



**Strategic Planning  
Report  
2024 - 2029**

**DeKalb County School District  
Strategic Planning Report – 2024**

**Table of Contents:**

Strategic Planning Executive Summary	3
Proposed Vision, Mission & Belief Statements	5
Proposed Strategic Goal Areas & Performance Objectives	6
Strategy Map	8
Strategic Plan Steering Committee Members	9
Community Engagement Summary	9
Conclusion	12
Appendix	13

DeKalb County School District  
Strategic Planning Report – 2024

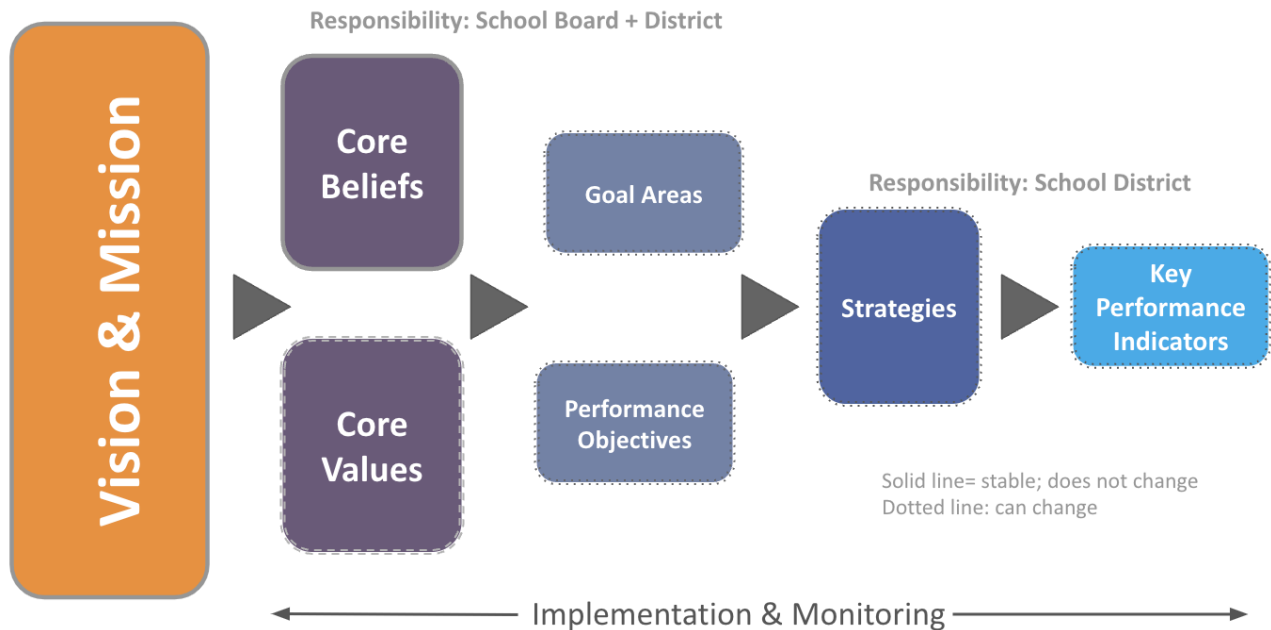
Strategic Planning Executive Summary

Phase I  
Strategic Plan Development

On September 11, 2023, the DCSD Board of Education approved a contract with the Insight Education Group to develop an updated strategic plan for the school district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for district and school improvement. Highlights of the process included:

- Development of a 33-member Steering Committee representing various stakeholder groups to develop the plan
- A comprehensive community engagement component to allow stakeholders to have a voice in the strategic improvement planning process through participation in surveys and focus groups
- A facilitated planning process that assisted the Steering Committee and Cabinet in analyzing the strengths and areas of growth for the school district and developing/refining the mission, vision, core beliefs, goal areas and performance objectives of the strategic improvement plan
- A facilitated process to work with district leaders on developing strategies and key performance indicators to implement the plan

Insight’s Strategic Planning Framework



# DeKalb County School District Strategic Planning Report – 2024



The three phases of the strategic planning process are the pre-work phase, design phase, and implementation phase. During the pre-work phase, Insight Education Group worked with the Steering Committee to conduct a needs assessment with a variety of stakeholders – students, parents, families, teachers, school and district support staff, school leaders, central office administrators, and community members – to gather feedback virtually and in person. Surveys and focus groups were conducted as part of this process.

