

EXECUTIVE SESSION, WORK SESSION, COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION &
BUSINESS MEETING
OF THE
DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 13, 2025

The DeKalb County Board of Education held its Executive Session, Work Session, Community Input Session and Business Meeting on Monday, January 13, 2025, in the J. David Williamson Board Room, at the DeKalb County School District's Robert R. Freeman Administrative Instructional Complex, 1701 Mountain Industrial Boulevard, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Mr. Dijon DaCosta, Sr. convened the meeting at 11:38 am and noted the following were in attendance; himself, Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Mr. Andrew B. Ziffer, Ms. Whitney McGinniss, Tiffany Hogan, Ph.D., Ms. Allyson Gevertz, Mr. Awet Eyasu and Superintendent, Dr. Devon Q. Horton.

Also in attendance were General Counsel Attorney, Ms. Melanie Slaton and Executive Director to the Board, Ms. Carolyn Lloyd.

Mr. DaCosta, Sr. led the pledge of allegiance.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. DaCosta, Sr. called to adopt the agenda for the January 13, 2025, work session and business meeting.

Mrs. Pierce made a motion to amend 2 items and move another item to the February meeting. Item: E.1.b. Affirmation of Board Policy, BH and BHA would be moved to become an action item due to items F.5. and F.6. needing to come first.

Item: E.1.c. Official Functions of the Board of Calendar Year 2025 would need to have the language revised and therefore moved to the February meeting.

Item: E.1.e. would be amended to read to authorize the Board B Policy Review Committee to be a standing committee. Ms. McGinniss seconded the motion.

Mr. DaCosta, Sr. called for another motion to adopt the amended January 13, 2025, work session and business meeting agenda. With a motion by Ms. McGinniss, seconded by Ms. Gevertz, and a vote of 7/0, the amended agenda was approved.

RECOGNITIONS

STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE ~ Miss Asia Spralling, Dr. Ronald E. McNair, 12th Grade did not attend the meeting.

RECOGNITIONS / PROCLAMATIONS / MIRACLE MAKER AWARDS

- a. Recognition: Honoring Chamblee High School Volleyball Team
Presented by: Mr. Andrew Ziffer, Board Member, District 1
- b. Recognition: Honoring Chamblee High School Softball Team
Presented by: Mr. Andrew Ziffer, Board Member, District 1

- c. Recognition: Honoring Chamblee High School Cross Country Team
Presented by: Mr. Andrew Ziffer, Board Member, District 1
- d. Recognition: Honoring Dunwoody High School Cross Country Teams
Presented by: Mr. Andrew Ziffer, Board Member, District 1
- e. Recognition: Honoring Druid Hills Middle School Volleyball Team ~ Updated
1.9.2025
Presented by: Ms. Whitney McGinniss, Board Member, District 2
- f. Recognition: Honoring Druid Hills High School Volleyball Team ~ Updated
1.13.2025
Presented by: Ms. Whitney McGinniss, Board Member, District 2
- g. Recognition: Honoring Columbia High School Football Team
Presented by: Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Vice Chair
- h. Recognition: Honoring Cedar Grove Middle School Football Team
Presented by: Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Vice Chair
- i. Recognition: Honoring DeKalb School of the Arts One Act Play
Presented by: Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Vice Chair
- j. Recognition: Honoring Miller Grove High School Volleyball Team
Presented by: Dr. Tiffany Hogan, Board Member, District 5
- k. Recognition: Honoring Miller Grove High School Softball Team
Presented by: Dr. Tiffany Tate-Hogan, Board Member, District 5
- l. Recognition: Honoring Stephenson High School Competitive Cheer Team
Presented by: Mr. Dijon DaCosta, Sr. Board Chair
- m. Recognition: Honoring Stephenson High School Football Team
Presented by: Mr. Dijon DaCosta, Sr. Board Chair

GROUP / EXTERNAL PRESENTATION ~ No Agenda Item This Month

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT and COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

1. Superintendent's Report ~ No Agenda Item This Month

2. Committee of the Whole Presentations

- a. First Read: Attendance Area Adjustment to Relieve Overcrowding at Idlewood Elementary School (SY 2025-2026) ~ Updated 1.9.2025

Presented by: Dr. Triscilla Weaver, Chief of Access & Opportunity, Division of Access & Opportunity and Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations

- b. Strategic Plan Update Goal Area #2: School, Family, and Community Engagement
Presented by: Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer, Division of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships,
Dr. Kermit Belcher, Interim Chief Technology Officer, Division of Information & Instructional Technology
- c. DeKalb PATH Academy Presentation ~ Updated 1.9.2025
Presented by: Ms. Crystal M. Felix-Clarke, Principal & CEO of DeKalb PATH Academy

REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE JANUARY 13, 2025, BUSINESS MEETING

07.01.a.

