

Date: November 26, 2018

For ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

For INFORMATION:  X

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

**FROM:** Mignon R. Anthony, Chief Operating Officer

**THROUGH:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools

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

**TOPIC:** The High School Project: Discover and Engage phase

**BACKGROUND:** With our high school enrollment currently significantly exceeding building capacity and growth expected to continue, the School Board allocated \$100,000 in the FY 2018 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget to engage the community on developing solutions for needed high school capacity. Following this, the Ad-Hoc Joint City-Schools Facilities Investment Task Force acknowledged the high school capacity need and recommended full funding of the high school capacity project, including \$5.15M in FY 2019 to further planning efforts and begin design.

In alignment with the Task Force's Recommendation to consider the capability needed prior to executing a capital project, ACPS developed a scope to assess the desired future high school experience and through which the design criteria will be established in anticipation of a substantial capital dollar request in FY2021 and ultimately, the delivery of new high school spaces and programs in between FY2022 and FY2023. ACPS contracted with Stantec Architecture and Fielding Nair International, Inc., nationally recognized architecture and planning firm and internationally recognized educational planning firm, respectively, herein referred to as "the consultants," to complete this necessary planning effort. The consultants' work consists of four phases which are critically timed to meet the desired period of performance for this project:

- Discover – Research high school models, learn about Alexandria's context
- Engage – Develop a vision and high school expansion approach by engaging multiple stakeholders
- Define – Articulate the requirements necessary to execute the vision and approach
- Evaluate – Assess and recommend site option(s) for implementation

This work session is an opportunity for the School Board to (1) discuss the researched educational vision recommendation, (2) to explore in more detail the recommended expansion approach and potential configurations that align with the educational vision, and (3) establish a clear set of approval points upon which to vote that allow the consultants and staff to continue forward towards final Board approval and design procurement by June 2019.

**SUMMARY:** ACPS staff and the consultants engaged multiple Alexandria City stakeholders at the onset of this work beginning in July 2018. The engagement process included an online survey earning 421 responses and over 40 in person meetings, including 22 student class discussions, 4 town hall work sessions, 2 business/community leader focus groups and TC Williams staff meetings. Using this feedback as a framework, the consultants conducted research on the latest findings in education and examined programmatic models that mirrored or exemplified the characteristics for Alexandria. This engagement and research culminated in an educational vision including three powerful and recurring themes for the future high school experience:

1. Community Connected – ensuring that the future high school program, culture and experience is rooted in community partnerships
2. Diversity as a Strength – that Alexandria’s values of access for all and our multitude of differences are integrated into future programs
3. Experiential Learning – hands-on learning and internships are fundamental to learning

The vision ultimately resulted in a connected high school network or multiple campus approach, as the proposed approach to add capacity for Alexandria’s high school of the future.

Next steps will also include further engagement to confirm this proposed vision and model with key stakeholders who contributed to its development prior to the request for the School Board’s vote.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the presentation and prepare questions for the administration and/or consultants. It will ultimately be requested that the School Board vote at a future board meeting in support of the:

- Educational vision;
- Commitment to evolve curriculum, operations and practices to accommodate the vision; and
- Conceptual model to successfully implement the vision.

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**ATTACHMENTS:** Presentation  
Appendix A - Discover: Research  
Appendix B - Engage: Community Engagement