

BOARD BRIEF

Date: April 9, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Kennetra N. Wood, Executive Director of Equity and Alternative Programs
Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policy and Board Initiatives

THROUGH: Dr. Julie A. Crawford, Chief of Student Services and Equity
Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Update: Equity Audit of School Board Policies

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA:

- Focus Area 2: Policy Equity Audit
- Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

SUMMARY:

Based on the School Board's approved FY 2021 budget and the identification as a 2020-2021 school year focus area, Superintendent Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. empowered the Department of Student Services and Equity, in collaboration with the Office of the School Board, to embark on an innovative equity audit of all School Board policies. This brief provides an update on the progress made since the initiative began in December 2020 and a timeline for the ongoing policy review, recommendations and revision process.

BACKGROUND:

Guided by Superintendent Hutchings and the five goals of the ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: *Equity for All* with racial equity at its heart, the policy audit team met with multiple organizations in an effort to secure a consultant partner for conducting the equity audit. During the search, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA EAC-South) was recommended by the Director of the VDOE Office of Equity and Community Engagement. IDRA EAC-South's experiences include working with the Governor's Commission for Social Studies SOL and reviewing and developing policy through an equity lens with a focus on the disparate impacts of policy implementation on marginalized student populations.

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The ACPS policy review team convened to work with representatives from IDRA EAC-South in December 2020. The team consists of the Chief of Student Services and Equity, the Executive Director of Alternative Programs and Equity, the Director of Policy and Board Initiatives, the Cultural Competence Coordinator, the Equity Resident and two School Board members, Dr. Michelle Rief and Mr. Christopher Suarez. The team devised the following timeline:

Phase I - Equity Audit- Review & Develop Recommendations

- December 2020 – February 2021 Audit team planning for organization and process
- February - May 2021 - Policy review and discussion
 - 2 Teams of Reviewers (*Policies reviewed to date*)
 - Reviewed and discussed A policies (foundations & basic commitments)
 - Reviewed and discussed discrimination & harassment policies
 - Review in progress: J policies (students)
 - Bi-weekly 2-hour meetings for review/discussion
 - Solicit key stakeholder feedback
- June 2021 - Report to the School Board

Phase II - Board Review and Policy Revision

- Refine and adopt revised policies

Phase III - Action Planning, Implementation & Capacity Building

- Develop 5-year outlook and plan for re-evaluation

The ACPS audit team prioritized policies from the [12 School Board policy classifications](#) into review tiers and concluded it was critical to begin with policies that directly impact students and student achievement (A, I and J policies). Policies scheduled for the second tier of review are those that directly impact staff, families and the community (G and K policies). Policies scheduled for the third tier of review include policies impacting how ACPS conducts business in an equitable way (B, C, D, E, F and L policies).

Currently in Phase I, the team is actively reviewing Section J (student-focused) policies and participating in bi-weekly review team sessions to discuss each policy through an equity lens. The team is considering each policy's intent, implementation outcomes, and the intended and unintended impact on our most marginalized populations. Our goal is to move closer towards equity for all of our ACPS students, families and staff.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the equity audit process and attached timeline in preparation for upcoming audit reports and policy revisions.

IMPACT:

Reviewing the status update will align the School Board's understanding of the equity policy audit with its projected timeline and process.

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ATTACHMENTS:

- Equity Audit Review Timeline
- 2021 Alexandria CEP Agreement

CONTACT:

Kennetra Wood, kennetra.wood@acps.k12.va.us