



ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

DOUGLASS CLUSTER PLAN



2016-2020

The Douglass Cluster will inspire scholars to love learning and will provide every student with the academic foundation that assures they are college and career ready.

STRONG STUDENTS | STRONG SCHOOLS | STRONG STAFF | STRONG SYSTEM

Letter from the Superintendent & Board



Dear Staff, Students, Families and Parents of the Douglass Cluster,

We truly believe APS stands at an exciting transformational moment. This school year, APS has put a new Charter System operating system in motion in conjunction with our cluster planning. Through these efforts, APS stakeholders will become more engaged in their schools and develop creative solutions to give more educational opportunities for all students.

More specifically, APS has created a collaborative alignment framework that gives you, your schools and the Douglass Cluster more autonomy and flexibility to do what you know works best in your individual classrooms and for your students. Over the past year, we engaged in a cluster-planning process that allows us to create for each cluster a flagship high school with strong academic signature programs and then backward map that curriculum and approach to Pre-K and elementary school so that it builds up to a producing a successful high school graduate.

As a cluster, Douglass has created a list of priorities that align with the four pillars of the district's Strategic Plan: Academics, Talent Management, Systems and Resources, and Culture. These are explained in more detail on Page 8. Further, Douglass has adopted the STEM curriculum as its Signature Theme. This integrated curriculum coordinates the teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics through problem solving, discovery, and exploratory project/problem-based learning. This student-centered approach taps into the natural passion to learn and is a powerful method for developing the curiosity, skills and knowledge in college and career.

The work you see within this Douglass Cluster Plan came through extensive cluster engagement efforts that involved every one of you, and that must continue as we all move forward preparing every Atlanta Public Schools student for college and career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meria J. Carstarphen".

Dr. Meria J. Carstarphen
Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Courtney D. English".

Courtney D. English
Chair, Atlanta Board of Education

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Letter from the Douglass Cluster Planning Team

Dear Staff, Students, Families, and Partners of the Douglass Cluster,

Over the last two years, the Douglass Cluster planning team has diligently worked towards developing a vision, mission and strategic plan for moving our schools towards excellence. We share passion for the work, resilience towards change, and a strong conviction that our students can achieve. We share a vision that each student who leaves the Douglass Cluster will be prepared to engage as an active citizen in our global world. We are aware that to achieve our vision we will need a cohesive community working together towards one mission. This plan is only the first step towards the necessary change that we know needs to happen in the Douglass Cluster.

Our Douglass graduates will be innovators, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers who are engaged in learning and equipped with the 21st century skills necessary to be ready for life beyond Douglass High School. Our students will stand on a pillar of confidence strengthened by relationships with their teachers, community members, and family members. Our academic program will lay the foundation needed to develop a rigorous transdisciplinary STEM program which will develop the intellectual, personal, and social emotional skills of our students. With inspiring educators and community partnerships we will build the capacity needed to bring our vision to life.

This work is impossible without the support, feedback, and hard work from our community. We look forward to continuing this journey with you.

Sincerely,

The 2015 Douglass Cluster Planning Team

* The Douglass Cluster Planning Team consists of principals, parents, and community representatives from each of the cluster schools.



About the Douglass Cluster

The Douglass Cluster is committed to fostering the social, emotional and educational success for all students. The Douglass Cluster currently serves more than 3,600 students and is comprised of seven elementary schools (Boyd, Fain, F.L. Stanton, Scott, Towns, Usher/Collier, and Woodson Park), one middle school (Harper-Archer), and one high school (Douglass).

Sensitive to serving families within inner city schools, the cluster is committed to providing a safe haven that is conducive to continuous rigorous learning. The rich historical environment has produced many successful professionals. As a progressive cluster with a clear focus, the schools have the opportunity to dramatically change the trajectory of our children with commitment and hard work. The cluster will change the world starting with our community of children.

