over the past two and a half years (Figure 5).

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### 5. Students who enrolled in or completed certification programs



# Metrics for school year 2012-2013

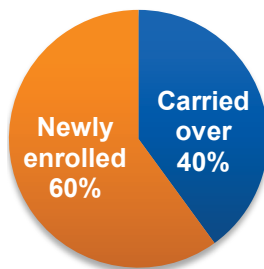
## Referral and enrollment information

Referrals to ALC Plus are made by social workers, probation officers and be@school staff who contact the program's System Navigator on behalf of students who have had chronic truancy issues. The System Navigator first assesses if a student can be served in their home school district. In cases where the student's needs cannot be met in their home district, the System Navigator helps enroll the student in other programs, including ALC Plus, in which he makes arrangements for students to begin classes as soon as possible.

ALC Plus staff are responsible for using a reporting spreadsheet to collect many different data, including demographic information, case coordination contacts, chemical health services, and mental health information.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the 140 students who are enrolled in ALC Plus school year 2012-2013. In addition to the 56 (40%) students who were "carried over" from the previous school year remained in the program, an additional 84 (60%) new students were enrolled during the school year.

### 6. Overview of SY 2012-2013 ALC Plus participants (N=140)



### Resident district

A third (33%) of ALC Plus students' resident district was Minneapolis, followed by Osseo (15%) and Robbinsdale (13%). See figure 7 for additional district information.

### The ALC Plus Experience: Latonya *Insight into the life of students in the ALC Plus program.*

Latonya came to South Education Center Alternative (SECA) as an 11th grader, pregnant with no high school credits. She was dropped from SECA's enrollment twice due to excessive truancy. Her case remained open with ALC Plus, but, in spite of daily check-ins, Latonya showed little progress. During the summer, Latonya gave birth to a son and began therapy services through the ALC. By fall, Latonya was ready to start over again, re-enrolling in school and enrolling her son in SECA's Early Learning Center. Latonya attended school for 2 days before her son became gravely ill and required a transplant. Her Case Coordinator visited Latonya and her son in the hospital to provide support to her and to facilitate her return to SECA. After a rocky start, and continued support from her Case Coordinator and the ALC team, Latonya began feeling more comfortable in class. Her attendance improved drastically and last quarter Latonya earned her first high school credit.

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## 7. Resident district

	#	%
Minneapolis <sup>a</sup>	92	35%
Osseo <sup>b</sup>	39	15%
Robbinsdale <sup>b</sup>	35	13%
Bloomington <sup>b</sup>	25	10%
Richfield <sup>b</sup>	25	10%
Brooklyn Center	11	4%
St Louis Park	11	4%
Hopkins <sup>b</sup>	8	3%
Eden Prairie	7	3%
Other	11	4%
Total	264	100%

<sup>a</sup> Provides transportation for all ALC Plus students

<sup>b</sup> Provides transportation for Pregnant and Parenting ALC Plus students

**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

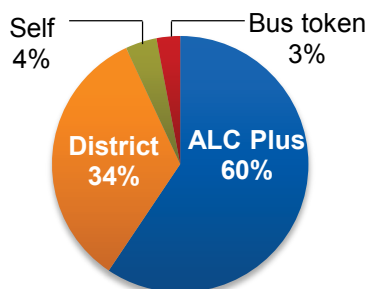
## Transportation

In addition to getting students engaged in school, the Case Coordinator may also provide transportation to students who have missed the bus, had difficulty getting to school on any given day or need a ride from school to their job or home. Over 70 hours, or 5% of Case Coordinators' time, have been spent transporting students during the school year.

More than half (60%) of ALC Plus students receive door-to-door transportation from the ALC Plus program. A third (34%) receives transportation from their resident districts. 4% of students transported themselves, and 3% relied on bus tokens (Figure 8).

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## 8. Transportation by type



**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

## Academic Indicators

ALC Plus staff also track some academic outcomes including pre-attendance suspensions, attendance, credit attainment, and assessment scores.

### Attendance

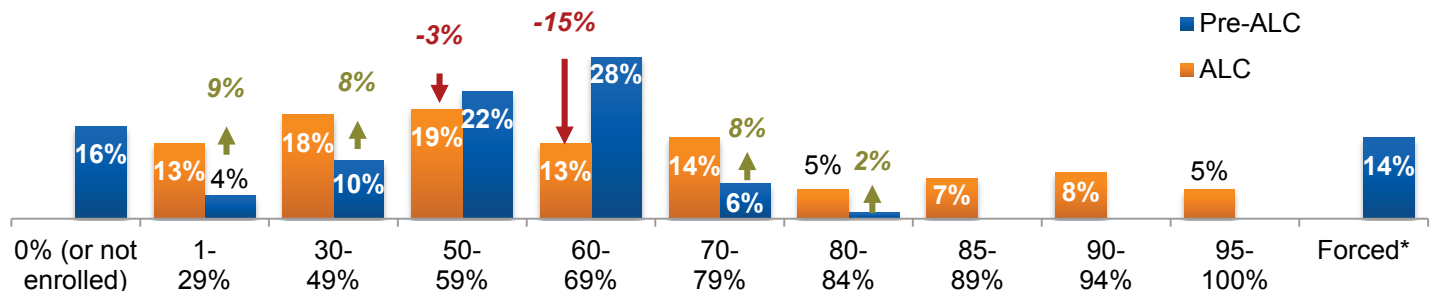
Different strategies have been attempted in collecting data since the beginning of the ALC Plus program. Starting in SY 2012-13, pre-attendance data for ALC Plus students and data were collected by the System Navigator, if available from the referring school district. Because not all districts provided this information to the System Navigator at the time of enrollment, some of the ALC Plus students' attendance data were missing (explaining the N=115 in Figure 9). ALC Plus program attendance was then collected by Case Coordinators monthly. Figure 9 indicates that three out of four ALC Plus students' attendance rates either improved or stayed the same, with more than half improving.

