

September 8, 2023

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Kathy Mimberg, Executive Director of Communications
Issmar Ventura, Media Relations Specialist

THROUGH: Julia Burgos, Chief of School and Community Relations
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Dr. Michelle Rief, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Media Relations Annual Report: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

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

SY 2022-2023 FOCUS AREA:

Supports all areas of focus.

SUMMARY:

The Office of Communications prepared an annual report summarizing earned media coverage for the division from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023. The report contains the number of media inquiries that the Office of Communications received and addressed during this time period, main topics related to ACPS in the news, the number of mentions of ACPS leadership, regional and national coverage, positive stories pitched by the Office of Communications and successfully covered by news media, as well as how ACPS' media coverage compares to nearby school divisions and more. The Office of Communications has produced a media relations report for every quarter of the 2022-23 school year, plus this final report, which includes the entire 2022-23 academic year. The next media relations report will summarize earned media coverage for the division from July 1, 2023, to January 19, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

The 2021-25 ACPS Strategic Communications & Community Engagement Plan identifies media and public outreach as a core opportunity to engage with the community on division-wide issues that are important for all students and the future of the school division. This report shows the work our media relations team has done with a broad range of news outlets to effectively reach the Alexandria community and stakeholders, as well as some national audiences, on the important issues and activities of our school division.

Starting in the 2022-23 school year, new data was collected on a quarterly basis and was shared with the superintendent and School Board to further the understanding of the narrative

surrounding the school division among various audiences, including the ACPS community of students, staff and families, residents of the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan region and others in the educational and national arena. This report is a compilation of all those reports.

During the 2022-23 academic year, ACPS received 300 media requests between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, and had over 2,500 mentions in broadcast and online news coverage; “mentions” mean the number of TV, radio and online news stories in which ACPS was included (not including print). Highlights include:

- The top topics for the academic year were the selection of Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt as the permanent superintendent of ACPS, school staffing and recruitment, safety and security, substance abuse prevention, Social Emotional Academic Learning (SEAL), Titan athletics, post-pandemic Covid-19 learning recovery and good stories from our schools.
- Top ACPS leaders in the news reflect the change in division leadership (Superintendent Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt), our emphasis on staff retention and recruitment (Director of Recruitment and Retention Margaret Browne), policy discussions in the news (former Board Chair Meagan L. Alderton) and an interest in division facilities and operations (Chief Operating Officer Dr. Alicia Hart).
- The top stories from our schools included 24 stories on the ACPS social, emotional and academic learning program, as well as stories featuring Alexandria City High School Math Teacher Lou Kokonis, Tucker Elementary School Custodian Patricia Morgan, post-pandemic learning recovery at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology, among others.

RECOMMENDATION:

The superintendent recommends that the School Board review this presentation to become familiar with the work of the communications team and some key metrics, such as the number of media inquiries that are received by ACPS, the stories pitched to reporters and their media outlets, how often the division appears in the news and the type of earned media coverage that affects public opinion of the school division.

IMPACT:

The report will serve to address how working with journalists and shaping our messages for the media can assist the division in addressing timely issues and our work within our school community, helping to foster relationships between families and staff and furthering community engagement goals as outlined in the Department of School and Community Relations plan: ensuring staff, families, students and the community have timely access to information and engagement opportunities, feel welcome and supported, and have confidence in ACPS.

Attachments:

Media Relations Annual Report: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

CONTACT:

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