Institution Progress Report

DeKalb County School District
1701 Mountain Industrial Blvd
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Prepared for the AdvancED® Monitoring Review Team

Date Submitted: November 22, 2013
Date Accepted: November 22, 2013

OVERVIEW TO THE INSTITUTION PROGRESS REPORT

Purpose

The Institution Progress Report engages the institution in a detailed review and analysis of the steps it has taken to address the Required Actions outlined by the AdvancED Special Review Team. The institution uses the report to document progress and/or help prepare for the AdvancED Monitoring Team Review. The institution completes and submits the report within specified timelines for required progress updates and/or at least two weeks prior to a scheduled Monitoring Team Review. AdvancED reviews the completed report to ensure sufficient progress is being made toward the Required Actions of the Special Review Team. In addition, the report is used by the Monitoring Team, if applicable, for its on-site progress review.

Structure of the Report

The Institution Progress Report is organized around the Required Actions in the Special Review Team report. The institution should list each of the Required Actions from the Special Review team report, and for each, indicate a Performance Level score and provide a detailed response describing the steps it has taken and the results obtained. It is the responsibility of the institution to address each of the Required Actions made by the Special Review Team as required in the Special Review Team report. If a Monitoring Review has occurred, the Institution Progress Report should also address Directives that the Monitoring Team included within the Monitoring report that are designed to help in meeting the Required Actions.

Institution Progress Report

DeKalb County School District hosted a Special Review team on October 16-17, 2012. Through interviews with institution stakeholders, observations, and reviews of institution documents, the team developed a Special Review Team report detailing its findings from the review.

The Special Review Team report contained specific Required Actions for the institution. The institution is responsible for addressing each of the Required Actions. Below, please provide a response regarding progress made toward meeting each Required Action from the Special Review Team report along with a Performance Level score for each Indicator.

Preliminary Information:

On February 18, 2013, the DeKalb Board of Education appointed Michael L. Thurmond as the Interim Superintendent. On February 25, 2013, the Governor of the State of Georgia suspended six of the nine sitting members of the DeKalb County School Board. This action by the governor was taken at the recommendation of the State Board of Education and based on state law permitting the removal of members of a local board of education when the school district of that board is placed on probation by AdvancED/SACS. In March, the governor appointed six replacement members to the board. Therefore, the six replacement members and the three sitting board members comprise the current DeKalb Board of Education.

Due to the serious nature of accreditation probation, the interim superintendent immediately began to address the Eleven Required Actions by appointing a response team to identify the scope of work to be completed and implement corrective action steps. The interim superintendent solicited technical assistance from AdvancED and appointed co-leads for each required action. He also appointed committee members to each required action team. The co-leads and committee members were comprised of a cross-section of district and school leaders from Curriculum and Instruction, School Leadership and Operational Support (including principals), Finance, Human Resources, Legal Affairs, Communications, Facilities, Information Technology, and Strategic Management as well as subcommittee members consisting of assistant principals, teachers, students, and support staff. The interim superintendent along with response team members, and co-leads, now called the Core Team, began to meet weekly. Co-leads met with their committees and sub-committees on a regular basis, which supported the work of completing the Eleven Required Actions and ensured that the work was permeating throughout the district.

The interim superintendent used monthly board meetings as a communication tool to notify the board and the public of the progress being made on each of the required

actions. The school district website became a repository of information on DeKalb's response to AdvancED's required actions.

AdvancED Support Team members provided technical assistance to DeKalb through on-site visits with the Core Team on March 21 and May 1. Weekly follow-up calls to the AdvancED Support Team have provided great insight to DeKalb in how to move forward in completing action steps.

On May 16-17, 2013, DeKalb County School District hosted an AdvancED Monitoring Review Team visit as part of the response to the Institution Progress Report submitted by the district on May 3. The Monitoring Review Team members conducted interviews, observations, and reviews of institution documents. The team developed a Monitoring Team report detailing its findings from the review. The Monitoring Visit Team report noted that the district had made significant improvements and recognizable progress on the eleven required actions. The team also gave directives to be addressed in DeKalb's response to each required action. The Core Team utilized the monitoring report to provide laser-focus on the ensuing work so that each directive was completely addressed.

During the summer the Core Team continued to meet, but it was in September that required action teams mobilized to complete full implementation of the required actions. In October, the school district began to communicate with AdvancED staff in preparation of submittal of the Institution Progress Report prior to the required review team visit on December 9-10, 2013.

Throughout the process used by DeKalb to respond to the eleven required actions, the district continued to seek and rely on technical assistance from the AdvancED Technical Support Team. In October, the district requested another on-site visit. Therefore, On October 30, 2013, the technical assistance team attended a Core Team meeting and provided significant input into completing the process used to respond to AdvancEd and offered valuable feedback regarding the work completed to that point.

On October 8, 2013, the DeKalb County Board of Education recommended an extension of the superintendent's current contract through June 30, 2015 and removed all references to "interim" when identifying the district's superintendent. On December 2, 2013, during the monthly business meeting, the superintendent will provide the Board of Education with a full and final review of the action steps taken by DeKalb County School District to address and complete the Eleven Required Actions/Directives of AdvancEd.

REQUIRED ACTION 1: *Devise and implement a written, comprehensive plan for unifying the DeKalb County Board of Education so that the focus can become serving the needs of the children of the DeKalb County School District.*

1. Devise and implement a written, comprehensive plan for unifying the DeKalb County Board of Education.
2. Devise a policy and training plan to address concerns over the sustainability of progress made by the district since March 2013.
3. Devise and implement a plan to ensure that the policies and training of future boards will maintain a core focus on serving the needs of the children of the DeKalb County School District.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
In February 2012, the Governor of Georgia removed six members of the DeKalb Board of Education. This was a direct result of the probation status assigned to the school district by AdvancED. Three newly elected members (November 2012) were allowed to remain. The governor then appointed six replacement members, who along with the three remaining elected officials, began to govern the district as one newly formed board in March 2013.

On April 1, 2013, the Board of Education affirmed the Board of Ethics Oath (Board Policy BH) and the Board Member Conflict of Interest Oath (Board Policy BHA). This was done in compliance with Board Policy and in demonstration of the board's commitment to accepting responsibilities and performing duties lawfully and ethically.

During the May 6, 2013, Board of Education Business Meeting, board members began the task of approving, revising, amending board policies in order to ensure compliance with AdvancED Standards of Quality Standard 2: Governance and Leadership 2.1 and 2.2. Additionally, being mindful of the public perception that, at times, the DeKalb School District has had a history of exhibiting dysfunctional behaviors among/between board members and with the superintendent, the current board adopted and embraced a set of norms that has been used as a behavior guide for the DeKalb Board of Education.

On June 12, 2013, the Board engaged with the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) to complete state-mandated Board of Education training. The training included information regarding (1) becoming a board member; (2) roles and responsibilities; and (3) board eligibility.

As part of the September 9, 2013, monthly business meeting, the DeKalb Board of Education approved the 2013-2014 Board Training Schedule which is to be used as the basis for the Professional Growth Plan (PGP) for board members. The trainings will be suited to the needs of board members and will satisfy state-mandated board of education training requirements. The trainings are approved courses and will be provided by GSBA and conducted for individual members on the following dates: 12/2013, (Best Practices); 12/2013 (School Law Workshop); 2/ 2014 (Board Chair Workshop); and 4/2014 (School Finance Workshop). The schedule is devised to ensure that each board member will earn the required minimum number (10) of professional learning hours.

On September 25, 2013, during a Called Meeting of the DeKalb Board of Education, the Governance Center of McKenna, Long, and Aldridge (MLA), hired earlier in 2013 to provide governance training and assistance to the Board, presented the DeKalb County School District a Governance Review. Much of the information presented in the review was used as the basis for the development of the Governance Policy, a document designed to unify the Board. The Board members developed a comprehensive set of integrated principles that allows them through practice and policy to realize accountable board leadership.

In October, the Board participated in a GSBA Governance Team- Self-Assessment. The self-assessment instrument was completed by all board members. The Board will schedule a retreat to discuss and review the assessments results and possibly develop an action plan for ongoing strategic planning goals, the superintendent's evaluation, financial planning and needed policy changes.

During the November 4, 2013, monthly business meeting, the Board of Education Policy BAB: School Board Governance, was adopted. This comprehensive policy unifies the Board and provides other policies in Section B of the School Board Policy Manual, School Board Operations, with more descriptive processes for the board and stakeholders to

follow as the board works to become more effective in providing school district governance and in leading the district to becoming acculturated in continuous improvement.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- School Board Governance Policy (BAB) – adopted November 11, 2013
- Board Norms document
- GSBA Governance Team Self-Assessment
- MLA Governance Center Report – presented September 25, 2013
- Board of Education Professional Development Plan – for 2013-2014
- Board of Education meeting agendas
    - April 1, 2013
    - May 6, 2013
    - September 9, 2013
    - November 4, 2013

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The next steps for the board will be to analyze the MLA Governance Center Report to continue using best practices and receiving input from the Center on becoming more fully-functioning. Utilize the trainings planned by GSBA to strengthen knowledge and skills of individual board members and to assist the board in becoming more effective as a whole. The board must maintain restraint in keeping the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and board separate so that the superintendent can lead the district in day to day operations without interference by the board. Policy BAB guides the board in governing as an effective board in an oversight role and holds the superintendent accountable for district results. The information gained through the self-assessment, governance training, and board norms will be used to impact the strategic plan's strategic goals and actions through policy development and budget alignment.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

The results of the steps taken by the board have been to diminish the perception by the public that the board is dysfunctional. Governance training, policy changes, collaboration of the board and superintendent, and separation of roles of the board and superintendent have combined to strengthen the district. The impact of steps taken to address Required Action 1 has been to assist to stabilize and unify a previously fractured district.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:

Board Policy BAB: School Board Governance has given the current and future boards of education parameters in which to work. The details of this policy identify key concepts and provide procedures for school board operations. Adherence to continued

professional learning and commitment to ethical behavior by the current board will carry-over to future boards.

REQUIRED ACTION 2: *Ensure that all actions and decisions of the DeKalb County Board of Education are reflective of the collective Board and consistent with approved policies and procedures and all applicable laws, regulations and standards, rather than individual board members acting independently and undermining the authority of the Superintendent to lead and manage day-to-day operations.*

1. Implement a systemic process to evaluate the Board's decisions and actions to ensure they are in accord with board policies and procedures and their defined roles and responsibilities.
2. Implement and complete training initiatives and continue to reflect transparency and adhere to policies, procedures, applicable laws, regulations, and standards.
3. Develop a systemic structure for board training and evaluation to ensure that in-depth training and evaluation are institutionalized and built into continuous improvements efforts.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
In February, 2013, the previous Board of Education, was working to address concerns noted in the December, 2012 AdvancED report that placed the DeKalb County School District on accreditation probation. In recognition of the serious consequences of being on probation and based on the recommendation of the new superintendent, the board voted to approve the contract for services of the Governance Center of McKenna, Long, and Aldridge (MLA). This action was taken to assist the board and superintendent in becoming better equipped to address governance issues and in utilizing recognized best practices when developing organizational improvement processes that support student success.

Yet, in February, 2013, because DeKalb was placed on accreditation probation, the governor, at the recommendation of the Georgia Board of Education and as allowed by Georgia law, suspended six of the nine members of that board. Three newly elected members were permitted to remain active, and the governor appointed six replacement members. The current board officially began its tenure on the DeKalb School Board in March 2013.

Since the initial meeting by the current board in March 2013, the board and superintendent have taken very, deliberate action steps to address AdvancED's Required Actions so that students enrolled in DeKalb are provided opportunities to learn and graduate from fully accredited schools in a highly functioning school district.

Therefore, the board and superintendent have worked collaboratively and taken the following steps to address Required Action 2/Directives 1-3 and ensure compliance of AdvancED Standards for Quality Standard 1 Purpose and Direction: Indicator 1.4 and Standards for Quality Standard 2 Governance and Leadership: Indicator 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

In demonstration of the board's commitment to providing lawful and ethical governance of the district, two of the new board's initial actions occurred during the April business meeting. The board unanimously affirmed Board Policy BH: Code of Ethics and Policy BHA: Conflict of Interest.

During the 2013 spring semester, The MLA Governance Center collaborated with the superintendent to identify areas of concern voiced by stakeholders, which included a sense of mistrust, fear, lack of systems and controls, and high turnover of leadership. The board and superintendent used the information gained from stakeholders input to begin to rebuild trust and stabilize the district. The superintendent opened communication channels and listened to concerns. The board addressed nepotism and favoritism, a commonly stated concern, and on May 6, 2013, adopted Policy GAGD: Staff Nepotism.

This policy outlines specific parameters for district hiring and promotion practices. The processes are transparent and were adopted to reduce and eventually eliminate the perception of mistrust and favoritism among internal and external stakeholders. During June 2013 and through the opening of the new school year, the Department of Human Resources provided and documented system-wide training for all employees on Policy GAGD. The training ensured that all employees have an awareness of the expectations by the board regarding hiring and promotion practices and have been given the information regarding consequences for violating the policy.

In accordance with the policy, all District employees are required to disclose, on an annual basis, whether they are a relative of any other current District employee. Failure to disclose this information may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Over the course of the last six months, DeKalb County School District employees were provided the opportunity to complete an online survey or complete a paper document to disclose their relationships to other employees in the district. The tools used to obtain this information were face-to-face data acquisition, online data collection, phone, fax, and carrier document collection.

During the month of October 2013 every employee in the District was required to participate in a webinar session explaining the Nepotism Policy, their rights and responsibilities and sign a log acknowledging that they had in fact viewed the video. To date we have 89.867% entries complete from data collected.

On May 6, 2013, the board also adopted a set of Board Norms. The document established guidelines board members are expected to follow when interacting with each other, staff, parents, and other stakeholders. It solidified the board's commitment to speaking with one voice. The norms are in line with the MLA recommendation for adopting a Code of Civility.

During June 2013, the board participated in the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) Annual Conference. On June 12, a day prior to the beginning of the conference, GSBA provided state-mandated training for all DeKalb school board members. The full-day training included sessions on becoming a board member, board member roles and responsibilities, and (3) board member ethics. The GSBA training session completed the state-mandated fifteen (15) hours of training for new board members. Documentation was submitted to Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) on August 14, 2013. The action taken by the board ensured compliance with state law.

On June 14, 2013, the DeKalb County School District was notified by The Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) at Harvard University that the district was selected to attend the July 7-12, 2013 summer program and become part of a cohort of 10 large urban school districts. The DeKalb Chamber of Commerce donated $18,400 of the total $36,800 tuition payment. The Chamber presented this generous donation at a board business meeting and committed to continue to be a collaborative partner with the district.

July 7-12, 2013, eight stakeholders from DeKalb (superintendent, 3 board members, one regional superintendent, one district curriculum and instruction leader, one principal, and one parent) joined the summer cohort at Harvard in order to learn how leaders "can drive improved performance by applying proven management concepts to the unique challenges of their districts." According to the DeKalb County School District Executive Summary, "PELP believes that a coherent strategy and a focus on the implementation of that strategy at all levels of an organization can improve student achievement across the district." To that end, DeKalb leaders described a district problem of practice and collaborated to identify solutions to the problem.

DeKalb's Strategic Problem of Practice (Harvard PELP)

The DeKalb County School District, one of the most diverse school districts across the state of Georgia, is seeking to develop a strategic plan for improving academic achievement with low-performing students through parental engagement. Historically, DeKalb County School District has been consistent in the development of parental engagement plans. However, the district and the local schools have been inconsistent in developing an inclusive culture that is needed to build capacity in parents so that they can become fully engaged in improving student achievement.

A result of the time spent at Harvard was the development of the district-wide parent engagement program entitled "The Bridge Initiative." The initiative is a board-approved research-based program designed to meet the unique needs of the diverse group of parents and students within the district. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to engage parents in student learning in order to increase student achievement.

