

MEMO

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COMMITTEE

FROM: CHAD BLOSSER, OEMS EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGER

CC: DEBBIE AKERS, DIRECTOR DIVISION OF ACCREDITATION,
CERTIFICATION & EDUCATION

DATE: MARCH 16, 2023

SUBJECT: EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES CONDUCTING EMS TRAINING: VIRGINIA
HIGH SCHOOL EMS PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

On February 8, the Division of Accreditation, Certification and Education met with the high school Program Directors and Virginia Department of Education (DOE) staff to assess what, if anything the EMS Advisory Board could do to assist high school programs with their mission.

This meeting was conducted at your request.

THE ASK

The Workforce Development Committee—a sub-committee of the EMS Advisory Board—recently discussed high school EMS programs at their February 2023 meeting. The results of this discussion included the need to meet with Virginia’s high school Program Directors to have an honest and open discussion about these programs.

Some of the items that we were requested to review were:

- Outcomes
- Program Metrics
- Difficulties / Challenges Encountered
- Program Availability Statewide

Are High School Programs the Answer to the EMS Shortage?

EMS worker shortages continue to be an issue. With a shortage of EMS workers pushing some communities into dire straits, the conversation has shifted to what can be done to fill the gaps. Are high schools an untapped resource to assist with staffing shortages and decreasing workforce numbers?

College level programs are doing their best to train their students and put them out into the community, but with some programs only having a dozen students, others are looking for ways to get kids interested in EMS from a younger age.

What can the EMS Advisory Board Do to Assist High School EMS?

The Workforce Development Committee is interested to learn:

1. Is there anything the EMS Advisory Board can do to support high school EMS programs?
2. Create a white paper on entrance requirements for HS Guidance Counselors?
3. Engage the Department of Ed directly?
4. Engage local HS principals directly?
5. How can the EMS Advisory Board work to increase the number of high school EMS programs across the state?

HISTORICAL HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Ultimate outcomes for high school programs are difficult to gauge due to the age of the student. High school students are likely to enroll in a college or university which makes tracking outcomes on the part of the programs difficult to say the least.

Additionally, unless a very distinct bond has been developed between the educator and the student, once they graduate, the likelihood of seeing/hearing from the student is negligible.

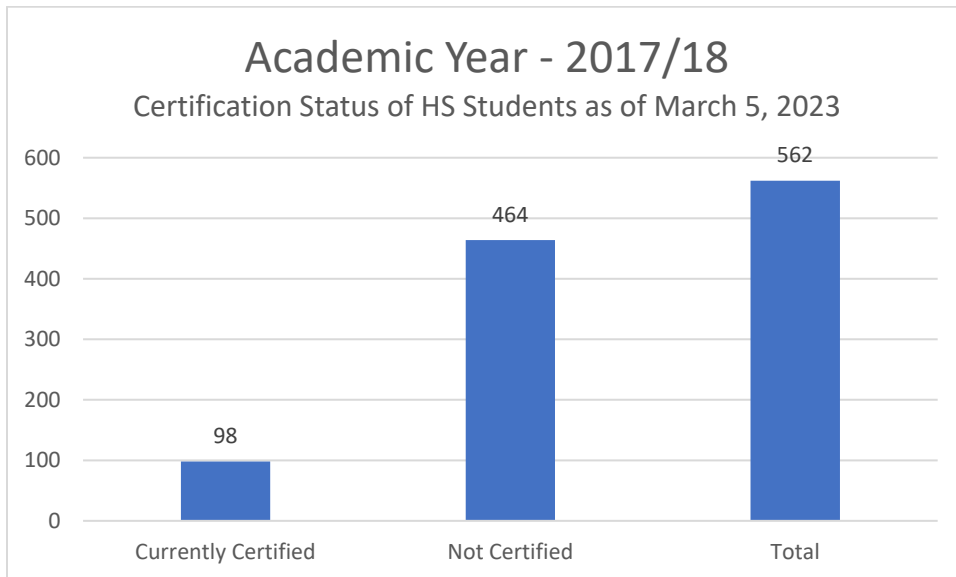
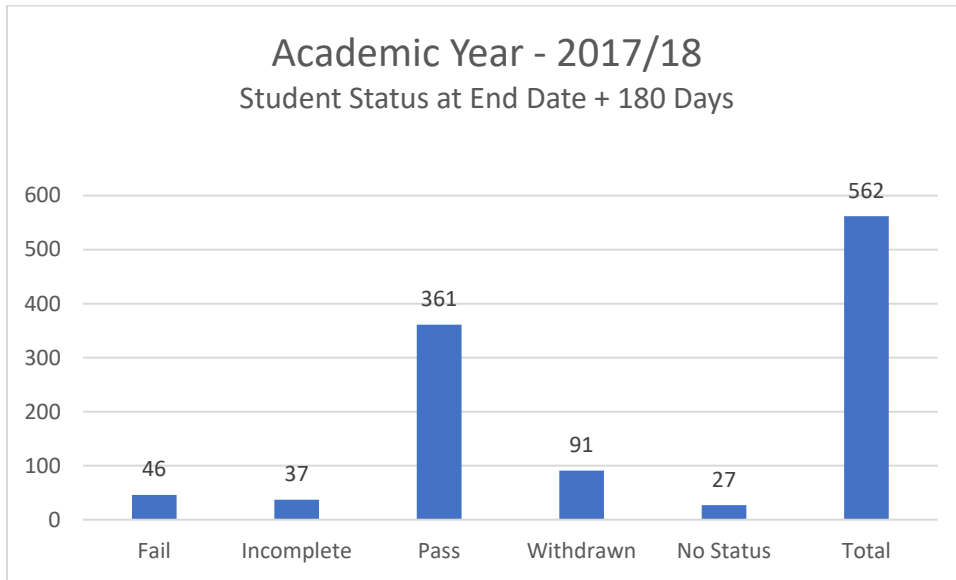
Student Outcomes Based on OEMS Data

