



Academic Report – October 2025

Chief Dr. Triscilla Weaver

Access and Opportunity

Learning Series

This month marked the beginning of our engagement with The Leadership Academy (TLA) to discuss the trajectory of learning and intended outcomes of the A&O Learning Series. During the initial meeting, the TLA team was provided a copy of the audit report, and we responded to various questions they had about the district's context. In a subsequent meeting, they provided us with an initial plan that contained the objectives, potential activities, and outline of the five modules in the series. In the coming weeks, we will work with them to design Module 1 of the series in preparation for the December 1st series launch with the Sr. Cabinet.

We worked with Division Chiefs to identify individuals from their respective divisions who would participate in the series. This list was finalized with a total of 69 participants—organized in two cohorts. A virtual orientation meeting has been scheduled for them to learn about the goals of the series, as well as expectations for participation.

In our continued efforts to deepen district leaders' understanding of, and deliberations around, the A&O Audit Report, we presented at the Schools and Leadership Fall Retreat. The presentation focused on data from the audit report that had implications for the work of the various leaders in the division. We also discussed ways we could support them in their efforts to center A&O in their work.

A&O Policy

We continued to socialize the A&O Policy—meeting with the Executive Administrators and Area Superintendents. In addition, we attended two sessions with the Board Policy Review Committee. The first session was on October 8th and the second session was held on October 29th. In these sessions, we were able to discuss the rationale for the policy, how we've socialized it, and gain feedback regarding next steps. In the October 29th session, it was determined that members of our department would meet with the Board Policy Review Committee in a separate meeting for further discussion.

Other/Collaborations

The A&O Department began collaborating with the Student Advancement Department in their work to develop a Student Board of Education. This student group would serve to elevate student voice and center their perspectives in district decision-making. The creation of this group is aligned to recommendations in the audit report.

We also collaborated with the Division of Wraparound Services for the Infinite Scholars Scholarship Fair and the DCSD Scholarship Fair. Both events provided students with the

opportunity to meet representatives from various colleges and universities and receive scholarships to pursue post-secondary education.

The A&O Department participated in the MBK induction ceremony held for our elementary-level mentees.

Finally, the A&O Department did a follow-up presentation with the Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee to further discuss their reactions to the A&O Audit report.

Executive Director Myss Johnson-Jelks

Athletics

Our focus continues to center on strengthening operations, enhancing safety protocols, and reinforcing fiscal accountability. Developing and updating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), revising the Athletic Handbook, and refining stadium policies to ensure consistency and improvement across all operations is an ongoing process. In partnership with Finance, I have established fiscal guardrails to ensure responsible and sustainable operations.

This month, I attended the Legal Symposium and Legal Liaison Training, as well as the NIAAA District AD Cohort Meeting. I also met with Atlanta United regarding the Ribbon Kicking Ceremony at Chapel Hill Middle School and with Coca-Cola to review the current contract. We met with PlayOn Sports to discuss current ticketing options, possible website upgrades, and toured their headquarters. I meet weekly with Facilities and Operations to review ongoing repairs and updates, and with Public Safety to address game coverage and safety concerns.

We hosted the Elementary Track Championships at Godfrey Stadium, where Austin Elementary was the overall champion, and the DCSD vs. APS Softball Game at Lakeside High School, where DeKalb County took home the championship. Preparations were also completed for elementary soccer. I participated in the "How to Do Business with DeKalb" Vendor Fair and hosted the monthly Athletic Liaison Meeting, featuring a presentation from Clark Atlanta University. Ongoing collaboration with Northside and Source Fitness continues to focus on improving athletic trainer coverage across the district.



Director Brandon Lane

Athletics

Fall Athletics, Safety, Continuous Improvement

As the Fall sports season concludes, I am pleased to report that our athletic programs have enjoyed a successful, productive run marked by growth, collaboration, and continued progress. Throughout the season, I have continued to develop and refine Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to strengthen the structure and consistency within our department. I attend all coaches' meetings to provide direct support, ensure clear communication, and align expectations across all athletic programs. The Executive Director and I have maintained ongoing collaboration with Public Safety through weekly meetings to ensure the safety of our student-athletes, staff, and spectators, and we meet regularly with Operations to provide updates and confirm that all athletic facilities are properly maintained and prepared for use. In addition, I have hosted weekly meetings with stadium managers and assistant managers to address any issues from prior weeks and ensure alignment and readiness for upcoming events. Our continued partnership with Northside Hospital has ensured that certified athletic trainers cover all athletic events, and we remain committed to expanding full-time athletic trainer positions at all high schools.

Furthermore, our department has engaged with outside vendors to enhance video coverage for practices and games across district facilities. I have also attended numerous athletic events within and outside the district to provide support to our student-athletes and ensure smooth operations. Overall, the Fall season has been a period of meaningful progress, operational improvement, and strong commitment to the advancement and safety of athletics across the district.

Director Kina M. Champion

School Innovation

Charter Schools

Over the past 30 days, the district's charter petition review process was thoroughly reviewed to ensure alignment with the National Association for Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) latest research on national best practices for application procedures. The Board Office was notified of required training for DBOE members on authorizer standards and evaluation processes. Additionally, the School Innovation team presented a workshop titled *"Navigating Non-Compliance: A Case Study of Charter Performance Challenges"* at NACSA's annual conference. Looking ahead to the next 30 days, the team will focus on clarifying the job functions of charter staff on the district's website and finalizing a template for the FY26 financial report as part of Category I Authorizer Standards (HR/Finance). The department will also schedule a *Charter Schools 102* workshop with High School and Specialty Area Offices focusing on the authorizer standards.

School Governance

Over the past 30 days, the School Innovation team has collaborated with Leadership Development to facilitate a new principal workshop on the Innovative Solutions Lab. A follow-up meeting was held with the Director, Leadership Development, to explore ways to enhance school governance support for new principals. The SY25-26 PAC compliance priority school list was compiled to share with Area Superintendents, and the requested PAC compliance information was compiled to submit to RDE for school scorecards, with a follow-up meeting planned to discuss full integration with School Innovation's compliance platform.

New PAC members were onboarded, and the first of six monthly *School Governance 101* professional learning sessions for PAC members was conducted. IT Webmasters continue to support schools with website updates following PAC elections. School Innovation also hosted the annual Meet & Greet event to welcome newly elected PAC members and will facilitate the Fall 2025 cross-council PAC meeting on November 12. Monthly *School Governance 101* sessions will continue to support ongoing PAC member development. Additionally, the first quarterly PAC compliance audit will be conducted in November, with findings shared with Schools & Leadership.

To promote engagement and learning, school leaders and PAC teacher representatives are being encouraged to participate in upcoming Spotlight School learning opportunities of Kittredge Magnet School, Freedom Middle School, and Tapestry Public Charter School. Best practices and artifacts from school visits will be shared via the School Innovation newsletter and the updated district PAC website. In partnership development efforts, a meeting is planned with the Director of Board Development at the Georgia School Boards Association, to discuss a potential partnership with APS, Fulton, and Clarke County school governance teams. School Innovation also participated in LEE's regional luncheon for school councils.

Executive Director Sarita Smith

Student Assignment

SAP, School Choice, and Registration

The Student Assignment Project (SAP) is guiding the DeKalb County School District in reviewing how students are assigned to schools and how programs are distributed across the district. Its goal is to create a more equitable, efficient, and transparent system that ensures every student has access to quality education. During Fall 2025, the committee focused on two major questions—whether specialized programs should remain concentrated in select schools or be integrated into neighborhood schools, and what criteria should guide future attendance boundaries. Using data on enrollment, facilities, and community needs, SAP recommended that programs be housed within attendance boundary schools whenever possible, with stand-alone models reserved for specialized or nontraditional settings. The committee also identified key priorities for boundary planning, including building utilization, equity in resources, feeder pattern consistency, neighborhood cohesion, and transportation impact.

Community feedback strongly supported preserving high-performing magnet and gifted programs such as Kittredge, Wadsworth, and DSA, while urging the district to replicate their success across more schools rather than eliminate them. Stakeholders expressed concerns about redistricting, emphasizing the importance of maintaining educational quality, community stability, and transparent communication. Many families, especially in the Chamblee cluster, opposed boundary changes and instead called for facility expansion to address overcrowding. The SAP timeline outlines continued engagement through 2026, with preliminary recommendations in early 2026 and final proposals in May. Overall, this phase of SAP reflects the district's commitment to data-driven, community-informed decision-making that balances equity, efficiency, and student well-being.

The next phase will continue to refine these ideas, ensuring that future boundaries and program placements reflect both districtwide priorities and the voices of the families and educators most impacted by these changes.

School Choice continues to process thousands of applications, reviewing credentials, and communicating with families who have not completed their applications. Our leaders are troubleshooting issues with our partners and families to ensure everyone enters the lottery before the deadline. We are also entering non-DCSD students' MAP scores for their lottery entry. The team will spend the remainder of the month continuing this work and sending notifications to families.

Interim Executive Director Dr. Latashia Searcy

Student Mentorship & Partnerships

Our Sister's Keeper / My Brother's Keeper

Throughout the month of October, various chapters of Our Sister's Keeper (OSK) and My Brother's Keeper (MBK) actively participated in the district-wide community service initiative, collecting jackets and socks to support individuals and families in need. This meaningful effort will continue through November as part of our ongoing commitment to service and community outreach.

In addition to these efforts, OSK and MBK proudly hosted three district-wide induction ceremonies, welcoming new members into the program and celebrating their dedication to leadership, mentorship, and community engagement.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to these impactful events and helped make them a success.



General Mentoring

Throughout the month of October, we welcomed 17 new mentors who successfully completed their training and are now actively supporting students across the district. Two independent mentors have begun their work at Stone Mountain High School and Columbia High School, further expanding our reach and impact.

The Men of House of Hope launched a chess club serving students at both Chapel Hill Elementary School and Chapel Hill Middle School, promoting critical thinking, focus, and engagement. Additionally, the Mu Alpha Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. at Emory University initiated

their mentoring program at Druid Hills High School, while Emory Hospital Hillandale began a violence prevention program at Stone Mountain High School. These collective efforts highlight our ongoing commitment to mentorship, leadership development, and community empowerment across the district.



FACE Advocates

FACE Advocates continue to participate in monthly professional learning (PL) opportunities to enhance their daily interactions with students to help them *Secure the Bag* – improve *behavior, attendance and grades*. October's PL focused on sharing best practices across schools, balancing mentoring, advocacy, and caseload management, and providing an update on the FACE Advocate dashboard, currently in development in partnership with Research, Data, and Evaluation.

SMP continues its partnership with Strategic Media Enterprises through the second Content Creator Boot Camp with McNair and Cedar Grove High Schools. Additionally, fifty mentees participated in our first Portrait of a Graduate programming, with a tour of Georgia Gwinnett College.

Finally, SMP is proud of the impact of FACE Advocates who serve as MBK and OSK site leaders and volunteers during the recent MBK and OSK induction ceremonies.

Leader in Me

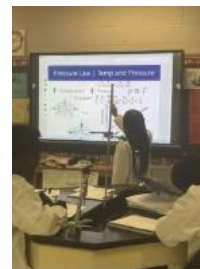
SMP is releasing an asynchronous course designed to train new staff members in the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. We have also provided guidance on how to create new staff cohorts for schools implementing hybrid training. In preparation for the November 20th Leader in Me Expo at Dunwoody Elementary, Dunwoody and SMP team members attended a LiM Genius session at Lockheed Elementary School (City Schools of Marietta).

Chief Dr. Candace Alexander

Continuous and Improvement Accountability

Portrait of a Graduate Academic Walks

Throughout October, the weekly Portrait of Graduate Academic Walks remained one of the most energizing parts of my week. Visiting classrooms alongside the Superintendent and Quad Team provided a front-row view of teaching and learning in action. I was inspired by the clarity of learning goals, the rigor of student tasks, and the engagement I witnessed as students confidently shared their thinking. These visits continue to remind me of the incredible talent and dedication of our educators and the shared commitment across the district to ensure every student experiences high-quality instruction.



Dr. Hogan's Town Hall at SWD

Dr. Hogan's Town Hall at Southwest DeKalb High School was a powerful example of community action. The dialogue was honest, hopeful, and centered on what matters most—our students. It was uplifting to see families, staff, and leaders come together to celebrate successes and talk openly about the next steps. The sense of pride and unity in the room reflected the strong partnerships that continue to drive progress in our schools.

Reality Checks

October also brought the conclusion of the Reality Check sessions, which gave our teams space to pause, reflect, and reset. These sessions are some of the most meaningful conversations we have all year—opportunities to celebrate growth, confront challenges, and reaffirm our shared purpose. Each meeting left me encouraged by the intentionality of our school leaders and their determination to keep students at the center of every decision.



Schools & Leadership Retreat and National Principals Month

The Schools & Leadership Retreat was both reflective and reenergizing. Gathering as a leadership community allowed us to align priorities, share best practices, and recommit to the MIRACLES framework that guides our work. The energy in the room was collaborative and forward thinking, a reminder that our strength lies in our unity of purpose and our collective belief in what's possible for every child. October is National Principals Month, and we proudly celebrated the outstanding leadership and dedication of our school principals. During our Schools & Leadership Retreat, we honored principals for their unwavering commitment to student success and school improvement. Their vision, resilience, and passion are the foundation of our district's progress. Thank you to all our principals for inspiring excellence every day!



Guest Reader — Jolly Elementary

Serving as a guest reader at Jolly Elementary was pure joy. The students' excitement was contagious, and their love for reading reflected the powerful culture of literacy their teachers have built. Moments like these remind me that our work extends far beyond data and dashboards—it's about nurturing curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.

