

BOARD MEMO

Date: September 21, 2023
For ACTION ____
For INFORMATION __X__

FROM: James Parker, Executive Director of Athletics & Student Activities

THROUGH: Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Middle School Athletics and Activities

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2023-2024 PRIORITY AREA:

Academic Achievement
Student Supports
CASEL Social Emotional Learning Competencies
Student Connection and Attendance
Continue Culture Building
K-8 School Analysis

FY 2024 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Target Chronic Absenteeism
Increase Support for Social and Emotional Learning

SUMMARY:

This memo and the supporting documents are the initial stages of starting middle school athletics and student activity programs at Francis C. Hammond Middle School, Jefferson Houston Middle School, Patrick Henry K-8, and George Washington Middle School. We also will introduce forensics, scholastic bowl, and debate to our middle school students to spark earlier interest in these VHSL high school programs.

DETAILS:

Providing middle school athletics and student activity programs will impact 1000 -1200 students in the 6th, 7th & 8th grades by offering 10 different athletic opportunities and 3 different competitive student activities on a yearly basis. The goal would be to hire teachers who currently work in ACPS to be our team coaches and activity directors. Roughly, 100-150 stipend positions would be offered for athletic coordinators, athletic trainers, activity directors, and

BOARD MEMO

coaches at each middle school. Students at Patrick Henry and Jefferson Houston would feed into Francis C. Hammond & George Washington Middle School for participation purposes if they are unable to field teams at their campuses.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, our middle school students do not have an option to participate in educational-based athletic programs in the City of Alexandria. The vast majority of the middle school-age athletic opportunities in the City of Alexandria are pay-to-play, which eliminates many of our students from participating in sports. Starting a middle school athletics and competitive student activity program will positively impact the social, emotional, and academic learning of middle school students at their most pivotal time in adolescence. This program will provide our high school athletic program with more prepared, engaged, trained, and motivated student-athletes which will result in more competitive teams. In addition, introducing athletic opportunities to our athletes at an earlier age will assist middle school students with their transition to high school as they will start building a stronger social network that allows them to develop social skills that help them better adjust at school. Furthermore, these programs will help us engage our Hispanic population at an earlier age to get them more involved in extracurricular activities which will assist in school connection and graduation rates. Currently, the local school districts that offer middle school athletics programs are PGPS, APS, DCPS, FCPS, and PWPS.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this memo.

IMPACT:

Having a middle school athletics & activities program will keep our students safe, more connected to their school community, physically active, and learning life skills they need to be successful in life. On average athletes have higher grades than non-athletes even when socioeconomic status, gender, age, and family composition are taken into account.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2023–2024 Middle School Athletics & Activities Presentation

REFERENCES:

None

CONTACT:

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