

Date: June 21, 2018

For ACTION \_\_\_\_\_  
For INFORMATION  X

Board Agenda: Yes  X   
No \_\_\_\_\_

**FROM:** Clinton Page, Chief Accountability Officer  
Theresa Werner, Executive Director of Specialized Instruction

**THROUGH:** Lois Berlin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Ramee Gentry, Chair, and Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** Students with Disabilities Evaluation Update

**BACKGROUND:**

ACPS has been working with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to evaluate services to students with disabilities during the 2017-18 school year. The purpose of this update is to provide the Board with information around the work completed to date, what are immediate next-steps in this project, and a review of high level commendations and recommendations as a preview to the final full report and presentation in September 2018. These high level findings will inform the division's development of guidance documents through committee work in summer 2018 which will be used to develop a division action plan to be presented in October 2018.

As a result of stakeholder input preceding a request for proposals, five guiding questions guided the scope of this project. The questions centered on instructional services; compliance with state and federal regulations; human capital resources; culture and climate; and internal as well as external communications. Findings were triangulated across a multitude of data sources and stakeholders so as to provide the clearest understanding of the current services provided to students with disabilities relative to their needs.

Since June 2017, PCG has collected information from various sources and stakeholders within the division to develop these high level findings. The expanded scope of the project in fall 2017 resulted in all elementary and secondary schools within the division being observed multiple times through classroom observations and student shadowing. Parents, staff, and Board members participated in this evaluation effort through focus groups, interviews, or surveys conducted by PCG over the course of this school year.

**RESULTS:**

Within the presentation from PCG, nine areas of strengths/commendations and ten high level recommendations are provided. The commendations include:

1. Technology Use

2. Co-Teaching
3. Dropout and Graduation Rates for SWDs
4. MTSS Interventions Guidance
5. City-wide Classes
6. Professional Development Offerings
7. EL Guidance
8. Parent Engagement through SEAC and other groups
9. Inclusive Settings

High level recommendations include the following areas:

1. MTSS Improvements
2. Special Education Referral, Assessment, and Eligibility Practices
3. Academic Optimism, Rigor, and High Expectations
4. Inclusive Practices
5. Specially Designed Instruction and Targeted Interventions
6. Leadership and Accountability
7. Inter-Departmental Collaboration
8. Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Morale
9. Fiscal
10. Culture, Equity, and Parent Engagement

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

Over the summer, a steering committee and four subcommittees will review these findings and draft sections of the evaluation report to develop guidance documents to inform the division's creation of a three year action plan. The primary objective in the formation of both the steering and subcommittees was to ensure representation of a meaningful cross-section of the organization to coalesce a multitude of perspectives to create the best guidance documents possible. In order to work across schools, departments, and roles within the division, a stakeholder group of 36 participants representing the roles and departments listed below will engage in identifying strategies and actions that align to the recommendations in the evaluation report. Stakeholder participants represent the following groups within the division:

- Specialized Instruction Teachers
- General Education Teachers
- Student Support Team Members
- School-Based Administrators
- Specialized Instruction
- Parent Resource Center
- Family and Community Engagement (FACE)
- SEAC
- Early Childhood Special Education
- English Learners
- Curriculum Design
- Human Resources
- Student Services
- Accountability
- Budget

Once the committee guidance documents are delivered to the Superintendent, they will be utilized to develop a three-year action plan to be presented to the Board in October 2018. The action plan will include steps that can be taken immediately (SY18-19) to improve upon the services provided to students with disabilities and their families as well as an explicit roadmap for the subsequent two years.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the attached materials for possible planning, procedural, programmatic, and/or budgetary changes.

**IMPACT:**

This update provides the Board with an initial understanding of high level findings and next steps from the comprehensive evaluation of services for Students with Disabilities within ACPS. This information will be leveraged by the division over the summer months to convene committees of stakeholders to engage in planning to provide guidance to the division on how best to strategically address areas of recommendation. This guidance will then be leveraged in the finalization of a three-year division action plan that will chart the course for the future of special education services within ACPS.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. *Steering and Subcommittee Members Document*
  2. *Update on the Comprehensive Review of Special Education, Pre-K through Grade 12 PowerPoint*

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