

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Belong. Grow. Succeed.

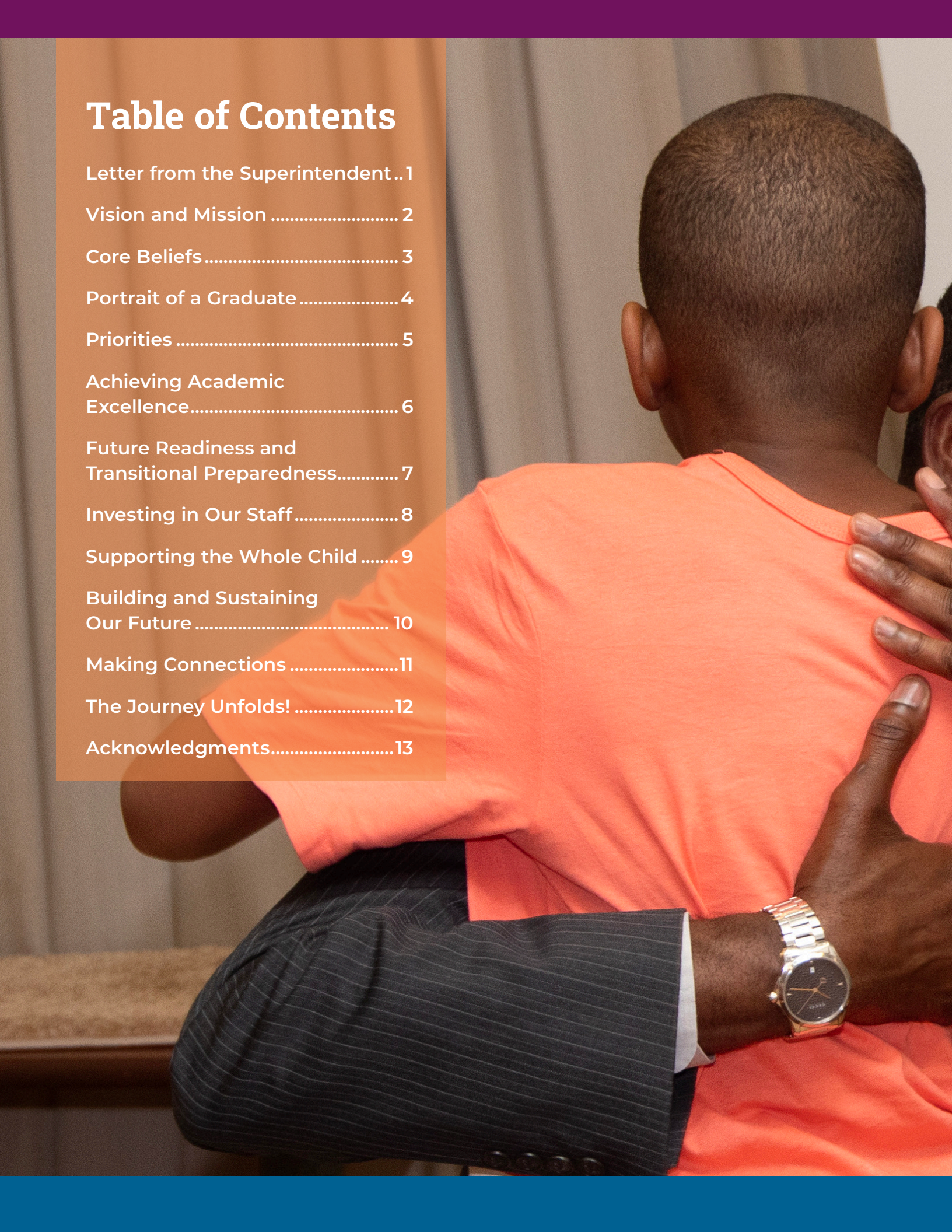


STRATEGIC PLAN 2024–2029

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Trust, Transparency, and Shared Purpose

For any school system to fully deliver the promise of education to its students and community, its work must be built on a foundation of trust, transparency, and shared purpose.

This Strategic Plan reflects those values. Though it is our Board of Education that is charged with adoption of this plan and it is our staff that is charged with implementation, this is not our plan.

This is a *community plan* centered on fostering an environment where every student feels a sense of belonging, empowered to grow academically and socially, and ultimately equipped to succeed in whatever path they choose. It is designed to be able to remain in place beyond the tenure of any school system employee or Board member. In short, it's about lifting the words *Belong, Grow, and Succeed* from this document and bringing them to life through each and every single one of our students.

