

Arlington High School

School Improvement Plan
School Year 2022-2023



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Part 1: Overview of Arlington High School - Learning, Connecting and Caring as a Community

APS Vision Statement

The vision of the Arlington Public Schools is to be an equitable educational community where all learners feel a sense of belonging, experience growth and joy, and are empowered to shape their own futures and contribute to a better world.

APS Mission

APS Mission Statement

The Arlington Public Schools focuses on the whole child to create inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for all students, values diverse identities and ways of learning, prepares all staff to maintain high expectations while providing necessary supports, and sustains collaborative partnerships with families and the community.

Arlington High School Mission

In an effort to foster academic excellence and personal achievement at the highest levels, Arlington High School focuses on learning, connecting, and caring as a community. AHS provides a safe, supporting, nurturing environment in which students can acquire knowledge, values, and intellectual curiosity that will lead to lifelong learning. As a community we have agreed upon the following values and habits of mind as foundational principles that will guide all teaching and learning and policy decisions at Arlington High School.

They are:

- Integrity
- Communication
- Accountability and responsibility
- Respect
- Effective teamwork

We believe that living these values and habits of mind on a daily basis will ensure all students a rigorous high school education that will prepare them for their future roles as learners, leaders, and citizens in a 21st century democracy.

Academic Expectations for Students

Arlington High School students will:

- Gather data and critically evaluate the content, source, and relevance of that data, especially but not exclusively, through the use of technology
- Reason logically, using appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods and use their analysis to answer questions
- Write clearly and effectively.
- Listen actively and respond through inquiry, discussion, writing, and various forms of art
- Read and comprehend varied materials and be able to interpret and apply what they have read.
- Speak clearly and effectively in a variety of contexts
- Demonstrate life, leadership, physical, and cognitive skills through projects, performance, and products

21st Century Focus Points Across the Curriculum

- Higher-order thinking skills through interdisciplinary learning, analysis, and synthesis of information
- Media and visual literacy
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics expertise
- Collaboration in a diverse, multicultural world
- Stress and time management
- Communication skills
- A love of learning coupled with a willingness to work hard

Part II: Data to Inform Planning

This past year, we were thrilled to return to in-person instruction after the yearlong separation created by the pandemic. We were also excited to move into the new Phase 1 sections of our new building. Beginning in February, we saw immediate positive impacts in collaboration and student activity caused by the new facilities and the proximity of science, technology, engineering, visual arts, and mathematics (STEAM) and the performing arts. We were even able to use the new facility to host our first underclass semi-formal dance in many years, with over 370 students attending.

We also contended with limitations created by safety restrictions such as masking, limiting gatherings, pool testing, and absences due to quarantine. The building remains at 100% capacity and the building project complicates logistics. This impacts programming and scheduling. Moving in the middle of the year put added strain on our already strained staff. Many students continue to deal with the social and mental health impacts of the past few years of disruption associated with the pandemic and the larger social environment.

Nonetheless, AHS continues to provide high levels of academic quality and a positive environment despite persistent challenges in facilities and the challenges of the pandemic. Over the last 9 years, Arlington High School has worked steadily on increasing academic achievement, equity, and school climate by working on a number of levels including program structure, classroom instruction, disciplinary practices, student leadership, and technology.

Over the past year, a number of groups have given input to the formation of our strategic improvement plans. A participatory group of students, parents, community members, and faculty met regularly to review our leveling practices as part of the Heterogeneous Grouping Initiative. Our Faculty Senate took input and met with our administration to guide our planning process. Over the summer, our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) reviewed school data and developed a “Problem of Practice” to help guide our efforts. Our School Council invited parents to a series of meetings to review our efforts and gain valuable feedback. Overall, these discussions raised three related areas of focus:

