



District Academic Report – April 2025

Chief Dr. Triscilla Weaver

Access and Opportunity

In April we received the report from Public Consulting Group (PCG) for our district's comprehensive A&O audit. This 198-page report outlines our district's strengths and areas for growth in ensuring that all students have the resources, support, and pathways they need to succeed and reach their full potential regardless of background or circumstances. It also includes recommended next steps to improving A&O across several key areas: organizational leadership, instructional and programmatic opportunities, professional learning (PL) and growth, resource distribution, family engagement, and school climate.

Since receiving the report, the A&O Team has been engaged in deep reflection on its findings. We met with PCG representatives to seek clarity and offer feedback on the findings. On May 13, each division chief, along with a designated team member, will participate and attend an action-planning session to prioritize next steps for the district and for their respective divisions.

In addition to the audit report, PCG provided a draft A&O policy. We have reviewed the draft and submitted our initial feedback. Given the policy's cross-divisional implications, division chiefs will also review and contribute input. Once finalized, the policy will be presented to the board for approval.

We also made considerable progress in developing our field trip policy. Each area superintendent designated a principal to review the draft and provide feedback. We incorporated their suggestions and submitted the revised draft to the Legal Team for review. Once their review is complete, the final draft will be ready.

Lastly, we continued our learning series with Dr. Juan Carlos of E3 Consulting. This month's coaching focused on the field trip policy and planning next steps following the audit.

Executive Director Myss Johnson-Jelks

Athletics

As we close out the academic year, we are currently in the midst of high school (HS) playoff season, with county championships for middle school (MS) sports rapidly approaching. Additionally, our elementary school (ES) flag football season has officially begun. Preparations for the upcoming fall sports season are underway, including finalizing schedules and placing orders for necessary equipment and supplies.

We have been collaborating closely with the Operations Department to implement updates at Godfrey Stadium in preparation for our district's role as host of the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) Sectionals. In partnership with Laurel Ridge and Operations, we are also exploring storage solutions to better support our adapted sports team, the DeKalb Silver Streaks. Furthermore, we recently held a joint meeting with the Operations and Public Safety Departments to review standard operating procedures (SOP) and explore options for financial delegation.

Planning is also in progress for our Spring Sports Awards Ceremony, which will honor our HS athletes. We've engaged with HS athletic liaisons to discuss the CLEAR process, the revised sports medicine ordering system, and upcoming GHSA updates for the next academic year.

The review and revision of our Athletic Handbooks and SOPs remains ongoing. I am working closely with our director of athletics to ensure consistent alignment across all facets of our department. Further details on our current initiatives are provided below.

Director Brandon Lane

Athletics

Over the past month, I have continued to meet weekly with our athletic coordinators to strengthen our department's structure and planning for the upcoming academic year. These meetings have focused on identifying areas of improvement, collaborating with community members, and ensuring greater efficiency and alignment in our operations. I have provided consistent feedback to all athletic coordinators regarding disseminating information to our athletic liaisons and coaches, emphasizing clarity, timeliness, and consistency. Through this process, I have also identified several areas within the department where SOPs are needed. I will continue working toward developing and implementing these SOPs to ensure streamlined processes across all functions.

In partnership with our executive director, I have collaborated with multiple departments to ensure alignment and efficiency. We have worked closely with the Operations and Facilities Department to confirm that all athletic facilities including gyms and stadiums, are safe, accessible, and adequately prepared for our student-athletes. Additionally, we have partnered with the Public Safety Division to prioritize the well-being of our students and guarantee security coverage at all athletic events. I have also actively supported our coordinators by attending numerous athletic events within and outside the district, providing on-site assistance, and demonstrating our commitment to our schools, staff, and student-athletes.

Director Kina M. Champion

School Innovation

Over the past 30 days, the School Innovation Department facilitated the final two Charter Schools 101 sessions to close out and hosted the fourth and final quarterly charter school collaborative meeting at Leadership Preparatory Academy. The team also began planning

school year (SY) 2025-2026 Spotlight School visits with Tapestry Public Charter School, the first charter school to participate in the Spotlight Schools initiative. The department prepared feedback for the state Charter Schools Commission on the petition for the Georgia (GA) Accelerated Career Academy for Innovation in Medicine. As a member of the Administrative Policy Committee, School Innovation continued reviewing Human Resources (HR) and Student Assignment policies. In legislative updates, SB82 passed the GA Assembly, prompting revisions to Strategic Waiver School System 101 sessions (School Innovation's third and final MIRACLES priority for SY25-26) with adjustments based on the recent legislative changes. Additionally, the department finalized its summer PL offerings and planned the summer and fall Design Thinking Boot Camps, which will serve as follow-ups to its spring and summer Situation Appraisal Workshops.

Executive Director Sarita Smith

Student Assignment

This month, the team is wrapping up the year reviewing data, conducting end-of-year (EOY) activities, and planning for summer. The April Student Assignment Project (SAP) meetings were related to developing guiding principles around boundaries. A few committee members will create the next Student Assignment at a Glance video for this month, similar to [the one for last month](#). We continue to collect and share data requested by SAP committee members and have had a few community meetings with Fulton, Cobb, and Decide DeKalb. We have also secured the SAP summer institute goal, framework, space, and invitations. The goal of the summer institute is to review several possible district maps related to the committee's guiding principles and emerging ideas while assessing them through an operational lens, providing opportunities and challenges. This committee will comprise of representatives from all DCSD divisions and current committee members.

SAP leadership is preparing aggregate data for the SAP staff and community survey and school visits (over 105 thus far) to share and post with the community and our committee. We are meeting weekly with the planning team to begin mapping out some of the reimagining ideas and boundaries developed during the committee meetings.

We continue supporting the Operations Team with boundary updates for the upcoming school year. We are ensuring the Smoke Rise/Idlewood merger is successful by auditing the student transfer list, mailing personalized letters to the families, and co-master scheduling with the principals.

To begin aligning student assignment operations, we have added a regulation to Policy JBCC E. (Employee Student Transfer). The regulation was created to provide a timeline and explanation for who the policy is intended for. We plan to roll this out once it is posted in Simbli.

Director Dr. Char-Shenda Covington**Student Assignment**

April proved to be a period of significant achievement, marked by the successful attainment of goals related to both school choice and registration processes. Site visits remain a priority, with over 110 of the district's schools and sites assessed to date. Principals have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to articulate their perspectives on their physical infrastructure, boundaries, and programmatic offerings. Furthermore, seats have been successfully allocated for all schools accepting applications, with plans to reassign any unclaimed spots following the initial 10 days of the 2025-2026 academic year to account for no-shows.

Noteworthy progress was made in professional development (PD) initiatives, including a training session led by our director for FACE Advocates (FA), titled Who Are You, Really? This session emphasized the importance of embracing authenticity as a guiding principle when supporting our most vulnerable scholars. Concurrently, we continued providing targeted support to new leaders while adopting a strategic methodology for equitable seat allocation across the district. To enhance operational efficiency, the board has approved a new vendor to manage the open enrollment lottery window for the 2026-2027 cycle. This decision aims to streamline processes, improve productivity, and establish a structured approach for expediting parent support services.

Additionally, preparations for summer registration hubs have been finalized, alongside the procurement of Vasco Translation devices to bolster the Student Assignment Team's capabilities. These measures are intended to ensure districtwide accessibility and readiness for new and returning scholars on the first day of school. The registration manager participated in the 2025 Georgia Interchange Conference, gaining insights into cost-effective enhancements to the district's student information system, Infinite Campus, with the objective of optimizing registration processes at a systemic level. Finally, she conducted the inaugural interview for Spanish-speaking families, DeKalb Te Escucha: Registro, Eventos y Entrevista Exclusiva (DeKalb Hears You: Registration, Events, and Exclusive Interview), which served to disseminate critical updates on registration procedures, district initiatives, and engagement opportunities with key stakeholders in DCSD.

Executive Director Dr. Loukisha Walker**Student Mentorship and Partnerships (SMP)**

Throughout April, the SMP Department successfully collected EOY artifacts for the DCSD Mentoring Framework from over 50 schools, demonstrating widespread participation and implementation of the initiative. With the original goals of this MIRACLES priority now achieved and schools having submitted the required documentation, this project has officially been closed out. The level of commitment from school-based mentoring teams speaks to the impact and sustainability of the districtwide mentoring program. Our lead mentors have been instrumental in turning vision into action. Thanks to their dedication and leadership, over 50

schools have submitted artifacts confirming implementation of the DCSD Mentoring Framework—surpassing our MIRACLES Priority Goal. Beyond implementation, lead mentors and other identified mentors have helped equip students with essential 21st Century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and cultural agility, etc. Their commitment continues to shape a culture of connection, support, and student success across the district.

April was a pivotal month for the FA program. The second draft of the *FA Blueprint* was completed, laying a strong foundation for consistent expectations and support for the role districtwide. Planning efforts continued for EOY celebrations to honor both FAs and FACE mentees, recognizing their dedication and achievements. Additionally, we reviewed the data collection process in collaboration with the Continuous Improvement Team and held ongoing discussions around improving data accuracy within the DOMO platform. FACE Advocates were celebrated, appreciated, and re-energized during the FACETIME Kickoff Meeting on April 16, 2025. The month culminated in two powerful events: the first FACETIME Event—*Family Game Night* on April 25—and a FACE Advocate Mini-Conference on April 30 that provided targeted PD and reflection opportunities.

The SMP Department also hosted a series of impactful school-based and collaborative events. On April 1, *Empower Her* was held at Allgood ES, encouraging girls to embrace their uniqueness, celebrate their strengths, and boost their self-confidence. On April 29, *Empower Him* was hosted at Flat Shoals ES to promote self-worth, leadership, and vision among young boys. Additionally, we partnered with other district divisions to host a mini-conference for FAs on April 30, further demonstrating the department's commitment to cross-collaboration, holistic student development, and continuous professional growth.

Chief of Schools Michelle Dillard

Division of Schools and Leadership

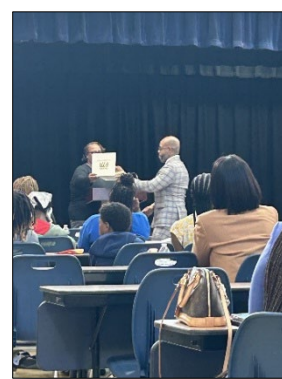
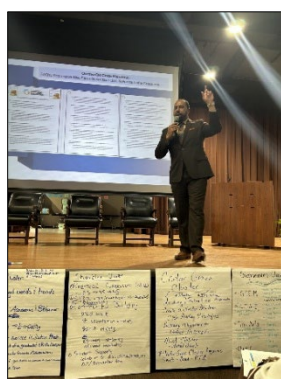
Monthly Summary

The Division of School and Leadership was active during April. Prior to spring break, we partnered with various departments to offer Consolidated School Improvement Plan (CSIP) support sessions for schools. Principals also participated in their final Principal Professional Learning Communities (PPLC), and we were able to close this MIRACLES priority out in April. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) trained school teams (principal plus two) with Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reports following the spring MAP administration.

After spring break, principals met on April 17 for the professional learning opportunity (PLO) to complete the final training for PLCs for the year. Leaders also received important updates from Student Support Services and Curriculum and Instruction (C&I). Principals were able to meet and plan for major initiatives within their cluster.

Schools and Leadership partnered with the Legal Department to do the Title IX training for specific roles for assistant principals, principals, culture and climate (C&C) coordinators, and area superintendents. The Educator Preparation Program Recertification was held at the end of the month. All areas were met. We are pleased about the work our leaders and educators are doing in this essential area.

Several schools were recognized at the spring PTA meeting and the April Board Meeting.



Beth Kyle

Area 1 Elementary Schools

The Area 1 Team has been busy in schools assisting with a strong finish to SY24-25 while working to help teams plan for SY25-26. The team has been supporting the application of our spring MAP results and providing in-class support for teachers. They have also been working with School Improvement Teams to analyze data and develop a plan based on their school's strengths and areas for growth. Executive administrators have worked with principals to finalize 2025-2026 schedules, teacher placements, and hiring. They have also been conducting Leader

Keys summative assessments and conferences. The team has also been working with Leadership Teams in identifying highly qualified candidates for Lead Teacher for Special Education (LTSE), Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), and academic coach positions.

Highlights from our schools include Sagamore Hills' students who won 3rd place in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) recycling project with Live Thrive! competition. Woodward ES received a five-star climate star rating for the SY23-24. Ashford Park, Austin, Chesnut, Doraville United, Montgomery, Oak Grove, and Vanderlyn received a four-star rating.



Terry Brown**Area 2 Elementary Schools**

Our Area 2 Elementary Team has been hard at work supporting school leaders with closing out the school year strong while also engaging in planning for the upcoming school year. Our team supported preparation for the GA Milestones Assessment by engaging every school in a review with the assessment checklist.

Area 2's English Language Arts (ELA) coordinators, along with the area superintendent, reviewed each school's Science of Reading (SOR) course completion to tier the schools for May support as needed in fulfilling this requirement. Additionally, all Area 2 Support Team members collaborated to develop a system for CSIP feedback, revision, and reviews.

Executive administrators practiced using the GROW model in coaching sessions, and they followed up with about three principals each who needed more direct supervision with their six-systems weekly report. Support was also provided with staffing and hiring.

The final area assistant principal session was facilitated in April. Assistant principals had the opportunity to collaborate on their best practices for assessment logistics and lessons learned. In addition, the area 2 superintendent in collaboration with the area 2 ELA content leads provided them with some highlights and implications for their work as it relates to the new ELA standards, elementary scheduling, and SOR.

The mental health coordinator facilitated PL sessions called Connections Matter. Our mental health coordinator also supported two schools, Hambrick and Rockbridge, with a Health Family Fun Fair. C&C coordinators continued to support schools with attendance and discipline monitoring while also celebrating schoolwide events such as Dunwoody Elementary's International Day and Farm-to-Table celebrations.

We are looking forward to finishing the school year strong!

Ateshia Lester**Area 3 Elementary Schools**

During April, Area 3 principals continued their job embedded PL focused on PLCs with Solution Tree. Also, each school team worked with their MAP consultants to utilize their spring data results to enhance student academic success.

Executive administrators have been supporting leaders with CSIP plans and master schedules for SY26. Coordinators supported APs with GA Milestone Readiness which included reviewing accommodations for small groups and testing procedures and practices. C&C coordinators participated in training for restorative practices. The special education (SPED) coordinator has been assisting with the hiring of new LTSE's and ensuring compliance with Individual Education Programs (IEP).

Highlights from some elementary schools include celebrating Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Day at Bob Mathis ES and conducting parent meetings to assist with improving Lexile Levels. Allgood ES kicked off the "Empower Her" Conference for all young ladies. All elementary schools started their participation in flag football.



Jacqueline Tayler

Area Middle Schools

Throughout April, the MS area executive administrators led summative conferences, discussing Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) and the Breakthrough Principal Action Plans during LKES sessions. They also conducted extended learning time (ELT) observations, GA Milestones Readiness Checks, and collaborated with MS Area Team members to plan summer retreats for school leaders.

The MS C&C coordinators focused on enhancing restorative practices through school team meetings, supported schools in discipline data clean-up, and provided mediation services. They facilitated facility audits, collaborated on a streamlined restorative practices training, and supported event planning for the summer retreats. Ongoing data monitoring and support for discipline, attendance, and MTSS remained a central focus.

Math coordinators worked closely with students on Desmos fluency and monitored effective tool use. They also provided feedback on instruction, supported schools in revising CSIP strategies, and began reviewing MS CSIP plans.

The SPED coordinator analyzed data from the MS collaborative calibration visits (CCV) presentations to identify emerging trends and areas of need. A key finding was the need for targeted, individualized support for LTSEs to enhance their leadership and skill development. In collaboration with the SPED Department, planning began for future trainings and support initiatives for the upcoming school year. Additionally, the coordinator actively participated in several C&C meetings across various schools to address issues impacting students with disabilities (SWD), including discipline (in-school suspension [ISS]/out of school [OOS]), attendance, manifestation determination reviews (MDR), parent concerns, and documentation challenges within Infinite Campus. Additionally, individualized support was provided to LTSEs to address overdue IEPs and re-evaluations, ensure IEP compliance, and implement behavior supports tailored to specific student needs.

The mental health coordinator conducted engagement meetings with parents and counselors, focusing on student support, teacher wellness, and program planning.

The ELA coordinator collaborated with C&I Teams during CSIP sessions, aligned curriculum with StudySync resources, and supported school-level planning and feedback. This included PL facilitation and targeted instructional feedback at multiple schools, alongside planning for the upcoming principal and AP retreats.

The English learner (EL) coordinator provided targeted English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support across several schools, assisted with World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) testing and accommodations, contributed to district-level CSIP efforts, and participated in the development of the EL Master Plan. PL sessions were facilitated, data reports were requested to inform planning, and preparations for summer and fall initiatives were undertaken. The coordinator also engaged in leadership event planning and concluded the month with a summative conference focused on future instructional support strategies.

Thomas Glanton

Area High Schools

Monthly Summary

April has been a dynamic month for high schools, filled with exciting updates and achievements. This summary highlights key developments, including advancements in educational practices, notable student accomplishments, and important events that have shaped the academic landscape.

Climate and Culture

The C&C Team continues to provide targeted support to Area High Schools in the key areas of behavior, attendance, and grade. The team maintains a consistent presence at all operation graduation meetings and has been deployed to monitor end-of-course (EOC) and other high-stakes testing environments when needed.

ELA

Coordinators participated in district, RESA and state PL sessions to deepen understanding of the new state standards and their expectations. Additionally, the team contributed to the development of curriculum resources in coordination with other DCSD ELA coordinators in preparation for SY25-26.

Mathematics

Coordinator focused on supporting curriculum alignment, teacher development, and Milestones preparation across multiple schools. Key efforts included conducting Learning Walks, facilitating PLCs, modeling instructional strategies like algebra tile use, and providing one-on-one coaching to new and veteran teachers.

Special Education

Coordinator actively supported schools by attending IEP meetings to ensure compliance and promote meaningful collaboration between team members. Additionally, In preparation for the end of the school year, the coordinator worked closely with LTSEs to ensure timely completion of closeout procedures and required documentation.

Multilingual Learners

Coordinator supported EOCs, Half Cap Ceremonies, the Military Signing Ceremony, and Operation Graduation meetings. In addition, the coordinator supported teachers in creating EOY plans for at-risk multilingual learners.

Mental Health

Coordinator supported EOCs, Half Cap Ceremonies, the Military Signing Ceremony, and Operation Graduation meetings while also conducting wellness check-ins with staff, visiting classrooms to identify elements of a positive learning environment, attending PD webinars, and meeting with head counselors to discuss stress management strategies and trauma-informed care. Additionally, the coordinator co-facilitated a presentation at the FACE Advocates Mini Conference, co-facilitated Healing Circles, and produced and distributed the *Mental Health Matters* newsletter.

As we move into May, the final month of the academic year, students are encouraged to continue their efforts, stay engaged, and complete their final projects and assessments with dedication.

Derrick Hardy

Area Horizon Schools

During April, Horizon Area hosted professional entertainers and local radio personalities for student Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) inspirations and pep rallies at Clarkston HS, Snapfinger HS, Bethune MS and Fairington ES.

As part of mental health awareness, we conducted Adverse Childhood Experiences Trauma-Informed Care PL at Stoneview ES and Murphey Candler ES.

