

EQUITY FOR ALL



ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Updated: Sept. 30, 2022





**OUR VISION:
EMPOWERING
ALL STUDENTS
TO THRIVE IN A
DIVERSE AND
EVER-CHANGING
WORLD**

MISSION:

ACPS ensures success by inspiring students and addressing barriers to learning

OUR CORE VALUES:

In all we do, the ACPS learning community strives to live these core values. We are...

Welcoming

Empowering

Equity-Focused

Innovative

Results-Driven

IT'S BOLD. IT'S COURAGEOUS.

IT'S ABOUT EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT AND INSPIRING STUDENTS TO THRIVE

In June 2020, the Alexandria City School Board approved Equity for All 2025, an ambitious strategic plan for Alexandria City Public Schools.

Equity for All 2025 places racial equity at the center of everything that we do as a school division. It challenges us to ensure our students are engaged in classroom instruction and have access to the educational resources needed to enhance their learning experiences. It will ensure that our schools are a safe, friendly and welcoming environment for all. It also sets clear division-wide priorities and programs to address opportunity and achievement gaps as well as makes sure that all students graduate ready for college, careers and life. The vision is big and bold, and the potential is enormous.

Equity for All 2025 has five primary strategic goals. Progress toward these strategic goals will be measured with rigorous metrics. These targets are audacious, but we hope our success will ultimately become a model for urban school divisions around the country.

We are acting with urgency and know that the time is now to educate the next generation. And so, at ACPS, we unapologetically require a standard of excellence for all employees, students and families to ensure that our mission comes to fruition. Success is the only option for the future of ACPS. No matter what other priorities we have going forward, our young people will always be the center of our work, decision-making and mission.

As an urban-suburban school division with a very diverse student population, we are often presented with a unique combination of incredible opportunities and complex challenges. Equity for All 2025 promises to empower all students to thrive in this diverse and ever-changing world so that they can attain their dreams and achieve their own goals.

We are taking action by ensuring that funding, priorities, areas of focus and programs are designed to address barriers to learning regardless of our young people's circumstances. This involves a paradigm shift in our thinking across the school division. It entails a strategic approach to reallocation of human, capital and educational resources to ensure that all students engage in ACPS' educational experiences which will help them thrive in our diverse and ever-changing world.

We cannot do this alone. Equity for All 2025 is part of a bigger unified strategic vision for our city and is aligned with multiple citywide organizations involved in supporting children and families. These organizations, including Alexandria Health Department, Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria and the City of Alexandria's Department of Community and Human Services — responsible for The Children and Youth Master Plan — have partnered in the first unified five-year planning process that will engage and empower the entire city of Alexandria.

Join us in bringing Equity for All 2025 to life, as we work on empowering all our students, helping them to flourish and thrive in whatever college or career pathway they may choose.

GIVE US FIVE FOR 2025.

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Read more about the plan at www.acps.k12.va.us/2025



THE STORY BEHIND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The year this strategic plan was adopted marks the 100th anniversary of the Parker-Gray School — one of the first public schools for African Americans in Alexandria. Students at the Parker-Gray School barely had what they needed to learn. In fact, they were lucky to have any school books, chalk, or chalk boards. Members of the community provided chairs and basic equipment, and any African American student who wanted to continue their education past eighth grade had to potentially walk to Washington, D.C, or at least 21 blocks to catch a bus to school and back home.

Alexandria City Public Schools was again at the forefront in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, although this time for resisting the desegregation of schools. The story of Alexandria City Public Schools is long, complex and messy. Ours is a story of a community that faced adversity, racism, bigotry, and neglect. With the odds against them, many went on to become champions for equality and civil rights. They bequeathed us a legacy that we are trying to live up to today.

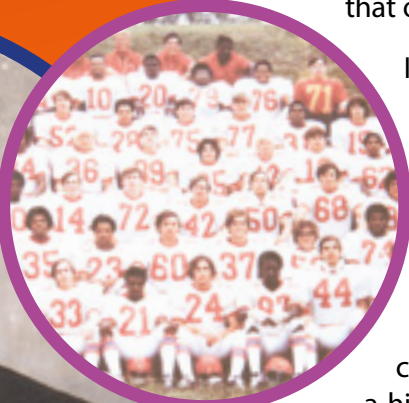
In fact, it is our duty to carry on their legacy. We must refuse to give up on any student and continue to fight for an equitable education for all regardless of their race, socioeconomic status, ZIP code, family circumstances, and/or educational ability.

Our goal in this strategic plan is to make equity a pillar in our community. To do that we must acknowledge our inequities and also understand the history within our city that has contributed to the barriers that many of our young people still face today.

Today, we welcome students from many different countries who speak many different languages. In fact, we have 119 countries represented and 120 languages spoken in ACPS. We celebrate and honor our diversity. But the courageous fight for equity is far from over. In order to move on, we have to acknowledge that modern day segregation still exists and that our work is not yet done.

In order for this pillar of equity to be constructed, we must have courage and be unapologetic about speaking on behalf of those who are different from us. We must advocate for our young people and those who don't have a voice in our communities and tear down the barriers that prevent all of our young people from being the best they can possibly be. Even more important, we must stand together and work collaboratively to ensure that every child is engaged in a high quality educational experience inside and outside of our classrooms in ACPS to meet their social, emotional and academic needs.

