

## **Atlanta College and Career Academy (ACCA)**

### **I. Program Overview**

Atlanta Public Schools has been working with stakeholders since 2011 to design and create a college and career academy (CCA) charter school solution for the district and its students. Under the guidance of new leadership and in alignment with the 2015-2020 strategic plan, the CCA plan is being integrated into the charter system operating model as a strategy for district-wide improvement. The planning process for the CCA has leveraged many of the same staff and stakeholders for data gathering, public hearings, analysis, and planning, which will continue through the 2015-2016 school year.

### **The Model**

APS has partnered with Atlanta Technical College (ATC) as the initial, lead post-secondary partner to establish the first such CCA in APS on the campus of ATC. The CCA is also partnering with the Metropolitan Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MACOC) to attract business partners who will mentor and serve as potential employers for our graduates. This CCA will embrace the guidelines separately developed by the state since 2007 for charter systems and for college and career academies. The Atlanta College and Career Academy (ACCA) will provide quality educational opportunities that will increase the percentage of students graduating from Atlanta Public Schools and help them make successful transitions to postsecondary education and career pathways that offer advancement and growth potential.

The Atlanta College and Career Academy, or ACCA, will have the following characteristics:

- Georgia nonprofit corporate status
- A governing Board of Directors, with the majority of Directors from the business community. The Board will include K-12 and college educators and will have authority over policy, finance, personnel, partnerships and curriculum
- A dedicated CEO directly accountable to the Board of Directors
- A renovated, centralized, and well-branded facility on the ATC campus
- COMPASS test preparation beginning in Middle School
- Initial curriculum pathways (to be expanded as needed) in technical college certificate programs determined by an analysis of local, state and national labor trends and industry needs
- A combination of secondary CTAE electives and post-secondary dual enrollment offerings in the above programs at ATC and, later, at other partnering colleges and universities (also to be expanded as needed)
- Secondary CTAE elective offerings as needed and negotiated by the educational partners
- Outstanding secondary and post-secondary faculty and student support staff
- A dedicated transportation solution to ensure transportation is not a barrier to participation for interested families
- A budget that supplements secondary and post-secondary public funds with private assets secured and managed by the Board of Directors and CEO

- Work-Based Learning opportunities developed by a cadre of committed public and private stakeholders that include job shadowing, mentoring, unpaid and paid internships, and paid apprenticeships for students and externships for faculty
- A culture of achievement focused around the school's mission of "securing a next generation workforce for Atlanta of APS graduates capable of working and succeeding in a profession of their choice anywhere in the world"
- A commitment to continuous, data-driven improvement from the governing board and all administration, faculty and staff, stakeholders, parents and students

### **Rationale**

The adoption of Senate Bills 2 and 132 on April 30 will revolutionize Georgia's dual enrollment program, allowing high school students to take college courses and earn simultaneous credit in high school and college. Under the new law, eligible high school students can simultaneously earn a high school diploma while working toward a technical college or associate's degree.. Through the CCA, students will remain enrolled in their APS high school and will never pay tuition or fees (as a result of the Georgia Hope Grant) for their college credit earned at ATC (which is transferrable to any technical college in Georgia). Academic credit earned at ATC will transfer to any University System of Georgia institution and the diplomas earned will count toward the graduation rate of the student's home high school.

More specifically, a CCA will advance APS' progress toward the goals outlined in this charter system application in the following ways:

1. The current graduation rate of APS's high schools is under 60% and behind that of the state average. The graduation rate at eight high schools has decreased since 2013, and some high schools have graduation rates in the 40s. Subgroup graduation rates, especially among low-income students and students of color, are significantly lower than that of the state average.

The 33 college and career academy charter schools in operation across Georgia have dual enrollment graduation rates approaching 100%, and those graduation rates are applied to the percentage of graduates for the home school, rather than the CCA as a separate entity. As such, the CCA would increase graduation rates at many of our schools by meeting the needs of our students who may be likely to drop out of a traditional program.

2. The CCA will enhance the proposed cluster signature programs by offering continuity for existing CTAE pathways and providing high-quality alternative programs that may not be a part of a cluster's signature program.