The following data have been extracted from the Virginia EMS Portal in order to provide basic outcomes for students enrolled in high school EMS programs.

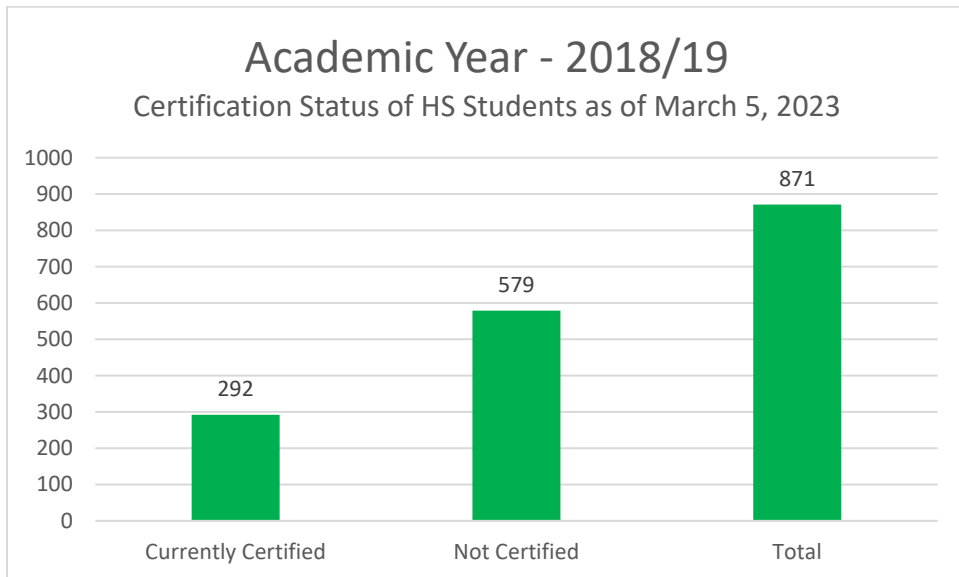
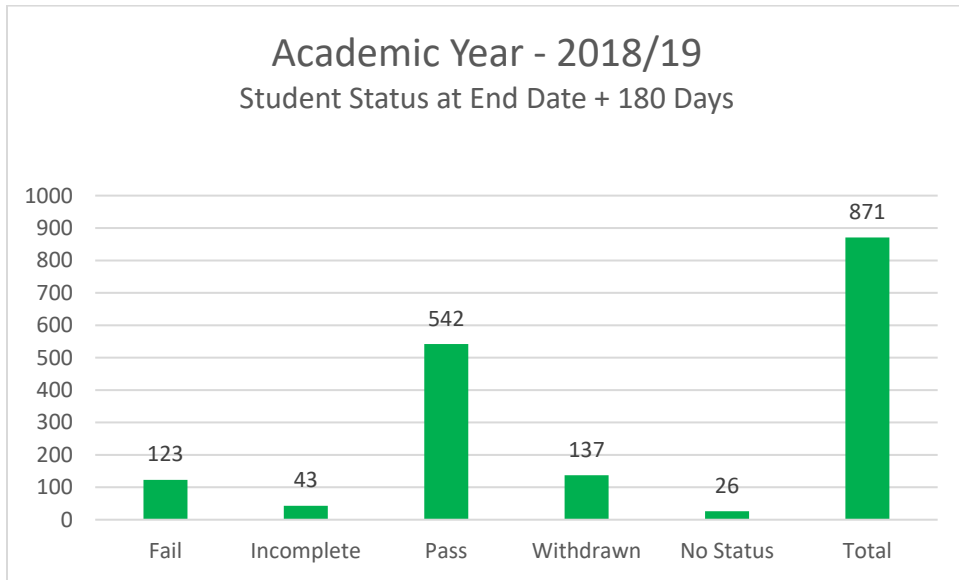
There are two distinct graphs provided for each academic year: 1) the status of each enrolled student in the cohort at the end of their program + 180 days; 2) the current number of high school students in that same cohort that are currently certified in Virginia as an EMS provider. Affiliation was not tracked or monitored.

