



Strategic Plan

2025 - 2029





MISSION

The mission of the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS) is to:

- **Build** an empowered and inclusive community of students, parents, and educators
- **Engage** the whole child—intellectually, social-emotionally, and physically
- **Help** all students to know themselves and to be known well by their community
- **Challenge** each student to take an active role as an informed citizen in a global society
- **Collaborate** with the larger community to advocate for student-centered schools



VISION

Our vision is to be a dynamic learning community where students become life-long learners, develop self-knowledge, and are challenged to excel.



Values

COMPASSION

We cultivate a culture of empathy and understanding, where every member of our community feels seen, heard, and supported. We recognize that all members of our school family can thrive when they are provided an experience based in care and empathy.

AUTHENTICITY

We foster an environment where individuals are encouraged to embrace their true selves, celebrating diversity of thought, background, and expression. Honesty, integrity, and sincerity are at the core of all interactions within our school community.

COLLABORATION

We believe in the power of collective effort and shared knowledge. By working together, we inspire creativity, innovation, and excellence in teaching and learning.

COMMUNITY

Our school is a vibrant hub where relationships are cherished, and connections are fostered. We value the strength of our collective community, embracing its richness and diversity. We engage with all members of our school family and the neighborhoods where we are based to create a supportive network that enriches the educational experience for all.

INCLUSION

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where every individual is valued and respected. We celebrate differences and work to dismantle barriers to access and opportunity. By cultivating a sense of belonging, we empower all members of our community to thrive and contribute positively to society.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We come to school and every class prepared to learn and do our best.
- We respect each other, our surroundings, and ourselves.
- We take responsibility for our actions and learning.
- We resolve conflicts in a peaceful, thoughtful, and meaningful way.
- We celebrate our individual and collective successes.

Organizational Background

The Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS) is a K-8 charter school with two campuses. The Middle Campus (located in Ormewood Park) was founded in 2005 and the Elementary Campus (located in Grant Park) was founded in 2002. The two campuses merged in 2010 to form what is now Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School today. At the elementary campus (EC) students engage in a holistic curriculum based on constructivism and hands-on learning. Most classrooms have two teachers, and

instruction is differentiated based on student interests and needs. The majority of students who finish fifth grade at the EC matriculate on to 6th grade at the middle campus (MC). The MC students engage in a rigorous IB philosophy-based curriculum focused on developing international mindedness, critical inquiry, and global citizenship. Both schools also maintain working farms, which produce food for the schools' top-rated nutrition program.

2025-2029

Strategic Plan Focus

Emerging from the challenges posed by the pandemic, ANCS finds itself positioned to fortify its foundational pillars while also delving into the myriad opportunities and obstacles presented by the post-pandemic educational landscape. Our aim is to address the enduring needs of our community while upholding the distinctive features of our academic programs and school ethos. This strategic plan is intended to provide the blueprint for the next chapter of our school's evolution, ensuring that future endeavors, including potential expansion of the ANCS model, are primed for realization.

Central to this plan is the emphasis on fostering continuity in the ANCS experience across both Elementary and Middle Campuses, ensuring that every phase of students' educational journey is meticulously designed to equip them for success upon leaving ANCS in 8th grade. We recognize that student achievement

is multifaceted, extending beyond the confines of the traditional curriculum. It encompasses robust faculty and staff support, active engagement within the school community, deliberate structuring of academic and support systems, and a recognition of the diverse life experiences that enrich our student body. These components are all considered within the overarching framework of this strategic plan.

We continue to stay committed to the constructivist education model as we believe in the academic philosophy of this work. We are dedicated to continuously improving academic programs through inquiry-based learning, fostering an environment where students are empowered to ask questions, explore ideas, and construct their understanding of the world. Through ongoing reflection and collaboration, we strive to create meaningful learning experiences that inspire curiosity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning skills among our students.

