



## District Operations Report Document – November 2024

### Mr. Byron Schueneman, *Chief Financial Officer*

Finance progressed on several projects during November :

- Munis
  - Time and Attendance – see below
  - Financial Reporting Module (ACFR) - see below
  - Grant Accounting Module – to maintain grants/donations greater than \$5,000 that are not state of federal.
  - Employee Access – see below
- DebtBooks – assist with and formalize treasury management
- Allovue Manage – assist district leaders with position control and budget management in a user friendly dashboard
- MyRetirement Manager expansion – see below
- E-Procurement Integration – see below

### Lauren Scott, *Deputy Chief Financial Officer*

Throughout the month, Finance has focused on the implementation of Time and Attendance. We have completed training for all 138 schools/bookkeepers and 75% of the District’s Principals. Additionally, we are testing Employee Access, which would replace Employee Self Servic (ESS). Employee Access would allow employees to request time off within the platform and update banking/address information.

### Regina Bagley, *Director of Budget*

### Lance McConkey, *Comptroller*

**GASBO Conference:** Finance leadership attended the annual conference in Athens, GA November 5-8, 2024. GDOE, DOAA, and others presented various courses covering information related to FY24 year-end close & audits, budget preparations, legislative updates, etc.

**FY23 Audit:** The Business Service teams continue to work collaboratively with the M&J audit team to finalize the FY23 audit. The Finance team has fulfilled all audit requests. Two items remain for HR & DIIT. Additionally, weekly meetings with the M&J audit team are held to ensure any follow-up questions are answered to keep the audit moving toward completion.

**FY24 Year-End Close & Financial Statement Preparation:** Fiscal year 2024 year-end close procedures were successfully completed at the end of September. Additionally, Finance has submitted the various reports to GDOE and DOAA by the deadlines. The Business Service teams have completed many financial statement preparation tasks and have draft financial statements 95+ percent completed, including the SPLOST Schedule and SEFA. The focus on



these tasks aligns with Finance Mircale – Distinction Award for Excellent Financial Reporting.

**Financial Reporting Procedure Updates:** Team members participated in four days of training over the MUNIS ACFR module in October 2024. The team configured the module and received hands-on experience developing financial statements through the module. In November, Dan Copeland, District Finance Senior Systems Engineer, tested the module and generated reports have been reviewed by the team. Next steps are to continue testing and participate in one more training day. This training aligns with Finance Mircale – Financial Reporting Module.

**School House Accounting Procedure Updates:** A pilot project across 30 schools will implement Bank of America check scanners, which will improve deposit procedures and allow quicker access to funds. The scanners have been delivered to 30 schools and the goal was for training and implementation to be completed by October 30, 2024. The goal timeline was adjusted due to additional implementation needed on the Bank of America part of the project, which has been completed as of October 25, 2024. Schedules are being developed to train and implement in January 2024.

**MyRetirement Manager Platform Expansion:** Finance coordinated an additional meeting including HR and DIIT to receive information on available updates and improvements. Fully implementing the MUNIS payroll module allows consideration of opportunities that will improve data submission and the end users' experience. Also, an internal meeting was held to discuss which updates and improvements all Divisions wanted to implement from the information received from the vendor. Next steps are continued meetings to work on the updates and improvements. The focus on these tasks aligns with Finance Mircale – MyRetirement Manager Expansion.

**Federal Programs Completion Reports & ESSER Survey:** Business Service has worked collaboratively with the Federal Programs Department to complete and submit various program completion reports and the ESSER annual survey.

#### **Dr. Milton Hall, Director of Allotments**

Team members of the RAMP Committee participated in a 2-hour Work Session on November 11, 2024, in which we began to examine how other districts award and distribute allocations throughout their districts for non-traditional (Alternative) and Special Area Programs. This is the initial step to comparing their allocation processes to that of DeKalb County School District's (DCSD). Our next 2-hour Work Session is scheduled for Monday, December 9, 2024, in which we will take a deeper dive into examining how DCSD allocates resources in these same areas with the goal of adjusting local school allocations in an effort to more equitably staff the local schools. This initiative aligns with Finance Mircale for Allotments.

The Office of Allotments is currently meeting and working with Operations and Planning as well as School Choice on initial allocations for FY26 based on the most recent FTE/QBE earnings for FY25. The goal is to execute Pre-allotment meetings the week of December 16<sup>th</sup> to allow building leaders time to more effectively plan for the upcoming year.



**Carla Smith, *Vendor Services Executive Level/Executive Administrative Assistant Procurement***  
Equal Level eProcurement Marketplace -

During our weekly virtual Finance Refresher Session, the Vendor Service Team gave the bookkeepers and administrative assistants a sneak preview on Wednesday, November 20th. A requisition was created in Munis, and we punched out to one of our vendor's online sites, created a shopping cart, and pulled the requisition back into Munis, but not before allowing the comparison software the opportunity to check other vendors for better prices or cheaper alternatives and created a purchase order in a matter of minutes. We like to call this... magic! They were overly excited to see the software's functionality and looking forward to the face-to-face training sessions. The first round of training will be held **on December 11th** for departments and will continue after the holidays for schools and centers.

**Dr. Tasha Mills-Davis , *Chief Human Resources Officer***

**Difference Maker Campaign**

I am pleased to share an update on our recent employee recognition efforts. This past month, the HR Department launched the *I Am a Difference Maker* campaign, which celebrated 10 outstanding employees from across our district. The DCSD Prize Patrol personally delivered awards. This strategy transformed a standard recognition process into a memorable, engaging experience that highlights the exceptional contributions of our staff.

