

2026-2027



 **DeKalb County**
School District

COMMUNITY L.E.A.D. ACADEMY

BUILDING FUTURES. EMPOWERING LEADERS.

LISTEN

ENGAGE

ALIGN

DELIVER

COHORT DIRECTORY



2026-2027 COMMUNITY L.E.A.D. ACADEMY COHORT DIRECTORY



Erik Anderson

Vice President of Enterprise Sales and Public Sector
Stratix

Erik Anderson is Vice President of Enterprise Sales and Public Sector for Stratix, where he leads the company's nationwide Enterprise Account Sales Team and drives growth across enterprise and public sector markets. He also personally leads Stratix's education technology initiatives, partnering with some of the nation's largest K-12 school districts to optimize device lifecycle management, support services, and technology investments.

With more than 42 years of experience in mobile computing and enterprise technology, Erik has built a career spanning mobility solutions, managed services, and executive leadership. Prior to Stratix, he held leadership positions with Symbol Technologies and emerging technology companies focused on transportation and onboard computing. Erik holds degrees in Business Administration and Finance from Bradley University.



Jeneen Andrews

DeKalb Area Manager
Georgia Power

Jeneen Andrews serves as the DeKalb Area Manager for Georgia Power, leading external engagement and strengthening the company's community and business presence throughout DeKalb County. With more than 26 years of service at Georgia Power, Jeneen has built a diverse career across External Affairs, Community Engagement, Accounting and Finance, Internal Controls, Compliance, and HR Administration. She is an active community leader, serving on multiple boards including higher education, workforce development, chambers of commerce, and nonprofit organizations. Jeneen holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and is a graduate of several regional leadership programs.

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Charles Atkinson

City Manager
City of Doraville

Charles Atkinson is the City Manager for the City of Doraville, having been appointed to the position on April 1, 2026. He previously served as Doraville's Chief of Police. He began his career with the City of Doraville in 1993 as a member of the Doraville Police Department. A graduate of the University of West Georgia with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science, he also holds a Master's in Public Administration from Columbus State University and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, 216th Session. During his career with the City of Doraville, he has served in numerous positions and divisions and has held both police and city management responsibilities. Charles Atkinson is a member of Chapter 8 of the Police Unity Tour, where he serves as a Trustee on the Board of Directors. Outside of work, he enjoys cycling and sports of all kinds.



Lauren Bateman

Global TBM Finance Lead
FedEx

Lauren Bateman serves as a Global Technology Business Management Finance Lead at FedEx. A proud DeKalb County native, she is raising her three sons in the community that shaped her. In addition to her professional leadership, Lauren serves on Decide DeKalb's Technology Advisory Board and the Georgia Tech Scheller College of Business Young Alumni Advisory Board. She earned an Executive MBA from Georgia Tech, along with bachelor's degrees in Finance and Hospitality Management from Tuskegee University. Driven by a commitment to youth development, Lauren works to expand access to educational and career opportunities for young people throughout DeKalb.



Ernest L. Brown

Community Member

Ernest L. Brown has been an active partner with the DeKalb County School District over the past 25 years. He has served in leadership roles on several county-wide DCSD committees, all with a focus on reviewing and strengthening the internal systems and relationships that support student success. His contributions and perspectives come from 40+ years professional experience in IT, critical and strategic thinking, along with a leadership style grounded in collaboration, clarity, and service.



Shelly Browning Bason

Sr. Project Manager
Engage DeKalb

Shelly Browning Bason is a community leader, project management professional, and passionate advocate for students, families, and strong communities. She is a longtime DeKalb County resident and proud parent of a DCSD scholar.

Shelly is committed to strengthening community engagement, building meaningful partnerships, and helping create opportunities for the future success of all DeKalb County students and families. She is particularly passionate about expanding exposure to future technologies, skilled trades, innovation, and career pathways while engaging parents as active partners in preparing our rising scholars for the future.

Through her service as a DeKalb County Community Ambassador and involvement in civic, nonprofit, and several community initiatives, Shelly brings a collaborative, solutions-focused perspective to public service. She is honored to be part of the inaugural Community L.E.A.D. Academy and looks forward to listening, learning, and partnering with fellow leaders and DCSD stakeholders to help build a stronger future for all DeKalb County.

