



## Dr. Norman C. Sauce III

### Superintendent of Schools

### Superintendent's Year in Review

#### “One District, One Direction – Forward Together for Results”

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Guided by a vision of organizational clarity and mutual trust, I have delivered effective, ethical, and student-focused leadership for the DeKalb County School District.

By leading with clarity, consistency, and coherence, I have championed a culture of "accountability with dignity" across all divisions. My intentional, relational leadership approach has successfully shifted the District's focus from adult-centered challenges towards improving student experience.

The results speak for themselves. My metric-driven and high-impact leadership approach has yielded measurable outcomes in academic achievement, operational efficiency, and systemic equity.

Structured around the **8 SuperEval Performance Standards**, the following overview showcases and summarizes how strategic progress and shared ownership are propelling the DeKalb County School District forward together.

# Leadership

*The Superintendent/Leader dedicates time to helping staff grow as leaders.*

**19%**

2-yr increase in gifted-identified students

**300+**

participants across 5 Forward  
Together Forums

**2**

new leadership pipeline programs launched

## CORE APPROACH

Provided calm, stable, coherent, and student-centered leadership to guide the DeKalb County School District through an unexpected period of transition and potential crisis.

## KEY STRATEGIES

Redesigned leadership frameworks to emphasize being relational, receptive, and responsive while maintaining strict operational accountability and clear organizational alignment.

## KEY MILESTONES

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- Developed and implemented the district's first "Portrait of a Leader" framework
- Achieved a 19% two-year increase in total gifted-identified students and maintained a healthy reserve fund balance
- Maintained a strong and healthy reserve fund balance despite increasing expenditures and flattening revenues
- Adopted "The Through Line" and the Principal Support Framework to standardize Central Office support to schools
- Principal/Assistant Principal/Teacher Time Needs Assessment and SY7 Changes
- Expanded leadership development opportunities through the DeKalb Leadership Institute (aspiring Assistant Principals) and Principal Pathway Pipeline (aspiring Principals)
- 5 different Forward Together Forums held in January 2025 (more than 300 total participants)



# Learning Culture

*The Superintendent/Leader coaches and supports individual staff and engages in effective professional learning strategies to help staff grow as leaders.*

**3,000**

teachers completed professional learning modules

**96.2%**

of K–3 teachers trained in Structured Literacy

**\$301M**

in scholarships earned, up 43% in one year

## CORE APPROACH

Focused on cultivating a cohesive, responsive, growth-oriented culture where adult professional development translates directly into enhanced student outcomes.

## KEY STRATEGIES

Streamlined districtwide professional learning pathways to eliminate redundancies and ensure adult development directly translated to improved student achievement.

## KEY MILESTONES

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- Nearly 3,000 teachers completed asynchronous modules in gifted, early literacy, English learners, and special education
- Graduating class total scholarship earnings saw a 43% one-year increase to \$301M
- Amira (dyslexia universal screener): 22,864 K–3 students demonstrated 13.2% overall growth, with 80% of students meeting/exceeding their growth targets
- Achieved noticeable academic growth: 10 of 11 grade levels increased median MAP Reading achievement percentiles, and 9 of 11 grade levels improved in median MAP Math achievement percentiles
- Development of Literacy Policy and Regulations first draft
- 10% one-year increase in 10th graders on track for graduation (May 2026)
- Ensured 96.2% of K–3 teachers were trained in Structured Literacy, and 98% of Pre-K staff completed Phase II of the Science of Reading
- Development of Unified Literacy Plan draft



# Assessing and Planning

The Superintendent/Leader uses evidence of effectiveness to determine necessary improvements in practices to foster a positive educational environment that supports the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.

|                                             |                                                               |                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 40%                                         | 39                                                            | 76%                                          |
| reduction in Fall/Winter EOC irregularities | DCSD schools earned GADOE Math Leaders awards (most in State) | faster districtwide device repair turnaround |

## CORE APPROACH

Grounded our organizational planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement in diverse data sources rather than treating planning as a static compliance exercise.

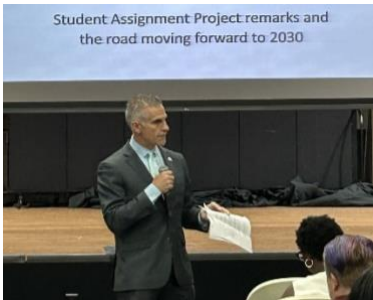
## KEY STRATEGIES

Maintained a disciplined approach to progress monitoring via seasonal divisional playbooks, monthly performance updates, and cross-functional feedback loops.

