Arlington Public Schools

Strategic Plan

Update to Steering Committee: August 2023

Arlington Public Schools

UPDATE TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Progress

- Select Slides Used in Chairs Meetings
- Decisions Reached (Informed by Steering Committee Feedback)
- Timeline

Processes

- Community Engagement Approach and Coverage
- Essential Questions (Questionnaire and Community Engagement)
- Focus Group Processes

Roles

- Steering Committee Decision Making
- Steering Committee Roles in Community Forums and Focus Groups

Feedback

- Makeup of Community Focus Groups
- Outreach methods (email vs. other)
- Questionnaire processes

STEERING COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Feedback Received from Steering Committee Members that Informed Strategic Plan Development Processes

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VALUES INFORMING STRATEGICN PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

ALL STUDENTS AT THE CENTER

Students are at the center of every decision we have made about the processes of building our next strategic plan, including prioritizing in-person student focus groups, ensuring that ALL students are represented through the other engagement processes, and using the word “student” intentionally in the foundations questionnaire

EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION

To ensure historically under-represented populations and groups were intentionally and systematically included, we approached the selection of students, families, and community groups for focus group participation through an equity lens.

EQUITY OF VOICE

We are soliciting and using feedback through the development process in ways that respect the equity of voice of each individual.

INCLUSIVITY

The approach for the foundations development is to enable ALL members of the APS community to inform the revision to the Strategic Plan foundations. This is accomplished by providing multiple opportunities for input and feedback and use of targeted outreach and engagement opportunities.

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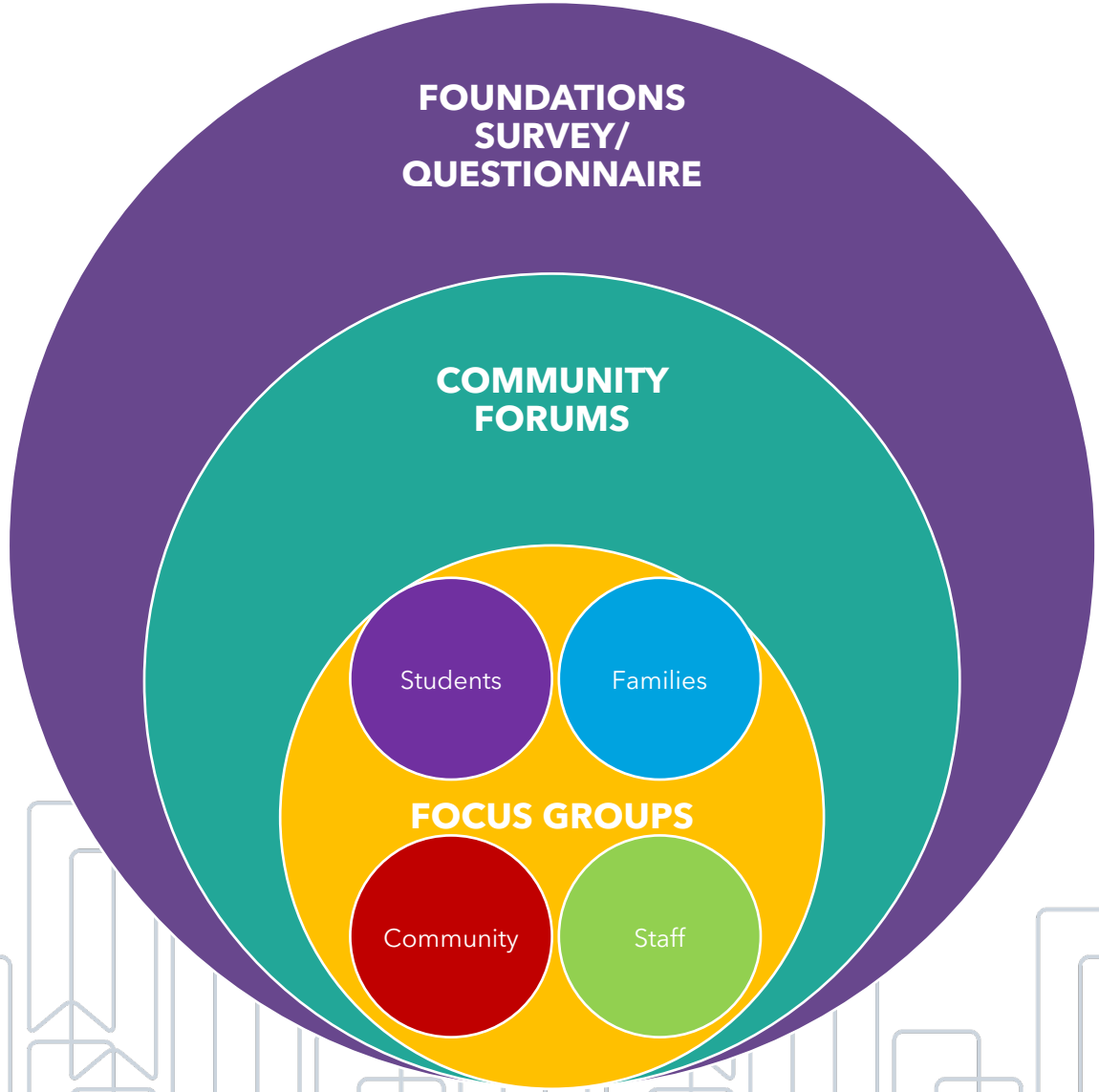
STRATEGIC PLAN: FOUNDATIONS ENGAGEMENT PLAN

