Aspire Three Year Strategic Plan
FY 23 – FY 25

FY 23 Year 1 Progress
FY 24 Year 2 Priorities
Strategic Plan Background

• In May 2022, the Aspire board approved an ambitious 3-year strategic growth plan
• The plan was informed by over four months of planning and focus groups facilitated by an outside strategic planning consultant
• Focus groups included key Aspire constituents: Board, Staff, AmeriCorps members, Aspire students, Aspire parents, and key partners (funders, volunteers, Arlington County and APS representatives)
Six Key Strategic Priorities

• **Strategic Priority #1: Growth aligned with Excellence**
  • Respond to increased learning needs of Aspire students accelerated by the pandemic
  • Reach more students while maintaining history of excellence through high-quality, holistic, and individualized support (grow from 80 to 150 students)
  • Explore Train the Trainer/earned revenue model to serve more students and increase financial sustainability

• **Strategic Priority #2: Growth aligned with Equity & Access**:
  • Continue to serve students most impacted by opportunity gap through increasing program access at A. Mill location and increasing summer camp capacity
  • Keep programs at no-cost to families
  • Launch and executive values decision making scorecard and year long DEI training

• **Strategic Priority #3: Attract & retain diverse and talented team**:
  • Further equity and access values by developing, attracting, and retaining diverse team and creating pathways for employment for former students and members of the communities we serve (Student/Family Member to Volunteer, Volunteer to AmeriCorps Member, AmeriCorps Member to Staff)
  • Right size staffing model and AmeriCorps recruitment and retention to achieve Strategic Priorities #1 and #2
Six Key Strategic Priorities

• **Strategic Priority #4: Communicate impact & strengthen partnerships for sustainable growth and outcomes:**
  • Grow partnerships to execute vision (APS, Affordable Housing, Arlington County)
  • Expand Theory of Change to fully reflect holistic, best in class OOT programming

• **Strategic Priority #5: Diversify funding sources to support org growth and sustainability**
  • Launch and execute Maker Space capital campaign and build out, including strategic corporate/funding partners
  • Execute strategic fundraising road map and grow revenue, board engagement
  • Expand funding partners (21st Century)
  • Volunteer program

• **Strategic Priority #6: Build strong foundation of operational capacity**
  • Strengthen/invest in human resources, policies and procedures
  • High performing fiduciary responsibility and compliance
  • Strengthen board engagement and development
Strategic Priority #1: Growth Aligned with Excellence

FY 23 Achievements:
• Grew from 80 to 125 students served in school year program (over 50% increase)
• Largest summer program in history (125 students)
• Students further behind past cohorts; Project Based Learning and Social Emotional Learning lessons designed to meet student needs accelerated by pandemic
• 67% students improved reading, 75% improved math

FY 24 Priorities:
• Maintain number of students served consistent with FY 23
• Explore how to grow Summer Program via partnerships, AmeriCorps
• Launching Train the Trainer Program with APAH across six affordable housing sites to reach additional 90 students with reading and math support
• Explore additional Train the Trainer Earned Revenue

FY 24 Budget Investment:
• 36% ($14K) increase in Program Activity budget to account for increase in students served and costs of program supplies, field trips, and student monitoring and evaluation
Strategic Priority #2: Growth Aligned with Access

FY 23 Achievements:
- Partnerships re-visioned with new sites opening Randolph & Drew Title I APS schools
- Reading curriculum developed
- Record number of historically underserved students served at no-cost to their families
- Evaluation calendar developed and executed

FY 24 Priorities:
- Strengthen Parent Program
- Reading curriculum launched
- Deliver high-quality programming and partnership to Randolph and Drew Elementary Schools
- Explore data sharing with APS
- Continue holistic quantitative and qualitative evaluation execution and analysis
- Year-long DEI training program for staff, board, and AmeriCorps created and implemented
- Clearer roles across Program Team
- Continue to explore how to maximize AmeriCorps model to meet needs of students, summer program, and school expansion

FY 24 Budget Investment:
- 36% ($14K) increase in Program Activity budget to account for increase in students served and costs of program supplies, field trips, and student monitoring and evaluation (see above slide)
Strategic Priority 3: Attract & Retain Diverse & Talented Team

FY 23 Achievements:
• New Development & Communications Coordinator hired
• New Program Coordinator position hired and moved from PT to FT (former Aspire AmeriCorps member)
• Staffing model created with input from staff/AmeriCorps and HR Workgroup
• Salary benchmarking and staff/AmeriCorps benefits and compensation survey and analysis completed, wellness days and staff retirement plan implemented
• Recruited all but one 1200 AmeriCorps position in FY 23, going into FY 24 with 52% returning AmeriCorps members (9 of 17) and 88% of positions filled (only two remaining) at start of program year

