Level Up Atlanta!

Minecraft Student Build Challenge
2025-2026

EDUCATOR GUIDE

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Design Overview & Prompts

Welcome Educators & Facilitators of our innovators, designers, and future leaders, to the 2025-2026 Level Up Student Minecraft Build Challenge! We are thrilled to launch this incredible partnership between Atlanta Public Schools, the City of Atlanta, and Microsoft. The future of our city is not just something to be talked about; it's something to be built, and we believe our students are the architects of that future. We can't wait to see how they use their creativity and ingenuity within Minecraft Education to tackle real-world issues and design a more connected, equitable, and resilient Atlanta. Their fresh perspectives are exactly what our city needs, and we are excited to see their solutions for building a future where every resident can thrive. Let the building begin!

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Atlanta Public Schools has partnered with the City of Atlanta and Microsoft to bring an authentic real-world design challenge to all students.

The design challenge is to engage students in an authentic learning task embedded in a custom-built Minecraft world of one of Atlanta's four initiatives. The challenge itself was designed in collaboration with Atlanta Public Schools and the City of Atlanta and is aimed at inviting students to be actively involved in the future developments of Metro Atlanta.

Once the challenge is officially open for submissions from **October 27 – December 6, 2025**, teachers will be able to work through the challenge with their students and incorporate the challenge into their curriculum in a way that suits the collective needs of the students. The challenge consists of four areas of focus aligned to the mayor's vision for Atlanta. Students will incorporate two out of the four challenges to address in their build and will be supported by real-world experts in-game.

The City of Atlanta is seeking to further engage Atlanta's youth in developing the future of our city. There is a great deal of work being done by the city to consider and plan how we can envision a connected, equitable and sustainable future that moves Atlanta forward without leaving anyone behind.

WHAT IS LEVEL UP ATLANTA STUDENT MINECRAFT BUILD CHALLENGE?

The Level Up Atlanta Student Minecraft Build Challenge is a powerful multidisciplinary exercise that blends STEAM education with civic engagement and local history.

This initiative is an opportunity for our students to not only participate in shaping their city's future, but also to connect with the City of Atlanta's vision for an "Opportunity for All." We believe their insights, unbound by traditional constraints, can offer fresh perspectives on building a more connected, equitable, and sustainable city.

Student Build Challenge Overview:

Last year, we asked how students could envision a connected, equitable, and sustainable future for our city. This year, we're taking action.

The City of Atlanta is committed to creating an "Opportunity for All," ensuring every resident can thrive. Your mission is to harness the power of Minecraft to design and build a model city district that directly addresses critical challenges facing our urban environment.

Your design must be a synthesis of creativity and thoughtful planning, demonstrating how a community can be connected, climate-ready, historically grounded, and food-secure.

In the challenge students will use Minecraft Education to:

- Visit and explore downtown Centennial Park, the Stitch, the Beltline, and Five Points.
- Speak with and learn from a variety of experts from the City of Atlanta.
- Design and build a model city district that directly addresses critical urban challenges. Builds must be a blueprint for an "Opportunity for All" by intentionally incorporating solutions for at least two of the following four mission areas:
  - **Connecting Neighborhoods: Bridge divides with community-focused designs for shared, public spaces.**
  - **Climate Resilience: Create sustainable, resilient spaces through green infrastructure and innovative design.**
  - **Historic Revitalization: Give new, vibrant purpose to a historically significant area while preserving its character.**
  - **Food Security: Design innovative solutions (like urban farms or distribution hubs) to ensure healthy food access for all.**
- Students will submit a two-minute video explanation of their Minecraft Build.

You will guide your students through the challenge and support them in submitting their work to APS's Minecraft challenge submission form. If students are working on their own or with the support of parents and/or guardians, ask them to contact you to connect them to the Minecraft challenge submission form.

Design Prompt:

Building an Equitable and Resilient City: How can we create a future where every resident can thrive?

Design Challenge Teacher Planning

Student Build Challenge Prompt

Students will build a space that incorporate two out of four of these options into their solutions:

- **Option A: Physical Spaces:**

  - How can we better connect metro Atlanta's diverse neighborhoods, creating a more unified and accessible city for everyone?
  - **Challenge Overview:** This prompt encourages students to think about how physical spaces can bring people together. They might consider:
    - **Community hubs:** Designing a new community center, library, or public market that serves as a central gathering place for multiple neighborhoods.
    - **Shared spaces:** Reimagining existing public spaces like parks or plazas to be more inclusive and welcoming to people from different backgrounds.
    - **Transportation equity:** Building new bridges, walkways, or public transit connections that link previously isolated communities.

