



Superintendent's 2015 Annual Report



Arlington
Public
Schools



Dear James, Emma, Abby, Nancy and Barbara,

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve as the Superintendent of Arlington Public Schools, a world-class school division in this vibrant community we call home. We have realized some significant gains and meaningful strides for our students and families this past year and are poised to continue to work in creating more opportunities in the classroom, forging an individual path for each student, and building on the foundation of progress that we have set for the school division. We are excited about the future and know that our efforts around consistent communication with families, striving for excellence through continuous progress, and keeping our priority on meeting each of our strategic goals will drive our work forward in the coming year. Accomplishing these objectives will require all of us to maintain a keen focus on enhancing instruction, exercising solid operational practices, and fostering strong connections with families and the community.

As we approach the end of another successful year, I am grateful for the strong partnership that ensures our students have every opportunity to succeed. I appreciate the School Board's commitment and dedication to our students by the time, energy, and resources you devote to our success, an essential component that results in our school division being among one of the best in the country.

The following pages provide some highlights of my work and each member of my Executive Leadership Team. The highlights reflect the progress that has been made this year in our academic programs, as well as the progress we have achieved in the areas of operations and management of the school division.

Our students' success is a reflection of our shared values and commitment to ensuring that Arlington maintains high-quality public schools. Thank you for your excellent work in leading us forward. I welcome the opportunity to support our current and future School Board leaders and to facilitate our collaboration as a caring and cohesive group of policymakers to guarantee student success. I continue to be energized and rewarded by the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students and be part of our Arlington community. I believe our future is bright and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we prepare for the next step along a path that demonstrates our progress and success.

Sincerely,



Patrick K. Murphy, Ed.D.
Superintendent



SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

2014-15 Highlights

The Superintendent's Office is responsible for providing the instructional and organizational leadership to guide Arlington Public Schools (APS) in achieving the educational goals of the community as directed in the Strategic Plan. Ensuring that students succeed and providing the resources to support them toward that end are the responsibility of the Superintendent and his Executive Leadership Team. The following are highlights of the current school year in the areas of student achievement, management and operations.

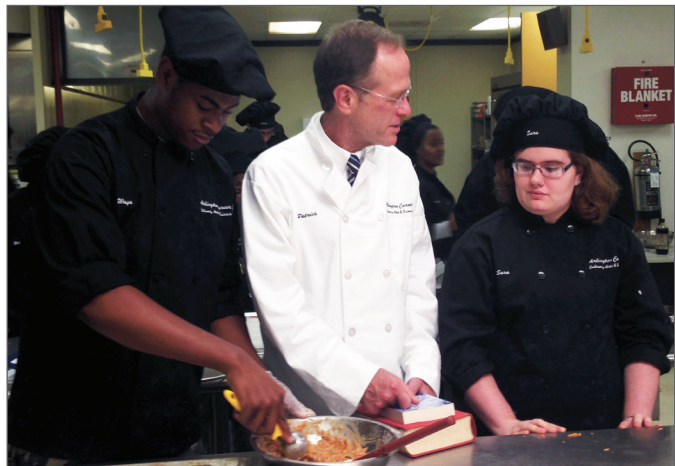
OUR CORE PRIORITY: TEACHING & LEARNING

Quality instruction is our top priority and the academic progress of our students depends on it. We have many measurements of instructional excellence as students continue to be challenged to succeed in a more rigorous and relevant academic program.

- **Literacy Programs** provide a strong foundation for students to develop effective reading and writing skills that are essential for their success in life.
- We have launched the **Arlington Tiered System of Support**, a systematic approach to identify and deliver services that meet the unique needs of each child.
- We continue our focus on **Personalized Learning** efforts by strengthening the use of technology to support instruction. As our professional development expands and classroom strategies and outcomes are shared, we are making continuous improvements that will help all teachers and students benefit from digital learning in the classroom.
- Our **Executive Leadership Cohort** is supporting student academic performance in 11 elementary schools and two middle schools by developing and implementing effective analysis of student achievement data, instructional delivery models, interventions and staff development. This work has resulted in more APS schools achieving the academic standards based on state and national accountability.
- We have also stretched ourselves to make sure that no roadblocks, big or small, keep students from being prepared to learn. We explored the School Board suggestion to make breakfast more accessible and were able to create "**Grab and Go Breakfasts**," our new bagged meal program to make sure kids begin each day with a healthy start. We look forward to expanding it next year.
- The *Washington Post* **Challenge Index** continues to rank all four Arlington high schools among the top 75 in our region, based on the high number of our students who are taking Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests. This is just one of many independent measures that continue to highlight the quality of our instructional programs.

MANAGING FOR SUCCESS

Student enrollment growth continues to present challenges for our school division and can also be viewed as a testament to the excellence that can be found in each of our schools. Providing students with a top-notch public education has led to more students entering APS and for that we can be proud. Tackling these capacity challenges will be one of the top priorities as we enter a new year to ensure that students continue to have optimal learning environments. We hope to gain better insights and develop long-term solutions for growing enrollment through our Community Engagement Process and through the findings of the Community Facilities Study.



FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Reflecting on the FY 2016 budget process, we learned that creating opportunities for input early in the process made for a smoother budget adoption. Understanding and consensus were gained in what could have proven to be a challenging environment. Early decision-making and engagement were the keys to our success and it has taught us a great deal about the road we are paving as we move forward. Vital to this process was the focused approach we took when addressing efficiencies and identifying potential changes in service delivery. Our continued efforts around the recent dependent care verification audit and residency verification are prime examples of our work as a team to realize efficiencies.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE APS COMMUNITY

Meeting our students and teachers in the classroom has been a major highlight of this past school year. I continue to be very involved and present in our schools, and have made almost 100 **Classroom and School Visits** over the past year to stay connected with our students and engaged in their success. Getting a firsthand look at instruction and hearing the voices of our students is energizing and helps to shape our future work. I had the opportunity to play ball, read books, experience professional development among students, see gardening projects led by students, capture fifth graders helping kindergartners produce biographical e-books, learn to weld, and even support seniors as they made pledges for their post-secondary choices. I see these occasions as integral to understanding our work at the grassroots level and how we affect every child's path. Through the Aspire2Excellence program we are leveraging these connections and identifying the individual talents of each child to develop their path to success.

We have facilitated many community discussions to help us plan for our future needs, through our More Seats efforts in addition to both the **WRAPS** process and the **Arlington Community Facilities Study**. These conversations have helped us foster a collaborative approach to determine how we can best accommodate the public facility needs of our growing population of residents, which will include many more students in the years to come.

Because I understand the importance in **Recognizing Achievement**, this year I've written more than 1,450 letters to students, staff, and families to acknowledge their many milestones and successes. Just as important, we highlighted many other successes at our School Board meetings, in School Talk messages to our community and the local media, and through the evolving social media channels now available to us.

