

**Draft Proposal: Targeted Recruitment & Retention Incentive for High-Needs Schools
DeKalb County School District
Three-Year \$10,000 Annual Stipend Incentive Program**

Purpose:

To recruit and retain high-quality educators in DeKalb County School District's highest-needs schools by offering a meaningful, multi-year financial incentive paired with professional support. This program targets both high-performing current employees willing to transfer and fully certified newly hired teachers entering the profession. For the purpose of this proposal, high-need schools will include, but may not be limited to: schools designated by the State as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI); and schools with historically high rates of teacher turnover (>25% average over the last three years).

Rationale:

DCSD faces ongoing challenges staffing its lowest-performing and hardest-to-fill schools. Traditional one-time bonuses have not consistently led to sustained improvements in recruitment or retention. Research indicates that multi-year, predictable incentives, when combined with professional support, are more effective in stabilizing school staffing patterns and improving student outcomes. The proposed incentive will encourage experienced and effective teachers to not only consider working in these schools but also to stay committed to them, and in today's educational climate, we all know that stability matters. When students are still developing academically, consistency in instruction and strong relationships with their teachers make a real difference.

This proposal would support 17 schools, with two teachers allocated to each school, for a total of 34 teachers. Schools, in conjunction with the Divisions of Schools and Leadership and Accountability and Research, will use individual school data to determine the specific content areas these teachers will support. This ensures we are not taking a one-size-fits-all approach, but instead aligning resources directly to each school's greatest academic needs.

This proposal introduces a \$10,000 annual stipend for three consecutive years for qualifying teachers who commit to serving at designated high-needs schools.

Program Overview

1. Eligibility

A. High-Performing Internal Candidates

- Current DCSD teachers rated *proficient* or *exemplary* on their last three (3) TKES evaluations – and at least ONE of the following:
- Documented GA Milestones student proficiency+ rates of at least 60% for at least two of last three years (if teacher of record for a GA Milestones End Of Grade or End Of Course class).
- Documented GA Milestones grade level literacy rate of at least 60% for at least two of last three years (if teacher of record for an End Of Grade or End Of Course class that assesses English Language Arts)
- Documented GA Milestones median student growth percentile of at least 60th percentile for at least two of last three years (if teacher of record for a GA Milestones End Of Grade or End Of Course class).
- Documented Spring MAP median Achievement percentile of at least 60th median achievement percentile for at least two of last three spring MAP assessments (if teacher of record for a class that takes either Math, Reading, Language Usage, or Science MAP assessments)
- Documented Spring MAP student median Conditional Growth percentile of at least 60th student median conditional growth percentile for least two of last three spring MAP assessments (if teacher of record for a class that takes either Math, Reading, Language Usage, or Science MAP assessments)
- Documented Spring MAP percentage of students who met growth projection of at least 60%, for least two of last three spring MAP assessments (if teacher of record for a class that takes either Math, Reading, Language Usage, or Science MAP assessments)
- No active performance concerns or corrective action plans.
- Must agree to transfer into a designated high-needs school.

2. Placement Guideline Options

- Transferring teachers will fill current vacancies **OR**
- Transferring teachers will be moved into positions held by instructionally deficient teachers. Principals will have to provide data to support measures to support

instructionally deficient teachers. These teachers will be moved into vacancies in non-horizon schools.

3. Financial Incentive

- \$10,000 annual stipend, paid in two installments yearly – December and May.
- Renewable for each of the three years upon meeting service requirements.
- Teachers must complete the full school year to receive the full annual amount.

4. Service Commitment

- A three-year commitment to a designated high-needs school.
- Early departure results in prorated repayment or forfeiture of future installments.
- Departure from the school district for a lateral position will result in the last payment being forfeited.
- Transfers during the committed time will not be permitted unless initiated by the school district

Professional Supports Included

This incentive is complemented by targeted support structures to improve teacher experience and effectiveness:

- Protected planning time, prioritized for teachers in high-needs schools.
- Access to specialized professional development in literacy, numeracy, student engagement, and culturally responsive practices.
- Optional leadership pathway development, including opportunities to serve as teacher leaders, model classroom hosts, special consideration to the Assistant Principal Academy, and an opportunity to sit on various district-level instructional committees.

Implementation Timeline

January–March 2026

- Identify and publish list of eligible high-needs schools.
- Begin internal recruitment campaigns.
- Add incentive guidelines to recruitment materials and job postings.

March–June 2026

- Extend contract offers with incentive commitments for the 2026–2027 school year.
- Prioritize high-needs placements for new graduates and internal transfers.

July 2026–June 2027

- Implement stipends and support structures.
- Monitor recruitment, retention, and teacher satisfaction metrics.

Budget Considerations

Projected cost per teacher:

- \$10,000 per year × 3 years = \$30,000

District-wide cost:

- Approx. **\$340,000** per year for SY27, SY28, SY29 = **\$1,020,000** in total over 3 years
- Determined by the number of incentive slots funded (34 teaching positions: 2 positions at each of the 17 Horizon designated schools = **\$1,020,000.00** million for three years). This number is half of the 183 teachers who transferred last year.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased placement of effective teachers in high-needs schools.
- Stabilized staffing patterns and reduced mid-year vacancies.
- Improved new-teacher success and early-career retention.
- Measurable impact on school climate, instructional quality, and student achievement over three years.
- Increased upward mobility for high-performing teachers.