

BOARD BRIEF

Date: April 21, 2023

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Kurt Huffman, Executive Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement

THROUGH: Julia Burgos, Chief of School and Community Relations
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: Community Partnership Update

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2022-2023 FOCUS AREA:

- Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery
- Hispanic Males
- Staff Wellness and Growth
- Middle School Educational Experience
- Early College
- Talented and Gifted
- Continued SST Support Expansion
- Strategic Plan Implementation
- Continuous Improvement in KPI Disparities

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:

- K-4 Literacy
- Address Chronic Absenteeism & High School Graduation Rate Among Hispanic Male Students
- Social and Emotional Supports for Students
- Expand Access and Improve Quality of Out of School Learning
- Expand Cultural Competency Training to ACPS Families

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SUMMARY:

Partnerships with Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) are essential to the success of our students, staff, families and educational community. When we align and coordinate our efforts to address barriers to learning and generate new opportunities, we can inspire civic engagement in students and encourage lifelong learning. By working together, we can also ensure, in alignment with the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity For All, that ACPS is an effective place that connects students and families with essential resources and learning opportunities. For a partnership ecosystem to move forward successfully, it takes the unique contributions of each type of partner to together constitute a rich array of support and learning opportunities for youth.

A well-coordinated and cohesive service framework share certain characteristics in order to perform at the highest level:

Shared Vision and Leadership	Aligned Implementation and Responsive/Reflective	Shared Accountability For Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shared vision ● Common goals and outcomes ● Collaborative decision- making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Services aligned with needs ● Efficient use of existing assets ● Discovery of new partners as needed ● Trusting and supporting relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality at the point of service ● Evaluation as an integral component of programming ● Use of shared data for planning

The ACPS Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement (CPE) is committed to utilizing the latest best practices in its goal of continuing to provide partnership pathways that can support every potential and existing Alexandria community partner. Through comprehensive local and national research, a school division can elevate their partnership work through the establishment of a well defined, inclusive partnership network.

To align with that research, planning has begun with internal and external stakeholders to create the ACPS Partnership Pathway Network. This network will encompass all community partnerships in a tiered membership level that will guarantee additional support to qualified partners. Through this network, partners will gain access to an array of specialized resources, free of charge. It will also offer a strong opportunity for partners and the community to learn from each other and adopt best practices for their own work.

Through research, we know that a strong partnership pathway ecosystem has the potential to:

1	Enable children’s understanding of concepts to unfold and deepen in intentional partner connected ways.
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2	Build children’s practice skills and knowledge with additional support through multiple exposures and experiences, including settings where children have the freedom to make and learn with project-based and experimentation outside of the classroom.
3	Spark and nurture children’s interest in and enthusiasm for learning over time, by bringing additional learning supports through different environments and opportunities.
4	Ensure that children have additional ways to build relationships with adults and peers and test out their own leadership and teamwork capabilities as they experience learning over connected environments.
5	Intentionally support youth that are historically underrepresented to foster diverse learning experiences.
6	Increase understanding and build capacity among families to support children’s learning by ensuring that they have additional support learning opportunities through community partnerships.
7	Provide strong mentoring and coaching to youth through additional programming and small/individual learning sessions.

In addition, it is essential that strong goals and strategies are identified and implemented as referenced below.

- Support existing partnerships between ACPS and business/community groups to enhance the efforts of ACPS to be a high-performing school division.
- Create new partnerships between the school division, local schools, businesses and community agencies to support the education of all children.
- Heighten community awareness of the desire of ACPS to partner with local businesses and community agencies actively.
- Support the efforts and growth opportunities for family engagement and volunteers.
- Investigate, develop and implement systems designed to increase strategic funding and programmatic support for ACPS.
- Collaborate with families in providing the high-quality services that they need to be leaders in the education of their children.
- Encourage a sense of community ownership of our schools and support the development of the academic, social, physical, creative and emotional needs of students.

Overarching Strategies include:

1. Supporting the capacity of partners in all sectors, by clearly identifying the shared purpose, outcomes, services, metrics and financial responsibilities of the partnership.