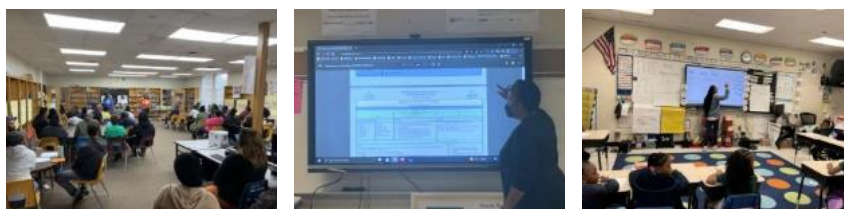


Initiative One Executive Cabinet Professional Learning Session

The Initiative One Executive Cabinet Professional Learning Session was an important space for reflection and growth among district leaders. The session emphasized the power of trust, communication, and alignment in leadership. It was a timely reminder that strong systems begin with strong relationships and that purposeful leadership is key to sustaining organizational excellence.

CCV Sequoyah Middle School

Visiting CCV Sequoyah Middle School was an inspiring experience. The school's focus on continuous improvement and data-informed decision-making was evident in every conversation. Walking the halls and speaking with staff reinforced how accountability and collaboration work hand in hand to create environments where students thrive.



Executive Director Dr. Myisha Warren

Federal Programs

Bookkeeper Training – October 8, 9, & 10th

The Office of Federal Programs hosted a three-day Bookkeeper Training and Work Session at Cedar Grove High School from October 8–10, 2025. During the session, all DeKalb County School District (DCSD) Title I bookkeepers participated in a comprehensive overview covering the following key areas:

- Pulling Year-to-Date (YTD) Budgets
- Entering Requisitions in MUNIS
- Closing Open Purchase Orders (POs)

Following the overview, bookkeepers were provided dedicated work time to enter requisitions on site for instructional resources—including supplies, computer software, and books—as well as Parent and Family Engagement (PFE) materials.

Throughout the session, participants received individualized feedback and guidance from their assigned Accounting Associates/Budget Specialists and Title I Coordinators to ensure accuracy and compliance with district and federal guidelines. The training fostered collaboration, strengthened fiscal management practices, and supported timely budget execution across all Title I schools.

Parent & Family Engagement (PFE)

“Families Discovering Education and Career Paths in Inspiring New Ways.”

The 2nd Annual Octoberfest - Family Engagement Fall Festival provided a new array of engagement opportunities for families with students in grades K-12. Utilizing the feedback shared

by last year's attendees, the event evolved to include the following Zones for families:

1. Family Zone- A one-hour workshop selection for families provided by the following DCSD Departments: Mental Health, Post-Secondary, and Assessment.
2. Exploration Zone- 1 hour hands-on area where families explored College & Career Readiness with the following DeKalb County Organizations and DCSD Departments/Programs:
 - a. DeKalb Sheriff's Department, featuring Sheriff Melody Maddox
 - b. DeKalb County Fire & Rescue
 - c. DeKalb Park and Recreation-Student Tech Center-The Treehouse
 - d. Cross Keys HS CTAE- Pharmaceutical
 - e. Columbia HS CTAE- Culinary Arts
 - f. DCSD Post Secondary- Naviance Virtual Reality
3. Fun Zone-Featured community resources from DCSD and DeKalb County community organizations, academic resources from the Title I Parent Center Facilitators, as well as fun festival-style games for the entire family. Community collaborator, AmeriGroup, sponsored a Game Bus, and The People's Agenda, along with an additional community donation, contributed to our Ice Cream food truck to ensure every child received a delicious treat.

Title I & Title II 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 Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP):

- CSIPs
- Open POs
- Travel
- FY26 budgets
- Tutorial
- Spending
- Ongoing training

OFP continued to review, approve, and verify extra activity packets and stipends throughout October. The funding sources were Title I & Title II.

Director Dr. Felicia Rhone

Assessment Administration

WIDA ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS

The WIDA ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window is from January 7, 2026 – February 27, 2026. Each year, all certified staff members administering the WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS must complete the required WIDA training and certification for all ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS grade-level tests they will administer. The annual certification period runs from September 1 – August 31. As of October 20, 2025, the Assessment Department has created 73 new accounts in the WIDA Secure Portal so new teachers and test coordinators can begin required WIDA training for the WIDA ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS assessments. On September 29, 2025, School Test Coordinators were notified via email that School Test Coordinators and Test Administrators/Test Examiners must complete the required WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS training modules in the WIDA Secure Portal by December 12, 2025.

Parent Engagement

DCSD's Title I Octoberfest provided a valuable opportunity for the Assessment Administration Department to share assessment information with families. Assessment coordinators presented the range of assessments administered across grade levels and explained how data informs academic progress and program eligibility. Parents asked insightful questions and gave positive feedback.



Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)

The Intellectual Disabilities Liaisons shared an *Understanding the GAA 2.0 Assessment* webinar with teachers. This webinar provides a clear overview of:

- The purpose and structure of the GAA 2.0 and how it aligns to Georgia's Extended Content Standards.
- The task development process, including examples of scaffolding and student interaction at various complexity levels.

- How student responses are scored, how achievement levels are determined, and how to interpret the Individual Student Report.
- Updates for the 2025–2026 school year, including upcoming changes to ELA achievement standards.

PSAT 8/9

The PSAT 8/9 was administered on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, to 5, 778 students in 29 DCSD middle schools and 1 high school.

Student Participants with Submitted Tests by Grade Level:

- 9th Grade: 68 students
- 8th Grade: 5, 652 students
- 7th Grade: 27 students
- 6th Grade: 25 students

The College Board should generate students' results by the end of November.

PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT was administered on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, to 6,054 students in 24 DCSD high schools.

Student Participants with Submitted Tests by Classified Grade Level:

- 12th Grade: 4 students
- 11th Grade: 451 students
- 10th Grade: 5, 171 students
- 9th Grade: 381 students

The College Board should generate students' results by the end of November.

Georgia Milestones EOC

The Georgia Milestones EOC main administration window will open on December 3, 2025, and will close on December 12, 2025, for high school students who will be completing and EOC course in the Fall semester. STCs will be trained on November 4, 2025.

Director Dr. Rebecca Braaten

Research, Data, and Evaluation (RDE)

Research

The department processed two (2) research applications submitted after the Fall research cycle. The two (2) were local school research studies approved by the principals. There were five (5) submitted research proposals from last month that were not finalized due to questions and

edits from the Research Review Board's (RRB) meeting. Of the five (5), three (3) were approved, one (1) was denied, and one (1) was drafting an MOU to accompany their proposal.

The next research submission deadline is Friday, December 12, 2025, at midnight.

Surveys and Online Forms

The department processed thirty-five (35) electronic online document requests in October. Of those thirty-five (35), twenty-nine (29) were Grow by Level Data observation forms, three (3) were online registration/application forms, two (2) were an event/training feedback survey, and one (1) was a stakeholder survey. The electronic online documents were requested by the following divisions/departments:

- Accountability and Research
- Grants & Partnerships
- Teaching & Learning
- Schools and Leadership
 - Elementary Area 2
 - Professional Development
- Superintendent's Office
- Wrap Around Services
 - Social Work

Data Requests

In October, the department completed twenty-three (23) data and dashboard projects serving both internal and external stakeholders. These projects covered a diverse range of topics, including attendance, discipline, student demographics, academic performance, and assessments at the local, state, and national levels.

During October, the department also developed and launched interactive dashboards to track student progress on the DCSD Curriculum Benchmarks and NWEA MAP assessments.

Interim Chief Dr. Penny Mosley

Curriculum and Instruction



Setting the Table: Advancing Literacy in DeKalb Together

The Setting the Table: Advancing Literacy in DeKalb Together event showcased a powerful partnership among the community, local businesses, and the DeKalb County School District to create a thriving *ecosystem of literacy* that advances academic achievement for learners of all ages. The convening brought together educators, civic leaders, nonprofit partners, and literacy advocates to identify assets, resources, and commitments that strengthen literacy from birth through adulthood. During the event, Dr. Penny Mosley, Interim Chief Academic Officer, presented *DeKalb County's Literacy Journey*, highlighting how the district is addressing HB 307 and implementing comprehensive support for students, staff, and families. Her presentation underscored DCSD's districtwide focus on structured literacy, foundational reading instruction, family engagement, and data-driven strategies that elevate every learner's literacy outcomes.

Board of Education – Board of Commissioners Joint Meeting

On October 30, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction participated in the joint meeting between the DeKalb County Board of Education and the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, a collaborative effort focused on strengthening alignment between county and district initiatives. During the session, participants engaged in breakout discussions centered on three key areas: Student Safety and Wellness, Workforce DeKalb and Pathway Opportunities, and Infrastructure, Land, and Facility Use. Each breakout group explored strategies to enhance cross-agency partnerships and identified actionable steps to ensure that collaboration between the school district and county government continues to positively impact both schools and the broader community. This joint session exemplified the district's commitment to fostering shared responsibility and unified planning to support student success and community growth.

Portrait of a Graduate Academic Walks

During the month of October, the *Portrait of a Graduate Academic Walks* continued across the district, shining a spotlight on effective science instruction in DeKalb County Schools. Classrooms were alive with hands-on, inquiry-based learning as students engaged in science labs that

reflected the Georgia Department of Education’s Science Instructional Framework, which emphasizes obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information through real-world phenomena. Science instructional framework. Instruction across grade levels was guided by the Georgia K–12 Science Standards, ensuring that teaching and learning remain *student-centered, exploratory, and grounded in scientific reasoning*. These walks highlighted how DeKalb educators are elevating science instruction by fostering curiosity, promoting collaboration, and creating authentic opportunities for students to think and act like scientists.



Curriculum and Instruction Leadership Retreat

The Curriculum and Instruction Leadership Retreat held October 9–10, brought together staff members from across the division, including CTAE, Fernbank Science Center, FLEX Academy, Teaching and Learning, Educational Media and Instructional Resources, MTSS, and Academic Coach Coordinators. Centered on the theme “Soaring Together: New Levels and New Heights,” the retreat focused on team building, change management, data review and analysis, and strategic planning to strengthen collaboration and coherence across all departments. The two-day experience fostered unity, innovation, and a shared purpose, leaving participants inspired and equipped to Empower Educators, Elevate Instructional Practices, and Advance Student Achievement throughout the DeKalb County School District.

Deputy Chief Dr. Sean R. Tartt

Curriculum and Instruction

Academic Coaches

October was a month of collaboration and growth as the Academic Coach Senior Coordinators continued to strengthen systems of support for coaches and schools. The month began with Job-Alike Meetings and a Restorative Circle, creating space for open dialogue, reflection, and renewed collaboration. The team also facilitated Collaborative Learning Sessions, where academic coaches launched a book study of *Get Better Faster 2.0* and explored strategies to enhance coaching practices and teacher development.

A major highlight was the New Academic Coach Academy, featuring Lillian Gordon, who provided practical guidance on supporting, documenting, and progress-monitoring Tier 4 teachers. The team continued to provide on-site technical assistance and school-based support, ensuring coaches received timely, differentiated assistance aligned with district goals. Additionally, a

professional learning session for all ELA coaches was held at Arabia Mountain High School, led by the Senior ELA Coordinator and the Director of Literacy, reinforcing best practices and expectations for instructional support.

Team members also participated in the Division Retreat, CCVs, and Reality Checks, collaborating across departments and areas to strengthen alignment and monitor instructional priorities. These collective efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to building coherence, supporting coaches, and promoting continuous improvement across all schools.

Area	Number of Coaches	Number of Vacancies	Number of New Coaches
Area Elementary 1	11	1	11
Area Elementary 2	15	0	7
Area Elementary 3	15	1	6
Area Middle Schools	43	3	23
Area High Schools	31	3	21
Area Horizon	71	1	50
Area Specialty	9	1	8
Totals	195	10	126

DCSD Coach Up

During fall break, collaborative partners from Human Resources, Schools and Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, and Accountability and Research gathered to discuss the DCSD Coach Up Framework which is a coaching pipeline designed for teacher leaders who aspire to effectively coach, mentor, and support teachers toward improved instructional outcomes.

In this engagement session, leaders explored the Jim Knight Coaching Framework, discussed content delivery models, reviewed the selection process, and examined proposed timelines. Participants provided valuable feedback, which the team is now incorporating into the rollout of this important initiative. As we prepare for the launch, communication with school leaders and interested candidates will be shared soon. We are excited about this opportunity to strengthen our coaching capacity and achieve our goal of equipping teachers to serve confidently and effectively as academic coaches and supporting them in achieving greater success as they transition into these vital leadership roles.

Academic Skills Centers

In October, staff from all 23 Academic Skill Center (ASC) sites came together for a dynamic mathematics support session led by the mathematics coordinators from Curriculum and Instruction. The session focused on strengthening foundational math skills and exploring practical strategies to empower ASC tutors in their work. Participants actively engaged in hands-on activities and collaborative discussions, sharing ideas and best practices for effectively supporting students who struggle with math.



Student Success Skills Backpack

On October 9, 2025, members of the second cohort representing 21 schools gathered at AIC for an engaging and informative session about the Student Success Skills Backpack (SSSB), an initiative aligned with the DeKalb Portrait of a Graduate (POG).

During the session, participants learned about the initiative's origins, key components, and valuable insights from the initial pilot group. Principals who implemented the SSSB last year shared their experiences and offered practical strategies for successful rollout. Collaborative partners from Curriculum and Instruction and Instructional Technology were also present to provide support and engage with local site teams.

