

APS Conversation #7: Operating Models for School System Flexibility Options
Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School: Stakeholder Questions

September 6, 2014

General Comments:

- We should be able to get a six month waiver from the deadline to make a decision considering APS's recent challenges and the fact that a new Superintendent just started. This timeframe is unrealistic for APS.
- Special education and ESOL programs are already in crisis at APS. We must make sure to think about these programs when considering a choice of operating models.
- We have concerns about how each of these models affects teacher's retirement, tenure and pay.
- Transitioning to a new operating model by cluster seems to be a "best scenario" for implementation.

Question from the Plenary

- Are class size waivers the same thing as the student/teacher ratio? Is the ratio the same at all levels? How would these ratios be different if APS re-applies for waivers?
- What is QBE funding?
- What are the current class size requirements without waivers? What are the APS class sizes?
- Has the class size-plus number for APS changed? Would the plus number change under the different operating models?
- How would APS achieve leveling throughout the district if there is local governance control of human resource functions?
- How do the Board of Education and central office fit into the System of Charter Cluster model? What is the role and authority of each?
- What data will the state use to set performance measures under IE2? Would performance measures be set at the school or the district level?
- How would APS accommodate the diversity of the Atlanta system in the System of Charter Schools and the System of Charter Clusters? How would APS equitably distribute and offer quality services without centralization?

- What is CCRPI?
- How do the common core standards relate to all of the models? Do all models have to follow common core?
- Does the level of assessment vary between the different operating models?
- Who controls - can you control - how many assessments are done based on the operating model? Is the number of assessments a centralized or a localized decision?
- Do the different contracts with the state have probationary periods associated with them?
- Is a district considered Status Quo by default if the district does not choose an operating model by the deadline?
- When did the state pass the original law? Why has APS procrastinated on taking any action until now?

Questions from the Small Group Discussions

- How will the selection of an operating model affect the transition of King/Coan middle school?
- How will the selection of either model fix or impact special education and ESOL programs that are already in crisis at APS?
- How does funding change based on each model? How will spending change?
- Can schools raise outside/alternative funding, or does money raised locally go to the system? Can local school governance boards raise private money that they can keep?
- What is the state's agenda in bringing the operating models forward? Is it funding or political?
- Can we move/transition by cluster? How does cluster integration affect students who move within the district, outside the cluster? This is a highly transient district.
- How would all of these options affect the IB model in schools that use it?
- Are class sizes the only waivers APS has? What are the waivers we have now?

IE2 System

- How does this operating model affect current charter schools?
- What are the specific Title XX provisions?

- Who will be in charge?
- What happens if schools don't meet the performance targets?

Charter System

- How does this operating model affect current charter schools?
- What are the specific Title XX provisions?
- What happens if schools don't meet the performance targets?
- How will the Charter System affect teacher compensation/retirement?
- Would APS decide to put special education students in a special school like Fulton County did when they became a Charter System?