



ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Arlington, Virginia
Community Engagement and Profile Report
February 6, 2020

Presented by

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BWP and Associates Consultants

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The following report provides data and information gathered through a community engagement and audit process for Arlington Public Schools (APS). The purpose of this process is the development of a leadership profile which is represented by the qualities, characteristics and desired skills identified through community input. Upon approval by the Arlington School Board, this profile will be used as the basis for the recruitment, identification and selection of the superintendent. A special note of thanks is given to Leslie Peterson, Catherine Ashby, Tannia Talento and the entire District Office staff for their efficiency, gracious hospitality, planning support, and assistance.

REPORT FORMAT

- I. Community Engagement Objectives
- II. Summary of Community Engagement Activities
- II. Preliminary Search Survey Results
- IV. Feedback from Engagement Meetings and Forums
- V. Utilizing Common Themes for Creation of Leadership Profile
- VI. Draft Leadership Profile
- VII. Final Comments
- VIII. Appendices

I. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To identify perceived strengths and challenges of the Arlington Public Schools.
2. To identify desired qualities and characteristics of next superintendent.
3. To build community understanding and support for the superintendent search process.
4. To ensure broadest possible community participation in superintendent search process.

II. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

BWP search team members conducted an extensive Community Engagement process that included focus groups with invitees that included: nonprofits, Higher Ed, businesses, parent groups, faith groups, staff, students, county board members, former school board members and school board members and the entire Arlington community. The information provided reflects the overall themes that emerged from input and feedback from the numerous constituent groups between January 22, 2020 and January 25, 2020. Information was gathered by BWP and Associates consultants via individual face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, four (4) community forums, hard copy feedback via the Focus Group discussion forms and emails. The process also consisted of an online survey utilizing Survey Monkey which was available in five (5) languages: Amharic, Arabic, English, Mongolian, and Spanish. In order to address Board and community concerns about engaging all segments of the community and most importantly those individuals considered to be in “marginalized” groups, Focus Group participants were asked to serve as “search ambassadors” and use their contacts and outreach efforts to inform and encourage participation within those groups. The focus group facilitator team included Dr. Kevin Castner and Dr. E. Wayne Harris. All data and written feedback were gathered and analyzed exclusively by the BWP team.

On January 22-25, the search team facilitated 34 scheduled interviews and meetings and 4 public forum meetings. Approximately 240 individuals participated in these sessions.

The online survey included 1,956 responses: English – 1,840, Amharic – 6, Arabic – 8, Mongolian – 17 and Spanish – 111. Included in this number is 498 students.

We, also, received over 100 emails and letters.

This multifaceted approach to community engagement reflects the Arlington School Board’s commitment to input from students, employees and members of the community. The process has

yielded a significant amount of thought-provoking responses which provide clear guidance as the search process proceeds.

III. COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Listed below are the three highest rated responses to each of the five non-demographic questions from the online survey. This data was gleaned from 1,956 responses.

The online survey results may be found in Appendices B-F. An analysis of the data indicates that 79.4% of the respondents live in Arlington, 64% of the respondents have or have had students in Arlington schools, 25.4% of the respondents are employed by APS of which 53.67% are teachers.

- A. **Survey Question #1 requested responders to select the three most significant strengths of Arlington Public Schools from the following list:** Curriculum and instruction, Diversity, Educational programs and options, Effective leadership, Equity, Facilities, Fiscal management, Growth, Inclusion, Quality of staff, Reputation of school division, Resources and funding, Supportive and engaged community, Other.

The top three results were:

1. Quality of staff– 46.5 %
 2. Educational programs and options– 40.0%
 3. Curriculum and instruction– 38.5 %
 - (4.) Reputation of the district – 34.9%
- Other responses – 4% = 72

- B. **Survey Question #2 requested responders to select what they consider to be the three most important issues or concerns facing the district in the next five years from the following list:** Curriculum and instruction, Diversity, Educational programs and options, Effective leadership, Equity, Facilities, Fiscal Management, Growth, Inclusion, Quality of staff, Reputation of school division, Resources and funding, Supportive and engaged community, Other.

The top three results were:

1. Growth – 45.1%
2. Effective leadership – 36.2%
3. Resources and funding – 29.4%
- (4.) Equity – 25.0%

Other responses – 10% = 181

- C. **Survey Question #3 requested responders to select the three important skills you would like to see in a superintendent from the following list:** Communication skills, Instructional skills, Leadership skills, Financial skills, Organizational skills, Interpersonal skills, Public relations, and Other.

The three top results were:

1. Leadership skills – 80.7%
2. Communication skills – 67.3%
3. Interpersonal skills – 38.1%
- (4.) Organizational skills – 35.9%

Other responses – 10.7% = 195

- D. **Survey Question #4 requested responders to select the three most important characteristics you would like a superintendent to exhibit from the following list:** Commitment to the community, Enthusiasm, Integrity, Good judgment, Innovation, Team builder, Change agent, Risk taker, Negotiator, Peacemaker, Visionary, Other.

