DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COGNIA ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

20-25 MARCH 2022

MRS. CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS,
SUPERINTENDENT

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OPENING STATEMENT

The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) is one of the most diverse school districts in the nation. The District is primarily a suburban school community and represents the third largest school district in the state of Georgia. The District embraces its rich and diverse community of learners and families. Approximately 94,000 students compose the District's student population. Additionally, approximately 15,000 employees comprise the District's workforce. Schools are divided into seven (7) geographic regions of the county. Within each region, schools are primarily clustered into grade-band feeder patterns (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools within a given geographic community). Each region has its own Regional Superintendent and regional support structure. Consistently, eight (8) district-level divisions support the needs of regions and schools within the District. The divisions are as follows:

TABLE A.

Curriculum and Instruction	Continuous Improvement	Equity and Student Empowerment	Community Empowerment, Innovation and Partnerships
Information and Instructional Technology	Human Resources	Finance	Facilities

Since July 2020, the DeKalb County School District has been led by Superintendent Cheryl Watson-Harris. Superintendent Watson-Harris has a clear focus on the continuous improvement of all learning communities based on a coherent approach to supporting what is most essential, the instructional core (noted later as Graphic VII). This targeted approach, in alignment with the District's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, serves as a key driver towards the District's aspirational Vision for the DeKalb Graduate (noted later as Graphic I). The Superintendent, as supported by the Board of Education, is working to ensure that every single school in DCSD can provide the most effective and equitable educational experience for all DCSD scholars, in direct alignment with student needs and interests.

The actualization of an effective learning environment requires that all learning communities (i.e., students) should have access to:
- **Effective School Leadership**
- **Rigorous Instruction**
- **Student Work & Data-Driven Decision-Making**
- Staff who receive targeted **Professional Learning**
- **Supportive School Environment**
- Schools that embrace **Strong Family & Community Ties**

Note: The **core essentials** (noted later in Table J) that must all be prevalent to drive continuous improvement are identified above in bold print.

Accordingly, although every school is unique and is expected to embody the identified ***Qualities of an Effective School*** (DCSD Effective Schools Framework, 2021 – noted later in Table J) the District also supports the diverse needs of students through several specialized school choice programs, as indicated below:

TABLE B.

Centers	Early Learning Center	Coralwood Center
Theme Schools	Edward L. Bouie Theme ES Narvie J. Harris Theme ES Marbut Theme ES Oakcliff Theme ES	Robert Shaw Theme ES Wynbrooke Theme ES Champion Theme MS
Magnet Programs	Kittredge High-Achievers Magnet (4-6) Wadsworth High-Achievers Magnet (4-6) Chamblee MS High-Achievers Magnet (7-8) Chapel Hill MS High-Achievers Magnet (7-8) Chamblee HS High-Achievers Magnet (9-12) Southwest DeKalb HS High-Achievers Magnet (9-12)	Barack Obama Magnet School of Technology (3-5) Evansdale Magnet School of Math, Science and Language (K-5) DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts (K-8) Columbia MS Magnet for Math, Science, and Technology Arabia Mtn. HS Magnet for Environment, Energy and Engineering Columbia HS Magnet for Math, Science and Technology DeKalb High School of the Arts
Academy Programs	Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy ES	DeKalb Early College Academy (DECA) HS
Dual Language Immersion	Ashford Park Elementary School Barack H. Obama Elementary School Evansdale Elementary School	Pleasantdale Elementary School Rockbridge Elementary School
International Baccalaureate	Avondale Elementary School Fernbank Elementary School Midvale Elementary School Druid Hills Middle School	Tucker Middle School Druid Hills HS (9-10) Martin Luther King Jr. HS (9-10) Tucker HS (9-12)

	Salem Middle School	
Montessori	Briar Vista Elementary	Huntley Hills Elementary
Start-Up Charters	DeKalb Agriculture Technology and Environment (D.A.T.E._K-8) DeKalb Path Academy (5-8) DeKalb Preparatory Academy (K-7) Leadership Preparatory Academy (K-8)	The Globe Academy (K-8) Museum School of Avondale Estates (K-8) International Community School (K-5)

DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

At a macro level, the District's racial demographic diversity is represented as follows:

TABLE C.

Student Population by Race	Total Number	Percentage
Black	55,602	59.3%
Hispanic	19,092	20.4%
White	10,127	10.8%
Asian	5,951	6.4%
Other	2,931	3.1%

At a micro level, the rich and diverse student DCSD immigrant population spans six (6) of the seven (7) continents, one hundred fifty-six (156) countries, and approximately one hundred seventy (170) different languages and dialects, districtwide. Please find the following tables (by continent | by region):

TABLE D.

Continent of Origin	Countries	Students
Africa	40	2424
Asia	38	3636
Europe	30	170
North America	32	4252
Oceania and Australia	6	15
South America	10	503

TABLE E.

Region	DCSD Languages and Dialects
Region 1	96
Region 2	113
Region 3	66
Region 4	111
Region 5	54
Region 6	64
Region 7	50

ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

Of the 138 schools, 110 schools receive Title I schoolwide allocations based on Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility status. Please find the following tables that demonstrate household income status and free and reduced lunch eligibility data:

TABLE F.

Region	Median Household Income
Region 1	$87.5K
Region 2	$80.7K
Region 3	$59.3K
Region 4	$49.0K
Region 5	$63.2K
Region 6	$46.4K
Region 7	$53.8K
District Median (not Mean)	$69.4K

TABLE G.

School Type	Student Total	School Total	Free and Reduced Lunch Count Total
Elementary School (grades PK-5)	42,120	77	21,980
Middle School (grades 6-8)	19,084	19	9,967
High School (grades 9-12)	26,820	22	11,244
Program School (grades PK-12)	1,350	12	381
Charter School (K-12)	4,329	8	1,647
Total	93,703	138	45,219

Table H.

+	REGION	Free & Reduced Lunch Percentage
	1	45.80%
	2	50.26%
	3	83.61%
	4	90.78%
	5	90.74%
	6	96.51%
	7	94.03%
+	Alternative	70.45%
+	Centers	32.14%
+	Charters	54.07%

Note: Data includes all active and withdrawn students (June 2021)
Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Schools included at 100%
Early Learning Center not included in data set

DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND OFFERINGS

The District also offers a diverse educational experience through various instructional curricular offerings such as the following:

- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- STEM/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics)
- Dual-Language Immersion
- Gifted Program
- Exceptional Education Program
- English Learner Program
- ROTC Program
- CTAE Pathways
- Magnet/Theme Programs
- My Brother's Keeper Program
- My Sister's Keeper Program
- Dual Enrollment
- 3DE Junior Achievement

OUR FOUNDATION | DCSD STRATEGIC PLAN, 2019-2024

The District's initial driver is its 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. The development of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan engaged all members of the DCSD community. A comprehensive series of community meetings allowed stakeholders to have a voice in the new strategic planning process, and a diverse planning team representing all district stakeholder groups developed the new plan. During six months of intense work, teams analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the school district to determine the direction. During the process, the stakeholder groups reaffirmed the District's mission and vision and developed new beliefs, goal areas, and elements of the Strategic Plan.

