

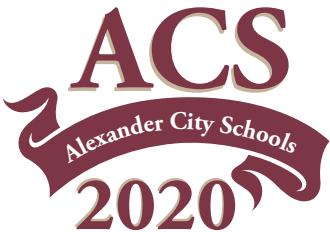




# Strategic Plan for the Alexander City Schools

## Board of Education

- Mr. Michael Ransaw
- Mr. Steve Robinson
- Mr. David Sturdivant
- Mr. Kelly Waldrop
- Mrs. Dorothea Walker



## Central Office Administration

Dr. J. Darrell Cooper	<b>Superintendent</b>
Mrs. Rhonda Blythe	<b>Chief School Financial Officer</b>
Mrs. Kristi Boone	<b>Director of Special Education</b>
Mrs. Janet Gilliland	<b>Curriculum Coordinator</b>
Mr. Keith Lashley	<b>Technology and Transportation Coordinator</b>
Mrs. Rebecca Marion	<b>Career Tech Director</b>
Mrs. Ellen Martin	<b>Director of Support Services</b>
Mrs. Marie McCall	<b>Director of Federal Programs</b>



DR. J. DARRELL COOPER  
SUPERINTENDENT

# ALEXANDER CITY SCHOOLS

375 LEE STREET • ALEXANDER CITY, ALABAMA 35010 • 256-234-8074

Dear Staff, Students, Parents, and Community Members:

On behalf of the Alexander City Schools, we are pleased to present our new strategic plan - *ACS 2020: A Pursuit of Excellence 2014-2020 (ACS 2020)*. This plan will serve as a blueprint in our organization's daily pursuit of excellence. In addition, it will provide a multi-year direction and focus for our school system, guide all annual operating plans, and serve as a framework for acquiring and distributing resources.

*ACS 2020* is a result of an extensive collaborative effort involving our staff, students, parents, Board, and business and community leaders. We want to thank all the people who so generously gave of their time and talent in the development of this plan. Over 96 individuals participated in the work of nine different committees over a period of eight months. Participants were challenged to identify strengths and weaknesses of our school system, as well as opportunities and threats from external factors. In consideration of items identified, they were asked to formulate areas for improvement, which are the core of *ACS 2020*.

In implementing *ACS 2020*, we hope to capitalize on the successes we have already achieved, but look forward to what we can accomplish in the years to come. It is our mission to provide a safe and inviting learning environment with high expectations for ALL, while focusing on the development of the whole child – academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We welcome the opportunity to carry out this mission and to distinguish ourselves as a high performing school system.

We ask each of you to carefully review *ACS 2020* and consider where your contributions of time, talent, and treasure can help us realize the goals set forth in this plan. It is with faith, mutual support and collaboration, and understanding of our priorities as they relate to our mission, that we will achieve continued success in the Alexander City Schools.

