School 'reform takes time'
Hall: System is improving

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Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall last week outlined a new effort designed to accelerate the pace of improvement in the 51,000-student district.

The goal of the effort, dubbed APS 2007, is for every school to meet at least 70 percent of its academic targets each year.

The targets -- reading and English test scores, attendance levels and enrollment in high-level courses -- vary from school to school and are set by district officials.

Hall unveiled APS 2007 last Thursday during her annual "State of the Schools in Atlanta" speech at the Georgia-Pacific building in downtown Atlanta.

"We must now accelerate our progress if we are to reach the goal of building a world-class system for Atlanta," Hall told a crowd of community and business leaders.

In her speech, Hall noted that the district has made significant progress at the elementary level since she came to Atlanta in 1999, with test scores rising dramatically during that time.

But she acknowledged that middle and high schools are not performing at the level she'd like them to be. She urged the public to be patient.

"Education reform takes time," Hall said.

She trumpeted the overhaul of long-troubled Carver High School as a sign that her administration is tackling the high school problem. Opening next year, the renamed "New Schools of Carver" will be made up of four largely independent small schools, each with its own focus -- early college, science and technology, health sciences and research, and the arts.

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• Full text of Superintendent Beverly Hall's "State of the Schools in Atlanta" speech.
• Photo
  "This is a critical time," APS Superintendent Beverly Hall said.