

BOARD MEMO

Date: February 20, 2020
For ACTION _____
For INFORMATION X
Board Agenda: Yes x
No _____

FROM: Clinton Page, Chief Accountability Officer
Kurt Huffman, Director of School, Business and Community Partnerships

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

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

TOPIC: Family Engagement Evaluation Findings

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 2: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

Focus Area 5: Strategic Plan

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Communications and Customer Service for External Stakeholders

Communications and Customer Service for Internal Stakeholders

Leadership and Professional Development

SUMMARY:

The February 7, 2020 Board Brief presented the culminating report of the 2019 comprehensive division-wide evaluation of family engagement. The evaluation is one piece of an ongoing effort to fulfil a commitment to collaborate with families in providing high-quality services in the education of Alexandria’s youth. The evaluation identified strengths, challenges, and stakeholder feedback across key focus areas as well as a number of recommendations for improvement. In an effort to continuously improve in the area of family engagement at a systems level, ACPS has initiated a process for identifying the key drivers of change which will be presented in a forthcoming division action plan.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide ACPS with a better understanding of the needs, barriers, resources, and services to engage all families across contexts. Surveys of families and staff conducted by an internal evaluation team were combined with data from observations (including site visits, secret shopper phone calls, and document analysis); staff focus groups and interviews; focus groups with English-speaking parents/guardians; and group interviews with non-English speaking parents/guardians collected by external partner, ICF International.

The evaluation framework, a collaborative effort across multiple ACPS departments, focused on five key areas of focus: Environment/Culture; Relationships; Decision-Making; Communication Practices; and Initiatives and Activities. Components of three research-based parental engagement models were used

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to develop a comprehensive concept map catered to the unique needs and interests of ACPS.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings and recommendations are organized around the five key areas of focus. The presentation highlights major themes, strengths, barriers, and recommendations within each of the five areas of focus. In the final report, ICF includes a total of 56 discrete recommendations for consideration. In support of the utilization of the evaluation findings, ICF presents two, high-level recommendations to be prioritized for systematic improvement within the division. Those priority areas encompass Relationship Building and Expanded Resource Utilization.

ACTION PLANNING:

Upon receiving the final evaluation report, the division assembled an Action Planning Committee inclusive of parents and staff representing building leadership, Student Services, Communications, Curriculum and Instruction, Accountability, and School, Business and Community Partnerships. The Action Planning Committee was charged with creating a draft action plan. The committee reviewed the findings and recommendations and identified specific steps to take in the near and long term toward systemic improvement in family engagement. The committee will seek additional input into strategies from a wide array of stakeholder groups culminating in a final action plan later this spring.

NEXT STEPS:

The ICF International evaluation team will be presenting the report findings at the February 20th School Board Meeting and will be available to take questions. An action plan is forthcoming after additional engagement with stakeholders which will include a timeline and scope of work to help monitor implementation.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the evaluation report for future discussion regarding possible planning, programmatic, and/or budgetary changes.

IMPACT:

The Family Engagement Evaluation Report and accompanying presentation provide critical insight into the extent to which ACPS is meeting the needs of families to allow them to be engaged partners in their child's education and growth. Addressing high priority areas of building relationships and expanding the utilization of resources will allow ACPS to better partner with families in driving success for every student.

ATTACHMENTS:

- (1) *Family Engagement Evaluation Executive Summary*
- (2) *Family Engagement Evaluation Report*
- (3) *Findings from the ACPS Family Engagement Initiative Evaluation Presentation*

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