

# Your Atlanta School Board Working for YOU 2016/2017 SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW

## Atlanta Board of Education Develops Policy on Affordable Housing

On December 15, 2016, the Atlanta Board of Education voted unanimously to form the Atlanta Public Schools Affordable Housing Taskforce. The Taskforce will explore the district's ability to achieve positive affordable and workforce housing outcomes by repurposing some of its surplus properties for residential development. Members of the Taskforce include: Mr. Nathaniel Smith (Taskforce Chairperson), Chief Equity Officer for the Partnership for Southern Equity; Mr. Bill Bolling, founder of the Atlanta Community Food Bank and longtime affordable housing advocate; Ms. Catherine Buell, CEO of the Atlanta Housing Authority; Hon. Andre' Dickens, Atlanta City Councilmember – Post 3, Citywide; Ms. Hattie Dorsey, founder and former CEO of the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership; Ms. Jennifer Freeman, Chairperson of the Atlanta Planning Advisory Board; Mr. Ryan Gravel, Creator of the Atlanta Beltline and renowned City Planner; Mr. Alan Lee, Director of AFSCME Southern Region; Mr. Keith Parker, CEO of MARTA; Mr. Egbert Perry, CEO of the

Integral Group; Mr. Daniel Shoy, President of the East Lake Foundation; Ms. Margaret Stagmeier, Partner with TriStar Real Estate Investment. These thought and action leaders from a number of sectors throughout the city have demonstrated a strong commitment and expertise in affordable housing. **"Housing affordability has been an issue for several years in Atlanta and I am glad to be part of a board that isn't afraid to tackle tough issues, even those that are outside of the schoolhouse. This all-star team of leaders that make up the Taskforce will play a huge role in moving the needle on this issue," said District 6 Board Member Eshe' Collins.**

The Taskforce has met six times, making tangible progress toward its goal of providing a full slate of policy recommendations to the Board and Superintendent. The Board of Education is fully committed to providing access to a great quality of life to our students, their families and all city residents!

For more information, please visit us  
[www.atlantapublicschools.us/Domain/3944](http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Domain/3944) or  
call 404-802-2255.



Office of  
Atlanta Board of Education  
Atlanta Public Schools

130 Trinity Avenue  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Office Phone: 404-802-2255  
Fax: 404-802-1204

**Pierre Gaither**  
Interim Executive Administrator  
Atlanta Board of Education  
404-802-2249  
[pierre.gaither@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:pierre.gaither@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

**Linda Israel**  
Office Administrator  
Atlanta Board of Education  
404-802-2255  
[linda.israel@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:linda.israel@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

**Keith Glass**  
Office Intern  
Atlanta Board of Education  
404-802-2255  
[keith.glass@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:keith.glass@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

## Putting Kids First Your Atlanta School Board Working for YOU



### Letter from the Chairman

Hello!

My name is **Courtney English**, and for the past four years I have had the honor of serving you as Chair of the Atlanta Board of Education.

As we prepare for the start of a new school year, my colleagues and I want to share some of the exciting progress we've made across the city and in your community.

Thanks to thoughtful investments and the dedicated work of our teachers and staff, APS has made significant gains in student achievement:

- Increased the graduation rate by 13%— from 58% to 71%.
- Improved SAT, ACT, and AP scores across the district
- Launched a \$20 million college scholarship fund – Achieve Atlanta – for APS graduates
- Secured \$545 million for school construction and technology upgrades
- Steered an aggressive turnaround plan toward improving chronically struggling schools
- Increased wrap-around services for students and families in need
- Empowered parents, teachers and principals — those closest to our kids — in more decision-making

Working together with the superintendent and her team, we also launched a Social-Emotional Learning initiative to focus on whole child development, expanded early childhood education and vocational training, and worked to increase the amount of affordable housing in Atlanta by re-purposing empty school buildings in our neighborhoods.

In streamlining our budget, we have cut waste from the central office, raised teacher pay, allocated funds based on student need, and directed more dollars in the classroom — all without raising your millage rate.