## KEY MILESTONES

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- Significantly reduced assessment irregularities (e.g., a 40% reduction in Fall/Winter End-of-Course irregularities)
- Improved the districtwide device repair response time by 76% (down from 17 days to just 4 days)
- Published first comprehensive Accountability & Research Handbook
- Successfully exited 17 schools from the Horizon Area and 6 schools from state oversight lists
- 39 DCSD schools earned GADOE Math Leaders awards (most in State)
- Developed system-wide plans for SY27 launch to increase middle school participation in completing Carnegie unit courses — established goal of 60% by 2030
- Launched 27 different school and district data dashboards to increase real-time progress transparency
- 23 Schools recognized as “Beating the Odds” by GOSA
- Completed one of the largest student and staff device refreshes in USA



# Shared Vision and Accountability

*The Superintendent/Leader advocates and informs the coherence of organizational vision, policies and strategies to support schools and student learning.*

96%

of English Learners Master Plan steps launched

27

public data dashboards launched

+14 pts

employee engagement percentile increase

## CORE APPROACH

Operationalized the district's long-term vision by matching goal metrics with rigorous accountability frameworks, policy updates, and strategic resource allocation.

## KEY STRATEGIES

Revamped the Strategic Plan Accountability Framework and cast a public vision for the district's four-year "6, 7, 8, 9, 10" goals by 2030.

## KEY MILESTONES

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- Developed the district's first-ever Literacy Board Policy (passed first read June 15, 2026) and Unified Literacy Plan
- Achieved a 14-percentile ranking increase in the total employee engagement score on the Spring 2026 Gallup survey
- Various Civic, Faith, Philanthropic, and Business community leaders' presentations
- DCSD Summer Leadership Conference Presentation
- Implemented the English Learners Master Plan, successfully launching 96% of its action steps
- Submission of Interim Superintendent's Week in Review reports to the Board
- Board Meeting and Retreat Presentations (i.e., Vision, Carnegie Units and AP course offerings expansions, English Learners Master Plan, Acceleration Academies expansion): January, April, May, and June
- Co-presented with Board members at the 2026 Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) Summer Conference, presenting "Implementing the District's Strategic Plan into Daily Action: Clarity, Consistency, and Coherence"
- Hosted 5 Forward Together Forums and multiple Advisory Councils to build trust and gather iterative feedback
- Twenty-seven public dashboards launched (June 2026) for GKIDS, AP, Reading proficiency, teacher certification, work order tracking, fiscal efficiency, school climate metrics, attendance, enrollment, and more
- State of the District Event Presentation
- Issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) and awarded the contract to Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International as an independent external vendor to conduct a comprehensive central office needs assessment



# Strategic Change

*The Superintendent/Leader leads strategic change that consistently elevates the performance of schools and sustains high-quality educational programs and opportunities across the district.*

**35%**

reduction in required school-leader meeting time

**19,000+**

operations tickets closed, +72% YoY

**40**

employees honored as DCSD Difference Makers

## CORE APPROACH

Led systemic transformation by balancing urgent educational adjustments with overall operational stability, utilizing a structured “immerse, experience, and leverage” cycle of inquiry.

## KEY STRATEGIES

Conducted deep internal audits to streamline administrative requirements and empower instructional leaders.

## KEY MILESTONES

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- Launched the brand-new Division of Capital Improvements to enhance long-term facility planning
- Interim Superintendent's Transition Plan: “Forward Together: Leading with Clarity, Consistency, and Coherence”
- Development of plans for our first Community LEADS stakeholder engagement program
- Honored 40 outstanding employees as DCSD Difference Makers
- Executed a cross-divisional self-study that reduced school leaders' required meeting time by 35% and eliminated 30% of required task submissions, saving 10–13 hours of monthly productivity time for school leaders
- Cogent immediate plans to increase middle school students' access to Carnegie unit courses
- Development of plans for our first Skilled Trades Operations Employees Leadership Development program
- Oversaw high-volume operations output, including closing over 19,000 operations work tickets (+72% year-over-year)
- Cogent immediate plans to increase high school students' access to AP courses
- Improved Gallup Employee Engagement Survey results (spring 2025 to spring 2026)



# Leadership in Effectiveness and Evaluation

*The Superintendent/Leader engages staff in the formal district evaluation process in ways that help them grow as leaders.*

## Biweekly

Cabinet check-ins sustaining feedback loops

## Monthly

Executive Board Level Reports issued

## 4

standing districtwide steering committees

### CORE APPROACH

Cultivated leadership development through the formal evaluation system, ensuring processes are collaborative and reflective rather than punitive.

