

Academic Report Document – August

Dr. Triscilla Weaver, *Chief of Equity*

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The newly formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Division at the DeKalb County School District has made significant strides during August. Through strategic planning and collaborative efforts, the division has begun to lay a solid foundation for promoting a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

One of the division's achievements is the creation of the MIRACLES Priorities, a comprehensive framework that guides its work. Additionally, the division has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify qualified vendors who will conduct an equity audit, develop equity policies, and create an equity rubric. These efforts will provide valuable insights into the district's current state and highlight areas for improvement.

Furthermore, during the August Principals' Learning Opportunity, the DEI Division shared its purpose, goals, and structure. By fostering open dialogue, the division gained valuable input and support for its initiatives. Leveraging insights from these interactions, the division has established the Equity Steering Committee and is developing the Consultative Committee, ensuring that DEI initiatives are grounded in consistent feedback and the priorities of our stakeholders.

To stay abreast of emerging trends and best practices, division members participated in professional conferences, allowing the team to network with experts and enhance their knowledge. Finally, the division has implemented a system of accountability check-ins and benchmarks to measure progress and ensure that its efforts align with its goals.

Athletics

Myss Johnson-Jelks, *Executive Director of Athletics*

High School Athletics:

DCSD football is off to a great start! Lithonia is ranked #10 in the state in AAAA. Druid Hills and Clarkston are playing region schedules this season. Additionally, participation numbers are up by at least 15% at Dunwoody, Lakeside, Chamblee, Arabia Mountain, Cedar Grove, and Lithonia.

Softball is also underway. In the GHSA softball power rankings compiled as of 8/29/24, three DCSD softball programs are ranked in the top 10 in their respective classifications:

- **AAAAA**
 - #5 Chamblee HS
 - #7 Lakeside HS
- **AA**
 - #5 Miller Grove HS

We are excited to share that Chamblee’s volleyball player Nathalie Tsai has made the American Volleyball Coaches Association All-American list. Additionally, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. High School has started a student media team. The team is composed of 20 students who rotate through all student games to film, photograph, and interview players and coaches. The team will ultimately be responsible for updating the school’s website, creating student highlight tapes, and providing team photography.

Middle School Sports:

The volleyball season is underway. This year, 14 DCSD middle schools are participating in our volleyball league. Sequoyah Middle School hosted its first match in the history of its volleyball program on Wednesday, August 21st.

On August 17th, 16 DCSD middle schools participated in the DCSD Middle School Football Jamboree. The jamboree was hosted at three stadiums: Adams, Hallford, and Cobb. On August 24th, the football season officially kicked off at all five stadiums. The marquee game was a championship rematch between the 2023 Champion, Cedar Grove Middle School, and the 2023 runner-up and 2022 Champion, Stephenson Middle School. Cedar Grove Middle School won the rematch 28-6.

Brandan Lane, *Director of Athletics*

Track season is in full swing! The first track meet was held at three high schools, with over 200 students participating from each cluster. The energy and enthusiasm were incredible! The next track meet will be held on September 7 at Lakeside High School, Southwest DeKalb High School, and Adams Stadium.

We’re also excited to kick off elementary soccer! Practices begin on September 23, with the first games scheduled for September 28. We can’t wait to see our young athletes shine!

School Innovation

Shakina M. Champion, *Director*

School Innovation has launched a common application for the District's Spotlight Schools and Innovative Solutions Lab initiatives, which offer multiple points of entry on the innovation journey. Spotlight School visits highlight promising practices, including the implementation of the Six Essential Systems, to improve student outcomes and promote equity. The Innovative Solutions Lab provides funding and support for schools to develop community-responsive solutions to identified problems of practice. The cross-functional Core Team for these two projects convened its first meeting for SY24-25 to provide feedback on key program documents, such as the common application and the criteria rubric, both of which are aligned with the Six Essential Systems. Additionally, three returning Spotlight Schools have started planning their fall encore visits, focusing on inclusive early childhood practices, academic and behavioral supports, collaborative planning and community impact. The fall Spotlight School visits will begin in early October 2024.

School Innovation met with DCSD charter school leaders to introduce the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) process and gather feedback on the essential features of the protocol. The QSR informs continuous improvement for charter schools, augments desk-audited compliance and accountability, and provides robust qualitative data about charter schools' academic, financial, and organizational effectiveness to enhance annual meetings and the charter renewal process. The Department has convened a working group of charter leaders to identify a self-assessment tool that aligns with the schools' innovative features and focuses on the learning environment and outcomes for student subgroups. The Department has also continued its collaboration with regional, state, and national partners in this effort.

At its retreat on May 29, 2024, the DeKalb Board of Education approved the District's Strategic Waiver School System (SWSS) contract for submission to the Georgia Department of Education. The State Board of Education (SBOE) approved the District's SWSS contract for a six-year term at its June meeting. In exchange for increased flexibility from specific Georgia laws and SBOE rules, the District has committed to heightened accountability for reducing the number of schools identified as Additional Targeted Support & Improvement (ATSI) and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), and to avoiding designation as financially high-risk. School Innovation collaborates with School Improvement and School Leadership in its monitoring functions, as SWSS accountability, interventions, and supports align with GADOE's School Improvement process. School Innovation has also begun bi-monthly meetings with Legal Affairs to ensure that DBOE policy revisions are consistent with waived state laws and SBOE rules. During SY24-25, School Innovation will facilitate professional learning opportunities to enhance district and school leaders' understanding of the SWSS contract.

Student Assignment

Sarita Smith, *Executive Director*

Student Assignment has had a very productive first month of school, establishing new norms to yield better results. Placements for the 24-25 School Choice cycle will expire on August 30, 2024. The 25-26 open enrollment

period is fast approaching. To ensure robust participation and a smooth transition, the team is actively developing new marketing tools to communicate the open enrollment changes. Student Assignment is also planning to host the School Expo, an event aimed at providing parents with comprehensive insights into available options throughout the district. The team is developing a detailed FAQ section to address common concerns, particularly focusing on the recent date change for school choice application submissions. This proactive approach is designed to streamline the process, enhance transparency, and support families in making informed decisions about their children's education while ensuring that the district demonstrates sound fiscal stewardship. Lastly, our director, Dr. Covington, presented on Student Assignment topics (i.e., SAP, School Choice, Hardships, etc.) to all School Social Workers, Attendance Specialists, and other key support personnel.

Dr. Char-Shenda Covington, *Director*

Our registration team has greatly evolved in registration and enrollment, transitioning from online registration to hands-on registration support. We now visit schools three days a week, offering localized assistance based on data from Infinite Campus. Additionally, we support 30-day provisional enrollments and maintain clear communication with schools and leaders through the weekly Target 0 report. This proactive approach ensures that we effectively address enrollment challenges and support our schools more comprehensively.

Lastly, our student assignment project is progressing well, with the application window closing on September 6, 2024. We have received over 274 applications for 120 committee spots and will begin reviewing them next week by location. Additionally, we will attend the Latino Community event at Dresden Elementary School to connect with faith-based and community organizations, fostering stronger community ties and engagement.

Student Mentorship & Partnerships

Dr. Loukisha Walker, *Executive Director*

Student Mentorship and Partnerships (SMP) have already demonstrated their necessity in the DeKalb County School District. Please see some of the great happenings in SMP. Leader in Me, founded on the belief that everyone has the potential to lead, is a comprehensive PK–12 framework that nurtures student leadership, fosters a culture of trust, and boosts academic success. This approach empowers students, educators, and families with essential leadership and life skills, preparing them to excel. DCSD has partnered with GADOE and Franklin Covey to bring this initiative to 22 elementary and middle schools across the district, aiming to positively impact the climate and accelerate student achievement. To date, schools have been oriented,

surveyed staff, students, and parents to establish baseline data, and scheduled their first meetings with Leader in Me coaches to begin the program.

MBK/OSK chapters are being established and/or revamped to support the updated expectations from the SMP department and to better align with the overall mentoring framework that will be implemented across the district. Currently, MBK/OSK is present in approximately 59 schools, a number that already exceeds the goal set by the SMP department. Based on our August 27th meeting, MBK/OSK Champions and Mentors are excited about the renewed emphasis on the programs.

FACE Advocates have returned this school year with renewed energy, an eagerness to better support students, and a strong desire to learn and invest in their roles. They have received high-quality professional development that included Data Exploration and Reflective Practices, Workplace Expectations, Action Plan Development, and Mentoring Phase I: Developing Rapport and Building Trust. The FACE Advocates' presence in the schools has been a phenomenal support for their identified students and school administration. Their work is rooted in advocacy to help students overcome barriers so that more focus can be placed on academics, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes. They have identified their caseloads and begun reaching out to parents, counselors, and teachers to determine how they can best support students for maximum impact. We are enthusiastic about the positive contributions of the FACE Advocates in DCSD.

Mrs. Michelle Dillard, *Chief of Schools*

Schools and Leadership has been off and rolling this school year. We have welcomed several new principals this school year. We visited several schools and on the first day of school we had teachers participating in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). The first Principal's Learning Opportunity went well with the principals. We have created our first MIRACLES priorities and held our first MIRACLES workshop.

The Leadership Development department has had an outstanding start to the 2024-2025 School Year. In addition to hiring four new part-time Performance Coaches to support our new principals, the team actively engaged in learning alongside leaders during the Principals' Learning Opportunity. This collaborative effort contributed to the achievement of two of the department's MIRACLES goals. The additional coaches enable the department to provide leaders with intensive support and maintain a manageable caseload, ensuring leaders can work more closely on their goals using their individual school data for assessment. The Leadership Development team now consists of nine part-time coaches and two full-time Performance Coaches.

The opening of schools has been outstanding! It has been a unique pleasure visiting schools and witnessing firsthand the implementation of the many systems and structures that are available to schools. I had the pleasure of assisting schools with their allocations and providing support. The principals were very open-

mindful, and appreciated the recommendations and assistance provided. Many schools had questions about District Balancing and the execution of this process.

The Miracle priority for DeKalb Leadership Institute (DLI) is currently underway. A memo, flyer and interest survey have been completed- this will be sent out to all Assistant Principals as soon as possible. The survey will

gather information from all APs who are interested in becoming a principal. Once the data is collected, the data will be shared with Area Superintendents and EA's to gather their input in identifying AP's with at least 2 or more years of experience to begin our first cohort.

Beth Kyle

Area 1 Elementary Superintendent

The school year is off to a great start. Area One welcomed over 10,100 students speaking over 80 languages. Our new principals: Kanessa Fain, Dunwoody Elementary, Kia Henley, Hawthorne, Regina Blanton, Henderson Mill, and Kim Clark, Woodward, have quickly gotten to know students, staff, and stakeholders. We are currently working on filling the principalship and then AP position at Kingsley Elementary. All schools had the opportunity to honor and celebrate their TOTY, ESPOTY 1 and ESPOTY 2. We also got to honor and celebrate our principal of the year, Tonya Freeman at Ashford Park Elementary. Henderson Mill Elementary was also able to take some time to celebrate their renewed COGNIA STEAM certification.

The Area team have been in schools supporting a smooth start to the school year by helping schools with whatever is needed. After the first week, focus shifted to ensure instruction is starting off on the right foot by beginning MAP and Las Links testing, supporting PLCs, and ensuring that teachers are utilizing DCSD curriculum and resources. We have been visiting all classrooms in the area to assess the implementation of the district curriculum and resources in order to plan strategic professional learning modeling and support for each school based on their level of implementation. Team members have been collaborating with the professional learning department and leadership development to support the continuation of the PLC Miracles priority as well as the Breakthrough Principal book study next month to support the Miracles Priority of Building Teacher and Leader Capacity.

Terri Brown

Area 2 Elementary Superintendent

Area 2 Elementary launched the SY24-25 school year focused on building and instructional readiness. During pre-planning, all Area 2 elementary schools received a site visit to gauge building readiness which included HVAC, cleanliness, and final preparations to receive students and ensure a safe, inviting environment. Four principals were supported for their first day and week of school as principal. Those new principals are Candace Sagers at Avondale, Dyani Robinson at Briar Vista, Sherita Davis at Evansdale, and Krystye Tatum at Smoke Rise. Additionally, the Area 2 Support team embarked on instructional readiness visits which included the following components: 1) Greeting all new school staff (both classified and certified), 2) Monitoring implementation for the Reading-ELA curriculum resources (Wonders & MyView), 3) Monitoring

implementation for the Mathematics curriculum resources (GADOE Learning Plans), and 4) Coaching principals, assistant principals, and academic coaches, and 5) Having conversations about schoolwide collaboration opportunities such as leadership team meetings and collaborative planning along with Professional Learning Communities. To date, 14 out of 17 Instructional Readiness support visits have taken place with the final 4 schools scheduled to be completed by Tuesday, September 3rd.

Ateshia Lester

Area 3 Elementary Schools

Area 3 Schools had a wonderful start to the new school year. Three new principals were introduced to the Area 3 Community: Candace Hardy, Columbia Elementary, Candace Wade-Blaise, Bob Mathis Elementary and Deborah Satterfield, Toney Elementary. Area 3 Principals participated in job-embedded professional learning focused on writing effective smart goals and understanding Professional Learning Communities. Executive Administrators completed 14 of 14 LKES Pre-Conferences for Area 3 Principals. Area Coordinators have provided training on how to access and utilize district resources for all schools. Culture and Climate Coordinators supported all schools with being school ready for the first day of school.

Some highlights from our local schools include Bob Mathis ES, Kelley Lake ES, and Princeton ES being a training site for Ignite U for elementary schools. Kelley Lake was H-Pride certified, Canby Lane partnered with Marshalls to provide each child a winter coat, and all elementary schools participated in the inaugural elementary opening ceremony track meet.