This is the legacy that we have a duty to fulfill for the sake of all our students, past, present and future. We must always continue to Remember the Titans.



HOW EQUITY FOR ALL 2025 IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

Data-informed

The Strategic Planning Committee worked with comprehensive data, compiled into a workbook, to drill down into what was working and what needed more development at ACPS through an equity lens. Grounding the process in data ensured that ideas for the strategic plan were based on practice. It ensured that our strategic plan would proactively make a positive impact on student achievement, rather than being a mere wish list.

Less, but more

Equity for All 2025 has fewer goals, measures and actions than the previous strategic plan. It focuses on the most critical elements that will accelerate change that is sustainable. Rather than doing everything sparingly, it proactively focuses on areas that need improvement — ensuring we do those well.

Unified planning process

In 2019, an opportunity presented itself when the timing of revisions to three major city plans coincided — the ACPS Strategic Plan, the Department of Community and Human Services Children and Youth Master Plan, and the Alexandria Health Department and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria's Community Health Improvement Plan. These organizations joined to form a Unified Planning Team to collectively develop these plans, increasing the opportunity to maximize collective community engagement, share important data, and focus on shared outcomes. These plans will also be implemented in tandem with shared commitments to racial equity, trauma-informed care and a developmental assets approach.

Staff voice

Every school was represented by at least one staff member in the design of the strategic plan. This was a deliberate effort to draw on the skills and expertise of those who are in our schools and impact our students on a daily basis. We believe that it is our staff who have the greatest ability to truly make a difference in a child's life every single day.

Focus and prioritization

Equity for All 2025 encourages all of us to focus and prioritize equity. Goals, measures, strategies and highlighted actions are understandable, achievable, and ambitious.

For more information, please visit: www.acps.k12.va.us/2025

How Equity for All 2025 was developed

During the previous strategic plan (2015-20), we learned a lot about what was working and what needed further development. We conducted focus groups, staff listening sessions, classroom observations, the analysis of survey data, and a deep dive into data to evaluate our current academic progress.

The strategic plan was drafted by a 60+ Strategic Planning Committee made up of ACPS staff, leadership, parents, school board members, and representatives from key city and community organizations. The committee met nearly every month from late summer 2019 through January 2020. They were supported by consultants, FourPoint Education Partners, who worked with them to create components and content of a draft strategic plan. This plan then received additional feedback from principals, ACPS leadership, staff, and the committee itself to create a final draft. The final draft of our strategic plan was presented to the School Board in May 2020 for their feedback and open for public comment from May 2020 through June 2020. Based on all stakeholders feedback, a final strategic plan was brought before the School Board and approved on June 26, 2020.





RACIAL EQUITY AT THE HEART

Alexandria City Public Schools is committed to racial equity. Racial equity is when race does not determine quality of life, opportunities, and outcomes.

ACPS places racial equity at the heart of everything it does due to the recognition that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities has been deeply rooted into school systems. Deeply racialized systems are costly and depress outcomes and life chances for all groups. Focusing on racial equity provides the opportunity to create goals and strategies that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization.

Strategies to achieve racial equity differ from those to achieve equity in other areas. One-size-fits-all strategies are rarely successful. To have maximum impact, focus and specificity are necessary. Race can be an issue that keeps other marginalized groups from academic success. An approach that recognizes the interconnected ways in which marginalization takes place will help to achieve racial equity across the division and our community.

Our goal is to collectively remove barriers that prevent someone from achieving their aspirations and fully engaging in whatever they choose within ACPS' educational experiences.

Equity and equality are sometimes used interchangeably; however, they actually convey significantly different ideas. Equity is about fairness, while equality is about sameness. We are not interested in closing the achievement gap by equalizing student results. We are interested in raising our results across the board through equitable access and practices in our schools. Equity to us also means meeting every student where they are, and not where we want them to be. Sometimes that means changing the way we teach, and how we respond to and support students of every learning ability level. It also means providing students with acceleration and advanced level work without lowering the standards simply to increase diversity — but rather raising the academic bar for all.

Equity is about knocking down barriers for all. It is not about taking from one group to give to another. It is about ensuring that all students are engaged in the services, programs and opportunities they need to succeed.

— Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) inspired —

KEY DEFINITIONS

Racial Equity:

When race does not determine quality of life, opportunities and outcomes.

Educational Equity:

Educational disparities based on race, economics and other dimensions of difference are reduced and eliminated. Positive school outcomes are distributed equitably proportionally across all demographic and identity groups. Negative outcomes and disproportionality are reduced for all groups.

Educational Excellence:

We keep the bar high in all we do. We educate students for life and for reflective citizenship. We empower students and employees in the preservation of their identity and culture. Substance, depth and critical thinking are more important than compliance or test scores.

OUR CORE VALUES

In all we do, the ACPS learning community strives to live these core values. We are...

Welcoming

We take active steps to ensure all stakeholders feel welcomed in schools. We embrace everyone who comes through our doors and respect our differences because we believe our diversity is our greatest strength.

Equity-Focused

We actively work to remove barriers to educational access.

Empowering

We inspire each student and staff member to thrive to their best abilities.

Innovative

We take initiative to solve problems in the classroom and across the system.

Results-Driven

We set ambitious goals to learn, grow and achieve at high levels.