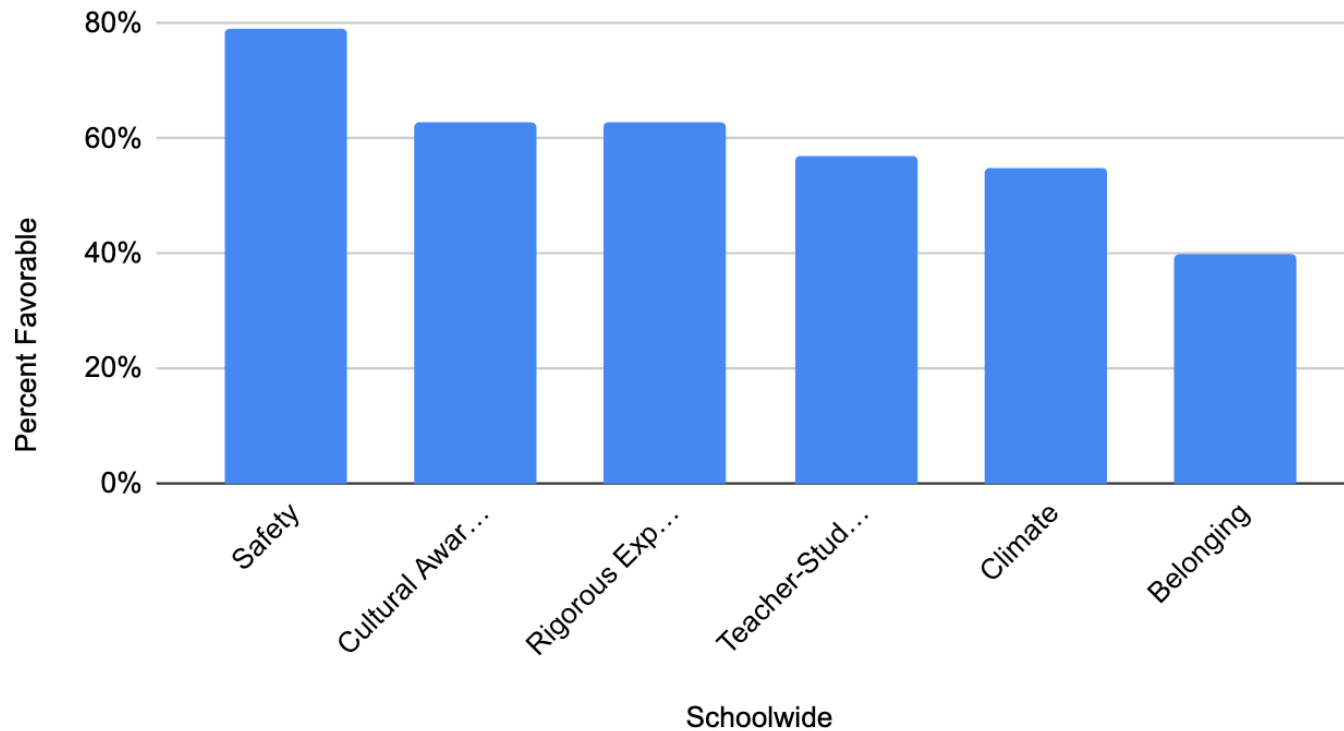
- Belonging
- Engagement
- Equitable Access to Higher Level Learning

The importance and interrelatedness of these three areas is outlined in our ILT “Problem of Practice” which states, “A sense of belonging is vital in any institution and it is both a core value of our educational community and a foundational condition of learning. Engagement derives from belonging and is central to deep learning. We acknowledge an absence of belonging and unity among the AHS community members, including students, faculty and staff.”

