Accreditation Report

DeKalb County School District

Dr. R. Stephen Green, Superintendent
1701 Mountain Industrial Blvd
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School System

Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?

Description of the School System

DeKalb County School District (DCSD) was established in 1873 when residents raised $4,200 to open public schools. Named for Baron Johann de Kalb, a German soldier who aided the colonists in their fight for independence, DeKalb County, Georgia is the community served by the DeKalb County School District. DeKalb County School District is Georgia's third largest school system. Under the leadership of Dr. R. Stephen Green and the Board of Education, DCSD is a deep teaching and learning organization that prepares students for college and careers through a laser focus on rigorous, relevant classroom instruction related to each child's needs.

On May 28, 2015, the DeKalb Board of Education voted to appoint Dr. R. Stephen Green as Superintendent of the DeKalb County School District. The Board in its governance role employed the Superintendent after conducting a national search. As an effective school board, they work to develop and adopt policies, curriculum and the budget. Under the leadership of the DeKalb BOE and Dr. R. Stephen Green, DCSD prepares students for college and careers through a laser focus on rigorous, relevant classroom instruction related to each child's needs.

DCSD is considered one of the most diverse districts in the State of Georgia and in the Nation. Our student's ethnic distribution includes: African-American 63.9%, Hispanic 16.7%, White-American 11.0%, Asian/Pacific Islander 6.4%, and Other 2.0%. Our district welcomes students who originate from 156 countries and who speak 167 languages and dialects. Nearly 26,000 students are identified as PHLOTES (i.e. students whose primary home language is other than English). Among these students approximately 17,000 are English Learners and over 3,000 of our students are classified as refugees. A significant number of our students are undocumented immigrants, or with at least one parent who is undocumented, while others are unaccompanied minors who have crossed the border in hopes of a better life. These facts are indeed evidence of one of our unique features. However, as a district we believe that our cultural and linguistic diversities represent incredible opportunities to thrive.

DCSD has approximately 6,000 classroom teachers. Of these, 67 percent hold a master's degree or higher, while 31 percent have been in education for at least 11 years. Demographically, 71 percent of our teachers are African-American, 30 percent are Caucasian, and 3 percent are Hispanic, 2 percent Asian, while Native American and Multiracial constitute 1 percent or less of the teaching population. Finally, 83 percent of our professional teaching staff are female and 24 percent are male.

DCSD is a leader in STEM curriculum with 13 STEM certifications at the school level and 11 additional schools seeking STEM certification from AdvancED. School choice options are available in nearly 50 schools to include theme, magnet, IB, charter, and Montessori options.

The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) reports subgroup enrollment data by program as follows: 24.5% in Early Intervention Programs, 10.9% in English to Speakers of Other Languages, 16% in Remedial Education; 9% in special education; 2% in alternative programs, 13% in Gifted programs; 43% in vocational labs, and 72% Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals. Graduation rate data for the 2015-16 school year is at 70%, which shows a significant increase from the 62% in 2013-2014 school year.

DeKalb County School District includes 170 facilities/sites consisting of: 76 Elementary Schools, 19 Middle Schools, 22 High Schools, 2 other, 20 presently vacant or unused sites; 15 other education programs, 9 Charter Schools, 4 Administrative Offices (AIC, East DeKalb Campus, Sam Moss, William Bradley Bryant Center (WBBC), and 5 Stadiums. The one percent Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST) for capital improvements was successfully voted in by a 71 percent margin of DeKalb citizens in May 2016. It was the highest in DCSD history and reaffirms a confidence in DCSD to facilitate capital improvement projects in support of continued student success.

Changes we have experienced over the past two years, under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Green include, the district has undertaken an expansive K-12 Curriculum Writing initiative, successfully achieved overwhelming E-SPLOST support from citizens, instituted strict spending controls yielding an expansive General Fund balance, initiated a reorganizational structure placing local autonomy for central office operations under five regional superintendents, and implemented a decentralization plan for the central office which includes the areas of Transportation, Human Capital Management, Finance, Operations, Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology and Student Support and Intervention. All of these systemic initiatives have moved DeKalb County School District closer to becoming a high performing school district with intent focus on student success.

Though we are the third largest school district in the state, our decentralization plan fosters a small district feel. Our various levels of schools - elementary, middle, and high- are grouped into regions and clusters. This model supported by decentralized services enables better support at the school level from our central office, fosters effective K-12 communication, collaboration and continuity, and allows stakeholders in the cluster to come together in the spirit of region pride.

Finally, one of the major strengths of the DeKalb County School District is the dedication of its internal and external stakeholders and their desire to see the school district become one that is recognized across the nation for the way in which it puts students first. Stakeholder survey data points to the many alternative learning environments, quality teachers, small neighborhood schools, parent/community involvement, desire to keep children first and the climate and culture of schools as strengths that can be built upon by the district.

System's Purpose

Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

System's Purpose

The purpose of the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) is laser focused on student success and the core organizational tenets necessary to fulfill our commitment to the students, families, and communities we serve. Therefore, the DeKalb County School District maintains and communicates a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commits to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. The Strategic Plan provides the direction needed to facilitate change that will allow the district to fulfill its vision and mission.

The vision is to inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence. The mission is to ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and life-long learning. The district's work is focused on a Strategic Plan comprised of five Strategic Goal Areas: 1) Student Success with Equity and Access; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; 3) Staff Efficacy and Excellence; 4) Internal and External Communication; and 5) Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency. Our Core Beliefs are focused on teaching and learning, and we commit to the following: Ensuring that a highly qualified, effective teacher instructs every class; Providing a safe and orderly 21st century instructional and working environment infused with emerging technologies; Embracing our district's cultural and linguistic diversity and using it to create an environment of educational excellence; Improving organizational effectiveness, maintaining fiscal responsibility, and supplying exceptional school and district leadership; Communicating openly and accurately with all stakeholders; Cultivating a community of learners in which all individuals are valued, respected, encouraged to contribute, recognized for their efforts, and held accountable for their actions. Instrumental to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan is a focus on continuous improvement.

The system's process for review, revision and communication of the purpose statement is documented and includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. On August 5, 2013, the Board of Education voted to use a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated five-year strategic improvement plan for the school district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for continuous improvement at the school and district level. The desired outcome of the Strategic Plan was to align the work of the district from the boardroom to the classroom with the purpose of increasing student achievement and organizational effectiveness. From this work the Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and Strategic Goal Areas, of the DeKalb County School District were developed, voted on, and approved by the board in December, 2013.

District leadership maintains a high level of commitment to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning that supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all children in the district. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success.

DeKalb County School District is dedicated to sustaining standards based classrooms where teachers utilize research-based instructional strategies. Some of the programs offered to evidence how the school district embodies its purpose and supports student learning include: Extended Learning; Saturday School; English Learner Studies; Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM); Early Intervention; Title I; Special Education; Gifted and High Achievers; and Career Technical & Agricultural Education. In addition, school choice

programs are open to all students to apply during the open enrollment window. Students are selected by a random automated lottery process. School choice offerings include, but are not limited to: Charter, Immersion, Inclusion, International Baccalaureate, Magnet/Career Technology, Magnet/High Achievers, Magnet/Special Interest, Montessori, Theme, and Joint Enrollment programs. In addition, a wide array of professional learning opportunities are provided to employees in order to further the growth and enhancement of the district's workforce.

Our district's purpose and direction is further defined by our core belief that rigor, relevance, and relationships are essential components of effective instructional practice. These concepts weave through the tenets of our curriculum development process to help foster the ideal that each student's learning experience will be achieved at a level for optimal individual growth, will be personally attainable, engaging and meaningful, and will occur in a supportive learning environment.

The DeKalb County School district is committed to our mission to ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and lifelong learning, focused on our vision to inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence, and continuously living out our motto of Inspire, Achieve, and Excel. The world is ever changing and we are making sure our students are prepared to pursue college, career, and life goals upon leaving our schools.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Notable Achievements

Academics

- Full AdvancED Accreditation earned
- Curriculum Audit and K-12 Curriculum re-write
- Development and Implementation of a Comprehensive Curriculum Management System
- Development and Implementation of a Turnaround Plan for underperforming schools
- Increased wrap-around services "circle of care" to students and families
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Program certification and expansion
- Strategic Waivers School System contract granted by GaDOE

Teachers and Staff

- Competitive teacher salaries
- Teacher raises, retention and signing bonuses
- Central Office Reorganization and New Leadership
- Proactive Student Code of Conduct/Restorative Practices
- State-of-the art wireless access in every classroom in DCSD

Community

- Lead Testing in water for all schools and district facilities (underway)
- Passage of E-SPLOST V (71% yes vote - the highest in the history of DeKalb County Schools)
- Plan for addressing overcrowded schools current and future
- Increased fiscal accountability and transparency
- Increased fund balance
- Reduced tax millage rate
- My Brother's Keeper and Our Sister's Keeper Initiatives
- Increased Stakeholder Involvement and Engagement opportunities
- Improved Customer Service experiences
- Redesigned District Website
- Increased digital communications outreach
- Cyber Safety Awareness campaign

Areas for Improvement

DCSD Performance

Graduation Rate

2012: District 57.3% / State 69.7%

2013: District 60.2% / State 71.8%

2014: District 62.6% / State 72.5%

2015: District 70.9% / State 78.8%

2016: District 70.3% / State 79.2%

DCSD increase of 13 percentage points since 2012

CCRPI Scores (GA College and Career Ready Performance Index)

2012: District 65.1% / State 74.1%

2013: District 62.4% / State 75.8%

2014: District 62.8% / State 72.3%

2015: District 67.7% / State 75.5%

2016: District 66.6% / State 73.6%

DCSD increase of 2 percentage points since 2012

DCSD is committed to continuous improvement in student and school performance. Therefore, we ensure that our continuous improvement plans are updated on a continuous monitoring cycle at both the school and system levels. The key performance goals and improvement priorities outlined in our strategic plan for 2016 include the following:

Goal Area 1: Student Success with Equity and Access

Performance Objective #1- Improve student's mastery of learning standards.

Performance Objective #2- Provide equitable access to academically rigorous courses and programs.

Performance Objective #3- Increase graduation rates for all students.

Goal Area 2: Stakeholder Engagement

Performance Objective #1- Provide a safe, orderly, and positive school environment.

Performance Objective #2- Increase stakeholder involvement and engagement.

To help achieve these goals the district has adopted the following improvement priorities:

1. Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Curriculum Management System

2. Continue STEM as a catalyst for the promotion of project-based learning

3. Increase Fiscal Accountability and Transparency

4. Deepen and Sustain Customer Service Engagement

5. Reverse Disproportionality: My Brother's Keeper and Female Empowerment

6. Renew Accreditation

7. Improve underperforming schools

8. Reinstitute the DeKalb County School District Foundation

9. Fulfill E-SPLOST vote of confidence and mandate

10. Continue integration of instruction and technology: Time for 1:1

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

Additional Information

DeKalb County School District will Jumpstart E-SPLOST after Positive Bond Ratings

DeKalb County School District (DCSD) will use its bonding ability to get a jumpstart on completing vital E-SPLOST funded projects following upgrades to its financial ratings by two firms.

DCSD will obtain at least $134 million from general obligation funds that will be used to initiate technology and facilities projects identified in E-SPLOST V, a ballot measure overwhelmingly approved by DeKalb County voters by a 71 percent margin in 2016. Those bonds will be offered in early February and be repaid with E-SPLOST revenues to be collected starting in July 2017.

This advance financing comes on the heels of upgrades to the DCSD's financial ratings by experts at Moody's Investor's Service and Standard & Poor's Global Ratings. Because of these upgrades, the district will be able to obtain financing through the bonds at a reduced interest rate.

"The ability to fund these projects early is a result of our team acting as good stewards of resources provided by this community," said Superintendent Dr. R. Stephen Green. "The families of DeKalb County believe in our vision, and the finance ratings firms believe in our balance sheet. We remain committed to excellence and building the best public school system for our taxpayers."
Moody's Investor's Service has upgraded DCSD from "A1" to "Aa3," based on the district's large and diverse tax base, its positive trend of maintaining cash reserves and the "manageable" amount of debt on the district's ledger.

Meanwhile, Standard & Poor's Global Ratings assigned its "AA" rating, its second highest level, to that same bond package. The rating was based on the strong tax base in DeKalb County, strong reserves that constitute nearly 12 percent of the district's budget, and low debt. Without this financing, DeKalb schools would have likely waited five additional months before starting the latest round of E-SPLOST projects.

DeKalb Students Win at VEX Robotics Competition

Approximately 38 robotics teams in the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) competed in the DeKalb County VEX Robotics Tournament on Jan. 21 at Tucker High School, with several teams taking home honors.

According to the VEX Robotics website, teams of students are tasked with designing and building a robot to play against other teams from around the world in a game-based engineering challenge. Students use STEM on the playing field while building skills in teamwork, leadership, communications, and other areas.

Winning teams from DCSD include:
Excellence Award - Dunwoody High School
Tournament Champions - Stone Mountain High & Clarkston High Schools

Design Award - Tucker High School
Judges Award - Tucker High School
Robot Skills Award - Stone Mountain High School

Governor's Office Honors High Performing Schools

Fourteen schools within the DeKalb County School District were recognized for generating some of the best student achievement statewide in 2016. The 2016 Single Statewide Accountability System awards, given by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, is a listing of Georgia schools that have exhibited high student performance or academic growth as measured by the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) from the three most recent school years.

Awards are given for student performance and/or academic growth. The rating system is awarded by percentile compared to other schools in the state: bronze (93rd percentile), silver (95th percentile), gold (97th percentile), and platinum (99th percentile).
High performing DCSD campuses, including awards in greatest gains and academic growth, respectively, include:

Austin Elementary School (platinum growth, platinum performance)
Cedar Grove High School (silver growth)
DeKalb Early College Academy (gold growth, platinum performance)
DeKalb PATH Academy Charter School Silver (silver growth)
DeKalb School of the Arts (silver growth, platinum performance)
Dunwoody Elementary School (bronze performance)
Dunwoody High School (bronze growth)
Indian Creek Elementary School (platinum growth)
Kittredge Magnet School (platinum performance)
Laurel Ridge Elementary School (gold growth)
Montgomery Elementary School (bronze performance)
Oak Grove Elementary School (silver performance)
Vanderlyn Elementary School (gold performance)
Wadsworth Magnet School (platinum performance)

Design Develop Construct Journal Features DeKalb's Schools

DeKalb County School District's efforts to improve its school buildings recently received recognition in the winter/spring 2017 edition of the Design Develop Construct (DDC) Journal, a construction trade publication for North America.

The two-page feature, titled "Building Top-Notch Schools," provides readers a glimpse of how DCSD has effectively used E-SPLOST funds and other funding streams to complete and open two new elementary schools and a football stadium. In addition, the article shares how the district's Capital Improvements Plan will inform and guide the construction of another seven elementary schools and a new middle school. Facilities prominently featured in the article include the new Peachcrest Elementary School and the new Fernbank Elementary School.

The DDC Journal is geared toward readers with a wealth of construction industry expertise including project managers, engineers, architects, planners, construction managers and general contractors.

Self Assessment

Introduction

AdvancED's Self Assessment (SA) diagnostic is based on the AdvancED Standards of Quality, which serves as the foundation of the accreditation and continuous improvement process. The SA is a valuable tool for collaboratively engaging staff members and stakeholders in purposeful, honest dialogue and reflection to assess the institution's adherence to the Standards, and guide its continuous improvement efforts. The SA includes the institution's self-ratings of and the evidence cited for each of the indicators, comments that explain the indicator's ratings and an overall narrative for each Standard. The results of the SA are reviewed by the External Review Team as one essential component of the preparation process for the institution's External Review.

Purpose and Direction

The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.	•District purpose statements - past and present •Survey results •Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction •Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness •Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the district's purpose	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	•Survey results •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements •DCSD Strategic Plan BOE Policies link, Continuous Improvement Plan Training Agenda 2015, June Training Agenda 2016, FY17 Continuous Improvement Planning System Session Dates, Photos-June CIP Sessions 2016, Continuous Improvement Plan Participant's Guide 2015, Continuous Improvement Plan Training 2015, School CIP 2016, CIP June 2016 Training Slides, CIP System Participant's Guide 2016, CIP Sample Plan 2016, Validate the Need for Improvement Collaborative Protocol	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.	•Survey results •Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •The district strategic plan •DCSD School Choice Programs Webpage Link, Rigor Meter, DCSD Rigor Toolkit Link	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system's purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated. Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.	•Examples of schools continuous improvement plans •Survey results •Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings •The district data profile •The district strategic plan •Continuous Improvement Plan Training Agenda 2015, June Training Agenda 2016, FY17 Continuous Improvement Planning System Session Dates, Photos-June CIP Sessions 2016, Continuous Improvement Plan Participant's Guide 2015Continuous Improvement Plan Training 2015, School CIP Template 2016, CIP June 2016 Training Slides, CIP System Participant's Guide 2016, CIP Sample Plan 2016, Validate the Need for Improvement Collaborative Protocol, Local School CIP System Overview Visual	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Standard 1 Purpose and Direction

At all levels of the organization, the DeKalb County School District maintains and communicates a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commits to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. The Strategic Plan provides the direction needed to facilitate change that will allow the district to fulfill its vision and mission. The vision is to inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence. The mission is to ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and life-long learning. The district's work is focused on a Strategic Plan comprised of five Strategic Goal Areas: 1) Student Success with Equity and Access; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; 3) Staff Efficacy and Excellence; 4) Internal and External Communication; and 5) Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency. Instrumental to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan is a focus on continuous improvement. In order for the Strategic Plan to be effective and dynamic, the district continuously measures and assesses performance.

AREAS OF STRENGTH: Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4

Indicator 1.1

The system's process for review, revision and communication of the purpose statement is documented and includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. On August 5, 2013, the Board of Education voted to use a process developed by the Georgia

School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated five-year strategic improvement plan for the school district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for continuous improvement at the school and district level. The desired outcome of the Strategic Plan was to align the work of the district from the boardroom to the classroom with the purpose of increasing student achievement and organizational effectiveness. From this work the Vision, Mission, Beliefs, Strategic Goal Areas, and Performance Objectives of the DeKalb County School District were developed, voted on, and approved by the board in December, 2013. Strategic priorities are reviewed annually and opportunities for stakeholder input are provided. For example, a Parent Focus Group session held in February, 2017 gave parents an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the Strategic Plan at their local schools. Parents also identified the strengths of the plan, asked questions, and provided input. In addition, the superintendent's "On the Scene with Dr. Green" community engagement sessions and the State of the District addresses are forums where stakeholder groups have the opportunity to review strategic priorities, ask questions, and offer feedback.

DeKalb County School District has a purpose statement, is committed to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning, and has implemented a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support student learning. The AdvancED stakeholder survey results for staff, parents, and students reveal "Purpose and Direction" as one of the highest scoring categories. Across all survey responses, a high-scoring item was C1, which states, "the purpose statement is clearly focused on student success." An average of 85% of all staff, parent, and student respondents believe that our school district's purpose statement is focused on student success. The staff surveyed at both the school and district level rated C5 as another high scoring item: "our school district has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures for growth." The perception of students is that teachers and principals want every student to learn, and programs and services are available to help them succeed. The survey results revealed no trends toward a decrease in stakeholder satisfaction of Standard One: Purpose and Direction.

Further, it is important to note that the AdvancED Special Review Team identified in their December, 2014 monitoring report that Required Action 13, which states, "Develop and implement plans, policies, and processes to monitor, evaluate, and sustain the school system's continuous improvement efforts," had yet to be fully addressed. As a result, the district focused on this area of needed improvement and has evidence to support improvement. As a result of these concentrated efforts, AdvancED reported in January, 2016 that the district had satisfied the steps necessary to address Required Action 13.

DeKalb County School District has developed a process to communicate a system-wide purpose for student success. A Communications Plan has been implemented to communicate the superintendent's strategic priorities. The school system's purpose and direction is communicated to stakeholders in a multitude of ways. For example, the mission of "Ensuring student success, leading to higher education, work, and life-long learning," and the vision to "Inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence," is routinely communicated to both district and school stakeholders through presentations to the School Board, discussions at Administrator Academies, School Council meetings, and continuous improvement planning sessions. In addition, the FY16 Strategic Dashboard was developed as a tool for reporting more detailed information to all stakeholders related to the superintendent's improvement priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. A Strategic Plan informational brochure was developed and published in hard copy and digital format for all stakeholders, including translation in ten languages, which made the information accessible to more of our families whose primary language is not English. Posters containing the district's Vision, Mission, Motto, and Beliefs are prominently displayed in all schools and district administrative buildings. The Strategic Plan webpage, accessible through the homepage on the district's public website, contains updated information as well as documentation of consecutive years of implementation, including links to:

Vision, Mission, Beliefs, Goal Areas, and Performance Objectives

Strategy Map

Mid-Year Progress Data

Annual Progress Data

Executive Summary of Progress

Progress Checks

Strategic Plan Profile

Strategic Dashboard

Board of Education Presentations

High Level Timeline

Balanced Scorecard (eBOARD)

Submit Feedback

The superintendent also provides several opportunities for students, staff, and stakeholders to engage in two-way communication on the progress status of the school district. These opportunities include monthly Advisory Committee meetings (teachers, students, parents, and community leaders), quarterly "On the Scene with Dr. Green" engagements, and bi-annual State of the District addresses.

Indicator 1.2

System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. Governance and management structures designed to monitor, evaluate, and communicate the school system's progress on AdvancED Standard 1: Purpose and Direction are currently in place and are providing a continuous improvement environment for the district. It is the policy of the DeKalb County Board of Education to ensure the development and execution of a Strategic Plan to serve as the roadmap by which all efforts are measured. Board Policy BAB: School Board Governance and CA: Goals and Objectives clearly define expectations related to strategic planning. Board agendas are developed and aligned to the Strategic Plan, and division heads have become effective in reporting updates based on the plan. In addition, the superintendent's evaluation is based on progress in the five strategic goal areas. The Board of Education is provided extensive mid-year and end-of-the-year progress reports and is kept informed of the work with the strategic plan through a weekly communiqué from the Director of Strategic Planning. Further, DCSD recently entered into a multi-year contract with the GaDOE to allow for flexibility and waivers from state law and policies and regulations in exchange for innovation and increased accountability. These flexibilities will allow DCSD to improve operational, financial and academic practices that will result in increased student achievement and organizational effectiveness. The request for waivers was based on the Strategic Plan.

System personnel monitor progress and provide support to school personnel. The superintendent's cabinet (superintendent, chiefs, deputies, and regional superintendents), Strategic Attack Team (SAT), and the Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA²) Task Force are examples of leadership groups that meet each week to support the district's purpose and direction. In addition, various leadership development academies, comprised of regional superintendents, principals, assistant principals, district administrators, and teacher leaders meet monthly to engage in learning focused on student achievement and plan for ongoing continuous improvement.

Indicator 1.3

District leadership maintains a high level of commitment to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning that supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all children in the district. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. DeKalb County School District is dedicated to sustaining standards based classrooms where teachers utilize research-based instructional strategies. Some of the programs offered to support student learning include: Extended Learning; Saturday School; English Learner Studies; Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM); Early Intervention; Title I; Special Education; Gifted and High

Achievers; and Career Technical & Agricultural Education. In addition, school choice programs are open to all students to apply during the open enrollment window. Students are selected by a random automated lottery process. School choice offerings include, but are not limited to: Charter, Immersion, Inclusion, International Baccalaureate, Magnet/Career Technology, Magnet/High Achievers, Magnet/Special Interest, Montessori, Theme, and Joint Enrollment programs. In addition, a wide array of professional learning opportunities are provided to employees in order to further the growth and enhancement of the district's workforce.

