The Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Department of School and Community Relations (SCR) leadership created the 2021-22 Annual Report as a means of highlighting the team’s work in a well-defined manner capturing its alignment to strategic goals, including a recognition of the “hand holders that support the work and taking a “deep dive” look at specific department initiatives. The report encapsulates all of these elements in a visually appealing, informative and impactful document shared division-wide on our website. In addition to creatively showcasing many of the projects our department engaged in and undertook throughout the year while promoting a quality and equity-focused education for our students, it was an especially useful summary to help familiarize ACPS’ new incoming leadership with the work of our department at a glance.

Research

The impetus for producing a vehicle that could summarily highlight our department’s work in a visually appealing way and provide information about our individual offices’ major initiatives at a glance was realized as we prepared for the onboarding of a new incoming superintendent who we wanted to become quickly familiar with the vital role the school community and relations department plays in supporting a successful school division. In researching and reviewing the surrounding jurisdictions, we found that no other school division in Northern Virginia produces this type of department annual report. We found that some do a division-wide annual report, but do not showcase the work of the communications and community engagement teams in its own document. This is especially important to assist in elevating the importance of strong communications and community engagement support for school divisions and illustrating the vital role it plays in supporting the work of the entire school division in every aspect.

Planning

Several SCR Leadership meetings were held to best determine which initiatives to highlight and to demonstrate their alignment with the strategies outlined in the 2021 NSPRA award-winning 2021-25 ACPS Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan. Since the plan had recently been approved by the outgoing leadership and served as our department’s blueprint for managing work being conducted by a relatively new team that had also undergone a recent reorganization, it was important to carefully consider the report’s content in terms of data and next steps. Staff were tasked with identifying the strategies from the 2021-25 Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan that pertained to the office’s work; defining the exact work for which the office was responsible; recognizing the individuals and/or entities that supported that particular office’s work and including a section described as “Deeper Dive” that illustrated the accomplishments through graphics that indicated basic data analytics, metrics or measurements showing a particular result (e.g., family and engagement statistics, grant funding secured, # of media inquiries and requests, and links to top ACPS video releases, etc.).

Implementation

A Team Lead template was developed by the executive director of community partnerships and engagement and shared with department team leaders supporting the pertinent offices. Each team leader was responsible for completing their assigned sections and sharing the appropriate data and analytics supporting the outlined sections. All these elements were combined and
bundled together with an introductory page and table of contents listing the various offices within the department whose work was included in the report.

**Evaluation**

This was a great project and/or mechanism to close out the department’s year of accomplishments and achievements. It enabled a high level view of the many projects that the different offices had been engaged in and also indicated the volume of cross-departmental collaboration involved in the culmination of every single initiative. The template was developed and shared in late June and completion of this part took the better part of the summer due to a variety of interrupting factors (e.g., staff turnover, identification of appropriate data, etc.). A visual arts presentation platform was used (Visme) to develop a fitting template to the information submitted by the team leads and then the different slides or pages were completed and thoroughly reviewed for accuracy, relevance of content and overall alignment with the vision of a comprehensive departmental annual report. This also took time due to factors such as the use of a new platform/application (Visme) and collection of data points. It has been posted to our department webpage on our school division website and plans for the 2022-23 edition are being discussed including the creation of the template in the spring and collecting data in June when the information and accomplishments are fresh in everyone’s minds to complete the report prior to starting a new school year.

**Photos/Links**

[2021-22 SCR Annual Report - cover/intro (finalsite.net)](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1675894676/acpsk12vaus/k7wz2y76pwuxfu1fu78/ACPSSStrategicCommunicationsandCommunityEngagementPlan.pdf)

[Copy of Specific Office Summary Template- Comms - Google Docs](#)