Arlington Public Schools

EVERY STUDENT COUNTS

APS Strategic Plan
2024-30



Proposal for Non-Traditional Secondary Programs

Department of Academics
Department of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Student Support
Department of School Support

January 22, 2026

Agenda



Student Academic Growth and Success

- Overview
- Purpose & Principles
- Key Recommendations & Changes
- Overview of Proposed Programs
- Discussion

Purpose and Goals

Non-traditional school programs in APS provide innovative educational programs and pathways for students who have unique academic, social, emotional or behavioral needs. This proposal includes adjustments to non-traditional programming at Arlington Community High School, Grace Hopper Center and Langston.



- APS recognized the need to review secondary non-traditional programming and developed recommendations to further strengthen and expand offerings for all students.

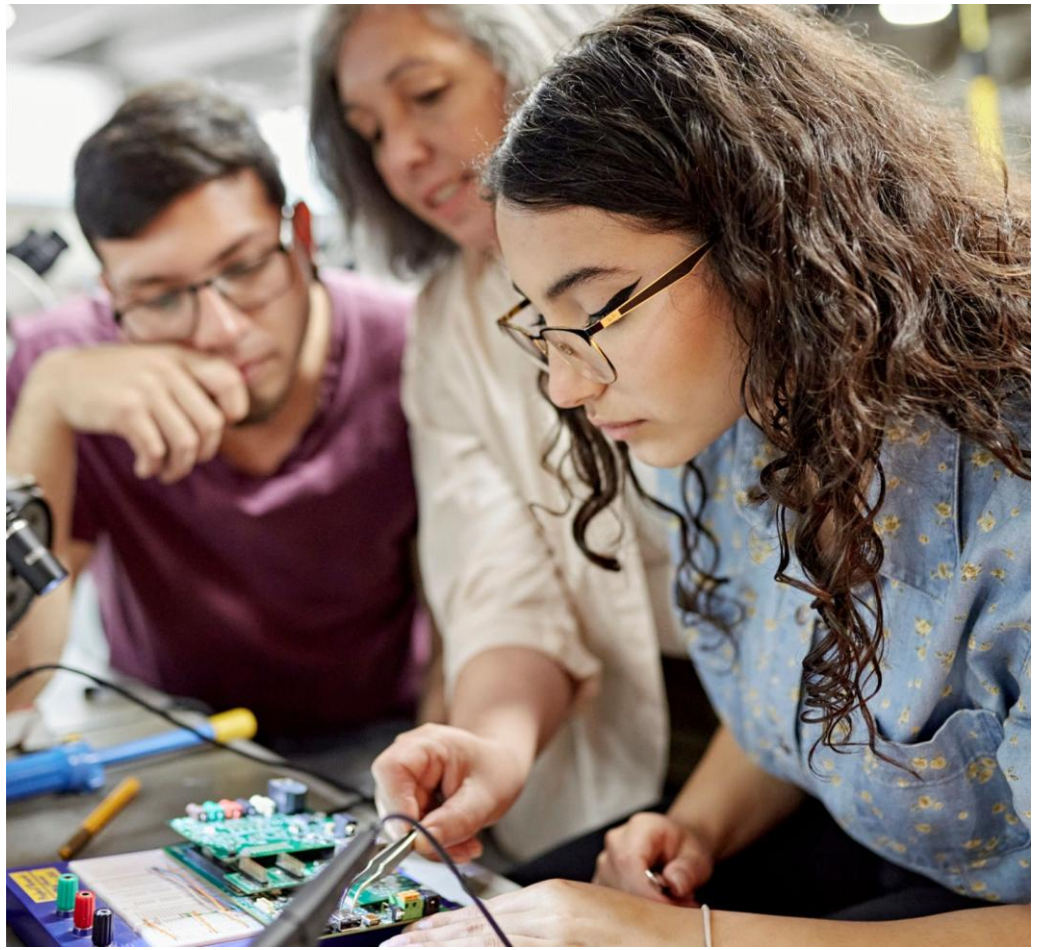
- Goals: Identify opportunities to **increase academic achievement**, **improve student support**, consider **efficiencies** and provide **equitable access** to best serve student needs.