- **Option B: Historic Revitalization:**

  - How can we reimagine and revitalize a historic area of metro Atlanta to honor its past while creating a vibrant, modern space for the future?
  - **Challenge Overview:** This prompt challenges students to become urban planners and historians. They will need to research a specific historic location and design a new purpose for it. Potential areas could include:
    - **Old Fourth Ward:** Reimagining a new purpose for a historic building or lot that honors the area's rich history.
    - **Sweet Auburn:** Revitalizing a key section of Auburn Avenue to create new business opportunities while preserving its legacy.
    - **The Gulch:** Designing a new purpose for this historic rail yard that incorporates its past into a new design.

- **Option C: Food Insecurities:**
  - How can we design spaces within Metro Atlanta that combat food insecurity and create a healthier, more nourished city?
  - **Challenge Overview:** This challenge focuses on a critical community issue, which is access to healthy food. Students could design:
    - **Urban farms:** Creating vertical farms, rooftop gardens, or community gardens in food deserts to provide fresh produce.
    - **Mobile Food Solutions:** Building a design for a mobile market or food pantry that can serve multiple neighborhoods.
    - **Community kitchens:** Designing a central kitchen or learning space where residents can learn to cook and share meals.

- **Option D: City Planning:**
  - How can we design new green spaces, parks, and trails that create a "green corridor" throughout Metro Atlanta, improving public health and biodiversity?
  - **Challenge Overview:** This prompt is about using nature to improve the city. Students would design a series of connected green spaces that:
    - **Connect parks:** Create a network of trails or greenways that link existing parks and public spaces.
    - **Incorporate nature:** Design new habitats for local wildlife within the urban environment.
    - **Improve air quality:** Use plants and trees to create natural air purifiers in key areas.

Make sure students are thinking about everyone in and around the city of Atlanta. Students should make places that are functional for people of different sizes, different ages, people with disabilities, people who come from different countries, or those who speak different languages.

WORLD LOCATIONS

The Level Up Atlanta Student Minecraft World contains five sites. The Learning Sites provide information to support student ideas. The Build sites are locations that allow students to create solutions to the design challenge.

- **Learning Sites:**
    - Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson International Airport *(Learning Site)*
    - The Stitch(Intersection of I-75/85 & I-20) *(Learning Site)*
    - Centennial Park *(Learning Site)*
- **Build sites:**
    - 5 Points(Two Peachtree Street)
    - The Beltline

Flow of the Game

Students will spawn into Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson International Airport where they will be greeted by Mayor Dickens and Monica Pearson who will inform them of each location, the challenges they face, and an overview of the build challenge.

Students can then explore Centennial Park, The Stitch, the Beltline, Five Points and nearby environments, interacting with various nonplayer characters (NPCs) that will help set the stage for the challenge. Students will be guided and transported between sites by the **Level Up Atlanta Guide** which will act as a portal. They can navigate between build-sites where they will be given the opportunity to redesign that space with a focus on building a connected, equitable and sustainable future that moves Atlanta forward.

STUDENTS CAN CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO BUILD SITES

Site 1: Atlanta Beltline This site is a massive 22-mile loop of trails, parks, and future transit built on a former railway corridor that connects 45 diverse intown neighborhoods. The Beltline is a living laboratory for urban renewal, directly addressing issues of connectivity, green space, and equitable development across the city.

Site 2: Two Peachtree Building (Downtown) Located adjacent to Woodruff Park and the Five Points MARTA station, this 44-story former State of Georgia office tower is currently slated for conversion into a major mixed-income, mixed-use residential project. This historic site represents a unique opportunity to address the need for affordable housing, economic activity, and transit connectivity right in the heart of Downtown Atlanta.

The Beltline Build Site

The Five Points Build Site

Once students complete their build, students will connect with their teacher to share their design. The teacher will be responsible for vetting all student submissions and assisting students in the creation of their final submission in the form of a two-minute video.

