



# ALLEN PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*An Uncompromising Commitment to Excellence*

Superintendent Michael Darga



## Message from the Superintendent

August 2024

Dear APPS Families and Staff,

We are excited to share with you an important initiative that will guide the future of Allen Park Public Schools—our new board adopted Strategic Plan. This plan is a comprehensive roadmap that outlines our vision, goals, and strategies for the next three academic years, aimed at enhancing the overall educational experience for our students, staff, and our families.

What is a Strategic Plan?

A Strategic Plan is a dynamic document that helps organizations set priorities, focus energy and resources, and ensure that all stakeholders are working toward common goals. It provides a clear direction and establishes measurable objectives to achieve desired outcomes. For our school, this plan is a commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in education.

We believe that by focusing on three goals; student success, family & community engagement, and communication, we can create a nurturing and stimulating environment where every student can thrive. We look forward to working together with you to achieve these objectives and make Allen Park Public Schools an even better place for our children to learn and grow. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Darga





## Strategic Plan Committee Chairs

**Steve Zielinski**  
Arno Elementary Principal

**Kathy Lott**  
Lindemann Elementary Principal

**Laura Maurer**  
Lindemann Elementary Assistant Principal

**Zach Short**  
Bennie Elementary Principal

**Sean Laura**  
Allen Park High School Assistant Principal

**Giovanni Foster**  
Allen Park High School Assistant Principal



## Strategic Plan Focus and Goal Areas

- **Student Success:** Our primary goal is to ensure every student achieves their highest potential. We are dedicated to providing a rigorous and engaging curriculum that meets the diverse needs of our learners. This includes fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. We will also focus on supporting the whole child, addressing academic, social, and emotional needs to prepare them for future success.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** We recognize that education is a collaborative effort that involves families, schools, and the broader community. Our goal is to strengthen partnerships with parents and community members to support student learning and development. This includes creating opportunities for meaningful involvement in school activities, decision-making processes, and providing resources to help families support their children's education at home.
- **Communication:** Effective communication is key to building trust and fostering a positive school culture. We are committed to enhancing our communication channels to ensure transparency, clarity, and timely information sharing. This involves utilizing various platforms to keep you informed about school events, initiatives, and student progress. We aim to create an open and inclusive environment where feedback is valued and acted upon.



## Early Childhood

Allen Park Public Schools will establish an Early Childhood Advisory Team, expand the Building Up to Kindergarten program to all three elementary schools, select a preschool program aligned with Young Fives and kindergarten, and establish a high-quality GSRP preschool program. We will also expand tuition-based preschool to offer full-day options. In the second year, APPS plans to grow the GSRP preschool program, expand professional development for Early Childhood staff, and continue the Early Childhood Advisory Team. By the third year, the focus will be on maintaining the high-quality GSRP preschool program and expanding family education and support programs.



## Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

In Year 1, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) will involve reviewing K-12 practices, establishing a communication process for Elementary Data Dives, reviewing common assessment tools for Secondary, and identifying MTSS/Data Dives members for Secondary. In Year 2, the focus will shift to selecting common assessments for Math and ELA at the Secondary level, establishing systematic processes and common language for Social Emotional Learning in MTSS for K-5, and providing training on selected common assessments. By Year 3, the plan includes establishing a communication process for Data Dives (6-12), expanding and promoting interventions for Math, ELA, and ELL at the Secondary level, and enhancing communication of MTSS information across school levels from Elementary to Middle School to High School.





# Communication Strategic Actions

## Student Success Strategic Actions continued- STEM

In Year 1, the K-5 STEM program will focus on increasing vertical and grade-level alignment, continuing to field test OpenSciEd, expanding coaching support, and providing ongoing staff training. At the secondary level, pending approval, new courses such as Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Introduction to Engineering Design at the high school and PLTW Automation & Robotics and PLTW Engineering Design at the middle school will be offered, along with mapping new courses, implementing a high school science sequence change, and expanding coaching support. In Year 2, K-5 will evaluate the OpenSciEd program, adopt and map a new science program, maintain coaching support, and develop Media/STEM programming, while the secondary level will add PLTW Principles of Engineering at the high school. In Year 3, K-5 will continue staff training, map Media/STEM programming, and maintain coaching support, while the secondary level will add a Project Lead the Way Capstone Course and a new elective course for the 2027-2028 school year.

