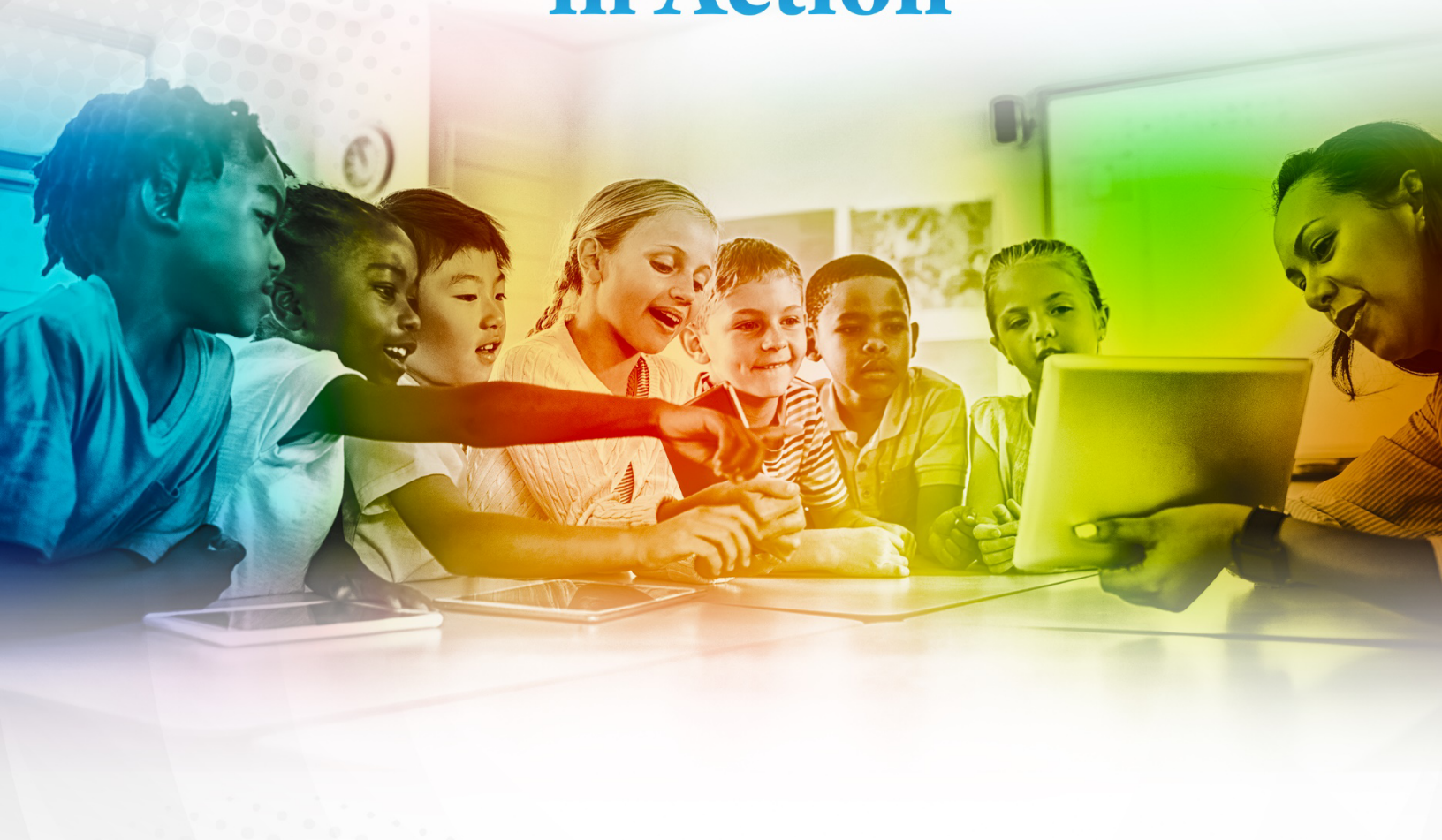


DeKalb County School District

# MIRACLES

**in Action**



***Academic Report Document***  
***October 2023***

## ***Academic Report Document October 2023***

### **Mrs. Michelle Dillard Chief of Schools**

October has been very impactful for Schools and Leadership Champions. We are excited to support the schools, community and district to provide them with the necessary tools to build capacity and have sustainability to improve scholar achievement.

#### **Miracle Priorities**

#### **Weekly Emails**

This month the weekly emails have been focused on the Six Essential Systems for a Strong Learning Climate. Each system has a definition, description, success criteria and ensuring equity component. The six systems are as follows:

System 1: Standards Deconstruction

System 2: Effective Use of Data

System 3: Instructional Planning and Practice for Deeper Learning

System 4: Progress Monitoring and Analysis of Student Work

System 5: Academic and Behavioral Support

System 6: Instructional Feedback and Professional Learning

#### **Learning Walks**

I am proud to say all seven Areas have focused on Learning Walks this month. The district Areas would go in with a team to conduct these learning walks. The teams consisted of the Area Superintendents, Executive Administrators, Professional Learning Facilitator, Academic Coaches and the Culture and Climate Coordinators. The team focused on whatever the schools CSIP priorities were or identified look Fors when visiting the classrooms. Each team then would meet to debrief leaving glows, grows and next steps for the leadership team. The feedback is left with teachers and over a period of time they will receive a coaching session based on the data from the learning walks.

#### **Principals Learning Opportunity**

We had our second Area Principals Learning Opportunity. All schools did a review of their schools CSIP and provided feedback to one another in their Area. They created progress monitoring goals on how to monitor the strategies created in their CSIP. The elementary principals got the first round of training for the Science of Reading. This was done in collaboration with the C and I departments.

#### **Leadership Development**

##### **\*\*\*Education Leadership Legal Symposium: Navigating Education's Legal Landscape**

Leadership Development, in collaboration with Employee Relations, Special Education, and General Counsel, planned and implemented the first Legal Symposium on October 17th and 18th.

Dr. Horton and Champion Dillard's vision to provide principals, assistant principals, and area leaders with targeted leadership development around legal topics was realized. Guest Speakers and in-house experts presented on Fire Safety, Title IX, Progressive Discipline, Evaluations/Non-renewals, ADA/FMLA, 504/IEP implementation, Employee Misconduct Process, Divisive Concepts and Transgender issues. The symposium hosted **324** principals, assistant principals and area leaders. **Eighty-six percent** of evaluation completers believed the event was effective to highly effective in meeting their learning needs. The Leadership Development, Employee Relations, and Planning team will meet **on November 2, 2023**, to complete a SWOT debrief analysis in preparation for the next event for district leaders, projected to happen during the Spring Semester of the FY24 school year.

### **New Principals' Academy**

The New Principals' Academy began on October 27, 2023, focusing on serving and providing leadership induction for principals with 0-4 years of experience. The department is excited to partner with *The Principal's Dynamic* to provide our new leaders with engaging leadership development that allows them to learn, reflect, and plan for increasing student achievement by establishing solid cultures and systems. The academy also provides leaders the opportunity to collaboratively think, design, and learn from and with their peers. Leadership Development will host the new principals' next learning opportunity **on November 14, 2023**.

### **Assistant Principals Academy**

The Leadership Development department will host its second learning opportunity for all district assistant principals **on October 31 and November 1**. The Academy will feature our collaborative partnership with Dr. Mike Rutherford from the Rutherford Learning Group and continue to focus on enhancing our district Assistant Principals' observation, coaching, and feedback skills.

Data Highlights and Reflections from Learning Opportunity 1 for District Assistant Principals, held on September 27 and 29:

- **100%** who attended believed they gained new insights to assist them in their work
- **100%** who attended believed the content provided in the session was relevant to their job
- **99%** of leaders believed the learning opportunity was effective in contributing to their work as a leader
- **97%** who attended believed the session's activities engaged them in the learning process

### **Melanie Pearch Area 1 Elementary Superintendent**

Our focus in Area I this past month has been our investment in our Assistant Principals. We continue to build capacity and get them ready for the next step with the following activities:

We have set up AP pods and have named Pod leaders. Our AP leaders work with newer APs in small groups to support in all areas of the position. These are informal meetings where new hires have shared they feel very comfortable and prefer the small group vs a one-one mentor. They are also able to build a peer networking group.

We completed Instructional Rounds with all principals; and have now hosted our first round with APs. Six APs participated in an Instructional Round at Pleasantdale Elementary and are ready to host at their own schools. Our Area Team hosted two meetings for all APs. The agenda included instructional items -such as benchmark alignment and tiering teachers, operational items- guest speakers from facilities, and practical items- including Board policy and real scenarios. We also heard directly from the APs on how they envision the new Area Teams as support.

The APs have shared that they feel valued and empowered during these sessions working directly with the Area team.

Dunwoody feeder schools (elementary, middle, and high) all participated in the annual Dunwoody Homecoming Parade. The principals had their own float (car). The community loved seeing the cluster leaders united- and the kids really loved seeing their principals.

### **Trenton Arnold** **Area 2 Elementary Superintendent**

This past month, the Area 2 Team has been working to complete the first round of Learning Walks in the schools. These walks include classroom visitations, feedback to leadership teams (and teachers if requested) as well as in-depth discussions on the CSIP and how the school is doing in implementing strategic action steps to respond to identified needs (and determining if adjustments are needed). Literacy has been identified as a clear area of focus, and the Area's book study of Marzano's "Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement" will support this area and tie in perfectly with the District's Collaborative Calibration Sessions.

The Area 2 team continues to be built as the Mathematics and ELA Content Lead recommendations have been made. The finalist for the Indian Creek ES Principal position were named, and the Jolly ES Principal selection process should be completed prior to the Thanksgiving Break. Custodians appreciation day was celebrated across all of the schools, and many of the schools in the Area have hosted a Walk to School Day during October.

### **Ateshia Lester** **Area 3 Elementary Superintendent**

\*\*\*During the month of October, Area 3 conducted learning walks and provided feedback to 16 elementary schools focused on tasks aligned to standards, teacher and student behaviors utilizing the District Walkthrough Tool. Job-embedded professional learning was provided to all principals on structured literacy with an emphasis on Oral Language and utilizing writing data to create writing



action plans. Also, The Area 3 Principals began chapter presentations on our book study "Disruptive Thinking in our Classrooms" by Eric Sheninger. Our Professional Learning Facilitator, Dr. Graham continued our AREA 3 PD series for teachers focusing on "The Importance of Responding to Data during Collaborative Planning". Culture and Climate Coordinators reviewed attendance and discipline data with all schools and conducted virtual training on field trip guidelines.

In Area 3, our schools have a lot to celebrate. Bob Mathis has been certified as a H-Pride School. Allgood Elementary and Kelley Lake Elementary were recognized as Georgia Title I Reward Schools for exhibiting high growth. Cedar Grove Elementary was featured on Atlanta News First for their partnership with Callanwolde Fine Arts Center. Marbut Elementary was featured on WSBTV for the Literacy work in their Hip Hop Lab. All schools celebrated Hispanic Month and kicked off Red Ribbon Week.

### **Jacqueline Taylor Area Superintendent – Middle Schools**

During the month of October, the Middle Schools Area Team accomplished the following:

- Team completed seven Learning Walks using a modified Learning Walk tool to include CSIP Action Step Implementation.
- PLF facilitated four learning opportunities for teachers on Disciplinary Literacy, Classroom Management, Close Reading, and Reading Strategies for Struggling Readers.
- Academics Coaches participated in PL on Do the Work Protocol.
- C&C Coordinator began discussion with schools on positive intervention programs, schoolwide discipline plans, referral processes, and In School Suspension programs.
- C&C Coordinator attended the No Place for Hate and Anti-Bullying Campaign training.
- Began revision of one school's master schedules for next semester to address equity and access.
- Kicked off the Area book study on Marzano's Leadership That Works.
- Principals participated in a Peer CSIP Review.
- Chamblee MS staff participated in a training on Social Emotional Health sponsored by Children's Health Care of Atlanta.
- Champion Theme MS had the honor of performing for the Governor at the Annual Red Ribbon Week kickoff at Maple House Amphitheater.

### **Norman Sauce Area Superintendent – High Schools:**

Over the last month, our High School Area Team has facilitated Learning Walks for 8 different high schools. The process is facilitated by our Area Executive Administrator, and directly involves our Area Superintendent, Area Culture and Climate Coordinators, Area Professional Learning Facilitator, and school leaders. The process includes feedback for principals to support instructional practices that will garner an increase in instructional performance. We have also completed resume reviews for 4 different Area Content Lead positions- with interview panels

scheduled throughout the last 2 weeks of October. The week of October 23 we are hosting the Clarkston and Stone Mountain Cluster Alliance meetings, and the week of October 30 we will host the Beyond Cluster Alliance meeting.

We have conducted an instructional survey instrument with all high school principals, to allow us to align our professional development needs as they relate to the Six Systems for a Strong Instructional Climate. We shared that data with Principals in the most recent Principal Meeting held on October 19, 2023. In addition, we presented an overview of instructional expectations and the results of the learning walks to date. Our Area Executive Administrator has conducted a survey to develop a Sunshine Committee for High School Area and delivered congratulations cards to all high school principals who achieved gains in their graduation rate for 2023. Our High School Area Team was also represented at our October 16th Board Meeting, EduClimber Training, Title 1 Training and the Legal Symposium during October 2023.

Our High School Area Culture and Climate Coordinators have participated in area high school learning walks, observed classroom instruction, collaborated with the school leadership teams on student trip planning, parent concern resolution, individual student meetings and group meetings, employee misconduct allegation investigations, and feedback for increased positivity in our classroom learning environments, instructional practices, and professional learning.

In October our Culture and Climate Coordinators continued their planning with principals for effective systems for reducing student office discipline referrals and increasing staff engagement and wellness. We have identified some effective climate and culture initiatives piloted at two of our schools that they will work with all area principals to extend to all schools: a) Columbia High School's "Gathering Place" staff wellness room; and b) Cedar Grove High School's teacher-led "Student Discipline Team."

### **Triscilla Weaver** **Area Horizon Superintendent**

On October 4, 2023, Stone Mountain Elementary School hosted over three dozen men for their annual Real Men Read Program. The theme of the event was "Moving the Mountain with Literacy and Community Engagement". Principal Covington provided the participants an overview of highlights for the school and community. The event also allowed the opportunity for our district leaders to network with local business owners, as well as Stone Mountain Elementary School supporters.

Cross Keys opened their doors for the second straight year to nine Fullbright scholars through their partnership with Georgia State University's College of Education and Human Development. The scholars are teachers from several countries who worked beside Cross Keys Intensive English and sheltered content teachers for two weeks in October. The collaboration provided numerous opportunities for scholars and Cross Keys teachers to gain insight and perspective on education from a global lens, share best practices, and identify opportunities for future collaboration.

Stone Mill Elementary School received a grant from the "UGA Fresh on DeK" initiative to promote healthy eating habits among youth in DeKalb County. This initiative focuses on educating

children about nutrition and encouraging them to make healthier food choices. Additionally, Stone Mill has been selected as one of the sites to receive cooking classes and healthy eating sessions for the community. This is a beautiful opportunity to support the well-being of the students and their families.

## **Michelle Jones**

### **Area Specialty Superintendent**

The Specialty Area has two Title I Distinguished Schools: Robert Shaw Traditional Theme School and Wadsworth Magnet School for High Achievers. There are also six Title I Reward Schools in our area: DATE Academy, EL Bouie TTS, Wynbrooke TTS, DeKalb PATH, Robert Shaw TTS, and DESA. We also had two teachers presenting at State conferences for Mathematics (GCTM) and Social Studies (GTSS). Four of our schools have hosted district leaders from across the state who have come to see exemplary practices in place: Kittredge Magnet School for High Achievers, Coralwood Diagnostic Center, The Early Learning Center, and DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts. This month, Fernbank Science Center was featured on WSB. Director Greenwood was interviewed prior to the annular eclipse on October 14th and shared activities open to students and families. October has given all of our schools an opportunity to celebrate our Bus Drivers, as well as launch Red Ribbon Week activities to promote Bullying Prevention Month. October gave the Area Support Team an opportunity to celebrate Principals' Appreciation Month with tokens of appreciation.

