ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SOUTH ATLANTA
CLUSTER PLAN

2016-2020

Our mission is to cultivate a universal culture of excellence through collaboration, academic achievement, personal responsibility, respect and a commitment to service.

STRONG STUDENTS I STRONG SCHOOLS I STRONG STAFF I STRONG SYSTEM

Letter from the Superintendent & Board

Dear Staff, Students, Families and Parents of the South Atlanta Cluster,
We truly believe APS stands at an exciting transformational moment. As we near a new 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 South Atlanta Cluster more autonomy and flexibility to do what you know works best in your schools and for your students. Over the past year, we engaged in a cluster-planning process that allows us to create a flagship South Atlanta High School with strong academic signature programs. This approach allows us to build the curriculum across grade levels including Pre-K and the elementary grades to produce a successful high school graduate.

As a cluster, South Atlanta 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 9. Further, South Atlanta has adopted Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics or STEM as its Signature Program. This student-centered project-based learning approach taps into the natural passion to learn and is a powerful method for developing the curiosity, skills and knowledge for college and career success.

The work you see within this South Atlanta 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,

Dr. Meria J. Carstarphen
Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools

Courtney D. English
Chair, Atlanta Board of Education

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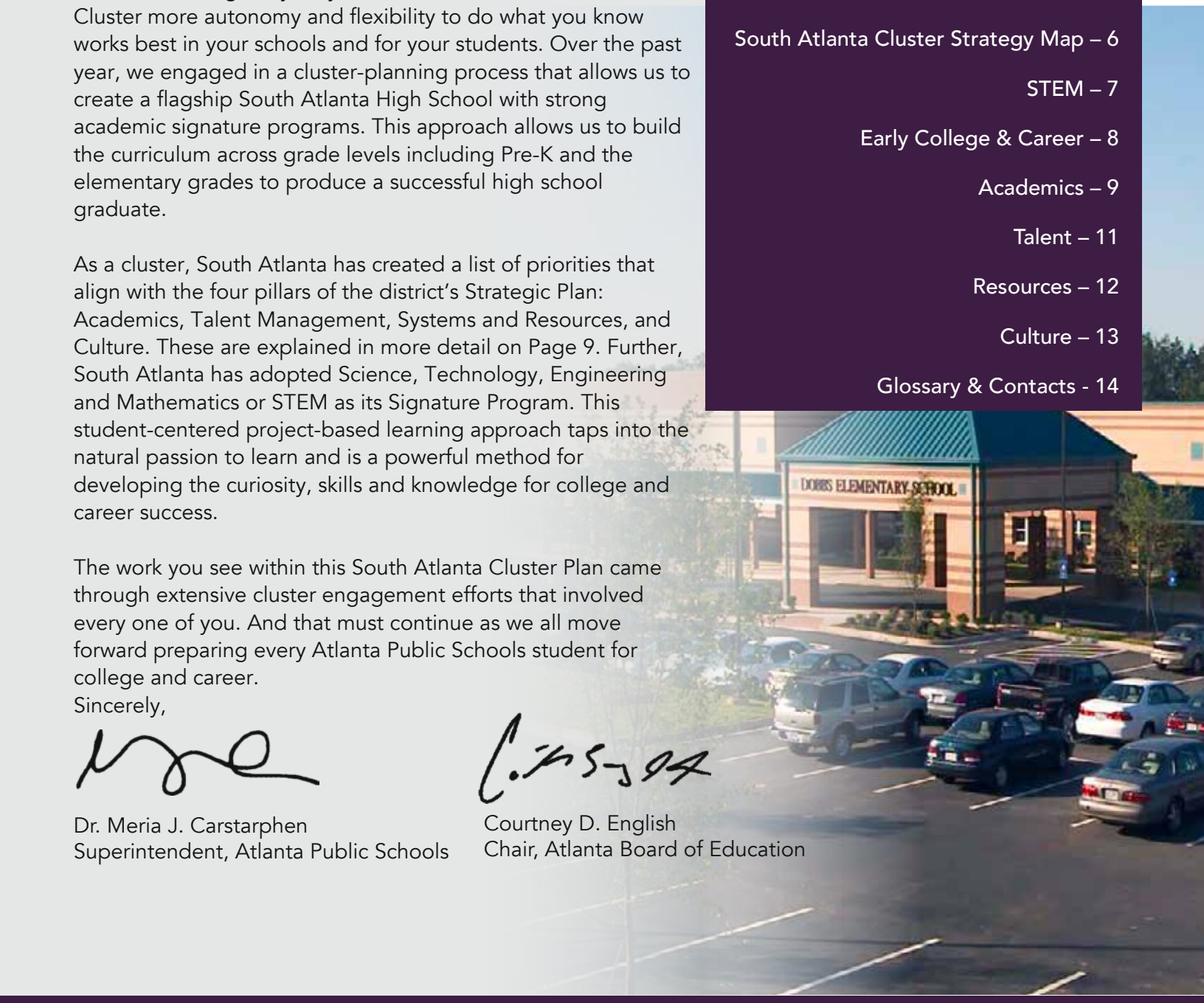


