

ACPS Board Status Report: 2019-20 Priorities, Equity Report Recommendations, and State of the Division Report

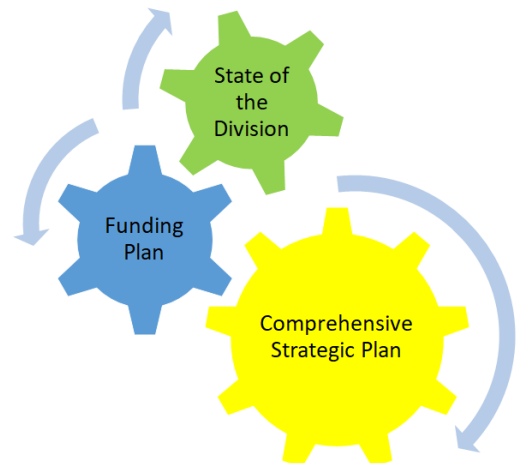
Matt Haas
October 10, 2019

At the request of the School Board, Superintendent Matt Haas is providing this brief status report on: (1) the Board's three biennial priorities as revised during the Board's 2019 summer retreat; (2) recommendations from the division's 2018 Equity Report initially presented to the Board during the same retreat and again in a revised form at the Board meeting on September 26; and (3) the upcoming State of the Division report coming on the heels of the 2018-19 school year.

I am providing these three status reports in one document because it is time to stop thinking of them as separate entities. We should continue to braid the work into a recursive process to both eliminate competition for Board attention and make the most efficient use of staff resources and time. We should align our work to support a focus on high-quality teaching and learning and providing the best experience possible for students, staff and families, with equity as the frame.

Further, I am aligning all of these status updates within the funding request development that officially began its lift-off during the October 2 Joint School Board and Board of Supervisors work session on compensation.

Everything we do should be driven by our comprehensive [ACPS Strategic Plan](#) in accordance with [School Board Policy AF, Commitment to Accomplishment](#). Please take time to review this policy to understand the gap between where we are now with strategic planning and where we should be in terms of having and enacting a comprehensive strategic plan. We are taking steps to close that gap, including making our data and progress on funded strategies transparent to our Board and school community. The Board's push to establish goals and targets is a lever for comprehensive planning. While we are not used to doing this at the division level, it is time to try.



Priorities: Status Update

For an overview of this year's priorities, please revisit the [Strategic Priorities Brief](#) shared with the Board on September 12, 2019. Below is a status update on each action the Board requested:

Identify and remove practices that perpetuate the achievement gap.

ACTION: By December 1, identify practices that have demonstrated elimination of the achievement gap.

Current practices that support elimination of the achievement gap include:

- Professional Learning Community (PLC) model
- Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and CRT leadership practices
- Project-Based Learning (PBL) classrooms and experiences for all (Watch Pedro Noguera's 6-minute [Equity Talk](#) video.)
- Competency-based assessment, scoring, and grade reporting

ACTION: By September 30, staff will evaluate and present to the Board the Equity Table (formerly the Equity Dashboard) for 2018-19 and present achievement goals and targets.

The shared mission of our schools is to end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities on student success by working together with families and communities to ensure each individual student's success. You can read more about the [Equity of Opportunity](#) from the U.S. Department of Education.

2016-17 Equity Table

Demographic Group	Student Count (PK-12)		Students Identified Gifted		Students with Disabilities (IDEA)		Students Chronically Absent		Students Suspended (Out of School)		Students Passing 3rd Grade Reading SOL		Students Passing 3rd Grade Math SOL		Graduates Earning 5 or More Math Credits		Students Earning an Advanced Studies Diploma	
All Students	13,832		1,351		1,735		1,399		531		742		737		512		659	
Asian	672	5%	99	7%	50	3%	44	3%	5	1%	43	6%	39	5.3%	32	6%	34	5%
Black	1,532	11%	31	2%	350	20%	144	10%	140	26%	51	7%	47	6%	29	6%	45	7%
Hispanic	1,783	13%	39	3%	247	14%	246	18%	67	13%	70	9%	69	9%	22	4%	38	6%
White	9,006	65%	1,103	82%	989	57%	857	61%	280	53%	530	71%	531	72%	407	79%	507	77%
Two or more races	800	6%	79	6%	91	5%	98	7%	37	7%	45	6%	49	7%	21	4%	32	5%
Econ Disadv	4,357	31%	77	6%	912	53%	733	52%	314	59%	140	19%	141	19%	45	9%	70	11%
ELs	1,433	10%	16	1%	168	10%	149	11%	48	9%	10	1%	8	1%	9	2%	8	1%
SWD	1,735	13%	15	1%			291	21%	172	32%	40	5%	40	5%	13	3%	25	4%

