



## **District Academic Report – February 2025**

### **Chief Dr. Triscilla Weaver**

#### **Access and Opportunity (A&O)**

##### **Comprehensive Access and Opportunity Audit**

Public Consulting Group (PCG) completed the final data collection phase for the audit during the last week of February. We collaborated with the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) Research and Data Department to provide PCG with additional milestones and scholastic assessment test/American college testing (SAT/ACT) data, as well as data related to student access to Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Magnet Programs. PCG is currently interpreting and analyzing all the quantitative and qualitative data they have collected. At the end of March, PCG will meet with our team to share their findings and actionable recommendations. After soliciting our feedback, PCG will work to finalize the audit report.

##### **Field Trip Committee**

The members of the Field Trip Committee convened to review the exemplary field trip standard operating procedures (SOPs), as determined by a scoring rubric that assessed how the SOPs accounted for affordability, accessibility, curricular alignment, and timing. The committee will reconvene on March 18, following a training session with Dr. Juan Carlos Arauz of E3: Consulting, to continue synthesizing the exemplar SOPs. The goal is to provide all schools with standardized guidelines and procedures for field trip planning.

##### **Coaching Sessions with E3: Consulting**

We participated in weekly coaching sessions with Dr. Juan Carlos Arauz of E3: Consulting to deepen our understanding of how to effectively assist our district in 1) recognizing and enhancing the brilliance of all students, 2) increasing student engagement, and 3) engaging in critical self-reflection to improve student achievement. Our department will co-facilitate a two-day training session with Dr. Arauz Field Trip Committee and A&O Steering Committee members. The training aims to enhance the collective understanding of our committee members and ensure alignment of vision and perspective in our access and opportunity work.

### **Executive Director Myss Johnson-Jelks**

#### **Athletics**

##### **Enhancing Athletic Programs in DeKalb County**

I am committed to improving athletic programs in DeKalb County by increasing opportunities, resources, and support for all athletes. Through collaboration with coaches, schools, and community organizations, I am working to ensure that every program is equipped with the

tools necessary for success, which include upgrading facilities, implementing training and development opportunities, and fostering a culture of teamwork and sportsmanship. My goal is to create an environment where athletes can thrive, compete at their highest level, and develop skills that will benefit them both on and off the field.

### Northside Athletic Training Contract

We met with Northside to discuss the contract structure for full-time athletic trainers. The focus of the meeting was to review the terms and conditions, ensuring that both parties align on expectations and responsibilities. We aim to establish a clear, mutually beneficial agreement that supports the needs of the athletic programs while maintaining fair and equitable terms for the trainers.

### Finance

We met with the finance team to restructure the budget for the upcoming year. These discussions aim to carefully review our financial priorities and identify areas for improvement, ensuring that our resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to support our objectives. By working closely with the finance department, we aim to develop a more sustainable and strategic budget that aligns with our goals and sets us up for success in the coming year.

### Athletic Handbooks and Standard Operating Procedures

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

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

### Director Brandon Lane

#### Athletics

#### Strengthening Athletic Program Oversight Through Meetings and Collaboration

Over the past few weeks, I have actively engaged in various meetings and initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of our athletic programs. I attended a parent meeting to address a serious matter regarding a student's participation in sports, ensuring that all concerns were adequately discussed and resolved. Additionally, I hosted and facilitated meetings with the school-level athletic directors to address concerns about the coach's behavior, creating open communication and accountability. I conducted weekly one-on-one meetings with staff members to provide necessary support and assistance to ensure that all sports programs ran smoothly. Additionally, I collaborated with our track coordinator to discuss the logistics of the upcoming regional track meets at Godfrey Stadium in April, ensuring all details are up to date and proactively addressing potential issues.

### Enhancing Athletic Programs Through Strategic Partnerships and Oversight

Collaborating with Executive Director Myss Johnson-Jelks, I participated in several key stakeholder meetings to improve our athletic programs and facilities. We met with Hellas Construction Company to receive progress updates on their work at Godfrey Stadium and assess the quality of their services. Additionally, we engaged with multiple outside companies interested in forming partnerships with our district to enhance program effectiveness. We conducted weekly budget review meetings with the finance team to maintain financial oversight, ensuring our department aligned with financial requirements. Our department also has diligently updated handbooks, including the students, coaches, and departmental guides. We participated in professional development training facilitated by our Career and Technical Education Department, focusing on advancing technology use in our programs. Furthermore, I have attended athletic and non-athletic events within and outside the county to support our students, reinforcing a commitment to student engagement and community involvement.

### Director Kina M. Champion

#### School Innovation

##### Charter School Qualitative Site Review Implementation and Petition Process

The School Innovation Department completed the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) for The Museum School of Avondale Estates and facilitated three Charter Schools 101 sessions for DCSD divisions. Additional Charter Schools 101 sessions are scheduled for March and April. The third quarterly charter school collaborative meeting was held at DeKalb Preparatory Academy on February 4. School Innovation met with the National Planning Team for the Assess: Global access, Academics, Mission, and Equity (A-GAME), a national association for charter school authorizers, in preparation for sharing the QSR and other processes at the group's May convening. The team hosted the charter renewal petitioner's workshop for DeKalb Agriculture Technology and Environment, Inc. Academy, which, like DeKalb PATH Academy, will include a QSR in its renewal process. February 12 marked the deadline for start-up charter petitioners to submit applications. DCSD received one incomplete petition, while the State Charter Schools Commission received eight letters of intent from petitioners seeking to serve DeKalb County.

##### Spotlight School Visits and Implementation Awards

On February 27, the School Innovation Department hosted the fourth of six school year (SY) 2025-2026 Spotlight School visits at Kittredge Magnet School. At Kittredge Magnet School, formative assessment is a cornerstone of teaching and learning. Teachers and administrators demonstrated real-time insights into student learning through innovative strategies such as the purposeful use of AI tools, intentional student grouping, and deep analysis of student work. This culture of assessment was observed in daily practice, with educators identifying learning gaps and providing targeted support. Kittredge Magnet School exemplified a school-wide commitment to formative assessment practices that drive student success. Strategic re-teaching strategies, informed by data, ensured that every student had the opportunity to

master essential skills and concepts. Thirty-two teachers and principals experienced how formative assessment is not just a tool at Kittredge but a mindset that empowers students and teachers to achieve their fullest potential.

The Spotlight Implementation Award offers up to \$1,500 to help educators implement strategies and practices inspired by their Spotlight School visit. Eligible expenses include classroom resources, professional learning opportunities (PLO), and instructional materials. To apply, applicants must have attended a SY24-25 Spotlight School visit, ensure their projects align with observed strategies, and have principal approval. Applications must detail the project, its connection to the visit, and a budget breakdown. Four teachers have been awarded SY24-25 Spotlight Implementation Awards to transform their inspiration into action and meaningful impact on their students.

### **Executive Director Sarita Smith**

#### **Student Assignment**

##### **Student Assignment Project (SAP) and Registration**

The SAP is moving into the working sessions, where committee members will develop guiding principles. These will become the parameters by which we create and develop recommendations. We met with a committee of the whole to process division answers to our questions over the past three months and prepare for the next three months. We will also begin the internal SAP Summer Planning Team to review all SAP worksheets and develop scenarios for the committee to review this fall. We are still going to several communities to ask them to complete the SAP survey.

We are beginning a monthly ‘SAP At-A-Glance video’ to promote what’s happening in the SAP committee meetings to the broader community. These videos will be shared at the board meetings and on social media. Our Communications Team also writes monthly press releases to share with the community.

The Registration Team is working with the Family Engagement and Federal Grants Team to develop a comprehensive plan for summer registration hubs. We have established the four hubs Student Assignments will manage and discovered that other spaces and staff can provide support. Our manager convened a planning meeting with the other satellite hubs to plan training and troubleshoot the known challenges with their staff supporting registration. Our team is prepping local school registrars for annual verification.

### **Director Dr. Char-Shenda Covington**

#### **Student Assignment**

##### **School Choice And Principal Allotment Meetings**

School Choice has demonstrated its commitment to providing access to educational opportunities by offering the remaining seats to families based on their waitlist position and seat availability. To facilitate the smooth execution of this process and awareness at the local

school level, the Director of School Choice has actively participated in allotment meetings with school principals. The importance of seat allocations and ongoing registration were emphasized during these meetings. In addition to group meetings, the director has conducted one-on-one sessions with principals to address individual concerns, clarify policies, and distinguish between policy and practice. These efforts have contributed to a more coherent and consistent approach to seat allocation, benefiting both families and schools. Moreover, the leaders of Student Assignment have played a crucial role in supporting various literacy programs across the district. By collaborating with schools and community partners, they have ensured that these programs are effectively implemented and meet the needs of all students.

### **Executive Director Dr. Loukisha Walker**

#### **Student Mentorship and Partnerships (SMP)**

##### **Community and Corporate Partnerships**

A major focus for SMP has been strengthening community and corporate partnerships to enhance mentorship and student learning opportunities within the DCSD. We have been working closely with 21 Savage's Leading By Example Foundation, Dekalb County Commissioner Mareda Davis-Johnson, to establish a partnership for Financial Literacy Week in May to provide students with essential financial education and real-world money management skills. Additionally, we have secured a collaboration with Wealthy Habits, which will host a two-week financial literacy summer camp designed to equip students with foundational knowledge in budgeting, investing, and entrepreneurship. Beyond financial literacy, we have expanded afterschool mentorship opportunities through new partnerships with UChamp, Wholistic Stress Control Institute, Inc., and the National Hook-Up of Black Women, ensuring that students receive academic support, personal development coaching, and access to positive role models. We are also exploring potential partnerships within the film and entertainment industry to introduce students to career pathways in media, production, and storytelling. These initiatives underscore our commitment to leveraging external partnerships to provide students real-world skills, career exposure, and personal growth opportunities beyond the classroom. Additionally, we are finalizing the SMP Department website content to enhance the visibility and accessibility of mentoring and partnership opportunities within the district. These ongoing efforts reflect our commitment to holistic student development, mentor empowerment, and sustainable partnerships that contribute to academic success.

##### **Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Advocate Program**

The SMP Department has made significant strides in strengthening mentorship initiatives, fostering community engagement, and enhancing student support systems. We are planning a FACE Night, a large-scale event designed to engage FACE mentees and their families in an evening of interactive activities, mentorship bonding, and family engagement. In addition to programmatic efforts, we have been preparing for upcoming initiatives, including the Washington, DC field trip for FACE mentees, exposing students to historical landmarks, college

campuses, and cultural experiences. Securing transportation, planning educational site visits, and ensuring proper chaperone training are ongoing logistics for this trip. Other mentoring activities are being planned to celebrate the work of mentors throughout the district.

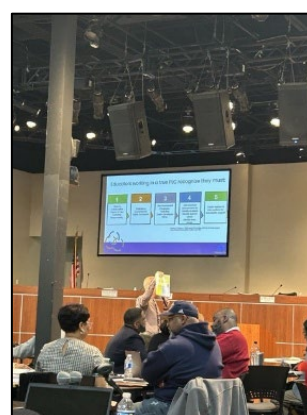
## Chief of Schools Michelle Dillard

### Division of Schools and Leadership

#### Division Summary

The Division of Schools and Leadership is proud of our work this month. We calibrated on providing feedback for the upcoming Collaborative Calibration Visits (CVV) cycle. We also calibrated the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Consolidated School Improvement Plan (CSIP) process and timeline with several divisions.

We hosted the district's principal PLO on February 13. Accountability and Research gave leaders an overview of the CSIP process. Solution Tree provides training in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) so school leaders can implement PLCs with fidelity. The leaders were given special trivia questions as we celebrated College and Career Month, Black History Month, and Heart Health Month. Our Title I Reward schools and distinguished schools were recognized.



We also participated in the Initiative One Think Tank. District leaders and assistant principals were invited. The focus was on having kind teams, not nice teams.

**Beth Kyle**

## Area 1 Elementary Schools

### Area Team Summary

Area 1 Elementary accomplished a lot in February, even with the February break, which allowed the schools to recharge! The month has been busy with CCVs, Reality Checks, Learning Walks, and providing needs-based support to our schools based on their CSIPs and CSIP monitoring. The target CSIP support and CSIP monitoring allowed us to start having meaningful, data-rich conversations around 2025-2026 CSIP planning to complement the CSIP workshops hosted by Accountability and Research.

Executive administrators focused on giving feedback, coaching, and support around the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) standards. English/Language Arts (ELA) coordinators focus on writing strategies and the Science of Reading courses during site visits. Our math coordinator is working to support schools with appropriate implementation of the state frameworks and clarifying what concrete, representational, abstract (CRA) truly looks like in the classroom as principals research improvement strategies for their upcoming CSIP. Mental Health is supporting schools by implementing First Aid mental health training. Climate and Culture (C&C) coordinators are helping schools with next steps with restorative practices and planning for summer. Our C&C coordinators, ELA and math coordinators all presented to small groups during our Area PLO. All of the coordinators hosted small-group sessions during our Area I AP meeting.

### School Highlights

Some highlights from our school include celebrating Austin Elementary's fifth grader, Sarv Dharavane won the DeKalb County Spelling Bee, and Vanderlyn Elementary's fifth grader, Adhvik Ravikumar, was runner-up. Last school year, Sarv tied for 22nd place in the National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC. John Lewis Elementary was awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Brookhaven Chamber of Commerce to commission a mural to honor the legacy of John Robert Lewis. Through our DCSD partnership with the Georgia Aquarium, Dunwoody Elementary had a visit from the Aquanaut Express.



**Terry Brown****Area 2 Elementary Schools****Team Summary**

Area 2 Elementary launched second semester CCV visits in February. To date, Jolly, Smoke Rise, Idlewood, and Evansdale Elementary had their CCVs plus Learning Walks with the Area 2 Support Team. The Area 2 team focused on strengthening the quality of the CCV feedback with more refined action steps and improved hyperlinks for resources.

Principal mid-year conferences were also a February focus, with discussions centered on progress on professional goals, mid-year cognitive and non-cognitive data, and formative assessments with the LKES standards. The Area 2 Support Team reviewed the Science of Reading (SOR) status school by school and crafted a “realignment” plan to support schools not on track with the May deadline. The Area 2 Support Team also pushed out a monitoring process to track the participation rate of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) climate survey.

Content coordinators supported teachers with Area 2’s Metro Regional Educational Service Agency (MRESA) partnership for mathematics. Teachers gathered by grade level to practice upcoming unit instructional learning plans for mathematics. In literacy, writing professional learning for informational and opinion writing took place side-by-side with teachers to support with how-to mini-lessons to teach writing techniques. Academic coaches also received the writing professional learning (PL) with the charge to support teachers with implementation. C&C coordinators and the mental health coordinator continued to support schools with staff mediation and mental health concerns, as well as building needs with operations.

Discussions have begun with the Smoke Rise and Idlewood rezoning work. This will be a major focus for the next few months.

**Ateshia Lester****Area 3 Elementary Schools****Area Team Summary**

In February, executive administrators facilitated CCVs in eight schools. Principals provided an update on their work with the Six Systems and how the systems impact student outcomes. Content coordinators continue to support teachers with instructional practices and strategies during PLCs and model effective instruction in the classroom. The mental health coordinator continues to provide trauma-informed care at local schools and small group support to students struggling with their behavior. C&C coordinators continue monthly monitoring of non-cognitive data and provide support through restorative circles.

