



Family and Alumni Engagement Strategy

Board of Education

December 5, 2016



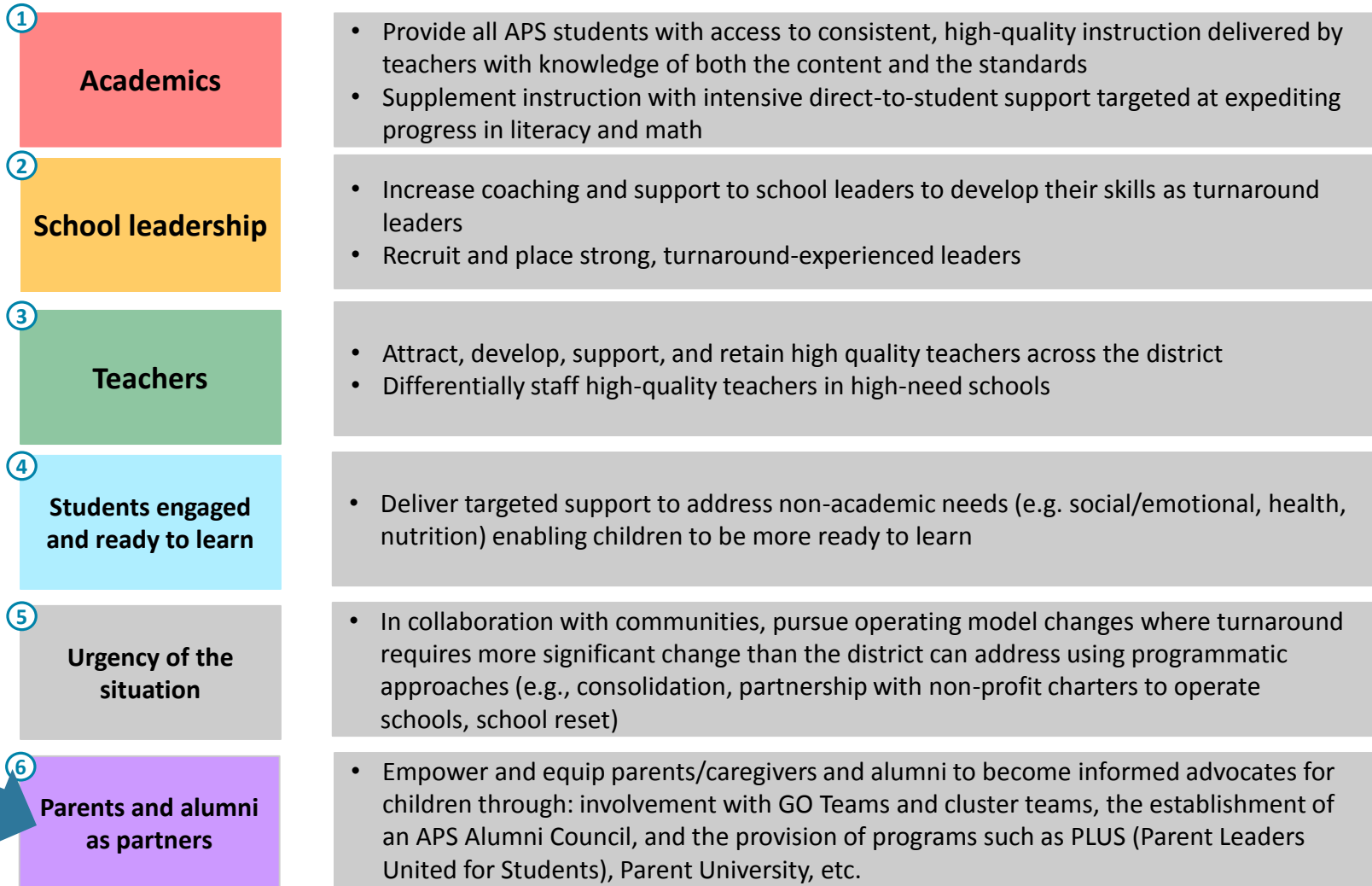
Agenda

Project Overview & Key Findings

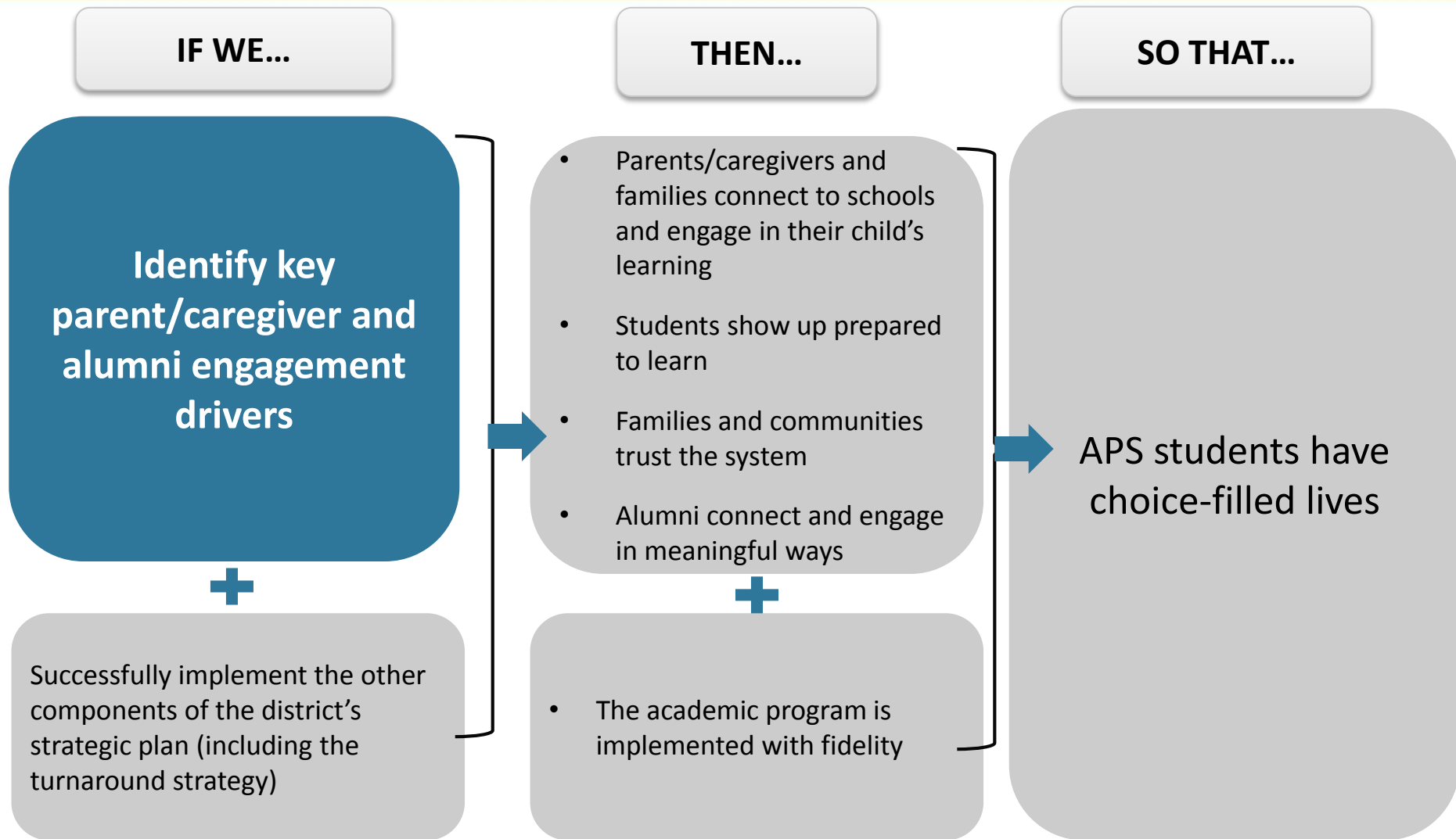
Proposed Strategic Priorities

Proposed Implementation Schedule & Next Steps

Family/alumni engagement was added to the turnaround strategy based upon feedback received during the engagement process; the strategy is district-wide not just focused on turnaround schools



The purpose of this strategy process was to identify the right drivers for meaningful engagement so that our students will ultimately benefit



As shared in October, to identify the right drivers for an engagement strategy, we sought input from internal, external and secondary sources

Guidance from Cross-Functional Internal Steering Committee



Conduct APS Data Gathering Activities

- Convene cross-functional internal steering committee to identify current APS family engagement strategies and initiatives



Gather Input from APS Stakeholders

- Conduct engagement circles in each cluster
- Conduct focus groups with a variety of stakeholders
- Conduct individual interviews with key community partners and funders



Administer Parent Survey

- Create and distribute district-wide electronic and paper-based surveys to parents/caregivers



