

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

between

DeKalb County School District

and

Georgia Aquarium Inc.

August 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between DeKalb County School District and Georgia Aquarium, Inc who are providing services and/or in-kind support to DeKalb County School District.

DeKalb County School District

DeKalb County School District representative: Dr. Devon Q. Horton

Position: Superintendent

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Georgia Aquarium, Inc.

Georgia Aquarium representative: Michael Boos

Position: Chief Animal Officer

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Purpose

This document outlines the renewal of the partnership agreement between Georgia Aquarium, Inc. and DeKalb County School District. This MOU is to establish an agreement among the above-mentioned parties about their roles and responsibilities for the partnership's implementation. This agreement is to establish and coordinate joint processes and procedures for the provision of the partnership (including summer, before and after school, weekends, evenings, in-service days, vacation breaks, etc.) for students, family engagement activities, staff development, leadership development, and program evaluation.

Georgia Aquarium Partnership Vision and Overview

DeKalb County School District will collaborate with Georgia Aquarium, Incorporated to address experiential learning in science education and promote increasing career and post-secondary opportunities in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

Students in grades K-12 will gain access to opportunities that explore careers in Marine Science and empower them with the knowledge to address socio-environmental issues that impact their community. This agreement will also provide Georgia Aquarium, Inc. the opportunity to strategically achieve goals of being a school and community partner while assisting in the process of addressing workforce development in the future of Ocean Sciences and Marine Biology.

GOALS

1. To develop K-12 career exploration opportunities in the fields of marine biology and ocean science to increase representation of students from DeKalb.
2. To accelerate learning and bridge gaps in knowledge and understanding through real world enrichment opportunities as it relates to science and other core content areas.
3. To support improving student outcomes as it pertains to standards-based local, state and national summative assessments.
4. To increase teacher's professional knowledge as it relates to Marine, Ocean, and Environmental Sciences to support integration and application of the core content areas.
5. To increase Georgia Aquarium's program accessibility and outreach for DeKalb County School District parents and students in grades K-12.
6. To increase student's knowledge of aquaculture to raise awareness in local and global environmental sustainability efforts.
7. To develop a more cohesive path for K-12 students to engage in meaningful instruction, using sustained multipoint contacts to create a continuous path into STEM/Marine Science careers.
8. To instill an understanding of and passion for aquatic animals and their habitats by increasing awareness and abilities for students from DeKalb to pursue careers in aquatic fields.

Duties of Parties

For DeKalb County School District, the responsibilities and agreements include:

Providing classroom space and all other appropriate space to accommodate the Georgia Aquarium partnership.

Being responsible for allocating funds for identified programs and personnel that support the goals of the partnership as predetermined by the DeKalb County School District approved budget.

Providing DeKalb County School District teachers to participate in professional development opportunities that support the partnership's goals.

Recruiting and referring students and teachers to participate in meaningful instruction through multipoint contacts and experiences to create a continuous path into STEM/Marine Science careers.

For Georgia Aquarium, Inc., the following will apply:

Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will facilitate teacher professional development in K-12 Marine Biology, Ocean Science, and Environmental Science to prepare DCSD teachers to support and implement the learning process with students.

Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will provide/develop STEM-based educational programming that will engage students in authentic marine and science-driven research.

Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will provide access to their staff, curriculum, onsite classrooms/learning environments and resources for student engagement experiences available through their education programs (Outreach, Instructor-Led Programs, Virtual Programs, etc.) and any future programs that are relevant to the identified goals and objectives of the partnership.

Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will communicate and collaborate with DeKalb County School District about curriculum and instruction as it relates to Marine, Ocean, and Environmental Science.

Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will be responsible for providing necessary materials/supplies/equipment for designated components in accordance with their budget.

Activities and Funding

DeKalb County School District will support the curriculum development, transportation, personnel, Georgia Aquarium, Inc experiences, teacher professional development and provide resources/supplies/equipment to support the implementation of the partnership.

The Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will provide the staff and resources related to the instructional and learning opportunities that are provided and developed by the Georgia Aquarium. Programs that will aid in the completion of program objectives are listed below:

- Georgia Aquarium Field Trips (Includes but not limited to general admission and Instructor-Led Field Trips)
- Individual Classroom Outreach
- Teacher Professional Development: Project Based Learning/STEM in Marine Science (Aquarium), Aquaponics and Aquaculture, Content Knowledge for Marine Science, Oceanography, and Environmental Science
- Mobile Classroom Outreach Programs
- SMART Farms (i.e. Aquaponics Systems, Hydroponics Systems, Urban Agriculture)
- Ocean Guardian Schools Program
- Work-Based Learning Program Placement

Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will provide the staff and resources needed to implement the above identified programs.

The Georgia Aquarium, Inc. will give priority considerations to DeKalb County School District as it pertains to program and staff scheduling, time allocations, and funding to fully support the objectives and goals of the partnership.

Duration

The agreement is for a period of one year and may be renewed annually contingent on funding availability.

Procedures for Modification and Termination

- The MOU may be modified, revised, extended, or renewed by mutual written consent of all parties, by the issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by all parties.
- Any party of the MOU may terminate their participation in this MOU by giving written notice of intent to terminate to each of the partners. In such case of the need of a 3rd party agreement to carry out the objections stated above, termination by one or more of those parties to this MOU does not alter the terms or obligations of DeKalb County School District and Georgia Aquarium, Inc. to this MOU.

Signatures

All partners in this agreement sign to confirm their acceptance of its terms by their signature.

DeKalb County School District Representative

Georgia Aquarium Representative

DeKalb County School District Printed Name/Title

Georgia Aquarium Printed Name/Title