We only reported data for academic years 2018—2022.

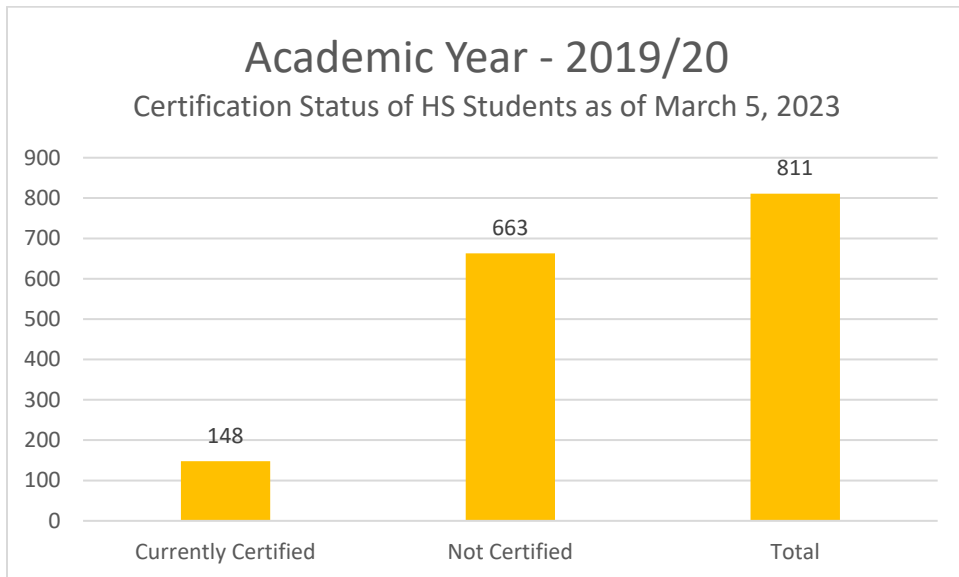
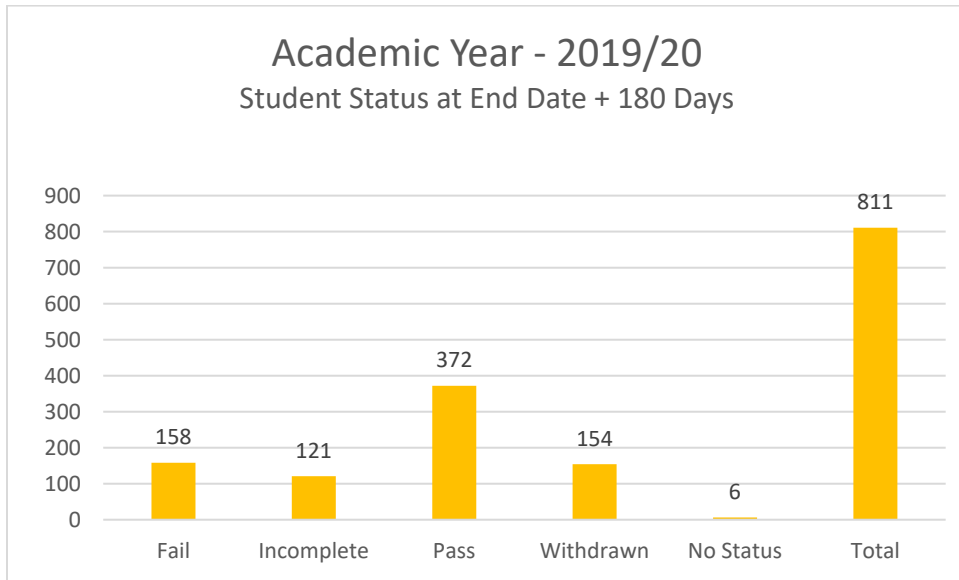
Academic Year 2018