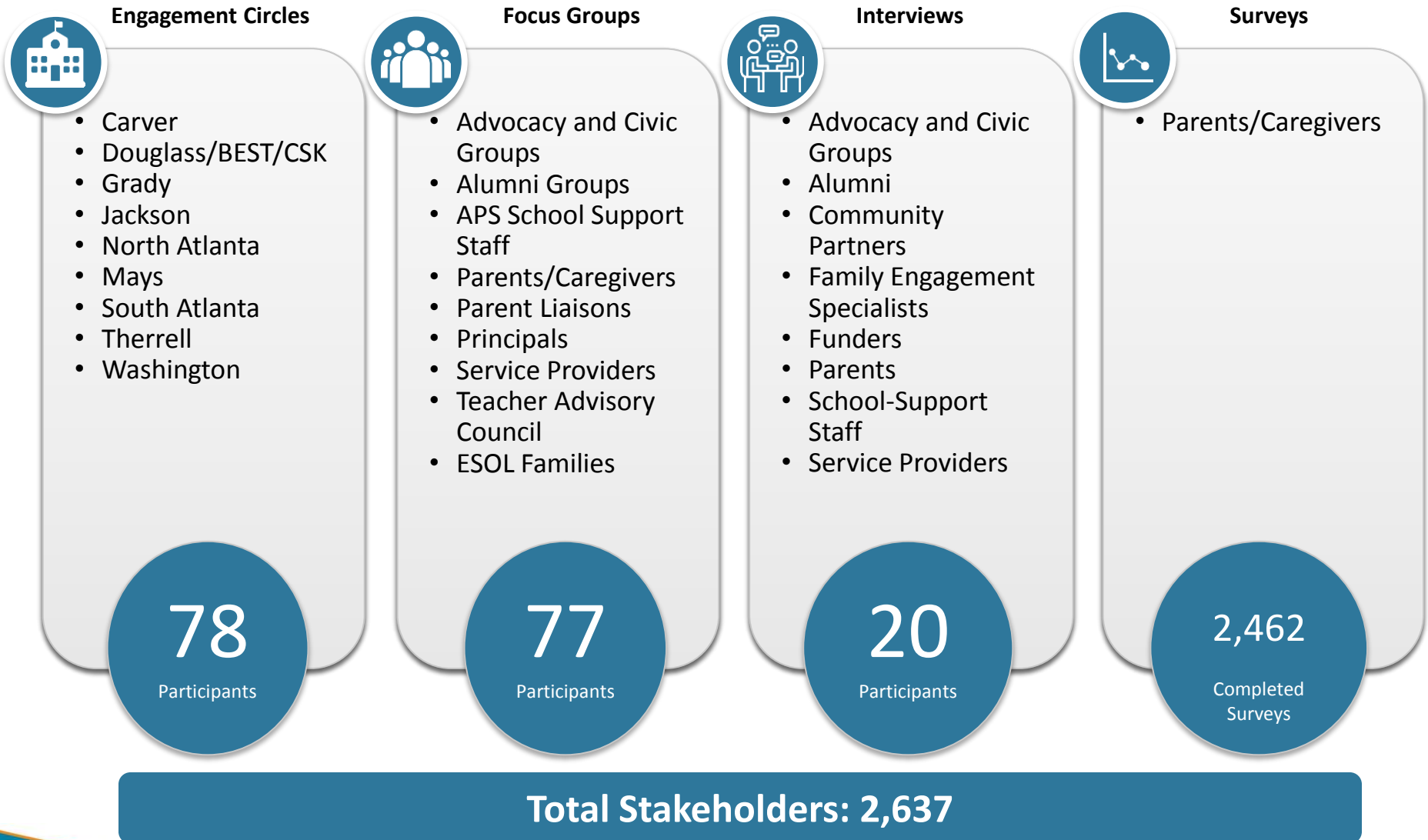
Identify Engagement Best Practices

- Conduct secondary research to identify best practices for family and alumni engagement

May to September

Present findings and preliminary recommendations to stakeholders

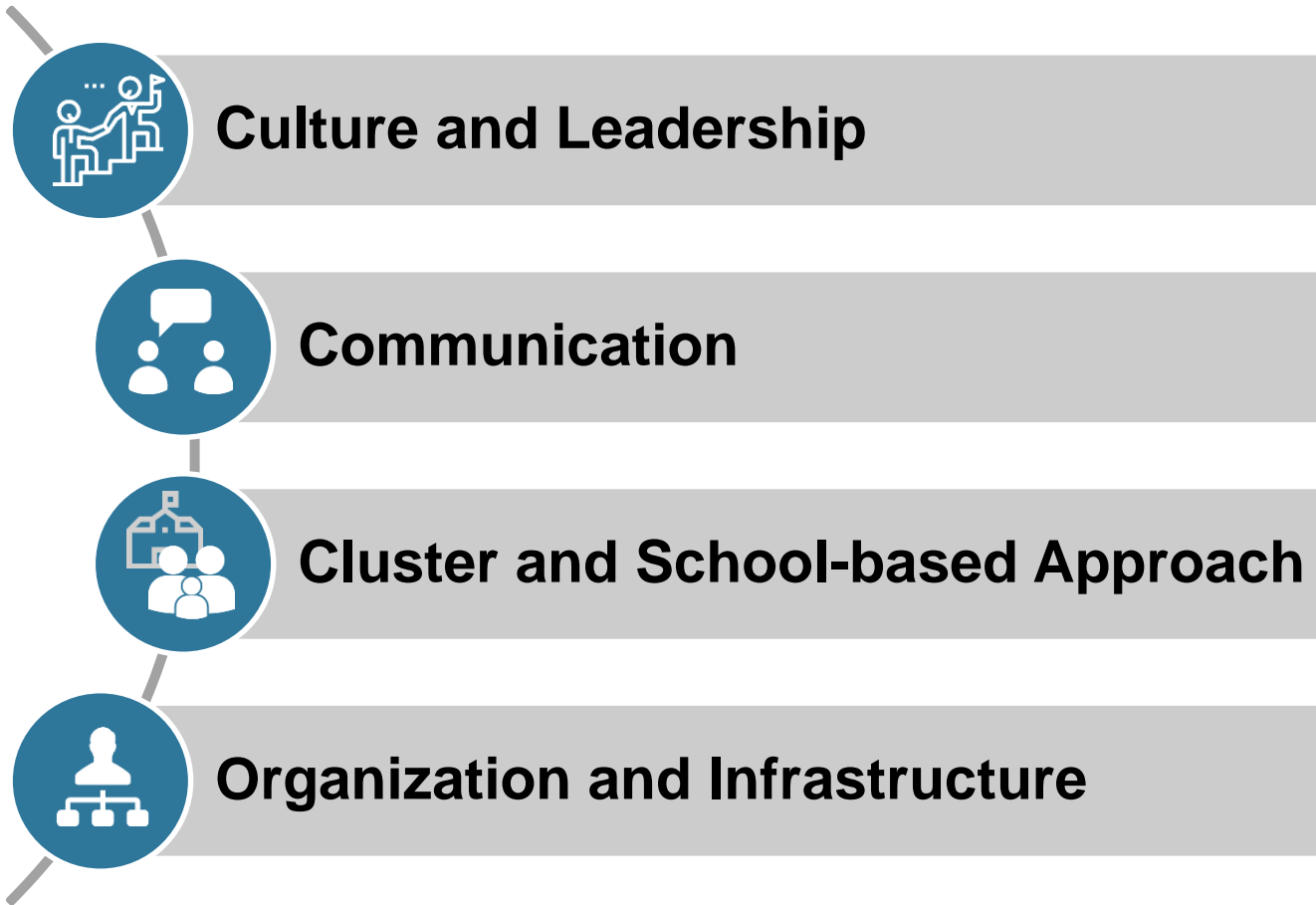
We invited stakeholders to provide feedback and perspectives via a variety of engagement opportunities



