

Strategic Priority 3: 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.

Needs Assessment to Support Initiatives

Strategic Priority 3 is designed to address the following challenges identified by the larger strategic planning team and the Strategic Priority 3 Working Group:

- Currently Arlington Public Schools does not have a fully implemented proactive maintenance of facilities and infrastructure plan, which results in addressing issues in a reactive manner;
- The Arlington Public Schools have grown quickly while maintaining facilities that were designed for different educational programming and staffing levels than we currently have in place;
- Ongoing climate change and challenges combined with aging infrastructure require the Arlington Public Schools to redesign and maintain spaces with a focus on reducing emissions and increasing efficiency and use of clean energy, contributing to the Town's Net Zero goals.

Several reports and data sources have informed the development of initiatives in Priority Area 3; many of these have been conducted by outside vendors and are linked in this report. Other data come from interviews and focus groups with students and families, feedback received from stakeholders, and regular culture and climate surveys. A review of these data sources follows.

Observations and Feedback from Stakeholders:

In the past decade, Arlington has experienced a 24.5% increase in enrollment: 4,858 in 2012, compared to approximately 6,000 students today. This rapid increase in enrollment has been met with multiple successful campaigns and projects to expand the footprint of the Arlington Public Schools, including the opening of Gibbs in 2018 and the establishment of buffer zones to balance enrollment at the schools. While the community has expanded physical space and direct service to students to accommodate this rapid expansion, the same expansion has not been seen in services surrounding the buildings, even as demands on existing facilities have increased. For example, the pandemic brought new challenges to ensuring HVAC systems are operating appropriately; expanded access to before and after-school programming places additional wear on facilities for more hours of the day; and space constraints limit programming expansions for additional extracurriculars. Finally, additional service providers require workspace that buildings were not necessarily designed for during renovations.

In interviews, stakeholders told us that additional custodial support would allow for more proactive maintenance of facilities; that

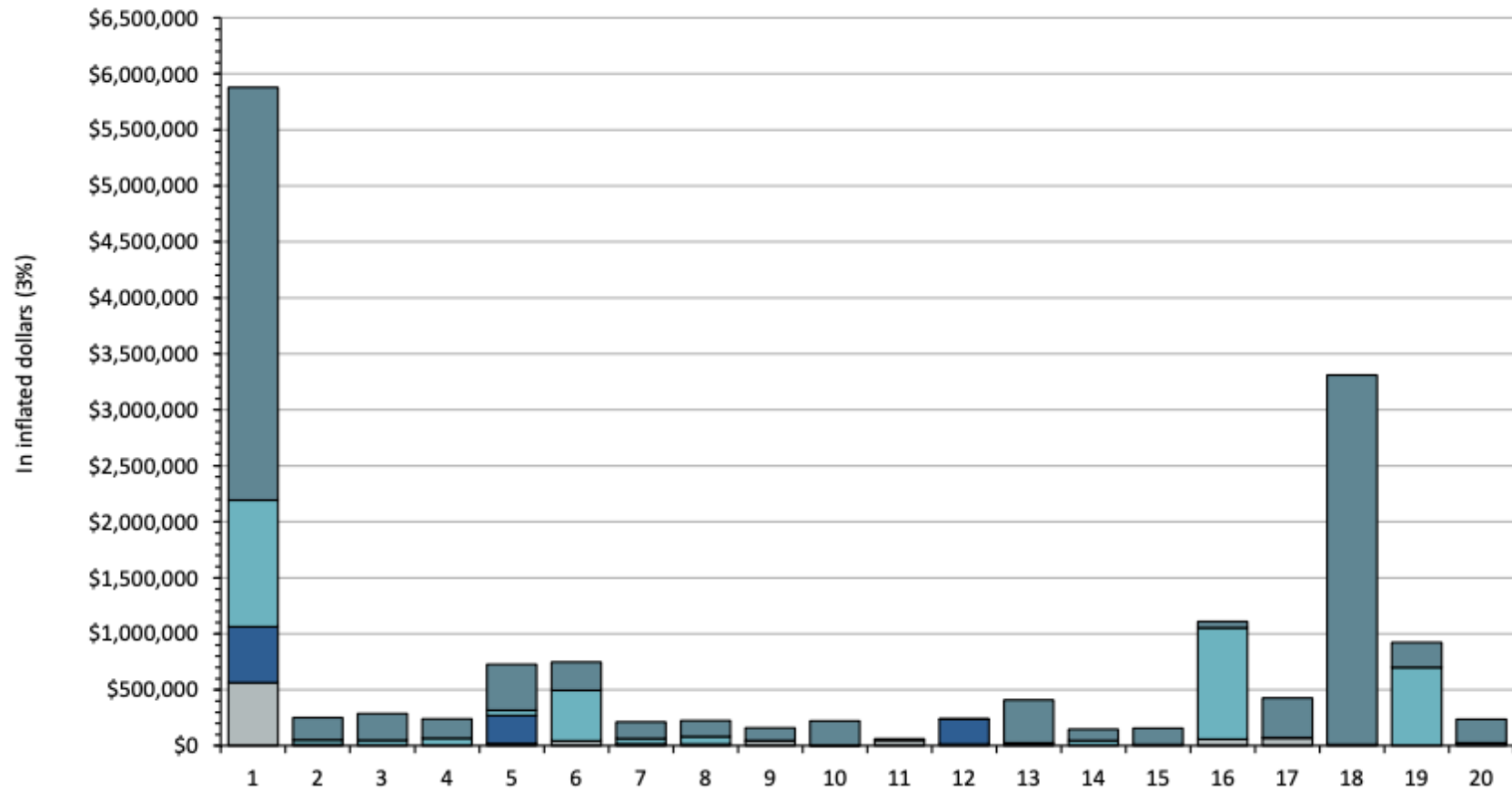
automations specialists would allow for more efficient use of energy, particularly at the new Arlington High School; and that Ottoson Middle School would need to be prioritized in future years. Students have expressed how different the educational experience is at Gibbs and the new AHS compared to the Ottoson. With the introduction of free-to-families meals during the pandemic, students and families have also expressed an interest in improving meal options at lunch and breakfast, prompting new partnerships between Food Services and our Science and Sustainability departments. These reflections have been gathered in empathy interviews with students and families, as well as from building leaders, who have expressed a desire for a more proactive approach to planning for building improvements and space for additional service providers.

