

BRIGHT STARS FY 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



A PROGRAM OF
THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY PRESCHOOL NETWORK

Presented to

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
The Albemarle County School Board





ALBEMARLE COUNTY
Department of Social Services
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It is a pleasure to provide this introduction to the FY2017 Annual Report for the Albemarle County Bright Stars Program. With over two decades of collaboration between the Social Services Department of county government and the county schools, we have continued to demonstrate the benefits of a high quality preschool program for at-risk county children, and to prepare them for success in school in the kindergarten year and beyond.

For the past several years, the issue of preschool education has been much on the minds of stakeholders in the county. The community-based Early Education Task Force, which began in 2015, continues to work towards ensuring high quality preschool education for all at-risk four year-olds in the community. How best to meet the needs of all children who could benefit, how and where to best deliver the program, and how to pay for the program, have been and continue to be on the table. As part of this continued effort, Albemarle County DSS, in collaboration and with fiscal support from a grant received by the United Way, placed 17 children in private preschools in the area, in addition to the preschool children served in Albemarle County Public Schools.

In the midst of new initiatives and successful collaborations, it is also good to remember that in Albemarle County the importance of early childhood education has long been identified, and a successful program undertaken under the guidance of the Virginia Preschool Initiative. The importance of the program has been highlighted in planning for the future on the part of both schools and local government, with a major commitment of local dollars as well as substantial dedicated “in-kind” services from both the schools and local government. In FY2017, the Bright Stars program served 187 at-risk four year-olds in eleven classrooms within seven county elementary schools, which is half of all at-risk four year-olds in the county.

It is clear from program results that the Pre-K year in the Bright Stars classroom prepares children for successful transition to kindergarten. While few Bright Stars children are able to meet the Pre-K PALS benchmark when entering the program in the fall (12% in Fall 2016), a much larger percentage of the children are able to do so in the spring (66% in Spring 2017).

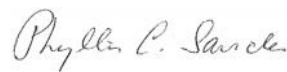
The gains made in the Pre-K year also hold up in kindergarten. When taking the KPALS at the end of their kindergarten year, 73 % of Bright Stars graduates from the class of 2016 achieved the KPALS target in the Spring of 2017.

The Bright Stars program continues to feature a robust, academic learning experience with daily opportunities for children to develop critical social and personal skills; and a strong family service component in which families are assisted in accessing community services to create stability, opportunity and a network of support.

Parent engagement is an important strategy in helping children to make best use of the classroom experience. Parents consistently note a high degree of satisfaction with the program and speak in glowing terms about their children’s experience. Their positive experience with the school and their involvement in their child’s education will continue to benefit the child in future years.

We believe that you will once again be impressed by the results achieved by the educational community - host schools, teachers and assistants, family coordinators, children and families - that are the result of this unique collaboration on behalf of young children in Albemarle County.


Dr. Pamela R. Moran
Superintendent, ACPS

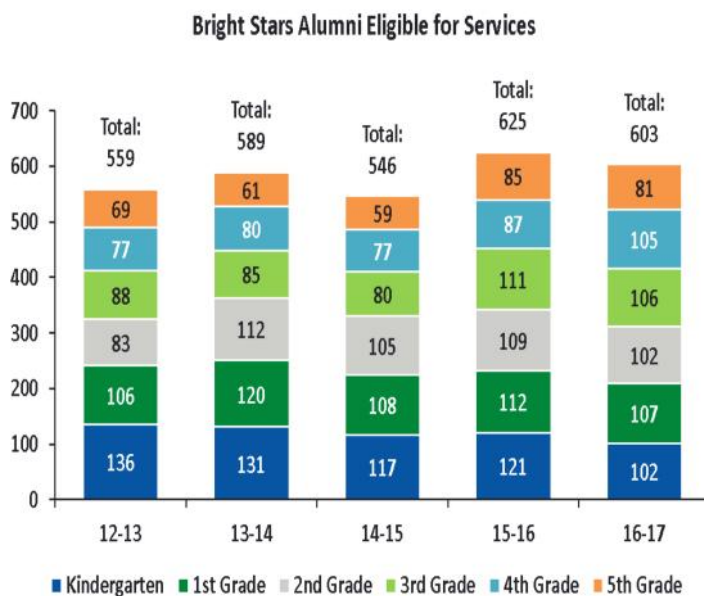
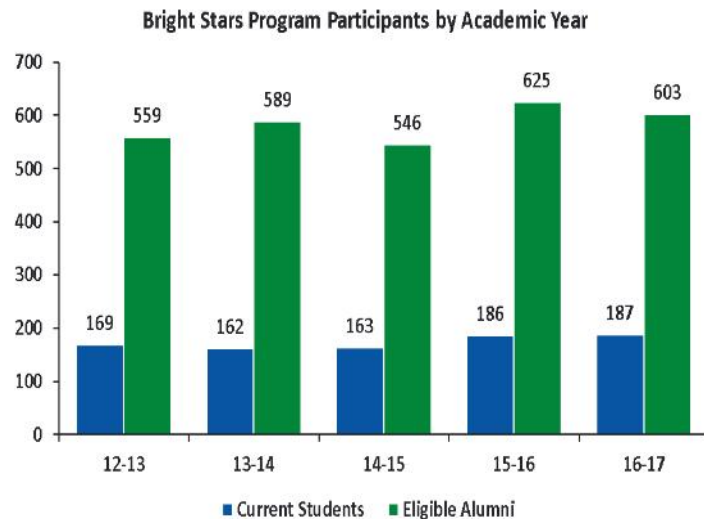

