



## **District Operations Report – December 2024**

### **Chief Eric Hilton**

#### **Office of Legal Affairs**

The Legal Department's high-level priorities for the month continued to include refining and updating the contract administration process, a Miracles Goal for the Legal Department. The legal review was completed in a timely manner for the January 2025 board meeting agenda items. The TregoEd continues its work on revisions to the contract administration processes, focusing on recommendations for appropriate signing authority and recommended updates and changes to the contract administration process. We will implement a pilot program for electronic signatures on contracts and board items for the first quarter of 2025. The updated legal request form has been implemented district wide. Regarding professional learning opportunities, continuing education courses are approved for the attorneys in the DCSD Legal Department. We continue to seek applicants for the legal counsel position in exceptional education. We have identified a candidate for the position of office specialist to the chief legal officer and expect to extend an offer in the immediate future.

### **Executive Legal Director/Title IX Coordinator MARRISA KEY, Esq.**

#### **Employee Relations/Title IX**

The Administrative Policy Review Committee identified the initial human resources policies for review and presentation to the board. The district's Strategic Waiver School System contract waivers are being evaluated to see how they can apply to the policy revision process. Title IX developments continue to be monitored, as Georgia is enjoined from implementing the 2024 Title IX regulations. Employees will continue to be trained on the 2020 Title IX regulations to remain compliant. 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 extra training will equip employees with knowledge and hands-on coaching from the Title IX Team to confidently execute their responsibilities under Title IX through the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

## **Legal Director Ginton Darien, Esq.**

### **Risk Management and Workers' Compensation**

The Risk Management Team continues its work on insurance review. The team is taking the necessary steps to adhere to the Ashley Wilson Act (the Act), effective Jan. 1, 2025. This Act requires that any nurse or school resource officer employed by the district who experiences a traumatic event resulting in post-traumatic stress syndrome, be eligible for the benefits provided under the Act. A qualified professional must diagnose the PTSD. Workers' Compensation does not cover the new benefits required under the Act.

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 services 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 percent (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 2024 is \$4,214,395,368.00. The premium for the property insurance policy was \$3,335,010.44.

## **Senior Legal Counsel Chastity Middlebrooks-Cody, Esq.**

### **Employee and Student Relations**

The highly anticipated fall Legal Symposium was successfully completed on Wednesday, Dec. 18. Central office leaders attended the training. The legal subgroups of Employee and Student Relations will explore various methods to deliver content during the symposium based on feedback from district staff.

We have also started exploring the use of alternate mitigation methods with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to address discrimination claims. The commission has become more proactive in encouraging employer respondents to discrimination claims to participate in free mediation led by commission investigators. We have found that this avenue allows us to obtain more information on the employees' perspective by working with a neutral party to resolve matters promptly. We anticipate this will result in cost savings for the district regarding legal bills and settlement fees. Additionally, it may serve as a tool to improve morale in the workplace while the matter is being addressed. This method's effectiveness will be determined at the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

### **Legal Counsel Imani Redd, Esq.**

#### **Contract Administration**

In December, the Contracts Administration Team reviewed approximately 100 contracts. The team meets weekly to review current contracts, address any urgent issues, and strategize ways to improve contract administration processes. Additionally, the 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, and 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.

### **Legal Counsel Vacant**

#### **Exceptional Education**

## Chief Human Resources Officer Tasha Mills-Davis

### Human Resources

Following our training with IBEX, HR has adopted a new rallying call: Show Up, Rise Up, Answer the Call to Change. This mantra reflects our commitment to fostering consistent communication within our team and district. It also emphasizes how we are working to engage stakeholders with exceptional customer service.

### Deputy Chief Jason E. Kennedy

#### HR Core Team

Establishment of the **HR Core Team!** – A strategic group of various HR Team members and departments focused on elevating the efficiency and effectiveness of our hiring processes.

Members of the HR Core Team will play a pivotal role in:

- Identifying key areas for improvement within our hiring process.
- Streamlining workflows and developing practical solutions to enhance **Munis, Frontline**, etc. operations.
- Collaborating with stakeholders across the district to innovate and implement processes that improve efficiency and reduce errors.

### Director Tracy Harris

#### Talent Acquisition

We are excited to announce the launch of the **DCSD transfer process**, designed to provide certified and classified employees with the opportunity to explore new positions within our district. This initiative supports professional growth and allows our talented staff to find roles that align with their skills and aspirations.

### Director Carina Harrigan

#### IGNITE

We are currently accepting applications for Cohort 3, and the application period is now open! Early admission and first-round applications will be reviewed starting Jan. 17, with our first selection day tentatively scheduled for mid-February.

Our recruitment efforts are in full swing. We leverage platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed to reach a wide audience of aspiring educators. Additionally, we are personally connecting with universities and community organizations to share information about the program and identify passionate individuals who are ready to join us in this transformative journey.

I'm also proud to report that Cohort 2 has successfully completed its fall semester, with all residents passing their coursework. This achievement is a testament to their hard work and commitment.

Through collaboration with Employee Service's talent acquisition managers and school principals, we successfully onboarded Cohort 1 residents into the district and their schools.

### Director Chuck Nwagwu

#### Total Rewards

We are excited to confirm that we have reached a point where we have consistently successful payroll runs with minimal errors. We have also developed a plan to audit and maintain our benefits reconciliation process. Additionally, the Compensation Team has added Compensation Analyst Sabrina Huling, who brings a wealth of true compensation experience.