The event was a great success, drawing more than 60 participants and fostering meaningful collaboration among schools as they prepare to implement the SSSB initiative.

Interim Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kim C. Williams

P-5

K-12 Content Meeting

In October, all Division of Curriculum and Instruction coordinators participated in a science data dig. During this interactive meeting, science coordinators reviewed benchmark and unit data, presented implications for practice, and solicited feedback on solutions from colleagues on how interdisciplinary methods can be employed to increase student achievement.

Realizing that the arts are a vital component of our curriculum, the music coordinator shared a problem of practice, and members of the division used a protocol to address the barriers. All content coordinators are eager to support one another as well as students, teachers and leaders within the DeKalb County School District.

The Principal Center

Dr. Williams had the unique opportunity to attend The Principal Center Advisory Board Meeting at Georgia State University. The focus of this critical conversation, *The Shifting Funding Landscape: Leading Through Funding Uncertainty*, centered on strategies for navigating fiscal challenges districts face regarding Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). Participants discussed ways districts can maximize available funding, strengthen leaders' understanding of scheduling practices, and ensure teachers are strategically assigned to meet student needs and program goals.

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

This month, the Early Intervention Program (EIP) coordinators collaborated with EIP teachers and/or building leaders to review eligibility documents. Individual site conferences were held to ensure that students being served receive interventions using DCSD - approved models. Additionally, coordinators clarified district expectations and reviewed appropriate materials for instruction. Both teachers and building leaders valued the dedicated time to discuss the details of their schedules and collaborate with our team on strategies to best support students. Overall, the sessions were informative and helped us to enhance alignment, ensure compliance, and improve support for our most at-risk learners.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rose Prejean-Harris

6-12

Acceleration Academies

DeKalb Acceleration Academy's continues to grow and accept graduation candidates from across the district. As of October 31, enrollment stands at 186 GCs. This month, the program anticipates three new graduates. Academically, 536 courses have been completed since January, totaling 1072 credits have been earned. Acceleration Academies has now named Ms. Krystal Braxton as Program Director.

Advanced Academic Committee

To support DeKalb County School District's commitment to equity and excellence, the Advanced Academics Committee has been established as a collaborative, multi-departmental and multi-divisional initiative. This committee is designed to create a space where DCSD can engage diverse stakeholders—including educators, administrators, families, and community partners—in the shared mission of increasing access and opportunity in advanced academic pathways for all students.

The committee's primary goal is to ensure that by June 2026, every middle and high school in the district will expand its offerings of advanced academic courses for the 2026–2027 school year. This work will involve identifying barriers, sharing best practices, and developing strategic recommendations to support schools in broadening their advanced academic programs.

Director Dr. Lynn Angus Ramos**Literacy**

C&I Literacy Leaders Dr. Lynn Angus Ramos and Ms. Lawanzer Smith were recently featured in the Georgia Department of Education's "Let's Talk ELA for Leaders" series, where they shared how DeKalb County School District ensures *standards-based instruction* while effectively integrating Tier I and supplemental literacy resources. Their participation spotlighted DeKalb's statewide leadership in advancing literacy excellence and fostering coherent implementation of the new Georgia ELA standards.

95 Core Phonics

The DeKalb County School District has officially launched full implementation of the 95 Phonics Core Program to strengthen foundational literacy instruction across all elementary schools. In partnership with Metro RESA through the *Let's Read, Georgia* initiative, the district has completed over 100 classroom observations across 16 elementary schools, focusing on instructional fidelity, teacher practice, and student engagement. Monthly training sessions for Area Coordinators have begun to ensure consistent, aligned support across regions.

The implementation walks—conducted jointly by DCSD and Metro RESA—utilize a walkthrough tool housed in the Grow platform, providing a structured system for data collection and analysis. The district will review walkthrough data monthly with Metro RESA to identify trends, guide instructional decisions, and tailor professional learning for teachers and leaders. Next steps include targeted coaching cycles, school-based feedback sessions, and cross-school learning walks to deepen implementation and strengthen literacy outcomes districtwide. This collaborative effort demonstrates DeKalb's unwavering commitment to high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction and continuous improvement in support of every student.

Director Lummie Baker**Educational Media and Instructional Materials****DeKalb Teacher-Librarian Advisory Council (DTLAC) Meeting**

The DeKalb Teacher-Librarian Advisory Council (DTLAC) recently convened to strengthen its commitment to literacy, collaboration, and innovative library media center programming across the district. This meeting served as a platform for members to share ideas, review progress, and plan initiatives that support both educators and students.

Key discussion points included:

- **District Support and Literacy Initiatives:** Members explored strategies to enhance reading engagement and align library media center programming with district-wide literacy goals.
- **Media Center Programming:** The council emphasized creating dynamic, student-centered spaces that foster curiosity, collaboration, and a love for reading.
- **Professional Library Updates:** Exciting news—usage of the Professional Library continues

- to rise, with more educators accessing resources and services to enrich instruction.

OctoberFest

On October 4, 2025, The Department of Educational Media and Instructional Materials participated in the DeKalb County School District's (DCSD) annual **Title I Parent & Family Engagement Fall Festival, Octoberfest**, at Redan High School in Stone Mountain, Georgia. The event focused on the theme: *"Families discovering education and career paths in inspiring new ways."*

Octoberfest included three zones designed to engage parents and students:

- **Family Zone:** Focused on literacy, test readiness, post-secondary planning, and mental health resources.
- **The Interactive Zone:** Provided hands-on activities related to career exploration and college readiness.
- **Fun Zone:** Included community resource stations, games, and food trucks (with snacks provided for families participating in earlier zones).

The festival demonstrated DCSD's commitment to empowering families through education and collaboration. By offering academic resources alongside interactive experiences, Octoberfest strengthened the connection between schools and the community.

Families left with valuable tools for student success, a stronger sense of engagement, and, for many, a renewed excitement about future opportunities.

Beanstack Reading Challenge

The students and staff of DCSD have logged 2,044,582 minutes! That places the district at over 50% of the 4-million-minute goal.

The reading challenge, launched to foster a culture of reading across all schools, encourages students and educators to track their reading time and celebrate progress together. By surpassing the two-million-minute mark, DCSD is demonstrating the power of community engagement and the importance of consistent reading habits in academic success.

District leaders emphasize that this achievement is more than just numbers; it reflects a growing enthusiasm for reading among students of all grade levels. Teachers have integrated creative strategies to motivate participation, from classroom competitions to themed reading events, while families have joined in by supporting reading at home.

With less than half the journey remaining, DCSD is calling on everyone to keep the momentum going. Every minute counts toward the goal of four million minutes, and the district is confident that, with continued effort, this target will be met and exceeded.

Schools will continue hosting literacy-focused activities and sharing progress updates to inspire participation. As the challenge moves forward, DCSD remains committed to building a strong reading culture that empowers students for lifelong success.

DeKalb Teacher-Librarians Shine Bright at American Association of School Librarians Annual Conference

Teacher-Librarians, Dr. Roberta Barber (Tucker HS), Dr. Sarah Sansbury (Austin ES), Tracie Harding (Clarkston HS), and Rachel Peyton (Lithonia MS), attended the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Conference in St. Louis, held October 10–12, 2025. The conference offered a wealth of learning opportunities, including inspiring author talks and countless chances to connect and collaborate with librarians from across the nation. Our teacher-librarians returned energized with new ideas, resources, and strategies to support students and staff in their libraries.

Travel and accommodations were made possible for Ms. Harding and Mrs. Peyton through the generosity of the grants they received from Georgia Library Media Association and AASL.

At the conference, Dr. Sarah Sansbury demonstrated her continued leadership and commitment to literacy education through a series of impactful contributions. As chair of an AASL award committee, Dr. Sansbury had the honor of presenting two prestigious awards, recognizing excellence in the field.

In addition to her leadership role, Dr. Sansbury co-presented a compelling session on *Soft Censorship* alongside Dr. Barber and librarian Nan Brown, from Fulton County, addressing the subtle yet significant ways access to diverse literature can be limited in schools. She also shared insights from her ongoing research on *Reading Culture*, offering attendees a deeper understanding of how school environments can foster lifelong reading habits.



Supporting Teaching and Learning Through Instructional Resources

The Instructional Materials staff have conducted 137 visits to our schools and centers to provide instructional resources support. In collaboration with support from the Sam Moss Warehouse staff, the department is working to conduct deliveries and retrievals of instructional materials

from the schools and centers. Additionally, we continue to collaborate with the Division of Curriculum and Instruction content coordinators to provide support with both print and online instructional resources to schools.

Interim Director Dr. Laura Neely

K-12 Teaching and Learning

Advancing Student Achievement and Recognition

DeKalb County School District celebrated outstanding student accomplishments this month. In Social Studies, 36 students advanced to the next round of the Governor's Honors Program competition. Interest continues to grow, with 373 applications submitted this year. The interview phase is now underway, coordinated by Teaching and Learning and CTAE teams with support from more than 50 teacher-interviewers who will identify 200 student nominees for state review.

In Mathematics, students were honored at the 2025 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Conference in Atlanta through the TODAS Awards, which recognize achievement among underrepresented student populations. Recipients included Angelo Dela Cruz and Albert Honorio of Cross Keys High School, nominated by Dr. Edmar Orato, and Sofia Lauzan Izquierdo of Tucker High School, nominated by Uma Anne. Each received a calculator donated by Texas Instruments and a certificate of recognition.

The Visual and Performing Arts Department also celebrated excellence, with three ensembles selected to perform at the 2026 Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference: the Southwest DeKalb High School Wind Symphony directed by James Seda, the DeKalb School of the Arts Sinfonia directed by Jonathan Carmack, and the DeKalb School of the Arts Tenor Bass Choir directed by Jared Duncan.

Strengthening Instruction Through Collaboration

Collaboration continues to enhance teaching and learning across the district. The Visual and Performing Arts and Mathematics teams partnered to design an art exhibit for the 57th National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics Conference, featuring student work that connected mathematical concepts with creative expression.

The Science Department worked with Academic Coach Coordinators to deliver professional learning for Horizon Schools, focusing on standards deconstruction and classroom observations to strengthen instructional practices. Senior Math Coordinator Michelle Bateman and Specialty Area Math Coordinator Angela Leach also presented at the NCTM Conference, sharing DeKalb's work in *Strategic Planning for Success: Leveraging Numeracy Development to Boost Student Achievement*.

Mathematics Professional Learning and Planning

During October, the Mathematics Team deepened collaboration and professional learning across the district. In partnership with the Exceptional Education Department, the team conducted mathematics learning walks focused on co-taught and self-contained classrooms to clarify expectations and define effective instructional practices in these settings.

Following these observations, Lead Teachers of Special Education (LTSEs) participated in *Mathematics Instructional Special Teams Playbook: Intentionally Designing the Plays*, a session focused on incorporating scaffolds, supports, and purposeful questioning to ensure students engage in grade-level work and meaningful academic discourse.

Through the Accelerate8 initiative, selected middle school mathematics teachers participated in their second session of high school mathematics content, continuing to strengthen their content knowledge and instructional practice as they prepare to become high school certified.

Mathematics coordinators also represented DeKalb at state and national conferences, playing key roles in organizing and facilitating professional learning sessions at the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM), NCTM, and the Georgia Mathematics Conference (GMC). Coordinators supported DeKalb educators presenting for the first time at the GMC, a milestone that highlights the district's growing leadership in mathematics education.

Science: In the Zone—Coaching for Excellence

The Science Team's *In the Zone: Coaching for Excellence* initiative continued this month in partnership with Academic Coach Coordinators, providing action-oriented support to Academic Coaches across the district. October sessions focused on launching phenomena through multimodal text. Coaches engaged in modeling effective instructional strategies, connecting to literacy, demonstrating coaching moves, and deepening their understanding of the Science Content Walk Tool.

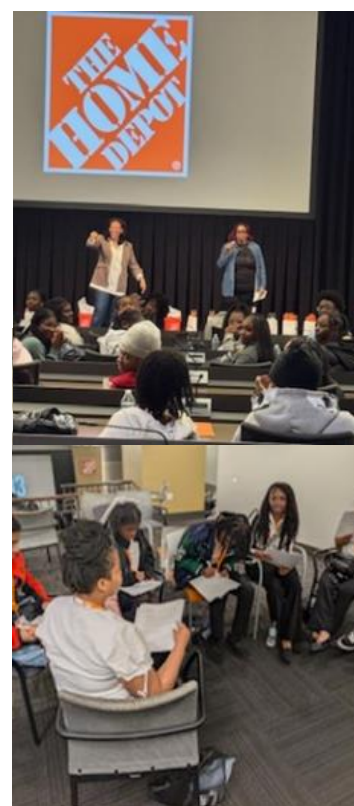
Next month's Learning Lab will allow Academic Coaches to observe effective PLC facilitation in action, with coordinators modeling how to deconstruct standards and develop standards-aligned tasks. Upcoming November sessions will center on *Sensemaking* through engagement in the Science and Engineering Practices, providing leaders, teachers, and coaches with practical examples of high-quality 3-Dimensional Science instruction.

Director Doryiane Gunter

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE)

DCSD CTAE Students Attend Home Depot Street Law Program

DeKalb County Law and Justice students proudly represented the district at the Home Depot Street Law Program on October 22. More than 30 students participated in this valuable learning opportunity, which exposed them to diverse careers in law enforcement and justice. Through their engagement in the program, several students earned scholarships that will cover their CTSO (Career and Technical Student Organizations) competition fees for the 2025–2026 school year. This achievement reflects both the students' dedication and DeKalb's ongoing commitment to developing future leaders in the field of law and justice.