Sincerely,

J. Darrell Cooper, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Michael Ransaw  
Board President

A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL EXCEL  
STUDENTS - FACULTY - PARENTS - COMMUNITY

# SCHOOL INFORMATION

## Jim Pearson Elementary School

**Grades: K-2**

Enrollment: 741

**Principal**

**Assistant Principal**

Mr. Jamie Forbus

Mrs. April Neese

## Nathaniel H. Stephens Elementary School

**Grades: 3-4**

Enrollment: 474

**Principal**

**Assistant Principal**

Ms. Smith

Mrs. Julia Abrams

## W. L. Radney Elementary School

**Grades: 5-6**

Enrollment: 457

**Principal**

**Assistant Principal**

Mr. Andrew Caves

Mr. Reginald Clifton

## Alexander City Middle School

**Grades: 7-8**

Enrollment: 507

**Principal**

**Assistant Principal**

Dr. Beverly Price

Ms. Tracie Tolbert

## Benjamin Russell High School

**Grades: 9-12**

Enrollment: 995

**Principal**

**Assistant Principal**

**Assistant Principal**

**Assistant Principal**

Dr. Anthony Wilkinson

Mr. Evan Blair

Mrs. Kelli Kelly

Mr. Tracy McGhee

## The Strategic Planning Development Process

*ACS 2020: Pursuit of Excellence 2014-2020 (ACS 2020)* is the strategic plan for the Alexander City School System. The plan is a result of the collaborative work of nine different stakeholder committees – Teaching Staff, Support Staff, Students, Parents, Building Administrators, Central Office Staff, Board Members, Business and Community Leaders, and Lead Strategic Planning Committee. A total of 96 individuals representing all schools and grade levels served on committees. The Superintendent of the Alexander City Schools facilitated the work of each committee and the entire strategic planning process. The planning process spanned a period of eight months, August 2013 to March 2014. Prior to the start of committee work, a comprehensive school system audit was conducted in order to provide five years of data and other pertinent historical information. Audit areas included: academics, demographics, discipline, attendance, facilities, technology, fiscal, and personnel. Each committee met separately on several occasions, with over 50 meetings being conducted during the process. *Standard Area 1: Purpose and Direction* was first developed in order to guide the development of remaining elements. The S.W.O.T. process was initially used to begin committee considerations. The S.W.O.T. process involved each committee identifying strengths and weaknesses (internal factors) of the school system and opportunities and threats (external factors) for factors lying outside the school system. Following the S.W.O.T. sessions, committees participated in brainstorming sessions to generate ideas on how the school system can make improvements in regard to five standard areas: 1) Purpose and Direction, 2) Governance and Leadership, 3) Teaching and Assessing for Learning, 4) Resources and Support Systems, and 5) Using Results for Continuous Improvement. Several drafts were constructed, followed by additional committee meetings for suggested revisions. A total of 112 improvement statements were drafted for the public draft. In order to garner public input beyond the committee work, a draft was made available for public review and input for a two-week period. Prior to the construction of a final draft, the LSPC, Board, and Superintendent considered public suggestions for revisions. The Superintendent constructed a final draft and subsequently submitted it for Board approval. The Board approved *ACS 2020* on March 18, 2014. *ACS 2020* will serve as a guide in the Alexander School System's work for improvement through the year 2020.





## Standards-Based Strategic Plan

*ACS 2020* was developed using the *AdvancED* standards as a framework. Every five years, in an effort to promote excellence and continuous growth throughout our organization, the school system completes the *AdvancED* accreditation process. This process entails a comprehensive program of evaluation and external review, which is supported by the five research-based *AdvancED* standards. The five standard areas are:

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

### Standard 1: Purpose & Direction

The school system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

**Action Plans:** In fulfillment of this standard, the following tenants shall serve as daily guidance in all aspects of the school system:

#### Purpose – WHY we exist as an organization

The **PURPOSE** of the Alexander City Schools is to provide students with a quality educational experience that fosters a productive and successful life.

#### Vision – WHAT we want to achieve as an organization

The **VISION** of the Alexander City Schools is to produce graduates that are successful and empowered to compete globally based upon their own



## Standard 1: Purpose & Direction (cont.)

### Mission – HOW we want to achieve our vision

The MISSION of the Alexander City Schools is to provide a safe and inviting learning environment with high expectations for ALL, while focusing on the development of the whole child – academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

### Core Values/Beliefs – WHAT we stand for & HOW we behave as an organization.

1. Student-Centered Focus
2. High Expectations for All
3. Respect for All
4. Safe, Positive, & Nurturing Learning Environment
5. Equity for All
6. Well-Trained, Highly Qualified, & Professional Staff
7. High Character & Integrity
8. Caring, Compassionate, & Courteous
9. Openness and Transparency

### Motto – High Expectations & Success for ALL

### System Goals

1. We will provide a high-quality, rigorous academic experience that is standards-based, addresses the whole child, reaches all students, and meets or exceeds all accountability standards.
2. We will provide a safe, positive, and nurturing learning environment for our students.
3. We will provide teaching and learning resources necessary for the success of our students.
4. We will expect every student to graduate and each graduate to be well prepared for success and leadership in his/her chosen path according to his/her own unique talents and interests.
5. We will provide a professional, accountable, and highly qualified staff, who is committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders in order to provide an exceptional educational experience.





## Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

The school system operates under governance and leadership that promotes student performance and school effectiveness.

**Action Plans:** In fulfillment of this standard, our school system shall:

### Governance

- a) Establish consistent policies, procedures, and practices that ensure effective administration of the system;
- b) Conduct a Board policy revision for the Alexander City Schools and regularly review and revise policies to reflect current educational laws, requirements, and practices;
- c) Ensure the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively;
- d) Require that continuous and effective improvement processes are carried out at the district and school level and that appropriate stakeholders are involved in the process;
- e) Establish and maintain adequate job descriptions with an accompanying organizational chart;
- f) Conduct a minimum of one town hall type Board meeting per year;
- g) Regularly conduct Board meetings at individual schools and include activities such as performances, tours, etc.
- h) Ensure Board members are educated and well informed about current issues, trends, and challenges facing public school systems; members will meet all required professional development requirements;
- i) Seek opportunities to engage other government entities in planning for and providing resources for the school system; and
- j) Utilize technology to implement a paperless system to carry out the functions of the Board.



