

BOARD BRIEF

January 8, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION:

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Kurt Huffman, Executive Director of Community Partnerships & Engagement

THROUGH: Julia Burgos, Chief of School & Community Relations
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Additional Information Regarding Support for Academic Disparities: Hispanic
Male Graduation Rates

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Chronic Absenteeism among Hispanic Students
Outreach to Hispanic Families to Improve Attendance and Graduation
Outreach to Underserved Communities to Increase Engagement

SUMMARY:

On November, 23, 2020, ACPS presented information regarding data, supports and structures through the presentation titled, "[Academic Disparities: Hispanic Male Graduation Rates.](#)" In the questions and answer section of the agenda item, the ACPS School Board requested additional information on how the Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement supports outreach and engagement to Hispanic families. The following provides specific information from the work of Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE), Partnerships and the T. C. Williams Family Engagement Specialist.

1. FACE Support

ACPS has multiple ways in which they support ACPS' Hispanic students and families. Below are examples and a short description of those initiatives:

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- **Spanish Language Support Group** (Familias Unidas)—This group serves as a network to support parents to navigate school and community resources.
- **Family Engagement Series**—Bilingual workshops to support academic and socio-emotional needs of students and families.
- **Home Learning Resources**—Connecting families to resources to support learning at home, graduation requirements, college and career exploration and obtaining internet, and information to navigate technology resources.
- **English Classes**—In partnership with Northern Virginia Literacy Council, FACE provides English classes in Arlandria, John Adams and William Ramsay to parents/families.
- **Strengthening Families Program**—The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is an evidence-based family skills training program for high-risk and general population families. FACE, in partnership with SCAN, provides an eight-week session at Francis C. Hammond Middle School.
- **Division-wide Parent Liaisons**—Spanish, Amharic and Arabic language division-wide parent liaisons provide one-on-one support to families via phone or on-site as requested.
- **Noche de Ciencias**—In partnership with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, FACE provides opportunities for students to promote knowledge and inspire Hispanic students. Noche de Ciencias is a national program established in 2008 by the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Foundation to increase knowledge and interest in STEM among the Hispanic and other underrepresented communities. The goal of the Noche de Ciencias Program is to inspire Hispanic and other underrepresented youth to pursue STEM degrees and careers. Noche de Ciencias is a two-hour event that has included hands-on STEM activities designed for K-12 students, a STEM Panel, and bilingual parent workshops on college and education costs and how to help their child(ren) and their potential higher education plans.
- **Targeted Outreach**—In partnership with the International Academy (IA), focused call and text campaigns to connect IA and/or tier three families with important academic resources and updates.

2. Community Partnerships

ACPS has several community partners who are supporting ACPS Hispanic students and families. Below are a couple of examples and a short description of their partnership:

Capital Youth Empowerment Program—Provides underrepresented elementary students with increased protective factors, reduced risk factors, awareness of STEM careers, exposure to STEM activities, develop soft skills and access to role models.

Dream Project Mentoring Program—Weekly mentoring sessions for high school seniors (mentees). The mentors are current college students or professionals who have

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experience navigating the college application process, transitioning to higher education and excelling in college. The target participants are low-income immigrant students with an immigration status that creates barriers to accessing a college education.

Edu-Futuro—Robotics Club for Middle School Students and Emerging Leaders Mentoring program for high school students. Students meet with a mentor and sessions include a focus on leadership, college preparation, resume building, college tours, goal setting civic engagement, public speaking and interview skills. There is also a parent support component to the partnership to assist with financial challenges, access to food and emergency needs.

Liberty's Promise—Support for low-income, immigrant youth to reconnect with their high school education and develop career readiness and college access skills. Provide one-on-one assistance, as well as weekly virtual group meetings. In addition, they support ACPS parents with learning opportunities and resource dissemination.

Casa Chirilagua—High school mentoring program that provides students with life skills such as conflict resolution, financial literacy and healthy relationships. In addition to the mentoring program, the "Teens Club," offers extracurricular opportunities for middle school students. This includes social and developmental support through group classes, experience and exposure to field trips and service learning projects.

Community Lodgings—With the support of ACPS LINK Club, comprehensive support and enrichment opportunities were offered to nearly 150 Latin X students and their families who live in the Chirilagua Community during the 2019-2020 school year. Guided by cultural sensitivity, ACPS provided services including academic coaching/homework help, enrichment activities, social-emotional support, as well as significant Family Engagement opportunities.

3. T. C. Williams Family Engagement Specialist Support

During the summer and fall of the pandemic school closure, the T. C. Williams Family Engagement Specialist collaborated with teachers, School Support Team members, and staff from other schools to engage, inform, instruct and empower parents to manage and cope with aspects of virtual learning and the psychosocial stressors which typified this time.

Outreach and engagement efforts included, but were not limited to, preparing monthly social-emotional seminars in Spanish for secondary parents (75 attendees), presentations to Spanish for Heritage Speakers class (40 students) and their parents (20 attendees), developing and presenting 'High School 101' or how to succeed in high school and beyond seminars (91 parent attendees over three sessions, plus students who were in classes). Social media communication and outreach with families was conducted through Facebook, Whatsapp, two-way text messaging, and other social media platforms to promote ACPS and community resources.

The Family Engagement Specialist developed, scripted, produced, and collaborated with staff on 15 informational videos for families to help them negotiate and utilize educational and community resources both within and external to ACPS. Views and 'hits' for these videos totaled in the thousands across the various platforms used to disseminate information, and

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videos were shared with other school's social media networks to 'cascade' throughout the ACPS community. Through these means, trusting relationships between families and T.C. Williams continues to strengthen, which is an essential foundation for building productive partnerships. In addition, training and advocacy for the use of the language line to communicate with multilingual families have been provided to the staff, and data use has been provided to administrators.

BACKGROUND:

The Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement supports broad-based, innovative partnerships that strengthen the education for all ACPS students. Through these partnerships, ACPS inspires civic engagement in students and encourages lifelong learners. In addition, the office provides families with the high-quality services they need to be leaders in the education of their children through the work of school-based, division-wide parent liaisons and the family engagement specialist at T.C. Williams.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information contained in this brief.

IMPACT:

The Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement will continue to be a leader in the creation and implementation of innovative, best practice initiatives that support ALL ACPS students and families.

ATTACHMENTS:

[201123 Academic Disparities: Hispanic Male Graduation Rates](#)

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