We are enthusiastic about the positive impact of this initiative with our next award ceremony scheduled for January 2025. This ongoing program demonstrates our commitment to acknowledging and celebrating the dedicated professionals who make a significant difference in DeKalb County School District.

**Jason E. Kennedy, *Deputy Chief***

**Collaboration with Department of Operations - Employee Engagement Group**

Members of the Total Rewards team and I met with The Employee Engagement Group (EEG) in Operations to discuss employee-related issues. This productive meeting laid the groundwork for an ongoing partnership to enhance the employee experience district wide.

**Tracy Harris, *Director of Talent Acquisition***

The Talent Acquisition Team made significant progress toward its MIRACLES goals throughout November. On November 9, the department successfully hosted its first job fair, resulting in the hiring of 44 potential candidates. The newly established Operations HR team began their roles in their designated locations on Monday, November 18. The Call Center Manager position was filled, along with the hiring of three new Talent Acquisition Managers. Interviews for the Employment Service Associates are scheduled for Friday, December 6, with the Call Center set



to open on Friday, January 3. The contract timeline, non-renewal timeline, and transfer period were all finalized in November and are now ready for approval and publication. Additionally, the November newsletter was released on the 18th, alongside the first edition of "Talent Times," a newsletter aimed at supporting waiver and provisional teachers in their certification process. To further assist teachers, Talent Acquisition Managers and Certification Specialists collaborated to host a meeting for teachers on waivers and provisional certificates, highlighting pathways to certification. The event was attended by five local colleges and universities, offering on-the-spot admittance to their teacher education programs.

**Chuck Nwagwu, Director of Total Rewards**

The Total Rewards Team has made consistent progress on our employee pay concerns. The most recent payroll (11/29/2024) did not yield any contact/visits from employees. The Team has consistently addressed all 'experience verification' requests and caught up with outstanding employee requests for experience credits. We have significantly decreased the number and amounts of requests that we receive for retroactive payments due to processing audits. The Team is also working with Payroll to address time and attendance concerns.

**Kismet Sims, Performance Evaluations Coordinator**

The evaluation team has been actively preparing to support the first evaluation assessment period. We collaborated with the operations team to define the necessary support for success and engaged with managers and supervisors to address questions and concerns. Additionally, we extended the due date for the first formative assessment to accommodate leaders' needs, delivered targeted training to the finance department and shared key information with the SuperEval consultants to ensure alignment and effectiveness in the evaluation process. SuperEval is ready to go! We are working with Chief Palmer to determine the best date to train the Cabinet members.

**Janitrea R. Sebree-Kelly, Director of Human Resources Information Systems**

HRIS has made several significant updates to improve operations and processes. While in the development phase, the internal data dashboards have been enhanced with additional information, providing more comprehensive insights for analysis and presentation during selected meetings. In support of the Division's PAE process, testing of the Frontline/Munis integration began. This testing marks a key development in streamlined processing for our supporting teams. Consistent audits and close collaboration amongst the HRIS team, along with sharing data with other teams, have contributed to a continued decrease in payroll concerns for employees. Furthermore, the school district is maintaining a steady pace with approximately 197 new applicants per week, ensuring that departments have access to a strong pool of talented candidates. Finally, the HRIS team members are actively engaging in professional development opportunities to build on their existing knowledge base.



### **Jamel Crawford, Employee Relations**

The Employee Relations Team is working on updating HR Acuity, finalizing Employee Misconduct Cases, and Employee Complaints. We are also preparing for Fair Dismissal Hearings, and School House Staff Meetings regarding the Code of Ethics, and Staff Allegations.

### **Carina Harrigan, Director, IGNITE**

In November, IGNITE advanced key initiatives across its programs. The Para-to-Teacher Apprenticeship Program interviews were conducted on November 1 and 7, with 30 candidates selected to join Cohort 2. Of these, 13 will pursue bachelor's degrees in special education (Mild to Moderate), and 17 will pursue degrees in Elementary Education through Lake Erie College's Professional Teacher Pathway Program. Coursework begins in January.

For the IGNITE Teacher Residency Program, Cohort 1 residents are preparing for graduation in December and job placement in high-priority DeKalb County schools. They have successfully completed their Candidate Work Samples and are finalizing resumes and introductory videos to share with principals. The IGNITE team has worked closely with Employee Service to coordinate and finalize job placements for these residents. Graduation celebration plans have been finalized, with Middle Georgia State University Commencement on December 11 and the IGNITE Graduation Celebration on December 12. Invitations for the celebration have been distributed. Cohort 2 residents are gaining valuable hands-on experience through their Fall lead teaching which involves planning and delivering instruction for two consecutive days. Recruitment for Cohort 3, set to begin in June 2025, is progressing, with the team finalizing strategies and exploring collaboration with the recruitment firm Cushion.

