

## BOARD BRIEF

Date: November 8, 2019

BOARD INFORMATION:   X  

MEETING PREPARATION:       

**FROM:** Helen Lloyd, Director of Communications

**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:** Concerns, Inquiries & Suggestions – Communications Protocol

**ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 2: Family and Community Engagement  
Goal 3: An Exemplary Staff  
Goal 6: Effective and Efficient Operations

**SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 5: Strategic Plan

**FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Communications and Customer Service for External Stakeholders  
Communications and Customer Service for Internal Stakeholders

**SUMMARY:** The attached *Concerns, Inquiries & Suggestions Communication Protocol* codifies the systematic handling of concerns, inquiries and suggestions across the division to ensure that they are being addressed and/or resolved at the appropriate level before being escalated.

**BACKGROUND:** Although ACPS has previously had a codified complaints protocol for staff or internal complaints, the school division has never codified its concerns, inquiries and suggestions communication protocols for ACPS parents or the general public. These protocols aim to ensure that concerns across the division are addressed and/or resolved at the appropriate level by the appropriate staff member before they are escalated. The ultimate goal is to ensure that concerns, inquiries and suggestions are streamlined to provide better customer service to ACPS families and the community as well as ensure that we provide them the necessary support expeditiously and efficiently.

Before the protocols can be shared with the public, all front office staff will undergo a mandatory training to understand our purpose for better communication and any supports to provide high quality customer service. Staff will be assisted in handling public concerns by a one-pager that will include suggested responses. Principals will work collaboratively with their

## BOARD BRIEF

front office staff to ensure they are well versed in the communications process, with assistance from the Office of Communications if needed. Office of Communications staff will conduct random check-ins followed by immediate feedback sessions at all schools before the Winter Break as well as “secret shopper” calls throughout the school year to determine efficiency and effectiveness of the communications protocol. This ongoing reflection and check ins will afford the school division to continuously refine our practice and ensure that we are serving our ACPS families, staff, and community well.

The attached Concerns, Inquiries and Suggestions Communication Protocol Communication Plan aims to ensure that ACPS staff, parents, City Council and the School Board are aware of the new protocols in a strategic and intentional manner.

The *Concerns, Inquiries & Suggestions Communication Protocol* will be found on the ACPS website in the following three places:

1. Under “About ACPS” section
2. On the homepage in the “Up-to-Date With ACPS” section
3. Under “Contact Us” section

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the Concerns, Inquiries and Suggestions Communications Protocol, communication materials connected to the plan, and the Communication Plan.

**IMPACT:** Improve internal and external clarity around the process for concerns, inquiries and suggestions, and improve customer service.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Concerns, Inquiries & Suggestions Communications Protocol flier

[Concerns, Inquiries & Suggestions Communications Protocol on the ACPS website](#)

Tips for Staff

Communication Plan – Concerns, Inquiries & Suggestions Communications Protocol

### **CONTACT:**

Helen Lloyd, Director of Communications

Helen.lloyd@acps.k12.va.us