GA Power Hosts DCSD CTAE Students

Over 20 DeKalb County CTAE students recently participated in GA Power's Klondike Day, a hands-on career expo connecting them with opportunities in energy, engineering, and skilled trades. Students explored interactive exhibits, met industry professionals, and gained insight into diverse career pathways. GA Power continues to support our workforce development, financial literacy, and innovative STEM programming for students.



Director Janetta Greenwood

Fernbank Science Center

Outreach and Single Visit Programs

In October, Fernbank Science Center continued to provide single visit and outreach programs for the new school year, with strong participation across both planetarium and classroom experiences. Approximately **8,103** students visited the planetarium for engaging, curriculum-aligned shows, while another **919** students took part in single visits at FSC and local outdoor learning parks and **3,411** students participated in outreach programs that brought hands-on, standards-based science learning directly to classrooms.

Scientific Tools & Techniques (STT), Students of Advanced Research (SOAR), and Advanced Studies

In October, students continued making steady progress on their Green Heart STEM Challenge research projects. Mentors began meeting regularly with student teams to provide feedback, guide data collection, and help refine research questions and community impact goals. These collaborative sessions have strengthened students' problem-solving and communication skills while deepening their understanding of environmental sustainability.

This month, Fernbank Science Center also participated in STEM and 8th Grade Nights at Tucker Middle School and Columbia Middle School to promote our high school science programs. These outreach efforts are part of our ongoing commitment to increasing participation from underrepresented schools and ensuring equitable access to advanced STEM learning opportunities across the district.

ScienTots Program (Pre-K)

In October, The ScienTots Program served 11 classrooms at Panola Way ES, Shadow Rock ES, Smoke Rise ES, Browns Mill ES, Flat Shoals ES, Snapfinger ES and Dunwoody ES. The program engaged 23 teachers and paraprofessionals and 189 Pre-K students. Students engaged in learning about sound and coding through our Sound Safari program and Coding Camp.

School Master Gardener Program

The third session of the School Master Gardener Program was held on October 24 with 22 teachers representing seven schools: Clarkston High School, Coralwood, DeKalb School of the Arts, Henderson Mill Elementary, Indian Creek Elementary, Oak Grove Elementary, and Stone Mountain Middle School.

This session focused on ecology and plant science concepts aligned with Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) in Earth and Life Science, including topics in weathering, ecosystems, and plant structure and function.

Guest educators from the American Geosciences Institute (AGI) provided professional learning on their Rain Gardens as STEM Learning Environments curriculum, equipping teachers with NGSS-aligned resources for connecting stormwater management, soil science, and career exploration in the geosciences.

A guest instructor from the DeKalb Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program guided participants through the process of creating herbarium specimens, linking the activity to plant identification and classification standards.

Fernbank Science Center staff facilitated outdoor botany investigations using local trees as models to identify and classify common species found on DeKalb school campuses. These hands-on activities demonstrated how teachers can integrate field-based, standards-driven instruction into their school gardens.

By the end of the session, participants gained practical strategies for implementing place-based science instruction, engaging students in data collection, observation, and environmental stewardship directly connected to Georgia science standards.

Community Engagement

World Space Day

During the month of October, Fernbank Science Center hosted two successful and interactive community events. On October 4th, and in collaboration with the Morehouse Center for Excellence in Education, the World Space Day Event was held at Fernbank Science Center. 1,021 participants attended the event and engaged in learning about the universe through planetarium shows, robotics demonstrations, and hands-on STEM activities.

Spooky Science and Fall Plant Sale

Fernbank Science Center hosted Spooky Science on October 25th. 789 participants attended this event and participated in fall themed planetarium shows, investigated the science between skeletons and brains, and engaged in hands-on seasonally themed STEM activities.

Partnerships**Georgia Aquarium**

During the month of October, 42 schools participated in the Georgia Aquarium Partnership programs. 8 schools participated in the Aquanaut Express, Georgia Aquarium's mobile classroom. 11 outreach programs that reached 969 students were provided and 2,525 students attended instructor-led field trips at the Georgia Aquarium.

Ocean Guardian schools continued to receive support from the collaborative team of DCSD Science Coordinators, Fernbank Science Center Instructional Specialists, and the Georgia Aquarium. The visits included tailored support that assisted schools with implementation, field trip identification and instructional guidance aligned to the individual school's NOAA Ocean Guardian program goals. NOAA Ocean Guardian Schools began to take field trips that support their individual projects. As an example, Brockett Elementary School visited the Chattahoochee Nature Center and engaged in a hands-on workshop about pollution related to watershed cleanliness and management.

At the October 6th, DCSD Board of Education Meeting schools were recognized for achieving the NOAA Ocean Guardian School Distinction Award. Students from Clarkston High School, Dunaire Elementary School, Freedom Middle School, Indian Creek Elementary School, Martin Luther King Jr. High School and Salem Middle School have achieved this prestigious award through their projects completed during the 2024-2025 academic year. Guided by their dedicated educators, these students developed and implemented impactful projects focused on protecting and preserving local watersheds.

Morehouse School of Medicine

On Saturday, October 4th, Fernbank Science Center served as an exhibitor at the Morehouse School of Medicine Community Engagement Day 2025. This annual event celebrates partnerships between MSM and community organizations focused on health, wellness, science, and education. Fernbank's team engaged families with interactive STEM demonstrations and hands-on science activities designed to connect health and science learning. The event drew hundreds of attendees and provided an excellent platform to share resources, promote science literacy, and strengthen community ties through collaboration with one of Atlanta's leading institutions in medical research and education.

Director Monique Kimbell

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Effective Data Teams

Building Capacity Through Data Leadership

During the month of October, the MTSS Department continued to strengthen systems of support across the district by leading data-driven conversations and deepening the capacity of school-based MTSS Specialists to function as effective data leaders. Each Area MTSS meeting held October 20–23 centered on the development of effective data teams capable of translating universal screening results into actionable Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 plans. MTSS Specialist analyzed reading and behavior data, identified trends, and developed targeted tiered supports. This approach reflects the MTSS Arc of Learning — Data-Based Decision-Making, Implementation Fidelity, and Capacity Building — ensuring that student data drives the instructional conversation.

Amira Implementation and Early Literacy Focus

A major highlight of October was the implementation of Amira Tutor, which officially launched districtwide on October 1. The Amira Tutor platform serves as an intervention/acceleration tool, allowing teachers to monitor reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension in real time. During the week of October 6–10, more than 13,900 students actively engaged with Amira Tutor. The Office of MTSS celebrated the top three schools in each area with the highest number of students logging 30 or more minutes on the platform. The integration of Amira Tutor usage represents a major step toward meeting the requirements of HB 307 while supporting district Goal 1.1: increasing literacy proficiency for all students.

Strengthening Compliance and Data Integrity

MTSS Specialists worked alongside grade level teams to review intervention plans, ensuring that each Tier 2 and Tier 3 student had interventions in place that addressed current support needs. MTSS Specialists also took a deep dive into their Tier 2 and 3 data to determine where their MTSS Framework needs strengthening before the next Interval Data Reporting period. Coaching conversations with schools experiencing high numbers of parent evaluation requests focused on strengthening problem-solving protocols, improving communication with families, and aligning interventions to specific deficit skill areas prior to initiating formal evaluations. This proactive work not only reinforces compliance with IDEA and district procedures but also supports early and equitable access to intervention for all students.



Director Keatra Wright

FLEX Academy

October was a busy month for FLEX Academy. We concluded Session I of FLEX Beyond the Day with a success rate of over 90% for graduating seniors.

Grade Level	Does Not Meet %	Passing %
9	27.27%	72.73%
10	10.42%	89.58%
11	14.08%	85.92%
12	9.55%	90.45%

We continue to support local high schools with our current enrollment in FLEX Beyond the Day Session II of 542 students, and we are anticipating similar success rates. Additionally, we have enrolled 163 students into 296 courses for credit recovery in FLEX Restore.

We are currently partnering with Elizabeth Andrews High School to provide flexible options for students during the Spring semester.

Chief Dr. Kermit Belcher**Information and Instructional Technology****Deputy Chief Office of Technology Glenn Melendez****Digital Resource and Technology Request Process****School Websites**

In September 2025, the district proudly completed the launch of our new district website — an important milestone in our ongoing effort to enhance communication, accessibility, and engagement across our school community. This modernized site reflects our commitment to ensuring families, staff, and community members can easily find the information they need, when they need it.

With this successful launch, the district is now turning its attention to the next phase: evaluating the migration of our individual school websites to a unified platform. This effort will ensure a consistent, high-quality experience for all users and strengthen our district's online presence. Planning for the school website migration is underway, with completion targeted during the 2026 school year.

A modern web presence brings significant benefits to our K–12 community. Families will experience improved mobile access, intuitive navigation, and streamlined updates from schools and the district. Staff will benefit from efficient tools for sharing timely information, and our broader community will enjoy a more cohesive, accessible, and transparent view of our schools in action. Together, these improvements will support stronger communication and deeper connections throughout our district.

Data Governance Program

The district is pleased to share progress on our Data Governance Program, which continues to strengthen how we understand and support student learning through the effective use of digital resources. The initial scope of work focused on measuring the utilization and impact of key digital learning tools on student outcomes. This foundational analysis was completed and presented to the Board of Education during the September 2025 meeting.

Building on this work, the next phase of the program is focused on developing enhanced reporting and data visualizations that monitor ongoing utilization of our digital learning resources. On October 1, 2025, an initial prototype illustrating usage trends for the district's top 25 resources was delivered to our instructional partners. This reporting will now be shared monthly, providing timely insights to guide instructional decision-making and ensure that our digital tools are being used effectively to support teaching and learning.

In parallel, the district is developing advanced visualizations using Power BI to provide deeper insights into utilization and impact data. These enhancements will help educators and leaders

identify trends, promote consistent and equitable use of digital tools, and better connect technology usage to student success. Looking ahead, the district is also evaluating off-the-shelf analytic solutions to expand these capabilities and provide even greater visibility into how digital learning resources are supporting student outcomes.

Monitoring the use of our digital resources with fidelity enables the district and our instructional partners to make informed decisions, maximize the value of our investments, and ensure every student benefits from engaging, effective digital learning experiences.

Chief Champion Michelle Dillard

Schools and Leadership

During the month of October, Schools and Leadership came together as a division for the Fall S and L retreat with the extension of the theme Mission Possible. This time of team building, learning, and sharing allowed us to grow professionally. We hosted the monthly Think Tank and the PLO. Principals were celebrated in October for Principals' Appreciation Month, but also received additional training for the new ELA standards implementation and effective PLCs.

We rebranded the Area office suite with a new wall mounted logo. Schools and Leadership also "painted the office pink" with our Pink events in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month!

We partnered with several divisions this month including:

- **Access and Opportunity** for Elementary Track, PAC meet and greet, and MBK/OSK induction.
- **Accountability and Research** for Reality Checks and Overview of the CCRPI.
- **Community Engagement, Innovation and Partnerships (CEIP)** for the Launch of the Principal for a Day project where new business partners and principals had a kick-off breakfast meeting.
- **Curriculum and Instruction** for new ELA standards implementation.
- **Information and Instructional Technology** for FTE and state reporting.
- **Operations** to celebrate our Bus Drivers.
- **Student Services** to celebrate Georgia Pre-K week and reading to Pre-K students, as well as SDI implementation in Special Education classrooms.
- **Wrap Around Services** for two College Scholarship Fairs, Unity Day, and Red Ribbon Week.



Superintendent Dr. Beth Kyle

Area 1 Elementary Schools

The Area team and schools packed a lot into October, including a much-deserved break, FTE, and the first round of benchmarks. The Area team has been busy completing Learning Walks in collaboration with school teams. We also continued our monthly plan with me sessions to provide support to teachers throughout the area and teacher leader PL cohorts so each school has onsite experts.

Schools were busy this month with Red Ribbon Week, Georgia Pre-K Week, National Walk to School day, National School Lunch Week, and National School Bus Safety Week. Many schools closed out Red Ribbon Week with Book Character walks. Congratulations to Chesnut Elementary for being recognized by the GaDOE as a Title I Distinguished and Reward School. Distinguished schools are among the highest-performing 5% of Title I Schoolwide and Title I Targeted Assistance schools based on the combined ELA and math content mastery scores from the statewide assessments of the most recent year. Reward schools are among the greatest-improving 5% of Title I Schoolwide and Title I Targeted Assistance schools when comparing the content mastery scores from the most recent two years of statewide assessments. Austin (#13), Vanderlyn (#39), Dunwoody (#45), Oak Grove (#47), and Ashford Park (#86) were named in the Top 100 elementary schools in Georgia by U.S. News and World Report.



Superintendent Terri D. Brown

Area 2 Elementary Schools

The Area 2 Support Team continued supporting schools with feedback on CCVs and learning walks. Walks included a focus on 95 Core implementation, shifts for the new ELA standards, and student engagement with the Instructional Learning Plans for mathematics. The Area 2 Support Team also provided professional learning for school leaders on Amira reports/progress monitoring and CCRPI target calculations using embargoed CCRPI data and MAP Projected Proficiency Reports. Area 2 has also monitored Amira high quality time for three weeks, and 15/16 schools have seen steady growth in the percentage of time.

Area 2 Leaders supported district-wide professional learning for principals and assistant principals for the writing shifts for the new ELA standards. School leaders received a hands-on work session for “writing across the domains” and context such as audience, purpose, and situating the texts. Principals also reflected on their Professional Learning Community (PLC) implementation.