Letter from the South Atlanta Cluster Planning Team

Dear Staff, Students, Families, and Partners of the South Atlanta Cluster,

We are excited to share our plan for the South Atlanta Cluster schools with the community!

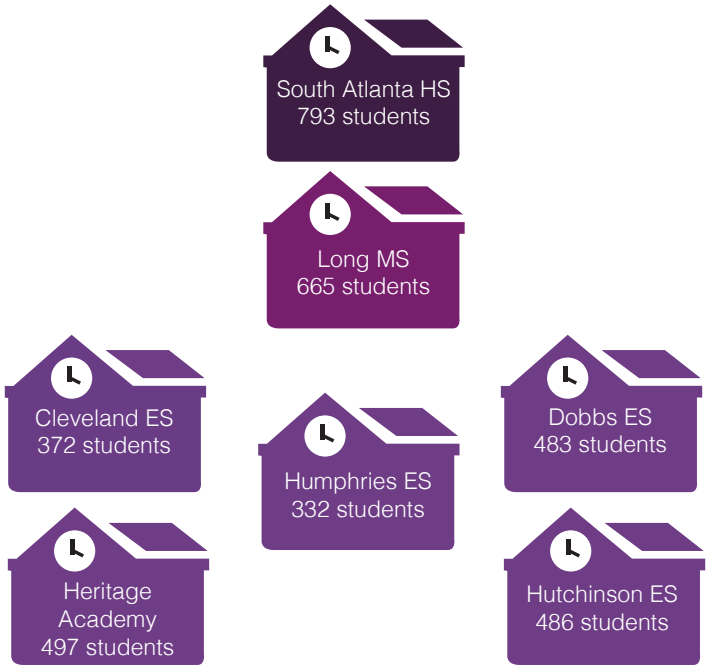
The plan provides an overview of the ways the cluster will develop and strengthen its programming to cultivate a universal culture of excellence through collaboration, academic achievement, personal responsibility, respect, and a commitment to service. Our community came together to describe the vision for our students – high quality education that produces graduates who are independent critical thinkers, skilled problem solvers, civic-minded leaders who are academically prepared for college and/or career. This plan is the roadmap to that vision.

Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, we will initiate the process for implementing the Science, Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) signature program for K-12 students in the South Atlanta Cluster. Every school in the cluster will pursue the Georgia STEM certification, which encourages an inquiry-based approach to learning that engages students in a real-world practice of what they learn and provides alignment of coursework and instructional strategies across schools.

Our cluster has already started on a positive trajectory, with increased graduation rates, high attendance rates and resounding support from families, students, staff and community partners. With your support, we have the resources needed to make this vision a reality for every student!

Sincerely,
The 2015 South Atlanta Cluster Planning Team*
*The South Atlanta Cluster Planning Team consists of principals, parents, and community representatives from each of the cluster schools.

Enrollment (2015)



About the South Atlanta Cluster

The South Atlanta Cluster is a collaborative, innovative family of schools that offers all students diverse, engaging options. The cluster is aligning programming and supports for consistency across schools so all of our students are prepared for success after high school.

Established in 1994 after the merger of Walter F. George High School (which was located at the current South Atlanta complex) and Fulton High School (which was located at the present day Dobbs Elementary near the Lakewood area), South Atlanta High currently is home to more than 800 students. All South Atlanta Cluster 6th-8th graders attend Long Middle, which receives students from Cleveland Avenue Elementary, Dobbs Elementary, Heritage Academy Elementary, Humphries Elementary and Hutchinson Elementary.