During the September 2013 monthly business meeting, the board voted to approve the 2013-2014 board training schedule. The approved schedule contains systematic training for individuals and the whole board. The schedule demonstrates compliance with the July 1, 2011 state law requiring board members with one or more years of service to complete 9 hours of training. It also provides individual members with opportunities to participate in state approved professional learning courses that meet individual member needs. The completed professional learning also will fulfill Board Policy GAD: Professional Learning Opportunities, which mandates that all certified and auxiliary employees earn up to 20 hours of Board Mandated Professional Learning.

On September 25, during a Called Meeting of the DeKalb Board of Education, MLA presented the DeKalb County School District Governance Review. Much of the information presented in the review was used by the board as the basis for the development of Policy BAB: School Board Governance.

On October 22, 2013, the DeKalb Schools superintendent was a featured guest speaker for the School Board Governance Symposium: Improving Schools through Governance. The symposium was sponsored by the University of Georgia Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach. Several of the DeKalb School Board members attended the meeting and seized the opportunity to enhance their individual professional learning.

During the last portion of October, the Board participated in a GSBA Governance Team-Self-Assessment. This is an internal assessment tool that the board can use to provide benchmarks for the governance team. The instrument was completed by all board members. Recommendations or action plans that result from self-assessment may impact future strategic planning goals, financial planning or policy changes.

During the November 4, 2013 monthly business meeting, Board of Education Policy BAB: School Board Governance was adopted. This comprehensive policy is a district unifying document. Board operations are explained in detail, and in some cases, the document serves as a companion to previously written policies in Section B of the School Board Policy Manual, School Board Operations. The Governance Policy is a demonstration of how the current board is utilizing training opportunities, stakeholder input, board norms, and board adopted policies to move the district forward to becoming acculturated in using continuous improvement processes.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- School Board Governance Policy (BAB) – adopted November 11, 2013
- School Board Policies BH, BHA, GAD, GAGD
- Board Norms document
- GSBA Governance Team Self-Assessment
- The Bridge Initiative
- Harvard acceptance letter for DeKalb
- DeKalb Executive Summary of PELP
- 2012-2013 Local School Board Governance Annual Training Report
- MLA Governance Center Report – presented September 25, 2013
- UGA School Board Governance Symposium 10-22-2013 program
- Nepotism Policy Training
- Nepotism Survey Instructions
- SAC Nepotism Response
- Board of Education meeting agendas
    - April 1, 2013
    - May 6, 2013
    - September 9, 2013
    - November 4, 2013

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The next steps for the board to follow include keeping the commitment by the board to continue to implement best practices in developing policies and procedures related to school board operations. The board must be diligent in maintaining separation of roles and responsibilities to ensure that the superintendent alone is responsible for day to day management of the school district. The board must attend and participate in planned professional learning. The board must hold the superintendent accountable for implementing policies with fidelity, and the board itself must be diligent in keeping its own policies.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:
The results of the steps taken will provide the district with a board that is equipped to govern the district at a high level of competency, and it will guarantee that students will have the opportunity to learn in fully accredited schools. School boards that utilize highly effective governance strategies build trust among stakeholders and assist in the systemic development of a culture of continuous improvement that leads to improved student performance.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
The full implementation of Governance Policy BAB will assist in sustaining the results of required action 2 because the policy provides for effective governance that all board members must follow. Adherence to Board Norms, and continued governance training by GSBA, MLA and universities such as UGA and Harvard will create a culture where continuous improvement is accepted practice that will carry-over to board members that will be elected in the future. Finally, when internal and external stakeholders realize that board members maintain fidelity by focusing on student achievement and are transparent in all aspects of board governance, a sense of trust will become pervasive throughout the district.

REQUIRED ACTION 3: *Establish and implement policies and procedures that ensure segregation of duties of the governing board and that of the administration including the elimination of Board working committees which result in board members assuming administrative functions that should be the responsibility of appropriate staff.*

1. Evaluate Section B of the DeKalb County Schools Policy Manual to eliminate any conflicts with Policy BBC – Board Committees.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
In March 2013, the newly configured DeKalb Board of Education composed of three recently-elected officials and six governor-appointed officials began to govern the DeKalb County School District. Among the first actions taken by the new Board of Education was the review of district concerns and issues related to the Board of Education as identified by AdvancED which included the eleven Required Actions identified in the December 2012 Special Review Committee Report.

On April 1, 2013, during the monthly Business Meeting, the Board of Education set the tone for future acts by affirming action items regarding Policy BH: Board Code of Ethics and Policy BHA: Board Member Conflict of Interest. This action was a demonstration by the Board of its commitment to fulfilling responsibilities most ethically, including (1) financial governance, (2) board member conduct, (3) board member conflict of interest, and (4) board eligibility.

On February 18, 2013, the previous Board of Education revised Policy BBC to reflect that there "shall be no more standing committees of the Board." On May 6, 2013 the Board voted to modify Board Policy BDC to reflect that there is no longer a Board Policy

Committee resolving a potential conflict between Policy BBC and BDC. Additionally, on May 6, 2013, Board Policy BC: Procedures for Board Meetings was revised. Included in the policy is a statement requiring adherence to Policy BBC when discussing procedures for an ad hoc committee.

Additionally, on May 6, the Board approved a set of norms to be used as a means to providing self-governance by the Board. The norms are evident in the manner in which board members communicate with each other and the courteous restraint that is used to maintain civility during situations that have the potential to become contentious.

On June 12, 2013, in a session prior to the beginning of the annual Georgia School Boards Association's (GSBA) 2013 Summer Conference in Savannah, Georgia, the GSBA designed a full-day professional learning opportunity for all DeKalb Board of Education members. The training focused on state-mandated training. Topics included (1) Becoming an Effective Board of Education Member, (2) Roles and Responsibilities, and (3) Board of Education Board Member Code of Ethics.

In an effort to ensure compliance with AdvancEd Required Actions, and in response to the need to develop and promote a culture of continuous improvement by the Board of Education and the DeKalb County School District, the Board adopted Policy BAB: Governance Policy on November 11, 2013. This document is an overarching policy that outlines governance principles, and includes topics such as board responsibilities, board capacities, board meetings, board calendars, stakeholder communications, board contact with operations/management, and the superintendent's performance. The board is committed to using the policy as its guiding principle for effective board governance. The policy clearly defines the role and responsibility of the board by placing the focus on the oversight of board policy, financial management, superintendent evaluation, and monitoring of operations and performance by staying informed through the review of information, metrics, and controls. This is frequently demonstrated by the board at work sessions. They require performance data, utilization reports, and metric information to make informed decisions and approval of expenditure of funds.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

DeKalb Board of Education Policy Manual: Section B School Board Operations
- Policy BAB
- Policy BBC
- Policy BC
- Policy BCBI
- Policy BDC
- Policy BH
- Policy BHA

Board Agendas
- April 1, 2013

May 6, 2013
September 9, 2013
November 11, 2013
DVD recordings of Board of Education Meetings

Next Steps for the Required Action:
The DeKalb Board of Education understands the significance of the changes made in the manner of how business is conducted in DeKalb County School District. However, it is critical that the board continue to learn and extend knowledge related to the effective use of best practices regarding principles and procedures of board governance. Therefore, on September 9, 2013, the Board approved the 2013-2014 Local Board Training Plan for annual state-mandated school board member training. GSBA will conduct trainings in December 2013, February 2014, and April 2014 in order for DeKalb Board of Education members to earn a minimum of 10 professional learning hours.

The Board must also continue to exercise self-governance and practice the principles of civility when conducting business during board meetings, in supervision of the superintendent, and in dealing with stakeholders.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:
The results of the steps taken by the Board of Education to develop and implement procedures and guidance for self-governance have led to the board conducting business in a more courteous and professional manner. The steps have also resulted in addressing Required Action 3 of the May 15-17, 2013 AdvancED Monitoring Visit Report. Finally, the actions taken by the district are in direct compliance with AdvancED Standards of Quality for School Systems Standard 2: Governance and Leadership Indicators 2.1 and 2.2.

The impact of the revision or adoption of policies in Section B of the policy manual have resolved potential conflicts in understanding and hereby assisting in the implementation of policy by district leaders. The on-going professional learning planned for board members demonstrates the desire by the board to act responsibly and ethically, which will build trust among stakeholders.

Finally, actions taken by the board to address Required Action 3 /Directive(s) promote a culture of continuous improvement within the school district. Effective governing by the Board of Education has a direct impact on implementation and sustainability of the majority of the other AdvancEd Required Actions including: (1) student achievement initiatives outlined in RA 6; (2) financial decisions in the balanced budget (RA 4); and to a great extent the success of the Strategic Planning Process (RA 11).

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:

The long-term plans to sustain the results/impact of Required Action 3 are summarized in the following three actions: (1)The adoption of Policy BAB: Board Governance provides specific procedures for present and future Board of Education members to use to guide the district; (2) The Board's professional learning plan outlines a schedule of courses /workshops to enhance the knowledge base of individual board members and improve long-term operations; and (3) On-going review and revision of policies in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, ensures compliance with the law and helps to resolve any potential conflicts between Board of Education policies such as BBC and BDC, as noted by AdvancEd in the May 2013 Monitoring Visit Report.

REQUIRED ACTION 4: *Implement and adhere to fiscally responsible policies and practices that ensure the DeKalb County Board of Education will adopt and ensure proper implementation of budgets within the financial means of the school system and that support the delivery of an educational program that meets the needs of the students.*

1. Inform the community as to how the FY2014 budget has been developed to better meet the needs of the students of the DeKalb County School District.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
In response to Required Action 4 and in compliance with AdvancED Standards for Quality, Standard 2: 2.1; and 4: 4.2 and 4.4, relative to informing the community as to how the FY 2104 budget had been developed to better meet the needs of students the following legally required actions were taken:

During the deliberations leading up to the adoption of a balanced budget for FY 2014 there were required advertisements run in the District's legal organ on May 24, 2013, June 21, 2013 (Tentative Budget) and millage rate history (June 14, 2013). There were public comments invited on the Budget structure on June 10, 2013 and June 26, 2013 which was the date of the final Budget adoption. Also, prior to the final adoption of the millage rate(s) on July 1, 2013, there were three millage rate hearings; one on June 26, 2013 and two on July 1, 2013. (See Attached). All the hearings/meetings were held in the J. David Williamson Board Room in the AIC Complex, 1701 Mountain Industrial Boulevard. (See attached recordings of meetings)

During the budget deliberations, there was much discussion of following established board budget policy (Policy DC) relative to budget adoption. The attached Executive Summary (Revised June 5, 2013) was posted on the website and communicated electronically throughout Divisions and Schools on June 5, 2013. The approved budget was communicated throughout Divisions and Schools on June 27, 2013.

During these numerous public hearings and Budget deliberations there was discussion of the Proposed Budget (FY2014) Executive Summary dated June 5, 2013. This document was available to the public on the District's website and was referred to throughout the hearings. This Executive Summary (as attached) indicates the detail of the Revenue Anticipations along with the detail of the projected Expense Appropriations.

The originally adopted FY2014 Budget anticipated $755.761.000 in revenue and appropriated the same amount in expenses.

Evidence to Support the Steps:
Attached are the referenced advertisements relative to the Budget and Millage Rate hearings, along with the referenced FY2014 Proposed Budget Executive Summary. Additionally, attached are recordings of the referenced meetings/hearings indicating BOE input.

In addition to the attached evidence of public input on the FY2014 Budget and its structure, there appears on p. 6 of the Executive Summary the specific educational enhancements incorporated in the adopted FY2014 Budget:

FY2014 BUDGET ENHANCEMENTS	AMOUNT		AdvancED Alignment
Fund Balance	$ 12,698,594.00		Fiscal Management and Operational Efficiency (reserves 5.8 million after-school funds subject to Board action)
Furlough Day (1)	$ 3,000,000.00		Academic Achievement and Professional Development
Textbooks	$ 4,000,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Rebind-Replenish Textbooks	$ 1,300,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Student Diagnostic Needs Assessment	$ 1,100,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Student Wrap Around Services	$ 350,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Career Pathways Initiative	$ 1,000,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Central Office Decentralization	$ 150,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Interpreters	$ 500,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Band Uniforms & Instrument Repair	$ 300,000.00		Academic Achievement and Career Readiness
Bus Mechanics	$ 250,000.00		Fiscal Management and Operational Efficiency
Meritorious Attendance Program	$ 1,000,000.00		Employee Morale-Engagement-Retention
Principal Supplement	$ 100,000.00		Employee Morale-Engagement-Retention
Technology Enhancement to Financial System	$ 1,500,000.00		Fiscal Management and Operational Efficiency
FY2014 Total Requested Budget Enhancements	**$ 27,248,594.00**		

These specific enhancements were adopted with the FY2014 Budget and have been communicated to the Division/Schools electronically and are being executed.

- Board Financial Reports (May 2013 through October 2013)
- Quarterly Budget Analysis Report
- FY2014 Budget Summary
- Proposed Code Chart of Accounts
- 2012 Audit Report
- FY2014 Budget Detail
- FY2014 Consolidated Budget
- FY2014 Executive Summary
- Additional State Audit Materials
- FY2012 Audit Press Release
- Advertisements/Hearings/Millage/Other

Next Steps for the Required Action:
Next steps include acceptance and adherence to a balanced budget throughout fiscal year (FY2014). Put in place a new management team including Superintendent, CFO, Budget Manager, and added Budget staff. Utilize funding from the increased total millage levy from 22.98 mills to 23.98 mills approved during FY2013. Continue use of strict controls of expenses during second half of FY2013 and beyond. Additionally, put monthly reports to BOE on GAAP basis and effectively utilize the services of the newly hired Accounting Manager. Additional Finance Division staff will need to be added in the future to ensure adequate accounting and budgetary controls.

Finally, within the structure of the adopted FY2014 Budget specific targeted cuts were put in place relative to areas where the District had cost control issues Next steps must include effective management of expenditures of the FY2014 Budget to ensure that the targeted cuts are realized.

FY2014 CUTS	AMOUNT		
Legal Fees	$ 6,000,000.00		Superintendent mandated cuts to Legal Fees
Central Office Vacancies	$ 5,346,000.00		Superintendent mandated cuts of central office vacancies
Central Office Budget Cuts	$ 7,200,000.00		Superintendent mandated cuts to central office budgets
FY2014 Total Budget Cuts	$ 18,546,000.00		

Results/Impact of Steps Taken:
Along with the adoption of a FY2014 Budget with equal anticipations and appropriations the District, under the management of a new Superintendent and a new CFO instituted a mid-year (FY2013) spending freeze and revenue enhancements relative to prior year tax accruals. The preliminary results of these steps has been to eliminate the

FY2012 General Fund deficit of $13.9 million (audited) with an indicated (unaudited) fund surplus of $10.8 million as of the end of FY2013. In order to manage and maintain the BOE approved balanced budget quarterly expenditure/encumbrance meetings/reviews have taken place with Superintendent, Senior Staff and all Division Heads to monitor budget progress.

Additionally, the board requires data and metrics information for analyzing prior to considering expenditures of budget funds. The work sessions (DVD) provide evidence of discussions between the board, superintendent, and the senior staff of performance data, utilization reports, and other metrics information.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
Relative to managing a Budget balanced by anticipation (revenue) and appropriations (expenses) regular reporting is essential. In addition to the above referenced enhanced budgetary controls the Finance Division has initiated a Chart-of-Accounts conversion project with an expected completion date of July 1, 2014. Converting to the State recommended Chart- of- Accounts will substantially reduce the number of accounts presently existing within the District's Accounting structure, and will greatly facilitate end of year reporting by eliminating manual conversion.

Additionally, along with putting the monthly BOE reports on a GAAP basis, a variance report has been added to indicate the current financial position of the district relative to targeted revenue collections and expenditure totals. Finally, a quarterly review of expended/encumbered amounts compared to budget has been initiated with all Division Heads as a means to ensure sustainability of newly revised financial practice and procedures. The referenced reporting initiatives and cost control devices are directed towards rebuilding the District's General Operating Budget fund balance to the level of at least one month's revenue or 8.333%. Based on the presently adopted budget, that amount would be $63 million.