The DCSD Board of Education engaged in the plan development by monitoring progress throughout the planning year and providing input into the 2019-2024 vision, mission, beliefs, goal areas, and performance objectives. The Board approved the 2019-2024 DCSD Strategic Plan in July of 2019.

VISION

To inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence.

CORE BELIEFS

We believe:
- In making sure every decision supports quality teaching and learning.
- In ensuring we meet every student's academic, social, and emotional needs.
- In embracing the cultural diversity of our community as a strength.
- In holding everyone accountable for educational excellence.

MISSION

To ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and life-long learning.

TABLE I.

2019-2024 DCSD Strategic Goal Areas			
Performance Objectives			
1. **Student Success with Equity and Access**	Improve student mastery of learning standards	Provide academically rigorous courses and pathways	Increase graduation rate	
2. **Stakeholder Engagement and Communication**	Increase the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement experiences	Improve opportunities for innovative stakeholder collaboration	Improve and ensure effective district internal and external communication	
3. **Staff Effectiveness**	Recruit highly effective staff	Develop high performing staff	Retain highly effective staff	
4. **Culture and Climate**	Create and maintain a safe, orderly, positive learning environment for all	Establish and maintain clear and high expectations for excellence for all stakeholders	Cultivate culturally responsive learning environments for all	Provide support for social and emotional learning for all
5. **Organizational Excellence**	Ensure excellent financial management	Ensure efficient use of resources		
6. **Facilities**	Improve and maintain facility conditions	Ensure educational facilities meet programmatic needs	Develop and increase sustainable funding for facilities	

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | THE VISION FOR THE DEKALB GRADUATE

The Vision for the DeKalb County School District is to inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence. The essence of who we are and what we do is to ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and life-long learning. We are committed to our scholars and removing barriers that disrupt their pathway to their preferred future. We are one District, and we want to ensure all students succeed with equity and access. The aspirational Vision for the DeKalb Graduate embodies these values and beliefs that the school District provides comprehensive, research-based, and engaging learning experiences for students – based on their need and interests – to ensure that all students graduate and can thrive in their post-secondary pursuits based on a high-quality DeKalb County School District learning experience.

Based on these ideals, the District's journey to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for students – from birth to post-secondary – is a commitment to foundational principles in support of equity, excellence, and empowerment. This aspirational vision is built upon the District's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. The following graphic is a visualization that expresses this vision:
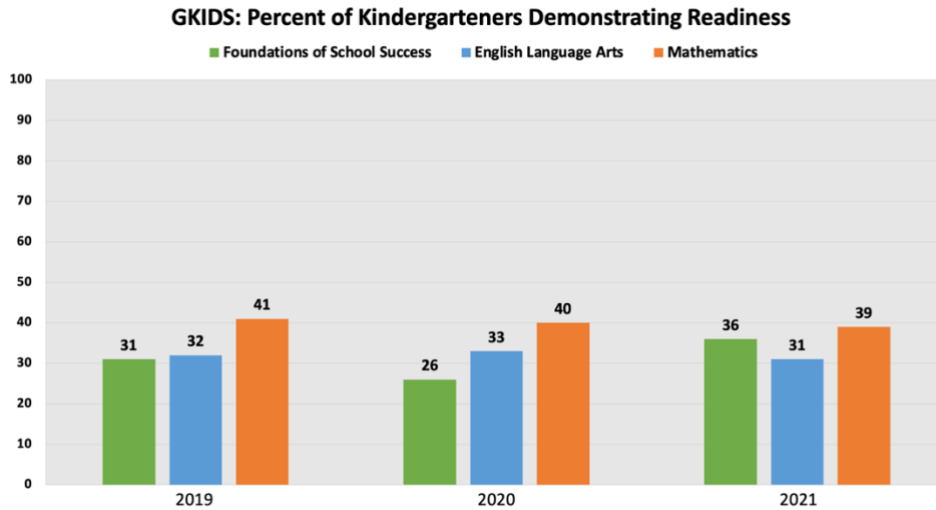
Graphic I. The Vision for the DeKalb Graduate
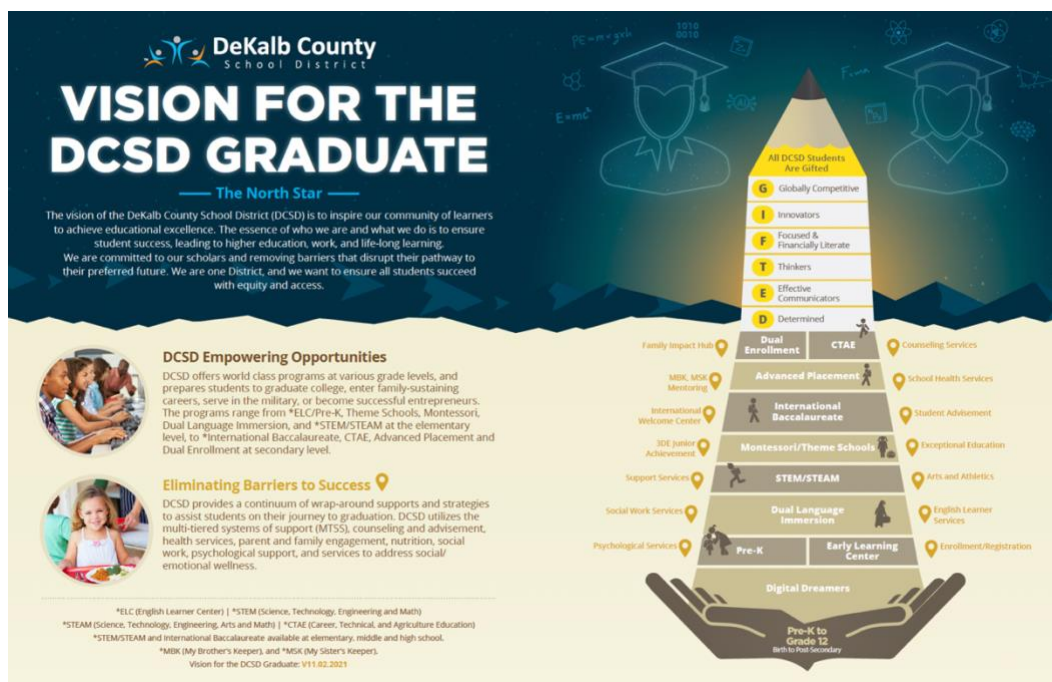
Macro level student performance data are viewed in a variety of ways, such as through the lens of our ***Birth-to-Post-Secondary (B2PS) Milestones***. DCSD uses these Key Performance Indicators macro checkpoints to determine how well our students are mastering grade level content in the areas of ***Kindergarten Readiness, Reading Fluency by 3rd Grade, Mathematics Proficiency by 8th Grade, Graduation Rate, Post-Secondary Enrollment, and Post-Secondary Completion***. The following data highlight four (4) of the milestones related to academic readiness, performance, and graduation rate data:

Graphic II. Kindergarten Readiness Trend Data (GKIDS Assessment Data) | 2019-2021
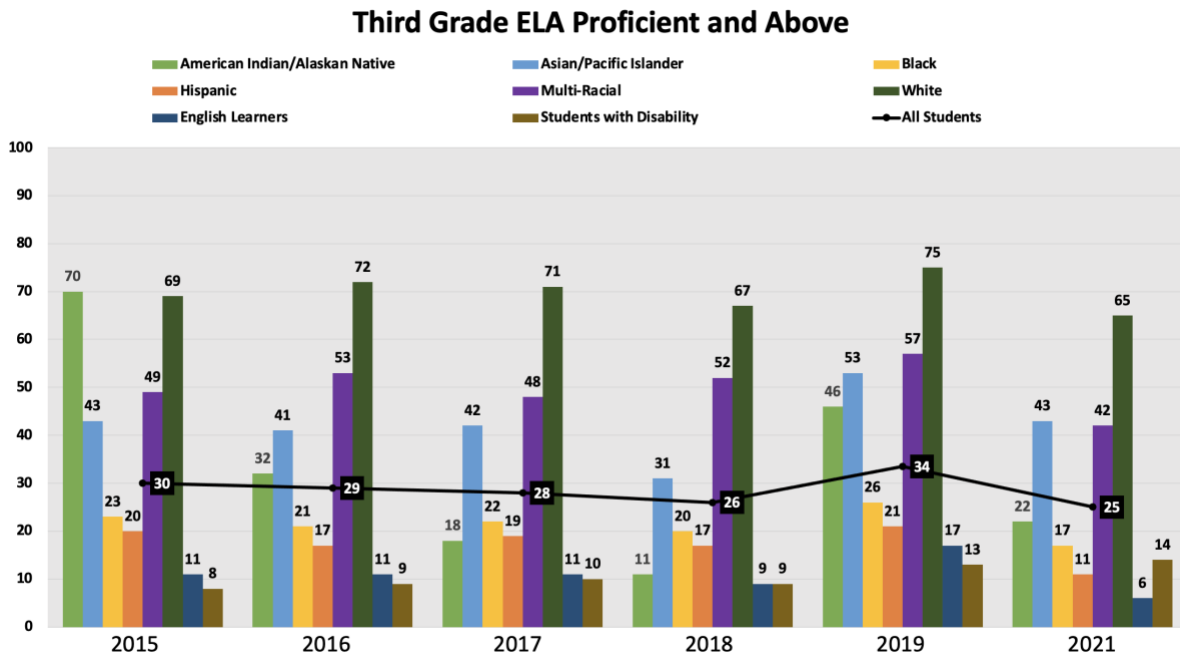
GKIDS: Percent of Kindergarteners Demonstrating Readiness

■ Foundations of School Success   ■ English Language Arts   ■ Mathematics

Graphic III. 3RD Grade Reading Proficiency Trend Data (GA Milestones Assessment) | 2015 – 2019 and 2021
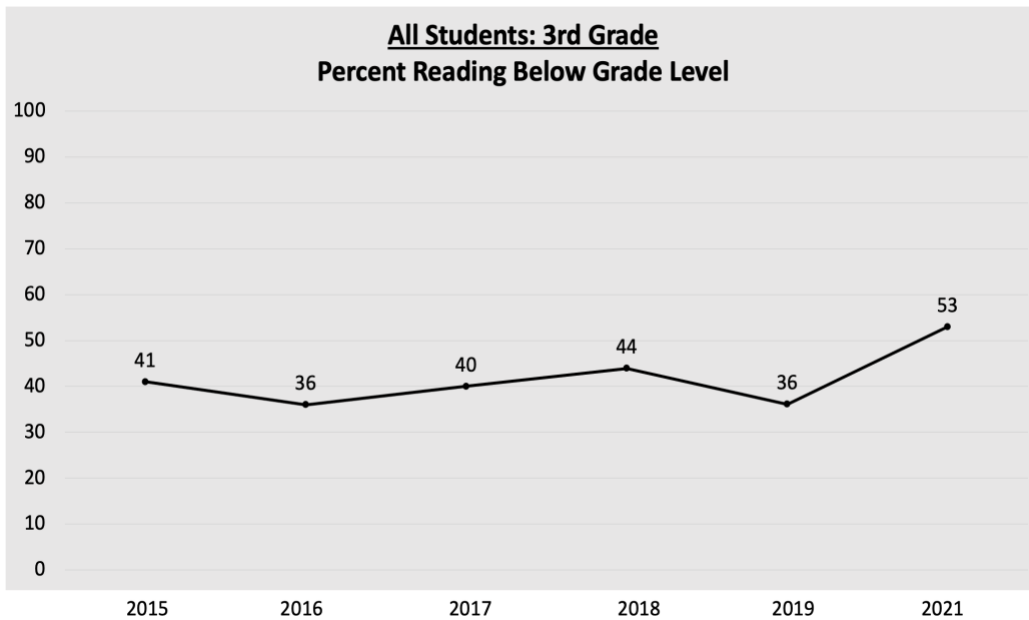
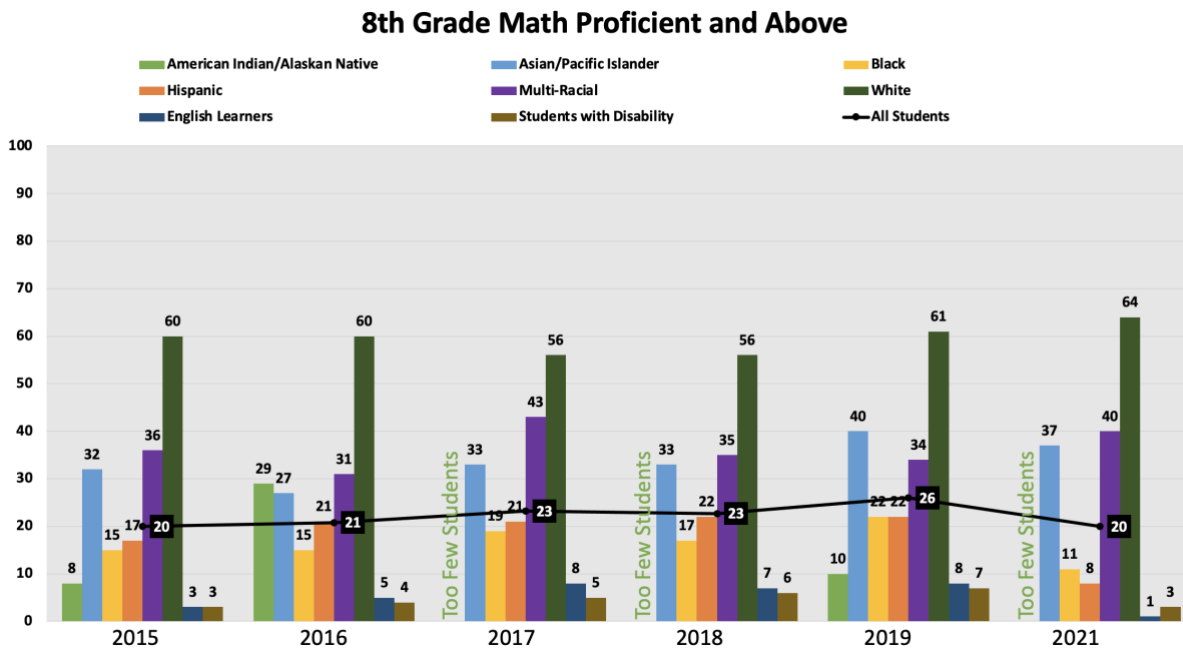*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Georgia Department of Education's waiver was approved; therefore, the Georgia Milestones assessments were not administered in 2020.