3. Because coursework through the CCA can be offered to students from a mix of grade levels (and even adults) and home campuses, it allows high-interest programming that would be otherwise unaffordable at a single site. More, because the course offerings leverage the resources and expertise of Atlanta Technical College's facilities, materials,

and staff, the CCA provides a course of study that could not be afforded at a traditional high school.

4. Students who earn their diploma through the CCA will have simultaneously completed the majority of college credits required to earn a two-year degree, as well as technical certificates of study and an industrial certification. For those students interested in pursuing a career in a field offered by the CCA, they will have completed the required college coursework completed in the CCA tuition-free, significantly reducing the total financial burden of a college degree.

5. Research shows that career and technical courses provide a relevant and high-interest modality for learning and practicing core academic concepts. The increased depth of understanding and heightened interest from students enrolled at the CCA will ensure students have access to an instructional method that will facilitate their mastery. Connecting high school graduation to career readiness through college performance may shift how students choose to complete high school and jump start their post-secondary careers as gainfully employed, productive citizens.

### **Courses of Study**

The Atlanta College and Career Academy is proposing to begin offering certain programs as early as 2016-2017. The proposed initial curriculum pathways are based on industry growth trends, employment forecasting, and workforce education needs based on data from city, state and federal agencies.

- Automotive Collision Repair
- Avionics
- Barbering
- Carpentry
- Computer Information Systems (CISCO Networking)
- Construction
- Cosmetology
- Drafting
- Early Childhood Care and Education
- Electronics
- Health Information Management
- Pharmacy Technology
- Plumbing/Pipe-Fitting Technology
- Supply Chain Management
- Design and Media Production Technology
- Welding

## **Estimated Enrollment –**

	9	10	11	12	Total
Yr 1	5	5	40	50	100
Yr 2	5	5	65	75	150
Yr 3	10	10	100	100	220
Yr 4	20	25	125	150	320
Yr 5	25	50	150	200	425

## **II. Goals and Waivers**

### **Academic Goals**

The CCA is an innovative strategy designed both to address the academic program and culture imperatives of the strategic plan. By providing an innovative, relevant means of college and career readiness that students across the district can access, the CCA will offer a rigorous path to high school graduation and dual enrollment that is currently unavailable. Although the CCA will be an independent entity with its own governing board, executive director, and non-profit organization, students will remain simultaneously enrolled at their home high school, thus increasing the graduation rate and success of that high school through the success of its CCA students.

Because ACCA will be organized in the same model as other Georgia CCAs, the success of each student will positively impact the graduation rate of each student's home high school. Though ACCA will be a program and will thus not appear on the state's CCRPI report (nor be considered in the Beating the Odds fixed regression model), ACCA will calculate and report to APS, the state and its own stakeholders its own CCRPI scores and eligibility to earn a Beating the Odds designation. By meeting and exceeding the CCRPI and BTO goals below, the CCA will positively impact the CCRPI scores of its feeder high schools and the system as a whole.

Academic Goal 1: The first academic goal for ACCA in the first charter term is for  $\geq 90\%$  of enrolled students to earn their high school diploma through the CCA.

Academic Goal 2: The second academic goal for ACCA in the first charter term is for the CCRPI calculated for the total students enrolled to meet exceed the CCRPI of the state.

Academic Goal 3: The third academic goal for ACCA in the first charter term is for enrolled students to achieve at a rate that would earn a Beating the Odds designation on Georgia's new BTO fixed effect regression model in each year of operation in the charter term.

### **Organizational Goals**

In addition to the academic goals outlined above, ACCA has set rigorous organizational goals to guide the school's operation.

Organizational Goal 1: In order to help as many APS high school students test “program ready” on the Technical College System of Georgia’s COMPASS exam (and therefore qualify for dual enrollment at ATC ), ACCA will work with APS to offer COMPASS test preparation to all 8<sup>th</sup> graders annually.

Organizational Goal 2: Through communication and outreach to parents and students across the district, ACCA will meet or exceed its annual enrollment targets for each year of the charter term.

