



District Academic Report – January 2025

Chief Dr. Triscilla Weaver

Access and Opportunity (A&O)

This month, we achieved our MIRACLES priority goal of establishing at least six strategic partnerships with organizations, institutions, and agencies whose missions align with ours. We exceeded this goal, successfully building relationships with more than 10 like-minded entities, some of which will also serve on an advisory committee. Additionally, we continued our work with E3 Consulting, focusing this month on scheduling professional learning opportunities.

We also continued our robust campaign to solicit stakeholder input for the A&O Audit. The A&O Department sent correspondence to district leaders and principals while coordinating with various departments to maximize participation in the A&O Audit survey and focus groups. We worked closely with multiple divisions and departments across the district to gather their support for this initiative. Furthermore, A&O coordinators conducted school visits to support principals whose schools were identified as observation or focus group sites for the audit.

Public Consulting Group (PCG) representatives were on-site from Jan. 27 to Jan. 30, conducting school visits (20 schools) and holding interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders. PCG will return between Feb. 10 and 12 to continue engaging stakeholders for the audit.

Lastly, our department collaborated with E3 Consulting to develop an objective rubric for scoring 46 field trip standard operating procedures (SOP) submitted by schools across the district. The rubric assigned an equity rating of one to four in four areas: timing, accessibility, curriculum alignment, and affordability. Schools receiving a score of three or four in any category were shortlisted. This resulted in 11 schools being shortlisted for timing, 6 for accessibility, 12 for curriculum alignment, and 9 for affordability. These shortlisted SOPs will inform the development of a district exemplary at our next monthly committee meeting.

Executive Director Myss Johnson-Jelks

Athletics

We've had a strong start to January as we prepare for spring sports. Our team met with the Cross Keys Admin Team to discuss practice locations for the next couple of years while renovations are underway. Additionally, we've finalized the relocation plan for the Champion Middle School (MS) and Sequoyah MS spring sports programs due to building renovations. We've also teamed up with athletic liaisons to create and implement 90-day action plans to increase female participation in sports. After discussions with the cheerleading coordinator, we've allowed ninth-grade students to join varsity cheerleading, and we will communicate this change before March 1.

In January, we hosted district meets for MS and high school (HS) wrestling, as well as HS swimming. Our department also met with the Northside Hospital Team to collaborate and plan for the upcoming spring and summer seasons.

Reviewing and updating our Athletic Handbooks and SOPs is an ongoing effort, and I'm working closely with our director of athletics to ensure we fully align across all areas. Below, you'll find more details on the items we've been working on.

Director Brandon Lane

Athletics

Over the past month, we have made significant strides in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of our athletic programs and operations. Our team continues developing the coaches' and administrators' handbook to establish clear stakeholder guidelines and expectations. Additionally, Executive Director Myss Johnson-Jelks and I collaborated with facilities operations to implement a comprehensive weekly maintenance plan for all baseball fields, ensuring they are well-prepared for the season. We also worked to confirm that all schools with soccer, lacrosse, and track teams have adequate field lighting, allowing both boys' and girls' teams to practice safely and without interruptions.

To further strengthen our athletic programs, I organized and facilitated cardiopulmonary resuscitation training sessions for all district coaches, ensuring compliance with Georgia High School Association requirements and equipping them with critical life-saving skills. I also attended the Georgia Track and Field/Cross Country Coaches Association clinic, gaining valuable insights into track and field that will help better support our coaches. Additionally, I reviewed information from the National Athletic Director Conference regarding sponsorships and am actively developing strategies to enhance corporate partnerships and sponsorship opportunities across the district. Beyond these initiatives, I have been at athletic and non-athletic events to support student-athletes and ensure smooth event logistics. I also work closely with the executive director to implement SOPs to refine event management processes and improve overall department operations. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to elevating the quality of our programs and creating a positive environment for students, staff, and the community.

Director Kina M. Champion

School Innovation

School Innovation collaborated with Student Assignment and Operations to plan for upcoming Principal Advisory Council cluster meetings, providing a platform for sharing information about the departments' joint projects. Additionally, the recruitment process for Construction Advisory Committee members continues for several school communities, including Stoneview, Idlewood, and Dresden Elementary Schools, Sequoyah MS, and Cross Keys and Druid Hills High Schools. These efforts are crucial in ensuring community involvement in upcoming construction projects.

School Innovation is integral to cross-functional district teams, contributing to Consolidated School Improvement Plan (CSIP) monitoring, administrative policy reviews, and district improvement planning. The department also joined the planning committee for the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce Education Week.

On Jan. 13, the DeKalb Board of Education (BOE) approved a two-year extension of the charter contract for DeKalb Perseverance, Accomplishment, Triumph, and Honor (PATH) Academy, reflecting the district's ongoing commitment to charter school success. The School Innovation Team also led the charter renewal workshop for DeKalb Academy of Technology and the Environment (DATE) on Jan. 24. The school's current contract expires June 30, 2026. The BOE is anticipated to take action on DATE's petition in Feb. 2026. Due to inclement weather, the pilot Qualitative Site Review visits for select charter schools were rescheduled for February. However, School Innovation worked with Accountability and Continuous Improvement and the area offices to facilitate the annual performance review meetings for all eight charter schools, focusing on continuous improvement across the district.

Executive Director Sarita Smith

Student Assignment

The student assignment project is wrapping up at the end of our learning series. We have met with each committee five times throughout the fall and winter to engage in learning and profound conversation about DCSD buildings, boundaries, and programs. We are moving into a new section of the work related to building guiding principles, which will guide how the committees develop recommendations next fall.

We are also extending additional efforts to targeted communities that did not complete the Student Assignment Project (SAP) survey. We attend community events and school cluster meetings and work closely with the family support specialist to host focus groups. In addition to this data point, we are researching magnet schools and lottery systems and developing best practices for boundaries at comparable districts to share with the SAP committee.

Director Dr. Char-Shenda Covington

School Choice

Our school choice initiatives achieved significant milestones throughout January, marking it a notably productive period. Despite challenges with our vendor, the second and third rounds of seat offerings during the late lottery window commenced, facilitating more opportunities for prospective students. We introduced alternative strategies to address these challenges and meet stakeholder needs, ensuring continuous progress and efficiency. Engagement at the Atlanta School Choice Expo proved fruitful, where we disseminated critical updates and reinforced our commitment to transparency and stakeholder communication. We are also nearing the completion of plans for our four summer registration hubs, reflecting our proactive approach in preparation for the upcoming academic school year.

Moreover, individual support for new principals from our director has been integral, focusing on personalized guidance and targeted support for our newest leaders. This individualized attention aims to equip new principals with essential tools for understanding the relationship between their school and the Office of Student Assignment. Concurrently, meticulous planning for the 2026-2027 open enrollment period has commenced, illustrating our forward-thinking strategy and dedication to smooth, efficient processes for future admissions. Collectively, these efforts underline our unwavering commitment to providing exceptional choice options and robust educational frameworks for our community.

Executive Director Dr. Loukisha Walker

Student Mentorship and Partnerships (SMP)

The SMP Department has been actively advancing its initiatives to strengthen mentoring programs and community engagement throughout the district. This month, I began conducting school visits to observe mentoring activities in action and provided feedback to lead mentors to enhance program implementation and student engagement. A mid-year survey was sent to lead mentors to assess the program's early impact, collecting initial participation data such as the number of students served, attendance, and engagement levels. These findings will guide adjustments and ensure continuous improvement of the districtwide mentoring program. Additionally, SMP collected first-semester data to measure program outcomes and align strategies with departmental goals.

Further efforts focused on professional development and efficiency within the department. Surveys were distributed to Principals and Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Advocates (FAs) to evaluate FA performance, gather insights, and identify growth opportunities. Professional development and work sessions were scheduled for FAs to strengthen their skills and understanding of key responsibilities. Internally, I revised departmental roles to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness. Embedded professional development was also provided during the SMP Department meeting to align team members with the revised roles and priorities, ensuring the department's continued success in meeting the needs of students and schools.

Chief of Schools Michelle Dillard

Division or Department

We hosted Barbara Blackburn, who engaged teachers and leaders in work and rigor. Leaders in the division also participated in MUNIS Time and Attendance training as well as Active Shooter training. All principals received training in the new finance platform, Allovue Manage. Schools and leadership participated in a Calibration Observation at Miller Grove MS, for Principal Professional Learning Communities (PPLC). We are excited about our MIRACLES priorities work and seeing progress.



Beth Kyle

Area 1 Elementary Schools

The Area I Team spent January focused on being in schools to ensure that the second half of the year started on the right foot. Climate and Culture (C&C) coordinators provided restorative practice and everyday lab refreshers for administration and reviewed first-semester attendance and suspension data to set priorities for school teams. Our mental health coordinator continued site visits to support students and staff along with completing mental health first aid training for our counselors. Our math and English/language arts (ELA) coordinators focus on our third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade teachers to ensure they are on track for the second semester. They have also provided intensive support for select schools to accelerate the daily teacher impact on students. Our special education coordinator worked intensively with teachers to increase collaboration and student support to maximize student exposure to grade-level standards.



Executive administrators have been working on coaching principals in one-on-one sessions and holding mid-year conferences. At the Area Professional Learning Opportunity (PLO), the C&C, math and ELA coordinators hosted small group principal sessions for great conversations around writing, utilizing state resources, and maintaining and improving school culture. Mrs. Ivey provided professional learning (PL) on science instruction. Dr. Kyle led PL in digging deeper into Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Rasch Unit (RIT) scores and how to connect subtest scores to the end-of-grade (EOG) blueprints, Achievement Lexile descriptors, and back to the learning continuum. Finally, the team hosted an area assistant principal (AP) meeting to ensure that APs get the same PL and support as principals to be co-instructional leaders.

Schools had a great month, even with the snow, celebrating the 100th day of school and kicking off winter sports, including competitive dance. Austin and Vanderlyn celebrated placing in the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl (HRRB) and being home to the DCSD Spelling Bee winners. Again, Austin's spelling bee winner was Sarv Dharavane, who attended the National Spelling Bee in Washington DC last year to represent the State of Georgia.

Terry Brown

Area 2 Elementary Schools

January focuses on science instruction and using high-quality resources from DCSD and Georgia's Department of Education (GaDOE). During the Area 2 PLO, the principal reviewed the achievement level descriptors (ALD) for fifth-grade science and connected the standards to the formative assessment tasks from science to notice the intent of the standards. The Area 2 Team has provided side-by-side coaching sessions with fifth-grade science teachers and school administration on accessing science resources and using GaDOE ALDs to plan lessons and determine tasks. Additionally, Area 2 ES continues to support schools with writing. This month, the Area 2 superintendent and ELA coordinator facilitated PL for informational and opinion writing with several school and academic coaches. Area 2 ES also provided mathematics support in partnership with the Metro Regional Educational Service Agency (MRESA). Mathematics teachers from across the area gathered by grade level for planning sessions on upcoming units using the GaDOE instructional learning plans. The mathematics content coordinator facilitated this work. Area 2's student with disabilities (SWD) and English language learner (ELL) coordinators continue to support schools with program needs, including individual education program (IEP) compliance and plan implementation. C&C and the area superintendent continue to focus on attendance, discipline, building readiness, and employee mediation.



The area superintendent and the executive administrators are underway with mid-year conferences for principals and side-by-side reviews of Area 2’s Reality Check data. Principals, APs, and academic coaches also received side-by-side support with calculating improvement targets and comparing their 2024 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) results to where their school currently stands with mid-year MAP results.

Ateshia Lester

Area 3 Elementary Schools

In January, Area 3 focused on data analysis by the area superintendent and executive administrators supporting school leaders with Reality Checks and mid-years. All leaders were able to finalize their targets for school year (SY) 2025 using final Georgia Milestones results, primarily focusing on subgroups. The ELA coordinators utilized the virtual day of Jan. 3 to provide narrative writing support for all ELA teachers. All math teachers unpacked their upcoming units with the support of MRESA, math, ELL, and SWD coordinators. Our mental health coordinator trained all staff on Connections Matter during our remote workday, focusing on social-emotional learning. Also, Our math and ELA coordinators supported academic coaches in Area 3 by reviewing expected monitoring commitments for February, emphasizing collaborative planning.



Some highlights in Area 3 schools for January include Kelley Lake and Rainbow Elementary Schools being named GaDOE Reward Schools for making significant progress when comparing the content mastery scores from the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 statewide assessments. Barack Obama, Chapel Hill, Princeton, Bob Mathis, and Allgood Elementary Schools were winners at the DeKalb Technology Fair. Also, schools participated in the HRRB, and dance competitions for elementary athletics kicked off across the area. Finally, Barack Obama revealed their Obama “Faculty and Staff Zen Den” as a result of the school’s participation in Innovative Solutions.

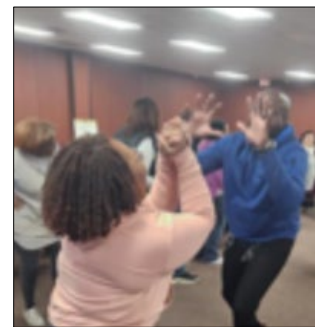
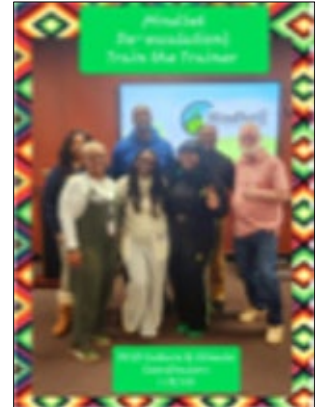
Jacqueline Tayler

Area Middle Schools

In January, the MS Area's focus involved data analysis, school support, teacher and academic coach (AC) support, PL, and C&C collaboration. Additionally, there is always a concerted focus on student and staff mental health, offering targeted support in crisis situations and promoting overall wellness in our middle schools.

Executive Administrators

- Facilitated Reality Checks, Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) Mid-Year Conferences, LKES Formative Assessments, and PPLC guidance.
- Provided feedback on MAP action plans, retention plans, breakthrough principal action plans, and CCRPI targets. They also reviewed School Mint implementation.
- Facilitated two PL sessions: one on Leveling Lexile and the other on PLC Guiding Coalition.



SWD Coordinator

Analyzed CCRPI data to determine the number of students required to meet achievement targets. Provided specialized training and support in co-teaching models, crisis prevention intervention (CPI), and Mindset. Follow-up observations took place after PL sessions.



English Learner (EL) Coordinator

Focused on teacher development for ELs, compliance, and instructional resource creation. Key tasks included classroom observations, providing feedback, and addressing compliance issues like student placement. The coordinator also supported Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) testing preparation and ensured Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training was conducted in multiple schools.

ELA Coordinator

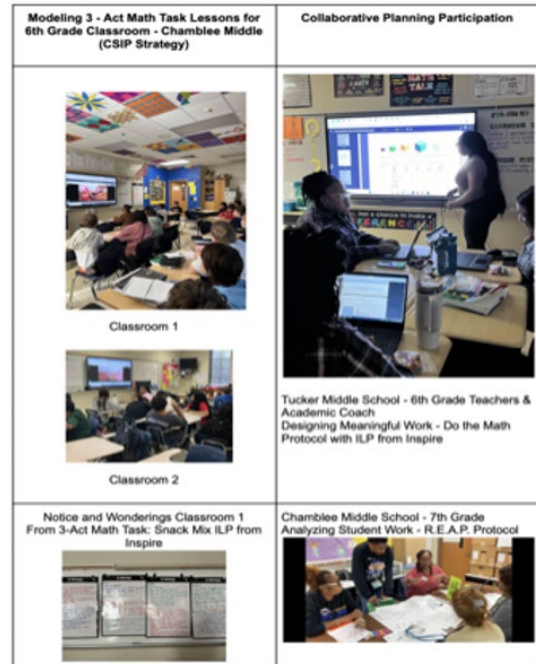
Supported new ACs, modeled teaching strategies, and offered feedback. Collaborated on PL opportunities, including StudySync training and instructional resource development.

Math Coordinators

Continued working closely with math teachers and ACs to strengthen PLCs, support CSIP strategies, and focus on student engagement and academic discourse. They also participated in MRESA math training to align with district goals.

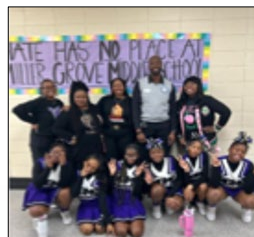
Culture and Climate Coordinators

- Participated in school team meetings and Reality Checks/Mid-Year Conferences.
- Worked with district attendance specialists to schedule Everyday Lab training for consistent attendance monitoring.
- Collaborated with schools to ensure GA School Climate Survey completion goals were met.
- Assisted with uploading student photos for school ID badges as part of the Safe and Orderly Schools Initiative.
- Continuously monitored discipline and attendance data and cell phone policies across schools. Conducted building walkthroughs and provided one-on-one administrative support as needed.



Mental Health Coordinator:

- The coordinator continues to provide daily check-ins with schools that have students on a Suicide Intervention Protocol. This support goes beyond the initial intervention, ensuring ongoing student care.
- The coordinator provided wellness support to two schools, likely to help staff cope with the stresses of their work and maintain their own mental health.
- Conducted training for HS and MS counselors to help them address the impacts of trauma on students and provide better support.
- The coordinator also extended support to In-School Suspension (ISS) and MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) personnel, likely to help them develop strategies for supporting students with mental health needs or behavioral challenges.



Thomas Glanton

Area High Schools

During January, the HS Area summary reflects the commitment to Operation Graduation through progress monitoring of schools and principals, evaluating data systems of schools, and action plans that address the diverse needs of students. The Area also celebrated its “Difference Makers.”