We acknowledge the strong interest within our school community to explore the potential expansion of ANCS into additional grades and offerings. However, at this stage of our planning, such expansion remains in an exploratory phase. Before considering any expansion or replication, it's imperative to prioritize strategic enhancements and investments aimed at better serving our existing school population. This includes improvements to our facilities, provision of resources for our dedicated staff and faculty, and the bolstering of academic

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2025-2029

Strategic Plan Focus

and non-instructional supports for our students and families. By focusing on the continual enhancement of these critical areas, we position ANCS to more effectively understand the needs and motivations underlying our expansion goals. This approach ensures that any future decisions align closely with the long-term needs and aspirations of our community.

A primary area of focus for ANCS over the course of this strategic plan is to improve our outreach and recruitment of underserved

students from Tier 1 and Tier 2 neighborhoods. We are committed to providing an infrastructure that is prepared to welcome, support, and retain those families for the full tenure of their students' education. We have considered the necessary prerequisites, as well as the barriers, for these families that currently exist at ANCS and will address those throughout the implementation of this plan. This is not only critical to ensuring that our school is reflective of the communities we serve, but also is a key element of our charter status.





Strategic Priorities

Unified K-8 Academic Experience
Innovative School Features
Facilities Improvements
Community Engagement

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Unified K-8 Academic Experience

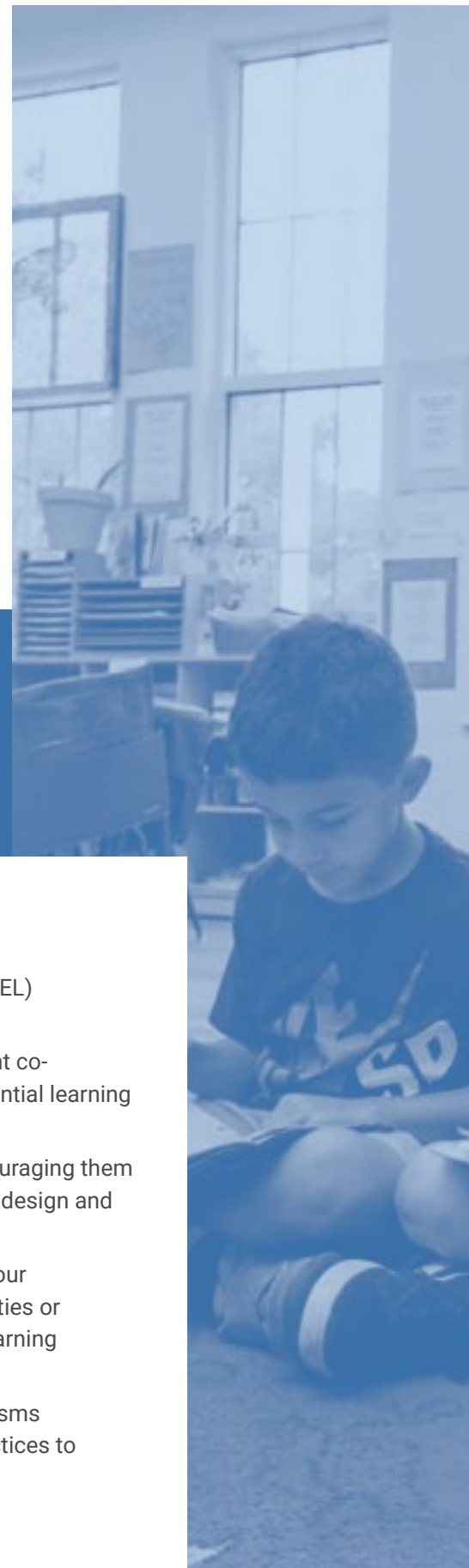
The primary attributes of ANCS, as highlighted by stakeholders and market analysis reports, include the intimate and interconnected nature of our school community, fostered by small student-to-teacher ratios and an academic framework centered on social and emotional learning, alongside a strong culture of creativity and collaboration. ANCS will explore ways to enhance these instructional supports across both Elementary and Middle School campuses to better serve students and faculty, creating an intentionally aligned K-8 experience.

