School Board Advisory Committee Member Survey
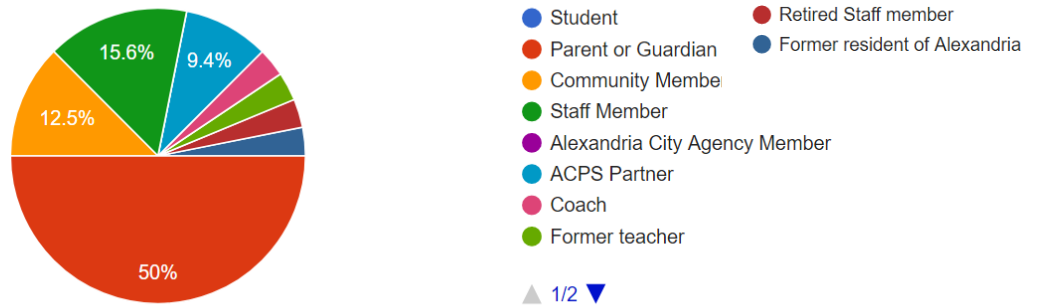# 32 Responses

October 1-31, 2021

Stakeholder Information

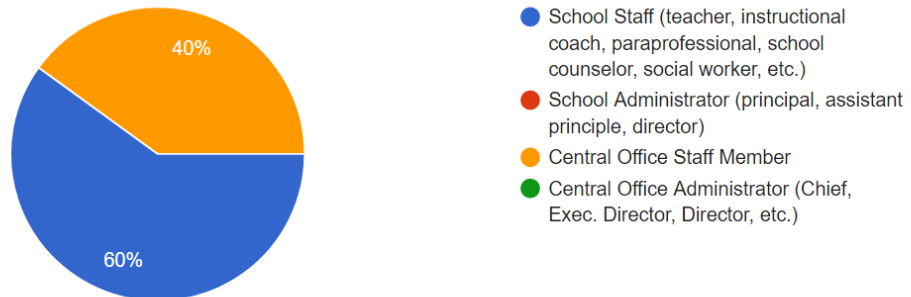Q: Which of the following best describes your affiliation with Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS)?

32 responses

- Student
- Parent or Guardian
- Community Member
- Staff Member
- Alexandria City Agency Member
- ACPS Partner
- Coach
- Former teacher
- Retired Staff member
- Former resident of Alexandria

△ 1/2 ▼

Staff

Q: What is your current staff member role in ACPS?

5 responses

- School Staff (teacher, instructional coach, paraprofessional, school counselor, social worker, etc.)
- School Administrator (principal, assistant principle, director)
- Central Office Staff Member
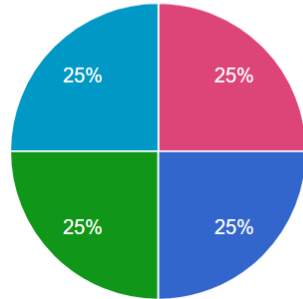- Central Office Administrator (Chief, Exec. Director, Director, etc.)