The focus for our area for the month of October has been **Monitoring the New Math Standards**. We have visited schools to observe mathematics instruction and provide feedback. With the rollout of the new standards, we have seen evidence of use of the GADOE Tasks and Learning Plans, use of the new REVEAL resources, mathematical reasoning and justifying answers, as well as students engaged in academic discourse and having a positive mathematical mindset. Additionally, District Data provided by MAPLE from Georgia State University was discussed and Area Data for Benchmarks were analyzed. Leaders collaborated on next steps for targeted interventions. Combined with our focus walks, the area team has participated in learning walks to support schools in advancing their school improvement goals (CSIP). This aligns to the Division's Learning Walk Priority within our MIRACLES Framework.

## **Candace Alexander**

### **Director of Professional Development**

The NETwork Seminar on October 10th exemplified a collaborative effort with Human Resources (HR) through the Ask HR session and the NETwork Monthly Induction, emphasizing a holistic approach to supporting educators by addressing diverse needs and concerns. The seminar's primary focus was on utilizing DCSD strategies and resources to navigate the journey toward teaching success. Participants actively took part in interactive Professional Learning Community

(PLC) Breakout Sessions categorized by content and grade level, highlighting a commitment to providing targeted and engaging professional development opportunities for educators.

TAPP recently held a series of impactful events, including an informational session attended by 21 participants, three of whom were from outside the district. This session featured engaging facilitators modeling station teaching. Additionally, participation in a Para Academy Informational Session provided an overview of DCSD TAPP, while TAPP Faculty Training offered updates on GaPSC Rules for certification. The upcoming TAPP Diverse Field Experience on November 2, 2023, will see first-year candidates visiting the Cedar Grove Cluster as part of their certification process, observing classes tailored to their grade band certification, including special education, gifted, and ESOL students. Notably, completers of the TAPP program have earned promotions to Academic Coaches, leading their respective departments. The program's recognition and impact extend further with its involvement in the P-20 Collaborative Convening on November 2nd, indicating a comprehensive approach to teacher preparation and advancement.

The Professional Learning department recently expanded its university partnerships, securing an agreement with Young Harris College and two more pending legal reviews with St. Augustine University and Emerson College. This development will increase the total number of university partnerships to 23. The department has also taken a proactive approach to support current student teachers by connecting with them at their Candidate Cohort Campuses (CCC), conducting interviews to better understand their professional learning needs, and initiating customized onsite PL sessions during the day to accommodate their schedules. Notably, teacher candidates who are graduates of the district, referred to as "RUBY SLIPPER" candidates, are being acknowledged for returning to their educational roots, and the department is actively brainstorming ways to recognize and appreciate their commitment.

**James Jackson**  
**Executive Director for Athletics**

Congratulations to the following teams for make the GHSA state playoffs in softball:

Chamblee, Arabia Mountain, Lithonia, Cedar Grove, Southwest DeKalb, Miller Grove, and Redan

Congratulations to the following teams for make the GHSA playoffs in Volleyball:

Southwest DeKalb, Chamblee, Towers, McNair, Lakeside, Redan, Tucker, Arabia Mountain, and Cedar Grove

The final four in Middle School Football will be played **Saturday, October 28, 2023 starting @ 10:30 am**. Chapel Hill v. Cedar Grove and McNair v. Stephenson

Congratulations to the following Cross Country Teams for making the GHSA state Meet  
State Meets at Carrolton High School



### **Friday, November 3, 2023**

9:00 am - 5A Boys – Chamblee, Martin Luther King, and Tucker

9:45 am – 5A Girls – Chamblee, Martin Luther King, and Tucker

### **Saturday, November 4, 2023**

9:30 am - 2A Boys – Towers and Redan

12:30 pm – 4A Boys – Clarkston and Druid Hills

1:15 pm – 4A Girls – Druid Hills and Southwest DeKalb

2:00 pm – 6A Boys – Lakeside 2:45 pm – 6A Girls – Dunwoody  
The 18<sup>th</sup> annual all-star game will be held on **Wednesday, November 1, 2023 @ Lakeside High School**. Top 18 Senior Players for the Blue Team vs Top 18 Senior Players for the Red Team.

### **Dr. Markisha Mitchell Chief of Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

The Division of Accountability and Continuous Improvement continues to seek opportunities to implement continuous improvement cycles, and effective monitoring, measurement and accountability for district programs and initiatives. We strive to collect and provide data analysis across district departments to ensure a high return on investment and opportunities for improvement.

Early in October, we concluded our Horizon School Data meetings. This was an opportunity for Horizon School leaders to experience a guided walk through their GMA data and receive guided support in writing analysis and action planning. Survey results indicated that the sessions were well received and that school leaders felt they were able to replicate the learning with their school sites.

Two RFPs were submitted in October. The first was for program evaluation. Our district is resource heavy. My division's charge is the alignment, measuring and monitoring of the resources, specifically purchased applications/programs. We are seeking a vendor to collect data on all of our purchased applications/programs, analyze the usage, effectiveness, and alignment with targets and share a report on what programs are best to meet our targeted areas of opportunity. We will then provide a truncated list of applications for schools to choose from in math and reading. The list will include platforms for interventions and after school tutorial recommendations as well.

The second RFP is for a school evaluation and coaching tool. We are exploring an instructional coaching and classroom observation platform that enables school leaders, district administrators and coaches to grow teachers through feedback. Data tells us that having one digital home to take time-stamped observation notes, fill out forms and rubrics, plan meetings, track action steps, and share feedback in

real time is paramount. The evaluation and coaching platform will make it easy to share the right feedback with the right people at the right time — helping leaders and teachers work collaboratively toward instructional goals.

Last week I shared 2023 final graduation rate data with members of the BOE. Of the 25 schools that received a 4-year graduation rate, 13 schools (52 %) maintained or increased their rate over the prior year. One of the division's MIRACLES priorities is to increase graduation rates across the district through consistent monitoring of monthly graduation cohort meetings and establishing research-based credit recovery initiatives that meet the needs of all students.

Over the course of the month, I presented data at each BOE member's townhall meeting. The data included MAP, discipline and attendance data by cluster. During mini sessions I shared GMA data with members of the BOE. The data largely demonstrated that compared to our neighboring counties we were the third lowest in many grade levels in reading and math. Action planning is well underway given the summative results.

Lastly, at the end of October the entire division gathered for our first Quarterly Divisional Meeting where the theme was "homecoming." The event was full of information, food, fun and relationship building. Each department shared their priorities for the year and introduced their staff. We played a few team building games and most importantly learned about the work of the department. It was a great time for all who attended. Our next quarterly meeting will be held in February.

**Dr. Myisha Warren**  
**Executive Director of Federal Programs**

The Office of Federal Programs includes the work of Title I, Part A, School Improvement 1003 (a), Title II, Part A, and ESSER.

Accountability and Continuous Improvement participated in our first divisional town hall meeting where we fellowshiped, did team building activities, and discussed each department's goals and priorities.

Also, members of the Title, Title II and ESSER team have been working collaboratively with finance for the FY23 closeout.

School Improvement 1003 (a) and Research, Design and Evaluation conducted Leveling Up with Data meetings for the Horizon schools. These meetings provided analysis of Georgia Milestone and writing data. Through Dr. Weaver's office, schools will create a writing action plan as a follow-up to the data meetings. School Improvement continues to provide professional learning throughout the month to the Horizon Schools, based on school needs. Federal Programs participates in cross-divisional Horizon meetings frequently to discuss Horizon supports, alignment, monitoring and next steps. We also participate in CSI STAP meetings where schools present their goals, implementation, data, monitoring, best practices, and next steps. These meetings are cross-collaborative with the GaDOE, Metro RESA, and internal stakeholders from various divisions.

As the acting Equitable Services Director, I have been meeting with private schools, particularly for Title II, to discuss their plans, budgets, and revisions needed. The Budget Specialist and I work collaboratively

to review and approve requisitions and travel. DeKalb has the highest Title II allocation in the state. We also participated in a charter school cross collaboration meeting to discuss best practices regarding support for charter schools.

As the acting ESSER Director, I meet with divisions on an ongoing basis to discuss either their ESSER budgets or needs based upon data and allowable items that help prepare, prevent, or respond to COVID-19. ESSER also has the largest allocation in the state. The ESSER team meets with finance to discuss amendments, journal entries, and closeouts to ESSER II and ESSER III, throughout the month. The team completed an ESSER six-month review for the GaDOE and participated in audit interviews with Forvis and internal audits and compliance. Title I and the ESSER team participated in a cross-divisional summer school meeting, led by C & I, to discuss glows, grows, threats, and opportunities of the summer programs from last summer. Meetings will be held monthly in preparation for the FY24 summer programs.

The Academic Coach Coordinators have worked diligently to support academic coaches at their schools. The team of four supports 121 schools and over 160 Academic coaches. Their efforts include but are not limited to:

- Planning with Area Superintendents/Area Teams
- Area Learning Walks
- Conducting Professional Learning for academic coaches:
- October Academic Coaches Academy (10/20/23)
- Topics:
- The Science of Reading
- Integrated Approach to Student Achievement
- Wonders and MyView Updates from Curriculum and Instruction
- Instructional Technology Updates
- Collaborative Learning Sessions
- Differentiated topics based on Area needs
- Topics include but are not limited to:
- The Georgia Early Literacy Act HB 538
- MAP Data
- Equity in the Classroom: Essays From 10 Educational Leaders: pgs. 4-32. (November Collab)
- Support with Examining Student Work, Monitoring Student Data, Implementation of Curricular Resources, and Virtual Data Walls/rooms
- Supporting coaches with technical assistance (face-to-face or virtual support) which includes but is not limited to coaching conversations centered around the expectations for the 23-24 school year: (Instructional Coaching Tool, Coaching Plans of Support, Tiered System of Support, collaborative planning, observations, and Tier I instructional support plans)
- Conducting weekly ACC Team calibration meetings

- Collecting CSIP Improvement Strategy data from the month of September (data were submitted by coaches on 10/5/23)
- Supporting academic coaches still assigned to classrooms (45-day mandate from DCSD)
- Attending Short-Term Action Plan (STAP) Meetings
- Attending District Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) Meetings

I participated in an October 3 LEA Affiliate Membership Committee feedback session sponsored by the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators (NAESPA) to discuss changes in the conference and potential next steps.

I am a member of the Title I, Part A Committee of Practitioners with the GaDOE. This committee discusses topics related to Title I, upcoming items, and events. We provide feedback for the GaDOE's consideration.

**Ms. Shaun Thompson**  
**Director of Title I, Part A**

- In preparation for the submission of the Completion Reports to GaDOE, a fiscal year closeout meeting with finance was held to ensure that all invoices paid were captured. The reports are due on October 30, 2023.
- In preparation for the official role out of the new school assignments, Title I Coordinators have been collaborating to provide transition plans and best practices to one another to ensure that the move to new schools is seamless. Transitional meetings were held between Coordinators on October 19-20, 2023.
- An updated TouchPoint Workflow was submitted to IT via help desk ticket. We are working with IT to make the requested changes.
- We conducted interviews to fill two coordinator positions. One position was filled, and we will interview again to fill the second position.

**Dr. Sherry Johnson**  
**Director of School Improvement**

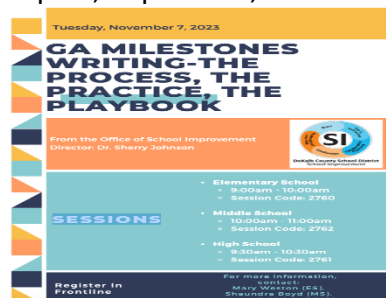
The Office of School Improvement continues collaboration with internal and external partners to align support for identified schools. Please see below for support provided to Horizon Schools for October 2023 in the areas of: (1) special ed, (2) data-driven decision making, (3) Ga Milestones Writing, (5) Science of Reading and (6) academic discourse. This work directly aligns to Horizon Schools' designations from GaDOE and the following MIRACLES tenet: Learning Environments that Support Student Success.

**Retention for New Exceptional Ed Teachers-** Participants from Horizon Schools engaged in Avatar sessions that simulated how to effectively deliver explicit instruction (HLP 16). Participants received peer feedback and reflected on how to address misconceptions that become instructional barriers. For upcoming sessions, participants have requested more support with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for completing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).



## [GA Model Induction-New Teacher Retention Project.pdf](#)

**Leveling Up With Data**- The Office of School Improvement collaborated with The Office of Research, Data and Evaluation during the month of September to provide Horizon School Principals and their Teams with a deep dive into their recently released Ga Milestones Data. The analysis of writing scores from the Ga Milestones revealed an opportunity to increase the ELA content mastery score through more targeted PL. The Office of School Improvement has prepared writing presentations for the November 7<sup>th</sup> district-wide professional learning day. The presentations will include how to utilize the writing checklists and exemplars from GaDOE to plan, implement, and monitor the process of what proficient writing looks like.



**Improving Student Outcomes**- The Office of School Improvement engaged in professional learning on October 18<sup>th</sup> with the GaDOE. The professional learning session was titled “Improving Student Outcomes: Monitoring Student Progress”. The session highlighted how data analysis and reflective teaching practices during collaborative planning are vital components for increasing student mastery. Additionally, the professional learning focused on the frequency of data analysis and characteristics of effective data analysis teams.

[Improving Outcomes Session 10 Monitoring Student Progress-20231018\\_090013-Meeting Recording.mov](#)

**Fall MAP Data Review**- On October 16<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Rebecca Braaten provided an overview of Fall MAP data for the School Improvement Team. The data review highlighted trends in student group performance and content proficiency rates. This data is combined with other data sources helps to guide continuous improvement needs for Horizon Schools.

**Science of Reading**- During the October Principals’ Meeting, School Improvement Professional Learning Facilitator, Mr. William C. Dillard, collaborated with Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator, Dr. Charnita West, to present key elements of The Science of Reading: Components of Oral Language. The session included principals engaging in activities to assess their knowledge from previously completed modules. The Knowledge Building for Leaders: Set the Foundation for Structured Literacy Transformation cohort left the session with a protocol for reflective practices for oral language and written language.

**Reimagining Academic Discourse**- Dr. Karonda Foster-Mitchell, School Improvement PLF, presented “Reimagining Academic Discourse” at the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Georgia Math Conference hosted by the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The session engaged teachers in

situated learning experiences focused on mathematics academic discourse. Utilizing the Daily Discourse Protocol, teachers participated in robust activities that leveraged mathematical literacy to mirror effective instructional practices. DCSD promotes academic discourse as a crucial function to increase literacy and student engagement.

**Dr. Rebecca Braaten**  
**Director of Research, Data and Evaluation**

The fall research approval and denial letters have been sent to all internal and external research proposal applicants.

The department processed eleven (11) electronic online document requests during the month of October. Of those eleven (11), four (4) were online registration/application forms, three (3) were event/training feedback surveys, and four (4) were stakeholder surveys. The electronic online documents were created for the following divisions/departments:

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Leadership Development
- Professional Development
- Accountability and Continuous Improvement
- Grants and Partnerships
- Finance

The department completed the following updates to online data platforms:

- MTSS Specialists have been granted access to Achievement Dashboard in the eduCLIMBER platform. They now have access to data visualizations for attendance, discipline, demographics, and Milestones EOG/EOC.
- Eighteen (18) additional student profiles have been merged to ensure students have only one profile in the eduCLIMBER platform.
- Staff user profiles (1,112) have been merged to ensure staff only have one eduCLIMBER account.
- Fall MAP scores have been loaded into Illuminate DNA and eduCLIMBER.

RDE has started to create start-up charter school profiles. All elementary, middle, and high non-charter school profiles are pending final updates. Those updates include 2024 demographics, 5-year graduation rates, and 2023 CCRPI data once released.