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Annette J. Cousin

Vice President

110% Foundation

Annette J. Cousin is a retired DeKalb County School District employee and has proudly called South DeKalb home for more than 50 years. She is the mother of two DCSD graduates and currently serves as Vice President of the 110% Foundation, a DCSD community partner serving schools and communities throughout DeKalb County. She is also the writer of “To Know God Is to Prepare, Pray, and Praise Him for His Glory: H.O.P.E. in a Book”. Her passion is “Serving Others” and “Helping Other People Endure”. Through the Community LEAD Academy, she looks forward to gaining a deeper understanding of the inner workings of DCSD so that she may continue to better serve DeKalb County stakeholders, schools, and communities.



Jamesia Craig

Executive Director

College AIM

Jamesia Craig is the Executive Director of College AIM, a DeKalb County nonprofit helping students uncover, own, and act on their ambitions through postsecondary pathways that lead to opportunity. Jamesia brings 10 years of experience supporting students from high school through college and into meaningful careers, helping them achieve economic mobility for themselves and their families. Through College AIM’s longstanding partnership with DeKalb County School District, she works alongside schools and community partners to ensure students have the support they need to thrive beyond high school. As a resident of the greater Towers community, Jamesia is personally committed to strengthening the communities she serves and creating greater opportunities for students and families to thrive.



Tiffany Cuthbert

Executive Director
Pillars Initiative

Tiffany Cuthbert is a DeKalb County native and proud product of DeKalb County School District who has built her career around strengthening communities and creating opportunities for young people and families. She is the Founder and Executive Director of Pillars Initiative, where she leads community-based initiatives focused on behavioral health, substance misuse prevention, youth development, family engagement, and community partnerships. With more than a decade of nonprofit and public service leadership, Tiffany works across schools, government agencies, nonprofits, and community organizations to strengthen systems of support and expand access to resources. She holds master's degrees in Educational Leadership and Nonprofit Management and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Social Work Policy, Planning and Administration, and Social Science at Clark Atlanta University's Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work.



Janikqua Cutno

Corporate Director, Office of Health Impact
Emory Healthcare

Janikqua Cutno is a social impact strategist and strategic leader with expertise in developing cross-sector strategies that strengthen communities, mobilize partnerships and drive social change.

As Corporate Director of the Office of Health Impact at Emory Healthcare, she provides leadership for enterprise-wide initiatives that advance community investment, partnerships and social impact across the health system. Janikqua has led initiatives spanning violence prevention, workforce development, community engagement and organizational strategy, building high-performing partnerships across healthcare, government, philanthropy and community organizations to address complex social challenges through sustainable, systems-level solutions.

Janikqua holds Bachelor and Master of Social Work degrees from Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and is pursuing a Doctor of Social Work at Tulane University, where her research explores the intersection of economic mobility, cross-sector collaboration and community transformation.

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Jetaun Davis

Director, Admission - New Staff Experience & Community Engagement
Emory University Office of Undergraduate Admission

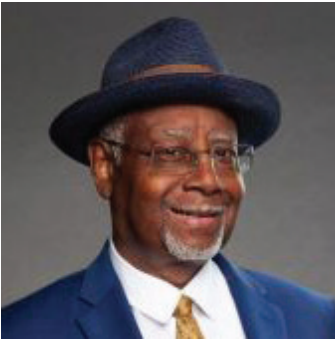
Jetaun Davis serves as the Director of Admission - New Staff Experience & Community Engagement at Emory University, where she oversees local community relations across the Atlanta metropolitan area. A graduate of Lakeside High School in DCSD and a first-generation college student, she is deeply committed to expanding college access and helping students navigate pathways to higher education. She earned her Bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and a Master of Science in Communication from Northwestern University.



David Felfoldi

President/Founder
Creative Catalyst Collective, Inc.

David Felfoldi is an entrepreneur, community leader, and education policy researcher. He founded Creative Catalyst Collective, a nonprofit supporting student creativity and collaborative problem-solving, and has been actively involved in DeKalb County School District programs and planning initiatives. David is a longtime Brookhaven resident and parent of two DCSD students.



Silas Frazier Jr.

CEO

Silas Frazier Realty LLC

Silas Frazier Jr. is a former DeKalb County School District teacher and retired Gwinnett County School System assistant principal. He has been the Broker for Silas Frazier Realty LLC for the last 26 years. He has been successful with helping people in DeKalb and other counties with their real estate needs. Silas Frazier Jr. and his company Silas Frazier Realty LLC are always looking for ways to help young people be successful by providing financial assistance for their education.