Belonging and Engagement

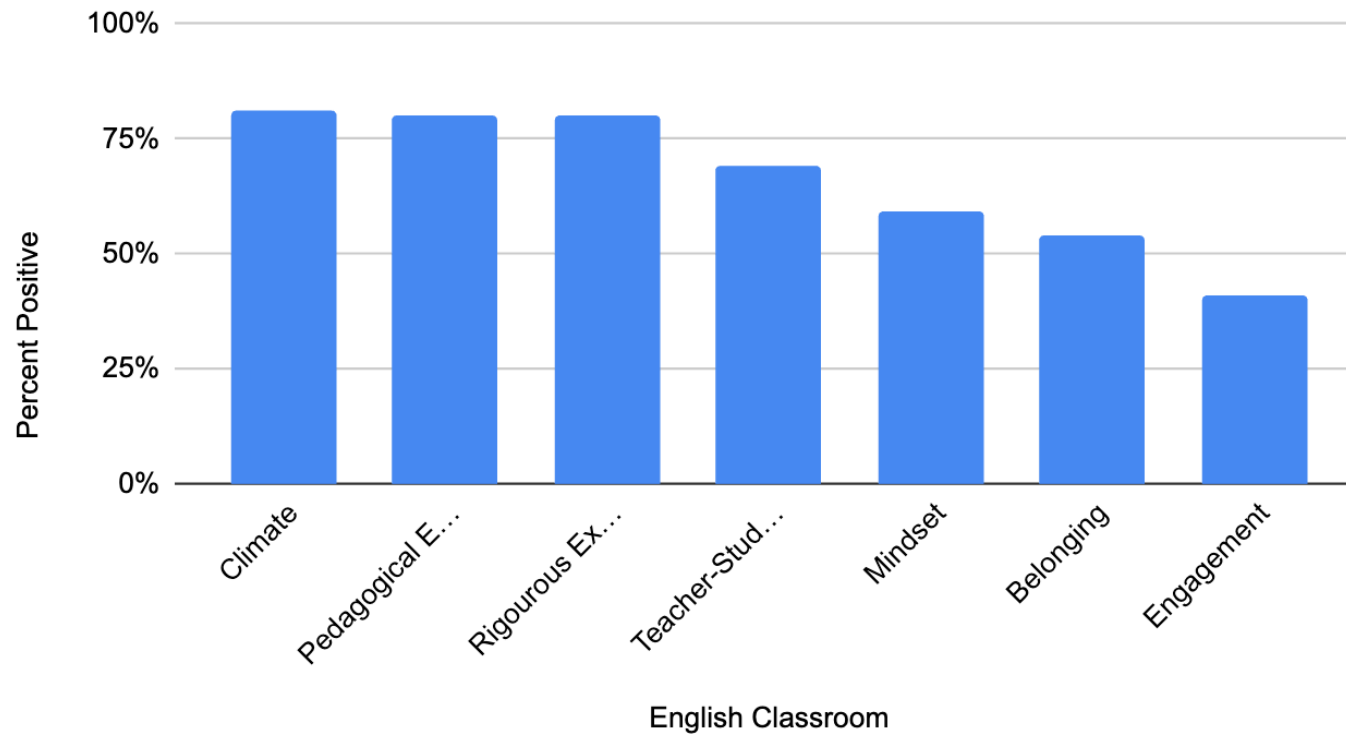
This conclusion was based on a number of measures. On the student Panorama surveys conducted in the spring of 2021 we saw Belonging and Engagement as the lowest scales. The schoolwide survey showed Belonging as the lowest scale.

Schoolwide Panorama Scales Percent Favorable - Spring 2022



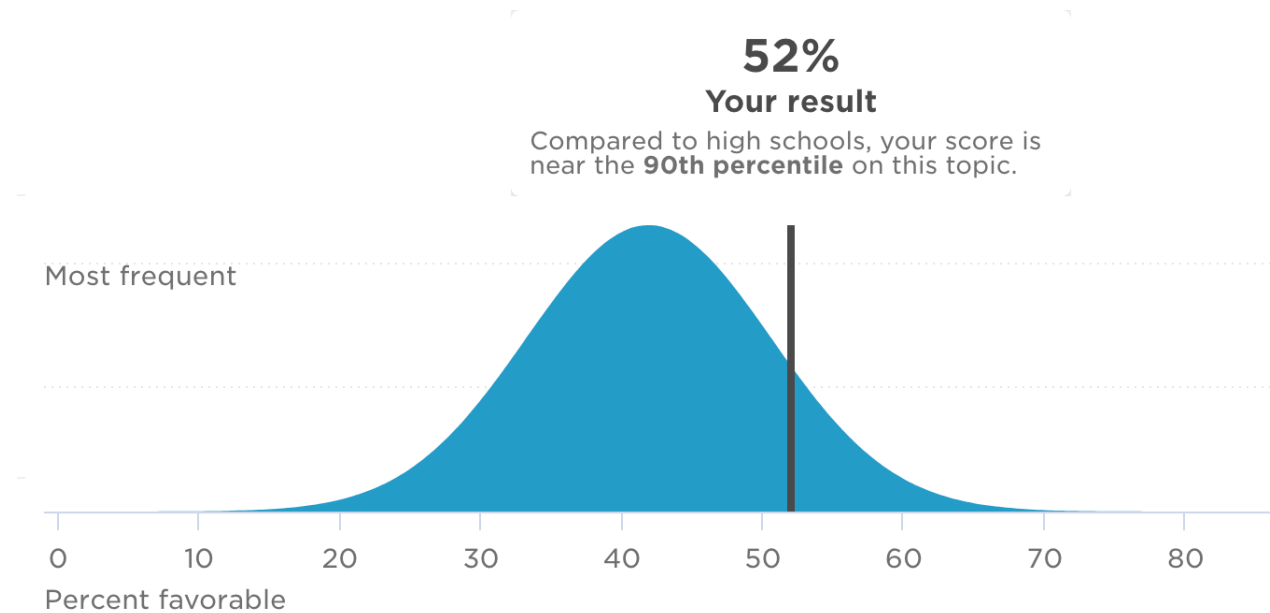
We also conducted a classroom level survey in the English 9 and Physical Science 9 classes. These similarly showed belonging and engagement as the lowest scales.

