



Jackson Cluster Community Meetings Updated Frequently Asked Questions March/April 2014

(Note: This document will continue to be revised and updated as we receive additional questions throughout the process.)

1. What is the reason for this round of community meetings in the Jackson Cluster?

The community meetings in April and March are designed to give as many people as possible an opportunity to share their ideas about how best to strengthen middle grades education in the Jackson Cluster. Despite the hard work and effort of students, parents, educators and partners in this cluster, both traditional middle schools are underutilized. In the eastern part of the cluster, enrollment at Sammye E. Coan M.S. is approximately half the enrollment of Martin Luther King Jr. M.S., in the western part of the cluster.

Southeast Atlanta is growing – economically with new development and academically with the new Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School campus. We want the feeder middle schools – as well as the elementary schools – to match Jackson’s growing strength and community support.

2. Does this mean the K-8 proposal is no longer an option under consideration? If so, why not?

At the February meeting of the Atlanta Board of Education, Superintendent Erroll Davis recommended that the K-8 proposal be tabled. He made the recommendation after the district held five community meetings to explore the possibility of creating a K-8 pilot school in the Jackson Cluster. Several K-8 proposals were offered to resolve individual school issues, but none of them resolved clusterwide issues. During the meetings, parents, principals, community leaders and board members spoke candidly and raised valid concerns about the quality of our traditional middle schools. Therefore, the superintendent announced that he would begin the process to explore quickly and intensely the collective action that could be taken to strengthen our middle schools in this cluster.

3. Has the decision already been made about what will happen to Coan and/or King? Will my input really count?

No decisions have been made about the future of Coan or King. Several ideas were proposed by a taskforce of school and community leaders that met with the superintendent on March 13. A summary of the taskforce meeting is available for

review. Invited to attend the taskforce meeting were representatives from each school in the Jackson Cluster, including traditional and charter school principals, teachers of the year, representatives from the Parent Teacher Association and local school council, and community partners. [Taskforce participants provided preliminary options, from which the superintendent has prepared a preliminary proposal that is available for review.](#)

The goal now is for parents, employees and community members to provide feedback on the superintendent’s preliminary proposal. Please provide feedback at <http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/jacksonmiddlegrades> . The community’s feedback will then be collected, catalogued and reviewed by the superintendent to help shape the administration’s recommendation to the Atlanta Board of Education on April 14, 2014, the date of the next monthly board meeting.

4. What are the enrollment and capacity at each school in the Jackson Cluster?

Jackson Cluster of Schools Enrollment, Planning Capacity and Other Data								
School	Acres	Sq. Ft.	Current Enrollment KK-05 (Oct. 1, 2013)	Maximum Projected Enrollment	Year Enrollment is Projected to Reach Maximum	Planning Capacity @ 25/1	Sq. Ft. Per Student Seat	Number of Core Class- rooms
Benteen	4	68,440	256	267	2016-2017	600	114	24
Burgess- Peterson	8.3	85,836	296	398	2019-2020	875	98	35
Dunbar	5.3	98,959	393	413	2015-2016	500	198	20
Parkside	8.3	80,836	579	537	2014-2015	775	104	31
Stanton, D.H.	6	75,674	224	216	2014-2015	825	92	33
Toomer	10.6	70,012	311	302	2016-2017	700	100	28
Whitefoord	2.3	62,712	243	228	2014-2015	650	96	26
Coan	16.1	166,269	261	280	2022-2023	1,025	162	41
King	6.5	176,547	471	538	2018-2019	1,000	177	40
Jackson	25	314,251	960	926	2021-2022	1,500	210	60

Created by the operations division of Atlanta Public Schools, March 2013

5. People are moving back into the city and buying homes that are large enough to accommodate families with children. Does the district take all of this into account when projecting enrollment over a period of years?

Professionals at Atlanta Public Schools undertake regular analyses of the school-aged population in every neighborhood in Atlanta. We use data from the city of Atlanta planning department, the Atlanta Regional Commission, the U.S. Census

Bureau and other sources. We also take into account school enrollment over a period of years in order to develop projections that help guide the district's school staffing and planning. As new data become available, we update our projections.

6. In all, how many students live in the Coan and King attendance zones?

Approximately 440 students live in the Coan attendance zone, and approximately 715 students live in the King attendance zone. These numbers do **not** include those students who are home schooled or enrolled in private school.

7. How many children who are zoned to Coan and King actually attend these middle schools? How many middle school students attend the area public charter schools – Atlanta Neighborhood Charter, Drew Charter and Wesley International Academy?