Graphic IV. 3RD Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiency Trend Data (GA Milestones Assessment) | 2015 – 2019 and 2021

Third Grade ELA Proficient and Above

Legend: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, White, English Learners, Students with Disability, All Students

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Georgia Department of Education's waiver was approved; therefore, the Georgia Milestones assessments were not administered in 2020.
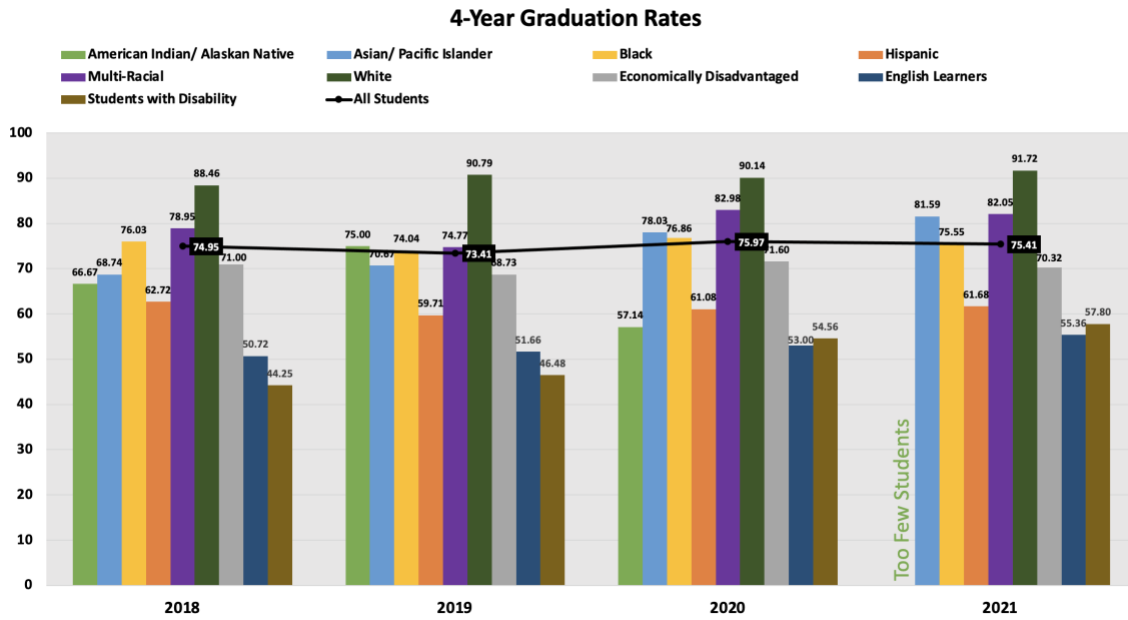
Graphic V. 8th Grade Math Proficiency Trend Data (GA Milestones Assessment) | 2015 – 2019 and 2021

8th Grade Math Proficient and Above

Legend: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, White, English Learners, Students with Disability, All Students

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Georgia Department of Education's waiver was approved; therefore, the Georgia Milestones assessments were not administered in 2020.

Graphic VI. Historical Trend Data | High School Graduation Rates (4-Year Cohorts by Subgroups) | 2018 - 2021

4-Year Graduation Rates

Legend: American Indian/ Alaskan Native · Asian/ Pacific Islander · Black · Hispanic · Multi-Racial · White · Economically Disadvantaged · English Learners · Students with Disability · All Students

2018: 66.67, 68.74, 76.03, 62.72, 78.95, 88.46, 71.00, 50.72, 44.25 — All Students 74.95
2019: 75.00, 70.87, 74.04, 59.71, 74.77, 90.79, 68.73, 51.66, 46.48 — All Students 73.41
2020: 57.14, 78.03, 76.86, 61.08, 82.98, 90.14, 71.60, 53.00, 54.56 — All Students 75.97
2021: Too Few Students, 81.59, 75.55, 61.68, 82.05, 91.72, 70.32, 55.36, 57.80 — All Students 75.41

The District must continue to refine its processes and ensure that the right and targeted supports are provided to and for our students.
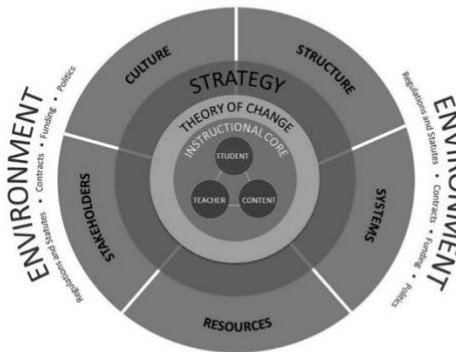
SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | JOURNEY TOWARDS COHERENCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The journey towards improvement is always continual and specific. The past two years of reimagining the educational experience – in response to the COVID-19 pandemic – represent unprecedented challenges, yet unparalleled opportunities. This moment in time has highlighted and, in some instances, exacerbated the educational gaps that existed pre-pandemic. In response, under the leadership of Superintendent Watson-Harris, the District has made strident efforts to strengthen its focus, reimagine learning supports, retool educators, reengage internal and external communities, as well as develop a coherent path that ensures the actualization of our aspirational vision and purpose, which is the Vision of the DeKalb Graduate.