Stacy Garmon

Executive Director

Leadership Perimeter

Stacy Garmon is an experienced nonprofit and community leader who currently serves as Executive Director of Leadership Perimeter, where she provides strategic leadership and oversees the organization's programs, operations, partnerships, and financial sustainability. With more than a decade of leadership experience across nonprofit and business organizations, Stacy has a proven track record in strategic planning, fundraising, organizational growth, stakeholder engagement, and building strong business and community partnerships. She is passionate about connecting leaders and organizations to create meaningful, lasting impact in the communities they serve.

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Dr. Jasmin Goodman

Sr. Director of Academic Programming
Trilith Institute

Jasmin M. Goodman, Ph.D. is a higher education leader with a deep commitment to supporting students from the classroom to the workforce. She serves as Senior Director of Academic Programming at Trilith Institute, where she develops accessible training pathways for learners entering the film and television industry, and as an adjunct professor at Clark Atlanta University. A Truist Foundation Fellow, Dr. Goodman has partnered with school systems, corporations, and civic organizations to explore how communities can better prepare students and workers for the future of work. An active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she recently co-led the organization's HBCU Impact Day College Fair, connecting over 3,000 metro-Atlanta students with postsecondary opportunities. A proud DeKalb County resident and alumna of Clark Atlanta University, Ohio University, and Howard University, Dr. Goodman is committed to building the civic and educational infrastructure that ensures students have a clear and supported path from the classroom to a thriving career.



Linda Hernandez-Chavez

Member Services Associate
Technology Association of Georgia

Linda Hernandez-Chavez currently works as a Member Services Associate at the Technology Association of Georgia, where she supports member engagement and helps foster meaningful connections within the technology community. She's also a recent graduate of Georgia State University with a degree in Computer Information Systems and Marketing and a proud member of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. She loves working with nonprofit organizations and giving back to her community through volunteering. She also enjoys planning educational and social events throughout Atlanta that bring people together, create meaningful connections, and provide opportunities for growth. She believes that everyone deserves equal access to quality education and is passionate about helping close educational gaps and creating more equitable opportunities for students and communities. Through her work, community involvement, and leadership, she hopes to continue making a positive impact in Atlanta and beyond.



Nakhia Hill

Education Chair

NAACP DeKalb Branch

Nakhia Hill is a lifelong DeKalb County resident, education leader, parent advocate, NAACP DeKalb education chair and newly selected GeorgiaCAN Fellow with more than 20 years of experience in educational leadership, instructional development, and community engagement. She is committed to building stronger partnerships between families, schools, and community organizations. She works to ensure every child has access to a high-quality education.

Nakhia Hill is passionate about elevating student voice and seeks to do so in every role she has had. She has served as a district instructional materials manager, district mentor, instructional development and design specialist, program administrator, instructional coach, math department chair, secondary math teacher, high school dance team coach at Cedar Grove and Tucker High, JV cheerleading coach at Tucker Middle and High, and lifelong PTSA member. Her students remain the echo of what drives her work.



Crispin Ilombe Wilondja

Student and Community Engagement Manager

Global Village Project Inc.

Reverend Crispin Ilombe Wilondja serves as Pastor of Faith and Grace and Good Samaritan Lutheran Ministries in Decatur, Georgia. He also serves as the Students and Community Engagement Manager at Global Village Project, a school dedicated to supporting refugee girls through education.

Originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Reverend Ilombe Wilondja is deeply passionate about ensuring that every child has access to quality education. He believes that education is the foundation of opportunity and that every child deserves the chance to learn, grow, and thrive.

As both a pastor and a parent, Reverend Ilombe Wilondja is committed to advocating for children's education and equipping parents with the support and resources they need to help prepare their children for a successful future.

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Andrea Jayaraman

Manager

Discovery Education

Andrea Jayaraman is a dedicated career educator and public education advocate with deep roots in Georgia classrooms. Her journey began in 2004 in DeKalb County, where she first stepped into the classroom—the very same school her youngest child now attends.

Over the years, she's worn many hats across the educational landscape, serving as a lead teacher, professional development coach, and library media assistant. Having earned a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in instructional technology, she is passionate about bridging the gap between educational policy and everyday classroom practice, connecting stakeholders, and championing innovative practices that help build Georgia's future workforce.



