



FourPoint
Education Partners

Alexandria City Public Schools

Strategic Planning Launch
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FourPoint Team



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Experience: Chief Education Officer, MBRT,
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Director, Center for Financing School-Community Partnerships
Experience: Finance Project, Assoc Director
Researcher and Evaluator



Tracee Frazier: SME

FourPoint: Senior Associate

Experience: Principal,
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Angel Johnson: SME

FourPoint: Senior Associate

Experience: School Improvement Action Planning
(DC), Community Engagement (OK), Special Educator
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Amy Cox: Data

FourPoint: Lead Data Analyst

Experience: Resource Modeling,
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Why Strategic Planning?

1. Provides a focus

- Formalizes the mission, vision, core values, goals, and objectives
- Enables stakeholders to voice and set shared priorities and a path to improvement

2. Engages the community, incl. both internal and external stakeholders

- Process involves engaging community in feedback sessions
- Helps the team develop a more targeted strategic plan
- Builds community support

3. Helps create efficiency and saves money

- Districts that implement strategic plans ultimately create efficiency that can translate to financial savings.

Adapted from the American Productivity & Quality Center

Making Equity a Strategic Focus

The Strategic Planning process provides an opportunity for **ACPS** to build on what is working and to plan for future needs, while promoting...

- *equity & cultural competence*
- *collaboration & transparency*
- *social-emotional development*
- *instructional excellence*

A FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING EQUITY TAXONOMY IN ACPS



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*BASED ON BUILDING EQUITY: POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO EMPOWER ALL LEARNERS BY DOMINIQUE SMITH, NANCY FREY, IAN PUMPIAN AND DOUGLAS FISHER

Strategic Planning Process - Overview

Needs Assessment

- ✓ Data collection and analysis
- ✓ Creates shared understanding of strengths and challenges
- ✓ Provides data for benchmarking and goal-setting
- ✓ Builds buy-in and momentum for plan



Strategic Planning Meetings

- ✓ Review Needs Assessment
- ✓ Refresh Vision/Mission
- ✓ Determine Theory of Action
- ✓ Develop Strategies and Activities
- ✓ Identify Outcomes and Measures
- ✓ Review Draft Plan
- ✓ Implementation Planning and Prioritization

Strategic Planning Committee

Steering Committee

Subcommittees

Plan Development

- ✓ FourPoint Drafts Plan
- ✓ ACPS Reviews Draft
- ✓ Provide feedback opportunities on Draft Plan
- ✓ FourPoint Presents Final Plan to Board and Steering Committee

FourPoint Roles and Responsibilities

FourPoint will be working with division partners to plan for engagement, data collection and analysis, strategic planning meetings (which FourPoint will facilitate), and drafting the plan.

- Project kick-off meeting finalized scope of work, timeline, and project management plans
- Protocols to help ACPS schedule interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations
- Draft surveys, communications to internal and external stakeholders, needs analysis report, and strategic plan
- Regular progress check-ins and/or updates
- Presentation of the draft plan to the Board
- Presentation of final plan to school board and planning team.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is critical for three reasons:

1. Collection of important information, incl. the Children & Youth Master Plan, the Community Health Improvement Plan, and ideas for improvement
2. Validity of plan and belief that it represents internal and external stakeholders' views
3. Successful implementation and momentum for action

Engagement is a focus of all FourPoint's planning

- **Needs analysis** includes surveys; interviews and focus groups of key internal and external stakeholders, incl. City agencies; and classroom observations
- **Strategic planning** process includes steering committee and strategic planning committee
- **Draft Plans** are circulated for comment and feedback by internal and external stakeholders
- FourPoint regularly adjusts strategies based on needs and preferences of division leaders

Engagement of Diverse Communities

FourPoint has worked with some of the most diverse communities in the country to conduct needs analyses and plan strategically.

Sample of district clients: Philadelphia (PA), Camden (NJ), Jersey City (NJ), Buffalo (NY), Omaha (NE), Fayette County (KY), Lee County (FL), Hillsborough County (FL), L.A. County (CA), Topeka (KS), Wichita (KS), Denver (CO)

Engagement Strategies:

- Provide transportation
- Meet in accessible locations and at various times
- Provide food and student showcases
- Involve interpreters and someone to watch children
- Work with trusted community partners
- Use community surveys and community forums

Strategic Planning: Equity Focus

FourPoint considers three key indicators of equity in all work:

1. How **resources**--people, time, and money-- are allocated across schools and student groups
2. How **instructional practices** and supports (including culture and climate) vary across schools and student groups
3. What **key indicators** - incl. absenteeism, discipline & academic achievement - tell us about equity gaps in **social emotional academic learning** across schools and student groups



Research and Best Practices

FourPoint uses research, benchmarking, and data to assess district needs, plan strategically and track progress

- **Research:** Coherence Framework (Harvard - PELP), Classroom Practices (Marzano, Elmore, Others), SEL (CASEL, Zins et al.), Leadership (Wallace, Gates, Others), Domain Specific
- **Benchmarking:** FourPoint clients, Council of Great City Schools, Education Resource Strategies (ERS), published data (e.g., finance and resource allocation, facilities, class size, number of principals per administrator, etc.)
- **Data analytics:** Examples include teacher vacancies and fulfillment by month, per-pupil expenditure by school and school-level poverty, use of high-impact instructional strategies

Empowering the Strategic Planning Committee

To help members of the full Strategic Planning Committee understand and serve effectively in their roles, ACPS has also partnered with Hanover Research to create a workbook summarizing key efforts and metrics across core areas, as well as evaluative findings and recommendations of recent audits.

