

BOARD BRIEF

Date: November 11, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Carmen Sanders, Executive Director of Instructional Support
Peter Balas, Executive Principal, Alexandria City High School

THROUGH: Wendy Gonzalez, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
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: Educational Design Team Update

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

SY 2022–2023 FOCUS AREA:

Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery
Strategic Plan Implementation

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Address Chronic Absenteeism & High School Graduation Rate Among Hispanic Male Students
Social and Emotional Supports for Students

SUMMARY:

The High School Project Educational Design Team (EDT) continues to plan for the educational experience of students in the Alexandria City High School (ACHS)-connected network, focused on the goal of instructional excellence and pathways that prepare students for college, career, and civic life.

The EDT has initiated a plan for systemic implementation of project-based learning (PBL) practices to engage students in rigorous, authentic learning that develops academic knowledge and skills for success. ACPS is working in partnership with PBLWorks, which shares our vision of PBL as a lever for equity and transformative education. With PBLWorks, we have identified areas of focus for our PBL implementation plan to develop capacity in ACPS on three levels over the next three years:

- Capacity of **teachers** to design and facilitate high-quality PBL
- Capacity of **school leaders** to develop the conditions and structures to support high-quality PBL
- Capacity of **division leaders** to create coherence and infrastructure necessary to support and sustain schools' deep implementation of high-quality PBL that leads to desired student outcomes

During the summer of 2022, approximately 100 staff members participated in PBL 101 training, a three-day foundational workshop. This included principals and assistant principals, who are also participating in an ongoing PBL leadership series to develop the capacity and conditions to support PBL experiences. Throughout this school year, leaders will collect data about implementation of PBL from

BOARD BRIEF

teachers and students and use feedback to refine plans for expanding professional learning and sustaining implementation over the next three years.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) and the Industry Advisory Boards (IABs) remain central to the work of the EDT. The IABs are currently being reignited, with a focus on selecting local partners for each board: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Government; Education and Human Services, and the Arts and Architecture. These partners will be from community organizations, Alexandria businesses, and city agencies and will provide work-based learning experiences connected to students' coursework. The IABs will also help evaluate industry credentials and certifications that are essential for success in the career pathways. The IABs will also revisit plans to develop and implement plans for professional learning for staff in March. Success of this initiative will require a shared commitment of all stakeholders to provide the time and resources to achieve the deliverables of both teacher and student experiences.

BACKGROUND:

The High School Project began in the summer of 2018 and has progressed steadily. On September 26, 2019, the School Board voted in favor of a Connected High School Network strategy to address Alexandria City's future high school capacity needs. This includes designing and constructing a new Minnie Howard Campus that will house more students and offer more programming opportunities. Educational specifications and design concepts were approved in 2021. As plans for the building were finalized and construction began, the EDT has continued to work on developing a revitalized instructional program at the high school level.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Interim Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this memo and the attached presentation.

IMPACT:

Reviewing the status update will align the School Board's understanding of the progress of the EDT and the priority areas of work ahead.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

CONTACT:

- Carmen Sanders, Executive Director of Instructional Support, carmen.sanders@acps.k12.va.us
- Peter Balas, Executive Principal, Alexandria City High School, peter.balas@acps.k12.va.us