THEORY OF ACTION

To be successful, ACPS will align its strategies, systems and resources with a theory of action, which is defined as a set of beliefs about how we manage our schools to improve student outcomes and eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps for low-income students, Black and Hispanic students, English learners, and students with disabilities. This will allow us to ensure that we achieve our vision, execute our mission and uphold our core values.

At ACPS, our theory of action is grounded in the following belief statements:

1. Principals are instructional leaders. As a system, we must support our teachers and staff in delivering a rigorous curriculum that addresses the needs of all students — especially those who have been underserved — and give our principals the tools and resources they need to be the instructional leaders of their schools.

2. The Central Office's role is to support schools in fully implementing selected division-wide areas of focus that will increase student achievement and eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps. The Central Office must use its finite capacity strategically to ensure that all schools effectively implement a defined set of non-negotiable Division-wide areas of focus with fidelity.

3. Although Division-wide areas of focus may change over time, several key principles will guide decision-making and implementation:

- a. The core values developed by the ACPS School Board and included in this strategic plan will inform the actions of all staff, educators, school administrators, Division administrators, and Board Members.
- b. Division-wide areas of focus will be finalized in consultation with school stakeholders.
- c. Division-wide areas of focus will be well defined and communicated in writing and include resources to support effective implementation and monitoring.

d. Professional learning, instructional and leadership coaching, and the Superintendent's quarterly improvement planning meetings with school instructional and departmental teams will focus on the Division-wide areas of focus.

e. Any new area of focus beyond the Division-wide areas of focus that the Central Office recommends will be vetted with school stakeholders and — if appropriate — piloted in a limited number of schools. Only after careful evaluation will areas of focus be brought to scale.

f. Beyond the Division-wide areas of focus, schools will be encouraged to work with their families to serve the needs of students and eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps. The Central Office will support schools to identify innovative practices that appear to be working and — after careful vetting, analysis, and definition of impactful processes — incorporate the most successful practices into areas of focus.

4. The Division-wide areas of focus for the 2020-25 school years are likely to include:

- Balanced Literacy
- Social, emotional, and academic learning (SEAL)
- Family engagement
- Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and early warning systems to support students' academic and behavioral needs, including causes of chronic absenteeism
- Multiple pathways to high school diploma and beyond

5. Beyond the Division-wide areas of focus, principals and their leadership teams will be supported in developing, implementing, and monitoring other strategies — clearly defined in their school improvement plans — that will fully meet the needs of their students, especially those who have been traditionally underserved.

We at ACPS summarize this context and detail with the following theory of action:

If ACPS provides high-quality instruction and differentiated supports, engages the community and families, and allocates resources equitably, opportunity and achievement gaps among underserved student populations will be eliminated and all students will graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and life. To ensure the delivery of high-quality instruction and differentiated supports, ACPS will:

- Engage students, staff, and families in the decision making and educational processes
- Define, support, and monitor the implementation of selected high-leverage strategies in all schools

- Empower principals and their leadership teams to implement additional strategies to meet the specific needs of their student populations

To implement this theory of action, ACPS has defined the goals, measures, strategies and highlighted actions that follow. Success requires purposeful collaboration among ACPS departments to support schools and families in ensuring that all students are empowered to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world.



MEASURING OUR IMPACT

Each of the five **goals** for the strategic plan has a number of **measures** that will help us track and report progress in achieving the goal.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) define the key overall outcomes that an organization is trying to achieve. They answer the question of what success looks like and how will we know if we are progressing toward the intended outcome. As an educational organization, within ACPS all KPIs are student outcomes.

In addition to measures, each goal also has a number of **strategies** and **highlighted actions**, which outline the steps that ACPS will take to achieve the goal.

We are committed to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps by monitoring our progress through:

Kindergarten readiness

Student growth and proficiency in reading

Student growth and proficiency in mathematics

Disproportionality rate of chronically absent students

Disproportionality rate of students identified with a disability

Percentage of 9th grade students on target to graduate high school in 4 years

Disproportionality of underrepresented students in advanced courses

Disproportionality rate of students with one or more out-of-school suspensions.



OUR 5 GOALS

Systemic Alignment

Instructional Excellence

Student Accessibility and Support

Strategic Resource Allocation

Family and Community
Engagement



SYSTEMIC ALIGNMENT

ACPS will build a culture of continuous improvement and design equitable systems for school and instructional improvement.

ACPS systems will:

- align with the ACPS mission
- clearly communicate a vision that provides a clear, concise, systemwide understanding of how identified instructional improvements will lead to better outcomes for students
- focus attention, energy, and resources on a limited number of strategic areas of focus that all schools implement with fidelity
- ensure Division leaders provide schools and school leaders with the support, collaboration, and monitoring they need to be successful

MEASURES

We are committed to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps by monitoring our progress through:

Support of the Division's identified strategic areas of focus by ACPS staff, students, families and the broader community (survey)

Input and support for the Division's approach to systemic alignment, and identified strategic areas of focus from ACPS staff (survey)

School staff report collaboration, monitoring and support from Central Office (survey)

Level of implementation of strategic areas of focus by each school and Central Office departments (rubric)



STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Clearly define areas and conditions in which schools have autonomy and do not, and corresponding roles and responsibilities for administrators and educators.

