Clayton County Public Schools
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ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Division of Communications

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From a Moment to a Movement: CCPS Unity in the Community Event Rallies Community Around a Shared Vision for Children

Unity in the Community celebrates student achievement, community partnerships, and the ceremonial oath of office for Superintendent/CEO Dr. Douglas Hendrix Sr.

JONESBORO - Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) brought together students, families, educators, elected officials, business leaders, faith-based organizations, and community partners on Thursday, November 19, 2026, for *Unity in the Community: An Evening Focusing on Children, Community & Coherence*. The event was held at the Arena at Southlake in Morrow.

Centered on the theme One Clayton County, the event celebrated the power of collaboration, highlighted student achievement, and marked the ceremonial swearing-in of Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer Dr. Douglas Hendrix Sr. The evening reinforced the district's guiding philosophy, "The Children Eat First," and challenged the community to transform a moment of celebration into a sustained movement of collective responsibility.

The event began with a Community Resource Fair featuring more than 30 participating vendors and organizations, connecting families with valuable resources and services. Coordinated through the leadership of the district's Magnet School Choice Department, the fair featured live entertainment and line dancing led by Coach B, a musical performance by the Stilwell School of the Arts Jazz Ensemble, culinary contributions from Charles R. Drew High School students, and the Egg Roll Daddy food truck.

The formal program, hosted by CCPS Director of Fine Arts Dr. Prince T. Bowie, featured student performances, remarks from distinguished community leaders, and reflections on the importance of unity and collaboration. Highlights included a welcome from Brown Elementary School student Nicholas Esters; ceremonial presentations by the Morrow High School AFJROTC, Cadet Airman Basic Hailey Myrick, and Stilwell School of the Arts student Shila-Amari Cineus; and musical selections by the CCPS United Honor Marching Band. Board of Education Chairman Benjamin Straker (video presentation) and Vice Chairwoman Mary Baker joined Morrow City Councilwoman Hue Nguyen, Clayton County Commission Chairwoman Dr. Alieka Anderson-Henry, Chamber of Commerce President Valencia Williamson, CCPS Foundation President Louis Negron, Georgia PTA District 7 Director Dr. Arvis Walker, and Reverend Dr. Robert L. Burton in emphasizing a shared commitment to student success. Student speakers Paola Perez Lopez, Madison Reese, and Uyen Ly further reinforced the importance of ensuring every child is seen, supported, challenged, and prepared for the future. Adding a personal touch to the evening, Mr. Ricky L. Clark, Jr., a former student of Dr. Hendrix Sr., shared a special video presentation highlighting the lasting impact of Dr. Hendrix's leadership and influence as an educator.

A defining moment of the evening came as the Honorable Shana Rooks Malone, Chief Judge of Clayton County Superior Court, administered the ceremonial Oath of Office to Dr. Hendrix following his introduction by Morrow High School Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Tajyon Sanders.

In his keynote address, "One Clayton County — The Moment We Become a Movement," Dr. Hendrix called upon educators, families, businesses, faith leaders, and government officials to move beyond

individual responsibilities and embrace a shared commitment to children. "What if this is the moment we become a movement?" he asked.

Using the imagery of intersecting circles, Dr. Hendrix emphasized that while organizations and individuals serve different purposes, their responsibilities meet in the lives of children. He challenged the community to strengthen partnerships, remove barriers, and create opportunities that extend beyond the classroom.

The Superintendent also highlighted the district's academic progress, including an all-time high graduation rate of 88.3 percent, record graduation rates for students with disabilities and English Learners, and recognition of seven CCPS high schools as Advanced Placement Honor Schools. He outlined the district's *Coherence by Design* approach, focused on ensuring that every student, every day, in every classroom, is seen, supported, challenged, and prepared.

Dr. Hendrix further emphasized the importance of early literacy, family stability, and partnerships that connect students to future opportunities in enrollment, enlistment, employment, and entrepreneurship. Throughout his address, he reinforced the principle that decisions affecting the community must prioritize the needs and well-being of children.

"Let this be the day we stop speaking of unity only as something we hope to see and begin practicing it as something we have chosen to do," said Dr. Hendrix.

Following the Superintendent's address, CCPS Chief Operations Officer Landry Merkison delivered a Community Charge, encouraging attendees to translate the evening's message into meaningful action. Participants received One Clayton Community Pledge Cards, symbolizing a shared commitment to putting children first. Deveon Mashburn, a senior at Mundy's Mill High School, delivered the closing remarks, reinforcing the importance of turning the evening's promises into lasting opportunities for students.

CCPS extends its sincere appreciation to the Clayton County Board of Education for its leadership and support and to the Clayton County Public Schools Foundation, Inc., a key sponsor of the event, for its generous contributions. The district also recognizes its Roundtable Leadership, participating government and public safety agencies, district departments and divisions, student performers, program presenters, community organizations, volunteers, and employees whose collective efforts made the event possible.

While the evening celebrated an important milestone in district leadership, its lasting significance rests in the relationships strengthened and the collective commitment to creating a brighter future for Clayton County's children.

For a complete look at this memorable celebration, including event photos, videos, featured remarks, and other highlights, visit the Unity in the Community webpage using the following link: https://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/administration/superintendent/unity-in-the-community.

-An official document from the Clayton County Public School System-

About Clayton County Public Schools: Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is fully accredited by Cognia. The district offers a focused world-class program based on a challenging curriculum which is taught from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Serving over 50,000 students, Clayton County Public Schools is ranked among the 100 largest school districts in the U.S. and is the sixth-largest school system in Georgia.

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