

## BOARD BRIEF

Date: February 7, 2020

**BOARD INFORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**MEETING PREPARATION:**   X  

**FROM:** Clinton Page, Chief Accountability Officer  
Kurt Huffman, Director of School, Business and Community Partnerships

**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:** Family Engagement Evaluation Findings

### **ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 2: Family and Community Engagement

### **SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

Focus Area 5: Strategic Plan

### **FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Communications and Customer Service for External Stakeholders

Communications and Customer Service for Internal Stakeholders

Leadership and Professional Development

### **SUMMARY:**

In 2019, ACPS conducted a comprehensive division-wide evaluation of family engagement toward fulfilling its commitment to collaborate with families in providing high-quality services in the education of Alexandria's youth. The evaluation identified strengths, challenges, and stakeholder feedback across key focus areas as well as a number of recommendations for improvement. ACPS has initiated the process for identifying the key drivers of change for systemic improvement which will be implemented in a forthcoming division action plan.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide ACPS with a better understanding of the needs, barriers, resources, and services to engage all families across contexts. The evaluation was conducted in two phases with the internal ACPS evaluation team conducting surveys of families and staff in Phase I and ICF International conducting 1) observations (including site visits, secret shopper phone calls, and document analysis), 2) staff focus groups and interviews, 3) focus groups with English-speaking parents/guardians, and 4) group interviews with non-English speaking parents/guardians.

The evaluation framework focused on five key areas of focus: Environment/Culture; Relationships; Decision-Making; Communication Practices; and Initiatives and Activities. Components of three research-based parental engagement models were used to develop a comprehensive concept map catered to the unique needs and interests of ACPS.

## BOARD BRIEF

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Findings and recommendations are organized around the five key areas of focus. In the final report, ICF includes a total of 56 discrete recommendations for consideration. In support of the utilization of the evaluation findings, ICF identified two, high-level recommendations to be prioritized for systematic improvement within the division. Those priority areas encompassed Relationship Building and Expanded Resource Utilization. For Relationship Building, strategic investments in staff development and utilization as well as increased family-facing programming, especially at the secondary level, were promoted as high leverage strategies for engaging families. The findings of the report acknowledge the significant division-wide investments in communication and technology platforms to support family engagement especially in the area of communication. For Expanded Resource Utilization, the recommendation challenges the division to dig deeper to better understand why available resources supporting family engagement are underutilized and identify steps to continuously improve in this area.

### **ACTION PLANNING:**

Upon receiving the final evaluation report, the division assembled an Action Planning Committee inclusive of parents and staff representing building leadership, Student Services, Communications, Curriculum and Instruction, Accountability, and School, Business and Community Partnerships. The Action Planning Committee was charged with creating a draft action plan. The committee reviewed the findings and recommendations and identified specific steps to take in the near and long term toward systemic improvement in family engagement. The committee will seek additional input into strategies from a wide array of stakeholder groups culminating in a final action plan later this spring.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

ICF International will present the report findings at the February 20<sup>th</sup> School Board Meeting. An action plan will be developed which will include a timeline and scope of work to help monitor implementation.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the evaluation report for future discussion regarding possible planning, programmatic, and/or budgetary changes.

### **IMPACT:**

The Family Engagement Evaluation Report provides critical insight into the extent to which ACPS is meeting the needs of families to allow them to be engaged partners in their child's education and growth. Addressing high priority areas of building relationships and expanding the utilization of resources will allow ACPS to better partner with families in driving success for every student.

**ATTACHMENTS:**       (1) *Family Engagement Evaluation Executive Summary*  
                              (2) *Family Engagement Evaluation Report*

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