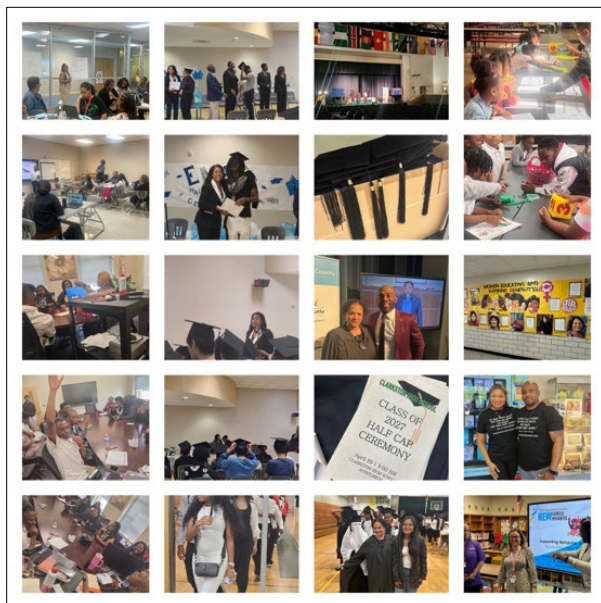
Zone 3 elementary principals at Montclair, Hightower, and Peachcrest Elementary Schools complete the MIRACLES PPLC priority. Flat Shoals ES opened the FS Elementary Game Room as part of the schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) incentive for academic achievement and positive behavior.

Stone Mountain ES hosted the Supporting Student Behaviors with Diverse Learners PL by our coordinators for SWD and English Language Learners (ELL). McNair HS conducted the schoolwide career fair.

Panola Way ES partnered with Shoes that Fit and GEICO to distribute new, brand-name athletic sneakers to all students. Zone 1 secondary schools hosted a series of ELA new standards roll out PL for MS and HS teachers.

Lithonia HS conducted a Parent Teacher Student Association listening and learning session with student and parent leaders. We wrapped up the month of April 2025 with Half Cap Ceremonies at Clarkston HS and Elizabeth Andrews HS.





Michelle Jones

Area Specialty Schools

The focus in March was CCVs and FTEs. We completed our CCVs and district Learning Walks. Our team conducted PL for teachers and leaders for the district PL Day on March 7. In our ALO, we reviewed milestones preparation and CSIP monitoring with fiscal year (FY) 2026 planning. We also offered specialized FTE support sessions for our administrators to assist with clearing errors, and we hosted our Specialty Area Assistant Principals' Academy. Fernbank Science Center (FSC) offered several events this month and even hosted the State of the District event.

Monthly Summary

The focus for April for the Specialty Area was preparing for Georgia Milestones and building Master Schedules. We provided leaders with additional strategies for preparing students for exams and building their master schedules. The Specialty Area AP Academies have been a success in coordinating support for administrators. Our team visited schools to observe the testing preparation for GMAS. We started the month by attending the Charter Collaborative at Leadership Preparatory Academy. Multiple departments presented at the meeting.

We also attended special events for our schools such as Field Day and the opening of the Zen Den at E.L. Bouie, as well as the Beta Club induction for Narvie J. Harris and Career Day for Robert Shaw. Several schools celebrated their Administrative Professionals, and the Area office celebrated Mr. Hawk during the week of April 21.

Kittredge was recognized at the April Board Meeting for winning the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl (HRRB). We have two schools who will compete in the State Science Olympiad competition.



Mike Kelly**Leadership Development****The DeKalb Principal Pathway (DPP)**

Leadership Development met with the cohort on the evening of April 16. The primary focus was to examine, evaluate, and monitor progress on their “Change Projects.” This was completed through a collegial peer review protocol. DPP participants received training on how to strengthen deliverables, overcoming resistance and how to implement phase three of the “Change Project.”

The DeKalb Leadership Institute

Leadership Development held its sixth monthly DLI session on the evening of April 22. DLI participants received training around principal decision making, prioritizing your inbox and how to support deeper comprehension around the PLCs. Lastly, participants received insight on the application process for the principal position and how to write a 90-day entry plan.

DLI is transitioning to a program that will support teachers moving into the assistant principal’s role for the SY25-26. Leadership Development has developed a rigorous application process complete with performance assessments. This program will be selective in nature as we work to find our future leaders with the most skills and potential.

Project DEAL in Partnership with Georgia State University (GSU)

The federal grant has been terminated. However, we are working closely with GSU, and if this grant is reinstated, we will be prepared to take full advantage of it.

Leadership Development is in the design phase for a cohort to receive their Tier 1 and Tier 2 administrative certifications. If the federal grant is reinstated, each participant will receive an \$8,000 stipend from the DEAL grant.

Leadership Development is preparing to move forward with the cohort even without support from the grant. We are working with GSU to provide college credits and administrative observation hours needed to receive certification. DCSD can also develop the program and course curriculum with the university.

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) Literacy Project

Leadership Development is represented on the GLISI Team and is providing insight on how to best provide efficient implementation of structured literacy in DCSD for the SY2025. The GLISI Team shared our PL, and our road traveled throughout the school year to improve structured literacy within DCSD. The GLISI Team presented our work to all school districts participating in GLISI in Macon, GA on April 15.

Professional Learning Communities

Leadership Development is working closely with Solution Tree to design a plan for PL for SY25-26. We are serving on the District PLC Guiding Coalition and this group will be making recommendations to Champion Dillard in May.

Principal's Learning Opportunity

Leadership Development provided oversight and planning for the PLO on April 17. The day of learning for our leaders consisted of the following: Professional Learning Communities, Putting Our Learning into Practice, Legal Updates, Backpack of Success Skills, and Student Services Updates.



Ayana S. Smith

Professional Learning Department

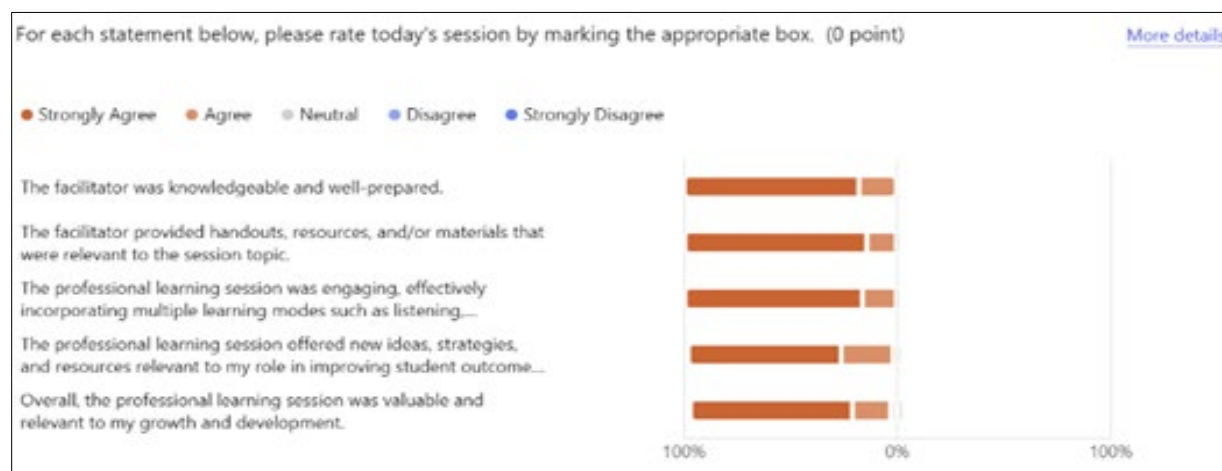


This month, the Professional Learning Department focused on Strategic Goal Areas 1 and 3 – Student Academic Success with Equity and Access and Recruit, Develop and Retain Talent. This month has been a continuation of meaningful and impactful work across multiple areas of our district. The HB671 course remains a cornerstone of our efforts to ensure educators are well-prepared to support students with exceptional needs. The Para Academy provides targeted PL opportunities that empower our paraprofessionals with the tools and strategies they need to succeed.

Peer Learning Facilitators Murdock, Rhea-Neeley, and Ross had the opportunity to attend and present at the National Science Teaching Conference (NSTA) in Philadelphia. Murdock delivered on Sensemaking in Science and was well-received by 43 teachers/practitioners from various states who walked away with several tips and high-leverage strategies for improving 3D science instruction across the country. (This was captured in the [survey feedback](#).)

The H-PRIDE Integrity Endorsement PL session was attended by 139 individuals and was offered at the district level to promote PLCs and the practices that enable teams to effectively increase student achievement.

Over **100 MTSS specialists from all seven DCSD Areas** attended a PL focused on the role MTSS specialists hold in the school-based PLC. Ninety-five (95) participants completed the feedback survey with the feedback below:



As of March 30, the department's PL requests were **227** with a total of **(+8)** from last month), completing **210** of those requests **(+39)** from last month), **17** are still in progress, with **570 Total PLs** provided with area schools and departments within the district.

Field Experience Coordinator C. Seroyer

Meetings were conducted with nine university partners to review their placement needs in preparation for fall 2025. These ongoing meetings have proven productive, as our university partners continue to refine their internal processes to align with the terms outlined in our signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Notably, this collaborative work is essential to maintaining a streamlined and consistent placement process, which allows for effective monitoring and support of teacher candidates.

DCSD Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (TAPP) Coordinator, M. Thompson

A Month of Growth, Engagement, and Purposeful Reflection – This month began with great enthusiasm as our candidates embarked on their diverse field experience, a pivotal component of their certification journey. In alignment with their grade band requirements, candidates observed instructional practices at Bob Mathis ES, Chapel Hill MS, and Southwest DeKalb HS. These immersive visits provided rich, authentic insights into classroom culture, instructional

strategies, and student engagement across various educational levels. The impact of these experiences was both profound and inspiring. Reflections from our candidates highlight their growth and renewed motivation:

*“The high expectations and student engagement at **Southwest DeKalb High School**, particularly in Spanish III and Algebra, inspired me to implement warm-up exercises in my own classroom to encourage students to reflect on their learning.”*

*“Visiting classrooms at **Bob Mathis Elementary School** illuminated areas where I can continue to grow as an educator. Observing teachers who were both excited and prepared to teach reinvigorated my passion for the profession.”*

*“The classroom culture at **Chapel Hill Middle School** was consistently focused on academic engagement. Teachers maintained effective classroom management, and students demonstrated a clear understanding of routines. One notable difference I observed was the strong sense of school spirit that positively influenced the overall climate.”*

In further alignment with **Strategic Goal Area #3: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent**, I actively participated in the district’s job fair, where I connected with prospective candidates for the DCSD TAPP program. The event was vibrant, well-attended, and filled with positive energy. A particularly heartwarming moment was reconnecting with a former student—whom I taught in first grade—now aspiring to join our district as an educator. Witnessing her professional aspirations come full circle was both touching and inspiring.

New Teacher Orientation/Network/ Teacher Support and Coaching (TSC) Coordinator L. Turner

This month the TSC facilitators and I have been conducting TSC endorsement site visits as the culminating activity for Module III of the TSC Endorsement Program. The purpose of the visits is to observe the effective implementation of the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and standards of the course and to provide specific feedback to the TSC coordinator on these areas including conferencing and observation skills; modeling lessons; conducting PL for a grade level, team, or their school; and effective use of assessment data to drive the relationship and instructional activities. The New Teacher Orientation is July 14-18, and donations have been received for meals for participants. The next New Teacher monthly seminar is May 6 and will be face-to-face.



Brenessa Matthews Swain (Miller Grove Middle School)

Chief Dr. Norman C. Sauce III

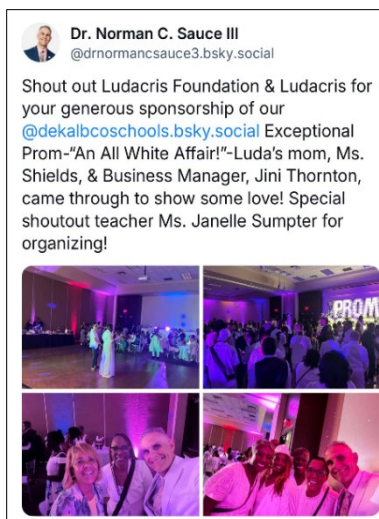
Student Services

Chief of Student Services Dr. Norman C. Sauce III began April actively engaged with key partners and stakeholders. He attended a site visit at Peak Academy within Fulton County Schools and participated in the DCSD Curriculum Steering Committee. His commitment to instructional leadership continued with a school visit to Chestnut ES, where he observed an EL classroom in action. He also joined a virtual session with retired gifted educators, emphasizing the value of legacy expertise in shaping future instruction. Dr. Sauce also participated in the Superintendent's Exceptional Education Parent Council meeting, listening to feedback from families and advocates. His dedication to team development was demonstrated through bi-weekly meetings with the Division of Student Services leadership and individual check-ins with each executive leader. One of the month's standout moments was Dr. Sauce's attendance at the Intellectual Disabilities Prom on April 5, where he enjoyed an uplifting evening celebrating students, alumni, and staff. He continued his routine engagements with bi-weekly MAP assessment meetings and wraparound services check-ins. In a spirit of transparency and collaboration, Dr. Sauce met with division leaders to deliver key updates on upcoming budget planning for SY25-26. He also contributed to broader district conversations by attending the Federal Law Enforcement Committee meeting and participating in special operations discussions relevant to exceptional education.

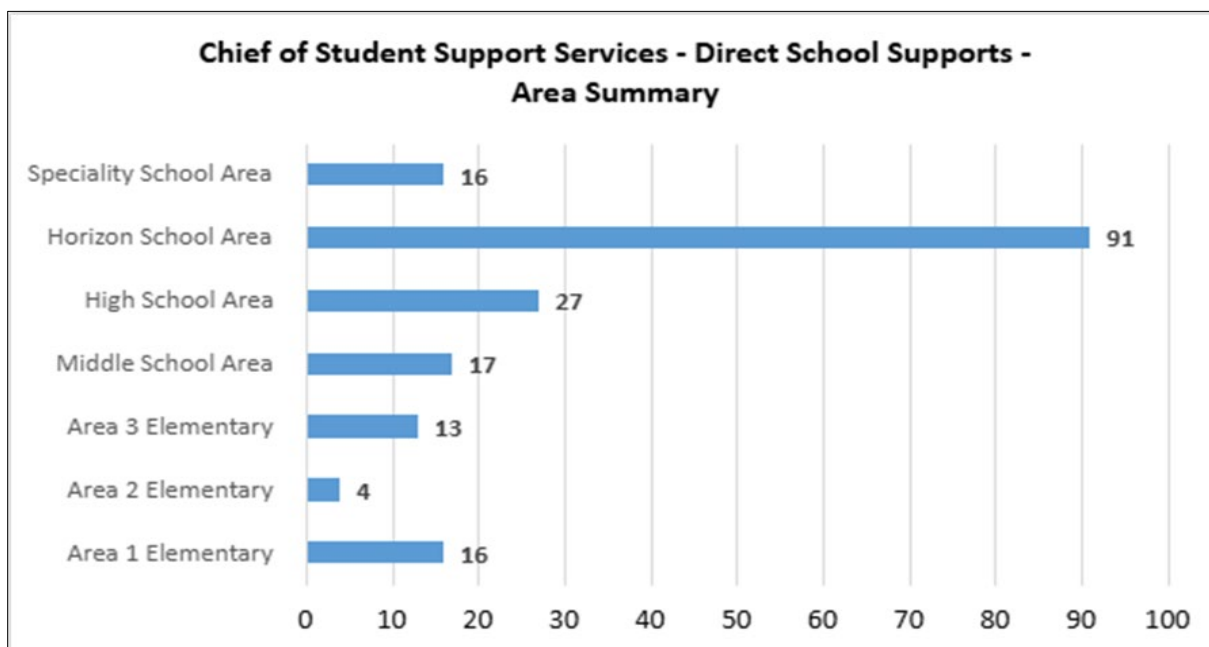
Community engagement remained a central focus as Dr. Sauce joined a Town Hall meeting hosted by Board Member Dijon DaCosta. He also took part in the principals' PLO meeting and later that evening joined the Exceptional Education Awards Ceremony, recognizing staff and students for their achievements. On April 21, Dr. Sauce participated in the DeKalb County Board of Education (BOE) meeting, where the Division of Student Services presented two key agenda items. He continued building school-level connections through school visits and check-ins with principals at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. HS and Southwest DeKalb HS. He later attended the Bilingual Parent Advisory Council meeting, reinforcing support for multilingual families.

Throughout the month, Dr. Sauce conducted department-level pulse check-ins across elementary, middle, and high schools to identify emerging needs and affirm appreciation for staff contributions. He also participated in the Initiative One executive cabinet PL session, emphasizing the importance of leadership growth. To strengthen external partnerships, Dr. Sauce joined a Lunch and Learn executive briefing with education partners focused on effective strategies for understanding and managing student behavior. He also attended the Military Students Swearing-In Ceremony at Miller Grove HS, honoring students from across the district who committed to military service during the ceremony. Dr. Sauce continued his standing check-ins with the superintendent and Wraparound Services Team and concluded the month with the impactful MIRACLES Workshop, where the Division of Student Services presented its latest initiatives. April ended on a celebratory note as Dr. Sauce attended the Half Cap Ceremonies at Elizabeth Andrews, Tucker, and McNair High Schools, recognizing students who

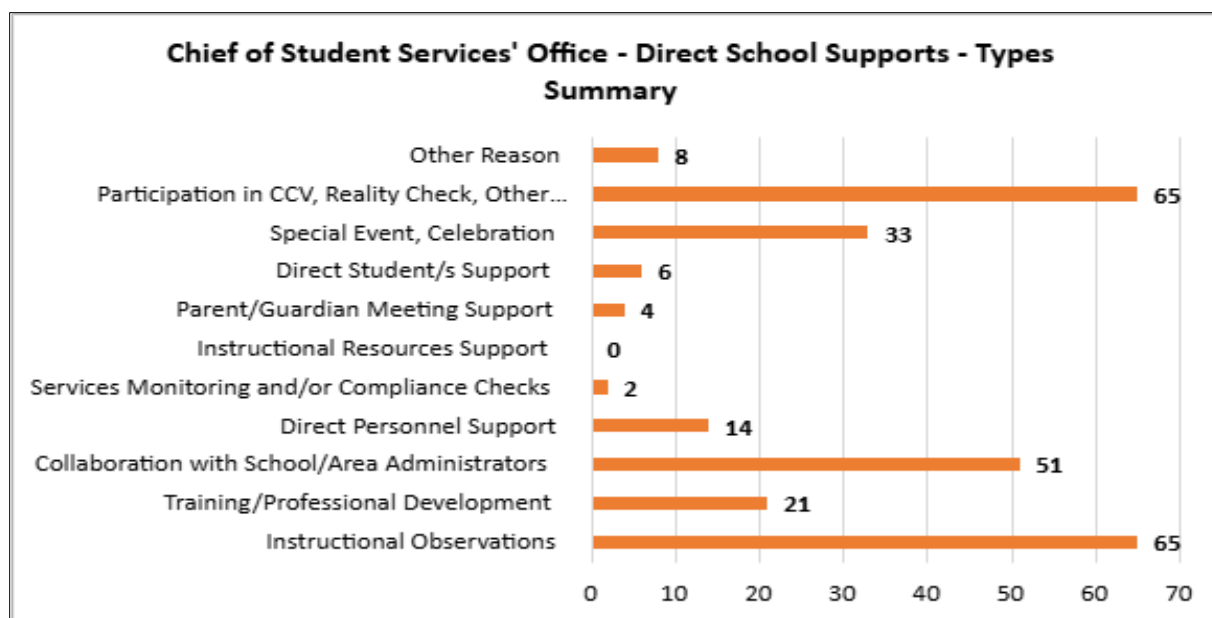
have reached the midpoint in their graduation journey. Dr. Sauce's school visits during April included: Chestnut ES, Eagle Woods Academy, Shadow Rock Center, Stephenson MS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. HS, DeKalb Early College Academy, Miller Grove, Elizabeth Andrew, Southwest DeKalb, and Tucker High Schools.