Relative to the recently released State FY2012 Audit (covering 7/1/2011 through 6/30/2012), there were three material weakness findings:

- Deficit Fund Balance in the General Fund
- Weaknesses in accounting procedure
- Weaknesses in internal controls over grant management (one specific grant)

In addition to the specific budgetary, reporting and accounting improvements cited above, under the present Superintendent's administration, new school-based accounting software has been purchased and is being installed, a rewrite of accounting standard operating procedures (ongoing) is taking place, along with an examination of procedures, policies and processes to improve internal controls.

Finally, in preparing for FY 2015 budget planning, the following tentative schedule has been built in anticipation of the development of a balanced budget to be adopted by the Board of Education:

Tentative Budget Timeline

**** The Finance Department is unable to provide specific dates on this time line. Our time line is dependent on outside government agencies to provide information that is used to build the DeKalb County School District budget.**

1) Finance develops jobs file	January (early)
2) Division Heads to receive staffing and budget forms	February (mid)
3) Draft Budget to Superintendent	March (late)
4) Revenue estimates due	April (mid)
5) Public Budget Hearings	April (late)
6) Budget work sessions with Board of Education to present draft budget	May (early)
7) Public Budget Hearings	May (mid)
8) Three public millage hearings	May (late)
9) Tentative budget adoption by Board of Education	June (early)
10) Board of Education adopts final property tax millage rate for fiscal year 2015	June (mid)
11) Board of Education adopts final budget for fiscal year 2015	June (late)

REQUIRED ACTION 5: *Establish and enforce a policy that board members honor the chain of command when communication with stakeholders.*

1. Expand the content of Policy BBI – Board-Staff Relations to include more descriptive details that clarify the protocol for the chain of command in the district.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
In response to RA 5 /Directive 1, the current Board of Education has taken significant steps to ensure better understanding of roles and responsibilities and chain-of-command. This action is especially important regarding communication and the extent of how and when board members communicate among and between internal and external stakeholders.

As noted in the May Monitoring report, the new Board affirmed the Board of Ethics Oath on April 1, 2013, as required in Board Policy BH and affirmed Board Policy BHA: Board Member Conflict of Interest. During interviews with AdvancEd, it was validated by interviewers that there appeared to be "a climate of hope and optimism for the district."

On May 6, the Board of Education approved a set of norms to be used by board members when communicating with other board members, staff members, and the general public. The May Monitoring Visit Report noted that interviewees were aware of the norms and acknowledged the adherence to the chain of command when communicating with stakeholders.

On June 12, 2013, the Board of Education met in Savannah, GA with the Georgia School Board Association's (GSBA) for a full-day of state-mandated Board of Education training,

which included topics referencing (1) Roles and Responsibilities and (2) Board of Education Board Member Code of Ethics.

On November 11, 2013, the Board of Education adopted Policy BAB: Governance Policy. This policy strengthens other policies found in the Board Policy Manual, Section B - School Board Operations, which includes Policy BBI Board Staff Communications. Portions of the policy entitled Stakeholder Communications, Board Contact with Operations and Management, and Superintendent Performance Review, Compensation, Assessment and Succession Planning specifically address concerns noted in the May Monitoring Visit Report. Clear expectations for the Board of Education are set regarding communication among and between board members and stakeholders, internal and external.

Evaluation of the superintendent is one of the most important responsibilities of the board. The evaluation represents the key components (academic performance, fiscal management, operational efficiency, communication with internal and external stakeholders) by which the board can address and effectively serve the needs of the school district as it seeks to improve student achievement and district operations. It is an ongoing and dynamic process. The evaluation tool was agreed upon by the members of the board and superintendent in a collaborative manner. The superintendent's evaluation process serves to develop positive board and superintendent relationships, promotes professional growth, provides clarity of roles, creates common understanding of leadership, and provides a mechanism for accountability.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- Board of Education Policy BBI- Board Staff Communications
- Board of Education Policy BAB- Governance
- Board of Education Policy BH –Code of Ethics
- Board of Education Policy BHA
- Board of Education meeting agendas
    - April 1, 2013
    - May 6, 2013
    - September 9, 2013
    - November 11, 2013

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The Board of Education has been diligent in learning how to use principles and procedures of best practices for school board governance as identified in Policy BAB. The Board of Education must fully implement all aspects of Policy BAB, which will require professional learning for both internal and external stakeholders so that adherence to chain of command is pervasive throughout the district.

Additionally, the Board of Education must follow its September 9, 2013 board - approved trainings scheduled for December 2013, February 2014, and April, 2014 in order to continue growth as a cohesive and effective Board of Education.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:
The results and impact of actions taken by the DeKalb Board of Education to address Required Action 5 /Directive 1 are multiple: (1) Board action moved the district forward to becoming a fully-functioning effective Board of Education and to developing a district-wide culture of continuous improvement. (2) The parameters outlined in Policy BAB: Governance provided the Board with tools to ensure that communication among and between board members and stakeholders does not give the appearance of interference in daily operations or favoritism by board members towards members of the community or staff. (3) The actions taken by the Board demonstrate adherence by the district to AdvancEd Standards for Quality: Purpose and Direction Indicator 1:4 and Governance and Leadership Indicators 2.1 and 2.2. (4) The Governance Policy demonstrates how Required Actions 1, 2, 3 and 5 are components of effective leadership that are dependent upon the other components.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
In order to sustain and continue the growth of the Board of Education as a whole and as individuals, the board must ensure the following: (1) Board trainings are to be held as scheduled; (2) Board members must utilize policies such as the Code of Ethics to hold each other accountable for adhering to best practices of self-governance; (3) The Board must hold the Superintendent and district leadership accountable for consistently implementing policies; and (4) The Board must ensure that the development of the Strategic Planning Process (RA 11) reflects improvements made in board governance and that those improvements are manifested in the central office and local schools.

Required Action 6: *Ensure a robust district diagnostic assessment program (universal screener, progress monitoring probes, and benchmarks included) that is a systematic and a regular component of the district's comprehensive assessment system, include a variety of formative assessment tasks and tools to monitor student progress, and provide school personnel access to the State Longitudinal Data System.*

1. Develop protocols for sharing available data with the superintendent, board, senior leadership, and the stakeholders.
2. Develop protocols to use data from a variety of assessments to inform instructional and operational decisions.
3. Address the comprehensive nature of assessment, from the classroom to the system level, in formative and summative concepts.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
In direct support of Required Action 6 and AdvancED standards 3, 4, and 5, the school district concluded the 2012-2013 with school teams trained in the 6-Step Data Protocol and began the 2013-2014 with the purchase of a universal screener to diagnose students in math and reading. The purchase has been accompanied by a universal screener-Response to Intervention (RtI) implementation plan inclusive of on-going training for administrators and teachers, work sessions on the district's 6-Step Data Protocol aligned to the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, and access to and use of data from the State's Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and the district's Instructional Data Management System (IDMS). The district's professional learning during the first semester of the school year has been to ensure that all schools are effectively utilizing the district's newly purchased universal screener to inform instructional decisions using an established data protocol that results in improved and sustained student learning

outcomes. More than 4,500 teachers participated in professional learning sessions which included a presentation on accessing and using data from IDMS and the SLDS to inform instructional decisions. The trainings have been designed to acculturate the use of formative assessment data to inform instructional decisions that will significantly improve student achievement for the students of DeKalb. Additionally, the trainings and redeliveries have been organized and aligned for significant participation and impact. Additionally, training sessions and work sessions were held with Senior Cabinet and the Superintendent to implement, develop support mechanisms, and monitor the 6-Step Data Protocol and the Communication protocol. These training and work sessions support the ongoing focus of the district to identify significant data, utilize data to drive instructional and operational decisions as well as to communicate with all stakeholders. The Communication Protocol is a tool used by the Board of Education to ensure appropriate conversations related to data occur during Board Meetings, Board Workshops, Committee of the Whole Meetings, and when agenda items are discussed during Board Work Sessions and Business Meetings. This report outlines the steps that have been completed to ensure an acculturation of the use of formative and summative data to inform decisions at the classroom, school, district, senior team, and Board levels as required of and related to Required Action 6.

The district developed and implemented a communication protocol for sharing available data with the superintendent, board, senior leadership, and the stakeholders. The communication protocol was developed to be used at the classroom, school, department, and board levels. The protocol highlights a timeline for dates and important times for results which focus attention to decision making and program evaluation. The communication protocol establishes a clear flow chart for information to be distributed at any level and provides an expectation for when and how the data should be communicated. The communication protocol acculturates the expectation to not only use data but to share data at all levels with appropriate audiences. The various departments, Regional Superintendents, senior staff, principals, and teachers continue to use the protocol and provide feedback related to its use.

In addition to the communication protocol, to address the comprehensive nature of assessment, from the classroom to the boardroom, the district expanded the use of the 6-Step Data Protocol to be used with a variety of formative and summative assessment data to inform instructional and operational decisions. The subcommittee for RA6 and the RtI Leadership team met to develop and plan for the implementation of the 6-Step Data Protocol during the spring 2013. The 6-Step Data Protocol, developed for use at all levels, was shared during summer and fall training sessions and is the official data protocol to be used during data conversations at all levels. The 6-Step Data Protocol was critical in the strategic planning process, universal screener-RtI training, and SLDS training and all subsequent campus trainings related to these areas of work. In addition to August training on the use of the universal screener, the universal-screener data report and RtI training occurred in October and included five member RtI teams from all schools in the district. The five member team included the principal, assistant principal

and three teacher leaders. The teacher leaders included the school's Teacher of the Year and two other teachers identified as the universal screener facilitator. The school teams were charged with redelivery to the schools and leading the school's implementation of the universal screener and the implementation of the RtI process. The RtI team trainings occur quarterly as a strategic effort to sustain the use of the tool, provide support to schools, develop a culture of collaboration, and to monitor the progress toward the expected outcome of improved student achievement.

The Bridge Initiative, launched in September 2013, is a vision of the Superintendent to ensure a comprehensive, cross-functional, integrated approach to identifying and addressing the needs of high-achieving, marginal, and under-performing students who are also categorized as economically disadvantaged, is founded upon thorough review and analysis of the data as presented to the Board of Education and discussed. The data was analyzed using the 6-Step Protocol. The goals of the Bridge Initiative were the direct result of the analysis of data and address 1) student achievement, 2) teacher and leader quality, and 3) parent engagement. The Bridge Initiative's strategic problem, strategy, goals, and actions to be taken were communicated in September to the Board of Education and the community as prompted by the expectations codified in the Communication Protocol.

The Board of Education continues to model the comprehensive use of data to inform instructional and operational decisions. An example of this was the Board's decision to approve purchase of a digital instructional resource title ExploreLearning to improve math and science learning and achievement. On October 7, 2013, the BOE reviewed math and science achievement within the context of the recommendation to purchase ExploreLearning as an online supplemental resource to improve learning in math and science. After a robust conversation about the math and science achievement data, instruction, the root causes, the training plan, and the desired impact, the BOE unanimously approved the purchase of the resource. Additionally, the reengagement of the community in the strategic planning process as lead by the Board of Education also incorporated the 6-Step Data Protocol and the Communication Protocol. The strategic planning team, which included BOE representation, used the 6-Step Data Protocol to review and analyze the data. The Communication Protocol was adhered to as the progress of the strategic planning process (RA 11) has been communicated to the community in the various community meetings to collect feedback and to share the resulting strategic goal areas and the related performance objectives.

The first semester will conclude with all RtI Teams conducting campus redeliveries of the Universal Screener Tool, 6-Step Data Protocol, and RtI Process. In addition to approximately 4,500 teachers participating in Saturday Learning Sessions which included a presentation on the State's Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), all 137 campus Teacher Effectiveness Facilitators were trained in November on SLDS and will complete local school redeliveries by the end of December, prior to the mid-year progress monitoring using the district's universal screener.

Evidence to Support the Steps:
The evidence to support the development and acculturation of the district's 6-Step Data Protocol and the data communication, include several documents. The name of the document and a brief summary of each document are provided as follows:

I. Document Evidence

a. A Communication Protocol

This document identifies the communication goal, levels, suggested audience, and possible methods of delivery with examples.

b. The 6-Step Data Protocol

This document identifies the 6-Step Data Protocol

c. The 6-Step Data Protocol aligned to the RtI Process

This document identifies the 6-Step Data Protocol aligned to the RtI Process

d. The 6-Step Data Protocol aligned to (Culturally & Linguistically Responsive RtI^2 Protocol)

This document identifies the 6-Step Data Protocol aligned to data process used to address the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)

e. The Instructional Data Management System (IDMS) and State's Longitudinal Data System Comparison Sheet

This document identifies the various data as housed in the district's IDMS and as available in SLDS thereby providing clarity as to which platform should be used depending on the data one intends to use.

f. *School data and response document from training days*

This document indicates the actual work being done by the schools and provides samples of implementation, strategies to utilize data, and allows schools to share ideas amongst regions.

II. Meeting and Training Evidence

a. Meeting Agendas, Training Agendas, and Signature Sheets
b. Universal Screener Conference & Training Documents/Handouts
c. Videos from CELT and administration trainings: http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/idms
d. Teacher Effectiveness Conference & Training Documents/Handouts
e. Leadership Academy & Training Documents/Handouts
f. STAR Reading, STAR Math, and STAR Early Literacy Report Generation
    a. Documents/Handouts
g. IDMS Report Generation Documents/Handouts
h. Student Goal Setting Process Document/Handout
i. Faculty Redeliveries (PD Planner Reports)
j. RA 6 Progress Reports
k. Universal Screener
        i. 6-Step Data Protocol and the RtI Process
        ii. State's Longitudinal Data

iii. Communication Protocol

III. Board Meeting Agenda Items Reflecting the Use of Data to Inform Recommendations and Decisions

a. Board Agenda Items reflecting the Use of Data to Inform Recommendations and Decisions
    1. Purchase of ALEKS for Math
    2. Purchase of ExploreLearning for Math
    3. Purchase of TeachTown to Support Students with Disabilities
    4. Purchase of Professional Development and Technical Services from Carnegie Learning to support Math
    5. Purchase and Renewal of PD360 to Support Online Professional Development
    6. Purchase and Renewal of Pearson for Lowest Achieving Schools
    7. Purchase of Instructional Resources for Development and Delivery of CCGPS Curriculum and Units of Study
b. The Bridge Initiative Presentation

IV. Emails and Memos and other Written Communications

Next Steps for the Required Action:

As the district ensures a robust district diagnostic assessment program which includes the universal screener, progress monitoring probes, benchmarks, student learning objectives (SLOs), and other forms of summative and formative data housed within the district's Instructional Data Management System (IDMS) and the State's Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), the perpetual next steps include the on-going acculturation of the 6-Step Data Protocol and Communication Protocol Develop protocols to use data from a variety of assessments to inform instructional and operational decisions that result in improved and sustained academic achievement. Ongoing training will occur to ensure all aspects of the district are aware of the available tools. Support and monitoring will occur from the Regional Superintendents and the Department of Leadership development. Additional support and ongoing training will be aligned and provided from strategic members of the Curriculum and Instruction Department. District and school level administration will continue to monitor the systems provided to ensure access and usage at all levels from the classroom to the Board of Education to support Instructional and Operational decisions. The use of the Student Goal Setting Protocol will continue to serve as the connection between the collection, analysis, use, and communication of the data. The district's on-going professional learning and monitoring are perpetual next steps. The Board's continuous use of the Communication Protocol to inform decisions related to the strategic plan (RA 11) and related board agenda items are on-going next steps which have already begun and which should continue perpetually.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:
All schools will document the identification of Tier II students for intervention or remediation resulting in improved student performance and academic growth. The 6-Step Data Protocol and the Communication Protocol will be consistently utilized to address classroom level, school level, district, and Board level data. The use of the Communication Protocol will ensure data is shared at all levels and utilized to inform instructional and operational decisions. The following will be the result/impact of the aforementioned steps that have been taken to address RA6.

