

Virtual Strategic Planning Workshop

3.7

In this strategic planning session, Atlanta Public Schools stakeholders discussed what must be true in schools, operations, and community partnerships to achieve the goals of academic excellence, critical thinking, and life skills/career readiness. Participants emphasized the importance of qualified teachers, modern curriculum, student support systems, and equitable access to resources. Strong themes included real-world learning, family engagement, and the need for safe, inclusive environments across the district.

Schools

Academic Excellence & Critical Thinking

- **Qualified & supported educators:** Retention, professional learning, and support for teachers are essential.
- **Modern, relevant curriculum:** Integrated, culturally responsive, and aligned with 21st-century skills and standards.
- **Literacy proficiency:** A recurring concern—improve literacy and numeracy rates.
- **Safe and inclusive environments:** Both physical and psychological safety for students, staff, and visitors.
- **Whole-child focus:** Address social-emotional needs; include support staff like counselors and social workers.
- **Student-centered pathways:** Tailored academic paths based on aptitude, not a one-size-fits-all model
- **Early exposure and real-world connection:** Begin introducing careers, technical options, and academic pathways early.

Life Skills & Career Readiness

- **Curricular time for life skills:** More than annual career days—integrate life readiness throughout schooling.
- **Career exposure PK–12:** Field trips, internships, and pathway exploration should begin early and be continuous.
- **Aptitude-based planning:** Use assessments to match students with career paths that reflect their strengths.
- **Modern electives:** Life skills courses (e.g., financial literacy, home economics reimagined as “life management”).

Operations

Academic Excellence & Critical Thinking

- **Safe and supportive buildings:** Clean, secure, and inclusive facilities for students, staff, and families.
- **Data-informed decision-making:** Ensure programs are assessed for impact; district should be accountable for results.
- **Communication & responsiveness:** Timely responses from central office; transparent processes.
- **Technology & materials:** Ensure schools have access to up-to-date resources (digital and print).

Life Skills & Career Readiness

- **Housing for staff:** Recognize teacher housing challenges; explore solutions.
- **Transportation equity:** Timely, safe transportation—essential for access to programs, internships, etc.
- **Nutrition:** Provide healthy meals; seen as a learning barrier if unmet.
- **Equity checks:** Ensure opportunities (e.g., career fairs, field trips) are consistent across schools and regions.
- **Support for vulnerable students:** Systems to support students without adult advocates (e.g., EIP testing, wraparound services).

Family & Community Partnerships

Academic Excellence & Critical Thinking

- **Transparent & two-way communication:** Data sharing with parents about student performance; real engagement, not performative meetings.
- **Shared framework:** Families and educators should operate from aligned expectations and curriculum understanding.
- **Supportive resources:** Families need access to internet, devices, textbooks, and other tools to support learning at home.

Life Skills & Career Readiness

- **Asset mapping:** Identify and organize community partners by service area (career, wellness, academic, etc.).
- **Community engagement in curriculum:** Invite local businesses and professionals to co-create relevant learning experiences.

- **Family learning & involvement:** Provide parents tools to help students explore interests and careers (especially via GO Teams).
- **Consistent engagement:** Avoid jumping from initiative to initiative; keep messaging and support stable.