#### 9. Change in attendance rates (includes days attended and excused absences) from pre-enrollment attendance

	#	%
Improved	64	56%
Stayed the same	21	18%
Declined	30	26%
Total	115	100%

Pre-ALC Plus and ALC Plus attendance data were collected using ranges agreed upon by the advisory group. Attendance rates in the top five attendance categories improved. None of students had attendance rates higher than 85% before enrolling in ALC Plus, but almost one-fifth attended school 85% of the time or more in the ALC Plus program (see Table 10). It should be noted that ALC Plus attendance data in this table reflects only SY12-13.

#### 10. Pre-ALC and ALC attendance rates



**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

\*Attendance forced due to out of home placement in a correctional facility



## ***Credit attainment***

Students coming into the ALC Plus program are behind on credits for various reasons. At intake, the System Navigator attempts to obtain information about each student's current credit situation. Not all referring districts provide students' credit history to the ALC Plus program. Of the students whose credits were collected, nearly all of them are substantially behind in credits by the time they enroll in ALC Plus.

Figure 11 provides an overview of students who are currently enrolled in ALC Plus and their *credit-equivalent grade* using the number of credits attained prior to enrollment in the program versus their cohort grade. The cohort grade reflects the grade in which the other people of same age are enrolled. For 9<sup>th</sup> graders, none were behind in credits, as is to be expected of the first year of high school. But by their sophomore year, almost all of the ALC Plus enrolled students are behind in credits. Eighty-three percent (83%) have only 9<sup>th</sup> grade level credits. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 88% are behind in credits. Two in three seniors are behind in credits. Sixteen percent are in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, while 45% have obtained only 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade credits.

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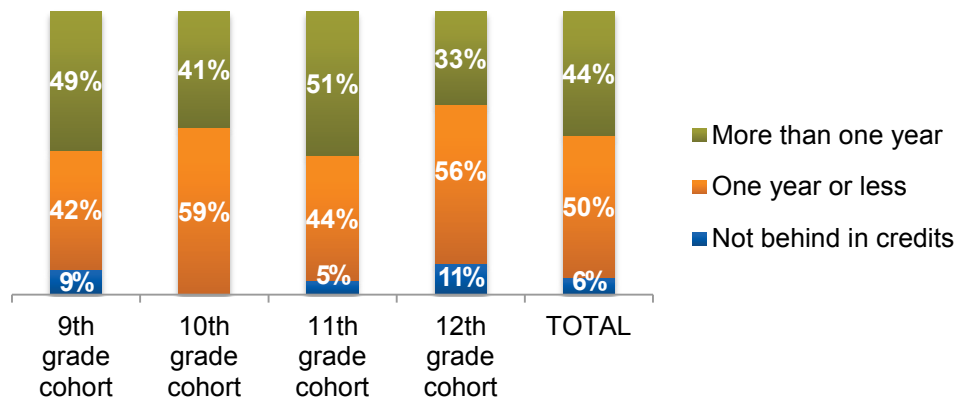
### **11. Pre-ALC Plus credit-equivalent grade versus cohort grade**

<b>Credit-equivalent grade</b>	<b>Cohort grade</b>			
	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9</b>	97%	83%	43%	6%
<b>10</b>	3%	13%	45%	39%
<b>11</b>	0%	4%	7%	16%
<b>12</b>	0%	0%	5%	39%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Information was also collected and assessed by the System Navigator, who was charged with establishing whether each student was *more than 1 year, one year or less, or no credits* behind. This was determined by looking at their actual grade enrolled versus the credits they have obtained. Notably, about half of all 11<sup>th</sup> graders (51%) and 9<sup>th</sup> graders (49%) are behind in credits by more than one year before they enroll in ALC Plus. Data are slightly different from Figure 11 because Figure 12 attempts to provide a straightforward measurement of how far behind they are and include if they are less than one year, which is not captured in Figure 11.

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## 12. School years behind by grade cohort



To get a better picture of how ALC Plus students' credits are accruing once enrolled, the Systems Navigator collected information about credits attained by the credits that were attempted in Quarters 1 through 4 of SY 2012-2013 (Figure 13). Close to a third of students earned 75% or more of the credits they attempted, and over half (56%) earned more than 50% of the credits they attempted.

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## 13. Percentage of credits attempted that were earned, SY 2012-2013

	#	%*
Less than 25%	23	21%
25% to less than 50%	24	22%
50% to less than 75%	26	24%
75% or more	35	32%
Total	108	100%

**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

\*Statistical analyses indicated that percentage of credits earned was positively associated with attendance rates, with higher attendance rates correlating to greater percentage of credits earned.

### *Out of school suspensions*

The system navigator attempted to collect information about out of school suspensions *prior* to enrollment in the ALC Plus program. As mentioned earlier, the sample size is different because not all students' out of school suspension data, pre-ALC Plus enrollment, was provided by their resident district. Of those students with data, just under half (46%) had out of school suspension prior to being enrolled in ALC Plus (Figure 14).

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#### 14. Pre-ALC out of school suspensions

	#	%
Yes	63	46%
No	73	54%
Total	136	100%

As demonstrated, school staff execute a lot of work to prevent suspensions in ALC Plus schools. The vast majority (96%) of students whose suspension data was available did not receive out of school suspensions while enrolled in ALC. Of the 63 students who had out of school suspensions before enrolling in the ALC Plus program, only four (3% of total students) were suspended while in the program. Slightly more than half (53%) of all students had no suspension records either before or after enrolling in ALC Plus (Figure 15).

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#### 15. Out of school suspensions pre-ALC Plus and while enrolled

		Out of school suspensions while enrolled in ALC				Total	
		No		Yes			
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Pre-ALC out of school suspensions	No	72	53%	1	1%	73	54%
	Yes	59	43%	4	3%	63	46%
	Total	131	96%	5	4%	136	100%

#### ***MAP Scores***

The first day students are enrolled, they will go to the Media Center, and take the MAP assessment. An educational assistant or the guidance counselor will administer the MAP test. When students are leaving the County Home School, they are given a MAP test upon exit; that exit score is used for these students, so they do not have to test on the first day. Test scores are used to determine if a student should be enrolled in Read 180, and also to help determine which classes students will be in. While students are enrolled, they are given the MAP test during three testing windows in the fall, winter and spring. More than one MAP test scores for reading and/or math are not available for all ALC Plus enrolled students, and therefore the sample sizes differ. In some cases, two sets of test scores are not available for a student, either because the student was absent on a testing day or was not enrolled long enough to take the second test.

