

## BOARD BRIEF

Date: June 24, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION:   X  

MEETING PREPARATION:       

**FROM:** Gladis Bourdouane, Assistant Director of Communications  
Jaclyn Goddette, Digital Communications Specialist

**THROUGH:** Julia Burgos, Chief of School and Community Relations  
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:** New ACPS Website Timeline - July 2022 Launch

### **ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment  
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  
Focus Area 4: Early College  
Focus Area 5: Talented and Gifted

### **FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan

### **SUMMARY:**

The Office of Communications is planning to soft launch the new ACPS website on July 1, 2022. The Communications team selected *Finalsite* as the vendor that could best provide the website and related services we needed for effective communications with our stakeholders. As outlined in the timeline, from July 1, 2022 until the first day of school, the team will be adding more content and enhancing with photos and special features throughout the summer after making more adjustments and additions in partnership with schools and departments. The team has migrated over 4,000 pages of content and has focused on moving the most critical content over for the July 1, 2022 launch. You will note that the first phase has all the key components needed to begin the school year and will become more robust in the coming

## BOARD BRIEF

weeks as new content is added. The current platform will become obsolete on June 30, 2022.

The team is pleased with the new platform as it achieves the following:

- **Improves the end-user experience** — with either a fully responsive or a mobile-first design, a more user-friendly website structure that is easier to navigate, all content meets ADA accessibility guidelines, and email newsletters that are visually appealing and stylistically aligned with our other communications materials.
- **Provides high-quality automated translation of our online information** — by implementing a robust AI translation service that allows for greater accuracy to better meet the needs of the diverse ACPS community.
- **Simplifies web management** — more efficient and effective use of staff time by simplifying technical functions and giving more staff members the ability to make basic updates to keep our online information current.
- **Reflects the school division brand** — a clean, simple design that is diverse, forward-looking, focused on our students and is in sync with an environment that provides an equitable, high-quality educational experience that is accessible and engaging to all students.
- **Adds a vital platform for telling and archiving ACPS stories** — our new website will allow us to expand our communications channels and develop rich, compelling, and diverse stories showcased in multimedia formats that highlight our students, staff and programs and build upon the ACPS brand.
- **Introduces a comprehensive staff intranet** — our new website platform will allow us to separate public and staff information, and provide an information hub for internal communications.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The 2021-23 ACPS Strategic Communications and Community Engagement supports the work of the school division overall, the superintendent and SLT, as well as its department plans and the work of their teams, as well as the communications from each school to families, students and staff. The plan supports current methods of engaging daily with students, staff and families, and expands these efforts to help stakeholders stay up to date and get the information they need. The goal is to support current activities that foster stronger relationships and provide additional avenues to cultivate engagement through an array of communications channels, school-based visits and active involvement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review this brief to become familiar with the timeline for the various stages of the new ACPS website launch that aligns with the school division's goals and the need for a brand refresh.

### **IMPACT:**

The new website supports the rebranding of the division and provides the school community with a friendlier user experience and a high-quality website and related services that will enhance our stakeholder communications.

## BOARD BRIEF

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

New ACPS Website Timeline

### **CONTACT:**

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