Community Members

Q: Which of the following best represents your role as a community member?
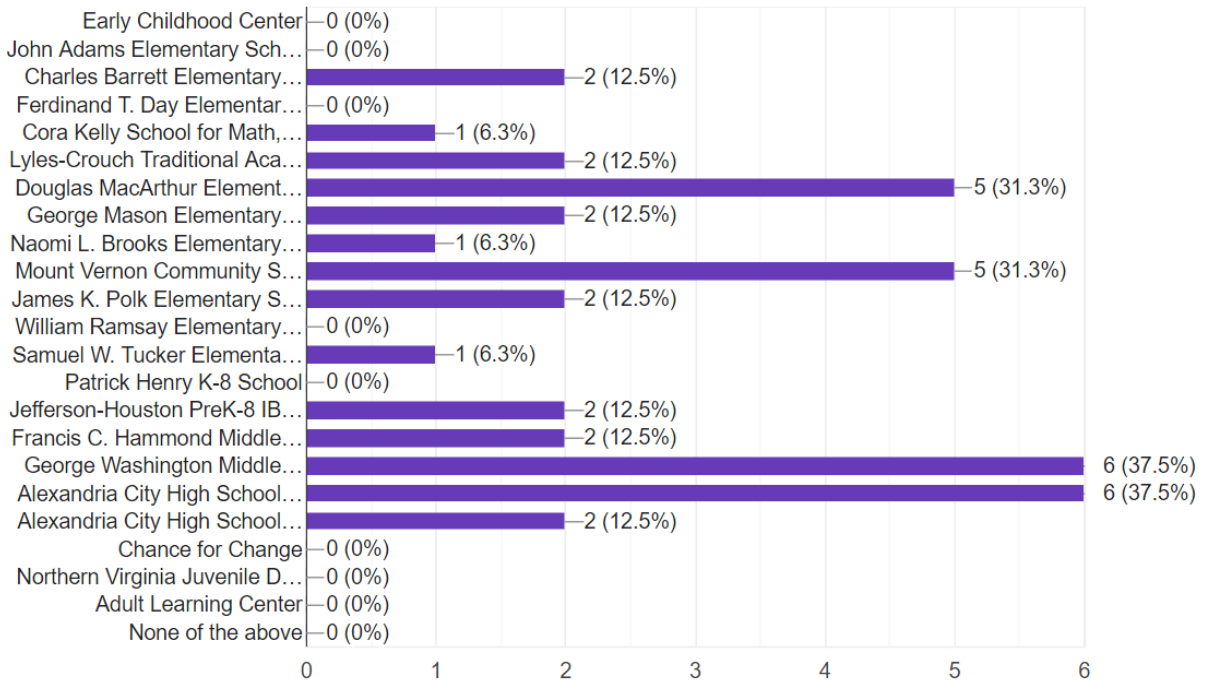
4 responses

- I own or work in a business.
- I work for or am a member of a civic organization.
- I work for or am a member of a non-profit organization.
- I work for a local or federal government agency (other than the City of Alexand…
- I am affiliated with a religious organiza…
- I am a member of a community coalition
- Retired

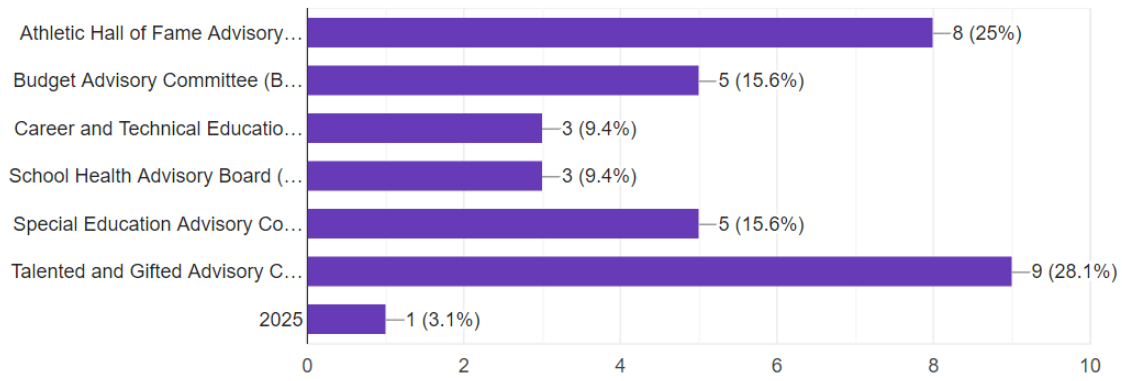## Parents:

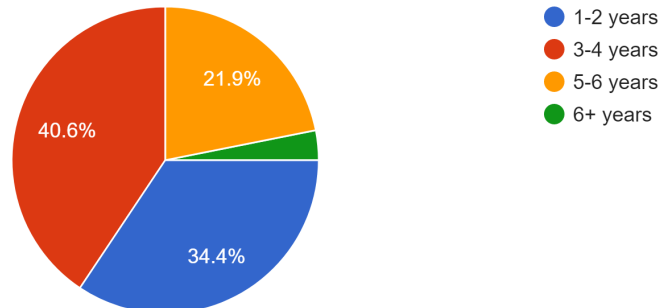Q: Which schools has your student(s) attended?

