

BOARD BRIEF

Date: November 8, 2019

BOARD INFORMATION:

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Jennifer Mursaloglu, Ph.D., Evaluation & Assessment Analyst
Jennifer Whitson, Ed.D., Evaluation & Assessment Analyst

THROUGH: Clinton Page, Ed.S., Chief Accountability Officer
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: 2018-19 End-of-Year Discipline Data

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity

Goal 3: An Exemplary Staff

Goal 5: Health and Wellness

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

Focus Area 5: Strategic Plan

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Gap Group Achievements

Academics

Optimal and Equitable Learning Environments

Mental and Social/Emotional Health

SUMMARY: The enclosed brief highlights division discipline data collected for the 2018-19 school year. The report provides a multi-year comparison of the number of discipline referrals and out-of-school suspensions by school, percentage of suspensions within subgroups, and short and long-term suspension reasons.

BACKGROUND: Throughout the year the Department of Accountability analyzes discipline data across all schools within the division. Quarterly discipline data are reviewed and monitored by various internal stakeholders within the division to inform procedural, programmatic and other discipline related practices.

Table 1 shows a two year comparison of the number of discipline-related referrals for all schools within the division. Overall, the data show that there was an increase in the number of

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referrals across the division, elementary, and high schools. In contrast, there was a slight decrease in the number of referrals at the middle school level.

Table 2 represents a two-year comparison of the number of short- and long-term out-of-school suspensions and the number of students suspended by school for the 2018-19 school year. With the exception of middle school, there was an increase in the number of suspensions across the division, elementary, and high school levels, when compared to end of year data from 2017-18.

Table 3 represents a two-year comparison of the percentage of suspensions within disproportionately impacted subgroups by educational level. The data reveal that Black males, Hispanic males and students with disabilities remain disproportionately suspended at higher rates relative to their enrollment. For example, Black males represented 14% of enrollment in 2018-2019 but 32% of suspensions.

Table 4 provides a two-year comparison of the suspension reasons disaggregated by non-violent and serious/violent offenses. The suspension reasons were coded and grouped using the Virginia Department of Education's Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) Guide. Given the overall increase in suspension numbers, results also revealed that there was an increase in the number of both non-violent and serious/violent offenses when compared to end-of-year data from 2017-18. Disruptive behavior and fighting continue to be the most prevalent reasons for suspension. While suspensions in the division increased overall, there was a marked decrease in suspensions for fighting from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019. In 2017-2018, fighting was the number one reason for suspensions and in 2018-2019, it was second behind disruptive behavior.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the information within this memo and the attached 2018-19 end-of-year discipline findings.

IMPACT:

The number short- and long-term out-of-school suspensions across the division are on the rise when compared to end-of-year data from 2017-18. Moving forward ACPS must focus on addressing the disproportionate percentage of Black males, Hispanic males, and students with disabilities who are being suspended at higher rates relative to their enrollment. Further, the division should specifically focus on disruptive behavior and fighting suspension incidents which accounted for 59% of overall suspensions. Unpacking the root causes leading to the increase in suspensions in the most recent school year will allow the division to begin to plan strategic steps toward reduced and more equitable discipline outcomes.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. *2018-19 End of Year Discipline Data*

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