

Date: March 24, 2017

For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION _____ X _____

Board Brief _____ X _____

Board Agenda: Yes _____

No _____ X _____

FROM: Alvin L. Crawley, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
TO: The Honorable Ramee A. Gentry, Chair, and Members of the Alexandria City School Board
SUBJECT: Jefferson-Houston Prek-8 School: Literacy, Math and Leadership Audit

BACKGROUND: Last year, Alexandria City Public Schools decided to change our external school turnaround partner effective SY2016-2017. External partners are mandated and funded by the Virginia Department of Education as a part of the state's accountability process for schools that have been denied accreditation. After a careful review of organizations with expertise in school turnaround, staff recommended that we pursue a partnership with the University of Virginia's (UVA) Curry School of Education. UVA was selected based on their long history of educational excellence, specifically, in the research and training of school staff in literacy and mathematics instruction.

Due to the state's approval and process for allocation of funds, there were delays in the transition of services. In January 2017, we were given approval to move forward with the transition process. We have now fully transitioned the UVA School Turnaround Program staff into Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 School. One of the deliverables requested was an audit of work in the school related to literacy and math instruction, and leadership. We received a copy and presentation of the final report during Governance meeting held on March 17, 2017. The results will be used to drive the school's action plan going forward. Major findings from the audit were as follows.

Strengths

- Teacher buy-in for a balanced literacy approach
- Teachers eager to grow their practices
- Districtwide support for balanced literacy
- Guided math instructional approach across K-5
- Broad adherence to ACPS pacing guide, supporting common assessments and progress monitoring goals

- Mutual support for personal/professional/career growth among leaders and staff
- Teachers, staff, and administration actively discuss curriculum issues and instructional strategies

Areas in Need of Support

- School-wide definition and understanding of differentiated and balanced literacy instruction at levels appropriate for student development
- Leveraging progress monitoring towards effective differentiation
- Professional development on implementing best practices with manipulatives and CRA (Concrete/Representational Abstract) instructional approach
- Staff and leadership seeking more clarity on roles and responsibilities
- Staff collaboration over school-wide behavior code and master scheduling options

Major Audit Recommendations

- Direct coaching for J-H Reading Coaches in order to support job embedded professional development on differentiated literacy instruction across J-H faculty
- Targeted instructional support of teachers by UVA coaches
- Collaboration with J-H math coach on short-term and long-term grade level PD objectives
- Instructional leadership support provided to build and sustain progress monitoring system within and across J-H grade levels
- School leadership coaching to help develop clear roles and responsibilities, along with knowledge, attitude, skills, aspiration, and behaviors (KASAB model) that support each role
- School leadership coaching to establish and refine communication systems between and among leaders and faculty

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the attached audit.

ATTACHMENTS:

University of VA Audit
Instructional Leadership Workshop Flyer
Summary Audit Powerpoint

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