Since the October update, we have been collecting feedback on the draft recommendations which proved to be very fruitful in shaping final strategy

- ✓ Hosted two follow-up meetings with stakeholders who participated in initial engagement circles, focus groups, and interviews on Oct 5 & Oct 13
- ✓ Convened Superintendent's Principal Advisory Committee on Oct 17
- ✓ Hosted meeting with Office of World Languages for ELL families on Oct 24
- ✓ Engaged Senior Cabinet on Oct 18 and Oct 25
- ✓ Convened Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Committee on Nov 2
- ✓ Presented at South Atlanta & Therrell Town Hall Meetings on Nov 10 & 14
- ✓ Shared with GO Teams representatives from across the district on Nov 15
- ✓ Held a general community meeting on Nov 16
- ✓ Engaged Expanded Cabinet on Nov 17
- ✓ Met with parent liaisons & family academic engagement specialists on Nov 29
- ✓ Collected feedback through our website
- ✓ Conducted student interviews

At the October board meeting, we shared the four major themes that came out of this extensive engagement process



Leaders must focus on building a culture of engagement and holding people accountable for creating a welcoming environment



Culture and Leadership

- Commit to engagement standards and accountability at all levels of leadership
- Ensure everyone is responsible for creating a welcoming environment
- Rebuild trust through strategic intent and consistency in actions and interactions
- Develop expectations and boundaries to support effective partnerships and collaboration with families and alumni
- Invest in recruitment strategies and professional development to support positive engagement

Authentic, two-way communication builds trust, enhances relationships and is the foundation for increased engagement at all levels



Communication

- Ensure communication is accurate, consistent and relevant to all stakeholders, particularly parents/caregivers and alumni
- Personalize and provide vehicles for interaction when communicating with parents/caregivers, whenever possible
- Embed interpretation and translation services in all communications
- Leverage technology, including social media and digital platforms, to extend reach to parents/caregivers and alumni
- Provide access to and navigation within schools and CLL that align with welcoming environment standards

Effective engagement must align with vision and standards, and should be tailored based on needs of clusters, schools and communities



Cluster and School-based Approach

- Acknowledge that schools and teachers are the engagement “front-line”
- Commit to meet families “where they are”
- Strengthen engagement and relationships through increased interconnections within clusters
- Expand virtual engagement opportunities to broaden participation
- Be intentional about cultivating relationships with alumni and identify specific ways that they can support students

Investment in organization and infrastructure must align strategy and resources to support engagement goals

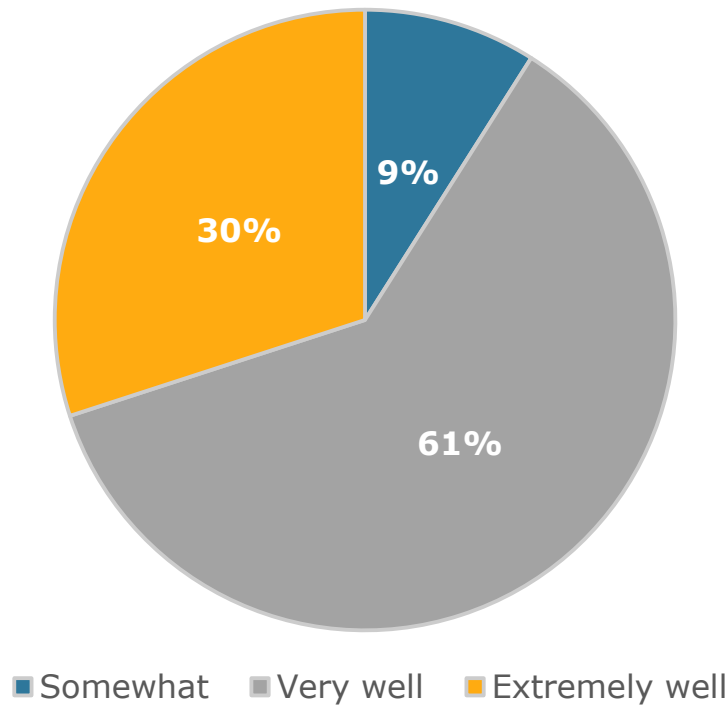


Organization and Infrastructure

- Ensure infrastructure and resources are aligned at the district, cluster and school level
- Empower parents/caregivers to support their children and be effective partners
- Build capacity of Parent Liaisons to support the school and cluster engagement strategies
- Expand partnerships to better serve family and community needs
- Drive accountability and consistency through performance management, evaluation, and reporting systems
- Invest in staff development to build capacity

91% of stakeholders who participated in our follow-up sessions indicated that these four themes captured their feedback very well or extremely well

How well do these 4 themes capture the most critical issues to incorporate into the family/alumni engagement strategy?



