



2024-2029

STRATEGIC PLAN



Strategic Plan Update

Goal Area 5: Mental Health & Wellness
May 12, 2025

Implementation Chart - Goal Area 5

Goal Area 5: Mental Health Performance Objectives	Implementation Years				
	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
5.1: Create safe and supportive environments that promote positive mental health and wellness.	I	R	R	R	R
5.2: Increase awareness of factors that can impact mental health to foster well-managed learning environments.	I	R	R	R	R
5.3: Increase mental health support staff to improve classroom behavior and peer relationships.	I	R	R	R	R
5.4: Expand staff participation in mental health professional learning opportunities.	I	R	R	R	R

Key:

Not Started	NS	Planning	P	Initial Implementation	I	Continuous Refinement	R
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5.1. Create safe and supportive environments that promote positive mental health and wellness.

- The district has created Safe Spaces within 10 middle schools during the 2024-2025, which include: Bethune, Cedar Grove, Chapel Hill, International Center, Miller Grove, Stephenson, DeKalb Alternative School, DeKalb School of the Arts, Tucker, and Peachtree. Spaces are supervised by School Social Workers and Student Engagement Coaches and can be used by students to de-escalate, self-regulate, and have a mindful moment to return to a balanced state. Sensory items are being purchased for the rooms.
- Towers High School opened as the district's sixth SAFE Center in the Fall of 2024. During the 2024-2025 school year, a total of 9,143 students have visited the six centers to receive support, ranging from mental health, social skills, and conflict resolution skills, to tangible needs including, food, clothes, and hygiene products. All centers are led by a certified social worker, equipped to work with students/families requiring mental health support.
- To support mental health accessibility, school psychologists have provided small group counseling sessions to promote coping skills and resiliency for 144 targeted students. Additionally, school psychologists have provided crisis counseling support for 1,244 students.

5.2: Increase awareness of factors that can impact mental health to foster well-managed learning environments.

- 9,215 staff members trained in signs, symptoms, and identification of mental illness and how to access assistance.
- 253 Staff members trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid (Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis).
- 1137 staff members trained in Connections Matter (Connections Matter trainings strives to promote the building of more resilient, compassionate, and trauma-informed communities).



5.3: Increase mental health support staff to improve classroom behavior and peer relationships.

- DCSD has an existing partnership with Unum, the provider of Employee Assistance Programming. Unum provides an opportunity for staff members to have three free visits with a licensed professional counselor.
- The number of school social workers has expanded from 49 to 65 over the past two years. Social workers are trained mental health professionals.
- Each Area Superintendent has hired a Mental Health Coordinator (7) to provide additional support to schools and students.
- Mental health specialists (6) have been hired since 2024 to increase mental health support to students at the following schools: Salem, Stone Mountain Middle, Browns Mill, Panola Way, and Fairington.

5.4: Expand staff participation in mental health professional learning opportunities.

- The Wellness Office has an ongoing partnership with the National Association for Mental Health (NAMI) which offers quarterly webinars on their Ending the Silence (ETS) on suicide initiatives for children through adults.
- The Wellness Office shares extensive digital resources through ambassadors who spread mental health awareness information throughout their school and administrative buildings.
- DeKalb Leadership Institute (Dr. Collins), Office of Professional Development (Dr. Leigh Turner), Transportation (Alex Riley) & Operations (in partnership with HR) have had formal training on holistic wellness to achieve harmony between personal well-being and professional well-being. This training promotes work life balance and offers the creation of a personal wellness plan guide to assist with recognizing triggers and creating action plans.
- HR has proposed adding Wellness initiatives as a professional development day option.



May 2025!

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness
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