



Dr. Vasanne S. Tinsley, *Interim Superintendent*

Mr. Dijon DaCosta, Sr., *Board Chair*
Mrs. Deirdre Pierce, *Vice Chair*
Mrs. Anna Hill
Mrs. Whitney McGinniss
Mrs. Allyson Gevertz
Mrs. Vickie B. Turner
Dr. Joyce Morley

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cognia Review Notes ‘Clear Focus’ on
Improved Teaching, Learning, and Accountability**

(STONE MOUNTAIN, GA)- The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) today releases the latest Cognia™ Monitoring Review Report, which shows that District leadership continues to demonstrate progress toward governing within defined roles and responsibilities.

This feedback is the culmination of Cognia’s review held in the District on November 8-11, 2022, which was scheduled to evaluate DCSD’s progress toward addressing findings related to Board governance from the [*Accreditation Engagement Review*](#) that was conducted on March 20-25, 2022.

“We appreciate the attention that Cognia has demonstrated in their review of our efforts to provide the best public schools for our students, staff, and communities,” said Dr. Vasanne S. Tinsley, Interim Superintendent. “It takes everyone working together to achieve and sustain excellence. To that end, feedback like this helps us to strengthen our commitment to achievement, equity, and outcomes for every student who walks into any of our schools.”

The Cognia Monitoring Review Report noted an “initiating” rating regarding the Board governance standard. More specifically, it pointed out, “*Individual interviews with each of the seven board members indicate that each is highly committed to the district and the students.*” The report stated that Board members could do better working together.

Mr. Dijon DaCosta, Sr., the newly elected Chair of the Dekalb County Board of Education, emphasized that the efforts of Board members are aligned with providing the finest public schools possible.

“This report outlines much of what we already know: There is important work to do,” Mr. DaCosta said. “The good news is that my colleagues on the Board and I have a shared vision of helping improve and sustain an exceptional, world-class public school district. While we may have different ideas on how to get there, we are individually committed to collaborating to support our district leadership and each other in achieving this standard.”

In February, Board members will participate in a Board retreat to further discuss and implement recommendations outlined in the Cognia Monitoring Review Report. During this retreat, Board members

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will renew their commitment to the [District's Vision and Mission](#), study and discuss recent Board Self-Assessment results, examine current structures that support efficient and effective Board operations, and receive guidance on conducting meetings following the prescribed procedures outlined by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Mr. DaCosta also reaffirmed the Board's commitment to transparency and welcomed constructive feedback from parents, students, and community members.

"We can make a positive impact on the education and future of our scholars by working collaboratively with all stakeholders to achieve our common goals," he said.

The Cognia Monitoring Review Report encouraged DCSD to implement the following "next steps":

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Ensure the Board fully implements effective board governance best practices from professional learning sessions.
- Regularly revise and update policies and procedures to ensure all are current and relevant.
- Document work and accomplishments related to the Cognia Performance Standard (1.5).
- Complete and submit a Progress Report to Cognia after addressing the Directives.
- Schedule and host a Monitoring Review by December 2023

Cognia fully accredits DCSD through June 30, 2027.

Cognia™, a non-profit, non-governmental organization that accredits primary and secondary schools, serves more than 36,000 institutions with 25 million students and one million educators in approximately 80 countries.

The complete Cognia Monitoring Review Report for DCSD is located on the District website [HERE](#).

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