

Date: February 22, 2018

For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION X

Board Agenda: Yes _____

No _____

FROM: Terri H. Mazingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Rachael R.B. Dischner, Principal, West End Elementary School

THROUGH: Lois F. Berlin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Status Report on Development of the West End Elementary School

SUMMARY

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you a status update regarding the new West End Elementary School. The Board presentation scheduled for February 22, 2018, will provide Board members with a detailed overview of the following: (1) the research supporting the value of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics); (2) how STEM education is aligned to state and national best practices; (3) updates about parent and community outreach; (4) the STEM design principles underlying the school's curriculum and instructional program; (5) updates about site visits by steering committee staff to ensure that the most recent STEM practices become operational at the school; (6) an overview of curriculum and learner outcomes; and (7) how STEM prepares students for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

BACKGROUND

Since 2014, representatives from all departments within the ACPS school division have collaborated to develop and implement both the physical plant design and the instructional program that will become operational at the West End Elementary school site. Below are key highlights of this process:

1. **Vision:** The West End Elementary School will support the Virginia State Vision Statement for STEM education: "Virginia's vision is to transform teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to equip all learners with the skills and knowledge to become STEM literate and to inspire and empower students to contribute as global citizens to the economy in meaningful ways."
2. **Goals (Aligned with Virginia STEM Education Outcomes):** Students at the West End Elementary School will benefit from the school's commitment to:
 - Create problem solvers, innovators, critical thinkers, and risk takers with entrepreneurial spirit;
 - Integrate the content, processes, and skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics;
 - Promote equity and access to STEM experiences for all learners;
 - Expose students to STEM career fields and opportunities; and

- Encourage community partnerships and involvement.
3. **Community and Parent Engagement:** Extensive community and parent engagement has occurred during the past two years, including: (a) PTA meetings at John Adams (January 25, 2018) and William Ramsay (February 15, 2018); (b) principal attendance at regular John Adams and William Ramsay parent coffees; (c) ACPS outreach to local Mosque and apartment managers zoned for the West End Elementary School; (d) Regular robocall and text message services to families in four languages; (e) updates with parents at redistricting meetings; (f) regular principal tweets; and (g) scheduled grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremonies (August 2018).
 4. **Site Visits:** The steering committee members have been extremely diligent in visiting exemplary STEM sites throughout the Northern Virginia area, including the Arlington Science Focus School (January 10, 2018); Lowell School, Washington, D.C. (January 16, 2018); Henderson Elementary School, Prince William County (February 1, 2018); Baldwin Elementary School, Manassas Public Schools (February 9, 2018); and Bailey’s Elementary School, Fairfax County (scheduled site visit TBD).
 5. **Curriculum Design (The Core Program):** The curriculum for the West End Elementary School will align with the pacing and sequence of the ACPS curriculum, including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Health and Physical Education, Library Media Services, and an ongoing focus on STEM-related projects. The school will also provide a comprehensive set of services and support programs for English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and the Talented and Gifted (TAG).
 6. **Curriculum Design (STEM Enhancements):** The instructional design principles in this K-5 elementary site will focus upon the following:
 - A STEM emphasis in all grade levels
 - Technology and blended learning for all students
 - Emphasis upon project-based learning as a culminating form of summative assessment
 - In-class and field experiences heightening the impact of a STEM education
 - Standards-driven progress monitoring ensuring that all students make appropriate and satisfactory progress
 - A “Whole Child” approach emphasizing students’ cognitive-academic, physical, social-emotional, and relational development
 - A culturally responsive classroom, ensuring that every learner can see his/her culture, background, and interests in the content being studied
 - Emphasis upon inquiry-based investigations and collaborative learning at all grade levels
 7. **Digital-Age Learning:** In addition, a major focus of the school will be upon developing our students as “digital learners” capable of being:
 - Empowered students

- Global collaborators
- Intelligent about the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities offered by technology
- Creative communicators
- Effective computational thinkers
- Innovative designers
- Knowledge constructors

8. **Staffing Profile:** The teaching and administrative staff at West End Elementary School will be carefully selected to ensure that they present the following profile:

- Life-long learners
- Leaders who support student empowerment
- Digital citizens and learners
- Collaborators
- Designers who create authentic, real-world learning experiences for all students
- Facilitators who encourage creativity and self-expression
- Analysts who carefully use data to personalize and differentiate learning experiences
- Curriculum designers who provide meaningful, authentic, and purposeful STEM-aligned lessons

9. **Professional Development:** The school division will ensure that all administrators and teachers are fully prepared to implement the proposed STEM program and related curriculum for the school site. Workshops will be intentionally focused and customized to meet the needs of students and staff as well as the instructional direction of both the school and the division. STEM integration and strategies for supporting diverse learners (EL, TAG, SPED) will be a priority.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the Board review the status report of the West End Elementary School.

IMPACT

The new West End Elementary School will address the issue of enrollment increases at Ramsay and John Adams. Additionally, it will provide the school division with a state-of-the-art STEM program, ensuring that we are in alignment with State and Virginia requirements and trends in this area.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 180222_Presentation_West_End_Elementary_School_a_School_of_the_Future!
2. 180222_Flyer_STEM_Occupations_in_VA

CONTACT

Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
 Lisa Piehota, Ed.D., Executive Director of Elementary Instruction
 Rachael R.B. Dischner, Principal of the West End Elementary School

cc: Senior Leadership Team