EDUCATE THE ISLE



Provide all residents equal access to primary and secondary education, workforce development, continuing education, and enrichment opportunities to enable them to succeed as productive citizens.



EDUCATE THE ISLE

Investing in public education has immense social and economic benefits. Students who have access to quality education throughout primary and secondary school are more likely to graduate, find gainful employment, have stable families, and be active and productive citizens. Thus, a good education provides substantial benefits to individuals and, as individual benefits are aggregated throughout a community, creates broad social and economic benefits. A major factor in the consideration of a community for potential business locations is the quality of educational opportunities provided to the residents as well as the skill levels of its local workforce. Investing in public education and workforce development raises overall wealth levels for both individuals and the community.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

PUBLIC FORUM 1

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY?

- "Maintain[ing] a quality educational system to ensure that our youth can compete in a global market"
- "Ensur[ing] schools can meet capacity with new development"

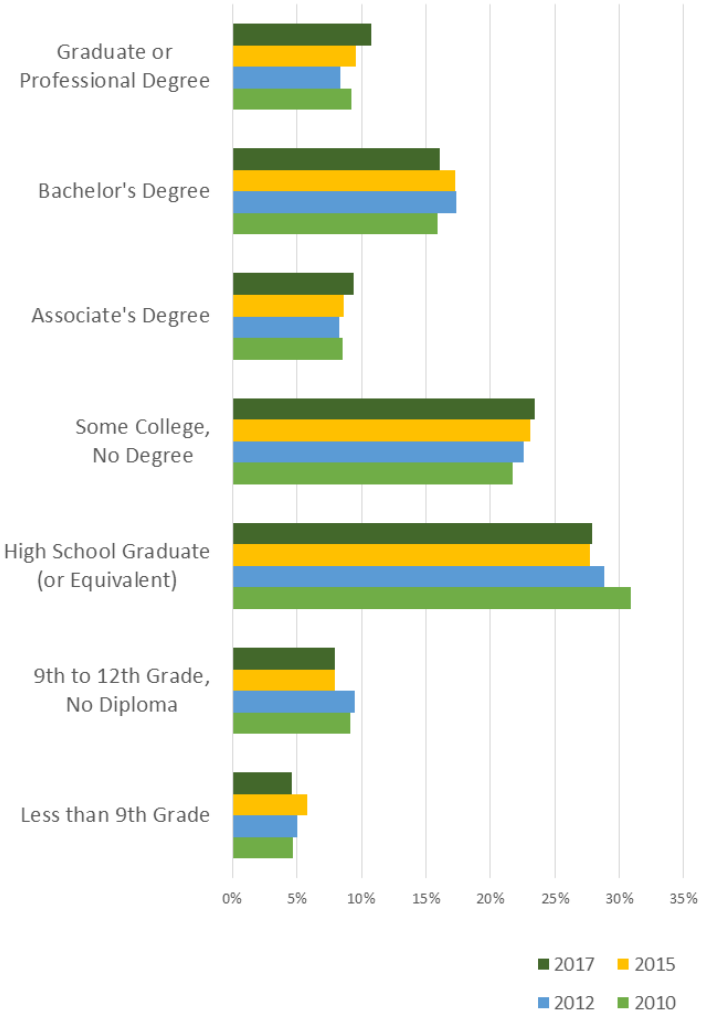
WHAT SHOULD STAY THE SAME IN ISLE OF WIGHT?

- "The focus on a diverse education pathway for the workforce"

IN THE FUTURE I WANT ISLE OF WIGHT TO?

- "Prepare young people for the workforce"

AGE 25 AND OVER HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINMENT



Educational Achievement

The average overall level of education in Isle of Wight's population is comparable to that of the State. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, more than 85% of the population over age 25 have completed high school. This number, however, is racially skewed within the County with only 77% of the black population over 25 possessing a high school diploma compared to 91% of the white population within the same age range. These same numbers within the entire State of Virginia are 85% and 92% respectively. While there is no definitive source of all postsecondary enrollment records, according to the Virginia Department of Education, 64% of Isle of Wight County Schools (IWCS) graduates in 2016 (compared to the 70% of graduates statewide) pursued postsecondary education within sixteen months of graduation. While the percentage of female students who went on to enroll in higher education within the County matched that of the State (75% of female students enrolled in an institution of higher learning), only 52% of male graduates from IWCS did the same compared to the 64% statewide.