16 responses

School	Value
Early Childhood Center	0 (0%)
John Adams Elementary Sch…	0 (0%)
Charles Barrett Elementary…	2 (12.5%)
Ferdinand T. Day Elementar…	0 (0%)
Cora Kelly School for Math,…	1 (6.3%)
Lyles-Crouch Traditional Aca…	2 (12.5%)
Douglas MacArthur Element…	5 (31.3%)
George Mason Elementary…	2 (12.5%)
Naomi L. Brooks Elementary…	1 (6.3%)
Mount Vernon Community S…	5 (31.3%)
James K. Polk Elementary S…	2 (12.5%)
William Ramsay Elementary…	0 (0%)
Samuel W. Tucker Elementa…	1 (6.3%)
Patrick Henry K-8 School	0 (0%)
Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 IB…	2 (12.5%)
Francis C. Hammond Middle…	2 (12.5%)
George Washington Middle…	6 (37.5%)
Alexandria City High School…	6 (37.5%)
Alexandria City High School…	2 (12.5%)
Chance for Change	0 (0%)
Northern Virginia Juvenile D…	0 (0%)
Adult Learning Center	0 (0%)
None of the above	0 (0%)

Advisory Committee Service/Recruitment

Q: Please select **ALL** of the advisory committees that you have served on.

32 responses

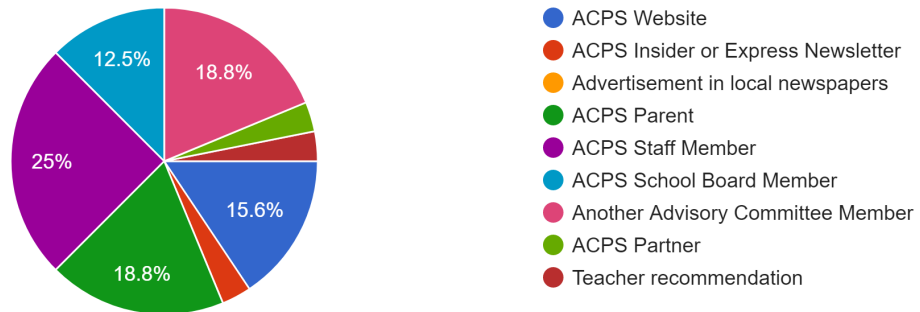| Committee	Count
Athletic Hall of Fame Advisory…	8 (25%)
Budget Advisory Committee (B…	5 (15.6%)
Career and Technical Educatio…	3 (9.4%)
School Health Advisory Board (…	3 (9.4%)
Special Education Advisory Co…	5 (15.6%)
Talented and Gifted Advisory C…	9 (28.1%)
2025	1 (3.1%)

Q: How many years have you been an advisory committee member? If you have served on various ACPS advisory committees for different terms, please include your cumulative years of experience.

32 responses

- 1-2 years: 34.4%
- 3-4 years: 40.6%
- 5-6 years: 21.9%
- 6+ years

Q: How did you find out about this opportunity?
32 responses

- ACPS Website
- ACPS Insider or Express Newsletter
- Advertisement in local newspapers
- ACPS Parent
- ACPS Staff Member
- ACPS School Board Member
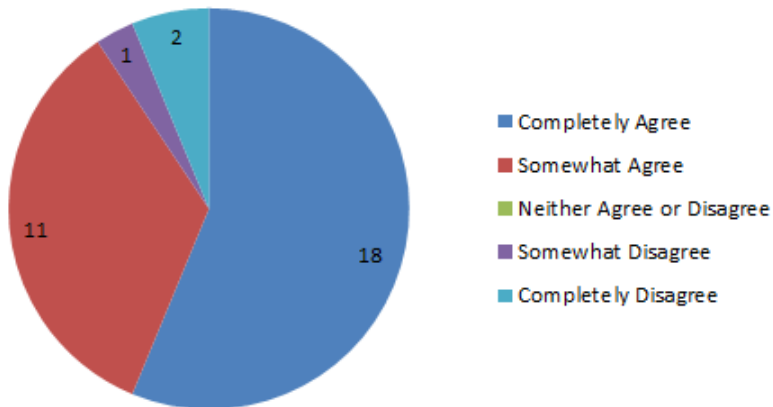- Another Advisory Committee Member
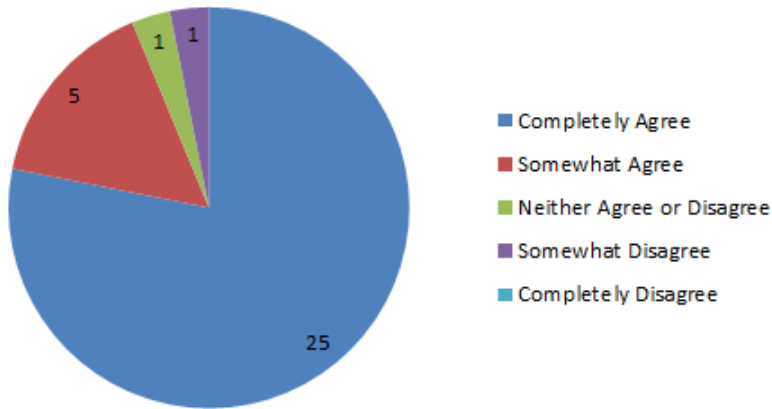- ACPS Partner
- Teacher recommendation