Phyllis C. Savides
Director, ACDSS

BRIGHT STARS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Bright Stars enjoyed another successful year. A new model of inclusion was piloted that included having 3 classrooms at Cale, all of which could include children in need of Special Education. Each classroom had two teaching Assistants, and a Special Education teacher was available to consult and add support across the 3 classrooms.

The classroom that had been housed at Stony Point in previous years was moved to Agnor Hurt and Stony Point students were included in the class at Stone Robinson. This allowed for maximization of program space for children most at need. Eleven preschool classrooms across 8 elementary schools served a total of 187 students.

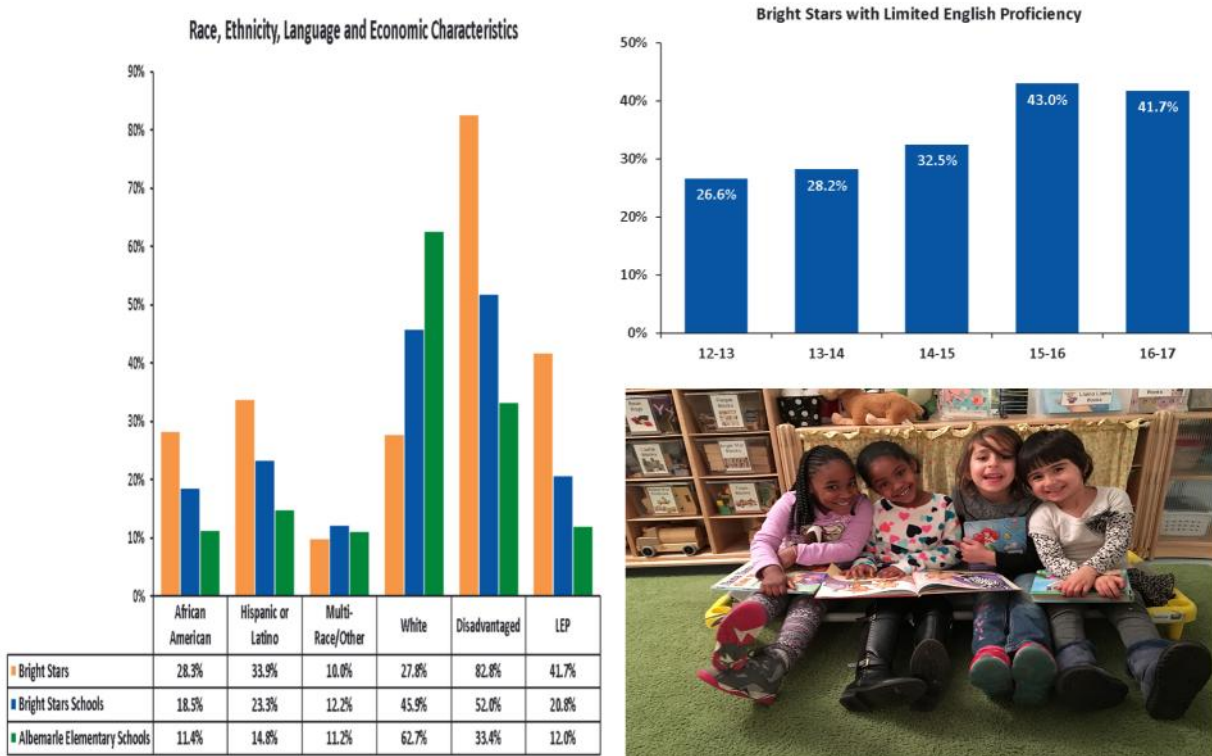
The program also collaborated with the Early Education Task Force and placed another 17 students in private preschool settings which included Foundations Child Development Center and JABA Shining Stars Preschool.