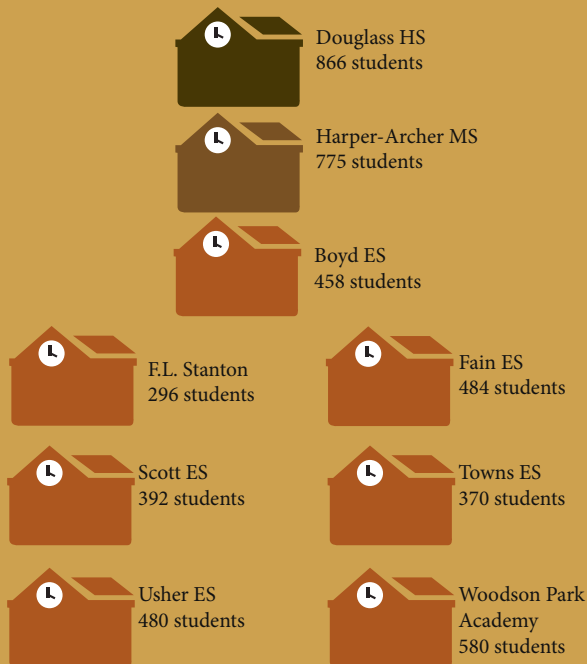
This change begins with the implementation of the Turnaround Strategy as well as the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) signature program for PK-12 students.



Douglass Cluster Fast Facts

Student Enrollment	3,635
Elementary Schools	7
Middle School	1
High School	1
Graduation Rate	58.7%
Students with Disabilities	9%
English Language Learners	3%
Black	94.32%
Hispanic	4.95%
Native American	0.13%
Mixed Race	0.40%
White	0.17%

Enrollment (2015)

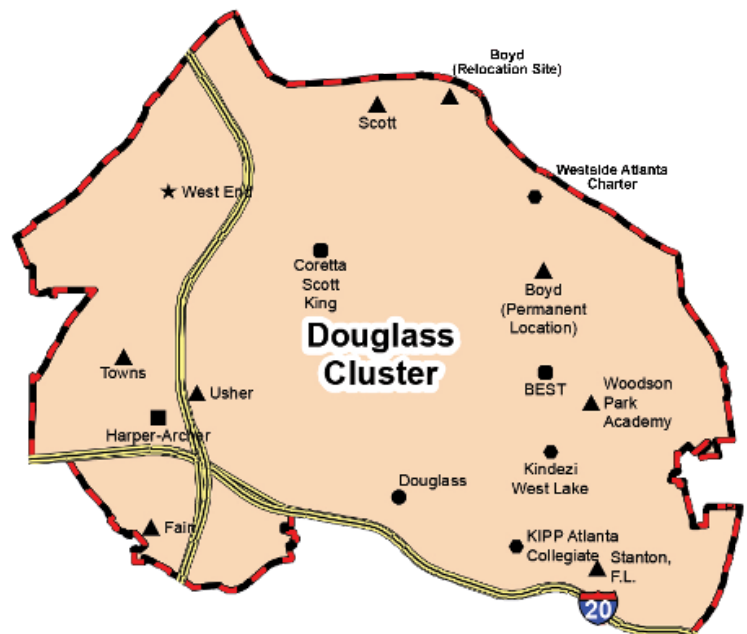


Douglass Strengths



- Strong Alumni
- Strong extra-curricular programs
- Cultural Benefits
- Diverse Community
- Desire to Improve
- Strong Community
- Legacy, history and culture
- Strong Business Partners

The Douglass cluster recognizes and celebrates the importance of community engagement and collaboration in creating innovative and rich learning programs. While concentrated poverty and changing student needs is prevalent, the Douglass cluster has the strong desire and will to improve students outcomes in all subject areas for all grade levels, while also providing social emotional supports to build character and improve school culture. With the theme of Douglass pride and legacy, the cluster has leveraged their strengths in alumni and community engagement; strong extra-curricular programs; and turnaround strategies to build a comprehensive cluster plan designed to inspire scholars to love learning and to provide every student with the academic foundation that assures they are college and career ready.



Executive Summary

The Douglass Cluster Strategic Plan is the result of Atlanta Public Schools' support for each cluster community to create its own vision and path to success in alignment with the APS Strategic Plan. With input from across the community, this plan outlines the path to Douglass Cluster providing rigorous instruction and customized support to prepare all students for academic achievement, graduation and successful career options.

This strategic plan was developed by the cluster planning team, comprised of one principal and one designee from each cluster school. Team members reviewed school data, stakeholder surveys and evolving best practices to determine the priorities that will position the cluster to meet its goals. Access to these opportunities is increased through strengthened foundational skills and a cluster-wide focus on Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM). The Turnaround Strategy will enable Douglass Cluster elementary schools to focus on building those foundational skills and provide targeted academic and wraparound support to the students with the most needs.

In addition, community leaders agree that innovative initiatives as well as strong educational standards are vital to this strategic plan. It is our intent that through STEM education we will produce critical thinkers, increase science literacy and enable the next generation of innovators.