Jacqueline Taylor

Area Superintendent – Middle Schools

During the month of August, the Middle School Area's focus has been on establishing procedures & processes to better support student achievement and enhance the physical learning environment. The Middle School Area team conducted 134 walkthrough visits during the first week for school opening. EA completed LKES preconference with all principals. As well as attended administrative team meetings to ensure consistency in professional practice. New principals received intentional coaching with instruction, operations, and school climate.

Content coordinators have been focused on collaborative planning ensuring teachers know how to access and implement the District's and State's curriculum as well as offering one-on-one support. Additionally, coordinators began classroom observations with feedback and PL on the REAP protocol and how to deconstruct standards. Culture & Climate Coordinators ensured that all schools have Attendance and Culture & Climate Committees and that they are aware of the Areas expectations. CCC conducted virtual AP meetings to review school-based reminders, discuss expectations for the year, and share the rollout of Restorative Practice.

Thomas Glanton

Area Superintendent – High Schools

Subject: Successful Start to the 2024-2025 School Year in the High School Area

The High School Area has launched the 2024-2025 school year with a strong focus on enhancing structures, ensuring equity, and preparing our scholars for success. As part of our Climate and Culture initiatives through

the MIRACLES project, we have introduced *Rock the Vote*, *SAT Day*, *Disconnect-to-Reconnect*, and *Project ID* to better prepare students for high school and beyond.

- **Special Education:** Focused on professional learning opportunities for leaders and teachers, including co-teaching models, IEP implementation, and re-evaluation processes.
- **Mathematics:** Facilitated collaborative planning for Algebra and Geometry teachers around the new Georgia Standards of Excellence, emphasizing district and GA DOE resources.
- **English Language Arts:** Provided training on new textbooks, standards, assessments, and resources. Developed curriculum resources and 90-day support plans while engaging with new schools.
- **Multilingual Learner Support:** Focused on Humanization and Equity by assisting ESOL department chairs, onboarding new teachers, and promoting data-driven
- instruction. Ensured master schedules offer rigorous, grade-level courses that reflect multilingual learners' interests.
- **Mental Health:** Facilitated Trauma-Informed Care training, produced a monthly newsletter, and collaborated on additional learning opportunities.

We remain committed to creating engaging learning environments where all students can excel. Our efforts are dedicated to supporting the success and well-being of every scholar in the High School Area.

Derrick Hardy

Area Horizon Superintendent

The Horizon Area is off to an AWESOME start this school year. Our leaders welcomed over 21,000 students and we have introduced five new principals in July: Mr. Marcus Wright -Salem Middle, Mr. Eric Johnson-Panola Way Elementary School, Ms. Shayna Bishop- McNair DLA Ms. Lindsay Scott - Pineridge Elementary School, and Dr. Fricretia Rice- Shadow Rock Elementary School. Once again, Stoneview ES has been selected as an Innovation Solution Lab spotlight school visit for DCSD. Flat Rock ES presented at the Model Schools Conference during July 2024. McNair Discovery Learning Academy presented best practice collaborative planning at the GADOE Federal Programs Conference and again virtually across all Georgia School Districts

Michelle Jones

Area Specialty /Theme Superintendent

The Specialty Area is off to a great start this school year! Our Area Support Team has visited 100% of the schools in the area. The focus for the month of August has been building readiness, welcoming new staff, and launching Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Our area has reviewed Georgia Milestone Data for ELA

(3-8), Science (5 & 8), and Social Studies (5 & 8) and discussed required training and protocols for the start of the year. This month the Area Support Team has visited all schools to welcome all new staff to the Specialty Area. Our team has supported new teachers in classroom set up and assisted with all aspects of school opening. We also supported our two newest leaders, Dr. Tiffany Reeves, Principal at Marbut Theme School and Mr. Anderson Spince, the Director of the Early Learning Center. We have welcomed multiple Assistant Principals from

International Student Center, Narvi J. Harris Traditional Theme School, Early Learning Center, and most recently at DeKalb Arts Academy. Finally, we welcomed our newest Specialty Area team member, Mr. Andrew Hawk, Executive Assistant. We have been posting positive interactions on our new social media account on Instagram.

At the August Board meeting, one our students, Nia Stephens, from DeKalb Arts Academy was recognized for her original work for the National History Day Competition this summer in Washington, DC.

Ayana Smith

Interim Executive Director Professional Learning

In August, the professional learning department was excited to launch the PL implementation plan aimed at enhancing educators' knowledge to improve student engagement and academic outcomes this 2024-2025 school year!

The first Professional Learning Day to kick off the 2024-2025 school year resulted in:

- 111 sessions offered.
- 7915 participants registered.
- 711 surveys completed.
- 95% Agree or Strongly Agree – The professional learning achieved the session objectives. (Question 4)
- 95% Agree or Strongly Agree – I am confident I can implement what I learned in this session. (Question 7)

The first week of school was supported by the Interim director of PL Coordinators, and PL facilitators who visited all 7 areas and made 118 school visits. Our first August New Educator Team (NETwork) session was a success to kick off the school year! We had over 180 attendees with 45% of the attendees having 0-3 years of experience and 60% new to DeKalb. 50% of the attendees indicated that they were assigned a mentor at the school level. Shout out to the Horizon Area for having the highest new teacher attendees and Middle school had the 2nd highest to attend. We look forward to having at least 90% of our new teachers attending virtually in September.

Dr. Candace Alexander, *Chief of Continuous and Improvement Accountability*

Accountability and Research

The Division of Accountability and Research collaborated with Schools and Leadership and Instructional Technology to assist leaders in supporting MAP participation. We also worked with Schools and Leadership to

present at the Principals Learning Opportunity. The Title I Overview, led by Dr. Myisha Warren, Executive Director of Federal Programs, was very informative. Additionally, the Federal Programs team awarded prizes to the top three Kahoot winners! Our team worked diligently to ensure all data requests were completed.

Dr. Myisha Warren
(Executive Director of Federal Programs)

The Office of Federal Program (OFP) staff supported schools in all capacities throughout the first week of school visits.

Title I Coordinators began meeting with school staff to discuss FY24 requisitions, Open POs, FY24 closeout, travel, FY25 budgets, tutorial and spending. These items are reviewed to ensure alignment with the Strategic Plan and goals created by the comprehensive needs assessment (CNA).

OFP reviewed, approved, and keyed thousands of extra activity packets and stipends throughout June, July, and August. The funding sources were Title I, Title II, and ESSER.

The ESSER team continued working on:

- Execution and implementation of the approved budget
- Participating in meetings with divisions that impact the remaining ESSER III carryover funds
- Regular, collaborative meetings with finance
- Closing out the grant

OFP had collaborative meetings with district staff to support state identified schools during the FY25 school year. The GaDOE's School Improvement 1003 (a) budget was reduced by over 70% and they did not issue allocations for state designated schools. In lieu of the State's budget, DCSD created a district set aside for schools to utilize throughout the FY25 school year.

OFP Accounting Associates and Budget Specialists provided the first of several bookkeeper trainings on August 14 to all bookkeepers within the district. The topics included:

- Who We Are – Why are We Here
- Close PO's
- 2025 Funds
- Use Your Tools
- Final Tips & Takeaways

Dr. Warren and Ms. Thompson provided a Title I, 101 Training to Principals and district staff on August 22:

- Six Systems for Effective School Environment
- How are Allocations Determined?
- Who's on Your Team?

- Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)
- Spending
- Gold Medal Moments

Dr. Felicia Rhone
(Director of Assessment & Accountability)

Assessment Administration SharePoint Site: The [DCSD Assessment Administration SharePoint Site](#) was published on August 12, 2024. The site was introduced to School Test Coordinators during the General Assessment Training on August 13, 2024. All Principals and School Test Coordinators were manually provided site access. The SharePoint Site provides quick access to assessment resources, including the GaDOE Student Assessment Handbook, DCSD assessment calendars, assessment administration procedures, assessment platforms, required forms, and test security protocols.

SAT School Day Administration: The DeKalb Board of Education approved the SAT School Day Administration for 2024-2025 school year for juniors and seniors. The SAT Exams have been ordered for all seniors for the October 23, 2024, administration day and all juniors for the March 19, 2025, SAT School Day Administration. School test coordinators will be trained beginning Aug. 29, 2024, in a virtual open lab setting conducted by our high school assessment coordinator and College Board executive. School test coordinators will work through their College Board accounts to set up students with accommodations and validate their students for final SAT School Day assessment registration.

GaDOE Non-Participation Reconciliation Reporting: The SY23 – 24 Non-Participation Reconciliation window opened on August 14, 2024, and we ask schools to have their reports cleared by close of day Friday, August 30, 2024. The Non-Participation application allows schools to provide reasons an expected participant did not participate in the expected assessment. The Assessment Administration team is working with all schools to provide the most accurate information. Participation rates are calculated to accompany assessment data. U.S. Department of Education expects at least 95% participation. Principals' communication was given to school leaders to take extreme caution in completing these documents, as documentation will affect a school's CCRPI (College & Career Ready Performance Index) score.

DCSD School Test Coordinator's Handbook: The Assessment Administration Department has created the framework for the DCSD School Test Coordinator's Handbook that includes the roles and responsibilities of the School Test Coordinator, School Test Coordinator assessment planning checklists and timelines, State and District guidance for creating a school assessment plan, requirements for professional learning and local school training redelivery expectations, DCSD assessment calendars, and protocols for test security, assessment monitoring and professional ethics. The department is adding additional content to the handbook.

Georgia Milestone End-of-Course: All STCs attended the General Assessments training on Tuesday, August 13, 2024. STCs were trained on assessment protocols and expectations as outlined by the state and the district, including updates, duties and responsibilities, planning test security, irregularities and invalidations, test forms, and accommodations. While the main administration window for the EOC is December 4- 13, 2024, the mid-

month administration opened August 19. STCs received training for mid-month administration via a webinar to be viewed by August 8, 2024. The General Assessments training further emphasized pertinent information for a successful mid-month administration.

IC Pilot: For SY 2024-2025, two DCSD schools were selected for participation in the Interpreting & Constructing Texts (ICT Fall Pilot (EOG & EOC) administration—Cross Keys High School and Freedom Middle School. The principals were notified of selection and provided preliminary information on August 19, 2024. The assessment window is September 30 – October 11, 2024. Schools were selected to be representative of the state’s demographics, and participation is mandatory. Since this is a pilot, students will be assessed on content from their previous grade level.

ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs: The assessment matching process for the 2023-2024 ACCESS for ELLs assessment is in progress. Approximately 80% of matching has been completed for the 2023-2024 ACCESS assessment.

NWEA MAP Growth: The MAP Growth testing window opened August 12, 2024. Prior to the test opening the Assessment Administration team participated in the DSCD’s Professional Development Day on July 30, 2024, to train school test coordinators and new principals on the basic navigation of the MAP platform and Benchmark Assessments. The make-up session was held on August 7, 2024. There were three open forums for MAP assistance on August 12, 14, and 16, 2024. School Test Coordinators were able to discuss issues and create solutions regarding NWEA MAP Growth administration.

There has been an ongoing issue with teacher and student access, rights, locations, and generalized syncing between NWEA and Clever. This has led to significant testing issues including irregularities, students unable to test, teachers unable to administer assessments and more. After meeting with DIIT, it was discovered that for staff, MUNIS is providing Clever with inaccurate data which causes school staff limited access to MAP. DIIT also shared that each student had to have a homeroom, GTID, and Dekalb student number to be properly rostered in MAP platform.

MAP Reading Fluency: MAP Reading Fluency training took place July 25-26 and August 8-9, 2024, for elementary school STCs (School Test Coordinators) and school representatives. This training was led by Patrice Newnam and other NWEA staff members. STCs are expected to redeliver the information to staff in their buildings. Participants received the NWEA links that they could use to access the Professional Learning tab available when logging into the NWEA platform. This testing window is scheduled to open August 26 through September 6, 2024.

District Benchmarks: The Assessment Administration department continues working with Curriculum and Instruction and K12 Assessment Solutions through the University of Georgia. Over the past 30 days, the following has taken place:

- UGA has completed Benchmark 1 for High School courses. These benchmarks have been given to Renaissance Learning for uploading and the DCSD Assessment Administration received the final upload for review.
- Assessment Administration has shared the test codes with Curriculum and Instruction for review before distributing the completed American Literature, US History, Biology, and Algebra C&C Benchmark 1 assessments to each school's High School Test Coordinators. Currently, these tests are now available in the Renaissance platform and have been shared with School Test Coordinators. The first benchmark window opens on August 26, 2024, for high school on the block schedule.
- School Test Coordinators will also receive a script for testing along with test administration times using the newly developed Benchmark Test Examiner's Manual.
- On August 14, 2024, a meeting between the Science Content Coordinator, C&I Director, Assessment Administration team, and UGA took place to discuss the approval by the elementary school's benchmark 1 for science for grades 1-5. Approval was granted by C&I, and these benchmarks were added to the August 16, 2024, file upload to Renaissance Learning.
- All three departments continue to meet bi-weekly to monitor the progression of the Benchmark resetting process.

CogAT/IOWA: The Assessment Administration Department met with representatives from Riverside Data Manager on August 9, 2024, and August 14, 2024, to review technical requirements for testing and plan for the upcoming DCSD school test coordinator training sessions. All School Test Coordinators were notified to attend the required CogAT and IOWA platform training offered August 26 - 27, 2024 in preparation for the gifted identification assessment that opens September 3, 2024, through October 4, 2024.

AP Exams: STCs attended the virtual *Beginning of the Year* training on Wednesday, August 14, 2024, held by the College Board. As part of the College Board review of the district's AP Program for SY 2023-2024, the percentage of students enrolled in AP classes who took the AP exam was assessed. The highest school site percentage of students enrolled in AP

classes who tested was 98%, with the lowest being 50%. The Assessments Administration team and the AP/IB District coordinator in Curriculum & Instruction met on Friday, August 16th to discuss the data and strategies to improve student enrollment in AP classes and participation in the associated AP exam.

