

Children's Services Act



Office of
Children's Services
Empowering communities to serve youth

Outcome Indicators Report FY2022

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Executive Summary

This annual report addresses the requirements of Virginia Code §2.2-2648.D.17. by summarizing statewide performance for each of the six measures. This review includes the most current complete fiscal year (FY2022 and the four prior fiscal years. For this year's report, the period is FY 2018 – FY 2022.

Findings include:

- In its first year of reporting, the percentage of youth in this year's CANS cohort (FY 2022) with improved scores was similar to last year's cohort (FY 2021).
- The Child Strengths domain had the largest percentage of the FY 2022 cohort showing improvement from its initial assessment (57 percent). Approximately 40 percent of youth in the FY 2022 cohort showed improvement in the School and/or Behavioral/Emotional Needs domains.
- The percentage of youth receiving only Community-based services, among all CSA-funded services in the fiscal year, has increased each year for the last five years. In FY 2022, 87 percent of youth received only Community-based, CSA-funded services.
- The statewide performance on foster care-related outcomes was slightly lower this year (74 percent in family-based settings and 79 percent exiting to permanency) compared to FY 2021 (75 percent in family-based settings and 82 percent exiting to permanency).

Introduction

Virginia Code, §2.2-2648.D.17. requires that the State Executive Council for Children's Services shall:

Oversee the development and implementation of a uniform set of performance measures for evaluating the Children's Services Act program, including, but not limited to, the number of youths served in their homes, schools and communities. Performance measures shall be based on information: (i) collected in the client-specific database referenced in subdivision 16, (ii) from the mandatory uniform assessment instrument referenced in subdivision 11, and (iii) from available and appropriate client outcome data that is not prohibited from being shared under federal law and is routinely collected by the state child-serving agencies that serve on the Council. If provided client-specific information, state child-serving agencies shall report available and appropriate outcome data in clause (iii) to the Office of Children's Services. Outcome data submitted to the Office of Children's Services shall be used solely for the administration of the Children's Services Act program. Applicable client outcome data shall include, but not be limited to: (a) permanency outcomes by the Virginia Department of Social Services, (b) recidivism outcomes by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, and (c) educational outcomes by the Virginia Department of Education. All client-specific information shall remain confidential and only non-identifying aggregate outcome information shall be made available to the public.

Under the direction of the State Executive Council for Children's Services (SEC), the Office of Children's Services (OCS) has developed a set of performance/outcome measures to be used to evaluate the Children's Services Act (CSA) program. The six indicators are:

- The percentage of youth who had a decrease in their score on the School Domain of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS), the mandatory CSA assessment instrument, from a baseline assessment to the most recent reassessment or discharge;
- The percentage of youth who had a decrease in their score on the Child Behavioral and Emotional Needs Domain of the CANS instrument from a baseline assessment to the most recent reassessment or discharge;
- The percentage of youth who had a decrease in their score (indicating increased strengths) on the Child Strengths Domain of the CANS instrument from a baseline assessment to the most recent reassessment or discharge;
- The percentage of youth receiving only Community-based Services (CBS) of all youth receiving CSA-funded services;
- The percentage of youth in foster care who are in family-based placements; and
- The percentage of youth who exit from foster care to a permanent living arrangement.

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Outcomes

The CANS is the mandatory uniform assessment instrument for all children receiving CSA-funded services. It is administered at the time of service initiation and at periodic intervals throughout the duration of services. The reassessment interval varies depending on the service provided and local policy and practice. Typically, children receiving more intensive services are reassessed more frequently.

- The CANS School Domain score is the total score of the three domain items.¹
- The CANS Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain score is the total score of the ten items that constitute the domain.²
- The CANS Child Strengths Domain score is the total score of the 11 items that constitute the domain.³

A trained and certified assessor scores each item in a Domain as a 0, 1, 2, or 3, with a lower score indicating the youth has less significant needs (or is better functioning) in those areas. Domain scores would be expected to decrease (as a youth's needs decrease) if interventions have the desired impact. Children are assigned to an annual "cohort" in which their baseline (initial) assessment occurs. Only youth with at least one reassessment within six months of the end of the fiscal year (FY) are included. The FY 2022 cohort includes youth with an initial (baseline) assessment on or after July 1, 2022 and a reassessment on or before January 1, 2023. As time elapses and additional youth in the FY 2022 cohort are reassessed, the number in the cohort will grow, and the outcomes will be recalculated⁴. The baseline assessment score is compared to the most recent assessment for children in each cohort. As of January 1, 2023, the most recent assessment was used to develop this report. The percentage of youth with a decreased domain score on these items is calculated for each locality. For the FY 2022 cohort, the average time between the baseline and most recent assessment was 220 days.

¹ The items are: School Behavior, School Achievement and School Attendance.

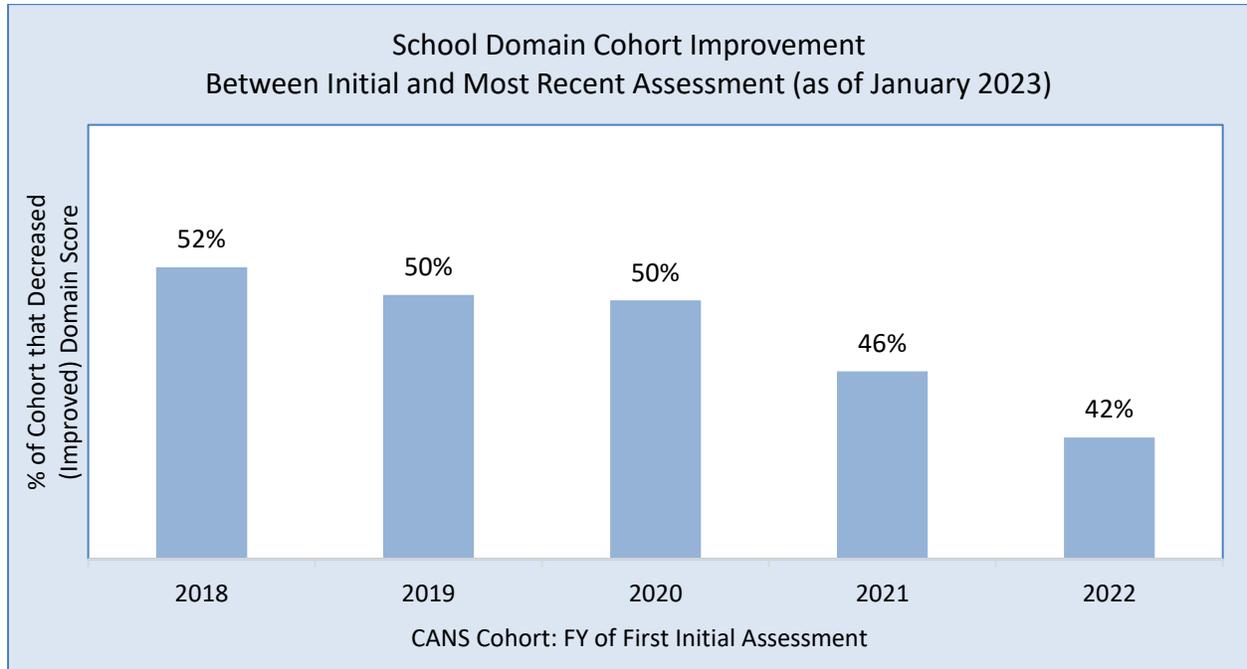
² The items are: Psychosis, Impulsivity/Hyperactivity, Depression, Anxiety, Oppositional, Conduct, Adjustment to Trauma, Anger Control, Substance Use and Eating Disturbance.

³ The items are: Family, Interpersonal, Optimism, Educational, Vocational, Talents/Interests, Spiritual/Religious, Community Life, Relationship Permanence, Child Involvement with Care, and Natural Supports.

⁴ Locality specific data for FY 2021 and updated data from prior year's cohorts at the local level is reported in the CSA Data and Outcomes (CQI) Dashboard, found on the CSA website.

School Domain of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths

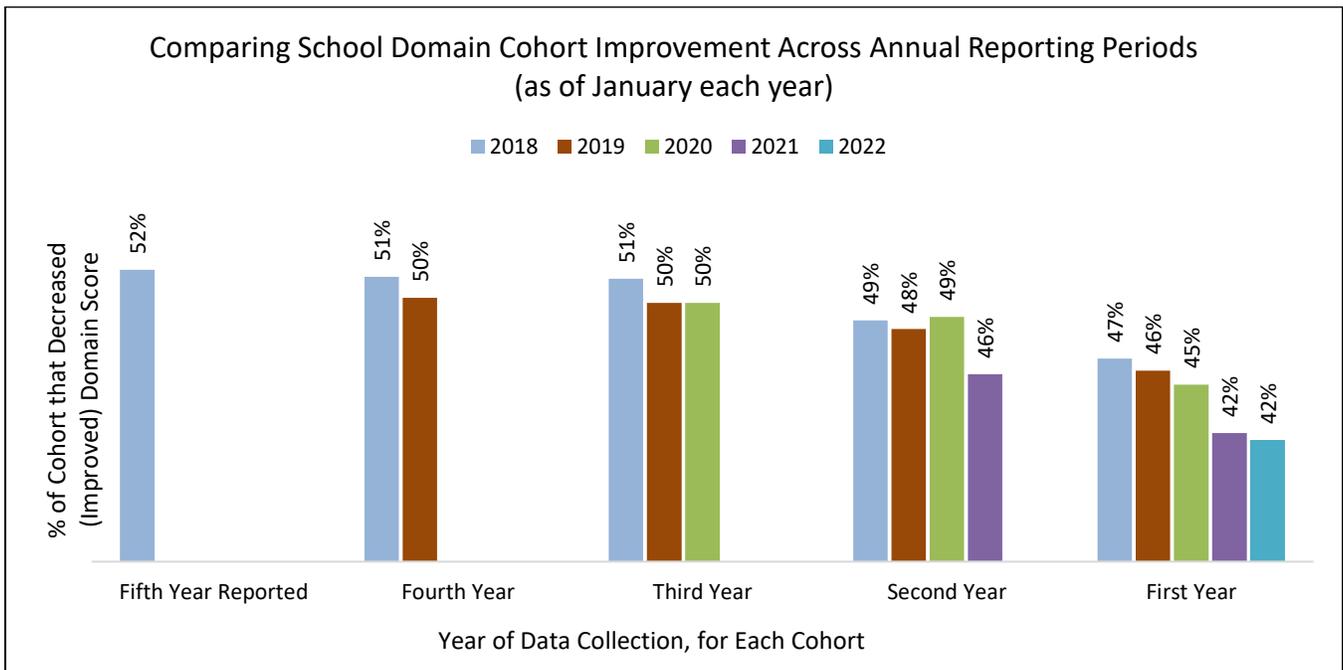
In the first year of reporting for the FY 2022 cohort, 42 percent showed improvement (a decrease in the score) between the initial and most current assessments. Prior year cohorts have also demonstrated improved School domain scores from their earliest initial assessment. The FY 2018 cohort had the most extended average period between assessments (782 days) and the greatest percentage of improvement (52 percent).



