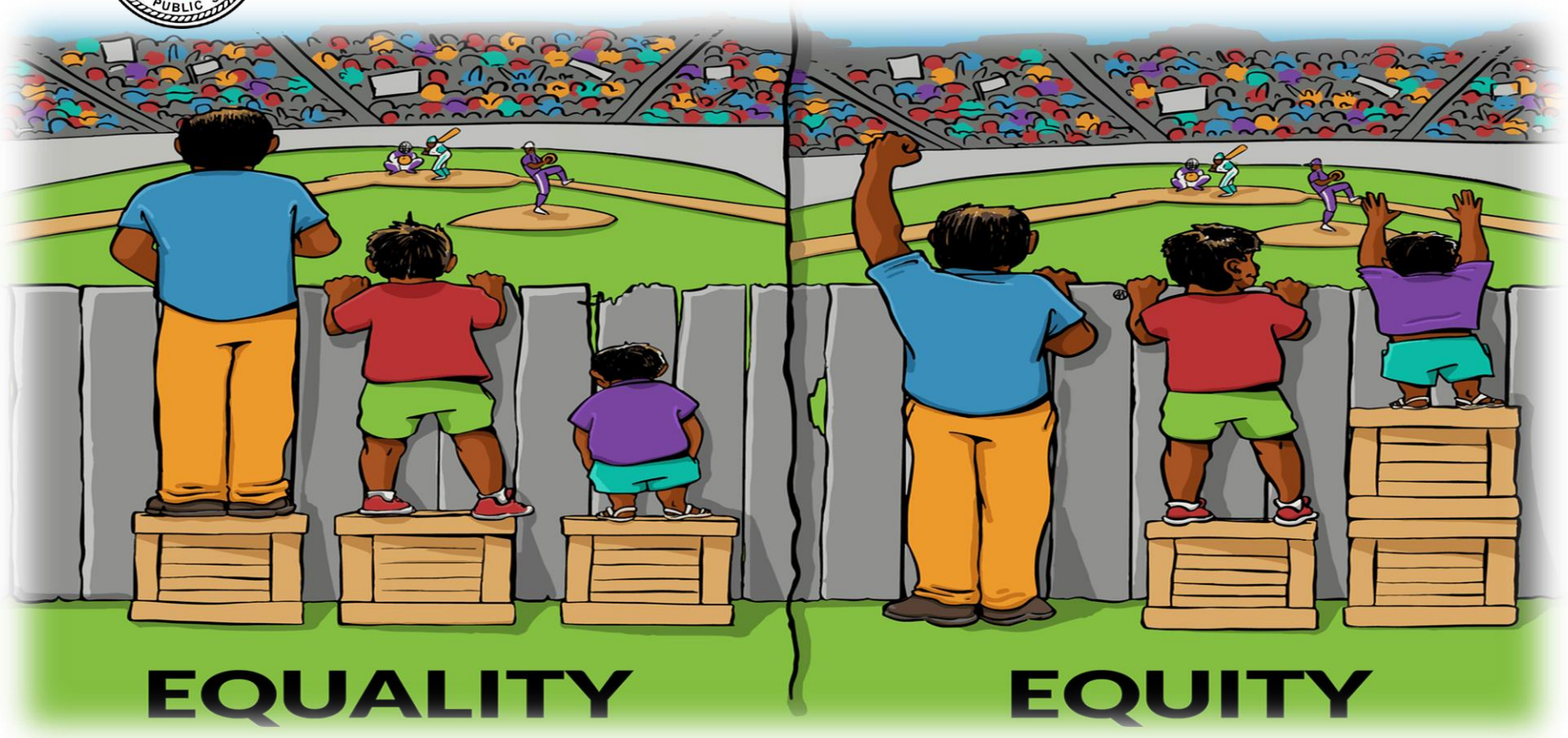
EQUITY & EXCELLENCE AT APS



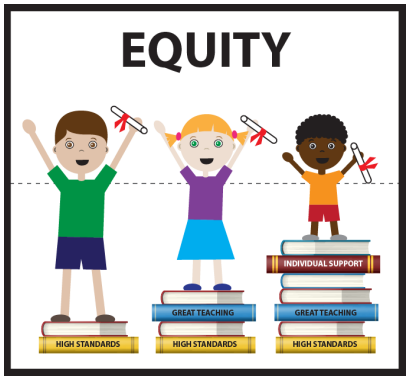
EQUITY TASKFORCE MEMBERS

Byron Amos (Chair)
Cynthia Briscoe Brown
Leslie Grant
Erika Mitchell

Equity Advisory Taskforce	District 1	Trinity Lewis
Equity Advisory Taskforce	District 2	Semira Ajani
Equity Advisory Taskforce	District 3	Morna Francis
Equity Advisory Taskforce	District 4	Lisa Dwyer
Equity Advisory Taskforce	District 5	Shamkia M. Yizar
Equity Advisory Taskforce	District 6	Jessica Johnson
Equity Advisory Taskforce	At-Large Seat 7	Greg Clay
Equity Advisory Taskforce	At-Large Seat 8	Tom Dunn
Equity Advisory Taskforce	At-Large Seat 9	Miriam Archibong