Evidence indicates varied use of instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. In addition, system leadership and staff hold one another accountable to high expectations for professional practice. For example, the Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA²) Task Force was formed by the superintendent to focus the work of the district on teaching and learning.

The CIA² Task Force began work in July, 2015. The first action of the task force was to share the message and mission of CIA², which is to facilitate an intense focus on teaching and learning with all stakeholders. Information has been shared in board meetings, senior cabinet meetings, monthly administrator academies, assistant principal academies, teacher advisory council meetings, regional superintendent meetings, local school faculty meetings, and parent and community meetings. One of the goals of the task force is to support increased instructional rigor in the classroom. Principals were engaged in discussions over several months to develop a common definition and establish a framework for rigor. The professional learning department also developed a rigor toolkit to support the framework.

The CIA² Task Force developed a rigorous internal assessment system aligned to the written and taught curriculum which mirrors the assessment format that students experience on state and national assessments. Building leaders had access to multiple sources of data; however, the data was not organized in a way for administrators to efficiently access the data for the purposes of supporting student learning. Therefore, the DeKalb County School District department of Research, Assessments, and Grants (RAG) provided support to help principals analyze the many different forms of data available to the schools, determine the best use of the data, and identify the best data sources to improve student learning. Additionally, the district collaborated with Georgia Center for Assessment (GCA) to provide professional learning to school-based teams to build capacity in the use of formative and summative assessment data to plan for instruction. Efforts around this goal will continue and will include the implementation of GCA-developed benchmark assessments that are aligned to the district's curriculum units for instruction.

Although work began with building leaders, the CIA² Task Force developed a plan to address the critical issue of impacting practices at classroom level teaching and learning. With that understanding, DeKalb central office staff conducted over 2,000 unannounced classroom walk throughs to assess the level of rigor in every school and in every subject area. The data from the walk throughs were used to develop district level professional learning to support schools in improving teaching and learning. Although there has been success in engaging in discussions about increasing rigor, the team will continue to gather data and plan professional learning to ensure that increased rigor is systemic in every school and every classroom.

Indicator 1.4

Leadership at all levels of the district execute a documented, systematic continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. This process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Implementation of the district's five-year Strategic Plan began in the 2014-2015 school year. A systemic and systematic process of accountability has been developed and implemented. Performance measures, with baselines and targets, have been developed as a way to assess progress toward meeting the performance objectives for each goal area. Initiatives and action steps were also developed to answer the question "How do we plan to get there?" In addition, a monitoring and data collection process for the Strategic Plan has been created and executed. Further, a Progress Check monitoring system, based on the

Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle for continuous improvement, serves as a checkpoint to evaluate progress towards reaching the performance targets. Ongoing progress monitoring and data collection inform the initiatives and mid-course adjustments. Opportunities to strengthen performance measures and improve and revise initiatives and action steps are part of this monitoring process. The end-of-the-year data (Balanced Scorecard) is used to inform the division plans for the next school year. Information is placed on the district's Strategic Plan webpage for full transparency and to keep all stakeholders informed of progress.

Ongoing strategic planning sessions with all divisions are conducted throughout the school year. Guiding questions are utilized to provide focus, direction, and opportunities for reflection. In addition, two cross-divisional sessions are conducted throughout the year (mid-year and end-of-the year). This allows a cross-divisional forum to discuss initiatives, actions steps, annual progress, and opportunities for division collaboration. During these sessions, each division leader reports on progress to the superintendent. Progress is also reported to the Board of Education in a public meeting during a Strategic Planning Mid-Year Review and Strategic Planning Comprehensive Review.

Leaders at all levels of the district implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. Support and structures have been developed to improve decision-making and documentation of student success. For the past two years, training was conducted during the summer to support school leaders with continuous improvement planning. Subsequently, in the fall of 2015, DeKalb was awarded a $250,000 grant from the Wallace Foundation to implement leadership development initiatives. The Wallace Leadership Development Core Team was formed, which included representatives from the following divisions and departments: Leadership Development; Professional Learning; Curriculum and Instruction; Research, Assessment, and Grants; Federal Programs; and Strategic Planning, as well as a regional superintendent, and an external partner. This team has focused their work on developing a Continuous Improvement System (CIS) for the district.

As a result of the work of the Wallace Leadership Development Core Team, the DeKalb County School District implemented a refined approach to continuous improvement planning for all schools during the 2015-2016 school year. Using a case study, participants engaged in processes used in continuous improvement planning. This included understanding the appropriate uses of various types and sources of data and designing collaborative processes to develop and implement a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). Three monitoring cycles were built into this system to review, reflect, and refine the work being done throughout the school year. These monitoring cycles are strategically held after Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments, common assessments, and benchmark assessments so that data can be used to inform progress.

In the fall of 2016, principals led their school teams through the Continuous Improvement System (CIS) process to develop a school-based Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). A comprehensive needs assessment that utilized multiple measures of data was conducted in order to validate the need for improvement. School teams examined demographic, perception, school process, and student learning data to confirm and prioritize needs. Teams then clarified the school's purpose, goals, and measures and selected evidence-based strategies and aligned them to action items. DeKalb leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. Throughout the year, schools will review progress, reflect on processes, and identify actions to refine implementation of strategies for improvement. Schools are given guided support from district leaders to conduct three monitoring cycles. All school CIPs are aligned to the district's Strategic Plan Goal Areas and Performance Objectives as well as to the Georgia District Performance Standards as required by the Georgia Department of Education. The CIP serves as an action plan for implementing improvement priorities and is reviewed and updated annually.

Actions to Sustain the Areas of Strength

To further strengthen and sustain continuous improvement efforts at all schools, additional Continuous Improvement System (CIS) processes are currently being developed and will be implemented in the 2017-2018 school year. Key tasks and timelines have been identified that will

enable the implementation of these new processes with fidelity. To begin, in late March 2017, principals will be given support and training as they begin development of the 2017-2018 Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). Each school will submit the CIP by May, 2017. During the months of May and June, a CIP Peer Review and Feedback process will be conducted. CIP Peer Review members will include the principal, regional superintendent, and members of the regional micro cabinet, and representatives from the departments of Federal Programs and Curriculum & Instruction.

Impact Checks will also be a component of the Continuous Improvement System in the 2017-2018 school year. The purpose of the Impact Checks will be to ensure that leaders at all levels of the system are engaged in supporting school improvement. Information gleaned from these visits will be used to inform regional decisions and district action plans for allocating time and resources to support local school improvement efforts. Feedback from Impact Checks will also be used to refine the implementation of the Continuous Improvement Plan. To ensure coherence with the Monitoring Cycle, protocols that include rubrics, guiding questions, and listening guides will be available to frame these visits. Impact Checks for schools receiving external support from groups such as the Georgia Department of Education and Metro-RESA will be scheduled to coincide with visits from these providers.

AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

Although there were no Purpose and Direction indicators that warranted an overall score of 1 or 2, the district leadership recognizes some performance areas in need of improvement for indicator 1.2. While there is evidence that the system ensures each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for success, the district is currently strengthening how system personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for improvement. While the district has a robust Continuous Improvement System, additional tools and processes for monitoring and providing support are currently being developed and implemented. Calibration will be ongoing as the district utilizes the tools and engages in processes to provide feedback for continuous improvement.

Plans to Improve the Areas of Need

District leadership recognizes that monitoring and providing feedback to schools on the implementation of Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) is an area of growth. To make improvements in this area, the "monitor" phase of the newly developed Continuous Improvement System includes three distinct district-led monitoring cycles for reviewing progress, reflecting on processes, and refining actions and strategies. Indistar, a web-based system used to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report improvement activities, is the platform being used as a monitoring tool for all schools. Additional tools and processes for monitoring and providing support, such as a CIP System Continuum, CIP Monitoring Resource Guide, Data Dialog Inquiry Protocol, and Plus/Delta Reflective Analysis Protocol, have been developed and implemented. Calibration will be ongoing as leaders utilize the tools and engage in processes to provide feedback for continuous improvement. Leadership Development provided training on assessing quality plans and coaching implementation for the regional superintendents through the regional superintendent academy. In addition, the CIP Peer Review and Feedback process, along with Impact Checks, will be new components to further enhance the Continuous Improvement System in the 2017-2018 school year.

Governance and Leadership

The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.

Overall Rating: 3.33

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	Policies and practices support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.	•Professional development plans •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •District operations manuals •Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions •School handbooks •2016 Parent Survey Data Report, 2016 Student Survey (Middle and High School) Data Report, 2016 Student Survey (Elementary) Data Report, 2016 Staff Survey for Schools Data Report	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	The governing body has a process to ensure that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit.	•Governing authority minutes relating to training •Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest •List of assigned staff for compliance •Proof of legal counsel •Governing authority training plan •Assurances, certifications •Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies •Historical compliance data •Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	The governing body consistently protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a clear distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.	•Communications regarding governing authority actions •District strategic plan •Examples of school improvement plans •Roles and responsibilities of school leadership •Roles and responsibilities of district leadership •Social media •Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district •Stakeholder input and feedback •Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation •Agendas and minutes of meetings •2017 Salary Ranges.html and job descriptions	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community.	•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan •Professional development offerings and plans •Survey results •Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans •Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders consistently communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts, and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' proactive and persistent efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation, positive engagement in the system and its schools, a strong sense of community, and ownership.	•Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action •Survey responses •Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan •Communication plan •Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	The focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice throughout the system and improving student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and improve student learning.	•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation •Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted •Process for Measuring Professional Development, 2016 LKES Condensed Calendar 2016-2017, 2016 TKES Condensed Calendar 2016-2017	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Standard 2 Governance and Leadership

The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) is the third largest school system in Georgia. The school district is led by a Superintendent/CEO who is appointed by a seven-member board of education. On May 28, 2015, the DeKalb Board of Education appointed Dr. R. Stephen Green as Superintendent of DCSD. Each Board member serves a four-year term and is elected from individual single-member districts on a staggered basis. Annually, members of the board of education elect a chair and vice-chair. Due to a change in Georgia law, on January 1, 2012, the board transitioned from a nine-member elected board to a seven-member elected board.

AREAS OF STRENGTH: Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6

Indicator 2.1

The DeKalb County School District Board of Education has adopted a solid foundation of policies and practices that ensure effective operation of all aspects of the school district and its schools. The Board of Education establishes and approves the policies that govern the DeKalb County School District as documented in Board Policy ABB. In 2015, the board developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for conducting the business of the board and documented the processes, procedures and protocols in the DeKalb Board of Education Handbook. These policies and practices support the district's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the district and its schools. The Board regularly reviews and affirms the contents of the handbook to ensure that policies and procedures remain current and are within federal, state, and local laws. The manual includes policies that support effective governance and leadership, direction for oversight of fiscal management, employment and personnel matters, facility planning, community relations, professional development, curriculum and instruction, and additional areas designed to support student success.

The superintendent and senior staff members lead the policy development process. Proposed policies, budgets, strategic plans, and other such matters are presented to the Board for initial review and then distributed to all stakeholders for public review and comment. All policy additions, revisions, or deletions are discussed publicly during monthly business meetings. Prior to the monthly business meetings, all board meeting agenda items, including policy changes, are published on eBoard, an online platform developed and provided by the Georgia School Boards Association. The board and superintendent have been intentional in focusing the work of the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) on improving student performance and improving the quality of schools by using continuous improvement processes. To that end, the superintendent has worked with staff to ensure that all district initiatives are aligned to board-approved goals and measured accordingly, as outlined in the DCSD Strategic Plan.

Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction and assessment, and produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. To evidence this practice, the board approved the superintendent to hire a vendor to assist with conducting an audit of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. Audit results identified strengths and weaknesses of the division as well as in the current curriculum. One of the most valuable outcomes of the curriculum audit was the creation of the Superintendent's Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Accountability (CIA²) task force. The CIA² team is comprised of the superintendent and a cross-functional team of district-level administrators who meet weekly to develop strategies to increase student achievement by utilizing teaching and learning best practices that are both rigorous and relevant in 21st century classrooms.

Since the implementation of the CIA² Task Force in FY2014-15, the team has developed a process for the creation of a rigorous curriculum written by DeKalb teachers that will provide students with a systematic course of study aligned to the state curriculum. Used effectively, the curriculum will improve student performance. The development of the curriculum began as the CIA² Task Force worked with the superintendent to identify the components of a rigorous curriculum, develop a timeline for completion of the curriculum design, and establish expectations for ongoing professional learning to ensure district implementation of the curriculum with fidelity.

The curriculum writing process began during the summer of 2016, when the CIA² team vetted applications from teachers desiring to serve as content-area experts to write specific portions of the curriculum. Over 200 DCSD teachers were selected and now serve under the direction of the CIA² team, the DCSD Division of Curriculum & Instruction, and the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE), the vendor hired to support the development of the K-12 core curriculum. The curriculum writing and implementation project will follow a three-year timeline. In order to ensure that the curriculum remains viable, curriculum writers will facilitate ongoing professional learning for teachers to ensure implementation with fidelity. Oversight, systemic review, and monitoring by district leadership as well as annual approval by the board will ensure that a quality curriculum is created, delivered and sustained.

Policies and practices have been established that provide clear requirements and direction for oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system. As a result of focused efforts, the district moved from having a financial deficit greater than $14,000,000 in FY2012 to ending FY2016 with an estimated fund balance of $125,000,000. This positive fund balance was the end result of refined budget practices, new

leadership in the Finance Division, and the implementation of strict spending controls throughout the district. Also, the overall economic recovery assisted in improving the district's financial status. To sustain this continued solvency, the district has developed a clearly established process for budget development, which is stated in Policy DC: Annual Operating Budget, Policy DCL: Fund Balance and Policy, and Policy DJE: Purchasing. The current board has referenced these policies extensively to ensure that an open, transparent process for district expenditures is evident to taxpayers.

In addition, in 2015, the Finance Division updated the Local School Accounting Manual that all schools follow to ensure use of the most current district-approved procedures for accounting of funds received and expended by individual schools. The Finance Division also updated the Finance Standard Operating Board Policy information to include policies that have been revised by the board within the past two years. The Finance Division provides monthly finance reports to the board during the monthly BOE meetings, along with annual reports to the Georgia Department of Education.

Indicator 2.2

The activities of the board and superintendent demonstrate responsible actions and effective functioning on behalf of the DeKalb County School District by using processes to ensure that decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, and are free of conflict of interests.

To that end, the governing body has established and adheres to strict policies regarding ethics, conflicts of interest, and nepotism. In 2013, the DCSD Board of Education received notice from AdvancED that the school district was placed on Accredited Probation. One consequence of the probation was that the Governor of Georgia replaced seven of nine sitting members of the Board of Education. The new board and superintendent immediately began to work to restore the trust of stakeholders and realign the work of the district to better support student success. As a result, on January 28, 2016, DCSD received notice that full accreditation from AdvancED had been restored.

This achievement was the direct result of incremental improvements made in governance and leadership by the board and superintendent. In 2013, the board selected an interim superintendent to lead DCSD. Together, they worked to positively change the culture of the district. Then, on May 28, 2015, after conducting a national search, the Board appointed Dr. R. Stephen Green as Superintendent of the DCSD.

The board began its transformation by developing and implementing a Code of Civility called the Board Norms. The norms govern and outline how board members are to respond to each other and the public. The board also publicly affirms adherence to the Code of Ethics policy annually. In September of 2016, during the monthly BOE Business Meeting, the board approved the superintendent's recommendation to hire an Executive Legal Officer for the district. This staff member works closely with the superintendent and chief legal officer to ensure that board policies are current, compliant with all laws, and aligned to the vision, mission and goals of the DCSD.

All members the school board participate in a systematic, formal professional development process. The Board takes part annually in two retreats with an agenda focused on student achievement, team building, roles and responsibilities of the board, and the DCSD Strategic Plan. In addition, the DCSD Board of Education annually prepares a professional learning plan and reports the professional learning hours of each board member to the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) as required by law. The full board participates in the training, and a benefit of the training has been the clarification and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board and the superintendent.

The current board aspires to conduct business as a high-performing board of education. In FY2014-15, the board began to utilize the services of the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute to facilitate professional learning for members. The board collaborated with the institute to develop and implement a process for self-assessment. When the self-assessment process is fully implemented, the information will be analyzed and used for sustaining improved board performance and to inform additional professional learning needs. The board of

education is leading the improvement charge by partnering with the Carl Vinson Institute to support their professional learning needs and to ensure that the board is fully prepared to function effectively with fidelity.

The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit. Board attorneys ensure that all proceedings of the board and superintendent remain within the law. Nelson, Mullins, Riley and Scarborough represent and serve the DCSD Board of Education as General Counsel and as Education-Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST) counsel. The school district maintains a legal office and attorney Jennifer Hackemeyer is the Chief Legal Officer for the district and also serves as a member of the superintendent's cabinet.

Additionally, to assure stakeholders that the DeKalb Board of Education is in compliance with all laws, DCSD has established an Office of Audits & Compliance. The director of the department reports directly to the Superintendent. Annually, the Office of Audits & Compliance conducts school audits which may include finances, property and equipment. The Office of Audits & Compliance also monitors reports from the ethics hotline (IntegriLink) and, following investigation, refers all substantiated instances of unethical behavior to the Office of Legal Affairs and the Office of the Superintendent for action. The Ethics, Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Corruption Procedures manual provides the district with information regarding how to report a breach in ethical behavior and states the consequences associated with unethical behavior that has been committed by individuals employed by the school district.

Indicator 2.3

The DCSD Board of Education maintains a clear distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership. A clear understanding has been established that the sole employee of the board of education is the superintendent. Therefore, the day-to-day administration of the school district is the responsibility of the superintendent, who is appointed by the board. Specifically, Board Policy BAB outlines the separation of duties of the board and superintendent. The superintendent selects and utilizes the expertise of district administrators to lead the district's organizational divisions to discharge board policies.

Prior to 2013, there was a perception among stakeholders that the board interfered in the daily operations of the school district, including hiring practices and fiscal management. In 2015, to ensure that the board demonstrates fidelity to govern effectively, the board voted to approve Policy BAB: School Board Governance, which established guiding principles for the board as it relates to governance of the district, ensures the superintendent's autonomy to manage the day-to-day operations, and outlines the parameters of roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent. Additionally, BOE policies ABD, CG, CGB, and CGE specifically guarantee the superintendent's complete autonomy to manage the district, including the hiring of personnel. The Board of Education Policy Manual clearly lists the roles of the board and superintendent and is reviewed on a regular basis, which validates that the governing body consistently protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for achievement and instruction. To that end, a collaborative and shared leadership structure is established by school and district leaders. The superintendent's cabinet meets weekly and is comprised of the superintendent, chiefs, deputies, region superintendents, and select executive level personnel. The cabinet meetings are scheduled at schools throughout the district to allow more visibility of the superintendent and cabinet members and to allow principals the opportunity to showcase their schools. In addition, the superintendent meets with region superintendents weekly as a group and invites cabinet members to each meeting to discuss matters within their respective divisions.

School board meetings are held monthly with work sessions occurring midday and public comments and business meetings occurring in the evening. Pre-agenda and agenda setting meetings are held with the Board Chair and Vice-Chair prior to the board meetings to allow for review and discussion of board agenda items. This structure and process ensures transparency and facilitates open communication between the superintendent, school board, and internal and external stakeholders. Finally, the Board meeting agenda is posted one week in advance of the meeting for public view.

The school board consistently safeguards that the leadership at all levels is empowered to lead and manage day-to-day operations consistent with the district's purpose and direction. For example, the superintendent authorized an audit of the Human Resources Division in 2015-2016. Subsequently, the superintendent reorganized the Human Resources Division to facilitate a high-performing culture in a vital division that is responsible for hiring and retaining qualified individuals to function effectively and efficiently in their professional roles. Part of the reorganization included staffing changes in the department and the conversion of the Human Resources Department to the Human Capital Management Division. To that end, the Human Capital Management Division has worked to clarify all DCSD salary ranges and job descriptions to accurately reflect roles and responsibilities as well as ensure competitive salary structures in alignment with neighboring metro area school districts.

Additionally, the Board-approved reorganizational structure placed local autonomy for central office operations under the five regional superintendents. The decentralization of central office included the areas of Transportation, Human Capital Management, Finance, Operations, Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology and Student Support and Intervention. Representatives from the areas listed above serve on the micro-cabinet of each regional superintendent in the five regions. The five regional micro-cabinets collaborate with the schools in the clusters housed in each region. The decentralization of services is creating efficient, effective and community-centered processes serving to develop the perception of making a big district seem small. Decentralization was undertaken to provide faster response and more efficient customer services to students, parents, and employees. Decentralization helps to make certain that the core business of teaching and learning remains at the forefront of all that is done in the DeKalb County School District through the enhanced support provided to schools as a result of the decentralization plan.

Indicator 2.4

Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. District and school leaders are resolute about building the culture of the district around our mission, vision and core beliefs. This is demonstrated by the ongoing reference to our strategic direction in staff meetings, board meetings, and professional learning activities. In order to ensure that the strategic planning process is fully utilized, the DCSD assigned a Director of Strategic Planning. The strategic planning office works closely with the superintendent to ensure that all initiatives of the district are aligned with the DCSD strategic direction and are monitored for efficacy. Ongoing monitoring and assessment ensure that effective improvement strategies continue and those that are not effective are revised. The district has created measures, targets and initiatives to ensure success in each strategic plan goal area. A monitoring and data collection process has been developed and updates are provided on the DeKalb Strategic Plan webpage and in eBoard.

DCSD leadership and staff expect all personnel to maintain high standards and hold students to high standards in all courses of study. Leaders at all levels collaborate to make certain that actions and decisions target high priority initiatives to facilitate student success. To evidence this commitment, divisions collaborate in cross-divisional teams to ensure that all departments within the organization are able to coordinate efforts to advance student success. A component of the superintendent's reorganization plan is a change in the position of Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to that of Chief Academic Officer and Deputy Superintendent for School Leadership to that of Deputy Superintendent for Student Support and Intervention. Both changes are to ensure that wrap-around services are aligned in divisions and structured to efficiently deliver the academic, social, emotional, and physical services necessary to positively impact student success.

The Strategic Waivers School Systems (SWSS) contract demonstrates the capacity and vision of the district through established flexibility from specific state laws. These flexibilities allow DCSD to improve operational, financial, and academic practices that will result in increased student achievement and organizational effectiveness. SWSS school districts operate under a five year contract with the State Board of

Education. In exchange for the freedom from selected state laws, the district agrees to generate higher levels of student achievement and operational effectiveness based on agreed upon goals and measures. The Georgia Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement maintain oversight of the contract.

DCSD leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning as outlined in the SWSS agreement. Therefore, the district has designed a graduated set of interventions to move under performing schools back on-track to higher performance. The first step is to allow the school to design and implement a continuous improvement plan using the menu of flexibilities at their disposal to improve student performance. If that does not result in improved performance, the district will get more intensively involved and require more rigorous steps both by school leadership and staff. If the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score is continuously below expectations, the district will involve the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) and work with them to improve school performance. The earliest a GOSA intervention could take place will be the 2022-2023 school year.