Agenda

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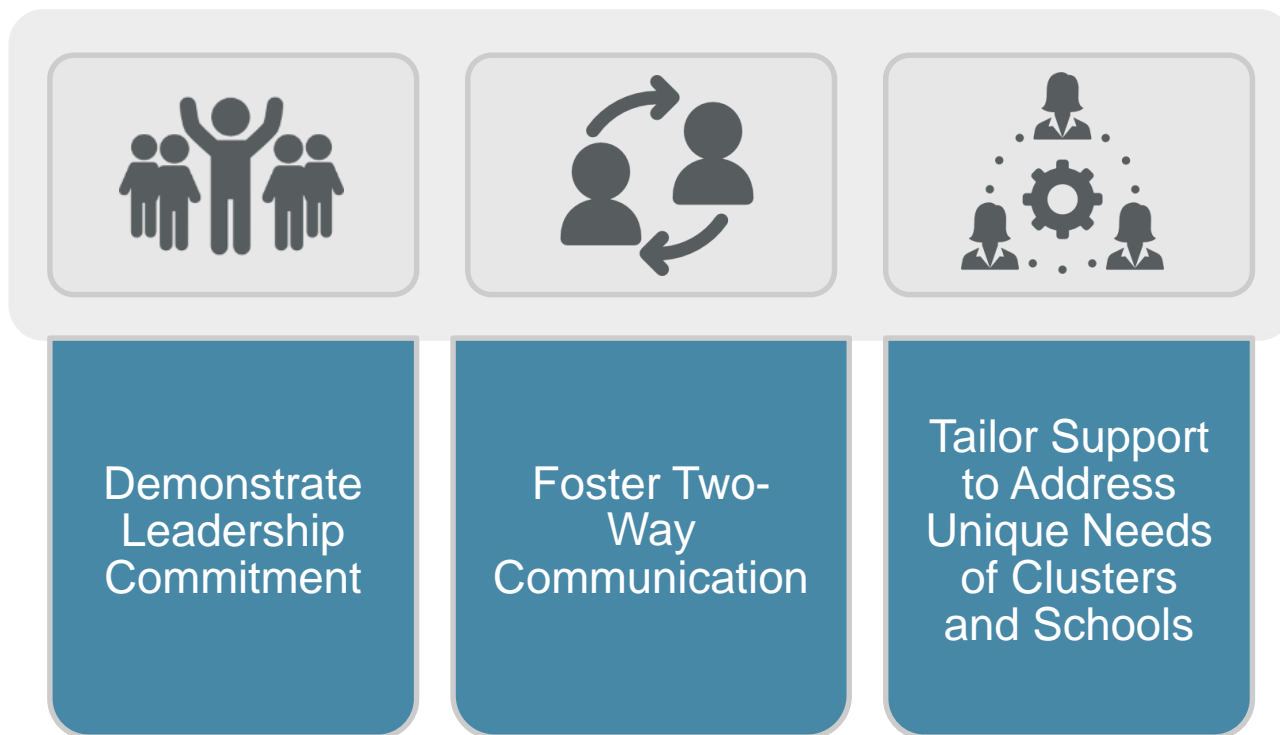
Proposed Strategic Priorities

Proposed Implementation Schedule & Next Steps

Based upon the themes that emerged through the engagement process, the family/alumni engagement strategy will focus on 3 major priorities

VISION

A high-performing school district where students love to learn, educators inspire, families engage, and the community trusts the system.



Priority 1: Demonstrate Leadership Commitment

1

**Adopt board policy;
define standards &
accountability**

Adopt Board Policy to commit to effective engagement that reflects agreed upon guiding principles, such as:

- Make engagement an integral part of APS culture
- Balance safety and security needs to create a “welcoming place”
- Listen and provide timely responses

Define standards and expectations for engagement and integrate into performance management system to support a welcoming environment; align to culture work around core values.

2

**Convene alumni
leadership to support
APS mission & vision**

APS will play a convening role to bring together representatives from the various alumni groups to share ideas for their alumni initiatives and to collaborate on district-wide efforts; the Board Office will establish an APS Alumni Council.

3

**Empower
GO Teams**

Empower and support GO Teams to drive engagement and innovation; ensure GO Teams have tools and support to develop their own school-based engagement plans and promote PLUS small grants program for GO Team engagement initiatives.

The draft Family Engagement Policy is being presented for first read today

The Atlanta Board of Education believes that attentive, engaged, and empowered families are a key to the success of our students and our system. In order to achieve our mission, Atlanta Public Schools must foster an environment in which parents and other caregivers have the opportunity to be active participants in the life of our schools, and family engagement should be an integral part of the work of every district staff member. To achieve this goal, the superintendent shall:

- Recruit, develop, and retain employees who believe that all parents and caregivers love their children and want what is best for them and who are responsive to their needs;
- Cultivate a safe, welcoming and caring environment for students and their families;
- Demonstrate an attitude of partnership through regular, two-way communication with families that is respectful, accessible, and culturally relevant;
- Support families in understanding the strengths and needs of their children and in fostering students' lifelong relationship with learning; and,
- Empower families as advocates by valuing their voices in decision-making about their children and their schools.

