

## BOARD BRIEF

Date: April 22, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION:   x  

MEETING PREPARATION: \_\_\_\_\_

**FROM:** Kennetra N. Wood, Executive Director of Equity  
Matt Smith, Policy Services Consultant

**THROUGH:** Julie Crawford, Ed.D, Chief of Student Services and Equity  
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Meagan L. 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 Allocations  
Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

### FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan  
Implementation of Equity Audit of School Board Policies

### SUMMARY:

Based on the School Board's approved FY 2022 budget and the identification as a 2021-2022 school year budget priority, Superintendent Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. empowered the Department of Student Services and Equity, in collaboration with the Office of the School Board, to continue the work 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 Equity Policy Audit Team (team) engaged the consulting services of Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA EAC-South) to perform an equity audit of all ACPS's policies. 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 Equity Policy Audit Team first convened to work with representatives from IDRA EAC-South in December 2020. The team consisted of the Chief of Student Services and Equity, the Executive Director of Equity, the Director of Policy and Board Initiatives, the Equity Coordinator, the Equity Resident, and two School Board members, Dr. Michelle Rief and Mr. Christopher Suarez. The team devised an initial project timeline, which has been subsequently updated as the initiative moved forward.

### **Phase I - Equity Audit- Review & Develop Recommendations**

- ✓ December 2020 – February 2021 planning for organization and process
- ✓ February - May 2021 - Policy review and discussion
  - A policies (foundations & basic commitments)
  - Discrimination & harassment policies
  - J policies (students) – Ongoing
  - Solicit key stakeholder feedback
- ✓ June 2021 - Report to the School Board

### **Phase II - Board Review and Policy Revision**

- Refine and adopt revised policies
  - ✓ Discipline Policies - Adopted
  - Student Placement Policies - In Progress
  - ❖ Grading, Nondiscrimination, and Student Support Programs – In Scheduling

### **Phase III - Action Planning, Implementation & Capacity Building**

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

During Phase 1, the Equity Policy Audit Team prioritized policies from the [12 School Board policy classifications](#) into three 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).

On October 7, 2021, the School Board adopted the approach of using a series of three board member Equity Policy Audit School Board Committees (committee) to revise groups of policies within the three review tiers. The committee performs an in-depth review of policies, working alongside the Equity Policy Audit Team to incorporate board recommendations with staff input, public comment, and feedback from community focus groups. Recommendations are then presented to the full School Board at subsequent board meetings for review and approval. The first group of policies, revised by Equity Policy Audit School Board Committee #1, was adopted by the board in December 2021.

The Equity Policy Audit Team and Equity Policy Audit School Board Committee #2 are continuing to review tier 1 policies and participating in bi-weekly sessions to discuss each policy through an equity lens. The second group of tier 1 policies providing governance over

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admissions, placements, options, and transfers is currently being revised. The next groups of tier 1 policies will include grading, nondiscrimination, and student support programs.

The Equity Policy Audit Team and the School Board Equity Policy Audit Committee's shared responsibility is to consider each policy's intent, implementation outcomes, and the intended and unintended impact on our most marginalized populations. Our goal is to move closer toward equity for all of our ACPS students, families, and staff.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the equity audit process.

**IMPACT:** Reviewing the status update will align the School Board's understanding of the equity policy audit process.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. ACPS Equity Audit Process Diagram

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