The SWSS contract allows for flexibility from state laws at both the central office and school levels. Central office flexibilities support high standards for student performance in all courses through more efficient and effective district programming and support practices. Examples of district programming flexibilities include: Human Capital Management (HCM) implementation of the certification waiver for hard to fill positions such as computer science, engineering, and interrelated special education positions. This flexibility will decrease staffing vacancies and foster timely education of students in these areas. The finance division has implemented the flexibility option of waiving the 65% rule that required this percentage of our funding to be school based, which limited our ability to effectively allocate personnel resources across our diverse district. As a result, the district is now allocating personnel resources in greater support of student learning across the district.

Another area of central office flexibility is the redesign of school councils across our district to further engage stakeholders in school level decision making and school improvement efforts. The redesign includes greater participation in the selection of local school principals by school councils and more accountability for ensuring that local school councils are viable components of each school community. In order to assist school councils with additional resources, a district level coordinator for school councils has been added to support the 114 school councils in DCSD.

Indicator 2.5

DCSD leaders consistently strive to communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback, and respond to stakeholders. As a result, district and school leaders' proactive and persistent efforts relative to stakeholder engagement have resulted in measurable active stakeholder participation, positive engagement, and a strong sense of community ownership as evidenced through the redesign of our school councils. Working through a reorganized regional structure, existing councils and school leaders were surveyed in the fall 2016 to determine the effectiveness of the current school council structure relative to student achievement. Based on this feedback a series of focus groups and council work sessions were undertaken to redesign bylaws, cross council structure, automated elections, member training, and policy. As a result of the redesign, DCSD School Councils will have opportunities to shape decision and work collaboratively on data analysis, principal selection, E-SPLOST design decisions, and any SWSS flexibilities through the continuous improvement planning process.

In addition to efforts with school council redesign, the superintendent's resolve to include stakeholder feedback in determining how the Education-Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST) funds are to be used is unprecedented in DCSD. The school district engaged stakeholders during a series of region meetings, online information opportunities, and surveys over a period of several months. The district then issued a broad set of needs that would be addressed by the passage of E-SPLOST. Consequently, the E-SPLOST Referendum was approved by 71% of all votes cast during the May 2016 election.

Moreover, DCSD engages stakeholder feedback and participation from the broader community. As an example, to further expand communication with varied representatives from stakeholder groups, feedback was collected prior to submitting the SWSS application to the Georgia Department of Education. DCSD leadership took over 18 months to build a detailed vision of future success as captured in the SWSS application. The work was based on feedback gathered at 17 community engagement sessions as well as extensive audits of academic and organizational practices.

Indicator 2.6

The DeKalb County School District has clearly defined evaluation processes and procedures in place that are regularly implemented and designed to improve professional practice throughout the school district. The district utilizes the Georgia Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES) and the Leader Keys Evaluation System (LKES), provided by the Georgia Department of Education for formal evaluation of certified staff. Evaluation tools for classified positions are developed by the school district.

The Teacher and Leader Keys evaluation instruments are designed to assess quality teaching and learning in the classrooms. The Teacher Keys evaluation process includes walk through observations and formative observations. Data reports from these observations are used to directly inform teachers' instructional practice. School district leaders receive a timeline listing the deadlines for completing and submitting evaluations. This timeline is monitored by region superintendents, who directly supervise principals. The leadership development department provides ongoing training in the use of these evaluation instruments to ensure that evaluations are conducted with fidelity. Remediation and ongoing support are the initial steps in addressing performance concerns. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to inform and adjust professional practice throughout the school district to improve student learning.

There are also policies and practices requiring and giving direction for professional growth of all staff. Board Policy GAD: Professional Learning Opportunities and Policy GAD-R (1) Professional Learning Opportunities provide procedures and processes for ensuring that all employees engage in systematic and ongoing professional learning. The district's professional learning efforts utilize district data (e.g., student performance, teacher observation data, and staff feedback) to determine, facilitate and measure enhanced staff practices, based on the goals of the district's Strategic Plan. Professional development processes are aligned to these data-driven priorities. Educator practices are monitored by local school administrators, and the district monitors performance measures and processes.

School and district leaders have a plethora of opportunities to develop as leaders in a variety of leadership academies offered through the leadership development department. Additionally, the monthly Administrator Academy provides leaders with professional learning opportunities that are tied directly to the Superintendent's plan for improving teaching and learning. The DCSD professional learning department has also collaborated with the instructional technology department to provide a newly designed professional learning vehicle, VERGE, to bring needs-based data-driven professional learning to teachers and employees of the district. Finally, AdvancED stakeholder survey responses indicate satisfaction with the work that is being conducted in the district in the area of Governance and Leadership.

Actions to Sustain the Areas of Strength

A cabinet-level position was created to ensure that two-way communication is effectively and appropriately engaged at various levels of the organization. The addition of Chief Communications and Community Relations Officer has reinforced the commitment of the school district to enhance stakeholder participation. The Communications Department and Informational Technology (IT) personnel have engaged in using social media to provide ongoing, real time information to internal and external stakeholders. The district utilizes Facebook, Twitter, the DeKalb Mobile App, YouTube, and Instagram to share information and gain instant feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

A position of district-level School Council Coordinator has been added to strengthen and sustain the meaningful leadership roles of

stakeholders serving on local DCSD School Councils. This was a district-created position and included in the general budget. The coordinator works under the leadership of the Director of Charter Schools, School Governance, and Flexibility Department. The coordinator manages and oversees the 114 local school councils in DCSD. The coordinator works with district departments to facilitate positive interactions between local school councils and the district. Additional duties of the coordinator include: monitoring compliance of federal law; maintaining a data base of best practices for school councils and principals; and training all school council members, chair persons, and principals.

AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

Although there were no Governance and Leadership areas that warranted an overall self-assessment score of 1 or 2, district leadership recognizes the need for a strategic waiver approval process to strengthen collaboration and shared leadership across central office divisions. To that end, district leaders have begun the development of a process that will document the impact of the requested flexibility on student and organizational performance. The process is expected to enhance collaboration, shared leadership and professional growth across the district.

Plans to Improve the Areas of Need

The district is developing a process to use to determine the viability of requested SWSS waivers (flexibility). The SWSS Flexibility Approval Process will provide a road map for the district to use when considering the need to implement requested waivers (flexibility) included in the SWSS contract. The process will include the identification of the specific waiver being sought and the intended outcome of improving organizational efficiency or student achievement. The requesting department must provide a detailed plan of implementation, and set SMART Goals. The waiver must be in alignment with the district's Strategic Plan and identify any potential budgetary or personnel impacts. The approval process will include approval by the Charter Department, Office of Legal Affairs, all interdisciplinary departments impacted, and the Superintendent. If the waiver is approved, monitoring and accountability measures will be implemented to effectively measure the attainment of intended goals.

Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

Overall Rating: 2.75

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations.	•Learning expectations for different courses and programs •Course, program, or school schedules •Student work across courses or programs •Course or program descriptions •Survey results •Lesson plans •Graduate follow-up surveys •Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	•Curriculum guides •Common assessments •Standards-based report cards •Surveys results •Curriculum writing process •Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps •Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	Teachers in most schools sometimes use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of groups of students when necessary. Teachers sometimes use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.	•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Authentic assessments •Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource •Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations •Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool •Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge •Surveys results •Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs •Interdisciplinary projects	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	System and school leaders monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures to ensure that they 1) are aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, 2) are teaching the approved curriculum, 3) are directly engaged with all students in the oversight of their learning, and 4) use content-specific standards of professional practice.	•Surveys results •Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs •Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	All system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration often occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching occur regularly among most system personnel. System personnel indicate that collaboration causes improvement results in instructional practice, system effectiveness, and student performance.	•Common language, protocols and reporting tools •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings •Survey results •Peer coaching guidelines and procedures •Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning •Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	Most teachers in the system use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Exemplars are sometimes provided to guide and inform students. The process may include multiple measures, including formative assessments, to inform the ongoing modification of instruction. The process provides students with feedback about their learning.	•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Survey results •Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction •Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning •Required Response to Intervention RtI Tier 2 Roles and Responsibilities RtI IC Training Schedule	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	System personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that are consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. These programs set expectations for all system personnel and include measures of performance.	•Survey results •Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to district and school beliefs and values about teaching and learning •Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff •Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed and implemented. System and school personnel regularly inform families of their children's learning process.	•Survey results •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	School personnel implement and participate in a structure designed and evaluated by the system that gives them long-term interaction with individual students, allowing them to build strong relationships over time with the student. All students may participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into and serve as an advocate for the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	•Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students •Survey results •List of students matched to adults who advocate on their behalf	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	Teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in all schools across grade levels and courses. Stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures are regularly evaluated.	•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices •Survey results •Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting •District quality control procedures including the monitoring of grading practices across all schools •Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on assessment of needs of the system. The program builds capacity among all professional and support staff. The program is systematically evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	•Survey results •District quality control procedures showing implementation plan for professional development for district and school staff •District professional development plan involving the district and all schools •Crosswalk between professional learning and district purpose and direction	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	System and school personnel use data to identify unique learning needs of all students at all levels of proficiency as well as other learning needs (such as second languages). System and school personnel stay current on research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related learning support services to all students.	•Survey results •List of learning support services and student population served by such services •Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Standard 3 Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) affirms that a consistent curriculum with clearly defined expectations for implementation and

outcomes is the foundation of a quality education program. To that end, Superintendent Green has begun laying the foundation to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the curriculum, with teachers collaborating on its development, identified resources for support, professional learning, and research-based guidance for improved instructional delivery and knowledge acquisition in support of student success.

AREAS OF STRENGTH: Indicators 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12

Indicator 3.1

Curriculum is at the heart of the learning experience for all students; therefore, approximately 1,000 teachers participated in the writing and revising of the DeKalb County School District's curriculum from January to June 2012. During this process, the District partnered with Curriculum Designers, Incorporated (CDI). National experts at CDI trained, reviewed, and provided feedback on curriculum documents to ensure Common Core standards alignment of content, skills, and assessments. The curriculum-at-a-glance guides, unit plans, and model lessons for each course provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. The district's curriculum resources clearly define what students should know and be able to do in order to be prepared for the next grade level and post-secondary options.

Increasingly our teachers are seeking opportunities to develop lessons that individualize instruction to support achievement of learning expectations. The curriculum-at-a-glance guides provide clearly defined learning targets to support students as they move through the coursework and demonstrate mastery of each target. Additionally, courses/classes across the district have equivalent learning expectations as evidenced by the standards that are required to be mastered in each class.

Indicator 3.2

In support of the district's continuous improvement planning processes and wanting to ensure that the written, taught, learned, and assessed curriculum remains aligned to Georgia's standards, the Superintendent created a task force: the Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA²) Task Force. This task force selected the most responsive vendor to conduct a comprehensive curriculum audit.

The District contracted with the Curriculum Management Solutions, Incorporated (CMSi) in January 2016 to perform the curriculum audit to determine the following:

(a) If the school district has a rigorous written curriculum for students in all grade-levels and courses;
(b) If the school district has sufficient resources aligned with core and non-core standards;
(c) If the school district is organizationally structured and resourced for achieving an aligned, written, taught, learned, and assessed curriculum;
(d) If the school district demonstrates control, adequacy, and equitable distribution of resources, programs, and personnel;
(e) If the school district demonstrates internal consistency and rational equity in its program development, implementation, monitoring, accountability, and evaluation of students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged students, struggling learners, and gifted students;
(f) If the school district has the internal capacity to develop rigorous assessments and use the results to adjust, improve, or abandon ineffective instructional practices, programs, or curriculum; and
(g) If the school district is improving productivity as it relates to financial decisions, budget development, curricular alignment, and facilities that support improving teaching and learning outcomes.

In response to the audit, a recommendation was made to the district to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a viable curriculum through an on-going curriculum design process. As a result, DCSD began its partnership in July 2016 with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) through the Request for Proposal (RFP) practice to lead the curriculum writing process. Through this partnership, the district is addressing the needed revisions to increase the rigor of the written, taught, and assessed curriculum. The administration anticipates seeking Board approval of Phase I of the new curriculum in March of 2017.

Indicator 3.5

Through the Classroom Focused Improvement Process (CFIP), teachers, administrators, and support staff participate in collaborative learning communities both formally and informally across grade levels and content areas. This process was introduced to school leaders during fall semester 2016 to assist school-level staff with implementing a more structured process to analyze classroom, common, state, and national data in a collaborative setting to identify students who need interventions or enrichment, root causes for student performance, and instructional adjustments required to ensure students learn the content and skills. Staff members have been trained to implement this process, which is designed to promote discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Through the CFIP process, all schools analyze student data, engage in reflection, participate in study teams, and analyze the results of inquiry practices to design and implement innovative programs and research-based interventions to help struggling learners and provide challenging enrichment opportunities for students to extend their learning.

The District crafted a professional development plan that supports each region based upon feedback data from Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES), surveys, and needs assessments. Cross-divisional collaboration is evident throughout the District and personnel indicate that collaboration supports improved results in instructional practice, district effectiveness, and student performance. Through grade-level, department chair, cluster, regional and district-level meetings, and conferences, staff members collaborate and discuss data and implications to identify research-based strategies and best practices to improve student achievement. For instance, the Diverse Learner Services (English Learners) Department plans, organizes and conducts an annual conference for all English Learners (EL) teachers to participate in meaningful professional development and network with other teachers vertically and horizontally.

Indicator 3.7

District staff participate in on-going professional learning, which is supported by Board Policy GAD: Professional Learning Opportunities and Policy GAD-R (1) Professional Learning Opportunities which clarifies expectations for district personnel and establishes procedures and processes for ensuring that all employees engage in systematic and on-going professional growth practices that are consistent with the District's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. The District's professional learning efforts utilize district-level data (e.g., student performance, teacher observation data, and staff feedback) to determine, facilitate, and measure performance and enhanced staff practices, based on the goals of the District's Strategic Plan. Professional development processes are aligned to these data-driven priorities, and educators' practices are monitored by the local school administrators, as well as district-level monitoring of performance measures and processes. In addition, autonomy is allocated for regional superintendents and principal's to align professional development based on the unique needs of each region and each of its schools.

The District's professional learning opportunities also include a robust new teacher induction program called the Program of Induction for new DeKalb Educators (PRIDE). This program is also consistent with the District's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. PRIDE teachers meet monthly and receive content-specific training and pedagogical support in various forms, such as coaching and mentoring.

Indicator 3.8

DCSD has implemented and designed programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education. To that end, the District hired a Family Engagement Coordinator and six Parent Liaisons at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. The Family Engagement Centers are strategically located throughout the school district to serve as a hub for workshops, seminars, round table discussions, and resources in each region. The intentional work of district-level and school-level staff is improving the communication between the school and home, providing an environment for informing families of their children's learning process and strengthening the District's relationship with families and communities at large. The resources available focus on Pre-K - 12 curricula, Georgia Milestones Assessment System, assessments, Title I programs, college information, and parent engagement activities and events.

Communicating with the families of over 25% of our student population who speak a great variety of languages and dialects is a unique opportunity. Therefore, the DeKalb County School District facilitates meaningful communication with our linguistically diverse community through our Translation and Interpretation unit. District interpreters and translators, as well as outside service providers are used as resources to address the need for written and oral communication in order to ensure that our parents are connected and informed. For all events and activities planned, documents are translated and interpreters are secured in order to ensure effective communication with the linguistically diverse community. Parents/guardians whose primary home language is other than English (PHLOTE) participate in the parent/guardian outreach programs. These programs include offering ESL classes, computer literacy, school orientation workshops, and instructional childcare.

Furthermore, the DeKalb International Welcome Center serves as a liaison between schools and our linguistically diverse students and their families. Our interpreter/registrars and counselors provide information and support and identify the language needs of students and their families. Most importantly, they provide a welcoming atmosphere to our newcomers. With the support of a highly qualified staff, the International Welcome Center offers numerous services to our culturally and linguistically diverse student population and the community of DeKalb County. Each year the DeKalb International Welcome Center provides services to approximately 3,000 newcomer families.

Indicator 3.9

The DCSD has many programs in place that allow for school personnel to implement and participate in structures designed to ensure at least one adult advocate in a student's educational experience. Every student is assigned to a guidance counselor. The assigned counselor works with students and parents to mitigate issues that might impede academic success. Counselors also help students to determine areas of interest and schedule them to take the necessary courses while establishing long-term interactions that support students' social and academic needs. Through the teacher-student mentoring program, students are paired with caring adults who provide support and encourage students to be their best in addition to creating an environment where the adults have the opportunity to build strong relationships over time with the students. These opportunities to check in with students take place formally and informally while providing the adults the prospect of gaining insight into the students and being able to serve as an advocate for the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.

Through the post-secondary transition specialists program and Communities in Schools adults participate in a structure designed to give them long-term interaction with individual students. Students receive constant feedback to help them make wise decisions regarding their post-secondary options, while eliminating barriers to high school completion. These adults also help make certain that students meet all benchmarks associated with college enrollment, such as application deadlines, and financial aid submissions. The Check and Connect Mentors are assigned to select schools throughout the District to address disproportionality. These adults meet with students to address academic, behavioral, and attendance concerns that can impact students' ability to matriculate successfully and graduate on time. In addition, the EL Success Facilitators work with students at three of the most impacted EL schools within the District. The efforts of the facilitators are focused on supporting students to ensure increases in the English Learners' graduation rate. They work in collaboration with the school counselors, social workers, and instructional personnel to support culturally responsive practices.

In addition, a focused, intensive support plan is being implemented in Horizon schools. These are the lowest performing elementary schools identified by the state as measured by CCRPI scores. The Horizon School support plan has an emphasis on work related to instructional programs and resources; uniformity and processes; structure; culture and climate; and support services for all learners. Horizon Schools are also partnering with central office staff to ensure that every student has a mentor. The Horizon Schools are refining their procedures and practices to sustain effective local school mentoring programs.

Indicator 3.10

Research shows that a strong, school-parent-community connection is an essential element in building and sustaining school improvement. On September 23, 2013, DCSD launched the Parent Portal registration process for all K-12 students and informed all stakeholders of the new process and procedure for student registration. In addition, the district adopted a new student information system (SIS) that was launched in August 2014 to engage a common reporting process and procedure in all schools across grade levels and courses for reporting students' academic progress and to promote parental engagement and the school-home connection. Infinite Campus, the new SIS, engages families in meaningful ways by keeping them informed of their children's learning progress with real time data. Through Infinite Campus, parents/guardians have access to the academic performance and attendance of students in all scheduled courses for a given grading period and semester. Teachers communicate academic progress to students and parents in a timely manner through Infinite Campus by maintaining accurate and current records and adhering to the district-wide grading protocol and syllabus template. In addition, educators are able to provide parents with tips for assignments given to students, thereby allowing parents/guardians to support learning at home. This partnership is essential in the education of students for continuous student achievement and improvement of student morale and attitude. As a result of the recent data relative to parent utilization of this tool the District will resume the "Stay in the Know" campaign designed to increase the number of parent portal users and to encourage parents/guardians to consistently make use of the tool.

Teachers across the district use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures in support of Board Policy IHA: Grading Systems. This common grading process is based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. With the implementation of a district-wide grading protocol and syllabus, all teachers use the same grading criteria through Infinite Campus. The district-wide grading protocol and syllabus template were created with input from internal and external stakeholders.

Indicator 3.11

All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is aligned with the district's purpose and direction and based on an assessment of district needs. As a result, the district implements professional learning specifically designed to meet the needs of all schools including state and federally identified schools. Through monthly regional, administrator, department chair/grade level chair, counselor, coach, ambassador, network, and PRIDE (new teacher induction) meetings, the District provides intentional, job-embedded professional development that builds capacity among all professional and support staff. The districts' professional learning has focused on school culture, rigor, literacy, mathematics, STEM, pedagogy, Response to Intervention (RtI), unpacking of standards, Check and Connect, restorative practices, exceptional education, and analyzing data. The commitment of our district to the process of continuous professional growth is supported by the Board of Education mandating a total of 10 professional learning hours for staff per year. Also, the District will require staff to create an individualized professional development plan in July 2017 to complement its current evaluation of professional learning programs and to further ensure the impact of professional learning on improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning.

Indicator 3.12

District and school staff use data to identify unique learning needs of all students at all levels of proficiency as well as other learning needs. Consequently, In August 2015, the Superintendent restructured and authorized the hiring of additional personnel to facilitate the implementation of the multi-tiered support system (MTSS). The District revised the Response to Intervention Handbook and conducted professional development for school leaders, local facilitators, and teachers in support of MTSS. Also, the RTI module was designed to house pertinent student data in Infinite Campus in further support of MTSS. The District's RTI/MTSS Initiative (Year 2) provides consistent and research-based practices, including training for SST Chairs on new procedures towards implementation of a multi-tiered system of support.

In an effort to address students with diverse academic needs district and school personnel stay current on research related to unique characteristics of learning and the district provides related learning support services to students through Title I, Early Intervention (EIP), Remedial Education (REP), and Response to Intervention (RtI). RTI training will continue during the 2016-2017 academic year to ensure that students receive the appropriate, evidence-based interventions to address academic and behavioral targets. Other services are provided through special education, English Language Learners, gifted/high achievers and homeless. In addition, schools have mentoring programs, teachers as advisors, and comprehensive guidance programs to provide additional individualized support to students.

Identified English Learners receive language assistance services through our ESOL Program. The EL Studies Department is responsible for the identification and quality services provided to our English Learners. The EL Team ensures that state and federal guidelines are followed and that teachers and administrators receive the professional learning opportunities needed to meet the needs of our English Learners. The DeKalb County School District has met the State Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives for English Learners in English language progress and proficiency (AMAO 1 and AMAO 2) every year.

Actions to Sustain the Areas of Strength

One area of strength is our Curriculum Design work. Therefore, in preparation for the curriculum design work that is underway in DCSD, CIA² created and distributed an online application to select teachers who are participating in the development of the curriculum and the revision of the existing curriculum resources to ensure that this work is firmly established by teachers. A timeline was created to meet the phase one deadline in March 2017. In response to the audit, DCSD is developing and will implement, monitor, and evaluate a viable curriculum through an on-going curriculum design process.

DCSD established a professional development plan that supports each region based upon teacher keys (TKES) data, surveys, and needs assessments. The professional development plan is specifically designed to meet the needs of all schools. In addition, the lowest performing elementary schools, identified by the Georgia Department of Education as measured by CCRPI scores, called Horizon Schools are receiving intentional, job-embedded professional development during the 2016-2017 school year.

Discovery Education and the University of Georgia are partnering with DCSD to offer leader and teacher professional development. For instance, Horizon Schools are receiving targeted professional development focusing on school culture, unpacking standards, analyzing data (national, state, district, and local school assessments) at the classroom level, identifying the depth of knowledge level of each assessment item, and learning how to design more rigorous questions that require students to synthesize, analyze, and evaluate information.

DCSD continues using "On the Scene with Dr. Green", "EngageMEnt Now", newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open houses, Infinite Campus, social media, and DeKalb Mobile APP to improve communication. Most notably this year, DCSD hosted a series of "Back to School" events including the first county-wide Knock, Walk and Talk and pep rally to engage with our families and communities and to inspire and empower them to get excited about the new school year. Staff members donated school supplies for students that were distributed during the pep rally and other family focused events.