- ELA:** Coordinators have supported the continued implementation of the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) resources. Additionally, they attended MRESA’s new ELA standards training and collaborated with other coordinators and literacy leaders to make sense of the practices domain.
- Mathematics:** The coordinator hosted the 12th MRESA math training for algebra and geometry teachers in the area. Coupled with conducting Learning Walks to gather observational data to determine the next steps for support by utilizing GaDOE learning plans and other instructional resources. In addition, the math coordinator has continued to support various schools in the area with targeted training on common assessments, data monitoring, and effective practices in math PLCs.
- Mental Health:** The coordinator co-facilitated virtual PL sessions titled *Connections Matter*, which focused on the impact of interactions and relationships in supporting students who have experienced trauma. Additionally, the coordinator continued to co-facilitate restorative circles designed to help students at Redan HS. Visited classrooms and created and distributed the January newsletter.
- Culture and Climate:** Coordinators focused on key operational and student support initiatives across area high schools. Efforts included monitoring and managing the attendance dashboard, implementing the ID project, and processing field trip requests. Additionally, the team coordinated scheduling needs, addressed parental complaints and concerns, and responded to operational challenges following recent snowstorms to ensure a smooth return for students. These efforts contributed to maintaining a positive and structured school environment.
- Multi-lingual Learners:** The coordinator collaborated with schools to implement reading plans based on MAP data. Teachers were trained in intervention support for struggling readers using the science of reading research. Additionally, training was provided in implementing new reading resources provided by the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Department.

- Special Education:** The coordinator delivered PL sessions to support educators across multiple schools. At Redan HS, a session on managing challenging behaviors was facilitated, while at Columbia HS, two sessions were provided: one focusing on co-teaching strategies and another on incorporating specially designed instruction into co-taught settings, emphasizing H-Pride. Additionally, the coordinator supported schools in addressing noncompliance issues and guided next steps for students with behavior concerns.

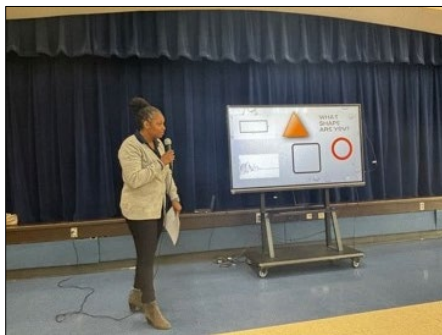
As we wrap up this month's academic summary, we take pride in the strides our students and staff have made in fostering excellence, creativity, and resilience. This month has been a testament to the power of collaboration and hard work, with highlights ranging from academic achievements to extracurricular milestones.

Derrick Hardy

Area Horizon Schools

January was filled with Horizon Principals' Leaders and Support Team members engaged in Reality Checks data presentations. Our leaders received meaningful feedback on strengthening our response to real-time data while reflecting on previous responses to longitudinal data points within the Reality Checks session. Additionally, the Horizon Leadership Team fulfilled critical GaDOE CCRPI/school improvement deliverables to culminate the 2024 school improvement method of administration in preparation for the 2025 season.

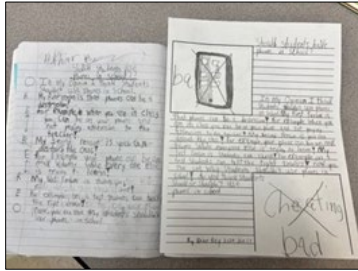
Several Horizon schools conducted family and parent information nights. Bethune MS is hosting families for parent information and mental health.



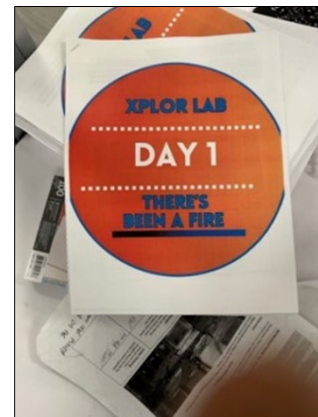
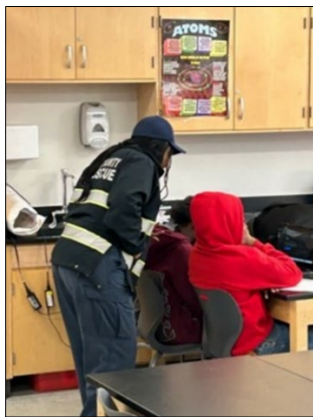
Peachcrest ES is hosting ELL/ESOL families on second-semester updates.



Stone Mill ES is fully implementing the Write-Away writing plan as part of the winter short-term action plan priorities for all Horizon schools.



McNair MS science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) scholars partnered with the DeKalb County Fire Department for hands-on learning in the STEM lab.



Cross Keys HS welcomed our new cohort of inspiring greatness and normalizing innovation in teacher education (IGNITE) teacher fellows for student learning.



Elizabeth Andrews HS welcomed over 200 cohort 2025 scholars into the ELEVATE 2025 program for credit recovery and on-track graduation acceleration.

Michelle Jones

Area Specialty Schools

January launched a new year and a new semester. Our focus of the month was science. Leaders engaged in science activities, reviewed GA Milestone resources, and heard from guest speakers about STEM opportunities for students. The team engaged in science focus walks, observed science classrooms, and provided feedback. We observed Fernbank Outreach, labs in action, and high-quality resource materials, including STEMscopes.



Also, in January, the Specialty Area completed its Reality Check and began conducting individual school Reality Checks. Our peer learning facilitator (PLF) and ELA coordinator also continued Writing PL for our ELA teachers.

This month, we celebrated our Title I reward and distinguished schools. We congratulated Wadsworth, Robert Shaw, and Wynbrooke for distinguished honors. DeKalb Acceleration Academies (DAA), Leadership Prep, and International Community School received reward honors. Wadsworth and the International Community School received grants for their work in STEM. Kittredge Magnet School won the MS division of the HRRB, and several of our schools participated. The Specialty Area welcomed our two new principals: Ms. Devetra Ushery at Wynbrooke Theme School and Mr. Benjamin Polite at the DeKalb Arts Academy.

Mike Kelly, Raifa Russ, Dr. Jermain Sumler-Faison

Leadership Development

The DeKalb Principal Pathway (DPP)

Leadership Development is working with the Leadership Academy Group to develop our Aspiring Principals Program. The DPP rigorous candidate application process has been completed, and 15 strong future leaders have been selected to participate in the DPP program.

- This program's first cohort has already completed their orientation on Jan. 29. This program is supported by Leadership Development in the evenings and on full-day sessions on Saturdays to limit disruptions to the schoolwork load required of these leaders. They are truly committed to giving their own time to grow.
- The curriculum of this program is connected directly to the DeKalb strategic plan, MIRACLES, H-PRIDE, and the six systems.
- The skills and competencies we are growing in our aspiring principals are connected directly to the leadership framework of DCSD: Wallace Foundation Effectiveness, LKES, Breakthrough Principals, and Michael Moore's School and Community Improvement Programs (SCIP). The DPP program connects to these guiding resources we use as a district.

The Aspiring Principal's Program

At this point in time, the Aspiring Principal's Program (of the DPP) is working in a two-phase plan:

- Phase One – Cohort 1 is underway, and the 15 participants will work to complete this accelerated cohort by the end of June.
- Phase Two – Use this rigorous system to support a second cohort of future principals to be selected to begin in July of the 2025-2026 SY. We hope to advertise Cohort 2 in April.

Project Developing Educators and Leaders (DEAL) in Partnership with Georgia State University (GSU)

Project DEAL, in partnership with GSU (Doctoral Program and Tier 1 Administrative Certificate) Leadership Development, works directly with GSU to build leadership opportunities for DCSD employees.

- The GSU Doctoral Program grant supports five district leaders seeking their doctorate with a \$30,000 stipend over the three-year program.
- The five doctoral candidates have been selected and are now applying with GSU.
- Leadership Development is in the design phase of establishing a first-ever cohort of teacher leaders looking to achieve their Tier 1 Administrative Certificate to become APs in our district. The goal is for the first cohort of 25 participants to start the program in the summer of 2025.

- The curriculum for the program is being developed in tandem with GSU and DCSD Leadership Development to assist in growing our own mentality for school leadership.
- Participants will receive an \$8,000 stipend to participate in the program.

The Leadership Development Team met with the university’s GSU Team to build project timelines, expectations, and priorities for the selection process and review how to use the funds for the “DEAL” grant.

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) Literacy Project (Structured Literacy for SY 2025)

Leadership Development is working with other district leadership to develop the Literacy Initiative for the 2025-2026 SY. The GLISI Team has designed a Model Literacy Lab to take place in February, where lead teachers will develop, monitor, and provide feedback on how literacy classrooms should perform for the 2025-2026 SY.

PLC Development with Solution Tree

- PLC Development with Solution Tree (performance coaches training) Leadership Development in tandem with the PL Department and Solution Tree created a specific PL that supports the district’s direct efforts to implement PLCs across all schools and their teachers. PLFs and performance coaches participated in the second session from Solution Tree on Jan. 8 and 9. We received direct training on how to coach PLCs and support principals with the work around:
 - PLC Teams’ application of
 - Question #1 – What are they learning?
 - Question #2 – How do we know if they are learning it?
- PLC Teams apply the Learning Guide to support student learning.
- Analyzing essential standards that students must receive to be proficient in the curriculum.
- Building assessments that match those content standards.
- How can coaching support be provided to PLC Teams to be efficient in essential standard identification and tracking student learning results?



The DeKalb Leadership Institute (DLI)

- The DLI Program is going through some transitions as we speak based on feedback from our area superintendents, executive administrators, Champion Dillard, and Superintendent Dr. Horton:
 - Champion Dillard and Dr. Horton have challenged Leadership Development to implement more PL for leaders around their instructional knowledge.
 - Leadership Development is following the feedback of area leaders to redesign the program so that APs will not be out of their schools. Because of this feedback, we are adjusting the program to include more after-school hours.
- The last DLI session occurred on Jan. 9. This session included content around building rituals and routines and opening school and safety protocols.

Men of Color in Educational Leadership (MCEL) New Cohort of Five Selected

This intensive year-long PL for identified leaders will begin in the spring. This Leadership Development program will provide insight into the core principles of “quality, quantity, and care.”

Snow Days Don’t STOP the Work

New Principal and AP Academies – The Leadership Development Team made some quick pivots during the week to ensure we could provide all of our school leaders with the PLOs they expected to attend in person. I am very proud of the work of the team.



Ayana S. Smith

Professional Learning Department

During January, the PL Department was engaged in PLC training with Solution Tree (Jan. 8 and 9) and supporting individual schools and programs throughout the month. Our department collaborated with DeKalb’s IGNITE program to continue supporting participants in passing Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) preparation. IGNITE Cohort members (41) passed GACE and obtained teaching positions. GACE preparation sessions will continue throughout this semester for all interested staff. We proudly announce that 23 of 26 participants successfully completed the HB671 course, showcasing their dedication to professional growth and the program's value.



PLFs provide tailored support by collaborating with school leaders to identify needs, analyze data, and develop PL plans and a coaching cycle of support. The department has managed 168 PL requests (+18 from last month), completing 104 (+15), and 63 still in progress. January currently has 25 requests, and 40 sessions completed.

[New Teacher Orientation/NETwork/ Teacher Support Specialist \(TSS\)-Teacher Support Coach \(TSC\)](#)

The TSS and TSC program is continuing efforts to work directly with schools who need to rebuild their TSC programs after losing TSCs due to retirement/attrition and to expand the recruitment/support of as many new TSC-endorsed special education (SPED) educators as possible. SPED teachers and paraprofessionals are the district's highest percentage of new hires annually. The Jan. 14 NETwork Induction Webinar focused on providing strategies and resources to facilitate the start of a great second semester. We had over 250 attendees.

[Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy \(TAPP\)](#)

During January, the TAPP coordinator conducted various groups with information on DCSD TAPP and met with approximately 180 principals and APs to provide information about TAPP.

[Field Experience Teachers \(Student Teachers\)](#)

January has been extremely busy with field placements and our new Project DEAL grant. We are in the process of confirming and updating our 151 spring 2025 placements. We have also interacted with 12 vendors as we vet them for PLOs for pre-service teachers. This includes assisting them as they work to become DCSD vendors, reviewing their offerings to ensure that they align with the grant objectives, confirming logistics for both in-person and virtual presentations, collaborating with Grants and Partnerships about the grant specifics, etc.

Chief of Student Services Dr. Norman C. Sauce III

Student Services

Dr. Norman C. Sauce began January with participation in the Curriculum Steering Committee meeting, setting the tone for academic excellence and strategic planning. He attended the swearing-in ceremony for our new DCSD BOE members – in support of a successful Governance Team transition. Dr. Sauce extended his commitment to school engagement via his visits to Dekalb School of the Arts, Montgomery and Flat Rock Elementary Schools, Shadowrock Center, DeKalb Early College Academy, and Eagle Woods Academy. During the school visits, he observed classroom instruction along with the principals, facilitated PL sessions for administrative teams on analyzing and responding to MAP results, and discussed with principals their schools' needs, successes, and how the Division of Student Services can further assist their schoolwide goals.

Dr. Sauce also virtually attended the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council meeting, the Exceptional Education Department's virtual Parent Education, Empowerment, Resources and Support (PEERS) session with 200+ participants, and the Student Assignment Planning Project meeting at Miller Grove HS during January. These allowed him to remain connected to parental input and insights. He further engaged with the Horizon Schools Area. He participated in a Schools and Leadership meeting where they were developing critical plans to enhance the collaboration for elevated support of SWDs within Horizon Area schools. Additionally, he led the Student Services Division Leadership meeting, focusing on critical initiatives and receiving updates from each department to ensure coherent school support.

Dr. Sauce continued collaboration with the Executive Director of Early Learning and Pre-K Dr. Zack Phillips, regarding the development of DCSD's Cradle Through Kindergarten Campaign, emphasizing early childhood education, outreach, and resources for kindergarten readiness. He actively engaged in crucial conversations during schools' winter Reality Checks, addressing pressing needs affecting formative student outcomes and services. He participated in 24 different Horizon Area schools' Reality Checks during January. Furthering strategic initiatives, Dr. Sauce collaborated with Chief of Wrap Around Services Dr. Kisha Towns, to discuss preparations for monitoring and supporting DCSD's strategic planning goal Area 5 metrics. He also joined other senior cabinet members for a leadership development training session with Initiative One.

Near the end of January, Dr. Sauce partnered with the Gifted Team to facilitate our third Gifted Information Night, which was a great success, with more than 450 virtual participants. His engagement in broader academic and student support initiatives was demonstrated by participating in the Transformational Systems of Improvement for Students With Disabilities Success meeting, the Communities in Schools of Georgia (CISGA) Board Ambassador Workshop, and the Middle/High School Pulse Checks. Dr. Sauce concluded the month with the *Instructional Leadership Through the Lens of Student Services* professional development session to give school leaders a deeper understanding of each department's functions that support student success.

Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@DrNormanCSauce3

Rejuvenating morning w/ Principal Dr. Keith Jones @DSA_HS. Always a joy to share ideas & strategies with him, & to observe their student-centered instruction: ELA, Algebra, & US History today. The school is an incubator of artistic creativity & innovation under his leadership!



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@drnormansauce3.bsky.social

So impressed with Dunwoody HS Principal Mr. Tom Bass' presentation on cultivating positive school climate & recruiting & retaining effective staff - during @dekalbcoschools.bsky.social New Principals Bootcamp. Thank you, Senior Leadership Development Coordinator, Ms. Raifa Russ, for all you do!



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@drnormansauce3.bsky.social

Heartwarming visit today w/ GNETS Director Ms. Lila Brown & her team at Eaglewoods Academy. Their "Foot Locker," clothes closet, & student supplies "store" are up & running! Thank you Sr. Coordinator Ms. Angela Smith & Social Worker Ms. Ashley Wright for your vision of access #TheDeKalbDifference



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@drnormansauce3.bsky.social

Inspiring Reality Check w/ Panola Way ES Principal Dr. Eric T. Johnson & Horizon Area Team. Since he took over the helm this year, suspensions have dramatically decreased, ELA & Math MAP results are trending up, & his school has doubled its gifted-identified students. 🥰 @dekalbcoschools.bsky.social



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@drnormansauce3.bsky.social

We learned during Reality Checks w/ Peachcrest ES Principal, Mrs. Stephany Smith, on how she's led her school towards 25% increase in gifted students identified, zero student suspensions, increased attendance & family engagement, & through the 4 PLC Questions this year! @dekalbcoschools.bsky.social



Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@drnormansauce3.bsky.social

Superb Reality Checks with Principals Ms. Shayna Bishop (McNair Discovery Learning Academy) & Dr. Fricretia Rice (Shadow Rock ES) & Area Superintendents Mr. Derrick Hardy (Horizon) & Dr. Michelle Jones (Specialty)!- Discipline down, attendance & gifted up across the board! #DeKalbDifferenceMakers



Not only was it a scintillating collaborative session on MAP results & CCRPI crosswalk with @MESMustangPride Principal Dr. @Carolina_Girt96 & her team - but I was also afforded this awesome shirt in support of their Mustang student bravely fighting cancer. Go, Warrior Wells!