The department has completed nine (9) data and dashboard projects for internal and external stakeholders. These projects include the following types of data: Naglieri (gifted data), ACCESS, and Advanced Placement. In addition, a text analysis was provided for the Stadium Security survey, DCSD school and district leadership lists were prepared for School Leadership for upcoming focus groups, and teachers with associated grade levels were provided to Professional Development.

Two (2) new public-facing dashboards have been created and are being added to the district data dashboard webpage. The dashboards will be located on the School Designations tab: [Title I Awards Schools](#) and [Advanced Placement Awards](#).

During the month of October, RDE provided thirty-seven (37) supplemental services and support to divisions, departments, and schools. Of the thirty-seven (37), fourteen (14) were training, nine (9) were application and technical support, and fourteen (14) were categorized as other miscellaneous support. The support was provided for seven (7) divisions, nine (9) departments, and thirty-one (31) schools.

RDE has shared Fall MAP data with Georgia Policy Labs (GPL). GPL will continue analyzing COVID student learning loss using the new Fall data. RDE has sent all school principals a list of students with the most significant learning loss based on a 3-year analysis done by GPL. The students are color-coded and identified as either in the bottom 30% of the district or in the bottom 30% of the school.

RDE has also compiled a MAP Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 national test percentile learning loss student list. Those files have been added to the GPL file folders so the principals can further identify students with significant learning loss over the prior year.

## **Vacant Director of Assessment Administration**

### **Completed:**

- **ACT/SAT:** In preparation for the **ACT/SAT Day** meeting, Dr. Rhone met with the ACT executives, Lydia Griffin and Ginger Green, on Tuesday, October 24, 2023. They discussed several benefits of offering a school day test administration and the costs associated with the online or paper/pencil test administration. The benefits will be shared with the ACT/SAT Day committee at the next meeting. Both executives are willing to meet with the core committee, executive administrators, principals, and the community when a date has been decided. Dr. Rhone met with the SAT executive, Penny Damianias, on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, to discuss the benefits of an SAT school

day administration. She offered several benefits and will document the benefits for the next core committee meeting. The information will be shared at the November ACT/SAT Day committee meeting.

- **PSAT 8/9; PSAT/NMSQT:** College Board utilized the new digital PSAT 8/9 and digital PSAT/NMSQT for online administration. Two open labs were held for school test coordinators (STC) who were not familiar with the College Board SAT Suite for online testing, particularly middle school test coordinators. Fifty-three STCs participated in the open lab sessions. All STCs were trained and administered the assessments successfully. The **Digital PSAT 8/9 and Digital PSAT/NMSQT Day Administration** concluded on Oct. 12, 2023. Of the 6,450 middle school students registered for the PSAT 8/9, 5,523 participated in the assessment, an 85% participation rate. Of the 7,940 high school students registered for the PSAT/NMSQT, 6,198 students participated in the assessment, a 78% participation rate. There were only four irregularities reported for these assessments.
- **Georgia Milestones End of Course/End of Grade:** The **2023 Georgia Milestone October EOC Mid-Month** assessment was administered Oct. 16-20, 2023. There were seven high schools that participated in the October EOC Mid-Month with 166 high school students being tested. That brings the total number of high school students participating in the 2023 Fall EOC Mid-Month to 801 participants. The last Fall 2023 EOC Mid-Month administration will be Nov. 6-10, 2023. This administration is important for high school students who need the Algebra I EOC or the Coordinate Algebra EOC since this is the final administration of both math EOC assessments as we move to the new Algebra: Concepts and Connections EOC assessment for the 2023 Winter EOC Main Administration in December 2023. Email reminders have been sent to high school test coordinators to make sure that all students who still need the Algebra I EOC or the Coordinate Algebra EOC are registered for the November EOC Mid-Month Administration. There will not be another opportunity to take the Algebra I EOC or the Coordinate Algebra EOC after November 2023. No irregularities reported for the October EOC Mid-Month administration.
- **ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS:** We are in the preparation stages of the **ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Administration**. All elementary, middle, and high school test coordinators (STC) received the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS materials order forms, due October 23, 2023. All order forms have been received and will be entered in the WIDA AMS platform by November 10; state deadline is November 21, 2023. STCs identified their school test examiners who will be responsible for administering the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in January 10-March 1, 2024. All new test examiners for the 2023-2024 school year, along with new school test coordinators, were granted access to the WIDA Secure Portal which allows them to complete the required WIDA ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS course training prior to test administration. Accounts were set up, and access was granted individually to 242 new school test coordinators and new test examiners.



- **NAEP:** School test coordinators of selected schools who will administer the **NAEP Assessment** in January/February 2024 participated in the GaDOE Pre-Assessment NAEP Administration on October 12, 2023, along with Dr. Rhone.
- **CogAT:** The **Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)** window opens on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 and closes on Thursday, November 30, 2023. The CogAT is the second identifier in the Gifted Identification Process. School Test Coordinators (SchTCs) and gifted liaisons were trained on test security and test procedures on Tuesday, August 24<sup>th</sup> during the Gifted Eligibility Workshop. This workshop is a mandatory workshop for all SchTCs administering the CogAT assessment. Following the Gifted Eligibility Workshop, SchTCs were mandated to attend the Riverside Platform Training. This training facilitated by Riverside personnel took SchTCs through the administration platform with an emphasis on session set-up, proctoring, session monitoring, session management and completion and reports/data evaluation.
- **Illuminate/eduCLIMBER:** Professional Development for Illuminate began October 18-19th and October 23-24th. This PD was a virtual professional learning opportunity entitled Illuminate- Two-Day Comprehensive. The sessions guided academic coaches on starting with DnA. It also highlighted building assessments in DnA, mastering data analysis, using reports for classroom teachers, and understanding the student profile report. The Assessment window for **Benchmark 1** opened on September 25th and closed on October 13th for traditional/year-long scheduled schools. The window for block-scheduled high schools taking **Benchmark 2** opened on September 26th and closed on October 16th.
- **NWEA MAP:** The MAP Growth window for Fall closed on September 29th. The NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment is a universal screener that measures student growth and guides teacher instruction. Scores were sent for validation and distribution to families.  
The Fall MAP scores are also used for Gifted Identification. Following the validation, notification was sent home to all students with qualifying MAP scores. These students, if granted permission by the parent or guardian, are then moved to the second phase of Gifted Identification which is the CogAT assessment.  
The MAP Window for School Choice opened on October 9th and closed on October 13th. Students who are home-schooled or attending private school tested at Elizabeth Andrews tested during this cycle. The next School Choice window will run from November 9th to November 14th, with official testing on Saturday, November 11th. The Winter MAP window will begin December 4th through February 9th.
- School visits with Horizon Schools began on October 17th at Peachcrest Elementary & Salem Middle. The remaining schools visited this month are as follows:
  - October 18 Stone Mt Elem & Bethune
  - October 24 Oak View & Stone Mill
  - October 25 Towers & Woodridge
  - October 26 Stoneview & McNair Middle
- The remaining visits for this semester will begin on November 1st. The visits are scheduled as follows:

- November 1 Pine Ridge & Flat Shoals
- November 9 Flat Rock & Panola Way
- November 10 McNair Discovery & Fairington
- November 29 McNair HS & Dresden Elem
- November 30 Browns Mill & Cross Keys

## **November/December**

### **Follow-up Tasks**

- Conduct the following trainings with school test coordinators:
  - Winter Georgia Milestone EOC Administration Workshop (High School Test Coordinators)
  - Managing Your School During Testing (New School Test Coordinators)
  - MAP – Applying Reports for Leaders (New School Test Coordinators)
  - GAA 2.0 Overview and Eligibility Workshop
  - ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Workshop (All School Test Coordinators)
  - Adding the Final Touches to Your School Testing Plan (New School Test Coordinators)
- Enter ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test material orders in WIDA AMS platform for each school participating in the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs administration by November 10, 2023.
- Meet with schools who had a low participation rate for the 2022-2023 ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs (Peachtree Middle School, Stone Mountain High School, and Tucker High School) on November 7-8, 2023. Mr. Greg Wickersham, EL Coordinator and Dr. Rhone will meet with the STCs of these schools.
- During the week of November 27, 2023, conduct follow-up school visits/observations of new test coordinators and test coordinators who need additional support developing their school assessment plan, particularly high schools that will participate in the Georgia Milestone 2023 Winter Main Administration. Provide feedback using the Assessment Monitoring Feedback form.
- Reminder emails will be sent to STC coordinators concerning:
  - Final administration of the Algebra I EOC and the Coordinate Algebra EOC.
  - Upcoming assessment workshops

**Ms. Stacy E. Stepney  
Chief Academic Officer**

**Early Learning Center Expansion Classes:**

The focus of the Early Learning Center (ELC) is to provide a learning environment that nurtures healthy emotional, social, cognitive, and physical growth and development. At the Early Learning Center, children begin the process of becoming readers, writers, listeners, and speakers. Students learn in whole groups, small groups, and have free choice activities during each school day. The students also receive an introduction to visual arts, music, and dance.

This program is offered to 3-year-olds and is the beginning of the student's education within the DeKalb County School District. Preschool-3 focuses on hands-on learning, exploration, creativity, literacy, writing, math, and social and emotional development. The goal is to establish habits of learning while teaching a curriculum that is vibrant and engaging for young minds. Students will experience instructional activities that include a hierarchy of skills and objectives to cultivate all areas of their development. Art, Movement (Dance, Free Expression, and Dramatic Play), Music, and Library time will be embedded into the weekly schedule.

The target date to launch Early Learning Center expansion classes at the following schools is January 8, 2024:

1. John Lewis Elementary School, District 2 (**Note:** Shares attendance area with District 4)
2. Briar Vista Elementary School (Montessori), District 2
3. Marbut Theme Elementary School, District 7 (**Note:** Shares attendance area with Districts 5 & 6)
4. Princeton Elementary School, District 6
5. Indian Creek Elementary School, District 7 (Note: Shares attendance area with District 2)
6. Rainbow Elementary School, District 5
7. Peachcrest Elementary School, District 3 (**Note:** Shares attendance area with Districts 2 & 7)
8. Austin Elementary School, District 1
9. Rockbridge Elementary School, District 6 (**Note:** Shares attendance area with District 7)
10. Smoke Rise Elementary School, District 4

The furniture will be delivered and installed December 19-22 and 27-29, 2023. Each classroom will be set-up according to the specifications in preparation for the opening of classes.

**Elizabeth Andrews High School Support:**

To support staff at Elizabeth Andrews High School, I partnered with Champion Dillard and Dr. Weaver to schedule a meeting on Wednesday, October 4, 2023. During the meeting, we discussed the laws and policies that outline enrollment age requirements for general education, special education, immigrant, refugee, and migrant students. Also, we discussed strategies to increase the enrollment at Elizabeth Andrews High School by collaborating with all high schools, revising the scheduling model to offer credit acceleration, and exploring transportation options.

**Retention Incentive Pep Rally:**

The DeKalb County School District deployed central office staff members to visit schools on Friday, October 6, 2023. Our team visited Oak Grove Elementary School, Laurel Ridge High School, Druid Hills Middle School, and Druid Hills High School. We thanked all staff members for their dedication and commitment to serving the students and families in the DeKalb County School District.

**Global Village Program Collaborative Meeting:**



Representatives from the Global Village Program requested a meeting to discuss options for immigrant and refugee students who are beyond the enrollment age defined by law. On Thursday, October 12, 2023, we met and discussed the laws and policies that outline enrollment age requirements. The Global Village Program will partner with DCSD when the night school program launches second semester to host informational sessions in the community.

#### **Dual Language Immersion Town Hall:**

On Thursday, October 19, 2023, the Teaching and Learning Department in collaboration with the DLI principals and teachers hosted a joint town hall meeting for the parents/guardians of students currently enrolled in one of the dual language programs and interested families. DLI principals and teachers provided school-specific information during the breakout sessions for parents/guardians.

#### **Support for Intellectual Disabilities (ID) Classroom Staff:**

In partnership with Dr. Norman Sauce, Area Superintendent for High Schools, the Department of Exceptional Education met to discuss the support needed for ID teachers in the areas of scheduling, teaching standards, utilizing instructional resources, and reviewing IEPs for transfer students.

#### **AVID Showcase:**

Palmer Middle School in Cobb County hosted an AVID Showcase on Tuesday, October 24, 2023. DeKalb's leaders attended classes, observed the during the day tutoring class in partnership with Kennesaw State University, met with AVID students, and witnessed firsthand the WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading) strategies being implemented.

#### **Shadowbox Studios:**

On October 26, 2023, students from McNair High School visited Shadowbox Studios. To support McNair High School, members of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction joined Superintendent Dr. Horton, Champion Dillard, Dr. Williamson, and Mr. Palmer for the lunch and learn opportunity. During the visit, students were exposed to the "behind the scenes" work performed by a production assistant including lighting, sound, and walkie talkie etiquette to name a few areas.

#### **Tri-Learning Tuesday Meetings:**

Dr. Mitchell, Champion Dillard, and I met weekly to ensure that our divisions are providing the necessary support for schools. We discussed the implementation of Wonders and

MyView, new K-12 math standards, assessments, professional learning, tutoring initiatives, Reality Checks, and data this month.

### **Horizon Schools Meeting:**

The cross-divisional team met twice this month to discuss and align the support provided to Horizon Schools. The literacy and numeracy support plans were revised to include the specific strategies in literacy and math that will be modeled in grades three and five in November and December. In mathematics, the strategies include CRA (concrete, representational, and abstract) instructional sequence and questioning and feedback. The specific reading strategies include Elkonin boxes and Phoneme-grapheme mapping. The writing strategy is the POW strategy (pick ideas, organize notes, and write more).

### **Town Hall Meetings:**

We have attended the town hall meetings hosted by Mrs. McGinniss and Mrs. Pierce to address questions from our stakeholders pertaining to the new math standards, services for students with disabilities, strategies to support English Learners, budget allocation for English learners, strategies to improve outcomes for all learners, counseling services, and the school calendar.

### **Dr. Lenisera Barnes-Bodison Executive Director (Curriculum and Instruction)**

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction is supporting the Elementary Principals Learning Opportunity to meet the expectations of HB538 - Georgia Early Literacy Act. Our ultimate goal is to ensure our building leaders are equipped with the knowledge to lead the change required for rigorous aligned instruction for structured literacy. Elementary leaders will participate in four District Collaborative Calibration sessions led by district coordinators to consolidate lessons learned from the virtual Rollins Center/Cox Campus PLCs.

### **In preparation for the District Collaborative Calibration Session One on October 19, 2023, leaders were informed to**

1. Complete the Science of Reading Overview and Oral Language Module.
2. Complete the Assessment for the Science of Reading Overview and Oral Language Module.
3. Visit classrooms of teachers who are participating in the LETRS training and make note of any noticings and wonderings as it relates to structured literacy and module one.
4. Visit classrooms of teachers who are currently in the Reading Endorsement Program or already have the endorsement and make note of any noticings and wonderings as it relates to structured literacy and module 1.