ABOUT OUR PARTICIPANTS

Bright Stars classrooms tend to be more ethnically and linguistically diverse than the overall student body in the same schools. Bright Stars students are more likely to be African American or Hispanic, and are less likely to have English as their primary language.

The percentage of students who enter Bright Stars with Limited English Proficiency had been steadily climbing until this year when it appears to have leveled off. The students with limited English proficiency benefit greatly from their preschool experience, usually picking up a considerable amount of English before entering Kindergarten. Some students' families require interpretive services. In addition to paid interpreters, the Bright Stars program utilizes volunteers to assist in the classroom and with family events whenever possible. We also provide families with bi-lingual books so they can share in their children's literacy-building activities at home.



ABOUT OUR PARTICIPANTS

Children enrolled in the Bright Stars program are selected based on individual or family factors that could result in poor school performance over the years. Risk factors for Bright Stars children may include low income, limited parental education or illiteracy, parents who are very young or parenting alone, unemployment, domestic violence, incarceration, a sibling having difficulty in school, previous child protective services reports or involvement with foster care, and substance use and/or mental health issues among family members.

Of the 187 preschoolers who participated in Bright Stars Classes:

- **91% lived with one or both biological parents, with about half of those in single-parent households.**
- **10% were from families where all caretakers were unemployed.**
- **83% qualified for free or reduced lunch.**
- **Most had parents without a college degree. 10% of children lived with a parent/guardian who earned an associates or bachelors degree, 67% lived with a parent with a GED or high school Diploma, while 42% of students had at least one parent who did not finish high school.**

“They treat you like family. The fact that my child can still come home and talk about everything they did makes you feel like they made the Bright Stars classroom their 2nd home.”

Stone Robinson Parent



BRIGHT STARS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IN 2016-2017

The Bright Stars Program is more than just preschool. We focus on all aspects of family well-being. For example, we work to help children receive adequate health and dental care. Family Coordinators assist in making appointments and providing transportation when necessary. An award from the Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital Community Health Partnership allows for children to receive pediatric dental care and services, which sometimes is their very first visit to a dentist. These services are provided by a variety of local specialists. In addition, we purchase dental care supplies for our preschoolers to use in the classroom and at home.

Because children learn best by doing, the Bright Stars program includes activities where the children travel to interesting venues and have the opportunity to create during hands-on activities. Bright Stars enjoy visits to apple orchards and farms, local firehouses, and the Paramount Theatre. They invite their parents into the classroom to help them make gingerbread and bird houses and host them for Thanksgiving Dinner.



PERFORMANCE ON PROGRAM GOALS **FY17**

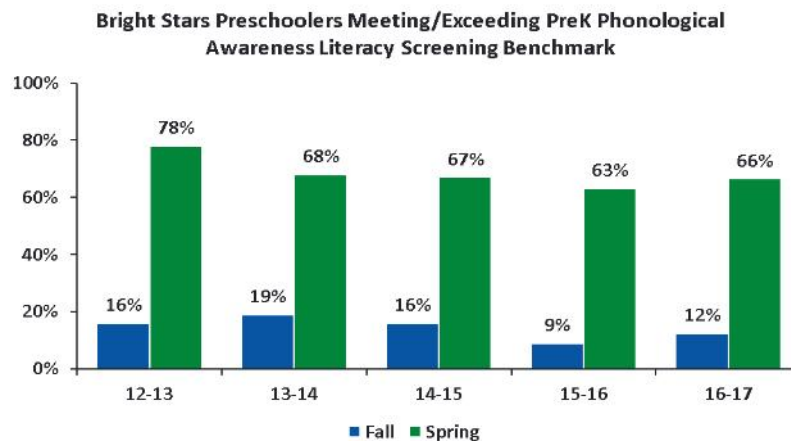
The following table shows our progress towards achieving key program goals over the past five years.

