ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education That Empowers

Five-Year Strategic Plan

2023-2028

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Message from Dr. Homan

Members of the Arlington Community,

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide the Arlington Public Schools with a mission and vision, strategic priorities, and a clear set of the most crucial initiatives for the district to implement over the next 5 years. This forward-looking work ensures that APS centers our students and community firmly. With this plan, we have a clear set of priorities and a blueprint for the outcomes we seek, to guide decisions about programming and resources moving forward. The community will be able to keep up with the plan as we report on progress over the next five years.

The mission, vision, and priorities were developed by a broad team of over 60 stakeholders, including many students, parents, teachers, administrators, elected officials, and others. In the fall of 2022, a subset of the group, maintaining strong parent representation in particular, met at least twice each month to define the twelve highest priority initiatives for the district to pursue. These ideas have been frequently and constantly tested in parent and teacher forums and student focus groups, with the feedback incorporated by the planning committee.

I am deeply grateful to the school committee for their leadership and trust and to all of the participants of our community forums who spent time reviewing our drafts and giving us quality feedback. Finally, thanks to the broader visioning team and the small initiative planning team who worked so tirelessly. Your contribution has been tremendous, and your dedication to problem solving, difficult discussions, and above all, to our students, has set us up for equity and excellence as we look to the future. I am grateful as always for your partnership and am excited to see the heights these ideas can enable our students and community to reach.

With optimism,
Elizabeth C. Homan, Ph.D.
Superintendent

"The mission, vision, and priorities were developed by a broad team of over 60 stakeholders, including many students, parents, teachers, administrators, partners, school committee members, and others."

Overview of the Strategic Plan

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide the Arlington Public Schools with a mission and vision statement, four strategic priorities, and a clear set of the twelve most crucial initiatives for the district to implement. Strategic plans are useful as statements of values, blueprints for planning, and prioritization guides for decision making. As a result of this Strategic Plan, by 2028, APS students and community members should enjoy the following tangible benefits:

- An instructional vision that provides a deeper baseline expectation of excellence across academic areas and teaching to support all students to excel.
- A strong sense of belonging and relationships between students, staff, & families.
- A Multi-Tiered System of Support that ensures that every student getting what they need is systematic, not haphazard or uneven.
- A strong, diverse faculty that feels valued, is well supported professionally, and is compensated accordingly.
- Modern, well maintained, and sustainable facilities, technology, food, & spaces.
- Improved expectations, systems, and resources for partnering with all families.

This plan represents the roadmap for APS to achieve these outcomes.

Arlington Public Schools Vision

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.

Arlington Public Schools Mission

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.

This plan was developed by APS students, parents, staff, community members, and the school committee. The school committee voted to adopt the plan on March 30, 2023.

Strategic Priorities

The four priorities were developed to focus the work of APS in service of the vision and mission. The community team that identified them used a broad range of resources including student, parent, and staff surveys and the district's recent equity audit to ground the development of the priorities.

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.

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.

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.

4 Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships

The Arlington Public Schools will partner collaboratively with families in meeting the educational needs of all students; facilitate consistent two-way communication; and provide timely, transparent, relevant, and accessible information to all stakeholders.

Five-Year Strategic Initiatives

Each of the twelve five-year strategic initiatives is aligned to one of the four priorities. Together, the initiatives provide a roadmap to get from our current conditions to the stated outcome of the priorities they enact.

Strategic Priority 1: Ensuring Equity and Excellence	Strategic Priority 2: Valuing All Staff
Initiative 1.1: Instructional Vision Initiative 1.2: Student Belonging and Adult Support Initiative 1. 3: Implementing MTSS	Initiative 2.1: Pathway Programs Initiative 2.2: Reimagined Professional Development Initiative 2.3: Compensation
Strategic Priority 3: Improving Infrastructure, Operations, and Sustainability	Strategic Priority 4: Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships
Initiative 3.1: Inclusive and Modern Schools Initiative 3.2: Healthy Lunch for All Initiative 3.3: Enhanced Facilities Stewardship	Initiative 4.1: Before and After Care Initiative 4.2: Welcome Center and Registration Initiative 4.3: Communication and Partnership

Defining Focal Groups

The strategic plan identifies several "Focal Groups" for whom the district will track and monitor gaps in experiences and outcomes related to academic achievement; attendance; student, family, and staff experience; and other metrics outlined in this plan.

Addressing these gaps will require significant shifts in mindset, practice, and content, both for our staff and for members of the Arlington community. If we establish a system that accounts for all needs, all students will benefit.

1 Students, and the families and teachers of students, who have IEPs

2 Students, families, and staff who identify as Black or Hispanic/Latino

3 Students, families, and staff who identify as non-binary, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, and asexual (LGBTQIA+)

4 Students who are multilingual learners (MLs) and their families, as well students and families who speak a language other than English as their primary language in the home

5 Students and families who are low-income

Strategic Priority 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.

Needs Assessment to Support Initiatives

The Arlington Public Schools have a legacy of providing an excellent education overall. With a strong track record of high achievement and high post-secondary attainment, it may appear to the outside observer that APS has little it needs to transform about teaching and learning. However, educational research over the past several decades has indicated a need for school districts to consider not only their performance in aggregate, but also those areas in which schools may intentionally or unintentionally restrict access for some groups of students. APS has been engaged in efforts to disaggregate data and to deeply understand its achievement and opportunity gaps over the past several years; a 5-year budget plan in 2019 identified "Addressing the Achievement Gap" as a primary focus for spending, and the district is practiced in analyzing data across demographic populations in order to determine where the greatest gaps exist. However, prior to the development of this plan, the district has not developed strategic long-term actions to address disparities in students', families', and teachers' experiences, particularly for those stakeholders who have been traditionally marginalized by the district and in our greater society.

For the purposes of this plan, the strategic planning committee is identifying several "Focal Groups" for the district to track and monitor for gaps, not only in achievement but also in areas of attendance; student, family, and staff experience; and other metrics outlined in this plan. For the purposes of Priority Area 1, those metrics will be primarily student-facing, and actions will focus on addressing gaps in the student experience that are persistent and challenging to address. APS acknowledges that addressing these gaps will require significant shifts in mindset, practice, and content, both for our staff and for members of the Arlington community. We recognize that to address the needs of ALL, we must focus on the needs of those students for whom the system has not historically been designed. We recognize that the adjustments we will make to meet the needs of some of our students are truly meant to enhance the learning experiences of ALL of our students; In the initiatives that follow, we encourage the community to notice our commitment to improving achievement for ALL students though the elimination of barriers and resulting achievement gaps for our focal groups.[1]

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[1]Blackwell (2017). "The Curb Cut Effect" https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_curb_cut_effect

APS will focus on closing experience, opportunity, and achievement gaps for the following 5 focal groups of stakeholders in our work over the next five years:
1. Students, and the families and teachers of students, who **have IEPs;**
2. Students, families, and staff who identify as **Black or Hispanic/Latino;**
3. Students, families, and staff who identify as **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) or who identify as non-binary;**
4. Students who are **multilingual learners (MLs)** and their families, as well students and families who **speak a language other than English as their primary language in the home**; and
5. Students and families who **are low-income.**

These five groups provide the most specific and therefore potentially impactful opportunities for improvement and are where we notice the greatest gaps in achievement and opportunity for APS students across levels, content areas, and experiences in our schools.

Not all data are available for all focal groups in all data sets. For example, not all students who identify as LGBTQIA+ or non-binary are currently identified in our system or reported to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and therefore academic/achievement data are not readily available for this focal group; however, changes at the state and local levels will make these data available in the coming years. Data for this focal group is available in our experiential outcomes (culture and climate surveys). As another example, some data linked to race and ethnicity may be suppressed in some years due to the number of students in a particular focal group. Through the duration of this plan's implementation, we will continue to refine and improve data collection and reporting practices, with explicit attention paid to these focal groups.

Improving the Experiences and Academic Outcomes of Focal Groups and ALL Students

An analysis of achievement for students with IEPs, students who identify as BIPOC, students who are multilingual learners, and students from low-income households reveal significant differences between the experiences and achievement of these students and their peers in the Arlington Public Schools. These gaps persist not only across academic outcomes, but also across students' self-reported experiences in our schools and the reports of focal student groups' parents and teachers.

It is important to explain what we mean when we talk about "closing an achievement gap." An action-oriented approach to closing achievement gaps requires identifying the *opportunity gaps* that exist within the system that hinder a student's access to the kinds of experiences that are more accessible to their peers.

Closing achievement gaps requires opening up more engagement, enrichment, and academic opportunities and experiences for ALL students. Importantly, closing achievement gaps does not include lowering standards or limiting opportunities for any students.

If APS sees a decline in any group of students' performance, we have not met our mission to provide for all students. Scholars in the field of educational equity emphasize that prioritizing the needs of a traditionally marginalized group of students has the potential to facilitate gains for ALL groups of

students when executed effectively.

Districts who have made gains for all students while closing achievement gaps have done so by articulating a clear vision for their work, ensuring all stakeholders have an opportunity to understand and make meaning of that vision. They have done so by implementing actions aligned with their vision strategically over multiple years. In places where this work is successful, there is a focus *not only* on content, *but also* on pedagogy and practice throughout the school system, from the classroom to the superintendent's office.[2] The gap analyses that follow provide a baseline for the work of Strategic Priority 1. They focus primarily on academic achievement gaps as measured by MCAS, but also include analysis of gaps in student experience; these are the quantitative district-level data that will allow us to monitor progress on this plan. Additionally, the district will monitor student growth percentiles; a faster rate of growth for focal groups with average-high growth for peers will result in a closing of achievement gaps without compromising the learning of any students. These metrics will also be used at the school level on annual School Improvement Plans. It is important to note that action steps for each initiative include triangulating these quantitative data with equally important qualitative data, such as observational data from walkthroughs and/or interview and focus group data gathered from stakeholders.

APS has made a concerted effort to include qualitative assessments alongside quantitative data over the past two years. As examples, a comprehensive equity audit conducted by Longview Education in 2021 engaged stakeholders in over 150 empathy interviews over several months. The equity audit report can be found here. The strategic planning team used this report's recommendations as an initial roadmap to designing the initiatives you will find across all Priority Areas in this plan. The report contains concrete recommendations directly from stakeholders, several of whom come from the focal groups identified above. Furthermore, upon becoming Superintendent, Dr. Homan engaged stakeholders in several listening sessions and developed an Entry Plan Report that triangulated several qualitative and quantitative data sources. In reporting out on the implementation of this plan, APS will strive to include multiple types of data, prioritizing the stories of students and families as important to the work ahead.
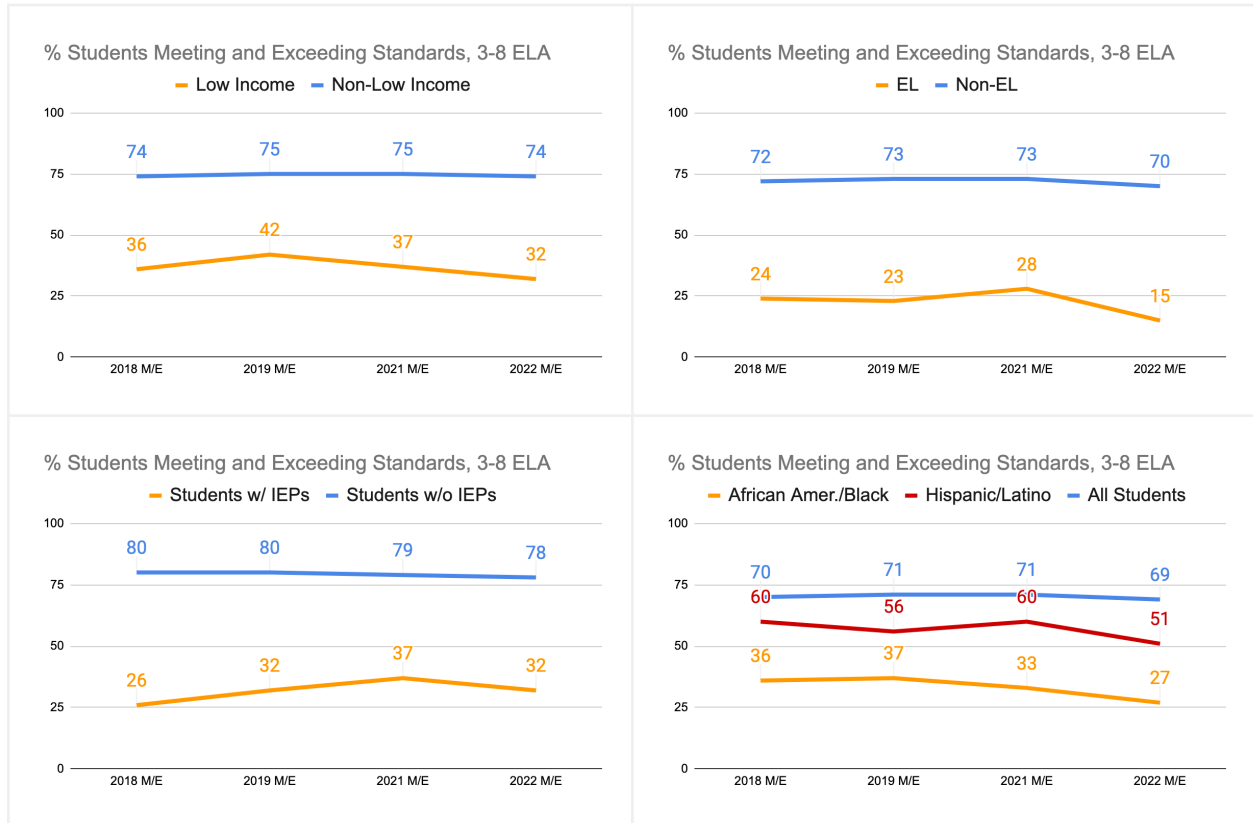
The initiatives that follow focus on identifying an instructional vision for APS (1.1), ensuring all students' identities are represented, and that their identities are celebrated as assets to our learning communities (1.2), and developing systems and structures that support early intervention and providing each student with the support they need to thrive (1.3). This will require APS stakeholders to grapple with sometimes challenging and uncomfortable truths about who our system has historically served and who it has historically marginalized. We know the Arlington community is ready for this work, and so are our students. In the words of one APS student:

"Teachers should be addressing big things like this because, it's not only just in Arlington, that racism [is] happening around. It's worldwide. So it's good for teachers to address it to kids, so they know why."
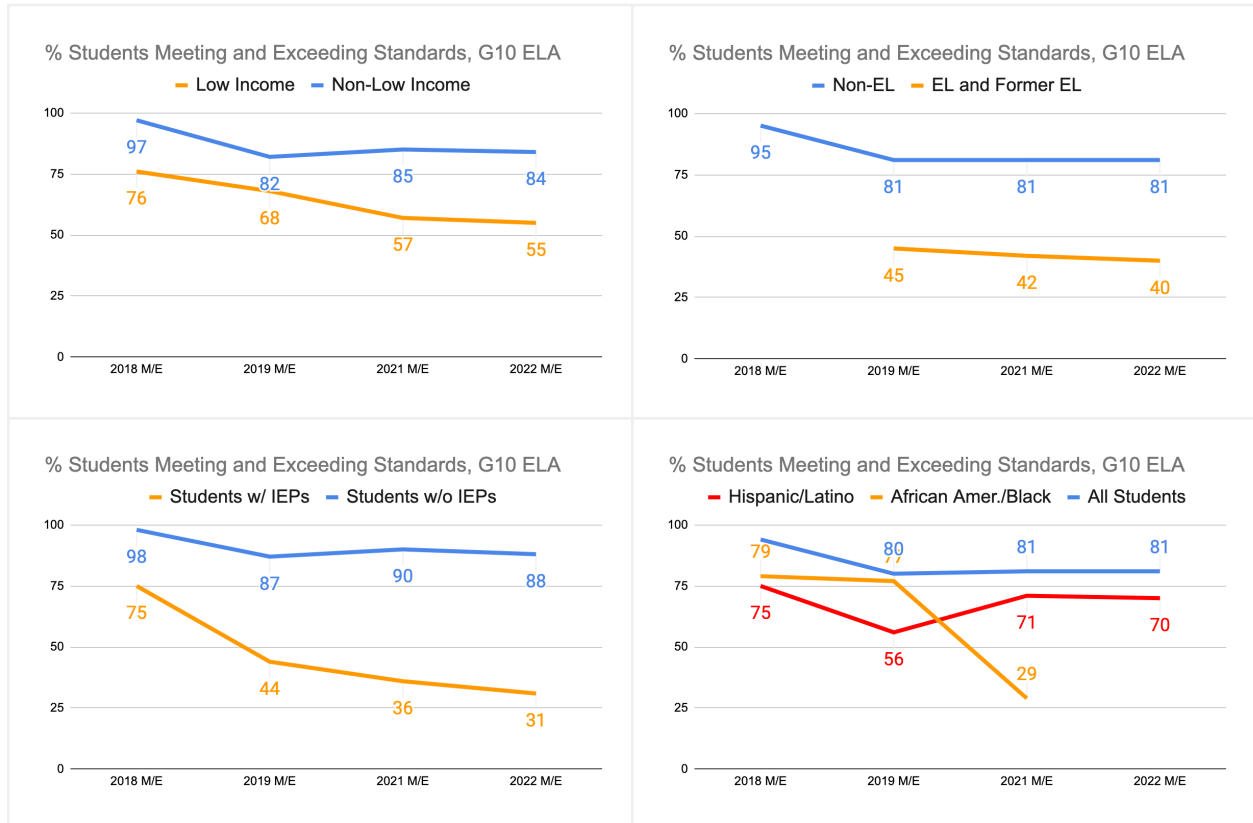
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[2] Mehta, J. and Fine, S. (2019). *In Search of Deeper Learning.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Arlington Public Schools | Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Achievement Gap Analysis: Grades 3-8 ELA for Four Focal Groups

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 ELA

— Low Income — Non-Low Income

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-Low Income	74	75	75	74
Low Income	36	42	37	32

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 ELA

— EL — Non-EL

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-EL	72	73	73	70
EL	24	23	28	15

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 ELA

— Students w/ IEPs — Students w/o IEPs

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Students w/o IEPs	80	80	79	78
Students w/ IEPs	26	32	37	32

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 ELA

— African Amer./Black — Hispanic/Latino — All Students

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
All Students	70	71	71	69
Hispanic/Latino	60	56	60	51
African Amer./Black	36	37	33	27

Achievement Gap Analysis: Grade 10 ELA for Four Focal Groups

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 ELA
— Low Income — Non-Low Income

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-Low Income	97	82	85	84
Low Income	76	68	57	55

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 ELA
— Non-EL — EL and Former EL

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-EL	95	81	81	81
EL and Former EL		45	42	40

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 ELA
— Students w/ IEPs — Students w/o IEPs

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Students w/o IEPs	98	87	90	88
Students w/ IEPs	75	44	36	31

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 ELA
— Hispanic/Latino — African Amer./Black — All Students

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
African Amer./Black	79	77	29	
All Students		80	81	81
Hispanic/Latino	75	56	71	70

Achievement Gap Analysis: Grades 3-8 Math for Four Focal Groups

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 Math
— Students w/ IEPs — Students w/o IEPs

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Students w/o IEPs	75	77	64	77
Students w/ IEPs	27	31	32	31

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 Math
— EL — Non-EL

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-EL	68	70	61	69
EL	28	36	29	26

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 Math
— Low Income — Non-Low Income

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-Low Income	71	72	62	73
Low Income	29	37	21	30

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, 3-8 Math
— Hispanic/Latino — African Amer./Black — All Students

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
All Students	66	69	59	68
Hispanic/Latino	50	49	45	47
African Amer./Black	28	25	9	25

Achievement Gap Analysis: Grade 10 Math for Four Focal Groups

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 Math

— Low Income — Non-Low Income

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 Math

— Non-EL — EL and Former EL

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 Math

— Students w/ Disabilities — Non-Disabled

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G10 Math

— Hispanic/Latino — African Amer./Black — All Students

Achievement Gap Analysis: Grade 5 Science for Four Focal Groups

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G5 Science

— Low Income — Non-Low Income

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-Low Income	67	72	77	75
Low Income	28	33	21	27

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G5 Science

— EL — Non-EL

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-EL	66	69	73	71
EL	17	26	32	13

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G5 Science

— Has an IEP — No IEP

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
No IEP	69	74	79	77
Has an IEP	38	36	43	42

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G5 Science

— Hispanic/Latino — African Amer./Black — All Students

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
All Students	63	67	71	69
Hispanic/Latino	47	56	42	61
African Amer./Black	28	22	11	38

Achievement Gap Analysis: Grade 9 Science (Physics) for Four Focal Groups

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G9 Science

— Low Income   — Non-Low Income

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-Low Income			83	69
Low Income	53	72	40	23

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G9 Science

— Non-EL   — EL and Former EL

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Non-EL	85		79	64
EL and Former EL	64	71	56	33

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G9 Science

— Students w/ IEPs   — Students w/o IEPs

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
Students w/o IEPs			84	69
Students w/ IEPs	56	64	38	25

% Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards, G9 Science

— Hispanic/Latino   — African Amer./Black   — All Students

	2018 M/E	2019 M/E	2021 M/E	2022 M/E
All Students	85		79	64
Hispanic/Latino	67	82	75	43
African Amer./Black	38	71		

Experiential Gap Analysis: Fall 2022, Grades 3-5 and 6-12, Gender Identity

Grades 3-5 Student Experience: Gender…

Legend: I am a girl · I am a boy · Prefer to self-describe

Values shown: 34, 32, 30 (Cultural…); 73, 59 (Rigorou…); 67, 62, 45 (School…); 71, 66 (School…); 69, 40 (Sense o…); 68, 64, 56 (Teacher…)

Grades 6-12 Student Experience: Gender Identity

Legend: Female · Male · Prefer to self-describe

Values shown: 64, 61, 60 (Cultural Aware…); 71, 68, 65 (Rigorous Expe…); 59, 47 (School Climate); 80, 76, 70 (School Safety); 50, 28 (Sense of Belon…); 67, 61 (Teacher-Stude…)

Bar chart values:
- Male: 13%, 15%
- Female: 32%, 29%
- Genderqueer: 68%, 52%

Legend: ■ Arlington HS ■ Arlington MS

2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Percent of Arlington middle and high school students who reported that their mental health was not good most of the time or always in the past 30 days

Experiential Gap Analysis: Fall 2022, Grades 3-5 and 6-12, Students with IEPs and Multilingual Learners

Grades 3-5 Student Experience: Students w/IEPs

— No IEP — Has IEP

	Cultural Awareness and Action	Rigorous Expectations	School Climate	School Safety	Sense of Belonging	Teacher-Student Relationships
No IEP	33	73	64	72	68	66
Has IEP	32	69	60	65	66	64

Grades 6-12 Student Experience: Students with IEPs

— No IEP — Has IEP

	Cultural Aware…	Rigorous Exp…	School Climate	School Safety	Sense of Belo…	Teacher-Stude…
No IEP	62	70	59	78	48	66
Has IEP	58	66	54	76	48	69

Grades 3-5 Student Experience: Multilingual Learners

— Not ML — ML

	Cultural…	Rigorou…	School…	School…	Sense…	Teacher…
Not ML	33	73	63	71	67	65
ML	38	66	67	65	77	73

Grades 6-12 Student Experience: Multilingual Learners

— Not ML — ML

	Cultural…	Rigorou…	School…	School…	Sense o…	Teacher…
Not ML	62	69	58		48	66
ML	60	60	65	74	53	61

Experiential Gap Analysis: Fall 2022, Grades 3-5 and 6-12, Race/Ethnicity

Grades 3-5 Student Experience: Race

— Black or African American — Hispanic/Latino — All respondents

	Cultural…	Rigorou…	School Cl…	School S…	Sense of…	Teacher-…
All respondents	33	72	64	71	68	66
Black or African American		64	59	60	58	66
Hispanic/Latino	37	63	54	53	52	57

Grades 6-12 Student Experience: Race

— All respondents — Black or African American — Yes

	Cultural Aware…	Rigorous Expe…	School Climate	School Safety	Sense of Belon…	Teacher-Stude…
All respondents	62	69	58	77	48	66
Black or African American	62	65	55	74	45	63
Yes	46	59	43	63	39	63

Initiative 1.1 Instructional Vision and Coherence

Priority 1	Ensuring Equity and Excellence	Short Initiative:	All students must have equity of access to rigorous and comprehensive content implemented through inclusive and engaging instructional practices. Deeper Learning concepts and practices will serve as the anchor for the APS instructional vision.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	We will use Deeper Learning (DL) as an organizing framework for pedagogical focus and instructional coherence in APS.[3] DL overlaps with several other key concepts, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), experiential and project-based learning, competency-based assessment, and culturally responsive teaching.[4] Research on Deeper Learning emphasizes the prioritization of student agency and voice in the educational setting as a way of promoting rigor and access to higher-level learning and coursework, as students focus on mastery, identity, and creativity as means for learning.[5] With a coherent instructional vision that includes a strong focus on pedagogy, APS faculty will be able to collaborate on teaching with shared vocabulary and resources, with the aim of enhancing access to advanced coursework (including APs at AHS) for all students. An

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[3] APS is participating in the Deeper Learning Dozen (DLD) project, which provides significant resources on understanding Deeper Learning as a concept. Many resources are available here. One essential working definition that the DLD refers to is outlined in this document from the Hewlett Foundation. A transcript of this conversation from the Harvard EdCast podcast provides a summary from scholars Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine who have led the discussion on Deeper Learning.

[4] One framework for thinking about Deeper Learning is articulated by Jobs for the Future here, which shows how several elements comprise the unified student experience. Also, see: Thomas S. Dee and Emily K. Penner, "The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence From an Ethnic Studies Curriculum," American Educational Research Journal 54, no. 1 (February 1, 2017): 127–66, https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216677002.

[5] Mehta and Fine (2015): *The Why, What, Where, and How of Deeper Learning in American Secondary Schools. Also: Yong Zhao, World Class Learners: Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students (Corwin Press, 2012); Bill Lucas and Ellen Spencer, Teaching Creative Thinking: Developing Learners Who Generate Ideas and Can Think Critically (Williston, VT: Crown House Publishing, 2017).*

instructional vision is one of the most important companions to a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), as is described in Initiative 3. A strong instructional vision is a necessary driver in evaluating and selecting curricula and instructional materials for all classrooms.

Responsible Person	Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

If APS is to ensure equity and excellence, an essential, foundational component will be a strong instructional vision. Any instructional vision must be student-centered, emphasizing student agency, evidence-based thinking and argument, peer collaboration, and comprehensive teacher feedback. It must facilitate universal design of instruction that ensures all students have suitable opportunities to wrestle deeply with academic questions in lessons that don't leave them unproductively frustrated. Deeper Learning also prioritizes the development of relationships in the academic setting, which contributes to students' confidence to take on risks and challenges in their learning, which is directly aligned with the APS vision to create educational environments that support a sense of belonging, academic growth, and joyful learning experiences. Such an approach also supports academic excellence by allowing for teachers to set higher academic standards and design instruction with scaffolds embedded for students to reach those standards.

There are myriad different instructional models available that are research- and evidence-based, each of which have great promise. While APS must codify a shared vision, and while we will use Deeper Learning as a framework, we recognize that other frameworks are useful and have important lessons to teach us. We will pay attention to areas where we feel Deeper Learning doesn't meet our needs and supplement those areas. An example might be with specifics around culturally-responsive practice.

A strong and cohesive instructional vision will be aligned with the APS Vision and Mission. It will help guide curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and professional learning decisions. With a strong APS instructional vision, instructional leadership teams will be able to work to guide their schools in developing focus areas that best suit their community's needs.

Deeper Learning explicitly gives us content and techniques to move forward, and APS is actively involved in a pilot program with teachers and administrators already building knowledge of the framework.[6] Deeper Learning pedagogical techniques include the following instructional strategies, for example:

    a. Posing open-ended questions that illuminate and deepen student understanding;

    b. Allowing students to demonstrate understanding and show mastery of standards in multiple ways;

    c. Focusing on broad and conceptual, analogical ("higher-order") thinking and problem-solving;

    d. Supporting students in their constructive and creative endeavors;

    e. Utilizing appropriate and relevant assessment tools to determine the efficacy of instructional practices and use competency-based assessments to engage students in the application of academic concepts;

    f. Weaving student identities into curricula so students see themselves in the curriculum and can contextualize learning while building relationships with their diverse peers and understanding diverse perspectives;

    g. Prioritizing lessons that require completing complex tasks over rote work; and

    h. Providing consistent opportunities for diverse means of expression (e.g., writing, speaking, artistic expression, computer-supported tools).

To be effective, this initiative would require a paced rollout: Year 1 would be used to define the vision, involving teachers in the exploration of Deeper Learning methods and concepts. Professional development design and the progressive rollout of key concepts would follow.

While this is an instructionally focused approach, it does not discount the importance of curriculum materials. APS would use the vision as a core resource in a regular curriculum review cycle, starting with the selection of a core literacy resource in 2023 and continuing with the evaluation of curricula at the secondary level to align with Deeper Learning practices and principles. Any effective instruction must be based on a robust, rigorous, and culturally-responsive curriculum for all students.

In addition, an instructional vision informs assessment by setting the conditions for ongoing formative assessments to provide students with meaningful and multiple ways to demonstrate their mastery of the material. A specific component for the vision to address would be the inclusion of frequent writing and other expressive tasks to demonstrate mastery, a particular need identified through data analysis and by the community in interviews and focus groups.

Another component of this initiative includes an examination of structures that have the potential to impede Deeper Learning, academic excellence for all, or which could otherwise stand in the way of achieving the goals of this initiative. Ongoing interrogation of APS tracking

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[6] Mehta and Fine (2015): The Why, What, Where, and How of Deeper Learning in American Secondary Schools.

and leveling practices will inform our efforts to interrogate structures that research has shown to be detrimental to historically marginalized groups of students. This initiative includes action steps designed and specifically intended to improve access to higher-order thinking and learning, while improving teachers' capacity to hold all students to a high standard, as required by the APS Mission Statement.

Finally, part of implementing a strong instructional vision is combining it with a well-organized instructional infrastructure. This includes the elements that aid in continuous learning and skillful implementation of the vision. Effective instructional leadership teams (ILTs), instructional coaching, mentorship, peer observation tools, teacher walkthroughs, and conversations about teaching are all essential elements that must be built into collaboration structures and professional development. Those who observe and evaluate teachers must be trained in the vision as well.