- Clearly define strategic areas of focus that all schools must implement with proper support from the Central Office.
- Develop clear ~~frameworks that support their implementation and monitoring.~~
- Ensure effective implementation of areas of focus through Central Office support and monitoring.
- Restructure the Division's professional learning to be focused on established strategic areas of focus.
- Clearly define instructional leadership responsibilities and processes for school and Central Office administrators.

Transform the Division into a learning organization where transparency, inquiry, and collaboration are prioritized in advancing continuous improvement.

- Identify prioritized behaviors aligned with each core value for staff to ensure consistency and quality of experience across all ACPS environments.
- Pilot any new focus area before implementing Division-wide.
- Across the Division and schools, create and manage systems and structures that identify key barriers to high student performance and that implement "plan-do-study-act" cycles of continuous improvement.
- Focus on identifying what is working in school and program implementations, define their processes, and work to scale and adapt those processes in other settings through protocol development, coaching and networks

Provide regular updates on impact and implementation of the strategic plan.

- Provide the Board regular, formative updates on students' academic progress and on implementation levels of key strategic areas of focus, focused on improving student progress.

Create a culture in which Division operations department works collaboratively and engages families to support the education delivered to students.

- Develop specific practices and programs with school campuses and Operations that encourage common goals around safety, security, cleanliness, care of Division facilities, and healthfulness.
- Ensure that messaging about transportation, nutrition, facilities services, safety and security are timely, accessible, translated, engaging, recognizable and updated.
- Institute regularly scheduled school/student training and reminders around areas of operational importance.

Edit as follows:

... written frameworks collaboratively between schools and central office staff that clearly define expectations, roles, responsibilities, supports, monitoring, measurement, and adjustment processes prior to implementation.

Rationale:

Lack of clarity across the system around key strategic areas/initiatives and wanting to increase formal documentation of planning and implementation to increase clarity, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

Add new highlighted action:

Begin a process for prioritizing and documenting key organizational processes, including: purpose, roles within and between central office and school staff, responsibilities, and other key project planning elements including an understanding of where flexibility does and does not exist.

Rationale:

To best sustain and improve organizational processes across time and staff turnover increase documentation of key organizational processes to ensure transparency and shared understanding across current and incoming staff and other stakeholders.



INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

ACPS will ensure that all students have access to and engagement with high-quality instruction.

ACPS instruction will:

- be aligned to a Division-wide instructional framework and high-quality curricula
- be engaging and rigorous
- be culturally relevant
- be differentiated to students' strengths
- be responsive to students' social, emotional, and academic needs
- be supported and monitored by school and Division administrators and instructional coaches, creating a culture of substance, depth, and critical thinking in curriculum and instruction

MEASURES

We are committed to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps by monitoring our progress through:

Percentage of teachers planning and implementing lessons utilizing the ACPS instructional framework (observation)

Percentage of classrooms in each school demonstrating use of high-impact (engaging, rigorous, culturally relevant) strategies (observation; rubric)

Student growth as measured by formative assessments at school and Division levels

Percentage of teachers agreeing that they feel well supported with high-quality instructional training and support (survey)

Percentage of students agreeing that they feel supported socially, emotionally, and academically (Equity Audit)

Percentage of parents agreeing that their children are receiving a high-quality education (survey)



STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum is delivered to all students.

- Assess implementation of Division's curricula.
- Work collaboratively with educators to refine the instructional framework and ensure its use.
- Apply the use of identified best practices in educating students with disabilities and English learners.
- Implement the Student with Disabilities and Talented and Gifted Action Plans in support of ensuring a curriculum that is differentiated to meet the individual needs of students.

Ensure implementation of a few well-defined, high-impact instructional strategies that support academic learning and social and emotional development for a diverse student population.

- Clearly define high-leverage instructional strategies and expectations for Division-wide use.
- ~~Require~~ all schools to support and monitor implementation of high-leverage strategies.
- Realign professional learning, Division supports for schools, and instructional coaching on instructional framework and identified high-leverage instructional strategies through a lens of trauma-informed care.
- Continue to implement and scale instructional rounds and evaluate implementation and impact.

Implement a consistent, high-impact approach to teaching literacy in all K-2 classrooms across the Division.

- Clearly define and support the implementation of an evidence-based balanced literacy approach using the ~~K-5 Literacy Guidelines~~.
- ~~Expand the work of the K-2 Literacy Task Force to collaborate and implement best literacy practices K-5 across ACPS.~~
- Provide professional learning to support the integration of the ~~recently adopted K-2 Really Great Reading phonics program with existing TCRWP and Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading materials.~~

Implement the Connected High School Network.

- Support the Industry Advisory Board partnership to provide opportunities for students to experience different careers.
- Identify the programming for the Minnie Howard and King Street campuses with the Educational Design Team.
- Complete Educational Specifications at the Minnie Howard campus.
- Begin construction on the Minnie Howard Campus.
- Develop a master schedule that provides ~~flexibility for the leadership~~ of Alexandria City High School.
- Study the demand for and feasibility of adding Amharic and Arabic language classes.

Implement a systematic approach to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) that addresses the diverse strengths and needs of the ACPS student population.

