

aspire!
Afterschool Learning

STUDENT
ART



ASPIRE'S STRATEGIC ROADMAP: 2025 - 2030

Learn. Dream. Thrive.

MESSAGE FROM PAULA FYNBOH, CEO



A Glance Back:

In 2021, Aspire formalized our ambitious three-year strategic plan. Guided by our values, we centered the voices of students and families to create our goals.

Despite a rapidly changing environment, Aspire fulfilled all of those commitments. We more than doubled the number of students we serve, continued to offer all programming at no cost to families, strengthened academic programming, and invested in staff recruitment, retention, and pay equity.

These accomplishments are a testament to the strength of the Aspire community, including our curious and ambitious students, our hard-working parents and families, our dedicated community partners, our committed, creative, and passionate staff and board, and our generous donors and funders who continue to believe and invest in the power of afterschool programming and the South Arlington community.

Looking Forward:

In 2025, Aspire once again convened students, families, staff, board, and community partners to design a five-year strategic roadmap rooted in our values and responsive to today's challenges. We made sure that this roadmap would focus on what we were hearing from our community, while also leaving room for flexibility to respond to new and changing needs over the next five years.

Building on our momentum, we have an ambitious plan to increase student achievement, expand our holistic programming, strengthen strategic partnerships, and build a sustainable staffing model.

We know that education is relational and holistic. Our strategic roadmap reflects this and provides a path forward that is innovative, student-centered, and rooted in equity, joy, connection, and excellence, ensuring every student has the opportunity to not just catch up, but fall in love with learning, dream big, and thrive.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature of Paula Fynboh in black ink.



Key Priorities



Aspire's new roadmap has four main priorities, all focused on ensuring that our students and families receive holistic support that empowers them to become all they aspire to be.

INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Students continue to enter Aspire further behind academically. Aspire remains committed to having high expectations, providing personalized instruction, and closing the educational opportunity gap. We will:

- Continue strengthening our proven literacy and math curricula.
- Have 90% of students improve in reading and math annually.

EXPAND HOLISTIC PROGRAMMING

Aspire students and families are experiencing greater uncertainty, mental health challenges, and economic needs. Our holistic model helps meet urgent short-term needs and set students up for long-term success and well-being. Aspire will:

- Expand our social-emotional learning curriculum to support students' confidence, resilience, and well-being.
- Grow STEM programming and harness our Makerspace to spark students' curiosity and open doors.
- Develop a logic curriculum to help students develop critical thinking.
- Increase family programming, such as computer classes, a food pantry, and 1:1 support for students' parents and caregivers.

STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Aspire's long history of partnering with our community is essential to student success. To meet growing needs in Arlington, Aspire will:

- Expand partnerships that create a continuity of support for students as they transition into high school and beyond.
- Build partnerships to identify students for our program, fill gaps in community services, and help families access support for food, housing, and other safety-net needs.

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE STAFFING MODEL

With a rapidly shifting federal funding environment and cuts to the AmeriCorps program that was crucial to our staffing and funding model, Aspire is designing new staffing models to:

- Maintain our enrollment numbers while continuing to offer highly individualized support.
- Create employment pathways for young people in our community, including former Aspire students.
- Ensure long-term stability across all program sites in the years ahead.

“Aspire helps me because they believe in me, they don’t doubt me.”

Aspire student

WHAT WE DO

Aspire provides the only daily, accessible, academic afterschool and summer programs for 3rd-8th graders in Arlington that are offered at no cost to families. We transform summertime and afterschool into a comprehensive, holistic launchpad preparing students to succeed academically, thrive personally, and build the skills needed for future career success.



WHO WE SERVE

100% of students identify as students of color.

94% of students represent low-income households.

74% of students live in homes where English is not the only language spoken.

OUR VALUES

GROWTH	We Aspire to support our students and to empower them to reach their goals.
CONNECTION	We Aspire to bring our community together to create a sense of belonging for our students and their families.
EQUITY & ACCESS	We Aspire to provide access to students most impacted by the educational opportunity gap and treat Aspire students and families with dignity, fairness, and respect.
EXCELLENCE	We Aspire for excellence in our programs, from our students, and from our team.
FUN & CARING	We Aspire to approach every day with a nurturing spirit of playfulness and warmth.

Aspire is deeply rooted in the South Arlington community. Since 1994, we have honed an evidence-based program model to successfully deliver real results each year. We host programming at three locations in South Arlington, and connect the three main aspects of a student's life: school, afterschool/summer, and home/community. These pillars serve as the foundation of our strategic roadmap, which centers on the voices of our students and parents while also reflecting the insights of staff, volunteers, and partners at the school and county levels.

