



A Promise and a Pathway

STRATEGIC PLAN | 2021-2026





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Afya Baltimore Was Founded WITH A MISSION

Afya Baltimore Inc. (ABI), has been operating high quality public charter schools in Baltimore City since 2007. From the beginning, our mission was clear — we wanted to teach Baltimore’s children to lead healthy, balanced lives. Health was so integral to our program that it inspired our name — Afya, which means “health” in Swahili. Fourteen years later, with two established pre-K through 8th grade schools and 1,500 students across three facilities, health is still at the heart of what we do.

As an organization and at our individual schools we continue to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of our communities. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, our schools were put to the test as Baltimore City moved to virtual instruction. Our teachers created online lessons that were rigorous and engaging. Our administration made sure every student could access learning — distributing computing devices and working to bridge the digital divide, as many of our students did not have their own tablet or laptop or reliable internet at home.

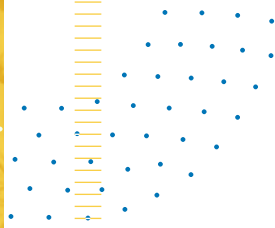
Now, as we look ahead, it is essential for us to renew and re-energize the commitment we have to our mission and reframe our work over the next five years as a **promise and a pathway** for our families and students. Long existing inequities facing our communities — including racism, violence, economic, and health disparities — have been exacerbated by the pandemic and require a significant and comprehensive response by our school community. In our own continual process to improve outcomes and experiences for our students, we want to understand, appreciate, and celebrate what we’ve done well over the past 14 years of operating schools in Baltimore City and embark on new work that is ambitious, courageous, and vital.

We promise to continue to provide and maintain safe, equitable, and engaging places for our students to grow and learn with us from the time they enter in pre-K or kindergarten to the time they move on to high school as young adults. Families can trust ABI and our schools to honor the experiences, perspectives and potential of every child and to invest in the partnership between school and family. The pathway through these elementary and middle school years will be filled with meaningful experiences, rituals, and milestones — intellectual, social/emotional, and physical — that will ultimately help our students thrive in high school and beyond.

Afya Baltimore provides the necessary supports — the **healthy foundations** — so that our schools can deliver on our mission of teaching Baltimore’s children the skills they need to live healthy, balanced lives: intellectually, socially/emotionally, and physically. Expertise in academic programming, facility management and development, communications, finances, and talent development are all key pieces of this foundational support.

ABI is a dedicated community of school leaders, teachers and staff, students, families, board members, and partners who are committed to our schools, our mission, and to each other. Together, we create healthy, joyful, inclusive, creative, supportive communities of learning for every child of every race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability.

This strategic plan will guide our commitments, priorities, investments, and work for the next five years so that we can fulfill our promise and our mission.



OUR MISSION

The word Afya is Swahili for health. Our schools teach children to live healthy, balanced lives: intellectually, socially/emotionally, and physically. We nurture and support our students to be active learners and caring community members. **We call our mission The Afya Way.**

OUR VISION

The Afya Way is a comprehensive whole-child approach. From our littlest learners in pre-K to our adolescents in 8th grade, we prepare our students for a healthy future by building a foundation for and a pathway to high school and beyond. In our classrooms, our students engage in content that is meaningful, challenging, and relevant to their lives. Our students learn to think critically, work collaboratively, be physically active, and develop a strong sense of self and community. Together with families and our partners, we support our students in taking ownership of their education, developing their voice and sense of agency, and taking decisive action to improve themselves and their community. At each step of the educational journey, we set ambitious and feasible goals, and we work relentlessly to help every one of our students — of every race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability — achieve them.

The
Afya
Way





OUR SCHOOLS

ABI's first school opened in Belair-Edison in 2008 — Afya Public Charter School. Next came The Tunbridge School in the Govans neighborhood in 2010; then the conversion of Brehms Lane Public Charter School in 2016. Most recently in 2019, we merged Afya Public Charter School and Brehms Lane Public Charter School into The Belair-Edison School, a dual-facility elementary/middle school. At every step of the way, our schools have successfully delivered on our mission. We have been evaluated for renewal by the Baltimore City Public School System four times since 2008, each time earning the maximum renewal term.



the **tunbridge** school



ABI is now responsible for educating almost 1,500 students in Baltimore City across two schools and three campuses, from pre-K to 8th grade. The experiences of our students along the pathway through our elementary and middle schools help them thrive in high school and beyond. Our school counselors and teachers guide and assist our students with the Baltimore City high school choice process to find a fit that's right for them, from career technical education (CTE) schools to criteria-based and magnet high schools and independent and private schools in the area.