Figure 16 provides information about students who had at least two reading MAP tests in the school year. The figure compares the grade equivalent scores from Day 1 to the last test taken. While nearly half (49%) of the students tested “less than 6<sup>th</sup> grade” equivalent level on Day 1, only one quarter (25%) were at that level on the last taken MAP test. Also, only five percent of students tested at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade equivalent level on Day 1, but one in five (20%) were at that level on the last test taken.

## 16. MAP Reading Scores: Day 1 and Last Taken

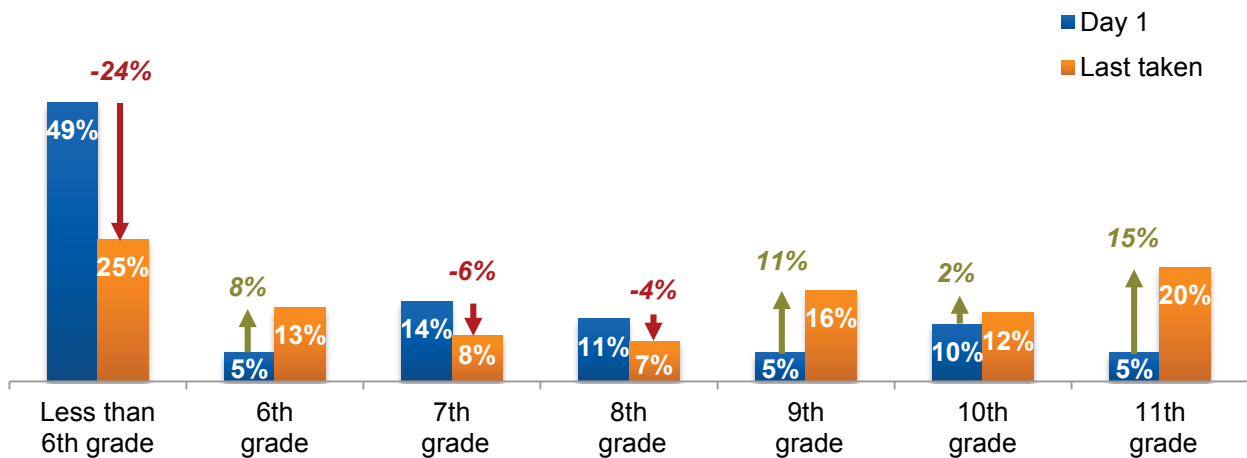


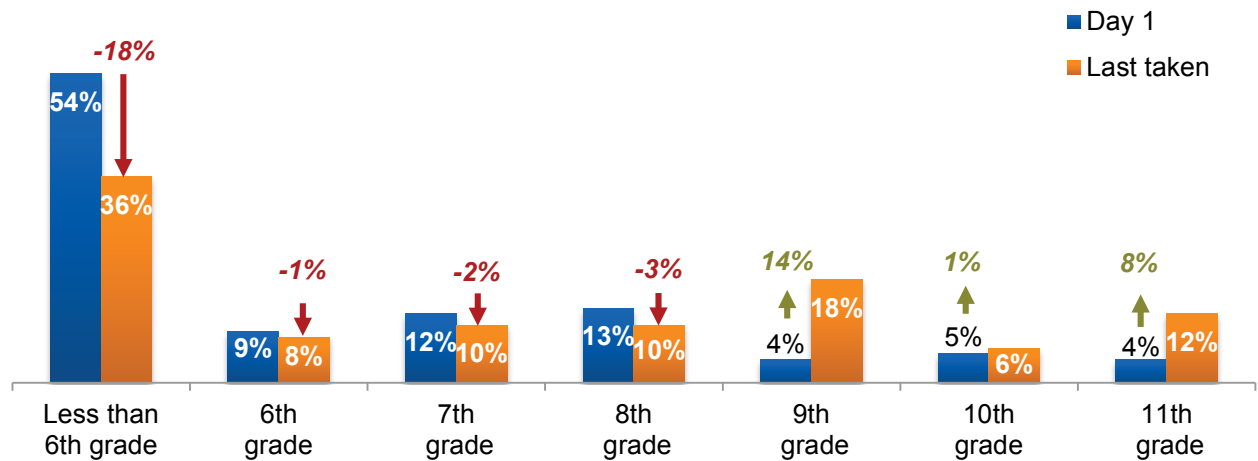
Figure 17 provides information about changes in reading scores. Almost everyone (98%) either improved (59%) or stayed the same (39%).

## 17. Changes in MAP Reading Scores

	#	%
Improved	36	59%
Stayed the Same	24	39%
Declined	1	2%
Total	61	100%

Although improvements in MAP math scores were not as compelling as those in reading scores, there was improvement. Figure 18 provides information about students who had at least two math MAP tests in the school year. The figure compares the grade equivalent scores from Day 1 to the last test taken. While over half (54%) of the students tested “less than 6<sup>th</sup> grade” equivalent level on Day 1, a third (36%) were at that level on the last taken MAP test. Also, only four percent of students tested at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade equivalent level on Day 1, but twelve percent were at that level on the last test taken.

## 18. MAP Math Scores: Day 1 and Last Taken



*Note: Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.*

Figure 19 provides information about changes in math scores. Almost everyone (98%) either improved (48%) or stayed the same (50%).

## 19. Changes in MAP Math Scores

	#	%
Improved	24	48%
Stayed the Same	25	50%
Declined	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Mean reading and math scores on Day 1 and last test taken were compared to determine if their differences were statistically significant. For both tests, improvements in scores were determined to be statistically significant, indicating improvements are noteworthy (Figure 20).

