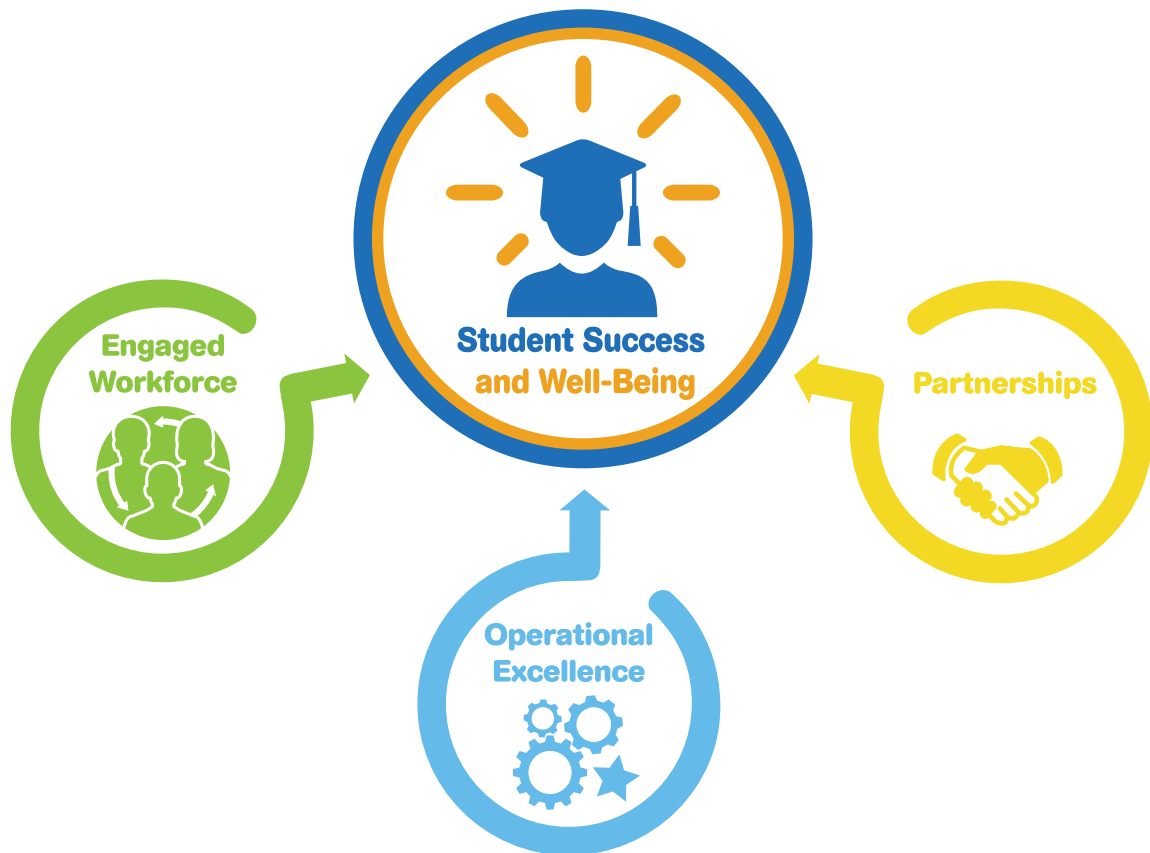




Arlington
Public
Schools

APS STRATEGIC PLAN

2018-2024



INCLUSION
EXCELLENCE
INNOVATION

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR

It is with great pleasure that we share our newly-adopted **Arlington Public Schools (APS) 2018-24 Strategic Plan**, focusing our work for the next six years on **Inclusion, Excellence and Innovation**. APS is well-known for its successful practices, which have fostered real-world skills and student achievement. While we celebrate our progress, we also recognize that there is a continuous need for improvement in our schools and in the outcomes for all students. We understand that the continued success of the district's mission can only be accomplished through a community-wide vision coupled with a commitment to action and sustained engagement.

A tremendous amount of collaboration guided the work of creating a plan that clearly articulates our **Mission and Vision** for APS, and the **Core Values** that are the foundation for all our work. Our new **2018-24 Strategic Plan focuses on Inclusion, Excellence and Innovation**. We will be challenged to try new approaches to teaching and learning, recognizing that our work is about **both student success** through the transfer of knowledge and skills **and student well-being** by fostering safe, nurturing and inclusive learning environments that support social and emotional skills. At the same time, all systems that lead to these student outcomes are dependent upon an **engaged workforce, operational excellence and strong partnerships**.

