

Atlanta Public Schools  
Board of Education  
Community Engagement:  
Input to Inform Superintendent Search

October 22 through October 30, 2019

# Clarification & Mediation, Inc.

**Facilitation and Management Consulting for  
public, private and non-profit organizations**

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**October 2019**

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## Overview

The Atlanta Board of Education has launched a search for a new Superintendent for the Atlanta Public Schools District. The Board hopes to select a new Superintendent by July 2020, in time for the next academic school year. The Board conducted four engagement sessions to solicit input from the community to inform the Superintendent search process. The following represents feedback received.

### Public Engagement Session #1

Tuskegee Airmen Global Academy

October 22, 2019

### Let's Talk

**Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What achievements or positive changes stand out for you?**

Education Programs and Assessment

- Increase in wraparound services available at school building level
- Part of a resource structure is in place to fund behavioral specialist and instructional coaches in the schools
- Moved away from emphasis on standardized testing toward looking at the whole child
- Focus on making sure students retain information
- Increase in graduation rate

Students

- Increase in number of students taking the SAT and ACT
- Increase in the number of scholarships awarded to APS students

Principals/Teachers

- Transparency with principals about their performance. "This assists in holding them accountable."
- Increased training for teachers with lesson plan accountability
- District wide training and staff development being provided so all schools across the district share some key instructional practices. Students can experience some consistency even if they move about in the District.

- Flexibility and autonomy for principals to design for uniqueness of schools

#### Parent and Community Engagement

- Parents are getting more involved. The District is embracing the actual community engagement happening in the schools. It's happening in small ways, but it's a start.

#### Management and Administration

- Starting each school year with fewer teacher and principal vacancies
- Aggressive nature of restructuring and providing resources and stability on one side of town

#### Partnerships and Collaborations

- Increase in number of partnerships with business community

#### Equity

- Community members are beginning to speak up has created the opportunity to identify inequity – problems are now in the open and there is the possibility of them being addressed
- Improvement in equity of resources allocated to schools
- Establishment of the Equity Taskforce and Equity Advisory Board

### **Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What does APS need to work on improving?**

#### Education Programs and Assessment

- Overall student achievement for all students. "We want to be above state average in all subgroups".
- Addressing literacy challenges – getting to the root of why students are not succeeding
- Developing the whole child – with CTAE pathways, arts education, etc. for all students, including those who have special needs
- Just 'being excited' about students taking test and the perception that they are doing better
- Ensuring students are prepared – that their real skill level matches what test results looks like
- Improved literacy instruction

- Attention to differences in the General Education Fund and Special Education Funding. Need an immediate audit of special needs educators currently in place to determine areas where they may need additional training.
- Attention to resources for students who are managing ADHD and other behavioral challenges
- Introducing transformative educational practices into our schools

#### Students

- Behavioral interventions to reduce disciplinary referrals

#### Principals/Teachers

- Teacher preparedness – content knowledge/culturally responsive pedagogy/equity lens
- Exodus of highly qualified educators from the District

#### Parent and Community Engagement

- Resolving the leadership disconnect between district leaders, partnership leaders, school-level leaders and community members
- Board responsiveness to the community – listening and basing actions on community input
- Engagement has really been a joke

#### Transparency

- Being transparent in discussing test results
- Disaggregate scholarship award data across District and within schools

#### Communication

- Timely/honest communication with parents and community at school building and district levels
- Leadership
- Provide ethical leadership that is not based on nepotism

#### Management and Administration

- Aggressive nature of restructuring and providing resources and stability is visible on one side of town. However, we want to see that all across the district and right now we don't.
- Customer service at the school building and district levels

- Both the school Board and APS Administration can improve by functioning according to the Atlanta Independent School System Charter
- Move away from charters/magnets and strengthen neighborhood schools
- Ensure vacancies are filled with quality people
- A community school model is needed district-wide

#### Partnerships and Collaborations

- Ensure that school partnerships enhance student learning
- Authentic business partner relationships that listen to community ideas