Throughout this document we have tried to incorporate voices and lenses from every portion of and position in Anne Arundel County. The thousands of notes from focus groups and results from more than 20,000 survey responses helped jumpstart a year of discussions. A steering committee of more than 70 community members, students, employees and Board Members (listed elsewhere in this document) then examined detail after detail from the feedback, parsing words and ideas as they focused in on core beliefs, priorities, and goals.

This is a living plan that aligns with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). It will also be used in the development of School Improvement Plans and other documents that guide the work of our schools and school system.

Most importantly, it will change as we all change and grow. It will have a scorecard, so those we serve can track our progress. It will be entirely transparent.

Above all, this is our promise to move Anne Arundel County Public Schools forward to the place where it is truly great. It is our belief that this plan will change the trajectory for AACPS. Most importantly, we believe it will change the trajectory for thousands of students whose lives will be positively impacted by the work that comes alive through the implementation of the ideas set forth in these words.

Yours in Education,

Mark T. Bedell, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools



Vision

Anne Arundel County Public Schools is a school community where everyone can **belong, grow, and succeed.**

Mission

AACPS harnesses the strengths of its diverse community and builds on a robust academic foundation to foster safe, joyful learning environments where students explore opportunities, discover their passions, and develop their skills

Belong. Grow. Succeed. 

Core Beliefs

In order to ensure that we are creating an environment built on the promise of academic excellence and social-emotional growth, we must take action through the following core beliefs:



Belonging

We believe that genuine connections and relationships are the foundation of a successful community. We are committed to nurturing strong bonds between students, staff, families, and community members so everyone feels connected, supported, and valued.



Equity

We believe that the promise of public education is for every child to succeed in school and life. We are committed to maximizing every student's academic growth and social-emotional well being by providing access to rigorous learning, differentiated resources, and eliminating obstacles to accessing educational opportunities and academic success.



Innovation

We believe in transforming education through a culture of curiosity, creativity, and collaboration. We are committed to supporting tech-infused, joyful classrooms and schools where students are challenged to think critically and solve problems by educators who are empowered to design engaging learning experiences.



Integrity

We believe honesty, transparency, and accountability promote trust and mutual respect. We are committed to open communication between administration, staff, students, and families, inviting feedback, and creating a sense of shared responsibility for student academic success and personal growth.



Safety

We believe that every individual needs to have physical, social-emotional and mental safety and security as a foundation in our community. We are committed to fostering a culture of learning and well-being where individuals have access to resources and support that enable them to belong, grow, and succeed.

Portrait of a Graduate



Future-Ready

I set ambitious goals, create and implement flexible plans, and use my knowledge and skills to live independently, learning, growing, and thriving in an ever-changing world.

Effective Collaborator

I form meaningful relationships, skillfully communicate, and work with diverse groups of people to achieve common goals.

Critical Thinker

I analyze and evaluate information, resources, perspectives, and experiences to weigh opinions, formulate well-reasoned conclusions, solve problems, and navigate challenges.

Curious Learner

I ask questions, explore ideas, and embrace new opportunities so I can understand the world and build a better future for myself and my community.

Empathetic Community Member

I demonstrate sensitivity, concern, understanding, and respect for the experiences and feelings of others to better the community.



Priorities

Achieving Academic Excellence 1

Ensuring that all students are exposed to high academic expectations, rigorous curriculum, and an engaging learning environment to meet individual needs and continue to grow.

Future Readiness and Transitional Preparedness 2

Ensuring that all AACPS students are prepared to grow and prosper as they move through the system and successfully transition from the school system to adulthood.

Investing in Our Staff 3

Ensuring a diverse and highly effective staff at all levels and positions.

Supporting the Whole Child 4

Ensuring the social, emotional, mental, physical, and behavioral health and well-being of all students.

Building and Sustaining Our Future 5

Ensuring the safety, security, and upkeep of all district facilities and the efficient and equitable management / allocation of district resources.

1

Achieving Academic Excellence



Ensuring that all students are exposed to high academic expectations, rigorous curriculum, and an engaging learning environment to meet individual needs and continue to grow.

Why is this urgent?

A solid academic foundation in school provides students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed for success in higher education, careers, and lifelong learning.

This equips them to participate meaningfully in their communities.

- GOAL A:** Increase the percent of students reading on or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade for all student groups.
- GOAL B:** Increase the percent of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on the national/state standards in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies for all student groups.
- GOAL C:** Increase the percent of Multilingual Learners making progress towards attaining English Language Proficiency.