I am grateful for the dedicated leadership provided by our Strategic Plan Committee Co-chairs, Meredith Purple and Ted Black, who partnered with a wide range of APS staff and volunteer committee members. They have collaborated over the past year to reflect on where we are as a school division, gather broad community input, and more importantly, they have worked together to clearly articulate our future focus and direction to ensure APS provides an optimal learning experience to help every child in APS succeed.

The 2018-24 Strategic Plan is the result of months of work by the Committee, along with members of our community, parents, students, advisory committees and staff. On behalf of all Arlington School Board members, I want to express our sincere gratitude for the countless hours of time, energy, thoughtful deliberation and creativity shared by so many in the development of this plan and, most importantly, on behalf of our students.



Reid Goldstein
School Board Chair



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Every six years, Arlington Public Schools engages in a formal strategic planning process. It is comprehensive in nature and involves a reflection on the accomplishments achieved, areas that need continued focus to strengthen our academic program and a forecasting of priorities to chart a course for our work over the next six years. Our **2018-24 Strategic Plan** is critical because it will serve as a framework for our School Board and advisory committees, school and department plans, and individual work plans. It is the barometer that we will use to measure and keep a pulse on our work to provide the best educational opportunities for children.

We want every student to be able to explore their possibilities, chart their goals, and have the knowledge and skills needed for whatever their future holds. For that reason, the focus for the new Strategic Plan continues to keep our students at the center, and clearly defines the role of our staff and the overall organization and community to meet students' needs and establish the goals outlined below.

The Strategic Plan includes enduring themes that will define our continued success as a school division as we strive to eliminate excellence and opportunity gaps and support the needs of the whole child through safe and healthy learning environments. In the end, to be successful in this work, we need to concentrate on three areas that will support student success: (1) recruiting and retaining a highly engaged workforce; (2) focusing on operational excellence, and (3) strengthening our family and community engagement to support APS students.

Additionally, the Strategic Plan focuses on aligning our work with the goals in our state Department of Education's new "Profile of a Virginia Graduate" and addresses the changing culture of schools. The outcomes for our students will combine content knowledge with workplace skills, community and civic responsibility, and career planning.

This plan is a living document, and while it provides us with the goals, targets, actions and measures for the next six years, we will look at these measures annually to see if we need to make course corrections in our work to ensure continued progress.

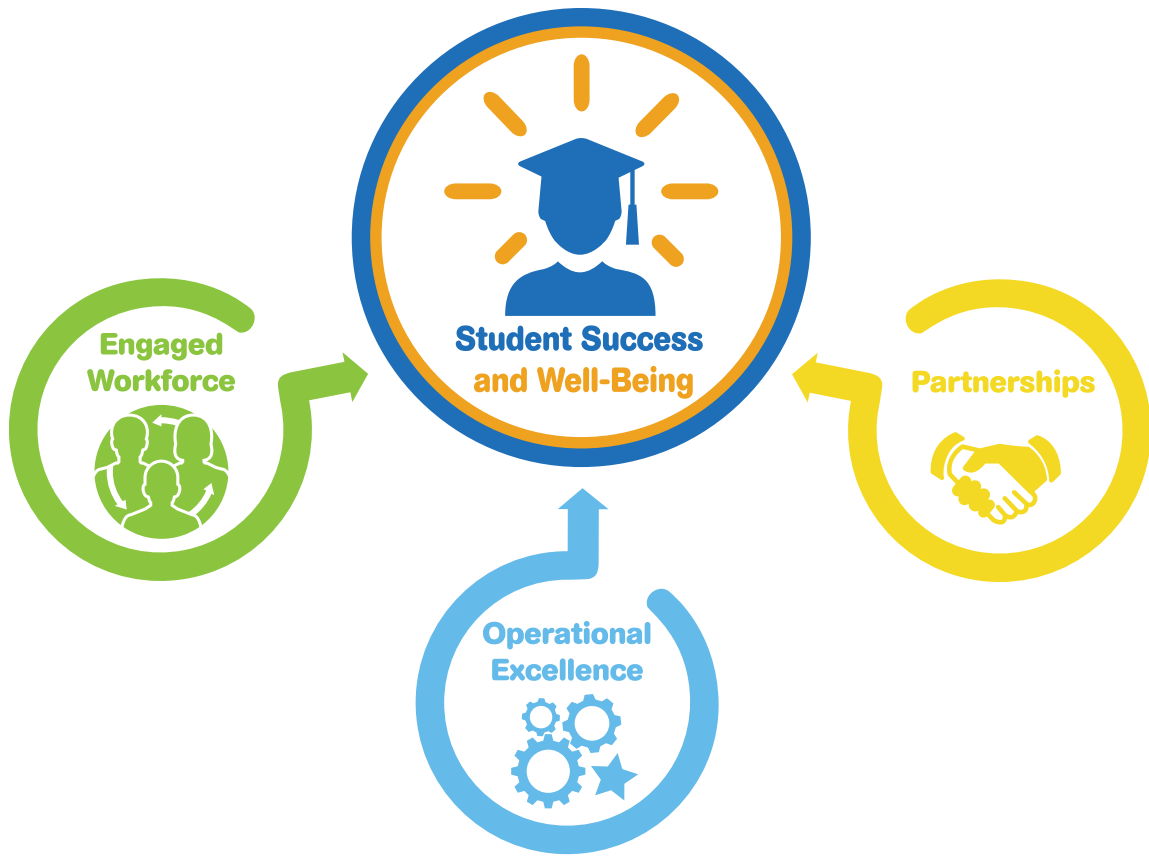
Our continued success depends on all of us working together to achieve the best outcomes for students. Our new 2018-24 Strategic Plan provides a strong educational and organizational approach for our work and collaboration in the years ahead.

