

DeKalb County School District

MIRACLES

in Action



MIRACLES In Action Update – Operations Document

October 16, 2023

MIRACLES in Action Update Document

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. We are delighted to present the monthly MIRACLES in Action Update Document outlining the collective efforts of the DeKalb County School District's Leaders. All central office staff that serve as a director position or higher will be featured in this monthly report. As representatives of the dedicated and passionate central office staff, DeKalb County School District is committed to fostering a culture of excellence, collaboration, and transparency. This report serves as a testament to the ongoing commitment to support school leaders, enhance student outcomes, and ensure the continued success of our district. This MIRACLES in Action Update Document reflects the critical work that is being presented at the Monthly Workshops that happens once a month with Cabinet Leaders and their support teams.

MIRACLES MONTHLY Workshops, which are held monthly with Cabinet Leaders to speak about their programs and initiatives they are responsible for across the district. During these workshops, members from each department come together to provide updates of their work's progress. They provide 30-day updates attached with SMARTIE goals and Timelines of when their priorities will be completed. These workshops are imperative to ensure full transparency to all stakeholders. This MIRACLES In Action Update document and the Monthly Workshops are aligned with one another and represent the C Tenet, "Commitment to Accountability."

In this monthly report, there will be an opportunity to understand the dynamic work that is happening across the district. Each department led by their respective Chiefs will have a section in this monthly document to speak about the work that is happening in real time. There will be examples and celebrations that are highlighted from departments along with collaboration with other departments. In this monthly report, our school community, Board of Education, and community members can all feel informed and aware of what each district administrator is working on throughout the school year.

This is an attempt to continue to model the example of our Superintendent, Dr. Horton in Disrupting for Excellence. Transparency is often used without practice so this will allow everyone in our DCSD community an opportunity to hold leaders accountable for the work that should be happening for all scholars across the DeKalb County School District.

District Operations Report Document September 2023

Dr. Tekshia Ward-Smith
Interim Chief of Human Resources

Since May 2023, HR has onboarded more than 800 new certified and 700 new classified employees; yet we are still not done!! While we are aware that every transaction was not carried out to 100% accuracy, know that we won't make excuses. We are striving hard to improve our processes in an effort to enhance the employee experience. Although we have hired a large number of employees; this summer more than 1100 also exited the District for various reasons. There is no doubt that we MUST do a better job of retaining staff and listening to our employees.

With 1500 plus new hires and 1100 separations, HR has completed more than 2600 transactions in the last 3 months. Once again, we must continue our intentional approach to creating positive and supportive environments where employees feel valued and thrive! Let's celebrate our success!! Thanks to the phenomenal HR Team!

Angelica Collins
(Director of Employment Services)

We are excited to launch our Walk-in Wednesdays, Transportation Tuesdays, and Talent Screening Thursdays Hiring Events this past week. The district offers interested certified and classified candidates the opportunity to walk in and interview on the spot (All are advertised on Frontline). After a robust interview and vetting process, if the candidates are quality and qualified candidates, Hiring Managers will hire them on the spot.

In addition to implementing our in-house hiring events, our recruitment specialists have been on the road to several off-site recruiting events: We attended the Goodwill Fall Career Fair, White Oak Hills Baptist Church Job fair, We Care Veterans Job Fair Event and the Atlanta CWT and Goodwill of North Georgia Job Fair Event. Our next upcoming event is scheduled for Sept. 28th at the Atlanta Center for Self Sufficiency (ACSS). We are looking forward to marketing DeKalb County School District (DCSD) and onboarding several more high-quality candidates.

Karen Beadles
(Director of Total Rewards)

Retirement

The Supplemental Retirement 2% Match Program is a tax deferred savings program where the BOE contributes 2% of an employee's base salary into a 403b account with one of the four approved vendors. The employee must contribute at least 2% of his base salary into the account to qualify for the match.

The Open Enrollment period occurs periodically throughout the year. The latest period was from August 15 to September 15. We successfully enrolled 106 qualified employees into the program.

Wellness

The District's Employee Wellness Program is one that supports employee health and well-being. We empower employees with health education, lifestyle skills, and offer fitness programs and social events to positively affect employee health, morale, and job satisfaction.

The Wellness Center Grand Re-Opening was the last week in August. The Center includes state-of-the-art fitness equipment and is in full swing for September with dance fitness classes on Mondays and Wednesday 5:15-6:00, and yoga classes every Tuesday and Thursday from 5:00-6:00. The classes have been an enormous success with employees.