The board authorizes the superintendent to develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

Conference Call for Community Feedback on Draft
Policy – December 13th at 5:00pm
Dial in to (404) 802-1010
Conference ID - 35683

APS will bring together alumni from across the district to identify ways to collaboratively advance the mission & vision of APS

Primary Role: Convener

- There are many active alumni organizations across the city; the district will primarily play a convening role to bring together representatives from the various alumni groups to share ideas for their alumni initiatives and to collaborate on district-wide efforts.

Alumni Council

- The district will identify leaders from the various alumni organizations to serve on an APS Alumni Council which will meet regularly in order to:
 - keep alumni updated on what is happening in the district so that they can keep their constituents updated
 - seek advice and input on various initiatives
 - identify opportunities for alumni to support the individual schools where they have specific connections, including service on Cluster Advisory Teams

Maintaining Contact

- APS will disseminate best practices to alumni organizations to ensure that they maintain up-to-date contact information for their alumni; Atlanta Alumni Unified will serve as a key partner in this effort and will provide support to the district in contacting alumni

Roles & Responsibilities

- The Board Office will serve as the primary point of contact for APS alumni and will help to facilitate the alumni council; the APS administration will identify opportunities for alumni to provide input and for alumni to contribute to school and district based efforts.

Priority 2: Foster Two-Way Communication

4

Launch technology-enabled communications

Launch APS app to enhance and support communication with parents/caregivers. The application provides access to:

- Integrated calendars for school & district
- Grades and attendance information
- One-stop shop for all social media feeds and school website
- Push-notifications including route-specific bus updates
- Nutrition/menus/balances
- Directory with contact information
- Instant translation services in many languages

5

Commit to clear, timely and accurate communications

Commit to a leadership approach that values transparency and effective communication for ALL families; implement strategy to ensure communication platforms including calendars are accessible, easy to use and up to date at the district, cluster and school level. Ensure parents & caregivers have access to student and school level data to help support the academic achievement of their children.


6

Create feedback loop

Create stakeholder feedback loop to assess and evaluate progress. Structure more opportunities to ensure feedback is accurately received and that ideas are vetted multiple ways whenever possible. Implement systems such as “secret shopper” initiatives to measure improvements in creating welcoming school and district environments.

A cross-functional team of APS leaders is working on a plan to launch an integrated APS parent app that will help to streamline communication

Blackboard | Integrated Mobile Communications App



Optimize your mobile engagement

Real reviews for parents that use the mobile app...

“
Very informative for this winter weather!
Parent from Forth Worth ISD (TX)

“
Finally, something that helps me keep up with all my kids' activities at different levels - everything together like calendars, lunch menus, and the lunch & pay button. <3 this app.
Parent at Clay County Schools (FL)

Build relationships, share your story

With nearly 80% of parents having access to a smartphone today, mobile needs to be a priority in any communications strategy. When you go mobile, you are empowering your families to get involved and engage with students and schools in the way they prefer, from the device of their choice.



Why Blackboard Integrated Mobile Communications App?

Integrate seamlessly with third party providers.

By using the Integrated Mobile Communications App you'll have access to dozens of third party integrations including SchoolPay, PeachJar, Busloss, and more. We're constantly increasing our number of integrations to enable you to get the most out of all your technology investments.


Access to student information systems.

Our relationships with SIS providers improves the integration flow of data between the app and the SIS, creating greater parent engagement.

Enable deeper user customization.

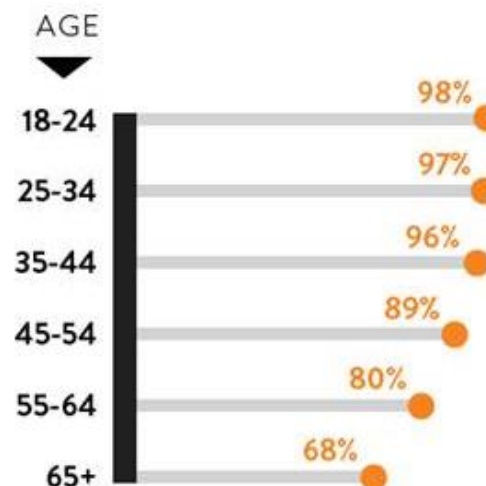
The Integrated app offers a personalized experience for its users by providing a platform for easy access to student-specific information such as grades, assignments, updates, lunch balances, and much more.

Winner of the 2015 District Administrator Reader's Choice award
Blackboard Mobile Communications App is the proud recipient of the Reader's Choice award. This prestigious award is given to only the best K-12 products and services, as selected by District Administrator readers from across the country.



- While a parent app would not replace other forms of communication, the rapid penetration of smartphone usage across the country suggests that APS should optimize this communication channel.
- 88% of all cell phone users now have a smart phone.

