

Date: August 28, 2017

For: Board Brief

**FROM:** Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer

**THROUGH:** Lois Berlin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Senior Leadership Team Members

**TO:** The Honorable Ramee A. Gentry, Chair, and Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** Analysis of Responses to SOL Testing Results by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Staff

### **BACKGROUND**

At the September 7, 2017, School Board meeting, Dr. Terri H. Mozingo, Chief Academic Officer, will present an overview of actions and initiatives to be undertaken by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to address achievement gap areas identified in the most recent Virginia Standards of Learning tests in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. This Board Brief will provide additional explanation for items included in Dr. Mozingo's power point presentation, including continuing and new priorities and specific interventions proposed in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, Specialized Instruction, and English Learners.

### **SUMMARY**

Dr. Mozingo's presentation will highlight what worked well in 2016-17 in terms of academic programs and support interventions, lessons learned for reinforcement and/or modification, continuing and new priorities for accelerating student achievement, and a list of ways the department will support schools and monitor student outcomes:

#### **1. What Worked Well in 2016-17?**

- **Data Analysis and Interpretation:** (a) Continued focus upon project management and detailed data analysis, providing curriculum supports and professional learning to address achievement gap areas within the SOL data (e.g., data analysis and interpretation in partnership with school-based professional learning communities); (b) Used cross-functional teams to provide modeling, coaching, demonstration lessons, and support programs related to aggregate and disaggregated student achievement results; and (c) Reinforced teacher effectiveness in lesson design and implementation through one-on-one and small-group tutorials and coaching.
- **Professional Learning Opportunities:** (a) Expanded content academy offerings (from 37 in the previous academic year to over 87 during 2016-17) to focus on achievement gap areas; (b) Provided monthly professional learning to principals and assistant principals; (c) Enhanced support for coaches, mentor coordinators, and paraprofessionals; and (d) Expanded professional learning opportunities in the areas of Specialized Instruction and English Learners.

- **Enrichment Opportunities for Students:** (a) Supported teachers in developing Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) for TAG-identified students; (b) Supported AVID students in the college preparation and application process; (c) Expanded Summer Learning opportunities for students in grades 3-12; (d) Launched a Service Learning Program to address real-world problems in students' communities; and (e) Supported implementation of an Advanced Placement Boot Camp to enhance student achievement in AP coursework.
- **Instructional Enhancements:** (a) Collaborated with over 100 teachers attending our first Curriculum Institute; (b) Continued to offer forums for teachers to express their ideas and provide feedback (e.g., Teacher-to-Teacher Talk, Curriculum and Instructional Advisory Team); (c) Expanded availability of "gap lessons" aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning (and posted on our new *Lesson Exchange* website); and (d) Worked with Technology staff to integrate blended learning into our newly reformatted curriculum on Canvas.

## 2. What Lessons Were Learned in 2016-17?

- **Instructional Focus:** (a) The necessity of emphasizing curriculum pacing and fidelity of curriculum implementation as our new Canvas curriculum instructional management system comes on-line; (b) The power of providing feedback to staff using a cohesive walk-through and non-evaluative feedback process; and (c) The importance of cross-functional teaming (e.g., Curriculum Design and Instructional Services, English Learners, Specialized Instruction, TAG/Honors) to enhance curriculum alignment and effectiveness of implementation and student achievement.
- **Professional Learning to Build Capacity:** (a) The significance of direct training to help PLCs, grade-level teams, departments, and data coaches analyze data and use results to modify and enhance the instructional delivery process for all learners; and (b) The need to offer professional learning that is customized to specific school needs, personalized for individuals and groups, and engaging as a result of meaningful hands-on activities and direct applications to the classroom.
- **Expanding Our Multi-Tiered System of Support:** (a) The need to expand our MTSS framework to ensure that reading and math interventions are matched with fidelity to program design and individual student needs; (b) The importance of providing early intervention to address and eliminate achievement issues that may impede subsequent learning (e.g., enhanced focus on main idea, phonics, fluency, reading comprehension, math problem solving); and (c) The value of replicating strategies that have shown promise, targeting specifically those areas in which students have demonstrated academic decline.
- **Addressing Feedback from Key Stakeholder Groups:** (a) The importance of listening to and learning from teachers, administrators, parents, and students to identify what works well and what needs improvement; and (b) The need to implement suggestions and recommendations from comprehensive program evaluation studies (e.g., the new Canvas curriculum and instruction management system in response to the McREL Curriculum Audit).