GOAL

Enhance the educational outcomes for all students by strengthening our distinctive academic programs through a unified K-8 experience that fosters continuity and consistency.

STRATEGIES

1. Consistently refine and enrich our curriculum to ensure it reflects the latest advancements in constructivist education and social-emotional learning (SEL) principles, effectively catering to the diverse needs of all learners.
2. Provide ongoing training and support for educators to effectively implement co-teaching strategies, utilize special education support, and integrate experiential learning into their practices.
3. Continue to foster a culture of collaboration among faculty members, encouraging them to share best practices, exchange feedback, and collaborate on curriculum design and implementation across campuses.
4. Develop and implement inclusive strategies to ensure equitable access to our signature academic programs for all students, including those with disabilities or from underrepresented backgrounds, fostering a diverse and supportive learning environment.
5. Implement comprehensive data collection systems and feedback mechanisms involving students, parents, and staff to continually improve academic practices to foster improved student outcomes



The background of the page features a blue-tinted photograph of three young students sitting on the floor in a classroom, looking at and pointing to a book. An orange horizontal bar is located at the top left of the page.

METRICS OF SUCCESS

1. Student outcomes at 5th and 8th grade graduation*
2. Success of SEL instruction and conscious discipline on improving the academic experience for students and faculty
3. Faculty reported data
4. Family reported data
5. CCRPI Goals

**Year One of the strategic plan will include implementing new data gathering tools to collect this information. After initial benchmarks are set, ANCS will set annual goals.*

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Innovative School Features

ANCS stands out for its holistic approach to education, integrating non-instructional support services directly into its school curriculum. As ANCS strives to maintain and enrich its holistic educational experience, initiatives like the Farm Program play a pivotal role. By bolstering these supports, ANCS not only enhances its ability to distinguish itself within Metro Atlanta but also expands its impact on students. Moreover, by refining and scaling these initiatives, ANCS sets a model for similar support systems within the broader community, reinforcing its position as a leader in innovative educational practices.

GOAL

Expand non-instructional support services to broaden their impact on students and their families, while also laying the groundwork for increased community engagement.

STRATEGIES

1. Elevate the Farm Program into a flagship model that integrates experiential learning, a STEM-focused curriculum, robust workforce development initiatives, and community outreach opportunities
2. Collaborate with local transportation providers to ensure that students have reliable access to both school campuses and enrichment activities
3. Expand community partnerships to increase access to art, enrichment and other afterschool activities

METRICS OF SUCCESS

1. Percentage of students moving between tiers of support
2. Student outcomes related to the farm, related arts, and enrichment programs
3. Rates of participation in enrichment programs

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Facilities Improvements

Feedback from the community underscores a clear need for enhancements to our school facilities, aimed at bolstering infrastructure to better accommodate a range of enrichment programs. This includes improving facilities for athletics at the Middle Campus, enriching arts programming across both campuses, and ensuring adequate accommodations for our valued faculty and staff. Furthermore, student surveys have highlighted a strong desire for expanded opportunities to engage in enrichment activities, signaling a need for further investment in our spaces that house enrichment program offerings.

GOAL

Improve school resources through necessary facilities improvements

STRATEGIES

1. Audit additional needs related to facilities and school infrastructure for the coming years to anticipate potential expansion needs and continued areas for improvements
2. Update the Elementary Campus auditorium with full AV capabilities to accommodate performing arts programming needs
3. Establish a regulation-sized gym for the Middle Campus to facilitate onsite athletic programming

METRICS OF SUCCESS

1. Number of students engaged in athletics programs
2. Number of students engaged in performing arts programs
3. Student reported satisfaction with enrichment program offerings
4. Faculty reported satisfaction with enrichment program offerings
5. Family reported satisfaction with impact of facilities improvements on overall school experience

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Community Engagement

In recent years, ANCS has dedicated significant efforts to cultivating a school community that mirrors the diverse neighborhoods served by its Elementary and Middle School campuses. While progress has been evident, the Board of Directors, staff and faculty, acknowledge that further strides are essential. The shifting socio demographic landscape of the local area, coupled with escalating housing costs, has led to changes in the composition of nearby families. Despite this, market analysis reveals untapped potential within both Tier 1 and Tier 2 neighborhoods with diverse populations of underserved students that ANCS has yet to recruit and successfully retain. Central to our charter renewal and strategic plan is a heightened emphasis on fostering authentic partnerships through intentional community engagement, especially targeting those historically underrepresented within the ANCS school family.

