

***Academic Report Document - April***

**Mrs. Michelle Dillard**  
**Chief of Schools**

Schools and Leadership have been very productive this month. The Area Teams have been providing support to schools based on the feedback and recommended actions from the CCVs. We just completed our end of the year Retreat (Return on Investment-Optimizing Results-It's 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter). Our schools have been testing for the milestones and have done a great job in preparing our scholars for the assessment.

We provided CSIP training for the principals, including bringing members from their school to receive it too. Four departments collaborated to provide CSIP Calibration to the teams to be prepared to provide feedback when we review the schools CSIP.

The Tri-Learning team (Chief Stepney, Dr. Mitchell and I) have continued to meet weekly for coherence purposes and discuss issues that impact schools. We have added Dr. Sauce to be part of the group now and we have been discussing the number of GT scholars and how to provide additional support to schools for identification purposes.

We celebrated our administrative assistants as well for an entire week. Each day we had a different them and provided them with a small token daily. Each of them received an H-PRIDE shadow box with their dominant H-PRIDE core value.

**Beth Kyle**  
**Area 1 Elementary Schools**

April was a busy month even with spring break. The area teams supported schools with testing so that students and staff could do their best work. The schools are not just with testing but with the closing out the 2023-2024 school year strong. The schools have dedicated time to thoroughly review their CCV reports and reality check data to begin refining their instructional program and develop their 2024-2025 CSIPs, hiring, needed staff and develop schedules.

A couple of highlights for this past month include, Sagamore Hills was selected as a recipient for a NASA Moon Tree. They were selected from over 1,300 applicants during an application process held by the NASA Office of STEM Engagement and the USDS Forest Service. They will have a school-wide event on May 2 to utilize the provided instructional resources and prepare their seedling for planting. Woodward and Doraville United will be hosting representatives from the Dominican Republic in partnership with Mercer University. The team be visiting both sites to observe English Language Arts Instruction to see how each school has implemented the Science of Reading. They will also observe collaborative planning in order to take some lessons learned back to the Dominican Republic.

**Trenton Arnold**  
**Area 2 Elementary Superintendent**

April always begins with a focus on state assessments, and Area 2 schools have worked to ensure that students are provided with an opportunity to successfully participate in the Milestones; however, teaching and learning does not pause. Classroom instruction has continued, and staff are working hard to close the year and meet the highest expectations. Schools have been hard at work on their 2024-2025 Continuous School Improvement Plans (CSIP) and are looking forward to the support from the various divisions assisting as well as the Area Team.

Avondale ES had seven students participate in the 4th Annual Black History Month Youth Art Contest hosted by the Avondale Alliance for Racial Justice, with two students receiving awards for their artwork. Kudos also go out to Ms. Islam, Avondale's awesome art teacher! Indian Creek ES held their "Walking and Rolling to School" event in late March, and at Dunaire ES, the students created musical instruments out of recycled materials in an effort to support students as they not only apply S.T.E.A.M. principles but also guarantee that they have continual access to musical creativity! Additionally, the school's percussion ensemble performed at the Music in the Parks Festival where they clinched 1st place in both the Elementary and Junior High Percussion Ensemble categories. Kudos go out to teacher Chelsea Cook for her dedication and support towards these talented students!

**Ateshia Lester**  
**Area 3 Elementary Schools**

The Area 3 Team is working with all schools on writing their SY 24-25 consolidated school improvement plan. Also, Area 3 Principals continued their monthly literacy initiative with the Rollins Center focusing on Vocabulary and Structured Literacy Assessment and Instruction.

Some highlights from our local schools include Barack Obama, Bob Mathis ES, Cedar Grove ES and Kelley Lake ES having the highest engagement scores from the Gallup Survey. Allison Vo, a scholar at Rainbow ES, won the second-grade district Young Georgia Authors Writing contest. Area 3 has completed the principal selection process for Marbut Theme.

**Jacqueline Taylor**  
**Area Superintendent – Middle Area**

During April, the Middle School Area welcomed two new principals at Tucker Middle and Peachtree Middle. The EAs participated in the principal onboarding meeting for two new principals and provided follow-up sessions to include planning, staffing, and allotment support. We have also been focusing on concluding CCVs, providing support to schools during testing, supporting the CSIP process, preparing for next school year, and ramping up our school climate practices.

MS principals were provided with qualitative CCV data reports that included powerful practices, opportunities for improvement, recommended actions, and resources to support recommended actions. Principals and schools have also been provided virtual CSIP support sessions both as a group and one-on-one from the EAs and ACC.

MS Coordinators and PLF continue to provide teachers with demo lessons, co-teaching, modeling, feedback, small group instruction, and collaborative planning support. All to enhance student engagement and foster critical thinking.

MS Culture & Climate (C&C) Coordinators facilitated and completed the initial Culture & Climate School Team meetings at each school including sharing District Reality Check data. Also, C&C held another Assistant Principal virtual session to provide school-based reminders and to identify any immediate needs prior to the GMAS district-wide administration.

The Middle School Area Team began planning for the 2024-2025 school year. The areas of focus include a middle school ELT structure template, collaborative planning blueprint, prioritization of middle school professional learning, in-school intervention, and a restorative practice rollout.

**Area Superintendent – High Schools:**

During the month of April, the High School Area made great strides on three priorities 1.) assessment preparation and administration 2.) operation graduation 3.) climate and culture engagement:

1. Area High Schools were engaged in mock assessments emphasizing writing and ensuring scholars were prepared to be successful in all content areas. Also, high schools had a great spring administration of the end-of-course test filled with excitement and expectations of positive outcomes. The High School Area Team did walkthroughs at the schools in the area in an effort to ensure schools were prepared to begin testing to support a smooth implementation of the testing process for all schools.

2. Operation Graduation was also a key focus for the month, with schools participating in bi-weekly meetings evaluating credit attainment, class grade progress monitoring, and developing action plans for scholars that may need additional support to ensure that graduation was realized. The High School Area Team has made graduation rate cohort monitoring and support a top priority for the area. The area team is attending Grad Rate Cohort meetings and providing additional support as needed to ensure the appropriate safety nets are provided for students as well as ensuring the data is as clean as possible in preparation for grad rate cohort calculations.
3. Climate and culture continued to be paramount throughout the month, with Climate and Culture Coordinators engaging with the F.A.C.E. advocates and climate and culture teams to ensure that school communities were inclusive and fostered belonging based on artifacts that were submitted in their CCVs. The entire High School Area Team went to every school during the month of April and observed supervision for every school during either arrival, lunch, or dismissal. Every school received feedback about the effectiveness of their supervision with recommendations. Schools were tiered and revisited and given additional feedback based on the initial visit. Supervision is a high priority for the High School Area for the remainder of the year. The other priorities for the month have been CSIP preparation The Valedictorians and Salutatorians.

**Celebrations:**

- We welcome our new Area Superintendent, Thomas Glanton and look forward to his leadership
  - DeKalb High School of Technology South became H-Pride Certified
  - Stephenson High School received the Innovations Grant
  - Redan High School was a Spotlight School and opened a new Safe Center
  - Georgia Scholars were recognized from: Chamblee, Dunwoody, and Southwest DeKalb
  - REACH Scholars were recognized at Arabia Mountain and Tucker HS
  - Lakeside HS, Chamblee HS and Dunwoody HS were recognized as Athletic Champions in Swimming and Diving
  - Lakeside High School Reading Bowl Team was the 2024 Champion of the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl
  - Cedar Grove had their annual Sneaker Ball for MOID students in celebration of Exceptional Education Week
- [H-Pride Video presented by Southwest DeKalb at one of the last CCVs](#)

**Triscilla Weaver**  
**Area Horizon Superintendent**

Horizon Area students **Julianna Cole (6<sup>th</sup> grade) of Bethune Middle School** and **Jalasha Maddox (9<sup>th</sup> grade) of Clarkston High School** were both first place grade level winners for the writing competition sponsored by the Georgia Language Arts Supervisors.

Many congratulations to **Towers High School's Media Specialist, Djeneba Muhammad** for being named the DCSD Library Media Specialist of the Year! Ms. Muhammad was honored at the April Board Meeting.

Horizon Area Schools, **Salem Middle** and **Flat Rock Elementary**, were both awarded \$10,000 DCSD Innovation Grants.

**Michelle Jones**  
**Area Specialty Superintendent**

The focus for the month for Specialty Area for April has been preparing for the testing environment at all schools. Additionally, we are following up on CCVs with requested or needed support based on the feedback. Support is being provided for the CSIP process and master scheduling.

We have celebrated at several schools this month. Kittredge Magnet school won the State competition for the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl. Both Kittredge and Robert Shaw have advanced to state for Science Olympiad. DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts had several students compete at the National History Day competition and winners will be competing at the national level.

We welcomed and onboarded a new team member to our Specialty Area team, Latisha Dixon, our Special Education Coordinator.

**Kedra Fairweather**  
**Leadership**  
**Development**

We are thrilled to provide you with an update on the outstanding progress within our Leadership Development department. Through April, our team has been diligently engaged in many activities aimed at enhancing leadership capabilities across the district. We've been focused on wrapping up ongoing initiatives, introducing fresh leadership development opportunities such as our Executive Leadership Series, and offering crucial support to new principals, all while preparing for our upcoming events.

First and foremost, we are excited to announce the finalization of Phase III of our Legal Symposium, scheduled for April 30, 2024. Additionally, we are eagerly gearing up for our Summer Leadership Conference themed "Disrupting for Excellence: New Levels, New Heights," which promises to be a transformative experience for our leaders. In light of the importance of safety awareness, we've included a presentation on CRASE (Civilians' Response to Active Shooter Events) from our Public Safety team in lieu of the Title IX session at the upcoming Legal Symposium. Ensuring our leaders have the necessary knowledge to handle safety concerns is paramount to our mission.

One of our recent collaborations involved assisting a Coordinator II in Special Education with their professional learning session. It's been incredibly rewarding to work with our colleagues, sharing insights, strategies, and best practices to enhance professional development opportunities across departments.

Looking ahead to the 2024-2025 school year, we are actively engaged in strategic planning to elevate further our support for principals, assistant principals, and central office leaders. From outlining the New Principal Academy to developing comprehensive learning plans for assistant principals, our focus remains on fostering extraordinary leadership at every level.

Our Summer Leadership Conference planning is well underway, and we are dedicated to aligning breakout sessions and learning objectives with the needs of our leaders. We're excited to provide a dynamic and enriching experience that will empower our leaders to excel in their roles and drive positive change in our schools and communities.

Lastly, our commitment to supporting new principals through mentoring and coaching remains steadfast. With over 300 touchpoints already provided, we are dedicated to ensuring their seamless integration into their new roles within the district.

**Candace  
Alexander  
Professional  
Learning**

Our collective effort has led to the achievement of our goal-100% central office staff are now trained to enter PL sessions into Frontline, mark attendance, and access the survey data. This is a significant milestone that wouldn't have been possible without each individual's contribution. School-based PLLs have also played a crucial role by starting to submit their documents/artifacts, which are now being reviewed and processed. To prepare the schedule for New Teacher Orientation, communication has been shared with departments to submit their session information. We are collaborating with Federal Programs to develop the Summer 2024 PL Catalog based on sessions submitted for teachers to receive stipends for attending PLs during the summer months. **Kudos Ms. Vestal!**

***Professional Learning Request*** link continues to show progress, with 28 requests in total (+7), including 17 closed (+3), 11 in progress (+1) reflecting a dedication to continuous professional learning in the district. Developing ***'EmpowerED Teaching: Innovate Your Lesson Plans with the GRID Method,'*** a PL to enhance teaching skills by developing self-paced, learner-driven lesson plans emphasizing mastery and standards-based education, utilizing tiered learning targets and aligned learning tasks to maximize learner achievement and foster transformative learning experiences. Developing ***'Visualizing Learning: Unlocking Potential with Thinking Maps,'*** a PL to explore Thinking Maps' potential, from Circle Maps to Bridge Maps, with practical strategies to enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and content mastery across subjects and grade levels. Developing ***'Circle & Bubble Maps in Focus: Translating Ideas Into Writing,'*** PL to integrate Thinking Maps into writing instruction, providing essential tools to explore effective writing elements, understand grade-level expectations, and scaffold student writing across genres. Developing ***'Maximizing Student Achievement: Leveraging the CCRPI Content Mastery***

**Projection Tool,** a PL to analyze projected scores, identify instructional priorities, implement interventions, and drive data-informed instruction to maximize student achievement in alignment with state standards.