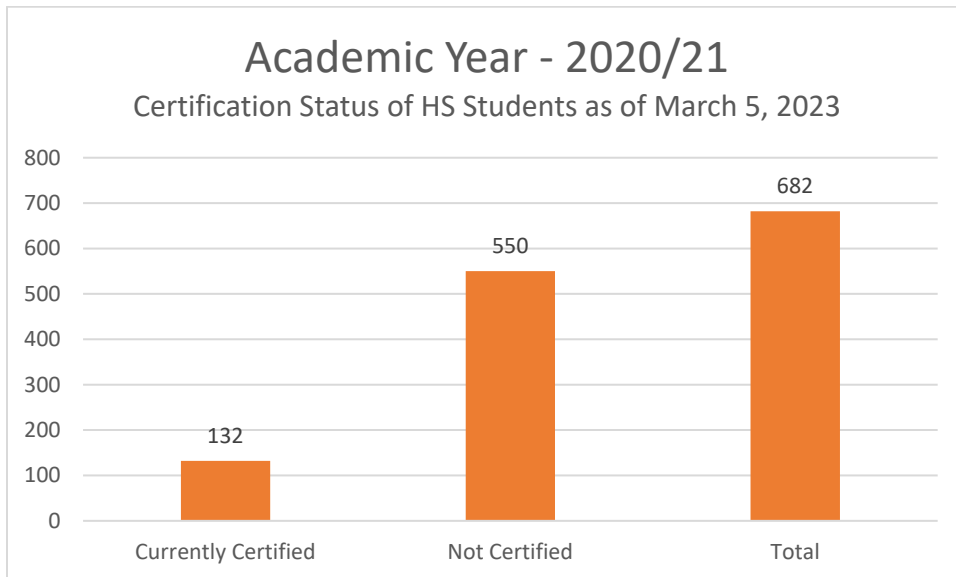
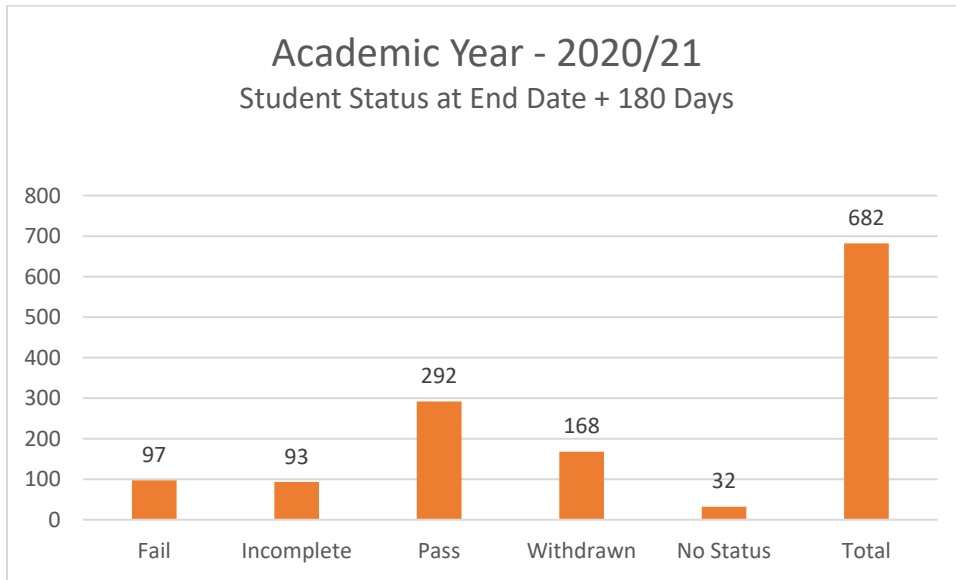
Academic Year 2019