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

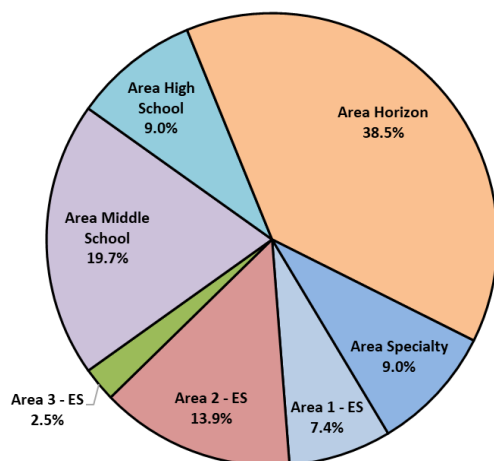
English Learners

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 **122** students. To date, the ISSC has registered and screened **4,203** ELs this academic year.

2024-2025 ISSC

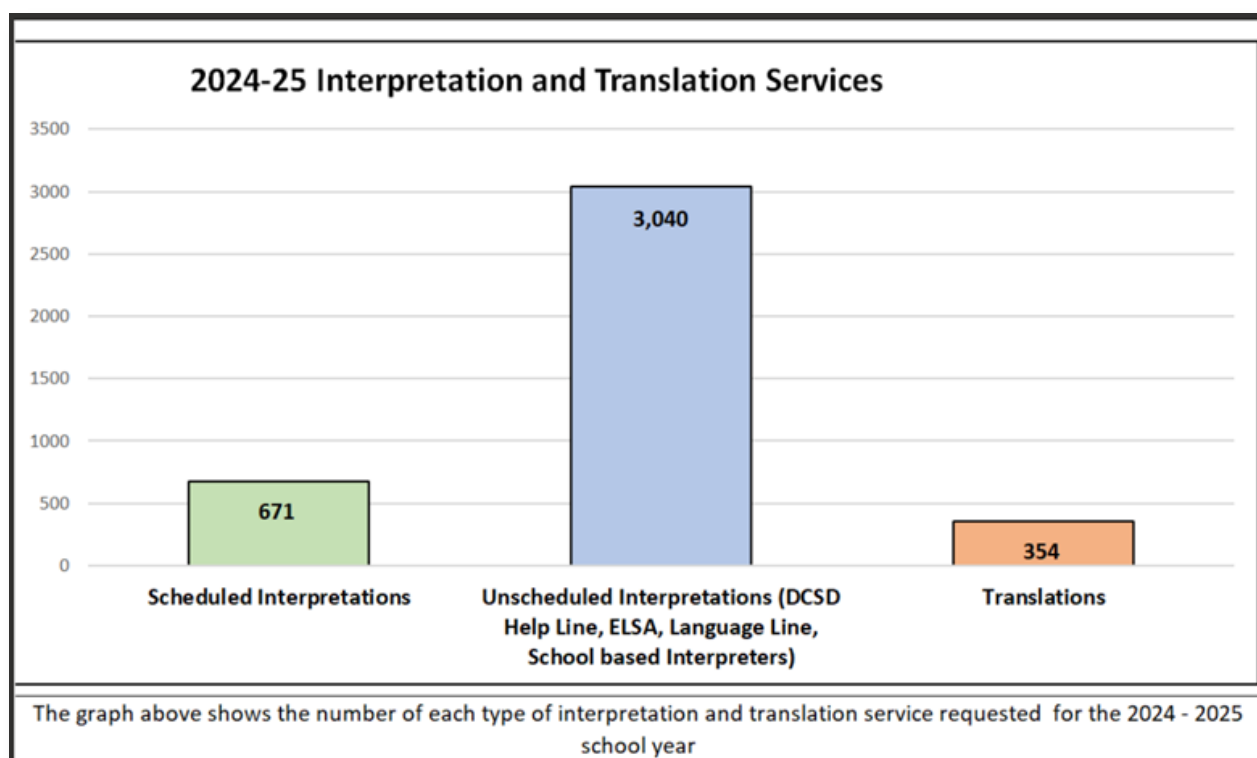


2024-2025 ISSC Registrations

Area	Students
Area 1 – ES	9
Area 2 – ES	17
Area 3 – ES	3
Area Middle School	24
Area High School	11
Area Horizon	47
Area Specialty	11
Totals	122

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 English Learners Department provided **3,711** PHLOTE families with language access and translated **354** documents.



Interpretation, translation, and registration services align with the DCSD 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

Book Studies

The EL Department offers book studies each semester for teachers of ELs, administrators and support staff. The spring 2025 book studies concluded this month.

[Welcoming and Engaging Newcomers Book Study \(Six-part series\)](#)

The book Teaching and Supporting English Learners: A Guide to Welcoming and Engaging Newcomers provides guidance to teachers in welcoming and engaging newcomers in the classroom. By the end of the book study, participants will be able to support and welcome

newcomers and their families and effectively implement Intensive English instructional strategies that are focused on language development including language input and output strategies.

Strategies for Unlocking English Learners' Potential (five-part series)

The focus of this book study is to support teachers of ELs with evidence-based strategies that focus on language development, academic discourse, and advocacy. By the end of this book study – Unlocking English Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible – participants will be able to support ELs with a toolbox full of ready-to-go, research-based strategies to increase English language development and academic vocabulary.

Co-Teaching for English Learners

This book study is for all co-teachers of ELs who collaborate and teach via the Push-In Model. This session will provide participants with guidance on how to collaboratively plan, instruct via specific models and access ELs. By the end of the book study, participants will be able to support ELs in a co-teaching model through collaborative planning, instruction and reflection.

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

Georgia Department of Education Exemplary EL Student/ESOL Teacher Recognition

So Wah – 2025 GaDOE Exemplary English Learner

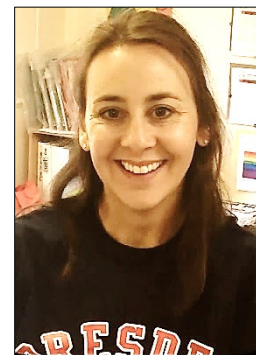
So Wah was nominated for his outstanding character, academic excellence, perseverance, leadership and community involvement. He currently attends Redan HS where he maintains a 3.8 GPA while participating in rigorous coursework and demonstrates a deep commitment to his community and school. Beyond academics, So Wah has demonstrated exceptional leadership and character. His involvement in the National Honor Society and International Club showcases his commitment to academic excellence and global awareness. Furthermore, his participation in diverse athletic pursuits, including football, soccer, cross country, and ultimate frisbee, highlights his ability to balance multiple commitments while fostering teamwork and perseverance. So Wah has also demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity. Despite receiving a leukemia diagnosis during his senior year, he maintained his academic performance and continued his extracurricular involvement, displaying remarkable strength and determination. So Wah's commitment to



community service is evident through his efforts in school clean-up initiatives and participation in Camp Encounter, where he contributed to mentorship and personal development programs. His dedication to making a positive impact on his school and community, even while facing personal challenges, demonstrates his exceptional character and leadership qualities. Through his unwavering determination, academic excellence, and commitment to service, So Wah exemplifies the qualities of an exemplary EL. He serves as a role model for his peers, inspiring others with his leadership and character, and demonstrating the potential for ELs to excel.

Mrs. Mary Cozart – 2025 GaDOE Exemplary ESOL Teacher

Mrs. Mary Cozart, DCSD's ESOL teacher nominee for the 2025 GaDOE Exemplary ESOL Teacher, has been an educator since 1994. She obtained her ESOL endorsement in 2016, Orton-Gillingham certification for dyslexia intervention in 2018, and completed her master's degree in 2024. Since 2013, Mrs. Cozart has been the ESOL Lead at Dresden ES supporting ELs. She also supports her colleagues through PD by highlighting best practices for effective instructional implementation. Her strength is data disaggregation to maximize the learning outcomes for ELs. Additionally, she fosters strong relationships with parents, helping them navigate the educational system and become partners in their children's learning. Her expertise ensures ELs receive targeted instruction to develop English skills while feeling valued and supported. Mrs. Cozart's dedication has significantly impacted student success, increasing confidence, language acquisition, and academic performance. Her professionalism, advocacy, and instructional excellence exemplify outstanding ESOL education, making a lasting difference in the lives of students, families, and colleagues at Dresden ES. Through her leadership and commitment, Mrs. Cozart builds trust with parents, many of whom have limited formal education, strengthening the school community and empowering families to support their children's learning.



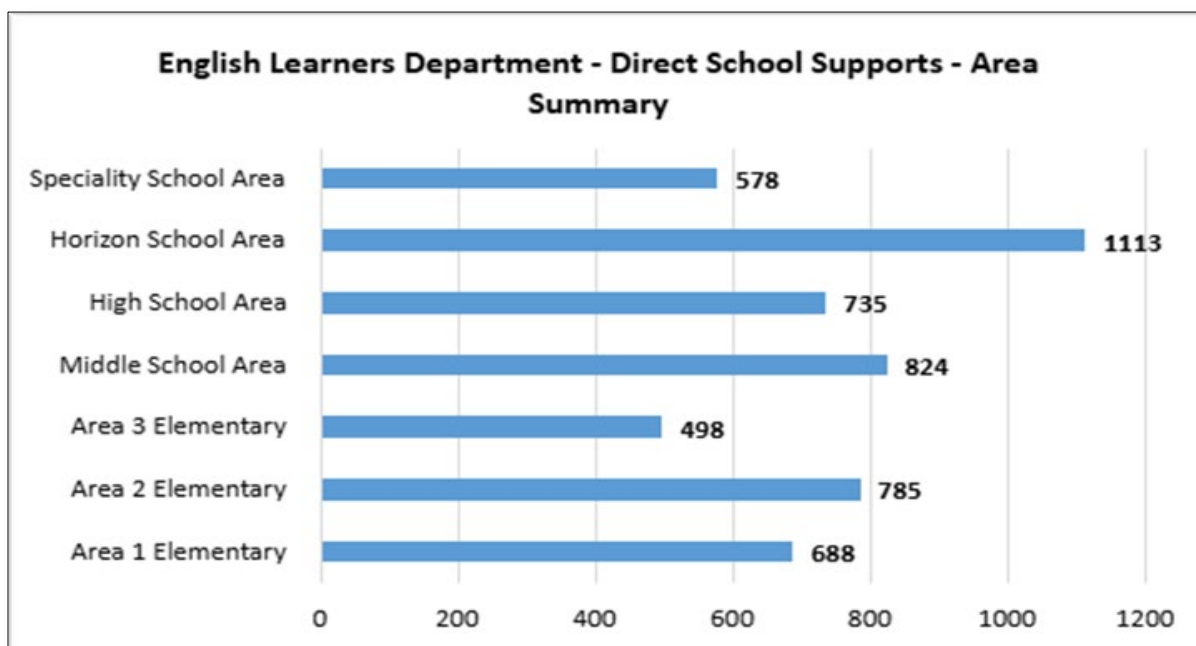
2025 Title III English Learners Summer Enrichment Program

Registration for the Title III EL Summer Enrichment Program is open now through **April 16**. The purpose of the Title III EL Summer Enrichment Program is to provide an extended year opportunity for ELs at the entering level of language proficiency (1.0-1.9). ELs in grades 1-12 will develop the academic language necessary to succeed in all content areas, with a special focus on the academic language of reading, mathematics, and science. The students will also participate in hands-on activities and experiences.

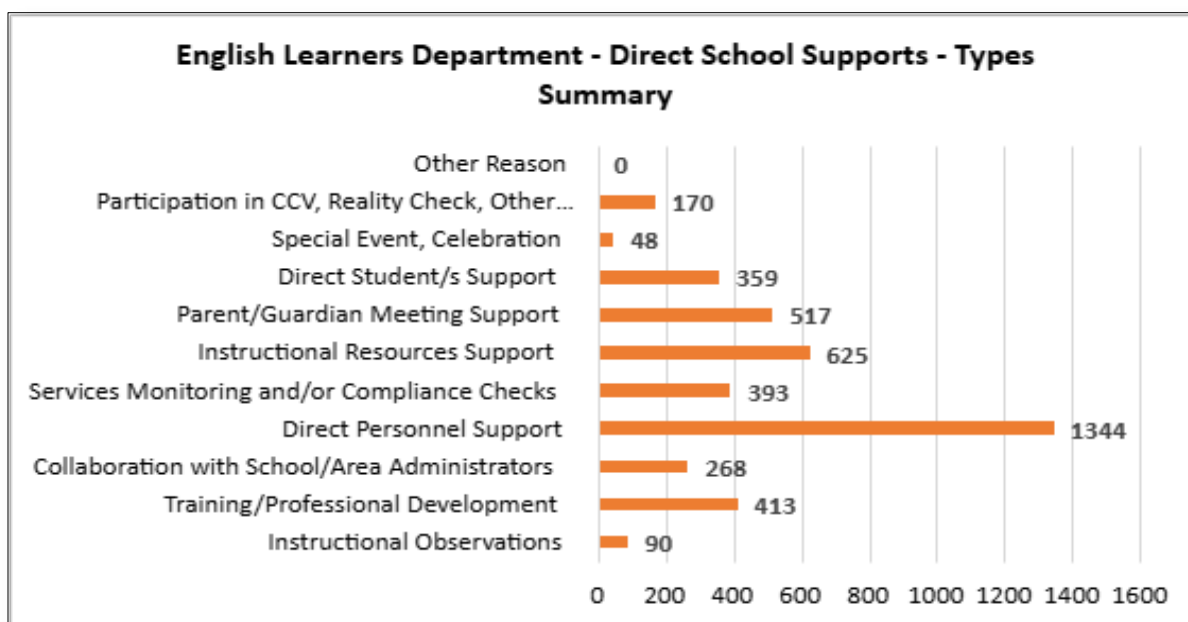
The Title III EL Summer Enrichment Program aligns with the DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area 1: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access; Goal Area 2: School, Family, and Community Engagement; Goal Area 4: Culture and Climate; and Goal Area 6: Organizational Excellence, and the DCSD MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement:

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

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

Professional Development and Instructional support

- The 504/HHB Office facilitated several impactful PD sessions during April with a focus on continuous quality improvement.
- On April 17 and 24, the 504 Team also facilitated in-person training sessions for Horizon and Specialty Area 504 chairs to address Child Find, data review, overcoming barriers to compliance, and shared successful best practices.



- The SPED annual gala was held on April 5, sponsored by the Ludacris Foundation. Students, staff, parents, and community members engaged in a night of music, dancing, and fellowship.



- We celebrate our team's dedication to staying informed and empowered as they engaged this month in meaningful PL to enhance their knowledge in support of schools!
- The week of April 14 – 18 was the Council for Exceptional Children's Exceptional Children's Week, culminating with an awards ceremony and BOE proclamation honoring students with disabilities.
- The fourth and final Special Opportunity session for SPED teachers and support staff was facilitated on April 16, with over 90 teachers in attendance.

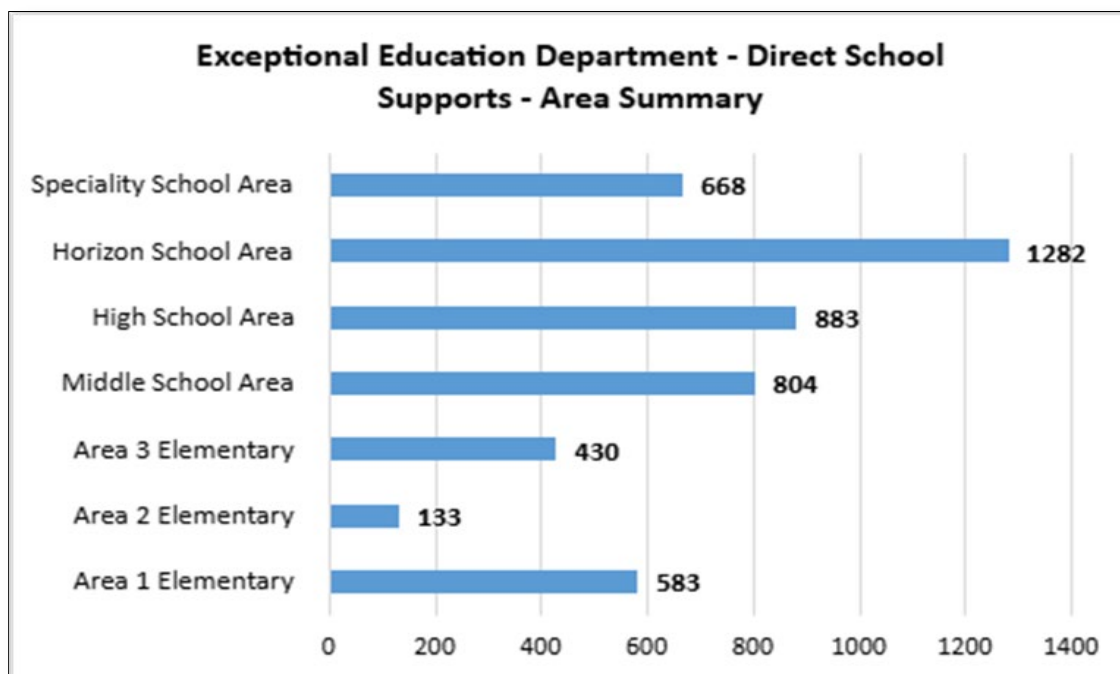
- On April 21, DCSD completers of the Georgia Teacher Provider Retention Project new teacher program celebrated their accomplishments with a graduation ceremony, certificates of completion, and new phone chargers to ensure they are continually ready to answer the call. One hundred percent of program completers once again signed contracts for DeKalb County Schools for the upcoming year!



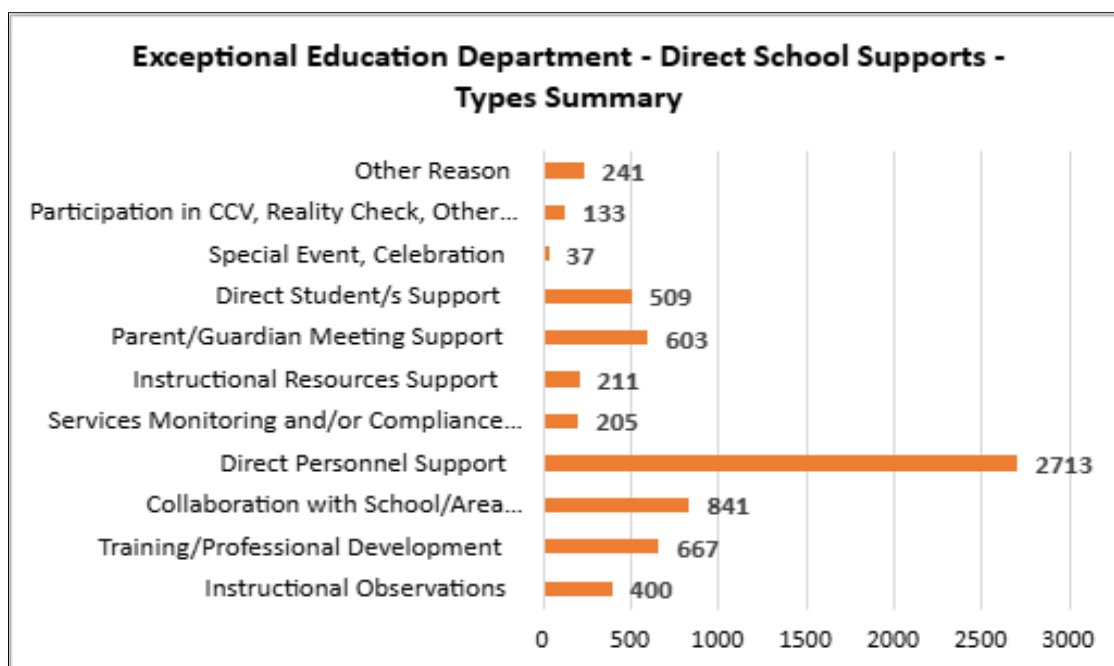
- The Office of SPED would like to acknowledge LTSE Tikisha Walwyn, for receiving recognition as a dedicated and compassionate educator by the mayor of the City of Doraville and Sign Language Interpreter Yuvonda Jones, recipient of a scholarship from the GA United Credit Union to apply to a master's program.