Damaris Johnson

Clinical Director/CEO

The Walk of Life Counseling Center

Damaris Johnson, LMFT, is the Clinical Director and Founder of The Walk of Life Counseling Center, a private practice based in Atlanta, Georgia. For over eleven years, the practice has provided therapy services to individuals, couples, and families under her leadership.

Damaris holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Georgia and a Master's degree in Marriage & Family Therapy from Mercer University. Her clinical focus spans relationship and family dynamics, with particular attention to maternal mental health.



Lauren Lamoly

Director of High School Initiatives
Georgia Piedmont Technical College

Lauren Lamoly is the Director of High School Initiatives at Georgia Piedmont Technical College, where she leads partnerships that expand access to college and career opportunities for high school students across DeKalb, Newton, and Rockdale counties. She holds an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, M.A. in English from San Diego State University, and a B.A. in English from the University of Lynchburg. Lauren's career has taken her from advocacy through K-12 classrooms, corporate learning and development, and higher education, including several years at Lakeside High School, where she worked closely with students and families navigating the transition from high school into what comes next. That experience shaped how she approaches her current work: building systems that are not just accessible on paper, but genuinely responsive to the students moving through them. She is especially energized by work that brings schools, colleges, families, and community partners together to create real opportunities for young people.

Lauren lives in the Druid Hills High School Cluster of DCSD with her wife, Jess, a DCSD graduate, and their three-year-old son, Jules, a future DCSD student.



Brittney Lindsay

Community Engagement Director
City of Chamblee

Brittney Lindsay is a community engagement and events professional passionate about creating meaningful experiences that connect people, strengthen communities, and bring cities to life. With a background in event production, community programming, communications, marketing, tourism, and civic engagement, she leads initiatives that foster connection, celebrate culture, and create opportunities for communities and businesses to thrive. As Community Engagement Director for the City of Chamblee, Brittney has spent eight years developing and leading award-winning events and community programs. Prior to joining Chamblee, she served as Manager of Marketing and Communications in the private sector, partnering with cities and counties on various planning and community development projects.

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Karen Love

Senior Literacy Executive
Scholastic

Karen Love is a Senior Account Executive with Scholastic Education, where she partners with school districts and educational leaders to advance literacy achievement, family engagement, and student success. With more than 20 years of experience in education, she has served as a classroom teacher and educational leader in roles including Federal Programs Coordinator, Arts Excel Grant Facilitator, and Gifted and Talented Program Facilitator. Karen earned a Master of Science in Teaching Early Childhood Education from Fordham University and remains committed to lifelong learning and educational excellence.

Beyond her professional work, Karen values time with family, friends, and her beloved dogs. She believes strong relationships, lifelong learning, and service to others are at the heart of meaningful success.

"Let all that you do be done in love."

1 Corinthians 16:14



Aaron Lupuloff

Vertical Markets Director
Stratix

Aaron Lupuloff serves as the Director of Education Vertical Markets, continuing his long-standing commitment to expanding access to technology in schools. He brings proven experience working with districts to deliver sustainable, cost-effective programs that support students, educators, and IT leaders alike. With a career spanning leadership roles in education, nonprofit development, and community engagement, he brings a unique perspective on the intersection of technology, innovation, and organizational impact. Prior to joining Stratix, he spent more than a decade with Gwinnett County Public Schools, serving as Senior Executive Director and is currently the President of the GCPS Foundation Board.

During his tenure, he championed initiatives that expanded educational opportunities, strengthened community partnerships, and increased access to resources that support student achievement and educator success. At Stratix, he focuses on helping education and healthcare leaders navigate complex technology challenges by implementing sustainable, cost-effective mobility and managed service solutions. He continues to advocate for innovative approaches that empower students, educators, healthcare professionals, and the communities they serve.



Pastor Demetrius McCoy

Senior Pastor

Redemption Life Church

Pastor Demetrius McCoy is a dedicated public servant and a proud native of DeKalb County. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, where he was initiated as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Demetrius holds a Master of Science degree in Organizational Leadership. He is also a graduate of the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Bright Futures Leadership Development Program. Pastor McCoy began his public service career advocating for veterans in the Office of Congressman John Barrow. With over 10 years of experience, he has served in the DeKalb County CEO's office and now works as Chief of Staff to Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson. Demetrius oversees the day-to-day operations of the District office, manages the budget, handles Boards and Commission appointments, and drives the Commissioner's policy initiatives.