#### Equity

- No improvement in equity of resources allocated to schools
- Continue conversation of racism and classism in Atlanta Public Schools
- Better attention to equity in distributing human, fiscal and opportunity resources
- Use an equity lens in distributing resources across the District
- Ensure equity within the schools as well as across the District
- Better attention to equity in distributing human, fiscal and opportunity resources
- Use an equity lens in distributing resources across the District
- Ensuring equity within the schools as well as across the District
- Diminish the achievement gap between white children and black and brown children
- Deliver on the promise of a strong neighborhood school regardless of the neighborhood where the school is located. We have to get out of the mindset that you can only get a good education in Grady, North Atlanta, etc.
- Beyond equity to justice – you have to be committed to justice
- Need more intrinsic love for Black children from teachers, administrators, District
- Have and have not mentality needs to be defeated
- Address inequity of partnerships across the District – number of partnerships, scope of partnerships and quality of partnerships
- Close achievement gap not just between white and black children but also between special education and highest achieving students. Not just in academics but also in the arts and athletics. We must offer through inclusive practices, so we are educating the entire child
- Correct inequities of partnerships. Create partnerships, not just in certain parts of town.

#### Transportation

- Increased safety on buses
- Timeliness of buses

## Other

- Consider providing shadowing opportunities at Morningside Elementary School for teachers across the District

## **If you could be Superintendent with a magic wand, what one change would you make to create the best school district for the children of Atlanta?**

### Education Programs and Assessment

- Implement community school model going beyond wrap-around services
- Ensure adequate special needs resources, programs and results
- Provide a school in every neighborhood where every child is excited to attend and learn
- Ensure that every school in the district has a comprehensive arts program from elementary to high school

### Principal/Teachers

- Provide for teachers to become the best they can be – not as individuals – as essential to a quality system of teaching and learning

### Leadership

- Have compassion for everyone – students, teachers, and community
- Put the legislative process back in the District's control
- Restore Board powers
- Ensure a safe environment – remove all fear at any level

### Management and Administration

- Hire the best people and have a strong team
- Remove the buffer so there is a direct pipeline from principals and teachers to the superintendent

### Equity

- Taking equity into account when approaching education, and moving beyond equity to justice

## Other

- Work with government agencies, community, etc. to ensure that every family has an adult with a livable wage/stable income to ensure that families can afford housing that will be stable
- Implement rent control

## **What experiences, talents and skills must a new Superintendent have to sustain the achievements and positive changes you have identified?**

The next Superintendent should be someone who:

### Experience

- Has experience and confidence working with and listening to impoverished families who have experienced a variety of challenges
- Has a demonstrated track record in closing the achievement gap
- Has moved up through the ranks from parent to teacher and up through administrator

### Education/Knowledge

- Won't rely on standardized test to assess how students (and the District) are doing
- Is an educationist – professional educator; knowledgeable and competent as an administrator; systems thinker
- Understands Board governance and is able to manage the Board
- Is academically focused and understands pedagogy
- Is knowledgeable about best practices and how to implement them

### Talents/Skills

- Works, and is accountable for, progress toward established goals/objectives
- Understands local politics and relationships with the Governor and County Commissioners
- Really understands how to talk to families and parents
- Is fiscally accountable and responsible. If we can't teach children how to read with a \$3.2 million budget, then what are we doing

### Beliefs/Philosophy and Values

- Has a long-term commitment to APS and will stay longer than 5 years

- Has a vested interest in the success of students in APS
- Is not afraid to challenge the status quo on behalf of Black children
- Understands the achievement gap is, in fact, an achievement debt
- Is interested in our children and community
- Has the right information and mindset to lead this district, based on a philosophical and psychological evaluation
- Understands the connectedness to the community and does not just check boxes to say we have parent and family engagement.
- Doesn't get excited about the glossy things, but will look at the real facts, e.g., less excitement about graduation rates when children are not prepared or about more children taking SAT and ACT when black and brown children are doing worse than ever

#### Character Traits

- Understands politics, but is not afraid to speak truth to power in representing the community
- Is independent and will operate independently from the local and national business community
- Is from the state of Georgia and understands the politics
- Is local or a product of APS schools

#### Questions or Comments for Board

- Is the Board competent to manage the Superintendent selection process?
- Ensure that the Board receives the training and learning they need to effectively conduct the search process and select the right Superintendent
- Conduct a philosophical evaluation of candidates to make sure they have the right philosophical information needed to really be able to lead this School District and understand what people have said today

## **Public Engagement Session #2**

Bolton Academy

October 24, 2019

### **Let's Talk**

**Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What achievements or positive changes stand out for you?**

#### Education Programs and Assessment

- Consistency with DLI programs across the cluster
- Putting children first, being student centered
- Progress has been made against key performance measures, like graduation rates, student scholarships and the CCRPI. APS is doing better.