### Director Janitrea R. Sebree-Kelly

#### Human Resources Information Systems

The HRIS Team is focusing on many initiatives; a couple of highlights can be found below:

- The Munis new hire import process is being enhanced in collaboration with the Division of Information and Instructional Technology (DIIT). The goal is to reduce manual data entry for HR and streamline user provisioning for DIIT.
- In partnership with the Department of Charter Schools/School Governance, an improved data reconciliation process for certified/classified personnel information has been developed. This process adheres to Munis standards and fosters improved communication between the department and HR.

### Performance Evaluations Coordinator Kismet Sims

#### Evaluations Team

The Evaluations Team is thrilled to announce the launch of our new evaluation platform for our chiefs, called **SuperEval!** This is a significant step forward in supporting the growth and development of our district.

We have been working diligently alongside a fantastic group of consultants from New York whose support and expertise have been invaluable throughout this process.

Additionally, we are excited to have the backing of champion Dillard and her team, who will play a key role in ensuring that building leaders remain accountable for their contributions to the district's growth and success.

We look forward to seeing how this new platform will enhance our evaluation process and help drive continued improvement.

## Senior Investigator Jamel Crawford

### Employee Relations

The Employee Relations Team is happy to announce that we have participated in the Legal Symposium with the Legal Affairs Team and offered suggestions on the progressive discipline model and complaint process.

The Employee Relations Team will conduct trainings with school-based staff regarding the code of ethics and the complaint process.

The Employee Relations Team has a job posting for an internal investigator.

## Chief Operating Officer Erick Hofstetter

### Closing Out 2024 with Gratitude and Momentum

The holiday season offered a much-needed opportunity for reflection, self-care, and quality time with loved ones. As we close the calendar year of 2024, the Division of Operations remains committed to carrying the momentum of our achievements into the second half of the 2024-2025 school year. This past season has been a time of transition as we welcomed new faces to the district and bid heartfelt farewells to colleagues moving on to new opportunities. Notably, we are thrilled to welcome our Operations HR Division, which is poised to drive innovative approaches to hiring and retention, ensuring the district continues to attract and support exceptional talent.

Our progress is a direct result of the dedication and hard work of every Division of Operations Team member. Through collaboration and a shared vision, we have made strides in student assignments and generated valuable community feedback, particularly regarding Idlewood and the reimagining proposals. Your tireless efforts have not gone unnoticed, reminding us of the positive impact we make when we work together with purpose and passion.

We are excited about our growing partnership with the Carl Vinson Institute. This collaboration has launched the first cohort of the Operations Certification Program, a groundbreaking initiative designed to foster career growth through comprehensive training opportunities. We are proud to amplify the voices of our team members and encourage participation in this program as a pathway to professional development. Together, we will continue to build on the foundation of excellence that defines our division, making 2025 a year of growth, innovation, and shared success.

## Deputy Chief Operations Officer Antwyn Brown

### Division of Operations

Participated in reviewing job descriptions for many current and forthcoming job announcements to ensure appropriate personnel alignment within the Division of Operation's mission as we seek to foster a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment for all students. Participated in an administrative protocol meeting between the Department of Procurement within the Finance Division and the Department of Business Services and Facilities Maintenance within the Operations Division to streamline recurring challenges and identify new opportunities for internal efficiencies and divisional compliance. Supported Chief Operating Officer (COO) Hofstetter in facilitating an introductory meeting with CESO to ensure access and define the scope for the forthcoming internal performance evaluation and audit. Facilitated the regular bi-monthly deputy chief cross-divisional meeting. Participated in an ad hoc meeting with other divisional leaders and DeKalb PATH Academy to discuss facility challenges that require them to relocate their programming and operations. December saw the ongoing discussions between the municipalities (Chamblee and Dunwoody) and DCSD Public Safety regarding school zone cameras and the appropriate approach to procuring a vendor for such services.

Continued establishing a workflow and communication cadence between the Department of Transportation and HR to account for outstanding vacancies and recruitment efforts. In addition to addressing personnel challenges, Executive Director Raymond Stanley, COO Erick Hofstetter, and I attended the Annual Drivers and Monitors Advisory Committee’s holiday party. Took the time to meet individually with one of the Division of Operation’s Employee of the Year runner-up and the district’s locksmiths to discuss their concerns regarding the status of our door handles, pulls, and locking systems. Participated in a follow-up meeting with Georgia State University regarding our ongoing memorandum of understanding for shared use of their property during athletic events and other DCSD-sanctioned events.

Participated in a seminar that highlighted a partnership opportunity with a national rideshare company that would assist DCSD employees with transportation to and from work. Worked as a thought leader with a group of cross-divisional leaders to review and evaluate the posterity of our Capital Improvement Program management framework.

Looking ahead, we are excited about upcoming opportunities for professional growth through HR GSSA training and our partnership with the Carl Vinson Institute. We encourage staff members to participate in these centralized training programs designed to provide actionable feedback and tailored development in their career fields. By investing in our team’s growth, we aim to empower our staff to excel and foster a culture of continuous improvement and shared success within the Division of Operations.

