Greetings, Cluster Advisory Members!

Thank you for joining us last evening for the 2025-2026 Cluster Advisory Meeting #1. The recording is available, here: 2025-2026 CAT Meeting #1 Recording and meeting notes are: 2025-2026 CAT Meeting #1 Notes. Presentations from the meeting are available as follows:

- Charter System Renewal
  - School Governance Influence Poll Results
  - Charter System Renewal Feedback Form (please complete)
- Budget Updates
  - Budget Commission Meeting | Thursday, November 20th | 12:00 pm (View at ABOE TV)
- Attendance Strategies (pending)
- Organizational Structure (effective January 2026)
  - School Assignments

The remaining Cluster Advisory meetings are scheduled for February 10 and April 21, 2026. You can register for those meetings, now: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 | Zoom and Tuesday, April 21, 2026 | Zoom.

Thankfully, we resolved the issue with recording the breakout sessions, it was a disabled global setting in our new Zoom Admin account.

Finally, we the updated District Executive Committee (DEC) roster. The DEC meeting dates are December 10, 2025 and March 9, 2026. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Best wishes for a safe and happy Thanksgiving break!

Be Well,
Sheletha

Sheletha Y. Champion, MBA, LSSGB, ITIL4
Program Director-Strategy Management
Atlanta Public Schools | Office of Strategy & Impact
Phone: (404) 802-2838
Email: sychampion@apsk12.org
Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach
Developer | Relator | Connectedness | Empathy | Activator

From: Champion, Sheletha Y
Sent: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 2:06 PM
To: Champion, Sheletha Y <sychampion@atlanta.k12.ga.us>
Cc: Barnett, Carolyn <cbarnett@atlanta.k12.ga.us>; Diane Jacobi <Diane.Jacobi@atlanta.k12.ga.us>; Norvell, Travis <tnorvell@atlanta.k12.ga.us>; Kruger, Erin <Erin.Kruger@atlanta.k12.ga.us>; Askia, Rashida <Rashida.Askia@atlanta.k12.ga.us>; Gipson, Chaundra <Chaundra.Gipson@atlanta.k12.ga.us>
Subject: 2025-2026 Cluster Advisory Organizational Meeting: Recording, Recap, Roster, Form Responses

Greetings, Cluster Advisory Members!

Thank you for joining us last evening for the 2025-2026 Cluster Advisory

Program Organization Meeting. The recording is available, here: 2025-2026 CAT Organization Meeting Recording and
the recap is: 2025-2025 CAT Organization Meeting Recap.

For lists of all CATs with contact information, see: All Cluster Advisory Rosters. Also, hot off the presses: 2025 APS GO Team Handbook!

The results of the meeting poll follow and **all form** responses are here: 2025-2026 Cluster Advisory Team Organization. We will review your requests for General Sessions and invite the responsible parties to discuss/present the requested topics.

1. Meeting #1 – Tuesday, November 18, 2025
2. Meeting #2 – Tuesday, February 10, 2026
3. Meeting #3 – Tuesday, April 21, 2026

I will set up the meetings via zoom. Any District Executive Committee meetings are scheduled separately; we will be in touch. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Be Well,
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2025-2026 Cluster Advisory Team
Meeting #1 Recap

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, November 18, 2025	4:30 pm-6:00 pm	Zoom
Organizer	**Facilitators**	**Meeting Type**
School Governance Strategy + Impact	Travis W. Norvell Carolyn M. Barnett Sheletha Y. Champion	Status | Discussion | Planning

Meeting Purpose + Objectives

PURPOSE: Promote cluster-wide ***and*** cross-cluster collaboration, communication, engagement, and advocacy.

OBJECTIVES:

- Charter System Renewal Overview
- Cluster-wide **and** cross-cluster collaboration
- Review and provide feedback on initiatives that impact or involve the cluster

Summary

The meeting covered the charter system renewal, budget updates, and attendance strategies. Carolyn Barnett discussed the December 3 charter system renewal application, emphasizing the district's flexibility and local school governance. Dr. Lisa Bracken highlighted the FY 2027 budget challenges, including a $50-$60 million gap, due to decreased enrollment, increased costs, and revenue constraints. Attendance strategies were presented by Dr. Jacquelyn Anthony and Elesha Curvey, focusing on tiered interventions, parent engagement, and leveraging school social workers. The meeting concluded with organizational changes, including cluster superintendents transitioning to associate superintendents, to better align with school needs.

Action Items

- Provide feedback on what could be changed or strengthened in the next charter system contract to improve local school governance.
- Provide input on the biggest challenge using the flexibility and autonomy of the charter system.

- Provide input on what innovative practices or flexibilities would most benefit your school's community in the next five years.

Decisions made

- The charter system renewal application will be submitted on December 3rd.
- The FY 2027 budget process will begin with a projected $50-60 million gap.
- Organizational changes will take effect at the beginning of January, shifting from cluster superintendents to associate superintendents.

Issues & Risks

- **Charter System Renewal:**
    - Need to address the sustainability of the system's financial structure.
    - Challenges in using flexibility and autonomy as a charter system.
- **Budget:**
    - Declining enrollment due to competition and lower birth rates.
    - Increased spending across various areas, including salaries and benefits.
    - Revenue constraints, including the impact of TADs and exemptions.
- **Attendance:**
    - Chronic absenteeism affecting student achievement.
    - Need for stronger school-wide support to address attendance issues.
- **Organizational Changes:**
    - Shift from cluster superintendents to associate superintendents handling specific school levels.

Next steps

- **Charter System Renewal:**

  - Feedback from the Google Form will be incorporated into the application by Carolyn Barnett and team.
  - The full application will be made available online after state approval.

- **Budget:**
  - Budget parameters and school allotments will be discussed at the upcoming Budget Commission meeting.
- **Attendance:**
  - Schools to implement strong CART (Chronic Absence Review Team) practices.
  - Principals to ensure social workers are assigned no more than 30 minutes of duty per day.

Questions discussed

- Which domain has helped Go Teams have real influence in schools?
- What has been the biggest challenge using the flexibility and autonomy as a charter system?
- What innovative practices or flexibilities would most benefit your school's community in the next five years?
- Is the Georgia DOE attendance dashboard a good source of information for non-staff members?

Timeline

- Charter System Renewal application to be submitted on December 3rd.
- FY 2027 budget planning process is beginning.
- Budget Commission meeting scheduled for Thursday at 12:30 PM.
- Organizational changes to take effect at the beginning of January.

Outline

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2025-2026 Cluster Advisory Team
Meeting #1 Recap

Charter System Renewal Overview

- Carolyn Barnett discusses the charter system renewal application, noting the district's history with the charter system since 2016.
- Carolyn explains the charter system as a contract between Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and the state of Georgia, emphasizing flexibility and student achievement.
- The roadmap for the charter system renewal is presented, highlighting the district's strategic plan, finance, research, resources, curriculum, instruction, principal hiring, and school operations.

Poll on Domains with Influence

- Carolyn conducts a poll to identify which domains (school improvement, finance and resource allocation, curriculum and instruction, principal hiring, or school operations) have had the most influence on Go Teams.
- Participants respond to the poll, with a significant portion indicating that school improvement and curriculum and instruction have had the most influence.
- A Google Form is introduced to gather additional feedback on improving local school governance.

Innovations and Flexibilities

- Carolyn discusses innovations and flexibilities enjoyed by APS schools, including waivers for financial flexibility and innovative school models.
- The consolidation of state and local funding is highlighted, ensuring that federal funding can be used to support students' needs.
- Carolyn asks participants to consider the biggest challenges using the flexibility and autonomy of the charter system and to think about innovative practices that would benefit their schools in the next five years.
- The next steps for the charter system renewal application are outlined, emphasizing the need for innovative practices and waivers.

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2025-2026 Cluster Advisory Team
Meeting #1 Recap

Finance and Budget Updates

- Dr. Bracken discusses the FY 2027 budget process, highlighting a "math problem" with revenue and expenditures.
- External factors impacting the budget include increased competition, decreased birth rates, and inflation, leading to a decline in enrollment.
- Increased spending in areas like salary and benefits, student services, and utilities is noted, along with the impact of Senate Bill 233 and House Senate Bill 82.
- Dr. Bracken outlines the revenue constraints, including the TADS and homestead exemptions, and the need for belt-tightening to address the multi-year gap.

Q&A on Budget and TADS

- Tanya asks about the updated enrollment numbers and their impact on the budget, with Dr. Bracken explaining the preliminary projections and the process for finalizing them.
- Tricia inquires about the benefits of the TADS, with Dr. Bracken explaining the success of the TADS in certain areas and the challenges of closing them out.
- Torrey asks about the reduction at the central office and the impact of deeds on property liquidation, with Dr. Bracken providing partial answers and promising to follow up.
- The Q&A session concludes with Dr. Bracken offering to provide additional information and resources.

Attendance Strategies Presentation

- Dr. Jacquelyn Anthony and Elesha Curvey present strategies for increasing student attendance, emphasizing the connection between attendance and student achievement.
- The district's target for reducing chronic absenteeism is highlighted, with a focus on using data to guide interventions.

- Strategies for improving attendance include building parent and family capacity, training staff, and using a tiered attendance strategy approach.
- The importance of a strong Chronic Absence Review Team (CART) and the role of school social workers in providing tier three interventions are discussed.

Promising Practices and Key Takeaways

- Promising practices from schools like Scott Elementary, Herman J Russell, Cascade, and North Atlanta are shared, highlighting successful attendance strategies.
- The importance of a strong CART team, dividing work among team members, and using data to inform interventions is emphasized.
- The role of school social workers in providing tier three interventions and the need to ensure they have adequate time for this work is discussed.
- Key takeaways include ensuring a strong CART team, using a tiered attendance strategy, building parent and family capacity, and leveraging school social workers effectively.

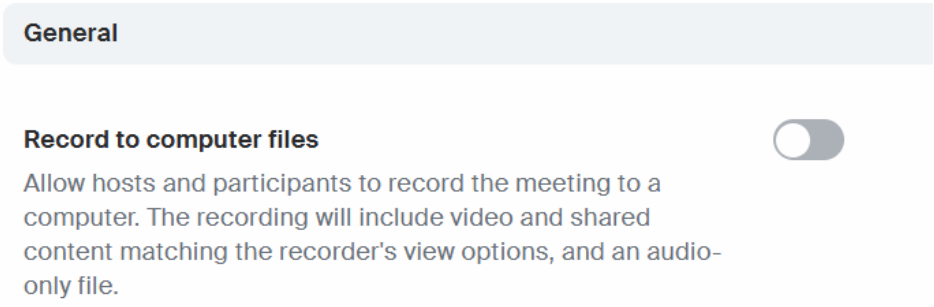
Organizational Changes

- Travis introduces the organizational changes, including the shift from cluster superintendents to associate superintendents, and the alignment of programs and non-traditional schools.
- The new organizational structure aims to tightly focus on the needs of individual schools and programs.

Cluster Breakouts

- Participants are directed to breakout rooms to discuss concerns related to the FY 2027 budget process and attendance strategies.
- Breakout rooms could not be recorded due to a global admin account setting in Zoom. Most clusters took notes using the form provided.

- The Cluster Advisory Program Team has the account access to ensure members can record breakout rooms in future meetings.



Charter System Renewal

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Today's Agenda

01 **Charter System Overview**

- A high-level review of the charter system model

02 **Governance in a Charter System**

- Current State Review and Future State Planning

03 **Flexibility and Innovation**

- Current State Review and Future State Planning

04 **Next Steps**

- Charter System Renewal Process

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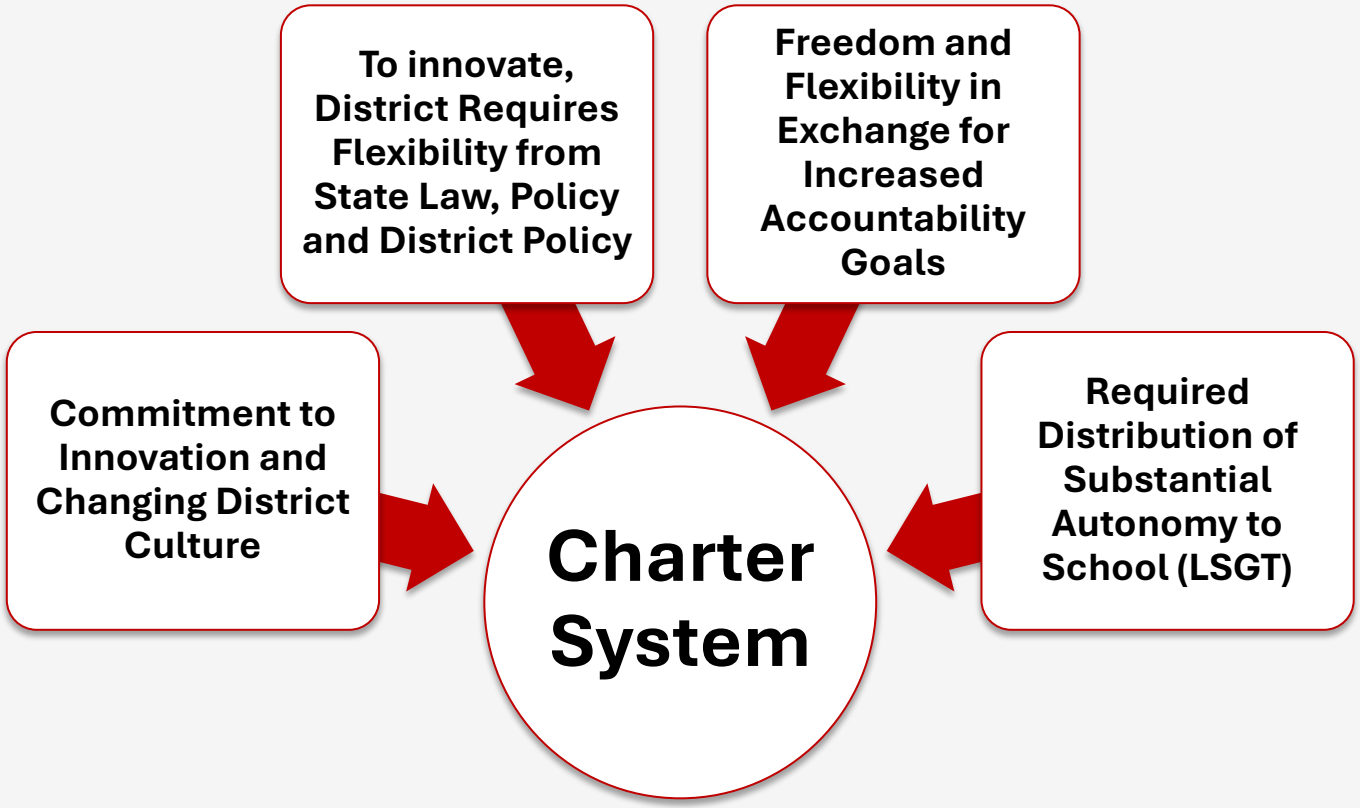
WHAT IS A CHARTER SYSTEM?