- A culture of data use to inform instruction
- A culture of communication of data
- A culture of data used for student goal setting
- A culture of data used to inform classroom decisions
- A culture of data used to inform school decisions
- A culture of data used to inform district-level decisions
- A culture of data used to inform Board decisions

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
The best plan for sustainability includes accountability which is always accompanied with monitoring. The implementation of RtI Audits with consequential outcomes will ensure that the results/impacts will be sustained. The RtI audits should reveal that schools are implementing the RtI process consistently resulting in decreases in the number of students not performing on grade level or projected to not perform on grade level. Furthermore, the use of the district's online platform for professional development, PD360, which will serve as the depository of the content and information, with well-communicated expectations for all employees to participate in on-going training related to the Universal Screener and RtI Process, Communication Protocol, and the 6-Step Data Protocol, will sustain the work that has been completed related to RA6.

The aforementioned actions support the acculturation of the 6-Step Data Protocol and Communication Protocol to use all types of formative and summative data, whether available from the universal screener, IDMS, SLDS, or achievement data, and will result in improved and sustained student learning outcomes. The 6-Step Data Protocol aligned to the RtI Process used in conjunction with the District's Universal Screener will contribute to a sustained use of data in the district. This process coupled with the expectation of improvement and accountability as conveyed and monitored by the Regional Superintendents will result in continuous improvements in student achievement outcomes with deliverables being monthly, quarterly, semester, and annual reports on the universal screener, benchmarks, and achievement outcomes reflecting students growing academically. The use of data in SchoolNet/IDMS and the SLDS within this data driven culture will contribute to improved results in all areas of focus.

The implementation of a Data Sharing Protocol (Communication) will be instrumental in establishing a culture focused on making data-driven decisions within a framework of continuous improvement. The use of the 6-Step Data Protocol within the instructional environment for student goal setting will be a significant step toward improving results and developing students who take responsibility for their learning outcomes. The Board's continuous use of the 6-Step Data Protocol and the use of the Communication Protocol will continue to serve as a model for the use of formative and summative data to inform decisions and will convey the expectation and the process for using data to inform decisions.

Current Evidence to Support Sustainability:

- A communication protocol for sharing has been developed and widely communicated.
- The communication protocol highlights a timeline for dates and important times for results to focus attention for decision making and program evaluation.
- The communication protocol establishes a clear flow chart for information to be distributed. This flow chart will maximize exposure and ensure all appropriate stakeholders have access to the data in a timely and appropriate manner.
- The district's continued use of the 6-Step Data Protocol will contribute to acculturation thereby supporting sustainability.
- Additionally, the district's commitment to the use of the Universal Screener, Benchmarks, SLDS, Common Assessment, and Formative Assessments (Formal and Informal), will contribute to the sustainability of the data drive culture resulting in continuous improvement of student learning outcomes.
- The documented monthly, quarterly, and annual sharing of data and the use of the 6-Step Data Protocol at the BOE, District, School and Classroom levels to inform instructional and operational decisions will contribute to sustainability.
- The use of the 6-Step Data Protocol for Student Goal Setting will also contribute to sustainability and improved learning outcomes.
- The expectation of the Board of Education that the 6-Step Data Protocol and the Communication Protocol are utilized at all levels and that staff recommendations and agenda items accompany data to be used to inform decisions and thereby achievement outcomes.

REQUIRED ACTION 7: *Establish a formal change management process for new system initiatives (vision, mission, strategic plan, curriculum, benchmark assessment, etc.) to address development, implementation, timeline, monitoring, communication and evaluation effectiveness. This process should be in accordance with state regulations and guidelines.*

1. Complete the development of the formal change management process for new system initiatives (vision, mission, strategic plan, curriculum, benchmark assessment, etc.) to address development, implementation, timeline, monitoring, communication and evaluation effectiveness. This process should be in accordance with state regulations and guidelines.
2. Provide professional learning opportunities for stakeholders related to the formal change management process.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
The District developed an action plan to establish a change management process. A survey was created and distributed to senior management, regional superintendents, and strategic initiative project managers. The survey assessed the current climate by gathering input/feedback with regard to establishing a process. Research was conducted on best practice models and existing comparable district practices were also reviewed. A meeting was conducted with identified subcommittee members of Required Action 11 which addressed the development of the district's strategic plan. The work of Required Action 11 was identified as a dependency to the work with the change management process since initiatives identified in the strategic plan would flow through the new process. Results were collected and synthesized to develop a summary report of the feedback obtained from the survey. (Note: there were 15 out of 22 responses to the survey.)

Multiple drafts of a proposed new change management process were developed, refined and finalized (newly named Change Management for Continuous Improvement). Additional subcommittee members were identified. A Guidance Document for Change Management for Continuous Improvement was developed and designed to take an employee (team/group) through the four phases. This document includes:

- The Change Management chart
- The Change Management flowchart
- The Change Management *Request Form* (both hardcopy and e-copy)
- The Change Management *Implementation Plan* template
- A detailed explanation of all the components that should be taken to complete the process.

The process was presented to RA 7 subcommittee members and the Core SACS response team. A meeting was also held with the Instructional Software Committee on October 25, 2013 to accomplish the following tasks: review the Change Management Chart and its components with the group; determine the connection between the instructional software approval process and Change Management; look at other initiatives and where they may be in the Change Management process; and gather information for creating a professional learning plan.

The Change Management for Continuous Improvement process was incorporated in a professional learning opportunity for all principals and selected assistant principals and central office administrators on November 19 & 20, 2013. Participating leaders were asked to provide an overview of the new process with all employees at the schools and district offices. Principals were informed of the strong connection that exists between this process and the Strategic Plan process that is currently taking place. This approach insured a more cohesive and focused approach to implementation. Finally, the Change Management for Continuous Improvement will be presented to the Board of Education and Superintendent as a component of the District's Strategic Plan on December 2, 2013.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- RA7 committee meeting agendas/sign in sheets
- High level action plan from work session
- Copy of email communicating and distributing survey to senior management, regional superintendents, and strategic initiative project managers
- Data report with survey responses
- Summary report based on synthesized results
- Multiple drafts of a proposed new change management process (newly named Change Management for Continuous Improvement)
- Research and notes regarding best practice models
    - Five basic phases of Project Management
    - Prosci methodology
    - Kurt Lewin's model

    - John Kotter's model
    - Harold Resnick's process
    - Deming's model (Plan-Do-Study-Act)
    - Change Management workflow model
    - Change Management basics from the Change Management Learning Center
    - "What is Change Management?"
    - Park City School District's Strategic Plan – Decision Making Criteria for Initiative Selection, Adoption, and Retention
    - Prince George's County and Rock Hill, SC – Performance Management
    - Prince George's County Public Schools Performance Management brochure
    - Los Angeles Unified School District Performance Meter
    - Gwinnett County Public Schools Cross Functional Action Team documents
    - Kempner-Trego Model
- Fully developed Change Management for Continuous Improvement
- Fully developed Guidance Document
- Administrator Academy presentations on November 19 and 20, 2013 – agenda, handouts, and sign-in sheets
- Professional Learning Schedule
- Board of Education presentation (to be conducted) December 3, 2013 – agenda, one-page handout, DVD recording

Next Steps for the Required Action:
Professional development is provided to all stakeholders on how to execute the Change Management for Continuous Improvement through the implementation phase of the District's Strategic Plan. Through the ongoing implementation of the District's Strategic Plan, sustainability of the process will be ongoing.

Each principal and selected school leadership teams will develop the School Improvement Plans with the support of the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI). A continuous improvement model which includes the Change Management System and the DCSD Data Protocol will be embedded in the process.

Presentations to the Board of Education will be ongoing for the next several months as the Strategic Plan is finalized.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:
Because of the actions taken thus far, the process for initiating and implementing new system initiatives (newly named Change Management for Continuous Improvement) is complete. As a result of developing this new process, the Required Action 7 sub-committee made connections with several other required action sub-committees to determine where they were in the process as well as give suggestions on how it could be

improved. The Required Action 8 sub-committee (Technology Audit, Allocation and Training Needs) and Required Action 9 sub-committee (Instructional Programs versus Financial Resources) were able to follow the four phases to determine their status in the process. In addition, DeKalb has expanded the reach of Required Action 7 beyond the required "system initiatives" to also include regional and school changes (or initiatives). It was determined that a more comprehensive approach to utilizing Change Management for Continuous Improvement was needed to ensure the effective implementation of DeKalb's vertically and horizontally aligned Strategic Plan. The work of Required Action 11 (Strategic Planning Process) will serve as the nucleus which will help sustain and institutionalize the process.

In order for the change management process to reach every level of the organization, it has to be supported and embedded in the district's Vision, Mission and Strategic Goal Areas since every component of this plan is aimed at inspiring our community of learners to achieve educational excellence. Furthermore, Required Action 7 identifies most with AdvancED's *Standards for Quality*, Standard 1: Purpose and Direction, specifically Indicator 1.4 which states that *"leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning."*

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
In order for this new process to be effective, it is imperative for it be a component of the District's Strategic Plan. The success and sustainability of this process is dependent upon setting clear expectations for its consistent use when establishing new school, regional, and district changes (or initiatives). A comprehensive and effective communications plan through the implementation of the Strategic Plan is essential to stakeholder commitment, use, and sustainability. This plan ensures that all personnel in the organization are aware of the process, why it was developed, and its short- and long-term benefits to achieving and sustaining the District's Strategic Goal Areas and Priorities. The communications plan will be supported with ongoing, job-embedded professional development opportunities for school, regional and district staff to understand, utilize and recognize the organizational efficiency that can be attained by using the Change Management for Continuous Improvement process when implementing new changes (or initiatives).

REQUIRED ACTION 8: *Conduct an internal audit on the available technology across all schools in order to identify areas of need with the intent to allocate appropriately throughout the district. Support this action by researching appropriate training for teachers and staff to ensure technology's effective use in daily instruction.*

1. Develop a comprehensive management structure that includes ongoing and regularly scheduled technology audits and inventories and an analysis of the data to inform and proactively meet the current and future technology infrastructure needs of the system.
2. Develop a process to determine the equitable allocation of technology throughout the district.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
The Board of Education and Superintendent recognize the importance of conducting an internal audit and using the results to ensure appropriate allocation of technology resources and to provide research-based training for teachers using technology in daily classroom instruction. In order to address Required Action 8, a committee was formed to develop a process for conducting an internal audit, addressing equity in technology allocation, as well as developing a research-driven technology training plan for teachers that ensured implementation into the daily classroom instruction. In addition, this committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive management structure that utilizes data analysis to inform and proactively meet the current and future technology infrastructure needs of the district.

In an effort to organize this work, the committee created a project schedule and divided it into four major milestones. These milestones included:

1. Conduct a technology audit;

2. Identify the technology needs;
3. Address the equitable allocation of technology; and
4. Create a technology training plan for teachers that ensure integration.

Each milestone was divided into specific tasks and assigned to various committee members. The development of a comprehensive management structure that introduced the interdependent relationship among the milestones assists to ensure sustainability.

Technology Audit

The technology audit was completed in April 2013. The purpose of the technology audit was to inventory the technology and related resources currently available to the teachers and students of the DeKalb County School District (DCSD).

Data for the technology audit was gathered from the following data sources:

- **DCSD 2012 – 13 Annual Technology Inventory**
  The Information Technology Department executed the district's annual technology inventory as mandated by the Georgia Department of Education (GA DOE). A data analysis of the inventory results provided details regarding hardware devices procured by the District, the age of those devices, and student to device ratios (by district and by school). More information on this mandate and results can be found at the following website: http://www.gadoe.org/Technology-Services/Instructional-Technology/Pages/Technology-Inventory.aspx

- **DCSD Technology Project List**
  The audit included a detailed listing of the Technology Projects that have been approved by the Board of Education to be completed during the 2013 – 2014 academic year.

- **DCSD 2012 – 15 District Technology Plan**
  The audit included the district's technology plan for the years 2012 – 2015 as mandated by the GA DOE. This technology plan is posted on the District website: http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/management-information-systems/tech-plan.pdf

- **DCSD Instructional Software List**
  The district's Information Technology and Curriculum and Instruction departments worked with the local schools to identify widely-used instructional software at both the district and local school level.

In order to provide a complete picture of the technology resources available in the District, an Executive Summary was created to summarize the data and address the following categories:

- Hardware
- Software
- Network and Infrastructure

- Technology Projects
- District's Technology Plan
- Operations and Support

This Executive Summary has been posted on the District's website: http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/advanced-sacs-accreditation-review/sacs-required-action-8-technology-audit-executive-summary.pdf

The summary provides evidence indicating how the District adequately meets AdvancED Standards of Quality Standard 4 Indicator 4.6 regarding provision of a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.

Needs Assessment

In order to identify the technology needs of the DeKalb County School District, the committee initially analyzed data collected from the technology audit, a Technology Use Survey for Staff, and several other resources addressing research on the technology needs of K-12 institutions. The Technology Use survey data is posted on the District's website: http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/advanced-sacs-accreditation-review/technology-use-survey-responses.pdf

As the committee for Required Action 8 analyzed and evaluated these data sources, it became clear that the District needed to develop a shared vision for technology use and integration into teaching and learning. The committee collaborated with several stakeholder groups to develop a DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment framework (21CLE). This framework is rooted in educational technology research addressing 21st Century themes, skills, and standards as well as the technology tools necessary to support this environment. The primary research sources referenced are the International Society of Technology in Education's National Educational Technology Standards (ISTE NETS), Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), and the Secondary Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA). The committee engaged stakeholders in developing and vetting this framework by administering a district-wide 21st Century Learning survey for all staff as well as facilitating internal department collaborations and a teacher focus group. Student input was also collected along with input from several businesses that partner with the District's Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education department. The DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment framework is posted on the District's website: http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/advanced-sacs-accreditation-review/21st-cle-framework-proposal.pdf

Once the District developed a research-supported DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment framework, the committee compared the District's current technology resources to those identified on the framework. This alignment of resources validated that the District was actively procuring the tools through various projects and initiatives necessary to support a technology-rich learning environment. The 21CLE: Resource Alignment and Allocation Chart is posted on the District's website:

http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/advanced-sacs-accreditation-review/21st-cle-technology-tool-alignment-chart.pdf

Equitable Allocation of Technology

The DeKalb County School District's Technology Plan for 2012 - 2015 states that the District will establish a standard baseline for hardware and software across all schools. In addition to providing this baseline, the District will empower local schools to make more specific technology-based decisions aligned with school improvement plans. In order to determine appropriate and equitable allocation of technology that satisfies this standard baseline, the District used the needs assessment data to evaluate technology needs at each school.

It is important to note that the Board of Education promised the taxpayers of DeKalb that the District would use SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) funding to address several critical technology-related areas of concern. Not only do the current technology projects comply with these promises, but they are also aligned with the needs discovered in the technology audit conducted in April 2013 as well as the District's 21st Century Learning Environment framework.

The technology projects listed below have been reviewed, discussed and approved by the Board of Education (BOE) to be funded by SPLOST IV dollars. The process that Information Technology followed in order to get projects approved is detailed below:

1. Prepared the BOE agenda item. This item consisted of the Project Rationale, Summary, Financial Impact, Contacts, Requested Action, Implementation Date, and Supporting Documents (i.e., schedule, vendor list, budget sheet(s), RFP associated with the project, etc.).
2. The Chief Information Officer approved and submitted the agenda items via the district's online (electronic) workspace at least three weeks before the board meeting.
3. The Superintendent reviewed the agenda item with the Chief Information Officer prior to the board meeting.
4. The Superintendent approved and submitted the agenda items to be discussed at the next board meeting. Each Board member was given the opportunity to review board agenda item at least one week prior to the board meeting.

The technology projects utilizing this process are listed below:

- **Wireless for All Classrooms (BOE approval date: January 7, 2013)**
  The district has installed wireless access in all schools, centers and administrative buildings. The deployment schedule was designed to meet the needs in middle and high schools followed by elementary schools and centers, alternating north, central and south. The project was 100% complete as of November 2013.

  The Board Agenda Item can be found at the following website:
  https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=23957

- **Comprehensive Desktop Refresh/Virtual Desktop (BOE approval date: July 1, 2013)**
  A 3-step evaluation process was used to address end-of-life technology. The steps included:
    - A review of inventory reports provided by the district's electronic asset inventory management system;
    - A physical walk-through of each site to ensure the accuracy of information in the reports; and
    - A second walk-through to label end-of-life computers and identify infrastructure needs to support the new equipment.