Also, parents/guardians are encouraged to continue to access their Student Information System (SIS) account, which is named Infinite Campus, to monitor the academic progress of their children. Teachers communicate academic progress to students and parents through Infinite Campus by maintaining accurate and current records and adhering to the district-wide grading protocol.

RTI training will continue during the 2016-2017 academic year to ensure that students continue to receive the appropriate, evidence-based interventions that are needed to address academic and behavioral targets. The RTI module was fully implemented this year in Infinite Campus and to facilitate student information being in one system the 504/HHB module is currently being developed.

The district has completed a data analysis report recognizing trends of disproportionality in the identification of economically disadvantaged students and students of color in the most rigorous courses of study or programs. The report has been shared with the Superintendent, and as a result, a full disproportionality remediation plan has been ordered by the Office of the Superintendent. Work has begun in this area through refinement of the gifted eligibility handbook and policies associated with identification of gifted students inclusive of bias-free assessments and realignment of the roles and responsibilities of the local school gifted liaisons. Also, recent district-wide initiatives such as My Brother's Keeper and Our Sister's Keeper are in the early implementation phases and are designed to reduce and/or eliminate disproportionalities in advanced/accelerated, gifted, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual credit courses among students of color and economically disadvantaged students.

The district was selected through a competitive application process to partner with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) through the Lead Higher Initiative to reduce pervasive socio-economic and racial disparity in the identification of, eligibility of, and success of economically disadvantaged students and students of color in both Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Six schools are participating in the Lead Hire program (Cedar Grove High School, Arabia Mountain High School, Southwest DeKalb High School, Dunwoody High School, Druid Hills High School, and Stone Mountain High School). Implementation has begun and schools are in the process of using program data to identify and enroll underrepresented students in Advanced Placement courses.

AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT: Indicators 3.3, 3.4, 3.6

Indicator 3.3

The majority of teachers plan and use instructional strategies that foster deeper learning in which students collaborate, communicate, and demonstrate their understanding of the content and skills taught by applying their knowledge to real world experiences and solving problems. However, this expectation varies among schools and would not be considered consistent and deliberate throughout our district. With the increasing diversity and changing demographics in DCSD schools, it is essential that the data are used to adjust the curriculum and make programmatic modifications to ensure that the educational needs of all learners are addressed by all teachers. To that end, additional work is planned to ensure that all teachers are consistent and deliberate in planning and using instructional strategies that support achievement of learning expectations throughout our District.

Indicator 3.4

District and school leaders monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures; however, a formal and consistent process beyond classroom observation is needed. Through the Superintendent's CIA² Task Force, the District has focused on improving the instructional outcomes for all students. District-level and school-level leaders use data from student assessments and learning walks (classroom observations) to assess the usage of the curriculum resources, monitor the implementation of instructional strategies and practices to differentiate instruction, and identify the instructional rigor evidenced by teacher-student interactions, student engagement,

student work, and student achievement. Through student data analysis and classroom observations is it determined that all teachers are not consistently using instructional strategies that require students to apply higher order knowledge and skills or integrate content and skills with other disciplines. There are some exemplars throughout the district, but this important work is included as an action item for the CIA² task force.

Indicator 3.6

Most teachers in the district use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations; however, this remains an area in need of improvement to rise to the degree of all teachers throughout the district using a consistent instructional process that clearly informs students of learning expectations. The use of formative and summative assessment data to inform and differentiate instruction is the expectation; therefore, the District will implement in spring 2017 benchmark assessments created by the University of Georgia that are aligned to the curriculum and instructional pace to monitor student mastery of the standards and to make instructional adjustments as needed. The designed assessment items are identical to the common-core based items that are offered through the Georgia Milestones Assessment System. The items vary in the depth of knowledge levels and include distractor rationale. The content coordinators are vetting the assessment items during the final review phase to ensure the quality of the benchmark assessments.

Plans to Improve the Areas of Need

Phase I of the Rigorous Curriculum Design Process began in August 2016. In order to ensure that this process becomes a part of the ongoing curriculum review cycle, the curriculum writers are developing the curriculum in phases. Upon completion, each phase will be presented to the Board of Education for adoption and approval. The first phase consisting of required core courses and introductory CTAE course will be presented to the Board of Education for consideration, adoption, and approval in March 2017. Curriculum implementation and support are slated for the 2016-2017 school year with all phases to be implemented by 2019.

The current Curriculum Writing Team consists of over 200 teachers in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and specific CTAE courses. The curriculum writers have determined the priority standards and created the curriculum-at-a-glance guides with the pacing embedded. Teachers have linked the standards to essential questions and enduring understandings. The curriculum writers have created authentic performance tasks with specific instructional strategies to differentiate the learning experience for all students. The scenarios promote critical thinking and require students to apply their existing and new knowledge to solve relevant problems aligned to the standards from multiple disciplines. Also, the teams have developed pre-assessments that are aligned to each unit. The teachers are collaborating and monitoring the work to ensure "Instructional Rigor."

The Rigorous Curriculum Design process ensures alignment each time curricula, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the district-level or school-level. The newly developed curriculum includes detailed unit plans containing identified priority standards, essential skills and questions, content vocabulary, performance tasks, pre-assessments, benchmarks, and weekly plans to ensure teachers are consistently developing daily plans that address the needs of all learners through a tiered support system with identified strategies and interventions. Efforts will remain focused on the alignment of professional development and resources to support curriculum implementation as well as the need to monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessments to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment. To foster a more structured monitoring system, a cross-divisional team is developing a district-wide walk through template to ensure that the quality of instruction in every classroom is consistent. The goals of the walk through instrument are to provide teachers and leaders with timely, detailed, strategic, and intentional feedback and determine the understanding and implementation of instructional priorities and strategies.

The District is planning phase two of the rigorous curriculum design process. As a provision of the Board Policy, the District will continue its partnership with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. The second phase includes core electives and the upper level CTAE pathway courses. The

application is currently being revised to obtain additional information from candidates to appropriately match each candidate's knowledge and experience to the most logical course for development.

Additionally, robust, differentiated professional learning plans are being implemented for literacy, mathematics, and STEM with unique provisions for state and federally identified schools. The K-12 Mathematics Initiative Year III (School Year 2016-2017) shifts from a focus on teaching to student learning. The district-wide mathematics professional development plan concentrates on enhancing differentiated math instructional practices, mathematical literacy, KUD (what students must know-understand-do), number talks, formative assessment lessons, Polya's problem solving, UPS Check, and close reading. A new component of year III is developing a cohort of teachers to become district-level math ambassadors. These math ambassadors work collaboratively with the Math Initiative Team to develop lessons that are student-centered with emphasis on learning with flexible structures that embody problem-based learning. The teacher leaders are creating math lessons aligned to content-specific standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practices, analyzing student work, and providing instructional commentary to students for next steps. The expected outcome is a group of math teacher leaders who are able to provide modeling sessions, training, workshops, and mentorships throughout the district to ensure teachers are teaching the approved curriculum and incorporating the Standards for Mathematical Practices.

The K-12 Literacy Initiative Year II addresses balanced literacy, writing, and reading interventions. The district-wide literacy professional development plan dives deeper into the implementation of Leveled Literacy Interventions (LLI) by providing teachers support with planning, assessing, grouping, managing, and monitoring growth of early intervention program (EIP) students. More importantly, the Literacy Initiative Team is providing ongoing support for teachers with unit-specific pre-assessing, planning and implementing mini-lessons for specific writing units, including narrative, informational, and persuasive/argument writing. Similar to the math initiative, K-12 Literacy Ambassadors are enhancing their content knowledge and honing their pedagogical skills through professional development. The anticipated outcome is expanding the network of literacy leaders to develop model lessons, assist with training and support, and cultivate potential lab classrooms to ensure teachers are teaching the approved curriculum and offering the appropriate research-based interventions when necessary.

The District STEM initiative (Year 4) continues to focus on enhancing problem-based learning at 102 DCSD schools through focused professional development. Intensive support is provided on an ongoing basis to schools being recognized by the Georgia Department of Education and AdvancED as STEM-certified schools. The District leads the nation with 13 STEM certifications at the school level. There are 11 additional schools seeking STEM certification from AdvancED. Certification determination will be made by June 2017. External partnerships are being increased to support STEM efforts in the schools.

Upon initial review of the student achievement data as well as school accountability (CCRPI), the District has noted significant increase in student growth as well as notable outcomes in the mitigation of pervasive student achievement gaps across core-content areas. While student proficiency in the mastery grade-level contact standards continues to improve nominally, lower quartile performance has increased year-by-year. The District has begun implementation of the Strategic Attack Team Initiative toward improving educational outcomes for students scoring in the lowest academic quartile. The Strategic Attack Team is working with school leaders based on access and interpretation of local school formative and organizational data to ensure that all teachers understand how to design, modify, or revise appropriate instructional and school practices, extended learning processes, and/or safety nets to provide students with specific and immediate feedback.

Teachers and leaders use formative assessments results to adjust the instructional program to meet the needs of all learners. With the implementation of MAP and benchmarks, the District is emerging and working toward more consistent practices to monitor student mastery of the standards and to make instructional adjustments as needed. The benchmarks are housed in VERGE and were made available to schools on January 30, 2017.

Also, the implementation of VizIT (Tableau), new data warehouse, allows district-level and school-level staff to readily access data to inform the decision making process. The VizIT installation process has been completed. Principals, district leaders, teachers, and specific instructional personnel received full access to VizIT in January 2017. All schools are now positioned to implement purposeful data analysis of multiple measures to identify data trends, develop action plans, and move toward enhanced instruction and increased student performance. Professional development is ongoing and began in Jan 2017 with school principals. Professional development will be provided to all district-level personnel inclusive of district-level leadership, school leadership, and all teachers.

Resources and Support Systems

The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Overall Rating: 3.12

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	Policies, processes, and procedures ensure that system and school leaders have access to, hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. System and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support purposes, educational programs, and continuous improvement throughout the district. Sustained fiscal resources are available to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	•Survey results •District budgets or financial plans for the last three years •District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools •School budgets or financial plans for last three years •Assessments of staffing needs •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are focused on supporting the purpose and direction of the system, its schools, educational programs, and system operations. Instructional time is protected in policy and practice. System and school leaders work to secure material and fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students and improve the effectiveness of the system. System and school leaders demonstrate that instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are allocated so that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations. Efforts toward the continuous improvement of instruction and operations include achieving the purpose and direction of the system and its schools.	•Examples of school schedules •District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •Examples of school calendars •Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction •Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction •District strategic plan showing resources support for district	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	System and school leaders have adopted or created clear expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with stakeholders. System and school personnel as well as students are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions. Improvement plans are developed and implemented by appropriate personnel as necessary to improve these conditions. Results of improvement efforts are evaluated.	•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments •Example systems for school maintenance requests •Survey results •Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments •Example maintenance schedules for schools •School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes •Example school records of depreciation of equipment	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	The system has clearly defined policies and procedures for strategic resource management. The system employs a systematic, long-range, strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. The strategic planning process is regularly evaluated for effectiveness, and improvement plans related to the process are developed and implemented when necessary. All strategic plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body, and system leaders and have built-in measures used to monitor and ensure successful implementation and completion.	•District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems •District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments •Evaluation results of the effectiveness of the district strategic plan or indicators of changes resulting in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan •Survey results •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to ensure that all students, school, and system personnel have access to the media and information resources necessary to achieve the educational programs of the system and its schools. The system implements and evaluates processes to ensure qualified personnel are recruited, hired, and retained in sufficient numbers to assist students, school and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information.	•Evaluation procedures and results of education resources •Survey results •District education delivery model intended for school implementation including media and information resources to support the education program •Data on media and information resources available to students and staff •Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	The system provides a modern, fully functional technology infrastructure, modern, updated equipment, and a qualified technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of all stakeholders throughout the system. System and school personnel collect data concerning needs and use the resulting data to develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment.	•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level •Survey results •District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level •District quality control procedures that monitor the effectiveness of technology services at the district-level and school-level •Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	•Student assessment system for identifying student needs •Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support •Survey results •Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills •Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education •Examples of improvements made to education program and delivery models based on results of program effectiveness evaluations •Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education •List of support services available to students	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning •Survey results •Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning •Description of IEP process •District quality assurance procedures that monitor program effectiveness of student support services •Description of referral process	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Standard 4 Resources and Support Systems

The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) has been effective in providing essential resources and services that support our core purpose and strategic direction. The District has established a process for long-range planning coupled with careful strategic resource management strategies that will ensure sufficient resource and service provision to support student success.

AREAS OF STRENGTH: Indicators 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8

Indicator 4.1

The DeKalb County School District has policies, processes, and procedures to ensure that the system and school leaders have access to hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. The district has hiring procedures to facilitate the recruitment and onboarding of new employees for both classified and certified positions. Additionally, the Division of Human Capital Management has a thorough recruitment plan that includes local and national efforts to recruit teachers to work in DeKalb. The recruitment plan also includes active searches for new teachers at the top ten colleges of education, nationally, regionally, and in the state, in addition to recruiting at the top colleges of education and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The district addresses new teacher retention through the Program of Induction for new DeKalb Educators (PRIDE). PRIDE is our induction program for new teachers, and includes a year-long onboarding process and ongoing professional development to keep new teachers engaged in DeKalb Schools.

To assist in the workforce retention efforts, the Superintendent recommended and the Board of Education approved a salary adjustment for all school-based certified personnel in January 2016, and a three percent salary increase for all employees in July 2016. Additionally, the Superintendent recommended to the Board a one and a half percent salary increase for all school-based certified and classified employees in December 2016, for payment in January 2017, and an additional half of a percent salary increase for all school-based certified and classified staff in January 2017, to be paid in February 2017. These efforts have bolstered our salary ranking with other metro Atlanta districts. Prior to these efforts, DCSD ranked 6th out of 6th in salary. After these efforts in 2016, DCSD ranks 4th out of 6th.

The recruitment efforts were also examined through the climate survey in December 2016. This is the first employee climate survey in approximately five years. The results of the climate survey will be used to sustain practices for reward and to implement new processes to retain our employees.

In addition, the Superintendent recommended, and the Board approved changes in Phase three of our reorganization to address retention efforts. This reorganization included the creation of a new position, Talent Management Specialist. This position was created to address the dearth of professional development opportunities for classified staff. The District had professional development for certified staff offered through the Office of Professional Learning in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, but had not adequately addressed the needs of classified staff. Therefore, in August 2016, the Division of Human Capital Management created and offered a full catalog of classes. Some of these classes include, "Dealing with Difficult People", "Effective Communication", and "Performance Management." Also, the Director of Staff Services, compensation, and benefits position was changed to the Director of Total Rewards. This change includes, giving a codified home retention effort in Total Rewards. The Director of Total Rewards is responsible for compensation, benefits, professional development, employee rewards, and the new wellness initiative. The district's new wellness initiative is called T.O.T.A.L. (Taking Our Team to Another Level) Wellness and will launch in the 2017 school year.

The system and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all roles and responsibilities essential to support purposes, educational programs and continuous improvement throughout the school system by implementing a two-step process. First, we engage in the annual budget cycle process. During this process, departments may request additional personnel, or modify existing personnel to ensure adequate staff are available to meet the District's strategic need. Position control is a very rigid component to the process, whereby each person has a position number which is driven by allotments through our finance division. Therefore, personnel cannot

be added absent a position number. Schools staffing is driven through student enrollment projections. The Department of Planning, within the Division of Operations, makes enrollment projections and student enrollment projections drive personnel allotments and funding. Secondly, a collaborative multidisciplinary team comprised of Operations, Human Capital, Finance, and Curriculum and Instruction ensure comparability and staffing allotments for all schools and programs.

As a result of our stringent budget cycle process, the District has sustained fiscal resources to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs. To that end, our student enrollment projections have remained stable and we have not had a reduction in force since 2012, while our student educational programs continue to expand.

Indicator 4.2

The DeKalb County School District operates on a 180-day student calendar. However, within the last five years we have had a reduction in student calendar days and found it necessary to add staff furlough days resulting from state and local revenue deficits. However, over the last two years we have seen an increase in revenue which has afforded us the opportunity to restore the number of student calendar days and staff work days. Currently, we have no calendar reduction days, and our 12-month employees work on a 246-day calendar.

At the school level DCSD principals are effective in creating master schedules and school procedures that maximize instructional time in adherence to Board Policy AEA and AF.

The BOE and superintendent require that all expenditures be aligned to the strategic goals of the district. To ensure alignment, the requestor must identify the goal area from the strategic plan in support of their spending request. Individual schools utilize their continuous improvement plans to inform allocation and utilization of financial resources that support instructional programming.

As it relates to the allocation of material and fiscal resources, the district has consistently allocated approximately more than 63 percent of the operating budget to direct instruction. These funds are used for school-based staffing and material resources. All DCSD schools receive $9600 on average in FTE funds per student. Therefore, all district allocation of human, material, and financial resources are managed to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations.

Indicator 4.3

District and school leaders have adopted and created clear expectations for maintaining a safe, clean, and a healthy learning environment for all students and staff. These definitions and expectations have been shared with stakeholders via the District's Student Code of Conduct, Board Wellness Policy EEE, and various other custodial training initiatives/programs managed by the Divisions of Operations, Student Relations, and Public Safety. System and school personnel are accountable for upholding these expectations by passing various facility inspections and safe school audits conducted by our in-house experts, state inspectors, and third-party professional service vendors. Measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions which include ongoing physical and visual inspections by our custodial supervisors, safety administrators, wellness committee members, local school administration staff, and various state and federal regulatory agencies. Improvement plans, to include the District's Green Cleaning Initiative, Recycling Program, and Safe School Taskforce, are developed and implemented by personnel to improve these conditions within all schools and centers. Results of improvement efforts are evaluated on a regular basis and align with the District's Strategic Plan.

The Code of Student Conduct has been revamped to provide restorative treatment for students with disciplinary infractions. The district also has several schools that have implemented the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support program (PBIS). Through this program, schools work to decrease the number of school disruptions and enhance the overall school climate.

The Public Safety Department works in collaboration with local schools and the community to ensure that buildings are safe and afford a conducive climate for learning. School Resource Officers (SRO's) are assigned to schools to support campus supervisors in maintaining campus safety. Through collaborative effort with the Office of Student Relations, local school administrators address disciplinary infractions in accordance to the District's Code of Student Conduct. Parents are made aware of behavioral expectations early, and are involved in the process when disciplinary infractions occur.

Safe school audits are conducted annually in all schools. The Safe School Team conducts walk throughs to identify areas of potential vulnerability. Feedback from audits is shared with building leaders and plans for improvement are developed and implemented. Follow up reviews take place to ensure implementation of improvement plans.

Indicator 4.4

The system employs a systematic, long-range, strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. Division Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs), aligned to the district's Strategic Plan, have been developed and implemented. These plans include performance measures, targets, initiatives, and action steps that are inclusive of all strategic priorities. End-of-the-year data are used to inform future plans and identify any course corrections needed. All CIPs are implemented with fidelity and system leaders have built-in measures used to monitor and ensure successful implementation and completion. Performance measures, with baselines and targets, have been developed as a way to assess progress toward meeting the performance objective for each goal area. Further, a Progress Check monitoring system, based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle for continuous improvement, serves as a checkpoint to evaluate progress towards reaching the performance targets. Ongoing progress monitoring and strategic planning sessions are conducted throughout the year. The Balanced Scorecard, located on eBOARD, provides a way to track and report performance levels against district goals. The Board of Education is provided extensive mid-year and end-of-the year progress reports. Additionally, information is placed on the district's Strategic Plan webpage for full transparency and to keep all stakeholders informed of progress.

The district has clearly defined policies and procedures for strategic resource management, which is evidence by the development of our master planning efforts. In the spring of SY2015, the district formally launched its Facility Master Planning effort, branded under the term "Building S.P.A.C.E.S. Initiative", to determine how, where, and why future resources should be dedicated to the improvement and modernization of our buildings and infrastructure in support of the district's mission, vision and strategic priorities. This initiative had three primary components which focused on master planning, stakeholder engagement, and the development of the district's $500+ million Capital Improvement Plan. Through this initiative, the District sought to guide its strategic decisions by effectively leveraging extensive stakeholder engagement within a data-driven process.

In support of this important work, the District hired a third-party consultant to assess the physical condition and educational suitability of every school facility in the District. Formal Facility Condition and Educational Adequacy assessment reports were compiled by our consultants and validated by District central office staff, local school principals, PTA organizations, school councils, and other community stakeholders. In addition, enrollment projections and utilization rates were calculated for all schools and centers through 2022 and a full Secondary School Planning and Feasibility Study was conducted to evaluate overcrowding in all middle and high schools throughout the District. In the spirit of full transparency, the District engaged in thoughtful and meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the entire 18-month master planning process, which will culminate with the Board's approval of a formal long-range facilities master plan to support the purpose and direction of the system.

Indicator 4.5

The district provides, coordinates and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to ensure that all students, school and system personnel have access to the media and information resources necessary to achieve the educational programs of the district and its schools. Educational Media and Instructional Materials, a department in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, provides services and support to the district's library media programs and instructional materials needs, which includes textbooks and supplemental materials.

Educational Media provides a number of specific services to ensure that all students and district personnel have access to media information and information resources. The Professional Library provides 24-7 online access to an extensive collection of books, e-books, and other professional documents and journals as well as interlibrary loans to DeKalb teachers and employees. The Learning Resources Center offers DeKalb teachers access to its collection of 10,000 DVDs, videos, CDs, and sheet music through Medianet, an online catalog, and provides courier delivery to our district's schools and sites. Instructional Media Processing provides library cataloging for materials to DeKalb's school library media centers through its subscription to BestMarc, a centralized, online MARC record database management platform used to create, find, and update MARC records. Three times a year, the entire district's MARC records are analyzed, evaluated, and adjusted, when necessary, through our MITINET Full Circle Support subscription.

The library media staff at each school receives training and uses Destiny Library Manager, an online Library Management System with 24-7 access, to manage their library resources. Destiny Library Manager is used to circulate books, access electronic and digital resources, conduct inventory, and run reports to evaluate the collection to guide the weeding and collection development processes. As an online platform, Destiny Library Manager provides its patrons access to electronic library resources in the library, the classroom, and from home. The Destiny Library Manager home page can be customized by each school or center's library media staff to meet the needs of the students and teachers. The home page can be used to feature district and school information, highlight library events, and provide links to a variety to relevant, age and grade level resources. Additionally, each school's Teacher Librarian (TL), who serves as the Destiny Library Manager Site Administrator, can modify the search features to make access to reading materials based upon reading programs and reading levels easier for students to retrieve.

Educational Media administrators communicate with the system's TLs to provide on-going support and assistance through school visits, e-mail, listservs, and memos. Additionally, the department coordinates monthly professional development meetings. Surveys are conducted and usage statistics of resources are evaluated regularly to help coordinate relevant professional learning sessions to help TLs meet the individual and academic needs of their students and facilitate collaborative lessons with their teachers.

The system's TLs and their library media programs and practices are evaluated yearly using the Georgia Media Specialist Evaluation Program (GMSEP) Instrument. The Educational Media Administrative team provides GMSEP training to all school administrators to conduct appropriate evaluations of the TLs serving in each of their schools. Additionally, the Library Media Assistants are evaluated yearly using the DeKalb County Evaluation System Annual Evaluation Instrument for Classified or Non-Administrative Employees.

