



Curriculum Guide



CONTENTS:

- Overview
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- World Languages/Dual Language Immersion
- Visual and Performing Arts
- General Music
- Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education
- Health and Physical Education
- Character Education
- Gifted Education
- Counseling and Advisement
- Special Education
- English to Speakers of Other Languages
- Testing
- Parent Portal

Welcome to Eighth Grade

Together, we can help your child achieve educational excellence.

We encourage you to talk with your child about what they are learning and support their learning at home.

INSPIRE. ACHIEVE. EXCEL.



CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The DeKalb County School District values a strong parent-school partnership and invites you to discover more about what your child will learn this year through this publication, Curriculum Connections.

DeKalb’s curriculum for grades K-12 is aligned to the state-adopted Georgia standards of excellence in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition to core studies, students in DeKalb County schools are offered a variety of coursework to develop the whole child.

DeKalb County School District prepares students for college and careers through a laser focus on rigorous, relevant classroom instruction related to each child’s needs. The curriculum was developed by DeKalb teachers for DeKalb students and is aligned with the district’s mission to ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and lifelong learning.

Each unit of study prioritizes essential concepts and skills students should master in that grade or course. The curriculum offers engaging learning experiences that are based on tasks that require critical thinking and application of knowledge in real-world situations. Instructional resources and digital tools, as well as support services, help every student reach their potential.



LANGUAGE ARTS

The grades six through eight standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. Instruction in grades 6-8 addresses students’ increasing maturity and the growing sophistication of their abilities, culminating in the development by the end of Grade 8 with the development of students who are ready to succeed in high school.

In grade 8, student should be able to:

- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- Analyze how differences in the points of view of characters and the audience or reader create such effects as suspense or humor.
- Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
- Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

- Acquire and accurately use grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

While continuing with a variety of literary non-fiction, students in grades six through eight will begin to tackle more technical informational texts as well. Literary selections will include foundational materials from mythology, cultural histories, and religious traditions.



MATHEMATICS

The Grade 8 Mathematics Curriculum provides instruction to build mathematical concepts, procedures and skills. It provides a balance of computational fluency, procedural fluency and problem solving. These types of activities help build mathematical literacy for students to be successful in meeting and exceeding the expectations of the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

The Grade 8 curriculum focuses on three critical areas:

1. Formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations;
2. Grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; and

- Analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

To achieve the level of rigor in the mathematics classroom daily, Grade 8 students will be asked to persevere and attend to precision on all math learning experiences.

Content standards for Grade 8 are arranged within the following domains and clusters:

THE NUMBER SYSTEM

- Know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers

EXPRESSIONS AND EQUATIONS

- Work with radicals and integer exponents
- Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations
- Analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations

FUNCTIONS

- Define, evaluate, and compare functions
- Use functions to model relationships between quantities

GEOMETRY

- Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software
- Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem
- Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres

STATISTICS AND PROBABILITY

- Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data

Grade 8 students will use a variety of strategies and math tools as they learn math. They will be asked to demonstrate their understanding using pictures, words, numbers, and concrete models. The use of technology is an integral part of supporting the teaching and learning of the content standards. Students will use problem-solving strategies and processes within the problem-based learning environment.



SCIENCE

Science consists of a way of thinking and investigating, as well as a developing body of knowledge about the natural world. To become literate in science, students need to possess sufficient understanding of fundamental science content knowledge, the ability to engage in the Science and Engineering Practices, and to use scientific and technological information correctly. Technology is infused into the curriculum and the safety of the student will be foremost during instruction.

The Eighth Grade Science Curriculum is designed to prepare all students with the necessary skills for a smooth transition from elementary physical science standards to high school physical science standards. The purpose is to give all students an overview of common strands in physical science including, but not limited to, the nature of matter, conservation of energy, energy transformations, conservation of matter, kinematics, and dynamics. These standards are not intended in any way to take the place of the high school physical science standards. Eighth grade students keep records of their observations, use those records to analyze the data they collect, recognize patterns in the data, use simple charts and graphs to represent the relationships they see, and find more than one way to interpret their findings.

In Eighth grade, students will:

- Develop conceptual understanding of the laws of conservation of matter and conservation of energy
- Explain the characteristics of the motion of an object (speed, acceleration) and the way that forces may change the state of motion of an object
- Use what they observe to explain the difference between physical and chemical changes
- Use what they have learned to explain cause and effect relationships between force, mass, and the motion of objects
- Construct explanations based on evidence on the difference and similarities between electromagnetic and mechanical waves
- Plan and carry out investigations
- Describe observations
- Show information in graphical form
- Replicate investigations
- Compare results to find similarities and differences





SOCIAL STUDIES

In eighth grade, students study Georgia geography, history, government, and economics.