NAEP: For SY 2024-2025, sixteen DCSD were selected to participate in the NAEP assessment. The schools selected were four elementary schools, four middle schools, and eight high schools. Principals were notified of selection and provided preliminary information on July 8, 2024. Some schools will participate in the Field Test Assessment and the others in the Long-Term Trend Assessment. The assessment dates are October 7 –

December 13, 2024, and January 6 – March 14, 2025, for the Long-Term Trend Assessment; and January 27 – March 7, 2025, for the Field Test Assessment. The Field Test Assessment will be computer-based. In preparation for NAEP participation, an assessment of the district's technology devices is required and the NAEP form must be completed by the Assessment Administration and DIIT no later than the September 9, 2024, deadline.

Dr. Rebecca Braaten
(Director of Research, Data and Evaluation)

On Professional Learning Day, the Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation (RDE) facilitated five (5) professional learning sessions for DCSD staff. The sessions covered the following topics:

- CCRPI updates
- Using SLDS to identify students' academic strengths and weaknesses (2 sessions)
- Tips for navigating the district research application process
- Data department and resource updates for teacher librarians

During the first week of school, RDE made twenty-six (26) school visits to fifteen (15) school locations. RDE visited the following locations: Chapel Hill Elementary, Chapel Hill Middle, Clarkston High, DeKalb Alternative, DeKalb Arts Academy, DeKalb School of the Arts, Doraville United, Dunwoody, Jolly, Midvale, Murphey Candler, Pleasantdale, Southwest Dekalb, Stone Mountain High, and Stone Mountain Middle. The RDE team primarily assisted with front office support, translation, registration, Chromebook distribution, directing students, hallway/cafeteria monitoring, and transportation.

The fall research approval window is underway. This review cycle so far includes eight (8) applications, five (5) doctorate dissertations, and three (3) external agency studies. In addition, the prospective researchers have submitted four (4) incomplete proposals. These proposals will be processed once finalized.

The department processed forty-two (42) electronic online document requests during July and August. Of those forty-two (42), seventeen (17) were online registration/application forms, twelve (12) were event/training feedback surveys, and thirteen (13) were stakeholder surveys. The electronic online documents were created for the following divisions/departments:

- Division of Accountability & Research
- Department of Assessment Administration
- Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation
- Division of Community Empowerment, Innovation, and Partnerships
- Division of Curriculum and Instruction
- Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Division of Human Resources
- Department of Organizational Excellence

- Division of Schools & Leadership
- Department of Leadership Development
- Department of Professional Development
- Department of Athletics
- Department of Strategic Planning
- Department of Student Assignment
- Division of Wrap-Around Services

The department facilitated the annual update of the Cohort Withdrawal Application, provided application assistance to high school principals, submitted student cohort reassignment appeals for students on alternate content standards, and submitted appeals for students requiring cohort assignment corrections. The data is finalized and awaiting the 2024 graduation rate release in mid-to-late September.

The MARS (Manage at Risk Students) Early Warning System has been set up in Infinite Campus. District and school leadership will have real-time access to student grades, attendance, and discipline to monitor students across the school system. RDE will start training end-users in September.

The department has completed twenty-three (23) data and dashboard projects for internal and external stakeholders. These projects include the following types of data: attendance, discipline, student demographics, student grades, student retentions, and local, state, and national assessments, including Spring 2024 MAP, Spring 2024 Georgia Milestones, SAT exams, and Advanced Placement exams. During July and August, the department collaborated with the Division of Curriculum and Instruction on projects related to the Academic Skills Centers (ASC), GaDOE Seal of Biliteracy, and Fine Arts/Music program analysis. Additionally, data was provided to our external research partners, such as Georgia Policy Labs - MAPLE, 3DE by Junior Achievement, Level Data, Student Success Agency, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Acceleration Academy, and Communities in Schools.

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

Literacy Partnerships

In alignment with DeKalb County School District's (DCSD) Strategic Goal Area 1- **Student Academic Success with Equity and Access**, the DeKalb County School District will partner with Chiefs for Change and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI).

Chiefs for Change

District leaders from the Division of Curriculum and Instruction are partnering with Chiefs for Change to engage in a community of practice surrounding the science of reading for every student. Chiefs for Change is a national

organization of leaders from diverse backgrounds with a shared belief that education is a fundamental right in the United States. Monthly sessions allow DCSD leaders an opportunity to learn, share, and reflect on systems that impact students' academic success. As a result, all participants are charged with taking action steps to improve educational outcomes.

GLISI Literacy Network

GLISI will provide Literacy Implementation Team (LIT) coaching support and networking opportunities for DCSD's team to develop and refine plans for implementing effective literacy practices. Clay Hunter and Kimberly Lipe will serve as DCSD's performance coaches throughout the yearlong experience. Also, Clarke County School District is our collaborative partner.



Academic Coaches

The Academic Coach Coordinators (ACCs) have worked diligently to prepare for the 2024-2025 school year and to ensure that we are Soaring to New Levels and New Heights with the DeKalb County School District's Academic Coaching Program. This year's theme is *The Reset*. It is necessary to reset to support new coaches,

clarify misconceptions, and strengthen the supportive network based on feedback and documentation from academic coaches.

In July, the Academic Coach Coordinators revised the Coaching Playbook to align with DCSD’s 2024-2029 Strategic Plan and the Six Essential Systems. In support of our cross-divisional, school improvement efforts during the months of July and August, the ACCs have assisted with the development of the District Plan of Support for Horizon Schools, planned the Academic Coaches Academies, Collaborative Learning Sessions, and New Academic Coaches Academies, presented at the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Making Schools Work Conference, facilitated team building to demonstrate the importance of data and details for school leaders, and attended job-alike, area, and school improvement meetings.

There are 180 Academic Coach positions of which 162 are filled, leaving 18 vacancies.

Area	# of Coaches	# of Vacancies	# of New Coaches
Area Elementary 1	4	2	
Area Elementary 2	16	1	3
Area Elementary 3	18	1	6
Area Middle Schools	40	1	21
Area High Schools	31	3	7
Area Horizon	66	8	38
Area Specialty	5	2	4
Totals	180	18	79

Division Vacancies

Academic Coach	K-12 English Language Arts Coordinator	K-12 Social Studies Coordinator	MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Coordinator
Secretary	Receptionist	Exhibit Support Specialist	Instructional Materials Technician
Accounting Associate			

Dr. Sean R. Tartt , Deputy Chief Academic Officer

Summer Learning Programs

The DeKalb County School District hosted many summer programs in June and July that included academic academies, enrichment camps, credit recovery, and tutoring. Summer Learning Programs supported students in Pre-K through 12 from all over the district.

Supports for Students

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction has partnered with 8 Horizon schools to implement **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)**, which is a program that assists scholars with developing academic habits needed for success as they matriculate through school and prepare for the collegiate experience. AVID teaches scholars organization, self-advocacy, study skills, communication, and structured notetaking amongst other skills. This summer teams from each AVID site attended the AVID Leadership conference and planned for the 24-25 school year.

Academic Skills Center (ASC)

This year three new **Academic Skills Center (ASC)** sites will launch at Murphy Candler ES, Rock Chapel ES, and Hightower ES. All ASCs sites are working to identify students for the 24-25 school year. Schools are actively

staffing their sites, and the Division of Curriculum and Instruction is setting up training for ASC staff using the Imagine Learning instructional tool.

Portrait of a Graduate (POG)

Recently, the District approved the newest version of the **Portrait of a Graduate (POG)** as a part of the strategic plan, which highlights and identifies skills that DeKalb graduates should possess upon completion. Complimenting the POG is the **Student Success Skills Backpack (SSSB)** which allows scholars to show evidence towards matriculation to the next grade level. The SSSB is a set of attributes, skills, and qualities DeKalb believes every student should possess when they walk across the stage at graduation to be ready for college and life. This year a pilot of 21 schools inclusive of each area will experience the SSSB in grades 5, 8, and 12.

Content Collaboration

On August 16th, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Division of Schools and Leadership, Division of Support Services and Division of Student Support Service held the beginning of the year Coordinators' Collaboration with coordinators in job-like roles. Each month, collaborative work sessions are held with coordinators to calibrate, align support to schools, review data trends, co-author professional learning and engage in professional development that will enhance the skillset of district-level leaders. The alignment of instructional coordinators in job alike roles allows staff to enhance the DCSD experience as teams work collectively to support and monitor curriculum implementation, review student work, analyze area/district trends, support teachers, and improve teaching and learning.

Dr. Penny Mosley, Assistant Superintendent (P-5)

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Through the Early Intervention Program (EIP), the Division of Curriculum and Instruction will continue to support supplemental instruction in reading and math to kindergarten – fifth grade students at risk of not reaching or maintaining their academic grade level. The student eligibility process has begun using GADOE (Georgia Department of Education) guidelines, and targeted instruction will begin in September. To support schools with implementing the augmented, self-contained, pull-out, and/or innovative model, the Division of

Curriculum and Instruction, Division of Finance, and Division of Schools and Leadership are collaborating to enhance the existing guidance to include local school assurances for the innovative model.

Dr. Rose Prejean-Harris, Assistant Superintendent (6-12)

Innovative Educational Opportunity (IEO)

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction is in the implementation phase of two new Innovative Educational Opportunity (IEO) programs for over-aged and under-credited students. **Chance Light** will serve currently enrolled 5th-8th students who are older than their peers and want another option to earn credits toward grade advancement. **Acceleration Academy** will serve Dekalb County residents that are 16-21 years old. The program will target both currently and formerly enrolled graduation candidates. Both programs will offer personalized

learning plans tailored to the student's needs with a focus on academic support, skill development, and credit attainment while also addressing social and emotional well-being and career development.

Dr. Lynn Angus Ramos, Director of Literacy

We shared the structured literacy training and strategy implementation information through a cross-divisional Principal Learning Opportunity on August 22. Each elementary principal received an email with the names of those who have completed LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) and a link to the new [DCSD Literacy SharePoint](#). Initial planning for a series of parent literacy cafes has begun in collaboration with the Department of Family and Parent Engagement.

ELA (English Language Arts) - Summer English Language Arts (ELA) Symposium

Over 125 English language arts teachers in grades K-12 attended four days of professional learning including sessions on structured literacy strategies, standards, and instructional resources. Sessions were facilitated by ELA coordinators and professional learning facilitators, Area ELA coordinators, the ELA teacher leader cadre, and several of our vendor partners.

ELA - Structured Literacy Training

In accordance with the Georgia Early Literacy Act (House Bill 538), DCSD will continue to provide structured literacy training and support to elementary teachers. To date, over 430 teachers have completed LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling), with nine beginning LETRS facilitator certification over the summer. DCSD has prepared a pacing guide and support plan for teachers who still need training.

Mrs. Lummie Baker, Director of Educational Media and Instructional Materials

Reading Challenge Summer Program

The Reading Challenge Summer Program was hosted at seven elementary schools and three middle schools throughout the district. Students in grades 3-8 had the opportunity to participate in this engaging reading

program that is designed to motivate students to read for pleasure and share what they are reading in a variety of ways with a community of other student readers utilizing the print and digital resources available in the school library media center. Students had the opportunity to participate in daily thematic reading challenges.

Beginning of the Year Professional Learning

Teacher-Librarians (TLs) and Library Media Assistants (LMAs) participated in professional learning sessions emphasizing skills- reading promotion, and instructional collaborations. A total of 93 LMAs attended the July 23rd meeting, and a total of 109 TLs attended the July 30th meeting.

Georgia United Foundation's School Crashers



Miller Grove Middle School (MGMS) used their Georgia United Foundation School Crashers® grant to transform their school library media center into a hub for reading enthusiasm, where students can study independently or in small groups, participate in whole class collaborative instructional lessons, or check out and unwind with an enjoyable book. The redesigned layout and updated space include comfortable, modern, and flexible furniture and seating from Ernie Morris along with durable new vinyl flooring from Mohawk Flooring. A special thanks is extended to former MGMS student, Khalil Siddeeq, for nominating his former school for this well-deserved transformative makeover.

Mrs. Stephanie Brown-Bryant, *Director of K-12 Teaching and Learning*

Health and Physical Education (HPE) - Literacy in Motion: Integrating Literacy into HPE

Health and physical education teachers participated in professional development session that focused on equipping health and physical education teachers with strategies to seamlessly incorporate literacy and cross-curricular content into their physical education lessons. They learned practical methods for integrating reading, writing and subject-specific vocabulary into physical activities, enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.

Science - Investigative Science Summer Camp

The K-12 Science Department hosted the inaugural Investigative Science Summer Camp for students in grades 9-12. Throughout the week-long camp, participants engaged in a dynamic curriculum that included physical science, forensics, and first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, culminating in students

receiving their full certification. The highlight of the camp was an immersive field trip to the DeKalb County Fire Academy training facility, where students participated in firefighting training scenarios, applying their physical science knowledge to real-world situations.

Visual and Performing Arts - Summer Professional Learning and New Instructional Resources

Engaging professional learning was offered for visual and performing arts teachers at the Woodruff Arts Center Annual Educator Conference, The High Museum of Art, and The Carlos Museum. In addition, new instructional resources were adopted to support the dance, theatre, and visual art courses.

World Languages – Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Summer Camps

Ninety-five students participated in DLI Summer Camps at Ashford Park Elementary School, Evansdale Elementary School, and Pleasantdale Elementary School. In these camps, students spent the day engaging in the target language (French, Spanish, or German) and focused on vocabulary, grammar, and conversation skills. Lessons were designed to be interactive and included storytelling, games, and group discussions.

World Languages – New Instructional Resources

In anticipation of the new World Language instructional resources, 103 teachers attended sixteen sessions to preview new materials. The resources include interactive web-based activities that bring languages alive through visuals and text. Resources are available in both print and digital formats.

