

BOARD BRIEF

Date: December 17, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Julia Burgos, Chief of School & Community Relations

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan L. Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: ACPS 2021-25 Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2021-2022 FOCUS AREA:

- Focus Area 1: Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery
- Focus Area 2: Hispanic Males
- Focus Area 3: Middle School Educational Experience
- Focus Area 4: Early College
- Focus Area 5: Talented and Gifted
- Focus Area 6: Strategic Plan Implementation
- Focus Area 7: Policy Equity Audit
- Focus Area 8: Implementation of Student with Disabilities Plan

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan

SUMMARY:

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) prides itself on its diverse student population, the world-class education that the division provides and the stellar team that it has assembled to deliver on its promise of instructional excellence - one that takes into account - equity for all. Part of that promise includes effective and transparent communications to ensure that students, families and staff feel valued, heard and included in every step of their child's academic journey at ACPS. In July 2020, as part of the superintendent's reorganization of the Senior Leadership Team, the Department of School and Community Relations (SCR) was created with the charge to fulfill this promise and elevate the importance of communications in the successful operation

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of the school division. The department brought together two vital components under one team: the Office of Communications and the Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement led by the newly created roles of the chief of school and community relations, an executive director of communications and an executive director of community partnerships & engagement - all cabinet-level positions.

This structure has offered the team an opportunity to build a solid framework for its work and create a deep alignment to the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All. While the team supports all aspects of the Strategic Plan, you will see that the *2021-25 ACPS Strategic Communications & Community Engagement Plan* is organized by four of the Strategic Plan goals most closely affiliated with the work of the SCR team. The department comprises many facets of the school division's work including media and public relations, social, web and digital communications, photography and videography, crisis communications, internal communications, partnerships, family and community engagement, community outreach, grants, volunteers and out of school time programming. The team supports every aspect of the school division's mission and core values and is poised to bring its work to new heights under this structure.

What this plan offers is a glimpse into the work of this team that is underway with short-term deliverables and work that spans over the next four years. It also addresses the recommendations from the [2019 Communications Audit](#) and the [2020 Family and Community Engagement Evaluation](#). The SCR team has carefully crafted this plan and is excited about completing all components with the support of all of ACPS' key audiences. It has been built to be strategic, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based with an organized approach to evaluating the progress along the way. ACPS has entrusted this pivotal work to the SCR team and it is ready to communicate and engage at a deeper level to ensure that all students, families and staff feel part of the ACPS community through a shared voice - one that supports students to be at their very best while meeting their individual needs. The team is confident that this plan will get us there.

BACKGROUND:

The School & Community Relations team worked together in summer 2021 to begin to consider how to streamline communications to stakeholders, create two-way engagement opportunities with families, staff and the community and use all ACPS communications channels. During this planning session, the team took into consideration the various audiences and their preferred methods of receiving information and engaging with the school division. The planning identified the following core opportunities:

- Build an internal communications structure to enhance staff supports and professional learning through the lens of communications.
- Provide schools and departments with tools and resources for consistent, efficient communications across the school division.

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- Continue working to make it easier for stakeholders, especially our underrepresented populations, to engage with ACPS on division-wide issues that are important for all students and the future of the school division.
- Deepen staff and partner's understanding of family engagement and welcoming environments through multiple new and innovative best practice initiatives.
- Strengthen collaboration between community partners and ACPS to better support the needs of students and their families.
- Continue to coordinate and facilitate staff and department efforts in acquiring grant funding for unmet student needs.
- Work collaboratively with aligned departments and community partners to explore strategic expansion of out of school time programming to support the social, emotional and academic success of ACPS' most vulnerable students.
- Continue to provide meaningful, inclusive volunteer opportunities that utilize the talents of our families and community members to support the students and staff of ACPS.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the ACPS 2021-25 Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan that will elevate our communications and community engagement efforts across the school division over the next four years.

IMPACT:

The ACPS 2021-25 Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan will position ACPS as a school division that values communications and community engagement to successfully deliver on its mission.

ATTACHMENTS:

ACPS 2021-25 Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan

CONTACT:

Julia Burgos, chief of school & community relations
Julia.burgos@acps.k12.va.us