Charter System Philosophy: A district must want to truly change how it does business and believe that, in order to increase student achievement, **schools must be operated in a different way, with greater parent and community buy-in at every single school.** Schools are empowered to develop solutions free from the established educational bureaucracy of legislature-driven education mandates, State Board rules, and even the district's own policies and practices. With this freedom from the law, the district and its schools in turn agree to be held accountable for significant increases in student achievement.

Our Charter System Road Map

2014–2016: Select & Plan

- ✓ *Identify key blockers: Culture, Academics, Talent, Systems*
- ✓ *Select charter operating system*
- ✓ *Identify key blockers:*
- ✓ *Autonomy & flexibility as solutions*

2016–2017: Structures for Autonomy

- ✓ *GO Teams*
- ✓ *More fiscal and personnel decision-making at school level*
- ✓ *Design talent strategy*
- ✓ *Create theory & model for change*
- ✓ *Shift in roles at CLL to support schools differently*

2017–2018: Further Down the Road

- ✓ *Increase autonomy: Assessment, Instructional Resources, Professional Learning*
- ✓ *Central Office to Central Service Center*
- ✓ *Increasing Capacity of ILTs*
- ✓ *Student Success Funding Formula*

2017–2021: Continuing the Work

- ✓ *Increasing scope of school autonomy*
- ✓ *Continue to build capacity*
- ✓ *APS' 5-year Charter System contract will end June 30, 2021*

2021–2025

- ✓ *Charter System Renewal*
- ✓ *Expand stakeholder access to GO Teams and local school governance*
- ✓ *Leveraging flexibility to mitigate pandemic learning loss*
- ✓ *Expansion of ACCA enrollment and career tracks*

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School-Level Governance

Domain	Required	Additional role in APS
School Improvement (Strategic Plan)	**Autonomy:** Establish/monitor achievement of school improvement goals **Autonomy:** Approval of school improvement plan and oversight of its implementation	**Autonomy:** Develop and approve innovations aligned with the school strategic improvement plan.
Finance & Resource Allocations	**Input:** Final recommendation for school budget **Input:** #/type of personnel, curriculum costs, supply, equipment, maintenance, operations costs	**Autonomy:** Develop/manage requests for funding to support approved Local School Governance Team (LSGT/GO Team) school-based solutions
Curriculum	**Input:** Curriculum and accompanying instructional materials	**Input/Autonomy:** Align school's curriculum offerings and modes of delivery to cluster theme
Personnel	**Input:** Recommend the principal or school leader for selection by the Superintendent/BOE	**Input:** Annual feedback on principal's performance/interaction with LSGT/GO Team **Input:** Input into preferred qualifications for principal and for staff positions created through the school-based solutions process
School Operations	**Input:** School operations that relate to school improvement goals and/or charter system goals	**Autonomy:** Develop school-community communication strategies and creation of Parent/community involvement/engagement plan **Input:** School system calendar to share at Cluster Advisory Team meetings

School-Level Governance

Poll: Which domain has most helped your GO Team have real influence in your school?

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School Operations	**Input:** School operations that relate to school improvement goals and/or charter system goals	**Autonomy:** Develop school-community communication strategies and creation of Parent/community involvement/engagement plan **Input:** School system calendar to share at Cluster Advisory Team meetings

School-Level Governance: Looking Ahead

If you could add, change, or strengthen ONE thing in the next charter system contract to improve local school governance, what would it be?

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Flexibility and Innovation

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APS Charter System Benefits and Opportunities

Examples of flexibilities leveraged by Atlanta Public Schools as a Charter System Contract

Waiver Category	Type	School/District	Details
Human Resources Flexibility	Teacher Certification	Sarah R. Smith ES	Waiver for Teacher Certified in Early Childhood from Puerto Rico
		Brandon	Certification and Language Proficiency waivers for DLI Spanish Teachers
	Employee Recruitment and Hiring	District	Employment contracts would include a probationary period of ninety working days or one semester (whichever comes first) for all newly contracted personnel
	Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) observations for highly effective teachers	District	Schools had the flexibility to follow the state recommended plan in lieu of the **local plan**, specific to the Full Formative Assessment Process versus the Flexible Process for veteran teachers with proficient or exemplary summative performance ratings, including highly effective teachers with 3+yrs of experience.
Academic Flexibility	Media Center Scheduling	Burgess Peterson	Flexibility from state guidelines for media center scheduling to include the media center and media specialist in the school's schedule for the Specials rotation.
	3rd-5th Grade Intensives	Hollis Innovation Academy	To provide targeted instruction to students in the area of Reading and Mathematics. Students who have scored below proficient on the GMAS and have an SGP below 30 will be considered for 3rd-5th grade intensives.
	Seat Time Waivers	Hollis Innovation, DH Stanton, Boyd, Fain, Finch, and Perkerson Elementary Schools/District	To develop intervention blocks or increase instructional time in a subject area
	Class Size	District	Allocation of resources to afford wrap-around (psych/socio/emotional) services, increased instructional support (instructional coaches, coordinators), etc.

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APS Charter System Benefits and Opportunities

Examples of flexibilities leveraged by Atlanta Public Schools as a Charter System Contract

Waiver Category	Type	School/District	Details
Financial Flexibility	Consolidation of State, Local, and Federal Funds (including Title 1)	District	Federal law allows schools to consolidate their federal program funds with state and local funds into a single pool. The federal funds lose their identity, and the consolidated funds may be spent with the flexibility to support a schoolwide program in the same manner state and local funds are spent, so long as the schoolwide program meets the intent and purposes of the federal programs that have been consolidated
	Student Success Funding Formula	District	Student Success Funding (SSF) is the districts funding formula that will allocate funds based on the attributes of students. SSF provides autonomy & flexibility to schools and increase equity for all students.
	QBE Financing except to the extent it relates to funding	District	While the QBE formula is used to determine the total amount of state funds allocated, charter systems can choose to spend those funds on different programs than those for which the funds were originally designated.
Program	Creation of Atlanta College and Career Academy in Partnership with Atlanta Tech	District	This model allows school districts to obtain waivers from specific provisions of Title 20 of the Georgia Code and State Board of Education rules. This flexibility enables districts to implement innovative programs and structures, including the creation of CCAs, while still maintaining accountability for student performance.

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Let's Discuss: Flexibility and Innovation

What has been the biggest challenge using the flexibility and autonomy we have as a charter system?

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Flexibility and Innovation : Looking Ahead

What innovative practices or flexibilities would most benefit your school community in the next five years?

Think in terms of staffing, scheduling, curriculum, student support, or anything else.

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Next Steps

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CHARTER SYSTEM RENEWAL PROCESS

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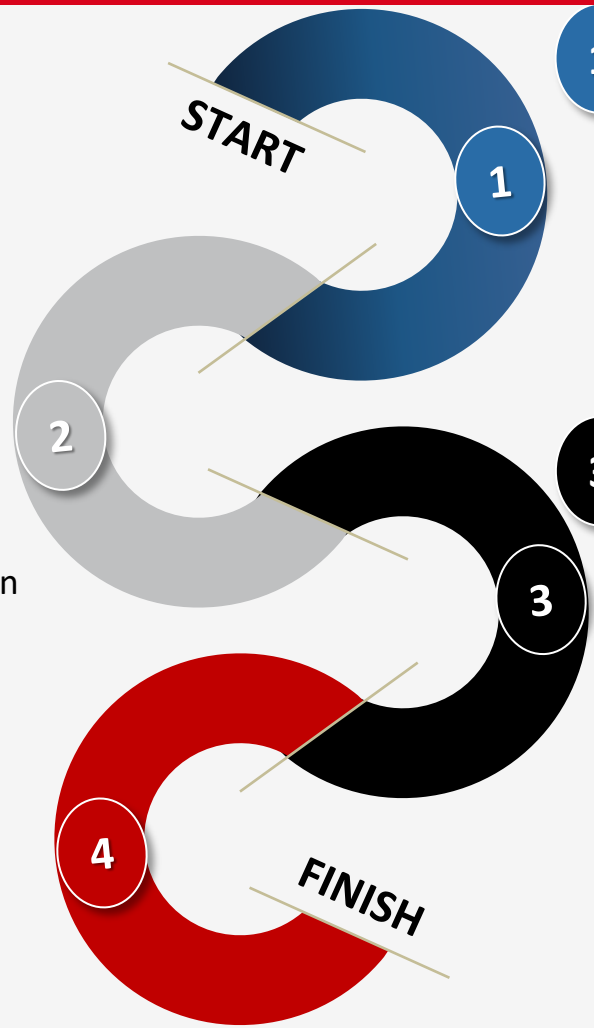

1

File A Renewal Letter Of Intent

- Superintendent/Designee will submit letter of intent to GaDOE

2

Complete Charter System Renewal Application

- Status of Essential or Innovative Features Implementation under current contract
- Waivers utilize under current contract
- New Essential or Innovative Features
- Potential waivers plan under your new contract
- Local Schools Governance implementation

3

Submit Charter System Application to GaDOE

- Submit through portal
  - Charter Application
  - Governance Matrix, and CCA Partners Roles and Responsibilities Chart

4

Charter System Interviews

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Thank You

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BUDGET COMMISSION

FINANCE DIVISION

Lisa Bracken, Chief Financial Officer

September 30, 2025

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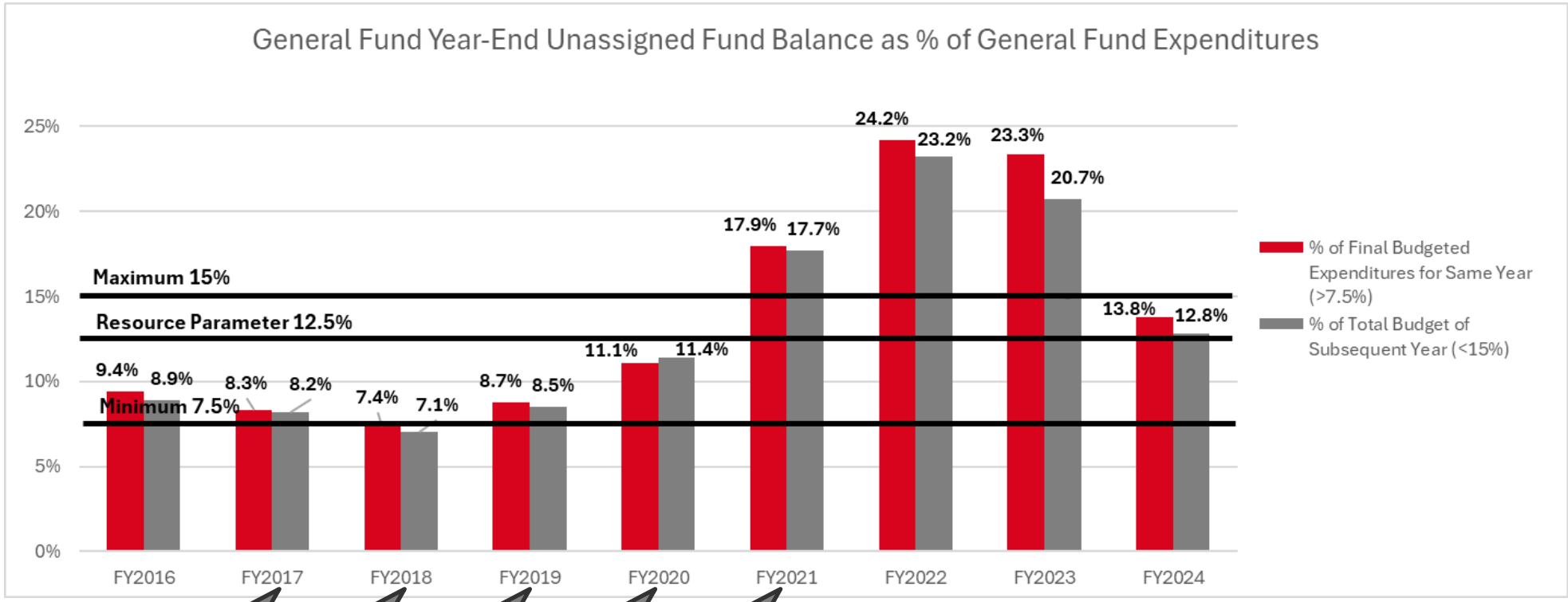
Develop and Maintain Sustainable Funding Models

Fund Balance: Historical by Percentage of Expenditures

It is the goal of the School District to achieve and maintain an **Unassigned Fund Balance in the General Fund at fiscal year-end of not less than 7.5% of budgeted expenditures**, **not to exceed 15% of the total budget of the subsequent fiscal year**, net of any committed reserve fund balance for capital expenditures, in compliance with O.C.G.A. 20-02-0167(a)(5).



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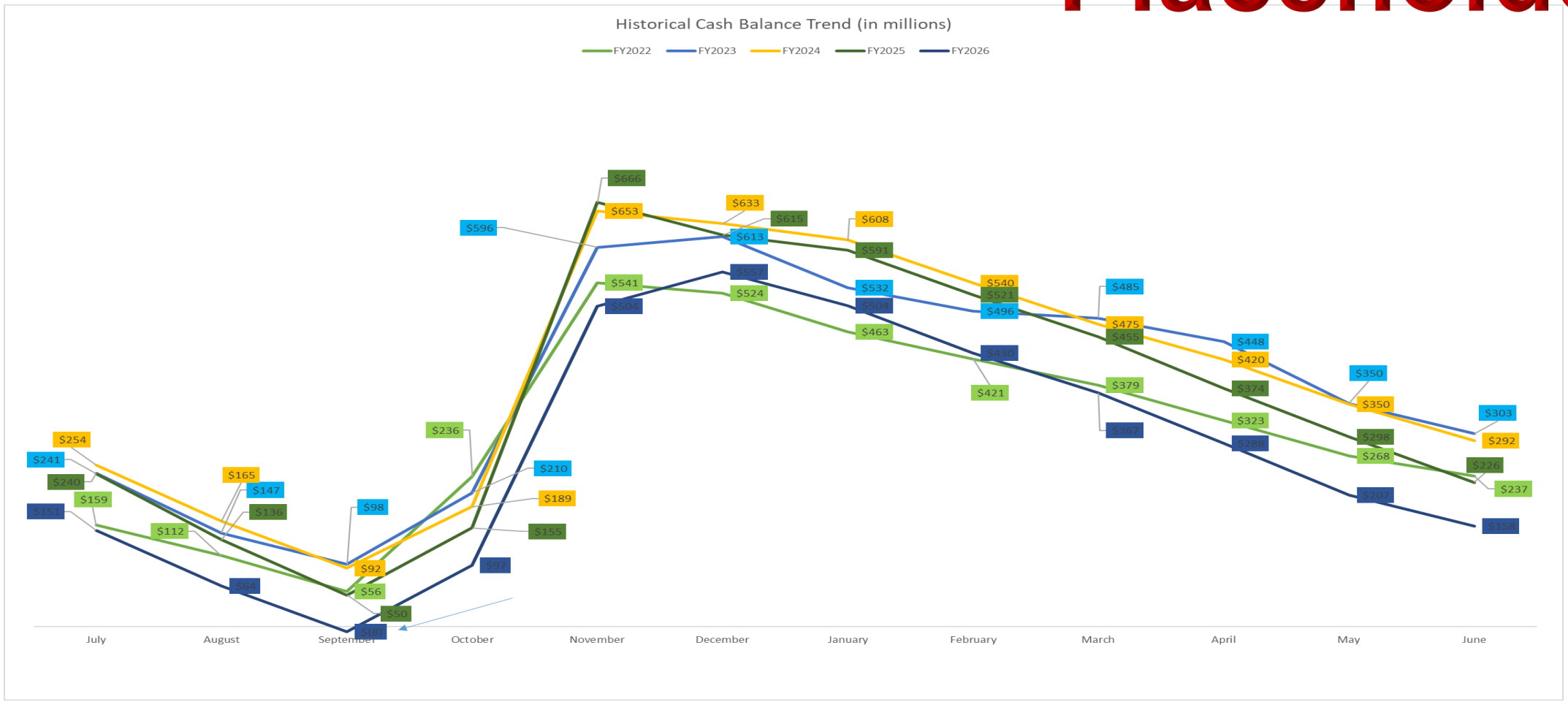
Timing of Cash on Hand vs Budgeted Expenses