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

CTAE Summer Enrichment

Chefs in Training Culinary Camp

The Chef in Training Culinar Camp brought the art of food service to life for middle and high school students from DeKalb schools. Over two immersive weeks, participants engaged in hands-on training and gained valuable insights into the world of culinary operations. With over 100 students benefiting from the expert guidance of seasoned culinary chef instructors, the camp offered a unique opportunity to explore culinary arts and develop skills that could inspire future careers in food service. DeKalb CTAE's dedication and this enriching experience have set the stage for the next generation of culinary talent. See the links below to see all the action. [Middle School Camp](#) and [High School Camp](#)

Girls Who Game 2024 Summer Program supported almost 30 middle school scholars from across the school district. Level 1 students reimagined Fernbank Science Center (FSC) exhibits with input from the staff. They created their solutions in Minecraft EDU and presented their ideas to community stakeholders. Level 2 (returning) students received direct mentorship from Dell employees and were challenged with leadership activities. They also reimagined the new district Professional Learning (PL) facility with input from the PL department and presented their ideas to community stakeholders. [Girls Who Game Highlight Video](#)

Industry Ready Pre-apprenticeship Program

Twelve students received training in Industrial Maintenance from Georgia Piedmont Technical College and shadowed five local manufacturers. They earned the Workplace Readiness Skills credential. Seven students are seeking full-time employment, and the rest plan to attend college. Interviews and a signing day are scheduled for September.

Professional Development

MADLearn and NFTE (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship)

Over 30 Business, Marketing, and Computer Science teachers participated in MADLearn professional learning to support effective instruction in using Design Thinking for app development. These teachers also attended the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) professional learning where they were immersed in best practices for teaching entrepreneurship and coaching students through successful competitive events. The strategies learned support the school district's annual youth business plan challenge at our schools.

MADE (Manufacturing, Automation, and Distribution Emerging) in DeKalb Fellowship

Fifteen CTAE instructors participated in the Manufacturing, Automation, Distribution Emerging in DeKalb (MADE) Fellowship and toured local businesses as part of a year-long professional development program. Our goal is to provide continuous exposure for instructors to industry and local business to ensure connectivity for students to real-world experiences.

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

Scientific Tools and Techniques (STT)

For the Fall 2024 semester, 80 students are enrolled in the Scientific Tools and Techniques (STT) program. The students attend Cedar Grove High School, Clarkston High School, Columbia High School, DeKalb Early College Academy, Dunwoody High School, Lakeside High School, Lithonia High School, Stephenson High School, Stone Mountain High School, and Towers High School. For the Spring 2025 semester, 105 students are enrolled.

Professional Learning - FSC Program Showcase

On Tuesday, July 30th, Fernbank Science Center held professional learning for scheduling liaisons and DCSD teachers to highlight program offerings. Approximately 58 elementary, middle, and high school teachers were in attendance to learn more about FSC program offerings and innovative programs offered, in partnership, with the Georgia Aquarium.

Professional Learning - NOAA Ocean Guardian Environmental Educators

On Tuesday, July 30th, the Georgia Aquarium hosted a professional learning session at Fernbank Science Center for teachers selected to participate in the 2024-2025 NOAA Ocean Guardian Environmental Educator program.

An overview of the program was provided to program participants. Participating schools include Clarkston High School, Martin L. King Jr. High School, Freedom Middle School, Salem Middle School, Indian Creek Elementary

School, and Dunaire Elementary School. Schools were selected based upon data, feeder patterns, and current program offerings.

Summer Camp - Green Heart Challenge Incubator Camp

The Green Heart Idea Incubator Camp is a culminating experience for students who participated in the Green Heart STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering Mathematics) Challenge during the spring 2024 semester. As part of the challenge, students explored and identified environmental justice issues in their communities and designed feasible solutions to address these problems. During the weeklong camp, ten challenge winners in grades 7-10 attended the Green Heart Idea Incubator Camp to work with mentors on implementing their solutions. In addition to the Incubator Camp, 38 students, in grades 4 and 5, participated in an Environmental STEM camp where they engaged in hands-on environmental science STEM challenges.

Summer Camp - Aviation Camp

Photo Album: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Y2xnPX6twVGRKZqu9>

Fernbank Science Center hosted its annual Aviation Camp in partnership with Lockheed Martin. During Aviation Camp, approximately 100 campers (grades 4th - 6th) participated in hands-on aviation STEM activities. Activities were led by DCSD teachers and former STT students who served as volunteer camp counselors.

Summer Camp - Georgia Aquarium Aquatic Engineering Camp

Photo Album: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Y2xnPX6twVGRKZqu9>

Fernbank Science Center in partnership with the Georgia Aquarium hosted the Aquatic Engineering Camp. During the weeklong camp, 60 DCSD middle school students visited the Georgia Aquarium daily. Aquarium educators helped students explore how remote-operated vehicles (ROVs) are used by scientists to collect data or various samples, how engineers build and fly ROVs in the ocean, and what challenges are faced while building and navigating ROVs.

Over five days, students learned various engineering skills that allowed them to design, assemble, and operate an ROV.

Ms. Monique Kimbell, *Director of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)*

The MTSS Department completed J.E.T. (Job Embedded Training) setting training the week of July 22-26th. During this week the MTSS' participated in job embedded training sessions on a variety of topics such as all things social worker related, fidelity walks, new MTSS training, Early Intervention Program, SuccessMaker, Career Technical and Agriculture Training, roles and responsibilities, digital resources for secondary, Mandated Reporter training, Multi-Tiered Student Support expectations, Check In Check Out intervention, etc. The purpose of the training was to provide the MTSS team with the tools necessary to walk in on day one prepared to support their students, teachers, and all stakeholders.

School visits in August focused on supporting MTSS Specialists at Jolly Elementary School, Rainbow Elementary School, Stone Mountain Middle School, Columbia High School, Montclair Elementary School, Flat Shoals Elementary School, Elizabeth Andrews High School, DeKalb Alternative School, Marbut Theme Elementary School, Indian Creek Elementary School, GLOBE Academy, Chamblee Middle School, Princeton Elementary School, and Panola Way Elementary School.

Ms. Keatra Wright, *Director of FLEX Academy*

Summer Learning Programs

FLEX Academy served 680 students this summer to obtain course credits towards graduation. Students had opportunities to enroll in synchronous classes taught by certified DCSD teachers and recover credit in asynchronous courses utilizing Edmentum/Apex content.

FLEX Academy Registration

FLEX Academy continues to partner with and support Horizon and High School areas to provide Innovative Education Options for students. In August, 485 students enrolled in FLEX Academy and FLEX Beyond the Day. Students can take courses in all core content areas including CTAE. Currently, we are partnering with the High School Area Superintendent and staff to align credit recovery policies prior to launching FLEX Restore in September 2024.

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

Dr. Norman C. Sauce III, Chief of Student Services had an exceptionally active and productive month in August 2024, marked by his extensive engagement across various schools, departments, and community initiatives. His efforts were focused on ensuring a smooth start to the 2024-2025 school year and providing robust support to the administration, staff, and students throughout the district. He kicked off the month with visits to elementary, middle, and high schools, where he provided on-the-ground support to school staff and administration during the critical first weeks of the school year. His focused attention on the Gifted Education Department was particularly evident, as he played a vital role in assisting with the logistics and execution for DeKalb County Schools' inaugural Gifted Education Information Night on August 20. This event saw over 600 stakeholders logging in to participate. This event was instrumental in delivering essential information to the community. Dr. Sauce and the Gifted Team followed up by preparing a comprehensive Q&A document for stakeholders and parents, based on questions that emanated from the virtual event. Dr. Sauce and the Gifted Education team also met with the staffs at three different schools during August to discuss changes in the District's gifted identification practices- to be more inclusive and accessible for underrepresented populations. Beyond his school visits, Dr. Sauce made it a priority to engage with department directors, conducting bi-weekly check-ins to align division goals and maintain strong communication within the Student Service Division. His commitment to community engagement was also evidenced as he joined Superintendent Horton and Executive Cabinet for the first District community town hall meeting of the school year. Additionally, Dr. Sauce visited the English

Learners Department to support new ESOL teachers as they engaged in training for the academic year, underscoring his dedication to fostering a supportive environment for educators and students alike.

Throughout August 2024, Dr. Sauce was a strong advocate for a fair and equitable gifted program, working closely with gifted coordinators to promote updates and ensure the implementation of equitable procedures across the district- meeting with staff members and leaders of several schools on the topic. His collaborative efforts with College Aim and Student Service leadership on August 29th were intended to enhance post-secondary planning and support for students, particularly those in specific subgroups, reflecting his commitment to comprehensive student success. The month concluded with a highly successful Student Service Division Staff retreat on August 30th. This event featured an impactful keynote address by an inspirational speaker and in-depth discussions on the District's new Strategic Plan, MAP Data, achieving clarity, consistency, and coherence in our supports for schools, and facilitating overall District growth. Lunch was sponsored by Steve Overcash, with Georgia United Credit Union, with catering by the Redan High School Culinar Arts program. The retreat received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the team, further highlighting the success of the new Division of Student Services as we strive to function with clarity, consistency, and coherence in support of students, staff, and families.



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Today was an impactful day of candor, laughter, inspiration, collective efficacy, continuous improvement planning, & solution seeking for scholars & families. Our @DeKalbSchools Division of Student Services retreat was such a resonate experience. Thank you, Team!



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Meet our @DeKalbSchools Division of Student Services Team. We seek to elevate conditions and experiences for our scholars, staff, and families through relationships, receptiveness, and responsiveness- in delivering the unique services we provide. #ILoveDCSD

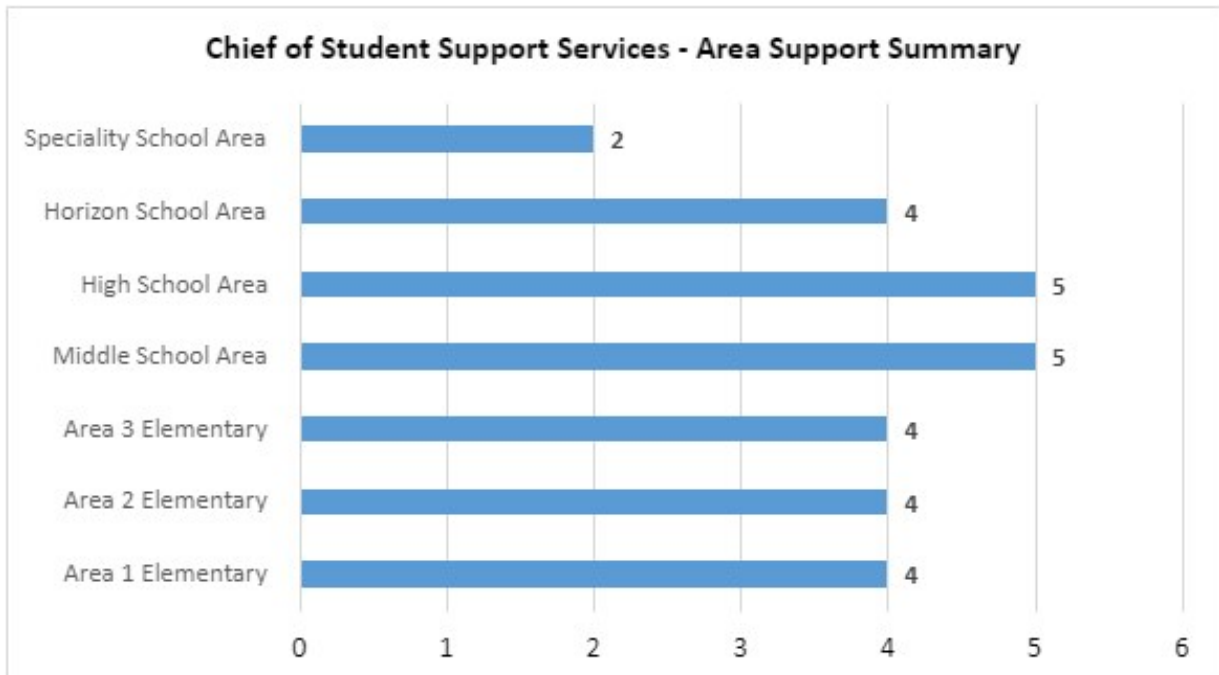


Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

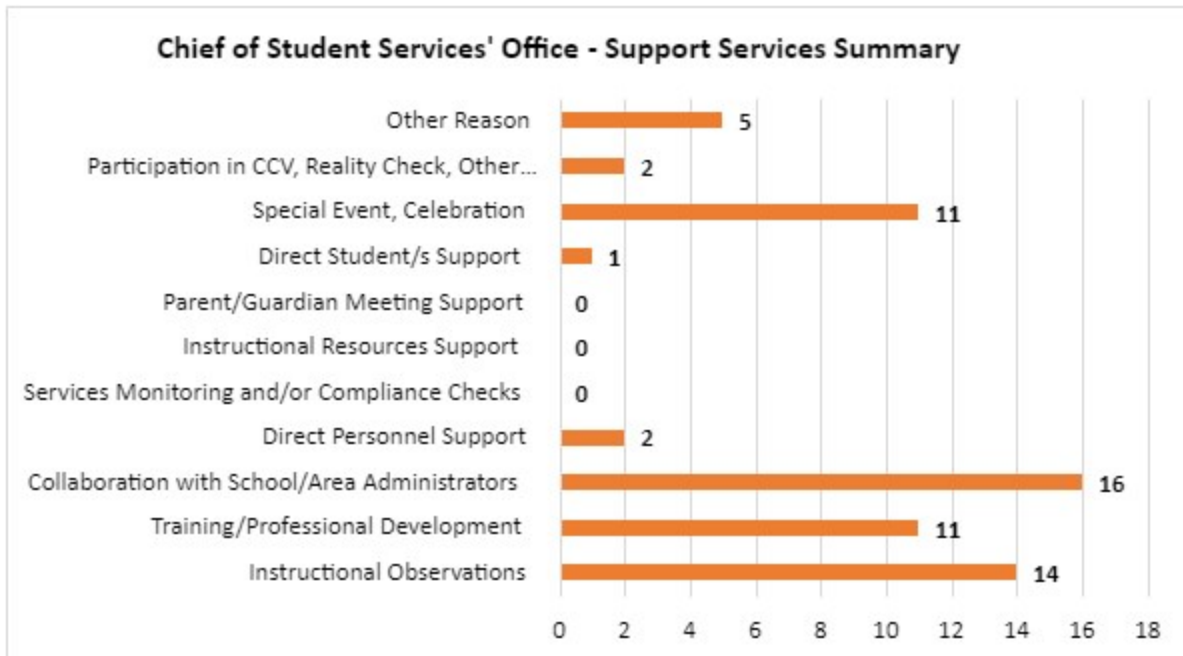
Extraordinary collaboration today w/ @CollegeATM & Student Services Division Team. So many opportunities to envelope each other's work in support of our scholars & families-as they navigate the road towards higher ed & career. Thank you, Executive Director, Sam Aleinkoff & Team!