We look forward to continuing to share our progress as we focus on making our work and instruction **inclusive, excellent and innovative** to ensure that every student finds their path to success.



Patrick K. Murphy, Ed.D.
Superintendent





CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Strategic Planning Process	2
Strategic Plan “Tuning” Process	4
Mission, Vision & Core Values	5
Goals, Performance Objectives & Strategies	6
Student Success: Multiple Pathways to Student Success	6
Student Well-Being: Healthy, Safe, and Supported Students	7
Engaged Workforce	8
Operational Excellence	9
Partnerships: Strong and Mutually Supportive Partnerships	10

INTRODUCTION

Education systems, as well as our broader community, continue to evolve. We have transitioned from agricultural and industrial communities to post-industrial and global communities. As we reflect on these shifts and the needs of our students, we understand the need to build on our successes and reimagine what is possible in education. This change includes ensuring that students have necessary content knowledge as well as core skills related to communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and citizenship. As students prepare for their futures, the ability to build effective relationships and apply workplace skills will be paramount. Additionally, preparing students for college and career means providing strong academics and skills, plus a wide range of social and emotional skills. Therefore, throughout the Strategic Plan, we focus on each of these areas as we support globally competent students who investigate the world, recognize perspectives, communicate ideas, and take action.

In addition to addressing the overall shifts in education, Arlington Public Schools (APS) continues to focus on eliminating excellence and opportunity gaps. A complex array of forces both local and global, along with historical and present-day practices, intersect to create what we see in our schools as achievement and opportunity gaps. We do not accept that these are intractable problems. Rather we see opportunities to reignite and rededicate our efforts to create a more equitable educational system that serves each and every child regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, home or native language, disability, special learning needs, economic background, or other factors that should not be predictors of success. We strive to be more deliberate and specific, both in naming the challenges we face and in directing our remedies. We believe that student achievement should not be predictable by any demographic classification. Therefore, throughout the Strategic Plan, we have woven those strategies that will strengthen APS's focus on eliminating opportunity gaps.

Finally, APS is mindful of the need to wisely manage growth and our capital and natural resources. We continue to grow as a school division, rapidly evolving into a larger and more dynamic system, ready to meet the needs of the Arlington community. This plan focuses energy and resources on smart and strategic planning for APS's growth over the next six years.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In the fall of 2017, the APS School Board shaped the charge to the Superintendent's Strategic Plan Steering Committee. The Superintendent then selected co-chairs, Meredith Purple and Ted Black, to lead the process. The community was invited to help shape the plan through an application process for the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. From over 120 applicants, 23 committee members were selected (see Appendix A), representing:

- parents and community members;
- APS staff across various employee scales;
- students;
- Arlington County Government staff;
- neighborhood and options schools, as well as programs across all school levels; and
- representatives from internal and external advisory committees.