Demetrius serves as Senior Pastor of Redemption Life Church and is a small business owner. Demetrius and his wife, Dr. Mariah Crew McCoy, are the proud parents of Demetrius Jr. and Malik.



Norma Mendoza

Youth Services Program Manager

Latin American Association

Norma Mendoza is a bilingual youth development and community engagement leader with more than 15 years of experience creating educational opportunities and building partnerships that strengthen young people, families, and communities. She moved to the United States at age 16, graduated from Stone Mountain High School, earned an associate degree in Business Administration from Perimeter College's Clarkston campus, and later earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from Mercer University as a first-generation college graduate. After more than a decade of advancing leadership opportunities for girls through the Girl Scouts, Norma now serves as Youth Services Program Manager at the Latin American Association, where she leads programs that empower Latino middle and high school students through leadership development, academic support, family engagement, and college and career readiness. Her lived experience fuels her commitment to helping students navigate educational systems, access meaningful opportunities, and recognize their voices and experiences as sources of strength. As the proud mother of two DeKalb County School District scholars, Norma's dedication to public education is both deeply personal and central to her work as a community advocate.

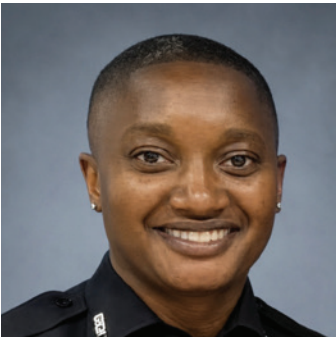
2026-2027 COMMUNITY L.E.A.D. ACADEMY COHORT DIRECTORY



ChaQuias Miller-Thornton

City Manager, CEO/CAO
City of Clarkston

Ms. ChaQuias Miller-Thornton brings extensive knowledge, proven leadership, and a strong commitment to excellence in public service to the role of City Manager for the City of Clarkston (DeKalb County). She serves as the City's Chief Executive and Administrative Officer, responsible for overseeing daily operations, guiding departmental leadership, advising the governing body, informing policy, implementing policy directives, ensuring the delivery of services to the Clarkston community, and advancing projects and initiatives that lead to sustainable growth. Ms. Miller-Thornton's connection to DeKalb County spans more than a decade and includes distinguished service in other DeKalb cities such as Stone Mountain and Pine Lake; service (as a resident and parent) on the Parent Advisory Committee for Stephenson High School; membership in the Leadership DeKalb Class of 2017; and long-term appointment to the Georgia Municipal Association's Federal Policy Council (serving the 4th Congressional District which includes DeKalb County). Ms. Miller-Thornton considers herself a public servant who is working to be a trusted partner within the community, the region, and the state. Her motto is that of the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being..."He who profits most is he who serves best."



Africa Mingo

PAL Detective
DeKalb County Police Department

Detective Mingo currently serves with the DeKalb County Police Department on the Police Athletic League (PAL) Unit. Detective Mingo has proudly worked for DeKalb County for eight years and remains committed to serving, mentoring, and creating meaningful opportunities for young people and families throughout the community.

Detective Mingo's passion for PAL is deeply personal because she grew up participating in PAL programs in the Bronx, New York. That experience inspired her to use her position in law enforcement to build trust, strengthen relationships, and help young people see police officers as mentors, supporters, and positive role models.

She also works closely with schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government leaders, and community partners to secure donations, resources, jobs, and memorable opportunities for underserved youth and families. Her goal is to continue bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community while helping every young person we serve feel supported, valued, and empowered to build a successful future.



Lawonna Mosley Pope

Chief Financial Officer

Partnership Against Domestic Violence

Lawonna Y. Mosley Pope is an accomplished executive leader with more than 24 years of experience in finance, operations, human resources, nonprofit leadership, and organizational transformation. She has successfully led organizations through financial turnarounds, strengthened internal controls, improved operational performance, developed high-performing teams, and helped position organizations for sustainable growth.

Lawonna has served in senior leadership roles including Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Controller, and Human Resources leader. Her expertise spans financial management, strategic planning, budgeting, compliance, organizational development, employee relations, and community engagement. Lawonna holds a BA in Accounting, MBA in Business, and holds the SHRM-SCP credential.

