

APS Facilities and Tech Plan Outline

[cover page]

Letter from the Superintendent

Arlington Community Members,

I am excited to present here an action-oriented facilities and technology plan for our district. It is intended to be a roadmap that details how we can *both* achieve our aspirations as a district for both facilities and technology resources *and* to project out costs so that we can plan, pace out expenses, and take a multi-year approach to capital and operational budgets. In consultation with the School Committee, I have asked our team to project out an effective aspirational vision that we would work to enable in coming budgets, while also balancing realistic expectations for what can be done financially.

This report is a product of a broad working group this year on Inclusive Spaces and Technology, and builds on the work of the Five-Year Strategic Plan for Year-year and on the work of last year's working group on Inclusive Spaces. I enthusiastically thank all of the Arlington students, parents, staff, and partners who have taken part in each of these efforts that have built upon each other.

I am eager for us to delve into these plans as a community and look forward to our dialogue.

Dr. Elizabeth Homan,
Superintendent

Executive Summary

The purpose of the plan is to serve as a comprehensive communication tool for both internal stakeholders and the broader community. It draws from our Five-Year Strategic Plan, our vision for inclusive spaces, and the developing vision of Deeper Learning for all students to unify the facilities plan and the technology plan. The plan outlines key priorities, operational details, and a strategic roadmap to ensure APS students and staff have the necessary conditions and resources for success.

The plan is intended concisely to outline our anticipated needs in facilities and technology to be able to provide crucial elements of Deeper Learning: Mastery, Identity, Creativity. Similarly, the plan's recommendations account for the spaces and technology required to meet APS's overall vision. Over the next five years, it aims to address anticipated needs in critical areas, including environmental sustainability in facilities, furniture and equipment refresh cycles, temperature control and HVAC improvements, and enhanced accessibility. A central focus is enabling teachers to create flexible and inclusive learning environments that support diverse student needs. Each of these areas is represented in the subsequent sections of the plan.

Following the facilities and technology details, the plan provides fiscal projections that both show currently budgeted resources and which estimates what would be needed to implement the plan fully. With this blueprint, we can plan elements of the capital budget.

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Vision for the APS Learning Environment

“APS 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.”

With this overarching vision in mind for APS, the working group has focused on confirming the crucial facilities and technology conditions and resources that enable the vision. While any work on these areas must fundamentally contribute to our ability to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary, project-based, authentic learning experiences, and to encourage the senses of belonging and empowerment at the center of the vision, there are specific, concrete physical features and resources that are foundational to meeting these lofty ideas.

With that in mind, our approach is to aim for all Arlington learners to learn in inclusive, modern facilities with effective spaces, technology with efficient operations. Through audits of our existing spaces and recommendations for future renovations and improvements to technology, furniture and fixtures, and other infrastructure, the ultimate outcome of school climate measures and student and family experiences in our facilities will be improved.

All learners should have safe accessible access to all facilities within their learning environment. This includes the condition of facilities which includes heating, functionality, elevator access, mold free facilities, etc. All learners should be equipped with devices that are adaptable to their specific needs (voice recognition, interpretation, etc.). And any school practices we expect to see must have space.

All learners should experience learning environments that are comfortable and inspiring. Arlington Public Schools is a shared and student centered learning environment that requires equitable access to an efficient learning space. Learning spaces should allow for appropriate lighting, access to curriculum by way of visual representation such as projection, whiteboards, etc. Learners should experience a sense of belonging supported by representation of cultures, access to break areas, visual representation of student art/work, accurate and updated universal signage throughout the building.

APS Facilities Priorities

Our Goal is to create spaces where our students and staff can learn and teach effectively and sustainably. To do that, the measures planned here bring together needs for modernization along with improvement, maintenance, and regular ongoing costs that we can anticipate. Some facilities work comes in the form of large-scale capital projects, and other work is regular maintenance.

Recently, the Town of Arlington has undertaken longer-term visioning for *Arlington's [Net Zero Action Plan](#)*, which provides an aspirational backdrop for many efforts, as does the concluding Arlington High School building project, which delivers on much of the *Net Zero Action Plan's* blueprint. Building on past work, much of what comes next will need to stem from location-specific next steps that apply these visions.

A focused portfolio of complementary projects are outlined below. Some cut across most or all school buildings, while others are needed particularly in one or another. For each, we share initial ideas about prioritization here. Note that many of the smaller-scale projects omit the Ottoson Middle School, for which the district looks to propose a statement of intent to apply for the Massachusetts School Building Authority's school building program for a large-scale capital project. Such a project would be comprehensive and would address many of these underlying issues at once.

