

Turnaround Strategy Update

Atlanta Board of Education

June 5, 2017

Agenda

Initiative Update

Key Changes, 2017 – 18

Family Engagement

Partnerships

Preliminary Findings: MPR Implementation Study

The School Turnaround Strategy focuses on six themes that emerged as priorities throughout our stakeholder engagement process.

1

Academics

- Provide all APS students with access to consistent, high-quality instruction
- Supplement instruction with intensive direct-to-student support targeted at expediting progress in literacy and math

2

School leadership

- Increase coaching and support to school leaders to develop their skills as turnaround leaders
- Recruit and place strong, turnaround-experienced leaders

3

Teachers

- Attract, develop, support, and retain high quality teachers across the district
- Differentially staff high-quality teachers in high-need schools

4

Students engaged and ready to learn

- Deliver targeted support to address non-academic needs (e.g. social/emotional, health, nutrition) enabling children to be more ready to learn

5

Urgency of the situation

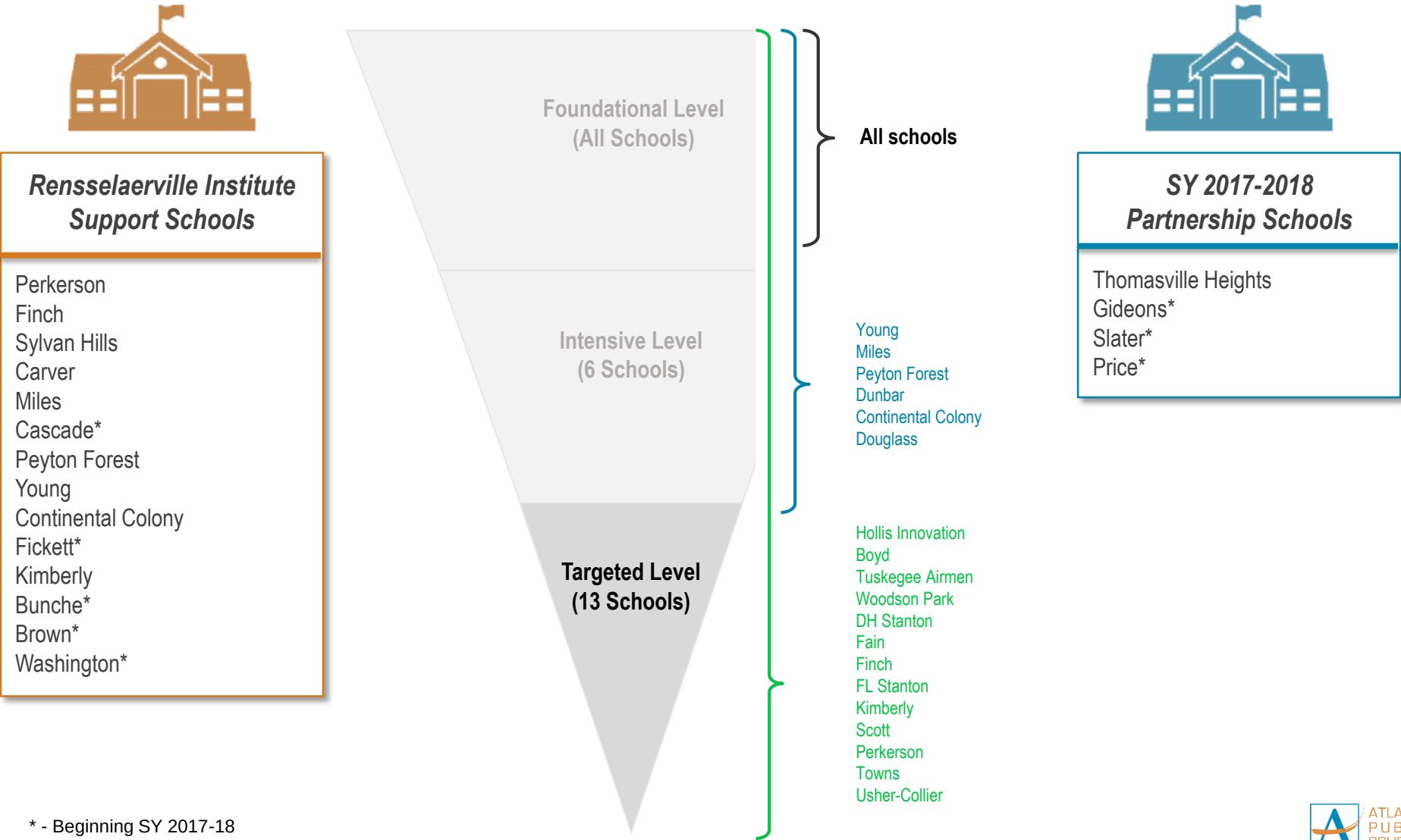
- In collaboration with communities, pursue operating model changes where turnaround requires more significant change than the district can address using programmatic approaches (e.g., consolidation, partnership with non-profit charters to operate schools, school reset)