The result of this concerted work should be an improvement in the student learning experience, with assessments indicating mastery. This should also add to a sense of teacher community across the district, as teachers are able to collaborate around the vision.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Develop and Implement Instructional Vision Aligned with Deeper Learning	Establish Administrator Deeper Learning Team (DLT) to study and build shared definition of Deeper Learning Practices Expand ILT stipends	Incorporate teachers into district DLT and conversations about Deeper Learning into school-based ILT inquiries.	ILTs focus on, share, and implement Deeper Learning practices to transform instruction across schools	Continued implementation of APS instructional vision	
	Continued DLD Participation	Expand Deeper Learning Dozen Team to include community members and teachers, continue participation, host a convening			
Financial Impact	$70,000	$70,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000
To Fund	Deeper Learning participation, professional development for administration and for staff, Instructional Leadership Teams at all schools and their activities with staff, instructional coaching support for school and district leadership starting in 2025 (was funded with ESSER in 2022-24), and ILT stipend increases				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Identify and Implement Curricula aligned to Deeper Learning Instructional Vision	Establish curriculum review cycle and identify which curricula will be reviewed when	Implement curriculum review cycle			
	**Identify new curriculum resource for K-5 ELA and begin implementation for Grades 4 and 5	Implementation of new ELA curriculum resource, Grades 2 and 3	Implementation of new ELA curriculum resource, Grades K and 1	Ongoing Implementation **Implementation timeline may be revised based on ongoing planning for ELA curriculum implementation**	
Financial Impact	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$200,000	$200,000
To Fund	Initial purchase of texts and consumable materials, ongoing refresh of materials, ongoing pay and training for teachers and leaders to review and refresh curriculum				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Analyze and transform assessment and data collection practices	Establish focal groups for closing achievement gaps and identify data sets, both qualitative and quantitative, for monitoring gaps in both summative and formative assessments	Implement use of focal group data analysis and data systems consistently in School Improvement Plans and on school-based ILTs	Establish and implement practices within teacher and administrator meetings and professional development time for using focal group data to reflect on and transform Tier 1 instructional practices, aligned with our vision.		
	Study competency-based assessment practices and hold community forums on grading practices in APS	Pilot experiential, project-based, and competency-based assessments in targeted areas of the district, continue community engagement		Expand promising competency-based assessment practices and professional learning based on student, staff, and community feedback, continue community engagement	
Financial Impact	$150,000	$150,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000
To Fund	Research, Data, and Assessment Coordinator (Year 1); professional development for educators, data platforms and dashboards to aid in reporting and analysis, supplies for community forums				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Interrogate Tracking and Leveling Practices Across APS	Complete and assess pilot of heterogeneous ELA in 9th grade at AHS: Year 2 of Pilot program	Based on findings of the pilot, propose appropriate adjustments to leveling practices at AHS in conversation with the AHS community, conduct professional learning and design staffing models to take aligned action.			
	Begin community conversations surrounding the impact of skipping and leveling practices in the middle grades	TBD Based on Community Recommendations			
Financial Impact	$20,000	$100,000 up to $400,000 (Years 2-5)			
To Fund	Continuation of HGI 9th grade pilot: professional development, common planning, and staffing	Up to $50,000 may accommodate community conversations: supplies, stipends for participating educators, space to meet Depending on outcome of action steps, potential funds would be required to: take action based on the results of the evaluation, provide targeted professional development to teachers for implementation, adjust schedules to allow for common planning time (high school), adjust staffing models to accommodate smaller class sizes			

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked, whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	For the academic achievement of students, specifically students with IEPs, students of color, multilingual learners (MLs), and students from low-income households, close the gap relative to their peers over 5 years, as measured by assessed subjects on state assessments such as MCAS and local assessments such as common curriculum assessments, benchmark assessments, or performance tasks. These groups are referred to as focal groups. The Arlington Public Schools' true goal is to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps for all groups of students who experience them. We acknowledge that this takes time and considerable resources, and is impacted by factors both within and outside the control of the public school system. These metrics reflect our commitment to transforming the Arlington Public Schools into a system that eliminates opportunity gaps, thereby allowing all students to thrive, while pacing benchmarks to reflect ambitious and attainable progress .				
Annual Benchmark	Close gaps for focal groups compared to peers by 3 percentage points annually across subject areas. Close gaps for for focal groups compared to peers by 4 percentage points annually for focus disciplinary areas: • ELA Grades 3-5 and Grade 10, • Math Grades 6-8 and Grade 10, • Science Grade 8 Maintain Student Growth Percentiles for focal groups and peers above 50% each year, with focal groups growing at a faster rate than peers to accelerate achievement.				

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 3	Administrators, teachers, and instructional staff are trained (years 2-3) in the instructional vision and report comfort and understanding of the vision (years 3-5), as measured by targeted questions on annual climate and culture surveys.				
Annual Benchmark	50%	75%	95%	95%	95%
Outcome Metric 4	Systematic observations at each school show execution of key components of the instructional vision across classrooms, using a specific, consistent instrument that reflects the vision.				
Annual Benchmark	Tools and procedures will be established.	TBD: Increase in implementation of instructional strategies aligned with district vision, as measured and tracked by established observation tools.			

Initiative 1.2 Student Belonging and Adult Support

Priority 1	Ensuring Equity and Excellence	Short Initiative:	All students have a supportive relationship with at least one adult at school, are engaged in their learning, and feel that they belong in the school community.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	To ensure that all students feel a deep sense of belonging, APS will prioritize ensuring that school-building cultures are centered on the premise that the success and belonging of all children are everyone's responsibility. While APS has a dedicated staff, there is an opportunity to be more systematic about ensuring that all students are seen and supported through specific adult relationships and engagement activities.

Responsible Department	Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice (DEIBJ)

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Just as we focus on instruction and student support, a crucial element of our work is sustaining a welcoming community so that students feel a strong sense of belonging, which facilitates inclusion and the systems and structures required to sustain it (equity). Not all students feel known in school, and this is particularly the case for students in the focal groups identified in the Needs Assessment for Priority Area 1, as evidenced on Panorama surveys, in data collected for the APS Equity Audit (2022), and in focus groups and interviews.[7]

APS will develop practices that allow us to create a coherent and consistent understanding of what "equity and inclusion" mean and look like in our schools. Because this area is focused on student belonging, all of these ideas are tentative, with an expectation that direct engagement with targeted focal groups of students will significantly shape adult understanding of needs and the solutions to create learning environments that best meet those needs. These practices will be aligned with our instructional vision (1.1) and will inform the development of our MTSS (1.3). Following are initial ideas about some of the work required to facilitate this work:

Establishing strong relationships with adults:
- Review and evaluate the structure, content, and impact of middle and high school advisory groups on students' sense of belonging.
- Facilitate connections between students and adults so that every student is connected to an adult, feels known, and has regular access to their adult advocate. (e.g., "primary person" model)
- As children transition through grades and schools, create practices to support the continuity of relationships and connection.
- Build the capacity of adults to identify and challenge their own biases, mindsets, and assumptions individually and collectively, in order to maintain high expectations for all students, in collaboration with Departments of DEIBJ and Teaching and Learning and in alignment with Initiative 2.2.
- Study and deploy strategies that rely less on high-level aggregate data and more on connecting with students to understand the

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[7] Ensuring a strong sense of belonging for students is both an expression of our community's values and necessary for student academic success. In her foundational work *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2000), scholar Geneva Gay summarizes a significant body of scholarly research which demonstrates that "providing spaces and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected, valued, seen, and heard" is an essential component of the school experience for all students to be successful. Additionally, in his 2009 meta-analysis of over 130 practices and interventions intended to support student achievement, John Hattie ranked strong Teacher-student relationships as having the 11th highest effect size for positively impacting student learning when done well.

student experience (e.g., focus groups, empathy interviews). Establish routines and norms for collection and analysis of these data to use alongside aggregate data and to inform action steps.

Promoting student engagement and empowerment:
- Each secondary school prioritizes a climate of student engagement, empowerment, and agency, such as: student leadership opportunities, student council, student-initiated organizations and activities, and school-based enrichment activities.
- Communicate engagement strategies for individual students and key information about student sense of belonging between staff from grade level to grade level.
- Continue to identify and remove barriers to students participating in electives, clubs, and other aspects of life at the school to build a sense of belonging and engagement, paying attention to findings in elementary, middle, and high school settings, respectively.

While this initiative is specifically focused on student belonging and inclusion, it is complemented by others. In particular, initiative 1.1 and the focus on an instructional vision are designed to increase student engagement by ensuring that pedagogy across the district encourages students' sense of connection to academics.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Study and deploy strategies that allow APS to deeply understand the student experience	In collaboration with Deeper Learning Team (Initiative 1.1), pilot and begin to implement practices that bring established systems closer to the student experience. For example, establish routines for focus group and empathy interviews; assess adult meeting structures to suggest and implement student-centered protocols, etc		Integrate practices from DLT studies into MTSS structures; adjust based on findings and feedback	Continue to refine practices and implement new approaches. Triangulate systematically-collected qualitative data with aggregated quantitative data in plans and communications, such as school improvement plans	
Financial Impact	See Initiative 1.1				
To Fund	Costs associated with this strand are aligned with and reflected in Initiative 1.1				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Build capacity of Department of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice	Fill existing budgeted role for DEIBJ Specialist, add additional DEIBJ Specialist, to partner with schools and ILTs and provide professional learning and consultation services to staff	Continue to build the capacity of the office of DEIBJ with administrative support	Establish 1.0 specialist for each grade-level band for targeted support: Elementary, Middle, High School	Expand supports for DEIBJ and family engagement work through expansion of shared Family and Community Liaisons (in partnership with Family Welcome Center; see Initiative 4.2)	
Financial Impact	$140,000	$165,000	$210,000	See Initiative 4.2	
To Fund	2.0 DEIBJ Specialists	.5 DEIBJ Administrative Assistant	1.0 DEIBJ Specialist	Establish and implement Family and Community Liaisons in partnership with Family Welcome Center	

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked, whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	Improve outcomes across student experience indicators where gaps exist between focal and reference groups as measured by Culture and Climate surveys, particularly for the following focal groups, categories, and grade levels: "Sense of belonging" for all Black/AA students (Gap: 10% Grades 3-5, 9% Grades 6-12) and Hispanic/Latino Students (Gap: 16% Grades 3-5, 3% Grades 6-12) "Sense of belonging" for all students who prefer to self-describe their gender (Gap: 28% Grades 3-5, 20% Grades 6-12) "School Safety" for elementary students with IEPs (Gap: 7% Grades 3-5) "Rigorous Expectations" for all multilingual learners (Gap: 7% Grades 3-5, 9% Grades 6-12)				
Annual Benchmark	Improve outcomes for identified focal groups in designated categories where significant gaps exist, identified above, by 3% annually. Improve outcomes for identified focal groups in all categories by 1% annually at schools based on areas of focus identified in school improvement plans.				
Outcome Metric 2	Demonstrate improvement in qualitative experiences of families as measured by analyses of qualitative interviews, focus groups, and feedback data, triangulated against outcomes described above.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish routines for collection of qualitative data	Incorporate qual. accounts into plans and presentations at the school- and district-level	Triangulate qualitative accounts from focal groups into analysis of progress towards outcomes at the school- and district-level		

Initiative 1.3 Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Priority 1	Ensuring Equity and Excellence	Short Initiative:	All students in APS will be supported in their schools by an active multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). MTSS will be coordinated and effective so that students have rigorous learning opportunities coupled with the right supports and resources.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	Every student in APS in need of support beyond Tier 1 will have access to a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in which they experience strong core instruction and receive the "right" intervention program, at the "right" juncture, with a highly trained educator, for the "right" duration of time. "Right" will be defined as what the student needs, as defined by the student's teachers and service providers, families, and the student themselves whenever possible. Those supports will be monitored, adjusted, and communicated effectively. An effective MTSS will be in place and functioning well so that all graduates will be prepared to achieve their choices of post-secondary education, career, and community contribution. The components of MTSS will be operating effectively in each school. Every student in APS has equitable access to "a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systematic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision making.' (ESSA, 2015). This should also lead to reduced behavioral and special education referrals; increases in social emotional well-being, increased student sense of belonging, and increased graduation rate, among other metrics.

Responsible Department	Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Currently, APS schools have a large number of student support practices and resources. A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) organizes those supports and the work of adults around students, coordinating adult work so that student needs are identified and met with the correct academic or social-emotional resource that fits the precise case.

APS will develop a comprehensive, consistent, clear, and well-communicated MTSS. This framework is designed to meet the needs of all students by ensuring that schools make evidence-driven decisions, monitor progress and usefulness of supports for students, and use evidence-based supports and strategies with appropriate – and if necessary, increasing – intensity to sustain student growth.[8] MTSS is not just a list of structured interventions, but rather a cohesive system for the procedures and resources in a school to fit together to ensure a high quality education for all students. Benefits of an effective MTSS include:[9]

- Consistent structures and effective implementation across schools.
- Increased achievement of students who have IEPs, and students in other focal groups as defined by this plan.
- Increased academic and other opportunities for historically marginalized students specifically, and all students generally (i.e. multilingual learners, BIPOC, students with learning differences or disabilities, neurodivergent learners, children who have experienced trauma or adverse experiences).
- Provision of precise supports to students in the areas they most need them narrows opportunity and achievement gaps.
- Ability for all students who need it to receive needed evidence-based intervention while ensuring access to aligned Tier 1 (core instruction) programming.

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[8] The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shares rich resources supporting the definition and implementation of an MTSS, such as this Blueprint of an effective MTSS.
[9] Burns, M., Jimerson, S., VanDerHeyden, A., Deno, S. (2016). Toward a Unified Response-to-Intervention Model: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. In: Jimerson, S., Burns, M., VanDerHeyden, A. (eds) Handbook of Response to Intervention. Springer, Boston, MA.

- Provision of enrichment and challenge to students in academic domains where they demonstrate proficiency.

In an effective MTSS, universal supports such as high quality, universally designed, culturally sustaining, and evidence-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments are provided for all students. Movement amongst the three tiers is fluid and is supported by data from universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, and how a student responds to one level of intervention. Any and all students should have access to support when they need them, not just students with IEPs. One potential structure is the "What I Need" or WIN period in the schedule, for student-specific extension or enrichment time (a form of this is present at Gibbs though not at other schools).

Because the introduction of MTSS is complex[10] and time intensive[11], this initiative will need a paced, five-year rollout. Steps will include an initial round of resource mapping, data collection, and training, followed by training and implementation over several years. This will require a dedicated cross-district team to execute.

Initial efforts will include:
- Conduct resource mapping of interventions for elementary, middle, and high school
- Inventory and evaluate assessment tools
- Design systems for analyzing/decision-making teams
- Attend to hiring, staffing, and training
- Implementation of supportive schedules that provide space for intervention while protecting student access to rigorous grade-level or higher instruction (including a Development of a system for understanding, allocating and assessing the impact of resources across individual schools
- Development of a comprehensive action plan

The resources that will need first to be mapped and then to be developed will be:
- Instructional vision and practices (aligned to initiative 1.1)
- Core and supplementary curriculum
- Social-emotional supports and services
- School schedules that give students time for intervention or enrichment and that give teacher teams the chance to meet (for instructional work, student support work, etc)

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[10] Harlacher, Jason & Sakelaris, Tami & Kattelman, Nicole. (2014). Practitioner's Guide to Curriculum-Based Evaluation in Reading.
[11] MA DESE MTSS Mobilization Guide and Self-Assessment show many necessary components and steps.