The principals successfully completed a Principal Professional Learning Community (PPLC) led by leaders from Columbia and E. L. Miller Elementary Schools, focusing on student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and implementing the Six Systems. Columbia’s

principal emphasized effective questioning and varied student response techniques to enhance engagement and critical thinking, while the E.L. Miller principal prioritized strategies for engaging students in content mastery for reading.

Barack Obama, Bob Mathis, and Princeton had outstanding achievements at the 2025 DCSD Technology Competition! Students demonstrated remarkable talent and innovation across multiple categories, from 3D modeling and digital photography to audio production and graphic design. Kelley Lake was featured on Atlanta News, highlighting the Callanwolde Dance Progressions program.

Principals and their teams attended the CSIP workshop, where they received individualized support from area leaders. Leaders helped teams analyze data by delving into the root cause using the "five whys" method and provided valuable feedback to strengthen CSIP plans for improving student achievement. Many leaders scheduled follow-up meetings to continue support until our team and the Federal Programs Team finalized the review plans.

### **Jacqueline Tayler**

#### **Area Middle Schools**

##### **Area Team Summary**

In February, the MS executive administrators attended PPLCs, provided virtual support meetings, and offered guidance on CSIP planning, student Lexile, master scheduling, and PLC structures. They also completed LKES formative assessments.

C&C coordinators focused on enhancing classroom management and restorative practices, supporting schools through restorative circles, conferences, and relationship-building activities. They conducted facility audits, held check-ins with various school staff, reviewed discipline and attendance data, and provided recommendations for improving school protocols. The coordinators also participated in school meetings to help meet GA School Climate Survey goals and supported school events and parent concerns.

Math coordinators continued supporting math teachers through observations, co-teaching, and modeling instructional strategies. They worked on strengthening PLCs and supported the implementation of CSIP strategies, focusing on student engagement, academic discourse, and curriculum pacing. They participated in professional development opportunities and collaborated with math academic coaches and teachers to refine best practices.

The Special Education (SPED) coordinator focused on co-teaching models and supporting teachers with Individual Education Program (IEP) compliance, specially designed instruction (SDI), and behavior management. They attended C&C meetings and offered guidance on special education-related documentation in Infinite Campus.

The English Learner (EL) coordinator provided instructional support to teachers, focusing on building background knowledge and comprehensible input. They worked with schools to improve EL education, analyzed EL program trends, and collaborated with colleagues to develop goals for improvement. They also assisted with scheduling for the SY25-26 and prepared for upcoming CCVs.

The ELA coordinator supported teachers through StudySync training and meetings, offering resources and feedback to enhance instruction. They also collaborated on CSIP revisions and aligned the curriculum to new standards, providing ongoing support during the roll-out of new standards for teachers and staff.

The mental health coordinator focused on supporting staff wellness, facilitating restorative circles, and enhancing parent and family engagement during the month.

### Thomas Glanton

#### Area High Schools

##### Area Team Summary

As the High School Area stepped into the heart of the academic year, February stood as a pivotal month, offering unique opportunities for reflection, growth, and forward momentum. This month was characterized by a blend of challenges and accomplishments, wherein students and faculty alike found themselves balancing the demands of ongoing projects, assessments, and the excitement of new academic pursuits.

The **ELA coordinators** worked collaboratively with the Division of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) to provide feedback on new Curriculum At A Glance (CAGG) drafts (*ELA Coordinator's Collaborative*), DCSD lesson plan template (*Lit Lab*) revisions, and sample lessons incorporating the new ELA standards.

The **math coordinator** worked with the C&I math coordinator to discuss gaps in instruction and plans to support teachers. The High School Area hosted our final MRESA math session, *Unpacking the Units*, for high school area algebra and geometry teachers.

**C&C coordinators** facilitated restorative circles for employees, led monthly meetings to address chronic absenteeism, and managed attendance dashboards while analyzing data and implementing interventions. The team updated the Area High School Attendance Dashboard and began supporting the districtwide discipline request approval protocols.

The **SPED coordinator** facilitated PL sessions on *De-escalating Challenging Behaviors* and *Building Positive Classroom Environments* to enhance classroom management practices. Additionally, the coordinator participated in the Lead Teacher for Special Education (LTSE) Support PLC and continued weekly meetings with the coordinator II and instructional liaison for SPED to align on key initiatives and provide consistent support.

The **mental health coordinator** provided crisis support for student losses and conducted Wellness Check-Ins for staff members. Additionally, the coordinator facilitated self-care training, co-led healing circles, assisted with the Atlanta Community Food Bank food distribution, and supported Black History Month celebrations by attending school events. The monthly newsletter, *Mental Health Matters*, was also produced and distributed.

**Multilingual learners (MLs) coordinator** attended Reality Checks identifying areas of support for MLs. In addition, the coordinator provided ACCESS testing support directly to schools through action planning.

As we conclude this month's reflection, it's clear that February has been a month of perseverance, learning, and growth. From the classroom to extracurricular activities, our students and staff have continued to demonstrate resilience and a commitment to excellence.

### **Derrick Hardy**

#### **Area Horizon Schools**

##### **Area Team Summary**

February was the month for realignment of our focal points and priorities.

DCSD was spotlighted during the GaDOE School Improvement Virtual Conference as a model district for continuous improvement team (cross-divisional) support to federally designated schools. Horizon Area welcomed four schools for targeted support to improve content mastery for students with disabilities. Interim Principal Dr. Barlow and the Towers HS participated in Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Rasch Unit (RIT Score) interpretation PL being delivered across zone one schools.

In February, we successfully completed a second round of PPLC, Reality Checks, and launched our CCVs for the spring semester.

MLK Jr. HS conducted the Football College Signing Day for the senior class.

The Peer Learning Facilitator (PLF) Team conducted *Phonics Implementation* PL across Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)-designated schools.

Peachcrest Elementary Schools were spotlighted for data triangulation using cognitive and noncognitive key performance indicators in the MAP analysis Padlet, and the EL support coordinators conducted *Teaching Strategies for Opportunity and Access for All Learners* (formerly culturally relevant teaching strategies).

### **Michelle Jones**

#### **Area Specialty Schools**

##### **Area Summary**

The focus for February was social studies and specials. Leaders received resources for social studies, including local field trip options for schools to consider. We also started our CCV schedule and reviewed the CSIP plans for the second monitoring cycle. Our Specialty Area

Support Team (SAST) has been fully engaged with assisting with Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) testing, starting second-semester Learning Walks, problem-solving, and presenting.

In February, we offered PL for our leaders in our area learning opportunity, followed by PPLCs. We also attended the Charter Collaborative meeting hosted at DeKalb Preparatory Academy with all charter schools present. Cognia recognized the Museum School as a School of Distinction! We offered PL to math teachers in the area to show how to implement small group instruction using the GaDOE Instructional Learning Plans. We also offered additional writing PLs for our ELA teachers. Fernbank Science Center (FSC) offered a special Adults Only “I Love STEM” event for Valentine’s Day. It was creative, fun, and well-attended!

We kicked off February by celebrating School Counselors Week! In February, we celebrated two schools, Shadow Rock Center and Eagle Woods Academy, which received the Operational Designation as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) schools. Two of our schools presented in Austin, Texas, this month. Robert Shaw presented at the National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Conference, and Kittredge presented for the Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA). Several of our students in the Specialty Area were winners in the spelling bee and the social studies fair. Kittredge Magnet School advanced to the Metro Regional Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl (HRRB) competition and won! They will move on to compete at the state level. We also celebrated Black history events at our schools this month. The Specialty Area welcomed one new Human Resources (HR) Staffing Team member.

### Specialty Area Highlight



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

## **Leadership Development**

### **The DeKalb Principal Pathway (DPP)**

Leadership Development is working with the Leadership Academy Group to develop our Aspiring Principals Program. The DPP has completed three in-person sessions (two evening four-hour sessions and one Saturday seven-hour session)

- These leaders are evaluating their leadership strengths based on the HIGH 5 Assessment.
- The curriculum of this program is connected directly to the DeKalb Strategic Plan, MIRACLES, H-PRIDE, and the Six Systems.
  - These early sessions set the stage for each cohort member to develop a Change Project around the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model.
  - Each cohort participant is assigned a performance coach
  - Performance coaches are receiving PL on how to provide coaching support.

### **Project DEAL in Partnership with Georgia State University (GSU)**

The federal grant has been cancelled. However, Leadership Development is continuing to work directly with GSU to build our leadership opportunities for employees of DCSD.

- The GSU Administration Certification Program is being developed to support DeKalb County-certified employees interested in Tier 1 administrative credentials.
- Leadership Development is in the design phase of establishing a first-ever cohort of teacher leaders looking to achieve their Tier 1 Administrative Certificate to become assistant principals in our district. The goal is for the first cohort of participants to start the program in the summer of 2025.
- The curriculum for the program is being developed in tandem with GSU and DCSD Leadership Development to assist in growing our own mentality for school leadership.
- Participants will receive three hours of college credit, and 50 administration evaluation hours required to complete the program.

### **Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) Literacy Project (structured literacy for SY25)**

Leadership Development is working with C&I to design, implement, and assess our ELA model classrooms. We are meeting on February 28 to adjust the classroom instructional framework across all grade levels.

### PLC Development with Solution Tree (principals and assistant principals learning opportunities)

Leadership Development in tandem with the Professional Learning Department and Solution Tree on February 13 for principals and February 26 and 27 for assistant principals.

- PLC Teams' application of
  - Question #3 – What do we do if they don't get it?
  - Question #4 – What do we do if they do get it?
- PLC Teams apply the Learning Guide to support student learning
- How to provide coaching support to PLC Teams to be efficient in the process of essential standard identification and tracking results of student learning.

### New Assistant Principal Consortium (partnership with State Farm at Park Center Parklink to utilize the facility for PL)

We continued our work with new assistant principals (years 0-3). Middle School C&C Coordinator Dr. Renee Robinson facilitated learning on developing a Restorative Mindset (System 5). Our Leadership Development Team provided strategies for maximizing time with IKES evaluations and planning for assessments.



**Ayana S. Smith**

## Professional Learning Department

### Department Highlights

In February, the Professional Learning Department was excited to have three PLFs (M. Murdock, D. Armstrong, and T. Ross) showcase their work with teachers from counties throughout Georgia at the Georgia Science Teacher Association Conference. The sessions were well attended and yielded exceptional feedback. As we continue implementing schools becoming effective PLCs, our department was engaged in the final PLC training with Solution Tree (February 5-6) while supporting individual schools and programs throughout the month. Districtwide Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators preparation sessions through the Project Deal Grant began with 31 participants in the first two-part session, 65 participants in the second two-part session, and 60 registered for the third session. February marked the launch of the **spring section of HB671**. We opened with 20 attendees interested in increasing knowledge, awareness, and strategies for educating students with exceptionalities.

As for the department's PL requests, we have managed 196 PL requests (+18 from last month), completing 131 of those requests (+27 from last month), 65 are still in progress, with 406 total PLs provided so far this SY.



## Chief Dr. Norman C. Sauce III

### Student Services

Dr. Norman C. Sauce III, Chief of Student Services, started his month with a district committee meeting on federal education policy. He also visited Bethune MS and met with the Exceptional Education team to reimagine the role of the LTSE. Additionally, he visited Dunwoody High School to engage in and participate in classroom instruction with scholars.

Dr. Sauce also met with a group of dedicated staff members from the Exceptional Education Department and participated in planning discussions with Horizon Area and Exceptional Education leadership teams to reimagine the LTSE role to focus more on instructional leadership. Dr. Sauce also participated in the virtual Exceptional Education Parent Advisory Council, Pre-K information parent meeting, and Parent Empowerment Engagement Resources session with the Exceptional Education Department. He visited Shadow Rock Elementary alongside Board Member Dijon DaCosta and members of Schools and Leadership to engage with school staff and scholars to observe instruction and facility conditions. At the monthly Board meeting, Dr. Sauce presented two agenda items.

Dr. Sauce attended the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program Evaluation and Master Planning Working Sessions with RMC Research Group and a cross-section of school and district-based staff. Additionally, he participated in the FY25 Disproportionality Determinations meeting to discuss disparities in student outcomes and plans to address them – along with leaders from multiple divisions. Dr. Sauce attended the Communities in Schools of Georgia Quarterly Board Meeting. He visited Stephenson HS, Snapfinger ES, and the Early Learning Center and attended the PLO for all principals. He also participated in multiple meetings with Finance and Exceptional Education and personnel from two other Georgia school districts in research efforts on Medicaid billing reimbursements for eligible services. Also, along with the executive leaders from the Division of Student Services, he presented status of priorities at the Cabinet MIRACLES Workshop.

Dr. Sauce took part in the Initiative PL session with the executive cabinet. Additionally, he participated in discussions about math support for students with IEPs and MLs with school staff. He joined the reconvening of the Committee of the Whole for the Student Assignment Planning Project on February 26. On February 28, Dr. Sauce hosted a division retreat, bringing together Gifted Education, English Learners, Exceptional Education, and Early Learning. This was an outstanding session fostering collaboration across departments and featuring presentations from other divisions. Discussions included wrap around services addressing students' social and emotional needs. It included sessions facilitated by personnel from multiple divisions on our collaborative efforts supporting student needs. All Division of Student Services staff were present to discuss departmental highlights and strategies for moving forward.

**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauce3.bsky.social

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



January 17, 2025 at 6:56 PM Everybody can reply

**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauce3.bsky.social

Treated to a "two-fer" @DunwoodyHS! I was enthralled w/ Mrs. Williams-Pitkonen's AP African American Studies class-as they examined enslaved Africans' impact on the usage of vaccines during the pre-American Revolution era. & Mrs. King gifted me this incredible engraved warming mug etched by scholars



**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauce3.bsky.social

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



**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauce3.bsky.social

Cheers, insights, & advocacy during tonight's Superintendent's Exceptional Education Parent Advisory Council. Open dialogue on matters for consideration & deliberation to elevate the impact of services for exceptional scholars. Well done, Excep. Ed. Team to facilitate! [@dekalbcschools.bsky.social](#)



**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauce3.bsky.social

During our visit to Shadow Rock ES, Chief of Schools Dillard & I met Dr. Lalita Karpen- Lead Teacher for Special Education. She's served [@dekalbcschools.bsky.social](#) almost 25 years for exceptional scholars. Thank you for the educational excellence & love you lead with, Dr. Karpen.