STEM education in the Douglass Cluster will incorporate several researched-based best practices proven to improve student achievement such as: inter-disciplinary instruction, problem -and project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, laboratory investigations, research projects, and real-world experiences via work-based learning opportunities. Through a cluster-wide approach to high-quality professional learning for teachers, classrooms across the cluster will implement interdisciplinary, rigorous and engaging curriculum that prepares students for success.

It is imperative that we make building a strong foundation and implementing STEM education as a top priority for our students and community. The Douglass Cluster has a rich history with a strong legacy, and this plan will build on that legacy for our community of children.

Mission:

The Douglass Cluster mission is to inspire scholars to love learning and to provide every student with the academic foundation that assures they are college and career ready.

Vision:

Our vision is provide rigorous instruction and customized support to prepare all students for academic achievement, graduation and successful career options.



Douglass Cluster Student Data

An Opportunity for Change

The Douglass legacy has been challenged by the concentrated poverty and changing student needs in recent years. Student performance demonstrates that the academic program needs to be strengthened and support for students need to be increased.

Cluster schools must improve student outcomes on assessments in all subject areas for all grade levels, with a focus on math, literacy, and students with special needs.

APS is implementing a bold strategy to increase student achievement dramatically and to transform its lowest-performing schools through comprehensive direct services to students, recruitment and development of top turnaround leaders and teachers, school operation changes and opportunities for innovative school design.

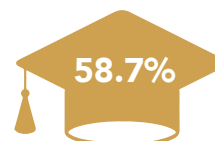
CCRPI (2015)

	School Name	Achievement Points	Progress Points	CCRPI Score
	Usher/Collier Heights Elementary School	20.1	40	68.9
	Boyd Elementary School	10.1	28.9	43.2
	Douglass High School	19.6	33.2	57.8
	F. L. Stanton Elementary School	15.9	28.8	48.5
	Fain Elementary School	15.1	30.3	49.7
	Harper-Archer Middle School	14.1	27.1	44.5
	Scott Elementary School	16.6	31.8	53.9
	Towns Elementary School	15.8	31	52.3
	Grove Park Intermediate School	14.2	29.2	47.7
* Merged with Woodson Primary to create Woodson Park Academy for 2016-2017				

CCRPI Description

The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) is Georgia's annual 100-point scale for measuring how well its schools are preparing students. The CCRPI includes four main components: Achievement, Progress, Achievement Gap, and Challenge Points. The table include two major components: Achievement and Progress. Achievement addresses student performance on state assessments, graduate rate, and other measures of college and career readiness. Progress measures whether students are growing compared to academically-similar students across Georgia.

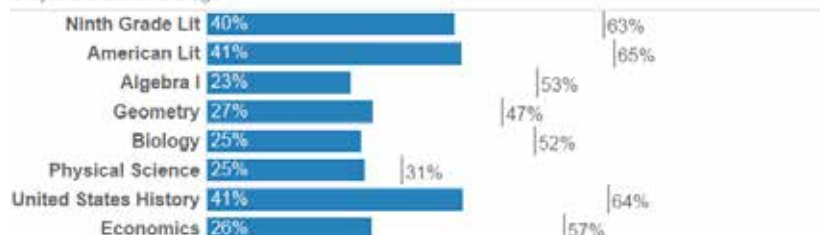
Graduation Rate
(2015)



Milestones

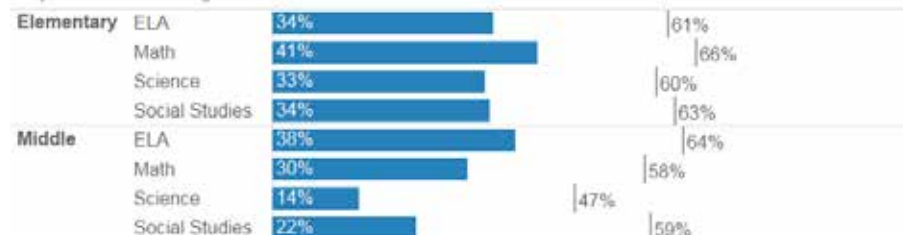
Milestones Percentage Developing or Higher: Douglass Cluster