#### Parent and Community Engagement

- There is a greater level of engagement and accountability by APS, in both the schools and local community
- Change in people's perspectives of APS in the community at large

#### Transparency

- Transparency has improved. I no longer feel like I'm discovering things after they are done.
- There is more clarity about actions taken and decisions made

#### Leadership

- Leadership can be trusted
- APS is now functional where before we were totally dysfunctional
- APS has been an advocate for schools and the school system. There has been no hesitancy to go to bat against pushback from the City and other competing interests.

#### Management and Administration

- There is more local control at the school level, especially with budgets and human resource decisions
- Improved effort to address things that didn't work quickly, and to change them when necessary



## Partnerships and Collaborations

- There has been high interest in establishing rapport with non-profits who share similar goals with APS
- More engagement with willing partners and with stakeholders outside of APS

## Physical Plant

- APS has done a great job of building renovation and new construction

## **Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What does APS need to work on improving?**

### Education and Achievement

- Increasing support for art and music programs
- Having a stronger commitment to innovation
- Providing more athletic and other after school programs
- Providing additional support for students and teachers in the DLI program

### Students

- Create more equity in sports program accessibility, as some kids can't afford to participate

### Principals/Teachers

- Cultural competency. Continue staff training on different cultures, backgrounds, abilities.
- Provide additional support for students and teachers in the DLI program
- Empower teachers, e.g., ensuring that the use of innovative methods don't count against them
- Improve the quality of the teachers in terms of core capabilities. Teachers must pass written and oral test for Spanish competency, but not for English.
- Help teachers grow
- Train teachers how to use data to their best advantage
- Build a culture of professionalism and support for teachers by providing them with the tools, training and time they need

## Parent and Community Engagement

- Give a concerted effort to bring the north and south sides together, instead of continuing to pit them against each other. They could start by simply getting the communities together.
- Provide the community with data and helping us analyze the information and strategize/assess how to use the information to make an impact on the south, north east and west sides
- Achieve more engagement of *all* parents, including those with English as a second language
- Help parents navigate the system to be more engaged and better support children

## Transparency

- There has been a complete lack of transparency in hiring/firing decisions
- Make sure the Board doesn't backtrack into being less transparent
- Increase transparency

## Communication

- Include everyone in the conversations people are having
- "Driving" more consistent communication, which is different in different clusters and schools
- Providing information about available summer programs

## Leadership

- Give a concerted effort to bring the north and south sides together, instead of continuing to pit them against each other. They could start by simply getting the communities together.
- Support leaders at the District level

## Management and Administration

- Improving and revamping the selection process used for principals.
- "The current Go Team lead process is an ineffective waste of time and uses questions don't relate to what's happening in the school".
- Improve on the retention of good and effective principals, keeping them at the same school longer
- Expand the selection of lunch offerings (like Fulton County) and look at quality of the food served

- Adjust the lunch schedule so some children are not eating so late

#### Equity

- Equal distribution of resources. Do we have two systems in the district?
- Make sure the achievement gap for minority, poor and second language students has the same growth as other students, both across schools and within the same school. "Seems as though the achievement gap between some groups of students has not shrunk".
- Create more equity in sports program accessibility, as some kids can't afford to participate
- Learn how to implement the District's new equity policy
- Provide the community with data and helping us analyze the information and strategize/assess how to use the information to make an impact on the south, north east and west sides
- Provide resources based on school needs, not just pure numbers

#### Transportation

- Transportation is inconsistent across the district
- Bus drivers could use instruction in managing students

### **If you could be Superintendent with a magic wand, what one change would you make to create the best school district for the children of Atlanta?**

#### Education and Achievement

- Provide human trafficking courses to everyone at every school

#### Students

- Remove socio-economic barriers. No worry about eating, clothing - just learn and become better people.
- Pixie dust the kids, so that they can focus free from violence, bullying and other daily distractions
- Instill love of learning for all students
- Make schools exciting, fun, safe places to be

## Principals/Teachers

- Pay teachers more
- Restore respect for the teaching profession

## Parent and Community Engagement

- Better connect the school and the community

## Leadership

- Give schools all the money they need

## Equity

- Channel resources where they are most needed
- End intergenerational poverty. "That's what plagues our schools; we can't address all the needs that come with that".