Throughout the process, community input has been encouraged and gathered through:

- meetings with APS Ambassadors, PTA Presidents and a variety of parent and community groups;
- multiple community surveys;
- School Board Work Session, February 2018;
- School Board Monitoring Report, April 2018;
- APS podcasts;
- APS SchoolTalk messages;
- article in *The Citizen*;
- Letter to the Editor, *Sun Gazette*; and
- interviews with Wakefield, Washington-Lee, and Yorktown student journalists for articles in student newspapers.

Meetings of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee were open to the public and advertised on APS's website. Public comment was welcomed at the meetings and encouraged from citizen groups and individuals. All meeting materials, work products, meeting notes and input received were made public on the Strategic Plan webpage for community review.

Our strategic planning process has focused on soliciting input from the APS community, as well as an assessment of the Arlington, state and global environment; quantitative and qualitative information; and participatory involvement.

DATA SOURCES AND PROCESSES USED TO DEVELOP THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Internal APS Resources

- 2011-17 APS Strategic Plan
- 2017 Baldrige Self-Assessment
- Advisory Council on Instruction: Annual Reports
- APS 3-5 Year Action Plan
- APS Data Dashboard
- APS Program Evaluations
- Arlington’s 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Community Facility Study
- Facilities Advisory Committee: Future Facilities Needs Report
- Master Planning Committee Report
- Whole Child Framework

External Resources

- Arlington County Vision
- Blueprint Virginia 2025: A Business Plan for the Commonwealth
- Building the Talent Pipeline
- Destination Known: Valuing College and Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems
- Employability Skills (Perkins Collaborative Resource Network)
- Environmental Scan
- Future of Jobs
- Global Competence
- P21 Framework
- Profile of a Virginia Graduate
- Supporting Future Oriented Teaching and Learning
- Transformational Vision for Education in the US
- Virginia’s Workplace Readiness Skills: Framework for the Future

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Setting the Stage	October 30, 2017
Vision	November 16, 2017
Mission, Vision, and Core Values	November 27, December 5, December 21, 2017, and January 24, 2018
Goals	January 9, 2018
Comprehensive Review	February 10, 2018
Goals and Strategies	February 26, 2018
Comprehensive Review	March 14, 2018
Community Presentation	April 2, 2018
Comprehensive Review	April 23, 2018

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Hopes and Aspirations	September and October 2017
Mission, Vision, and Core Values	January 2018
Goals and Strategies	February 2018
Draft Strategic Plan	April 2018

STRATEGIC PLAN “TUNING” PROCESS

Understanding that APS, as well as the profession of education as a whole, is dynamic and constantly evolving, each year the Strategic Plan will be reviewed by staff, parents, and community members to determine annual performance toward goals, as well as to make any adjustments that may be needed.

This “tuning” process provides flexibility as APS implements the Strategic Plan. As part of tuning, APS will:

1. Conduct an assessment at the end of each school year to review:
 - Progress to date on each performance objective, key strengths and opportunities for improvement;
 - Potential revisions or changes necessary; and
 - Additional resource needs and budget implications.
2. Work with staff and advisory committees to provide a comprehensive analysis of each performance objective from various perspectives, including:
 - Should we stay the course and continue to focus on the performance objective?
 - If not, what do we need to adjust?
 - Is the 2023-24 outcome for the performance objective too high or too low?
 - Does the performance objective need adjustment to better align with the strategic plan goals?
 - Are there unanticipated changes that are outside of our control that need to be considered?
3. Each September, if needed, the Superintendent will recommend revisions to the School Board’s adopted performance objectives for consideration.

Adjustments may be made to goals, desired outcomes, objectives, or strategies as we engage in constant monitoring and realignment. In addition to this annual process, the Strategic Plan drives the annual School Board and Superintendent priorities, district department plans, school plans, and specific projects and tasks. The chart below shows the steps of each of these components and the timing of the related tuning processes.