Reports and Studies Conducted:

[Ottoson Middle School Capital Needs Assessment](#)

The Ottoson Middle School Capital Needs Assessment performed by On-Site Insight on April 19th, 2022, reviewed all of the spaces and systems at the 100+ year old school. The report indicated that the school is in fair condition but overall behind the times in providing a modern, learning environment. The report also indicated that the property has “substantial” capital needs which included replacing systems that were coming to the end of their useful life. Many of the immediate needs included replacing HVAC equipment replacement, replacing the pneumatic control system, building envelope repairs, architectural systems, boiler and mechanical room upgrades, and fixes to building mechanical and electrical systems.

The report outlines how to address the building related capital needs of the Ottoson Middle School over the course of 20 years. The year old report starts the plan in 2022 and ends in 2041. The report estimates that the total plan to address the capital needs of Ottoson will cost \$16,243,016. This estimate assumes a three percent rate of inflation and does not take into account higher than normal inflation that the town and neighboring communities have been experiencing. The estimate also does not provide an estimate on upgrades required to make Ottoson Middle School a modern, learning environment. The capital outlay is provided in the chart below:



[Bishop Elementary School - Building Envelope Investigation Report](#)

During the months of November and December of 2020, Russo Barr Associates (RBA) performed an investigation of the building envelope of the Bishop Elementary School. RBA submitted a report that documents their findings and includes photographic documentation and a construction cost estimate at the time the report was drafted. The report stated the following overall findings:

- The roofs are in fair condition on both the original and additions of the building. Many of the roof shingles have become broken, dislodged or missing in some locations. The waterproofing was determined in areas where the shingles were missing, damaged or dislodged, insufficient.
- The low sloped roofs that are approximately 24 years old are in poor condition. And that the classroom(s) below the flat roof has had the most leak history in the building and causes staining in ceilings throughout the building.
- The exterior masonry walls are in generally fair to good condition. However, there are numerous deficient conditions that they observed.
- Windows and doors are in poor condition and they are not energy efficient. At the time of the report the windows were 22 years of age and are beyond their useful life. The report stated that weather-stripping is worn, and perimeter sealants have failed.

The report estimated that the envelope needs of the Bishop School was going to cost a total of \$2,153,624 at the time the report was generated in 2020. The report suggested the following actions:

- Steep sloped slate roof is in fair to poor condition and should be removed for complete replacement. RBA recommended the installation of a new slate roof system. Along with the replacement of flashings, gutters and a new snow guard system.
- Repointing deteriorated brick masonry and the cleaning (power washing) to remove staining, algae and moss on the exterior of the building.
- Recommendation of water repellant application to all solid masonry walls of both original and addition buildings.
- Recommendation of replacing all windows with energy efficient windows along with replacing certain exterior doors.

[Hardy Elementary School - Building Enclosure Leakage Investigation](#) and [Cost Estimate](#)

The Hardy School has a history of water infiltration issues caused by the roof and also from various areas of the exterior wall and window areas of the original building. The original building was constructed in 1926 with a gymnasium wing that was added in the 1990's and 6 additional classrooms added in 2018. Maintenance has been performed on the roof, windows and exterior walls to try to reduce the leaks, but it has not been effective. In addition, the roof system and rooftop ventilation units are the end of their useful life.

