

## Creating Community and an Optimal Learning Environment at the New Elementary School at the Key site



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Greetings New Elementary School community,

I am so excited to begin the process of meeting all of you and working together to create an amazing learning community! The opportunity to open this new school is a unique and energizing experience and I am very much looking forward to working with all of you on this collaborative journey. As we continue life in the COVID-19 pandemic, that collaboration, as with so many other things, will need to look different. But, I am committed to developing authentic collaborative relationships in a virtual format, outside in a socially distanced venue, and eventually in person in our new building.

My transition plan is characterized by a commitment to creating optimal learning environments in which all students can thrive, building and enhancing open and collaborative relationships, and maintaining meaningful communication to support students' academic and social emotional growth. I will achieve this by focusing on the following key objectives:

- Creating a new school community based on trust, respect, camaraderie, and collaboration through open and inclusive communication.
- Establishing a rigorous academic program that is supported by highly qualified staff, with a focus on literacy, that aligns with APS standards and meets the needs of all learners.
- Building a safe and supportive environment that takes into account the unique social-emotional needs of students that have resulted from the school closure period and boundary adjustments.
- Developing safe and effective operational systems that result in a successful opening in August 2021.

### **Creating Community**

Over the course of my first year, I will make the time to get out into the community and into classrooms to meet every student and family and seek to understand their expectations for the new school community. I also look forward to families getting to know me in settings both large and small. It will be vital that we work together through all processes, from the naming of our school to the development of our culture and academic program, and beyond. I am eager to share my strengths with you and look forward to all that you can contribute to your children's education. Together with a strong school staff, we will create an environment in which our children can thrive.

After our initial introductions, I pledge to be visible, approachable, and transparent. I plan to attend community and curricular events, including PTA and other family organized events. I will work with fellow elementary principals and feeder school leadership to ensure our students have successful transitions and are prepared for their preferred instructional program pathway. I hope through our collaboration that you will learn I will be your child's advocate as they move through their elementary school years.

### **Strategic Planning and Continuous Assessment**

Although much time will be spent developing the relationships that will be the foundation of the new school community, simultaneously it will be important to plan strategically to ensure that we open successfully and have a roadmap for continued success and reflection moving forward. Over the course of the planning and opening years for the new elementary school I will focus on operational development, capacity development, leadership development, cultural & professional development, and team building as our school learning community grows and evolves. Some initial key objectives and essential questions are in the chart below. As we work together to continually assess our progress, I envision these areas may evolve with us.

### **Personal Professional Growth**

Moving from the secondary level to the elementary level is an exciting move for me. I look forward to bringing my community building

	<p>skills and collaborative approach to this new elementary school community. My work with secondary students and families has given me strong insight into the academic and personal skills that our children need to be successful along the K-12 continuum and beyond. I look forward to bringing that perspective to classrooms and to our community. I also recognize that this year will be a time of personal learning for me as well. I will work closely with curriculum supervisors and APS leadership to seek out and engage in learning opportunities related to early literacy, research-based elementary classroom interventions, and numeracy to support high quality instruction for all students. I plan to work with curriculum supervisors and Human Resources to hire highly qualified staff to support these areas of student need. Additionally, I will continue my learning and growth related to trauma-informed instruction and positive behavior interventions and supports to ensure that students' social emotional needs are met. Finally, I will work collaboratively with all stakeholders to focus a lens of equity and anti-racism on our development of school policies, practices, and curriculum.</p> <p>I recognize that planning the opening of a new school during a pandemic requires creative thinking and novel approaches to develop and build the kind of strong relationships and community that are necessary to ensure everyone feels safe, welcomed, and valued. I am committed to using virtual formats and working within social distancing guidelines to make this happen. When we open our doors in August 2021, we will need a strong focus on social-emotional needs and on ensuring that any academic gaps that exist are addressed immediately and effectively. I am confident this plan takes the unique needs that COVID-19 has created into account. We all want to return to a time when we can be together, but while we are apart the community building and focus on the needs of all our children does not stop.</p> <p>I truly look forward to this opportunity to work together to create a learning community in which all of our children thrive.</p> <p>Claire Peters Principal, New Elementary School</p>
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## Entry Plan Objectives by Constituency Group

Constituency	Entry Plan Objective
<b>Students</b>	Create a safe and welcoming school environment in which all students are valued and are able to thrive socially and academically.
<b>Families</b>	Establish and cultivate strong, collaborative relationships so that all families feel safe, welcome, and valued in the education of their children.
<b>Staff</b>	Build and cultivate a collaborative and open staff culture built on mutual respect and communication in which the academic and social-emotional needs of all students are valued and addressed.
<b>Community Members</b>	Engage with the surrounding community to build positive partnerships that enhance learning at the new elementary school.
<b>Central Office Staff</b>	Enhance and build effective relationships with staff from the Department of Teaching and Learning to ensure APS initiatives and instructional directives are carried out at the new elementary school.

