

BOARD BRIEF

Date: July 22, 2022

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Julia Burgos, Chief of School and Community Relations
Peter Balas, Executive Principal, Alexandria City High 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: Update on Alexandria City High School TV Studio

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:

- Building Upgrades
- Technology Upgrades
- Communications Support

SUMMARY:

Over the past year, the Office of Communications has been working with Executive Principal Peter Balas and relevant teaching staff to devise short- and long-term plans to upgrade and maintain the Alexandria City High School TV Studio. When we met last year with the team, we learned about the years of neglect of the studio by the previous team, equipment that was purchased and never installed or used, and the outdated analog equipment and technology that was integrated with digital equipment that made the TV studio antiquated and difficult for the teachers and students to use for career and technical education (CTE).

BACKGROUND:

Funding

Once we learned about these issues, we leveraged the opportunity to request funds in the ESSER III grant process to assist with the studio needs, maintenance and management. As a result, we were able to secure \$106,000 for the TV studio upgrade and we added a video production specialist granted position through ESSER III to increase our video production

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capacity and have a dedicated position to oversee the use and maintenance of the studio. In addition, the adopted CIP budget also includes \$1.8 million to upgrade both the ACHS Auditorium and TV Studio in this coming school year.

CTE Opportunities for Students

This past year, we worked with the film teachers to identify opportunities to have students work with the Communications team on large projects such as the Superintendent's State of the Schools, President Biden's visit, the Noah Lyles visit and Gov. Northam's visit. We have plans to work with the teachers this coming school year (2022-23) to create a student intern program for the filming and broadcast of School Board meetings to earn CTE hours. In addition, the TV studio has always been available for students to use and there are no plans to change this access. The main rationale for the TV Studio upgrade is to make it state of the art and a better learning space for students.

Challenges

The Office of Communications faced several challenges with recruiting for the video production specialist position which delayed the upgrade process for the TV studio. The position was posted on December 17, 2021 right before Winter Break and we did not receive viable candidates for some time. Our new Video Production Specialist Gustavo Decker was finally hired and started on May 23, 2022 and he has hit the ground running. Since then, he has met with the film teachers and taken inventory of the TV Studio equipment to determine short-term needs and resolutions.

Next Steps

The Office of Communications recently met with Director of Educational Facilities John Finnigan to begin the process for utilizing the \$106,000 in ESSER III funds to resolve some short-term issues before the start of school. We are also working with Mr. Finnegan to begin the RFP process for the long-term TV Studio and Auditorium design and upgrade project. More details will be shared once we have the RFP timeline.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review this brief that provides an update on the plans for the ACHS TV Studio in the coming school year.

IMPACT:

The updates to the ACHS TV Studio will support career and technical education (CTE) with state-of-the-art equipment and provide increased access for students in a modernized learning space.

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A

CONTACT:

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