

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

A Message from Dr. Terri H. Mozingo, Chief Academic Officer

Welcome to the twenty-second edition of the *Pursuit of Excellence Newsletter* for 2018. This version will update you on the latest developments in a variety of key areas including:

- (1) trends, focus areas, and high-priority projects involving the Department of Curriculum and Instruction;
- (2) 20 powerful ways to lead your team to greatness;
- (3) information from ACPS Library Media Services; and
- (4) updates from the Office of Talent Development.

Thank you for your continued support! Have a wonderful week!

20 Powerful Ways That Will Lead Your Team to Greatness

You have probably heard the proverb that says "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." Most often, the greatness in a great team starts from the leader, the one who sets the standards. Here are **20 of the most powerful habits** you can use to steer your team to greatness.

- 1. Give them the freedom to use their talents.** The best leaders step aside and allow those on their team to do what they do best.
- 2. Give them permission to make mistakes.** If you are going to create great teams, coach those you lead that mistakes are part of the process - and they have the power to turn you into something better than you were before.
- 3. Guide them to work together toward a compelling vision.** Working toward a common vision is the beginning of progress for any team, and a sure sign that they are on the road to success.
- 4. Show up as the leader and develop leaders within.** Make sure that what you say is congruent with what you do. Then take the next step by encouraging your team to step into their own leadership.
- 5. Give them what they need to be successful.** There's a simple way to find out what your team needs: ask them.
- 6. Create an environment of fun and enjoyment.** Everyone performs better when they are able to relax and are having a good time.
- 7. Model accountability and teach responsibility.** Be the kind of leader people can trust to follow through on everything you say.

8. Be decisive and purposeful. Decisions need to be made on a constant basis, and thriving teams with great leaders know how to act decisively and with purpose.

9. Don't underestimate the power of EQ. If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you're not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships - then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far with your team or leadership.

10. Teach them that everything is hard before it's easy. Encourage your team to persist until something happens.

11. Give them something to learn and grow on. The best teams, like the best leaders, are never stagnant.

12. Show them fearlessness and encourage them to be brave. Great leaders coach and teach their team. They are right there with them, not on the sidelines screaming and instilling fear but showing them fearlessness and encouraging bravery within them.

13. Earn their respect and give them yours. Mutual respect is critical to any team, so set an example by treating everyone you encounter with respect.

14. Admit that you don't have all the answers. Let your team see that leadership doesn't mean having all the answers or pretending to.

15. Create win-win situations. Everyone benefits from little gains along the way, and the more opportunities you create, the bigger the benefit.

16. Be agile and flexible. Being an agile and flexible leader aligns with the need for your team to be collaborative and cooperative, and it aligns and empowers teams to hold those qualities.

17. Get personal as you are being professional. Building a great team means building a personal relationship with each member of your team.

18. Be honest and encourage candor. Honesty is the best policy.

19. Be accessible and available. Be there for your team and make sure it's easy for them to access you.

20. Consistently praise them and always appreciate them.

**By Lolly Daskal, President and CEO, Lead From Within (Article published May 11, 2017)*

ACPS 2020
Strategic
Plan Goals

- 1. Academic Excellence and Educational Equity:** Every child will be academically successful and prepared for college, work and life.
- 2. Family and Community Engagement:** ACPS will partner with families and the community in the education of Alexandria's youth.
- 3. An Exemplary Staff:** ACPS will recruit, develop, support, and retain a staff that is best for Alexandria's students.
- 4. Facilities and the Learning Environment:** ACPS will provide optimal and equitable learning environments.
- 5. Health and Wellness:** ACPS will provide access and support that enables students to be healthy and ready to learn.
- 6. Effective and Efficient Operations:** ACPS will be efficient, effective, and transparent in its business operations.

ACPS Library Media Services

Did you know that ACPS houses **249,374 different titles** and has **286,805 copies** in its library collections? In addition, ACPS Library Media Services provides teachers and students with access to **millions of articles in 25 research databases!**

What does this mean for your school community? The American Association of School Librarians adopted the **National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries** in November 2017. The standards framework reflects a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning and demonstrates the connections among learner, librarian, and library standards.

The **school library is your community's learning hub** in that it provides equitable access to information for the entire learning community. There is **so much more to the library** than checking out books!

- School librarians connect student learning across all disciplines by focusing on four learning domains: **Think, Create, Share, and Grow**.
- School librarians encourage students to **inquire** and **include** diverse perspectives throughout the **Guided Inquiry Design** process.
- School librarians actively **curate** relevant multi-media texts to support student learning and **collaborate** across disciplines, and they teach students and teachers to do the same.
- The school library provides an interdisciplinary center where students and teachers can **explore** connections across subjects, preparing them to **engage** in rich, responsible lives as citizens, workers, and scholars beyond the school.

What's even more exciting is that **ACPS is collaborating with Alexandria Public Library** to ensure that every student has a public library card through the **ConnectEd Library Challenge!** This program enables all students **fine-free book checkouts and 24/7 access to all of its electronic resources**. So far, George Mason Elementary School is on board, and we look forward to bringing this program into more schools.

For more information, please contact Dr. Anne Booth via email (anne.booth@acps.k12.va.us).

What can you do as school leaders to connect learning across grades and disciplines? Take advantage of your librarian's school-wide perspective on **literacy and technology learning**. **Empower your school librarian to forge connections** that capitalize on teachers' efforts, and **encourage your classroom teachers to collaborate** with your school librarian.

Finally, accept the invitation to participate in **All Alexandria Reads**, as ACPS Library Media Services collaborates with Alexandria Library in its initiative to create **shared experiences through reading**. The public library will reveal the feature title in March 2018, with the **program kickoff during National School Library Month this April**.



Updates from the Office of Talent Development

March 15, 2019, is a division-wide professional learning day. The theme for this day is: **Engage. Empower. Enlighten**. We are hoping that school-based staff members will benefit greatly from the **wide range of professional learning workshops** available on this day. Specifically, this day is designed for school-based professional development **sessions aligned with School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities**. Administrators are responsible for determining the priority areas to be addressed in their respective schools. However, Central Office instructional specialists will offer (via the Professional Learning Management System/PLMS) **content-related professional development sessions**, which can be incorporated as part of your plan for the March 15, 2019, professional learning sessions.

Participation is expected. **Paraprofessionals are expected to attend** sessions with their teachers.

Beginning on January 25, 2019, all content courses to be offered by Central Office instructional specialists will be posted on PLMS. If a content course is **less than 20% full by February 22, 2019**, that session will be canceled. Participants who have registered will be notified of the cancellation.

At this time, **Paraprofessionals may sign up on PLMS** for any of the courses they are interested in attending on March 15, 2019. There are also **leadership trainings** for Principals and Assistant Principals based on the priorities the Principals gave input to in regards to the **Literacy Framework and Updates on the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)**.

For more information, please contact Dr. Debra Lane via email (debra.lane@acps.k12.va.us) or at 703-619-8313.



Your Feedback is Valued!

Do you have any topics of interest that you want featured in the Pursuit of Excellence? If so, please email [Sahar Wiltshire](mailto:Sahar.Wiltshire).

*Please note: all Pursuit of Excellence newsletters are posted on [Canvas](https://www.canvaslms.com/). Log in with your ACPS Google ID to access these newsletters.