Planning System	Steps	Horizon	Tuning
<pre> graph TD SP[STRATEGIC PLAN] --> SB[SB/Supt Priorities] SB --> DP[Department Plans] SB --> SH[School Plans] DP <--> SH DP --> PT[Projects & Tasks] SH --> PT </pre>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct community outreach. 2. Update Environmental Scan. 3. Review relevant data. 4. Update long-term goals, strategies, desired outcomes, and indicators. 	6 years	Annual
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a “vital few” set of priorities. 2. Cascade priorities to all levels of the division. 3. Align annual budget and resource allocation to priorities. 	1-5 years	Annual
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update current condition. 2. Create priority-aligned SMART goals and projects with specific targets and time limits. 3. Develop project management plans. 4. Establish SB/Supt approval of SMART goals and project management plans. 	1-3 years	90 days
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create an activity and task list of key actions for completing SMART goals and projects. 2. Monitor and report progress. 3. Adjust activities and tasks, as needed. 	Various	90 days or less

In addition to the tuning process, APS staff will prepare an annual implementation plan, describing the detailed tasks that will be undertaken in order to meet the goals in the Strategic Plan.

MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Our mission and vision articulate why APS exists as an organization and what we aspire to achieve. Our core values are the beliefs and philosophies that frame APS planning and decision-making. These elements serve as the foundation of our work.

MISSION

To ensure all students learn and thrive in safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments

VISION

To be an inclusive community that empowers all students to foster their dreams, explore their possibilities, and create their futures

CORE VALUES

- **Excellence:** Ensure all students receive an exemplary education that is academically challenging and meets their social and emotional needs.
- **Equity:** Eliminate opportunity gaps and achieve excellence by providing access to schools, resources, and learning opportunities according to each student's unique needs.
- **Inclusivity:** Strengthen our community by valuing people for who they are, nurturing our diversity, and embracing the contributions of all students, families, and staff.
- **Integrity:** Build trust by acting honestly, openly, ethically, and respectfully.
- **Collaboration:** Foster partnerships with families, community, and staff to support the success of our students.
- **Innovation:** Engage in forward-thinking to identify bold ideas that enable us to be responsive to the expectations of our organization and community while cultivating creativity, critical thinking, and resourcefulness in our students.
- **Stewardship:** Manage our resources to honor the community's investment in our schools; create safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable learning environments; support civic and community engagement; and serve current and future generations.



GOALS, PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

The goals of the APS Strategic Plan provide the areas of focus that are the framework for operations and planning. These goals combined with performance objectives and strategies, define how we will achieve our mission and vision.

The goals keep our students at the center of everything we do and focus on strengthening their APS experience through an exemplary workforce, operational excellence, and meaningful partnerships.



STUDENT SUCCESS: MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Ensure that every student is challenged and engaged while providing multiple pathways for student success by broadening opportunities, building support systems and eliminating barriers. APS will eliminate opportunity gaps so all students achieve excellence.

- All students are academically challenged
- Access to personalized learning opportunities
- Multiple pathways to graduation
- Engagement in activities that reflect college and career opportunities and provide the opportunity to learn about and experience workplace expectations and career options
- Access to all curriculum, options schools, and programs without barriers

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Increased achievement for all reporting groups on district and state assessments shows progress toward eliminating the opportunity gap.
2. All students will make at least one year's worth of growth as measured by federal, state, and/or district assessments.
3. Historically over-represented and under-represented groups accessing services will be proportionate with student need and demographics.
4. All graduates will have engaged in at least one experience that demonstrates productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors and may include a work-based experience (internships, externships, formal job shadowing, etc.). (Virginia Profile of a Graduate)
5. At least 80% of students with disabilities will spend 80% or more of their school day in a general education setting.

STRATEGIES

- Embed global competencies, critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship into curriculum and instruction.
- Adapt curriculum and instruction to the needs of each student.
- Increase meaningful inclusive learning environments for students.
- Provide learning opportunities in a variety of settings, times, and formats that include opportunities for students to align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career and higher educational opportunities including internships and externships.
- Increase high-quality options for PreK-12 instructional models within and beyond neighborhood schools.
- Ensure equity of access and opportunity across all school programs.
- Address unconscious racial bias throughout APS.



STUDENT WELL-BEING: HEALTHY, SAFE, AND SUPPORTED STUDENTS

Create an environment that fosters the growth of the whole child. APS will nurture all students' intellectual, physical, mental, and social-emotional growth in healthy, safe, and supportive learning environments.

