

BOARD BRIEF

Date: February 4, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director of Instructional Support

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

TO: The Honorable Meagan L. Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Middle School Update

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

SY 2021–2022 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 3: Middle School Educational Experience

Focus Area 4: Early College

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan

Reduce Disproportionality in Talented and Gifted (TAG) and Advanced Courses

SUMMARY:

Over the next four months, ACPS will engage with a group of internal and external stakeholders in providing a recommendation to the School Board regarding the middle school framework, including instructional programs. This project work team, led by Principal Finney, will address potential revisions, additions, refinements, and/or deletions in the following areas: honors courses, mathematics pathways, Dual Language progression, scheduling options for students, and exploring the possibility of offering college credit in middle school. All the middle school team recommendations will be supported by national research, ACPS data, and ACPS metrics, with equity at the heart of each recommendation, as well as by our ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All. The middle school team will develop a three-year timeline to outline outcomes seeking, key areas of focus, professional learning needs, and key implementation milestones.

BACKGROUND:

ACPS's Middle School Project Work Team (MSPWT) includes Executive Sponsors, Co-Project Managers, and Project Work Team Leads and Members and will consist of leaders, teachers,

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parents, and students. For the next four months, the MSPWT will examine the following: honors courses, mathematics courses, Dual Language strategic plans, scheduling, and offering college credit courses in middle school. The chart below outlines the essential questions related to each topic.

Topic	Essential Question
Honors Courses	How should advanced courses at the middle school level be constructed to provide rigor and engagement to all students with a focus on removing barriers to student success?
Mathematics Pathway	How does the Virginia Mathematics Pathway Initiative (VMPI) affect middle school mathematics pathways in ACPS?
Dual Language	Is the Dual Language expansion on target to meet objectives?
Middle School Scheduling	What type of bell schedule provides the best results for student learning in ACPS and the opportunity for students to explore areas of interest?
College-Level Courses	What acceleration courses should students take in middle school?

The MSPWT will conduct an analysis on each of the identified areas. This analysis will include the latest research on the topic and site visits to schools, as needed, to help determine the impact of the recommendation on ACPS K–8 schools. A second component of the team’s work will include establishing metrics for each recommendation to determine success during implementation. The last component will be a detailed implementation timeline for three years. This timeline will include updates to the internal staff, parents, and community; professional learning for staff; and updates to the School Board.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information within this Middle School Update Board Brief.

IMPACT:

The points in this brief support the middle school focus areas in the *ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All* (scheduling, math pathways, and middle school transitions for grades 5–6 and 8–9). The brief also provides information about ACPS’s plans for the Middle School Project.

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