**Dr. Fricetia Rice**  
@FLR\_SheLeads

We had some visitors at "The Rock" today!! Our board member, Chief of Schools, Chief of Student Services, Area Superintendent & EA came out to walk our building and check on our needs! Thanks for your continued support!! [@COSDeKalbCounty](#)  
[@DacostaDeKalb](#) [@DrNormanCSauce3](#)



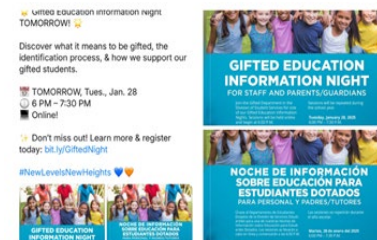
**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauce3.bsky.social

Hats off to our Division of Student Services department leads on another successful professional learning session: Instructional Leadership through the Lens of EL, Exceptional Ed, Gifted & Early Learning. Thank you to our participants & facilitators!  
[#TheDeKalbDifference](#)  
[@dekalbcschools.bsky.social](#)



**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@DrNormanCSauce3

Tuesday Night - January 28, 2025 - 6:00pm.  
Register here: [dekalbschoolsga-org.zoom.us/webinar/regist...](#)



**Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauce3.bsky.social

Appreciate [@decatrish.bsky.social](#) highlighting the collective efficacy, clarity, consistency, & coherence we strive for, across Divisions, in support [@dekalbcschools.bsky.social](#) - we are on our way! [#TheDeKalbDifference](#)  
[decatrish.com/2025/02/deka...](#)



DeKalb Schools 'quad team' works as 'collective voice' across departments to improve schools  
A team of four top DeKalb County Schools administrators is making improvements within the district by working across...

© decatrish.com

 **Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauc3.bsky.social

Was treated to walk the halls & visit classes today with Flat Rock ES Principal @LatanyaRohan. She knew every child's name, circumstances, academic needs, & how to make them each smile. We shot hoops in the game room, she tutored small groups, & even jumping jacks for indoor PE!  
#TheDeKalbDifference



 **Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauc3.bsky.social

Spent time in the Principal's office - Bethune MS Principal Mr. Donover Butler's mobile office, that is...We posted up on the 6th grade hall as he greeted every scholar, checked w/ every teacher, popped into every class. Culture, accessibility, instructional norms on full display!



 **Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauc3.bsky.social

What a power hour with this crew! And since great minds...we were sets of triplets and twins today by coincidence! Meaningful collaboration with Dr. Broyard-Baptiste, Dr. Logan, Mrs. King, & Champion Dillard on enhanced systems to address disproportionality in discipline  
@dekalbcoschools.bsky.social

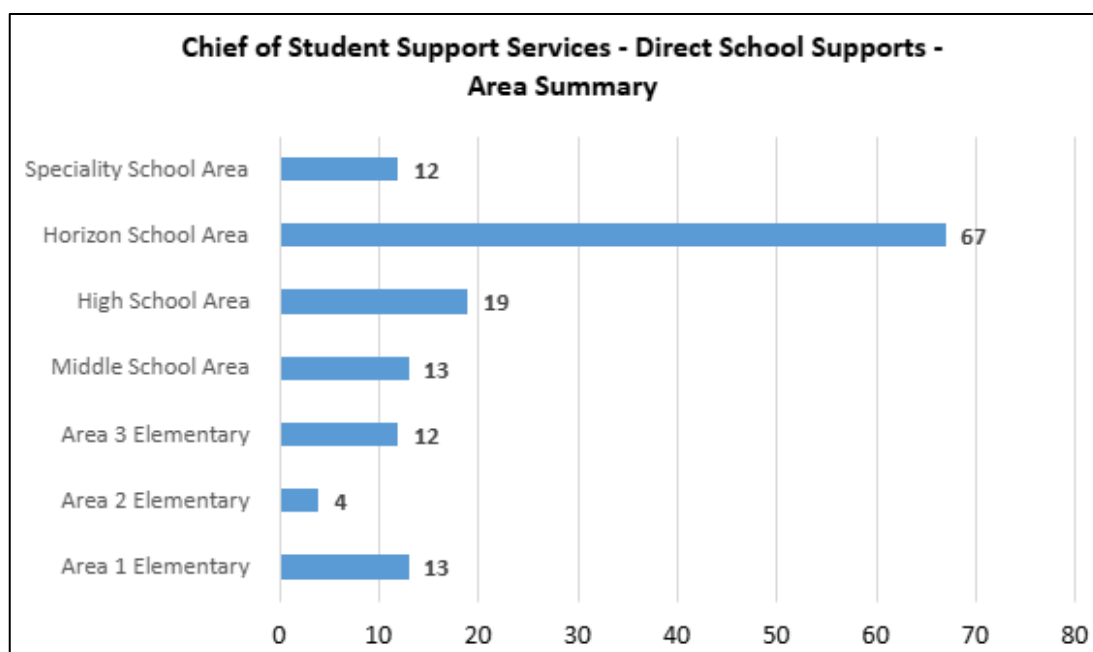


 **Dr. Norman C. Sauce III**  
@drnormancsauc3.bsky.social

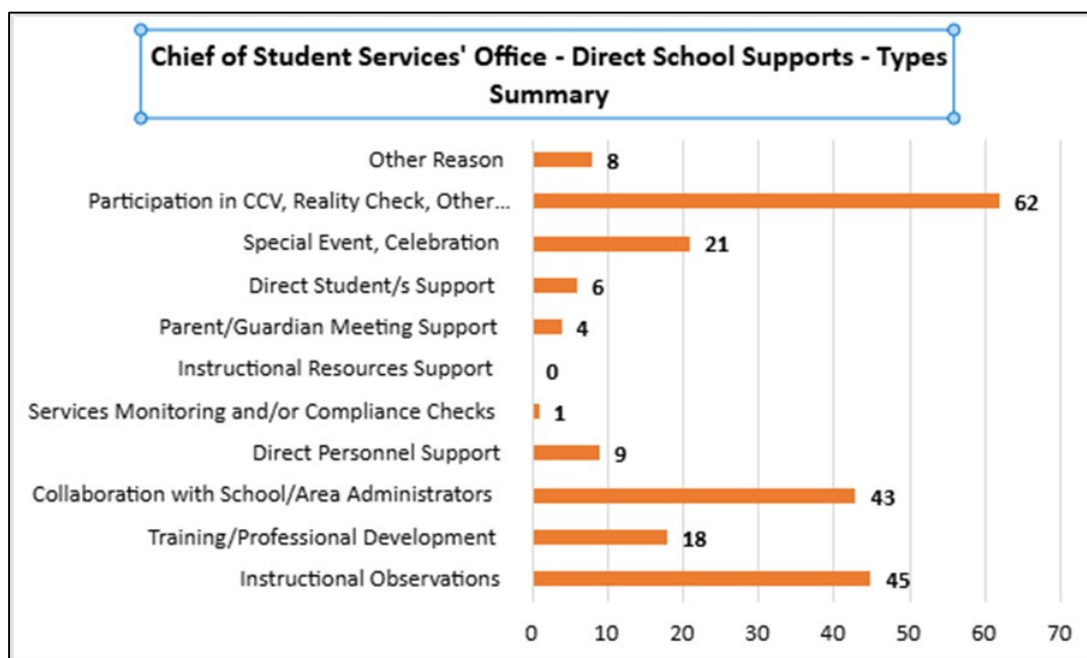
What a day @dekalbcoschools.bsky.social! Started at our Early Learning Center to join structured literacy PL with [waterford.org](https://waterford.org) & Pre-K educators - plus DeKalb Fire Dept. taught our scholars on fire safety & prevention. Then GA Piedmont Tech College for school improvement planning w/ principals-wow!



**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

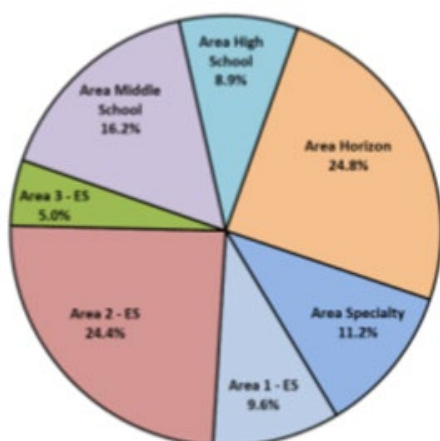
## English Learners

### 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 **304** students. The ISSC has registered and screened **3,890** ELs this academic year.

**2024-2025 ISSC  
Jan. 12 – Feb. 10**

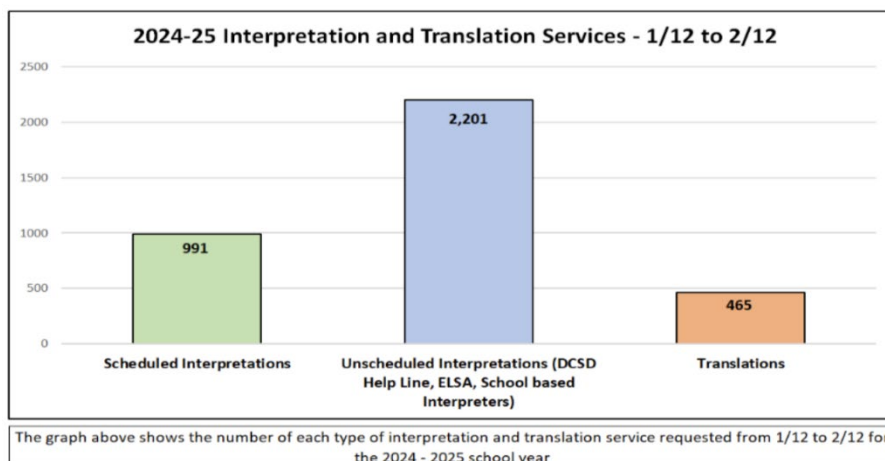


**2024-2025 ISSC Registrations  
Jan. 12 – Feb. 10**

| Area               | Students   |
|--------------------|------------|
| Area 1 – ES        | 29         |
| Area 2 – ES        | 74         |
| Area 3 – ES        | 15         |
| Area Middle School | 49         |
| Area High School   | 27         |
| Area Horizon       | 75         |
| Area Specialty     | 34         |
| No Area            | 1          |
| <b>Totals</b>      | <b>304</b> |

#### 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 **3,192** PHLOTE families with language access and translated **465** documents.



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

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

### Allotments

The English Learners Department participated in the SY2025-2026 allotment process under the leadership of Dr. Milton Hall. Our team assisted administrators and answered questions about serving ELs. In addition, each school received a demographic profile of their EL population and language assistance recommendations for each grade cluster.

Allotment aligns with Goal Area 1: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access; 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

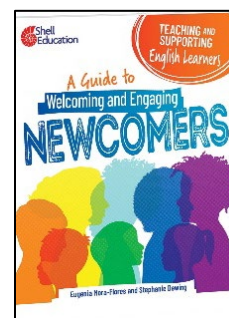
### Professional Learning

#### Spring 2025 Book Studies

The EL Department offers book studies each semester for EL teachers, administrators, and support staff. Our spring cohorts began on January 13 and 18.

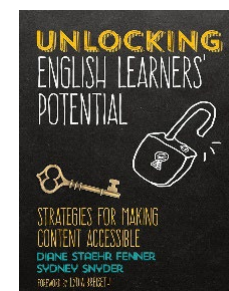
#### Welcoming and Engaging Newcomers Book Study (six-part series)

The book *Teaching and Supporting English Learners: A Guide to Welcoming and Engaging Newcomers* guides 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 focused on language development, including language input and output strategies.



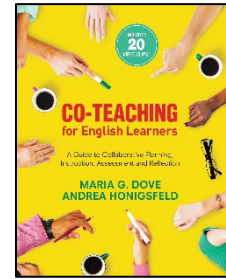
#### Strategies for Unlocking ELs' Potential (five-part series)

This book study focuses on supporting EL teachers 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 guide participants on how to plan collaboratively, instruct via specific models, and access ELs. By the end of the book study, participants can support ELs in a co-teaching model through collaborative planning, instruction, and reflection.



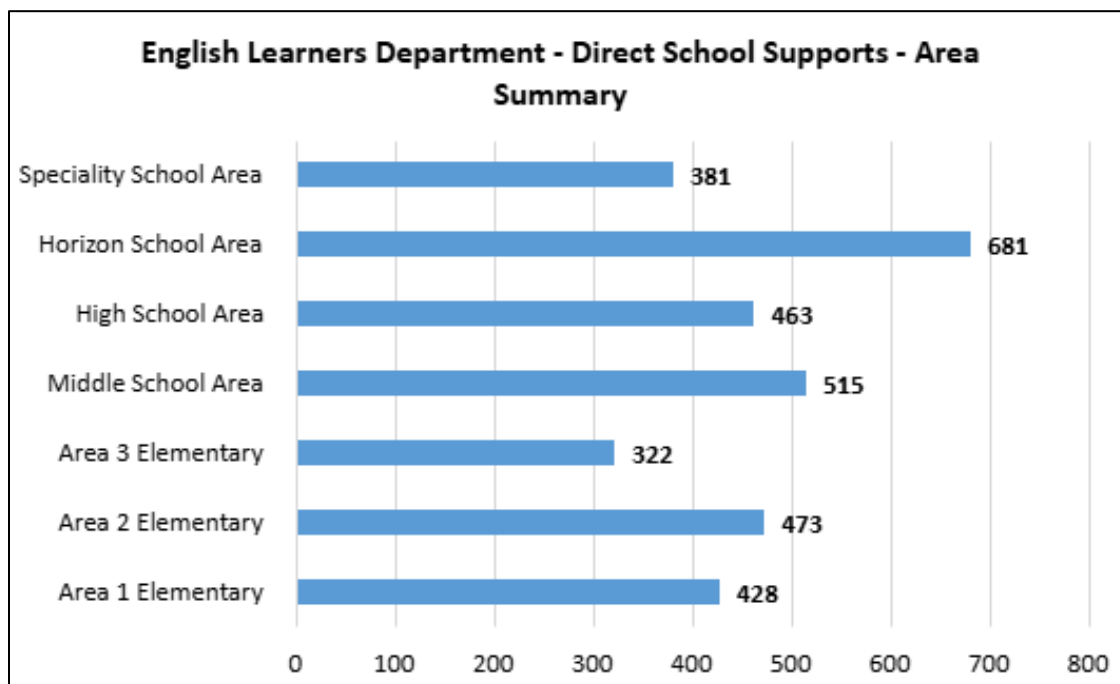
### ESOL Endorsement

The DCSD English Learners Department offers the ESOL Endorsement Program. This program prepares educators to develop the necessary skills to address ELs instructional and language development needs. This program is open to all DCSD teachers with Georgia Professional Standards Commission Professional Renewal Teaching/Standard Renewal Teaching certification. The 2024-2025 Cohort has begun; **90** teachers are currently enrolled in the program.