Mr. Dijon DaCosta, Sr., Board Chair requested that the Board of Education floor be opened to accept nominations for the position of Board Chair and Vice Chair for 2025.

Mr. DaCosta made a motion to nominate Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce as Board Chair. The motion was seconded by: Mr. Eyasu. With a vote of 7/0, Mrs. Pierce was elected as the Board Chair for 2025.

Newly elected Board Chair, Mrs. Pierce made a motion to nominate Ms. Allyson Gevertz as the Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. DaCosta, Sr. With a vote of 7/0, Ms. Gevertz was elected as the Vice Chair for 2025.

07.01.b.

Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Board Chair reminded the audience that this item has been removed from the consent agenda and would become an action item.

07.01.c.

Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Board Chair stated for the record that this item has been moved the February meeting.

07.01.d.

Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Board Chair informed the public that Vice Chair, Ms. Allyson Gevertz will serve as the Chair of the Audit Committee. Mrs. Pierce then opened the floor for nominations of additional board members to serve on the Audit Committee. Ms. Gevertz motioned to nominate Board Chair; Mrs. Pierce to serve on the committee. Mrs. Pierce accepted the nomination. With a second motion by Mr. DaCosta, and with a vote of 7/0, Mrs. Pierce was elected to serve on the audit committee.

07.01.e.

Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Board Chair requested that the Board of Education authorize the Board B Policy Review Committee to be a standing committee.

07.01.f.

Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Board Chair opened the floor for nominations of board members that would serve on the Board B Policy Review Committee. Ms. Gevertz made motions to nominate Ms. Whitney McGinniss and Mr. Dijon DaCosta, Sr. to be on the committee. Mr. Awet Eyasu seconded the nominations. With a vote of 7/0, the motions carried. As Board Chair, Mrs. Pierce appointed Ms. Whitney McGinniss as the Chair of the Board B Policy Review Committee. Ms. McGinniss accepted the appointment.

07.02.a.

Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce, Board Chair, requested that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the following meeting; December 9, 2024, board meeting which includes the executive session, work session, community input session and business meeting.

Mr. Eyasu indicated that he would like to abstain from voting on this item because he was not a board member at the time. Dr. Hogan, and Mr. Ziffer also decided to abstain from voting on this item. With a majority vote of 4/3, the item was moved to the consent agenda.

07.03.a.i.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve the contract renewal one of four (#1 of 4) for **ITB 24-458 for Asphalt Paving, Striping, and Overlay Services** in an amount **not to exceed \$2,500,000.**

- **DAF Concrete, Inc.**
- **ShepCO Paving, Inc.**

07.03.a.ii.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve the **fourth of four (#4 of 4) contract renewals for ITB 21-752-010 for Tree Cutting and Trimming Services** in a not to exceed amount of **\$1,500,000** to:

- **Casey Tree Experts**
- **Richmond Tree Experts, Inc.**
- **Total Outdoor, LLC.**

07.03.a.iii.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve grant of an easement to the Georgia Power Company for upgrades to electric distribution facilities around the Stone Mountain Elementary School site.

07.03.b.i.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve the following:

- The contract renewal for ITB 22-80 for District-Wide Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E) district Contract Award for **Ernie Morris Enterprises, Lakeshore Learning Materials LLC., and School Specialty LLC.**, for a term through **March 14, 2025, to March 13, 2026**, not to exceed amount of **\$5,000,000.**
 - **This is the third of four (#3 of 4) contract renewals for ITB 22-80.**

- **An increase in the spend limit of contract ITB 22-80 for District-Wide Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E) Contract Award for Ernie Morris Enterprises, Lakeshore Learning Materials LLC., and School Specialty LLC., through March 13, 2025, in the not to exceed amount of \$2,000,000.**

07.03.b.ii.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve the contract for **rental of the Georgia State Convocation Center for 23 Graduation Ceremonies** in an amount not to exceed \$369,133.75.