### **Eric Hilton, Chief Legal Officer**

The Legal Department High Level Priorities for the month continued to include refining and updating the contract administration process which is a Miracles Goal for the Legal Department. **Our new Contracts Counsel, Imani Redd, Esq. has joined the legal team and since our last report, the Contracts Administration Group has reviewed and processed in excess of 156 contracts. Board Agenda legal review for the December Board meeting agenda items were timely completed and we are tracking to complete the January 2024 Board Agenda items in accordance with established deadlines.** The TregoEd continues its work on revisions to the contract administration processes with a focus on recommendations for appropriate signing authority and recommended updates and changes to the contract administration process. **The updated legal request form has been implemented District wide.** With regard to professional learning opportunities, continuing education courses have been approved for the attorneys in the DCSD Legal Department. **We continue to seek applicants for the position of Legal Counsel, Exceptional Education and Office Specialist to the Chief Legal Officer.**



**Marissa Key, Esq., Executive Legal Director, Employee Relations & Title IX Coordinator**

The Administrative Policy Review Committee identified the initial HR policies for review and for presentation to the Board. The waivers included in the District's SWSS contract are being evaluated to see how they can be applied to the policy revision process. Title IX developments continue to be monitored as Georgia is currently enjoined from implementing the 2024 Title IX Regulations. Employees will continue to be trained on the 2020 Title IX regulations to remain in compliance. The current Title IX structure has been revised to create a more efficient process. Training opportunities will be offered to school level investigators and decision makers before the holiday break. Additional role specific training opportunities will be offered in January 2025. The additional training will equip employees with knowledge and hands on coaching from the Title IX team so they can confidently execute their responsibilities under Title IX through the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

**Glinton Darien, Esq., Legal Director, Risk Management & Workers Compensation**

The Risk Management team continues its work on insurance review. The team is currently taking the necessary steps to adhere to the Ashley Wilson Act (the "Act"), which is effective January 1, 2025. This Act requires that any nurse or school resource officer employed by the District, who experiences a traumatic event resulting in PTSD, be eligible for the benefits provided under the Act. The PTSD must be diagnosed by a qualified professional. The new benefits required under the Act are not covered by Workers' Compensation.

In addition, the Risk Management team is continuing its work with the Operations Department regarding the property appraisals received from the District's insurer, Alliant. The Operations Department has suggested that we utilize the service of the District's real estate contractor. We are awaiting approval of this recommendation by the Chief Operating Officer.

These property appraisals are for 25 District facilities. Based on those appraisals, the District is only 11.97% (i.e., \$100,115,324) underinsured. The team must review the appraisals and update the Statement of Values and other documents. The District's total insured value under its property insurance policy renewed in June of 2024 is \$4,214,395,368.00. The premium for the property insurance policy was \$3,335,010.44.

**Chasity Middlebrooks-Cody, Esq., Senior Legal Counsel, Employee Relations & Student Relations**

The highly anticipated Fall Legal Symposium has been rescheduled for Wednesday, December 18, 2024, and registration is open. Central office leaders are encouraged to attend. They will have the opportunity to meet and greet the in-house legal team and talk with various departments about navigating a legal conundrum. The Employee Relations and Student Relations legal subgroups will have explored various methods to deliver content during the Legal



Symposium based on feedback from District staff. We are currently finalizing the materials for distribution at the Legal Symposium.

We have also started to explore utilizing alternate mitigation methods with the EEOC to address discrimination claims. The EEOC has become more proactive in encouraging employer respondents to discrimination claims to participate in free mediations led by EEOC investigators. We have found that this avenue allows us to obtain more information on the employee's perspective by working with a neutral party to resolve matters in a timely manner. It is anticipated that this will result in a cost savings to the District in legal bills and settlement fees. Additionally, it may serve as a tool to improve the morale in the workplace while the matter is being address. A determination of this method's effectiveness will be assessed at the end of the 24-25 school year.

**Imani Redd, Esq., *Legal Counsel, Contract Administration***

In November, the Contracts Administration team reviewed over 150 contracts. The team meets weekly to review current contracts, address any urgent issues, and strategize ways to improve contract administration processes. Additionally, the Contracts Administration team holds bi-weekly meetings with the Operations Department and the Solicitation team to review open agreements and discuss upcoming renewals.

Moving forward, the team will continue to train bookkeepers and other department staff on the proper process for submitting agreements via Doc Express, as well as on the DJE Board Policy related to purchasing. The team is also working on developing and implementing instructional cover forms to enhance the efficiency of contract submissions.

**Vacant, *Legal Counsel, Exceptional Education***

**Mr. Elijah Palmer, *Chief of Staff***

November was a month where we chose to not have a MIRACLES monthly workshop since it would have occurred during Thanksgiving break. Cabinet leaders used that time to prepare to provide more of a robust update for the upcoming MIRACLES workshop on December 16th, 2024, to close out the calendar year. The first of three Strategic Plan update reports was presented to the Board of Education, offering a comprehensive review of key district improvements during the initial 45 days of the 2024-2025 school year compared to the same period in 2023-2024. The report highlighted significant progress in student outcomes, including measurable gains in MAP assessment scores, improved attendance rates, reductions in disciplinary incidents, and an increase in the graduation rate. These metrics underscore the district's commitment to advancing academic achievement, fostering a positive school culture, and ensuring student success through



the alignment of efforts under the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

The Saving Our Students (S.O.S.) campaign has emerged as a powerful movement within the district, focusing on critical issues affecting our youth, including gun violence prevention. In November, the initiative took center stage at Cedar Grove High School and Bethune Middle School, where the district hosted impactful sessions dedicated to raising awareness and fostering dialogue around the epidemic of gun violence. These sessions included a thorough examination of national and state-level data, comparing Georgia's statistics to broader trends, and shedding light on how this issue affects DeKalb County. The sessions culminated in a restorative practice known as "Circling Up," where students, staff, and community members who had been directly or indirectly impacted by gun violence were given a safe space to share their stories, feel seen and heard, and begin the journey toward healing and restoration. This initiative demonstrated the district's commitment to supporting students' emotional well-being and addressing the root causes of challenges affecting their safety and success.

