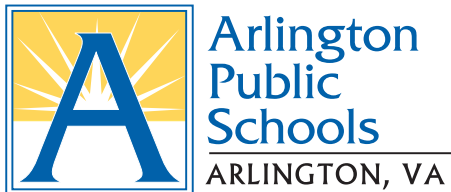




Listening and Learning to Facilitate Relationships for Student Success

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy



The new superintendent's entry plan offers a framework to facilitate Dr. Patrick K Murphy's efforts to initiate honest and productive discussions with all levels of Arlington Public Schools and the Arlington community. The plan provides a method to facilitate and articulate a comprehensive and transparent plan-of-action for Dr. Murphy from May to October 2009 and involves various constituencies within APS and the Arlington community. The plan addresses several key elements that are embedded in the objectives and activities at each phase of the plan. These key elements are:

- Building collaborative and team-oriented relationships;
- Developing a more comprehensive understanding and knowledge about the people, community, and school division; and
- Creating an environment that moves the school community forward to address both short-term and long-range academic and operational goals.

The foundation that guides the activities in each phase of this entry plan are the Arlington Public Schools 2005-11 Strategic Plan and its four goals of

- Raising Student Achievement,
- Eliminating the Gap in Achievement,
- Providing a Responsive Education, and
- Building Effective Relationships.

The entry plan is divided into three two-month phases: Pre-entry, Entry, and Post-entry. The plan focuses on five

themes – Vision, Communication, Achievement, Strategies, and Future – to organize activities, gain knowledge and information, and ultimately, to create a picture of the current and future state of the school division. These themes provide a lens for the Superintendent, School Board and staff to:

- Think about our future and the aspirations we have for students,
- Examine our students' academic accomplishments; and
- Provide an opportunity and forum for us to sharpen the focus of our commitment to ensure the success of all students.

The entry plan activities have been designed to provide opportunities to collect information through a variety of approaches including interviews, group meetings, and a review of documents and resources. This combination of informal and formal research will provide a more comprehensive picture of the organization. The conclusions of the first two two-month phases coincide with the ending of the current school year and the start of the new school year, respectively. A report at the end of the first six months will precede the development of the Superintendent's FY11 Budget, and will also aid in crafting a community process for building the 2011-17 Strategic Plan.

This entry plan has been developed to provide the necessary investment of time and resources to:

- Foster relationships,
- Create partnerships,
- Build teams, and
- Reflect on the accomplishments and direction of the school division.

In essence, the entry plan will serve as a formative process for the whole organization to see what is working and what may need adjustment.

Information and findings will be regularly reported by Dr. Murphy, with updates available on the APS Web site. At the end of each phase of the plan, Dr. Murphy will communicate the status of activities as he engages with the

different groups in the school division and community. At the conclusion of the final phase, Dr. Murphy will present a report to the School Board and community, detailing his findings, and outlining recommendations and strategies proposed for the future direction of the school division.

A framework for the entry plan includes:

- A list of constituencies to be consulted with objectives for each group;
- Information on guiding questions for each phase,

- Objectives for each question and data collection, and
- Documents to review throughout the entry plan time-frame.

Additional tables will be available online detailing the entry plan objectives and activities by constituency group. Appendices that present documents to track progress toward these entry plan goals, objectives, and activities will also be available, along with interview questions that will be used to collect information.

Detailed Entry Plan Objectives By Constituency Group	
Constituencies	Entry Plan Objectives
School Board	Establish team-oriented working relationships with individual board members and the board as a whole to support the work and success of Arlington Public Schools
Senior and Executive Staff	Develop strong professional relationships with all Senior Staff members to create a collaborative team to lead the school division
School and Department Leadership	Cultivate strong professional relationships with all school-based and department leaders to become knowledgeable and to understand each community they serve, their instructional and support services and resources, and the goals of each program
Teachers (TCI and ILT)	Create open, professional relationships to facilitate communication between teachers and school-based and senior leadership to support staff in meeting the needs of students and families
Other Employee Group Representatives	Develop relationships with other employee groups to facilitate open communication, provide opportunities for feedback, and align our work to support students and families
Students	Establish partnerships with representatives from student groups at all levels to gain perspective and understanding of the opportunities and contributions of students within the Arlington Public Schools
Parents	Establish partnerships with local, division, and regional parent groups to become knowledgeable of their advocacy and contributions for all students in the Arlington Public Schools
APS Advisory Groups	Establish effective partnerships with representatives from the district-wide advisory councils and committees to become aware of their work and priorities to support the goals of the Arlington Public Schools
Community Leadership	Generate goodwill, build support, and establish channels for communication with community leaders – faith-based and business organizations – that serve the students and enhance the Arlington community
Political Leadership	Create partnerships and establish means for consistent communication with local, regional, state and national leaders to support the students, their families and the Arlington community
Media	Generate an early “listening and learning” focus to clearly communicate goals to the press, public, and education community