### Professional Learning Schedule

Date	Session	Location
September 22, 2023	Orientation Session	Pre-Recorded
September 25, 2023	Science of Reading Overview and Oral Language	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
<b>October 19, 2023</b>	<b>District Collaborative Calibration Session I</b>	<b>AIC</b>
October 30, 2023	Early Literacy	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
November 27, 2023	Phonics	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
<b>December 7, 2023</b>	<b>District Collaborative Calibration Session II</b>	<b>AIC or Microsoft Teams</b>
January 29, 2024	Reading Fluency & RTI	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
February 29, 2024	Reading Comprehension	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
<b>March 21, 2024</b>	<b>District Collaborative Calibration Session III</b>	<b>AIC or Microsoft Teams</b>
March 25, 2024	Vocabulary Instruction	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
April 22, 2024	Structured Literacy Assessment and Instruction	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
June 3, 2024	Writing	Cox Campus Virtual PLC
<b>June 11, 2024</b>	<b>District Collaborative Calibration Session IV</b>	<b>AIC or Microsoft Teams</b>

### Facilitators of District Collaborative Calibration Sessions

Facilitator(s)		Area Superintendent	
Dr. Jeffery Dillard	Dr. Lynn Angus Ramos	Area I	Mrs. Melanie Pearch
Dr. John Hruby	Woodsen Plummer	Area II	Mr. Trenton Arnold
Kanessa Fain	Dr. Felicia Wynter	Area III	Mrs. Ateshia Lester
William Dillard	Dr. Charnita West	Horizon	Dr. Triscilla Weaver
Kristen Drake	LaShawn White	Specialty	Dr. Michelle Jones

### Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (GCTM) Annual Conference

The annual GCTM conference hosted at Rock Eagle allows for teachers and leaders across the state of Georgia to attend professional development to promote high quality mathematics education for all students. The DeKalb County School District presented three

presentations led by the Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction, K-12 math coordinators, Professional Learning Facilitators, and cadre member at GCTM to encourage an active interest in mathematics education at all levels.

### **Session 1: A Roadmap to Interdisciplinary Teaching for Elementary Grades K-5**

Facilitated by: Dr. Lenisera Barnes-Bodison and Mrs. Michelle Bateman

The session focused on providing an experience of endless possibilities for how teachers can provide interdisciplinary challenges to students that connect to career opportunities and Computer Science.

### **Session 2: Unleashing the Power of Feedback to Transform Math Teaching and Learning**

Facilitated by: Ms. Tiffany Dillard and Ms. Lateisha Andrews

The session focused on the research of John Hattie and Helen Timperley. Participants learned about three types of feedback approaches: feed-up, feedback, and feed-forward.

### **Session 3: Mathematics Modeling using 3-Act Tasks**

Facilitated by: Mrs. Angela Leach and Ms. Robbi Brown of Rock Chapel Elementary

The session focused on how to analyze a mathematical representation of a real-world scenario to make predictions through completing a 3-Act Task.

### **Summer Learning Programs 2024**

Preparations are underway for successful implementation of summer programs for students grades K-12. There have been a series of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis meetings to learn of ways to strengthen program services and leverage areas that are highlights for our students and families.

- August 21, 2023 – SWOT Analysis After-Action Review Meeting with Federal Programs, Finance, and Curriculum & Instruction (10 attendees)
  - Focus: Standard Operating Procedures for ESSER Approval Process, Payroll, and Time/Attendance
- August 25, 2023 – Rate of Pay Meeting (14 attendees)
  - Focus: Increase Rate of Pay for Summer Employees
- October 12, 2023 – SWOT Analysis After-Action Review Meeting with Summer Learning Programs District-wide Committee (40 attendees)
  - Focus: Summer Learning Programs Pre-Approval Process, Summer Learning Programs Committee Meeting Dates, and Standard Operating Procedures Presentation Schedule

**Mrs. Lummie Baker**

**Director, Educational Media and Instructional Materials**

**Adoption and Purchase of Instructional Resources:**

The Department of Educational Media and Instructional Materials is pleased to announce that the Requests for Solicitation have been submitted to and received by the Finance Department. Upon review of the four (4) submitted solicitations, solicitation kick-off meeting will be scheduled to create a timeline for the scope of work.

Area/Content/Program	Grade Levels
English Language Arts	6-12
Visual and Performing Arts	K-12
World Languages	K-12
EL Lab Program/Intensive English	4-12

**Professional Learning:**

A variety of professional learning opportunities are provided for both teacher-librarians (TLs) and library media assistants (LMAs) throughout the year to increase program knowledge, skills, and innovative practices to elevate student learning experiences through the library space, resources, and services. Additionally, TLs, in conjunction with classroom teachers and Digital Learning Teams, are expected to provide digital citizenship and copyright lessons to students to promote Cyber Safety Awareness.

Date	Session	Audience	Delivery
October 10, 2023	Open Office Hours - Allotment and Ordering Q&A	TLs	Microsoft Teams
October 12, 2023	Ignite Student Learning through Partnership with DeKalb County Public Library	TLs and LMAs	Microsoft Teams
October 16-20, 2023	Digital Citizenship Week	TLs and LMAs	Locally at each school
October 24-26, 2023	Cluster Meetings -	TLs	Robert Shaw Theme ES Hawthorne ES Canby Lane ES Stone Mountain MS Clarkston HS

**Dr. Evelyn Hall**  
**Director, EL Studies**

**New Interpreters:**

The English Learners Department is pleased to announce the hiring of five new interpreters:

- Three Spanish speaking interpreters will support Areas 1 and 2, middle schools, and high schools.
- One Karen interpreter will support Area 2.
- One Dari/Pashto interpreter will support Area 2, middle schools, high schools, and Specialty Schools (International Student Center).

### **Professional Learning:**

The EL Department is providing ongoing professional learning for teachers to improve instructional practices that support academic progress and achievement of English learners. Professional learning offerings include the following:

- **Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol** - These engaging opportunities allow participants to gain valuable instructional strategies to make content comprehensible for English learners as they develop academic English in the content areas.
- **Teaching and Supporting Intensive English Students (Virtual Book Study)** - The book *Teaching and Supporting English Learners: A Guide to Welcoming and Engaging Newcomers* provides guidance to teachers in welcoming and engaging newcomers in the classroom.
- **Strategies for Unlocking English Learners' Potential (Virtual EL Book Study)** - The focus of this book study is to support teachers of English learners with evidence-based strategies that focus on language development, academic discourse, and advocacy.
- **Cultural Awareness** - To meet the needs of our culturally and linguistically diverse population, this session provides all staff the opportunity to explore topics of culture and discuss strategies for working with our students and families.

**Mrs. Doryiane Gunter**  
**Director, CTAE**

### **College and Career Visits:**

The CTAE team visited four College and Career Academies in metro area school districts. The team was able to connect with teachers, administrators, and students at Innovation Academy (Fulton County), Alliance Academy for Innovation (Forsyth County), Lanier College and Career Academy (Hall), Gainesville High School. This opportunity was aligned with Improving the Instructional Core of our CTAE Programs and ensuring that we have a Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study.

### **\*\*\*STE(A)M Expanded Learning Opportunity:**

Ms. Andrea Wright, DCSD STE(A)M Coordinator, and Ms. Michelle Autrey, teacher from Stone Mountain Middle School, participated in a 10-day "School of Rock" Expedition on the JOIEDES Resolution ship. The team was invited to serve with a delegation of 20 educators from across the country. The expedition started in Iceland, where the team



evaluated Geothermal and Natural influences. While on the ship, Ms. Wright and Ms. Autrey conducted research with scientists to look at the impact of climate change on the environment. They also analyzed core samples that were extracted from the ocean. There were three learning opportunities provided for students during the expedition:

1. A group of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students were provided with a tour of the ship and introduced to the initial findings of the research during a Zoom session on Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, during their class time. Ms. Wright facilitated the learning session.
2. A second 6<sup>th</sup> grade class was taught an Earth Science lesson from the ship using the artifacts and findings on Geothermal influences. Ms. Autrey facilitated the lesson via Zoom on Thursday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, during their class time.
3. A group of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders from DESA (future STEAM school) followed Ms. Wright's daily journey using Twitter. The class is currently writing a story to journal Ms. Wright's expedition using the daily Tweets.

The expedition ended in Amsterdam with the team evaluating the innovation that the city is using in Agriculture, Geology, and other sciences. These two educators are excited and ready to share their learning with other STE(A)M teachers and administrators at the November STE(A)M Lead meeting and the November 7<sup>th</sup> Professional Learning Day.

**Dr. Kimberlynn Weston**  
**Director, Pre-K-12 Teaching and Learning**

**Master Teacher Cadre:**

Under the direction of the District Mathematics team, Mathematics cadre members conducted a Super Saturday professional learning day on Saturday, October 14, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. One hundred and forty-eight (148) teachers participated representing all grade levels and areas. Participants focus on the Independent Learning Plans from the Georgia Department of Education to understand what students are to know and be able to do within each unit.

The English language arts cadre team hosted their Super Saturday professional learning day on Saturday, October 28, 2023. One hundred sixty-nine teachers pre-registered for the training that was held from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Like mathematics, teachers were grouped by grade bands to focus on the five components of structured literacy. Early grade levels focused on phonics and morphology strategies while upper elementary and secondary focused on vocabulary, fluency, and writing strategies.

**Governor's Honors Program (GHP)** – Two hundred and thirty (230) high school students have been invited to participate in district-level GHP interviews. Student interviews will conclude on November 3. District nominees will be submitted to the state on November 14, 2023.

**Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Townhall** – The Department of Teaching and Learning hosted its first DLI Townhall for current and prospective parents in the DLI programs on

October 19, 2023. Community members learned more about what it means to be in the DLI program and about the specific schools that offer this opportunity. The first half of the virtual meeting covered general topics, such as what is DLI, what are the benefits, course sequencing K-12, and what proficiency means and how its measured. The second half of the virtual meeting included school-based breakout rooms with the school teams, including the DLI Principal and DLI teachers. In these school rooms, the teams will discuss a day in the life of a DLI student, school expectations, and what to expect from the program.

**International Baccalaureate (IB) Evaluation Visits** – Salem Middle School hosted its IB evaluation on October 25, 2023. During this evaluation meeting DCSD Governing Body members (Dr. Weaver, Champion Dillard, Ms. Stepney, Dr. Rowe, Dr. Barnes-Bodison, Dr. Weston, and Dr. Donovan) shared their insights about the implementation of IB MYP (Middle Years Programme) at Salem Middle School and answered questions about the district’s role in supporting the school’s implementation.

**Mrs. Michele Summerlin**  
**Executive Director (Special Education/504/GLRS/GNETS)**

**\*\*\*Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities Subgroup:**

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Students with Disabilities Subgroup					
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
44.25%	46.48%	54.6%	57.8%	60.3%	62.63%

Over the past six years, the four-year cohort graduation rate for DeKalb County School District’s special education subgroup has increased by 18.38% percentage points. There has been a consecutive annual gain for this subgroup. The Department of Exceptional Education will continue to partner with schools to provide intensive instructional support to enhance the professional growth of school level staff leading to successful outcomes for all students. The Department of Exceptional Education will continue to collaborate with district and school leaders to offer ongoing professional learning in the areas of High Leverage Practices in Special Education, Specially Designed Instruction, Co-Teaching and Co-Planning, Behavior/Classroom Management, Progress Monitoring, Data Collection, and IEP Compliance.

**Section 504:**

The District's Section 504 team is dedicated to providing high quality professional learning for 504 chairpersons who lead efforts that ensure access and equity for students in their respective schools. As such, Attorney Dave Richards was invited to facilitate an engaging PL session for 504 chairpersons focusing on a deeper understanding of the federal law that guides this work- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This exceptional learning opportunity took place on October 19, 2023, from 9:00am-2:00pm. The evaluation responses were overwhelmingly positive!

**Ms. Lila Brown**  
**Director, GNETS**

**Collaborative Partnerships:**

GNETS teachers will participate in collaborative planning monthly with DECA and Freedom Middle School. Teachers will attend sessions on a rotational basis once a month. This partnership will allow GNETS teachers to collaborate with traditional and non-traditional schools with similar academic needs. Many of our teachers are 0-3 years and will have the opportunity to share ideas for effective classroom instruction. In addition, DECA and Freedom MS will collaborate with GNETS staff regarding behavioral strategies to use in their school settings.

**KUD-Learning Targets PL:**

On Monday, October 23, 2023, GNETS Teachers and Paraprofessionals participated in a professional learning session on KUD- Learning Targets. The session was facilitated by Ms. Armstrong with the Specialty Area. Teachers and paraprofessionals were provided resources on identifying learning targets and success criteria in a collaborative setting. Resources such as GA Inspire and GADOE Milestones Study Guides were shared with staff to use with their content areas. Staff thoroughly enjoyed this session as it provided an alignment focus with the curriculum and hands on activities to assist teachers with accessing the content. The next session with Ms. Armstrong will take place in January 2024.

**Ms. Terri Jenkins**  
**Director, GLRS**

**Support for TSI Schools:**

In alignment with the District Plan of Support submitted to the Georgia Department of Education and GADOE priorities for GLRS, GLRS personnel are assisting with the development and delivery of targeted instructional support for special education teachers with 0-3 years of experience. The professional learning and technical assistance sessions, funded by the Georgia Department of Education through IDEA funding, are designed to

support numeracy and literacy as determined by individual student profiles. In addition, GLRS is assisting with observation and coaching.

The targeted schools are TSI schools.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Face-to-Face Training at GLRS</b> <i>All sessions will be from 4:30 – 6:30.</i>	<b>Mixed Reality Session</b>
HLP#7	Monday, August 28, 2023	Monday, September 18, 2023
HLP #16	Monday, September 25, 2023	Monday, October 16, 2023
IEP Components	Monday, October 30, 2023	Monday, November 13, 2023

**\*\* HLP = High Leverage Practice**

**GLRS/GNETS Collaboration**

GLRS continues the support of Rockdale-DeKalb GNETS center teachers and paraprofessionals in transition settings by providing professional learning in the area of literacy. Sessions will take place every other month focusing on vocabulary, reading informational text, inductive thinking, and reading literary text. Staff will meet from 2:30 pm- 3:30 pm at Eagle Woods Academy.

**Mrs. Kiana King**  
**Director, Special Education**

**Teacher Retention Initiative:**

The Special Education Department is continuing to focus on increasing the retention rate of new special education teachers with 0-3 years of experience. The Special Education Teacher Academy (SETA) offers monthly targeted professional development opportunities that include evidence based instructional practices that are known to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. In the months of September and October, over 80 teachers participated in our academy sessions focusing on progress monitoring, data collection, effective lesson planning, and student grouping.

**Professional Development Opportunities offered for all schools (October)**

- Provided Symphony Math Training and Technical Assistance Sessions for teachers
- Facilitated monthly Special Education Teacher Academy
- Facilitated Lexia Training and Technical Assistance Sessions for teachers
- Delivered Co-teaching and Co-planning Training for Special Ed and General Ed Teachers
- Conducted Co-Teaching Learning Walks/ Feedback to follow Co-teaching Training

- Facilitated individual teacher training-Developing a Compliant Individualized Education Program (IEP)

**Incarcerated Youth Program (Auditor Visit-October 16, 2023)**

As a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), school districts must provide services for all students K-12 including those students located in a non-traditional setting. The special education department serves incarcerated youth in the DeKalb County Jail and has developed programming to not only allow the student inmates to make progress on IEP goals and objectives but the program also allows the opportunity to participate in credit bearing courses utilizing the APEX online platform. In October, the jail auditor scheduled a site visit to review the program implementation and to determine compliance with individualized student needs. The visit allowed counsel, jail staff and special education leaders to collaborate on next steps regarding procedural compliance, location of services and to discuss the most appropriate service delivery models.

**Parent Mentor Collaboration with Family Engagement**

The Department of Exceptional Education is excited to partner with the department of Family Engagement to film short mini segments with parents of students with disabilities and District staff detailing the vast array of services available to support students and families. The first segment will be recorded and aired in the month of November.

**Dr. Sean Tartt  
Portrait of a Graduate**

**Academic Skills Centers:**

During the October 16th Board Meeting, both internal and external stakeholders were provided a detailed overview about Academic Skills Centers during the Committee of the Whole. Collaborative sessions were held with Board Members, Horizon Principals, MTSS, Operations, Human Resources, and Information and Instructional Technology to identify support needed, answer questions, and identify next steps. Presently, we are partnering with Human Resources and the Area Superintendent for Horizon schools to post positions.

