

## BOARD BRIEF

Date: December 18, 2020

BOARD INFORMATION:   X  

MEETING PREPARATION:           

**FROM:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and  
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** Civility Discussion – Board Retreat

### 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 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

### FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Gap Group Achievements

Communications and Customer Service for External Stakeholders

Leadership and Professional Development

Optimal and Equitable Learning Environments

Mental and Social/Emotional Health

### SUMMARY:

Hanover Research conducted a search to identify resources on civility. Based on their research, it seems as though the negative connotation of the term, civility, has come to fruition once again given the recent social protests and political divide across the country. NPR actually has an entire series dedicated to exploring civility, which you can access [here](#). In addition to this resource, some other resources that can be used in preparation for future discussions on this topic include:

- ☐ [When Civility is Used as a Cudgel Against People of Color](#)
- ☐ [In These Divided Times, is Civility Under Siege?](#)
- ☐ [What Does It Mean To Be Civil](#)

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- ☐ [How Civility Became a Buzzword – and Lost All Meaning](#)
- ☐ [The Word Civil Has Become Meaningless](#)

In addition to these sources of information, attached is the report Hanover Research developed outlining examples of district civility policies. In the report, you'll notice they begin by presenting discussion questions we can use to guide our future discussions amongst the School Board and with other stakeholders. They also provided example policies and resources from large and peer districts across the country – the 10 largest school districts as well as peer districts at the national, regional, and state levels. Through their research it was discovered that district civility policies vary in terms of format, structure, content, and degree of specificity. However, their preliminary research in this report indicates that the most comprehensive district civility policies commonly:

- ☐ Define civility;
- ☐ Discuss why civility matters;
- ☐ Note that civility represents a realistic, attainable goal (e.g., stakeholders can acknowledge differences respectfully, disagree courteously, solve problems constructively);
- ☐ Specify acceptable and unacceptable forms of language and behavior;
- ☐ Set expectations (in general and for different stakeholder groups);
- ☐ Outline mechanisms for reporting violations; and
- ☐ Indicate how the district will respond to confirmed violations

### BACKGROUND:

The School Board held a School Board Retreat on December 14, 2020, where the School Board Facilitator, Laurie Cromwell, facilitated a discussion on the following topics: Potential Civility Policy, Dual Pandemic Effect on School Board Meetings, Strategic Plan and other Division Work by the School Board, What is the Role of the Chair and Vice Chair and Implementing the Annual School Board Assessment.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the documents provided.

### ATTACHMENTS:

Hanover Research: District Civility Policies

### CONTACT:

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