This month, our collaboration with Para Academy's paraprofessionals has been fruitful. We have primarily focused on enhancing their capabilities in lesson planning and tailoring instruction. The in-depth strategies we provided have been customized to meet the diverse needs of individual students, ensuring that educational support is both effective and inclusive. The impact of these sessions on the paraprofessionals' capabilities is evident, making them feel empowered and valued in their roles.

In alignment with the superintendent's "Elevation" theme, we have initiated the planning of an inspiring end-of-year event for the My Brother's Keeper program. The planned activities include a motivational walk-up Stone Mountain, designed to symbolize the elevation of our participants' aspirations and achievements. This event aims to celebrate the year's progress and inspire continued growth and achievement among the young men involved.

Initial sessions with the Museum School have been conducted, focusing on effective ways to engage middle school-aged boys. These discussions have been instrumental in developing targeted approaches to better meet the educational and developmental needs of this group, enhancing their overall school experience and engagement.

The recent training sessions held with the Fleet Services department have been met with positive feedback and tangible results. These successes have led to additional requests for further training opportunities within the department, reflecting a strong appreciation for the value these programs bring to their team's development and operational efficiency.

The classes with HB671 have maintained steady numbers and active participation throughout the sessions. This consistency highlights the sustained interest and commitment of the participants, contributing significantly to the course's overall success. **Nice job, Dr. Fuller!**

The H-PRIDE movement is being systematically advanced through the H-PRIDE Certification program in Spring 2024. This program provides detailed descriptions of the H-PRIDE shared language and explains specific mindsets and motives that demonstrate the H-PRIDE Core Values. The second session of the three H-PRIDE Certification Spring 2024 sessions was held on April 10th, and more than 160 participants, including Teachers, Paraprofessionals, HR, Coordinators, Academic Coaches, and Area personnel, attended the session. We are currently processing stipends and artifacts for session 2 and leaving feedback to promote engagement before the third H-PRIDE Certification session scheduled on May 1st.

The H-PRIDE Certification program has allowed participants to become more familiar with the H-PRIDE Core Values and Shared Language. They can now confidently and proudly identify how and when they

demonstrate H-PRIDE in their work and explain how their actions contribute to school conditions that support student success. Keep up the great work **Dr. Norwood!**

### **James Jackson Executive Director Athletics**

- **Lakeside Knocks Off Dunwoody 14-9 for State Playoff Berth**

The Lakeside Lady Vikings rallied from an early 3-0 deficit to defeat the Dunwoody Lady Wildcats 14-9 at Adams Stadium on Wednesday night to secure a Class 5A-6A state playoff berth out of Area 1.

- **Southwest DeKalb Tennis Team Wins Off the Court with Community Service**

Southwest DeKalb hits a winner off the court by serving up community service as 18 team members recently trekked to the Atlanta Community Food Bank's primary warehouse facility to help get food out to those in need across the Atlanta Metro area. Coaches Daelyn Turner and Lance Davenport joined in as the team members started by sorting and packing donated food items in the facility near Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The group also packed food into care boxes that were readied for delivery to supplemental food pantries, mobile markets and those metro-area families and residents in need. ears.

### **Stephenson, Tucker Tie for DeKalb Track & Field Championships Title**

The 2024 DeKalb County Napoleon Cobb Boys' Track and Field Championships title came down to the last event of the day with Stephenson closing in on Tucker to tie for the title on finals day at William "Buck" Godfrey Stadium.

### **Druid Hills Goes Back-to-Back at DCSD Girls Track and Field Championships**

Five gold medals and two new DeKalb County track and field records were part Coach Henrietta George's Druid Hills Lady Red Devils' run to a second consecutive DeKalb County Track and Field Championships title.

The **Chamblee girl's gymnastic team** won the 2024 DeKalb School District County Championship.

The **Lakeside JV baseball team** won the 2024 DeKalb County School District County Championship.

The following Soccer Teams have qualified for the 2024 State Playoffs in Soccer. Congratulations and best of luck!

### **14 STATE PLAYOFF TEAMS**

#### **CLASS 5A**

**Chamblee**, boys and girls  
**Tucker**, boys and girls  
**Arabia Mountain**, girls  
**Cross Keys**, boys

#### **CLASS 4A**

**Clarkston**, boys and girls  
**Druid Hills**, boys and girls

#### **CLASS 3A**

**Cedar Grove**, boys and girls

**CLASS 2A**

**Towers**, boys and girls

**17 Teams qualified for the state playoffs in Tennis**

**CLASS 6A**

**Lakeside**, boys and girls

**Dunwoody** boys and girls

**CLASS 5A**

**Chamblee (11-3)**, boys and girls

**Tucker** boys and girls

**Arabia Mountain** boys

**M.L. King** girls

**CLASS 4A**

**Druid Hills** boys and girls

**Clarkston** boys and girls

**CLASS 3A**

**Cedar Grove** girls

**CLASS 2A**

**Redan** boys and girls

Congratulations to the following baseball teams for making the GHSA playoffs.

6A

Dunwoody

5A

Chamblee

Tucker

Martin Luther King

4A

Druid Hills

Southwest DeKalb

3A

Cedar Grove

2A

Redan

**Chamblee's Brian Ely Picks Up Baseball Career Victory 300.** Ely has compiled a 300-217 (.580) record in his 19 seasons (2006-2024) at the helm of the Bulldog baseball program to move to sixth on the DeKalb County coaching victories list.

**Dr. Markisha Mitchell**  
**Chief of Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

The month of April started off strong with the start of the Georgia Milestones Assessment. The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 will take an end-of-grade assessment in each content area, while high school students will take an end-of-course assessment for each of the eight courses designated by the State Board of Education.

Our small but mighty assessment team is working daily to support School Test Coordinators (STCs) and schools with typical and atypical testing issues. Testing concludes the last week of April.

Over the last two months and in collaboration with C&I and the School Leadership team, we have revised the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The improvement plan now includes the Six Systems, SMARTIE goals and action steps aligned with the district's instructional frameworks. All school leaders and district support staff have been trained in the revised expectations. Next week the participating divisions will host virtual support for school leaders based upon their needs.

**Dr. Myisha Warren**  
**Executive Director of Federal Programs**

I participate in monthly GaDOE meetings for Title I, Title II, & ESSER to receive state and federal updates.

Title I & School Improvement Coordinators continuously meet with schools to discuss CSIPs, budgets, requisitions, travel, and progress monitoring. I review all school and district plans, budgets, and review all requisitions for Title I, Title II, and ESSER to ensure that they are aligned to the intent of the grants. Schools should have 90% of their allocations spent by June 7, 2024.

Federal Programs, HR, Allotments, and the Planning department worked collaboratively together to become comparable!

The CSIP cross-divisional committee revised the CSIP template, trained CSIP reviewers, provided CSIP training to school-based leadership groups, and conducted CSIP collaboration meetings.

Federal Programs began preparing for the District Summer Professional by revising documents, guiding training with facilitators who will be conducting PL, and reviewing the courses for allowability and the appropriate funding source.

We met with all Federal Programs directors for the upcoming Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) meetings. The purpose of the CLIP is to coordinate DCSD's federal funds through Georgia's systems of continuous improvement to provide students with supports and services from supplemental federal funds

I am also working with Alain Love-Davis, the new Equitable Services Director, to review all plans, budgets, and approve all requisitions. We began meeting with private school and charter school officials regarding FY24 closeout and the upcoming FY25 plans and budgets.

As the acting ESSER/CARES Director (**VACANT Position**), I attended the monthly GaDOE Meetings. The team met with various divisions to discuss budgets and final supports needed. The team reviews all requests to ensure they are aligned to the grant's intent, we review all budgets, and approve all requisitions. We are working collaboratively with finance to provide several reports to the GaDOE.

Academic Coach Coordinators - From 3/1/24 - 4/24/24 supported 121 schools and over 160 Academic coaches. Their efforts included but were not limited to:

- Planning with Area Superintendents/Area Teams
  - Area Learning Walks
  - CCVs
- Conducting Professional Learning for Academic Coaches:
  - March Academic Coaches Academy (3/22/24)
    - Topics:
      - The Science of Reading
      - Integrated Approach to Student Achievement
      - Area breakout sessions
    - Collaborative Learning Sessions
      - Differentiated topics based on Area needs
        - Topics included but were not limited to:
          - Individual AC Data presentations

- Continued work with The Georgia Early Literacy Act HB 538 (Early Literacy and Phonics)
- MAP Data
- Equity in the Classroom: Essays From 10 Educational Leaders -- Book Study (continued)
- CCRPI Targets and High Impact students
- April CSIP Support Session - Professional Development (All Areas)
  - 3/25/24 - 3/29/24
  - Topics:
    - Root Cause Analysis
- Knowledge Building for Leaders Professional Development (Area leaders)
  - Topics:
    - Structured Literacy
- GMAS testing support
  - Ongoing
- Math Carnival Support
  - 3/16/24
- Continued support for coaches with technical assistance (face-to-face or virtual support) which included but was not limited to coaching conversations centered around the expectations for the 23-24 school year: (Instructional Coaching Tool, Coaching Plans of Support, Tiered System of Support, collaborative planning, observations, and Tier I instructional support plans).
- Conducting weekly ACC Team calibration meetings
- Collecting CSIP Improvement Strategy data from the months of March 2024 and April 2024 (data were submitted by coaches on 3/5/24 and 4/12/24)
- Continued assistance for coaches who made late transitions from the classroom after the 45-day mandate from DCSD
- Attending Short-Term Action Plan (STAP) Meetings
- Attending District Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) Meetings

**Dr. Rebecca Braaten**  
**Director of Research, Data and Evaluation**

We are excited to announce that we have added two (2) new members to the department. Abel Rojas and Elijah Ardister are our new Data Analysts. Abel transitioned to the department from Educational Media, and Elijah is a recent Georgia State University graduate.

In April, one RDE team member participated in the Read Across DeKalb literacy event at two DCSD schools, and another team member judged graduate-level student policy briefs and grant proposals at Georgia State University, assisting Dr. Sass, one of our Georgia Policy Labs partners.

In addition, Georgia Policy Labs (GPL) at Georgia State University requested that an RDE team member attend the Second Annual RESTART Network National Forum held by the American Institutes for Research in Arlington, Virginia, on April 23 and 24, 2024. The forum focused on actionable insights from research and practice to support pandemic recovery. The forum highlights the partnership between DCSD and GPL and our collaborative research efforts to recover learning loss. GPL covered all travel expenses.

Thirteen (13) research proposals have been processed since our last monthly report. Eight (8) of the thirteen (13) have been reviewed; of the eight, two were local school research studies. Four (4) of the remaining five (5) are scheduled to be reviewed this month; one is missing documents, so it has not been assigned to reviewers. The Research Review Board is scheduled to hold its Spring review meeting on Monday, May 20th.

The department processed nine (9) electronic online document requests during April. Of those nine (9), four (4) were online registration/application forms, three (3) were event/training feedback surveys, and two (2) were stakeholder surveys. The electronic online documents were created for the following divisions/departments:

- Accountability & Continuous Improvement
- Board of Education
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Schools & Leadership

The district data dashboard webpage now has one (1) new public-facing dashboard. The dashboard is located on the Graduation Rates tab: Pathway Completers Graduation Rates. In addition, the ACT and EOY Balanced Scorecard dashboards have been redesigned and updated to include 2023 metrics.

As part of our division MIRACLES priorities, Dr. Horton requested the development of internal data dashboards to monitor student-level data throughout the school year. The first of those dashboards is complete and will provide access to the enrollment and demographic data that feeds state reporting. The next steps are to transition the dashboard to IT for publishing within Infinite Campus. RDE will then focus on finishing the second dashboard containing attendance and discipline data. The department has completed six (6) data and dashboard projects that

support the data needs of internal and external stakeholders. As we enter the spring assessment season, several internal projects were focused on informing district leaders, such as gifted assessment data trends, identifying any issues

related to the safety, climate, and health of schools, identifying students that qualify for the biliteracy seal, and discipline data related to social media usage. Similarly, student-level data was supplied to external partners, including Community in Schools-Atlanta. These projects have allowed district leaders to make informed decisions regarding student performance and program effectiveness.