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



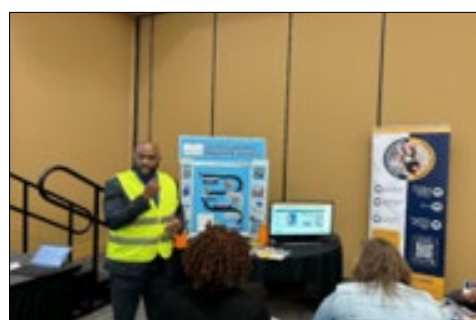
Types of Direct School Supports by Dept. of Exceptional Education Since the Start of the School Year



Executive Director Dr. Zack Phillips

Early Learning and Pre-K

Dr. Phillips and members of the Department of Early Learning and Pre-K Programs have been working diligently supporting district staff members and meeting with a sample size of teacher leaders on designated better-seeking teams for (Non-Negotiables, Assessment, and Instructional Environment). Dr. Phillips hosted representatives from Clayton County School District for a visit at the Early Learning Center on April 4. Dr. Phillips met with members of the DCSD and representatives from the Woodruff Foundation about a potential partnership for the upcoming SY25-26. Dr. Phillips participated as a member of the DeKalb County GLIS Lit Team during the visit to Middle Georgia State University on April 15. Dr. Phillips hosted representatives from Troup County School District for a visit at the Early Learning Center, participated in the 9th SOR Training for Pre-K (3&4) staff members, and the SAP Committee meeting April 16 at Stone Mountain HS. Dr. Phillips attended a meeting at the Atlanta Speech School on April 23 with other representatives from the metro Atlanta area. The topic of discussion centered around the State of Early Child Care in the State of Georgia. Dr. Phillips served as a committee member with other district and community stakeholders to discuss the topic of sibling preference on April 29. Team members within the Department of Early Learning and Pre-K Programs participated in Half Cap celebrations across the district. Dr. Phillips and team members visited Barack Obama, Dunaire, Flat Rock, Narvie Theme, Panola Way, Stone Mountain, Smoke Rise, Woodridge Elementary Schools, and the Early Learning Center to conduct observations, technical assistance, and provide support for other planned activities. Also, Dr. Phillips was recognized for being selected as a member of the 3rd Cohort for the Men of Color in Educational Leadership (MCEL) National Leaders Institute.



Professional Learning Opportunities

The Early Learning/Pre-K Department have worked diligently during April to offer various PL opportunities to district employees covering several topics: SOR, MTSS support, virtual Chat and Chews, Better-Seeking Teams, and Temp Checks related to SOR – Cox Campus Modules. These excellent opportunities for staff members are aligned with the DCSD Strategic Plan and the DCSD MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement.

Instructional Activities

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



School Supports

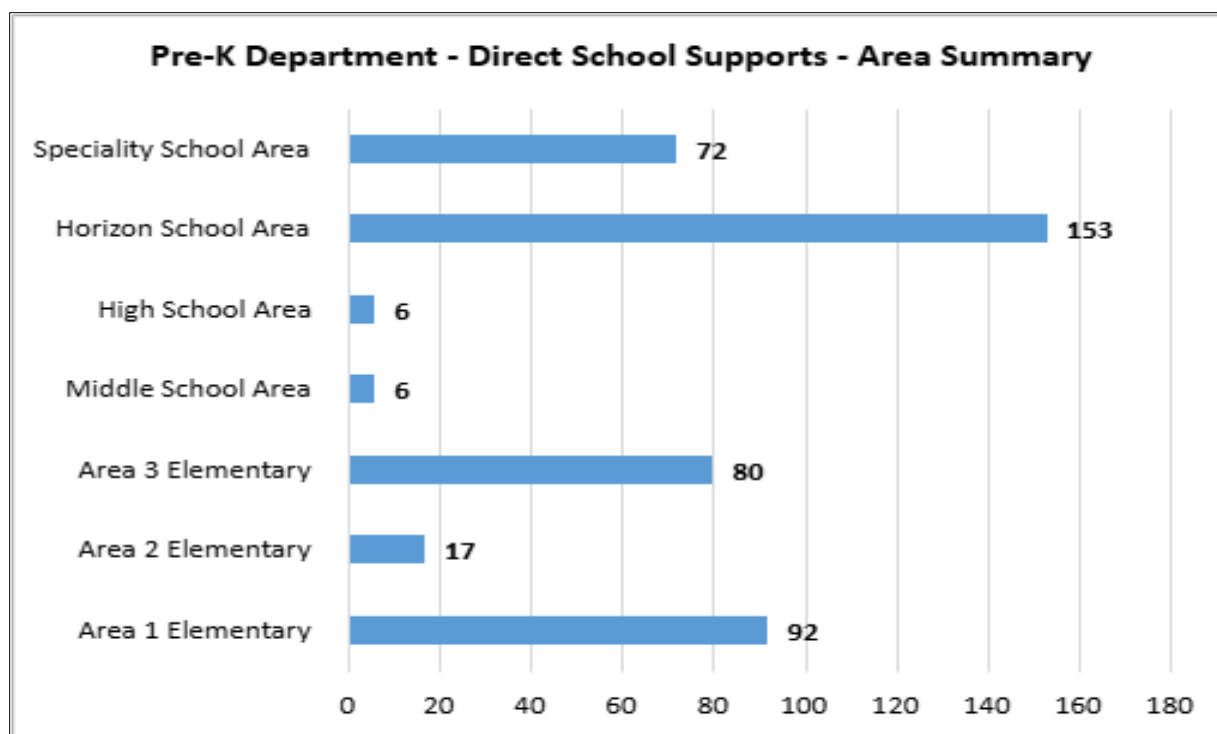
The Early Learning/Pre-K Department team continues to provide support to schools to assist with upcoming program visits, virtual Chat and Chews, SOR PL via Cox Campus, and guidance with MTSS Tier II and Tier III meetings, etc.

Department – Highlights

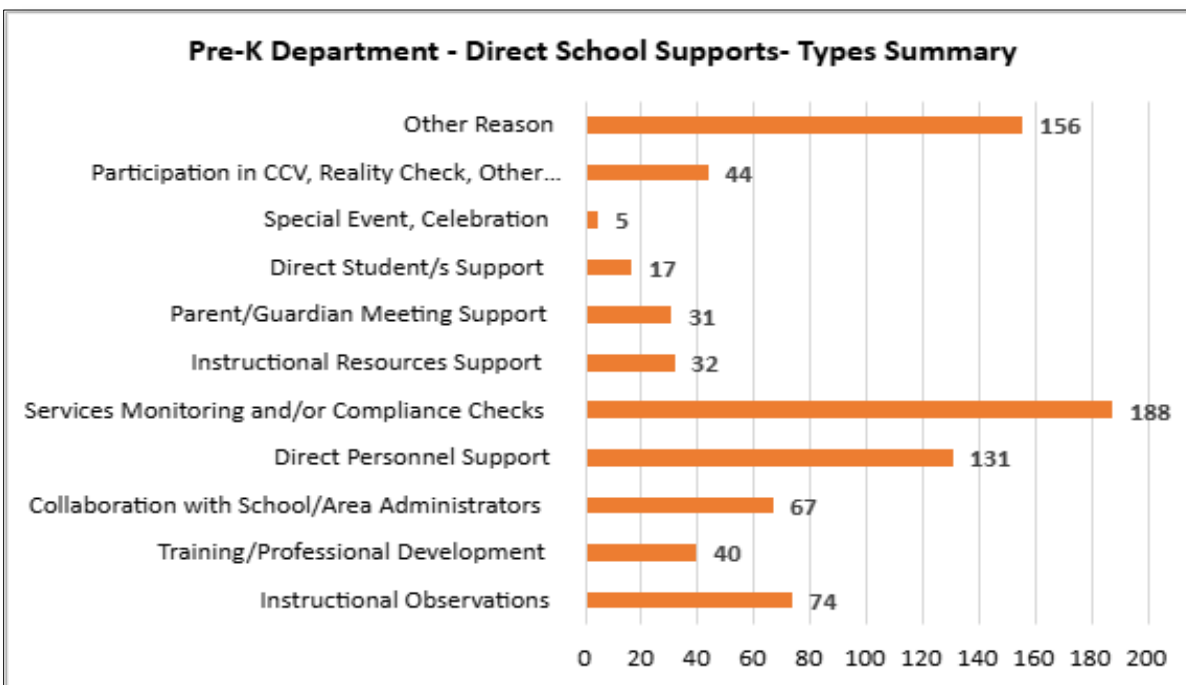
The Pre-K3 expansion classes and Pre-K4 pilot classes at the same ES locations in addition to the Early Learning Center, continue to utilize the Waterford supplemental resource within their instructional settings. This wonderful instructional resource supports various content areas ranging from literacy, math, social studies, and science, technology, engineering (art) and

mathematics (STEAM). Additionally, this instructional resource continues to support teachers and paraprofessionals with 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 ninth SOR PL training was a success and concluded on April 16. Dr. Phillips was recognized for being selected as a member of the 3rd Cohort for the MCEL National Leaders Institute.

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 Department purchased both online and print instructional materials. The online resource, Newsela, is accessible to all teachers and students through Clever. Printed instructional materials were also purchased for every school library from Critical Thinking Company. These resources are reproducible, and any teacher can check out these materials.



Teachers in the gifted endorsement program explored activities from *Sparking Student Creativity: Practical Ways to Promote Innovative Thinking and Problem Solving* by Patti Drapeau. Young Williams, a third-grade teacher at Oakcliff ES wrote, "I think the graphic organizer can be used for any grade level and as a tool to expand students' flexible thinking and creativity for a whole group activity, for an individual activity, or for both. Many students drew their rectangles in a landscape orientation for the descriptors labeled larger and smaller and drew their rectangles in a portrait orientation for the descriptors labeled longer and shorter. Some students drew their rectangles in portrait orientation for all the descriptors; some other students drew their rectangles in landscape orientation for all the descriptors. It is interesting to notice the variations in their work samples."

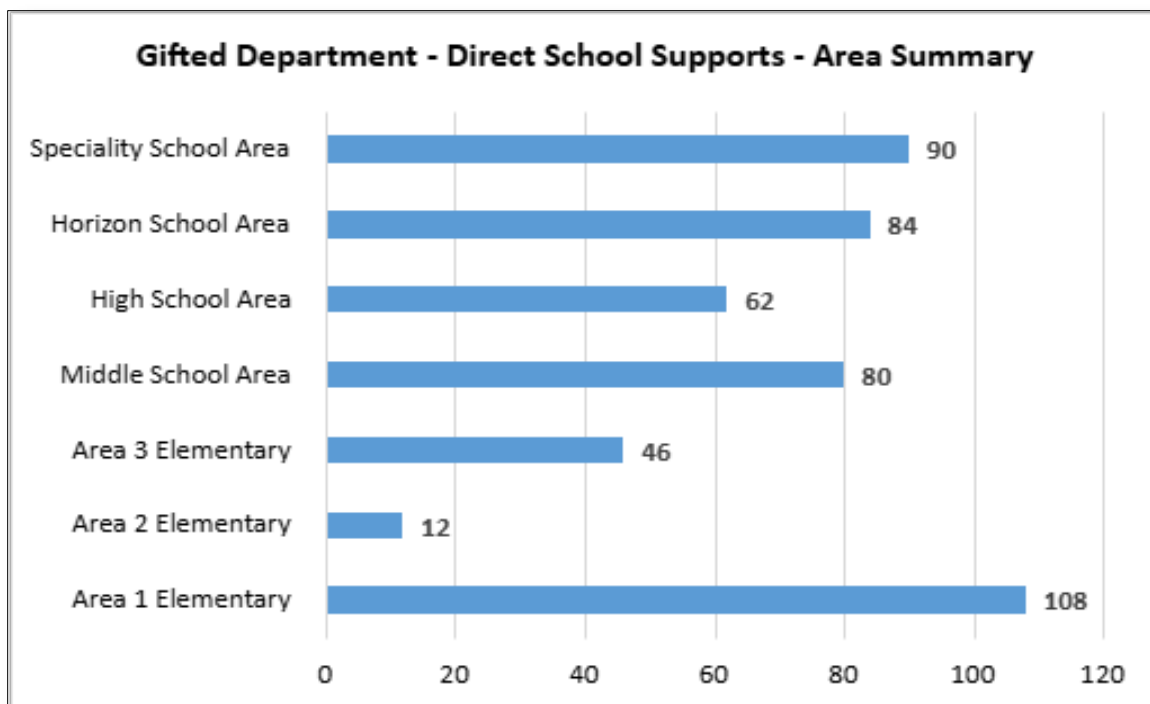
Goal setting was a major focus in one classroom at Sagamore Hills ES as students completed short milestones practice assessments. Before taking the daily quiz, Dr. Kristy Shackelford asked the students, "What are you noticing?" One student shared her growth. Another caught that he did not scroll down to read all the information, while another shared that she did not look at a chart. The goal is for students to move from proficient to distinguished.



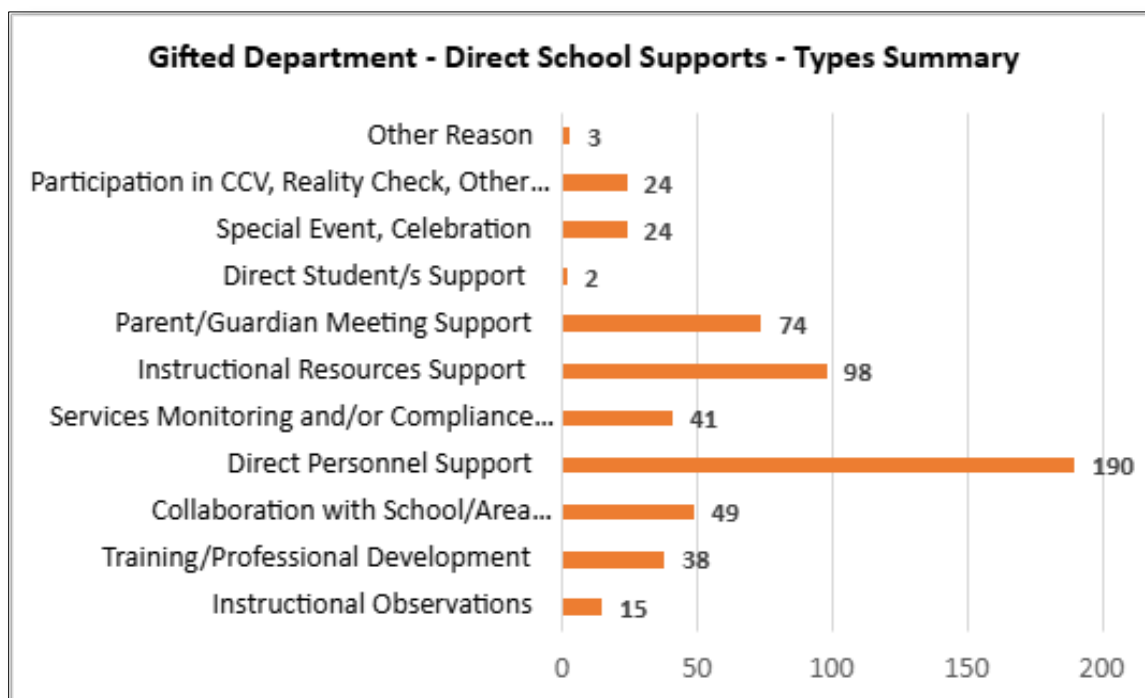
Senior Coordinator for Gifted Education, Mrs. Donyell Atkinson attended the GaDOE's Regional Gifted Coordinators Gifted meeting on April 24, hosted by Atlanta Public Schools to network with state representatives for gifted education as well as other district gifted coordinators to share gifted programming insights, strategies, procedures, and best practices relative to educating gifted students and the teachers that serve them.

While spring gifted testing has officially ended, the Gifted Education Department along with Assessment, Information and Instructional Technology (DIIT), Research and Evaluation Departments, have begun the process for obtaining the complete data file of all students that were screened for gifted status from all the assessments used in the district's gifted identification process. Based on the volume of students evaluated, parents can expect to learn of their student's status on or prior to the start of school. Importantly to note to address the parental and school concerns about gifted testing, local schools and their respective community stakeholder groups can expect an immediate remedy for gifted testing during SY25-26 pending superintendent approval. More information and details will be forthcoming. As we bring the school year to a close, summer program offerings are available to students attending a DeKalb County public school. It is with great pleasure to officially announce that Serendipity will be offered to all gifted-identified students that are currently in grades 1-6 beginning June 9–13, at Stone Mountain MS. Parents that have registered their students can expect to receive an email confirming their child's/children's participation the week of May 12.