Outcomes tend to improve with more time between the initial and most current assessments, and this pattern is seen with the increasing percentage of a cohort that improves over time. This consideration should be considered when comparing differences between the current and prior years' cohorts.

Average Number of Days Between Initial and Most Recent CANS Assessment (as of 1/1/23), by Cohort

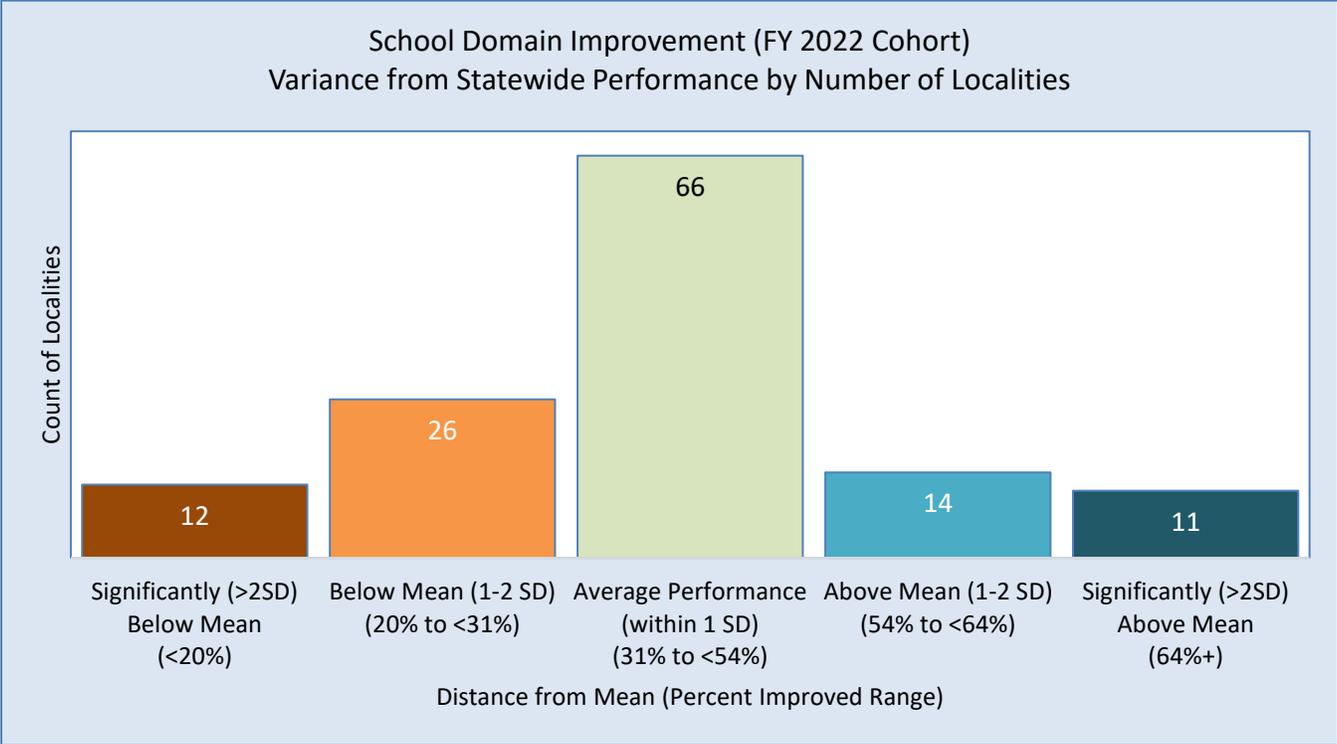
Cohort	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of Youth	4,448	4,234	3,827	3,407	3,604
Average Days	782	677	571	406	220



The percentage of each cohort showing improvement for the first year of reporting has declined over the last five fiscal years. Forty-seven percent of the FY 2018 cohort and 46 percent of the FY 2019 cohort improved in their first year, followed by 45 percent for the FY 2020 cohort and 42 percent for the FY 2021 and FY 2022 cohorts.

For cohorts with multiple years of available data, the trend has been a steady increase in the percentage of youth showing improvement. However, the increase slows around the third year of measurement. For example, the proportion of youth with improvement for the FY 2018 cohort increased in the first three years of reporting, maintained in the fourth year (51 percent showed improvement for both years), and increased slightly in the fifth year. The proportion of the FY 2019 cohort with improvement from the initial assessment increased through the first three years of reporting; the fourth year of reporting for this cohort also maintained the prior year's levels (50 percent of the cohort improved). This pattern may suggest that improvement in this Domain tends to "level out" after some time.

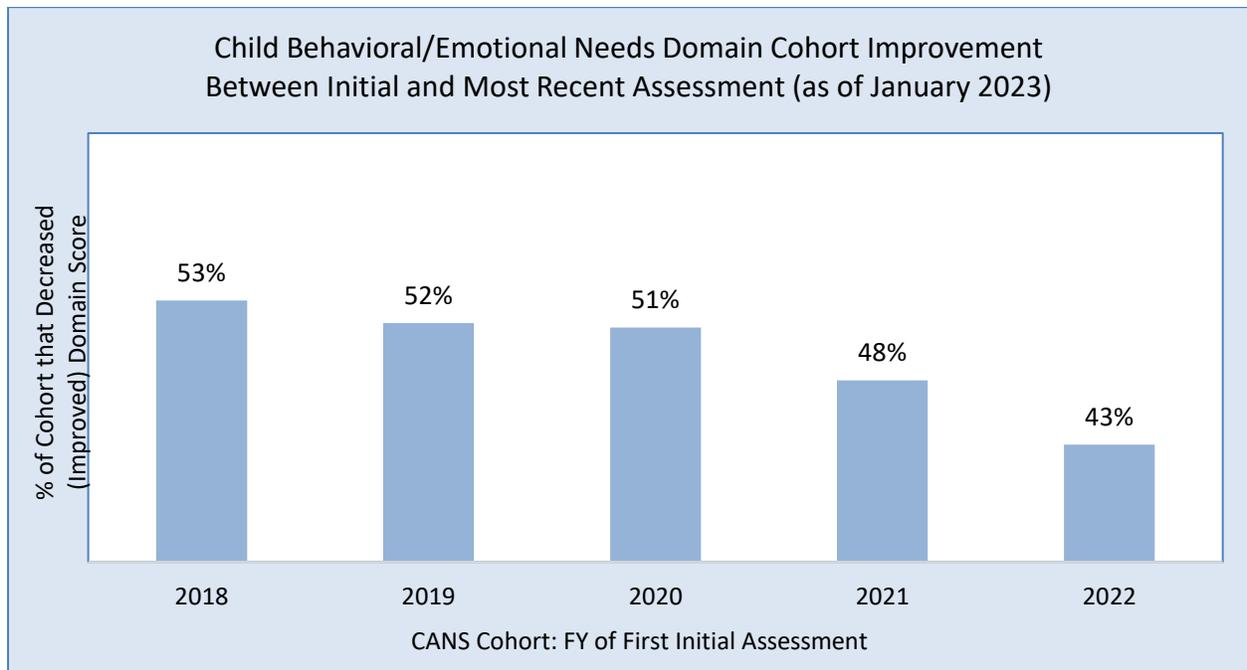
The graph below displays the count of localities based on the percentage of improvement achieved by the FY 2022 cohort compared to the statewide weighted mean.



While the performance for a majority of localities (66 out of 129 reporting, or 51 percent) fell within one standard deviation of the statewide mean, the number of localities outside this range was larger for lower improvement (38 localities) than for high improvement (25 localities).

Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths

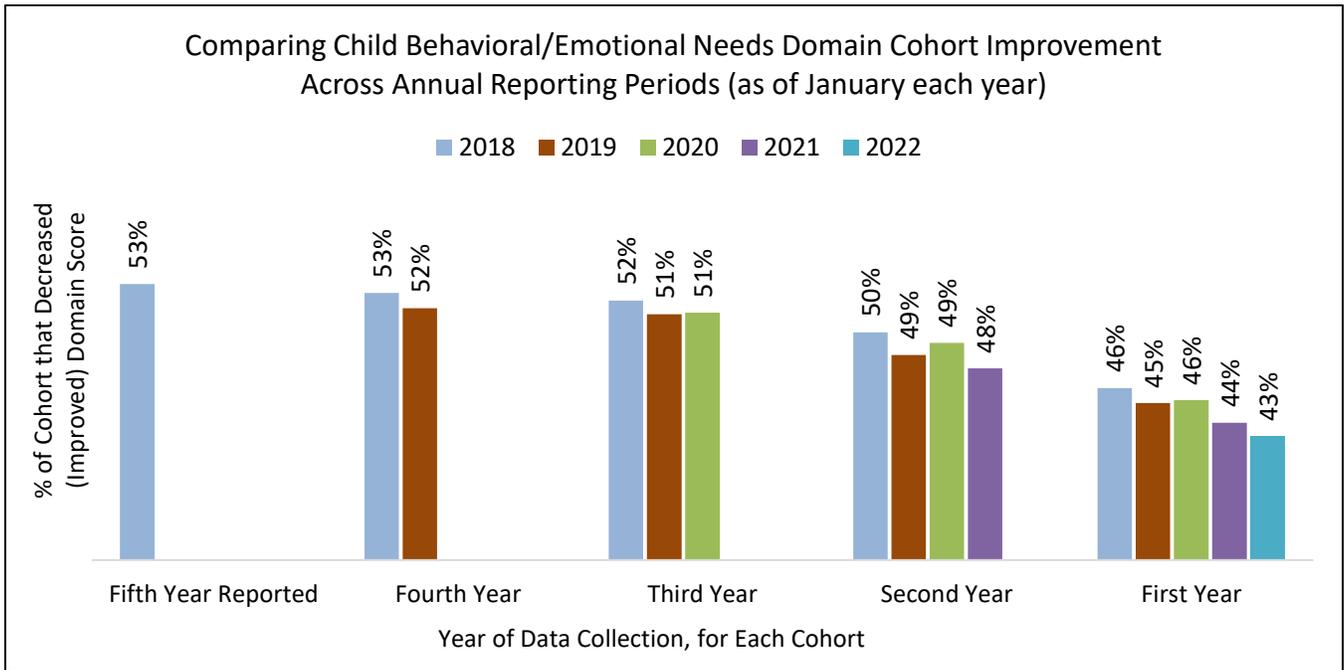
In the first year of reporting for the FY 2022 cohort, 43 percent showed improvement (a decrease in the score) between the initial and most current assessments. Prior cohorts have also demonstrated improved Behavioral/Emotional Needs domain scores from their earliest initial assessment. The FY 2018 cohort had the longest average period between assessments (782 days) and the greatest percentage of improvement (53 percent).



Outcomes tend to improve with more time between the initial and most current assessments, and this pattern is seen with the increasing percentage of a cohort that improves over time. This consideration should be considered when comparing differences between the current and prior years' cohorts.

Average Number of Days Between Initial and Most Recent, as of January 2023, by Cohort

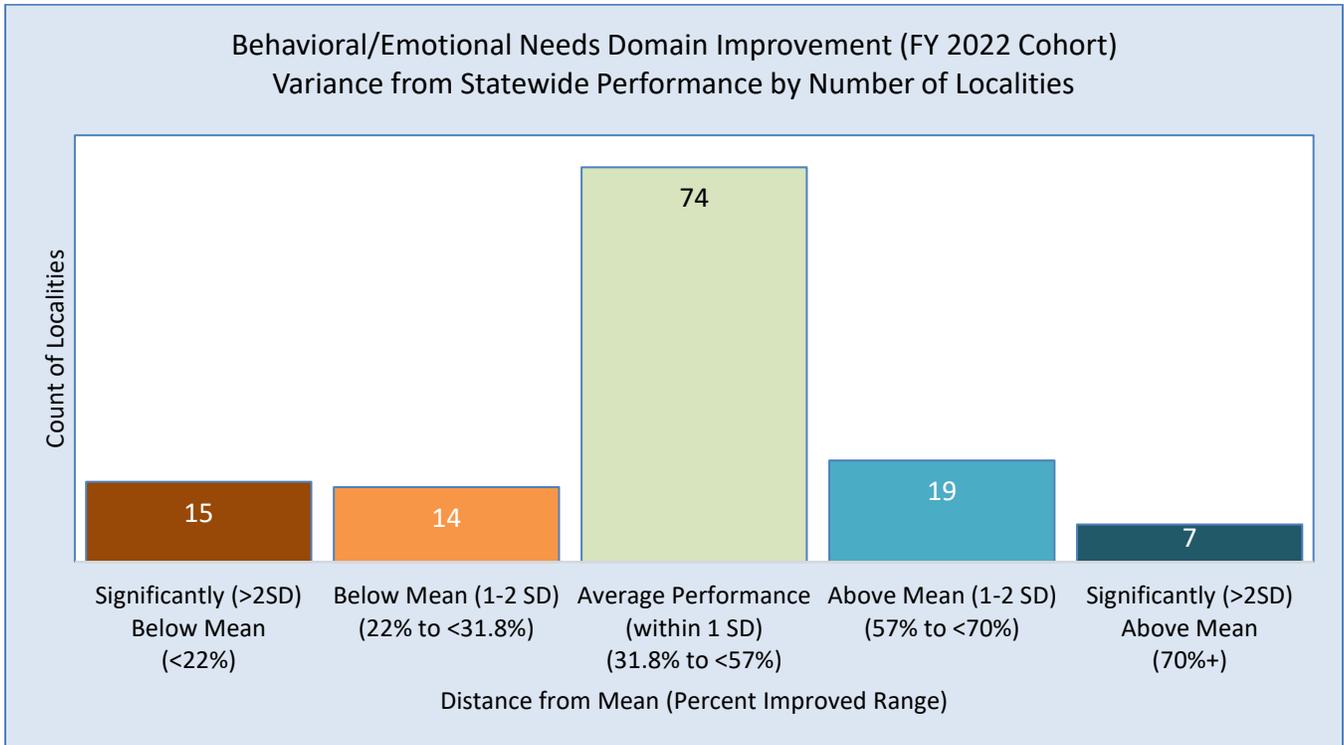
Cohort	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of Youth	4,448	4,234	3,827	3,407	3,604
Average Days	782	677	571	406	220



The percentage of each cohort showing improvement in the first year of reporting has declined over the last five fiscal years: 46 percent of the FY 2018 and FY 2020 cohorts improved in their first year, and 45 percent of the FY 2019 cohort improved in their first year. The FY 2021 cohort showed 44 percent of youth improving from the initial, followed by 43 percent for the FY 2022 cohort.

For cohorts with multiple years of available data, the trend has been a steady increase in the percentage of youth showing improvement. The increase slows around the fourth year of measurement, one year later than for School domain improvement. This pattern may suggest that improvement in this Domain tends to "level out" after some time.

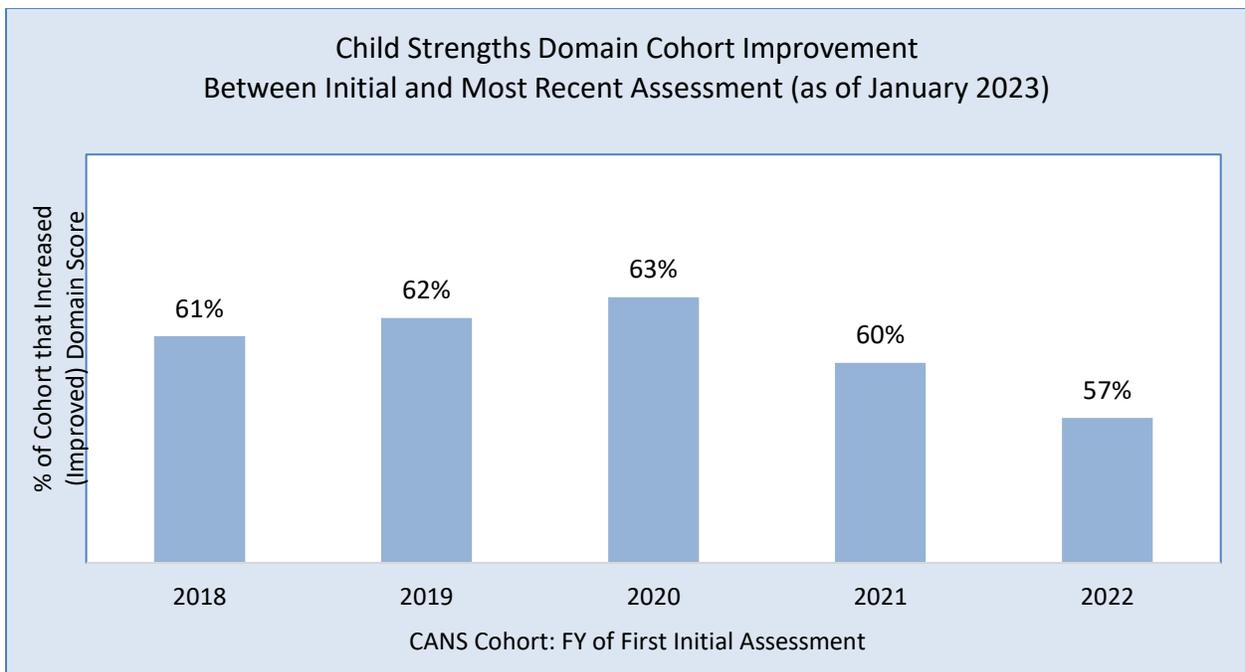
The graph below displays the count of localities based on the percentage of improvement achieved by the FY 2022 cohort compared to the statewide weighted mean.



The performance for most localities (74 out of 129 reporting, or 57 percent) fell within one standard deviation of the statewide mean. Similar to locality-level improvement in the School domain, there were more localities with below-average improvement than above-average improvement for the Behavioral/Emotional Needs domain (29 versus 26 localities, respectively).