Direct School Supports by Chief of Students Services' Office Since Start of School Year



Types of Direct School Supports by Chief of Student Services ' Office Since Start of School Year





Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Kudos @DunwoodyHS Principal Mr. Bass, Gifted Liaison Ms. Williams, & Team for their enthusiasm on enhancing access & efficacy with gifted education. What a great collaboration session! Thanks to my fellow @USC Trojan -English Teacher, Ms. Oreathia Smith- for organizing. #FightOn!



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Just launched of our year long partnership w/ Waterford.org to provide our Pre-K 3 & 4 educators w/ Science of Reading PL & integration of early literacy instructional resources in Pre-K-We're proud to be the largest public provider of Pre-K in GA @DeKalbSchools



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Wondrous visit @KelleyLakeES this morning w/ Principal Ms. Peggie Davis & her rockstar Admin Team! We saw consistent instructional frameworks in all grade levels, immaculately prepared classrooms for learning, caring adults, & enthusiastic learners! Go, Lions! #LoveDCSD



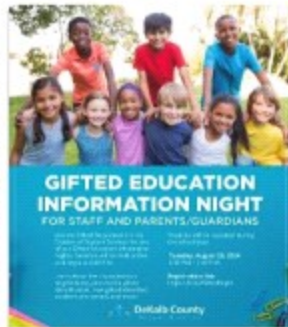
Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Thank you Principal Mr. Ingram & staff @McLendonSchool for the invitation & engagement this afternoon on giftedness. We are thrilled to partner with you as we "Disrupt for Excellence to New Levels, New Heights," - for access, inclusivity & efficacy with gifted education.



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Join @DeKalbSchools Gifted Education Team for our Inaugural Gifted Education Information Night for Staff and Parents/Guardians. 8/30/24, virtual, 6:00pm-7:30pm. Register at bit.ly/GiftedNight. Pass it on! #LoveDCSD



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Hopped over to McNair MS. Principal @theskooldr & a scholar provided morning announcements. Then observed the magic in many classes as teachers facilitated engaging instruction w/ scholars immersed in learning activities - high expectations & compassion on full display!



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

I'm elated for this group! Our English Learners team facilitated support sessions for new ESOL teachers - it was a packed house! It was so gratifying to experience the enthusiasm, empathy, & vigor of these educators in support of our multilingual learners! @DeKalbSchools



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

It's always the right time to check in w/ my guy, Principal Mr. Michael Alexander of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. HS. Today we experienced Chemistry, American Literature, American History, & connected engaged students w/ devices put away! Way to go, Lions! @DeKalbSchools



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Had the honor to observe 2 of @DeKalbSchools finest this morning at Margaret Harris School for Exceptional Scholars. Meet Mrs. Fry & Ms. Jackson. This week marks the beginning of Mrs. Fry's 45th year, & Ms. Jackson's 1st year as teachers. You're the best of us! #LoveDCSD





Dr. Evelyn Hall , Executive Director, English Learners

International Student Screening Center Registration

The International Student Screening Center (ISSC) registered and screened students to prepare for the 2024-2025 academic school year. The ISSC registered 2,240 students during the summer and the first two weeks of school. The number of students registered and screened increased by 37% compared to last year at this time. DeKalb County School District currently serves 27,743 students whose primary home language is other than English (PHLOTEs) and serves 18,557 English learners. A total of 171 languages and dialects are spoken by our linguistically diverse community. The English Learner and PHLOTE (Primary Home Language Other Than English) populations continue to grow in the DeKalb County School District.

Area	EL Students
Area 1 - ES	4112
Area 2 - ES	2833
Area 3 - ES	529
Area Middle School	3477
Area High School	2491
Area Horizon	3812
Area Specialty	1302
No Area	1
Totals	18,557

Area	PHLOTE Students
Area 1 - ES	4,823
Area 2 - ES	3,829
Area 3 - ES	713
Area Middle School	5,478
Area High School	4,832
Area Horizon	5,930
Area Specialty	2,065
No Area	1
Totals	27,743

ISSC Registrations	
2023-24	1,635
2024-25	2,240
Increase	605

* Registrations through August 14th of each year

2024-2025 ISSC Registrations	
Area	Students
Area 1 - ES	611
Area 2 - ES	523
Area 3 - ES	70
Area Middle School	259
Area High School	182
Area Horizon	508
Area Specialty	72
School Pending	15
Totals	2,240

Professional Learning



ESOL Teacher Pre-Planning Sessions

In preparation for the 2024-2025 school year, the English Learners Department provided professional learning for all ESOL teachers including ESOL Practices, Policies, and Procedures, Developing Instructional Language Plans, Progress Monitoring Intensive English Students, and Instructional Resources. There were 315 ESOL teachers who participated these sessions. These sessions provided teachers with essential tools, strategies, and information to support English learners. Additionally, over 60 teachers who are new to ESOL attended the New ESOL teacher training session. These opportunities align with the DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area I Student Academic Success with Equity and Access, Goal Area III Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent, and Goal Area V Organizational Excellence.

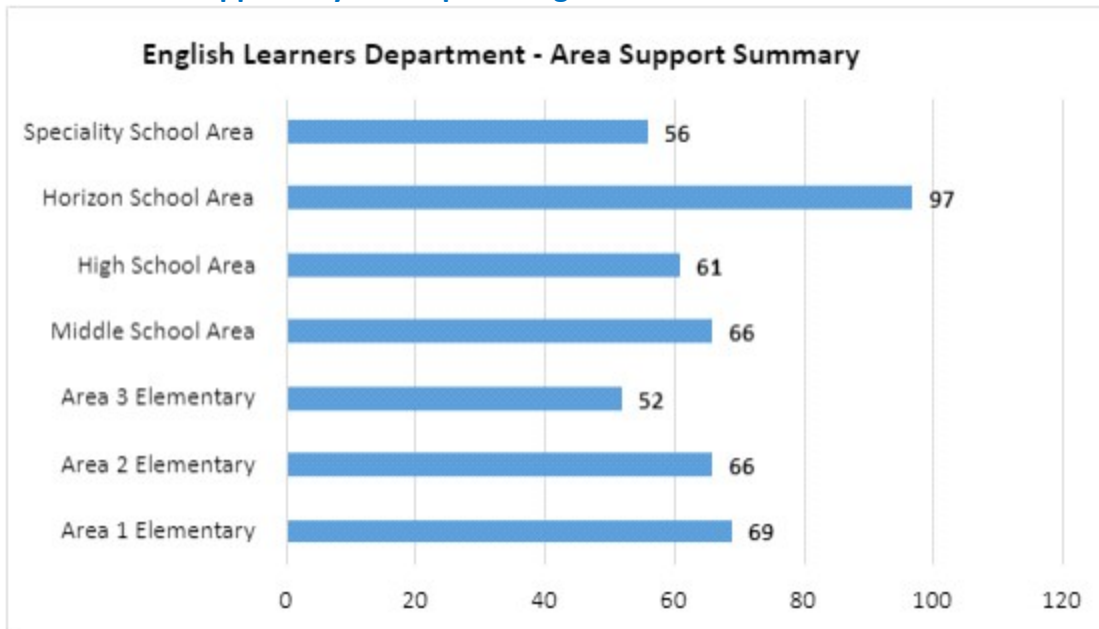


Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

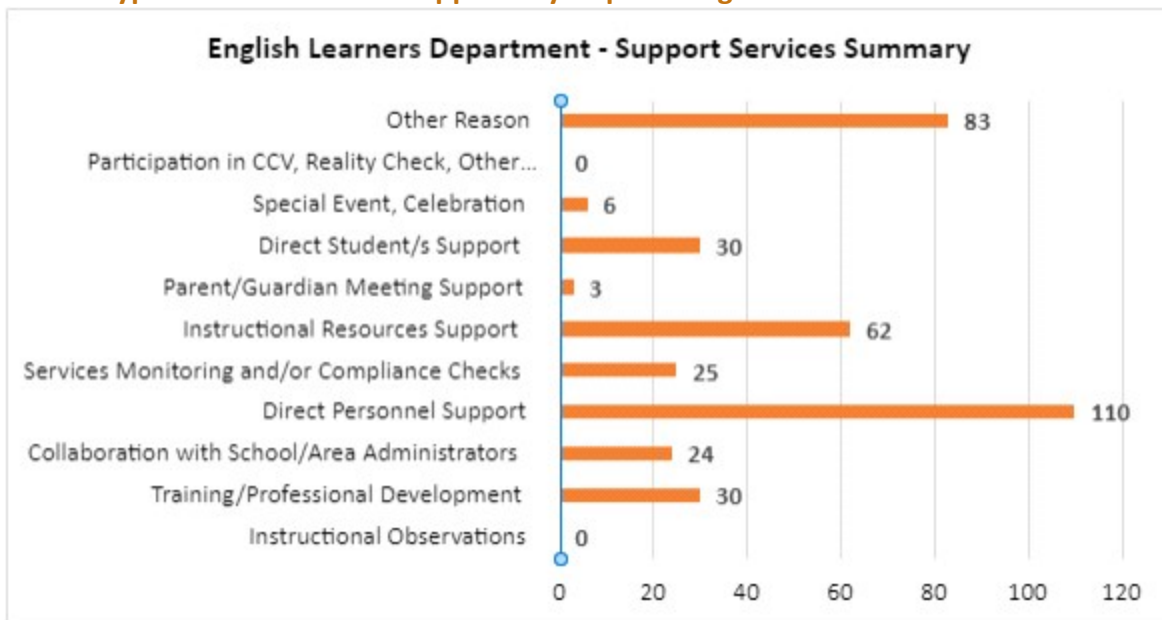
The English Learners Department is pleased to announce the *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)* professional learning (PL) opportunities for 2024-2025. These engaging opportunities allow participants to learn the SIOP instructional framework and gain valuable learning and instructional strategies to make content comprehensible for learners as they develop academic English in the content areas. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) professional learning opportunities align with the DCSD M.I.R.A.C.L.E.S. Framework for Continuous Improvement: M - Motion Towards Equity, I - Improved Instructional Core, and R - Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study. These opportunities also align with the DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access, Goal Area III: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent and Goal Area V: Organizational Excellence.

Course	Description	Dates
Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Workshop  2-day In Person	This PL introduces the 8 SIOP components and 32 features of the SIOP instructional framework. Participants learn valuable teaching and learning strategies to make content comprehensible for ELs. This is a 2-day in person workshop.	9/26/24 (Thurs.) – 9/27/24 (Fri.) 10/24/24 (Thurs.) – 10/25/24 (Fri.) 11/7/24 (Thurs.) – 11/8/24 (Fri.) 1/23/25 (Thurs.) – 1/24/25 (Fri.) 2/27/25 (Thurs.) – 2/28/25 (Fri.) 3/20/25 (Thurs.) – 3/21/25 (Fri.)
SIOP Component Enhancement Workshop  2-hour Virtual	This PL provides a review and refresher of the individual SIOP components. Participants should have previous knowledge of the SIOP framework. This is a 2-hour virtual workshop.	8/20/24 – Lesson Preparation 9/10/24 – Building Background 9/24/24 – Comprehensible Input 10/1/24 – Strategies 10/22/24 – Interaction 1/16/25 – Practice & Application 1/30/25 – Lesson Delivery 2/06/25 – Review & Assessment

Direct School Supports by the Dept. of English Learners Since Start of School Year



Types of Direct School Supports by Dept. of English Learners Since Start of School Year



Kiana King, Executive Director, Exceptional Education

Professional Development and School Support (July-September)

New Exceptional Education Summer Training (NEST)

The New Exceptional Education Summer Training Institute was held July 22- 26, 2024, with over 300 participants. This summer we added a one-day session for Veteran Exceptional Education Teachers (VEST). The summer conference style training covered topics to include-

- Evaluation Reviews and IEP Development
- IEP Compliance, IEP Implementation, Prior Written Notice (PWN)
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), High Leverage Practices
- Behavior Supports: Interventions and Strategies



Academic Coaching Cycle with Specialty Area Coordinators:

Starting in September, the specialty area coordinators for language arts, math, and special education will assist GNETS admin with informal observations, feedback, and targeted coaching support. GNETS administration will collaborate with the specialty area coordinators to monitor educator growth and to provide tiered support that aligns with the TKES standards.

Implementation of the Wilson Reading System for Horizon (ATSI) Schools:

In alignment with Goal Area 1- Student Academic Success with Equity and Access- 1.1 Increase proficiency rates in literacy on district and state assessments for all students, the Department of Exceptional Education, in collaboration with the Horizon Area leadership, is implementing the Wilson Learning System for use in resource classrooms via identified special education teachers at the eight-state identified ATSI schools, to improve literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. The first training session was held August 27 – 29, 2024.

