

**Ottoson Middle School**  
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### **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 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 support, and sustains collaborative partnerships with families and the community.

### **Ottoson Vision Statement**

The Ottoson School Community is an environment where students and adults strive to create a personalized learning environment that promotes academic excellence and empowers students to achieve their maximum potential. Through a model designed to target social-emotional needs, learners are welcomed into a school environment where student needs are centered around their academic growth focused on the motto Excel, Empower, and Engage.

### **Ottoson Mission Statement**

- ❖ All learners are provided with a rigorous, interdisciplinary academic program.
- ❖ All learners are exposed to a variety of disciplines that complement and enrich academic curriculum.
- ❖ All students develop a sense of community within a supportive school culture.
- ❖ All teachers are skilled at educating young adolescents, including developing cultural proficiency in their practice.
- ❖ All adult members of the school community recognize the varied academic, social, and emotional developmental needs of young adolescents.
- ❖ All teachers and administrators work collaboratively across disciplines and grade levels.
- ❖ Social-emotional learning along with health and wellness are promoted as integral components of the learning experience.

## Ottoson Middle School Student Demographics 2021-2022

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2020-21)			
Race	% of School	% of District	% of State
African American	4.5	3.4	9.3
Asian	9.6	12.9	7.2
Hispanic	8.2	6.5	23.1
Native American	0.2	0	0.2
White	71	69.6	55.7
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	0.1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	6.4	7.6	4.3

## Selected Populations

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	9.1	12	23.9
English Language Learner	1.5	4.2	11
Low-income	14.1	11.5	43.8
Students With Disabilities	18.2	15.9	18.9
High Needs	29.8	27.9	55.6



**Objective 1:** OMS Will expand opportunities for students to build connections with peers and staff in order to improve a sense of belonging school-wide.

### **Reasoning**

In order for students to develop their identity in a healthy and supported way, it is essential that they feel a sense of belonging at school. For many students, a sense of belonging can be a result of having strong connections to teachers and friends. However, for many students, a sense of belonging is not a given, and it is our responsibility to ensure that as many students as possible feel that they belong at Ottoson Middle School. To do this, we need to create opportunities for students to connect with each other and with staff, and to feel that when a sense of belonging is fractured, the school responds in a supportive and productive way.

This school year, we have worked to increase the number of extracurricular activities available to students (for example, we have a ping-pong club and student council), and we have also worked to increase access to activities that already exist (increasing advertising and recruiting for the drama club and the cross country team).