Child Strengths Domain of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths

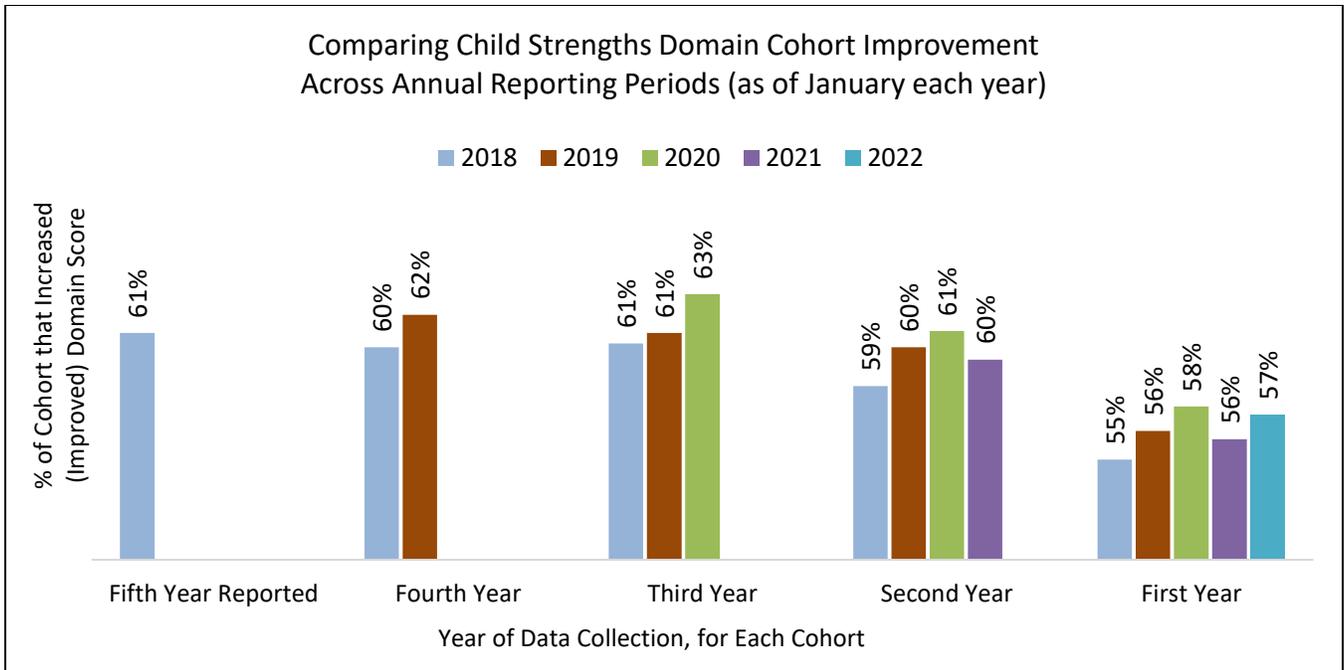
In the first year of reporting for the FY 2022 cohort, 57 percent showed improvement (an increase in the score) between the initial and most current assessments. Prior cohorts have improved their Child Strengths domain score from their earliest initial assessment. The FY 2018 cohort had the longest average period between assessments (782 days) but did not show the greatest percentage of improvement, as was the case for the other two domains. Sixty-one percent of youth in the FY 2018 cohort improved their scores in this domain from their initial assessment. The FY 2020 cohort had the largest proportion of improvement since the initial assessment (63 percent, with an average of 571 days between assessments).



Outcomes tend to improve with more time between initial and most current assessments, and this pattern is seen with the increasing percentage of a cohort that improves over time. This consideration should be considered when comparing differences between the current and prior years' cohorts.

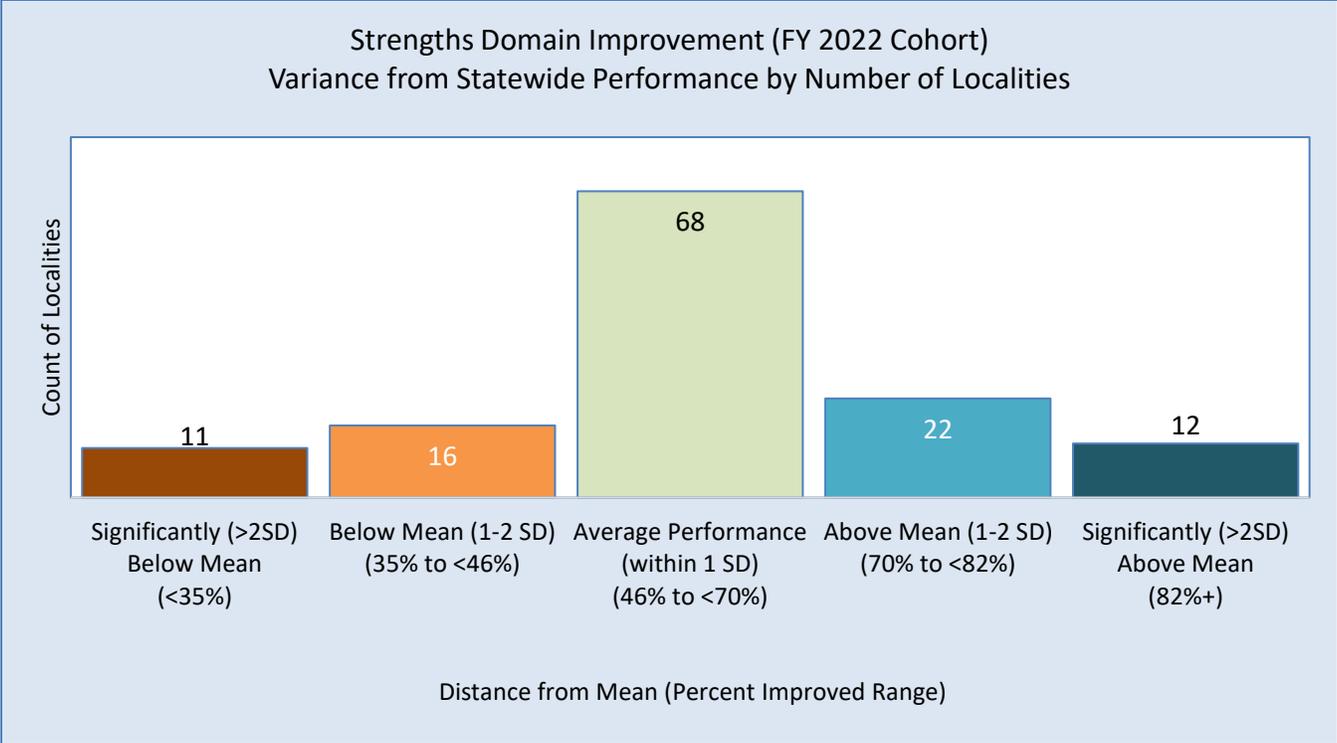
Average Number of Days Between Initial and Most Recent, as of January 2023, by Cohort

Cohort	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of Youth	4,448	4,234	3,827	3,407	3,604
Average Days	782	677	571	406	220



The percentage of each cohort showing improvement in the first year of reporting has been variable, and between 55 and 58 percent demonstrated improvement from the initial assessment for all five cohorts. Of the three domains analyzed in this report, the Child Strengths domain has had the highest proportion of cohort improvement in the first year.

The graph below displays the count of localities based on the percentage of improvement achieved by the FY 2022 cohort compared to the statewide weighted mean.



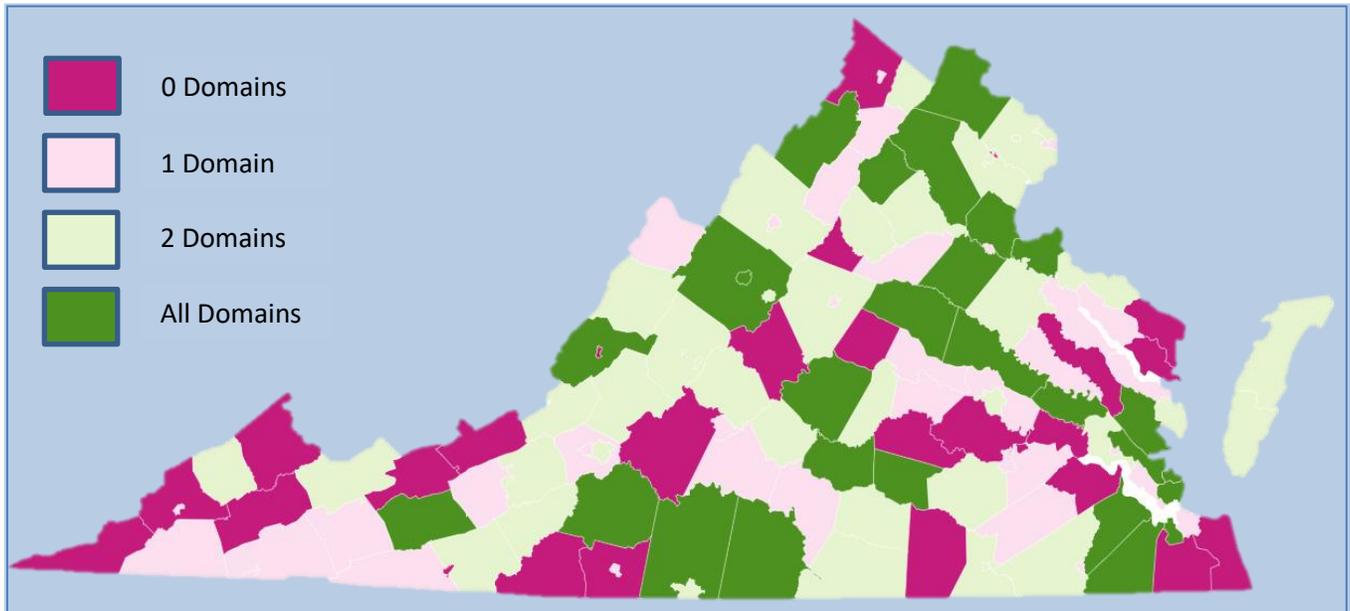
Most localities (68 out of 129 reporting, or 53 percent) fell within one standard deviation of the statewide mean. Unlike performance in the other two CANS domains, the number of localities with above-average FY 2022 cohort performance was greater than those with below-average performance (34 versus 27 localities, respectively).