Grey line is district average



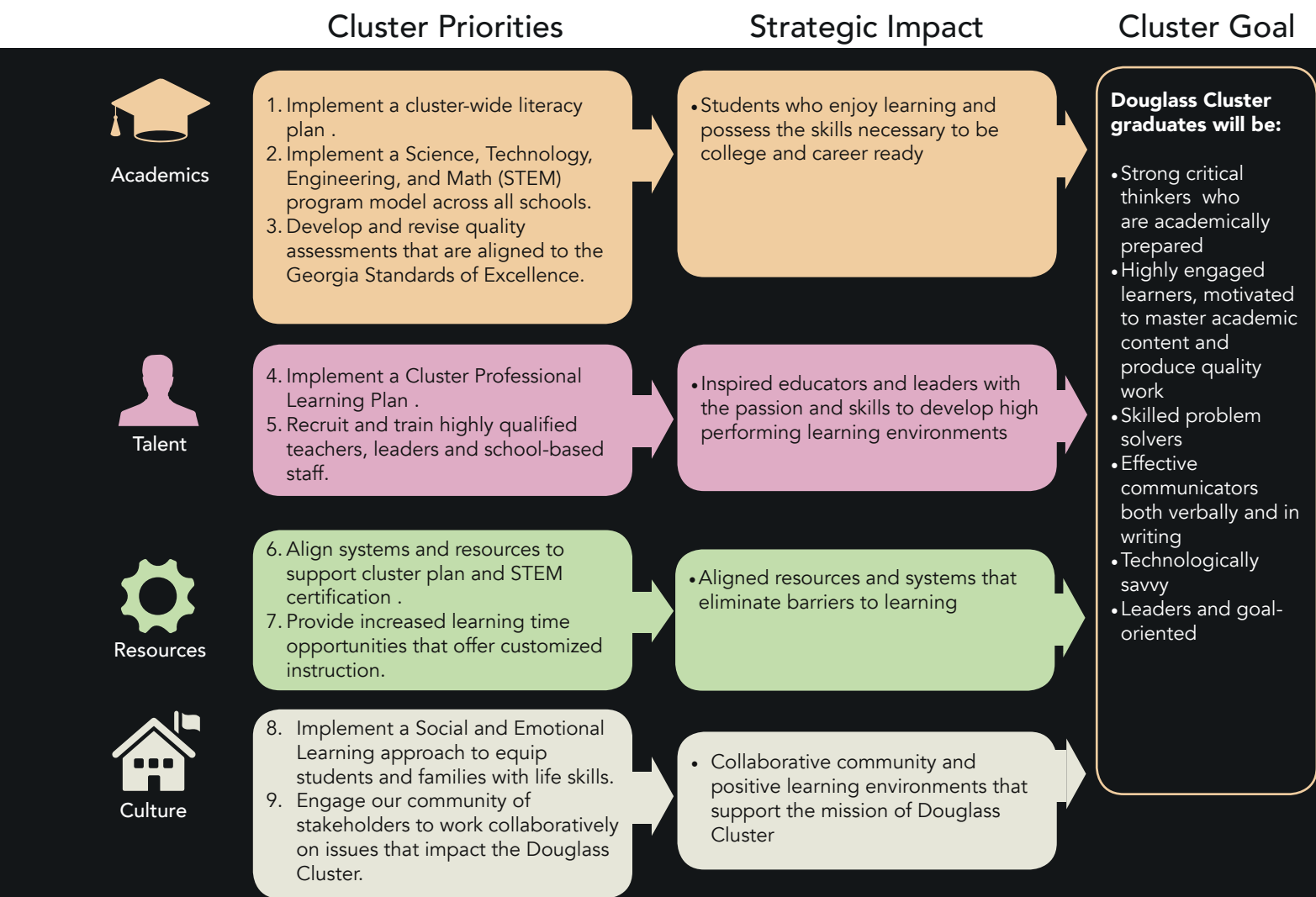
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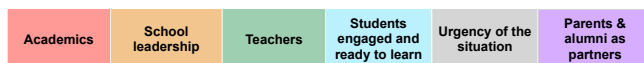
Douglass Cluster Strategy Map

The Douglass Cluster Plan is organized into cluster-specific priorities under each of the four goals of the APS 2015-2020 strategic plan: academics, talent, resources, and culture. The strategies detailed on subsequent pages are organized under each priority to align the cluster toward a common goal for graduates. School level GO Teams and the Cluster Advisory Team will continue to convene to review implementation, as well as progress towards goals.