STRATEGIES

1. Leverage community resources and partnerships to remove barriers to access for prospective families
2. Leverage the PTCA to create an inclusive and welcoming community to engage and retain families
3. Address barriers to participation through genuine outreach efforts
4. Craft a holistic support program tailored for new families, guaranteeing they have the necessary resources for a warm, inclusive, and supportive welcome

METRICS OF SUCCESS

1. Demographic profile of school families
2. New family reported data
3. New family retention rate
4. Community attendees to inreach events
5. Number of community partners engaged to support initiatives

GOAL

Develop authentic relationships with the whole community to build a school culture that is representative of and welcoming to families from all backgrounds.



Community Input

Purpose Possible reached out to various collaborators to garner feedback through a series of questions delivered via surveys, one - on - one interviews, and group meetings with various interested parties, including students, parents (current and former), faculty and staff, and the broader community that ANCS serves.





Overall Takeaways

Overall, several key themes and takeaways emerge from the feedback provided by faculty and staff, ANCS board members, caregivers, and students:

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

There is a consensus across segments about the importance of increasing diversity and inclusivity within the ANCS community. This includes a focus on reaching out to a more diverse range of families and students, addressing opportunity gaps, and ensuring resources are available to support students from different backgrounds.

EXPANSION AND GROWTH:

While there are differing opinions on expansion, there is recognition of the need to balance growth with maintaining the current quality of education and support for existing students. Expansion, particularly in the form of a Pre-K program, is seen as a potential avenue for increasing diversity and inclusion by faculty and staff. However, growth is largely cited as being related to need for sufficient facilities within the current campuses.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS:

Faculty and staff appreciate the autonomy given to them at ANCS but express concerns about workload and capacity. There is a call for improved operational efficiency, better communication, and transparency within the organization, as well as a desire for fair compensation in line with APS levels.

UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH:

ANCS is recognized for its holistic approach to teaching and learning, creative problem-solving, and dedication to farm and nutrition education. These aspects are valued by both the board and caregivers/students.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS:

There is a desire to strengthen community relationships, create an inclusive culture, and cultivate a diverse community. ANCS is seen as part of a privileged but evolving neighborhood, with a commitment to progressive thought and inclusivity.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

