

BOARD BRIEF

Date: April 5, 2019

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

Board Agenda:

No

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THROUGH: Clinton Page, Ed.S., Chief Accountability Officer
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Gregory Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy M. Anderson, Chair, and Members of the Alexandria
City School Board

TOPIC: Update on the Family Engagement Evaluation

BACKGROUND:

As the Board is aware, ACPS is conducting a comprehensive division-wide evaluation of family engagement. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide ACPS with a better understanding of the needs, barriers, resources, and services to engage all families across contexts.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

This formative evaluation is comprised of two evaluative phases focused on the following key areas: relationships, opportunities, decision-making, environment and climate, and two-way communication. Phase I, led by the internal ACPS evaluation team, will focus on understanding the perspectives of parents and staff members through surveys. Phase II, led by ICF International, will focus on garnering information related to the above areas of interest through conducting: 1) observations (including site visits, secret shopper phone calls, and document analysis), 2) staff focus groups and interviews, 3) focus groups with English-speaking parents/guardians, and 4) group interviews with non-English speaking parents/guardians.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE:

Phase I Update: The parent and staff surveys were open to receive responses from March 11, 2019 through March 29, 2019. There were a total of 480 and 3,117 respondents for the staff and parent survey respectively, yielding response rates of over 20 percent. The number of parent responses represented one, if not the, largest number of parent responses to any survey effort from the division within the past decade. The parent survey was available online in English, Spanish and Arabic and available via a two-page paper-pencil survey in English, Spanish, Arabic and Amharic.

In an effort to increase the parent response rate, paper versions of the survey were sent home to all elementary school families in English and Spanish. Additionally, Arabic and Amharic surveys were sent out to schools based on parent home language and/or school identified need. Paper copies of the parent survey were made available and distributed in all four languages at George Washington Middle School, Francis C. Hammond Middle School and T.C. Williams high school.

The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Center also enlisted help from parent liaisons and community partners to increase parent survey participation. FACE distributed paper versions of the survey during 30 parent coffee events, community meetings, and division-wide FACE events. As a result of these efforts, approximately 1,281 of the 3,117 parent surveys received were completed via paper-pencil.

Parents also received various reminders throughout the survey administration window including: emails, text messages, school newsletter reminders, ACPS Express postings, and reminders posted to the ACPS website. A total of 1,245 personal, multi-lingual calls were made by the FACE Center to Title I School parents to encourage and facilitate participation in the survey. In depth data analysis will be completed by the internal ACPS evaluation team during spring 2019 and included in the final report to be completed in fall of 2019.

Phase II Update:

ICF staff will begin conducting secret shopper phone calls across selected sample site locations. Additionally, ICF is working with school site liaisons in scheduling observations, staff focus groups, principal interviews, and parent interviews.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:

The on-site data collection effort will continue through the spring of 2019. Data analyses will be conducted in the summer of 2019 with a final report in fall of 2019. ICF, in partnership with ACPS, will present findings and actionable recommendations to stakeholders. ACPS will engage multiple stakeholder groups to devise an action plan to address any and all recommendations as a result of this evaluation effort.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends review of the information within this memo pertaining to the evaluation of family engagement.

CONTACT PERSON: Clinton Page, Chief Accountability Officer