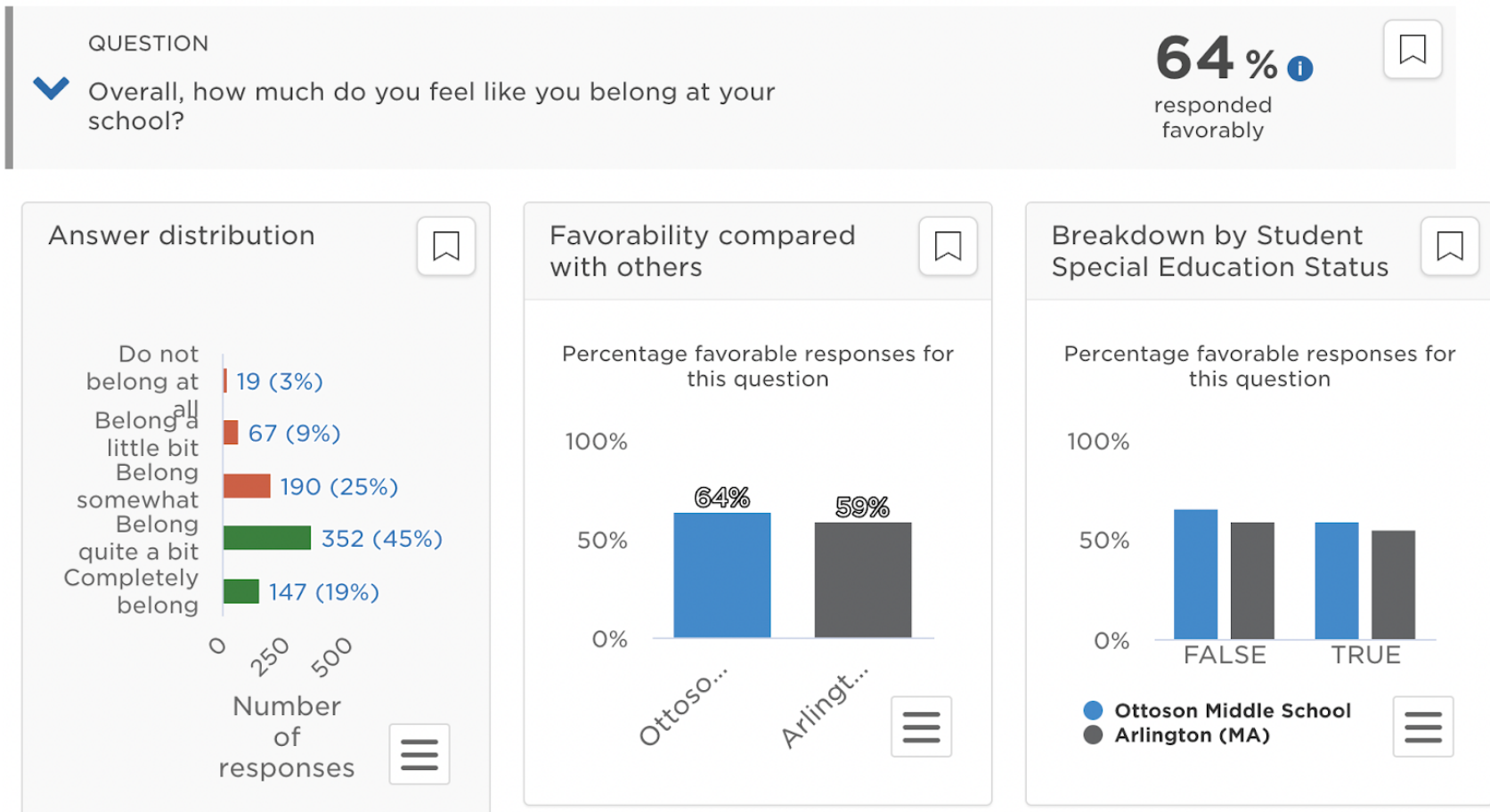
While we believe that having students involved in activities at the middle school increases a sense of belonging, we realize that many of our students do not feel a sense of belonging due to feeling excluded on the basis of their race, religion, and/or gender identity. To provide a space for students who are feeling excluded or lacking a sense of belonging because of their race, religion, or gender identity, we are trying to create as many safe spaces for our students as possible to connect with one another around identity.

In addition to extracurricular and opt-in activities, we want to establish a time and space within the school day that supports students in building relationships with their peers and teachers, as we believe that building relationships also supports a strong sense of belonging. To this end, we have created an Advisory block in which students meet once a month and engage in activities in small groups, led by their ASPIRE teachers.

### **Data**

In the fall of 2021, 782 students participated in the Panorama survey. When answering the question, “Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?” 64% percent of the students answered favorably. We are concerned that more than a third of our student population did not feel a strong sense of belonging at the Ottoson.

Additionally, based on this survey, we are worried about a sense of belonging for certain subgroups at Ottoson. For example, fewer than half of our Black students reported feeling a strong sense of belonging at school.



**Objective 2:** OMS will increase equity and access to math curriculum for all students by creating heterogeneous math classes in 7th grade.

### **Reasoning**

The Ottoson Middle School is looking to transition from homogenous math classes in seventh grade (Math 7 and Math 7A) to one heterogenous math class in 2024-2025. We understand this is a major change in curriculum, and we will need to plan this year and next year for this change.

We believe the two seventh grade math courses can be combined into one, since they cover essentially the same material. We are not looking to combine our eighth grade courses, Math 8 and Algebra 1, because the curricula are not similar enough to do so. Other local schools, such as Wellesley Middle School and the two Lexington Middle Schools, have a homogenous math class in seventh grade and heterogenous math classes in eighth grade.

Our goal with creating heterogeneous math groupings in 7th grade is to increase the rigor and performance of students who typically enroll in Math 7. We worry that because of our current homogenous groupings, students who typically enroll in Math 7 often believe they are in the “dumb class,” and that they cannot succeed in math. Further, certain subgroups are disproportionately represented in Math 7 - students identified as African-American or Black are more likely to enroll in Math 7 than Math 7A.