The district made significant strides in its commitment to certified H-PRIDE visits, successfully completing visits to six additional schools this period. With nearly all 139 schools in the district visited, we are nearing a milestone in this transformative initiative. These visits continue to foster intimate, meaningful conversations about the positive developments within each school and identify ways in which central office leaders and the Superintendent can enhance the overall educational experience. Principals, teachers, community members, bookkeepers, and students have all contributed valuable insights, representing their respective schools with critical feedback that guides continuous improvement. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the connection between the central office and schools but also ensures every voice is heard in the journey toward excellence.

My professional growth this month was greatly enhanced through participation in two impactful conferences. Attending the Impact Conference by Cognia in Peachtree, GA provided valuable knowledge about the accreditation process, equipping me with strategies to showcase our district's and schools' flourishing achievements through robust data evidence when the time comes for review. Additionally, the National Alliance for Black School Educators (NABSE) conference in Atlanta offered a forward-thinking perspective on embedding Artificial Intelligence into school curriculums and featured insightful sessions on effective data assessment at the district level. These experiences not only enriched my understanding but also offered practical tools to advance the district's goals.

***Vacant, Director of Strategic Management***



**Joel Thibodeaux, Director of Internal Audits & Compliance**

**Internal Audits Assessment & Benchmarking**

After working with our partners at Gartner, the assessment and benchmarking exercise for DCSD's Internal Audit function has been completed and a "Maturity Score" has been assigned to our function. "Maturity" measures how advanced an organization's development is in a functional activity relative to Gartner's best practice research. The Maturity Scores are assigned on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest level of maturity and 5 being the highest.

DCSD Internal Audits & Compliance score: 2+ (2.33-2.67)

Peer Benchmark Score: 3+ (3.33-3.67)

Peer Group: 698 participating organizations nationwide across all industries

Based on the Priority Index, also provided in the benchmarking report, our main opportunities for improvement are:

1. Increase Risk Assessment Proficiency \*
2. Establishing Audit Quality Assurance
3. Validating and monitoring corrective action plans
4. Development of Auditor Skills & Competencies \*
5. Increased Engagement with Divisional Management for Audit Planning

(\* Underway)

Fleet Operations Assessment

**Tracey Whaley, Executive Director of Public Safety**

**Recruitment & Retention**

Public Safety continues to work towards recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff.

- Since July Ten SROs have been added, trained and assigned to their permanent schools.
- Three (3) SROs have recently started as of 11/26/2024 & 12/02/2024.
- One (1) SRO will start work on 12/16/2024.
- We have hired 68 Elementary School Associates, and we continue to recruit and interview highly qualified candidates.

**Technology Integration**

- **Mobile Pro Systems** - Public safety has also set in place two Mobile Pro Systems security trailers, one placed at Martin Luther King Jr. High School's bus parking lot and the other at Godfrey Stadium's bus parking lot. These systems enable the lots to be monitored live to protect the vehicles parked in those locations.
- Evolv systems are currently in place at each county football stadium.
- **Evolv Conveyor Pilot** - Public Safety collaborated with Tucker High School to pilot an Evolv Conveyor System.

- Data is currently being gathered, and the system is being reviewed.

### **Active Shooter Drill**

Public safety leadership is currently coordinating and planning a Countywide Active Shooter Drill where we will host all law enforcement and public safety agencies in the county.

- The first leg of the drill will commence with a Tabletop exercise hosted at AIC on November 19, 2024.
- Tabletop number two will take place on 12/19/2024.
- The Drill is scheduled for 02/19/2025.

### **Visitor Management System**

We are coordinating two safety-centric pilot Visitor Management Systems which will serve as a visitor checkpoint in our schools.

- **Raptor** Visitor Management is being scheduled to be piloted at Ashford Park Elementary & Tucker Middle.
- **Centegix** Visitor Management is currently being used at:

- Allgood Elementary
- CANBY LANE ELEMENTARY
- Chapel Hill Middle
- Chesnut Elementary School
- Columbia Elementary
- Columbia Middle School
- Cross Keys High School
- Dekalb Alternative School
- Dekalb School of the Arts
- Doraville United Elementary
- Dresden Elem. School
- Druid Hills Hs
- Dunaire Elementary School
- Eagle Woods Academy
- Edward Bouie Theme School
- Fairington Elem. School
- Flat Rock Elementar
- Flat Shoals Elementary
- Freedom Middle School
- Hawthorne Elementary
- Idlewood Elementary
- International Community School
- Lakeside HS
- Laurel Ridge Elementary School

- Miller Grove High School
- Montclair Elementary
- Oak Grove Elem. School
- Oak View Elementary School
- Pine Ridge Elementary School
- Redan High School
- Rock Chapel Elementary School
- Rockbridge Elementary
- Sagamore Hills Elementary
- SALEM MIDDLE SCHOOL
- Shadow Rock Elementary
- Shadow Rock Center
- Snapfinger Elementary School
- Southwest DeKalb High
- Stone Mill Elementary
- Stone Mountain High
- Stone Mountain Middle School
- Towers High School
- Tucker High School
- Tucker Middle

The following training sessions have been planned and are currently being coordinated:  
Drill where we will host all law enforcement and public safety agencies in the county.

- Mental & Emotional Wellness Training – 01/03/2025
- Cultural Awareness & Community Engagement – 01/06/2025

***Carolyn Lloyd, Executive Director of Board Operations***

This month the board office is excited to join the Board of Education as they receive the Georgia School Board Association's Quality School Board award during its Annual Conference on December 11 – 13<sup>th</sup>.