OUR STUDENTS

Total Number of ABI Students: Approximately **1,500**

Tunbridge (pre-K-8):

472
students



Elementary:
322 students



Middle:
150 students

The Belair-Edison School (pre-K-8):

1,010
students



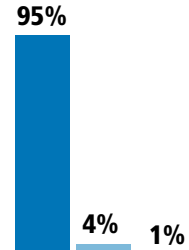
Elementary |
Brehms Campus:
650 students



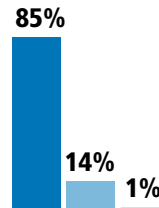
Middle |
Brendan Campus:
360 students

Total ABI Racial Breakdown

95% African American
4% White
1% Other



Tunbridge (pre-K-8)



85% African American
14% White
1% Other

The Belair-Edison School (pre-K-8):

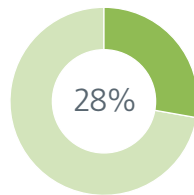


99% African American
1% Other

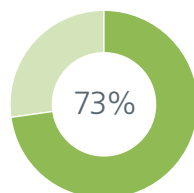
Total ABI Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP)



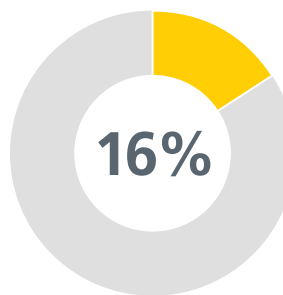
Tunbridge (pre-K-8)



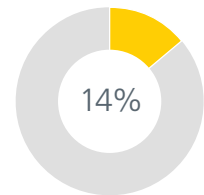
The Belair-Edison School (pre-K-8):



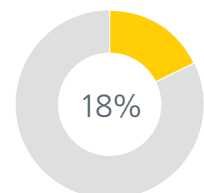
Total ABI Special Education (SPED)



Tunbridge (pre-K-8)



The Belair-Edison School (pre-K-8):





OUR COMMITMENTS

As part of our strategic planning process, we have reaffirmed our dedication to the **ABI Commitments**. Individually, they show the discrete outcomes we pledge to achieve and the actions we will take to get there. Collectively, they represent our renewed promise to fully realizing our mission for students and families.





COMMITMENT 1

Intellectual Health: Academic Excellence

- Our schools are positive and engaging spaces where all our students have access to rich, equitable learning and experiences.
- We believe our students deserve high-quality curriculum, access to grade level content, opportunities for enrichment, culturally-responsive instruction, and highly-trained teachers who believe in and have high expectations for them.
- We use assessments to inform instructional decision making and provide our students and families with meaningful feedback on their progress and areas for growth.
- We use targeted interventions to help our students achieve grade-level mastery.



What does academic excellence look like in our schools?

- Our students are at the center of our classrooms, deeply and actively engaged in their learning. We encourage our students to take ownership of their education preparing them to thrive in high school and beyond.
- Teachers facilitate instruction that prioritizes access to rigorous, relevant grade level work for all students and provides opportunity for students to do most of the talking and thinking.
- Families are engaged in and aware of student progress and performance.
- All of our students, of every race, socioeconomic status, gender and ability, are at grade level or above in all subject areas.
- We see increased enrollment in middle grades honors courses, so that there are no opportunity gaps between Black and White students, genders, and socioeconomics.

What steps will we take to achieve our goals?

- Continue to review the pre-K-8 math and reading curriculum to make sure they are high-quality and meet the needs of our learners.
- Review and adopt high-quality science and social studies curriculum in every school and every grade.
- Provide high-quality and ongoing coaching and professional learning around instructional practices that support accelerated learning and connect to students' experiences and identities.
- Examine and adjust the model and practices of our instructional model for students with disabilities.
- Revise our assessment and data-analysis strategies to ensure a clear picture of each student's strengths, performance, and progress.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to enrichment and intervention opportunities that includes increased opportunities for tutoring, mentoring, middle grades honors courses, and extracurricular activities.
- Invest in technology infrastructure so that every student has a device and develops the skills to use technology in support of their learning.