07.03.c.i.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve the use of Georgia Statewide Contract-**99999-SPD-ES40199373-009S (Wade Ford Inc.) and 99999-SPD-ES40199373-002 (Allan Vigil Ford)** for the purchase of support vehicles for the Operations Division in an amount not to exceed **\$2,000,000**.

07.03.c.ii.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve the purchase of 25 electric school buses from **Yancey Bus Sales and Service** in an amount of **\$9,375,000** through the Statewide Contract #99999-SPD-SWL20200630-001.

07.03.d.

SCHOOL NUTRITION_~ No Agenda Item This Month

07.03.e. i.

Mr. Erick Hofstetter, Chief Operating Officer, Division of Operations, requested that the Board of Education approve the award of **RFP No. 25-752-004 Capital Improvement Program (“CIP”) Planning and Management Services to Hoar Program Management LLC**. The Board is requested to approve a **not to exceed amount of \$5,630,326** for Capital Improvement Planning and **Year 1** of Capital Improvement Program Management services.

Ms. Gevertz asked for this item to be removed. It was removed from the consent agenda and would be voted on separately.

07.04.

INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY ~ No Agenda Item This Month

07.05.

Mr. Joel Thibodeaux, Director of Internal Audits & Compliance, Chief of Staff Division requested that the Board of Education approve the contract for RFP No. 25-604 for the Purchasing Card Audit **in an amount not to exceed \$85,150** to the Forvis Mazars LLP, the most responsive and responsible vendor.

Mr. DaCosta, Sr. requested additional information before a vote was taken.

07.06.a.

Mr. Byron Schueneman, Chief Financial Officer, Division of Finance, requested that the Board of Education accept the November 2024 Monthly Financial Report.

07.07.a.

Mrs. Tasha Davis Mills, Chief Human Resource Officer, Division of Human Resources, requested that the Board of Education approve the January Human Resources Report.

07.08.

Mrs. Michelle Dillard, Chief of Schools, Division of Schools & Leadership, requested that the Board of Education secure **Timely** for Master Scheduling in the Middle and High Schools. The total amount is \$580,000.

The breakdown is as follows:

24 high schools*\$15,000= \$360,000

22 middle schools*\$10,000= \$220,000

Tiffany Hogan, Ph.D. objected to this item. It was removed from the consent agenda and would be voted on separately.

07.09.a.

Ms. Stacy Stepney, Chief Academic Officer, Division of Curriculum & Instruction, requested that the Board of Education approve the purchase of band uniforms for Miller Grove High School, Southwest DeKalb High School, and Towers High School from Stanbury Uniforms or Fruhauf Uniforms in accordance with the TIPS Contract No. 231001 through December 31, 2026 in the amount not to exceed \$380,000.

07.09.b.

Ms. Stacy Stepney, Chief Academic Officer, Division of Curriculum & Instruction, requested that the Board of Education authorize the District to purchase music instruments from the following vendors: **Adorama, Amro Music Stores, Inc., Brook Mays Music and H & H Music and Fishburn Violin Shop, Delgado Guitars, Midwest Musical Imports, Music & Arts, Steve Weiss Music, Sweetwater Sound Inc., Taylor Music, Inc., Terra Nova Violins, LLC., The Tuba Exchange, and Washington Music Sales Center, Inc.**, in accordance with the TIPS Contract No. 240302 through May 31, 2027, **Alamo Music Center** in accordance with the TIPS Contract No. 220802 through October 31, 2027, and **West Music Company**, in accordance with the Choice Partners Cooperative Agreement Contract No. 23/025SG-05 through May 16, 2025 in an amount not to exceed **\$2,940,000**.

07.10.

WRAP AROUND SERVICES ~ No Agenda Item This Month

07.11.a.

Dr. Norman Sauce III, Chief of Student Services, Division of Student Services requested that the Board of Education approve the purchase of instructional materials and resources from Newsela to assist gifted-certified teachers in supporting students as they further develop critical thinking and analytical skills for an amount not to exceed \$500,000.

07.11.b.

Dr. Norman Sauce III, Chief of Student Services, Division of Student Services requested that the Board of Education approve the purchase of instructional materials and resources from Critical Thinking Company regarding the educational use of instructional resources to assist gifted-certified teachers in supporting students as they further develop critical thinking and analytical skills for an amount not to exceed \$500,000.