	Enhance and build effective relationships with Facilities and Operations to ensure the building is safe and ready for learning by August 2021. Collaborate with Planning and Evaluation and School and Community Relations to understand the boundary process and to utilize community feedback.
<b>Superintendent and ELT</b>	Enhance and build strong professional relationships with the Superintendent and ELT staff to establish an educational program at the new elementary school that is consistent with the high standards in APS.
<b>Feeder School Leadership</b>	Establish effective partnerships with the leadership of all schools to which the new elementary school will feed to ensure students are prepared for successful transitions and are beginning to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for high levels of achievement as they progress along the pre-K through 12 continuum.

## Detailed Entry Plan Objectives by Constituency Group

Constituency	Objectives	Examples of Essential Questions	Action Items - Initial (I) and Long-Term (L)
<b>Students</b>	Create a safe and welcoming school environment in which all students are valued and are able to thrive socially and academically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strengths and challenges do students have?</li> <li>• What successful interventions are in place that can be continued at the new elementary school?</li> <li>• How might our support for students need to differ based on trauma experienced during the school closure and the boundary realignment process?</li> <li>• How can I, along with school staff, support students' transition to a new elementary school?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend academic and extracurricular activities (virtually or in person) at Arlington Science Focus, and any other schools from which boundaries will be altered, to learn about successes and challenges. While schools remain closed, work with the principals of these schools to identify opportunities to engage virtually with students (observe or teach virtual classes, engage in enrichment opportunities, learn about community events). <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Send an introductory postcard to all students in the new elementary school attendance zone. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Conduct neighborhood walks. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Plan small and large events at the school site (Spring Fling, grade level meetups, etc.) when safe and allowed. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Engage students in the naming and community-building process for the new elementary school. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Maintain visibility by engaging with learning, extracurricular, and celebratory activities. <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Highlight and celebrate student successes. <b>(L)</b></li> <li>● Collaborate with staff and families to develop after-school programs for enrichment and academic strengthening. <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	Establish and cultivate strong, collaborative relationships so that all families feel safe, welcome, and valued in the education of their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What communication strategies will ensure that all families are informed and feel valued in the education of their children?</li> <li>● What opportunities exist for family involvement in the development of the new elementary school community and culture?</li> <li>● How can we work together to create a learning environment that is engaging, challenging, and responsive to the needs of all students?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Send an introductory letter to all families in the new elementary attendance zone. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>● Ensure family representatives are included in the naming process and in the development of the school's mission and vision. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>● Plan small and large events at the school site (Spring Fling, grade level meetups, etc.) when safe and allowed. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>● Visit neighborhoods, community centers, and apartment complexes and host chats to meet families in their communities, when safe and allowed. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>● Hold monthly principal chats. <b>(L)</b></li> <li>● Attend PTA meetings. <b>(L)</b></li> <li>● Ensure all communications are translated into the major languages of the school community. <b>(L)</b></li> <li>● Evaluate systems of communication and adjust as necessary to ensure all families are included and engaged. <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	Build and cultivate a collaborative and open staff culture built on mutual respect and communication in which the academic and social-emotional needs of all students are valued and addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What high quality professional learning will be needed to ensure our academic program is consistent with other schools and with the high standards of APS?</li> <li>● What high quality professional learning opportunities exist to support the unique needs of our student population?</li> <li>● What team-building activities will increase our ability to be a collaborative and open staff who look out of the needs of all students?</li> <li>● What systems need to be in place to ensure clear communication and efficient work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaborate with HR to hire high quality staff who reflect the diversity of the new elementary school community and its academic focus. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>● Conduct a staff needs assessment to determine appropriate professional learning options. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>● Plan large and small scale team-building activities for staff. <b>(L)</b></li> <li>● Create collaborative learning teams and guide their work. <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>Community Members</b></p>	<p>Engage with the surrounding community to build positive partnerships that enhance learning at the new elementary school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can our location in the Courthouse area create opportunities for business and community partnerships to support student learning?</li> <li>• What partnerships already exist with APS that can be expanded to the new elementary school?</li> <li>• What outside-the-classroom learning environments exist within walking distance of the school?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send welcome letter to local businesses and organizations <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Attend neighborhood association meetings to allow for in-person introduction <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Build upon existing APS partnerships to bring community resources to the new elementary school <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Central Office Staff</b></p>	<p>Enhance and build effective relationships with staff from the Department of Teaching and Learning to ensure APS initiatives and instructional directives are carried out at the new elementary school.</p> <p>Enhance and build effective relationships with Facilities and Operations to ensure the building is safe and ready for learning by August 2021.</p> <p>Collaborate with Planning &amp; Evaluation and School and Community Relations to understand the boundary process and to utilize community feedback gathered through the Engage process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What resources and supports are required to build optimal learning environments?</li> <li>• What additional resources will be necessary to support social-emotional learning and trauma informed instruction?</li> <li>• What structural changes might be necessary to ensure optimal learning environments?</li> <li>• What resources are needed to ensure that the building is safe and ready to open in August 2021?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule meetings with Curriculum and Department leaders to become familiar with various roles, responsibilities, and available resources. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Engage in recommended professional learning related to early literacy and literacy intervention. (LETRS, OG, Haggerty Phonics, etc.) <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Explore pathways to earning a designation as a Trauma Sensitive School. <b>(L)</b></li> <li>• Explore how the new elementary school might fit into the Instructional Program Pathways (creative and collaborative thinking, innovation, growth mindset, project-based learning, service learning, etc.). <b>(L)</b></li> <li>• Collaboratively plan professional learning for staff related to ATSS, literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning (SEL). <b>(L)</b></li> <li>• Attend facilities and operations meetings to ensure building needs are met. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Engage in the boundary process in collaboration with Planning and Evaluation. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>• Identify and utilize the processes used to gather input from staff, students, families, and other community members. <b>(I)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Superintendent and ELT</b></p>	<p>Develop and enhance strong professional relationships with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What instructional leadership viewpoints can positively affect the development of our</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular meetings to discuss initiatives, needs, and goals. <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>