Expectations/Contributions

Q: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the effectiveness of your advisory committee:
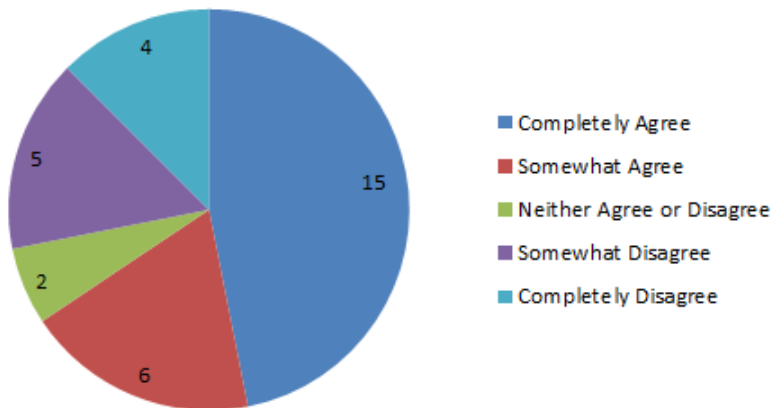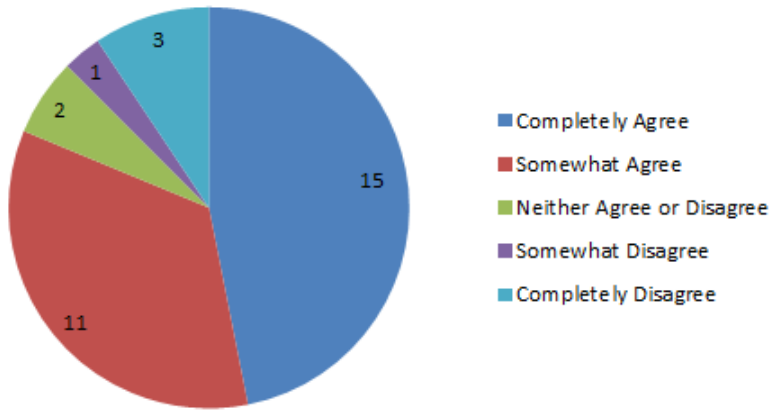
1.Committee meetings were run efficiently.

- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree

2. The committee met regularly (at least quarterly).

1 1	■ Completely Agree
5	■ Somewhat Agree
	■ Neither Agree or Disagree
	■ Somewhat Disagree
25	■ Completely Disagree

3. Committee membership reflected the schools and community in terms of diversity and viewpoints.

4	■ Completely Agree
5	■ Somewhat Agree
15	■ Neither Agree or Disagree
2	■ Somewhat Disagree
6	■ Completely Disagree

4. All committee members were able to effectively contribute and have their voices heard.

Completely Agree: 15
Somewhat Agree: 11
Neither Agree or Disagree: 2
Somewhat Disagree: 1
Completely Disagree: 3

5. The Committee reviewed its bylaws annually.

Completely Agree: 19
Somewhat Agree: 5
Neither Agree or Disagree: 5
Somewhat Disagree: 1
Completely Disagree: 2
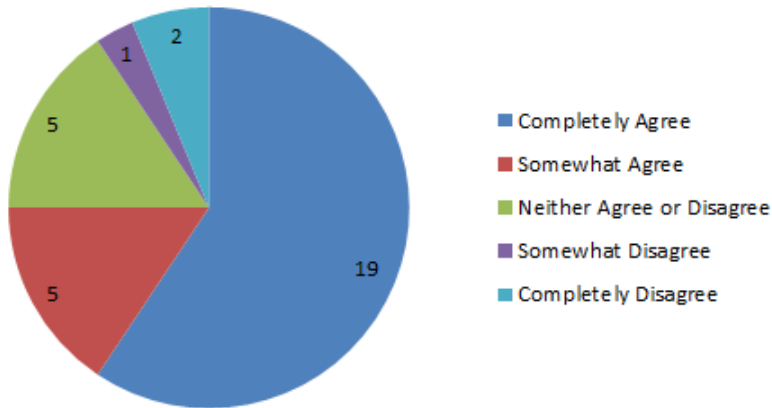
6. The School Board Member Liaison provided sufficient support and guidance to the committee.