Based on a research-based coherence model (Harvard PELP, Coherence Framework), the District initiated work to strategically enhance the process of how people, work, structure, and culture (Nadler-Tushman, The Coherence Model, 1980) collectively support the instructional core, as represented by the following models:

Graphic VII. Harvard's PELP Coherence Framework (based on the Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model)
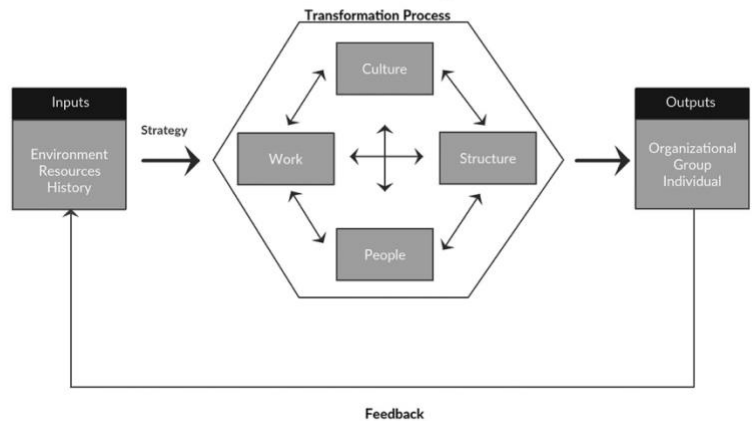
SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | REORGANIZING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Based on the needs of the school district and feedback from stakeholders, a phased approach to reorganize and create divisional support structures was implemented. Realigning departments and divisions, with an emphasis on continuous improvement, the Office of Continuous Improvement was developed, as well as the division of Community Empowerment, Innovation and Partnerships. These two divisions, in conjunction with existing divisions (i.e., Curriculum and Instruction, Equity and Student Empowerment, Information and Instructional Technology, Human Resources, Finance and Facilities) collectively serve as support sources aimed at improving student performance outcomes.

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT OF SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

The District also began the work of differentiating between systems and commitments that were in alignment to its Strategic Plan and which processes were not aligned. As a result, the following table reflects systems and commitments that the District has determined as critical strategic alignments:

TABLE J.

Strategic Alignment of Systems and Processes	
DCSD 2019-2024 Strategic Plan	A time-bound framework that outlines the District's strategy to reach its mission and vision. The plan also includes anticipated achievements within each goal area, as well as key measurable values that demonstrate how effectively the District is achieving its performance objectives.
Superintendent Goals and Objectives (Annual)	DCSD Board of Education-approved expectations related to performance goals and objectives for the Superintendent
Legacy Commitments	District processes and practices that have demonstrated impact that we believe should continue to exist.
COGNIA Domain Area and Performance Standards	Leadership Capacity; Learning Capacity; and Resource Capacity
Strategic Waiver School System - Granted Waivers	Approved GA law related to allowable Local Educational Agency (LEA) flexibilities that support the local needs of the District
Strategic External Community Partnerships	High-leverage partnerships aligned to the needs of schools focused on continuous improvement
Equity Statements	Embedded district-wide practices that promote equitable resource allocation and student/school supports based on identified needs

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VOICE

The District has engaged all its stakeholders to listen, learn, and/or allocate leadership opportunities relative to areas of improvement. These efforts include the following continual forums:
- BOE Principal Surveys
- Principal Roundtables
- Assistant Principal Roundtables
- Superintendent's Medical Advisory Committee
- Equity and Innovation Leadership Fellowships
- P.O.W.E.R Educator Fellowships
- Community Townhalls
- Teacher Talks
- GALLUP Feedback Survey Results
- Learning and Leading with Excellence Team
- Superintendent's Advisory Council
- Teacher Advisory Council
- Student Advisory Council
- Parent and Community Surveys

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | THE DCSD EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

Through a research-driven, collaborative approach, the District developed its first district-wide improvement model, the DCSD Effective Schools Framework. The purpose of the framework is to establish the District's continuous improvement Theory of Action, and clarity of purpose, process, and high-leverage focal areas (based on data) that drive continuous improvement in classrooms, schools, regions, and the district. The framework was developed through a lengthy and extensive process that included research, as well as sustained contributions from internal and external stakeholders. The framework ensures that every teacher, principal, regional superintendent, division leader and the superintendent can connect their purpose and impact related to continuous improvement.

TABLE K.

	The DCSD Effective Schools Framework	
Theory of Action	**If we…** • Engage students in learning environments that are rigorous, culturally relevant, and enhance the diversity of our community • Build trusting relationships and collectively work towards a shared vision of equity and school community empowerment • Intentionally implement policies and practices that ensure equal and equitable access to resources based on identified needs.	**Then…** • Every student in DeKalb will have the same opportunity to reach their potential. • Our core values will guide all our decisions and actions. • All students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful 21st Century learners that will prepare them to thrive in a rapidly evolving global society.
Qualities of an Effective School	**Theme 1:** High Quality Instruction Instruction that focuses on creating culturally relevant classrooms which prepare students for the careers of the future. **Theme 2:** Equity and Access Eliminate the barriers to educational excellence and provide wrap-around services that offer support for scholars. **Theme 3:** High Quality Staff Recruit and retain the highest quality staff for all students by prioritizing staff effectiveness. **Theme 4:** Communication and Partnership Foster a culture of transparency through improved communication and creating a coalition of support for students, parents, and community stakeholders.	
Focus Demographic Groups	**Demographic Group 1:** Black males (all content areas) **Demographic Group 2:** Hispanic males (all content areas) **Demographic Group 3:** Students with Disabilities (all content areas) **Demographic Group 4:** Multilingual Learners (English Language Learners – all content areas)	The focus demographic groups comprise a very specific subgroup of students who – through data – are demonstrating academic, social, emotional, and school engagement distress. The data show that these subgroup sets of students require an equity investment to ensure the District is focused on closing the performance gaps that exist.
District Commitments	**Strategic Action 1** Implement and monitor with fidelity a non-negotiable, evidence-based **Instructional Framework** throughout the District incorporating the adopted DCSD curriculum. **Strategic Action 2** Implement and monitor with fidelity a research-based **Climate & Culture Framework** throughout the District integrating a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approach for all stakeholders. **Strategic Action 3** Implement and monitor with fidelity a research-based **Student & School Community Engagement Framework** throughout the District with integrated early detection and intervention supportive services. **Strategic Action 4** Allocation of identified technology, facility and staffing infrastructure that align with the needs of students to ensure **Functional, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environments**.	The District Commitments (Strategic Actions) emerged from a root cause analysis of three improvement priorities: (1) content mastery, (2) climate and culture, and (3) attendance and chronic absenteeism. These District Commitments serve as the conduit for improvement.
Core Essentials for Improvement	**Core Essential 1: Effective School Leadership** **Core Essential 2: Rigorous Instruction** **Core Essential 3: Student Work & Data-Driven Decision-Making** **Core Essential 4: Professional Learning** **Core Essential 5: Supportive School Environment** **Core Essential 6: Strong Family & Community Ties**	The six **Core Essentials for Improvement** are focused on supporting and guiding schools in the implementation of the Qualities of Effective Schools and the District Commitments (Strategic Actions) at the school level. The Core Essentials for Improvement are an organized set of interdependent elements.