During the month of December, we also celebrate our outgoing board members, Mrs. Anna Hill, Mrs. Vickie B. Turner, and Dr. Joyce Morley. These board members will be honored during the December 9<sup>th</sup> BOE meeting.

The Board & District will host State School Superintendent Richard Woods on December 12<sup>th</sup> to recognize the district for its exceptional advancement in literacy and math proficiency.

The Boards Annual Legislative Luncheon has been rescheduled to Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 12 – 1:30 p.m. in the Board Office. During this time the Board will share its legislative priorities with



the DeKalb Delegation members.

New BOE members will be sworn in on January 7<sup>th</sup> in the Board Office. Those new Board members are Tiffany Hogan, District 5, Andrew Ziffer, District 1 and Awet Eyasu, District 7. The Board office continues to work each month in service to the BOE, Superintendent and the District.

**Mr. Erick Hofstetter , *Chief Operating Officer***

I am pleased to report that October 2024 was a month of significant achievements and progress for the Division of Operations. One of the most notable events was the high-profile pep rally at Hallford Stadium, featuring Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Barack Obama, which showcased the district's ability to accommodate large, high-security events on a national level. Additionally, we celebrated the groundbreaking of a new state-of-the-art facility at Dresden Elementary School, completed major renovations at Woodridge Elementary, and unveiled refreshed Academic Skills Centers at three elementary schools. Our transportation team successfully supported the district's first-ever elementary school athletic competitions, and we honored our dedicated bus drivers, monitors, and fleet staff during School Bus Safety Week. Many of our Division's highlights are captured in [November's Newsletter](#) that depicts our drive to continue to use innovative initiatives to excel our division.

Our departments continued to excel in various initiatives. The School Nutrition Service ensured high standards of food safety with ServSafe certifications, while the Design and Construction team made significant progress on key projects, including new schools at the Sequoyah campus and renovations at Cross Keys High School. Facilities Service demonstrated exceptional productivity, completing over 3,300 work orders. Business Service launched the "Caught Doing Good" program to recognize employee contributions and explored educational partnerships for staff development. Planning and E-SPLOST/CIP Programming prepared for the Fall 2025 Enrollment Forecast and advanced efforts to digitize historical records. These accomplishments reflect our unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation, setting a strong foundation for continued success and community engagement.

**Antwyn Brown, *Deputy Chief Operations Officer***

This month we have worked to ensure prompt payment of all outstanding invoices and ancillary costs associated with the Presidential Campaign Rally held on Thursday October 24, 2024. I was also honored to serve as an usher during the 2024-2025 DeKalb County School District's Teacher and Employee of the Year program. We also convened three (3) meetings with our District Plant Engineers and Custodial Staff at Chamblee HS, Clarkston HS and Southwest DeKalb HS to discuss the organizational structure realignment. We continue to monitor the status of our kitchen



equipment inventory and repair efforts between Facilities Management and School Nutrition Service weekly. We have worked diligently to engage and communicate the change management relative to the roles and responsibilities of our Construction and Design project management staff as the DeKalb County School District begins to transition its program management services. We have begun working diligently to prepare for the incoming Human Resources-Operations staff members both logistically (office space and outfitting) and incorporating them into the Divisional workflow. We have begun identifying an appropriate Divisional point of contact to ensure responsiveness for the forthcoming CESO Audit Review in coordination with the Office of Internal Audit. We continue to manage the working relationship with our monthly Drivers Monitors Advisor Council (DMAC) and Auxiliary Employee group meetings.

**Keith Ball, Executive Director for Capital Improvements and Facilities**

We are excited to have members of Human Resources join our Operations Team at Sam Moss. This team of dedicated professionals will support our efforts to hire and retain top talent in our division. Additionally, HR support will be critical with the transfer of custodians and plant engineers occurring in the new year.

Operations is also collaborating with the Equity Division to provide dedicated support to our Horizon schools. Operations has assigned a dedicated project manager to assist with the projects at our Horizon schools in addition to managing other top priority projects including the newly purchased Kroger building and additional built out of Silver Hills.

Construction at Dresden Elementary will continue along with staging a site lay down at Cross Keys HS and at the Sequoyah MS/ HS site. These multi-year capital projects are evidence of the district's commitment to our 3 priorities of providing facilities that are safe, clean and efficient.

**Raymond Stanley, Executive Director of Transportation and Fleet Operations**

DCSD recently hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy of Excellence on November 2, 2024. The Division of Operations was well represented, with deserving honorees from each department. The Fleet department's very own **Mr. Bernard Watson** (Bus Mechanic) was selected as the overall Employee of the Year for the Operations Division. Mr. Watson is so deserving of this honor, and we are extremely delighted to highlight his accomplishment.

The Transportation department, specifically bus drivers, bus monitors, routing technicians, dispatch clerks, safety & training, assistant transportation supervisors, transportation supervisors and transportation managers are going above and beyond to serve students and staff with transportation request for regular route runs, numerous trips, athletic events, special events and emergency situations. Our team is demonstrating a great work ethic and collaboration to deliver

when called upon, despite limited staff. I want to express my gratitude to our entire department.

**Dr. Connie Walker, Executive Director of School Nutrition Services**

Farm to School - Serving Up Nutrition Excellence in Dekalb Schools!

Dekalb County School Nutrition Service is part of the evolving farm-to-school movement that is revitalizing school meals. The goal of Farm to School is to ensure students have access to high quality foods from local farmers.

The Georgia Department of Education School Nutrition Division (GaDOE SND) with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, University of Georgia Extension, and the Georgia Department of Public Health annually recognizes outstanding farm to school programs with the Georgia Farm to School Award.