Congratulations to Livsey Elementary for being a Title 1 Distinguished School and Evansdale Elementary for being named a Title 1 Reward School.

As a support for staff mental health, Area 2 Elementary launched Wellness Wednesday exercise for all teachers and staff who would like to work out and grow great health practices together. This initiative is being facilitated by the Area’s Mental Health Coordinator.



Area 2 Principals working on PLCs!



Mental Health Coordinator: Staff Mental Well-Being Summit



Area 2 Elementary Wellness Wednesday Initiative

Superintendent Ateshia Lester

Area 3 Elementary Schools

Despite the Fall Break recharge, Area 3 Elementary schools maintained impressive momentum this October! The month showcased strong instructional leadership, community engagement, and professional growth across our schools. Our leaders participated in differentiated PLC sessions designed to support tailored instructional practices for diverse learners. A particular focus was placed on analyzing AMIRA usage data to monitor literacy engagement and fidelity of implementation. Area Coordinators provided hands-on support through "Plan with Me" sessions

and facilitated local school professional learning communities, ensuring teachers had the resources and guidance needed for effective instruction.

The Area Office maintained its commitment to continuous improvement through CCVs, Reality Checks, and local school Learning Walks, providing valuable insights into instructional practices and school operations. In partnership with Metro RESA, Area 3 provided critical ELA professional development focused on understanding the expectations for teaching text techniques aligned with the new ELA standards. Additionally, Culture and Climate Coordinators equipped Assistant Principals with training on the 5 Rs of Restorative Practice, strengthening our approach to building positive school environments.

Community & School Celebrations

- **Allgood and Redan Elementary** brought families together with an engaging instructional carnival and fall festival
- **Bob Mathis and Canby Lane** delighted students and families with vibrant book character parades, celebrating literacy and creativity
- **Barack Obama and Cedar Grove ES** being recognized as a Title I Reward School
- ELL Coordinator **Ninalynn Bradshaw** for representing Area 3 at Georgia TESOL! Her session, "Leading with Language Across the Curriculum," shared our innovative approaches with educators statewide.



Superintendent Bridgette Allen

Area Middle Schools

During October, the Middle School Area Team engaged in comprehensive initiatives designed to strengthen leadership capacity, instructional quality, and school culture across the area. The team collectively participated in Reality Checks to analyze data and inform continuous improvement,

conducted Collaborative Calibrated Visits (CCVs) to assess implementation of the Six Systems for an Effective School Environment, and engaged in school-facilitated learning walks to provide feedback on the implementation of the instructional frameworks. The Area Team attended the Schools and Leadership Fall Retreat and the Legal Symposium and participated in the Think Tank for leadership development. Additionally, they began Impact Checks to evaluate the effectiveness of their work and its alignment with district, divisional, and area expectations.

The Executive Administrators facilitated CCV support sessions, participated in Principal Professional Learning Communities, engaged in Academic Walks with the Superintendent, and attended the district principal learning opportunity, where they co-facilitated the Middle School Area breakout session. They also held collaborative sessions with Culture and Climate Coordinators to strengthen school-level support, conducted observations, provided targeted feedback, and developed individualized support plans for schools in collaboration with the Area Support Team. The Special Education and English Learner Coordinator launched virtual support sessions with a deliberate focus on instructional practices to support subgroups, delivered school-based professional development, and collaborated closely with school staff to enhance instructional effectiveness. Culture and Climate Coordinators advanced the district's commitment to positive school environments by leading culture and climate meetings, facilitating restorative circles, providing job-embedded professional learning, and modeling de-escalation strategies and restorative practices. The Mental Health Coordinator partnered with the Culture and Climate Coordinators to identify student and family needs and developed workshops addressing wellness topics, including prevention initiatives related to vaping. Content Coordinators reinforced instructional excellence by conducting observations, offering feedback to promote teacher growth, participating in professional learning communities, supporting the analysis of student work, providing instructional resources, and leading professional learning sessions focused on instruction, specifically in ELA.

The team celebrated principals by acknowledging National Principals Month, recognizing and honoring their dedication, leadership, and impact. Collectively, these coordinated efforts reflect the Middle School Area Team's unwavering commitment to instructional excellence and school improvement.

Learning, Growing, and Winning Together



Interim Superintendent Damian Bounds**Area High Schools**

October marked another month of purposeful progress across our high schools. Leaders, teachers, and coordinators continued to advance instructional priorities, strengthen culture and climate systems, and refine support for multilingual learners. The month reflected our shared commitment to balancing academic excellence with the well-being of every student, ensuring that each classroom remains a place of engagement, challenge, and belonging.

In English Language Arts, schools continued to build on the momentum from the start of the year. Coordinators led targeted professional learning to enhance writing instruction and strengthen teacher understanding of the “new/now” Georgia Standards of Excellence. The “Writing Through the Domains” workshop for principals and assistant principals highlighted the power of clear expectations and consistency in writing across grade levels. Teachers deepened their use of Tier 1 resources such as HMH and Writable, while also learning to leverage MAP data to guide instruction and promote independent reading. As part of continued readiness efforts, principals received updated communication on the 2025–2026 Milestones Runway and revised instructional modules. Across schools, ELA instruction is becoming more intentional, data-informed, and aligned to both state standards and the district’s vision for literacy excellence.

In Mathematics, observation and feedback cycles revealed both strong alignment to standards and a clear focus on procedural fluency. Math learning walks were conducted and feedback sessions that followed during PLCs allowed for immediate reflection and planning. Teachers demonstrated confidence in pacing and fluency, while next steps include expanding opportunities for conceptual understanding and real-world application of skills. The preparation for the upcoming November 4 Professional Learning Day centers on connecting conceptual and procedural learning through the GaDOE learning plans. Math teams across the area continue to embrace collaboration, data use, and high expectations as essential parts of their practice.

The work of our Culture and Climate team remained a vital anchor for student success. Culture & Climate coordinators led the charge in promoting restorative practices while introducing leaders to the five pillars of restorative work—relationships, respect, responsibility, restoration, and reintegration. Whole Child Data Review meetings conducted focused on attendance and safety monitoring sessions to ensure supportive learning environments to strengthen student engagement.

In the area of English Learners (ELL), our ELL coordinator continued to lead intentional work around ACCESS readiness and multilingual learner support. Schools engaged in goal-setting sessions to identify “bubble MLs,” analyzing domain-level data to guide instructional priorities. The co-teaching professional learning sessions at our high schools serve as a model of how inclusive classrooms can better meet the needs of all learners. Our ELL coordinator also worked closely with leadership teams to move from compliance-driven ILP plans toward meaningful,

instructional implementation. This shift reflects a growing commitment to ensuring multilingual learners receive both equitable access and rigorous academic experiences aligned to district goals.

The month also reflected the power of collaboration and shared leadership. The High School Area Team conducted calibration meetings to ensure consistency in expectations and feedback during school visits. Coordinators contributed to leadership development sessions such as the ALO, PLO, and the Assistant Principal Academy, reinforcing the value of continuous learning among leaders. Area support was extended to new principals and administrative teams to ensure smooth transitions and alignment to district priorities. Across each department of ELA, Math, Culture and Climate, and ELL the team continued to model what it means to lead collectively, with focus and intentionality.

As October ended, the high school area celebrated measurable growth in instructional alignment, culture transformation, and collaborative leadership. The work ahead in November will focus on strengthening Tier 1 instruction through coaching and feedback, maintaining data-driven culture and climate support, and ensuring readiness for both ACCESS and Milestones assessments. Each step taken reflects our continued belief that when we lead with clarity, collaboration, and care, our schools become stronger and our students thrive.



Superintendent Dr. Derrica Boochee-Davis**Area Horizon Schools****Leadership Development**

The Horizon Area began in October, focused on clarity, data transparency, and strategic support. The Area Superintendent shared performance metrics for all nine schools—TKES data to identify coaching needs, principal retention feedback to ensure leadership stability, and Beanstalk indicators to monitor instructional and operational trends. Targeted coaching reinforced professional expectations, and one Collaborative Calibration Visit (CCV) strengthened alignment between school-level practices and district priorities.

Executive Administrators and Coordinators deepened principal leadership capacity through coaching, systems alignment, and data-driven reflection. Conversations linked the District Plan of Support (DPoS), CSIPs, and Short-Term Action Plans (STAPs) into a unified direction. EAs led data talks connecting attendance, MAP, walkthrough, and discipline data to decision-making, while coaching leaders on how to translate observation data into actionable feedback. The focus on Systems 2 (Instructional Planning) and 6 (Professional Learning & Feedback) ensured school teams maintained clarity on expectations, timelines, and next steps.

Instructional Support

Instructional work across the area reflected strong coherence with district frameworks and school-specific needs. ELA Coordinators emphasized Tier 1 fidelity, pacing, and rigor through classroom visits, PLC coaching, and the implementation of Writable to enhance writing instruction. The Horizon ELA Support Plan provided principals and coaches with quarterly alignment, instructional priorities, and phased teacher supports. Professional Learning Facilitator Alexis Green supported this work through benchmark calibration, PSAT coordination, and school-based coaching aligned to district goals. Mathematics coordinators conducted instructional walks emphasizing CRA modeling, ILPs, and the use of CFA and MAP data to inform instruction. Collaboration between math and ELA teams reinforced literacy integration in mathematical reasoning.

Student Support, Culture & Climate

Student and staff well-being remained a priority. The Mental Health Coordinator provided training on trauma-informed practices and wellness while attendance teams developed individualized student plans. MTSS and special education teams collaborated to reduce chronic absenteeism and address behavioral challenges through early interventions and wraparound supports. Exceptional Education Coordinator Dr. Moore led professional learning on Specially Designed Instruction and co-teaching, while EL Coordinator ensured compliance, ILP alignment, and effective SIOP practices in partnership with district leaders.

Culture and Climate Coordinators advanced alignment of attendance, discipline, and engagement systems through restorative practices, PBIS fidelity, and climate meetings that united counselors, MTSS specialists, and behavior coaches. Facility walkthroughs addressed environmental needs, and principals continued to celebrate staff and students through recognition of events and family

engagement initiatives. Collectively, these efforts reinforced belonging, recognition, and trust—driving the Horizon Area’s mission of equity, excellence, and achievement for all scholars.



Superintendent Dr. Michelle Jones

Area Specialty Schools

The Specialty Area continued to engage in instructional leadership through Reality Checks, CCVs, PPLCs, and the use of Math Instructional Learning Plans (ILPs). The October focus included FTE, Math, and CCVs. We have started our district learning walks and provided feedback. Professional learning opportunities ranged from PLO for principals, Restorative Practices and Connections Matter to Metro RESA’s ELA sessions and SDI modules for Special Education staff. The month also included a Virtual Teacher Workday, The Fall Break, Unity Day, Red Ribbon Week, and the Principals’ Appreciation Month. Schools participated in events like Exhibition Night, Title I meetings, Fall festivals and Hispanic Heritage Month activities.

October was a month of remarkable achievements and vibrant celebrations across our specialty schools. We proudly recognized Robert Shaw and Wadsworth as Title I Distinguished Schools and our Title I Reward Schools- Robert Shaw and Margaret Harris. Early Learning Center received a financial literacy partnership check from Georgia United Credit Union. Our schools led the way with Georgia Pre-K Week with enthusiasm, highlighted by Board recognitions and a featured video. Several of our schools with Pre-K hosted district leaders and Board members to read. Bouie's Elementary Band played for the District 5 Community Meeting. Elementary Track yielded several honors also with Marbut's boys track team winning the district championship, and DAA's Area II championship.

Specialty area celebrated the promotions of Dr. Kim Williams and Dr. Laura Neely to Curriculum and Instruction. Brad Daniell was named Interim Principal at Kittredge Magnet School. Sub administrators Ms. Portis and Dr. James are supporting Kittredge, while Dr. Brooks and Dr. Swanson returned to support Robert Shaw.



Interim Executive Director Mike Kelly**Leadership Development****Governor's School Leadership Academy (GSLA)**

On October 27th, our district GSLA team leaders engaged in a planning session with our Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) Coach. Together, we outlined and planned the work our GSLA Team needed to complete before our November 24th full-team professional learning session. We have scheduled an additional work session for the Team on November 7th.

The DeKalb Principal Pathway (DPP)

On Friday evening, October 24th, The Leadership Development team, Champions Faison and Anthony, facilitated Session 5 of DPP Cohort #2. Candidates engaged in professional learning to support their root cause analysis of their Instructional Change Project, participants shared early impacts of their change initiative, and they also established a plan for implementing a shadow tour experience of students.

Leadership Development full-time team members received professional planning with The Leadership Academy. The focus consisted of increasing the rigor of the "Change Project" and how to train school leaders to scale change across the school.

The DeKalb Leadership Institute (DLI)

On Friday evening, October 24th, DLI Cohort 1 participated in professional learning facilitated by Champions Russ and Fairweather, with a focus on school data analysis, plan of action and goal setting. Participants were required to analyze, plan, set goals, and present to the whole group within a two-hour time frame. Feedback was provided by both Leadership Development leads and their cohort colleagues.

Leadership Development full-time team members received professional planning with The Leadership Academy. The focus consisted of developing a "Cap Stone" project.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Leadership Development is supporting the implementation of PLCs in our district by serving and leading the work of the DCSD District Guiding Coalition. On October 2nd, the DCSD District Guiding Coalition met to design professional learning sessions for the October 23rd District PLO for principals. The professional learning for the PLO consisted of three differentiated sessions that principals were allowed to select. Session #1 PLC Framework Comprehensive Review. Session #2 PLC Framework Steps 6-10 Deep Dive. Session #3 PLC Advanced Promising Practice.