6

Parents & alumni as partners

- Empower and equip parents/caregivers and alumni to become informed advocates for children through: involvement with GO Teams and cluster teams, the establishment of an APS Alumni Council, and the provision of programs such as PLUS (Parent Leaders United for Students) and Parent University

In the 2017-18 school year, our continued investments in the School Turnaround Strategy will focus on the targeted level schools and collaboration with our partners to improve our neediest schools.



We have concluded year one of full implementation and have incorporated feedback from school leaders to refine continued implementation.

Initiative	Update
Vacation Academy	Enrichment opportunities were increased and students were able to participate in sessions on various topics, including Coding, Dance, Game Design, Karate, Rockets, and Science Exploratory. Hiring experienced Assistant Principals as Site Administrators enhanced the programmatic and operational flows for each site.
Assessment System	Results from the benchmark assessments are being used to inform warranted curricular and instructional changes to best position students for success.
High Impact Tutoring	Based upon feedback from principals, the model for high-impact tutoring will change for the 2017-18 school year to provide schools with choices on how they will provide additional learning supports for students.
Summer Leader Academy	During an intensive week at Harvard University in Summer 2017, principals will learn the Data Wise Improvement Process, a step-by-step process for using a wide range of data sources—from standardized tests to student work to observation of teaching practice—to improve instruction and student outcomes.
Leader Recruitment	Hiring incentives for turnaround leaders hired for the 2017-18 school year will be paid in June 2017. Retention stipends for turnaround leaders hired for the 2016-17 school year will be paid in late June 2017.
High Quality PLCs	Kimberly ES and FL Stanton ES will begin Year One implementation in 2017-2018 school year. Boyd ES will continue its implementation and have indicated that teacher collaboration and data use have increased.

We have concluded year one of full implementation and have incorporated feedback from school leaders to refine continued implementation.

Initiative	Update
Targeted PD	Grades 3-5 teachers and instructional coaches received differentiated professional learning in mathematics to deepen their content knowledge and use of instructional practices. Teachers received resources to support the implementation of the strategies they have learned
Teacher Recruitment	Teacher Interview Day was conducted in March and principals submitted final recommendations for hire on April 1. Principals continue to recruit and vet candidates in the event of a late resignation or teacher promotion.
Instructional Coaches	Instructional coaches continue to support teachers' capacity building in content knowledge and instructional practices through the APS coaching cycle. The coaches also continue to engage in their own professional learning.
Reading & Math Specialists	Some schools will add additional Reading and/or Math Specialists to increase the number of students served. The Specialists will continue to provide direct supports to assist students in solidifying their foundational skills and addressing their misconceptions.
Non-Academic Support	Our partner, Communities In Schools, experienced challenges with staff turnover throughout the 2016-17 school year. They developed an aggressive plan to address these challenges in order to limit the impact on schools. Schools evaluated their needs for the additional FTEs that have been allocated; adjustments that are needed will be made for the 2017-18 school year, as appropriate.
Social-Emotional Learning	Through coaching and ongoing professional learning, SEL coaches provided substantially more on-the-ground support to turnaround schools, when compared to non-turnaround schools. Several positive outcomes from these efforts include: implementation of the SEL explicit curriculum (Second Step and School Connect respectively); reports of high levels of support from SEL coaches; and the turnaround schools' demonstrated growth on end-of-year SEL walkthroughs.
Partnerships	Partner schools will begin in late July. GO Team elections for remaining vacant seats will be held in Fall 2017. Kindezi and Purpose Built schools are almost 100% staffed.
Family/Alumni Engagement	Family Engagement Strategy Awareness Campaign kicked off in March with several events conducted in March, April and May. The first Alumni Engagement meeting was held in March during which associations provided ideas on how they can support schools. Family Engagement staff hiring completed.

