

## EDUCATION

### The Challenge

Education is the root of all economic development. Metro Atlanta’s public-education system is critical to the region’s long-term development as a world-class place to live and work. We must have good schools producing a home-grown workforce for the metro Atlanta region to maintain and grow economic vitality.

Our education efforts focus on the 15 school-system region. This region educates almost half of the state’s student population and has the largest school system in Georgia -- Gwinnett Public Schools. The area has experienced improvements in the last decade on SATs and high school graduation rates, lending to favorable comparisons with regions we compete with for new businesses and relocations.

Additionally, for more than 25 years, the Atlanta Partners For Education (APFE) has worked with the Atlanta Public Schools (APS). Through APFE, more than 300+ businesses partner with 100 schools to provide support such as mentoring and tutoring, building playgrounds, and supplying student incentives. APFE also hosts annual events like the State of the Schools in Atlanta address, Principal Shadow Day (formerly “Principal For A Day”) and newly created Executive For A Day.

### History of MAC Leadership

Our focus on APS has produced tangible results:

- The Metro Atlanta Chamber (MAC) **created EduPAC** to screen and endorse school board candidates. Fully 80-100 percent of EduPAC-endorsed candidates have been elected in the past 16 years.
- **EduPAC** has also inspired the creation of EduKalb in DeKalb County.

Our focus on the 15 school-system region includes frequent dialogue with school superintendents who have asked for our help in areas including:

#### **creating effective school boards**

- In 2008, MAC launched the **Commission for School Board Excellence** at the request of the State Board of Education when the Clayton County Public Schools was losing its accreditation. The commission advocated for changes to state law to make school boards more accountable. This legislation passed during the 2010 session. The new law leads the nation in school board reform.

#### **teacher recruitment and retention**

- MAC worked with corporate human resources officers to identify best practices in **recruiting and retaining teachers**.

#### **career preparation**

- MAC conducted a **survey of employers** in the metro region to determine the gap between what students are learning and the education they need to get good jobs.

### 2011 Call to Action for the Metro Atlanta Region

To strategically improve education metrics in the metro Atlanta region and Georgia, we support:

- utilizing Atlanta Partners For Education flagship programs – Principal Shadow Day, Executive For A Day, and the State of the Schools in Atlanta address – to create public-private partnerships that **support student achievement**
- **ensuring the state continues requiring rigorous coursework** for students and provides teachers the tools and training to effectively teach this coursework

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