

SUPERINTENDENT DR. DEVON HORTON

90-DAY PLAN

DeKalb County School District

Dr. Devon Horton
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Diijon DaCosta Sr.
District 6 (Board Chair)

Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce
District 3 (Vice Chair)

Mrs. Anna Hill
District 1

Mrs. Whitney McGinniss
District 2

Ms. Allyson Gevertz
District 4

Mrs. Vickie B. Turner
District 5

Dr. Joyce Morley
District 7

DeKalb County™
School District

Dear DeKalb County Community Members,

As your new Superintendent of the DeKalb County School District, I am honored to have the opportunity to serve you and your children. Over the years, I have had the privilege of working with various school districts across the country, but I must confess that there is something distinctive about the DeKalb County community. I am impressed by the level of commitment to academic excellence, the passion for student success, and the unwavering support for public education.

I want to assure you that my top priority is to maintain these fundamental values while also improving and strengthening our educational system. I understand that we are navigating unprecedented times, and this calls for informed and innovative leadership. For this reason, I will be working tirelessly to ensure that our students receive the best possible education in a safe and welcoming environment.

My vision for the DeKalb County School District includes a commitment to equity and inclusion in every aspect of our work. I believe that all students should have access to high-quality education regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. Therefore, I will prioritize initiatives aimed at closing the achievement gap, promoting diversity and cultural awareness, and providing resources to underserved communities.

In addition to our students, I will be partnering with parents, educators, and community leaders to make our schools more responsive to the needs of the community. This includes promoting parental engagement, supporting teacher development, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

I look forward to listening to your ideas, concerns, and feedback as we work together to build a brighter future for our students. Please do not hesitate to contact me to share your thoughts or to learn more about our plans and strategies for the upcoming school year. Together, we can create a DeKalb County School District that is the flagship district of the nation.



Sincerely,

Devon Q. Horton Ed.D.

Devon Q. Horton Ed.D.
Superintendent, DeKalb County School District

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT ACTIVITIES

- Schedule meeting with the Board Chair to plan an entry and post 90-day retreat.
- Meet with each Board member individually to better understand their observation of where we are currently and recommendations for next steps.
- Review engagement plan and schedule any joint engagement opportunities.
- Review current policies and prepare to discuss any upcoming revisions.
- Initiate the strategic planning process.
- Establish communication and evaluation protocol.
- Provide Board with monthly progress updates on the entry plan activities.



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PRELIMINARY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Board and superintendent retreat.
- Build out Board agreement.
- Feedback from engagement activities.
- Communication and evaluation protocol.

Vision: to inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence.
Mission: to ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and lifelong learning.
Motto: Inspire. Achieve. Excel.

Personal Belief:

"Students do not fail, it's the systems that we create that fail students"

Core Values:

Humanization:
Humanization is a core value for our school district that emphasizes the importance of treating all individuals with dignity, respect, and compassion. We recognize that every student, teacher, staff member, and community member is unique and has their own needs, strengths, and challenges. It promotes a culture of empathy, inclusion, and belonging, where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive. It fosters authentic connections, meaningful relationships, and a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of all.

Inspire:
We believe that inspiration is a powerful force for positive change, and we are committed to fostering an environment that inspires our students, faculty, and staff to reach their full potential. We strive to inspire creativity, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning in all members of our community, and we celebrate the achievements and contributions of those who inspire others to greatness.

Righteousness:
Righteousness refers to the quality of being morally right and just here in DeKalb. As a core value in our school district, righteousness would emphasize the importance of ethical behavior and personal responsibility for making decisions that benefit the greater good. We will encourage students and staff to act with integrity, honesty, and fairness, while promoting respect for diversity and empathy for others.

Excellence:
Excellence is the goal and standard for our district, encapsulating the drive towards achieving the highest quality in everything we do. From the education we provide to the relationships we build, we are committed to pursuing excellence as we strive to realize our vision for success. It is our unwavering dedication to excellence that sets us apart and distinguishes us as a community of learners and achievers.

Pre-entry

The transition team will consist of individuals who possess a variety of skills and experiences that align with the goals of the entry plan. The team may include members from the DCSD Board, district and school leaders, community partners, and other stakeholders. The team will work together to gather information about the district and its surrounding community, including demographics, school and district data, accomplishments and challenges, and current initiatives.