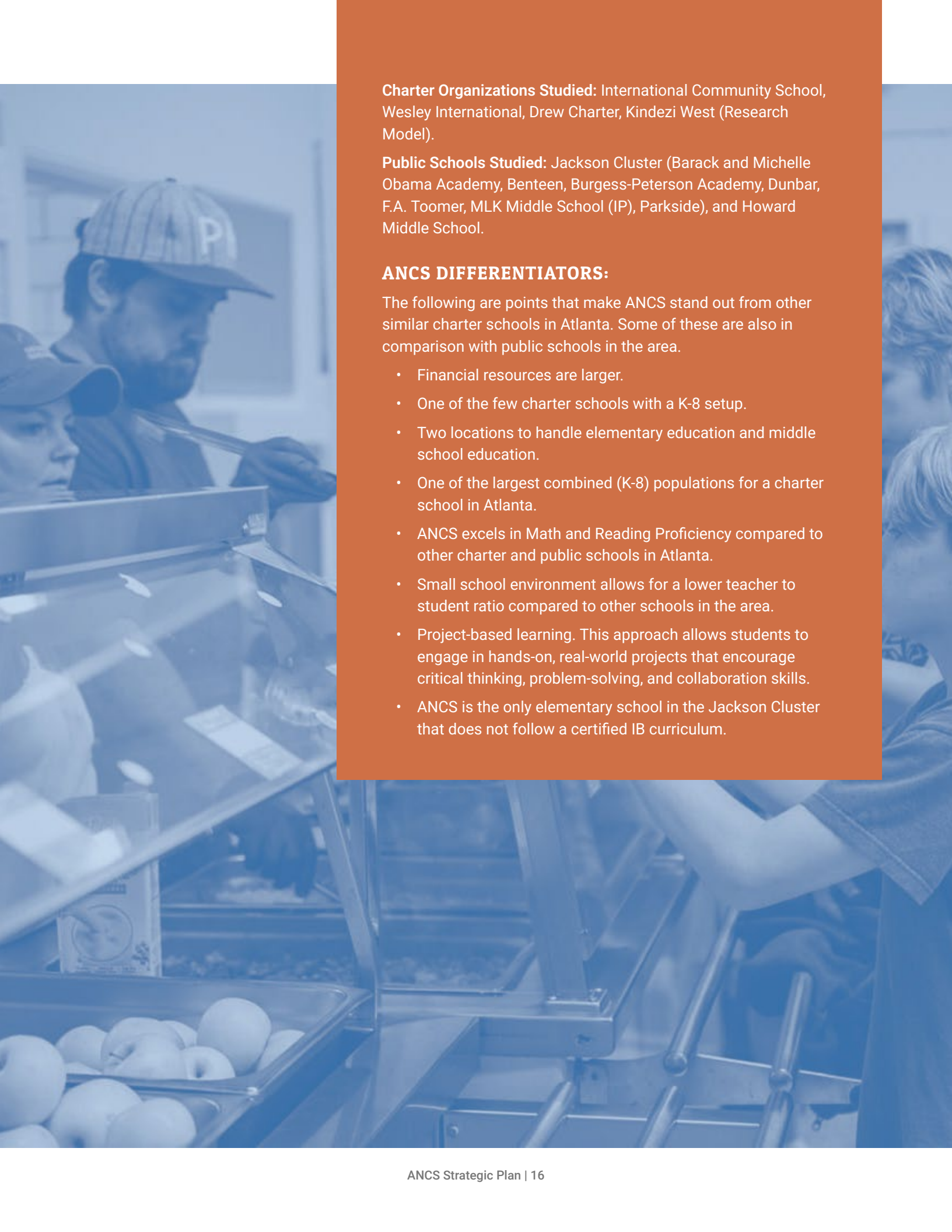
Recommendations for the future include addressing current challenges before considering expansion, focusing on improving existing operations, and revisiting expansion plans in the future. Priority areas for the next three years include increasing socioeconomic diversity, improving the middle school campus, and being a thought leader in food and culinary education.

These takeaways highlight the importance of maintaining a balance between growth and quality, prioritizing diversity and inclusion, supporting teachers, and continuing to evolve in line with the needs and values of the ANCS community.

Environmental Analysis

Purpose Possible has surveyed charter and public schools in the vicinity of ANCS to better understand ANCS's situation within the education and charter education systems. Our team has put together the following document with trends and key takeaways that pertain to strengths and possible areas of opportunity for ANCS to consider.





Charter Organizations Studied: International Community School, Wesley International, Drew Charter, Kindezi West (Research Model).

Public Schools Studied: Jackson Cluster (Barack and Michelle Obama Academy, Benteen, Burgess-Peterson Academy, Dunbar, F.A. Toomer, MLK Middle School (IP), Parkside), and Howard Middle School.

ANCS DIFFERENTIATORS:

The following are points that make ANCS stand out from other similar charter schools in Atlanta. Some of these are also in comparison with public schools in the area.