Placeholder



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Cost and Timeline of TAN

Amount of TAN- $35M

Timeline:

- Secure bidders and select winning bid by 9/24/25
- Work to finalize documents 9/30-10/3
- Approve Note resolution at Board Mtg 10/6/25
- Close: 10/8/25

Placeholder

- Due to a delay in the issuance of Fulton County property tax bills, we are recommending the issuance of a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) in the amount of $35 million to ensure adequate cash flow during the first week of October.
- Tax bills were originally scheduled for release on September 1, 2025, but an administrative error affecting homestead exemptions and longer-than-usual debate over the millage rate in Fulton County have pushed the release date to September 15, 2025. This two-week delay shifts the timing of collections and creates a gap between our scheduled expenditures—particularly payroll ($38 million), charter school payments ($30 million) and other recurring obligations—and the receipt of anticipated property tax revenues.
- Anticipated Cost: 60-day TAN: approximately $230,000 in interest, plus issuance fees (Based on current market conditions and an estimated 4% annual rate)

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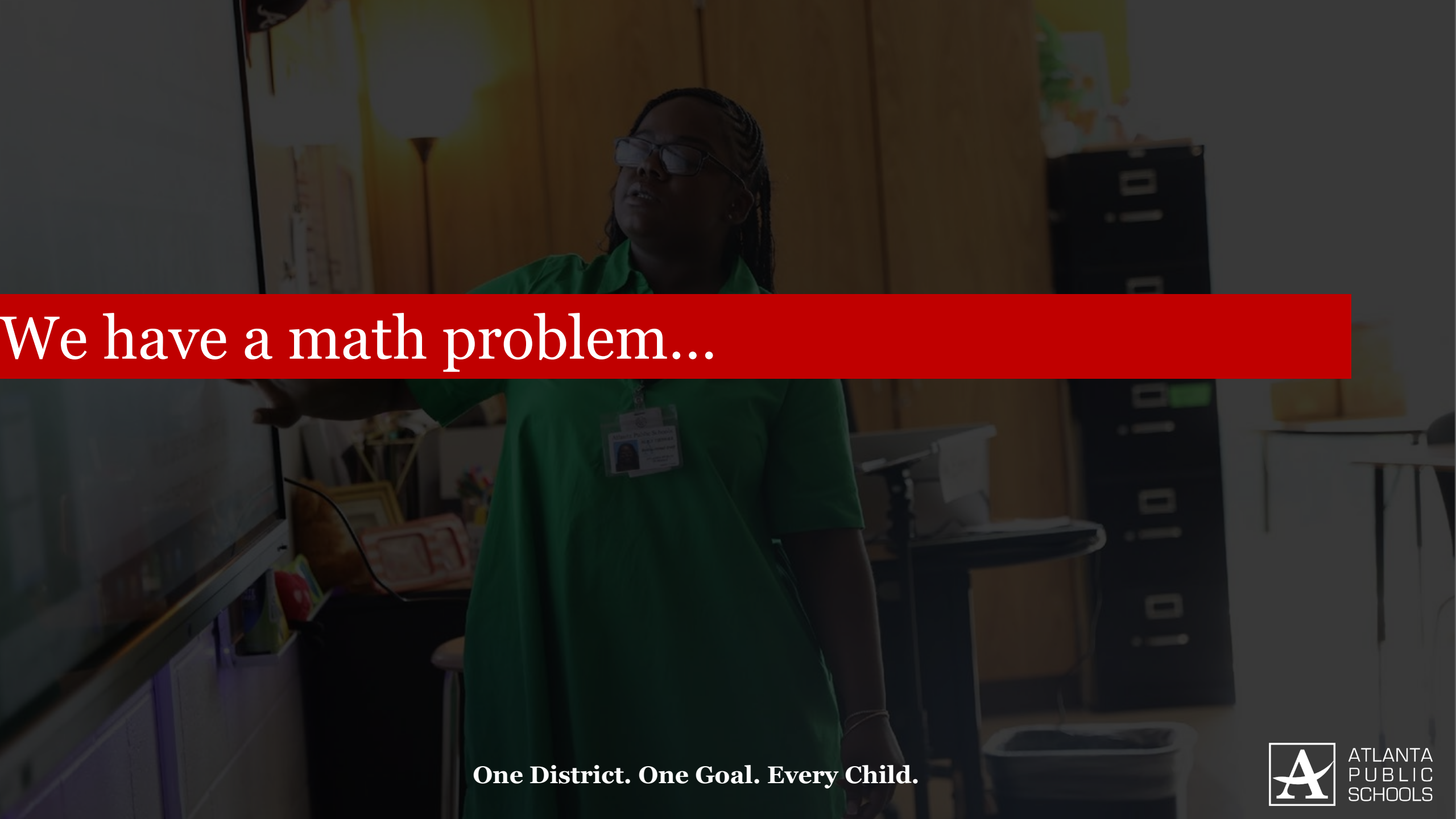

We have a math problem…

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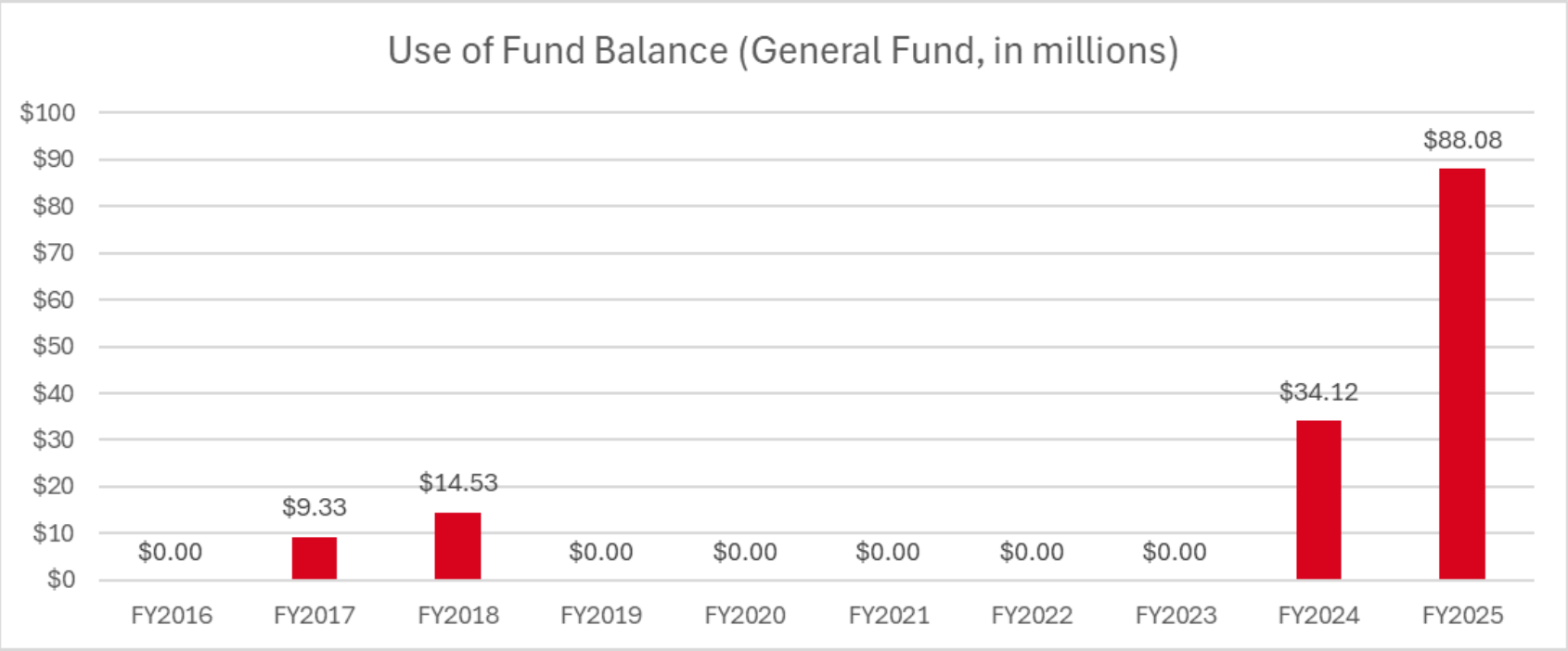
Develop and Maintain Sustainable Funding Models

Fund Balance: Use of Fund Balance

Fund balance has been used for district initiatives such as piloting new programs (Readers are Leaders), one-time or short-term initiatives (ERP), and potentially non-recurring costs (stipends, Nutrition, etc.).



* This funding shows actuals or the most current projections, in comparison to the adopted funding levels on Slide 11.

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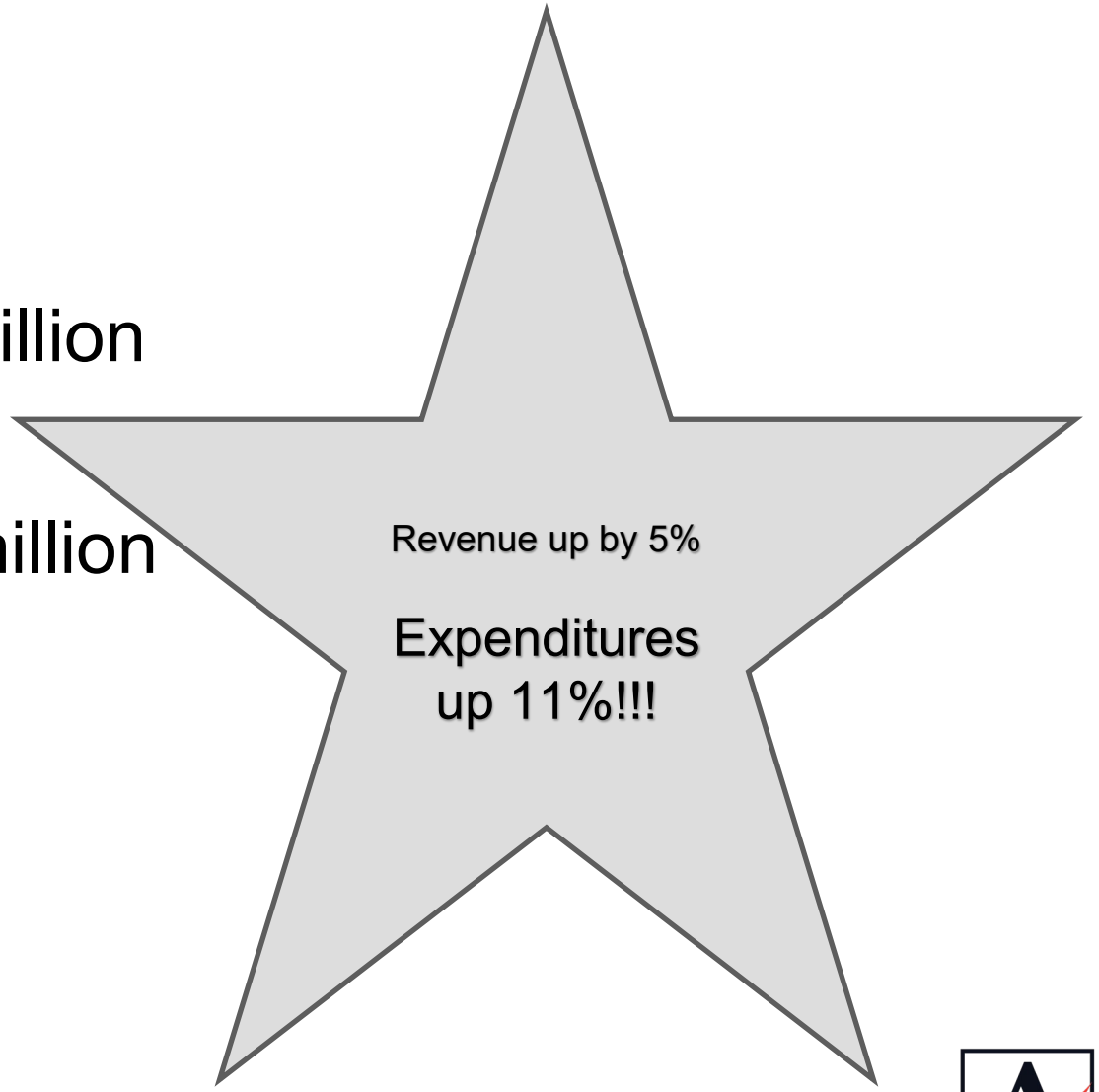
FY2025 Big Spend

- Teacher (and other) raises- $68 million
- Readers are Leaders- $12 million
- Stipends and Supplements- $20 million
- ERP- $12 million
- Whole-child position- $7 million
- Nutrition in house- TBD



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Getting back on track

Current Actions

FY26 Budget: Sustainability through Discipline

- Cut Central Office positions and non-personnel spending
- Constrained growth in utilities budgets
- Completed zero-based budget for Signature Programs and Turnaround
- Amended pension payment schedule
- Reduced duplicated funding for APS programs (AVA, Phoenix)
- Eliminated general fund transfer to School Nutrition Program
- Reduced dependence on fund balance by 84%
- Kicked-off a facility master planning process

Revenue	FY2025	FY2026	Diff	% Change
Fund Balance	$80.51	$13.00	-$67.51	-84%

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Department and Central Office Budget Reduction Summary

- Even with the reduction of a net 146 positions for over $40.6M (gross dollars), increased costs to State Health Insurance rates, and TRS benefit percentages negate many of the reductions made at central office.
- FY25 State Health Insurance Budget - $88M
- FY26 State Health Insurance Budget - $102M