### **Executive Director Keith Ball**

#### **Capital Improvements and Facilities**

As we close out 2024, we have much to reflect on and celebrate. Our Capital Improvement Team has executed the most project work in one calendar and a shortened summer than ever before. Many of these projects suffered delays for several reasons, including COVID-19, but were able to get completed. The projects listed below do not include several parking lot additions, security vestibules, or other large maintenance projects completed in 2024. Additionally, they do not include the thousands of work orders that were closed out.

#### **2024 Major CIP Projects:**

- Roof replacement at Redan Elementary School (ES)
- Roof replacement at Coralwood Center
- Roof replacement at Freedom Middle School (MS)
- Roof replacement at Sam Moss Service Center
- Roof replacement and bus canopy installment at Lithonia MS



- HVAC replacement at Early Learning Center
- HVAC, sprinkler, and vestibule at E. L. Miller ES
- HVAC refresh and sprinkler installation at Chesnut ES
- HVAC, roof and sprinkler installation at Woodridge ES
- HVAC and roof replacement at Hawthorne ES
- HVAC, roof and sprinkler installation at Laurel Ridge ES
- HVAC refresh at Dekalb High School (HS) of Technology South
- HVAC replacement at Tucker MS

A heartfelt thanks to the team for preserving and executing our priority of providing safe, clean, and efficient schools.

### **Executive Director Raymond Stanley**

#### **Transportation and Fleet Operations**

##### **Rising to Challenges with Dedication and Excellence**

Despite staffing challenges, the Fleet and Transportation Departments have exemplified resilience and commitment, ensuring transportation services for all schools and programs. Our team has consistently risen to meet every need, demonstrating an unwavering dedication to supporting students and schools.

A shining example of this dedication occurred as we entered 2025 when our Transportation Team successfully launched services for Elizabeth Andrews HS's Alternative Credit Recovery Program—a first in the school's history. Beginning on Jan. 7, 2025, approximately 100 students from 16 high schools were seamlessly transported to Elizabeth Andrews HS during the program's first week. This monumental effort was made possible through the collaboration and hard work of our Routing Team, supervisors, bus drivers, and bus mechanics, each playing a vital role in this achievement.

Our Fleet Team continues to deliver outstanding performance despite facing a bus mechanic shortage. Under the exemplary leadership of Fleet Manager Dr. Carter, the team has maintained open communication and strong partnerships with vendors, ensuring seamless operations and uninterrupted service. As we embark on the Department of Transportation state inspections for our bus fleet from Jan. 8–31, 2025, we are prepared to meet this critical milestone with the same level of precision and teamwork that defines our department.

The accomplishments of the Fleet and Transportation Teams reflect not only technical expertise but also a shared commitment to excellence and adaptability. We are incredibly proud of their ability to overcome challenges and deliver high-quality, timely solutions. Together, we look forward to continuing this exceptional service, ensuring that all buses remain operational, and students receive the safe, reliable transportation they deserve.

## **Executive Director Dr. Connie Walker**

### **School Nutrition Services**

#### **Health and Wellness: Nutrition Education Tips for Student, Parents, and DCSD Employees**

As we enter the new year, it's the perfect time to refocus on our health and wellness goals, particularly the importance of balanced, nutritious meals. According to the USDA, healthy school meals are vital in creating an educational environment where students can learn, grow, and thrive. With that in mind, incorporating simple yet impactful dietary habits can make a significant difference.

#### **Fruits and Vegetables:**

It is imperative to ensure a rich intake of essential vitamins and nutrients by filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables like sweet potatoes, broccoli, oranges, and plums.

#### **Whole Grains:**

Adding whole grains like brown rice and oatmeal provides the fiber needed for sustained energy, while lean proteins and low-fat dairy options like baked chicken and yogurt promote muscle strength and bone health.

#### **Physical Activities:**

Physical activity is just as important as nutrition. Finding enjoyable ways to move is key to staying active, whether walking, biking, or participating in other outdoor recreational activities.

These healthy habits should be encouraged at home and reflected in the carefully designed school meals provided by DCSD. Our meals adhere to USDA guidelines, featuring reduced sodium, lower sugar content, and a balanced combination of lean proteins, whole grains, and vegetables to support students' overall well-being.

Achieving health and wellness goals is a journey, and success comes from staying encouraged and making consistent, positive choices each day. Whether you are a student, parent, or DCSD employee, these tips are a foundation for fueling your body and mind for success. Let's embrace a year of healthy habits, mindful choices, and forward momentum toward a healthier lifestyle.

## **Director Bernardo Brown**

### **Student Transportation**

#### **Transportation Department: Rising to Challenges and Expanding Services**

Despite significant staffing challenges, the Transportation Department exemplifies resilience and dedication, ensuring reliable services for all schools and programs. Our team's steadfast commitment to providing safe and dependable transportation is integral to our students' educational success. Every day, our professionals rise to the occasion, demonstrating excellence under pressure and a shared dedication to meeting the needs of district students and staff.

As we begin 2025, the department proudly marks a historic milestone by launching transportation services for Elizabeth Andrews HS's Alternative Credit Recovery Program. This expansion, a first for the program, highlights our team's adaptability and resolve to address the evolving needs of our schools. Through determination and collaboration, our transportation professionals have successfully ensured seamless operations, reaffirming their vital role in supporting the district's mission and the success of its students.