Organizational Goal 3: In conjunction with APS, ACCA will offer annual professional development to dual enrollment instructors from Atlanta Technical College to reinforce their understanding of instruction for adolescents and related competencies.

Organizational Goal 4: The ACCA Board of Directors will participate in an annual retreat wherein directors participate in training, data analysis, and an evaluation of the ACCA CEO.

### **Financial Goals**

A critical element of ACCA’s organizational health will be sound financial practices and resource management. To this end, the board will maintain a finance committee who will oversee the regular review and analysis of organizational finances. The goals outlined below will ensure the financial health of the entity.

Financial Goal 1: ACCA will demonstrate sound financial planning and management as verified through an annual audit conducted by an external CPA.

Financial Goal 2: In order to supplement the public funding for ACCA and support the needs of students, ACCA will raise \$100,000 in external support for each year of the charter term.

### **Waivers**

As a college and career academy, ACCA will leverage the broad flexibility waiver to afford the innovations described herein. Examples of elements of the model that require a waiver include but are not limited to the following:

1. SBOE 160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees – to provide instruction flexibly when needed
2. Personnel Required: 160-5-1-.22; § 20-2-290; § 20-2-167 – to enable ATC instructors who may not have the credentials for K-12 education to administer coursework
3. 160-3-3-.04 Professional Learning and 160-3-3.10 PLU Program Approval; O.C.G.A. 20-2-201(c) – the professional development to be offered the instructional staff will come from ATC and be supplemented by ACCA as needed
4. 160-4-2-.20 Course Descriptions (post 2008); 160-4-2-.02; 160-4-2-.03 (as it relates to methods of delivery of certain funded subjects) – to modify and create new courses, if necessary, at both high school and college levels to meet defined needs.

### III. Governance

ACCA's founders will appoint the founding governing board of no fewer than nine members in the planning year (FY 2015—2016). Board members will be appointed for a term of two years, eligible for re-election for up to three consecutive terms (six total years). The founding board will be elected to staggered terms, with half of the directors serving three-year terms and half serving two-year terms.

#### *Composition*

The directors will include the following:

- Two (2) representatives from the APS Charter System nominated by the Superintendent and Atlanta Board of Education. (Neither the Superintendent nor any elected member of the BOE may be nominated.)
- Two (2) representative from ATC nominated by the college president (who may not self-nominate).
- Five (5) business representative from each of the following categories in the Atlanta area: Large Business (1000+ employees), Emerging Technology Business (any size), Medium/Small Business (any business not classified as Large), Healthcare (any size), and a Business Director At Large. MACOC will nominate business representatives. *Two business representatives must also be parents of APS high school students.*

The Board of Directors will also include ex-officio members to represent the needs and supports for the entity, including but not limited to:

- Superintendent of APS,
- the President of ATC,
- the President of MACOC,
- the principal of any interested high school
- one parent designee from each high school with enrolled students (designated by the principal of that school)
- one student designee from each high school with enrolled students (also designated by the principal of that school)

#### *Officers*

The governing Board of Directors will elect officers at its organizational meeting. Officers will serve for a one-year term and may succeed themselves for one additional year. Following one year not served as an officer, a previously elected officer can be re-nominated to serve as an officer. The Board of Directors will elect the following officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

#### *Election and Removal*

The initial Board of Directors will adopt bylaws that describe causes for removing a Director, and a specific process for accepting the resignation of a Director and replacing Directors. Violating the conflict of interest policy and missing a set number of consecutive meetings will be among the causes for removal. Any Director may be removed at any regular, special or annual meeting of the Board of Directors by the

affirmative vote of a majority of all the Directors then in office if notice of intention to act upon such matter shall have been given in the notice calling such a meeting. A removed Director's successor may be elected at the same meeting to serve the unexpired term. A Director may resign at any time by delivering a signed letter to the Chairman.

Any vacancy in the Board of Directors arising at any time and from any cause, including, without limitation, the authorization of an increase in the number of Directors, may be filled for the unexpired term of an existing Director, or for a designated term for an additional Director, at any meeting of the Board of Directors by a vote of a majority of the Directors then in office; provided, that if the appointment is to fill a vacancy of an existing Director, the replacement Director must fall within the same classification as the Director being replaced.