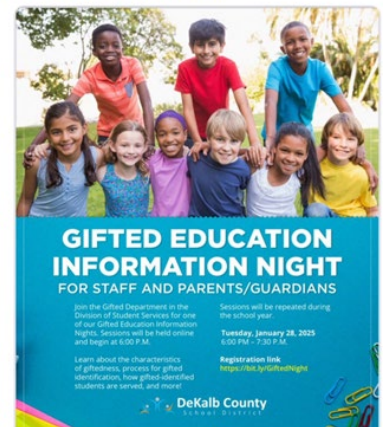
Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
@drnormansauce3.bsky.social

@dekalbcoschools.bsky.social We stand up in solidarity to prevent human trafficking. "Making everywhere a safe space" along with my stupendous office suite mates, Ms. Myra Stewart and Ms. Elana Frazier. #TheDeKalbDifference

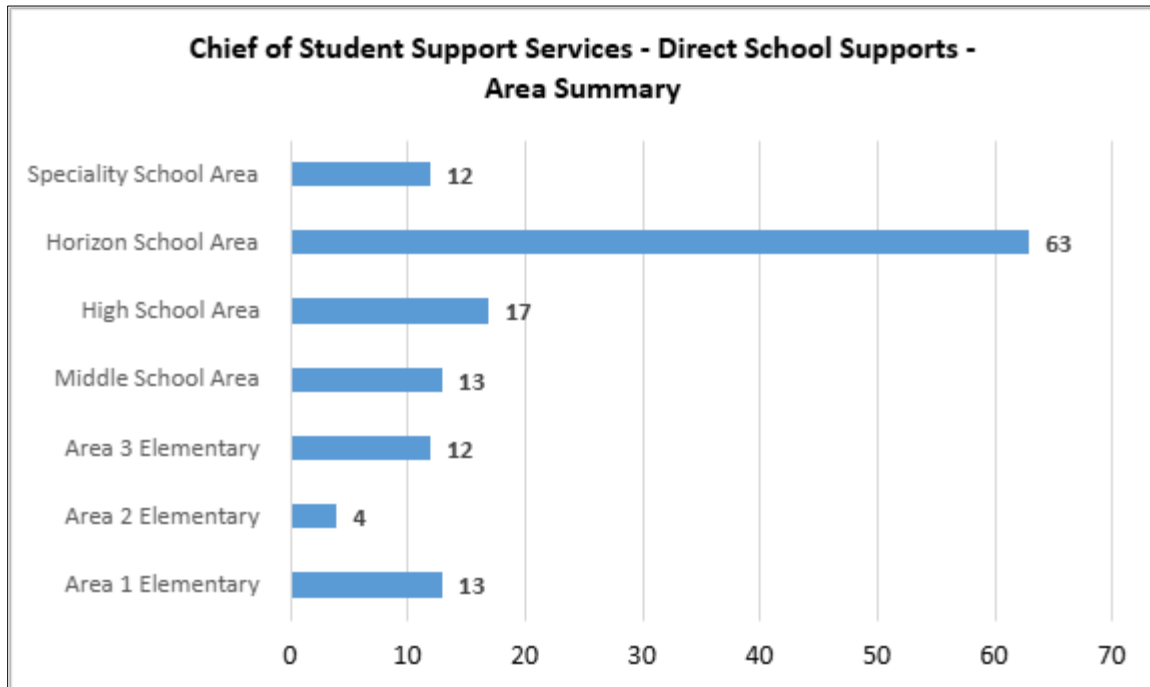


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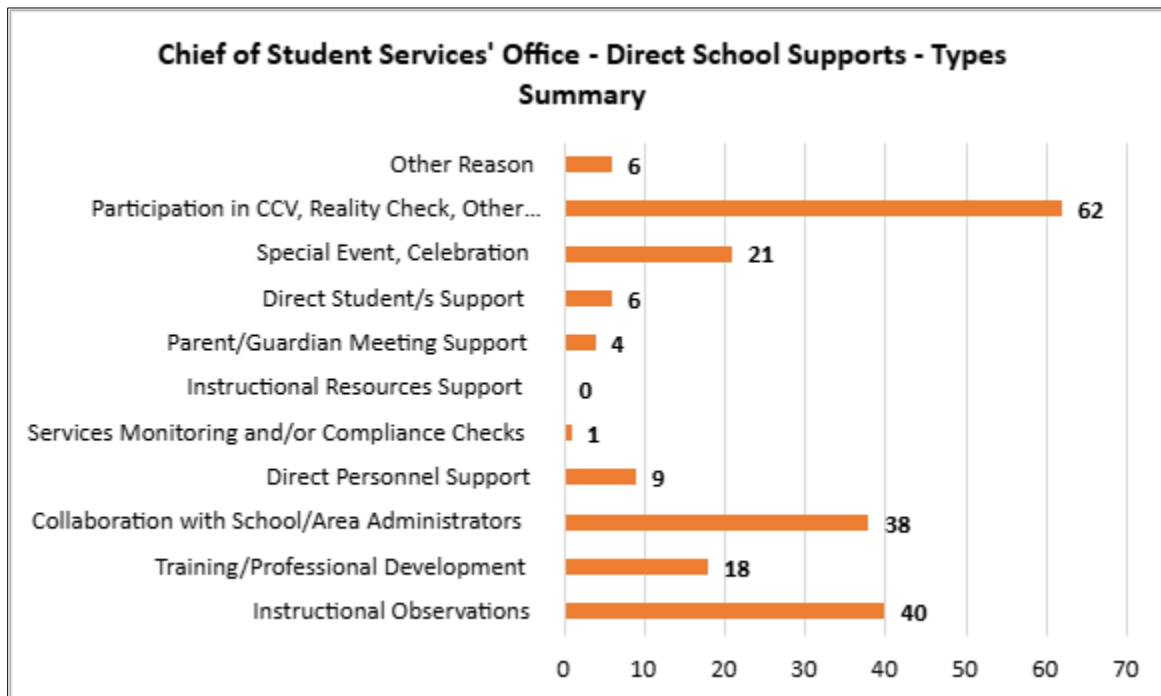
Join us for our final Gifted Education Virtual Information Night of the 2024-2025 school year: January 28, 2025, 6:00pm. Register at this link: dekalbcoschools-ga-org.zoom.us/webinar/registr... Pass it on! #DeKalbDifferenceMakers



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



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



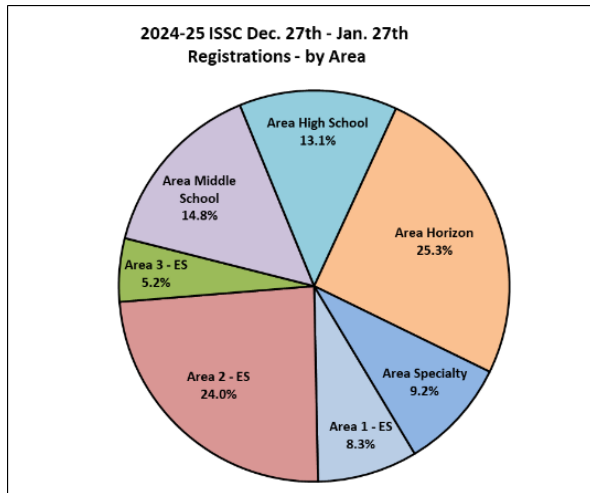
Executive Director Dr. Evelyn Hall

English Learners

Registration and Interpretation

International Student Screening Center (ISSC) Registration

The ISSC continuously registers and screens students throughout the school year. This month, the ISSC registered and screened **229** students. The ISSC has registered and screened **3,706** ELs this academic year.

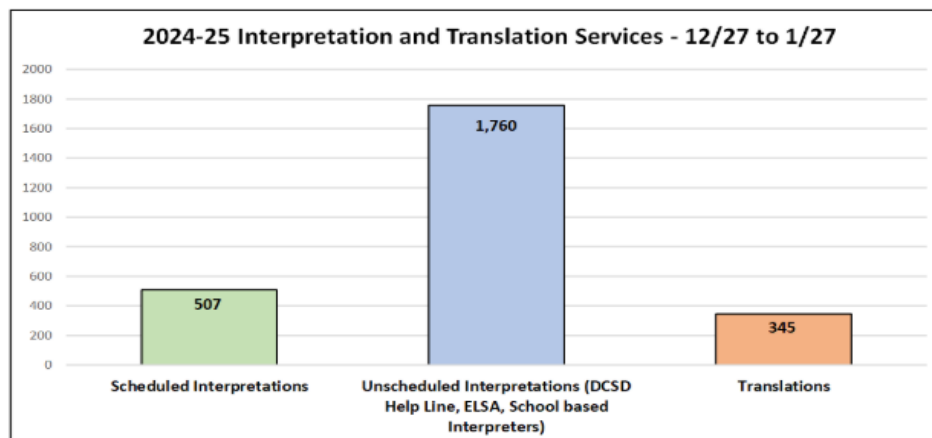


**2024-2025 ISSC Registration
Dec. 27 – Jan. 27**

Area	Students
Area 1 – ES	19
Area 2 – ES	55
Area 3 – ES	12
Area Middle School	34
Area High School	30
Area Horizon	58
Area Specialty	21
Totals	229

Interpretation and Translation Services

The ISSC provides interpretation/translation services during registration and at local schools for families with a Primary Home Language Other than English (PHLOTE). During the past month, the EL Department provided **2,267** PHLOTE families with language access and translated **345** documents.



The graph above shows the number of each type of interpretation and translation service requested from 12/27 to 1/27 for the 2024 - 2025 school year

Interpretation and translation aligns with DCSD’s Strategic Plan: Goal Area II: School, family, and community engagement and the DCSD MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement:

- M – Motion Towards Equity
- C – Commitment to Accountability

Assessment

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) Window

The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) ACCESS 2.0 testing window for ELs began Jan. 8 and will close on Feb. 28. All active ELs must be assessed to determine their growth and EL proficiency level. Any student who enrolls in the district during the ACCESS testing window and is identified as an EL must be administered the ACCESS assessment.

Spring 2025 Professional Learning

The EL Department offers a variety of EL-focused PLOs (in-person and virtual sessions), including workshops, trainings, and book studies each semester for teachers of ELs, administrators, and support staff.

The spring 2025 PL Catalog has been released and includes several opportunities for teachers of ELs and all DCSD staff. These include:

Spring 2025 Professional Learning English Learners Department

Name	Date(s)	Audience
2-Day SIOP Workshop	Jan. 23-24 Feb. 27-28 March 20-21	Teachers of ELs
SIOP Enhancement Workshops	Jan. 16 and 30 Feb. 6	Teachers of ELs
Cultural Awareness Workshops	Feb. 2 March 12	All DCSD staff
Book Study: Co-Teaching for English Learners	Jan. 13 and 27 Feb. 10 and 24 March 10 and 24	Teachers of ELs
Book Study: Unlocking ELs Potential	Jan. 28 Feb. 4 and 27 March 4	Teachers of ELs
Book Study: Welcoming and Engaging Newcomers	Jan. 28, Feb. 11, March 4 and 18 April 3 and 17	Intensive English teachers and administrators

These opportunities align with the DCSD Strategic Plan Goal Area 1: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access; Goal Area 2: School, Family, and Community Engagement; Goal Area 4: Culture and Climate; and Goal Area 6: Organizational Excellence, and the DCSD MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement:

- M – Motion Towards Equity
- I – Improved Instructional Core
- R – Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study

Instructional Language Plans

For the 2024-2025 SY, the DCSD implemented Instructional Language Plans (ILP) to offer additional instructional support for ELs who did not demonstrate positive band-to-band movement (students who did not show growth in their language skills) on the 2024 ACCESS 2.0 assessment. This growth is measured by comparing domain scores in listening, reading, writing, and speaking with scores from the 2023 ACCESS 2.0 assessment. As of this month, **4,220** ILPs and goals have been created for **99.7** percent active ELs who did not make positive band-to-band movement on the 2024 ACCESS.

Areas 1, 2, and 3 Elementary Schools, Middle School Area and Specialty Area have completed 100 percent of required ILPs for students who did not make positive band-to-band movement.

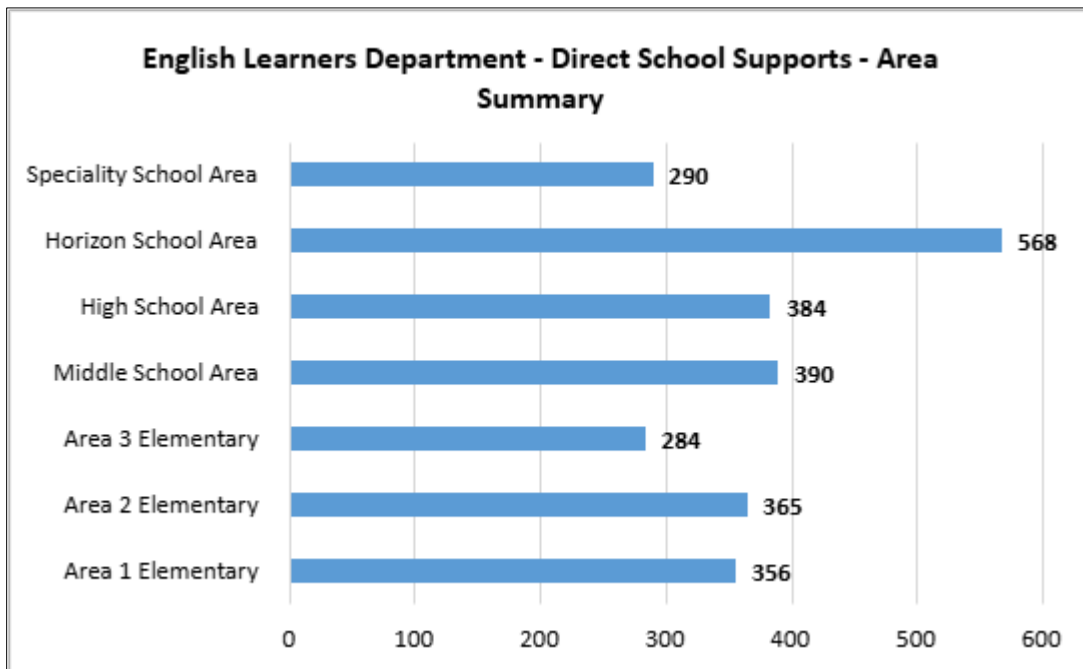
ILP Completion by Area as of Jan. 28.

School	Incomplete	Complete	Percent Complete
Area 1	0	703	100%
Area 2	0	524	100%
Area 3	0	69	100%
Middle	0	1,342	100%
High	37	796	95.5%
Horizon	2	1,050	99%
Specialty	0	287	100%

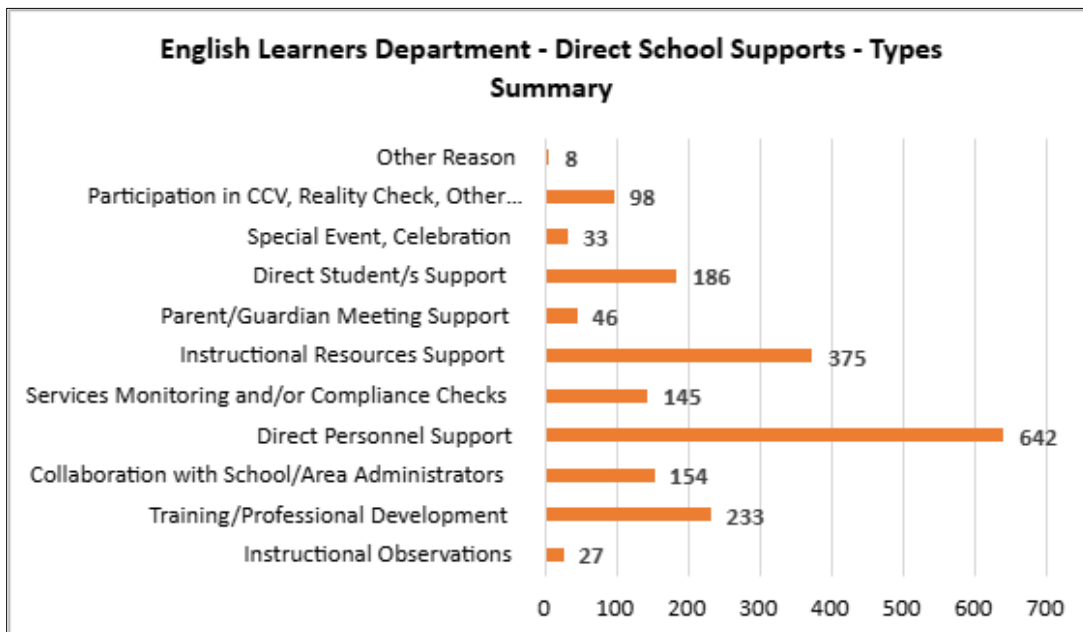
ILPs align with the DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access, and Goal Area V: Organizational Excellence, and the DCSD MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement:

- M – Motion Towards Equity
- I – Improved Instructional Core
- R – Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study

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



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



Executive Director Kiana King

Exceptional Education

Department Highlights

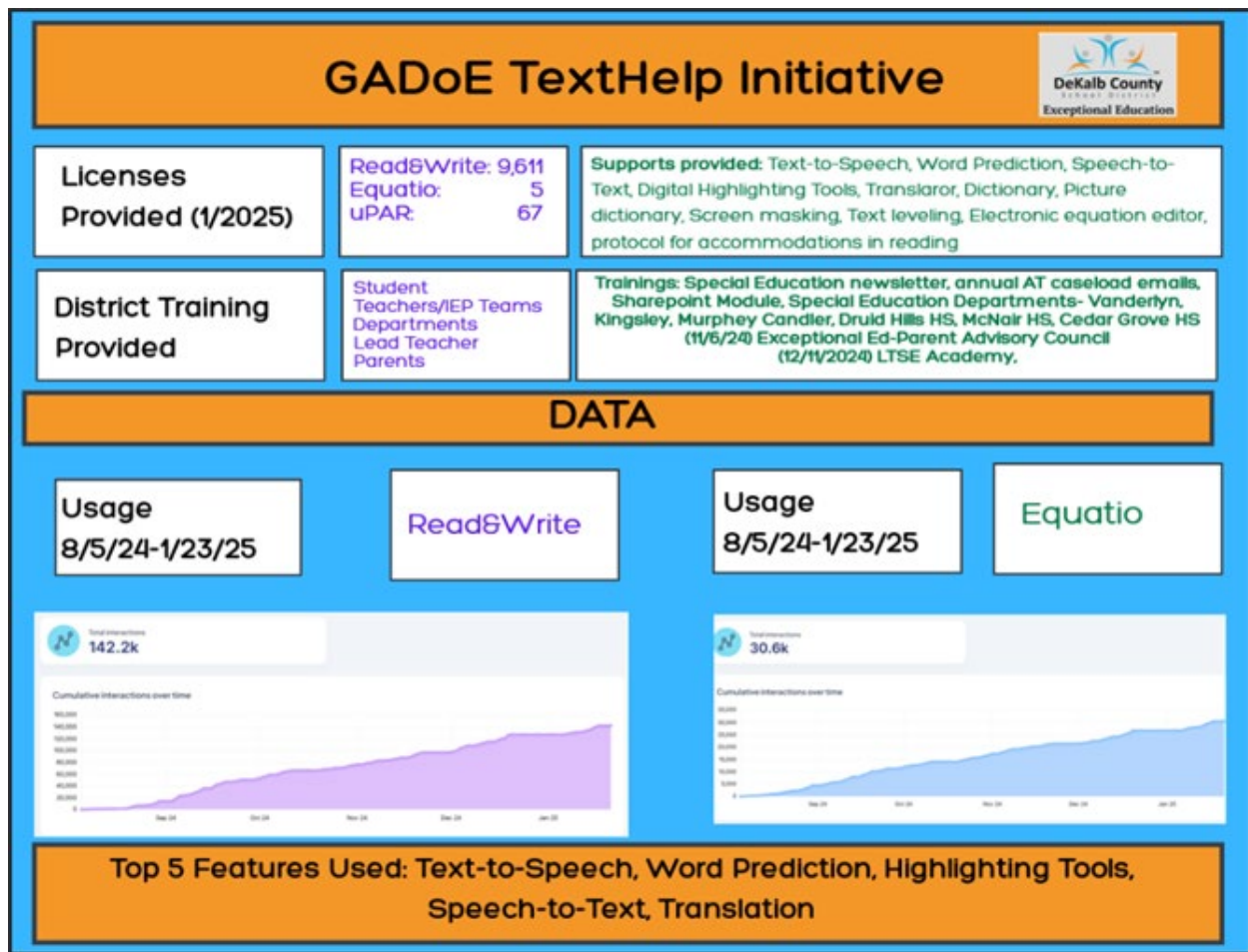
- Every year we celebrate the incredible students that participate and showcase their skills during Special Olympics events. In January, students from various schools across multiple areas enjoyed a half day engaging in a bowling tournament where students displayed their enthusiasm and skillset for the sport. Additionally, many of our school psychologists jumped in to offer support of the students and teachers participating in the event. The school psychologists provided a continental breakfast for the teachers and stood by cheering for students as they engaged in the activities. We celebrate all of the students who participated this year!