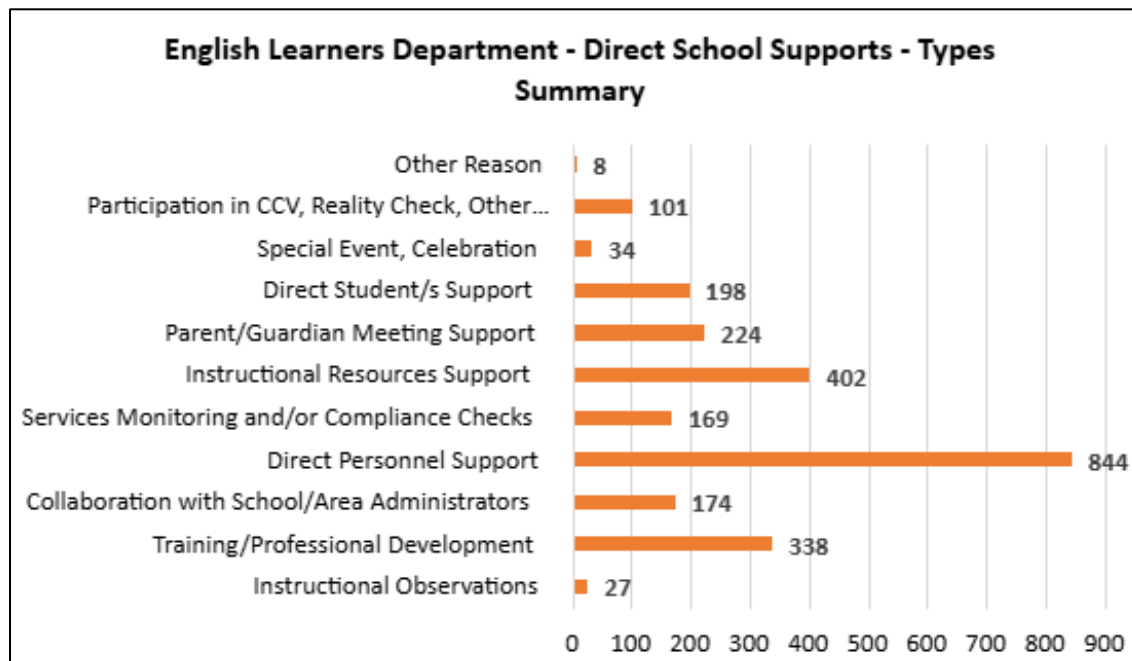
These opportunities align with the DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access; Goal Area II: School, Family, and Community Engagement; Goal Area IV: Culture and Climate; and Goal Area VI: Organizational Excellence and the DCSD MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement:

- 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**

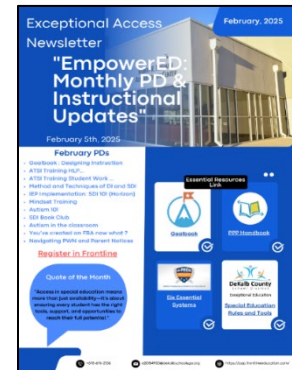


Executive Director Kiana King

## Exceptional Education

### Professional Development Highlights

- The Office of Special Education** February PL sessions have covered numerous topics, offered remotely in most instances for ease of teacher convenience and in-person where most appropriate. Topics related to Goalbook implementation, high-leverage practices for student work for Horizon schools, SDI, and Autism in the classroom. A total of 288 participants attended.
- The Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS)** has provided multiple sessions on using generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support teachers in its effective use to support students' growth and learning. In addition, GLRS delivered training on February 6 and 13 on using high-leverage instructional strategies and formative assessment for Horizon area teachers. The fourth Cohort of SDI train-the-trainer participants met for their second session. Participants looked closely at the relationship between the psychological and SDI. Ten DeKalb employees participated: Horizon School lead teachers, area, and SPED coordinators.
- During the winter break, the **National Association of School Psychologists Conference** was in Seattle, Washington. The Office of Psychological Services was well represented by 10 school psychologists and our interns and practicum students. In addition, we were so proud that our interns and practicum students were presenters and shared research with the many attendees who visited their booths. The DCSD recruitment booth was very active as we shared the vision of our school district and the innovative practices we use to support our students. There was a lot of interest in moving to Georgia and seeking employment in DeKalb County.
- The 504 Team** successfully completed districtwide compliance audits, assessing schools' adherence to federal and district guidelines. The team developed a targeted action plan following the audit to address any identified challenges or concerns. This plan includes strategic support measures, additional professional development, and ongoing monitoring to ensure continuous improvement.

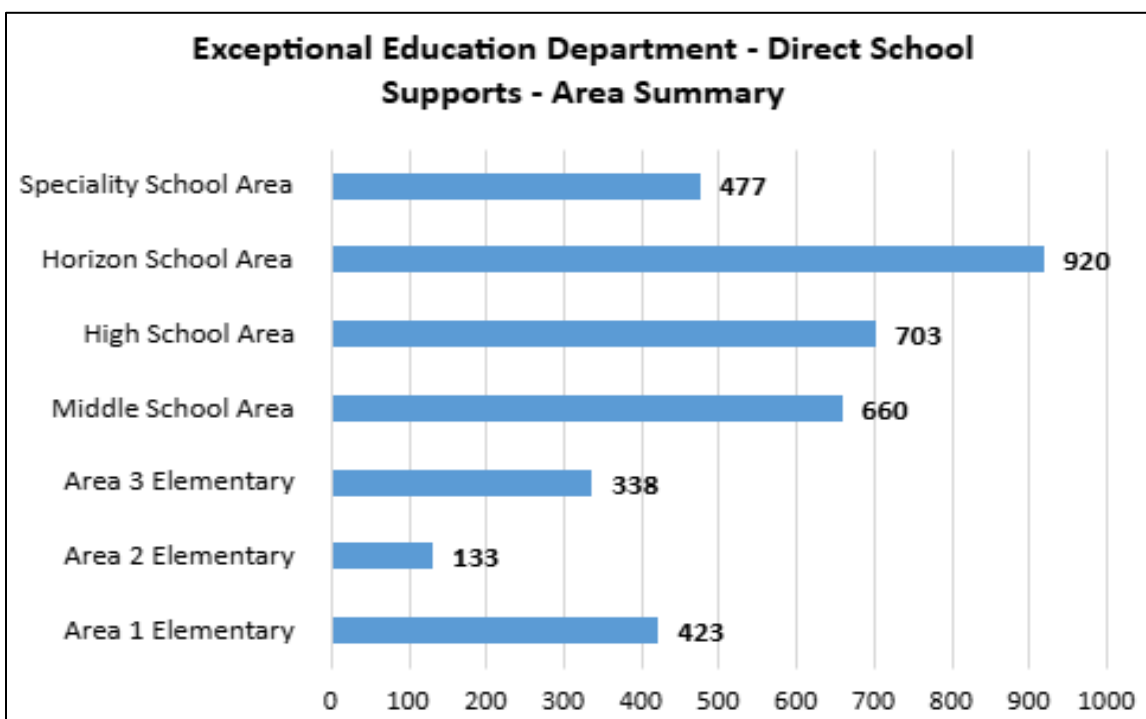


## Celebrations

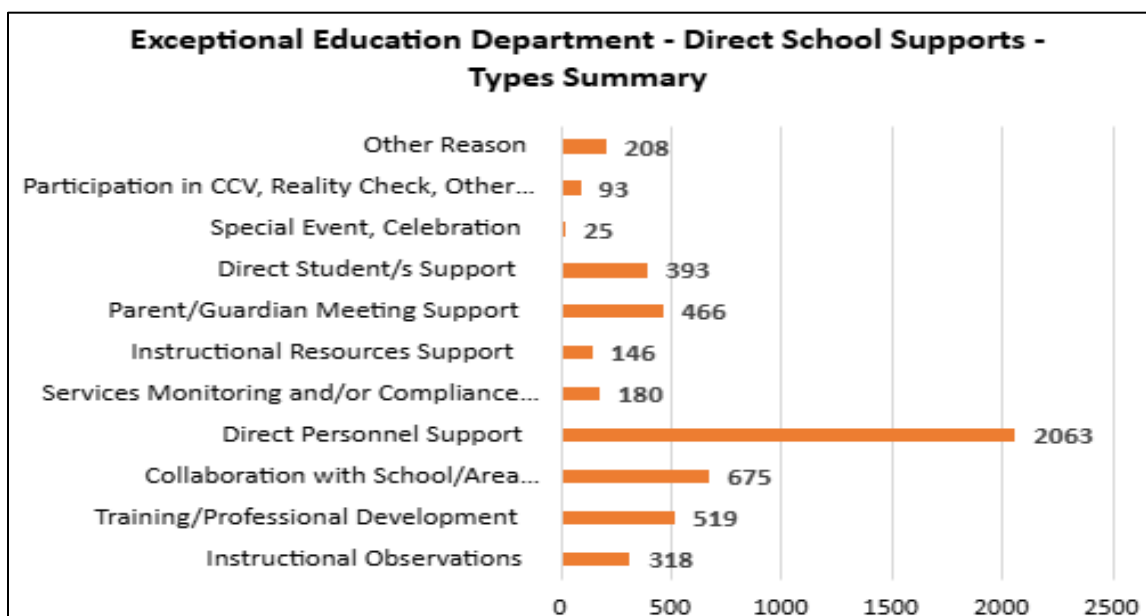
- As of February 12, the Department of Exceptional Education is excited to report that the Incarcerated Youth Program has complied with all 32 required indicators for the second consecutive audit report! Students served in the DCSD Incarcerated Youth Program are provided small group learning addressing all content areas with additional skill development incorporated.
  - The Incarcerated Youth Program currently serves 16 students in grades 9-12, ages 17-21.
  - Students are working on obtaining credits toward graduation, exploring options for employment, and being introduced to transitional skills.
- We are excited to highlight the impact of **Parent Transition Liaison** Lisa Lake during SY24-25 in support of families with students with disabilities. A total of 171 direct parent contacts have been made to support parental engagement and answer questions. The Department of Exceptional Education has hosted four Parent, Education, Empowerment, Resources, and Support (PEERS) virtual sessions. Over the last six months, almost 500 DCSD families have attended these virtual sessions. Presentations and information have been shared in the following areas: Inclusive post-secondary programs, guardianship rights, Medicaid waivers, Section 504/ HHB/ Child Find, technical colleges, and Student Support Services.
- The DCSD's students with intellectual disabilities participated in the **State of Georgia Special Olympics Winter Games** in January. We are over the moon proud of our student-athletes bringing home gold medals in overall team skills.
- In collaboration with the Horizon Area, the Office of Special Education has implemented the Wilson Reading System (WRS) in eight ATSI-identified schools to assist with improving literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. WRS students have shown an average 9.9 increase in their fall and winter reading MAP scores.



**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

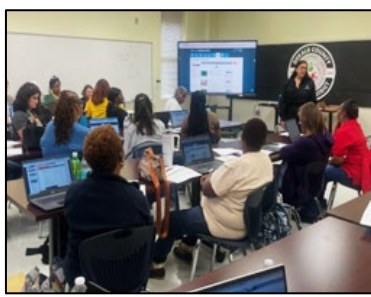


Dr. Phillips and the Department of Early Learning and Pre-K Program's members participated during the third PL session on January 31 for district leaders, highlighting the scope of the work associated with the Division of Student Services via Exceptional Education, English Learners, Gifted Education, Pre-K, and Early Learners. Dr. Phillips and a department member have worked extensively with members of the Finance Department during the Budget Round-Up session to ensure equitable distribution of resources aligned throughout the district within our Early Learning/Pre-K budgets. Dr. Phillips participated in the CSIP Calibration Meeting – cross-division – and the second family-to-family (F2F) Waterford training session on February 7. Additionally, team members have assisted Dr. Phillips with finalizing the upcoming Pre-K (3&4) Programs application window and lottery for all district stakeholders for the upcoming SY25-26. The application window and lottery will run from March 3-21. Lottery seats will be awarded on March 28. Dr. Phillips visited Briar Vista, John Lewis, Robert Shaw Theme Elementary Schools, and the Early Learning Center. Dr. Phillips and team members from the Department of Early Learning and Pre-K Program conducted their first virtual parent application and lottery support meeting on February 25, and 795 district stakeholders participated in the event. Dr. Phillips participated in the seventh SOR training for Pre-K (3&4) staff members and the Student Assignment Planning – Committee Meeting of the Whole on February 26. Lastly, Dr. Phillips supported and participated in the Division of Student Services' Retreat on February 28. Dr. Phillips and designated team members spoke on the department's highlights and provided updates.



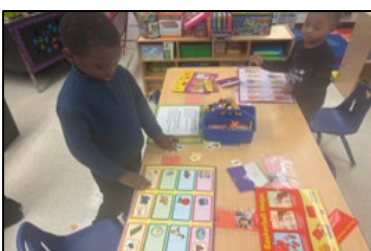
### Professional Learning Opportunities

During February, the Early Learning/Pre-K Department worked diligently to offer various PL opportunities to district employees covering various topics: SOR, Waterford, Virtual Chat and Chews Work Sampling Online, upcoming program visits, etc. These excellent opportunities for staff members align with the DCSD Strategic Plan and MIRACLES framework for continuous improvement.