The superintendent will also work closely with the DCSD Board to gain insight into their priorities and vision for the district. This will include attending Board meetings, reviewing policies and initiatives, and engaging in conversations with individual Board members.

To prepare for the official start date, the superintendent will dedicate non-work hours to reviewing important documents related to the district, including the strategic plan, budget, and curriculum. Additionally, the superintendent will engage in a political mapping exercise to identify key stakeholders in the community and schedule introductory meetings with them.

Finally, I will develop a comprehensive communication plan to introduce themselves to the DCSD community and generate excitement for upcoming listening and learning activities. This may include social media posts, press releases, and community events. By engaging in these pre-entry activities, the we can ensure a smooth transition and establish a strong foundation for my leadership in the district.



Entry Plan and Purpose:

The purpose of the 90-day Entry plan is a crucial roadmap for me to get acquainted with the district's culture, strengths, and challenges. The plan helps me to connect our vision, mission, and goals. It also serves as a tool for building relationships with various stakeholders, such as students, staff, parents, and community members. Additionally, the plan provides an opportunity to assess the current state of the district, identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement, and develop strategies to celebrate or address them. Ultimately, the Superintendent 90-day Entry plan aims to set a solid foundation for my leadership and success in the DeKalb County School District.





ENGAGE

As a new Superintendent, engaging the district community within the first 30 days is essential for building a strong relationship with stakeholders. Here are some steps I can take to foster community engagement. Meet with key stakeholders: I will schedule meetings with key stakeholders such as school board members, principals, staff, parents, and community leaders. These meetings will allow me to introduce myself, listen to their concerns and ideas, and understand the district's culture and priorities. Host meet-and-greet events: I will organize informal events where I can meet with parents, students, and community members in a relaxed setting. These events can be held at local schools, community centers, or parks, and will provide an opportunity for people to get to know me and ask questions.

EXPLORE

I will design and distribute surveys to gather feedback from parents, students, and staff about their experience in the district. The results of these surveys will help identify strengths and areas for improvement and guide my decision-making process. I will attend community events such as sports games, concerts, and other cultural events to show my support for the district and connect with families and community members.

EMPOWER

I will use social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn to share updates, news, and events with the district community. Social media is an excellent tool to engage with a large audience and promote transparency and open communication. I will partner with local businesses and organizations to create mutually beneficial partnerships that support the district's mission and goals. This will help to build relationships with the community and show that the district is committed to working in partnership with them.