- Strengthen the implementation of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support with an emphasis on Tier I SEAL (Social Emotional and Academic Learning) instruction to address the academic learning loss and social-emotional wellness.
- Develop consistent expectations for high-leverage instructional delivery for all learners across Tiers 1, 2 and 3 with appropriate monitoring tools to determine supports needed for fidelity of implementation.
- ~~Form~~ MTSS teams at each school to implement data-to-action informed, efficient, and effective decision-making processes for ongoing learning and growth.
- Use diagnostic, formative, and summative data to inform appropriate interventions or strategies.

Identify and use best practices in online and blended learning to differentiate, support, and increase access to instruction and to promote innovation.

- ~~Expand access to the Satellite Campus.~~
- Integrate ~~online and~~ blended learning strategies to enhance and support the instructional goals of the ~~Connected High School Network~~ and expand virtual learning opportunities for K-12 students.
- ~~Streamline and align technology tools for improved communications with families and other stakeholders.~~

Edit as follows:
Assess implementation of the division's curricula in alignment with the VDOE Standards of Learning and Curriculum Framework.
Rationale:
To align with the VDOE curriculum standards with both cognitive and content levels.

Add:
..."Black students, culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, and economically disadvantaged students."
Rationale:
ACPS has several populations of students that we serve and could benefit from implementation of best practices.

Change to:
"Ensure support for" and "social, emotional and academic strategies with fidelity".
Rationale:
The word require does not support the need to support schools with this strategy.

Change to:
K-8
Rationale:
With the Virginia Literacy Act, literacy instruction will be expanded K-8.

Update to:
"... K-8 Literacy Guidelines in alignment with the Virginia Literacy Act."
Rationale:
With the Virginia Literacy Act, literacy instruction will be expanded K-8.

Change to:
"Continue to focus the work of K-5 literacy to collaborate and implement best practices for grades 6-8 across ACPS."
Rationale:
With the Virginia Literacy Act, literacy instruction will be expanded K-8.

Change to:
VDOE approved literacy curricula resources.
Rationale:
VLA is currently in Phase II of core curricula resources and have not yet approved the full list.

Add "Dari" Rationale: There is a large population of students who speak those languages and the study would be responsive to our student demographic.

Change to:
"...access and opportunity for participation in the instructional programming at the campuses..."
Rationale:
The flexibility of schedules should be student-centered and supported by leadership.

Change to:
"Strengthen"
Rationale:
Teams have been formed and now need support with norming and performing.

Change to:
Increase awareness and access to the learning opportunities at the Satellite Campus for students seeking a non-traditional pathway to graduation.
Rationale:
This statement addresses expansion and awareness of the learning opportunities of Satellite Campus.

Change to:
Pre-K-12
Rationale:
Removing the word online again and updating the language to reflect blended learning opportunities for all students.

Rationale:
Blended learning incorporates direct instruction and online instruction. Therefore, the use of the word online is redundant.

Change to:
~~Continue to streamline and align digital tools to create student-centered environments that provide academic excellence, educational equity, and increased communication to families.~~
Rationale:
~~This statement better aligns to the goal of instructional technology and digital tools in ACPS.~~



STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY AND SUPPORT

ACPS will ensure students have equitable access to and engagement with programs and supports that reduce barriers to learning.

ACPS programs and supports will:

- acknowledge the strengths and needs of the whole child
- reflect and support high expectations for all students
- engage and inspire students to take ownership of their learning
- enable students to explore and succeed in their post-secondary pathway

MEASURES

We are committed to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps by monitoring our progress through:

Equity audit

Disproportionality rate of students in TAG at the elementary level by school and student group

Disproportionality rate of students in advanced coursework at the secondary level by school and student group

Percentage of students chronically absent by school and student group

Disproportionality rate of students referred to special education by school and race/ethnicity

Percentage of students who feel safe, valued, and engaged in their learning (survey)

Dropout rate by student group

Disproportionality rate of suspensions (out of school and in school) by school and student group

Number of students enrolled in the mixed delivery (state/federal funding) or ACPS pre-K program



STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Partner with students and families in identifying, offering, and monitoring use of needed supports and services.

- Provide student supports in all schools based upon their assessed need; continue framework within the school schedule for the delivery of social, emotional, and academic learning (SEAL) through structures such as restorative practices and community circles at each school in ACPS.
- Work with the Alexandria Health Department, the Department of Community and Human Services, and other city and community agencies to expand student access to mental and physical health supports.
- Ensure alignment of services and monitor collective efforts through the Unified Planning Process.
- Take a case management approach to serving an identified group of students most at risk of failure at each school.

Use improvement science to identify and address root causes of historic systemic inequities and racism.

- Examine areas of inequities including special education referrals, discipline, early childhood education, chronic absenteeism, access to Talented and Gifted (TAG) programming, access to advanced courses at the secondary level, advanced diploma attainment, and postsecondary enrollment and completion for underserved student groups.

Improve students' and families' experiences during key transitions in their educational journey.

- Develop informational tools and grade level dialogues for students and families to support key preK-12 transitions, including sharing student performance data to facilitate collaborative development of short and long-term academic and social goals for improved outcomes.
- In coordination with CTE and AVID, develop information tools and programming for students and families to support postsecondary transitions to include college, advanced training, military, gap-year, and workforce options.
- Enhance and implement consistent practices to introduce all students to the high school campuses beginning in the middle grades, providing in-person introductions to available programs, resources, and supports.
- Develop and implement K-12 college and career programming aligned with the Academic and Career Plan Portfolio and Academic and Career Plan guidelines from the Virginia Department of Education.
- Enhance academic advising tools and practices with a focus on equity and encouragement of course plans that incorporate rigor, balance, and wellness.
- In coordination/collaboration with CTE, ~~develop and implement~~ a sequence of work-based learning opportunities for students in middle and high schools.