**Dr. Felicia Rhone**  
**Director of Assessment Administration**

**ACT/SAT School Day:** The ACT/SAT School Day Committee participated in the TregoED workshop on April 25, 2024. The committee will revise the Implementation Plan and Communication Plan at the next meeting scheduled for May 1, 2024. They also voiced their opinions about test prep opportunities to include test taking strategies and overcoming test anxiety. Seventy-eight percent of the students preferred the SAT over the ACT at 22% of the votes. We have researched the cost of offering the ACT/SAT School Day administration to seniors in the Fall of 2024 while the PSAT is administered to our 8th and 10th grade students. The cost for 6,100 seniors (at \$25.25 per test+-) to participate in the SAT School Day administration is \$154,025. We looked at ESSER funds; however, funds must be spent by Sept. 30, 2024, and the earliest an SAT school day administration could be offered is October 1, 2024. **Meeting with Princeton Review tomorrow, April 30.**

**Assessment Calendar:** A committee of chiefs, area superintendents, executive administrator, content coordinators, principals, assistant principals, academic coaches, and LTSEs participated in the TregoED workshop on April 23 and 24, 2024. Participants followed the situation appraisal strategy to “SCAN” the issues around the Assessment Calendar. The two-day workshop allowed participants to 1) see the issue and state the issue, 2) clarify the issue, 3) assess priorities, and 4) name next steps. Participants were broken into teams to work on the priority areas. We have four additional TregoED workshops in May.

**ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Assessment:** The ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment was completed on March 1, 2024. More than 17,000 EL students participated in the ACCESS assessment. School test coordinators have completed the pre-assessment validation process to ensure student demographics are accurate and assessments are matched to the correct student. Post-assessment validation process will begin May 10, 2024. School test coordinators will have the opportunity to make additional corrections to student profiles.

**2024 Spring Georgia Milestone EOG/EOC Main Administration:** The Georgia Milestone window opened April 17, 2024, for all elementary, middle, and high school students. Currently, we are overseeing the administration of the GMAS for elementary and middle school students. Currently processing 35 irregularities in elementary and middle schools and 24 irregularities in high schools. Two schools were visited during the administration due to test preparation/administration concerns.

**GKIDS:** We are continuing to monitor the assessment of students. State reporting window closes May 17, 2024, but schools are expected to assess students until the end of the academic school year.

**Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA):** The GAA 2.0 window will close April 26, 2024. We are currently overseeing the administration of the GAA for elementary, middle, and high school students. No irregularities to report. Examiners received the errata from GaDOE and were able to re-assess students.

**Assessment Administration Monthly Newsletter:** We are working to complete and will have the rough draft submitted by the end of day, Monday, April 29, 2024.

**MAP:** The Spring MAP assessment window opened on April 9, 2024, and will close on May 22, 2024.

**Benchmarks (Illuminate/DnA):** Benchmark Assessment 3 opened on April 10, 2024, and closed on April 23, 2024, for block high schools. We continued to use the reformatted sharing scenario. Only one report has been submitted to me regarding this assessment window. That issue was related to technology, and no further action was needed from the Assessment Administration team. The final Benchmark assessment is listed as optional. The window for it opens on May 1, 2024, and closes on May 15, 2024.

The Assessment Department, Curriculum and Instruction, and UGA K-12 Assessment Solutions (test developers) are collaborating to ensure our benchmarks mirror the Georgia Milestones, and they provide reliable and valid data. Test developers have received the pacing guides (by standards) from the C&I team. We are currently discussing frequency of the benchmarks for block high schools and development of an additional benchmark for middle school Enhanced Algebra.

**eduCLIMBER:** The March eduCLIMBER training occurred virtually with Renaissance Education trainer Randy Haack on March 27-28, 2024. This training was designed to follow up on the February workshops for Counselors, PBIS Coaches, School Psychologists, Behavior Specialists, and LTSE instructors. Participants were scheduled to review available data using the Achievement Dashboard and how to use interventions with eduCLIMBER. However, many of the participants during the training were not follow-up users. They were participants who matched the role but did not participate in the previous sessions. To Mr. Haack's credit, the objective was pivoted to meet the needs of the attendees. Those who used the platform before welcomed the refresher on eduCLIMBER usage as it re-introduced how to access, navigate, and effectively use it. Questions centered on how the program would be used districtwide and if it would replace the existing platforms. The primary feedback was from the school psychologists concerned about the lack of access to the whole district. The usage demonstrated covered behaviors and how the platform supports MTSS.

**Ms. Stacy E. Stepney**  
**Chief Academic Officer**

## **MIRACLES Priorities**

**Dr. Sean R. Tartt**  
**Deputy Chief Academic Officer**

### **Summer Learning Programs**

On March 28, 2024, the summer learning committee and program leaders gathered to discuss program enrollment, staffing for each program, transportation needs, and payroll procedures. At the next meeting in May, representatives from Federal Programs and Finance will facilitate a work session centered around updated payroll workflows and required documentation. Upon completion, program leaders will work to notify staff selected for each summer employment program.

### **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)**

Our District is continuing the collaborative work with AVID to support schools with developing academic habits needed for success as they matriculate through school and prepare for the collegiate experience. Currently, we are supporting a group of middle and high schools with planning efforts. School teams visited Haynes Bridge Middle School in March to see AVID in action and hear from the regional AVID representatives. The Division of Curriculum and Instruction and the office of Federal Programs are supporting principals with registration for AVID summer leadership conference in June.



**Invest in *YOUR TEAM***

### **Student Success Skills Backpack**

In August 2024, DCSD will launch the **Student Success Skills Backpack (SSSB)**, part of the newly designed Portrait of a Graduate. The SSSB is made up of a set of skills DeKalb graduates need to be successful beyond graduation. The District's strategic planning committee, including various stakeholders, engaged in a March work session to start identifying specific skills to include in SSSB. Additionally, DCSD stakeholders had an opportunity to share what skills they think students need to be successful via DCSD's March Thought Exchange. We are excited about this new

development where our students will have another opportunity to shine and share their readiness for the next level.

### **Content Coordinators' Collaboration**

Curriculum and Instruction and School Leadership continue to partner monthly to engage job alike groups in learning, data reviews, observation feedback, and developing targeted professional learning to support schools. The April collaboration supported topics, such as but not limited to:

- Supporting ELA instruction and implementation of new standards
- Supporting Schools with the REAP (**R**eview/**E**xamine/**A**nalyze/**P**lan) protocol in Math
- Summer 2024 Professional Learning for Exceptional Education staff
- English Language Learner progress monitoring
- Tailoring Professional Learning for the District and Individual Schools
- Climate and Culture Social Emotional Learning supports for schools

The next content collaboration meeting is scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup>, which will include presentations and work sessions with the GADOE and DCSD content coordinators as we work to enhance support to schools.

### **Mrs. Lummie Baker** **Director, Educational Media and Instructional Materials**

#### **Georgia United Credit Union Foundation – 2024 School Crashers Recipient** **Miller Grove MS - Media Center Makeover; Mohawk Flooring grant**

After a rigorous judging process, Georgia United Credit Union Foundation in partnership with Georgia United Credit Union has announced the six recipients of the 2024 Georgia United Foundation School Crashers® program that will receive school improvements over the summer. School Crashers is one of the Foundation's largest community service programs that offers schools across the state an opportunity to apply for a school facility makeover. The program strengthens communities by supporting local school systems with the end goal of improving the learning environment for the students, faculty, and staff. Nominations were received from 224 applicant schools.

Miller Grove Middle School in Decatur is a Title I school that serves over 900 students in DeKalb County. Compelling stories from parents, teachers and their principal communicated their desire to give their Media Center a makeover to inspire students to curl up with a good book or get a head start on their homework. Media Specialist, Crystal Cooper, shared how much potential their huge library space had with adjoining counseling offices and work rooms. Some new flexible, collaborative seating to replace some of the heavy wooden tables and chairs, some fresh carpet and paint, and our School Crashers volunteers could turn their vision into reality. This media center will become the hub of the school as it is transformed into a warm, colorful, and inviting space for the students to grow their love of reading.

### **Read Across America**

While Read Across America is an annual event that takes place on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, teacher-librarians throughout the school district took the opportunity to celebrate reading throughout the month with a variety of events. The following are a few of the school-wide and community events that

encouraged students to celebrate the joy and love of reading: author visits, book parades, Men Who Read volunteer readers, and D.E.A..R Days (Drop Everything and Read).

**Mrs. Doryiane Gunter**  
Director, CTAE (Career, Technical and Agricultural Education)

**Student Television Network Competition (STN)**  
DeKalb School of the Arts Audio Video/Television (AV/TV) Film pathway students achieved an impressive 5th place nationally at the National STN competition held in Long Beach, California. This prestigious event saw over 330 students from across the country competing in diverse categories such as Newscast, Short-Film, and Documentary. Our heartfelt pride extends to all the students from Chamblee High School, DeKalb School of the Arts, and Dunwoody High School who actively participated in this remarkable competition!

**Certified Nursing Assistants Pinning Ceremony**  
We are thrilled to announce that 23 students, who are part of the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) pathway at DeKalb High School of Technology, have successfully passed the State of Georgia CNA Written and Skills Exams. To commemorate their achievement, a pinning ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2024. This event will honor the remarkable accomplishments of these students.

**Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)**  
Morgan Sheppard, Stephenson High School's salutatorian, is the 2024 DCSD winner in the Annual NFTE Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Morgan will advance to compete in the semifinals at the 2024 NFTE Southeast Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge competition for her tutoring business, **"MathYourWay!"** She will represent DeKalb on May 15<sup>th</sup> in Miami, Florida at the Idea Center on the Miami Dade College campus.

**Mrs. Stephanie Brown-Bryant & Dr. Kimberlynn Weston**  
Directors, K-12 Teaching and Learning

### **Young Georgia Authors (YGA) Competition**

For the 2024 Young Georgia Authors (YGA) Competition, DCSD had one student make it to the state level competition. Skyler Moss from Cedar Grove High School submitted the entry "That Foggy Night". The entry won first place on the district-level for Grade 11. The entry won second place for Grade 11 on the regional level.

### **IB Student Celebration**

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, International Baccalaureate Diploma and Career-related Programme students, parents, teachers, and special guests came together at AIC to celebrate this year's academic accomplishments. Students in the IB programs at Druid Hills High School, Martin Luther King, Jr. High School, and Tucker High School brought samples of their best work to share, including research essays, art exhibits, service projects, and more. Over 200 students and guests participated in the event.

### **Fine Arts Diploma Seal**

We are excited to announce that 184 seniors earned a Fine Arts Diploma Seal in dance, music, theatre, or visual art. We congratulate these students who attend the following high schools:

Arabia Mountain, Cedar Grove, Chamblee, Clarkston, Cross Keys, DeKalb Early College Academy, DeKalb School of the Arts, Druid Hills, Dunwoody, Lithonia, Southwest DeKalb, and Stephenson.

### Governor's Honors Program

Congratulations are extended to our Governor's Honors Program winners! **Twenty-two (22) finalists and four (4) alternates** have been selected to attend the prestigious summer program at Georgia Southern University from June 16 - July 13, 2024. Attendees will participate in an intensive curriculum designed to provide them with academic, cultural, and social enrichment necessary to become the next generation of global critical thinkers, innovators, and leaders.

The state accepted over 4,000 nominees. The school district had over **200** students participate in our local application and interview process with **182** being nominated for the state-level competition. Following a review process, nominees chosen as semifinalists were invited to the campus of Georgia Southern University for interviews and auditions.

| School                       | Last Name  | First Name         | Nomination Area                        |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------------|--|
| <b>FINALISTS</b>             |            |                    |  |
| Chamblee High School         | Agravat    | Suhina             | World Languages: French                |
| Chamblee High School         | Chitta     | Sai Akshat         | Engineering: Programming               |
| Chamblee High School         | Dave       | Tanaya             | Engineering: Programming               |
| Chamblee High School         | Glass      | Nora               | Communicative Arts                     |
| Chamblee High School         | Joshi      | Rasesh             | Mathematics                            |
| Chamblee High School         | Kelly      | Elise              | Visual Arts                            |
| Chamblee High School         | Williams   | Taylor             | Communicative Arts                     |
| Chamblee High School         | Xu         | An-Ying            | World Languages: German                |
| DeKalb Early College Academy | Ali        | Kamilah            | Communicative Arts                     |
| DeKalb Early College Academy | Labiano    | Lariece<br>Nygelle | Visual Arts                            |
| DeKalb School of the Arts    | Gordon     | Marley             | Visual Arts                            |
| DeKalb School of the Arts    | Mank       | Sterling           | Music: Jazz- Acoustic or Electric Bass |
| DeKalb School of the Arts    | Moore      | Josiah             | Music: Jazz- Trumpet                   |
| Druid Hills High School      | Johnson    | Tashina            | Communicative Arts                     |
| Dunwoody High School         | Bustamante | Rafael             | Music: Brass- Euphonium                |
| Dunwoody High School         | Misewicz   | Artemis            | Social Studies                         |
| Dunwoody High School         | Popa       | Maia               | Social Studies                         |
| Dunwoody High School         | Wesolowski | Zoe                | Visual Arts                            |
| Homeschool                   | Mouzon     | Sean               | Music: Brass-French Horn               |
| Lakeside High School         | Collins    | Amelia             | Communicative Arts                     |

|                      |       |           |                    |
|----------------------|-------|-----------|--------------------|
| Lithonia High School | Davis | Zy'Torria | Social Studies     |
| Tucker High School   | Baah  | Akosua    | Science: Chemistry |

| School                    | Last Name | First Name | Nomination Area        |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>ALTERNATES</b>         |           |            |                        |
| DeKalb School of the Arts | Kato      | Erika      | Dance                  |
| DeKalb School of the Arts | Ralston   | Samantha   | Music: Voice- Soprano  |
| DeKalb School of the Arts | Tinker    | Sinaa      | World Languages: Latin |
| Lakeside High School      | Heller    | Andrew     | Science: Physics       |

### Social Studies Fair

On Saturday, April 13, 2024, the State Social Studies Fair was held at North Cobb High School. We are excited to announce that three DeKalb County students placed during this competition. Congratulations are extended to these students and to all students that participated in this year's competition.