### **Director Bobby Moncrief**

#### **Facilities Services**

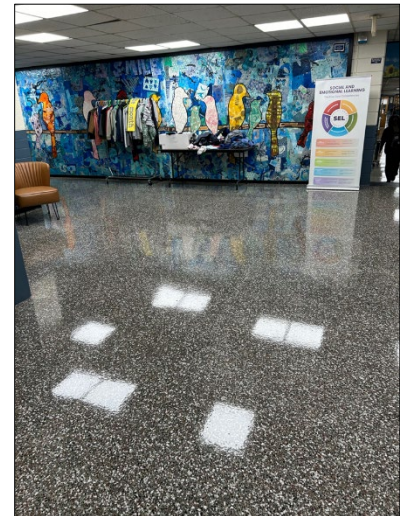
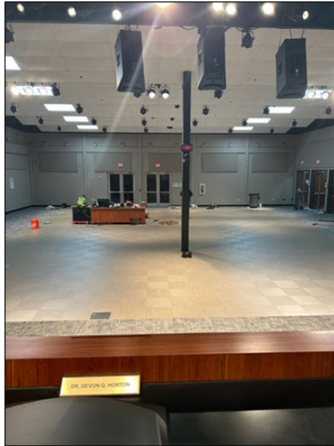
##### **Facilities and Maintenance: Closing 2024 with Accomplishments and Pride**

The Facilities and Maintenance Department wrapped up the 2024 calendar year with remarkable achievements and a strong sense of accomplishment. Over the year's final months, the team demonstrated unwavering dedication, opening 934 new work orders and successfully closing 547 of them—a testament to their efficiency and commitment to excellence. This productivity reflects the department's proactive approach to meeting the needs of our district and ensuring that every task contributes to a well-maintained and functional environment.

A standout moment in our year-end accomplishments was the installation of new flooring in the boardroom at the Administrative Instructional Complex (AIC). It was an honor and privilege to enhance this space for our board members and superintendent senior staff, ensuring a professional and welcoming environment for critical meetings and decision-making. The project exemplifies the department's focus on quality and attention to detail, aligning with the district's mission to foster excellence in every aspect of our operations.

As we transition into the new year, the Facilities and Maintenance Team remains committed to delivering outstanding services and meeting the evolving needs of our district. We look forward to building on this momentum and continuing to provide the highest standard of care and professionalism in the work we do every day.

Installed new flooring in the boardroom at AIC, installed new flooring in the lobby for the main entrance, the auditorium, and the gym at Towers HS, and painted the interior of Oak Grove ES.



We refreshed the floors at the following schools: Panola Way, Woodridge, Narvie J. Harris, Flat Shoal, Idlewood, Princeton, Rockbridge, and Evansdale Elementary Schools; Peachtree, Bethune, and Henderson Middle Schools; and Cross Keys, Clarkston, MLK, Columbia, Towers, Cedar Grove, and Tucker High Schools. Also shown above are the floors at Oak Grove ES.

### Director Keith Singleton

#### Business Services

Business Services is pleased to highlight the exceptional efforts of Printshop Supervisor Chris Goldson in achieving significant cost savings through the recent purchase of printing equipment. Chris conducted thorough research, negotiated effectively with vendors, and carefully evaluated multiple options to ensure the department acquired high-quality equipment at the best possible value. His diligence and strategic approach resulted in a notable reduction in overall procurement expenses while meeting the operational needs of our team.

This accomplishment underscores the importance of proactive planning and resourcefulness in managing departmental resources. Chris’s initiative contributed to immediate financial savings and set a standard for future equipment acquisitions. We commend his efforts and encourage other team members to adopt similar practices to enhance efficiency and fiscal responsibility within the organization.

Vendor	Equipment	Click Charge*	Cost
SOS FLEX TECHNOLOGY LEASING AGREEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHARP BP- 50C55</li> <li>CANON TZ30000</li> </ul> <b>Equipment lease</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black/White – .008 cents per copy</li> <li>Color – .059 cents per copy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplies not included</li> <li>Service and maintenance included</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	\$1,348.30 – Base monthly lease payments, click charges not added \$300.00 – Average click charge per month. Average monthly payment \$1,648.30 Average annual payment \$19,779.60 Average 5-year lease payment \$98,898.00
CANON USA PURCHASE	<b>New Purchase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CANON IMAGERUNNER 5850I purchase cost \$9,878.24</li> <li>CANON TZ32000 – upgraded from TZ30000 at no additional cost to DCSD. Purchase cost is \$14,075.16</li> </ul> <b>Equipment owned</b>	No click charges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplies/maintenance not included</li> </ul> Canon maintenance agreement – if purchased: Average monthly estimated maintenance cost predicated upon click usage is \$178.50 which should include supplies. Annual estimate \$2,142.00	\$23,953.40 Total average savings to DCSD: \$74,944.60 over 5-years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of supplies is not included in this amount.</li> </ul>

\*A printing fee paid (per page) on a leased printer.

## Director Hans Williams

### Planning and E-SPLOST/CIP Programming

#### Forecasting for Fall 2025

Work is progressing on the comprehensive school-by-school, grade-by-grade enrollment forecast for fall 2025, with completion anticipated by Jan. 21, 2025. As in previous years, a detailed report for each school and a summary of the methodology and key findings, will be published on the [Planning Department's website](#) under the "Forecasting" tab.

