



LINKING YOUTH TO NEW EXPERIENCES (LYNX)

Submitted by: Dr. Cheryl L. Dyson, FCPS Superintendent
Evaluator: Natalie Gay, Coordinator, Data Analysis & Research

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2023

SB 1126/Ch. 470, 2016 (MSAR 12873)

Overview

Linking Youth to New eXperiences (LYNX), a modern school model, aims to accelerate achievement and ensure equity for students at Frederick High School (FHS). It also supports school improvement efforts and promotes college/career readiness. To accomplish its goal, LYNX: a) provides individualized, self-directed learning opportunities in accordance with a student-developed student success plan; b) allows students to select coursework, the method of instruction, and the pace of learning that works best for each student; and c) allows students to participate in innovative learning experiences at the high school and college levels as well as work, internship, or apprenticeship experiences focused on college and career readiness competencies as an integral part of students' curriculum. In May 2016, Senate Bill 1126 authorized LYNX and provided the flexibility for students to earn credit for approved learning experiences that are standards-based, curricula-aligned, and competency-demonstrated rather than rely exclusively on Carnegie units.

Evaluation

The LYNX evaluation is mixed-method and measures the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of LYNX as well as assessing whether the program is succeeding in accomplishing its goals. Data are collected and analyzed to answer local evaluation questions (see *Conclusions – What Has the Evaluation Answered* on page 13) and to fulfill legislative evaluation requirements. With LYNX in its sixth year of implementation, evaluation efforts primarily focus on mid-term and long-term outcomes (e.g., school culture, student engagement, learning, academic performance, graduation rates, and college/career). To inform school improvement and sustainability efforts, the evaluation focuses on stakeholder satisfaction as well as structural and process aspects to identify best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations.

Implementation

The 2022-2023 school year (SY) marked the sixth year of implementation for LYNX. The 2016-2017 SY was a “planning year” followed by five years of implementation (phased-in). The Class of 2021 was the first Cohort for LYNX at FHS. In 2022-2023, over 1,800 students were enrolled at FHS; thus, approximately 40% increase since 2016-2017. More than 40% of students are Hispanic/Latino, 25% black/African American, 23% white, 5% Asian, and 5% two or more races. About half of these students receive free and reduced-priced meals, close to 20% are multilingual learners, and approximately 10% receive special education services. Demographics are similar in each of the LYNX grade-level cohorts.

Impact Highlights

- ▶ The four components of LYNX—advocacy, partnerships, flexible scheduling, and innovative learning—are and continue to remain integral pieces to linking students to new experiences.
- ▶ LYNX is ingrained in the culture at FHS.
- ▶ Student satisfaction remains high (≥ 95%).
- ▶ Partnerships/experiences are helping to influence student plans post-high school.
- ▶ FHS is no longer identified by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as a Targeted Support and Improvement School (TSI) in the 2022-2023 SY.



Watch a video on LYNX scholars describing LYNX: Opportunity, Support, Networking, and Community! <https://youtu.be/NRZvOF2UusI>

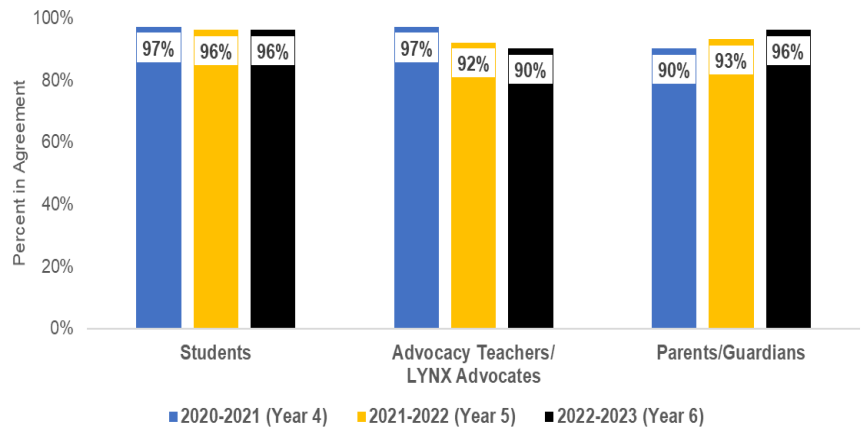
Stakeholder Satisfaction Surveys

Beginning in 2018, satisfaction surveys have been administered to LYNX stakeholder groups each year to obtain feedback on their experience with LYNX. The 2023 surveys were administered in April-June 2023; surveys yielded responses from 61 FHS teachers/advocates, 1,026 students, and 54 parents/guardians. Satisfaction levels continue to remain high with LYNX among respondents (see Figure 1).

Summaries of survey findings for 2018-2020 can be found in prior years' evaluation reporting. Surveys will continue to be administered to stakeholders in 2023-2024; results are used to help monitor progress and inform decisions related to program improvements.

Figure 1

FHS/LYNX Stakeholder Satisfaction - Variety of Options Offered to LYNX Students (e.g., LYNX Experiences, Flexible Scheduling, Free Supper, Learning Lab, and Course Credit by Demonstrated Mastery)



Advocacy

The ultimate goal is for students to advocate for themselves. At FHS, students receive help in creating educational plans and engaging in learning experiences aligned to their strengths and interests through a network of advocates. This network consists of four school-based Advocates, a team of designated grade-level advocacy teachers, school counselors, and LYNX partners.

Every LYNX student creates a student success plan to serve as a roadmap for college and career readiness with the support of their parents and families. LYNX students identify interest-based learning ambitions and career aspirations, then design a schedule of coursework, programs, networks and partnerships specifically designed to support their goals.

Overall highlights:

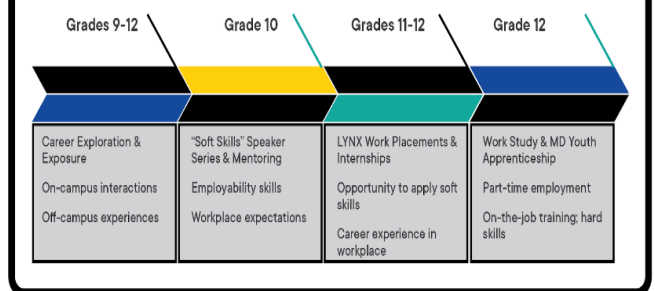
- ▶ Advocacy continues each school year at FHS and serves as a critical component to supporting student evolving needs.
- ▶ Feedback from stakeholders continues to speak to the impact and importance of advocates.
- ▶ Building relationships with students and supporting them in developing and achieving academic, digital, and experiential goals is an integral role of all advocates.
- ▶ LYNX student ambassadors help to mobilize students from all backgrounds and to serve as peer mentors and ambassadors for all things LYNX-related.