- The Eagle Woods Academy Team is thrilled to celebrate the success of the **EWA Shoe Drive** coordinated by school staff. As a result of an overwhelming response from internal staff and district personnel, EWA received over 100 pairs of shoes donated specifically for students! The EWA staff will continue this practice with gently used donated clothing for a Clothing Closet in the coming months! Thanks to the generosity of all donors, students had access to comfortable and stylish footwear, helping them feel confident and ready to “run!” Staff are welcome to donate any items to support the program. A special thank you to Ms. Wright (school social worker) and Ms. Smith (senior coordinator-EWA).



- The use of assistive technology across the district for students with IEPs continues to rise. As school districts received unlimited license subscriptions to the most highly recognized accessibility features, such as speech-to-text or screen readers, over **9,683** students with disabilities in the DCSD have been assigned an assistive technology extension to support access to instruction and instructional resources. During the first semester, students accessed assistive technology tools over 130,000 times.



- The Section 504/Hospital Homebound (HHB) Office proudly participated in the state’s HHB Consortium hosted by Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. Key outcomes included:
 - Networking with hospital-based and district HHB professionals to share best practices and innovative solutions.
 - Gaining insights on supporting students with acute, chronic, and terminal conditions.
 - Improving transition plans for students re-entering the traditional school environment after extended absences.
 - Strengthening partnerships with health care providers to enhance service delivery for students requiring HHB services.



- At the State Superintendent Parent Advisory Council meeting, DCSD Parent Transition Liaison Lisa Lake was asked to sit on a parent panel representing the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership and DCSD. The meeting was held on Jan. 28 at the GaDOE offices. State Superintendent Richard Woods was also present. In addition to the DCSD parent transition liaison, the panel comprised the vice president of programs from Parent to Parent of GA and United Way of Greater Atlanta. The GA Parent Mentor Partnership Director Anne Ladd and the GaDOE Parent Engagement Specialist Mandi Griffin moderated the panel. This working lunch and panel discussion revolved around creating opportunities to increase engagement and partnership with parents and local school districts, empowering families to become more active in their students' educational success and educating the council on available parent resources and supports.

Professional Learning

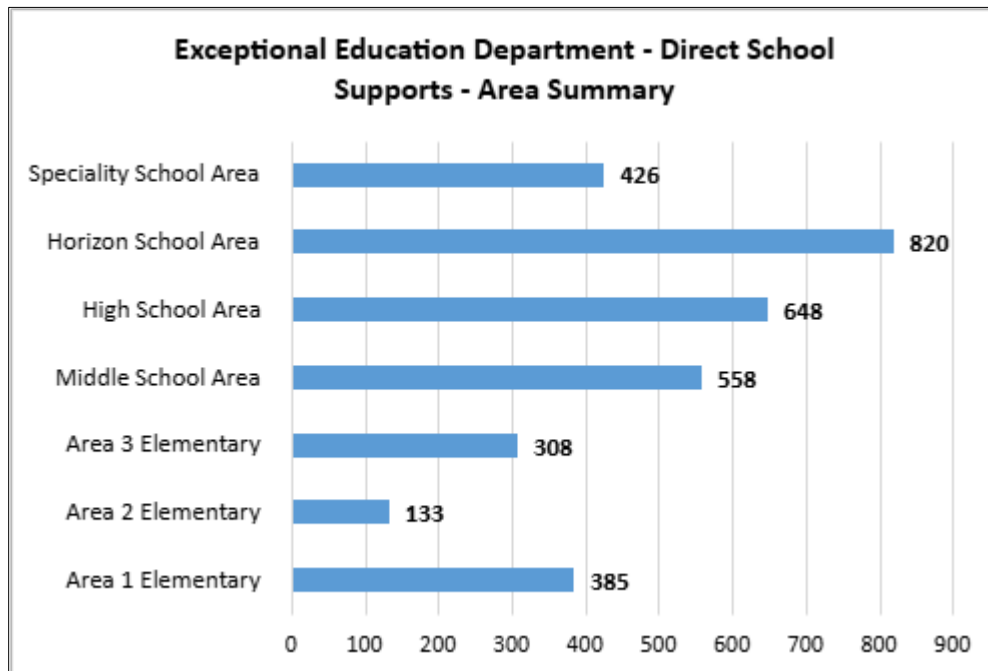
- The school Psychology Team participated in an amazing training opportunity utilizing the Thriving Students platform, an evidence-based platform for supporting complex learners, educators, and families who support them. The school psychologists will have a plethora of interventions at their fingertips to help students, educators, and families, especially for neurodiverse students and students with mental health challenges.
 - Collaborative planning with Shadow Rock Elementary starts Jan. 22. We are excited to share the instructional partnership with Shadow Rock Center (SRC) and Shadow Rock ES. SRC teachers will participate in collaborative planning two days a week with Shadow Rock ES. This collaboration aims to provide in-house PL and support for Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) teachers that are zero to three years for all academic contents. In addition, collaborative planning has begun at SRC on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week to include data talks for each academic content and alignment of academic expectations to support students. SRC has aligned its academic schedule with Shadow Rock ES to create a cohesive and consistent planning schedule for our teachers. All teachers at SRC will participate in this academic partnership.
- Special Education professional development and training opportunities for January included:
 - Lexia Core 5 and Power Up training for K-12 special education teachers.
 - De-escalation and Mindset training for school administrators to strengthen teacher-student relationships, use effective and appropriate language to foster open, welcoming environments, and support staff in engaging with students in meaningful ways.
 - Goalbook training to explore strategies for using Goalbook to develop effective, compliant IEPs and enhance instructional planning.
 - Autism in the classroom training provides an overview of how to support the unique needs of students with Autism.

- The Special Education spring Semester PL catalog is below:

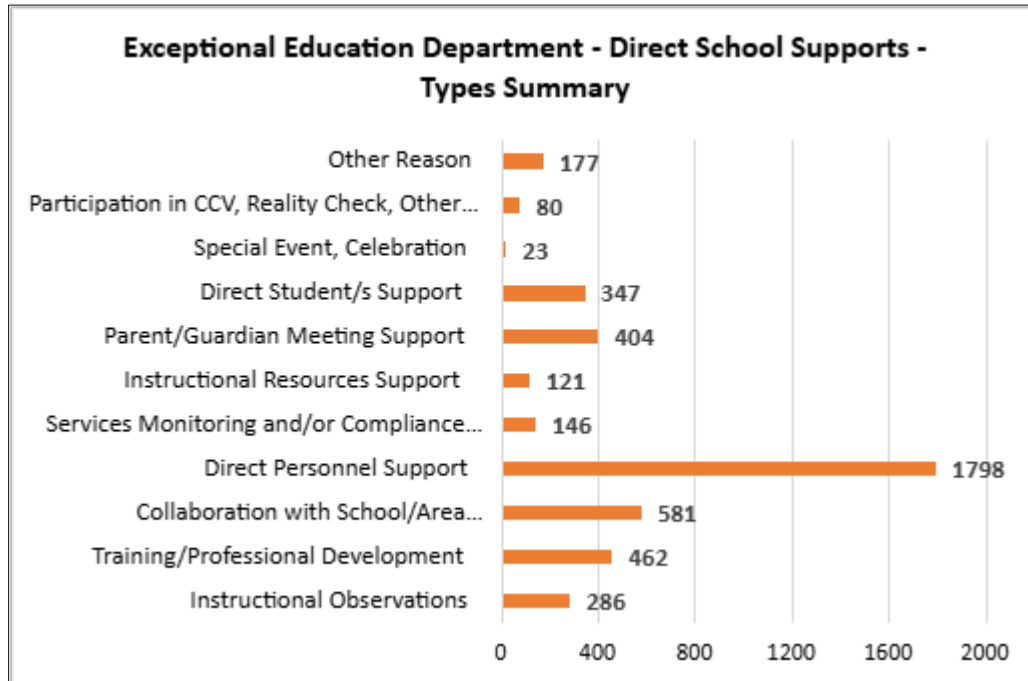
DATE	TIME	TITLE	TARGET AUDIENCE
March 7, 2025	8:00 – 12:00 pm	GAA 2.0 Questions and Answers	Intellectual Disabilities Teachers and Paraprofessional
March 7, 2025	8:00 – 9:30 am	Analyzing Student Work: Assessment and Feedback	Special Education Teachers 0-3 years & Para
March 7, 2025	9:30 – 11:00 am	Classroom Management from an Instructional Lens	Special Education Teachers 0-3 years & Para
March 7, 2025	12:00- 1:30 pm	Analyzing Student Work: Assessment and Feedback	Special Education Teachers 0-3 years & Para
March 11, 2025	2:45 – 3:45 pm	Putting Your SDI Playbook into Play, by Implementing SDI Strategies in Reading & Math	Horizon Special Education Teachers
March 18, 2025	3:00 - 4:00 pm	Autism in the Classroom	Special Education Teachers
March 24, 2025	2:45 – 3:45 pm	SDI Book club	Horizon Special Education Teachers
March 25, 2025	2:45 – 3:45 pm	Implementing Services, Supports, and Accommodations for Student Success	Horizon Special Education Teachers
March 26, 2025	10:00 - 2:00 pm	Mindset Training	Special Education Teachers
April 2, 2025	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Goalbook: Designing Instruction	Special Education Teachers
April 15, 2025	3:00 - 4:00 pm	Autism in the Classroom	Special Education Teachers
April 15, 2025	2:45 – 3:45 pm	SDI – Implementing SDI Strategies in Writing Instruction	Horizon Special Education Teachers
April 28, 2025	2:45 – 3:45 pm	SDI Book club	Horizon Special Education Teachers
April 30, 2025	2:45 – 3:45 pm	Understanding ESY Services and Placement Decisions	Horizon Special Education Teachers
May 7, 2025	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Goalbook: Designing Instruction	Special Education Teachers
May 13, 2025	2:45 – 3:45 pm	SDI –Implementing SDI Strategies in all Content Areas including Electives	Horizon Special Education Teachers

- Section 504/HHB office members spent a day at the Gwinnett County public schools Instructional Support Center (ISC), participating in PL sessions for school principals and central office leaders. The experience focused on resilient leadership and supporting multilingual learners. Key takeaways from the sessions will inform future strategies to support diverse student populations better and foster more effective leadership.

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



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



Executive Director Dr. Zack Phillips

Early Learning and Pre-K

Dr. Phillips and members of the Department of Early Learning and Pre-K Programs participated during the third PL session on Friday, Jan. 31, for district leaders highlighting the scope of the work associated with the Division of Student Services via Exceptional Education, English Learners, Gifted Education, Pre-K, and Early Learners. Dr. Phillips and a department member are actively working with members of the Finance Department during the budget window to ensure the equitable distribution of resources aligns throughout the district within our Early Learning/Pre-K budgets.

Dr. Phillips met with Dr. Horton and Dr. Sauce about the Cradle Through Kindergarten Campaign. Additionally, Dr. Phillips attended numerous meetings, including GLISI DCSD LIT, various area Reality Checks, McNair DLA, and Oak View ES. Dr. Phillips met with members of the DeKalb



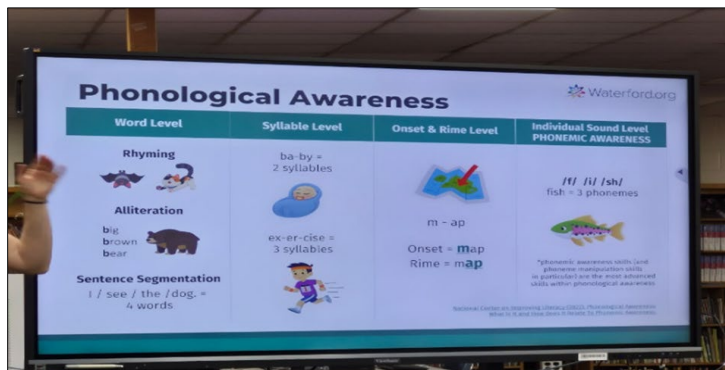
Chamber on Tuesday, Jan. 21, to finalize an upcoming site visit within the district for Pre-K (3&4) scholars. Dr. Phillips participated in the sixth Science of Reading (SOR) training for Pre-K (3&4) staff members on Wednesday, Jan. 29, and the Division of Student Services Instructional Leadership meeting on Friday, Jan. 31.



Dr. Phillips and team members are currently meeting with the preferred Pre-K (3&4) application/lottery vendor to finalize a date for the 2025-2026 SY.

Professional Learning Opportunities

The Early Learning/Pre-K Department has worked diligently during January to offer various PL opportunities to district employees covering multiple topics: SOR, Virtual Chat and Chews covering Classroom Orders, Timely Waterford support for parents, teachers, and students, and Weekly Updates. These excellent opportunities for staff members align with the DCSD Strategic Plan and the MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement.



DCSD Strategic Plan Goal

Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access

Goal Area III: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent

Goal Area V: Organizational Excellence

MIRACLES Framework

M – Motion Towards Equity

I – Improved Instructional Core

R – Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study

Instructional activities and usage of the Waterford platform have occurred throughout January in numerous Pre-K (3&4) classrooms throughout the district that support various content areas via the gallery walk.



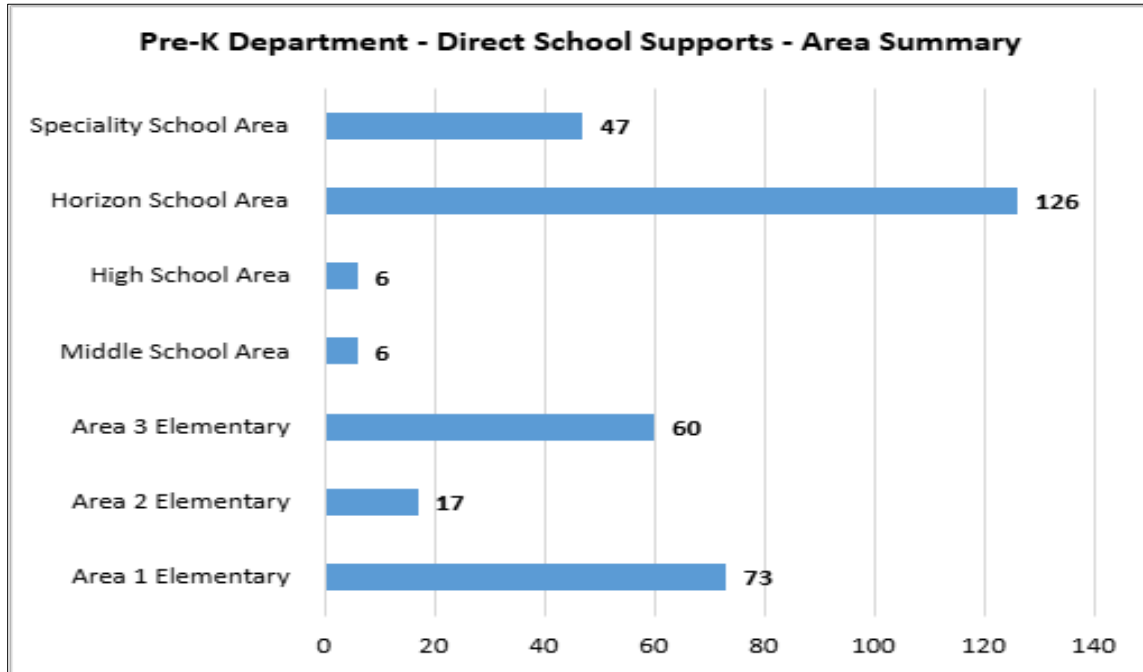
School Supports

The Early Learning/Pre-K Team continues to support schools to assist with auditing student files, instructional observations, providing feedback and guidance with MTSS Tier II and Tier III meetings, classroom environments, instructional planning, school visits, parent concerns, etc.