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

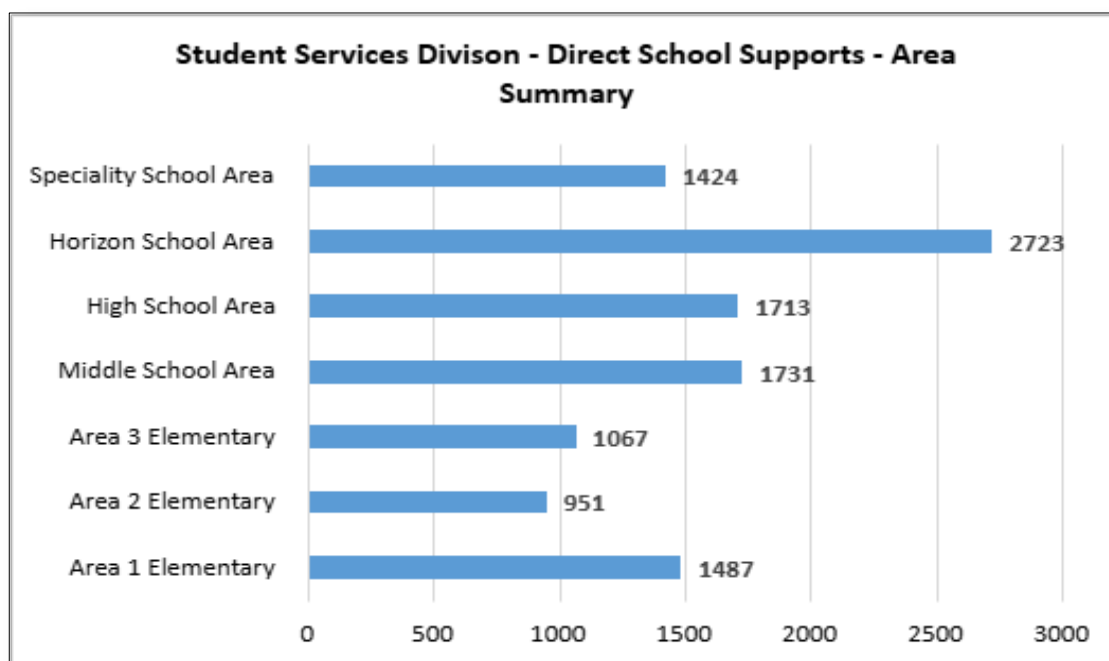


Types of Direct School Supports by Gifted Education Team Since the Start of the School Year

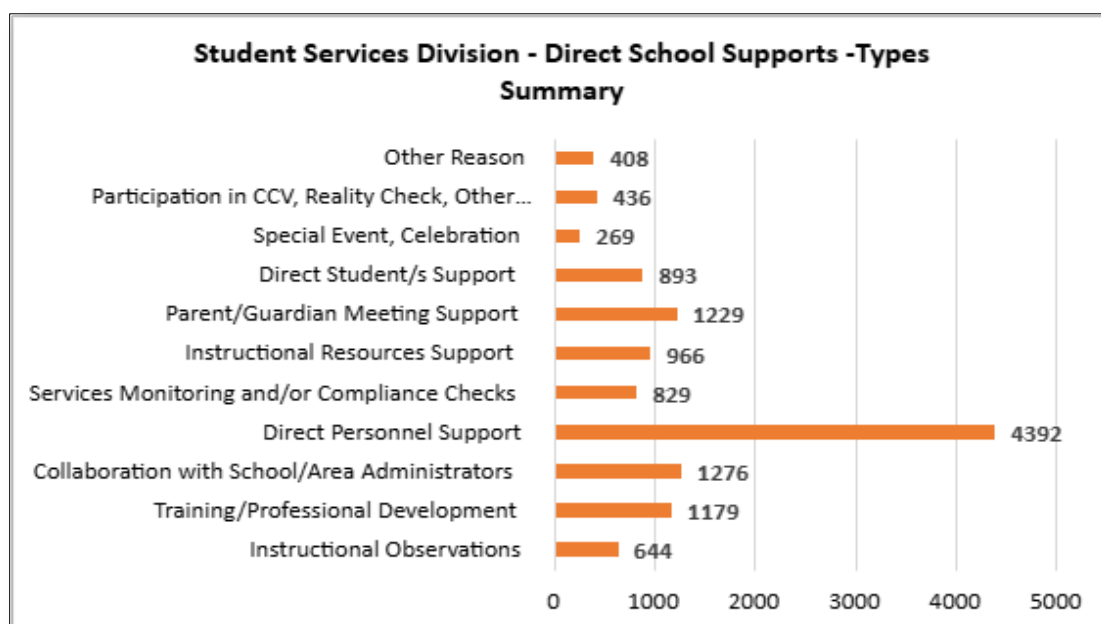


Division of Student Services – Direct School Supports Totals – Since the Start of the School Year

**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

2025 Teen Summit

The Division of Wrap Around Services hosted the Inaugural Teen Summit for over 200 HS students at the Evergreen Conference Center on May 2. The Summit included students serving as presenters, alongside an expert in one of the six breakout sessions, which included topics related to: substance abuse prevention, healthy relationships, mental health and youth, gun violence prevention, human trafficking prevention, and distracted driving. The keynote from Motivational Speaker Keith Brown, was well received as he encouraged students to face the future with optimism and create their own paths for themselves. Please click on the [DCSD 2025 Teen Summit](#) link to view the 2025 Teen Summit.

Inaugural Military Student Swearing-In Ceremony at Miller Grove High School

The Division of Wrap Around Services was delighted to attend the DCSD inaugural *Military Student Swearing-In Ceremony*, recognizing approximately 200 remarkable scholars who have pledged to serve in the United States Armed Forces (*Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, or Space Force*). This special event took place April 24, at Miller Grove HS. The students, families, and staff were excited and celebrated all inductees.

Officers from the respective branches offered the Oath of Enlistment. The Oath of Enlistment is a sworn declaration that each service member makes upon entering or re-enlisting in the U.S. Military. It symbolizes the formal commitment to uphold the duties of military service, defend the Constitution, and obey the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Importantly, it's the same for all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces – Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Space Force. Congratulations to all of the newly enlisted scholars of DCSD.



Executive Director Christopher Key

Student Advancement Department

School Counseling Office and Post-Secondary Outreach Office – Elementary and Middle School Career Exploration

Scholars in elementary schools are being exposed to various careers through virtual reality software. Our Post-Secondary Transition Specialist Team members have scheduled exploratory sessions for elementary teams during the months of April and May.



Pictured: Columbia Elementary School scholars using VR devices to explore jobs and engage as an employee on the specific job chosen.

The DCSD Scholarship Club and the 4Es: Endless Possibilities Campaigns

Two campaigns have been launched this month. See flyers and logos below. The Communications Team is working in concert with the Student Advancement Team to heighten awareness and promote these two initiatives that are being implemented to celebrate scholars.

The 4 Es: Endless Possibilities Branding Pitch is as follows, and we seek to inform our scholars and our community, particularly parents and guardians regarding what to expect at graduation:

Logo

“Class of 2025...Your future? It starts with a single letter — E.

- **4Ê** – Enrollment
- **4€** – Enlistment
- **4£** – Entrepreneurship
- **4Σ** – Employment



Branding Pitch (continued)

“We look forward to highlighting your post-secondary path at graduation this year.

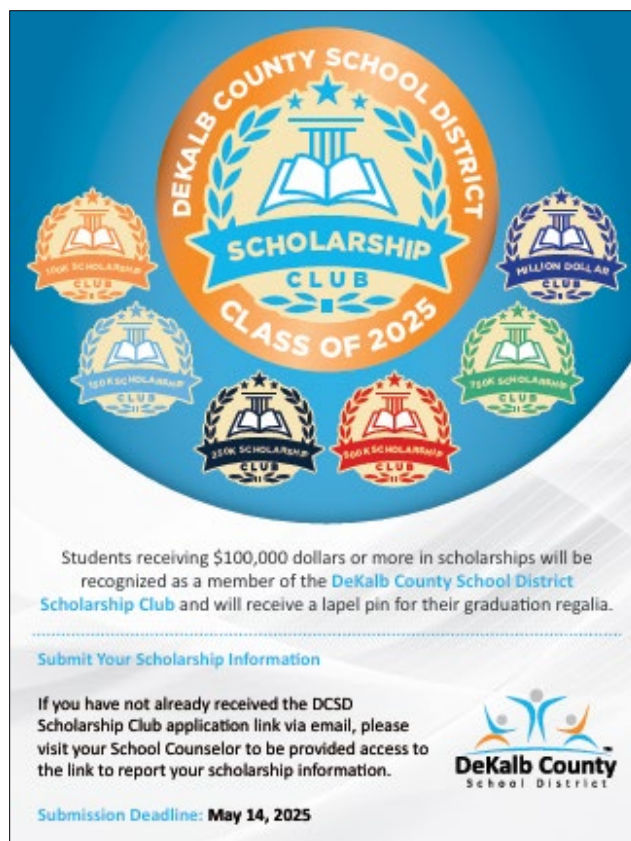
Four possible paths. One incredible you. Whether you’re building a business, starting a career, serving your country, or heading to college — your journey starts now. If you are a senior and you have not selected your path and need additional support, please see your PT senior advisor liaison, post-secondary transition specialist, or school counselor today.”

The DCSD Scholarship Club Campaign

Standardized links have been forwarded to school counselors and scholars so that documentation of the scholarships can be uploaded. Preliminary results show a sharp increase in scholarship dollars being awarded. For example, one school alone, Chamblee HS has an estimated 24 million dollars, and over 70 scholars are being added to the scholarship club. A flyer is being advertised to promote awareness.

Check and Connect Pre-Milestones Kick-Off/ Workshop

Student engagement coaches are immersed in school culture seeking to motivate and support students as they prepare for the Georgia Milestones. For example, at Salem MS, Student Engagement Coach Crayton-Brown, provided test-taking tips while hosting an ice cream social for scholars. Scholars left the event feeling motivated and empowered.



Elementary School Counseling

The Critical Role of SEL in Elementary Education

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a cornerstone of student development, equipping young learners with essential skills in self-awareness, emotional regulation, responsible decision-making, and relationship-building. Research consistently shows that strong SEL programs improve academic performance, reduce behavioral incidents, and enhance overall school climate. Furthermore, SEL lays the foundation for early career awareness by fostering resilience, teamwork, and problem-solving—skills that directly translate into future workplace success. A school culture embedded with SEL principles promotes a supportive, inclusive, and high-achieving environment where both students and educators thrive. Following a thorough review of the raw data from April 30, 14 schools have an overall average lesson completion rate at or above 70 percent, 18 schools are between 50 and 69 percent, 30 schools have been between 25 and 49 percent, and 23 schools have less than 25 percent overall lesson completion rates.

The DCSD School Counseling Coordinator Team remains committed to providing targeted support to schools in order to strengthen SEL integration. Key initiatives include monthly analytics review, large group intervention, ongoing progress monitoring, PL, and product support. This plan is designed to address immediate concerns regarding SEL lesson completion rates and establish a framework for ongoing improvement. By implementing consistent data reviews, structured interventions, targeted PL, and effective product support, the district can enhance SEL program fidelity and ensure that all students receive the full benefit of SEL instruction. By reinforcing SEL curriculum engagement, we not only empower students with essential life and career readiness skills but also cultivate a positive and productive school climate. Continued collaboration between district leadership, school administrators, and educators is essential in advancing SEL implementation and ensuring long-term success for all students.

Professional Learning Attendance and Sessions

The 2024-2025 ESC Professional Learning Series continued with a third session entitled “AI in School Counseling” hosted on April 17. The session provided valuable insights and resources for elementary school counselors to enhance their practice. By introducing counselors to foundational Artificial Intelligence (AI) concepts and ethical considerations, such as data privacy and algorithmic bias, the session empowered them to integrate AI tools responsibly into their counseling programs. Through interactive discussions and activities, counselors explored AI applications like ChatGPT and Magicschool.ai to boost student engagement, support SEL lesson delivery, and streamline administrative tasks. This type of PD supports counselors in staying current with technological advancements, ultimately benefiting their students’ academic, career, and social-emotional development. This session also helped counselors recognize the importance of balancing AI’s potential benefits with a critical understanding of its limitations. By addressing ethical concerns and emphasizing data security, the session ensured that counselors could use AI tools in a way that prioritizes student well-being and equitable access.

Additionally, by fostering creative problem-solving and media literacy, this training enhances counselors' abilities to adapt to emerging technologies and apply them effectively within their schools. As a result, the counselors I support are better equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of school counseling, fostering a positive and inclusive environment for students. This PL series is aligned with several Counselor Keys Performance Standards: *Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge (Define)*, *Performance Standard 3: Instructional Strategies (Manage/Deliver System)*, *Performance Standard 9: Professionalism (Define/Manage)*.

On April 18, we hosted a Naviance training session for elementary school counselors, providing an overview of key features and updates that are vital for supporting our students' college and career readiness and social emotional learning lesson completion. The session began with a review of the pre-assessment, followed by a detailed walkthrough of the home page and the basic functionalities of both the staff (Navigator Mode) and student (Explorer Mode) portals. The Naviance trainer and I focused on the management tools available for staff, including user and group management, as well as lesson tracking and administration. This allowed counselors to better understand how to utilize Naviance to organize and oversee lessons, student progress, and other key components within the platform. The session also included a deep dive into student-facing features such as "My Work" and the "Up the Ladder" tool, which are essential for guiding students through their learning and growth. We demonstrated how to use reports like Assignment Status and Utilization to track students' engagement with the system and their progress on social emotional learning lessons. To assess the impact of the training, I had participants complete a post-session survey. This session was crucial in reinforcing the skills necessary for elementary counselors to effectively support their students' development and ensure they are on the path to success with the resources Naviance offers. The outcome of the training resulted in a 30 percent boost in staff confidence and proficiency with Naviance.

MIRACLE Priority – Drug Awareness

The DCSD is committed to developing a districtwide drug awareness and prevention program as part of its MIRACLE priority, aiming to promote abstinence from alcohol and drugs through primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention measures by June 2025. DCSD has partnered with Kaiser Permanente to enhance the health and well-being of our school communities. An elementary presentation on Rhythm, Resilience, and Drug Awareness was piloted for district review to ensure its appropriateness. Additionally, a partnership with the GA Army National Guard has been established to deliver drug awareness presentations in schools. These presentations educate the public on the reasons individuals might turn to drugs, healthier recreational options, and basic drug information. The GA Army National Guard collaborates closely with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and other organizations, with their evidence-based presentation "One Pill Can Kill" reaching over 525 HS students at Dunwoody HS and 810 MS students at Druid Hills MS. Student resources will be purchased to support this campaign during Red Ribbon Week in fall 2025.

Below is a summary of the Kaiser Permanente and GA Army National Guard presentations hosted or scheduled in DCSD elementary schools:

Location	Kaiser Presentation Date	Number of Students Scheduled	Number of Students Impacted	Number of Staff
TOTALS	-	700	665	300
Briar Vista ES	2-3-25	-	203	-
Canby Lane ES	2-5-24 and 2-7-25	-	132	-
Columbia ES	2-4-25	-	176	-
Dresden ES	March/April	350	-	-
John Lewis ES	March/April	200	-	-
Princeton ES	March/April	150	-	-
Rainbow ES	2-6-25	-	154	-
School counselors	-	-	-	300

Location	GA Army National Guard Presentation Dates	Number of Students Scheduled	Number of Students Impacted	Number of Staff
TOTALS	-	5,114	3,512	423
Elementary Schools	-	0	110	0
Leadership Prep Academy K-8	3-14-25	0	110	4
Oak View ES	10-23-24	0	110	4

Career Lessons

Students in grades K-5 complete these lessons using the Naviance platform. Raw ES career lesson completion data is available and is currently being developed into a dashboard to facilitate comprehensive analysis.

Career exploration is important for ES students because it helps them understand the world of work, develop their interests and strengths, and set future goals. It also fosters self-awareness, decision-making skills, and motivation, laying a strong foundation for their educational and career paths. Current lesson completion data can be viewed in detail on the DCSD SEL Dashboard.

Middle School Counseling

BRIDGE Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy (Career Lesson) Data Support

Middle school is a pivotal time for kids as they explore career paths and discover their interests and strengths, shaping future educational and career choices. Connecting core subjects to real-life jobs ignites their passion, helps them appreciate education, and keeps them motivated.

Georgia's Bridge Law requirements offer an engaging way for students to explore careers and pathways. Although the average bridge lesson completion rate is over 50 percent, the goal is to reach at least 90 percent. Here's the Bridge Data as of April 28.

Task Name	Task Completion Target	Students Assigned	Students Completed	Student Completion Rate
6th Grade				
Complete AchieveWorks Learning and Productivity	100	6,501	5,092	78%
Complete Career Key	100	6,501	5,322	82%
7th Grade				
Add Career Clusters to My List	100	6,653	4,642	70%
Complete Career Cluster Finder	100	6,653	5,120	77%
8th Grade				
Complete AchieveWorks and Skills	100	6,766	4,635	69%
8 th Grade Individual Graduation Plan	100	6,764	6,576	97%

Social Emotional Learning: Bullying, Child Protection Data/Support

SEL is crucial for MS students, helping them navigate emotions, build relationships, and make wise choices during a key developmental stage. However, the Second Step curriculum often faces low completion rates due to time constraints. To address this, schools in the first and second quartiles will receive targeted support between September to April 2025. By analyzing current data to identify low-performing areas, these schools will become priorities for intervention. Virtual check-ins with counseling departments and principals will focus on overcoming obstacles and crafting strategies to improve SEL lesson completion.

Second Step Lesson Overview (All Lessons)				
Grade	Required Task Month	Lesson Title		
Grade 6	September	Starting Middle School (1a) or Helping New Students (1b)	81.20%	5,283 of 6,506 students
	October	Bullying Recognizing Bullying	73.70%	4,795 of 6,506 students
		Bullying Responding to Online Bullying	69.31%	4,509 of 6,506 students
	November	Why Conflicts Escalate	74.33%	4,836 of 6,506 students
	December	What Emotions Tell You	74.32%	4,835 of 6,506 students
	January	What are Guiding Principles?	58.84%	3,828 of 6,506 students
	February	Respectful Communication	58.85%	3,829 of 6,506 students
	March	Teen Lures	63.14%	4,108 of 6,506 students
	May	Thinking Short-Term & Long-Term	44.97%	2,926 of 6,506 students

	second step 6th Grade	4/9/2025		
Month	Lesson Name	Students	Completion #	Completion Rate
September	6th Grade Lesson 1a: Starting Middle School	6513	5097	78%
October	6th Grade Bullying Lesson 2: Recognizing Bullying	6513	4620	71%
October	6th Grade Bullying Lesson 3: Responding to Online Bullying	6513	4265	65%
November	6th Grade Lesson 21: Why Conflicts Escalate	6513	4689	72%
December	6th Grade Lesson 14: What Emotions Tell You	6513	4502	69%
January	6th Grade Lesson 8: What are Guiding Principles	6513	2809	43%
February	6th Grade Lesson 23: Respectful Communication	6513	3042	39%
March	6th Grade Lesson 4 & 6: Teen Lures	6513	3752	58%
April	Testing No Lessons Required (Makeup Month)			
May	6th Grade Lesson 12: Thinking Short-Term & Long-Term			
	second step 7th Grade	4/9/2025		
Month	Lesson Name	Students	Completion #	Completion Rate
September	7th Grade Lesson 1b: Helping New Students	6681	4822	72%
October	7th Grade Bullying Lesson 1: What is Harassment	6681	4814	72%
October	7th Grade Bullying Lesson 5: Our Rights & Responsibilities	6681	4171	63%
November	7th Grade Lesson 21: Keeping Cool in Conflicts	6681	4210	63%
December	7th Grade Lesson 14: Emotions Matter	6681	3804	57%
January	7th Grade Lesson 8: What is Self-Concept	6693	3804	57%
February	7th Grade Lesson 25: Taking Responsibility for Your Actions	6693	2108	31%
March	7th Grade – Teen Lures Lessons 4 & 6 TASK	6681	2495	37%
April	TESTING No Lessons Required (Makeup Month)			
May	7th Grade Lesson 12 Your Future Concept			
	second step 8th Grade	4/9/2025		
Month	Lesson Name	Students	Completion #	Completion Rate
September	8th Grade Lesson 2: Who Am I? My Identity	6748	5137	76%
October	8th Grade Lesson 2: Social Factors that Contribute to Bullying	6748	4546	67%
October	8th Grade Lesson 5: Be Inclusive & Ask for Change	6748	4046	60%
November	8th Grade Lesson 22: Recognizing Other's Perspective	6748	4158	62%
December	8th Grade Lesson 14: Understanding Stress & Anxiety	6771	4025	60%
January	8th Grade Lesson 9: Sources of Confidence	6748	3687	55%
February	8th Grade Lesson 21: Values and Relationships	6748	3487	52%
March	8th Grade Lessons 4 & 6: Teen Lures	6748	3286	48%
April	Testing No Lessons Required (Makeup Month)			
May	8th Grade Lesson 12: Agency & Confidence			

Miracle Priority-Drug Awareness: Data, Sessions, Partnerships and Support

The significant increase in alcohol, vaping, and drug use among MS students underscores the critical need for improved drug education. Providing young people with the knowledge to recognize the dangers of substances enables them to make better choices and resist peer pressure. Initiatives like the Army National Guard Counterdrug Task Force's Drug Awareness Sessions in the DCSD play a vital role in prevention and safety. Interactive workshops led by health care professionals can offer valuable insights into the effects of drugs, helping students understand the importance of healthier coping strategies. We are looking forward to continuing with presentations in the fall as well.