English Panorama Scales Percent Favorable - Spring 2022

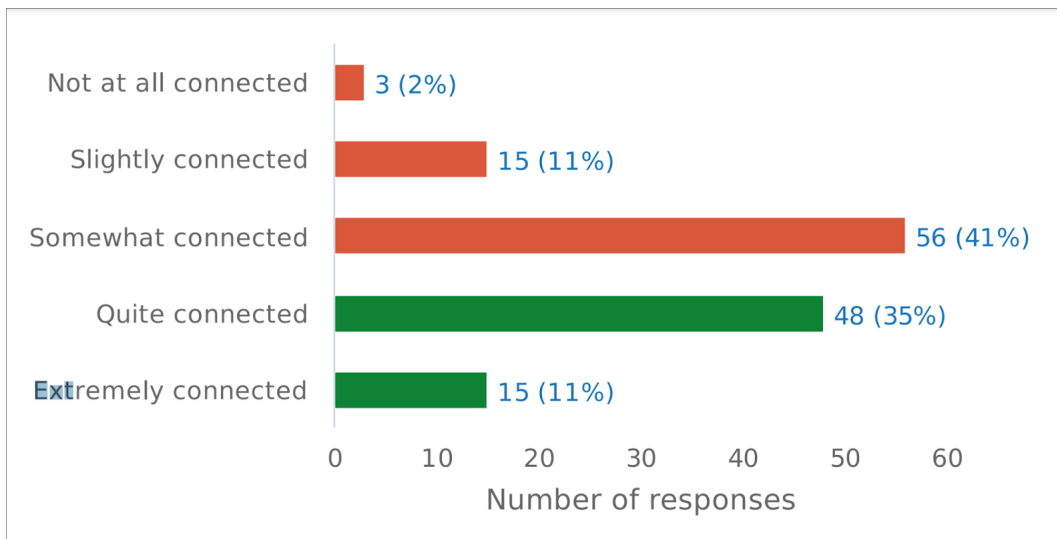
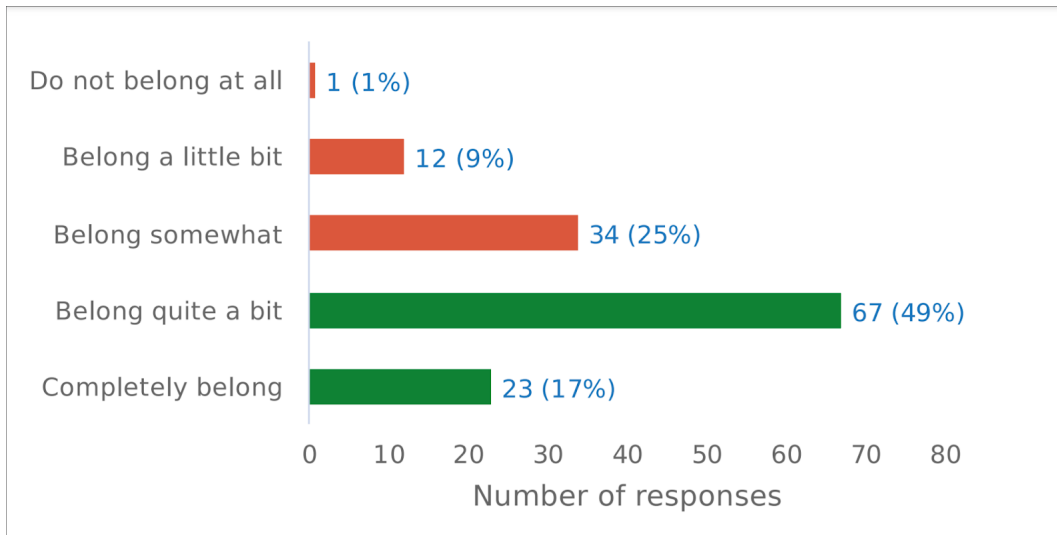


While the schoolwide and classroom surveys are scored differently, it's worthwhile to note that the classroom scale in English classes appears higher than the score overall. The schoolwide scale for Belonging was 40% favorable, while the English classroom scale for Belonging was 54% favorable. A chart contextualizing the classroom belonging scale shows that, while low compared to the other scales, a 54% favorable rating on belonging is high for high schools. Thus, while we acknowledge the importance of belonging and engagement, we also understand that these are challenges for most high schools and their students.