Lawonna and her husband, Johnston Pope, reside in DeKalb County, Georgia. She is a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, woman of faith, and community leader who enjoys traveling, golf, reading, and inspiring others to pursue purpose-driven lives.



Jeannie Myers

Director of Academics & Outreach

Los Niños Primero, Inc

Jeannie Adams Myers, Ed.S., is the Director of Academics & Outreach for Los Niños Primero with extensive experience in the public education sector, including charter and dual immersion settings. With a strong focus on equity in education, she has demonstrated ability in compliance, community outreach, and professional development. Recognized for her leadership and advocacy, she was the recipient of the Los Niños Primero Angel Award in 2019, selected as a Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) Champion (2023 cohort), and led the work that earned Los Niños Primero the GSAN Excellence Award in 2025.

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Liat Oren

President and Co-founder

Building Community Thru Conversation

Liat Oren is a community leader, education advocate, and mother of three children in DCSD. She is deeply involved in her children's schools and in district and community initiatives, serving in PTA leadership, parent advisory roles, and committees focused on strengthening public education and family engagement.

Trained in law, Liat brings a background in international affairs, diplomacy, economic affairs, human resources, and organizational leadership, with professional experience in both the United States and Europe. She is also the co-founder and president of BCTCTalks.org, a nonprofit that brings people from different backgrounds together to reduce hatred, broaden perspectives, and foster understanding across communities and cultures through meaningful conversation.

She enjoys traveling, connecting people, dancing to good music, and spending time outdoors with her husband, their three children, and their dog.



Terry Owens

Education Coordinator

Georgia Power

Terry Owens is an Education and Workforce Development professional with Georgia Power, where he builds partnerships across business, education, government, and community organizations to strengthen talent pipelines and expand economic opportunity. With nearly a decade of experience, he brings a relationship-driven approach to community engagement, workforce strategy, and organizational leadership.

An active community leader and Leadership DeKalb Class of 2026 participant, Terry Owens is passionate about connecting people, institutions, and opportunities to create meaningful impact. His leadership experience includes industry partnerships, workforce development initiatives, public speaking, workshop facilitation, and advisory leadership. He is focused on advancing as a strategic leader who can translate relationships and community insight into measurable outcomes.



Megan Poonolly

Sr. Program Manager
Google

Megan Poonolly is a trust and safety leader with over 17 years of experience in tech, law, and trust and safety. She currently leads developer experience programs within the Trust & Safety team for Google Play and Android. Before joining Google, Megan was the Head of Safety at Care.com, where she oversaw the user safety program and led the Global Safety team.

Megan also spent many years as an attorney, specializing in background screening and safety at global law firms and in-house at Uber. Before embarking on her legal career, Megan worked as a systems engineer for a defense contracting company.

Megan received her B.S. in Computer Science from the University of Virginia and her J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School.



Kendra Price

Director of Community Programs
Emory University

Kendra Price is Director of Community Programs in Emory University's Office of Government and Community Affairs, a central office within the Office of the President, where she builds partnerships and leads community engagement initiatives that strengthen relationships between Emory and communities throughout DeKalb County. Her work supports the broader Emory enterprise, including Emory University and Emory Healthcare, and focuses on health and well-being, social and economic mobility, and civic engagement. A dedicated community leader, Kendra serves on the DeKalb Chamber Board and is passionate about bringing together institutions, government, and community partners to create meaningful opportunities for students, families, and communities to thrive.

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Tyler Sanchez

Self-employed

Tyler Sanchez is a community supporter and advocate for child development for holistic family support. He is a youth sports director, coach and mentor as well as a proud father of three boys and husband to an amazing wife. He is also an animal lover and servant of the Most High!



Chris Sands

Director of Emerging Generations
New Birth

Chris Sands is a speaker, community leader, educator, and advocate committed to developing the next generation of leaders. His work has focused on youth and young adult development, community engagement, violence prevention, education, and creating pathways to college, careers, and long-term success. He currently serves as Director of Emerging Generations at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, where he leads initiatives supporting teens, college students, and young adults through leadership development, mentorship, scholarships, workforce readiness, and spiritual formation. Previously, he served as Executive Director of Community Safety and Gun Violence Prevention for the City of Chattanooga. He is passionate about building partnerships that strengthen communities, expanding opportunities for young people, and helping individuals move beyond fear to pursue their purpose and make a meaningful impact.



