

BOARD BRIEF

Date: October 20, 2023

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Matt Smith, Policy Services Consultant

THROUGH: Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Staggered Terms Work Session

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 2023-2024 FOCUS AREA:

N/A

FY 2024 BUDGET PRIORITY:

N/A

SUMMARY:

During the October 5, 2023 the Board discussed and reached consensus on several key decision points for staggering terms. There was clear consensus to increase the length of the terms to 4 years and to stagger elections. There was no clear consensus on the other possible changes.

DETAILS:

During the October 5, 2023 the Board conducted an exercise to redesign the election cycle process to optimize two key criteria established at a prior work session: 1) Continuity of Operations and 2) Resident Representation. Each board member was permitted to speak for or against 5 potential changes. At the end of the debate on each of the potential changes, a straw poll was taken to determine the general level of consensus.

The results of the straw poll were:

1. Increase the length of the Board terms from 3 years to 4 years.
 - a. Agree – 8
 - b. Disagree – 0
 - c. Neutral – 1

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2. Stagger the elections.
 - a. Agree – 8
 - b. Disagree – 0
 - c. Neutral – 1
3. Decrease the size of the Board.
 - a. Agree – 4
 - b. Disagree – 3
 - c. Neutral – 2
4. Establish at-large board members.
 - a. Agree – 1
 - b. Disagree – 3
 - c. Neutral – 5
5. Elect one district at a time.
 - a. Agree – 2
 - b. Disagree – 5
 - c. Neutral - 2

The Board also discussed several options around models for 4-year terms with staggered elections. There was no clear consensus on a favored model.

1. Model D (4-year staggered terms, 9-member board, no at-large members, elections occurring on odd years with each district electing one or 2 members in a given year.)
 - a. Agree – 3
 - b. Disagree – 2
 - c. Neutral – 2
2. Model J (4-year staggered terms, 9-member board, 3 at-large members, elections occurring every year. On even years each district elects one member, on odd years the entire city elects one or 2 members)
 - a. Agree – 1
 - b. Disagree – 4
 - c. Neutral – 2
3. Model K (4-year staggered terms, 9-member board, no at-large members, elections occurring 3 of the four years with each district electing one member in a given year.)
 - a. Agree – 4
 - b. Disagree – 2
 - c. Neutral – 1
4. Model L (4-year staggered terms, 9-member board, 3 at-large members, elections occurring three of four years. Each district elects one member for 2 of the three election years, on the 4th year the entire city elects the 3 at-large members.)

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- a. Agree – 2
- b. Disagree – 1
- c. Neutral – 4

BACKGROUND:

This topic was previously discussed at the following meetings, the materials are available on ESB.

- July 13, 2023 - Panel discussion
- May 18, 2023 - Board work session
- May 15, 2023 - Meeting with the Alexandria City Council
- February 13, 2023 - Board work session
- December 13, 2022 - Board work session
- November 14, 2019 - Board work session
- June 10, 2019 - Board work session
- June 21, 2018 - Board meeting
- May 31, 2018 - Board work session
- April 26, 2018 - Board meeting

In addition, the following public comment opportunities have been provided

- April 20, 2023 - Public Hearing
- April, 2023 - Survey

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the memo

IMPACT:

Reviewing standard board procedures such as elections provides opportunities to improve board effectiveness.

REFERENCES:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

- None

CONTACT:

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