  As a result of the study, it was discovered that there were over 7000 various computers models (i.e., desktops, laptops, netbooks, etc.) five years and older. In an effort to meet the needs of today's students and the 21st Century Learning Environment (21CLE), the decision was made to address end-of-life computers. In past SPLOST cycles, computer technology upgrades were deployed at various levels (i.e., students, teachers and/or administrative staff). Considering student and teacher technology took precedence over administrative technology, there was always an abundance of outdated equipment. The Comprehensive Desktop Refresh project provides each student, every teacher, and all administrative staff members with access to new technology, whether it is a traditional technology package or a virtual technology package. The project is scheduled to be completed in February 2014. This project is 54% complete.

  Board Agenda Item can be found at the following website:
  https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=31834

The project listed below is currently in the queue for BOE approval.

- **21st Century Classroom (BOE tentative approval timeline: December 2013)**
  As indicated in the technology audit, 64% of the district's classrooms are outfitted with an interactive board and complementing accessories. This is approximately 3915 classrooms. To ensure that all classrooms have access to the interactive board technology, the remaining 36% of the district's classrooms (or 2200 plus instructional units) will receive an interactive board and complementing accessories. All classrooms that are in trailers will also receive comparable types of interactive technology. This will ensure equitable access throughout each school's campus and the district. This project will be funded via SPLOST IV. Currently, the hardware, installation, and support services for the 21st Century Classroom project are in procurement for an RFP (Request for Proposal) vendor award. This action is pending Board approval in December 2013. This project is tentatively scheduled to start deployment in December 2013.

These technology projects and their progress are available on the following website:
http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/splost-iv/projects

Technology Training Plan

The most critical component in researching effective technology training that ensures classroom integration is to first identify teacher training needs. Listed below are the steps the committee followed to determine those instructional technology training needs:

1. Created a shared vision that served as a guide to the development of the technology training. This shared vision became the DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment framework.
2. Reviewed the District's current technology tools to check for alignment with the technology tools and skills identified in the shared vision (DCSD 21CLE Framework)
3. Reviewed current technology resource allocations, technology courses currently being taught, as well as feedback from Staff Technology Use and 21st Century Learning survey results.
4. Identified the technology professional learning experiences necessary to support the DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment.

Once the technology training needs were identified, the committee worked closely with the Instructional Technology and Professional Learning departments to develop a dynamic training plan for the District. The committee wanted to ensure that the training was not merely a collection of courses offered in silos with no alignment to an overall district plan. As a result, the training plan offers an integrated and deliberate course of study that provides teachers with the awareness and integration skills that complement the DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment framework. In an effort to create professional learning experiences that promote continuous learning, the technology training plan is structured as the DCSD 21st Century Technology Academy. This technology academy strives to promote and maintain standards in the educational technology field by monitoring progress through self-assessments as well as external evaluations.

In an effort to immediately utilize the data analysis that the needs assessment provided, the Information Technology and Curriculum and Instruction departments collaborated to offer technology training for teachers that specifically addressed integration. The course offerings included:

- Summer Technology Integration Professional Learning Courses (Summer 2013)
- Fall Saturday Learning Sessions ~ Curriculum, Data, and 21st Century Learning (August 2013 – September 2013)
- 21st Century Classroom Online Training Modules (Summer 2013 – ongoing)
- IDMS Training and Support (Spring 2013 – ongoing)
- STEM Program Training (Summer 2013 – ongoing)

The Technology Training Plan Proposal has been posted on the District's Website:
http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/advanced-sacs-accreditation-review/dcsd-technology-training-plan-proposal.pdf

Comprehensive Management Structure
After completing all of the milestones necessary to address Required Action 8, the committee was able to use the processes within these milestones to create a comprehensive management structure that organizes and sustains the work. This was a very productive task because it allowed the District to reveal interdependency among milestones and the individual processes associated with each one of those milestones.

The following chart is a visual representation of the Comprehensive Management Structure:

An explanation of each task is listed below:

- **Develop and Communicate 21CLE Framework**
  The district developed a shared vision that addresses the needs of 21st Century Learners. This is a continuous collaboration with all stakeholders and is to be revisited to maintain relevance.

- **Align Current Technology Resources to the 21CLE Framework**
  All technology hardware and software audits are conducted in this phase. The results of all technology audits are continuously aligned with the technology resources identified in the 21CLE Framework.

- **Determine Technology Needs**
  Data from the technology alignment is used to inform needs and equitable allocations. This phase will also include the Hardware and Software Approval Procedures for district and school level purchases. A major component of this process is that technology need must be clearly aligned to the district's strategic plan and local school's improvement plan.

- **Develop 3-Year Training Plan**
  The training plan is based on technology alignment with district needs. This plan is constantly evolving ensuring that the needs of the 21CLE Framework are being met.

- **Assess Progress of Training Plan Benchmarks**
  Benchmarks and evaluations are built into the training plan to address several indicators of progress – such as number of teachers trained, level of technology integration, hardware and software use, etc. Data analysis is used to refine the 21CLE Framework and follow the same process allowing the district to make data driven decisions and changes as needed.

The development of this comprehensive management structure demonstrates how the District adequately meets Indicator 4.4 of the AdvancED Standards which states the system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

Technology Audit
- Executive Summary - Technology Audit
- 2012 - 13 DCSD State Inventory Data
- 2012 - 2015 DCSD District Technology Plan
- District Technology Project/Initiatives
- DCSD District-Level Software List

Needs Assessment
- Staff Technology Use Survey Results
- 21st Century Learning Environment Framework
- Resource Alignment and Allocation Chart

Equitable Allocations of Technology
- BOE Business Meeting Agendas & Supporting Documents
  - Desktop Refresh Project
  - Wireless Project

Technology Training Plan
- Teacher Technology Training Plan Proposal
- DCSD Technology Courses Taught (February - October 2013)

Comprehensive Management Structure
- DCSD Comprehensive Management Process

Next Steps for the Required Action:
In order to promote awareness of the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) 21st Century Learning Environment framework, it is imperative that the district implements the technology communications plan because the DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment is

the district's shared vision for teaching, learning, and assessment in the 21st Century. This shared vision should be infused throughout all processes within the comprehensive management structure to ensure technology integration into instruction.

The District must also aggressively implement the technology training plan to prepare teachers to effectively integrate technology into instruction. As mentioned in the technology plan, awareness of the available technology tools and how to use them have been a district-wide issue in the past. However, communication and implementation of the technology training plan will mitigate many of those issues. It will be imperative that the district focuses on leveling this variation of knowledge and skill in order to bring all teachers to a consistent level of integration.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

All actions taken to address Required Action 8 have provided a foundation that allows the district to develop, implement, and continuously revisit its processes to ensure a robust technology infrastructure and appropriate procedures to support teaching, learning, and operations.

By designing a district-wide 21st Century Learning Environment framework, the committee was able to effectively identify necessary technology resource allocations, teacher and staff training, as well as necessary benchmarks that evaluate progress. The shared vision of the DCSD 21st Century Learning Environment permeates from the district-level to every classroom allowing each teacher to self-assess skills and take control of his or her professional development. This empowerment allows teachers to think critically about how to integrate technology into instruction that supports the 21st Century Learning Environment. This modeling and integration supports student success because the students are exposed to more rigorous, authentic, and engaging learning experiences that prepare them to be college or career ready.

The communications plan is critical because it ensures all stakeholders are aware of the technology tools available and how to get assistance in using and implementing them.

The steps taken in the required action also impact the District's ability to make strategic and data-driven decisions to ensure the effective use of technology in instruction. During the course of this work, there was an organic alignment to several other required actions. Required Action 9 (RA9) addressed the communication of available instructional software programs and resources. During the technology training needs assessment, the committee found that the District's stakeholders were not aware of the technology tools available. RA9 and RA8 committees worked to create a website that shows the digital content procured by DCSD. Another issue identified by the needs assessment was the need to enforce a process for implementing technology projects at all levels. Although the Information Technology Division's Project Management Department routinely utilizes similar processes, it is imperative that all District departments organize technology procurement and implementation using the same protocols and processes. Required Action 7 provided a framework to meet this need. Data analysis is critical when determining technology needs. Required Action 6 introduced a Six Step Data Analysis protocol that is now infused into the

technology hardware and software approval process necessary for technology procurement. Required Action 11 established the development of the District's strategic plan, the goals identified are driving forces that impact technology procurement as well as effective integration into instruction.

The district realizes that the milestones of this required action are processes that must occur on an ongoing basis. The comprehensive management structure process has been designed to interconnect the milestones and to assist in ensuring sustainability. The long-term effect of this interconnectivity assists to better develop an environment for making clear data-driven decisions regarding school district technology resource management and training.

The District will continue to conduct an annual technology audit that informs the needs of the district. This needs assessment will continue to guide the District's Technology Plan mandated by the state of Georgia BOE and approved by the DeKalb Board of Education. It will be imperative that the Board uses this data to inform equitable allocation of technology throughout the district.

The Technology Training Plan identifies instructional goals for all staff and provides assessment opportunities to measure mastery for the next three-years. In addition to the data from the technology plan, various benchmarks such as ongoing technology audits and needs assessments will be used to measure progress and make data driven decisions.

Stakeholder Engagement will be a critical component of sustainability. The District will continue to solicit for continuous feedback via focus groups, surveys, and training. Engaging our stakeholders will empower them to serve as ambassadors for the milestones in this required action.

REQUIRED ACTION 9: *Communicate to stakeholders the difference between programs and financial resources available to schools.*

Refine the communications plan to ensure that it is a viable tool to communication to stakeholders the difference between programs and financial resources available to schools.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
The RA 9 Committee was charged with communicating to stakeholders the difference between programs and financial resources available to schools. Steps were taken in three main phases (P1-February to May, P2-May to July and P3-October to December) in order to address the required action/directives.

During Phase 1 (February to May), co-chairs developed a high level plan for addressing RA 9, which included the following action items that were initiated with their committee members during Phase 1. Committee representatives from Curriculum & Instruction (C&I), School Leadership & Operational Supports (SLO) [including but not limited to Title I], Instructional Technology (IT), and Finance were all involved. The committees defined what was meant by "programs" and determined two broad categories for data collection (i.e., programs purchased at the district-level and programs purchased at the building-level). In addition, they determined a method for compiling data in order to create an inventory of existing programs that included associated costs of the programs and their funding sources. The full committee was divided into sub-committees that were charged with establishing criteria for the programs to be included as part of RA9 and established sub-committee tasks, timelines, and outcomes. Committee members worked with

staff to develop a communications plan for RA9. Committee members then discussed how and when the data collection and communications plan would be launched. Building principals and central office staff across divisions and departments were issued surveys requesting information related to existing programs and their associated funding sources.

During Phase 2 P2 (May to July), the RA 9 Committee met weekly prior to and following the May 3rd delivery of the Institution Progress Report (IPR) and May 16-17th AdvancED/SACS monitoring visit and interviews. The committee continued to meet, collect and analyze data up until July 17, 2013. The committee concluded based on the data collected from school and district personnel as of July 17 that they had enough evidence to illustrate that a wide variety of programs and resources (both print and technology-based) were purchased using various funding sources and that each sub-committee could provide artifacts to support this (i.e., spreadsheets with information collected). Additionally, the committee concluded that it was difficult to clearly communicate the differences between the existing programs and the financial resources used to support the purchase of the programs due to the sheer volume and the fact that the information did not exist in a centralized data base, had been collected from multiple places (i.e., Finance, IT, individual schools, and various district departments), and/or was self-reported and as a result incomplete. A duplication of existing information pulled from another source was included using multiple definitions or understandings of what was meant by "program". The committee revisited how they defined “program” and agreed upon a revised definition for programs in order to narrow the scope of their work and to be able to more clearly communicate their Action Item to all stakeholders moving forward. Following the committee’s July 17 meeting, they shifted gears to focus on summer trainings and various preparations related to the opening of schools.

During P3 (October to December), the RA9 Committee resumed meetings every Wednesday in October and the committee received a new/revised directive. A building level principal was added to the committee. The committee considered the new/revised directive in light of the existing charge and identified work to date, welcomed new co-chairs and the new committee member. They redefined “programs” within RA9 as **technology-based instructional software programs (ISP)** currently available for the entire district and purchased by the district as well as those programs widely used at the building level and purchased by individual buildings. In addition, the committee broadly defined the funding sources as federal, state/local, and special revenues. A timeline was created and specific tasks assigned in order to complete RA9 by IPR due dates and the December 2013 AdvancED/SACs visit. The committee considered a draft heuristic and made edits to improve the design and delivery of RA9 information and decided that a heuristic would include a narrative overview of RA9 that addressed the committee’s charge, the process followed to collect, analyze, and communicate data as well as how

stakeholders could access resulting information. In addition, it was determined it would include a map of the district with hyperlinks, a scroll-over, pop-up, or hover over to access the program and funding source data by individual regions and schools. It was also determined that the heuristic would include a pie chart of funding source allocations that aligns with respective areas (i.e., federal 10%, state 40%, local 46%, special 4%) and that includes access to narrative descriptions of funding sources by clicking on specific sections of the pie chart.

The committee completed several specific action items to enhance communication of RA9. First, the committee created a FAQ sheet to complement the heuristic and to assist stakeholders with understanding RA9 and accessing the information they were seeking. Next, they crafted a narrative that described the process used to collect the data as well as the committee's analysis/conclusions. Then, they revised the format of the spreadsheets to include: a) program name, b) funding source, c) program goal/target area (i.e., reading, mathematics, social studies, science, EL, SPED enhancements, etc.), d) subscription period, e) help/contact info link, f) region, and g) school. Additionally, they revised the existing Communications Plan. Next, they prepared memos and other communiqué distributed to stakeholders via a variety of channels (i.e., email, Newsflash, social media, etc.) that announced the RA9 findings that included the different programs available to schools and their associated funding sources.

The committee collaborated with appropriate staff in schools and across divisions and other Required Action Committees necessary to complete RA9 tasks. They continued to communicate with principals and appropriate school personnel to ensure that the most up-to-date data reported by schools was received since it was originally collected in May 2013. In addition, the committee coordinated with IT personnel to assist with the display of various data sources and the heuristic as well as creation of FirstClass email to include on a spreadsheet for program support/help requests. Furthermore, the committee communicated and collaborated with one of the RA 8 co-leads and full RA 8 Committee around the work of the Instructional Software Sub-Committee to ensure work continues to move forward on the development of a process that the district and schools must follow to select or remove instructional software programs. It was determined that the ISP selection/removal process should include the six step data protocol identified within RA6. Also, the committee collaborated with the RA7 Committee to institute the district change process with the Instructional Software Program Selection/Removal Process.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- Sign-in sheets for committee meetings
- Agendas for committee meetings
- Progress Reports

- Other meeting artifacts such as: emails, notes, timelines, draft heuristics, spreadsheets, etc.
- Spreadsheets by regions and by individual schools that identify instructional programs purchased by each school
- Spreadsheet of existing district-wide instructional programs purchased for all schools by the district
- Spreadsheet of existing widely-used instructional programs across the district purchased by various schools
- Communications Plan
- Various communiqué used to inform stakeholders about RA9 such as memos, newsflash, and social media
- Heuristic that communicates various funding sources used to purchase existing district-wide and building-based programs and all associated text, charts, and narrative posted on the district and building webpages
- Instructional Software Purchase Process

Next Steps for the Required Action:
Next steps for the required action include a presentation of RA9 webpage information, including a demonstration of the heuristic on district and building webpages to all school principals, assistant principals, district division/department heads and staff the week of November 18, who in turn will share the information with building staff and stakeholders. Additional steps include a presentation of RA9 webpage information, including demonstration of heuristic on district and building webpages at the December 2nd Board Meeting. Following the unveiling of the RA9 graphic at the Board Meeting, memos will be circulated to various stakeholders (i.e., Board, Superintendent, Senior Staff, Regional Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, Parents/PTA, etc.) via various communication channels alerting them to RA9 specifics posted on district and school web pages (heuristic with map and pie chart and associated spreadsheets with program/funding source information) on December 3. Additionally, the committee will continue the work of the Instructional Software Program (ISP) sub-committee to communicate and implement the new process for the selection, purchase or removal of instructional software programs throughout 2nd Semester 2014 and beyond. The committee will also continue preparation for the AdvancED/SACs visit scheduled for December 9-10.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:
The results and impact of the steps taken by the RA9 committee are that the district has developed a viable communication tool that makes transparent to stakeholders the difference between programs and financial resources available to schools by district, regions, and individual schools. Programs have been defined as Instructional Software Programs (ISP) and financial resources have been defined as the three main funding sources (federal 10%, state 40%/local 46%, & special revenues 4%) available to the district and individual schools for the purchase of ISPs.