Your result compared to National



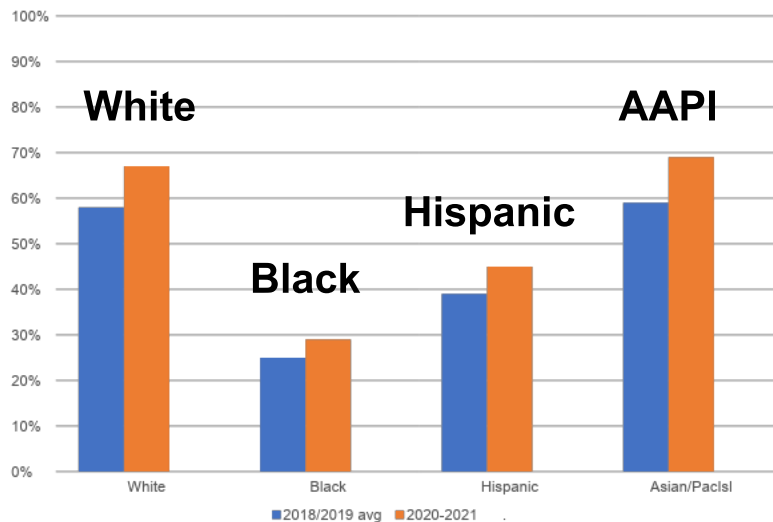
In the fall 2021 Panorama staff survey of AHS climate and culture, 60% of staff reported favorably on the survey scale of Belonging. While staff generally reported that they felt some sense of belonging (66%), the lowest area was in the sense of connection to other staff members (46%). Reports from discussions within the AHS Faculty Senate and the AHS Instructional Leadership Team reflect these responses, with staff reporting that they feel less connected to each other as they have in the past.



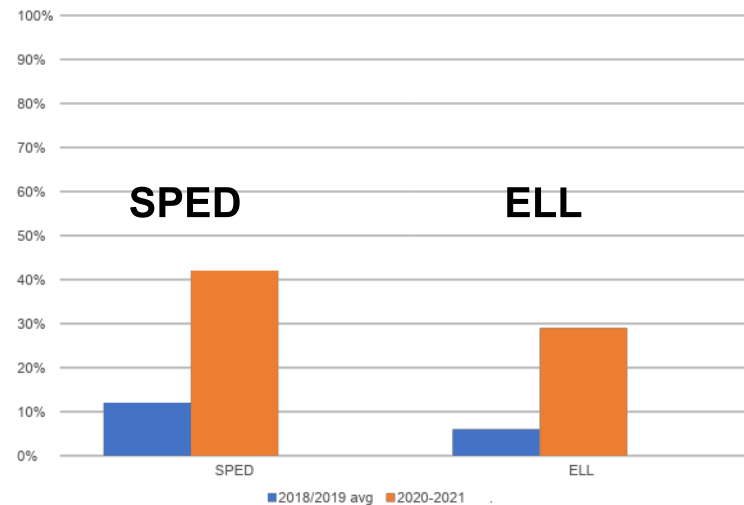
Equitable Access - HGI data on disproportionality

We see strong evidence of disproportionate participation in honors level work in grades 9 and 10. In addition, we find that the likelihood of students changing levels after being placed into a level at Grade 9 is relatively small. Thus, while our current practices allow students to choose between honors and advanced courses, the impact is the tracking and segregating of our student body during their high school years. Roughly $\frac{2}{3}$ of AHS students are currently enrolled at the honors level in most of these courses. Nonetheless, even though we know that talent and academic excellence is evenly distributed across races, ethnicities, abilities, and identities, we find students of color and students with IEPs under-represented at the honors level. African American students enroll in honors at slightly less than half the rate of all other racial groups, and Latinx students are 1.5 times less likely to be in honors than white students.