## **What experiences, talents and skills must a new Superintendent have to sustain the achievements and positive changes you have identified?**

The next Superintendent should be someone who:

### Experience

- Has boots on the ground experience, earned in classrooms from elementary to high school
- Has experience in, and understanding of, the dynamics of being a leader in a metro school district
- Has proven success at reducing the achievement gap
- Has a previous history of longevity (longer than 3 or 4 years) at their position
- Is connected to local communities; willingness to engage with NPU's
- Is a holistic leader, with one face and one style, who will be consistent in both politically rich and marginalized communities
- Has not just a passion, but some experience so he/she can offer more than "just coming to test what you've learned"
- Has a vision, a proven track record and a knowledge of urban education

## Education/ Knowledge

- Has a psychology degree
- Possesses literacy, all the way across the spectrum
- Is technologically aware and savvy
- Has a vision, a proven track record and a knowledge of urban education
- Has a high level of literacy in reading and math, with the ability to truly educate our children

## Talents and Skills

- Has ability to see both sides of two things
- Can see people regardless of who they are
- Can build partnerships with Fortune 500 companies
- Is willing to “stand up for us” and advocate for APS with the City, and have the ability to partner with the City as well
- Has ability to get the Board to listen without being punitive
- Can communicate directly with parents and community
- Is a listener who wants to learn about Atlanta and move the system forward
- Is capable of listening when truth is being spoken

## Beliefs/Philosophy and Values

- Will take the time to learn and experience through the eyes of people who work in the system
- Has ideas on how to address the District’s wealth gap in relation to education, opportunity and achievement
- Is interested in developing more programs that can help kids, who are not going to college, gain tech experience while in school
- Desires to partner with different groups and work collaboratively on problem solving
- Is commitment to continuing successful programs, like Social/Emotional Learning and DLI
- Is not interested in just cutting and changing because they are new, but being willing to consider continuing some beneficial student and teacher programs
- Believes in and is willing to engage with others and seek input before making major decisions
- Believes in focusing on children who have the greatest need
- Believes in being present and accessible, so that students, parents, local civic leaders, and teachers see them
- Is present in the business of educating our children

### Character Traits

- Has Integrity and courage, able to speak truth without compromising their power
- Speaks truth to power, no matter who that power is
- Has passion and energy, not a yes man

### Other

- Is a homegrown educator who knows Atlanta

### Questions or Comments for Board

- Need clear data on why the last Superintendent was not rehired in order to answer these questions and make informed decisions.
- Bring more than one candidate to community for consideration

## **Public Engagement Session #3**

Kindezi at Gideons

October 28, 2019

### **Let's Talk**

**Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What achievements or positive changes stand out for you?**

Education Programs and Assessment

- Being proactive about social emotional learning

Principal/Teachers

- The high level of investment in emerging leaders, mentoring and support

Parent and Community Engagement

- The Go Team governance structure

Communication

- Communication with the community as a whole, e.g., the web site, newsletter and the Superintendent's chats and emails

Leadership

- Leadership's visibility in the school and community

Management and Administration

- Autonomy that schools have to design a learning environment
- The increase in local control and autonomy. Money has been pushed down to school level and there is more control of budget
- Reduction of teacher and principal vacancies at the start of the school year
- Increased technology capacity

Partnerships and Collaborations

- Inclusive services (more services, greater accessibility) provided by community partners

- Agencies available to help in communities where there has been trauma, like Chris 180 and the Atlanta Volunteers Lawyers Fund
- Expansion in the number of corporate partners
- Partnerships put together for after school and other support programs

#### Physical Plant

- Facility renovations
- Rebuilding schools, like renovating Gideons

### **Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What does APS need to work on improving?**

#### Education Programs and Assessment

- Making sports a part of the curriculum (co-curricular as opposed to extracurricular)
- Improve graduation rate to at least 90%
- Students reading comprehension
- A greater emphasis on soft skills. e.g., employability skills, time management, cooperativeness, etc.
- Clarity on the relationship between, and future of, Charter, Partner, and Turnaround schools. Will APS keep them all or close them?