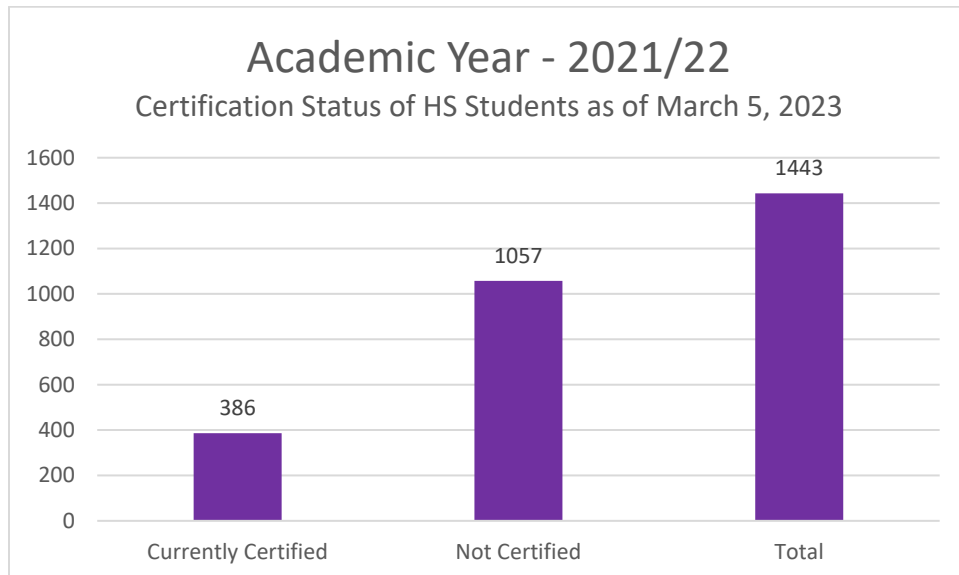
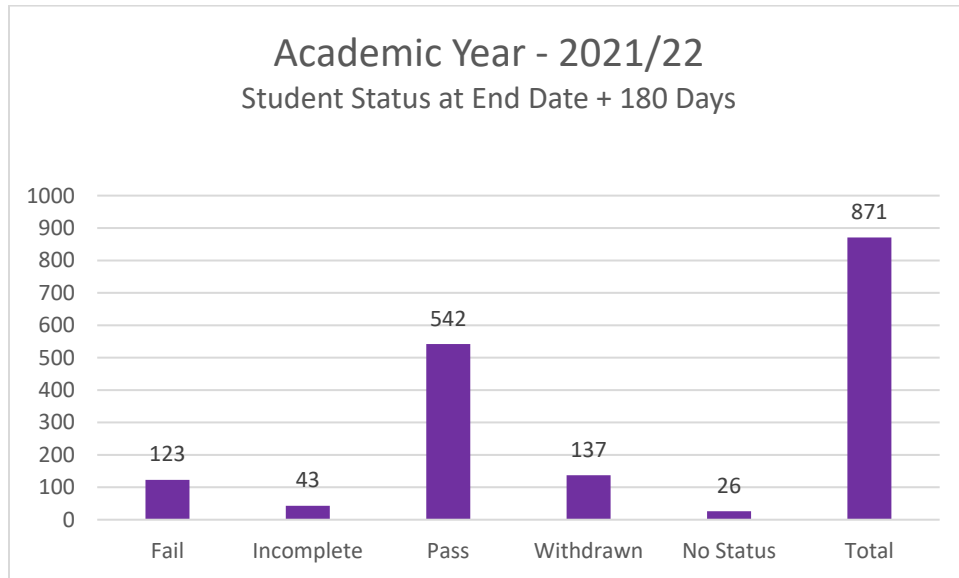
Academic Year 2020



