



2024-2029

STRATEGIC PLAN



dekalbschoolsga.org

Strategic Plan Implementation

Board Update
February 9, 2026

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness

Chief Dr. Kisha Towns - Wrap Around Services
Interim Chief Kiana King - Student Services

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029 SUMMARY

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.

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.

Mental Health and Wellness

- 5.1. Create safe and supportive environments that promote positive 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.

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.

GOAL AREA 4



GOAL AREA 5



GOAL AREA 6



Implementation Chart - Goal Area 5

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness 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	I	R	R	R
5.2: Increase awareness of factors that can impact mental health to foster well-managed learning environments.	P	I	R	R	R
5.3: Increase mental health support staff to improve classroom behavior and peer relationships	I	I	R	R	R
5.4: Expand staff participation in mental health professional learning opportunities.	I	I	R	R	R

Key:

Not Started	NS	Planning	P	Initial Implementation	I	Continuous Refinement	R
-------------	----	----------	---	------------------------	---	-----------------------	---

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness			
Performance Objective and Strategies	KPI	Goals for Year 2 (2025-2026)	Progress Update
<p>5.1: Create safe and supportive environments that promote positive mental health and wellness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement a standardized needs assessment for staff and students to determine the level of support needed and general awareness. b. Provide social emotional learning (SEL) training to create safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces for students. c. Implement the SEL curriculum to help students manage emotions, problem solve, as well as create positive relationships with others. d. Increase mental health awareness by offering annual training for staff and students. e. Develop a communication plan for reporting mental health emergencies. This plan will outline how staff will communicate with students, parents, and first responders in the event of an emergency. f. Develop clear and accessible channels for students to report mental health concerns. g. Provide resources and opportunities for mindfulness practices for students and staff. 	<p>Smart Goal: By 2029, DCSD will increase the number of student safe centers to twenty.</p> <p>Smart Goal: By 2029, DCSD will increase the number of staff safe spaces to fifteen.</p>	<p>By the end of Dec 2024, at least 85% of school staff will participate in SEL annual training.</p> <p>By April of 2025, at least 85% of all students' grades 2nd - 8th will participate in SEL lessons as a Tier I intervention.</p> <p>By the end of 2026, each school in DeKalb will have at least 2 staff members that have been trained in restorative practices; MindSet Verbal De-Escalation, Connection Matters and/or Restorative Circles.</p> <p>At the start of 2025-2026 85 principals and 152 assistant principals were trained in restorative practices. With the remaining trainings happening in September & October.</p> <p>100% of schools receive the school counselor and social work training which outline the referral process.</p>	<p>District is considering the purchase of a universal screener to gather baseline data regarding student wellbeing.</p> <p>There are now 8 Student and Family Engagement (SAFE) Centers and ten Safe Spaces. Lithonia and Stephenson SAFE Centers will host grand opening in the Spring 2026. All 8 centers provide mental health support.</p> <p>69% of all 2nd to 8th graders received SEL lessons. 200 high school students attended Teen Summit.</p> <p>9,215 staff members trained in signs, symptoms and identification of mental health concerns, 27 trained in Reaching Teens: Strength-Based, Trauma-Sensitive, Resilience-Building Communications, 67 trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid, 690 trained in Connections Matter; 1982 employees trained in SEL.</p> <p>Students will report mental health concerns to an adult in the building. Adult refers student to counselor/soc worker.</p>

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness			
Performance Objective and Strategies	KPI	Goals for Year 2 (2025-2026)	Progress Update
<p>5.2: Increased awareness of factors that can impact mental health to foster well managed learning environments.</p> <p>a. Youth mental health awareness training</p>	<p>Smart Goal: By 2029, DCSD will increase mental health support staff to twenty-three.</p>	<p>Increase efforts to create standard operating procedures for handling staff in acute crises, increase mental health partnerships, recruit mental health personnel to address staffing need.</p>	<p>Continuing to utilize the Recruit, Train, and Retain Program with University of Georgia to increase the number of psychologists.</p> <p>As of 5/15/25 DCSD employs 53 School Psychologists (+8 from June 2024)</p>

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness

Performance Objective and Strategies	KPI	Goals for Year 2 (2025-2026)	Progress Update
<p>5.3: Increase mental health support staff to improve classroom behavior and peer relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish partnerships with recruitment agencies to increase mental health support staff. b. Advertise mental health career opportunities in local, state, and national publications. c. Increase partnerships with mental health agencies to recruit potential candidates. d. Collaborate with colleges and universities to create a pipeline of potential mental health candidates. 	<p>Smart Goal: By 2029, DCSD will increase mental health support staff to twenty-three.</p>	<p>Increase efforts to create standard operating procedures for handling staff in acute crises, increase mental health partnerships, recruit mental health personnel to address staffing need.</p>	<p>Continuing to utilize the Recruit, Train, and Retain Program with University of Georgia to increase the number of psychologists.</p> <p>As of 5/15/25 DCSD employs 53 School Psychologists (+8 from June 2024)</p>

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness			
Performance Objective and Strategies	KPI	Goals for Year 2 (2025-2026)	Progress Update
<p>5.4: Expand staff participation in mental health professional learning opportunities.</p> <p>a. Mental First-Aid for adults.</p>	<p>Smart Goal: By 2029, 152 staff will be trained in Mental First Aid for Adults.</p>	<p>By the end of SY 2026 we will have a minimum of 12 department mental health activities during staff meetings.</p> <p>Continue offering Mental Health First Aid adult classes for the entire department. End goal is that all of HR will have taken the class and we will move towards offering MHFA for adults into our schools for educators and staff.</p> <p>By end 2026: DCSD staff have wellness ambassadors in each school/division.</p>	<p>At this time, we have had 44 staff members across the district trained in Mental Health First Aid. We are working with Kaiser Permanente to schedule two MHFA Certification classes before 6.30.26. We have meetings scheduled with area leaders in HS, MS, & ES to ensure class attendance.</p>

Building a Healthier Future: Inside DCSD's Mental Health & Wellness Plan

This infographic provides a snapshot of the DeKalb County School District's multi-year strategic plan to enhance mental health support. It highlights key actions being taken to create supportive environments and strengthen the network of care for both students and staff.

Fostering a Supportive Environment

Expanding "SAFE Centers" for Students

The district now has 8 student centers providing direct mental health support.



69%

69% of 2nd-8th Graders Now Receive SEL Lessons

The Social Emotional Learning curriculum helps students manage emotions and build positive relationships.

9,215 Staff Members Trained to Identify Mental Health Concerns

A massive training initiative is equipping staff to recognize signs and symptoms.

Hired 8 New School Psychologists in Under a Year

The district is actively recruiting to increase vital mental health personnel.



Goal for 2029:

152 staff will be trained in Mental Health First Aid for Adults.

Strengthening Support Systems

Building a Talent Pipeline with University Partnerships

A "Recruit, Train, and Retain" program is in place with the University of Georgia.



2029