  $14M Net Increase
- FY25 TRS Budget - $95M
- FY26 TRS Budget - $106M

  $11M Net Increase

Category	Amount Reduced
Personnel (Gross Dollars since December 2024)	$40.6M
Non-Personnel (Central Office Departments)	$24.4M
Savings via Hiring Freeze	$5.4M
Total Savings and/or Reductions	**$70.4M**

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MULTIYEAR (in millions)

DRAFT

Revenue	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031	Assumptions
Local	$993.09	$1,012.77	$1,032.84	$1,053.32	$1,074.21	$1,095.51	2% increase annually
State	$257.08	$266.52	$276.29	$286.38	$296.82	$307.61	Assumes some increase in overall QBE but offset by local fair share
Other	$6.96	$7.08	$7.20	$7.32	$7.45	$7.58	Erate, tuition, interest, etc.
Title Transfer	$15.37	$15.37	$15.37	$15.37	$15.37	$15.37	Held flat
Fund Balance	$13.00	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Restore fund balance
Grand Total	**$1,285.48**	**$1,301.73**	**$1,331.70**	**$1,362.39**	**$1,393.84**	**$1,426.06**	
		1.26%	2.30%	2.31%	2.31%	2.31%	

Expenditure	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031	
Schools	$640.27	$674.75	$711.12	$749.47	$789.93	$830.80	Salaries and Benefits up 5%, supplies up 4%, contracts up 6%
Charters	$246.31	$256.20	$266.49	$277.19	$288.32	$302.91	Assumes annual 4% increase based on revenue and trend
Partners	$58.13	$60.47	$62.90	$65.43	$68.06	$70.80	Assumes annual 4% increase based on revenue and trend
Central Office	$241.57	$264.37	$276.55	$279.86	$283.67	$297.53	Salaries and Benefits up 5%, supplies up 4%, contracts up 6%, ERP completed by FY2028
Districtwide	$66.54	$67.70	$68.92	$70.21	$71.55	$35.96	6% increase in districtwide benefit rates, pension funded in FY2030
State Grants	$10.10	$10.66	$11.27	$11.91	$12.59	$13.33	Assumes gradual 3-5% increase
Utilities	$22.57	$22.57	$22.57	$22.57	$22.57	$22.57	Assumed held flat
Grand Total	**$1,285.48**	**$1,356.72**	**$1,419.81**	**$1,476.64**	**$1,536.70**	**$1,573.89**	
		5.54%	4.65%	4.00%	4.07%	2.42%	
Gap	**$0.00**	**-$54.99**	**-$88.12**	**-$114.24**	**-$142.86**	**-$147.82**	Initial gap for FY2026 was over $100 million!

Based on FY2026 Amended Budget as of September 9, 2025

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WE HAVE A MATH PROBLEM

EXTERNAL FACTORS + **INCREASED SPENDING** + **REVENUE CONSTRAINTS** =

IMMEDIATE NEED FOR EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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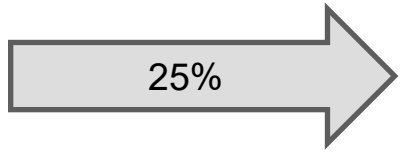
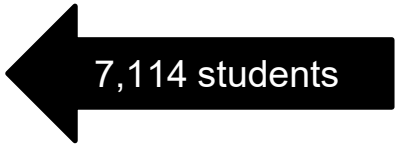
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EXTERNAL FACTORS

- Competition is UP!

In Fy2026
- Birthrates are DOWN!

From 2013-2023
- Inflation and Cost of Living are UP! 

From 2020-2025
- Enrollment is DOWN! 

From 2016-2026

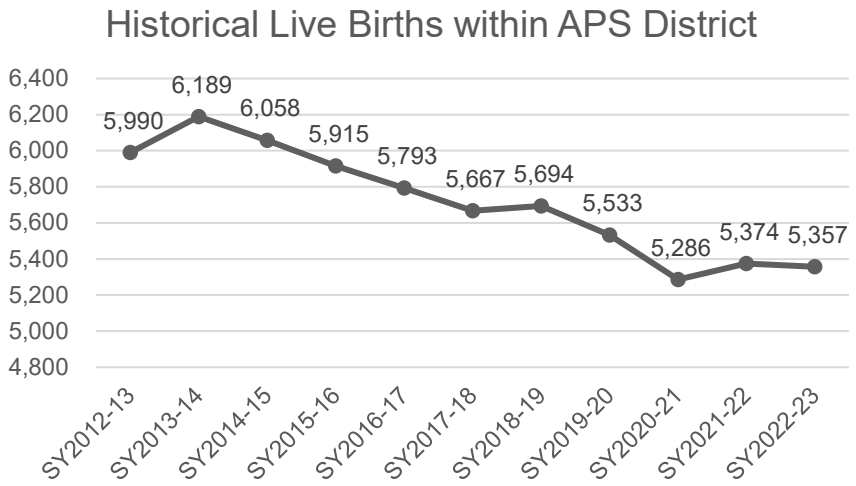
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

External Factor: Competition for Student Enrollment

- APS traditional school enrollment is impacted by:
  - **19** local charter schools
  - **14** state charter schools serving the APS area
  - **36** private schools
  - **2** statewide virtual schools

- The Georgia legislature has passed legislation in support of school choice over the past 20 years, enabling conversion charter schools, local start-up charter schools, and state charter schools via the State Charter School Commission, as well as providing tax credits for private school scholarships, establishing vouchers for families who withdraw students from public school, and requiring local boards of education to make unused facilities available to charter schools
- Recent legislation includes:
  - Senate Bill 233 (2024), creating the Georgia Promise Scholarship program, a $6,500 per student payment that can be used toward private school tuition or home study for students living in the attendance zones of low-performing schools
  - Senate Bill 82 (2025), authorizing payment of $250,000 per year for three years to local boards of education for each new charter school they approve and delaying eligibility for charter or strategic waiver renewal if a board denies two or more charter petitions that are later approved by the State Charter School Commission

More External Factors Affecting Enrollment



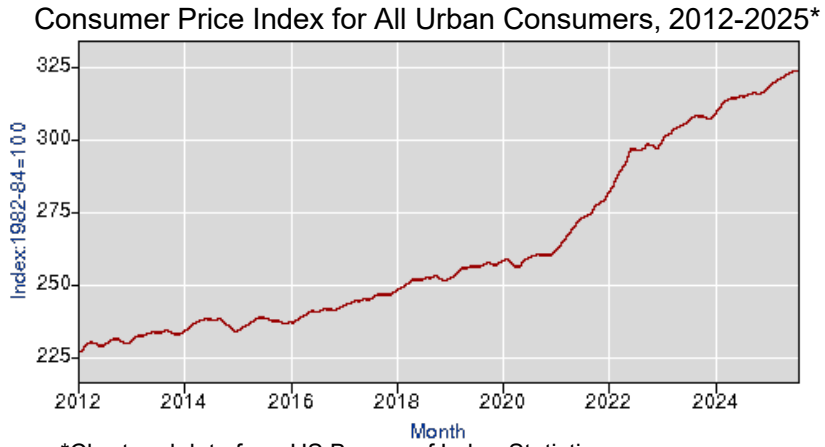


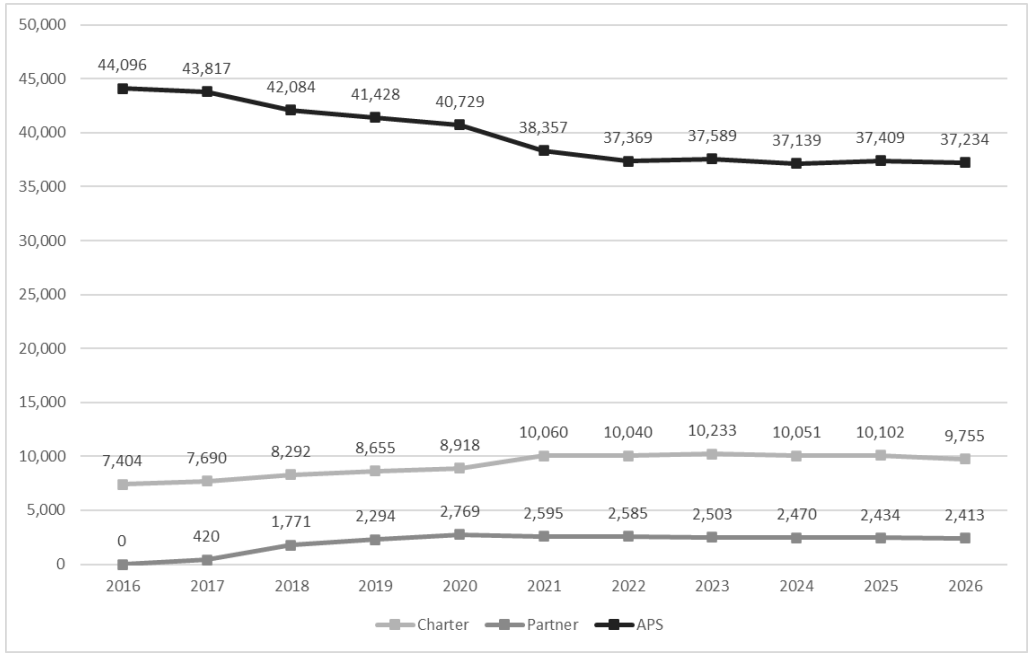
*Chart and data from US Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Live births within the district decreased by 13% between School Year 2012-13 and School Year 2022-23, affecting kindergarten enrollment. This is in line with a declining birth rate nationwide.
- Housing cost and availability also impacts the ability of families to live within the district and attend APS schools. According to the Atlanta Regional Commission, elevated housing costs, driven by low supply, are acting as a brake on the region's population growth. Current building permit activity remains lower than pre-Great Recession permit levels.
- Inflation and increased cost of living are also a barrier to raising a family and living within the City of Atlanta. In August 2025, it takes $1.25 to have the same purchasing power as $1 in August 2020 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator).

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	School Year	District	Charter	Partner	APS
FTE-1	2016	51,500	7,404	-	44,096
	2017	51,927	7,690	420	43,817
	2018	52,147	8,292	1,771	42,084
	2019	52,377	8,655	2,294	41,428
	2020	52,416	8,918	2,769	40,729
	2021	51,012	10,060	2,595	38,357
	2022	49,994	10,040	2,585	37,369
	2023	50,325	10,233	2,503	37,589
	2024	49,660	10,051	2,470	37,139
	2025	49,945	10,102	2,434	37,409
	2026*	49,402	9,755	2,413	37,234

*Enrollment as of 9.25.25



- Since school year 2016, district enrollment has declined by 2,098 students
- Charter school enrollment has increased by 2,351 students or 35%
- Traditional school enrollment has decreased by 6,862 students or 16% (average of 2,225 accounted for in partner schools)

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WE HAVE A MATH PROBLEM

EXTERNAL FACTORS + **INCREASED SPENDING** + **REVENUE CONSTRAINTS** =

IMMEDIATE NEED FOR EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Increased Spending

Personnel Costs

Salaries	Benefits	Other Comp
+$202.5m	+$126.7m	+$12.2m
64%	78%	106%

Student Services & Safety

SEC	Pupil Services	Safety
+$45.96m	+$48.9m	+$11.6m
64%	143%	140%

Schools

PP High and low per pupil	Staff Ratio	Facilities Average enr. and # of excess schools
$28,747	5.29	564
$11,804	997+ staff	17+

Other

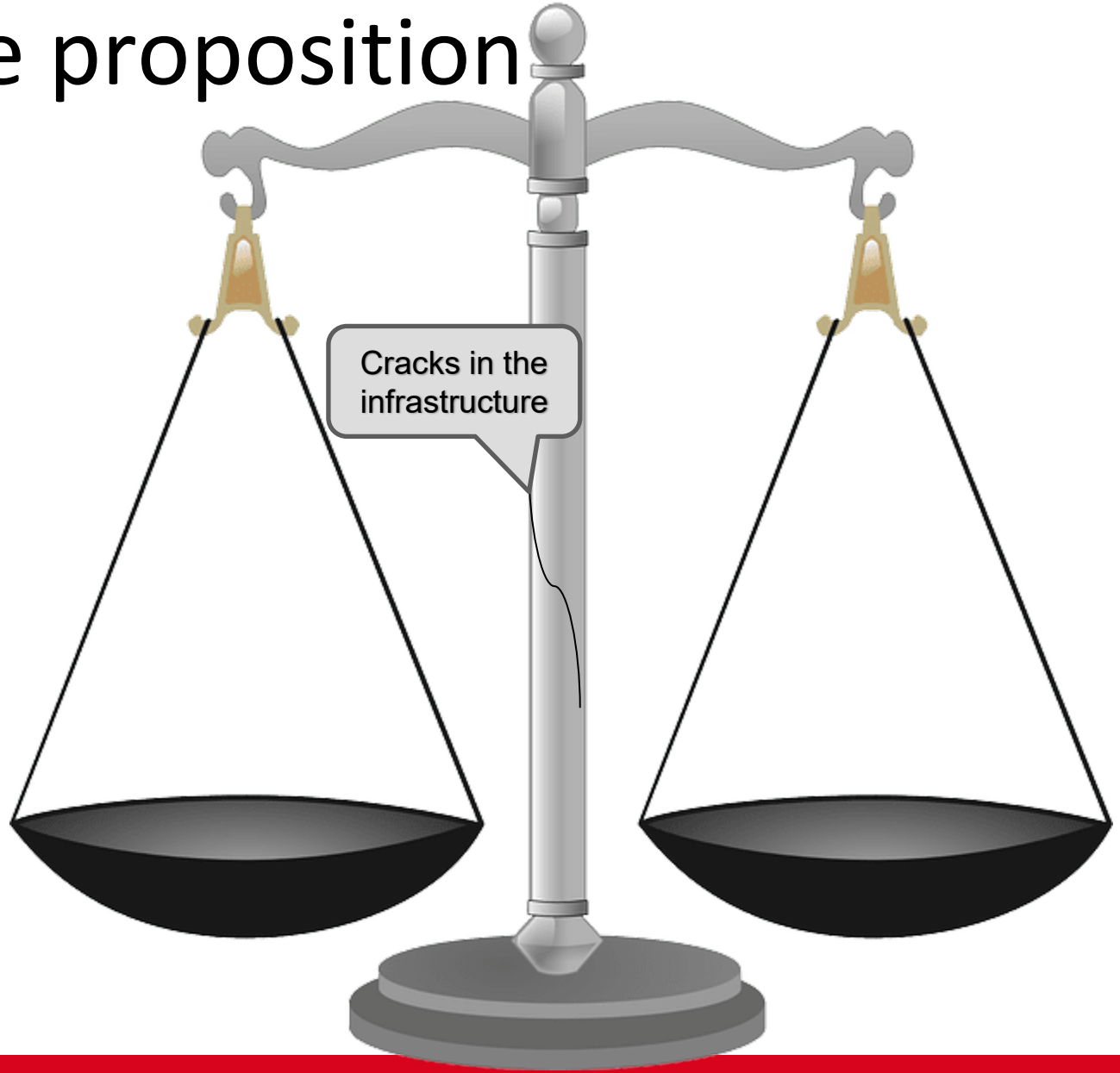
Utilities	Charters	General Admin
+$7.5	+$145m	+$35.6m
50%	157%	109%