In my commitment to transparency and connectedness, it has been gratifying to see the momentum that has been created through my interest in social media. I believe in embracing new ways to communicate, so this year, I adopted **Social Media** as a new opportunity to reach more families and community members, and modeled its use to encourage members of the team to use it to share what we're doing throughout APS. As a result, this year I have enjoyed a birds-eye view of the many happenings across the division and have connected personally with students, families, and staff. I have been pleased to see how this platform has generated a buzz among APS staff, leading to a weekly series of Twitter Chats where staff and participants from across the country join us to talk about strategies and approaches to better serve our students. These rich conversations have brought together staff from all levels to share promising practices and gain insight from one another. The best part about these efforts is that these new tools are in the infancy stage and I look forward to seeing where it will lead us in the coming year. Supporting technology to create connections in and outside the classroom is critical, and I believe that by modeling this behavior, staff and families understand the role that technology plays in creating continuous learning, 24/7.



DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTION

2014-15 Highlights

The Department of Instruction's over-arching core service is providing instructional support for schools particularly focusing on Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2, and 5. For 2014-15, three significant and sustainable indicators that highlight this are the: Executive Leadership Cohort (ELC), Literacy Initiative, and Family and Community Engagement (FACE) process. Each has embedded within it the continuous improvement cycle and is also a part of the larger continuous improvement cycle for the Department as a whole.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COHORT (ELC)

ELC is a multi-tiered framework in 11 elementary schools and two middle schools designed to build school capacity, strengthen teaching, and improve academic performance. Schools are clustered into two groups to provide greater access to resources and to engage in innovative and decisive problem-solving with school meetings rotating bi-monthly with:

- ELC Division team and principal (with the opportunity to have select staff join the meetings)
- Division leadership including the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
- The Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Education or the Director of Secondary Education

In addition, direct school-based monthly support is provided by content and program area specialists in English language arts (ELA), math, ESOL/HILT, and Special Education. The ELC resulted directly in a decreasing number of schools being under ESEA sanctions culminating with, in 2014-15, no APS school being under any ESEA sanctions. ELC develops and implements common expectations related to effective implementation of student achievement data, instructional delivery, interventions, professional learning communities and professional learning for the identified schools.

LITERACY INITIATIVE

The Literacy Initiative, launched in the summer of 2014, is a five-year plan directly tied to Strategic Plan Goals 1 and 2, and is focused on having all students reading at grade level by Grade 3. The initiative builds upon the continuous improvement model of teaching (Plan, Teach, Differentiate, Assess, and focuses on using screening data to inform targeted professional development for reading and is supported by appropriate classroom resources with particular emphasis on the identified needs of students with disabilities and/or English language learners. To date, the following work has been accomplished or initiated:

- Professional learning and training in identified strategies for instructional staff
- Designing the five-year plan
- Working to identify universal screeners
- Revising the Intervention Assistance Team process



While only in the first year, staff has seen positive data through our formative assessments (Interactive Achievement) as well as anecdotal reports from specific schools and will be closely reviewing the results from Virginia's standards-based assessments. The Literacy Initiative is crucial to building all staff's understanding and ability to use best practices for all learners with a focus on collaboratively improving core instruction and the utilization of resources across subject and program areas.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strategic Plan Goal 5 focuses on family involvement and partnerships in support of the APS core value of collaboration. The School Board adopted a new Family and Community Engagement (FACE) policy in September 2014, and a 0.5 FACE Specialist was hired in January 2015 with redirected funding from the Department of Instruction to begin the work to implement the policy. Since then the FACE Specialist, supported by other Department of Instruction staff, has:

- Developed a needs assessment
- Met with each of the principals' groups and the directors of counseling to complete the needs assessment
- Established a citizen, parent, county, and school staff Action Team to begin drafting consistent and sustainable procedures for both school and district-wide efforts
- Begun drafting the procedures
- Begun planning for a FACE handbook or best practices and specific guidelines

To fully implement this policy as part of the FY 2016 budget, the School Board approved funding for a dedicated full-time staff position in the Department of Instruction to continue this work and to train and support teachers in best FACE practices, strategies, and activities. The FACE Specialist will facilitate systemic coordination and technical assistance with capacity building and collaboration between APS departments and offices (such as Instruction, Student Services, ESOL-HILT, Title I, Minority Achievement, and School and Community Relations) and community organizations (including the Arlington Partnership for Children Youth and Families, Edu-Futuro, AHC Inc. Greenbrier Learning Center or other organizations that connect families and learning).

CONCLUSION

Each of these indicators are sustainable on its own as an activity providing support to schools and integrated into the broader structure of support that the Department of Instruction and APS provides to students, schools, and families. As the Department moves forward, each indicator will be continually assessed to ensure that it is providing effective utilization of resources; efficient support for student achievement (particularly in the area of college and work-readiness); and increased collaboration. The next key step will be integrating these assessments and the other work of the Department of Instruction with the system-wide initiatives for personalized learning devices and increasing student options.



DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

2014-15 Highlights

The Department of Student Services and Special Education utilized and improved existing resources to ensure that all students have optimum opportunity, access and support to enroll in and master academically rigorous courses. These efforts involved significant collaboration with schools and central departments, including Instruction, Information Services, Administrative Services and Human Resources. Strategies utilized to support this overarching goal include an emphasis to increase participation in dual enrollment courses; support to students and families under the Aspire to Excellence umbrella; and district-wide implementation of the Arlington Tiered System of Support,

ARLINGTON TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (ATSS)

Following the program evaluation recommendation and the APS Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2 and 5, the tiered system of support structure was developed to reduce the achievement gap and help ensure consistent and systematic instructional practices for our students. Using a multi-tiered system of support, the Arlington Tiered System of Support (ATSS) expands the current Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) process to make it more reflective of a comprehensive and research-based Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to ensure that all students receive the instruction and interventions they need to support academic and social/emotional learning, and to achieve at a higher level of performance. ATSS provides a framework to ensure that all students can access the most meaningful and rigorous courses to maximize their ability to graduate from APS prepared for post graduate courses and careers.

During the 2014-15 school year, the Department collaborated with schools and central departments to complete the first year phase of Research/Installation. Key accomplishments for the year include:

- Hired a highly-qualified ATSS supervisor to oversee the formative process, professional development and countywide implementation.
- Closely collaborated with Instruction, Information Services, school administrators, teachers, and parents to build the knowledge base needed to effectively build a tiered system of support and to identify which structures need to be put in place as a framework.
- Identified methods to ensure standardized implementation, utilizing research-based universal screeners.
- Revised the current IAT process.
- Collaborated with instructional staff and Information Services to identify a monitoring system using quarterly benchmark data
- Provided professional development for more than 300 teachers, including special education and ESOL teachers, and all APS administrators.
- Developed a data monitoring system via the Data Warehouse

ATSS is a comprehensive framework that integrates assessment and intervention in a school-wide, multi-tiered prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce the number of behavior referrals. The framework can also support APS efforts to reduce over-identification of students in need of special education services, and is designed to eliminate the achievement gap for all students. Now that the initial model is in place, the 2015-16 school year will begin the initial implementation to focus on providing academic support. In 2016-17, full implementation will begin to include a countywide network of supports to meet each student's social, emotional and behavioral needs.



INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES

Dual enrollment is an enrichment opportunity that allows high school students to earn college credits for courses taken through NOVA while still being enrolled in APS. This year, the Department focused on increasing the number of students enrolled in and graduating from dual enrollment courses.

- In one year the number of students who were dually enrolled increased by 164 students
- Course enrollment increased by 172 courses
- Many students enrolled in more than one dual-enrolled courses

Dual Enrollment provides yet another opportunity for students to increase their capacity to earn an advanced diploma. Students who successfully complete DE courses are better prepared and increase their likelihood to earn a college degree.

ASPIRE TO EXCELLENCE (A2E) DATA QUICK CHECKS

A key priority for the Department is to increase the number of students graduating from APS with an advanced diploma. By providing families a thorough understanding of the academic planning process, beginning in PreK through 12th grade, students become self-advocates and parents understand how to navigate academic supports needed to assist their children in meeting and exceeding their aspirations. Students and parents are provided with updated information and strategies to support and guide students to post-secondary education and future employment.

To determine how many students are on track for an advanced diploma, the Department partnered with school staff to closely monitor student progress:

- Middle Schools focused on increasing the number of students who will transition to 9th grade with at least three high school credits.
- High Schools focused on increasing the number of students enrolled in IB/AP/DE courses.
- Staff used multiple data sources (SOLs, Grades, Course Completion, Course Requests, GPA, SAT, ACT, PSAT AP Potential, etc.) to identify students who are encouraged to enroll in more rigorous courses. In addition, parents were provided information about the benefits through A2E workshops.
- Staff closely monitored the progress of students who have accepted the challenge, and provided additional supports to students in need, as well as communicated progress to families via ParentVue, report cards and interim reports.
- Student enrollment in high school credit courses increased for middle school students.
- The number of students graduating with advanced diplomas is expected to increase this year.

CONCLUSION

Academic planning includes a comprehensive educational focus to better meet the academic needs of students. As evidenced in the data, students are enrolling and completing DE courses in unprecedented numbers, thus increasing their access to post-secondary education. The A2E Data Quick Check meetings provide ongoing, regular progress checks that align with our continuous improvement efforts and help to ensure academic pathways for all students. Finally, the ATSS model is a division wide approach to systems change by improving instructional decision-making at all levels, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and the classroom through the division level. This approach will provide a continuum of support across all schools to foster improved student success.



DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SERVICES

2014-15 Highlights

The Department of Information Services (IS) provides support and solutions that promote education in Arlington. The department delivers technologies and data that support and promote student learning, effective teaching, user productivity, accountability in decision-making, reliable communication and best business practices. The development of clear technical strategies to support instructional and business goals and to anticipate future technology trends is a key focus for IS. Priorities for 2014-15 include: Increased data availability for decision making, high quality communications, digital learning implementation, data quality in key systems of record, staff growth in the use of technology to improve professional practices, alignment of APS work with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, and wireless expansion. Three projects exemplify the work accomplished in support of these priorities.

SUPPORT OF PERSONALIZED (DIGITAL) LEARNING

Education in the 21st century is increasingly focused on personalized learning. APS has embraced personalization through its Strategic and Technology Plans. The APS Strategic Plan calls for utilizing state-of-the-art technology that creates engaging, relevant and personalized learning experiences for all learners regardless of background, language or disabilities. This indicator is measured by the student-to-device ratio, with a target of 1:1 by 2017. The APS Technology Plan states that every student should have access to an internet-connected personal computing device both during and outside of school hours. To meet these goals IS began work in 2010, centering around four key areas of focus to update classroom technology. Between 2010 and 2014 the network infrastructure was completely upgraded and the most appropriate types of personalized devices were selected. In the 2014-15 school year, the department began deployment of the personalized devices.

- Over 350 teachers received training on the use of the new student devices. The training included basic 'how to' for the devices as well as an introduction to the Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition (SAMR) model. ITCs provided additional just-in-time training for teachers, helping them to learn at their own pace. Additional training is planned for the 2015-16 school year and beyond.
- Students in at least one grade level at each school were issued a personalized device; at some target schools, additional students received devices. This was APS's first large scale transition from shared devices to individual devices being issued to students. In total 4,370 iPads and 2,050 MacBook Airs were issued to teachers and students.
- IS set up a new Mobile Device Management system to support management of the devices. This system makes requested instructional applications available to students on their devices through an App Catalog. IS has made 58 apps available to all students, and individual schools have supplemented these with additional apps to support the individual school-based programs. For example, Kenmore students have 25 additional apps, while Abingdon students have 212 additional apps.

DATA WAREHOUSE: PROVIDING IMPROVED ACCESS TO DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING

With the increasing focus on storing data in electronic databases, APS has an enriching set of information to continuously inform instructional decisions. The APS Strategic Plan calls for the division to have data-driven processes across all goal areas. IS focuses on making sure that data is reliable and available in a user friendly format. The strategy focuses on identifying the system of record for data, and then aggregating data from these systems of record into the Data Warehouse.

- IS added a 360 degree view of individual students which includes trend analyses of items such as attendance, grades and assessments. These 360° views can be accessed through multiple drill-down reports. This provides administrators with a snapshot of specific targeted students.



- In 2014-15, APS transitioned to using the Data Warehouse to support quarterly meetings with principals, sponsored by Student Services. Data analyzed at these meetings includes reports on honor roll, grade distribution, students at risk of dropping out, and Aspire2Excellent academic planning progress.
- Several key reports were added to the Data Warehouse including a dashboard related to middle school students taking high school courses, PALS assessments, students at risk, and a monthly membership report packet. All of these reports can be disaggregated by the APS Strategic Plan segments and drilled down to the individual student level.

IMPROVED NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

In support of the anticipated migration towards mobile devices and in preparation for the significant expansion in the number of devices as well as the possible loss of the current cable franchise agreement, the entire APS network infrastructure needed to be redesigned. Without the redesign, the devices provided through the Personalized (Digital) Learning project would be unreliable. The department began work on addressing this in 2010 by redesigning and improving all major systems. During the 2014-15 school year, the primary focus has been to improve wireless reliability, accomplished by adding additional access points in schools. The long-term goal is to have two access points in every classroom plus multiple access points in high traffic common areas such as libraries and cafeterias.

- The department added over 200 wireless access points to schools, bringing the APS countywide total to 2,203. The access points were placed primarily in relocatable classrooms, an ongoing need as APS student enrollment continues to grow.
- Two schools received additional access points to provide one in every classroom, and two more schools are scheduled to receive the same upgrade. When these final two schools are completed, every school will have an access point in every classroom.
- With the migration to personalized learning and an increased focus on the use of video in instruction, the department has seen a significant increase in Internet bandwidth. This year the department more than doubled the capacity of the APS internet connection, from a 600MB connection to a 1.3GB connection to more effectively support our growing instructional needs.
- The Education Center and Network Operations Center are connected via ConnectArlington. The Marshall building is scheduled to be connected before the end of the 2014-15 school year. ConnectArlington has the potential to help APS provide internet connectivity to families who may not have internet access at home. It will also ensure that APS will continue to have a reliable network that is not dependent on a cable franchise agreement.