The table below shows the percentage of students who are zoned to Coan or King but attend other schools – whether traditional public or public charter – in Atlanta Public Schools. The difficult reality is that only half of the students who live in the Coan attendance zone actually attend Coan M.S. Approximately 60 percent of the students who live in the King attendance zone actually attend King M.S. Our goal is to decide the actions we can take together to strengthen our middle schools and thereby attract more students and parents.

School Attending	Zoned School	
	Martin L. King Jr. MS	Sammye E. Coan MS
Atlanta Neighborhood Charter	18.80%	6.80%
Charles R. Drew Charter	3.90%	32.20%
Sammye E. Coan MS	0.14%	49.66%
Martin L. King Jr. MS	57.80%	0.68%
Wesley International Academy	6.13%	2.95%
Other APS schools (traditional and charter)	13.23%	7.71%

Source: Operations division of Atlanta Public Schools, March 2013

8. How many students attend the charter schools in the area?

School	Current Enrollment (As of Oct. 1, 2013)				Total Enrollment
	PK	ES	MS	HS	
Atlanta Neighborhood Charter (K-5) (6-8)	n/a	432	234	n/a	666
Drew Charter (PK) (K-5) (6-8) (9)	89	792	333	99	1,313
Wesley International Academy (K-5 (6-8)	n/a	546	162	n/a	708

Source: Georgia Department of Education

9. Will the district provide information about each school's academic performance?

Yes, currently, the school district is updating one-page fact sheets for each school. The fact sheets for the Jackson Cluster of schools will be available during [April](#). Each fact sheet will include students' test results, mobility rates and eligibility for the federal meals program.

10. I've heard a lot about the possibility of the IB program being expanded.

Would you tell us more about the program and its expansion?

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is administered by the IB Organization. When a school completes the organization's rigorous application process and becomes a fully authorized IB school, it means that school offers a highly competitive, globally recognized curriculum. An IB school challenges students and grooms their foreign language, leadership and civic skills. A major component of the IB learning experience is to inspire students to understand different cultures.

In 2013, Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School became an authorized IB World School, offering the program of study in grades 11 and 12. It would be academically advantageous to offer consecutive IB programs throughout the cluster so that students can move from one level to the next. For these reasons, district officials are exploring the possibility of expanding the IB program.

However, expansion will not happen overnight. The process of becoming an IB World School takes two to three years. It requires a considerable per-school investment of time, funding, training and community/partnership support. Jackson's five-year cost to implement IB is estimated to cost more than half a million dollars.

11. Coan students are temporarily attending school at the East Lake facility.

Where will Coan students attend school for the 2014-15 school year? Will they move back into their permanent location?

[If Coan and King are combined at the end of the 2013-14 school year, students of the newly formed middle school would be located at the Coan campus for one to two years. During this time, King would receive a major renovation \(\\$10 million to \\$20 million\) to reflect current design principles for educational facilities. Enhanced student supports and social services \(e.g., security, social workers, counselors, etc.\) would be staffed at the Coan building as part of an active plan to ensure a smooth transition for all students at the merged school.](#)

12. I heard that one of the middle schools is being considered for a career academy. What is a career academy?

No action has been taken on whether or not to make a school in the Jackson Cluster a career academy. Such an academy is only an idea at this point. A career offers young adults technical career education in a small, supportive learning environment that links students to technical colleges and future employers. Career academies offer students opportunities to explore careers that are not usually studied in a traditional environment. Most career academies enroll students in grades 9 through 12.

13. Part of the reason parents and students are not attracted to Coan and King has to do with the buildings' physical appearance. Will the district make physical improvements to our middle schools?

Many parents and community members have said that Coan and King are physically imposing structures that do not reflect current design philosophies for schools. We want to explore the types of improvements that can be made to either or both schools. For example, some individuals have said Coan's entryway and front office are awkwardly located. Others have said King has too much concrete and not enough natural lighting. Based on the feedback from these community meetings and outcome of this process, district officials will explore further the possibility of using SPLOST funds to make these schools the kind of learning environments in which parents and students can take great pride. District officials estimate that the cost to make meaningful physical improvements to one middle school site would range from \$10 million to \$20 million.

14. What happens next?

Based on the community's input, options will be collected, catalogued and reviewed by the superintendent to help shape the administration's recommendation to the Atlanta Board of Education in April. Following is the revised timeline of key dates:

- **March 13:** first taskforce meeting
- **March 18:** first Jackson Cluster community meeting (Coan M.S.)
- **Week of March 31:** online posting of preliminary proposal for community feedback
Please provide feedback at <http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/jacksonmiddlegrades>
- **April 3:** second Jackson Cluster community meeting (King M.S.)
- **April 4:** second taskforce meeting
- **Week of April 7:** spring break
- **April 14:** presentation of superintendent's recommendations to the Atlanta Board of Education