Exceptional Education Department Highlights-On the Horizon

New K12 504 Module in Infinite Campus:

We are excited to share an important advancement in our efforts to enhance equity and access for Section 504-protected students within the DeKalb County School District. The Section 504 Office, in partnership with K-12 Solutions Group, has adopted a new 504 platform integrated within Infinite Campus. This cutting-edge student information system is designed to streamline the educational process foster greater collaboration among stakeholders, and improve communication, documentation, and personalized support for students.

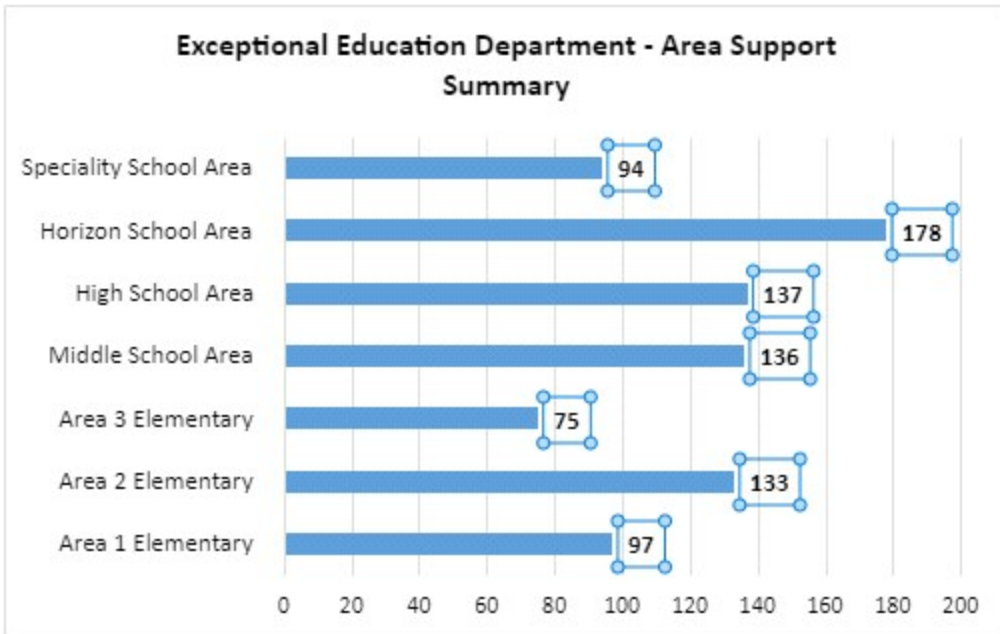
Autism Classroom Pilot Program:

In alignment with Goal Area 1- Student Success with Equity and Access the Office of Special Education has partnered with the University of Georgia's (UGA) Center for Autism and Behavioral Education Research (CABER) to implement an Autism Pilot Program to improve special education pedagogy in support of students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Autism Pilot Program will provide intensive and targeted training to a cohort of fifteen (15) special education teachers on supporting students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) served in the special education classroom, in addition to monthly classroom visits and targeted support to ensure implementation of instructional and behavioral skills obtained during the intensive summer training.

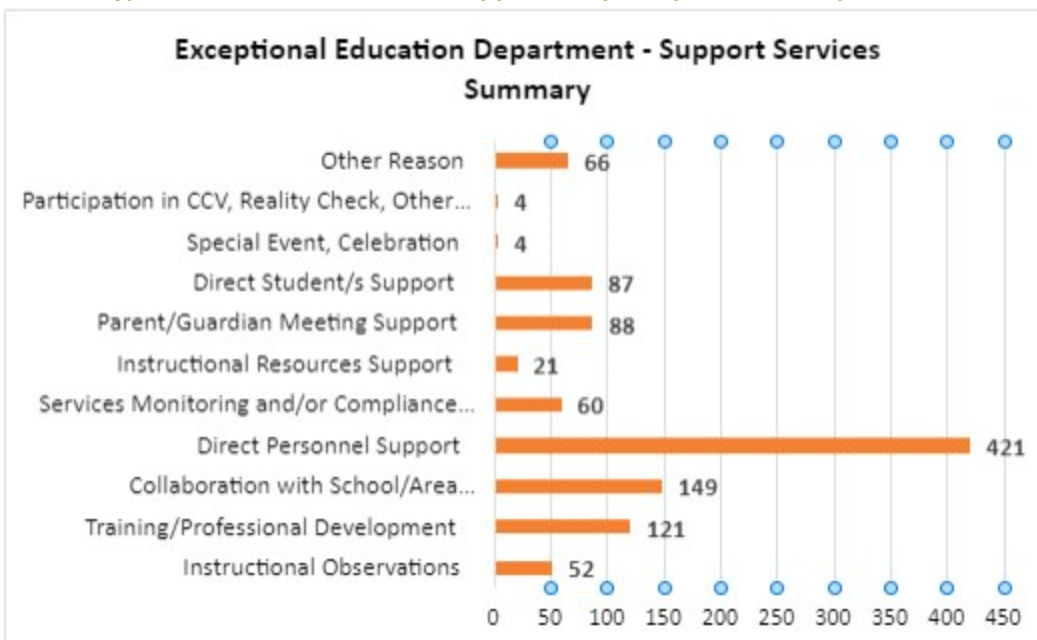
Capacity Building Grant:

For FY25, the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) Program's application for the Building Capacity Grant was accepted by GaDOE! The DeKalb-Rockdale GNETS Program received a grant award amount of \$50,000. The grant funds will be used to structure the team's work in the areas of K-3 Literacy and K-12 ELA Standards. Our plan includes providing professional learning opportunities to support new and veteran staff monthly. Staff will receive training in the area of Literacy to increase academic growth and Lexile levels. In addition, our program will implement monthly Data Talks during collaborative planning sessions to monitor the instructional growth of our students in the area of Reading/Literacy.

Direct School Supports by the Dept. of Exceptional Education Since Start of School Year



Types of Direct School Supports by Dept. of Exceptional Education Since Start of School Y



Dr. Zack Phillips, Executive Director, Pre-K and Early Learning

Professional Learning Opportunities

The Early Learning/Pre- Department have worked diligently to offer various (PL) opportunities to district employees on various titles ranging from Bright From the Start training, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support process for Pre-K (3 & 4) scholars, virtual Chat and Chews covering class rosters, student records, learning environments, New Teacher Orientation, and Science of Reading- all for our 320+ Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 educators. These excellent opportunities for staff members align with the DCSD Strategic Plan and the DCSD MIRACLES Framework for Continuous Improvement.

DCSD Strategic Plan

Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access

Goal Area III: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent

Goal Area V: Organizational Excellence

MIRACLES Framework

M - Motion Towards Equity

I - Improved Instructional Core

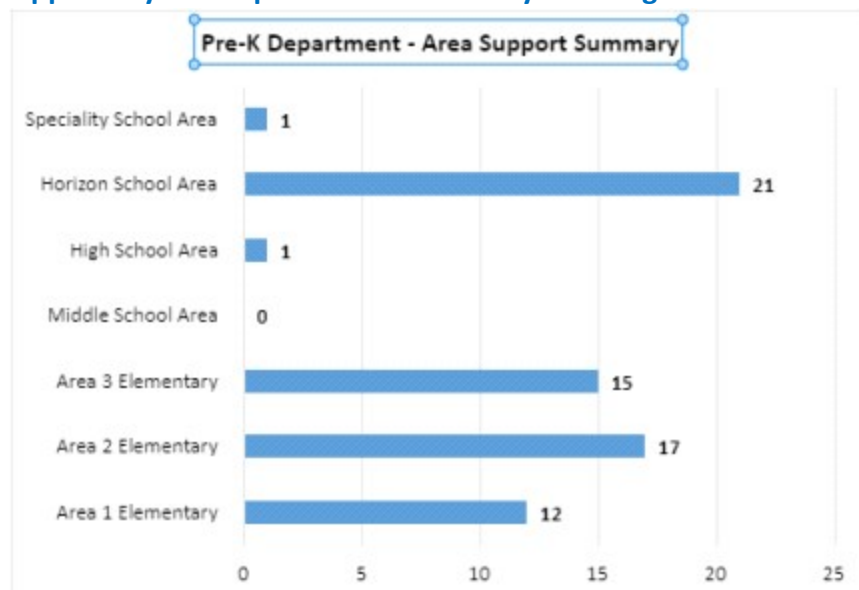
R - Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study



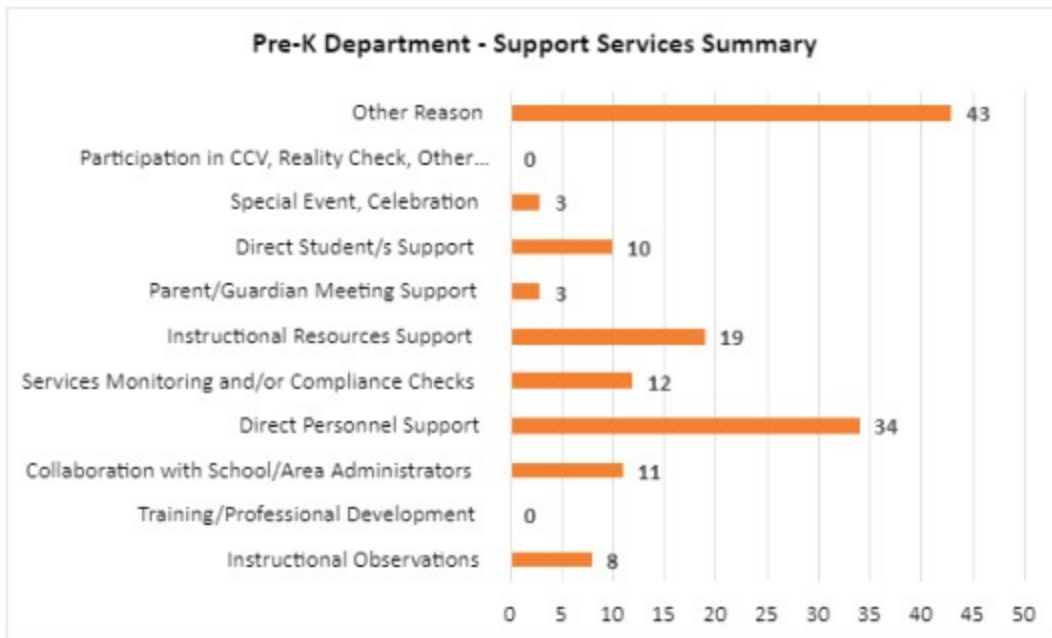
School Supports

The Early Learning/Pre- Department team continues to provide support to schools to assist with auditing of student files, instructional observations, providing feedback and guidance with MTSS Tier II and Tier III meetings, classroom environments, instructional planning, etc.

Direct School Supports by the Dept. of Pre-K and Early Learning Since Start of School Year



Types of Direct School Supports by Dept. of Pre-K and Early Learning Since Start of School Year



Upcoming Early Learning/Pre-K Department – Highlights

The Pre-K3 expansion classes and Pre-K4 classes at the same ES locations will pilot the Waterford supplemental resources during the 24-25 SY. This wonderful instructional resource supports various content areas ranging from Literacy, Math, Social Studies, and STEAM. Additionally, this instructional resource will support teachers and paras with planning a plethora of instructional activities that are age appropriate and aligned to the GELDS standards and Frog Street Curriculum that's embedded within their weekly lesson plans. Waterford continues to be utilized as a supplemental resource at the Early Learning Center.

Donyell Atkinson and Kristen Drake, Senior Coordinators for Gifted Education

Professional Learning

- The Gifted Education Department hosted professional learning opportunities at Princeton and Rockbridge Elementary Schools. We had 130 teachers from across the district participate in either *Thinking Deeper Through Questioning* and/or *Literacy & Math Stations* learning the power of effective questioning and examining gifted data through critical thinking games.



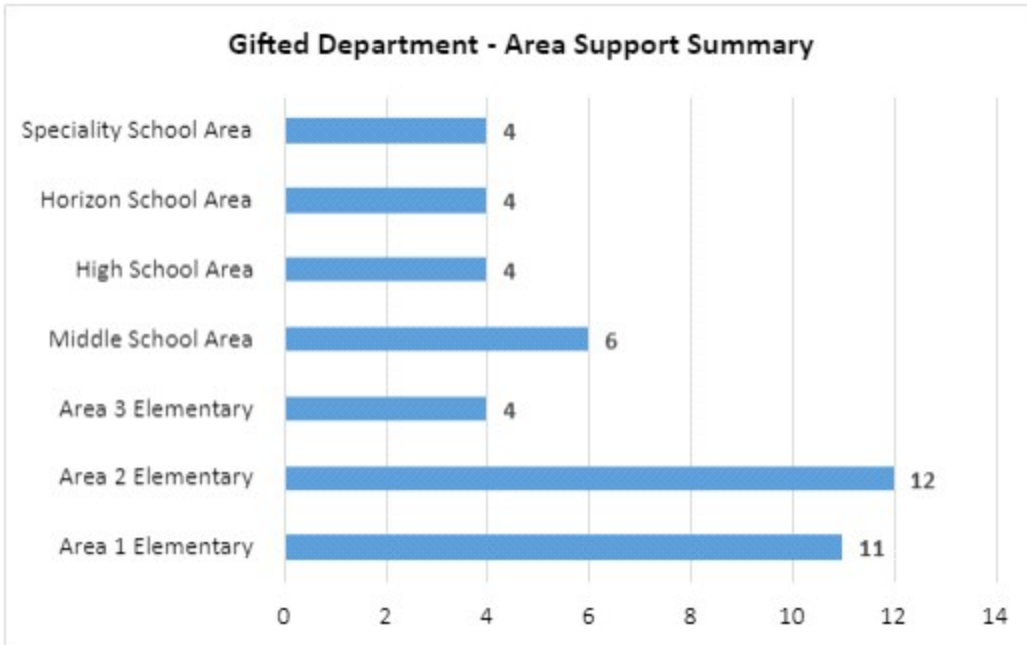
- In collaboration with the Assessment Department and Riverside Insights, the Gifted Team hosted four training sessions for CogAT/ITBS Assessments for all STCs and Gifted Liaisons. These sessions offered test coordinators and gifted liaisons knowledge on the platform's assessment management, monitoring, and data access for students being screened.
- A virtual training session of the additional assessments used in the district's identification process was held for all gifted liaisons and Site Testing Coordinators. This informative session provided insight on the assessment type, management, monitoring and data access for students needing a third measure in meeting the state's three out of the four domains.

