

Date: April 26, 2018
For ACTION: X
For INFORMATION: X
Board Agenda: Yes X
No

FROM: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
THROUGH: Lois F. Berlin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools
TO: The Honorable Ramee A. Gentry, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board
TOPIC: Rationale and Description of Proposed Reorganization for the Department of
Curriculum and Instruction

SUMMARY:

This memorandum summarizes a recommended plan to improve student achievement in Alexandria City Public Schools through the creation of six cross-functional teams within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction: (1) College and Career Readiness; (2) Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Resources; (3) Humanities; (4) Literacy; (5) STEM; and (6) Elementary Instruction. These teams will be responsible for providing collaborative services to schools, especially those elementary and secondary sites requiring extensive support and intervention to improve overall and disaggregated student achievement results. Teams will be comprised of instructional specialists representing the Offices of Curriculum Design and Instructional Services, English Learners (EL), Specialized Instruction, and Talented and Gifted (TAG). These teams will complement and enhance—not supplant—existing duties and responsibilities of the offices to which team members are currently assigned. Teams will focus on problems of practice to help improve student outcomes. The Offices of Elementary and Secondary Instruction will be realigned under the Department of Curriculum and Instruction with Executive Directors reporting to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO).

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY:

During the 2015-16 academic year, the first phase of reorganization of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction occurred under the leadership of the new Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Terri H. Mozingo. This process involved the redesign of the role of Curriculum Developers to Instructional Specialists within the Office of Curriculum Design and Instructional Services, including the reinstatement of specialist positions in the areas of World Language, Fine Arts, and Health and Physical Education. The Office of Special Education was also redesigned to focus on specialized instruction and reorganized to reinforce compliance while expanding emphasis upon the academic achievement of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

The proposed second phase of this reorganization process (which will begin in July 2018 as part of the new academic year) will involve the formation and sustained collaboration of cross-functional teams with representatives from the Offices of Curriculum Design and Instructional Services, English Learners, Specialized Instruction, TAG, Elementary Instruction, and Secondary Instruction.

THEORY OF CHANGE UNDERLYING THE REORGANIZATION:

The theory of change guiding this process is that highly effective curriculum departments are learning organizations that maximize the collaboration, input, and cross-program interactions among instructional specialists; opportunities for this cross-functional team collaboration are

especially important in light of the division's need to improve the achievement of students with disabilities, English Learners, and those who receive Free and Reduced Price Meals. Long-range goals necessitating the formation of these cross-functional teams address the need to:

1. Optimize the workflow of Curriculum and Instruction staff to ensure alignment with school-based performance targets and priorities.
2. Maximize communication, collaboration, and coordination of services to streamline service delivery and implement a school support structure that drives increases in student achievement.
3. Increase the level of collaborative data analysis and interpretation to ensure that school-based performance targets are achieved.
4. Eliminate silos and reduce duplication and/or redundancy to ensure a coherent, continuous, and sustained system of school-based service delivery.
5. Ensure that all performance targets in the *ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan: Every Student Succeeds* are met in a timely and efficient manner, including those targets specified for English Learners and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

PROPOSED TEAM COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS:

Part I: Team Composition: Specific teams will be comprised of the following individuals:

1. **Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Resources:** To more effectively address the critical need for expanded data analysis, interpretation and instructional implications, a formal data team within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction is essential. This team will work with the Department of Accountability and with the newly formed cross-functional teams. This team will assist the other teams in analyzing data, preparing data displays, and offering broad analysis of data across schools. This new team will be led by the Chief Academic Officer, Terri H. Mozingo, and will include the current Coordinator of Textbooks and Library Media Services, the current English Learner Office Data Specialist, and the Assistant Director for Specialized Instruction.
2. **College and Career Readiness:** This team will concentrate upon ensuring that there is a fully articulated and effectively implemented set of career and college-preparation programs and services for all ACPS learners, grades K-12. To ensure that our students are prepared for as many opportunities as possible while in school and beyond their completion of high school, this team will support the continued expansion of dual enrollment, opportunity to earn industry certifications and an associate degree while completing high school credits for an Advanced Studies Diploma. Ensuring students' graduate on-time will also be a primary focus for this career and college readiness team. Team members will include the current Executive Director of Secondary Instruction as well as the current Coordinators of Adult Education, AVID, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Talented and Gifted (TAG). Additionally, this team will include instructional specialists representing English Learners and Students with Disabilities. The Executive Director of Instruction will also oversee the secondary school principals and report to the Chief Academic Officer.
3. **Humanities:** This team will concentrate upon improving student achievement in the areas of social studies (including history, economics, political science, and service learning), fine arts, and world languages. Team members will include the current instructional specialists for social studies, fine arts, and world languages. The team will also include instructional specialists from the offices of English Learner and Specialized Instruction. This team will collaborate with the K-

12 TAG Coordinator to ensure appropriate alignment of gifted practices within these disciplines to support the problem-based/service learning opportunities for students.