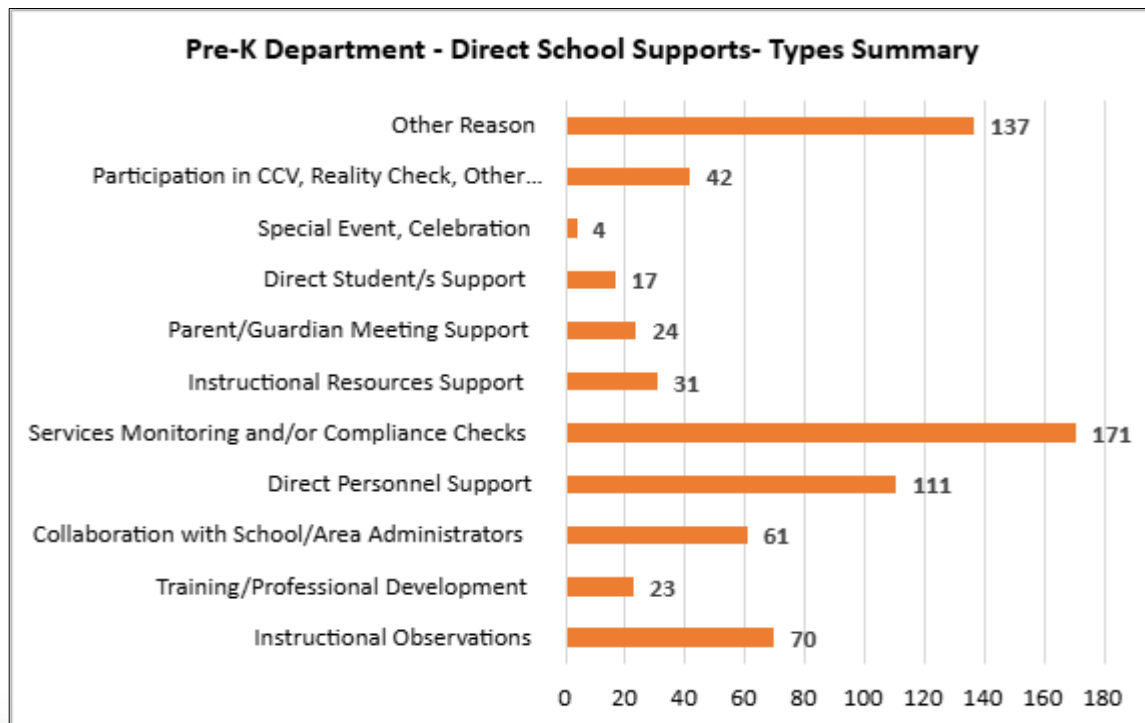
Department Highlights

The Pre-K3 expansion classes and Pre-K4 pilot classes are at the same ES locations, and the Early Learning Center continues to utilize the Waterford supplemental resource within its instructional settings. This wonderful instructional resource supports various content areas ranging from literacy, math, social studies, and science, technology, engineering (art) and mathematics (STE[A]M). Additionally, this instructional resource will support teachers and paraprofessionals in planning a plethora of instructional activities that are age-appropriate and aligned to the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards and Frog Street Curriculum that's embedded within their weekly lesson plans. The SOR stipend opportunity for Pre-K (3&4) teachers and paraprofessionals continues to be offered with staff members completing online modules, which is above and beyond the mandatory SOR training for Pre-K (3&4) employees. Our sixth SOR PL training was a success and concluded on Wednesday, Jan. 29. Dr. Phillips met with representatives from the Dekalb Chamber to finalize details for an upcoming site visit for Pre-K (3&4) scholars on Tuesday, Jan. 21. Our sixth SOR training will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 29 for 32 staff members. Additional meetings with the preferred Pre-K (3&4) lottery vendor are ongoing, with a tentative date to be determined, which will be announced soon to community stakeholders.

**Direct School Supports by the Department of Pre-K and Early Learning
Since the Start of the School Year**



**Types of Direct School Supports by Department of Pre-K and Early Learning
Since the Start of the School Year**

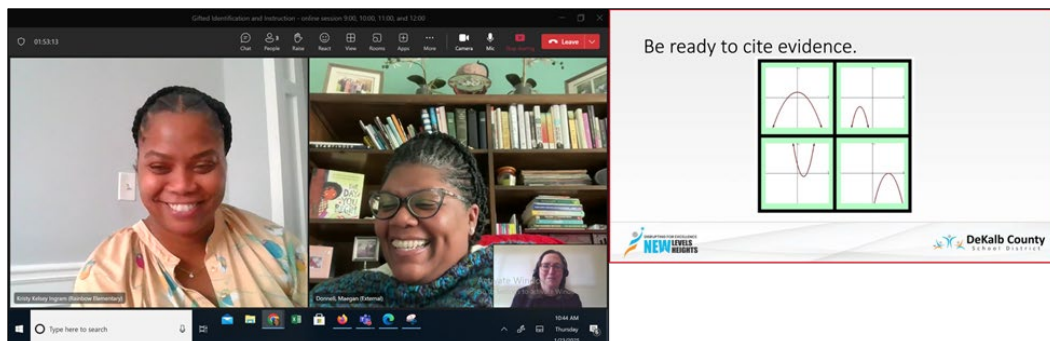


Senior Coordinators Donyell Atkinson and Kristen Drake

Gifted Education

The Gifted Education Team, along with Dr. Norman C. Sauce III, held its third and final Gifted Education Informational Session on Tuesday, Jan. 28, via ZOOM from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. with 450+ participants to learn about the district’s gifted identification process and the instructional support and resources that are available to schools, students, and teachers. These sessions were recorded and reside on the gifted page of the district’s website along with the FAQs that resulted from each session.

The Gifted Department offered a full-day PL session titled *Gifted Identification and Instruction* at Doraville United. One participant wrote, “I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank you for the fantastic training session on gifted instruction and identification. I truly appreciated your insights, and I left the session feeling both informed and inspired. The strategies and ideas you shared are already making a difference in how I approach my role as Gifted Liaison.” An online version of *Gifted Identification and Instruction* was offered during an inclement weather day. Notice the teachers' engagement as they completed, *Which One Does Not Belong*, an activity often used in Math Talks that can be adapted for any content area.



We also held a session at Tucker HS in collaboration with the advanced placement/international baccalaureate coordinator in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I). The session featured a text on engagement followed by a formal discussion protocol. One teacher wrote, “Please take heed and make them a model of how training and learning sessions should go. Their tone, information, and efficiency were precisely what a teacher/staff development session should look like. Everyone was pleased, enlightened, and enthusiastic about bringing their new strategies to the classroom to enrich their teaching. And we didn't even get snacks as a bribe.”

An online engagement session was offered for Flat Rock teachers during inclement weather. One teacher wrote, "Something that stood out to me in the professional learning session is that if we expect our students to grow and change, we should expect it of ourselves. I understand that in order to have effective engagement we should create an environment where students are actively involved in their learning process, and it should be meaningful and motivating. I also learned more about the importance of differentiated instruction and how to adapt teaching methods and content to meet the learning needs, interests, and abilities of students.

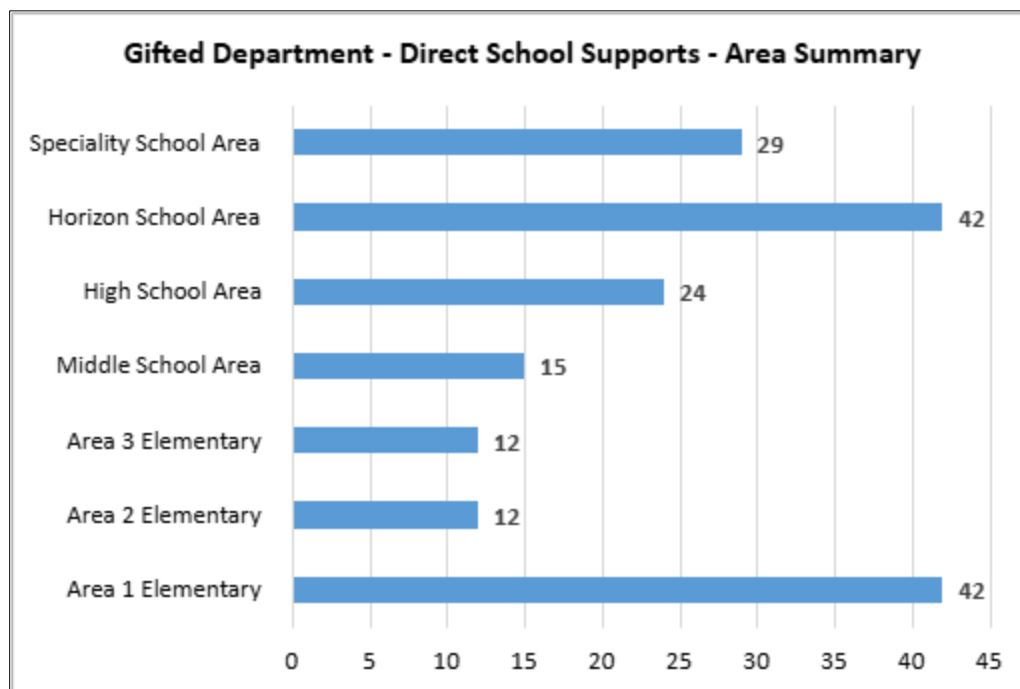
I loved when we played the game, ‘Which One Doesn't Belong.’ I will use this in the classroom because it will help me to observe how students think, reason, and make connections.”

In preparation for the upcoming testing cycle, Senior Coordinator Donyell Atkinson, in collaboration with the Assessment Department, hosted on Jan. 16 and 17 its IOWA and CogAT Training/Refresher Workshop for all school test coordinators (SchTC) and gifted liaisons to learn of updates, implementation, and timeline for assessment administration.

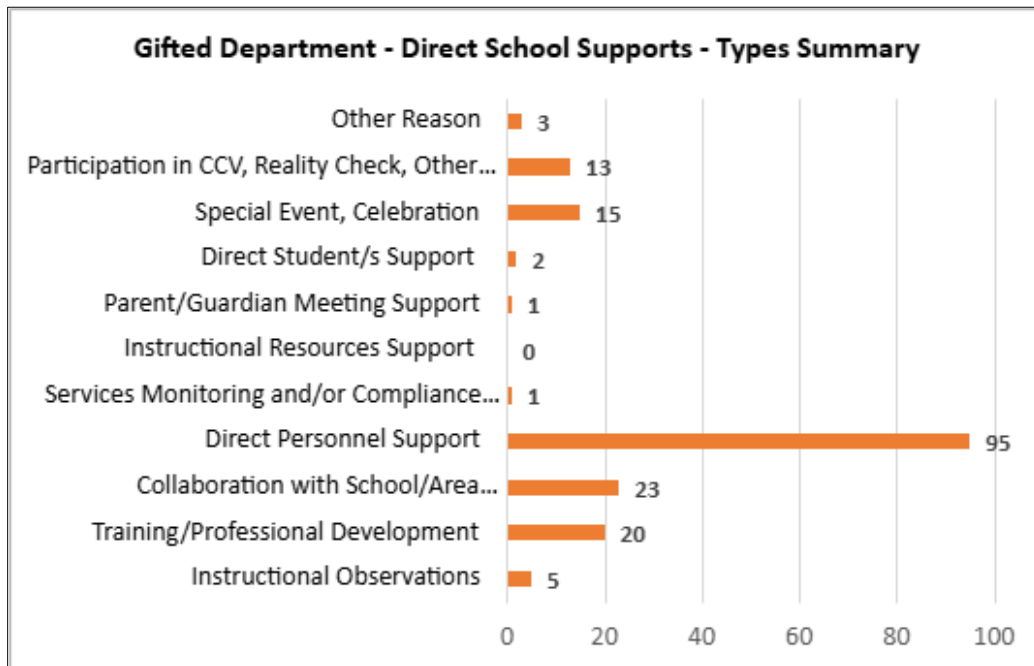
Senior Coordinator Donyell Atkinson attended the Georgia Gifted Coordinators' Consortium Workshop on Jan. 22 and 23 at Saint Simons' Island to collaborate and network with gifted coordinators of similar district sizes to share ideas and issues about gifted education.

Data based on the expansion opportunities during the fall gifted testing cycle for our students considered for gifted evaluation in the district's identification process showed as of Jan. 24, **10,476** students have been gifted-identified with 11 percent African American, 16 percent Hispanic, 14 percent SWD, and 7 percent ELLs.

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

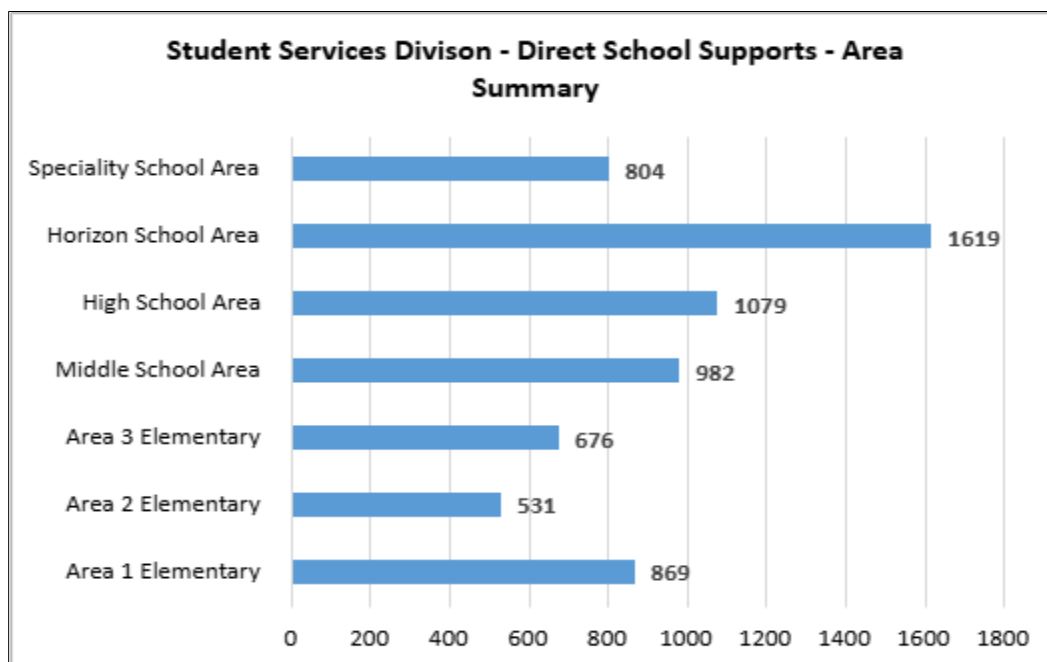


Types of Direct School Supports by Gifted Education Team Since the Start of the School Year

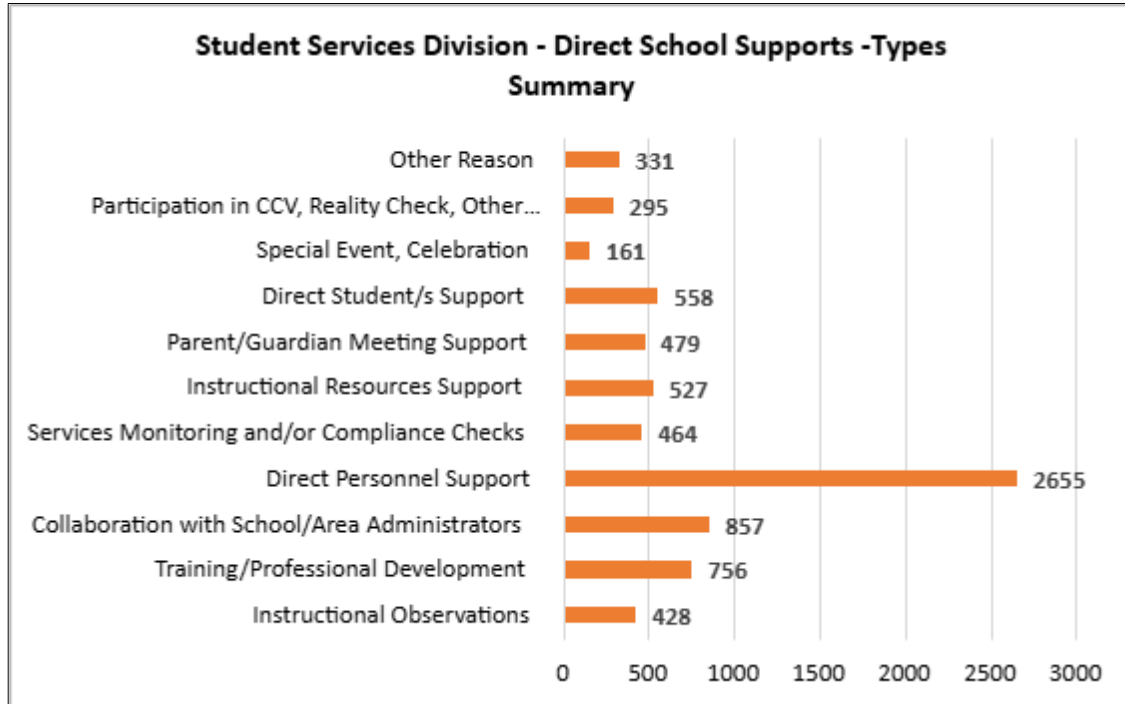


Division of Student Services – Direct School Supports Totals – Since the Start of the School Year

Direct School Supports by Division of Students Services’ Personnel Since the Start of the School Year



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



Chief Dr. Kishia K. Towns

Wrap Around Services

The Division of Wrap Around Services has had a very busy second semester. Supports have been provided through our Disconnect to Reconnect initiative, several SAFE Centers in their initial phases, and the inclusion of vape detection devices in all middle and HS restrooms.



The post-secondary PUSH Plan continues to be incorporated into high schools across the district, and various activities to support scholars are highlighted. Sophomore Half-Cap meetings have been held in conjunction with the School Leadership Team, and we are in the final stages of developing our grant application for the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) federal grant. This grant will support MS and HS scholars by exposing them to post-secondary options if awarded. Finally, we have 180 students who graduated as of Jan. 30. This number represents early and mid-year graduates. Congratulations to our scholars.