The Dekalb County School District, School Nutrition Service department was recognized for the District's exceptional achievements in the fulfillment of farm to school requirements in SY 23-24. DCSD School Nutrition Service met and exceeded the qualifiers for this award, through their innovative ways of incorporating local vegetation and products into school menus, and measurable increases in meal participation, student knowledge of farms and the value of school meal programs.

Students in Dekalb are presented daily, with an assorted selection of farm fresh fruits and vegetables, such as peaches, watermelon, blueberries, strawberries, oranges, apples, Bok choy, bibb lettuce, zucchini, carrots, assorted greens, and more, all sourced from local farms.





### **Bernando Brown, *Director of Student Transportation***

Transportation Managers Monroe Kenard, Pamela Sanders, and Chenille Hemphill-Moore attended the TSD (Transporting Students with Disabilities) Conference, held November 6-12, 2024, in Frisco, TX.

### **Conference Highlights**

The TSD Conference provided our team with a unique opportunity to engage with transportation professionals nationwide and learn the latest trends in special needs transportation. Key activities included:

- **Networking Opportunities:** Managers connected with like-minded individuals, exchanging ideas and best practices to enhance the transportation service for students with disabilities.
- **Keynotes and Training:** Attendees participated in keynote sessions from industry leaders, offering innovative insights into improving operations and producing measurable results.
- **Educational Sessions:** Workshops and training sessions provided practical solutions for overcoming challenges specific to special needs transportation.
- **Product Demonstrations:** Exploration of cutting-edge products and service to enhance safety and efficiency in our transportation operations.

### **Expected Outcomes**

Our team looks forward to applying the shared knowledge and practical solutions gained at the conference. The training and networking will contribute to enhanced safety measures, improved service delivery, and a stronger transportation team to support students with disabilities and special needs.

### **Next Steps**

Managers Kenard, Sanders, and Hemphill-Moore will meet with the transportation department leadership team to share insights and recommendations. Additionally, strategies for implementing these improvements will be developed and communicated for integration into our operations.

**Vacant, *Director of Fleet & Fleet Maintenance***

**Vacant, *Director of Design and Construction***



**Bobby Moncrief, Director of Facilities Services**

**Work Order Milestones:**

Our team worked hard to address **1,057 new work orders** and successfully closed **1,156 work orders** this month—an outstanding accomplishment that highlights our commitment to operational excellence!

**Facility Improvements:**

Significant upgrades were completed across our district, including:

- **Flat Rock Elementary School:** New flooring installed in the game room.
- **Lakeside High School:** New flooring installed in the cafeteria.

These improvements enhance the functionality and aesthetic appeal of our learning environments, supporting a positive experience for students and staff.

**Head Custodian Training Showcase:**

Eighty of our Head Custodians participated in a dynamic **two-day training showcase**, featuring hands-on sessions and collaborative learning opportunities. This event not only enhanced their skills but also celebrated the vital role they play in maintaining our schools. A PowerPoint with pictures is attached—check it out to see the event in action!

**ISSA Conference Delegation:**

We proudly sent a delegation to the **ISSA Conference**, the premier event for the cleaning hygiene, and facilities management industry. Our team attended classes on critical topics such as employee retention and recognition, Indoor-Air Quality, and innovative practices. They also explored cutting-edge equipment and connected with new vendors. The wealth of knowledge they've brought back will be invaluable for implementing fresh ideas and improvements across the district.





**Keith Singleton, Director of Business Services**

This month has been a shining example of teamwork, dedication, and celebration within our department!

**Shoutout to Kelvin Thorton, Raul Juran, Adrien Walker, and Ernest Davis** for their outstanding efforts at Hallford Stadium! Their quick response and hard work ensured all requests from the Democratic campaign were fulfilled seamlessly and on time. Amazing job, team!

Over in the Print Shop, **Mr. Christopher Goldson and his staff** continue to raise the bar, delivering large rush projects with exceptional quality and precision. Their commitment to excellence is truly commendable and keeps us moving forward!

**This is a heartfelt celebration for Ms. Gloria Johnson**, who is retiring after an incredible 32 years of dedicated service to the DeKalb County School District. Her unwavering commitment and impact on our community will be cherished for years to come. Best wishes, Ms. Johnson—you have inspired us all!

Let us keep up the great work and high spirits as we continue making a difference together!

**Hans Williams, Director of Planning & E-SPLOST/CIP Programming**

**Fall 2025 Enrollment Forecast**

Our team is making exceptional strides on the Fall 2025 Enrollment Forecast! Using critical insights from the recent **“FTE Day”** count conducted in October, alongside key metrics like housing trends and birth rates, we’re crafting precise, by-grade and by-school projections.



These forecasts will play a pivotal role in guiding resource planning for the 2025–26 school year.

The **Initial Forecast** is on track for delivery in early December, setting the stage for informed, data-driven decisions across the district. A huge thank-you to the staff for their dedication to this vital planning effort!

### **Private School Enrollment Reporting**

Kudos to the Planning Department for their tireless efforts in completing the **Private School Enrollment Reporting** ahead of the November 19 deadline! Their hard work engaging private schools, collecting enrollment forms, and submitting data to the GaDOE portal ensures that funding decisions like Title I allocations are based on accurate and comprehensive data.

This year's milestone achievement—connecting with more private schools than ever—demonstrates our unwavering commitment to collaboration and precision in meeting the needs of our students and community.