While the four strands are interwoven, ample opportunity is also provided for in-depth study of the geography of Georgia and the government of Georgia. U.S. historical events are included, as appropriate, to ensure students understand Georgia’s role in the history of the United States.

By Grade 8, all map and globe skills and information processing skills should be applied and mastered. Special emphasis will be placed on the examination and analysis of primary sources throughout the Georgia Studies curriculum.



WORLD LANGUAGES/ DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

Connections courses introduce students to the study of French or Spanish. Students use components of language, make observations about languages and cultures, develop language study skills, and/or acquire simple communicative skills. The goal for these courses is as much exposure as possible to the language as well as the target culture. Outcomes may include an improvement in the ability to communicate in English, a facilitation of learning other languages, and a deeper appreciation of other cultures and professional pursuits. The connection class studies the themes of classroom routines, geography, time and colors, body parts, family, foods, clothing, shopping, leisure activities, and hobbies.

The connection course may be taken one time in middle school.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CARNEGIE UNIT WORLD LANGUAGE

The middle school Carnegie Unit class is taken for high school credit. It follows the themes and requirements of the Level I high school class. The class is offered in French, Spanish, or German. All language skills are emphasized: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural awareness.

The Carnegie unit curriculum emphasizes the areas of Interpersonal Communication (IP); Interpretive Mode of Communication (INT); Presentational (P); Cultural Perspectives, Practices, and Products (CU); and Connections, Comparisons, and Communities (CCC).

PRESENTATIONAL MODE OF COMMUNICATION

- Use expressions of courtesy in oral and written form
- Express likes, dislikes, agreement, and disagreement
- Make simple requests
- Comprehend basic directions
- Ask for clarification
- Give basic descriptions
- Use sequenced information
- Ask questions and provide responses pertaining to the themes
- Initiate conversation and participate when spoken to
- Use formal and informal forms of address
- Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written exchanges: pronunciation, intonation, and mechanics

INTERPRETIVE MODE OF COMMUNICATION

- Demonstrate proficiency in listening and reading comprehension
- Comprehend simple, culturally authentic announcements and messages
- Identify main ideas and some details when reading and listening
- Demonstrate understanding of simple instructions
- Recognize gestures, body language, and intonation in a message
- Presentational mode of communication
- Present information gathered from various sources
- Give basic information about self and others using the themes
- Demonstrate comprehension of rehearsed material
- Demonstrate appropriate proficiency in oral and written presentations in pronunciation, intonation, and writing mechanics

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE, PRACTICES, AND PRODUCTS

- Identify practices and products of the target culture
- Demonstrate knowledge of contributions of the target culture to civilization
- Describe customs and traditions of the culture
- Identify similarities and difference between different cultures

CONNECTIONS, COMPARISONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Demonstrate knowledge of geographical locations and identify major countries, cities, and geographical features of the target language cultures
- Apply learned skills from other subjects
- Identify examples of vocabulary, phrases, proverbs, and symbols for the target language that are used in other subjects
- Identify major current events in the target country
- Identify examples of the media, entertainment, and technology in the target language
- Identify resources, individuals in the community, and organizations that provide basic cultural information

MIDDLE SCHOOL CARNEGIE UNIT WORLD LANGUAGE: SPANISH FOR NATIVE SPEAKERS

Designed for heritage language learners of Spanish, this course can accommodate a wide range of heritage language learners, from those who are minimally functional (can comprehend Spanish but are not able to speak fluently, read, or write) to those who are more proficient and literate in Spanish. The recommended entrance requirement for the beginning level is at the intermediate-mid level of proficiency in listening comprehension. It is not necessary that students speak at the intermediate level prior to entering the course. This course will develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The student will also develop an awareness and understanding of Hispanic cultures, such as language variations, customs, geography, and current events.

The Spanish for native speakers curriculum emphasizes the areas of interpersonal communication (IP); interpretive mode of communication (INT); presentational (P); cultural perspectives, practices, and products (CU); and connections, comparisons, and communities (CCC).