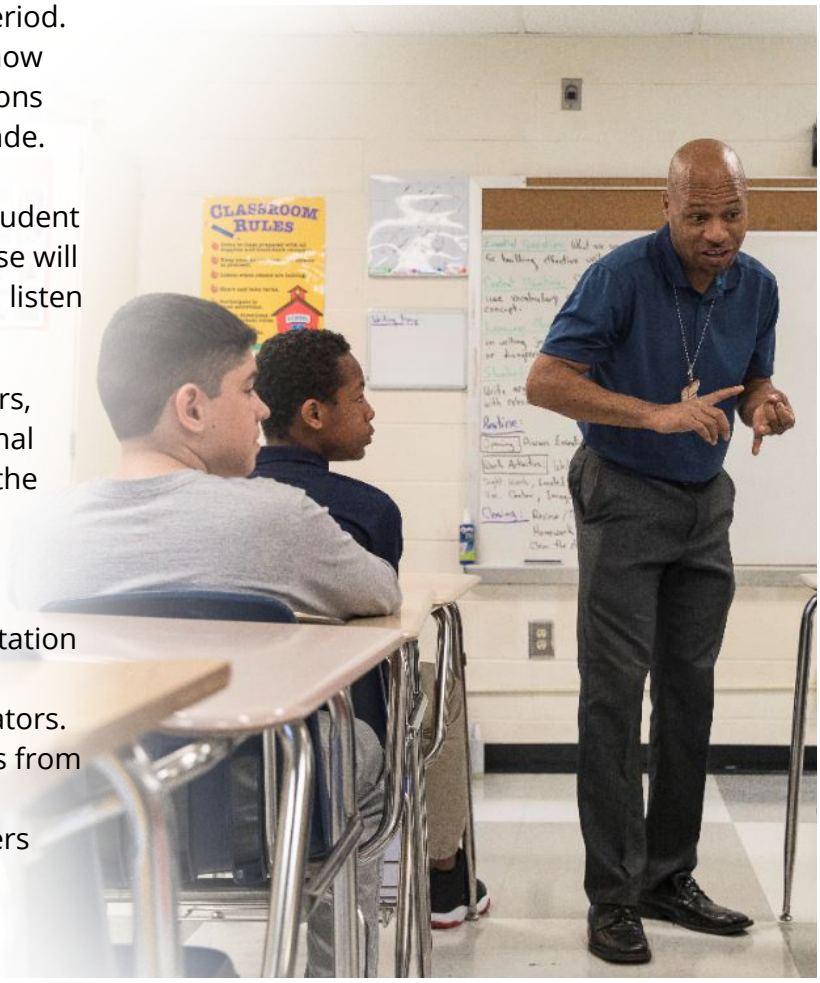
EXECUTE

As the new Superintendent of the DeKalb County School District, I have built this 90 day entry plan to improve the quality of transition. I have met with and will continue to meet with our Board, teachers, leaders, staff, parents, community members and students to gain insights into the strengths and challenges of the district. I will establish an accountability system to monitor progress. We will improve communication and transparency with stakeholders, implement innovative teaching methods, and increase funding for teacher development. By the end of the 90 days, we will have made significant progress toward our goal of building a transformational plan to accelerate Dekalb County School District into a National model district.

Engage (Pre-work)

Look, Listen and Learn:

This phase is best considered a fact gathering time period. It is important to gather as much information about how the district works as possible, so that informed decisions about what works and what does not work can be made. The idea is to ensure all actions taken are in the best interest of the district and are designed to increase student achievement and operational efficiency. The first phase will last approximately 30 days, but I will continue to look, listen and learn. **(Using the Keep- Stop & Start protocol)**



- Meet with DeKalb County School Board members, school leaders and Interview internal and external stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the district's strengths and weaknesses.
- Complete a review of internal documents and possibly review audits of Facilities, Finance Department, Curriculum Department, Transportation and Personnel.
- Meet with the the Organization of DeKalb Educators.
- Meet with cohorts of students, staff and parents from each region.
- Schedule meetings with key community members and organizations, business owners, university partners, faith leaders and all city government officials.

Establish an effective working relationship with all staff and the Board.

- Establish and communicate expectations for effective Board working relationships with special attention to the development of shared values, beliefs, organizational structure, areas of improvement, professional development and accountability criteria.
- Work to build positive relationships with the Board by instituting bi weekly check-ins with all board members and weekly meetings with Board Chair and Vice chair
- Meet with Board members to determine how the Board envisions working in partnership with executive staff. Establish a process, structure, timeline and metric system to measure and monitor strategic plan success and system improvements.
- Establish regular meeting times for reviewing and constructing board agendas, agenda review processes and productivity of Board Meetings.
- Visit various community, religious and civic organizations and functions.

Engage

Determine how district-wide systems contribute equitably to student achievement and ensure college/career readiness.

- Meet with district personnel to obtain an overview of areas of responsibility, significant or potential problems in each area of responsibility and necessary decisions to be made in 30 days, 65 days and 100 days.
- Meet with district personnel, stakeholders and the community to gather accurate situational analysis data to understand the DeKalb County School District's structural capabilities and limitations.
- Assess data to understand the needs of schools, leaders, teachers, students and gaps in services provided to meet those needs.
- Establish criteria for increased student achievement and ensuring college and career readiness.
- Develop whole child priorities for creating a safe, trauma informed, healthy and culturally responsive atmosphere.
- Collaborate with the DCSD instructional leadership team to discuss district-wide instructional systems for achievement data, rigor, curriculum alignment, professional development, progress monitoring and instructional feedback/coaching expectations.
- Collaborate with the School Board and Finance team to review the following: accounting systems, contracts, management of grants, revenues, spending, fiscal stability, procurement procedures and protocols.
- Review how the district creates an environment where staff members thrive by showing courtesy, dignity, respect, professionalism and humanization,
- Review opportunities for staff to grow and develop by offering individualized professional development.
- Review how DCSD recruits and retains top talent throughout the city, state and nation.
- Conduct an inventory of technology to assess alignment to curriculum and 21st century learning standards.
- Gather data on students and staff mindsets of the work ahead.

Establish an effective working relationship with all staff and board.

- Present 90-day plan and obtain feedback.
- Create collective goals and agree on criteria for assessing achievement of those goals.
- Establish methods for increasing trust, transparency, communication and mechanisms for cultivating mutual growth.
- Review problem solving structures. (Situational analysis)
- Complete an overview of organizational structures and the creation of the RACI chart that clearly lays out whose responsible, accountable, consulted, and Informed.