## Leadership

- a) Communicate to all stakeholders the high expectations for student learning and positive results of continuous improvement results;
- b) Annually publish a Student/Parent Handbook that explains the basic rules, regulations, and procedures for both individual schools and school system;
- c) Publish an annual report for the system and schools, which communicates accomplishments, initiatives, and other important information;
- d) Create a comprehensive recruiting and retention plan to attract and secure diverse, highly qualified, effective personnel;
- e) Develop a comprehensive plan to engage parents and community members/organizations in our schools;
- f) Create partnerships with local industry and colleges in an effort to address local industry needs and prepare students for future college and career opportunities;
- g) Develop programs, procedures, and activities for recognition of teachers and support staff;
- h) Strive to create teacher leaders in our schools by promoting leadership qualities, providing a framework for opportunities, and providing leadership training;
- i) Hold high expectations for teachers and staff, including professional management, communication, content, and pedagogical skills and behavior;
- j) Create standing committees that addresses the aesthetic appearances of all schools;
- k) Promote staff activities and opportunities for the enhancement of employee morale, health, and wellness;
- l) Employ various methods of communication, including the use of our district website and social media, to promote positive information related to schools, programs, students, and staff;



- m) Develop a comprehensive communication plan – calendars, social media, etc. - and maintain open and numerous communication channels in an effort to provide and receive information from staff, students, parents, and community members
- n) Provide staff with handbooks containing expectations, procedures, and other relevant information to assist staff in their work toward promoting organizational effectiveness;
- o) Work with the Alexander City Schools Education Foundation (ACSEF) to develop a plan to support and promote the foundation's efforts by effectively communicating the initiatives of the ACSEF to staff, parents, and the community;
- p) Work in a manner and provide opportunities to create an organizational environment/culture to promote staff unity and the concept of one organization/team;
- q) Encourage the development of media programs/teams (web, newspaper, broadcasting) at all schools, with special attention toward BRHS;
- r) Study the grade configuration of our schools and develop long-range plans that inform and support long-range facility plans;
- s) Monitor school climate and take appropriate steps to ensure it is conducive to student learning; and
- t) Encourage schools to apply for state and national recognition for the accomplishments of staff, students, and schools.



## Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The school system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

**Action Plans:** In fulfillment of this standard, our school system shall:

- a) Ensure the implementation and improvement of a balanced and challenging curricula at each school;
- b) Develop and maintain a well-articulated curricula by regularly publishing maps/documents;
- c) Develop and maintain a plan for formative assessments that guides instruction;
- d) Provide a comprehensive K-12 fine arts program that consists at minimum of band, choral/music, visual arts, and drama offerings in grades 5-12 and music and visual arts instruction in grades K-4.
- e) Provide a comprehensive program for substitute teachers, which shall at minimum include training, guidance, and classroom standards/expectations;
- f) Develop a comprehensive teacher mentoring, coaching, and induction program, especially for new teachers, that promotes instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning;
- g) Provide adequate opportunities to teachers for vertical planning and reciprocal observations;
- h) Create a K-12 continuum for comprehensive STEM-based programs, courses, and opportunities;
- i) Identify, develop, and offer more career tech opportunities and develop a master plan for all offerings/programs, which includes students at the middle school level; develop strategies to better inform parents and students of career tech opportunities and promote positive perceptions of such opportunities;