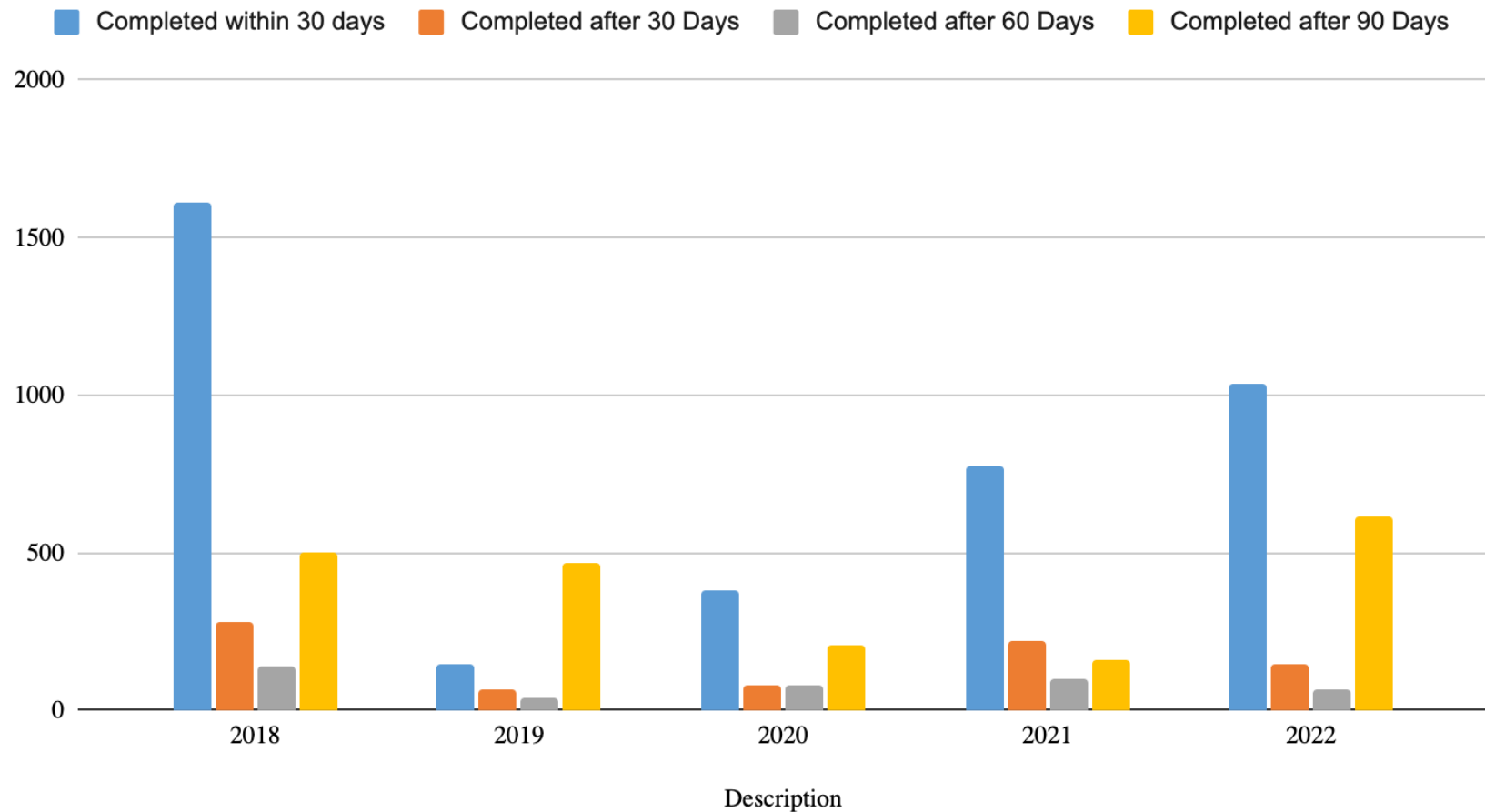
The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the source of the water infiltration at exterior walls and windows, and document the existing conditions of roofs, while making recommendations for appropriate window and wall repairs as well as roof replacement options. The [cost estimate](#) for this project including contingency was \$2,978,905 at the time of drafting this report.

Facilities Maintenance Tickets and Asset Management

Arlington Public Schools currently uses Brightly SchoolDude Maintenance Direct ticketing system to manage the district's preventative maintenance tasks in addition to building occupant issues. The overall tickets had gone down in 2019 and 2020 creating an anomaly

with low tickets completed due to the Director of Facilities ceasing the use of the ticketing system. After the departure of the director, the Chief Financial Officer in partnership with the next Interim Facilities Director, reimplemented the system. As buildings increase in age, there will be an increase in tickets submitted into the system for facility related issues by the building occupants. The increase will require the district to look at staffing levels to proactively address needs and adequately fund trade positions to close out tickets timely.