Those who leave high school with no employable skills or educational credentials are at a significant disadvantage when attempting to advance in the labor market. Isle of Wight residents who obtain a high school diploma or the equivalent reduce their likelihood of falling into poverty in half (from 17.9% to 9.6%) while those who obtain a bachelor's degree or higher lower this likelihood to 3.9%.



Isle of Wight County Schools

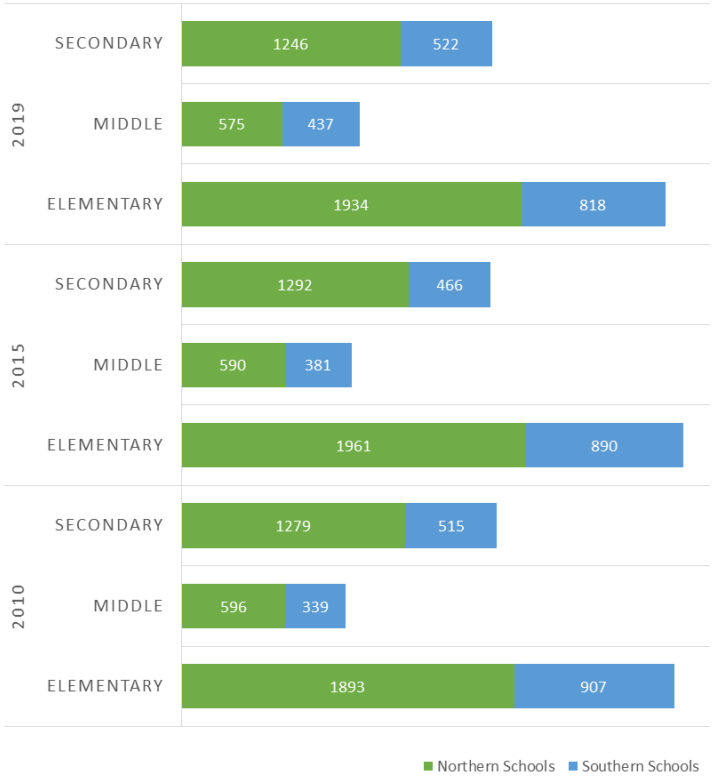
The IWCS system consists of nine schools – five elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. All nine of the County's schools are accredited by the Virginia Department of Education. The northern portion of the County is served by Carrollton Elementary, Hardy Elementary, Westside Elementary, Smithfield Middle, and Smithfield High Schools. The southern portion of the County is served by Carrsville Elementary, Windsor Elementary, Georgie Tyler Middle, and Windsor High Schools.

While public school enrollment in the northern portion of the County experienced large growth in early 1990s, the County's overall public school enrollment has remained steadily around 5,500 students since 2010. While the overall public school enrollment has remained the same, increasing by only four students in nine years, elementary school enrollment has decreased by 50 students (-2% change), middle school enrollment has increased by 80 students (8% change), and high school enrollment has decreased by 25 students (-1% change), as shown in the adjacent chart. In the coming years, approved residential growth brings potential for continued improvements and additions to be made to existing school facilities. Additional information can be found on the IWCS website.

Facilities and Programs

The IWCS system provides a comprehensive program for grades kindergarten through twelve with special programs for gifted students and students with disabilities, remedial instruction in basic skills, advanced placement classes, alternative education, preschool, and conventional education. These programs allow students opportunities to develop their unique gifts and talents and ensure every child is college, career, and life ready.

IWCS ENROLLMENT



High-quality early childhood education offers one of the highest long-term returns of any public investment. To capitalize on these formative years, IWCS offers a pre-kindergarten program for a limited number of students at three of the five elementary schools each year. The division's preschool program, The Learning Center, provides a healthy learning environment that prepares students for success in kindergarten. The program operates on a full day schedule and addresses physical, academic, social, and emotional needs of attendees. However, for parents whose children are not able to attend the offered program, there are not many other options. Fewer than ten daycare facilities are located within



NOTABLE AWARDS RECEIVED BY IWCS

- Distinguished Title I schools
- 2019 Virginia School Boards Association Excellence in Workforce Readiness Award
- 2019 Youth Development Award from Peninsula Metropolitan YMCA
- 2019 Virginia Clean Cities Fuel and Innovation Award
- Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) Showcases for Success 2019, 2018, 2017
- 2018 Workforce Innovation Award, Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board (Opportunity, Inc.)
- 2018 WHRO Grace Little Spirit Award
- VSBA School Board of Distinction 2017, 2014
- VSBA Food for Thought 2016, 2014
- National Blue Ribbon School, Carrsville Elementary School 2013
- Gates Millennium Scholars Windsor High School and Smithfield High School
- Virginia Board of Education Virginia Index Performance (VIP) Awards











Isle of Wight, creating a hardship for working parents and making it increasingly difficult for young families to both work and live within the County.