Lori Hanford



Ms. Hanford is a pillar in our community as she has been instrumental in ensuring our scholars have the necessary resources, support, and mentoring to meet their full potential. As a check and connect student engagement coach, we recognize her exemplary talent for meeting scholars where they are and helping them reach higher heights. For this, Ms. Lori Hanford received the Difference Maker Award.



Executive Director Christopher Key

Student Advancement

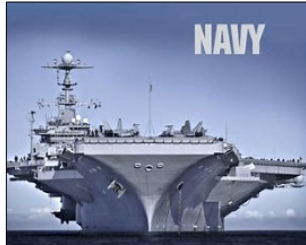
Post-Secondary Transition and Outreach

Various colleges visited our schools in January, and free application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) workshops were held. Additionally, activities to promote employment, enlistment, and entrepreneurship pathways were held in DCSD high schools. Civic engagement opportunities that are available this upcoming summer were also provided.

High School	Description of Event or Activity
Columbia High School	Savannah State at Columbia/Info Session

Savannah State Visit

Additional Navy and Perimeter College presentations were held, and Naviance task completion sessions have been an ongoing focus.



High School	Description of Event or Activity
Arabia Mountain	Student Access Loan (SAL) supported students with senior tasks in Naviance, completing surveys assigned by the school, scholarship search, applying for college, and with National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) fee waiver request forms.
MLK Jr	Navy lunchroom visit
MLK Jr	Georgia State Perimeter State Farm Application Workshop – seniors applied for the GSU Perimeter and the Perimeter Academy to be eligible for the State Farm Scholarship
MLK Jr	College bound FAFSA specialist assisted students with FAFSA.
MLK Jr	GA Tech experience classroom visit – 9th through 11th-grade students interacted with students and staff from the Georgia Institute of Technology H. Milton School of Industrial and Systems Engineering to learn more about the STEM programs at GA Tech.



iExperience (formerly IE Days) is a CASE initiative that exposes high school students from local Georgia high schools to the programs and services that are offered through the H. Milton School of Industrial & Systems Engineering. High school students who participate in the iExperience will gain insight into the life of an undergraduate ISYE student at Georgia Tech. iExperience is divided into three distinct phases.



High School	Description of Event or Activity
Miller Grove	FAFSA Frenzy Day
Miller Grove	Georgia State Univ. C.O.R.E. Mtg
Miller Grove	FAFSA Frenzy Day
Towers	FAFSA Frenzy Day

Scholars in all grade levels were allowed to learn of post-secondary summer programs and community service opportunities available to them.

VIRTUAL SUMMER SUCCESS FAIR

Explore internships, job shadowing programs, college preparatory programs and other opportunities for high school students to maximize their summer!
Opportunity for 9th - 11th Grade Students

January 29, 2025
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Attendance: 168

Registered: 521

Recordings of each virtual session were made available to all who registered and attended.

High School	Description of Event or Activity
Clarkston	Ongoing/classroom visits – Naviance tasks, Naviance scholarship outreach, historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) college fair administrative planning, Student Success Center-Student advisement
Dunwoody	Ongoing/FAFSA support for students, onboarding /Naviance training for SALs
Lithonia	Ongoing/Naviance tasks overview, HBCU college fair review, GSU Lift scholarship, Advisement – Tuesday/Thursday-Naviance Tasks
DECA	Ongoing/HBCU college fair outreach, common application planning rising seniors, student advisement meeting
All	FAFSA data Gear Up, mid-year transcripts Naviance, HBCU college fair planning March 25, SAT Prep Outreach, summer math and science honors (SMASH) academy information session planning

Tucker/Redan/Lakeside High Schools

University of Houston College Visit Video

[20250128_210052000_iOS.MOV](#)

Our Post-Secondary Transition Team promoted the Seventh Annual Greater Atlanta HBCU College Fair on Feb. 1 and supported DCSD seniors in attendance.

Plans for all 24 high schools to attend the Focus HBCU Fair on March 5 are underway.



On Jan. 31, we finalized our plans and data collection efforts for the GEAR UP grant application. We are looking forward to partnering with GSU on this initiative and are waiting for the results of the grant, which is due February 3.



School Counseling

School counselors have been working diligently to submit mid-year and early graduates, and we are proud of our scholars. Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) student information has also been collected. In addition, they are verifying the Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) grade point averages (GPA) which are due mid-February. Data from the HOPE GPA will be used to calculate additional scholarship eligibility.

Mid-Year Graduates – 180 Students Graduated as of Jan. 30

High school counselors submit mid-year and early graduates to the HS counseling coordinators. This is an ongoing effort. Students considered mid-year graduates are students who aged out due to their IEP, October or March graduates at Elizabeth Andrews HS, and fifth-year or beyond cohort students who have met graduation requirements. Early graduates are students who seek early graduation from HS at the request of their parent/guardian before their cohort graduation date.

[SOP Graduation Requests Revised December 2024 \(1\).pdf](#)

STAR Student – 24

The STAR program honors Georgia's top HS seniors and the teachers who have played a pivotal role in their academic success. Established in 1958 by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the STAR program has recognized more than 30,000 students to date. All accredited high schools in Georgia are eligible to participate in this prestigious academic recognition program. All DCSD high schools submitted their STAR student's name and photo. Local recognition events occur from Jan. 10 to Feb. 20. Regional winners will be honored Feb. 20 to March 20.

[2025 DCSD STAR STUDENTS \(1\).pdf](#)

[2025 DCSD STAR STUDENTS with Pictures.pdf](#)

Director Denise Revels

Wrap Around and Support Services

Title IV – English Learner Success Facilitator (ELSF) First Semester Highlights

ELSF Dr. Jenevee Spence: Serves Clarkston, Martin Luther King, and Towers High Schools.

- At the end of the FY24 semester, Dr. Spence collected students' performance data and utilized the final progress report to make informed decisions about classes students passed and their progress toward grade-level promotion and HS graduation. The following data provides guidance in assisting students and their counselors in deciding on course selection and required classes. Dr. Spence also utilizes the data to monitor credits that students have obtained and their path toward graduation. The outcome report was great for Clarkson HS.
 - Students on target = 73 percent (passed all classes)
 - Student in progress = 15 percent (passed all classes except for one)

- Students off track = 12 percent (failed two or more classes)



ELSF Shamia Moffitt: Serves Cross Keys, Lithonia, and McNair High Schools.

- Mrs. Moffitt is dedicated to fostering relationships and enhancing student involvement with our diverse families. Each month, she actively participates in food drives at Cross Keys HS. She has been instrumental in organizing parent nights focused on college and career readiness while providing families with essential information about the ESOL program. Mrs. Moffitt is committed to keeping her students on track with their classes by emphasizing the importance of regular school attendance.

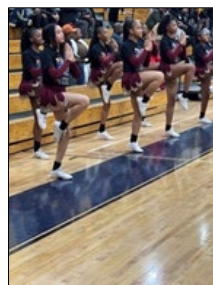


Lead Prevention/Intervention Liaison Stacey C. Robinson

Human Trafficking Prevention Month Blackout Day

Jan. 28 was Blackout Day, dedicated to increasing awareness and engaging the schools and community in meaningful action to fight against human trafficking. Southwest DeKalb HS hosted a powerful Human Trafficking Prevention Resource evening in conjunction with the Division of Wrap Around and the Saving Our Students (SOS) initiative aimed at raising awareness related to the risks and realities of human trafficking. This event occurred during the exciting basketball game between Tucker and Southwest DeKalb High Schools. In a unified show of support, all the teams wore Human Trafficking Prevention T-shirts to emphasize the importance of this critical cause. The night not only highlighted the ongoing fight to keep our schools and communities safe, but also served as a reminder of the role each of us plays in recognizing and preventing human trafficking.

A resource table was set up during the event, providing attendees with valuable information and awareness materials, such as pamphlets, wristbands, tees, and educational supplies. The table was a central point for students, staff, and community members to learn more about the signs of human trafficking, how to protect themselves and others, and how to get involved in prevention efforts. This event was an opportunity to continue the fight against human trafficking by reaching a broad audience, educating the community, and empowering everyone to take action. The collective effort of the teams, students, and supporters made Blackout Day an impactful and memorable event in raising awareness for such an important cause.



Director Dr. Darnell Logan

Student Relations

Disconnect to Reconnect Initiative: Principal Feedback Summary

In January, survey data was collected from 40 MS and HS principals across the district to gather feedback on the Disconnect to Reconnect initiative. The data includes responses from principals implementing Yondr pouches, cell phone lockers, and those whose schools primarily promote the Disconnect to Reconnect message while focusing on the discipline code.

1. Impact on Climate and Culture:

Principals widely noted a positive shift in school C&C following the implementation of the cell phone pilot initiative. Common observations include increased student focus, improved communication, and reduced distractions during instructional time.

2. Impact on Student Behavior:

Many schools reported significantly decreased behavioral incidents related to cell phone misuse. Some principals noted a marked improvement in student interactions, with increased peer engagement and fewer conflicts driven by phone use.

3. Impact on Instruction:

Principals highlighted that the initiative positively impacted instructional delivery. Increased student engagement and decreased classroom distractions were common themes. Teachers reported a noticeable improvement in their ability to conduct lessons without interruptions.

4. Challenges Experienced:

Common challenges include ensuring consistent policy enforcement, managing manpower to oversee implementation, and achieving teacher and student procedure adherence. Some schools faced logistical difficulties, particularly with students circumventing the rules.

5. Additional Comments and Recommendations:

Principals emphasized the need for additional staff support to ensure successful implementation. Recommendations included continued teacher training, additional resources like cell phone pouches, and ongoing evaluations to measure the program's effectiveness.

Overall, feedback indicates the initiative has had a generally positive impact but requires more structured support and resources to address challenges in implementation and sustainability.

Student Discipline/Student Reintegration

During January, the Department of Student Relations scheduled **102** DDP (District Due Process) hearings; **15** were canceled due to Discipline Team Meetings (DTM), **10** were canceled/withdrawn, and **4** were manifested – totaling **73** DDP hearings held in January. Additionally, Student Relations cleared **28** students to attend their attendance zone school within DCSD.

PBIS Coordinator Brandy Woolridge and PBIS District Coaches Shakira Bates-Shaw, Brian Bryant, Marcia Bryant-Cornelison, Dr. Dia Harden, Eva Landers, Kimmie Pryor, and Jason Townsend

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

The PBIS District Team conducted various coaching sessions, school visits, meetings, and training to improve the fidelity of PBIS implementation in DCSD. We have collaborated with other divisions and departments to integrate PBIS systems and practices with the MTSS framework and support the whole child. This collaboration aims to improve districtwide understanding of PBIS's impact on school climate, academic achievement, discipline, attendance, and mental health. Please review the PBIS events and artifacts that detail our support and partnerships in January.

- The PBIS District Team conducted PBIS Day 1 Retraining for schools receiving Tier 3 supports. This training is designed to equip existing PBIS school teams with content and resources to realign Tier 1 school-wide systems and practices in alignment with PBIS guidelines. The goal is to enhance the fidelity of PBIS implementation and improve school culture and climate for students and staff. During the session, key features of the PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) will be covered, including team composition, operating procedures, behavior expectations, teaching expectations, feedback, and acknowledgment.

Schools	Number of Participants	Sign-in Link	Evaluation Link
1. Chamblee Middle School	30	Sign-In Data	Evaluation Feedback Data
2. Chapel Hill Middle School			
3. DeKalb County Alternative School			
4. Dr. Ronald E McNair Middle School			
5. Druid Hills Middle School			
6. Peachcrest Elementary School			

- In collaboration with the Division of Wrap Around Services, the Student Relations PBIS District Team partnered with MRESA to offer the “*Empowering Educators: Mastering Essential Classroom Practices*” training (Jan. 6, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) opportunity for Pre-K-12th grade teachers and in-school suspension (ISS) paraprofessionals. This training is designed to equip teachers with effective strategies centered around the following five essential classroom practices:
 - Building relationships
 - Classroom structure and teaching
 - Active engagement

- Responding to appropriate behavior
- Responding to inappropriate behavior

Throughout the training session, participants engaged in hands-on activities and collaborative discussions to solidify their understanding and application of these practices.

Overall, the training was informative and well received by participants. However, I would like to bring a few pertinent concerns regarding attendance to your attention:

Attendance Overview:

A total of **126** DCSD employees registered for the training, but only 46 participants attended, resulting in a 36 percent attendance rate.

The training with MRESA was offered a second time based on requests from teachers, administrators, and district leaders. Additionally, we expanded registration to include ISS paraprofessionals, C&C coordinators, and pre-K–12th grade teachers. Despite these efforts, over 70 percent of registered attendees did not attend.

Proposed Training Protocols:

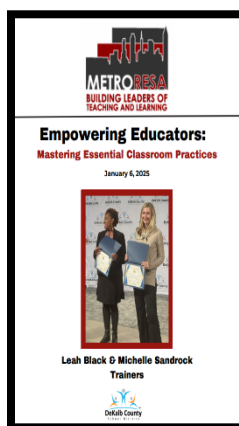
To prevent similar issues in the future, I recommend as a district we consider implementing the following training system protocols:

For School-Level Participants:

1. Obtain prior approval from your principal or direct supervisor before registering for training to ensure there are no scheduling conflicts with mandatory meetings or training.
2. If you cannot attend training, notify the training organizer and your direct supervisor in advance via email.

For District-Level Personnel:

For training that requires attendance from specific personnel, executive administrators, and area superintendents should communicate attendance expectations to school administrators (principals and APs).



Number of Participants	Sign-in Link	Evaluation Link
46	Sign-In Data	Evaluation Feedback Data

- The PBIS District Team and other district leaders (C&C coordinators, social workers, and one principal) completed the MindSet De-Escalation Train-the-Trainer Program on Jan. 7 and 8. Director of Student Relations Dr. Darnel Logan organized this districtwide training.



- On Jan. 9, DCSD leaders attended MRESA’s Whole Child Supports regional meeting. During this meeting, attendees reviewed the GaDOE MTSS-PBIS Integrated Model, the new GaMTSS Recognition System, fidelity tools, and the District Leadership Team (DLT) integration process.

A special thank you to Chief of Wraparound Services Dr. Kishia Towns, and Chief Academic Officer of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction Stacy Stepney, for their support and approval of our participation in the Whole Child Supports meeting.

MRESA’s Whole Child Supports Regional Meeting

DCSD Attendees

Jan. 9 | 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

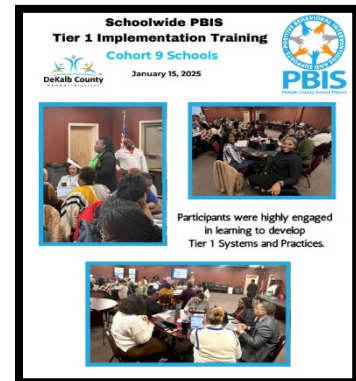
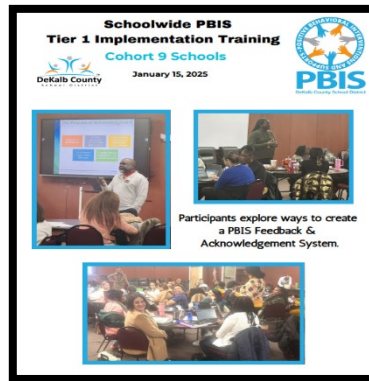
Name	Title
Dr. Kishia Towns	Chief of Wrap Around Services, Division of Wrap Around Services
Dr. Darnell Logan	Director of Student Relations, Division of Wrap Around Services
Denise Revels	Director of Wrap Around and Student Support Services, Division of Wrap Around Services
Monique Kimbell	MTSS Director, Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Ateshia Lester	Area 3 Elementary Superintendent
Dr. Rose Prejean-Harris	Assistant Superintendent 6-12 , Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Brandy Woolridge	PBIS Coordinator, Division of Wrap Around Services



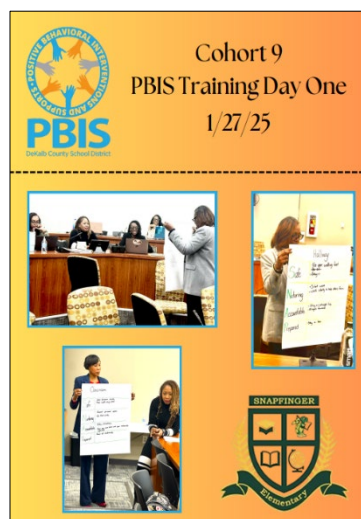
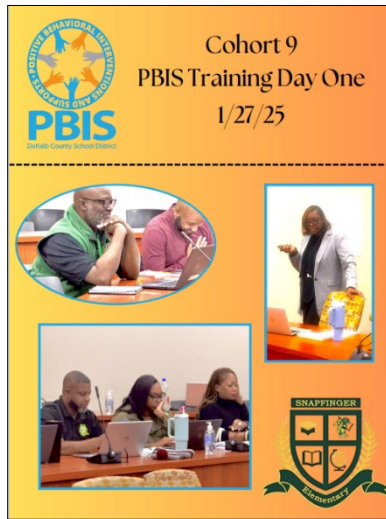
- On Monday, Jan. 13, Dr. Quentin Fretwell gave the PBIS District Team an overview presentation on the district’s Bullying Campaign Initiative and process. The discussion focused on supporting PBIS schools in analyzing bullying data and ensuring adult compliance with policies and protocols.
- On Tuesday, Jan. 14, the PBIS District Team completed the Manage At-Risk Students (MARS) Early Warning System training offered by the Research and Evaluation Team.
- On Jan. 15, Cohort 9 schools were trained on the GaDOE's new PBIS Day 1 Training curriculum. All required school team members attended the session. During the training, teams developed drafts of their PBIS mission statement, schoolwide behavior expectation matrix, lesson plans, teaching schedule, and acknowledgment systems for students and staff. The MRESA Whole Child Supports Team (Michelle Sandrock and John Martin) conducted the training, which was well received by participants.