Outcome Measure	Measurement	Goal	Actual
Preschool Literacy Skills Preschoolers who are in Bright Stars for at least six months achieve literacy benchmark scores for the preschool developmental range at the end of the school year	PreK Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (pKPALS)	FY17 Target: 80%	FY17 Actual: 66% FY16 Actual: 63% FY15 Actual: 67% FY14 Actual: 68% FY13 Actual: 78%
Kindergarten Literacy Skills Bright Stars alumni achieve literacy benchmark scores for the kindergarten developmental range at the end of the school year	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten (KPALS)	FY17 Target: 80%	FY17 Actual: 73% FY16 Actual: 74% FY15 Actual: 84% FY14 Actual: 86% FY13 Actual: 82%
Family Events Parents of Bright Stars preschoolers attend at least 4 Bright Stars/school functions, not including parent-teacher conferences, during the school year	Bright Stars database	FY17 Target: 90%	FY17 Actual: 96% FY16 Actual: 86% FY15 Actual: 87% FY14 Actual: 62% FY13 Actual: 74%
Parent-Teacher Conferences Parents of Bright Stars preschoolers attend both parent-teacher conferences offered during the school year	Bright Stars database	FY17 Target: 80%	FY17 Actual: 84% FY16 Actual: 80% FY15 Actual: 80% FY14 Actual: 84% FY13 Actual: 72%
Parent Goals Parents of Bright Stars preschoolers make progress on goals that support their child's success during the school year	Family Needs Assessment	FY17 Target: 80%	FY17 Actual: 84% FY16 Actual: 84% FY15 Actual: 75% FY14 Actual: 83% FY13 Actual: 89%

EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS

Classroom teachers administer pre-kindergarten language and literacy screening in the fall and spring. The assessments include questions about the alphabet, letter sounds, rhymes, and awareness of how pictures and words work together in a story.

Our preschoolers show substantial improvement over the course of the year as they work to master the basic skills for reading readiness. More than five times as many students were able to meet the standard of passing 6 out of 8 subtests in the spring than in the fall.



This success carries over into kindergarten. Among Bright Stars alumni who entered kindergarten in 2017, 73% passed the kindergarten PALS in the fall, compared to 85% of students in the same schools overall.

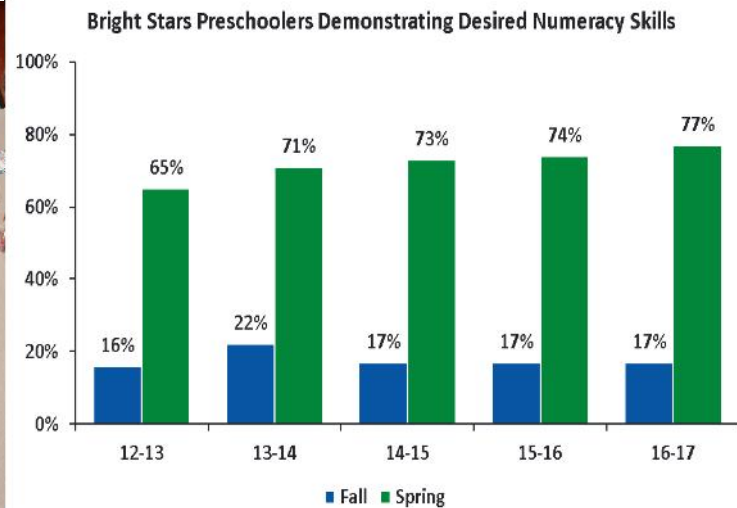
“[I liked best] the support the teachers gave my daughter during her difficult times adapting. They were patient and showed effective ways for her to change her behavior.”
Greer Parent



