

**Arlington Public Schools
District Goals 2015-2016**

**Progress Report
March 31, 2016**

Goal 1 Student Achievement

The Arlington Public Schools (APS) will ensure that every graduate is prepared to enter and complete a post- secondary degree program, pursue a career, and be an active citizen in an ever-changing world by offering a rigorous, comprehensive, standards-based and data-driven K-12 system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that integrates social, emotional and wellness support.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Emphasize inquiry and experiential learning to promote student engagement and a deeper understanding of the curriculum.

- FOSS (Full Option Science System) Science curriculum, which is aligned with the new generation science standards, is being implemented in grades 1-3 this year. The FOSS approach is based on the belief that students learn science best by doing science. Teachers and students do science together through FOSS activities designed to engage students in experiences that lead to a deeper understanding of the natural world.
- More students and teachers are using the Makerspace area of the high school. The Makerspace is a collaborative workshop where students gain practical hands-on experience with new technologies and innovative processes to design and build projects. They provide a flexible environment where learning is made physical by applying science, technology, math, and creativity to solve problems and build things.
- The high school internship program, now in its third year, has expanded our offerings for outside internships, placing 25 seniors in businesses and organizations for work-study experiences during first semester. Students presented their internship projects in an evening forum in January to their parents, work mentors, high school teachers, and fellow students. Enrollment this spring indicates that the program is on track to at least double next year. A consultant has been hired for a short-term project to help develop and support the program in four areas: Clarifying program and students goals and indicating key indicators of outcomes; Examining the successes and challenges of the current program through the lens of growth; Clarifying expectations with students and internship hosts; and, Tracking program data over time.

2. Increase support for social emotional needs of students.

- A planning grant to assess APS programs to address the social emotional needs of our students and plan for future programming was submitted to AEF for funding and we learned recently that AEF awarded the grant.
- Last summer and again this upcoming summer, thirty elementary teachers will have a one-week training in responsive classroom strategies that are designed to support a positive social emotional culture in a classroom and school.
- Over twenty-five teachers, administrators and social workers participated in a graduate level course *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*.
- APS continues to pay close attention to Bullying Prevention initiatives. Examples of these initiatives this year include expansion of professional development to include all staff, programs such as The World of Differences at Ottoson, expansion of Open Circle and Responsive Classroom at the elementary level, and advisories at Ottoson and AHS.
- WIIDICO worked with the middle school to revamp their procedure for re-entry for students who have been out due to medical, school avoidance/school anxiety, and/or suspension.

3. Expand opportunities for secondary students to gain college and career readiness.

- The intent of the MA Common Core Standards is to prepare students for college and careers. APS curriculum is aligned with the standards.
- The PARCC assessment that APS students will take this spring assesses skills that have been identified as essential to college and career readiness: fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as, higher order skills, such as critical thinking skills, problem-solving and analyzing sources to write arguments and informational essays, which require that students develop the skill of close reading of texts.

4* Close the achievement gap in the APS.

- The measure of success for this goal will be the PARCC assessment results, which will be released in the fall. To make progress on this goal, there is more focus this year on data teams at all levels to analyze student work to identify understandings and skills that students may not have mastered and to plan interventions for those students. At the elementary level, grade-level data team meetings have been regularly scheduled (year-long schedule provided to all teachers) during the new Tuesday afternoon meeting time.

Goal 2 Staff Excellence and Professional Development

The Arlington Public Schools will recruit, hire, retain, and build the capacity of a diverse staff to be excellent teachers and administrators by providing high quality professional development aligned to needs, instructional support, coaching, and an evaluation framework that fosters continuous improvement.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Enhance professional development to support the better/smarter use of data in educator decisions and development.

- Monthly data meetings have been scheduled on Tuesday afternoons in every elementary school. Principals have received professional development to facilitate of data meetings, using a district developed protocol. Due to the new elementary schedule, literacy and math coaches, special education teachers and specialists are able to participate in the meetings.

2. Develop a district strategic plan for teacher leadership for teacher career growth.

- The initial leadership training sessions for teacher leaders was held last summer (2015) with continued work this winter (2016).
- Curriculum Council was established with elementary teacher leaders to advise the district regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions, as well as professional development offerings and schedule.
- Grant application to AEF currently being written to expand the pilot teacher leader training program to an established program that will be offered to teachers.
- The first course offered to all teacher leaders is planned for this summer 2016. The course will be co-facilitated by an Arlington staff member and a Teachers-21 staff member in order to build capacity in the district to sustain the program over the long-term.

3. Improve ELL teaching and learning.

- Separate RETELL courses were provided for administrators and teachers.
- Three mini-courses were held to assist classroom teachers at all levels to better meet the needs of ELL students.
- ELL teachers received training in the literacy and math curriculum to enable ELL teachers to reinforce the content covered in the classroom.

4. Professional development to support new elementary science curriculum in grades 1-3.

- Summer PD June 29, 30 for grades 1 – 3 with FOSS authors (FOSS is the new elementary science curriculum that is aligned with the next science
- Grades 1 – 3 PD September 15, October 20, and November 5.