Partnerships

Through LYNX partnerships, students are provided with real-world learning experiences (see Figure 2 for the wide range of experiential learning opportunities for students from Grade 9 to Grade 12). From 2017 to 2023, LYNX has gained the involvement of over 180 partners. In 2023, 93 partners engaged directly with FHS students for career/college exploration learning experiences held either at FHS or at their place of business. A total of 59 on-campus and 71 off-campus LYNX experiences, including college visits, occurred in 2023 (see Figure 3 on page 3). The number of students participating in at least one career/college exploration opportunity has increased over time; about 64% of the student population participated in 2023. About 60% of students participating in these opportunities were in Grades 9-10 (n=643) and 40% were upperclassmen (n=443).

Figure 2

Experiential Learning with LYNX Partners



See additional LYNX experiential continuum highlights in Figure 3 on page 3.

STUDENT VOICE ON LYNX EXPERIENCES

I think it helped me a lot with my after high school plans because I didn't use to know what I wanted to do and I just figured it out this year. – Grade 12

Hi [Name of Advocate], thank you again for the LYNX experience yesterday. I really loved going to the [Name of Local Business] and I haven't found anything at all that I am interested in doing after high school but majoring in fashion merchandising excited me more than anything! And it is something I now want to pursue for sure. Is there any chance you could reach out to the owner of [Name of Local Business] or connect me to them because I would really enjoy doing work there or an internship for work study during my senior year and want to get that situated soon? – Grade 11

I already wanted to be an auto mechanic but this helped me decide to take another step in that direction that make it become a reality. – Grade 10

They've opened my eyes opportunities I may have never realized. – Grade 9



Soft Skills Series and Mock Interviews

In addition to career/college exploration opportunities, students in Grade 10 participate in a “soft skills” series during advocacy time and seniors enrolled in English 12 participate in LYNX mock interviews. Over the course of the year, there were 22 partners teaching the “soft skills” series for a total of six sessions each. In 2022 and 2023, eight partners held LYNX mock interviews with FHS seniors enrolled in English 12.



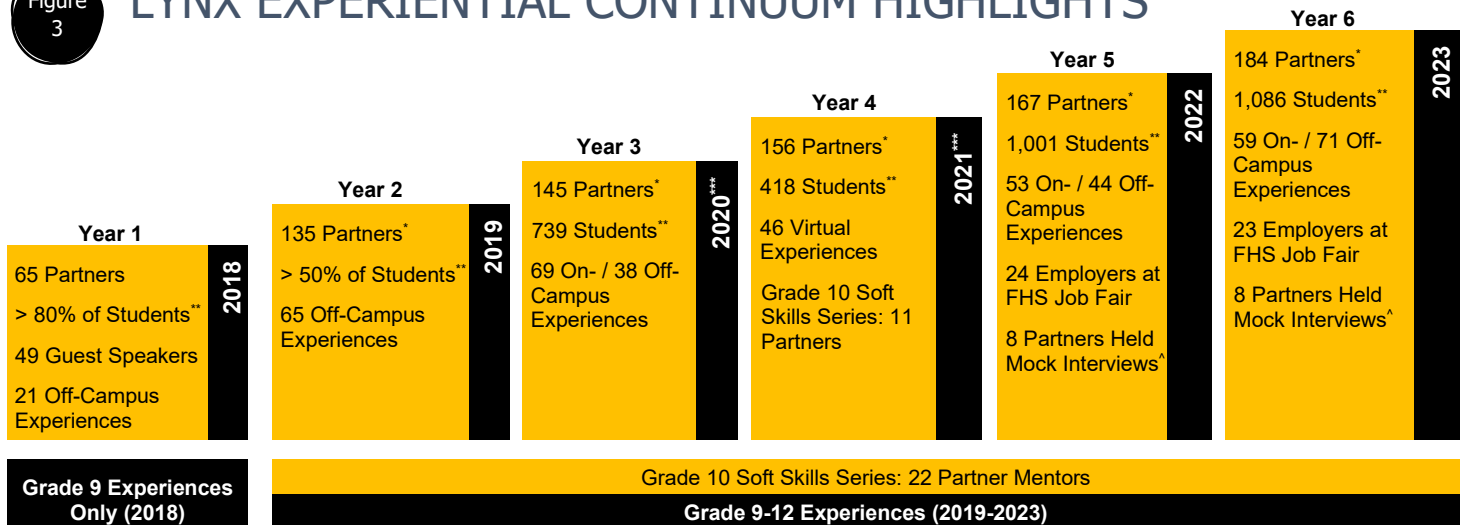
FHS Job Fair

LYNX career exploration efforts culminated into a school-wide job fair beginning in 2022. In both 2022 and 2023, feedback and relevant job fair outcome data were gathered from employers. Data estimates may be underreported as not all employers responded in both years; however, data that was provided by employers as a result of the job fair(s) are promising.

- ▶ 2022: About 128 applications and/or contact information from interested students were obtained by employers. Twenty-seven students were confirmed to be hired.
- ▶ 2023: Seventeen employers providing feedback reported that each of them had at least 20 applications and/or contact information from interested students. At the time of feedback, employers were in the process of contacting, interviewing and/or hiring students as a result of the job fair.

Figure 3

LYNX EXPERIENTIAL CONTINUUM HIGHLIGHTS



* Cumulative number of LYNX partners ** Students participating in ≥ one career/college exploration opportunity *** Pandemic impact ^ English 12 students

STUDENT VOICE – ALLISON WARD

Class of 2023: Allison obtained her real estate license through a high school internship and is now employed at a LYNX partner business.

LYNX has shown me what real jobs and careers look like past high school. By bringing in real adults who can share their story from beginning to end, you get a glimpse into what your future can look like. I love this program because you can get the ins and outs of a career quickly, without the commitment of a degree or training in a field you might later realize is not for you. For me personally, I have chosen to pursue my interest in the real estate field because of a LYNX experience with Allie Vasquez. I knew that after having this experience it was the career for me. It gave me and spark and joy for the future and possibilities of a career in this field that none of the other experiences did. Because of LYNX, once I graduate I will have a direct path and goals set that let me create the future I want to build. – Allison Ward

See additional student feedback on LYNX experiences on page 5.



Work-Based Learning

LYNX is largely credited for the expansion of work-based learning (WBL) opportunities at FHS. Despite a decrease in 2021 as a result of the pandemic impact, the number of students participating in WBL continues to grow (see Figure 4). In 2023, 128 students participated in WBL opportunities.

