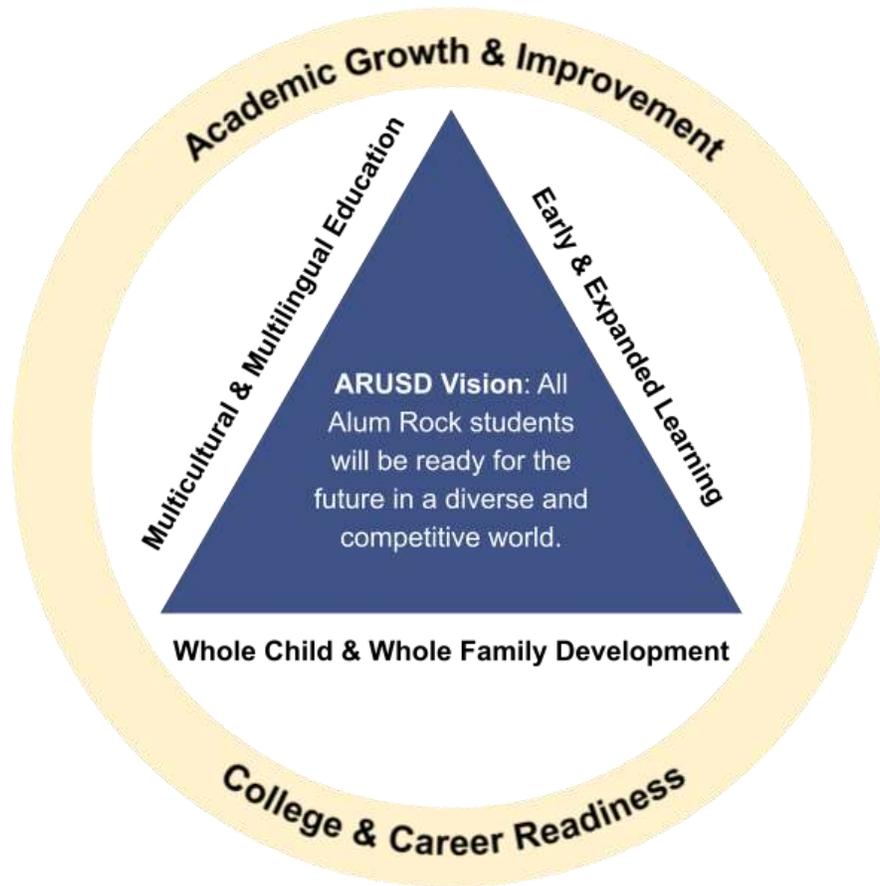


# Alum Rock Union School District Strategic Plan

June 2022



**APPROVED**

## Introduction

### Purpose

This strategic plan establishes Alum Rock Union School District's (ARUSD) overall strategic direction, identifies three priority areas in support of this direction, and specifies goals and recommended actions within each priority area.

This plan is intended to frame, complement, and inform – and not replace – other more targeted district planning efforts such as the LCAP, facilities master plan, community schools planning, Universal Prekindergarten planning, etc. Specifically, the strategic plan provides the overarching direction, strategic priorities, and goals for the district that more targeted planning efforts should intentionally align and connect to.

While this plan outlines a core set of goals for ARUSD to pursue, it does not provide a detailed implementation plan to make progress toward each goal. As a critical next step, ARUSD leadership, staff, and partners should engage in an implementation planning process to detail the specific steps needed to achieve the strategic plan goals.

### Process

With the support of the Santa Clara County Office of Education, ARUSD engaged the Glen Price Group (GPG) to facilitate a strategic planning process, which took place between March 2021 and June 2022.<sup>1</sup>

The process launched with a Discovery phase that took place between March and December 2021 and involved a number of information-gathering activities (e.g. interviews, group discussions) to learn about the ARUSD context and gather input and perspectives from parents, teachers, school administrators, district staff, Board members, community partners, and more. The January 2022 [Discovery Report](#) details this process and its results. A [2-page summary](#) of the Discovery Report was developed to provide a quick reference for the key strengths, challenges, and opportunities that were identified.