Through vital partnerships, we are impacting the lives of our students. A partnership with Kauffman Tires resulted in the district's only on-site automotive repair lab, and our cluster is able to provide mentorship and health science education programming for high school students through a partnership with Atlanta Tech and the Emory University Pipeline. Opportunities like these will continue to complement the dual enrollment and CTAE pathways at the high school level, positioning every student to graduate ready for college and career.

South Atlanta Cluster Fast Facts

Student Enrollment	3,635
Elementary Schools	5
Middle School	1
High School	1
Cluster CCRPI Average	65.3

Graduation Rate

South Atlanta CAD	77.8%
South Atlanta Health	87.9%
South Atlanta Law	65.7%

Enrollment (2015)

Asian	0.25%
Black	93.92%
Hispanic	5.08%
Native American	0.06%
Mixed Race	0.42%
White	0.28%
Students with Disabilites	10%
English Language Learners	3%

<u>Other Facts</u>

- Home to the district's only automotive repair lab

South Atlanta Cluster Strengths

The South Atlanta Cluster is comprised of the following communities: Glenrose Heights, Blair Villa, Poole Creek, South River Gardens, Orchard Knob, Rosedale Heights, Browns Mill Park, Hammond Park, Perkerson, Swallow Circle/Baywood, Lakewood, Lakewood Heights, Norwood Manor, Thomasville Heights, Leila Valley, and Rebel Valley Forest.

Cluster planning has brought representatives from across the communities together to define their vision for students and leverage the business partners. Some of those partnerships include:

- Emory University
- Communities in Schools
- Kauffman Tires
- Atlanta Technical College

- Collaborative spirit within cluster of schools
- Strong extracurricular programs (Fine Arts, Academic Competitions, Clubs, Athletics, and Career Technical Student Organizations)
- Dual enrollment opportunities
- High attendance rates
- Community and staff involvement
- Strong business partnerships with schools
- Strong principal, staff and teacher teamwork
- Facility and student support for expansion of career-related options

Executive Summary

The South Atlanta 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 South Atlanta becoming a high-performing cluster where every student graduates with college and career readiness.

The strong inter-cluster collaboration and partnerships with local businesses have provided the cluster with unique opportunities for career and college preparation. One example of the innovation being leveraged for South Atlanta students and families is the College and Career Academy, which will provide high school students access to advance courses of study for career preparation at Atlanta Technical College. Other initiatives like Move On When Ready and Dual Enrollment enable students to access college-level coursework during high school for college credit.

Access to these opportunities is being increased through strengthened foundational skills and a cluster-wide focus on Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM). It is our intent through STEM education to produce critical thinkers, increase science literacy and enable the next generation of innovators.

STEM education in the South Atlanta 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
- real-world experiences via work-based learning opportunities

Classrooms across the cluster will implement inter-disciplinary, rigorous and engaging curriculum that prepares students for success.

Community members have already begun the collaborative work of determining the best strategies for implementing an effective STEM program.

Mission:

The mission of the South Atlanta Cluster is to cultivate a universal culture of excellence through collaboration, academic achievement, personal responsibility, respect and a commitment to service.

Vision:

The South Atlanta Cluster vision is to be a high performing cluster where every student graduates with college and career readiness.

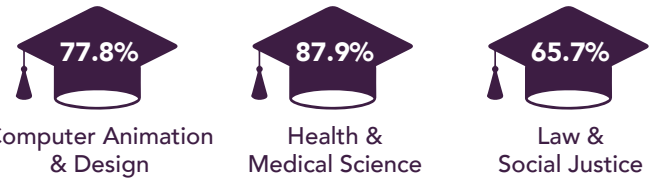
South Atlanta Cluster Student Data

An Opportunity for Change

The South Atlanta Cluster has demonstrated its capacity for high performance and innovation with the academies approach and will leverage those successes to provide a rigorous K-12 STEM program that prepares students for college and career.

Low performance on assessments in some cluster schools requires strengthened skills essential for success and a stronger foundation in math and sciences.

