

CYFCC Strategic Directions

Notes from CYFCC December 2025 Meeting

Priority Area: Safety & Belonging

Goal Statement: All youth feel valued, supported, and safe in the school and community.

Key Themes from the Discussion

- Students do not feel heard, even when reporting safety concerns
- Over-reliance on security can undermine trust with students
- Inconsistent policy enforcement across campuses is creating confusion and resentment
- Safety is deeply tied to belonging, dignity, and relationships
- Restorative approaches are promising but unevenly implemented
- Communication gaps between school leaders, students, and families are affecting trust

High-Level Strategies the Group Identified

1. Strengthen Student Voice in Designing Safety Measures

- Elevate student voice as a preventative safety measure
- Create formal, ongoing student safety advisory/committee structures
- Improve anonymous reporting and close the feedback loop so students see action

2. Shift from Enforcement-Heavy Responses to Trust-Building Approaches

- Re-examine the role, training, and accountability of security staff
- Expand restorative practices and peer mediation, especially at the high school level
- Align safety practices with developmental needs rather than punitive responses
- Reconsider bringing back Lunch 'n Learn and keep kids engaged in purposeful activities

3. Improve Communication and Family Partnership

- Increase transparency around safety policies and enforcement
- Clarify roles between ACPs and APD to reduce confusion
- Strengthen communication with families so they feel like partners

Shaping this Group's Advocacy Agenda

Our next step will be shaping the Commission's advocacy agenda and identifying which CYCP strategies this group wants to champion and help steward.

- Which of these strategies still feel most urgent to you?
- How should this Commission help advance student-centered approaches to safety and belonging?
- What role can the Commission play in elevating student voice as a safety strategy?

Next Steps

- What is one concrete action this Commission could take this year?
- What does meaningful progress on safety and belonging look like from a student's perspective?

Priority Area: Supportive & Responsive School Conditions

Goal Statement: All students deserve to learn in environments that are designed to support their learning and wellbeing every day.

Key Themes from the Discussion

- Clean, safe, and functional school environments are important elements for learning
- Barriers students named, such as access to basic needs, are often concrete and solvable
- Gaps exist between what students experience and what adults assume
- There is limited visibility into how facilities and cleanliness issues are reported and resolved
- Students want a voice in shaping daily school conditions (e.g., food, cleanliness, access)

High-Level Strategies the Group Identified

1. Re-examine Systems That Shape Daily School Conditions

- Review custodial staffing models and contracts
- Assess whether current funding aligns with the realities students described
- Better understand existing reporting systems for cleanliness and facilities issues

2. Center Student Voice in Operational Decisions

- Create student advisory groups focused on specific areas (e.g., nutrition, facilities)
- Involve students, custodians, teachers, and principals in problem-solving together
- Learn from schools that are already doing this well

3. Treat Basic Needs as a Strategy for Supporting Academic Success

- Explicitly connect school conditions to academic outcomes
- Prioritize solving basic needs issues as a prerequisite to learning gains
- Frame this work as student readiness, rather than facilities management

Shaping this Group's Advocacy Agenda

Our next step will be shaping the Commission's advocacy agenda and identifying which CYCP strategies this group wants to champion and help steward.

- Which school condition issues feel most actionable at a system level?
- Where could small changes have a noticeable impact on students' daily experience?
- How should the Commission help elevate student voice in operational decisions that affect school conditions?

Next Steps

- What is one system-level question or practice we should push ACPS to examine?
- What would a student-ready school environment look like one year from now?
- What is one concrete action this Commission could take in the next 6–12 months to help create supportive and responsive school conditions?

Priority Area: Affordability for All

Goal Statement: Every family has what they need to live with stability and thrive in Alexandria

Key Themes from the Discussion

- Housing insecurity overshadows all other needs
- Financial stress consumes students' mental bandwidth
- Food access and healthcare are more immediately actionable than housing costs
- Families often lack awareness of existing resources
- Strong interest in partnership-based solutions (businesses, nonprofits, health systems)

High-Level Strategies the Group Identified

1. Reduce the Burden of Basic Needs Through Partnerships

- Expand access to food, healthcare, and preventive services in schools
- Partner with businesses, nonprofits, and health providers
- Explore incentives for private-sector participation
- Align with housing-focused commissions and efforts

2. Strengthen Access to Existing Supports

- Increase awareness of homelessness protections (e.g., McKinney-Vento)
- Build capacity so families know what resources exist and how to access them
- Position schools as hubs for support

3. Advocate for Youth-Centered Affordability Solutions

- Elevate youth impacts in broader affordability conversations
- Frame affordability as an issue that impedes student success

Shaping this Group's Advocacy Agenda

Our next step will be shaping the Commission's advocacy agenda and identifying which CYCP strategies this group wants to champion and help steward.

- Which of these strategies still feel most urgent to you?
- How can this Commission help align partners, policies, and resources to better address the impacts of affordability on youth and families?
- Which solutions do you personally want to help move forward this year?

Next Steps

- What is one concrete action this Commission could take in the next 6–12 months to elevate youth impacts of affordability?
- What would success look like one year from now?