Explore (Days 1 to 30)

1. Collect data on student performance, including standardized test scores, graduation rates, college acceptance rates, and attendance rates. This data should be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, exceptional needs, and other key characteristics.
2. Analyze the data to determine whether there are any disparities in student outcomes across different groups. Use this information to identify areas that may require additional support and resources.
3. Use the data to determine how funds and resources should be allocated to ensure equitable outcomes for all students. Consider using evidence-based practices that have been shown to improve student achievement.
4. Analyze how investments in different programs and interventions have impacted student achievement and whether they have achieved their intended goals.
5. Based on the analysis, identify any areas where the budget allocation methodologies can be improved to better support student outcomes.
6. Use the data and analysis to develop credible forecasts and multi-year budgets under various "if/then" scenarios with a focus on sustainability.
7. Develop policies and practices to ensure equity in spend with small and minority-owned business enterprises.
8. Develop a plan to socialize district practices regarding small business enterprises to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the policies and procedures in place.
9. Develop a dashboard of baseline performance data to track progress over time and provide regular updates to stakeholders.
10. Provide semi-annual reports of district activity to keep stakeholders informed of progress and identify areas for improvement



Internal Evaluation: Assessing Student Performance and Infrastructure

Evaluation of Student Performance

To ensure equity in education outcomes, we will conduct an internal evaluation of student performance data across the DeKalb County School District. The evaluation will include disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, exceptional needs, and other key characteristics. This information will guide us in determining funding, resource allocation, and next steps.

Targeted Data

Our evaluation will include data on literacy, numeracy, and other core subjects, socioeconomic factors, mobility, attendance, kindergarten readiness, English Learner reclassification rates, post-secondary readiness, graduation and dropout rates, A-G “C” or better on-track rates, grades, metrics for social-emotional learning, crime incidents by neighborhood, and family or caretaker level of educational attainment.

Assessing Infrastructure for College and Career Readiness

We will evaluate the district's infrastructure to support students' post-secondary success. Our evaluation will examine counselor ratios, including academic and college counselors, to ensure that all high school students receive help in developing a personalized post-secondary success plan. We will also review school calendars and dates of available student outcome data to identify opportunities to hold regular district-level data discussions with principals and executive staff. Additionally, we will make recommendations to improve the Individualized Graduation Plan and Career Pathway requirement for high school students.

Broad Fiscal Analysis

We will conduct a comprehensive fiscal review of the district's funding conditions, practices, and challenges. Our objective is to identify equitable and efficient ways of using district funding to drive student achievement and wellbeing. This analysis will include an assessment of fiscal resources and staff allocation to support schools. We will also provide a detailed report on the difference between budgeted and spent dollars to ensure effective use and better decision-making. This report will help us understand how investments improve student achievement, improve budget allocation methodologies, and ensure equity across the DeKalb County School District in terms of spending with small and minority-owned business enterprises. We will create a dashboard of baseline performance data and provide a semi-annual report of district activity.

Internal Evaluation: Environmental Safety and Capital Improvement

Assessment of Environmental Liabilities

We will conduct a comprehensive analysis of potential environmental dangers in and around our school communities. Our plan is to establish the “Know Your Air Network,” which is a sensor network in schools to provide real-time air quality data for employees, students, parents, and the entire community. We will also conduct surveys to identify environmental hazards in or near schools and develop action plans for the highest priority findings.

Ensuring Safe Passages to and from School

To ensure the physical and emotional safety of our students, we will explore and analyze the challenges that students face when coming to and from school. We will collaborate with community-based organizations to ensure students have safe routes to and from school. We will identify community needs and respond accordingly.

Capital Improvement Plan

Our focus is to improve district facilities to better serve students, families, and employees. We will assess the effectiveness of current investments, facilities, and assets and identify opportunities to optimize and sustain them. Our plan includes the development of a four-year "here and now" plan that looks at overall capital improvement needs, funding options, and potential partnerships to support these efforts.



Empower (Days 31 to 60)

As I enter into my new role as Superintendent in the DeKalb County School District, I know that a strong communication plan is essential. I'll make it my priority to establish open and transparent channels of communication with all stakeholders, including board, teachers, parents, students, and community members. By listening to their concerns and ideas, we will be able to develop a shared vision for the district and work collaboratively towards achieving our goals. With effective communication, we will build trust, foster engagement, and create positive change in the lives of our students.