## 20. MAP Scores: Means

Mean Reading Scores		Mean Math Scores	
Day 1	Last Taken	Day 1	Last Taken
6.8	7.9	6.4	7.3

## Access to supportive services

### *Case coordination*

All ALC Plus students are eligible to receive case coordination services. The Case Coordinators work closely with students and monitor students' daily attendance and academic needs, and to attempt to get them engaged in school. Currently there are four Case Coordinators, two in each site. The Case Coordinators are the students' main point of contact once part of the ALC Plus program.

Figure 21 provides an overview of the contacts the Case Coordinators interacted with during the school year 2012-2013. These interactions include meeting in person and communicating via phone, email and/or text. The majority of contacts were with students (39%), families (19%), and school staff (17%).

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#### **21. Contacts by Case Coordinators**

	#	%
Students	7,853	39%
Families	3,710	19%
School	3,477	17%
County	1,977	10%
Other	2,997	15%
Total	20,014	100%

#### **The ALC Plus Experience: Wayne**

##### ***Insight into the life of students in the ALC Plus program.***

In spite of intervention efforts by the school and some initial progress to improve his behavior after he was charged with assault, Wayne slid back into old behaviors, missing school and making poor choices. Then he was charged with a second assault which led to out of home placement. He returned to South Education Center Alternative (SECA) in the summer, progressed well at summer school, and came back to school in the fall appearing highly motivated, even obtaining his first job. However, over time his Case Coordinator grew concerned about behavior lapses and symptoms of depression. Wayne's support team, including ALC Plus program staff and other service providers, agreed to place him on an Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) for a week, to increase their contact with him and to get him into a regular school routine. This seemed to provide the impetus Wayne needed to get back on track. He is now faithfully attending school, becoming an excellent student, and thriving at SECA.

Additionally, Case Coordinators made 49 referrals to the Chemical Health Specialists and 47 referrals to mental health services. A student may be referred more than once to either or both of these services.

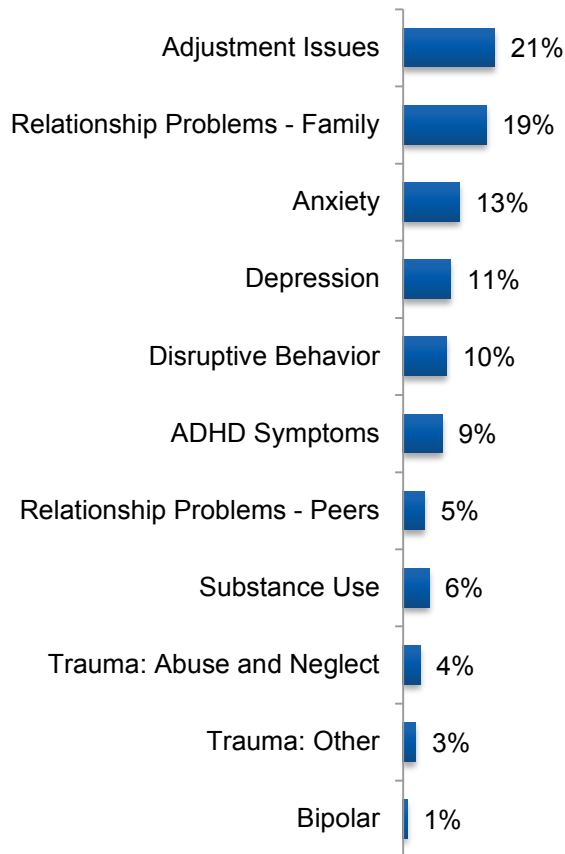
### ***Mental Health services***

Mental health services were provided to 61 students in both SEC and NEC during SY 2012-2013.

Clinicians tracked presenting problems, or the initial symptom(s) displayed by the student, for 47 (78%) of the students receiving mental health services. Some of the students had more than one presenting problem. Over one in five (21%) of the students' presenting problem areas were adjustment issues and another one in five (19%) were relationship problems related to family (Figure 22).

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## 22. Presenting problems (N=61)



**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

There are four clinicians who work with ALC Plus students, two from Headway and two from People Incorporated. These clinicians collectively provided over 1,000 billable and ancillary services to students. Some of the services that are provided are reimbursable by insurance or other funding sources. The majority of these billable service contacts were 60-minute individual therapy sessions, followed by 30-minute individual therapy sessions (Figure 23).

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### 23. Billable services

Billable	# of services	Hours
Individual Therapy 60 min	333	333
Individual Therapy 30 min	177	89
Diagnostic Assessments (Intakes)	66	64
Family Therapy w/ Client	28	28
Family Therapy w/o Client	6	6
Total Billable	610	520

Other services provided are not reimbursable by insurance or other funding sources. The majority of these ancillary services were parent consultations and care coordination (Figure 24).

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### 24. Ancillary services

Ancillary service	# of services	Hours
Parent Consultation	134	66
Care Coordination	126	74
Consultation to Teachers	69	37
Individual services	24	8
Consultation to Support Staff	23	7
School Conferences	13	8
Student Meeting PRIOR to DA	3	2
Consultation to Administration	2	1
Child Specific Observation	1	1
Total Ancillary	395	204