### KEY STRATEGIES

Embedded standard platforms (TKES, LKES, DKES, SuperEval) into routines and championed the cultural mantras “accountability with dignity” and “leadership is not intimidation”.

### KEY MILESTONES

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- Established strict feedback loops via biweekly Cabinet check-ins, monthly Executive Board Level Reports, and monthly Steering Committees
- Required leaders to cascade evaluation expectations throughout all divisions to secure systemwide alignment to common growth standards
- Leadership of monthly steering committee meetings (i.e., Teaching and Learning, Finance, Operations, Human Resources)
- Monitored evaluation completion rates and implementation fidelity in real time through regular Strategic Plan Accountability workshops
- Portrait of a Leader framework adoption
- Monthly Executive Board Level Reports
- Leadership of monthly Strategic Plan Accountability Workshops
- Codified and disseminated the Senior Cabinet and Division Leaders Expectations document to explicitly connect evaluation with day-to-day leadership behaviors
- Modeling the mantras of “accountability with dignity” and “leadership is not intimidation”



# Leadership in Professionalism

*The Superintendent/Leader engages in their own development and continuously models the value of reflective practice through reflection and feedback.*

7

Board members briefed via routine check-ins

3

key literacy partnerships secured

High

response rate to stakeholder & Board inquiries

## CORE APPROACH

Modeled an ongoing personal commitment to ethical leadership, professional development, reflective practice, and proactive, multi-channel communication.

## KEY STRATEGIES

Engaged consistently with professional networks and maintained high transparency with the Board of Education and public stakeholders.

## KEY MILESTONES

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- Participated in the Georgia School Superintendents Association (GSSA) new Superintendent mentoring
- Professional development conference participation via Georgia School Boards Association and Georgia School Superintendents Association
- High response rate to direct stakeholder inquiries to the Interim Superintendent's Office
- GSBA Conference Presentation
- Maintained open, structured reporting lines to the seven-member Board via informational memos, committee prep, and routine bimonthly check-ins
- Active solicitation of partnerships with literacy leaders such as Learn4Life, Atlanta Speech School, and budding partnership with Woodruff Foundation
- High response rate to Board members' inquiries to the Interim Superintendent's Office
- Secured vital literacy-focused partnerships with external entities like Learn4Life and the Atlanta Speech School
- Routine Board member communications such as monthly and bimonthly check-ins, monthly Executive Leadership Board Reports, various information memos, Board committee preparation and participation, Board member inquiry response documents, and other informal communication updates (texts, emails, and calls)



# Leading for Equity and Community Relations

*The Superintendent/Leader assists the district in ensuring all divisions are culturally/socially responsive and have equitable access to resources necessary for success.*

14,350

student contacts through SAFE Centers

236

videos produced, 84,000 YouTube views

95%+

SRO & campus security staffing achieved

## CORE APPROACH

Maintained that equity must be a “lived reality” achieved by intentionally dismantling barriers to advanced programs, expanding student support systems, and building collaborative community ties.

## KEY STRATEGIES

Provided culturally responsive environments, expanded community partnerships, and prioritized restorative and mental health initiatives.

## KEY MILESTONES

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- Drafted a new Access and Opportunity Board Policy for a first read following a dedicated learning series for district leaders
- Completely redesigned the district website (the first overhaul in over 10 years) and produced 236 informative videos logging 84,000 views on YouTube to foster widespread transparent communication
- Participation in dozens of events/experiences with external organizations (faith-based, civic, inter-governmental, philanthropic, business, non-profit, parental, community-based)
- 95%+ School Resource Officer and Campus Security staffing for the first time in nearly 3 years
- Designed Community LEAD Academy for Fall 2026 launch
- Managed SAFE Centers yielding 14,350 student contacts and 7,210 family supports to target student needs, intervention strategies, academic success, attendance, wellness, and behavior
- Provided photography coverage for 152 events
- More than 600 students served via FACE Advocates
- Hosted five different Superintendent's Advisory Councils (bi-lingual parent, special education parent, teacher of the year, staff, student leadership)
- Trained 320 Transportation staff members in Mindset Verbal De-Escalation
- Increased My Brother's Keeper/Our Sister's Keeper participation by 30% (one year)
- Launched student taste testing pilots to allow for eight new culturally responsive school nutrition menu options in SY27
- Launched Cartwheel student mental health services initiative