**Cohort 9 Schools
PBIS Day 1 Training Session
Jan. 15 | 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Schools	Number of Participants	Sign-in Roster
1. Austin ES 2. Bethune MS 3. Chesnut ES 4. Dunwoody ES 5. Kingsley ES 6. Oak Grove ES 7. Rock Chapel ES 8. Stephenson MS	57	Sign-In Link



- The PBIS District Team conducted PBIS Day 1 Training for Snapfinger Elementary School on Jan. 27. During the training, the PBIS School Leadership Team developed a draft of the following PBIS system artifacts: Elevator speech, mission statement, meeting norms, schoolwide behavior expectation matrix, lesson plans, teaching schedule, and acknowledgment systems for students and staff.



Chief Academic Officer Stacy E. Stepney

Curriculum Audit

During the week of Jan. 13-16, representatives from Insight Education Group observed an additional 18 schools. Teachers provided artifacts connected to their lessons when they were observed. The curriculum auditors continue to analyze the artifacts using the Georgia Standards of Excellence and rubrics adapted from organizations such as EQuIP, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve.

Insight Education Group will complete the in-person observations on Feb. 6 and 7. Nine additional secondary schools have been added to increase the number of schools receiving in-person observations to 54 schools. The next phase includes observing 182 teachers virtually through the Teaching Channel.

Literacy

In preparation for implementing Georgia's new ELA standards in August, the DCSD is training literacy leads, academic coaches, and ELA Department/grade-level chairs. These specialized training and coaching sessions are designed to provide school-level instructional staff with the tools necessary to support teachers in implementing the new standards. Participants receive in-person training and virtual coaching to prepare for redelivery to site-based teachers. Virtual coaching allows literacy leaders to ask questions, rehearse presentation segments, and receive individualized support as they prepare to redeliver the content.

Academic Coaches

Throughout January, senior academic coach coordinators (ACC) worked together to provide opportunities for learning, preparation, planning, and calibration. The ACC Team members continue to support their respective areas and departments to ensure academic coaches (AC) have the necessary resources to support teachers in implementing the curriculum. The ACCs attended the area retreats and planning sessions, facilitated and judged elementary spelling bees, attended and facilitated sessions during the district/area PLOs, attended the MRESA new ELA Standards training, participated in the PLC Coaching Academy, actively engaged in job-alike meetings for content coordinators, and supported the Curriculum Audit Team. Additionally, the team worked on the new standards training for secondary ELA and attended the Barbara Blackburn training and MRESA secondary standards training. Further, the team attended StudySync training for middle schools.

ACCs met with their respective ACs during the Academic Coaches Academy to delve into data related to full-academic-year students and how they impact the CCRPI. They examined ways to use MARS to identify at-risk students, learned about pivot tables, and practiced using the target calculators. ACs also worked to review the PLC framework within their buildings and shared best practices. They also discussed pacing and ways to ensure that all has been taught prior to testing. Also, the ACCs attended the district Certified Instructional Trainer (CIT), conducted new AC onboarding, and provided technical assistance.

Tiered coaching support remains based on principal feedback, AC documentation of work, and onsite observations.

UPDATE: There are 203 academic coach positions of which 193 are filled, leaving 10 vacancies. Of the 193 positions filled, 111 are first-time coaches.

Area	Number of Coaches	Number of Vacancies	Number of New
Area 1	6	0	6
Area 2	17	1	7
Area 3	19	0	7
Middle	43	0	24
High	30	2	13
Horizon	68	6	46
Specialty	10	1	8
Totals	193	10	111

Deputy Chief Academic Officer Dr. Sean R. Tartt

Academic Skills Center

As we progress, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction is excited to continue to invest in our Academic Skills Center (ASC) staff. In February, ASC staff will engage in an interactive session centered around the effective use of close reading strategies led by PLF Dr. Felicia Wynter. Graduation Innovations Senior Coordinator Culisha Curry, will facilitate a tabletop discussion that will benefit ASC staff with listening and modeling successful instructional strategies that have worked in their respective ASC.

Student Success Skills Backpack (SSSB)

In January, cabinet members were given an overview of SSSB in partnership with the DIIT. This session provided an overview of the initiative, target audience, process, platform for uploading artifacts, and timeline. A training course in Canvas has been pushed out to the teachers, and students have access to their SSSB course to begin. Next, marketing videos about SSSB will be released, and teacher stakeholder meetings will be held.

Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID)

The eight AVID sites engaged in sessions with AVID Regional Representative Dr. Alberta Banks, and graduation innovations senior coordinator to discuss their quarter-at-a-glance monitoring. Leaders participated in the Southern Coastal Principal's Collaborative Conference in January, which focused on implementing *writing inquiry collaboration organization reading* (WICOR) strategies schoolwide. Likewise, school and district AVID Team members are registering for training modules and summer institute.

Assistant Superintendent P-5 Dr. Penny Mosley

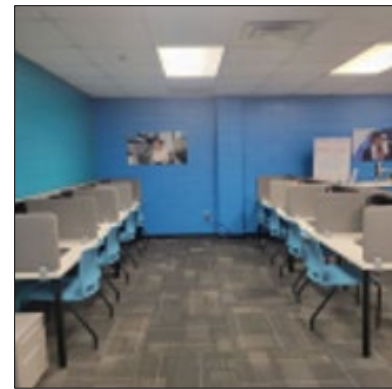
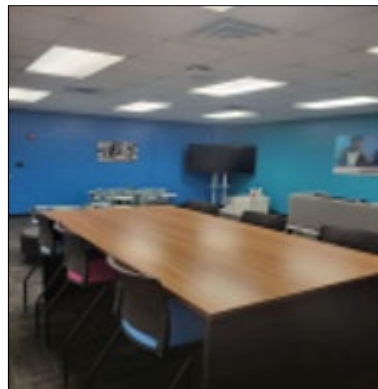
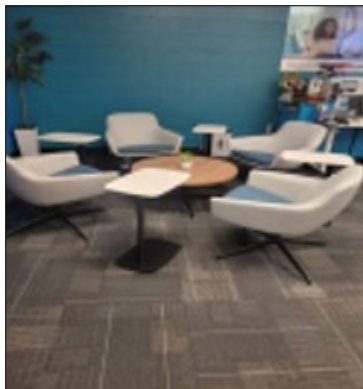
Let's READ, Georgia

DCSD Division of Curriculum and Instruction has partnered with MRESA for the implementation of new ELA standards for the 2025-2026 SY. Elementary literacy leads along with ACs have participated in two days of training on the four ELA domains: foundations, practices, texts, and languages. The school-based literacy teams will redeliver new ELA standards training on a monthly basis to ensure our teachers and staff are ready to support students for the upcoming school year.

Assistant Superintendent 6-12 Dr. Rose Prejean-Harris

Dekalb Acceleration Academies (DAA)

DAA is ringing in the new year with energy and excitement! The addition of new modular furniture has transformed the space, creating a bright, welcoming environment that feels like a brand-new school for everyone. The McNair HS Team has been incredibly hospitable, and DAA invites all members of the DCSD to stop by and visit!



Currently, 24 students are enrolled, with a goal to reach 40 by the end of the month. The interest has been overwhelming, and DAA is in the process of reviewing 54 completed applications. DAA is eager to continue expanding and serving even more students!

Our dedicated staff consistently engage in professional development, enhancing everything from ACCESS proctor testing and enrollment processes to crafting personalized learning plans for each graduate candidate. The commitment to growth and excellence is evident in the work being done to support our students.

On Jan. 29, we hosted a career event featuring Michelle France, entrepreneur and guest speaker. It was an inspiring session for our students.

Director Dr. Lynn Angus Ramos

Literacy

Parent Partnership

The Literacy Department hosted a table at the HRRB to engage with parents. The team gave away decodable books and the DCSD Read and Rise interactive literacy booklet. Additionally, we talked with parents about literacy strategies and modeled in several read-alouds with young students. The team is also preparing for an additional parent conference and small group sessions in February and March.

Structured Literacy Professional Learning (PL)

As a requirement of House Bill 538, grades K-3 teachers are to complete PL around structured literacy. Through the Georgia Literacy Academy course, provided at no cost by GaDOE, DCSD requires all K-5 teachers to take the training if they have not completed another state-approved pathway such as language essentials for teachers of reading and spelling or a reading or dyslexia endorsement. As of Jan. 24, we have **2,019** teachers engaged in the full course and **1,015** working on the condensed course for electives teachers. Principals and area teams have access to reports to monitor progress. Follow-up support “Knowledge Builder” sessions are being designed and delivered in collaboration with school improvement to support Horizon Schools.

Director Lummie Baker

Educational Media and Instructional Materials

Professional Learning

The theme for Educational Media’s Annual Mid-Year meeting was *Back to the Basics*, which was inspired by the movie *Back to the Future*. The purpose of the session was to revisit best practices related to using the school library media center’s space, resources, and services with a focus on foundational learning and innovation. Teacher-librarians and library media assistants participated in training related to promoting the school library’s learning environment through program planning, collaborating with staff, and elevating technology literacy skills via the school library media center’s print and digital resources. This meeting served as a catalyst for propelling our library media staff forward to meet the needs of their respective school communities.

Destiny 101: Weeding and Inventory PL

These virtual PL sessions were presented on Friday, Jan. 10, and Friday, Jan. 17, to teacher-librarians and library media assistants interested in refreshing their skill set related to the district’s library management system. Topics covered included generating circulation and collection development reports, creating lost book notices, and preparing the program for processing annual inventory.

26th Annual DCSD Georgia Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Winners

The 26th Annual DeKalb Georgia HRRB was held on Saturday, Jan. 25, at Arabia Mountain HS. Prior to the competition, students, coaches, parents/guardians, district staff, and board members gathered in the gymnasium for the parade of teams and the opening ceremony that was filled to capacity. During the competition, each team competed against students in their grade level for four rounds consisting of 60 questions. All teams had to answer questions about the 10 Georgia Book Award Nominee books (for elementary and middle schools) or the 20 Peach Teen Award Nominee books (for high schools) that they read. All first and second-place teams will advance to the Metro Regional Georgia HRRB, which will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8, at Clayton State University. The DCSD Georgia HRRB encourages and celebrates the love and enthusiasm for reading in DeKalb County!

School	Place	Grade Level
Austin Elementary School	1st Place	Elementary School
DeKalb County Public Library	2nd Place	Elementary School
Vanderlyn Elementary School	3rd Place	Elementary School
Kittredge Magnet School	1st Place	Middle School
Henderson Middle School	2nd Place	Middle School
Chamblee Middle School	3rd Place	Middle School
Lakeside High School	1st Place	High School
Chamblee High School	2nd Place	High School
Dunwoody High School	3rd Place	High School

26th Annual DCSD Georgia HRRB 1st Place Winners





Director Stephanie Brown-Bryant

K-12 Teaching and Learning

National History Day

The National History Day competition was a remarkable success! Our middle and HS students presented creative and deeply informative presentations through exhibits, papers, performances, websites, and documentaries. Several students are advancing to the South Metro Regional Competition.

World Language – PL: Learning Targets

Teachers are offered after-school PL sessions focusing on learning targets in world languages. The PL aimed to improve engagement and motivation, support differentiated instruction, and ensure alignment with standards. Forty-six participants attended a synchronous session with more participants completing asynchronously. This was our highest attendance, after-school session and highest rated at a 4.94 satisfaction rating out of 5.

Spelling Bee

The 2025 DCSD Spelling Bee Finals were held on Jan. 28. The top 21 school bee champions in the school district competed to participate in the next level, which is the Georgia Association of Educators Region 4 Bee. Fifth grade Austin Elementary student, Sarv Dharvane, emerged as DCSD's champion for the second year in a row.

Mathematics

The Mathematics Team provided three one-hour PL opportunities for MS mathematics educators. One hundred sixty-nine participants attended one of the three sessions. These sessions contained information on the diagnostic assessments' purpose, common errors, tips to administer, and practice time.

Visual and Performing Arts – HRRB T-shirt Contest Winners

Visual and Performing Arts collaborated with the Educational Media Department to highlight artistic talents. The following scholars were recognized in the competition: First place – Natalie T. from Chamblee HS; second place – Elenore H. from Peachtree MS; and third place – Aleah H. from Champion Theme MS.

Georgia High School Musical Theatre Awards

The DeKalb School of the Arts "*Little Shop of Horrors*" musical is eligible to be nominated for a 2025 Georgia High School Music Theatre Award. The Georgia High School Musical Theatre Awards, also known as the Shuler Hensley Awards, celebrate excellence in high school musical theatre across the state. The program is named after Tony Award-winning actor Shuler Hensley and recognizes outstanding performances, direction, design, and technical achievements. The program fosters a love for the arts and supports aspiring theatre students.

Science – Georgia Science Supervisors Leadership Training at Jimmy Carter Historic Museum

On Jan. 29, K-12 science coordinators traveled to the Jimmy Carter Historic Museum in Plains, GA to participate in the Georgia Science Supervisors Leadership Summit. This training provided an invaluable opportunity for DeKalb's science leaders to engage with national experts, industry leaders, and education professionals across Georgia to strengthen their advocacy for high-quality science and literacy instruction.

English/Language Arts – StudySync Training

In collaboration with the area ELA leads and ACCs, C&I has planned and scheduled additional implementation training for MS coaches and ELA teachers for StudySync, our Tier I resource. The focus of the sessions is on backward planning using the resources. Training began during the last week of January and will continue through February.

Director Doryiane Gunter

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE)

Professional Learning

A team from DCSD attended the Future of Education Technology Conference in Orlando, FL from Jan. 14-17. Andrea Wright facilitated a poster session on micro credentials in edtech, served on a female gamers’ esports panel, and facilitated a breakout session on STEM programs in DCSD that supports female scholars. Sylvester Boston from Stone Mill ES served on an esports panel hosted by CDW. Linda Stewart from Dekalb Arts Academy facilitated a poster session on how she started the Lego competitive teams from one student’s interest.

Student Success and Programming

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Region 10 Competition

FBLA Region 10 competition took place on Thursday, Jan. 16, at Cedar Grove HS. Over 400 students from DeKalb, Clayton, Rockdale, and Henry counties participated. Students from 17 DeKalb high schools and nine middle schools competed in events such as electronic career portfolio, public speaking, and job interviewing.

High School Winners: 1st Place – Cedar Grove HS; 2nd Place – Chamblee HS

Middle School Winners: 1st Place – Tucker MS; 2nd Place – Freedom MS; and 3rd Place – Sequoyah MS

School	Place	Grade Level
Tucker Middle School	1st Place	Middle School
Freedom Middle School	2nd Place	Middle School
Sequoyah Middle School	3rd Place	Middle School
Cedar Grove High School	1st Place	High School
Chamblee High School	2nd Place	High School



Peach State Culinary Challenge

Students in the culinary arts program at McNair HS participated in the Taste of the Championship Teen Peach State Culinary Challenge held in conjunction with the College Football National Championship on Sunday, Jan. 19, at Georgia Aquarium. Although they did not take home the win, the students shared that it was a memorable experience. McNair HS Culinary instructors Chef Jay Middleton and Mrs. Nadine Thompson-Samuels led the students in a great challenge.



Director Janetta Greenwood

Fernbank Science Center

School Support – Single Visits, Outreach, Planetarium, STT, and SOAR

Fernbank Science Center (FSC) continues providing single visits and outreach in science across the district. In January, FSC served **254** students with single visits, **2,734** through Outreach, and **965** with planetarium visits. A total of **3,953** students were served through FSC various program offerings during January. Due to weather challenges in January, some visits have been rescheduled.

Scientific Tools and Techniques (STT)

FSC successfully hosted **STT Recruitment Week** from Jan. 27-31, targeting schools with historically low application rates. Approximately **145** students from Columbia, Lithonia, Mary M. Bethune, and Freedom Middle Schools participated in classroom visits, hands-on STEM activities, and discussions with former STT students about their experiences. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with many students expressing strong interest in applying. The deadline to submit STT applications for the 2025-2026 SY is March 1.

Students of Advanced Research (SOAR) – Expanding Access

FSC's SOAR program kicked off its pilot program in January with student representation from three high schools. SOAR is a gateway to mastering STEM skills for 10th-12th graders who have a passion for discovery and critical thinking. Students take two courses in one semester: AP Seminar and Scientific Research III. In AP Seminar, students explore real-world problems, analyze diverse perspectives, and refine their abilities to present compelling arguments. In Scientific Research III, students dive into hands-on scientific research, design their own experiments, and tackle challenges that ignite their curiosity. With small class sizes, expert guidance, and the chance to publish their research, this course is a step toward STEM success and beyond. The deadline to submit SOAR applications for the 2025-2026 SY is March 1.

Professional Learning – School Master Gardener and Green Heart Challenge

On Jan. 13, 20 school representatives from seven school sites became certified Monarchs Across GA educators through a full-day workshop. They gained curriculum and resources to deliver standards-based integrated lessons highlighting math and science on plant propagation techniques and pollinator habitat development using school gardens. School representatives could plan, collaborate with others from across the district, and develop lessons to incorporate into their weekly instruction at their home school.

On Jan. 22 and 23, FSC, in collaboration with the Captain Planet Foundation, hosted a virtual teacher training for Green Heart Challenge 2025. Teachers were provided with an overview of the competition and strategies for implementation with students. The Green Heart Challenge competition is an environmentally focused competition that encourages students to address problems and design solutions that impact their community. This opportunity aligns with environmental and ecology-based standards supporting grades 5-12.

Partnerships

Georgia Aquarium Partnership

The Georgia Aquarium Partnership continued during January. The Georgia Aquarium Partnership has served **18,189** students and **69** schools. As of Jan. 7, **838** students ventured to the aquarium with teachers and chaperones to participate in instructor-led field trips. The outreach programs have served **7,006** students. Virtual programs have served **2,445** students through the end of January.

The Aquanaut Express began visits to schools on Jan. 15. DCSD was the first school district to receive the revitalized Aquanaut Express. This interactive classroom exhibit served **909** students at seven school sites. The focus of the Aquanaut Express for the remainder of the academic year will be on grades 1, 3, 6, and HS science courses (biology, environmental science, and oceanography). Indian Creek ES was the first school to experience this engaging learning experience and was chosen as the school to be featured by the Georgia Aquarium regarding the official relaunching of this program.