Graduation Rate (2015)



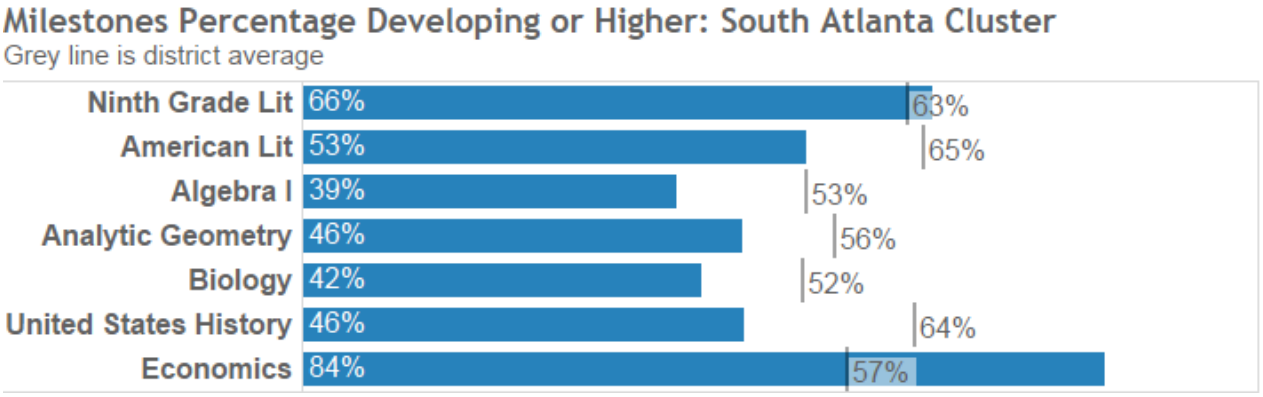
CCRPI (2015)

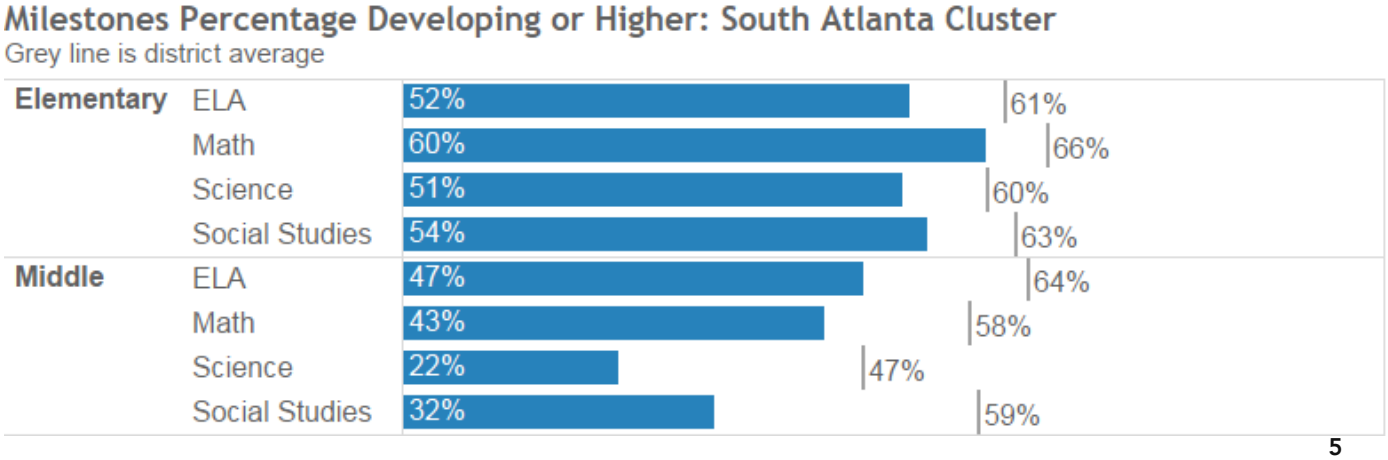
School Name	Achievement Points	Progress Points	CCRPI Score
South Atlanta Health & Medical	27.6	39.2	76
South Atlanta Law & Social Justice	25.1	38.3	71.1
South Atlanta Computer Animation & Design	24.8	31.6	64.4
Long Middle	14.8	30.7	51
Cleveland Avenue Elementary	22.2	39.2	72.2
Dobbs Elementary	17	35.6	60.3
Heritage Academy Elementary	20.2	35.8	63.5
Humphries Elementary	20.8	36.9	67.7
Hutchinson Elementary	18.4	30.2	58.7

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.

