



UNITE FOR GOOD

KeyWay Weekly Newsletter

This Week's Program:

Shelly H. Goodrum, K-12 Cluster Superintendent for the historic Booker T. Washington Cluster in Atlanta Public Schools



We welcome Shelly H. Goodrum, an esteemed nonprofit executive, public policy professional, and passionate literacy advocate. Ms. Goodrum serves as President and CEO of Literacy Action, Inc., Georgia's leading provider of adult basic education.

With nearly 30 years of experience in strategic leadership, community engagement, and education equity, Ms. Goodrum has consistently driven transformative impact. Prior to joining Literacy Action, she was Vice President of Development at the

Urban League of Greater Atlanta and held key roles in workforce development and public policy advocacy.

Ms. Goodrum is a graduate of Spelman College and Georgia State University and has earned executive certificates from both the Harvard Kennedy School and the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute for Leadership Development. She also contributes her time as a board member with the Atlanta Regional Workforce Development Board and the DeKalb County Charter Review Commission.

A champion for lifelong learning, Ms. Goodrum works daily to eliminate barriers to adult literacy and create opportunities for economic advancement across Georgia. She is a proud resident of DeKalb County, wife, and mother of two. Her leadership at Literacy Action is shaping a more literate, empowered future for adults and families throughout the region.

JOIN ONLINE

Zoom Link - [Click here](#)
Meeting ID: 874 0116 4307
Passcode: Service

Dial In

1-646-558-8656
Meeting ID: 874 0116 4307
Passcode: 846122

***September's Theme is Basic Education and Literacy:
Fridays: 5, 12, 19, 26***



**KeyWay Report on Our Speaker
Dr. Bryan Johnson, Superintendent, Atlanta Public
Schools**

September 12, 2025 | AWER Weekly Meeting

President **Victoria Seals** began the meeting by asking **Ms. Aretta Baldon**, Atlanta Board of Education member for the 2nd District, to introduce our speaker. Ms. Baldon presented **Dr. Bryan Johnson, School Superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools**. Dr. Johnson thanked AWER for providing an opportunity to talk about APS. He began by asking each person at the meeting to give him one question for him to address - he said he wanted to be responsive to the concerns and interests of all attending the meeting. Questions ranged from the City of Atlanta Tax Allocation Districts, to how to deal with Christian nationalism, to school safety, to the roles and responsibilities of parents, among other topics.

Before responding to questions, Dr. Johnson shared his journey from business education to public education leadership. Between his junior and senior year of college, while playing football, he found a job working with youth who had behavioral challenges. This experience revealed his passion for working with children, though he completed his business degree on his advisor's recommendation. His business background has proven valuable in navigating the complexities of school district administration. Dr. Johnson served as superintendent of Hamilton County Schools in Tennessee, where the district became the fastest-improving school district in the state. He also worked in corporate leadership at US Express Enterprises and in higher education at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga before coming to Atlanta Public Schools. Dr. Johnson emphasized his commitment to being a husband and father first, while understanding the demands of his role as superintendent. He described his leadership style as direct and focused on rebuilding trust through honest communication rather than concentrating on public appearances. Further, he said, working with youth who had behavioral challenges revealed his passion for children as his first calling, despite having a business degree.

Dr. Johnson explained the "math problem" that the APS is dealing with which is resulting in a projected deficit of \$130M for the 2026-27 school year. The math problem is based on paying for a student capacity for 70,000 students but enrolling only 50,000. He said the Board of Education will agree to reduce central office costs, but those cuts will be far from enough to close the deficit. He said he imagines that living within our means will require school closings - as many as seventeen. He emphasized that no decisions have been made.

He was also asked what is needed to return APS to its former greatness. He said some of the answer must come from the public and talked of the late and former school superintendent **Dr. Alonzo A. Crim's** notion of a "community of believers." He emphasized the public must believe in the schools and while criticism is vital, we all must believe in and work for our schools' success, and some of this means getting much

more of the good news out about all that teachers and children are accomplishing. Dr. Johnson posed a critical question: "Are you proud enough to send your child to the school you graduated from?" He believes Atlantans must answer this question affirmatively for the district to succeed. People must ask about their own pride in the schools and then work with schools to be sure that opportunities are fully available ... he specifically noted Carver and Washington high schools need major investments, which is more than money, though money is needed.

He added trust-building is all of our jobs. Further noting that being critical helps only when it is fact-based. Operationally, he said the APS is devoted to students being prepared for both technical careers and for higher education.

— Neil Shorthouse, *Keyway Speaker Reporter*

September is Basic Education and Literacy Month

Building Community Through Learning

September is Rotary International's official focus month for Basic Education and Literacy, one of Rotary's seven core areas of focus and a cornerstone of its efforts to foster individual growth and sustainable community development

Let's celebrate Basic Education and Literacy Month by lifting up local learning. Whether through material support, personal mentorship, or simply spreading awareness. Our combined actions make a difference. Let's show how AWER builds brighter futures, one lesson learned at a time.

Streets Alive!

Peachtree Street Edition

Membership Director Sonia Hantman and Public Image Director Jared Evans represented AWER and enjoyed a beautiful day with a fun crowd.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- 9/26: Club Assembly
- 9/27: WEND Candlelight Concert
- 10/3: District Governor Steve Ivory/Micheal Mumper
- 10/25: ATL Tech. College 5K
- 10/26: Streets Alive! *West End*
- 10/31: Judith Fuller & Threshold Choir Voice of Love

Sign up to be a program chair [here](#) today!

CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays

Uku Urb: September 3

Service Anniversaries

Don Schewe: 44 years September 1

Elma McCutchen: 2 years September 15

Uku Urb: 2 years September 16

Debra Stokes: 3 years September 23

Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation & Pledge
3. Introduction of Guests
4. Tasse Trivia
5. DEI Moment
6. Announcements
7. Program/Speaker
8. The Four-Way Test
9. Adjournment

RY2025–2026 Board of Directors

President: *Dr. Victoria Seals*

Co-Presidents-Elect: *Debra Stokes & Chris Hempfling*

Immediate Past President: *Jared Evans*

Secretary: *Neil Shorthouse*

Treasurer: *Rose Caplan*

Club Administration: *Chris Hempfling*

Membership Chair: *Sonia Hantman*

Public Image Chair: *Jared Evans*

Service Projects Chair: *Carolina Ramos*

The Rotary Foundation Chair: *Debra Stokes*

DEI Chair: *Marilyn Jackson*

THE FOUR-WAY TEST of the things we think, say or do



first **Is it the TRUTH?**

second **Is it FAIR to all concerned?**

third **Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?**

fourth **Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?**

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