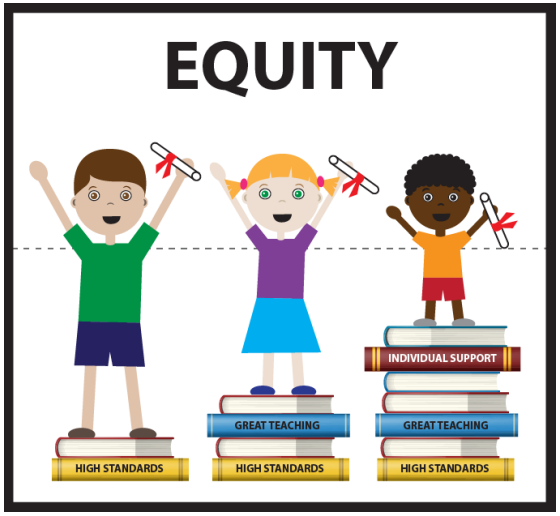
GUIDING PRINCIPLE ON EQUITY?

Equity is strategic decision-making, with the goal of remedying opportunity and learning gaps, and creating a barrier free environment, which enables all students to graduate ready for college and career.

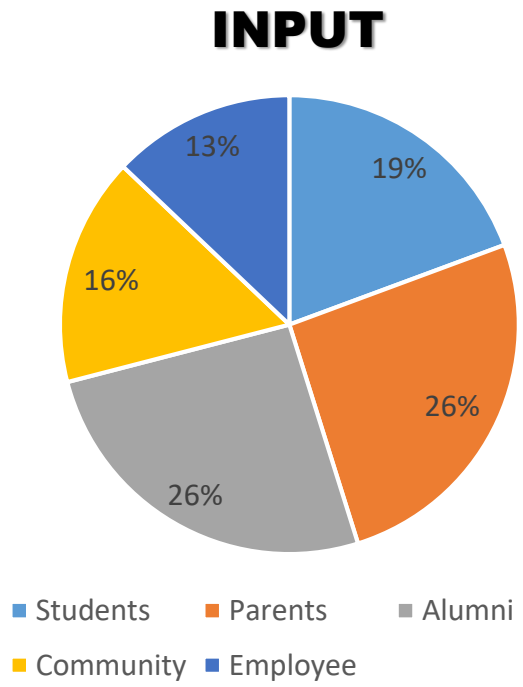


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INTRODUCTION

Members of the committee were asked to conduct "Empathize" Interviews. These are brief conversations that connected members to the authentic experiences of the Atlanta Public Schools community and staff related to equity and inequity. Although we want to hear about people's experiences of inequity, their positive experiences are equally valuable as we consider what we want to foster and build.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



CONDUCTED 62 INTERVIEWS

Reviewed Sample Equity Policies

- Roanoke Equity Policy
- Norfolk Equity Policy
- Portland Equity Policy
- Oakland Unified School District Equity Policy

The Equity Taskforce follows the Board's outline and key ideas to develop the draft Equity Policy (two versions)

Version 1

Equity Definition → Purpose/Call to Action → Goals → Structures/Process for Implementation and Accountability

Version 2

Purpose/Call to Action → Goals → Structures/Process for Implementation and Accountability → Equity Definition

