

# Strategic Direction (Values and Goals)

## North Atlanta High School

2.13.25

Atlanta Public Schools is hosting a series of community meetings to help shape the district's five-year strategic plan. Board members are leading the first set of meetings to update the district's goals and guardrails, emphasizing the importance of community feedback in defining the district's vision and priorities. The meeting was structured to gather input through group discussions and a survey, ensuring the final plan reflects what families and stakeholders want for students' futures. The board asked two main questions during the session, and participants' feedback is summarized below.

### **Question 1: What should students know or be able to do by the time they leave APS?**

Community members shared their hopes for what students should achieve by graduation:

- **Academic Readiness:** Students should graduate with strong reading and math skills, as these are essential for long-term success.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students need the ability to analyze information, think independently, and make thoughtful decisions.
- **Life & Soft Skills:** Essential skills like communication, conflict resolution, and punctuality are key to personal and professional success.
- **Balanced College & Career Prep:** APS should prepare students for both college and career pathways so every student leaves with a plan for their future.

### **Direct Quotes:**

- *"Students should be able to read and do math at their grade level."*
- *"Kids have to be able to critically think... they don't always know how to process all the information to make a decision."*
- *"Students should know how to communicate, resolve conflicts, and show up on time."*
- *"Not every kid is going to college, but they all need to have a career path."*

### **Question 2: What should APS stop or avoid doing to better support student outcomes?**

The community highlighted practices they feel APS should change to better serve students:

- **Harsh Discipline Policies:** Parents expressed concern that suspensions, especially for minor infractions, push students out of the classroom and disrupt learning.
- **Lack of Collaboration:** Schools should work together more to share strategies, resources, and best practices across the district.
- **Overemphasis on College:** While college is important, APS should equally value career readiness for students who choose different paths.
- **Ignoring Inequities:** Community members raised concerns about racial disparities in discipline and special education referrals, urging APS to address systemic biases.
- **Politics Over Students:** The focus should always be on student success, not political agendas or external pressures.

### **Direct Quotes:**

- *“Stop suspending students for things like insubordination.”*
- *“Stop working in silos — schools need to work together more.”*
- *“Stop overemphasizing college readiness while neglecting career options.”*
- *“There’s a huge disproportionality in who gets suspended... especially for Black male students.”*
- *“Stop pursuing politics over student outcomes..pupils over politics.”*