

BOARD MEMO

Date: November 12, 2020

For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION X_____

Board Agenda: Yes x_____

No _____

FROM: Julia Burgos, Chief of School & Community Relations

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

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

TOPIC: Communications Audit Update

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment

Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Reopening of School

Focus Area 3: Strategic Plan Implementation

Focus Area 4: Renaming of Schools

FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Increased Staff Retention

Outreach to Hispanic Families to Improve Attendance and Graduation

Outreach to Underserved Communities to Increase Engagement

Improving Customer Relationship Services and Management

SUMMARY:

The attached presentation serves as an update to the Communications Audit presented to the School Board on Jan. 9, 2020. It provides progress and metrics related to each of the 29 recommendations included in the audit including four focus areas:

- **Area 1:** Staffing and Organization (5 recommendations)
- **Area 2:** Emergency Communications (6 recommendations)
- **Area 3:** Collaboration and Opportunity (7 recommendations)
- **Area 4:** Processes and Tools (11 recommendations)

In addition to the update on the recommendations, the presentation also showcases the cross-collaboration of the newly combined team that is now known as the Department of School and

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Community Relations as of July 1, 2020. The team brings together the Office of Communications and the newly named Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement.

BACKGROUND:

Even in the midst of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Office of Communications, with support from the Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement and the new chief of school and community relations, many of the recommendations outlined in the Communications Audit have been completed or are under development. The presentation illustrates that, in addition to these recommendations, the team has pivoted on many fronts to ensure that families and staff received timely, relevant and valuable information to stay connected with the school community while buildings were closed. In addition to the 1.0 to 3.0 Continuity of Learning Plans, the team created the Virtual PLUS+ brand for the reopening of schools which has allowed for consistent messaging and a common thread for all of the components of the program – Virtual PLUS+ has become a household name. Through this work, the team has ensured that the brand spoke to our racial equity work which has a direct correlation to the goals of the Strategic Plan. Each of the progress areas in this plan also supports the work of the departments and schools across the division to communicate and engage with families. Despite the obstacles presented by the pandemic, the team is well-poised to fulfill the additional recommendations and work through some of the barriers presented by budgetary limitations.

RECOMMENDATION:

The superintendent recommends that the School Board review the Communications Audit Update to get an understanding of the progress of the recommendations and the next steps for fulfilling on all remaining recommendations that are under development.

IMPACT:

To assess the progress of the Communications Audit Recommendations and the reach of the newly formed Department of School & Community Relations in the midst of the pandemic under the leadership of the new chief of school and community relations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Communications Audit Update Presentation

REFERENCES:

School & Community Relations Update, Oct. 16, 2020

CONTACT:

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