



# Arlington Public Schools

Education That Empowers

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## Dear Arlington Community,

While my name may be familiar to many of you who have worked with the Special Education Department or tuned into the School Committee meetings over the last nine years, I want to take this opportunity to (re)introduce myself to the larger community in my new role as the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. Having served as the Director of Special Education since 2014, I have come to know the District and community well, but perhaps with a very specific lens. From my first teaching position as a special education teacher for transition-age youth in a vocational training program, to my experience as a building-based administrator in the state's largest urban district working with students with emotional impairment, to my current role as a district-level leader, I have been driven by a strong commitment to access and equity, regardless of one's ability, race, socioeconomic background, gender, or other identities. I look forward to this expanded role, which now includes the Nursing and School Counseling & Social Emotional Learning departments, as an opportunity to work with even more staff and community members in our efforts to eliminate barriers and close opportunity gaps.

As we sit on the precipice of launching a five year strategic plan and other departmental reorganizations, it is an excellent time to assess where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going within these departments and as a District as a whole. The following entry plan overview is to highlight some of the actions I will be taking over the course of the school year to gather and synthesize information from stakeholders within and outside of the Arlington Public Schools.

## Goals

1. To meet staff members with whom I have not previously worked with directly in the School Counseling and Nursing Departments.
2. To work with the Directors of each of these departments to develop an understanding of what has worked well in those departments and what challenges they have experienced.
3. To gather insights into the opportunities the three departments have to work together under a larger umbrella of Student Services.
4. To deepen my understanding of the needs of the community members in regards to the delivery of services from each department.

## Ongoing Entry Activities

This entry plan includes activities that are within my existing scope of work: visiting school buildings and observing in classrooms, participating in "learning walks" with district and building-level administrators, attending individual monthly meetings with building leaders and special education coordinators, attending district-wide administrator meetings, analyzing and disaggregating student data, participating with community members in the strategic planning initiative, meeting weekly with Central Office Cabinet team, meeting weekly with the Special Education Coordinators, meeting monthly with the Director of School



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Counseling & Social Emotional Learning, continued work with the Joint Committee of the AEA and Special Education, and attending monthly SEPAC meetings.

These activities will help me to identify where the work of the departments overlaps of which I was not previously aware, the potential intersections between on-going work that may currently be siloed, and the opportunity to weave together collaborative working arrangements among departments to increase knowledge, skills, and understanding in order to address current unmet needs.

## **Additional Entry Activities**

In my new role, I will engage in additional activities that will help to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities: attendance at Fall 2022 Community Forums, attending AEA board meetings with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Human Resources Administrator, attending building Instructional Leadership Teams, increasing the frequency in which I am meeting with Interim Director of School Counseling & SEL to weekly, meeting monthly with the Director of Nursing, and attending department meetings with both Nursing and School Counseling. The District is also undergoing Cycle A of the DESE's Tiered Focus Monitoring system which will also provide valuable information on the policies, practices, and procedures of the Special Education Department.

In addition to my work activities outlined above, I will also conduct listening sessions and empathy interviews. These stakeholder sessions will be opportunities to hear from teachers, administrators, curriculum directors, school nurses, counselors, students, and community members about what has worked well in *each* of these departments, what challenges they have faced, and where the opportunities for collaboration within the Student Services department exist or can be created. I will also conduct individual interviews with building principals, the Director of Nursing, the Interim Director of School Counseling & Social Emotional Learning, and the Co-Chairs of the SEPAC.

These activities will help me to understand the values and goals that drive each department, as well as the needs and aspirations of our various stakeholders. These findings will help me surface themes and develop a more holistic understanding of the challenges facing the departments, while also identifying the assets that exist within our District. Together this information will inform an action plan which will connect to the goals and strategic initiatives the District will be undertaking.





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## Timeline

**Fall:** Ongoing activities identified above  
Tiered Focus Monitoring (TFM) on-site review & final report  
Strategic Planning Team  
Equity Forums  
AEA board meetings  
Establish regular meeting schedule with Directors  
Observations/school visits

**Winter:** Stakeholder listening sessions  
Individual interviews  
Attend Department meetings

**Spring:** Synthesis & Reporting to Community

## Listening sessions:

### Stakeholder groups:

Teachers  
Curriculum Directors  
Special Education Coordinators  
Assistant Principals/Deans  
School Nurses  
School Counselors PK-8  
School Counselors 9-12  
Students  
Community members

### Individual Interviews:

Principals  
Director of Nursing  
Director of School Counseling & SEL  
SEPAC Co-Chairs

I know that Arlington Public Schools shares my deep commitment to eliminating barriers and increasing access and opportunities to *all* students and we have made strides to address inequities within our own school community. With a new five-year strategic plan, we are at the cusp of taking this work even further and have an even greater impact. I am proud to be a member of this team and am excited to be a part of this continued growth and work ahead.