

BOARD BRIEF

Date: July 11, 2024

For ACTION X

For INFORMATION X

FROM: Carmen Sanders M.S., Executive Director of Instructional Support

THROUGH: Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: SY 24-25 Academic Calendar Change -Additional Professional Learning Days

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2024-2025 PRIORITY AREA:

- Tier 1 Instruction: Alignment, Rigor, Engagement
- CASEL Social Emotional Learning Competencies
- Student Connection and Attendance
- Culture Building
- Recruitment and Retention

FY 2025 BUDGET PRIORITY:

- Reduce Class Sizes
- Target Chronic Absenteeism
- Restorative Practices Supports
- Increase Support for Social and Emotional Learning

SUMMARY:

The Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership’s Office of Instructional Support has worked collaboratively with central office and school stakeholders to assess the professional learning needs to meet Virginia Department of Education requirements. In response to the training requirements outlined in the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) it is necessary that school staff are allocated additional professional learning time. This dedicated time will ensure that school staff can thoroughly engage with and implement the required components, thereby enhancing their instructional practices and overall student outcomes.

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DETAILS:

Due to the additional professional learning requirements, the following days have been recommended:

- 1st Quarter - Wednesday, October 2, 2024
- 2nd Quarter - Thursday - October 31, 2024
- 3rd Quarter - Tuesday, January 28, 2025
- 4th Quarter - Wednesday, May 28, 2025

These dates are inclusive of the traditional academic calendar and modified calendar for Samuel Tucker Elementary School.

To support the effective implementation of these requirements, the Office of Instructional Support will collaborate to develop a comprehensive guidance document. This document will provide clear expectations and direction for school leaders, coaches, and teacher leaders regarding the in-person additional professional learning days.

For teachers who are not required to participate in the VLA training, these additional professional learning days will offer valuable opportunities for school-based professional learning and instructional planning through Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Suggested topics for these sessions include, but are not limited to:

- Planning for Project-Based Learning (PBL)
- Designing inquiry-based activities
- Differentiating instruction
- Planning for formative assessments

This focused planning time will enable teachers to enhance their instructional strategies, which will benefit students' learning experiences and outcomes.

BACKGROUND:

The Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) was enacted to ensure that all students develop strong literacy skills by the end of third grade. The act mandates specific training and instructional practices to support literacy development. Key components of the VLA include:

- Comprehensive training for educators on evidence-based literacy instruction
- Implementation of new literacy assessment tools and intervention strategies; and
- Regular monitoring and reporting of student progress in literacy.

These requirements are designed to improve teaching effectiveness and ensure compliance with the updates to state education and federal policy. By providing additional professional learning time, we can support our teachers in meeting these requirements and ultimately enhance the quality of education for our students.

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RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this brief and approve the recommended calendar change.

IMPACT:

Approving the calendar change will allow school staff with additional professional learning time to complete required state-mandated training.

REFERENCES:

May 24, 2024 - Virginia Literacy Act Presentation

ATTACHMENTS:

None

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