

**City of Alexandria**  
Council Strategic Planning Meeting  
Goal #4 Meeting 2, December 2, 2009  
Meeting Recap

Goal 4: *“Alexandria is a Community with Public Schools Amongst Northern Virginia’s Best and Where Our Recreational Programs Provide Youth the Opportunity to Succeed.”*

**Meeting Purpose:** To bring members of youth serving boards, commissions, and the public together to participate in a structured public input exercise regarding Goal #4 of the City Council strategic plan.

**Meeting Owners:** Councilwoman Alicia Hughes and Councilman Rob Krupicka

**Facilitator:** Jim Spengler, RPCA Director

**Attendees:** Sharon Shackelford, Carri Stoltz, Carol Farrell, Pat Miller, Shawn Fludd, Richard Merritt, Veronica Aberle, Allen Lomax, Jason Dechant, Rose Dawson, Brooksie Koopman, Clark Mercer, Sean McEneaney, Cheryl Ann Colton, Joyce Jefferson, Jeff Murphy, Jackie Surratt, Lenny Harris, Bill Campbell, Michael Wenk, Elizabeth Jones, Eric Gray, Heather Martin, Noraine Buttar, Mike Mackey, Becky Griesse, Lisa Baker, Debra Collins, Tom Gates, Ron Frazier, Mike Gilmore, John Porter, Karen Parker Tompson, Janice McLaury, Bob Moir, Deborah Warren, Sheryl Gorsuch, Jack Browand, Robin DeShields.

**Meeting Format:** This meeting used a structured public input process to gain meaningful information on objectives, initiatives, and performance measures regarding Goal #4. Structured planning is a method used to generate ideas in a limited time frame from a large group of participants. All ideas are valued and accepted without criticism or comment from other participants. The group tries to build off earlier ideas presented to generate additional thoughts. The exercise needs to move quickly without interruption to maximize the value of time allotted to planning. There was one round of idea generation followed by a round of voting. Each member of the audience was asked to state an objective, major initiative, and performance measure related to Goal #4. People could present multiple ideas during the evening. The thoughts were captured on cards that were posted in the front of the room. One card showed the objective, another the initiative, and the last card the performance measure. At the end of the idea generation round, each participant was asked to vote for his or her top three groupings of objectives, initiatives, and measures. Each person was given three votes.

**Ideas generated:**

Objective - Initiative -Measure.

- **Increase number of teens in after school and community service/leadership programs (8 votes).**
- **High quality after school programs (6 votes).**
- **Access to after school programs (5 votes).**
  - Build new infrastructure and facilities for youth who want to participate.
  - Improve student/teacher ratio in after school programs with goal of state accreditation.

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- Determine the type of activities and community service they want.
  - % of youth in accredited after school programs
  - # of youth participating in programs
  - # of children participating in after school programs or service activities
  
- **Increase in family literacy (5 votes).**
- Reading opportunities (4 votes).
  - Family library day
  - No TV day
  - Family eat together day
  - Increase hours in family
    - Third grade reading scores
  
- **All children birth to school age has an opportunity to early childhood education (7 votes).**
- School readiness (1 vote).
  - Coordinate efforts for an inter-agency council to ensure a variety of opportunities for early childhood experiences.
    - Quality rating improvement system
  
- **Establish a kid's first core principle in the City (8 votes).**
  - Infuse principle of kids first in every aspect of budget and operations
  - Infuse kids first in every school activity
    - % of departments in the city putting kids first
  
- **Support the social, emotional and academic needs of families (6 votes).**
  - Fully integrate school and city services
    - % of students above grade level
  
- **Reduce drop out rates (5 votes).**
  - Establish early warning system for dropouts
    - Early warning system for all middle schools by 2012
  
- **Access for each child to the arts (5 votes).**
  - Establish programs in the schools and recreation centers for the arts
    - # of children enrolled in programs
  
- **Reduce youth risky behaviors (pregnancy/drinking), (5 votes).**
  - Evidenced based programs in and out of school
    - Risk youth behavior survey

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- **Increase # of kids participating in a mentoring program (3 votes).**
  - Establish a mentoring “buddy” system
    - Number of children participating in a mentor program
  
