



ANCS

STRATEGIC PLAN

2019 - 2022

Executive Summary

The Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS) is a K-8 charter school with two campuses formed by the merger of two successful charter schools that have been serving southeast Atlanta since 2002. ANCS is a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), a national network of schools focused on creating schools that are intellectually challenging, personalized, and democratic.

Our vision is to be a dynamic learning community where students become life-long learners, develop self-knowledge, and are challenged to excel. Our strategic goals are designed to help us fully embrace this vision and fulfill our mission.

ANCS has participated in a structured process to update its current strategic plan, which involved the Governing Board, teachers/staff, families, and the community. Feedback was gathered through PTCA meetings, surveys, board meetings, and email.

This three-year strategic plan is based on our 7 foundational priorities and is organized around 4 strategic goals (1) Educational Achievement & Opportunity (2) Equity and Inclusivity (3) Culture & Community and (4) Innovation.

These goals and objectives will guide and direct our governance, operations, financial investments and resource development over the next 3 years.

Shared Language

For the purposes of this Strategic Plan, we will use these definitions of the following terms:

Equity/Equitable/Equitably	Equity work is an ongoing process of recognizing and eliminating oppression, ending biases and ensuring equally high outcomes for all participants through the creation of inclusive and welcoming practices and conditions, interrupting injustices, and removing the predictability of success or failure as correlated with any social or cultural factors.
Inclusion	Authentically bringing traditionally excluded and/or marginalized individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. [Source: OpenSource Leadership Strategies]
Diversity	All the ways in which people differ and all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national origin, religion, ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, and language. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values. [Source: - UC Berkeley Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity]
Culturally Responsive	A community-centered approach that recognizes the importance of all cultural backgrounds and experiences in all aspects of relationship building and learning. This approach is meant to identify and nurture the cultural strengths of our community and validate lived experiences.
Norms	Rules or expectations of behavior, which are based on shared beliefs and by which members of a community agree to be governed
Community	For the purposes of this document, the group of individuals who share an interest in the success of the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS); This group is not limited to simply those with children in attendance, but includes all who share intent, belief, preferences, needs, and risks related to our school.
Experiential Learning	The process of developing new understandings that includes passing through stages: of (1) having a concrete experience followed by (2) observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to (3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then (4) used to test hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences. [adapted from Kolb's work]

Consolidation of Existing Strategic Goals

2014-2018 Existing Strategic Goals

Teaching & Learning ● ● ● ●

To support academic, social-emotional, & physical growth of all students with high expectations for all, including exceeding external accountability standards

Parent & Community Partnership ● ● ● ●

To strengthen the partnership between the school and its families and to engage the wider community—especially within APS—in partnerships for collaborative learning

Fundraising & Resource Development ● ● ● ●

To strengthen fundraising infrastructure to expand and diversify sources of funding with a goal of 20% non-public funding and a reserve fund to weather funding drops

Faculty & Staff Development ● ● ● ●

To be a school of choice for talented educators through competitive compensation, quality professional development, and emphasis on employee well-being

Governance Capacity ● ● ● ●

To continue development of board capacity in strategic governance, resource development, and community outreach

Facilities & Operations ● ● ● ●

To plan for and implement facilities and technology improvements that result in consistency between campuses, enhanced school image, and promote sustainability

Diversity ● ● ● ●

To build upon current diversity by creating proactive program to improve, retain, and realize benefits of student diversity that reflects socioeconomic and racial diversity of Jackson cluster

2019-2022 Strategic Goals

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT & OPPORTUNITY

All students will be challenged and supported in academic growth as well as social-emotional and physical well-being through culturally responsive teaching and equity-focused practices

EQUITY & INCLUSIVITY

We will be a safe and welcoming school that honors the diversity of our school community and strives to provide equitable opportunities, experiences and outcomes for all students, faculty & staff, and parents & caregivers.

CULTURE & COMMUNITY

We will be a school family whose faculty & staff, parents, students, community and board work actively to respect each others' experiences and build trust through collaboration and effective communication.

INNOVATION

We will demonstrate the courage to challenge the status quo and continuously seek to improve.

Educational Achievement & Opportunity

Strategic Goal

All students will be challenged and supported in academic growth as well as social-emotional and physical well-being through culturally responsive teaching and equity-focused practices

1

Facilitate the development of faculty and staff understandings and attitudes that build empathy, compassion and inclusivity in educating the whole child



a.