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | EQUITY IN ACTION – FOUR (4) FOCUS DEMOGRAPHIC SUBGROUPS

The Effective Schools Framework identifies four (4) key student demographic groups that are demonstrating to be most at-risk related to academic performance in all content areas, social and emotional well-being, and graduating from high school within four years or possibly not graduating from high school. Data dictate that the following subgroups are most-at risk based on the aforementioned:

Graphic VIII. The Identified Four Demographic Subgroups (Data-Informed Most At-Risk)

| BLACK MALES | HISPANIC MALES | STUDENTS W DISABILITIES | MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS |

This equity-based acknowledgement and focus require that each school (in all regions) closely monitors these at-risk subgroups, consistently, and provide the necessary supports to close academic gaps. The District differentiates between equal access and equitable supports. All students are to have equal access to curricular resources, quality teachers, and comparable learning environments. Each student is expected to receive the necessary supports that best aligns to his or her need(s) to ensure the actualization of equity.

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | IMPROVEMENT PLANNING – REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS AND DIVISIONS

Schools and divisions have consistently utilized continuous improvement plans that are data-driven and include aligned goals and actions. During the 2020-21 school year, clearly defined regional improvement plans were also developed. All district-level (regional and divisional) improvement plans address two key essential questions:

1. *How does the District continually evaluate the needs of schools (as evidenced by data)?*
2. *How does the District continually provide the right and targeted supports to schools (as evidenced by data)?*

At the school-level, the strategic goal areas permeate throughout local school continuous improvement plans, as well. Essential questions at the school-level are extensions from the District's essential questions:

1. *How does the school continually evaluate the needs of students (as evidenced by data)?*
2. *How does the school continually provide the right and targeted supports to students (as evidenced by data)?*

Accordingly, based on the identified S.M.A.R.T. goals (driven by data) within each improvement plan, the district-level actions aimed at supporting schools are monitored for progress, quarterly.

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | PROGRESS MONITORING

Implementing an improvement plan is not enough. Monitoring the progress of the actions within the improvement plans at every level of the organization is key. The following graphic displays a high-level view of process expectations related to quarterly progress monitoring efforts. This process has been enhanced within the past year. Regional Teams and Divisions present their quarterly reviews (e.g., identified academic, SEL, school engagement, projected graduation rate data, aligned supports and outcomes) in a forum that includes the Superintendent, all district-level supporting departments, and selected principals. As reviews are conducted, real-time decisions are determined on the spot based on the needs shared within each region.

Graphic IX. Quarterly Progress Monitoring Process (Ex. Q1 – Q2)
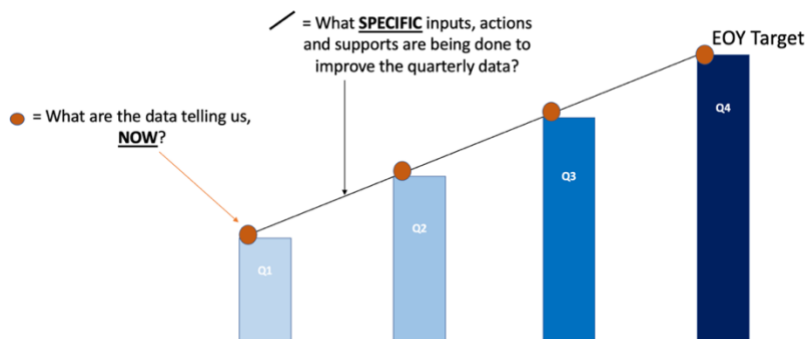
Graphic X. Quarterly Progress Monitoring Process (Ex. Q2 – Q3)
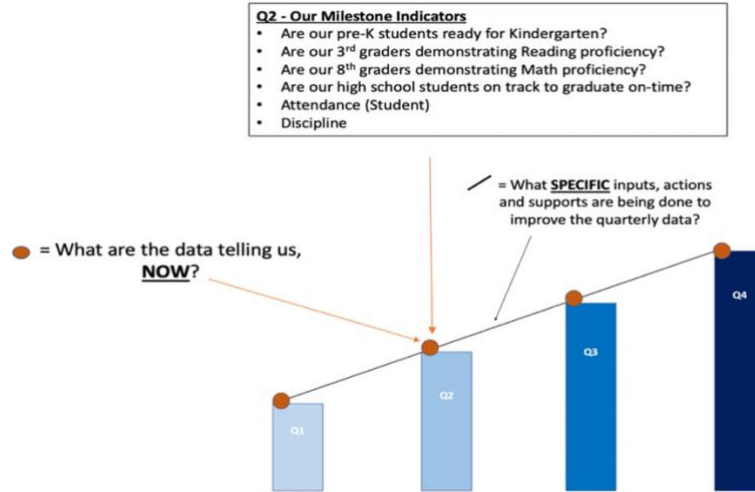
As schools consistently monitor student progress through common formative impact checks (e.g., student work, school-based and District assessments, on/off track projections towards graduation, etc.), the District's divisions and regional superintendent offices also progress monitor through the utilization of the same common formative impact checks.

While monitoring the academic health and well-being of our students is primary, the District also recognizes that there are conditional factors that must also be addressed, supported, and monitored for progress that impact the learning experiences of our scholars. As an example, the District also monitors the social and emotional health and well-being of our scholars based on multiple key performance indicators such as counseling referral data, absentee data, discipline data, and others. Likewise, monitoring the progress of other key conditions for learning (e.g., school facilities, fiscal responsiveness, technology infrastructure, and human capital needs) is essential to high-quality learning environments.
Parental and community empowerment and inclusion within the educational partnership experience is also analyzed and supported based on data. As with the improvement focal areas, ensuring positive and fully collaborative partnerships between the school/district and community is also monitored for progress.