SMARTPHONE OWNERSHIP



Source: Nielsen Mobile Insights

APS recently received a grant to build parent dashboards that will support more effective communication with parents around student & school data

Student Data

Access to student information including:

- summative assessments
- formative assessments
- grades
- behavior
- attendance

Assessment data will allow parents to drill down to individual standards, to see progress over time, and to compare student scores to norms and comparison groups, such as achievement levels or national percentiles.

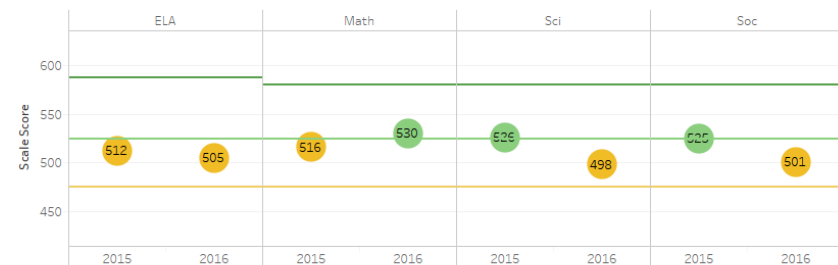
School Data

Allow parents to compare schools and drill down to the grade-subject level for the same data points as the student-level dashboards. Similar to the public-facing dashboards, these dashboards will have both simple descriptive views and a more advanced view that shows school productivity.

Access

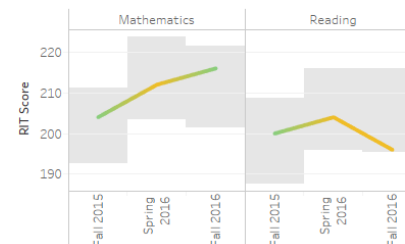
Parent-facing dashboards will be available through a district website that uses the same login system as the district's student information system. Parents receive login credentials from their children's school.

Milestones



CAAS

Grey bands show the 25th-75th percentile range.



Attendance

Attendance	2016	99.4%
	2017	97.6%

Behavior

2016	Incidents	0
	Suspension Days	0
2017	Incidents	0
	Suspension Days	0

Priority 3: Tailor-Support to Address the Unique Needs of Clusters and Schools

7

Establish dedicated leader

Establish a dedicated leader responsible for coordinating, integrating and providing parent/caregiver and alumni engagement support to clusters and schools.

8

Provide schools with a choice of tailored engagement initiatives

Provide schools with the opportunity to opt-in to one of three initiatives:

1) **Academic Parent Teacher Team Program** - training around effective academic parent conferences; training and stipends for home visits

2) **Family Access Program** – facilitate partnerships and direct funds to provide transportation support, childcare, wrap-around supports, and to host meetings at convenient community meeting locations, etc. in order to meet families where they are

3) **School Designed Engagement Program** – access to additional pool of limited funds to launch new engagement ideas that meet funding criteria and have support of GO Teams

9

Provide professional development

Integrate effective engagement strategies into district culture initiative (including teachers and instructional staff), GO Team implementation, and targeted professional development for Parent Liaisons and front office staff with initial focus on creating a warm/welcoming environment.

Stakeholder feedback provided the foundation for recommendations that, if implemented with fidelity, will integrate family and alumni engagement into our DNA

IF WE...

1. Adopt board policy; define standards & accountability
2. Convene alumni leadership to support APS mission & vision
3. Empower GO Teams
4. Launch technology-enabled communications
5. Commit to clear, timely and accurate communications
6. Create feedback loop
7. Establish dedicated leader
8. Provide schools with a choice of tailored engagement initiatives
9. Provide professional development



Successfully implement the other components of the district's strategic plan (including the turnaround strategy)

THEN...

- Parents/caregivers and families connect to schools and engage in their child's learning
- Students show up prepared to learn
- Families and communities trust the system
- Alumni connect and engage in meaningful ways



- The academic program is implemented with fidelity

SO THAT...

APS students have choice-filled lives

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Proposed Implementation Schedule & Next Steps

Proposed Implementation Schedule

October

- Present first draft of strategy to board
- Engage with stakeholders and collect feedback on strategy

December

- Present final strategy recommendations to the Board
- Board considers policy for first reading
- Board votes on approving creation of new position Director of Family Engagement
- Public comments on draft policy
- Policy Review Committee meets to review policy

February

- Director of Family Engagement starts; begins interviewing for team
- Begin engaging with stakeholders to develop draft standards and expectations
- Convene representatives of alumni organizations; begin to develop plan for FY18

April

- GO Teams select their options for tailored engagement initiatives; planning begins for implementation

June - July

- First phase of professional development for key initiatives implemented
- Soft launch of APS Parent App at Back to School Bash
- All team members are in place

November

- Create feedback loop for stakeholders to provide input; refine strategy based upon feedback
- Present draft plan to GA DOE to ensure Title I compliance with all recommendations
- Policy team drafts board policy and gets feedback from various stakeholder groups and Policy Review Committee
- Cross-functional team begins planning for APS Parent App

January

- Interview candidates for Director of Family Engagement
- Board considers policy for final approval
- Board votes on approving any additional positions needed for Family Engagement team
- Standard Communication Practices implemented to ensure readiness for launch of APS Parent App
- Draft FY18 Budget for Family & Alumni Engagement developed

March

- Final FY18 Budget for Family & Alumni Engagement submitted
- Begin developing professional development plan for creating warm/welcoming environment
- GO Teams presented with their options around tailored engagement initiatives for FY18

