

MERIA JOEL CARSTARPHEN



Meria Joel Carstarphen, Ed.D., is the superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools (APS) where she leads the district's nearly 52,000 students, 6,000 full-time employees, and 89 schools, and oversees the system's \$1 billion annual budget. Prior to serving in Atlanta, she was superintendent in diverse, major metropolitan public school districts, including Austin, Texas and Saint Paul, Minnesota.

In 2014, Dr. Carstarphen was charged with leading the transformation of APS. She has worked to restore organizational integrity and create a student-focused culture not driven by adult agendas. Through her leadership, the District has moved away from an over-reliance on high-stakes testing to emphasize whole-child development.

During her tenure, APS is seeing improvements:

- The District's graduation rate has increased by 20.8 percentage points from 59.1 percent in 2014 to 79.9 percent in 2018, which is the highest graduation rate the District has achieved since the state aligned with the national standard in 2012.
- The school system achieved its highest gains to-date in the percentage of students who scored proficient and above on all subjects on the 2018 Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade assessments (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) and the District narrowed the performance gap with the State on all four End-of-Grade subjects.
- APS achieved year-over-year gains in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on 18 of 24 (75%) End-of-Grade and End-of-Course assessments compared to gains in just over half (52%) in the previous year, and the District has seen longitudinal gains in the six End-of-Course subjects it has administered since the 2015 baseline year.
- The number of engaged employees increased significantly in 2018 (40%) compared to 2016 (29%), accounting for the largest year-over-year increase that APS has seen since this work began in 2014.
- Through the District's social and emotional learning initiative and its restorative practice efforts, the number of student arrests is down by 34% and student suspension rates have decreased overall.
- For the first time in seven years, APS is no longer disproportionate for the over suspension of African-American students with disabilities.
- The District increased the number of Career Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) pathway completers from 876 in 2017 to 1,083 in 2018 with 70.4% of the students earning an industry credential.
- APS' college-going rate has continued to increase, climbing seven percentage points from 2016 to 2017, and 60% of the 2017 on time graduate cohort were enrolled in two or four-year institutions.

As part of her community involvement, she serves on the boards of the Atlanta Ballet and the Woodruff Arts Center, and serves on the President's Council for Tulane University. In addition, she serves on the visiting committee for the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and as a Commissioner with the

Aspen Institute's AspenSEAD (Social Emotional and Academic Development). She is an honorary member of the Junior League of Atlanta, a member of Leadership Atlanta, and a member of the Rotary Club of Atlanta.

She is honored and humbled to be the recipient of numerous awards including: the American Federation of State and County Municipal Employees and the Georgia Federation of Public Service Employees Superintendent of the Year (2018); Newcomb Alumnae Association at Tulane University Outstanding Alumna Award (2018); Anti-Defamation League Torch of Liberty Award (2017); Atlanta Magazine's Women Making A Mark (2017); Georgia Trend Magazine Top 100 Most Influential Georgians (2017, 2016); Atlanta Business Chronicle Most Admired CEO Awards (2017, 2016, 2015); Cool Girls, Cool Woman of the Year (2016); YWCA's Academy Of Women Achievers Award (2015); Austin Chapter of the NAACP DeWitty/Overton Freedom Award (2013); Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce Superintendent of the Year Award (2011).

Dr. Carstarphen earned her doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, master of education degrees from Auburn University and Harvard University, and a bachelor of arts in political science and Spanish from Tulane University. She has also studied at the University of Seville, Spain, and University of Innsbruck, Austria. Dr. Carstarphen began her education career as a middle school teacher in her hometown of Selma, Ala. She also has worked with elementary-level children in Seville, Spain, and Caracas, Venezuela.

Dr. Carstarphen is passionate about public education, leading APS and living its mission every day: With a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career.