CANS Performance by Location

The map below visualizes, by locality, results for the FY 2022 cohort across the three CANS domains addressed in this report: School, Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs, and Child Strengths. A locality is shaded based on the number of domains, out of three, in which its FY 2022 cohort's percent of improvement met or exceeded each domain's overall statewide percent improved.

Map of Virginia Localities:

Count of CANS Domains where Percent Improved (FY2022 Cohort) Met or Exceeded Statewide



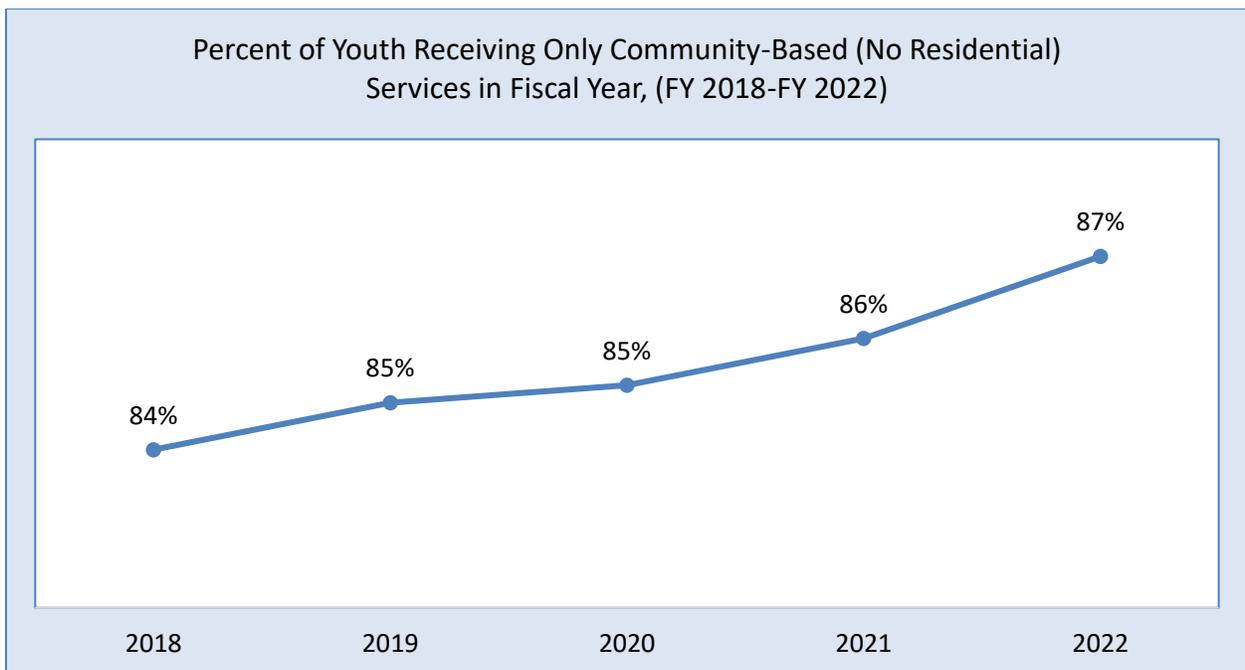
Map created using Datawrapper

Most localities showed improvement equal to or exceeding the statewide value for at least one CANS domain (103 localities or 79 percent). There were 27 localities where the proportion that improved was below the statewide value in all three included CANS domains. Using DSS geographic regions as a guide, 36 percent of Western localities (8 localities), 30 percent of Central (8 localities), 17 percent of Eastern (4 localities), 13 percent of Piedmont (4 localities), and 12 percent of Northern (3 localities) had below-statewide percentage improvement in all three domains. Cohort performance that equaled or exceeded statewide values in all three domains was most prevalent in the Northern (8 localities or 31 percent) and Eastern (7 localities or 29 percent) regions of the state.

CSA Performance Indicator

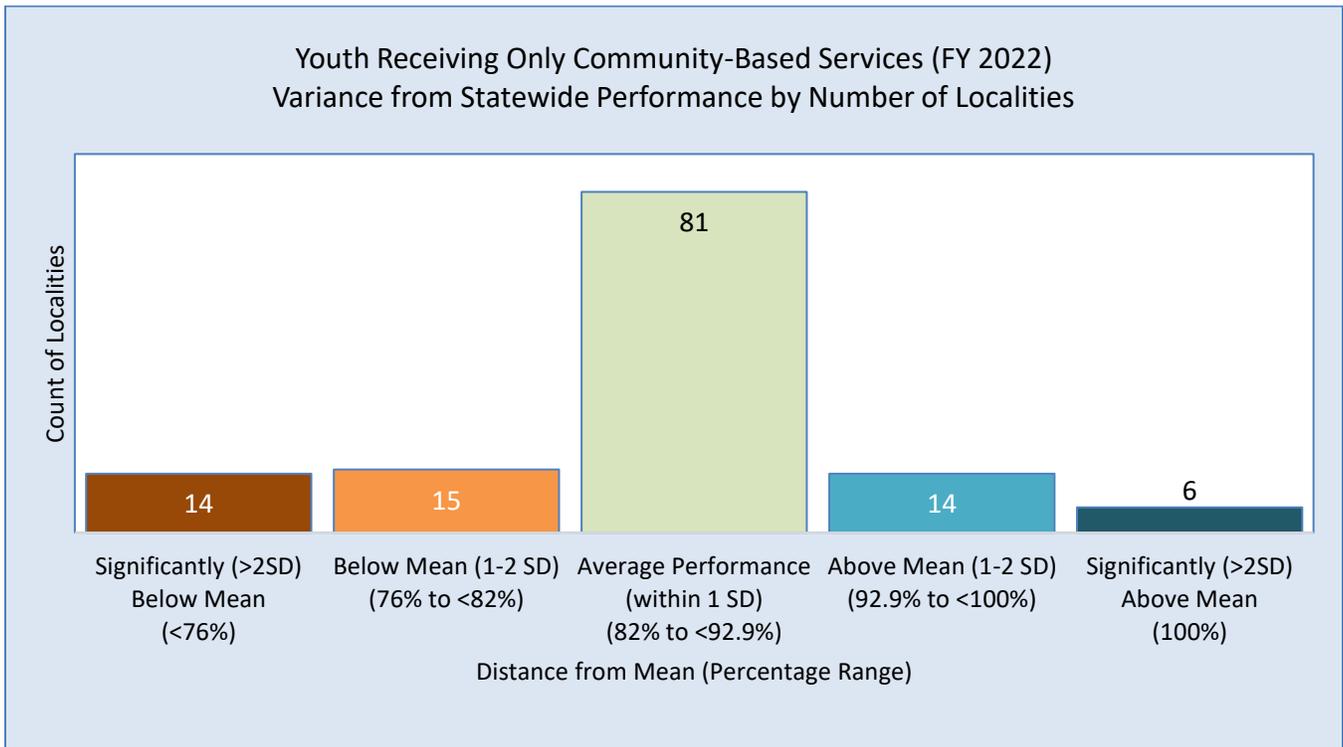
Youth Receiving Only Community-Based CSA-Funded Services

The CSA has long supported serving youth in their homes and home communities as a centerpiece of the system of care approach. This indicator is one measure of how this goal is realized. In each fiscal year, youth who received only community-based services through CSA (no residential or congregate care) are counted from the entire population served.



In FY 2022, 87 percent of all CSA youth received only community-based services. This percentage has increased steadily over time.

The graph below displays the count of localities based on the percentage of youth that received only community-based services in the fiscal year, compared to the statewide weighted mean.



While most localities (81 out of 130 reporting, or 62 percent) fell around the mean statewide value, more localities had below-average performance (29 localities) than above-average performance (20 localities).