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Schools were given choice options to extend and support student learning. The choices were based upon feedback from school leaders, initiative owners, and data reviews.



**Additional
Instructional Staff**

Boyd
DH Stanton
Fain
Finch
FL Stanton
Hollis Innovation
Kimberly
Perkerson
Scott
Tuskegee Airmen Global
Usher-Collier
Woodson Park



**Saturday Academy/
Extended Day**

Hollis Innovation
Scott
Towns
Woodson Park



Intervention Block

Boyd
DH Stanton
Fain
Finch
Hollis Innovation
Perkerson



**Tutors through vendor
partnerships**

DH Stanton
Towns

Choice Options for Schools

Principals were able to select any of the following options. To implement the selected options, each school was provided with a budget of \$270,000.

Option A: Intervention Block during school day

Option B: Saturday Academy

Option C: Extended Day

Option D: Vacation Academy

Option E: Additional Specialists

Option F: Hire hourly instructional paraprofessionals or teacher tutors

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Preliminary Findings: MPR Implementation Study

The Family Engagement work has kicked off with a strategy awareness campaign, staff hiring, and the start of the alumni engagement council.

Family Engagement Strategy Awareness Campaign

- Presented Warm/Welcoming Environments & School Based Choice programs to Expanded Cabinet. (March 2017)
- Presented School Based Choice to all GO Team Cluster Advisory teams with the exception of the Washington Cluster. Incorporated feedback into implementation plan (March 2017)
- Strategy snapshot and Staff Contact information published on the APS website (April 2017)
- Presented Family Engagement Choice and resource allotment at Principals meeting (May 2017)

Alumni Engagement

- Held inaugural Alumni Engagement meeting – mini State of the District and collection of ideas on how associations can support district and schools (March 2017)

Family Engagement Team Development

- All Family Engagement Staff hired

Family Engagement Strategy Implementation

- Warm/Welcoming, Customer Service professional development for Parent Liaisons - 51 staff participated (May 2017)
- Principals collaborating with GO Teams, & community partners to opt into Family Engagement Choice (June 2017)
- Two-way communication tool – the Parent App – will launch at Back to School Bash on July 29th
- Launched partnerships with Families First, Sheltering Arms, and Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

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Purpose Built Schools and Kindezi are making preparations for the Gideons, Slater, and Price transitions for the 2017-18 school year.

Purpose Built Schools Atlanta *Slater and Price*

Day One

- Students return on July 26; teachers report on July 10
- New staff orientation begins on July 10

Hiring staff

- Continuing to fill positions; almost at 100% staffed

Family/Community Outreach

- A family STEAM night was held on May 18 to introduce the new instructional program to Slater and Price families
- The Office of Early Learning conducted an enrollment session at Slater for Pre-K parents on April 25, 2017
- Slater's Pre-K classroom has a full enrollment of 20 students and will remain a Head Start site for 2017/18

GO Teams

- Purpose Built administrators are engaging current GO Team members in transition-planning activities
- Elections for remaining seats will be held in Fall 2017

Kindezi Schools *Gideons*

Day One

- Students return on July 31; teachers report on July 24
- New staff orientation begins June 12th

Hiring staff

- Continuing to fill positions; almost at 100% staffed

Family/Community Outreach

- Kindezi administrators will continue home visits of current Gideons' students throughout the summer; goal is to visit each student's home at least two times before Day One
- The Office of Early Learning conducted an enrollment session at Gideons for Pre-K parents on March 30, 2017
- Gideons' Pre-K classroom has a full enrollment of 22 students for next year

GO Teams

- Kindezi administrators are engaging current GO Team members in transition-planning activities
- Elections for remaining seats will be held in Fall 2017

Thomasville ES has made significant changes in staffing, student support programs, and outreach to support students and families.