The three top results were:

1. Good judgment – 56.3%
2. Integrity – 50.8%
3. Commitment to the community – 47.5%

Other responses – 10% = 182

- E. **Survey Question #5 requested responders to indicate whether you believe the item is either extremely important, important, or not important in the new superintendent from the following list:** Experience as: a superintendent with a proven track record of success; a superintendent in a district of similar size, an assistant superintendent, a district level administrator, a principal, a classroom teacher, Experience in: a multicultural environment, community engagement, finance, Human Resources, instruction, facility construction and management, strategic planning, Experience with technology in instruction, Doctorate degree.

The top results under the choice of "extremely important" were:

1. Experience in a multicultural environment – 60.2%
2. Experience in community engagement – 59.0%
3. Experience in strategic planning– 57.6%
- (4.) Experience as a classroom teacher – 53.9%

Additionally, we reviewed the 630 “Other” responses, and at the end of the survey, the option for additional comments was also provided via direct email to Dr. Kevin Castner, a member of the consultant team. We have received over 100 comments. The survey data is being presented as a representation of quantitative community input.

IV. FEEDBACK FROM FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS, COMMUNITY FORUMS AND EMAILS

Qualitative data was collected from constituent participants which included individual interviews, focus groups, and hard copies/emails. There were thirty-four (34) interview sessions and four (4) Community Forums which included five (5) Board Members, six (6) former Board members and five (5) members of county government.

In summary, seventeen (17) constituent groups were represented throughout the process. Appendix A provides the feedback transcript of comments from all groups. While notes were taken, they were not meant to be provided as verbatim statements, but rather summarize while capturing the essence of the participants perceptions as related to the question prompts. It is important to note that any references about specific individuals were not included. Thus far, through interviews, focus groups and community forums, over two hundred forty (240) participants provided qualitative data by responding to the following prompts:

1. What do you see as the greatest strengths of Arlington Public Schools?
2. What do you see as the greatest challenges faced by Arlington Public Schools?
3. What qualities and characteristics does the next superintendent of Arlington Public Schools need to possess and demonstrate?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the hiring of the next superintendent?

Below are the three questions and a summary of “prominent” responses received. Responses were deemed to be “prominent: when they were expressed multiple times during the sessions and/or when they were considered uniquely relevant and insightful.

QUESTION 1 – WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST STRENGTHS OF THE ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

- ❖ **Quality of staff (46.5%)** - excellent teachers and dedicated staff; extremely qualified staff; strong executive leadership; excellence in teaching at all levels; dedicated and hard-working teachers; caring staff dedicated to students.
- ❖ **Educational programs and options (40.0%)** – strong instructional programs; strong programs for students and strong alternative programs for students; excellent facilities; full range of opportunities for students; multiple options for students; access to technology.
- ❖ **Curriculum and Instruction (38.5%)** – strong core instructional programs.
- ❖ **Reputation of school division (34.9%)** – creative and innovative school system; high performing school system; first choice for many families to live here.
- ❖ **Supportive and engaged community (32.7%)** - supportive and engaged parents, community and community partners; % passage of school bonds; affluent and supportive community; deeply informed and smart community; supportive community who values education; community engagement outreach is valued and encouraged.
- ❖ **Resources and funding (31.4%)** – abundant resources; well resourced; competitive salaries.
- ❖ **Diversity (26.8%)** – diversity is a strength; diversity – not just race but mix of students; diversity of students and the community.
- ❖ Great students.
- ❖ Dedication to cutting-edge and environmentally friendly practices.
- ❖ Strong partnerships with area colleges

Question 2 – What do you see as the greatest challenges faced by the Arlington Public Schools?

- ❖ **Growth (45.1%)** – growth and keeping up with infrastructure and capacity issues; growth and transient nature of evolving community; boundary change issues; loss of middle class.
- ❖ **Effective leadership (36.2%)** – school system v. system of schools; school-based autonomy cause fragmentation in programs; “30 schools 30 rules”; maintaining a strategic plan with fidelity; leadership that focuses on opportunity gaps; teaching the whole child; gaps in achievement and reduced access to programs for students of color; lack of cohesive vision; lack of consistency and accountability across county in program expectations.
- ❖ **Resources and funding (29.4%)** – challenge to equitably distribute funds; lack of space to build new schools; revenue to support growth; more spending is not the only solution to solve problems.
- ❖ **Equity (25%)** – addressing and eliminating the opportunity gap; gaps in public housing policies; maintaining equity among the many special interest groups; north Arlington v. south Arlington.
- ❖ **Diversity (23.3%)** – struggle to serve 25% of our students; meeting diverse needs of all students; improvement in the diversity of the staff.
- ❖ Community involvement can be overwhelming.
- ❖ Challenge in the degree of involvement (balance) of the advisory committees.
- ❖ Transparency in communication.
- ❖ Improve home school communication especially with marginalized groups in community;
- ❖ The “Arlington way” does not work for all students; resistance to change.
- ❖ Teacher morale - too many initiatives– initiative fatigue, competitive teacher salaries.
- ❖ Increasing support for student mental health issues and academic pressures on students.

QUESTION 3 -WHAT QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS DOES THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT OF ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEED TO POSSESS AND DEMONSTRATE?

Response to this question is organized into four areas: Instructional Leadership, Communications, Management and Personal Qualities and Leadership Characteristics.