School Turnaround Strategy

Atlanta Public Schools is implementing a bold strategy to increase student achievement dramatically and to transform its lowest-performing schools through comprehensive direct services to students, recruitment and development of top turnaround leaders and teachers, school operations changes and education partnership opportunities. The APS Turnaround Strategy is based upon six key themes shown below and has a tiered approach to identify which schools receive a certain level of needed support:



School Turnaround Strategy

Lay strong instructional foundation for all schools

- District-wide instructional framework and consistent theory of action
- District-wide balanced assessment to support instruction
- Improved quality and consistency of all teacher and leader professional learning
- District-wide parent and alumni engagement strategy

Intensive Support

Build leader and teacher capacity; help children to be ready to learn; reinforce literacy and math skills

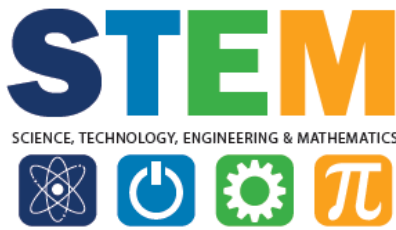
- Targeted professional learning for school leadership teams and teachers focused on school turnaround
- Recruiting and placing strong turnaround leaders
- Accelerating and strengthening wraparounds to support non-academic needs
- Resource-efficient strategies to reinforce literacy, math skills

Targeted Interventions

Increase time and focus on foundational skills; deepen capacity building

- Menu of options for schools to deliver intensive, high quality student learning time: reading/math specialists, high dosage tutoring, extended day/year and/or vacation academies
- Additional investment in capacity building (e.g., dedicated professional learning time)

STEM



Based on feedback from parents, students, teachers, and community members, the Douglass Cluster will formalize the Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) focus through STEM certification for every school in the cluster. Schools are aligning coursework and curricula for a seamless K-12 STEM program that builds critical thinking skills, leverages university partnerships, provides rigorous academic curriculum, and meets the demands of a new workforce.

Why STEM?

- STEM occupations are projected to grow by 17% from 2008 – 2018, compared to 9.8% growth for non-STEM occupations.
- STEM workers earn 26% more than non-STEM counterparts.
- STEM schools report higher achievement with an average of 82% of elementary school students meeting math/science standards, compared to 69% in non-STEM schools.

A K-12 signature program for the whole cluster ensures consistent practices across grade bands, continuity throughout academics and electives to build knowledge from one grade to the next, the capacity to plan across schools, and a necessary focus on improving math and science instruction to increase access to early college opportunities at the high school.

The STEM education focus incorporates several researched-based best practices proven to improve student achievement, including:

- Inter-disciplinary instruction — students practice concepts from different content areas simultaneously
- Inquiry-based and project-based learning
- Collaborative learning
- Laboratory investigations
- Research projects
- Real-world experiences via work-based learning opportunities
- Access to Advanced Placement (AP); college Dual Enrollment; and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs at the high school level

STEM Implementation Chart

Program	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Boyd ES	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation			STEM Certification
Fain ES	STEM Consideration	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation		
F.L. Stanton ES	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation			STEM Certification
Scott ES	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation			STEM Certification
Towns ES	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation			STEM Certification
Usher Collier ES	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation			STEM Certification
Woodson Park Academy	STEM Consideration	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation		
Harper-Archer MS	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation			STEM Certification
Douglass HS	STEM Planning	STEM Implementation			STEM Certification



This priority ensures every student is prepared to graduate college- and career-ready through K-12 alignment to the skills students need. The pursuit of Science, Technology, Engineering & Math certification for each school creates consistency in curriculum and instruction across schools that supports cluster-wide strategies and professional learning.

Because the inquiry-based, interdisciplinary approach builds a foundation for students that will support any career path they pursue, the STEM program is a strong choice for all students. Rapid growth in STEM careers and partnerships with local colleges and universities to provide college level coursework in high school mean Douglass graduates will have a competitive edge over peers.

Improved core content knowledge, especially literacy, for each school is critical to this priority. Increased support to build the academic foundation is necessary for long-term success.

Priority #1: Implement a cluster wide literacy plan

Strategies

A. Increase the availability and use of informational text to connect literacy across curriculum.

B. Implement a balanced literacy framework.

Outcomes

- Improved foundational literacy skills for all students
- Consistent standards-based instruction delivered in each classroom
- Support for teachers to provide remediation services for students

Priority #2: Implement a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program model across all schools

Strategies

A. Develop cluster implementation plan for STEM certification.

B. Implement integrated, project- and problem-based learning projects for grade-level and school-wide implementation.

C. Embed career exposure and real-life connections into curriculum.

Outcomes

- Consistency in expectations for STEM development
- Improved rigor and expectations
- Access to curriculum that supports 21st century learning
- Increased student engagement in learning
- Development of students awareness of career opportunities