Also, on October 2nd Teachers of the Year met to discuss the implementation efforts of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at their respective schools. This provides direct insight into the work needed for the DCSD Guiding Coalition in moving forward with our implementation of PLCs across the district.

Performance Coaches Supporting Principals/Assistant Principals

The Leadership Development team of Performance Coaches is working side-by-side with school leaders, providing hands-on support that directly strengthens instructional leadership and student outcomes. Their coaching is focused on the implementation of the Six Systems, guidance for PLCs, and instructional best practices that elevate teaching and learning. In October, Performance Coaches logged more than 550 hours of on-site coaching, a reflection of the district's deep commitment to equipping leaders with the tools and strategies necessary to drive success across schools.

District Principal's Learning Opportunity (PLO)

On October 23rd, Leadership Development supported the design and logistics of the Principal Learning Opportunity (PLO), where principals engaged in professional learning facilitated by the DCSD PLC Guiding Coalition, Literacy Training with a Focus on Writing through the Domains and the Principal for the Day Business Partnerships. October was Principal Recognition Month, and all school leaders were celebrated on stage by areas.

New Principal's Academy (2nd Year)

On October 9th, Leadership Development provided professional learning for second-year principals designed to deepen both instructional and operational leadership. Principals explored how to cultivate leadership in others, received training in restorative practices, and examined the support available from the department of School Innovation with details about innovation grants.

New Principal's Academy (1st Year)

On October 30, Leadership Development provided professional learning for 1st-year principals. The session featured principal analysis of their CliftonStrengths, Calendarization Skills, TKES Training and Scenario based situations connected to the Five Pivotal Practices of the Wallace Foundation.

Assistant Principal's Academy

In collaboration with the District Area Teams, Leadership Development facilitated professional learning for assistant principals, intentionally aligning the content with what principals received during their recent PLO. Assistant principals engaged in sessions focused on ELA Writing through the Domains, PLC professional learning connecting to the following two sessions: Session #1 The PLC Framework Comprehensive Review. Session #2 PLC Framework Steps 6-10 Deep Dive. Lastly, APs received continual training in restorative practices.

Strategic Planning- (New) Principal/Assistant Principal Hiring Slate

Leadership Development has launched a new Strategic Plan Initiative for the 2025–2026 school year with the creation of a Principal/Assistant Principal Hiring Slate. During October we have been researching and soliciting feedback from districts across the state which have similar systems that we are looking to implement. Leadership Development has been in discussion with Human Resources around the beginning phases of the planning process.

Schools and Leadership Fall Retreat

Leadership Development served on the retreat committee that developed a continued focus on the “Mission Possible” theme. The retreat focused on collaboration across departments. Conference style sessions included presentations from the following areas: Research and Accountability, Access and Opportunity, Student Services, and Curriculum and Instruction.



Executive Director Ayana S. Smith

Professional Learning

During October, the Professional Learning Department continued to advance the district’s strategic priorities (Goals 1 and 3) through targeted professional learning, coaching, and implementation of the DCSD 12-Step PLC Framework. Facilitators led sessions across multiple content areas and schools, emphasizing data-driven collaboration, instructional refinement, and

alignment to the Miracles Framework. Many sessions focused on analyzing student work, using formative assessments effectively, and enhancing teacher's understanding of strategies that promote academic discourse and deeper learning. The department also supported academic coaches and guiding coalitions through collaborative work on effective PLC practices and data use, reinforcing a culture of shared accountability and instructional excellence across all areas. Additionally, the department strengthened partnerships across schools and central office divisions, ensuring that professional learning remained responsive, high-quality, and directly connected to classroom impact.

New Teacher Orientation and teacher support remains a strong focus this month, October 9th NETwork Seminar at AIC focused on planning for impact 120 where facilitators led 120 participants in exploring strategies and resources that enhance instructional planning and scholar success. The Teacher Support and Coaching (TSC) Endorsement Program welcomed 102 TSC Endorsement candidates, selected by their principals. NETwork facilitators also provided mentoring, classroom management strategies, and professional learning experiences designed to build teacher confidence and instructional effectiveness. Teachers engaged in sessions centered on problem-solving processes, vocabulary development, and literacy strategies, helping them create stronger learning environments and promote active student engagement.

The TAPP program continues to thrive with informational sessions which included 40 participants this month, conducted mentorship, and provided targeted coaching for candidates at various stages of the program. Facilitators modeled instructional strategies, supported classroom management, and created opportunities for reflective practice among candidates. Several sessions highlighted collaboration among TAPP instructors, mentors, and completers, offering authentic learning experiences and career development pathways for aspiring teachers. The transition from Taskstream to Canvas also began this month, setting the stage for a more efficient and integrated learning management process for the Academy.

Field Experience partnerships expanded and strengthened through collaboration with multiple universities. The department hosted professional learning sessions tailored to field candidates, including specialized training on supporting gifted learners and understanding diverse student needs. These efforts reflect the department's unwavering commitment to developing effective educators, deepening instructional practices, and sustaining a professional learning culture that directly supports student academic success and equity across DeKalb County School District.



Chief Dr. Norman C. Sauce, III & Acting Chief Kiana King**Student Services**

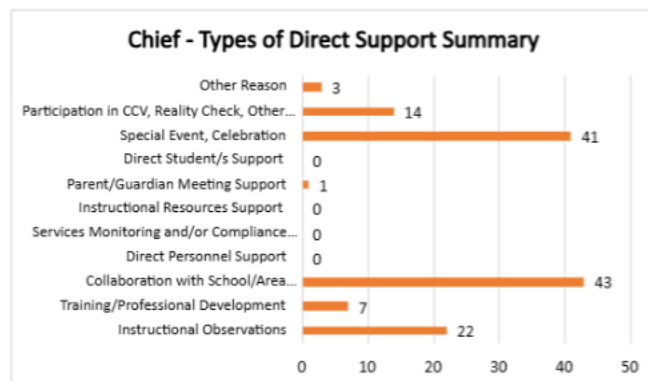
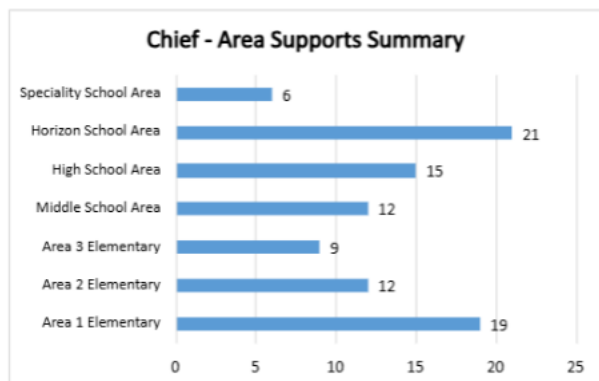
The month of October was filled with meaningful engagement, collaboration, and progress across the Division of Student Services. The Chief of Student Services began the month with the inspiring Faith Leaders' Summit, presented by the Early Learning and Pre-K Programs. This event brought together local faith leaders to explore opportunities for partnership in early learning and community support, serving as a powerful platform to bridge gaps between faith-based organizations and educational programs.

Throughout the month, the Chief made appearances at several key events, including school visits, the Leadership Retreat, and ongoing Portrait of a Graduate visit with the Superintendent and Quad Team. She also met with Newsela to review the services provided to the Gifted Education Program, ensuring alignment with instructional goals and enrichment opportunities for advanced learners. The Chief continued to meet regularly with the Division Leadership Team, both collectively and individually, to discuss program updates, priorities, and cross-departmental collaboration.

The Division Leadership Team also met with the Finance Department to review budget updates for the upcoming school year, gaining valuable insight into projected allocations to plan strategically for program enhancement. A major highlight of the month was the Gifted Parent Information Night held on October 21st, where many parents attended and received a wealth of information from the gifted education coordinators. The Chief also met with the Student Services Leadership Team to review the Strategic Plan Accountability Framework and participate in a workshop to strengthen alignment between divisional goals and district priorities. In addition, she attended the Superintendent's Principal Communication Committee Meeting, reinforcing Student Services' role as a vital link between school leaders and district initiatives.

Beyond the district, the Chief represented Student Services at both the DCSD CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Meeting and the Federal Law Enforcement Committee Meeting, reaffirming the division's commitment to student safety, mental health, and community partnerships. The Acting Chief continued to collaborate with Gifted Coordinator Mrs. Atkinson to plan the upcoming Division of Student Services Retreat, focused on building cohesion, innovation, and excellence across all programs. October concluded with additional Portrait of a Graduate school visit alongside the Superintendent and Quad Team, reflecting the division's ongoing commitment to equity, access, and student achievement. Overall, the month exemplified the Office of the Chief of Student Services' dedication to leadership, collaboration, and service—ensuring that every student is supported, challenged, and prepared to thrive.

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

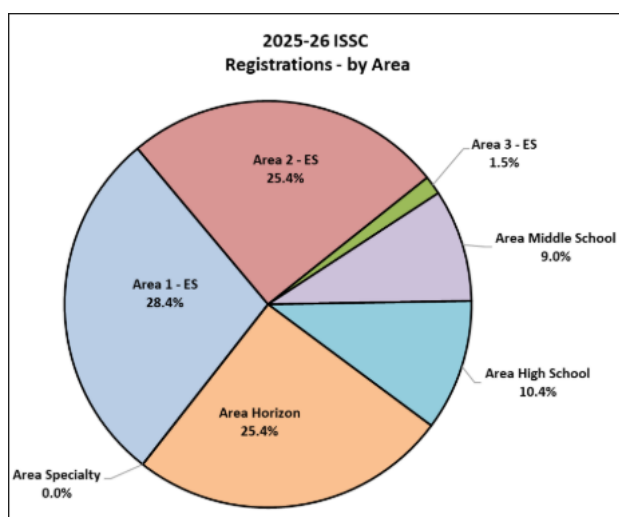


Executive Director Dr. Evelyn Hall

English Learners

International Student Screening Center Registration

The International Student Screening Center (ISSC) continuously registers and screens students throughout the school year. This month, the ISSC has registered and screened **67** English learners.

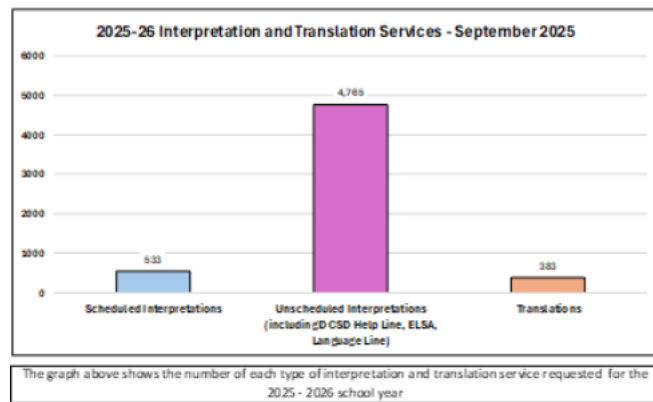


2025-2026 ISSC Registrations

Area	Students
Area 1 - ES	19
Area 2 - ES	17
Area 3 - ES	1
Area Middle School	6
Area High School	7
Area Horizon	17
Area Specialty	0
Totals	67

Interpretation & Translation Services

The International Student Screening Center (ISSC) provides interpretation/translation services during registration and at local schools for families with a Primary Home Language Other than English (PHLOTE). This month, the English Learners department provided **5,681** language services to PHLOTE families.



Interpretation, translation, and registration services align with DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area II: School, Family, and Community Engagement and the DCSD M.I.R.A.C.L.E.S. Framework for Continuous Improvement:

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

2025 English Learners Conference

On Saturday, September 13, the 2025 English Learners Conference welcomed 195 participants for a full day of professional learning. The event featured 42 sessions highlighting effective strategies for supporting English learners across all grade levels. The conference served as a dynamic space for educators to share knowledge, exchange innovative ideas, and celebrate ongoing progress in multilingual education. Engaging presentations, interactive workshops, and collaborative discussions reflected the district's strong commitment to equity and excellence in education. Participants left the event inspired with new insights and practical tools to enhance instruction for English learners throughout the district.



This opportunity aligns with the DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access, Goal Area III: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent, and Goal Area V: Organizational Excellence and the DCSD M.I.R.A.C.L.E.S. Framework for Continuous Improvement:

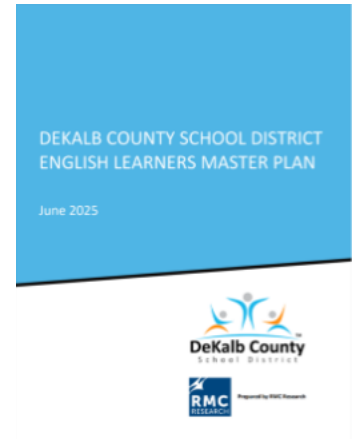
- M - Motion Towards Equity
- I - Improved Instructional Core
- R - Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study

EL Master Plan

The English Learners Department is excited to announce the release of the English Learners (EL) Master Plan [English Learners Master Plan](#).

Throughout the 2024-2025 school year, the DeKalb County School District (DCSD), collaborated with the RMC Research Team and the Stakeholders Committee to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the ESOL program and related services.

This Master Plan is the product of broad engagement between principals, teachers, English learners, parents, and community members. They contributed valuable insights through surveys, focus groups, classroom observations, and analysis of student outcomes data. Their input has shaped the road map for the development of the DCSD EL Master plan.