EARLY NUMERACY SKILLS

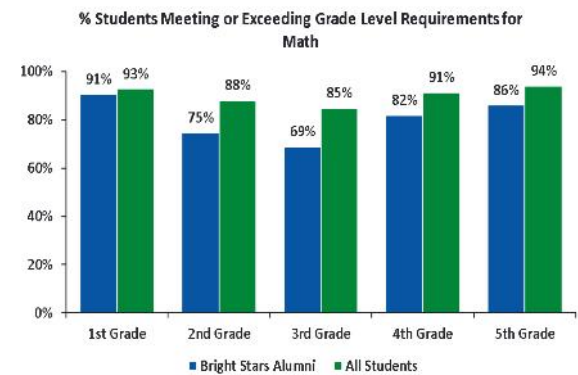
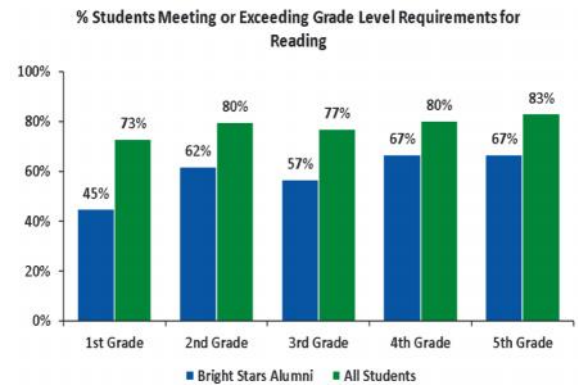
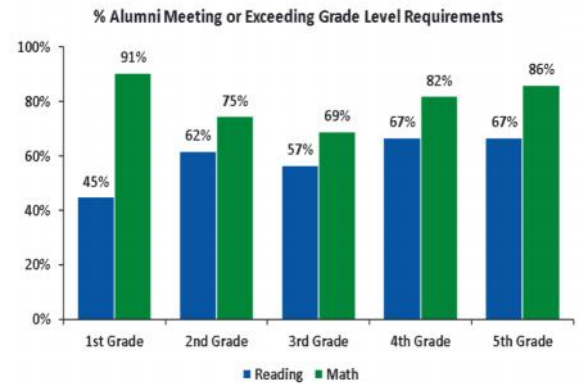
Preschoolers' abilities in the areas of numeral identification, completing patterns, identifying shapes and colors, and counting sequentially are assessed in the fall and spring using the Math Quick Screen.

In the spring, 77% of our preschoolers performed up to the minimum standards for numeracy skills (passing 7 of the 9 subtests), compared to only 17% in the fall.



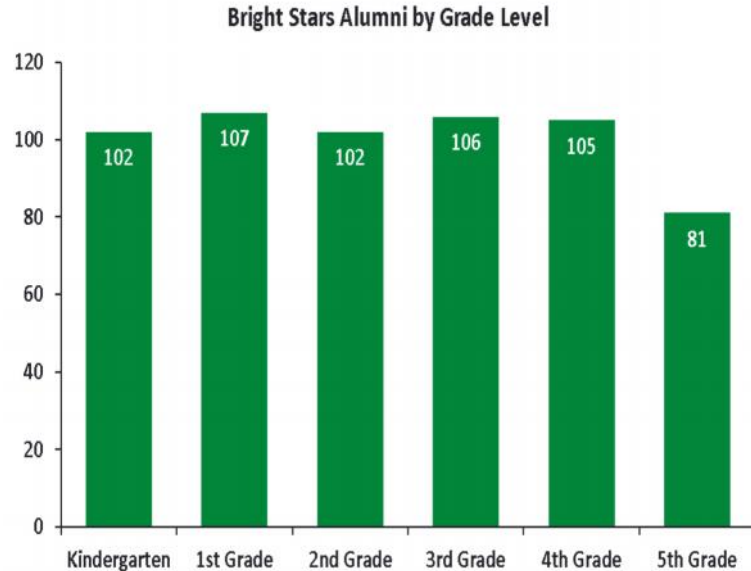
LONG TERM ACADEMIC BENEFITS

Academic benefits of Bright Stars can be seen in alumni throughout elementary school. Among all Bright Stars alumni in grades K-5, 100% were promoted to the next grade.



BRIGHT STARS “ALUMNI” SERVICES IN 2016-17

Family Coordinators are available to provide ongoing services to families past the preschool year. Many families continue to receive services on an as-needed basis throughout their child’s elementary school years. Services for Bright Stars alumni families are entirely voluntary. Bright Stars parents may agree to participate or not depending on their own needs and circumstances.