Two programs in particular, career and technology education (CTE) and dual enrollment, are specifically geared to give interested students a head start for college or a career. The dual enrollment program allows students to take courses at Paul D. Camp Community College (PDCCC) and graduate from high school with college credits already obtained. CTE allows middle and high schoolers to begin career exploration through career and technical education programs with current offerings in agriculture, business and information technology, marketing, technology education, military science, health and medical sciences, and trade and industrial education. CTE also equips participating students with college credits while attending high school, essential employment skills, job-specific technical skills, and industry certifications necessary for the workplace.

An emphasis on authentic learning prompted a new approach to the division's agriculture program and the creation of a working farm. Since opening in September 2017, the students have transformed the Land Lab from six acres of uncut grass, to four fenced pastures, a vegetable garden, and housing for chickens, rabbits and goats. The Barn and Classroom Building at the Land Lab opened December 5, 2018, behind Windsor Elementary School to provide students with real-world learning in the areas of agricultural business management and mechanization, along with plant, animal, and soil science. A full-time farm manager and agriculture teacher collaborate to provide real world experiences through the Land Lab, such as participation in "farm to table" marketing from the sale of farm products to the public and

to the division's culinary arts program. The lab has welcomed groups of elementary students as teachers introduce science standards in their classes. The working farm has made agriculture come to life throughout the division. The experiences provided through this program allow all interested students to experience the industry which is so important to the economies of both the County and the State.

On March 6, 2019, IWCS also opened the Career Building at Smithfield High School. The facility is home to five of the IWCS CTE programs, including welding, nursing, culinary arts, manufacturing, and engineering. Students in the welding, manufacturing, and engineering programs receive hands-on learning and access to industry standard equipment that allows them to take an idea from concept to finished product. Students in the nursing program have access to a mock medical facility with beds, manikins, and diagnostic equipment. Culinary arts students learn in a commercial kitchen and operate a student-run restaurant. These classroom experiences, as well as school-arranged internships and apprenticeships, prepare students for a successful future; and upon

KEY FACTS AND TRENDS

- **In 2014, Georgie Tyler Middle School was opened to replace the aging Windsor Middle School.**
- **Since 2017, IWCS has completed a Building Trades facility and a new greenhouse at Windsor High School; constructed a JROTC fieldhouse, an athletics fieldhouse, and heavily renovated an existing facility for the Career Building at Smithfield High School; and constructed the Barn and Classroom building behind Windsor Elementary School.**
- **IWCS altered the grade structure at Hardy Elementary to alleviate overcrowding at Westside Elementary School.**
- **Long-range plans for the division include a new elementary school to address growth in the Carrollton area and significant renovations to Hardy and Westside Elementary Schools to bring both aging buildings up to modern standards.**











graduation, students in the program are given the opportunity to begin a career with a company in their field of study.

