



DISRUPTING FOR EXCELLENCE

NEW LEVELS HEIGHTS



Department of Exceptional Education

Superintendent's Committee of the Whole
March 10, 2025

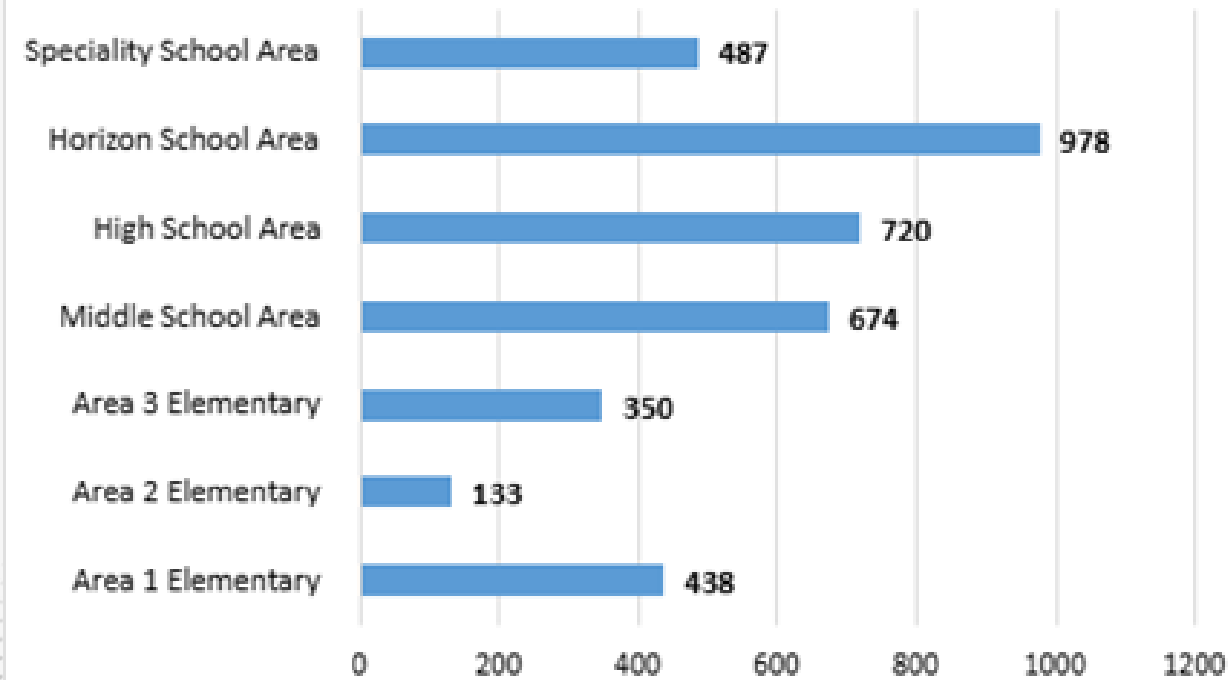
Dr. Norman C. Sauce III
Chief of Student Services

Current State-DCSD Exceptional Education

- ❑ DCSD currently serves 10,343 students with disabilities (IEP) and 5,126 students served through a 504-plan serving a total of approximately 15,000 students (IEP and 504)
- ❑ The Department serves students across all eligibility categories from ages 3-21
- ❑ DCSD offers robust instructional programming to support all learners (Pre-school, Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Low Incidence, Georgia Network for Educational Therapeutic Supports (GNETS), Section 504 and Hospital Homebound, transition programs and services for expelled and incarcerated youth)
- ❑ **Four Department Performance Objectives:**
 - ❑ Improve the graduation rate outcomes for student with disabilities
 - ❑ Improve services for young children (3-5) and the provision of FAPE to students with disabilities
 - ❑ Improve compliance with state and federal laws
 - ❑ Enhance the Professional Learning opportunities for staff

Department of Exceptional Education Direct School Supports Since Start of the School Year (as of 3/4/25)