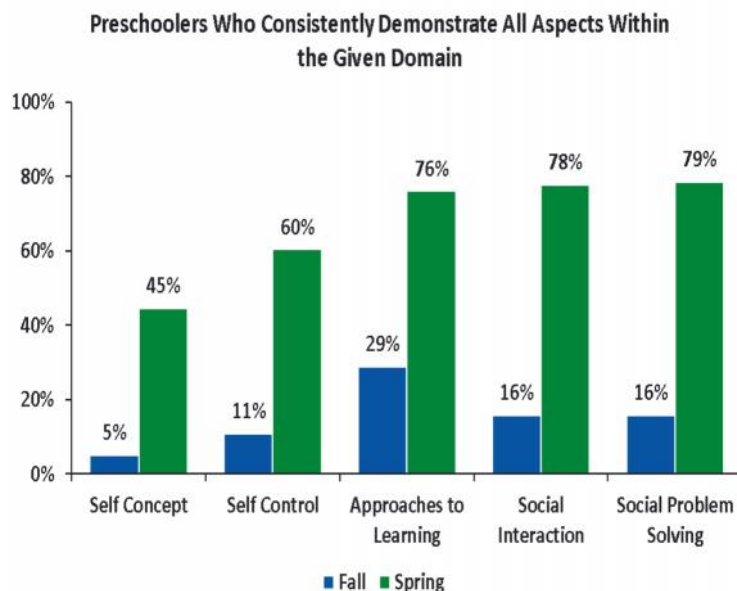
Bright Stars Family Coordinators work with families to encourage regular and timely school attendance, participation in parent-teacher conferences, engagement in school events, and preventive dental and medical health practices. Some parents seek support to improve their educational, housing or employment circumstances. The continuity of care and support that is provided by each Family Coordinator is a key element of the Bright Stars program. By linking our families to needed resources, while also facilitating connections between home, school and community services, we aim to encourage and promote self-sufficiency.



PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers and early childhood researchers agree that readiness for kindergarten includes knowing how to get along with others, to share, to take turns and follow directions, as well as to have curiosity and excitement about learning. We assess preschoolers in the fall and spring on multiple domains of personal and social development as indicated in the accompanying chart. When compared to their performance at the start of the year, Bright Stars made significant behavioral improvements over the course of the year. Bright Stars are regularly presented with opportunities to develop and practice these skills in the course of work and play.

Personal/Social Development Domains and Definitions
Self Concept : Self-concept and self-reflection
Self Control : Self-direction and responsibility
Approaches to Learning : Eagerness and persistence as a learner
Social Interaction : Ease of interactions with other children and familiar adults
Social Problem-Solving : Use of non-physical ways to resolve conflicts



“I can tell that (the teacher and TA) really cared about the children in their classes. I felt very good about (my daughter) being in their care.”
Woodbrook Parent

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging a child's family in the school community is viewed as key to long-term success in school. Measures of Parent Engagement include attendance at Parent-Teacher Conferences and school events such as an Open House and Back-to-School Night, as well as participation in Bright Stars classrooms, family events, and fieldtrips. Parents play an important part in our Bright Stars' success. Their active involvement in the classroom and at home supports the work the teachers do at school.



This year:

- Σ **84% of families had at least one parent attend both parent teacher conferences**
- Σ **96% of parents attended four or more non-conference school functions**

“Lots of emphasis on friendship and kindness”

Agnor Hurt Parent

Outside the classroom, Bright Stars Family Coordinators also worked with parents towards parents' personal goals. By the end of the school year, 84% of our parents had demonstrated meaningful progress or fully achieved their goal. Examples of goals might include getting financial education, learning English, being more consistent with consequences for their children's behavior, finding employment, increasing reading time with their children, getting a driver's license, taking care of an ill relative, being involved with their children's school, and improved eating habits. Family Engagement with the Bright Stars Program is a central tenet of the Family Coordinator's work. This year 84% of the families had at least one parent attend each of the two school conferences.