FY 24 Priorities:
• AmeriCorps Recruitment & Outreach Specialist hired (former Aspire AmeriCorps member)
• Continue strong AmeriCorps recruitment and retention to continue to serve record number of students, and serving them well with continuity of relationships, classroom experience, and representation of the background/cultures of Aspire students and families
• Enhanced AmeriCorps/staff recruitment with Equity & Access value and local partnership building
• Continue to build AmeriCorps recruitment/retention plan
• Continue to prioritize staff recruitment, retention, and development
• Refine and revisit staff model/staff capacity/right sizing staff to achieve strategic priorities

FY 24 Budget Investments:
• 14% increase ($112K) to staffing: staff salary benchmarking, additional FTE to support year-round AmeriCorps outreach, and staff retirement fund
• 9% increase ($40K) in living stipends and quarterly bonuses for AmeriCorps members
Strategic Priority #4: Communicate Impact & Strengthen Partnerships

FY 23 Achievements:

• Communications and engagement capacity and strategy expanded, resulting in more regular newsletters, community volunteer nights, and events at Aspire (coffee chats and Student Showcase)
• Website redesign complete

FY 24 Priorities:

• New program sites at Randolph and Drew Elementary/APS
• Revisit Theory of Change and Aspire Vision (wording of “citizens”)
• Continue strong communications and engagement strategy
• Grow STEAM partners in alignment with Makers Space
• Continue to build new program partnerships (EcoAction, mental health support, etc.)
• Bolster Aspire equity and diversity commitment and board diversity on website

FY 24 Budget Investments:

• Minor increase in technology budget ($1600) for ongoing website support
Strategic Priority #5: Diversify & Expand Funding Sources

FY 23 Achievements:
- FT Development & Communications Coordinator hired
- Fundraising consultant hired, implementation of fundraising plan begun
- Record breaking individual giving and annual event fundraising in FY 23
- New funding partnerships with Arlington faith community and local businesses
- Annual Coffee Chats events created

FY 24 Priorities:
- Ongoing implementation of Purpose Possible plan with record Annual Event and other expanded funding sources
- Expanding funding for Randolph/Drews school partnerships (21st Century)
- Launch and execute Makers Space Capital Campaign and build out
- Expand strategic corporate partnerships around Makers Space
- Continue with Coffee Chats and Student Showcase events, other branding/awareness activities
- Explore how to maintain/sustain volunteer program under current staffing model/capacity/funding

FY 24 Budget Investments:
- Increase of 25% ($5K) for larger annual event
- Increase of 50% ($4K) for printing for larger donor list
- Capital Campaign will not be reflected in FY Operating Budget (separate budget)
Strategic Priority #6: Build Strong Foundation/Operational Capacity

**FY 23 Achievements:**
- 100% board participation in annual event/fundraising
- Licenses secured for all three Aspire sites
- Audit of internal SOPs and vendors complete
- Staff retirement fund established and implemented
- Board performance metrics established/adopted
- Annual audit complete – implementing recommendations from audit

**FY 24 Priorities:**
- 100% board giving and participation in Annual Event, friend-raising activities (Coffee Chats, Student Showcase)
- Launch Annual Board Meeting to include Board Alumni and Board Alumni position
- Board and committee meeting participation meets Board performance metrics
- Board, staff, and AmeriCorps using values score card
- Successful bookkeeper transition and streamlined process (and on budget)
- Aspire Vendor Equity and Diversity policy created
- Aspire Reserves/Investment policy created
- Successful audit with recommendations to improve Charity Navigator and Guide Star Rating
- Key policies reviewed/updated through Aspire values score card
- Licenses extended to new Drew and Randolph sites

**Implications for FY 24 Budget:**
Increase of 12% in general operations to account for:
- License, compliance, and insurance requirements
- Maintenance of A. Mill site and equipment
- Hiring of new bookkeeper
FY 24 Strategic Priorities by Board/Committee

Finance:
- Reserve/investment policy created
- Budget guidance and financial oversight (ongoing)
- Audit and GuideStar/Charity Navigator ratings

Executive:
- Progress against strategic priorities
- Support Committee charges
- Elevate board culture, engagement, participation

Governance:
- Equity & Access in staff/AmeriCorps recruitment and Vendor Equity policy created
- Staff capacity/model, benchmarking, and retention
- Board meeting/committee meeting participation metrics
- Board recruitment

Resource Generation:
- 100% board giving
- 100% board participation in Annual event
- Champion Aspire friend-raising (Coffee Chats, Student Showcase)
- Ensure board participation in friend-raising and cultivation

Performance:
- Student performance/access metrics
- AmeriCorps recruitment/retention metrics
- DEI training
- Revisit/update Theory of Change, Vision, Diversity statement
Questions?