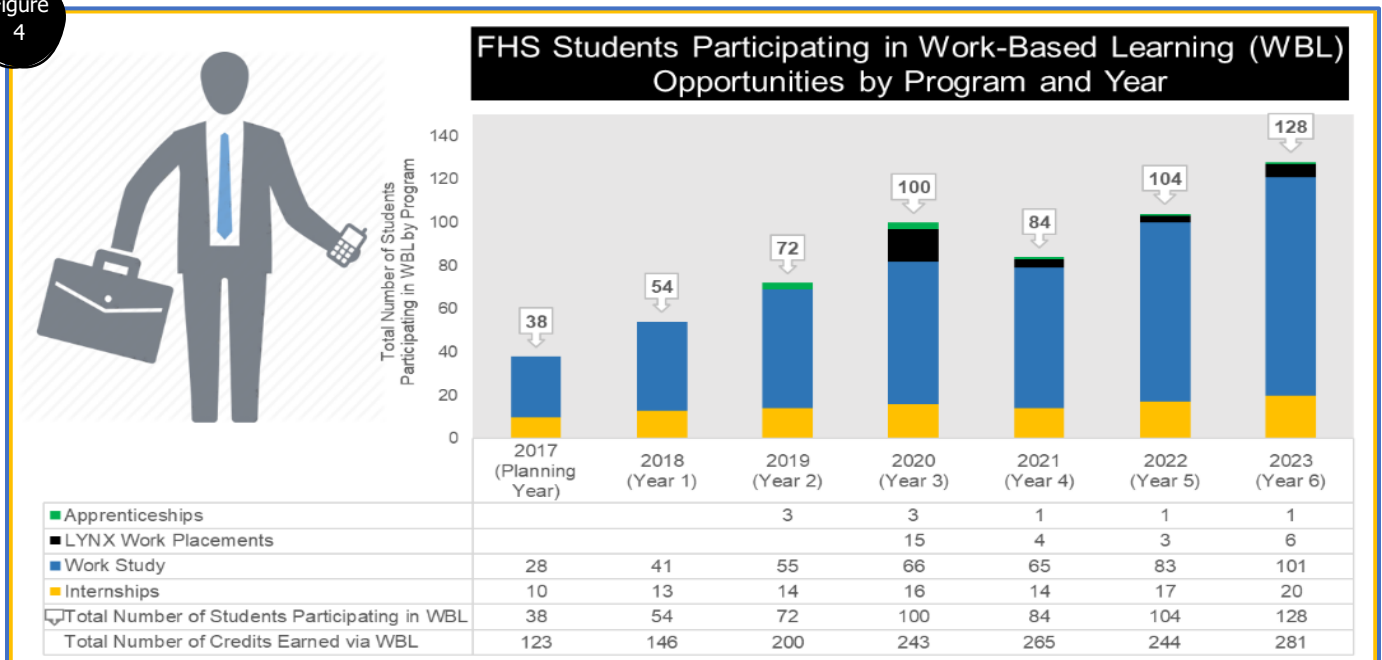
Additional WBL highlights include:

- ▶ LYNX work placements have enabled FHS students to gain experience in paying jobs during their junior year.

- ▶ An FHS student has started their own business under the mentorship of an FHS business teacher and LYNX partner.
- ▶ A student wanting to work in commercial aviation completed an internship and earned their private pilot's license.

In 2023, 44% of the 128 students participating in WBL indicated that they were working or interning in a career area they intend to pursue post-graduation. While this information was not collected in prior years, it is believed to be an increase due to the number of students working in careers areas other than food service or retail.

Figure 4



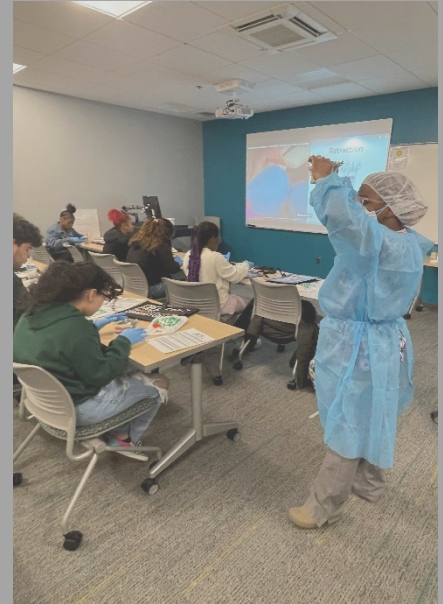
STUDENT VOICE ON LYNX EXPERIENCES

I have participated in countless LYNX experiences, each one providing me a valuable knowledge. My end goal is to become a doctor and the LYNX experiences helped strengthen and give me more knowledge in how I can attain it. I have been in a biomedical science experience with [Name of Partner], careers in medical field, workforce centers, biomedical technology, and many more. I have also learned to develop my soft and leadership skills. LYNX helped orient and developed crucial skills/mindsets toward entering a career/college. They also helped explore different routes and opportunities in life rather than the status quo. – Grade 12

It helped me explore opportunities that I would normally not have, to rule out options that I don't like and expand my knowledge about the ones that I do. – Grade 11

These LYNX experiences helped showed me different volunteer opportunities and internship opportunities that I have already applied to, or am going to apply for in the future. I have been to many college visits as well, which helped me decide what type of college I would like to go to in the future. – Grade 10

Participating in LYNX experiences has helped me shape my career/college goals because it showed me what type of job I want to do in the future. I know that I want to do something that interests me. I realized that in my careers in American Sign Language experience, that freelance is something that could be good for me and that I want to be in control of myself. – Grade 9



Feedback from Partners

Feedback from partners who actively participated in LYNX in 2023 was obtained. Thirty-seven partners responded to the survey; over half had been a partner for at least three years. Partners reported a high level of satisfaction with LYNX (97%). Common reasons why partners decided to be part of LYNX were to:

- ▶ Make a positive impact on students' lives.
- ▶ Share/educate students on their line of work.
- ▶ Engage in a meaningful partnership with the FHS community.
- ▶ Grow the local workforce.

This is a fantastic program and you can see the passion [Advocate] has helping students explore various career opportunities. I'm thrilled every year to reach 20-30 students interested in my line of work and share my experiences and knowledge. – LYNX Partner

As always, it is very rewarding to see the impact on the students. I could, literally, see the light go off in their head. One of the students shook my hand and genuinely thanked me for some of the life advice I shared. Those are the moments that make the LYNX experiences special and why I love being a partner. – LYNX Partner

Feedback from Students

Approximately two-thirds of students responding to the LYNX student survey in 2022 (n=1,062) and 2023 (n=1,026) reported that participation in LYNX experiences influenced their high school plans either a lot or somewhat (see Table 1). On average, about 10% of students surveyed reported a little influence.

Table 1. FHS Student Survey: To what extent did participation in LYNX experiences influence post-high school plans ?

Response	2022	2023
A lot / Some	63%	66%
A little	28%	24%
No influence	9%	11%

When asked to elaborate on how participation in experiences and/or engaging with partners helped to shape students' career/college goals or plans, more than the majority of students had positive feedback. Common student responses on how LYNX partner experiences shaped their career/college goals or plans included students having opportunities to:

- ▶ Explore career options with an open-mind and understand the direction or pathway to a particular career.
- ▶ Learn more about careers they knew they were interested in but at the same time learn about ones they didn't know they were interested in. In addition, they could learn what they didn't want to do versus what they do want to do.
- ▶ Understand that there are opportunities locally—both at local colleges and/or businesses.