Role of the Teacher

There is a lot of flexibility built into the challenge to allow teachers to personalize the challenge according to the needs of their students. The challenge can be utilized for whole group lessons, small groups, or independently. Students can work independently or in groups of 2-3 to complete the challenge. As students begin to generate ideas in response to the prompt or call to action, ask students to make connections to the prompt by considering some of the following:

- How are they/their families directly impacted by some of the issues identified in this build challenge?
- How is their neighborhood/community directly impacted by some of the issues identified in this build challenge?
- How are the citizens of Metro Atlanta directly impacted by some of the issues identified in this build challenge?

- What are their ideas for solving some of these issues? (Encourage students to let their creativity shine)

HOW TO SUPPORT/GUIDE STUDENTS WITH THEIR BUILD

As students prepare for their build here are some questions, they should consider helping guide their build:

- What does it mean to have a safe, healthy, and connected neighborhood?
- After meeting with various nonplayer characters (NPCs) in the world that will help set the stage for the challenge, what are two key takeaways that could be incorporated into their build?

As students start planning and designing, they should think about all the people that live around them. What innovative solution would strengthen their community and make it a better, more sustainable place to live? Have students use the white space in the student planning document to plan their design before they build it in Minecraft Education.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHALLENGE WITH YOUR CLASS

Each teacher has the option of how they want their students to participate in this **Level Up Atlanta Project (**individually or in groups of 2-3 students).   There are a few different options when it comes to using Minecraft Education with your students. These have varying degrees of collaboration and require a different level of comfort (from the teacher's perspective) with the game:

- Individual Play
- Hosting and Collaborating

Your Integration Specialist (former ETS) can assist you with collaboration and participation in the challenge.

INDIVIDUAL PLAY

Many teachers begin with individual play if they are unfamiliar with using Minecraft Education with their students. Each student opens their own copy of the world and works independently to complete the task. Teachers can have students share their work outside of the game itself. Once students have completed their build, they will use the screen recording feature on their Chromebook to present/explain their build.

HOSTING AND COLLABORATING (CLASSROOM TIME)

[Hosting a world](#) and having students work together to design and build in Minecraft Education can be very beneficial in the classroom.

When a player hosts a world, other players join the world which is being hosted and stored on one device. Hosting can be done in certain ways:

▪ The teacher hosts a world and has all students join (There is a limit of 20 students when using you APS issued laptop. Please remember that no more than 3 students can participate within each submission.)

▪ A student might host a world and have a small group of fellow students join (there is a limit of 3 total students including the host when using and APS Chromebooks)

MEET THE NPCS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are a crucial aspect of Minecraft Education. They are added to the game to help guide the player to an end goal. They can help do the following:

▪ give background information

▪ point players in a certain direction

▪ direct players to an external information source

▪ challenge players to complete a specific task

In the game, players will be directed to locate certain NPCs and explore the world to find others. These include:

- Mayor Andre Dickens
- Monica Pearson or Generic News Reporter
- City Experts from the Mayor's Office
- Various Build site Ambassadors

Mayor Andre Dickens   Monica Pearson   Amina
                                                    Community Expert
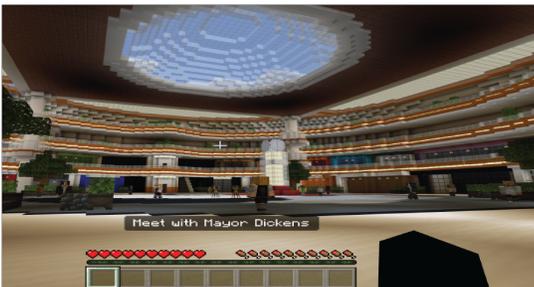
William   Olu   Army Corp Engineer
City Expert   Agriculture Expert

EXPLORE THE WORLD

There are several extra features in the world to help not only set the stage for the design challenge, but to also add to the interactivity within the world. These additions are aimed at helping students consider other aspects when designing and building their solution(s). A snapshot of these additions is added below. What other things or buildings can your students find?