Academic Year 2021



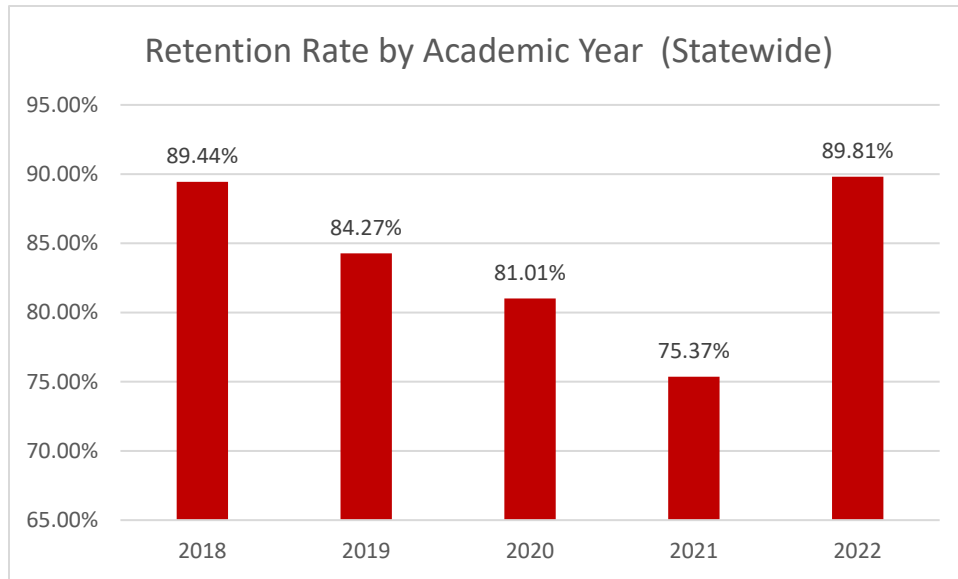
Academic Year 2022



PROGRAM METRICS

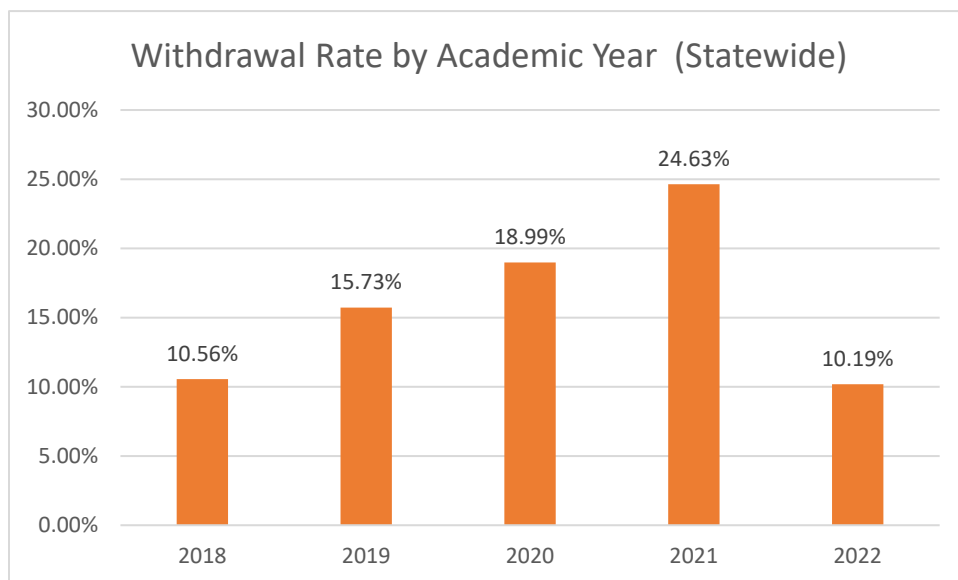
Retention Rate

For the purpose of this memo, **Retention rate** is the percentage of a school's students who continued through the program through the academic year.