Instructional Leadership

- ❖ **Leadership skills (80.7%)** – knowledge and proven experience in closing the opportunity gap; vision to build and improve APS; direct experience understanding a diverse community; leader who can project and follow a vision; ability to stay focused on the main thing – student achievement.
- ❖ **Experience as a classroom teacher (53.9%)** – experience as a teacher and building administrator.
- ❖ **Experience in instruction (47.7%)** – understanding of instruction and is supportive of STEM and applied science and non-traditional classroom settings; has experience with effective ELL and SPED inclusionary practices; has understanding of the needed expanded support to students regarding mental health issues; balanced focus - not just test scores but a broader vision for the whole child.

Communications

- ❖ **Communication skills (67.1%)** – ability to collaborate between board and county government; good listener; engages in a collaborative transparent process to arrive at decisions; understands and has experience working with people from different cultures; collaborative inclusive style in seeking input before making decisions.
- ❖ **Experience in community engagement (59.0%)** – forthright in working with people and building relationships; ability to work with the broader community; skill in and background in engaging a passionate community;

innovative in finding ways to have outreach to parents who don't always have the ability to be involved.

Management

- ❖ **Organizational skills (35.9%)** – excellent management skills; significant management and organizational skills; track record in managing positive change; ability to evaluate programs and determine what is working and what is not working and make changes; will hold others accountable; ability to develop working relationships with the school board and county officials.
- ❖ **Financial skills (28.7%)** – experience in a growth system; ability to address budget challenges and setting of priorities before program cuts; strong budget and finance background.
- ❖ **Experience in strategic planning (57.4%)** – understands the difference between a system of schools and a school system; ability to inspire and to create a strategic direction and chart course so people understand the why not just the what.

Personal Qualities and Leadership Characteristics

- ❖ **Personal qualities – Integrity (50.8%)** – humility, empathy with the ability to positively impact the underserved; student-focused, thick skinned; has spine; ethical; ability to say no and to respectfully tell people what they need to hear; high energy.
- ❖ **Interpersonal skills (38.1%)** – collaborative with a variety of stakeholder groups; can build good relationships; servant leader; good listener who gets input; exercises good judgment, approachable; cares; trust builder, will listen to student voices; ability to build consensus.
- ❖ **Leadership skills – Team builder (28.6%)** – ability to instill trust and respect with staff and community.
- ❖ **Visionary (28.4%)** – innovative; clear vision for the future with action plans that are implemented with fidelity and accountability.
- ❖ **Experience in a multi-cultural environment (60.2%)** – cultural competency; courage to tackle the hard stuff and make cultural shifts; experience in a system like APS; understanding of the significance of north Arlington v. south Arlington; will set tone of working effectively with marginalized students and community.

- ❖ **Commitment to the community (47.5%)** – looking for long term commitment; visibility in the schools and community.
- ❖ Loves kids and has willingness to listen to student voices and be visible in the schools.
- ❖ In the leader’s heart is a lens of what equity means and has demonstrated support for students who are vulnerable (LBGT, ELL, SPED, students of color, students on the margins).
- ❖ Maverick who can be independent of “the Arlington way” in making decisions of what is best for all students.

V. UTILIZING COMMON THEMES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP PROFILE

An analysis of the quantitative data collected from the search survey and the qualitative data comments from public meetings, interviews and small group discussions served as the basis for the development of a draft Leadership Profile for Arlington's next superintendent. Responses from this data are organized into four areas: Instructional Leadership; Communication; Management; and Personal Qualities and Leadership Attributes.

We present this Leadership Profile to the Board as a draft and encourage review by Board members. When the Board is comfortable with approving it, we will proceed to add it to our website and advertising, to let potential candidates know what the Board is looking for in its next Superintendent.

VI. DRAFT LEADERSHIP PROFILE

The Arlington School Board seeks an experienced, forward-thinking, successful educational leader to serve as Superintendent of Arlington Public Schools (APS). The Board will select the candidate who has demonstrated the ability to work collaboratively with a diverse community, will become invested as a member of the community and will encourage and support a culture of excellence. The successful candidate will have a proven track record of competence, understanding the importance of innovation, and will lead Arlington County forward on its path to foster and ensure equity and inclusion for all students. The successful candidate will exhibit integrity in all actions and will be respected as a leader who can successfully engage, inspire and manage a diverse and progressive system that is growing at a rapid pace.

The successful candidate will possess and demonstrate the following skills and knowledge:

Instructional Leader

- A dynamic leader with a firm grasp of excellent instruction and innovative teaching methods while collaborating with others to provide multifaceted educational programs that prepare students for the future.
- A leader who has the passion to lead and work with staff in an open, encouraging manner and continue the school system's commitment to academic excellence, maximize performance of each student, and there by address the disparity in opportunity gaps.
- An innovative leader who will articulate a strategic vision and implement effective programs that improve learning for all students.
- A leader with familiarity of, and experience in, a high-profile diverse school system and community where high expectations from an engaged community are the norm.

Communications

- A skilled listener and collaborator who practices and encourages transparency, will communicate and work to build relationships and trust with staff at all levels.
- An active and engaged listener who creates a positive culture of respect, maintains a visibility in all sectors of the school system and community and models a team-oriented approach to problem solving,
- An approachable, visible, and personable leader who can work effectively to bring all segments of a diverse community together.

