

BOARD BRIEF

Date: October 8, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Tina Constantine, M.Ed., Evaluation & Assessment Analyst
Clinton Page, Ed.D., Chief of Accountability and Research Officer

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

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

TOPIC: 2021 Equity for All Climate Survey Results

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2021-2022 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Social Emotional and
Academic Learning Recovery

Focus Area 2: Hispanic Males

Focus Area 3: Middle School Educational
Experience

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan

Implementation of Equity Audit of School Board Policies

MTSS Implementation with Restorative Practices and PBIS

Stress/Counseling Support especially around Trauma

Continue Engagement with Hispanic Families to Improve Graduation and Chronic Absenteeism

Professional Learning and Cultural Competency Training for all Staff and Partners

SUMMARY:

The Equity for All Climate survey is a new initiative tied directly to the ACPS Equity for All Strategic Plan. From June 1 to June 20, 2021 Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) administered the survey with the purpose of measuring perceptions of the current climate and equity within ACPS. This innovative approach blended a traditional climate survey with an equity audit. Staff expressed especially positive relationships with students, other staff, and their direct supervisor. The high levels of agreement are not common across national data and underscore the intentional efforts of leadership and staff last school year to support a positive climate. Additional areas of strength identified across stakeholder groups included the learning environment and school climate overall. Areas of continued focus revolve around inequities perceived by respondents, the use of Restorative Practices, and the inclusion of family feedback in decision-making.

BACKGROUND:

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As a component of the new Equity for All strategic plan, ACPS administered an equity climate survey to staff, students, and families. The survey combined elements of a traditional climate survey and past ACPS equity audits to create an instrument that gauges school and division climate through the specific lens of equity. The survey was administered to staff, students, and families from June 1 to June 20 and will be administered annually moving forward as a part of the strategic plan.

A total of 4,981 ACPS stakeholders participated in the survey (staff=1,266, student=2,111, family=1,604). Among student respondents, 33% identified themselves as White, 33% as Hispanic, and 24% as Black. Most family respondents identified as White (42%) followed by Hispanic (25%) and Black (17%).

Areas of strength identified include staff relationships, the learning environment, and school climate overall. Nearly all staff agree that they have positive relationships with students (98%), other staff (92%), and their direct supervisor (85%). These high levels of agreement are not common across national data and underscore the efforts of leadership and staff. For the learning environment and overall climate, stakeholders were likely to agree that students feel welcome at school (Family: 83%, Staff: 89%, Student: 81%), are encouraged to participate in learning (Family: 79%, Staff: 90%, Student: 76%), and that teachers provide extra support when needed (Family: 78%, Staff: 94%, Student: 88%). The social-emotional environment and school supports are also considered a strength with a large majority of stakeholders reporting that schools feel safe (Family: 82%, Staff: 87%, Student: 75%) and that adults at school care about all students (Family: 79%, Staff: 88%, Student: 79%). Areas of continued focus revolve around inequities, the use of Restorative Practices, and the inclusion of family feedback. Only slightly more than half of staff (53%) agree that resources are equitably allocated across all division schools and approximately one-third of stakeholders agree that students from different backgrounds are treated differently when they break the rules (Family: 33%, Staff: 39%, Student: 34%). The use of Restorative Practices varies across classrooms and teachers as it is being rolled out across the division. Few students and staff report that they use community circles daily (Staff: 18%; Student: 15%) or 2-3 times a week (Staff: 8%; Student: 10%). A plurality of students (35%) report that they never participate in community circles. Lastly, compared to other areas, fewer families believe that their feedback is included or valued in the decision-making processes at the school (62%) and division (55%) levels.

Data from the survey will be used to inform school and department improvement efforts this school year and will serve as a baseline for future year survey outcomes. The attached materials provide more detailed survey results.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review this information for an understanding of the ACPS climate survey results.

IMPACT: The ACPS Equity for All Climate survey generates understanding on how stakeholders are experiencing ACPS as an organization each and every day through an equity lens.

ATTACHMENT: *1. 2020-2021 Equity Climate Survey Results Summary*

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