#### Idlewood Elementary School Redistricting

The department led critical efforts in the emergency redistricting for Idlewood Elementary School, achieving significant cost savings for the district. By redistributing a portion of students from the overcrowded school, this initiative allows for expedited progress with minimal disruption. The department developed redistricting scenarios, prepared presentation materials, and facilitated community engagement sessions. Starting with six initial options, the community collaboratively narrowed the choices to two viable options. A final decision meeting is scheduled for early January to confirm the redistricting plan for Idlewood Elementary School.

## Chief of Staff Elijah Palmer

### Closing Out the Calendar Year

As we closed out the calendar year, we prioritized ensuring each division had an opportunity to share updates on their initiatives for December. Having skipped November due to the Thanksgiving break, it was important to reconvene and hold our MIRACLES monthly workshop to assess where we stood on key projects before heading into the new year. This workshop, held on Dec. 16, served as a platform for alignment and accountability, bringing together divisions for a comprehensive review of their progress and plans. The event was structured as a full-day session from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., allowing teams to provide detailed updates on their priorities and identify additional resources or support needed to advance their initiatives.

The workshop proved to be highly productive and celebratory. Leaders from various divisions reported on their progress and discussed strategic steps to accelerate the completion of their projects. Notably, six district-wide priorities were celebrated as fully completed, highlighting all teams' collective effort and dedication. The atmosphere of collaboration and transparency reinforced our commitment to the MIRACLES framework, ensuring that everyone left with a clear understanding of current standings and next steps. Overall, it was a successful and energizing day that set a strong foundation for continued progress in the new year.

Moving forward, the Department of Strategic Planning, under my division, will take a more prominent role in providing consistent updates at each monthly board meeting. Each month, we will spotlight a specific goal area from the strategic plan, with the goal area sponsor presenting key performance indicators and progress related to that focus area. This structure ensures that the board and stakeholders receive detailed insights into our ongoing efforts and measurable outcomes. In addition to these monthly presentations, we've committed to conducting in-depth reviews of each goal area three times this fiscal year, offering a more comprehensive look at the progress made and any adjustments needed to maintain momentum.

This approach reflects our commitment to transparency and accountability. By providing these monthly updates, we aim to demonstrate that our strategic plan is not just a document but a living, actionable roadmap guiding our decisions and actions with fidelity. Highlighting one goal area each month allows us to take a closer look at the benchmarks we've set, ensuring that we track progress and that central office members are held accountable for meeting annual milestones. This systematic effort will keep us on track as we work toward achieving the ambitious goals outlined in our plan, culminating in the ultimate vision we aim to reach by 2029. Through this process, we are reinforcing our dedication to engaging stakeholders, maintaining accountability, and driving continuous improvement across the district.

## Director of Strategic Management

Vacant

## Director Joel Thibodeaux

### Internal Audits and Compliance

Internal Audits and Compliance closed the year by celebrating the completion of our benchmarking exercise and initiation of our internal quality improvement program, which we will introduce as MIRACLES priorities over the coming months. We also intend to move forward to onboarding an open position to enhance the work on school audits as that process resumes in the second half of the fiscal year. We are also facing the challenge of replacing senior department staff over the next month without interruption of services or progress on current projects.

### Fleet Operations Assessment

Assessments of Fuel and Maintenance have come to a close, and reporting is near completion. Feedback from the new Fleet Management Team is pending. The full report will be presented at the Audit Committee's initial meeting in 2025.

### Athletics Audit

The executive director of Athletics is engaged while the pre-audit assessments are underway. Previous audit plans no longer translate to the new structure and scope of the Athletics Department. The department must reassess revenue estimates, review the expected use of funds, and reset for appropriate expense assignment. We intend to work very closely with the Division of Access and Accountability and the executive director of Athletics to ensure relevant results and effective recommendations for improvement.

### Update on Third-Party Engagements

Operations and DIIT assessments: This engagement is ongoing, and the data collection process is nearly complete.

Purchasing card audit: Selection complete. Approval is on the January 2025 board agenda.

ESPLOST follow-up: Based on responses to our request for quotes, we have selected \*\*\* as the vendor. We plan to kick off this engagement at the beginning of February following execution of the contract and pre-audit planning.

Procurement to payment process assessment: We are re-evaluating the necessity of this audit and will decide soon.



## Executive Director Tracey Whaley

### Public Safety

#### Recruitment and Retention

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

- Since July, 14 school resource officers (SRO) have been added, trained, and assigned to their permanent schools.
- Three SROs will start between Jan. 16, 2025, and Jan. 22, 2025.
- We have hired 71 elementary school associates and continue recruiting and interviewing highly qualified candidates.
- Four ESAs recommended to HR.

#### Technology Integration

- **Mobile Pro Systems** - Public Safety has also set up two Mobile Pro Systems security trailers, one placed at Martin Luther King, Jr. HS's bus parking lot and the other at Godfrey Stadium's bus parking lot. These systems monitor the parking lots live and protect the vehicles parked there.
- **Evolv Systems** – These are currently in place at each county football stadium.
- **Evolv Conveyor Pilot** – Public Safety collaborated with Tucker HS to pilot an Evolve Conveyor System.
  - All Tucker HS employees who utilized the system and responded gave favorable reviews of the system, citing:
    - Effectiveness – The system scanned bags, so staff did not have to search.
    - They believed the system would require less staff.

#### Active Shooter Drill

Public Safety leadership is currently coordinating and planning a countywide active shooter drill where we will host all county law enforcement and public safety agencies.

