

**BOARD BRIEF**

Date: December 6, 2019  
For INFORMATION:   X  

Upcoming Board Agenda:  
Yes   X    
No         
Agenda Date:  
January 9, 2020

**FROM:** Kennetra N. Wood, Director of Alternative Programs & Equity

**THROUGH:** Julie A. Crawford, Ed.D., Chief Student Services 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:** Update on Social Emotional Academic Learning Supports

**ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity  
Goal 5: Health and Wellness

**SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

**FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Leadership and Professional Development  
Mental and Social/Emotional Health

**SUMMARY:**

The social-emotional and behavioral component of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is also referred to as Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), a framework that includes consistent school-wide practices and intervention strategies to encourage positive student behavior. PBIS also serves to create and maintain positive learning environments for students and staff. Through social emotional learning and intervention support, students will gain the skills needed to be successful at school and beyond. Restorative Practices and Social Emotional Academic Learning (SEAL) are a part of the MTSS/PBIS framework.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Restorative Practices**

Restorative Practices utilize Community Circles as a Tier 1 practice to build strong positive relationships among all students and staff. Community Circles also teach and model pro-social

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skills which help to create emotionally and physically safe learning environments. Restorative Circles and Restorative Conferences are Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports used to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts or problems by allowing those affected by the behavior to share their perspectives on how they were impacted and thoughts on how the situation can be “made right” so the relationship(s) can be restored.

### **Social Emotional Academic Learning**

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) model, SEAL practices at the Tier 1 level cultivate a caring, participatory, and equitable learning environment using evidence-based practices that actively involve all students in their social, emotional, and academic growth. Implementation of SEAL in ACPS began with adult Professional Learning (PL) including but not limited to the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Interface workshop, Trauma Informed SEAL PL, Youth Mental Health First Aid training for all SST staff members, and ongoing training modules in *Conscious Discipline* for Early Childhood Center staff.

### **SEAL Pilot Program**

For the 2019-20 school year, Cora Kelly School for Math, Science, and Technology, Mt. Vernon Community School, and Ferdinand T. Day Elementary are implementing a trauma informed SEAL pilot program. This began in the summer of 2019 with a whole staff professional development session at each school to introduce the concept of trauma and the impact of trauma on brain development. Staff learned how trauma affects cognitive processes such as verbal and linguistic development, attention and focus, and the ability to regulate emotions. With this framework in mind, teachers were then provided with SEAL strategies that can be incorporated into daily classroom instruction to mitigate the impacts of trauma and build resilience.

In October, a team from each school attended the RULER Institute at Yale University. The RULER Approach is an evidence based social emotional learning curriculum designed to build emotional intelligence and contribute to a positive school culture and climate. RULER will be rolled out in phases, with a major area of focus being ongoing professional learning to ensure fidelity of implementation. At Tier 1, RULER strategies are universally embedded within core instruction while Tier 2 and 3 can use RULER tools for targeted, small group and intensive, individualized intervention. Together PBIS, SEAL, and RP practices help to build an inclusive school culture which encourages connectedness among students and staff and a shared ownership of the learning environment.

### **TIMELINE OF MTSS EVENTS:**

#### **Spring/Summer 2019**

#### **PBIS:**

- MTSS/PBIS collaboration with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) to relaunch MTSS throughout the division.
  - Creation of MTSS Quick Guides

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- Multi-day student behavioral support training at JH, inclusive of trauma informed SEAL classroom strategies, introduction to Restorative Practices, and establishing PBIS school-wide expectations and interventions.
- Ongoing professional learning provided for PBIS coaches on tiered intervention planning with a focus on systems needed to successfully implement Tier 2 practices.
- Assessment of PBIS implementation of Tier 1 systems and practices at individual schools' division-wide
- Schools received technical assistance to problem-solve challenges encountered during implementation

### RP:

- Division-wide RP professional development opportunities were offered
- RP professional development provided to TCW new staff
- GW and FCH were provided with RP training for all teachers and staff

### SEAL:

- Professional Learning Plan created for ACPS SEAL Implementation
- Ferdinand T. Day, Cora Kelly, Mt. Vernon began implementation of SEAL pilot program (Trauma Informed SEAL Professional Development Workshop provided to all staff at each campus)

## Fall 2019

### PBIS:

- Continued MTSS/PBIS collaboration with C&I
  - MTSS liaison meetings quarterly (*October 30, 2019 & January 29, 2020*)
- PBIS Coaches receive ongoing professional learning and opportunities to problem solve implementation challenges
- Ten representatives from ACPS schools attended the National PBIS Leadership Forum held in Chicago, IL where Anna Tush, School Psychologist from Charles Barrett ES delivered a poster presentation of Tier II Supports and their Effectiveness
- Technical assistance provided to PBIS coaches, administrative teams, and other staff as needed to refine tiered practices at individual schools

### RP:

1. 9 RP Liaisons were selected to provide RP support to secondary schools.
2. 4 ACPS staff members received RP training from the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP).
3. Collaborative meetings with TWU, NAACP and Grassroots Alexandria to develop RP survey.

### SEAL:

- Ferdinand T. Day, Cora Kelly, Mt. Vernon teams attended the RULER Institute at Yale
- Begin staff turn around training for RULER

## Spring 2020

### PBIS:

- Continued MTSS/PBIS collaboration with C&I
  - MTSS liaison meetings quarterly (*March 25, 2020 & May 19, 2020*)

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- PBIS Coaches receive targeted professional learning on trauma-informed practices using the book, “Reaching and Teaching Students Who Hurt” by Susan E. Craig to enhance Tier 1 strategies to better support all students, particularly those that have experienced trauma.
- Assessment of PBIS implementation of Tier 1 systems and practices at individual schools’ division-wide to include building walk-throughs and completion of the Tiered Fidelity Inventory
- Technical assistance provided to PBIS coaches, administrative teams, and other staff as needed to refine tiered practices at individual schools

### RP:

- Implementation of RP Survey developed by ACPS, TWU, NAACP, and Grassroots Alexandria.

### SEAL:

- Continue staff turn around training for RULER
- Begin student training for RULER
- Identify additional schools for RULER training (continue the pilot program structure)

## Summer 2020

### PBIS:

- Professional learning and technical assistance around MTSS/PBIS - Behavior implementation will be provided to school teams as determined by the results of the end of year fidelity assessments.

### RP:

- Implementation of RP will be extended to K-5 schools

### SEAL:

- Begin overview training with additional RULER schools
- Coordinate and provide support for continued RULER implementation with FT Day, Cora Kelly & Mt. Vernon

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information provided in this brief as preparation for an upcoming School Board presentation.

**IMPACT:** By reviewing updated information, the School Board continues its commitment to ensuring the wellness of ACPS students by providing an inclusive and supportive environment.

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