

# Atlanta Public Schools

## Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations (Posted May 7, 2012)

### **Overview:**

Over the past eleven months, Atlanta Public Schools (APS) has been engaged in a demographics and redistricting study that included planning for forecasted enrollment changes, balancing school capacity with school utilization, establishing sustainable attendance zones and most importantly, identifying and redirecting resources that support improved programs for all APS students. After eleven months, six scenarios from independent demographers, over 76 community meetings and countless emails, comment cards and hours of public discussion, APS will submit this final recommendation to the Atlanta Board of Education on April 30. The revised proposal allows the district to reduce the number of schools with less than 450 students from 38 elementary and middle schools to 25 elementary and middle schools. We believe we have achieved a balance between fiscal responsibility and community sustainability, with student academic success remaining the top priority.

In addition to addressing school capacity issues and forecasted enrollment concerns, the past eleven months have provided us with compelling insight into delivering a quality education to all students. Stable communities and stable school clusters often result in stable, quality schools. As a result, beginning in 2012-13, Atlanta Public Schools will operate according to a cluster model. We will form 9 clusters composed of dedicated elementary schools feeding into dedicated middle schools and ultimately into dedicated high schools (see attached models at the end of this document). Our expectation is that every school within every cluster will follow a rigorous curriculum. All students will have access to music, arts, foreign language and core academic programs that are high quality and well coordinated – from start to finish, from kindergarten through Grade 12. We believe the cluster model will decrease the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate. The cluster approach will better support students, schools and instruction, especially as we begin implementing the Common Core State Standards across the curriculum this coming school year. While periodic diseconomies between clusters may, at times, surface, we believe that the defined clusters should remain stable throughout the planning period.

This final recommendation is driven by our commitment to deliver a quality education to all APS students. While efficient operations, optimized resource allocation and school capacity utilization were factored into the study, our top priority is student academic success.

### **Problem:**

APS traditional schools serve \*47,000 students; yet, we have seats for 60,000 students. Heating, cooling and lighting 13,000 empty seats consumes resources, which could be put to better uses elsewhere. Not only must we reduce our costs, but more importantly, we must make decisions that are in the **best educational interest** of all students.

# Atlanta Public Schools

## Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations (Posted May 7, 2012)

Data show that the majority of empty seats are in the southern part of our district, while the northern section of the district is experiencing overcrowding. In some areas, enrollment is low because families with school-aged children have moved. In other areas, enrollment is low because of the perception or reality that the school lacks academic rigor and adequate support. Sparsely populated, inadequately supported schools adversely affect the education of children. By addressing under enrollment, as well as overcrowding, we can ensure educational equity across the district.

\*Counting charter schools, APS serves approximately 50,000 students.

### **Solution:**

Our proposal is to concentrate our resources by operating a more effective and efficient school district. We propose to close **7 schools**. Our remaining inventory of schools will be divided into 9 clusters. The previous recommendation included 10 clusters. We have eliminated the BEST/Coretta Scott King cluster and are recommending that the Atlanta Board of Education approve a resolution to open BEST Academy and Coretta Scott King for citywide enrollment. Students currently zoned to BEST Academy and Coretta Scott King will be zoned to Harper Archer Middle School and Douglass High School. Parents of students currently zoned to BEST Academy and Coretta Scott King will have the option of opting into the single gender schools; they will receive priority placement over other students from the district who apply to attend the single gender schools.

Our proposal will eliminate approximately 3,800 of our 13,000-seats, which save the district an estimated \$3.5 million annually. As a result, we can allocate more funds in direct support of students – that is, to provide more counselors, assistant principals, paraprofessionals and special education resources. Also, we will be better positioned to coordinate resources for children from birth to 5 years old, our pre-K programs, and school nutrition services. Of the remaining approximately 9,200 empty seats, 6,200 are in high schools. This issue must be addressed further.

Because we understand that closed and blighted buildings negatively affect communities and economic development, we are exploring meaningful uses for facilities recommended for closure. A formal Repurposing Committee has been formed to address this issue.

### **Grandfathering**

In order to minimize disruption and split feeder patterns, we will seek to decrease the extensive use of out-of-zone transfers. However, currently approved out-of-zone transfer students will be “grandfathered in” for the highest grade at their **current school only**.