- **Ready schools (3 votes).**
  - Education in best practices for principals and educators
    - PALS
  
- **Functional families fully engaged in their children’s education (2 votes).**
  - Full family support services for children birth to 8
    - Family function survey
  
- **Coordinated, connected and effective services to support youth services (2 votes).**
  - Development of a comprehensive youth master plan
    - Risk behavior survey
  
- **Foreign language opportunities at a young age (2 votes).**
  - Provide after school foreign language programs
    - % of kids entering high school fluent in a second language
  
- **Reduce child/adolescent obesity (2 votes).**
- **Reduce childhood obesity (1 vote).**
  - Engage in lifetime sport opportunities
  - Develop and implement a healthy kids programs
    - BMI 6, 9, 12 grades
    - # of children enrolled in program
  
- **Increase # of youth who feel they are part of a caring school program (2 votes).**
  - Mandatory community learning experience
    - % of students that report they are in a caring school environment
  
- **Keep kids with special needs in the community (2 votes).**
  - Strengthen school and community based opportunities to keep youth in system
    - % of children with special needs who remain in community
  
- **Youth text hotline to provide info. on children (2 votes).**
  - Comprehensive text message line
    - # of text hotline hits
  
- **Enhance positive socialization skills of at risk youth (2 votes).**
  - Provide quality chivalry programs at recreation centers
    - Feedback from the community and decrease in school discipline

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- **Adults and parents increase knowledge of youth risk behavior and resources available (1 vote).**
  - Education program throughout schools, PTA's, and other organization to support objective.
    - Pre and post test adults attending will show an increase in learning
  
- **Access to space for early childhood programs (1 vote).**
  - Provide incentives to businesses for early childhood programs and flexibility in zoning ordinance.
    - # of children entering kindergarten with access
  
- **Children have opportunities to succeed outside of school programs (1 vote).**
  - Mentoring programs
    - # of youth who think such programs provided life skills
  
- **Establish/raise standard level of parental involvement with children's education (1 vote).**
  - Improve advertisement of existing advocacy programs
  - Identifying and reducing barriers to programs
    - Increase participation by parents with decision making on boards and commissions
  
- **Education visions of providing access to all levels of education (1 vote).**
  - Support a statewide waiver of tuition for foster children
    - # of foster youth in college
  
- **Stop out of school suspensions (1 vote).**
  - Use other methods of suspension (in-school)
    - Reduce number of out of school suspensions
    - Increase graduation rates
  
- **Reduce school violence (T.C. Williams) (1 vote).**
  - Men to have skills to communicate good values and anger management
    - # of reduced violence incidents
  
- **Involvement in non traditional sports (1 vote).**
  - Exposure to different types of sports
    - # of children participating in all sports
  
- **Increase # of children participating in recreation programs (1 vote).**
  - Quarterly activity fairs at schools
    - # of participants in recreation programs

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- **Involve the community to give back, recruit volunteers of experienced retirees to help (1 vote).**
  - Organize the recruitment of volunteers to support the schools
    - # of volunteers in the program
  
- **Spend less time meeting and more time with children & youth (1 vote).**
  - Increase programs for children
    - Increase in student performance
  
- **Increase technology access for children (1 vote).**
  - Interface the library system and ACPS system and have available in recreation centers
  - Improve library and school link programs
    - % of accomplishments
    - Increase library usage
    - Increase reading level in the schools
  
- **More training for recreation staff to improve interaction skills with youth (1 vote).**
  - Provide training to staff in youth interaction
    - Observation
  
- **Place equal importance on emotional readiness of youth (1 vote).**
  - Increase intervention and prevention services
    - Children in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are on academic level
  
- **Identify dedicated funding source for initiatives (1 vote).**
  - \$.04 of every \$.10 in City budget are for school activities and goals
    - Charter amendment for tax assessment for schools
  
- **Greater access to vocational training (1 vote).**
  - Create partnership with the City & businesses to teach vocational skills
    - # of businesses partnered with City
  
- **Community liaison office to connect services for minority families (1 vote).**
  - Get the resources and information in one location
    - # of kids in mentoring program