- Our learning environment is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults
- Prevention and intervention services for physical, mental, behavioral, and social-emotional health
- Engagement in healthy practices that can be continued throughout life

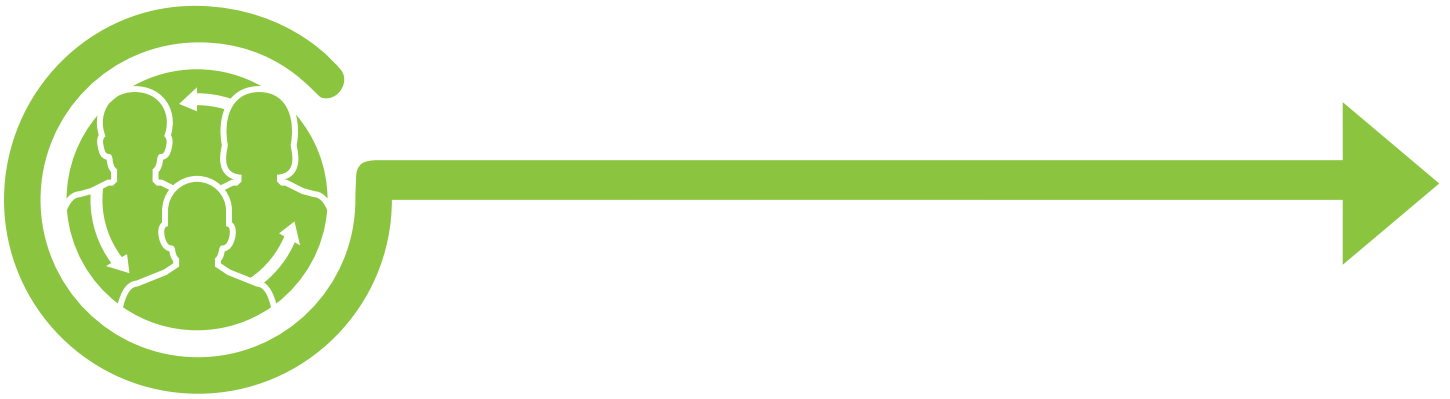
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

6. Key findings on student surveys, including the Your Voice Matters and Youth Risk Behavior Surveys will show a reduction in bullying, violence, sexual harassment, and substance use.
7. Key findings on student surveys, including the Your Voice Matters and Youth Risk Behavior Surveys will show an improvement in mental health measures and access to mental health resources.
8. Each school will report 95% implementation of the Whole Child indicators in the areas of safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments (ASCD).
9. All students can identify at least one school-based adult who supports and encourages their academic and personal growth.
10. Disproportionality in suspension rates by race/ethnicity, students identified with a disability, and English Learners will be reduced and overall suspensions will not increase.

STRATEGIES

- Deliver curriculum through innovative and relevant instruction that is adaptable to the diverse needs of each student.
- Integrate culturally relevant concepts and practices into all levels of school interactions.
- Establish and promote a culture of physical and mental wellness.
- Implement an evidence-based curriculum that focuses on students' physical, social, emotional, and mental health needs and provides interventions when needed through APS and/or community partnerships.





ENGAGED WORKFORCE

Recruit, hire, and invest in a high-quality and diverse workforce to ensure APS is the place where talented individuals choose to work.

- Strong recruitment and hiring as well as strong staff retention
- Professional learning opportunities engage all staff
- Evaluation processes provide actionable feedback for all staff
- Employees are included, respected, and supported
- Information is readily accessible to all staff in order for them to do their jobs effectively
- Visionary leadership is demonstrated while supporting high expectations that balance the needs of all stakeholders

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

11. At least 95% of APS staff will respond favorably that opportunities for professional development meet their needs, as indicated on the Your Voice Matters survey.
12. At least 95% of APS staff will respond favorably on staff engagement, as indicated on the Your Voice Matters survey.
13. At least 95% of APS staff will respond favorably in areas of leadership, as indicated on the Your Voice Matters survey.
14. APS will retain a high-quality workforce, with 95% of respondents to exit surveys indicating a reason for leaving to be an external factor.
15. All staff participate in training that meets or exceeds industry standards for their position and focuses on student success and well-being.