PARTNER/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Magnitude of Reach

Community engagement will include:

- **Foundations survey**: Widest Engagement
- **Community Forums**: Open to APS community based on location
- **Focus Groups**: Smaller (15 participants each) settings – add context and lived experience to data gathering and feedback



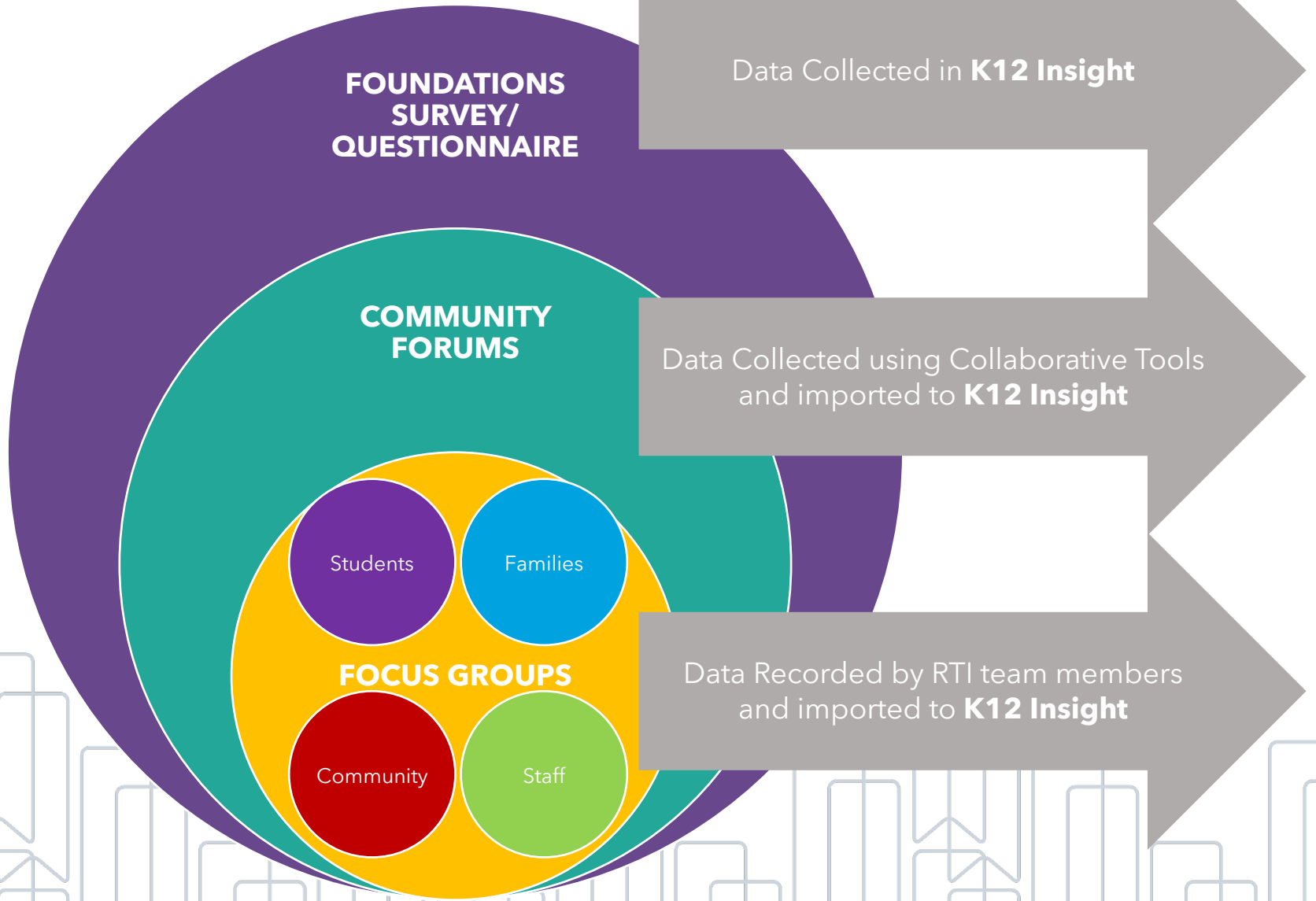
Communication Strategies

- Community Partners
- Steering Committee Members
- School Talk and Engage Updates
- Social media
- WhatsApp
- Friday 5
- Supt. weekly message
- Social Media (general and specific to underrepresented groups)
- Local Radio (WERA 96.7)
- ARL NOW
- Gazette Leader
- Inside Arlington County newsletters
- Friday Round-Up
- APS Staff leadership meetings
- AEA & ASA
- Supt. Message
- Staff Central on APS Website
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Community Forums
- Bilingual Family Specialists
- FACE action team
- APS weekly Spanish newsletter