INTERPERSONAL MODE OF COMMUNICATION

- Share emotions, opinions, preferences
- Exchange personal reactions to spoken and written information related to Hispanic cultures
- Participate in extended oral and written activities using appropriate discourse structures
- Use paraphrasing, circumlocution, and body language to convey and comprehend messages
- Demonstrate intermediate-mid to intermediate-high proficiency in oral and written exchanges

PRESENTATIONAL MODE OF COMMUNICATION

- Use expressions of courtesy in oral and written form
- Express likes, dislikes, agreement, and disagreement
- Make simple requests
- Comprehend basic directions
- Ask for clarification
- Give basic descriptions
- Use sequenced information
- Ask questions and provide responses pertaining to the themes
- Initiate conversation and participate when spoken to
- Use formal and informal forms of address
- Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written exchanges: pronunciation, intonation, and mechanics

INTERPRETIVE MODE OF COMMUNICATION

- Identify main ideas, supporting details, and various elements from a variety of texts (plot, theme, setting, characters)
- Understand some subtleties of meaning such as intent, humor, and tone, in a variety of level-appropriate culturally authentic works in Spanish, such as radio and television segments or literacy passages
- Comprehend and react to current events and issues presented through print and electronic media
- Understand connected discourse
- Expand knowledge of academic vocabulary in Spanish

PRESENTATIONAL MODE OF COMMUNICATION

- Summarize and communicate main ideas and supporting details from a variety of authentic language materials
- Produce extended oral presentations and write organized compositions using visual and technological support
- Prepare and present Hispanic poetry, skits, or stories
- Prepare and present organized original essays, poetry, skits, or stories in Spanish

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE, PRACTICES, AND PRODUCTS

- Participate in cultural events
- Discuss cultural patterns of behavior and issues of Hispanic identity in the modern world
- Compare and contrast how Spanish is used in various countries and communities, in formal and informal settings, and by people of varying background

CONNECTIONS, COMPARISONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Report on the role of major contemporary and historical figures and events from Spanish-speaking countries
- Identify and discuss how topics studied in other subjects relate to those studied in SNS I
- Discuss how viewpoints of people in Spanish-speaking communities are reflected in their practices and products, such as political systems, art, architecture, music, and literature

DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION

The district implements a 50/50 immersion model. Students learn the content-specific standards of the Georgia standards of excellence for science and target language literacy through use of the target language (French, Spanish, or German). Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are also addressed in the immersion classroom. In the partner classroom, students study literacy and social studies as well as receive math support in English.

The immersion program provides important benefits to students in the areas of cognition, achievement, and linguistics.

Enhanced Cognitive Skills: Immersion students typically develop more flexible thinking and greater non-verbal problem-solving skills (Met, 1998). The learning processes that students use make them pay closer attention and think harder. Bilingual brains demonstrate a greater capacity for spatial reasoning and motor control.

Linguistic: Students who complete the immersion program from Kindergarten through the fifth grade are expected to perform at the language proficiency level of traditional high school students.

Achievement: Studies consistently show that immersion students achieve as well as or better than non-immersion peers on standardized measure of verbal and mathematics skills administered in English (Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000). Students demonstrate a high level ability to solve problems, which is a 21st century skill needed in the workplace. Immersion students possess skills that give them a competitive advantage not only in pursuing continuing educational opportunities, but a competitive advantage with their peers.

Cultural Sensitivity: Dual language immersion students develop an appreciation for cultures and cross cultural understanding. They demonstrate more positive attitudes toward other cultures and a greater appreciation for the global society.

The National Standards for 21st Century Language Learning are organized into five categories;

Interpersonal Communication (person-to-person);
Presentational Speaking (spoken language production);
Presentational Writing (written language production);
Interpretive listening (understanding what is heard); and
Interpretive Reading (understanding what is read).



VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Arts education contributes to the intellectual, social and emotional growth of every child. The goals of the Visual and Performing Arts Program are to provide the five foundational domains of the Georgia Performance Standards that include: meaning and creative thinking, contextual understanding, production and response, assessment and reflection, and real life connections. The fine and performing arts curriculum is designed to develop the unique mental capabilities which foster flexible, original, divergent, fluent, creative, and imaginative thinking. While art enhances learning in all subject areas by providing auditory, visual and sensory experiences, it has intrinsic value and is worth learning for its own sake. The comprehensive program fosters the creative potential of every learner.

Through the fine and performing arts courses, students explore art history, art criticism, aesthetic perception and art production.

VISUAL ARTS

The Visual Arts Program is designed to help eighth grade students acquire the knowledge and skills about an arts integrated curriculum. Eighth graders who participate in the district's Visual Arts program learn about the Principles and Elements of Design that are found in all artworks. Students are given the opportunity to learn about arts and artists from around the world and through the centuries. Students learn about art and are given real life connections by making art works of their own such as paintings, drawings and 3-D pieces.