Darrell Smith

Director of Programs
CIS of Atlanta

Darrell D. Smith is a youth development and education leader with more than a decade of experience advancing student success, strengthening school-community partnerships, and developing programs that address barriers to academic and personal achievement. He currently serves as Director of Programs and Initiatives for Communities In Schools of Atlanta, where he provides strategic leadership for multi-district programming across metro Atlanta. In this role, he oversees program strategy, implementation, evaluation, staff development, and a multimillion-dollar program investment portfolio while leading efforts to improve academic, attendance, behavioral, and graduation outcomes for students.

Known for a collaborative, relationship-centered, and results-driven leadership style, Darrell is passionate about developing people, building sustainable systems, and connecting education with the resources students and families need to thrive.



Deanna Stinson

COO
Stinson & Associates, Inc.

Deanna Stinson is a DeKalb County native and graduate of Southwest DeKalb High School who has spent more than two decades building operational and compliance systems for students with disabilities across metro Atlanta. As Chief Operating Officer and co-owner of Stinson & Associates, she has grown the organization from the ground up into a trusted provider of transition and employment services for nearly 20 area schools, turning hands-on compliance experience into durable infrastructure that lets a mission-driven business scale. She is now building a consulting practice to bring that same systems-building discipline, including AI implementation, to other small businesses in the social services space. Deanna is entering this cohort to deepen her roots in the DeKalb community that shaped her and to sharpen her leadership alongside others building the county's future.

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Myra Surratt Walters

Registered Behavior Technician/Founder
Greater Works, Inc.

Myra Surratt Walters has extensive professional experience in the content media, behavioral health, and nonprofit sectors. With over twenty-five years in the field, her entrepreneurial spirit has inspired her to create initiatives that promote the well-being of both senior and youth populations.

She has a proven track record in strategic planning and efforts that improve community involvement and collaboration. Myra has coordinated cross-functional innovative solutions that have achieved impactful results.

In her personal life, Myra cherishes her role as wife and mother, and she actively participates in her church. She also advocates for senior adults, ensuring that both seniors and youth receive the attention they deserve.



Rev. Dr. Jordan Thrasher

Minister
Embry Hills United Methodist Church

Reverend Dr. Jordan Thrasher is the senior pastor of Embry Hills United Methodist Church, and has three students in DeKalb County Schools. He also serves as a community coach for the Lakeside Ultimate Frisbee Women's Team, a program he started a few years ago. His family moved into this community in 2021, and has become deeply involved in Dekalb County Schools through both volunteering and advocacy. He is married to Meredith, and they love living in Atlanta. Embry Hills UMC is a great place that does a lot of mission work in the community, including a community wide backpack food program connected to all of the elementary schools in the area, a Spanish speaking after school program, and a large scouting ministry. He has both a Masters and Doctorate from Emory University, and continues to teach classes there and at Reinhardt University where he once served as a chaplain. Being the pastor, teaching, and coaching frisbee take up a lot of his time, but with his free moments he loves going to Atlanta United Games, listening to local music, and exercising with his two dogs.



Siobhan T. Whitlock, Ph.D.

Supervisory Physical Scientist | Section Manager
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

Dr. Siobhan T. Whitlock is an environmental scientist, public servant, and community advocate committed to strengthening communities through education, engagement, and service. She currently serves as a Section Manager with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, where she leads programs supporting environmental protection, organizational effectiveness, and workforce development. A former science and mathematics teacher, Dr. Whitlock remains committed to supporting education and advocating for children, families, and communities. She has served in school- and district-level advisory roles and is actively engaged in community and civic organizations throughout DeKalb County. Dr. Whitlock and her family have called DeKalb County home since 2014, and both of her children have attended DeKalb County schools. Her interests include educational equity and STEAM education, environmental and public health, and strengthening connections between communities and the institutions that serve them.



Nasra Yonis

Manager of Youth Services
Catholic Charities Atlanta

Nasra Yonis is a dedicated youth and community service leader with more than a decade of experience supporting refugee and immigrant communities. As Manager of Youth Services at Catholic Charities Atlanta, she leads initiatives focused on youth development, mentorship, and community engagement in partnerships with schools and community organizations. Through her work, Nasra is committed to empowering young people and families, strengthening communities and creating opportunities that inspire connection and positive change.



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dekalbschools.org