4. **Literacy:** Recognizing the importance of literacy, this prek-12 team will address problems of practice related to the improvement of ACPS students' reading, writing, speaking, listening, research, and media presentation skills. It will include current elementary and secondary English Language Arts specialists and the Coordinator for Early Childhood Programs, as well as a representative from the English Learner, Specialized Instruction, and TAG offices. This team will strategically and deliberately focus ways to ensure that more students are reading on grade-level and have language skills that enable them to access the curriculum and other resources.
5. **STEM:** The focus of this team will be on the improvement of K-12 students' achievement in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This team will be comprised of the current elementary and secondary Math specialists, current elementary and secondary Science specialists, current Health and Physical Education specialist, as well as a representative from the offices of English Learner Programs, Specialized Instruction, and the K-3 TAG Specialist. This team can also support the STEM programs at Cora Kelly, Ferdinand T. Day, and T.C. Williams High School. The collective efforts to support these school-based programs will provide consistent messaging to students/families about the value of STEM.
6. **Elementary Education:** The elementary school program will continue to be monitored and supported by the current Executive Director of Elementary Instruction. She will work closely with all elementary principals and assistant principals as well as appropriate teams and team members to support practice within a single school site and/or across multiple elementary sites. The Executive Director of Elementary Instruction will report to the Chief Academic Officer.

Part II: Team Facilitation and Oversight:

1. **Professional Learning:** At the beginning of this reorganization process, each of these teams will receive professional development in key aspects of team facilitation, formation, implementation, and improvement, including communication and project management processes.
2. **Team Facilitation and Leadership:** Each team will be facilitated by a designated Team Leader/Coordinator responsible for ensuring that the team: (a) meets on a weekly basis; (b) effectively builds consensus regarding targeted problems of practice; (c) demonstrates effective communication skills and competencies; and (d) monitors team progress via a comprehensive project plan with clearly specified performance targets, timelines, and reporting deadlines.
3. **Oversight and Evaluation:** To ensure clear and sustained cross-office communication and interaction in support of the work of these teams, the Chief Academic Officer will convene a bi-weekly oversight team (comprised of current members of the Project Management Oversight Team as well as designated team leaders). This group will review data and related interpretations presented by each of the teams, providing guidance and recommendations to sustain productivity and address emerging problems of practice. Evaluation of the English Learner and Specialized Instruction team members will be the responsibility of current Executive Directors of those departments. The Chief Academic Officer will evaluate the

Executive Director of Elementary Instruction, the Executive Director of Secondary Instruction (who will serve as team leader for the College and Career Readiness Team), along with the current Executive Directors of English Learners, Specialized Instruction, Director of Title I and School Improvement, Talent Development, and the Humanities, Literacy, and STEM Team Leaders. These three team leaders will evaluate the appropriate instructional specialist for general education associated with their teams. This design will reduce the number of direct reports to the Chief Academic Officer.

4. **Incentives for Team Leaders:** The Chief Academic Officer and the Executive Directors for Elementary and Secondary Instruction will incorporate team facilitation and leadership into their current duties and responsibilities. The role of the team leader also serves as a leadership development opportunity for internal staff and this opportunity will positively impact retention of excellent employees.
5. **Projected Impact upon Current Office/Program Operations:** The goal of this reorganization process is to maximize the effectiveness and interactions of the instructional specialists in each of the identified offices (i.e., Curriculum Design and Instructional Services, English Learners, Specialized Instruction, TAG, and Elementary and Secondary Education). All existing services, program requirements, and resources associated with each of these areas will remain intact.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Interim Superintendent recommends that the School Board accept the recommended proposal to form cross-functional teams within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

IMPACT:

Adoption of this proposal and suggested action steps will result in the following:

1. Improvement of student achievement through the creation of cross-functional teams representing multiple program and content areas, including representatives with diversity of experience, ability, skills, program and instructional expertise
2. Increased teamwork from members in diverse roles
3. Enhanced coordination and collaboration involving instructional services, and reducing isolation and/or redundancy
4. Reinforcement of a culture of continuous improvement where department staff work together to achieve common goals and address problems of practice
5. Delivery of innovative solutions and increased momentum of change, with multiple perspectives shedding light on problems and proposed solutions
6. Expanded staff understanding of how their work contributes to the overall division and its articulated priorities
7. Promotion of an environment and organizational culture where fresh perspectives can replace traditional or outmoded approaches to improving teaching and learning

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 180426_Rationale_and_Description_of_Proposed_Redesign_Memo
2. 180426_Proposed_Redesign_Department_of_Curriculum_and_Instruction_PPT

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cc: Senior Leadership Team