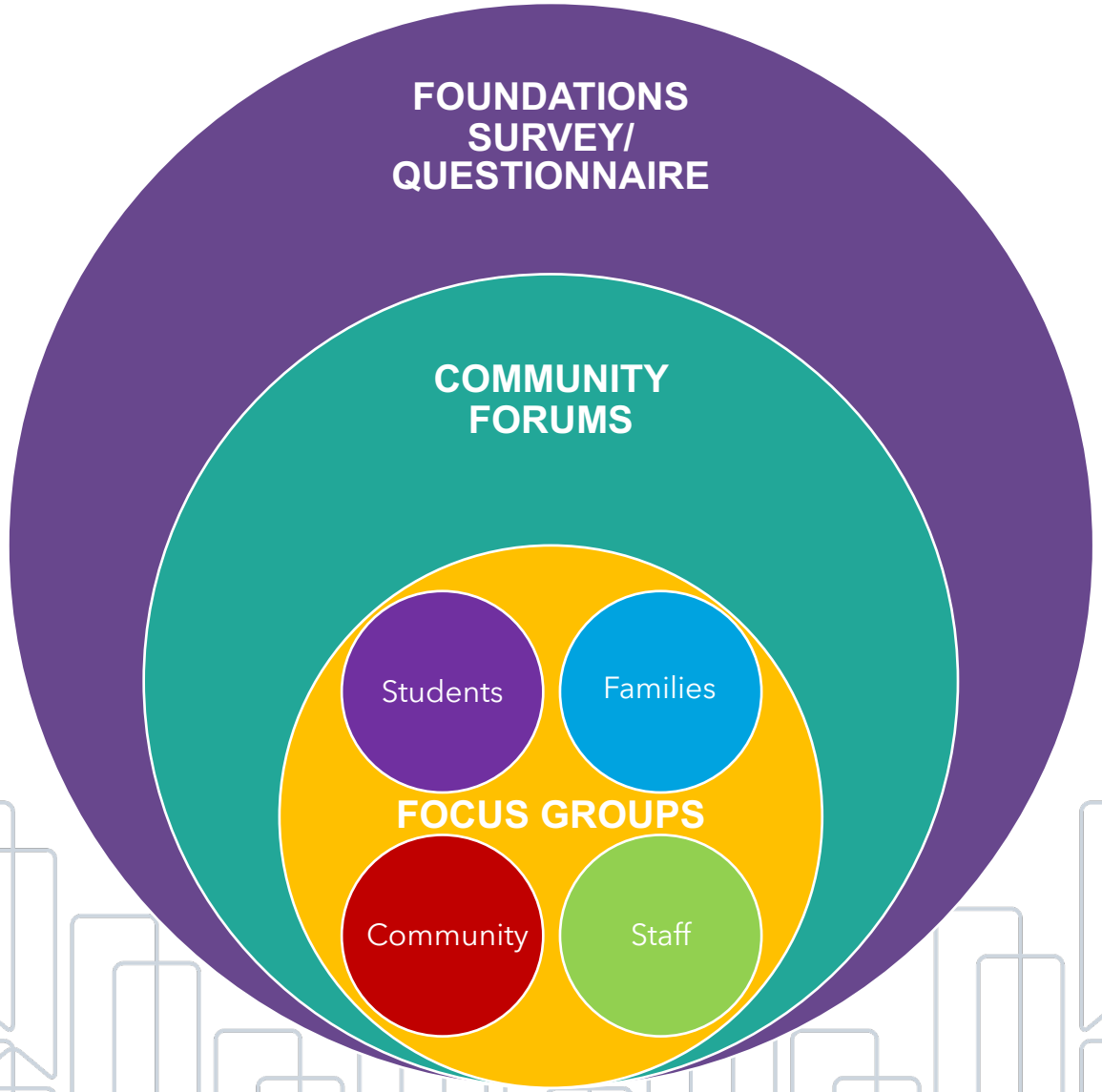
PARTNER/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Data Collection and Analysis

Tool selection prioritized
- tool simplicity (ease of access and use)
- efficiency of analysis
  - facilitate timelines
  - digital support
  - theme identification
- anonymity of participants to full engagement