Grow team of instructors and facilitators who can equip faculty and staff with understandings and attitudes that build empathy, compassion, and inclusivity

b.

Continue professional development with a focus on IB Development and culturally-responsive teaching practices



- Number of teachers & staff training to be facilitators of iGroup and ECCF institutes
- Number of CBCT-trained teachers
- Number of opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in equity-based learning

- Percentage of middle campus teachers and staff engaging IB training
- Percentage of teachers engaging in CRT trainings
- Survey data related to self-assessment of equity practices in the classroom
- Percentage of teachers formally observed utilizing CR teaching strategies

2

Identify and narrow existing gaps between demographic subgroups, starting with race & ethnicity, in academic and well-being opportunities and outcomes for students



a.

Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of current interventions alongside the introduction of new approaches as warranted



- Baseline comparison of academic and well-being outcomes (MAP, discipline, etc.) and regular tracking of progress in closing existing baseline gaps
- Baseline comparison of participation in academic and well-being extracurricular opportunities and regular tracking of progress in closing any existing baseline gaps

3

Incorporate best practices in student, faculty & staff well-being as a significant consideration in operational and facilities decisions



a.

Provide trainings for faculty & staff and students in: Wellness & Nutrition, Mindfulness, and Environmental Stewardship

b.

Pursue facilities and operations improvements with a focus on well-being



- Survey and focus groups of faculty/staff and students on wellness measures
- Teacher attendance
- Employee participation in current wellness program
- Student participation in nutrition program

- Collaboration with employee wellness committee to identify potential facilities & operations improvements that have the potential to further bring about wellness

c.

Explore expansion of farm-to-school program into partnerships with additional schools and enhanced curriculum connections

- Increase in number of partner schools participating in farm-to-school program
- Increase in number of menus tied to curriculum
- Increase in number of in-school learning opportunities that include the farm-to-table program

4

Strengthen the fundraising infrastructure to expand and diversify the sources of funding



a.

Expand and diversify the sources of funding for ANCS and CREATE

b.

Use of collected data to increase targeted fundraising efforts for ANCS and CREATE



- Number of external funding sources
- Increased engagement with donors

- Increase in funds raised
- Percent of families, faculty & staff, and board members donating to the annual campaign and volunteering
- Options for alternate giving methods (in lieu of cash contributions)

Equity & Inclusivity

Strategic Goal

We will be a safe and welcoming school that honors the diversity of our school community and strives to provide equitable opportunities, experiences and outcomes for all students, faculty & staff, and parents & caregivers.

1

Leverage the Diversity & Equity Action Team [DEAT] to increase engagement of the school community in discussion and to facilitate experiential learning about diversity, inclusion, and equity



a. Develop and adopt a value statement on equity and inclusivity

b. Continued support of DEAT by board and school leadership team

c. Increase precision and consistency of communication to prospective families about school purpose and mission



- Adopt and utilize a clear, succinct, and inspirational value statement which represents our beliefs

- Board representation on DEAT as well as quarterly reporting from DEAT to the Board

- Community-informed list of topics of interest for discussion series
- Number of participants, and their demographics, at DEAT-led activities

2

Intentionally pursue the creation of a safe and welcoming school environment that honors and reflects the racial and economic diversity of our community



a. Engage local communities of color and historically underserved communities to raise awareness of, and representation at, ANCS

b. Actively and intentionally recruit employees from educational communities with the diversity we seek



- Seek best practices for diversity-building from other schools that are diverse.
- Document and engage multi-year, strategic plan for improved community engagement
- Number of applications from faculty, staff, students, and families of color or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- Representation of faculty, staff, students, and families of color or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds

- Percentage of people of color, or peoples from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, applying for ANCS faculty and staff positions
- Percentage of current CREATE residents, or CREATE graduates, hired into vacant teaching positions

3

Increase culturally responsive spaces for all members of the school community to facilitate idea generation and receive feedback from all stakeholders



a. Hold affinity group sessions with faculty & staff, students and families

b. Collect feedback from people who choose to leave or do not attend ANCS



- Number of affinity group sessions with faculty, staff, students and families
- Feedback gathered via surveys of ANCS' diverse groups

- Data from exit surveys of families
- Data from surveys from families that apply but choose not to attend ANCS.
- Focus groups of community members who have not applied; care to share their perspective on the school

Culture & Community

Strategic Goal

We will be a school family whose faculty & staff, parents, students, community and board work actively to respect each others' experiences and build trust through collaboration and effective communication.