- The first leg of the drill was a tabletop exercise hosted at AIC on Nov. 19, 2024.
- Tabletop number two took place on Dec. 19.
- The drill will take place on Feb. 19, 2025.

#### Visitor Management System

We are coordinating two safety-centric pilot Visitor Management Systems, which will serve as visitor checkpoints in our schools. Data forthcoming.

- **Raptor** Visitor Management Systems pilot at Ashford Park ES and Tucker MS.
- **Centegix** Visitor Management is currently used at:

- Allgood Elementary
- Canby Lane Elementary
- Chapel Hill Middle School
- Chesnut Elementary
- Columbia Elementary
- Columbia Middle School
- Cross Keys High School
- Dekalb Alternative School
- Dekalb School of the Arts
- Doraville United Elementary
- Dresden Elementary
- Druid Hills High School
- Dunaire Elementary
- Eagle Woods Academy
- Edward Bouie Theme School
- Fairington Elementary
- Flat Rock Elementary
- Flat Shoals Elementary
- Freedom Middle School
- Hawthorne Elementary
- Idlewood Elementary
- International Community School
- Lakeside High School
- Laurel Ridge Elementary
- Miller Grove High School
- Montclair Elementary
- Oak Grove Elementary
- Oak View Elementary
- Pine Ridge Elementary
- Redan High School
- Rock Chapel Elementary
- Rockbridge Elementary
- Sagamore Hills Elementary
- Salem Middle School

- Shadow Rock Elementary
- Shadow Rock Center
- Snapfinger Elementary
- Southwest DeKalb High School
- Stone Mill Elementary
- Stone Mountain High School
- Stone Mountain Middle School
- Towers High School
- Tucker High School
- Tucker Middle School

Completed training sessions:

- Mental and Emotional Wellness Training – Jan. 3, 2025
- Cultural Awareness and Community Engagement – Jan. 6, 2025

## Chief Financial Officer Byron Schueneman

### Finance

December was a condensed month with shortened windows to process payroll and progress on key projects.

Finance continued to plug away on various Munis projects:

- Time and Attendance
- Financial reporting module (ACFR)
- Grant accounting module – to maintain grants/donations greater than \$5,000 that are not state or federal.
- Employee Access

Initial allotments were provided to principals by the Allotments Team, and the Budget Team continued initial meetings with divisions and departments. Finance finalized the fiscal year (FY) 2024 statements and submitted them on time to the Georgia Department of Audits. The corresponding audit has already been completed.

## Deputy Chief Financial Officer Lauren Scott

### Finance

Throughout the month, Finance has continuously focused on improving employee time entry and self-service benefits. As previously stated, Employee Access (EA) will replace Employee Self-Service. EA will allow employees to request time off and update banking/address information. The proposed conversion will occur mid to late January 2025, just in time for employees to receive W-2s electronically. Additionally, Tyler developed a patch for the secondary approver function within Time and Attendance in late December. The patch will be reviewed and tested in the coming weeks.

## Director Regina Bagley

### Budget

#### FY26 Budget Development

The Budget Team has been working collaboratively with human resources to develop FY26 budget requests from divisions/departments. Budget work sessions opened in November, and we facilitated 13 budget kick-off meetings and 47 budget work sessions with divisions and departments. The Budget Team will begin reviewing FY26 budget requests in January 2025.

### Position Control Audit

Phase III of the Position Control audit is ongoing and targeted for completion in February 2025. The team is communicating findings with the HR Team for system updates. The audit is approximately 30 percent complete.

### Allovue Manage Implementation

The Budget Team is developing training aids for the Allovue Manage platform. Principal training, designed to be a log-in and training environment, is scheduled for late January. User profiles have already been established.

### Comptroller Lance McConkey

#### FY23 Audit

The Business Services Teams continue to work collaboratively with the M&J Audit Team to finalize the FY23 audit. The Finance Team has fulfilled all audit requests. The audit is in the final review stages.

#### FY24 Year-End Close and Financial Statement Preparation

FY24 year-end close procedures were successfully completed at the end of September. Additionally, Finance has submitted the various reports to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and Department of Audits and Accounts by the deadlines. FY24 financial statements were submitted on Friday, Dec. 27, meeting the Dec. 31 submission deadline requirement.

#### FY24 Audit

The Business Services Team has begun working with the Department of Audits and Accounts to provide audit request information. As of Jan. 6, 2025, we received 49 requests and fulfilled 38.

#### Financial Reporting Procedure Updates

In October, team members participated in four training days over the MUNIS Annual Comprehensive Financial Report module. The team configured the module and received hands-on experience developing financial statements through the module. In November, District Finance Senior Systems Engineer Dan Copeland tested the module, and the team reviewed the generated reports. Next steps are to continue testing and participate in one more training day, scheduled for two- to four-hour sessions on Jan. 15 and 27. 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, improving deposit procedures and allowing quicker access to funds. The scanners were delivered to 30 schools, and the goal was for training and implementation to be completed by Oct. 30. The goal timeline changed due to additional implementation needed on Bank of America's part, which was completed by Oct. 25. Schedules are being developed to train and implement in January 2025.