The Equity Taskforce selected Version 2 for the DRAFT Policy

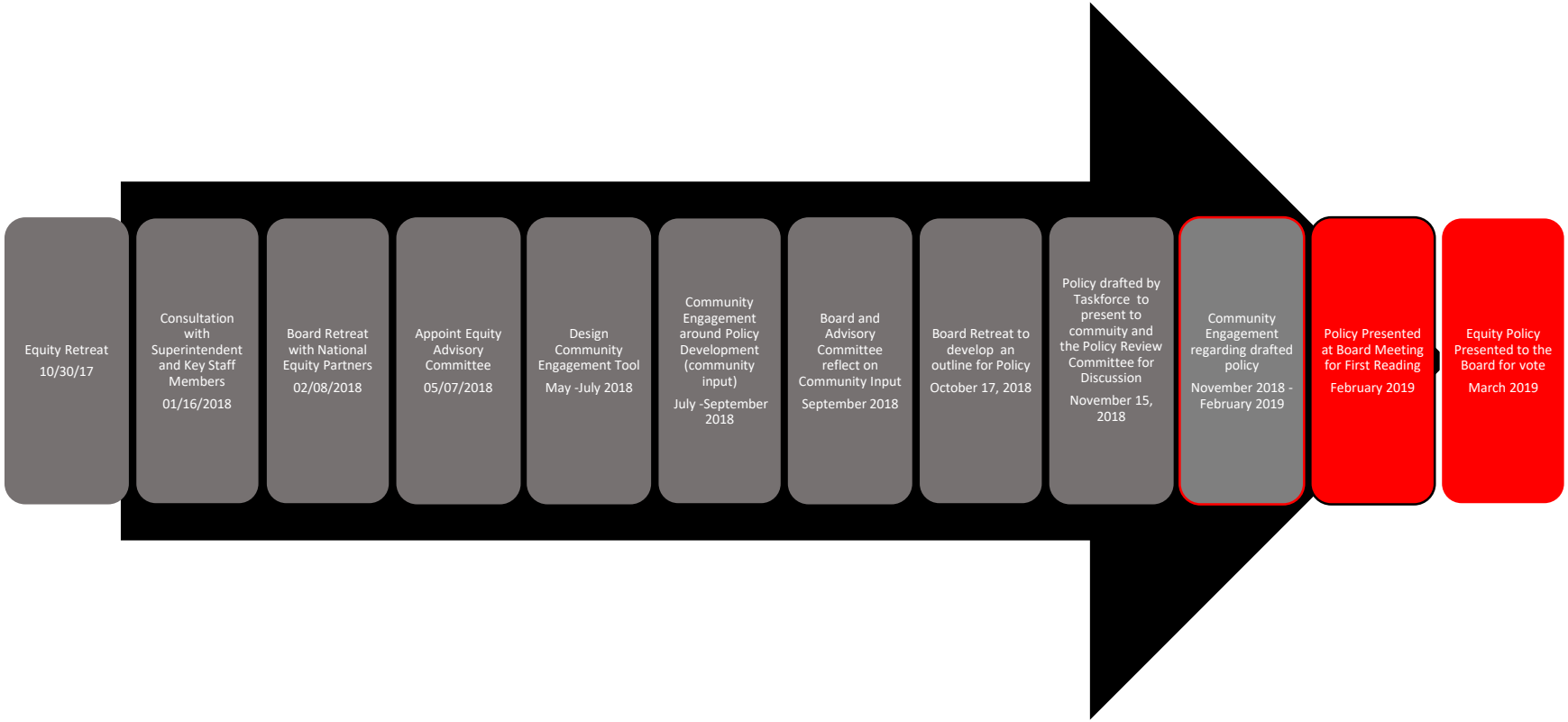
Version 1

Equity Definition → Purpose/Call to Action → Goals → Structures/Process for Implementation and Accountability

Version 2

Purpose/Call to Action → Goals → Structures/Process for Implementation and Accountability → Equity Definition

Equity Policy Timeline



Creating a System of Excellent Schools

Community Conversation
16 January 2019

Why this project? Why now?

Together, our aim is to:

- Knit together into a more cohesive whole the important initiatives and work streams we already have underway;
- Deepen our implementation of the strategic plan and core tenets of our operating model; and
- Better prepare us to develop our next strategic plan.

Photo credit: https://atlsuper.com/2018/05/25/congratulations-grad-nation-aps-class-of-2018/

Remember, our 'north star' is to define and enact a vision of excellence for APS and our system of schools

We must create a system of excellent schools that serves the needs and aspirations of ***Every Student*** through a clear vision of excellence and a plan to operationalize that vision.

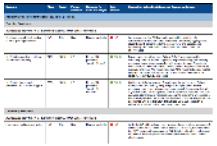
Therefore, we will:

- Align on a **definition of school excellence** that integrates with existing definitions of teaching and leadership excellence and includes a profile of an APS graduate;
- Determine how to best measure schools' **progress toward excellence** and determine **how to respond** when schools do or don't fulfill the vision; and
- Determine how to best advance the vision **through a system of excellent schools** that includes neighborhood, charter and partner schools, but may also include other school models.