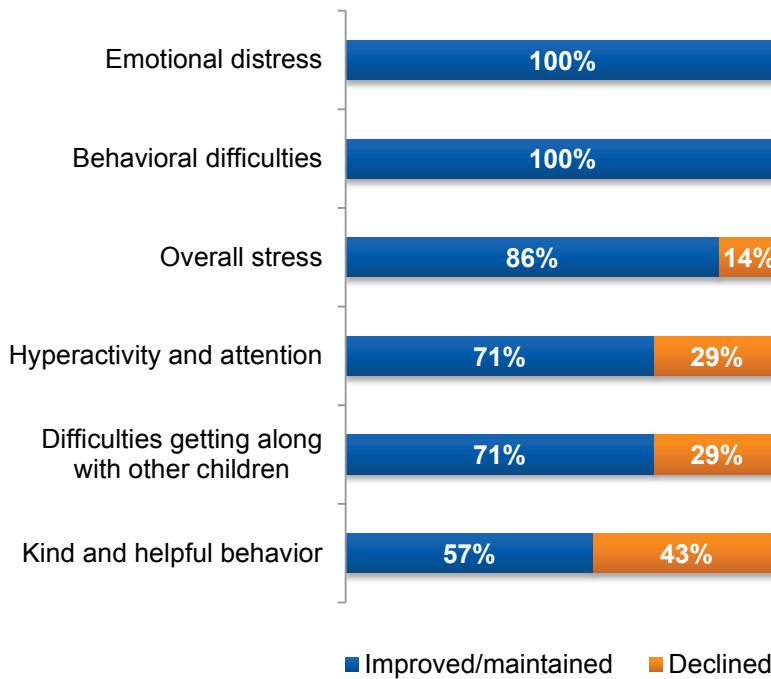
### *Mental Health outcomes*

SDQ and CASII assessment scores are often collected at intake and in six month increments. Of those assessments entered into the MN Kids Database, all parents reported in their SDQs that their child's emotional distress and behavioral difficulties improved or maintained and 86% felt that their child's overall stress level improved or remained stable. Ninety percent of students' CASII assessments improved or maintained. See Figure 25 for parent responses on the SDQ.



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## 25. Parent responses on the SDQ (N=7)



*Note the small number of parents who completed 2 or more SDQs, which may not yield reliable or precise estimates.*

### ***Chemical Health services***

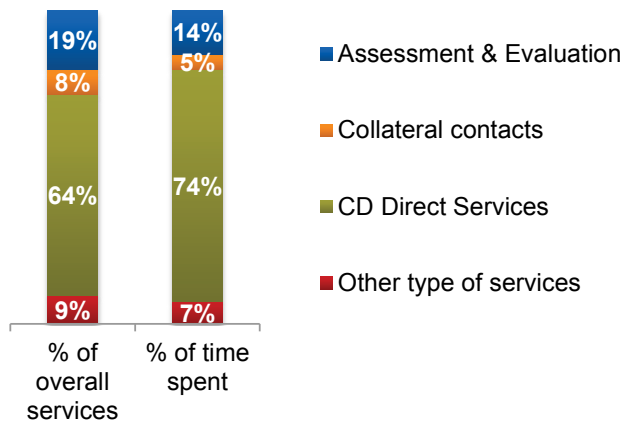
Chemical Health services are made available to students in the ALC Plus program. A student is eligible for the services by either self-referring or through the recommendation of their family, Case Coordinator, or other school staff. Once referred, the Chemical Health Specialist determines the extent of the services required by using the Personal Experience Screening Questionnaire (PESQ), a self-reporting tool that screens youth for substance use/abuse.

During the first half of school year 2012-2013, 61 ALC Plus students received on-site Chemical Health services from two Chemical Health Specialists, one located in each school. Nearly all of these students (98%) were assessed at the time the data was reported. Nearly two out of three (60%) students assessed were flagged red or yellow, which denotes risk of substance abuse. Data for the second half of school year 2012-2013 was missing due to data collection issues.

In addition to the time spent administering the assessment (14%), the Chemical Health Specialist also provides other services, including individual or group psychotherapy (74%), collateral services (time spent making contact with parents, probation officers, medical professionals, mental health providers, social worker, etc.) (5%) and other services (time

spent providing case coordination, staff consultation with school staff, etc.) (7%). Figure 26 provides information about the services provided by time and frequency.

## 26. Services provided by Chemical Health Specialists



### The ALC Plus Experience: Carmen

*Insight into the life of students in the ALC Plus program.*

Carmen began the ALC Plus Program when she was referred to North Education Center Alternative (NECA). It quickly became apparent that Carmen was insecure and had low self-esteem. She had trouble making friends at school. However, she developed positive relationships and trust with the ALC Plus Team. Carmen's ALC clinician soon learned of the chaos in Carmen's life, including abuse from her mother's boyfriend. Carmen temporarily moved in with her boyfriend, only to experience abuse from him. With support from her Case Coordinator, Carmen eventually landed in a safe place -- her sister's. In spite of her difficulties, Carmen maintained a positive attitude, passing grades, and satisfactory attendance for a while, but then started to slip. Her Case Coordinator took her for a heartfelt talk over ice cream, which cured her truancy, and illustrated to her Case Coordinator just how important that "one" adult can be in a child's life. Her Case Coordinator continued to be a trusted adult Carmen could turn to. She helped her navigate through the immigration system, so Carmen could get a work authorization card, a driver's license, and a social security number. Perhaps even more importantly, she gave Carmen a chance to step out of the shadows and realize her potential to go further than she had ever imagined. Carmen now dreams of attending college.

# The feedback from referring partners

Referring partners were asked to provide feedback about the program. The most common challenges identified by social workers, probation officers and be@school staff is navigating the educational system to get an 'at risk' youth school. Below are the results of the survey sent electronically to 60 referring partners in the Fall 2013.

A total of 35 referring partners (58%) completed the survey (5 social workers, 20 probation officers, and 10 be@school staff). Overall, 96% of referring partners stated that the ALC Plus program was one of the best school programs available to their clients.

Referring partners reported satisfaction with how they felt about the ALC Plus process and the outcomes/benefits for their clients, as summarized below:

## **The ALC Plus Process:**

- 100% reported that working with on-site case coordinators was “moderately” or “extremely helpful.”
- 100% reported that working with the mental health services was “moderately” or “extremely helpful.”
- 97% of referring partners felt that the System Navigator made the process of school placement moderately or extremely easy.
- 96% reported that the transportation services were “moderately” or “extremely helpful.”
- 87% felt that communicating about client's enrollment status was much easier compared to working with other school programs.
- 84% of respondents felt that getting information they needed was much quicker compared to working with other school programs.
- 84% used the System Navigator to answer questions about school placement options.
- 84% reported using the System Navigator to coordinate efforts with a client's parent/s or caregiver.
- 77% reported that finding transportation for their clients was much easier compared to working with other school programs.

- 68% used the System Navigator to follow up regarding the appropriateness of a school placement.
- 58% of respondents used ALC Plus's System Navigator to answer questions about school district procedures.
- 45% reported using the System Navigator to obtain school records.

