

**APS Conversation #6: Operating Models for School System Flexibility Options
North Atlanta High School: Stakeholder Questions**

September 4, 2014

General Comments:

- APS seems to be rushing on an important decision that requires significant detail. We should not rush through this process.
- We should not implement something new before everyone understands enough to contribute to the conversation and the decision.
- This is an important decision and there is so much information to consider and so many people who are not here.
- We need an explanation of what all these options are and what they really mean. Specifically, we need more detail than what is being covered here.
- There are too many children failing already to just change the curriculum again without evidence that it will make a difference.
- (Framed by Deputy Superintendent David Jernigan) This is a big decision with a lot of moving parts. APS will have to give significant attention to the details of how any model is implemented. However, there are two high level, almost philosophical, questions that have to be answered before we can really begin to fill in those details and they are:
 1. What do we believe about waivers? There are two views:
 - Waivers are not necessary to do what we want to do for children.
 - With the added flexibility of waivers we could really do some amazing things to educate children.
 2. What do we believe about how decisions should be made? There are two views:
 - Centralized decisions are likely to generate the best results for our system
 - Local control will move our schools toward increased effectiveness and our students toward higher achievement

Question from the Plenary

- What is the current APS structure and what offerings are available now? What does APS consist of?
 - Do you have technical schools?

- What is the relationship between APS and community colleges?
- How is the business community integrated/involved with APS schools?
- Does the current organization of APS do what we want it to do?
- Is it fair to conclude that the current state rules and regulations present barriers to innovation, savings and achievement?
- Why is this change happening now?
- What is with the timing on this? The state has offered systems options for years - why is there now this rush from APS to make a decision in 30 days?
- Why wasn't this discussed last year? Why are we now rushing through this complicated process?
- Shouldn't APS be granted an extension by the state due to the new superintendent and new Board of Education? Is anyone pursuing this possibility with the state?
- Where did these operating model options come from?
- How did the state choose these models?
- Did the state really look at all the models to pick something that is going to be best for our children? Is this another experiment? Does the state have evidence that these are the best operating models for us?
- Was this ever on a ballot for people to vote about it?
- Are there efforts underway from APS to get an extension?
- Is Georgia the only state with charter schools? Is it the only state considering a charter system?
- Is there flexibility if different clusters want to have different operating models? Or is this a system decision?
- Will there be an opportunity for APS to present the details of the proposal to stakeholders with an opportunity for community to respond/provide input before the proposal is submitted to the state? When and how will we learn of the details that APS would consider for each operating model?
- Would any of these models prevent development of what used to be called comprehensive high schools (vocational education)?

- Under the charter option it seems like there are 3 options (conversion charter school, charter system, system of charter schools). What are the differences between these options?
- For a System of Charter Schools or a Charter System, what would be the ramifications for existing charter schools?
- How will all of this be communicated to all the people so that we can give informed input?
- How is the budget allocated for transportation and safety in APS right now?
- Has APS looked at getting cameras on school buses?
- If the charter option is chosen would it be easier to get cameras on school buses? What about with the other operating system options?
- What flexibility does each operating model offer to use the budget differently than currently to address safety and other issues?
- What is the financial impact of picking one model over the others?
- What would the time frame be for making the change to a charter system
- Since the first two models require a 5 year contract with the state, does this mean this whole process has to happen again every 5 years?
- What is QBE?

Questions from the Small Group Discussions

- What is the APS vision and how would each model work to implement that vision?
- Does the Charter system allow teachers who are not tenured
- How centralized are decisions under the Charter System?
- What waivers will give schools the opportunity to better serve the community?
- Under the IE² will the local board keep control over salary and employment decisions?
- Will a choice now lock the system into a position for all future situations?
- Can you please present the information in lay reader's language?
- What would it look like if the state takes over schools in the fifth year? What is the impact? What happens if the state takes control of a school?

- Can school continue to use the charters that have?
- What happens if a charter school is failing?
- Will we continue to have the option of creating charter schools?
- Will disadvantaged communities have the same participation as a more advantaged community?