- **Atlanta Airport** *(Learning site)*
- **The Stitch** - *(Learning site)* (75/85 Downtown Connector)
- **Centennial Park** (*Learning site*) (Atlanta Aquarium, Mercedes Benz Stadium, Philips Arena, Atlanta Eye (Ferris wheel)
- **The Beltline** – (*Active student build site)* (Walking trails, neighborhood)
- **Five Points** – (*Active student build site)* (Marta Station, Two Peachtree Building)

Hartsfield Airport

75/85 Connector

Atlanta Ferris Wheel
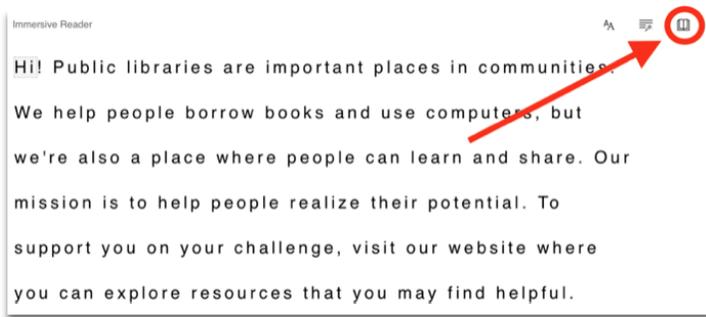
Language and Accessibility Options

Numerous language options are available for Minecraft: Education Edition via Microsoft's Immersive Reader tool. Languages include English, Spanish, French, etc. For instructions on how to change these in-game settings, click here. Minecraft: Education Edition also contains a variety of accessibility options to support students with diverse learning needs, including a UI Screen Reader and Text to Speech for Chat. Information on how to access these in game settings can be found here. In addition to changing the language options for the home and

loading screens, the text-to-speech Immersive Reader feature can be reconfigured in different languages as well. To do this, follow these instructions:
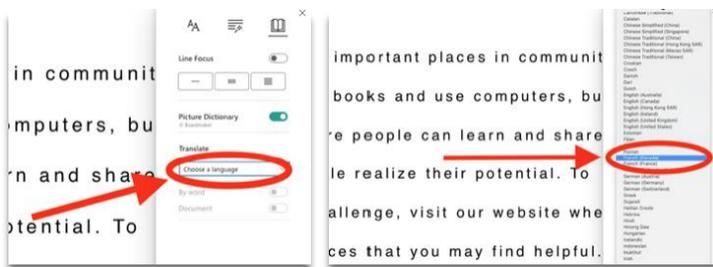
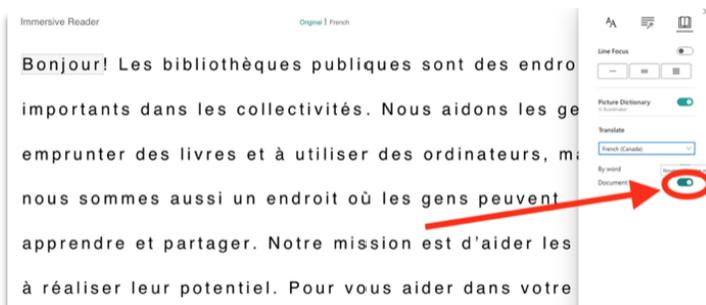**Step 1:** Right-click on an NPC and select the Immersive Reader icon.

Step 2: Select 'Reading Preferences' in the top right corner of the screen.

Step 3: Choose your preferred language

Step 4: Toggle the 'Document translation on' button

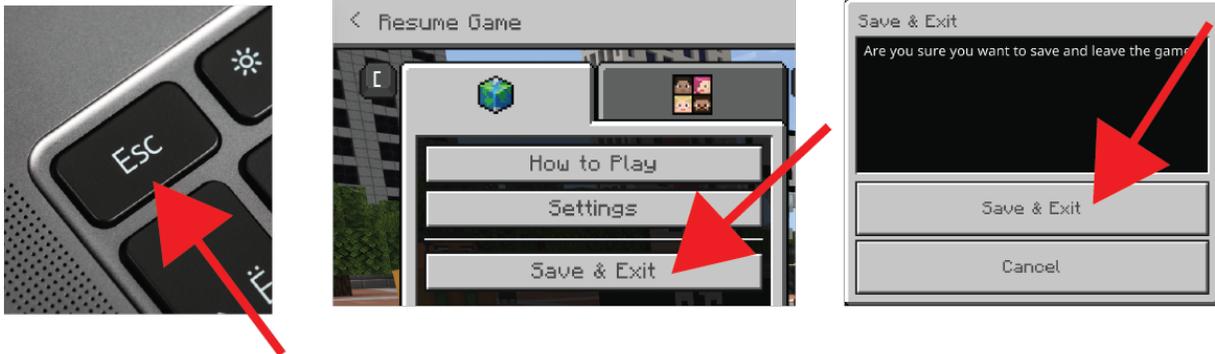# Instructions For Saving & Exporting World Files