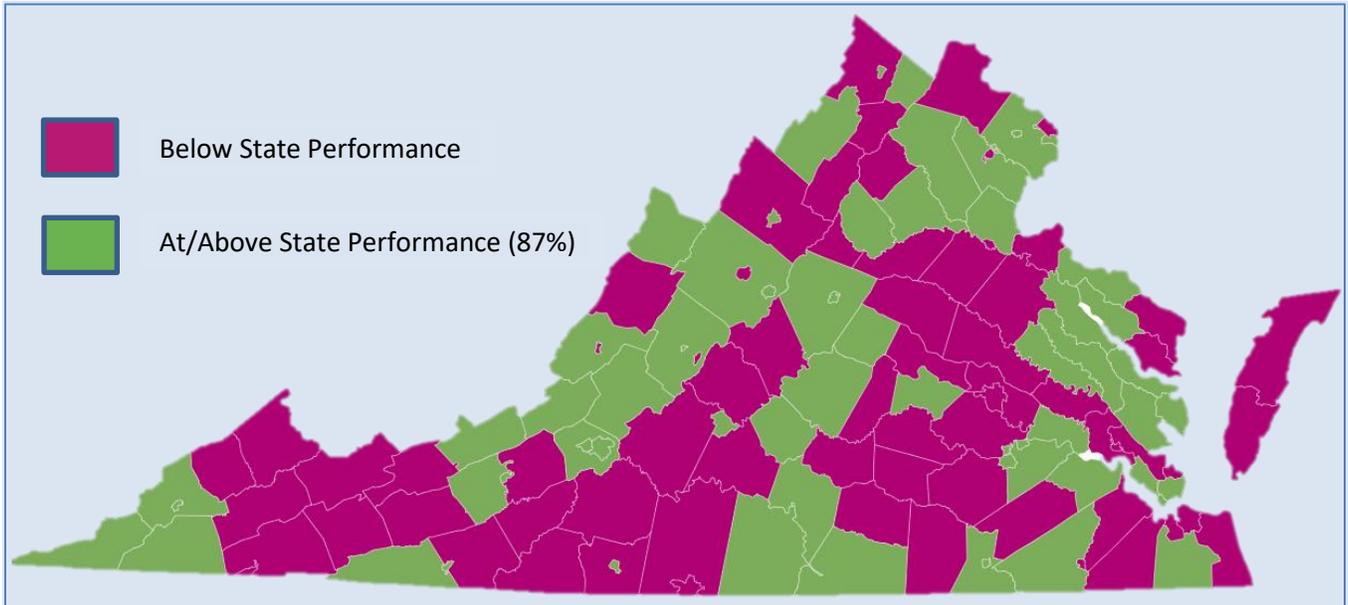
In all 130 localities, at least half of the CSA youth received only community-based services; in 118, the proportion was at least 75 percent. Six localities reported 100 percent of youth received only community-based services.

Community-based Services Only by Location

The map below visualizes, by locality, performance in using only community-based services. A locality's shading represents whether its percentage of youth receiving only community-based services through CSA funding and no congregate care was at least as high as the statewide percentage for FY 2022 (87 percent) or lower.

Map of Virginia Localities:

Localities whose Performance (FY2022) Met or Exceeded Statewide Percentage



Map created using Datavrapper

Sixty-eight localities, or 52 percent, performed below the statewide value in FY 2022. A slightly smaller percentage of localities (48 percent, or 62 localities) performed above 87 percent.

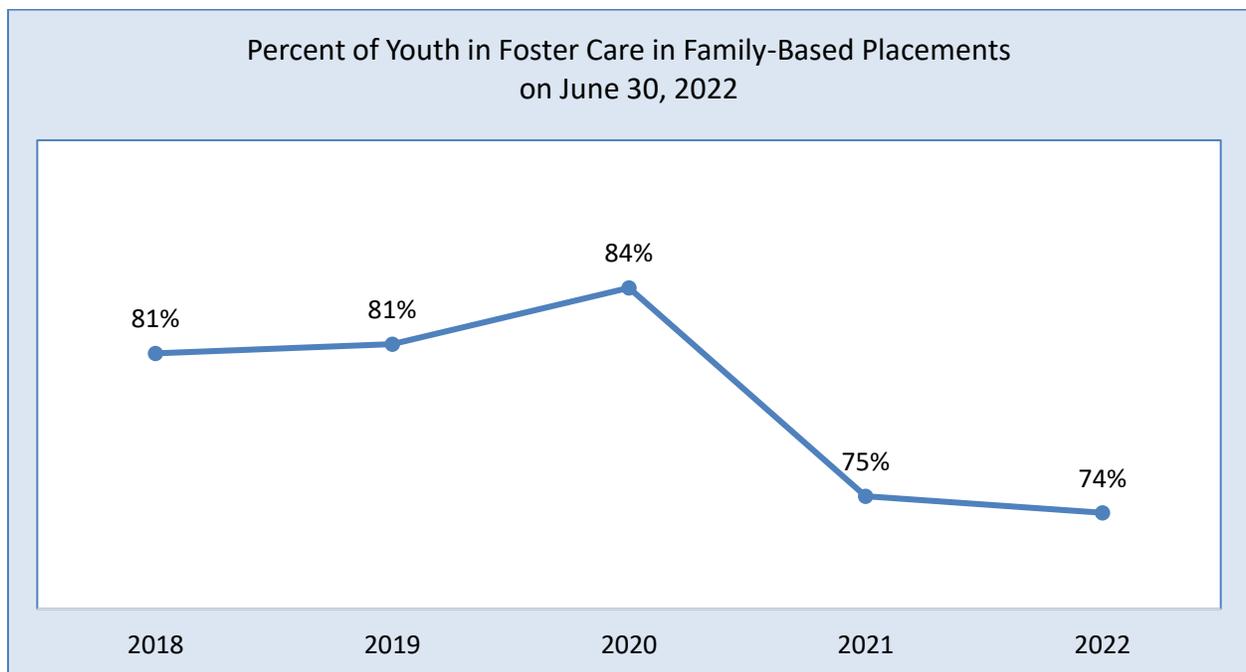
Using DSS geographic regions as a guideline, the Piedmont region had the largest proportion of localities (19 localities, or 61 percent of the region) with above-statewide performance for youth accessing only community-based services. Regions at or above 87 percent (in descending order) were Central (13 localities, or 48 percent); Northern (12 localities, or 46 percent); Western (9 localities, or 41 percent); and Eastern (9 localities, or 38 percent of localities in the region).

Outcomes Related to Foster Care

A majority (53 percent) of children served through the CSA in FY 2022 were referred by a local department of social services due to involvement in Virginia's child welfare system. The state Department of Social Services (VDSS) has established multiple indicators for children in the foster care system. The CSA has adopted two of these indicators in its performance measurement model.

Children in Foster Care in Family-Based Placements

Best practices in child welfare suggest that children removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or other reasons do best in family-based foster care settings. These are family and family-like settings with a limited number of children as opposed to a group home or other larger congregate care setting. The VDSS has established a target that 85 percent of the children in foster care are placed in a family-based placement.

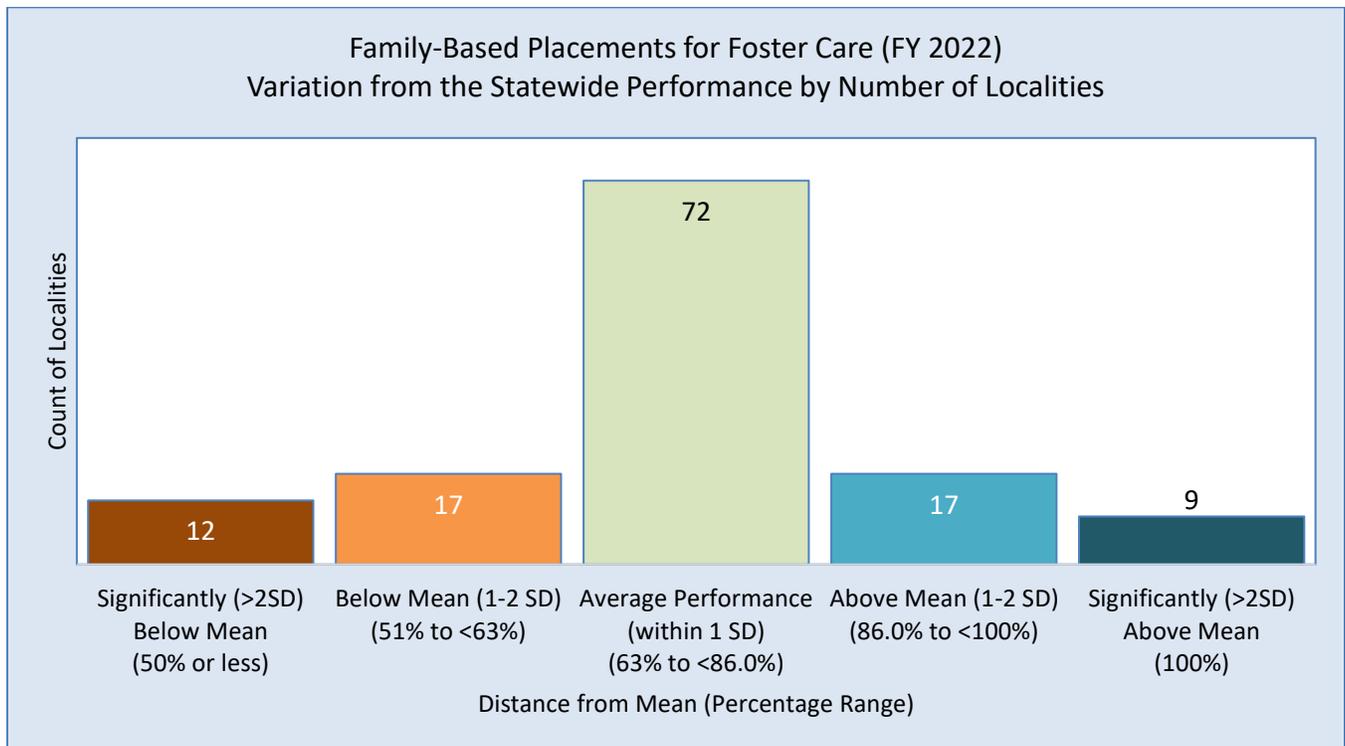


Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Research and Planning, Children's Services System Outcomes (CSSTO) report

Statewide performance on this indicator was 74 percent, or 11 percentage points below the VDSS established target, at the end of FY 2022. FY 2021 performance was similar, at about 75 percent. The last two fiscal years reported were around five percentage points below the performance for FY 2018 through FY 2020 (between 81 and 84 percent). Performance on this indicator for FY 2021 and 2022 may not be comparable to prior years (FY 2018 - 2020) due to a change in how the VDSS calculated this

outcome. Specifically, in FY 2021 and 2022, the sum of youth in current family-based and congregate care placements no longer equals the total child count reported for some localities. The method by which placement types are defined may result in a child being excluded from both of these categories.