- Financial resources are larger.
- One of the few charter schools with a K-8 setup.
- Two locations to handle elementary education and middle school education.
- One of the largest combined (K-8) populations for a charter school in Atlanta.
- ANCS excels in Math and Reading Proficiency compared to other charter and public schools in Atlanta.
- Small school environment allows for a lower teacher to student ratio compared to other schools in the area.
- Project-based learning. This approach allows students to engage in hands-on, real-world projects that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills.
- ANCS is the only elementary school in the Jackson Cluster that does not follow a certified IB curriculum.

Local Trends in Schools

(Charter & Public Schools
Combined)

STUDENT MINORITY ENROLLMENT

An average of 83% across all schools. Percentages across all surveyed schools indicate a notably higher proportion of minority enrollment compared to ANCS' 33%. The data suggests that ANCS has a substantially lower representation of minority students compared to the other schools listed. This discrepancy in demographic composition might influence the school's approach to diversity and inclusion within its mission statement, focusing on inclusivity despite a lower minority enrollment. It could also impact the strategies and programs implemented to cater to a more diverse student body present in other institutions.

TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIO

In comparison to ANCS' 10:1 ratio, several schools in this research have higher teacher-to-student ratios. This could affect the level of personalized instruction and attention each student receives in those schools. However, there are also schools with ratios closer to or even lower than ANCS' ratio, suggesting a potentially similar or more favorable teacher-to-student relationship in those institutions.

MATH AND READING SCORES:

- Comparing ANCS' math scores and reading scores to those of the charter schools and public schools researched shows ANCS performed significantly higher.
- ANCS math scores were 12% higher than the charter school average (for the schools we researched) and reading scores were 29% higher.
- ANCS math scores were 15% higher than the public school average (for the schools we researched) and reading scores were 7% higher.

