BOARD BRIEF

Date: December 16, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION: __X__

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Peter Balas, Executive Principal, Alexandria City High School

THROUGH: Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Executive Director of School Leadership
Wendy Gonzalez, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Alexandria City High School WIDA ACCESS Plan

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:
Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

SY 2022–2023 FOCUS AREA:
Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery
Hispanic Males

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:
Special Instruction Evaluation Implementation as a part of the Strategic Plan
Equitable TAG Identification of Black and Hispanic Students
Address Chronic Absenteeism & High School Graduation Rate Among Hispanic Male Students
Social and Emotional Supports for Students
Expand Access and Improve Quality of Out of School Learning

SUMMARY:
This brief updates the ACPS School Board on the high school's plan to administer the WIDA *ACCESS t*o its English Learner (EL) students.

BACKGROUND:
In previous years, the ACHS testing team would pull EL students out of class over the 8-10 week testing window to complete the WIDA Access for ELLs test, a federally mandated English proficiency test required for all EL students. There are four sections of the assessment: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Pulling students from classes over the course of the testing window period to ensure each of the domains were completed resulted in some incomplete sections in addition to extended disruptions to instructional time.

In February 2023, the ACHS Titan Testing Team will implement a new testing approach for WIDA Access for ELs. This approach includes:

- a two-day concentrated testing period for EL students in grades 9-12: February 7 and 8;
- a make-up window to test any EL students who were absent February 7 or 8;
- testing to occur at the King Street and Minnie Howard campuses for all EL students in grades 9-12;
- non-testing students at the King Street and Minnie Howard campus would remain asynchronous for these two days;
- non-testing students at Satellite Campus and Chance for Change Campus to report in-person for instruction.

This approach has the following benefits:

- Reduction in missed instructional time for our EL students and our staff overall.
- Increased equity with all other testing that requires alternate schedules. These alternate schedules usually do not touch as many students as the WIDA Access for ELs.
- Responsive plan for our participation rate plan to reach 95%, as mandated by the VDOE.
- A longer window for absent students to make up the assessment.
- Increased staff training on WIDA ACCESS and all of its components.
- Reduction in school-wide effort "days" to complete WIDA, which conflicts with our ability to get substitutes.
- Provides a high quality testing environment.
- Planning, collaborative meetings, and professional development that can take place after testing concludes.

The ACHS Executive Principal will communicate this plan of testing and schedule adjustments to the student population as well as parents/guardians through ParentSquare.

RECOMMENDATION:
The Interim Superintendent recommends that the ACPS School Board review the information in this brief to familiarize themselves with the high school plan for administering the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs.

IMPACT:
This approach to administering the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs will allow for the high school to provide the most appropriate assessment environment for our students, resulting in increased investment in the assessment as well as increased participation rates and maximum opportunities for absent students to make up the assessment. In addition, this will result in a reduction in missed instructional time for our EL students.

ATTACHMENTS:
None

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