



ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS



B.E.S.T. ACADEMY AT THE
THOMAS W. DORTCH JR. INSTITUTE
1190 NORTHWEST DRIVE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30318
404-802-4950
MR. ROBERT WILLIAMS, PRINCIPAL
rpwilliams@atlanta.k12.ga.us

July 13, 2025

Dear B.E.S.T. Academy at The Thomas Dortch Jr. Institute Families,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year! We hope you are enjoying a restful and joyful summer with your loved ones. I am excited to return for my second year as principal of B.E.S.T. Academy which continues to inspire me with proud traditions, talented scholars, and passionate educators. Last year, we embraced the call to **ELEVATE**—to Empower, Lead, Excel, Visualize, Achieve, Team, and Engage—as we renewed the culture of high expectations and holistic support for our scholars. Together, we took bold steps toward transforming teaching and learning, increasing engagement, and strengthening our school community.

This year, we continue that journey with **ELEVATE 2.0**—a deeper, more intentional focus on accelerating student achievement, fostering leadership at all levels, and promoting a culture where every scholar feels seen, heard, and valued. We are refining what works, reimagining what’s possible, and recommitting ourselves to excellence in all that we do.

Our incredible staff—passionate educators and lifelong learners—remain dedicated to challenging and supporting every student to reach their fullest potential. Through collaborative partnerships with you, we will continue to create the environment for your son to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

Please join me at the school for **Conversation and Coffee on July 24th from 8:30am - 9:30am** to discuss school updates (data, uniform policy, district cellphone policy, and feedback).

Open House is scheduled on **August 1st from 11am - 1pm**. All families are asked to report to the auditorium by 11am for an opening presentation. Free backpacks with supplies will be provided by the Emerging 100 and Walmart at Open House. Come in to meet your child's teachers. Following Open House, there will be the **Middle School After School All-Stars Parent Orientation** from 1pm until 2pm. Please come get information and register your student for the exciting 2025 - 2026 program. The sooner our students are registered, the sooner we can start the program. Updated bus route times can be found at <http://aps-edulog.apsk12.org/livewebsa/webquery/>.

This year the district will host the **Back-to-School Festival** exclusively for APS families on **Saturday, August 2, 2025, at Lakewood Stadium from 9 am - 1 pm**. This outdoor festival is a new back-to-school celebration created for students and families to connect to district services, receive back-to-school resources while supplies last and celebrate the start of a new school year! APS families must register using their Student ID number to attend at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/backtoschool>. The event is not open to the public.

Our **first day of school is Monday August 4, 2024**. Please have your scholar report to school between 8:05am and 8:15am. Our schedule for the 2025-2026 school year is for classes to be held from 8:30am until 3:30pm each day.

Students should come dressed according to the B.E.S.T. uniform. The uniform includes khaki or navy blue pants/shorts or black jeans with no holes with a collared shirt with or without BEST logo or BEST spirit wear (6th grade-black no crest until cresting ceremony, 7th-light blue, 8th grade-gold, 9th-11th grade-navy blue, and 12th grade-gold). Go to <https://genuineshirts.com/>, click on School Stores and choose B.E.S.T. Academy to purchase grade level collared shirts on-line. Place your order on the website by **July 21st** to pick up your shirt at **Open House on August 1st!**

In alignment with APS policy students will be required to turn in their cell phones at the start of each class period beginning on August 1st. Devices will be securely stored and returned at the end of the period. This policy is designed to support a learning environment that prioritizes academic engagement, personal responsibility, and safety. We appreciate your partnership in reinforcing these expectations at home as we work together to ensure your child's success.

Student Daily Expectations

1. Scholars are expected to **arrive to school between 8:05am and 8:15am** in order to report to their first class by 8:30am. The school day begins at 8:30am and ends at 3:30pm. We want to see your child each day on time (**all students are expected to maintain an Average Daily Attendance Rate greater than 90%**). Please schedule appointments for students in the morning (before 10am so that students arrive to school by 12pm) or afternoon (pickup students after 12pm) ensuring that your son is present for at least 3.5 hours of the day to be marked present. Early check-out time ends at 2:30pm. Please arrive before 2:30pm if you must sign out your child before dismissal.
2. Students should come dressed according to the B.E.S.T. uniform (see attachment-below). The uniform includes khaki or navy blue pants/shorts or black jeans with no holes with a collared shirt with or without BEST logo or BEST spirit wear (6th grade-black no crest until cresting ceremony, 7th-light blue, 8th grade-gold, 9th-11th grade-navy blue, and 12th grade-gold). Go to <https://genuineshirts.com/>, click on School Stores and choose B.E.S.T. Academy to purchase grade level collared shirts on-line.