Management

- A leader who has demonstrated fiscal expertise and experience with the politics of equity.
- An ethical manager who has successful experience overseeing boundary changes and managing student enrollment growth.
- An adept leader who has demonstrated success managing change while implementing a systems approach and organizational structures that support systemwide consistency, continuity, and accountability.
- A leader who has the operational expertise and ability to lead a system that assigns resources to priority initiatives.
- An innovative, detail-oriented leader who has a firm grasp on:
 - the value of strategic planning
 - experience with the challenge of continuous enrollment growth, and
 - establishing and maintaining programs and services that equitably benefit all students.
- A decisive and courageous decision maker, who uses a participatory process to solve complex and difficult issues for the benefit of all students.
- A politically savvy manager who will build relationships with the School Board, Arlington County officials, staff, students, parents, and community.

Personal Qualities and Leadership Attributes

- A leader with the desire, commitment and understanding of how to serve as a unifying force in a diverse school system and community and inspire others through ethical leadership, and a focus on fairness and equity.
- A leader with the courage to confront multifaceted challenges, complex issues and disparities and will practice open communication in order to build a positive culture.
- A transparent leader with strong people skills who is a balanced, thoughtful decision maker and will encourage and support quality experiences for all students.
- An approachable and compassionate leader, who communicates effectively with all segments of the community to build relationships, develop strong partnerships, and consistently advocates and supports what is best for students.

VI. FINAL COMMENTS

The BWP search team members have learned much about the Arlington School System and community and were very impressed with the willingness of participants to share candidly. The team enjoyed meeting key community, school, and district leaders. The Arlington community should be proud of the extent to which multiple segments of the population participated in this search process. We found the staff to be extremely capable and dedicated. We are hopeful that the next superintendent will take full advantage of community support and resources. The BWP Search team will use the final approved Leadership Profile to actively engage in the recruitment stage of your search process.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Board, the community, and district employees in our collected efforts to find an outstanding leader for Arlington Public Schools.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A Focus Groups and Community Forum Responses
- Appendix B Online Survey Results English
- Appendix C Online Survey Results Amharic
- Appendix D Online Survey Results Arabic
- Appendix E Online Survey Results Mongolian
- Appendix F Online Survey Results Spanish

Appendix A

Interview and Focus Group Feedback Transcriptions

Board Interviews former Board members - 6 meetings = 11 people

Strengths:

Diversity, educational choice, well-funded, abundant resources; high-quality schools and extremely well qualified staff; great outcomes for most students, engaged community, facilities, dedication to cutting-edge and environmentally friendly practices; well educated population we serve; well educated, affluent and supportive community – example being the passage of school bonds by significant amounts; supportive county board and revenue sharing agreement; strong instructional program; stability in school leadership and superintendent tenures; well-funded school system; strong executive leadership team; strong staff.

Issues/concerns/ challenges:

Growth, addressing and eliminating the opportunity gap; struggle to serve 25% of our students; allocation of funds for training and professional development does not meet all needs; challenge how to equitably distribute funds; inability to keep up with funding demands; some highly engaged stakeholders who have trouble balancing their needs with the needs of the whole system; our need to provide a lot of citizen input in almost every decision; the lack of space to build new schools; community involvement can be overwhelming; closing opportunity gaps; meeting diversity needs; public housing policies; community needs to change but there is much resistance if people are impacted by change; school system v. system of schools; transparency in communication; transition of new board members; teacher morale – pay scale issue; too many initiative – initiative fatigue; impact of affordable housing; loss of middle class; need cultural change in Arlington.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Leadership, empathy, knowledge and proven experience closing the opportunity gap; Address the bias presented by some faculty and staff; a cheerleader with a can do attitude; promote the growth and development of staff and “grow your own” approach; excellent management skills and respond to requests in a timely way; respond to the community and respect community expectations; creative with a budget deficit; vision to build and improve a system; direct experience understanding a diverse community; ability to be a public face and instill trust; emphatic; looking for long term commitment; ability to collaborate between board and county government; leader who can project and follow a vision; significant management and

organizational skills; deep understanding, empathy and ability to positively impact the underserved; ability to engage the business community; good listener; experience as a teacher and building administrator; can appreciate looking at multiple perspectives on issues – more than one way to skin a cat; has spine; collaborative; track record in managing positive change; ability to work with the broader community – housing policies; high energy; patience; ability to help board stay focused on the main thing – student achievement; loves kids; enthusiasm; good communicator; understanding of instruction; understanding of the difference between a system of schools and a school system; ability to address the achievement gap; forthright in working with people and building relationships.

County Government - 3 meetings = 5 people

Strengths:

Deeply informed and smart community; great community involvement; great teachers and committed staff; great reputation; personalized attention to students; diversity is a strength; active and engaged parent community is a net positive; strong programs for students and strong alternative programs for students; creative and innovative school system; reputation; strong community support for schools and recognition that schools help make great community – bond support; perception of schools is great; strong instructional leadership program; continuity in personnel; strong staff; parental support for the school system; strong core instructional program.