In January 2022, ARUSD formed a Core Planning Team (CPT) with diverse representatives including parents, district leadership, bargaining units, schools, and other community partners (see [Appendix 2](#) for a list of CPT members). The CPT convened for five two-hour meetings to engage in planning discussions and activities, using the Discovery Report findings as a foundational starting point. In addition, the CPT

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<sup>1</sup> COVID-related delays in 2021 resulted in the planning period extending beyond the original timeline.

held optional meetings in April 2022 and invited additional district office representatives to share feedback on emerging priority areas and goals.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the CPT's work led to the creation of this plan, including the north star and guiding principles described in the strategic direction below, as well as the priority areas, goals, and recommended actions that follow.

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<sup>2</sup> Summaries of CPT meetings are available in Appendix 3.

## Strategic Direction

ARUSD's strategic direction is rooted in its vision and mission. Additionally, ARUSD's work is guided by a north star statement and a set of guiding principles.

<p><b>Vision</b> <i>The future that ARUSD is working to realize.</i></p>	<p>All Alum Rock students will be ready for the future in a diverse and competitive world.</p>
<p><b>Mission</b> <i>How ARUSD works toward its vision.</i></p>	<p>Together with stakeholders, we provide Alum Rock students with high quality twenty-first century learning that builds upon our culturally diverse community to prepare our students to be lifelong learners and compete for the careers of the future.</p>
<p><b>North Star</b> <i>An expanded vision that provides direction for all ARUSD efforts.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All students, starting with our community's earliest learners, are equitably supported to realize their full and unique potential and to explore their interests and passions.</li> <li>2. All students are prepared in core academic areas and succeed on their path to college and career</li> <li>3. All students have the opportunity to become multilingual.</li> <li>4. Families meaningfully engage in their children's education and schools and ARUSD provides diverse resources to strengthen families' futures.</li> <li>5. Our schools and their surrounding communities mutually support each other's health and success.</li> <li>6. The ARUSD education workforce thrives and experiences ongoing opportunities to grow.</li> <li>7. We are united as students, families, community, and educators, in supporting each other and advancing our children to bright futures where each is a critical, creative, and curious thinker, a confident leader, and an active citizen.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Guiding Principles</b> <i>The core beliefs that are embedded in all district work and should never be compromised.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Service</b> – we serve our families and communities as their primary educational institution; we serve our education team by providing opportunities to grow and thrive.</li> <li>2. <b>Student Success</b> – we support the future academic and personal success of every student and provide the resources and opportunities for students to fulfill their potential.</li> <li>3. <b>Diversity</b> – we value our community's cultural diversity as a core strength and maintain cultural curiosity and humility.</li> </ol>

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4. **Collaboration** – we work together with respect, compassion, and empathy and keep an open mind.
  5. **Transparency** – we communicate transparently, maintain an open dialogue, and engage the community in decision-making processes.

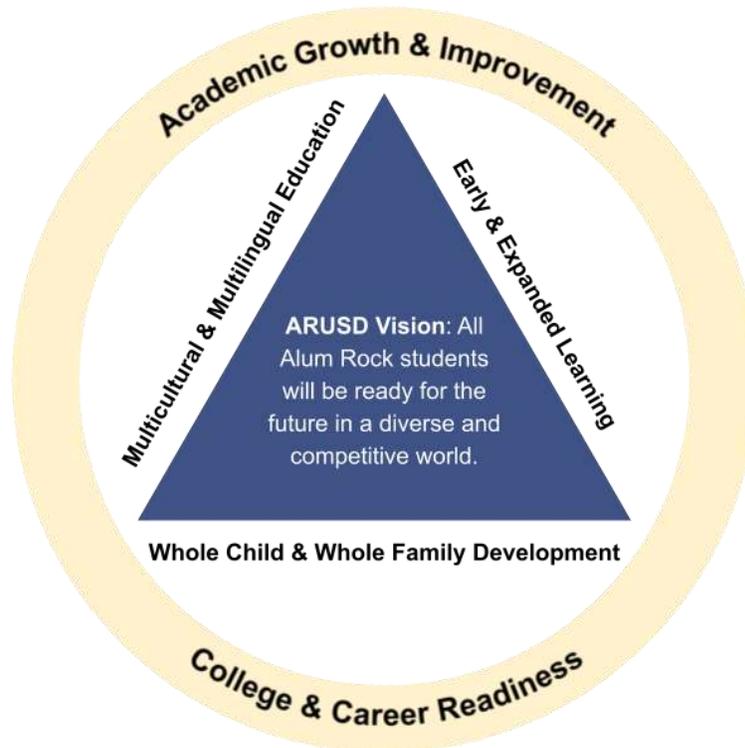
## Priority Areas, Goals, and Recommended Actions

In order to fulfill our mission of developing students who will be “ready for the future in a diverse and competitive world”, our work as a school district is oriented to achieve academic growth & improvement so that all ARUSD students are ready for college and career.