Students in the Eighth Grade visual arts programs are exposed to; but not limited to, the following Georgia State Standards/objectives, and expectations for mastery:

- Visualize ideas
- Convey visualizations to the audience
- Art history
- The creative process
- 2-D and 3-D art

- Media and technology
- Care and craftsmanship of materials
- Plan and present public displays of art
- The critique process
- Connect and expand visual verbal journals/sketchbooks to history and real life experiences

The Performing Arts Program is designed to help eighth grade students acquire the knowledge and skills embedded in an arts integrated curriculum. Eighth graders who participate in the district's Performing Arts program learn about the fundamentals of dance, theater, and performance. Students are given the opportunity to learn about dance theory and performing artists from around the world and through the centuries. Students learn how to master their craft and are given opportunities to make real life connections by practice in studio sessions/classes. Performing arts students show mastery by performing dance and dramatic productions.

Students in the Eighth Grade performing arts programs are exposed to but not limited to the following Georgia State Standards/objectives and expectations for mastery:

DRAMA

- Analyzing and constructing meaning from theatrical experience, dramatic literature, and electronic media
- Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments
- Designing and executing artistic and technical elements of theatre situations and environments
- Developing scripts through improvisation and other theatrical methods

DANCE

- Identifying and demonstrating movement elements, skills, and terminology in dance
- Demonstrating an understanding of creative and choreographic principles, processes, and structures
- Demonstrating critical and creative thinking in all aspects of dance
- Demonstrating an understanding of dance as it relates to wellness
- Demonstrating an understanding of dance as it relates to other areas of knowledge



GENERAL MUSIC

The DeKalb County School District provides a curriculum based on the belief that music education is a lifelong process that is sequential and skill based. Studies have proven that music fosters the development of cognition and provides a framework where students can learn intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Most importantly, music education involves, enhances, and contributes to the life of a community. It is the mission of the DeKalb County School District to enable every student to become artistically literate, creative, and lifelong participants in music education.

The goal of the music department is to contribute to each student's growth and development in the creative, artistic, and intellectual domains through an arts integrated curriculum. This involves a unified approach to education (parents, community, and school) coupled with the delivery of a planned, sequential, and a developmentally appropriate instructional curriculum.

The music education curriculum is designed to help students acquire the knowledge and skills embedded in an arts-integrated curriculum. There is no better subject that demonstrates the cross-curricular integration of language arts, social studies, history, mathematics, foreign language, etc., than music education.

ADVANCED ORCHESTRA

This course provides opportunities for students to learn advanced techniques and skills on stringed instruments. Eighth Grade Advanced Orchestra is the middle school's most advanced performing ensemble for string players. This year long course introduces "comprehensive musicianship" through music performance of challenging and varied literature. Skills and concepts from the previous year are developed and expanded upon. In addition to continued refinement of individual performance skills, greater emphasis is placed on ensemble performance skills. Students will continue to develop their knowledge of music theory, begin to analyze and evaluate music, and use critical thinking skills to make refinements in their performance. Individual and ensemble performance skills will be expanded through musical expression and technical accuracy. Individual growth and achievement are encouraged through participation in adjudicated solo and ensemble festivals, district honor orchestras, and private lessons. This is a performance-based class. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.

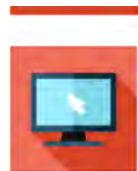
ADVANCED BAND

This course provides opportunities for students to learn advanced techniques and skills on wind or percussion instruments. Advanced Band is the middle school's most

advanced performing wind and percussion ensemble. This yearlong course introduces “comprehensive musicianship” through music performance of challenging and varied literature. In addition to continued refinement of individual performance skills, greater emphasis is placed on ensemble performance skills. Students will develop their knowledge of music theory, analyze and evaluate music, as well as use thinking skills to make refinements in their performance. Performance skills will be expanded through musical expression and technical accuracy. Individual growth and achievement are encouraged through participation in adjudicated solo and ensemble festivals, district honor bands, and private lessons. This is a performance-based class. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.

ADVANCED CHORUS

This course provides opportunities for students to learn advanced choral and vocal techniques. Eighth Grade Advanced Chorus students maintain breath control and correct singing posture extended throughout the entire singing range. They demonstrate open vowel sounds, properly articulated consonants and appropriate tone quality. Students sight-read in major and minor keys and recognize key and meter signatures of the music performed. They continue singing literature in three parts and begin singing major, minor and chromatic scales and major and minor arpeggios from memory. This is a performance-based class. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.



CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION:

The following middle school CTAE courses are offered in DeKalb County Schools:

MIDDLE SCHOOL BUSINESS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

The goal of these courses is to provide all middle school students with an introduction to the principles of computer science, basic keyboarding skills, Internet safety and usage, and computer applications. Students will explore how their personality traits and personal values align with career choices and will develop a career plan. Personal, professional, and ethical standards of behavior for the workplace will be examined and reinforced in the classroom. Development of leadership skills through participation in the career and technical student organization, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), will provide students the opportunity to explore possible career pathways.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The goal of these courses is to promote essential knowledge, skills and attitudes students need to make key decisions about career options, high school curricular offerings relating to a pathway of their choice, as well as, postsecondary and workforce opportunities. Instructional focus will address

interpersonal skills, management skills, employability skills, self-awareness, and educational and career planning. Students will increase awareness of resources available to support educational and career planning.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

The goal of these courses is to provide all students with an introduction to the principles of engineering and technology and its place in the modern world. Students will be introduced to the world of invention and innovation along with the engineering design process. They will examine the impact of invention and innovation on society and solve problems through research, design, and experimentation in one or more of the areas of engineering and technology. Students will utilize the universal systems model including input, process, output, and feedback to examine various systems. Development of leadership skills through participation in the career and technical student organization, Technology Student Association (TSA), will provide students the opportunity to explore possible career pathways.

MIDDLE SCHOOL FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE

The goal of these courses is to provide all students with an introduction to the Family and Consumer Sciences Career Pathways. The FACS career pathways are Nutrition and Food Science, Consumer Services, Interior and Fashion Design, and Family, Community, and Global Leadership. Education career pathways are Early Childhood Education and Teaching as a Profession and Culinary Arts is also a career pathway. Students acquire fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for success in any of the career pathways. Exposure to career possibilities in each area will allow students to successfully integrate their own interests into a career plan. Development of leadership skills through participation in Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), provides students the opportunity to explore possible career pathways.



HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The DeKalb County School District's Health and Physical Education (HPE) program is an integral part of the total education of every child. The role of a quality HPE program is to contribute to each student's growth and development in the physical, cognitive, and social domains through a movement-based curriculum. This involves a unified approach to education (parents, community, and school) coupled with the delivery of a planned, sequential, and developmentally appropriate instructional curriculum.

The HPE Program is designed to help eighth grade students acquire the knowledge, skills, attitude, and confidence needed

to adopt and maintain a physically active and healthy lifestyle. All sixth graders will have the opportunity to participate in a quality health and physical education program that will promote the whole child by providing psychomotor, cognitive, and affective benefits.

Every student in eighth grade is required to complete a minimum of one nine-week rotation of health and a minimum of one nine-week rotation of physical education. Per Board policy IEDA, supervised, unstructured breaks (recess) may be provided for students in grades six through eight at the discretion of the school principal.

Per Board policy IDB, all students in grades K-12 are required to participate in a comprehensive health and physical education program that includes the following:

1. Alcohol and other drug use
2. Disease prevention
3. Environmental health
4. Nutrition
5. Personal health
6. Sex education/AIDS education*
7. Safety
8. Mental health
9. Growth and development
10. Consumer health
11. Community health
12. Health careers
13. Family living
14. Motor skills
15. Physical fitness
16. Lifetime sports
17. Outdoor education
18. Fitness assessment

**Sex and AIDS education is further addressed in Board policy IDBA. The sex education program in the DeKalb County School District encompasses physiological, biological, and psychological education. From the biological and physiological prospective, the program deals simply with the anatomy of the reproductive systems. From the psychological prospective, students will acquire factual knowledge, skills and attitudes that will lead to behavior that contributes to the well-being of the individual, the family and society.*

Parents and legal guardians may exercise the option to exclude their child from sex education and AIDS prevention instructional programs. Upon request, the curricular and instructional resources and materials will be provided to the parent or legal guardian for review. Any parent or legal guardian of a child scheduled to receive

sex education instruction has the right to elect in writing to opt their child out of this course of study.

All certified physical education teachers are required to administer the FitnessGram, an annual fitness assessment approved by the Georgia Department of Education, to all eighth grade students enrolled in physical education classes.



CHARACTER EDUCATION

Georgia law mandates that character education be taught in all public schools. The comprehensive character education program focuses on the students' development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for others, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue.



GIFTED EDUCATION

The Gifted Program aims to bring exceptionally talented children together to experience a variety of challenging learning activities, supported by teachers in gifted education provide guidance for parents/guardians of gifted students. Sixth through eighth grade gifted instruction shall focus on developing cognitive, learning, research and reference, and metacognitive skills.

The State of Georgia requires schools to service gifted students in grades 6-8 using at least one of the following classroom models:

RESOURCE MODEL

- Students are "pulled out" for a minimum of 225 minutes per week.
- Teachers are gifted certified.
- The teacher/student ratio is 1:27 for middle school
- Lessons are interdisciplinary enrichment and extension activities.