Topic	Dates	Collaborative Partners
Overview of Academic Skills Centers during the Committee of the Whole	October 16, 2023	Federal Programs Operations DIIT Human Resources

Operations Support	October 20, 2023 November 2, 2023	Operations
Development of Progress Monitoring Framework and Data Collection	October 10, 2023 October 17, 2023 October 24, 2023	MTSS Coordinators and MTSS District Specialist
Overview with Horizon MTSS	October 20, 2023	MTSS Coordinators, MTSS District Specialist, and MTSS Specialists
Mini Sessions with the Board Members	October 23, 2023 October 24, 2023 October 27, 2023	Board Member Superintendent Chief Academic Officer

**AVID Showcase:**

Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, members of the DCSD team had the opportunity to participate in an AVID showcase at Palmer Middle School in Cobb County. The DCSD team included two members from Curriculum and Instruction, two Area Superintendents, and three Area Executive Administrators who collaborated with administrators from all over metro Atlanta. At the showcase, the team heard from central office staff, Palmer Middle School staff and students, listened to a panel discussion, collaborated with AVID student leaders, and engaged in meaningful classroom observations about AVID implementation.

**Ms. Kanessa Fain and Dr. Scott McManus  
MTSS Coordinator IIs**

The MTSS Specialists have worked diligently during the month of October to support students and staff at their schools. Their efforts include but are not limited to:

- Elementary MTSS Specialists have attended Istation Virtual Office Hours as well as a face-to-face professional learning regarding the dyslexia screening for K-3 students. The PL consisted of running data reports for the Beginning of the Year (BOY) screening for the ISIP and learning how to use this data to support teachers with identifying student supports at Tier 1, Tier 2, and/or Tier 3.
- Certain MTSS Specialists were chosen to be a part of a District Focus Group. This team of identified MTSS Specialists participated in EduClimber training in a “train the trainer” model. MTSS Specialists identified for this Focus Group will be lead trainers for all of the MTSS Specialists in their Areas for EduClimber.



- MTSS Specialists attended face to face professional learning on October 20, 2023 regarding the data dig in EduClimber, tagging students in EduClimber, and standard operating procedures in MTSS and Istation.
- The MTSS Team created a Monthly Fidelity Rubric to be used for all schools starting in January 2023. Training on the rubric will occur in November 2023.
- Efficacy and MTSS Support meetings for high schools started in the month of October and will continue for each high school. A plan of action is being executed for each high school to implement MTSS with fidelity.
- Weekly Check In/Check Out emails for all MTSS Specialists are being completed on Mondays (check in) and Fridays (check out).
- Daily MTSS support to schools is occurring by the district MTSS Coordinators as well as the district MTSS Specialist.

**Mrs. Janetta Greenwood**  
**Director, Fernbank**

**Single Visits and Outreach:**

Fernbank Science Center is continuing to provide planetarium visits, single visits, and outreach in science across the district. In the month of October, the Science Center served 21,450 DCSD students in grades PreK-12. Currently 11,618 DCSD students have participated in single visit programming, 6,895 DCSD students have participated in outreach programming, and 2,937 DCSD students have participated in planetarium visits.

DCSD Early Learning Center four-year-old scholars attended ScienToTs this month with learning focused on recognizing patterns/characteristics between living and nonliving things. Students had the opportunity to engage in science experiential learning opportunities specifically designed for PreK students.

**Professional Learning Opportunities:**

On October 27, 2023, Fernbank Science Center hosted the School Master Gardner professional development for identified schools. The professional development was designed to support teachers in using outdoor experiential learning to increase learning outcomes in science. Teachers from across the district engaged in learning about composting, botany and plant physiology, and participated in an outdoor learning walk in the Fernbank Forest located behind the Science Center.

**Special Events at Fernbank Science Center:**

Fernbank Science Center hosted OctoberFest on October 14, 2023. Teachers, students, and parents had the opportunity to participate in Chemistry Day as well as learn about and view the Annular Eclipse scheduled for that day. There were approximately 2,500 – 3,000 visitors to the center on that day. Visitors got the extraordinary opportunity to view the phenomenon of a partial Annular eclipse through our telescopes and eclipse viewers. There were a variety of free hands-on learning activities such as Storytime at FSC with our Media Center department, chemistry magic show, solar eclipse art design, and planetarium shows to engage the public during this community event. Student volunteers from our Scientific Tools and Techniques (STT) program supported the event and facilitated the various activities in collaboration with Fernbank Instructional Specialists and Staff. In addition, Fernbank partnered with Agnes Scott College Student Affiliate of the American Chemical Society and Georgia Gwinnett College Student Affiliate of the American Chemical Society to provide volunteers to facilitate additional learning experiences for students and the community.

Fernbank Science Center hosted Spooky Science at the Science Center on Saturday, October 28, 2023, to showcase the magic of science and real-world relevance. DCSD employees, students, parents, and all stakeholders were invited to attend and enjoy a variety of fun science activities. Participants had the opportunity to engage in a variety of free hands-on instructionally driven activities aligned to state science standards to support science engagement across the district. Activities targeted grades and standards in PreK-6, but all ages were able to attend. To promote STEM career awareness, we encouraged attendees to wear science inspired costumes for a chance of winning our costume contest.

**Dr. Zack Phillips**  
**Director, Early Learning Center**

Pre-K students at the Early Learning Center continued the successful ScienceTots program via a partnership with the Fernbank Science Center. Students were exposed to the attributes of living and non-living things and emulated being a paleontologist in one of the hands-on activities. The ongoing partnership with the Georgia United Credit Union to teach and expose students on the foundational principals in financial literacy is in Year 2, and the ongoing planning phase has started at the school-level to top last year's successful kick-off.

**Professional Learning**

The staff at the ELC continued facilitating the next chapter within their Educator's Bandwidth book study. Also, the staff continued their PLC work with their Unit

Enhancement Process for effective deployment of research-based instructional practices via assigned performance tasks and alignment of standards.

**Special Event:**

The administration team and staff at the ELC hosted the Executive Leadership Team from the Griffin Spaulding School System on Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. The focus of the visit was to understand the ELC's instructional framework, expectations, non-negotiables, processes, procedures, wraparound supports, counseling services, and funding sources. Griffin Spaulding School System is researching how they want to launch their Early Learning Center in the future.

**Ms. Ketra Wright**  
**Director, FLEX Academy**

**Exceptional Education/EL Support:**

In conjunction with FEV Tutor, FLEX Academy students with IEPs and/or EL accommodations are scheduled for 1:1 tutorial sessions weekly. These sessions provide support aligned with the students' course schedule as well as assistance with basic skills as needed. The FEV Tutor is also available for students without documented accommodations by request. The tutorial sessions are scheduled for thirty minutes to one hour depending on need.

**FLEX Academy Restore:**

In order to support the district's goal of improving the graduation rate, FLEX Academy has enrolled 201 students into FLEX Restore. These students will earn credits in courses in which they were previously unsuccessful. These students have an opportunity to receive support from instructional staff to assist with asynchronous instruction via weekly tutorial sessions.

**FLEX Academy *What I Need (WIN) Wednesdays:***

FLEX Academy provides weekly social emotional learning modules to students taking all classes virtually. Additionally, FLEX Academy provided the following college and career readiness sessions this month:

- October 18, 2023 - Virtual College Tour Georgia Piedmont Technical College – Linsey Walker, Admissions Counselor
- October 25, 2023 - Ga Futures enrollment and guided tour

**Apex Content Support:**

FLEX Academy continues to support DCSD by providing digital content to middle and high schools to assist with teacher shortages. FLEX Academy has provided professional

learning and virtual open labs to assist schools with using the school district’s learning management system, Canvas, to access Apex content.

<b>Apex Virtual Open Lab Dates</b>	
<b>10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.</b>	
October 6, 2023	October 13, 2023
October 20, 2023	October 27, 2023

**Dr. Kishia Towns**  
**Chief of Wrap Around Services**

The month of October has been a very productive month of student achievements through the resources and support provided by the Division of Equity and Student Empowerment. The team has had the opportunity to assist students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders by creating informational videos, Medicaid campaign, social emotional learning, town hall meetings, and the opening of a SAFE Center. The Division of Equity and Student Empowerment will continue to deliver wrap around support throughout the district.

**“L” is for Learning Environments that Support Students Success**

The MIRACLES Tenets Video for the MIRACLE Tenet “L” Learning Environments that Support Students Success was recorded to share wonderful efforts the Division of Equity and Student Empowerment makes to provide resources and supports for the DCSD students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders. MIRACLES is a continuous improvement framework designed to help DeKalb County School District and school leaders address and shift policies, practices, and expectations within its schools and facilities. The Division of Equity and Student Empowerment departments includes Student Advancement, Student Relations, and Student Support. Some of the programs that are executed that align with the tenet are Social Emotional Learning, Restorative Practices, Sources of Strength Suicide Prevention Training, and Not a Number Human Trafficking Prevention curriculum. The staff members are trained on crisis response, fostering resiliency in children and adolescents, de-escalation, and a host of other topics relevant to 21st century students.

### **EveryDay Labs Attendance Intervention**

On October 16, 2023, during the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) Board of Education (BOE) meeting, EveryDay Labs Attendance Intervention was approved by the DCSD BOE. EveryDay Labs will be implemented to reduce chronic absenteeism while providing more equitable access to information and resources related to attendance and fostering a culture of success for students, families, and educators.

EveryDay Labs is a web-based platform that provides real time analysis of attendance trends and patterns at the district, school, and student level. With easy-to-understand data cuts and visualizations, this powerful tool allows attendance and MTSS teams to identify and target interventions aligned to systemic and individual attendance barriers. Paired with the professional learning, practitioners will be able to use real-time district data to further develop their teams and intervention strategies.

### **Town Hall Meetings**

Town Hall meetings have been scheduled throughout the month of October. The Division of Equity and Student Empowerment has played an active role in addressing various questions and concerns in the Druid Hills, Cross Keys, Cedar Grove, McNair, and Columbia clusters. Many of the questions focused on post-secondary options, social emotional supports, food, and clothing resources, the DCSD Code of Student Conduct, and other topics relative to the assistance provided by our division.

### **Dream it! Believe it! Achieve it! Corner**

The students, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders collaborate daily to ensure our students can achieve their dreams while providing a safe, positive, and culturally responsive learning environment. This corner is here to brag on all the wonderful activities happening in DeKalb schools that are aligned to the efforts of the Division of Equity and Student Empowerment.

### **Be THE Voice® at Chapel Hill MS and Sequoyah MS**

Chapel Hill Middle School and Sequoyah Middle School sponsored the Be THE Voice® Kickoff. Be THE Voice® provides K-12 schools with a truly innovative approach to supporting the social and emotional well-being of our young people. It is a peer-driven platform that inspires students to 'Do what is right, not what is easy', by equipping them with the

interpersonal skills to become a “voice” of kindness and inclusion within their schools and communities.



Bullying Awareness and Prevention at Pine Ride ES and Stephenson HS  
 Pine Ridge Elementary School is making its mark in eradicating bullying and drug use. The staff is hosting a week of events about bullying and drug awareness and prevention. Stephenson High School participated in “Orange Out” for Bullying Awareness and Prevention Month.

### Red Ribbon Week

**OCTOBER 23-27 2023**

<b>MON 23</b>	<b>BEING DRUG FREE IS NO SWEAT</b> Students/Staff will wear their favorite sweat bands, sweatshirts, or sweatsocks. During the morning announcements students will recite the drug free pledge. While in class students will watch Red Ribbon Week music videos and begin decorating class pins for the Red Ribbon Week banner.
<b>TUES 24</b>	<b>WE'RE TOO BRIGHT FOR DRUGS AND BULLYING</b> Students/Staff will wear their favorite pair of sunglasses. Students will begin displaying their decorated paw prints on the banner that will be located on the cross of the school.
<b>WED 25</b>	<b>TEAM UP AGAINST DRUGS</b> Students/Staff wear their favorite sports team jersey off their shirt. If wearing pants, remember no rips, or tears. Students in grades three through five will participate in a coloring contest while students in grades 3-5 will participate in a skit/drama/creative activity.
<b>THUR 26</b>	<b>IT'S CRAZY TO DO DRUGS AND BULLY</b> Students/Staff will dress in their "crazy" clothes. It can be funny clothing and/or crazy socks or "helter skelter". Students will prepare banners about family or drugs to represent their views during the assembly. Students will make a video or post about story on YouTube.
<b>FRI 27</b>	<b>RALLY IN RED</b> Students/Staff will wear the Red Ribbon Week shirts with colorful, happy patterns. Banners will be displayed. Students from Stephenson High School will come down for the parade. The Parade at 9:30 am. Cash prizes will go to the 10th grade. The parade will begin at 10:00 am. The parade will end at 11:00 am. The parade will end at 11:00 am. The parade will end at 11:00 am.

### BULLYING STOPS HERE

OCTOBER 01

WORLD DAY OF BULLYING PREVENTION

OCTOBER 10

"BREAKING SILENCE, VOICES RESPECT"

OCTOBER 16

POSITIVE VIBES ONLY

OCTOBER 25

CODE: ORANGE

OCTOBER 31

WEAR KINDNESS, SPREAD CHANGE

SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING!

POSITIVE VIBES ONLY

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: JAC THEATER  
 SEE MS. PREMPHEN IN FRESHMAN ACADEMY RM 913  
 SEE MRS. BARNES 400 HALL RM 600  
 FOR ALL COMPETITION FORMS

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[HTTP://WWW.STOPBULLYING.GOV/](http://www.stopbullying.gov/)

### Call to Womanhood; Call to Manhood

The National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame Foundation sponsored students from McNair High School, Towers High School, Stevenson High School, and Redan High School. The Call to Womanhood workshop was helpful with social, and intellectual development. The session offered practical ways of avoiding some of the common mistakes that are made which can often delay attainment of academic, personal goals and impact mental and emotional health. The Call to Manhood The high-power workshop covered "Tenants of



Manhood Topics” which included determining and understanding that every young man has a task for which he is uniquely matched and inevitable life challenges.



My Brother’s Keeper (MBK)

The MBK Chapter of Browns Mill Elementary School is sponsoring a sock drive during the month of October.

The MBK Chapter of Shadow Rock Elementary School in conjunction with The Hearts of South DeKalb, Incorporated and Commission Larry Johnson participated in the Random Acts of Kindness Bus tour.



**Dr. Deborah Moore-Sanders**  
**Substitute Administrator; Executive Director of Student Advancement**

## **Post Secondary Transition Specialists attend the DeKalb County Fire and Rescue 20th Annual Fire Safety Festival**

Post Secondary Transition Specialists participated in the DeKalb County Fire and Rescue 20th Annual Fire Safety Festival at Northlake Mall on October 14, 2023. The purpose of the event is to provide fire and pedestrian safety, safety demonstrations, COVID-19 vaccines, and many more opportunities to the DeKalb community. The Student Advancement staff provided opportunities for students to engage in post-secondary activities via the Student Success Mobile Center. The Student Success Mobile Center travel to schools across the district, to community events, and through neighborhoods, collaborating with post-secondary education and workforce development partners. It is a colorfully engaging, constant visual reminder of the importance of focusing on future goals and the value of solid post-secondary planning.

## **Student Engagement Coaches Give Back**

Lori Hanford, Student Engagement Coach at Tucker Middle School, partnered with Pastor Jamal Bryant and her New Birth family at their annual back-to-school shoe drive. This year, New Birth exceeded their goal of 5,000 pairs of sneakers and the Tucker Middle School Check & Connect Program was awarded over 300 pairs of sneakers for the school. Because the need was so great in the Tucker and the surrounding communities, the Check & Connect Program partnered with Dr. Grandison, Principal at Jolly Elementary, Courtney Scott, Counselor at Wesley International Academy, the Clarkston refugee community as well as Megan's Childcare Center, LLC in Tucker. Ms. Hanford was able to meet those needs with the large donation of shoes to her Check and Connect program.

Ms. Hanford noted that by far "this partnership with Pastor Jamal Bryant and New Birth Missionary Baptist Church has been one of the most life changing experiences that I have witnessed as an educator." It was life changing for so many DeKalb County scholars and their families, and the smiles were priceless!