07.12.a.i.

Dr. Triscilla Weaver, Chief of Access & Opportunity, Division of Access & Opportunity requested that the Board of Education approve an **amendment to the spend limit** of RFP 23-544 Ambulance Services for the DeKalb County School District by **Metro Ambulance Services, Inc. dba American Medical Response, Inc.)** in an amount not to exceed **\$550,000 per renewal period**. With this approval, the total spend limit for the RFP will be increased by **\$300,000**.

07.12.a.ii.

Dr. Triscilla Weaver, Chief of Access & Opportunity, Division of Access & Opportunity requested that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to execute the **Hudl dba Agile Sports Technologies** ICA that exceeds \$50,000.00 with a total contract value not to exceed **\$114,000**.

07.12.b.

Ms. Shakina Champion, Director of School Innovation, Division of Access & Opportunity requested that the Board of Education approve an extension of the charter contract of DeKalb PATH Academy for two years ending June 30, 2027.

07.13.

ACCOUNTABILITY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ~ No Agenda Item This Month

07.14.a.i.

Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer, Division of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships, requested that the Board of Education accept the donation of **\$16,800** from the **Lakeside High School Cross Country Booster Club** as a one-time donation per Board Policy DFK “Gifts and Bequests Guidelines” for modifications and improvements to the cross-country trail on the Lakeside High School site.

07.14.a.ii.

Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer, Division of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships, requested that the Board of Education accept the donation of **\$117,910** from the **Austin Elementary School’s Parent Teacher Organization** as a one-time donation per Board Policy DFK “Gifts and Bequests Guidelines”.

07.14.a.iii.

Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer, Division of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships, requested that the Board of Education accept the **Chevron** donation for a total of **\$10,000** in DonorsChoose education gift codes to be used for monthly STEM experiments and projects to increase students’ access to STEM opportunities at Hightower Elementary School during the 2024-2025 school year.

07.14.a.iv.

Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer, Division of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships, requested that the Board of Education accept the donation of \$10,000 from Project Lead the Way to Woodward Elementary School.

07.14.a.v.

Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer, Division of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships, requested that the Board of Education accept a grant from the **Georgia Council for the Arts** in the amount of **\$8,000** and a **\$4,030** donation from the **Dunwoody Elementary School PTO, Inc.** to support fine arts and STEM programming at Dunwoody Elementary School.

07.14.a.vi.

Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Deputy Chief Communications Officer, Division of Community Engagement & Innovative Partnerships, requested that the Board of Education accept the rebate grant of **\$8,725,000** from the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** for their 2023 Clean School Bus Rebates Program.

07.15.a.

LEGAL SERVICES ~ No Agenda Item This Month

AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS AND POLICIES

F.1.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education amend Board Policy BCBI: Public Participation in Board Meetings.

Ms. Whitney McGinniss objected to this item. It was removed from the consent agenda and would be moved to the February meeting.

F.2.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education amend Board Policy BDC: Policy Adoption.

Ms. Whitney McGinniss objected to this item. It was removed from the consent agenda and would be voted on separately.

F.3.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education rescind Board Policy BDF: Review of Administrative Rules and to include the language in Board Policy BDC, Policy Adoption.

F.4.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education delete Board Policy BE: School Board Records as it is covered by Board Policy CN: Administrative Records.

Mr. Andrew B. Ziffer objected to this item. It was removed from the consent agenda and would be voted on separately.

F.5.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education amend Board Policy BH: Board Code of Ethics.

F.6.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education amend Board Policy BHA: Board Member Conflict of Interest. .

F.7.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education amend Board Policy BHC: Board Member Political Activity.

F.8.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education accept an amendment to Board Policy BBFA: Local School Councils as a First Read. The proposed revisions are requested to update the policy and to clarify the current language. This policy has been reviewed and analyzed by the Board Policy Committee. The Committee agrees on the recommended revisions.

F.9.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education amend Board Policy BC: Board Meetings.

F.10.

Ms. Melanie Slaton, General Counsel, Hall Booth Smith, PC Attorneys at Law requested that the Board of Education amend Board Policy BBI: Board Staff Relations.