CONCLUSION

The ongoing focus on increasing the use of technology to support student learning will continue to guide the work of Information Services in FY2016 and beyond. The transition from shared devices to personalized devices through the Personalized (Digital) Learning initiative will remain an area of focus. IS will continue to expand the Data Warehouse for teachers and administrators, and will emphasize and support the use of data in making decisions to support student success. As student enrollment continues to grow, the APS network infrastructure will need to be expanded to support APS's growing needs. The need for expansion will be compounded by the increase in the types of devices that are network connected. The key objective of the department will continue to be ensuring that teachers and administrators have access to tools that are reliable and meet the wide array of instructional needs.



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

2014-15 Highlights

Administrative Services focuses on Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the Strategic Plan to effectively employ various processes for decision-making. This occurs through close collaboration with the Departments of Human Resources (HR), Instruction, Student Services and Facilities & Operations on various district-wide needs and initiatives. Additionally, direct support is provided to the Superintendent and principals on a daily basis. This year, three significant and sustainable initiatives highlight the Department's work, including the Executive Leadership Cohort (ELC), Succession Planning for Leadership Development, and Discipline. Administrative Services works to ensure alignment with other departments, and each initiative has embedded within it the continuous improvement cycle for the work by the department and APS.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COHORT (ELC)

Administrative Services directly supports many continuous improvement initiatives that support the academic achievement of the Strategic Plan Goals 1 & 2. One initiative is the Executive Leadership Cohort (ELC), which is a multi-tiered framework in 11 elementary schools and 2 middle schools designed to build school capacity, strengthen teaching, and improve academic performance. The ELC utilizes all available resources for increased efficiency and effectiveness across the district and within each school. The meetings with schools has resulted in:

- Integrating division leadership including the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendents for Administrative Services, Student Services and Instruction to monitor student academic performance.
- Collaborating with the Department of Instruction on data analysis, strategies, and alignment of best practices aimed at achieving greater success for target groups.
- Participating in the ELC to ensure accountability for continuous improvement at targeted schools.
- Working in partnership with HR and the Superintendent's Office on updating the evaluation process for principals and providing important feedback for all reviews.
- Working jointly with the Superintendent to align ELC work to the P-Scale evaluation process through beginning, mid-year and end-of-year review meetings with principals.
- Integrating systems between teachers, principals and district SMART goals.

ELC develops and implements common expectations related to effective implementation of student achievement data, instructional delivery, interventions, professional learning communities, and professional learning for the identified schools.

SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership programs are designed to provide professional development for teachers and current administrators interested in pursuing future leadership positions. APS fosters professional growth and retains high-quality staff by providing them with opportunities to acquire leadership skills that are necessary for advancement in the profession. Throughout the year, collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources on components of the Work Force Initiative Plan has led to a comprehensive leadership training initiative for current and future administrators. To date, the opportunities have led to the following accomplishments:

- Expanded opportunities for advanced degrees and/or licensure endorsements through a partnership with George Mason University: The Education Leadership program provides individuals interested in a career as a school principal or in school



administration with an opportunity to earn a master's degree or advanced license. Four orientation sessions occurred during the 2014-15 SY and, as a result, two cohorts consisting of 34 APS teachers are poised to begin the two-year program.

- Further enhancement of the “Aspiring Leaders,” programs: Six sessions have been provided for “Aspiring Leaders” with 12-15 APS teachers participating in each professional development session which focused on professional readings, practical strategies and collaborative discussions with feedback from experts in the field (superintendent, school leaders, supervisors and assistant superintendents). The sessions are designed to develop leadership skills and establish an in-house pool of candidates for future leadership positions.
- Continuing to expand administrative leadership opportunities for practicing administrators such as the Statewide Committee of Practice for Excellence (SCOPE) offered by the K-12 Education Advisory Council. This type of initiative is a result of the partnership with HR and the Superintendent's Office, and is embedded in the APS Work Force Initiative Plan.

The “Aspiring Leader” and GMU candidates are identified through recommendations from principals, assistant principals, supervisors and assistant superintendents. Individuals are provided with leadership training that focuses on the roles and responsibilities of a school leader while meeting licensure requirements for an administrative endorsement. Both efforts have resulted in an increase of current staff applying for administrative positions and is helping APS to retain high-quality staff as future leaders, which supports the APS Strategic Goal 3: Recruit, Retain & Develop High Quality Staff.

SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

The systematic approach to address discipline issues is ongoing and embedded in Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2 and 5. A Discipline Guidebook for Administrators is utilized and designed to provide guidance and consistency in the management of disciplinary matters in APS, while respecting the personal rights of each student. To date, this systematic approach has led to the following accomplishments:

- Monitoring out-of-school suspensions has helped APS to remain among the lowest in the state (2007–510; 2008–406; 2009–360; 2010–316; 2011–199; 2012–203; 2013–223 and 2014–222).
- Establishing a committee to monitor implementation of the administrators' guidebook, while conducting data analysis, providing feedback and identifying appropriate interventions to help students remain in school. Schools continue to identify alternatives to out-of-school suspensions.
- Continuing implementation of the “Second Chance Program” that provides all first-time substance abuse offenders in middle and high school with an opportunity to participate in a diversion early intervention education program. As a result, more than 300 students have benefitted from this award-winning early intervention program.
- Exploring the expansion of alternative or new initiatives to discipline, such as Responsive Classroom, Positive Behavior Intervention School (PBIS), ATSS and Character Education.

CONCLUSION

Each area of focus represents collaborative teamwork between departments aimed at supporting schools through systematic approaches for instructional delivery, sustainability and continuity in addressing discipline issues and developing future APS leadership. As APS continues to develop each area of focus, the Department of Administrative Services will continue to collaborate with departments to directly support many continuous improvement initiatives identified in the APS Strategic Plan.

Next steps will include continuing to expand department partnerships in leadership development, incorporating technology to expand leadership professional development and identifying alternatives in addressing the discipline gap. The goal is to continue focusing on strategic priorities as an integral element in supporting continuous improvement throughout APS.



FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

2014-15 Highlights

Facilities and Operations supports learning through its various offices: Facilities Planning and Design and Construction address growing enrollment; Maintenance keeps our facilities running efficiently and safely; Plant Operations maintains clean and healthy indoor environments; Aquatics provides instruction and recreation for the entire Arlington community; Transportation ensures students arrive at school and then home safely and on time. The following indicators are examples of the department's many successful initiatives to improve and transform the services it provides and to integrate them with schools, other APS departments and the Arlington County Government.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR SECONDARY SEATS

The Capital Improvement Plan approved by the School Board in June 2014 included up to 1,300 new secondary seats to be completed by September 2019 to address growing middle school enrollment, particularly at Williamsburg and Swanson, but did not specify how or where the seats would be provided. The goal was to engage the community in a process leading up to a final School Board decision on how and where the seats were to be located by December 31, 2014, to allow sufficient time to design and construct the new seats on schedule.