Webinars for September have supported our pillars of financial, mental, physical, nutritional, and social. They are usually well-attended, and September includes the following webinars and one in-person session: Car Buying, Atlanta Falcons Game, On-site mammogram screening, Mental Health Matters, Identity Theft, Retirement, Emory Healthcare a Good Night's Sleep, and the in-person Social Security 101.

Special Projects

Preliminary results have been received from the vendor, CBIZ, for the Compensation and Classification Study. Data is being reviewed to include final recommendations. Final recommendations will be made to District leaders within the next 30 days.

Marissa Key
(Executive Director of Employee Relations)

By the Numbers

The Open Records Team, Employee Misconduct (EMC) Team, and Grievance Team are off to a running start this year. Since July 2023, the Records Team has received 143 requests. These requests include record requests under the Open Records Act, Subpoenas and Requests for Production of Documents. The Records team continues to identify ways to educate our internal stakeholder and the requirements and procedures for properly responding to requests.

The EMC Team has 94 cases to date. Although 94 is a substantial number, the team successfully advises District leaders on equitable and efficient investigative and disciplinary procedures resulting in a reduction of errors in EMC files submitted for investigation.

The Grievance Team currently has 36 cases. By utilizing creativity and exceptional customer services, during the first three months of the school year, many of those grievances have been resolved without having to proceed to a hearing.

The implementation of HR Acuity platform will enable us to keep track of EMC, grievances, and ADA cases. It will also assist in identifying trends so the Employee Relations team can provide targeted training in areas of need.

Evaluation Updates

We had a great start to the 23-24 SY. TKES (Teacher Keys Evaluation System) Training and Credentialing was a success. There were thirteen (13) newly appointed principals, and they all successfully passed the credentialing exam.

A tracking system has been implemented to track Area Superintendents' and building leaders' completion of the TKES and LKES Credentialing Review. By Law, all building leaders and Area Superintendents must complete the credentialing review prior to conducting evaluations. This system enables the Evaluations Coordinator to easily identify leaders who have not completed the review so they can be notified of non-compliance. Evaluative rights are removed until the review is complete.

DKES (DeKalb Keys Effectiveness System) Orientation Training was also a success. There were over 100 attendees present. To serve district leaders and staff more efficiently, the use of the new evaluations email, performance_evaluations@dekalbschoolsga.org, is encouraged rather than sending email directly to Ms. Sims. This allows several team members who support evaluations to view emails in one place and reduce response times.

(N/A) (Director of Ignite Dekalb Teacher Residency)

The mission of the IGNITE DeKalb Teacher Residency Program is to impact student achievement in DeKalb County School District by developing a pipeline of highly qualified, specially-trained teachers who are equipped with the content knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and cultural competence necessary to thrive as an urban educator.

Presentations were made during BOE member mini sessions September 19-21, 2023. RFPs are scheduled for review from university partners and recruitment firms during the week of September 25, 2023. Once selected the university partner will be presented at the Board of Education meeting in October 2023 for approval. Program launch scheduled for January 2024.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter
Chief Operating Officer

The Operations Division worked diligently throughout the summer to provide safe, clean, and comfortable schools and continues to provide responsive service to support our facilities. The Transportation Department transports over 60,000 students (twice) daily including Special Needs Student, McKinney Vento Students, students who attend choice schools, charter schools and home schools. Prior to 2021, DCSD employed approximately 900 bus drivers, this year, DCSD employs approximately 600 bus drivers. This 30% decrease in staffing continues to be a challenge and therefore, a review of priority transportation services is being conducted. The Design and Construction Unit is currently tracking over 60 capital improvement projects in active phase and the Planning and Programming Unit is scheduling an additional 20 projects to become active. Efforts are underway to begin the next visioning exercise to serve as a guiding document to guide the efforts of future capital projects

Additional work is being conducted on researching the feasibility of electric and alternative fuel vehicles to the fleet. Plans on constructing contemporary fleet maintenance infrastructure is underway and the procurement of new school buses is in process. The Facilities Use Policy and Regulation is currently being reviewed and revised to align with associated laws and practices.

