

Forward Together Staff Forum FAQ

This document summarizes questions submitted by staff in advance of the Forward Together Forum, along with district responses and areas identified for continued review. Themes reflect issues raised across multiple schools and roles.

Payroll, Time Approval, and MUNIS Processes

Q: Why are teachers and salaried employees being asked to approve time in MUNIS?

A: The requirement is tied to payroll accuracy, federal reporting, and audit compliance controls. The district acknowledges that the process may feel burdensome and is reviewing opportunities to streamline the workflow while maintaining legal and financial accountability expectations.

Compensation, Raises, Retention, and Contracts

Q: Will DeKalb teachers receive a pay raise or retention bonuses in the coming cycle?

A: Compensation remains a district priority. Retention bonuses were funded by the federal government with ESSR funds. That source is no longer available. Salary schedules and contract structures are being reviewed through the formal budget process. Final decisions must occur within that process to ensure responsible budgeting and sustainability.

Q: Why did some administrative roles receive increases when other employee groups did not?

A: Compensation adjustments are tied to different funding sources, position structures, and market alignment reviews. The district is continuing to evaluate competitiveness for all employee groups with a focus on retention and equity.

Security, Safety, and Campus Incidents

Q: How is the district addressing concerns related to Evolv systems, vape detectors, and school safety incidents?

A: School safety is addressed through layered strategies that include safety personnel, technology tools, prevention programs, and procedures. The district is reviewing the performance and placement of safety tools and continues to adjust safety approaches based on data, school needs, and best-practice guidance.

Q: How will the district respond to reports of break-ins during the instructional day?

A: School leadership, Public Safety, and Operations teams review security incidents, reinforce protocols, and support schools in addressing identified vulnerabilities.

Technology and Equipment Allocation

Q: Why are some part-time teachers returning laptops while paraprofessionals are allowed to keep them?

A: Equipment allocation is tied to funding rules and role functions; however, the district has heard concerns that the practice may not fully account for instructional responsibilities in some part-time roles. A review has been initiated to ensure instructional access remains the priority.

Immigration-Related Concerns and ICE Activity

Q: How will the district support students and families affected by immigration enforcement concerns?

A: While school systems do not control federal enforcement activity, schools remain committed to providing safe and welcome learning environments. The district is working with Legal and Student Support Services to provide clearer protocols and guidance for staff awareness and student support where appropriate.

Workload, Planning Time, and Class Size

Q: What is the district doing to address workload, planning time, and large class sizes?

A: The district is reviewing staffing models, scheduling structures, and opportunities to expand protected planning and collaboration time while balancing resource constraints and staffing availability.

Literacy, Instructional Pacing, and Curriculum Flexibility

Q: Will the district reconsider pacing plans and approaches that rely primarily on excerpt-based materials?

A: Feedback from teachers has been heard and is valued. Teaching and Learning will continue working with educators to ensure curriculum guidance supports deep instruction and professional judgment while maintaining academic expectations.

Enrollment Imbalance and Resource Distribution

Q: How is the district addressing overcrowding in some schools and under-enrollment in others?

A: Enrollment imbalances affect staffing, programming, and resources. The district is engaged in long-term planning work called the Student Assignment Planning, SAP.

Facilities, HVAC, Mold, and Environmental Conditions

Q: What is being done regarding HVAC challenges, mold, and building environment concerns?

A: Facilities conditions remain a priority. Remediation and upgrades are prioritized based on severity, environmental safety standards, and regulatory guidance, with communication shared as projects progress.

Remote Work Flexibility

Q: Will administrative staff continue to be allowed remote work options?

A: Remote-work practices are being reviewed to ensure alignment with operational needs, service expectations, and role responsibilities. No permanent changes have been finalized at this time.

Artificial Intelligence in Schools

Q: How does the district plan to use AI while protecting privacy and instructional integrity?

A: The district has an AI committee meeting to determine best practices for DCSD staff and students.

Discipline Consistency and Learning Environment Concerns

Q: Will there be changes to discipline policies or implementation consistency?

A: Feedback regarding discipline implementation has been shared with school leadership. The district continues to review practices to support safe and orderly learning environments while maintaining equitable student supports.

Staff Review and Evaluation Timelines

Q: Why are so many staff reviews and paperwork deadlines scheduled in February?

A: The district acknowledges concerns about workload clustering and is reviewing evaluation timelines and expectations in relation to instructional demands.

Teacher Leadership, Innovation, and Strengths-Based Culture

Q: How can the district better recognize successful practices at the school level and honor teacher leadership?

A: The district is committed to improving collaboration structures, elevating school-based successes, and strengthening a culture that values educator expertise and professional voice.

Instructional Models, Special Education, and SDI

Q: What is the district's position regarding the Resource Model and SDI implementation in middle grades?

A: The district continues to review instructional programming to ensure alignment with individualized student needs, federal requirements, and least-restrictive environment determinations.

Disconnect to Reconnect Policy

Q: Will the Disconnect to Reconnect policy continue?

A: The district continues to monitor implementation, review outcomes, and assess consistency across schools. Feedback regarding the practice has been shared with district leadership for continued evaluation.

Compensation Competitiveness Compared to Neighboring Districts

Q: How will the district remain competitive in compensation and retention?

A: Leadership is reviewing compensation models as part of the upcoming budget cycle to ensure the district remains competitive in recruiting and retaining a high-quality workforce.

Publishing Forum Answers and Accountability

Q: Will the district publish written responses from the forum?

A: Yes. A written summary will be published following the forum for staff who could not attend and for ongoing reference. Also, the meeting was available live online and is posted on YouTube.

Personnel Accusation-Based Questions

Q: How does the district respond to questions involving specific employees or allegations?

A: The district does not discuss individual personnel matters in public settings. Employee concerns are addressed through established review and accountability processes to ensure fairness, accuracy, and legal compliance.

Thank you to all staff who submitted questions. Your feedback helps inform decision-making and strengthens our shared work on behalf of students.