All monetary changes depict increase from FY16-FY26

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The value proposition

Highest salary
+
Competitive stipends
+
Rich benefit packages
+
Well-supplied and equipped staff
+
Access to high-cost technology, professional development, etc
=
Very “expensive” staff



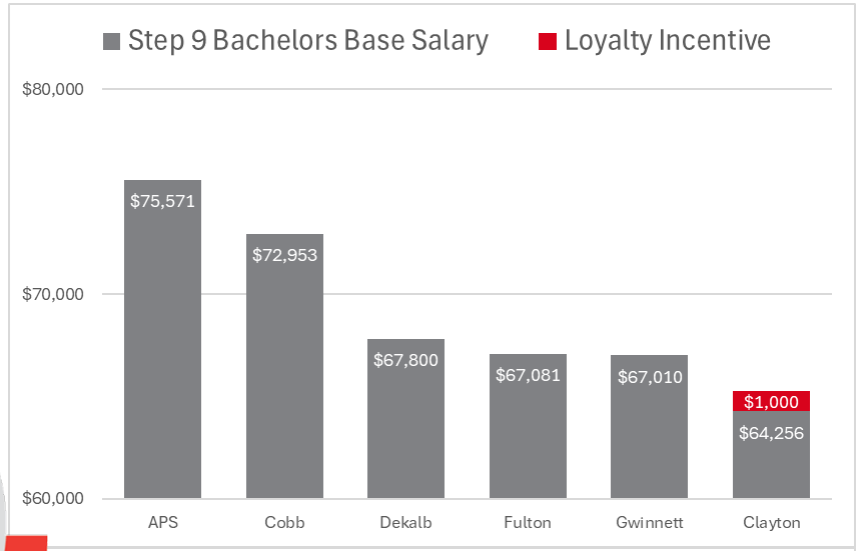
Low class sizes
+
Access to a variety of programming
+
Whole child supports
+
Emphasis on administration and oversight
+
Many underenrolled buildings
=
A LOT of staff

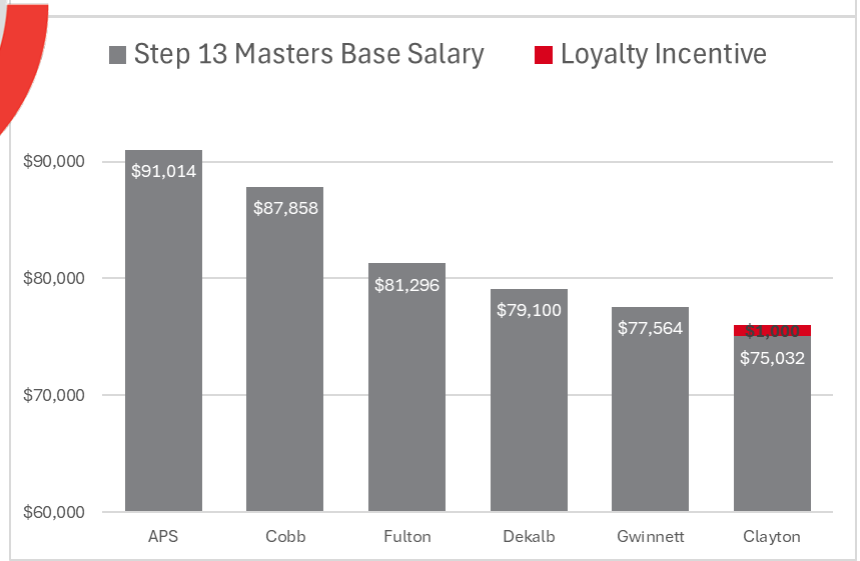
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: COMPETITIVE SALARIES

BY 2030

- Offer high-quality, universal PK3 and PK4
- Have a $100,000 average teacher salary
- Implement Individual Success Plans for every student
- Establish community hubs in every cluster

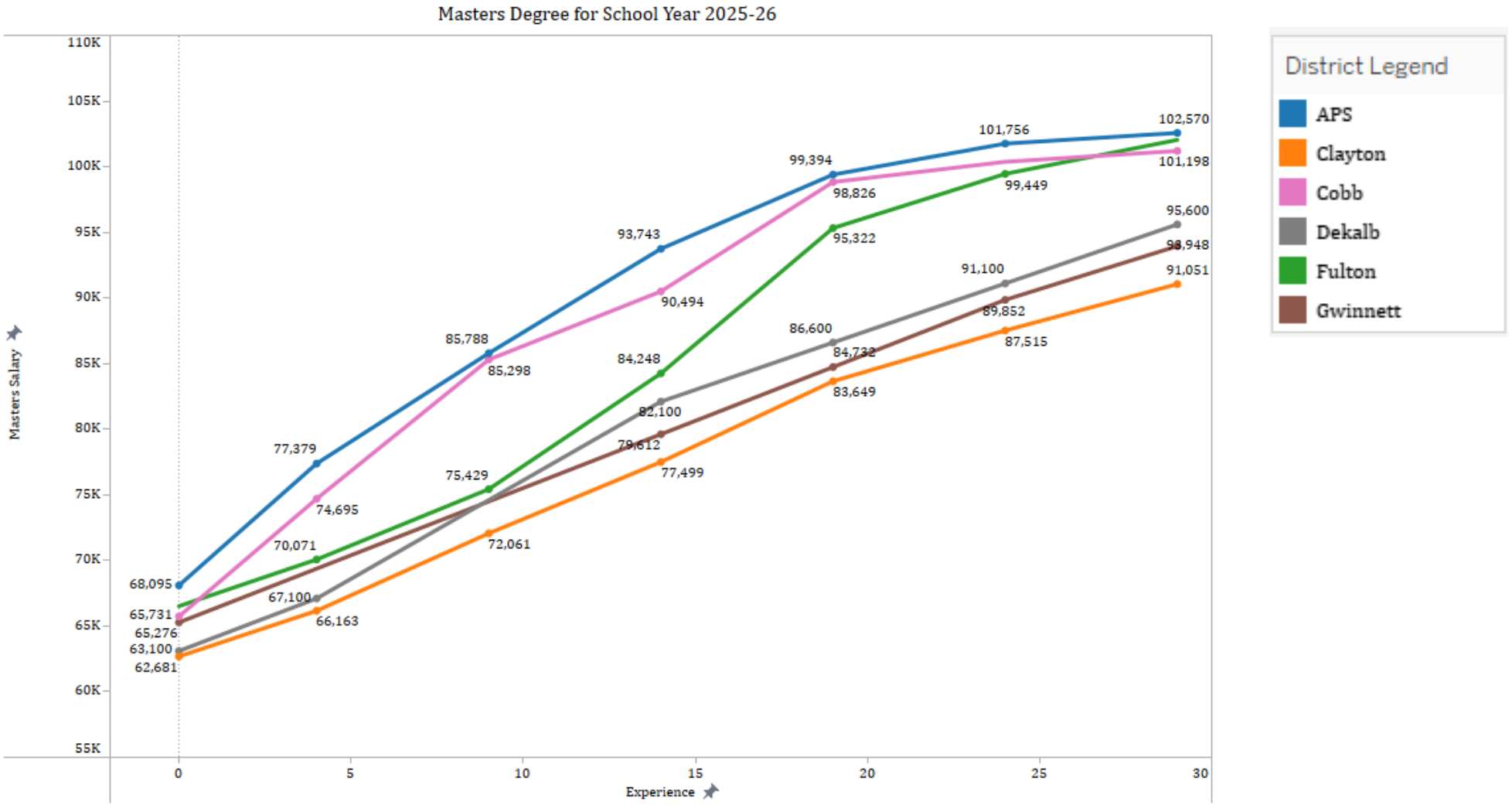




- APS is **first** in comparison to Metro Atlanta districts for teacher pay for all degree levels.
- Strategic Plan includes goal of $100,000 average teacher salary by 2030
- Starting pay at the Master's level for APS Teachers is $68,095 vs. the next highest district (Fulton) at $66,514.
- Mid-range pay at the Master's level for APS Teachers is $93,743 vs. the next highest district (Cobb) at $90,494.
- For FY26, Clayton increased every step by $2,500, Fulton increased all steps by 2-3%, Gwinnett increased all steps by $1,000, and Cobb stayed the same.

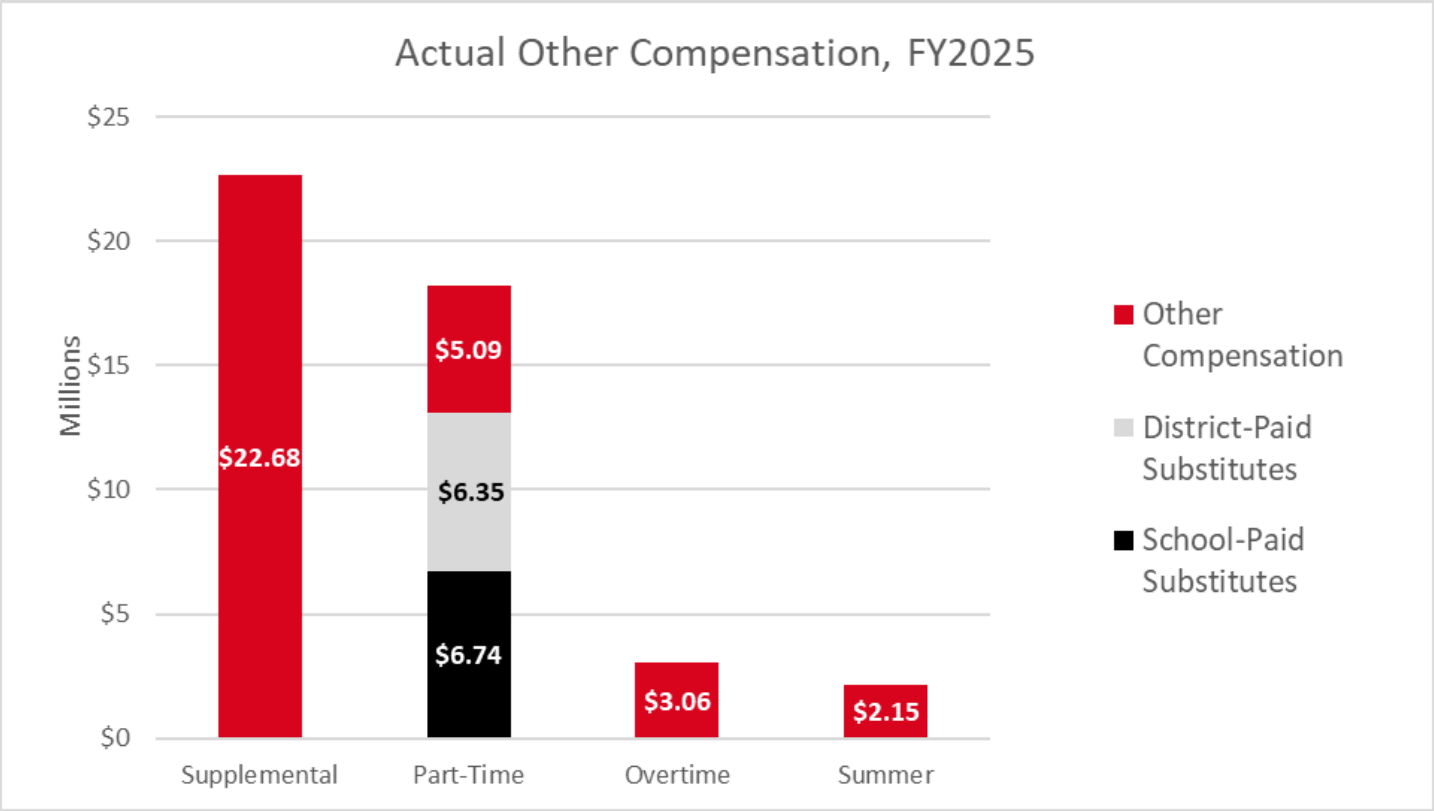
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: COMPETITIVE SALARIES



ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: OTHER COMPENSATION



- Over $46million in supplemental pay, subs, or stipends, was paid in FY2025
- In FY2026, all stipends have been discontinued except new hire incentives, supplemental duty, and stipends in lieu of a step increase for employees who have reached the highest step

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: BENEFIT RATES

	TRS Rates	SHBP Rates PM/PY
FY2021	19.06%	$11,340
FY2022	19.81%	$11,340
FY2023	19.98%	$11,340
FY2024	19.98%	Certified - $18,960 Classified - $11,340 / $14,340
FY2025	20.78%	Certified - $21,120 Classified - $18,960
FY2026	21.91%	$22,620

- State Health Benefit Plan employer rates have nearly doubled in the last few years
- For FY26, certified rates increased 7% and classified rates increased nearly 20%
- For some employees, SHBP rates are now 100% or more of salary
- We assume an 80% take rate for SHBP

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: STAFF TO STUDENT RATIO COMPARISON – LESS CHARTER PROXY

	APS FY26	DeKalb FY26	Fulton FY26	Fayette FY26	Clayton FY26	Cobb FY26	Gwinnett FY26
Enrollment	36,982*	86,602	80,187	19,206	48,646***	104,855	180,990
Staff	6,992.35**	14,000	11,536	2,619	7,300	17,000	22,366.79
Student Staff Ratio	5.29	6.19	6.95	7.33	6.66	6.17	8.09
APS Staff at Comparison District Ratio	**6,992.35**	**5,978**	**5,324**	**5,042**	**5,550**	**5,996**	**4,570**
Reduction in Staff		-1,013.9	-1,668.2	-1,949.9	-1,442.7	-996.5	-2,422.1
Employee average salary cost	$120,883**	$120,883	$120,883	$120,883	$120,883	$120,883	$120,883
Reduction in Costs	$0	-$122.56m	-$201.65m	-$235.7m	-$174.39m	-$120.46m	-$292.79m

**Based on Day 15 traditional school PK-12 enrollment*
***Based on Day 15 full-time employees*
****FY25 FTE-3 less charter proxy*

- This chart shows data from the FY2026 budgets for each district less a charter proxy for enrollment
- Because not all districts reported charter school and enrollment consistently, for analysis purposes only, the average school size has been multiplied by the total number of charter schools and decreased from enrollment
- APS has the lowest number of students per staff at 5.29
- If APS staffed at ratios similar to other districts, APS would have between 997 and 2,422 fewer staff, and would save between $120 million and $293 million

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: DRIVERS OF ADDITIONAL STAFF