1

Facilitate opportunities for parents, caregivers, faculty & staff to collaborate in order to learn with and from each other



a. Strengthen engagement parents, caregivers, faculty, staff, and students

b. Increase opportunities for students to showcase their learning and interests to adults and each other.



- Attendance of parents, faculty & staff at ANCS PTCA meetings and events
- Annual survey of teachers/staff, parents, students re: engagement
- Attendance at community events each year.

- Number of student learning showcase opportunities

2

Improve communication through education about, and engagement with, established "family-school partnership" norms



a. Develop school communications plan that increases ease of, and opportunities for, communication via tools (systems, etc.)

b. Establish a shared understanding between parents, caregivers, faculty and staff regarding "family-school partnership" norms

c. Engage each board member in guided observation of classes at middle and elementary school campuses annually.



- Written school communication plan (to include norms above) completed and socialized
- Survey data from parents and teachers/staff related to effectiveness of communication

- Number of opportunities to educate all on norms
- Parent/faculty engagement with norms-setting opportunities

- Collaboration with employee wellness committee to identify potential facilities & operations improvements that have the potential to further bring about wellness

3

Improve communication and understanding of school mission and values.



a. Increase precision and consistency of communication around school purpose and mission for sharing with prospective families.

b. Review and revise (as needed) current online marketing tools (video, one-pager, website, etc).

c. Educate current families regarding how and why ANCS is different so that they can be ambassadors for school in greater community.

d. Collect feedback from people who choose to leave or do not attend ANCS.



- Adopt "elevator pitch" (1-3 sentence description of ANCS) for school community to learn and use

- Analysis of baseline website interest/traffic compared to revised online marketing tools
- Number of new student applicants in school lottery

- Creation and utilization of "ANCS 101" course or workshop session; widely advertise for new and existing families
- Identify ambassadors to represent school in the greater community

- Data from exit surveys of families
- Data from surveys from families that receive an offer of enrollment but choose not to attend
- Focus groups of community members who have not applied; care to share their perspective on the school

Innovation

Strategic Goal

We will demonstrate the courage to challenge the status quo and continuously seek to improve.

1

Continue to pursue cutting edge practices in facilities efficiency, technology, and nutrition to meet the needs of school community and reduce energy footprint



a. Develop a long-term site plan

b. Secure "green" grant funding



- Development and approval of long-term site plan
- Recognition as model/innovator/leader in farm to school movement (Georgia Organics recognition, etc.)

- Funds from grants for energy footprint reduction, nutrition, technology
- Decreased utility costs

2

Build capacity for Center for Collaborative Learning (CCL) to take on projects and partnerships that promote innovative practices at other schools



a. ANCS administration, faculty & staff, and board are informed about and engaged with CREATE programming

b. CREATE and CCL personnel will contribute to the national dialogue on teacher training through research, publications, conference presentations and school visits



- Creation and implementation of business plan
- Quarterly meetings between CCL Director and APS Office of Innovation

- Number of projects, partnerships, and school visits in which CCL is engaged annually
- Number of research publications and conference presentations in which CCL is engaged annually

3

Continued support of CREATE by ANCS board and leadership team



a. ANCS administration, faculty & staff, and board are informed about, and engaged with, CREATE programming and fundraising



- Continued quarterly report by CREATE to the Board
- Number of ANCS administrators, board members, and faculty & staff engaging in CREATE professional learning
- Engagement of ANCS leadership team members at CREATE events
- Percentage of targeted ANCS administrative time contributed in support of CREATE
- CREATE-facilitated reflective activity/presentation about new teacher needs occurs at New Employee Orientation and at least one faculty meeting per year

4

Demonstrate collective responsibility for the success of CREATE new teachers



a. Develop a differentiated interview process designed to highlight the strengths of CREATE residents during their interviews at ANCS



- Interview team consists of at least one early career (1-3 years in) teacher
- Documentation and adoption of one-on-one interview questions appropriate for first-year teachers