14	

Legend:
- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree

Values: 14, 13, 1, 2, 2
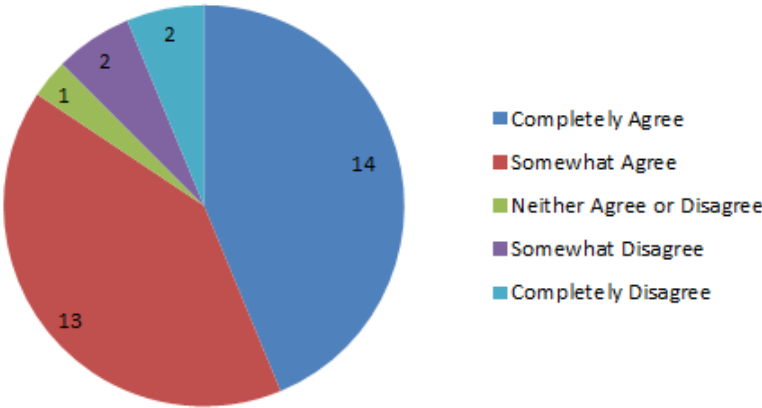
7. The Staff Liaison provided sufficient support to the committee.

Legend:
- Completely Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Completely Disagree

Values: 14, 13, 1, 2, 2
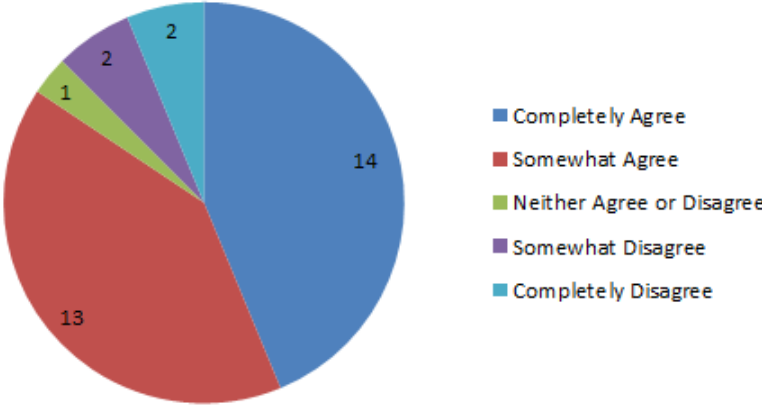
8. The school Board reviewed and valued the committee's work.

