

BOARD BRIEF

Date: March 1, 2019

For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION X_____

Board Agenda: Yes ___

No X___

FROM: Terri H. Mazingo, Ed.D, Chief Academic Officer
Theresa A. Werner M.Ed., J.D., Executive Director of Specialized Instruction

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

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Results Driven Accountability Review of Special Education by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

SUMMARY

Accountability for effective and meaningful implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is fundamental to achieving its intent that “all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.” The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has announced that it is beginning to implement a new accountability framework for special education. This framework, known as Results Driven Accountability (RDA), is intended to balance focus on improving educational results and outcomes for students with disabilities. RDA provides greater supports to local education agencies in improving results for children and youth with disabilities, and their families.

The Division of Special Education and Student Services is responsible for general supervision and monitoring the implementation of the IDEA in accordance with the provisions at 34 CFR 300.604(a)(1), and (a)(3), (b)(2)(i) and (b)(2)(v), and (c)(2) and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, 8 VAC 20-80. Virginia’s general supervision is a system that involves the following components: State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Reports (APR), effective policies and procedures, targeted technical assistance and professional development, effective dispute resolution system; integrated on-site and off-site monitoring activities, data verification, improvement and corrective action planning, and follow-up to ensure timely corrections.

Consistent with these requirements, the Virginia Department of Education has revised its monitoring of special education to implement RDA. The revised monitoring system is based upon targeted need as determined by data analyses of the state's SPP and APR, which incorporates both results data and compliance data generated from several different sources, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; Virginia's Standards of Learning; Discipline, Crime, and Violence Annual Report; Special Education Child Count; and other quantitative and qualitative data sources. The shift to RDA brings a more balanced approach to determining program effectiveness – focusing on how well students are performing while continuing to protect their rights.

BACKGROUND

As a result of the above described mandate, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) determined the ACPS would be reviewed under the Results Driven Accountability (RDA) model this school year. A team of ten VDOE team members will be onsite in ACPS schools from March 4-14, 2019. The ten schools selected by VDOE for site visits include: T.C. Williams, Minnie Howard, Chance for Change, Early Childhood Center, George Washington, Jefferson Houston, Matthew Maury, William Ramsay, Mt.

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Vernon Community School, and Cora Kelly. Additionally, a series of data sets were requested and provided to VDOE staff.

The onsite evaluation process will include record reviews, classroom observations, staff interviews, and parent interviews. The VDOE team particularly wants to speak with staff regarding the provision of reading and math instruction in ACPS. The VDOE team has scheduled multiple opportunities to interview school based staff and central office staff regarding the provision of instruction. The VDOE requested a Facilitated Meeting on the morning of March 4, 2019, so that each school may present an overview of their program and student data. There will be a culminating exit meeting on March 14, 2019, to review the VDOE team findings.

VDOE is aware of the PCG evaluation and received copies of the evaluation and proposed Action Plan. Team leaders represent that they will, whenever possible, align any required VDOE corrective action with our proposed Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends the School Board review the above information in the brief.

CONTACT

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