- Access to interventions and supports
- Access to enrichment and additional opportunities
- Presence and capacity of specific teams and student support procedures

The comprehensive action planning needs to address the following areas of practice:
- Student, family, and community engagement
- Core Instruction
- Screening and eligibility
- Equitable access to interventions across schools.
- School structures and schedules
- Three tiers of intensity for instruction, intervention, and supports
- Staff recruitment, selection, onboarding, assignment, and retention
- Staff engagement and professional development
- Progress monitoring and evaluation

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Develop comprehensive implementation plan paced for cohorts of schools	Establish and empower district -wide team to audit existing resources and develop comprehensive implementation plan with paced deliverables for cohorts of schools in subsequent years. This team will: • Audit resource maps at each school; • Study MTSS and attend professional learning; • Identify and visit/interview peer districts with effective MTSS; • Develop a staffing model for all APS schools at all levels, aligned with MTSS framework; • Implement with pilot cohort 1		Implementation plan is published and communicated broadly; more schools begin implementation in a cohort model; all schools implement intervention block or similar scheduling model. Staffing model is used to inform budgeting decisions. Professional development continues in alignment with 2.2 Implement with cohort 3, deepen with cohort 1-2 Deepen with cohort 1-3		
Financial Impact	$125,000	$50,000	$50,000	$25,000	$25,000
To Fund	District team stipends, audit and planning meetings, outside specialists to enhance or introduce supports	PD to implement and fund overall MTSS initiatives recommended by the committee (C1)	PD to implement and fund overall MTSS initiatives recommended by the committee (C2)	PD to implement and fund overall MTSS initiatives recommended by the committee (C3)	PD to implement and fund overall MTSS initiatives recommended by the committee (C4)

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Communicate broadly with public and faculties to message MTSS	Develop communication plans and expectations as part of development of comprehensive MTSS; use feedback from families in empathy interviews and focus groups to understand expectations regarding communication*		Implement communications expectations and gather feedback from families Broadly communicate MTSS plan and framework with community	Continue to implement and refine communications plan based on feedback.	
	Communications include website materials and resources/expectations for school communications with parents related to MTSS, as well as communication to faculty across the district				
Financial Impact	TBD				
To Fund	TBD: Costs associated with this portion of the plan are represented elsewhere; we will use the Panorama Culture and Climate surveys to ask targeted questions about the effectiveness of intervention services (Initiative 4.3). The Director of Communications and Family Engagement will partner with the Deputy and Assistant Superintendents to engage families in forums and empathy interviews and to craft communications (Initiative 4.2)				

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

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Annual Benchmark	Close gaps for focal groups compared to peers by 3 percentage points annually across subject areas. Close gaps for for focal groups compared to peers by 4 percentage points annually for focus disciplinary areas: • ELA Grades 3-5 and Grade 10, • Math Grades 6-8 and Grade 10, • Science Grade 8 Maintain Student Growth Percentiles for focal groups and peers above 50% each year, with focal groups growing at a faster rate than peers to accelerate achievement.				

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 2	Administrators, teachers, and instructional staff are trained (years 2-3) in the MTSS and instructional vision and report comfort and understanding of the vision (years 3-5), as measured by targeted questions on annual climate and culture surveys.				
Annual Benchmark	50%	75%	95%	95%	95%
Outcome Metric 3	Systematic observations at each school show execution of key components of the MTSS across classrooms, using a specific, consistent instrument that reflects the vision.				
Annual Benchmark	Tools and procedures will be established	TBD: Increase in implementation of instructional strategies aligned with district vision, as measured and tracked by established observation tools			
Outcome Metric 4	Each time a student fails a semester or is flagged for attendance, they have an assigned and tracked intervention/support implemented within two weeks.				
Annual Benchmark	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Outcome Metric 5	All schools have supports and interventions in place to meet 100% of needs identified during assessment, in accordance with the implementation plan developed in year 1.				
Annual Benchmark	NA (Assessment done during year 1)	All cohort 1 schools meet 100% of criteria	All cohort 1-2 schools meet 100% of criteria	All cohort 1-3 schools meet 100% of criteria	All schools meet 100% of criteria

Arlington Public Schools | Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Strategic Priority 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 leadership opportunities and shared decision-making; and prioritizing representation, diverse perspectives, and expertise.

Needs Assessment to Support Initiatives

For the purposes of this plan, the strategic planning committee has identified several gaps in practice to address related to Valuing All Staff. One gap is in the diversity of our staff. Another gap is in meaningful professional development for all staff. Yet another gap is in compensation and how we communicate all of the contractual benefits staff enjoy in Arlington.

APS has spent years working on creating a more diverse staff of educators that better reflect our student population. While the disparity between student and staff demographic data is significant among Unit A Educators, there are some groups that have less disparity and therefore more opportunity for growth in the ranks of Unit A Educators who identify as BIPOC by tapping into human resources in the district who work as Unit D Paraprofessionals, or are current student teachers or students. In addition, our Administrative Team has become significantly more diverse over the past several years, which should have a positive impact on our ability to recruit and retain diverse educators. We believe that continuing to expand the numbers of Administrators who identify as BIPOC will lead to an increase in the number of Unit A Educators who identify as BIPOC. We further believe it is important for all our students to connect with adults of various backgrounds in positions of leadership and public service. See graphs at the end of this Needs Assessment for information on the current representation of various racial groups amongst APS staff; in addition to these data, APS will begin tracking when we welcome staff who identify as LGBTQIA+, non-binary, and/or neurodiverse as part of this plan.

Our need to hire additional educators who identify as BIPOC is not a unique challenge. Arlington is a member of the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education (MPDE), a consortium of school districts in Massachusetts who share the same goal. [Statewide data show that the number of educators of color does not match the demographics of students.](#) Districts within MPDE and other Districts in Massachusetts are competing for the same limited number of BIPOC Eductors. Hence the need to explore different ways to recruit and retain BIPOC educators, including opening up new pathways to become an educator in Arlington.

With respect to professional development, Panorama Survey Data indicated that teachers and staff were not satisfied with the district's professional development offerings and implementation. This

year we have instituted choice based professional development, which includes affinity groups for educators of color and white educators. These improvements have yielded 1-3% improvements in faculty feedback on the relevance and value of professional development opportunities district-wide; however, there is significant room for further improvement. Administrators are participating in affinity groups as well, and we seek to expand this practice in future years. In addition, all staff have not always been included in professional development offerings. Initiatives in this Priority Area seek to improve retention by creating more valuable professional learning opportunities for educators that are linked to our goals in Priority Area 1.

Staff Culture and Climate Surveys: Professional Development

QUESTION		
At your school, how valuable are the available professional development opportunities?	**23**% ⓘ responded favorably	▲ **1** from Fall 2021
How much input do you have into individualizing your own professional development opportunities?	**30**% ⓘ responded favorably	▲ **2** from Fall 2021
How relevant have your professional development opportunities been to your work?	**31**% ⓘ responded favorably	▲ **3** from Fall 2021
Overall, how supportive has the school been of your professional growth?	**48**% ⓘ responded favorably	▲ **2** from Fall 2021

Finally, compensation is important to recruiting and retaining talented educators. Data demonstrate that there are gaps in pay for some employee groups, including Unit A Educators and Unit D Paraprofessionals. We also believe that highlighting and marketing the non-monetary benefits of working for APS and trying new strategies for recruitment will help us achieve our goals. Proven strategies for recruitment of a diverse workforce include refining hiring practices to mitigate for bias, refining job descriptions, and creating pathway programs to licensure.. Initiatives in this Priority Area prioritize revisions to all aspects of our recruitment and retention strategies in order to demonstrate Arlington's commitment to becoming an excellent and competitive employer that values the unique expertise of all staff.

Composite Salary Data/Total Compensation (% Higher or Lower than TM12 Average)
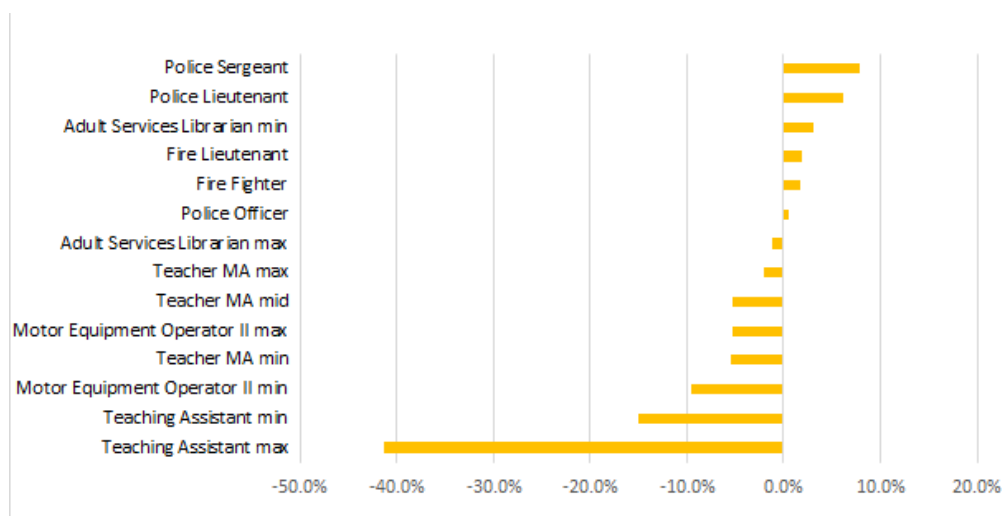
AEA Units A&D Staffing by Racial Identity, 2017-2022

Asian: AEA-A, AEA-D, and Students

AEA-A ■ AEA-D ■ Students

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Students	12.50%	12.50%	12.90%	13.00%	13.10%	12.90%
AEA-D	3.24%	2.56%	3.70%	5.11%	7.88%	7.49%
AEA-A	2.14%		2.50%	2.39%	2.50%	3.06%

Hispanic/Latino: AEA-A, AEA-D, and Students

AEA-A ■ AEA-D ■ Students

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Students	6.00%	6.40%	6.20%	6.10%	6.20%	6.50%
AEA-D	1.62%	2.05%	2.65%	4.55%	0.99%	1.58%
AEA-A		1.66%	1.61%	1.88%	1.66%	1.60%

Black/African American: AEA-A, AEA-D, and Students

AEA-A ■ AEA-D ■ Students

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
AEA-D	5.41%	6.67%	4.76%	9.00%	6.90%	8.02%
Students	3.70%	3.70%	3.50%	3.40%	3.40%	3.40%
AEA-A	1.00%	1.29%	1.25%	1.37%	0.83%	1.23%

Administration Staffing by Racial Identity, 2017-2022

Asian: AAA, CO/Admin, and Students

Legend: AAA, CO/Admin, Students

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Students	12.50%	12.50%	12.90%	13.00%	13.10%	12.90%
CO/Admin	5.71%	5.88%	5.88%	5.13%	7.69%	—
AAA	3.70%	3.57%	3.23%	3.13%	5.71%	5.56%
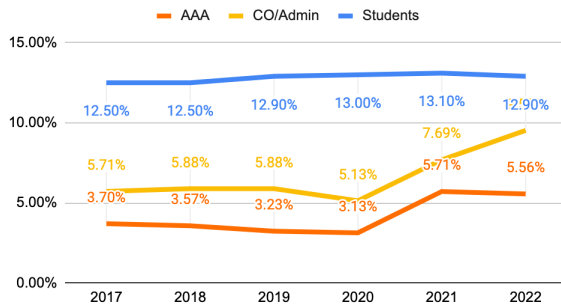
Hispanic/Latino: AAA, CO/Admin, and Students

Legend: AAA, CO/Admin, Students

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Students	6.00%	6.40%	6.20%	6.10%	6.20%	6.50%
AAA	3.70%	3.57%	6.45%	6.25%	5.71%	5.56%
CO/Admin	1.90%					
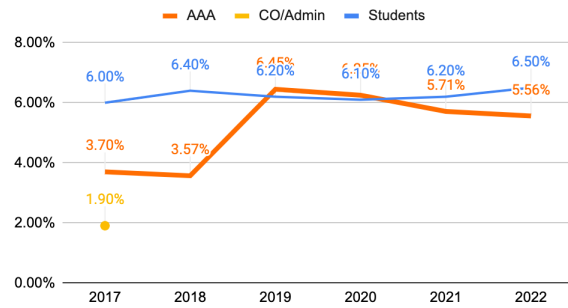
Black/African American: AAA, CO/Admin, and Students

Legend: AAA, CO/Admin, Students

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CO/Admin	4.76%	11.76%	11.76%	10.26%	12.50%	14.29%
AAA	3.70%	3.70%	3.50%	3.40%	5.71%	5.56%
Students	3.70%	3.70%	3.50%	3.40%	3.40%	3.40%
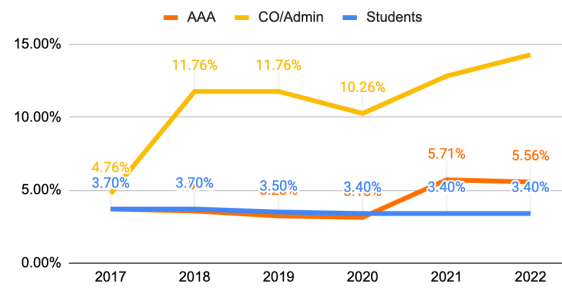
Initiative 2.1 Pathway to Teaching Programs

Priority 2	Valuing All Staff	Short Initiative:	Create and sustain pathway programs for future and potential educators, especially candidates who will increase racial and ethnic representation of the local community within the APS workforce.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	Through this initiative, APS will develop and sustain a staff that more closely mirrors the student population in race, ethnicity, language diversity, neurodiversity, and gender identity, including teachers and other instructional staff and administrators. This will be accomplished through the establishment of programs that allow staff within the system to obtain licensure or allow new staff to participate in programs to achieve licensure, as well as through programming that inspires current APS students to become teachers.

Responsible Department	Director of Human Resources and Director of DEIBJ

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

APS has spent years striving to have a more diverse staff that better reflects our student population.[12] While we have made some progress, we have also struggled to maintain progress on this front. APS has the opportunity to renew effort in this area. Some of our barriers to recruitment and retention of a more diverse workforce are linked to challenges that some marginalized members of society face when it comes to obtaining the education and credentials required to become an educator. These include difficulties with certification testing and licensure, the cost of educator license training and certification for applicants, and lack of pathways into education and information about them for interested community members.

Currently, APS does not have defined pathway programs for moving from unlicensed positions to licensed positions. We have had some programs for high school students in the past and should revisit those. In 2021-2022, the district had a Teacher Diversification Grant. This year, a cohort has joined the DESE Staff Diversification Professional Learning Community (PLC).

APS can address these issues in several ways. The district can help more paraprofessionals obtain teaching licenses, provide opportunities for current students to explore education as a possible career in the district after graduating college, partner with educator preparation programs to bring more BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) student teachers to Arlington, and can partner with programs such as MassTeach. An essential component will be the opportunities, professional development, and information for paraprofessionals, who are a natural group from which to recruit because they are already valued members of the community. APS will also work with the existing Internship Program for students at AHS to understand current internship opportunities in our schools for students and possibly create more internship opportunities in education working in district classrooms before graduation for credit. The district will work with local universities to potentially funnel students from high school internships to educator prep programs and back to the district once they are certified.

There will be costs associated with creating pathways programs, including tuition and Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) assistance or reimbursement, funding for stipends or an FTE (full-time employee) for staff to lead these efforts, and providing professional development.