Drug Awareness and Prevention Presentations to Date:

School	Presentation Date	Number of Students Scheduled	Number of Students Impacted	Number of Staff
Druid Hills MS	11-12-24 11-15-24 11-21-24 11-22-24	-	810	-
Peachtree MS	2-25-25	-	2,293	-
McNair MS	2-26-25	-	724	-
Bethune MS	3-4-25	-	650	10
Miller Grove MS	3-6-25	-	619	-
DeKalb Alternative MS	3-10-25	-	73	5
Chamblee MS	5-9-25	1,017	-	-



Professional Learning Attendance and Sessions

The importance of receiving PD cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in enhancing their ability to support students effectively. PD allows counselors to stay updated on the latest educational strategies, mental health resources, and counseling techniques, which are essential in addressing the diverse needs of students. By engaging in continuous learning, counselors can better understand emerging issues such as cyberbullying, mental health challenges, and college readiness, ensuring they provide relevant and timely support. It is advantageous for coordinators to share their unique insights and experiences that highlight the important work of those in support services and build bridges with the broader school community. The coordinators shared the topic, “Mastering the Art of Advocacy: Strategies for Success” at the Empowering Together: The Power of One in Advocacy Conference on April 30.



High School Counseling

Early Graduation Requests

We are pleased to report that a total of 45 students from Cohort 2026 across our district's high schools have submitted requests for early graduation. These requests are for students intending to complete their graduation requirements and receive their diplomas. This milestone highlights the academic readiness and determination of our students, as well as the dedication of our schools in supporting these efforts.

Each of these 45 students will graduate not only with a diploma in hand, but also with a clear post-secondary plan in place—whether that be enrollment in college, entry into the workforce, or enlistment in the military. This achievement reflects our district's commitment to ensuring every student is equipped with both the credentials and the vision to take confident steps toward their future.

May 2025 Early Graduation Requests

High School	Cohort
Arabia Mountain	1
Cedar Grove	1
Chamblee	3
Clarkston	3
Columbia	0
Cross Keys	0
DeKalb Early College Academy (DECA)	0
DeKalb School of the Arts (DSA)	0
Druid Hills	6
Dunwoody	15
Elizabeth Andrews	1
Lakeside	0
Lithonia	2
Margaret Harris	0
McNair	0
Miller Grove	0
Martin Luther King Jr.	3
Redan	2
Southwest	0
Stephenson	3
Stone Mountain	4
Tapestry Public Charter School	1
Towers	0
Tucker	0
TOTAL	45

House Bill 91

House Bill 91 makes it possible for those students to finally obtain their high school diploma so they can move on to a brighter future. Those who completed all the requirements for graduation except for passing one test on one given day now can go on to some form of post-secondary education, where they can obtain skills needed to have a great quality of life and be contributors to our society.

As of April 2, we have five new HB91 applications that have been received through Project Graduation. The applications have now been processed with either approval or denial based on eligibility and will be based on the graduation requirements in effect when the student first entered ninth grade.

86	Zakesha Willis	5339103 Open Campus HS	2003	3/18/2025	Yes, S. White 3/21/2025
87	Yadgar Shwani	7274009 Open Campus HS	2002	4/2/2025	Yes, S. White 4/14/2025
88	Katherine Fowler	8127610 McNair HS	2008	4/8/2025	Yes, S. White 4/14/2025
89	Albert Edmondson	4350472 Chamblee HS	1998	4/16/2025	No- S. White 4/28/2025
90	Magic Evans	8018696 Elizabeth Andrews HS	2011	5/1/2025	
91	LEGEND				
92	Student Not Approved for HB91				
93	Student has been approved AND transcript has been sent to student				
94					

FASFA/GSFAPP

As of April 23, updated enrollment data reports a total of **5,916 12th-grade students**. Based on this figure, **58.3** percent (approximately **3,451** students) have completed their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**) or Georgia Student Finance Application (**GSFAPP**), while **41.7** percent (approximately **2,465** students) have not yet submitted these essential financial aid forms.

This data marks a **6.65 percentage point increase** in FAFSA/GSFAPP completion compared to March 2025, reflecting steady and measurable progress in guiding students toward post-secondary financial aid opportunities. The upward trend is a positive indicator of the impact of current outreach and support strategies as we approach the conclusion of the academic school year.

High School Name and Address	12 th Grade Total Enrollment	FAFSA Completed Submissions	GSFAPP Submissions
Arabia Mountain (503)	267	189	59
Cedar Grove (519)	230	84	20
Chamblee (522)	428	242	88
Clarkston (525)	272	87	51
Columbia (527)	187	81	19
Cross Keys (529)	350	81	49
Dekalb Early College Academy (506)	69	55	19
DeKalb School of the Arts (501)	76	57	20
Druid Hills(533)	315	163	59
Dunwoody (535)	479	228	72
Elizabeth Andrews	184	5	2
Lakeside (555)	489	269	113
Lithonia (557)	316	113	25
McNair (595)	125	60	20

High School Name and Address	12 th Grade Total Enrollment	FAFSA Completed Submissions	GSFAPP Submissions
Miller Grove (564)	216	72	14
Martin Luther King Jr. (574)	300	114	27
Redan (567)	240	77	27
Southwest DeKalb (576)	272	121	36
Stephenson (578)	305	117	35
Stone Mountain (580)	280	131	17
Tapestry Public Charter School	28	15	6
Towers (585)	181	56	14
Tucker (593)	307	137	105
TOTAL	5,916	2,554	897

Head Counselor/Data Clerk Monthly Training

During the April 15, Head Counselor and Data Clerk Meeting, critical updates and protocols were reviewed to ensure alignment with district expectations. The agenda covered guidance on entering transfer credits, graduation cohort protocols, and updates on summer course limitations. A special emphasis was placed on preparing Cohort 2026 through data tracking and early intervention planning. Participants were reminded about deadlines for failure notifications, diploma distribution procedures, and proper documentation of student activities in Infinite Campus. Important changes to Dual Enrollment course alignment—particularly concerning economics—and transcript validation processes for Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) eligibility were also discussed.

Executive Director of Student Advancement Christopher Key provided clarification on the Four E's—Enrollment (4Ê), Enlistment (4€), Entrepreneurship (4£), and Employment (4Σ)—which are now represented with official symbols on graduation programs. He addressed related questions, helping schools better understand how to track and support students' post-secondary plans using Naviance. FAFSA completion cords were also distributed during the meeting, with a reminder of the May 15 deadline. Before the conclusion of the training, head counselors and data clerks were given time to clear their HOPE Invalid Reports with direct support from Cynthia Stephens of the Student Information Systems Department. Additional reminders included using the Help Desk Ticket system for graduation requests, managing aged-out students, completing Counselor Keys Effectiveness System evaluations, and counselor responsibilities for student advancement events.

Drug Prevention Presentation

The Drug Prevention Program held at Martin Luther King Jr. HS for approximately 312 senior students was a timely and impactful initiative designed to prepare them for the upcoming prom season. Focused on critical issues such as drinking and driving, vaping, and the influence of THC, the program featured engaging simulation activities that allowed students to experience the

real-life consequences of impaired decision-making. These simulations provided a powerful, hands-on approach to understanding the risks associated with substance use, especially during high-risk times like prom.

Community Outreach Specialist Ms. Wiggins, from the DEA, delivered a dynamic and informative presentation that truly resonated with the students. Her ability to educate while maintaining their attention made the program both effective and memorable. The students' enthusiasm during the simulations was a clear indication of the program's success. Ms. Wiggins's engaging delivery along with the support of the Counseling Team at Martin Luther King Jr. HS played a key role in making this prevention effort a meaningful experience for all participants.



Title IV Prevention

Community

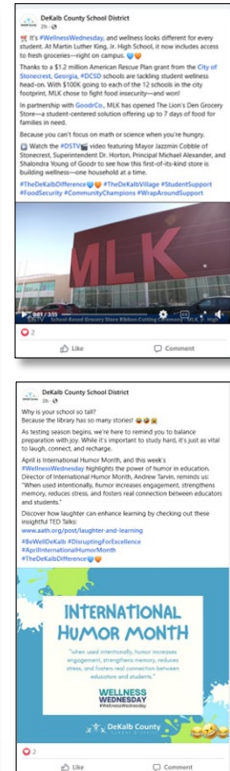
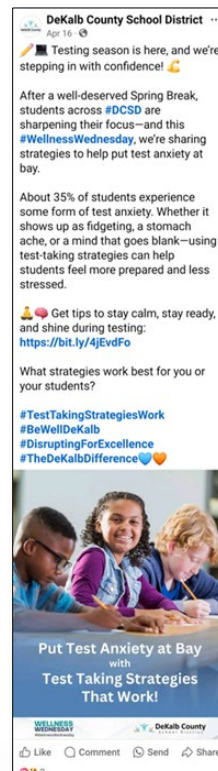
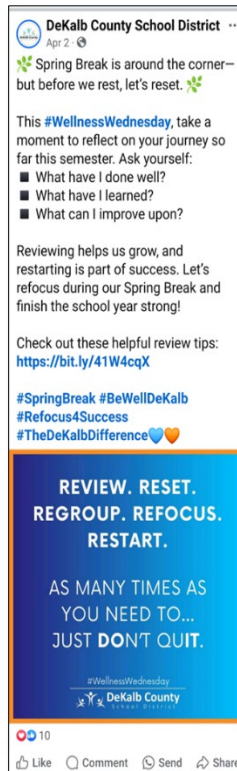
The 3rd Platoon of The Mission Continues returned on April 19 to continue the Earth Day Beautification Service Project at the Buck Godfrey Transportation Lounge. Thirty-eight volunteers participated in building computer desks, a kitchenette, creating a mural and more on behalf of our bus drivers. Outside, volunteers cleared the brush and built a free-standing pergola with flower boxes to allow staff to enjoy an outdoor eating and reflection area.

The team will return on May 3 for part two, to stain the outdoor seating area and complete the mural for the *Magnolia Room*. Among the participants were the Prevention Liaison, three transportation supervisors and various bus drivers.



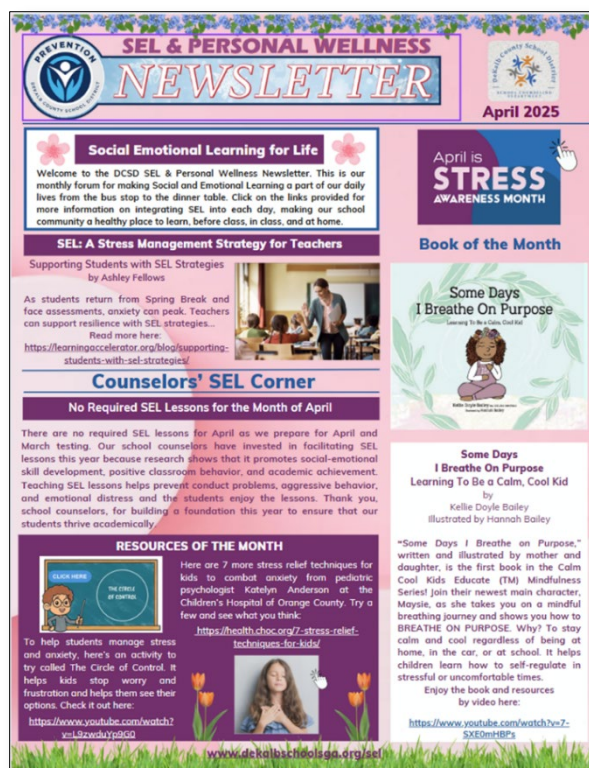
Online Community

#WellnessWednesday posts supporting the mental health and well-being of our DCSD cyber-community were distributed on our social media platforms addressing test preparedness, strategies to manage test anxiety, MLK HS's new school-based grocery store, and laughing while learning. These posts encourage parents and community members to participate in our wellness practices both in schools and at home.



Social and Emotional Learning

The April issue of the **SEL and Personal Wellness Newsletter** featured articles and resources for stress reduction in the classroom with personal wellness focused on environmental wellness. The newsletter is full of clickable links that direct readers to videos, resources, and checklists, to promote social-emotional learning and wellness for both students and staff.



DeKalb Alternative School

The prevention liaison provided introductory SEL Lessons to 34 enrolling students and 41 family members during the DeKalb Alternative School Orientations throughout the month. Lessons introduced were self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, interpersonal skills and responsible decision-making. Students were also introduced to a mindful strategy to manage anxiety, distributed a newsletter reminder that included the strategy, recited a pledge to practice self-management while at school, and participated in a family bonding activity.

Mental Health and Wellness

Coaches of Student-Athletes

The April edition of **Mental Health Matters in DCSD Athletics** was entitled, “What Stresses Our Student-Athletes.” It featured links to resources for athletic coaches on how to reduce stress for our student-athletes and is distributed collaboratively through our Athletics Department monthly.

Mental Health Matters in DCSD Athletics
APRIL 2025

WHAT STRESSES OUR STUDENT ATHLETES?

Brought to You by
Title IV Prevention Liaison, Dr. Torri Hornsby-Griffin, LPC




Student athletes are like superheroes. They appear to live ordinary student lives, but at certain times of the day, they transform into veritable school heroes—running around the track at lightning speeds, knocking baseballs out of the park, and making three-point shots. Externally, they look like regular kids, but internally, there's a lot more going on. Doing what it takes to carry that type of load may seem easy—after all, many of our students do it with style—but for the rest, the pressure of performance, the possibility of injury, and the pace of school schedules can lead to increased stress and anxiety.

In a recent study performed with high school athletes, researchers found that fear of failure and self-pressure were the most common forms of stress students experienced. Also, those most stressed did want help but did not receive it. What if our student athletes were experiencing this type of challenge? How could we address it?

Well, as you may know, April is **#NationalStressAwarenessMonth**, and the American Institute of Stress says that 55% of all Americans report feeling stressed. Stress and anxiety have been on a steady rise for the past 10 years and more increasingly since the pandemic. Another stressor found in that previous study was loneliness. Many students stay socially connected online but socially disconnected in person. As an athletic coach, we'd like you to invite students into the stress awareness conversation. Become more aware of what stresses our student athletes and give them a platform to share their strategies for managing stress with each other. Check out the resources offered online and help them feel supported.

Here's one that may help: <https://tinyurl.com/StudentAthleteStressReducer>.

Thanks for being one of our best resources for our student athletes. You make a real difference.



For more information on Mental Health Matters, contact Title IV Prevention Liaison:
Torri.Hornsby-Griffin@dekalbschoolsga.org

Mental Health Support for Staff

On April 30, , Prevention Liaison Dr. Torri Hornsby-Griffin, LPC, offered a PL on Effective Strategies for Stress Management Using Mindful Techniques in the Mindfulness Room at Oak View ES for staff interested in managing stress during testing season. Ten staff members attended.

Staff Wellness Room Grant Progress

Efforts continue to complete Staff Wellness Rooms in five locations with the goal of completion during in May. A meeting was held with representatives from Kaiser Permanente and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation at the Transportation Hub to review grant goals and progress. A soft opening for the Staff Wellness Room at Stephenson MS is scheduled for later next week.

Grasp Counseling

On April 2, the Mini Conference Program: “EMPOWER HER” took place at Allgood ES. This program is designed to inspire and empower young girls, helping them build confidence, express themselves, and foster lasting friendships. Empowering young girls involves providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources to make their own choices, participate in decision-making, and achieve their full potential. This can be achieved through various means, including fostering a belief in their abilities, supporting their education, and promoting positive role models.

Theme: "EMPOWER HER: Sparking Young Voices" (Grades 3-5)

On April 29, The Mini Conference Program “Empower Him” took place at Flat Shoals elementary school. This program is designed to inspire and empower young boys, helping them build confidence, sharing ambitions and goals, team building activities and bonding brotherhood. Empowering young boys involves creating environments and programs that nurture their emotional, mental, and physical well-being, fostering positive masculinity, and providing them with the tools and resources they need to thrive. This includes promoting healthy relationships, encouraging emotional expression, and challenging harmful stereotypes.

“EMPOWER HIM” Boys Empowerment Mini Conference (Grades 3-5)

This program is designed to inspire and empower young boys, helping them build confidence, express themselves, and foster lasting friendships.

Director Dr. Darnell Logan**Student Relations****Disconnect to Reconnect Initiative: Comprehensive Summary****Overview:**

The **Disconnect to Reconnect** initiative is a districtwide policy and behavioral intervention designed to reduce student cell phone use during instructional hours. The initiative aims to increase student engagement, minimize behavioral disruptions, and improve overall school climate by limiting digital distractions through the use of tools such as Yondr pouches and cell phone lockers.

Objectives:

- **Promote** academic engagement by minimizing distractions caused by mobile devices.
- **Improve** behavior and school climate by reducing conflicts fueled by social media.
- **Enhance** face-to-face interactions and encourage healthier peer relationships.
- **Support** teaching and learning by creating calmer, more focused classroom environments.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Deployment** of Yondr pouches to lock away cell phones during school hours at middle and high schools.
- **Installation** of cell phone lockers in select schools as an alternative option.
- Regular **walkthroughs** and **feedback collection** from administrators, teachers, and students.
- Ongoing **data analysis** to measure impact on academic focus, behavior, and school climate.
- **Collaboration** with school leaders for policy enforcement and accountability.

Key Achievements (SY24–25):**Academic Focus**

- Increased student **engagement and attentiveness** during lessons.
- Teachers reported **fewer instructional disruptions**.
- Improved **task completion** and classroom participation rates.

Behavioral Improvements

- Noticeable **decline in incidents** related to:
 - Cell phone misuse.
 - Social media-fueled peer conflicts.
 - In-class distractions and defiance.
- Reduction in **office referrals** and behavior-related **write-ups**.

Positive School Climate

- Monthly walkthroughs revealed:
 - **Calmer** hallways and common areas.
 - **Improved** student-to-student interactions.
 - **More focused** transitions between classes.
 - Administrators reported **fewer altercations** during unstructured times (e.g., lunch, passing periods).

Data-Driven Impact

- Observations, surveys, and stakeholder interviews were **conducted monthly** across participating schools.
- Feedback indicated **broad support** for the initiative from staff and many students.
- District leadership **utilized data** to identify areas needing re-training or resets on enforcement.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Inconsistent enforcement in some buildings required mid-year **retraining and accountability resets**.
- Some resistance from students and families around **cell phone restrictions**.
- Cost and inventory management (e.g., lost or damaged pouches) required **ongoing tracking and planning**.

Overall Impact Statement

The Disconnect to Reconnect initiative has led to tangible improvements in academic focus, student behavior, and school climate across the district. Through consistent enforcement and data-informed adjustments, it has supported a more structured and engaging learning environment.

Schools participating in the pilot using cell phone lockers and Yondr pouches saw an overall **17** percent decrease in combined suspensions (ISS/OOS) for the school year (**1,282** decrease in suspensions). This significant reduction aligns with and successfully meets the district's targeted MIRACLES Priority Goal related to improving student behavior and reducing exclusionary discipline.

The initiative serves as a model for how limiting mobile device access during the school day can positively impact educational outcomes and school culture.

Bullying Awareness Facilitator

Continue to work with schools to revise/update bullying data for the end of SY24-25.

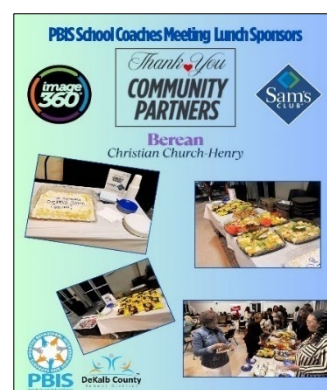
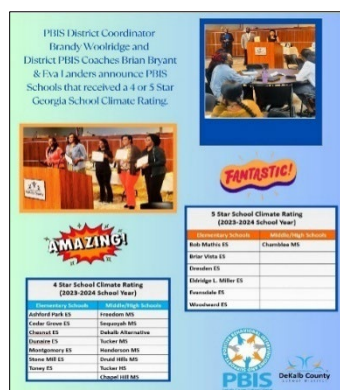
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support

The Division of Wraparound Services and the Department of Student Relations' PBIS District Team successfully met DCSD's PBIS MIRACLE Priority Goal of increasing the number of combined PBIS schools and Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) centers from 50 to 60 by June 2025. This includes 48 PBIS schools and two GNETS centers. Our 10 new Cohort 9 schools completed MTSS Tier I Readiness Training and PBIS Training, with participation from 65 Leadership Team Members:

Austin Elementary School	Oak Grove Elementary School
Bethune Middle School	Rock Chapen Elementary School
Chesnut Elementary School	Snapfinger Elementary School
Dunwoody Elementary School	Stephenson Middle School
Kingsley Elementary School	Stone Mountain High School

On April 17, PBIS District Coordinator Brandy Woolridge met with Director of MTSS Monique Kimbell, to discuss Whole Child Supports Integrated District Leadership Team plans and PBIS-MTSS updates in preparation for the upcoming meeting with the GaDOE and Metro Regional Educational Service Agency (MRESA).