- j) Emphasize the integration of technology into instruction in a manner that requires students' use of technology in the learning process, while at the same time ensuring teachers are provided adequate professional training in this area;
- k) Implement a more extensive K-12 foreign language program;
- l) Develop programs to motivate all students to engage in their community, accept personal ownership, and understand their relevance to community and a global society;
- m) Develop a K-12 plan at each school to address the needs of the advanced student, making sure to offer programs, activities, courses, and classroom instruction that challenges these students beyond normal classroom instruction and according to their abilities;
- n) Develop and support competitive academic-related teams at all levels;
- o) Develop plans/activities to better educate students and parents concerning academic expectations, standards, programs, etc.;
- p) Establish a digital platform to provide students with opportunities for online assignments, collaboration, and research;
- q) Provide students with courses/programs to strengthen test-taking skills needed for success on high-stakes assessments;
- r) Develop for the secondary level a course progression/pathway chart per subject area;
- s) Engage multiple stakeholders in developing, implementing, and maintaining a comprehensive fitness and wellness plan for students and staff, which will promote high standards for nutrition and physical activity both inside and outside the school day, and will be annually evaluated and amended, as needed, by a yearly-appointed wellness committee;
- t) Consistently meet and exceed goals of the state-mandated testing program; and
- u) Continue and expand extracurricular activities at all grade levels that are recognized as premier programs – Academic Teams, Band, Choral, Drama, Student Service Clubs, Athletics, Etc.



## Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

The school system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

**Action Plans:** In fulfillment of this standard, our school system shall:

### Human Resources

- a) Ensure the technology staff is adequate in number and skills to meet increasing technology demands;
- b) Establish a staff recruiting plan in order to secure and retain a high quality staff, ensuring the staff reflects the diversity of the student population;
- c) Annually complete a professional development needs assessment for staff and develop a yearly focus and related plan/map for specific professional development activities and a related timeline for implementation;
- d) Require staff to annually complete a minimum of twenty-five hours of professional development related to their current teaching assignment;
- e) Provide training and exposure to staff to better understand and relate to the diversity, home environments, and poverty issues related to our students;
- f) Develop a metric to measure administrator and teacher success;
- g) Develop a plan to promote and monitor staff attendance;
- h) Ensure all personnel are annually evaluated and provided performance feedback using both local evaluation instruments, metrics, and/or instruments provided by the Alabama State Department of Education; and
- i) Establish an administrative training program for current staff members who have administrative certificates or those interested in pursuing administrative certification.



## Financial Resources

- a) Establish a grant writing effort and secure an individual or company with the expertise to lead the effort;
- b) Provide schools and school programs with adequate resources and funding for transportation needs – e.g. field trips and extracurricular;
- c) Provide schools with adequate funds to meet basic costs of maintenance and operations;
- d) Explore new local revenue sources to help support schools; and
- e) Build and maintain a general fund reserve balance of three months.

## Physical Resources

- a) Maintain facilities, services, and equipment to provide a clean, healthy, attractive, and safe physical environment;
- b) Conduct a comprehensive facilities needs assessment and develop a long-range plan to address needs;
- c) Ensure a safe environment for all schools through adequate resources, comprehensive plans, staff professional development, appropriate drills, and yearly evaluations;
- d) Install athletic playing surfaces in all elementary and middle school gyms;
- e) Construct a new competitive gymnasium for the middle school, making sure the facility is adequate in size, seating capacity, concessions, restrooms, and dressing areas; consider converting existing girl's gym into library media space, auditorium, or athletic/fine arts facilities;
- f) Provide adequate science labs at the middle and high school level through either renovations or new construction;
- g) Develop a plan to address paving issues at each school;
- h) Update lighting and ceilings in schools, with a special effort to address the gym ceiling and drop ceilings throughout Radney Elementary School;
- i) Develop a construction plan to join the Kindergarten building to the main building at Jim Pearson Elementary School;





- j) Develop plans to make entrances of schools more visible, informative, and inviting;
- k) Develop a plan to address traffic issues, drop-off, and pick-up at all schools, but especially at JPES, which may include the installation of additional canopy space; and
- l) Develop a plan to connect exterior buildings at ACMS to the main building.

## **Material Resources**

- a) Provide necessary and appropriate curriculum materials and resources – textbooks, ancillaries, etc.;
- b) Provide and maintain adequate technology, including needed infrastructure;
- c) Strive to provide more resources through technology in an effort to move to a more paperless educational experience;
- d) Update the library media centers with new and appropriate technology, books, furniture, and storage;
- e) Create a plan to annually update the material resource needs of each school – desks, P.E./playground equipment, lab equipment; fine arts equipment, etc.; and
- f) Develop a replacement plan for classroom technologies such as projectors, SmartBoards, document cameras, etc.