### **MyRetirement Manager Platform Expansion**

Finance coordinated an additional meeting, including HR and DIIT, to receive information on available updates and improvements. Implementing the MUNIS payroll module allows for considering opportunities to improve data submission and the end users' experience. We also held an internal meeting to discuss which updates and improvements all divisions wanted to implement from the information received from the vendor. The next steps are continued meetings to work on the updates and improvements, which will continue in February 2025. The focus on these tasks aligns with Finance Miracle – MyRetirement Manager Expansion.

### **Director Dr. Milton Hall**

#### **Office of Allotments**

Team members of the Resource Allocation Methodology Plan (RAMP) Committee continuously meet for two-hour work sessions to find a more suitable funding model for non-traditional (alternative) schools and schools offering special area programs. Our next two-hour work session is on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025. This initiative aligns with Finance Miracle for Allotments.

The Office of Allotments collaborated with Operations and Planning, School Choice, and the Special Education Department on initial allocations for FY26 based on the most recent FTE/QBE earnings for FY25. During the week of Dec. 16-20, the Office of Allotments conducted pre-allotment meetings with all local DCSD schools and centers. The intended goal was to provide school principals with an initial glance at their FY26 allocations to begin staffing their buildings with the best candidates currently available, as we are certain the next few weeks will reveal anticipated vacancies.

### **Executive Director Carla Smith**

#### **Vendor Services**

##### **Equal Level eProcurement Marketplace**

The production environment is now complete! On Dec. 11, we successfully trained an enthusiastic group of departmental requisitioners on the eMarketplace platform. The training was easy to explain and conducted in person at the AIC. Additional training sessions for elementary, middle, and high school requisitioners will take place in January. The software will go live at the end of the month, and we plan to provide extra support for those requisitioners who may need it.

##### **Operations Division Procurement Training**

A special in-person training session held at the Operations Division on Dec. 12 was a joint effort between the two divisions and covered the entire procurement process. It began with an overview of the Business Services Standard Operating Procedures established by Keith Singleton for completing the internal requisition request form (PR-55 and Transmittal). The Vendor Services Team then guided participants through the requisition process.

Next, the Contract Management Team detailed how to process contracts and outlined the associated requirements. The team also discussed board policies regarding contracts and procurement to clarify the reasons some requisitions and contracts may be placed on hold or rejected. The training concluded with a session by Accounts Payable on how to handle invoices. Additionally, facility managers had the opportunity to learn how to find information regarding requisitions, purchase orders, invoices, and contracts in Munis. Overall, the collaboration was a huge success.

#### **eVerify Report**

The state-mandated annual eVerify Report, submitted to the DOAA before the Dec. 31 deadline, identifies all purchases from service providers totaling over \$2,499.00 made between Dec. 1, 2023, and Nov. 30, 2024.

## Chief of Community Engagement and Innovative Partnership Dr. Yolanda Williamson

### Community Engagement

We partnered with the Operations Division and Student Assignment Project (SAP) to host the second and third attendance boundary community engagement meetings at Idlewood ES. Family and Community Empowerment continued to work with schools to promote the Family-Friendly survey and took the mobile IMPACT Hub to Flat Rock. As part of the GED program, we hosted a Polar Express event to encourage student literacy.

This month, the following were presented and approved by the board:

- eSports donation of \$10,000 from Beta Psi Omega Chapter of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. High School
- Donation Acceptance of office furniture from Rheaply to DCSD
- Donation Acceptance of \$6,500 from Decatur Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for Rock the Vote initiative
- Grant Acceptance of \$3,517,500 in funding from the U.S. Department of Education to implement project DEAL – Developing Educators and Leaders

### Deputy Chief Communications Officer Jennifer Caracciola

#### District Website

In partnership with Technology, we wrapped up our interviews for Content Management Systems to move the district site in 2025. The team is continuing to work with divisions and departments to clean up the existing site content.

#### DeKalb Schools Television (DSTV)

We produced custom videos to thank the three retiring board members, a Holiday and New Year message from Dr. Horton, and launched a new video series on SAP. We also recorded:

- Three SAP meetings
- Two Idlewood ES attendance meetings
- Georgia Tech Early Learning at Cross Keys
- ES Soccer Championship
- Falcons Thursday/Friday
- IGNITE graduation
- Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education/Distributive Education Clubs of America Competition
- DeKalb Gives
- The Nutcracker at the DeKalb School of the Arts



- Legislative Luncheon
- Legal Symposium
- Idlewood Ribbon Cutting
- H-Pride visits
- Edition of Te Escucha

We produced videos for divisions and departments such as Curriculum and Instruction. Additionally, we visited four of our five Music Matters award-winning schools to celebrate with their band members.

### **Social Media**

We launched the district's Bluesky account and added Foundations, Grants, and Partnerships accounts. Additionally, we supported the programs and areas listed above under DSTV and assisted chiefs with their social media. A new feature that was quite popular was our top 10 countdown, which was a collaboration with our graphic designers.

### **Additional Areas of Communications**

We produced three Hitting the Road with Horton e-newsletters, supported Exceptional Ed's Parent Sessions and Saving our Students: Stop the Gun Violence event; coordinated State Superintendent Richard Woods' visit to the district; and supported various schools, divisions, and departments with graphic support. The Foundation met and voted to expand its board by two additional positions. Mr. Munir Meghjani is the new chair.