We have crafted and revised three main deliverables through extensive feedback from hundreds of stakeholders

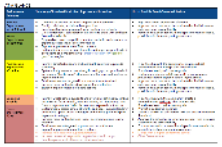
Vision of Excellence

Integrates with definitions of teaching and leadership excellence to define the characteristics of excellent schools and learning experiences that prepare APS students for college, career and community



Excellent Schools Framework

Translates the vision of school excellence into specific, measurable domains of school performance to enable planning, analysis and public transparency



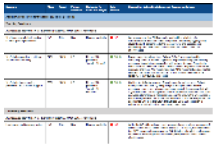
Excellent Schools Action Framework

Outlines the scenarios and decision criteria that will guide the district's responses to schools' progress toward our vision of excellence and answers related questions about autonomy, accountability and authorizing

Stakeholder Engagement

Vision of Excellence

Integrates with definitions of teaching and leadership excellence to define the characteristics of excellent schools and learning experiences that prepare APS students for college, career and community



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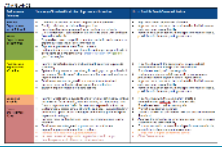


School Actions Framework

Outlines the scenarios and decision criteria that will guide the district's responses to schools' progress toward our vision of excellence and answers related questions about autonomy, accountability and authorizing

❑ APS Leadership
- SELT (8/24, 9/11, 9/25)
- Expanded Cabinet (9/26)
- Principals (10/15)

❑ APS Board of Education
- Retreat (8/23)

❑ Advisory Committee
- Virtual (9/11)
- In-person (9/24)

❑ Community At-Large
- Survey (10/19)
- Meeting (11/28, 12/12)

❑ APS Leadership
- SELT (10/9, 11/13)
- Expanded Cabinet (11/14)
- Principals (12/18)

❑ APS Board of Education
- Retreat (10/29)

❑ Advisory Committee
- In-person (10/22, 11/12)

❑ Community At-Large
- Meetings (1/16, 1/22)

❑ APS Leadership
- SELT (12/4, 1/8)
- Expanded Cabinet (1/28)
- Principals (TBD)

❑ APS Board of Education
- Retreat (1/24)

❑ Advisory Committee
- In-person (11/12, 12/17, 1/14)

❑ Community At-Large
- Meetings (TBD)

APS Leadership: 1) SELT: Senior Executive Leadership Team (app. 30 ppl); **2)** Expanded Cabinet: principals & district leadership (app. 200 ppl); **3)** Principals: (traditional, charter, and partner schools) (app. 75 ppl)
Advisory Committee: teachers, principals, GO team members, community members, central office leaders (app. 50 people)

What we heard (December 2018)

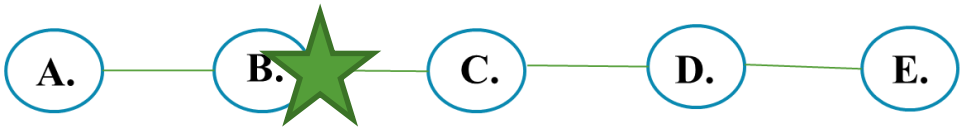
The vision presented reflects my beliefs about the characteristics of an excellence school.

Encompasses most or all of the most important characteristics of an excellent school

Is missing many of the most important characteristics of an excellent school

"I believe the overall domains and indicators are very good and are structured in a manner that would encourage and support a healthy educational system."

To what degree would a local Excellent Schools Framework benefit APS (compared to simply using the CCRPI)?



Very much – while the CCRPI measures many things we care about, it is not a comprehensive picture of school excellence according to our specific community and context

Not at all – the current CCRPI fully reflects APS' vision of what constitutes an excellent school

"It's a seemingly better approach than just CCRPI data and addresses the role of parents in the education process."