	APS FY26	DeKalb FY26	Fulton FY26	Fayette FY26	Clayton FY26	Cobb FY26	Gwinnett FY26
Enrollment	49,136*	92,235	86,031	19,206	50,926**	105,800	182,274
Number of Schools	**87**	**131**	**102**	**26**	**67**	**112**	**142**
ES	41	76	56	14	38	66	81
MS	9	19	19	5	14	26	29
HS	9	22	19	7	11	17	24
Charter	19	8	7		3	1	1
Partner	5						
Other	4	6	1		1	2	7
Average School Size Ratio	**564**	**704**	**843**	**739**	**760**	**945**	**1,284**
Number of schools at comparison district ratio	**87**	**70**	**58**	**67**	**65**	**52**	**38**
Fewer ES		-17	-29	-20	-22	-35	-49
**Based on Day 15 PK-12 enrollment* ***FY25 FTE-3*							

- The primary driver of additional staff is the much lower number of students in each school as compared to other districts.
- If APS had schools with similar student populations as comparison districts, APS would have between 17 and 49 fewer schools.
- This comparison does not include schools with two campuses, 9th grade academies, or other satellite buildings that exacerbate the overhead, facility, and administrative costs.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: STATE VS LOCAL FUNDING

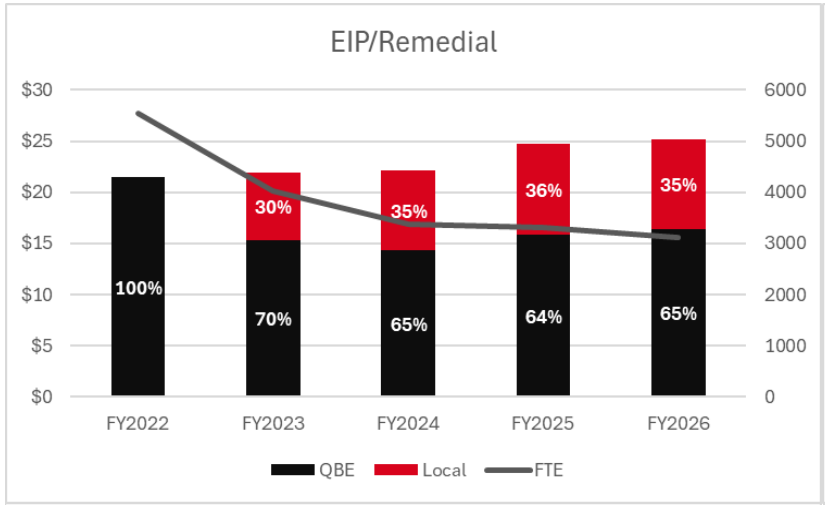
QBE Funding (net LFS, in mil)	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026
EIP/ Remedial	$21.51	$15.28	$14.31	$15.83	$16.40
Vocational	$3.39	$3.63	$4.18	$4.76	$5.33
Special Education	$25.34	$23.54	$27.79	$32.58	$36.94
Gifted	$8.22	$7.62	$9.75	$10.76	$12.13
ESOL	$2.68	$2.49	$2.83	$3.62	$4.48
FTE	**FY2022**	**FY2023**	**FY2024**	**FY2025**	**FY2026**
EIP/ Remedial	5,541	4,030	3,369	3,309	3,111
Vocational	1,426	1,542	1,582	1,602	1,643
Special Education	3,369	3,149	3,233	3,374	3,511
Gifted	2,311	2,157	2,388	2,331	2,405
ESOL	439	411	413	468	530
Total APS (in mil)	**FY2022**	**FY2023**	**FY2024**	**FY2025**	**FY2026**
EIP/ Remedial	$21.02	$21.91	$22.17	$24.74	$25.19
Vocational	$9.77	$10.80	$12.41	$12.51	$13.16
Special Education	$71.67	$79.25	$95.52	$107.07	$117.63
Gifted	$11.57	$11.54	$13.06	$14.30	$17.88
ESOL	$8.09	$8.30	$9.78	$11.31	$13.28
% Local Supplement	**FY2022**	**FY2023**	**FY2024**	**FY2025**	**FY2026**
EIP/ Remedial	-2%	30%	35%	36%	35%
Vocational	65%	66%	66%	62%	59%
Special Education	65%	70%	71%	70%	69%
Gifted	29%	34%	25%	25%	32%
ESOL	67%	70%	71%	68%	66%

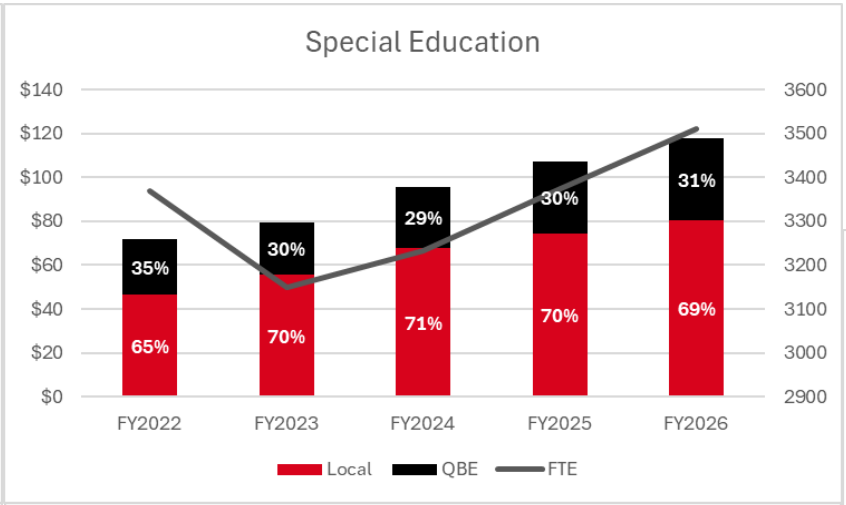
- APS generously supplements state funding
- APS spend increases at a rate higher than what is supported by state allocation or FTE

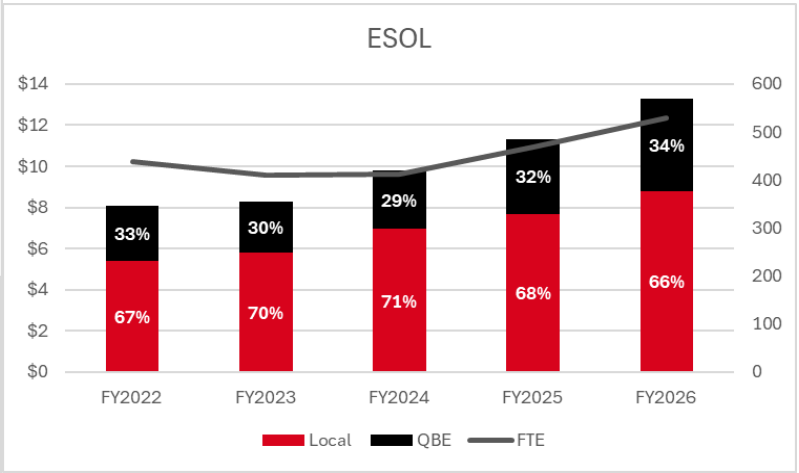
  APS funds many programs (IB, Dual Language Immersion, STEM/ STEAM, Turnaround, PAACT, AVA, etc.) 100% from local funds ($30+ million)

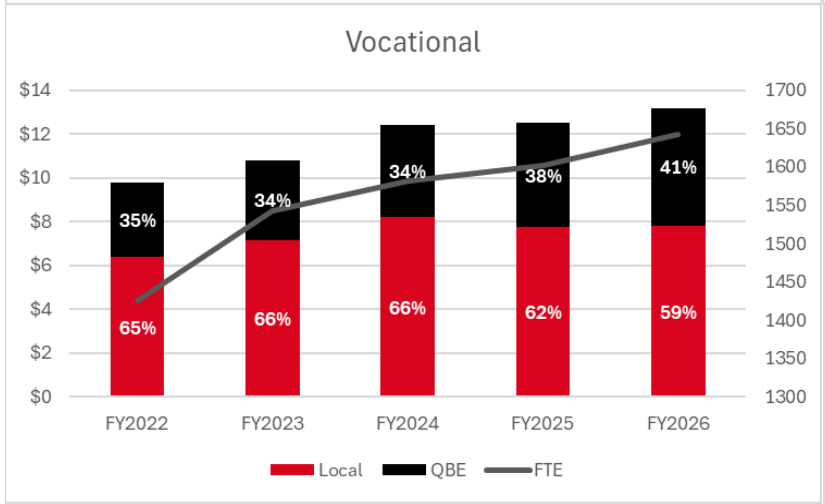
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

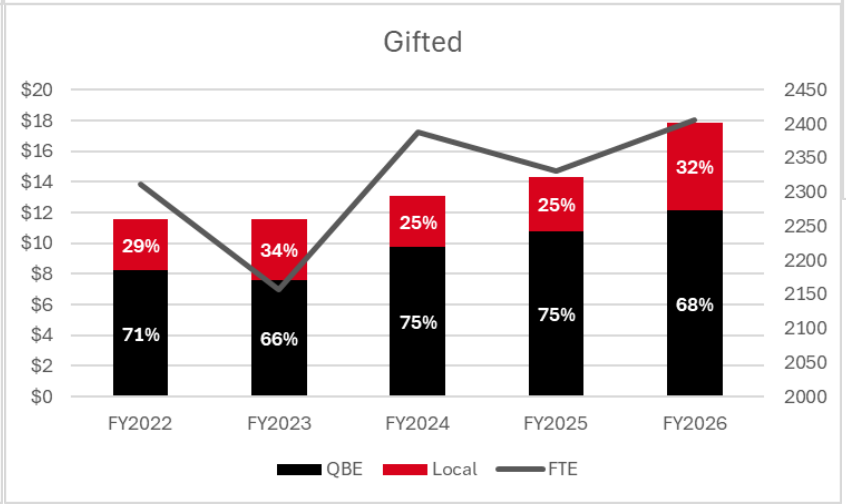
INCREASED SPENDING: STATE VS LOCAL FUNDING





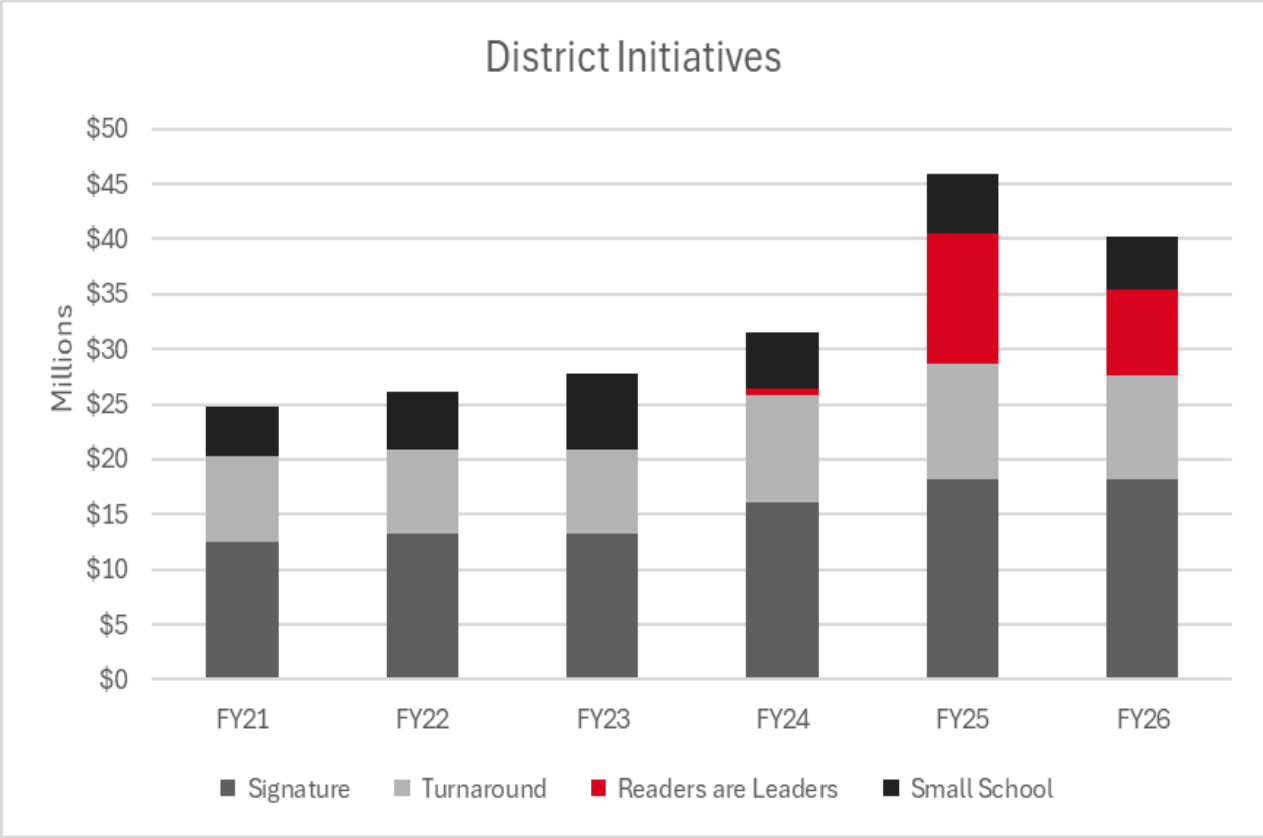






ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: INITIATIVES



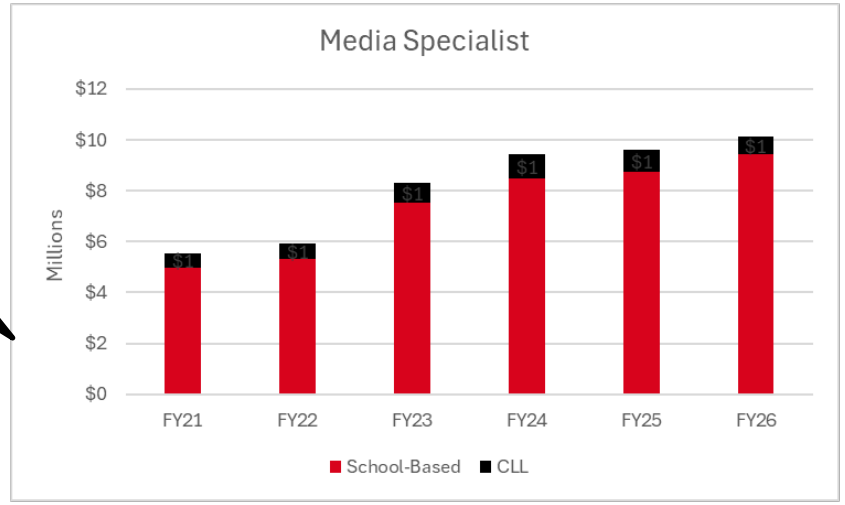
- Funding for district initiatives reached a peak in FY25 at $45.93m. These have also been funded for FY26, totaling $40.13m.