### **A Big Thank-You**

To everyone involved in these important efforts, your dedication continues to shine as we plan and achieve key milestones. Together, we're building a foundation for success across DCSD!

***Jennifer Caracciolo, Acting Chief of Community Engagement and Innovative Partnerships***

***Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer***

### **CEIP:**

- H-Pride visits: Redan ES, Freedom MS, Narvi J. Harris, McNair HS, McNair MS, and DeKalb School of the Arts
- Held Supt. advisory meetings: staff, exceptional education, parent, and bilingual
- Held District 4 Town Hall meeting at Tucker HS
- Held Druid Hills Modernization Meeting
- Hosted school/center visits for NABSE
- Held Family Literacy Day at Indian Creek ES

### **Communications:**

- Completed three-day NSPRA communications audit with 20 focus groups
- Conducted an online communications survey for all stakeholders
- Coordinated two community SOS events
- Partnered with HR for 1st DeKalb Difference Maker awards
- Website: Interviewed district website providers
- Foundation: Received 1st donation (\$50,000 from Commissioner Spears)



Dr. Marcia Oglesby, *Director of Grants and Partnerships*  
Grants:

Georgia State University was awarded a \$6 million U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Quality Partnership grant in partnership with the district. The grant project titled, Project DEAL (Developing Educators and Leaders) is designed to recruit, develop, and retain teachers and leaders. The next step is to present the award allocated to the district in the amount of \$3,517,500 during the December board meeting, for approval to accept and spend the funds according to the grant's budget.

Katrina Hammonds, Teacher at McNair Middle School, and Principal Tuqwan Taylor on being awarded the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) Georgia Outdoor Learning Demonstration (GOLD) grant in the amount of \$5,000. The grant funds will be used to support program implementation and engagement activities designed to launch, revitalize, or expand outdoor learning opportunities. The funds can be used to purchase the following: materials and supplies, professional development, field trips, and support other costs.

STEM Presentation – Dr. Marcia Oglesby and Mr. Michael Harris, Partnerships Manager, presented to STEM coordinators during Ms. Andrea Wright's monthly meeting. The presentation titled, Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning shared information of the grant's lifecycle, types of grants and grant funders, and assisted the participants on how to identify tools and supports for the grant writing journey and sources of funding,

Partnerships Georgia Teachers Initiative (GTI) - Extra Yard for Teachers – Cedar Grove High School's drumline and cheerleaders were invited to perform at the Extra Yard for Teachers - Georgia Teachers Initiative's national event which will be held on January 18, 2025, at the Mercedes Benz Stadium. Upon approval to travel to the event, GTI will pay for meals and charter bus transportation for the students and school staff to attend the event.

New Partner: Citizens Trust Bank is currently reviewing our proposal for financial support. In the interim, the Grants and Partnerships office connected Citizens Trust Bank to Human Resources to plan a homebuying seminar for employees where they will share resources for grants that provide cash incentives to homebuyers.

Expansion of an Existing Partnership: Braves Foundation. The Brave's Foundation is funding DonorsChoose projects via the Most Valuable Teacher program. They offered to make a DCSD teacher's project a priority for funding. They also encouraged the district to apply for the Fun at Bat program where schools get free baseball equipment. The information was shared with Myss Jelks-Johnson, Executive Director of Athletics.





Falcons Friday and Peek Behind the Beak Schools Shows. Thanks to Ms. Tanya Arrington, Manager I Strategic Partnerships. She has been fantastic at working back with schools to schedule shows. The Falcons Brand Marketing Department has completed 2 of 4 scheduled Falcons Friday School Shows and has completed 1 of 2 Peek Behind the Beak School Shows scheduled for DeKalb County.

#### Falcons Friday School Shows

Panola Way Elementary (Show Completed)

Murphey Candler Elementary (Show Completed)

Briar Vista Elementary (Show scheduled for 12/20)

Fernbank Elementary (Show scheduled for 12/20)

Peek Behind the Beak

Clarkston High School (Show Completed)

Chamblee High School (Show scheduled for 12/5)

Lakeside High School (Show scheduled for 12/5)

Cross Keys High School (Show scheduled for 1/9)

New Partner: South State Bank is interested in supporting the Back-to-School Rally.

Stewarding a New Partnership: Witherite Law Group will share a decision regarding the proposal submitted requesting funding to support the SAFE Centers, Family and Community Empowerment, the Back-to-School Rally, and the Innovative Solutions Laboratory during the month of December.

Stewarding New and Existing Partners: Katrina Ford, Partnerships Manager, sent requests for meetings with Georgia Natural Gas, Family First Credit Union, Google, Atlanta United, Equitable, Coca Cola Bottling United, and the Atlanta Hawks.

Dekalb Human Service Alliance – Katrina Ford, Partnerships Manager, attended the alliance meeting hosted by the Dekalb County Government’s Department of Human Services. The alliance is comprised of non-profit organizations that support our students and their families. Debra Furtado, Dekalb County Administrator, was in attendance and shared funding information offered by the Dekalb County Government for organizations who support our schools.

