

## Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction (SACI): Thursday November 9, 2023, 7pm

Kelly Leadership Center. **APPROVED.**

**Welcome—Mrs. Vanessa Olson, Chair, SACI.** Snacks, cookies, and water available. Ms. Olson is a mother of 6: 2 graduates, 1 senior, and 8<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades; and is now an Elementary teacher. Mr. Ken Bassett did retire end of September. New SACI Facilitator is Dr. Ashley Cramp, Director of Student Learning. New Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning is Dr. Stephanie Soliven, as Ms. Rita Goss retired. It is Dr. McDade's 3<sup>rd</sup> year in PWCS. Ms. Olson and Dr. McDade spent an hour and a half over the summer going over last year's annual report line by line. This Council is heard and helps PWCS. The SACI webpage has upcoming meeting dates, topics for the meetings they have been determined for so far, minutes from past meetings, and previous years' annual reports:

[https://www.pwcs.edu/about\\_us/advisory\\_committees/superintendent\\_s\\_advisory\\_council\\_on\\_instruction/index](https://www.pwcs.edu/about_us/advisory_committees/superintendent_s_advisory_council_on_instruction/index)

**Superintendent's Welcome Message/State of the Schools Report—Dr. LaTanya McDade, Superintendent of Schools & Dr. Michael Neall, Director of Research, Accountability, and Strategic Planning.** Thanks to Ms. Olson for coordinating and planning this Council. PWCS is a \$2B business, the largest employer in the County. Education is our business. Always looking for ways to improve education in PWCS. Using data to drive continuous improvement plans throughout the organization. Dr. McDade's first priority upon joining PWCS was to develop a 4 year strategic plan, developed in coordination with stakeholders throughout the County. Everything has to be grounded in data, and we have to be transparent about that. We have to acknowledge where we have issues so we know where we can improve. We have to learn how to get better at getting better. This State of the Schools presentation was recently presented to the School Board. The Strategic Plan is available online: [https://www.pwcs.edu/about\\_us/strategic\\_plan/index](https://www.pwcs.edu/about_us/strategic_plan/index)

State of the Schools Report contains data about progress toward PWCS Vision 2025 Thriving Futures Strategic Plan goals during the 2022-23 school year. Report also includes key takeaways from the data and next steps. The strategic plan centers around 4 key areas. *Learning and Achievement for All*—every school meeting standards. *Positive Climate and Culture*—physical safety, but also sense of belonging. Most diverse County in the state, and 10<sup>th</sup> most in the country. *Family and Community Engagement*—Need to remove barriers, since we can't do this without support. Messages from School Status will automatically be translated to the primary language listed for the family. School-level Principal's Advisory Councils (PACs) and Division-wide advisory councils are among the ways. *Organizational Coherence*—make sure that everyone is moving towards the same vision and the same goal. Not just a system of schools where everyone is doing their own thing, but a school system, where there is consistency. Unified approach, unified practices. Site-Based management committee working to develop lists of things all schools must have and which ones have leeway to tailor to the individual school's community. This slide deck available on the PWCS website, but will also go onto the SACI website.

End of 2022 statistics: 91K students: 19.4% black, 36.6% Hispanic, 26.9% white, 13% disabled. \$15,456 spending per pupil is the second lowest in the area—Manassas Park the only school system in the area that is lower.

*Learning and Achievement for All:* All schools in PWCS are accredited or accredited with conditions. Overall pass rates for literacy remained consistent, but there was a drop in performance for Hispanic students. Math and science both showed increases in pass rates across all student groups, which helps since they suffered the most during the pandemic. Research says it will take 3 to 5 years to recover from pandemic-related issues. Colleges are reporting that current students are suffering in their first year. Students meeting PALS benchmarks at end of second grade increased across all student groups. On-time graduation rate on par with 2021-22 but Hispanic and English Learner groups had substantial decreases. The % of students meeting SAT math and reading benchmarks increased, but there are significant participation gaps for Hispanic, English Learners, and students with disabilities. Keep in mind not all students take the SATs. School accreditation by VDOE is based on a number of indicators. If all indicators are level one or two, fully accredited. 93% of schools in PWCS are fully accredited. If one or more indicator is at level 3, the school is accredited with conditions (7% in PWCS). Science is one of the areas more likely to cause issues, but high schools can also have problems with dropout rates.

Yes, there are post high school options other than college. Students should be able to choose their path—not because they don't feel prepared, but based on what they want to do.

Our English Learner (EL) population has grown by 42% in the past 5 years, which is very challenging.