Rationale

The proposals will:

- Increase academic achievement
- Enhance student access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and competency-based learning
- Provide additional resources and support through consolidation of existing programs and locations
- Maintain small learning environments based on student needs

The proposals reflects feedback from students, staff and community.



Engagement Process and Timeline

Initial Meetings (2024-25 School Year)	• Individual school meetings held at H-B Woodlawn, Langston/New Directions, Arlington Community High School and with the Arlington Career Center and Arlington Tech to review non-traditional programs. • Joint meeting with high school principals to gather feedback.
Work Session #1 (Nov. 19, 2024)	APS leadership recommended potential efficiencies and adjustments to non-traditional programs.
Work Session #2 (Nov. 18, 2025)	APS leadership provided updated proposals for board consideration and feedback.
Community Group Meetings and Engagement (August 2025-January 2026)	• Arlington Schools Hispanic Parent Association (ASHPA) • Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Student Concerns (SACIRSC) • Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA) • Arlington Tech Advisory Council (ATAC) • Langston Civic Association
Student Town Hall Sessions (December 2025)	Program-specific student town hall sessions occurred for each program at Arlington Career Center and Langston.
Committee of the Whole (COW) (Jan. 13, 2026)	School Board discussed updated staff proposals and provided feedback.

Visit APS Engage for more information.

Summary of Feedback on Opportunities

Staff, students and families provided feedback on key needs and priorities for the future of high school non-traditional programs. This feedback shaped the development of the proposal.

Expanded Access & Pathways

- Increased access to CTE, online, and competency-based learning options across program models
- Greater flexibility through hybrid scheduling and multiple instructional pathways
- Expanded alternatives for students needing non-traditional supports

Student-Centered Design & Community

- Dedicated spaces and intentional community-building to support small-group and relationship-centered learning
- Student interest in being actively involved in program design and ongoing operations

Support Structures & Wraparound Services

- Opportunities to strengthen clinical, case management, and therapeutic supports for students with intensive needs
- Potential for expanded wraparound services and continuity of services between outpatient and non-traditional programs

Strategic Growth & Sustainability

- Clear program branding and strategic recruitment to strengthen awareness and access
- Consideration of co-located or satellite models to expand reach and efficiency
- Centralized locations and creative transportation solutions to improve equity of access

Summary of Feedback on Proposals

Staff, students and families provided feedback regarding key challenges and concerns on the proposed adjustments to non-traditional programs.

Access & Equity Risks

- Concerns about preserving CTE access for Arlington Tech and comprehensive high school students
- Ensuring students can complete existing pathways and course sequences without disruption
- Maintaining equitable access for students with disabilities and English Learners across varying service levels

Staffing & Capacity

- Shared staffing and the need to service EL and students receiving special education services
- Need for sustained professional development to support competency-based and hybrid instructional models

Operations & Systems Alignment

- Complexity of blending different schedule models (4x4 block vs. 8-period day)
- Scheduling conflicts, limited course offerings, space constraints, and transportation concerns

Clarity & Governance

- Need for clarity on shared leadership model and how this will still maintain one-school community
- Need for clear eligibility criteria, program definitions, re-entry protocols, and credit recovery pathways
- Clear, consistent communication with families and students about options, pathways, and postsecondary outcomes

Student Voice & Impact

- Strong desire for transparency around decision-making and direct student impact
- Requests for design considerations that reduce travel time and improve daily experience (e.g., program location within buildings)

Key Recommendations

1. Alternative Learning Program

- Expanding and enhancing current 45-Day Program to include general education students and middle school students
- Located at Syphax Education Center

2. Flexible Learning Program

- Launching small-group instruction to provide flexible pathways
- Located at Amazon HQ/Arlington Community High School

3. Multilingual Pathway Program

- Redesigning programming for high school-aged English learners in grades 9–12, including newcomers and students identified as Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) who are working toward a high school diploma
- Located at Grace Hopper Center

4. Relocate Langston Program to Grace Hopper Center

- Expanding access to Career & Technical Education (CTE) and additional resources and support for students



Proposed Alternative Learning Program (Syphax)

Description:

Provides a temporary, alternative learning placement for students with and without disabilities at the middle and high school level. This program will offer intensive, short-term interventions in a small, structured environment.