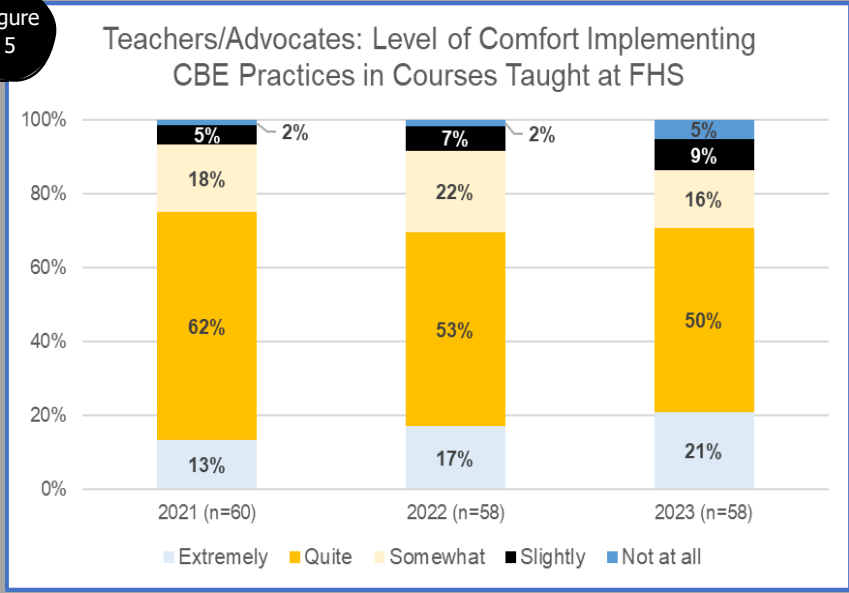
**LYNX is on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter)! @LYNXFHS
Website: www.fcps.org/lynx**

TEACHER PERCEPTION: COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION (CBE) PRACTICES

In addition to ascertaining overall satisfaction with LYNX, the staff survey was designed to gain a better understanding of areas of strength and growth in implementation of a competency-based education (CBE) learning environment.

Seventy-one percent of teachers in 2023 reported feeling “extremely” or “quite” comfortable in implementing CBE practices in the courses they teach compared to 75% in 2021 and 70% in 2022 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5



* N sizes may vary by survey question and not reflect overall number of responses.

Innovative Learning and Flexible Scheduling

LYNX aims to personalize learning in a CBE environment by providing students access to courses that are traditional face-to-face, online, and/or blended. Students at FHS have multiple pathways and opportunities to learn and demonstrate competencies, including structured classroom instruction, credit by demonstrated mastery (CDM), and experiential learning with LYNX partners. In addition, students have the opportunity to:

- ▶ Earn additional credits through a Block 5 course [e.g., Frederick Community College (FCC) ACCE 101 “College Success Tools], CDM, LYNX online courses (taught by FHS staff), and multiple online courses via the Frederick County Virtual School (FCVS).
- ▶ Access courses at the Career and Technology Center (CTC) as well as dual enrollment and advanced placement courses.
- ▶ Access the FHS Learning Lab during the week on any given day for academic support or tutoring. In 2023, the daily attendance for the Learning Lab ranged from 30-80 students.
- ▶ Access TutorMe services provided through FCPS for 24/7 online support.

- ▶ While decreases are shown from 2021 to 2022, teachers’ levels of agreement increased in 2023 for many CBE principles associated with learning expectations and assessment of learning.
- ▶ Although favorable (88%), there is a significant decrease in teachers’ agreement in 2023 on giving students multiple opportunities to improve their work and monitoring academic progress and achievement separately from work habits, etc.
- ▶ Over 90% of teachers reported frequently implementing specific CBE strategies in their classes (i.e., ≥ 90% for each CBE principle).

CBE Learning Environment – Teachers

Table 2 on page 7 includes FHS teachers’ responses to survey items on key CBE principles.

CBE Learning Environment – Student

Students were asked how often their teachers implemented strategies, such as explaining the standards, providing multiple opportunities to improve work, etc. in the classroom. Overall, more than the majority of students responding to the survey reported their teachers frequently implement strategies supporting a CBE learning environment (see Table 3 on page 7). However, student perceptions of their teachers frequently implementing CBE-related strategies in their classes decreased from 2022 to 2023. For example, 61% of students in 2023 responded that their teachers provide timely and specific feedback on how to improve their coursework compared to 67% in 2022.



Free supper is available to all FHS students (Grades 9-12).

In the 2022-2023 SY, 9,638 meals were served, i.e., on average 56 meals/day.

Table 2. FHS Teachers' Perceptions on CBE Learning Environment

Survey Item	Agreement ^a (%)			Frequency in Classes Taught ^b (%)		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
❖ Learning expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students and families, including short-term expectations (e.g., specific learning objectives for a course or other learning experience) and general expectations (e.g., rubric-based performance levels used to determine mastery).	89	73	90	90	95	100
❖ All forms of assessment are standards-based and criterion-referenced, and success is defined by the achievement of expected standards, not relative measures of performance or student-to-student comparisons.	92	86	86			
❖ Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process, and formative assessment results are used to inform instructional adjustments, teaching practices, and academic support.	90	72	92			
❖ Summative assessments evaluate learning achievement and summative assessment results record a student's level of competency at a specific point in time.	94	81	86			
❖ Students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected standards.	97	98	88	95	90	98
❖ Academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance and class participation, which are also monitored and reported.	98	95	88			
❖ Course pacing is adjusted for students as needed (i.e., giving some students more time to work on the topic/unit or competency area).				82	76	91

Teachers/Advocates responding to survey, 2021 SY: n=67; 2022 SY: n=61; 2023 SY: 61

^a To what extent do you agree with the following...; Favorability = "Strongly agree" and "Agree"

^b How often do the following occur for the classes you teach?; Favorability = "Most of the time" and "Always"

Note: Responses were not required for each item within a survey. The n size for each survey item may vary.

Table 3. Students' Perceptions on CBE Learning Environment

Survey Items	Overall, how often do your teachers... ^a (%)		
	2021 (n=353*)	2022 (n=1062)	2023 (n=1026)
❖ Share specific standards, learning targets, or competencies for your classes	79	75	71
❖ Explain the standards and scoring criteria needed to achieve mastery in your classes	78	75	74
❖ Give you more time to work on an assignment if you need it	76	67	66
❖ Give multiple opportunities for you to improve your work	79	74	70
❖ Provide timely and specific feedback on how to improve in your coursework	71	67	61

^a Frequency = "Most of the time" and "Always"

* Pandemic impact: Low response rate due to most students attending virtual/hybrid school year

Note: Responses were not required for each item within a survey. The n size for each survey item may vary.

Academic and Career Progress

To ensure that students are making progress towards meeting goals and meeting expectation, collection and reporting of student achievement data are important. Throughout the last several years of the LYNX evaluation, data on many academic measures were not reported, were limited in reporting, and/or were not available. Transitions in local and state assessments, accountability measures, and the impact of the pandemic on data collection and reporting presented significant challenges to evaluation reporting and data analysis. Thus, caution should be given to attributing fluctuations or patterns in the data to LYNX specifically as confounding variables during the pandemic impacted not only FHS but other FCPS high schools. Note: A school comparison group with baseline characteristics similar to FHS was identified. Data on the comparison school are reported in proceeding sections, when applicable.