## **Post-Secondary Opportunities**

The district-wide Infinite Scholars College Fair was held on Oct. 17, 2023, with over 29 million dollars in scholarships awarded to student participants.

Planning and outreach is currently underway for the district-wide National Hispanic College Fair which will be held on November 14, 2023, at Georgia Piedmont Technical College.

Fifty students participated in the College Awareness Tour with Aviation Institute of Maintenance in Gwinnett County. The program provides a graduate with the education and practical skills needed for a position in today's aviation industry. The program will provide the student a foundation of general education courses, technical skills, and aircraft systems knowledge. Students learn the specialized skills necessary to work on structures, powerplants, aircraft systems, flight-controlled systems, and engine systems, and become eligible and prepared for certification by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as an Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) Mechanic.

Post-Secondary Specialists hosted Parent and Student Information Sessions for Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory Illuminate College Preparatory Program. The purpose of the program is to assist in developing students to be competitive for highly selective eighth, ninth, and tenth grade cohorts.

**Mrs. Denise Revels**  
**Director of Wrap Around & Support Services**

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

School counselors have begun implementing the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) curriculum with elementary and middle school students while high school counselors have completed 64% of senior advisement conferences. The first SEL Newsletter has been shared with schools. As of October 20, 2023, school social workers have responded to over 4200 referrals to address the academic, economic, family, and emotional needs of students. The school psychology department is actively working on a strategy to increase evaluation capabilities through potential partnerships with external providers. \*\*\*The After School Extended Day Program office is working on the budget to provide over four million dollars in surplus funding to participating schools.

**\*\*\*A New SAFE Center at Stone Mountain High School**



The ribbon cutting ceremony for the SAFE (Student and Family Engagement) Center at Stone Mountain High School took place on October 20, 2023. Survey results from the five-school based SAFE Centers reveal that high school students are utilizing services and having their needs met when visiting centers. As of October 3, 2023, over 1,400 needs were met, and 454 students reported feeling better when they left the SAFE Center as opposed to when they initially visited the center for services. This is in addition to the 3000 families that have been served through monthly food distributions. The survey also provided students with an opportunity to provide open ended responses. A 12<sup>th</sup> grade MLK high school student wrote, “The safe room is my favorite place in the school, it is really a great addition. With someone with intense anxiety the safe center always comes in clutch!”

**Dr. Darnell Logan**  
**Director of Student Relations**

### **October is National Bullying Awareness Month**

October is National Bullying Awareness Month, and this is an opportunity to encourage the nation to take action at the local level to create safe and supportive organizations. Bullying is unacceptable and comments or conduct that disparages or demonstrates hostility or aversion should not be tolerated.

Since 1999, the DeKalb County School District has implemented a student bullying policy in schools. However, during the 2010-2011 school year, a state law mandating revision of Board policy on bullying gave us the opportunity to both help students and educate the community. This developed into the District’s Bullying Awareness Campaign, subsequently entitled the Bullying/Harassment/Hazing Awareness Campaign and now the “Bullying Stops Here!” Awareness Campaign. The title change demonstrates the cognition that you cannot have any conversation relative to bullying without a connection with harassment and hazing. Harassment and hazing are forms of bullying. They are all interconnected and need to be addressed to promote safe learning environments and academic achievement. The following are suggested school level activities planned in October:

- “BULLYING STOPS HERE!” Awareness Week – October 23-27, 2023.
- School-designed activities that focus on *Being Buddies, not Bullies*
- “BULLYING STOPS HERE!” White Shirt Day – During the week of October 23-27, 2023
- “LET’S HAVE LUNCH!” Day – During the week of October 23-27, 2023 – *Encouraging students to eat lunch with a new friend*
- DeKalb Board of Education Proclamation – “BULLYING STOPS HERE!” Awareness Month.
- Marquee Display on School District website – **National Bullying Awareness Month.**
- Character Trait of the Month: HONESTY (*HONESTY - Being truthful in word and action*).

### **DeKalb County Juvenile Court Rebound Drug Court Retreat**

In conjunction with the DeKalb County Juvenile Court, Dr. Darnell Logan attended the annual Rebound Drug Court Retreat on October 11, 2023, and serves as member of the team representing DeKalb County School District.

The DeKalb County Juvenile Drug Court Rebound Program is a five-phase intervention team approach program designed to keep juvenile offenders clean and sober. This team consists of staff from juvenile court, the district attorney’s office, public defender’s office, probation officers, parent and program coordinators, school system staff, treatment providers, and community supporters. The mission of the court is to utilize judicial and community-based interventions to provide an effective response to youthful offenders and their families and to create safer communities by strengthening families, reducing crime, and developing productive citizens.

**Ms. Monika Davis**  
**Chief Information Officer**

For the Division of Information and Instructional Technology, we are focused on ensuring we:

- Improve device management and support.
- Remediate and refresh the district's network and data center infrastructure.
- Harden information, cyber, network and physical security measures.
- Enhance and innovate the digital learning environment.
- Empower the "Digital Village" necessary to nurture and develop Digital Dreamers.

These goals represent our day-to-day commitment to the students, staff, and community.

As for the past month, intense focus has been placed on infrastructure project oversight and implementation, ongoing ERP support, FTE and Student Class state reporting, technology integration advocacy, and staffing for vacancies.

***Infrastructure Oversight***

With a district investment of over \$48 million, overseeing the transformation of the district's network, data center, and physical security infrastructures continue to be a major focus. DIIT looks forward to improved network performance and reliability by enhancing abilities to monitor and optimize network traffic. We are also looking forward to more efficiently identifying and resolving problems and security concerns before they create issues. We have spent the past months facilitating intensive project planning, developing technology infrastructure standards, and completing individualized facility assessments to ensure all learning and work environment needs are addressed. These projects will require massive movement and coordination to ensure we make progress, while not interrupting learning and work.

In November 2023, installation of these components will begin in our facilities. Considering these are taxpayer dollars at work, DIIT will work in conjunction with Operations to publish a dashboard with the status of these awesome projects. Once we get past the fiber, switches, servers, zeros and ones, the user experience for our Digital Dreamers and the Digital Village that supports them will be awesome. This is hard, but long overdue and exciting work.

***Staffing for Vacancies***

The CIO's Office continues to work with internal leadership as well as HR to fill existing vacancies for the division. Challenges faced and shared by potential candidates have included pay not aligned to industry standards and lack of access to a hybrid work environment. As we address these challenges, we are committed to filling our technology positions. We know that a strong tech team is essential to our success, and we are working to attract and retain the best talent.

Some of the strategies we are implementing include casting a wider recruitment net in environments where strong tech talent can be found. We are also assessing our existing staff talent for training and opportunities. Another effort in progress is developing partnerships with local colleges and universities to identify and recruit promising tech students. Our summer internship students are recruited from



local universities such as Kennesaw State University and Georgia Piedmont Technical College. We are looking to expand recruitment to more institutions for permanent positions.

### ***Cheering on Great Work!***

The Instructional Technology Department presented at the Georgia Educational Technology Conference. More details are listed below, but the most important point to note is that all staff members presented on a topic with packed sessions. DCSD is doing noteworthy and impactful work in EdTech and this team represented DCSD very well. They were a hit!

Student Information Systems did not present at a conference, but they did work diligently with our schools to ensure the superintendent was able to sign off on our FTE and Student Class state reporting on time. This is very arduous and intense work for both the SIS team and our schools. DIIT partners with School Leadership to monitor progress and provide support. Great Job team!

### **Jeff Miller, Manager of Asset and End-User Computing Herman Parker, Manager of Technology Assets**

Asset and End-User Computing has been focused on assisting school Device Distribution Coordinators (DDCs) with device distribution, maintenance, reconciliation, and audit preparation utilizing Frontline Asset Management. So far, we have held four of the year's monthly meetings with Device Distribution Coordinators.

- **Meeting 1 Summary**  
Communicated to DDCs regarding beginning of the year distribution tasks for students and staff devices as well as optional device insurance coverage. Schools begin the distribution process with the Digital Dreamers site: <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/digital-dreamers/device-request>
- **Meeting 2 Summary**  
Continued to work with Instructional Technology to assist DDCs with distributing student Chromebooks and staff laptops. Provided live question and answer session regarding beginning of the school year distribution.
- **Meeting 3 Summary**  
Facilitated a transition to school year device management of the inventory fleet. Covered processes for requesting hot spots, additional devices, and reporting lost/stolen devices.
- **Meeting 4 Summary**  
Discussed inventory reconciliation. Provided live session with questions and answers regarding the process of reconciling each school/site inventory

In the next few months, we will prepare our local school Device Distribution Teams for the January 2024 staff and student device audit. The device audit ensures:

- accountability for school or location inventory
- correct device is assigned to the correct student; and
- devices are in optimal functioning condition.

The winter audit informs DIIT of the health of existing devices and the need for additional devices in preparation for testing in April.

For further assistance, Device Distribution Coordinators take a course in Canvas specifically for distribution along with recorded step-by-step instructions. In addition, the Technology Asset Management unit is always there to assist schools with device needs. Digital Equity is a PRIORITY for the DeKalb County School District, and we are here to make it happen!

### **Natalie Terrell, Manager III of Project Management** ***SPLOST VI Technology Project Updates***

Under the Physical Security Program, there are three projects – door access, intrusion alarms, and surveillance camera systems refresh.

Building assessments are well underway, with 102 of 140 (or 73% of the) sites being completed as of Wednesday, November 1, 2023. The purpose is to assess the condition of all facilities against a district standard and specific site needs that will guide the installation of this new infrastructure. Review sessions have started to review the results of the assessment and installation plan with building administration and Public Safety. Installations will begin in November 2023 and is anticipated to last through December 2025. DIIT is working with Human Resources through the Superintendent's Office to add appropriate staffing needed to support this vast infrastructure. In addition, the district's physical security vendor will continue to provide repair and support services as we transition from one system to the next.

The other three projects in that are progress address the network infrastructure – cabling refresh, switch refresh, and wireless access point refresh. Currently, network infrastructure assessments have started for each site against the district's standard for these infrastructure components. This information will be used to determine needs by site as well as equipment purchasing. These projects are scheduled to be completed by December 2025.

#### ***Optimizing the Interactive Flat Panel (IFP)***

As approved by the BOE in September 2023, this project will replace all Generation 1 flat panels that are in the schools. Most of these flat panels were installed in 2017 – 2018, which have come to end-of-life, meaning that they are no longer under warranty and cannot be repaired when there are issues. Site visits began on Monday, October 30, by the vendor to be completed on December 6, 2023. This project must be completed by July 2024 due to its funding source, ESSER.

#### ***HUDL Cameras***

In partnership with the Athletics Department, DIIT is working to install and setup up HUDL cameras at 19 High schools, including the five stadiums, in order to record sporting events. At the present time, the perspective vendors have been visiting the sites with Athletics and Public Safety to determine the best location and select a vendor to assist with the installations.

**Dr. Kyia Clark, Executive Director, Information and Innovation**  
**Mr. Troy Palmer, Manager of Student Information Systems**



***Student Information Systems in Action!***

For the 2023-2024 school year to date, the SIS Department has overseen and facilitated the following:

- Processing of 37,558 student registration applications (including 16,997 new student registrations and 20,561 existing student annual verifications)
- Fulfillment of 8,126 requests for student records
- Processing of over 4,000 GTIDs for new to DeKalb students
- Resolution of 20,000+ state reporting errors and successful, on-time reporting of 91,398 active students and 552,350 funding segments across all grade levels and program areas for the Fall FTE data collection
- Successful on-time reporting of student, teacher, and instructional delivery model data for 804,335 course records across all grade levels and program areas (General Education, Gifted, ESOL, EIP, Special Education, Online/Virtual, CTAE, and Dual Enrollment) for the Fall Student Class data collection
- 76% of parents with Infinite Campus portal accounts, with more than 115,000 average weekly logins by parents

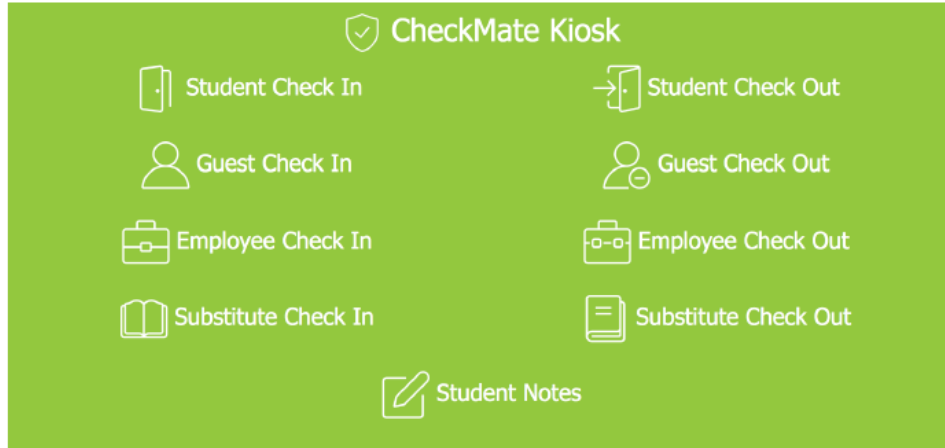
***Yearly Event Series (Y.E.S.) - Infinite Campus Discovery Week***

As part of the Yearly Event Series (Y.E.S.) available to all DCSD staff Infinite Campus users district-wide, Discovery Week will take place on November 13-17, 2023, and will offer a variety of virtual, online sessions. To access Y.E.S., view session offerings, and register for Discovery Week sessions, staff can log into Infinite Campus, click on the app launcher ("waffle" grid) in the top right corner, select Community, and then click on Campus Passport at the top right.



***CheckMate***

CheckMate fully integrates with Infinite Campus to provide real-time student attendance tracking, guest and substitute tracking, employee time tracking, and volunteer management and tracking. SIS is providing support to Equity & Student Empowerment to initially implement CheckMate with 13 pilot schools, with the ultimate goal of district-wide implementation.



**Ms. Terri Webb, Manager of Instructional Technology**

***2024 Student Technology Competition***

The 2024 Student Technology Competition will be held on January 20, 2024, at Ronald E. McNair Middle School. This event provides students in grades 3-12 to compete in 14 technology skills categories. With this year’s goal of 1,000 student participation, the competition supports MIRACLES tenet L by providing students an opportunity to showcase the vast array of technology skillsets of our Digital Dreamers.



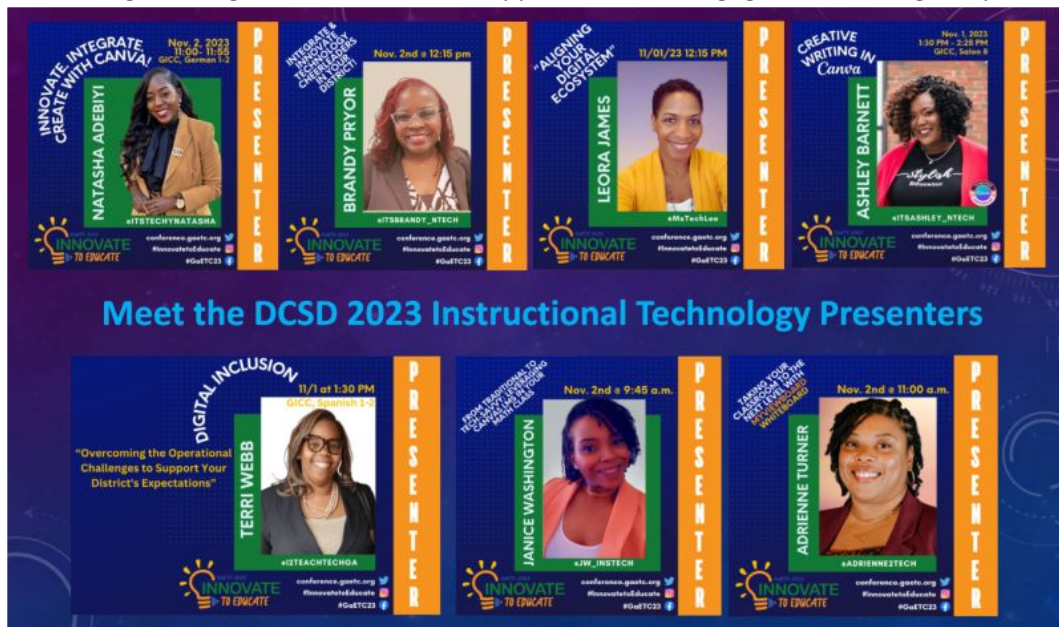
## Georgia Educational Technology Conference

Congratulations to the Instructional Technology Team for being accepted to present at GaETC, the Georgia Educational Technology Conference. This 3-day ed tech conference consists of over 350 concurrent sessions that provide thousands of educators and educational leaders with the opportunity to learn and discuss technology and how it is being used to support learning.