Purpose Built Schools Atlanta Thomasville

Enrollment

- Purpose Built will apply to DECAL for Pre-K classrooms at Thomasville for the 2017-18 school year.
- An initiative is in place to recruit 52 families zoned for Thomasville, but have chosen to attend a charter or out-of-zone school.
- Intentional efforts are focused on student stability through retention of 3rd and 4th graders, and matriculation of 5th graders to Price Middle School.

Summer Programming

- Horizons is offering a summer program for Thomasville Heights students. Program enrollment is 45 rising 1st – 3rd graders. The program will take place at Woodward Academy.
- The YMCA Summer Blast program is housed at the Thomasville Heights ES campus for 64 rising 4th – 6th grade students.

Family/Community Outreach

- A Community Support Plan has been designed to improve external factors that impact student outcomes. This plan includes six full-time support positions and partnerships with: Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (AVLF) ; Families First; Atlanta Community Food Bank; and Chris 180.

The Rensselaerville Institute (RI) will continue to provide leadership support to schools through coaching and professional development.

2017 -18 Schools

Carver Cluster

- Perkerson ES
- Finch ES
- Sylvan Hills MS
- Carver HS

Mays Cluster

- Miles ES
- Cascade ES*
- Peyton Forest ES
- Young MS

Therrell Cluster

- Continental Colony ES
- Fickett ES*
- Kimberly ES
- Bunche MS*

Washington Cluster

- Brown MS*
- Washington HS*

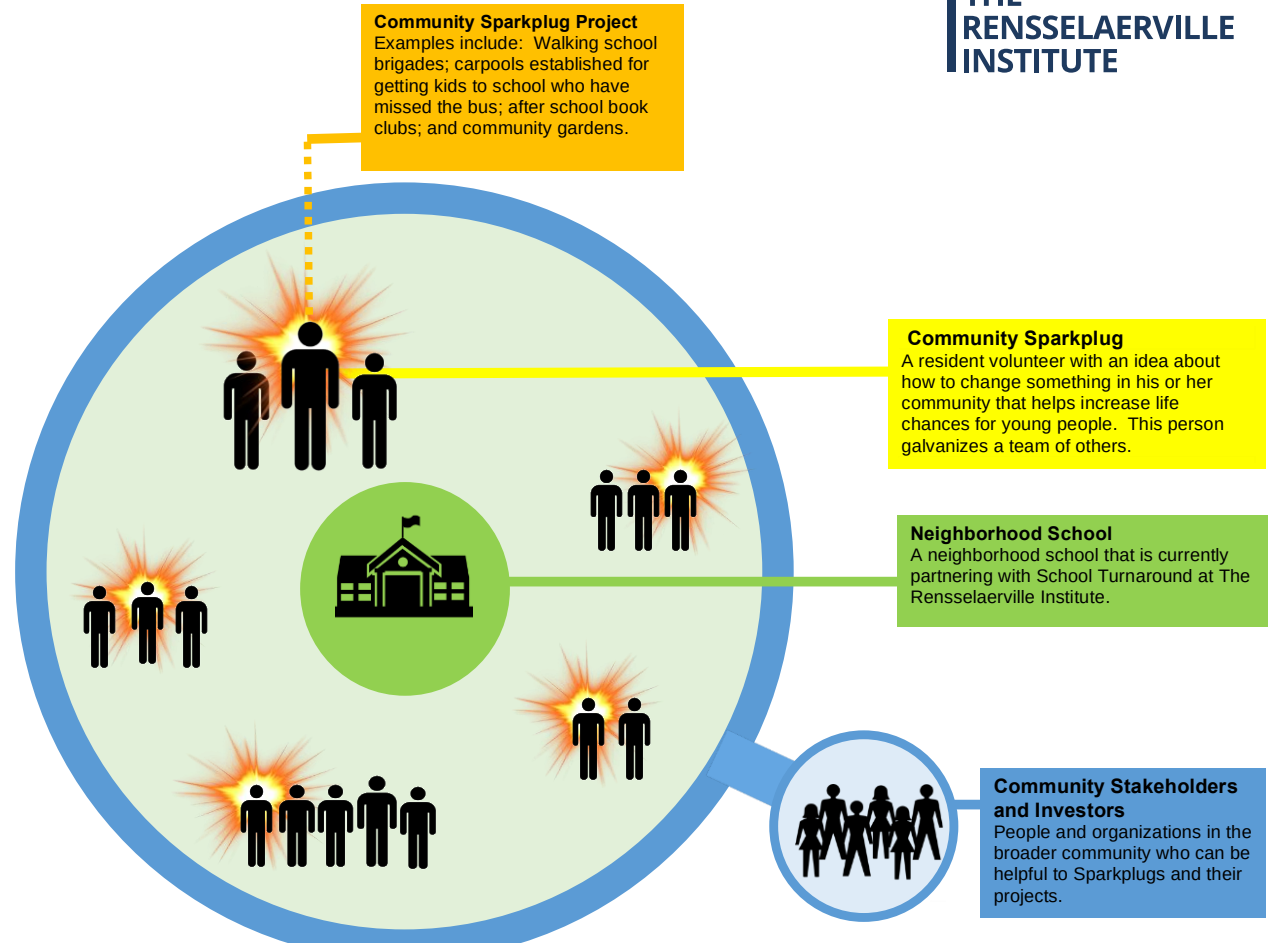
- School leaders of the five schools that will begin receiving RI support in 2017-18 will attend the Turnaround Conference on June 19-22, 2017 in Seattle, WA.
- Principals entering year two will attend the RI Assessment and Learning Conference on June 6 - 8 in Seattle, WA. During the conference, school leaders will review their initial targets, analyze their school's performance, conduct a lessons learned, and create a plan for the 17-18 school year to continue the upward trajectory of academic achievement.
- Community Sparkplug projects will be expanded to support additional school communities.

*The two-year support model for these schools will begin in June 2017.

Community Sparkplug projects, funded through The Rensselaerville Institute's fundraising efforts, kicked off in the Mays Cluster in January 2017.

What is a Community Sparkplug Project?

- Results-focused efforts to improve life chances for young people
- Driven by local folks – not outsiders or organizations
- Implemented in or around a neighborhood school
- Implemented in a time-compressed way over 6 months
- Moving quickly from talk to action
- Makes the best use of scarce resources