### 3. What Are the New Academic Achievement Priorities Identified for 2017-18?

- **Curriculum:** (a) Address all McREL curriculum audit recommendations, including implementation of the new Canvas instructional management system as well as monitoring, collecting, and posting exemplary lessons on the ACPS Lesson Exchange; (b) Ensure alignment with the new ACPS *Teaching and Learning Framework*, making certain that suggested strategies and resources reinforce effective planning, teaching, assessing, and adjusting; (c) Expand availability of exemplary lessons via the ACPS *Lesson Exchange*; and (d) Enhance the role of teacher input and voice in the redesign of the ACPS curriculum via the Canvas platform.
- **Instruction:** (a) Implement a new division-wide *Teaching and Learning Framework* to reinforce expectations for planning, teaching, assessing, and adjusting instruction; (b) Provide support via problem-centered lesson design, data analysis, modeling and demonstration lessons using visual representations and manipulatives, and curriculum implementation related to priority math areas such as Algebra and Geometry as well as 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics; (c) Expand availability of support for elementary and secondary science instruction through three instructional specialists (i.e., K-5, Title I, and Secondary); (d) Emphasize inquiry-based science instruction at all grade levels, including expanded student understanding of science-related career pathways via visiting scientists and mentors; and (e) Enhance literacy instruction and learning by implementing a Reading and Writing in the Content Areas approach, ensuring fidelity of implementation of ACPS Literacy Frameworks, using the Teachers College Writing and Reading protocols in classrooms, and using leveled texts to enhance students' mastery of reading SOLs.
- **Assessment:** (a) Design and implement a division-wide quarterly system of benchmark assessments to monitor student achievement and provide appropriate support and interventions to all learners; (b) Develop and publish quarterly data reports and presentations, emphasizing the instructional implications of benchmark, transfer task, and teacher-generated assessments; and (c) Produce synthesis reports assessing the impact of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs), and program usage reports.
- **Professional Learning:** (a) Work with Learning Forward to establish a common language and protocols for Professional Learning Communities and the ACPS coaching process; (b) Enhance the ACPS Mentor Program to ensure successful induction of new staff and increase teacher retention rates; and (c) Improve instructional performance by leading a new 25-person cohort of National Board Certified Teachers and providing ongoing tuition assistance in high-needs areas such as Educational Leadership, Specialized Instruction, English Learners, Dual Language, and Math and Science.

### 4. How Will We Address Achievement Issues for English Learners?

- **Expand EL Services:** (a) Continue to use data sources such as WIDA to identify and address the needs of students who are off-track from expected language development; (b) Refine the Multi-Tiered System of Support to ensure best practices for EL students in Tier I core curriculum implementation and related Tier II and III interventions in literacy and math; (c) Continue to provide support from cross-functional team members to EL teachers and students; (d) Expand professional learning offerings to general education teachers of EL students; (e) Pilot the Accelerating Academic Language (AAL) course at the elementary level to promote explicit

instruction; and (f) Create instructional resources for EL teachers as part of the new Canvas Instructional Management System.

**5. How Will We Address Achievement Issues for Students with Individual Education Plans?**

- **Expand Specialized Instruction Services:** (a) Implement fully the use of research-based interventions in reading and math for students with Individual Education Plan; (b) Continue to support implementation of Specially Designed Instructional (SDI) practices to enhance students' educational performance across the curriculum and grade levels; (c) Ensure standards-based teaching and learning emphasize co-teaching and rigor, using a non-evaluative instructional walk-through tool; (d) Continue to engage parents and families by utilizing resources and staffing at the Parent Resource Center; (e) Expand the use of cross-functional teams in key SOL-tested areas to support implementation of standards-based IEPs to enhance students' academic growth.

**IMPACT**

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction is committed to ensuring that all students succeed. The support programs and services identified in this Board Brief are designed to support the achievement of this mission and address gap areas identified in the most recent Virginia Standards of Learning. The targeted focus services and priorities identified here are fully aligned with the goals, deliverables, and timelines articulated in School Education Plans, helping to increase the alignment and mutual support of both central office and schools as successful learning organizations.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Consider these recommended services, interventions, and support programs when discussing and analyzing student achievement results associated with 2017 Virginia Standards of Learning test results.