

BOARD BRIEF

Date: December 16, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION:

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Wendy Gonzaelz, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Carmen Sanders, Executive Director of Instructional Support
Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Executive Director Of Instructional Leadership

THROUGH: Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

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

TOPIC: Middle School Project Update

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

SY 2022–2023 FOCUS AREA:

Middle School Educational Experience
Early College
Talented and Gifted

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Equitable TAG Identification of Black and Hispanic Students
Social and Emotional Supports for Students

SUMMARY:

During the 2021-2022 school year, ACPS engaged with a group of internal and external stakeholders in providing future recommendations to the School Board regarding the middle school framework, including instructional programs. This *Middle School Project Work Team (MSPWT)* was designed to address potential revisions, additions, refinements, and/or deletions in the following areas: honors courses, mathematics pathways, Dual Language progression, scheduling options for students, and exploring the possibility of offering college credit in middle school. All future recommendations will be supported by alignment with ACPS instructional initiatives, national research, ACPS data, and ACPS metrics, with equity at the heart of each recommendation, as well as our *ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All*. The MSPWT will develop a three-year timeline to outline outcomes seeking, key areas of focus, professional learning needs, and key implementation milestones. The Office of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership will use the 2022-2023 school year to align division-wide instructional initiatives to include Tier 1 instruction and the High School Project. The MSPWT will resume its analysis of the identified areas during the 2023-2024 school year.

BACKGROUND:

ACPS's Middle School Project Work Team (MSPWT) included Executive Sponsors, Co-Project Managers, Project Work Team Leads, and members including leaders, teachers, parents, and students. During the

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2021-2022 school year, the MSPWT examined the following: honors courses, mathematics courses, Dual Language strategic plans, scheduling, and offering college credit courses in middle school.

The chart below outlines the essential questions related to each topic.

Topic	Essential Question
Honors Courses	How should advanced courses at the middle school level be constructed to provide rigor and engagement to all students with a focus on removing barriers to student success?
Mathematics Pathways	Should ACPS change its mathematics pathways at middle school?
Dual Language Progression	Is the Dual Language expansion on target to meet objectives?
Middle School Scheduling	What type of bell schedule provides the best results for student learning in ACPS and the opportunity for students to explore areas of interest?
College-Level Courses	What acceleration courses should students take in middle school?

The Office of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership will align division-wide instructional initiatives during the 2022-2023 school year to include Tier 1 instruction and the High School Project. The MSPWT will resume its analysis of the identified areas during the 2023-2024 school year. This analysis will include the latest research on the topic and site visits to schools, as needed, to help determine the impact of the recommendation on ACPS K–8 schools. A second component of the team’s work will include establishing metrics for each recommendation to determine success during implementation. The last component will be a detailed implementation timeline for three years. This timeline will include updates to the internal staff, parents, and community; professional learning for staff; and updates to the School Board.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Interim Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information within this memo.

IMPACT:

The points in this brief support the middle school focus areas in the *ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All* (scheduling, math pathways, and middle school transitions for grades 5–6 and 8–9). The brief also provides information about ACPS’s plans for the Middle School Project.

REFERENCES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

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