Our approach to academic growth and improvement and college and career readiness is focused on three priority areas:

1. Whole Child and Whole Family Development
2. Multicultural and Multilingual Education
3. Early and Expanded Learning

We believe that the outcome of our focus on these priority areas will be academic growth and improvement, resulting in college and career readiness. Specifically, through work in these priority areas, we hope to see one and a half years of academic growth for all ARUSD students who are below grade level at the beginning of the year.



ARUSD’s work within each priority area is oriented around specific goals. For each goal, recommended actions for ARUSD and its partners are identified. However, as noted above, additional work will be needed to develop a detailed implementation plan. The recommended actions included below are intended to both highlight connections to ongoing and forthcoming efforts and to serve as recommendations to

inform implementation planning.

Specifically, the planning efforts listed below should be aligned in support of the goals outlined in this plan. These efforts provide a fantastic opportunity to advance the goals in this strategic plan, and should overtly reference the district's strategic plan and describe how they are supporting the implementation of individual goals.

- The district's annual and Local Control and Accountability (LCAP) and School Plan processes.
- Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant, including the development of a plan for how all children in ARUSD's attendance area will have access to full-day learning programs the year before kindergarten.<sup>3</sup>
- The expansion of Transitional Kindergarten (TK) such that by school year 2025-26, TK is available to all four-year-old children.<sup>4</sup>
- Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P), including the development of a plan for providing access to comprehensive after school and intersessional expanded learning opportunities for all TK-6 pupils.<sup>5</sup>
- Community schools planning as part of the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP).<sup>6</sup>

These efforts are referenced below in relation to relevant priority areas and individual goals.

## 1. Whole Child and Whole Family Development

Supporting "whole child" development requires an integrated approach to addressing students' academic, cognitive, physical, behavioral,

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<sup>3</sup> The [UPK Planning & Implementation Grant](#) provides one-time funding for the district to develop a plan to expand access for preschool-age students, working in partnership with community-based providers to ensure families have a choice of program type and setting. District plans under this grant must be considered by the Board at a public meeting on or before June 30, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> [Transitional Kindergarten \(TK\)](#) eligibility will be expanded to include all four-year-olds by the 2025-26 school year (currently districts are required to offer TK to children who will have their fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2). This expansion of eligibility will happen incrementally between the 2022-23 and 2025-26 school years.

<sup>5</sup> The [Expanded Learning Opportunities Program \(ELO-P\)](#) provides funding for afterschool and summer school enrichment programs for TK-6 students and will allow for near-universal access to these types of expanded learning opportunities starting with the 2022-23 school year.

<sup>6</sup> The [California Community Schools Partnership Program](#) received a one-time investment of nearly \$3 billion to support planning and implementation of the community schools model across the state. Community schools build partnerships with community agencies and local government to align resources to improve student outcomes.

and social-emotional needs. "At its core such an approach views the purpose of schooling as developing future citizens and providing the basis for each child to fulfill their potential."<sup>7</sup>

This approach requires active engagement of families to both leverage and build their expertise and knowledge as partners in supporting and educating students. Similarly, working with community partners will be critical to providing the full range of needed services. The district's anticipated community schools planning process provides an opportunity to explore school-family-community integration more deeply.

**Goal 1.a. ARUSD staff, families, and community partners share a common understanding of whole child and whole family development and related programs and activities available at their schools**

*Recommended actions:*

- As part of a districtwide communications campaign, communicate with students, families, staff, and partners about:
  - The elements of whole child and whole family development, using multiple formats including written materials, infographics, informational videos, and live training sessions to build a common understanding.
  - The availability of, and how to access, existing resources and services available in the Alum Rock community, including Family Resource Centers.
- Regularly engage in two-way authentic communications with families to understand their needs and interests, particularly in relation to social and emotional skills for both students and families. Planned input sessions such as family LCAP input meetings could be used for this purpose.

