WESTSIDE EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Vision:

The vision of the Westside Education Collaborative is to transform the life opportunities of children residing on the Westside of Atlanta by ensuring they receive a high-quality education.

Process:

- Westside Education Collaborative members examined Westside family engagement, the K-12 school system, early childhood and youth development in the context of their environments at home, at school and in the community.
- The strategic plan that they developed is grounded in having residents share their perspectives on Westside education and their hope for its future, a best practices literature review, and an assessment of qualitative Westside education metrics.
- The collaborative also looked at the data through an asset-based lens on the home and community factors affecting Westside youth's educational opportunities. The four focus areas are: Family & Community Engagement, Early Childhood (birth – 5 years), Youth Development, and K-12 Education.
- After reviewing the data and the assets and opportunities in the Westside, the collaborative finalized the strategic plan in August 2016.
- The plan has ten goals associated with 28 strategies that are focused on the following themes:
  - Expanding the number of quality program seats;
  - Improving the quality and capacity of existing programs;
  - Strengthening coordination across organizations (e.g., around overarching Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) priorities); and
  - Improving program accessibility through information and trust.

(1)   Family and Community Engagement Strategies

Goal 1: Reduce barriers to access
Goal 2: Build trust across the community and local organizations
Goal 3: Build the capacity of local organizations to engage families

Year 1
- Build and maintain a database of information on needs of families and accessible and effective services already offered and make available to the community.
- Start support groups to help families and children become resilient in tough life situations, drawing on research-based "best practices" by identifying professional organizations that can lead these efforts.
- Build engagement strategies to ensure community presence and authentic outreach.
- Use existing resources to set up systems to collect and distribute information about Westside education through trusted sources, while also encouraging trust and collaboration across sources.

Year 2
- Proactively address family mobility and displacement toward the effort of community retention.

(2)   K-12 Strategies

Goal 1: Talent management—Attract, Develop and retain top talent across Westside K-12 schools

Goal 2: Program and curriculum—Deliver excellent program/instruction to prepare students academically and socioemotionally for college and careers

Year 1
- ➢ Support Hollis Innovation Academy to achieve STEM certification and develop a robust collaboration and partnership strategy across all cluster schools that reinforces STE(A)M best practices.
- ➢ Leverage multiple partners (e.g., local universities, STE(A)M orgs) to build teacher capacity.
- ➢ Create teacher professional development "Innovation Days".
- ➢ Provide consistent training in the areas of cultural competence and implicit bias.
- ➢ Build dedicated Maker Space/STEM Lab with supporting supplies in every Washington cluster school.
- ➢ Collaborate to define a strategic approach to partner selection, tied to goals and commitments, and aligned to STEM Signature program.
- ➢ Provide consistent professional development and support in implementation of STE(A)M and expeditionary learning.

Year 2
- ➢ Create a program focused on pipeline development, to recruit and retain teachers in Washington cluster schools (scholarships, incentives, career pathways, etc.)

(3)   Early Childhood Education (ECE) Strategies

Goal 1: Demand—Create the demand for high-quality seats through family education and engagement

Goal 2: Insufficient quality slots—Increase supply of high-quality, affordable ECE slots accessible to Westside children (by building provider capacity)

Goal 3: Collaboration/coordination—Increase collaboration within and across ECE, K-12, and wraparound services

Year 1
- ➢ Create research to better understand the magnitude of unmet ECE need on the Westside.
- ➢ Create an ongoing forum for ECE stakeholders, including pre K-5 schools, to come together, share information and collaborate.
- ➢ Tighten coordination with health and wellness services (e.g., home visits, early developmental screenings).

Years 2-3
- ➢ Create a strong communications hub, establish walk-in, in-school family centers that guide families through the ECE process.
- ➢ Develop/identify a family-focused curriculum to support families in navigating barriers to access and building skills to support early learning/literacy at home, and providers in engaging with families.
- ➢ Create more affordable high-quality slots in accessible Westside locations.
- ➢ Provide opportunities for shared Professional Development.
- ➢ Provide incentives and support for Birth to age 3 and pre-K providers to engage in quality evaluation and improvement.
- ➢ Monitor for success—create a data system to consistently share information between ECE and K-12.

(4)   Youth Development Strategies

Goal 1: Participation—Increase Westside families' consistent participation in high-quality youth development programs.

Goal 2: Quality through coordination—Continue to increase provider quality through coordination across youth development providers and with schools

Year 1

- ➢ Build and maintain a database of information on Westside youth development providers.
- ➢ Create a coordination mechanism/forum to help youth development providers communicate with one another and make/track common goals, including breaking down barriers to family participation in youth development programs.
- ➢ Support Atlanta Public Schools to define a strategic approach to partner selection, tied to goals and commitments, and aligned to STEM signature program.
- ➢ Build integrated out of school time opportunities with collaboration between school-day providers, youth development providers, and corporate sponsors.

Years 2-3

- ➢ Develop a shared set of measurable, research based best practices for youth development quality, for providers to self-assess their performance against and development strategies for improvement.