#### Students

- Ensure students master skills before they advance to the next level so that they don't drop out because it is too late
- Get discipline in check so that it is not a distraction. Fix problems instead of mandating punishment and suspension

#### Principals/Teachers

- Mentorship and support for teachers especially for new teachers. Keep the best teachers
- Teacher preparation around managing and talking to children, being able to understand trauma and communication with parents
- Training/mentoring teachers from the beginning- social, emotional, cultural, etc. Make them feel good so that they are willing to stay.



## Parent and Community Engagement

- Better parent engagement
- Get parents more involved in their children's education
- Make the parents feel as if the school district cares about their involvement with the children

## Transparency

- More transparency with families about challenges

## Communication

- Improved communication to promote more community involvement
- How school performance is measured. Evaluation on the spot by independent people.

## Management and Administration

- Ensuring that schools in a cluster don't lose resources to specially focused schools that anyone can attend which are also in the cluster, e.g. Douglass/Best Academy
- Dealing with challenges that result from a mobility-rate over 30%, where children continue to move from one school to another

## Equity

- Make sure children can get a good education in all schools
- Make sure the community doesn't think they can get a better education on one side of the District versus the other (North/South)

## **If you could be Superintendent with a magic wand, what one change would you make to create the best school district for the children of Atlanta?**

### Education Programs and Assessment

- Replicate and scale things that work (like 8 children in a classroom) everywhere

### Students

- Ask the children what they want and need
- When students graduate, ensure that the cost of their post-secondary education is covered

## Principals/Teachers

- Provide individualized support to new and long-term teachers by asking what they need and really listening to them
- Ensure that every teacher that touches a child truly loves them and believes in their ability to learn

## Parent and Community Engagement

- City-wide parental involvement

## Equity

- Increase resources district wide from the North to South side. Note: "Losing students at a faster rate than in previous years, possibly due to issues of gentrification and affordability".
- Close the equity and the income gap
- Spend the same amount of money on the south side as has been spent on the north side
- Provide equity throughout the district so that every neighborhood school is a quality school

## Other

- Provide a \$20,000 down payment to all APS parents who want to buy a house

## **What experiences, talents and skills must a new Superintendent have to sustain the achievements and positive changes you have identified?**

The next Superintendent should be someone who:

### Experience

- Has the ability to equitably manage a nearly billion-dollar budget
- Has experience with extensive social justice/equity research, with the self-reflection to understand his or her equity and justice position when they make decisions
- Has the education and experience required for success
- Has experience working with early learning systems

### Education/Knowledge

- Knows where 'our children are going' because they understand the transition and development process

### Talents/Skills

- Has a collaborative spirit
- Understands finance. "Our education tax is high enough to afford the best schools in the country."
- Has the ability to do complex work

### Beliefs/Philosophy and Values

- Believes in after school and extracurricular activities for all students
- Has a real passion, really cares for children
- Believes in public education
- Believes in parental involvement.
- Has parent involvement at the top of their agenda
- Agrees to create a plan for parent engagement at the school, and not just the district, level
- Is a thorough and careful thinker and listener, willing to observe the community, school, circumstances, and context before making quick changes
- Is inclusive
- Is accessible, with a willingness to come out to the schools and communities
- Is committed to looking at charter partnerships and holding charter schools accountable

### Character Traits

- Has a willingness to fight for resources for the school system

### Other

- Is from the region (from metro Atlanta or grew up in the APS system) and be familiar with and have relationships in the community

## **Community Engagement Session #4**

Benteen Elementary School

October 30, 2019

### **Let's Talk**

**Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What achievements or positive changes stand out for you?**

#### Education Programs and Assessment

- Construction of social emotional programs to assure all students have 60 minutes of reading
- The graduation rate has increased
- Graduation rates have increased, very close to state average of 82%
- Certifications for International Baccalaureate (IB) program for middle schools
- Dual language immersion program
- Renewed interest in literacy – a more concerned effort
- Improvement in children reading at grade level
- Positive energy and messaging around school attendance -- being there on day one; the school bash
- Interest in improving the outcomes for special needs students. Increased resources, better wrap around resources and better transportation options

#### Principals/Teachers

- Hiring of highly effective principals
- Principals are open to the children
- Children feel comfortable going to the Principals—they connect

#### Parent and Community Engagement

- Allowing parents and stakeholders to have a conversation to be heard by the Board
- The school is open to the families, encouraging of parent participation and focused on the students