2017-18 Equity Table

Demographic Group	Student Count (PK-12)		Students Identified Gifted		Students with Disabilities (IDEA)		Students Chronically Absent		Students Suspended (Out of School)		Students Passing 3rd Grade Reading SOL		Students Passing 3rd Grade Math SOL		Graduates Earning 5 or More Math Credits		Students Earning an Advanced Studies Diploma	
All Students	13,946		1,305		1,812		1,530		453		788		801		572		719	
Asian	725	5%	94	7%	55	3%	59	4%	2	0%	48	6%	41	5%	39	7%	44	6%
Black	1,482	11%	27	2%	357	20%	159	10%	110	24%	48	6%	58	7%	16	3%	35	5%
Hispanic	1,801	13%	41	3%	277	15%	278	18%	52	11%	63	8%	70	9%	20	3%	46	6%
White	9,071	65%	1,070	82%	1,020	56%	912	60%	255	56%	583	74%	581	73%	468	82%	559	78%
Two or more races	836	6%	73	6%	99	5%	117	8%	33	7%	45	6%	47	6%	27	5%	32	4%
Econ Disadv	4,419	32%	94	7%	922	51%	813	53%	245	54%	167	21%	167	21%	54	9%	95	13%
ELs	1,419	10%	22	2%	193	11%	182	12%	24	5%	49	6%	48	6%	17	3%	27	4%
SWD	1,812	13%	20	2%			333	22%	152	34%	47	6%	42	5%	7	1%	16	2%

2018-19 Equity Table

Demographic Group	Student Count (PK-12)		Students Identified Gifted		Students with Disabilities (IDEA)		Elem/ Middle School Students Chronically Absent		High School Students Chronically Absent by Period		Students Suspended (Out of School)		Students Passing 3rd Grade Reading SOL		Students Passing 3rd Grade Math SOL		Middle School Students Enrolled in High School Math		Students Earning an Advanced Studies Diploma	
All Students	14,063		1,296		1,893		1,264		1,284		455		708		802		983		691	
Asian	728	5%	95	7%	60	3%	58	5%	30	2%	5	1%	38	5%	40	5%	75	8%	44	6%
Black	1,527	11%	42	3%	386	20%	172	14%	166	13%	122	27%	32	5%	44	5%	45	5%	38	5%
Hispanic	1,876	13%	48	4%	271	14%	223	18%	194	15%	43	9%	55	8%	77	10%	49	5%	48	7%
White	9,041	64%	1,033	80%	1,062	56%	718	57%	825	64%	259	57%	539	76%	591	74%	766	78%	527	76%
Two or more races	859	6%	78	6%	109	6%	90	7%	68	5%	26	6%	41	6%	47	6%	48	5%	33	5%
Econ Disadv	4,419	31%	107	8%	941	50%	711	56%	485	38%	254	56%	141	20%	187	23%	121	12%	87	13%
ELs	1,419	10%	18	1%	187	10%	156	12%	131	10%	21	5%	32	5%	53	7%	28	3%	21	3%
SWD	1,893	13%	22	2%			270	21%	220	17%	178	39%	50	7%	63	8%	20	2%	20	3%

Equity Table Definitions, 2018-19

Econ Disadv: Economically Disadvantaged; includes students whose households meet the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals (less than or equal to 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)

ELs: English Learners; includes students whose first language is other than English and who are in a special program for learning English