ADJOURN TO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Pierce called for a motion to adjourn January 13, 2025, meeting to an executive session for the purpose of discussing permitted matters regarding litigation, land, legal, personnel, and student appeals.

On a motion by Ms. McGinniss, second by Mr. DaCosta, Sr. and with a vote of (7/0), the January 13, 2025, meeting adjourned to executive session.

ADJOURN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Pierce called to adjourn the January 13, 2025, executive session to convene the work session.

On a motion by Mr. DaCosta, Sr., second by Ms. McGinniss and with a vote of (7/0), the January 13, 2025, executive session adjourned to the convene the community input session.

The community input session began at 6:00 pm.

COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION AND BUSINESS MEETING

Mr. DaCosta, Sr. convened the Community Input Session and Mrs. Pierce read the Guidelines for Public Comments.

The following individuals addressed the Board:

1. Norick Brewer
2. Wanda Jeon
3. Deborah Jones
4. Sophia Loftis ~ No Show
5. Tracee Benzo
6. Lyle Collins

PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Tasha Davis Mills, Chief Human Resource Officer, Division of Human Resources, requested that the Board of Education approve the hiring recommendation of Dr. Kermit Belcher to the position of Chief Information Officer in the Division of Information & Instructional Technology.

CONVENE THE BUSINESS MEETING

Mrs. Pierce, Board Chair called to convene the January 13, 2025, business meeting.

On a motion by Ms. McGinniss, second by Mr. DaCosta, Sr. and with a vote of (7/0), the January 13, 2025 convened the business meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Pierce, Board Chair called for a motion to approve the January 13, 2025, consent agenda items.

On a motion by Mr. Eyasu, second by Ms. McGinniss and with a vote of 7/0, the motion passed to approve the consent agenda.

ACTION ITEM(S)

K.1. APPROVAL OF AN ITEM(S) FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Pierce called for a motion to adopt the actions as discussed in Executive Session for:

- a. Item: Student Appeal #25-04

On a motion by Ms. McGinniss, second by Mr. Ziffer, opposition by Mr. Eyasu and Mr. DaCosta, Sr. and with a vote of 5/2, the motion passed.

- b. Personnel Recommendation of Dr. Kermit Belcher for the position of Chief Information Officer, in the Division of Information & Instructional Technology.

On a motion by Mr. Ziffer, second by Dr. Hogan, and with a vote of 7/0, the motion passed.

K.2. APPROVAL OF AN AGENDA ITEM(S) PULLED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Pierce called for a motion to approve the following Action Items which were NOT placed on the consent agenda.

a. Item: E.2.a. Approval of the Minutes

On a motion by Mr. DaCosta, Sr., second by Ms. McGinniss, abstention by Dr. Hogan, Mr. Eyasu and Mr. Ziffer and with a vote of 4/3, the motion passed.

b. Item: E.3.i. E-SPLOST ~ VI -Contract Award ~ RFP No. 25-752-004 ~ Capital Improvement Program Planning and Management Services ~ Hoar Program Management, LLC (Not to exceed \$5,630,326)

On a motion by Ms. McGinniss, second by Dr. Hogan, opposition by Ms. Gevertz and Mr. DaCosta, abstention by Mr. Ziffer and Mr. Eyasu and with a vote of 3/2/2, the motion failed.

c. Item: E.8.a. Timely for Master Scheduling in Middle and High Schools (Not to exceed \$580,000)

On a motion by Mr. DaCosta, Sr., second by Ms. Gevertz, opposition by Dr. Hogan and with a vote of 6/1, the motion passed.

d. Item: F2. Ready For Action: Board Policy BDC: Policy Adoption

On a motion by Ms. Gevertz, second by Mr. Eyasu, opposition by Ms. McGinniss and with a vote of 6/1, the motion passed.

e. Item: F.4. Ready For Action: Board Policy BE: School Board Records

On a motion by Ms. Gevertz, second by Mr. DaCosta, Sr., opposition by Mr. Ziffer and with a vote of 6/1, the motion passed.

f. Item F.5. Ready For Action: Board Policy BH: Board Code of Ethics

Before the meeting adjourned, Mrs. Pierce, Board Chair read the Ethics Oath. All board members recited and signed the oath.

ADJOURN

With no objections, Mrs. Pierce adjourned the January 13, 2025, work session and business meeting.

The work session and business meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm.

Secretary Ex-Officio

Chair