#### Communication

- Accessibility of current administration
- Control of PR and the narrative communicated
- The "Let's Talk" app is effective

## Leadership

- More accessible and open Superintendent
- Students know who Superintendent is and she knows them
- Teachers on Superintendent advisory board

## Management and Administration

- Charter system model chosen as the state operating model, signature program, cluster model
- Reputation and pride in being a part of APS
- Renewed sense of community confidence in the District

## Partnerships and Collaborations

- The involvement in the Westside revitalization efforts

## Physical Plant

- Renovations within the building and closure of older buildings
- Building improvements have continued

## **Consider the evolution of APS over the last five years. What does APS need to work on improving?**

### Education Programs and Assessment

- Streamline testing the students – too many, too often
- Increase funding for counselors to be available every day, especially in high poverty schools
- More investment in early learning (Pre-K- 2) to address needs early on
- Universal pre-k for all students
- Invest in how the district is approaching/managing discipline in the classroom
- Take a closer look at technical schools
- Streamline tests – there are too many. Reconsider the assessment process for beginning students especially – explore if it is too extensive
- Bring magnet programs and vocational programs back to APS for students not necessarily interested in four-year colleges
- Recruit English speaking teachers certified to teach students whose first language is not English

- Provide high school students with opportunity and exposure to potential, relevant employment opportunities
- More financial education (e.g., Rich Dad/Poor Dad)
- Increase funding for counselors to be available every day, especially in high poverty schools

#### Students

- Better mental health care for children
- More support (financial) for students who need assistance to participate in test prep
- Regular meals for students on SNAP/WIC

#### Principals/Teachers

- Remove apathetic teachers who are doing children a disservice
- Better mental health care for teachers
- Teachers need time to plan and time to plan together. Give more ownership and agency to teachers to do their work and hold them accountable for the planning time.
- Supporting administrator and educator equity-literacy so they are prepared to apply an
- Paid and trained mentors for teachers and cohort support
- Increase teacher voice at the District level. Ask teachers what they need to be successful and to stay with the district
- In service training for teachers on classroom management
- Involve teachers in discussions when the Board makes policies for the classroom
- Provide content training for teachers and how to teach the content, e.g., phonics, literacy
- Increase the funds for professional development for teachers. Exposure to other models
- More training for teachers in special education, especially in IEP planning and implementation so that they can help the special needs students graduate with a regular high school diploma
- Allow teachers the opportunity to choose their professional development opportunities, including traveling to see other models

#### Parent and Community Engagement

- More follow up from the engagement and input received – resulting in concrete improvements
- Support the PLUS Academy to educate and equip parents to advocate for their children
- More parental input on what pathways will be included in the College and Career academies
- More community voice in principal selection

- More principal leadership and accountability for engaging families

#### Transparency

- Continue the current trend of being more open and honest (school board members and administration). Avoid marketing spins. (e.g., with respect to measures like graduation rates, present the real data and use it to improve. There is no need to inflate the graduation rate – this serves no one).
- Be more honest and transparent about the achievement gap. This will require hard conversations. The belief and growth mindsets about students vary from school to school.
- Transparency about the safety in the schools -- honesty about what is happening in the schools

#### Leadership

- The Board must read and digest available reports and studies on what works in great national and global public school systems that don't have charter school industries (ex: OECD report, NCSL report on trends, and best practices). Look at school districts that work.

#### Management and Administration

- Be more responsive to the law with respect to open record requests
- Reconsider breaks for students and teachers within the academic year to allow adequate re-sets
- Make reasonable cuts to administrative services which are higher than other districts to be on par with other counties and reallocate the savings to other needed services
- Increase staff pay and create pathways to promotion/advancement
- More visible voice and presence in local and state politics
- Examine operational dollars allocated to under-enrolled schools
- Improve hiring incentives and talent development
- Continue to provide parents with choice within the District
- Improve how technology is purchased and used so that it is synchronized. Must align.
- Year-round schooling

## Partnerships and Collaborations

- Join other public school supporters in supporting legislation that will make a difference for special needs students, and support services, e.g., nurses and medical services in the public schools
- Replicate the service provisions from outside nonprofits across the District
- Increase collaborations with private and non-profit partnerships