Internal Communication	External Communication
Weekly communication to School Board	Weekly Good news sharing
Bi-weekly meetings with each Board Member	Multiple Social Media updates and highlights
Weekly Meeting with Board Chair	Bi-monthly community Chat and Chews in neighborhood
Weekly check ins with Teacher Association leadership	Weekly Chat & Chew at a school
Student Superintendent Advisory Committee	3 school visits per week
Weekly message to district leaders	Conversation with the Superintendent video series
Monthly Central office gatherings	Parent Superintendent Advisory Committee (4 per Region)
Central office leaders collaborative	BPAC committee participant
Leaders Collaborative	Gender Support group participant
Establish and Build out Board/Superintendent communication plan and Adopt	Bi annual Dekalb in action Reports
	All Communications translated in the top three languages.

Execute (Days 61 and Beyond)

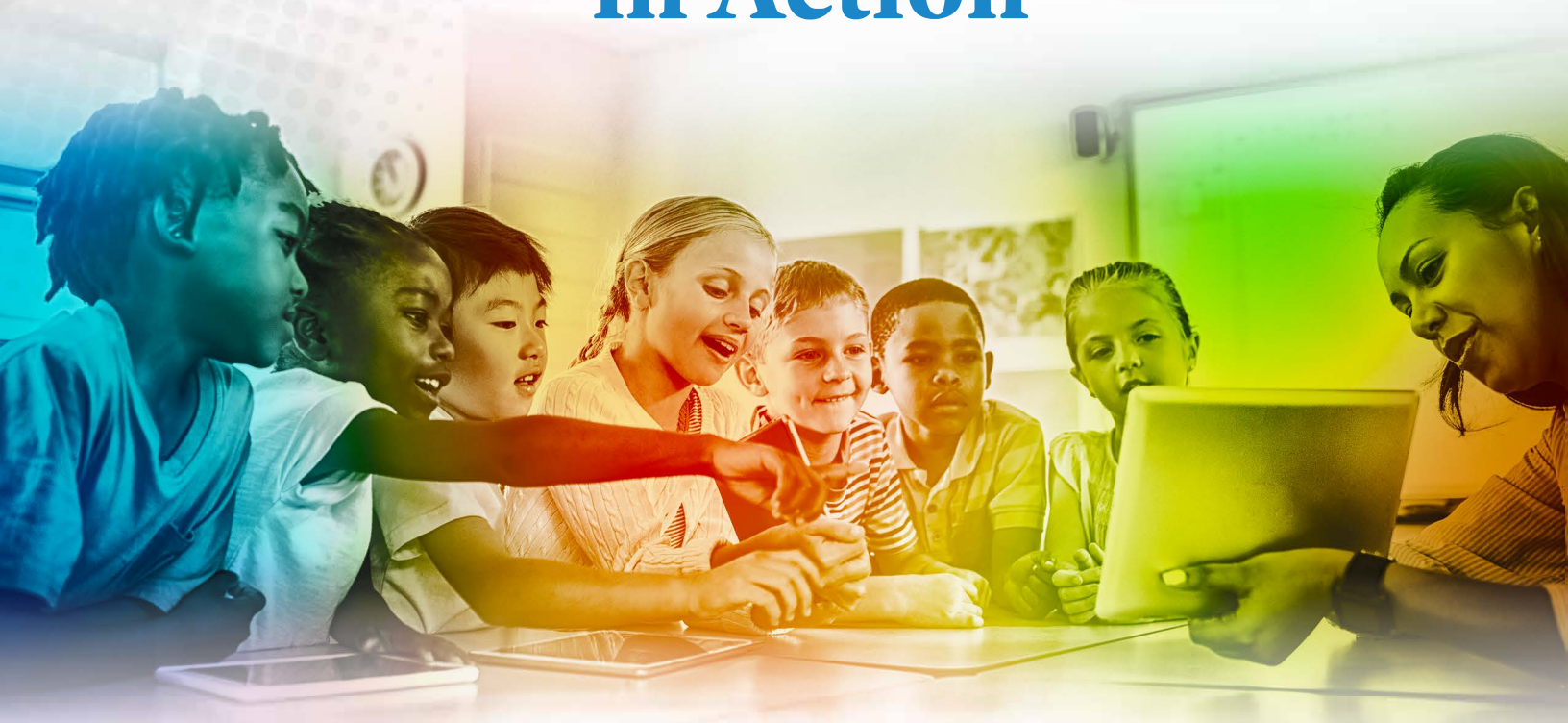
STRATEGY MAP

The Strategy Map is a strategic communications tool in the form of a diagram that is used to capture and communicate how the Strategic Goal Areas are being pursued by the DeKalb County School District. The Strategy Map links the Strategic Goal Areas and Performance Objectives in cause and effect relationships with each other. Utilizing the Strategy Map, the alignment among divisions and schools is established and effective implementation of the DeKalb County School District Strategic Plan is realized.

GOAL AREAS	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES			
Student Success with Equity and Access	Improve student mastery of learning standards	Provide academically rigorous courses and/or pathways	Increase graduation rate	
Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	Increase the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement experiences	Improve opportunities for innovative stakeholder collaboration	Improve and ensure effective district internal and external communication	
Staff Effectiveness	Recruit highly qualified staff	Develop high performing staff	Retain highly effective staff	
Culture and Climate	Create and maintain a safe, orderly, positive learning environment for all	Establish and maintain clear and high expectations for excellence for all stakeholders	Cultivate culturally responsive learning environments for all	Provide support for social and emotional learning for all
Organizational Excellence	Ensure excellent financial management	Ensure efficient use of resources		
Facilities	Improve and maintain facility conditions	Ensure that educational facilities meet programmatic needs	Develop and increase sustainable funding for facilities	

DeKalb County School District

MIRACLES in Action



- **M** Motion Towards Equity
- **I** Improved Instructional Core
- **R** Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study
- **A** Attract and Retain High Quality Staff
- **C** Commitment to Accountability
- **L** Learning Environments that Supports Student Success