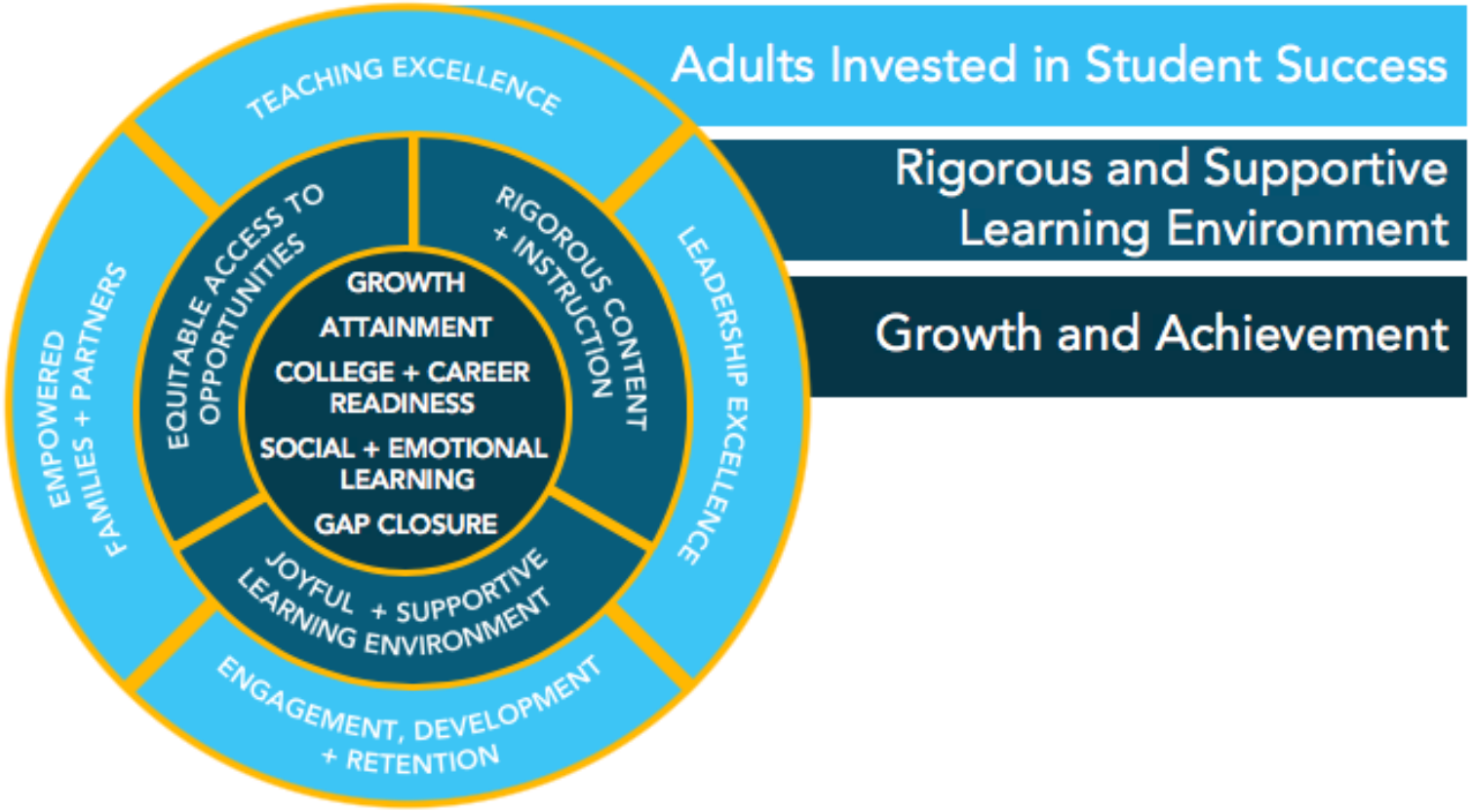
What we heard (December 2018)

- “This is too broad. Some components need to be broken down a bit more comprehensively.”
- “Where is funding tied to this?”
- “Access vs. Opportunity”
- “What is the timeline? When does this take affect?”
- “We should discuss what our graduates need to know when they graduate.”
- “What are the root causes?”
- “How is the equity policy aligned with this work?”

If adopted by the Board, APS leadership will then begin work on a multiyear implementation plan. The table below is an illustrative DRAFT.

THRU SUMMER 2019	SY19-20	SY20-21
1. Develop a comprehensive set of measures, floors, targets and weights to complete the design of the Excellent Schools Framework 2. Determine implementation criteria for the Excellent Schools Action Framework 3. Adopt and begin implementation of a multi-year plan for all System of Excellent Schools work 4. Continue to design and facilitate opportunities for broad engagement	1. Pilot the Excellent Schools Framework in order to gain data to inform its refinement and finalization 2. Progress monitor and refine implementation of multi-year plan 3. Continue to design and facilitate broad engagement	1. Implement the System of Excellent Schools work 2. Progress monitor and refine implementation of multi-year plan 3. Continue to design and facilitate broad engagement

The Vision of Excellence is comprised of 3 domains and 12 indicators



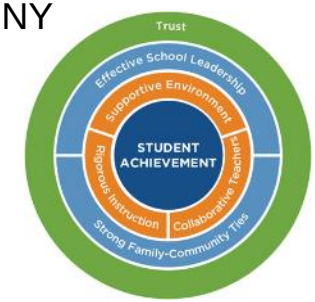
Handout

What began as a process of reviewing other models in the field is now a framework that others will be looking to nationally