STRATEGIES

- Recruit, retain, and advance high-quality employees.
- Provide growth and leadership opportunities for all staff by providing meaningful, high-quality, and relevant professional learning opportunities.
- Strengthen evaluation processes.
- Promote employee health, wellness, and engagement.
- Establish intentional and focused recruitment efforts to bolster a diverse applicant pool.





OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Strengthen and improve system-wide operations to meet the needs of Arlington's growing and changing community.

- Resources are aligned with needs
- Technology is leveraged to support learning and administrative needs
- Facilities are designed, developed, and maintained for high performance learning and working environments
- Environmental stewardship practices are in place
- Data-based decision making leads to continuous improvement

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

16. APS will be Accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).
17. Organizational operations will meet or exceed benchmarks in comparable school divisions.
18. All school and department management plans will clearly articulate the data used to write SMART goals aligned to the strategic plan.
19. All School Board policies will be up to date and will be reviewed every five years.
20. APS Departments (Finance & Management, Facilities & Operations, Teaching & Learning and Planning & Evaluation) will collaborate to plan innovatively, cost effectively, and within budget to meet 100% of student seat needs through both permanent and temporary facilities, based on 10 year projections.

STRATEGIES

- Manage available resources and assets efficiently, cost effectively, and equitably.
- Use long-term and systematic processes to ensure organizational capacity to accommodate sustained growth.
- Provide high performance learning and working environments that support Universal Design for Learning standards.





PARTNERSHIPS: STRONG AND MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Develop and support strong connections among schools, families, and the community to broaden opportunities for student learning, development, and growth.

- High-impact strategies for engaging all families
- APS programs and services integrate with those in the broader community
- Community businesses and organizations provide opportunities for internships/externships, service, and leadership development

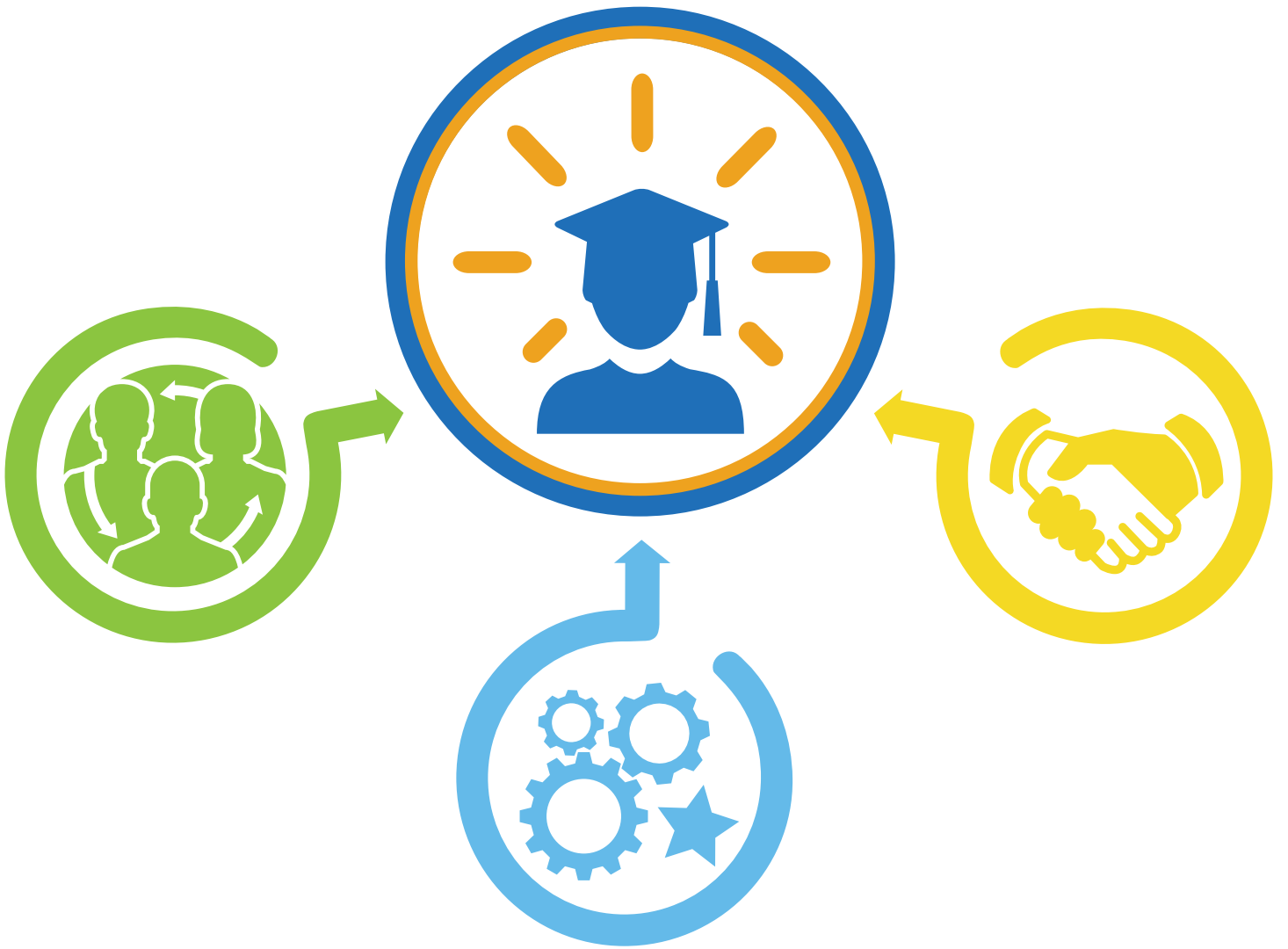
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

