

Date: September 5, 2019
For ACTION _____
For INFORMATION X_____
Board Agenda: X_____
No _____

FROM: Mignon R. Anthony, Chief Operating Officer
Terri H. Mazingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director of Secondary Instruction

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: The High School Project Update

BACKGROUND

The High School Project began in the summer of 2018, and has progressed steadily throughout the past year. On January 24, 2019, and as amended on March 21, 2019, the School Board voted to continue working on The High School Project focusing on several priorities and committing to a multi-option evaluation. Since then, the work has expanded to include a project team of additional consultants and the establishment of an Educational Design Team (EDT).

The School Board held work sessions in June, and most recently on August 22, 2019, to discuss the progress of The High School Project analysis required by the School Board's motion.

SUMMARY

This update is intended for the Board to review the motion, provide clarity on the September 26, 2019 vote, and respond to specific requests articulated during the work session.

Board Motion (January 24, 2019, amended March 21, 2019)

The Board's motion required that the Connected High School Network studies be guided by nine specific priorities. In addition, the Board moved that the Superintendent provide a comparative cost-benefit analysis between a campus approach (Connected High School Network) and a completely separate second comprehensive high school. The motion required that these analyses incorporate six other considerations, at a minimum, as the educational programming models were developed. A draft report for The High School Project was submitted to the Board on August 16, 2019 including all of these items, however, examples related to the 'Potential impacts on student achievement [of either approach], including impact on subgroups...' will need to be

measured as a focus of implementation following the Board's decision, regardless of the model.

School Board Vote on September 26, 2019

A vote by the School Board on September 26, 2019 is essential to maintain the funding City Council has committed to The High School Project and the credibility in ACPS' Capital Improvement Program. A vote for the second comprehensive high school or the connected high school network, and the educational design model are both imperative in order to deliver additional high school programming and space beginning in 2023. While, \$124,249,963 is currently appropriated for the project, more funding will be needed. Therefore, this vote will inform the upcoming FY2021 – 30 CIP Budget request.

The Board vote on September 26, 2019 must include the following components:

1. Selection of either a second comprehensive high school or the expansion of the connected high school network. The vote must also include the sites to be used.
2. Selection of one of the educational model frameworks developed by the Educational Design Team (EDT).

These two components are critical for developing a site-specific educational specification which is the basis for moving forward on a design contract to meet the 18 - 24 month design phase. The design phase includes final massing, architecture and engineering drawings, land use agreements, city zoning and other legislative precursors to construction. Staff has confirmed that a 24 - 36 month construction period(s) is required for every site alternative.

If a second comprehensive high school is determined to be the School Board's decision to accommodate high school growth in Alexandria, the School Board will also have to decide at a later time on a method for student assignment to each high school. Options for assigning students to a second high school include (1) using neighborhood boundaries, (2) implementing a lottery program, (3) school 'Choice' approach(es), and (4) an application process.

Follow-Up from August 22, 2019 Work Session

At the August 22, 2019, work session, the School Board made the following specific requests:

- Provide cost-benefit or SWOT analysis of educational design models and sites;
- Provide data that supports the conclusions from the Educational Programming rubric;
- Provide more detailed site investigation information; and
- Provide more information on controlled choice as a student assignment option

Regarding the first two bullets, attached are relevant information of how the educational design team's models were compared including the rubrics and values used.

Cost comparisons related to the site will be included in the September 19 work session materials.

Staff has also attached publicly available information about Controlled Choice to this update.

Minutes from the August 12, 2019 and the August 19, 2019 progress meetings are also attached.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the attachments, discuss the motion and ensure clarity among the full Board regarding their upcoming action on September 26, 2019.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Board Motion as amended on March 21, 2019
2. Two High Schools Rubrics
3. Connected High Schools Rubrics
4. Controlled Choice Information
5. August 12, 2019 Progress Meeting Minutes
6. August 19, 2019 Progress Meeting Minutes

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