Issues/concerns/challenges:

Maintaining a strategic plan with fidelity and to make decisions around plan; involved community; demanding parental advocates around their individual issues; might does not mean right; challenges of boundaries; improvement of diversity of staff; focus on improving opportunity gaps; maintaining equity among special interest groups; growth and keeping up with infrastructure and capacity issues; impact of student growth and revenue to support growth; achievement gap issues; teaching the whole child; continue to attract and retain quality staff; spending more to fix problems isn't the only solution.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Leadership to make addressing achievement gaps a top priority; ability to say no and to respectfully tell people what they need to hear v. what they want to hear; incredibly strong leader; warmth; good communicator; tough skinned; management style that is data driven but not data obsessed; sense of governance with people having an understanding of their roles; ability to not avoid but to have difficult conversations; leader who can understand and respect different views; leader who engages in a transparent process to arrive at decisions; team builder; ability to instill trust and respect with staff and community; ability to have credibility

with teachers and staff; ability to explore options to issues beyond the status quo; ability to work with an extremely involved community; experience in a growth school system; ability to make tough decisions and explore multiple options; ability to evaluate programs and determine what is working and what is not and make changes; skill in and background in engaging a passionate community; ability to earn broad buy-in.

Forums - 4 meetings = 43 people

Strengths:

Supportive teacher for 4th grade child; good schools; teachers are amazing; great services; small town feel but bigger; invested community that is one of the top five educated communities in the country; excellence in teaching at all levels; diversity is a strength; excellent programs.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Provide more support and help for students; communication is lacking with non-English speaking families; improve communication between home and school; use written communication sometimes rather than technology; increase relationship with parents of EL students; desire more access to school administrators when there is a problem; remove barriers that make parents feel unwelcome and provide support for the needs of children who need help; lack of access to information; transportation concerns at all levels; more opportunities for activities and clubs; equity issues and multiple needs for many different groups; growth and transient nature of evolving community; great number of passionate stakeholder groups; equity differences and needs; staff surveys indicate downward trend in teacher morale; attention to school discipline; north Arlington v. south Arlington; lack of diversity in some zip codes which leads to inequities in system and lack of voice from some communities; issues of growth and capacity in schools.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Superintendent who speaks more than one language; understands and has experience working with people from different cultures; sociable, strict, devoted to children; will hold others accountable; good communicator; visible and get out to meet people; get to know us; ability to inspire and create a strategic direction and chart course so people understand the why not just the what; leadership skills to stand up to passionate groups and make a tough decision; vision for the qualities we want to see in our graduates; integrity; track record of not spending too much time on PR; critical thinker; focus on instruction; collaborative inclusive style in seeking input before making decisions; ability to address budget challenges and setting of priorities before program cuts; skill set of creating a culture of looking at achievement difficulties and

development of strategies to address; management skills which includes an understanding of multiple needs and multiple programs; strong student advocate; servant leader; humility; leader who can build trust with community and staff; management piece is very important; ability to work with county government; as a community we can do more but need a leader who can help us get there; energy and passion; cultural competency; change is hard – need leader who is willing to create needed change; transparency – ability to honestly engage community; commitment and track record that addresses environmental sustainability with school system taking a leadership position (recycling issues); understanding of instruction and is supportive of STEM and applied science and non-traditional classroom setting; provides leadership that empowers teachers to use professional judgment without fear of retribution; management accountability skills to assess what's working and what's not and make adjustments; ability to instill trust and create genuine public input; deliberate approach to decision making that is open to all view points and includes a depth in understanding regarding implications of policy decisions.

Students - 3 meetings = 15 people

Strengths:

Diversity-not just race but mix of students; help when I need it; welcoming and helpful teachers; students get along; Principal is visible and welcoming; quality of education; teachers; resources; strong academics; many opportunities; activities.

Issues/concerns/ challenges:

Work load of testing stressful; SOL tests not spaced out and conflict with final exams; struggle with one teacher who is unfair-who makes me feel uncomfortable and other students have same experience; students complained about the quality of food not good; rigidity of curriculum that does not give teachers choices with the time given; disconnect between decision makers and those who are impacted by the decisions – for example students knew CANVAS was not good and they hope contract will not be renewed; why are there IPADS in elementary schools when funds could be used to upgrade middle school students to laptops; greater diversity in staff; support for the LGBT community.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Open-minded, understanding needs of different age groups of students; must be passionate about being superintendent in Arlington; knowledge of Arlington and difference between South and North Arlington; get to know students; ready to take on role of superintendent in Arlington; have past experiences interacting with students; interest in reaching out to students and seeking their opinions; willingness to listen to student voices; visible in schools; listen to student voices; focused on change – willing to do new things; interest in providing support to students by providing expanded support for mental health issues.

SB and Supt. advisory Groups - 3 meetings = 43 people

Strengths:

Reputation of APS; Funding for students; facilities exceptional; involved community; supportive (passed Bond); diverse County; have opportunities for parent voices to be heard; multiple options and opportunities for students; variety of innovative programs; teacher quality and passion who bring their best each day; stupendous highly trained teachers; recognize and address the needs of students; full range of opportunities for students; willingness to work collaboratively; central office staff dedicated idea of engagement unique in APS; diversity of community-international-many native speakers; teachers; technology for the student.