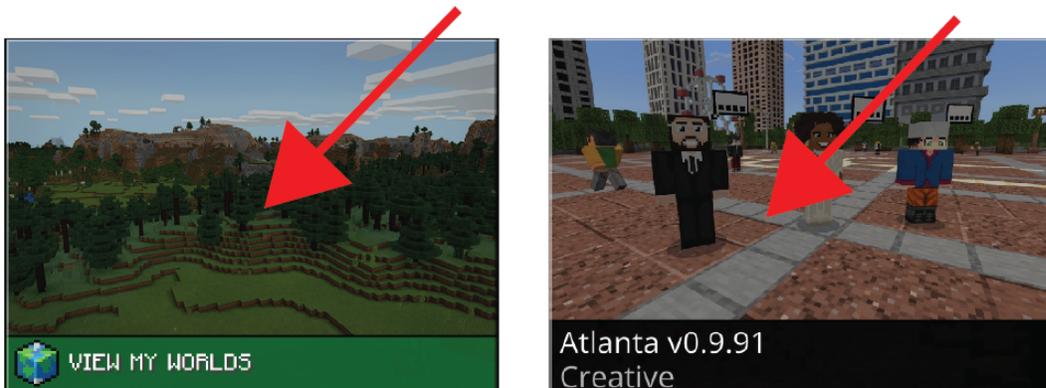

Please read the following information carefully.

Saving and Exporting World Files

Whenever students finish working on their world file after a session, they must save it to Google Drive before logging off otherwise their progress will be lost. Follow these steps:

1. Hit the escape key on a Mac, Windows, or Chromebook device or the Pause button at the top of the screen on an iPad to save your progress. You will then be taken to the world menu.

2. Click on View My Worlds, then select the file you wish to export.

3. Click on Manage, then Export.

4. Save the file to a preferred location, such as the desktop. Login to OneDrive or Google Drive to save your file.

Importing World Files

When your students are ready to resume working on their world file, they may import it into Minecraft: Education Edition from OneDrive or Google Drive.

For a Mac, Windows or Chromebook device follow these steps:

1. Download your world file from your drive. Choose import from the world menu.
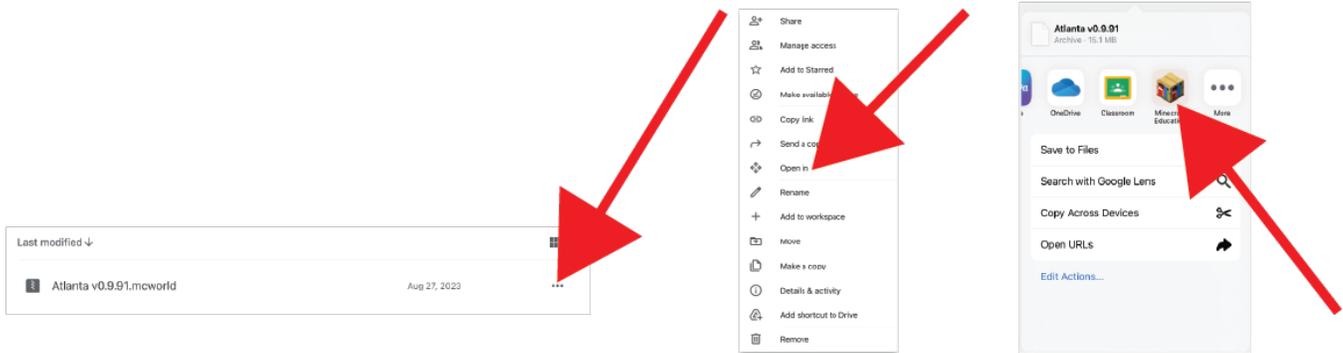

2. Open the .mcworld file from Downloads. The file is now available to access in My Worlds.

If using an iPad, follow these steps:

1. Go to OneDrive or Google Drive and click on the three dots of the file you wish to import. Select 'Open in' then choose the Minecraft icon. You may then go into the Minecraft Education Edition app and select the file from the My Worlds menu.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

HOW TO RECORD AND SUBMIT

For the Level Up Atlanta Minecraft Student Build Challenge, all builds will be submitted using the **APS Level Up Atlanta Submission Guide Links.**

Elementary Submission Form- http://tinyAPS.com/?2025LevelUpElementarySubmission

Middle School Submission Form- http://tinyAPS.com/?2025LevelUpMiddleSubmission

High School Submission Form- http://tinyAPS.com/?2025LevelUpHighSubmission

Students will respond to the topic in order to submit their video. Students will present their build via a **two-minute max** screen recording as they explain their build with an emphasis on how their build is providing solutions to issues that the city is currently facing. Students will also address how their Minecraft build addresses two of the four areas of the Moving Atlanta Forward Agenda (Connecting Neighborhoods, Climate Resilience, Historic Revitalization, Food Security). Students will access the Submission form and respond to the topic by uploading their screen recording of their build.

All student entries must be submitted to the submission page by the deadline of **5:00 pm on December 6, 2025**

Level Up Atlanta Rubric

In Level Up Atlanta, students assume the role of Metro Atlanta Planners under the challenge theme, "Building an Equitable and Resilient City: How can we create a future where every resident can thrive?" Review the rubric below to ensure students have prepared a solution that includes two of the four options below:

- Connecting Neighborhoods: Bridge divides with community-focused designs for shared, public spaces.

- Climate Resilience: Create sustainable, resilient spaces through green infrastructure and innovative design.

- Historic Revitalization: Give new, vibrant purpose to a historically significant area while preserving its character.

- Food Security: Design innovative solutions (like urban farms or distribution hubs) to ensure healthy food access for all.

SUBMISSION RUBRIC

	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
The craftmanship of the build reflects inclusive design for all Metro Atlanta residents(People who are different sizes, different ages, people with disabilities, people who come from different countries or those who speak different languages)	The build is designed without a clear representation of inclusion. (10 points)	The build is designed with a basic representation of inclusion. (25 points)	The build is designed to clearly highlight inclusion for at least 2 groups. (40 points)	The build is designed to clearly highlight inclusion for at least 3 different groups. (50 points)
Shares reasoning/solutions of how the design responds to the chosen prompts	Build does not provide a solution to the chosen prompts (10 points)	Build provides a solution to one of the chosen prompts. (25 points)	Build provides a solution to two of the chosen prompts. (40 points)	Build provides detailed solutions that describe how the design is connected to two or more of the chosen prompts and explains a direct connection of the prompts. (50 points)

LEVEL UP ATLANTA! BUILD CHALLENGE RESOURCES & EXTERNAL LINKS

- Level Up Atlanta! Minecraft world file- http://tinyAPS.com/?LevelUpWorld2025
- Additional build challenge resources to provide context for students as they reimagine these areas to help solve the issues that are currently impacting the site to make it sustainable.
  - Centennial Park (focus on sustainability)
    - [Mercedes-Benz Stadium Zero Waste](#)
    - [State Farm Arena Sustainability Program](#)
    - [Georgia Aquarium](#)
    - [World of Coca-Cola](#)
  - Five Points (possible ideas edible landscape)
    - Fresh Marta Market – this is a project the city has donated funds to late last year/early this year - [MARTA Markets – Fresh, healthy produce right inside MARTA stations (cfmatl.org)](#)
    - Grows a lot program - [Adopt: an AgLanta "Grows-A-Lot" — AgLanta AgLanta - Urban Agriculture Atlanta](#)
    - [Five Points Farm (rooftop community garden)](#)
  - The Westside Beltline (mobility, housing, affordable food)
    - [Aluma Farm](#)
    - [The Kendeda Building | The Greenest Classroom Building in the U.S. (gatech.edu)](#)
    - [History - Pittsburgh Yards ® Timeline in Atlanta Georgia](#)
    - [Trees Atlanta Kendeda Treehouse](#)
- Public Facing Design Challenge Webpage
- [Moving Atlanta Forward Agenda](#)
- [Level Up Atlanta! Rubric](#)
- Minecraft Resources:
  - [Minecraft Education Support Center (Educators)](#)