- Three potential locations for the seats were identified: the Wilson property, the Reed site and the Stratford Building. Three design teams were hired to determine site impact and develop concept designs to demonstrate to the community what could be achieved.
- The community engagement process comprised one key stakeholder briefing, four community meetings/gallery walks, three Twitter town halls, four CIP-TV segments, three School Board updates and two School Board work sessions.
- While the process started with much controversy and resistance to change, outstanding work by the design teams has generated excitement at the opportunities and focused community engagement which resulted in general agreement that the solution approved by the School Board was the best option. The clearest evidence of the success of this process was the very limited number of speakers at the December 16 School Board Meeting, most of whom supported the solution.
- On December 16, the School Board approved a new 775-seat building on the Wilson property to accommodate the H-B Woodlawn and Stratford programs and renovation of the Stratford Building to create a new 1,000 seat middle school.
- This intense process allowed APS to collaborate with various constituents in the Arlington community to find creative solutions in response to APS's rapidly growing enrollment, despite limited land resources and severe competition for available land.

SUSTAINABILITY

Facilities and Operations staff believes that every school, each department and all members of the APS community are responsible for environmental sustainability. Continuously improving our understanding of sustainability and our success in integrating it across APS is critical because our children are passionate about it, and it is our responsibility to awaken them as current and future advocates for every aspect of sustainability. Our goal is for continuous improvement and integration of sustainability across schools and departments by collaborating with the Departments of Instruction, Information Services, Finance and School and Community Relations, as well as with the Arlington County Government.



- Accomplishments this year include many innovative programs at schools including supporting the Food Services' Farm to Table program; expanding Information Services' program to shut down computers when not in use; posting a new online material safety data system; receiving a \$100,000 EPA award to replace our oldest busses; completing the magnolia bog restoration project at Claremont; expanding the storm water management program; and partnering with outside organizations such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and George Mason University.
- Collaboration with School and Community Relations and the AETV team resulted in the production of 11 Green Scene segments focusing on sustainable initiatives at individual schools to demonstrate how sustainability has become integrated across APS and the County. One example of integration with Arlington County Government is featured in the March 13 segment on APS students serving as volunteers at the County's Energy Board Game event.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The goal for Transportation in the 2014-15 school year was to continue the transformation of the office that started with the reorganization and use of routing software in 2012, by filling vacant management positions to create a professional team and by improving services to students with special needs, as recommended by the Multimodal and Student Safety Special Committee.

- The new team has been in place since September 2014. The new Transportation Director has broad international experience in transportation for special events. The Operations Manager has fifteen years' experience with Fairfax County Public Schools. The Routing and Planning Coordinator has a background in public transportation planning; the Support Services Coordinator has 25 years of successful experience with APS Transportation. A former APS cluster leader for Special Needs transportation has filled the new Special Needs Transportation Coordinator position, and two Special Needs cluster leaders have been hired.
- The broad experience of these individuals both within and beyond APS and the speed with which they have formed a collaborative professional team has clearly improved services.
- On-time arrival of busses has improved and the number of accidents has decreased. Complaints have been addressed more quickly and professionally, and the overall number has declined. Positive feedback on bus driver performance has been received from military parents at Fort Myer and from members of the Special Education PTA. Most importantly our drivers and attendants show a new confidence in management and renewed commitment to the services they provide and the students they serve.
- A professional management team and a confident, committed team of drivers and attendants are essential to the continued transformation of Transportation planned for the 2015-16 school year. Planned improvements include transitioning to more effective routing software, installing GPS and tablets on busses, achieving routing efficiencies, increasing ridership by eligible students and eventually rolling out student identification cards.

CONCLUSION

Because the Department of Facilities and Operations is active in so many areas, the Department has many goals for improvement and integration through the 2015-16 school year. Top priorities include: addressing growing enrollment by identifying the site for the new neighborhood elementary school in South Arlington through the planned community engagement process that is more aligned with the County's processes; improving departmental accountability and financial performance by filling the vacant and redefined administrative officer position; and improving coordination of security, safety and emergency management through greater collaboration with the Arlington County Government.



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

2014-15 Highlights

During this year, the Department of Finance and Management focused on a series of initiatives and enhancements that center around further improving the Budget development process. Providing the information needed for program managers to make good decisions with the resources they have was also an important focus of the department. In addition, a number of new initiatives were designed to promote integration of instruction and health/wellness activities in the department's school-based programs (Food Services and Extended Day). All of these activities reflect the division's Strategic Plan goals and are embedded in the department's annual plan and Smart Goals. Highlights of the significant achievements follow.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was significantly expanded and improved upon for the FY 2016 budget and new approaches were introduced as part of this year's budget development that were very effective in engaging the community, sharing information and receiving feedback from many sources. Engagement activities included:

- The Online Budget Engagement Survey received approximately 300 responses
- Four "Sounding Board" Meetings were implemented to engage constituents on a variety of issues using an open-ended inquiry approach – participants included 5 principals, 12 BAC members, 10 high school staff and 6 elementary staff
- An Online Suggestion Box was available for community comments
- Two well-attended Key Stakeholders Meetings were held for leaders of all APS advisory councils
- Three Administrative Council Meeting Presentations for all APS principals and directors
- Four Community Budget Forums including one joint forum with the County
- Online Budget Feedback Form that received nearly 1,200 entries
- Notes from all meetings were published on the website along with survey results and suggestions

In spite of a significant deficit and the prospect of major budget cuts, the community was accepting and supportive. In fact, during this budget process, only 20 citizens spoke to the School Board compared to 92 the year before, or a more than 400% decrease in the number of people petitioning the School Board. Moreover, in the end, the County was persuaded on the merits of our request for additional funds and allocated \$6.2 million more than the revenue share would have provided.

DECISION-MAKING RESOURCES

To enhance accountability and to promote the effective and efficient use of funds, new reporting tools were developed to help program managers better manage their resources. As part of the department's focus on continuous improvement, the following tools were implemented this year:

- Every principal and program manager now receives a monthly report showing the status of their discretionary accounts. The report was developed in coordination with school principals.
- New training has been developed to link and develop school treasurers.



- A division-wide financial system users group was organized and an all-day user group conference was held for approximately 60 school staff.
- A reorganization of the Finance and Budget offices was submitted to achieve a greater level of customer support for schools and departments by assigning staff to act as financial liaisons.
- The Purchasing Office developed publications for vendors who do business with APS and a manual for APS staff that make purchases. This effort is augmented by a quarterly Purchasing newsletter that provides information on issues that are seasonal or of general interest.
- The Budget office is implementing a new system this year that will provide schools and departments far more financial information to aid them in the development and monitoring of their budgets.