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[12] Significant scholarship has shown that the experience of having diverse and especially representative teachers has a tremendous positive effect on students, especially BIPOC students.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Develop and implement Pathways to Licensure programs and resources for current APS educators	Establish partnership(s) with local university educator prep. programs Cost-out sustaining prep. programs Sustain Teacher Leadership Program Partnership with Brandeis University	Recruit initial cohort for participation in educator pathway program Hold focus groups for feedback on recruitment plans with current educators	Sustain: continue to run cohorts for interested educators to obtain licensure in key areas, continue to offer fee reimbursement for educators seeking licensure Sustain Teacher Leadership Program Partnership with Brandeis University Sustain focus groups, continue to adjust programming based on feedback		
Financial Impact	$34,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000
To Fund	Time for study and development of initial plan with educators Brandeis tuition remission for 4 teacher leaders	Tuition for educators in pathway cohorts; marketing materials to inform cohorts about programs; stipends for internal leaders to mentor cohort members through the program; fees for licensure and tests required to obtain licensure			

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Study AHS Internship Program for future educators and examine other local models	Develop task force in partnership with AHS students to study options for student pathway-to-education programs	Create a plan for pathway courses and/or programs targeted at AHS students interested in education as a profession	Implement and iteratively assess plan and recommended pathway programs for students		
Financial Impact	$5000	TBD			
To Fund	Staff hours/stipends, supplies	TBD			

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	Increase staff diversity to more closely mirror the student body (current student body is approximately 30% BIPOC, whereas staff who identify as BIPOC are approximately 11%).				
Annual Benchmark	Increase % of staff who identify as BIPOC approximately 2 percentage points annually, to achieve 16% by 2028				
Outcome Metric 2	Hire licensed educators in APS as a result of new Pathway to Teaching programming.				
Annual Benchmark	--	--	--	Arlington will hire at least 3 people who have moved through a pathway to licensure	Arlington will hire at least 5 people who have moved through a pathway to licensure
Outcome Metric 4	All schools and central office implement and use annually a robust system for tracking demographic data of staff and pathway participants, with set meetings and procedures followed for data reviews and action planning.				
Annual Benchmark	100% implementation by year 2 of plan, sustained over time				

Initiative 2.2 Reimagining Professional Learning

Priority 2	Valuing All Staff	Short Initiative:	All staff enjoy relevant and effective professional learning that is responsive to their needs, and professional learning strategy and implementation is expanded to include paraprofessional and non-instructional staff.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	APS will have an effective, integrated professional development system, including district-wide professional learning (PL), school and department PL, Embedded PL and collaboration, Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), and PL tracking that is aligned to the major instructional work of teachers and the district. Educators will report at least satisfaction with and effectiveness of professional learning offerings, and pedagogy and classrooms throughout the district reflect new or improved practices based on the PL. Importantly, student outcomes demonstrate the impact of improved professional learning.

Responsible Department	Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

On Panorama surveys in the past few years, staff have reported dissatisfaction with professional learning offerings in the district. Educators often comment that professional learning (PL) options do not directly address their biggest needs or that professional learning that provides good content is not able to be translated into daily practice.

The goal of this initiative is to provide professional learning opportunities for staff that are meaningful, effective, and linked to staff needs. APS is currently piloting a new modular program that gives staff more choice and variety for early release days. This work will build on the pilot.[13]

The goal of this initiative is to improve both the quality of professional learning offered to staff, the usefulness of the courses offered, and to expand educator voice and choice in charting their path through their professional learning. This includes, but is not limited to, large district-wide initiatives, grade level or department based initiatives, individual licensure needs for the wide variety of roles in the district, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice (DEIBJ) work, and other trainings. This should be done in coordination with the district goals, as well as the vision and mission statement.[14] In particular, changes and improvements in professional learning will be guided heavily by the needs and topics identified under strategic priority 1. Some key levers will include: more relevant course offerings, systematic tracking of PL offerings in an online platform, increased compensation for PL leaders, opportunities for teachers to share what they learned during professional learning with their colleagues, implementation of courses that will aid in licensure, and revision of the modular course offering system.

Options that give staff the ability to decide what type of PD to be part of also shows that staff interests and needs are valued. After 5 years of the new PD program, educators renewing licenses will have been able to complete all Special Ed and English Learner components through no-cost, in-district PL.

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[13] This pilot is prioritized, to reflect the idea that "Real [instructional] improvement requires alignment among opportunities for professional learning" among other factors (from Forman, Stosich, and Bocala, 2017, *The Internal Coherence Framework*).

[14] As Forman, Stosich, and Bocala explain, "Researchers widely agree that professional development that occurs on the job, focuses on content, is coherently linked to other curricular or instructional initiatives, and is ongoing is the most effective way to improve teachers' practice."

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Expand choice-based professional development based on 2022-23 pilot and adjustments to full-day PD in 2022	Use feedback from 22-23 pilot year to change modular PL Expand choice-based approaches to other learning spaces Identify/implement new courses to count to lane changes Revise full-day PD from 2022 feedback	Incorporate targeted (position-specific) PL for educators (incl. specialists) Include other bargaining units in choice-based PL Continue to implement courses Revise full-day PD from 2023 feedback	Revise modular course offerings to reflect new curricular or district initiatives Identify a mechanism for educators to present what was learned from workshops to educator peers during PLCs and CPT (across schools) Continue to implement courses Incorporate courses for paraprofessionals that will enable pathways to licensure (aligned with 2.1) Continue to improve full-day professional learning experiences based on feedback		
Financial Impact	$150,000	$150,000	$150,000	$150,000	$150,000
To Fund	Payment for consultants to lead modules and professional learning courses; keynote speakers for full-day professional development courses; increased pay for teacher-facilitators of professional learning courses				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Assess, Expand, and Improve Job-Embedded Professional Learning (ACE, Rounds, CPT, PLC, etc.)	Incorporate teachers into instructional rounds and expand similar routines to see, process, and learn from colleagues' practice	Establish and communicate best practices for inquiry-based collaboration and integrate into collaborative meeting routines, with school-based ILTs leading these efforts		Continue to expand and integrate new collaboration routines into practice; adjust based on feedback	
Financial Impact	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000
To Fund	Expanded ILT stipends for all years; substitute teachers or coverage to enable rounds; consultation to analyze collaborative routines and conduct professional learning with ILTs to improve practice across the schools				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Implement Powerschool/ TalentEd PL application to track course offerings, needs, and PD taken	Implement use of Powerschool/ TalentEd PL application to track course offerings, needs, and PD taken	Continue offering all opportunities			
Financial Impact	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000
To Fund	Powerschool Professional Learning Module yearly software renewal				

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	100% of licensed staff are able to earn credits for pedagogy, special ed, and ELL/SEI to renew license through in-district professional development if they so choose.				
Annual Benchmark	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
Outcome Metric 2	Staff report 85% or greater satisfaction in the professional development offerings by the district as measured on annual surveys such as Panorama.				
Annual Benchmark	At least 60% satisfaction	At least 65% satisfaction	At least 70% satisfaction	At least 80% satisfaction	At least 85% satisfaction
Outcome Metric 3	All educators report that they are able to access PD that they need individually and PD that reflects district priorities.				
Annual Benchmark	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

Initiative 2.3 Competitive Compensation

Priority 2	Valuing All Staff	Short Initiative:	Recruit and retain staff in a system that is comparably competitive with area cities/towns.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	APS will retain our current highly-qualified educators and attract a larger and more diverse pool of applicants for all open positions by offering competitive compensation and benefits packages and by enhancing and marketing the non-monetary benefits of working for APS. We will reduce the number of unfilled positions, including reducing the amount of time needed to fill open positions.

Responsible Person	Director of Human Resources

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Arlington wants to better support our staff and students by retaining current employees who may seek to move to other districts for higher pay or benefits. Additionally, APS would like to attract a larger and more diverse pool of applicants for all open positions to diversify our staff. Diversification of our staff and competitive compensation will improve the retention of current staff from diverse backgrounds.

Currently, some educators opt to leave APS for neighboring districts with more competitive salaries. This is particularly hurting APS when it comes to the retention of staff of color. Feedback from staff consistently states that higher salaries are important to our efforts to retain excellent staff members. Arlington has shown dedication to this goal with a positive impact over the past several years, and as neighboring towns also raise salaries, Arlington seeks to both keep up and to be able to recruit from competitor districts. Applicant pools

may also be more limited due to higher salaries elsewhere. Although Arlington is a wonderful community, schools miss out on quality candidates and retention of effective staff due to financial considerations. Some of the benefits APS does offer, such as dedicated prep time, common planning time, a supportive environment, strong professional development opportunities, and well-resourced classrooms, need to be emphasized as part of a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy.

In order to achieve these goals, APS will need to increase the overall compensation to educators in the district and to enhance and market itself with the non-monetary benefits of working at APS. We must also continue to increase paraprofessional salaries, as many neighboring communities have done in recent years and in order to attract high-quality classroom assistants, whose work is so valuable to our students' learning.

The non-monetary benefits of working in APS include, but are not limited to
- Contractual daily planning periods (with compensatory time for missed planning periods)
- Contractual time for common planning with other educators
- District focus on educator wellness: counseling opportunities, PD options about self-care, and a supportive administration
- District focus on diversification: proven diversification in district leadership, affinity groups, and growing DEIBJ department
- Supportive student/teacher ratios that prioritize appropriate class sizes for general education (under 25 students/class) and small class sizes for substantially separate, small group, or other intensive instructional programs
- Substantial resources for teachers to acquire and/or purchase needed supplies and supplies for enrichment
- Recent expansion of professional development opportunities
- A staff daycare
- A staff credit union

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Refine and Track Strategies for Recruitment and Retention of Excellent APS Staff	Develop marketing / communications strategy for recruitment of diverse staff that highlights parts of our contract that are attractive to educators Redesign staff onboarding in collaboration with Mentor Coordinators	Develop and implement a standardized exit survey and track trends annually Continue revisions to staff onboarding process and begin pilot implementation Implement recruitment strategy, reflect, adjust	Implement recruitment and retention tracking system and marketing strategy and report results and trends annually Implement revised onboarding processes Partner with town governance and community partners to advocate for more affordable and equitable housing opportunities so more APS staff can live in Arlington. Retain those aspects of the APS bargaining agreements that make APS an attractive place to work		
Financial Impact	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000
To Fund	Materials for onboarding, development of exit survey, tools and time for tracking recruitment and retention, social media marketing of recruitment materials, materials for recruitment fairs.				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Establish and sustain competitive compensation	Reclassification of Unit D Employees Conduct AEA Unit A Negotiations	Implement renegotiated Unit A Contract Conduct Unit C Negotiations	Ongoing negotiations cycles with CBUs		
Financial Impact	$300,000	$2,000,000	$1,000,000	TBD	
To Fund	Salary structure changes, pending successful override, negotiations, and collaborations with Town of Arlington officials..				

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	Reduce attrition rate by at least 20% when 'moving to a better paying district' is cited as the reason for departure.				
Annual Benchmark	Identify baseline in Year 1; track and reduce attrition rate due to salary 4% annually				
Outcome Metric 2	Improve standing in Town Manager 12 (calculated list of 12 comparable communities) average salaries.				
Annual Benchmark	Evaluate adjustments to Town Manager 12 list using current data.	Improve standing for Unit A employees	Improve standing for Unit D employees	Re-evaluate adjustments to Town Manager 12 list using current data.	Improve standing for Unit A employees
Outcome Metric 3	Increase staff diversity to more closely mirror the student body (current student body is approximately 30% BIPOC, whereas staff who identify as BIPOC are approximately 11%).				
Annual Benchmark	Increase % of staff who identify as BIPOC approximately 2 percentage points annually, to achieve 16% by 2028				
Outcome Metric 4	All schools and central office implement and use annually a robust system for tracking demographic data of staff, with set meetings and procedures followed for data reviews and action planning.				
Annual Benchmark	100% implementation by year 2 of plan, sustained over time				

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:
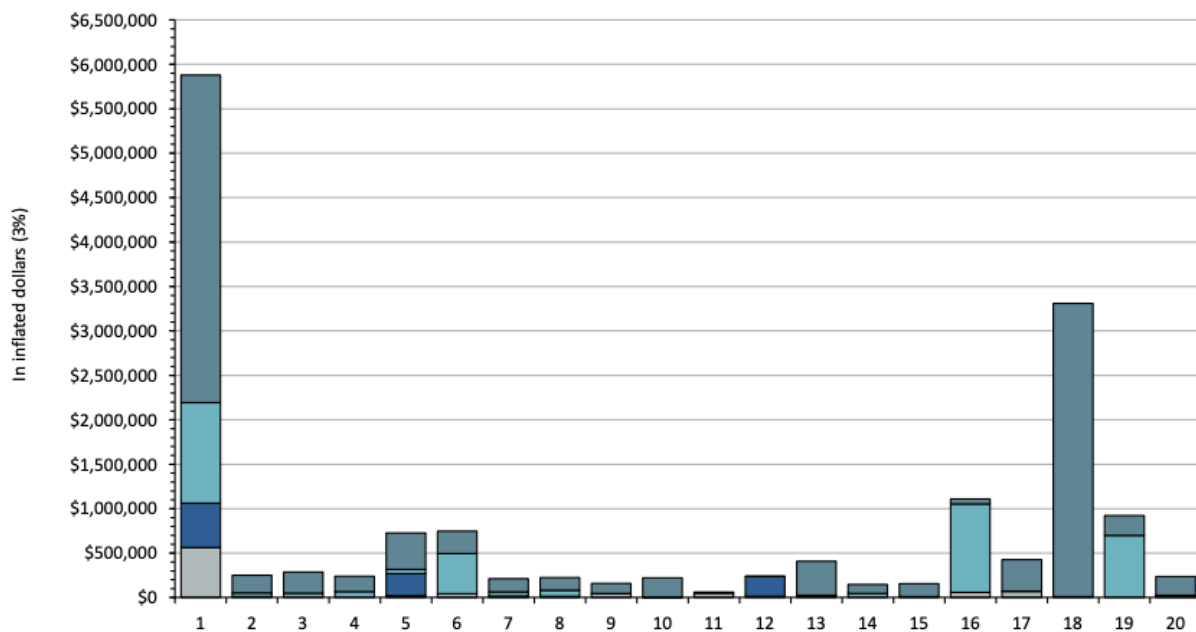
Bishop Elementary School - Building Envelope Investigation Report

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
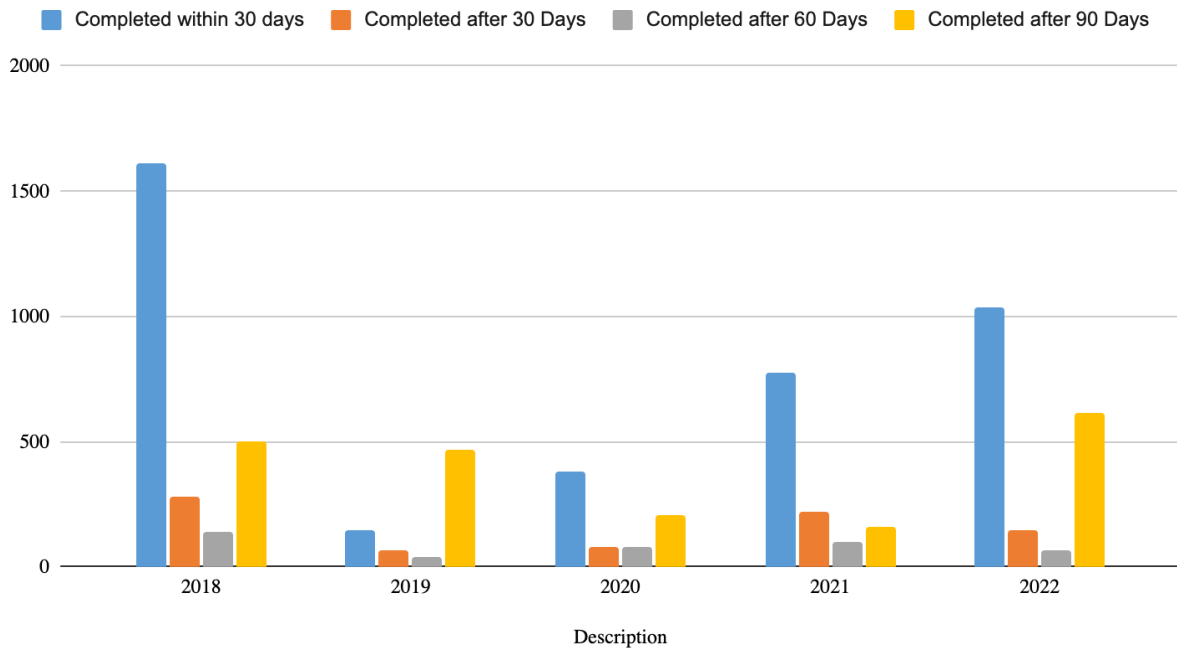
Food Service Needs