#### **Emory McKnight and Kenley Flickinger**

*The Great Depression: What led to the stock market crash of 1929?*

**Evansdale Elementary**

**Best in Class 1 - Overall**

#### **Alyce Highsmith**

*What decreased smog in the United States?*

**Wadsworth Magnet**

**Best in Class 1 - Geography**

**Special Award - Geography**

### Civic Engagement Diploma Seal

The state of Georgia offers a Civic Engagement Diploma Seal that is affixed to students' high school diplomas based on the completion of the program requirements in coursework, community service, knowledge of American Government, and civic engagement activities. Schools receiving this honor are Cedar Grove HS, Chamblee HS, Cross Keys HS, SW DeKalb HS, and Stephenson HS.

### DeKalb County School District Fair Results at Georgia Science & Engineering Fair

With over 128 entries from 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, twenty-nine DCSD projects competed in the Georgia Science & Engineering Fair (GSEF) on April 12, 2024, in Athens, Georgia. Congratulations are extended to all students who competed at the statewide Georgia Science & Engineering Fair. Honors include 5 Grand Awards, 12 Special Awards, 3- First Honors Awards, 4- Second Honors Awards, 5- Third Honors Awards, and 1- Fourth Honors Award.

### **Georgia Music Educators Association Large Group Performance Evaluations (LGPE)**

The Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE) sponsored by the Georgia Music Educators Association is an evaluation process for musical performance and sight-reading abilities of performing groups and teachers. Elementary, middle and high school bands, chorus and orchestra group performances were evaluated by a panel of 4 judges. This year 52 bands, 22 choirs and 19 orchestras performed and 88% of the ensembles received a superior or excellent rating.

### **K-5 Mathematics Numeracy Grant**

Thirty-five teachers and academic coaches in the GADOE Numeracy Development Grant have completed initial training. Participants explored evidence-based intervention resources focused on numeracy development of students in all tiers. Ongoing training and support will be provided to participants throughout the 2024-2025 school year to ensure the continuity and enhancement of students' numeracy skills and progress.

**Mrs. Janetta Greenwood**  
**Director, Fernbank Science Center (FSC)**

### **Single Visits and Outreach**

Fernbank Science Center continues to provide planetarium visits, single visits, and outreach in science throughout the school district. In April, the Science Center served 6,761 DCSD students in grades PreK-12. For April, 755 students participated in single visit programming, 2,890 DCSD students participated in outreach programming, and 3,116 DCSD students participated in planetarium visits.

### **Special Events at Fernbank Science Center**

#### **EclipseFest 2024**

Fernbank Science Center hosted EclipseFest on April 8, 2024. The event provided families with the opportunity to experience the solar eclipse in a fun and engaging way. Fernbank Science Center offered viewing stations with solar filtered telescopes, hands-on science/STEM activities, and free planetarium shows throughout the day during the eclipse. We hosted over 3,000 guests and passed out over 2,500 solar eclipse viewers and glasses. Thank you to everyone for supporting the event.

#### **Fernbank Science Center Spring Plant Sale**

Fernbank Science Center hosted their annual Spring Plant Sale on April 13, 2024. Guests had the opportunity, while attending the plant sale, to “Spring into Wellness” with learning how to use common plants found in gardens to make tea. Participants also potted their own plants to take home with them to support the continuation of what they learned while attending our plant sale.

#### **Bach Under the Stars**

Fernbank Science Center hosted Bach Under the Stars on April 20, 2024, in collaboration with Emory Chamber of Music Society Atlanta. Guests enjoyed a magical immersive experience

enjoying the sounds of Bach played by famed cellist, Zull Bailey, as the planetarium sky filled with the night stars. We had over 300 guests in attendance for the live performance.

**Ms. Kanessa Fain**  
**MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Coordinator III**

To foster alignment and collaboration across student support areas, MTSS has collaborated monthly for Professional Learning (PL) sessions. These sessions bring together MTSS, PBIS Coaches, Culture and Climate Coordinators, and Mental Health Coordinators.

**Key Benefits:**

- **Unified Approach:** By working together, these teams develop a more cohesive strategy for supporting student success.
- **Shared Expertise:** Each team member brings their unique knowledge and experience to the table, leading to more comprehensive solutions.
- **Improved Implementation:** The sessions ensure everyone is on the same page regarding best practices and end-of-year processes, leading to consistent and effective implementation across the system.

The required MTSS Specialist PL sessions focused on end-of-year processes. This collaborative approach ensures all specialists are equipped to implement these processes with fidelity, maximizing their impact on student outcomes.

**Ms. Keatra Wright**  
**Director, FLEX Academy**

DeKalb Virtual Career Academy



DeKalb County CEO Michael Thurmond and the Board Commissioners have created 700 summer internships for the youth of DeKalb County.

FLEX Academy has partnered with DeKalb County Work Source to provide students an opportunity for summer internship. Students will be able to earn money while learning valuable work skills.

April 17, 2024 - Representatives from DeKalb Work Source presented to 91 FLEX Academy students. **Twenty-five** students will automatically be accepted into the summer internship. Applications were made available to every student enrolled in all FLEX Academy programs.

April 19, 2024 - FLEX Academy provided updates to all high school counselors regarding the end-of-year grade posting as well as information regarding FLEX Summer Programs registration procedures, deadlines, and student eligibility.

April 23, 2024 - FLEX Academy Beyond the Day, Session III, concluded. Graduating seniors have been provided with an additional week to complete assessments.

**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
**Chief of Student Services**

**Dr. Evelyn Hall**

**Director of English Learners Department**

**Bilingual Parent Advisory Council**

The final Bilingual Parent Advisory Council meeting was held on April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Administrative Instructional Complex (AIC). The English Learners Department presented on topics that support teaching and learning practices and promote academic achievement of ELs. This meeting provided parents the opportunity to engage in collaborative discussions and learn about the districts goals and program offerings.



**Book Studies**

The EL Department concluded the book studies **Teaching and Supporting Intensive English Students** and **Strategies for Unlocking English Learners' Potential** this month.



- The ***Teaching and Supporting Intensive English Students*** book study had 25 Intensive English Teachers participate. Teachers were given the opportunity to learn and share strategies to support students in the Intensive English Program.



- The ***Strategies for Unlocking English Learners' Potential*** book student had 20 ESOL Teachers participate. Teachers facilitated sessions on each chapter and shared effective instructional strategies to support English Learners in their classrooms.

### **Ellevation Office Hours**

The EL Department in partnership with ELlevation hosted a power hour for the DCSD ESOL teachers. During this time, teachers were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the usage of ELlevation in their classrooms. There were 50 ESOL Teachers that participated in this virtual session held on April 11, 2024.

### **GaDOE Exemplary English Learner**



Chi Choo was named the 2024 GaDOE Exemplary English Learner. She currently attends Redan High School and was named the Salutatorian for the Class of 2024. She currently holds a 4.12 GPA and was recently named the STAR student for having the highest SAT score at her school. Her teachers admire her enthusiasm for learning. She is also committed to serving her school community; she is a student leader who contributes to several clubs and organizations, including Ladies of Redan and the International Club. As a Student Ambassador, she guides her peers and is known for her service. Moreover, Chi Choo has shown unparalleled determination despite the linguistic and cultural differences she has encountered since her arrival in the United States. She never lost sight of her goals, diligently pulling her talents and work ethic toward her language development and academic focus. During high school, she challenged herself to enroll in four Advanced Placement (AP) courses spanning different academic disciplines. Chi Choo's success story is inspiring and serves as an example of the countless possibilities achievable for Georgia's English learners. She truly deserves further recognition as an Exemplary English Learner by the Georgia Department of Education.

## GaDOE Exemplary ESOL Teacher



Ms. Ingrid Blum was named the 2024 GaDOE Exemplary ESOL Teacher. She currently teaches Intensive English at Lakeside High School where she also serves as the ESOL co-department chair. She has been an ESOL teacher for 27 years and taught English in her home country of Ecuador. Ms. Blum is an integral part of Lakeside's Intensive English (IE) Program, supporting students' success as they transition from the IE Program to ESOL Support classes and beyond. Many of her students transition from the IE Program in one semester and make positive band movement on ACCESS each year. She has built a strong, positive rapport and connection with her students. Ms. Blum invests her time and energy in ensuring all her students feel welcomed and supported in their learning. In addition to providing authentic, rigorous, and relevant lessons, she ensures her students participate in real-life experiences. She organizes several activities, fundraisers, and field trips each year. Ms. Blum also regularly communicates with EL families and connects them to resources. She supports guidance counselors with enhancing parent communications, implementing Social-Emotional Learning initiatives, and managing scheduling. Ms. Blum has served in many capacities at Lakeside, including being a member of the Digital Learning Team (DLT) for the ESOL Department and a teacher liaison for the Latin Youth Leadership Academy. Ms. Blum's exemplary teaching and her unwavering commitment to her students' success and well-being make her a truly exceptional ESOL educator.



## Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Component Enhancement PL

The EL Department will offer the "Review and Assessment" training as part of the SIOP Component Enhancement series. This series prepares teachers to deliver content effectively while supporting the language development of students who need additional language support. During this session, participants will deepen their understanding of the features of the "Review & Assessment" component of the Model.



## WIDA English Language Development Framework

Dr. Karen Golaub, ESOL Specialist, was selected as one of 30 educators in the WIDA Consortium to participate in the WIDA ACCESS for ELLS Bias, Sensitivity and Content Review. "The purpose of the Bias & Sensitivity and Content review is to help ensure that test item content is grade-level appropriate and factually accurate; and that test items are free of material that (1) might favor any subgroup of students over another on the basis of gender,

race/ethnicity, home language, religion, culture, region, or socio-economic status, and (2) might be upsetting to students."



### **Mrs. Kiana King**

#### **Executive Director of Exceptional Education**

The month of April marked a celebratory time as we highlighted the amazing abilities of students during Exceptional Children's Week 2024. This year's theme was "**Championing Tomorrow: Embracing Inclusive Technology for all students!**" According to the Council for Exceptional Children, special education focuses on providing individualized education, related services, and specialized accommodations so that students with special needs make great strides, prepare for transition, and as a result, achieve academic and life-long personal success and independence.

On **Thursday, April 18, 2024**, the department hosted the Exceptional Children's Award's Night ceremony and what a night it was. Students were acknowledged for their progress made during the year in academics, adaptive behavior, speech and language, and motor.

Also, the District's special education parent mentor, Ms. Lisa Lake, used this opportunity to engage with families and provided useful resources for use as parents access services for their child(ren).





**Ms. Terri Jenkins**

**Director of GLRS (Georgia Learning Resource System)**

GLRS has begun two cohorts of Specially Designed Instruction for Metro Area leaders and instructional support personnel. Individuals will complete this train-the-train course in a series of five sessions. Both cohorts will complete their final session in May.



Our Georgia New Teacher Induction has continued, and all sessions will be complete April 29<sup>th</sup>. We are proud to say that **all** program completers have signed contracts with DeKalb County Schools for the coming year. A hearty celebration will be held April 29<sup>th</sup> with Wina Low, Ed.S., State Director, Division for Special Education Services and Supports joining us. We are hoping to expand the number of participants in DeKalb. We will also be extending the program into Decatur City Schools for the 2024-2025 school year.