- **Goal 3 Resources, Infrastructure and Educational Environment**

The Arlington Public Schools will offer a cost effective education that maximizes the impact of taxpayer dollars and utilizes best practices, academic research, and rigorous self-evaluation to provide students and staff the resources, materials and infrastructure required for optimum teaching and learning in a safe and healthy environment.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Develop a plan to address space needs related to anticipate enrollment growth over the next 10 years.

Documents Relevant to the development of plan to address the space needs of the district:

- [HMFH Progress Update: Ottoson Study for Additions and Gibbs Study for Renovations \(March 2016\)](#)
[HMFH Proposal - Study at the Ottoson \(March 2016\)](#)
[HMFH Proposal - Study at the Gibbs \(March 2016\)](#)
[Handling the School Enrollment Challenge at Ottoson \(February 2016\)](#)
[December 2015 Update - Population Forecasts](#)
[December 2015 Update - School Enrollment Forecasts](#)
[Option to Redistrict 5 of 7 Elementary Schools \(January 2016\)](#)
[Thompson-Hardy District Pros-Cons \(January 2016\)](#)
[Thompson-Hardy District Chart \(January 2016\)](#)
[Cost of Option to Bus One Grade From Thompson to Peirce in 2015-2016 \(January 2016\)](#)
[McKibben's Modification of the 2015 Population & Enrollment Forecasts \(January 2016\)](#)
[Need for Elementary Classes Over the Next 5 Years](#)
[APS Facilities Needs 2015-2021](#)
[School Capacity](#)
[Draft Memo to School Enrollment Task Force 12.8.15](#)
[School Space Needs Analysis Draft Memo \(November 2015\)](#)
[Enrollment Information 2015](#)
[Options for School Enrollment Growth \(November 2015\)](#)
[HMFH Space Study \(September 2015\)](#)
[McKibben Population and Enrollment Forecast Report \(September 2015\)](#)

2. Do everything possible to expedite the rebuilding of AHS.

- Arlington High School invited by the MSBA Board into the Eligibility Module on January 25, 2016.

3. Improve the maintenance of APS buildings.

- SchoolDude software and system implemented during summer 2015. All school personnel provided training to use the system at the beginning of the school year. This system allows ease of work requests for faculty, generates work order schedules for the custodial and maintenance staff, and allows managers to monitor and audit work request completion.
- Hired new Facilities Director, Ruth Bennett, in August 2015.
- Hired new Facilities Administrator, Eileen Messina, in March 2016.

- During FY17, school related Facilities will continue to be funded from the School Department budget. In FY18, facilities funding will be transferred out of the School Department to Facilities, which will operate as an independent department serving both Town and Schools. The creation of the new facilities department has resulted in a noticeable improvement in the cleanliness and maintenance of the school buildings.

4. Transform teaching and learning by expanding the District's use and integration of technology.

- Expanded 1-to-1 pilot to full 6th grade – iPads used throughout the day in content and specialist classes. BYOD piloted at 6th grade. Increased number of devices available at grades 7 and 8. After-school Professional Learning Community (PLC) focused on using technology to better meet needs of all students.
- Mini-pilots in most departments in the high school implemented to increase an intensive use of technology to fundamentally alter educational experiences in courses. Experiences shared through building meetings on a regular basis.
- Summer Ed-Camp offered to increase teachers expertise in technology integration to enhance teaching and learning.
- High school sections of Computer-Science increased. Percentage of students who take Digital Modeling increased by 90%.
- Graphic design lab at high school expanded.
- Technology-based lessons in middle school art classes implemented.

Goal 4 Operations, Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

The Arlington Public Schools will be run smoothly, efficiently and professionally. The district will operate transparently and engage in effective collaboration and responsive communication with all stakeholders. It will provide timely, accurate data to support financial decision-making, envisioning of the district's future, and long-range planning in partnership with other Town officials. Through these actions it will create broad support for a high quality education system that is the community's most valuable asset.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Define and create a dashboard of district metrics.
 - In development – first draft discussed with the Community Relations Subcommittee on March 29.
2. Improve the communication of information by improving district and school websites.
 - Updated and re-organized website on-line in January 2016.

3. Increase the diversity of the APS staff.

Diversity of APS staff:

- October Numbers

			PREVIOUS HIRES	NEW HIRES 2015	TOTAL STAFF
		ASIAN	28	6	34
		BLACK	15	9	24
		HISPANIC	12	7	19
		NATIVE AMERICAN	2	0	2
		WHITE	954	142	1096
		Not Self-Identified	149	32	181
			1160	196	1356

Since October 1, 2015, we have hired 2 Asian Employees (Substitute Teacher/Nurse), 5 Black Employees (Teaching Assistant, Substitute Teachers, and Lunch Aides), 5 Hispanic Employees (After-School, Lunch Aides and Substitute Teachers), 5 employees who did not self-identify (Substitute Teachers, Lunch Aides, Tutors and Community Education), and 44 White Employees (Administrators, Teachers, Desktop Support, Substitute Teachers, Lunch Aides, Teaching Assistants, After-School Employees, and Coaches).

- Steps we continue to take to increase Staff Diversity:
 - Membership in Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education (MPDE_
 - Attendance at Job Fairs - Boston College, MPDE, Lesley
 - Coffee Social for Educators of Diverse Backgrounds
 - Frequent discussions with Administrators on strategies to reach out to candidates of diverse backgrounds.
 - Using School Spring to Filter Candidates