**Atlanta Public Schools**  
**Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations**  
**(Posted May 7, 2012)**

All current high school students who will be zoned to a new school, as a result of board action on the final recommendation, will be “grandfathered in” and can remain at their current high school through twelfth grade.

Current middle school students who will be zoned to a new school, as a result of board action on the final recommendation will be required to attend their new zone school. However, rising eighth graders will be “grandfathered in” and can remain at their current middle school through eighth grade.

Current elementary school students who have been zoned to a new school, as a result of board action on the final recommendation, will be required to attend their new zone school. However, rising fifth graders will be “grandfathered in” and can remain at their current middle school through fifth grade.

**Atlanta Public Schools**  
**Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations**  
**(Posted May 7, 2012)**

**Proposed Clusters:**

Schools recommended for closure or repurposing are shown in red.

**Carver High School Cluster**

Parks MS

Price MS

Sylvan Hills MS

Capitol View ES

Finch ES

Gideons ES

Perkerson ES

Slater ES

Thomasville Heights ES

Sylvan will be renovated and expanded at a present estimated cost of \$30 million. Parks will be closed in 2013-14, but current Parks students will remain for the 2012-13 school year. We are aware of the community concerns about closing and combining schools in this area, and we will plan accordingly. For 2013-14, the facility will be repurposed as a transition site before it is converted into a **career academy in January 2015**. The district will also use 2012-13 to work with community, city, county and state officials to plan for the academy at Parks. The split feeder pattern at Finch will be eliminated. Capitol View will be closed; students from Capitol View will be rezoned to Perkerson Elementary School. We have assembled a repurposing committee to consider options for the Capitol View facility. Benteen will be rezoned to the Jackson Cluster.

**Douglass High School Cluster**

Harper/Archer MS

Boyd ES

Fain ES

Grove Park/Woodson ES

Scott ES

F.L. Stanton ES

Towns ES

Usher ES

White ES

# Atlanta Public Schools

## Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations (Posted May 7, 2012)

CSK/BEST academies will be open to citywide enrollment. **Students previously zoned to CS King and BEST no longer will have to opt out of the single gender academies in order to follow the Douglass feeder pattern. They will now have to opt in to attend the single gender academies.** Grove Park/Woodson will convert to split K-2 primary and 3-5 elementary schools. White will be closed; students from White will be rezoned to Grove Park/Woodson and F.L. Stanton. We have assembled a repurposing committee to consider options for the White Elementary School buildings.

### Grady High School Cluster

Inman MS

Centennial Place ES

Cook ES

Hope- Hill ES

Mary Lin ES

Morningside ES

Springdale Park ES

While there will be some pressure in the short term, rezoning of the cluster has minimized concerns with long term capacity at Grady HS; however, continued uncertainty about how to manage growth effectively at the middle school level continues to exist in this cluster. Under present projections, there will be no available building in the cluster large enough to contain two classes of Inman students, after the 2016-2017 school year. Growth rates must be monitored and solutions defined, during the next two – three years. Next year, the capacity of Inman will be met with the use of portables to give time to plan for any needed transitions.

Cook will be closed; students from Cook will be rezoned to Centennial Place, Hope-Hill, Parkside, D.H. Stanton and Whitefoord elementary schools. Centennial Place will receive some students from Bethune and Cook. Hope-Hill will be rezoned to Inman. Approximately \$15 million will be invested for select additions and renovations at Mary Lin; students will not be relocated. For Springdale Park, we are exploring an expansion. While there are a few issues left to resolve, feasibility seems likely from an architectural perspective.

# Atlanta Public Schools

## Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations (Posted May 7, 2012)

### Jackson High School Cluster

Coan MS

King MS

Benteen ES

Burgess-Peterson ES

Dunbar ES

East Lake ES

Parkside ES

D.H. Stanton ES

Toomer ES

Whitefoord ES

Maynard Jackson High School (MJHS) will be rebuilt at a cost of approximately \$30-40 million and will include an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program and an intensive process improvement focus. In order to keep students within the community, MJHS will use the present Coan facility as a relocation site during the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, M.L. King will realize significant investments from the district, including the International Baccalaureate Program, architectural modifications, and an intensive process improvement focus. East Lake will close and students will be rezoned to Toomer. Coan Middle School will relocate to the East Lake facility, during the 2012-2013 school year. APS will make significant investments into Coan, including the International Baccalaureate Program and an intensive process improvement focus. The 2012-2013 year will be spent working with the community to further refine the programmatic, faculty and leadership requirements for a "New Coan". Coan will move back to the Coan building when Jackson High School is completed. All of Cabbagetown, Grant Park and Summerhill will be zoned to Parkside.