May

- Professional development schedule finalized for all engagement initiatives
- Systems and procedures finalized for engagement initiatives

August

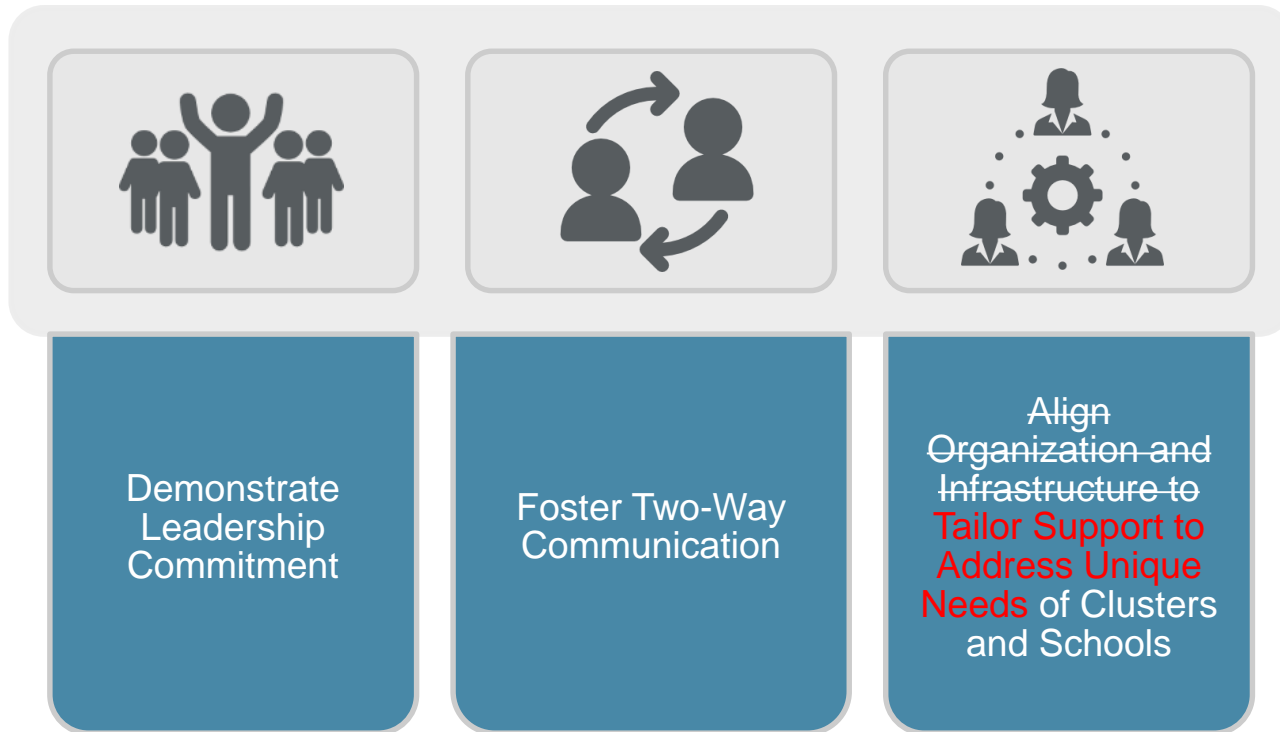
- First phase of standards and expectations implemented

Appendix (previous draft of strategy with markups)

Based upon the themes that emerged through the engagement process, we are considering 3 high-level recommendations

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Draft Recommendation 1: Demonstrate Leadership Commitment

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Define standards and expectations for engagement and integrate into performance management system to support a welcoming environment; align to culture work around core values. (MERGED)

2

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APS will play a convening role to bring together representatives from the various alumni groups to share ideas for their alumni initiatives and to collaborate on district-wide efforts; the Board Office will establish an APS Alumni Council.

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**Empower
GO Teams**

Empower and support GO Teams to drive engagement and innovation; ~~ensure support structures are in place for successful implementation.~~ ensure GO Teams have tools and support to develop their own school-based engagement plans and promote PLUS small grants program for GO Team engagement initiatives.

~~Other potential strategies:~~

- ~~• Revisit Parent Center strategy, pilot Community School concept, explore home visit strategy~~
- ~~• Identify resources to minimize barriers (e.g., transportation, childcare) and provide incentives to support engagement~~
- ~~• Provide resources to support partnerships in their efforts to contribute to schools~~

Draft Recommendation 2: Foster Two-Way Communication

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Other potential strategies:

- ~~Assess and develop recommendations to increase awareness and use of interpretation and translation services available and also explore opportunities to expand service offerings.~~

Draft Recommendation 3: ~~Align Organization and Infrastructure to~~ **Tailor Support to Address the Unique Needs of** Clusters and Schools

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~~Invest in cluster-based engagement structure~~
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Provide professional development

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~~Other potential strategies:~~

- ~~Explore partnership opportunities with umbrella APS alumni association~~
- ~~Evaluate new Title I regulations to maximize resources committed to family engagement~~

Stakeholder feedback provided the foundation for recommendations that, if implemented with fidelity, will integrate family and alumni engagement into our DNA

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8. ~~Invest in cluster-based engagement structure~~ **Provide schools with a choice of tailored engagement initiatives**
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