

BOARD BRIEF

Date: November 8, 2019

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: X

FROM: Julie A. Crawford, Ed.D., Chief Student Services Officer
Kennetra N. Wood, Director, Alternative Programs and Equity

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: Update on Social Emotional Academic Learning Supports

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity

Goal 5: Health and Wellness

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Mental and Social/Emotional Health

SUMMARY:

ACPS utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). The MTSS framework is comprised of two primary areas: academics and behavior and is supported by the Department of Student Services, Alternative Programs & Equity (DSSAPE) and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. ACPS uses the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) framework to support social emotional learning, behavioral development and to promote a positive school climate and culture. This brief provides an overview and information on current PBIS, Social Emotional Academic Learning (SEAL) and Restorative Practices (RP) programming for ACPS.

BACKGROUND:

The social emotional and behavioral component of MTSS is also referred to as Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports or PBIS, which is an evidence based framework that provides the structures, procedures, interventions and supports needed for students to be socially, emotionally and behaviorally successful. PBIS systems and practices help to create and maintain positive learning environments for students and staff. Under this framework, students' needs are addressed through social emotional curriculum, restorative practices and

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positive behavior interventions and supports. SEAL and RP are used within the PBIS framework to support students' social emotional and behavioral development.

PBIS ensures that learning environments use consistent school-wide behavior expectations and practices. At all three MTSS tiers, students are taught appropriate prosocial behaviors such as respect for others, cooperation, positive communication and problem solving and are provided the support necessary to sustain these behaviors. The PBIS framework uses school-wide systems to provide staff with consistent procedures for supporting and responding to behavior, school-wide practices to support and acknowledge positive student behavior and data to support the decision making within these processes.

SEAL (also referred to as SEL, Social Emotional Learning) is defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, known as CASEL, as the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. In alignment with the MTSS/PBIS process, SEAL skills are taught universally through explicit instruction and teacher modeling in classroom settings and reinforced with school-wide climate and culture strategies. SEAL practices are rooted in the understanding that learning is more effective in the context of strong and supportive relationships. From this perspective, SEAL works cooperatively with the principles of RP; moreover, SEAL strategies can be integrated into community building and restorative circles.

RP is a framework that supports the idea that positive relationships are essential to maintaining community and repairing relationships when harm has occurred. RP provides students and teachers with proactive methods and procedures for responding to issues of school discipline. RP adheres to the principle that every instance of conflict is an opportunity for learning and restoration. Through community and restorative circles, RP teaches and models prosocial skills creating physically safe learning environments. This social skills instruction is incorporated in and aligned with the schoolwide expectations promoted by PBIS and SEAL and gives all students a voice.

A critical aspect to the implementation and expansion of MTSS is the alignment with the division's equity work. The DSSAPE's Equity Team consists of:

- Director of Alternative Programs and Equity
- PBIS Coordinator
- Cultural Competence Coordinator
- School Climate and Culture Specialist
- Mental Health Specialist

Staff collaborate regularly and use MTSS as the framework that guides positive behavior support. When implemented with fidelity, PBIS, SEAL, and RP build an inclusive school culture which encourages connectedness among students and staff and a shared ownership of the learning environment. This also creates student-focused learning communities and reduces disparities in response to behavior and academic achievement.

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RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information provided in this brief as preparation for an upcoming School Board presentation.

IMPACT:

By reviewing updated information, the School Board continues its commitment to ensuring the wellness of ACPS students by providing an inclusive and supportive environment.

CONTACT:

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