SWD: Students with Disabilities; includes students who are eligible for special education and related services, as determined by the criteria adopted by the Virginia Department of Education (*Related services are developmental, corrective or supportive services required for a child with a disability to benefit from special education.*)

Student Count (PK-12): Percentage of students, grades PK-12, in each demographic group based on Albemarle County Public Schools' End-of-Year Student Record Collection for the specified school year

Students Identified Gifted: Percentage of students identified as academically gifted in the specified school year

Students with Disabilities (IDEA): Percentage of students served with an individualized education plan (IEP) under the auspices of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) during the specified school year

Elem/Middle School Students Chronically Absent: Percentage of elementary/middle school students who were absent from school 15 or more times during the specified school year (*The U.S. Department of Education provides more information about the impact of chronic absenteeism at this link: [Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools.](#)*)

High School Students Chronically Absent by Period: Percentage of high school students who were absent from an individual class 15 or more times during the specified school year (*The U.S. Department of Education provides more information about the impact of chronic absenteeism at this link: [Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools.](#)*)

Students Suspended (Out of School): Percentage of students who received at least one out-of-school suspension during the specified school year

Students Passing 3rd Grade Reading/Math SOL: Percentage of third-grade students who achieved a passing score of 400 or more on the Standards of Learning (SOL) test administered in the spring of the specified school year (*The Virginia Department of Education provides more information about SOL curricula and assessments at this link: [Standards of Learning & Testing.](#)*)

Middle School Students Enrolled in High School Math: Percentage of middle school students enrolled in a high school math class during the specified school year

Students Earning an Advanced Studies Diploma: Percentage of graduating seniors in the specified school year who earned an Advanced Studies Diploma after four years in high school (*The Virginia Department of Education details the requirements for different diploma types at this link: [Graduation Requirements.](#)*)

Three target goals for 2019-20:

1. Reduce suspension of Black students to 20% or fewer of the total out-of-school suspensions (OSS) for the 2019-20 school year. (This would be a reduction of 30 students, based on the OSS counts for the 2018-19 school year.) This also will reduce chronic absenteeism, and we will continue reduction in overall OSS numbers.

Key strategies:

- Superintendent/designee case review required for any out-of-school suspension for a Black student beginning October 15, 2019.
 - All instructional staff received introductory CRT professional development during the summer of 2019.
 - Development and piloting of teacher-level comparative data dashboard.
 - Growth of the STEP program in 2019-20 in two additional secondary schools.
2. Increase by 2% or more the representation of Black (18), Hispanic (16), Economically Disadvantaged students (15), and Students with Disabilities (14) among students passing the 3rd Grade Reading SOL for the 2020-21 school year. (All estimated student counts are based on 2018-19 pass rates.)

Key Strategies:

- Division-Level PLC for 3rd Grade Reading
 - Division-wide common cumulative assessment by school at first quarter beginning in the current 2019-20 school year
 - Continued division-wide common assessment at mid-year (started in 2018-19)
 - Implementation of evidence-based reading instruction practices with fidelity
 - Fidelity to key reading strategies in first grade
3. Increase by 1% or more the representation of Black (14), Hispanic (10), Economically Disadvantaged students (7), and Students with Disabilities (9) among students taking high school math in middle school during the 2021-22 school year. (All estimated student counts are based on 2018-19 enrollments.)

Key Strategies:

- Use MAP assessment and other objective formative and summative assessment results to identify the critical number of students in each demographic group to attend a summer math program between 5th and 8th grade to increase student confidence and strengthen prerequisite curriculum-based skills to take Algebra I in 8th grade.
- Offer non-traditional opportunities for students to participate in math enrichment.

Create a culture of high expectations for all.

ACTION: By September 30, create a definition of high expectations or revise/strike the priority.

High expectations means:

- Establishing important skills that students and staff must learn and use;
- Believing that all students and staff can and will learn and demonstrate their competency; and
- Empowering them to do so through support and demanding encouragement.

Maximize opportunities for students at all levels to identify and develop personal interests.

ACTION: Develop a student interest survey(s) for students in all levels by September 30 for presentation, input and approval from the Board.