Creating A Framework For Listening And Learning To Facilitate Relationships For Student Success

Phases	Themes and Guiding Questions	Objectives	Documents To Review
<p>Pre-entry: Exploration & Dialogue</p> <p>May to June</p>	<p>Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is currently being done to accomplish our mission, vision, and goals? <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we communicate our mission and vision in order to accomplish the goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of the perspectives of all stakeholders to establish a roadmap for the vision and expectations of APS • Establish an understanding and ownership of the process by which the division's vision, mission, core beliefs, commitment, and action plans are dedicated to providing the best possible education for every child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2005-11 Strategic Plan • School Management Plans • Department Plans • School Board Policy Manual • Policy Implementation Procedures • School Board Meeting Minutes/Agendas • Employee Handbook • Student and Parent Handbooks • Curriculum, Instruction, and Program Assessments • Professional Development Plans • Student Achievement Data by School/Division • Financial Projections and Budget Documents/Processes • Capital Improvement Plan • Legal Proceedings • Accountability Plans and Processes • Project Management Protocols and Plans
<p>Entry: Evaluation & Achievement</p> <p>July to August</p>	<p>Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What successes have been achieved toward meeting the Strategic Plan goals? • What successes must be achieved to meet the established goals outlined in the APS Strategic Plan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine "where we are and where we need to go" in terms of organization effectiveness and efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Management Plans and Procedures • Administrator and Teacher Evaluation Process • Middle and High School Programs of Study • Special Education Plan • Special Education Hearings, Decisions, and Appeals • Discipline Hearings
<p>Post-entry: Strategies for Future Success</p> <p>September to October</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps are necessary for APS to accomplish the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan? <p>Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the future aspirations of Arlington Public Schools? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify successful strategies APS staff are using to meet the goals and objectives of Strategic Plan • Determine gaps in strategies that may not be fully realizing Strategic Plan goals and objectives • Examine key issues in the school division to determine how the organization may function in the future 	



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Detailed Entry Plan Activities By Constituency Group*				
Constituency	Pre-entry Activities	Entry Activities	Developing Action Plan Activities	On-going Activities
School Board	Initial meeting	Board retreat		Establish internal communication, public engagement and board agendas, and regular meetings with Chair and Board members.
Senior and Executive Staff	Initial meeting Department "Meet & Greet" tour of department and administrative offices Introduction to staff Material & resource requests	Co-host department meetings with key leadership Senior staff retreat	Review Department Plans	Establish internal and external communication protocols, weekly meetings.
School and Program Leadership	Visit /meet each school/program and its leadership Material and resource requests	Host a meeting with all school program leaders Host administrative conference Tour all school and program neighborhoods and communities	Review student performance, student services	
Teachers (TCI and ILT)	Initial meeting	Host a coffee with TCI for discussion Meet with school-based ILTs		
Other Employee Groups Representatives	Initial meeting	Hold round-table discussion		
Students	Meet with student leaders during school visits	Host a meeting with key student groups	Establish regular meetings with key student groups	
Parents	Meet with the County Council of PTAs	Host an initial meeting with parent and advisory groups		Establish regular meetings with parent and advisory groups.
APS Advisory Groups	Meet with district councils and advisory groups (i.e., Budget, Facilities, ACI, Elimination of the Gap, Accountability & Evaluation, etc.)	Hold round-table discussions on issues		Establish regular meetings and exchange of ideas with advisory councils
Community Leadership	Meet community leaders at APS Welcome reception	Host an initial meeting with key community organizations to review the status of their relationship with the school division		Develop a plan for enhancing the division's linkages to each community group Participate in special community functions and events hosted by these associated organizations
Political Leadership	Host initial meetings with Arlington County Board, legal counsel and legislative liaison, Manager and Executive Staff	Host initial meetings with key state and national elected officials and/or representatives		
Media	Host an initial press conference for all media organizations			Meet regularly with local media

* Activities will continue to be added throughout implementation of the entry plan. The most up-to-date plan will be available online at www.apsva.us/superintenden/new