Completely Agree: 14
Somewhat Agree: 5
Neither Agree or Disagree: 8
Somewhat Disagree: 1
Completely Disagree: 4
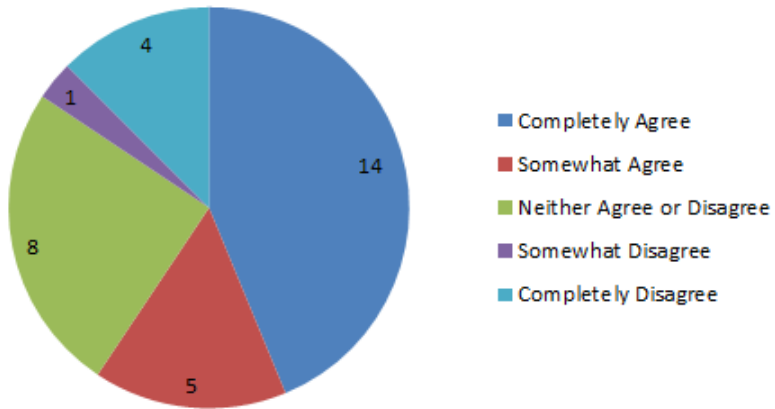
9. Committee work advanced the vision and goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Completely Agree: 17
Somewhat Agree: 5
Neither Agree or Disagree: 5
Somewhat Disagree: 1
Completely Disagree: 4
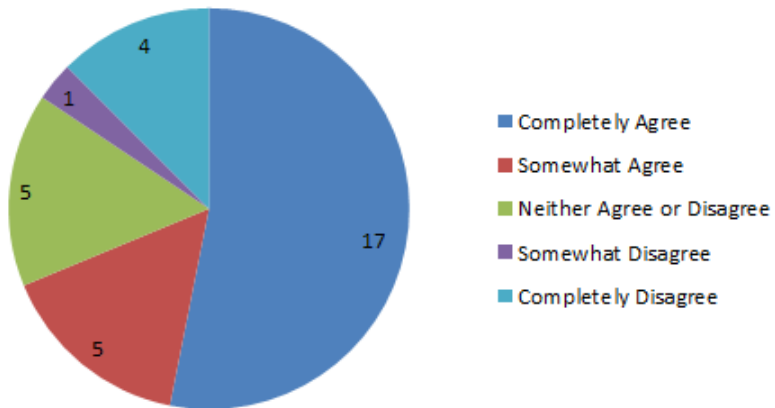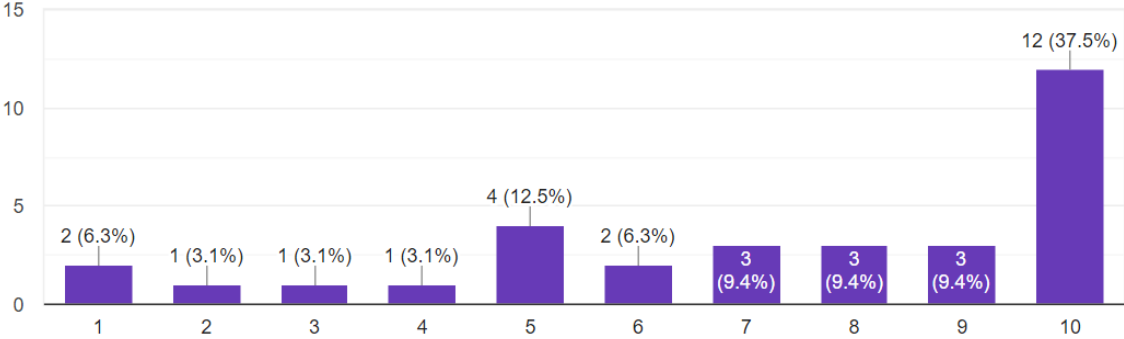
Q: Having served on an advisory committee, how likely are you to recommend this opportunity *
to a friend or community member?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all Likely	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely Likely

32 responses

Q: What suggestions or areas for improvement do you have for strengthening the effectiveness of
School Board advisory committees? (optional)

17 responses

Each Board member should appoint one member to each committee. That's the model the
BFAAC has, for example. This would help with recruitment snd also foster Board use of and
investment in the committees.

Board should invite each committee to present at least once a year to resort on its committees.
Board should provide feedback to committees.

Board should be consulted and proactively reach out to committees with guidance on areas for
committee focus.

My answers are mixed because my experience was mixed. When I started, the staff and Board
were very supportive and interested in our feedback. When I finished, the staff obstructed and
misrepresented our feedback to the full Board. The process was meaningful and constructive
years ago. I believe it has become a figurehead position now. I think some of the problems
stemmed from individualized practices by various staff over years past. Uniform guidance to
staff liaison about what to do and not do might avoid the problems I experienced. Also, a
uniform process across all Advisory Boards about how policy input is to be received would help
too. When I started, we literally drafted and voted on changes which the full School Board

considered and usually formally approved. At the end of my term, our draft suggestions were not even given to the Board and we were told by staff the process never worked that way - which was not true. So, I guess it is also important to be clear (if you implement a new process) that you recognize various processes were followed in the past but this is the one consistent process going forward.
My #5 or "neither" answers reflect an average opinion. On all those questions, my first term experience would've rated a 10 and my second term experience a 1.

Having never been on an advisory committee before, it would be helpful to be briefed on the structure of the formats prior to attending the first meeting.

The school board needs to take SEAC's work more seriously. Special Education/Specialized Instruction is lacking at ACPS. Students with disabilities are marginalized and segregated far too much. Instead of "fixing" our students with IEPs or shoving them into resource rooms, ACPS needs to do better at including everyone in a meaningful way. Really interacting with SEAC and hearing from their chair regularly at school board meetings is critical.