The committee worked with district and school personnel to gather data on existing programs and funding sources as well as analyzed and organized the information so that it could be displayed in a cogent manner that informs all stakeholders of available programs and funding sources.

In addition to creating a viable communication tool as a result of this action item, the district is now positioned to continue with important next steps that include the continuation of communication and implementation of guidelines and a new process for the identification, purchase, renewal, removal and return on investment (ROI) of building-based and district-wide instructional software programs. Furthermore, as a result of RA9, the district is better positioned according to several AdvancED Standards such as Standards 2, 4, and 5.

More specifically, the district has taken steps necessary per Standard 2 to operate under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness. Additionally, per Standard 4, the district has taken steps through RA9 to gather data that informs whether the district has resources in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students. Or, as stated in Indicator 4.2, has "material resources and fiscal resources" [that] are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations. Related sub-committee work of RA9, around an ISP selection and removal process and the work of associated RA Committees 7 & 8, has the district actively involved with Indicator 4.4 by producing data and processes that allow for "strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system." Furthermore, the work of RA9 allows the district to better engage in Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement and Indicator 5.2 such that this action item generated data that will allow for district and building staff to use it to consider student learning and program effectiveness as well as make decisions based on both to better support learning.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
The long-term plans to sustain the results and impact of the required action are that the committee will continue to work with IT, district departments and school-based personnel to update the reported program information and make the necessary edits to the district and school webpages on an annual basis. Additionally, the district will continue to communicate and implement the new process for instructional software program (ISP) selection and removal. The new process will be reviewed and updated annually based on the level of success or lack of success of its implementation as well as to ensure the district and school personnel are engaging in RA7 Change Process when making ISP changes. The ISP Committee will continue to share the program selection and removal information to appropriate building and district personnel on an ongoing basis in order to determine Return on Investment (ROI) that in turn informs instructional resource budgeting and purchasing decisions

so that the information is used to move student achievement forward across the district. Trainings and ongoing communication efforts will continue to occur in order to reach new employees and new stakeholders year after year so they too are apprised of available programs and funding sources as well as related processes for selection and removal of programs. Trainings will occur during the first week for new and returning employees for the 14-15 SY in August to ensure all staff is apprised of RA9 and related outcomes and processes.

REQUIRED ACTION 10: *Enroll all students (K-12) in Parent Portal and communicate with parents this action to work more closely with them. Establish policy for timely Parent Portal updates by teachers. Also provide students with tools to monitor their success.*

1. Identify and implement district wide strategies to promote the use of the Parent Portal to increase the number of parents, teachers, and students actually using the resource.
2. Develop regional plans to provide access to computers in schools and other community facilities such as libraries.
3. Provide supportive service for English Language Learners and families to permit them to access the Parent Portal.
4. Evaluate the user-friendly status of the Parent Portal, which should require minimal steps to sign in and readily access student information.

Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) provided parents/guardians and students with access to students' grades through a portal application at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year. Although the software changed, a mainstay was the basic functionality of viewing current averages, assignment information, daily attendance, and direct messaging with teachers. Access to the *Parent Portal* was voluntary. Parents/guardians were able to utilize an on-line application to establish accounts by creating unique user IDs and passwords. Approximately 23% of our parent/guardian stakeholder group had active accounts when the AdvancED team visited DeKalb in October 2012.

On February 21, 2013, members of the Student Information System (SIS) Department met with members of the Application Development Department to develop an action plan to respond to the charge. The team initially proposed that DCSD should create a unique account for every student's parent/guardian. The approach quickly changed because of the custodial issues only known at the local school level, the lack of accurate email addresses uploaded in the SIS system, the amount of multiple families living at one address, and the absence of family identifiers. The group recommended that the most viable solution to enroll all K-12 students in the *Parent Portal* was to create an individual student account for every student.

Members of the Student Information System (SIS) Department met with members of the Application Development Department on February 27, March 6, March 20, and March 21, 2013. The sub-committee discussed how the accounts would be programmatically created, the specific User ID and password for each student, and the email address tag for the accounts. The development tasks required to build the Portal accounts were identified. Also, the timeline and test plan were developed for each task.

On March 21, 2013, the two assigned co-leads met with the sub-committee to select three Principals to serve on the sub-committee and determine our next steps. The sub-committee determined that an extensive communication plan must be developed and include translating all written correspondences in multiple languages to effectively share information with all parents/guardians.

On April 3, 2013, when the full sub-committee met, policies and regulations governing teachers' grading practices from metro area school districts including Gwinnett, Atlanta and Cobb were reviewed. The existing IH and IHA policies were revised as agreed upon by the sub-committee. After receiving input from Senior Staff, policy IHA was presented and approved the Board of Education on October 7, 2013. District-level administrators, school-level administrators, support personnel, and teachers received the revised policy.

In preparation for the mass activation, the Division of Information Technology established accounts for all active K-12 students and conducted several pilots from July 1st – September 20th. The pilots were conducted during GHSGT Summer Remediation Program at Stone Mountain High School, Registration/Open House at McLendon Elementary School, and the first month of school at Bethune Middle School and Cedar Grove High School. As the schools conducted the pilots, the registration documents were refined, simplified, and translated into multiple languages based upon lessons learned to meet the needs of the users. Additionally, the *Parent Portal Handbook*, *Parent Portal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)*, and guidelines to assist Registrars in providing support at the local school level were developed and translated in multiple languages.

On September 23, 2013, DeKalb launched the ePortal registration process for all K-12 students by sharing SACS Required Action #10 and the resulting actions with all

Principals via FirstClass. The sub-committee acknowledged the need to bridge the communication gap between the District and home and the local school and home. The suggested communication tools to encourage and motivate parents/guardians to activate accounts included, but were not limited to, PDS-TV24, K-12 alerts, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, posters to display in schools and public libraries, Web page banners, marquees, calling posts, Board meeting announcements, mass mailings, report card messages, PTA/PTO meetings, and parent/guardian workshops. On October 9, 2013, daily bulletins began airing on PDSTV 24 at 2:59 AM, 4:41 AM, 6:00 AM, 8:59 AM, 10:41 AM, 12:00 PM, 2:59 PM, 4:41 PM, 6:00 PM, 8:59 PM, 10:41 PM, and 12:00 AM. The DeKalb County Public Library System shared the Parent Portal registration process for students and parents/guardians in support of the District, regional and school level plans to provide parents/guardians computer access in each region.

As DeKalb continues to build the bridge, Diverse Learner Services provides intensive support to assist parents/guardians in registering for Parent Portal accounts while attending district-sponsored classes and workshops using the Parent Portal Handbook available in Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Bengali, French, Chinese, Nepali, Vietnamese, Spanish and Somali. Also, the District partnered with the International Center Lab and the Cross Keys Cluster to register students and families by providing technical support and documents in their native languages to address language barriers at the Cross Keys Cluster Title I Parent Conference on November 8th. The District also conducted a hands-on, interactive session during the annual Title I Parent Conference on November 16th.

Evidence to Support the Required Action:

SACS Required Action 10 Sub-Committee can provide the following evidence to support the required action and directives:

- Meeting agendas
- Minutes/Notes
- Signature Logs
- FirstClass correspondences with Principals, district-level personnel, and school-level personnel
- Student ePortal Registration Guide (multiple languages)
- Parent Portal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Parent Portal Handbook (multiple languages)
- PowerPoint (guide for Registrars and Parent Portal Managers)
- PDSTV24 Bulletins
- Web page banners and links
- Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram announcements
- DeKalb County Public Library System
- Board Policies IH and IHA (red-lined and adopted)

Next Steps for the Required Action:
DeKalb will continue promoting the use of Parent Portal to monitor academic progress and attendance. DeKalb will continue advertising the "Stay in the Know" campaign via Web page, PDSTV24, Twitter, and Facebook to increase the number of active accounts. Sub-committee members will visit at least one public library in each region to share the Parent Portal registration process for students and parents/guardians in support of the District, regional and school level plans to provide parents/guardians access to computers.

Results/Impact of the Actions Taken:
Research shows that a strong, school-parent-community connection is an essential element in building and sustaining school improvement. Parent Portal is one of the digital tools adopted by the District to promote parental engagement and the school-home connection. Parent Portal engages families in meaningful ways by keeping them informed of their children's learning process as required by AdvancED Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning; Indicator 3.8.

Parent Portal provides real time data on the academic progress of students to parents/guardians as required by AdvancED. Through Parent Portal, parents/guardians have access to the academic performance and attendance of students in all scheduled courses for a given grading period and semester. In addition, educators are able to provide parents with Parent Tips for every assignment given to students, thereby, allowing parents/guardians to support learning at home. This partnership is essential in the education of students for continuous student achievement and improvement of student morale and attitude.

Teachers are communicating academic progress to students and parents in a timely manner through the *Parent Portal* by maintaining accurate and current records. The electronic tool has strengthened communication between the home and school.

The number of stakeholders utilizing the Parent Portal has increased significantly as evidenced by the following Parent Portal weekly data reports:

Reporting Date	Parent /Guardian Accounts	All K-12 Student Accounts
September 25, 2013	**65,790**	**1,251**
October 7, 2013	**Communication**	**6,633**
October 14, 2013	**Campaign**	**10,243**
October 21, 2013	**69,294**	**14,109**
October 28, 2013	**70,030**	**16,792**
November 8, 2013	**70,660**	**27,610**
November 13, 2013	**70,990**	**33,586**
November 18, 2013	**71,306**	**40,205**

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
Students have the ability to monitor their academic success using minimal steps through their Parent Portal accounts each year. The Student Information System (SIS) program automatically creates an account for a student within 24 hours of enrolling in a school to ensure long-term sustainability. The newly adopted SIS will allow parents and students to communicate with teachers though a web-based platform. The Division of Information Technology will develop and implement a transition plan, so that the web-based platform is available in August 2014.

REQUIRED ACTION 11: *Re-establish the district's strategic planning team for the purpose of effectively implementing the DeKalb County School System Strategic Plan to guide the direction of the district.*

1. Complete the RFP process, retain a strategic planning facilitator, and begin the strategic planning process to define and set the future direction for the DeKalb County School District.

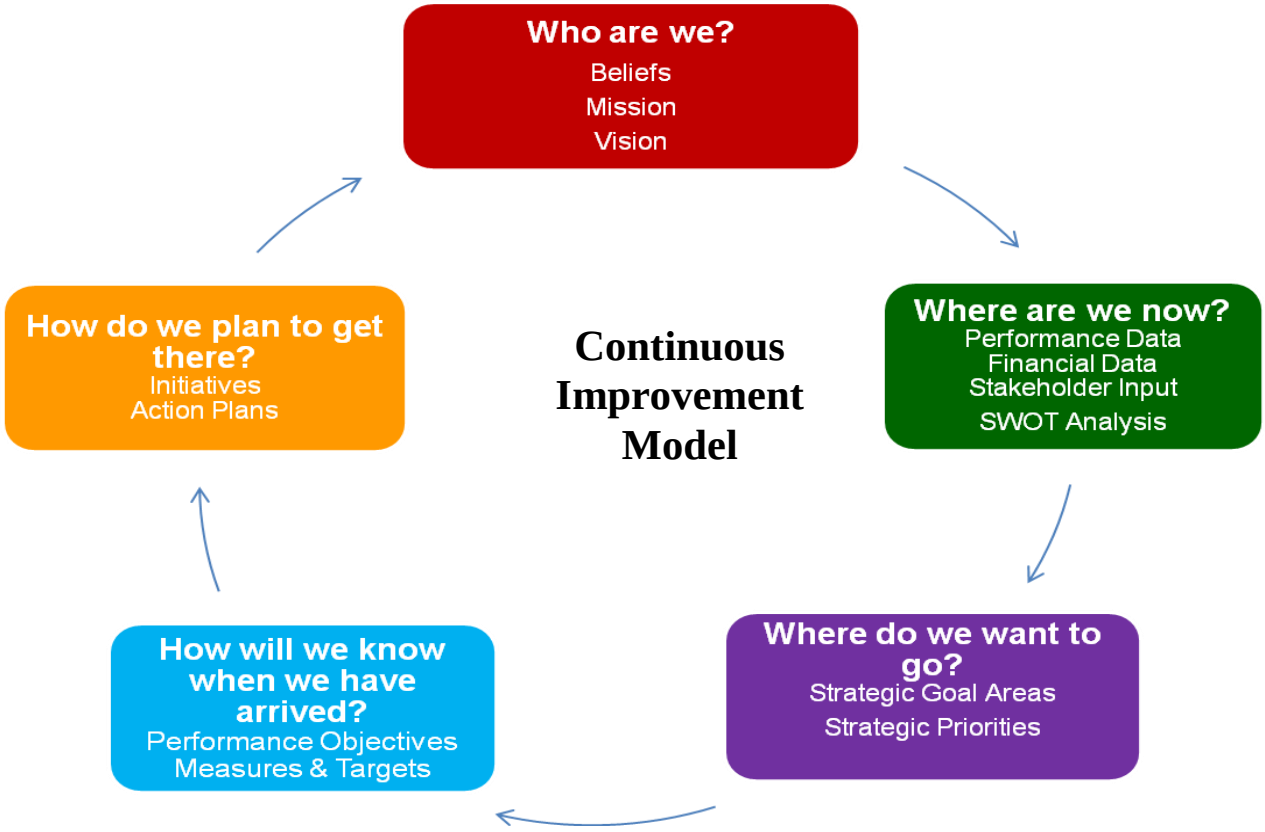
Progress Status: Indicate the progress the district has made toward addressing the required action.

X	**Completed** – All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The district has documented evidence that supports completion of the required action.
	In Progress – The district is currently working to execute the actions and processes but has yet to fully implement all the necessary actions to address and/or complete the required action.
	Have Not Addressed – The district has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide the detail to support the required action. The response should include: 1) The steps taken to address the required action/directives; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) the results/impact of the steps taken; and 5) the long term plan to ensure sustainability of the steps taken.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:
On August 5, 2013, the Board of Education of the DeKalb County School District voted to use a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated strategic improvement plan for the school district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for district and school improvement. Highlights of the process include:

- A comprehensive community engagement component to allow stakeholders to have a voice in the strategic improvement planning process
- A diverse planning team that represented stakeholder groups to develop the plan
- A facilitated planning process that assisted the planning and action teams in analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the school district and in developing/defining the mission, vision, beliefs, goal areas and elements of the strategic improvement plan
- A facilitated process to work with experts within the district and community on developing initiatives and action steps to implement the plan



The strategic improvement planning process follows a continuous improvement cycle designed around the five questions listed in the visual above. This process begins with a community engagement session with stakeholders. The entire process will take 8-12 months to complete and is divided into the four phases.

Phase I

Community Engagement: In order to assist the Strategic Planning Team with their work, input from a number of stakeholder engagement sessions was synthesized. The sessions involved were conducted in 2011 and 2013. The following provides a look at each session in terms of audiences participating. Due to the lack of complete implementation of a strategic plan since 2011, the information was identified was relevant.

- Community Forum - September 2011 - 300 participants representing the school district, students, parents, and community members

- Online Survey - September 2011 - 1,227 completed surveys. The group with the largest percentage of respondents to the online survey identified themselves as parents (55%). The next group with the largest number of participants was "teacher" (24%).

- Hispanic Community Focus Group - October 2011 - 24 participants who identified themselves mostly as parents
- Listening Sessions - 2011 and 2013 These sessions were conducted throughout the District with internal and external stakeholders

In addition, one focus group was conducted in each of the district's five regions during October 2013. The district invited a cross section of stakeholders to each focus group, which included teachers, staff, parents, business leaders, students, and others. Laura Reilly from the Georgia School Boards Association served as the facilitator for the focus groups.