Milestones



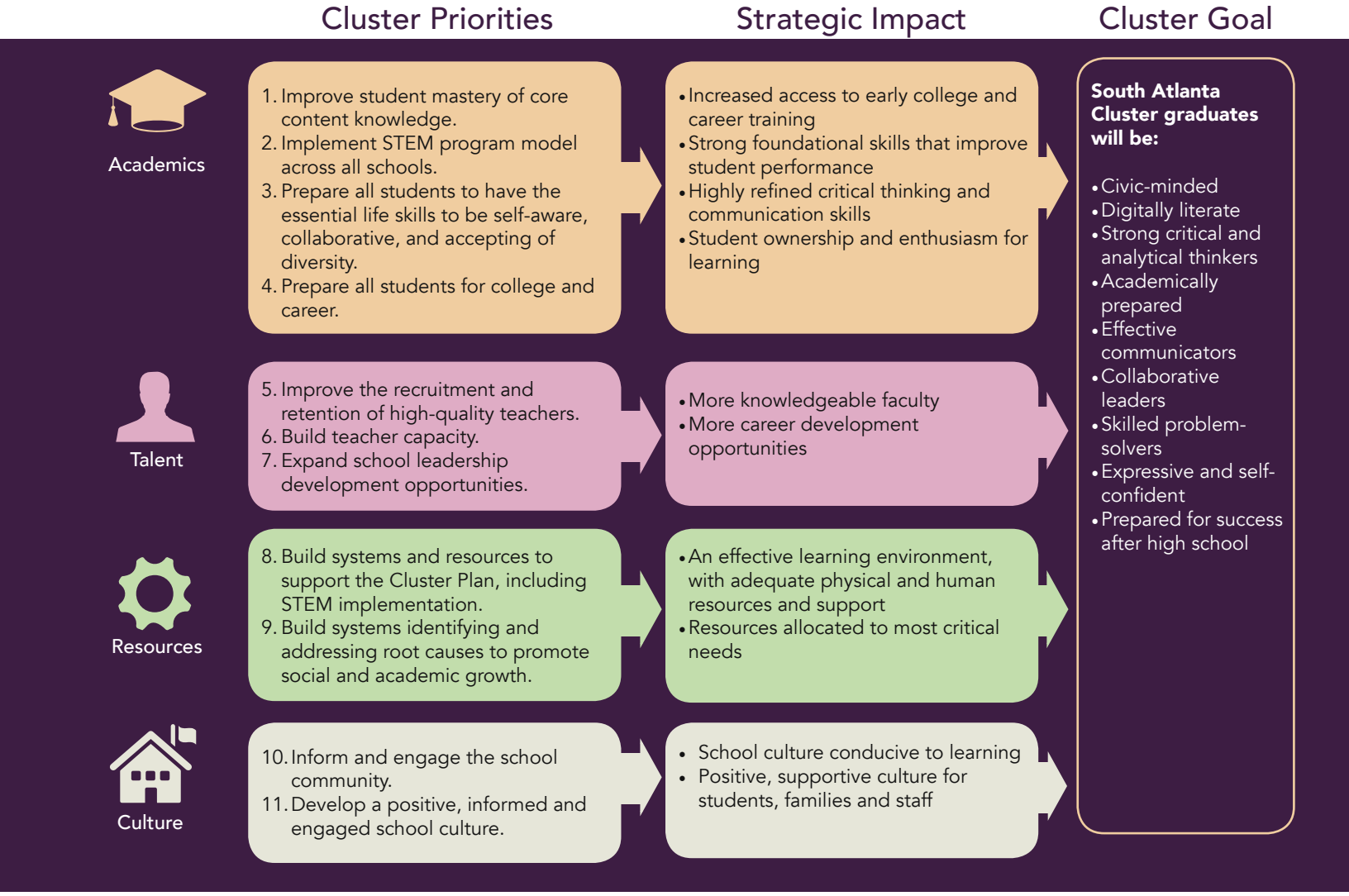


South Atlanta Cluster Strategy Map

The South Atlanta 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 review implementation, as well as progress towards goals.

Mission

Cultivating a universal culture of excellence through collaboration, academic achievement, personal responsibility, respect and a commitment to service.



STEM

Based on feedback from parents, students, teachers and community members, the South Atlanta Cluster will formalize the Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) focus through STEM certification for every school in the cluster.