Priority #3: Develop and revise quality assessments that are aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence

Strategies

A. Provide professional development and support in performance-based assessment.

B. Create Douglass Instructional Coach collaboration meeting to create assessments and support instruction.

Outcomes

- Alignment of classroom expectations to Georgia Standards of Excellence
- Authentic implementation of assessments to inform instruction
- Increased rigor of student's performance
- Stronger classroom support for implementation of best practices in assessment

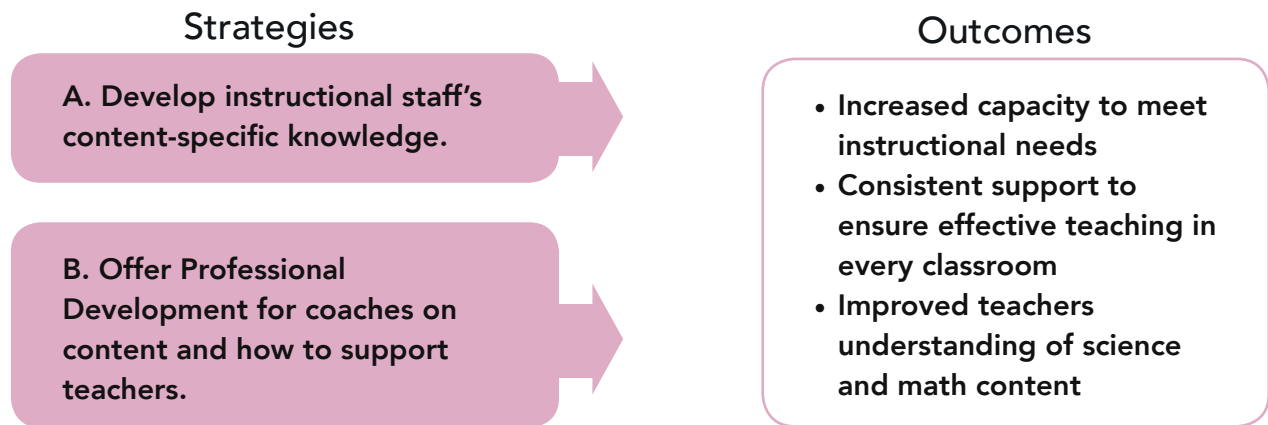




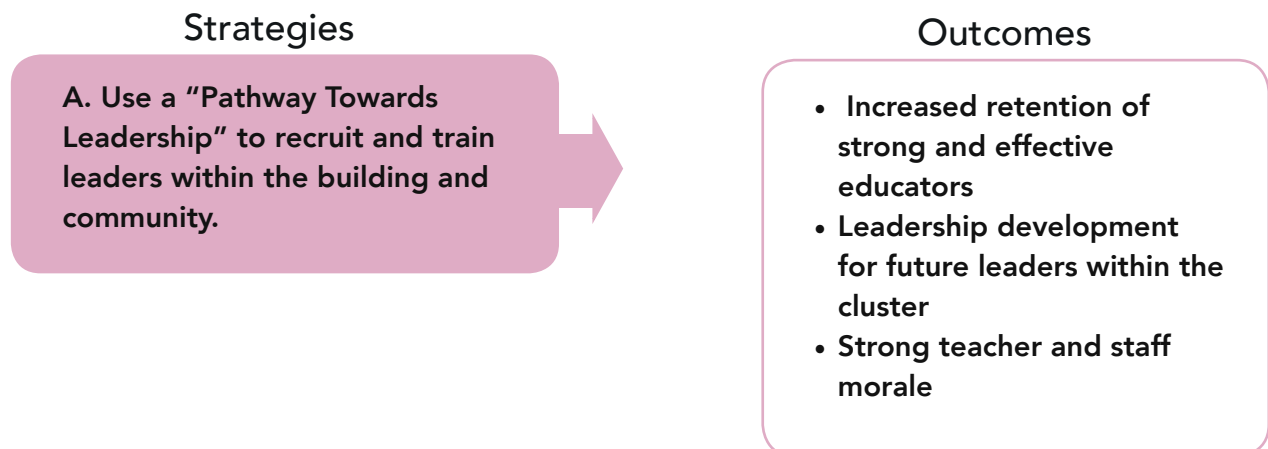
The professional learning priority aligns supports and training to increase the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers. Cluster-wide professional learning ensure all teachers are prepared to deliver instruction in a rigorous STEM-accredited school.