### Mays High School Cluster

Young MS

Adamsville/Miles ES

Beecher Hills ES

Cascade ES

Peyton Forest ES

West Manor ES

The middle school must be appropriately sized to fit the high school. Young will be expanded for slightly less than \$10 million. Construction will begin in July of 2013. It is anticipated that students will not be relocated. Adamsville and Miles will be a split K-2 primary and 3-5

# Atlanta Public Schools

## Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations (Posted May 7, 2012)

elementary school. This will allow us to provide a more concentrated effort on early childhood education. The Beecher Hills zone will be expanded to include parts of Peyton Forest, and all of Beecher Hills will feed into Young Middle School.

### **North Atlanta High School Cluster**

Sutton MS

Bolton Academy (ES)

Brandon ES

Garden Hills ES

Jackson ES

E. Rivers ES

Smith ES

North Atlanta High School will transition to its new home in fall of 2013. Sutton will move to the present North Atlanta High School facility in fall of 2013. As Sutton nears capacity in its new home, the old Sutton site will be repurposed as a sixth grade academy for the cluster. E. Rivers will be rebuilt starting in fall of 2013; students will relocate to the existing Sutton site for 18 months. Brandon and Garden Hills populations will be monitored, and decisions on temporary versus long-term solutions will be determined at the appropriate time. All of Pine Hills will be zoned to Smith, in order to relieve overcrowding at Garden Hills.

### **South Atlanta High School Cluster**

Long MS

Cleveland Avenue ES

Dobbs ES

Heritage Academy (ES)

Humphries ES

Hutchinson ES

Long will be expanded and appropriately sized to fit the high school at a present estimated cost of slightly less than \$10 million. There will be boundary changes in this area.

# Atlanta Public Schools

## Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations (Posted May 7, 2012)

### Therrell High School Cluster

Bunche MS

Continental Colony ES  
Deerwood Academy ES  
Fickett ES  
Kimberly ES

The middle school must be appropriately sized to fit the high school. Bunche will be completely renovated starting in July of 2013 at a present cost of approximately \$25 million. Students will be temporarily relocated to the Archer Building during the 2013-14 school year. No major elementary school feeder patterns will be affected.

### Washington High School Cluster

Brown MS  
Kennedy MS

Bethune ES  
Connally ES  
Herndon ES  
M.A. Jones ES  
Venetian Hills ES

Brown Middle School will be expanded, if necessary, once the impact of declining out-of-zone transfers and growth rates are reviewed. The present cost of expansion is estimated to be slightly less than \$10 million. Construction will begin in July of 2013; students will not be relocated. Herndon will be closed; students will be rezoned to Bethune. Kennedy will be closed at the end of the 2013-14 school year. Rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders will attend Brown middle school beginning in the 2012-13 school year; rising 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders that currently attend Kennedy will remain at Kennedy through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Families with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who move into the new Washington cluster zone between August of 2012 and May of 2014 will have the option of enrolling their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students into Kennedy or Brown. **We will collaborate with the community, city, county and state officials to plan for a career academy at the Kennedy site beginning in 2015-2016.**



# Atlanta Public Schools

## Superintendent's Final Redistricting and Closure Recommendations (Posted May 7, 2012)

### **Additional Considerations:**

- All construction is contingent upon finances and the availability of adequate project management capability.
- There will be minor corrections to zone discrepancies where necessary.
- We have identified a building repurposing team, and we will develop protocols accordingly.

### **Next Steps:**

**Revised Final recommendation** – This is the revised final recommendation that will be submitted to the Atlanta Board of Education on April 30. We appreciate the large number of thoughtful and reflective comments we have received to date. The ownership of schools by parents has been most impressive and remains a key focus of our cluster organization. The best schools have engaged parents who demand excellence on a daily basis. We believe that the clean cluster models that we have put forward, if sustained over the planning period, will only increase and maintain this engagement.

**Final boundary maps are posted.**