Introduction

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) recently formed a Strategic Planning Committee, including representatives from all stakeholder groups, to set priorities for the division across the next five years and to create a new ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan. As the committee begins its work, ACPS would like to provide members with an overview of the division during the previous strategic plan period. To support this effort, this report provides committee members with background knowledge of key metrics and evaluations that have taken place within the division and proposes discussion questions to guide further investigation. The overall aim of this report is to create a summary of evidence that supports where ACPS performs with regards to various key goals and priorities.

To support the Strategic Planning Committee's work, Hanover Research organizes this report into five chapters:

- 1 Enrollment and demographics,
- 2 Academic achievement,
- 3 Behavior and social-emotional learning,
- 4 Stakeholder perceptions, and
- 5 Staffing and operations.

KEY REFLECTION:

As committee members review the reports, they should take time to reflect on the concept of equity by considering the following questions: **What evidence or examples point to successes the division has had in addressing equity over the past five years? What opportunities still exist?**

Chapter 2: Academic Achievement

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AUDITS AND EVALUATIONS

CURRICULUM

SUMMARY

A 2016 evaluation of ACPS' curriculum determined that it supports diverse learning experiences and differentiated instruction for most students. Strengths of the curriculum include lesson plans and activities that enable students to engage in individual, group, and/or project-based learning; resources for helping students become self-directed learners; resources for differentiating instruction; and texts to support teachers' efforts to connect learning across content areas. Development areas included 1) the need for additional resources to support instruction of students with disabilities and 2) changes to the timing, delivery, and content of teacher professional development, especially related to using assessment data to inform instruction.

KEY COMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Curriculum guides use a common framework for all education levels (elementary, middle school, high school) and all content areas.
- ✓ Curriculum guides facilitate a variety of diverse learning experiences, including group work, individual work, and project-based learning.
- ✓ Instructional resources, materials, and strategies for English learners are a strength in the curriculum guides. They are specific to the content of each unit.

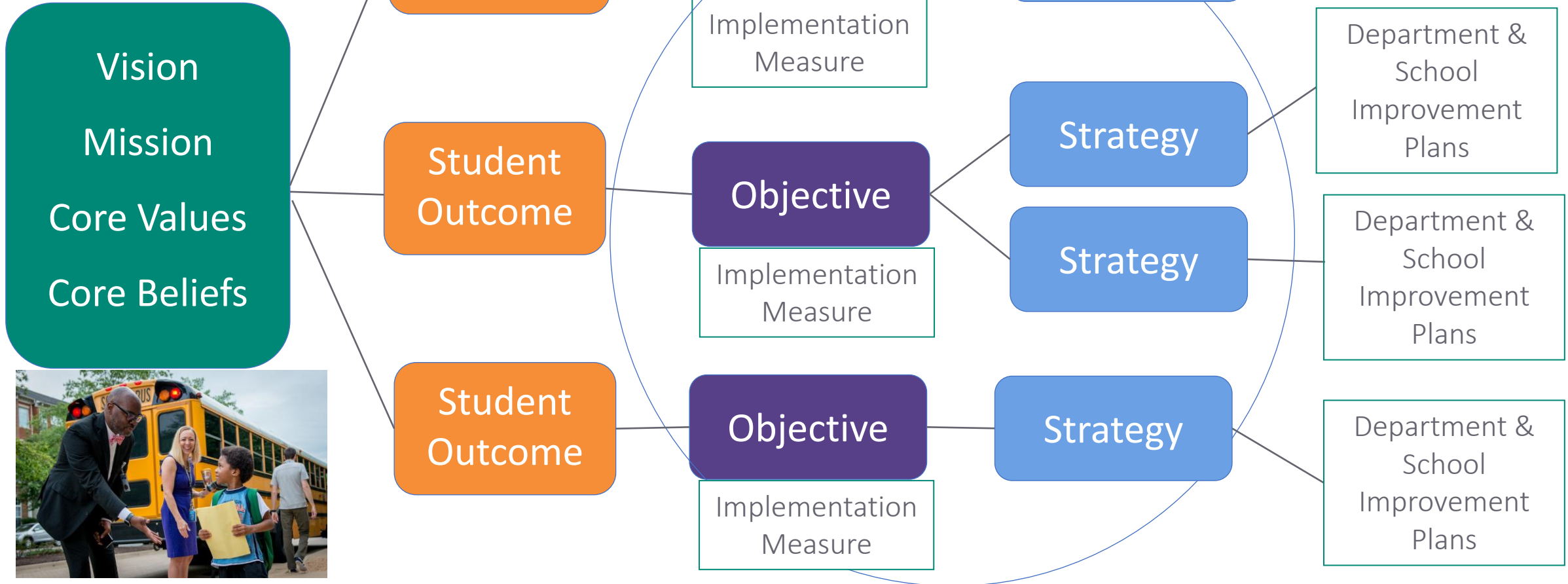
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVE THE USABILITY OF WRITTEN CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

- Replace the current online PDF format with a web-based searchable platform for housing the written curriculum.
- Provide instructional guidance for lesson planning that is specific to the individual unit's subject matter content.
- Include ACPS teachers more directly in the development of curriculum lessons.
- Provide instructional guidance for teaching students

Strategic Planning Framework

Theory of Action



Strategic Planning: Board Involvement

Board participation is key to the strategic planning process, including:

- Revisiting the **vision, mission, core beliefs**, and **core values**
- Participating in training on **effective planning** and **implementation**
- Having **representation** on the **steering committee**
- **Approving the final plan**
- **Monitoring implementation of the plan**



The Big Finish

FourPoint looks forward to supporting ACPS and the Board in meeting its goals of planning strategically to improve outcomes for all students and to eliminate achievement gaps.

- **Reputation:** collaborative problem solvers that deliver high-impact products and services on time and within budget
- **What matters to us:** context, coherence, relationships, equity and access
- **Why we do it:** improved outcomes for all children and youth