[Draft Student Interest Survey](#)

Priorities: Next Steps

Staff and I will seek Board input and approval of the information provided in this status report and then move forward in continuing to enact the Board's priorities to accomplish our mission.

Equity Report: Status Update

In the future, I believe we will regard the public presentation of the ACPS Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee's [2018 Equity Report](#) as a watershed moment for ACPS. What I see as having started as a process of spotlighters striving to use data to make a case for change has now been embraced by lead educators throughout the division as well as the School Board and central staff. I congratulate the Equity Committee for their tenacity as well as their intellect and moral position, and I am glad to move their work into the mainstream of Albemarle County Public School's strategic work, including *A Work in Progress*, the upcoming State of the Division report.

Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee Members:

Dr. Joanna Lee Williams, Chairperson
Dr. Russell Carlock, Vice-Chair
Jonno Alcaro
Ben Allen
Michele Castner
Dr. Blaire Cholewa
Emily Elliott

Dr. Bernard Hairston
Lars Holmstrom
Dr. Abigail Kayser
Leilani Keys
Diantha McKeel
Ayanna Mitchell
Gloria Rockhold

Per the 2018 Equity Report, "Based on ACPS data and gaps in opportunity, equity and achievement addressed within this report, this final section summarizes recommendations for district policy and practice, as well as areas where continued research and analysis are necessary. Many of these recommendations were made after the 2016 equity report, but have not yet been fully implemented."

The following update on the 2018 Equity Report recommendations is based on my assessment given ongoing check-ins I have with Leadership Team members. I have organized the priorities based on the level of evidence that currently exists to indicate systemic attention to planning or successful execution across the division.

Evidence Does Not Exist

For the following recommendations, evidence does not exist to indicate systemic attention to planning or execution across the division that will impact outcomes for teaching, learning and operations.

- Build more diverse communities through critical considerations of county zoning practices.
- Build bridges to the most rigorous classes through course recommendation practices and mentorship support that build social capital among diverse students in challenging classes.
- Collaborate with school stakeholders (parents/families, students, school staff, community partners) on a root cause analysis to identify trends in chronic absenteeism, and involve community partners in providing support to chronically absent students and their families.
- Explore and design an alternative Response to Intervention experience (also known as Multi-Tiered System of Support) that shifts from intervention to enrichment services that spark curiosity, provide purpose to student learning, and offer enriching life experiences.
- Study uses of differentiated staffing across schools and provide analysis on practices connected to improving outcomes for students in poverty.

Adequate Evidence Exists

Adequate evidence of attention exists for the following recommendations, particularly in the area of planning. There appears to be a foundation of variable implementation and execution through inputs that will impact outcomes.

- Build a beloved community that lives up to Dr. King’s description of integration when he described it as “the positive acceptance of desegregation and the welcomed participation of [all people] in the total range of human activities.” We must ensure that all groups of students are fully welcomed and participating in all aspects of our schools.
- Break down barriers between classes and programs that segregate students, and end tracking practices that segregate students by race and class.
- Ensure that diversity is distributed across schools in redistricting decisions.
- Following the practice of Loudoun County Public Schools, provide schools and teachers with their own data on behavioral referrals/suspensions, so teachers can compare their own rates to their peers (e.g., using a simple “disproportionality calculator”) and schools can compare to the division as a whole.
- Consider implementing division-wide Restorative Practices. This requires thorough professional development; training; and buy-in from administrators, teachers and staff.
- Invest in intensive professional development in culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed care, and support for teacher-student relationship-building at the beginning of each year.
- Follow the previous two recommendations to implement positive discipline strategies that promote school engagement.

- Strengthen parent engagement through interactive family literacy experiences that occur with frequency throughout the year.
- Increase professional development opportunities that lead to high-yield results in the areas of language acquisition and literacy development.
- Connect hiring practices with differentiated staffing to hiring staff with certain experience, licensure or backgrounds that link to improving outcomes for students in poverty.
- Provide extended learning time for students who need additional support by staggering contracts or providing 11-month contracts for some staff members.
- Consider alternatives to removing struggling students from core instruction in the Tier 1 setting and provide more unleveled classes in secondary schools.
- Return to implementing Rick DuFour's Professional Learning Community (PLC) work in the schools, facilitated with fidelity and monitored by trained administrators across the division.