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 Meals Served by Fiscal Year (chart)

- Y-axis: # of Student Meals (0 to 600,000)
- X-axis: School Year (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)

Student Participation by Fiscal Year

Student Participation by Fiscal Year (chart)

- Y-axis: # of Student Meals (0.00% to 60.00%)
- X-axis: School Year (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)
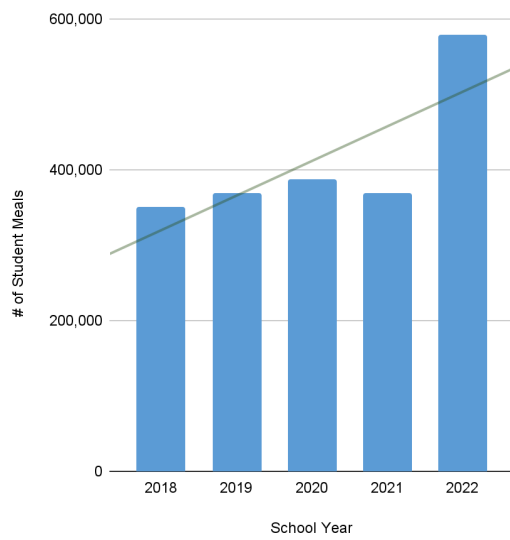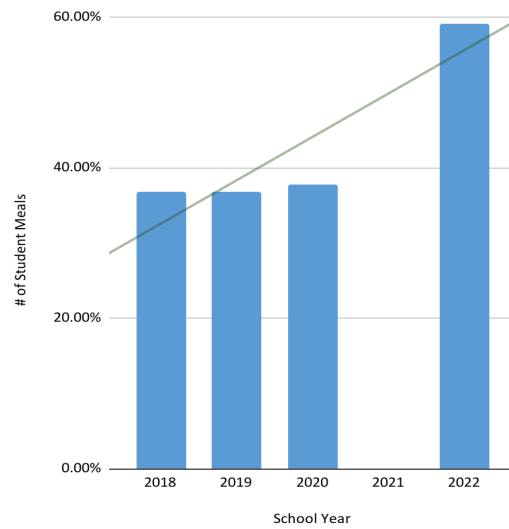
In addition to the complexities of meeting production with increased demand, the food service team had to do so while trying to fill vacancies to positions that are compensated at severely low wages.

Initiative 3.1 Inclusive and Modern Spaces and Operations

Priority 3	Improving Infrastructure, Operations, and Sustainability	Short Initiative:	All Arlington students learn in inclusive, modern facilities with effective spaces, technology and efficient operations.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	With this initiative, APS students will learn in inclusive and modern spaces with great tools for deeper learning, and students and staff will have the technology they need to meet our APS Vision. During the process, families will know what projects their schools can expect and when, and the community will know the purpose and cost of facilities upgrades.
	Ultimately, all of Arlington's students and faculty will enter schools, classrooms and workspaces with the most current, available technology, furniture, learning resources, and hardware to support Arlington's Instructional Vision (Initiative 1.1).
	In addition, by the end of this work, 100% of students and faculty should report confidence that our school district's physical spaces support the full spectrum of diversity within our learning community and are equipped for joyful, rigorous, inclusive deeper learning.

Responsible Department	Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

The Town of Arlington has supported investments ensuring our students, families, and staff have access to modern tools and environments that support their experience and success. As curriculum evolves, student populations and needs shift, and instructional resources and technology advance, these tools will continue to require assessment and replacement to support the needs of learners and teachers and to keep our school system competitive and inclusive.

Building on visioning from the AHS building project, APS will establish an "Instructional Technology and Space Vision." This vision will be used to develop a 5-year plan to address inclusivity and modernization of each school's technology, furnishings, equipment and space usage. The plan will focus on inclusive learning spaces and supportive instructional technology for staff and students to help them fully access their learning day and foster a sense of belonging. This plan should result in a prioritized list of needs and the projects to address them and should result in clear capital proposals and plans for internal improvement projects (Initiative 3.3).

Considerations will include (but are not limited to):
- space allocation and layout of classrooms (including specialist spaces),
- instructional technology,
- furniture,
- non-instructional spaces: cafeterias, administrative spaces, nurses' offices,
- Unrealized and reimagined outdoor spaces,
- and extracurricular spaces.

This initiative also supports the evaluation and improvement of current operational workflows, which impact the availability of space and our ability to plan for large-scale operational improvements. As technology and software have improved, APS has more tools that it can and will leverage to make operations more efficient. This would include evaluating operational tools and document retention protocols, in addition to modernization of the recruitment process, position control management, and the conversion of physical workflows to electronic workflows.

APS will convene a multi-stakeholder working group of staff, students, and families to assess whether the available tools and environment reflect the student and staff experience and access needs (e.g., representation of the families in our community, the full learning profile of

our student body, the tools that our staff need to instruct all learners). This group will provide recommendations for spaces and practices that can help meet each school's learning and community needs.

Following initial assessment, environmental and technological needs will be reviewed continually and integrated into budget and planning efforts in each school.

Key Questions to guide the development of the Technology and Space Vision and 5-year plan include:
- Does the school environment feel welcoming and inclusive to all learners?
- How are MTSS and Deeper Learning supported by the existing environment/space and instructional technology?
- What activities / populations need more space? May have extra space?
- How can spaces support the range of learners present in the student body?
- What spaces/tools are over-utilized / under-utilized?
- How are we currently occupying/using the existing spaces? (Instruction, office, extracurricular, etc.)
- Where is learning most/least successful for our student population?
- What best practices can we share?

These questions will guide the development and execution of our vision and plan for sustained and continuous improvement of instructional spaces in APS.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Improve Instructional Environment and Spaces throughout the District	Assess & Envision: Establish/update APS Instructional Technology and Space Vision & Guiding Principles	Prioritize the needs of the schools to develop cohorts for implementation Establish available capital for plan Implement at first schools based on priority planning			
Financial Impact	$50,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000
To Fund	Audit and planning process	Furniture/fixtures in Hardy	Furniture/fixtures in Bishop	Furniture/fixtures in Brackett	Furniture/fixtures in TBD based on plan

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Develop and implement Instructional Environment & Technology Plan IETP and team	Develop (IETP) and team to review technology and identify PD needs Digitize resources in APS Central Offices and begin streamlining and digitization of centralized workflows		Begin and continue implementing IETP and implement professional learning		
Financial Impact	$200,000		$500,000	$500,000	$500,000
To Fund	Plan development and Central Office digitization process		Outfitting classrooms and students with technology according to plan		

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	80% of APS students report "slightly positive" to "very positive" on the School Climate component of the Annual Student Survey (currently 64% secondary, 58% elementary).				
Annual Benchmark	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
Outcome Metric 2	100% of instructional spaces have the technology identified during the audit to meet student and faculty needs.				
Annual Benchmark	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Outcome Metric 3	100% of revenue to be collected via payment collection software.				
Annual Benchmark	80%	85%	90%	95%	100%
Outcome Metric 4	Reduction of the use of physical paper and toner.				
Annual Benchmark	Reduce the use or need of physical paper and toner in the Central Office by 10% each year.				

Initiative 3.2 Healthy Meals for All

Priority 3	Improving Infrastructure, Operations, and Sustainability	Short Initiative:	All students enjoy healthy school meals with the appropriate space and amount of time to enjoy it.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	All students will be provided with the opportunity to eat healthy meals in supportive spaces and with adequate time dedicated to nutritious habit-forming. All students in APS will also enjoy access to high-quality, healthy food choices and will contribute to improving food and nutrition programming.

Responsible Department	Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

One of the most beneficial early pandemic decisions of policymakers was fully subsidized meals for all children in the public schools across our nation. This decision immediately impacted families, particularly families from low-income backgrounds, and as noted in the Priority 3 Needs Assessment, participation in Arlington Public Schools' meals increased dramatically. In 2021, APS also opened up breakfast service for all students, serving breakfast at our schools for any students who arrive early to school.

With this dramatic increase in participation also comes the opportunity to reimagine our meals program and to ensure that all students are arriving in class well-nourished and ready to learn. This initiative outlines how APS will go about ensuring that all students are provided with healthy meal options, opportunities to learn about food and nutrition through their meal times at school, and opportunities to socialize, interact with peers, and enjoy meals while they are at school.

One challenge this initiative seeks to interrogate is the amount of time allotted to meals in APS. The breakfast program currently operates at different times at various schools and is supervised with different models at each school, perpetuating inconsistencies of student experience and family access to before-school care (Initiative 4.1). Furthermore, Arlington Public School students are scheduled 20 minutes for lunch each day. Elementary and middle school aged students and families frequently report that this is not enough time for the necessary nutritional and social-emotional benefits that healthy school lunch can provide. Currently, students report feeling rushed, skipping meals, or being unwilling to explore different food varieties, opting instead to go with what's quick and familiar. Current options on the APS menu, which are aligned with FDA regulations, are not always the most nutritious parts of their meals. Furthermore, some students and families have reported that lunch menus aren't culturally responsive to the many identities in our schools.

The objective of this initiative is to ensure that every student has access to quality, healthy school meals, and that time and space allotted support healthy eating and peer interaction. This effort seeks increased engagement at school due to quality nutrition and break time where students can choose how to spend their time.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Review lunch menu & operations and enhance quality and nutrition	Review lunch menu & operations and identify opportunities to enhance quality / nutrition	Implement revised menus	Review & adjust menu & operations (ongoing) for nutrition, participation, and costs		
Financial Impact	$0	TBD	TBD		
To Fund	NA	Adjusted or additional menu options	Staffing and additional costs determined by audit; all to be funded from food services enterprise fund		

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Develop evaluation criteria for lunch	Develop evaluation criteria for lunch, such as: student participation, volume of trash / food not consumed, Student / teacher / parent feedback, and measure of nutritional quality	Implement feedback mechanism, include educator staff participation Use feedback mechanism to adjust menus as needed	TBD		
Financial Impact	$0	TBD	TBD		
To Fund	NA	TBD	TBD		

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Review and adjust cafeteria space / furniture as needed	Assess current spaces and usage rates; generate recommendations for consideration as part of Capital Planning process	Implement space / furniture changes that are possible immediately Include recs for space and furniture adjustments in capital planning	Review and adjust space / furniture as needed Implement any planned capital/ facilities changes		
Financial Impact	N/A	$50,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000
To Fund	Space improvements and enhancements, furniture improvements for school meal spaces				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Review and adjust Mealtime Programming Across APS	Audit school lunch timing and identify any need to address timing across schools (with resources to assist changes)	Assist schools to implement timing/ schedule changes	TBD		
Financial Impact	TBD				
To Fund	TBD				

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	100% of lunches meet nutritional quality expectations set during year 2.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish baseline		Improve towards 100%		
Outcome Metric 3	When surveyed, students report an increasingly positive experience with school meals relative to the baseline established in the first two years. Participation in school meals also continues to increase.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish baseline and improvement goals		Improve relative to baseline		

Initiative 3.3 Enhanced Facilities Stewardship

Priority 3	Improving Infrastructure, Operations, and Sustainability	Short Initiative:	All students attend schools that are managed proactively, continuously, and effectively so that maintenance and care ensure a safe, healthy, and comfortable student experience.

Overarching Goal

| What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years? | As a result of this initiative, APS will have systematic approaches to proactively manage, address, and communicate about all maintenance and building issues. In APS, an asset management system will be used to proactively communicate school building project priorities between facilities team and building-based operations team.

100% of facilities department staff will report having access to (and/or a clear timeframe and plan for accessing) the resources needed to ensure appropriate, forward-thinking maintenance of all school buildings and grounds. We will ensure that the facilities department is adequately staffed.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Town of Arlington, APS will enact changes to ensure that no fossil fuels will be powering systems in buildings by 2050 (per Town Net Zero Action Plan); all buildings will meet the highest standards of efficiency/health and are resilient to projected impacts of climate change.

In short, this initiative seeks to identify maintenance that can be done quickly and to implement a systematic approach for ongoing maintenance and care that also supports community-wide sustainability goals. |
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Responsible Department	Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

This initiative will ensure proactive maintenance of facilities and infrastructure and, where appropriate, assess options for renovation, redesign and/or reconfiguration of schools. The goal of this initiative is to enhance the student experience and ensure superior facility and infrastructure functioning to directly support student and staff comfort, safety, and health; as well as the long-term livability of students' broader environments.

The primary focus is to systematically approach both maintenance and mitigation, taking existing practices and communication of operations and building staff and organizing them more effectively and strategically. By doing so, we will be able to ensure timely action on priority issues as well as clear communication and prioritization of projects so that all stakeholders involved are informed and confident with the process.

This initiative acknowledges the importance of maintaining Arlington's physical facilities and infrastructure in order to achieve community goals like student happiness, success, and safety; as well as energy efficiency and climate mitigation/adaptation, which also affect students' long-term wellbeing. It also acknowledges a key priority for the District: to address the physical plant of the Ottoson Middle School. The community will need to decide the scope of this project (options range from capital upgrades to full renovation, and whether to revisit the middle school experience and its impact on the project). Finally, this initiative must account for the Town's goals to significantly reduce energy use and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

A needs assessment will be completed with specific objective evaluation criteria to determine and prioritize building needs. Building systems to be examined include: general maintenance needs, internet, custodial needs, emissions, bathrooms, facilities, cafeterias, and learning spaces. This process should identify both easy or high priority short-term fixes as well as a longer prioritized list of projects needed to be paced out over time. It will also establish an ongoing maintenance process to be used indefinitely to systematically address any issues that arise.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Set baseline standards based on stakeholder feedback for building performance	Set baseline standards based on stakeholder feedback for building performance	Define communication norms for building occupants and custodial and maintenance staff	Reassess Re-evaluate baseline standards for building performance and communication norms in conversation with Facilities Department and faculty		Continue ongoing maintenance system
Financial Impact	$90,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
To Fund	Building Systems and Automations Manager	Training for custodial and maintenance staff, improvements to communications systems. Additional costs could include staffing expansions depending on findings from feedback and assessments in Year 1			

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Improve use of asset management and maintenance system with consistent processes	Review use of asset management and maintenance system & establish consistent process Conduct training for all users of asset management system to increase use and facilitate communication between school and facilities staff Add facilities maintenance line item in the budget with explicit allocation	Leverage feedback from conversations with facilities staff and occupants to improve asset management system	Continue ongoing maintenance system		
Financial Impact	$1000	$0	TBD	TBD	TBD
To Fund	Training for facilities staff. An APS Asset Management system is already in place, and requires human resources and time to implement effectively				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Use system data to assess preventative maintenance needs and establish phased improvement plan for all buildings	Use system data to assess preventative maintenance needs and establish improvement plan for all buildings, both for capital projects and planned internal projects

Establish stakeholder surveys and baselines for improving building operations | Introduce phased capital requests in accordance with prioritized projects from maintenance and renovation plan

Share comprehensive maintenance plan with the community | Continue prioritizing building projects based on preventative maintenance and renovation plan | Continue ongoing maintenance system | |
| Financial Impact | $0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| To Fund | Capital budget requests and smaller district-funded projects | | | | |

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric	All school administrators report experiencing clear communication around how and why particular repairs get prioritized, based on annual surveys. Staff, students, and families are also asked focused questions about the quality of facilities, with areas of focus identified and addressed at an accelerated rate.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish baseline and desired areas of improvement	Improve in focal areas by 5% annually Improve in all areas by 3% annually			

Strategic Priority 4: Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships

The Arlington Public Schools will partner collaboratively with families in meeting the educational needs of all students; facilitate consistent two-way communication; and provide timely, transparent, relevant, and accessible information to all stakeholders.