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | DCSD HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

TABLE L.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS			
	Increase in ACT and SAT scores		
ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS	**FY21 Title I Distinguished Schools** Congratulations to the following schools that have been named FY21 Title I Distinguished Schools. The schools represent the top 5% of Georgia schools based on the single 2019 CCRPI score by GA DOE. • Chestnut Elementary School • DeKalb Early College Academy • Fernbank Elementary School • Livsey Elementary School • Smoke Rise Elementary School • Wadsworth Magnet Elementary School • Wynbrooke Elementary School		
	National ESEA Distinguished School Smoke Rise Elementary has been named as a National ESEA Distinguished School by the Georgia Department of Education! They were one of two schools selected for national recognition because of the success of their educational programs and the progress made by their students.		
	COGNIA STEM CERTIFIED SCHOOLS		
	Ashford Park ES	Austin ES	Avondale ES
	Briarlake ES	Chapel Hill ES	Chesnut ES
	DeKalb Academy of Technology and Environment (D.A.T.E.)	Evansdale ES	Hawthorne ES
	Hightower ES	Huntley Hills ES	Kingsley ES
	Laurel Ridge ES	Livsey ES	Midvale ES

	Montgomery ES	Oakcliff Theme ES	Oak Grove ES
	Ronald McNair Discovery Learning Academy ES	Smokerise ES	Vanderlyn ES
	Wadsworth Magnet	Chamblee MS	Champion Theme MS
	Peachtree Charter MS	Ronald E. McNair MS	Stone Mountain MS

	GADOE STEM/STEAM + COGNIA CERTIFIED SCHOOLS • Dunwoody ES (GADOE STEAM + COGNIA) • Henderson Mill ES (GADOE STEAM + COGNIA) • Sagamore Hills ES (GADOE STEM + COGNIA) • Tucker MS (GADOE STEM)
	GRADUATION RATES ABOVE 95% (2021) • Arabia Mountain HS (98.81%) • DeKalb Early College Academy (98.51%) • DeKalb School of the Arts (97.53%) **EXITS CSI STATE-IDENTIFICATION (2021 GRAD RATE IMPROVEMENT)** • Clarkston HS (+12.85%) **OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS WITH GRAD RATE INCREASES | 2021** • Chamblee HS (+8.55%) • Columbia HS (+0.20%) • Cross Keys HS (+1.17%) • Druid Hills HS (+1.11) • Miller Grove HS (+2.42%) • Towers HS (+14.50) • Tapestry Charter (+7.54)
STUDENT AND STAFF WELLNESS	• My Brother's Keeper (MBK) • My Sister's Keeper (MSK) • School-based Health Center at Doraville United ES • Safe Center at Cross Keys HS
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	• The Mobile Impact Hub • Superintendent's Newsletter (Community Engagement) • GED Education Courses • Refugee Impact Huddle • Escucha (Spanish Language Televised Programming) • Partnership Roundtable
CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING	• State Financial Audit Results • Adoption of Zero-Based Budgeting Process (driven by needs) • Development of Longitudinal Public-Facing Data Dashboards (Stakeholder Communication Commitment) • Digital Dreamers Initiative • Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) • Facility Support Improvement | Work Order Closures • Staff Wellness Initiative • COVID Response | Staff Wellness Incentives • New Applicant Tracking System

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | LOOKING FORWARD – 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

Using what we know and have learned affords the District insight into its vision for the 2022-23 school year. With input from our stakeholders, as well as an assessment of the district continuous improvement needs (in fulfilment of the DCSD 2019-2024 Strategic Plan), our 2022-2023 Theory of Action and supporting areas of focus based on the District's 4 Key Pillars have been developed.

The SY22-23 Theory of Action

IF WE COMMIT TO:
- **EQUITY:** Eliminate all barriers for student success, inclusive of access to excellent teachers, technology and connectivity, social-emotional supports, research-based and relevant instructional materials, and enriching learning experiences

- **EXCELLENCE:** Create the district-wide conditions for students and schools to be successful, inclusive of seamless district operations, excellent facilities and human resources, and transparent budget and decision-making processes

- **EMPOWERMENT:** Empower coalitions of teachers, staff, families, and partners with the consistent communication, transparent access to data, and authentic engagement opportunities to guide our district forward

THEN OUR:
- **STUDENTS** will learn in classrooms that meet their distinct academic and social emotional needs and spark a lifelong love for learning

- **STAFF** will work in environments that support their professional growth, equip them with the resources they need to succeed, and engage in a collaborative and empowering culture

- **COMMUNITY OF STAKEHOLDERS** will have their voices heard in decision making processes and have the information and tools necessary to support student learning

SO THAT WE:
- Achieve our birth to postsecondary success milestones
- Close access and achievement gaps for our prioritized students
- Equip students with DCSD graduate traits to access their preferred future

In support of our Strategic Plan, we have identified four (4) key pillars that will operationalize our 2022-23 Theory of Action in support of the instructional core (PELP, Graphic VII). Please note the 2022-2023 DCSD Pillars in the table, below:

TABLE M.

DCSD SY22-23 FOCI: EQUITY – EXCELLENCE - EMPOWERMENT		
PILLARS	**VISION FOR SUCCESS**	**ESF CORE ESSENTIALS**
ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	Teachers use culturally relevant, research- and evidence-based instructional materials to deliver excellent instruction to all students, every day. Teachers engage in continuous cycles of collaborative, content-specific professional learning to deepen their mastery of standards and practices.	1, 2, 3 and 4
STUDENT & STAFF WELLNESS	School leadership teams are equipped with the tools and training needed to integrate social emotional learning and equitable behavioral policies and practices. Staff receive the physical, mental health, and financial supports needed to bring their best selves to work each day.	5
FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Families and the DCSD community are true partners in addressing the needs of all students. Strategic partnerships provide capacity and support to implement all initiatives.	6
CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING	The comprehensive master plan is implemented to ensure schools have sufficient capacity for students, are safe, well maintained, and support student learning. Excellent human resources practices result filling all vacancies with exceptional staff. Budget and decision-making processes are transparent and inclusive.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | A TIERED APPROACH | SCHOOL SUPPORTS