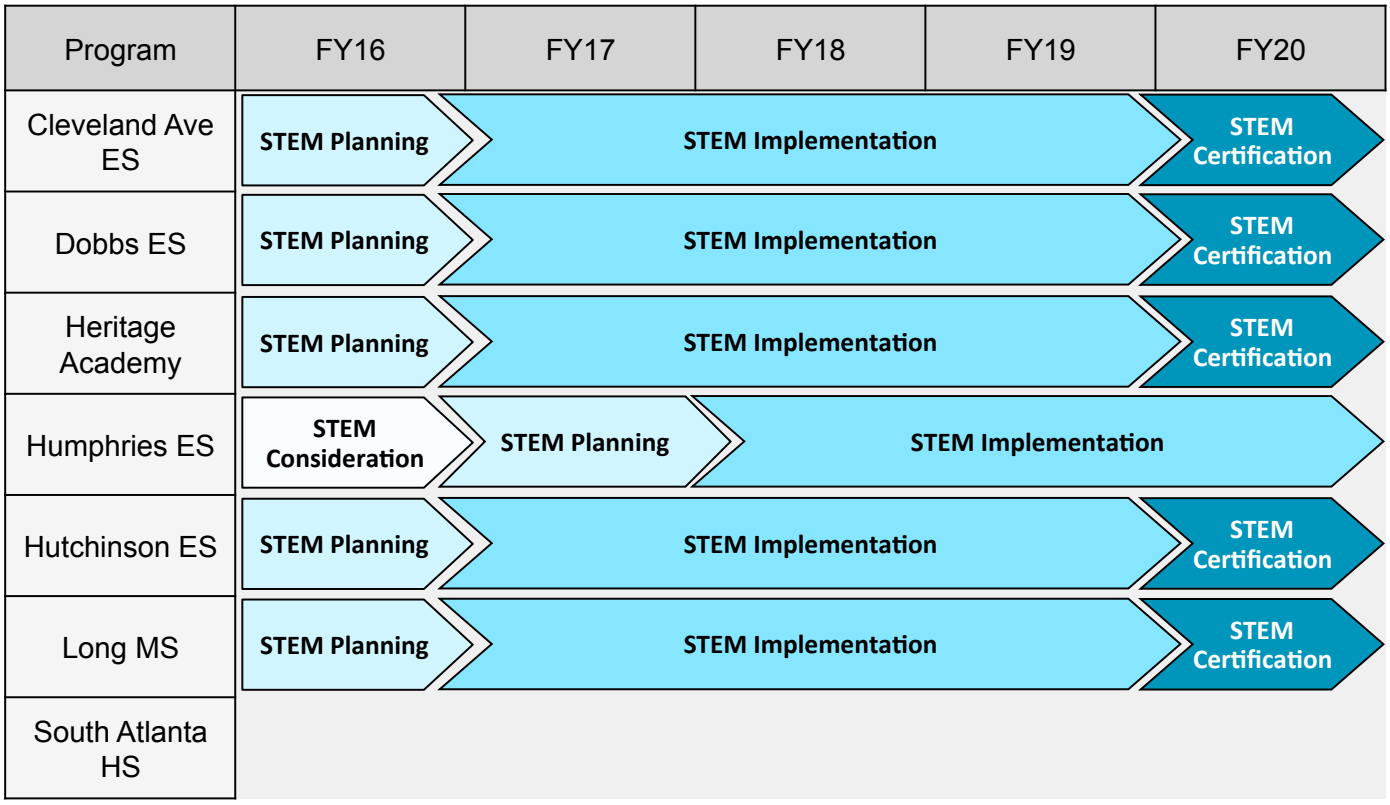
Why STEM?

- STEM occupations are projected to grow by 17% from 2008 to 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.

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.

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
- a necessary focus on improving math and science instruction to increase access to early college opportunities at the high school.



Early College & Career

A defining characteristic of the South Atlanta Cluster plan is to focus on preparation for college and career. Through the College and Career Academy, which will be housed on the campus of Atlanta Technical College, students will be able to take college level courses in any of the fields offered in order to earn college credit for career preparation coursework. Plans are to design a center that will offer adult education opportunities for families in the evening, enabling students and their parents to pursue career-prep coursework at the school after the regular school day.