**Outcomes/benefits for clients in the ALC Plus program:**

- 96% reported that their ALC Plus enrolled clients increased attendance while enrolled in ALC Plus.
- 88% of respondents felt that their ALC Plus enrolled clients tend to do better in school than before they were enrolled in ALC Plus.
- 81% of referring partners felt that their clients made progress on their case plan with them.
- 77% of referring partners felt that accessing chemical health services was “extremely” or “moderately helpful” for their clients.
- 73% of referring partners stated that participating in vocational or certificate programming was “moderately” or “extremely helpful” for their clients.
- 61% reported that their clients obtained adequate credits while enrolled in ALC Plus.

# Key findings and considerations

The ALC Plus program offers many supports to its students. The four primary goals of increasing attendance, graduating or earning credits, reducing school placements, and obtaining job skills or a GED were achieved in various ways. Key findings (as specified in the Background section) and considerations for the future are listed below.

## Key Findings by goal

- **Goal of increasing attendance:** Over half (56%) students attendance improved once they became part of the ALC Plus program. While none of students had attendance rates higher than 85% before enrolling in ALC Plus, one in five students attended school at least 85% of the time once enrolled in the program. Almost all (96%) of the referring partners reported that their ALC Plus enrolled clients increased attendance while enrolled in ALC Plus.
- **Goal of graduating or earning credits:** Over half (56%) of students earned at least 50% of the credits they attempted. Statistical analyses indicated that percentage of credits earned was positively associated with attendance rates, with higher attendance rates correlating to greater percentage of credits earned. Two in three referring agencies reported that their clients obtained adequate credits while enrolled in ALC Plus.
- **Goal of reducing school placements:** Nearly two of every three students (63%) who were referred to the program were enrolled in NEC or SEC and a third (30%) of those enrolled remained in the program for more than one school year. Nearly all (88%) of referring partners felt that their ALC Plus enrolled clients tend to do better in school than before they were enrolled in ALC Plus.
- **Goal of obtaining skills or a GED:** Students seem to become more engaged the more time that they spend in the program (e.g., an increase in the numbers of completion in certification programs). Additionally, three-quarters (73%) of referring partners stated that participating in vocational or certificate programming was "moderately" or "extremely helpful" for their clients.

## Considerations

- **Importance of having realistic expectations:** While the goal of the program is to get students who are not on-track to finish back or re-engaged in school, stakeholders need to be realistic about the outcomes by considering the students who are being served. Nearly all of the ALC Plus students face barriers (e.g., juvenile justice

involvement, history of truancy, behavioral difficulties, chemical dependency) that interfere with their academic lives. Additionally, many of these youth have already fallen far behind in their credits. ALC Plus is equipped to provide transportation, one-on-one daily supports, mental and chemical health supports, opportunities for certifications, etc., but it is unrealistic to plan for students to attain *extra* credits, for example. ALC Plus provides its students with supports to make sure they do not get further behind and most importantly, that they stay in school – even until they are 21 years old, if they need to be.

- **Importance of having a one stop shop that provides various supports:** As mentioned earlier, ALC Plus provides system navigation, transportation, one-on-one case coordination for the student, on-site mental health chemical dependency counseling, and access to certification programs, to name a few. Having the System Navigator, one that partners can count on, is vital to the program; having a case coordinator to be accountable to and to show care is unique; and providing mental health and chemical dependency supports for students who need it may speak to the successes the program. These components appear to be critical to reaching the goal of keeping students in school and on track to complete. School and program staff focus group participants emphasized that having all of these supports in the building are critical, as they allow for quick problem-solving of students' needs. Referrals are increasing every year and, over the past two years, have hit enrollment capacity by mid-year. Also, a number of ALC Plus students stay in the program for more than one school year. If more students were to be part of the ALC Plus program in the future, it would be important to make sure that the case loads of the case coordinators, mental health and chemical dependency counselors were not overburdened.
- **Importance of transportation:** Access to transportation is critical and possibly one of the main reasons for increased attendance. As captured in the staff focus groups, if it were not for transportation services, most of the students' attendance would have plummeted. The Oversight Group recommends a policy solution. At minimum, working with member school districts to share transportation costs should be considered (as they are currently absorbed solely by Hennepin County and Minneapolis).
- **Satisfaction with the program:** Partners felt this program is working well for the students they refer. Without ALC Plus, some felt these youth might not be in school at all. Additionally, school staff have expressed that the ALC Plus program providers and atmosphere seems like a good fit for the students. It has been noted that even though the program brings together kids that may not "play well" in other settings, it seems to work in the ALC Plus program. It is likely that the committed staff in the Area Learning Center environment play a large role in the success. As year four of the ALC Plus demonstration program approaches, the next steps are to interview

youth who are in the program, as well as their parents, and to get their sense of satisfaction and perceptions of academic accomplishments.

- **Difficulties of collecting and reporting some data:** The process for tracking data is time consuming and at times has been difficult due to the various interests of stakeholders. Currently, there are no standards about how students' credits are collected and/or reported from school to school. Additionally, data are stored in many different systems and some of the data are not readily available electronically (i.e., pre-enrollment attendance, credits and behavior data), so requires extra time spent tracking down member district staff. Much of the data collection responsibility falls on the System Navigator. Building more formalized processes, such as developing a standard "member district form," may help alleviate some of the time the System Navigator spends on this one aspect of his job, but additional support and buy in from the member districts to provide this information is critical, too.

# Appendix

## Demographic and referral details for students enrolled SY 10-11, SY11-12, and SY12-13

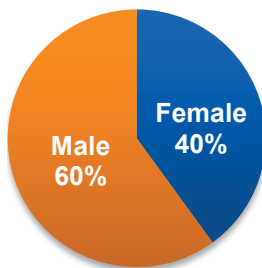
Demographic information is collected by ALC Plus staff on an ongoing basis. Data in this section represent students who were enrolled in the ALC Plus program from SY10-11, SY11-12 and SY12-13.

### *Gender*

More males (60%) than females (40%) are enrolled in the ALC Plus program this year (Figure A1).

