



January 8, 2021

Dr. Francisco Durán
Superintendent
Arlington Public Schools
2110 Washington Blvd
Arlington, VA 22204

Dear Dr. Durán,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce encourages Arlington Public Schools to implement its plan to hire a Partnership Coordinator for Fiscal Year 2022. The hiring of a Partnership Coordinator is part of the APS 2018-24 Strategic Plan and had originally been included in the proposed budget for FY 2021. Unfortunately but understandably, hiring for this role was delayed for a year in the adopted FY 2021 budget due to the pressing need to account for the pandemic's financial impact. We appreciate the continued financial strain, but believe that the educational return on investing in this position will be significant.

The Partnership Coordinator position would work with all secondary schools to make connections and to secure work-based learning opportunities for students. This individual will be well-positioned to identify work-based learning opportunities and would provide leadership in developing comprehensive career pathways for students. Moreover, this position will facilitate contributions to APS by serving as a single point of contact for Arlington's business community, and others.

Work-based learning will support students in meeting the Profile of a Virginia Graduate. A dedicated Partnership Coordinator will be able to put in the considerable time and intensive staff work required to establish these workplace opportunities for students. At present, individual teachers and other APS staff, or students themselves, are reliant on their own connections to arrange opportunities such as Senior Experiences. APS having a central contact for partners will support educational equity goals as we expect that the greatest benefit from having this position will accrue to students without personal connections to professional internship opportunities.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington School Board Chair Monique O'Grady, Vice Chair Barbara Kanninen, and members Christina Diaz-Torres, Reid Goldstein, and David Priddy;