Attendance

The overall attendance rate for FHS in 2023 was 90.2% (see Table 4). Attendance rates were slightly higher in 2018 and 2019 (pre-pandemic years) compared to 2022 and 2023 (post-pandemic years). Not shown are data for the 2020 and 2021 SYs (pandemic years) as attendance rates among all FCPS high schools were inflated by students attending virtually or hybrid.

Similar to other FCPS high schools, lingering effects from the pandemic which included an impact on attendance rates (e.g., quarantining due to COVID, lack of student engagement/attendance) continued in the 2022 SY. Figure 6 provides an illustration of the slight increases in attendance rates over the last two years at FHS but similar to many high schools, rates are lower than in pre-pandemic years.

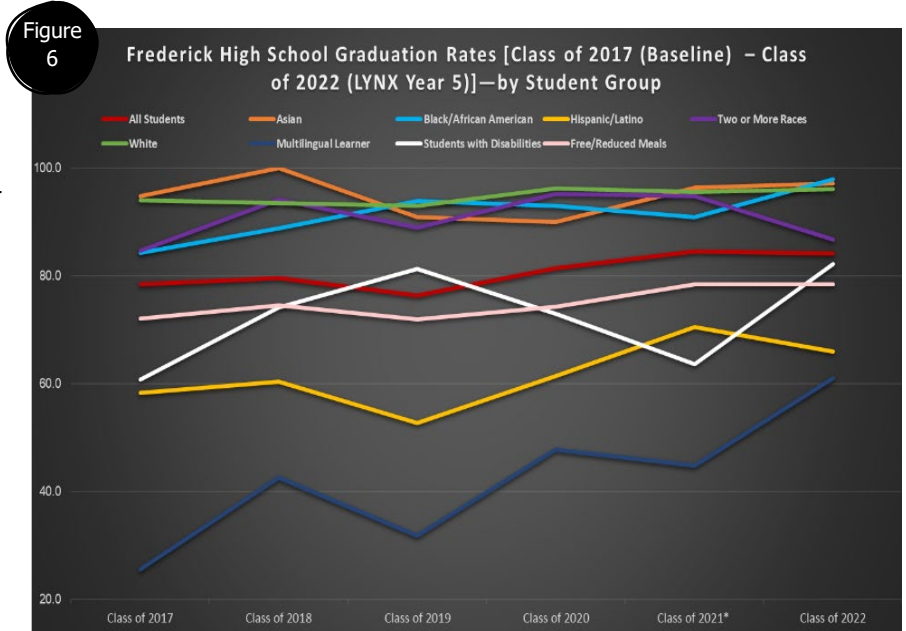


Table 4. FHS Attendance Rates by Grade and Student Group [Includes Comparison School (CS) Data]

Grade	2017	2018 (Year 1)		2019 (Year 2)		2022 (Year 5)		2023 (Year 6)	
	FHS Baseline	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS
All Students	92.8	93.0	91.3	93.0	91.7	88.8	90.8	90.2	91.8
Grade 9	92.1	93.5	90.5	93.6	92.3	88.1	90.1	89.7	90.7
Grade 10	92.5	92.4	91.7	92.7	91.9	87.9	90.7	90.3	91.5
Grade 11	93.2	91.9	91.3	92.1	90.7	89.7	90.8	89.8	91.8
Grade 12	93.8	94.0	91.9	93.4	91.9	89.8	91.7	91.2	93.4
Asian	96.7	96.7	94.1	96.7	95.5	91.6	94.2	92.5	94.1
Black/African American	93.7	94.1	91.1	94.5	91.6	92.3	90.2	92.0	91.3
Hispanic/Latino	90.4	90.6	88.4	90.0	88.9	84.6	90.1	88.2	90.9
Two or More Races	91.2	92.4	88.9	91.8	91.3	90.4	88.7	90.4	90.3
White	94.1	94.8	93.5	95.0	93.6	91.8	92.0	91.3	93.4
Free/Reduced Meals	91.0	91.6	88.0	91.2	88.6	86.4	88.3	88.8	89.9
Students with Disabilities	88.8	92.6	90.2	92.2	89.9	88.3	85.5	88.3	88.7
Multilingual Learner	90.0	89.6	85.1	88.5	87.7	80.6	88.9	87.4	89.9

PARENT VOICE ON LYNX AT FHS

Our daughter just graduated from FHS, and LYNX made all the difference in helping her decide the best path to pursue. She is very confident moving forward based on the advanced coursework she completed and the many positive interactions and experiences she had with LYNX partners along the way. We feel "lucky" that she went to the only school in the county that has these amazing opportunities.

LYNX remains one of the most innovative programs in any high school system in the country. We love and support the initiative and would love to see it move to other schools in Frederick and other counties in Maryland.

I think the program is an incredibly valuable opportunity for students. At this age, they often are unsure and curious about future career plans and the LYNX program introduces them to different experiences by exposing them to some of these options.



Grade Promotion

Approximately 93% of FHS students in Grades 9-11 were promoted to the next grade for the 2023-2024 SY. Thus, 7% of students in Grades 9-11 were retained. This is compared to 90% (promoted) and 10% (retained) at the comparison high school.

Performance on State Assessments

In 2022 and 2023, the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) state assessments were administered to students. The following are the percent of students meeting proficiency in English 10 and Algebra I. The percent of students meeting proficiency is significantly higher for ELA than math. It is important to note that MCAP results did not yield a measurable difference when compared to all FCPS high schools; thus, the results are similar.

English 10 – Percent of Students Meeting Proficiency

- ▶ 2022: 56% FHS; 48% Comparison School
- ▶ 2023: 54% FHS; 70% Comparison School

Algebra 1 – Percent of Students Meeting Proficiency

- ▶ 2022: 6% FHS; 3% Comparison School
- ▶ 2023: 11% FHS; 8% Comparison School

College and Career Readiness – End of Grade 10

Prior to the pandemic, multiple measures were used to determine College and Career Readiness (CCR) status and one of the most common measures was the SAT. However, the pandemic impacted administration of many assessments. For example, SAT census administration did not occur in the 2019-2020 SY due to the pandemic. In addition, state assessment waivers were granted by MSDE to graduating seniors in the 2020-2021 SY. Accountability measures were minimal since the onset of the pandemic.

According to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the new standard is that all students meet CCR by the end of Grade 10. For the 2022-2023 SY, measures to determine CCR status included the SAT and state assessments in ELA and math. In the 2022-2023 SY, 15% of FHS students met CCR status in ELA and math by the end of Grade 10 (compared to 14% at the comparison FCPS high school). In the 2022-2023 SY, results are consistent (i.e., very low) with other FCPS high schools.