External Examples

Denver, CO

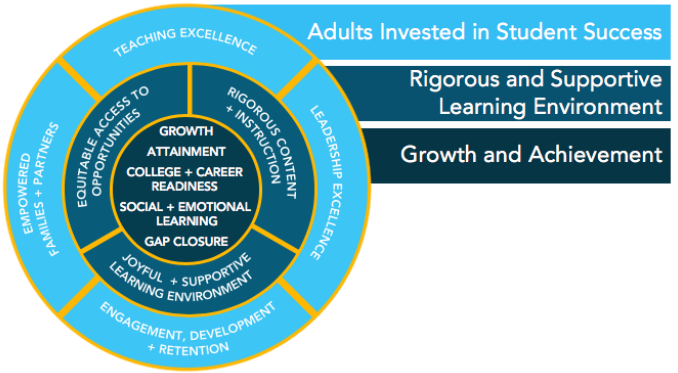
New York, NY



Washington, DC

Boston, MA

Uniqueness of the Vision



- ✓ Makes clear the relationship between enabling conditions (like signature program implementation) and outcomes
- ✓ Comprehensively incorporates stakeholder feedback through surveys of students, staff and families
- ✓ Builds from CCRPI when appropriate and possible
- ✓ Is distinct from CCRPI due to the inclusion of a holistic set of indicators, such as early literacy and social-emotional development

Small group discussion questions

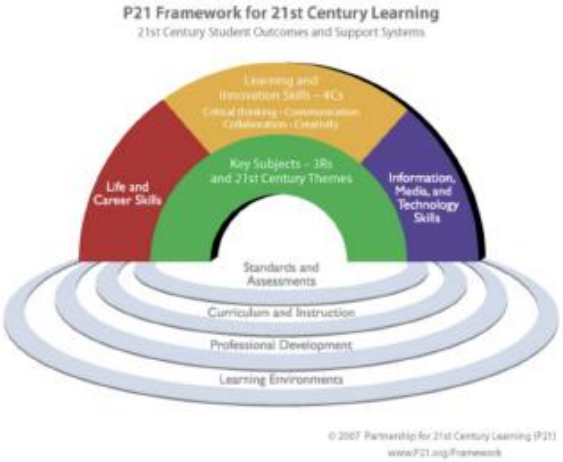
As you review the Vision of Excellence, to what extent (1-10 scale + narrative) does this communicate your vision of an excellent school? If not, what is missing?

As part of the Vision of Excellence, a Portrait of an APS Graduate defines the competencies, mindsets and knowledge bases APS graduates must attain to prepare for college and career.