Expand families' access to pre-K programs.

- Develop and lead a coordinated enrollment committee comprising early care and education partners.
- Develop and implement a pre-K recruitment strategy across the City.
- Analyze preschool enrollment, experiences and kindergarten fall data on an annual basis to ensure programs and services are meeting demonstrated need.
- Collaborate with community partners and the City to complete a pre-K space audit for program continuity and/or expansion opportunities.
- Continue to collaborate to support shared professional learning with community-based early-care and education partners.
- Expand pre-K programs in ACPS when new elementary schools are built.

Improve impact of out-of-school learning opportunities.

- Conduct a needs assessment of professional learning opportunities with staff involved in Division-wide after school programming.
- Continue out of school learning opportunities collaboration with City and partners in implementing the Children and Youth Community Plan including access, quality, academic/social enrichment, and professional development.

Conduct a study to assess the viability of pushing back school start times.

- ~~Engage a consultant to solicit community feedback and conduct a study.~~

Add:

... "disproportionate dropout and graduation rate for EL and Hispanic students"...

Rationale:

We added disproportionate dropout and graduation rate for EL and Hispanic students. According to the 2022 VDOE cohort report, the dropout rate was 21% for our Hispanic students.

Add:

... "and adult education, explore development and implementation of" ...

Add:

... "to include extended day evening, online and blended learning options outside of the traditional school program that provide alternative pathways to graduation."

Rationale:

We added expanded options to help address the disproportionality in dropout and graduation rates.

Edit as follows:

Engage a consultant to examine the feasibility of modifying school start times and extending the school day given factors affecting student learning loss and division operations.

Rationale:

Latest discussions post-COVID have included extending the school day due to student learning loss. Are school start times still as relevant as it was prior to COVID and school shut downs?



STRATEGIC RESOURCE ALLOCATION

ACPS will strategically provide differentiated resources and supports to schools and departments.

ACPS resources and supports will:

- be used efficiently and effectively to ensure fiscal health of the Division
- contribute to the health and safety of students
- focus on meeting students where they are to support equitable outcomes
- promote improved retention rates among staff serving low-income students and students of color

MEASURES

We are committed to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps by monitoring our progress through:

Funding and staffing equitably allocated to each school based on student population (resource allocation analysis)

Staff retention rates

Timeliness and safety of buses

Quality of Central Office facility and maintenance support for schools (principal survey)



STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Allocate resources and programs to meet their needs in an equitable and transparent way.

- Adopt a weighted student formula that includes Central Office positions.
- Facilitate equity-focused conversations, leading to improvements in policy and practice.

Improve the budget process to ensure impactful and efficient use of the Division's human and capital resources.

- Work with all leadership to establish priorities and identify cost savings and efficiencies.
- Conduct monitoring of prioritized area of focus funding through Return on Investment (ROI) methodologies to inform future decision-making.

Improve our staff recruitment and staff retention rates to improve school climate, operational efficiencies and instruction.

- Create formal programs to assist staff with onboarding, performance evaluations, mentoring and two-way communications.
- Review feasibility of expanding telework and designating permanent remote work positions for schools and office.

Improve operational efficiencies through a focus on better usage of data systems.

- Strengthen processes to improve the accuracy and quality of data entry and conduct a needs assessment of existing Central Office data systems, including finance and human resources information system, employee time and attendance system, learning management system, student information system for enrollment, attendance, grading, etc., and email communication system.

Provide safe, modern and comfortable facilities and buses for all students and staff.

- Continue to modernize school facilities at the elementary, middle and high school levels.
- Address all action steps of the Division's facility plan within audit-identified timelines.
- Review and develop a plan to address the multiple facets (ex. capacity transfers, bell schedules) that impact timeliness and investigate student experiences and safety to develop responsive improvement efforts.

At minimum, maintain funding for purchasing, maintaining and coordinating technology and for building capacity for its use through professional learning.

- Maintain a three year replenishment cycle for student and staff devices and essential network infrastructure.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for staff that support student-centric learning models, innovative instructional practices and professional growth through the use of technology.

Provide a reliable, scalable and transparent technology infrastructure that facilitates the operation of the school division and supports greater access and equity.