These efforts will be measured by tracking the numbers of inquiries received, the number and effectiveness of training opportunities and monitoring the effectiveness of the budget system by measuring the accuracy of projections.

INTEGRATING INSTRUCTION AND HEALTH/WELLNESS IN SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

The Extended Day program expanded its Reading Rodeo and other literacy-based activities to all sites. By collaborating with teaching staff at each school, this successful program is aligned with literacy activities offered during the school day. In addition, Extended Day continues to ensure that all supervisors have a smart goal to promote at least one of the developmental assets in the extended day program. These activities are being measured by tracking the number of students who opt to participate in literacy activities. Additionally, principals and teachers will be surveyed to assess the impact of the literacy activities and several focus groups will be held to brainstorm ways to strengthen the program.

The Food & Nutrition office expanded its Farm-to-School program to all schools this year. The office partnered with a local farmer who comes to schools to introduce students to seasonal foods and teaches students about the benefits of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as information on how they're grown and how they are used by different cultures. Data on the foods students select as well as their willingness to try new foods is being tracked.

Food & Nutrition is also piloting a Grab-and-Go breakfast program to increase breakfast participation. Food Service staff designed menus, procured supplies to enable breakfast in the classroom and collaborated with bus drivers to remind students to stop by the cafeteria for a bagged breakfast before going to class. Early indications suggest that the new approach for breakfast will increase the number of students eating breakfast at school. While APS doesn't have the capacity to measure the impact of the program on student performance, there is abundant evidence that students who have breakfast perform better at school.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Financial Services has achieved some important goals this year and will focus on continuous improvement for next year. The practices developed for this year's budget will be reviewed and refined over the summer with the goal of continued, expanded community engagement in the process. The information managers need to be accountable and to ensure they are using resources in the most effective manner has been greatly enhanced and planning for additional training and reports is underway. Our school-based programs remain committed to partnering with schools to support the instructional goals of the division as well as promote health and wellness in the children they serve.



DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

2014-15 Highlights

The School and Community Relations (SCR) Department has made great strides this year in diversifying the APS communications platforms, expanding reach, and strengthening visibility for key partners that support APS. The major achievements are directly linked to the launch of a school-based public relations (PR) liaison team to share news; a rapidly expanding social media platform that leverages Twitter to spread important messages to families; and new recognition programs that showcase the valuable role of school partnerships to provide resources and collaborate with the APS instructional leaders to support academic achievement across the school division.

SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) LIAISONS NETWORK TO INCREASE APS COMMUNICATIONS

At the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, the department formally launched a pilot stipend program to compensate school-based PR liaisons for increasing the quantity and quality of information received from schools so that it can be shared across all APS communication platforms.

- The SCR department staff provided four communication training sessions with the 35 PR liaisons and emailed communication updates each week to solicit and share news generated throughout APS. PR liaisons were also given specific social media hashtags to use, ensuring that APS focused on specific communication campaigns that shared a consistent message, leveraging many voices to communicate it.
- Effectively utilizing this new network of school-based staff has been critical to the SCR department's capacity to communicate more effectively because the department's limited staffing allocation does not allow SCR staff to visit all schools with enough frequency to gather, package and share good news with families in a timely manner.
- APS has received a more than five-fold increase in news submissions from schools as a result of this pilot program to pay PR liaisons. In the 2013-14 school year, 179 news submissions were received from schools in the first eight months of the school year (Sept. 1 through April 30). During the same period of the 2014-15 school year, 980 submissions have been received, a 547% increase in news and information.
- The PR Liaisons have also actively supported this year's rapid expansion of social media for APS and enhanced the content for NewsCheck and News Tips, the biweekly newsletters distributed to APS staff and the community respectively.
- This increase in news has significantly improved external communications to families and the community through successful media pitches to deliver positive news coverage.

EXPAND APS SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Social media is no longer an emerging communications tool – it is a widely-accepted, and expected, method of communication for families. The goal for this school year was to increase social media reach and engagement each month on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and to increase the number of followers on all social media platforms by at least 25%. Both of those goals have been accomplished and far surpassed.

- The department regularly incorporates Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube communication into editorial planning and outreach strategies every week and strives for continuous improvement in the level of engagement with the community.
- At the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, only a few dozen APS-affiliated Twitter handles existed. By the end of April, more than 500 Twitter accounts affiliated with APS were actively sharing information through this online platform.



- The APS Facebook page has grown from 4,200 to 5,235+ followers (+25%) and the APS Twitter account has grown from 3,580 to 6,150+ followers (+72%).
- Because so many APS staff have joined Twitter this year, teachers initiated a regular, weekly **Twitter Chat** to foster internal communication and collaboration between schools. Named **#APSChats**, these collaborative social media dialogues occur every Tuesday from 8-9pm and are publicized by SCR through NewsCheck, email updates with the PR Liaisons and other internal communication channels. The Chats are managed by staff volunteers who moderate dialogue on designated topics. APS Chats attracts 20-30 participants each week.
- AETV also has continued to produce compelling video content that includes regular features on Snapshots and Green Scene, and added three new video programs in the 2014-15 school year – **#digitalAPS**, **CIP-TV**, and **Partners in Action** – to highlight new initiatives.
- These videos have generated over 40,000 views on YouTube and the APS website over the past school year.
- The Department of SCR team also expanded the APS social media options to now include use of **Instagram**, and they have also leveraged a variety of applications to strengthen visual communications, including **Storify**, **Periscope**, **Flipagram**, and **Hyperlapse** video clips.
- The APS social media network has grown exponentially to help APS connect with community stakeholders who would not otherwise be reached through more traditional media or electronic platforms.

STRENGTHEN APS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Increasing community partnership agreements is a priority in the 2011-17 APS Strategic Plan, and remains a priority for SCR to achieve 240 strategic partners (with signed partnership agreements) by 2017. To support that goal, SCR launched three new strategies to increase partnerships.

- This year, SCR built a central database to create a single repository of all partnership information along with emails and other contact information to better facilitate communications with this important group of community partners.
- In October, a new monthly video series called Partners in Action debuted, featuring a variety of partners who provide resources and services that support student achievement.
- In March, the monthly **Partners in Action** newsletter was launched to communicate regularly with APS partners and to recruit new organizations as school partners.
- These recognition tools, coupled with ongoing recognition on Twitter with the hashtag **#PartnersinEducation**, have created value and 14 new partners have signed strategic agreements since the start of the 2014-15 school year.

CONCLUSION

The School and Community Relations Department has met or exceeded all of its Smart Goals for this year, but expects continuous improvement to increase social media engagement, enhance the PR liaison network, and grow the number of partnerships. Next year, a new website platform will be developed and launched, the first upgrade in nearly a decade, and this platform will be leveraged to more effectively support mobile communication and social media. Plans are already underway by the department staff to identify strategies to help schools which need increased engagement, and to develop a school communications scorecard to provide guidance and feedback to help each school more effectively leverage existing communications tools to connect with families and the community.