Rationale:

Need for educational programming addressing specific behavioral needs for general education students and middle school students that require temporary removal.

Key Takeaways:

- Expands options for high school students with high behavioral needs, whether they are students with or without disabilities, require more intensive, direct interventions to include temporary relocation with targeted academic and behavioral support.
- Provides an option for middle school students who require a temporary, alternative educational plan due to significant behavioral infraction.

Proposed Flexible Learning Program (ACHS)

Description:
The Flexible Learning Program is an in-person, blended instructional model designed for high school students who benefit from a smaller, more personalized learning environment. The program combines standards-based coursework completed through online platforms with individualized and small-group, in-person instruction, along with integrated social-emotional supports.

Rationale:
There is a need for a transition program that has flexibility to serve students who may have required treatment programs for behavioral or medical. This program would allow students to receive personalized, blended instruction that offers flexibility in terms of pacing and targeted in-person academic assistance.

Key Takeaways:
- Equips students for academic success due to a more individualized approach to learning.
- Serves students who require interim flexible schedules to maintain progress on current courses towards HS diploma.
- Students may transition back to their comprehensive school or attend ACHS.

Proposed Multilingual Pathway Program (Grace Hopper)

Description:
Redesigning instructional programming for English Learners in grades 9–12, including newcomers and students identified as Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) who are working toward a high school diploma, with greater access to CTE and instructional supports.

Rationale:
The need to improve academic outcomes for English Learner programs.

Key Takeaways:

- Increased targeted EL Support
- Expanded opportunities for CTE and Credentialing Programs
- Increased student academic achievement

Relocate Langston Program to Grace Hopper

Description:
Standards-based semester program, for any high school-aged student, focused on completing a standard high school diploma through a structured academic program, smaller class sizes, and targeted social and emotional support.

Rationale:
Establish Langston as a centralized high school site to support students who need an alternative setting to support on-time graduation. Increase access to CTE pathways and certification programs to support students after graduation.

Key Takeaways:

- Provides shared resources and increased access to academic supports
- Offers increased access to CTE courses and pathways
- Maintains small class sizes and individualized interventions
- Sustains current Langston program model, including small class sizes, individualized student supports, and student academic growth and achievement

Overview of Proposed Programs

Existing Program | NEW Program | NEW Location

Located at Grace Hopper Center

- Arlington Tech Governor's STEM Academy
- CTE (part-time students)
- Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP)
- Teen Parenting Program
- Langston Secondary Program (including New Directions and the Academy)
- Multilingual Pathway Program (Modifying EL programming for the EL Institute)

Located at Amazon HQ

- Arlington Community High School
- Flexible Learning Program
- GED/ISAEP

Located at Syphax Education Center

- Alternative Learning Program (including 45-Day)

Overview of Proposed Program Descriptions

Program	Purpose	Profile of Student
Langston Secondary including New Directions/Academy *Currently 90 students enrolled	Standards Based Semester Program, for any HS aged student, focus on completing a standard high school diploma through a structured academic program, smaller class sizes, and targeted social and emotional support.	• Students in at least 9th grade • Students who benefit from small class sizes • Students who benefit from daily access to courses in a semester model • Students who are off track from graduation and need support with a possibility of returning to home schools
Multilingual Pathways *Anticipated 75-100 students	Standards based program for High school-aged English Learners in grades 9–12, including newcomers and Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) who are working toward a high school diploma, with greater access to CTE and instructional supports.	• Students in grades 9-12 • Students with EL Levels 1-4 and/or SLIFE • Students who benefit from small class sizes
Flexible Learning Program *Anticipated 100 students over 2 sessions	An interim program for students transitioning through treatment, with entry any point in the school year and possible return to home school or enrollment in other programming with focus on student needs through personalized learning and hybrid approaches.	• Students who are focused on treatment for mental health or substance use • Students who require interim flexible schedules • Students who want to still maintain progress on current courses towards HS diploma
Alternate Learning Program *Anticipated 15 students per level (middle and high school)	45, 60, or 90-day placements for academic and behavioral interventions Based on student need with a focus on building new behavioral skills, strategies, and habits	• Students Grades 6-12 • Available to both general and special education students • Placement by Office of School Climate and Culture or IEP process

Arlington Tech at Grace Hopper

- No changes are proposed for the current Arlington Tech program.
- No changes in access to course have been made.
- Planned expansion of Arlington Tech remains in place.