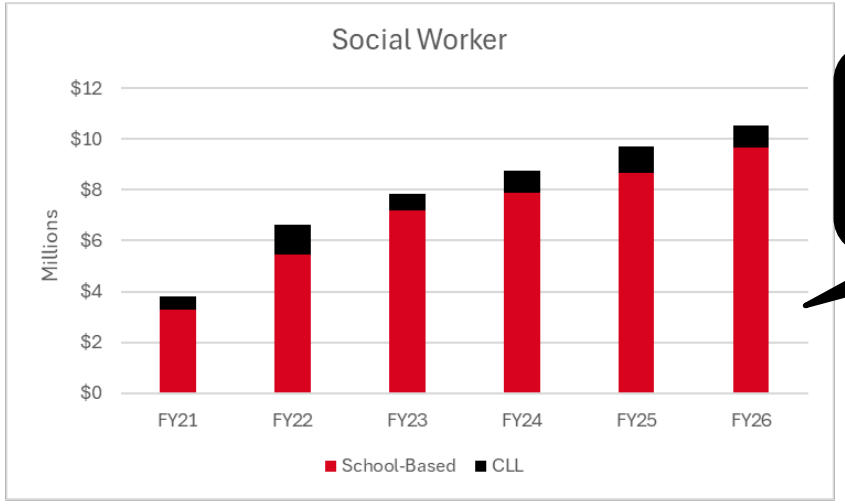
- **Signature:** APS Signature Programs focus on the vertical and horizontal alignment of academic programs for schools and neighborhoods.
- **Turnaround:** The APS School Turnaround strategy was developed in 2014 to provide additional critical support that our lowest performing schools need and deserve.
- **Readers are Leaders:** “Readers are Leaders” is a literacy initiative which includes a professional learning requirement for teachers and school and district leaders.
- **Small School:** Schools below a certain threshold receive an additional weight applied to each incremental student between the school’s enrollment and the threshold amount to ensure school viability in a per pupil allotment.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INCREASED SPENDING: STUDENT SERVICES

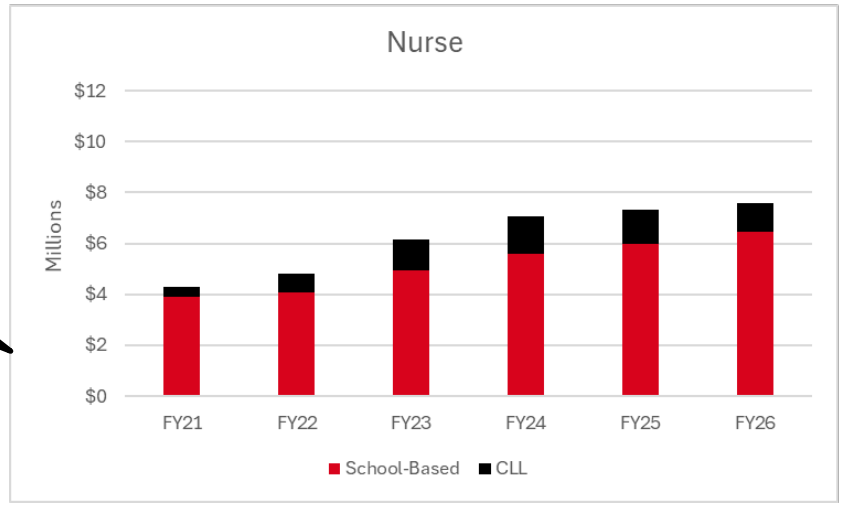
Increased by $4.6m (82%) since FY21

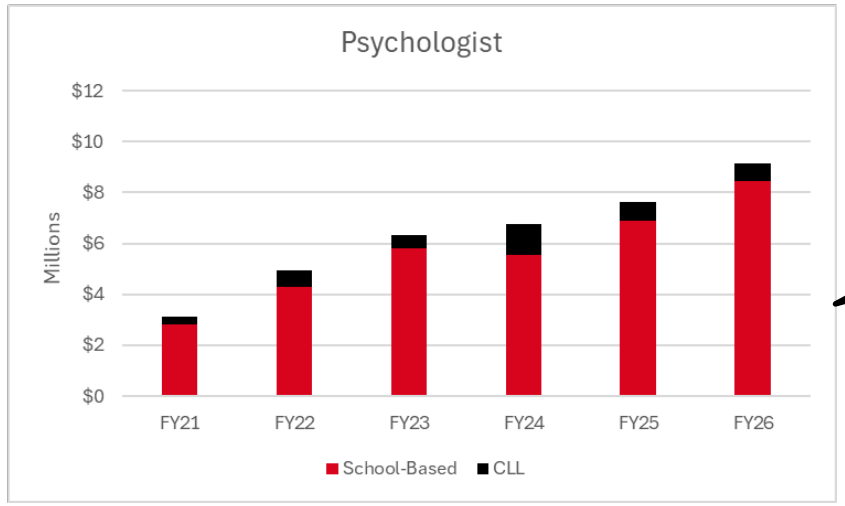




Increased by $6.7m (176%) since FY21

Increased by $3.3m (77%) since FY21





Increased by $6m (193%) since FY21

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PER PUPIL SPEND BY SCHOOL

Carver Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio*
Finch ES	$7,199,361	266	$27,065	$227,731	$0	1:4
Perkerson ES	$6,787,504	305	$22,254	$178,847	$0	1:4.8
Sylvan Hills MS	$8,821,063	467	$18,889	$116,846	$501,011	1:5.8
Carver Early College	$8,412,549	518	$16,240	$162,154	$116,968	1:7.6
Total/Average	**$31,220,477**	**$1,556**	**$21,112**	**$685,579**	**$617,979**	**1:5.55**

Douglass Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio*
F. L. Stanton ES	$5,519,453	192	$28,747	$281,385	$138,215	1:3.7
Scott ES	$6,972,849	273	$25,542	$182,424	$0	1:4
Usher-Collier Heights ES	$7,083,178	324	$21,862	$122,808	$0	1:4.8
Harper-Archer ES	$10,183,546	469	$21,713	$0	$0	1:4.7
Boyd ES	$8,165,603	377	$21,659	$13,115	$0	1:4.6
John Lewis Invictus Academy	$12,252,742	669	$18,315	$0	$0	1:6.1
Douglass HS	$20,426,760	1296	$15,761	$0	$0	1:6.8
Total/Average	**$70,604,130**	**$3,600**	**$21,943**	**$599,733**	**$138,215**	**1:5**

*Includes all school-based staff

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PER PUPIL SPEND BY SCHOOL

Jackson Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
Benteen ES	$7,152,157	305	$23,450	$170,500	$0	1:4.3
Dunbar ES	$6,529,907	279	$23,405	$215,808	$0	1:4.4
Barack & Michelle Obama Academy	$5,949,967	281	$21,174	$227,731	$0	1:4.2
Toomer ES	$9,257,132	457	$20,256	$0	$0	1:5
Parkside ES	$10,258,232	605	$16,956	$0	$0	1:5.8
Burgess-Peterson ES	$9,554,365	592	$16,139	$0	$206,497	1:6.8
King MS	$13,484,708	848	$15,902	$0	$0	1:7.1
Maynard H. Jackson, Jr. HS	$21,610,738	1594	$13,558	$0	$0	1:9
Total/Average	**$83,797,207**	**$4,961**	**$18,855**	**$614,040**	**$206,497**	**1:5.9**

Mays Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
Peyton Forest ES	$6,230,027	254	$24,528	$259,924	$171,176	1:4.5
Beecher Hills ES	$6,208,143	260	$23,877	$286,155	$286,367	1:4.6
Miles ES	$8,633,133	387	$22,308	$0	$0	1:4.4
West Manor ES	$5,259,617	238	$22,099	$236,078	$0	1:5.3
Cascade ES	$6,098,676	276	$22,097	$184,808	$0	1:4.6
Young MS	$10,150,971	600	$16,918	$0	$0	1:6.7
Mays HS	$18,973,716	1262	$15,035	$0	$0	1:7.4
Total/Average	**$61,554,281**	**$3,277**	**$20,980**	**$966,964**	**$457,542**	**1:5.4**

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PER PUPIL SPEND BY SCHOOL

Midtown Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
Hope-Hill ES	$8,040,238	390	$20,616	$46,500	$0	1:5.1
Springdale Park ES	$7,474,968	423	$17,671	$45,308	$0	1:6.6
Virginia Highland ES	$9,597,145	634	$15,137	$0	$0	1:7.5
Lin ES	$7,731,257	512	$15,100	$0	$276,452	1:7.3
Morningside ES	$9,687,809	670	$14,459	$0	$24,969	1:8.2
Howard MS	$15,815,021	1197	$13,212	$0	$0	1:9.3
Midtown HS	$20,456,102	1733	$11,804	$0	$117,747	1:10.5
Total/Average	**$78,802,539**	**$5,559**	**$15,429**	**$91,808**	**$419,168**	**1:7.8**

North Atlanta Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
Jackson ES	$9,434,103	453	$20,826	$0	$422,130	1:4.8
Garden Hills ES	$8,335,560	434	$19,206	$0	$0	1:5.7
Smith ES	$13,533,955	805	$16,812	$0	$0	1:6.6
Rivers ES	$10,419,331	628	$16,591	$0	$0	1:6.7
Bolton Academy	$9,694,345	594	$16,320	$0	$0	1:6.8
Brandon ES	$13,757,921	894	$15,389	$0	$0	1:7.1
Sutton MS	$22,175,058	1657	$13,383	$0	$0	1:8.8
North Atlanta HS	$28,765,390	2371	$12,132	$0	$0	1:10.1
Total/Average	**$116,115,664**	**$7,836**	**$16,333**	**$0**	**$422,130**	**1:7.1**

PER PUPIL SPEND BY SCHOOL

South Atlanta Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
Cleveland ES	$5,857,162	206	$28,433	$265,885	$139,791	1:3.8
Hutchinson ES	$6,470,966	228	$28,381	$220,578	$0	1:3.8
Humphries ES	$5,993,562	248	$24,168	$287,347	$198,663	1:4.5
Dobbs ES	$6,884,347	285	$24,156	$168,116	$0	1:4.3
Heritage Academy	$7,386,438	307	$24,060	$107,308	$0	1:4.6
Long MS	$10,104,013	609	$16,591	$0	$0	1:6.5
South Atlanta HS	$14,706,156	927	$15,864	$0	$0	1:7.1
Total/Average	**$57,402,645**	**$2,810**	**$23,093**	**$1,049,234**	**$338,454**	**1:5**

Therrell Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
Kimberly ES	$6,103,729	257	$23,750	$236,078	$0	1:4.6
Continental Colony ES	$7,304,684	315	$23,189	$97,770	$0	1:4.6
Fickett ES	$7,499,435	353	$21,245	$64,385	$0	1:5
Deerwood Academy	$8,394,755	475	$17,673	$16,692	$0	1:6.3
Bunche MS	$9,240,460	622	$14,856	$0	$9,122	1:7.9
Therrell HS	$14,394,559	978	$14,718	$0	$0	1:8
Total/Average	**$52,937,622**	**$3,000**	**$19,239**	**$414,924**	**$9,122**	**1:6.1**

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

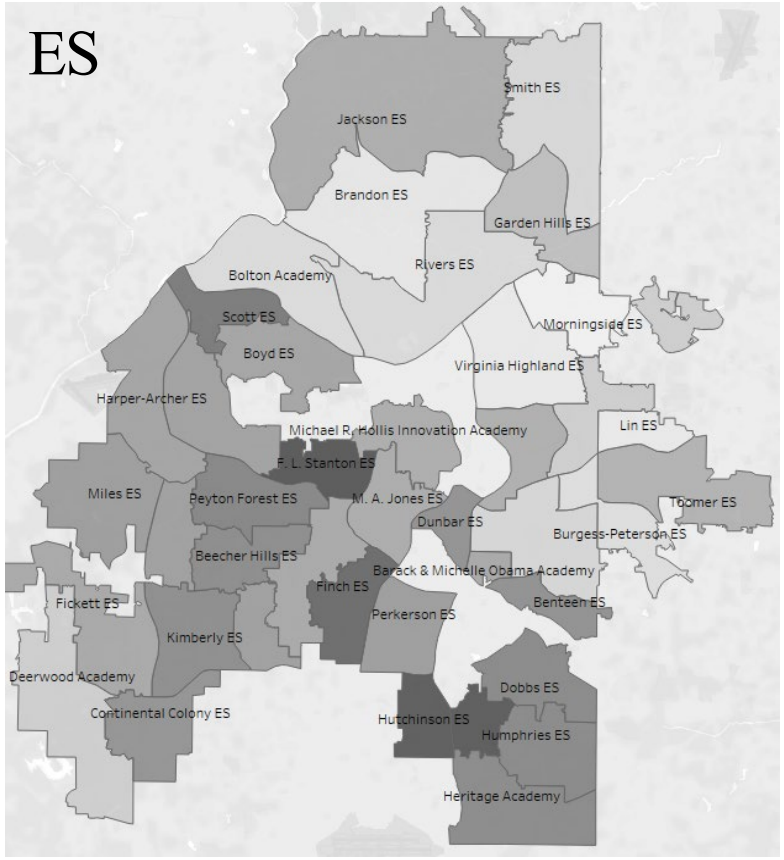
PER PUPIL SPEND BY SCHOOL

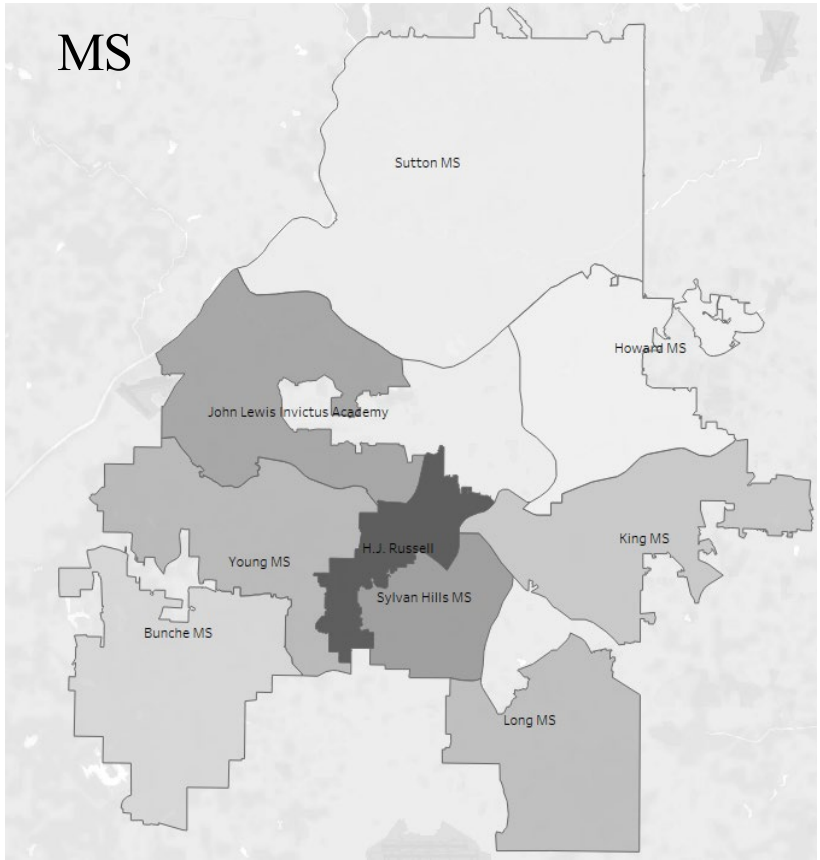
Washington Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
H.J. Russell	$7,721,322	327	$23,613	$280,193	$447,456	1:4.8
Tuskegee Airmen Global Academy	$8,573,620	404	$21,222	$48,885	$0	1:5.2
M. A. Jones ES	$8,112,977	387	$20,964	$20,269	$0	1:5.2
Michael R. Hollis Innovation Academy	$11,973,153	575	$20,823	$0	$103,451	1:5.1
Washington HS	$13,609,111	785	$17,336	$0	$0	1:6.5
Total/Average	**$49,990,182**	**$2,478**	**$20,792**	**$349,347**	**$550,908**	**1:5.4**