FOUNDATIONS SURVEY/QUESTIONNAIRE



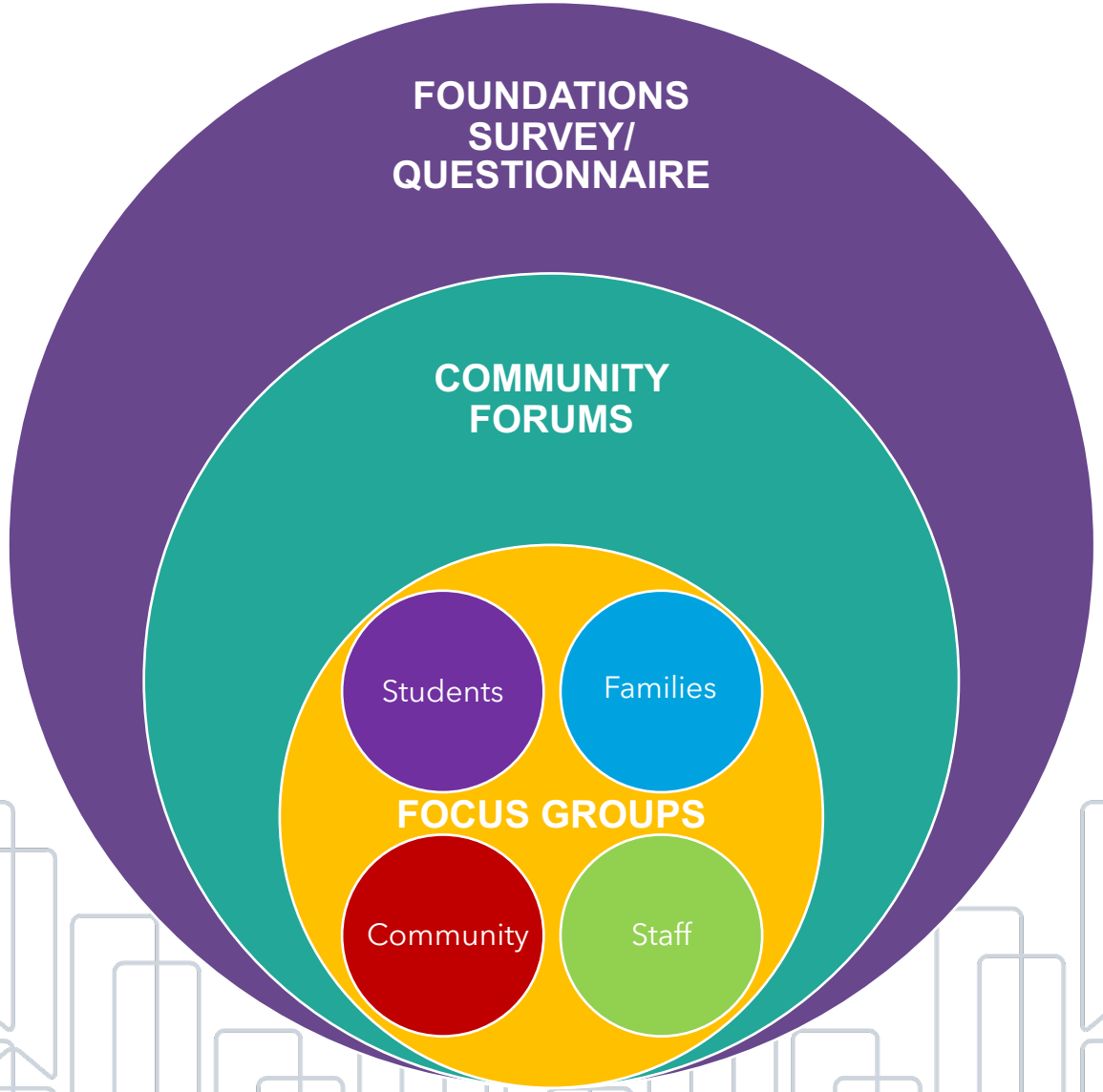
Data Collection Period
September 11, 2023
through
October 9, 2023

Data Collection Method
K12 Insight Engagement Tool

Survey/Questionnaire

- Demographic Questions
- Feedback on Current Foundations elements
- 3 Essential Questions
  - What are your hopes and aspirations for the students of Arlington Public Schools?
  - What are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing APS over the next six years?
  - What should APS prioritize in its next strategic plan as it relates to students, staff, the community?