Support Offered to School Leaders, Staff, and Parents

- Our inaugural Gifted Education Information Night for staff and parents was held on August 20, 2024, via ZOOM from 6:00PM –7:30PM. We had 600+ stakeholders to participate and learn about the characteristics of giftedness, the process for gifted identification, and how gifted-identified students are served.

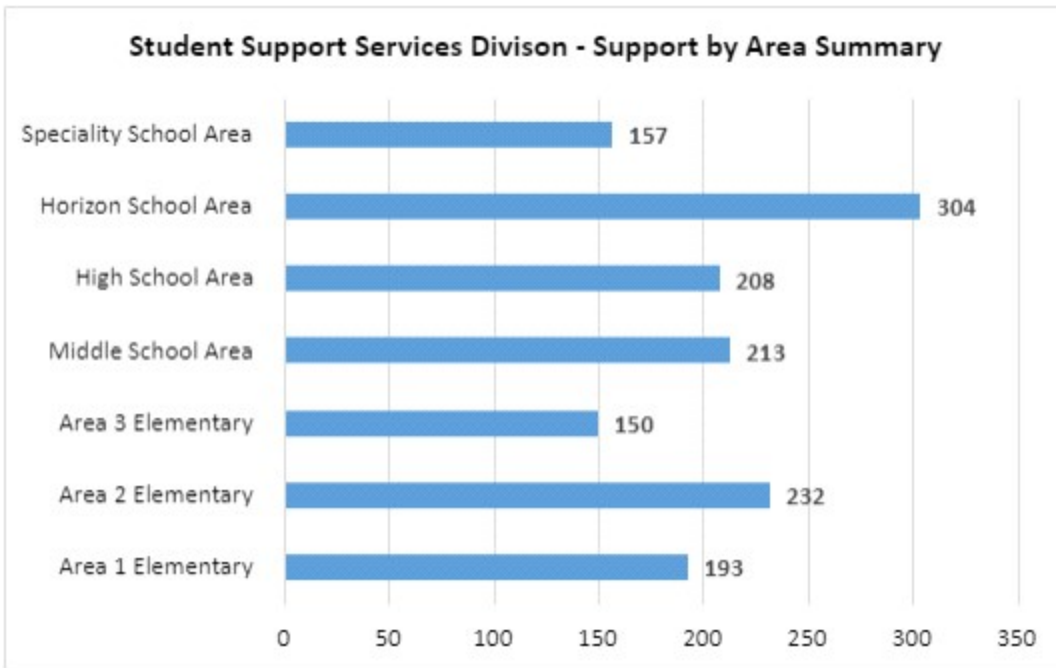
- Consultation of gifted service and delivery models to local school leaders and staff members for proper placement and scheduling of gifted identified students.
- Gifted 1:1 support for newly assigned gifted liaisons to work through their role, expectations, planning and organizational skills needed in fulfilling this position.
- DeKalb Schools Area Superintendents & Principals partnered with the Gifted Education Team to discuss how we'll confront disproportionality, misconceptions, and inequities in our schools.

Direct School Supports by the Gifted Education Team Since Start of School Year

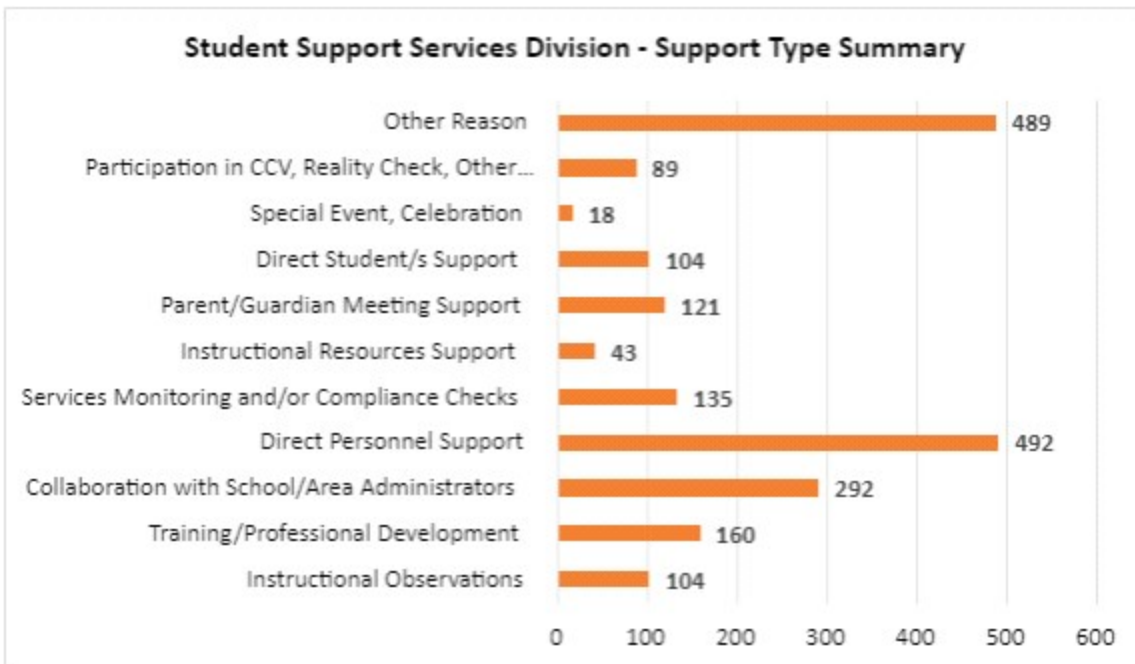


Direct School Supports Totals – Division of Student Services

Direct School Supports by Division of Student Students Services ' Personnel Since Start of School Year



Types of Direct School Supports by Division of Student Services ' Personnel Since Start of School Year



Ms. Monika Davis, Chief Information Officer

DCSD is committed to ensuring equitable access to digital resources for all students. Our new strategic plan for 2024-2029 prioritizes digital equity, recognizing the pivotal role of technology in education. This initiative aims to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that all students have the tools and skills necessary to succeed in a connected and progressive society.

Two key objectives that will drive the work of the Division of Information and Instructional Technology are:

- **Enhanced Digital Literacy:** We will foster a culture of digital literacy by providing comprehensive teacher training, promoting responsible technology use, and exposing students to emerging technologies such as AI, AR, and VR.
- **Secure and Accessible Digital Environment:** We will invest in robust IT infrastructure, implement preventative maintenance programs, and enforce stringent cybersecurity measures to create a safe and accessible digital learning environment for all students.

To further guide the responsible use of AI and protect sensitive information, DCSD has been working very hard to develop a comprehensive framework of administrative regulations. This framework will establish clear guidelines for the ethical and effective use of AI, while also ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our digital assets. With the approval of the updates to Board Policy IFBG by the Board of Education, the AI and Information Security Regulations will be shared with the DCSD community for implementation.

To equip our students and staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to leverage emerging technologies, we are also launching a series of educational experiences. These programs will provide in-depth training on best practices, ethical considerations, and potential applications of AI and other immersive technologies.

Our approach? Continue actively working to achieve these goals by providing devices to all students, implementing robust infrastructure, and fostering a culture of digital citizenship. We believe that by investing in these areas, we can create a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Dr. Kermit Belcher, Deputy Chief Technology Officer

The DeKalb County Schools Division of Information and Instructional Technology (DIIT) is excited to report progress in several key areas. The Network Infrastructure team has successfully completed the planning configuration, and design phases for district-wide network switch and wireless access upgrade projects. Installation has now begun with an initial proof of concept at a selected location, followed by phased rollouts to schools based on clusters. Once completed, these upgrades will significantly enhance connectivity across the district by establishing a more robust and secure network infrastructure. In tandem, the DIIT team is focused on strengthening safety and security by upgrading intrusion alarms, door access controls, and video surveillance systems.

Additionally, the DIIT device management team is working closely with schools to ensure that every student has access to an instructional device. It is essential for all DeKalb County students to have the technology

needed to support their learning facilitate technology integration, enable online testing, and extend educational opportunities beyond the classroom. The district is committed to providing a structured replacement cycle for student Chromebooks, offering device repair services and providing device coordinators at all locations to assist with inventory management.

Natalie Terrell, *Manager of Project Management Office*

The Division of Information and Instructional Technology Project Management Office is happy to announce that the project team and business partner for the District-Wide Records Digitization Project, Phase I – Records Center, have begun initial work by visiting the Records Center the week of August 26, 2024. The visit's purpose was to get a more detailed view of the records in each storage room. There are 13 rooms in the main building with a combination of school and business records and 4 rooms in a secondary building with all HR records. This week, on September 5, 2024, the team visited three schools (elementary, middle, and high) and the district's warehouse at the Sam Moss Center. From the information gathered, the team can move forward to start building the project requirements.

Dr. Kyia Clark, *Executive Director, Information, and Innovation*

Instructional Technology is pleased to announce completion of the set-up for the 2024 IGNITE U Pathways Professional Learning series will be launching on Monday, September 9th, 2024, to all DCSD (DeKalb County School District) educators.

- This series will begin with an overview of the district's AI (Artificial Intelligence) Guidelines and a preview of the professional learning pathways that teachers can select and learn from.
- This year's pathway opportunities include the 21st century of learning skills also called the 4 Cs of education: critical thinking communication, collaboration, and creativity, adding two additional C's: character and citizenship.

Glenn Melendez, *Executive Director of Enterprise Applications and Data Services*

The DeKalb County Schools Division of Information and Instructional Technology (DIIT) is excited to announce the launch of the *discovery phase* of a comprehensive website modernization project, aimed at elevating the district's online presence and strengthening communication with students, families, and community members. This effort is part of the district's ongoing commitment to providing accessible, user-friendly, and engaging digital experiences.

During this discovery phase, the district will explore and evaluate new features and functionalities that will enhance community engagement and ensure the website meets the evolving needs of its users. Central to this

initiative is a focus on a fully responsive design, ensuring seamless functionality across all devices, including desktops, tablets, and smartphones. The new website will adapt dynamically to different screen sizes, making it easy to navigate whether at home, in the office, or on the go.

Additionally, the Division of Information and Instructional Technology is reimagining protocols for integrating new technologies into its digital footprint. As part of this initiative, the district is redesigning its processes to better evaluate and vet technology solutions that support teaching and learning while maintaining a strong commitment to protecting student data and privacy. The district's revamped protocols will enable a more thorough and efficient review of emerging tools and platforms, ensuring they meet both instructional needs and data protection requirements.

Key elements of the new technology protocol include:

- **Comprehensive Evaluation Criteria:** The district will employ rigorous standards to review the security, privacy, and functionality of new technologies.
- **Enhanced Data Protection Measures:** All software and platforms will undergo stringent data security evaluations to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal student privacy regulations.
- **Alignment with Educational Goals:** Technologies will be evaluated based on their ability to support instructional goals and improve student learning outcomes, ensuring that any new solution contributes meaningfully to the district's mission.

This effort underscores the district's dedication to providing a safe, innovative learning environment while leveraging modern technology to support its students, teachers, and families.

Eric Logan, *Director of Information and Network Security*

The DeKalb County Schools Division of Information and Instructional Technology (DIIT) is thrilled to announce the launch of our Cyber Champions program for K-12 students! Announced during the August Parents Tech Café, the goal of this exciting initiative is to empower students to become leaders in promoting cybersecurity awareness and best practices within their schools and communities. Our Cyber Champions will receive specialized training, enabling them to educate their peers on the importance of online safety, recognize potential cyber threats, and foster a culture of digital responsibility. By involving students directly, we are not only enhancing our cybersecurity efforts but also inspiring the next generation of cyber-savvy individuals who will help create a safer digital world for everyone. Let's celebrate this milestone and look forward to the positive impact our Cyber Champions will make!

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

The Division of Wrap Around Services team members were glad to assist schools on the first day! We visited over 43 schools within the DeKalb County School District. The staff, students, parents, and community volunteers were exceptional and provided extraordinary customer service. It was a pleasure to meet the new students as well as greet the returning students who were excited to start a new year of opportunities and possibilities. We salute the teachers of DCSD and wish them a successful school year!

We also began the year with the amazing staff of DeKalb County School Year at the Back-to-School Convocation where we were delighted by “Coach Prime”, our very own Superintendent Dr. Horton. From the Strategic Plan goals to the “Dance Off” for gifts, the opportunity to enjoy colleagues from around the district was great. The energy was as electrifyin as the staff, students, parents, and community stakeholders of DeKalb County School District. We are moving to “New Levels, New Heights!



Dr. Ronald E. McNair School Based Health Center

The Division of Wrap Around Service is off to a great start this year with many opportunities awaiting the students of DeKalb County School District. As we closed out the 23-24 school year, several MIRACLES Priorities were achieved, and the team is proud to announce a new School-Based Health Center (SBHC) that opened in July 2024 at Dr. Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy. The SBHC will provide students with the best opportunity to succeed by addressing medical, behavioral, dental, and vision health needs. SBHCs address student needs by meeting students where they are – in school, which has proven to be successful. Transportation, accessibility, and cost for children and families living in communities with little to no access to healthcare will no longer have barriers as healthcare is being delivered at school. In addition, staff, parents, and other siblings may access the SBHC at McNair Discovery Learning Academy. The ribbon cutting for the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy is at 1:30 pm on Thursday, October 3, 2024, at 1:30 pm.