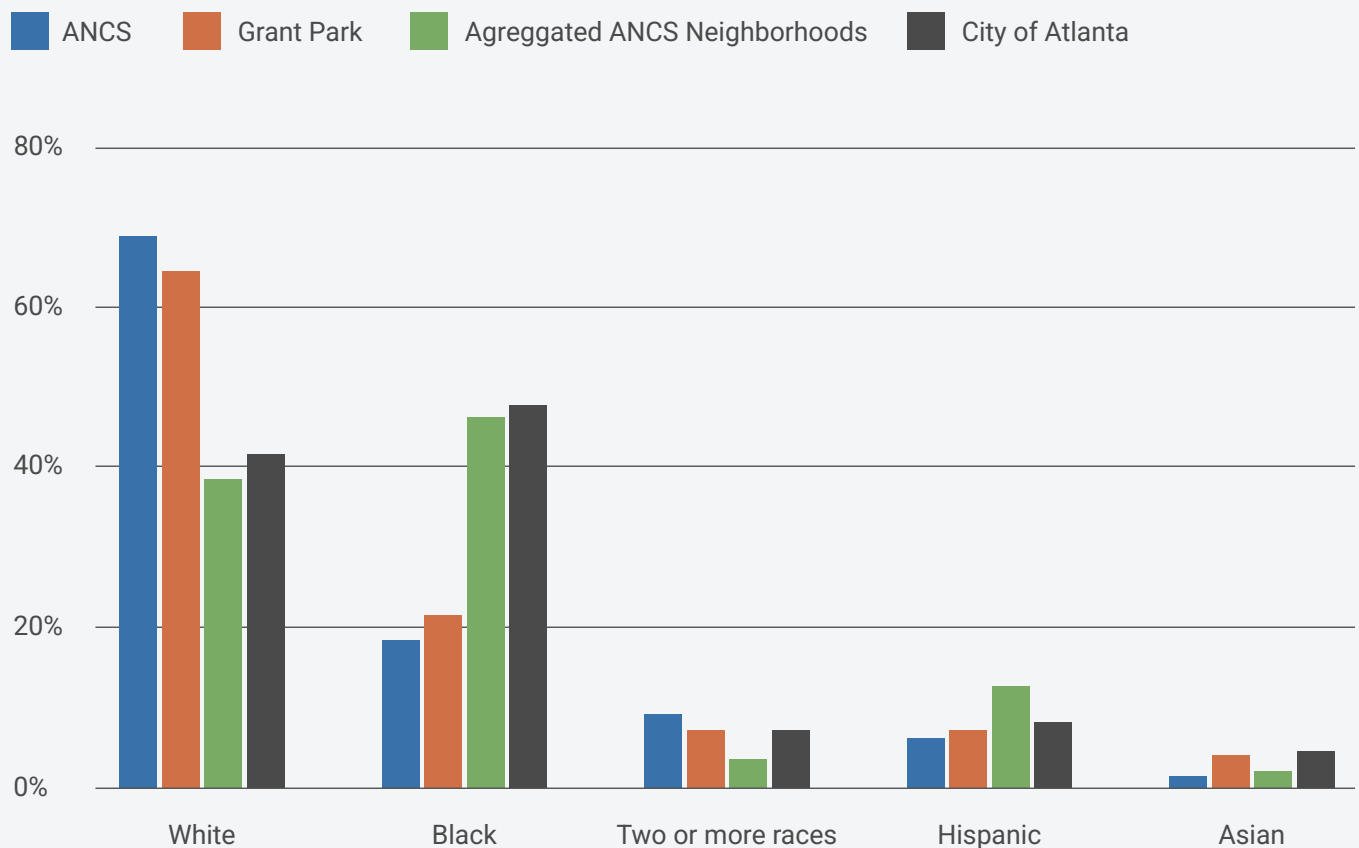
National Trends in Charter Schools

- **Personalized Learning:** Charter schools are increasingly exploring personalized learning approaches, leveraging technology and individualized instruction to tailor education to students' specific needs, pace, and learning styles.
- **Focus on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** Integrating social-emotional learning into curricula was becoming more prevalent. Charter schools are placing emphasis on developing students' emotional intelligence, resilience, empathy, and relationship-building skills.
- **Innovation and Specialized Programs:** Charter schools are often known for their innovative educational models, including specialized programs like STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), language immersion, vocational training, or entrepreneurship-focused education.
- **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Collaborations with local communities, businesses, and organizations are growing. Charter schools are seeking partnerships to enhance students' educational experiences, offering internships, mentorships, and real-world learning opportunities.
- **Equity and Inclusivity Initiatives:** There was a focus on creating more inclusive environments and addressing equity issues in charter schools. Efforts were made to ensure accessibility, diversity, and fairness in admissions, resources, and support for all students.

ANCS & Neighborhood Demographics

ANCS primarily serves the following neighborhoods:
Grant Park, Ormewood, Chosewood, Benteen, Boulevard Heights, Summerhill, Peoplestown, and East Atlanta.

DEMOGRAPHICS COMPARISON CHART



The background image is a blue-tinted photograph of a classroom. A male teacher with dreadlocks, wearing a white t-shirt with a circular logo that reads 'ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL', stands and looks down at a group of students. The students are seated at desks, some looking at papers. In the background, there are chalkboards with some writing, including '2016-2017' and 'Classroom'.

Methodology

ANCS began working with Purpose Possible in September 2023 on a strategic plan. The Strategic Planning Task Force helped us identify questions to ask, interested parties to survey, and generally ensure we were staying true to ANCS. We spent October and November gathering interested party feedback through one-on-one interviews, and surveys. From there, we held a retreat with the full Board of Directors and a listening session with all faculty and staff. The Strategic Planning Task Force worked to review the community input, market data, and discussions from both staff and the Board of Directors to develop consensus on the organizational direction for the next five years.

Our Strategic Planning Task Force was made up of the following individuals:

Pouya Dianat, *Board Member*

Nicole King, *Assistant Principal, Elementary Campus*

Rhiannen Laurent, *Dean of Student Supports*

Alastair Pullen, *Executive Director*

Shannon Rutledge, *Board Member*

Mark Sanders, *Principal, Middle Campus*

Cory Tiede, *Board Chair*

NaTasha Woody-Wideman, *Assistant Principal, Middle Campus*

Lara Zelski, *Principal, Elementary Campus*

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