Considerable Evidence Exists

For the following recommendations, considerable evidence of attention exists, particularly in the area of planning. There appears to be a foundation of broad implementation and execution through inputs that will impact outcomes for teaching, learning and operations.

- Ensure that textbook costs and exam fees are never a barrier to taking college credit classes.
- Use an early warning system to identify students who are chronically absent or at risk for chronic absenteeism with a focus on prevention. An implementation guide is available from the Institute of Education Sciences.
- Recruit and hire K-2 classroom teachers with an expertise in early literacy development to ensure high-quality Tier I reading instruction.
- Offer professional development in the area of culturally responsive teaching to new and veteran teachers. In addition, recruit and hire teachers who have demonstrated expertise with culturally responsive instruction.
- Increase emphasis on uses of differentiated staffing in conversations with principals.
- Use a portion of funding from differentiated staffing to support student activity materials fees (e.g., dual enrollment textbooks, AP exams, field trips) and enrichment opportunities for economically disadvantaged students.
- Develop deliberate and explicit professional development for administrators and teachers on culturally responsive teaching that closes achievement gaps within the core instructional program.
- Utilize instructional specialists to support efforts.
- Provide professional development (ongoing as well as event-based) that reflects a balanced approach to work on division initiatives (e.g., technology integration and direct instructional approaches; student-based learning and teacher-directed instructional practices; problem-based learning and specific strategies for economically disadvantaged students, English Learners, and children with disabilities in the Tier 1 setting).

Equity Report: Next Steps

During the spring of 2020, we will embark on the development of a new strategic plan for ACPS. I recommend that we use the *Equity Report*, as well as the *State of the Division Report* and my *100-Day Report* to the Board as key building blocks to support the strategic plan development, as well as strategies to improve our schools and school system.

The following strategies, mentioned earlier in this brief and based on the Board's priorities, are examples from which many of the strategies cited in the 2018 Equity Report recommendations will grow:

- Professional Learning Community (PLC) model
- Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and CRT leadership practices
- Project-Based Learning (PBL) classrooms and experiences for all (Watch Pedro Noguera's 6-minute [Equity Talk](#) video.)
- Competency-based assessment, scoring, and grade reporting

As the Board considers further recommendations to improve equity in ACPS, we will continue to study their effectiveness as well as alignment with our strategic plans.

State of the Division Report, Fall 2019: Status Update

The purpose of the State of the Division report is to inform the School Board, School Board employees, students, families, and community members as to the status of Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) in accomplishing the objectives of the ACPS Strategic Plan in accordance with [School Board Policy AF, Commitment to Accomplishment](#). While the primary focus of ACPS is student achievement through high-quality teaching and learning, each department/office and school shall have a strategic plan to continuously improve its processes for greater efficiency and resulting outcomes. In concept, the State of the Division report should be the first draft of the opening of the funding request, as the improvements and challenges of the division should advance the portfolio of investments by the Board for the coming fiscal year.

State of the Division Report: Format

The report will be brief and will include links to more information, including internal and external data and reports. Anticipated content includes:

1. Introduction
2. Division-Wide Student Results
3. Department Snapshots
4. School Snapshots
5. Enrollment and Capacity Data
6. Closing Statement
7. Related Reports and Documents
8. Terms and Abbreviations

State of the Division Report: Proposed Timeline

- **October 9** - First draft completed
- **October 16** - Final draft completed; Cabinet review
- **October 24** - Consent agenda
- **November 1** - Communication to School Community with Report
- **November 14** - Work Session on State of the Division (in preparation for budget work ahead)

State of the Division Report: Next Steps

Cabinet and staff will continue to compile the report for the Board's read between October 16-24. As part of the continuous improvement process and in alignment with our intention to make future reports more comprehensive, we will ask the Board for input regarding data they would like to see. Further, the State of the Division will become an extension of the new strategic plan to be developed beginning in the spring of 2020, which will have contextual goals and strategies unique to ACPS.