



Strategic Plan Update

Goal Area 5: Mental Health & Wellness
February 9, 2026

Implementation Chart - Goal Area 5

Goal Area 5: Mental Health Performance Objectives	Implementation Years				
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
	-	-	-	-	-
	2025	2026	2027	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.

- Lithonia and Stephenson High Schools opened their SAFE centers in Fall 2025 giving the district a total of 8 centers.
- During the 2024–2025 school year, more than 13,000 students visited the six centers for support. As of December 2025, over 5,000 students have received services through the Centers, including therapy, mindfulness sessions, restorative circles, mediation, and other forms of assistance.
- 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.
- The Department of School Counseling received a grant from Kaiser Permanente Georgia to provide mindfulness and SEL tools for the DCSD Counseling Team of approximately 300 counselors as they support students in each Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) tenet: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision making.

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).
- 49 staff members have been trained in Reaching Teens through Wellroot Family Services to discover effective strategies for supporting youth with trauma-informed care.

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 66 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 THRIVE Wellness Office successfully completed its first Frontline course in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Adults during the professional development day on November 4th, 2025, with 17 participants in attendance.
- In November 2025, the District hired their first onsite EAP Specialist to provide confidential, no-cost support to help staff and their household members navigate personal, work, and family challenges that impact well-being and performance.

Strategic Plan Goal Area 5 Outcomes



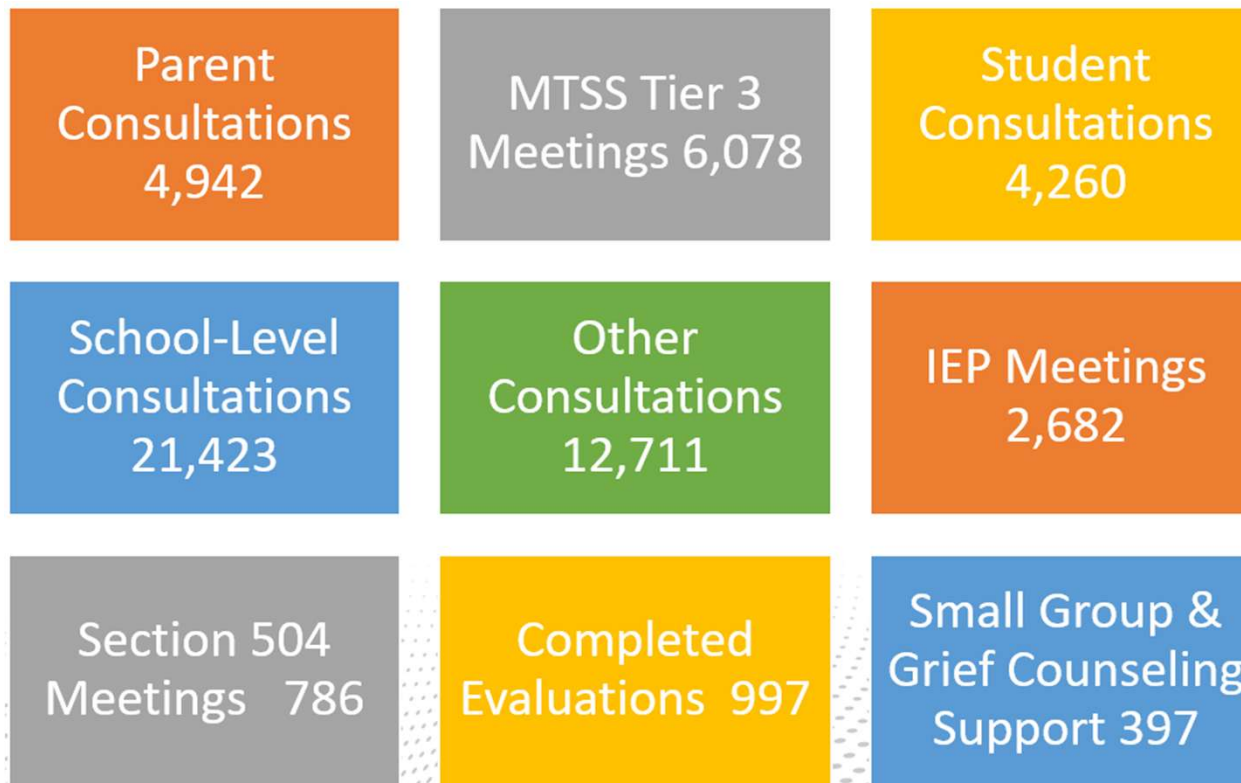
Goal Area 5: Mental Health & Wellness Outcomes

Currently, there are more than 700 staff members providing mental supports for the students in DeKalb County School District.



Goal Area 5: Mental Health & Wellness Outcomes

Psychological Services January 2026



Goal Area 5: Mental Health & Wellness Outcomes

Therapeutic services were provided in **55** schools by Chris 180, Pathways, Progress Place, Positive Growth, Summit, Jet Doc, and Claratel (formerly known as DeKalb Community Service Board).



Idlewood ES, Stephenson MS, McNair DLA, and the Buck Godfrey Transportation Lounge have established indoor Staff Wellness Rooms that were established and completed within the past year.

These are safe spaces where school staff may decompress and re-regulate for the remaining school day. The Transportation Lounge is now a place where bus drivers can truly rest and refresh between routes.



During 2024-2025 school year, there were

<p>6,582 In-School Suspensions</p> <p>To date: there are 2,713</p>	<p>13,545 Out-of-School Suspensions</p> <p>To date: there are 4,793</p>
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- Therapeutic services in schools are critical because they address students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs early, reducing barriers to learning and improving outcomes.
- Staff wellness lounges support mental health by giving educators and school staff safe spaces to decompress, recharge, and return to students more focused and regulated.
- Alternatives to suspension, such as restorative and therapeutic practices, address the root causes of behavior while keeping students engaged in school. Together, these supports foster safer, healthier school environments where both students and staff can succeed.

Goal Area 5: Mental Health & Wellness Outcomes



112 student groups have convened through the SAFE Centers to work on conflict resolution, self-esteem, dysregulation, and communication skills, thus avoiding a more serious consequence at school.



123 referrals were made for individual mental health services for students through the SAFE Center program, which decreased acting out behaviors at school.

5822 student conferences were held by SAFE Center Social Work Liaisons.



THANK YOU!

Strategic Goal Area 5: Mental Health & Wellness