

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Student Success Systems Workshop: Summary Memo

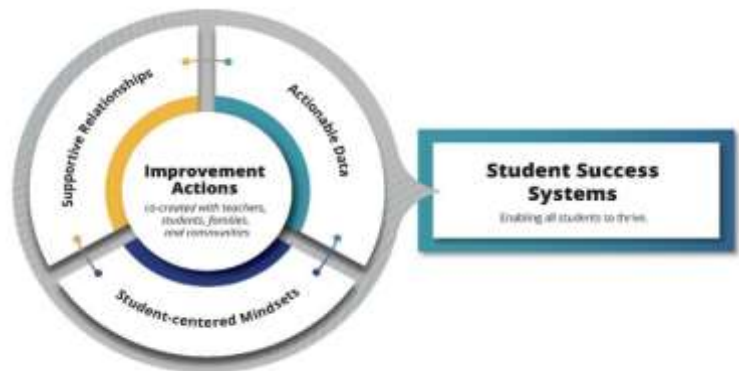
Event Summary

On March 22, 2023, AIR and ACPS leadership conducted a workshop to engage division leaders and members of the school community in discussion about Student Success Systems (SSS) and the strengths and areas of opportunity in ACPS to align their existing and planned efforts to the SSS framework.

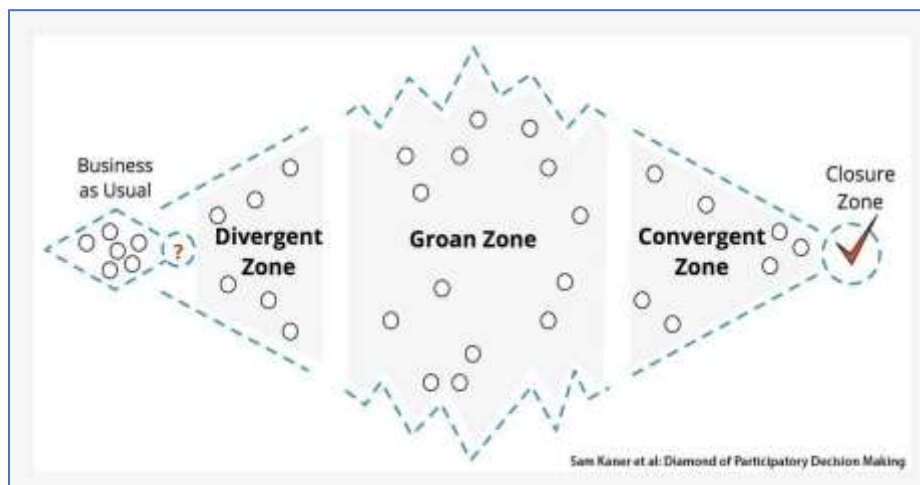
The meeting objectives were to:

- Increase understanding of student success systems (SSS)
- Use SSS to organize current ACPS work
- Prioritize ACPS work based on level of impact and effort
- Gather insights and perspectives to inform recommendations to share with Board of Education

Approximately 40 participants attended the workshop, including division leaders, school leaders, and educators. Participants' knowledge of each other's roles, positions, and perspective were varied – some were familiar with each other, and others were not.



To ground participation in a common understanding that any discussion, and particularly a discussion of SSS, would be impacted by the relational knowledge and trust in the room, the workshop began by engaging participants in an activity that helped to acknowledge and center their humanity and connection. Additionally, as this was the first time this group was convening, the Diamond of Participatory Decision Making was shared to help identify and normalize the dynamics of group decision making.



During the workshop, participants worked in small and large groups aligned to the four Student Success System Components to:

- read through and discuss with each other descriptions of the SSS components
- Identify current and planned ACPS initiatives, as well as opportunity areas.
- Summarize identified efforts into emerging themes.
- Align efforts into an Impact and Effort Matrix.
- Identify from summarized themes, efforts they felt were priorities in which to engage (each person was given two “voting dots” to place on the summarized ideas).

Emerging Ideas and Learnings

As an initial activity, teams identified key efforts currently underway, planned, or which represented opportunities for new efforts in ACPS. The efforts were synthesized into emerging themes which included:

Supportive Relationships	Real-time, Actionable Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSS • Social Emotional Academic Learning • Restorative Practices • Positive Behavioral Supports • Mentoring Programs (<i>for teachers and students</i>) • Community Partnerships/ Family Liaisons • Student Engagement • RULER • Equity Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal screeners (e.g., MAP, DESSA, WIDA, SBAR, VDOE SOL Growth assessments) • Data warehouses (e.g., data dashboards, implementation of parent portal for student data, implementation for intervention progress monitoring) • Common assessments (e.g., common formative assessments data, DIBELS, Delta math, Achieve 3000) • MTSS (e.g., student-level measures of agency, belonging and connectedness) • How to meaningfully integrate data (e.g., student level measures of agency, belonging and connectedness, ACPS CTE completer, work-based learning reports, Title I budget process) • Identified needs related to data
Improvement Actions	Student-Centered Mindsets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school and division improvement process (e.g., school improvement and support process, supports for Title I schools, improvement plan guidebook, alignment of instruction to standards) • Data driven instructional planning and feedback (e.g., populating data in performance matters, data cohort meetings) • Equitable access and opportunities (e.g., dual language program expansion, racial equity and anti-racism training, expanding access for black and brown students in advanced academic programs) • Student and practice driven data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEAL (e.g., restorative practices implementation, social emotional learning, SEAL lessons, ASCA student standards) • System alignment with equity (e.g., equitable practices, equity training) • Instruction (e.g., project-based learning, increasing rigor, more STEAM opportunities, small group instruction, Inquiry based learning) • Leadership (e.g., principal interviews, student board representatives, superintendent student group)

- Structures to support improvement (e.g., PLCs, quarterly chats, SIPs)

Following the initial activity of the workshop, participants were invited to share their hopes and fears about the concept and implementation of student success systems, the current and planned student support efforts, and opportunities for growth related to student success systems. Some of the perspectives shared were:

- **Hopes:** ACPS follows through with this work; uses SSS as impetus to move things forward; stays brave and available to try something new; uses SSS as a way to illuminate areas that are working and to find spots that aren't and make them beautiful; there is a sense of connectedness in doing this work at all levels within ACPS; start small and go fast
- **Fears:** Ensuring staff have the time to do this work (acknowledging that this work takes time); can't be expected that this work happens on donated time; this work just illuminates areas of weaknesses and that we don't move past the illumination aspect; we have too much on our plates- need to narrow the focus to be on things that give us better impact

During the prioritization exercise, many ideas emerged for consideration. The ideas with the most community support included:

Idea	Votes
1. Develop a common process for data analysis and utilization for "big" data and engaging in structured dialogue and next steps to include data literacy and adult facing classroom observations	15
2. Specifically collecting data on student agency, belonging, and connectedness from students	9
3. Inquiry based, high quality instruction with rigor, and small group opportunities	6
4. Master schedule – shift to student orientation and choice, and include key requirements and joy, and differentiate	6
5. MTSS monitoring and fidelity of implementation	6
6. Racial equity and anti-racism training, engagement and conversation	6
7. PLCs	4
8. Student engagement	3
9. Community partnerships; family engagement	2
10. Data warehouse – develop a platform for various student performance data (performance matters) and expectations for dialogue, capacity building for stakeholders	2
11. Mentoring programs	1
12. SEAL (especially the S, E, L) ongoing time in school to do this work and focus on social emotional aspects	0
13. System alignment with equity (unpack this)	0
14. Standardized method of continuous improvement	0
15. Alignment of curriculum standards – written, taught and assessed	0
16. Recognizing students for practicing PBIS	0
17. Helping students understand what student-centered mindsets mean, look like, and feel like, sound like	0
18. Supporting implementation of student-centered practices at the school based level (school staff, administration, teachers and students)	0
19. Leadership support (* this came up but didn't get added to chart paper prior to voting)	*

Recommendations for Next Steps

To build on the momentum of the SSS workshop and support continued ACPS progress toward aligning their efforts and systems with the SSS framework, AIR recommends ACPS:

1. Continue to engage workshop participants and other district and school staff in defining and moving forward the priorities identified and shared with them in the post-meeting follow up, specifically:

Strong, Supportive Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investing in mentoring programs (student-teacher, teacher-teacher)• Prioritizing explicit Social Emotional Learning support
Strategic Improvement Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protecting PLCs as critical staff development time• Utilizing continuous improvement tools and protocols to align, implement and evaluate initiatives.
Student-Centered Mindsets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measuring student-level data on their sense of agency, belonging and connection• Ensuring and monitoring rigorous, differentiated, and culturally-relevant instruction for all students
Real-Time, Actionable Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing data analysis protocols to ensure consistency and cohesion division-wide• Monitoring and supporting teacher practice through observation, trend analysis, and professional learning• Creating a data warehouse to store universal screening assessment data along with ABC data (Attendance, Behavior, and Course-completion/grades)

2. Continue to develop opportunities for including constituent perspective and voices in the ongoing design efforts. Consider using strategies such as providing drafts for feedback and input, creating smaller working groups to move specific pieces of work forward, and opportunities for students and families to contribute.
3. Maintain emphasis on going slow to go further together. This could be done by starting small with piloting work in a specific area of student success systems (e.g., real-time, actionable data) or creating subgroups to go deeper within each of the components. Participants noted that there were significantly fewer post-it notes on the student-centered mindsets group, perhaps having a group explore this further and report back to the larger team.
4. Determine a work plan for this work. Participants were excited to engage in these conversations, and expressed hope that this work continues. A smaller team could create a draft work plan and seek input from various constituents. Identify opportunities to leverage and build upon prior work already done.