Teacher development opportunities will include increased access to math and science endorsements, interdisciplinary approaches to instruction, and problem-based learning.

Priority #4: Implement a Cluster Professional Learning Plan.



Priority #5: Recruit and train highly qualified teachers, leaders and school-based staff.





Resources



This priority considers the changes that need to be made across the cluster to ensure each school is prepared to deliver on the mission. Integration of STEM in each school requires infrastructure upgrades to provide technology access, partnership support to provide students opportunities, and the resources and budgets for materials. With the clear cluster-wide vision, localized decision-making teams, or GO Teams, at each school will position elected stakeholder representatives to align their budgets, resources, and capacity to the needs of their specific school.

Localized decision-making both provides schools with the decision-making power they need to realize their goals and meaningfully partner with families and community entities on behalf of their students. Finally, the systems and structures necessary to evaluate and meet student needs will be implemented across schools so each site has clear data about what students need to succeed. Quarterly cluster meetings will include review of student outcomes to strategize for the success of all students.

Priority #6: Align systems and resources to support cluster plan and STEM certification.

Strategies

A. Leverage partnerships to provide rich, authentic STEM learning experiences.

B. Identify STEM lab and resources in each school to ensure access to materials that support learning.

Outcomes

- Deepened support and community engagement that supports academic program
- Alignment of resources to school's needs
- Increased opportunities for hands-on, engaging curriculum activities

Priority #7: Provide increased learning time opportunities that offer customized instruction.

Strategies

A. Develop a program that meets the needs of Douglass students through extended days, additional course offerings and SEL programs.

Outcomes

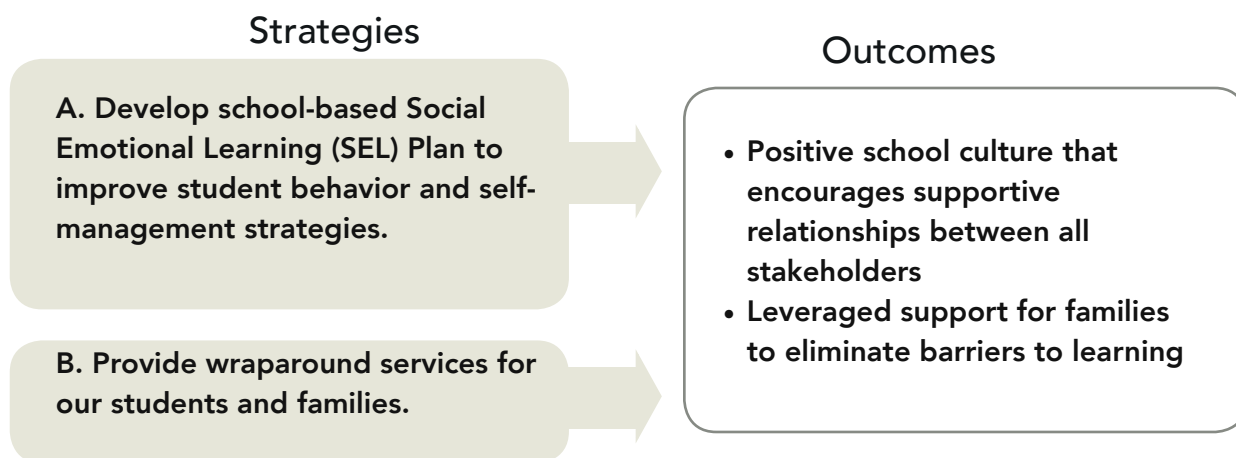
- Increased academic achievement as a result of engagement in learning
- Structured support for emotional needs of students