### Session Topics

- Aligning Your Digital Ecosystem to Learning Outcomes & Expectations (Leora James)
- Creative Writing in Canva with Teacher Canvassadors (Ashley Barnett and Natasha Adebisi)
- Digital Inclusion: Overcoming the Operational Challenges to Support Your District's Expectations (Terri Webb)
- From Traditional to Tech-Savvy: Leveraging Canvas LMS in Your Math Class (Janice Washington)
- Taking it to the Next Level myViewBoard Whiteboard & Classroom (Adrienne Turner)
- Innovate. Integrate. Create with Canva! (Natasha Adebisi & Ashley Barnett)
- Integrate & Innovate Technology Cheerleaders in Your District! (DCSD Instructional Technology Team)

GaETC supports the MIRACLES tenets I, A, C, and L by providing the specialists to enhance their coaching practices with current instructional methods (I, C), advertising the great work that is being done in DCSD (A), while fostering learning environments that supports student engagement in a digital space (L).



**Ms. Linda Jordan, Manager III of Applications and Development**  
**Ms. Mallorie Robinson, Manager II of Enterprise Business Solutions**



## Munis Employee Self Service Portal



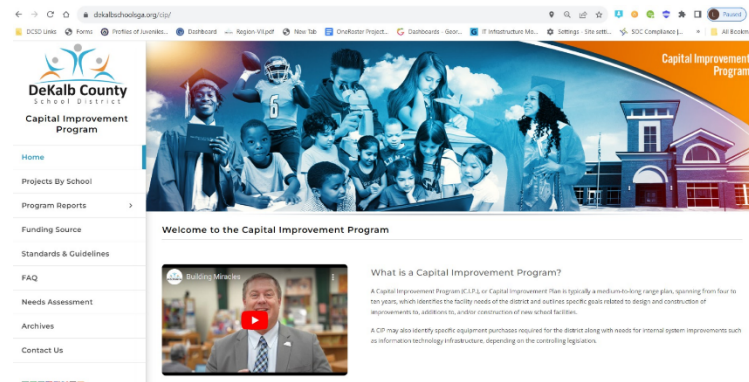
Enterprise Business Solutions has updated the configuration to the employee self-service portal configured to allow active employees to use their single sign-on credentials to log in. Currently, employees can view their paycheck, including deductions, update their direct deposit, alternate email address, preferred name, addresses, emergency contacts, and telephone information in the portal. More updates are forthcoming.

## District Website

The web development team has collaborated with various divisions to launch new sites to support DCSD initiatives. The following new sites were created in September and October 2023!

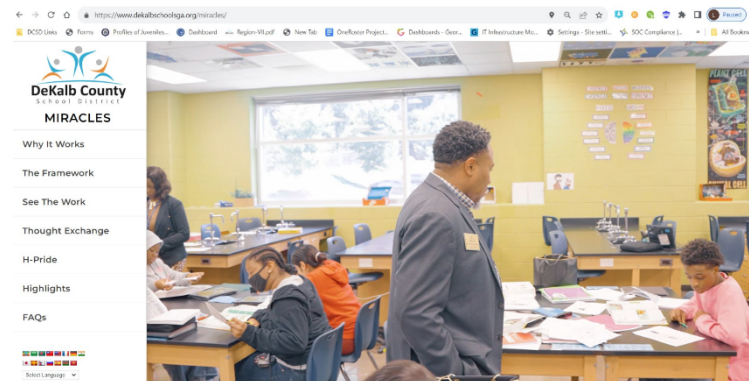
## Capital Improvement Program Website

<https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/cip/>



## MIRACLES Website

<https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/miracles/>



## IGNITE Website

<https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/ignite>

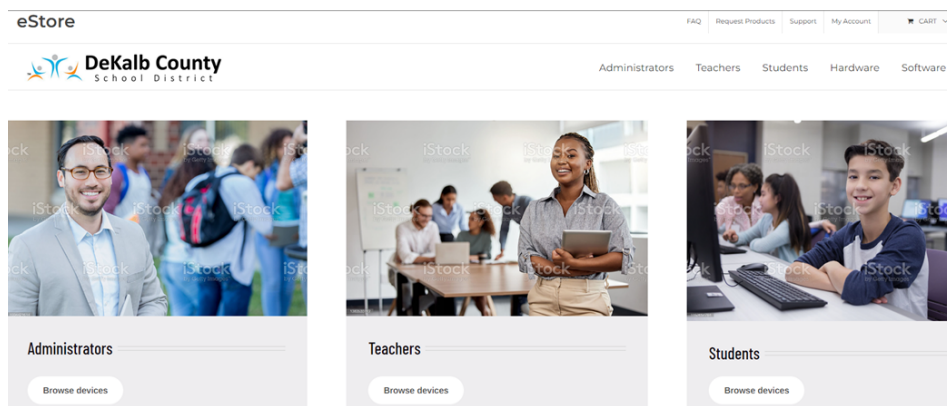




## Ms. Gwen Brame, Manager III, IT Business Operations

Business Operations continues to collaborate with Human Resources to ensure all DIIT approved new and vacant positions are posted in Frontline.

Business Operations also facilitated an eStore Refresher for all Bookkeepers/Administrative Assistants. The eStore is the tool used for schools/departments to receive approval to purchase equipment, software and accessories. Currently, the eStore consists of over 600 items and over 13,000 end-users. The eStore is a critical component in assisting with the effort to streamline, guide, and monitor technology purchases.



**Dr. Yolanda Williamson**  
**Chief of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships**

**High Level priorities for the month:**

**Staffing**

Executive for Foundation- Interviews are scheduled for 11/7/23

Manager of Strategic Partnerships- Interviews are scheduled for 11/7/23

**Thought Exchange**

The training for the display of the Thought Exchange surveys have been executed. The results of the surveys are placed on the MIRACLES website which will be released in early November. In the meantime, the last of the final MIRACLES Thought Exchanges will be released by the first week in November 2023.

Thought Exchange lends itself in other areas outside of MIRACLES. The following surveys were also released:

**DCSD Principals**

What are your thoughts on the systems, processes, and expectations on how well the DCSD Board of Education and Superintendent are doing when building student schedules?

**McNair HS Students**

What improvements can the DeKalb County School District make to enhance/improve your experience as a student at McNair High School. For example, you can share your thoughts on topics such as safety, academics, athletics, counseling, transportation, and etc.

**Horizon Data Meeting**

Did this session meet your expectations given the communicated outcomes? What additional information/training do you need to incorporate the use of the data analysis tool that was shared? Any suggestions for future sessions?

**DCSD Principals Communications Meeting**

What are your thoughts and suggestions on possible discussion topics for the Principals' Communication Monthly Meetings?

## **DeKalb Schools Foundation**

The DeKalb County Board of Education voted for the slate of members for the DeKalb Schools Foundation. At least one additional prospective member will be presented at the November 2023 regular BOE meeting.

Next steps for the Foundation include planning a luncheon for the members to celebrate their acceptance, begin establishing a working relationship among each other and Superintendent Horton, and to discuss the current next step for fully developing the foundation. A retreat is also planned January 2024 as an opportunity for Superintendent Horton to share his vision, goals, initiatives, review existing bylaws, discuss a process for selecting officers. Finally, the members have been invited to attend the Academy of Excellence Employee of the Year Gala.

## **S-Stewardship**

### **Gathering for Partners- Community Impact Showcase**

The early planning of the gathering of all DCSD partners to recognize their contributions to the district and share continued needs has been initiated. The Showcase is scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup> in the boardroom. DCEIP is in the process of identifying all district partners in preparation for this evening event. In addition to the community partners, the DeKalb BOE and DeKalb Schools Foundation Board will be invited.

## **S-Stewardship**

### **MIRACLES Priority update for the specific month and your role in it:**

R-Recruit & Retain High Quality Staff- DCEIP is still in its infant stage as it relates to staffing. My specific role is to schedule & conduct interviews for the Manager of Strategic Partnerships and the DeKalb Schools Executive for the Foundation.

M-Motion Towards Equity- I will be scheduling meeting times for all Superintendent Advisory Groups to begin in late October or early November. In addition, I will develop a selection process for membership and ensure that it is representative of every area within the district.

As it relates to Thought Exchange, I will release the results of the surveys that are published at the completion of the DCEIP webpage.

S- Sound Fiscal Stewardship- My specific role in the formation of the Foundation is to monitor the responses from the candidates for the board for the Foundation for the core board and communicate updates to board & superintendent. In addition, I will be orientating the new Executive into the Division and his/her new role. Also, I will explore the possibility of Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta for the management of the donations that come through the Foundation.

**Collaboration with another department for the specific month:**

**Staffing**

Division of Human Resources

Staff members (panel interviews)

**ThoughtExchange**

- IT will assist with the development of the webpage that will house the ThoughtExchange results.
- Communications will ensure that the results are presented in way that is attractive and professional, and easy to interpret.

**DeKalb Schools Foundation**

- The Board of Education & Superintendent will be kept abreast of the progress of the development of the Foundation.
- Continue to accept names for the core Board based on acceptance of first round of names.

**Community Impact Showcase**

- **Lorraine Sanford- Decorations & Setup**
- **Division Chiefs- Provide names of District Partners**
- **Portia Kirkland- Market the Showcase**

**Professional Learning Opportunities:**

Thought Exchange

- Ongoing training provided by Thought Exchange – Portia Kirkland
- Select individuals will be trained on the use of Thought Exchange

**Dr. Donald Porter**  
**Press Secretary**

**High-Level priorities for the month:**

- Prepared a Community Letter from Dr. Horton reaffirming DCSD's commitment to diversity in his community entitled *Building Bridges, Not Walls* in our Schools for all students from all backgrounds and cultures. To be published on 11/6/2023 in Dr. Horton's newsletter.
- Promoting Dr. Horton's UN speech- with a video celebrating DCSD's diversity efforts and helping celebrate all students who come from virtually every corner of our world and the fact that our schools are more than just buildings where lessons are taught; they are melting pots of culture, innovation, and ambition.
- Wrote an Equity video script for Dr. Williamson that was shot last week.
- Wrote a Miracles video script for Dr. Williamson focused on her division, featuring the creation of the DCSD Foundation, implementation of the ThoughtExchange, and the upcoming Fambassador program. This video will be shot later this month.
  - To date, I have written Miracle Video scripts for Mr. Hofstetter and Dr. Ward-Smith in addition to Dr. Williamson's.

**MIRACLES Priority update for the specific month and your role in it:**

DBP Collaboration with another department for the specific month (Review of work back to October 20):

- Wrote DCSD Employee Gala speech for Board Chair, Mr. DaCosta.
- Wrote Dr. Horton's letter to be included in the brochure for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Excellence Awards.
- Working with HR and Finance to promote through the media DCSD's efforts to minimize disruptions and errors in the District's complete conversion to the MUNIS payroll system.
- Wrote a District response at the request of Champion Dillard to a parent who alleged that her child experienced antisemitic treatment at Peachtree MS, and the school was not responsive to her concerns.
- Working with Chief Stepney to promote the new Early Learning Centers.
- Working with Chief Ward-Smith to promote the IGNITE Teacher Residency Program.
- Worked with HR to disseminate factual information regarding the hiring of Mr. Donald Dillard.
- Rewrote a District Statement regarding DCSD's decision to recommend and purchase the EVOLV weapons detection system.
- Wrote quotes for Dr. Horton and Board Chair DaCosta regarding allegations by Dr. Morley that Chief of Schools Dillard hired her husband.

Direct support for Schools (Reference names if applicable):

- At the request of Dr. Sauce, I wrote a DRAFT Family Letter for Principal Dodson and got media coverage for Redan HS regarding the loss of Coach Greg Wood.
- Wrote a parent letter at the request of Area Superintendent Taylor for Principal Evans regarding a level-3 lockdown at Miller Grove MS, due to a severe physical altercation.
- Working with Chamblee HS Principal Gail Barnes to promote a fantastic visual Art Honor Student mural on the Chamblee Rail Trail.
- Worked with Dr. Sauce to write and distribute a statement to minimize the WSB coverage of a physical altercation at Redan HS involving a substitute teacher and student.

**Portia Kirkland**  
**Director of Communications**

**High Level priorities for the month:**

1) The Miracles Website is a project underway in Communications to showcase a continuous improvement framework. This website is expected to be completed by November 2023 and aligns with the tenet Commitment to Accountability. The Miracles Website will be fully functional, visually appealing, and user-friendly. The website will explain Miracles, its works, FAQs, and videos. Further updates include:

- On September 28, we will produce four more Miracles Videos, including Stacy Stepney, Elijah Palmer, and Dr. Tekshia Ward-Smith
- Distribution of 6 Miracles videos, along with a Thought Exchange, will be distributed in the superintendent newsletter and the Miracles Website
- Review the Miracles Beta site to prepare for launch in the next 30 days

2) Aligning with the tenet Motion Toward Equity, Communications is re-designing the What's the Good News Ambassador graphic. This graphic and motion graphic will be used for a flyer and video that we capture of the current Horizon schools. In addition, Communications will send a flyer to schools to notify them that we will be capturing good news in their building. The team is collaborating with Dr. Triscilla Weaver. Videos will also have some translation.

3) DeKalb Schools TV is proud of the original programming produced in-house. Like many networks, such as PBS, DSTV creates entertaining programs that educate and empower its target audience. We are re-shooting 3-5 Magical Library shows to support reading initiatives by May 2024. We plan to incorporate phonics and translate content for future shows. Furthermore, the team is meeting this week to discuss our Math-Matic show, which will be



quick math tutorials airing on DSTV. This work aligns with Learning Environments that Supports Student Success.

4) The Communications team continues to look for ways to improve and increase internal and external communications. We are re-designing and editing our Communications Toolkit, which is a centralized hub (digital and print) that supports the district and schoolhouses with assets, resources, and tools to facilitate effective communication. Our goal is to have this complete by November 2023. By distributing this toolkit, principals and district leaders will have the necessary materials and procedures for successful communication within DCSD. The district will have access to templates, guidelines, and best practices such as social media guidelines, who to contact for support, and how to capture schoolhouse news. This work aligns with the Miracles tenet, Commitment to Accountability.

5) Communications wants to ensure that our stakeholders are in the know. In a few years, communications have yet to deliver a communications survey to identify key communication channels and platforms that external stakeholder's access for news. Currently, the team is working with the Research Department to update the survey and translate it into the top 15 languages. We will also distribute the survey in 2 newsletters by mid-October. This work aligns with the Miracles tenet, Commitment to Accountability.

**MIRACLES Priority update for the specific month and your role in it:** As Director of Communications, I collaborate with IT on content and visuals. I am also responsible for scripting, driving the marketing strategy, and video production team.

**Collaboration with another department for the specific month:** We have worked with the Information Technology Department on content management to ensure the Miracles website will be up and running by November.