MIRACLES Priorities

During the 23-24 school year, several MIRACLES Priorities were established in the Division of Wrap Around Services. The team is proud to announce that in addition to the priorities achieved before the end of the school year, other priorities were met during the summer months. The following MIRACLE Priorities have been achieved:

1. Established a positive, safe school climate, and culture in all schools by increasing the number of schools implementing PBIS by 5% (5 schools). This priority was exceeded by 100% as ten (10) schools began implementing PBIS this month.
2. Developed a comprehensive post-secondary push plan manual to ensure all students successfully graduate from high school and post-secondary ready.
3. Developed a post-secondary push plan to ensure all students successfully graduate from high school and post-secondary ready.
4. Developed a curriculum for In-School Suspension (ISS) and trained ISS.

The implementation of PBIS, development of a comprehensive Post-Secondary PUSH Plan, development of a comprehensive post-secondary push plan manual, and development of an ISS curriculum addresses both Strategic Goal Area 1: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access and Strategic Goal Area 4: Culture and Climate.

Summer Graduation

On August 9, 2024, over 140 graduates earned their diplomas from the DeKalb County School District. Summer graduation was a complete success, and it demonstrated the perseverance of our students to achieve their goals even through challenging times. Summer graduation also represented the culmination of years of hard work, personal growth, and the support of family and friends. It was time to celebrate achievements, reflect on memories, and prepare for the next steps, whether they involve engagement, enlistment, enrollment, entrepreneurship, or employment. The entire DeKalb County School District family is proud of the graduates and welcomes them into the next part of their journey. Thank you to the Department of Counseling for their hard work and dedication while ensuring all graduates are



ready for the next level.

Christopher Key, *Executive Director of Student Advancement*

Post-Secondary P.U.S.H. Plan

Senior Advisors have been hired to support scholars in each high school, and interviews take place each week. Our Senior Advisors' training and induction began with the support of school leaders, counselors, and the Post-Secondary Transition Specialists. The Georgia Student Finance Commission was recently on-site to deliver training on the [FAFSA](#) process, [Georgia MATCH](#), and [Georgia Futures](#). We are looking forward to exceptional outcomes for our scholars through the assistance of our Senior Advisors.

Check & Connect: Student Engagement Coaches

The Student Engagement Coach from Druid Hills High School has secured a partnership with Donte Cleaves, the owner of several McDonald's locations in the metro area. On August 28, 2024, Mr. Cleaves shared with students about his own journey, highlighting how despite a challenging home life and struggles with his education, he was able to attend college and ultimately become a successful businessman. His story was truly inspiring, and it clearly resonated with our students.

Mr. Cleaves was so impressed by the engagement and potential he saw in our students that he has pledged ongoing support for our program in several meaningful ways. Every two weeks, he will provide breakfast or lunch for our tutorial sessions. Additionally, he has committed to rewarding our students for their academic achievements with generous incentives: \$100 for every progress report card with all A's, and \$500 for students who achieve straight A's on their report card. Even more exciting, Mr. Cleaves has assured us that these incentives will continue until each student graduates.

He has taken to calling our students the "Elite McDonald's Club," and it is clear that he is deeply invested in their success. Beyond the incentives, Mr. Cleaves has also expressed

interest in offering job opportunities to students who are 16 and older, providing them with valuable work experience as they continue their education.

This partnership is a significant step forward for the Check and Connect program at Druid Hills, and I am so excited to see the positive impact it will have on our students. Mr. Cleaves' commitment to student success is truly remarkable, and this partnership will play a key role in helping them achieve their full potential.

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Denise Revels, *Director of Wrap Around and Support Service*

The ASEDP (Afterschool Extended Day Program) team delivered iPads and Chipper Payment Processors to 53 ASEDP schools servicing approximately 4,200 students to allow them to accept ASEDP registration and tuition payments from parents electronically through the MySchoolBucks software. This gives parents ease of mind

with making registration and tuition payments, as they can now make them from home. It also eases the stress of tuition collection done by the ASEDP sites' directors. The ASEDP directors are free from having to issue hand-written receipts to every parent in their program because MySchoolBucks captures all payments and makes it easy for directors to print reports of all payments made by parents.



School Social Work

New Teacher Orientation

The School Social Work Department participated in the district's FY 2024-2025 New Teacher Orientation and facilitated a training on the **"3's: Social Work, Systems, and Synergy": A Holistic Student Well-Being Approach**. This training provided new teachers with an overview of how school social workers are instrumental in creating a holistic support system for students and staff. The training equipped new teachers with an understanding of how social workers play a key role in addressing students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs, which can significantly impact their learning and overall well-being. The social work department also provided new teachers with hygiene kits, and other "goodies" for their students.



Back to School Attendance Flash Mob

The Division of Wrap Around Service implemented EveryDay Labs (EDL) last school year. This innovative tool aims to break down barriers for families and improve attendance. According to EDL 4,398 or 68% student's attendance rates improved after parents received EDL chronic absence nudges. This averages out to 2 of 3 students that improved their attendance. Therefore, to continue this momentum, the Back-to-School Attendance Flash Mob was held on Wednesday, July 31, 2024, and Friday, August 2, 2024, this was a vibrant and innovative effort led by Attendance Specialists to boost school attendance and foster a positive school culture. This event, which involved social workers, aimed to raise awareness about the importance of regular attendance, motivate students and families to prioritize consistent school participation, and strengthened community ties. By engaging the school community through a memorable and interactive event, the Flash Mob not only drew attention to the critical issue of attendance but also provided valuable information on overcoming enrollment barriers and highlighted available support resources, ultimately promoting a united and supportive school environment.



Operation Warm

Canby Lane Elementary School was selected from 30 schools in the Dekalb County area to participate in a remarkable event organized by Operation Warm, a nonprofit dedicated to providing brand-new, high-quality coats and shoes to children in need. Partnering with compassionate individuals, community organizations, and corporations across North America, Operation Warm aimed to offer emotional warmth, social confidence, and hope for a brighter future through these gifts. Mr. Kelvi Evans, the School Social Worker at Canby Lane Elementary, played a pivotal role in the event's success, collaborating with Marshalls and T.J. Maxx to plan and execute a flawless distribution. Over four weeks, meticulous preparations included sending parent letters, confirming speakers, and organizing nametags. On event day, Mr. Evans and Operation Warm, supported by

over 50 corporate volunteers, distributed more than 450 coats to children ages 4-11. The event, which was also attended by district board member Ms. Vickie Turner and Area 3 Supervisor Ms. Ateshia Lester, was a testament to the dedication and teamwork of Mr. Evans, school counselors, and all involved, ensuring a memorable and impactful experience for the children and their families.



Dr. Darnell Logan, *Director of Student Relations*

Bullying Awareness

The DeKalb County School District's "Bullying Stops Here!" Awareness Campaign continues to realize a significant reduction in the number of true bullying incidents. Annually, the school district utilizes a research-based, comprehensive approach to addressing student bullying harassment, and hazing. For the 2024-2025, training sessions have been conducted with students, faculty, staff, administrators, bus drivers, school psychologists, school social workers, and other support personnel. Dr. Quentin Fretwell, the creator and facilitator of this effort, has personally conducted all the district sessions, including area principals' meetings and several local school staff sessions. In addition, he provides technical assistance and support for schools. Targeted training for school liaisons and bullying data entry persons will be scheduled very soon. Based on research, the school liaisons work with a team of staff and students to facilitate a yearlong campaign of positive activities and messaging. This effort promotes respect, caring kindness, and a positive school culture and climate.

Based on changes in state statute and related information, this year's focus will be on hazing and cyberbullying. Hazing training has already been conducted with head football, wrestling, and cross-country coaches. In addition, this training module has been provided to schools to share with sponsors and students of all extracurricular clubs, teams, and organizations.

It is not the goal, or mindset of this campaign to operate in a silo, but to work collaboratively with the other wonderful and related initiatives offered by the DeKalb County School District. We will enhance this collaborative mindset and work together as the "Village" for the sake of the children we serve.

Student Discipline/Student Reintegration

The Department of Student Relations scheduled (12) DDP (District Due Process) Hearings; (1) canceled due to Discipline Team Meetings (DTM), and (1) Withdrawn. Additionally, (15) students were cleared to enroll in DCSD (DeKalb County School District).


Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

Director of Student Relations: Dr. Darnell Logan


PBIS District Coordinator: Brandy Woolridge

PBIS District Coaches: Shakira Bates-Shaw, Brian Bryant, Marcia Bryant-Cornelison, Dr. Dia Harden, and Kimmie Pryor

The PBIS District Team has conducted various coaching sessions, school visits, team meetings, trainings, and Principal's Check-Ins to improve the fidelity of PBIS implementation in DeKalb County School District. To integrate PBIS systems and practices with the MTSS framework and support the Whole Child, we have collaborated with other divisions and departments. This collaboration aims to improve districtwide understanding of PBIS's impact on school climate, academic achievement, discipline, attendance, and mental health. Please review the PBIS events and artifacts that detail our support and partnerships for the month of August 2024.


Event	Description	# of Participants and/or Schools	Data	Pictures
<p>New PBIS School Coaches Meeting (Friday, August 2, 2024)</p>	<p>This meeting is designed to equip new PBIS School Coaches with the foundational knowledge and tools needed to effectively support their schools in implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). We covered essential coaching strategies, reviewed PBIS best practices, and discussed how to drive positive behavioral outcomes for students.</p>	<p>29 Participants 22 Schools</p>	<p>Sign-In Link (August 2, 2024)</p>	

Event	Description	# of Participants and/or Schools	Data	Pictures
<p>PBIS School Visits (August 5-9, 2024)</p>	<p>During PBIS school visits, the District PBIS Team conducted introductory meetings with the school PBIS Team and staff to establish a solid foundation for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). In addition to these meetings, the team provided hands-on assistance during the first week of school transitions, ensuring that both students and families were supported as they adjusted to the new academic year. This collaborative effort is designed to create a welcoming and structured environment that promotes positive behavior and enhances the overall school climate.</p>	<p>59 School Visits</p>	<p>Field Activity Log (August 5-30, 2024)</p>	

Event	Description	# of Participants and/or Schools	Data	Pictures
<p>Collaboration-Integration Meeting (Friday, August 16, 2024)</p>	<p>During the meeting, the MTSS Director and PBIS Coordinator presented the MTSS Strategic Plan, an overview of the PBIS District Plan, the new GaDOE (Georgia Department of Education) PBIS-MTSS Integrated Model, and a proposed plan to align initiatives across departments to support the Whole Child model to district leaders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Student Relations • PBIS District Coordinator • PBIS District Coaches • MTSS Director • Culture and Climate Coordinators • Mental Health Coordinators 	<p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>PBIS Day 1 Retraining (Tuesday, August 20, 2024)</p>	<p>This training session is designed for PBIS School Teams to revise their Tier I systems of support. Participants learned about Team Composition, Team Operating Procedures, Behavioral Expectations, Teaching Expectations, and Feedback and Acknowledgement, all of which will help them develop their Tier I system artifacts .</p>	<p>29 Participants 4 Schools</p>	<p>Sign-In Link (August 20, 2024)</p>	

Event	Description	# of Participants and/or Schools	Data	Pictures
<p>Principal's Check-In Meeting (Friday, August 23, 2024)</p>	<p>This meeting is designed for principals to review and discuss the status of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation at their school. Principals can share successes, challenges, and best practices, and receive targeted support and guidance from the PBIS District Coordinator, Brandy Woolridge and the Director of Student Relations, Dr. Darnell Logan. The goal of this check-in is to ensure that PBIS initiatives are being implemented with fidelity, to address any barriers to success, and to reinforce a positive school climate that supports student achievement and well-being.</p>	<p>Bethune Middle School</p> <p>Principal: Donovan Butler</p> <p>Assistant Principal: Brian Kelley</p>	<p>Presentation</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>

Event	Description	# of Participants and/or Schools	Data	Pictures
<p>Principal's Check-In Meeting</p> <p>(Friday, August 23, 2024)</p>	<p>This meeting is designed for principals to review and discuss the status of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation at their schools. Principals had the opportunity to share successes, challenges, and best practices, and received targeted support and guidance from the PBIS District Coordinator, Brandy Woolridge and the Director of Student Relations, Dr. Darnell Logan. The goal of this check-in is to ensure that PBIS initiatives are being implemented with fidelity, to address any barriers to success, and to reinforce a positive school climate that supports student achievement and well-being.</p>	<p>Browns Mill Elementary School</p> <p>Principal: Marcus Kimber</p>	<p>Presentation</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>

Event	Description	# of Participants and/or Schools	Data	Pictures
<p>Social Workers Meeting</p> <p>(Wednesday, August 28, 2024)</p>	<p>This presentation offers an overview of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) tailored for DCSD Social Workers, Attendance Specialists, and SAFE Center Liaisons. Participants explored how their expertise in social-emotional learning, student support, and mental health can be pivotal within their school's PBIS Leadership Team.</p> <p>The session highlighted the PBIS framework and demonstrated how understanding its principles can enhance their contributions to creating a positive school climate, supporting student behavior, and fostering a collaborative approach to student success. Attendees learned strategies to align their roles with PBIS objectives, ensuring a holistic and supportive environment for all students.</p>	<p>85 Participants</p>	<p>Presentation</p>	

Event	Description	# of Participants or Schools	Data	Pictures
SWIS Training (August 29, 2024)	<p>This training session is designed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the SWIS (School-Wide Information System) application, a web-based decision-making tool for entering and analyzing behavior and discipline referrals. The SWIS application offers an efficient and effective way to capture behavior incident data, allowing school personnel to summarize and analyze this information to make informed decisions about educational environments.</p>	112 Participants	Sign-In Link (August 29, 2024)	