Finally, we achieved those goals while maintaining a commitment to equity — from building playgrounds at the 13 elementary schools that lacked them, to ensuring that every student impacted by the CRCT cheating scandal was given the remediation and enrichment they needed before graduating.

Thank you for continuing to place your trust in the board. I am grateful for your commitment to Atlanta's children and their families, and I am confident that we will continue to do great things together!



Steven Lee  
(District 5)

Jason Esteves  
(At-Large Seat 9)

Byron Amos  
(District 2)

Leslie Grant  
(District 1)

Matt Westmoreland  
(District 3)

Nancy Meister  
Board Vice-Chair (District 4)

Courtney D. English  
Board Chair (At-Large Seat 7)

Eshe' P. Collins  
(District 6)

Cynthia Briscoe Brown  
(At-Large Seat 8)



ATLANTA  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

## Putting Kids First

Your Atlanta School Board Working for YOU

## 2016/2017 SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW

### YOUR ATLANTA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Courtney D. English | Board Chair (At-Large Seat 7)

[cenglish@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:cenglish@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

Nancy Meister | Board Vice-Chair (District 4)

[nmeister@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:nmeister@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

Leslie Grant (District 1)

[lggrant@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:lggrant@atlantapublicschools.us)

Byron Amos (District 2)

[bamos@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:bamos@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

Matt Westmoreland (District 3)

[mwestmoreland@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:mwestmoreland@atlantapublicschools.us)

Steven Lee (District 5)

[slee@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:slee@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

Eshe' P. Collins (District 6)

[epcollins@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:epcollins@atlantapublicschools.us)

Cynthia Briscoe Brown (At-Large Seat 8)

[cbriscoe\\_brown@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:cbriscoe_brown@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

Jason Esteves (At-Large Seat 9)

[jesteves@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:jesteves@atlantapublicschools.us)

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## Welcome Back!!!

The Board is excited to welcome back the **Students, Staff, and Teachers** to the start of the **2017 – 2018** school year.



We look forward  
to seeing  
you in the  
classroom!

In the spring of 2016, the Atlanta Board of Education unanimously approved the Superintendent's recommendation to implement a Turnaround Strategy to increase student achievement and transform our lowest performing schools. This strategy has provided the district with a roadmap to:

- Direct more personalized services to students in need;
- Increase professional development of top turnaround leaders and teachers;
- Implement school operating model changes; and
- Add experienced educators



## APS Turnaround Strategy

In November 2016, more than 60% percent of Georgia voters overwhelmingly rejected a constitutional amendment that would have given the Governor's office authority to take control of local schools it deemed as failing. Citizens from around the state went to the polls and spoke loudly and clearly. They want local control of our public schools and they want school boards, parents and teachers to improve low performing schools. APS knows what citizens want and the district is more determined than ever to turn around our challenged schools. The Board is focused on improving instruction in APS' most challenged schools, making deeper investments into the students who need the most support, and extending more support to targeted schools so students have a better chance to graduate from APS ready for college and career.

**District 4 Board Member Nancy Meister said, "Early results from the Turnaround Strategy are very promising and the Board remains confident that the right path has been chosen for APS students."**

The Board continues to seek community engagement from parents, teachers and citizens as all strive together to improve our schools and give teachers the necessary tools to succeed.

## Number of APS Graduates Continues to Rise

The Atlanta Board of Education, along with Superintendent Meria Carstarphen, adopted a new mission two years ago: "With a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career." This commitment has yielded positive results and for two consecutive years the number of APS graduates has increased. Based on the most recent data from the Georgia Department of Education, APS handed diplomas to 2,267 four-year graduates in 2016 - 151 more than 2015. **District 3 Board Member Matt Westmoreland said, "Graduation season marks the culmination of every APS student's hard work. Increasing graduation rates show that the Board's work is bettering Atlanta by sending our graduates into the world in greater numbers, well-prepared for their next steps."**

Several APS schools surpassed the State of Georgia's 2016 graduation rate of **79.2%**.