COMMUNITY FORUMS



Dates/Locations

Tuesday, September 26, 2023: Washington-Liberty

Wednesday, September 27, 2023: Wakefield HS
(***Session in Spanish with translation to English***)

Tuesday, October 3, 2023: Yorktown HS

Data Collection Period

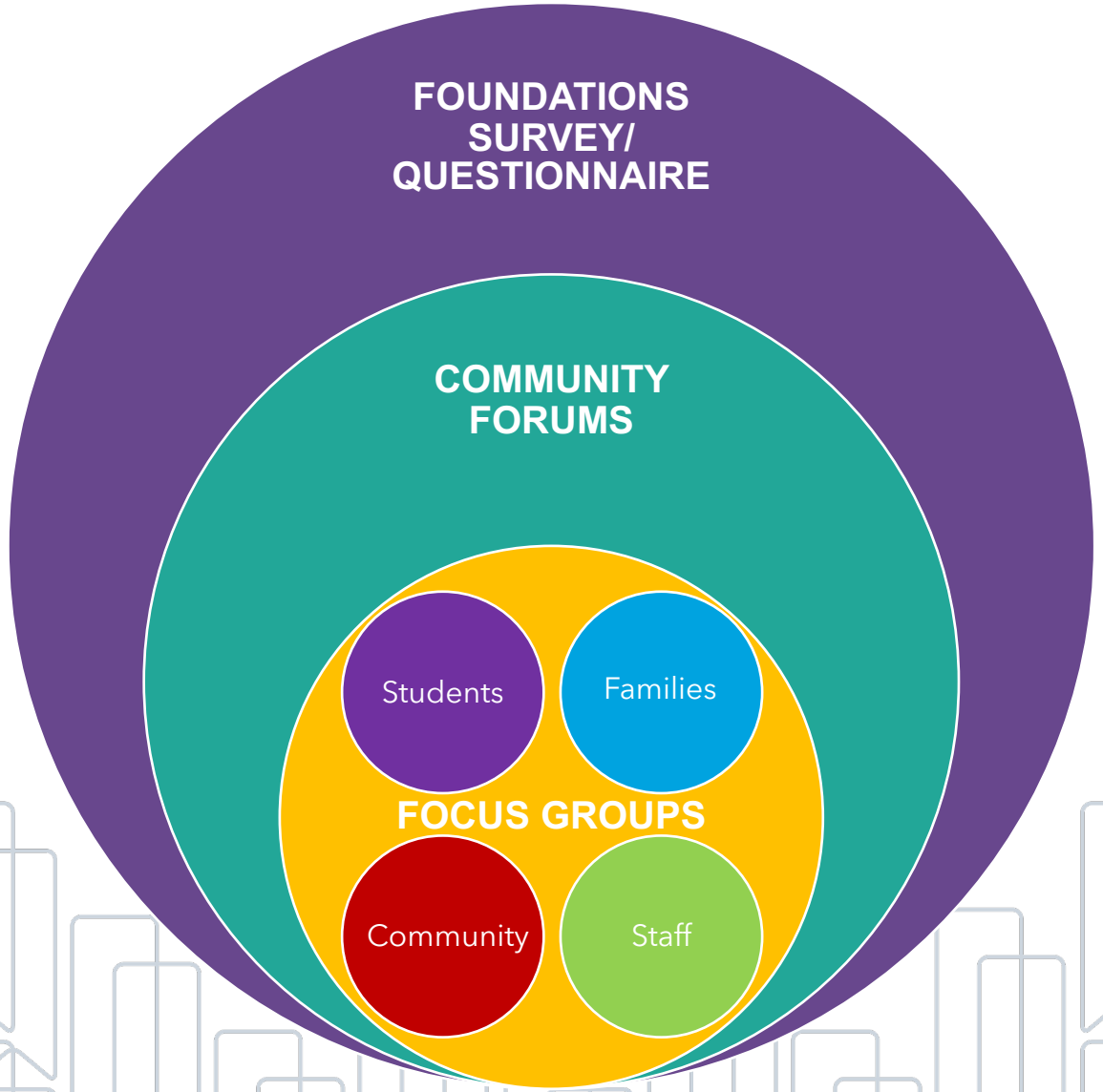
September 26, 2023 - October 3, 2023

Data Collection Method

K12 Insight Engagement Tool

FOCUS GROUPS

Representation



Students

Middle and High School Students representing each of the 12 secondary schools

Families

K-12 Family members representing student demographics in the three regions of the Division (North, Central, South)

Staff

Staff members taken from advisory groups, hourly/classified staff, and principals

Community

Community members representing the diverse interests in APS engaged in focus groups by interest area

FOCUS GROUPS - OVERVIEW

Students

12 Focus Groups (In-Person)
(15 participants per group)

Each Middle and High School

In-Person (on school campus)

School leaders select students based on school demographics (gender, race/identity, exceptionality, LGBTQIA+, ELL, achievement)

September 26, September 27, September 28, October 3

Families

6 Focus Groups (In-Person)
(15 participants per group)

2 groups in each Division region (North, Central, and South)

5 elementary, 5 middle, and 5 high school family members

School leaders select family representatives based on school student demographics (gender, race/identity, exceptionality, LGBTQIA+, ELL, achievement)

Sept 26, 27 and 28, Oct 3
(3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.)

AND

Sept 28, Oct 3 and 4
(6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.)