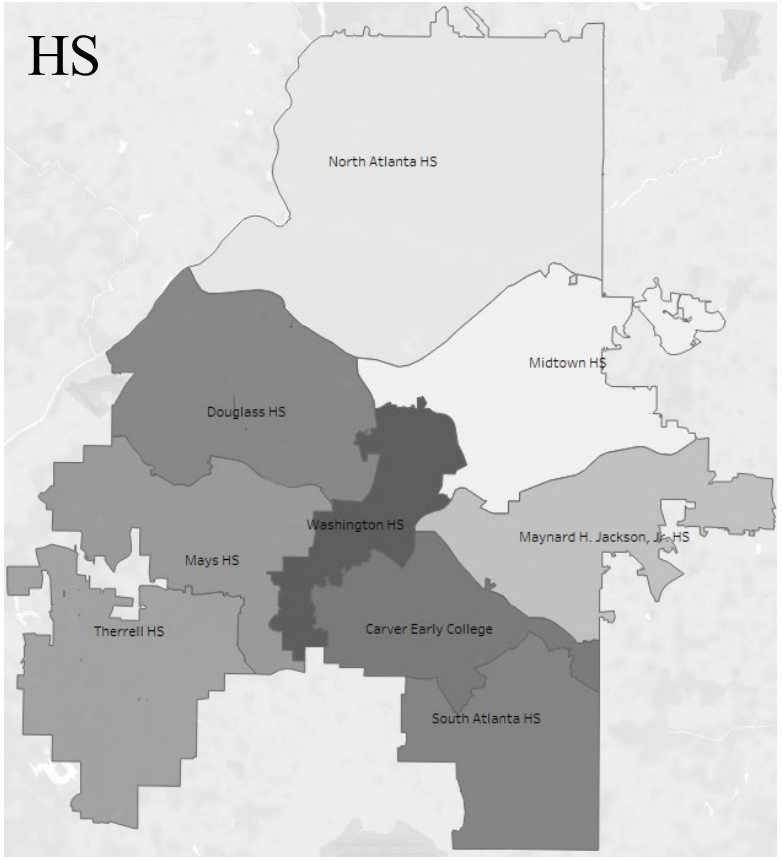
Cluster	Allocation Post Leveling	Leveling Enrollment	Per Pupil Post Leveling	Small School	Baseline Supplement	Staff to Student Ratio
Hank Aaron New Beginnings Academy	$8,889,595	121	$73,468	$0	$0	1:1.7
B.E.S.T Academy	$7,446,064	292	$25,500	$0	$0	1:4.5
Phoenix	$7,577,396	306	$24,763	$0	$0	1:4.2
Coretta Scott King Academy	$8,723,555	390	$22,368	$0	$0	1:5.6
ACCA	$4,821,061	573	$8,414	$0	$0	1:16.9
Total/Average	**$37,457,670**	**$1,682**	**$30,902**	**$0**	**$0**	**1:6.6**

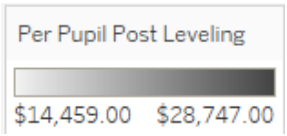
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

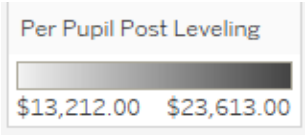
PER PUPIL SPEND BY SCHOOL

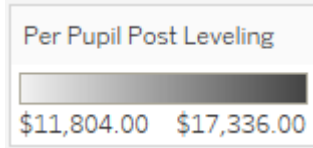












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WE HAVE A MATH PROBLEM

EXTERNAL FACTORS + **INCREASED SPENDING** + **REVENUE CONSTRAINTS** =

IMMEDIATE NEED FOR EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Revenue Constraints

- ESSER Funding Cliff **$ 314 million**
- TADs **$ 1.2 billion**
- Commercial Values **($ 122.17 million)**
  Decrease from FY25 original to FY26 original
- Exemptions **$ 728.72 million**
  Increase from FY25 original to FY26 original

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ESSER Funding

- The district received an influx of over $314 million of ESSER funding over five years
- This flexible funding stream allowed the district to pilot new initiatives, provide additional stipends, increase access to new technology, and make improvements to HVAC and other operational needs
- However, some projects increased long-term operational costs (HVAC), changed the precedent for compensation (influx of stipends), and generally shifted the culture of spending

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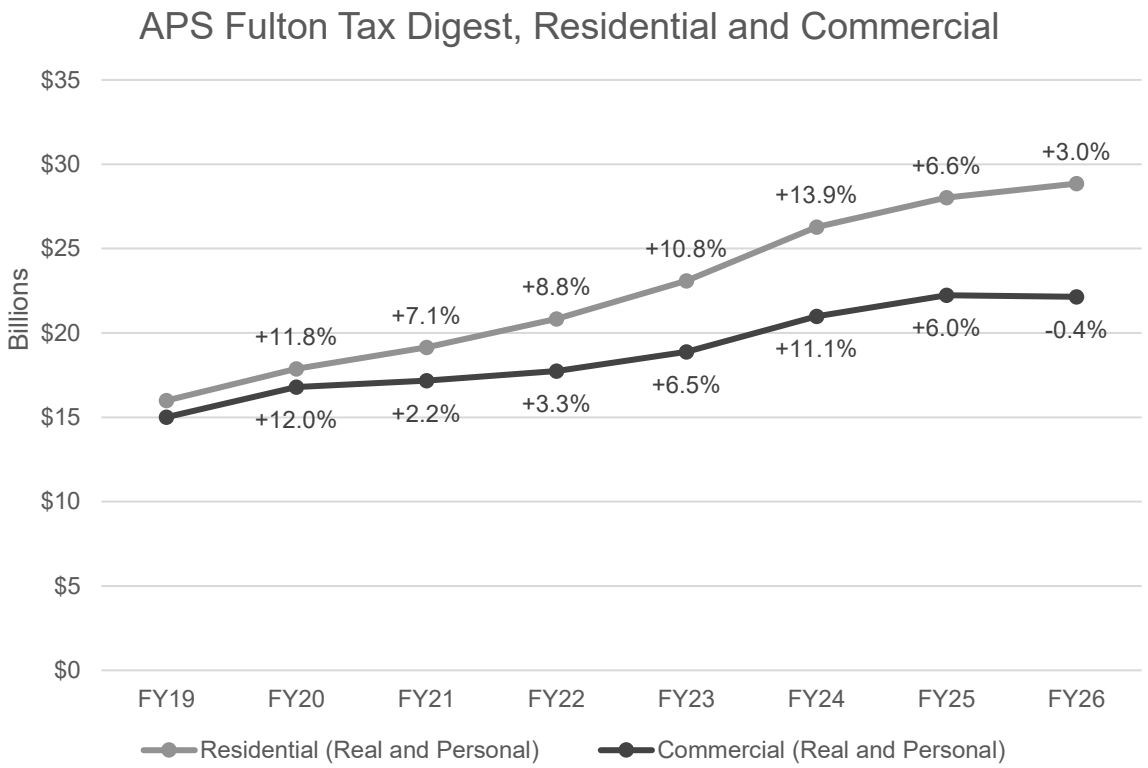
REVENUE CONSTRAINT: TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICTS (TADs)

- APS has participated in nine TADs since the 1990s; only one has been dissolved thus far (Atlantic Station)
- Current year impact ~ $86.7 million; equivalent of 1.64 mills (1 mill = $52.9m for FY26)
- Total cumulative increment reinvested in TADs so far: $886.2 million
- Total forecasted increment lost*: ~$1.2 billion
- **Total APS increment lost: ~$2 billion**

- The promise of TADs is the boon for the district as they close; in the past, as each TAD neared completion a request for an extension was made by the city. The 2019 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) set terms for definitive end dates for APS increment contribution.
- A benefit of TAD's is the "halo effect"; in the past, under-assessed values prevented the district from realizing that effect. In recent years, assessed values have increased. However, commercial properties in particular continue to have values frozen due to appeal.
- Abatements (which APS has limited input on) are approved within existing TADs, destabilizing that financing mechanism and prolonging the time it takes to pay down existing debt.

*Assumes all TADs end as currently scheduled and assumes a TAD digest increase that is the lesser of the average historical increase in the past five years or 10%. Corridor TAD increment is based on contributions defined by the IGA.

REVENUE CONSTRAINT: FULTON COMMERCIAL DIGEST



- Local revenue also continued to grow and higher than typical rates
- After increasing annually since FY2019 (and prior), Fulton County commercial property decreased in value in the Tax Year 2025/Fiscal Year 2026 digest.
- Fulton County residential property continued to increase, albeit less than expected.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Homestead Exemptions

- HB581- New single statewide homestead exemption
- Applies to all local taxing jurisdictions unless opt-out (we did)
- Sets base year assessed value
  - 2024 assessed value = 2025 base year assessed value for existing homesteads
  - Preceding year for new homesteads
- Caps assessed value increases for M&O at the inflation rate unless substantial property changes have occurred
- Exempts the amount by which the current assessed value exceeds its previous adjusted base year assessed value

WE HAVE A MATH PROBLEM

EXTERNAL FACTORS + INCREASED SPENDING + REVENUE CONSTRAINTS =

IMMEDIATE NEED FOR EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

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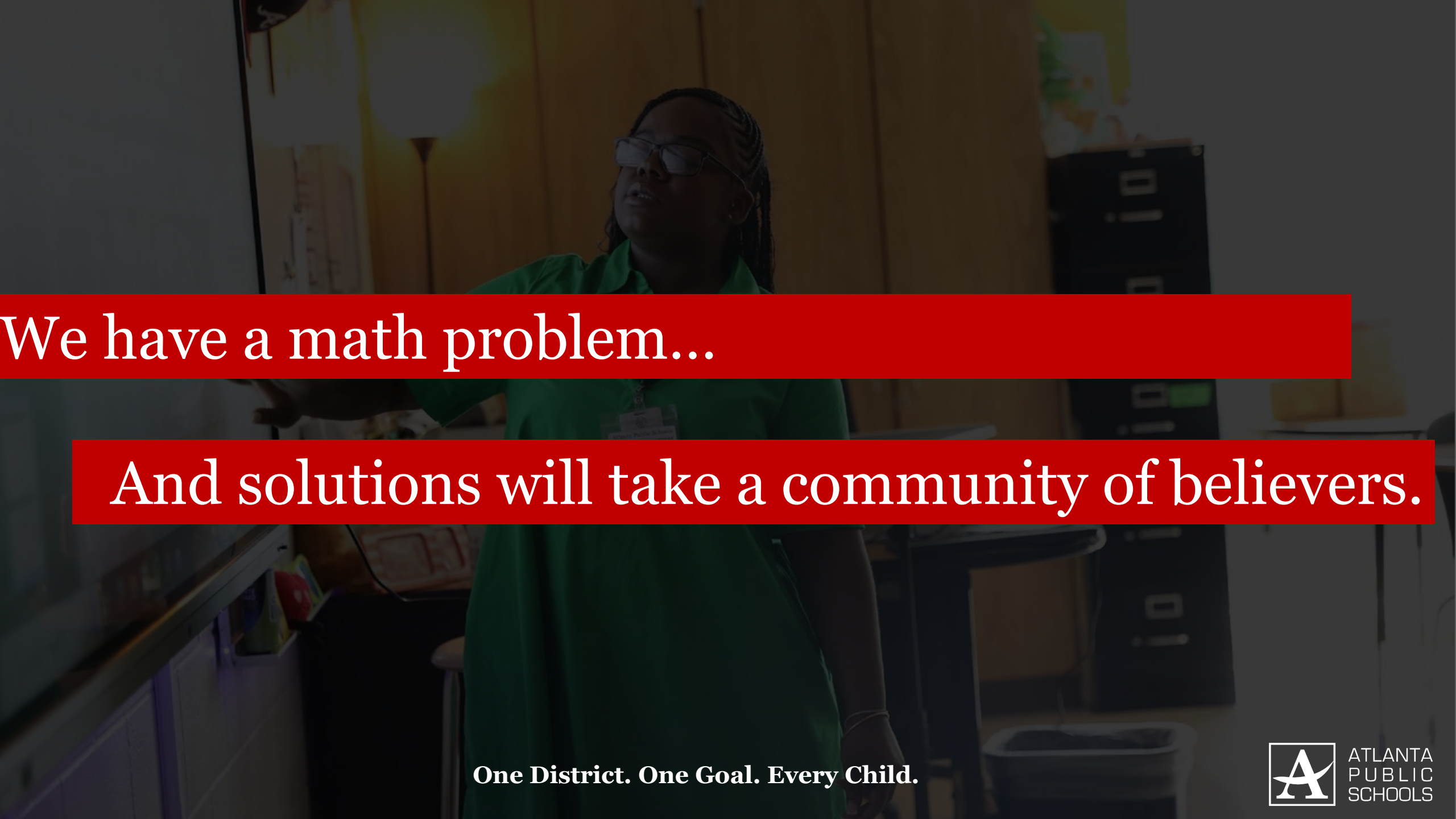
FY2027 and Beyond

- Facility Master Planning
  - Efficiency in staffing, operations, programming, administrative overhead, etc.
  - Revenue opportunities for lease/ sale of buildings
- School Allotments
  - Small-school supplement sunset
  - Baseline of services review
- Compensation
  - Differentiated? Moderated? Review of work-days, etc.
- Programmatic ROI Review


We have a math problem...
And solutions will take a community of believers.
One District. One Goal. Every Child.
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUDGET COMMISSION & BUDGET ADOPTION SCHEDULE

[TENTATIVE FY2027]

Date	Topics
Thursday, October 23, 2025	Level-setting and aligning on decision points, draft parameters, school allotment discussion
Thursday, November 20, 2025	Finalize parameters, revenue discussion
Thursday, January 15, 2026	Finalize school allotment conversations, preliminary revenue projections, TAD review, alignment with facilities plan
Thursday, February 26, 2026	Compensation proposal, Central Office review and deep dive
Thursday, April 16, 2026	Revenue to expenditures; first review of comprehensive budget; special revenue, additional gap closure conversations
Monday, May 4, 2026	Public Hearing #1, Tentative Adoption
Monday, June 1, 2026	Public Hearing #2; Final Adoption

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Thank You!

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