

BOARD BRIEF

Date: February 9, 2024

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Marcia Jackson, Ed.D., Chief of Student Services and Equity
Carmen Sanders, M.S., Executive Director of Instructional Support
Rene Paschal, M.Ed., Acting Executive Director of School Leadership

THROUGH: Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Michelle Rief, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Virginia Department Of Education All In Tutoring Plan Implementation Within
Alexandria City Public Schools

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2023-2024 FOCUS AREA:

Academic Achievement

Tier 1 Instruction: Alignment, Rigor, Engagement

Student Supports

SUMMARY:

This board brief provides an update on the implementation of the Virginia Department of Education All In Tutoring Plan. Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) started planning for a division-coordinated high impact tutoring (HIT) program in August 2023 and launched our HIT program within schools in January 2024. The ACPS HIT program is based on the research published by the National Student Support Accelerator--the same research cited by the VDOE in the All In Tutoring Division Playbook.

ACPS currently has school-based tutoring programs in place that are currently funded through ACPS division funds, Title I funds, and American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER III funds which allow ACPS to target tutoring support for schools with the greatest needs, including Title I schools and schools with the greatest risk of VDOE Accreditation with Conditions status. The additional VDOE funding from the All In Plan will allow ACPS to scale its tutoring programs to reach a larger number of students with the goal of having centrally-hired tutors work with students in grades 3-8 in all ACPS elementary and middle schools.

BOARD BRIEF

The ACPS Plan was approved by the VDOE in December 2023. Implementation within ACPS began in January 2024.

DETAILS:

The implementation schedule for the ACPS All In Tutoring Plan will occur at the principal's discretion. ACPS All In Tutoring can occur during the school day, after school, or on Saturdays. Ignite will be the learning platform used for reading. Zearn will be the learning platform used for mathematics. The focus of the ACPS plan is three-fold: Tutoring/Learning Acceleration Focus on grades 3 through 8, Preparation for and implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act, and Student Attendance Recovery and Addressing Chronic Absenteeism.

Tutoring/Learning Acceleration Focus on grades 3 through 8

Based on the score ranges for "not proficient" and low proficient" in reading and mathematics, ACPS estimates that there are approximately 5,124 students in math and 4,632, students in reading across the division who would qualify for math and/or reading tutoring in grades 3 -8. In order to meet these needs, ACPS intends to use existing ACPS staff as well as recruit and hire additional casual employee tutorings. ACPS will prioritize tutoring for students identified with the greatest need as evidenced by multiple data points. All tutors will be required to complete the VDOE tutor training modules, titled "*How to Be an Effective & Impactful Tutor*" through the VDOE website. Additionally, all tutors will implement ACPS and VDOE-approved curriculum materials. New tutors hired will complete training and use a VDOE aligned curriculum with the All In VA plan. Students who may not be able to be served during this initial rollout will have division-supported instructional intervention tools, opportunities through Tutor.com (for grades 6-8), and additional classroom support.

Preparation for and implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act

ACPS recognizes literacy as the foundation upon which every student's success is built. Literacy is a life skill, and the ability to read, write, think, and discuss are necessary for a full, successful life. ACPS is implementing a plan to address the Virginia Literacy Act to address the long-standing and persistent gaps in literacy achievement within the Division and to articulate an action plan for continuous literacy improvement in PreK through grade 12. These additional funds from All in Virginia will enhance ACPS' ability to purchase targeted and intentional resources for our students in grades 3-8.

Student Attendance Recovery and Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the overall rate of Chronic Absenteeism in ACPS was 7.9% during the 2018-2019 school year. When students returned from the pandemic chronic absenteeism rates increased to 16.5% during the 2022-2023 school year. This trend is consistent with school divisions across the state of Virginia.

ACPS is committed to reducing chronic absenteeism through the implementation of strategic interventions and supports to improve student attendance. ACPS currently adopts the following overarching strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism:

1. Implementation of the ACPS Attendance Task Force

BOARD BRIEF

2. Student and parent engagement
3. Monitoring of student attendance data and school-based practices
4. Personalized school-based early outreach with Student Support Team (SST) staff.

Intervention strategies are implemented within the context of our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). ACPS will continue to work with all schools to support tiered attendance strategies and student/parent engagement guidance to organize their data, systems, and practices to support improved student attendance.

As a result of this new funding opportunity, ACPS will be able to enhance our attendance efforts in collaboration with educators, administrators, SST staff, community partners, and families beginning in January 2024 to develop additional support and interventions to reduce chronic absenteeism. ACPS developed an Attendance Task Force to review VDOE resources provided through #AttendanceMattersVA to support the division-wide selection of strategies and interventions to promote consistent school attendance as part of our comprehensive division-wide plan to reduce chronic absenteeism and improve student engagement. Funding will support recommendations discussed by the Attendance Task Force. Anticipated use of funding will be based on recommendations from the attendance task force.

BACKGROUND:

On September 8, Governor Youngkin, Secretary Guidera, and Superintendent Coons released the 2022-23 Standards of Learning scores. These scores showed that students in grades 3 through 8 are demonstrating persistent learning loss as a result of the pandemic. As a result, Governor Youngkin outlined Virginia's All In plan that defined high-intensity academic tutoring. This tutoring focuses on supporting those students who failed their SOLs or who demonstrated risk of failing, establishes options for tutors, schedules, ratios, and resources to ensure that tutoring can be successful in every school across the Commonwealth.

The hallmark of All In tutoring is learning acceleration and that tutoring match on grade level content and supports students in connecting lost learning to what they are learning in the classroom every day.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review this Board Brief on the ACPS implementation of the VDOE All In Tutoring Plan.

IMPACT:

The impact of the implementation of All In Tutoring will support rising achievement for grades 3 through 8 students in the areas of Reading and Mathematics.

REFERENCES:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A

BOARD BRIEF

CONTACT:

Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Pierrette.Finney@acps.k12.va.us

Marcia Jackson, Ed.D., Marcia.Jackson@acps.k12.va.us

Carmen Sanders, M.Ed., Carmen.Sanders@acps.k12.va.us

Rene Pashcal, M.Ed., Rene.Paschal@acps.k12.va.us