As part of the data analysis, Insight worked with DCSD staff to access appropriate data to inform the strategic plan so that all decisions about the goal areas, performance objectives, and key performance indicators were grounded in the district’s data.

The last stage of the process focuses on the implementation of the strategies aligned to the goals and performance objectives of the plan. Insight will identify action steps throughout the process and conduct virtual check-ins to ensure that DCSD is reaching its intended outcomes. Insight will create a performance management process aligned to the Miracles framework to ensure ongoing monitoring and reporting about the progress of implementation.

# DeKalb County School District Strategic Planning Report – 2024

## Vision

### **Current DeKalb Vision Statement:**

To inspire our community of learners to achieve educational excellence

### **Proposed DeKalb Vision Statement:**

To prepare students for success as lifelong learners and responsible global citizens

## Mission

### **Current DeKalb Mission Statement:**

To ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and life-long learning

### **Proposed DeKalb Mission Statement:**

To promote the academic, social, and emotional growth of each student by fostering a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment

## Core Beliefs

### **Current DeKalb Belief Statements: (4)**

#### **We believe:**

- In making sure every decision supports quality teaching and learning
- In ensuring we meet every student's academic, social and emotional needs
- In embracing the cultural diversity of our community as a strength
- In holding everyone accountable for educational excellence

### **Proposed DeKalb Belief Statements: (4)**

#### **We believe in:**

- Meeting each student's academic, social, and emotional needs
- Supporting quality teaching and learning
- Creating equitable educational opportunities for all students
- Embracing cultural diversity

**DeKalb County School District**  
**Strategic Planning Report – 2024**

**Strategic Goal Areas and Performance Objectives**

**Goal Area 1: Student Academic Success with Equity and Access**

- 1.1 Increase proficiency rates in literacy on district and state assessments for all students.
- 1.2 Increase proficiency rates in numeracy on district and state assessments for all students.
- 1.3 Increase the 4- and 5-year cohort graduation rates.
- 1.4 Ensure all students have equitable access to and support for academic programs and career pathways.
- 1.5 Improve student academic growth as measured by the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI).
- 1.6 Enhance student proficiency in digital literacy skills using innovative technology.

**Goal Area 2: School, Family, and Community Engagement**

- 2.1 Strengthen family, school, and community engagement to establish clear, accessible, and relevant communication tailored to meet stakeholders' preferences.
- 2.2 Create opportunities for collaboration between the district, families, community partners, and businesses to foster partnerships to support district-wide initiatives.
- 2.3 Improve communication processes for stakeholders to ensure the flow of clear, timely, and relevant information.
- 2.4 Establish clear communication channels to effectively engage with multilingual families and provide equitable access to district and school information.

**Goal Area 3: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent**

- 3.1 Recruit and hire a diverse and highly qualified workforce that reflects a world-class, innovative talent pool.
- 3.2 Develop high performing staff to ensure quality teaching and learning outcomes, an innovative workforce, and visionary leaders.
- 3.3 Retain highly effective staff in critical needs positions to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of integral district programs and services.
- 3.4 Develop employee pipelines for key staff positions to ensure the long-term viability of essential programs and services.

**Goal Area 4: Culture and Climate**

- 4.1 Ensure all schools provide a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment for all students and staff.
- 4.2 Implement restorative practice structures in all schools and increase the number of schools using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs each year.
- 4.3 Improve student attendance by creating a positive and engaging school experience.
- 4.4 Ensure all schools have staff trained in de-escalation techniques and Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) strategies.