Equity commitment

We believe academic excellence for all is the foundation for equity. It empowers students to reach their full potential, participate meaningfully in society, and break down barriers to success. Through a commitment to academic excellence, we strive to close opportunity/achievement gaps to ensure that all students have supports to excel academically and create a future where each student graduates prepared to thrive in a dynamic and interconnected world.

Future Readiness and Transitional Preparedness

Ensuring that all AACPS students are prepared to grow and prosper as they move through the system and successfully transition from the school system to adulthood.

- GOAL A:** Increase the percent of students ready to transition to Kindergarten for all student groups.
- GOAL B:** Increase the percent of students who access and demonstrate success in Career and Technical Education (CTE), Cultural Arts, Advancement Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Dual Enrollment programs (as defined by MSDE) for all student groups.
- GOAL C:** Increase the percent of students who graduate high school in four years for all student groups.

Equity commitment

We will ensure each student begins their academic journey with a strong foundation and continues to stay on-track through graduation by identifying and closing opportunity/achievement gaps through equitable access, data-driven interventions, and begin to personalize learning pathways for each student.

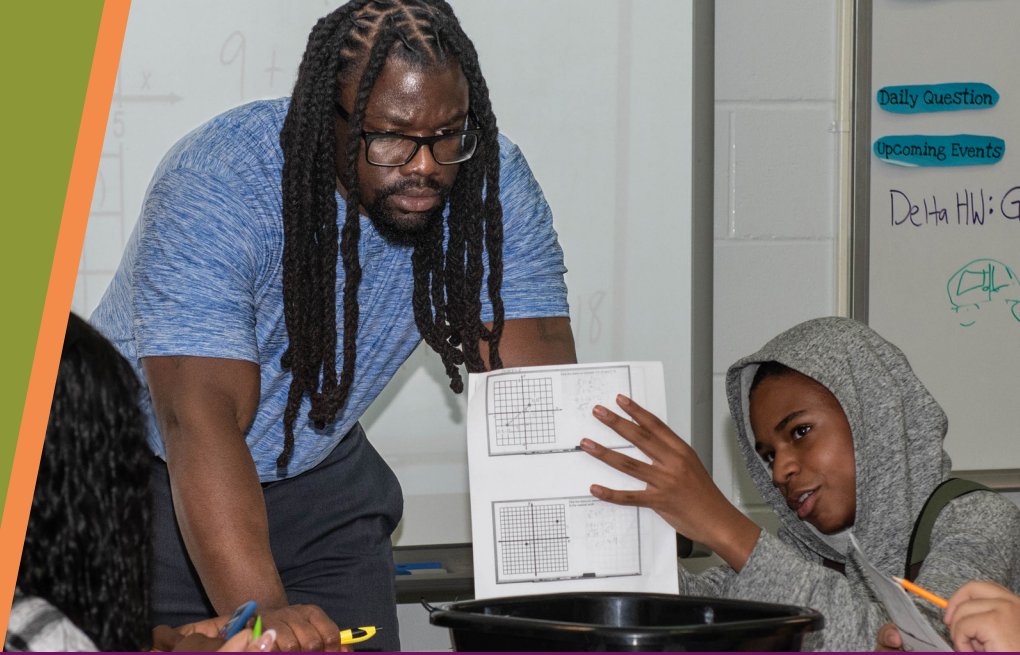
Why is this urgent?

AACPS faces an urgent task in ensuring each student is college and career ready. This is not just about test scores, but equipping students with the skills and knowledge to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

College and career readiness levels the playing field for future opportunities and strengthens our community. It is about empowering each student, regardless of background, to reach their full potential and contribute to a better future.

3

Investing in Our Staff



Ensuring a diverse and highly effective staff at all levels and positions.

Why is this urgent?

Diversity in the workplace allows individuals from different backgrounds and with different perspectives to learn from each other.

We believe hiring highly effective individuals from various backgrounds and with different talents, skills, and perspectives will enhance creativity and innovation within our organization.

- GOAL A:** Increase the retention of instructional and non-instructional staff.
- GOAL B:** Increase the number of diverse employees to reflect the diversity of students in the district.
- GOAL C:** Increase the percent of Nationally Board Certified Teachers and work toward ensuring an equitable distribution across all schools.

Equity commitment

We are committed to actively recruiting and retaining highly qualified diverse staff. A diverse staff that reflects our student population fosters a sense of belonging and enriches the educational experience for all.