- **E** Establish Expected Targets Driven by Results
- **S** Sound Fiscal Stewardship

*The **MIRACLES** framework is a district improvement plan strategy that has been designed to drive action for the strategic plan movement. This framework has a comprehensive approach to ensure that all students receive equitable and high-quality education. This framework focuses on eight key tenets. To achieve success, districts must build systems of accountability that leads to outcomes for continuous improvement. This work has to be transpired in unison to support each other, and the **MIRACLES** framework provides a systematic and cohesive approach to make this possible.*

Motion Toward Equity: Culture of collaboration and trust that allows for staff and community engagement to increase student success for ALL students regardless of social economic, race, gender and or ability. (SG 2: Stakeholder engagement and communication) ; (SG 4: Culture and Climate)

Objectives:

- **Adoption of Equity Taxonomy: Physical Integration- Social and emotional Engagement- Opportunity to Learn- Instructional excellence- Engaged and inspired learners**
- Create a community of collaboration focused on ALL students while prioritizing our marginalized students and families
- Engage parents and community partners using Dr. Karen Mapp "Dual Capacity Building Framework"
- Establish and Coordinate Community Wrap Around Services
- Demonstrating Cultural Competence in Personal, Professional Behaviors, and Organizational Policies and Practices
- **Review of districts process to review policies for inequities**

Improved Instructional Core: Access to grade-level, State Standards aligned tasks for Tier 1 instruction that are rigorous and improve learning for ALL Learners. (SG 1: Student success with Equity and Access)

Objectives:

- Adoption of Equity Taxonomy: Physical Integration- Social and emotional Engagement- Opportunity to Learn- Instructional excellence- Engaged and inspired learners
- Targeted professional learning that ensures educators' development in instructional strategies to support ALL students
- Deliberate use of district wide adopted teaching Framework and implementation of the DCSD way as it relates to improving the Instructional Core
- Ensure ALL curricular resources are aligned to rigorous, college and career standards
- Establish common instructional language integrating effective practices implemented by high-performing schools to inform district-level support
- **Review of current Early Childhood learning and opportunities for expansion**
- Use data and evidence to evaluate what is working and not working to improve instructional outcomes for students
- **Work with both local and Metro Atlanta businesses to partner with our amazing CATE programs to build Academies of DCSD.**

Relevant and Rigorous Course of Study: Lead system-wide professional learning and implementation support of cognitively rigorous and culturally responsive instructional practices. (SG 1: Student success with Equity and Access)



Objectives:

- **Review and enhance in school tutoring program at all Hope schools**
- Standards-based, college and career prep curriculum
- **Analyze and adopt SIOP training(Strategies for English Language Learners)**
- Aligned assessment system that identifies student academic needs
- Ensuring the DCSD Professional Development Framework is effective & aligned to Professional Learning Standards
- Viable SPED best practices and inclusive supports to engage ALL learners
- A comprehensive quality designed written English Learner Master Plan
- **Organize a series of meetings with local community and four year colleges to design programs for students to complete high school while also obtaining a free associates degree**

Attract and Retain High Quality Staff: Create structures and processes to support consistent and effective two-way communication with staff about district-level decisions and actions. (SG 3: Staff effectiveness)

Objectives:

- Utilizing a systematic structure to communicate district initiatives to ALL stakeholder groups
- Create an environment where staff members are valued
- Differentiated Professional Development Opportunities to support the growth and development of ALL staff
- Strategically recruit and retain diverse top talent throughout the district and state as well as nationally.
- Organizational structure built to best support student achievement with clear lines of Chain of Command
- **Work with the Organization of DeKalb Educators and the board to adopt either TURN or workforce collaboration framework**
- **Review all Higher ed relationships in order to form the needed partnerships for educator advancements for ALL staff**
- **Succession planning through Aspiring leaders prep program, Future Leaders and DCSD Teacher prep program**

Commitment to Accountability: Systemic practices with clearly defined mechanisms to measure impact or effectiveness. (SG 2: Stakeholder engagement and communication) (SG 5: Organizational excellence

Objectives:

- Strong leadership with high-functioning teams
- **Launch district wide Curriculum audit**
- **Review and assess current review of Board updates on Strategic plan priorities and plan for new one**
- **Build out of critical Equity progress indicators for multi year data reviews**
- **Designing of DCSD improvement plan as well as review school work plans**
- **Develop district wide Continuous Improvement plan that will include reviewing student data and walking through schools with an intentional priority**
- **Fully developed Communications plan for internal and external best practices in transparency, informational and celebration**
- **Review and design Standard Operations Procedures to ensure reliability, efficiency, and consistency for lifting quality standards in regular work activities around the following areas: Finance, Procurement, Technology, school safety and security and Onboarding**
- **Design and launch annual Legal conference for all district leaders and central office staff**
- **Review policy on Student assignment and make plans to begin the work**
- Well established systems to help develop and maintain high quality schools
- Quality written Policies that are reviewed often.
- Create viable Practices that align with Policies
- Systems and Structures will be guided by our district Policies and Practice guidelines.

Learning Environments that support Student Success: Lead system-wide professional learning and implementation support of restorative practices to create environments that are intellectually, physically and socially safe for learning. (SG 4: Culture and Climate)

Objectives:

- Shared understanding of the interconnectedness of Social emotional learning, Restorative Practices & Multiple tiers of Support
- Safe and orderly schools with the increased implementation for PBIS
- **Adoption of Restorative practices district wide**
- **Professional development for all Classified staff in de-escalation and relationship training**
- **Analyze and possibly adoption of Everyday labs to support Regions with attendance concerns**
- Culture and Climate plan to help schools create an environment where every stakeholder is set up to achieve their goals
- Trauma and Bullying prevention program to support all students including LGBTQ
- **Review current status of district wide safety plan**
- **Review current transportation structures and review parental navigation options**

Establish Expected Targets Driven by Results: Ask students and families directly about their goals and school experiences to inform ongoing strategy development, and adjust as appropriate.

Objectives:

- Track the progress of equity initiatives from the voice of students
- Aggressive, transparent goals for schools, teams, and individuals
- **Performance management systems with cycles of inquiry: Reality checks, Collaborative Calibration visits and Learning walks**
- Upgrade and develop a more comprehensive district wide data dashboard. (by district, grade level and school)
- **Creation of Equity Progress Indicators (Create a culture of public practice)**

Sound Fiscal Stewardship: Engage in long-term financial planning to ensure we have the necessary funding for our priorities on the instructional core (SG 5: Organizational excellence; (SG 6: Facilities)

Objectives:

- Audit to ensure that resources support district priorities
- Secure Additional Funding sources
- Work to build and support the repairing of the school facilities according to the approval of 700 million
- Strong accounting system where funding is easily identified
- Reliable management of grants
- Continued PD on spending
- Complete a deeper analysis of current Master facility plans
- High level procurement procedures and protocols





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