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#### A1. Gender



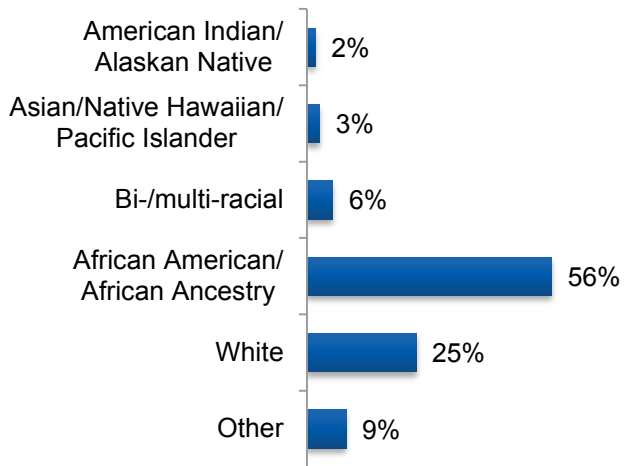
### *Race and ethnicity*

Over half (56%) of ALC Plus students were African American or of African ancestry. A quarter (25%) of the students was White. The remaining students were Bi/multiracial (6%), Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (3%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (2%) or other (9%).



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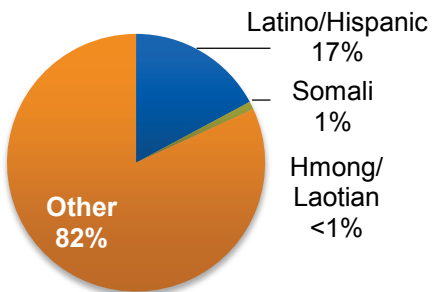
## A2. Race



The majority (81%) of ALC Plus students was Non-Hispanic; 17% were Hispanic (Figure A3).

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## A3. Ethnicity

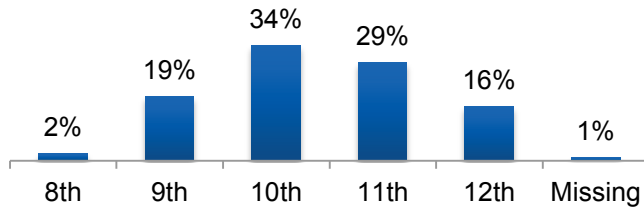


## Grade

A third (34%) of ALC Plus students are in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, followed by 11<sup>th</sup> grade (29%), 9<sup>th</sup> grade (19%), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade (16%) (Figure A4). As mentioned in the *Academic Indicators* section, placement into the grades denoted in the Figure are often based on age and not credits earned.

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#### A4. Grade

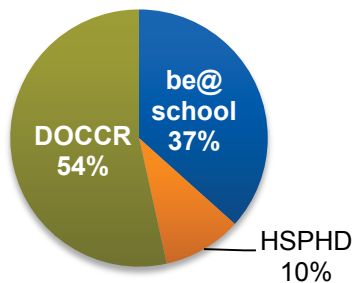


*Note: Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.*

The majority (54%) of the referrals came from Hennepin County's Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR). In addition, referrals came from the county's be@school initiative (37%) and Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD) (10%) (Figure A5).

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#### A5. Referral source of all ALC Plus students enrolled in school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

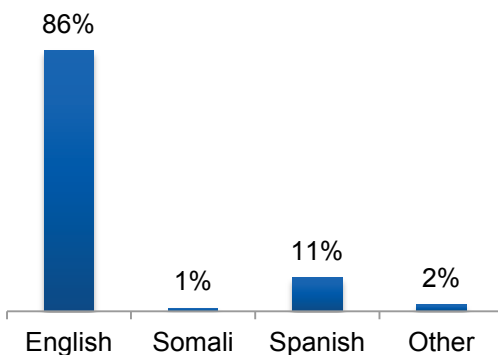


*Note: Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.*

The majority (86%) of all ALC students spoke English at home, with 11% speaking Spanish and 1% speaking Somali.

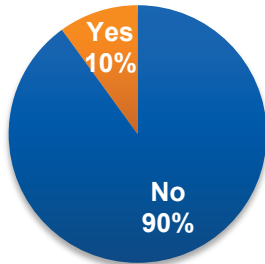
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#### A6. Home language



One in ten (10%) of ALC Plus students required an interpreter, with the majority (90%) not requiring one.

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**A7. Interpreter needed**

Four out of five (80%) ALC Plus students lived at home with a parent or parents, followed by living with a relative (8%), in a foster home (4%) or on their own (4%).

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**A8. Current living status**

	#	%
Correctional facility	1	<1%
Foster home	10	4%
Group home	4	2%
Homeless with parent	3	1%
Homeless without parent	2	1%
Independent living	11	4%
Parental home	211	80%
Relative home	21	8%
Total	263	100%

**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

Close to one in three (30%) of ALC Plus students had an Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

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**A9. IEP**

	#	%
No	184	70%
Yes	79	30%
Total	263	100%

5% of ALC Plus students were enrolled in the ELL program, with 93% not requiring ELL services.

---

**A10. ELL**

	#	%
No	244	93%
Yes	14	5%
Missing	5	2%
Total	263	100%

Approximately one in ten (9%) of ALC Plus students were pregnant or parenting at the time of intake.

---

**A11. Pregnant or parenting**

	#	%
No	231	88%
Yes	24	9%
Missing	8	3%
Total	263	100%

*Note: Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.*

The majority (94%) of ALC Plus students were not in the AVID program at the time of intake. Three percent of students were involved with the program.

---

**A12. In AVID program**

	#	%
No	246	94%
Yes	9	3%
Missing	8	3%
Total	263	100%

## Demographics and referral details of students referred, but not enrolled SY10-11, SY11-12, and SY12-13

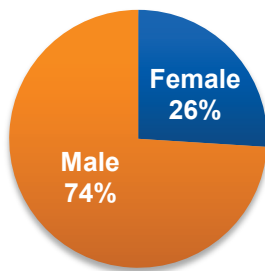
Data in this section represent students who were referred to, but did not enroll in the ALC Plus program during SY10-11, SY11-12, and SY12-13.