Focus Group Goals:

- To be transparent and inclusive
- To honor the input citizens gave in the last strategic planning process, the MLA focus groups and in listening sessions conducted by Superintendent Michael Thurmond
- To inform citizens on the strategic planning process
- To build trust and relationships with stakeholder groups
- To include voices of DeKalb's various stakeholder groups in the development of the strategic plan
- To demonstrate the process is proactive rather than reactive
- To communicate and demonstrate to all stakeholder groups that the success of the public school system is a shared responsibility between the district, parents, students, and the community

Planning Team: In September 2013 a group of 54 people representing stakeholder groups from the school board, central office, schools, parents, students, business and other community representatives were assembled to answer the questions: “Who are we”, “Where are we now”, and “Where do we want to go”. Specific outcomes include Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, a review of beliefs, mission and vision for the district, and developing strategic goal areas and priorities for the strategic improvement plan.

Action Teams: In October 2013 five smaller teams consisting of 12-15 stakeholders per team were assembled to answer the question “How will we know when we have arrived”. The action teams looked at each proposed strategic goal area and identified the performance objectives, and a draft of measures and targets to answer this question. Additionally, the action teams began to look at the initiatives and action steps that might be needed to answer the fourth question of the GSBA Strategic Improvement Planning Process, “How do we plan to get there”.
Action team members reviewed the alignment of goal areas and performance objectives with the following

- AdvancED Quality Assurance Review Standards (SACS standards)

- Required Action Report from the December 17, 2012 AdvancED Report
- The "Bridge Initiative"
- A Vision for Public Education in Georgia - Recommendations
- Race-to-the-Top Guidelines
- Title I Guidelines
- The Georgia Road to College Initiative
- Workforce development goals in the DeKalb County Government's Strategic Plan

Action Team Report to Planning Team: In November, 2013, the Action Team Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team for the District began a more focused look at initiatives and action steps that might be needed to answer the fourth question of the GSBA Strategic Improvement Planning Process, "How do we plan to get there". Also, Action Teams delivered a report of their work back to the Planning Team. The planning team reviewed the action team's work, discussed priorities, implications and made recommendations for additions or changes that might be needed.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- Response-for-Proposal (RFP) review documents
- District contract with the selected strategic planning facilitators
- Community engagement report
- Planning documents supporting the two-day retreat for members of the Strategic Planning team
- Minutes summarizing the planning meetings with members of the district's strategic planning team and the facilitators from the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI)
- Planning and Action Team membership lists consisting of internal and external stakeholders
    1. **Planning Team** – A group of 45-50 people, both internal and external, who work to develop the district Beliefs, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goal Areas or Goals and Strategic Priorities.

    2. **Action Team(s)** – A group of 10-15 people, primarily staff, who work to develop the Performance Objectives, Measures & Targets for a Strategic Goal Area or Goal. Typically there will be a different action team for each Strategic Goal Area or Goal.
- Strategic Planning Progress Report (http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/strategic-plan/)

- Trend data
- Photo and video recordings of planning teams work and community engagement sessions
- School Improvement Plan development calendar
- **Stakeholder Input** – Data gathered from stakeholders, internal and external. May be in the form of a survey or public engagement session.
- eBOARD updates of Strategic Planning Documents to include
    1. **Beliefs** – The fundamental convictions and core values that guide the actions and decisions of an district
    2. **Mission** – Defines why a district exists; the district's purpose/core work; all operational functions, actions and decisions should support the mission.
    3. **Vision** – The statement of a district's picture of future success which communicates; where it wants to be in the future. The vision helps to determine the district strategic perspectives.
    4. **SWOT Analysis** – Listing of district's strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T).
    5. **Strategic Goal Areas or Goals** – District Strategic Improvement Plans typically have between three to five strategic goal areas which provide a framework to describe the district's mission and vision. Strategic Goal Areas highlight the key areas that a district must address as it works to achieve its mission.
    6. **Strategic Priorities** – 2 to 4 key measurable performance areas under each strategic goal or goal area in which the district needs to put special emphasis.
    7. **Strategic Dashboard** – Graphical report that captures, for quick review, the strategic priority measures of the district.
    8. **Performance Objectives** – Concise statements that describe the specific strategies within each strategic goal or goal area that must be performed for a district to achieve its desired results. Performance Objectives along with specific performance measures will be used to determine progress towards overall strategic goals or goal areas. Performance objectives should be stated in action terms, beginning with an action verb, such as improve, increase, reduce, initiate, develop, lower, become, achieve, etc.

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The strategic improvement planning process follows a continuous improvement cycle designed around the five questions listed in the visual above. This process begins with a community engagement session with stakeholders. The entire process will take 8-12 months to complete and is divided into the four phases.

Phase II

Action Teams Report to the Board of Education: In December 2013 representatives from Action Teams present a report of the strategic improvement plan to the board. The board will review the report, offer input and consider approval of the plan for 2014-2019.

Board and Staff: Once the board has approved the work of the Planning and Action Teams, specific initiatives, and action steps necessary to execute the plan will be investigated and/or implemented as necessary. These initiatives will be investigated and/or implemented at the board, district, school (School Improvement Plans) and community levels. The DeKalb County School District's Strategic Plan is posted on the Board of Education meeting agenda for approval on December 2, 2013.

A Theory of Change to address the need to ***Bridge the Gap Between Under-Performance and Excellence through Growth and Achievement*** will be drafted to provide a strategic roadmap for parents, staff, and community members.

Phase III

Alignment: The plan initiatives and action steps will be aligned to the district and school budgets, as well as board, superintendent and leader evaluations (to be determined by Mr. Thurmond). Additionally, school improvement plans and other system action plans will be aligned with the new strategic improvement plan.

Phase IV

Execution, Monitoring and Reporting: After alignment of the plan, district and school staff in conjunction with the board will execute, monitor, and report on the plan as well as ensure an ongoing process to review and update the plan as needed.

DeKalb County Schools' Commitment to Ongoing Process: Action Team performance measures and suggested initiatives/action steps have been documented for follow-up. These suggested initiatives/action steps are not inclusive of school-based initiatives that may be developed to support and meet specific established goals. In keeping with the school district's commitment to continuous improvement there will be continued focus on systemic processes and goals to improve the district, but differentiated models will be encouraged at the local school levels. In circumstances where needed, a task force will be created to further explore suggested system level strategies and initiatives. School-based governance and leadership teams will be in place to foster the development of appropriate action items in support of school-based initiatives to support and meet specific established goals, performance measures and strategic priorities.

Strategic plan mid-year and summary updates will be provided to the board by Action Team Leaders in March 2014 and July 2014. The Deputy Superintendent for School Leadership and Operational Support through each Region Superintendent will review

the school-based status of the strategic goals through the principal evaluation process currently in place. The eBOARD Strategic Plan software provides a Balanced Scorecard that reflects the Strategic Plan goals and progress.

eBOARD Strategic Plan Software: One of the most important aspects of the Strategic Improvement Planning Process is the ability of the school district to use GSBA's eBOARD Strategic Plan Software to assist with the execution, monitoring, and reporting of the plan. GSBA's eBOARD Strategic Plan Module makes the process easy for district staff and the school board. Strategic plan items can be easily updated by staff allowing users to filter the plan by staff, department, status, priority, date, etc. As the plan is updated, results are reported through the Strategic Dashboard, Balanced Scorecard and Goal Alignment report. eBOARD helps to keep everyone informed and provides real-time status updates of the strategic planning process in a transparent fashion.

Accountability System: In collaboration with the Strategic Planning Team, McKenna, Long, and Aldridge LLP will develop an accountability structure that will promote ownership by all employees on achieving the desired results and sustain a focus on performance over time.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

To date, the district invited a cross section of stakeholders to participate in the strategic planning process - teachers, staff, parents, business leaders, students, and others. The following goals are representative of the efforts of the planning process to maintain transparency and honor the input of stakeholders. The work of the stakeholders through a facilitated process has led to a proposed beliefs, mission, vision, strategic goals, performance objectives and strategy map as follows.

Proposed Mission, Vision & Beliefs

Mission
To produce globally competitive citizens prepared for higher education, work and life-long learning

Vision
To inspire Our Community of Learners to Achieve Educational Excellence

Motto
Inspire•Achieve•Excel

Based on our core beliefs, we commit to:

- Focusing on Teaching and Learning

- Embedding an equitable and accessible 21st Century Learning Environment supported by the use of emerging technologies throughout the curriculum
- Providing a safe and orderly learning and working environment
- Improving organizational effectiveness
- Maintaining Fiscal responsibility
- Ensuring effective district and school leadership
- Ensuring that an effective teacher instructs every class
- Communicating to stakeholders in an open, honest, and accurate manner
- Embracing our community's linguistic and cultural diversity and using it to enhance the educational environment through equity and access
- Creating an environment where everyone is valued and respected, encouraged to contribute, and recognized for his/her efforts
- Holding everyone accountable for educational excellence

Proposed Strategic Goal Areas and Performance Objectives

Goal I: Student Success with Equity and Access

- Improve student's mastery of learning standards
- Provide equitable access to academically rigorous courses and programs
- Increase graduation rate for all Pre-K - 12 students with an emphasis on college and career readiness

Goal Area III: Stakeholder Engagement

- Provide a safe, orderly, and positive school environment
- Increase stakeholder involvement and engagement
- Increase use of technology and innovative strategies

Goal Area III: Staff Efficacy and Excellence

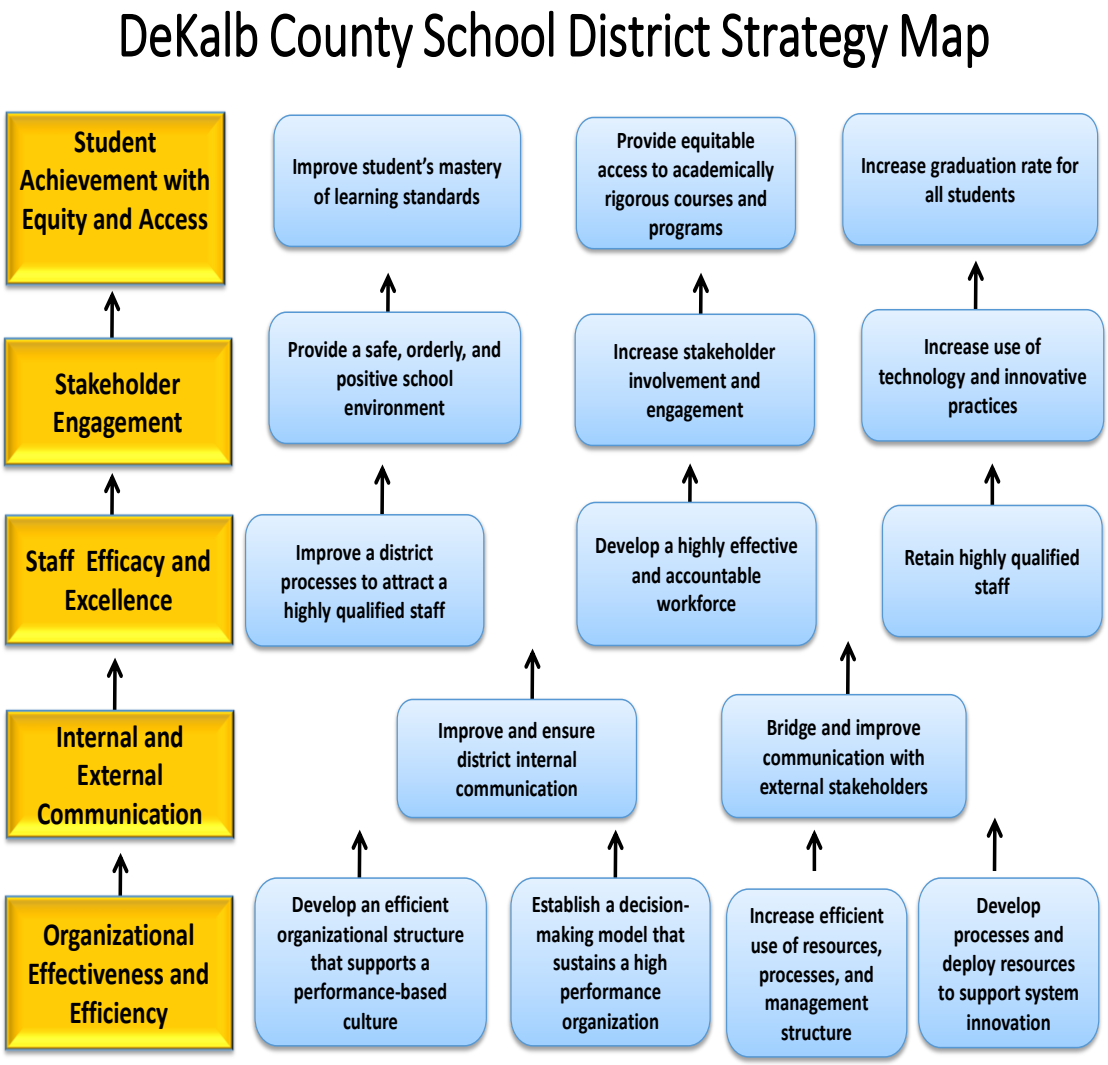
- Improve district processes to attract highly qualified staff
- Develop a highly effective and accountable workforce
- Retain highly qualified staff

Goal Area IV: Internal and External Communication

- Improve and ensure district internal communication
- Bridge and improve communication with external stakeholders

Goal Area V: Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency

- Develop an efficient organizational structure that supports a performance based culture
- Establish a decision-making model that sustains a high performance organization
- Increase efficient use of resources, processes, and management structure
- Develop processes and deploy resources to support system innovation



The DeKalb County School District Strategy Map

Strategy Map Goal Area	Cause and Affect Statement
Student Success with Equity and Access	Then our graduation rate will improve, our performance gaps will decrease, and ***ALL*** students will meet high expectations.
Stakeholder Engagement	Increase stakeholder engagement,
Staff Efficacy and Excellence	Build and support a high quality workforce, and
Internal and External Communication	Improve the effectiveness of school-to-home and district communications, and
Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency	If we develop an efficient organizational structure that supports a performance-based culture, and

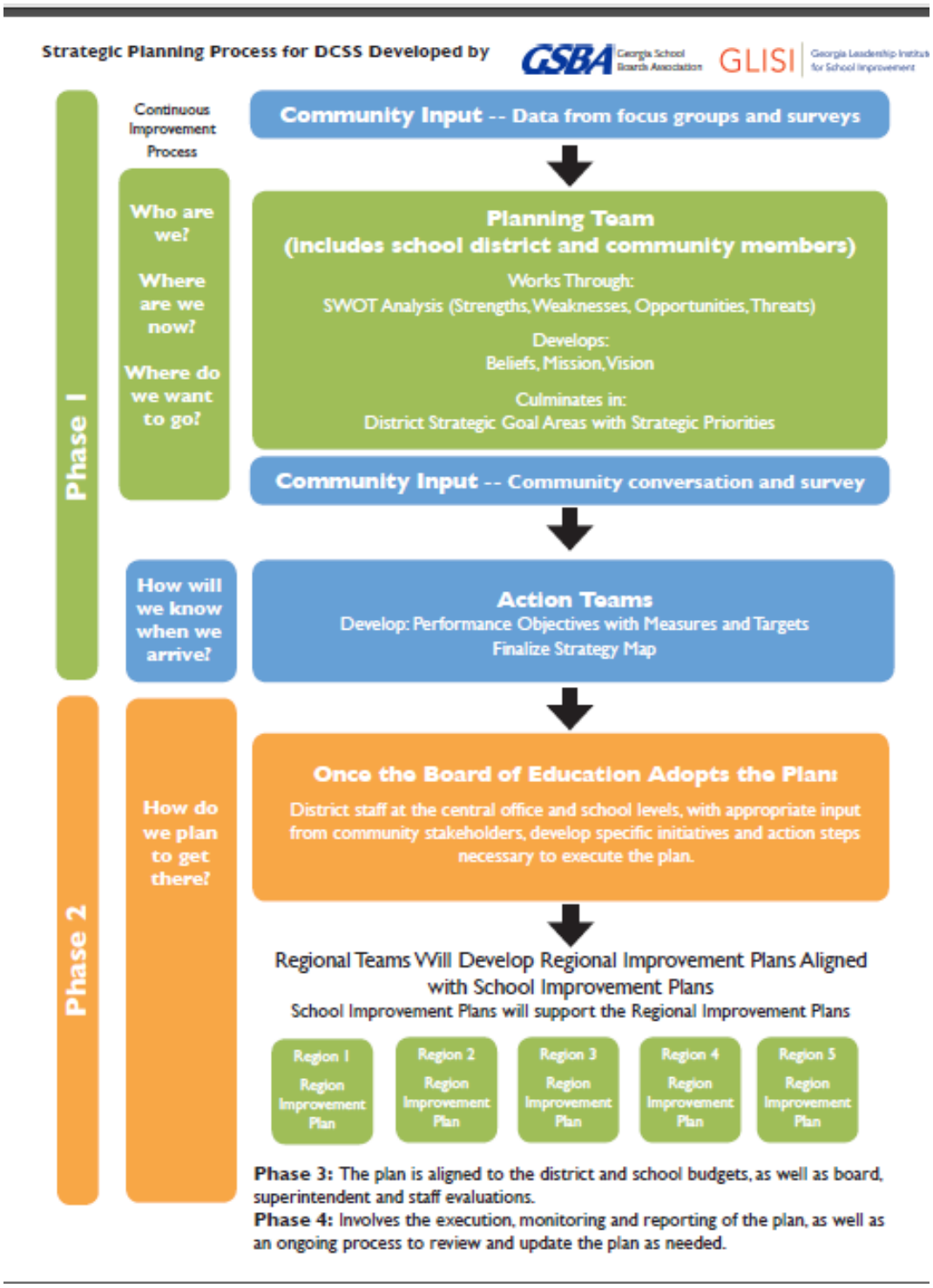
Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:
Adherence to the DeKalb County strategic planning model with a four-phased approach will ensure a plan that aligns the mission and vision for the entire school district.