**Percent of Students Enrolled in Honors
in Grade 9-10 ELA, Math & Physical Science
plus Grades 9-11 History by Race**



**Percent of Students Enrolled in Honors
in Grade 9-10 ELA, Math & Physical Science
plus Grades 9-11 History by IEP and ELL
Status**



Part III: Strategic Objectives and Initiatives

Strategic Goal I: Heterogeneous Grade 9 English Pilot

In school year 2022-23, we will begin a two-year pilot project in which 9th grade ELA classes will be heterogeneously grouped. The [full proposal](#) explains the reason, structure, and goals of the pilot project. You can also view this [student-produced video](#) about the initiative.

Alignment to District Strategic Goals

1. Ensuring Equity and Excellence: The Arlington Public Schools will ensure equity, excellence, and access to rigorous learning experiences for all students. All graduates will be prepared to achieve their choices of post-secondary education, career, and community contribution.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Initiative 1: Heterogeneous English 9 Pilot

Action Steps:	Responsible Teams and People:	Completed By:
Heterogeneous Grouping Initiative (HGI) Study Group Proposal	Principal, Curriculum Leaders, Teacher Representatives, Student Representatives, Parent/Community Representatives	April 2022
School Committee Approval	School Committee	April 2022
English 9 Teacher Planning and Professional Development	Principal, ELA Curriculum Leader, English 9 Teachers	August 2022
Pilot Grade 9 Heterogeneous Classes	Principal, ELA Curriculum Leader, English 9 Teachers	SY 2023 SY 2024
English 9 Common Planning Time	English Curriculum Leader, English 9 Lead Teacher,	Ongoing

	English 9 Teachers	
Annual Evaluation	English Curriculum Leader, English 9 Lead Teacher, English 9 Teachers	Spring 2022 Spring 2023
Initiative 2: Department-level review of leveling practices		
Action Steps:	Responsible Teams and People:	Completed By:
Departmental review of curriculum, standards, and pathways to focus on equitable access to higher level learning .	Curriculum Leaders, Principal	SY 2023 SY 2024

Outcomes and Benchmarks	
Description:	Outcome:
Student Grades: Grades are our primary and most reliable indicator of student learning.	Grades in English 9 will remain steady or improve overall at both the honors and advanced levels and across all demographic groups as compared to the three-year average in non-heterogeneous English 9.
Honors level participation	<p>The proportion of students electing honors level learning will remain steady or increase overall and across all demographic groups as compared to the three-year average in non-heterogeneous English 9.</p> <p>We will meet the above objectives across demographic groups as well as closing gaps in honors participation vs. the overall rate by 5 percentage points.</p>
Belonging and engagement - Our spring 2022 administration of the Panorama culture and climate survey in English 9	In the spring of 2023, we will be looking for improvements of 5% in students reporting favorably on measures of belonging and engagement in the Panorama survey at both the honors and advanced levels and across all demographic groups as compared

classes showed deficits in reports of belonging and engagement.	to the spring 2022 classroom responses.
Qualitative Measures	Teachers will track student experiences and periodically collect feedback data for formative purposes, to adjust their practice.
Formative Assessments	Teachers will administer at least 3 common writing assessments during the year and use this to review student work and norm teacher expectations.

Necessary Resources to Ensure Success

Summer curriculum work has been planned for as a component of the normal planning and budgeting process. The APS will set aside necessary funds for all AHS ELA teachers to participate in spring and summer retreats and planning. In addition, the cost of consulting, training, and support for the teachers is estimated at \$10,000, and has been accounted for in the district's planning for FY23. These resources will need to be set aside for SY24 as well.

Strategic Goal 2: Equity Response Team

The Arlington High School Equity Response Team (ERT) Initiative seeks to create and implement a method of collecting, analyzing, and responding to reports of microaggressions in the Arlington High School community. This effort arose from requests from our Black Student Union in 2020, and has been carried forward by the Resources for BIPOC Committee (a sub-committee of the AHS Anti-racism Working Group). The initiative is designed to help maintain a community of kindness and respect for all in the Arlington High School community.