Antwyn Brown
Deputy Chief Operations Officer

The Deputy Chief Operations Office has been facilitating several “Chief Chats” with a variety of frontline Operations Employees. “Chief Chats” are monthly talks comprised of 6-8 randomly chosen frontline employees that meet directly with the COO and provide feedback on employee concerns, opportunities for improvements, and other considerations. This valuable information is evaluated and shared with Division Leadership and action plans created where opportunities are feasible. Additional opportunities for employee input are also found in the monthly DMAC meeting and Auxiliary Committee meeting, as well as individually requested open-door meetings.

Continual work and efforts to develop an Intergovernmental Agreement with local municipalities is ongoing. Additionally, the current Community Use of Facilities Policy (KG) and associated Regulation (KG-R) is currently being reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the Equal Access Amendment,

Fee Structure, and the guiding principles supportive of H-PRIDE. A revised draft is near completion and will be shared soon.

Dr. Connie Walker

Executive Director of School Nutrition Services

School Nutrition Services continues to serve nutritious meals and infuse new food items requested through previous student "taste tests". Free and Reduced Lunch form processing continues and will convert to the verification process on October 1st.

Kitchen Equipment Repair has been identified as an area needing additional resources and has recently organized support from the Facilities Services department. The two departments are working cooperatively to address immediate repairs and plan for long-term replacement items. We are awaiting on the arrival of over \$1 million of new Kitchen Equipment which will be installed upon receipt.

Additional Division support with logistics services is also being provided to School Nutrition Services to accommodate temporary vacant SNS positions.

Bernardo Brown

Director of Student Transportation

Daily effort continues with routing needs and scheduling modifications as the bus driver challenge continues. The team is currently working on proposing a "Routing Priority of Service" document to align resources that can be committed given the demand. This document will be available to share by November 1 and will serve as the guideline to optimize the routing program and ensure commitments can be consistently met.

Additionally, reorganization of the transportation department is in the process to meet the new district structure of "areas". As a result, the transportation department will use a central approach for communication and overall routing processes. It is anticipated the reorganization will be finalized and implemented by Spring 2024.

Cedric Burse

Director of Fleet & Fleet Maintenance

The Fleet Maintenance Department continues to meet mandated inspections, services, and repairs despite several mechanic vacancies. Installation of new lifts continues and early planning on needed infrastructure is underway. The infrastructure planning contemplates the construction of new service facilities to meet contemporary standards and norms and also be adaptable to service alternative fuel and electric buses.

Further effort, research, and planning continues the feasibility and extent to include electric vehicles in the fleet. The acquiring of 4 full electric maintenance vehicles is in procurement. These vehicles will be used to identify and learn needed infrastructure, develop processes and assess feasibility. A \$22 million federal grant to purchase up to 50 buses electric buses and associated charging equipment has been submitted.

Richard Boyd**Director of Design and Construction**

The Design & Construction Department continues to manage and track over 60 construction projects in an active phase. The focus is now turning toward coordination efforts with Principals and Schools for Summer 2024 projects including 18 projects that are eligible for ESSER Reimbursement.

ACERM has added an additional Project Manager to expand project capacity for E-SPLOST V and VI projects.

Bobby Moncrief**Director of Facilities Services**

The Facilities Services Department continues addressing and completing work tickets, Since August 7th, 2023, 2,689 have been completed. Facilities Services is working diligently to address work tickets in a responsive manner and remain committed to quality work performed.

In addition to the daily work, Facilities Services has recently assumed the Kitchen Equipment Repair Operation from School Nutrition Services and are working diligently to address much needed repairs. Facilities Services is looking forward to conducting continual inspections as a part of a new quality assurance practice to support healthy and clean schools beginning November 1st, 2023. Evaluative tools and database creation are in finalization and are being tested for accuracy and useability.

Keith Singleton**Director of Business Services**

Collaborative and cooperative work between the Business Services and Finance continues to review and revise the requisition, purchase order, and accounts payable processes. Recent efforts have shown results in our goal of reaching a “net 30” status on payment to vendors.

A solicitation for Maintenance/warehouse storefront operations is public. The goal is to receive proposals from vendors to set up supply store operations in support of the Facilities Services and Warehouse operations. This scenario is similar in model to the NAPA contract currently utilized by the Fleet Maintenance Department and is intended to expedite supply chain challenges by providing parts and materials needed for Facilities Services efficiency.