Supporting the Whole Child

Ensuring the social, emotional, mental, physical, and behavioral health and well-being of all students.

- GOAL A:** Increase student and family awareness of, access to, and use of available social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports.
- GOAL B:** Increase the percent of students not chronically absent for all student groups.
- GOAL C:** Increase behavioral health supports in schools by reducing the staff-to-student services ratios.

Equity commitment

We believe each student deserves to thrive in a learning environment that prioritizes their social, emotional, mental, physical, and behavioral health and well-being alongside academic achievement. By integrating these supports and fostering a positive school climate, we aim to create equitable access to opportunities for students to succeed in school and life.

Why is this urgent?

Schools that support the whole child address not only academic achievement, but also mental, physical, and behavioral health.

This comprehensive approach creates a sense of belonging and helps develop the social and emotional skills needed for lifelong success and responsible citizenship.

5

Building and Sustaining Our Future



Ensuring the safety, security, and upkeep of all district facilities and the efficient and equitable management/allocation of district resources.

Why is this urgent?

Maintenance and modernization of facilities and higher levels of safety allow students and staff to feel unencumbered to concentrate on learning and growth.

Additionally, it is critical for AACPS to be fiscally responsible in supporting the mission of the district.

- GOAL A:** Ensure that all AACPS facilities are secure and are fully equipped with modern infrastructure and maintenance practices to create a clean, safe environment for students and staff.
- GOAL B:** Equip all AACPS students with learning spaces that are appropriate to the needs of the students and that have the technology and other resources necessary to support modern learning environments.
- GOAL C:** Ensure equitable and transparent funding and resource distribution that meets the needs of each student.

Equity commitment

We are committed to maximizing the use of our existing facilities in a fiscally responsible way and creating adaptable and sustainable learning environments that foster collaboration, innovation, and a sense of community for each student. This ensures equitable access to quality education and equips students with the skills they need to thrive in the future.

Making Connections

As this plan was developed, careful consideration was given to align to the goals of the Blueprint for the Maryland’s Future and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The work articulated in this plan also will be carried through School Improvement Plans and other guiding documents. AACPS is committed to doing everything we can to bring to reality Blueprint’s goal that all students, regardless of their circumstances, “can leave high school globally competitive and prepared for success in postsecondary education, work, and life.” This commitment and alignment allow for a strategic focus on student achievement and reduce perceived competition between plans and accountability measures. More importantly, they guide the work throughout our school system so that every student in AACPS can Belong, Grow, and Succeed.

Strategic Plan Priority

Alignment with Blueprint

1 Achieving Academic Excellence

- All students and student groups on track for CCR*
- Reduced opportunity/achievement gaps*
- Reading proficiency by the end of Grade 3*
- Students on track to graduate*

2 Future Readiness and Transitional Preparedness

- Kindergarten readiness
- Successful transitions between grades*
- College and Career Pathways*
- Success in the attainment of credentials and certifications*
- Earning college credits*

3 Investing in Our Staff

- Increased staff retention rates
- Support for staff in professional growth including leadership opportunities
- Increased percentage of NBCTs

4 Supporting the Whole Child

- Awareness of and access to social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports*
- Increased student services staff
- Support to address chronic absenteeism*

5 Building and Sustaining Our Future

- Appropriate facilities for 21st-century learning*
- Resource allocation system that ensures equitable funding to meet the needs of all students*

** Also aligns with Maryland Report Card*

The Journey Unfolds!

The next five years are our chance to turn vision into action. We'll build this roadmap brick by brick by staying focused, disciplined, and accountable.

Leading the Charge

Dedicated teams, fueled by passion and expertise, will spearhead each priority area. They'll be our guides, ensuring every step we take brings us closer to success. One of the first steps is to leverage the expertise of the group and draft SMART goals to be incorporated into a monitoring dashboard. Groups will identify strategies we will use in the next five years of the AACPS Strategic Plan.