Needs Assessment to Support Initiatives

Strategic Priority 4 is designed to address the following challenges identified by the larger strategic planning team and the Strategic Priority 4 Working Group: APS currently has inconsistent approaches to communication with families and relies on one-way communication with families. APS also is not always clear about the follow-up actions taken in response to feedback, when that feedback is solicited. Finally, APS lacks a centralized location for families to acquire information about and be welcomed into the schools in an easy-to-access format, and lacks the capacity to rapidly expand communications and parent engagement efforts. Additionally, APS is challenged by a lack of access to umbrella (before and after) care programming, which is particularly impacting our already-marginalized families and groups of students.

APS is currently reliant on inconsistent one-way communication with families, and schools and teachers across the district also have different ways of sharing updates with families. The district needs to build consistent expectations, with room for teacher- and administrator- flexibility and creativity, for communication with families, including parameters surrounding frequency and style of communication, in order to improve the helpfulness and accessibility of one-way communications. While overall ratings for family-school communications have improved on Culture and Climate surveys since Fall of 2020, 31% of families still indicate that family-school communications require further improvements. Furthermore, when asked to what extent the schools value families' input, only 55% of families reported feeling as though the schools value their opinions "quite a bit" or "a tremendous amount."

Family-School Communication

Based on **695** responses

How have results changed over time?

Percent Favorable

80%

70%

60%

50%

63%   66%   68%   **69**%
Family-School Communication

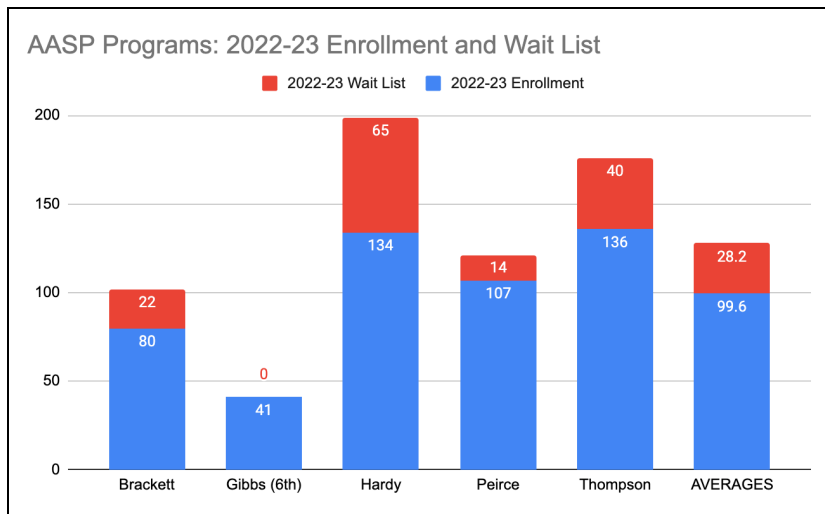Fall 2020   Spring 2021   Fall 2021   Fall 2022
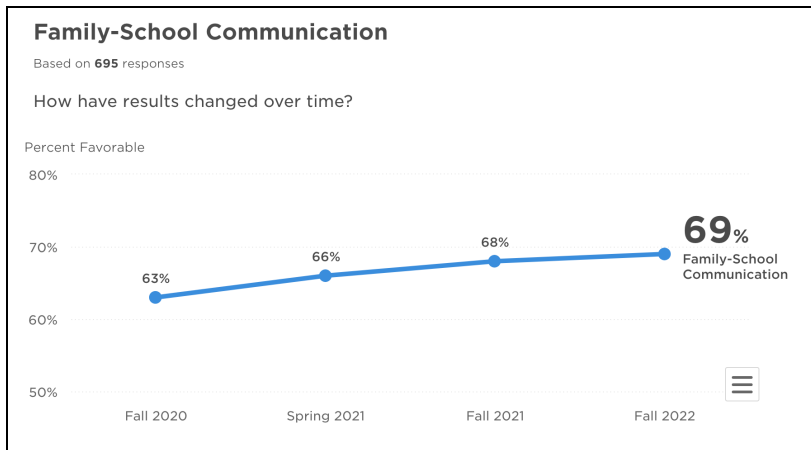
Disproportionately, those families who are most challenged in their relationships with the Arlington Public Schools are those families whose children are in the focal groups identified in other areas of this strategic plan: the families of students with IEPs, of students of color, and of students who are transgender report the least supportive relationships with the schools across categories on school culture and climate surveys. For example:

- The families of students with IEPs report 17% less favorable school response in "Student Needs" and "Learning Behaviors" categories on the family survey;
- The families of students who identify as transgender report significantly less positive home-school relationships and support than the families of students who do not identify as

Group Name	Group Size	Additional Family Assistance	Cultural Awareness and Action	Family-School Communication	Learning Behaviors	School Climate	School Safety	Student Needs
All respondents	695	89%	53%	69%	50%	74%	82%	78%
Does your child identify as transgender?								
Yes	11	-3	-15	-3	-14	-7	-5	-20
No	658	0	+1	+1	0	0	0	0
I'm not sure	16	-5	-16	-5	-3	-9	+4	-12
I prefer not to answer this q...	7	-11	-21	-26	-17	-33	-17	-21

transgender, across all categories of the family culture and climate survey; and
- The families of students who identify as black or African American report 26% less positively "Additional Family Assistance," 15% less positively on "Cultural Awareness and Action," 13% less positively on "School Climate," and 15% less positively on "Student Needs" than the families of their white or Caucasian peers.

AASP Programs: 2022-23 Enrollment and Wait List

■ 2022-23 Wait List ■ 2022-23 Enrollment

School	Enrollment	Wait List
Brackett	80	22
Gibbs (6th)	41	0
Hardy	134	65
Peirce	107	14
Thompson	136	40
AVERAGES	99.6	28.2

- Families who do not speak English at home report significantly less satisfaction on "Additional Family Assistance" categories of Culture and Climate surveys, ranging from 3 to 11% less satisfied than English-speaking parents.

Arlington families have also expressed significant needs and concerns surrounding assistance that is critical to supporting students throughout the day, including before and after school. Wait lists for after school programs have frustrated Arlington families for years, including as we emerge from the pandemic. Challenges associated with expanding before- and after-school care options include staffing and space shortages. The pandemic also disrupted the availability of enrichment activities that could be offered and would extend students' connections to peers and school through engagement in after-school clubs, extracurricular activities, or academic enrichment; however, the district does not currently have the staffing capacity to design and offer such programming.

Finally, an identified need in multiple Tiered Focused Monitoring reviews by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has been expanded supports for the families of English Learners. APS has put significant efforts into forming and sustaining an English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), but has struggled to maintain momentum and to sustain the ELPAC in partnership with families. Findings from a TFM review prior to the pandemic cited APS for a lack of robust translation and interpretation services for families. Over the past year and a half, the percentage of students who are English Learners in APS has increased, with more students coming from countries in the Middle East and South America. Arlington went from having an EL population of 4.1% in 2021 to 5% currently, the highest percentage of English Learners in Arlington since 2013.

Initiatives designed to meet these needs include the creation and staffing of district-wide Family Engagement resources as part of a Family Welcome Center, the expansion of before- and after-school offerings to support families and students' connections to school beyond the regular school day, and refinement of communications strategies, expectations, and consistency throughout the district.

Initiative 4.1 Access to Before- and After-School Services

Strategic Priority 4	Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships	Short Initiative:	APS will expand before and after school care options so a greater number of students are able to access varied before-and-after care, extracurricular, and learning services.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	As the number of dual-working households in Arlington increases, more pressure is placed on families to find options for affordable child care services. This initiative prioritizes ensuring that care and learning options beyond the school day are more affordable and accessible to a greater number of families. There will be an increased number and greater availability of enrichment programs, and improved scheduling will give families more choices when making decisions about where students will go after school. Additionally, as part of this initiative, families will have the tools and resources to support learners in becoming engaged advocates in working collaboratively in school and community, developing leadership skills, and in their identity exploration during before and after school opportunities like clubs (Rainbow Alliance, for example).

Responsible Department	Superintendent (Years 1-2), Assistant Superintendent of Student Services (Years 3+)

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Families need access to affordable and available before and after-care and a range of enrichment opportunities. Currently, demand is greater than supply and in particular, spots in building-based programs are at a premium, particularly for after-care. In order for working families to experience school as a trusted partner and to minimize transitions from one location for the school day to another for after-care for learners, in-building after school care that is affordable is the greatest area of need for Arlington families.

Currently, in-building after-care programs follow multiple organizational schema, with some operating relatively independently and others with greater supervision by the district. Regardless of their infrastructure, the programs all struggle with adequate space and staffing. In addition, Arlington Community Education (ACE) offers after-school enrichment programming in the form of periodic courses, which is separate from the after-care programs that cover the full afternoon time frame.

Because decisions about space are primarily made locally (i.e. at the level of individual schools/buildings), opportunities for enrichment programming are inconsistent/uneven across schools. Without coordinated transportation options, this leaves learners at some sites without access to the same opportunities. Over time, this can lead to marked differences in experience, especially when it comes to curriculum-focused enrichment, like language-learning and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills (e.g. coding).

For before-care, APS's current pilot will need to be assessed, and then potentially adjusted and refined based on the experience this year, with the goal of expanding a before-care option to all elementary schools. In alignment with Initiative 3.2, this could coincide with the expansion of the APS Breakfast Program, which was opened to all APS students in the Fall of 2021.

This initiative also opens up possibilities for reimagination of the services provided under other umbrellas; for example, Title I services could provide options for intervention and enrichment outside of the school day; expanded access to extracurricular clubs at the middle and elementary levels could improve students' connections to school (in alignment with Initiative 1.2), and creative solutions to subsidizing fees for low-income families could provide more access to these critical services, closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

In the next five years, APS will explore multiple possible solutions, beginning with better coordination of staffing and space. With the goal of meeting demand for after-school care and enrichment opportunities, community-based/-run programs may also need to be explored (on and off-site). We will approach before- and after-school care district-wide, to better allocate resources and meet family needs.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Assess status of current programming, future programming needs, and establish district leadership for programming	In collaboration with the Welcome Center, gather longitudinal data and feedback on needed services Gather feedback on, and expand, APS Breakfast and Before Care Program Pilots Continue to coordinate programming and space challenges		Establish central expectations for before, after, and enrichment progs Establish leadership for all out-of-school progs, including summer, to reside in Student Services	Continue budget analysis and sustainability planning	
Financial Impact	TBD		$110,000	$150,000	$150,000
To Fund	Costs for this phase will be mostly human resources and time; costs for any adjustments to programming would come from grants or fees		Coordinator of Enrichment and Umbrella Care Services, budget for expansion of services and/or subsidies for low-income families		

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Audit and plan for additional extracurricular, needs-based, and enrichment programming for all students	Audit current use of Title funds and consider ways to expand enrichment and need-based programming to operate outside of the school day Set shared goals about program capacity - involving sites/schools, program leadership, district leadership, and families Audit participation in existing enrichment programming, such as ACE, to identify barriers to access for focal groups Pilot expanded staff-run programming using Title funds, or as part of summer programming		Collapse oversight and coordination of extracurricular, Title-based, and enrichment programming to be led by Coordinator of Enrichment and Umbrella Care Services (or alternative title) Implement pilots and adjusted programming based on audit findings		
Financial Impact	TBD		Same as above		
To Fund	Costs for this phase will be mostly human resources and time; costs for any adjustments to programming would come from grants or fees		Coordinator of Enrichment and Umbrella Care Services, budget for expansion of services and/or subsidies for low-income families		

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	Decrease the number of families on waiting lists by December 1st of each year for school-based after school care programs. Continue to decrease the size of waiting lists incrementally each year.				
Annual Benchmark	Decrease of 20% from prior year	Decrease of 20% from prior year	Decrease of 20% from prior year	Decrease of 20% from prior year	Decrease of 20% from prior year, reaching 0%
Outcome Metric 2	Establish a baseline for family satisfaction with before-and-after-school care services and options, as measured by routine climate and culture surveys.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish baseline		Incrementally improve relative to baseline by % established in years 2-3		
Outcome Metric 3	Improve representation of families and students accessing before-and-after care services, and increase participation in extracurricular and enrichment services, particularly for focal groups.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish baseline for participation of focal groups in before-, after-, and extracurricular/enrichment programming		Incrementally improve relative to baseline by % established in years 2-3		

Initiative 4.2 Welcome Center and Registration

Strategic Priority 4	Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships	Short Initiative:	Improve family experiences and relationships with registration and APS communication through implementing, staffing, and resourcing an APS Welcome Center.

Overarching Goal

| What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years? | In the next five years, APS will ensure that all families – especially those new to the community – have an easy experience connecting with the district. Families will have a Welcome Center located in the new Arlington High School that they will utilize when they enter the district and for ongoing support. Initial connection and registration for school will be clear and accessible, and families will clearly understand the structure of APS, including how to get in touch with someone for important questions.

Assessment of progress on this initiative will rely on metrics such as usage and survey data administered at moments of engagement, as well as qualitative feedback from school-based administrators and faculty. |
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Responsible Department	Communications and Family Engagement

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Families new to APS do not currently have a centralized physical location for learning about the district's resources, registering children in schools, or seeking support for emergent issues. The Welcome Center[15] will be fully staffed and located in the new high school, and it will include computers or tablets that families can use. Translation services will be available, and families will be able to access the center on a walk-in and appointment basis.

The goal is to advance educational access and increase equity by improving access to information, especially for families who would benefit from a personal connection. The Center will provide a single, centralized location for newcomer and all other families to easily access school and community information. This will ensure that families from marginalized groups have an easy access point to APS. Families will receive assistance with the student registration process, navigating the district's technology platforms, and locating community resources. The Center will provide ongoing access to resources and programs and establish stronger family connections.

In particular, intentional orientation programming for families and for students can provide an overview of the physical spaces, introduce resources, and educate families and students about expectations about curriculum, course schedules, community norms, communication pathways, etc.

Implementation will start with a focus on families with students entering the district or making transitions in grades 6, 7, and 9.

Additional specific actions will include the creation of orientation materials and meetings to meet family needs and use of publicity to ensure that families and staff throughout the community know how to access the center. This initiative is also directly linked to the Communication initiative, especially the drive to ensure translation.