Dual Enrollment

Through partnerships with FCC, FHS students have the opportunity to take college courses while also earning their high school diploma. Of the FHS students enrolled in Grades 9-12 in the 2021-2022 SY, 13% (n=206) had taken at least one dual enrollment course. Similar, 13% (n=218) of FHS students in the 2022-2023 SY took at least one dual enrollment course.

A total of 440 dual enrollment courses in 2022 and 492 courses in 2023 were taken among FHS students in Grades 9-12. Seniors and juniors accounted for over 90% of students taking dual enrollment courses. Ninety-six percent of seniors and juniors accounted for students taking dual enrollment courses at the comparison high school (n=265 students; 647 total dual enrollment courses).



Find more information on LYNX at Frederick High School: www.fcps.org/lynx

Graduation (Four-Year) Rates

Graduation status for FHS serves as one indicator in measuring the success of LYNX. The official graduation rate for FHS Class of 2022 was 84.1% (see Table 5). The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate has increased at FHS for all student groups despite a decrease shown among students with disabilities from 2017 to 2022. When compared to the overall FCPS graduation rate from 2017 to 2022, there were similarities in trends overall and for each student group. Data would suggest that the increase in graduation rates may not be unique to FHS. FHS increase among multilingual learners is noteworthy. In 2017, the graduation rate was 25.6%. With the exception of 2021, graduation rates among multilingual learners at FHS has continue to increase annually to 61% in 2022. The Class of 2022 graduation rates were slightly lower for FHS in comparison to one FCPS high school having similar demographic characteristics. However, FHS showed increases in graduation rates in all student groups from 2017 to 2022.

Dropout Rates

The dropout rate for the FHS Class of 2022 was 10.3% (see Table 6 on page 11). Since 2017 (baseline), the dropout rate has decreased at FHS for all student groups despite an increase from 2021 to 2022. When analyzing comparison data for dropouts, similar findings to those of overall graduation rates were found true (with dropout rates decreasing).

***Important:** Due to state assessment waivers granted by MSDE to graduating seniors in the 2020-2021 SY, graduation rates may be higher than during a non-waiver/non-pandemic school year. Graduation and dropout data for the Class of 2023 are not available yet; data are lagged.

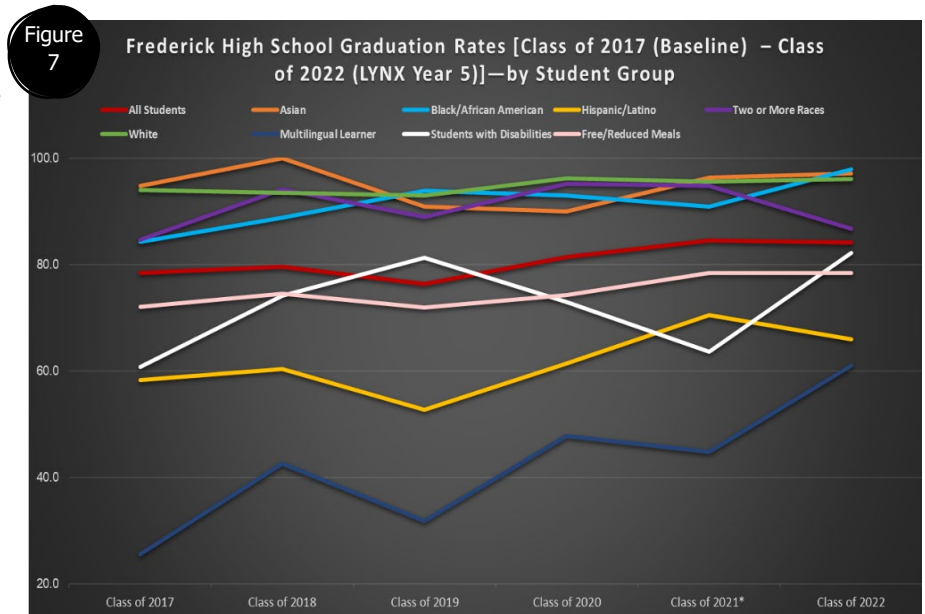


Table 5. Frederick High School Graduation Rates [Class of 2017 (Baseline) – Class of 2022 (LYNX Year 5)]—by Student Group [Includes Comparison School (CS) Data]

Student Group	Graduating Class										
	2017	2018		2019		2020		2021*		2022	
	FHS Baseline	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS
All Students	78.4	79.6	82.0	76.3	84.4	81.4	86.0	84.5	91.0	84.1	85.7
Asian	94.7	100	93.3	90.9	93.3	90.0	100	96.3	88.2	97.1	94.7
Black/African American	84.2	88.8	82.9	93.8	83.2	92.9	91.9	90.8	92.2	97.9	87.3
Hispanic/Latino	58.3	60.3	67.3	52.7	70.6	61.4	70.3	70.5	86.6	65.9	75.7
Two or More Races	84.6	94.1	76.5	88.9	85.0	95.2	95.7	94.7	100	86.7	87.5
White	94.0	93.5	90.1	93.0	94.4	96.2	95.1	95.5	92.5	96.0	92.8
Multilingual Learner	25.6	42.6	20.8	31.8	47.9	47.7	60.0	44.8	88.2	61.0	65.1
Students with Disabilities	60.7	74.1	51.2	81.3	69.4	73.0	71.4	63.6	66.0	82.1	59.3
Free/Reduced Meals	72.1	74.5	72.3	71.9	76.2	74.3	76.8	78.4	84.3	78.4	73.6

* Due to state assessment waivers granted by MSDE to graduating seniors in the 2020-2021 SY, graduation rates may be higher than during a non-waiver/non-pandemic school year.

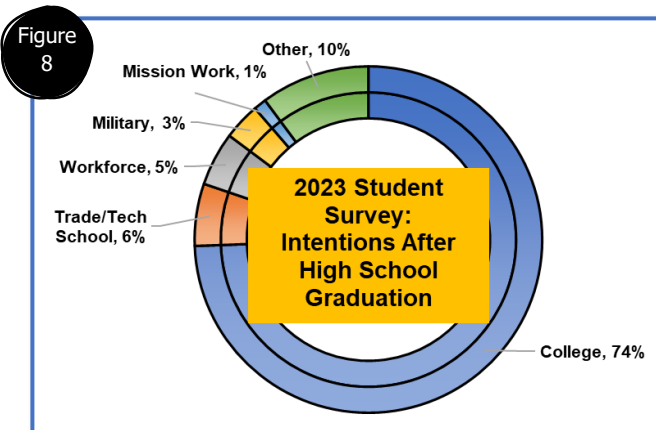
Table 6. Frederick High School Dropout Rates [Class of 2017 (Baseline) – Class of 2022 (LYNX Year 5)]—by Student Group [includes Comparison School (CS) Data]

Student Group	Graduating Class										
	2017	2018		2019		2020		2021*		2022	
	FHS Baseline	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS	FHS	CS
All Students	16.4	13.1	9.1	14.6	9.1	11.6	8.5	7.3	3.4	10.3	7.7
Asian	0	0	0	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black/African American	9.2	5.0	10.5	6.2	7.4	2.0	1.2	3.4	3.3	1.1	2.7
Hispanic/Latino	35.2	26.9	20.4	28.1	21.1	26.6	21.5	14.4	7.6	23.8	15.7
Two or More Races	7.7	0	0	5.6	10	0	4.3	5.3	0	6.7	6.3
White	4.8	4.3	3.3	4.2	2.1	2.9	1.2	2.3	1.3	1.0	5.0
Multilingual Learner	72.1	33.8	50	34.8	33.0	32.6	30.0	20.7	2.9	19.5	23.3
Students with Disabilities	17.9	0	4.9	0	5.6	2.7	2.9	3.0	8.5	0	10.2
Free/Reduced Meals	18.9	13.9	13.1	13.1	12.9	12.0	14.1	7.4	6.4	15.5	16.4

* Due to state assessment waivers granted by MSDE to graduating seniors in the 2020-2021 SY, graduation rates may be higher than during a non-waiver/non-pandemic school year.