### *Gender*

More males (73%) than females (27%) were referred to, but did not enroll in the ALC Plus program this year (Table A13).

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#### **A13. Gender**

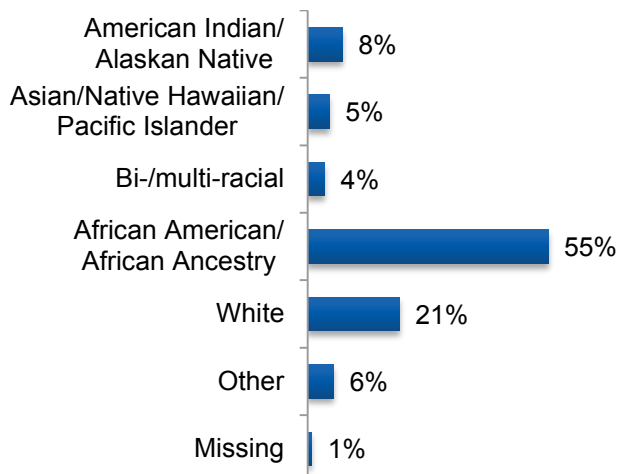


### *Race and ethnicity*

Over half (55%) of students referred but not enrolled were African American or of African ancestry. About one-fifth (21%) were White. The remaining students were American Indian/Alaskan Native (8%), Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (5%), Bi-/multi-racial (4%), or other (6%).

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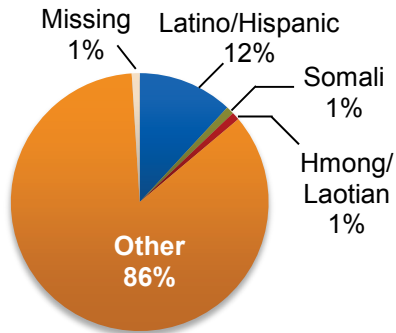
#### **A14. Race**



The majority (86%) of students who was referred to but did not enroll in ALC Plus were non-Hispanic; 12% were Hispanic (Figure A15).

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### A15. Ethnicity



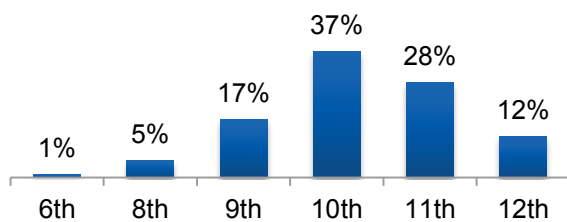
*Note: Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.*

### Grade

Over a third (37%) of referred but not enrolled students were in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, followed by a about a quarter in 11<sup>th</sup> grade (28%) (Table A16).

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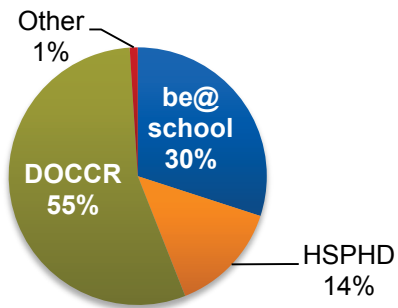
### A16. Grade



The majority (55%) of the referrals for students who were referred but not enrolled came from Hennepin County's Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR). In addition, referrals came from the county's be@school initiative (30%) and Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD) (14%) (Figure A17).

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### A17. Referral source of referred but not enrolled students

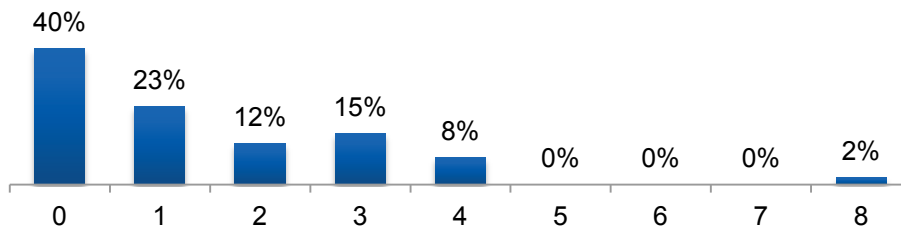


### *Recidivism*

Recidivism information is inclusive of all students who were referred to the ALC Plus program in the past 3 school years through the Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR). Of the students who were discharged, 60% had an adjudication one-year or more after they left ALC Plus (Figure A18).

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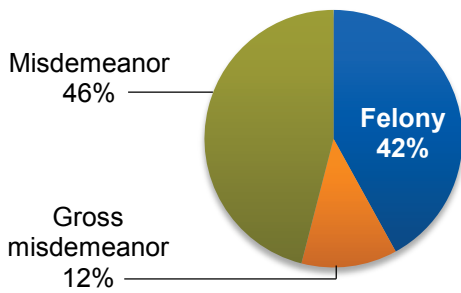
### A18. Number of new adjudications for probation-referred students



Close to half (46%) of the DOCCR students who were adjudicated a year or more after discharge from the program were charged with a misdemeanor as their most serious offense, with another 42% having a felony for their most serious adjudication. (Figure A19).

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### A19. Offense classification of most serious adjudication



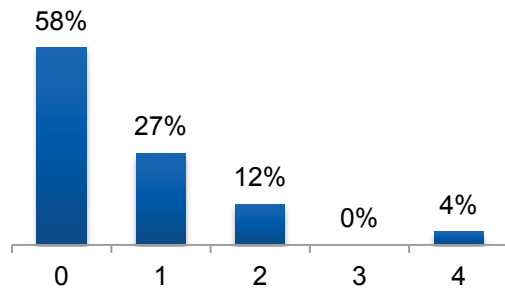
\* - 5 (10%) of DOCCR students adjudicated a year or more after discharge had a petty misdemeanor as their most serious offense.

### *Out of home placement*

Three in five students (58%) DOCCR students discharged from ALC Plus had no out of home placements (OHP) after discharge. Another quarter (27%) was placed in at least one OHP (Figure A20).

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### A20. Number of out of home placements for DOCCR students discharged from ALC Plus



**Note:** Totals for rows may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.