# DeKalb County School District Strategic Planning Report – 2024

## Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness

- 5.1 Create safe and supportive environments that promote mental health and wellness.
- 5.2 Increase awareness of factors that can impact mental health to foster well-managed learning environments.
- 5.3 Increase mental health support staff to improve classroom behavior and peer relationships.
- 5.4 Expand staff participation in mental health professional learning opportunities.

## Goal Area 6: Organizational Excellence

- 6.1 Provide clean, safe, and efficient school facilities for all students.
- 6.2 Deliver safe and efficient transportation services to all students.
- 6.3 Deliver efficient school nutrition services and healthy meals to all students.
- 6.4 Improve and maintain a secure, accessible, and equitable digital learning environment for all students.
- 6.5 Ensure excellent financial management of district resources.

DeKalb County School District  
Strategic Planning Report – 2024

# DeKalb County School District Strategy Map

Goal Areas

	Student Academic Success with Equity and Access	School, Family, and Community Engagement	Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent	Culture and Climate	Mental Health and Wellness	Organizational Excellence
Performance Objectives	Increase proficiency rates in literacy on district and state assessments for all students	Strengthen family, school, and community engagement to establish clear, accessible, and relevant communication tailored to meet stakeholders' preferences	Recruit and hire a diverse and highly qualified workforce that reflects a world-class, innovative talent pool	Ensure all schools provide a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment for all students and staff	Create safe and supportive environments that promote positive mental health and wellness	Provide clean, safe, and efficient school facilities for all students
	Increase proficiency rates in numeracy on district and state assessments for all students	Create opportunities for collaboration between the district, families, community partners, and businesses to foster partnerships to support district-wide initiatives	Develop high performing staff to ensure quality teaching and learning outcomes, an innovative workforce, and visionary leaders	Implement restorative practice structures in all schools and increase the number of schools using PBIS programs each year	Increase awareness of factors that can impact mental health to foster well-managed learning environments	Deliver safe and efficient transportation services to all students.
	Increase the 4- and 5-year cohort graduation rates	Improve communication processes for stakeholders to ensure the flow of clear, timely, and relevant information	Retain highly effective staff in critical needs positions to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of integral district programs and services	Improve student attendance by creating a positive and engaging school experience	Increase mental health support staff to improve classroom behavior and peer relationships	Deliver efficient school nutrition services and healthy meals to all students.
	Ensure all students have equitable access to and support for academic programs and career pathways	Establish clear communication channels to effectively engage with multilingual families and provide equitable access to district and school information	Develop employee pipelines for key staff positions to ensure the long-term viability of essential programs and services	Ensure all schools have staff trained in de-escalation techniques and CPI strategies	Expand staff participation in mental health professional learning opportunities	Improve and maintain a secure, accessible, and equitable digital learning environment for all students
	Improve student academic growth as measured by the College and Career Readiness Performance Index					Ensure excellent financial management of district resources
	Enhance student proficiency in digital literacy skills using innovative technology					

# DeKalb County School District Strategic Planning Report – 2024

## DeKalb Strategic Plan Steering Committee Members

Stacy Stepney	Shakina Champion	Ebony Green	Danielle Jones
Michelle Dillard	Doryiane Gunter	Manish Gupta	Jennifer Dees
Erick Hofstetter	Evelyn Hall	Cedric Masten	Deborah Jones
Byron Schueneman	Kedra Fairweather	Paul Mays	Juana Alzaga
Kishia Towns	Rebecca Braaten	Jecorey Jackson	Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
Monika Davis	Marcia Coward	Autumn Luke	Steve Overcash
Elijah Palmer	Kiana King	Anne Ferreira	
Trenton Arnold	Lisa Limoncelli	Lysa Moore	
Triscilla Weaver	Thomas Glanton	Rachel Smith	

## DeKalb County School District Stakeholder Engagement

As a component of its strategic planning process, DeKalb County School District (DCSD), with Insight Education Group, conducted both an online survey and a series of seventy focus groups open to the DeKalb County community in the spring of 2024. Over 1200 stakeholders provided input on the proposed language for the 2024 Strategic Plan in focus groups.