Placeholder for Graphic

Comprehensive Improvement: Fully Renovating Ottoson Middle School

Context

APS intends to pursue a Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) project to fully renovate the Ottoson Middle School. Such a project would be a multi-year endeavor. This is the same program that APS used to support the new Arlington High School project.

The MSBA process begins with districts submitting a Statement of Intent (SOI) to apply for the core state aid program. This process, which might necessitate the hiring of a vendor, will happen in the coming year. After this, if APS is invited to complete a full application, the multi-year planning, budgeting, and building process could begin.

Priorities

The following specific priorities are reflected in the projected budget for the next five years.

What are the specific items needed?	What is the ideal timeline? (or frequency of refresh or revisiting)	What are the cost drivers and considerations?	What is the projected cost?
Engage a vendor to	If applicable, during	Cost of vendor to	TBD

support the SOI	2025-2026.	support, if APS moves forward with one	
OMS Building Project	Multi-year timeline beginning with SOI.	Cost of full renovation TBD	

Additional Notes

- NA

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Control: Future-Proofing our Facilities

Context

Arlington’s Net Zero Action Plan [provides the core aspirations](#) for a future of electrification and environmental sustainability, by addressing the infrastructure of buildings, transportation, and energy supply effects. These components coalesce into a vision for the town’s infrastructure to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Actions for our schools from the Net Zero plan include:

- Existing school buildings will undergo deep energy retrofits to minimize energy consumption and transition school facilities from fossil fuels to electric alternatives.
- The plan encourages the development of local renewable energy sources, such as rooftop solar on school buildings, to reduce reliance on fossil fuels broadly.

These initiatives will have particular implications for temperature control, which also has a profound impact on student learning as comfortable conditions contribute to learning. For that reason, cooling in core school areas and classrooms is a central goal. This is, however, costly, especially when done in a fully green/electrified model.

Cooling first would address core/common areas of schools, then classrooms and other areas. A possible first step in some cases would be to study the project needs for electrification in a given building. One recent proposal that APS has received came in at about \$800,000. However, this likely will not be needed for each building. A

Priorities

The following specific priorities are reflected in the projected budget for the next five years.

What are the specific items needed?	What is the ideal timeline? (or frequency of refresh or revisiting)	What are the cost drivers and considerations?	What is the projected cost?
Cooling for core areas of every school building	Plan for upcoming years, in prioritized order: -Group 1: Thompson, Bishop -Group 2: Hardy, Stratton	Considerations - Whether a study is needed - Whether cooling is standard or green/electric - Whether full	Overall, significant project with several variables from the considerations.

	-Group 3: Others	buildings are cooled, or selected areas/floors	
Cooling for all schools	Plan for upcoming years, in prioritized order: -Group 1: Thompson classrooms -Group 2: Bishop classrooms -Group 3: Other	- Whether it is possible to use mounted units in current infrastructure	

Additional Notes

- As these projects develop, there is an opportunity for the town to increasingly make use of reused materials.
- An additional facilities component contributing to sustainability will be efforts to reduce school waste, improve recycling, and address the sustainability of cafeteria materials. These elements do not currently project any major capital expenditures.

Access and Inclusion: Ensuring All Are Welcome

Context

APS is fully committed to ensuring complete accessibility to our schools. The district conducted an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) audit at Hardy in 2019, which noted specific areas for focus and improvement. Other buildings will require similar assessment. As these assessments are completed, we will know the specific areas that need improvement and we will address the issues identified.

An additional crucial component of accessibility in the context of schools is the need for learning environments that are inclusive in the sense of enabling not just physical access, but configuration in ways that makes it easy for all learners to use. This often comes in the form of establishing classrooms that make it easy for teachers to set up flexible learning environments. This will be addressed in more detail in the following section.

Audio projection technology is an additional element of inclusive access, ensuring that all students with hearing needs are able to fully participate in learning. This will be addressed further in the technology discussion later in this document.

Priorities

The following specific priorities are reflected in the projected budget for the next five years.

What are the specific items needed?	What is the ideal timeline? (or frequency of refresh or revisiting)	What are the cost drivers and considerations?	What is the projected cost?
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Engage a vendor to do ADA reviews of schools	For the 2025-2026 School Year, beginning with priority schools serving students with specific needs, with other schools to follow in subsequent years.	Consideration: Availability of vendors/cost.	The audit at Hardy
Conduct ongoing improvements to address items in the ADA audits or identified elsewhere	These would be addressed annually, in projects assessed within the capital budget.	Various accessibility projects, such as ramps.	Variable

Additional Notes

- NA currently

Furniture , Fixtures, and Finite Projects: Efficiently Nailing the Fundamentals

Context

Our schools are vast ecosystems of activity and many potential improvements are smaller in scale. This includes the retrofitting of classrooms with updated and modernized equipment. As discussed under the “Access and Inclusion” section above, classrooms with flexible furniture configurations greatly assist learning.