Exceptional Education Department - Direct School Supports - Area Summary



Exceptional Education Department - Direct School Supports - Types Summary



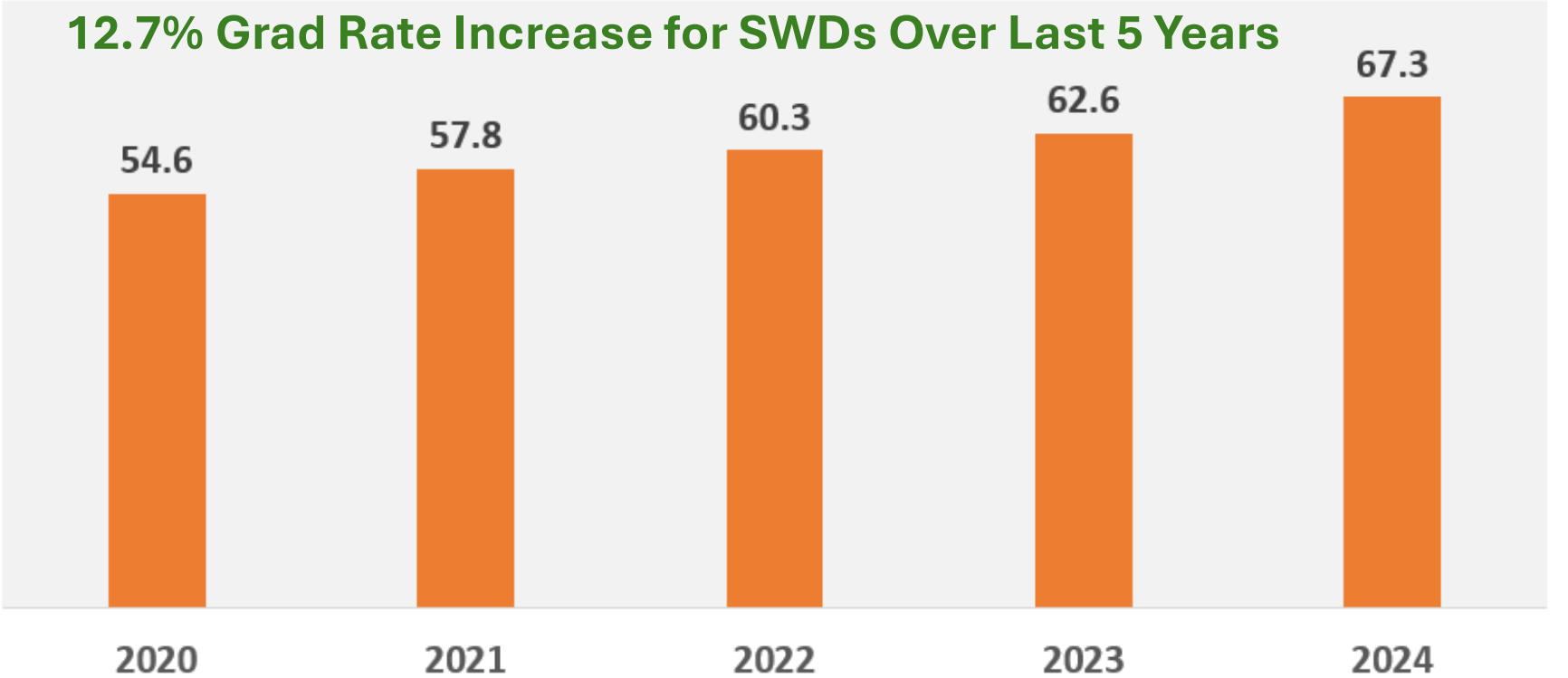
Graduation Rate Data



Five Year Graduation Rate Students with Disabilities



12.7% Grad Rate Increase for SWDs Over Last 5 Years

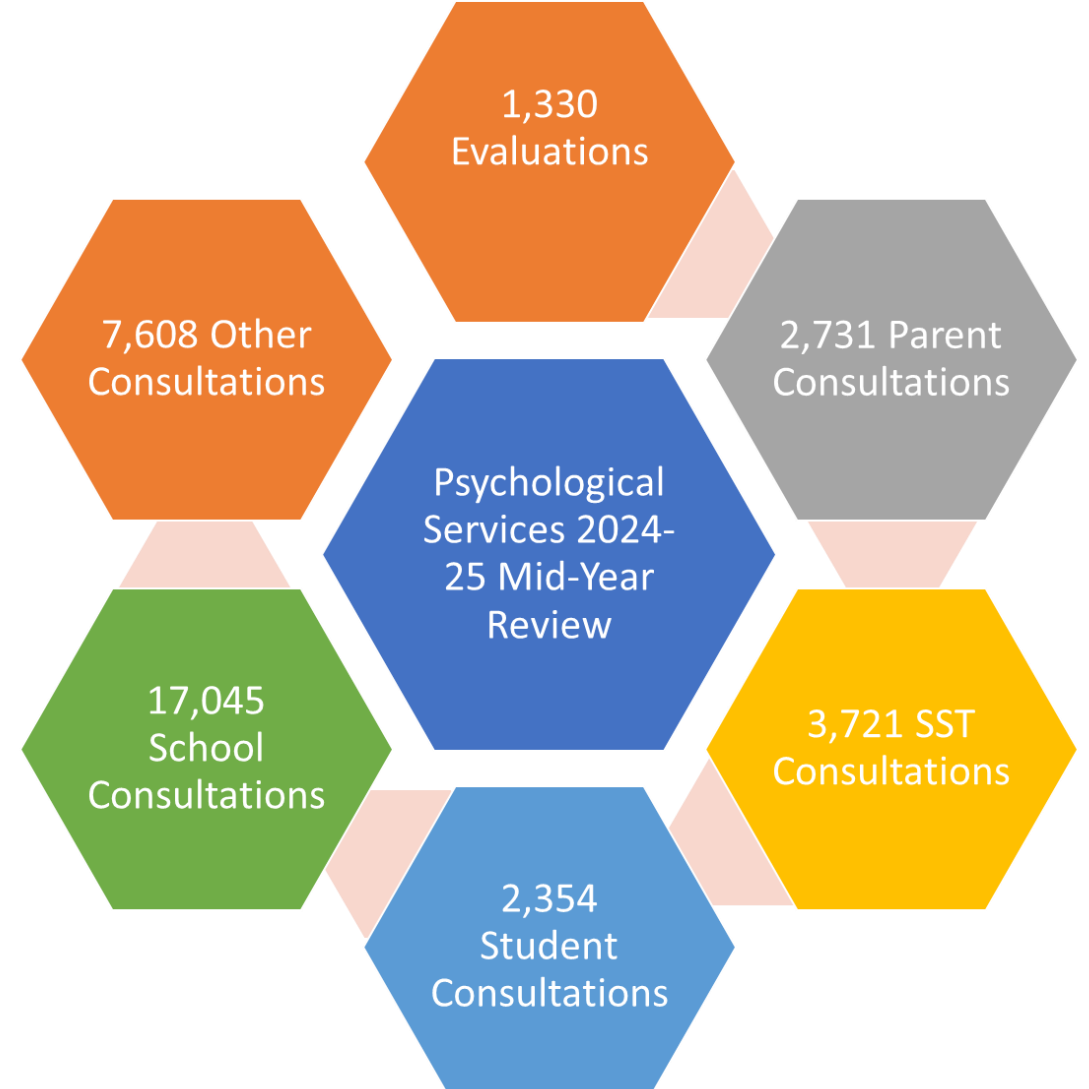


**What services and supports do
we provide?**



School Psychology Updates:

- Completion of on time initial psychological evaluations is up to **91%** for SY25
- Small group, individual counseling and crisis support
- Ensure fidelity of interventions and collection of data
- Individualized instruction and interventions support
- Recruitment efforts for School Psychs to DCSD:
 - Hired 11 new Schools Psychs in SY25
 - Partnership established with Georgia State University's (GSU) School Psychology program creating a pathway for ensuring future school psychologists with the district- grad school tuition for School Psych practicum students with DCSD – via USDOE grant
 - Paid internship for GSU graduate students with DCSD



Psychological Services

Special Education Pre-school Program

- Children ages 3 and 4 with suspected disabilities are evaluated through the Diagnostics program
- 100% compliant with initial evaluation timelines for children transitioning from the Babies Can't Wait Program to the DeKalb County School District!
- SY 23-24: 661 students evaluated
- SY 24-25: To date, 431 students evaluated (February 2025)
- ** Currently, DCSD offers 151 traditional PK3/PK4 classes and 63 special education PK3/PK4/Kindergarten classes

Age and Model of Instruction	Age 3	Age 4	Kindergarten
Consultative and Community	83	64	N/A
Co-Teaching	28	72	N/A
Self-Contained	228	217	270
Total Students Served: 962	339	353	270

Students Receiving Speech and Related Services

<u>Required Service</u>	Number of Students Served
Speech/Language	5,635
Occupational Therapy	775
Transportation	2,117
Assistive Technology	9,723
Physical Therapy	247
Nursing	380
Audiology	127



Pillars of Therapeutic Support (Specialized Environments)

- **Shadow Rock Center-** Grades K-5 (15 students)
- **Eagle Woods Academy-** Grades 6-12 (37 students)
- **6 Transition Sites** (McClendon ES, Chamblee MS, Chamblee HS, Cedar Grove MS, Southwest DeKalb HS, and Warren Technical school)
- Academic and Therapeutic support based on students' Individualized Education Plans.
- Wraparound services
- GNETS Strategic Plan
- Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (PBIS)
- Georgia Multi-Tiered System of Support (GaMTSS)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Serves DeKalb County School District, Rockdale County Schools and City Schools of Decatur.

Georgia Network of Educational and Therapeutic Supports

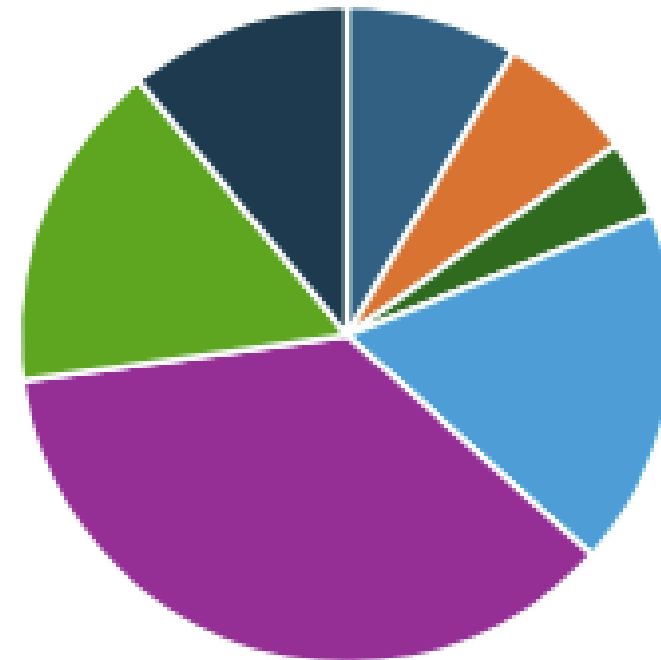
Section 504 and the Hospital Homebound Program



- DCSD supports approximately 5,200 general education students with disabilities through a 504 plan to ensure equity and access to educational programming
- **Supports** include various school and classroom accommodations such as extended time for classwork or assessments, access to monitored breaks, preferential seating (near the source of instruction), additional transition time to class, copy of notes, etc.
- **Services** provided include Special Transportation, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology, nursing, and support from a Childcare Technician (CCT).
- The DCSD Hospital Homebound (HHB) Program supports approximately 200 students with excessive absences due to a documented medical or psychological impairment totaling more than 10 days.

High-Level Overview of Section 504 Data (SY25)

Number of 504 plans per Area



Key Observations:

Highest Completion Rates: Elementary Area 2 (92.4%), Area 1 (89.5%), and Specialty Area (87.9%)

Low Suspension Rates: Most areas have minimal numbers of 504 students suspended for 10 or more days.