COMMITMENT 2

Social/Emotional Health and Wellness: Strong Culture, Climate, and Community

- Our schools are safe, joyful, and inclusive places where students learn and grow socially and emotionally.
- We ground our work and support for students in restorative practices.
- Social-emotional development is taught and practiced throughout the day.
- Our approach is trauma-responsive and healing-centered. We support our students through a focus on individual and collective resilience.
- By building strong relationships, we foster a sense of belonging and community among students, teachers, and families.
- Students feel a sense of ownership of their education, set goals for themselves, and celebrate their accomplishments; we help them find their voice and encourage them to use it.
- We focus on building communities in our classrooms, schools, city, and the world: Our students' education extends beyond the classroom to include opportunities in the arts, athletics, and other creative endeavors.
- We believe in taking care — of one's self, of others, and of the spaces we share.

What does strong culture, climate, and community look like in our schools?

- Our students feel that they belong and are empowered to make decisions about their education, the communities they live in, and their future.
- Our students take pride in their schools, each other, and in the school community.
- We embrace and explore issues of social justice, equity, race, and identity through dialogue, study, and action.
- Our students successfully develop skills to set and meet goals, express their feelings, be civic-minded and active, work collaboratively, and celebrate successes.
- Our teachers, school leaders, students, and families have positive, trusting relationships with each other.
- Our families feel welcome and connected to our schools.
- Every student, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender, and ability, attends school on-time and regularly.
- Suspensions are rare and not disproportionate by group.



What steps will we take to achieve our goals?

- Strengthen our school-wide approaches to social-emotional learning grounded in restorative practices and trusting relationships.
- Reimagine and build a pathway of learning experiences and traditions from pre-K–8 that extends beyond the classroom and includes opportunities for civic engagement and service learning so students develop their voice and their ability to help create a more just and equitable world.
- Continue leader, teacher and staff learning on restorative practices.
- Strengthen our partnerships with families and provide regular opportunities for families to participate in decision making about ways to enhance the culture and climate of our schools.
- Increase offerings in the arts during and after school.
- Continue to fund out-of-school-time programming, including athletics, the arts, and a broad array of other activities.



COMMITMENT 3



Physical Health: Fitness and Nutrition

- We believe in the connection between being fit and healthy and having a love of learning, and that physical health and wellness support student academic achievement and social/emotional growth.
- Our schools provide ample opportunities for students, staff, and families to engage in a wide range of wellness activities — including exercise, movement, play, and healthy decision making throughout the school day — along with experiences outside of the classroom that broaden students' horizons.

What does fitness and nutrition look like in our schools?

- All of our students, of every race, socioeconomic status, gender, background, and ability, have the opportunity to participate regularly in a broad variety of wellness activities.
- Our students develop healthy exercise and eating habits for life.
- Our teachers and school leaders build a school culture that celebrates and supports healthy living.

What steps will we take to achieve our goals?

- Integrate physical health, wellness, and play throughout the school day and along students' educational pathway.
- Provide students with daily experiences and new opportunities to explore and learn about nutrition and healthy eating at school and beyond the classroom.
- Invite our school communities to participate in wellness activities.
- Provide students with new opportunities in organized sports so they can compete at local, regional and national levels.





COMMITMENT 4

Healthy Foundations: Supporting Our Schools

- ABI provides high-quality support, operations, and expertise to our schools, focusing on school-based management, talent development, finances, facilities, communications, and overall organizational sustainability.
- A talented and diverse staff enables us to provide equitable experiences for our students.
- Our governing board provides effective oversight and support.
- Our stakeholders have a voice in our organization and in our schools.
- Our school buildings and learning spaces are designed and maintained, both inside and out, to be functional and aesthetically pleasing, to foster creative, high-quality teaching and learning.

What does supporting our schools look like?

- Teachers, leaders and staff have opportunities to learn and grow professionally while drawing upon their interests and talents to help build a vibrant community.
- As vital members of our learning community, teacher voice is valued and teachers hold a variety of leadership positions and are supported in their professional growth goals.
- We have a high retention rate for our teachers, leaders, and staff, all of whom are highly skilled, well trained, and committed to our schools.
- ABI is financially healthy, supports all programming and facility needs, takes proactive steps to plan for the future, and reserves necessary funding to meet our goals.
- We can easily and creatively reach our families and communities through robust, efficient, and functional communication platforms.
- Our schools are in compliance/good standing in all contractual obligations.
- Our stakeholders are very satisfied with our organization.



What steps will we take to achieve our goals?