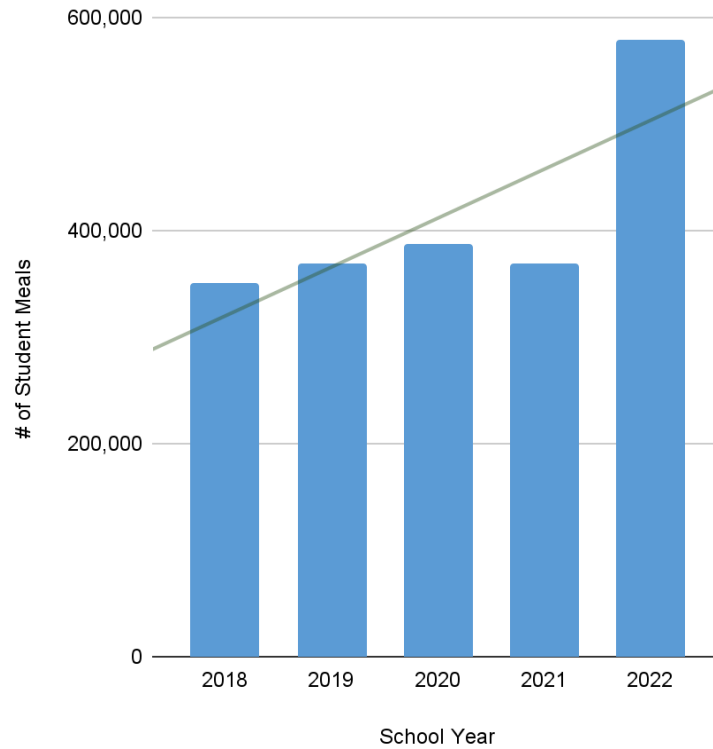
Completed Facilities Maintenance Tickets by Fiscal Year



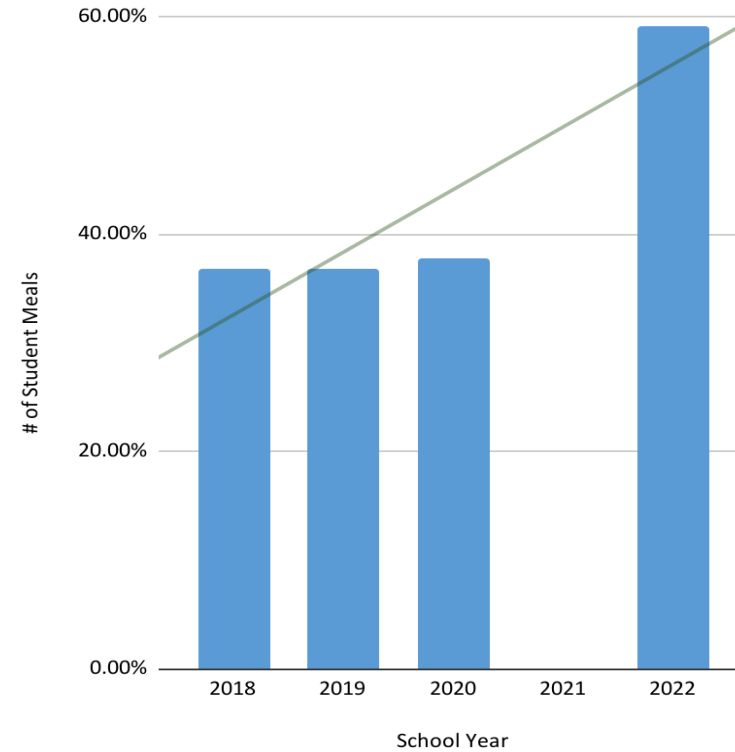
Food Service Needs

The Arlington Public Schools lunch program normally has two revenue funding sources to operate; subsidies from the National School Lunch Program and local receipts from school lunch fees. However, during the pandemic the federal government fully subsidized the National School Lunch Program where lunch and breakfast became available for free to all students regardless of income level. Although this was great and gave the district the ability to provide access to an affordable meal, it also provided an increased strain on our staff in order to meet production. Below you will find charts outlining both total meals served from fiscal years 2018-2022 and student participation from 2018-2022 (excluding 2021 because of the hybrid model implemented in result of the pandemic).

Student Meals Served by Fiscal Year



Student Participation by Fiscal Year



In addition to the complexities of meeting production with increased demand, the food service team had to do so while trying to fill vacancies to positions that are compensated at severely low wages.