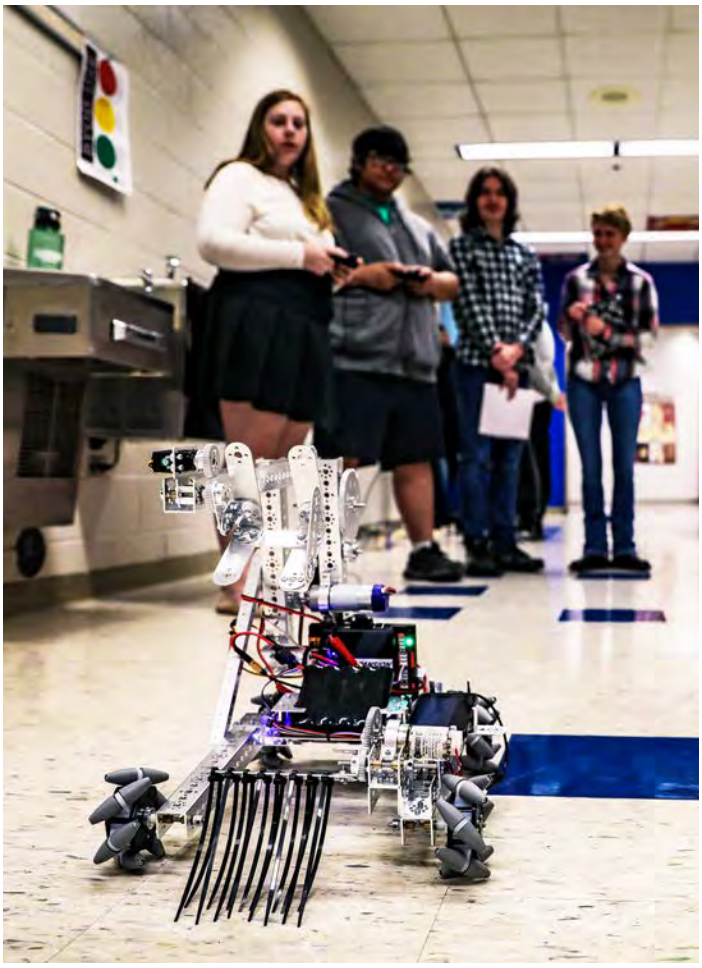
Workforce Development

Increased public investment in aiding noncollege-bound youth and unemployed or underemployed adults in acquiring the training, skills, and experience needed to get good jobs will increase the strength of Isle of Wight's labor pool. Workforce development programs are effective antipoverty tools when they create avenues for low-income individuals to gain skills and find secure, better-paying jobs. These programs also provide another route to building a successful career path by providing access to valuable skills needed on the job. Instead of choosing between college or starting a career, students can now employ both to achieve their personal goals.

Isle of Wight County is positioning itself to be a premier destination for business growth and for workforce innovation. Isle of Wight County Economic Development has partnered with IWCS to establish the Workforce Development Working Group, which includes local, regional, and state workforce partners. The goal of this group is to create a County-wide workforce development program that supports the workforce training efforts of new and existing businesses.

Economic Development officially launched its ACT® Work Ready Communities initiative in October 2018. The nationally recognized ACT® Work Ready Communities Program certification helps localities quantify and track job-ready skill sets of the current, transitioning, and emergent workforce using WorkKeys assessments that result in a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Certification will help the County link, align, and match its workforce development efforts for economic growth and competitiveness. This initiative increases the reach of the County's pre-existing workforce development program – Isle of Wight Works. This brand includes www.isle4jobs.com, which points directly to workforce development programs, data, and job search tools. The local Workforce Development Working Group, established in 2015, will continue supporting the County's efforts toward work-ready certification. By the end of 2018, the County had achieved 23% of its goal toward full certification.

In addition, PDCC'S Division of Workforce Development provides training to assist job candidates and existing workers to improve their skill sets. The College also offers transfer degrees and career and technical degrees. For those interested in continuous learning throughout adulthood, PDCCC also offers non-credit courses open to individuals over 21 as well as courses available to seniors via a membership-based program. In addition to courses offered at PDCCC, Blackwater Regional Library, IWCS, and Isle of Wight Department of Parks and Recreation offer classes in foreign and sign languages, athletics, crafts, and hobbies to ensure that residents can continue learning throughout their lives.



POLICIES AND ACTIONS

The United States' economy has shifted from one of manufacturing to one of technology and knowledge-based services. To remain competitive, Isle of Wight must continue to provide opportunities for our future and current workforce to acquire skills to meet changing needs and retain high levels of competence in the constantly shifting economy. The support and strengthening of the planning efforts by the County and their educational partners will allow those opportunities within the County to continue to grow. The final chapter of the Plan, "Create the Isle," establishes timeframes and responsible parties for the implementation of each action step

POLICY	ACTION
Support early childhood education and life-long learning through schools, libraries, continuing and higher education programs, community-based education programs, and recreation programs for people of all ages.	Partner with Isle of Wight County Schools to develop level of service standards and criteria for initiating planning efforts for new capital improvements.
	Improve community access to books (in paper and electronic format), computers and the internet, and spaces for programming and civic engagement.
	Develop strategies to increase the locations and availability of childcare.
Enhance Isle of Wight's quality of life to retain and recruit a highly skilled workforce for the community.	Continue to grow programs that enhance job skills of County residents needed by employers.
	Support efforts by area schools, colleges, and businesses to integrate recent graduates into the local workforce.
	Create public-private partnerships to expand housing choice and availability in key areas.
Improve public access to high speed networks.	Develop a County broadband access plan to promote commerce, educational opportunities, and social engagement.
	Identify partnership opportunities to expand broadband coverage throughout the County.

