

BOARD BRIEF

Date: March 08, 2024

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Anthony Sims, Ph.D., Executive Director of School Improvement

THROUGH: Clinton Page, Ed.D., Chief Accountability and Research
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Michelle Rief, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Priority Improvement Plan Update

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 2023-2024 PRIORITY AREA:

- Academic Achievement
- Student Supports
- Staff Supports

FY 2024 BUDGET PRIORITY:

N/A

SUMMARY:

Enhancing systematic alignment to build a culture of continuous improvement that establishes equitable systems and instructional practices to accelerate student achievement is an integral goal of ACPS' strategic vision. The Priority Improvement Plan (PIP) is a system-level continuous improvement innovation designed to strengthen interdepartmental collaboration and cooperative engagement to achieve outcomes in key ACPS priority areas. This board brief provides an overview of the process guiding the development of the PIP process and mid-year progress updates on strategy implementation.

BACKGROUND:

Maintaining a commitment to continuous improvement and systemic alignment, the

BOARD BRIEF

Department of Accountability and Research and Office of School Improvement (OSI) introduced a new Priority Improvement Plan (PIP) approach to continuous improvement planning for central office departments. This innovation strengthens the previous planning process and advances systemic outcomes in three critical areas:

1. Increasing awareness of and coherence across departmental workstreams on key ACPS priority areas
2. Enhancing interdepartmental collaboration
3. Expanding knowledge, skills, and utilization of continuous improvement tools to consolidate evidence of progress and impact for strategic efforts

In August 2024, staff from the Department of Accountability and Research and OSI facilitated a series of scaffolded strategic work sessions with senior leaders to initiate the development of Priority Improvement Plans.

Priority Area Identification - The initial strategy session was structured to support visioning and consensus building among Executive Cabinet members to delineate three division-wide priority areas and the department co-sponsors identified for each priority area. An Executive Cabinet leader was designated as a Point-of-Contact for each priority area. The finalized priority areas identified are:

Academic Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tier 1 Instruction: Alignment, Rigor, Engagement• The High School Project
Student Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Emotional Learning Competencies• Student Connection and Attendance
Staff Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue Culture Building• Recruitment and Retention

Goal Setting and Prioritization – Goal Setting and Prioritization – Session two engaged an expanded cadre of all senior leadership members who participated in cross-departmental work sessions to conjointly generate specific, measurable goals SY 23-24 for each priority area, including specific criteria for success. Teams developed two goals for each priority area (Attachment 1).

Strategy and Action Step Formulation – PIP teams developed targeted strategies and actions consistent with their respective professional domain for the priority improvement goal area in the third session. The OSI provided technical guidance and consultation assistance to department teams to support critical components of strategy development based on a continuous improvement framework. These components included establishing a plan to assess progress and differentiating between Implementation and Impact measures.

Review and Finalization – In the culminating work session, OSI staff facilitated the review, alignment, and revision process to finalize draft PIPs with Executive Cabinet members.

BOARD BRIEF

Mid-Year Progress Updates –Executive Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team met in February to collectively review mid-year updates on the PIPs in a roundtable discussion of high-leverage progress towards strategies identified in each domain. PIP Leads described successes, challenges, and next steps for Essential Actions. The joint progress update process facilitated a shared understanding of opportunities to collaborate across departmental work streams, and enabled feedback on refining plans, monitoring implementation and monitoring of improvement strategies. Attachment 2 highlights the leading ideas reported in the meeting by PIP Focus Area, Priority, and Strategy.

Virginia Support Framework - Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

The PIP process provides a timely building block and direct alignment with the VDOE’s new focus on division-level support for schools with identified within state accountability. The VDOE recently announced a new improvement monitoring model, the Virginia Support Framework (VSF), for divisions with any schools newly identified (SY 23-24) with Level 2 in Academic Achievement in English, Math and/or Science, and/or a Level 3 in any area. The new guidelines for accreditation monitoring and accountability require ACPS to develop an explicit division-wide plan of support to address identified systemic needs to improve student outcomes.

The new guidelines require ACPS to conduct a division-level needs assessment to identify *systems-level* teaching and learning needs and an explicit division-wide plan of support in four specific domains: Academic Supports, Staffing Supports, Professional Learning Supports, and School Climate Supports. This work aligns with and will allow previous PIP work to serve as a foundation for ACPS moving into the new Virginia Support Framework.

Central office leaders representing academics, student services, family engagement, human resources, professional learning, school improvement, and other stakeholders will engage in collaborative work sessions beginning in March 2024 to gather and analyze data, conduct root cause analyses, identify priority areas, and develop the ACPS Plan of Support.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this brief.

IMPACT:

The improvement planning process provides a critical professional learning opportunity to enhance the capacity of ACPS leaders to engage in innovative continuous improvement and achieve the goals identified in the ACPS strategic plan.

REFERENCES:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. SY 23-24 Priority Improvement Plan Goals
2. SY 23-24 Priority Improvement Plan Midyear Progress Updates

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