CLUSTER GROUPING

- Twelve or fewer gifted students may be served in a regular classroom setting.
- Gifted endorsed teacher.
- Differentiated curriculum in content, process, product and/or assessments.

ADVANCED CONTENT

- Minimum of one core content class.
- Gifted endorsed teacher.
- 1:25 teacher/student ratio.
- Accelerated curriculum emphasizing process skills, problem-solving activities, research projects, and other higher order thinking skills.

Advanced Placement (AP) classes are included as long as the teacher is AP certified and has completed ten clock hours of the Nature and Needs of Gifted.

Some IB and Advanced courses may be used to provide gifted services.



COUNSELING AND ADVISEMENT

The DeKalb County School District's comprehensive counseling program is guided by the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College and Career Readiness for Every Student. The 35 standards (see chart below) include the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness, and social/emotional development. Grade-level competencies have measurable expectations that students attain as they make progress toward the standards.

The counseling program aligns with specific standards from the Georgia Standards of Excellence. This alignment affords school counselors the opportunity to help students meet these college and career readiness standards. It also helps school counselors directly support with academic instruction when providing individual and small group counseling by focusing on standards and addressing a student's developmental needs.

The delivery methods are organized in three broad domains: academic, career, and social/emotional development. These domains promote mindsets and behaviors that enhance the learning process and create a culture of college and career readiness for all students. The definitions for each domain are as follows:

Academic Development—Standards guiding school counseling programs to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn.

Career Development—Standards guiding school counseling programs to help students 1) understand the connection between school and the world of work and 2) plan for and make a successful transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the world of work, and from job to job across the life span.

Social/Emotional Development—Standards guiding school counseling programs to help students manage emotions and learn and apply interpersonal skills.

CATEGORY 1: MINDSET STANDARDS

School Counselors encourage the following mindsets for all students.

1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of social/emotional and physical well-being
2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed
3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
4. Understanding that postsecondary education and life-long learning are necessary for long-term career success
5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes
6. Positive attitude toward work and learning

CATEGORY 2: BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

Students will demonstrate the following standards through classroom lessons, activities, and/or small-group counseling:

LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. Critical thinking skills to make informed decisions
2. Creativity
3. Use of time-management, organizational, and study skills
4. Self-motivation and self-direction to learning
5. Media and technology skills
6. High standards of quality
7. Identification of long- and short-term academic, career, and social/emotional goals
8. Actively engaging in challenging coursework
9. Ability to gather evidence and consider multiple perspectives to make informed decisions
10. Participate in enrichment and extracurricular activities

SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

1. Ability to assume responsibility
2. Self-discipline and self-control
3. Ability to work independently
4. Ability to delay immediate gratification for long-term rewards
5. Perseverance to achieve long- and short-term goals
6. Ability to overcome barriers to learning
7. Effective coping skills when faced with a problem
8. Ability to balance school, home, and community activities
9. Personal safety skills
10. Ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities

.....
STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT
PARENTS ARE THE MOST
SIGNIFICANT
INFLUENCE ON THE
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
THEIR CHILDREN.
.....

SOCIAL SKILLS

1. Use of effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
2. Ability to create positive and supportive relationships with other students
3. Ability to create relationships with adults that support success
4. Empathy
5. Ethical decision-making and social responsibility
6. Use of effective collaboration and cooperation skills
7. Use of leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams
8. Advocacy skills and ability to assert self, when necessary
9. Social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment





SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education is specially designed instruction, support, and related services provided to students, ages 3 through 21, with an identified disability requiring an individually designed instructional program to meet their unique learning needs. The purpose of special education is to enable students to successfully develop to their fullest potential by providing, as appropriate, instruction to meet and address the needs of that student and ensure access to the general curriculum. Students are eligible for special education and related services when they qualify as a student with one or more of the following disability categories:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blind
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH)
- Emotional and Behavioral Disorder
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Significant Developmental Delay
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech-Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment and Blindness

Legal mandates require that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum and the opportunity to learn the same skills and concepts as their non-disabled peers. Special Education services are provided at all public schools based on the student’s needs. Additional specialized programs, classrooms, and services are also offered at various schools and programs in specific regions within the district. Supports and related services are also designed to meet unique needs of students with disabilities and to enable access to the general education curriculum.

.....

SHARE UPDATES AND COMMUNICATE OFTEN WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AT HOME TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY AT SCHOOL WITH IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTION AND ACCOMMODATIONS.

.....