**Goal 1.b. In collaboration with families and community partners, ARUSD schools provide a range of services and supports for academic, cognitive (critical thinking), behavioral, and social-emotional development**

*Recommended actions:*

- Research validated tools for measuring social-emotional learning and whole child development, and develop

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<sup>7</sup> Slade, Sean & Griffith, D. (2013). A whole child approach to student success. KEDI Journal of Educational Policy. 21-35 Accessed 5/12/2022 at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287320346> [A whole child approach to student success](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287320346)

recommendations for if and how ARUSD should use these tools for measuring and reporting on whole child development (in addition to existing dashboard measures such as test scores, attendance, suspension, etc.)

- Assess curriculum to determine the extent to which it addresses life skills and fosters critical thinking, and develop recommendations for curricular changes as needed.
- Build on existing and planned efforts:
  - Develop and implement an ethnic studies curriculum, building on ongoing work (also included under 2.b)
  - Apply results of the Racial Equity Committee's work
  - Conduct a districtwide needs and assets map, as proposed in ARUSD's community schools planning grant, to help identify additional needed services and existing resources
- Strengthen integration of early, expanded, and school day learning (see priority 3 for additional details)

**Goal 1.c. ARUSD implements districtwide systems and protocols as part of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)<sup>8</sup>**

*Recommended actions:*

- Launch a targeted planning effort to establish a districtwide MTSS, building on existing site-level efforts. This could be incorporated as a focus of the forthcoming community schools planning work.
- Explore opportunities to connect MTSS integration to ARUSD's community schools planning efforts (as proposed in the community schools planning grant proposal) and subsequent implementation work.

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<sup>8</sup> The California Department of Education's (CDE) definition of Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) provides a basis for understanding how California educators can work together to ensure equitable access and opportunity for all students to achieve the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In California, MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on CCSS, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success.

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscomppti2.asp>)

The California MTSS Framework is structured around three whole child domains of academic instruction, behavior instruction, and social-emotional instruction and mental health, and five essential domains and features: administrative leadership, integrated supports, family and community engagement, and policy structure and practice.

(<https://ocde.us/MTSS/Documents/Revised-California-MTSS-Framework-July-2021.pdf>)

**Goal 1.d. ARUSD students love learning, have opportunities to be creative, are in control of their own learning experience, and are able to learn independently**

*Recommended actions:*

- Assess ARUSD's play and creativity spaces (including outdoor structures, maker spaces, art rooms, etc.) and develop recommendations to strengthen and expand these types of spaces across the district.
- Increase the range of elective courses, including for elementary grades.
- Integrate opportunities for creative expression offered through expanded learning programs with core learning activities (see priority 3 for additional details).

*Additional considerations:*

- Provide students with opportunities to shape the physical appearance of their schools (e.g., student-created murals and sculptures).
- Ensure outdoor play structures are innovative and foster creativity and problem solving.
- Consider what support and training is needed for staff such as Physical Education teachers to innovate and support creativity and problem solving.

## 2. Multicultural and Multilingual Education

Research demonstrates the vast benefits of multilingual education, including its positive impact on academic and career success.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, when students' learning experiences reflect their own cultures and expose them to other cultures, they become more interested and engaged in learning and develop a stronger sense of belonging.<sup>10</sup>

The Alum Rock community is linguistically and culturally rich. This is recognized in the district's Guiding Principles of leveraging the community's cultural diversity as the basis for growth, maintaining cultural curiosity and humility, and recognizing community cultures as a core strength. By pursuing bold goals related to multicultural and

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<sup>9</sup> Ellen Bialystok (2018) Bilingual education for young children: review of the effects and consequences, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 21:6, 666-679, DOI: [10.1080/13670050.2016.1203859](https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1203859)

<sup>10</sup> Muñiz, J., 2019. 5 Ways Culturally Responsive Teaching Benefits Learners. [online] New America. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/5-ways-culturally-responsive-teaching-benefits-learners/>

multilingual education, ARUSD puts these principles into practice.

