



The Achievement Zone is a geographic area that makes up the Banneker High School attendance boundary in the southern end of the Fulton County School district. The schools within this area experience high rates of mobility, poverty, crime risk, and a lack of intensive supports for struggling students. They need additional resources and support to boost student achievement. The Achievement Zone is designed to accelerate the school district's efforts to improve academic outcomes for the students who attend schools within the zone.

The **mission** of the Achievement Zone is to accelerate and concentrate research-based reform efforts, offering a wide range of supports and opportunities to remove obstacles to dramatic school improvement and provide access for all families with students in the Zone to receive a high quality education.

Why did the district decide to create an Achievement Zone?

The unique challenges of the Achievement Zone require a focused solution in order to fulfill the promise of a high quality education for every student. Research shows that there is limited opportunity to improve educational outcomes and increase graduation rates for students at Banneker High School without addressing students' needs in middle and elementary feeder schools. A focused, coordinated effort among the school system, philanthropic organizations, the private sector, and the community to leverage resources and support common goals will yield much greater results than isolated efforts.

What schools are included in Achievement Zone?

There are ten schools in the Achievement Zone: Banneker High School, McNair Middle School, Woodland Middle School, Bethune Elementary School, Brookview Elementary School, College Park Elementary School, Feldwood Elementary School, Heritage Elementary School, Asa Hilliard Elementary School, and Love T. Nolan Elementary School.

When will the Achievement Zone be implemented?

The first phase of the Achievement Zone started in the spring of 2015, with additional phases scheduled to begin during the next few years. Immediate strategies implemented for the 2015-2016 school year to support schools in creating a culture of high expectations; recruiting, developing, and retaining high quality staff; and providing high quality learning and teaching for students include:

- *The Junior Achievement-Magnet Business Academy (JA-MBA) at Banneker High School*
- *Expansion of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) at McNair Middle School, Woodland Middle School, and Banneker High School*
- *Strategically staffing high performing teachers at Feldwood Elementary School, Heritage Elementary School, and McNair Middle School*
- *Recruitment incentives for new staff to Achievement Zone schools*
- *Teach for America K-3 literacy grant at Brookview Elementary School*
- *8th and 9th grade academies at McNair Middle School, Woodland Middle School, Banneker High School, and McClarin High School*
- *Extensive professional development for staff*
- *Grant-funded partnerships for social and emotional supports*
- *District Readiness Assessment and strategic planning for school turnaround*

How will the Achievement Zone operate?

The Achievement Zone will create a direct connection within the community to encourage and promote transformation throughout the geographic area. All staff members of the zone will serve in a highly visible, high touch capacity to support the schools and community. Schools will continue to work through their School Governance Councils to develop strategic plans, but they will coordinate with feeder schools to vertically align plans throughout the zone. Achievement Zone team members will have a proven track record of success in their field of expertise and have the competencies necessary to drive dramatic improvement. The zone staff will design, coordinate, and implement high-yield, research-based strategies to create a culture of high expectations; continuously recruit, develop, and retain staff; and help schools to provide high quality learning and teaching.

How will this benefit students?

The Achievement Zone will recruit, develop, and retain high performing staff who will serve as role models of life-long learning and incorporate innovative teaching strategies to engage and connect with students. Processes and procedures will be aligned across the zone, allowing students to have a cohesive experience as they transition to the next level of school within the zone. Resources and cutting-edge technology will provide personalized learning opportunities that connect students to a global world and provide access to rigorous coursework. High performing teams will partner to provide a vast array of tiered supports and enrichments for students, ensure a safe and inviting learning environment, and foster positive relationships with students. Students will have expanded options for college and career readiness through curriculum offerings such as virtual learning, expansion of the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) center, AVID and the Junior Achievement Magnet (JA-MBA) at Banneker High School. The Achievement Zone will embody a focused, coordinated effort to remove barriers to student achievement.

Who is impacted by this change?

Through the efforts of the Achievement Zone, we envision a community where all students are prepared for citizenship, college, and life; where achievement gaps are closed; and where the overall level of knowledge and skill among the students match or exceed the best in the district. The Achievement Zone initiative is an opportunity to build the necessary supports and structure to better equip children within their communities to be successful in school, work, and life.

Why was this model chosen? Is it based upon a proven model for success?

There are many research-based and proven models similar to the Achievement Zone across the nation. There are variations in names and implementation, but all operate from a concept of dedicating resources to promote innovation to turn around struggling schools. Similar efforts have been implemented by school districts, partnerships, or charter management organizations. Our district is researching and studying all models and their effectiveness. Rather than adopt one full-scale model, we will incorporate the proven practices and strategies from several models to create our Achievement Zone. Best practices have been studied from areas including: Louisiana Recovery School District (New Orleans, LA); Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Project L.I.F.T. (Charlotte, NC); Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Achievement Zone (Charlotte, NC); Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools' Innovation Zone (Nashville, TN); Green Dot Public Schools (Los Angeles, CA); Northside Achievement Zone (Minneapolis, MN); Harlem Children's Zone (New York, NY); Renaissance 2012 (Chicago, IL); Innovation Schools (Baltimore, MD); and iDesign Schools (Los Angeles, CA).

For more information, contact achievementzone@fultonschools.org.

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