Existing Cluster Plans

Surveys + Worksheet Responses

External Research



Handout

Alignment of Teaching and Student Excellence

DRAFT

If we implement/create…

APS Definitions of Teaching Excellence

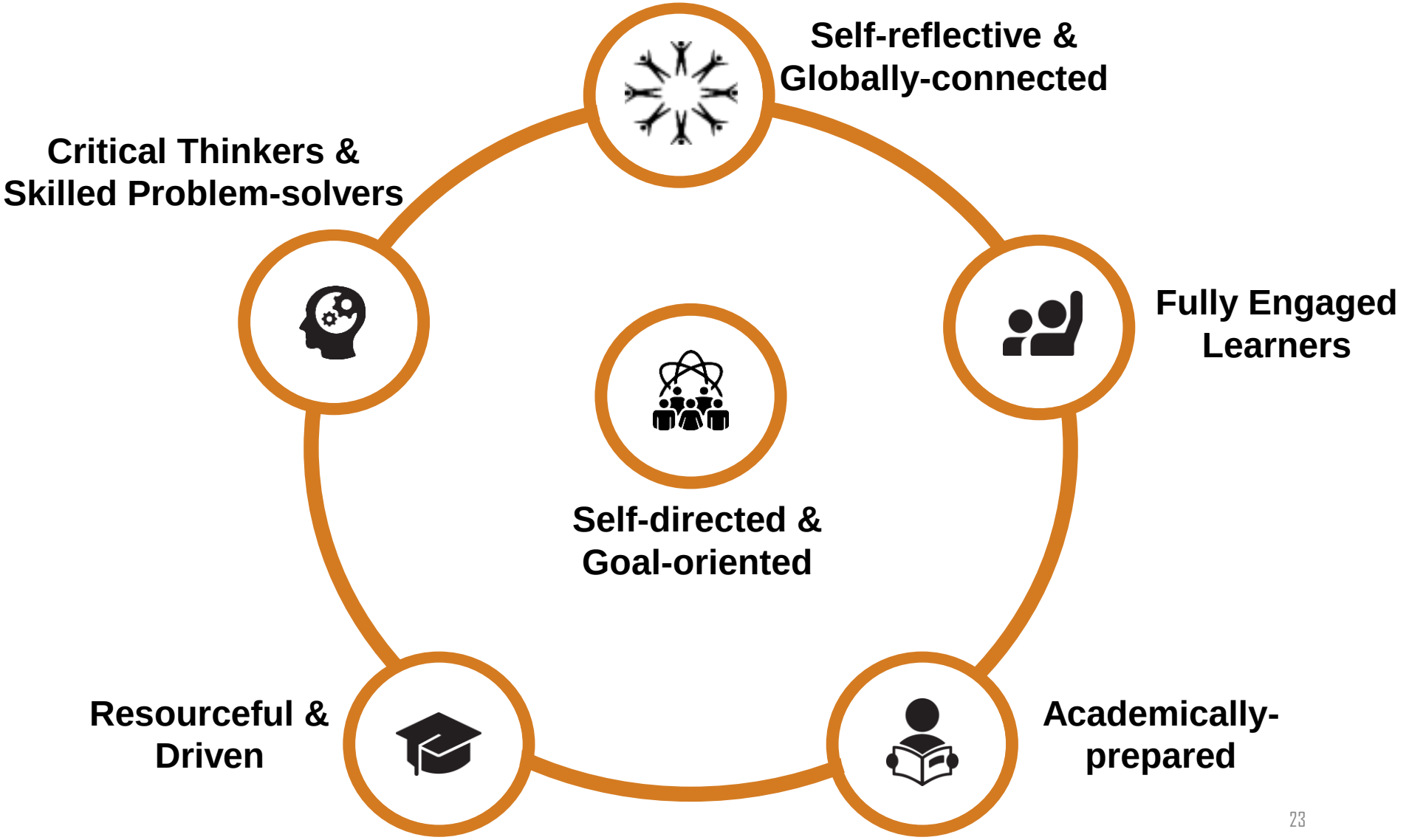
Social Emotional Learning	Culture of Learning	Essential Content	Academic Ownership	Demonstration of Learning	Belief & Value
Observable Student Behaviors					
• Use & apply core social-emotional competencies • Identify, label and recognize their own emotions & triggers • Establish & pursue goals through grit, determination or perseverance • Identify social cues& appreciate diversity • Communicate effectively • Self-reflective and self-evaluative	• Feel known, valued & part of a safe learning community • Work with genuine curiosity, joy & a love of learning • Take ownership over system and routines • Easily access materials, resources & work effectively independently & with peers • Develop critical consciousness through which they are equipped to acknowledge & challenge the status quo	• Engaged in standards-based, culturally relevant content • Use instructional materials that are appropriately demanding and require students to use evidence	• Responsible for thinking, speaking and doing • Regularly make connections to their lives, the world around them, and their goals and aspirations • Respond with evidence and clear rationale • Regularly participate in well-facilitated academic conversations • Consistently persevere in completing academic work	• Demonstrate learning and reflect on their progress towards their goals • Demonstrate ability to apply learning through multiple methods • Apply learning by solving real-world problems/tasks • Engage in self and peer assessment, and use feedback to accelerate their learning	• Applies APS core values and SEL strategies appropriately to their learning and basic lives • Sets high expectation for their learning • Consistently recognizes strengths and areas of growth • Hold self accountable • Establishes healthy school-life balance

Then our students will be…

APS Definitions of Student Excellence (Graduate Profile)

Self-reflective & Globally-connected	+ Fully Engaged Learners	+ Academically-prepared	+ Resourceful & Driven	+ Critical Thinker & Skilled Problem-Solver	= Self-directed & Goal-oriented
• *Citizenship* • *Community-focused* • *Open-minded* • *Caring* • *Balanced* • *Civic-minded* • *Expressive* • *Effective Communicators*	• *Innovation Skills* • *Collaborative Leaders*	• *Core Subjects* • *Authentic, real-world context*	• *Life & Career Skills* • *Confident* • *Resourceful* • *Responsible* • *Entrepreneur* • *Resilient*	• *Critical Thinker* • *Tech Savvy* • *Digitally Literate* • *Skilled Problem Solver*	• *Aspirational* • *Motivated*

If we have excellent schools, then our students will be…



Small group discussion questions

As your review the Profile of Graduate, identify competencies, mindsets and knowledge bases for each area.