## Equity

- Democratize education by making computers available for students in school and at home. Sponsor internet access in homes.
- Improve equity within the building – close the achievement gap between minorities and majority races
- Support administrator and educator equity-literacy so they are prepared to apply an equity lens, know how to have those conversations and are prepared to close the opportunity gap
- Create equitable spending. Have policies that should be applied to spending
- Radical equity work to reform multiple aspects of the District, e.g., discipline, curriculum.
- Funding support when and where needed
- Help students to understand federal and state funding, local taxes and other issues that reinforce inequity
- Explore the Louisville, Kentucky and Jefferson County School models that have stopped paying lip service to equity, diversity and inclusion and who are leading social justice

## Physical Plant

- Address APS blighted properties
- Smart boards and more technology for teachers – do not rely on PTAs to fund

**If you could be Superintendent with a magic wand, what one change would you make to create the best school district for the children of Atlanta?**

## Education Programs and Achievement

- Make sure that every APS graduate is able to read and do math on grade level

## Principals/Teachers

- Increase teacher pay



## Parent and Community Engagement

- Make the community stronger
- Require community and parental involvement

## Transparency

- Require parents and families to be accountable for student discipline

## Communication

- Create an honest and open-door policy so that everyone can bring forward their ideas without fear and people really listen no matter who is offering the idea

## Leadership

- Change out a few Board members
- Ensure that everyone-- from Board to staff in building-- is truly invested in ALL of the children in the district and wants to see ALL of the children succeed

## Management and Administration

- Create community schools that are neighborhood grounded and open at all times for a variety of services and responsive to input – so APS moves away from specialized charter schools
- Make sure APS operates as a public good such that it provides support to the investment of democratic practices moving ever closer to democratic ideas
- Insist on open minded thinkers

## Equity

- Insure an equitable and inclusive education, i.e., to ensure no one slips through the cracks
- Create an equitable system that helps everyone to be successful

## **What experiences, talents and skills must a new Superintendent have to sustain the achievements and positive changes you have identified?**

The next Superintendent should be someone who:

### Education/Knowledge

- Has the knowledge to lead APS as a public institution in such a way that the divides between north and south and black and Hispanics disappear

### Experience

- Has experience with families and children facing poverty and whose experience is reflected in their political savvy to communicate what the community needs, wants, and knows
- Has extensive classroom experience and school leadership experience across multiple school levels
- Has experience in a diverse urban school district and demonstrated success with innovation
- Has extensive classroom experience, school leadership experience across multiple school levels
- Has experience teaching in a classroom; a school administrator in an urban setting and has done a great job in a previous District

### Talents/Skills

- Is culturally competent in order to provide support needed by every student
- Is politically savvy with the north and southside schools (we exist in a context larger than the school systems), the board members, parents, taxpayers and other stakeholders. Must be able to navigate the various interest groups.
- Is multilingual
- Is strategic, strong interpersonal skills, collaborative mindset, strong verbal and written communication skills, and personable with an even temperament

### Beliefs/Philosophy and Values

- Believes they can accomplish their goals
- Is a real educator who is for public education and not just a person with a degree
  - Is willing to back away from the "excellent school plan"
  - Knows what works and will remain a good public school educator

- Is willing to tell the truth on what good research says and the best practices around the country
- Fully embraces the arts as a necessity to education instead of an option
- Is wholeheartedly, unwaveringly and unapologetically committed to the success of all the students -- those of color. LGBTQ students, students from low income households, students with disabilities -- explicitly recognizing that there are students whose needs are not being met with the resources and support they deserve
- Leads from the foxhole as opposed to from the headquarters- connects on all levels
- Sees educators as people who have a lot to teach the business community and not just reliant on the direction or approval of the business community for decisions. See education a more than the path for creating jobs.
- Whose staff will reflect/resemble the community and who will communicate with the community about what he/she planning to do
- Is willing to be a student as well as a teacher; will tap into the knowledge and experiences of those in the District
- Is willing to be accessible and accept new ideas from the stakeholders
- Tells Atlanta what points and philosophy he/she embraces within the first 30 days (Particularly addressing points of agreement and disagreement with Education Secretary Betsy Devos)

#### Character Traits

- Has demonstrated good character traits – integrity, compassion, honesty
- Loves their job

#### Other

- Is willing to broaden the tools of assessment beyond a “test” to show that students are learning
- Is looking forward to coming to Atlanta or who is from Atlanta and willing to address equity as a top priority
- Focuses on the proficiency gap between white children and those of color