

BOARD BRIEF

Date: November 12, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Krishna Leyva, FACE Manager
Kurt Huffman, Executive Director of Community Partnerships & Engagement

THROUGH: Julia Burgos, Chief of School and Community Relations
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: School Family Engagement Framework and Blueprints

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2021-2022 FOCUS AREA:

- Focus Area 1: Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery
- Focus Area 2: Hispanic Males
- Focus Area 3: Middle School Educational Experience

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

- Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan
- Implementation of Equity Audit of School Board Policies
- Stress/Counseling Support especially around Trauma
- Continue Engagement with Hispanic Families to Improve Graduation and Chronic Absenteeism
- Professional Learning and Cultural Competency Training for all Staff and Partners

SUMMARY:

The Family Engagement Blueprint Action Plan (FEBAP) is a strategic starting point for schools and leaders committed to strengthening ongoing efforts and mechanisms designed to engage families and create an on-going culture of best practice family engagement (FE). These plans will be linked to learning for all families and support academic success for all students. The FEBAP process will assist schools to navigate the shifts needed to move from status quo family involvement events to transformative and ongoing family engagement mechanisms that are co-designed with families that represent the full diversity of the school community. The FEBAP

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process follows the Department of Education FE Dual Capacity Framework and ACPS Family Engagement Policy and is an ongoing process with dedicated staff, training time and leaders. The FEBAP process and the template may be useful for any school, particularly if a school participates in programs (21st Century Community Learning Centers, Special Education, etc.) that have specific family or stakeholder engagement requirements. Leaders will want to ensure that the family engagement action planning aligns and includes all programs and grant specific requirements.

Family Engagement Action Plan Blueprint Process

Collaborative Leadership

- The FACE manager or designee has begun reaching out to the school principals to schedule a meeting to share a self-assessment tool to be completed by administrators and school personnel. This document will be important to gather multiple perspectives regarding how well the school engages families so that they can establish a baseline, demonstrate needs and build commitment from all stakeholders and assess needs and priorities for their school.
- After the self-assessment tool is completed, a meeting will be set up between the FACE Team (manager, coordinator and division-wide parent liaisons) with the school principal, building parent liaison (if applicable) and their team to discuss data results from the ACPS Family Engagement Evaluation and school self-assessment tool.
- The goal of this meeting is to establish a clear path and next steps to; identify staff, school leadership, professional learning for participants (administrators, teachers and school staff) and a timeline for recruitment of families to pull together a Family Engagement Team.
- Once this team is established, FACE will serve as an advisor and mentor to model family engagement practices to ensure schools have a clear vision and understanding to build an actionable blueprint that is equitable and aligned with ACPS strategic planning.
- The FACE manager will allocate funds and resources such as staff, training and materials to support schools and model high-impact family engagement activities for families.
- The first two family engagement (high-impact) events will be led by schools & Family Engagement Action Team leaders and members with FACE collaboration.

Timeline

The following is an example of the timeline that is being implemented with this initiative:

Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Meet with Principals (Title I Schools)● Schools will complete self-assessments● Principal will identify school staff to participate in family engagement action team and meet throughout the year with FACE team to discuss data results and to set a timeline for implementation of family engagement action team● Parent liaison and/or school designee will solicit family participation using a variety of communication strategies supported by FACE Team
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Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continued recruitment, training and creation of a school family engagement action teams and implementation of blueprints at Title 1 schools
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continued recruitment, training and creation of a school family engagement action teams and implementation of blueprints in high, middle and remaining elementary schoolsReflective, collaborative discussions with Title I schools on the successes, challenges and potential adjustments of their action teams and blueprints
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reflective, collaborative discussions with Title I, elementary, middle and high schools on the successes, challenges and potential adjustments of their action teams and blueprints

Metrics

Success will be measured using quantitative and qualitative data from each school based on established goals and key indicators of high-quality family engagement programs and activities based on best practices and the Department of Education’s Family-School Dual Capacity Framework. This measurement includes the use of a family engagement rubric and each school progress will be assessed annually. Data from the ACPS Equity survey, family event surveys/feedback, the number of high-impact activities and participation of staff in family engagement professional learning will be in consideration when assessing each individual school to demonstrate impact.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

To support this important family engagement work, the division has made a commitment to family engagement by increasing our Amharic and Arabic division-wide parent liaisons from half time to full time in the 2021-2022 school year. This increase for these positions has allowed our FACE team to expand our outreach, support and engagement of our Amharic and Arabic families throughout the division. The Office of Community Partnerships & Engagement has also submitted a budget request for FY23 to expand our current building-level parent liaisons to schools that currently do not have that position. This expansion, if approved, will provide additional support for our families and support the identified goals and implementation of school family engagement blueprints.

BACKGROUND:

Practicing equitable family engagement requires an intentional, long-term effort to change ingrained perceptions, beliefs and regular practices of school and division staff. For years, the FACE team has been working towards creating equitable family engagement practices in all schools. However, we have found that there is a lack of understanding across the district about best practice family engagement and what elements are important to implement at each and every level. Providing training, while working collaboratively with school leadership, will ensure

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equitable family engagement opportunities across the school division. Establishing a shared responsibility for family engagement requires school leaders to commit to learning from-and-with families about how to effectively engage with each other over time, rather than approaching engagement as a “top-down” initiative. This may require school leaders to codify equitable family engagement as a major component of their school success criteria, for example:

- Clearly articulating a vision for equitable family engagement
- Requiring all staff to attend and complete family engagement development training
- Establishing family engagement standards and holding school leadership accountable for meeting these standards
- Supporting staff in developing new mindsets, skills and practices related to equitable family engagement practices

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review this plan to familiarize themselves with the process and instruments being used to support and realize the fulfillment of the *ACPS Strategic Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement*.

IMPACT:

Research shows that students receive the following benefits from a collaborative partnership with the school, the family and the community: higher grades and test scores, better attendance and homework completion, fewer placements in special education, more positive attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates and greater enrollment in post-secondary education. The gain for families includes: improved understanding of their child’s development, improved ability to parent, improved ability to assist their children with school and learning and improved relationships among all stakeholders.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. ACPS Family Engagement Evaluation
2. Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships
3. ACPS FACE Blueprint Template
4. Assessment and Rubric

CONTACT:

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