

## Board Memo

Date: April 21, 2022  
For ACTION   
For INFORMATION   
Board Agenda: Yes   
No

**FROM:** Terri H. Mazingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership  
Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director of Instructional Support  
Pierrette Finney, Ed.D., Principal, Francis C. Hammond Middle School  
Jennifer Tutuska, Teacher, George Washington Middle School

**THROUGH:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., 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 2021–2022 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 3: Middle School Educational Experience  
Focus Area 4: Early College

**FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Implementation of the 2025 Strategic Plan  
Reduce Disproportionality in Talented and Gifted (TAG) and Advanced Courses

**SUMMARY:**

Over the next four months, ACPS will engage with a group of internal and external stakeholders in providing a recommendation to the School Board regarding the middle school framework, including instructional programs. This *Middle School Project Work Team (MSPWT)*, led by Principal Finney, will 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 recommendations will be supported by 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.

**BACKGROUND:**

ACPS's Middle School Project Work Team (MSPWT) includes Executive Sponsors, Co-Project Managers, Project Work Team Leads, and members including leaders, teachers, parents, and students. For the next four months, the MSPWT will examine the following: honors courses, mathematics courses, Dual Language strategic plans, scheduling, and offering college credit courses in middle school.

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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 MSPWT will conduct an analysis on each of the identified areas. 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 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.

### ATTACHMENTS:

1. 220421\_Board\_Presentation\_Middle\_School\_Project\_Update

### CONTACT:

Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D, [gerald.mann@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:gerald.mann@acps.k12.va.us)

Pierrette Finney, Ed.D, [pierrette.finney@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:pierrette.finney@acps.k12.va.us)

Jennifer Tutuska, [jennifer.tutuska@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:jennifer.tutuska@acps.k12.va.us)