- Carver Early College.....**98.7%**
- KIPP Atlanta Collegiate.....**92.9%**
- Coretta Scott King.....**89.7%**
- North Atlanta .....**88.3%**
- Grady.....**86.4%**

Many of the district's high schools also saw significant increases in their individual graduation rates. B.E.S.T Academy increased by 12.2%, Frederick Douglass increased by 10.1%, North Atlanta increased by 6.8% and Maynard Jackson increased by 5.9%.

Approximately 2400 students - 133 more than 2016 - crossed the graduation stage in 2017 and **Seat 8 Board Member Cynthia Briscoe Brown shook almost every graduate's hand. She said, "Until APS graduates EVERY student there is still much work to be done, but my colleagues and I remain committed to providing every resource to the Superintendent to assuring each student has the opportunity to graduate ready for college and career."**

Graduation rates from the 2016-2017 cohort will be available later this fall.



## APS Launches State-of-the-Art School-Based Clinics at L.P. Miles Elementary and John W. Dobbs Elementary

Data shows when students have access to good healthcare, it helps improve grades and attendance. Emory University's PARTNERS for Equity in Child and Adolescent Health in the Department of Pediatrics, along with renowned service providers HEAL and Southside Medical Center, has selected Atlanta Public Schools' Dobbs and Miles elementary schools to open school-based health centers (SBHCs) at each location. The new health centers will serve students, families, and community members in the Mays and South Atlanta high school clusters. This project is being underwritten by a \$400,000 grant from the Jesse Parker Williams Foundation to provide additional SBHCs throughout Atlanta. A third elementary school, Whitefoord Elementary, has had a health clinic for decades. The new clinics will accept Georgia Better Health Care, Medicaid, Peach Care and private insurance. Patient fees will be determined on a sliding scale and parents' incomes will determine what they'll be required to pay. The centers will treat students, their families, and people in the surrounding communities. The two

new health centers are equipped with examination rooms and a physician's assistant. They will treat a wide range of illnesses, do diagnostic tests, preventive care and manage diseases like asthma, diabetes and obesity. The goal is to eventually have the centers staffed with physicians, nurses and dentists. **Seat 9 Board Member Jason Esteves was on hand to cut the ribbon at Miles Elementary and he said, "Today is a great day, because this new clinic provides our students and their families with the opportunity to get their health needs met right in the school. I firmly believe a healthy student is a ready student and a healthy community is a vibrant community."**

**District 1 Board Member Leslie Grant was equally excited about Dobbs Elementary's new clinic, stating, "It has long been my mission to create opportunities for all children to learn and grow in healthy communities. These kinds of partnerships make all the difference as we work to build strong school communities."**

## Safety and Security is a Priority for APS Board Members

In line with the new student-centered focus on safety practices, the 2016 - 2017 school year brought about the launch of APS' new Office of Safety and Security which includes the Atlanta Public Schools Police Department (APSPD), the Emergency Management team and the Security Operations Department. APSPD trains School Resource Officers to align with the district's social emotional learning approach using a national TRIAD model which involves law enforcement officers serving as informal counselors and educators. The SROs are assigned to middle and high schools to support students, staff and parents, and to secure its campuses. **"I can't think of a better way to make our students feel safe inside their schools than to have real-life "Officer Friendly's" working alongside other caring staff members to provide quality learning environments at every school!" said District 5 Board Member Steven Lee.**

The National Association of School Resource Officers is partnering with APS to facilitate SRO training, which involves positive behavior support interventions and other student-centered services such as social emotional learning and conflict resolution consistency. Additionally, the SROs will have staffing assignments and focused training to foster a

safe, orderly teaching and learning environment in Atlanta Public Schools.

This effort is also supported in part by a \$7.5 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Justice, which APS earned in partnership with WestEd, Georgia State University and more than a dozen other supporting agencies. **District 2 Board Member Byron Amos said "With this additional support and guidance, the district can do more work on the front lines in schools to improve safety and security measures and practices for our students."**

