

BOARD BRIEF

Date: October 29, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Julia Burgos, Chief of School and 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 Website Redesign - July 2022 Launch

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
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

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan
Implementation of Equity Audit of School Board Policies
K-2 Literacy Continued Implementation
Reduce Disproportionality in TAG and Advanced Courses
Complete Educational Programming Design for HS Project
Implement Monitoring System for Specialized Instruction Action Plan
MTSS Implementation with Restorative Practices and PBIS
Stress/Counseling Support especially around Trauma
Customer Management System
Continue Engagement with Hispanic Families to Improve Graduation and Chronic Absenteeism
Professional Learning and Cultural Competency Training for all Staff and Partners

SUMMARY:

The Office of Communications is planning to change our vendor for the ACPS website and email newsletters, and is beginning this process now in order to have a soft launch of a new website

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in July 2022. The Communications team has selected Finalsite as the vendor that can best provide the website and related services we need for effective communications with our stakeholders. We have also completed the procurement process successfully.

Finalsite's services and software will help further the ACPS communications goals of ensuring staff, families, students and the community have timely and accurate access to information and engagement opportunities, feel welcome and supported, and have confidence in ACPS so that students are empowered to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world. Our objectives are to do the following:

- **Improve the end-user experience** — with either a fully responsive or a mobile-first design, a more user-friendly website structure that is easier to navigate, all content meets ADA accessibility guidelines, and email newsletters that are visually appealing and stylistically aligned with our other communications materials.
- **Provide high-quality automated translation of our online information** — by implementing a robust AI translation service that allows for greater accuracy to better meet the needs of the diverse ACPS community.
- **Simplify web management** — more efficient and effective use of staff time by simplifying technical functions and giving more staff members the ability to make basic updates to keep our online information current.
- **Reflect the school division brand** — a clean, simple design that is diverse, forward-looking, focused on our students and is in sync with an environment that provides an equitable, high-quality educational experience that is accessible and engaging to all students.
- **Add a vital platform for telling and archiving ACPS stories** — our new website will allow us to expand our communications channels and develop rich, compelling, and diverse stories showcased in multimedia formats that highlight our students, staff and programs and build upon the ACPS brand.
- **Introduce a comprehensive staff intranet** — our new website platform will allow us to separate public and staff information, and provide an information hub for internal communications.

BACKGROUND:

The 2021-23 ACPS Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan (to be finalized in December 2021) supports the work of the school division overall, the superintendent and SLT, as well as their department plans and the work of their teams, as well as the communications from each school to families, students and staff. The plan supports current methods of engaging daily with students, staff and families, and expands these efforts to help stakeholders stay up to date and get the information they need. The goal is to support current activities that foster stronger relationships and provide additional avenues to cultivate engagement through an array of communications channels, school-based visits and active involvement.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review this brief to become familiar with the plans for the ACPS website redesign that aligns with the school

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division's goals and the need for a brand refresh.

IMPACT:

Our communications team is confident that Finalsite will provide a high-quality website and related services that will enhance our stakeholder communications.

ATTACHMENTS:

ACPS Proposal from Finalsite
Finalsite Features

CONTACT:

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