## Communication

Over the next three years, the district will focus on improving communication and community engagement through various initiatives. For the district and school websites, the plan includes gathering community feedback, identifying essential website items, providing access resources, and continuously tracking usage and updates based on yearly surveys. For Parent Square, staff will receive training on using the platform, and families will be provided with resources and videos on accessing information, with usage and content analysis conducted annually. Community outreach efforts will target key topics like preschool, kindergarten registration, and employment opportunities, with attendance tracking and yearly surveys to refine communication methods. Communication from the central office will be enhanced by training staff on online resources, developing contact flowcharts, and surveying staff for further communication improvements, with results analyzed and updates made annually.





**Allen Park**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC ACTIONS

## K-12 Focus

The district aims to organize, expand, and develop inclusive events to promote engagement within the school and district community for preK-12 grade students and their families. In Year 1, the high school will host an annual open house showcasing various activities, a committee will evaluate the impact of district events, and an event liaison will collaborate with PTAs to combine events for greater unity. In Year 2, all high school extracurricular groups will volunteer in elementary schools. By Year 3, the district will schedule a yearly beautification day, collaborate with the city for an annual picnic, and coordinate district-wide events, such as a reading event during March.



## Staff & Community Engagement

Allen Park Public Schools aims to foster meaningful relationships with local government, businesses, and community organizations to provide resources and opportunities for family engagement in the school community. The district plans to form a School and Community Engagement committee to review and develop meaningful events and increase staff volunteering. Community initiatives include opening buildings for hallway walking during Winter/Early Spring at no charge and collaborating with the city to create district-city events. In the second year, the district will work with organizations to host monthly parenting sessions and rent spaces for collaborative programs. An advisory committee will be formed to enhance volunteering for community events. By the third year, the district will align community passes with school pool access and ensure each school has an official business partner.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY TASK FORCE

## **Family and Community Engagement Committee Members**

Cristina Mercer- Arno K Teacher  
Jimmy Victor- Athletic Director/Clubs  
Activities Director  
Angela Merrihew- Lindemann 2nd grade  
Teacher  
Jack Miller- Social Worker  
Middle School  
Grant MacKenzie- APMS PE Teacher  
Andrea Alvarez- Arno SLP  
Kathy Lott- Lindemann Principal  
Bridgette Botten- APHS teacher  
Jeanette Potasnik- APHS Para  
Dan Loyd- APHS Teacher  
Melissa Lambert- APHS Library Media  
Specialist  
Koren Easlick- Lindemann K Teacher

## **Communication Committee Members**

Chelsey Bianchi- Bennie K Teacher  
Alex Cervantes- Arno 2nd Grade Teacher  
Zach Short- Bennie Principal  
Sarah Kaminski- Riley ECP (Early Childhood  
Program)  
Katie Jensen- Arno/Bennie Media Literature  
Teacher  
Giovanni Foster- APHS Assistant Principal  
Nicole DePhillips- APHS Special Ed Teacher  
Leanne Gleib- Lindemann Secretary  
Todd Creutz- APMS Teacher

## **Student Success Committee Members**

Nickie Roller- Director AP Early Childhood Center  
Kristyn Pierfelice- APHS teacher  
Sean Laura- APHS Asst. Principal  
Erica Saville- Bennie Social Worker  
Sara Metzger- Bennie Reading Specialist  
Kendra Payette- Lindemann Social Worker  
Laura Maurer- Lindemann Assistant Principal  
Amy West- APHS Teacher  
Tim Whitlow APHS Teacher  
Cindy Marcero- APMS Teacher Consultant  
Angelina Astalos- Bennie 3rd Grade Teacher  
Ame Sexton- APMS Teacher  
Beth Wesley- Arno Reading Specialist  
Mary McMaster- District Science Coach

## **Facilitators**

John Silveri, Michigan Leadership Institute.  
Michael H. Darga, Superintendent

## **Allen Park Board of Education**

Dr. Jennifer Warren  
Sarah Fillipiak  
Laura Luecke  
Jason Babbage  
Mike Klein  
Jeannette MacDonald  
Steve Martin