

## BOARD MEMO

Date: June 17, 2021

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

Board Agenda: Yes

No

**FROM:** Kennetra Wood, Executive Director of Equity and Alternative Programs  
Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policy and Board Initiatives

**THROUGH:** Dr. Julie A. Crawford, Chief of Student Services and Equity  
Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Superintendent of Schools

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

**TOPIC:** Equity Policy Audit Update

### **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 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 2: Policy Equity Audit

Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

### **SUMMARY:**

Based on the School Board's approved fiscal year 2021 budget and its identification as a 2020-2021 school year focus area, Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings directed the Department of Student Services and Equity, in collaboration with the Office of the School Board, to embark on an innovative equity audit of all School Board policies. This presentation provides an update on the progress made since the initiative began in December 2020 and a timeline for the ongoing policy review, community engagement, recommendation and revision process.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Guided by the ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: *Equity for All*, with racial equity at its heart, the policy audit team met with multiple organizations in an effort to secure a consultant partner for conducting the equity audit. During the search, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA EAC-South) was recommended by the Director of the VDOE Office of Equity and Community Engagement. IDRA EAC-South's experiences include working with the

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Governor's Commission for Social Studies SOL and reviewing and developing policy through an equity lens with a focus on the disparate impacts of policy implementation on marginalized student populations.

The ACPS policy review team convened to work with representatives from IDRA EAC-*South* in December 2020. The ACPS team consists of two School Board members, Dr. Michelle Rief and Mr. Christopher Suarez, the Chief of Student Services and Equity, the Executive Director of Equity and Alternative Programs, the Director of Policy and Board Initiatives, the Cultural Competence Coordinator, and the Equity Resident. The team devised the following timeline:

### **Phase I - Equity Audit- Review Prioritized (Tier 1) Policies & Identify Themes**

- December 2020 – February 2021 Audit team planning for organization and process
- February - June 2021 - Policy review and discussion
  - 2 Teams of Reviewers (*Policies reviewed to date*)
    - Reviewed and discussed A policies (Foundations & Basic Commitments)
    - Reviewed and discussed discrimination & harassment policies
    - Reviewed and discussed J policies (Students)
  - Review in progress: I policies (Instructional Program)
  - Bi-weekly 2 hour meetings for review/discussion
  - Beginning to solicit key staff member feedback
- June 2021 - Update presentation to School Board

### **Phase II – Engagement, Board Review and Policy Revision**

- SY 2021-22: Review Tier II Policies
- Community Engagement with ACPS Stakeholders
- Board Review and Policy Revision
- Refine and Adopt Revised Policies

### **Phase III - Action Planning, Implementation & Capacity Building**

- Develop 5-year outlook and Plan for re-evaluation

The ACPS audit team prioritized policies from the [12 School Board policy classifications](#) into review tiers and concluded it was critical to begin with policies that directly impact students and student achievement (A, I and J policies). Policies scheduled for the second tier of review are those that directly impact staff, families and the community (G and K policies). Policies scheduled for the third tier of review include policies impacting how ACPS conducts business in an equitable way (B, C, D, E, F and L policies).

Currently in Phase I, the team is actively reviewing Section I (instructional program-focused) policies and participating in bi-weekly review team sessions to discuss each policy through an equity lens. The team is considering each policy's intent, implementation outcomes, and the intended and unintended impact on our most marginalized populations. Our goal is to move closer towards equity for all of our ACPS students, families and staff.

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**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the equity policy audit update.

**IMPACT:**

Reviewing the update presentation will align the School Board's understanding of the equity policy audit with its projected timeline and process.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Presentation: Equity Policy Audit Update

**CONTACT:**

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