

CASE STUDY: Achieve Atlanta

Founded in 2015, Achieve Atlanta envisions a city where race and class no longer predict postsecondary success and upward mobility. In pursuit of that vision, Achieve Atlanta coordinates cross-sector collaboration between key stakeholders, working alongside Atlanta Public Schools (APS), colleges and universities, local and national nonprofits, and students and families to promote postsecondary access and success through structural shifts and the provision of direct services (e.g., scholarships, programming, a college match & fit tool). Since 2015, this work has supported growth across access metrics, including FAFSA completion, postsecondary application submission, and seamless enrollment in college.

This case explores how Achieve Atlanta’s leaders have refined the organization’s internal structure to make measurement practical, integrated, and accessible.

Declutter data practices, and simplify measurement systems

To serve as chief aggregators, processors, and collectors of data, and make the volume of data manageable, actionable, and aligned to learning goals, Achieve Atlanta leaders:

- **Design data tools for their accessibility and likelihood to be used, even by those without an extensive data background:** At Achieve Atlanta data and data tools are used by practitioners with a range of backgrounds—from assistant principals new to college-advising to counselors with years of experience. In an effort to make college advising data useful and practical, Achieve Atlanta takes on the role of data aggregator and processor, enabling the busy individuals who work with high school students to focus their limited time on acting on the data and providing tailored support rather than sifting through and interpreting the high volumes of data.
- **Streamline data collection:** Achieve Atlanta works with a number of school district departments and nonprofit partners, each of which collects data on high school seniors each year. When Achieve Atlanta became aware that each partner gathered this information using a separate survey, they streamlined data collection, condensing multiple surveys into a single survey that met everyone’s requirements and unified, rather than duplicated efforts.





Hardwire systems to surface improvement opportunities

To rapidly detect and communicate deviations from expectations, leaders:

- **Design systems to collect and make available “green data.”** After reflecting on their distance from work occurring in schools, Achieve Atlanta’s leadership restructured their team to access more timely and proximate data. Leaders created a new role focused on working directly with high schools, which allowed them to get closer to day-to-day work and become aware of experiences, challenges, and lessons as soon as they occurred.

Cultivate a culture of measurement for learning

To foster a strong culture of measurement for improvement, leaders:

- **Fuel discovery through shared goals and measures.** Achieve Atlanta works with an intricate web of partners on the complex issue of college access and success. To coordinate efforts, Achieve Atlanta streamlines efforts and data around shared goals, integrates its own work as an outside organization with existing infrastructure in the district, and shepherds and builds relationships with stakeholders. Achieve Atlanta’s [change management framework](#), developed in partnership with Bellwether Education Partners, helps set shared goals across teams, understand, and make explicit sought after change management outcomes.