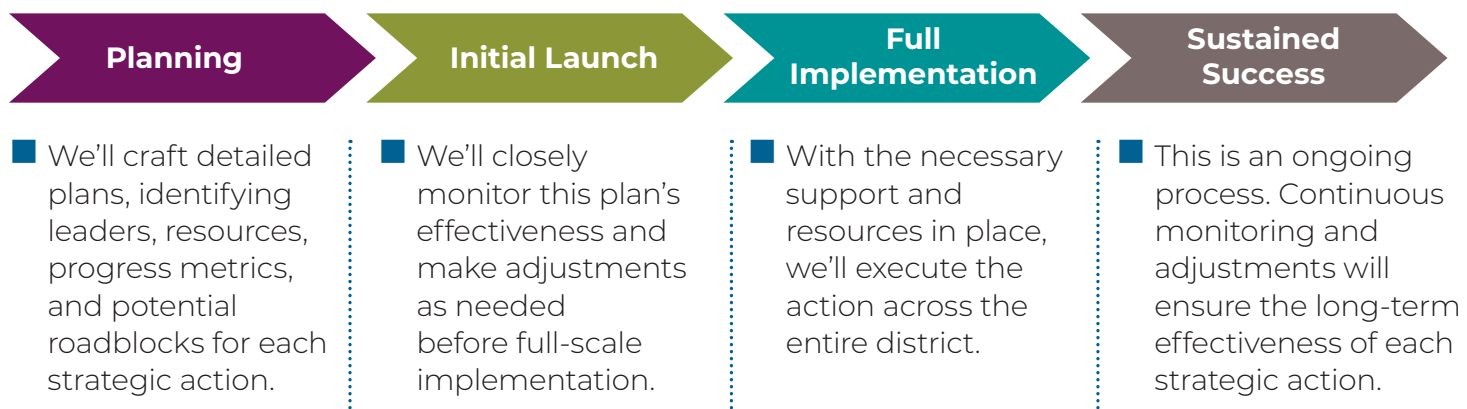
Transparency and Collaboration

Open communication is our cornerstone. Regular updates will flow freely to the Board, staff, students, and our entire community. We'll foster ongoing dialogue and actively seek feedback to shape informed decisions.

Analyze and Adapt

Resource allocation is critical. People, funding, facilities, and time—all will be strategically aligned to ensure the plan's viability. Implementation won't happen overnight, but will follow a phased approach, allowing for ongoing assessment and adjustments. Over the next five years (2024–25 to 2028–29), we'll work collaboratively through **four key stages below**.

Four Key Stages of Success through Sustainability



This is a living document that will guide us to ensure that our students belong, grow, and succeed. **Let the journey begin!**

Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Steering Committee for their dedication and commitment over the past several months. Their efforts in crafting our district's strategic plan are truly commendable.

We are especially grateful for the diverse perspectives brought to the table. Students, staff, parents, and community members all played a vital role. Student voices provided invaluable insights into their educational needs and aspirations. Staff expertise ensured the plan aligns with practical considerations. Parents' perspectives were crucial in understanding the needs of our families. Finally, the contributions of community members enriched the plan by reflecting the broader context in which our schools operate.

This collaborative spirit, where all voices were heard and valued, is a testament to the Steering Committee's exceptional leadership. The resulting strategic plan is a roadmap for the future of AACPS, built upon the collective wisdom of our entire community.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Tracey Ahern
Delonya Akindoyo
Shelly Banachoski
Sandy Blondell
Virgil Boysaw
Pam Brown
Kristen Caminiti
Linda Chandler
Zachary Cohen
Luis da Conceicao
Jennifer Corbin
Kristine Crandell
Lisa Crittenden
Peggy Cruz
Frances Cruz-Serrano
Mary Dadone
Tressa Dooran
Preeti Emrick

Jaden Farris
Jennifer Fold
Tiffany Foster
Brenda Galvez-Sierra
Tonii Gedin
Anna Harding
Raven Harris
Jeff Haynie
Leanna Henceroth
Steven Hildebrand
Nicole Hill
Kia Holder
Lorenzo Hughes
Edward Jackson
Monique Jackson
Dwight Jefferson
Shantae Johnson
Thornell Jones

Jed Kling
Katherine Larrabee
Eric Lin
Dawn Lucarelli
Carmenlita Makell
Alexis McKay
Erica McFarland
Diane McGowan
Adrienne Mickler
Maneka Monk
Shenninta Newman
Kamille Ogunwolu
Heidi Oliver-Oglivie
Jeanette Ortiz
Jennifer Powell
Kim Pratta
Shannon Pugh
Gabriel Rodriguez

Amanda Salveron
Jason Semanoff
Lisa Shore
Jerray Slocum
Asha Smith
Isaphine Smith
Erin Snell
Cathy Steen
Karla Steinbach
Gavin Stemmler
Kelly Thomas
Joanna Bache Tobin
Joe Toolan
Ryan Voegtlin
Lauren Ward-Allen
Brian Whitley
Mizetta Wilson



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For more information, contact:
Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Division of Human Resources
2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401
410-222-5286 TDD 410-222-5000