Issues/Concerns/Challenges:

Diversity presents challenge because of difference in quality of opportunities at different schools; schools segregated; special education program out of compliance and many students segregated from others; growth and overcrowding in some schools; implementation of ipads present concerns; lack of concern for all students by many in community; boundary changes will add to problem; lack of adequate instructional time; failure to communicate on many concerns; must improve communication; accountability questionable; issues related to transportation: confusion at all levels-lack of drivers and time for pick-up when weather is bad and lack of clear communication to parents; voices of some over-power voices of others; academic results can be misleading-mask the lack of achievement of others; lack of consistency of education expectation for all students; no clear vision and direction for system thinking and action; need more professional development for Sp. Ed. Teachers; Sp. Ed. not meeting the needs of many and not following the law-out-of-compliance; gaps in opportunities and academic progress related to difference in income/wealth; segments of county not engaged; strength of faculty varies; low expectations for some students; bipolar system in meeting needs

of all groups of students with data to support disparity; reality demonstrates we don't do what we say we do.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Superintendent who understands who we (APS) are; proven track record to implement an action plan for a clear vision; address the multiple challenges listed above; evidence of success in community/school system similar to APS; use a balanced approach to implement changes; take time to assess and understand current programs and issues; assess the way things are - "the Arlington Way"; focus on what's best for students; promote consistency of educational expectations and accountability; welcoming leadership with holistic view and experience working with Sp. Ed. Population; experience in district like APS; support vision of acceptance of all children; promote evidenced based curriculum in English and Math; courage to implement vision of equity; experience in budget and finance; understands day-to-day operations and work of schools like those in APS; success closing the achievement gap and providing access to rigorous curriculum for all students; reach out to the ELL community; demonstrate courage, flexible, collaborative and measured leadership style; build positive board-superintendent relationships; consistency and accountable for delivery of instruction; leadership skills to affect change without blowing the place up; wants the job for kids not the money or as a stepping stone to another job; demonstrated track record in closing equity gaps; leadership with high expectations that is supported by accountability; leader who demonstrates consistency, equity and best practices; cultural competency; superintendent with ability to work with county government to encourage decisions that support the school system; accountability to needed changes in SPED program; ability to hear student voices on environmental issues about sustainability; demonstrated understanding of a social emotional learning curriculum; loves kids; a good listener and communicator; record for follow through.

Extended Day Supervisors - 1 meeting = 7 people

Strengths:

An award-winning school system; reputation; dedicated and hardworking teachers and staff; extended day program is a plus; advisory groups active; PTA is strong.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Transportation issues-lack of communication and difficult to know the schedule, driver shortage; role and purpose of extended day program unclear; access and safety of buildings a concern for teachers and staff; concerned that pay is low and sometimes not compensated for hours worked.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Superintendent who understands and supports extended day programs; innovative, open-minded, transparent, advocate for extended day programs; clear vision that is sustainable; fair treatment of all employees; visible, and demonstrates best interest of students; focus on equity of resources.

ELT/Interim Superintendent - 1 meeting = 10 people

Strengths:

Highly dedicated/trained staff; commitment to excellent work; supportive community who value education; diversity of opportunities; community diversity; resource rich.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Balancing community demands can be challenging at times; need to listen to all voices in community; growth in student population requires additional resources; school-based autonomy causes fragmentation; Board trust of staff is questionable.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Superintendent who can help board understand their appropriate role and responsibility; experience with organizational change; systems approach to running a school district; articulate the way forward and create consistency; understand and support the operational side of APS; extremely well organized; strong budget and finance background; demonstrate knowledge of difference between equal and equitable; receptive to expertise of executive staff; Create space and time for “deep thinking and team building”; ability to deal effectively with appointed and elected officials; firm understanding on policies and help Board revise/update policies; courage to tackle the hard stuff and make cultural shifts; experience in a system like APS; values the support side of the house.

Principals- 2 meetings = 11 people

Strengths:

Diversity of students and community; community expectations for high level of service; advocacy for students/demanding/well educated community staff and community members; location near DC; wealthy community; listen to community when they speak; high performing

school system; eye towards approach beyond just academics that includes the whole child; wholistic approach that is supportive of the social and emotional needs of children.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Gaps of innovation; gaps in achievement for some population of students (black and Hispanic); reduced access to programs for some students (black and Hispanic); do not listen to some members of the community when they speak; the “Arlington Way” does not work for all students; reverse inequities in student outcomes; growth and capacity issues in schools; how to provide support for student mental health issues and academic pressures on students.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Willingness to challenge the Board to make decisions for best interest of students; risk-taker; proven track record and skillful manager working with school board; maintain good relationships with the board; articulate a clear vision for student growth; understand systems approach to leading APS; interpersonal relationship skills; strong desire to be superintendent in Arlington; ability to build consensus; good listener; student’s best interest always at the heart of all decisions; ability to work well with the Board; understands instructional research and evidence based best practices

Employee Advisory Groups/Assns. – 3 meetings = 10 people

Strengths:

Lots of opportunity; parent involvement. Diversity is a strength but not always being used to our advantage.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Local school autonomy is a major issue; eliminating the achievement gaps for some groups is a challenge; disproportion number of Black and Hispanic students disciplined and in special education; staff needs to be more representative of student population and makeup of the county; elementary bounty changes are an issue; demographics of county determine level of success; loss of teachers to other districts; demanding community, difference between parts of Arlington – South vs North; Diversity of race, economics and opportunity; becoming less inclusive; parents don’t always know how to take advantage of opportunities; local school autonomy is a major issues; eliminating the achievement gaps for some groups is a challenge;

disproportion number of Black and Hispanic students disciplined and in special education; staff needs to be more representative of student population and makeup of the county; elementary boundary changes are an issues; demographics of county determine level of success; loss of teachers to other districts; demanding community.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Superintendent who will bridge the gap for achievement and support inclusion; caring, individual who is approachable and will be visible and involved in the community; attend community events and let people see who they are; support central office staff

Teachers – 1 meeting = 11 people

Strengths:

Commitment to ELL students (alternative program for over age students); awareness of challenges and have resources to meet needs; APS is an academic power house (AP classes and dual enrollment); diversity; wealthy community; Initiative rich; highly educated community and political savvy; location near DC.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Facilities in need of attention; lack of institutional knowledge; lost staff to other school systems; not sure “who we are anymore”; lack of cohesive vision; need to do a better job targeting resources to kids who need more; lack of equity in some schools; need to diversify teaching staff; lack systems for consistency; data shows disparity in who is disciplined and placed in special education; need to increase communication with colleges, parents and business communities.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Superintendent who is representative of diversity; will communicate with those in the trenches; collaborative, not just top down; clear willingness to build relationships and develop trust; clarify the big picture; balance and navigate the political and business aspects of leadership; will look out for the mental health and wellbeing of staff; will set a tone of working effectively with marginalized students and community; demonstrates an understanding and support for career and technical education programs as well as relevant current professional development for staff; think “outside of the box” and plan long range; seek ideas from students; courage to have

honest conversations re: varied sensitive issues involving race, culture, etc.; diversify the teaching staff; ability to work effectively with the county board; transparent and use an equity lens to make decisions; balanced focus-not just test scores-broader vision.

All Staff – 2 meetings = 17 people

Strengths:

New physical facilities; constant evaluation of progress; staff embrace board initiatives; first choice for many families to live here; high achievement rate-tops in the Commonwealth of Virginia; high quality staff; resources are adequate; community support; appreciate the School Board for the opportunity to participate in the selection of next Superintendent; strong staff; diversity of students; strong public support; size of system – small to act small – big to act big.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Pay for teachers and support staff needs to be reviewed; often times failure to follow policies and procedure; cost of living for some prohibitive; difficult balancing the needs, demands and wishes of the few compared to those who need more; distribution of resources is an issue; some reporting groups of students not doing well; special education and students of color do not always receive fair treatment; must clarify what is meant by the “whole child”; many students struggle because of academic and physical challenges; balance the difference between needs, wishes and demands; look at growth of students not just test scores; lack of diversity in staff; growth; veil of self-deception – there are issues; enrollment has out grown budget; “30 schools 30 rules”; employees overwhelmed; challenges of advisory committees – is this the best structure; student and staff mental health

Characteristics and qualities desired:

A superintendent who will develop working relationships with the school board and county officials; articulate the value of staff work; support the continued success of APS; look beyond the current measure of success; demonstrate a mindset that the goal is to educate the “whole child”; an innovative, collaborative superintendent who will prioritize implementation of challenges, issues and new initiatives; clear communicator who is approachable, good listener demonstrating clear expectations consistency of operation; courage to make decisions that positively impact students; will support implementation of best practices in an orderly manner; support and honor recommendations from staff; build relationships based on clear vision for future; open-minded, willing to learn about APS and community; success working in a diverse community; flexible, charismatic, and can adopt to situations and gatherings (code switch); comfortable meeting and engaging with all members of the community; ability to create

workable relationships with board and county officials; demonstrated ability of successful leadership in a community like APS; in leaders heart is a lens of what equity means; humility; experienced leader who makes all decisions in the best interests of all children; emotional intelligence; vision with actions plans that are implemented with fidelity and accountability; ability to engage the entire community; visibility; not be conflict avoidant.

Parent and Education Groups – 3 meetings = 9 people

Strengths:

Staff; quality of education; resources; rich diversity; size of the system; access to technology – 1:1 initiative; community engagement and outreach is valued and encouraged.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Clear divide in community-North vs South; teacher salaries not keeping pace influencing teachers to seek employment in other systems; lack of communication re: new school plans and progress; approach to communities sometimes confusing; re: expenditure of money; public not informed about students following graduation from high school i.e. job, college, etc. difficult to obtain information and data; narrowing of achievement gaps – used example that before integration there was no achievement gap; how superintendent will support newly created Diversity/Inclusion Officer; trust issue with data; concern about confidential search; need for expansion of mental health and wellness issues with students; “the Arlington way”; attracting and maintaining staff at all levels including bus drivers; perception of system of schools v. school system; lack of consistency and accountability across county in program expectations; challenge of growth; reaching all families; differentiating instruction to reach all students.