PARENT SATISFACTION

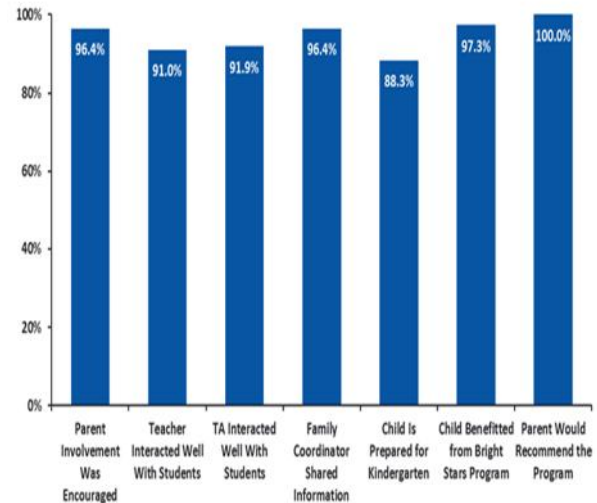
Parents' satisfaction with the Bright Stars Program remains very high. They report significant growth in their children and believe them to be better prepared to enter Kindergarten. Parents report positive relationships with the Bright Stars staff and feel that their participation in their child's preschool program is encouraged. One hundred percent of parents would recommend the program to others.

Child Improvement in Growth Domains		
Growth Domain	Definition	Parents Reporting Improvement
Language	Understanding and using oral speech	91.9%
Social	Getting along with other children and adults	94.6%
Self-Care	Meeting own needs for feeding, toileting, dressing, etc.	93.7%
Motor	Moving large muscles and using small, fine muscles	90.1%
Pre-Academic	Recognizing colors, letters, numbers, songs, etc.	91.9%
Problem Solving	Using cooperation, asking for help, etc.	93.7%

***“Everyone has the child’s success as their main area of concern”
Red Hill Parent***



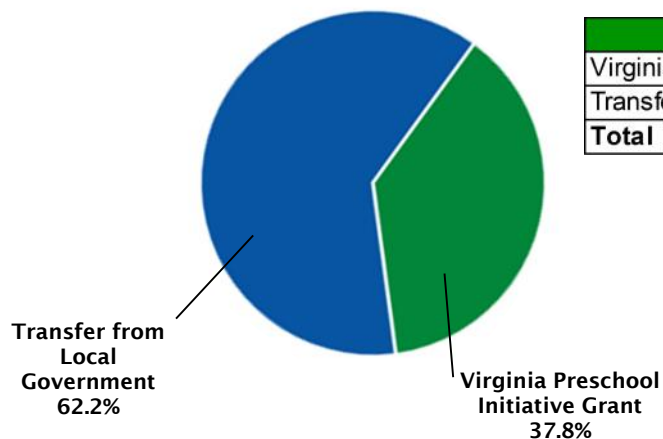
Parent Perception of Bright Stars Program Elements





BRIGHT STARS FISCAL REPORT

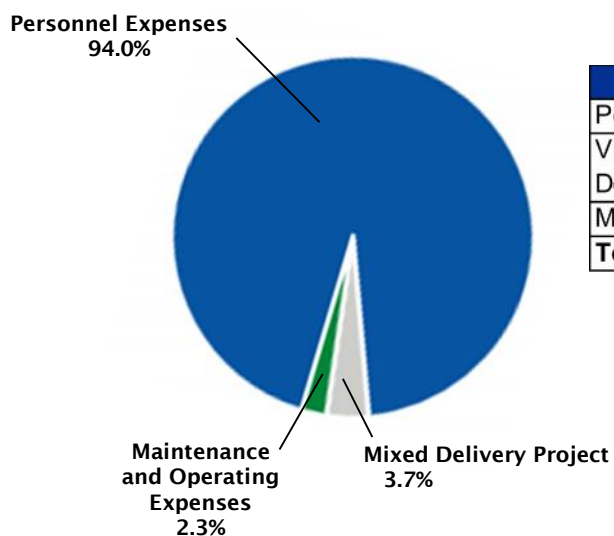
FY 2017 Revenues



Bright Stars Revenues FY2016-2017	
Virginia Preschool Initiative Grant	\$ 526,750
Transfer from Local Government	865,548
Total Bright Stars Revenues	\$ 1,392,298

The above Bright Stars Program budget includes 40% of the Bright Stars Family Coordinator positions and the remaining 60% is funded in the Albemarle County Department of Social Services General Fund

FY 2017 Expenditures



Bright Stars Expenditures FY2016-2017	
Personnel Expenses	\$1,308,515
VPI Funding to United Way for Mixed Delivery Pre-School Project	52,063
Maintenance and Operating Expenses	31,231
Total Bright Stars Expenditures	\$1,391,809



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