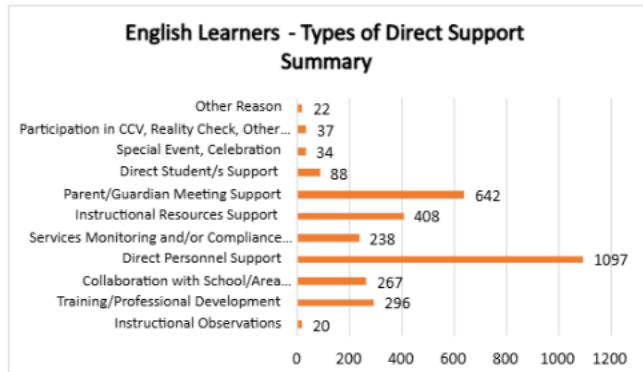
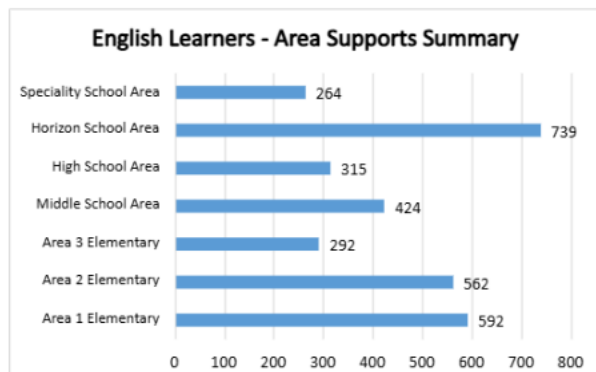


Some key highlights from the master plan include a new vision and mission, core principles, and five goals to guide the work of the EL Department with an implementation timeline through 2027-2028.

The DCSD EL Master Plan aligns with the DCSD Strategic Plan: Goal Area I: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access, Goal Area III: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent, and Goal Area V: Organizational Excellence and the DCSD M.I.R.A.C.L.E.S. Framework for Continuous Improvement:

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

[Direct School Supports by the Dept. of English Learners Since Start of School Year](#)



Acting Executive Director Dr. Erin Broyard Baptiste

Exceptional Education

The Department of Exceptional Education (DEE) has completed 248 school support visits during the month of October, providing targeted guidance and collaboration to schools across the district. Coordinators and support staff have led a hands-on demonstration on administering cognitive assessments for students with significant delays and introduced the district's new Section 504 platform through targeted professional learning sessions to reinforce best practices and clarify district procedures.

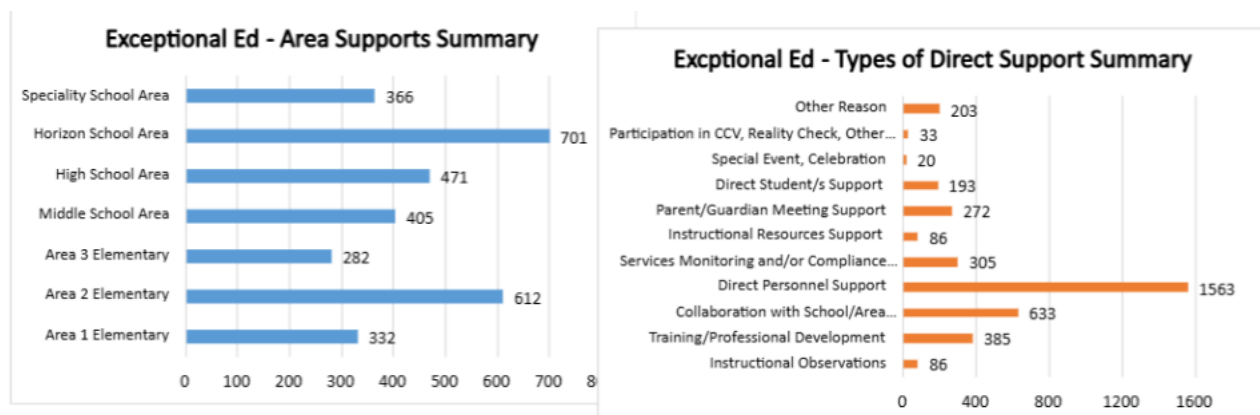
Ongoing professional learning opportunities were offered focused on strengthening instructional practices and compliance requirements. Training sessions supported educators in the areas of specially designed instruction, effective use of assistive technology in the classroom, understanding psychological reports to inform instruction, writing compliant and high-quality IEPs, supporting speech therapy in schools and ELA/Math instructional playbooks. Over 300 district staff members participated in the professional learning opportunities during the month of October, with a 96% satisfaction rate.



The Department of Exceptional Education's Parent Educator Team hosted a virtual Parent Education Empowerment Resources and Support (PEERS) parent session via ZOOM focusing on Parent Rights/Dispute Resolution. A total of 85 parents attended. The session featured speakers from the DCSD Dispute Resolution Team, with overwhelmingly positive survey feedback.



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



Executive Director Dr. Zack Phillips

Early Learning and Pre-K

Dr. Phillips and members of the Department of Early Learning and Pre-K Programs have worked diligently auditing student files, attending MTSS meetings, visiting schools, and supporting staff members with newly developed instructional non-negotiables and program enhancements for the 2025-2026 school year. Instructional learning targets and anchor charts that are aligned to the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards was deployed to all Pre-K (3&4) lead teachers and paraprofessionals to utilize within every instructional setting as an instructional tools and safety nets for our young scholars. A Progression Standards-Based Common Formative Assessment (CFA) is currently being piloted with a focus group of teachers and students within Canvas via a partnership with the Division of Curriculum and Instruction and Instructional Technology. Additional pilots will be administered to determine the next steps and scale for PL training for staff members administering the assessment to students. Pre-K Week was celebrated across the district on Monday, October 6th – Friday, October 10th with guest readers reading to our young scholars across the district. Georgia United Credit Union partnered with the school district on Wednesday, October 8th and presented a check for \$3500 to expand our Financial Literacy Program across the district for our young scholars. Our new initiative called the Cradle Through Kindergarten Campaign launched our Faith Leaders' Summit on Early Learning on Friday, October 10th. The (SOR) professional learning session #2 concluded on Wednesday, October 1st. Additional training sessions will continue to occur during the months of November 2025 – May 2026 on Science of Reading – Phase II.

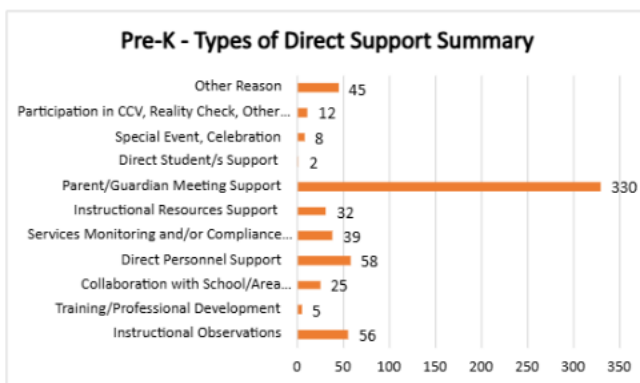
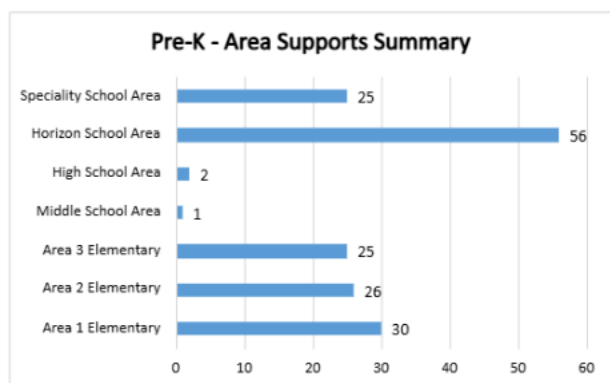




Professional Learning Opportunities

The Early Learning/Pre-K Department has worked diligently during the month of October to offer support to our Pre-K (3&4) staff members with frontloading instructional non-negotiables, auditing student files, attending MTSS meeting, processing class orders, etc. Additional professional learning (PL) opportunities for current Pre-K (3&4) teachers and paraprofessionals will be offered in the months of November 2025 – May 2026 on via the topics of Science of Reading – PL Phase II on Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, and Vocabulary. The 2nd session of the (SOR) training session took place on Wednesday, October 1st. The 3rd (SOR) training session will take place on Wednesday, November 5th. These excellent (PL) opportunities for staff members are aligned with the DCSD Strategic Plan and the DCSD MIRACLES Framework for Continuous Improvement.

Direct School Supports by the Dept. of Pre-K and Early Learning Since Start of School Year



Senior Coordinators Donyell Atkinson and Kristen Drake

Gifted Education

The Gifted Education Department offered its second of five Lead by Example professional learning series for all assigned gifted liaisons on October 7, 2025, at Chamblee High School. Gifted liaisons are expected to attend at least three of the five sessions offered to elevate their capacity for building leadership within their schools as they serve gifted and highly capable learners.

Senior Coordinator, Mrs. Donyell Atkinson participated as a guest reader during Georgia Pre-K Week at Robert Shaw Theme School, Stone Mill Elementary School, Fernbank Elementary School, and Wynbrooke Theme School.



All teachers are invited to participate in face-to-face professional learning opportunities centered around gifted instructional strategies at Silver Hill Administrative Complex.

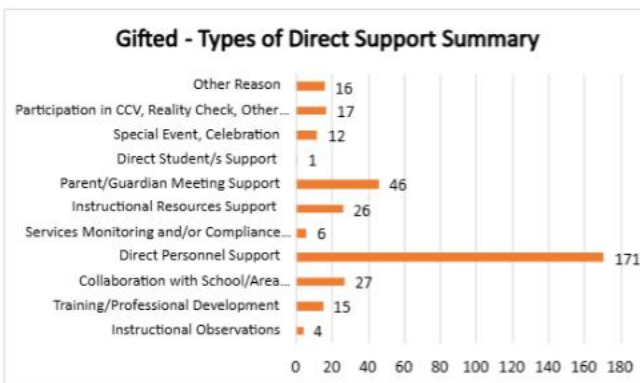
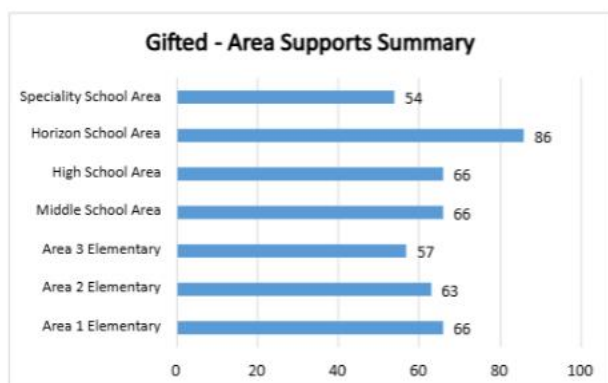
Participants *experience* five stations where they explore instructional strategies of curriculum compacting, choice, flexible grouping, and tiered assignments. When thinking about professional learning communities, the sessions illustrate what to do when students already know the material. One teacher wrote, *"I was able to learn new features of Newsela to use with my students. The writing component is a game-changer."* Another responded, *"I love the stations!!! I didn't realize I needed that even as a teacher."* One educator added, *"I was able to better understand myself while reading and take the time I needed to process the information."* Teachers can register for one of the remaining 10 sessions in Frontline.



Teachers at Dunwoody Elementary spent time exploring the instructional resources provided by the Department of Gifted Education. Teachers explored the reproducible books from The Critical Thinking Company. They also created online reading assignments in Newsela which can be differentiated to meet the needs of their learners.