	the Superintendent and ELT staff to establish an educational program at the new elementary school that is consistent with the high standards in APS.	learning community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend monthly principal and administrative council meetings. <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Feeder School Leadership</b>	Establish effective partnerships with the leadership of all schools to which the new elementary school will feed to ensure students are prepared for successful transitions and are beginning to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for high levels of achievement as they progress along the pre-K through 12 continuum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What knowledge and skills do students need to transition successfully to middle school and high school?</li> <li>How can we support students in developing resiliency and a passion for lifelong learning?</li> <li>What partnerships can we create to ensure students are ready for the transition to the next level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up introductory meetings with the principals of feeder schools. <b>(I)</b></li> <li>Establish systems of on-going communication and feedback with feeder schools (administration, counseling staff, instructional staff). <b>(L)</b></li> <li>Explore partnership opportunities (academic, volunteer, family, etc.). <b>(L)</b></li> </ul>

## Strategic Planning Objectives and Action Items

Area of Focus	Objectives	Essential Questions	Action Items
Operational Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a welcoming and safe school campus</li> <li>Establish safe operational and emergency routines</li> <li>Acquire appropriate resources for the learning community (furniture, technology, classroom materials, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What routines will result in the safest drop off and dismissal?</li> <li>What attributes of a master schedule allow students the best access to high quality intervention and extension activities?</li> <li>What resources will best fit the needs of our learning community and support student needs?</li> <li>What technology is needed to support student learning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Annual School Management Plan (90-Day Progressive Plan model).</li> <li>Collaborate with APS and Arlington County staff on operational and emergency routines.</li> <li>Observe drop off and dismissal at other school locations.</li> <li>Work with APS Transportation and Safe Routes to School to examine walk zones and determine safety supports needed.</li> <li>Establish collaborative learning teams and guide work.</li> </ul>
Capacity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract and hire a high quality and diverse staff</li> <li>Plan targeted and appropriate professional learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What hiring strategies will help us attract a diverse and highly qualified staff (teaching and non-instructional) who will help us create an optimal learning environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with HR to attend job fairs and other recruitment events</li> <li>Complete a needs assessment with staff to determine appropriate and necessary PL</li> </ul>

		<p>where all students thrive?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strengths do staff bring with them to the new school community?</li> <li>• What data is needed to ensure we understand the needs of our students?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with Planning and Evaluation to access student data to guide PL decisions</li> </ul>
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue my own professional learning</li> <li>• Establish leadership opportunities for students and staff</li> <li>• Support the creation of the PTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what areas do I need to build my knowledge to best support teachers and students?</li> <li>• What leadership opportunities and staff structures will support distributed and collaborative leadership?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in LETRS course and research other PL opportunities, including Responsive Classroom</li> <li>• Create leadership team norms</li> <li>• Establish a student advisory group</li> </ul>
Cultural & Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with all stakeholders to create a community that is open, welcoming, collaborative, and focused on the success of all students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will our mission, vision, and values be reflected in school policies, procedures, and decor?</li> <li>• What steps do we need to take to ensure that school policies are inclusive and equitable for all students?</li> <li>• What age-appropriate instructional opportunities exist to explicitly teach our values and expectations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve all constituency groups in the collaborative development of the school mission and vision.</li> <li>• Establish an advisory group who can evaluate proposed policies and procedures through an inclusive and anti-racist lens.</li> </ul>
Team Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish meaningful relationships based on mutual respect, collaboration, and shared decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What team building activities will create authentic opportunities for families to get to know each other and further develop a sense of community?</li> <li>• What team building activities will create and enhance staff relationships and a sense of shared responsibility and vision?</li> <li>• How can I encourage continued team building through the year?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan spring and summer (2021) team building activities for students and families</li> <li>• Plan summer and fall (2021) team building activities for staff</li> <li>• Plan recurring activities that further develop respectful and collaborative relationships</li> </ul>