Business Services payroll operations is working closely with the MUNIS team in anticipation of the upcoming October “Go Live” payroll date for 12-month employees. Staff continues working diligently to ensure a smooth, accurate, and timely transition of the MUNIS supported payroll function for many of the Operations Division 12-month employees.

Hans Williams**Director of Planning & E-SPLOST/CIP Programming**

The Planning Department continues to evaluate data and prepare for the upcoming FTE count. This count is a major data component for calculating enrollment projections. These enrollment projections

will be shared with the Board no later than January 2024 along with all other district divisions to support School Year 2024-2025 planning.

The E-SPLOST/CIP Programming operation continues to work with internal and external resources to plan budgets and schedules in response to current construction market conditions. Additionally, work continues with the implementation of the KAHUA Project Management Information System. We anticipate the PMIS being operational by January 2024 as planned on the schedule.

Mr. Byron Schueneman
Chief Financial Officer

Staffing / Critical Vacancies:

Deputy Chief Financial Officer – this position is posted. The resume review process is set for September 29th.

Executive Director of Budgets – Finance sent the approved ORHR form to HR and requested this position to be posted.

High Level Priorities:

- Year End Close – Finance successfully closed FY23 books on Tuesday September 26th.
- Financial Reporting – The FY23 DE-046A (trial balance detail) to GaDOE, Transparency in Government (TIGA) to Georgia Department of Audits. Both are due September 30th.
- Maudlin & Jenkins – The contract for the new auditing firm has been finalized and executed. Next thing on the list is to transmit the DE-046A and TIGA files so they can begin preparing our financial statements for FY23.
- ERP Implementation – Human Resources/Payroll - the team continues to rinse, wash and repeat prior month payrolls. The team will catch up and process all 12-month employee payroll from Munis on 10/15/23. We continue to test integrations and reports to third party vendors and hammer out new standard operating procedures for processing and posting payroll to the general ledger, transferring cash, entering journal entries and processing other payroll related payments (SHBP/TRS/State & Federal Taxes etc...)
- RAM/P - We are working heavily with Allovue to codify existing RAM/P into Allovue's "Allocation" tool. The goal is to 1. Project FTE for FY25. This can be estimated once October's FTE is complete. 2. Use the projected FTE to generate earned allotments. 3. Distribute allotments to schools and departments using Allovue's Allocate. 4. Have schools and departments use their allocations to build staffing models. 5. Use the staffing models to build the FY25 budget.

Lance McConkey
Comptroller

Staffing / Critical Vacancies:

- Director of Financial Reporting.
- Accounting Manager III (effective October 13, 2023).

Professional Development:

- Accounting team attending the GGFOA (Georgia Government Finance Officers Association) conference in Athens, GA October 8-11, 2023.
- 28 Bookkeepers attending the 2nd cohort of the UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government's School Financial Accounting Personnel Certificate Program. 7 courses will be held in Fall 2023. I can provide a list if wanted.

High Level Priorities:

- Finalize capital assets, long term debt for FY23
- FY23 Year End Close
- Prepare financial reporting for GaDOE (DE-046) by September 30th
- Prepare financial reporting for DOAA (TIGA) by September 30th.
- Completion reports for federal programs are due September 30, 2023.
- Payment of the FY24 GOLD Case payment - due October 12, 2023. Plan to pay Monday, October 2, 2023.
- Finalization of the Treasury/Cash Management SOP - deadline October 6, 2023.
- Completion of safe installations - collaboration with Operations, School Bookkeepers, Loomis.
- Student Activity Module - Implementation and Training - collaboration with Tyler/Munis consultant - Steven Meyer, LSA Team, Bookkeepers.
- Kick-off FSP and audit for FY 2023 - collaboration with M&J and other divisions.

Glinton Darien
Director of Risk Management

Claim Settlement Project:

First, the goal of this project is to make the District's Excess Workers' Compensation Claims Portfolio more attractive to insurance companies. This will result in more interest by various insurance companies that will inevitably achieve a lower premium payout by the District.

Second, the next step of this project is to identify and settle more claims. An increase in the number of claims settled will reduce the District's exposure to continuing attorneys' fees and costs related to the on-going payment of income benefits to employees and medical expenses for employees.