During the Spring, we will offer two Autism classes for Metro area Special Education Leaders and Coaches. Demand is high and classes are full!

Metro East GLRS has facilitated Autism, ID, Parent Mentor, Transition, and MTSS Consortium for leaders across the twelve metro districts.

**Ms. Lila Brown**

## Director of GNETS

### Family Reading Night:

On April 10, 2024, Shadow Rock Center held a Virtual Reading Night for their families. This was a great opportunity for our teachers to read selected stories and students to enjoy listening to staff as they relaxed with popcorn at home.

Some students shared their favorite stories to read. District leaders from the Specialty Area joined us for this amazing virtual event. We look forward to hosting another Family Reading Night for our stakeholders.

### Ribbon Cutting Ceremony:

On Tuesday, April 16, 2024, we celebrated our new playground for our students at Shadow Rock Center. District and school-based leaders attended this event. We are so appreciative of the support provided by DSCD for our students and staff.



## Dr. Watina April

### Section 504/Hospital Homebound (HHB) Coordinator III

The Section 504 District's team is thrilled to announce our exciting transition to a new data system that promises to revolutionize our compliance efforts, streamline processes, and enhance overall efficiency. With a keen focus on providing greater oversight and improving accessibility, this cutting-edge platform will facilitate a seamless, paperless experience for all stakeholders involved. To ensure a smooth transition, we have conducted several collaborative work sessions, bringing together local 504 chairs to actively participate in the process of importing existing data into the new system. With our collective efforts and dedication, we are optimistic that the new platform will be fully functional by the Fall, empowering us to better serve the needs of our students and community.



**Dr. Zack Phillips,**

**Director of the Early Learning Center**

**Fernbank Science Center**

Pre-K students at the Early Learning Center took a grade level field trip to view a program within the Planetarium at Fernbank Science Center. Students were exposed to content centered around the solar system entitled, One World One Sky.

**Early Learning Center Expansion Classes**

Summer resources will be delivered to each expansion class during the week of Monday, May 6th – Friday, May 10th as an instructional safety net to reduce the occurrence of a potential “summer slide” for students over the break.

**Professional Learning**

The staff at the Early Learning Center completed their book study on the book entitled the *Educator’s Bandwidth*.

**Special Event:**

Students at the Early Learning Center completed their 3rd administration of the ELC – Common Formative Assessment. Also, the (CRT) Summative Assessment was completed to show a true triangulation of data points to justify student’s academic growth and inform instructional next steps. On Tuesday, April 22nd, Dr. Phillips and Mr. Spince met with Ms. Ellyn Cochran, President & CEO of Quality Care for Children. Discussion items included a potential follow up conversation with district leaders within the Division of Student Services and alternative options for community stakeholders within the early learning arena.

**Earth Day**

Staff members and students at the Early Learning Center participated in Earth Day activities on Monday, April 22nd. Students learned the importance of recycling materials via the mantra - reuse, reduce, recycle.



**Ms. Stephanie Lindstrom and Ms. Kim Rhodes,**

**Pre-K Coordinators**

This year, 10 Pre-K Lead teacher representatives from each area were chosen to participate in a 40-hour professional learning community provided by Bright from the Start (BFTS) on “Making the Most of Classroom Interactions” (MMCI). Afterwards, each teacher was observed by a specialist and the following

remarks were noted. *“These wonderful educators scored nearly perfectly in the domains of Positive Climate, Educator Sensitivity, Regard for Child Perspectives, Behavior Management, and Productivity.”* Congratulations to: **Avondale-** Alexis Coffee, **Allgood-** Danielle Spragin, **Ashford Park-** Meghan Rajpara, **Dunwoody-** Kristen Hudson, **Rockbridge-** Yejide Ogotuga, **Henderson Mill-** Katherine “Barry” Murphy, **Hightower-** Angela Davis, **Oak Grove-** Ansley Dillion, **Pleasantdale-** Melissa Tamayo, and **Panola Way-** Brittany Jones.

An induction meeting was facilitated by the Chief of Student Services seeking perspectives and experiences from current Pre-K lead teachers and paraprofessionals. From the dialog, all participants were able to secure valuable insight of the significant strengths and assets, impediments and challenges, current needs, and recommendations/suggestions for the department’s success.

**Ms. Donyell Atkinson and Ms. Kristen Drake,**

**Gifted Education Coordinators**

The Chief of Student Services and the gifted team held induction meetings with gifted liaisons and gifted-certified teachers to listen to perspectives and experiences. Teachers shared significant strengths and assets, impediments and challenges, current needs, and recommendations/suggestions for the department’s success.

**Dr. Kishia K. Towns**  
**Chief of Wrap Around Services**



As the end of the school year nears, there have been several opportunities to provide support through the Division of Wrap Around Services thus far and possibilities for future goals to be achieved. During the month of April, staff participated in Career Day at Peachcrest Elementary School and Shadow Rock Elementary School. It was such a pleasure to share health and wellness with the younger students. They engaged in a mindfulness activity to be intentionally more aware and awake to each moment and being fully engaged in what is happening in one's surroundings – with acceptance and without judgment.

The Division of Wrap Around Services attended the Atlanta Business League's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress on the State of Black Business in Metro Atlanta held at DeKalb Conference Center at Georgia State University. The message was "Driving Economic Equity: Shaping the Future." This was a wonderful event that allowed DeKalb County School District staff the opportunity to engage with government officials, business leaders, and college presidents to discuss Black business and community development, real estate development and housing, diversity, equity and inclusion, and infrastructure.

**Mr. Christopher Key**  
**Executive Director of Student Advancement**

### **Post-Secondary Transition Specialists**

#### Career Fair & Job Expo

The Student Advancement Department in partnership with TLT USA conducted a District Wide Career Fair & Job Expo on March 27<sup>th</sup> for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The event was held at Strong Hold Baptist Church – 10 DCSD (DeKalb County School District) High Schools Participated – over 400 students were serviced. In addition, DCSD Higher 2 Hire HR

(Human Resources) Department (101 students signed up at DCSD table). The Post-Secondary Transition Specialist facilitated FAFSA outreach, communication, and support provided for 125 students during the Career Fair & Job Expo in support of the FAFSA “Frenzy” Financial Literacy Campaign.



## Student Engagement Coaches

### Career Exploration at The Atlanta Evergreen

The Check and Connect field trip to Stone Mountain Park and The Atlanta Evergreen Resort. Although this trip was planned for my Check and Connect group, I was able to take some of my former mentees and some 7th and 8th graders chosen by their AP's and counselors. While there, my good friend and General Manager, Justin, gave our scholars a VIP tour of the hotel and VIP passes to the park as well.

Before the trip to the park, the sales, hospitality, and food/beverages departments were so enthusiastic about showing the students their departments and how each of their roles affected customers at the resort. Treats were given, Starbucks drinks were plentiful and dental hygiene packages were given to them in case they ever needed a room at the resort.



**Mrs. Denise Revels**  
**Director of Wrap Around & Support Services**

### **Migrant Education Program**

The migrant education program is a federally funded program which exists to support students whose families move for agricultural or fishing reasons and the student has experienced a qualifying move within the last 36 months. The district is currently serving 13 students who are eligible for services. Student Support will continue to provide academic support to students throughout the summer months to assist them in reaching their academic goals. The migrant liaison, Teena Hargrove, works with students at home and in the community to provide support.



### **Student Health Services**

The Lion's Lighthouse, one of the district partners for vision care has provided vision screenings for 1528 students with 518 students identified and referred for a follow-up vision examination. Vision vouchers have been provided for corrective lenses and follow-up care. The schools participating in the vision program include Jolly ES, Columbia ES, Stone Mountain ES, Dunaire ES, Farington ES, Cross Keys HS, Snapfinger Es, Rockbridge ES, Stone Mountain MS, Wynbrooke ES, and DeKalb Preparatory Academy.



### **Social Work**



It has been an exciting year since the School Social Work Department expanded its partnership with the Assistance League of Atlanta and, specifically, through their Operation School Bell program. As of today, 220 pairs of new shoes have been given to elementary aged students in need across the district! Each region has a social worker responsible for facilitating the program for their area. When the shoes are ordered from the vendor, shoes are shipped to one of three school locations, Northern, Central, or Southern area of the school district. Then, shoe orders are sorted and distributed to the school social workers for delivery to the students. The program has been a success in obtaining needed resources and delivering them directly into the hands, and onto the feet of our scholars.



### **S.A.F.E Center at Cross Keys HS**

Cross Keys HS SAFE (Student and Family Engagement) Center Liaison, Yazmin Acevedo-Mendez hosted a housing rights workshop on April 16, 2024. During this intimate parent engagement event, a Housing and Tenant Rights Attorney, Esther Graff Radford presented general and beneficial information to families. Topics such as ways to communicate with landlords, expiring leases, breaking lease agreements, housing repair request, the eviction process and other valuable housing right information. The SAFE Center at Cross Keys hosted this information session because of the high number of housing inquiries, and concerns that have been raised as barriers to student learning and school attendance.



**Dr. Darnell Logan**  
**Director of Student Relations**

### **Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBIS)**

Over the past 30 days, the PBIS team facilitated PBIS Tier 1, Day 1 training for Cohort 8. The team completed TFI (Tiered Fidelity Inventory) Walkthroughs for all PBIS Schools. The team attended PBIS school level team meetings to provide TFI Walkthrough data, coaching, and support. The team hosted the PBIS District Leadership Team meeting. The PBIS Team continued collaboration with MTSS, Culture and Climate Coordinators, and Mental Health Coordinators. The team continued coaching and planning sessions with Metro RESA school climate specialist. The team hosted the Stars of Honors Partnership Meeting, collaborated with APEX representative, and onboarded one additional PBIS District Coach.

Over the next 30 days, the PBIS team will facilitate PBIS Tier 1, Day 2 Training for Cohort 8. The team will continue attending school level PBIS team meetings to provide coaching and support. The team will facilitate the PBIS school level coaches end of the year meeting and a PBIS coaches networking event. The team will develop SY 2024-2025 PBIS District Training and Meeting Calendar. The team will attend the following training/meetings: Establishing and Maintaining Positive Relationships Student Engagement and Positive School Climate training, PBIS-MTSS Integration meeting, and Metro RESA PBIS District Coordinators/PBIS District Coaches meeting. The team will continue collaboration with MTSS, Culture and Climate Coordinators, and Mental Health Coordinators. The team will continue coaching/planning meetings with Metro RESA school climate specialist. One external PBIS coach will be onboard.

## Student Relations

The Hearing Officers scheduled **(130)** DDP (District Due Process) Hearings; **(27)** canceled due to Discipline Team Meetings (DTM). Additionally, Student Relations cleared **(55)** students to attend their attendance zone school within DeKalb County School District.

## Bullying Awareness Campaign

Bullying data is reviewed each month for possible errors, omissions, technical issues, or nuances in handling reports. That review is scanned and emailed to the bullying data entry person(s), with a copy to the principal to address. ***However, please note that the data entry person is asked to review this data for their schools each week.*** Significant concerns with bullying data are discussed directly with schools via a phone call or in person.

Students and school personnel received refresher training in January. In addition, the Facilitator of the Bullying Campaign conducted specific refresher session with schools and area principals by request. Moreover, identified schools based on years of data received regular in-person visits and support from the Facilitator. Conversations were held on the school's progress and bullying data was received.

Technical assistance will continue to be provided to schools relative to local bullying issues as they arise. Furthermore, bullying complaints are reported to the district via EthicsPoint, the GaDOE (Georgia Department of Education) Hotline, See Something/Say Something, and other methods. Those reports are forwarded to the Area Superintendent and the Facilitator of the Bullying Campaign for available support when needed.

**Ms. Monika Davis**  
**Chief Information Officer**

For the Division of Information and Instructional Technology, we are focused on ensuring we:

- Improve device management and support.
- Remediate and refresh the district's network and data center infrastructure.
- Harden information, cyber, network and physical security measures.
- Enhance and innovate the digital learning environment.
- Empower the "Digital Village" necessary to nurture and develop Digital Dreamers.

These goals represent our day-to-day commitment to the students, staff, and community. For more information, please visit the following site: [www.dekalbschoolsga.org/tech-plan/2022-2025-it-roadmap](http://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/tech-plan/2022-2025-it-roadmap)

***The State of DCSD's Physical Security Infrastructure***

Strong physical security measures are essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of students and staff in K-12 schools. Up-to-date security systems like intrusion alarms, access control systems, and security cameras play a crucial role in deterring unauthorized access, preventing violence, and creating a safe learning environment.