### **Director of Grants and Partnerships Dr. Marcia Oglesby**

#### **Grants**

#### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Program Grant**

The Grants and Partnerships Team supports Kelli Wright, Dr. Walker, and Bethune Middle School in partnership with Georgia State University by applying for the GaDOE's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant. The grant application is due on Jan. 30, 2025.

#### **Clean School Bus Grant and Rebate Program**

The Department of Transportation's team facilitates a weekly meeting to include Finance, Grants and Partnerships, and other district leaders to ensure we are on track with adhering to the reporting requirements and implementation of the Clean School Bus and Rebate grant award projects.

#### **Public Safety Grant**

The quarterly report was submitted to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. An update will be provided when the grant is closed out since the Evolv touchless security system has been purchased.

### Impact Aid Program

The team is working with various departments and agencies to obtain information to submit to the U.S. Department of Education to receive funding through the Impact Aid Program. The program supports local school districts with concentrations of children who reside on Indian lands, military bases, low-rent housing properties, and other federal properties or have parents in the uniformed services or employed on eligible federal properties. The law refers to local school districts as local educational agencies.

School districts can use Impact Aid for various expenses, including the salaries of teachers/teacher aides, purchasing textbooks, computers, and other equipment; after-school programs and remedial tutoring; advanced placement classes; and special enrichment programs. Payments are for the extra costs of educating children with disabilities.

### Teacher Quality Partnership Grant

The Professional Learning, Leadership Development, and Grants and Partnerships Teams, in collaboration with Georgia State University, will begin the implementation of project DEAL: Developing Educators and Leaders grant program. The grant project, designed to increase the number of highly qualified teachers, also supports the development of pre-baccalaureate teachers who will receive their teacher certification. Additionally, experienced teachers will benefit from the grant by having access to obtaining Tier 1 and Tier 2 Educational Leadership certification and an Educational Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

### Partnerships

#### University of Georgia's DeKalb County Extension

The team met with Dr. Crystal Perry, who would like to provide \$1,800 stipends to each teacher who currently sponsors the 4-H program in their schools or would like to sponsor the 4-H club for students. The schools that have had or currently have 4-H clubs are as follows: Chapel Hill, Snapfinger, and McLendon Elementary Schools; Redan, Chapel Hill, Kittredge Middle Schools; and Druid Hills, Clarkston, and Towers High Schools. We invite additional schools to participate in the 4-H program.

#### Georgia Teachers' Initiative (Extra Yard for Teachers)

Teachers receive grants through the College Football Playoff Foundation to purchase instructional resources, iPads, and other requested items. The Foundation invited Cedar Grove High School's band and cheerleaders to attend the special recognition event for teachers in Atlanta on Jan. 18, 2025. It will pay for meals and transportation for students and staff to attend the event.

### Donation

**State Farm** will donate gently used office furniture to the district. The donation has a \$0 value, so there is no cost to the district in accepting the donation.

### Press Secretary Dr. Donald Porter

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

- 11Alive – Inquiry regarding an anonymous tip saying a "serial rapist" previously expelled from Cedar Grove High School has now been allowed to return. The story was debunked.
- 11Alive and Decaturish – Requested information and interview regarding the Georgia Promise Act. I referred the reporter to the [originally released statement](#).
- WANF is checking on DCSD schools without working heat.
- Education Reform Now – Worked with Dr. Michelle Jones to secure a positive interview with Principal Dr. Kim Williams at Shaw Traditional Theme School.
- 11Alive – Follow-up on the renovation discussions for Druid Hills HS.
- Atlanta Journal Constitution – Worked repeatedly to change the story headline for the Druid Hills HS renovations from “can’t pay” to “the district is exploring options to fund the additional costs.”
- The Imprint: Worked with Wrap Around Services to get headshots of Ms. Revels and Ms. Owen-Robinson to accompany the story.
- Fox News – Inquiring about a fatality involving a female hit by an automobile and then restruck by a DCSD school bus near Columbia HS. Not a DCSD student or staff member.
- 11Alive Folo on Druid Hills HS.
- Fox News – Canby Lane ES lockdown at the urging of DeKalb County Police Department regarding activity in the area.

School letters and communications related to:

- Rewrote the Project ELEVATE letter for Mr. Hardy
- Laurel Ridge ES employee arrested
- Southwest DeKalb HS student death
- Principal letter regarding Laurel Ridge ES arrest
- Lakeside HS Phys altercation – improper lockdown
- Tucker HS employee arrest
- Clarkston HS lockdown and sweep
- DeKalb High School of Technology – Principal introduction – Dr Bryant Thomas
- DCSD assessment irregularity family letter
- DHST – S principal farewell letter
- Smoke Rise ES family letter – Student’s inappropriate behavior
- Peachcrest ES teacher death
- DeKalb Arts Academy – Student threat

- Freedom MS lockdown
- Avondale ES – Parent weapon on field trip

Scripts and speeches:

- Rewrote Dr. Horton’s video script for “SAP Says.”
- Wrote a DeKalb Gives video script to solicit donations from DCSD staff for the campaign (not used).

Feature Stories:

- Rewrote Monika Davis's feature.
- Rewrote outgoing Board of Education members’ feature.

Media Releases:

- DCSD schools are recognized nationally with the College Success Award
- Press release: College and Career Readiness Performance Index
- Media advisory: IGNITE Dekalb Teacher Residency Graduation
- DCSD Celebrates Inaugural IGNITE Teacher Graduates (not distributed)