CONSULTATION

Students with disabilities receive at least one segment per month of direct service in the general or special education classroom.

SUPPORTIVE INSTRUCTION

Students with disabilities receive service from personnel other than a certified special education teacher in the general education classroom (e.g., paraprofessional or sign language interpreter).

COLLABORATION

A special education teacher provides service to students with disabilities and shares teaching responsibilities with two general education teachers within an instructional segment in the general education classroom. The special education teacher is in each general education class for half of the instructional segment.

CO-TEACHING

The special education and general education teacher provide service to students with disabilities and share teaching responsibilities for all students in the general education classroom. The special education teacher is in the general education class for the full instructional segment.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SETTING

The special education teacher provides service to students with moderate, mild, severe, or profound disabilities in a special education classroom.

To further support the student and to help the student advance appropriately toward attaining his or her educational goals, the student may also be considered for related services. Related services are additional corrective and supportive services that are necessary to assist a child with a disability and include one or more of the following areas or services:

- Audiological services
- Psychological services
- Speech-language pathology
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Social work services
- Counseling services, including rehabilitation services

The district provides the various programs and services throughout the district across a wide continuum of care. The following settings are available:

- Orientation and mobility services
- Interpreting services
- School nurse services
- Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes;
- Recreation, including therapeutic recreation;
- Early identification and assessment
- Parent training
- Transportation

Students, if applicable, are active participants in their IEP development and implementation. They work with their teachers, sharing learning goals and understanding how their learning is progressing, what next steps they need to take, and how to take their learning to higher levels.

In addition to teaching the general education curriculum standards, teachers within the special education department have access to a supplemental curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities. Unique Learning System™ is an online, standards-based curriculum specifically designed for students with special needs to access the general curriculum. Teachers use the interactive, differentiated, thematic units of study with special instructional and assistive technology, equipment and devices so that students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery, as well as participate in engaged exploration of the various content offered by the general education curriculum.



ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The EL Studies Program provides language support services to students whose primary or home language is other than English and who are not yet proficient in English. These services are provided through the English to Speakers of Other Languages Program (ESOL) until students attain proficiency and are able to perform on standardized assessments at the same level as their English-speaking peers. ESOL services are provided using different instructional delivery models that depend on the language proficiency and grade levels of the students.

ESOL instruction develops skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in:

- Social Instructional Language
- Academic Language of Language Arts
- Academic Language of Mathematics
- Academic Language of Science
- Academic Language of Social Science

Students may receive instruction through the following program:

Intensive English Program – Third to twelfth grade qualifying students are taught social and instructional language and content area (math, science, social studies, and language arts) language, school culture, and classroom routines.

Lab Program – Qualifying students with fewer than 6 years of formal schooling and 13 years or older receive remediation for academic deficiencies. Students receive content-based instruction in language arts, math, science, social studies, health, physical education and basic computer technology.

ESOL Services at the Local Schools – Kindergarten to twelfth grade qualifying students are taught social and instructional language and content areas (math, science, social studies, and language arts) at their home schools.

The EL Studies program is committed to provide each English Learner with culturally responsive and effective instruction taught by teachers who are fully certified experts in their field.



TESTING

The state of Georgia requires assessments of all students enrolled in its K–12 public schools.

Aside from accountability features, assessments also provide a wealth of information regarding the progress of students and schools. Educators gain large amounts of data for analysis and use it in planning, and parents can gain valuable information about the academic growth of their student.

The mission of the DeKalb County Schools District’s assessment program parallels the Georgia Department of Education mission. It is designed to measure student achievement relative to the state mandated curriculum, to identify students failing to achieve mastery of content, to provide teachers with diagnostic information, and to assist school systems in identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to establish priorities in planning educational programs.

DeKalb students participate in classroom, district, and state assessments which includes customized summative tests at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

TESTING IN EIGHTH GRADE

All eighth grade students participate in the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Benchmark Assessments, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Georgia Milestones Assessment (End of Grade). Qualifying students participate in the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), ACCESS for

ELLs, Georgia Alternate (GAA) Assessment, and the Georgia Milestones Assessment (End of Grade).

MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

MAP Assessments are administered three times during the course of the school year and it measures what a student knows, is ready to learn, and is projected to achieve. It is currently used district-wide as one of the tests used to determine gifted eligibility. MAP is a computer-based adaptive assessment that delivers key information about students' performance levels and instructional needs. MAP also provides a learning continuum for teachers to utilize as an instructional guide to help students attain the core skills necessary to achieve grade level proficiency.

DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BENCHMARKS

DeKalb County School District Benchmarks were created specifically for the district through a collaborative effort with University of Georgia and district level content specialists. All benchmarks infuse state-adopted content standards into targeted unit assessments which are designed to measure student proficiency following classroom instruction. Based on the results, instruction can then be modified to increase student performance in an effort to improve overall achievement and readiness. Students in grades 1 through 8 will be assessed in English Language Arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

The NAEP is more commonly known as "The Nation's Report Card". It is the largest continuing and nationally representative assessment of what our nation's students know and can do in various subjects. Assessments are given most frequently in mathematics, reading, science, and writing.

GEORGIA MILESTONES END OF GRADE

The Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessment is a comprehensive summative assessment program that measures how well students have gained 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. It is designed to not only provide information about how well students are mastering the state-adopted content standards in the core content areas of English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, but to also provide students and parents with information about their achievement and readiness for the next level of learning.

COGNITIVE ABILITIES TEST

The CogAT assessment appraises the cognitive development of students and measures students' learned reasoning abilities in three cognitive domains: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and nonverbal reasoning. The Verbal Battery assesses students' abilities to use research retrieval, and comparison processes that are essential for verbal reasoning. The Quantitative Battery assesses students' abilities to reason about patterns and relations using concepts that are essential in quantitative thinking. The Nonverbal Battery assesses student's abilities to reason with somewhat more novel questions that use spatial and figural content. The CogAT is a reliable and valid tool that assists in planning effective instructional programs and adapting instruction to enhance the student's opportunities for success in learning.

ACCESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs) is used to determine the English language proficiency levels and progress of ELLs in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. EL students in grades K-12 complete the ACCESS test. The ACCESS is administered in two modes: paper/pencil and online. Students in grades 4-12 are administered the assessment on-line. The ACCESS for English Language Learners measures language proficiency and is designed to monitor the progress of ELLs. The results of the ACCESS test are used to inform classroom instruction and assessment. It also provides meaningful and reliable data for decision making and accountability at the local school level and district level.

GEORGIA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

In an effort to ensure that the principles of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have been met, the Georgia Alternate Assessment was developed so that students with significant cognitive disabilities, have access to a general state mandated curriculum that encompasses challenging academic

standards. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) defines an alternate achievement standard as one that “sets an expectation of performance that differs in complexity from a grade-level achievement standard.” Students with significant cognitive disabilities are assessed using a portfolio based alternate assessment based on these alternate achievement standards. The alternate achievement standards are aligned to state academic content standards, although they may reflect pre-requisite or entry – level skills. The GAA portfolio is a demonstration of student achievement and progress relative to selected skills that are aligned to the Georgia curriculum in the four content areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

GEORGIA MILESTONES END OF COURSE

The Georgia Milestones End of Course Assessment is a comprehensive summative assessment program that measures how well students have gained knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in Coordinate Algebra, Analytic Geometry, Economics, U.S. History, Biology, Physical Science, American Literature, and Ninth Grade Literature. It is designed to not only provide information about how well students are mastering the state-adopted content standards in the core content areas of English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, but to also provide students with information about their achievement and their preparedness for post-secondary work, college, and/or careers.



PARENT PORTAL

The DeKalb County Schools Campus Portal is a confidential and secure website that allows parents/guardians to log in and view their child’s progress in school. The goal of the Campus Portal is to create a better partnership between parents and teachers.

.....
URL: [HTTPS://CAMPUS.DEKALB.K12.GA.US/CAMPUS/PORTAL/DEKALB.JSP](https://campus.dekalb.k12.ga.us/campus/portal/dekalb.jsp)

DISTRICT CODE: FLZLHV
.....

You need to retrieve an activation code before you can create a username and password. You may visit the visit *Infinite Campus Portal* and click on DCSD Portal Account Activation. You will be prompted to enter your child’s 7-digit DCSD student number, your child’s 9-digit social security number, and your child’s date of birth. When this information has been entered, click the **Submit** button. If you are successful in retrieving your activation code, click the Activate Your Parent Portal Account Now to create your username and password. If you are still unsuccessful, please contact your child’s school and be prepared to visit the school with a picture ID to receive your activation code. **Note: Please do not use a numeric only username as it may conflict with a student account.**



.....
MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS AND COMMUNICATE, REGULARLY, WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS. IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS EXTRA HELP OR WANTS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT A SUBJECT, WORK WITH HIS OR HER TEACHERS TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR TUTORING, AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS OR OTHER RESOURCES.
.....

CONNECT WITH US.

ADDRESS:

1701 Mountain Industrial Boulevard
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

TELEPHONE:

678.676.1200

WEB:

www.dekalbschoolsga.org