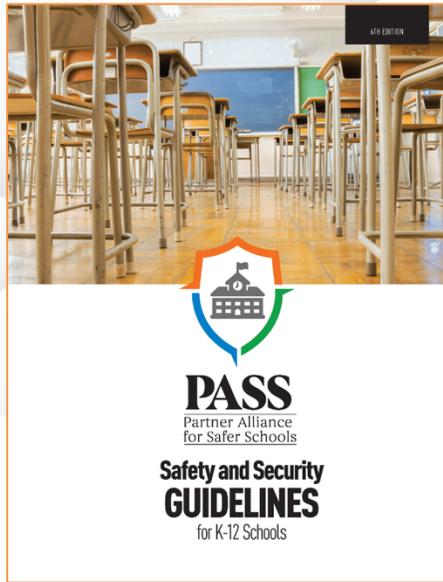
The DeKalb County School District is demonstrably committed to this goal. SPLOST VI-funded projects, totaling approximately \$46.5 million, are replacing end of life physical security infrastructure across all schools and facilities with new systems aligned to Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) best practices. This includes critical upgrades to intrusion alarms, door access control systems, and security cameras. To further support this enhanced physical security infrastructure, SPLOST funds are also being used to replace all network switches and outdated cabling in all facilities as well.

These improvement initiatives are a major undertaking addressing **all** DCSD facilities and will include a refresh of over:

- 251+ miles cable
- 5402 door contacts
- 7922 motion sensors
- 1446 card readers
- 306 access control panels
- 7991 security cameras
- 2813 network switches
- 52 security camera servers with updated software (Installation Completed)
- 1 door access control Server with updated software

All of these projects are in progress and scheduled for completion by December 2025.

By balancing the installation of these comprehensive enhancements with ongoing targeted support for existing physical security infrastructure, DCSD is prioritizing student safety and creating a more secure learning environment for all. This commitment is aimed at giving parents, students, and staff peace of mind which allows us to keep the main thing the main thing — learning and student success.



**Dr. Kermit Belcher, Deputy Chief Technology Officer**  
**Jeff Miller, Manager of Asset and End-User Computing**  
**Mr. Joseph Swing, Manager III, Enterprise Systems**  
**Ms. Emma Oakley, Manager III, Technical Support Services**

State testing remains the top priority for the **Asset & End-User Computing** team. Over the past four weeks, the team has worked diligently to prepare for state testing, ensuring that all schools have enough devices, accessories, technical assistance, and sufficient bandwidth. We are ecstatic to report that testing was extremely successful from a technical standpoint. This success was the result of a collaborative effort spanning planning, preparation, and execution.

In the upcoming weeks, our team will continue to support schools in planning for device collection at the end of the school year. Additionally, we are planning summer upgrades to instructional devices that will enhance security and mobile device management. Furthermore, we will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a device refresh program for students in the next academic year, with the goal of providing them with updated and efficient tools for learning.

**Telecommunications** is pleased to report that 97.03 percent of T-Mobile cellular phones have been migrated to new AT&T cellular phones and data plans. This transition will provide staff with a better user experience and enhanced communication capabilities. Currently, there are 25 cellular phones left to migrate, not including newly requested devices. Most of the remaining users are on extended leave, and Telecommunications is devising a plan to migrate these devices as well.

**Physical Security** onboarded three Network Liaison Specialists recently who were newly hired to the team. These new members will offer additional support by troubleshooting and maintaining video surveillance cameras, access control panels, and security alarm panels. They will play a crucial role in providing support as DIIT migrates to the new Lenel Access Control System. This project is just one of the exciting initiatives underway to enhance physical

security. Upgrading video surveillance cameras following the network infrastructure project is another target area. The DIIT team faces the challenge of maintaining aging equipment while overseeing the overall project implementation in these areas.

**Network Services** continues to focus on supporting state testing for DeKalb County students and staff. The networking team ensured there was sufficient bandwidth to accommodate the large number of students testing simultaneously. Additionally, they targeted wireless connectivity by ensuring ample coverage of access points for student Chromebooks. Thanks to the planning, preparation, and collaboration of various departments, testing was an overall success. The networking team is also working on several substantial network upgrade projects, including new switches, wireless access points, stadium connectivity, wiring closet upgrades, and more.

**Technical Support Services** have played a vital role in the technical success of DeKalb County Schools' state testing over the past few weeks. The team created a best practice guide that was shared with schools to support testing. This guide proactively reduced support tickets and calls while equipping staff with valuable information. If there were technical issues, the ITTs were on site to assist, troubleshoot, or escalate any technical issues. As always, the call center was available as well if a staff member needed technical support.

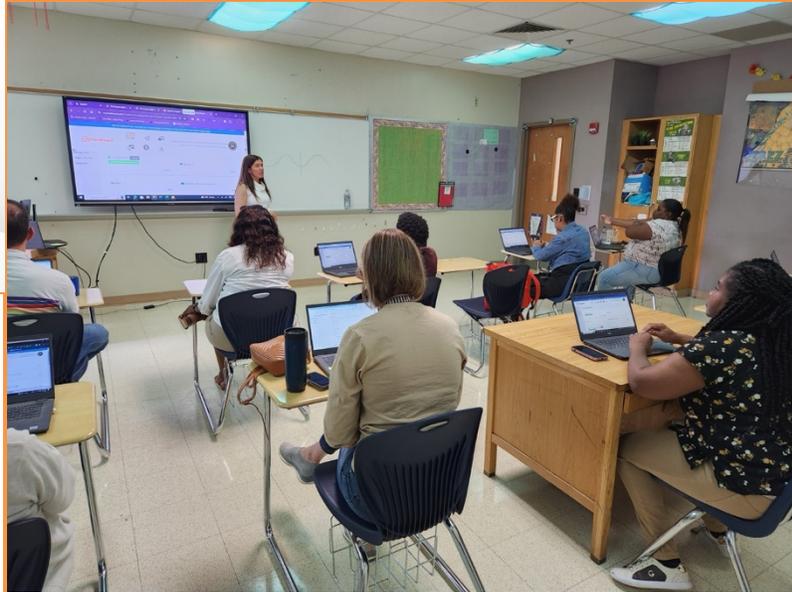
The Technical Support & Services team has been essential to supporting SPLOST Cabling projects as well. The team provides support to crews after hours in areas of cabling, physical security, and interactive flat panel installation.

Over the next few weeks, the district's ticketing system contract, Incident IQ, will need to be renewed. The graphic below depicts open and closed tickets; Incident IQ helps organize and evaluate data to proactively target recurring issues and resolve technical issues in a timely manner.

### **Natalie Terrell, Manager III of Project Management**

The Project Management Office is happy to say that we have several major projects that are moving forward.

The **Optimizing the Interactive Flat Panel (IFP) Project Installation Project** is in week 11 as of Monday, April 15, 2024. As of Monday night, April 15th, we completed 52 schools or 1172 IFP installations. The last installation is scheduled for Tuesday, July 16, 2024. In collaboration with the Instructional Technology Department, principals will sign up to have their teachers trained by ViewSonic Professional Development team on how to use the board features and the myViewBoard software once boards are installed.



For the **SPLOST Physical Security Project**, cabling has been completed at the three core sites (WBBC, Sam Moss, and AIC) and two schools (Elizabeth Andrews and DECA). Intrusion alarm systems have been installed at the core sites. The standardization document for building access was completed and sent to the vendor for feedback. After feedback is received, the document will be finalized and formalized for distribution to leadership.



For the **SPLOST Cabling Project**, the first baseline school installations began the week of March 25 – 26, 2024, DESA and Salem MS respectively. While testing is in session, April 17 – 29, cabling installation will move from the schools to the administration building, AIC.



**Dr. Kyia Clark, Executive Director, Information and Innovation**  
**Mr. Troy Palmer, Manager of Student Information Systems**



### ***Infinite Campus Language Translation Services***

In collaboration with EL Services and Parent and Family Engagement, the SIS Department has been working to provide language translations in the district's top 15 languages for the Infinite Campus Online Registration (OLR) module, Parent and Student Portals, report cards and transcripts, and attendance letters. This project will enhance stakeholder engagement by providing more equitable access to new student registration and existing student annual information updates, student academic progress, and student attendance data. To date, all components (OLR, Parent/Student Portal, report cards/transcripts, and attendance letters) have been translated by Zab Translation Solutions and provided to K-12 Solutions Group (K12SG), our Infinite Campus channel partner. The OLR and Parent/Student Portal translations are 100% complete and have been activated in Infinite Campus. The attendance letter, report card, and transcript translations require considerable manual setup work, and we are working collaboratively with K12SG on setup and testing prior to activation. Overall, the translations work is approximately 90% complete, with finalization anticipated the first week of April 2024.

### ***Master Schedule Building Optimization***

DIIT/SIS has been working collaboratively with DCSD School Leadership, Student Support Services, and Wrap-Around Support and Intervention on optimizing master schedule building processes and procedures. This project will ensure equitable access to allocations and allow schools and program areas to more accurately identify resources and services to better meet all learners' needs. SY2024-2025 master schedule building training for school scheduling staff is 100% complete, next year scheduling is well underway, and the project is on track for finalization by the end of April 2024.

**Dr. Kyia Clark, Executive Director, Information and Innovation**  
**Ms. Terri Webb, Manager III of Instructional Technology**

### ***Save the Date – Technology Symposium Update***

Mark your calendars for the 2024 Technology Symposium scheduled for Wednesday, July 17th, 2024. This EdTech conference is dedicated to showcasing digital tools and offering practical and innovative strategies for integrating them into educational settings. If you missed the outstanding 2023 Technology Symposium, you can [watch the recap video here](#). Click [here](#) to secure your spot as an attendee, volunteer, or presenter.



### ***Digital Learning Team Liaison Closeout***

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, the Digital Learning Teams convened regularly, boasting an average attendance of 150 participants per month. These sessions occurred virtually on the third Thursday of each month, accommodating the schedules of members across grade levels, with meetings scheduled at 3:30 PM and 4:30 PM. To ensure a cohesive conclusion to the academic year, all digital learning team members and liaisons were provided with an End of Year checklist, aimed at facilitating a successful wrap-up. The final meeting of the year is scheduled for Thursday, May 9, 2024, where we will conclude the year's initiatives and look forward to using feedback to structure the meetings for next year.



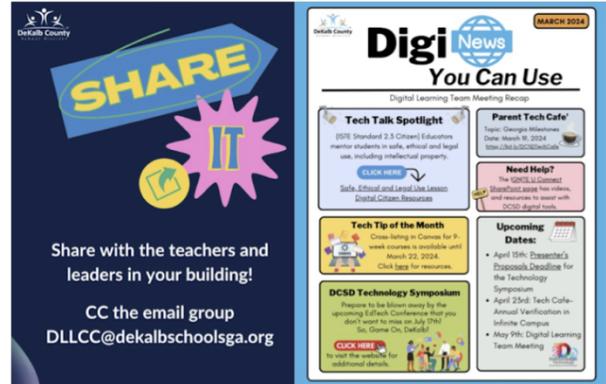
**End of year CHECK list**  
Liaisons complete your tasks by Thursday, May 16, 2024

**Digital Learning Team Members**

- Schedule an end-of-year meeting with your team and ITS to reflect on how the team assisted teachers with integrating technology within the school.
  - How many training courses did you host during the 23-24 school year?
  - Which tools did you train on?
  - What was communication like?
- Develop a plan on how you will increase technology proficiency for the next school year.
  - Consider giving teachers a tech tools needs assessment to help you prepare.
- Recruit members for next year to start the year off strong!

**Digital Learning Liaison**

- Forward the Instructional Technology Newsletter to the teachers and building leaders within your building. To confirm the email has been shared, be sure to Carbon Copy (CC) the following email group: [DLLCC@dekalbschools.ga.us](mailto:DLLCC@dekalbschools.ga.us).
  - Share the information within 24 hours of the meeting.
- Provide documentation of a training you facilitated during the 2023-2024 school year by emailing the group: [DLLCC@dekalbschools.ga.us](mailto:DLLCC@dekalbschools.ga.us)
  - Documentation examples: agenda, pictures, presentation, sign in sheet, email notification
- Review your school's 2023-2024 IGNITE U Professional Learning Series
  - Update the IGNITE U Local school monitoring form to ensure your school is at or above 90%.
    - If teachers have not completed all the IU TICs, then they need to complete it. \*Please note that new staff members that arrived after January 1, 2024, are excused from the 23-24 IU PL.