Consistent Identification of New 504 Students: Demonstrated in all areas, with Horizon Area, High School Area, Specialty Area, and Middle School Area demonstrating the highest numbers.

■ Elementary Area 1
 ■ Elementary Area 2
 ■ Elementary Area 3
 ■ Middle Area
■ High Area
 ■ Horizon Area
 ■ Specialty Area

Special Education



Special Education Priorities

Improve academic outcomes through implementation of Specially Designed Instruction

Effective professional development

Attract and retain high quality special education staff

Increase positive and proactive communication with families



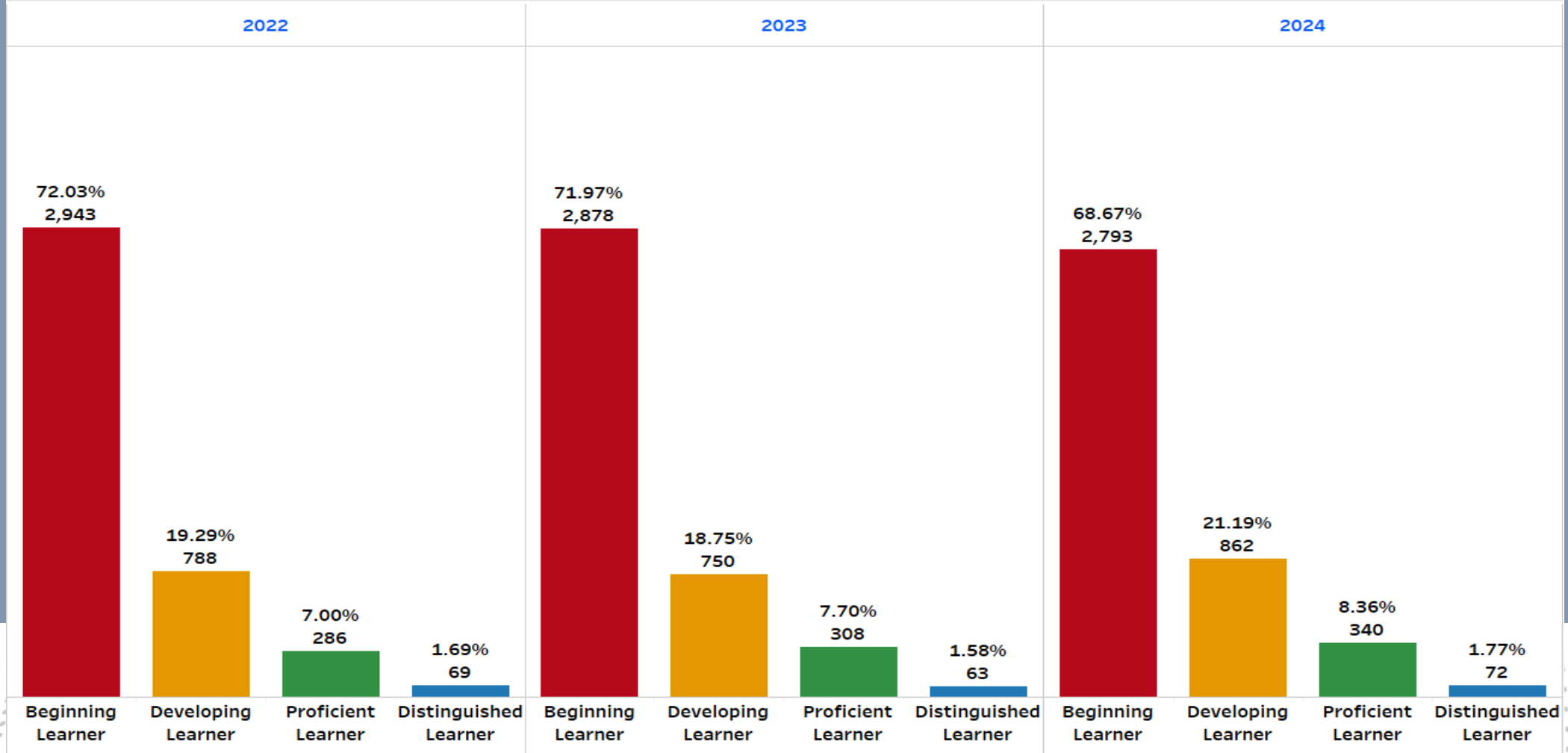
Improve discipline practices for SWDs

Reduce dispute resolution cases

Evaluate students in a timely manner

Students with Disabilities

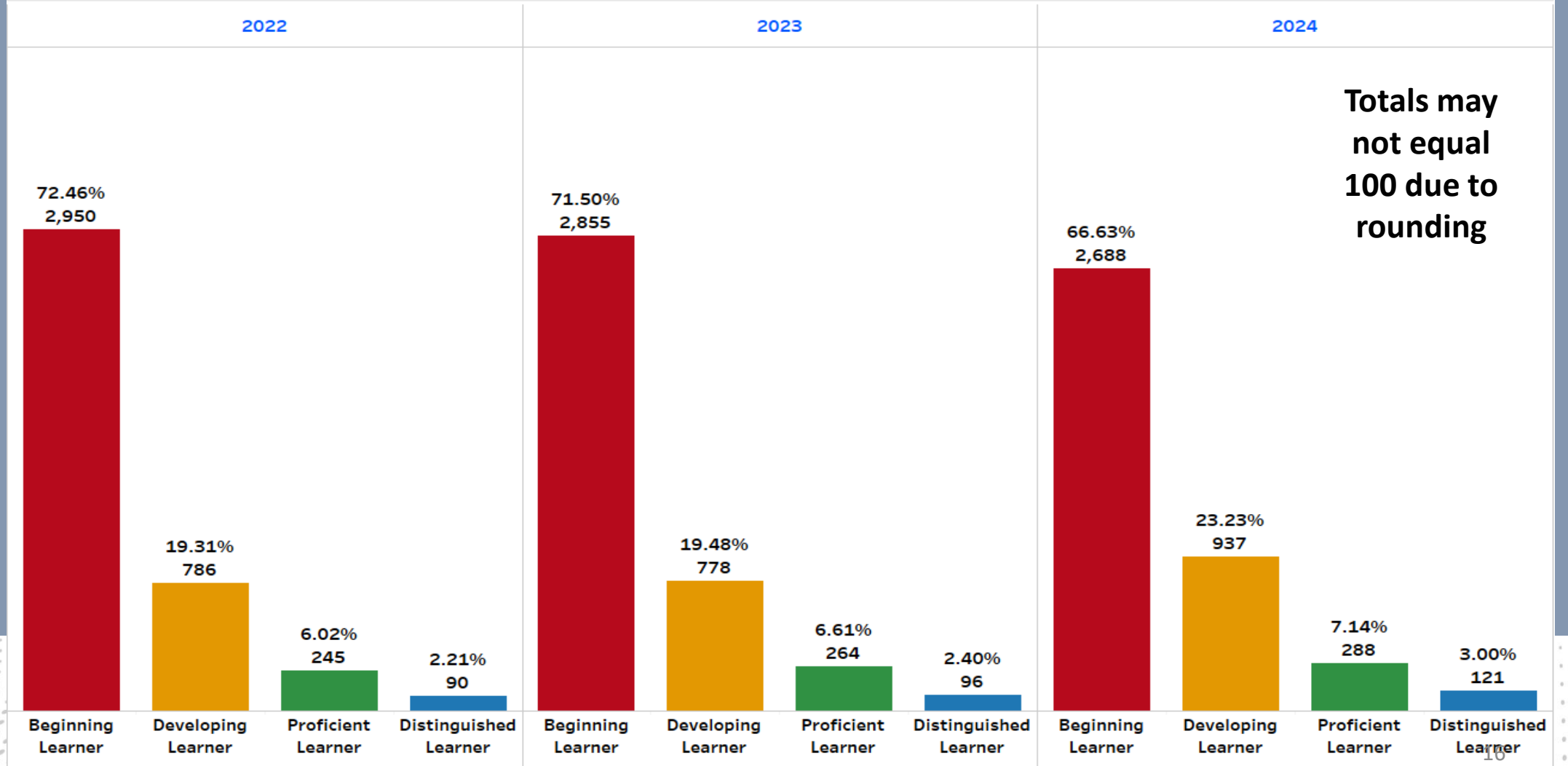
English Language Arts End-of-Grade
Students with Disability



Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

Students with Disabilities

Mathematics End-of-Grade
Students with Disability



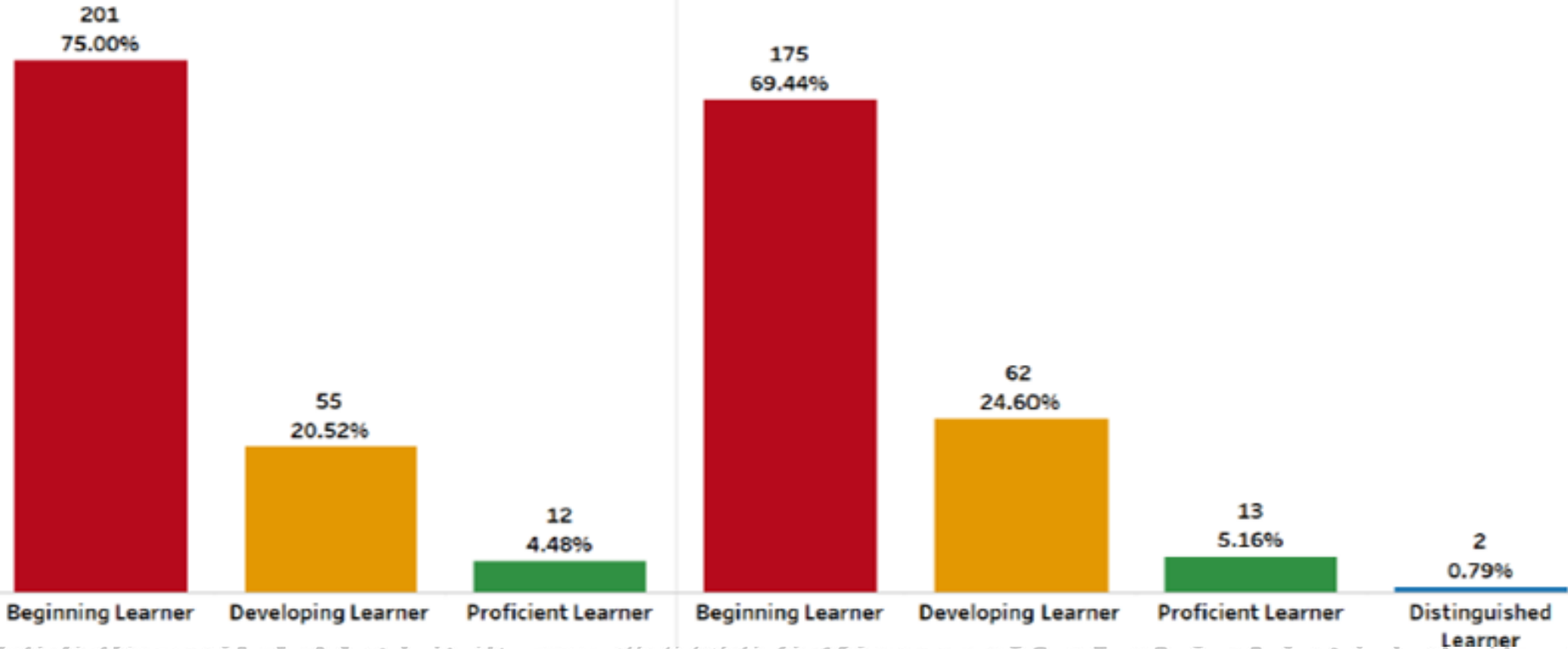
Total may not equal 100
to due rounding

American Literature & Composition

Winter EOC Results

2024

2025



Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

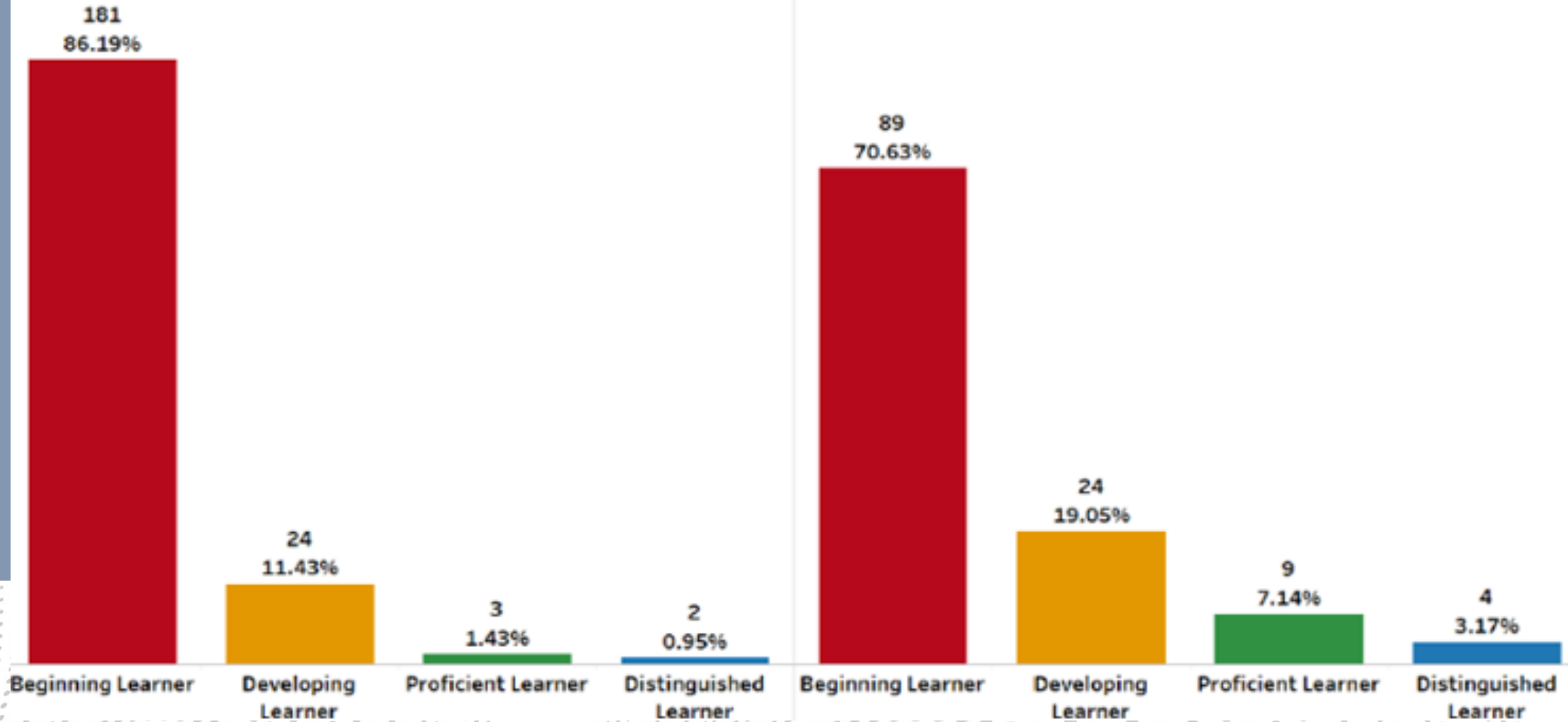
Total may not equal 100
to due rounding

Algebra Concepts and Connections

Winter EOC Results

2024

2025



Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

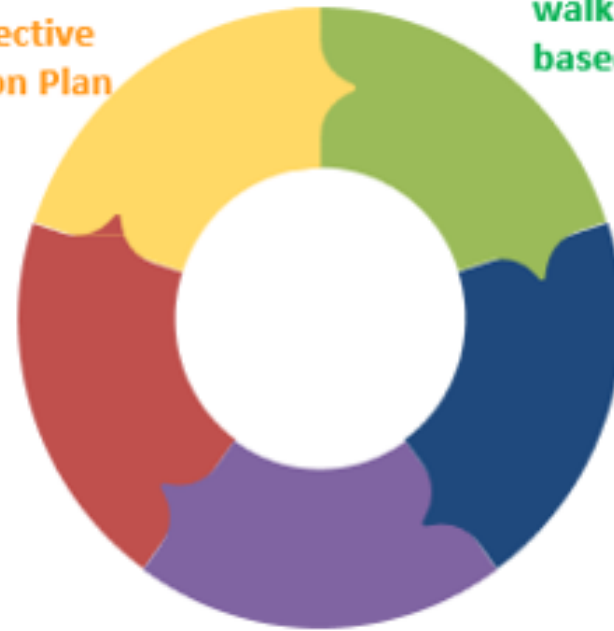
Specialized Supports to improve educational outcomes



What Does Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Support look like?

1. Curriculum Expectations-Provide school level support and technical assistance on effective planning and curriculum resources-Lesson Plan

2. Intentional collaboration- PLC meetings with Area Content leads, etc.



5. SDI toolkit-Use of SDI walk through tool and learning walk rubric to evaluate the implementation of evidence-based strategies and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

4. Monitor implementation of Wilson Reading System and instructional software usage