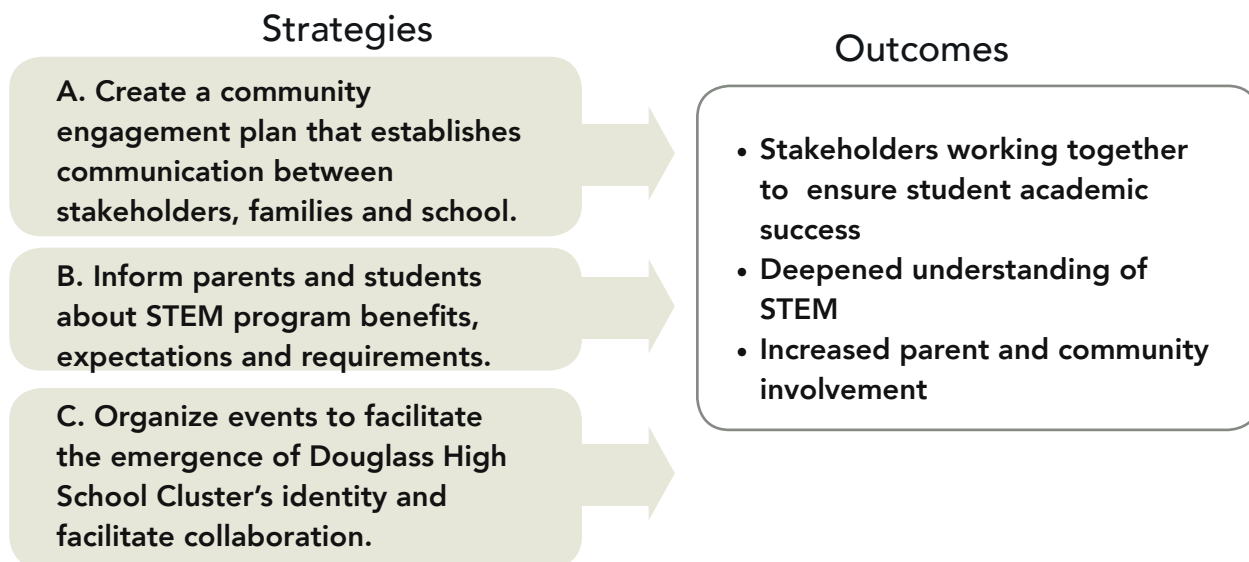
The final priority positions culture to be positive, engaged, and conducive to learning for all schools through the cluster. Through Social and Emotional Learning implementation at each school, students receive robust support and modeling of effective collaboration skills to build an inclusive and productive school culture.

Meaningful opportunities for adult engagement, including access to adult learning at the College and Career Academy, participation on GO Teams, and partnerships with local businesses, position each school to better leverage the capacity of its community. A focus on improved communication, both within schools and across clusters, ensures a collaboration toward the common vision for students.

Priority #8: Implement a Social and Emotional Learning approach to equip students and families with life skills.



Priority #9: Engage our community of stakeholders to work collaboratively on issues that impact the Douglass Cluster



Glossary of Terms

CCRPI: College and Career Readiness Performance Index—this is the score each school receives each year that considers measures like test scores, survey data, and attendance to determine how well the school is preparing its students for college and career.

Charter System: The new operating model chosen by Atlanta Public Schools, which will afford each school greater decision-making autonomy, as well as flexibility to innovate across the district. Atlanta Public Schools was fully transitioned to a charter system in the 2016-2017 school year.

CTAE: Career, Technical, Agricultural, Education certificates are awarded to those graduates who complete a rigorous course of study through high school that supplements basic requirements with a focus on a particular career path.

Dual enrollment: Dual enrollment is college coursework (on college campuses or online) that is offered to students at the high school level who have demonstrated the readiness to complete college-level courses while completing high school requirements.

GO Teams (Local School Governance Teams): GO Teams are the committees of 3 parents, 3 teachers, 2 community members, 1 swing seat, (1 student at high schools), peer-elected for each school starting in the 2015-2016 school year.

Signature Program: The curricular approach adopted by a cluster to align all schools behind a common curriculum. For the Douglass Cluster, the Signature Program is STEM.

Social and Emotional Learning: This programming is based on the understanding that the most effective learning happens in supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful. The framework, training, and strategies for SEL are provided to APS schools through a partnership with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Math—an approach to curriculum or what teachers teach that provides interdisciplinary, hands-on learning that build skills applicable to all fields and disciplines.

Douglass Cluster Contact Information

Douglass High School
225 Hamilton E. Holmes Dr, NW
404-802-3100

Harper-Archer Middle School
3399 Collier Dr., NW
404-802-6500

Boyd Elementary School
1891 Johnson Rd., NW
404-802-8150

Fain Elementary School
101 Hemphill School Rd., NW
404-802-8600

Grove Park Intermediate
404-802-7750

Scott Elementary School
1752 Hollywood Rd., NW
404-802-700

F.L. Stanton Elementary School
1625 M.L.King, Jr. Dr., SW
404-802-7500

Towns Elementary School
760 Bolton Road., NW
404-802-7400

Usher-Collier Heights Elementary School
631 Harwell Rd., NW
404-802-5700

Woodson Primary School
1605 D.L. Hollowell Pkwy, NW
404-802-7350

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