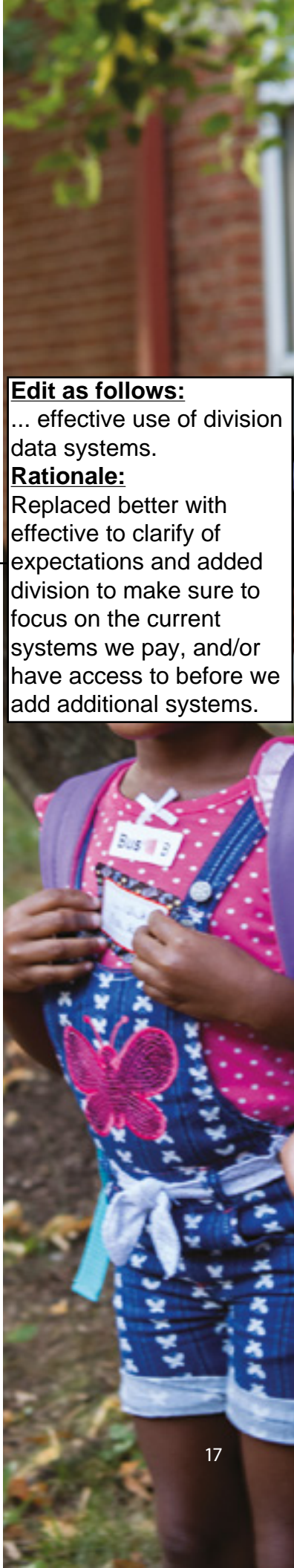
- Provide equitable hardware (Chromebooks, laptops, presentation tools, etc.) for students and staff across the Division.
- Maintain and support telecommunications, network connectivity and networked tools.
- Provide a streamlined set of Division-wide software/applications to support the education and business operations.
- Provide a streamlined set of digital tools to support real-time communication with students, staff, families and the community.
- Provide reliable, universally available on-site internet access and reliable off-site internet access for students as needed.

Edit as follows:

... effective use of division data systems.

Rationale:

Replaced better with effective to clarify of expectations and added division to make sure to focus on the current systems we pay, and/or have access to before we add additional systems.





FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ACPS will ensure that all families and community members feel welcomed, respected, and valued.

ACPS family and community engagement will:

- be included in ACPS decision-making processes
- be empowered to support the delivery of education and services to students
- be connected to a coordinated system of services across partner organizations

MEASURES

We are committed to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps by monitoring our progress through:

Percentage of families feeling welcomed, valued, and empowered as partners in their children's success (survey)

Percentage of families who feel their voices are included and valued in ACPS decision-making processes (survey)

Percentage of volunteers feeling welcomed and empowered to support the delivery of education and services to students (survey)

(All surveys need representative voice across groups.)

Add:

..."visitors, and community partners"...

Rationale:

To be inclusive of this measurement to all educational stakeholders who fit into this grouping.



STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Partner with all families —with a particular focus on immigrants and families of color— in their children’s education and in school and Division decision making.

- Implement the family and community engagement action plan in support of ensuring all families feel welcome and supported as equal partners in their children’s education.
- Support parents, in their home language, to know the expectations for student learning, what to do to support their student’s success and how to receive assistance.
- Hold regular community events in schools across the Division in-person and virtually; work with Family and Community Engagement team and ~~parent~~ liaisons to engage families in meaningful ways.
- Adopt research-based strategies to develop authentic, sustained relationships with families that support students’ social, emotional and academic well-being.
- Attract and retain diverse and multilingual staff in schools that represent the school community and support the division’s antiracist journey.
- Build cultural competency and a welcoming customer service orientation among staff, teachers and administrators.
- Build strong relationships with families that honors individual culture while providing a quality service that is equitable and meets each families’ needs.

Work with city and community and corporate partners to address the health, social service and academic needs of students and their families.

- Continue to collaborate with city agencies involved in the Unified Planning Process around key issues of common interest, including the health and mental health of students and their families.
- Working with city and community and corporate partners, conduct an analysis of community need at each school and the resources available at each school to address the need.
- Provide ~~wrap-around~~ supports for students and families ~~in the highest-need schools~~.

Increase the effectiveness and diversity of community volunteers supporting schools.

- Work with schools to create clear guidelines for the role of and outreach to nonprofits and volunteers in schools.
- Work with parent and family engagement groups to increase the diversity of volunteer participation in schools and to decrease barriers for working parents.

Engage business partners to expand opportunities for students.

- Develop opportunities for students to explore career opportunities via Northern Virginia technology partners.
- Develop pathways and establish an equitable process for students to become connected to work-based and career learning opportunities.

Rationale:

Although we feel like it is certainly a focus, do we need this in the headline? Does it exclude Special Needs, Gender, etc?

Change to: "family"

Edited to correct grammar.

Edited to correct grammar.

Edited as follows:

Provide supports for students and families.

Rationale:

Generalizing to be inclusive of all supports in the area of student services, emotional and mental health supports.

Add:

... "and professional learning support"...

Rationale:

Adding in Professional Learning.

Add:

"commercial and"

Rationale:

To broaden outside of technology.



Achievement Gap: The “achievement gap” in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates, among other success measures.

Advantage/Privilege: A set of conditions or immunities that allow a group of people to benefit on a daily basis beyond those common to others. Advantage can exist without a person’s conscious knowledge.

Core Values: The fundamental beliefs of ACPS. These guiding principles dictate behavior and can help people make decisions for the Division.

Developmental Assets Approach: These 40 positive supports and strengths are building blocks that children and teenagers need as a foundation for growing up. Research shows that these assets can have a positive impact on young people’s lives.

Equity Result: The condition we aim to achieve in the community.

Educational Equity: Educational disparities based on race, economics and other dimensions of difference are reduced and eliminated. Positive school outcomes are distributed equitably proportionally across all demographic and identity groups. Negative outcomes and disproportionality are reduced for all groups.

Educational Excellence: We keep the bar high in all we do. We educate students for life and for reflective citizenship. We empower students and employees in the preservation of their identity and culture. Substance, depth, and critical thinking are more important than compliance or test scores.