The PBIS District Team hosted the EOY PBIS School Coaches Meeting on April 29, celebrating the accomplishments of our PBIS District Team and PBIS schools across DCSD. During the meeting, the PBIS Stakeholder Recognition Award was presented to Dr. Renee Robinson, C&C coordinator (internal recipient), and Training and Sales Manager Annie Bea Gayle from Sam's Club (external recipient) in honor of the legacy of former PBIS District Coach Stanley Bradley.



- School Climate Star Ratings:
 - In 2022–2023, 38 percent (22/57) of DCSD schools with a School Climate Star Rating of 4 or higher were PBIS schools.
 - In 2023–2024, this increased to 52 percent (25/48).
 - The percentage of PBIS schools earning a rating of 4 or higher increased by 36.84 percent from SY22–23 to SY23–24.
- Oak Grove Elementary School and Tucker High School were named PBIS Film Festival Winners at the Association for Positive Behavior Support International Conference.
- The PBIS district coordinator and five PBIS district coaches are now certified PBIS trainers.
- On May 1, members of the PBIS District Team and MTSS Department attended the MRESA Whole Child Support Regional Meeting.

Student Relations

Clear overview of the Department of Student Relations workload for March 28 – April 30:

District Due Process Hearings:

- Scheduled: **134**
- Canceled/dismissed/withdrawn: **20**
- Manifested: **17**
- Hearings held: **72**
- Discipline Team meetings: **25**
- Board appeals presented: **0**

Students cleared to attend DeKalb County schools: **22**

Director Denise Revels

Wrap Around and Support Services

Student Health Services

At Oakcliff Elementary Theme School in Doraville, School Nurse Elizabeth Grant, RN, found a creative way to connect with her students beyond the clinic—by donning the new Oakcliff Eagle mascot costume at select times and special occasions. Her unexpected role as the Oakcliff Eagle sparked joy and surprise among students. Through this playful alter ego, Nurse Grant created a warm, approachable presence that encouraged students to seek her out not just for injuries and illnesses, but also for emotional support. Her dual role helped foster a unique bond with the school community, showing that care can come in many forms—even inflatable ones.



Chief Stacy E. Stepney

Division of Curriculum and Instruction

Literacy – Reading and Dyslexia Universal Screeners

The DCSD GLSI Literacy Implementation Team met with the top contenders, Amira ISIP and iReady Universal Screening Suite, on April 2 to review intervention components available at a cost to support Tier 2 and Tier 3. On April 30, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement announced that Amira ISIP is the free universal screener for SY25-26. Amira ISIP assessment will be administered to all kindergarten – third-grade students three times next school year.

Curriculum Audit

Insight Education Group and Resonant Education closed the confidential teacher survey on April 7. When the survey ended, 1,333 teachers had completed the survey.

As part of the curriculum audit, Insight Education Group continued facilitating focus group sessions via Zoom with different teacher groups during April. District leaders, principals, assistant principals, parents, students, and additional teachers were randomly selected to participate in the next round of focus groups in May.

Magnet Schools of America National Conference April 7-10

Mrs. Greenwood, Mrs. Gunter, and I attended the Magnet Schools of America National Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Team members visited the following magnet demonstration schools in the Metro Nashville Public Schools: McGavock and Glenclyff High Schools. McGavock High School’s unique instructional programs include AVID, Academy of Aviation and Transportation, Academy of Digital Design and Communication, Academy of Life Science and Law, Gaylord Opryland Academy of Hospitality and U.S. Community Credit Union Academy of Business and Finance, and Freshman Academy. Glenclyff HS offers an Academy of Agriculture, Automotive, and Technology, Academy of Health and Hospitality, Ford Academy of Business and Innovation, and Freshman Academy. The magnet program overview sessions, school tours, and classroom observations allowed us to learn more about each school’s journey to becoming a magnet demonstration school.

Throughout the conference, we connected with schools and school districts seeking national magnet certification. I collaborated with Winston Salem/Forsyth County schools to learn how their magnet schools are implementing integrated learning to connect students with their literacy competencies. Also, I collaborated with Britt David Magnet school in Columbus, Georgia that offers the 17 Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) career clusters to kindergarten through fifth-grade students.

Academic Coaches

April was a busy month for the senior academic coach coordinators (ACC). They continued to provide tiered coaching support and technical assistance based on principal feedback, documentation of work, and on-site observations. To support the rollout of the new ELA standards, the ACCs participated in the Lit Labs as well as GLISI. Additionally, members of the team attended Curriculum at a Glance (CAAG) and Resource Alignment Sessions at Pleasantdale ES.

The senior ACCs participated in Half Cap ceremonies to represent the Division of C&I as well as support their respective areas. Additionally, they have begun providing support, in collaboration with their area teams, on CSIP feedback and revisions. ACC Team members attended the PLO, MAP training, and training regarding access to the Solution Tree's Global PD Hub. Members of the team actively participated in the phonics adoption process to determine the best phonics program for the district.

The ACCs met with senior leadership within the Division of C&I to review plans and support needed for upcoming academic coaching Events. ACCs planned their presentation for the upcoming Coaching for Change Conference. Senior ACCs are continuing to plan the upcoming Summer Coaching Institute on June 2 and 3. Currently, the team is securing keynote speakers.

Currently, there are 201 academic coach positions. The chart below provides the number of coaches, vacancies, and new coaches by area.

Area	Number of Coaches	Number of Vacancies	Number of New Coaches
Area Elementary 1	6	0	6
Area Elementary 2	14	1	6
Area Elementary 3	18	2	8
Area Middle Schools	41	1	24
Area High Schools	33	0	15
Area Horizon	70	5	47
Area Specialty	10	0	7
Totals	192	9	113

Deputy Chief Dr. Sean R. Tartt

Curriculum and Instruction

Summer Learning Programs

The registration window for summer learning programs closed in the latter part of April. DCSD has over 20 programs to support learning interest throughout the district. We are excited to share that over 7,500 applications were completed for districtwide learning programs. In May, each program sponsor will connect with families and staff to share next steps and program logistics. Summer Learning programs begin in June and will conclude in July.

Content Collaboration

Each month coordinators from several divisions in job-alike roles gather to discuss trends, plan instructional support, PL, and assist schools with performance. Coordinators met on May 2 to engage in work sessions centered around new ELA CAAG, the Math observational tool, Georgia MTSS, cross curricular instructional opportunities, and support for ELLs, and much more. The next content collaboration is tentatively scheduled for the first week in June.

Student Success Skills Backpack

The SSSB has given our 21 pilot schools the opportunity to showcase their learning and readiness for the next grade level. Students in Kindergarten through second grade have been exposed to the five Portrait of a Graduate (POG) skills through teachers incorporating the skills in daily instruction. Third through twelfth-grade students have uploaded evidence of learning in Canvas for each POG skill. Next year, we are excited to launch the SSSB districtwide!

Advanced Via Individual Determination

DeKalb has eight AVID schools in the district, which is an increase from four last year. Next year, one more school will be added to the group. AVID supports students with college eligibility, taking rigorous courses, and organization in effort to increase the success of students through college. School site teams have registered for the annual AVID Leadership Conference in June, which will aid schools with effective implementation and outcomes. The district AVID Team explored methods to enhance AVID implementation and provide data to the superintendent for future budget considerations.

Academic Skills Centers

DeKalb has 23 ASCs that are housed in Horizon schools that support students in reading and math during each school's intervention block. Tutors have worked with students this year in concert with using the Imagine Learning platform. During the testing and assessment window, tutors worked with non-tested grade levels (kindergarten through second grade). In partnership with Schools and Leadership, we are reviewing data, implementation, upcoming PL, and recruitment efforts for ASCs for SY25-26.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Penny Mosley

P-5

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement LIT Team

On April 15, DCSD's cross-divisional LIT Team participated in the GLISI sustainability exhibition. During the exhibition, the GLISI Team shared DCSD's literacy journey inclusive of teacher and administrator survey data, literacy lab feedback, Lifting Lexiles campaign, and the district's responsive actions to address the literacy needs of



students K-12. In addition, DCSD's Portrait of an Early Reader was shared with the three participating districts. Although our GLISL partnership has concluded, we will continue to address increasing time for literacy in the master schedule and adding supplemental phonics/word study resources as we create a culture of literacy across the district.

Georgia Milestones Support for Exceptional Education Advisory Committee

During the Exceptional Education Advisory Committee, the Division of C&I in partnership with the Division of Assessment and Accountability provided information on how to prepare students for Georgia Milestones testing. District leaders demonstrated how to locate achievement-level descriptors, test blueprints, study guides and practice tests. Committee members were able to experience online testing and practice using online tools.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rose Prejean-Harris

6-12

Secondary Collaboration Efforts

In our ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration and alignment within the 6-12 educational space, we have undertaken several key initiatives this month. These initiatives focus on refining grading and remediation policies, analyzing data to update curriculum pacing guides and benchmarks, and improving content Learning Walk tools. Additionally, the C&I Team is collaborating closely with Schools and Leadership to plan summer PLOs for educators.

These initiatives represent our commitment to fostering a collaborative and aligned educational environment. By focusing on grading and remediation policies, curriculum revisions, content Learning Walk tools, and PL, we aim to support the continuous improvement of teaching and learning in the 6-12 space and eagerly anticipate the positive impact these efforts will have on our educators and students.

1. Grading and Remediation Policies

- A cross-divisional team conducted a comprehensive review of current grading and remediation policies.
- Areas for improvement were identified to ensure fairness and consistency across all grade levels.
- New strategies have been developed to support students who require additional help, ensuring they receive timely and effective remediation.

2. Data Analysis for Curriculum Revisions

- Analyzed student performance data to identify trends and areas needing attention.
- Used data insights to revise curriculum-pacing guides, ensuring they are aligned with student needs and learning outcomes.
- Updated benchmarks to reflect the latest educational standards and best practices.

3. Content Learning Walk Tools

- Evaluated the effectiveness of current content Learning Walk tools.
- Made enhancements to these tools to better capture and support instructional practices.
- Provided training for educators on how to use these tools effectively to improve teaching and learning.

4. Summer PL Planning

- Collaborated with Schools and Leadership to design a comprehensive summer PL program.
- Focused on providing targeted PD for teachers, academic coaches, and administrators.
- Planned sessions to address key areas such as instructional strategies, curriculum implementation, and leadership development.

DeKalb Acceleration Academies

The DAA Team is preparing to move to a new campus at the end of June, and the staff and students are excited to think about their new academy. Larger space means more students to serve! Coaching efforts are focused on increasing course completions through targeted strategies and ongoing support for the team. Currently, 66 students are enrolled, with extensive recruitment efforts taking place from withdrawal lists and referrals from counselors. As of today, 88 courses have been completed, yielding 44 credits. By December, DAA is on track to graduate a minimum of four students, and in May of 2026, an additional 13! Testing is soon upon us, and DAA is looking to finish the year strong.

Director Dr. Lynn Angus Ramos

Literacy

Science of Reading

Grade K-3 teachers who do not have another form of structured literacy training are finishing up their PL through the Georgia Literacy Academy by June 1. The training is a requirement under Georgia House Bill 538. Currently, DeKalb has 2,065 teachers engaged in the courses, including over 600 electives teachers. The division has collaborated with Research, Data, and Evaluation on a dashboard that shows course progress and completion by area, school, and teacher name. The area ELA leads in Schools and Leadership are partnering with us to provide reminders and support as needed for principals.

Georgia Literacy Academy Completion as of April 4

Course Number	Full Course	Electives
1	1,748	509
2	1,531	629
3	1,490	507
4	1,353	541
5	1,476	-
6	1,391	-
7	1,270	-
8	1,140	-
9	1,070	-
10	1,076	-

Director Lummie Baker

Educational Media and Instructional Materials

School Library Month Recognitions

During the April BOE meeting, April was proclaimed as School Library Month in the DCSD and the school libraries, their teacher-librarians/school librarians, and library media assistants who serve as support personnel were recognized for their contributions to the teaching and learning process through our school library media programs. Ms. Tracie Harden, teacher-librarian at Clarkston HS, was also recognized as the DCSD 2025 Library Media Specialist of the Year. Additionally, the 26th Anniversary of the DeKalb HRRB and the reading bowl participants, coaches, volunteers, and planning committee were recognized. Finally, Kittredge Magnet School (1st Place) and Lakeside HS (2nd Place) were recognized as well for participating in the State HRRB competition.

Director Stephanie Brown-Bryant

K-12 Teaching and Learning

National History Day State Winners

Three outstanding students from Chamblee MS, DSA, and Lakeside HS will proudly represent the DCSD at the National History Day competition, held June 8–12 at the University of Maryland. These students earned top honors at the state-level National History Day Georgia event, which showcases student-led historical research projects that reflect critical thinking, creativity, and academic excellence. Their success highlights DeKalb's continued commitment to developing scholars who engage deeply with the past to inform the future. We are excited to cheer them on as they compete on the national stage!

Young Georgia Authors Writing Contest

Each year, the Georgia language arts supervisors sponsors a statewide writing competition for students in kindergarten through grade 12, the YGA writing contest. The Division of C&I commends the students who were selected as grade-level winners for the DCSD after winning the grade-level contest at their local schools. Special recognition goes to Precious Nketsia, whose poem, “Who Am I?”, earned an Honorable Mention at the state level.

DCSD – YGA Grade-Level Winners

Grade	School	Student Name
K	Dunwoody ES	Brooke Waldman
1	Dunwoody ES	Chellaraasmithaa Chellakumar
2	Dunwoody ES	Yakshith Satish
3	Hambrick ES	Arsema Mekkonnen
4	Kittredge Magnet School	Aelfraed Hefner
5	Montgomery ES	Jamey Thompson
6	Kittredge Magnet School	Sydney Reinking
7	DeKalb Arts Academy	Nia Stephens
8	DeKalb Arts Academy	Norah Davis
11	Cedar Grove HS	Gabrielle Blue
12	Cedar Grove HS	Precious Nketsia – Honorable Mention

Druid Hills MS International Baccalaureate Community Projects

On April 29 and 30, students at DHMS proudly showcased their IB community projects—an inspiring culmination of inquiry, collaboration, and service learning. These student-led group projects tackled meaningful local and global issues, demonstrating a deep commitment to making a positive impact. From addressing veteran mental health challenges to advocating for adoptive families for senior dogs and promoting school bathroom cleanliness, students thoughtfully researched real-world problems and developed actionable solutions. Their efforts not only reflected academic excellence but also the power of youth leadership and civic responsibility. These projects were powerful examples of students making a lasting difference in their communities.



World Languages Diploma Seal Ceremonies

DCSD is proud to recognize four seniors from across the district who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in global learning and multilingual excellence. The GaDOE's Seal of Biliteracy celebrates STAR students who have attained proficiency in English and at least one other world language. These distinctions reflect DeKalb's strong commitment to preparing students for success in an interconnected world.

GaDOE Fine Arts Diploma Seal

The GaDOE Fine Arts Diploma Seal is a state-recognized honor awarded to graduating seniors who complete a fine arts pathway and demonstrate mastery through advanced coursework, extracurricular participation, community service, and a capstone presentation. This year, 269 students earned the seal, reflecting a 44.6 percent increase from last year's total of 186 recipients. The number of participating schools also rose from 13 to 15, a 15.4 percent increase. This growth highlights the district's expanding commitment to arts education and its positive impact on student engagement, achievement, and college and career readiness.

Environmental Advocacy in Action

Students at Martin Luther King HS are taking bold steps to protect their environment through a hands-on, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)-supported initiative that brings science to life. As part of this real-world learning experience, students explored practical solutions to environmental challenges impacting their school community. Their efforts culminated in the installation of storm drains and the removal of more than four kilograms of litter—an achievement that reduces pollution and promotes long-term sustainability. This project is one of six dynamic NOAA-supported activities that have enriched science classrooms this year, empowering students to become informed, proactive stewards of the planet.



Mathematics Guidance at School Leadership Retreat

A recent PL session brought together School Leadership Area Teams to explore strategies for supporting administrators in guiding teachers toward stronger instructional alignment. Participants engaged with key resources, including the GaDOE Assessment Item Bank, study

guides, achievement-level descriptors, and instructional learning plans, to deepen their understanding of how to ensure rigorous, standards-based instruction. The session sparked meaningful dialogue and practical planning across teams. The event has inspired a follow-up session specifically tailored for principals—affirming the value of this collaborative learning and the district’s commitment to instructional excellence.

Director Doryiane Gunter

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education

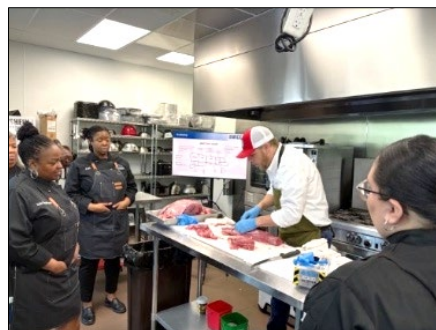
Student Achievement

An agriculture student at Warren Technical HS, who is hearing impaired speaks very limited English and uses American Sign Language, won 1st place in the agriculture science category at the Career Technical Intervention competition. Using knowledge from three semesters at Warren Tech, the student designed a plan to sell Hydro/Aquaponics Systems in Guinea, Africa to support the community and family. Additionally, the student aims to help others who are denied education learn English and build these systems.

On April 30, Cross Keys HS hosted a celebration of CTAE student accomplishments. The CTAE Department recognized the achievements of their Career and Technical Student Organizations members with parents, family, and friends cheering them on. The highlight was a \$1,000 honor given by Emerge Brookhaven to the Cross Keys Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America for their partnership and support.

Professional Development

On April 4, Culinary Arts and Family and Consumer Sciences teachers participated in a **Meat Fabrication Professional Development** session hosted by Byron Hospitality with **Buckhead Beef**. During this hands-on training, educators gained valuable experience in breaking down a side of beef, learning industry-standard skills and techniques that can be applied directly in the classroom during lab instruction.



Director Janetta Greenwood**Fernbank Science Center****School Support – Single Visits, Outreach, Planetarium, Scientific Tools and Techniques, and SOAR**

FSC is continuing to provide single visits and outreach in science across the district. In April, FSC served 1,329 students with single visits, 4,006 students through outreach, and 3,247 students with planetarium visits. A total of 8,582 students were served through various program offerings during the month of April.

Community Engagement – Plant Expo and Spring into STEM

On Saturday, April 19, FSC hosted the Plant Expo and Spring into STEM. This dual event provided the opportunity to identify and locate local plants for their backyard habitats. Participants had the opportunity to participate in environmental-themed STEM activities focused on environmental awareness and restoration. There were 447 participants who attended the event.