APS Definitions of Student Excellence (Graduate Profile)					
Self-reflective & Globally-connected +	**Fully Engaged Learners** +	**Academically-prepared** +	**Resourceful & Driven** +	**Critical Thinker & Skilled Problem-Solver** =	**Self-directed & Goal-oriented**

Other:

We have crafted and revised three main deliverables through extensive feedback from hundreds of stakeholders

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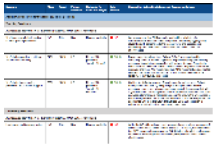

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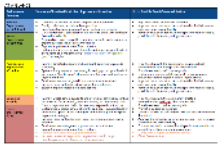

Excellent Schools Action Framework

Outlines the scenarios and decision criteria that will guide the district's responses to schools' progress toward our vision of excellence and answers related questions about autonomy, accountability and authorizing

In order to operationalize the Vision of Excellence, we must address design tensions

1. How heavily should each components (Adults Invested in Student Success; Rigorous & Supportive Learning Environment; and Growth & Achievement) be counted in determining a school's level of excellence?

2. Should different school types (grade band, governance type) have different frameworks?

3. How much of our framework should focus on perception or observational measures?

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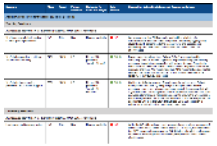

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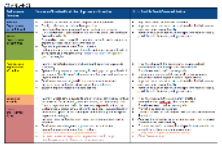

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DRAFT Excellent Schools Action Framework (at a glance)

AT A GLANCE

Performance Category	Summary of Possible District-Led Supports and Incentives	List of Possible Actions
Exceeds Expectations ★★★★★ Meets Expectations ★★★★	• Continue to provide universal supports and autonomies • Codify, celebrate, and share best practices • Incentivize teachers to support lower performing schools • Create intentional collaboration structures to share with and learn from other schools • As possible, make competitive funding available to strengthen or expand success and/or pilot innovations • Support implementation of Board actions • Systematically assess school strengths and gaps; support leader in developing and implementing "great to greater" or "good to great" strategies	• Replicate school or program elements • Approve the school as an innovation school with increased autonomy and accountability • Form an innovation zone with multiple innovation schools, possibly to include nonprofit governance • Expand enrollment
Approaching Expectations ★★★	• Intensify targeted supports and oversight; continue to provide autonomy • Systematically assess school strengths and gaps; support leader in developing "fair to good" strategies and forming partnerships to implement them • Provide access to a targeted improvement incentive fund • Increase focus on teacher development and retention • Support implementation of Board actions	• In partnership with the community, create a school improvement or re-design plan that includes Board-monitored performance goals • Implement a strategic staffing initiative to incentivize proven teachers to support school improvement • Approve the school as an innovation school with increased autonomy and accountability • Form an innovation zone with multiple innovation schools, possibly to include nonprofit governance
Needs Improvement ★★ Beginning ★	• Intensify whole-school supports and oversight, at times by shifting resources to focus people, time and money on "beginning" and "needs improvement" schools; continue to provide autonomy • Systematically assess school strengths and gaps; support leader in developing "poor to fair" strategies and forming partnerships to implement strategies • Increase focus on teacher and leader development and teacher retention • Provide access to targeted improvement incentive fund • Support implementation of Board actions • Increase non-academic support personnel • Increase personnel to provide targeted academic support • Prioritize placement of teachers with incentives	• In partnership with the community, create a comprehensive re-design plan that includes Board-monitored performance goals • Enable student transfer to higher performing schools • Secure a partner to collaborate with the district to operate the school • Approve the school as an innovation school with increased autonomy and accountability • Form an innovation zone with multiple innovation schools, possibly to include nonprofit governance • Merge with a higher performing school • Reconstitute • Close

Note: APS leadership reserves the right to prompt a leadership transition or take other actions as appropriate at any time to ensure school success.

Small group discussion questions

1. What action, if any, is missing from this framework?

2. Are there any actions listed on this framework that should be removed? If so, which one? Why?

3. What else should be considered, as part of the decision-making process, when determining the best action for a school?

Next steps

DATE	MEETING	PURPOSE
January 22	Community Meeting (Sutton MS, 6pm)	• Gather additional feedback on the Vision of Excellence and Excellent Schools Framework
January 24	Board Retreat	• Board explores recommendations and key questions
February 4	Board Meeting	• APS presents SES recommendations for Board action in March
February TBD	Community Meetings	• Gather additional feedback on the Vision of Excellence and Excellent Schools Framework
March 4	Board Meeting	• Vote on relevant Actions from the SES project

Thank you for your insight

Thank you!