This partnership with Atlanta Technical College will provide increased dual enrollment offerings, as well as increased access to Career, Technical, and Agricultural Pathway endorsements for students. The CTAE pathways enable students to focus on a particular area of study throughout high school that prepares them for careers upon graduation. Current CTAE offerings at South Atlanta include the following:

- Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

Through South Atlanta's dual enrollment program, students can "move on when ready," accessing higher level coursework for college credit. This enables students to begin building their career and college credits before they have even earned their high school diploma.

In order to prepare all South Atlanta Cluster students to access these opportunities, college and career planning will begin at the elementary and middle school level with infusing college and career programming in the STEM curriculum. In the future, plans are to design a center with the cluster that offers adult education opportunities for families in the evening, enabling students and their parents to pursue career-prep coursework at the school after the regular school day."

Academics

Our four academic priorities ensure 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. The inquiry-based, inter-disciplinary approach builds a foundation for students that will support any career path they pursue. The rapid growth in STEM careers and partnerships with local colleges and universities to provide college level coursework in high school means South Atlanta graduates will have a competitive edge over peers.

Improved core content knowledge and Social and Emotional Learning initiatives for each school are critical elements. Increased support to build the academic foundation and socio-emotional skills necessary for long-term success will improve students' communication, self-efficacy, critical thinking and collaboration skills.

Priority #1: Improve student mastery of core content knowledge.

Strategies

- **A. Establish foundational academic knowledge.**
- **B. Provide remediation and acceleration as indicated by data.**
- **C. Provide Pre-K programs throughout the cluster.**
- **D. Focus on Pre-K to 2nd grade.**

Outcomes

- **Demonstrated proficiency and understanding of knowledge by actively applying skills to each discipline and subject area**
- **Ability to think critically by analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing complex ideas**
- **Increased rigor and academic attainment across content areas**
- **Alignment of K-12 course offerings and instructional models**
- **Increased support and resources for all students, including special needs and English Learners**

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

Strategies

- **A. Implement STEM instruction and content.**
- **B. Implement integrated, project- and problem-based learning projects for grade-level and school-wide implementation.**
- **C. Implement rigorous and real-world inter-disciplinary projects and units.**
- **D. Integrate technology throughout the curriculum.**
- **E. Implement the Engineering Design Process.**

Outcomes

- **Demonstrated proficiency and understanding of knowledge by actively applying skills to each discipline and subject area**
- **Ability to think critically by analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing complex ideas**
- **Increased rigor and academic attainment across content areas**
- **Alignment of K-12 course offerings and instructional models**
- **Increased support and resources for all students, including special needs and English Learners**

Priority #3: Prepare all students to have essential life skills.

Strategies

- A. Implement Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).
- B. Increase the communication skills of all students.

Outcomes

- A school-wide culture of caring, respect, compassion and hope
- Increased contribution of service and citizenship to the school and local community
- A climate of trust and teamwork within the classroom and throughout the school
- Effective communicators

Priority #4: Prepare all students for college and career.

Strategies

- A. Enhance college and career awareness and preparedness.
- B. Develop a K-12 college and career program of study.
- C. Performance-based assessments for children

Outcomes

- Clear alignment of coursework to each student's college and/or career path
- Knowledgeable graduates pursuing STEM related post-secondary education or careers
- Alignment of CTAE offerings and vocational programming
- Business industry skills connected to classroom instruction
- Access to higher paying and rapidly growing careers in STEM

Talent

Our three talent management priorities align, support and provide training to increase the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers. Cluster-wide professional learning ensures 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, inter-disciplinary approaches to instruction, and problem-based learning.

Priority #5: Improve the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers.

Strategies

- **A. Improve the recruitment process.**
- **B. Ensure the retention of high-quality teachers.**

Outcomes

- **Recruitment, retention, and development of excellent teachers**
- **Every school staffed with professional and exemplary teachers**
- **Implementation of best practices across classrooms that enable all students to succeed**
- **Increased rigor and student performance**

Priority #6: Build teacher capacity.