Community Engagement

We encourage community feedback through:

- Writing to **engage@apsva.us**
- Filling out the form on **apsva.us/engage**
- Writing to the school board at **school.board@apsva.us**
- Speaking at a school board meeting prior to the vote on Feb. 19, 2026



An updated **FAQ** is available on **Engage with APS**

Recommendations

The Superintendent recommends the School Board take the following action:

- Approve the development of the Alternative Learning Program to be located at Syphax
- Approve the development of the Flexible Learning Program to be located at ACHS
- Approve the development of the Multilingual Program that incorporates EL services previously delivered by English Learner Institute
- Approve the relocation of Langston Program including New Directions to Grace Hopper Center

Questions & Discussion



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Appendix

2025-2026 Non-Traditional Programs

Program	Program Description	Student Profile	Current Enrollment *Data may vary slightly with enrollment changes.	Program Admittance	Program Registration/ Enrollment	Academic Requirements	Calendar/ Schedule
Alington Career Center							
English Learners (EL) Institute	**Mission**: to provide a supportive, family-like learning environment where students feel connected and thrive. **Vision**: to develop empowered students ready for success in college and employment. -This program is for HILT/HILTEX students (under age 21) who are interested in completing a high school diploma while learning valuable career and technical skills. Students benefit from: • small class sizes • individualized support • career and technical training (leading to certifications/licenses) • college credits through dual enrollment • individual and group counseling • before and after-school tutoring • mentoring	-Grades 9 – 12 -Under 21 y/o -EL -Dually Identified	43 Students 6.0 Staff	**Referred by:** LSRC, Home School Counselors or Lead EL Teachers Referrals to the English Learner Institute include students who: may benefit from -a smaller, supportive academic environment, -need additional time to complete high school, and /or -are interested in career and technical education	Through Program Coordinator -Ongoing	Same Academic Requirements for HS graduation	Regular School Calendar

2025-2026 Non-Traditional Programs

Program	Program Description	Student Profile	Current Enrollment *Data may vary slightly with enrollment changes.	Program Admittance	Program Registration/ Enrollment	Academic Requirements	Calendar/ Schedule
The Academy	**Mission: To** provide a safe and nurturing academic environment where students thrive by gaining the skills necessary to graduate high school, compete in the workforce, and become successful in their chosen post-secondary path. **Vision: All** students are safe, well, empowered, and successful. **Goals:** On-Time Graduation, Student Success, Student Well-Being, Partnerships The program is designed for students as an alternative to the comprehensive high school. Students in grades 9 through 12 are served. It is designed with smaller class settings, low teacher/student ratio, individualized interventions, and structured academics. In addition to academics, students have the option of enrolling in one of the many Career and Technical Education (CTE) elective classes offered at the Career Center starting in ninth grade. Students may attend the Academy for half-day and return to the comprehensive high school for an additional two classes in the afternoon, or students may choose to spend the entire academic day at the Career Center.	-Grades 9 – 12 -SWD -EL	33 Students 5.6 Staff	**Referred by:** Home School Counselors, Principal/Designee, or parent/guardian/Self or,	Through Program Coordinator Ongoing	Same Academic Requirements for HS graduation	Regular School Calendar