The graph below displays the count of localities based on the percentage of youth in foster care that were in family-based placements at the end of the fiscal year, compared to the statewide weighted mean.



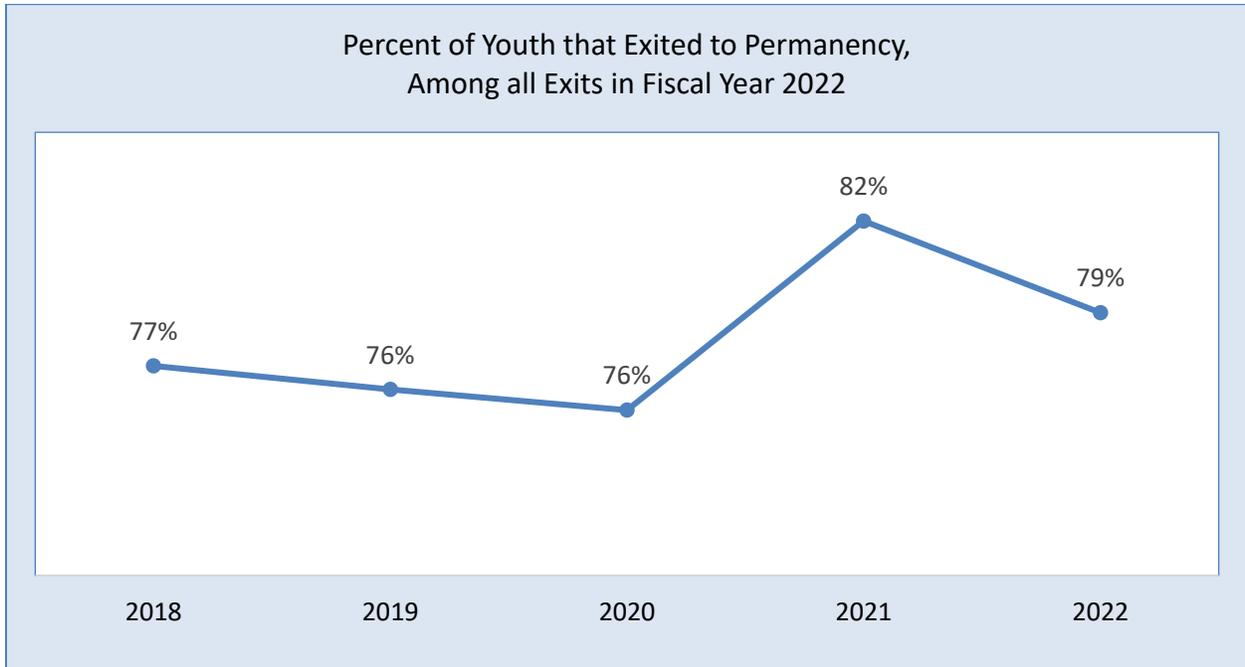
Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Research and Planning, Children's Services System Outcomes (CSSTO) report

While most localities⁵ (72 out of 127, or 57 percent) were similar to the statewide mean for family-based placements, slightly more localities had below-average performance (29 localities) than above-average performance (26 localities).

⁵ The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is comprised of 120 local agencies, with some covering multiple jurisdictions. The VDSS reports foster care outcomes at the agency level. In this report, each locality within a multiple jurisdiction agency was assigned the overall DSS jurisdictions' percentage.

Percent of Children Who Exit from Foster Care to a Permanent Living Arrangement

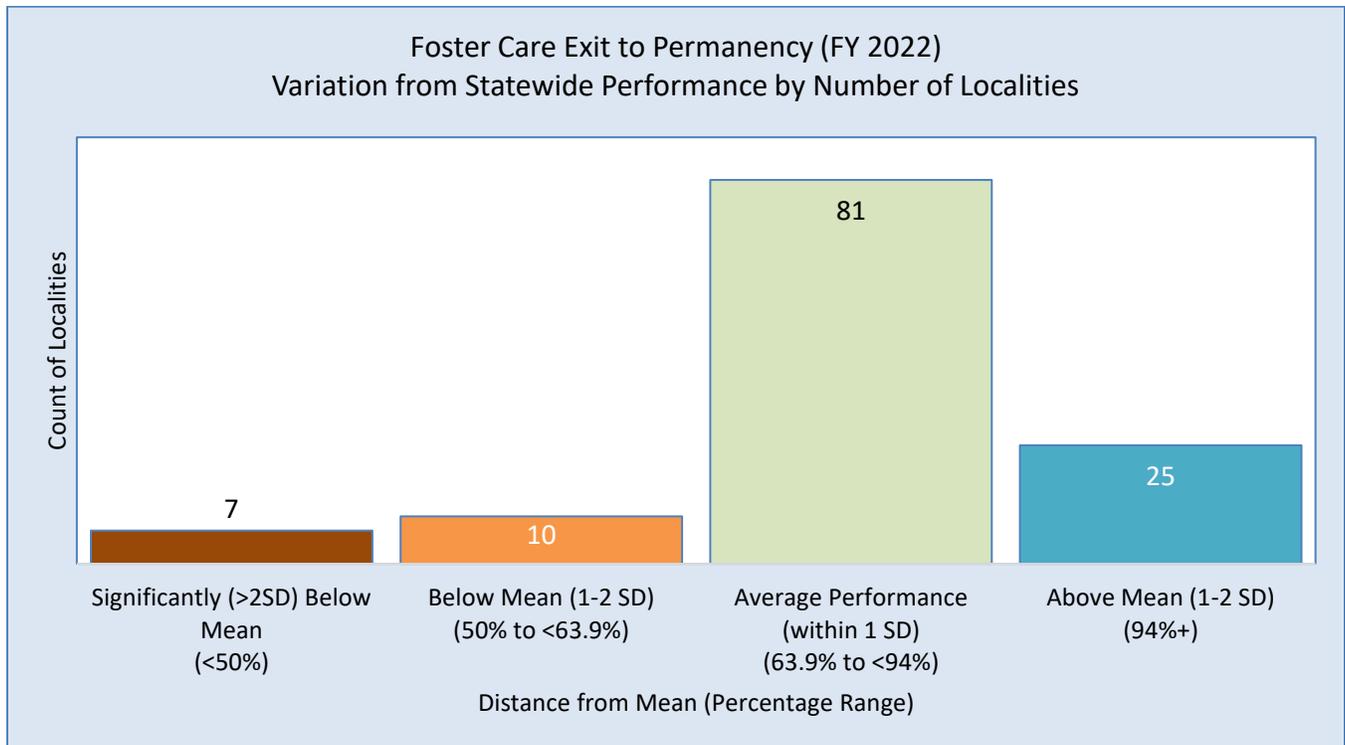
Children who "exit" or "age out" of the foster care system without establishing a permanent family connection (typically through adoption, reunification with their biological family, or placement with a relative) have considerably poorer life outcomes. Achieving permanency is a critical indicator of performance for the child welfare system. The VDSS has established a target that 86 percent of the children in foster care "exit" to a permanent living arrangement before "aging out."



Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Research and Planning, Children's Services System Outcomes (CSSTO) report

For FY 2022, the statewide percentage who exited to permanency was 79 percent or seven percentage points below the target. This outcome is lower than 82 percent of children who "exited" to permanent living in FY 2021.

The graph below displays the count of localities with youth that exited foster care to permanency in FY 2022, relative to the statewide weighted mean.



Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Research and Planning, Children's Services System Outcomes (CSSTO) report

While most localities⁶ (81 out of 123, or 66 percent) were similar to the statewide mean of youth exiting foster care to permanency, slightly more localities had above-average performance (25 localities) than below-average performance (17 localities).

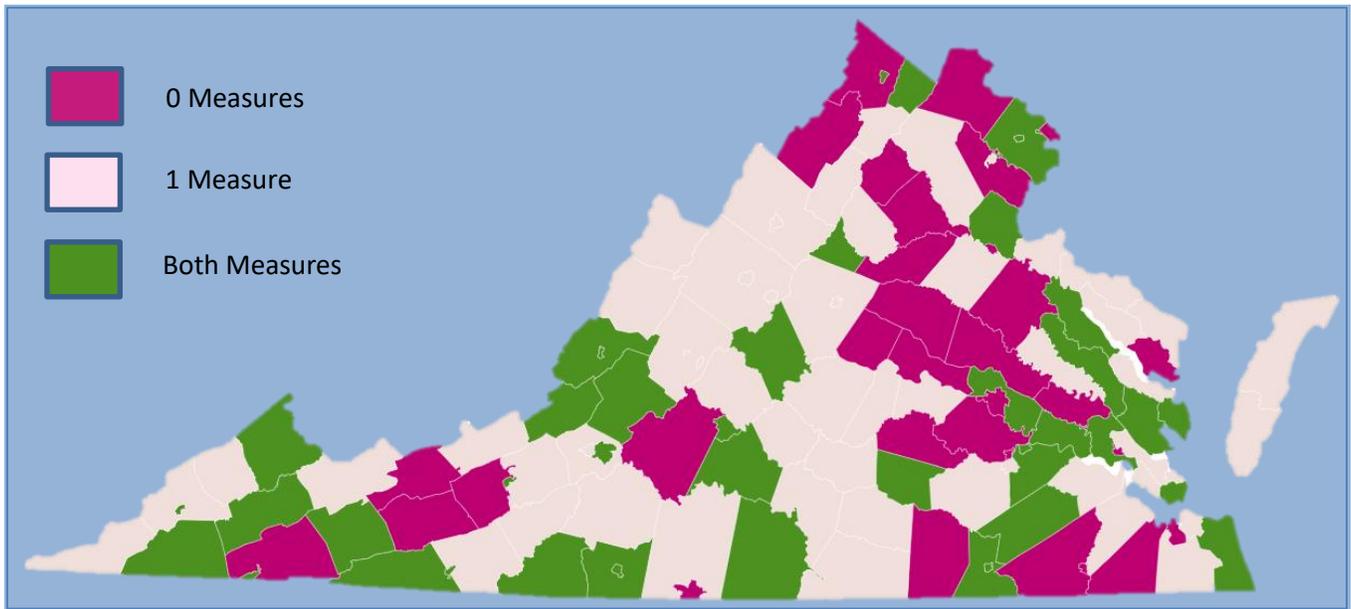
⁶ The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is comprised of 120 local agencies, with some covering multiple jurisdictions. The VDSS reports foster care outcomes at the agency level. In this report, each locality within a multiple jurisdiction agency was assigned the overall DSS jurisdictions' percentage.