My personal experience was that the work of the advisory committee that I served in was not really valued, despite trying everything in our power to actively engage the board and ask what would be most helpful to them. In addition, it often felt like work that the committee could have done to assist the board and staff, the board didn't even think to engage the committee and ask them to do this work.

However, the absolute worst part of my experience was submitting a cumulative report that represented a substantive amount of work from the committee, and subsequently receiving a staff rebuttal to the report. A recommendation for the future: If you are actively trying to dissuade people from volunteering, that's a good way to do it - have your professional staff refute well-intended recommendations - if that wasn't your intent, staff could just say "thank you for the recommendations, we'll take them under advisement" - that experience made me understand that my time was not valued, and I resigned my position.

Last recommendation, if the board can't actively engage with the committee, I'd recommend, reevaluating how many committees the school board supports, and focus only on the ones that are important to the board, and disband the others - meaningful engagement is better than half-hearted engagement.

Over the summer, each committee should outline a work plan for the year that aligns with the focus areas if the School Board.

After the Board reads the Annual Report, I would like them to do a Q&A and provide feedback to the committee. The current process allows no formal mechanism for the board to address the committee.

Have goals based on Strategic Plan or guidance from School Board / leadership

Keeping virtual as an option, it would increase participation

The committee was beneficial to me because it provided with detail information on the budget process and the decision that had to be made to keep within a balance budget. The issue that I find is that alot of these committees and commissions & boards through out the city do not allow for community members to have an impact of policies. I also belong to the Gang task

force and it was the same, we were provided with information but we were not given the opportunity to make decision on how these agencies were being ran. As a community member I did not feel that my voice really matter, it was more for me to get information.

Also for the ACPS budget committee I wasn't really clear how the leader of the committee was chosen. The process was not transparent. Thank you again for allowing me this opportunity to give you my feedback.

There is not really a representative for the black and international community, parents and students don't really see a whole lot of that in school board meetings except for the translators. They don't really feel welcome to come out and speak about their issues because they don't see anyone like them to advocate for them, or see enough of people like them to really make the changes that they need. Even the person who has managed to make it in the community, the application was not even considered until it was pushed. The advisory makes it very difficult to get people of international and black decent to even get on the board. The Arabic student who has been a model student, who has applied several times, the chairperson ignored and acted like those applications didn't exist for her and effectively took away the opportunity. Testing is the biggest priority regarding the environment for certain kids, while other kids (international and black) are practically neglected. Another thing that delays any problem solving from being done is the lack of communication, or more specifically the lack of communication to basically any minority group. The one minority person you have right now on the board, if that application is not renewed, that would not come as a surprise.

Stronger leadership by the Board liaison. Most of the committees I was on, the ACPS liaison directly or indirectly took control over the committee agenda to deflect the focus away from ACPS program gaps.

As recommended to the committee at the end of last year (and as will be implemented this year) the advisory committee needs fewer full committee meetings so that subcommittee meetings can be scheduled into our regular meeting times.

Advisory committee chairs should be given the handbooks as soon as they assume their role as chair. All committee members need to be alerted to VA FOIA requirements when they start serving on the committee. I was not given the handbook until having been chair for many months and had no awareness of FOIA (even though I had been on the committee prior to becoming chair).

For our advisory committee, which is mandated by the state, there are many state resources. The chair should be directed to these resources as soon as they assume the role of chair. (This happens now but did not happen when I became chair. It would be wise to ensure that the chair is aware of these resources.)

I would like to see a segment of SB meetings during which advisory committee comments can be read aloud or receipt of reports can be acknowledged. Because the Public Comment of a chair represents the advisory committee as a whole, it seems strange to have chairs stand in line with individuals for Public Comment rather than have a section of meetings reserved for this (even if right before or after Public Comments).

I think all advisory committees would like guidance from the SB on how they prefer updates. Should the liaison serve this purpose? Should the chair provide a (very brief) update quarterly? Should Public Comment be made as needed? Are written input and reports useful?

None
We've had alot of discussions about hybrid or real time meetings with QA to include people who cannot attend in person due to travel or child care issues. It doesn't seem to be an option currently. Faster feed back on submissions. Easier ways todo parent/teacher/student surveys
More nominees from the Community.
Perhaps offer a workshop on Robert's Rules ls of Order on how to run a meeting effectively and make a motion