## **Support Systems**

- a) Revamp the system's alternative school program, ensuring the program meets the behavioral and academic needs for students through both direct and computer-based instruction, adequate and well maintained facilities, counseling services, mentoring programs, and a positive, well structured environment;
- b) Prepare career-ready graduates through career planning, skill alignment, and curriculum alignment;
- c) Continue and expand after-school opportunities for students at all grade levels and schools;
- d) Continue and extend its relationship with Central Alabama Community College, seeking to provide our students with more dual enrollment opportunities and possibly offer faculty opportunities for graduate courses through a partnering university;

0 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020  
 0 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020  
 0 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020 ACS2020

- e) Develop a comprehensive transition plan for all levels, being sure to address developmental abilities and social, emotional, and academic requirements;
- f) Require each school to develop orientation programs to be used in assisting the acclimation of all new students and parents, especially those new to our school system;
- g) Develop a mentor plan for at-risk students in grades K-12, using current staff and resources, but also providing opportunities to involve churches, businesses, and civic organizations;
- h) Develop and implement a comprehensive K-12 behavior and discipline plan;
- i) Study the counseling program in an effort to plan opportunities for counseling personnel to be relieved of administrative and assessment responsibilities where their focus may be refocused toward guidance and counseling needs of students;
- j) Develop a long-term advisement program at the secondary level, using all staff to address college and career readiness plans and monitor the progress of each individual student;
- k) Encourage the development of K-12 academic booster clubs that recognize and support high student and staff achievement and improvement;
- l) Construct and implement plans to address the social and soft skills of students;
- m) Provide guidance to our student-athletes and fine arts performers who have interests in scholarships and opportunities performing beyond high school;
- n) Provide mental health resources for students and provide teachers with training on how to respond to students with mental health issues;
- o) Ensure Problem Solving Teams are well trained and are provided support, resources, and models to be effective.
- p) Develop and maintain school safety and crisis management plans that provide appropriate training for staff, students, parents, and local law enforcement; and
- q) Study the feasibility of establishing preschool programs for four-year-old children, with a special emphasis for at-risk students, while at the same time establishing partnerships with existing programs in order to plan, share resources, and offer training opportunities;



## Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The school system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

**Action Plans:** In fulfillment of this standard, our school system shall:

- a) Annually construct a K-12 assessment plan;
- b) Require all schools to annually construct and implement continuous improvement plans;
- c) Use formative assessment to continuously monitor the academic progress of students and inform instructional decisions;
- d) Implement and monitor benchmark assessments at all grade levels;
- e) Employ technology resources and engage staff in collaborative work in an effort to identify at-risk students and develop appropriate plans/strategies to decrease retention, prevent dropouts, and promote successful graduates;
- f) Develop Continuous Improvement (CI) Teams for the district and each individual school that is responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the continuous improvement process; the district team will consist of chairpersons in each school who make up each school's CI Team and lead the work of individual task forces that engage all staff members in the following areas: 1) Curriculum & Instruction; 2) Standards & Assessment; 3) Professional Development; 4) Technology; 5) Parent & Community Involvement; 6) School Organization, Finance, and Facilities; and 7) School Services and Programs;
- g) Annually survey stakeholders on their perceptions of school effectiveness and use the resulting data in the continuous improvement process;
- h) Use a data disaggregation system to maintain a comprehensive profile of individual and group student achievement data in order to track student progress, plan instruction to meet the specific needs of all students, identify instructional gaps/weaknesses, and evaluate the overall instructional program;
- i) Develop K-12 academic and other school performance goals and yearly

- j) Plan, implement, and evaluate procedures and practices to address the achievement gaps among minorities and poverty subgroups; and
- k) Ensure the district's strategic plan is annually reviewed, evaluated for progress, and amended as needed.

## **K-12 Annual Performance Goals** (See Standard 5-i)

A committee of staff members will be responsible for formulating performance goals at all levels.

### **Possible goal areas to include:**

Graduation Rate

ASPIRE

EXPLORE

PLAN

ACT and Writing

ACT WorkKeys

ACT QualityCore

AP Scores/Participants

Dual Enrollment Courses Completed

Merit Scholar Participants

Percentage of College Bound Students

Career Tech Enrollment

Extracurricular Participation

Student Attendance

Staff Attendance

Percentage of Mastery for Benchmark Assessments

DIBELS

ACCESS for ELLs

\*The timeline for the fulfillment of the action plans presented in this strategic plan will be January 1, 2020. The plan will be revisited on an annual basis to evaluate progress and amend as needed.