More information can be found [HERE](#)

Alignment to District Strategic Goals

Ensuring Equity and Excellence: The Arlington Public Schools will ensure equity, excellence, and access to rigorous learning

experiences for all students. All graduates will be prepared to achieve their choices of post-secondary education, career, and community contribution.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Initiative 1:

Action Steps:	Responsible Teams and People:	Completed By:
Presentation to the staff to educate them more about microaggressions, and introduce them to the work of the ERT	David Conneely and Margaret Credle Thomas (and the ERT team)	September 14, 2022
Advisory Lesson: Core Values in our Advisory	David Conneely, ERT, Student Leaders	September 22, 2022
Advisory Lesson: Core Values at AHS and How Our Affinity Groups Help Uphold those Values.	David Conneely, Affinity Group Advisors Other Active Participants: Jasper Zellmer (Videographer), Hannah Markelz (AWG), Maren White (AWG), Lilia Naylor (AWG), Em/Phoenix Phillips (GSA), Greta Billingsley (GSA)	September 29, 2022
Advisory Lesson: What happens when we fall short of our values at AHS? How We Can Stop Microaggressions at AHS.	Lianna Bessette and Liza Basso Other Active Participants: Members of the Curriculum Subcommittee (AWG)	October 6, 2022
Launch Microaggressions Reporting Form	Equity Response Team, Administration	October 7, 2022
Monitor and respond to reports on the Microaggressions Reporting Form	Administration, David Conneely, Margaret Credle Thomas	Ongoing
Analyze data for initial report to staff and students.	David Conneely, Equity Response Team,	December 2022

	Administration, Margaret Credle Thomas	
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Outcomes and Benchmarks	
Description:	Outcome:
Successful launch and administration of the microaggressions reporting process	Successful completion of the initial report in December 2022. Ongoing administration of the process.
Improvement in students' sense of belonging and favorable responses to school efforts to increase cultural awareness and action	In the spring 2023 administration of the schoolwide Panorama survey, 45% of students will respond favorably on the Belonging scale and 68% will respond favorably on the Cultural Awareness and Action scale.
Improvement in students' respectful treatment of their peers	In the spring 2023 administration of the schoolwide Panorama survey, 59% of students will respond favorably to the question, "How much respect do students in your school show you?"

Necessary Resources to Ensure Success
Stipends for the Equity Response Team and Affinity Group Advisors - \$8,000 Advisory Time Professional Development Time

Strategic Goal 3: Voices United Workshops

A trained group of Arlington Public School staff will be hosting full-day Voices United Student Leadership Workshops for all grade 9 students. This training is designed to help students understand and address instances of bullying, bias, harassment, and degrading language among their peers. The Voices United Committee supports the notion that while teacher training and commitment is

important, only student leadership can change interactions and climate among students. These workshops will help our student develop the understanding and skills they need to build a school community that is more positive, safe, and inclusive.

Alignment to District Strategic Goals

Ensuring Equity and Excellence: The Arlington Public Schools will ensure equity, excellence, and access to rigorous learning experiences for all students. All graduates will be prepared to achieve their choices of post-secondary education, career, and community contribution.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Initiative 1:

Action Steps:	Responsible Teams and People:	Completed By:
Schedule and conduct 7 days of Workshops for 385 grade 9 students. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review workshop curriculum• Identify workshop leaders• Reserve workshop space• Prepare workshop materials and supplies• Collect Permission forms• Conduct 14 workshops over 7 days• Collect and review evaluation forms	Matthew Janger, Margaret Credle Thomas, Rob DiLoreto, Veronica Tivnan, Paul McKnight, Bill McCarthy, Richelle Smith, Shayla Lowe, Stacy Kitsis, Joanan Sanchez Selmo	November 22, 2022

Outcomes and Benchmarks

Description:	Outcome:
Positive evaluations from student participants	Students will give the workshop a mean score of 5 out of 7 on workshop evaluation forms

Improvements in grade 9 students' sense of belonging	In the spring 2023 administration of the schoolwide Panorama survey, 45% of grade 9 students will respond favorably on the Belonging scale.
Improvements in grade 9 students' student ratings of the school's cultural awareness	In the spring 2023 administration of the schoolwide Panorama survey, 68% of grade 9 students will respond favorably on the Cultural Awareness and Action scale.

Necessary Resources to Ensure Success

- At least 2 trained facilitators (4 per day) to conduct the workshops
- Opportunities to train additional staff, including staff participation in the Ideas course on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Funding for supplies \$700
- A graduate principal intern helped to organize the workshops and materials

Strategic Goal 4: Instructional Leadership Team

The AHS Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) was formed to assist with organizing departmental and schoolwide professional development, school improvement planning, and teacher learning during department activities.

The ILT draws upon and fits into existing structures at Arlington High School. 10 teacher leaders represent the broader curriculum areas (both academic departments and key roles) and will assist their Department Heads in supporting professional development, planning, and teacher learning during department activities. We meet monthly to discuss (communicate, coordinate and give input) schoolwide improvement efforts.