2025-2026 Non-Traditional Programs

Program	Program Description	Student Profile	Current Enrollment *Data may vary slightly with enrollment changes.	Program Admittance	Program Registration/ Enrollment	Academic Requirements	Calendar/ Schedule
Arlington Community High School (ACHS)							
ACHS (Day & Evening Programs)	Arlington Community High School is an alternative high school that offers courses required for a high school diploma on a semester basis for day classes, and a year basis for evening classes, to any county resident aged 16 or older. Classes operate from 8 a.m.–9:10 p.m. Arlington Community High School's diverse student population is focused on earning a high school diploma, while preparing for college, work, and the future. While completing high school requirements, students have an opportunity to take classes for dual enrollment for college credit, as well as work with NOVA counselors to plan a seamless transition to college. Arlington Community High School offers students: -flexibility in scheduling to meet individual student scheduling needs and course requirements; -the opportunity to earn eight or more credits in a year, allowing for credit acceleration or credit recovery; -semester-based classes, allowing students to complete one, two, three, or four block classes each semester (up to 8 credits per year); year-long evening classes (up to 4 credits per year); -a choice for a high school – students elect to attend the school; -personalized learning, often in smaller classes to meet students' learning styles. Teachers and staff have developed a supportive and individualized atmosphere.	16 or older (Day) 18 or older (Evening) No upper age limit EL	159 Students 29 Staff	Students interested in enrolling in Arlington Community High School should contact the school directly or see their current school counselor for enrollment information and referral.	Open Enrollment	Same Academic Requirements for HS graduation Competency-based to allow more flexibility while maintaining rigor of course content	Regular School Calendar

2025-2026 Non-Traditional Programs

Program	Program Description	Student Profile	Current Enrollment *Data may vary slightly with enrollment changes.	Program Admittance	Program Registration/ Enrollment	Academic Requirements	Calendar/ Schedule
HBW- EL Program							
HBW- EL Program	This is a full-time English Learners Program (WIDA 1-4) with an academic focus leading to high school graduation/ college for students who are 18-21 years of age (some students aged 17 may enroll if later in the year). All students attend school for a full day of classes with EL classes for 3-4 periods per day and then can enroll in mainstream classes based on teacher recommendation or may attend career and technical classes at the Career Center. Advanced Placement classes are available as students' progress through English acquisition. Extra-curricular activities are available within the school and with the student's home high school for qualified students. School bus transportation is provided. Enrollment is maintained only until age 22, then, if students have not completed graduation requirements, students must transition to Arlington Community High School or Langston High School Continuation Program to complete their diploma.	For ages 17 – 22 EL	69 Students 5.8 Staff	**Referred by:** LSRC, Home School Counselors or Lead EL Teachers	Ongoing	Same Academic Requirements for HS graduation	Regular School Calendar

2025-2026 Non-Traditional Programs

Program	Program Description	Student Profile	Current Enrollment *Data may vary slightly with enrollment changes.	Program Admittance	Program Registration/ Enrollment	Academic Requirements	Calendar/ Schedule
Langston							
Langston Program including New Directions	The Langston Program offers students an alternative way to earn a high school diploma. Students are responsible for the same course requirements, number of credits, and SOL assessment verification as students in the comprehensive high schools, and the program offers flexibility in the way and timeframe in which students can earn a high school diploma. At Langston: • Students are able to earn eight or more credits in a year. • Classes are semester-based, and students may complete one, two, three or four classes each semester, allowing for credit recovery or acceleration. • Upon completion of requirements, students receive standard or advanced-studies high school diplomas from their home schools. • College credit is available for select courses from Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) through a dual enrollment program. As a result of working in a program that is kept small by design, teachers and staff have developed a supportive and individualized atmosphere. Teachers are skilled at teaching students with diverse needs and learning styles in multiple levels or subjects within one classroom.	Grades 9-12 EL	90 Students 25 Staff	**Referred by:** -Students elect to attend Langston or may be referred by the comprehensive high schools' counselors or administrators -LSRC	Ongoing	Same Academic Requirements for HS graduation	Semester basis (full classes completed in one semester)

2025-2026 Non-Traditional Programs

Program	Program Description	Student Profile	Current Enrollment *Data may vary slightly with enrollment changes.	Program Admittance	Program Registration/ Enrollment	Academic Requirements	Calendar/ Schedule
45-Day Program	Students with disabilities who require an alternative learning program need additional support.	6-12 grade Students with disabilities only	3 students 2.5 staff	**Placed by:** IEP Team	Ongoing Through IEP Team	Same Academic Requirements for HS graduation	Regular School Calendar