College Enrollment

Official college enrollment is not tracked at the local level. Significantly lagged data are published by the National Student Clearinghouse on college enrollment within 12, 16, or 24 months of high school graduation. MSDE also publishes these data on the Maryland Report Card website. In order to ascertain student post-graduation intentions, students were asked about their current plans post-graduation on the LYNX student satisfaction survey. Of 1,016 students responding to the survey question, 74% reported planning to attend either a 2- or 4-year college/university post-graduation (see Figure 8). These results were similar to the 2022 survey in which 73% of students reported plans to attend college post-graduation. In addition, post-graduation decisions data (i.e., intentions) are collected from all graduating seniors in Maryland via a high school graduate follow-up questionnaire. Results from the local and state survey are similar for FHS (see Table 7).



School Culture and Climate

The evaluation seeks to understand whether LYNX has impacted school culture and climate. In 2023, a student-wide climate survey was administered to all FCPS students in Grades 3-12. Survey items were identified and/or revised to align to systemic goals for the district. While not mandatory, students were highly encouraged to complete the survey. Over 1,000 students representing Grades 9-12 at FHS completed the survey in 2023 (i.e., n=1,004; 56% response rate). The overall favorability rate for the culture and climate items was 84% (baseline). For the most part, students reported positive responses to each of the items measuring the construct of culture and climate: student behavioral expectations (91%), feeling supported by adults at school (86%), respected by other students (76%), sense of belonging (84%), and students of all races, cultures, religions, and genders are treated fairly (83%). Overall favorability for the student culture and climate survey was similar at the comparison FCPS high school, higher than eight out of ten high schools, and significantly higher (i.e., ≥ 5%) than six out of 10 high schools.

Table 7. FHS Grade 12 Post-Graduation Decisions

Response	Class of 2022	Class of 2023
College	67%	66%
Employment	13%	10%
Military	6%	4%
Other or Undetermined	14%	20%

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Best practices and lessons learned were captured as part of prior evaluation findings and continue to remain true. These included understanding that:

- 1) Financial support is always a factor in sustainability.
- 2) Change is big and change in school culture takes time; growth mindset among staff is necessary.
- 3) Community perception can be a challenge and an effective communication plan from the onset is critical.
- 4) All staff must “buy into the mission” to support not only the shift in school culture but to support LYNX communication needs.
- 5) School administrators must be constant cheerleaders and advocates for the program or model.
- 6) One-time onboarding is not sufficient for stakeholders; it is a continuous effort of communication and deliberate re-introductions of the “compelling whys”.
- 7) Professional learning is necessary to ensure the expansion of LYNX and progress in planning and implementation of CBE.
- 8) Flexibility and having options are key to LYNX sustainability when facing programmatic adversities resulted from uncontrollable circumstances (e.g., pandemic).
- 9) It is essential to provide resources that offer choice for students and teachers.
- 10) To provide equitable access to all LYNX services and opportunities, ongoing recruitment of bilingual and multilingual teachers, administrators, and LYNX partners should be a priority to meet students’ needs.

Recommendations

The following is a summary of key recommendations gained from local evaluation efforts in 2022. These recommendations continue to remain true based on evaluation efforts in 2023.

- ▶ Consider recruiting and hiring another Advocate (i.e., a fifth Advocate, preferably bilingual/multilingual) given the increase in first-time 9th graders enrolled at FHS from over 300 at the start of LYNX to now over 500 in Year 6. The initial student caseload for LYNX Advocates was to be between 75-100 (max). In order to meet student needs adequately, another Advocate is needed.
- ▶ Continue to evolve the student success plan to meet the needs of students and help FHS better serve students. Obtain and use student and staff feedback to redesign/update the student success plan format to ensure accessibility. Empower Advocates to continue to be involved in the design and use of the student success plan.
- ▶ Expand opportunities for student ambassadors to support peers by providing: academic tutoring, language support on LYNX experiences, and orientation sessions/support for new students.
- ▶ Further establish sheltered Advocacy 1 and 2 groups to better support multilingual learners through sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) practices.
- ▶ Recruit and hire a CBE teacher specialist to support the advancement and transition to CBE and support staff in FHS. This is especially important given the county-wide delay in work related to standards-based learning and FHS no longer contracting with GSP on CBE.
- ▶ Continue recruiting efforts to attract bilingual and multilingual staff (i.e., teachers and administrators) and LYNX partners to meet students’ needs.
- ▶ Provide the infrastructure (e.g., additional bus/driver) to meet the transportation needs for out-of-district multilingual learners who are assigned to FHS by FCPS so that they have equitable access to Block 5 opportunities (e.g., Learning Lab, coursework).
- ▶ Continue efforts to diversify the LYNX partnership network so that experiences are meeting students’ needs (i.e., ensure representative of the diverse FHS student population) and interests.
- ▶ Offer multiple sessions and/or expand access to LYNX experience topics to ensure that students can access experiences without capacity ceilings for participation occurring.
- ▶ Explore creative and innovative ways for LYNX partners to collaborate on experiences to increase student interaction and engagement during experiences.
- ▶ Continue evaluation efforts to support local progress monitoring and continuous school improvement.

Conclusions - What Has the Evaluation Answered?

Since the onset of LYNX at FHS, data were collected and analyzed to answer local evaluation questions (and to fulfill legislative evaluation requirements):

- ▶ To what extent is the LYNX program being implemented as planned?
- ▶ What structural and process aspects of the LYNX program have facilitated progress towards the initial LYNX program vision? What aspects have hindered progress?
- ▶ How has each program component—advocacy, partnerships, innovative instruction, and flexible scheduling—facilitated student engagement? How has each component facilitated student learning?
- ▶ How has professional learning increased teacher knowledge and efficacy in delivering innovative instructional strategies?
- ▶ To what extent were LYNX program goals and/or objectives met?
- ▶ What impact has the LYNX program had on school culture and climate? How satisfied are students, advocates, staff, and families with LYNX?
- ▶ To what extent has the LYNX program impacted student achievement?