Goal 85% pass or pass advanced in grades 3-8 on reading SOLs. Currently at 72.8%. Have breakouts by race, then students with disabilities, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged. For math 69.8% pass, with improvement across all subgroups. Science now at 68%, with improvement across all subgroups. 2020-21 data is slightly skewed since students could opt out of SOL testing due to the pandemic, so the numbers testing was much lower. Goal is to increase pass advance rates grades 3-11 on reading SOL tests by 10%. All students at 14.6%. Math at 10.9%, with increases across subgroups. Science 9.8%. Reading on grade level by grade 3 at 71% by HMM test, Goal is 80%; PALS testing is at 75% on grade level currently. On-time graduation rate goal is 95%. Currently 91.7%. Most subgroups exceed 95%, but the Hispanic students' 83.6% brings the overall average down. Only 71.0% of English Learners graduate on time.

Today is just data—we will discuss approaches and strategies another time. Yes, there are students with multiple category identifications, and our approaches are looking at those issues.

Goal of 60% of graduates will meet SAT college readiness benchmarks in reading and math. Current 40%. Benchmark goals: English Reading/Writing 480, Mathematics 530. Keep in mind not all of the students actually take the SAT. Goal for 100% of graduates will have a post-secondary plan—entering college, technical school, military, workforce, or community transition services. In 2023 we met that goal. All students have had meaningful conversations with counselors and have a plan in place. The % of HS students completing advanced or dual enrollment courses. Goal to increase by 10%. 48% current rate. Graduates completing at least one qualifying score to gain the credit at 40%, and includes AP, IB, Cambridge exams; dual enrollment credit earned; industry credential; or seal of biliteracy. Goal of at least \$250M in scholarships earned. Total \$119M, up from \$91M in 2022.

Pwcs.edu about tab, interactive dashboard has data details and ability to do comparisons:

[https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/accountability/data/school\\_data\\_profiles/index](https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/accountability/data/school_data_profiles/index)

*Next steps:* Expansion of Equal Opportunity Schools to all 13 HSs to increase enrollment in advanced level coursework. On-Time Graduation Task Force to include Early Warning System and tracked interventions: losing a lot of students in August, they are simply not returning, so targeting keeping students engaged, or re-engaging. Creating and tracking intervention plans to ALL students with flags indicating risk of not graduating on time. Explicit training and instruction aligned to the Science of Reading and the Virginia Literacy Act: prioritizes training early education teachers on how students learn reading, and the strategies are already starting to pay off. Implementation of tiered intervention through Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)—rebooted this system to tailor intervention to support students. There are MTSS specialists at all schools. Algebra Readiness Initiative for all schools, giving direct tutoring to students that need it, with many modes of delivery. Continued work on inclusive practices and specially designed instruction for students with disabilities. Make sure classrooms are inclusive, both for educational and social needs. Comprehensive Instructional Rounds at all schools. All schools have a Comprehensive Improvement Plan.

*Positive Climate and Culture:* chronic absenteeism (absent 10% or more of membership days) rates have decreased. School year is 180 days, so 18 or more days is chronic absentee. 21.7% for all students. By 2025 looking to decrease rate by 5%. Dropout rate goal to decrease by 10%: Current overall dropout rate is 6.9%, but 28.7% for English Learners. Yes, EL includes students arriving at age 17 well below grade level, but there are multiple paths available to help students achieve. Another goal is to decrease the % of students receiving exclusionary discipline (suspensions) by 10%. Current 4.4% for all students. Goal 90% retention of certified staff. At 91.9%. Goal 90% of students report feeling safe at school. ES and HS have stayed the same, but MS dropped some. Feeling free from bullying also consistent ES and HS, but dropped in MS.

*Next steps:* Strategic monitoring and analysis of student attendance and dropout data to inform school attendance efforts, at-risk student engagement and credit recovery, remediation, and alternative learning opportunities. Increased school-based administrator support to ID and implement student disciplinary supports and interventions. Implement “Success Coach” program to offer one-on-one mentoring support to students in need. Implement “You Belong Here” enhancements, a comprehensive diversity, inclusion, and equity initiative and pilot “Upbeat” as part of employee retention and satisfaction efforts. Implement weapons screening systems in all secondary schools by 10/20 and Raptor Alert mobile crisis communication and alert all. Additional 106 positions approved to directly support school security, including 5 additional Community Safety Officers, security assistants at ESs, and increase security staffing at secondary level.

*Family and Community Engagement:* Attendance at family engagement events showed general upward trend. Feelings of Family Engagement and Positive Trust similar to prior year. Majority of PWCS leaders have participated in one or more professional learning session on this topic. Continuous Improvement Plans are in place at all schools. 100% of school and department improvement plans align to the strategic plan. Continuous Improvement professional development is at 100% for principals and central office staff, and 86% for assistant principals.