**SHARE IT!**  
Share with the teachers and leaders in your building!  
CC the email group [DLLCC@dekalbschools.ga.us](mailto:DLLCC@dekalbschools.ga.us)

**Digi News You Can Use**  
MARCH 2024  
Digital Learning Team Meeting Recap

**Tech Talk Spotlight**  
ISTE Standard 2.3 Content Educators mentor students in safe, ethical and legal use, including intellectual property.  
[CLICK HERE](#)  
[Safe School and Legal Use Lesson Digital Citizenship Resources](#)

**Tech Tip of the Month**  
Cross-listing in Canvas for 2-week courses is available until March 22, 2024.  
[CLICK HERE FOR RESOURCES](#)

**DCSD Technology Symposium**  
Prepare to be blown away by the upcoming EdTech Conference that you don't want to miss on July 27-28! (St. Stone On, DeKalb!)  
[CLICK HERE](#)  
to visit the website for additional details.

**Parent Tech Cafe'**  
Topic: Google Milestones  
Date: March 16, 2024  
<https://www.usccdc.org/Calendar>

**Need Help?**  
The DIGITE U Contact Sheet will assist you with all resources to reach with DIGITE U digital tools.

**Upcoming Dates:**

- April 15th: Dassenet's Bi-monthly Deadline for the Technology Symposium
- April 23rd: Tech Conference Annual Verification in Infinite Campus
- May 9th: Digital Learning Team Meeting

### FUSE Cohort IV Update

The FUSE Cohort IV members are currently working on the EmpowerED: Re-Ignite the Flame PL Course in Canvas. Instructional Technology Specialist provides one-on-one coaching support with FUSE members. A virtual check-in session will be held on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. This will provide FUSE members an opportunity to share their FUSE experience and prepare for the closeout of the cohort. Plans are currently being made for an End of Cohort Celebration.



**Digital Dreamers Educator Recognition**  
TECH TRENDSETTER | TECH ENTHUSIASTS | TECH DISRUPTER

**EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING WITH TECHNOLOGY TOOLS**  
MODULE 2  
FUSE Cohort IV

**FUSE Cohort IV**  
March - May 2024

**FUSE Cohort IV**  
2023-2024

**Ms. Linda Jordan, Manager III of Applications and Development**  
**Ms. Mallorie Robinson, Manager II, or Enterprise Business Solutions**

The Learning Systems and Visualizations Team rolled out the User Access Review software tool used to audit Infinite Campus users according to schedule. The updated software has incorporated immediate supervisor level data to improve accuracy in the identification of employees and required access levels.

The Enterprise Business Systems Team continues to support the transition of the district's ERP (Enterprise Resource Program) environments. The district is still scheduled to completely transition payroll for all staff members to Munis ERP system by June 30, 2024.

The Visualization Team and the Web Team continue to update and publish the public dashboards for the student devices, Finance, and Operations. The devices dashboard is updated weekly based on Monday morning Frontline Asset Management data; the Finance and Operations dashboards are published monthly.

**Dr. Yolanda Williamson**  
**Chief of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships**

**Dr. Yolanda Williamson**  
**Community Engagement**

**Exploration of New Community Partners**

**Wellroot-** Meeting was an overview of services offered to DeKalb students and families possibly in the fall (currently in Gwinnett and Hall Counties)- Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is a parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children and teenagers. It aims to prevent problems in the family, school, and community before they arise and create family environments that encourage children to realize their potential. They also work with foster care students (providing shelter, transportation and employment help), and working with teen moms- from pregnancy through delivery (program is for 3 years). All services are currently free. Connected Wellroot with Dr. Towns and her team.

**DHA Farmers Market-** Meeting was held virtually to discuss DeKalb County School District becoming a partner at their Fourth of July community event. They are seeking a donation of at least \$2500 for DCSD to host a booth and place printed materials for attendees.

**ATE Educational Consulting-** Meeting was an overview of an educational consulting business that provides school leaders with professional development so they can improve their impact on student achievement. The owner, Dr Angela Taylor-Eccles, has created a new teacher institute that works on teacher sustainability and helping to develop a teacher retention plan. She also has developed an initiative titled Power- P perseverance, O opportunities, W wellness, E environment R relationships. Designed to create a sustainable and thriving network.

### **Meetings/Presentations for Further Review**

Edlio- Meeting with Cristy Rivera to discuss an online platform that unifies, simplifies and streamlines school communication for their students, families and community. Moreover, it is a digital platform that combines all of the systems schools are using into one place (website, mobile app, parent communication, online school payments, forms, emails, etc) and makes it easy for all educators to use. The cost ranges from \$1.50-\$2 per student. App is free for district staff and teachers. We will be meeting with Terri Webb (IT) to explore how the process works if we were to use this as a community engagement tool.

### **Communicative Diversity Plan**

**Update Friday or Saturday**

### **Communications Audit**

The plan to implement a communications audit has been finalized. The audit of the Communications Department is to assess communication processes, strategies, and channels. This comprehensive examination helps identify strengths and weaknesses in communication practices, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and enhancing overall effectiveness. Overall, a communications audit will help to refine their communication strategies, improve internal and external communication processes, and ultimately achieve their communication goals more effectively. The prep work for the audit is underway. The actual audit is schedule to begin August/September 2024.

### **Advisory Councils**

The Parent and Bilingual Parent Advisory Councils have closed for the 2023-2024 school year. Participants were requested to engage in a ThoughtExchange concerning ways to enhance the effectiveness of the meetings.

The Staff Advisory and Exceptional Education Advisory Councils are set to meet in May 2024. The Staff Advisory meeting in May will be used to closeout previous discussions and remaining concerns expressed in ThoughtExchange. The Exceptional Education Parent Advisory Council have participated in a ThoughtExchange, providing insight into the thoughts and concerns of council members.

### **Parent Advisory Council Meeting**



## **Bilingual Parent Advisory Council Meeting**



**Tanya Arrington**  
**Manager Strategic Partners**

### **Meetings/Presentations for Further Review**

#### **Cognia (MyVoice):**

The meeting (with Robert Neu, Senior Director) was an introduction to a program they have developed called My Voice which will help the superintendent and principals drill down the data and address issues like teacher burnout and the culture of the building. The program looks at 10 different drivers/indicators that allow teachers to give real time feedback on different areas and allow administrators to go into the platform and come up with real time solutions/conversations based on this data. The goal of the program is teacher retention and a healthy school culture

#### **K12 Insight- Let's Talk:**

The meeting (with Joseph Douglass, Regional Sales Director) was an opportunity for DCSD to look at how we can streamline communication and route phone calls and emails to a specific person/team. The service (Let's Talk) is designed to allow DCSD to be more efficient and productive in responding to our stakeholders' needs through AI-powered technology. All calls are logged into the system and responded to within 48 hours (about 2 days). The yearly subscription price is \$350,000 and the one-time fee for set up is \$50,000. The system was designed to save thousands of labor hours. A meeting will occur after spring break with the IT department, Chief of Staff and Superintendent Horton.

**Dr. Donald Porter**  
**Press Secretary**

The Press Secretary's Office serves as the primary point of contact for all news media inquiries and actively participates in many direct and indirect support functions across DCSD divisions. A monthly summary of these activities for March 28-April 26, 2024, includes:

2024-04-26 I worked with Dr. Towns to provide information on DCSD's approach to curbing chronic student absenteeism for an AJC story.

2024-04-25 Worked with Champion Dillard and Dr. Jones to draft a media statement acknowledging an internal investigation into the activities of a Chamblee HS employee.

2024-04-25 Worked with School Nutrition to provide the latest information to 11Alive regarding the Summer Meals Program.

2024-04-25 Worked with Dr. Towns in Wrap Around Services to address questions regarding DCSD's Dual Enrollment Program.

2024-04-25 Wrote and Distributed Spring Job Fair Media Release.

2024-04-24 Scheduled and prepped Transportation Director to be interviewed by Fox 5 regarding Gov. Kemp's signing of Abby's law, which positioned DCSD as being ahead of the curve in implementing these bus route safety measures years before being required by the state.

2024-04-24 At the request of Dr. Michelle Jones, I rewrote a principal letter to Dunwoody HS families regarding a student threatening students and adults.

2024-04-24 Scheduled and prepped HR Chief for 11Alive interview about the incredible work of DCSD HR staff and the initiatives implemented by Dr. Horton in hiring and retaining staff and previewed the upcoming DCSD Spring Job Fair.

2024-04-23 For a WSB-TV story on Gov. Kemp signing the Ga Promise Scholarship Act, I prepared and released a DCSD statement after conferring with Dr. Horton.

2024-04-23 For a WSB-TV story, I worked with Mr. Hofstetter to craft a District statement to dispel community misconceptions regarding the recommendation to postpone the construction of the Cross Keys MS project and it's having no effect on the modernization of the high school.

2024-04-23 At the request of Dr. McGhee, I rewrote a principal letter to Lithonia HS families regarding a lockdown at the school.

2024-04-23 Provided updated information to WSB-TV regarding DCSD's use of weapons detection system (EVOLV).

2024-04-22 At the request of Dr. Williamson, I wrote and delivered a video script for Dr. Horton, acknowledging his appreciation for his employment contract extension.

2024-04-21 Over the weekend, I provided edits to a family communication at the request of Dr. Weaver regarding a possible bomb threat at a DCSD school on Monday, April 22.

2024-04-19 I worked with Dr. Horton and Mr. DaCosta to write and distribute the media release announcing Dr. Horton's contract extension.

2024-04-17 At the request of Mr. Arnold, I edited a principal letter to Jolly ES families about delayed state testing.

2024-04-17 At the request of Mr. Damian Bounds, I reworked a principal letter to McNair HS families announcing a lockdown at the school.

2024-04-16 After consultation with the chief legal officer, I wrote a widely distributed media statement regarding the contractual settlement with the former superintendent:

At its Regular Business Meeting on April 15, 2024, DeKalb County School Board Members approved a settlement to former Superintendent Cheryl Watson-Harris based on the terms of her original contract for \$325,000 plus \$16,000 in attorney fees. The vote was 6-1.

2024-04-16 At the request of Dr. Lisa McGhee, I rewrote a principal letter for Bethune MS families regarding a weapon reported on a school bus.

2024-04-16 At the request of Dr. Lisa McGhee, I rewrote a principal letter for Lithonia HS families regarding an unauthorized parent threatening a teacher.

2024-04-16 At the request of Dr. Michelle Jones, I rewrote a principal letter to SW DeKalb HS families regarding a student with a weapon in their car on campus.

2024-04-15 Working with CAO Stacy Stepney to answer a media inquiry regarding the curriculum audit.

2024-04-15 Proofed and suggested additions to the weekly Hitting the Road with Horton newsletter.

2024-04-15 At the request of Dr. Thomas Glanton (SWD HS), I edited his family letter announcing his departure as principal to assume his new position as the Regional Superintendent for high schools in June.

2024-04-11 Worked with Chief Elijah Palmer to respond to a media inquiry into the DCSD Use of Force for SROs.

2024-04-10 Wrote and submitted Dr. Horton's Graduation Speech draft.

2024-10 Rewrote the GaDOE announcement that eight high school seniors were named Georgia Scholars for 2024. See: <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/students/gadoe-lauds-8-dcsd-students-recognized-as-georgia-scholars-for-2024/>

2024-04-10 Worked with Naimah Holmes in HR to get broader media coverage for the April 27 DCSD Spring Job Fair.

2024-04-09 Facilitated media interview with Dr. Kishia Towns regarding chronic absenteeism and what DCSD is doing to overcome barriers to more consistent student attendance.

2024-04-09 At the request of Trenton Arnold, I rewrote a principal letter for Idlewood ES to families regarding a weapon found on campus.

2024-04-09 Proofed and suggested additions to the weekly Hitting the Road with Horton newsletter.

2024-04-09 Wrote and submitted the approved Val/Sal letter for Dr. Horton.

2024-04-09 Wrote the initial draft and submitted the approved Val/Sal letter for Board Chair Dijon DaCosta.

2024-04-08 At the request of Dr. Williamson, I wrote a speech to be delivered to the American Jewish Committee's Atlanta Unity Seder.

2024-04-08 Attended and coordinated media stories and interviews at Fernbank Science Center for the widely promoted Solar Eclipse Events there.