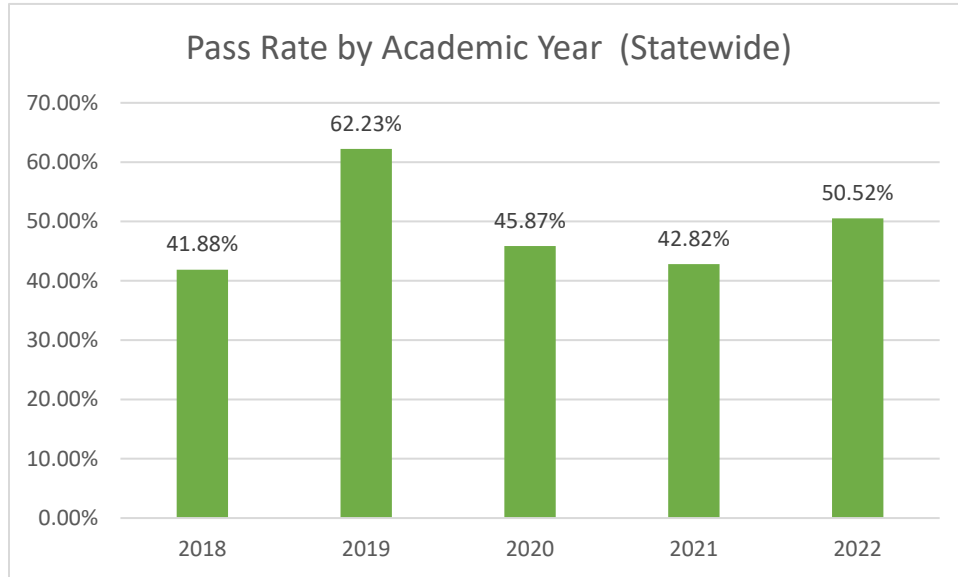
Withdrawal Rate

Withdrawal Rate means the number of withdrawals as a percentage of program enrollment, that is, $Withdrawal Rate = (Number\ of\ Withdrawals / Program\ Enrollment) \times 100$.



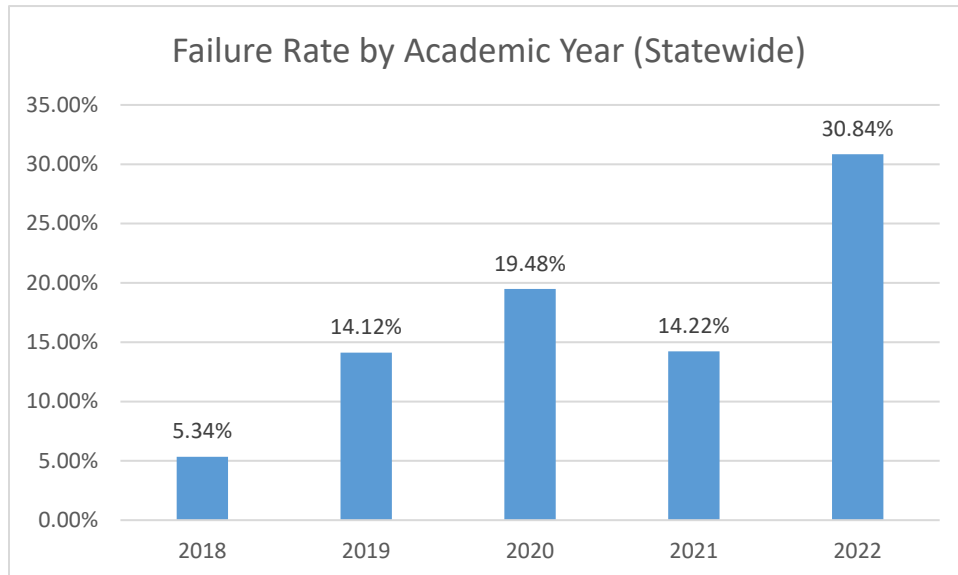
Pass Rate

Pass Rate means the number of students marked as pass as a percentage of program enrollment, that is, $\text{Pass Rate} = (\text{Number of Passes} / \text{Program Enrollment}) \times 100$.



Failure Rate

Failure Rate means the number of students who failed out of the program as a percentage of program enrollment, that is, $\text{Failure Rate} = (\text{Number of Fails} / \text{Program Enrollment}) \times 100$.



DIFFICULTIES / CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Educational Challenges In Emergency Medical Students

A pro-active approach to EMS programs by school administrators is required in order to avoid or limit:

- programs operating without a Medical Director,
- programs operating without credentialed instructors,
- instructors feeling pressured by administration to pass and certify students,
- student motivation,
- teacher turnover,
- lack of professional support,
- class size is too large, and
- passing and licensing students who have not demonstrated competency.

Student Selection is Key

School Administration

Far too often, school administrators (principals) do not take a pro-active approach to EMS programs and as long as there are “no big problems coming to their level” are hands-off. Regretfully, this is far from what is needed in high school programs.

School Guidance Counselors

Either due to failure to preemptively discourage EMS, failure to take the initiative or a lack of training/understanding of Emergency Medical Services, high school Guidance Counselors are placing the wrong students in EMS programs.

More often than not, high school programs become the dumping ground for students who cannot be placed in any other program, either due to grades, truancy, propensity to be in trouble, etc. This not only make the educational process that much more difficult; it also does not result in students’ successful completion of the program and certification as an EMS provider ready to join the workforce.