In order to provide support to those students who have traditionally been recommended for Math 7, we need to give our teachers professional development in differentiating instruction, assess how we use our math interventionist to support some of our students, and examine our grading practices. We have identified the following action steps pursuant to this goal:

1. SY 21-22: Plan collaboratively with Matt Coleman, Math Curriculum Director
2. SY 21-22: Revise curriculum mapping for 6th, 7th and 8th grades
3. SY 21-22 and SY 22-23: Conduct learning walks in math classrooms
4. SY 21-22: Look at repurposing Math Support
5. SY 22- 23: Set up community forums to engage the larger community in discussion about the 7th grade math curriculum
6. SY 22-23: Plan and create time for professional development for 7th grade math teachers on differentiated instruction
7. SY 22-23: Have all middle school staff do a professional book study on *Grading for Equity* by Joe Feldman
8. SY 23-24: Roll out heterogeneous math classes in all 7th grade teams

## Data

The vast majority of our 7th graders take either Math 7 or Math 7A. Students are recommended for their math class by their 6th grade teachers, though families have the option to override any math recommendation. The breakdown of our 7th grade population across these math classes is as follows:

	Math 7 - All Students	Math 7 - Black or African American Students	Math 7A - All Students	Math 7A - Black or African American Students
<b>2020 - 2021</b>	172 // 40%	26 // 81%	253 // 60%	6 // 19%
<b>2021 - 2022</b>	155 // 33%	19 // 70%	304 // 66%	8 // 30%
<b>2022 - 2023</b>	139//32%	12//63%	293//68%	7//37%

**Objective 3:** OMS will increase teachers' sense of belonging in and ownership of the school by creating an Instructional Leadership Team.

## Reasoning

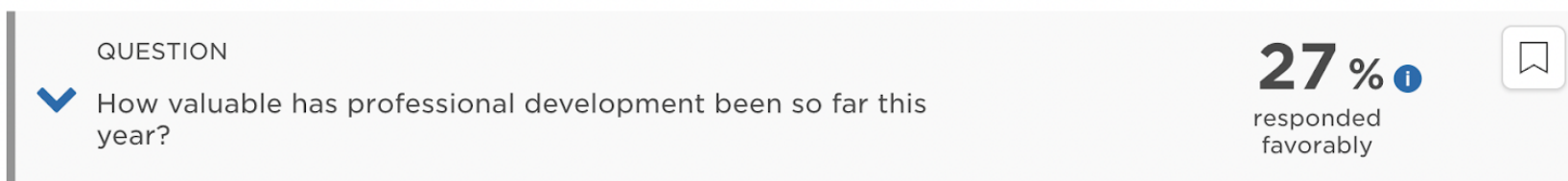
The Ottoson Middle School has created an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to increase teacher engagement with and ownership over instructional decisions at Ottoson. The Ottoson Administration believes that effective change is more likely to happen when the teachers are included in the decision-making process. Over the past few years, due to Covid, decisions have tended to be top down rather than collaborative. Some examples of change that have been made due to collaboration include the creation of the Civics program, the establishment of a Bridge program, and changes in protocols and procedures before the opening of school this year. These successes have all engaged teachers from the ground-level through final implementation, and we believe that an Instructional Leadership Team will allow us to continue to see success in other areas of instructional and school improvement. Based on the

Panorama surveys conducted over the last two years, teachers want a greater voice with professional development and academic decisions.

## Data

How did teachers & staff respond to each question?

Sorted by Survey order ▾ First to last ▾



## Strategic Goal #1: Increasing a Sense of Belonging

Alignment to District Strategic Goals
Arlington Public Schools District Strategic Goal Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li></ul>
Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps
Initiative 1: Increase extra-curricular opportunities for all students

Action Steps	Responsible Teams and People	Completed By
Recruit teachers to run extracurricular activities	OMS Leadership	September 2022 and ongoing
Increase advertising of club and activity opportunities to students	OMS Leadership and Staff	Ongoing
Initiative 2: To create an atmosphere of inclusion for all students.		
Action Steps	Responsible Teams and People	Completed By
Create a DEI Committee at OMS	OMS Leadership	December 2022
Create a school-wide response protocol to use in instances of hate speech and/or hateful graffiti	OMS Leadership DEI Committee	February 2023
Develop a restorative curriculum for students who commit acts of hate speech	OMS Leadership DEI Committee Students	March 2023
Establish affinity groups for students	OMS Leadership OMS Counseling DEI Committee Students	December 2022
Hold an annual Ottoson Day	OMS Leadership OMS Counseling DEI Committee	May 2023
Initiative 3: Establish an Advisory Committee and Practice at OMS		
Action Steps	Responsible Teams and People	Completed By
Create Advisory Committee	OMS Administration	September, 2022