Instructional Materials completes orders and provides access to instructional resources including, but not limited to, textbooks and supplementary materials. Resources are monitored and purchases are made to accommodate projected growth and replenish inventory due to lost or damaged materials. The department uses Destiny Resource Manager to monitor resources, coordinate inventory dispersal, and conduct audits. Each school and center assigns Building Textbook Administrators (BTAs) and Building Textbook Coordinators (BTCs) who are trained to use the Resource Manager software to complete reports. During textbook adoptions, the department works closely with the academic departments to facilitate and evaluate instructional materials to ensure that they are appropriate, relevant, and suitable.

Educational Media and Instructional Materials use a variety of bid and sole source vendors to purchase library and instructional materials. The DeKalb County School District gives each school 100% of its earned FTE Library Media State Allotment funds. Each school's TL uses

the allotment funds to purchase print and non-print resources to fulfill the district, library media, and school-wide goals and meet the needs of each school's students. The Instructional Material unit manages the budget to purchase, replenish, and rebind textbooks and other instructional materials. Furthermore, schools occasionally receive additional funding to support identified curriculum needs.

In accordance with the Georgia Board of Education Rule and the DCSD Board Policy governing school library media center programs, both School and System Library Committees are required to be established. Each includes representatives from the student body, faculty, administration, and community. This advisory group assists in setting yearly library media program goals, discusses local and system-wide technology initiatives, and contributes recommendations in the selection/evaluation of resources and equipment. Additionally, both committees respond to any formal request submitted for the reconsideration of challenged library media or instructional material.

The system implements and evaluates processes to ensure qualified personnel are recruited, hired and retained in sufficient numbers to assist students, schools and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information. Educational Media and Instructional Materials, a department in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, implements a system and has an evaluation process in place to ensure that qualified personnel are recruited, hired, and retained in sufficient numbers. The department's staff of one director, three coordinators, and seven auxiliary members assists the library staff at 126 schools and special programs.

The district supports the hiring of certified TLs. Many of the district's TLs who are hired are first prescreened by the Educational Media Administrative team prior to interviewing at the school level. New TLs attend an orientation session specifically designed to share information about the Educational Media Department and the libraries in the school district. Each new TL is also assigned a mentor who works with similar grade levels at a school that is located in the same region. New TLs attend at least seven professional development sessions through PRIDE (Program of Induction for new DeKalb Educators), which is designed to provide initial and sustained professional learning and support. On-going support and assistance is provided through school visits, e-mail, listservs, and memos.

Annually, Educational Media provides an updated list of individuals agreeing to substitute in library media centers during the school year as short-term or long-term substitutes. The list consists of several retired TLs and former library secretaries, and all substitutes are recommended by fellow educators. This list assists the TLs in locating individuals who understand the mission and procedures of the school library media program.

Several schools have a Library Media Assistant (LMA) who works with the TL to provide instruction, support, and assistance to students and staff in the library media center. Currently, 26 LMAs are assigned to serve two schools each with a total of 52 schools receiving assistance. These employees were hired during Phase I of a special hiring process to restore administrative staff to serve in our library media centers. They received a full-day of orientation and hands-on training. On-going support and assistance is provided through school visits, e-mail, listservs, and memos. Additional professional development is planned to ensure that the LMAs have the tools and information necessary to meet the needs of the stakeholders at the schools to which they have been assigned.

Indicator 4.6

The system provides a modern, fully functional technology infrastructure, modern, updated equipment and a qualified technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning and operational needs of all stakeholders throughout the system. The DeKalb County School District strives to be acknowledged as a high-performing organization that delivers an accessible and engaging 21st Century Learning Environment for all students. It is our intent to promote the ubiquitous integration of technology tools that will not only support relevant and personalized learning, but also develop and nurture adaptable skills for all students. Consequently, success will be defined by how well this learning environment produces globally competitive students prepared for higher education, work, and life-long learning in a rapidly changing society. A mission this significant and impactful requires DCSD to continue extensive evaluation and planning as it pertains to the district's educational

technology infrastructure and tools.

By the end of the 2016 - 2017 school year, DCSD would have implemented a state of the art fiber optic and wireless network in all elementary, middle and high schools districtwide. Utilizing this new high speed switches and high-capacity wireless access points, the district provides a robust network for the 21st century learner. This infrastructure delivers wireless connectivity to a variety of devices in all classrooms allowing seamless support for a blended learning environment. The district has deployed 1,927 switches and 5,982 access points in every classroom, accommodating 96 devices per classroom. This will support a total of 574,272 devices districtwide.

In addition, DCSD will continue our established refresh process which replaces outdated technology with new equipment during the 2017 calendar year. The goal is to continuously assess and align the district's technology infrastructure ensuring an engaging and accessible learning environment for all stakeholders. During the 2012 -2017 ESPLOST cycle, the district completed a desktop refresh for all middle and high schools, teachers, and central office staff. Nineteen-thousand desktop computers were deployed throughout the district. Plans are being made for the upcoming 2017 - 2022SY E-SPLOST cycle to refresh all technology that is more than three years old.

Understanding the need for digital and green initiatives, the district has also deployed 477 new multi-function copiers to all schools, centers and central offices. For accountability purposes, these copiers have been connected to the network and are monitored for consumable usage. This connectivity will also provide a more reliable printing environment by proactively identifying hardware failures.

Further looking at opportunities to assess and align the district technology with district initiatives, a new state of the art digital security system has been deployed to all middle and high schools to promote a safe learning environment. By the end of the 2016 calendar year, 1,953 cameras will have been installed. This same security system will be rolled out to remaining schools and centers during the 2017 calendar year. Upon completion of the project, DCSD would have deployed close to 5000 high-definition security cameras.

DCSD has invested in a multi-tiered support approach to continuously monitor and maintain, as well as train stakeholders on how to leverage the district's technology infrastructure. Several levels of support personnel within the Division of Information Technology provide technology troubleshooting. The Support Center is the first point of contact for all users when there is a technical problem that cannot be resolved at the local school level. Upon analysis, the Support Center staff utilizes a help desk call management system to escalate issues through first and second level support for every school and center. DCSD's Instructional Technology program facilitates the research and evaluation of innovative technology tools with the intent to utilize those tools to provide targeted professional development and support through training, modeling, coaching, and resource development.

System and school personnel collect data concerning technology needs and use the resulting data to develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment. During the fall of 2014, DCSD organized a Technology Advisory Committee to lead the development of an effective and actionable technology plan for the years 2015 - 2018SY. The purpose of the Technology Plan is to provide a roadmap that communicates to all stakeholders how DCSD will use technology tools to support an engaging 21st century learning environment for all stakeholders. From late 2014 to mid-2015, the Technology Advisory Committee hosted round table discussions and focus groups with various stakeholders to learn first-hand what each group thought was crucial as it pertained to the technology offered and needed within DCSD. Stakeholder participation included students, parents, administrators, teachers, the DeKalb county business community, and higher education institutions. The Technology Advisory Committee then used this feedback to develop a vision for technology use in alignment with our strategic direction. Once a shared vision was established, the committee was then prepared to collaborate with internal DCSD divisions to evaluate the district's current technology infrastructure and identify gaps that could impede the realization of the shared vision.

Indicator 4.7

The DeKalb County School District has designed and implemented sound processes for supporting the physical, social, and emotional needs of students and for supporting student needs in the areas of counseling, assessment, interventions, and college/career readiness. All DCSD schools have counseling, social work, health and psychological support personnel assigned to work with students as areas are identified that may impact successful academic progress. Programs are designed, implemented and reviewed to ensure compliance with occupational best practices and support for students. Local schools work to monitor student progress towards earning Carnegie units for successful high school completion. District support personnel assist local school counselors to address issues that potentially may impact high school graduation. Areas of focus include academic progress, behavior, and attendance.

The Check and Connect intervention is implemented by the special education department in support of general education students as a part of the Coordinated Early Intervening Service. This same initiative will be implemented with students with disabilities at two pilot high schools and ten elementary schools. This intervention is a research-based model to increase student engagement with both school and learning. The focus of this intervention is to foster school completion with academic and social competence. Check & Connect is designed to be a supplemental intervention meant to lend additional support to students who are not experiencing success through universal interventions. This means that in our multi-tiered system of supports, Check & Connect is considered a Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 intervention.

Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students. Advisement plans are developed for students with parental input and plans are used to determine the course of study for students as they matriculate through middle and high school. School counselors are available at each grade level to provide personal, social, academic, and career guidance for all students. These services are provided through a comprehensive school counseling approach that includes classroom guidance sessions, individual guidance sessions, small group sessions, and parent conferences.

School social workers and student health personnel work to support students by providing resources to students and families. Working closely with community partners, wrap around support is provided to homeless families and those experiencing challenging situations that could negatively impact student attendance. In some situations, clothing, school supplies, and food may be provided. Student health personnel work with parents to make certain that students remain healthy and medical conditions do not stop a student from attending school. Additionally, efforts are made to assist homeless families' with securing permanent housing.

The newly created Student Advancement Department was designed to support efforts related to academic advancement and career and college readiness. The focus of the department includes promoting dual enrollment programs, parental engagement and career, technical and agricultural education. Transition Specialists work to support the needs of students and to help ensure their smooth transition from middle to high school and from high school to post-secondary options. To that end, partnerships have been established with local post-secondary institutions to encourage participation in programs and to foster smooth transitions.

The Parental Engagement Department supports improved stakeholder communication through PDS-TV24, our district public access television station. Information is shared with the community regarding events that take place in the district along with tips on how parents can become involved in schools to advance student success.

Indicator 4.8

DCSD has designed and implemented a collaborative process involving students, parents, district and school personnel to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students. This collaboration occurs during advisement sessions, parent conferences, IEP meetings or the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process. Subsequently, measures of program effectiveness are in place through the MTSS process. DCSD has made a commitment to utilize a comprehensive multi-tiered system of

supports to address the needs of all children across both academic and behavioral domains. The District believes that this comprehensive MTSS process provides strong universal, targeted, and intense interventions for social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs that are: multifaceted, fluid, and flexible; responsive to the varied needs of a diverse student population; results-based and data driven; and proactive, focusing on both prevention and intervention. The MTSS is the cornerstone of academic school improvement efforts and includes instructional and behavioral supports aligned to the Georgia Pyramid of Interventions Tiers 1-4. It is the foundation for wrap around services in DCSD and a robust continuum of care. Response to Intervention (RtI) is the process DCSD employs to use data to inform decision-making regarding the effectiveness of interventions in order to inform next steps for helping students to maximize growth.

In DCSD, RtI is implemented as follows: Tier 1 equates to standards-based classroom learning in which all students participate in general education instruction; Tier 2 is considered needs-based learning and is provided in addition to Tier 1. Students identified through early risk surveillance are targeted to participate in Tier 2 interventions; Tier 3 is Student Support Team (SST) driven learning for students that do not show adequate response to Tiers 1 or 2 interventions. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in the development of Tier 3 interventions; Tier 4 is specially-designed learning that includes Special Education, Gifted, and English Language Learners. Individualized plans are developed to support gifted and English Language Learners. Students found eligible for Tier 4 supports are provided with learning that includes specialized programs, methodologies, and instructional deliveries.

When a student is determined to require Tier 4 interventions, the special education referral and eligibility process begins by securing parent or guardian consent. This committee process in inclusive of the Lead Teacher for Special Education, teachers, school psychologist, and any additional support personnel based on the needs of the student. Once the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) has been developed progress toward goals/objectives is reported to the parent in alignment with progress reporting for general education students. The IEP is reviewed annually, at minimum, and the eligibility is reconsidered every two years.

For students who require accommodations due to medical diagnoses, the district provides both 504 plans and Hospital Homebound Services.

In DCSD, educational and career planning needs are supported by Career, Technology, and Agricultural Education programs (CTAE) offered in middle and high schools. In an effort to promote College and Career Readiness, elementary students also participate in career exploration activities. In middle and high school, students take classes in various career pathways to explore and develop areas of interest. Through career portfolios and inventories, students are able to identify pathways of interest to guide course advisement and post-secondary planning. In high school students also have the opportunity to participate in work based learning programs to augment career exploration and allow for exposure to fields of interest. Data is collected on course enrollment, demographics and academic success to determine program effectiveness and areas for enhancement.

In addition, the CTAE Department has developed a continuous improvement plan that guides the work of the department and aligns with district improvement priorities. Additionally, through advisory committees, course offerings in schools are tailored to present and future industry needs. Students also complete surveys to determine areas of interest to help with course planning.

Actions to Sustain the Areas of Strength

The DCSD decentralized model of support will help to sustain our areas of strength and continue focused regional support to schools. Utilizing the micro cabinet structure in each region we are able to quickly address any concerns related to transportation, Human Capital Management, student services, Title I, finance, and operations to ensure that school support is immediate and concerns mitigated expeditiously.

An additional method to sustain areas of strength is through the Division of Human Capital Management. The climate survey, taken from December 2016 through January 2017 will provide feedback that can be used to strengthen employee retention.

The District's Summer Leadership Conference will help to strengthen practices and prepare district leaders for continued professional growth and development. Annually the Summer Leadership Conference brings together district leaders to prepare for the opening of school. This is the beginning of the year forum where District leaders discuss new and sustained programs and receive updates for the upcoming school year. This cross-functional conference provides a professional learning opportunity for new and returning district leaders and reinforces the alignment of practices to the Strategic Plan.

Stakeholders recognize that the district has the necessary resources and support for students to carryout our district's purpose and direction and ensure success for all students.

AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

Although there were no indicators in the Resources and Support Systems standard that warrant an overall score of 1 or 2, district leadership recognizes that one method of improving support services for students is by engaging in ongoing development of district and school leaders. An area of consideration for ongoing improvement is in the area of leadership continuity or succession planning. Leadership continuity planning is currently being implemented at the Superintendent and Cabinet level. However, continued progress will involve extending this approach throughout the district at all levels of leadership. Succession planning will empower district leaders to strategically approach their career goals and aspirations as DCSD employees. In addition, entrenching this approach into the district's professional culture also provides district leadership with a viable pool of potential candidates to select from for future opportunities.

In addition, the DeKalb County School District recognizes teacher retention as another focus area for our district. This is a matter especially relevant in metropolitan Atlanta with six school districts all competing for teachers in the same geographic area. Historically, DeKalb County School District has compensated teachers less than neighboring school districts. To that end, the administration has taken proactive measures to address the need to retain teachers. In May 2016, the Superintendent recommended and the Board of Education approved a three percent salary increase for all full-time employees, teacher signing bonuses (based on subject area and region), and a retention bonus for all teachers who signed their contract and returned to teach in DeKalb County Schools. In addition, the Superintendent recommended to the Board a one and a half percent salary increase for all school-based certified and classified employees in December 2016 and an additional half of a percent salary increase for all school-based certified and classified staff in January 2017.

Another area district leaders will address for continued progress is ongoing support for the district's technology infrastructure. When considering the relevant and effective uses of the district's technology infrastructure, district leaders also understand the need to continuously monitor and evaluate all systems to ensure sustainability and continued access.

Finally, in addition to enhancing support provided for the district's technology infrastructure, a focus on more intensive and targeted training for teachers will be instituted to better leverage the technology infrastructure in support of student engagement.

Plans to Improve the Areas of Need

District leadership recognized that engaging succession plans through the Division of Human Capital Management will strength our professional pipeline of qualified staff to lead key departments in the district and lead our schools. To that end ongoing strategies are being employed at all leadership levels to enculturate this approach in our process of encouraging growth and development of our staff.

The Superintendent and administration are acutely aware that with turnaround comes turnover, because expectations are raised to a higher focus on student outcomes and achievement. However, it is also the Superintendent's desire to retain the teachers who want to remain by incrementally increasing salaries to remove compensation as an issue for teacher retention.

In addition, the Information Technology Division will continue to establish expectations and service level agreements that support district stakeholders as well as enhance existing diagnostic tools and dashboards. This approach will enhance the provision of critical and forensic data to ensure proactive support of the technology infrastructure. Finally, increased job-embedded technology training is being implemented to empower all teachers to personalize their learning needs related to integrating technology with instruction.

Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance. The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free. The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Survey results •Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning.	•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning •District quality control procedures that monitor schools in effectively using data to improve instruction and student learning •List of data sources related to district effectiveness •Survey results •Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis •Examples of changes to the district strategic plan based on data results •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	All professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a rigorous professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data •Documentation of attendance and training related to data use •Survey results •Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data •Policies and written procedures specific to data training	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	•Policies and procedures specific to data use and training •Student surveys •Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data •Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning •Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans •Evidence of student readiness for the next level •Evidence of student growth •Evidence of student success at the next level	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups.	•District quality control procedures for monitoring district effectiveness •Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals •Survey results •Communication plan regarding student learning, systems that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders •Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals •District quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, systems that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals •Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement •Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Standard 5 Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The DeKalb County School District utilizes results for continuous improvement using a targeted system of cross-cutting, researched-based strategies rooted in successful tenets of school improvement. DeKalb has made concentrated efforts to redesign school improvement efforts to be immersed in the use and analysis of data as one of the primary bases for making organizational and programmatic decisions that influence positive outcomes at all schools. Schools are offered frequent and robust professional development relative to using data to improve results utilizing a plethora of data sources that are based on solid student assessment and school accountability policies, practices, and procedures.

AREAS OF STRENGTH: Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5

Indicator 5.1

The DeKalb County School District maintains a well-defined comprehensive student assessment system that produces multiple measures of student achievement data that provides clear direction for the strategic design of instructional strategies and techniques. Students in grades PK through 12 are assessed for learning through the implementation of both formative and summative assessments. The assessments in each grade level measure a multitude of content areas and are aligned to Georgia content standards. System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures in all grade levels. The district implements three tiers of assessment types: summative, interim, and formative. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system performance. As evidenced by the DeKalb County School District Assessment Handbook, comprehensive district assessments include:

In grades K, 1 and 2, Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS): The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) is a year-long, performance-based assessment aligned to the state-mandated content standards. The goal of the assessment program is to provide teachers with information about the level of instructional support needed by individual students entering kindergarten and first grade. GKIDS will allow teachers to assess student performance during instruction, record student performance in an on-line database, and generate reports for instructional planning, progress reports, report cards, SST, and/or parent conferences. Throughout the year, teachers may assess students and record GKIDS data based on their system's curriculum map or report card schedule. At the end of the year, summary reports and individual student reports will be generated based on the data the teacher has entered throughout the year.

Measures of Academic Progress for Primary Grades (MPG) - Reading and Mathematics: MPG is not a single assessment, but a suite that comes with three computer-based assessment components: (1) Screening; (2) Skills Checklists; (3) Survey with Goals (adaptive, appropriate for universal screening and growth measurement), which can be supplemented with Screening tests and Skills Checklists to dig more deeply into foundational skills throughout the year. The Screening assessments provide baseline information for new students in the earliest stages of learning (e.g. in Kindergarten). The Skills Checklist assessments provide information about specific skills and concepts (e.g. phonological awareness, phonics and concepts of print within reading and number sense and computation within mathematics). They can be administered as many times as necessary during the school year, at the teacher's discretion. For instance, they can be used in between growth assessments to determine which skills require the greatest focus. Just like the Survey with Goals assessment within MAP, Survey with Goals within MPG is recognized by the National Center for RtI as a universal screening tool. It adapts to the level of difficulty appropriate for each student, and is designed to be administered three times a year (fall, winter, spring). It provides growth data (using the stable RIT scale to track growth within and across grades), and a Lexile range for reading. Teachers use this adaptive assessment to identify skills most appropriate for instruction based on each student's performance, regardless of whether the student is at, above, or below grade-level.

District Benchmark Assessments (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies and 9th Grade Literature and Composition; American Literature and Composition; Coordinate Algebra; Analytic Geometry; Physical Science; Biology; United States History; Economics): Offered following every instructional unit via the online learning management system, the DeKalb Benchmark Assessments (DBA) are Formative assessments for grades 1-12 in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Assessment items are aligned to the state's content standards and DeKalb County's curriculum maps as an instructional resource to support student learning. These items will be an instructional resource for classroom teachers. Items reflect the rigor and depth of knowledge (DOK) inherent in the standards. The items span grades1 through high school and are based on the following criteria: Content areas (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies); Item types - selected response, constructed response and extended response; Depth of Knowledge -DOK 1 - 20%, DOK 2 - 60% and DOK 3 - 20%; Four plausible distractors will be developed for each selected response item except in Grades 1 and 2 which consist of three plausible distractors; ELA items are associated with passages that reflect readability and text complexity appropriate to the grade level. The rubrics for constructed and extended response items provide clear and specific diagnostic feedback on each student's level of mastery. Analytic rubrics can also clarify the standards themselves and serve as a powerful professional development tool.

ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs): ACCESS for ELLs is administered, annually, to all English learners in Georgia. ACCESS for ELLs is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English learners' social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains. ACCESS for ELLs meets the federal requirements that mandates require states to evaluate EL students in grades K through 12 on their progress in learning to speak English. ACCESS for ELLs is used to determine the English language proficiency levels and progress of ELs in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. ACCESS for ELLs serves five main purposes. These include: determining the English language proficiency level of students; providing districts with information that will help them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESOL programs; providing information that enhances instruction and learning in programs for English language learners; assessing annual English language proficiency gains using a standards-based assessment instrument; and providing data for meeting federal and state requirements with respect to student assessment.

CogAT Assessment for Gifted Evaluation: The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) reflects the most current industry research in the measurement of cognitive abilities and learning styles. The use of CogAT 7 assesses students in three main areas: (1) Verbal Battery; (2) Nonverbal Battery; and (3) Quantitative Battery. The Verbal Battery consists of three subtests: Picture (Verbal) Analogies, Picture (Verbal) Classification, and Sentence Completion. For the Primary Edition, the Picture Analogies and Picture Classification subtests are comprised of all picture-based items which tap into verbal reasoning processes without tying items to a specific administration language. Only the Sentence Completion test requires teacher-read prompts. On this subtest, children listen to the teacher read a question and then choose the picture that best answers the question. The new picture-based item formats on Picture Analogies and Picture Classification reduce the language load of the tests. For the Multilevel Edition, the student must read individual words on two subtests of the Verbal Battery (Verbal Analogies and Verbal Classification) and a sentence on the third (Sentence Completion). The Nonverbal Battery is comprised of three subtests: Figure Matrices, Paper Folding, and Figure Classification. The three subtests at the Primary level are just like those at the Multilevel and did not require much adaptation for young students. The Figure Matrices subtest contains three figures in an analogy (AB: C) that the student must complete. Paper Folding requires the examinee to determine how a folded, hole-punched paper will appear when unfolded. Figure Classification presents three figures in the stem, and the examinee is required to determine a fourth figure that belongs to the set. The Quantitative Battery is comprised of three subtests: Number Analogies, Number Puzzles, and Number Series. The three subtests have been adapted for young students by couching quantitative reasoning challenges in engaging and accessible formats. The Number Analogies task for primary children relies on picture-based quantitative concepts rather than numeral representation. The Number Puzzles task presents equations as trains that must carry the same number of objects. And, finally, the Number Series task is presented as an abacus toy on which students search for patterns. All of these formats have been extensively tried out with students and have been found to engage students by tapping into important quantitative reasoning skills.

Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA): The GAA is a key component of the Georgia Student Assessment Program. An essential tenet of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is the fact that states must ensure that all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, have access to a general curriculum that encompasses challenging academic standards. States must also ensure that all students are assessed for their progress toward meeting academic standards. The GAA is a portfolio of student work that enables the demonstration of achievement and progress relative to selected skills that are aligned to the Georgia curriculum. The portfolio is used to capture student learning and achievement/progress in four content areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. This assessment program promotes a vision of enhancing capacities and integrated life opportunities for students who experience significant cognitive disabilities. Committees of Georgia educators developed the requirements of the portfolio system including the number of required pieces of evidence of student performance of tasks aligned to content standards (i.e., student work samples), types of evidence, and the parameters/timing of the collection of student work samples. Georgia educators also informed the development of the rubrics by which the student work samples are evaluated. The GAA portfolio entries are scored for four discrete dimensions: fidelity to standard, context, achievement/progress, and generalization. A separate score is assigned for each dimension. The focus is on academic content and skills.

In grades 3, 4, and 5 Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies): The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 take an end-of-grade assessment in English Language Arts and mathematics while students in grades 5 and 8 are also assessed in science and social studies. In the middle grades, End-of-Course assessments are available in both Coordinate Algebra and Physical Science.

High school students take an end-of-course assessment for each of the ten courses designated by the State Board of Education. Features the Georgia Milestone Assessment System include: open-ended (constructed-response) items in English Language Arts and mathematics (all grades and courses); a writing component (in response to passages read by students) at every grade level and course within the English Language Arts assessment; norm-referenced items in all content areas and courses, to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison; and transition to online administration over time, with online administration considered the primary mode of administration and paper-pencil as back-up until the transition is complete.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment (Language Usage, Reading, Mathematics, and Science): Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) computer -adaptive assessments determine a student's instructional level and measure academic growth throughout the school year, and from year-to-year in the areas of Reading, Math, Language Usage, and Science. MAP assessments are unique in that they are computer adaptive tests a student takes on a computer. That means that the test can increase in rigor and difficulty with the greater number of questions a student answers correctly. When a student incorrectly answers a question, the test becomes less difficult as a means to matching the questions with the student's academic aptitude. Therefore, a student takes an assessment specifically created for his or her learning level. In addition, the student would have the opportunity to learn the information presented on the assessment in the classroom, because the MAP assessments are aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. A student's MAP results are reported in RIT (Rausch Unit) scale scores. This is a different type of score than a typical test that provides a percentage correct. It is also different from many tests that provide results based on a student's score compared to others in his or her grade level. Instead, the RIT score is an equal-interval scale, like feet and inches, that is independent of grade level. As a result, we can easily measure growth in learning. This type of score increases the value of the tests as a tool to improve student learning because it enables teachers to recognize where to focus attention for a student's learning needs. MAP assessments are powerful tools for monitoring student growth over time and is built on one of the most robust normative scales in the United States. The MAP assessments recently replaced the Renaissance Learning STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading, and STAR Math products previously utilized for universal screening. MAP assessments meet state and federal requirements as a Universal Screener for all students and plays a critical role in providing information to guide the Response to Intervention (RTI) process at all local schools, including enhanced measures for student progress monitoring. In addition, the MAP assessments will provide metrics for determining eligibility for magnet/high achiever's programs as well as gifted eligibility programs.

Common Assessments: The school district provides an online learning management system and online learning assessment platform that creates a dedicated space for all schools to develop, create, and administrator common assessment items. Schools have the option of creating assessments from existing item banks with questions that are aligned to state content standards or schools may create assessment based on pre-developed assessment items. Common assessments are often used in the district to align instructional content delivered by instructional departments as a means to strengthening and aligning the content both taught and assessed by all department teachers. In many cases, common assessments are also used for common mid-term and/or common final examinations.

PSAT 8 (8th grade students): The PSAT 8 is the first in the College Board's "SAT Suite of Assessments" and is offered to eighth grade students in the District. The purpose of the PSAT 8 is to establish a starting point in terms of college and career readiness as student's transition to high school. The PSAT 8, like the PSAT 10, PSAT/NMSQT and SAT, has three testing areas: Reading, Writing, and Math. The

Reading and Writing subject areas are combined for an Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section score. Math has its own separate section score. On the PSAT 8/9, students will earn a total score between 240 and 1440, which is the sum of the two section scores in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math that each range from 120 to 720. Students also get three test scores for Reading, Writing, and Math that each range from 6-36. Students are also given Cross-Test scores which analyze questions across the three subject areas and separate them into a score for Analysis in History/Social Studies and a score for Analysis in Science. Each of these scores ranges from 6-36 as well. The subject areas are broken down into six additional sub-scores measured on a scale of 1-15. The PSAT 8 also serves the school district by providing early identification of middle school students who would highly eligible for Advanced Placement upon enrollment in high school.

PSAT/NMSQT (10th grade students): The PSAT/NMSQT or Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is a preliminary version of the SAT and also allows eligible students to apply for the National Merit Scholarship. It has three subject areas: (1) Evidenced-Based Reading; Writing & Language; and Mathematics. The Evidence-Based Reading section of the exam is aimed at testing your ability to draw supported conclusions from the passage details and/or make inferences based on the author's point of view. The Writing & Language section of the exam is aimed at testing students' ability to identify and correct areas where the passage does not comply with Standard English conventions, such as grammar, usage, and punctuation. The Mathematics section of the exam will focus on algebraic problems and students' ability to analyze and interpret a specific set of data. Many questions will require two or more steps in order to solve them.

In grades 9-12, Georgia Milestones End-of-Course Assessment (9th Grade Literature and Composition; American Literature and Composition; Coordinate Algebra; Analytic Geometry; Physical Science; Biology; United States History; Economics): The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 take an end-of-grade assessment in English Language Arts and mathematics while students in grades 5 and 8 are also assessed in science and social studies. High school students take an end-of-course assessment for each of the ten courses designated by the State Board of Education. Features the Georgia Milestone Assessment System include: open-ended (constructed-response) items in English Language Arts and mathematics (all grades and courses); a writing component (in response to passages read by students) at every grade level and course within the English Language Arts assessment; norm-referenced items in all content areas and courses, to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison; and transition to online administration over time, with online administration considered the primary mode of administration and paper-pencil as back-up until the transition is complete. In the middle grades, End-of-Course assessments are available in both Coordinate Algebra and Physical Science. Students at the high school level will take an end-of-course assessment in the following courses: English Language Arts (Ninth Grade Literature and Composition and American Literature and Composition); Mathematics (Coordinate Algebra and Analytic Geometry); Science (Biology and Physical Science); and Social Studies (United States History and Economics/Business/Free Enterprise). The end-of-course measures are administered at the completion of the course, regardless of the grade level. These measures serve as the final exam for the course, and contribute 20% to the student's final course grade.

Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations: The Advanced Placement (AP) Program, a national nonprofit educational association of colleges, universities and high schools, monitors introductory-level college curricula and then designs courses, materials, and professional development to deliver the curricula in middle schools and high schools. National examinations are administered to measure the knowledge and skills of students who have taken AP courses. The program encourages colleges and universities to grant credit and/or advanced placement to student's representative of their achievement. Through AP's college-level courses and exams, students can earn college credit and advanced placement, stand out in the admission process, and learn from some of the most skilled, dedicated, and inspiring teachers in the world. DeKalb students complete a number of AP examinations each May and qualify for college credit based on the results of their assessments.

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) End-of-Pathway Assessments: Georgia's End-of-Pathway Assessment (EOPA) process was derived in direct response to the Perkins IV Legislation (Perkins Act of 2006), Core Indicator 2S1, which mandated states to implement a measurement mechanism that would ascertain the technical skill attainment level of students participating in career and technical education courses. Such mechanisms were expected to be valid and reliable technical assessments aligned with industry-validated standards. The EOPA process provides students with a sustainable opportunity to gain valuable skills and knowledge through participation and completion of a career pathway at the secondary level. Obtaining such skills in the secondary realm will potentially provide students with increased opportunities to earn industry-validated credentials while still in high school and possibly lead to increased earning potential throughout the student's career span. The EOPAs in the Technical Skill Attainment Inventory consist of several different measurement components. A student can earn a credential through one of the following measurement components: National, Industry-Recognized Credentialing Exams; National Occupational Assessments; State Developed Occupational Assessments.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams: The IB assesses student work as direct evidence of achievement against the stated goals of the Diploma Programme (DP) course. DP assessment procedures measure the extent to which students have mastered advanced academic skills in fulfilling these goals, such as: analyzing and presenting information; evaluating and constructing arguments; and solving problems creatively. Basic skills are also assessed, including: retaining knowledge; understanding key concepts; and applying standard methods. In addition to academic skills, DP assessment encourages an international outlook and intercultural skills, wherever appropriate. Student results are determined by performance against set standards, not by each student's position in the overall rank order.

The comprehensive assessment system in DCSD ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions as indicated by the assessment program system that outlines the content-areas and grade-levels that are assessed. Multiple systems of assessments and modalities of assessments are provided for all content areas to provide diversity and consistency across various educational program areas and content areas. Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free through the following methodologies employed by the DeKalb County School District: ensuring diversity in test-development staffing, and training test developers and scorers to be aware of the potential for cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic bias; verifying that test materials reviewed by experts trained in identifying cultural bias and by representatives of culturally and linguistically diverse subgroups; norming processes and sample sizes used to develop norm-referenced tests are inclusive of diverse student subgroups and large enough to constitute a representative sample; eliminating items that produce the largest racial and cultural performance gaps, and selecting items that produce the smallest gaps; screening for and eliminating items, references, and terms that are more likely to be offensive to certain groups; translating tests into a test taker's native language or using interpreters to translate test items; including more "performance-based" items to limit the role that language and word-choice plays in test performance; using multiple assessment measures to determine academic achievement and progress, and avoiding the use of test scores, in exclusion of other information, to make important decisions about students.

The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning on annual basis. Assessment evaluation protocols are employed by the Office of Research, Assessment, and Grants to confirm the validity and reliability of all assessments to ensure consistent alignment to DeKalb curriculum and instructional pacing recommendations as well as one-to-one alignment to current state content standards. This process works in conjunction the DeKalb Curriculum Management System, whereby District curriculum and assessments are required to cycle through an annual review process to ensure reliability and validity before recommendation for use can occur for the next school year.

Indicator 5.2

Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the school system. The general underpinnings of data analysis in the District are

influenced by two major accountability systems: (1) Georgia's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) and (2) The District's Balanced Scorecard. The CCRPI is the statewide, multi-variable accountability system that accounts for the extent to which school outcomes are commensurate with state performance targets. The Balanced Scorecard is a district-based, performance management system developed to measure the District's success in meeting the performance objectives established the Continuous Improvement Planning process. As such, the collection and application of a large range of data sources relative to student learning and instructional efficacy are analyzed. In addition to being governed by local Board of Education Policy, professional and support staff have access to a District Strategic Attack Manual, which outlines the District's systematic process for data collection and analysis toward increased student and school-wide achievement, with a special emphasis on ameliorating achievement gaps among our lowest quartile student performance groups.

DeKalb Board of Education Policy IJ requires that instructional programs be evaluated for effectiveness. As such, a number of data resources are collected and housed on secured data servers for further analysis and application. The District's student information system, Infinite Campus, is the central repository of all data collection and reporting and contains decades of trend data containing a number of data elements including but not limited to: enrollment data; demographic data; student assessment data; attendance data; behavior data; early warning data; grades/GPA data; program/service data (special education, ESOL, economically disadvantaged, Gifted, EIP, RTI); and process data. In addition to local Board policy, the Georgia Department of Education provides for a number of required data elements, evidenced through the state reportable data specifications that require multiple data elements to be collected and reported both periodically and annually. This is a systematic process that is governed by a number of state-defined standard operating procedures and protocols and consistent among all divisions and departments of District.

Program evaluation is a top priority of the District toward effectively informing the policy and procedural decisions made by both the Superintendent and Board of Education. To conduct effective and impactful program evaluations, a number of data elements must be collected, analyzed, and reported. The current, general categories of program evaluations produced by the District include but are not limited to: state accountability trends; college and career readiness; Georgia Milestones trends; teacher and leader efficacy, Graduation cohort trends; early childhood education; universal screener trends; English learner proficiency; Gifted student outcomes; special education outcomes; cognitive abilities outcomes; school operations; school climate and culture; student cohort outcomes; math and literacy education; intensive English programming; and Title I school outcomes.

Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instructional outcomes, and the total effectiveness of programs and the conditions that support learning. During the 2016 - 2017 school year, DeKalb Schools introduced a number of enhanced data systems toward improving the accuracy, reliability, and congruency of student outcomes data consistent with that of effective continuous improvement and school accountability practices. The District's student information system, Infinite Campus, was introduced in school year 2013 - 2014. This new, top-tier student information system has significantly improved the quality and reliability of data collected and reported. School leadership, professionals, and support staff were provided a user-friendly system to access multiple measures of data with ease, inclusive of millions of student data records for demographic, achievement, perceptual, and process data processes. Since the inception of Infinite Campus, greater efficacy has been achieved relative to student data entry, master school scheduling, student demographic analysis, geographical trending, student grading/reporting; and student program services (e.g., ESOL, special education, early intervention programming, STEM education, Section 504, MTSS/RTI).

The most significant enhancement to Infinite Campus made by the District during the 2016 - 2017 school year is the implementation of a tool named 'VizIT,' which is a data visualization system that provides easy to access data dashboards for all district instructional personnel. VizIT was developed as a major enhancement to Infinite Campus toward the creation of a user-friendly, web-based tool that would provide all District instructional personnel with trend data in all of six major data categories: (1) Student Demographics; (2) Attendance; (3) Behavior; (4) Grades; (5) Achievement and Assessment; (6) Early Warning for High School Graduation. Accessed via Infinite Campus, instructional personnel in the District can access data that is automatically updated nightly to make informed decisions about organizational processes

and policies as well as decisions related to instructional programming and services. VizIT produces easy to read charts and graphs that are dynamically controlled and filterable so that instructional personnel can access data as granular as student-level achievement trends and outcomes, while providing school district administration and teachers with a complete picture of student data profiles.

System and school personnel use data to design, implement and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning and quality of instruction, including the effectiveness of programs and the conditions that support learning. The District maintains a balanced scorecard that contains multiple performance measures that are directly aligned to the District's Continuous Improvement Planning process. Performance measures are developed district-wide and at each individual school to support Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) at both levels of administration. Each CIP is developed in alignment with a comprehensive needs assessment as well as district priorities and signature initiatives. In order to ensure that the CIP process is implemented with fidelity, monitoring cycles were pre-determined by the school district and occur four times per year. The monitoring cycles include robust professional development for system-office and school-based leadership teams toward using performance data as a foundation for renegotiating improvement priorities that are high priority at the individual school site. The balanced scorecard used to measure District performance at the time of each respective monitoring cycle contains approximately 160 performance data measures that are updated each time a monitoring cycle occurs.

Data used for the balanced scorecard is based on research associated with the 'Multiple Measures of Data by Dr. Victoria Bernhardt,' and include comprehensive data from a number of sources centered on demographics, student achievement, institutional processes, and stakeholder perceptions. Performance data are categorized with the five goal areas of the District's Strategic Plan: (1) Student Success with Equity and Access; (2) Stakeholder Engagement; (3) Staff Efficacy and Excellence; (4) Internal and External Communication; (5) Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency. Performance data collected and reported on through the District's public website include but are not limited to: student assessment proficiency levels; school improvement trends; technology usage and integration; high school graduation rates; special education student outcomes; grade promotion and retention; college readiness trends; career readiness data; student attendance trends; safety and behavior incidents; parental engagement trends; teacher and leader effectiveness ratings; personnel hiring and attrition trends; personnel professional learning; website and marketing analytics; leadership development and success trends; financial efficiency and ratings; efficiency in federal programs program expenditures; student transportation data trends; facilities usage data; state-governed school district accountability measures.

As the District continues to improve its system for using results to achieve continuous improvement, some areas of improvement are noted. In particular, the District has 6,600 teachers and is working to expand its professional development protocols so that all teachers have the opportunity to receive direct professional development and training as opposed to over-relying on train-the-trainer models that are employed throughout the District. In addition, while the Continuous Improvement Planning (CIP) process has been completely redesigned by the District, the system of redesign is too new to truly demonstrate totality of efficacy, albeit short-term and intermediate gains have been noted. As this process is continued and strengthened, long-term and longitudinal data outcomes will be fully observed.

Indicator 5.3

All professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a rigorous professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation and use of data. As evidenced through the DeKalb County School District professional development plan for research, data, assessment and evaluation and in collaboration with the Office of Professional Learning, a large number of professional development courses are offered to system professional and support staff and is strategically differentiated to succinctly prepare all staff on data use relative to specific employment roles. For example, school principals and administrative teams belong to a specific cohort of continuous professional development designed to assist them with permeating school culture and environment to implement dynamic data use. School support staff, such as professional learning facilitators, academic coaches, and instructional support specialists are provided professional developing in the use of data that is designed to not only teach school support staff how to analyze data themselves but also

how to support teachers in their use of data toward increasing pedagogical impact.

To support both efficacy and long-term sustainability in the professional development of system professional and support staff relative to the use of data, several strategic implementation practices have been deployed. When new data protocols and practices are established, professional development begins first with cross-divisional system-level staff who are charged with providing support to schools. This group of system-level staff includes regional superintendents; deputies and chiefs; department and division directors; district instructional coordinators; professional learning coordinators and coaches; and parental engagement liaisons. Following system-level staff, school principals and assistant principals receive a variation of the professional development customized for their roles as campus leaders. Next, the same training provided to principals and assistant principals is customized and delivered to school-based department chairpersons, academic coaches, instructional support specialists, professional learning facilitators, and student support specialists who have direct involvement in coaching teachers. From there, teachers are trained on data use in one of two ways: (1) school-based department chairpersons, academic coaches, instructional support specialists, professional learning facilitators, and student support specialists redeliver training with support from the system office or (2) in addition to redelivery by school support staff, teachers are also provided direct professional learning from the system-level. Professional and support staff are also provided opportunities for additional learning asynchronously via the District's learning management system (VERGE) and a repository of online professional development platforms, such as Destination PD.

During the 2016-2017 school year, over 100 courses in professional development affiliated with data use and interpretation were offered throughout the district. This professional development is offered collaboratively between a number of system-level divisions and departments: Office of Research, Assessment, and Grants; Division of Information Technology; Department of K12 Core and Elective Instruction; and the Office of Professional Learning. Each course is differentiated for the level of proficiency among schools and is also differentiated based on the categorization of staff. For example, schools where evidence supports the need for more intensive support with data use may receive multiple days or site-based professional development; whereas, schools where personnel have displayed advanced levels of data use may receive shorter, sometimes hybrid modality versions of courses. The District's professional development not only accounts for school capacity when designing professional development but also develops professional development courses of the same topic using diverse modalities designed for specific personnel groups. For instance, when principals are trained on using Georgia Milestones student assessment data toward developing effective strategies for instruction, assistant principals and school support teams are trained on the same topic with the exception that the delivery style and modality is customized for the specific group so that a solid continuum can be established.

Examples of data-related modules and/or topics for professional development offered by the DeKalb County School District during the 2016-2017 school year include but are not limited to: MAP Assessment data and reporting; progress monitoring and mastery checks; school-site data coaching; basic common assessment development; state school accountability data use; formative assessment practices; assessment item development; data team planning; data teaming; data visualization; data analysis protocols and best practices; school-based action research; Georgia Milestones data assessment use; gifted formal evaluation data; Kindergarten assessment data use; data use for teaching English Learners; Benchmark assessment data use.

The following modalities of professional development centered on data use are offered district-wide: face-to-face; online; webinar; hybrid of face-to-face and asynchronous online; site-based; and District-sponsored professional conferences. Professional and support staff have opportunities to be trained both during the school day, evenings, and weekends toward developing more convenient times for personnel to participate in this type of professional development. Artifacts, including agendas, copies of presentations, and sign-in sheets are collected and archived both electronically, and under lock and key in a second location.

Indicator 5.4

Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. DeKalb Board of Education policies IJ (Evaluation of Instructional Programs) and CA (Goals and Objectives - Strategic Planning) provide school district priority toward the implementation of a continuous process for validating student learning and augmenting organizational priorities in order to foster best practices and yield greater levels of student readiness for the next level of learning. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning. The District has implemented three signature programs that govern the continuous process for validating student learning and readiness and success at the next level: (1) the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP); (2) the DeKalb Strategic Attack Team (SAT); and (3) the DeKalb Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA2) taskforce.

With support from a grant award from the Wallace Foundation, the DeKalb County School District has redesigned its continuous improvement process for school improvement to address the growing needs of the District. This collaboratively-based process was developed on the platform of research-based practices of school improvement and rooted in empirical research practices that foster the continuous and collaborative use of data to ensure that school system leadership are prepared for facilitating greater school accountability. Historically, DeKalb Schools required multiple school improvement plans (e.g., school-based, Title I, Special Education, etc…). Through the new CIP process, DeKalb has now moved to a consolidated plan whereby all schools are only required to submit one comprehensive plan that is monitored over time to ensure that expected performance outcomes are met. During the summer, school-based leadership teams meet to discuss data outcomes for the previous school year and are provided professional development on a collaborative protocol for using data to improve school outcomes. From there, schools develop their CIPs with assistance and support from all system-office departments. These CIPs contain intended strategies, performance objectives, and key personnel assigned to support the CIP, and all final plans are properly vetted by regional superintendents who oversee these schools as well as system-office professional and support staff. All CIPs are developed in collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders, including significant input from parents. During the school year, there are three distinct monitoring cycles. These monitoring cycles are designed to provide school leadership teams with an opportunity to 'Reflect, Review, and Refine' processes based on student data, observed outcomes, and shifts in priorities. Principals and their school teachers also participate in a data analysis protocol whereby student data is analyzed in three distinct cycles and school teams meet to also 'Reflect, Review, and Refine' based on the observed trends in data.

The DeKalb Strategic Attack Team (S.A.T.) is an initiative introduced during the 2016-2017 school year to provide a strategic emphasis on improving educational outcomes for students performing in the lowest (25%) quartile. It was strategically designed to ameliorate pervasive achievement gaps among multiple student demographic subgroups. Trend data across the District emphasizes the imperative for helping students in the lowest quartiles improve their academic outcomes with a specific emphasis on longitudinal student growth. The S.A.T. is an intensive program led by a collaborative team of senior level staff (Superintendent, Regional Superintendents, Curriculum Chief, Chief of Staff, Executive Directors) who meet weekly to develop protocols and support systems to best support the instructional needs of all schools, particularly as it relates to fostering greater student achievement among the lowest quartile of students as measured by annual assessments in all core-content areas. Formative protocols are in place to succinctly evaluate readiness for learning at the next level. All schools have identified students for S.A.T. based on lowest quartile data provided by the District. Student performance over time, including the instructional interventions being provided to these students, are documented through a common data file that is monitored by system-level professional and support staff. The individual student plan also calls for the identification of an adult advocate in the building who is assigned to assist the individual student in his/her success. The meeting frequency between the adult mentor and the student is also documented. In between monitoring cycles for verifiable student achievement, the S.A.T. provides focused interventional support for schools to improve learning outcomes of their lowest quartiles students through the following foci: Data Analysis; Professional Learning; Instructional Planning & Delivery; Assessment of Mastery and Monitoring of Student Growth; and Communication. Parent involvement is also critical component of this initiative in that that parents are involved in the monitoring of student success through consistent parent contact and conferencing.

The Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA2) taskforce is a cross-divisional taskforce designed to audit efficacy in teaching and learning deliverables and to develop common program priorities for the District. One of the key responsibilities of CIA2 is to establish processes that govern instructional protocols and priorities; however, these is also a heavy emphasis on the development of protocols and procedures for the development of policy and procedures that support organizational alignment of efforts to optimize the use of student achievement data.

The combination of DeKalb's three major accountability initiatives; (1) the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP); (2) the DeKalb Strategic Attack Team (SAT); and (3) the DeKalb Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA2); provides district-wide direction for horizontal and vertical data analysis that encourages high levels of collaboration among schools at different levels as a means to better planning for student success at the next level and for developing proven strategies for the development of curricular programming that meets the student at his/her ability level to provide enrichment at the next level of learning. Regional principals meet as feeder pattern/clusters to collaborate on data analysis tasks designed to prepare students for the next level of learning. These monthly meetings are critical toward the District's emphasis to develop a culture embedded in cross-collaboration and solely focused on student achievement. In addition, these systematic initiatives provide documented protocols for the analysis of school accountability data so that common best practices and expectations are clear and understandable to all District Stakeholders.

Indicator 5.5

System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. The District's Continuous Improvement Planning (CIP) process, which includes frequent and close monitoring of the District's Balanced Scorecard, is the terminal system for interfacing with the public about targeted District performance objectives. All District performance measures, targets, and objectives are posted visibly on the school District's strategic planning public website. This public communication tool contains the Balanced Scorecard (designed to monitor overall school district performance) and also contains information on the District's vision, 5-year strategic plan, and provides a tool for the public to provide feedback on the school district's performance. To add to the levels of communication to both internal and external stakeholders, the District holds informative sessions in conjunction with Board of Education meetings to explain the CIP/strategic planning process and provides regular updates on school district progress toward meeting the established system performance objectives. This process of continuous improvement planning and monitoring is also governed at the local school level. All DeKalb County schools are required to develop a CIP in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and are required, through their student councils and parent advocacy groups, to report on school-level progress toward meeting performance objectives. Regional superintendents and other system-level professional and support staff support the CIP process regularly to ensure that all schools have the resources necessary to properly plan for the needs of all schools.

The District has implemented three signature programs that govern the continuous process for validating school improvement: (1) the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP); (2) the DeKalb Strategic Attack Team (SAT); and (3) the DeKalb Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA2). An added layer of monitoring, specific to state-identified Priority and Focus schools, is the establishment of the District Effectiveness Team (DET). The DET is primarily responsible for working alongside the Georgia Department of Education to develop monitoring systems that oversee the efficacy of school improvement planning and implementation at schools with historical trends of lower student achievement. This process in managed via an online system named 'Indistar.' Following state-adopted tenets for school turnaround and improvement, the continuous improvement process at local schools with the greatest needs is amplified to provide maximized levels of capacity and support with increased emphasis on school monitoring and governance. System-level departments/divisions that participate in monthly meetings and school visits to guarantee the success of this work and include the following units: Finance; Human Capital Management; Regional Superintendents; Student Support and Intervention; Research, Assessment, Accountability; Curriculum and Instruction; Professional Learning; and Federal Programs. Verifiable school improvement artifacts and documentation are accessible via the 'Indistar' system, inclusive of formative coaching feedback provided to school principals from members of the system-level cross-divisional

team assigned to provide optimal support for schools.

Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups. The Superintendent's Office along with the Division of Strategic Communications and the Office of Strategic Planning and Management have developed an evidence-based communications plan for communication of District-wide student learning data outcomes to all internal and external stakeholders, including the processes and programs designed to utilize data toward continuous improvement. Brochures, posters, and web pages that describe the District process for continuous improvement have been developed, including documentation that illuminates student learning data.

In addition to these publicly facing informational websites, the District is preparing for a launch of its public dashboard system that would allow external stakeholders the opportunity to access non-sensitive data through an interactive online public portal. The data sources would be filterable by school, feeder pattern, and region and will provide aggregate data on attendance trends, behavior incidences, assessment outcomes, and school enrollment/demographic trends.

The Division of Communications has been instrumental in its prompt and thorough communication of results to the internal and external communities at large. Between the last two school years, over fifty media releases have been published via the main District website and social media channels with particular emphasis on school improvement and data. These publications are reinforced at local partnership meetings, school council meetings, parent council meetings, and with our local Board of Education. Special emphasis on strategic communications is also directed toward local metropolitan media outlets as a means to publishing school improvement results and programs for all Metro-Atlanta stakeholders.

Actions to Sustain the Areas of Strength

The District continues to strengthen many of its practices relative to assessment and data use. During the 2016 - 2017 school year, the assessment system within the District was completely realigned to remove unnecessary assessments, in compliance with federal and state recommendations, to be more focused and aligned with the instructional framework of the District. Historically, the District required heavy standardized testing in the fall, which often times impeded on instructional capabilities due to the number of instructional hours required to complete testing. The realignment strategically removed the burden of over-testing in the fall semester and replaced those assessments with a comprehensive progress monitoring, mastery check, and feedback system that requires shorter, skills-based formative assessments as opposed to larger, high-stakes assessments. The realignment of the assessment system also yielded the DeKalb Benchmark Assessment (DBA) system that now provides unit and common assessments that are shorter in their cycles but better aligned to daily teaching and learning. This complete realignment was paramount for the District to achieve a wiser balance of summative to formative and high-stakes to low-stakes assessments.

DeKalb has also strengthened its data accessibility and data visualization systems and protocols, which has led to more impactful data analysis at the local school level. The deployment of the new data dashboard system, VizIT (Tableau) has provided all professional and support staff in the District with an incredible resource that can be utilized to identify student trends based on data. This system of visualization taps into our relatively new and robust student information system (Infinite Campus) and provides millions of records of data in a user-friendly, visually appealing format. This allows accessibility to data for purposes of school improvement to be more palatable for school-based and system-level personnel who need to make sound decisions based on data trends.

To support the realigned system of assessment, accountability, and data, professional development for all professional and support staff has been strengthened in DeKalb. A robust professional development plan and annual calendar has been implemented that includes over 100 data-related courses for all levels of professional and support staff both at the local school and at the system-level. These professional development opportunities are critical toward building an infrastructure across the district whereby decisions regarding school improvement,

resource allocation, instructional design, and organizational management are rooted in data use and analysis. DeKalb has strengthened its modalities for professional development to make data and assessment professional development easier to access for all staff types, inclusive of online, hybrid, face-to-face, asynchronous, and webinar-based professional development opportunities.

Actions to sustain the areas of strength include continuous program and process evaluation, including third-party audits (if necessary) to insure system compliance protocols. Additionally, annual review of professional development protocols and plans to maintain alignment to District instructional priorities is required. Ongoing professional training for staff will also prove effective as assurance that all staff are trained in contemporary practices in assessment, accountability, and data compliance and use.

AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

While there are no overall scores of either 1 or 2 identified for Standard 5, Using Results for Continuous Improvement, we do believe there is a need to continue our focus on the District's efforts relative to the use of data to inform our continuous improvement efforts at both the school and district levels. The District's processes and protocols for continuous improvement and data analysis, though recently overhauled, are relative new in their implementation phases and require continuation of robust professional development and implementation in order to observe greater success.

In addition, overall stakeholder feedback results support the District's efforts to improve its use of data to inform continuous improvement efforts. Recent stakeholder feedback data indicates the following:

Staff Survey (School): The overall score (4.13) is in alignment to the Network Average (4.1); Responses indicate that school staff use the multiple assessment measures put in place by the district (32% strongly agree and 57% agree = 89% SA/A); responses also indicate that these assessment measures are used by school leaders to monitor data related to student achievement (34% strongly agree and 54% agree = 88% SA/A)

Staff Survey (District-level): Responses indicate that district level staff are aware of the multiple assessment measures used by the schools (20% strongly agree and 52% agree = 72% SA/A).

Student Survey (Elementary): G3: My principal and teachers help me to be ready for the next grade was the fourth (4th) highest scoring item of the five standards (2.90; 92% selected very satisfied happy face); The overall score (2.69) slightly exceeds the Network Average (2.66).

Student Survey (Middle and High): G3: My principal and teachers help me to be ready for the next grade was the fourth (4th) highest scoring item of the five standards (2.90; 28% strongly agree, 37% agree); The overall score (3.66) exceeded the Network Average (3.51).

Parent Survey (Schools): The overall score (4.07) was higher than the Network Average (4.01); Responses for question G2: My child is prepared for success in the next school year indicates that parents believe the comprehensive assessment system is effective and being used to guide continuous improvement. (35% strongly agree and 45% Agree= 80% SA/A).

Plans to Improve Areas of Need

Toward addressing area in need of improvement, the District has instituted a curriculum, assessment, and accountability audit and management process that focuses intensely on reviewing, evaluating, and augmenting protocols and practices around data analysis systems. Recommendations for improvement as well as improvement priorities are determined and communicated with the Superintendent of Schools for consideration and approval. From there, various cross-divisional teams begin the process of continuing the cycle of revisions

and refinements in order to address gaps in implementation and quality. In addition, more intensive and targeted professional development for all school stakeholders will be provided in order to ensure that newly implemented accountability systems are employed with fidelity and primed for long-term sustainability.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Purpose and Direction — 3

Governance and Leadership — 3.33

Teaching and Assessing for Learning — 2.75

Resources and Support Systems — 3.12

Using Results for Continuous Improvement — 3
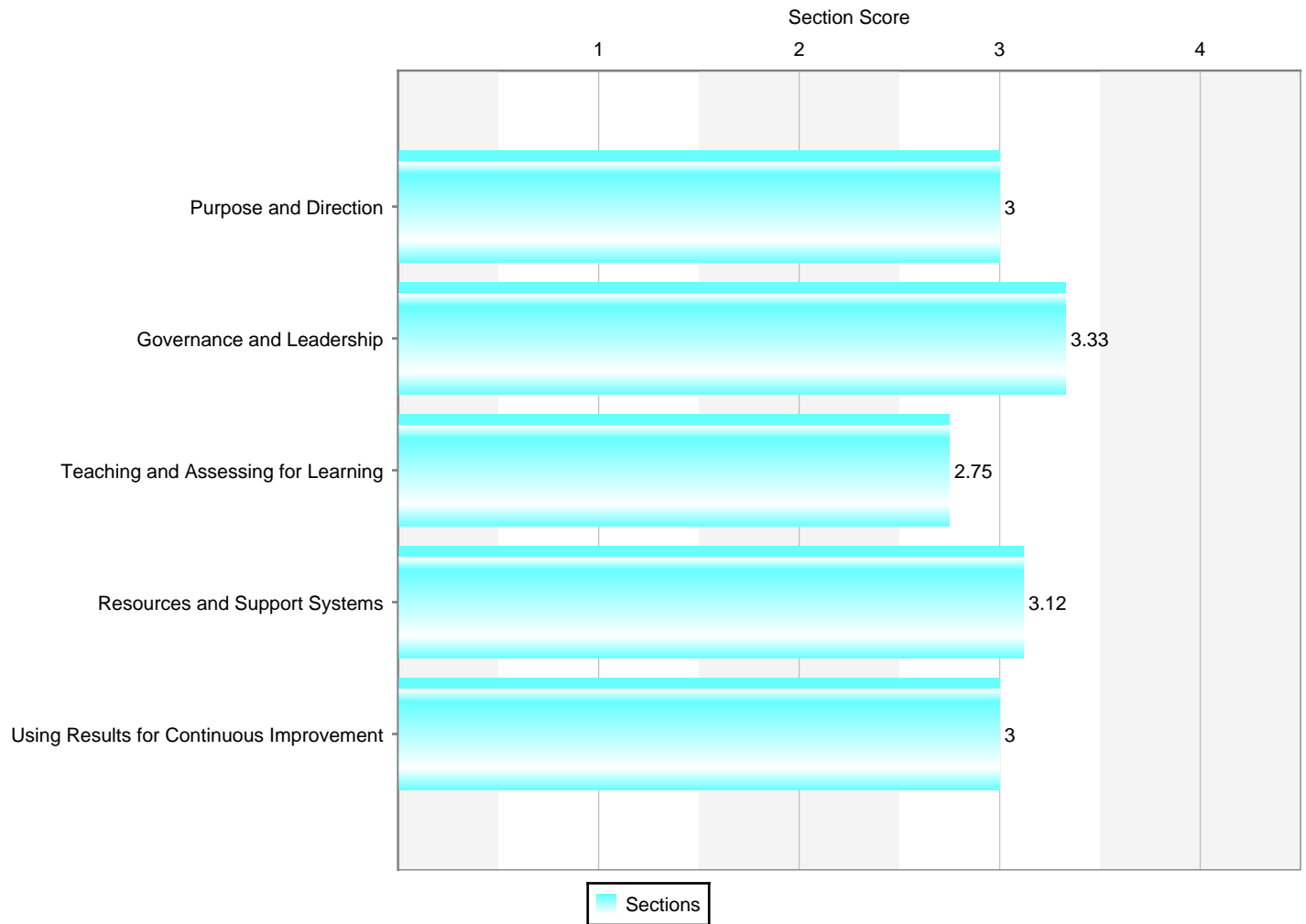
Sections

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Introduction

The Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic is designed to analyze the institution's survey results in terms of areas of achievement and areas that need improvement. Further, the diagnostic is essential to the accreditation and continuous improvement processes in that it provides the institution with a comprehensive view of the aggregate scores of the surveys administered, and the actual total of respondents for each survey type to derive a single score for this diagnostic. The performance level score computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used to broaden and enhance the external review team's understanding of the stakeholder's perceptions of the institution; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

Stakeholder Feedback Data

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
1.	Did you complete the Stakeholder Feedback Data document offline and upload below?	Yes	Stakeholders were notified about the survey through school meetings, school and district websites, social media, and phone messages. Students and staff completed surveys online and parents were able to complete the survey online or on paper (if access to a computer was extenuating). All surveys were issued in multiple languages and all stakeholders were invited to complete the survey. Survey results will be shared with all stakeholders and used for decision-making for improvement planning.	DCSD Stakeholder Feedback Data Document DCSD Stakeholder Feedback Worksheet

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.5

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
1.	Questionnaire Administration	All required AdvancED questionnaires were used by the institution to receive stakeholder feedback. The minimum response rate for each population was met (parent questionnaire: equal to or greater than 20%, student questionnaire(s): equal to or greater than 40%, staff questionnaire: equal to or greater than 60%). Questionnaires were administered with complete fidelity to the appropriate administrative procedures. In every instance, the stakeholders to whom these questionnaires were administered fully represented the populations served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations were provided as necessary for all participants.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
2.	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	All questionnaires had an average item value of 3.20 or above (on a 5.0 scale). Results of stakeholder feedback collected by the institution were acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity.	Level 3

Areas of Notable Achievement

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest level of satisfaction or approval?

Elementary school students in the District indicated these highest levels of satisfaction or approval: (D3) In my school my teachers want me to do my best work (2.95/3.00); (C1) In my school my principal and teachers want every student to learn (2.94/3.00); (F3) My school has computers to help me learn (2.91/3.00); (G3) My principal and teachers help me to be ready for the next grade (2.90/3.00); and (F2) My school has many places where I can learn, such as the library (2.90/3.00).

Middle and high school students in the District indicated these highest levels of satisfaction or approval: (D3) In my school, the principal and teachers have high expectations (4.05/5.00); (E11) All of my teachers use tests, projects, presentations, and portfolios to check my understanding of what was taught (3.95/5.00); (E1) My school gives me multiple assessments to check my understanding of what was taught (3.93/5.00); (C1) In my school, programs and services are available to help me succeed (3.93/5.00); (F6) In my school, I can participate in activities that interest me (3.91/5.00).

Parents in the District indicated these highest levels of satisfaction or approval: (C1) Our school's purpose statement is clearly focused on student success (4.26/5.00); (D3) Our school has high expectations for students in all classes (4.25/5.00); (E10) My child knows the expectations for learning in all classes (4.23/5.00); (F3) Our school provides a safe learning environment (4.21/5.00); (D5) Our school communicates effectively about the school's goals and activities (4.19/5.00).

Staff in the District indicated these highest levels of satisfaction or approval: (C1) Our school's purpose statement is clearly focused on student success (4.35/5.00); (D4) Our school's leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards (4.35/5.00); (D6) Our school's leaders hold all staff members accountable for student learning (4.27/5.00); (C5) Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures for growth (4.24/5.00); (D7) Our school's leaders regularly evaluate staff members on criteria designed to improve teaching and learning (4.23/5.00).

The central focus of DeKalb County School District is teaching and learning. The two components (teaching and learning) comprise the core work of the District. All actions of the District are to provide wrap-around support for the core work. Leadership Academies provide all current and promising leaders with professional learning that is designed to fortify leadership skills and increase knowledge regarding the importance of knowing and using effective leadership strategies within the schools. The Board of Education is intent on functioning as a high-performing Board of Education in order to write effective policies and provide district oversight that is within the parameters of their roles and responsibilities. The Superintendent has placed a direct focus on engaging parents more effectively through newly developed processes for school councils and in being very visible in the greater DeKalb community.

The Superintendent developed the Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability (CIA2) Taskforce to ensure that all curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability initiatives are closely aligned to the Board-approved Strategic Plan. The CIA2 Team has embarked on the course of facilitating the process of teachers developing and formulating a new curriculum for DeKalb that is rigorous in content and aligned to what is written to what is taught and to what is assessed.

Over the past two years, the CIA2 team has worked to ensure that rigor is advanced in all classes throughout the district. Principals have been provided with on-going monthly professional learning sessions in the Principals' Academy on the use of rigorous teaching and learning strategies, with the understanding that the strategies are to be redelivered and implemented in classrooms throughout the district. In order to

ensure that the work is being discussed and implemented as directed, on-going interval-based district walk-through monitoring has been developed and implemented district-wide. Monitoring is also provided through quarterly/semi-annual/annual review and analysis of the Strategic Plan.

As a result of the focus on effective leadership, rigor in the curriculum, and implementation within the classrooms, the idea of high expectations for student learning and performance has permeated throughout the district, as noted by all stakeholder groups participating in the AdvancED surveys. The derivatives of this work is reflected in the positive satisfaction levels of the District's student, parent, and staff stakeholder groups.

Which area(s) show a trend toward increasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?

Parent satisfaction is increasing due to the emphasis placed by the Superintendent on the use of engaging stakeholders in the work of the District. The school district and the local schools use a various forms of social media and DeKalb's PDS TV24 to provide information to parents and solicit feedback regarding the many initiatives and programs offered by the school district. The regularly scheduled Superintendent's meetings with parents, known as "On the Scene with the Green," and the decentralization of the district into regions have given stakeholders inroads to having opportunities for engagement that were not previously available. Parent and community engagement activities through the 'EngageMEnt Now' television program were developed to provide all stakeholders with a wide variety of topics that are of high interest to the District's stakeholders. Parents are also being asked to become more engaged in school governance and principal selection through the renewed focus on school councils. The Superintendent's insistence on having stakeholder engagement in E-SPLOST activities brought about an increased level of parent participation and engaged thought into the process of spending approximately $500 million dollars of tax revenue.

Historical data illustrates longitudinal satisfaction from students; however, the District has noted very positive trends in stakeholder satisfaction and approval of both the staff and parent stakeholder groups. New District leadership and intentional foci on community engagement and 'spirit-building' has yielded more engaged adult advocacy for the needs of the District.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?

The Georgia Climate Surveys are annual climate surveys of the following stakeholder groups: students, staff, and parents. These surveys are required and contribute to the overall state accountability climate score of school districts across the State of Georgia. DeKalb offers these surveys to stakeholder groups each year. Consistent with the stakeholder feedback provided for AdvancED accreditation, the findings of the Georgia climate surveys report areas of notable achievement relative to the following areas: students are mostly satisfied with feedback offered to them by their teachers on improving their achievement; Parents are generally satisfied with the openness of their child's school environment, indicating that parent input is welcomed at the school; staff mostly feel that there is purpose and direction in the school and that there are opportunities for professional growth.

Areas in Need of Improvement

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest level of satisfaction or approval?

Elementary schools in the District indicate these overall lowest levels of satisfaction or approval: (G1) My principal and teachers ask me what I think about school (2.35/3.00); (E5) My teachers ask my family to come to school activities (2.41/3.00); (D2) In my school students treat adults with respect (2.50/3.00); (F1) My school is safe and clean (2.58/3.00); (D1) In my school I am treated fairly (2.62/3.00).

Middle and high schools in the District indicate these overall lowest levels of satisfaction or approval:
(F2) In my school, students respect the property of others (3.05/5.00); (D2) In my school, students treat adults with respect (3.14/5.00); (F5) In my school, students help each other even if they are not friends (3.18/5.00); (C4) In my school, all students are treated with respect (3.24/5.00); (F1) In my school, the building and grounds are safe, clean, and provide a healthy place for learning (3.35/5.00).

Parents in the District indicate these overall lowest levels of satisfaction or approval: (E4) All of my child's teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction (3.86/5.00); (D2) Our school's governing body does not interfere with the operation or leadership of our school (3.90/5.00); (E7) All of my child's teachers keep me informed regularly of how my child is being graded (3.91/5.00); (F8) Our school ensures the effective use of financial resources (3.96/5.00); (E9) My child sees a relationship between what is being taught and his/her everyday life (3.97/5.00).

Staff in the District indicate these overall lowest levels of satisfaction or approval: (F3) Our school provides sufficient material resources to meet student standards (3.94/5.00); (F7) Our school provides a plan for the acquisition and support of technology to support the school's operational needs (3.95/5.00); (G4) Our school ensures all staff members are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data (3.99/5.00); In our school, all school personnel regularly engage families in their children's learning progress (3.99/5.00); (E15) In our school, staff members provide peer coaching to teachers (3.99/5.00).

Which area(s) show a trend toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?

Although there were areas whereby the agree/strongly agree category was not as strong as other areas; overall, the AdvancED stakeholder surveys reflected a high level of satisfaction as noted by the DCSD averages when compared to the Network averages. Some areas display possible trends of decreasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval: (1) Staff, both school and central office, agree that more training is needed; (2) Students, both elementary and secondary, agree their opinions should be asked and considered more frequently when developing school improvement plans.

What are the implications for these stakeholder perceptions?

The implications for these stakeholder perceptions indicate that: the perception of staff (school and district) and parents is that the school district has a clear purpose statement that is focused on student success; the perception of students is that teachers and principals want every student to learn and programs and services are available to help them succeed; the perception of staff (school and district) is that the continuous improvement process is based on data, goals, actions, and measures for growth.

Overall, parent perception on stakeholder engagement questions appear to be quite positive. There were no parent participation questions that fell below the 50% level for agree or strongly agree on any subsection of the questionnaire, which is a strong indication that the parents completing the survey know, understand, and agree with the direction being taken by the Board and Superintendent to lead the district. School staff surveys scores were significantly high. The percentage of strongly agree/agree responses ranged from 80-91% for all questions, which clearly indicate that school staff members are in support of the direction of the District.

Middle and high school student survey results were generally positive. Out of three questions, only one fell below 50% for agree /strongly agree. It is therefore, incumbent upon the district to review current strategies and /or modify techniques used for assisting students in how to communicate respectfully, even during times of disagreement as noted in question D2. Elementary student surveys were positive. The responses to the three questions on governance and leadership were all above the 50% for earning a happy face.