At the same time, furniture needs to be replaced over time. Our aim is to plan both maintenance/replacement and modernization/improvement together as one process. We can anticipate that a certain amount of furniture will need to be replaced with regularity, so if we plan to update as we replace, and plan to replace over time at a consistent pace, we can bring some predictability and normalcy to facilities expenses while also improving learning conditions.

We have blueprints for thinking about improving our classes over time, thanks to the recent high school project and to recent ongoing work at Dallin, where classrooms have been updated over time.

As mentioned above, the district seeks to pursue a large-scale Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) project to conduct a full renovation of the Ottoson Middle School. Because this would likely supersede these more limited projects, Ottoson is provisioned here.

Priorities

The following specific priorities are reflected in the projected budget for the next five years.

What are the specific	What is the ideal	What are the cost	What is the projected
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items needed?	timeline? (or frequency of refresh or revisiting)	drivers and considerations?	cost?
Classroom updates	APS would look to confirm the number of classrooms to be addressed, and then spread that need out over five years.	Chairs, desks, files, pedestals, chairs, tables, etc.	Projected cost/room is a minimum of \$14,000, based on recent experience in the AHS project and other recent updates. Inflation will also apply.

Additional Notes

- NA

APS Technology Priorities

At APS, we seek to empower students and teachers to use technology to support learning and problem-solving in a safe and responsible manner. Technology enables student learning in myriad ways, and our teachers are increasingly fluent in various tools.

Placeholder for Graphic

We aim for students to be able to use tech to explore and create their own work. In order to get there, the conditions must be in place so that teachers are able to use tech to support learning and instruction, while being able to collect data to inform teaching.

In short, all students and staff must have access to the tools they require for teaching and learning.

Single-Location Technology: Bringing the Rooms Together

Context

Current state: The district needs a holistic program that equips classrooms with the appropriate tools for teaching and learning, most notably digital tools, projection and increased accessibility. This would also include AV for cafeterias, gyms and other large meeting spaces for remote participation and outreach.

Currently OMS has the greatest need for upgrades in the classroom, followed by Dallin, Gibbs and Thompson.

Placeholder for Graphic

In addition, there are A/V systems in large common spaces in the schools which require updates. These spaces might include learning centers, supplemental classrooms, student labs, and living classrooms.

Placeholder for Graphic

Priorities

The following specific priorities are reflected in the projected budget for the next five years.

What are the specific items needed?	What is the ideal timeline? (or frequency of refresh or revisiting)	What are the cost drivers and considerations?	What is the projected cost?
Classroom updates	Paced out over five years	TBA # of classrooms	TBD
Shared space updates	These will be	Cost of projectors,	TBD

	prioritized across five years, with 2-3 projects annually	speakers, amplifiers, etc	
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Additional Notes

- NA

Individually-Assigned: Tools for Teachers, Stuff for Students

Context

Teachers and students rely on crucial technology tools to enable their learning activities. All of the technology that we use – primarily student chromebooks and teacher laptop computers – needs to be updated periodically. Currently, APS does not have funding approved to complete hardware refreshes over the next 5 years, based on inventory. This includes both student and teacher devices.

Teachers currently use MacBook Air models, managed by APS. These computers are expected to have a 6-year average lifespan, at which point they must be replaced.

In addition, Paraprofessionals are not allocated devices and no funding has yet been approved to expand provisioning to other educators. However, this expansion would greatly enhance the collaboration between educators and support for students, and so is proposed here. This would begin with 200 devices for paraprofessionals during 2025-2026.

Placeholder for Graphic

APS has followed through on its commitment to providing students with the devices that they need to fully participate in learning activities. Students currently used APS managed Chromebooks, which are expected to be replaced every 3 years.

In 2025, the district projects the lifespan of a student chromebook to be three years, while the life of a teacher laptop to be six years.

Placeholder for Graphic

IT is working with the principals of Gibbs, OMS and AHS to redefine the device distribution policy for FY2526 and the goal is to move to 1:1 for K-8, but there is not yet budget to support this.

Placeholder for Graphic

Priorities

The following specific priorities are reflected in the projected budget for the next five years.

What are the specific items needed?	What is the ideal timeline? (or frequency of refresh or revisiting)	What are the cost drivers and considerations?	What is the projected cost?
APS Teacher MacBooks		MacBook Air / teacher, every 6 years	TBD
Devices for Paraprofessionals	TBA	TBA	TBD
Student Chromebooks	TBA	Chromebook lifespan of 3 years, with increasing participation	TBD

Additional Notes

- NA

Contributor Acknowledgements

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