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

2014-15 Highlights

The Department of Human Resources (HR) provides collaborative, proactive and responsive leadership in the human resources field to all levels of the school system to further the effective and efficient delivery of quality services to APS employees and the Arlington community. The goals and initiatives support Strategic Plan Goal 3, to recruit and retain high quality staff. A highlight of HR's recruiting initiatives is the newly-drafted APS Workforce Initiatives Plan, focusing on the applicant pool and continuing to attract highly-qualified staff with an emphasis on dual endorsement. This year, HR continued its efforts to use resources efficiently by conducting a Dependent Care Eligibility Audit that generated significant savings. Additionally, the HR team partnered with Information Services (IS) to design and implement a training module to complete the transition to an online evaluation system. This system will increase HR's ability to track evaluation records and employee performance.

FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR ALL APS EMPLOYEES

As part of the Oracle R12 upgrade in FY14, the implementation of Oracle Performance Management (OPM) was requested to facilitate moving end-of-year evaluations from a paper-based to online process. HR worked with the IS to complete the implementation of OPM in early 2014. The STARS online evaluations provided and will provide a number of capabilities that the paper-based process did not. These include:

- Generating evaluation templates for the specific type each employee should receive;
- Providing HR the ability to access data on evaluation status and completion levels; and
- Developing a method for employees to provide their statement of agreement/disagreement while acknowledging their evaluation.

In FY14, HR piloted the new Online Evaluation process with volunteers in several schools and departments, including: Abingdon, Arlington Mill, Glebe, Long Branch, Stratford, Swanson, HR, IS, Special Education and Student Services. The pilot allowed HR and IS an opportunity to receive feedback from a smaller group of users to provide insight on instruction text in the online form as well as on areas of focus for training. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from the pilot participants who found the STARS online evaluations to be extremely helpful in managing their evaluation process. Beginning in February 2015, sessions were held to train all administrators on the new online evaluation system. In March, all evaluation templates were generated in STARS for administrators to begin the end-of-year evaluation process. HR is beginning to see completed evaluations forwarded to the Department for approval through STARS. HR will solicit feedback from participants in the first full year through the STARS online evaluation process.

APS WORKFORCE INITIATIVES PLAN

Recruiting high quality staff and developing leadership talent is a goal of APS which supports a long-term investment in staff. One component of this focus is implementation of initiatives that will allow APS to diversify its applicant pool as the school division focuses on hiring staff that reflect the diversity of the APS student population. The term "diversity" is multifaceted. The APS Workforce Initiative Plan focuses on diversifying the applicant pool with candidates that bring different backgrounds, various ways of thinking and problem-solving, and numerous perspectives and ideas to APS that will support and enhance the school division's instructional initiatives. The APS Workforce Initiative Plan focuses on hiring high quality staff, increasing the retention of superior employees, and recognizing the expertise of future leaders to safeguard APS's investment of time,



attention and skill enhancement for the purpose of career development. As APS aspires to excel and instill a love of learning in students, the school division strives to prepare students to be responsible and productive global citizens in collaboration with families and the community. The Workforce Initiative Plan focuses on attracting and retaining highly-qualified staff through the following strategies:

- Careers@APS – Inspiring Generations
- Recruitment Committee
- One-to-One Recruitment
- Licensure Opportunities
- Dual-Endorsed Special Education Teachers (in the content areas)
- Dual-Endorsed Teachers (adding Reading or ESOL/HILT to current endorsement)
- Teachers for Tomorrow Program
- Aspiring Administrative Leaders
- Arlington Assistant-To-Teacher Program
- University Partnerships
- Mentoring Leadership Groups

DEPENDENT CARE AUDIT

The FY 2015 Budget authorized an audit of dependents enrolled in APS health and dental insurance to ensure that only dependents eligible to be enrolled in APS insurance plans are covered. AON, the APS benefits consultant, conducted the audit which was completed on March 27, 2015. As part of the eligibility audit, any employee who had a dependent (spouse or child) enrolled in an APS health or dental plan was asked to provide proof to verify that the dependent remains eligible for APS health insurance. Examples of ineligible dependents under the APS insurance plans include spouses who are no longer married to an APS employee or grandchildren of an APS employee (unless legal guardianship has been obtained).

Most APS employees verified the eligibility of their dependents. A total of 3,353 dependents were verified as eligible for insurance. Twenty-six dependents were voluntarily removed from APS coverage during the audit. At the close of the audit, 316 dependents enrolled by 169 employees had not been verified as eligible. These dependents were removed from APS insurance coverage effective April 30, 2015. The estimated savings that APS will realize from the audit and resulting actions is approximately \$560,000 per year.

CONCLUSION

The Human Resources Department will continue to address identified smart goals for FY16 through the continuous improvement process. The HR team will focus on continuing to implement the APS Workforce Initiative to recruit highly qualified staff and to create a diverse applicant pool. Future recruitment efforts will include the following: enhanced collaborative partnerships with local universities; support for high school students through the Teachers for Tomorrow Program, including a mentorship initiative; increased participation in the Assistant-to-Teacher Program and Dual Endorsement Programs; and continued support for employees during the online evaluation roll out. Benefits will continue to work with the Healthcare Advisory Committee to identify other areas for efficiencies. Benefits will also be addressed as part of an APS compensation study.



APS 2015 DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Washington Post Challenge Index Ratings**
 - » APS in the Top 75 out of 350 in the Region
 - » APS in the Top 3% out of 21,000 in the Nation
- **U.S. News and World Report Ratings:**
 - » APS Among Top 11% in the State
 - » APS Among Top 6% in the Nation
- **APS Ranks among Top Districts in Niche® Rankings of Best Public Schools 2015**
 - » Metropolitan Washington Area Ranking –#1
 - » State Ranking –#1
 - » National Ranking –#38
- **APS Scores and Participation on SAT and ACT Increased in 2014**
 - » 13% More Students Took SAT and/or ACT
 - » Scores on Both Exceeded State and National Results
 - » Total and Composite Scores Increased
- **75% of Arlington Voters Approve \$105.78 Million School Bond**
- **APS Ranks #2 on EPA's Top 30 K-12 Green Power User Schools**
- **Traveling Trolley Receives District of Distinction Award**
- **Traveling Trolley Wins 1st Place Award in 2015 NSBA Magna Awards**
- **Graham Holdings Company Awards \$25,000 Grant to APS for Summer Traveling Trolley**
- **APS Schools Mark Major Milestones:**
 - » BARRETT: 70 years
 - » DREW: 70 years
 - » SWANSON: 75 years
 - » HENRY: 90 years
 - » HOFFMAN-BOSTON: 100 years
- **School & Community Relations Wins Seven 2014 CHESPRA Awards**
- **Finance Receives ASBO Award for 4th Consecutive Year**
- **Henry Elementary School Named National Title I Distinguished School by Virginia Board of Education**
- **Career Center Students Win at SkillsUSA Competition**
 - » 12 students finished in First Place
 - » 10 to compete at nationals this summer



ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS
INTERNATIONAL

NATIONAL BOARD

for Professional Teaching Standards

- **Williamsburg Student Sarah Murphy Wins National PTA Reflections Contest**
- **4 Yorktown Seniors Place First at Microsoft Image Cup Finals**
- **Yorktown Senior Christian Carillo Receives Posse Scholarship to Attend Bucknell University**
- **13 APS Students Earn 15 National Scholastic Arts Awards**
- **4 APS Students Win National Scholastic Writing Awards**
- **19 APS Students Named National Merit Scholarship Finalists**
- **4 APS Seniors Win \$2,500 National Merit Scholarships**
- **5 APS Seniors Named National Achievement Scholarship Finalists**
- **2 Yorktown Students Earn 3 Awards at Intel International Science and Engineering Fair**
- **H-B Woodlawn Student Salome Gongadze Elected Virginia Youth Governor for 2016 YMCA Model General Assembly**
- **Williamsburg Receives 2015 Jostens National Yearbook Program of Excellence Award**
- **Arlington Career Center TV Production Students Earn First Place in VSBA Video Contest**
- **Yorktown Receives the NAMM Foundation's 2015 Support Music Merit Award**
- **Drew Model School Receives Grant from JPG Companies to Transform Outdoor Classroom Space**
- **Abingdon Teacher Katherine Hale Named 2015 Apple Distinguished Educator**
- **Williamsburg's Leni Bronstein Receives Foreign Language Teaching Awards**
 - » 2014 David Cox Excellence in Foreign Language Teaching Award from the Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA)
 - » 2015 Regional Teacher of the Year for distinguished work as a foreign language (Spanish) teacher from the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT)
- **19 APS Teachers Earn Prestigious National Board Certification**
 - » APS Tied for 28th in the nation for number of new NBCT teachers
 - » In total, 172 APS teachers have earned National Board Certification
- **APS English Language Arts Supervisor Dr. Michelle Picard Awarded the James D. Mullins Leadership Award by Virginia State Reading Association (VSRA) for Exemplary Support of Reading**
- **Yorktown's Brian Bersh Named Quarterfinalist for GRAMMY Music Educator Award**
- **ATS Art Teacher Veronica Perez Receives Northern Virginia Hispanic Teacher of the Year Award**
- **APS Crossing Guard Jeff Covell Selected as a Virginia Most Outstanding Crossing Guard**
- **Dr. Pat Murphy Named National 2015 Superintendent of the Year Finalist by AASA (The School Superintendent Association)**





LOOKING AHEAD

It was extremely gratifying to see the results of the recent **Arlington Community Satisfaction Survey** which indicate that 84 percent of our community is pleased with the services provided by the County and Schools. Through this year's achievements and progress, I believe we are poised to continue to improve and excel as we move to the next rung on the ladder.

As we look forward in the coming year, we will need to focus on several issues that will require strategic thinking and new approaches to our work.

- We have a growing number of students who arrive at school speaking another language and continue to need a strong instructional program and transitional support.
- Recognizing that the world is right here in Arlington and we are an international community, we will need to continue our efforts to provide students with the tools to succeed, including the ability to speak two or more languages when they leave high school.
- To ensure that more students are college and career ready upon graduation, we need to identify more **internship opportunities and work experiences** for students with our local and regional business partners, and with local universities. Coupled with this is the need to **expand our volunteer base** and recruit more community members to invest in our schools and students as volunteers, tutors, and supporters of our students.
- Increasing the number of students earning an **Advanced Diploma** continues to be a priority. Thanks to the new **Data Quick Check Meetings** that our Student Services team has established with schools, we continue to focus on student progress and identify students who are ready to stretch themselves to achieve more.
- I am very proud of the recognition APS has received with the SPQA award and, as a result, the school division has the unique opportunity to be eligible for the **Malcolm Baldrige Award**. As we look to our future needs and opportunities, our focus on continuous improvement through the Arlington Improvement Model and the Baldrige process will help guide us in methodical approaches to identify effective solutions.

“Through this year’s achievements and progress, I believe we are poised to continue to improve and excel as we move to the next rung on the ladder.”

—Dr. Pat Murphy

A BRIGHT FUTURE

As we look forward and embrace the changes that are on our horizon, we also recognize that future transitions on the School Board and within the leadership team provide us with opportunities to chart new pathways. We also see the implementation of our framework for evaluation as a focal point of our continued concentration on instruction. Through this process, we hope to learn more about bringing recommendations into fruition for each program.

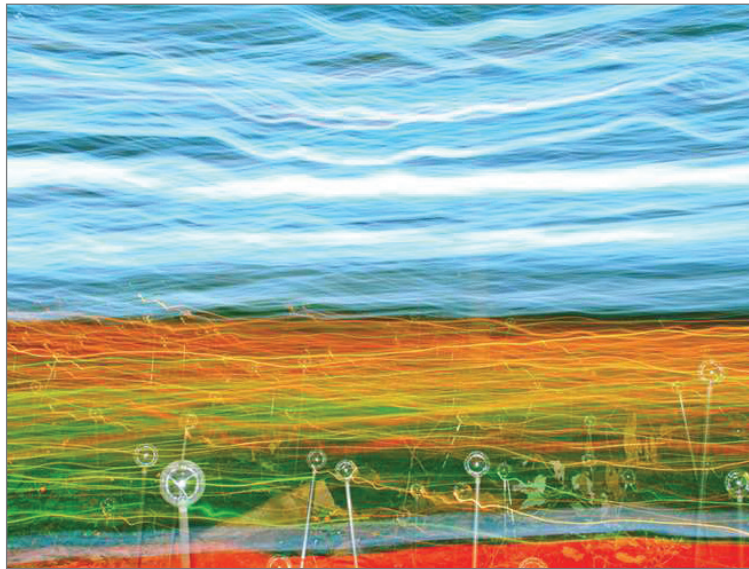
Moving towards the FY 2017 budget, we have already initiated conversations about utilizing our resources in new ways and identifying potential efficiencies in an effort to set the foundation for a seamless process. To that end, we must continue to collaborate closely with our partners on the Arlington County Board, the County Manager, and all members of the County Government team to ensure that we are part of a united front.

This month, we will shake hands with our graduates and celebrate their successful journey in APS. We will promote students transitioning through all grade levels and prepare our students for a summer of continuous learning. We will take advantage of this time to regroup and prepare to welcome back students and meet new families in September. I look forward to the days ahead and all that we will continue to do for our families and staff to ensure our students' continuing success.





Eric-Carle-inspired Rainbow Fish by Claremont's Kindergarten Classes (collaborative mural)



Amelia Hayden, Yorktown High School, 12th Grade



Caroline Nelson, Washington-Lee High School, 11th Grade