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[15] Several neighbor districts make use of Welcome Centers. The Boston Public Schools relies entirely on its Welcome Centers to support and guide families through the registration process in particular. Lowell Public Schools maintains a Family Resource Center for both registration and other family services, as do Randolph Public Schools and Waltham Public Schools.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Hire/assign Welcome Center leadership and staff and establish standard operating procedures	Review school-based and Center-based activities with families and staff to determine what activities should occur at schools and which at the Center	Establish protocols and training plan for front-line staff at individual schools to welcome all families including all those who don't speak English, and to ensure effective and accurate referral to Welcome Center Expand Welcome Center connection to schools to include school-based family liaisons (FTE, hourly, or stipend), in collaboration with Department of DEIB-J Expand Welcome Center staffing to include Comm. Specialist			Assess usage of Center and determine what changes in outreach or programming are needed Continue implementation, study, and revision
Financial Impact	$110,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$50,000
To Fund	Hire a Director of Communications and Family Engagement	Training materials for staff, Liaison salaries and/or pay, Survey and assessment tools Communications Specialist Salary			

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Development of materials and opportunities for families to engage with and learn about the district	Conduct needs assessment to understand family experience, concerns, confusion Develop Yr 2-5 Plan Establish ELPAC in collaboration with Dept. of ELs	Expand Welcome Center programs to create affinity groups, community conversations Create, translate, and distribute additional resources for families	Continue to grow affinity groups, community conversations, other WC programming	Continue assessment of family experience and plan immediate and long-term changes	
Financial Impact	$20,000	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000
To Fund	Promotional materials, translations, and supply / software / materials costs for programming				

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Assist with implementation of family and student orientations to support transitions between schools	In collaboration with schools, draft family orientation materials for K, 6, 7 and 9 and gather feedback from key constituents		Pilot revised orientations for students and families at Gibbs, Ottoson, and AHS	Pilot delivery of family orientation for all grades	
Financial Impact	TBD				
To Fund	TBD				

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	The experiences of families, specifically those families whose students have IEPs, identify as transgender, or identify as people of color (all considered focal groups) demonstrate significant improvement over 5 years as reported on annual culture and climate surveys.				
Annual Benchmark	Close gaps for focal groups compared to peers' families by 10% annually on Climate and Culture Surveys. ● Families of Transgender Youth: Average gap of 9.6% in 2022, Reduce gap to 6.3% or less by 2028; ● Families of Students of Color: Average gap of 10.4% in 2022, Reduce gap to 6.8% or less by 2028; ● Families of Students with IEPs: Average gap of 6.7% in 2022, Reduce gap to 4.4% or less by 2028.				
Outcome Metric 2	By year 5 of plan, 95% of families new to district are satisfied with enrollment and onboarding experience, as reported on Welcome Center and Registration surveys.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish benchmark	Improve based on feedback to achieve 90% Satisfaction with Welcome Center Experience			
Outcome Metric 3	Families that do not speak English as their primary language and families of English Learners feel more connected to the schools and the district as reported on the annual Climate and Culture Survey "Additional Family Assistance" category, and in ELPAC meetings.				
Annual Benchmark	Close gaps for families compared to peers' families by 10% annually for each language category (Spanish, French, Russian, Not Listed, and Multiple Languages) on Climate and Culture Survey "Additional Family Assistance" category. ● Families who do not speak English as Primary Language: Average gap of 4.2 in 2022, Reduce gap to 2.8% or less by 2028 ● Families of English Learners: Gap of 7% in 2022, Reduce gap to 4.6% or less by 2028.				

Initiative 4.3 Communication and Partnership

Strategic Priority 4	Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships	Short Initiative:	All families experience robust and coherent partnership opportunities and clear, accessible communication from educators, schools, and the district.

Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	APS will furnish multi-faceted, coordinated opportunities for robust family engagement, including school transitions and ongoing learning to facilitate optimal student learning. Communications with families across the district will be clear, accessible, and consistent. As a result all APS families will feel connected to and respected by the schools their children attend, as well as the district overall. Families will know how to connect with their child's school or the district to get the information they need. They will also understand and feel connected to the vision of what an APS graduate should be prepared to do and to conversations about curriculum, equity, and learning. Additionally, all families will have multiple avenues for sharing information, feedback, and questions. Communications between families and schools will be consistent and equitable across the district, such that families with students at multiple schools will have a similar experience and will have access to translated materials and translation resources consistently. With these features in place, families will all be able to support learners in their growth and development in partnership with schools.

Responsible Department	Director of Communications and Family Engagement

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Currently, families of APS learners experience very different frequency, content, and styles of communication from individual schools. Opportunities for engagement vary widely across the district and contribute to inconsistent feelings of belonging and awareness of information, especially in terms of cultural relevance. In the next 5 years, APS seeks to offer families a proactive, uniform system that ensures that they connect to all of the district's resources and that they are able to engage with their schools and their learners in ways that are meaningful and supportive.

Key to these efforts are access to communications, resources, and services.[16] Translation and interpretation resources must be available for written and oral communication between school and families for all who require it, phasing in translation expectations with certain highest importance communications and then continuously adding to that list.

Communication that is clear and accessible is especially important at key junctures, including transitions (e.g. entering a new school community) and learner support outside of school (e.g. understanding student progress reports). In addition to information sharing from school to family, APS also seeks to provide coordinated multi-faceted engagement opportunities that support relationship building that in turn supports student learning. For example, district-wide conversation about math pedagogy would allow for families to understand the trajectory of their learner(s) and could also illustrate what families can do to support their learner. Similarly, as students are asked to develop further independence and self-efficacy, APS can facilitate dialogues across teachers and families to build a broad supportive environment for learners. This work aims to create both family-to-school and family-to-family communication. Finally, it is critical to the success of initiatives across this plan that APS prioritize two-way conversations with families about the equity work of the district, to include discussions about how we define equity, how and why certain actions are taken to improve the experiences of focal groups

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[16] Henderson et al. explain in *Beyond the Bake Sale* (2007) that "Many years of research show that involving families and the community contributes to children's academic and social success." They are also explicit in their recommendation that "Offering translation and interpreters for meetings and other communications is critical" when working with multilingual families.

defined in this plan, and how we can better meet the needs of marginalized members of our community, thereby improving the experiences of all members of our community.

In addition, APS will ensure that there are multiple and varied pathways for feedback. Once established, APS will provide education and awareness efforts for families about modes and methods of feedback, engagement, and advocacy. Methods for this include, but are not limited to, family visits; supportive school-based family liaisons; buddy systems that partner families and students; English conversation groups; and more.

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Ensure all district and school websites are consistent on the district platform and are user-friendly	Complete migration of school sites and clean-up/accessibility of new website, and establish norms		Maintain and update sites with current information		
Financial Impact	$66,000	$66,000	$110,000	$110,000	$110,000
To Fund	.6 District Communications Specialist (ESSER in Year 1)		Stipends for school-based webmasters 1.0 District communications specialist/webmaster		

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Define expectations and establish practices for effective school-home 2-way communication	Review equity audit recommendations for initiatives to address 2-way communication Define expectations for home-school partnerships and routines Establish practice and funding requirements for fully-funded access to interpretation and translation services; build funding line into FY25 budget	Create a standard system of expectations for community communications district-wide (Director of Communications and Family Engagement offers guidance and tools to schools) Implement 2-way communication plans and expanded access to translation and interpretation	Communication expectations are embedded into teacher training Refine 2-way communication plans (including family feedback) and improve as needed	Assess use of standard expectations Assess family feedback mechanisms for usage, quality of feedback, how issues raised can influence proactive communication going forward Establish revised ongoing schedule for family engagement	
Financial Impact	$10,000	$50,000	$50,000	$40,000	
To Fund	Estimated cost for increase in usage and availability of translation and interpretation services or platforms/software to aid in family communication. Other costs include staffing included in other initiative strands			Sustained Efforts	

Arlington Public Schools | Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Major Milestones	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Expanded coordination of parent groups and establishment of Family University	Establish partnerships with PTO leadership to support town-wide organization and possible town-wide funding for school-family connection events	Pilot APS Family University / Workshop Series		Refine and sustain systems for Family University and coordination of parent groups across schools	
Financial Impact	$0	$50,000		$50,000	
To Fund	NA	Guest speakers, supplies for forums or conferences, advertising for events		Sustained efforts	

Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 1	In an annual parent survey on school-family communication, 95% of parents report "yes" to the question: Does the district provide clear communication?				
Annual Benchmark	Establish expectations	Implement expectations and establish baseline	Improve relative to baseline in order to reach 95%		
Outcome Metric 2	In a faculty survey, 95% of teachers and administrators know the protocol on communication lead time for signups for parent-teacher conferences and school visits, and regular communication about classroom activities.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish expectations	Implement expectations and establish baseline	Improve relative to baseline in order to reach 95%		

Key Metric	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26	Year 4: 2026-27	Year 5: 2027-28
Outcome Metric 3	In an annual parent survey of families that speak multiple languages, 95% of parents report "yes" to the question: Were district-wide and school-wide communication (such as Superintendent's letter and Principal's newsletter) and important documents pertaining to your child's education (such as progress reports, IEPs, etc.) translated into your native language accurately, and were competent interpreters provided at important school and district events (such as P-T conferences, building tours, IEP meetings, PTO meetings, district level parent forums, etc.)?				
Annual Benchmark	Establish expectations	Implement expectations and establish baseline	Improve relative to baseline in order to reach 95%		
Outcome Metric 4	Family surveys include questions that assess the extent families feel they are co-creators of school communities, and the answers show increasing levels of positive responses.				
Annual Benchmark	Establish expectations	Implement expectations and establish baseline and target	Improve relative to baseline to reach target		

Implementing the Strategic Plan

Because the elements of this plan are important and complex, the district administration will undertake a specific, methodical process for execution.

The APS senior team and central office staff will set up a simple but specific implementation document and task list that reflects both the key activities to successfully implement each of the 12 initiatives and the need to monitor progress and effectiveness. The senior team will hold meetings at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year to check on the actions that should have been taken, determine the actions to be taken in the next several months, monitor effectiveness, and troubleshoot any challenges. These meetings will also include dedicated time to review the metrics and targets, to monitor progress on meeting those targets, and to revise planned actions accordingly.

Because the plan includes essential initiatives for the success of the district, the superintendent will report annually on progress to the School Committee as a component of the annual Outcomes Report in October of each year. Further, the Strategic Plan will guide the development of annual goals each Spring, to be approved by the School Committee before the close of each school year. Finally, district officials will report on various components of the plan as needed at the request of members of the School Committee. These reports will include updates on the completion of planned milestones, progress towards targets and metrics, and any new learning that has come from implementation.

Conclusion

The Arlington Public Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan is an integrated statement of values and plans. The APS community can expect that the district will focus effort, attention, and significant communication on this plan in the coming five school years, between 2023-2024 and 2027-2028. Together, we can implement these crucial initiatives and provide our students with the crucial resources, conditions, and support that they need to reach their own visions of the future.

This plan was developed by APS students, parents, staff, community members, and the school committee. The school committee voted to adopt the plan on March 30, 2023.

Appendices

Appendix A: Strategic Planning Participants

We wish to thank all of the community stakeholders who gave considerable time and effort to this endeavor during the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2022 strategic planning.

- Claire Abbott, *Family*
- Kirsi Allison-Ampe, *School Committee*
- Gabrielle Ambrosino, *Staff*
- Rebecca Arnold, *Family*
- Sarah Barton, *Family*
- Shaun Berry, *Family*
- Dia Black, *Family*
- Judi Bohn, *AEF*
- Madeline Bransford, *Staff*
- Katerina Cai (Yuanjia), *Family*
- Kamal Chadha, *Family*
- Matthew Coleman, *Staff*
- Margaret Credle Thomas, *Staff*
- Evgenia Diakonenko, *Family*
- Len Diggins, *Town Select Board*
- Thad Dingman, *Staff*
- Alex Dorson, *Student*
- Julie Dunn, *Staff*
- Alison Elmer, *Staff*
- Sarah Endo, *Family*
- Rayann Fatahi, *Student*
- Talia Fox, *Town Staff*
- Danuta Forbes, *Family*
- Katie Gribben, *Family*
- Berengere Guerlavais, *Family*

- Julie Hansen, *Family*
- Bella Harris, *Staff*
- Danika Hodges, *Family*
- Liz Homan, *Superintendent*
- Inae Hwang, *Family*
- Eva Kennedy, *Staff*
- Julianna Keyes, *AEA President*
- Leah Krukonis, *Family*
- Michiko Kurata, *Family*
- Lisa Lambert, *Staff*
- Rebecca Lane, *Family*
- Scott Lever, *Family*
- Junlei Li, *Family*
- Sissi Liu, *Family*
- Elisa MacDonald, *Family*
- Roderick MacNeal, Jr. *Staff*
- Hannah Markelz, *Student*
- Michael Mason, *Staff*
- Aqeel Merchant, *Student*
- Filip Musial, *Student*
- Andrea Nicolay, *Town Staff*
- Cori Palmer, *Family*
- Justin Panarese, *Family*
- Parisa Parsa, *Family*
- Kate Peretz, *Staff*
- Liz Phipps-Soeiro, *Staff*

- Rashmi Pimprikar, *Staff*
- Sindhumathi Revuluri, *Family*
- Kathy Rogers, *Arlington Human Rights Commission*
- Paul Schlichtman, *School Committee*
- Alecia Serafini, *Teacher/Family*
- Patricia Sheppard, *Staff*
- Laurence Slotnick, *Family*
- Rob Spiegel, *Staff*
- Emily Sullivan, *Staff*
- Smita Thakur, *Family*
- Jeff Thielman, *School Committee*
- Kevin Toro, *Staff*
- Thor Trumbull, *Student*
- Jessica Truslow, *AEF/Parent*
- Cesar Urrunaga, *Staff*
- Maren White, *Student*
- Andrew Yang, *Student*
- Dr. Jessica Pepple, *Facilitator (Spring)*
- Dr. Robert Rametti, *Facilitator (Spring)*
- Dan Anderson, *Facilitator (Fall-Winter)*

Appendix B: APS Vision and Mission

Arlington Public Schools Vision

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.

Arlington Public Schools Mission

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.

Appendix C: APS Strategic Priorities and Initiatives

The Strategic Priorities

The four priorities were developed to focus the work of APS in service of the vision and mission. The community team that identified them used a broad range of resources including student, parent, and staff surveys and the district's recent equity audit to ground the development of the priorities.

➤ 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.

➤ 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.

➤ Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships: The Arlington Public Schools will partner collaboratively with families in meeting the educational needs of all students; facilitate consistent two-way communication; and provide timely, transparent, relevant, and accessible information to all stakeholders.

Five- Year Strategic Initiatives

Each of the twelve five-year strategic initiatives is aligned to one of the four priorities. Together, the initiatives provide a roadmap to get from our current conditions to the stated outcome of the priorities they enact. The twelve initiatives are:

Strategic Priority 1: Ensuring Equity and Excellence	Strategic Priority 2: Valuing All Staff
Initiative 1.1: Instructional Vision Initiative 1.2: Student Belonging and Adult Support Initiative 1. 3: Implementing MTSS	Initiative 2.1: Pathway Programs Initiative 2.2: Reimagined Professional Development Initiative 2.3: Compensation
Strategic Priority 3: Improving Infrastructure, Operations, and Sustainability	Strategic Priority 4: Sustaining Collaborative Partnerships
Initiative 3.1: Inclusive and Modern Schools Initiative 3.2: Healthy Lunch for All Initiative 3.3: Enhanced Facilities Stewardship	Initiative 4.1: Before and After Care Initiative 4.2: Welcome Center and Registration Initiative 4.3: Communication and Partnership