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2. Equipping partners from different settings and components with tools and structures to enable sustained partnership as desired with ACPS.
3. Aligning partnership programs to the ACPS Strategic Plan, Alexandria Youth Support Network, school improvement plans and policies and processes of ACPS.
4. Supporting learning progressions for young people through additional partner opportunities.
5. Aligning, when appropriate, partnership curricula and instruction with ACPS guidance.
6. Supporting the implementation of partner programs and support to strengthen families' understanding and support of their children's learning and ACPS.
7. Implementation of a site coordination team that serves as the point of contact for community partners and others providing services. Ideally, the coordination team works closely with the leadership of the site.

In order to move forward, there must be data analysis of where we currently are in regards to partnerships. The following contains the latest partnership data:

<p>Current Non Profit/Business/Organization Partnerships (no exchange of funding)</p>	<p>Approximately 160</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various school buildings, community sites and departments ● All grade levels from Pre-K to 12 ● All areas of need represented (social emotional/STEM, etc.)
<p>Higher Education Partnerships/Internships (Tab 2)</p>	<p>Approximately 90</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various school buildings, community sites and departments ● All grade levels from Pre-K to 12 ● All areas of need represented (social emotional/STEM, etc.)

In addition to the information shared above, the partnership network components must include a well-defined timeline of action steps. These steps are currently being drafted with help by the partnership team and also the ACT for Alexandria Youth Support Network initiative. The ACT for Alexandria Youth Support Network is currently in their focus group phase for out of school time programming analysis as part of its goal to provide a citywide out of school time programming landscape study and establish multiple resources, standards of quality and clear definitions for partners and families to utilize. It is essential that the ACPS Partnership Network align its work with this initiative. Other important components of a partnership network that are currently in the draft stage with a tentative timeline of completion, outreach and implementation in fall 2023 include:

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- ACPS Partnership Pathway Network Process For Formalizing a Partnership
- ACPS Partnership Pathway Network Intensity Rubric
- In-Kind Benefits Dependent on Level of Partnership
- Maintaining Current Partnership Level
- Partnership Pathway Examples/Scenarios

BACKGROUND:

Currently, ACPS and the Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement (CPE) has approximately 160 partners and 90 additional higher education partners who have signed official agreements with our office. Those partnerships are mainly non-profit with a non exchange of funding. These official partners support various focus areas, buildings/departments and align strongly with our ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan. The Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement continues to strengthen current partnerships with multiple types of support, information/guidance and data requests through in-person and virtual meetings, email/phone correspondence and newsletters. We also guide new potential partners through the agreement process and connect them with the aligned school/department leadership as needed. The executive director of community partnerships and engagement is part of multiple city organizations, commissions and boards (e.g. Children Youth and Families Collaborative Commission, City and Schools Staff Group, Volunteer Alexandria, Youth Support Network, Unified Implementation) which allows for continuous connection and latest information to be brought back to the partnership team as needed. Throughout the year, the office reflects and analyzes the impact of our partnerships and identifies potential support gaps that are based on alignment with school and department plans.

In 2020-21, a forum was conducted in collaboration with Education Elements. That data spotlighted takeaways that provided us with a pathway to success moving forward. Those takeaways included the need for a simple and clear community partnership portal and definition of what a partnership contains. There was also feedback that requested an exploration of current “in kind” supports offered to partners from the school division. In addition to these key takeaways, the office has also added the following as aligned strategic plan tactics:

- Conduct quarterly partnership relationship meetings with large-scale partners to check implementation and progress of agreements and memorandums of understanding. This includes large partnerships such as Amazon, Running Brooke, Virginia Tech Innovation Campus and Alexandria Tutoring Consortium.
- Based on school improvement plans and reflection meetings, provide each school and department analysis and information of current and potential newly-aligned partner opportunities.
- Strengthen and develop new partnerships with higher education universities (For example: George Washington-Governor's Health Science Academy, Virginia State-Teachers For Tomorrow, George Mason-Facility Student Intern Program).

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- Explore national and regional partnership best practices to design and implement a learning partner network. This learning network will implement tiered partnership membership levels that will provide various supports and expectations (e.g. data impact reports) based on their organization details and student/division programming reach.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this memo to gain a better understanding of the path moving forward to expand and strengthen partnership opportunities to meet the ever-growing needs of our school community.

IMPACT:

Through exploration of partnership best practices and reflection of current ACPS partnerships, the Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement will continue to focus on building and strengthening broad-based, innovative partnerships that strengthen all ACPS students' education. Through these partnerships, we can inspire civic engagement in students and encourage lifelong learners.

ATTACHMENTS:

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