Third, an analysis of various files has illustrated that the longer a claim is open, the greater the chances are of the District's exposure increasing. This is due to allegation by the claimant of super-added injuries, or the development of catastrophic injuries based on the initial work-related injury. Settlement of workers' compensation claims will avoid high payouts in the future for medical costs, legal invoices, and income benefits which increase over the years. Risk Management has recently presented, through defense counsel, the request to settle cases to the Board of Education during its Executive Session.

Risk Reduction Strategies Project:

First, the goal of this project is the prevention of injuries to students and to employees. This will result in a safer environment for students and employees as well as a reduction in the number of claims filed.

Second, the next step of this project is to further analyze the causes of injuries then implement steps to eliminate the risk of injury to students and employees. Risk Management will continue its training of employees to reduce work injuries. This training will focus on specific ways to decrease injuries based on the various claims received where employees were engaged in risky activities. Most recently, as a part of the mandated employee training in Canvas, which was due September 18, 2023, Risk Management submitted a training module which covered prevention of employee work accidents.

Third, with respect to student injuries, Risk Management will continue its efforts to provide parents with information regarding student accident insurance that can be purchased by the parents. Although Risk Management worked with the Communications Department to provide notices to parents, at the end of last month, about the increased number of District approved companies which provide accident insurance policies that can be purchased by parents, Risk Management has found, through its discussions with parents, that many parents did not fully understand the notices. Therefore, Risk Management will collaborate with schools and area superintendents directly regarding further dissemination of this information to parents.

Carla Smith

ED of Vendor Services

High Level priorities for the month:

Staffing:

Vendor Services is in the process of onboarding the following positions:

- Procurement Manager III -Non-capital
- Procurement Manager I –Capital
- Procurement Manager I -Non-Capital

Interviews have been held and recommendations made for the following positions:

- Contract Administrator

Year End Close:

Vendor Services has been working with accounting on addressing open purchase orders, p-card transactions, employee expense claims, contracts, invoices to help ensure a smooth year-end close for FY23.

Operations Process Improvements:

- Vendor Services meets weekly with the operations managers to identify areas of concern with entering requisitions, contract renewals, vendor payments, and solicitations.
- We have also prepared a “How to do Business with DCSD” event with the goal of expanding purchasing to local small businesses. Advertisement is on the DCSD website and placed on the newspaper.
- “TidBits” communication was emailed to bookkeepers and support staff, listing informative information regarding the process and procedures for Pcards, requisition processing, travel, vendor registration, and documents from the departments.

RFP Update: the following four RFP’s are active!

- RFP 24-561 DeKalb Teacher Residency University Partner
- RFP 24-562 DeKalb Paraprofessional to Teacher Residency Education Program
- RFP 24-563 DeKalb Teacher Residency Recruitment Firm
- RFP 24-566 Human Resources Professional Service

Interim Chief Larry Wright
Executive Director of Public Safety

During the 2022- 2023 school year, DCSD Public Safety solicited and reviewed several vendors on safety and security products to help enhance Dekalb County School District security needs. This was an importance to promote a positive learning environment that allows individuals to thrive without fear. Therefore, we have implemented more safety initiatives this 2023- 2024 school year. The Department of Public Safety worked and collaborated with other DCSD Divisions and vendors to start two new safety initiatives. Those initiatives are the Evolv Walk-Through Detection System and Centegix (Crisis Alert). By initiating those programs, it will help provide a secure and safety environment for all Dekalb County students, faculty/staff members, and Stakeholders.

Evolv Walk-Through Weapon Detection

The Evolv Systems has been installed in all middle and high schools in Dekalb County School District. First, site visits were conducted to strategically place the systems in the best location properly service the schools. Then the systems were delivered, and the implementation phase was done prior to the start of school. Between 09/07/2023 and 09/22/2023 there have been 2,387,883 visitors to walk through the Evolv systems with over 460,062 alerts with an average clear rate of 82 %. This good news does show the operations of the system are detecting and deterring weapons from entering the schools. There will be systems placed at all Dekalb Stadiums, Wadsworth, DECA, and additional systems at 4 high schools.

Centegix

The installation of Centegix also known as Crisis Alert, has been completed in all schools and centers in the district. The badges and hardware have been assigned to each school and center. As a result, Centegix has given the district an immediate response for any crisis by administrators or first responders (SROs). This was collaborative effort by DCSD IT, school administration and public safety. Most alerts have been administrative issues such as fights and medical responses. However, there have been several false alerts due to employee error and they are retrained. All new employees are trained by administration or designee using the “train the trainer” model.