**Professional Learning Opportunities:** We are members of the National School Public Relations Association.

**Dr. Marcia Oglesby**  
**Director of Grants & Partnership**

**High Level priorities for the month:**

- (L) Learning Environments that Support Student Success - The district was awarded the [GaDOE's Safer Georgia Schools Grant](#), to purchase safety equipment for schools. The state will make the announcement during the November board meeting. After the grant is awarded, I will ensure the appropriate documentation is submitted to the state.
- (M) Motion Towards Equity – ensure the partnerships and school surveys are submitted to community organizations and schools to assess which partners are supporting schools and determine the resources needed by schools.
- (L) Learning Environments that Support Student Success and (M) Motion Towards Equity – collaborate with the mathematics coordinators/C&I team to apply for the **\$100,000** GaDOE K-5 Numeracy grant which will provide funds for instructional support, professional learning, and mathematics resources to schools in DCSD. The application is due on November 15, 2023.
- (L) Learning Environments that Support Student Success and (M) Motion Towards Equity – Work collaboratively with Dr. Lenisera Barnes-Bodison to submit a grant application in the amount of **\$15,000** for the GaDOE's AP Teacher Training grant intended to support local school districts' efforts to improve the academic achievement of students and to increase access to college-level courses across the state. The application's deadline is December 15, 2023.
- (L) Learning Environments that Support Student Success and (M) Motion Towards Equity – Submit an application to obtain funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Impact Aid Grant program. This grant provides funding to help support students who live on military bases, in low-renting housing properties, other federal properties, or have parents in the uniformed services or employed on eligible federal properties. We need assistance with obtaining a list of students in DeKalb County who meet any or all of the above criteria, specifically students living in low rent housing properties.
- (M) Motions Toward Equity - Development of the Employee Wellness Center's proposal to present to Kaiser Permanente for funding.
- (M) Motion Towards Equity - Continue to encourage teachers to post projects to Donors Choose; Dr. Horton signed off/approved the district to become an official partner last week; Grants and Partnerships created a special [DCSD Donors Choose landing page](#) on the platform; Chevron awarded Hightower Elementary School a \$10,000 education grant via the Donors Choose platform. Teachers have received over \$4.5 million in resources through Donors Choose.
- (S) Sound Fiscal Stewardship – Submit revised budget for the Public Safety and Community Violence Reduction grant's budget to the Governor's office as requested by the Program Manager of the grant.

- (S) Sound Fiscal Stewardship - Transitioning of the approved City of Stonecrest donation to the schools in the district via a district-level account; received Mayor Cobble's signature on October 31, 2023 and will obtain Dr. Horton's signature on the MOU.
- (S) Sound Fiscal Stewardship - Ensure the Publix donation in the amount of \$93,321 is presented as a November board agenda item
- (M) Motion towards Equity - United Way AARP Experience Corps Tutoring Program for Stone Mountain Elementary School, continue to respond to questions from the United Way and obtain the MOU for review and approval
- (M) Motion Towards Equity - Participate on the planning committee for WorkSource DeKalb's and DeKalb County government's summit
- (A) Attract and Retain High Quality staff – Georgia State University is interested in establishing a partnership with the district to provide special education paraprofessional to teacher training for DCSD paraprofessionals. A meeting will be scheduled with GSU and C&I leaders including Kiana King, Director of Special Education.
- (M) Motion Towards Equity – I am collaborating with community based organizations who are interested in applying for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers grant in the amount of up to \$350,000 per year, an academic tutoring and enrichment after school program grant funded by the GaDOE.
- Monitor the new release of the Teacher and School Leader grant and similar federal grant opportunities which provide incentives for teachers and school leaders. The U.S. Department of Education's grant closed in June 2023.

#### Completed:

- National Coalition of 100 Black Women's donation prepared as a board agenda item and presented to the board during the October board meeting.
- Submitted the Public Safety grant requirements to the Governor's Office (W9 and Vendor Management Form)
- Created the board agenda item for the Publix donation (\$93,321)
- The State Farm grant in the amount of \$75,000 to provide funding for the SAFE Centers has been submitted.

#### **MIRACLES Priority update for the specific month and your role in it:**

- (M) Motions Towards Equity – My role will be to assist the Grants and Partnerships team with writing and reviewing the Wellness Center Proposal.
- (L) Learning Environments that Promote Student Success – I will work directly with Donors Choose, Hightower Elementary School, and finance to transition the grant award from the grantor to the district.

- (L) Learning Environments that Promote Student Success – I will work directly with the United Way to obtain and submit the MOU for legal review, obtain answers from Public Safety regarding the new DOJ background requirements, and contact Stone Mountain Elementary School and James Hearn, the after-school coordinator, with updates.
- (S) Sound Fiscal Stewardship – I will work directly with Public Safety to ensure the revised budget is submitted to the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget.
- (S) Sound Fiscal Stewardship – I will work collaboratively with the City of Stonecrest, identified schools and Denise Revels to create and submit budgets for each school (a total of 12) to finance so the gl accounts can be established and schools can begin using their funds.
- (S) Sound Fiscal Stewardship – I will work directly with Dr. Williamson to ensure the Publix Tools for Back-to-School donation is submitted as an agenda item and presented during the November board meeting. Additionally, Dr. Williamson and I will request Marcia Coward to provide a budget narrative of how the funds from last year were spent and how the current funds will be expended.
- (M) Motions Towards Equity – ensure the school and partnership surveys are disseminated to school leaders and community-based organizations and corporations.

**Collaboration with another department for the specific month:**

- Collaborate with Dr. Myisha Warren, to transition the Safer Schools grant award to the district.
- Grants and Partnerships will collaborate with Total Rewards (Andrea Aplin-Little and Karen Beadles) and facilities to locate an ideal location for an additional Wellness Center in the district.
- Collaborate with the Curriculum and Instruction team to submit the AP Teacher Training and K-5 Numeracy grants.
- Serve on the planning committee with WorkSource Dekalb, the CTAE department and other community leaders to plan the WorkSource DeKalb’s education summit.
- Assist with obtaining the VIN and model numbers of school buses from Operations and Facilities to complete the Clean School Bus Initiative’s bus rebate program. 25 buses must be identified to be replaced with electric or clean energy buses as part of the application requirements.
- Publix Donation – Family and Community Engagement – Marcia Coward and finance;
- City of Stonecrest Donation – Denise Revels, Wrap Around Services and Support and contact school principals and finance
- Collaborate with finance to stay abreast of active grant awards and transition new awards and donations to finance and the awardees.

- Schedule meetings with partners to discuss inquiries and partnership opportunities (i.e. GSU requested paraprofessional to teacher training opportunities and community-based-organizations will apply for grants to continue or start academic tutoring and enrichment opportunities for students).
- Work with Dr. Williamson and Mrs. Dillard, Chief of Schools, to ensure the surveys are disseminated to school leaders

**Professional Learning Opportunities:**

N/A

**Direct support for Schools (Reference names if applicable):**

- Stone Mountain Elementary School – Dr. Covington – AARP tutoring program.
- Opportunity grants – ensuring 69 schools receive the gl account codes from finance and provide next steps

**Marcia Coward**  
**Manager, Family Engagement**

**High Level priorities for the month:**

In response to the significant demand for English classes, it is imperative that we hire two more part-time ESL instructors. This demand underscores the importance of expanding our educational offerings to cater to the needs of our community.

New High School Equivalency (HSE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are scheduled to commence at AIC, Sequoyah, and Cross Keys on Wednesday, September 27, 2023. This marks an important step in our commitment to providing accessible and comprehensive education to our parents. To accommodate the growing interest in our programs, we are actively collaborating with Goodwill to secure additional classroom space, which will be available starting November 6th.

Initiated the collaboration of Custodial and Hospitality Industry Experience Training (IETs) in partnership with Hampton Inn, DCSD Operations Team, and the HR Department. These IETs will provide our GED participants with the chance to attain Industry Certification in both sectors, enabling them to acquire the necessary skills to thrive in the job market.

UnityFest: Celebrating a world of cultures! Family Engagement Liaison Anne Ferreira spearheaded the organizational endeavors for the highly successful DCSD 2023 UnityFest: Celebrating a World of Culture! The event garnered an impressive turnout, with over 600 attendees representing various countries, including Thailand, the Dominican Republic, Myanmar, Mexico, Jamaica, Congo, Rwanda, Afghanistan, and more. This gathering proved to be a showcase of extraordinary moments and cultural demonstrations, encompassing poetry, musical performances, dance, culinary delights, traditional attire, and much more. UnityFest, in its essence, served as a jubilant tribute to the abundant diversity that characterizes the DCSD community.

**MIRACLES Priority update for the specific month and your role in it:**

Initiated the collaboration of Custodial and Hospitality Industry Experience Training (IETs)

Started the process of acquiring artificial intelligence-powered technology that will allow families to communicate with the district in their own language. We have had several meetings with AllHere Technologies AllHere is the only digital application powered by artificial intelligence and built by educators that is independently proven to positively impact stakeholder communication, family engagement, and student achievement.

**Collaboration with another department for the specific month:**

Engaging with the Lead Counselor from Student Support Services to address the needs of underage students, which will have a direct impact on our graduation rates.

Collaborating with the HR department to offer assistance and support to GED students who are presently unemployed or in underemployment situations.

We also collaborated with the staff from Indian Creek Elementary School to execute the plan for the Unity Fest.



### **Professional Learning Opportunities:**

A professional development session has been arranged for the GED staff on October 19th. During this session, we plan to exchange and deliberate upon the strategies that were introduced during the statewide GED Conference.

A Learning Lab was undertaken by two members of the Family Engagement team in collaboration with The Institute of Educational Leadership in Washington, DC, and the University of Ohio. It was a fantastic opportunity to interact with fellow Family Engagement practitioners and District Leaders from 9 other school districts. The itinerary also included site visits to 3 school districts, aiming to gain insights into their innovative practices.

### **Superintendent's Department**

**Dr. Sherry Everett**  
**Director of Strategic Planning**

**Strategic Management:**

The Strategic Planning Process is underway with the awarded vendor, Insight Education Group. Outlined below are the stages of the Strategic Planning Process that will be facilitated with the guidance of Insight Education Group.

Oct. - Dec.

- Kick-off meetings to align priorities, establish goals, solidify timeline, and develop metrics for success (Oct. 17 & 23, 2023).
- Workstream
  - Foundational Work (Insight Education’s review of H-Pride and the MIRACLES framework)
  - Stakeholder Surveys
  - District Data Analysis
  - Steering Committee (6 evening meetings)
    - 25-30 members selected based on their individual knowledge and skills, as well as their affiliations to particular stakeholder groups.
    - Committee’s Role: Advise on development of the plan, elevate the voices of stakeholders, be ambassadors for the project, and provide thought leadership on the implementation of the plan.
  - Leadership Team Meetings (Bi-weekly)
  - Board Work Sessions (3) 2-hour meetings
  - Focus Groups (by Board Member District)

**Cognia Accreditation:**

The DeKalb County School District will participate in a follow-up Cognia Monitoring Review Nov. 1-3, 2023, that will focus on the findings from the November 2022 Monitoring Review and the progress the district has made aligned to the following Cognia Performance Standard:

- ❖ Standard 1.5: The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.

Updates:

- Artifacts/Evidence have been collected and aligned to findings from the Nov. 2022 monitoring review team report and uploaded to the Cognia workspace site.
- All BOE members, Superintendent Dr. Horton, and select internal staff have been scheduled for an interview.
- 6 Principals have been scheduled by Cognia for an interview.
- 2 Community members have been scheduled for an interview.

**Mr. Joel Thibodeaux**  
**Director of Internal Audits and Compliance**

1. **District School Audits:** to assess the local management of Student Activity Funds as required by the Georgia Department of Education LUA Manual (Sec. V, Ch. 4).

Completed:

- Met with Local School Accounting department to determine current risk levels based on LSA's work and observations over the past 2 years. Determined that high schools present the greatest risk and ranked the schools based on level of activity and internal controls.
- Confirmed that reporting structure is in place for follow-up and post-audit monitoring.
- Finalized the School Risk Assessment Survey.
  - Published initial surveys to Principals, Bookkeepers, and LSA Specialists for each school to be audited in Q3 of FY2024 (January – March 2024).
  - Initial Schools: Lakeside High School, Cedar Grove High School, Southwest DeKalb High School, Redan High School, Dunwoody High School, Cross Keys High School, Martin Luther King, Jr. High School
- Began observation of Finance's implementation of the Munis School module by participating in training conducted by Tyler.
- Initial communication announcing audits sent to Area Assistant Superintendents, Principals, and Area Local School Accountintg Specialists. Bookkeepers being notified individually along with their Principals.

November – December 2023:

- Create the basic Audit Plan for all schools. Areas to be audited will include student activity fund management, bookkeeper's cash management, school managed fundraising, booster and PTO activity.
- Design and create Audit report format.
- Assign and schedule internal audit staff to specific engagements – initially assigned as teams and subsequently to individual auditors.

January – March 2024:

- Initiate audit activity

**Mr. Elijah Palmer**  
**Director of Organizational Effectiveness**

**MIRACLES Tenet C Video**

This month, I had the opportunity to partner with the Communications Department to record a video of the MIRACLES Tenet C, "Commitment to Accountability," in the weekly "Hitting the Road with Horton," that is shared out to communities and families each week. It was a chance to speak to some of the work that is coming from the "C" Tenet and it provides transparency to our board and key stakeholders. This is one of the ways in which to educate our educators and school administrators on some of the work that is happening under our Continuance Improvement Framework called MIRACLES.

### **Executive Cabinet Meetings**

Each week I am thinking of ways in which to build the leadership capacity of Executive Cabinet Members. We focused on topics around Customer Service in a School Setting, and Establishing A Foundation to Ensure Student Readiness for College and Careers. I am responsible for making sure that Cabinet meetings are meaningful and insightful so that Cabinet Leaders can relay vital information to their team members. This is a way to build capacity so that all levels of central office staff received continued learning throughout the year that supports the mission and vision of Dr. Horton and his initiatives. The sessions this month have been powerful since Cabinet members have provided feedback about take aways that they use with their department meetings.

### **H-PRIDE Certified Visits**

This month we were able to get into about 10 schools for their H-PRIDE Certified Visit. In these visits, I am accompanying Superintendent, Dr. Horton, Champion Dillard, and Dr. Williamson to discuss some of the things that are going well at the respective school buildings along with things that the district can provide to make their school experience even more rewarding. During these visits we are vulnerable in these spaces while having courageous conversations about the two questions that we pose. We are close to about 50 schools visited of the 140 that Dr. Horton is making it his business to visit before the end of the school year. It is a way to learn about the different dynamics of each schools and how each school have unique characteristics along with different challenges that needs the support of central office and the Board. This is helpful as I continue to learn the district and figure out what needs should be made a priority and addressed right away or what needs could be built into a capital project and addressed in the future.

### **FACE Advocate Hiring**

As I work with Champion Dillard, Dr. Weaver, Dr. Sauce, and Dr. Towns about interviewing and staffing this critical position in our district, we finally have a plan that should fill an important void in our Horizon schools along with other schools who needs to provide Tier 3 support for identified students at these respective schools. Once these candidates are staffed and active in school buildings, I am confident that the suspensions and daily referrals will decrease substantially after the FACE Advocates are given the training and expectations to serve as mentors, coaches, accessible advocates in the school building who are readily and available to support their social and emotional needs. I am leading this charge in identifying the right candidate and will work closely with the team that I mentioned above to see that this support is much different than what already exists in our district.

### **MIRACLES Monthly Workshop**

The workshop was a success as all Cabinet Leaders brought their respective team members to provide updates on their programs that they were working on for the month. It started at 8:30am and concluded close to 4:30 as we wanted to give every department the time they needed to go in depth about the progress from the past 30 days. We were honored to have board members in attendance: Board Chair Mr. DaCosta, Mrs. Turner, and Mrs. McGinnis. It was an opportunity for them to witness the discussions that came about as each department spoke on their initiatives. This was the third workshop of the year and the next one will be held on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> which are led and facilitated by Elijah Palmer.