

Date: 01/21/2022

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Taneika Taylor Tukan, School Engagement & Community Outreach Manager
Kurt Huffman, Executive Director of Community Partnerships & Engagement

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

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

TOPIC: Information on “Simply the Best” Grassroots Communications Campaign

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 2021-2022 FOCUS AREA:

- Focus Area 1: Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery
- Focus Area 2: Hispanic Males
- Focus Area 3: Middle School Educational Experience
- Focus Area 4: Early College
- Focus Area 5: Talented and Gifted

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

- Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan
- Reduce Disproportionality in TAG and Advanced Courses
- MTSS Implementation with Restorative Practices and PBIS
- Continue Engagement with Hispanic Families to Improve Graduation and Chronic Absenteeism
- Professional Learning and Cultural Competency Training for all Staff and Partners

SUMMARY:

With the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All, ACPS reaffirmed our commitment to ensuring success for every student by inspiring and empowering them through access to a world-class education. “Simply the Best” is a grassroots communications campaign that will enumerate and lift up for internal and external stakeholders the numerous ways in which ACPS’ instructional, fiscal and hiring practices cultivate a learning environment that positions our students to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world. This is possible by providing “simply the best” teaching

and learning, staff, learning environments and resources. The campaign will elevate the brand of each school and highlight the unique attributes of each school building.

BACKGROUND:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present unique challenges to the functioning of school systems – from how we transport, feed and instruct students to how and what we communicate to stakeholders. COVID-19 has dominated the national discourse and, likewise, communications here across our school division. In spring 2022, the School & Community Relations team will launch the “Simply the Best” campaign to help re-center ACPS’ outreach efforts on promoting two of our hallmarks – instructional excellence and a collaborative learning and work environment.

The campaign objectives are three-fold:

- Showcase the unique offerings, instructional programs and nuances of each school that brings its own character and flavor to each school community.
- Provide additional opportunities to increase awareness of and enthusiasm for the instructional best practices in place at ACPS as well as special programs and supports including Talented and Gifted, Early College and RULER among families; and
- Help internal and external stakeholders see ACPS’ commitment to recruiting and retaining dedicated and high-quality staff.

“Simply the Best” will employ a range of strategies and tactics to help refocus our narrative on instructional excellence and the amazing things that are happening in classrooms and buildings across the division. Among these strategies and tactics are:

Placing Advertorial Content: Beginning in March 2022, *The Alexandria Times* will run a quarterly school profile that showcases one of our schools and shines a light on how our instructional program takes shape differently in each building. Each of our schools will be profiled over the course of several years.

Using Existing ACPS Channels: With support from various departments and school buildings, we will curate content including best practices, staff accolades and student achievement – to spotlight a regular/monthly “Simply the Best” feature in the division-wide newsletter and post across ACPS communications channels.

Revitalizing Realtor Initiative: Real estate agents can unwittingly influence opinions of ACPS and whether or not a family decides to enroll in ACPS. “Simply the Best” profiles and story content will be repurposed and made available on the realtor section of the ACPS website. Materials will include talking points/division fast facts, campus profiles and other quick links.

Increasing Physical Visibility: Mobile billboarding presents a real opportunity for “Simply the Best” to sustain awareness and generate excitement in the community for the duration of the campaign. We will work with Facilities and Operations to explore the possibility of

transforming a segment of the ACPS vehicle fleet, which is greater than 100, into mobile billboards for the campaign through the use of vehicle wraps.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this memo to become familiar with the moniker and purpose of the campaign.

IMPACT:

“Simply the Best” helps ensure equity for all by increasing awareness and access to information about ACPS instructional programs and student supports among a wide range of families and community members.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

CONTACT:

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