### Instructional Activities

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



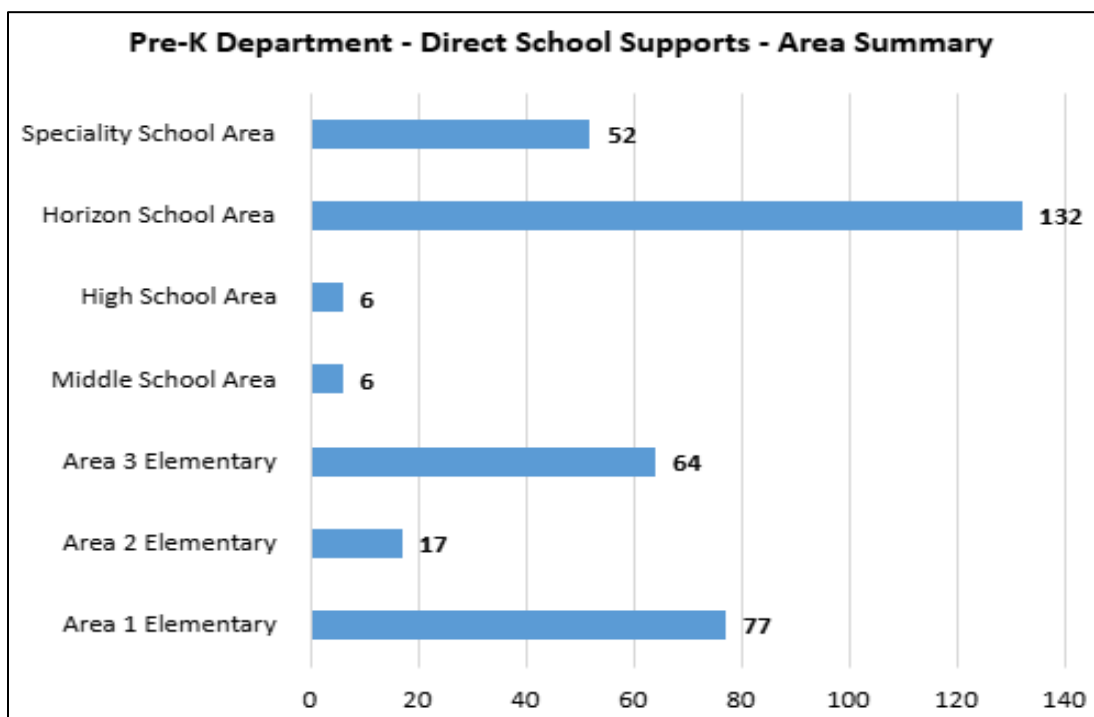
### School Supports

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

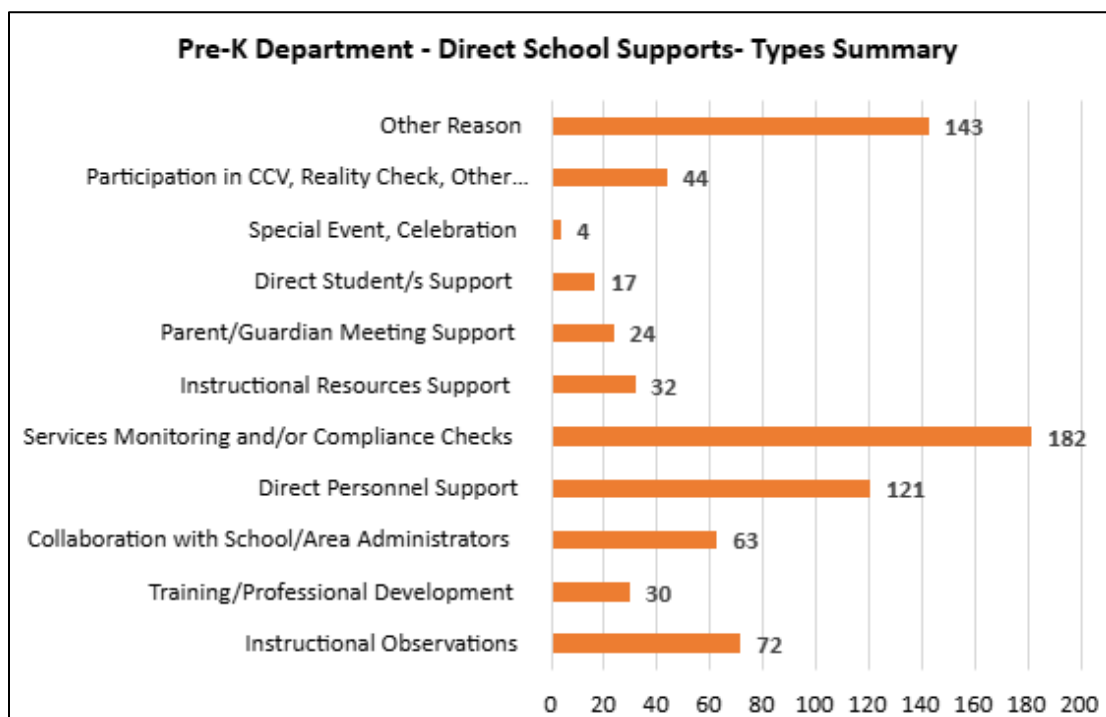
### Department – Highlights

The Pre-K3 expansion classes and Pre-K4 pilot classes 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, including literacy, social studies, science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM). Additionally, this instructional resource will support teachers and paraprofessionals in planning a plethora of instructional activities that are age-appropriate and aligned to the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards and Frog Street Curriculum 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 above and beyond the mandatory SOR training for Pre-K (3&4) employees. Our second F2F Waterford training session concluded on February 7 at the Early Learning Center. Our seventh SOR PL training was a success and ended on February 26. The upcoming Pre-K (3&4) application window and lottery will run from March 3-21. Lottery seats will be awarded on March 28.

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



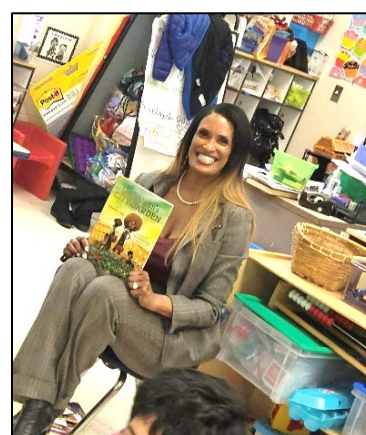
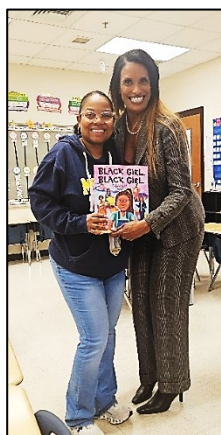
### Types of Direct School Supports by Department of Pre-K and Early Learning Since the Start of the School Year



#### Senior Coordinators Donyell Atkinson and Kristen Drake

##### Gifted Education

The Gifted Education Department kicked off the month of February by collaborating with the Department of Student Mentorships and Partnerships in encouraging the students at Peachcrest Elementary School's "I Need to Read" reading program by reading aloud to Pre-K, kindergarten, and first-grade classes and giving a brand-new book from the book collection for their class library.

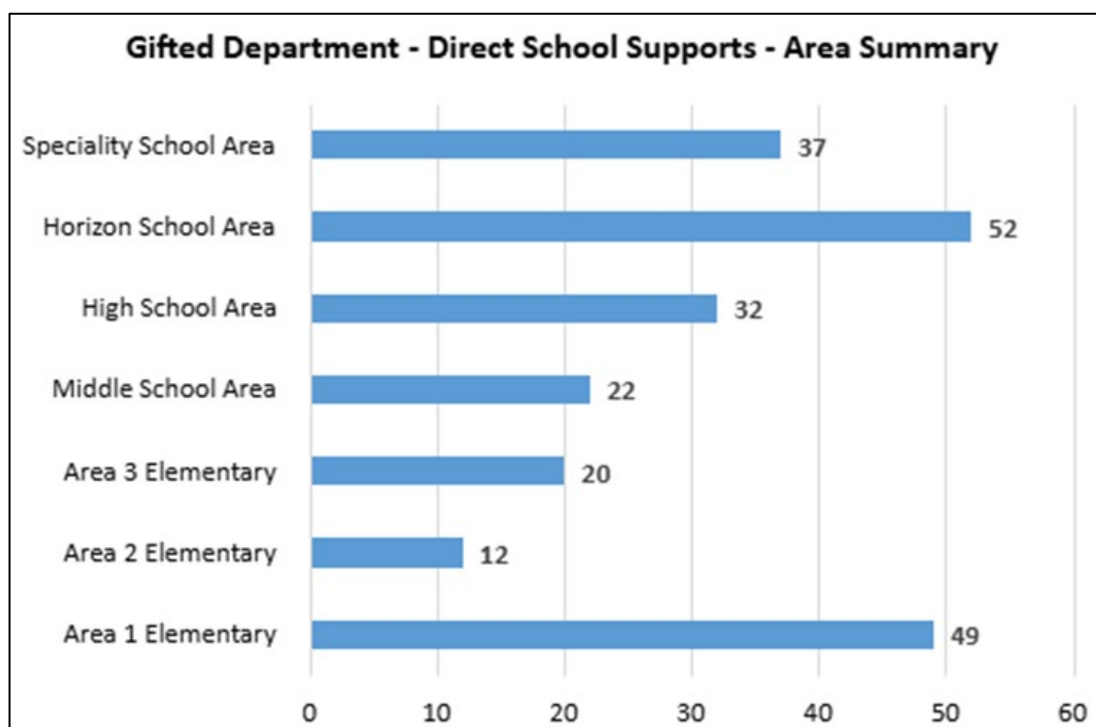


As a result of our efforts to expand access and opportunity for students to be considered for Gifted Education eligibility under state criteria, as of January 24, the district has a total of 10,476 identified for Gifted Education since the beginning of SY24-25. This represents a 16 percent overall increase: an 11 percent increase for African American students, a 16 percent increase for Latino students, a 14 percent increase for students with disabilities, a 7 percent increase for ELs, and a 19 percent increase for students who attend Horizon Area schools. Senior Coordinator Donyell Atkinson hosted a Gifted Identification spring testing cycle workshop for all gifted liaisons and school test coordinators to learn about district expectations, eligible students, and the assessments used in the evaluation process. The district's spring testing cycle is underway, with IOWA and CogAT administration ending on February 28, while the remaining assessments used for gifted screening will continue until March 7.

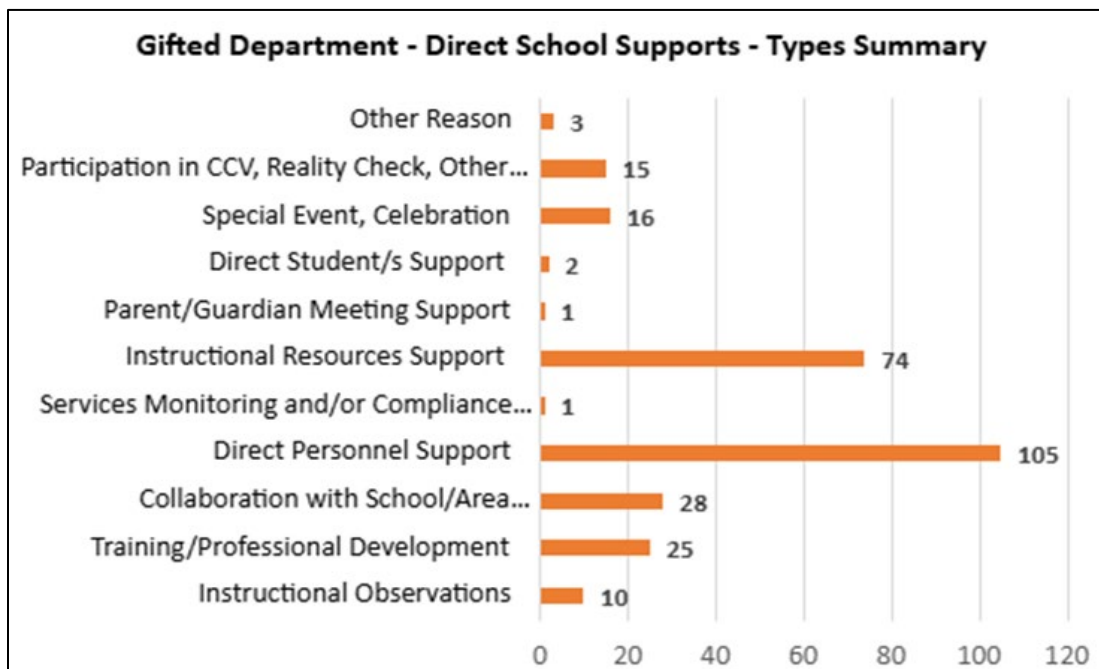
Teachers and students now have access to Newsela, an online instructional resource purchased by the Gifted Education Department. The platform is accessible in Clever/Launchpad and is ideal for differentiated instruction. Teachers of gifted students may use the resource to increase text complexity and expand vocabulary. It is important to note that all students and teachers have access to Newsela. Pictured are students from Smoke Rise Elementary using Newsela.



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

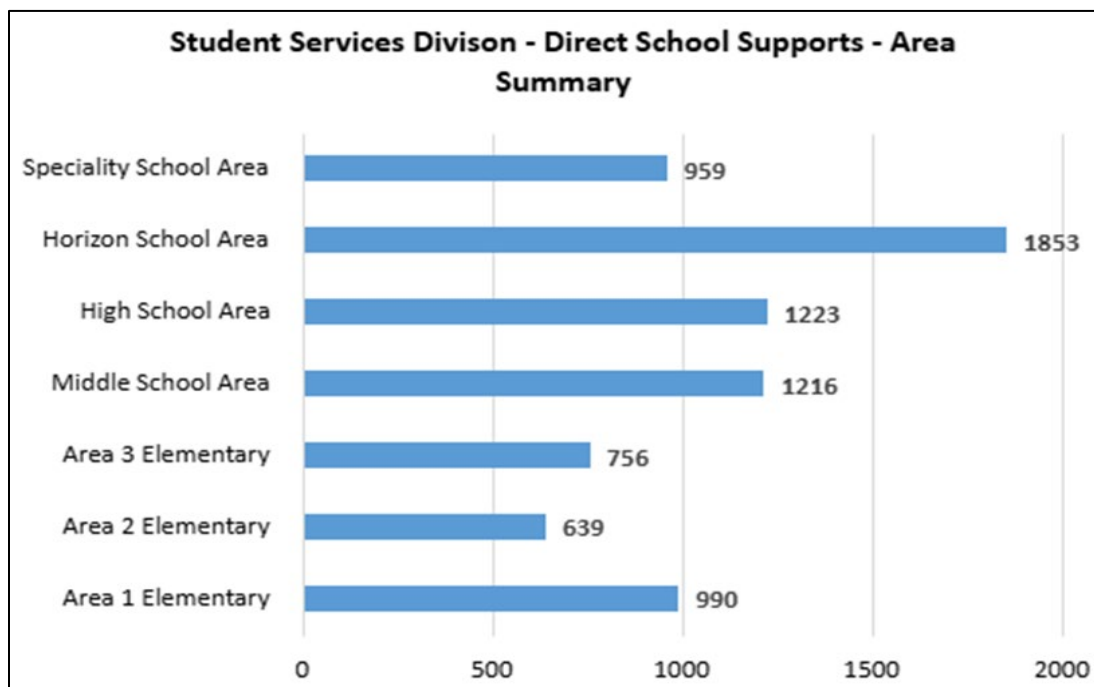


### Types of Direct School Supports by Gifted Education Team Since the Start of the School Year

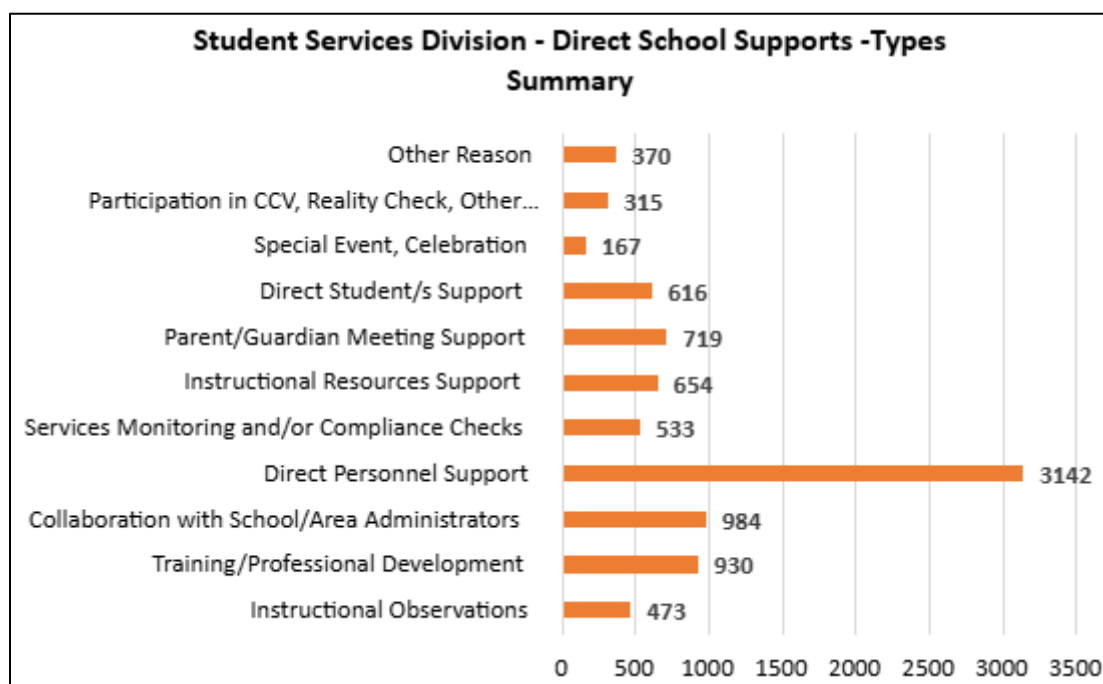


### Division of Student Services – Direct School Supports Totals – Since the Start of the School Year

#### 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**

National School Counseling Week February 3-7



February began with a bang as we celebrated National School Counseling Week, February 3-7. The counselors were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the lives of our students at the February board meeting, with more than 60 counselors in attendance. The week culminated with the [3rd Annual School Counselors Conference](#) held at Georgia Piedmont Technical College in Decatur. Counselors had the opportunity to receive professional development and other self-care techniques that will help them manage stress, prevent burnout, and improve overall job performance, satisfaction, and quality of work within the workplace. Dr. Kishia K. Towns greeted the counseling staff, encouraging them to stay the course while continuing to do the important work of helping students with academic, social, and emotional issues and assisting students with developing plans for graduation and post-secondary success.