**Goal 2.a. All ARUSD students have the opportunity to learn multiple languages**

*Recommended actions:*

- As part of a districtwide communications campaign, communicate with students, families, staff, and partners regarding the value of multilingualism for student success and competitiveness, and to create the shared expectation that every student at ARUSD will learn multiple languages.
- Clarify ARUSD district-level roles and responsibilities for documenting, communicating, and supporting the implementation of multilingual education models (e.g., dual immersion schools and strands, language electives, etc.) across the district.
- Develop an implementation plan and timeline to deploy multilingual education models across ARUSD schools, resulting in the universal availability of multilingual education in a variety of languages (including but not limited to English, Spanish, and Vietnamese) at all ARUSD schools.
  - Identify metrics and processes to monitor progress toward providing the opportunity for all ARUSD students to learn multiple languages.

*Additional considerations:*

- Ensure language education is developmentally appropriate.
- Ensure multilingual education models are refined and strengthened prior to scaling to additional sites.

**Goal 2.b. ARUSD schools celebrate cultures and focus on cultural**

## education

### *Recommended actions:*

- Clarify district-level roles and responsibilities for ARUSD and its partners in organizing and leading efforts to improve cultural education and celebration across ARUSD schools.
- Assess curriculum and materials (e.g., career presentations) to determine the extent to which they reflect the cultural identities of the Alum Rock community and cultural diversity more broadly, and develop recommendations for changes as needed.
- Add murals to school sites that reflect diversity (for example, dual immersion schools could include murals of their founders).
- Develop and implement an ethnic studies curriculum, building on ongoing work (also included under 1.a).

### *Additional considerations:*

- Engage families to share their cultures and participate in cultural activities.

## **Goal 2.c. ARUSD school professionals are culturally proficient and provided with opportunities to learn multiple languages**

### *Recommended actions:*

- Offer language courses to staff interested in learning additional languages, particularly Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Recruit multilingual staff from the community, and identify and implement ways to support multilingual individuals to complete teacher credentialing programs.
- Provide professional learning opportunities to the ARUSD workforce designed to build multicultural knowledge, curiosity, and humility.

## 3. Early and Expanded Learning

High-quality early care and education programs support optimal child development and prepare children for increased success in school and beyond.<sup>11</sup> Expanded learning programs provide a host of benefits for

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<sup>11</sup> Bustamante, A., Dearing, E., Zachrisson, H., Vandell, D. and Hirsh-Pasek, K., 2021. High-quality early child care and education: The gift that lasts a lifetime. [online] Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2021/11/04/high-quality-early-child-care-and-education-the-gift-that-lasts-a-lifetime/>

school-age children ranging from opportunities to explore expressive activities like dance and music, learning and practicing multiple languages, augmenting classroom instruction in core academic subjects, and more. The power of early and expanded learning to bolster student success can be multiplied through strong, intentional alignment with the school day curriculum.

Recent state investments provide an opportunity for ARUSD to both expand and further integrate early, expanded, and school day learning – in particular the UPK Planning and Implementation Grant, TK expansion, ELO-P, and CCSPP (see pages 4-5 for additional details).

While there is a need for and clear benefit of early learning and development programs for infants and toddlers, as well as expanded learning for students in older grades, there is an emerging focus on the value of strong preschool through third grade (P-3) alignment.<sup>12</sup> This type of alignment can help ensure that the benefits of early learning programs are continued and built upon in the early elementary grades, further preparing students to succeed in later grades.

**Goal 3.a. ARUSD families and students access free high-quality early learning, preschool, before school, after school, and summer programs that support whole child development**

*Recommended actions:*

- Build on current efforts as part of the Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Planning and Implementation Program Grant, TK expansion, and collaboration with early learning partners to provide high-quality, full-day and nontraditional-hour, full-year early learning and care to Alum Rock families.
  - Identify metrics and processes to monitor progress toward achieving this goal.
  - Include infant and toddler programs in addition to preschool.
  - Pursue multiple models for providing access to services, including early learning centers (e.g., Chavez) and preschool co-op programs (e.g., Painter).
- Invite family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers to participate in professional learning opportunities offered by the district as one way to build and strengthen relationships with FFN caregivers.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/p3/>

- Build on current efforts to plan and implement the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) to provide comprehensive after school and intersession programs for ARUSD students.

*Additional considerations:*

- Ensure expanded learning programs integrate with and complement school-day programs and offer a combination of enrichment (creative, physical, field-trip, etc.) and academic activities, including additional academic support for students in need.