3. Professional learning-GLRS support, Special Education Teacher Academy, NEST/VEST, Monthly New Teacher Orientation sessions, individual school level support provided through technical assistance opportunities



Wilson Reading System

SWD Students Fall '24 MAP Mean RIT Score	SWD Students Winter '25 MAP Mean RT Score	SWD Students Mean RIT Score Increase
166.3	176.2	9.9-point RIT score increase

ATSI Schools	Number of Teachers Implementing	Number of Students Receiving WRS Support
Browns Mill	4	13
Hightower	3	16
Snapfinger	4	7
Murphey Candler	3	12
Stoneview	3	9
Rock Chapel	3	9
Lithonia HS	1	6
ML King HS	2	22
Total	23	94

Wilson Reading System (WRS)

- Structured Literacy program based on phonological-coding research and Orton-Gillingham principles
- Each student experiences 30-40 minutes, 4-5 times per week

Literacy Instruction Components:

- Understanding Language Concepts
- Word Identification Accuracy and Spelling
- Vocabulary Development
- Word Fluency
- Reading Comprehension

Professional Development and Parent engagement



Professional Development Participation and Survey Results

August 2024 – February 2025

208-Professional Learning Opportunities Offered

Audience

Special Education Teachers

Paraprofessionals

Lead Teachers for Special Education (LTSEs)