**Idlewood ES and Stone Mountain MS: Where We Woosah!**

As part of the Strategic Plan Goal Area 5 – Mental Health and Wellness, the Division of Human Resources, in collaboration with the Division of Wrap Around Services, Kaiser Permanente, and Alliance for Healthier Generations, DCSD received a \$25,000 grant to create staff wellness rooms for both school and office-based staff. Prevention Liaison Dr. Torri Hornsby-Griffin was instrumental in obtaining the grant and spearheading the project. Additional wellness rooms will be completed at the Buck Godfrey Transportation Hub, Stephenson MS, and three upcoming sites. This is an effort to create and maintain safe and healthy working and learning environments both psychologically and physically for students and staff. The staff at both schools appreciate the district's willingness to prioritize the social-emotional well-being of school-based employees. May wellness permeate the entire district in as many ways as we can develop to support our students.

[See the video of the ribbon-cutting event for the Woosah Room!](#)

## Parent Support at Chapel Hill Middle School

On February 11, Chief of Wrap Around Services Dr. Kishia K. Towns, participated in the Chapel Hill MS Parent Engagement Session. This was an opportunity to share the resources and wrap around support provided by the division and any needs requested by parents. The importance of parental support in our communities and schools to ensure student success was one of the main topics. In addition, information was provided about the state of Georgia networks and agencies, the After School Extended Day Program, school-based mental health supports, Student and Family Engagement Centers, school programs, PLOs, current school staffing, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) resources, and the Saving Our Students (SOS) Campaign. The parents of Chapel Hill MS were receptive and thoroughly engaged in the session. It was quite a delight to collaborate with our DCSD families.

## Executive Director Christopher Key

### Student Advancement Department

#### School Counseling Office and Post-Secondary Outreach Office

The Student Advancement Department focuses on providing awareness, access, and resources to students to assist them with graduating on time and having a post-secondary plan. The primary goal is to provide support to increase student engagement and graduation rate and enhance employability skills and career outcomes.

#### Superintendent Student Advisory Committee

Dr. Horton met with the Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee and listened to middle and HS scholars' input about the following areas: facilities, culture and climate, and technology – Disconnect to Reconnect. Students provided their assessment of the district regarding these functional areas or projects, and the superintendent collaborated with the committee by sharing updates and feedback.

#### Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Awareness (Enrollment Pathway)

The Post-Secondary Team hosted FAFSA Awareness evening events to support families of scholars seeking to enroll in a college and university. FAFSA Frenzies have been taking place during the school day to further support students with the application process.

#### Higher to Hire (Employment Pathway)

In collaboration with the HR Division, the Post-Secondary Team hosted recruitment meetings with seniors who selected the employment pathway. Higher to Hire is a district-sponsored program that focuses on recruiting seniors for employment opportunities after graduation. Pictured is Recruitment Manager Dr. James Oggs, meeting with HS scholars regarding Higher to Hire.



### Elementary School SEL Lesson Completion Data

A review of SEL lesson implementation across DCSD elementary schools reveals the following levels of engagement as of January 30:

| School Percentages                                     | Area 1<br>ES | Area 2<br>ES | Area 3<br>ES | Area<br>Horizon | Area<br>Specialty |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Schools with 20 percent + average lesson completion    | 9            | 7            | 4            | 7               | 5                 |
| Schools with 10-20 percent average lesson completion   | 3            | 6            | 6            | 5               | 1                 |
| Schools with 5-9 percent average lesson completion     | 3            | 2            | 2            | 3               | 0                 |
| Schools with below 5 percent average lesson completion | 2            | 3            | 1            | 4               | 8                 |

**MIDDLE  
SCHOOL  
SUICIDE  
INTERVENTION  
DATA BY  
SCHOOL**

|                                                          | August    | September | October   | November  | December  | January  | February  | March | April | May | June |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Middle                                                   |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Cedar Grove Middle                                       | 1         | 3         | 1         | 4         | 1         |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Chamblee Middle                                          |           | 1         | 2         |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Champion Theme Middle                                    | 1         | 5         | 1         |           |           | 1        |           |       |       |     |      |
| Chapel Hill Middle                                       | 0         | 1         |           |           |           |          | 1         |       |       |     |      |
| Columbia Middle School                                   | 3         | 3         | 5         |           | 1         |          | 1         |       |       |     |      |
| DeKalb Agriculture Technology and Environment            | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| DeKalb Alternative School                                |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| DeKalb Arts Academy                                      | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| DeKalb Elem School of the Arts                           |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| DeKalb Path Academy                                      |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| DeKalb Preparatory Academy                               |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Druid Hills Middle                                       | 2         | 6         | 1         | 2         |           | 2        |           |       |       |     |      |
| Eagles Wood Academy (6th Grade - Age 21)                 |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Freedom Middle                                           | 1         | 6         | 2         |           | 2         |          | 2         |       |       |     |      |
| GLOBE Academy                                            |           | 1         |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Henderson Middle                                         | 3         | 4         |           | 1         | 1         | 2        | 3         |       |       |     |      |
| International Student Center - Intensive English Program |           | 1         |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Leadership Prep Academy                                  |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Lithonia Middle School                                   | 1         | 1         | 5         | 1         |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| M.M. Bethune Middle                                      | 1         | 1         | 2         | 3         | 1         |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| McNair Middle                                            |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Miller Grove Middle                                      | 2         | 1         |           | 2         |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Peachtree Middle                                         | 5         | 9         | 6         | 9         | 6         |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Redan Middle                                             | 7         | 2         | 2         | 3         | 2         | 1        | 1         |       |       |     |      |
| Salem Middle                                             | 0         | 4         | 0         | 1         |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Sequoyah Middle                                          | 1         | 0         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1        |           |       |       |     |      |
| Stephenson Middle                                        | 3         | 1         | 2         | 2         | 2         |          | 1         |       |       |     |      |
| Stone Mountain Middle                                    |           |           |           |           | 1         |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| The Museum School of Avondale                            |           |           |           |           |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| Tucker Middle                                            |           |           |           |           |           |          | 2         |       |       |     |      |
| Wadsworth Magnet                                         |           |           |           | 1         |           |          |           |       |       |     |      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                             | <b>33</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>11</b> |       |       |     |      |

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

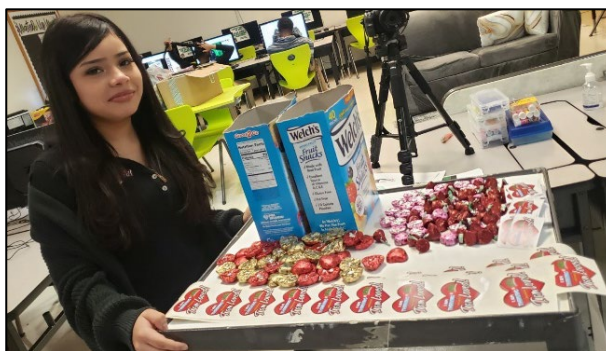
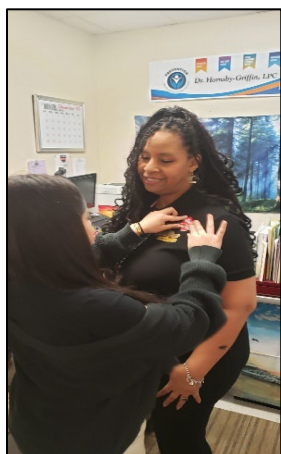
| Location          | Kaiser Presentation Date | Number of Students Scheduled | Number of Students Impacted | Number of Staff |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>TOTALS</b>     | -                        | <b>700</b>                   | <b>665</b>                  | <b>300</b>      |
| 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             |

Annual DCSD Professional School Counselor Conference hosted at Georgia Piedmont Technical College on February 5. Annual professional development helps counselors gain the knowledge and tools needed to support all students, fostering inclusivity and equity in schools.

### DCSD Board Meeting February 10 To Recognize National School Counselor Week



SEL activities were conducted with students and at DAS on February 14, 2025, to encourage kindness throughout the school.



### Counseling Student Advancement Team's Participation in the "I Need to Read" Program

The Counseling Student Advancement Team participated in the "I Need to Read" program at Princeton Elementary, where we engaged with first and second-grade classes by reading various books. Celebrating **Black History Month**, we are thrilled to collaborate with our selected elementary schools to promote literacy and cultural awareness.



## Director Denise Revels

### Wrap Around and Support Services

#### Student Health Services

As flu cases surge across the nation, Laurel Ridge ES is actively prioritizing wellness and community well-being through the dedicated efforts of our wellness committee and school community. We focus on promoting nutritional wellness and disease prevention by sharing nutritious recipes monthly on ClassDojo and partnering with the Toco Hills Community Alliance to sponsor the LRES Mobile Food Pantry, which provides food for our families in need. Additionally, each Friday, we send home backpacks filled with nutritious foods for families who request them, ensuring that no child goes without healthy meals over the weekend. Our school nurse also plays a key role in educating students on health practices, delivering presentations like healthy handwashing to reinforce good hygiene habits. Our school believes it truly takes a village to raise a child, and we are committed to supporting every aspect of our students' well-being. By fostering kindness and encouraging healthy habits, we aim to create a safer and healthier environment for all and help contain the spread of viruses.



#### ASEDP Coordinator James Hearn

### After-School Extended Day Programs

ASEDP Coordinator James Hearn visited Wynbrooke's ASEDP and observed several activities going on for their after-school scholars. The scholars moved in groups to visit different stations set up throughout the school and outside on the playground. Teachers held a technology class in one classroom, where the students worked on various activities using their Chromebooks. All students were actively engaged and worked collaboratively, completing a group project.



Director Dr. Darnell Logan

## Student Relations

### Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

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

- PBIS Coach Eva Landers and the PBIS coordinator conducted a PBIS staff overview training at Panola Way ES on February 5.
- The PBIS District Team conducted the ES PBIS coaches' meeting on February 12. During the session, participants discussed organization and time management strategies to enhance PBIS implementation, explored ways to strengthen student, staff, family, and community engagement, and expanded their knowledge of planning and facilitating PBIS professional development sessions. Our guest speaker Associate Professor of School Psychology and Director of the Center for Research on School Climate at GSU Dr. LaSalle presented *"Enhancing Student Engagement to Improve Overall School Climate and Culture."*

| Number of Participants | Sign-in Link                   | Evaluation Link                   |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 24                     | <a href="#">Sign-In Roster</a> | <a href="#">Presentation Link</a> |



- On February 4, PBIS District Coordinator Brandy Woolridge met with the Achieving Professional Excellence (APEX) director to discuss how APEX school counselors can serve on the PBIS School Leadership Team to support schoolwide PBIS implementation starting in SY25-26.
- The PBIS District Team met on February 17 to discuss PBIS walkthroughs for Cohort 1-8 schools, MTSS-PBIS schools' baseline walkthrough observations, PBIS coach and PBIS administrator interviews, the Tiered Fidelity Inventory Product Book Checklist, the new training date for Everyday Labs, field activity logs, monthly check-in coaching sessions, and the PBIS Team retreat.

- On February 21, DCSD's PBIS Coordinator Brandy Woolridge and MTSS Director Monique Kimbell met with MRESA Director of Whole Child Supports Michelle Sandrock and GaDOE MTSS Program Specialist Christy Jones to share proposed initial meeting objectives and updates on establishing a Whole Child Supports Integrated Team in the DCSD. The District Fidelity Tool Checklist was recommended as a guide for the initial meetings and discussions with the Whole Child Supports District Team.

### Student Discipline/Student Reintegration

During February, the Department of Student Relations scheduled **90** district due process hearings (DDPH), **9** were canceled due to Discipline Team Meetings, **10** were withdrawn, and **12** were manifested – leaving a total of **59** DDPHs held for February. Additionally, Student Relations cleared **17** students to attend their attendance zone school within DCSD.

### Comprehensive Summary of Yondr Cell Phone Pouches and Cell Phone Lockers Implementation

#### Overview

Implementing **Yondr cell phone pouches and lockers** has positively impacted classroom engagement, student focus, and disciplinary issues. The observations from multiple schools reveal that these policies have effectively minimized distractions, promoted a more structured learning environment, and encouraged positive peer interactions.



#### Key Positive Outcomes

- Improved student focus and academic engagement
  - Reduced distractions:** Students were notably less distracted by their phones, leading to greater attention to academic tasks.
  - Increased participation:** Many students engaged more in classroom discussions and activities without the temptation of using their phones.
  - Better task completion:** With phones secured, students showed improved preparedness and organization during lessons.
  - Teacher satisfaction:** Many teachers reported that lessons ran more smoothly, and they experienced fewer interruptions related to phone usage.
- Enhanced classroom behavior and discipline
  - Fewer discipline issues:** Schools observed a significant reduction in cell phone-related disciplinary actions, including unauthorized phone use and classroom disruptions.
  - Respect for policy:** Most students complied with the rules without major resistance, leading to a more structured classroom atmosphere.

- **More positive peer interactions:** Students socialize more face-to-face without phones, fostering a stronger sense of community in classrooms and during non-instructional periods.
3. Consistency and policy effectiveness
- **Effective implementation:** In most schools, administrators, teachers, and students agreed that Yondr pouches and cell phone lockers effectively reduced phone-related issues.
  - **Compliance with lockers:** In schools where lockers were used, students followed the policy upon entering the classroom, helping maintain order.
  - **Classroom climate:** Many classrooms were described as more conducive to learning, with fewer distractions and better student engagement.

### Recommendations for Further Improvement

- ✓ **Enhanced communication and training:** Provide ongoing teacher and student training on the importance and benefits of the policy.
- ✓ **Emergency access procedures:** Develop a streamlined process for emergency phone access, ensuring student safety without compromising the policy.
- ✓ **Teacher and student feedback sessions:** Conduct regular check-ins to refine policy implementation based on real-world feedback.
- ✓ **Stronger policy enforcement:** Ensure all staff consistently enforce the policy to prevent inconsistencies in student compliance.

### Takeaway

**Yondr cell phone pouches and lockers have proven to be effective tools** in minimizing classroom distractions, improving student engagement, and enhancing school climate. While some challenges exist, continuous monitoring, clear communication, and consistent enforcement will further strengthen the success of these policies.

## Chief Stacy E. Stepney

### K-12 New ELA Standards Training

Elementary literacy leads and academic coaches have completed two full days of new ELA standards training and have begun redelivery at their local schools. As of February 14, 194 teachers were trained during a redelivery schedule. Secondary English department chairs, academic coaches, and assistant principals have completed day one of the new ELA standards training. Additional redelivery is scheduled to occur at all elementary schools in March. Continued training and support for implementing new standards are planned for the summer and throughout SY25-26.



