

Date: November 8, 2018

For ACTION: _____

For INFORMATION: X

Board Agenda: Yes X
No _____

FROM: Mignon R. Anthony, Chief Operating Officer

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

TO: The Honorable Ramee A. Gentry, Chair, and Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: The High School Project: Discover and Engage

BACKGROUND: With high school enrollment currently exceeding capacity and growth expected to continue, the School Board allocated \$100,000 in the FY 2018 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget to engage the community on developing solutions for needed high school capacity. Following this, the Ad-Hoc Joint City-Schools Facilities Investment Task Force acknowledged the high school capacity need and recommended full funding of the high school capacity project, including \$5.15M in FY 2019 to further planning efforts and begin design. In alignment with the Task Force’s Recommendation to consider the capability needed prior to executing a capital project, ACPS developed a scope to assess the desired future high school experience prior to pursuing substantial capital dollars. ACPS contracted with Stantec Architecture and Fielding Nair International, Inc., nationally recognized architecture and planning firm and internationally recognized educational planning firm, respectively, herein referred to as “consultants,” to complete this necessary planning effort. The consultants’ work consists of four critical phases:

- **Discover – Research high school models, learn about Alexandria’s context**
- **Engage – Develop a vision and programmatic model by engaging multiple stakeholders**
- Define – Articulate operational requirements to execute the vision
- Evaluate – Assess site option(s) for implementation

This agenda item is to inform the School Board of the outcomes of the first two phases of the planning conducted by the consultants.

SUMMARY: ACPS staff and the consultants engaged multiple stakeholders at the onset of this work in July 2018. Engagement included over 40 meetings, including 22 student class discussions, 4 town hall sessions, 2 business/community leader focus groups and staff meetings. Using feedback heard as a framework, the consultants also conducted research on the latest findings in education and programmatic models. All of this engagement and research culminated in an educational vision including three powerful and recurring themes for the future high school experience:

- Community Connected
- Diversity as a Strength

- Experiential Learning

The presentation outlines the process by which this vision was developed along with the qualities associated with implementing each these values successfully. It also begins to outline a programmatic model for consideration by the School Board.

Next steps will include a work session for the School Board to discuss the content of this presentation, review all research and consider all feedback. Next steps will also include further engagement to confirm this proposed vision and model with key stakeholders who contributed to its development prior to the request for the School Board's vote on December 6, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the presentation and prepare questions and/or edits for the consultants' consideration during this agenda item, as well as the work session planned for November 26, 2018. It will ultimately be requested that the School Board vote on December 6, 2018, in support of the:

- Educational vision;
- Model to successfully implement the vision; and
- Commitment to evolve curriculum, operations and practices to accommodate the vision.

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ATTACHMENTS: Presentation