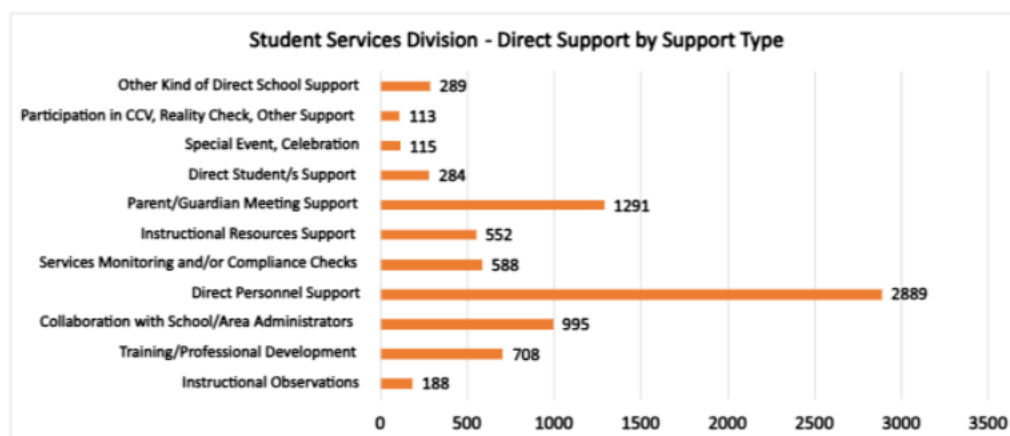
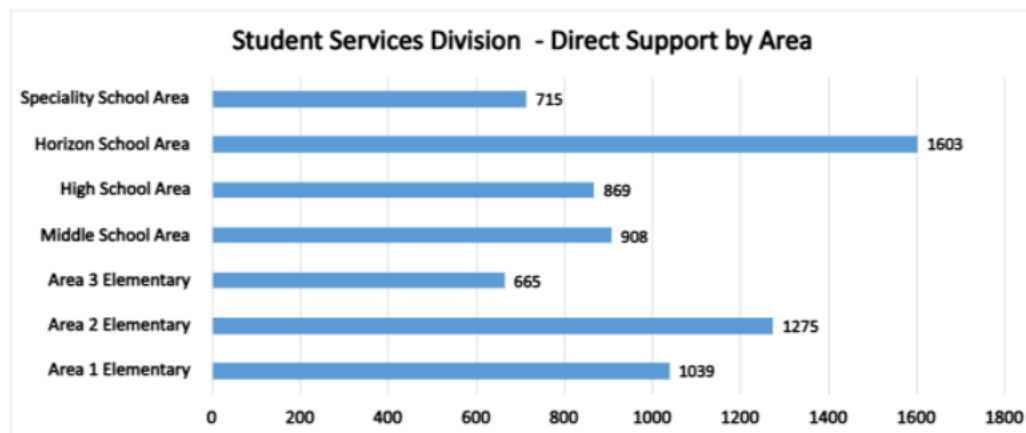


Direct School Supports by the Gifted Education Team Since Start of School Year



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

Direct School Supports by Division of Student Students Services' Personnel Since Start of School Year



Chief Dr. Kishia Towns

Wrap Around Services

IEI Roadshow at Towers High School

The Division of Wrap Around Services sponsored a roadshow for the Institute of Education Innovation Friday, October 3, 2025. Ms. Tiffany Law, Director of Partner Relations, toured Towers High School's Student Success Center and the Student and Family Engagement (SAFE) Center including the garden. Mr. Christopher Key, Executive Director of Student Advancement, discussed the Post-Secondary P.U.S.H. Plan. The plan provides academic support integrated with varied strategies and interventions to prepare Dekalb County School District high school students for postsecondary education, employment opportunities, entrepreneurial opportunities, or for military careers. The integration of career-focused and academic content includes an annual review of individual graduation plans, virtual learning opportunities, early warning notification of course failures, and credit recovery. Support also includes a focus on attendance which is critical for students to master academic content

Pre-K Reading with Fantasia the Book Fairy

On Tuesday, October 7, 2025, Fantasia the Book Fairy came to the Early Learning Center as a guest to read to the scholars during Georgia Pre-K Week. Fantasia had a wonderful time reading to Ms. Jackson's Pre-K3 class where she met several boys and girls who loved to swing, dance, and sing. All the scholars enjoyed the reading time, but Fantasia the Book Fairy loved it most of all. Next year, she will return to read more adventurous stories that will excite scholars at the Early Learning Center.



Early Learning Center Awarded a Donation from Georgia United Credit Union

The Early Learning Center (ELC), a free preschool program for 3 and 4-year-olds within the DeKalb County School District, was awarded \$3,500 from the Georgia United Credit Union to assist the scholars with financial literacy. Financial literacy is important because it empowers individuals to make sound financial decisions, leading to greater stability, reduced stress, and the ability to achieve long-term goals. Congratulations to Mr. Anderson Spince, principal of ELC and the ELC staff!



MBK-OSK Induction Ceremony

Miller Grove High School sponsored the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) and Our Sister's Keeper (OSK) induction for middle and high school students on October 27, 2025. MBK and OSK encourage scholars to embrace their potential, reach new heights, and thrive in every aspect of life. The families were excited to participate in the ceremony to uplift the scholars throughout the district. Moving forward, MBK will ensure student success by supporting academic achievement, service, and mentorship for young men of color as they become productive citizens of this global society who will continuously give back to their community. OSK will prepare our young ladies with skills that transcend beyond the classroom and prepare them for the future by empowering them to thrive GLOW; Glowing. Innovative. Resilient. Leader.

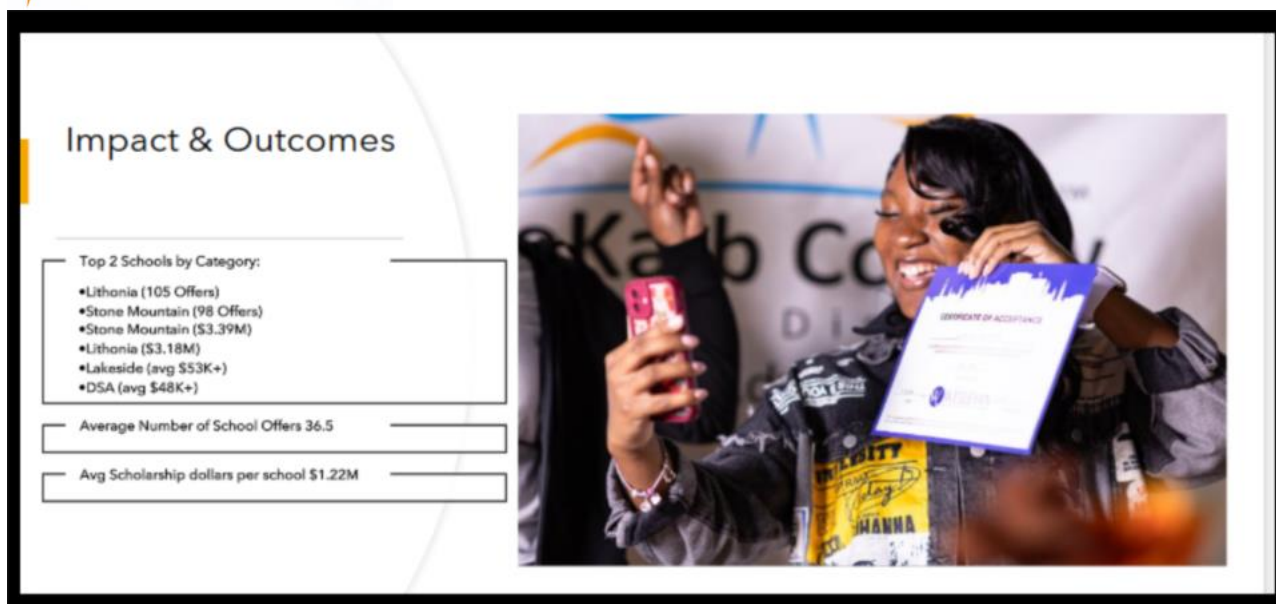


Executive Director Christopher Key

Student Advancement

Post-Secondary Transition Office

Post-Secondary Transition Specialists, Senior Advisors, and Senior Coordinator for Student Advancement supported scholars who attended the Infinite Scholars Free College Scholarship Fair during Fall Break. Approximately 6.8 million dollars were tentatively awarded to seniors during the three-day event. The Post-Secondary Transition Team sponsored a Scholarship Symposium for DCSD Scholars which resulted in scholars receiving over 29 million dollars in scholarship offers.



Celebrating Excellence in School Counseling

School Counseling Department is proud to spotlight two outstanding Professional School Counselors who have been recognized as Educational Support Professional II of the Year at their respective schools: Amanda Staples, Counselor II at *DeKalb School of the Arts*, and Jonathan Hughes, Counselor II at *Stephenson High School*. Their dedication and impact have played a vital role in advancing student success and school achievement.

DeKalb School of the Arts celebrated a remarkable accomplishment as one of only four schools in the district to achieve a 100% graduation rate. Stephenson High School also earned high distinction as one of the Top 6 Schools for Highest Scores in the District, with a notable 3.13% increase in its 4-Year Graduation Rate, reaching 86.10% for Cohort 2025.

Ms. Staples and Mr. Hughes played a critical role in these outcomes through consistent monitoring aligned with the district's Post-Secondary Push Plan and active participation in monthly Operation Graduation meetings. Their efforts helped ensure students were supported in crossing the stage prepared for their futures—whether through Enlistment, Employment, Entrepreneurship, or Enrollment, as outlined in the district's Four E's Plan.

In addition to his school-level recognition, Jonathan Hughes was selected as the Area High Schools Educational Support Professional II of the Year, honoring his outstanding commitment to student advocacy and meaningful service within the high school area of the DeKalb County School District.



Director Denise Revels

Wrap Around and Support Services

The Prevention/Intervention program continues to promote wellness and foster a healthy school environment. In alignment with this commitment, we have partnered with Wellroot Family Services to provide trauma-informed tools and resources that support our students' emotional and mental well-being. The Reaching Teens Resiliency Training has been provided to SAFE Center Liaisons, select Student Engagement Coaches and additional staff members to provide consistent programming across SAFE Centers and middle schools with sensory rooms. The training equips staff with strategies to strengthen resilience, enhance emotional safety, and ensure that every student has access to a supportive environment where they feel valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

DeKalb County Schools Homeless Education Program Partners with Soles4Souls and Frontline Response

Through a generous donation of new shoes and socks, Soles4Souls is helping to uplift homeless and foster children across DeKalb County Schools. This partnership provides more than just footwear; it offers dignity, confidence, and a sense of belonging to students facing challenging circumstances. New shoes can improve school attendance, participation in physical activities, and self-esteem, helping children feel supported and ready to learn. This initiative was made possible through a grant written by Sonja Tobler, Homeless and Foster Care Social Work Liaison.



Additionally, Ms. Tobler coordinated a Lunch and Learn for School Social Workers with Frontline Response, a community agency that provides emergency shelter, outreach, and support services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in DeKalb County. During the session, social workers learned about the agency's programs, referral process, and ways to collaborate more effectively to assist students and families experiencing housing instability.

Partnering with community organizations plays a vital role in supporting the overall well-being and academic success of students. These collaborations extend the reach of school-based services, ensuring that students and families have access to essential resources that address barriers to learning. By working together, schools and community partners create a network of care that fosters stability, builds resilience, and empowers students to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

DeKalb School of the Arts Small Group Series

DeKalb School of the Arts (DSA) High School has launched a small student group series coordinated by School Social Worker Mrs. Cofer. The series focuses on organizational skills, managing anxiety, and identifying and using effective coping strategies. DSA is a distinguished school offering a rigorous academic and artistic curriculum. Given the intensity of the workload, both students and staff combined resources to provide a safe environment where students can learn skills to manage the positive stress that arises from their drive to succeed.

All small groups are held in the newly established DSA's Wrap Around and Support Services, Safe Space, where students can come during lunchtime and participate in the sessions. Students are identified by teachers, parents, or may self-refer after learning about the benefits of the program. The goal of this small group series aligns with the DCSD Strategic Plan, Goal 5.2: Increase awareness of factors that can impact mental health to foster well-managed learning environments.



Director Dr. Darnell Logan

Student Relations

Student Relations supported student discipline and placement processes through District Due Process Hearings and related reviews. A total of 66 District Due Process Hearings were scheduled, with 11 canceled or withdrawn by schools, two dismissed, and two resulting in manifestation determinations. The school teams conducted 12 Discipline Team Meetings, and there were no Board or State appeals presented during this reporting period. Additionally, 17 students were cleared to return to DeKalb County Schools.

DeKalb County Juvenile Court Collaboration

The DeKalb County Juvenile Court operates two accountability court programs that provide intensive support and intervention for youth offenders. The Journey Program supports youth whose offenses are connected to mental illness, with six students currently receiving services. The Rebound Program provides structured support for youth on probation to maintain a drug-free

lifestyle, with ten students currently enrolled. Students in either program who attend DeKalb County schools also receive academic and behavioral support from the district's Student Engagement Coach for Juvenile Justice, who utilizes the Check & Connect model to monitor attendance, behavior, and grades and provide individualized intervention.

Dr. Darnell Logan and Ms. Cassandra Davis represent the DeKalb County School District in both accountability courts and attend four sessions each month. Rebound Court convenes on the second and fourth Tuesday, and Journey Court meets on the second and fourth Thursday. On October 21, 2025, two DeKalb County students successfully graduated from the Rebound Program.

Disconnect to Reconnect

Disconnect to Reconnect shows strong implementation across schools over the past month, based on observation and walk-through data collected using the Disconnect to Reconnect Observation Walk-Through Form. Data was gathered by PBIS District Coaches and Culture and Climate Coordinators. Most staff are clearly communicating expectations, and students are generally keeping phones off and put away during instruction, which has resulted in calmer classrooms, improved engagement, and fewer disruptions. Staff are also responding to minor phone issues using non-punitive strategies that reinforce expectations without escalating discipline.

The data also reveals a few key areas that need continued support to ensure consistent implementation. Visual signage remains inconsistent, and some classrooms are not reinforcing expectations throughout the day and during transitions. These areas should be prioritized for improvement to strengthen clarity and consistency across all schools. Overall, the initiative is showing an early positive impact and is well positioned for continued success.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

The PBIS District Team conducted the PBIS School Coaches Meeting on October 9, 2025, with over 70 participants in attendance. School coaches shared best practices for acknowledgment and feedback systems, and participants reviewed the Product Book process. Magic School AI facilitated a learning session on using the platform to analyze Tier I discipline data, develop problem statements and goals, and identify strategies for prevention, teaching, and recognition. Lunch was provided by Magic School AI, catered by Chick-fil-A. On the same day, the first Whole Child Supports District Leadership Team meeting was held with Chiefs and designees from the Divisions of Wrap Around Services, Schools and Leadership, and Curriculum and Instruction. Leah Black, Whole Child Supports Coordinator at Metro RESA, facilitated the session. Division Chiefs will meet with Dr. Sauce to finalize District Leadership Team membership and roles in implementing GaMTSS for DeKalb in partnership with Metro RESA. Establishing this team fulfills a requirement of Georgia's MTSS Recognition System and supports the integration of academics, behavior, well-being, and attendance to improve districtwide outcomes. The PBIS District Team conducted ISS Intervention Program Training for Culture and Climate Coordinators.