University Partnership Roundtable – The Grants and Partnerships department will host a roundtable on Thursday, December 6, 2024, for universities and colleges. Multiple departments (Professional Learning Student Advancement, Student Mentorship and Partnership, Human Resources, Leadership Development and CTAE) will have the opportunity to share how





universities and colleges can support their initiatives and goals. The following universities will be in attendance: Emor University, Morehouse School of Medicine, Clark Atlanta University, Georgia State University, Grand Canyon University, Morris Brown, Perimeter College at Georgia State, and Mercer University. Those universities and colleges have expressed interest in supporting pathway efforts for computer science, math and science educators. Additionally, they expressed interest in supporting the district’s career readiness efforts. Georgia Teachers Initiative (Extra Yard for Teachers) - The Georgia Department of Education in partnership with the Georgia Teachers Initiative is offering teachers opportunities to focus on mental health and wellness and to obtain classroom resources. They are providing an opportunity to attend an Usher concert, receive classroom makeovers, gift cards, and classroom resources, by submitting a brief project to receive funding. Naomi King of Miller Grove High School received an award from the Georgia Teachers Initiative to purchase a MacBook Air and four iPads for her classroom.

Dunair Elementary School (Dr. Sean Deas, Principal) and Africa’s Children’s Fund (CEO – Mr. Victor Mbaba) are partnering to apply for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant. If awarded, the grant will provide after-school tutoring and enrichment programs for students for the next five years. The application is due on January 30, 2025. The Grants and Partnerships team will continue to provide technical assistance and support.

Student Mentoring and Partnerships and Grants and Partnerships will work collaboratively to submit district grant applications to apply for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. Dr. Walker and Ms. Kelli Wright will provide two schools to include in two separate grant

applications, upon approval from Champion Dillard. The deadline for submission of the applications is January 30, 2025, by 5 P.M.

**Partnership Recognitions on Social Media:**

DCSD STEM Leaders

Ms. Janelle Alexander-Sumpter for being week 28 Georgia Teachers Initiative @CFPEXtraYard Teacher Spotlight winner.

DCSD Partner Recognition- Georgia Power

DCSD Partner Recognition- Kona Ice/ Stacey Keller and Erica Lawrence

The King’s Table Annual Holiday Turkey Giveaway

Innovative Solutions Laboratory



Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson allocated \$25,000 from District 5's reserve, and the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners have approved a grant totaling \$25,000 to support Marching Band Programs at five DeKalb County Schools within District 5. Each school will receive \$5,000 to enhance their programs.

Martin Luther King Jr. High School will receive eSports donation on behalf of the Beta Psi Omega Chapter of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc, in the amount of \$10,000 to support the eSports program at Martin Luther King Jr., High School for the 2024-2025 school year.

**Dr. Donald Porter, Press Secretary**

Organized media interviews, gathered and shared information for such high-profile stories as:

- Bria Suggs Folo- GaDOE Trauma Informed Screener for Foster Care Students
- Tyisha Fernandes Folo with Columbia HS Teacher allegations
- WSB-TV Bus Accident Inquiry – Minor – No reporting
- WSB-TV, Fox 5, WANF Folo- Tucker HS Teacher Allegation
- WSB and AJC - EVOLV Update RE: Guns on DCSD Campuses
- WSB and 11Alive Rumor RE: Threatening Message for Clarkston HS
- WSB Statement RE: DCSD Arrest of Employee Making Threatening Statements at AIC
- Provided Attorney Slaton with Pix of outgoing Board members for Project
- 11Alive Inquir RE: Alleged Serial Rapist Student Allowed at Cedar Grove HS. Story Shut Down as Inaccurate Portrayal by Anonymous Tipster
  
- 11Alive and Decaturish- Provided DCSD Georgia Promise Statement
- Wrote or rewrote over X school letters and comminations related to:
  - 2024-11-01 McNair HS Weapon on Campus
  - 2024-11-01 CHS Phy Altercation-Lockdown
  - 2024-11-05 Fernbank ES Student Threat
  - 2024-11-06 McNair HS Phy Altercations-Lockdown
  - 2024-11-07 Columbia HS-Phy Assault Allegation-On Leave
  - 2024-11-08 Tucker HS Employee Allegations Involving a Student
  - 2024-11-08 Peachtree MS Student Threat
  - 2024-11-08 School Lockdown DRAFT-Armed Suspect in Area
  - 2024-11-13 Midvale ES Student Threat
  - 2024-11-13 Woodridge ES Student Weapon
  - 2024-11-14 Laurel Ridge ES Head Lice
  - 2024-11-25 McNair HS Student Passing
  - Student Death-Student Named TEMPLATE
  - 2024-11-26 Huntley Hills ES-Principal Transition
  - 2024-11-27 DHHS Student Passing



- Wrote scripts and speeches:
  - 2022-11-30 DeKalb Gives Script
  - 11Alive RE: DHHS Forum RE Modernization Efforts with Chief Erick Hofstetter
- Media Interviews
  - Bria Suggs Folo- GaDOE Trauma Informed Screener for Foster Care Students
  - 11Alive RE: DHHS Forum RE Modernization Efforts with Chief Erick Hofstetter
- Media Releases
  - 2024-11-06 DCSD Safety Fair This Saturday, Nov 9
  - 2024-11-11 DeKalb County Salutes 40 Schools Honored as GA Math and Literacy Leaders
  - 2024-11-14 Commissioner Spears Donation to DeKalb Schools Educational Foundation
  - 2024-11-18 US News Rankings Spotlight DCSD Schools
  - 2024-11-19 MEDIA ADVISORY- DCSD Hosts Exclusive NABSE School Tours
  - 2024-11-21 DCSD Responds to County Report on Water Quality
- Web Stories
  - 2024-11-01 Lakeside High Senior Goes from Dress Code Crusader to State Advisor
  - 2024-11-06 DeKalb County Honors Education's Finest at 11th Annual Gala
  - 2024-11-15 Adaptive Sports Phenom Najee Smothers
  - Lead-Free Water Report Reaffirms Commitment to Safety