We look forward to welcoming your scholar back to a school year filled with purpose, progress, and pride. Please visit our website <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/besths> and follow us on Instagram @apsbestacademy or Facebook @Best Academy 6-12 for updated information.

Please feel free to reach to us via phone at 404-802-4950 or email me at rpwilliams@apsk12.org. Thank you for your continued support as we ELEVATE 2.0!

Sincerely,

Robert Williams

Robert Williams, Principal



Appropriate Attire/Appearance 2025-2026

B.E.S.T. Academy at The Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute is dedicated to the total development of young men. As such we strive to instill, in the hearts and minds of every young man, the foundational principles of appropriate conduct, attire and appearance. This commitment is designed to achieve an important objective of the school's vision, "to create a high-performing single gender exemplar that produces transformational leaders who contribute to the community."

It is our expectation that students and parents who select B.E.S.T. Academy do so because of the school's growing legacy of producing leaders and its distinct reputation for developing and enhancing young men holistically. On the campus, and at school sponsored events and activities, students at B.E.S.T. will be expected to dress neatly and appropriately at all times. The following are examples of **appropriate attire** for the various grade levels:

B.E.S.T. Academy at The Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute Suggested Uniform

In order to consistently maintain the B.E.S.T. Academy standard, foster school unity and pride, and allow students to focus on learning in a safe environment, it is suggested that students consider the uniform guidance below:

LOWER ACADEMY			
	6 th	7 th	8 th
TOPS	Collared Black Shirt (No logo is allowed until earned at cresting ceremony)	Collared Light Blue Shirt with or without BEST LOGO or BEST spirit wear	Collared Gold Shirt with or without BEST LOGO or BEST spirit wear
HOODIES	Pullover hoodies must have a BEST LOGO or zip-down hoodies (any color)	Pullover hoodies must have a BEST LOGO or zip-down hoodies (any color)	Pullover hoodies must have a BEST LOGO or zip-down hoodies (any color)
BELTS	Brown/Black belt	Brown/Black belt	Brown/Black belt
BOTTOMS	Khaki or Navy Blue pants / shorts or black jeans with no holes	Khaki or Navy Blue pants / shorts or black jeans with no holes	Khaki or Navy Blue pants / shorts or black jeans with no holes
SOCKS	White or black socks	White or black socks	White or black socks
SHOES	Sneakers or solid black/brown shoes	Sneakers or solid black/brown shoes	Sneakers or solid black/ brown shoes

UPPER ACADEMY		
TOPS	9 th – 11 th	12 th
	Collared Navy Shirt with or without BEST LOGO or BEST spirit wear	Collared Gold Shirt with or without BEST LOGO or BEST spirit wear
HOODIES	Pullover hoodies must have a BEST LOGO or zip-down hoodies (any color)	Pullover hoodies must have a BEST LOGO or zip-down hoodies (any color)
BELTS	Brown/Black belt	Brown/Black belt
BOTTOMS	Khaki or Navy Blue pants / shorts or black jeans with no holes	Khaki or Navy Blue pants / shorts or black jeans with no holes
SOCKS	White or black socks	White or black socks
SHOES	Sneakers or solid black/brown shoes	Sneakers or solid black/brown shoes

Please see below regarding specific inappropriate attire and/or appearance violations:

1. NO Crocs-styled footwear, flip-flops, slides, shower shoes, bare feet, etc. are permitted in classrooms, the cafeteria, or any other public/indoor venues.
2. NO caps, do-rags and/or hoods are permitted in classrooms, the cafeteria, or other indoor venues. *This policy item does not apply to headgear or coverings worn for religious purposes or required for medical reasons.*
3. NO sunglasses or “shades” are to be worn in class or at formal programs unless *medical documentation is provided to support use.*
4. NO decorative orthodontics (e.g., “grills”) are permitted and shall not be worn on the school site.
5. NO clothing with derogatory, offensive, or lewd messages (*either in words or pictures*) are allowed.
6. NO sagging – *the wearing of one’s pants low enough to reveal undergarments or secondary layers of clothing.*
7. NO gym shorts or pajamas shall be worn while in school.

* Due to the complex nature of our uniform policy, the administration reserves the right to handle all dress-code violations in a case-by-case manner. Additional uniform regulations may be imposed/revised when students are participating in certain extracurricular activities that are considered auxiliaries (e.g., Athletic teams, the Band, Chorus, Clubs, etc.).

If students or parents have questions regarding attire for different functions or desire further clarification on what is considered neat, modest, casual, or business attire please consult Robert Williams (404-802-4938).