Alignment to District Strategic Goals

Ensuring Equity and Excellence: The Arlington Public Schools will ensure equity, excellence, and access to rigorous learning

experiences for all students. All graduates will be prepared to achieve their choices of post-secondary education, career, and community contribution.

Valuing All Staff: The Arlington Public Schools will recruit and retain an excellent and diverse workforce by creating a collaborative and supportive culture for all staff; providing high-quality and relevant professional development; expanding opportunities for leadership and shared decision-making; and prioritizing representation, diverse perspectives, and expertise.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Initiative 1:

Action Steps:	Responsible Teams and People:	Completed By:
August Leadership Workshop	Dr. Homan, Margaret Credle Thomas, Matthew Janger, ILT members, Curriculum Leaders	August 2022
Monthly ILT Meetings	Dr. Janger, Teacher Chairs: David Conneely and Annie Rebola, ILT members	Monthly 2022
Develop Norms, Roles, and Action Plans	ILT members	Ongoing

Outcomes and Benchmarks

Description:	Outcome:
Successful formation and participation in the ILT as reported by its members.	The ILT will conduct a self evaluation of how well it has met its norms and goals in the spring of 2023.
Increase in Staffs' sense of connection with each other.	In the spring 2023 administration of the schoolwide Panorama survey, 51% of staff will respond favorably to the question, "How connected do you feel to other adults in your school?"
Increase in Students' sense of belonging in school.	In the spring 2023 administration of the schoolwide Panorama survey, 45% of students will respond favorably on the Belonging

	scale.
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Necessary Resources to Ensure Success
List resources from the district and/or school budgets that will be required to facilitate and enable success for this strategic goal and its related initiatives.

Strategic Goal 5: Phase 2 Building Project Planning

Throughout the 2022-23 school year, AHS will be engaged in managing the impacts of construction, completing Phase 1 punch lists, preparing for the move into Phase 2 in the fall, and planning for new instructional spaces and programs in the Phase 2 buildings.

Alignment to District Strategic Goals
Improving Infrastructure, Operations, and Sustainability: The Arlington Public Schools will maintain a system of schools that is safe, well-maintained, sustainable, and fiscally responsible, with the appropriate tools and resources to support best educational practices and an optimum teaching and learning environment.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps		
Initiative 1:		
Action Steps:	Responsible Teams and People:	Completed By:
Staff will clear out and organize materials and equipment in preparation for the move in September 2023	Matthew Janger, Bill McCarthy, Curriculum Leaders, Staff Primary affected departments: World Languages, English, History, Family and Consumer Sciences, Library, Special Education, School Counseling,	September 2023

	Nursing	
Administration and staff will need to prepare schedules and lesson plans for starting school and then moving soon after in September 2023	<p>Matthew Janger, Bill McCarthy, Curriculum Leaders, Staff</p> <p>Primary affected departments: World Languages, English, History, Family and Consumer Sciences, Library, Special Education, School Counseling, Nursing</p>	August 2023
There are numerous specialized spaces that need planning for staffing and programming in the Phase 2 building. These include: the Smart Lab, Student Cafe/Store, Immersion Lab, Special Program Spaces, Library, and Cafeteria	<p>Matthew Janger, Bill McCarthy, Michael Mason, Curriculum Leaders, Stacy Kitsis, Jeff Snyder, Rashmi Pimprikar, Amy Forsythe, Alison Elmer, Denise Boucher</p> <p>Primary affected departments: Library, World Language, Special Education, Cafeteria</p>	January 2023

Outcomes and Benchmarks	
Description:	Outcome:
Opening of Phase 2 building in September 2023, on time and within budget	The high school administration will be prepared to move within the planned time frame, starting September 19, 2022, and within the budget provided by the AHS building project.
Minimal disruption of instructional time	The move will be conducted with the loss of no more than 2 periods of instructional time in affected classes and overall no more than 6 hours of instructional time.
<p>Support for staff well-being throughout the move</p> <p>Improvement on Panorama staff survey Well-being scale (+5%) in Fall 2023</p>	In the Fall 2023 administration of the schoolwide Panorama survey, 64% of staff will respond favorably on the scale of staff Well-being.

Necessary Resources to Ensure Success

List resources from the district and/or school budgets that will be required to facilitate and enable success for this strategic goal and its related initiatives.