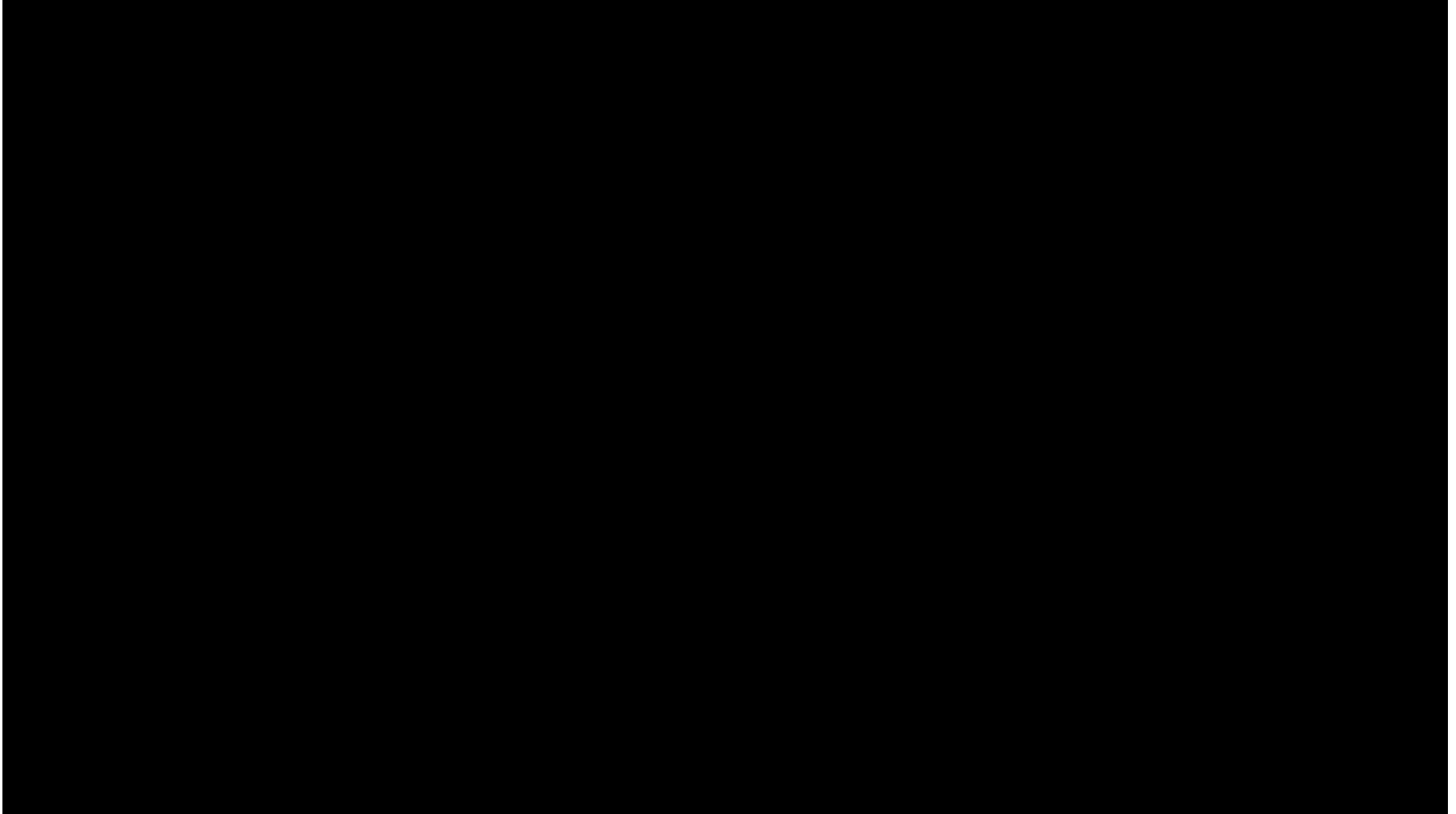


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The Community Sparkplug projects, focused in the Miles, Adamsville and Peyton Forest communities, are varied and derived from community members' ideas.

School Supported	Project Name	Project Lead(s)	Project Idea	Project Update
Adamsville	We Read Together	Kenneth Hill	Encourages students to develop a love of reading - provides individual reading tutorials, new books, and incentives for kids and families to read together	Serves 26 students; 20 have met milestone of reading at least 30 minutes per day at home. Incentives encourage parents and students to read together
Adamsville, Miles, Peyton Forest	LIT Boxes	Arelious Cooper	Design, creation, and installation of book houses in apartment complexes where students live	Installed 10 LIT Boxes in students' neighborhoods; started "100 Minutes" book challenge; incentivizing students to read an additional 100 minutes per week
Adamsville	Tennis for Life	Gwen Tate	Teaching children tennis, using under-utilized courts in the community	Teaches tennis skills to 25 students 2 times per week; students are exhibiting improved behavior and focus on the courts and in the classroom
Adamsville, Miles, Peyton Forest	Straight As	Fredrick Hope	(Academics, Athletics, Appearance, Attitude) program for upper elementary students	Serves 50 male students; kids are learning the benefits of playing basketball, eating healthy, and exhibiting personal hygiene and positive attitudes. Students are required to have at least one hour of tutoring and 30 additional minutes of reading each week
Miles	Broadway Baby	Pamela Faith Jackson	Theater production training for students including performance coaching, costume and set design, and overall theater production; students put on productions for parents and community	Teaches 30 students about Broadway theater and how to put on a successful theater production; students have shown growth in presentation skills, self-esteem, and have discovered hidden talents. Students will perform at least 6 times by the end of the school year
Peyton	Taking Care of Beesness	WC Harris	Teaches students basics of starting a business to develop entrepreneurship skills	Serves 20 students in the Park Commons Apartment Complex by teaching them entrepreneurial and reading skills
Adamsville, Miles, Peyton Forest	Aqua Farmers	James Agazie	Located at a local YMCA greenhouse, Aquaponics program teaches students the science of growing food	Meets with students and provides a fun, innovative, and hands-on environment for STEM-related projects and activities