21. At least 90% of family and community engagement activities build the capacity of staff and families in capabilities (skills and knowledge), connections (networks), cognition (understanding) and confidence (a Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships).
22. At least 95% of APS families will respond favorably on student and family engagement on the Your Voice Matters survey.
23. The number of partnerships/ volunteer opportunities will meet the needs of students, specifically in the areas of internships and externships.

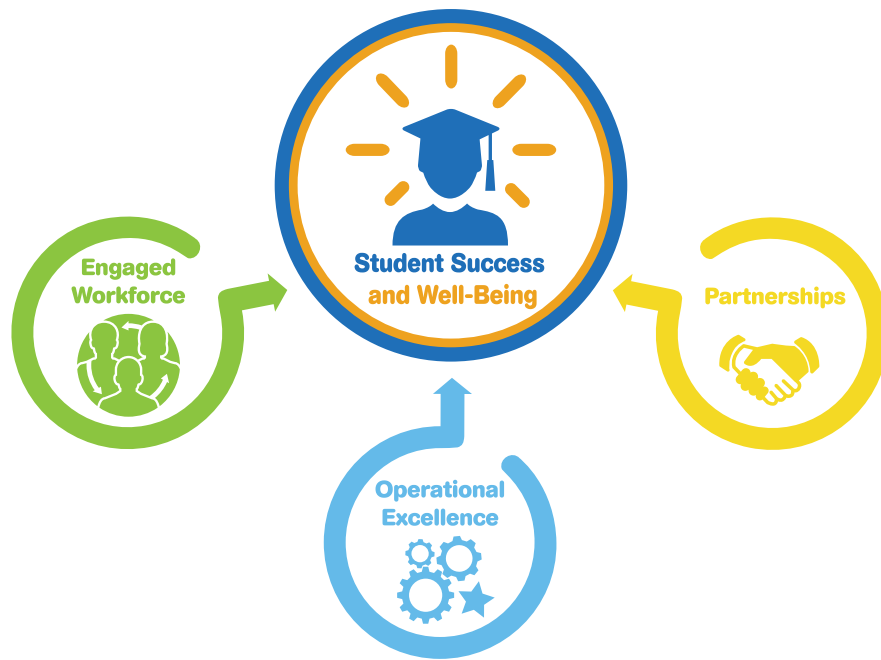
STRATEGIES

- Provide training and resources for staff and families to create meaningful partnerships that support student success and well-being.
- Foster effective and meaningful collaboration among and between resources in APS and the community, including APS programs and services, student, parent, and teacher organizations, County government agencies and programs, non-profit organizations, businesses, advisory groups, and community groups.
- Build partnerships with local, state, and national businesses, organizations, and governments to support a variety of learning experiences.
- Partner with local organizations to provide wraparound services to students including healthcare, nutrition, academic, and social and emotional supports.
- Build a comprehensive structure for defining strategic partnerships, setting expectations, monitoring performance, and measuring quality.





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