Empowerment: The knowledge, confidence, means, or ability to make decisions for oneself.

Goals: The five elements that comprise the Division’s approach to ensuring equity, frame the Division’s work in meeting the KPIs, and enable the Division to track implementation progress. Each goal includes measures that define how implementation of the goal will be determined. Each goal will also include a number of strategies and highlighted actions for how the goal will be achieved.

Highlighted Actions: These priority projects within each strategy specify actions aimed at helping to achieve each measurable goal. These highlighted actions are aligned with those of school and department improvement plans, which also identify implementation processes and measures.

Improvement Science: A user-centered approach to identifying, understanding, and solving persistent problems that focuses on starting small, learning-by-doing, systemic inquiry, and valuing that one-size solutions do not fit all.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): The overall student performance outcomes that ACPS is trying to achieve and used to evaluate the ultimate success of the Division.

Measures: Ways in which ACPS will determine the extent to which goals are being implemented.

Mission: A brief description of ACPS’ fundamental purpose both for those in the Division and for the public. It answers the question, “Why do we exist?”

Opportunity Gap: Disparity in access to quality schools and the resources needed for academic success, such as early childhood education, and/or access to rigorous, engaging and relevant instruction.

Racial Equity: When race does not determine quality of life, opportunities, and outcomes.

Strategies: High-level actions for how the Division plans to achieve each goal. Identified within each strategy are highlighted actions, which are specific priority projects that help achieve each measurable goal.

Theory of Action: Fundamental belief about what will lead to the greatest improvement of student outcomes and eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps for low-income students, Black and Hispanic students, English learners, and students with disabilities. The theory of action ensures that the division achieves its vision, executes its mission, and upholds its core values.

Trauma-Informed: The increased awareness of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACES) will build a stronger more resilient trauma-informed community.

Vision: A clear statement that describes what ACPS is trying to achieve in the future.

GLOSSARY OF STRATEGIC PLAN TERMS

UNIFIED PLANNING PROCESS

Alexandria prides itself on being a concerned, caring and engaged community — one which works collaboratively for the benefit of those who live here and the larger public interests. Alexandrians view themselves individually but also, as part of this larger collective wishing to improve the lives of all who live in the city.

In 2019, the “perfect storm” of opportunity presented itself when the timing of revisions to three major city-related plans coincided — the Alexandria City Public Schools’ Strategic Plan, the Department of Community and Human Services’ Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP), and the Alexandria Health Department and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria’s Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). These organizations established a Unified Planning Team in the spring of 2019 and found partnering to develop their plans collectively provided added value to each through the opportunity to maximize collective community engagement, use and focus on the most important data, and focus on shared outcomes.

The result of working together, instead of in isolation, should prove beneficial to all in Alexandria and serve as a model for future efforts in our community.

We invite you to view the outcome of this unified planning work in this document and the others completed as part of this collaborative effort.

While developing these plans is important, implementing them successfully is even more important. As a result, the Unified Planning Team will evolve into a Unified Implementation Team to continue the partnership during implementation of these plans over the next five years and continue to ensure alignment of actions, collective community engagement, use of data, and sharing of resources, when possible.

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ruba Afzal	Alejandro Gomez	Maureen McNulty*	Veronica Tellez*
Leslie Alexander	Jacinta Greene*	Sofia Melendez-Contreras	Ewan Thompson*
Mignon Anthony	Robert Gunby	K. Nicholas Miller	Brent Trigg
Naeem Baig	Dr. Stacey Hardy- Chandler*	Pedro Morales*	Dominic Turner
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Dr. Julie A. Crawford	Janelle Lee	Matthew Parrish	<i>Review Committee</i>
William Deeker	Dr. Bethany Letiecq	Rene Paschal*	<i>Member</i>
Gaynelle Diaz	Helen Lloyd	Dr. Lisa Piehota	
Caroline Doughty	Joanna Lovo	Jane Richardson	Core Planning Team:
Chelsea Eickert	Abigail Lower	Patricia Rodgers	Alejandra Caballero
Danielle Esposito	Dawn Lucas*	Ruth Santos*	Christina Constantine
Mariam Fikre	Laurie MacNamara	Matthew Schilling	Nathan Goldstein
Katrina Ford	Dr. Gerald R. Mann, Jr.	RaAlim Shabazz*	Cheryl Robinson
Leah Fraley	Dr. Victor Martin	Dr. Ashley Simpson Baird*	Dr. Jennifer Whitson
Mary Gaddis*	Sean McEearney*	Matthew Stensrud	Kennetra Wood
Ramee Gentry*		Natalie Talis	

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www.acps.k12.va.us/2025

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Follow our schools on social media:
www.acps.k12.va.us/socialmedia

Sign up for ACPS Express, school newsletters,
and emergency alerts:
www.acps.k12.va.us/lists

This plan was developed and approved in June 2020 under the following leadership:

ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD

DISTRICT A

Jacinta Greene
Dr. Michelle Rief
Christopher A. Suarez

DISTRICT B

Cindy M. Anderson (Chair)
Margaret Lorber
Veronica R. Nolan (Vice Chair)

DISTRICT C

Meagan L. Alderton
Ramee A. Gentry
Heather Thornton

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.



Alexandria City Public Schools

1340 Braddock Place • Alexandria, VA 22314 • 703-619-8000 • www.acps.k12.va.us