Characteristics and desired skills:

Develop relationships with all parts of the community; listen to all voices; support and focus on equity for all students; willingness to challenge and confront when necessary; demonstrate a clear vision and strategy that addresses issue of growth; clear plan for smooth entry-have “feet on the ground”; appreciation of diversity and unique needs of the community; listening to students; genuine community engagement; track record of interagency cooperation; commitment to provide resources for all students to achieve optimal levels with a focus on the underserved; maverick who can be independent of “the Arlington way” in making decisions in the best interest of all Arlington children; good communicator; demonstrated ability to create

and monitor expectations in all schools; visionary with ability to inspire and take system further; good collaboration skills; experience with growth; understanding of budget and finance; students as a focus for all decisions; belief that all students can learn and succeed; experience with the faithful implementation of inclusion that has fidelity in all schools; courage to make hard decisions and flexibility to make adjusted as needed; transparency.

Community and Faith Groups – 3 meetings = 11 people

Strengths:

Wonderful school system and attracts people to come here; quality of educators; resources.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Two levels of academic gaps in APS-high achieving students and low achieving students presents a challenge for the next superintendent; failure to serve the needs of all students ; understanding of what equity really is to all aspects of the system; unwillingness to seek nonprofits to connect with diverse population; instead of focusing on top story of how good the school system is, need to dive in by measuring the success of the system with all diverse groups; growth and resources needed to support growth; challenge of a digital divide for some students and families; need for additional bilingual resource assistants; ESOL issues.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

A Superintendent who is committed to academic excellence regardless of background and circumstance; demonstrate a background of reflective leadership; track record of closing the “gap”; evidence of managerial and situational leadership effectiveness; demonstrated support for student who are vulnerable (LGTB, Sp. Ed., students of color, students on the margins); Demonstrated tenure supporting equity, team building and inclusive integrity; success managing boundary changes; leading systems through growth in student population; connection to Arlington; demonstrate transparency; humility; ability to listen to diverse populations; ability to build partnerships with entire community; understanding of inclusion of SPED and support resources and training; innovative in finding ways to have outreach to parents who don’t always have the ability to be involved; skill set in working with outreach that builds trust with marginalized and undocumented populations; mindset to solve problems and then navigate, direct if there are unintentional consequences.

Business/Non-Profit/Higher Ed. – 2 meetings = 13 people

Strengths:

Engaged, excited staff and great teachers; passionate and caring staff dedicated to students; inclusive of all student; involved parents; world class, trend setter community and school system at the pulse of what's happening; excellent, well trained teachers; competitive salaries; well resourced; schools are academically strong; highly educated community with high expectations for schools; parents involved in wanting best for their child; strong programs for students with all abilities; community support; community values school system and makes efforts to support; highly educated community.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Teachers and staff have limited time to do everything demanded of them; lack system collaboration with rest of county; slow to address the needs of most vulnerable students; reluctant to open conversation around issues of race and other disparities; tactical issues- schools operate in silos cause problems; suspension of more brown kids than white kids; unfair treatment of students in special education; growth of county creates space problems and strain on resources; attention to equity in the development of school boundaries; achievement gaps in student performance; ability to find and retain teachers, subs and bus drivers; as the system becomes more diverse, how is the system adjusting; growth and capacity issues.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Champion for systems approach to leading APS forward; Develop a broad view of the community and commit to collaboration for clear communication and input; measured approach to implementation of next generation of technology; include the business community in conversation about vision for future; support efforts to implement sustainable resources in all that we do in APS; promote programs that address the emotional and mental health needs of students and staff; address the unfair and uneven treatment of students of color, those in special education and other populations that are on the margins; invite and engage members of the community, who do not have children in APS; inspire all segments of community to become involved; make decisions based on relevant research and best practices; an innovative thinker who has experience maximizing existing resources; excite and inspire others to be involved; support life changes of students beyond high school; has a compelling vision and can articulate that vision; strategic leader who can move system forward; will engage community and develop partnerships; will engage in all aspects of the community in understanding of cultural competency; as an instructional leader has understanding of need for both hard and soft skills in preparing students for the work force; experience as a strategic planner and

forecaster who can address growth issues; ability to actively listen to people; ability to creatively solve problems.

Trades Center/Facilities Groups/ Equipment Bureau – 1 meeting = 9 people

Strengths:

Teachers well educated, highly qualified and dedicated; trend-setting community in what we do.

Issues/challenges/concerns:

Managing growth; hiring bus drivers; operates as 32 different school systems; improved communication a must; boundary changes will be challenging; factions all over APS; achievement gaps for many students; strong partnerships with area colleges.

Characteristics and qualities desired:

Interact with all levels from top to bottom; recognize support staff; build relationships with county officials; understand the various ways we are diverse; good communicator; demonstrate transparency; courage to make and stick to decisions; bring a leadership of consistency; approachable, interact with students, visible; make connections with schools and community; knowledge of Spanish community and awareness of diversity.

Appendix B – English Survey Results

Appendix C – Amharic Survey Results

Appendix D - Arabic Survey Results

Appendix E - Mongolian Survey Results

Appendix F - Spanish Survey Results