The findings from evaluation efforts often provide information to stakeholders about the replication of programs. After six years of implementation at FHS, what overall findings can be shared from the evaluation?

First and foremost, LYNX was designed with the purpose of capitalizing on innovative instruction to support personalized learning experiences for students. Thus, it focuses on student success, student choice, and flexibility in setting and meeting academic and career goals. LYNX has been implemented as planned to date.

Students at FHS have access to a network of advocates supporting students' evolving needs, a wide range of experiential learning opportunities, and multiple pathways and opportunities to learn and demonstrate competencies. In order for an innovative model, such as LYNX, to be replicated, all interconnecting pieces—advocacy, partnerships, innovative learning, and flexible scheduling—are integral and critical to ensuring that outcomes are met. Specifically, LYNX components do not operate in isolation from one another. CBE learning standards are accessed through every piece of LYNX and wraparound services (e.g., advocacy, transportation, Learning Lab) must be in place to ensure that all students have equitable access to learning. Even with the challenges faced during the pandemic years, the inherent flexibility of LYNX services and opportunities within a structured framework allowed FHS to navigate the pandemic and maintain its focus on personalization for students. Other variables (e.g., maintaining optimal teacher-student ratio with enrollment numbers, changes in staffing, and addressing evolving transportation and technology needs) have presented challenges and routine problem solving.

Despite these challenges and the pandemic learning loss felt by all high schools, LYNX has had a positive influence on school culture and college/career planning efforts at FHS. Feedback from students continues to provide testimonial evidence on the impact that partnership experiences are helping to customize students' education path and pursuing opportunities.

The 2023-2024 SY will mark the seventh year of LYNX at FHS. LYNX will continue to stay the course and anchor itself to the key components that define it. Most importantly, LYNX will look to continue to meet the needs of its students, connecting students to experiences, and building a strong community to support academic success.

Financial Report

LYNX Fiscal Year (FY) Financial Report (2017-2023)

Expense Line Items	FCPS	LYNX STATE GRANT	TITLE II/IV FEDERAL GRANT	Expenses						
				FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023
Project Manager for High School Innovation (S/B)	•			\$ -	\$ 125,948	\$ 148,161	\$ 160,668	\$ 164,491	\$ 188,551	\$ 199,635
LYNX Advocate #1 (S/B)	•	• (FY22*)		\$ -	\$ 90,299	\$ 114,337	\$ 127,934	\$ 133,129	\$ 111,948	\$ 124,040
LYNX Advocate #2 (S/B)	•	• (FY22*)		\$ -	\$ 131,292	\$ 133,005	\$ 135,643	\$ 128,864	\$ 137,338	\$ 145,991
LYNX Advocate #3 (S/B)	•	• (FY22*)		\$ -	\$ 110,877	\$ 120,216	\$ 122,087	\$ 124,740	\$ 132,449	\$ 140,827
LYNX Advocate #4 (S/B)	•	• (FY22*)		\$ -	\$ 116,220	\$ 120,448	\$ 127,819	\$ 128,669	\$ 137,822	\$ 127,053
LYNX Secretary (S/B)		•		\$ -	\$ 54,292	\$ 56,636	\$ 41,989	\$ 45,171	\$ 46,716	\$ 49,576
LYNX Instructional Assistants (S/B)		•		\$ -	\$ 52,534	\$ 53,434	\$ 79,137	\$ 86,487	\$ 84,501	\$ 92,842
Negotiated Stipend - FASSE Support Employees with Degree	•			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 648	\$ 648
State ESP Stipends (supplemental pay)	•			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,621
Food Service Site Assistant - Suppers**		•		\$ -	\$ 13,272	\$ 22,800	\$ 15,197	\$ -	\$ 11,343	\$ 13,315
Food and Nutrition Services - Supplies**		•		\$ -	\$ 6,586	\$ 3,180	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Security Guard for After-School/Evening Hours		•		\$ -	\$ 13,145	\$ 12,874	\$ 9,490	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Certified Teachers for After School Learning Lab, Online Courses, and/or Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (supplemental pay)	•	•		\$ -	\$ 14,408	\$ 9,799	\$ 11,880	\$ 44,286	\$ 25,547	\$ 66,816
Certified Teachers – Competency-Based Education Curricular Development (workshop pay)		• (FY22)	• (FY21)			\$ 47,718	\$ 8,797	\$ 35,352	\$ 8,895	\$ 17,593
Bus Driver - After School/Evening Hours/Field Trips (supplemental pay)		•		\$ -	\$ 12,781	\$ 15,981	\$ 13,681	\$ 1,779	\$ 13,744	\$ 28,189
Buses - Fuel and Lube for After School/Evening and Buses for LYNX Partnership Experiences (field trips, job shadow)		•		\$ -	\$ 4,844	\$ 6,495	\$ 8,150	\$ 497	\$ 5,661	\$ 8,082
Resident Substitute - Cover Professional Learning for Staff (supplemental pay)		•		\$ -	\$ 7,187	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
eSchool Student Success Plan Module Software (FY2017) & Maintenance (FY2018)	•	• (FY19)		\$ 21,940	\$ 4,265	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cost for Unique LYNX Experiences/Partnership Events/Promotions		•		\$ -	\$ 893	\$ 1,690	\$ 2,372	\$ 4,993	\$ 8,728	\$ 2,766
MOI for Experiential Learning		•		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 474	\$ 4,753	\$ 1,355	\$ 5,065	\$ 1,732
Travel Expenses for FCPS Staff - Conferences	•			\$ 2,118	\$ -	\$ 1,645	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Block 6 Frederick Community College Tuition Expenses		•		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,559	\$ -	\$ 499	\$ -
Office Supplies/Contracted Printing/Subscriptions & Dues		•		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,198	\$ 1,075	\$ 559	\$ 833	\$ 303
LYNX Program Specific Technology and Supplies (seat licenses for online courses)		•		\$ -	\$ 996	\$ 8,301	\$ 7,761	\$ 1,445	\$ 496	\$ 1,647
Contracted Services for Professional Development - LINC - Blended/Distance Learning Training for Teachers		• (FY18) • (FY20)	• (FY19)	\$ -	\$ 18,000	\$ 39,397	\$ 18,750	\$ 10,800	\$ -	\$ -
Substitute Teacher Cost (Teacher Professional Development, LYNX Experiences)			•	\$ 5,727	\$ 23,062	\$ 26,886	\$ 7,488	\$ -	\$ 5,235	\$ -
Supplies for Teacher Professional Development		•		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,252	\$ 6,013	\$ 320
GSP Consulting Services		• (FY18 - \$10,600) • (FY17-19) • (FY20)		\$ 39,545	\$ 89,350	\$ 78,791	\$ 34,222	\$ 9,885	\$ 4,200	\$ -
				69,330	890,251	1,023,466	945,452	\$ 926,755	\$ 939,232	\$ 1,025,998

S/B = Salary & Benefits

* Only a small portion of LYNX Advocates' salaries and benefits were supported via state funds in FY22.

** COVID grant paid expenses in FY2021