Additional implications noted in the survey indicate that: overall, stakeholders are aware of the comprehensive assessment system and its use to guide continuous improvement; parents and students indicating that they are prepared for the next year confirms the assessment measures are reliable; training of staff must be continuous; communication of trainings must include all stakeholders, not just those directly involved; results indicate that not all central office staff may be aware of the extent of assessment measures being used within the schools; both parents and students see the schools using data to guide continuous improvement; students and parents should become part of each schools' assessment analysis to afford them the opportunity to contribute their perspective as the District focuses on school improvement.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?

The Georgia Climate Surveys are annual climate surveys of the following stakeholder groups: students, staff, and parents. These surveys are required and contribute to the overall state accountability climate score of school districts across the State of Georgia. DeKalb offers these surveys to stakeholder groups each year. Consistent with the stakeholder feedback provided for AdvancED accreditation, the findings of the Georgia climate survey reports items in need of improvement relative to the following areas: students would like to be more involved in decision-making processes at their local schools; parents still require more assistance and resources with building a climate of academic enrichment in their homes - emphasis on how best to help their children succeed while at home; and staff consistently require more opportunities to engage in more peer-to-peer support initiatives and activities toward helping each other become stronger in their craft.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

	1	2	3	4

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics — 3.5

Sections
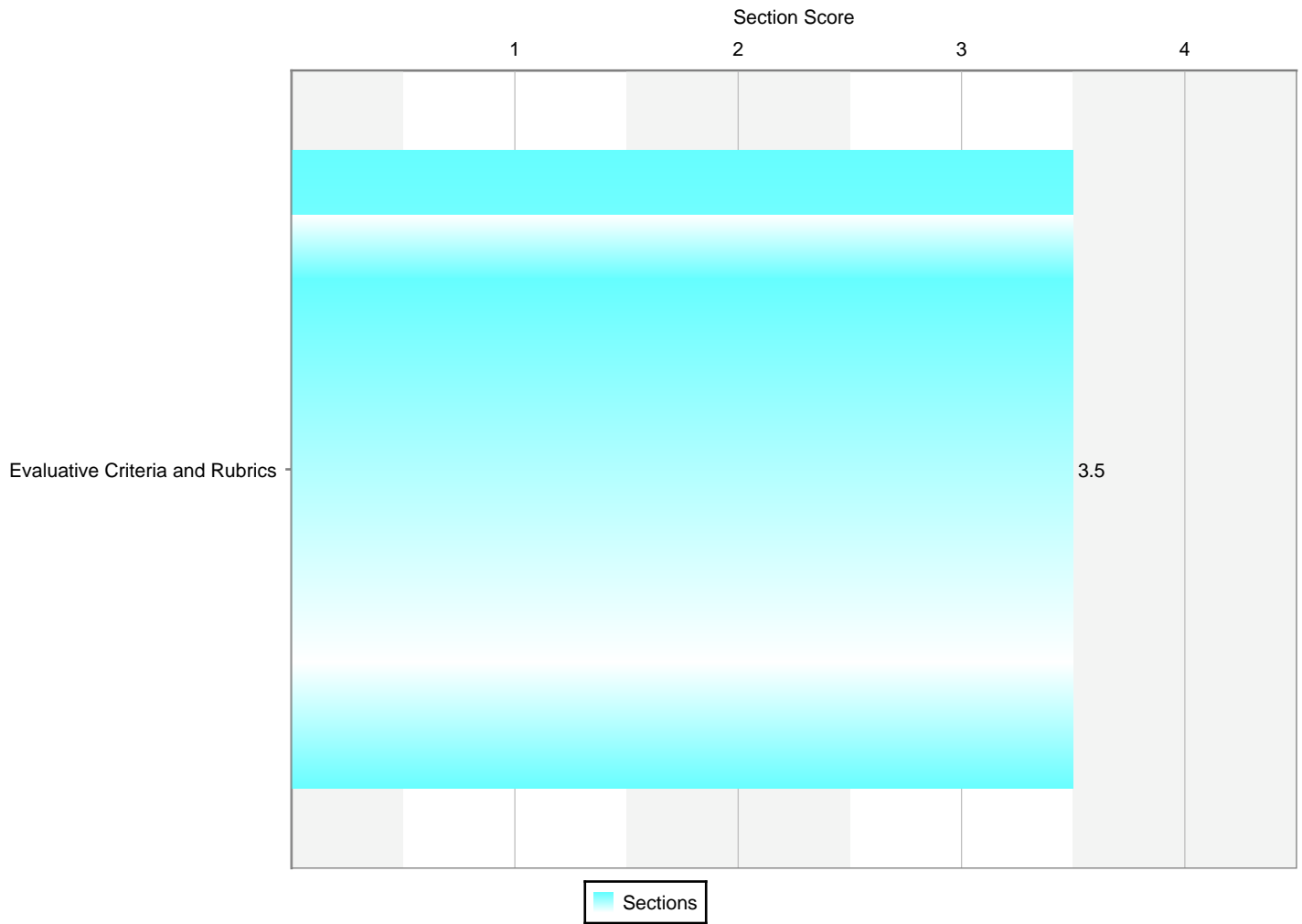
Student Performance Diagnostic

Introduction

The Student Performance Diagnostic provides an institution with a process to report summative student assessments. This diagnostic is significant to the accreditation and continuous improvement process as it serves as a resource for schools to view content area assessment results required by the state, district, or other entities, determine the quality and reliability of the given assessments, and show the alignment of the assessments to the school's curriculum. The performance level computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used by the external review team as a comprehensive report to understand fully the institution's assessment program; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

Student Performance Data

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
1.	Did you complete the Student Performance Data document offline and upload below?	Yes		DCSD Student Performance Data Document

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.25

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
1.	Assessment Quality	The array of assessment devices used by the institution to determine students' performances is sufficiently aligned so that valid inferences can be reached regarding students' status with respect to the majority of those curricular aims regarded as high-priority instructional targets. The documentation provided in support of this alignment is relatively persuasive. Most of the assessments used are accompanied by evidence demonstrating that they satisfy accepted technical requirements.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
2.	Test Administration	All the assessments used by the institution to determine students' performances, whether externally acquired or internally developed, have been administered with complete fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In every instance, the students to whom these assessments were administered are accurately representative of the students served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations have been provided for all assessments so that valid inferences can be made about all students' status with respect to all of the institution's targeted curricular outcomes.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
3.	Quality of Learning	Evidence of student learning promoted by the institution is acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity. In comparison to institutions functioning in a similar educational context, students' status, improvement, and/or growth evidence indicates that the level of student learning is at or above what would otherwise be expected.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
4.	Equity of Learning	Evidence of student learning indicates achievement gaps exist among subpopulations of students, and these achievement gaps have noticeably declined.	Level 3

Areas of Notable Achievement

Which area(s) are above the expected levels of performance?

The DeKalb County School District has performed above expected levels in student growth. As measured through the Georgia Student Growth Model (GSGM), student growth is measured longitudinally to determine, over extended periods of time, how far students' progress toward reaching the mean level of performance among all Georgia students who are categorized in similar performance reference groups. In the 2014-2015 school year, the GSGM reported a notable increase in student growth through Georgia's school accountability system, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). Out of 40 possible points, DeKalb Schools earned 34, 35.4, and 36 total points for demonstrating longitudinal growth for elementary, middle, and high school students respectively. In the 2015-2016 school year, DeKalb Schools earned 32, 33.7, and 36.7 total points for demonstrating longitudinal student growth for elementary, middle, and high school student respectively, demonstrating two academic school years when academic growth among students reached record highs. Student growth in DeKalb has been at or above state performance levels since the 2014-2015 school year, demonstrating notable academic progress across the District.

Relative to high school graduates' readiness for college and career, 85.4% of DeKalb's graduates in the class of 2015 completed either a CTAE pathway, advanced academic pathway, fine arts pathway, or world language pathway within their program of study. The completion of academic pathways demonstrates student readiness for college and career as these students have spent three to five years completing coursework that provides them with in-depth knowledge of their areas of specialty. Although completing a program of study is not required in Georgia, DeKalb Schools is committed to developing highly successful graduates through exposure to high-impact, real-world academic experiences.

Describe the area(s) that show a positive trend in performance.

As evidenced by the District's student performance data document, several performance measures show a positive trend in student performance:

District SAT Test performance: As demonstrated by high school student performance on the SAT, more and more students are demonstrating increased readiness for college. The SAT Scores for Critical Reading have increased 48 points since the 2013-2014 school year, from a total composite score of 411 to 459. Likewise, DeKalb students increased SAT scores in mathematics 37 points during the same period, moving from 413 to 450. Comparably, high school students in DeKalb also showed a notable increase of 39 points on the SAT writing test during the same span of years. More DeKalb students take the SAT each year and continue to demonstrate increased performance on measures indicative of readiness for post secondary education.

DeKalb high school students and schools show a positive trend in performance, particularly as it relates to high school graduation. Both the 4-year cohort and 5-year cohort graduation rates continue to increase over time. Since the 2013-2014 school year, DeKalb's graduating seniors showed an 8-point increase in the 4-year cohort graduation rate to a current graduation rate of 70.3%. Likewise, the 5-year cohort graduation rate increased 15.4 points since the 2013-2014 school year to a current rate of 74.4%. Increased focus on academic and social emotional interventions in all secondary schools has supported both increased graduation rates and increased college readiness rates across the District.

DeKalb's intensive academic focus on reading and literacy instruction has contributed significantly to the increase in the reading Lexile levels of students in multiple grade levels, demonstrating greater levels of reading comprehension among multiple student subgroups. The percentage of third grade students reading at or above grade level increased five percentage points since the 2014-2015 school year to a current rate of 64%. Fifth grade students who are reading at or above grade level increased two percentage points since the 2014-2015 school year to a current rate of 60%. The percentage of eighth grade students reading at or above grade level increased seven percentage points since the 2014-2015 school year to a current rate of 67%. In high school, eleventh grade students reading at or above grade level increased 38 percentage points since the 2014-2015 school year to a current rate of 68%, demonstrating sizable growth in the reading comprehension of high school students.

DeKalb's Title I schools continue to etch closer toward closing pervasive achievement gaps. Georgia's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) measures the extent to which schools can mitigate academic gaps between students performing in the lowest quartile to that of mean performance of students across the state. The CCRPI awards a maximum of ten points to schools for closing achievement gaps. The number of achievement gap points earned by Title I schools between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 increased 1.3 points to a total of 7.3 points, demonstrating academic growth and achievement across schools with significant numbers of students enrolled in the free and/or reduced lunch program.

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest performance?

The average daily student attendance rate continues to demonstrate high performance. Since 2013, the overall average daily student attendance rate for elementary, middle, and high school has been at/above 92%. DeKalb's Division of Student Support and Intervention has worked strategically to provide effective interventions to combat student truancy issues and to better engage and support students' families in working with their child's school.

DeKalb's emphasis on bolstering the instructional quality of students enrolled in English Learner/ESOL programs has resulted in significantly high performance, particularly among English Learners in the District's nearly 80 elementary schools. The ACCESS for ELLs assessment is a national assessment used in the State of Georgia to measure the English language acquisition and proficiency rates of students receiving ESOL services through the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) instructional model. The Georgia College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) measures the Percent of English Learners with positive movement from one Performance Band to a higher Performance Band as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs. Since the 2014-2015 school year, DeKalb's elementary school English Learners, where intensive English acquisition programs are the most needed, showed an increase in English Learners moving from one Performance Band to a higher Performance Band as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs of nine percentage points to a current rate of 85.5%. This evidenced growth in English language acquisition of skills for elementary students indicates progress in leveling the educational platform for students whose primary language is one other than English as well as promising movement in removing language barriers that are typically responsible for lower performance on high-stakes assessments for English Learners.

Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward increasing performance?

As measured by Georgia's school accountability system, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), several of DeKalb's

student subgroups show a trend toward increasing performance. In DeKalb's high schools, economically disadvantaged students, or students eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, met and/or exceeded state subgroup performance targets in both U.S. History and Economics. English Learners exceeded state subgroup performance targets in Economics. Hispanic students met and/or exceeded state subgroup performance targets in Geometry and met and/or exceeded overall state performance targets in both U.S. History and Economics. Black students met and/or exceeded state subgroup performance targets in American Literature, U.S. History, and Economics.

Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing?

Comparatively, Black and Hispanic high school students in the District have moved progressively toward closing pervasive achievement gaps. In recent years, DeKalb has enrolled increasing number of Hispanic students and, as such, immediate measures were implemented by school district administration to provide quality learning for Hispanic students whose primary language is one other than English. The 2016 graduation rate among Hispanic students was 63.9%, which represents a four percentage point increase over the 2015 graduation rate for Hispanic students. One example of progress in Hispanic student graduation rates is evidenced at Cross Keys High School, a school of 1,469 students with an enrollment of 1,180 or 86% Hispanic students. Between the 2015 and 2016 graduating class at Cross Keys High School, the total graduation rate increased 18 percentage points in a single school year as a result of targeted efforts directed towards family engagement and academic support.

On the SAT, comparatively, Black and Hispanic students showed significant progress in readiness for college. Minority student performance on the 2016 SAT in DeKalb was also comparable to minority SAT performance statewide. On the Critical Reading portion of the SAT, Black/African American students displayed an increase in performance in 2016 with a total score of 435, 8 points from the previous school year. In addition, Black/African American students scored 5 points higher than the national average score in Critical Reading, demonstrating comparable performance with Black/African American students across the nation. On the mathematics test, Black/African American students, on average, scored 424, up 7 points from the previous school year and within one point of meeting the national average in mathematics. On the Writing test, Black/African American students scored a 418, up 4 points from the previous school year, and 3 points higher than the national average in Writing. Hispanic/Latino students scored a 453 on the Critical Reading test, 5 points higher than the national average for Hispanic/Latino students nationwide. On the Writing test, Hispanic/Latino students scored a 438, 2 points higher than the national average among Hispanic/Latino students

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?

Data from related sources are consistent with statewide assessment and accountability trends. Black high school students met and/or exceeded state subgroup performance targets in three content areas as measured by the 2016 Georgia Milestones State Assessments. Likewise, Hispanic high school students met and/or exceeded state subgroup performance targets in Geometry and met and/or exceeded overall statewide performance targets in both History and Economics, all of which are subject areas where Hispanic students historically perform at lower levels.

Areas in Need of Improvement

Which area(s) are below the expected levels of performance?

The major area of performance below the expected levels is elementary mathematics proficiency. The state's summative assessment system, Georgia Milestones, measures student proficiency in mastering state content standards in the core-content subject areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The Georgia Milestones assigns scoring criteria that categorizes student performance into one of four performance levels, from lowest to highest: Beginning Learner, Developing Learner, Proficient Learner, and Distinguished Learner. In elementary mathematics, as made evident by the spring 2016 administration of the Georgia Milestones, students that scored in the passing performance bands (proficient and distinguished) were as follows: third grade - 28%; fourth grade - 27%; and fifth grade - 25%. Of note, however, is that Georgia considers Developing Learners as students with tremendous promise and counts these students positively in school achievement outcomes within state accountability measures. As such, the percentage of elementary school students scoring at Developing Learner and above is 51%. While this area is still below expected levels, it serves as evidence of promising increases in upward student matriculation through achievement/performance levels.

Describe the area(s) that show a negative trend in performance.

District wide data analyses indicate a recent negative trend in physical science performance across the grade spans. The physical science subject area proves to be the most challenging. Physical science is primarily taught in both the eighth and ninth grades. On the most recent administration of the Georgia Milestones state assessment, 21% eighth grade students and 14% high school physical science students passed the state assessment by scoring at either a Proficient Learner or Distinguished Learner level. This trend has led to a rewrite of the physical science curriculum in DeKalb to better address the relevant science standards along with increased professional development for physical science teachers.

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?

While achievement gaps present among the District's Title I schools continue to narrow each school year, evident achievement opportunities still remain at Tile I school across all four core-content subject areas. Pervasive socioeconomic challenges exist at these schools and compounds the imperative of increasing student achievement. Notably, however, are the recognizable increases in student achievement at Title I schools district wide. For example, the percentage of students scoring at the two highest levels on the Georgia Milestones assessment for English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies increased two percentage points and longitudinal student growth at Title I schools is significantly rising; however, at present moment, the overall lowest performance rates on achievement assessments can be found aggregately among the District's schools with lower socioeconomic levels.

Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward decreasing performance?

Economically Disadvantaged students, or students served by the free and/or reduced lunch program, show a trend toward decreasing performance. Among all student subgroups, students who reside in DeKalb County's poorest and disenfranchised communities face a host of challenges that contribute to trends toward decreasing performance including but not limited to: transiency; pervasive student/family mobility;

and declining access to external educational resources such as technology in the home. In most all cases, Economically Disadvantaged students face the greatest challenges with scoring at the highest levels of high-stakes state assessment programs.

**Between which subgroups is the achievement gap becoming greater?**

Through generalization, Students with Disabilities (SWD) served by the special education program represent the subgroup where achievement gaps have become greater. While the graduation rates for SWDs show positive trends overall, Georgia Milestones assessment proficiency rates for SWDs are slower to improve. During the 2015-2016 school year, on average, SWDs did not meet and/or exceed state performance targets, indicating that continued enhancement of the District's educational programs for SWDs must continue to be refined to support students with meeting performance targets set by the State Board of Education.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?

In addition to the statewide assessments, Students with Disability (SWD) subgroups demonstrate lower levels of overall achievement as demonstrated by locally administered assessments. The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment is a norm-referenced assessment locally administered to measure student proficiency in content standards for language arts, reading, mathematics, and science. SWDs typically score within the LOW and LOW-AVERAGE performance levels as measured by the MAP assessment. Though these trends support the above-reported findings, locally administered assessments like the MAP assessment provide for early intervention and identification of student skill deficiencies in ample time for school teachers to provide focused intervention toward the amelioration of these skill deficits and is widely supported through the District's MTSS/RTI program implementation.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics — 3.25
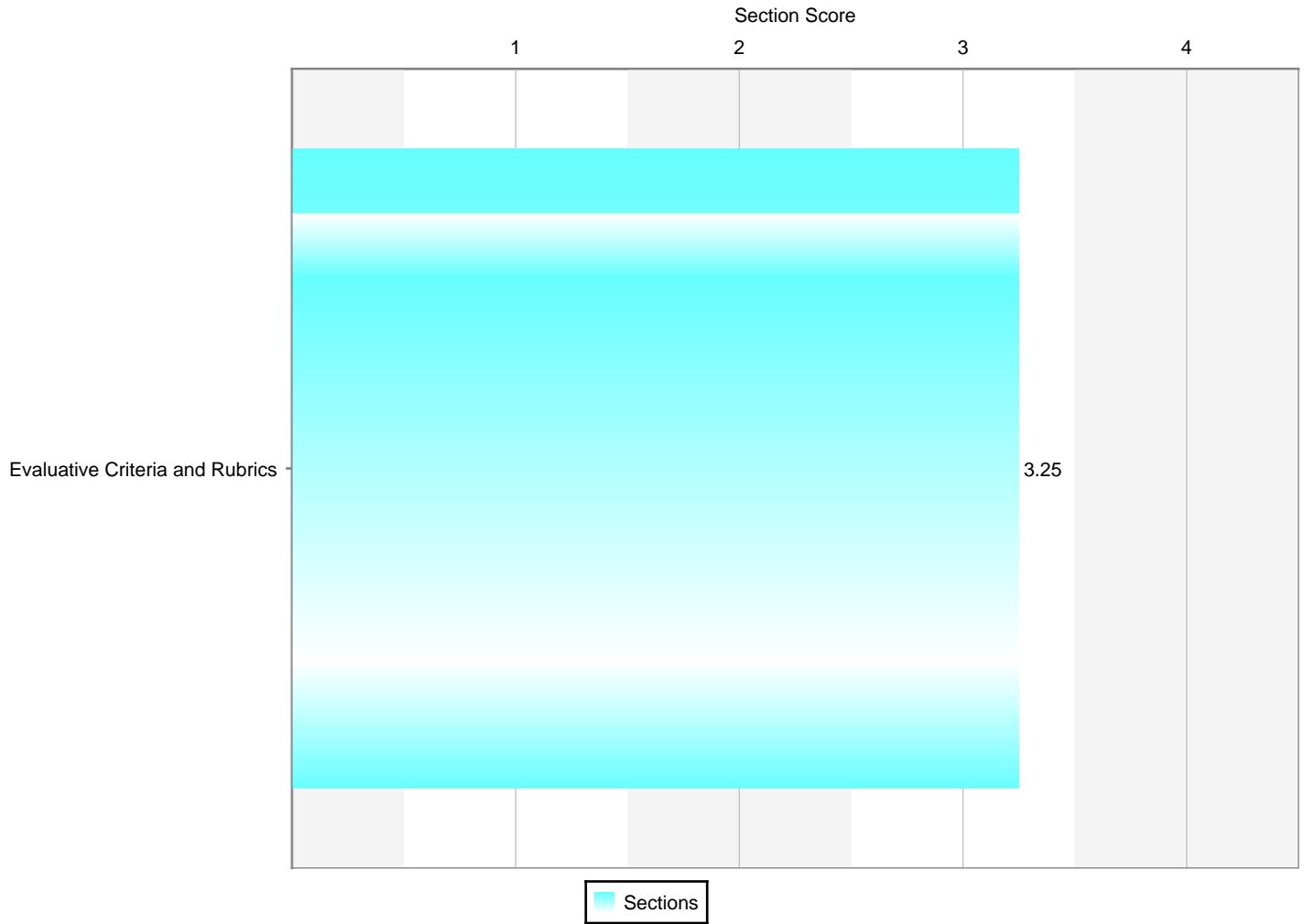
Sections

AdvancED Assurances

Introduction

AdvancED Policies and Procedures outline certain requirements that all institutions must meet in order to be in compliance. Institutions are required to verify whether or not they meet these requirements by answering a series of questions and in some cases, attaching evidence for review.

By responding to the questions in ASSIST and attaching evidence when required, the institution has verified whether it meets or does not meet each of the Assurances for Accreditation.

AdvancED Assurances

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
1.	The institution has read, understands, and complies with the AdvancED Policies and Procedures.	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
2.	The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the AdvancED standards and policies. Such changes include, but are not limited to: - Restructuring (merging, opening, or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction - Mission and purpose of the institution - Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership - Grade levels served by the institution - Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professionals personnel - Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance - Level of funding - School day or school year - Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus - Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s) - Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
3.	The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan which includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders. Attach the security and crisis management plan. (optional)	Yes		DCSD Emergency Procedure Booklet

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
4.	The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.	Yes	The DeKalb County School District currently processes and monitors all financial transactions through an enterprise resource planning system called CrossPointe. All financial reporting documents, which include internal management reports, financial reports to state and federal entities, submissions to audit requests, and the annually published and audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) are all generated from transaction driven data from the CrossPointe system. CrossPointe is also colloquially referred to as "TERMS" among the District's users.	DCSD Financials

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
5.	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan. Attach the improvement plan if the plan is not located in AdvancED's Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST).	Yes		DCSD 2014-2019 Strategic Plan Profile DCSD FY17 Balanced Scorecard

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
6.	The system verifies that all institutions within its jurisdiction meet the AdvancED Standards for Schools. Attach a description of the quality assurance process used to monitor the institutions.	Yes		DCSD Schools Continuous Improvement Planning Process DCSD Schools CIP Participants Guide DCSD System Continuous Improvement Planning Session