*Next steps:* Offering Family Engagement Series earlier in the year with weekly sessions in multiple languages. Parent liaisons at every school for direct outreach to families. They host parent advocacy events; Increase informational and support sessions for families interested in specialty programs; Facilitate home visits. Chronic absenteeism is down from last year, but still higher than pre-pandemic. PWCS offices and schools are engaged in coordinated efforts to address attendance, access, and achievement gaps. In grades 3-8 math and science performance improved but reading remained comparable to the prior year. Access and performance gaps persist for EL, students with disabilities, and Hispanic students. On-time graduation rates were comparable to previous year but drop-out rates for EL students increased. We are doing the work. Some areas have improved, some still need more work to start seeing improvement.

Dr. McDade and/or her team will be back to meetings to keep an ongoing flow of information. While she cannot attend all meetings, she will try to make more meetings. She has already started implementing some of the recommendations this council has made last year. There is a QR code and address will come by email for additional questions that will be passed along to the presenters and facilitators. Be sure to check if you are listed on the sheet and are registered—there is a QR code if you are not.

### **Break 8:28-8:35**

**Orientation for Members—Mrs. Vanessa Olson, Chair, SACI & Dr. Ashley Cramp, Director of Student Learning and SACI Facilitator.** Facilitator is Dr. Ashley Cramp, Director of Student Learning. Chair is Vanessa Olson. Vice Chairs: HS Rana Kahl, MS Tara Aqdas, Eastern ES Mark Sparlin, Central ES Vacant, Western ES Christy Weedon. Will elect Central ES Vice Chair next meeting. Emily Baisch is Secretary. SACI is pronounced “sack-ee” and usually referred to as the “Council.” Your role is to be a representative of your school’s interests, not necessarily your own. Staff can help direct you to resources. Our role as a Council is to provide feedback and input in commendations within the Division and area of improvement. Purview of this Council is not to make policy. We offer suggestions and advice, but do not dictate direction of the Division. Council is informational NOT confrontational. Council provides opportunity for administration to get direct feedback/ideas from parents on School Division programs. Council provides representative the opportunity to ask questions and to participate in discussions and breakout sessions. SACI reports to the Superintendent, not the School Board. We work on the long-term vision for the Division, not typically on immediate changes. We have a direct voice to the School Administration through the Annual Report, but we and the report are not a place for confrontation. We learn directly from senior staff, but do not dictate policy. SACI is a place for learning, connecting with reps from across the Division, and collaboration. Long-term priorities include the Budget. The annual budget timeline starts in July, when senior staff identify priorities. SACI gets a direct presentation on the annual budget straight from the source (head of finance), usually the week after it is presented to the School Board. As any citizen, you may bring up concerns as part of the public review and work sessions

with the School Board. The annual report is where we identify our priorities for the Division, which is presented to the Superintendent, and helps provide information as they develop priorities for next school year's budget. There may be times when the Superintendent requests immediate feedback on a project, and the Council arranges meeting content to accommodate these requests as needed. Examples have included updates to the homework regulation and the Strategic Plan, and happens at the discretion of the Superintendent.

*Expectations:* Every school is represented each month by primary or alternate. Primary should contact alternate to attend when needed. If neither can attend, inform the Chair. Communications from the Council primarily take place on the SACI page, but also some arrive via email. Usually we meet October through April 7-9pm second Thursday of the month. This year meeting November through May. Generally held at Kelly Leadership Center, but occasionally elsewhere. If schools are code red, we will not meet.

*Duties of Representatives:* Listen to the presentation and take notes. Minutes will be provided, but may not arrive before your next meeting. Participate in discussions/breakout sessions regarding the next month's topics. Ask questions about the presentations. Take information presented to you back to your own school's advisory council. Be an active member of your school's advisory council. If there is a need to vote, each school has one vote—the goal is to reach consensus. We form subcommittees as needed and by volunteer. Examples are report writing, bylaw review, best practices conference. The annual report is developed at the end of the school year and presented to the Superintendent. The Best Practices Conference for Parents has traditionally been held every year, though due to logistics was not held last year. Elections are held during the last SACI meeting of the school year to serve the next school year. Complete attendance every meeting—attendance will be reported to the area superintendents. Most meetings the first portion will be a presentation, and the second portion will be discussing the next month's topic(s).

December meeting will be Learning and Achievement for All centered—with presenters from Special Education, student Activities, and Gifted Education. Can use the question QR code to submit questions or issues you would like them to address in December. December's meeting will take place at Colgan High School in the Cafeteria due to a scheduling conflict at the Leadership Center. Ms. Olson will send a follow-up email with all of the links relevant to today.

***Adjourned 9:01pm. Next Meeting will be December 14, 2023 at Colgan HS in the Cafeteria.***