504 Chairs

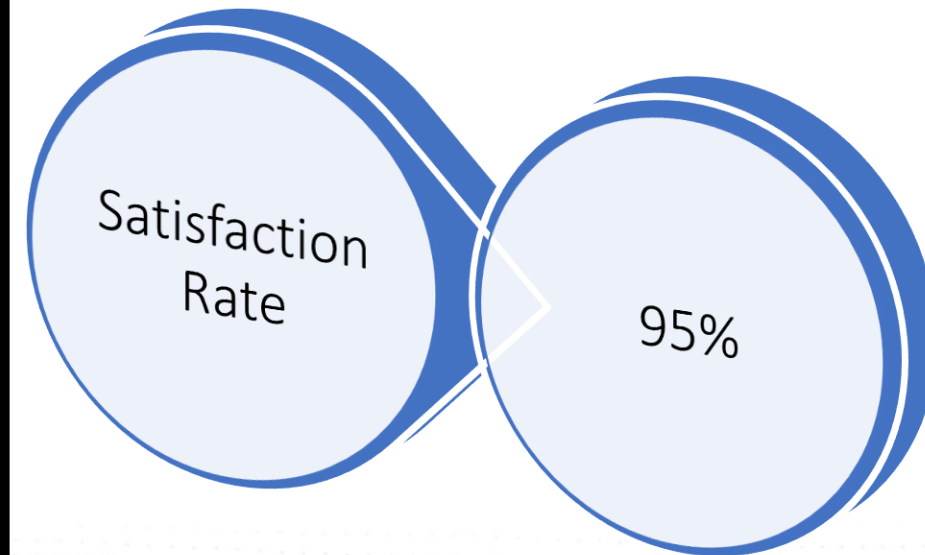
School Psychologists

MTSS chairs, school leaders

10,890

Exceptional Education Professional Development Attendees

Survey Results



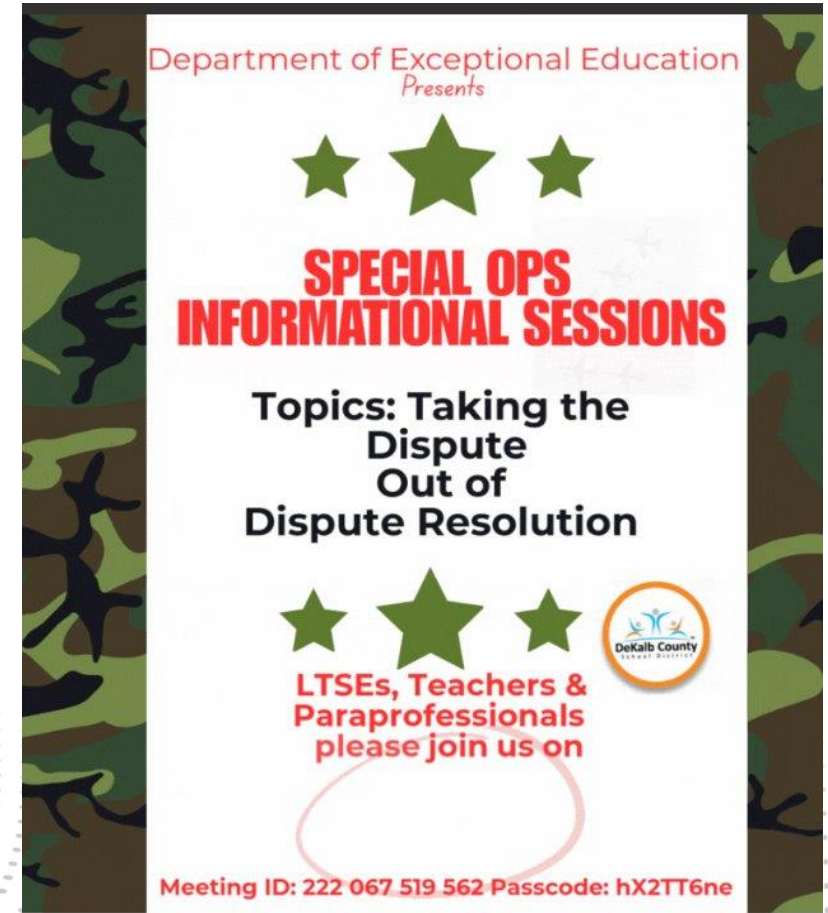
Special OPs!

Celebrating the Success of Special Opportunity Informational Sessions – Special OPS!

We are thrilled to highlight the incredible turnout and impact of our Virtual Informational Sessions designed for School Administration, Teachers, LTSEs, and Paraprofessionals, focusing on Special Education Policy and Procedures!

Session Highlights:

- **Virtual After School Session 1:** *Free and Appropriate Public Education* (November 12, 2025)
- **Virtual After School Session 2:** *Taking the Dispute Out of Dispute Resolution* featuring special guest Mrs. Jamilla Pollard, Esq., Senior Program Manager/Legal Officer, Georgia Department of Education (February 6, 2025)
- **Outstanding Participation:** Over **217 DCSD personnel** in attendance, demonstrating a strong commitment to professional growth and student success!




Department of Exceptional Education
Presents

★ ★ ★

**SPECIAL OPS
INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS**

**Topics: Taking the
Dispute
Out of
Dispute Resolution**

★ ★ ★ 

**LTSEs, Teachers &
Paraprofessionals
please join us on**

Meeting ID: 222 067 519 562 Passcode: hX2TT6ne

Parent Education, Empowerment, Resources and Support (PEERS)

Exceptional Education Highlights – Celebrating Success and Engagement!

Exceptional Education Monthly Digital Parent Newsletter

We're proud to announce the success of our dynamic newsletter, designed to keep families of students with disabilities informed and empowered!

- Featuring **departments, events, and resources** to support our community
- Comprehensive **content creation, marketing, translations, and approvals**
- **Launched:** October 2024
- **Published,** translated, and shared with parents of students with disabilities via email and the District's Exceptional Education Website
- **Goal:** 8 issues for the 2024-2025 school year – **4 issues published and counting!**



DeKalb County School District
Exceptional Education

MONTHLY PARENT
NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025
ISSUE 3
2024-2025 School Year

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
Section 504 & Hospital Homebound

- Section 504 & HHB Services
- Virtual Parent Education
- Parent Resource

Meet our Senior Coordinator for Section 504 & Hospital Homebound!

Dr. Watina April
Senior Coordinator
Exceptional Education
Email:
Watina_april@dekalbschools.ga.org

Introducing the Section 504/ Hospital Homebound (HHB) Team

Passionate about fostering positive outcomes for all students, Dr. April is committed to creating inclusive systems that address the diverse needs of learners. With extensive experience in education and advocacy, she strives to ensure every child receives a high-

WHAT'S NEW!

P.E.E.R.S Parent Engagement

A resounding success with **591** parents participating in our **PEERS sessions this year**

- To date, 5 P.E.E.R.S sessions have been held (October 22, November 19, December 3, January 30, and February 27)
- Essential topics are covered such as Transition Services & Supports, Section 504, and Technical Colleges
- Fosters strong family engagement and empowers parents by providing vital information to increase awareness

Exceptional Education Transition Fair

focused on parent's receiving resources on transitional services. 43 vendors are registered to attend!

Parent Education, Empowerment, Resources & Support (PEERS) and Transition Services
presents
Virtual Parent Education Sessions

FALL TRANSITION SERIES:

October 22, 2024	November 19, 2024	December 3, 2024
		
Transitional Services	Guardianship	NOW/COMP

Transition Fair



Families should expect:

- Vendors: Respite providers, Legal services, Day programs, State agencies, Recreation, Supported Employment, Technical Colleges and more!
- Attend Educational Sessions
- Resources and assistance

Continental breakfast served from 8-9am

DATE: 3/22/2025
TIME: 8am-2pm
LOCATION:
Redan High School
5247 Redan Rd. Stn. Mtn.
GA 30088

REGISTER NOW!

SCAN ME! >>>



REGISTER by scanning the QR code or go to <https://forms.office.com/r/wGQJcgWZwg>

For more information contact dcsdpeers@dekalbschoolsga.org



Thank you