DSS Performance by Location

The map below visualizes, by locality, FY 2022 performance in Virginia DSS outcome measures: percentage of youth in foster care in family-based placements and percentage of youth in foster care that exit to permanency. A locality is shaded based on the number of measures, out of two, in which its percentage of DSS youth in foster care met or exceeded the statewide performance on each measure.

Map of Virginia Localities:

Count of DSS Outcomes (FY 2022) that Met or Exceeded Statewide Percentages



Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Research and Planning, Children's Services System Outcomes (CSSTO) report; Map created using Datawrapper

Most localities had performance equal to or exceeding the statewide value for at least one of the two DSS outcomes (98 localities). Thirty-two localities fell below the statewide mean for both DSS outcomes. Using DSS geographic regions as a guideline, 38 percent of Northern localities (10 localities), 37 percent of Central (10 localities), 25 percent of Eastern (6 localities), 18 percent of Western (4 localities), and 6 percent of Piedmont (2 localities) had below average performance for both measures.

Localities that met or exceeded the statewide mean for both measures were most prevalent in Western (10 localities or 45 percent) and Piedmont (11 localities or 35 percent) regions. For localities that had a performance that met or exceeded only one of the two measures, it was more likely that performance was better in Foster Care Exit to Permanency (37 out of 57 localities) than in Foster Care Family-Based Placements (20 out of 57 localities).

Conclusion

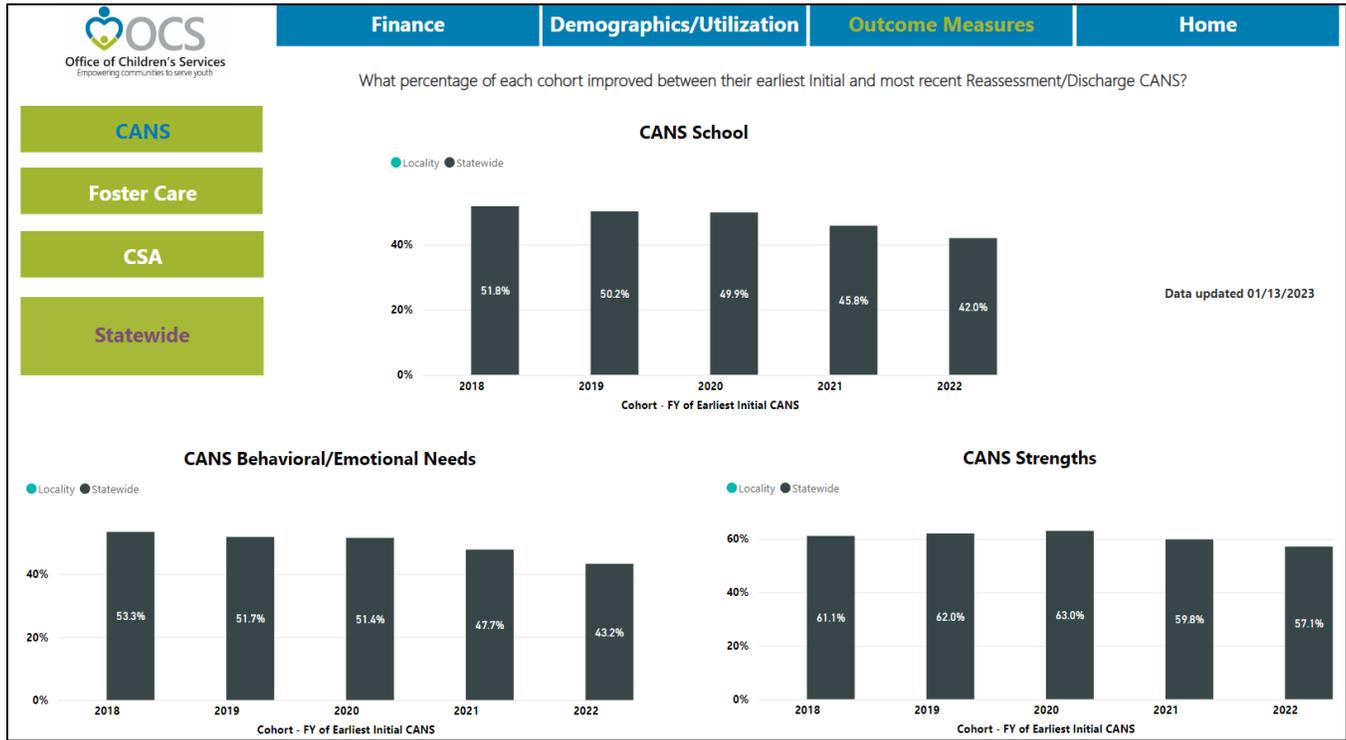
Measuring the performance of the Children's Services Act is critical in determining if CSA is achieving its stated goals and objectives. This report provides updates and additions to reporting completed in previous years. These performance benchmarks are treated with statistical analysis to provide information to CSA stakeholders and the State Executive Council for Children's Services about localities with a high level of performance and areas where possible improvements can be identified.

In addition to the state-level data summarized in this report, the Office of Children's Services features these measures in the Outcomes section of the CSA Data and Outcomes (CQI) Dashboard, allowing individual localities to view their performance on the six measures and compare their outcomes to the state average and that of other localities.⁷ This dashboard is available on the CSA website at www.csa.virginia.gov. It is hoped that local CSA programs utilize these data to identify and build upon areas of strength and develop strategies to improve performance where appropriate.

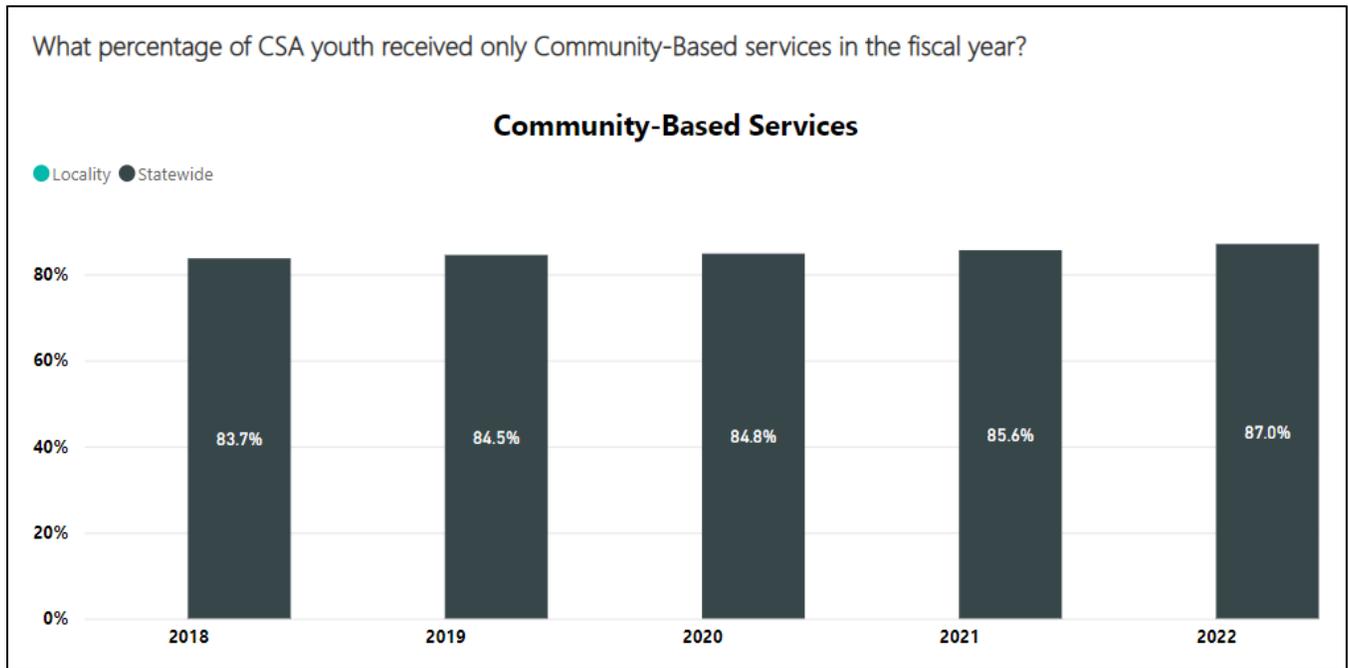
⁷ See Appendix 1 of this report for the FY 2018 – FY 2022 statewide results displayed in the CSA Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Dashboard.

Appendix 1: CSA Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Dashboard Outcomes Measures Section

CANS Outcomes (as of January 2023)



CSA Utilization Performance (as of July 2022)



DSS Performance Measures Related to Youth in Foster Care (as of August 2022)