2024-04-08 Took multiple pictures for social media from Fernbank Science Center for the widely promoted Solar Eclipse Events there.

2024-04-01-08 Responded to and coordinated local, regional, and national media in advance of the Solar Eclipse Events at the Fernbank Science Center.

2024-03-28 Responded to multiple media inquiries regarding allegations against an SRO at the DeKalb Alternative School. Here is the statement I drafted and released after proper approvals:

The safety and well-being of students and staff are top priorities for the DeKalb County School District (DCSD). Allegations of inappropriate or unlawful behavior are taken seriously and addressed according to established District policies and procedures.

Following an incident on March 13, 2024, allegations were made against a DCSD Police Officer working at the DeKalb Alternative School. Due to the serious nature of the

accusations, the officer was placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of an internal investigation.

DCSD is committed to maintaining the integrity of the ongoing investigation and legal process. Further statements will not be issued until the investigation is complete.

## **Jamelia Potter** **Communications**

The Communications Department is an integral part of District offices as it supports various priorities, campaigns, and promotions. With its wide range of services such as creative design, marketing strategies, video production, photography, bilingual communications, media relations, and strategic writing, the department plays a crucial role in the overall functioning of the organization. With this said, all chiefs and departments such as Finance, Curriculum and Instruction, Operations, and Community Engagement and Empowerment, Human Resources, work closely with Communications on a day-to-day basis to meet their MIRACLES priorities for the month. Because internal teams have high level priorities, Communications is always on standby to provide support and ensure Cabinet and department heads can meet their deadlines.

**Saving our Students (S.O.S.)** - In the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) community, gun violence, vaping, human trafficking, bullying, vaping, and cyberbullying have become critical issues impacting our students, families, staff, and community. DCSD is launching a Saving Our Students "S.O.S." campaign to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of these issues in our community. This campaign will involve PR, marketing, media, a march, and video efforts to reach a wider audience and spread our messages effectively. This campaign will be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year.

**Communications Survey** - Effective communication is crucial for the success and growth of DeKalb County School District. Communications has crafted a district-wide communications survey to identify how families, staff members, and community members receive information, the effectiveness of the communication, and the value of the information received. The Department of Communications will encourage all stakeholders to participate, and the survey will be made available in several languages. The survey results will enable the district to increase and improve our communications and better serve the needs of our district, scholars, and community.

The Communications Survey is being revamped through a new collaboration with NASPA, and is set to be released in August 2024 and distributed on the following channels:

- Hitting the Road with Dr. Horton Newsletter
- News Flash
- Social Media

- School Messenger
- The District Website
- School Websites

**Professional Learning Opportunities:** Members of the team are excited to be attending the national conference for the National School Public Relations Association in July.

**Direct support for Schools (Reference names if applicable):** Communications has provided schoolhouses with the following support: Graphic design (logos, letterhead, flyers) and event coverage.

**Completed Projects for schools (graphics):**

Miller Grove MS Envelopes

Mental Health Awareness Month Banner (physical; not web)

Henderson Middle school Detention Form design

DCSD Gifted Identification Documents Flowchart Reformat

Miller Grove Middle School Visitor Sticker

President's Education Awards Program Certificate

Rowland ES S.O.A.R. Poster

DCSD Front Office Star Rating Posters

**Dr. Marcia Oglesby**

**Director of Grants & Partnership**

Partners were provided with the Partnerships Interest Survey to share which schools they currently support and resources the organizations can provide for the district. The team will determine who they are currently supporting and if there is any interest in expanding support to additional schools. DCEIP has a goal to ensure the alignment of partners with schools and district departments to the MIRACLES priorities. Grants and Partnerships will create a document to show the partners for each area and school in the district. Analysis of the survey results and listing of the partners currently supporting the schools will assist us with ensuring all areas and schools have partners and resources to support the individual needs of the school communities. Finally, we will also work towards securing partners for the schools that need additional resources to support their efforts.

Grants and Partnerships worked collaboratively with a partnering organization to submit the Apprenticeship Building America, Round 2 grant. If awarded, \$2.8 million will be allocated to fund the Teacher Residency Program. An award decision will be provided on or before July 1, 2024.

Grants and Partnerships is supporting the Boys and Girls Club of Metro America (BGCMA) as they prepare to provide free summer programming to students in the McNair cluster. BGCMA

was awarded the 5-year 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program grant to provide free academic and enrichment activities year-round.

The new grant opportunities listing will be disseminated via News Flash. The grant opportunities will provide an opportunity for schools and district departments to apply for grants to support their funding needs and obtain resources to support students.

The team is participating on the planning committee with Workforce DeKalb to secure and increase partnerships to support the district's college and career academy efforts.

**Marcia Coward**  
**Manager of Family Engagement**

### **Fambassador Program**

On Friday, April 19th, Family Engagement Liaisons Anne Ferreira and Hau Dim, were honored to welcome an extraordinary group of individuals to the Fambassadors program at Indian Creek ES. This new cohort stands out as our most diverse yet, boasting representation from a multitude of languages, including Nepali, Burmese, Amharic, Chin, Swahili, Arabic and Karen.

With over 22 enthusiastic participants, this gathering exemplified a true melting pot of cultures and backgrounds, united by a common goal: to become community leaders. Throughout the session, attendees delved into the essence of the Fambassador program, gaining insights into our district's mission and the pivotal role played by the Family Engagement Department. They explored the significance of fostering strong connections between schools, families, and communities, recognizing the power of collaboration and mutual support in enhancing student success. The first session of the Fambassadors program was not only a testament to the richness of our cultural tapestry but also a promising start to a journey of empowerment and advocacy. We look forward to the transformative impact these dedicated individuals will undoubtedly make as they carry forward the torch of family engagement within their communities.

### **Volunteerism**

We continue to provide orientation for our district's volunteers. To date we have provided orientation for 2732 Level II and Level III Volunteers who are ready to contribute to the district's and school's initiatives.

Total number of volunteers by title capacity and levels.

- GED Support (Proctor) (Level II) , 34
- Community Coach or Lay Coach (Level III) , 103
- Literacy Support (Reading Pals/Reading Program) (Level III) , 161
- Classroom Parent (Level III) , 442
- Club Sponsor (Level III) , 91

- PTA/PTO Function (Level III) , 215
- Band Booster (Level III) , 71
- Cafeteria Helper (Level II) , 213
- Field Trip Chaperones (Level II Volunteer) Supervised by DCSD Staff , 445
- Field Trip Chaperones (Level III Volunteer) Fingerprinting Required PRIOR to Volunteer Approval , 354
- Concessions (Level II) , 140
- Field Day Event (Level II) , 370
- Media Center Helper (Level III) , 132
- Observer (Level II) , 145
- Office Helper (Level II) , 228
- PAC Meeting (Level II) , 81
- Mentor (Training Required PRIOR to Volunteer Approval) (Level III) , 138
- Beautification (Level I) , 87
- Book Buddies (Level II) , 121
- (AIC) District Level Volunteer , 15

### **SAFE Kids Day DeKalb Collaboration**

We are gearing up for our 2nd Safe Kids Day, The Department of Family and Community Empowerment, in collaboration with Safe Kids DeKalb / Dekalb County Fire Rescue, will host Safe Kids Day DeKalb on Saturday, May 4, 2024. The event will take place from 11 am to 3 pm at the Administrative and Instructional Complex located at 1701 Mountain Industrial Blvd, Stone Mountain, The event will feature interactive workshops, demonstrations, and informational booths where attendees could learn about different aspects of child safety. Participants have the opportunity to engage with experts, ask questions, and receive personalized advice on how to create safer environments for children.

Participants will have access to a wide range of educational materials and valuable resources, including brochures, pamphlets, and safety equipment. These resources were designed to empower parents and caregivers with the knowledge and tools needed to prevent accidents and ensure the well-being of children. Safe Kids Day DeKalb fosters a sense of community by encouraging active participation and collaboration among attendees. The event will provide a platform for families to connect with local organizations, schools, and businesses committed to promoting child safety initiatives.

We have successfully secured a generous donation of kids' bikes to be raffled off at our upcoming event. A heartfelt thank you goes out to Bike4kids for their invaluable contribution!

Safe Kids Day DeKalb aims to unite children, parents, caregivers, and the broader community in a collective effort to enhance child safety knowledge and practices.

The primary goal is to equip participants with the necessary information, skills, and resources to significantly reduce childhood injuries that occur at home, during playtime, and on the way to various destinations.

### **Adult Education(GED)**

We continue support our adult Learners as they work towards obtaining their GED and better command the English Language in our ESL classes. This is an exciting time of the year as our students are working hard to make the graduation day of May 3rd. To date 19 students have passed all 4 core content areas of the test and have received their High School Equivalency Diploma. Twenty students have 1 subject are to go and we are rooting for them to make it across the finish line.

### **Job Skills Training**

We are also excited to share the startup of a new training opportunity which will allow our participants to gain industry certified credentials as ServeSAFE Managers. Instruction will be conducted by world renowned Culinary Master Chef John Kanadu of Pro Chef Techniques Company and is scheduled to commence on April 15th. The training will cover essential concepts including:

- Understanding the Significance of Food Safety
- Practicing Good Personal Hygiene
- Ensuring Time and Temperature Control
- Preventing Cross-Contamination
- Implementing Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures
- Safely Handling Food Preparation
- Properly Receiving and Storing Food Items
- Various Methods of Thawing, Cooking, Cooling, and Reheating Food
- Understanding HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points)
- Comprehending Food Safety Regulations
- And more....

### **Computer Literacy Classes**

Our computer literacy sessions at both Sequoyah and Cross Keys locations are progressing smoothly. Parents are thoroughly enjoying the classes and gaining valuable knowledge. Collaborating with Compudopt has provided valuable lessons for the parents participating in the computer literacy classes, highlighting the importance of technology. It will empower them to navigate through the ever-evolving landscape of technology effectively. This cohort will end on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Family Support at Indian Creek – Mothers to Mothers Program**

In partnership with the Refugee Women Network, a Mothers-to-Mothers Program was introduced at Indian Creek Elementary School for Burmese Refugee mothers. M2M is a discussion-based, peer-to-peer support, small-group program that caters to women as the health brokers of their families. It prioritizes providing a safe space for mothers to attend by ensuring this is a time they can be themselves and their empowerment while discussing health issues that are pertinent to them.

The project provides mothers with education on vaccination, vaccination status, and the impact of the pandemic on the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of community members. It consists of 10 classes including the celebration of the mothers' understanding of basic health and it is held every alternate week.

### Parents Cafes

We have completed our series of Parent Cafe and celebrate their success! The Parents Cafes are educational workshops for parents to understand the school and district protocols and enhance their knowledge in supporting their children's academic success.

- In collaboration with the District Attendance Specialist, Attendance Cafe was conducted in 10 schools.
- In collaboration with school counselors, Stop Bullying Cafe was conducted in 3 schools on October 2023 as a recognition of STOP BULLYING MONTH.
- In Collaboration with the District School Psychologists Department, Social Emotional Cafe was conducted in November.
- Test Prep Cafe was conducted at Indian Creek and Idlewood Elementary School.



| Parents Attendance - Parent Café per Schools |                 |          |            |             |             |          |               |              |               |               |
|--|-----------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Name of Workshops                            | Indian Creek Es | Jolly ES | Allgood ES | Dunair e ES | Idlewood ES | Redan HS | Panola Way ES | Woodridge ES | Stone Mill ES | Bob Mathis ES |
| Attendance Café                              | 45              | 23       | 52         | 35          |             | 11       | 15            | 5            | 5             | 5             |
| Stop Bullying Café                           | 38              | 20       | 25         |             |             |          |               |              |               |               |
| Social Emotional Café                        | 45              | 18       | 25         | 25          |             |          |               |              |               |               |
| Test Prep Café                               | 45              |          |            |             | 15          |          |               |              |               |               |
| Total  | 173             | 61       | 77         | 60          | 15          | 11       | 15            | 5            | 5             | 5             |
| Total Parents attended                       | 452             |          |            |             |             |          |               |              |               |               |

### Dr. Amelia Jefferson Project Director

In support of the core value *Humanization* in H-Pride, DCEIP is facilitating the final Superintendent's Advisory Council Meetings. The themes for these meetings are based on Thought Exchange Data and In-person discussion of stakeholder topics of concern. Chiefs are invited to address concerns, give updates and information. This platform allows stakeholders to

participate in shaping policy and initiatives for the educational community of the DeKalb County School District. Finally, it allows the DCSD Leadership Team to recognize the value of these voices and show appreciation for their participation and commitment.