Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria

Decreasing the Dropout Rate in Alexandria Schools

The Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria (CCNA), based in Alexandria, VA, was founded in 2009, incorporated as a nonprofit organization, and designated as a 501 (c) (3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). CCNA was founded and created by Gwendolyn Hubbard Lewis who brought together several like-minded residents passionate about eliminating the dropout rate and increasing the high school graduation rate. Ms. Lewis is a visionary manager and public administrator retired from the Government with 35 years of federal and local government service. She also served four years on the Alexandria City Public School Board. As the Board’s Vice Chair, Ms. Lewis successfully chaired the development of the strategic plan that allowed for the establishment, approval and funding of innovative initiatives to close the achievement gap.

Ms. Lewis specifically founded CCNA in response to Alexandria City having the second highest dropout rate in Northern Virginia and its only high school ranked near the bottom of the list of “Lowest Performing Schools” in the entire state of Virginia. Approximately 32% of 9th grade students in Alexandria do not graduate from high school within six years. For all students, the dropout rate in 2008 was 11%, 2009 it was 10% and 2010 it was 14% and 2011 it was 15.1% and 2012 it was 11.9%. Even though the rate has improved, the dropout rate for African-American and Latino students is still at a high rate. For the year 2012, the dropout rate for African-Americans was 13% and 22% for Hispanic/Latino student.

CCNA primary objective is to inform the parents and students of Alexandria to know that this organization and its partners care about them, that they are loved; and that we will never give up on them. We want our children to know that they can achieve their desires by having confidence in themselves and that by working hard they will learn. All they have to do is believe it and take responsibility for their education.

CCNA’s after school program, “Reach and Rise for Excellence” (RARE) provides continuous academic intervention, picking up where the teacher leaves off at the end of the day. Support services will include helping with homework, using diagnostic tools to hone in on student weaknesses, strengthening those weaknesses and moving them to grade level and beyond. This organization is in a unique position to collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, and other service providers, as the need arises; developing the whole child and allowing that child to reach its fullest potential. CCNA and its partners are dedicated to improving the lives of young people in Alexandria.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS

- Reach and Rise for Excellence (RARE)- Mentoring and Training for “at promise” students
- Community Forum Stakeholder Engagement and Out Reach
- Parent Engagement-Family Advocacy and Support