The Lit Boxes project is one of the Community Sparkplugs that was implemented through philanthropic funds raised by our partner, Rensselaerville Institute.



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Mathematica began its evaluation of the implementation of the turnaround strategy with site visits beginning in March 2017.

Implementation Study Goal

The implementation study aims to examine the capacity of APS to deliver Turnaround Strategy components through practices thought to drive effective evidence-based interventions, as identified by the National Implementation Research Network.

Implementation Research Questions

How is the APS Turnaround Strategy designed, structured, and operationalized to achieve outcomes? To what extent did schools deliver the Strategy components as intended?

What are educators' experiences with implementing various Strategy components? What facilitators and challenges do key stakeholders experience during program implementation?

Interviews, site visits, and observations were conducted at the targeted and intensive schools.

Respondent Type	Individual Interviews	Focus Groups	Observations
Interviews and focus group participant			
APS District Staff	9	4	
Vendor Leadership*	2	4	
Principals/ Assistant Principal	20	2	
Teachers	4	4	
Practitioners*	26	23	
Observations			
HIT Sessions			9
Reading/Math Specialist Sessions			12
SEL Sessions			7
Other*			2
Total	61	37	30

*Vendor Leadership: CIS, Visions Tutoring, Hands on Atlanta, Renesselaerville Institute

*Practitioners: instructional coaches, tutors, reading and math specialists, student support staff, social-emotional learning coaches, CIS coordinators, afterschool program coordinators

*Other: Observation of an afterschool program and a math competition

As part of this process, Mathematica spoke with over 190 individuals.

Preliminary findings indicate that we are on the right track, but there is still work to do to ensure that processes are fully in place.

“All of the strategy components showed evidence of processes and practices that are either in place or partially in place to drive successful implementation.”

“Although APS is collecting data on strategy components, policies and procedures are not always in place for the district to use the data to make revisions to individual components.”

“There were reports of communication challenges between APS strategy owners with supervisors and other APS staff, between APS and principals, and between APS and practitioners who were implementing the strategy component.”

“Most principals and teachers reported understanding the purpose of the turnaround strategy, and most principals reported feeling supported in implementing the turnaround strategy.”

Mathematica will continue its external evaluation and will publish the first annual report in Fall 2017. Additional information about these preliminary findings will be included in the final report.

Coaching Programs

“Principals and teachers perceive coaching programs, such as Rensselaerville Institute and instructional coaching, as having a great effect on their respective skills. They attribute successes of these programs to the skills of the coaches and the relationships between the coaches and whom they coach.”

Specialists & Tutoring

“Principals generally reported that reading/math specialists were more effective than high impact tutoring. Teachers reported that both specialists and tutoring were effective.”

CIS Coordinators & Student Support

“Principals reported positively about both Communities in Schools coordinators and student support specialists. They attributed success to the skills of the particular individual assigned to the school and the collaboration/support with other staff in the school.”

SEL Blocks & Coaches

“The level of principal and teacher buy-in for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) was mixed. Some felt that teachers were applying what they learned and students were improving in behavior and social-emotional outcomes. Others reported that SEL took time away from academic instruction.”