

Board Brief

March 3, 2023

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Kathy Mimberg, Executive Director of Communications
Issmar Ventura, Media Relations Specialist

THROUGH: Julia Burgos, Chief of School and Community Relations
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Media Relations Quarterly Report: Oct.-Dec. 2022

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2022-2023 FOCUS AREA:

Supports all areas of focus.

SUMMARY:

The Office of Communications prepared a quarterly report summarizing earned media coverage for the division from Oct. 1, 2022 through Dec. 31, 2022. The report contains the number of incoming media inquiries the Office of Communications received and addressed during this time period, main topics associated with ACPS in the news, the number of mentions of ACPS leadership, national coverage, positive stories pitched by the Office of Communications and successfully covered by news media, how ACPS' media coverage compares to nearby school divisions and more. The Office of Communications will produce a similar media relations report every quarter for the 2022-23 school year. This report also highlights our efforts to fulfill our strategy to secure increased national media coverage to showcase the division beyond Alexandria and the Washington Metropolitan Area.

BACKGROUND:

The 2021-25 ACPS Strategic Communications & Community Engagement Plan identifies media and public outreach as a core opportunity to engage with the community on division-wide issues that are important for all students and the future of the school division. This report

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shows the work our media relations team has done with a broad range of news outlets to effectively reach the Alexandria community and stakeholders, and national audiences, on the important issues and activities of our school division.

Starting in the 2022-23 school year, new data has been collected on a quarterly basis and is being shared with the superintendent and School Board to further the understanding of the narrative surrounding the school division among various audiences, including the ACPS community of students, staff and families, residents of the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan region and peers in the educational and national arena.

In the first quarter of the 2022-23 school year, ACPS received 119 media requests between July 1 and Sept. 30, 2022, and had 1,143 mentions in news coverage. The number of media requests and mentions during these months were higher than usual due to the start of the new school year and the appointment of the interim superintendent. In the second quarter, ACPS received an estimated 50+ media requests and 634 mentions. These data points are expected to be lower during the Oct-Dec. time frame since this includes fall and winter breaks from school; we also had a decline in high profile topics during this period, accounting for less earned media.

The next report will examine media inquiries and news coverage from Jan. 2023 through March 2023, and a final report for the 2022-23 school year will be shared in July 2023. We expect that the next report will show higher levels of earned media due to the activity we have tracked in recent months.

RECOMMENDATION:

The superintendent recommends that the School Board review this presentation to become familiar with the work of the Communications team and some key metrics, such as the number of media inquiries that are received by ACPS, the stories pitched to reporters, how often the division appears in the news and the type of earned media coverage that affects public opinion of the school division.

IMPACT:

The report will serve to address how building a rapport with reporters and shaping our message for the media can assist the division in addressing timely issues and our work within our school community, helping to foster relationships between families and staff and furthering community engagement goals as outlined in the Department of School and Community Relations plan: ensuring staff, families, students and the community have timely access to information and engagement opportunities, feel welcome and supported, and have confidence in ACPS.

Attachments:

Media Relations Quarterly Report: Oct.-Dec. 2022

CONTACT:

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