All Guidance Counselors should be required to ask this question of themselves of each student they are placing in an EMS program:

- “Would I want to look up from a stretcher following a car accident and see this individual in charge of my medical care?”, or

- “Can I trust this individual to care for a sick family member in their time of greatest need?”

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to enroll in and pursue licensure in a high school EMS course, should all EMS students in the Commonwealth be required to meet minimum criteria? Suggested criteria could include:

- Be proficient in reading, writing, and speaking the English language.
- Must have a 1.85 cumulative GPA prior to entering the EMR program and maintain a 2.0 course GPA while in the program. Must have a 2.0 cumulative GPA prior to entering the EMT program and maintain a 2.0 course GPA while in the program.
- Be a minimum of 16 years of age by the scheduled end date of the course.
- The student must provide the course instructor with a parental permission form (TR-07), with the signature of a parent or guardian, verifying approval for enrollment in the course.
- Have no physical or mental impairment that would render the student unable to perform all practical skills required for the level of certification including the ability to function and communicate independently and perform appropriate patient care, physical assessments, and treatments without the need of an assistant.
- Currently possess or earn a current BLS Healthcare Provider CPR (or equivalent) card.
- Currently possess a current state-issued license/ID, valid passport, or federal visa.
- Not have an arrest/conviction record (as an adult) that has not been cleared by the EMS Certification Commission.
- Maintain a professional appearance in line with local EMS expectations and according to the local school district policy.
- Not be under the influence of any drugs or intoxicating substances that impair the ability to provide patient care or operate a motor vehicle while in class or the clinical setting, while on duty, when responding to, or assisting in the care of a patient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following a lengthy discussion with the high School Program Directors, the following consensus opinions were agreed upon.

Primary Request

The Program Directors feel that Virginia Department of Education needs to provide more education for high school administrators and Guidance Counselors to ensure that every school district in the state is on the same page when it comes to EMS programs in the high schools. The Virginia Office of EMS has been working hand-in-hand with the Department of Education CTE staff for more than 20 years. Recently, following some personnel changes, the OEMS staff is extremely optimistic that we can work together with DOE and that this relationship is positive and can produce results.

It is important that administrators and the Guidance Department understand the reason for and the need to follow state DOE policies and Office of EMS Regulations and policies as set forth in the Training Program Administration Manual.

Secondary Request

Program Directors would request that the state Workforce Development Committee in coordination with the EMS Advisory Board take the necessary steps to develop a memorandum or white paper which would clearly outline the minimum basic eligibility requirements that districts must follow when placing students in EMS programs.

Suggested eligibility criteria should include:

- Be proficient in reading, writing, and speaking the English language.
- Must have a minimum GPA prior (TBD) to entering and EMR or EMT program.
- Be a minimum of 16 years of age by the scheduled end date of the course.
- The student must provide the course instructor with a parental permission form (TR-07), with the signature of a parent or guardian, verifying approval for enrollment in the course.
 - Require parents or guardians to attend a meeting about the content and situations encountered in EMS. Each Program Director would be responsible for conducting one of these sessions in the mid-summer.
 - Develop a DOE approved PowerPoint presentation which would be used during this meeting containing, videos, graphic pictures, descriptions of scenes, etc.
- Have no physical or mental impairment that would render the student unable to perform all practical skills required for the level of certification including the ability

to function and communicate independently and perform appropriate patient care, physical assessments, and treatments without the need of an assistant.

- Currently possess or earn a current BLS Healthcare Provider CPR (or equivalent) card.
- Currently possess a current state-issued license/ID, valid passport, or federal visa.
- Maintain a professional appearance in line with local EMS expectations and according to the local school district policy.
- Not be under the influence of any drugs or intoxicating substances that impair the ability to provide patient care or operate a motor vehicle while in class or the clinical setting, while on duty, when responding to, or assisting in the care of a patient.

Conclusion

The Program Directors would like to thank the Workforce Development Committee, the EMS Advisory board and the Department of Education for taking an interest in high school EMS education programs.

High school educators are passionate about what they do and with the right education for administrators, guidance staff and parents, they feel these programs could lead to a pipeline for the current provider shortages being felt across the industry. Additionally, if done correctly and rolled out to the districts in a positive way, this is a CTE program that is ripe for growth and development across the Commonwealth.