- Invest in high-quality and on-going professional learning and coaching for our teachers and leaders to support our commitment to equity and opportunity in all aspects of our programming.
- Ensure that professional learning opportunities both align to our priorities and provide opportunities for teachers, leaders and staff to grow and advance in new ways.
- Create systems and protocols to recruit and retain highly talented people at all levels of our organization whose skills and beliefs support the diverse needs of our students and our commitment to equity.
- Make sure that students have computers, internet access, and other resources they need to engage fully with learning.
- Create and monitor school-based strategic plans each year to ensure progress on priorities.
- Review fiscal practices each year and seek ways to be more transparent with how our spending and investments align with our mission and vision.
- Align annual budgets with commitments and key actions.
- Engage in fundraising that is targeted and supports our mission.
- Continually invest in our communications platforms so we can effectively articulate our mission and vision and attract families to our schools.
- Ensure that the charters for our schools remain in good standing and all aspects of our fiscal compliance are completed in an ethical, responsible, and timely manner.
- Survey all stakeholders each year to determine satisfaction and potential areas for growth and improvement.
- Continue to implement and update our 10-year facilities plan.
- Conduct a comprehensive energy efficiency assessment and take steps to make ongoing, strategic improvements.
- Develop and recruit board members who are dedicated to our organization's health and sustainability and have a connection with the community.



REALIZING THE POTENTIAL IN EVERY CHILD

ABI is driven by the vision, dedication, and energy of our teachers, our staff, our leadership, our board, our partners, our students, our families, and our communities. With our community's continued support, ABI reaffirms our commitment to our mission and our promise that our schools recognize and realize the potential in every child. Back in 2019, we were inspired and challenged by the findings from TNTP (The New Teacher Project) report *The Opportunity Myth* and its call to make sure that every student, in every classroom, every day has access to grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and teachers with high expectations. Bolstered by increased state and federal funding in response to the pandemic, we will continue to invest in the partnership between school and family as we create pathways for our students to thrive in high school and beyond.



ABI GOVERNING BOARD

President, Jeanine Hildreth
Managing Director, Policy Studies Associates

Vice President, John Muchai
Director of Finance
Baltimore Community Foundation

Treasurer, Jeff Hettleman
Executive Vice President, CFO
Brightview Senior Living

**Secretary / Parent Representative,
Amani Surges Martorella**
Social Worker, Counseling Center
Johns Hopkins University

Natasha OrtizFortier
Career Services Consultant
Johns Hopkins University School of Education-
ITGL Program

Kevin Davidson
Attorney, Gallagher, Evelius & Jones, LLP

Brett Clark
Practice Administrator
Vascular Surgery Associates, L.L.C.

Tom DeWire
Principal, EdScale

Tavon Lawrence
Director of Internal Learning
New Teacher Center

Nakeia L. Drummond, PMP
Founder & CEO, NLD Strategic

ABI LEADERSHIP

Will McKenna
Founder & Executive Director
Afya Baltimore Inc.

Karen Hughes
Founder & Academic Director
Afya Baltimore Inc.

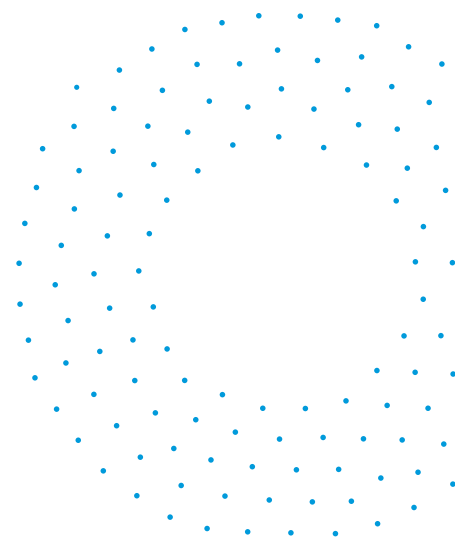
Liz Adams
Communications Director
Afya Baltimore Inc.

Danielle Burris
Business Manager
Afya Baltimore Inc.

Diya Slayton
Elementary School Principal
The Belair-Edison School

Tiffany Halsey
Middle School Principal
The Belair-Edison School

Sheila Adams
Principal
The Tunbridge School





Afya Baltimore Inc.

5504 York Rd.

Baltimore, MD 21212

info@afyabaltimore.org

www.afyabaltimore.org

410.736.8980