

BOARD BRIEF

Date: June 26, 2020

BOARD INFORMATION:

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Kimberly Schell, K-12 Literacy Coordinator
Carolyn Wooster, Elementary Literacy Instructional Specialist

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: K-2 Literacy Task Force Project Plan

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity

Goal 3: An Exemplary Staff

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY

Academics

Leadership and Professional Development

SUMMARY

As a result of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) School Board's commitment to early literacy and in alignment to the *ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan*, ACPS developed a K-2 Task Force comprised of teachers, administrators, and literacy coaches representing each elementary school to address early literacy needs. Together, the committee met over several months and:

- Analyzed our student data;
- Reviewed current academic research and literature;
- Inventoried current ACPS practices and resources; and
- Developed a plan to address the literacy needs in ACPS with a goal of equity for all students.

BACKGROUND

ACPS' approach to comprehensive and responsive literacy includes research-based structures where students engage with the elements of structured literacy (defined by the International Dyslexia Association to include phonology, sound-symbol association, syllables, morphology,

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syntax, and semantics) throughout multiple contexts. These include:

- Shared reading;
- Word study (phonics and phonemic awareness);
- Interactive writing;
- Mini-lessons providing explicit modeling and guided practice;
- Accountable, goal-directed, independent reading and writing; and
- Assessment-based differentiated small group instruction.

Current research placed increased attention on the framework for early literacy instruction. Although balanced literacy is not a program in and of itself, the K-2 Task Force Committee recognized the need to shift from the term balanced literacy to a more comprehensive and responsive literacy approach that includes explicit and systematic instruction.

The committee defined desired results and deliverables for the K-2 literacy initiative. The K-2 Task Force determined as a priority the need to research and implement a systematic and explicit phonemic awareness and phonics resource or program. Additionally, the committee determined a clear need for ongoing professional development in early literacy to support teachers' knowledge and instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness as well as the components of the ACPS comprehensive literacy guidelines. It is our goal that with these deliverables, we can enhance our current practices with increased teacher professional development and supportive curriculum resources to ensure every reader's success.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information provided within this brief and attachment.

IMPACT

The desired results of implementing this plan are the following:

- Increased pass rates or demonstration of growth on PALS and reading SOL assessments;
- Increased opportunity for ongoing professional learning for early literacy;
- Increased mid-year and end-of-the-year guided reading levels in grades K-2; and
- Increased fidelity in the teaching of reading and writing workshop.

ATTACHMENT

1. 200626_K-2_Literacy_Task_Force_Project_Plan_Summary

CONTACTS

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