On Tuesday, August 20, 2013, a deranged gunman entered McNair Discovery Learning Academy, with nearly 500 rounds of ammunition and an assault rifle. He was encountered by the school's bookkeeper, Ms. Antoinette Tuff, who engaged the shooter and kept him in the school office while he exchanged gunfire with local law enforcement personnel. Following standard operating procedures that were instilled in all employees through extensive, ongoing training, several of Ms. Tuff's colleagues initiated lock down procedures for the rest of the school's 800 students, faculty and staff. In addition, as a precaution, the district locked down all 135 schools and centers. The initial law enforcement personnel on site were DeKalb School Resource Officers, who maintained security until SWAT Teams from the DeKalb County Police Department arrived to enter the building. Again, following safety procedures learned in numerous training sessions, the students and faculty departed the school building and gathered in groups behind the school. Eventually, all 800 students were transported by buses from the school to a local shopping center, where they were reunited with their families without a single injury. The government agencies coordinated efforts to ensure the safety of the students and school employees included the DeKalb County School District, numerous law enforcement agencies including district police, DeKalb County police, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Federal Bureau of Investigations, U.S. Marshall's Service, U.S. Secret Service and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. This is a demonstration of an organizational structure that supports aligned and effective use of resources. This is a model for all divisions in the organization as we develop our strategic plan for improvement.

Upon completion of the DeKalb County School District's Strategic Plan, all district and school level leadership teams will begin the development of an aligned improvement plan, one that demonstrates effective use of resources and collaboration around improved communication to support improved student achievement. Each school's plan will be aligned to the district strategic improvement plan and serve as the strategic and operational plan for the school. The school strategic improvement plan will be developed and updated using a continuous improvement process. Currently, a draft of the framework for each school's improvement plan is posted in eBOARD.

An alignment exists between Strategic Goal Areas, Strategic Priorities, and Performance Objectives. Some variation may occur in the Action Plans, Initiatives, and Action Steps.

Goal Areas	Performance Objectives	Initiatives	Steps Action
Perspectives of strategic improvement plan	***What we will do in each goal area?***	***How we will reach the Performance Objectives?***	***Specific Steps needed to meet the initiatives***
Identical in district and school plans	***Identical in district and school plans*** ***Schools may add additional performance objectives but cannot remove any***	***Specific to the district, each school or department*** ***Same or similar in schools of the same grade level***	***Specific to district, school or department***
Performance Objectives	***Performance Measures*** ***Performance Targets***	***Description*** ***Person or group accountable*** ***Timeline*** ***Cost*** ***Status***	***Description*** ***Person or group accountable*** ***Start and End Dates*** ***Status*** ***Artifacts & Evidence***


Strategic Planning Process for DCSS Developed by
GSBA Georgia School Boards Association
GLISI Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement
Phase 1
Phase 2
Continuous Improvement Process
Who are we?
Where are we now?
Where do we want to go?
How will we know when we arrive?
How do we plan to get there?
Community Input -- Data from focus groups and surveys
Planning Team
(includes school district and community members)
Works Through:
SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
Develops:
Beliefs, Mission, Vision
Culminates in:
District Strategic Goal Areas with Strategic Priorities
Community Input -- Community conversation and survey
Action Teams
Develop: Performance Objectives with Measures and Targets
Finalize Strategy Map
Once the Board of Education Adopts the Plan:
District staff at the central office and school levels, with appropriate input from community stakeholders, develop specific initiatives and action steps necessary to execute the plan.
Regional Teams Will Develop Regional Improvement Plans Aligned with School Improvement Plans
School Improvement Plans will support the Regional Improvement Plans
Region 1 Region Improvement Plan
Region 2 Region Improvement Plan
Region 3 Region Improvement Plan
Region 4 Region Improvement Plan
Region 5 Region Improvement Plan
Phase 3: The plan is aligned to the district and school budgets, as well as board, superintendent and staff evaluations.
Phase 4: Involves the execution, monitoring and reporting of the plan, as well as an ongoing process to review and update the plan as needed.

The completion of an aligned strategic plan will provide purpose and direction for the school district and its community. Addressing this required action will ensure a systemic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate the district's purpose for student success as defined in AdvancED standard 1.1. As outlined in AdvancED standards 1.2 and 1.3, the strategic plan will demonstrate a commitment to shared values and beliefs as well as a process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support teaching and learning.

Finally, adherence to the GSBA/GLISI continuous improvement model ensures alignment with the DeKalb County Strategic Plan and each school-based improvement plan for improving student achievement.

Conclusion:

The DeKalb County Board of Education and district staff has worked together to complete the Eleven Required Actions /Directives of AdvancEd. The collaboration among internal and external stakeholders to complete the work required by AdvancEd has delivered processes, procedures and plans for systemic change that focus the work of the district on continuous improvement so that all students enrolled in DeKalb schools will graduate from fully accredited schools in a high-performing district.

The following points summarize actions taken by the board and district to address the required actions and directives:

- The DeKalb County School District has developed a positive working relationship with the GSBA and during 2012-2013 utilized the services of GSBA to complete the minimum school board hours required by state law for new school board members, which included training in knowing and understanding board roles and responsibilities. The board adopted a set of norms that have become established as accepted practice of behavior for board members during board meetings and when communicating with other board members, school and district staff, and other stakeholders. The norms provide guidelines to ensure that the board speaks with one voice. The board has focused its attention on policy and governance and taken steps to demonstrate commitment to board approved standards of ethics.

- The board contracted with the MLA Governance Center to begin the work necessary to address findings from district research conducted by MLA, which included the adoption of Policy GAGD–Staff Nepotism to clarify circumstances under which family members may be employed by the district, in order to demonstrate fairness and equity in hiring and promotion practices of the district. The board is reviewing all aspects of governance in an effort to more fully develop effective practices for the board and district. The board is committed to self-assessment of its actions and each member of the board completed the GSBA Self-Assessment during the latter part of October.

- The board utilized the recommendations of the MLA Center for Governance to develop a sweeping overarching governance policy and adopted Policy BAB: School Board Governance. The policy clarifies many of the policies found in Section B of the School Board Policy Manual and serves as a companion policy to those policies in Section B. The Governance Policy will be used to guide the board in its proceedings. Policy BAB ensures separation of roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent. The policy outlines the chain of command within the district, and it states that the day to day management of the district is the responsibility of the superintendent alone. The policy gives specific protocols and establishes parameters for board members when

communicating with staff or the general public. The Governance Policy is a clear example of how the board is applying effective governance practices and principles learned in board training with GSBA and GSSA to strengthen the board and sustain change within the district.

- The board will continue professional learning during 2013-2014 and has identified specific GSBA courses for individual members to complete within that timeline. Board members collaborated with the superintendent, district leaders, a principal, and parent to attend the Harvard University Public Education Leadership Project held in July 2013. An outgrowth of the training received during the week-long collaborative exercise was ***The Bridge Initiative***, a district plan to engage parents in student learning for the purpose of improving student achievement.

- The board and superintendent are developing a collaborative working relationship with the DeKalb Board of Commissioners, the DeKalb Delegation, the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, regional parent councils, PTA /PTO groups to provide greater services to the community and work to improve the well-being of all DeKalb stakeholders. The board, in conjunction with the superintendent, CEO DeKalb County, and the DeKalb Board of Commissioners sponsored *Progress DeKalb: A Conversation to Move DeKalb Forward*. The event focused on collaboration topics of quality of life, economic development, diversity, shared resources, and public safety. Both entities have committed to work together for the betterment of the county and school district.

- The board is committed to ensuring a transparent budgeting process. The board adopted a balanced budget for FY2014. During FY2013, the superintendent, with approval by the board, hired a new CFO and finance team. Together the superintendent, CFO, and the Department of Finance placed strict controls in place and instituted a speeding freeze that enabled the district to control costs during FY2013. The district was able to use the cost controlled savings from the 2013 tax millage increase to eliminate the deficit and end FY 2013 with an expected $10,000,000 surplus. A tentative budgeting process schedule for FY2015 has been created. The board will ensure that processes are transparent and open to public comment.

- The board, in conjunction with the superintendent, has worked to ensure that student achievement is the heart of all actions taken by the district; therefore, the district has taken steps to develop and implement a robust diagnostic assessment plan. The district has developed protocols for sharing data and the board is using the data to make purchasing decisions for curriculum and instruction. The district has purchased a universal screener to use as a reading and math diagnostic. All schools have been trained to use the screener, and it is

being used in conjunction with a Response to Intervention (RtI) implementation plan. On-going RtI professional learning is being provided to administrators and teachers. All schools are using the 6-Step Data Protocol when developing plans for classroom instruction. The 6-step Data Protocol is being used with a variety of formative and summative assessments. Over 4500 teachers have participated in Saturday Learning Sessions, which included a presentation on the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Benchmark assessments are on-going and results will be shared with the board through the Data Sharing Communication Protocol. The board requires and uses performance data, utilization reports, and metrics to make informed decisions and approved budget expenditures.

- The district has developed The Change Management for Continuous Improvement Process. It is a process that is steeped in research-based practices and designed to be a component of the strategic plan so that all change initiatives flow through the same district change management process and will be approved according to the vertically and horizontally aligned strategic planning process. Systemic use of this tool will improve organizational efficiency and will assist the district in sustaining goal efforts. The development of the process is complete, and on December 2, the superintendent will present and recommend approval of the change management process as part of the system-wide strategic plan.

- The DeKalb County Board of Education and school district recognize the significance of having technology resources available to all students and to ensure equitable allocation of resources. To that end the district developed a comprehensive technology management structure. It was developed after a thorough assessment of current technology resources and a comprehensive needs assessment. It was developed around five principles : 1) Develop and communicate a 21st Century Framework that addresses the needs of learners which is to be in collaboration will all stakeholders; 2) Align technology resources to the 21st Century Framework and use technology audits to identify resources; 3) Determine technology needs that are equitably distributed and aligned to the strategic plan; 4) Develop a three year technology plan that is aligned with 21st Century learner frameworks; and 5) Assess progress of training plans, include benchmarks, evaluation and input from stakeholders.

- The board and superintendent are aware of the need to provide transparency in how federal, state, and local program resources are allocated to schools. Therefore, the district has developed a heuristic for stakeholders to use to view district purchased software program allocations. The district website will house the data and it will be displayed in visuals that show amounts of funding allocated to each school by program and corresponding percentages of federal,

state, or local dollars used to purchase software programs. This is a tool that will demonstrate transparency in resource allocation for programs.

The board and superintendent are aware of the responsibility to provide parents with information in each family's language regarding their children's academic performance. Although the district has provided an electronic tool for communicating student performance to parents for several years, parents lacked motivation to use it. This is now not the case. The district has developed and advertised a new portal registration process that has made it simpler for parents to use. Schools promoted the portal registration process during student registration. The district utilized a variety of media in multiple languages to advertise to all parents in an effort to bridge the language barrier which often hinders many culturally-diverse parents from being involved in their children's schooling. The Parent Portal Handbook is available in English, Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Bengali, French, Chinese, Nepali, Vietnamese, Spanish and Somali. The focus placed on the parent portal has significantly increased the number of parent users and provided parents with greater access to their children's academic progress.

- In August, 2013, the board approved a process developed by the GSBA and GLISI to update the strategic planning process. This district has begun work to reestablish the strategic planning process in the district. The process being used is comprehensive and has engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal support for district and school improvement. The model being used for strategic planning is a continuous improvement model which will take approximately 8-12 months to complete. It is a four phase process. The district is currently in Phase II. The process being used by the district is a continuous improvement process that will lead to improved student achievement.

The DeKalb Board of Education and the superintendent have worked in collaboration to address AdvancED's Eleven Required Actions. As a result, the district is moving forward and is operating more efficiently. The action steps taken by the board have been focused on improving school board governance, while supporting the efforts of the superintendent to identify and implement school improvement strategies and student achievement initiatives. Through those efforts, the district has been stabilized. Finances have improved. The FY 2014 budget is a balanced budget and the FY13 deficit has been eliminated. The district strategic planning process is moving forward and includes a new change management process for the district. Due to the increased attention given to the parent portal, parents have greater access to student performance measures/assessments. Parent engagement opportunities have increased, and professional learning for board members and district employees is on-going. The board and district have developed procedures to ensure equity in technology resource

allocation and stakeholders have greater access to knowledge of how district technology software programs are allocated. Finally, the district has a robust diagnostic assessment program in place and the 6-step data protocol ensures that standards-based instruction is data driven and designed to improve student achievement.

Intense work has been done to address and complete the required actions, which the board and district have done on behalf of the students of the DeKalb County School District who deserve to have the opportunity to learn in fully accredited quality schools in a high performing district.

About AdvancED®

Background

Dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 30,000 institutions in more than 70 countries. AdvancED provides accreditation under the seals of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

The Accreditation Process

To earn and maintain accreditation, an institution must:

1. **Meet the AdvancED Standards and accreditation policies.**

Institutions demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED Standards/Indicators and accreditation policies, which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for educational institutions to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

2. **Engage in continuous improvement.**

Institutions implement a process of continuous improvement focused on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

3. **Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.**

Institutions engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, institutions host an External Review team at least once every five years. The team evaluates the institution's adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies, assesses the efficacy of the institution's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and identifies Powerful Practices and provides Required Actions to help the institution improve. The institution acts on the team's Required Actions and submits an Accreditation Progress Report at prescribed intervals following the External Review. Monitoring Reviews may be conducted during this time to ensure that the institution is making progress toward the Required Actions.

Special Reviews

At any point, a Special Review may be conducted in response to complaints or information about the institution and/or its system (district, board, or corporation) to determine adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies. The institution and/or its system must respond to the Required Actions of the Special Review Team. Monitoring Teams may be sent to the institution and/or its system at regular intervals to ensure that progress is being made toward the Special Review Team's Required Actions. Both Special Review Teams and Monitoring Teams are empowered to make accreditation recommendations based upon evidence obtained during said review.

A Process of Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED accreditation process engages institutions in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help institutions be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.