Strategies

- **A. Provide targeted professional learning opportunities to improve the quality of instructional pedagogy and focused on the implementation of Standards and STEM.**
- **B. Implement intentional vertical and horizontal alignment and collaboration throughout schools and clusters.**
- **C. Provide targeted professional learning opportunities focused on specialized student needs.**
- **D. Implement on-going STEM specific professional learning opportunities.**
- **E. Increase math and science endorsements and certifications.**
- **F. Develop and implement a cluster-wide professional learning (PL) plan.**

Outcomes

- **Increased number of teachers prepared and delivering integrated STEM education**
- **Increased number of teachers with math and science endorsements or certifications**
- **Consistency in expectations and supports for teachers across schools**
- **Dedicated time allocated for teachers to collaborate and plan together.**
- **Increased number of professional development geared to improving academic achievement of special needs population**

Priority #7: Expand school leadership development opportunities.

Strategies

- **A. Ensure consistent and ongoing feedback as a part of the performance management process.**
- **B. Identify and develop future school leaders through growth opportunities.**

Outcomes

- **Increased teacher performance and skill**
- **Increased opportunities for teachers to develop and demonstrate leadership skills**

Resources

Integration of STEM in each school requires infrastructure upgrades to provide technology access, partnership support to provide students access to opportunities, and the resources and budgets to obtain necessary 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 provides schools with the 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 #8: Build systems and resources to support the Cluster Plan, to include STEM implementation.

Strategies

A. Develop relevant business and education partnerships and establish various effective strategies to enhance communication.

B. Ensure the necessary technology infrastructure and equipment is available in all schools.

C. Ensure schools have the resources and budget to support STEM curriculum.

D. Ensure the required facilities, transportation, scheduling, and staffing allocations align to implement the Cluster Plan.

Outcomes

- **Pervasive use of technology throughout the STEM program to facilitate research, investigation, and design**
- **Integration of active-learning science programs, such as Define STEM, FOSS (Full Option Science System) and lab aids**
- **Alignment of school site needs to systems and resources**
- **Endorsement opportunities in reading, math and science**
- **Alignment of resources and partners to highest leverage initiatives**

Priority #9: Build systems identifying and addressing root causes to promote social and academic growth.

Strategies

A. Maximize the use of SLDS to monitor strategies.

B. Hold consistent quarterly meetings with cluster support staff to collaborate around student success.

C. Create a digital comprehensive and common bank of resources for stakeholder use.

Outcomes

- **Meaningful opportunities for stakeholder engagement around student success**
- **Alignment and efficiency across schools**

Culture

The final priority positions school and cluster culture to be positive, engaged and conducive to learning. Through Social and Emotional Learning implementation at each school, students receive robust support and modeling of effective collaboration skills, building more inclusive and productive school cultures.

GO TEAMS
STRONG SCHOOLS START WITH ME!

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 cluster-wide collaboration toward the common vision for students. Finally, an assets-based approach to development for students and staff promotes a culture of positivity and self-efficacy.

Priority #10: Inform and engage the school community.

Strategies

A. Build community awareness, knowledge, and support for STEM.

B. Implement Adult Education opportunities.

Outcomes

- **Evidence of industry/partnership involvement with the instructional programs**
- **Increased opportunities for non-traditional students to obtain high school completion, job readiness skills, high-wage employment and/or college degrees**
- **Mitigation of barriers to success for students and families**

Priority #11: Develop a positive, informed and engaged school culture.

Strategies

A. Implement "Social and Emotional Learning" for School Staff.

B. Increase effective internal communication.

C. Build a strengths-based school community.

Outcomes

- **Safe learning environment**
- **Effective two-way communication between stakeholders**
- **Promotion of high expectations**
- **Mutual respect and empathy**
- **Collaborative leaders**
- **Skilled problem solvers**
- **Highly skilled graduates prepared for success**

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. South Atlanta CTAE opportunities include Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications; Business, Management, and Administration; Education and Training; Energy; Finance; Government and Public Administration; Health Science; Hospitality and Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security; Manufacturing; Marketing; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

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 three parents, three teachers, two community members, and one swing seat (one student at high schools), peer-elected for each school starting in the 2015-2016 school year.

Signature Program: The approach adopted by a cluster to align all schools behind a common curriculum. For the South Atlanta 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 that provides interdisciplinary, hands-on learning and builds skills applicable to all fields and disciplines.

South Atlanta Cluster Contact Information

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404-802-4800

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Dobbs Elementary School
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Heritage Academy
Villa Circle, SE
404-802-8650

Humphries Elementary School
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404-802-8750

Hutchinson Elementary School
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