Georgia Aquarium Partnership

The Georgia Aquarium Partnership continued in April. The Georgia Aquarium Partnership has served 34,777 students and 78 schools. As of April 30, 14,678 students ventured to the aquarium with teachers and chaperones to participate in instructor-led field trips. The outreach programs have served 9,737 students. Virtual programs have served 3,806 students through the end of April. The Aquanaut Express has served a total of 30 schools and 6,556 students from January through April.

Professional Learning - Science After Dark

FSC, in collaboration with the Department of Science and Georgia Aquarium, Inc., proudly hosted its inaugural Science After Dark event at the Georgia Aquarium, providing DCSD science teachers with a unique evening of PL, networking, and ocean-themed exploration. Teachers enjoyed small bites, after-hours access to aquarium exhibits, and a special session, “Shark Tank for Teachers: Pitching Big Ideas for Bigger Engagement,” where they connected marine biology research with classroom innovation.

As part of the evening’s excitement, six teachers were selected to participate in the Georgia Aquarium Rivers to Reefs PD program, an extraordinary opportunity to deepen their understanding of aquatic ecosystems. In addition, nine lucky teachers won an incredible once-in-a-lifetime experience: the opportunity to swim with whale sharks at the Georgia Aquarium!

The night was a true celebration of science, discovery, and the amazing educators who bring STEM to life for students across DCSD.

Captain Planet Green Heart STEM Challenge Finale

Elementary, middle, and high school teams participated in the Captain Planet Green Heart STEM Challenge Finale on April 23 at FSC. The Green Heart STEM Challenge is an annual event challenging young people around the world to explore and identify environmental issues in

their communities, and to design feasible solutions to address these problems. The top three teams from each grade band pitched their ideas to an esteemed panel of judges to win a grant for their school to continue their environmental sustainability solution. The winning teams and awards are listed below:

First Prize Winners of a \$1,000

School	Teacher Coach	Team Name	Award
Wadsworth Magnet School	Monica Champion	Green Clan	\$1,000
Bethune MS	Connie Dowdy	BMS Green Victory	\$1,000
Tucker HS	Nicole Chapman	Compost Queens	\$1,000

Second Prize Winners of \$500

School	Teacher Coach	Team Name	Award
Huntley Hills ES	Amy Chandler	The MSA Stu	\$500
Wadsworth Magnet School	Hillary Harris Wimes	Operation Za Ad Do Su	\$500
STT Program at FSC	Chakeitha Nash	Food Waste 3	\$500

Third Prize Winners of \$250

School	Teacher Coach	Team Name	Award
Elementary School	Amy Chandler	The Helpful Clothing System	\$250
Middle School	Uzma Masood	Wonderful Wind Wonders	\$250
High School	Chakeitha Nash	Food Waste 4	\$250

Director Monique Kimbell

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Strengthening MTSS Implementation Through Strategic Collaboration and Capacity Building

Recent MTSS support has been centered on enhancing support systems for students through targeted planning and collaboration with all stakeholders. A virtual meeting focused on transition meeting support, Tier 2 reading plans, and next steps for the Characteristics of Dyslexia Plan in accordance with state law. Additionally, vetted vendors were engaged to share instructional support and intervention tools.

In collaboration with a cross-divisional team, a comprehensive implementation and training plan for the Tier 1 Readiness Team is ongoing. Efforts will remain focused on strengthening student services through continued collaboration with the Department of Exceptional Education which includes 504. Continuous district support was provided to MTSS specialists to monitor academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support with tailored services.

Director Keatra Wright

FLEX Academy

FLEX Academy Enrollment and Program Support

FLEX Academy supports all DeKalb County high schools by providing additional opportunities for students to earn credits towards graduation. Session II of Flex Beyond the Day concluded on April 18.

Grade Level	Enrolled	Percent Pass	Percent Does Not Meet	Percent Not Started	Total
9th	26	73.07%	26.9%	0%	100%
10th	59	79.66%	8.4%	1.1%	100%
11th	95	81.05%	10.5%	8.4%	100%
12th	202	91.5%	5.4%	2.9%	100%
TOTAL	382	86.1%	8.5%	5.3%	100%

There are currently 125 students enrolled in Session III of Flex Beyond the Day.

FLEX Academy also supports high school students by providing opportunities for credit recovery. There are currently 233 students enrolled.

Grade Level	Total
9th	29
10th	47
11th	71
12th	86
TOTAL	233

Chief Dr. Candace Alexander

Continuous and Improvement Accountability

New Levels, New Heights

We are delighted to announce the successful completion of the spring research approval cycle. This cycle showcased the data analysis achievements and successful projects of our team members; all achieved through effective stakeholder collaboration.

Our team members actively participate in PD initiatives, including the CSIP Leader Lab and the Initiative One Think Tank. Additionally, we conducted a parent and family engagement event to foster a stronger connection between the department and the community. We are currently in the process of revising the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) application. We are thrilled to share some exciting news:

- Abelardo Rojas and Elijah Ardister, both data analysts in the RDE department, have successfully completed the 2025 Georgia Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Ambassador Program. This prestigious program recognizes outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to the state's data literacy and science education. Joining Joseph Benford (Cohort 2024) and Rebecca Braaten (Cohort 2023), Abelardo and Elijah have earned this state recognition.
- In addition to their ambassador achievements, Rebecca Braaten recently graduated from the University of Georgia with a Data Analysis and Decision-Making for Government Certificate. This certificate further enhances Rebecca's skills and knowledge in data analysis and decision-making, making them an even more asset to the RDE Department.
- RDE was recognized for sharing a best practice in live data verification at the recent GaDOE State Accountability meeting. This recognition underscores the department's commitment to providing high-quality data and ensuring its accuracy and reliability.

Executive Director Dr. Myisha Warren

Federal Programs

Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan

On March 25, 2025, a virtual session for the CLIP attracted a total of 503 registrations. Of these, 347 participants attended, with the peak number of concurrent participants reaching 271.

The session fostered robust engagement through questions, comments, and suggestions. Participants actively participated in discussions, particularly regarding the data presented by Dr. Braaten. Other topics that garnered significant attention included federal funding for the upcoming year, IDEA, ESOL, mental health, PL, and parent/family engagement.

Additionally, participants raised questions and comments related to other DCSD divisions.

- April 24 – Titles I, II, III, IV, IDEA, Migrant and Homeless program leads met to review information obtained at the CLIP meetings and stakeholder surveys.
- April 25 - May 7 – CLIP Committee will began incorporating feedback into the CLIP application and Equity Plan.
- May 8 – Federal Programs Team will meet to review and discuss proposed revisions.
- May 9 – First draft of the CLIP application will be submitted to cabinet and district leadership for review.
- May 12 - June 9 – Cabinet and district leadership will provide feedback and revisions to finalize the CLIP documents.

Continuous School Improvement Plan

School Technical Support Sessions were held from March 31 - April 4, with 274 staff participants. The most attended topics were instructional improvement strategies, federal programs, and culture and climate.

- School teams continued developing their CSIPs during this period.
- Ongoing CSIP Committee meetings focused on refining the Peer Review process within Canvas.
- Area teams and district staff met with schools to review CSIPs and provide targeted support.
- Schools will finalize CSIPs by May 5.
- District staff will collaborate to provide feedback on submitted CSIPs in CANVAS CSIP Leader Lab – Module 3 by May 16.

Parent and Family Engagement

On April 24, an event was organized for parents and families of students in grades 3 to 12 from Columbia Cluster, Towers Cluster, Peachtree and Sequoyah Middle Schools, and Cross Keys and Chamblee High Schools. A total of 68 parents and students attended the event.

- Fifth year of the Creating Science Interest Mystery event. This event is designed to strengthen reading, writing, and summation skills for families of students in grades 3 - 12. This year's mystery was "Panic at the Park."
- Columbia High School's culinary department provided a three-course meal sponsored by the DeKalb Initiative for Children and Families.

Title I and Title II Updates

Coordinators, accounting associates, and budget specialists met with staff from public, private, and charter schools to discuss the items below. They reviewed these items to ensure they align with the Strategic Plan and the goals set in the CSIP.

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

Additionally, the team supported the review, approval, and processing of tutorial and PL stipends for payment.

Director Dr. Felicia Rhone

Assessment and Accountability

Georgia Milestone Assessment Administration

The Georgia Milestone EOC Assessment window opened on April 29, beginning with scholars enrolled in American literature/composition. The first day of testing proceeded smoothly, with strong collaboration between the Assessment Team and DIIT. DIIT ensured optimal network performance, and no connectivity issues were reported within the testing environment. The collaborative efforts were instrumental in achieving a smooth opening to the Georgia Milestones.

As of this report, the Georgia Milestone End-of-Grade Assessments have not yet begun. The window opens on May 1, starting with the math assessment for grades 3–8. We anticipate a successful and smooth administration for ES and MS scholars.

Saturday Assessment Administration for Gifted Identification Initiative

The committee met April 24, to review procedural plans for Saturday administrations of the Gifted Identification assessments. Key outcomes from the meeting included:

- Testing hubs were identified for student assessments.
- The Gifted Department proposed administering the Torrance and Naglieri paper/pencil assessments between January and February.
- To accommodate students who observe the Sabbath, an alternative testing day was suggested—preferably one aligned with Independent Learning Days.

- A Communication Plan was presented; parent communication must be distributed by Open House.
- A Staffing Plan was also presented. A survey will be used to identify interested staff members, with completion required before the end of the school year in May.

Advanced Placement Exams

The College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Exams will be administered May 5 - 16. HS test coordinators must ensure the following tasks are completed.

One week before testing:

- Confirm all relevant testing staff have signed into Test Day Toolkit and selected their assigned AP Exams from the dropdown menu.
- Confirm all students have successfully signed into Bluebook and can launch test previews.
- Remind students to confirm and test their College Board login credentials in Bluebook to avoid exam day delays.
- Identify any students requiring assistive technology. Review details about [using and configuring assistive technology with Bluebook](#) with them.
- Confirm or waive accommodations for students through AP Registration and Ordering.

On exam day:

In the Test Day Toolkit platform, full access to staff for the digital AP Exams.

AP Exam Schedule – Week 1 (May 6–10)

Week 1	Morning – 8 a.m. Local Time	Afternoon – Noon Local Time
Monday, May 5	Biology	European History
Tuesday, May 6	Chemistry and Human Geography	United States Government and Politics
Wednesday, May 7	English Literature and Composition	Comparative Government and Politics
Thursday, May 8	African American Studies	Japanese Language and Culture
Friday, May 9	Italian Language and Culture	Chinese Language and Culture

Art and Design: May 9, (8 p.m. ET) is the deadline for AP Art and Design students to submit their three portfolio components as final in the AP Digital Portfolio.

Director Dr. Rebecca Braaten

Research, Data, and Evaluation

Department Celebrations

The department is excited to share the following celebrations:

- Abelardo Rojas and Elijah Ardister, RDE data analysts, completed the 2025 Georgia SLDS Ambassador Program. With this state recognition, they join Joseph Benford (Cohort 2024) and Rebecca Braaten (Cohort 2023).

- Rebecca Braaten graduated with a Data Analysis and Decision Making for Government Certificate from the University of Georgia.
- RDE was recognized for sharing a Live Data Verification best practice at the recent GaDOE State Accountability meeting.

Research Review Board

The spring research approval cycle is complete. The review cycle included 19 applications, 16 doctorate prospectuses, 3 external agency studies, and 1 local study. Of the 16 doctorate prospectuses, 1 is a resubmission. In addition, 3 research proposals (all doctoral) were submitted after the spring research review submission window had closed. All proposals are scheduled to be reviewed this month.

Surveys and Online Forms

The department processed 15 electronic online document requests. Of those 15, 2 were online forms, 1 was an event/training feedback survey, and 9 were stakeholder surveys. The electronic online documents were created for the following divisions/departments:

- Access and Opportunity
- Audits and Compliance
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Human Resources
- Professional Development
- Schools and Leadership
- Wrap Around and Support Services

Data Requests

The department has completed 26 data and dashboard projects for internal and external stakeholders. These projects encompass various data types including attendance, discipline, student demographics, student grades, and local, state, and national assessments.

Additionally, interactive dashboards are continually updated to monitor key district initiatives across various programs, including ES and MS social-emotional learning courses, elementary career lessons, MS and HS BRIDGE law courses, HS credit completion, school innovation lab programs, and GAlEarns PD literacy courses. Our Data Team is also working on projects related to monitoring at-risk populations such as homeless students, foster care youth, and FACE mentees. We continue to develop comparative monthly attendance and discipline monitoring tools, including bullying data and Disconnect to Reconnect program impacts on suspensions.

As the school year draws to a close, our department is collaborating with program directors and administrators to deliver summary data that will help assess the impact and effectiveness of their programs.

Chief Information Officer Dr. Kermit Belcher

Department of Information and Instructional Technology

Always Learning

DCSD remains deeply committed to integrating technology into teaching and learning to ensure that all students have access to high-quality educational experiences. We believe that technology is a vital tool in preparing students for success in a rapidly changing digital world. Through strategic investments and thoughtful planning, we strive to provide all students and staff with reliable, innovative instructional devices that enhance learning, foster creativity, and promote collaboration. Our focus on equitable access ensures that every learner is equipped with the tools they need to achieve their full potential.

As part of this commitment, DCSD will begin replacing all student and staff devices during the summer of 2025. This districtwide refresh will ensure that every school is equipped with the latest technology, supporting modern instructional strategies and digital learning environments. By providing updated, high-performing devices, we are investing in our students' futures and empowering our educators with the resources they need to deliver engaging, transformative instruction. We look forward to partnering with our community as we continue to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning through technology.

Network Modernization

DCSD remains committed to providing a safe, secure, and reliable Internet experience for all students and staff. Through the 2025 Network Modernization Plan, the district is building a resilient, scalable infrastructure that supports future-ready learning across more than 140 sites. Recognizing that much of the existing network equipment had reached an end-of-life state, the district launched a multi-phase modernization initiative designed to upgrade critical components such as network cabling, switches, wireless access points, and firewalls. This work strengthens the ability to meet growing instructional and operational demands while enhancing security, redundancy, and communication across all schools and facilities.

With Phase 1 infrastructure upgrades underway, DCSD is advancing important efforts to further expand bandwidth, modernize firewalls, enhance network monitoring, and strengthen support systems. Key initiatives include expanding Tier 3 network support, implementing redundancy for major network circuits, and transitioning to a more secure wireless environment. These upgrades are part of a comprehensive strategy to ensure the district's network remains safe, efficient, and capable of supporting innovation and learning. Protecting and empowering every student and staff member who depends on the district's digital infrastructure remains a top priority.

Physical Security

DCSD remains committed to ensuring the safety and security of all students, staff, and visitors across our campuses. As part of this commitment, we are implementing a range of advanced security enhancements to better protect our school environment.

These upgrades include the installation of state-of-the-art intrusion detection systems, enhanced door access controls, and an expanded network of video surveillance. These measures are designed to strengthen our ability to monitor and secure our campuses more effectively.

Significant progress has been made, including the completion of pre-cabling and re-badging efforts in select areas, the start of system cutovers at schools, and the preparation for upcoming phases of work across additional clusters and administrative offices. In the next 30 days, we will continue re-badging and begin further cutover processes as we move forward with these important security initiatives.

DCSD is proud to lead these efforts and remains steadfast in our mission to provide safe, secure learning environments for all.

Manager Natalie Terrell

Project Management Office

Digitized Records Program

The proof of concept (POC), where the focus is on HR, is still in progress. A total of 3,142 boxes have been collected for reviewing, scanning, and indexing. The team is working on workflow processes as well as the Project Plan and documentation. The POC is tentatively planned for completion in early September. From this phase, there will be a good understanding and enough documentation to create a comprehensive plan for the entire project.



Executive Director Dr. Kyia Clark and Manager III Terri Webb

Instructional Technology

Instructional Technology has been gearing up for the full launch of the SSSB program for SY25-26. Our focus this year has been supporting the 21 pilot schools, and it's been inspiring to see the students' dedication to prepare for their defense projects. These projects are a fantastic opportunity for our Digital Dreamers to demonstrate their learning in a holistic way, highlighting not just academic knowledge, but also the specific skills they've mastered, the obstacles they've successfully navigated, and the new passions they've uncovered throughout their educational journey.



The SSSB program represents a significant step forward in how we empower students to reflect on and articulate their learning. We look forward to seeing this program in all of the DCSD.

Interim Deputy Chief Technology Officer, 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. ”

Additionally, a streamlined workflow intake process has been established to ensure all technology requests are systematically reviewed and prioritized. Users can also 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

This initiative represents a new benchmark for digital engagement and website modernization for the district. The website modernization initiative will deliver a dynamic, user-friendly website that reflects our district's commitment to innovation and excellence. This design will be informed by community surveys and focus groups led by the district's Communications Division.

As of April, website design is well underway. The district is currently going through an exercise of “site mapping” which will define existing content to be migrated to the new platform. In addition, the district is currently planning training for webmasters which will be instrumental in maintaining the new site.

Data Governance

The district's vision for data governance is to build a data-driven ecosystem that supports academic success by empowering educators, personalizing learning, informing interventions, advancing equity, and fostering continuous improvement.

The Data Governance Committee continues to strengthen our data management framework. The Policy Sub-Committee has guided the development of a comprehensive data policy, addressing roles and responsibilities, data ownership, sharing protocols, AI governance, and retention policies. A draft has been reviewed by Gartner Inc. to ensure alignment with best practices.

Simultaneously, the committee is evaluating digital learning tools to prioritize those with the greatest impact on student outcomes. Initial analysis includes platforms like iReady, IXL, iStation, and BrainPOP. A proof of concept has been completed and shared with leadership.

The next phase, launched in March 2025, involves evaluating a second set of high-priority tools. The one-year goal is to identify digital resources that most effectively improve outcomes in math, science, ELA, and social studies.

These efforts underscore our commitment to data-driven decision-making and maximizing the impact of digital learning investments.

Director Eric Logan

Information and Network Security

Cyber Smart Essentials Canvas Course – Security Awareness Training (SAT)

Education, awareness, and training must exist to create a culture of security in our district. We have a small Information Security Team, so we're leveraging Canvas, our Learning Management System, to scale how we educate, train, and bring awareness to the Cyber Guardians, the employees in our district. We started designing the course in a sandbox course and plan to share with the Instructional Technology Department to make it a published course where employees can self-enroll, learn about monthly cybersecurity topics, earn badges of completion, and ultimately change their behaviors and mindset to have security at the forefront instead of an afterthought. The course will also include an SAT preassessment to use the data to drive the monthly cybersecurity topics and determine the effectiveness of the course.



Active Directory Vulnerability Assessment

Unfortunately, because of a revision to the statement of work before we were to begin the engagement, the window for the provider to request funding from Microsoft had closed, so we will have to delay this engagement until after July 1 when the application process opens back up. Because of this, we are expecting to kick off this engagement in the fall now. Alternatively, the planned compromise assessment has been discussed with the vendor with a kickoff planned for early June.

DCSD Passphrase Requirement Updates

The DCSD Passphrase Requirement Updates is the first module of the Cyber Smart Essentials Canvas course and a resource that the Cyber Guardians can use to assist with updating their passphrases. Other resources have been created such as FAQs, a dedicated email address, and we collaborated with the Communications Department to create a video about the passphrase updates. All of these resources will be included in the Canvas course. The Task Force Team will meet to review the resources on April 30, and implement the rollout within DIIT starting May 1, before the staggered rollout with the remaining Cyber Guardians from June to August. It is expected that all Cyber Guardians have an updated passphrase by September 1!

Asset Discovery and Visibility Proof of Concept

While this project kicked off in March and we were in the final stages of confirming some configuration requirements with the vendor, the issues that we have been experiencing with the network have delayed progress on this initiative. We are in the process of discussing next steps to move forward after testing has completed.