

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Community-Oriented Approaches to Enable Local Success

The Smart Decisions Coalition recognizes that different parts of the state are unique, mean solutions will be implemented differently and programs will be most impactful in specific areas. Metro ATL has extreme poverty, but also has numerous employers and philanthropic support. Hub and rural counties have much of the same extreme poverty without the level of philanthropic support or number of employers.

The following recommendations are opportunities to remove barriers for students and encourage college completion throughout the state, with distinctions noted for different types of communities:

- 1. SAT/ACT Day- Schoolwide SAT/ACT Day during the school day to lessen transportation barriers and provide an opportunity to take a required test for college entrance.**
- 2. FAFSA Completion- Promote community-wide FAFSA completion events to ensure parents can ask questions, learn the facts, and understand the benefits.**
 - o In Metro ATL and hub counties, this would likely occur at the school or neighborhood level.**
 - o In rural counties, this would likely be a city or county-wide event that could be held in a community center or at a school.**
- 3. Achieve Atlanta- Replication or scaling of Achieve Atlanta's model focuses on low-income students.**
 - o Scaling Achieve Atlanta's model would be most feasible in metro ATL due to the strong philanthropic support.**
 - o Replication of Achieve Atlanta's model is more challenging in hub and rural counties since there are fewer philanthropic donors. Nevertheless, the need is as great in hub and rural counties as metro ATL.**
- 4. Discounted Transit- Support transit discounts or free rides for high school and college students. Students in metro ATL and hub counties where transit exists would benefit most.**
- 5. Community & College Transit Plans- Promote the development of transit plans with university and technical college partners in counties where transit already exists.**
- 6. High School & Employer Coordination- Encourage connection of employers and local high schools to fill employment needs. School systems in metro ATL, hub counties, and rural counties should have a designated staff person to manage these relationships. This includes hosting experience days for students, offering apprenticeships, internships, and teach externships.**
- 7. College Campus Visits- Create grants for increased school visits to local technical colleges and universities for students across Georgia.**
- 8. Nexus Degree- Support USG's expansion of the nexus degree throughout the state to fit student and employer needs.**
- 9. Higher Education & Employer Coordination- Support collaboration among employers and post-secondary institutions to ensure program offerings continue to meet job needs as industries evolve. This would be impactful in metro ATL as well as hub and rural counties.**
- 10. REACH Georgia- Prioritize the REACH scholarship program expansion in rural counties since the school districts are smaller and the effects of the program would be felt quickly.**
- 11. Community Asset Assessment- Support all communities in strategically assessing their needs and strengths in developing a local talent pipeline.**