Based on the diverse needs of schools, the District has begun the process of implementing tiered-based support (and hence, tiered autonomy) based on various key performance indicators. The tiers of support and autonomy are primarily based on student performance data, as the GADOE uses school performance data to determine which schools in the state are performing below expectations. While the District considers state designations (such as CSI and TSI schools – qualified by overall CCRPI data for academic performance or graduation rate), the District also has created an internal heatmap that supports schools based on additional factors. The District's state-identified schools with academic or graduation rate performance that demonstrate below required state targets are internally identified as Horizon schools, and currently receive targeted support across regions, divisions and with valued partnership with GADOE. As schools demonstrate higher rates of performance, the level of support is differentiated, as well as the level of local school autonomy. On the opposite end of the tiering of supports are the Lighthouse schools. Schools within this tier demonstrate the highest level of sustained performance. This tiering of supports and autonomy process is in the process of being calibrated and pending whole-scale roll-out, along with a strategic communications strategy is scheduled for the 2022-2023 school year. The following graphic denotes designation nomenclature relative to support and autonomy (continuum from left to right = state-identified to highest sustained performance):

Graphic XI. 2022-23 TIERED SUPPORTS (Evidence-Based Earned Autonomy Continuum)
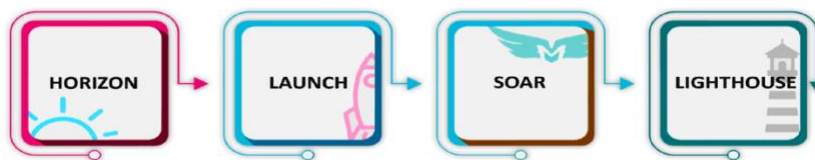
Note: Horizon Schools = state-identified schools

Horizon schools receive deeper and broader supports based on school needs by all divisions and all regional offices. Additionally, Horizon schools receive a higher level of funding allocations and are prioritized with regards to resources. Horizon schools are supported through professional development, social and emotional internal/external supports, prioritized hiring, and resource allocations.

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | PROMISING PRACTICES AND INNOVATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

As with all school districts in GA, DCSD received its allocation of CARES I, II and III funds in response to the educational impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures, and the needs for learning recovery. Research supports the fact that across most school districts, student learning was negatively impacted due to less-than-optimal educational experiences, since March 2020, when the District initially transitioned to a 100% virtual instructional delivery model. Now that most of our students have returned, the District has a unique opportunity using ARP CARES III to reimagine the educational experiences and supports that our students need. CARES funding affords the District with an opportunity to strengthen and broaden promising practices that exist and demonstrate successful outcomes.

Where the District has identified gaps and a lack of resources to meet an existing need, the CARES dollars allow for innovative solutions, resources, partnerships and more to meet the needs of our students.

Additionally, stakeholder input and internal assessments of needs are collectively driving the itemization of supports based on need. Examples of how the CARES dollars have and will continue to be used as investments to support students and staff are as follows:
- equipping identified schools with health and wellness centers
- building capacity of staff through professional development that will continue to live beyond the end of the CARES grant
- addressing school and technology infrastructure needs
- allocating educational resources based on need
- targeting and resolving staffing gaps
- purchasing district-wide data-visualization solutions for staff to access all relevant data sources for a complete understanding of the whole child
- providing district-wide staff incentives towards staff retention efforts

SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN | CONCLUDING STATEMENT

DCSD's improvement journey is a strategic one. Over the past two years, the District has built upon its legacy commitments (as noted in Table I.) and made collaborative evaluations of systems, structures, and practices that needed to be coherently aligned in support of the Strategic Plan. The pandemic has presented a unique set of needs, which has urged the continual progression of engaging stakeholders to narrow the educational gaps that exist.

Although the District has enjoyed some notable successes, we understand that there is more work needed to ensure that every single student, regardless of socio-economic status or demographic, deserves an effective school with highly effective educators, supported by district-level stakeholders based on time-sensitive needs. The District will continue to make any necessary shifts and embrace extraordinary partnerships on its path to excellence. Our tiered approach to supporting schools will provide differentiation and specialization based on school and community needs. Understanding that the conditions for learning (e.g., infrastructure, facilities management, hiring and retaining excellent staff, and resource allocation) are equally as important as the instructional focus on standards, student engagement, lesson delivery, data-informed practices, and close monitoring of students, school, regional and district performance. By staying committed to the goals, vision, and mission of our Strategic Plan, we believe that we will consistently actualize our Vision for the DeKalb Graduate.

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms:
CTAE – Career Technical Agricultural Education
DCSD – DeKalb County School District
ESF – Effective Schools Framework
PELP – Public Education Leadership Project (Harvard)
EASA – Elementary and Secondary Education Act
CSI – Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI, CSI Alternative, and CSI Promise Schools)
TSI – Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI Schools)
CCRPI – College and Career Performance Index
CARES – Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
ARP – American Rescue Plan
GADOE – GA Department of Education

KEY LINKS
2019-2024 Strategic Plan and Key Resources (also contained within the virtual artifacts binder shared with the Review Team)
Balanced Scorecard

Tables
Table A. DCSD Support Divisions
Table B. DCSD School Choice Programs and Offerings
Table C. DCSD Racial Demographic (Students)
Table D. DCSD English Learner Continents of Origin Data
Table E. DCSD Language and Dialect Total p/Region
Table F. Median Household Income and Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage Data p/Region
Table G. Total Number of Students by Grade Band/School Type and Free and Reduced Lunch Total Data
Table H. Free and Reduced Lunch Status (Percentage) by Region | Alternative | Centers | Charters
Table I. 2019-2024 DCSD Strategic Goal Areas and Performance Objectives
Table J. Strategic Alignment of Systems and Processes
Table K. DCSD Effective Schools Framework
Table L. DCSD Highlights and Accomplishments
Table M. DCSD SY2022-23 Foci: "Equity – Excellence – Empowerment"

Graphics
Graphic I.   The Vision for the DeKalb Graduate
Graphic II.   Trend Data | Kindergarten Readiness (GKIDS Assessment Data) – Birth to Post-Secondary Milestone
Graphic III.   Trend Data | 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency (GA Milestones Assessment Data) – Birth to Post-Secondary Milestone
Graphic IV.   Trend Data | 3rd Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiency (GA Milestones Assessment Data) – Birth to Post-Secondary Milestone
Graphic V.   Trend Data | 8th Grade Math Proficiency (GA Milestones Assessment Data) – Birth to Post-Secondary Milestone
Graphic VI.   Trend Data | High School Graduation Rates (4-yr Cohort p/Subgroup) – Birth to Post-Secondary Milestone
Graphic VII. Harvard's PELP Coherence Framework and Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model
Graphic VIII. Identified Four Demographic Subgroups (Data-Informed)
Graphic IX.   Quarterly Progress Monitoring Process (Ex. Q1 – Q2)
Graphic X.   Quarterly Progress Monitoring Process (Ex. Q2 – Q3)
Graphic XI.   2022-2023 Tiered Supports (Evidenced-Based Earned Autonomy Continuum)