

January 5, 2024

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Kathy Mimberg, Executive Director of Communications
Jasmine Washington-Price, Communications Specialist

THROUGH: Julia Burgos, Chief of School and Community Relations
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Dr. Michelle Rief, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Media Relations Report for 2022-23: July 1 - December 31, 2023

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2023-2024 PRIORITY AREA:

Academic Achievement
Tier 1 Instruction: Alignment, Rigor, Engagement
The High School Project
Student Supports
Student Connection and Attendance
Staff Supports
Continue Culture Building
Recruitment and Retention

FY 2024 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Target Chronic Absenteeism
Restorative Practices Supports
Target Planned Compensation Enhancement and Staff Retention Efforts
Increase Support for Social and Emotional Learning
Safety and Security Upgrades
Transportation
Communications Support
Transparency and Engagement for CIP Projects

SUMMARY:

The Office of Communications has prepared a biannual report summarizing earned media coverage for the division from July 1 through December 31, 2023. The report contains the number of media inquiries that the Office of Communications received and addressed during

this time period, main topics related to ACPS in the news, the number of mentions of ACPS leadership, regional and national coverage, positive stories pitched by the Office of Communications and successfully covered by news media, as well as how ACPS' media coverage compares to nearby school divisions and more. The Office of Communications is producing a media relations report twice during the 2023-24 school year. The next media relations report will summarize earned media coverage for the division from January 1 through June 30, 2024.

DETAILS:

During this time period at the start of the 2023-24 academic year, ACPS received 164 media requests between July 1 and December 31, 2023, and had over 2,800 mentions in broadcast and online news coverage; "mentions" mean the number of TV, radio and online news stories in which ACPS was included (not including print). Highlights include:

- The top topics for the academic year were the start of the school year/Back to School, the leadership of Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt as the permanent superintendent of ACPS, school staffing and recruitment, safety and security, attendance and absenteeism, substance abuse prevention and good stories from our schools.
- Top ACPS leaders in the news reflect our new permanent superintendent (Superintendent Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt) and new School Board Chair (Dr. Michelle Rief), our emphasis on staff retention and recruitment (Director of Recruitment and Retention Margaret Browne), the opening of a new school (Executive Director Erika Gulick and Douglas MacArthur Elementary School Principal Penny Hairston), the need for school nurses (Director of School Health Services Dr. Robin Wallin) and our emphasis on partnering with families to address attendance (Attendance and Truancy Specialist Hope Murphy, Executive Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement Taneika Tukan and William Ramsay Elementary School Principal Michael Routhouska).
- The top stories from our schools included stories from several of our schools, including Alexandria City High School, Naomi L. Brooks Elementary School, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, Cora Kelly School for Science, Technology and Math, Charles Barrett Elementary School and William Ramsay Elementary School, among others.

BACKGROUND:

The 2021-25 ACPS Strategic Communications & Community Engagement Plan identifies media and public outreach as a core opportunity to engage with the community on division-wide issues that are important for all students and the future of the school division. This report shows the work our media relations team has done with a broad range of news outlets to effectively reach the Alexandria community and stakeholders, as well as some national audiences, on the important issues and activities of our school division.

We are collecting data on a biannual basis during the school year to share with the superintendent and School Board to further the understanding of the narrative surrounding the school division among various audiences, including the ACPS community of students, staff and families, residents of the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan region and others in the

educational and national arena.

RECOMMENDATION:

The superintendent recommends that the School Board review this presentation to become familiar with the work of the communications team and some key metrics, such as the number of media inquiries that are received by ACPS, the stories pitched to reporters and their media outlets, how often the division appears in the news and the type of earned media coverage that affects public opinion of the school division.

IMPACT:

The report will serve to address how working with journalists and shaping our messages for the media can assist the division in addressing timely issues and our work within our school community, helping to foster relationships between families and staff and furthering community engagement goals as outlined in the Department of School and Community Relations plan: ensuring staff, families, students and the community have timely access to information and engagement opportunities, feel welcome and supported, and have confidence in ACPS.

REFERENCES:

Sept. 8, 2023 Board Brief: Media Relations Report 2022-23 School Year
June 23, 2023 Board Brief: Media Relations Quarterly Report: April - June 2023
May 5, 2023 Board Brief: Media Relations Quarterly Report: Jan. - March 2023
March 3, 2023 Board Brief: Media Relations Quarterly Report: Oct. - Dec. 2022
Oct. 21, 2022 Board Brief: Media Relations Quarterly Report: July - Sept. 2022
April 22, 2022 Board Brief: Media Relations Interim Report

Attachments:

Media Relations Report for 2022-23: July 1 - Dec. 31, 2023

CONTACT:

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