### Academic Coaches

The senior academic coach coordinators (ACCs) provided tiered coaching support and technical assistance based on principal feedback, documentation of work, and on-site observations. The ACCs reviewed the pacing guides with academic coaches to ensure all content is taught and shared coaching practices, strategies, and resources to support teachers in implementing the curriculum. To support each area, the ACCs attended the area retreats and planning sessions, facilitated the 5 Whys protocols for district leaders and school teams during the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) planning sessions, facilitated sessions during the District/Area Principal Learning Opportunity, participated in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Coaching Academy, and actively engaged in job-alike meetings with content coordinators. Also, the ACCs supported the implementation of ELA standards through the coaching and Literacy Lab sessions for teachers, coaches, and content coordinators.

Senior ACCs are planning the Summer Coaching Institute on June 2 and 3. The proposed theme is “After the Reset: We are Stronger, Wiser, and Better.”

Currently, there are 203 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 |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Area Elementary 1   | 6                 | 0                   | 6             |
| Area Elementary 2   | 17                | 1                   | 7             |
| Area Elementary 3   | 19                | 0                   | 7             |
| Area Middle Schools | 43                | 0                   | 24            |
| Area High Schools   | 30                | 2                   | 13            |
| Area Horizon        | 68                | 6                   | 46            |
| Area Specialty      | 10                | 1                   | 8             |
| <b>Totals</b>       | <b>193</b>        | <b>10</b>           | <b>111</b>    |

### Deputy Chief Dr. Sean R. Tartt

#### Student Success Skills Backpack (SSSB)

The 21 pilot sites continue to prepare students, staff, and stakeholders for effective implementation and awareness of this new initiative. District correspondence was provided to schools in an initial stakeholder letter, Portrait of a Graduate (POG) visual, defense scoring guide, and videos. In early March, teachers will engage in a virtual session conducted by C&I to learn additional methods to support scholars and highlight where POG skills exist within their instructional lessons.

#### Academic Skills Centers (ASC)

C&I continues to enhance the toolbox of our ASC staff by conducting PL sessions, virtual and face-to-face bi-weekly check-ins, and site observations. The February PL session has been rescheduled to March 18, where ASC staff will engage in an interactive session centered around the effective use of close reading strategies led by PLF Dr. Felicia Wynter. Graduation Innovations Senior Coordinator Culisha Curry will facilitate a tabletop discussion that will benefit ASC staff by listening and modeling successful instructional strategies that have worked in their respective ASCs. ASC staff will review their site's data during March, make key adjustments, and plan for continued progress.

### Assistant Superintendent Dr. Penny Mosley

#### P-5

#### Let's READ, Georgia

DCSD's Department of C&I continues to partner with MRESA on the SOR implementation. Literacy leads from each ES are engaged in professional development sessions. This month, the focus is on research-based routines for developing decoding skills from the book *Reading Above the Fray* by Julia Lindsey. Literacy leads will use the new knowledge gained to support building-level teachers as we continue to strengthen literacy practices across the district.

## Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rose Prejean-Harris

### 6-12

#### Innovative Educational Opportunities (IEO)

DeKalb Acceleration Academies (DAA) increased enrollment, attendance, and course completions in February. Currently, there are 46 students enrolled. Interest in the program remains high, with 54 completed applications under review. At the end of February, 13 courses have been completed.

Negotiations are underway for a Letter of Intent (LOI) at a location in Stone Mountain, while two other locations in Tucker are being considered. DAA's director and faculty continue receiving ongoing support through our IEO team and other means of guidance and collaboration, such as working with our national cohort of directors. The site has eight scheduled professional development sessions and will schedule more as needed. On February 21, the team focused on time blocking, Google platforms, enrollment, and marketing.



## Director Dr. Lynn Angus Ramos

### Literacy

#### Structured Literacy Professional Learning (PL)

Elementary teachers continue to progress through the Georgia Literacy Academy course, one of the approved pathways that meet the structured literacy professional learning requirements of House Bill 538. As of February 15, DCSD has 2,019 teachers engaged in the full course and 1,015 working on the condensed course for electives teachers. Over 50 percent of those teachers (1,021) have completed six of the ten required modules, and 40 percent (811) have completed the course's final module. Of the 1,015 teachers enrolled in the condensed course for electives teachers, 44 percent (451) have completed all four of their modules. Principals and area teams have access to reports to monitor progress. Follow-up "Knowledge Builder" support sessions continue to be designed and delivered in collaboration with School Improvement to support Horizon Schools.

#### Literacy Lab

Over two days in February, a select group of classroom teachers, academic coaches, and district staff gathered to participate in a Literacy Lab. Through the completion of an authentic planning session and lesson presentation, educators were, in essence, a focus group. They provided feedback on the lesson plan, new standards training and implementation, and additional support from the district that would assist in building a culture of literacy and increase

student achievement. Additionally, the work of the Literacy Lab participants will serve as a starting point for curriculum revision work in preparation for the implementation of new Georgia ELA standards.

## Director Lummie Baker

### Educational Media and Instructional Materials

#### 2025 Georgia Metro Region Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Winners

The 2025 Georgia Metro Region HRRB was held on February 8 at Clayton State University. The six teams representing DeKalb County were Austin ES, DeKalb Public Library (Elementary School Division), Kittredge Magnet, Henderson MS, Lakeside, and Chamblee HS. During the competition, each team competed in rounds against students in their grade level, consisting of 60 questions. All teams had to answer questions about the 10 Georgia Book Award Nominee Books (for elementary and middle schools) or the 20 Peach Teen Award Nominee books (for high schools) they read.

Thank you to the coaches and students for a momentous day of competition demonstrating the value of literacy. We extend a special thank you to the more than 50 volunteers who staffed the competition rooms and helped manage the event.

Only the regional first-place teams will compete in the state HRRB at the University of Georgia on March 22. Congratulations to Kittredge Magnet School and Lakeside High School for advancing to the state-level competition next month.

## Director Stephanie Brown-Bryant

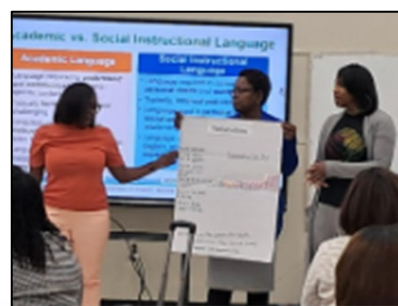
### K-12 Teaching and Learning

#### English Language Arts – Young Georgia Authors Writing Competition

All elementary, middle, and high school English/ELA departments were invited to hold a writing competition and select a grade-level winner to compete in the Young Georgia Authors Writing Competition. School-level entries were reviewed and scored at the district level. The top district entry at each grade level has been sent forward to the MRESA level of the competition, and finally, RESA winners are eligible for the state-level competition. Results will be shared in April.

#### Mathematics – Supporting Multilingual Learners with English Language Scaffolds in the Mathematics Classroom

The DeKalb Mathematics Team hosted the GaDOE and MRESA to facilitate a session for ESOL and mathematics teachers. This session provided mathematics and language teachers and leaders with specific, evidence-based strategies and support for MLs to support the mastery of Georgia's K-12 mathematics standards. This session provided mathematics teachers with identifying universal strategies that complement the instructional activities across the four sections of the



mathematics standards-based classroom instructional framework. In addition, this session assisted language teachers in understanding mathematics instructional activities used in Georgia's K-12 mathematics standards instructional learning plans.

### Science

Students from Arabia Mountain, Chamblee Charter, Druid Hills, and Lakeside High Schools were selected as semifinalists for the Governor's Honors Program (GHP) in science. These students have demonstrated exceptional skills in their respective disciplines, standing out among a highly competitive pool of candidates across the state. They will continue their journey as semifinalists in the GHP.

### World Languages

World Languages hosted 25 participants in a districtwide virtual PL session and received a 5 out of 5 rating from attendees. Participants focused on proficiency and what language should look like by the end of each grade level. Additionally, they learned more about strategies that can be used to push students into higher proficiency. This session was available asynchronously on Curriculum Community for anyone unable to attend the live sessions.

### Visual and Performing Arts

Twenty visual and performing arts students have moved on as semi-finalists for the GHP in the following areas: dance (2), theatre (5), and visual art (13).

### International Baccalaureate – Middle Years Programme

Druid Hills MS's teachers participated in a pilot workshop on incorporating conceptual teaching strategies into their teaching practice. The workshop, which took place on February 12, introduced the principles and benefits of concept-based teaching and learning. Teachers contributed to a repository of subject-based and broad conceptual teaching strategies that will be compiled and provided as a resource for all instructors to utilize in their classrooms.

### Music

Avondale ES Music Club Chorale performed at the Georgia Music Educators Association State Conference in a lobby performance as the only ES ensemble selected to perform. Southwest DeKalb HS Wind Symphony was selected to perform for the American Bandmasters Association 90th Conference as the first HS ensemble to perform at this event. The American Bandmasters Association Conference is an annual gathering of distinguished band directors, composers, and musicians dedicated to advancing the concert band tradition through performances, clinics, and professional collaboration.



## Director Doryiane Gunter

### Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE)

#### Soul of the City Culinary Professional Learning

On February 13, 20 DeKalb Culinary and Family and Consumer Science educators embarked on the Soul of the City experience as part of our third annual Black History professional development. Throughout the day, educators engaged with local chefs, visited Black-owned businesses, and gained valuable insights into local industry trends and student workforce expectations. Of course, they also enjoyed some delicious bites along the way! One of the day's highlights was meeting Chef Jamarius Banks, Executive Chef at the Fox Theatre, now a celebrity chef and a proud Ronald E. McNair HS graduate.



#### Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Region Competition

DeKalb students participated in the FCCLA regional competitions on February 6 and 7, displaying their skills in various events, including culinary arts, job interviews, repurpose and redesign, career investigation, entrepreneurship, and more. DeKalb's chapters excelled, earning over 37 gold and silver medals! These outstanding students will represent their chapters at the 2025 State Leadership Conference in Columbus, Georgia.

#### Audio Video Technology and Filming Tours

Audio Video Technology and Filming students from Arabia Mountain, Lakeside, Stone Mountain, and Southwest DeKalb High Schools participated in a mock filming studio set immersive experience at the Electric Owl Studios on Redan Road in Stone Mountain.



## Director Janetta Greenwood

### Fernbank Science Center

#### School Support – Single Visits, Outreach, Planetarium, Scientific Tools and Technics, and SOAR

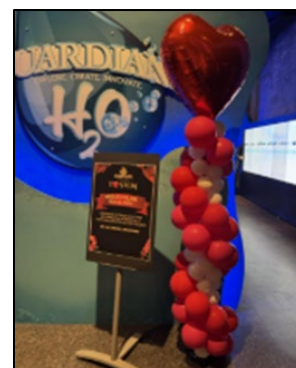
The FSC continues providing single visits and outreach in science across the district. In February, FSC served 740 students with single visits, 5,424 through Outreach, and 2,322 with planetarium visits. A total of 8,486 students were served through various program offerings during February.

## ScienTots

ScienTots continued to serve Pre-K students throughout the DCSD during February. The ScienTots instructional specialists engaged students at four schools, including classes of special education Pre-K students. Also, 115 students, 15 teachers and paraprofessionals, and 7 classrooms participated in their choice of programming from Sound Safari or Coding Camp during February.

## Community Engagement – I Love STEM!

The Valentine's event at FSC was a resounding success, bringing together adults for a unique, science-infused celebration of love and discovery. Held on February 14, the event featured engaging hands-on activities, including molecular mixology, candle making, floral bouquet design, and an exploration of cymatics and sound frequencies using love songs. Guests also enjoyed a special Cupid Star Talk in the planetarium, where they learned about romantic celestial myths and the current night sky. Attendees raved about the interactive experiences and the opportunity to explore science in a festive and social setting. The STEM-focused event was a fantastic pre-date, and Galentine's celebration reinforced the community's enthusiasm for innovative STEM programming for adults.



## School Master Gardener

The 20 students in this year's cohort representing seven school sites and FSC met at Fernbank on January 31 and again on February 28. During the session, the cohort visited the garden at the International Community School to engage in peer-to-peer experiential learning. They also engaged in 3D science lessons that focused on spring garden activities and can be applied to the classroom setting at their schools.

Current accomplishments from cohort schools include:

- International Student Center plans to incorporate School Master Gardener content into their new STEAM lab.
- Hightower ES is participating in the Bonnie Nursery Cabbage Competition.
- Henderson MS is conducting a student-led daffodil project.
- Shadow Rock Center has reviewed photosynthesis using veggies in the garden and completed a planning a garden mapping activity with students.
- Idlewood ES is focusing on developing a grant for their garden with a community partner.

### Georgia Aquarium Partnership

The Georgia Aquarium Partnership continued during February. The Georgia Aquarium Partnership has served 22,210 students and 71 schools. As of February 28, 9,730 students ventured to the aquarium with teachers and chaperones to participate in instructor-led field trips. The outreach programs have served 7,496 students. Virtual programs have served 2,985 students through the end of February. The Aquanaut Express has served 13 schools and 1,999 students.

### Ocean Guardian Schools

Ocean Guardian Schools, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Ocean Guardian's Grant and in partnership with the Georgia Aquarium, are continuing to receive additional support from the FSC and the Department of K-12 Teaching and Learning to support the implementation of their science inquiry projects focused on composting, gardening, and watershed restoration. On February 14, Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. HS students ventured to the Georgia Aquarium to engage in hands-on learning from experts to support their project focusing on watersheds. The instructional specialist from the FSC worked with the after-school garden club at Clarkston HS to support student gardeners in developing their rain gardens.

### Director Monique Kimbell

#### Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

##### MTSS Professional Learning

The MTSS Department collaborated with the Division of Student Services to facilitate PL training focused on MTSS best practices, the intersection of MTSS and 504 accommodations, psychological assessments for selecting appropriate interventions, and student records management related to private school requests. Participants engaged in discussions to enhance their ability to implement and sustain effective MTSS frameworks within their schools.



Additionally, the MTSS Team held a virtual meeting on "What Does Tiered Support Look Like?" to refine evidence-based interventions for academics, behavior, and wellness. This session empowered school teams to identify effective interventions, strengthen tiered support implementation, and apply data-driven decision-making. These PL opportunities reinforced a collaborative, data-informed approach to MTSS, equipping educators with the necessary tools to support student success effectively.



**Director Keatra Wright**

**FLEX Academy**

The FLEX Academy serves 186 students during the academic day, 394 students through FLEX Beyond the Day, and 22 students from East DeKalb Campus. The enrollment window for FLEX Restore is open, and approximately 200 students have already registered. Also, the FLEX Academy supports MS students enrolled in the Chancelight Program with instructional support from our certified teachers.

Through a partnership with Area Horizon and Area High School, we are refining the enrollment parameters for extended learning opportunities and credit recovery for HS students. Extended learning opportunities and credit recovery support students who have not mastered the content or skills required to earn course credit. These efforts reduce failure rates and impact graduation rates.