Staff

6 Focus Groups (Virtual)
(15 participants per group)

Teachers, Elementary P/APs, Secondary P/APs, Central Office Leaders, School Classified Staff, Division Classified Staff

Teacher Group
(Elementary, Middle, High)

Principals/APs:
North/Central/South

Classified Staff: Representatives from each Job Role

September 18, 2023 – October 6, 2023

Community Partners

12 – 17 Community Focus Groups (VIRTUAL)

Groups combined/ organized by similar interests or organizational mission

September 8, 2023– October 6, 2023

STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

In-Person Focus Groups Conducted on the 12 Middle and High School Campuses

Groups and Participants

- 12 groups
- 15 per group
- ***180 TOTAL*** student participants

Locations

- Middle and High School Campuses

When

- Dates
  - September 26
  - September 27
  - September 28
  - October 3
- 75 Minutes
  - 15-minute intro
  - 60-minute Q&A

Approach to Representation

- Student focus groups will be composed of demographics that closely mirror those of the school
- For identifiers that are not reported to schools, we will request that principals select students reflective of important lines of difference (e.g. LGBTQIA+, neurodiversity, military-connected, English Learners)

Approach to Outreach:

- Principals will coordinate the identification of ***15 students*** (per school) reflective of school demographics and provide a campus location to host the focus group.
- Principals follow local board policy to ensure students have family permission to participate (i.e., permission slips)

FAMILY FOCUS GROUPS

In-Person Focus Groups Conducted with Elementary, Middle, High School families

Groups and Participants

- 6 groups: 6 participants per school
  - North: Escuela Key, Swanson, Yorktown
  - North: Glebe, Hamm, Yorktown
  - Central: Barrett, Kenmore, Washintgon Liberty
  - Central: Barcroft, Jefferson, Arlington Career/Tech
  - South: Randolph, Gunston, Wakefield
  - South: Drew, Gunston, Wakefield
- 15 (*approximate*) per group
- ***90 TOTAL*** family participants

Locations

- Elementary Campuses (highest socioeconomic disadvantage)

When

- Sept 26, 27 and, Oct 3 (3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. in locations geographically close to community Forum location)
- Sept 28, Oct 3 and 4 (6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- *Times may be adjusted to accommodate needs*
- 75 Minutes
  - 15-minute intro
  - 60-minute Q&A

Approach to Representation

- Family focus groups will be composed of demographics that closely mirror those of the schools (attendance area)
- For identifiers that are not reported to schools, we will request that principals select family members with students reflective of important lines of difference (e.g. LGBTQIA+, neurodiversity, military-connected, English Learners)

Approach to Outreach:

- Principals and central office staff will coordinate the identification of ***6 family members*** (per school) reflective of school demographics and send information to the family member about attendance

STAFF FOCUS GROUPS

All Staff Questionnaire and Select Advisory Groups Engage in Virtual Focus Groups

Groups and Participants

- Focus Groups
  - 5 groups
  - 15 per group
  - ***75 TOTAL*** staff participants
- Faculty Meeting
  - ALL Staff is extended contract time to complete Division questionnaire
  - Presentation provided to school leaders to provide as an overview of the process and importance of participation

Focus Group Meetings - Virtual

When

- Mid-September – early October

Approach to Representation

- Teachers: Representatives from North/Central/South and Elementary, Middle, and High
- Principals/Assistant Principals:
  - Elementary Group (North/Central/South)
  - Secondary Group: (North/Central/South)
- Non-Licensed Staff:
  - Central office leadership
  - Instructional Assts./Admin Assts., Ext. Day, Food Service, Custodians
  - Bus Drivers and Building Trades

Approach to Outreach

- Division Leadership will reach out to employee groups (i.e., AEA & ASA) to support coordination of group representation based on parameters of job roles, region of Division, and grade span (elementary, middle, high)

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Predominantly Virtual Focus Groups Conducted with Community Affinity Groups

Groups and Participants

- Focus Groups
  - Up to 17 groups
  - 15 per group
  - *Up to **255 TOTAL*** community participants

Virtual and few Select In-Person Focus Groups

When

- Sept 5th – Oct 5
  - Virtually
  - Select in-person: Proposing Black/African American, Special Education, LGBTQ+, and Hispanic/Latinx.
  - Propose Sept 13, Oct 4, Oct 5 at Arlington Central Offices
- 2:00 – 3:30 and 4:00 – 5:15
- *Times may be adjusted to accommodate needs*

Approach to Outreach

- Work with central office engagement to send an introduction message from the Division and then RTI staff contacts each group and coordinates the number of participants by date/time.