#### *Roles and Responsibilities*

Roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board will include hiring and evaluating the CEO; tracking, meeting or surpassing charter contract goals (or in the case of APS Charter System goals, helping to meet those goals); establishing ACCA policies; approving budgets and the managing dedicated or donated funds in support of ACCA; approving timely reports to authorizers; and overseeing the continuous improvement of the ACCA partnership.

Members of the ACCA Steering Committee will participate in and support orientation of the initial Board of Directors at the organizational meeting of the Directors. The Board of Directors will comply with the annual training requirements of OCGA § 20-2-230. Training will include topics related to career pathways offered at ACCA in order to increase the awareness of each industry.

The initial Board of Directors will comply with ATC's conflict of interest policy. The initial Board of Directors will establish and implement a conflict of interest policy for the Directors and ACCA staff that must include, but is not limited to, the following provisions:

1. No member of the Board of Directors will engage in or have an undisclosed financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with his or her duties and responsibilities.
2. Members of the Board of Directors will not engage in work of any type where the source of information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information obtained through ACCA.
3. Members of the Board of Directors will not directly supervise, evaluate, or recommend for continuation of contract or termination of employment a spouse; parent, son or daughter; parent-in-law; son-in-law or daughter-in-law.
4. No part of the net earnings of ACCA may inure to the benefit of any individual member of the Board of Directors.

5. The officers and members of the Board of Directors will not receive any salary or any other compensation for their services, but by resolution of the Board, sums may be authorized to reimburse them for expenditures incurred in connection with the performance of their official duties, as the Board may determine.

The CEO is responsible for resolving grievances and conflicts. In the event that the CEO must recuse himself or herself from the process, the Directors are responsible for considering and resolving such grievances or conflicts.

## **IV. Operations**

### **Staff and Leadership**

ACCA will be operated by the Board of Directors and the CEO will manage the day-to-day operations of the entity. The board will not contract with an Education Service Provider or Charter Management Organization.

The CEO will be hired and evaluated annually by the governing board. All staff will employees of Atlanta Technical College or other partners, and the CEO is the only staff member anticipated to be hired at this time; however, the board reserves the right to add staff as needed.

### **Admissions**

Students will enroll by registering for dual enrollment courses offered by ATC. Students will follow APS rules for registration. Students must also test “Program Ready” to enroll by passing the COMPASS exam (this is a post-secondary requirement). Any APS student may enroll beginning their freshman year, and the attendance zone is all of APS.

ACCA will use state permitted enrollment priorities in the following order.

1. A sibling of a student enrolled in the start-up career academy
2. A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the career academy or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the career academy.

If a course is over subscribed during registration, ACCA will make every attempt to accommodate full enrollment without using a lottery. Flexibility includes adding courses, instructors and/or offering courses at high schools in addition to the ATC campus.

ACCA will report on the demographic status of its enrollment annually to the governing board and all stakeholders. If there is a variance from APS’s demographics, the CEO will take steps to correct any real or perceived gaps in enrollment and student recruitment. ACCA will always be an academy of choice, and its enrollment will always be students who have voluntarily chosen to attend and met post-secondary enrollment qualifications.

ACCA’s planners are aware of the much lower than average performance of some APS high schools, and APS expects to work with APS stakeholders to propose recruitment and

marketing programs to enhance college and career preparation from targeted lower performing APS HS clusters.

**Facilities**

The main location of ACCA will be in the former Junior Achievement building on the ATC Campus at 1560 Metropolitan Parkway SW, Atlanta, GA 30310. This facility currently has 30,000 square feet of space backing up to the Downtown Connector and is bus accessible. The facility will require extensive renovation. With the support of the Technical College System of Georgia's GCCAP facility grant, ATC plans to renovate this facility into a two-story, 60,000 square foot academy and to add parking.

Until such time as this facility is open - and as needed once it is open - all ATC's classrooms and labs will be used to provide instruction, counseling and administration.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be included in the TCSG GCCAP grant application to cover all operational and facility-related issues.