

BOARD BRIEF

Date: November 11, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: James Parker, Executive Director of Athletics & Student Activities

THROUGH: Wendy Gonzalez, Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: ACPS Middle School Sports & Student Activities Programming

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2022–2023 FOCUS AREA:

Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery

Hispanic Males

Staff Wellness and Growth

Middle School Educational Experience

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Address Chronic Absenteeism & High School Graduation Rate Among Hispanic Male Students

Social and Emotional Supports for Students

Expand Access and Improve Quality of Out-of-School Learning

Building Upgrades

Transportation

Planning for Future Projects

SUMMARY:

The Board Brief and supporting documents are the initial stages of starting middle school athletics and competitive student activities programming at Francis C. Hammond Middle School, Jefferson-Houston PreK–8 International Baccalaureate (IB) School, Patrick Henry K–8, and George Washington Middle School. Students at Patrick Henry and Jefferson-Houston would feed into Francis C. Hammond and George Washington Middle Schools for participation purposes if they are unable to field teams at their campuses. We also will introduce forensics, scholastic bowl, and debate club, so that our middle school students spark an earlier interest in these Virginia High School League (VHSL) high school programs.

BOARD BRIEF

Providing middle school athletics and competitive student activities programs will impact between 1,100-1,400 students in grades 6-8 by offering 15 different athletic opportunities and 3 different competitive student activities on a yearly basis. The goal is to hire teachers who currently work in ACPS to be our team coaches and student activities directors. We would also provide a stipend position for athletic coordinators at each of the middle school campuses.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, our middle school students do not have an option to participate in educational based athletic programs in the City of Alexandria. The vast majority of the middle school age athletic opportunities in the City of Alexandria are pay to play, which eliminates many of our students, specifically low income students from participating in sports. Starting a middle school athletics and competitive student activities program will positively impact the social, emotional and academic learning of middle school students at their most pivotal time in adolescence. This program will provide our high school athletic program with more prepared, engaged, trained, and motivated student athletes which will result in more competitive teams. In addition, introducing athletic opportunities to our athletes at an earlier age will also assist us in increasing the number of athletes who are offered college athletic scholarships. Furthermore, these programs will help us engage our various student populations at an earlier age to get them more involved in extracurricular activities. Currently, the local school systems that offer middle school athletics programs are Prince George, Arlington and Prince William.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Interim Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the 2024 Middle School Sports & Student Activities Program Timeline and Financial Commitment for proposed planning, procedural, programmatic, and/or budgetary changes.

IMPACT:

Regular exercise is important for our students' health as well as their wellbeing and sports are a great way to ensure our students get regular exercise. Studies also show that student-athletes have higher GPAs than the general school population and a 10% higher rate for graduating high school.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. ACPS Middle School Sports & Activity Program Timeline and Financial Commitment

CONTACT:

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