Approach to Representation

- Focus groups organized into affinity groups (special interest)
  - Asian American/Pacific Islander
  - Black/African American
  - Special Education
  - Gifted and Talented (no org on current list)
  - Higher Education (no org on current list)
  - Hispanic/Latinx
  - LGBTQ+
  - Local Government (no org on current list)
  - Military
  - PTA
  - Workforce
  - Early Childhood/Montessori/Afterschool
  - Economically Disadvantage Advocates
  - Faith Community
  - Civic Orgs /Local Government
  - Philanthropic Orgs
  - Educators and Administrators Association

Arlington Public Schools

FOUNDATIONS ENGAGEMENT PLAN

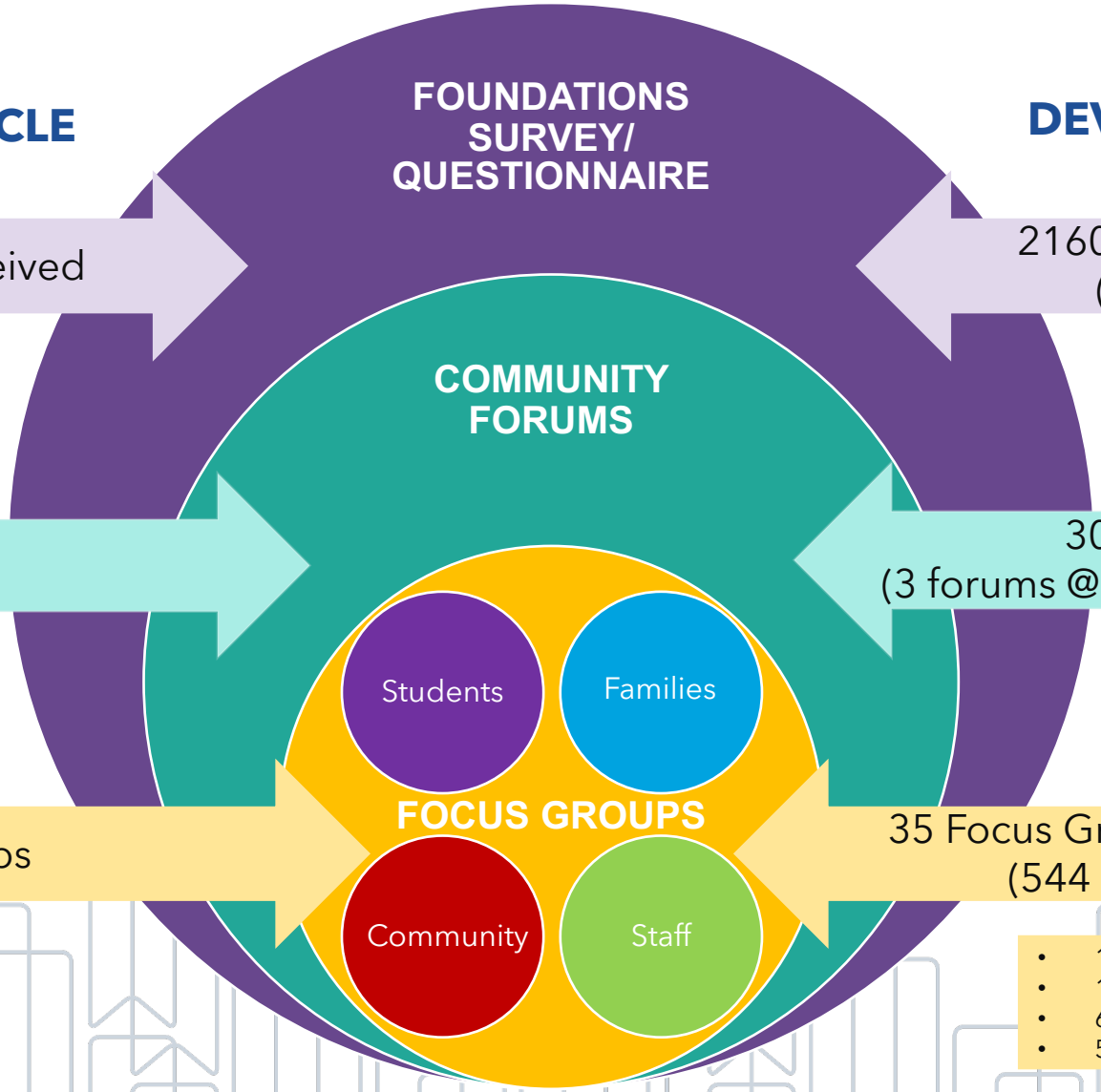
GOAL SETTING

PARTNER/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL SETTING: *Using past data to inform 2024 goal*

2011 PLAN DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

2024 PLAN DEVELOPMENT CYCLE
Goal Setting



1800 Surveys Received

2160 Surveys Received
(20% increase)

N/A

300 Attendees
(3 forums @ 100 participants each)

50 Groups

35 Focus Group Engagements
(544 participants)

- 17 different community affinity groups
- 12 student groups
- 6 family groups
- 5 staff groups

PARTNER/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL SETTING

- The total projected engagements (duplicated count) to inform the development of the foundations portion of the 2024-2030 Strategic Plan is detailed as:
  - **2160 surveys**
  - **300 community forum participants**
  - **544 focus group participants,** including
    - 17 community affinity groups,
    - 12 student groups,
    - 6 family groups, and
    - 5 staff groups
- **GOAL:** The Arlington Public School System proposes to **engage with approximately 3000 members of the APS community** informing the work of the Strategic Plan steering committee to develop the foundations document (*Note: This only represents Phase I/II*).

