

# Middle Schools for Tomorrow

Workgroup & Staff  
Recommendations

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Alexandria City Public Schools

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# Essential Questions

- What was the process used to arrive at recommendations for the future of ACPS middle schools?
- What are the recommendations put forth by the workgroup?
- What are the recommendations put forth by senior staff and middle school principals?

# Who was in the workgroup?

- Equal representation across middle school campuses within each stakeholder group.
- Each role for which an application was received had a minimum of one applicant selected as a member to the work group.
- Equivalent weighting of members across stakeholder groups.

# Process

- 10 meetings from June to November
- Built an evaluation model
- Created survey to administer to ACPS middle school stakeholders
- Literature Review
- Data Review
- Developed idealized solutions
- Developed recommendations

# Recommendations from Workgroup

## School Structure

- Data suggest that the GW campus stakeholders are more in favor of the current administrative structure than the FCH campus stakeholders. It is recommended that any consideration to change the present structure be made at the campus and not division level, incorporating the unique needs, programming, and goals for each campus in the decision making process.

## Discipline

- Develop a procedure and structure of discipline enforcement (i.e. deans, campus discipline panel, head disciplinarian) to increase uniformity and enforcement of discipline across all middle schools.

## ELL & Special Education

- In recognition of a large number of ELL and special education students not proficient on SOL assessments, it is recommended that there be further investigation of the root causes of teacher responses that ELL and special education students cannot succeed on grade level standards. Develop action steps based on identified root causes to better serve ELL and special education students.

# Recommendations from Workgroup

## Advanced Coursework

- Continue efforts to increase the number of students from underrepresented subgroups participating and succeeding in advanced courses.

## Student Services

- There should be comparable student support programs, personnel, and services available to students and families to ensure a continuity of services at both campuses.

## School Climate

- Investigate further why ACPS middle school staff is not encouraged to send their children to the middle school at which they work. Specifically, it is recommended to hold formal and informal discussions with teachers and staff regarding their perspectives of the school as well as establish an anonymous feedback system to encourage staff to provide their input.

# Recommendations from Staff

## School Structure

- Combine the Francis C. Hammond Campus into one middle school with one lead principal overseeing all operations. Within the school, students and staff will be placed into grade level teams.
- The George Washington Campus should remain as two separate schools with continued monitoring of this structure and the impacts it has on student achievement outcomes.

## Discipline

- Implement tiered approaches to discipline including an in-school suspension option for students. These tiered approaches to discipline, as well as the student behavior that predicated them, will be monitored formatively by schools and central office throughout the course of the school year.

# Recommendations from Staff

## ELL & Special Education

- Hold focus groups with staff to identify the root causes to why a large percent of staff felt that students in Special Education or ELL programs would not meet grade level standards during the school year. Staff must be asked what additional resources and/or structures they feel are needed to most effectively advance student outcomes within these subgroups.

## Advanced Coursework

- Several processes and programs have been put in place at the middle school level in recent years to increase access and retention in advanced coursework for all students. A next step for staff must include meetings between middle school and elementary school staff focused on increasing the articulation between elementary and middle school.



# Recommendations from Staff

## Student Services

- Strengthen the ability of staff to respond to the increasingly divergent needs of students and families by reviewing the allocation and utilization of school psychologists and social workers at the middle school level.
- Increase awareness of Student Support Team services through multiple focused outreach efforts to students, staff, parents, and the community.

## School Climate

- The immediate step required to investigate the finding of why a large proportion of staff would not be encouraged to send their children to the middle school in which they work is to hold targeted meetings with staff around this issue specifically to identify the key concerns they hold. This particular data point should continue to be tracked via the forthcoming TELL survey.

# Questions and Discussion