**Goal 3.b. Early, expanded, and school day staff and families have shared expectations of whole child development and the role of different settings and programs in supporting this development**

*Recommended actions:*

- As part of a districtwide communications campaign, communicate with students, families, staff, and partners about:
  - Child and youth development and developmental milestones, and how early learning, school day, and expanded learning contribute to child and youth development, using multiple formats including written materials, infographics, informational videos, and live training sessions.
  - Examples of developmentally appropriate activities for young children, including play-based learning and specific recommended activities for families to support child development and skill building at home.
  - See 1.a for additional related communications campaign content.
- Through the proposed community schools planning process, identify and plan for specific opportunities to strengthen early, expanded, and school day learning and P-3 alignment (e.g., through shared professional learning and planning for early learning and K-3 teams, sharing observation-based student assessment data with early and expanded learning providers, providing related professional development for principals, etc.).

*Additional considerations:*

- Pilot messages with community-based organizations and with families to gather feedback to ensure communications campaign language about child and youth development and developmental milestones is clear and accessible.
- Consider how to use a community schools approach to integrate early and expanded learning funding streams and strengthen preschool to third grade (P-3) alignment district-wide and at school sites.

**Goal 3.c. Early and expanded learning at ARUSD engages both families and children and engages older children to support**

## younger children

### *Recommended actions:*

- Offer co-op days or evenings for parents/families to observe and support early learning classrooms.
- Pilot “buddy” programs linking upper elementary/middle grade students to younger students.

## Conclusion

The overarching focus on academic growth and improvement toward college and career readiness, priority areas, goals, and recommended actions described in this document provide a framework for ARUSD’s work – in collaboration with families, community and labor partners, and local government – to advance in the strategic direction outlined above and particularly toward the vision that “all Alum Rock students will be ready for the future in a diverse and competitive world.”

When completing more detailed implementation planning, ARUSD and its partners should keep the [guiding principles](#) in mind. The resulting implementation plans should provide additional clarity around the specific steps to be taken, who is responsible for each step, and the anticipated timeline for completion. This level of detail will also provide a framework for reporting progress as implementation gets underway.

Thank you to all of the stakeholders, groups, and organizations – particularly the Core Planning Team members – that participated in informing and developing a bold plan for ARUSD that is rooted in the district’s and community’s strengths and opportunities.

## Appendix 1: Discovery Report

The Discovery Report is available [here](#). A 2-page summary of key findings from the Discovery Report is available [here](#).

## Appendix 2: Core Planning Team Members

The Core Planning Team included the following members.

- Randy Barth, Chief Executive Officer, THINK Together
- Dr. Hilaria Bauer, Superintendent, ARUSD
- Kolvira Chheng, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, ARUSD
- Sharon Fontaine, CSEA President
- Elley Ho, Santa Clara County Office of Education
- Deyanira Hurtado, Catholic Charities
- Tracy Leathers, Principal, Ocala STEAM Academy
- Brett Littrell, Chief Technology Officer, ARUSD
- Becky Maguire, Superintendent's Parent Advisory Resource Council (SPARC) (Alternate: Leslie Anaya)
- Scott Moore, Executive Director, Kidango
- Andrea Padilla, Student Body President, Adelante Dual Language Academy
- Sandra Pinal, District Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Saul Ramos, Co-Executive Director, SOMOS Mayfair
- Yadira Reyes, Teamsters
- Sandra Rivera, Alum Rock Educators Association (AREA)
- Araceli Ortiz, District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)
- Rene Sanchez, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, ARUSD
- Tereasa Smith, Director of Human Resources, ARUSD

## Appendix 3: Core Planning Team Meeting Summaries

The Core Planning Team held five monthly meetings between January and May 2022. Additional optional meetings were held in April to engage in deeper planning conversations around each priority area. Summaries of each meeting are available at the links provided below.

- [Core Planning Team January 2022 Meeting Summary](#)
- [Core Planning Team February 2022 Meeting Summary](#)
- [Core Planning Team March 2022 Meeting Summary](#)
- [Core Planning Team April 2022 Meeting Summary](#)
- [Core Planning Team May 2022 Meeting Summary](#)

## Appendix 4: Strategic Plan At a Glance