### Focus Group Sessions:

<b>Total Groups</b>	<b>70* (42 in-person; 28 virtual)</b>
<b>Staff Groups</b>	<b>52 (29 in-person; 23 virtual)</b>
<b>Parent/Community Groups</b>	<b>9 (7 in-person; 2 virtual)</b>
<b>High School Student Groups</b>	<b>7 (in-person)</b>
<b>All Stakeholders</b>	<b>2 (virtual)</b>

**\*Two focus group sessions were open to both staff and parent/community members.**

### In-Person Sites:

<b>Chamblee High School</b>	<b>Southwest DeKalb High School</b>
<b>Cross Keys High School</b>	<b>Stone Mountain High School</b>
<b>Dunwoody Elementary School</b>	<b>Fairington Elementary School</b>
<b>Briar Vista Elementary School</b>	<b>Rock Chapel Elementary School</b>
<b>Columbia High School</b>	<b>Clarkston High School</b>
<b>Tucker High School</b>	<b>Rowland Elementary School</b>
<b>McNair Discovery</b>	<b>Central Office</b>
<b>Oak Grove Elementary School</b>	

# DeKalb County School District Strategic Planning Report – 2024

**Initial Online Survey Window**

**January 8 - February 16, 2024**

Survey respondents and community engagement meeting participants all answered the following four questions:

1. What should the DeKalb County School District prioritize in the next 3-5 years as part of their next Strategic Plan? Select five priorities from the list of sixteen.
2. What should the DeKalb County School District start doing in order to provide a high-quality education to all students?
3. What should the DeKalb County School District stop doing in order to provide a high-quality education to all students?
4. What should the DeKalb County School District continue doing in order to provide a high-quality education to all students?

***For the first question, survey respondents were asked to select from a list of priorities and for the remaining 3, stakeholders were asked to respond as an open response.***

**On-line Stakeholder Survey:** 10,437 DeKalb County stakeholders participated in the online survey. The largest group (23.3%) reported that their household was zoned for District 1, with the second largest group zoned for District 4 (14%).

**Table 1** shows the distribution of responses across board member districts.

<i>District #</i>	<i># Respondents</i>	<i>% of total</i>
<i>District 1</i>	2437	23.3%
<i>District 2</i>	1097	11%
<i>District 3</i>	1146	11%
<i>District 4</i>	1484	14%
<i>District 5</i>	1374	13%
<i>District 6</i>	1359	13%
<i>District 7</i>	672	6.4%
Unidentified	868	8.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10437</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2** shows the respondents' relationship to DCSD. The majority of survey respondents were parents/guardians and teachers.

**Table 2** shows the respondents' relationships to DCSD.

## DeKalb County School District Strategic Planning Report – 2024

Relationship to DCSD	Number	Percentage
<i>Parent/Guardian</i>	4026	39%
<i>Teacher</i>	2262	22%
<i>Community Member</i>	346	3%
<i>DCSD Employee (with children in the district)</i>	403	4%
<i>DCSD School level Employee</i>	916	9%
<i>DCSD District level Employee</i>	508	5%
<i>Student</i>	1976	19%
<i>Total</i>	10437	100%

**Strategic Planning Focus Groups:** 1245 participants attended focus group meetings. Participants provided feedback on the proposed core beliefs, foundational language and goal areas.

**Table 3** shows the number of participants in Focus Groups.

**Table 3. Community Engagement Meeting Participation**

Meeting	Number of Participants
<i>District 1</i>	107
<i>District 2</i>	60
<i>District 3</i>	115
<i>District 4</i>	122
<i>District 5</i>	102
<i>District 6</i>	81
<i>District 7</i>	98
<i>Business Community / All Stakeholders</i>	560
<i>Total</i>	1245

# DeKalb County School District Strategic Planning Report – 2024

## **Conclusion**

Insight's stakeholder survey and focus groups yielded rich data that facilitated a crucial step – aligning foundational language, core beliefs, and goals with the community's feedback. The engagement process not only fostered alignment but also identified key areas for improvement. Stakeholders pinpointed challenges in facilities and instruction, providing valuable insights for future development. The critical need for recruiting and retaining qualified teachers was also emphasized. Additionally, they expressed a strong desire for increased support from the broader DeKalb County community. For a breakdown of stakeholder feedback, please see **Appendix 1**.