## Chief Dr. Candace Alexander

### Continuous and Improvement Accountability

#### New Levels, New Heights

- We are excited about our team members participating in leading and creating the CSIP Leader Lab in Canvas, our learning management system.
- Our cross-divisional collaboration has enhanced support and feedback for leaders throughout the CSIP process. Special thanks to Christy Crittenden from Professional Learning for creating this valuable workspace.
- We enjoyed our time at the Initiative One Think Tank, gaining insights into diverse leadership styles and approaches to strengthen teams and build capacity for greater impact.

## Executive Director Dr. Myisha Warren

### Federal Programs

#### Excited About

- Title I Distinguished Schools – Wadsworth, DeKalb Early College Academy, Livsey, Robert Shaw, and Wynbrooke – highest 5 percent of schools with achievement.
  - Award letters and building signage were presented to the principals at the PLO session on February 13.
- Title I Reward Schools – International Community School, DeKalb ES of the Arts, McLendon, Kelley Lake, and Rainbow – highest 5 percent of schools with growth between 2022 and 2023.
  - Award letters and building signage were presented to the principals at the PLO session on February 13.
- Robert Shaw, 2024 National Distinguished Title I School (one of two in the state) is presenting at the National ESEA Conference February 18-21.
  - Principal Kim Williams and the team presented exceptionally. The ballroom was packed, attendees were sitting on the floor, and there was an overflow room with additional attendees.

### Department Updates

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

- CSIPs
- Open purchase orders
- Travel
- FY25 budgets
- Tutorial
- Spending
- Ongoing training
- The Title I Team presented at the February 7 Accountability Clinics on FY25 travel procedures. The sessions were interactive.
- The Title I coordinators have begun working with their schools to complete the FY25 amendments for schoolwide, schoolwide parent and family engagement, and school improvement set-aside budgets.
- Office of Federal Programs continued to review, approve, and verify extra activity packets and stipends throughout February. The funding sources were Title I and Title II.
- The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Team continued working on:
  - The Annual Reporting Survey for the state – Completed before the February 14 deadline
  - The Department of Audits meeting and information for the FY24 audit
- On March 6, GaDOE will conduct a full cross-functional monitoring of Title I and II along with other federal programs. The team is preparing for this event.

#### Consolidated Local Education Agency Improvement Plan

- Timeline [FY26 DCSD CLIP Prep Meeting Workflow Jan. 24, 2025.docx](#)
- Flyer [CLIP Flyer 2025-2026.pdf](#)
- Regular meeting with all federal programs
- Submitted documents for translation
- Sending out communication to internal and external stakeholders after translations are received
- Working on the data and PowerPoint
- Meeting – March 25

#### CSIP

- February 7 district staff calibration meeting
- February 13 PLO meeting
- February 24, 26-28 school CSIP trainings

- The CSIP calibration and the PLO meetings were successfully completed. The trainings are in full swing to be completed on February 28, after which the individual school technical support will begin March 24 to April 4.

### Comparability

Two schools are not comparable. Additional staff members were identified and submitted to the state. The GaDOE provided feedback on DCSD's submission of the Resource Allocation/Methodology Plan, and I requested a meeting to discuss it.

- Bouie - Comparable
- Narvie
- Shadow Rock – Comparable
- Woodridge

### Director Dr. Felicia Rhone

#### Assessment and Accountability

#### Georgia Milestone End of Course (EOC)

Fifteen high schools participated in the February mid-month administration February 10 -14. The February window offered the opportunity for a retest. The final spring 2025 mid-month administration is scheduled for March 10-14.

#### District Benchmarks

- Benchmark testing for block high schools was conducted from January 27 to February 7. The total number of assessments completed, including spring testing for Block High Schools, is as follows:

| Subject             | Participant Total |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| American Literature | 3,753             |
| U.S. History        | 2,966             |
| Algebra C&C         | 4,033             |
| Biology             | 4,203             |

- The next round of benchmark testing is scheduled for March 3–12, covering:
  - Benchmark 2 for block high schools
  - Benchmark 3 for traditional schools
- This will be the final round of testing for all traditional elementary, middle, and high schools. Block high schools will conduct their final assessment from March 31 to April 4.

### ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

- The ACCESS for ELs/Alternate ACCESS test administration window opened on January 8 and closes on February 28. Approximately 18,896 active ELs are eligible to take the ACCESS for ELs/Alternate ACCESS assessment in the DCSD. Students are assessed in four domains (listening, reading, writing, and speaking)
  - Registrations (test sessions) were created in the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Assessment Management System (AMS) platform by school, grade level cluster, and test domain for 18,587 EL students. Additional registrations were created for approximately 369 EL students attending special programs (International Center, DeKalb Alternative School, GNETs) within the WIDA AMS platforms of the schools in the students' home attendance area.
  - Between January 15 and February 14, the Assessment Department facilitated the transfer of over 137 student profiles in the WIDA AMS platform from one DCSD school to another to accommodate student enrollments and withdrawals within the school district. In collaboration with the Data Recognition Corporation, the DCSD Assessment Department facilitated the transfer of approximately 20 student profiles to other Georgia school districts.
  - As of February 26, 16,988 EL students have completed at least one domain of the Online ACCESS assessment (grades 1-12), and 16,327 EL students have completed all four domains.
- Forty-five testing irregularities have been reported (student illness, wrong test administered, testing interruption, test administration error-adult) as of February 26. Seven tests have been invalidated due to cell phone usage or usage of scratch paper on the speaking domain.
- Collection Day for ACCESS for ELLs testing materials is March 3. The English Learners Department will be assisting. There will be seven EL coordinators assisting the Assessment Administration Team.

### Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)

- Following the meeting, collaboration began with the SPED's intellectual disabilities liaisons. Course development began in Canvas to create a test security course for test examiners and paraprofessionals administering the assessment. The course is mandatory for anyone administering the GAA. This is to ensure that all examiners understand how to assess students with severe and profound disabilities.
- Eleven schools were identified in the GAA analysis as having had serious test irregularities during the spring 2024 assessment window. The Assessment Administration Department and Employee Relations has scheduled a meeting with the 11 school principals, school test coordinators, and test examiners for March 6, from 2:00-4:00 pm in the Administrative Instructional Complex (AIC) auditorium.

### Professional Learning

- The assessment director and coordinators participated in the following training:
  - GaDOE GAA test setup and pre-administration workshop on January 16
  - GaDOE EOG/EOC test setup and pre-administration workshop on February 18
  - GaDOE GAA test setup and pre-administration workshop on January 16
- On-site training for school staff will be available until May, with a brief pause during Georgia Milestone testing. Training sessions will cover:
  - Student goal setting
  - Utilization of reports across all grade levels
  - Reading fluency with coach support
- Additional virtual training session on administering online assessments on February 17
- Session: “Online administration, scoring, and reports in data and assessment (DnA): Flexible and/or item bank assessments”
- This training will guide educators through the following:
  - Creating an item bank assessment
  - Sharing assessments with colleagues and applying performance bands
  - Administering and scoring assessments

### Director Dr. Rebecca Braaten

#### Research, Data, and Evaluation

##### Research Review Board

The department processed four research requests for the spring review cycle in February. Of those four, three were doctoral research, and one was an external research proposal.

##### District Data Dashboards

A new ELL exit status public-facing dashboard has been created and published on the district website. [Visit the dashboard.](#)

##### Surveys and Online Forms

- The department processed 15 electronic online document requests during February. Of those 15, 11 were online forms, and 4 were event/training feedback surveys. The electronic online documents were created for the following divisions/departments:
  - Access and Opportunity
  - Athletics
  - Curriculum and Instruction
  - Federal Programs
  - Human Resources
  - Leadership Development

- Professional Development
- Schools and Leadership

### Professional Development

- Research, Data, and Evaluation held several training and support sessions in February:
  - Graduation Cohort Calculator on February 5 – Elizabeth Andrews’s leadership
  - Monthly Accountability Clinic (CCRPI updates) on February 7 – District and School leadership
  - Select principal data support sessions on February 10 and February 21 – Wynbrooke, Marbut, Stone Mountain MS, Peachcrest, Flat Rock, and Murphey Candler
  - Beginning and intermediate Excel sessions on February 24 and 26 – District leaders and school-level Leadership Team members

### Data Requests

- The department has completed twenty-five data and dashboard projects for both 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 were continually updated to monitor course completion across various programs, including ES and MS social-emotional learning courses, MS and HS BRIDGE law courses, and GAEarns professional development literacy courses. The department also supplied crucial data for program evaluation audits and FACE program data for the Division of Access and Opportunity. Our Data Team provided current and historical data related to homeless students to the Division of Wrap Around Services to support the district’s cross-functional monitoring. We also began developing data reporting tools for the ES career lessons for the Student Advancement Department. Lastly, we remain committed to supporting our charter schools by providing data reporting and insights to help them achieve their mission.

## Chief Information Officer Dr. Kermit Belcher

### Department of Information and Instructional Technology

#### Always Learning

DCSD is steadfast in its commitment to providing every student with equal access to technology, facilitated by the district's one-on-one Chromebook initiative and a robust set of cloud-based learning resources. By integrating these tools, the district enhances students' ability to engage in customized, interactive learning opportunities that foster collaboration inside and outside the classroom. This initiative ensures that technology becomes a seamless extension of the educational experience, enabling students to take ownership of their learning journey, connect with peers and educators, and access critical resources from anywhere at any time.

As the district continues to refine its processes and procedures, there is an ongoing focus on optimizing device lifecycle management to ensure that students and staff have reliable access to the tools they need for success.

#### Network Modernization

DeKalb County Schools is making a major commitment to enhancing its network infrastructure, focusing on upgrading key components such as cabling, next-generation network switches, and high-performance wireless access points. This includes upgraded cabling in all schools, ensuring more reliable and faster connectivity across the district. Network switch firmware updates have already been performed, and preparations are underway to install new switches in several locations over the next 30 days. Additionally, the district has applied for E-rate funding to help support these network enhancements, including the critical task of cable management.

The district has also finalized the configuration changes for its wireless network, including Service Set Identifiers across all schools. These upgrades are designed to ensure that students and educators can rely on seamless access to digital tools, thereby supporting the success of initiatives like Always Learning.

#### Physical Security

DeKalb County Schools is enhancing campus safety by implementing a range of advanced security measures. These upgrades include state-of-the-art intrusion detection systems, enhanced door access controls, and an expanded video surveillance network to monitor and protect school environments more effectively.

As part of these efforts, the Physical Security Team has begun rebadging all staff at Redan, Shadow Rock, and Princeton Elementary Schools, Shadow Rock Center, and Eagle Woods Academy. The team has also completed walkthroughs and security assessments for FSC and conducted preliminary walkthroughs of additional locations to evaluate safety needs.

Furthermore, the district is working to integrate these physical security upgrades with existing safety protocols, ensuring a seamless and proactive approach to safeguarding students, staff, and visitors. The goal is to create a secure environment that supports both the physical and digital safety of all campus members.

**Manager Natalie Terrell**

**Project Management Office**

**Digitized Records Program**

The project kickoff meeting has been scheduled. The teams are excited and ready to move forward with this initiative! Initially, our targeted groups' records will be HR at AIC and the Records Center and Student Records at the Records Center.

**Cloud-based Managed Print Services Project**

This project is **complete!!** All deliveries, installations, configurations, and training have been completed, significantly improving our printing efficiency. Training aids have been distributed to all school administrators and select central office stakeholders to share with district employees.

**Executive Director Dr. Kyia Clark/Manager III Terri Webb**

**Information and Innovation/Instructional Technology**

**2025 State Technology Competition Winners**

Instructional Technology congratulates the DCSD's Digital Dreamers, who participated in the 2025 Georgia Student Technology Competition on March 1 in McDonough, GA. DCSD advanced 56 first-place winners to the state competition, with 10 winning top honors. [Download the list of 2025 State Technology Competition Winners.](#)



Congratulations to all participants for their dedication and achievements!

### 2025 DCSD Technology Symposium

Instructional Technology is excited to announce the 2025 DCSD Technology Symposium that will take place on July 16 at Ronald McNair MS. This year's theme is "Game on DeKalb: Bridging the Digital Divide." Educators throughout the district will share ways technology can empower learning and can bridge the digital divide. If you are interested in shaping the future of learning, [register to secure your spot as an attendee, volunteer, or presenter](#). We look forward to learning with you!



### 2025 "Let's Get Digital" with Work-Based Learning Conference

Instructional Technology is excited to support our class of 2025 work-based learning seniors as they prepare to venture to their next path beyond HS, focusing on this year's theme, "You're Future, Your Way...Take Action". We provided our Digital Dreamers with digital citizenship guidelines to audit their current social media profiles and build their digital branding while learning best practices for creating professional headshots and digital profiles on LinkedIn. With a clean digital footprint, we look forward to what the future holds for our Digital Dreamers.



**Executive Director Glenn Melendez****Enterprise Applications and Data Services****Digital Resource and Technology Request Process**

DCSD reinforces its leadership in technology by prioritizing integrating 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 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 March, this effort has begun planning and website design sessions are underway.

**Data Governance**

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

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

AI governance, and retention policies which align with regulatory requirements. During this reporting period, professional services firm Gartner Inc. reviewed a draft policy for alignment with industry best practices.

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

We are finalizing our initial proof of concept (POC) during this reporting period using the digital resources identified above. The analysis has been shared with district leadership for input, and final revisions are being incorporated. Additionally, the district has identified a second round of high-priority digital resources for impact and utilization analysis. Data collection for this phase began in March, marking the next step in our ongoing efforts to enhance data-driven decision-making around digital resource effectiveness.

The one-year goal for this effort is to identify digital resources with the greatest impact on student outcomes in mathematics, science, ELA, and social studies. As part of this effort, external factors that may contribute to improved student outcomes beyond the digital resources themselves may need to be vetted.

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

## **Director Eric Logan**

### **Information and Network Security**

#### **External Penetration Test**

The security engagement occurred from February 10 to 14. This engagement aimed to identify how DCSD's systems, networks, and policies perform against a skilled attacker. The attacker could not compromise the target system during testing because of a limited attack surface. However, minor issues were identified and, if addressed, will strengthen the overall posture of DCSD's external infrastructure. While there were no high-severity findings, there is no guarantee that a security breach will never occur. The overall opinion of the company contracted to perform the penetration test is that we have taken the appropriate steps to reduce our attack surface and mitigate the probability of such an event.

#### **Active Directory Vulnerability Assessment**

Following up on the recent external penetration test, an in-depth security assessment of DCSD's active directory (AD) environment will begin in late March. This assessment focuses on identifying insecure AD configurations that attackers can exploit. Additionally, this assessment is designed to provide actionable recommendations to improve the overall security posture of DCSD's AD environment.

### Asset Discovery and Visibility Proof of Concept (POC)

We are in the process of beginning a POC to evaluate a product that will provide us with more visibility into our network to strengthen its security posture and reduce the risk of cyber incidents. An engagement meeting occurred March 3 to discuss expectations and review the non-disclosure agreement. We are expecting it to kick off officially on March 18. This POC aims to determine if this product will be able to track which assets (e.g., computers) are deployed and their exposure to cyber risks to gain a complete picture of vulnerabilities across our environment. The POC will last six to eight weeks.

### Visiting Cyber Security Classes

Along with Dr. Shanique Worthey, I visited the cyber security classes at DeKalb HS of Technology-South and Columbia HS to talk with the students about career opportunities in cybersecurity and IT as well as answer any general questions they had about online security.