FOUNDATIONS DRAFT TIMELINE

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STEERING COMMITTEE ROLES

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Components and Steering Committee Roles

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Strategic Plan Component	Steering Committee Role (Defined by Charge)	Division Leadership and Staff Roles

FOUNDATIONS (**Strategic** Work – Board Leadership informed by Community, State, and Federal Requirements)	• Serving at the direction of the Superintendent
	• **Develop foundations recommendation** to the Superintendent based on the **voice of the community**
	  ◦ Focus on students as the core priority
	• **Support** the engagement of community partners
	  ◦ Attend engagement events on behalf of Steering Committee
		Serving at the direction of the Superintendent and School Board
		• **Support** the Board and steering committee in strategic plan foundations development informed by the students, families, staff, and community
		• **Report progress** to the School Board and Community towards reaching Division goals

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING ELEMENTS (**Operational/Tactical** Work – Staff implementation of services, supports, processes, and products to students and schools to accomplish goals of the Division)	• Serving at the direction of the Superintendent ◦ **Provide feedback** to inform **clarity, coherence,** and **comprehensibility** of APS staff's proposed implementation and monitoring elements	Serving at the direction of the Superintendent and School Board • **Develop** and **implement** the research-based and evidence-based **strategies** and **measures** to achieve the Division's goals for students • **Develop, implement, and continuously improve** action plans to implement those strategies with fidelity • Monitor progress towards achieving goals

SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 AGENDA

Steering Committee

Arlington Public Schools

WHAT	HOW	HOW LONG
Meeting Start-Ups	Present Consensus	20 minutes
Strategic Plan Development Process: Knows/Need-to-Knows	Brainstorm Categorize	30 minutes
Progress Report	Present	10 minutes
Steering Committee: SWOT/SOAR Analysis	Collaborate Present	55 minutes
Central Office Staff: SWOT/SOAR	Present	10 minutes
Community Forums & Focus Groups Steering Committee Participation	Present Sign-Up	10 minutes
Looking Forward: October 14, 2023 Steering Committee Meeting	Review Clarify	10 minutes
Next Steps/Evaluation	List +/Δ	5 minutes

STEERING COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Steering Committee Feedback and Chairs/APS Response

Community engagement, locations and logistics – ensuring coverage, reach, accessibility	APS/Chairs/RTI Partner team centered student success as we made decisions about the questionnaire, community forums, and focus group composition, representation, and logistics. These decisions were also shaped by the values on slide 4 (For details see slides 6 – 15)
Amount of community engagement and steering committee requirements	This will be discussed at September 13th meeting. Participation/attendance will be based on member availability with a balance of participants at each community forum
Survey: Clarity and not too broad	See slide four (4). Chairs/APS staff consensus was to have open-ended questions for initial questionnaire and likert-type responses once DRAFT foundations is sent back out for community feedback (October 16 – November 3)
Details on staff input processes	Slide 14 details the staff engagement and input processes. Staff will be selected for representation in collaboration with our professional organization partners (AEA, ASA)
Analysis of data (quantitative and qualitative) and feedback on current foundations	RTI will analyze and synthesize all feedback collected through multiple methods during the engagement processes and identify themes in the feedback to support the Steering Committee's work. Once the steering committee drafts foundations, the community will provide likert-type quantitative feedback to inform final recommendation. See slide 8
Community partner representation (ensuring inclusion of traditionally under-represented groups/populations)	Community partners will be engaged in all three opportunities for participation in Strategic Plan foundations development (questionnaire, community forums, and focus groups). Focus group details are listed on slide 15 as well.
Communication accessibility (language, neurodiversity)	See slide 9. Translation services will be offered at community forums and in focus groups when needed. Neurodiversity will be respected. Clarity and transparency are aspirations of this process.
Create measurable engagement goal	Slide 18 provides the goal that we agreed upon as an APS/Chairs/RTI Partner team. This goal is based on the previous response rates (and the availability of that data from previous strategic plan development cycles). Slide 17 details that previous data (left side of slide).
Emphasize anonymity of survey	This will be messaging on all questionnaires. RTI team is conducting all focus groups to facilitate both anonymity and ease of participation. Processes have been contemplated in data collection tools to ensure anonymity. Data collected in focus groups will not have identifiers. Attendance will not be taken.