**DeKalb County School District  
Strategic Planning Report – 2024**

## Appendix 1: Survey Results

What should DeKalb County prioritize in the next 3-5 years as part of their next Strategic Plan? (top 10 priorities per group)

Answer Choices	Student	Parent	Employee /Parent	Teacher	School Level Employee	District Level Employee	Community / Business	All
<i>Mental Health/Social Emotional wellness</i>	65%	58%	63%	56%	69%	56%	63%	60%
<i>Employee recruitment and retention</i>		39%	59%	64%	62%	63%	34%	45%
<i>Age and maintenance of school district facilities</i>	27%	44%	41%	48%	46%	45%	38%	42%
<i>School Safety</i>	57%	52%	45%	41%	51%	47%	37%	50%
<i>High school readiness, graduation, and post-graduate success</i>	59%	47%	42%	28%	34%	42%	41%	43%
<i>Educational equity for all students</i>	42%	41%	47%	39%	44%	49%	49%	42%
<i>Accelerated student learning (due to COVID-19)</i>	30%	38%	29%	36%	36%	30%	28%	35%
<i>Expanding school choice career programs, and access to advanced courses</i>	59%	40%	29%			22%	39%	36%
<i>Professional and career development and training for employees</i>	26%	32%	33%	29%	34%	42%		31%
<i>Investment in technology and associated training</i>	28%	29%					30%	26%
<i>Early Childhood Education</i>	21%		24%	32%	24%	23%	27%	
<i>3rd Grade Reading</i>				31%	20%			
<i>Graduate Profile</i>	23%							

**DeKalb County School District  
Strategic Planning Report – 2024**

**What should the DeKalb County School District start doing in order to provide a high-quality education to all students? (open-ended response)**

<b>Teachers Top 10 Trends</b>
Focus on student achievement Teacher support and professional development Parental involvement and communication Equity and ensuring all students are successful Positive school climate and social-emotional learning Reading, Writing and math achievement Investment in resources Focus on a well-rounded education Data-driven decision making
<b>District and School Employee Top 10 Trends</b>
Focus on student achievement Support for all students Teacher quality and training Smaller class sizes Technology integration Parental involvement Mental health support Reading and Math achievement Summer programs Curriculum resources
<b>Parent/Guardian Top 10 Trends</b>
Focus on equitable and healthy learning environments Redistricting for fairness and access More remote learning days Improved discipline and classroom management Teacher pay and support

**DeKalb County School District  
Strategic Planning Report – 2024**

Focus on core curriculum  
Smaller class sizes  
Improved facilities maintenance  
New school construction  
Support for counselors and resources for parents

**Employees who are Parent/Guardian Top 10 Trends**

Focus on student achievement  
Smaller Class Sizes  
Teacher Support:  
Parental Involvement:  
Improved Communication  
Positive school climate  
Data-driven decisions  
Standardized testing to gather data  
Focus on reading and math  
Equity

**Student Top 10 Trends**

Mental Health and Well-Being  
Real-World Skills and College/Career Prep  
Improved Learning Environment  
Teacher Quality and Support  
Student Agency and Voice  
Technology in the classroom  
Equity and Access  
Safe and Secure Environment  
Facilities and Maintenance  
Schedule and Flexibility

**Community Member Top 10 Trends**

Focus on student achievement and academic excellence  
Improved communication and collaboration  
Staff well-being and professional development

**DeKalb County School District  
Strategic Planning Report – 2024**

Equity and inclusion

Family and community engagement

Positive school climate and social-emotional learning

Data-driven decision making

Smaller class sizes

Enrichment programs for high-achieving students

Arts and a well-rounded education