Advisory Committee shares scope and sequence of Advisory blocks with faculty	Advisory Committee	October,. 2022
Advisory Committee meets monthly to create lesson for faculty to present to students	Advisory Committee	Monthly

Outcomes and Benchmarks	
Description:	Outcome:
Throughout the year, we will gather data on students' sense of belonging at Ottoson: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fall Panorama Survey</li> <li>- Spring Panorama Survey</li> <li>- Feedback survey on annual Ottoson Day</li> </ul>	We anticipate that at least 70% of our students will respond favorably when asked if they feel a sense of belonging at OMS.

Necessary Resources to Ensure Success
We will need to compensate staff for joining the DEI committee as well as providing project stipends for staff members starting new clubs.

## **Strategic Goal #2: Increasing Equity and Access to Math Curriculum for All Students**

Alignment to District Strategic Goals
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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: Transition from homogeneous math classes to a heterogeneous math class in 7th grade.

Action Steps	Responsible Teams and People	Completed By
SY 22-23: Plan collaboratively with Matt Coleman, Math Curriculum Director	OMS Leadership Matt Coleman	Ongoing
SY 22-23: Revise curriculum mapping for 6th, 7th and 8th grades	OMS Leadership Matt Coleman OMS Math Teachers	June 2023
SY 22-23: and SY 22-23: Conduct learning walks in math classrooms	OMS Leadership APS Administrators OMS Math Teachers	Ongoing
SY 22-23: Look at restructuring Math Support	OMS Leadership Matt Coleman OMS Math Teachers	June 2023
SY 23-24: Set up community forums to engage the larger community in discussion about the 7th grade math curriculum	OMS Leadership Matt Coleman	Summer 2023
SY 23-24: Plan and create time for	OMS Leadership	Summer 2023

professional development for 7th grade math teachers on differentiated instruction	Matt Coleman	
SY 23-24: Have all middle school staff read <i>Grading for Equity</i>	OMS Leadership OMS Staff	Summer 2023/Ongoing
SY 24-25: Pilot at least two heterogeneous math classes in all 7th grade teams	OMS Leadership Matt Coleman OMS Math Teachers	

Outcomes and Benchmarks	
Description	Outcome
Revise curriculum mapping for 6th, 7th and 8th grades	Updated math curriculum maps by June 2023
Restructuring the Math Support role	New job description for Math Support position by June 2023
New heterogeneous math classes in 7th grade	New heterogeneous math classes in 7th grade by the fall 2024

Necessary Resources to Ensure Success
The Ottoson we need to order 100 Grading for Equity books for next year. Cost is estimated at 2,500.00

### **Strategic Goal #3: Creating an Instructional Leadership Team**

Alignment to District Strategic Goals	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. 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.</li> </ol>	

Initiative 1: Establish the Instructional Leadership Team		
Action Steps	Responsible Teams and People	Completed By
Assemble an ILT for the 2022 August Leadership Workshop	OMS Leadership	August 2022
Plan and hold monthly ILT meetings	OMS ILT	Ongoing
Initiative 2: Examine Professional Working Relationships and Systems at Ottoson Middle School and Set School-Wide Instructional Goals for 2023-2024		
Action Steps	Responsible Teams and People	Completed By
Observation of LC Meetings	OMS ILT	March 2023
Learning Walks	OMS ILT OMS Staff	April 2023

Establish School-Wide Instructional Goals for 2023-2024	OMS ILT	June 2023
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Outcomes and Benchmarks	
Description	Outcome
Based on ILT meetings, observe, assess, and evaluate Learning Community meetings	Have more effective Learning Community meetings across the school, including a set of protocols and procedures in place (and in practice) by the start of the 2023-2024 school year
Based on ILT discussions and observations, as well as input from staff, we will identify an area of instructional practice in need of improvement	Articulate a Problem of Practice for instruction at Ottoson Middle School that will drive future School Improvement plans

Necessary Resources to Ensure Success
Funding for ILT participation