Community Engagement/Cross-Departmental Collaboration

Ocean Guardian Schools, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Ocean Guardian’s Grant and in partnership with the Georgia Aquarium, have received additional support from FSC instructional specialists and science coordinators through cross-departmental collaboration to support the implementation of their science inquiry projects focused on composting, gardening, and watershed restoration. The schools have collaborated with the Georgia Aquarium, South River Watershed Alliance, and FSC to provide hands-on experiences with industry partners.

Director Monique Kimbell

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

During this month’s PL, a variety of topics were covered based on area and need. We collaborated with the PL Department to provide training on MTSS’ role in PLCs. Professional Learning Facilitator Kimberly Sampson provided introductory training. Lead Social Worker Sonja Tobler, presented on Trauma Impact Education Screener (TIES). This training walked the team through the steps DCSD takes to support all students who fall into this category and the role of the MTSS in this process. The team discussed next steps for students who have been in MTSS for three or more years. Lastly, as a requirement of HB538, the team participated in training on the next steps for students who were flagged as having characteristics of dyslexia on the universal screener.

Director Keatra Wright

Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Academy

FLEX Academy is expanding its support to include providing academic support for students enrolled in Chancelight, an innovative educational opportunity designed for MS students. FLEX staff will provide live instruction in math, science, and social studies. In alignment with Strategic Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access, FLEX Academy provides a flexible alternative for HS students to gain credits toward graduation. FLEX Academy serves **186** students during the academic day, **394** through FLEX Beyond the Day, and **22** from East DeKalb Campus.

Chief Dr. Candace Alexander

Continuous and Improvement Accountability

Executive Director Dr. Myisha Warren

Federal Programs

Excited about:

- Title I Distinguished Schools – Wadsworth, DeKalb Early College Academy, Livsey, Robert Shaw, and Wynbrooke – highest five percent of schools with achievement
- Title I Reward Schools – International Community School, DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts, McLendon, Kelley Lake, and Rainbow – highest five percent of schools with growth between 2022-2023
- Robert Shaw, 2024 National Distinguished Title I School (one of two in the state) is presenting at the National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Conference Feb. 18-21

Title I coordinators, accounting associates, and budget specialists continued meeting with public, private, and charter school staff to discuss the items listed below. These items are reviewed to ensure alignment with the Strategic Plan and goals created within the CSIP:

- CSIPs
- Open purchase orders
- FY24 closeout
- Travel
- FY25 budgets
- Tutorial
- Spending
- Ongoing training

The Office of Federal Programs continued to review, approve, and verify extra activity packets and stipends throughout January. The funding sources were Title I, Title II, and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER).

Make-up bookkeeper training was conducted on Jan. 30, by Title I accounting associates and budget specialists. The intended outcome of the sessions was to equip attendees with tools to submit accurate and timely requisitions.

The ESSER Team continued working on:

- The Annual Reporting Survey for the state – Due Feb. 14
- The Department of Audits meeting and information for the FY24 audit

Consolidated LEA (local education agency) Improvement Plan (CLIP)

- The Federal Programs staff began initial planning
- Working on a draft timeline and draft documents

CSIPs

- The committee is planning for:
 - Feb. 7 district staff calibration meeting,
 - Feb. 13 PLO
 - Feb. 24, 26-28 school CSIP trainings

Comparability – Only four schools were not comparable. Additional staff members were identified and submitted to the state. This made Bouie comparable. An additional staff member for Shadow Rock was also submitted. HR and Allotments are working on staff for the other schools.

- Bouie – Comparable
- Narvie
- Shadow Rock
- Woodridge

Director Dr. Felicia Rhone

Assessment and Accountability

MAP Reading Fluency

Continued Professional Learning

To ensure ongoing support and the integration of assessment data, select schools will receive additional onsite PL opportunities through February:

- Area 3 Elementary Schools and Horizon Area Elementary Schools will continue to engage in targeted professional development.
- These sessions will focus on combining MAP growth reports with MAP reading fluency reports, enabling educators to leverage data for instructional decision-making and student support.

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Facilitators	Winter Date	School Name	District Assessment Specialist
Jay Jones	1/8/25	Martin Luther King, Jr. HS	Vanetta Vincent
Mesha Greene	1/8/25	Sequoyah MS	Chante Blackwell
Beth Praska	1/9/25	Chapel Hill ES	Vanetta Vincent
Lori Seelig	1/14/25	Cedar Grove ES	Vanetta Vincent
Brenda Windischman	1/14/25	Pine Ridge ES	Chante Blackwell
Lori Seelig	1/15/25	Canby Lane ES	Vanetta Vincent
Beth Praska	1/16/25	Eldridge L Miller ES	Chante Blackwell
Shannon Weaver	1/16/25	Rock Chapel ES	Vanetta Vincent
Yolanda Wallace	1/17/25	Shadow Rock ES	Vanetta Vincent
Patrice Newnam	1/22/25	Browns Mill ES	Chante Blackwell
Patrice Newnam	1/23/25	Redan ES	Vanetta Vincent
Patrice Newnam	1/24/25	Stoneview ES	Vanetta Vincent
Patrice Newnam	1/27/25	Murphey Candler ES	Vanetta Vincent
Shannon Weaver	1/27/25	Stone Mountain ES	Chante Blackwell
Patrice Newnam	1/28/25	Oak View ES	Chante Blackwell
Patrice Newnam/Lori Seeling	1/28/25	Clarkston HS	Vanetta Vincent
Patrice Newnam	1/29/25	R E McNair ES DLA	Chante Blackwell
Brenda Windischman	1/30/25	Allgood ES	Vanetta Vincent
Patrice Newnam	1/31/25	Panola Way	Vanetta Vincent
Jay Jones	2/3/25	Cross Keys HS/DeKalb HS	Vanetta Vincent
Patrice Newnam	2/6/25	Fairington ES	Chante Blackwell
Patrice Newnam	2/7/25	Flat Shoals ES	Chante Blackwell
Patrice Newnam	2/10/25	Barack H. Obama ES	Vanetta Vincent
Patrice Newnam	2/11/25	Rowland ES	Vanetta Vincent
Angela Morton	2-13-25	Rainbow ES	Vanetta Vincent
Mesha Greene	2/13/25	Henderson MS	Chante Blackwell
Staci Kimmons	3-5-35	McNair MS	Vanetta Vincent

Gray = Completed; Orange = Changes from original schedule

Professional Development for Benchmark Assessments

To ensure the effective use of the Data and Assessment (DnA) platform during benchmark assessment windows, the following training opportunities were offered:

1. Virtual training sessions for teachers: Designed for teachers and other personnel to deepen understanding of the DnA platform. These sessions were held on:
 - a. Jan. 3 (all sessions were filled)
 - b. Jan. 6 (all sessions were filled)

2. Face-to-face training:

- a. Jan. 22: Targeted support for administrators
- b. Jan. 23: Targeted support for academic coaches, lead teachers for special education (LTSE), MTSS specialists, and other instructional leaders.

Georgia Milestone End of Course (EOC):

In preparation for the spring administration, enrollment counts have been requested from all school testing coordinators (SchTC). SchTCs are expected to designate if paper documents will be needed for testing for any students with accommodations as outlined in their Individual Education Program (IEP)/504/ Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) and/or English Learner/Test Participation Committee (EL-TPC) plans. The deadline for submission of the HS counts is Jan. 8. Enrollment counts were submitted to the GaDOE on Jan. 17.

Eleven high schools were able to administer the January EOC mid-month for biology, U.S. history, and algebra C&C on Friday, Jan. 24. The following 11 high schools participated in January mid-month testing:

- Arabia Mountain HS
- Cedar Grove HS
- Clarkston HS
- Cross Keys HS
- Lakeside HS
- McNair HS
- Miller Grove HS
- Southwest Dekalb HS
- Stephenson HS
- Stone Mountain HS
- Tapestry Charter

ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs:

The assessment coordinator for ACCESS administration conducted two make-up sessions for SchTCs who missed the scheduled training.

- Eight additional ACCESS administration training sessions were held for principals and program directors/coordinators who were administering the ACCESS as their program site.

NAEP:

Two remaining DCSD schools are scheduled to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These last two selected schools, Doraville United and Chestnut Elementary, will test Jan. 30 and Feb. 4, respectively. These final two schools will participate in district-level training on Jan. 21. All schools have regularly communicated with state-level NAEP representatives to prepare for administration.

PL Attended:

- Large District User Group Spring Readiness – Virtual Meeting – Jan. 23
- GaDOE Lunch and Learn – Jan. 17
- Spring 2025 Technology Directors/Coordinators Training – Jan. 14

PL Facilitated:

- Make-up ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Workshop – Jan. 3, 8, and 14
- Navigating the WIDA Assessment Management System (AMS) Platform (Data Recognition Corporation [DRC] Insight) for ACCESS Testing Webinar – Jan. 3, 8, and 14
- Creating Assessments in Renaissance DnA (along with Renaissance representative) – Jan. 3 and 6

Director Dr. Rebecca Braaten

Research, Data, and Evaluation

Reality Checks continued during January. The meetings included the following areas and school locations:

- Area 2, Area 3, and Panola Way Elementary – Jan. 5
- Area Horizon, Area Specialty, McNair Discovery Learning Academy (DLA), and Shadow Rock Elementary – Jan. 16
- Area 1 – Jan. 17
- Pine Ridge, Stone Mountain, Browns Mill, Montclair, and Oak View Elementary Schools – Jan. 21
- Dresden, Fairington, Murphey Candler, and Hightower Elementary Schools – Jan. 22
- Flat Rock, Flat Shoals, Stoneview, Woodridge, Rock Chapel, and Snapfinger Elementary Schools – Jan. 23
- Stone Mill and Peachcrest Elementary Schools – Jan. 27

The first of two research review board meetings was held on Jan. 29. The second meeting is scheduled for Feb. 6. At that time, the winter Research Review Board approvals and denials will be finalized and letters to applicants will go out in February.

The department processed seven electronic online document requests during January. Of those seven, four were online registration/application forms, one was an event/training feedback survey, and two were stakeholder surveys. Electronic online documents were created for the following divisions/departments:

- Human Resources
- Professional Development
- Schools and Leadership

The department has completed twenty-three data and dashboard projects for internal and external stakeholders. These projects include the following types of data: attendance, discipline, student demographics, student grades, and local, state, and national assessments.

Additionally, interactive dashboards were created to monitor key district programs, including longitudinal gifted assessment and enrollment for Division of Student Services, literacy courses completion progress tools for district and area ELA coordinators, and bridge law and social emotional learning completion for the Student Advancement Department. The department also provided essential data to support summer school planning. Lastly, multiple school-level requests were initiated and completed during the period.

Research, Data, and Evaluation (RDE) held several training sessions in January:

- MAP data Jan. 13 – Department of Exceptional Education staff
- MARS training Jan. 14 – PBIS district staff
- Tableau training Jan. 14 – RDE and IT staff
- Graduation Cohort Calculator Jan. 17 – Chamblee High leadership
- MARS training Jan. 30 – Tucker HS Leadership Team
- Special Education Graduation Rate Calculations Jan. 30 – Area Horizon select staff
- CCRPI, Georgia School Climate Surveys, Full Academic Year, and MARS/Excel – Jan. 31 – academic coaches

The annual charter school data meetings were held in the last week of January. At the meetings, RDE discussed Reality Check data (attendance, discipline, and gifted) and reviewed the data layout for the fall-to-winter MAP comparison with each charter school.

- DeKalb PATH Academy and DeKalb Preparatory – Jan. 27
- Museum School and DATE – Jan. 28
- Tapestry and Leadership Preparatory – Jan. 29
- GLOBE Academy and International Community School – Jan. 30

Chief Information Officer Dr. Kermit Belcher

Always Learning

DCSD remains committed to ensuring every student has equal access to technology through its one-on-one Chromebook program and cloud-based learning tools. This initiative empowers students to engage in personalized, interactive, and collaborative learning experiences, in the classroom or at home. The district enables students to build and showcase their *Backpack of Success Skills* by equipping them with modern digital resources. This graduation profile provides tangible, evidence-based measures of student growth and achievement.

Network Modernization

DeKalb County schools are investing significantly in upgrading their network infrastructure, including advanced cabling, state-of-the-art network switches, and high-performance wireless access points. These enhancements will deliver faster, more reliable connectivity across the district, ensuring seamless access to digital tools for students and educators. A modern, high-capacity network is the backbone of daily school operations and instruction, directly supporting the success of initiatives like *Always Learning* and the district's ongoing physical security enhancements.

Physical Security

DeKalb County Schools is strengthening campus safety through comprehensive physical security upgrades, including advanced intrusion detection systems, secure door access controls, and expanded video surveillance. As part of this commitment, members of the Physical Security Team will attend the *Safer Schools Summit* this spring, where Superintendent Dr. Horton will serve as the keynote speaker, reinforcing the district's leadership in school safety initiatives.

Manager Natalie Terrell

Project Management Office

Digitized Records Program

All agreement signoffs are complete. The team is resuming its planning posture and is focusing on re-engaging the business partner and all stakeholders.



Cloud-based Managed Print Services Project



This project is well on its way; however, it was paused due to the holidays and to ensure equity across the district in the distribution of the devices. The deployment will resume Feb. 10, with the intent to be completed by the end of February.

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

Instructional Technology

Instructional Technology is excited to announce the 2025 DCSD Technology Competition winners. Fifty-six first-place winners from our district's competition will represent the DCSD as they compete in 14 categories ranging from Graphic Design, 3D Modeling, Robotics, and Project Programming to Video Production at the Georgia Student Technology Competition on March 1. This is the highest level of technology competition for our students in Georgia. [Take a look at this year's video.](#)



Instructional Technology will host Furthering Student Engagement (FUSE) Cohort V. This year's cohort will be focused on instructional design to support the Portrait of a Graduate and the Skills for Success Backpack program. We are soliciting paraprofessionals and teachers from all areas to participate in this cohort. We look forward to enhancing the knowledge of our educators!



Join our **FUSE V** Cohort!

EMPOWER YOUR STUDENTS FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE

Are you ready to prepare your students for a digital future? Join our FUSE V Cohort and embark on a transformative journey to equip your learners with essential skills for the 21st century.

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION.](#)

Space is limited!
Contact Leora James for more information.
Leora_James@dekalbschoolsga.org

FUSE V
Furthering Student Engagement

Director Eric Logan

Information and Network Security

The DeKalb County Schools Division of Information and Instructional Technology (DIIT) continues to progress with its efforts to strengthen DCSD's security posture. During the past thirty days, our team monitored the PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS) data breach to ensure that the PowerSchool products that DCSD use, Naviance and School Messenger, weren't affected. Additionally, we proactively reached out to our Infinite Campus service providers to discuss the PowerSchool SIS data breach to make sure that Infinite Campus has measures in place to protect against a similar cyberattack as well as to see if there were any steps we can take on our end to further fortify our security posture within IC to protect our students' data.

In addition, dates were finalized to begin several assessments:

- An external penetration test kicks off on Jan. 27 with the actual testing Feb. 10-14. The final report will be made available on or before March 4.
- The Active Directory Vulnerability Assessment is scheduled to start mid-February.
- Preparations begin for a proof of concept of an asset visibility and discovery solution that will kick off March 3.

Time will also be dedicated to preparing a submission for the state and local Cybersecurity Grant Program before the Feb. 28 deadline. Grant funds can be used to meet four objectives:

1. Develop and establish appropriate governance structures, including developing, implementing, or revising cybersecurity plans, to improve capabilities to respond to cybersecurity incidents and ensure continuity of operations.
2. Understand current cybersecurity posture and areas for improvement based on continuous testing, evaluation, and structured assessments.
3. Implement security protections commensurate with risk.
4. Ensure organization personnel are appropriately trained in cybersecurity, commensurate with responsibility.

Executive Director Glenn Melendez

Enterprise Applications and Data Services

Digital Resource and Technology Request Process

DCSD reinforces its leadership in technology by prioritizing the integration of innovative technology solutions that enhance teaching, learning, and operational efficiency within the DCSD technology footprint. To amplify the use of new technology, we have refined our evaluation process to more effectively assess and adopt modern tools, ensuring alignment with district goals and maximizing impact.

“
To advance this initiative, we have implemented a comprehensive evaluation rubric to standardize the assessment of new technology for compatibility and seamless integration into our district's dynamic technology ecosystem.
”

A streamlined workflow intake process has also been established to systematically review and prioritize all technology requests. Users can access a continuously curated database of approved technology solutions designed to meet diverse operational and instructional needs.

As of December 2024, **this effort has been completed.**

Website Modernization

As of February 2025, we have evaluated several top K-12 website providers, and an internal recommendation has been submitted for procurement review. This initiative represents a new benchmark for digital engagement and website modernization for the district. The vendor recommendation is now working through DCSD internal procurement/contracting processes. The website modernization initiative will deliver a dynamic, user-friendly website that reflects our district's commitment to innovation and excellence.

Data Governance

The district's vision for data governance is to establish a data-driven ecosystem that drives academic success by empowering educators, supporting personalized learning, informing targeted interventions, advancing equity, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement through data-informed decision-making.

The Data Governance Committee continues to make significant strides in advancing our district's data management framework. The Policy Sub-Committee has provided critical input on developing a comprehensive data management policy, ensuring alignment with best practices and district priorities. Key areas of focus include clearly defining a data management policy with purpose, roles and responsibilities, data ownership, sharing protocols, AI governance, and retention policies that align with regulatory requirements.

In parallel, the committee is actively enhancing our district's ability to identify and prioritize digital resources that yield the greatest impact on student outcomes. To date, we have begun an analysis of select digital platforms, including iReady (reading and math), IXL, iStation, and BrainPOP to determine their effectiveness in advancing our students' learning. Additionally, we are developing a shortlist of high-value digital resources for continued analysis.



These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to data-driven decision-making and ensuring that our investments in digital learning platforms drive meaningful improvements in student achievement.