

DeKalb County School District (DCSD)

**Chronology of the Agenda Item – School-Based
Mental Health Services Grant**

School Psychological Services Support

School psychologist shortages are a nationwide problem contributing to vacancies, recruitment challenges, turnovers, heavy student caseloads, and professional burnout in the school setting. At the same time, student mental health needs have increased along with requests for psychological evaluations based upon Child Find regulations. To mitigate these concerns, the DeKalb County School District – Recruit, Train, and Retain (DCSD-RTR) project was written in collaboration with Mrs. Kimberly Franklin, Senior Coordinator of DCSD Psychological Services; Dr. Tamika La Salle, Associate Professor of School Psychology and Director of the Center for Research on School Safety, School Climate & Classroom Management at Georgia State University (GSU); and Dr. Catherine Perkins, Coordinator of the Educational Specialist Program in School Psychology and School Psychology Internship Program at Georgia State University (GSU). The primary objectives for supporting the DCSD-RTR project are to recruit school psychologists and future school psychologists, to train and prepare school psychologists to provide mental health services, and to retain school psychologists in DCSD and reduce the ratio of school psychologists to students. It is requested that the Board of Education approve the amendment and ratification of the Georgia State University (GSU) School Based Mental Health Services Grant for year 4 of 5. At the request of the legal department, the requested amendment and ratification of the amended contract is for January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026. The ratification is requested to ensure the contract amendment board approval aligns with the grant terms.

DeKalb County School District's (DCSD) Office of Psychological Services was awarded the U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) School-Based Mental Health Services grant in the amount of \$2.9 million dollars. Official notice for this award from the U.S. Department of Education was received on December 31, 2022, with a start date of January 1, 2023. The grant runs from calendar year to calendar year. This is Year 4 of the grant, and the third amendment to the Technical Service Agreement with Georgia State University (GSU). DCSD is the fiscal agent of the grant and is requesting to provide GSU with funds to implement the following technical services as outlined in the grant proposal: Course development to prepare practitioners to work in high-needs districts specifically DCSD; targeted professional development for DCSD school psychologists and/or

mental health personnel; enhanced recruitment activities; supplies; conference travel; the support of a graduate research assistant; payment of tuition and health insurance; co-direct support of all project activities including gathering and

analyzing annual outcome data to write the annual performance report for the US DOE; coordinate efforts to engage in equity audits in schools and analyze data; and attend all grant and Advisory Board meetings.

The table below reflects the number of school psychology graduate students who will matriculate through Georgia State University. This grant places DCSD in a great position to have immediate access for school psychologists when positions become vacated and replacements are needed or to have growth positions for increasing the impact of mental health support from school psychologists.

Georgia State University Graduate Students						
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
1 st Year Grad. Student (Full-Time at GSU)	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 4 Students: K.C., C.G., I.R., T.W.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 6 Students: T.C., R.F., A.R., H.R., K.S., N.W.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 6 Students: K.M., M.M., J.C., K.G., E.L., G.L.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 5 Students: A.W., V.A., L.T., H.L., S.M.		
2 nd Year Grad Student (Practicum – Part-Time at GSU & Part-Time at DCSD)	<u>Goal # = 3 Students</u> Actual # = 2 Students: A.H., R.S.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 4 Students: K.C., C.G., I.R., T.W.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 6 Students: T.C., R.F., A.R., H.R., K.S., N.W.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 6 Students: K.M., M.M., J.C., K.G., E.L., G.L.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 5 Students: A.W., V.A., L.T., H.L., S.M.	
3 rd Year Grad Student (Intern – Full-Time at DCSD with Seminar Course at GSU)		<u>Goal # = 3 Students</u> Actual # = 2 Students: A.H., R.S.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 4 Students: K.C., C.G., I.R., T.W.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 5 Students: T.C., A.R., H.R., K.S., N.W.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 6 Students: K.M., M.M., J.C., K.G., E.L., G.L.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 5 Students: A.W., V.A., L.T., H.L., S.M.

Hired			<u>Goal # = 3 Students</u> Actual # = 2 Students: A.H., R.S.	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 4 Students: K.C., C.G., I.R., T.W.	<u>Goal # = 6 Students</u>	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u>
Additional Info	Year 2 M.A. left grant for doctoral degree pursuits		Year 2: R.F. removed from grant, T.C. repeating practicum			
Total Students Per Year	<u>Goal # = 8 Students</u> Actual # = 6 Students	<u>Goal # = 13 Students</u> Actual # = 12 Students	<u>Goal # = 15 Students</u> Actual # = 16 Students	<u>Goal # = 15 Students</u> Actual # = 16 Students:	<u>Goal # = 10 Students</u> Actual # = 11 Students:	<u>Goal # = 5 Students</u> Actual # = 5 Students:

Prior to the start of the grant (2022-23 school year), there were 43 school psychologists employed. There were 4 resignations at the end of the 2022-23 school year, and recruitment efforts led to the hiring of 5 school psychologists providing a total of 44 school psychologists for the 2023-24 school year for Year 1 of the grant. At the end of the 2023-24 school year, there were 5 resignations and recruitment efforts led to the hiring of 12 school psychologists totaling 51 school psychologists employed in Year 2 of the grant for 2024-25 school year. At the end of the 2024-25 school year, there were 2 resignations. Ten school psychologists were hired for the 2025-26 school year including 2 graduate students from the grant. There are currently 59 school psychologists employed in DCSD. Another purpose of the grant was to support the efforts for hiring school psychologists associated with the growth positions that were initially approved by the district.

Through the School-Based Mental Health Services grant funding, PREPaRE training, which is an evidence-based resource for school crisis prevention and response, has been provided for the school psychologists, school psychologist interns, and selected school social workers. Four district school psychologists received PREPaRE Train-the-Trainer instruction and are now able to offer the

training to newly hired school psychologists and district student support personnel. The school psychologists and school psychology interns have received training on the WhyTry curriculum which is based upon the sound principles of solution-focused brief therapy, social and emotional intelligence, and multisensory learning. Recruitment/hiring bonuses have been provided to the newly hired school psychologists, and retention bonuses were given during Year 1 for the school psychologists who remained in DCSD. In addition, membership to the Georgia Association of School Psychologists (GASP) has been paid or reimbursed to all DCSD school psychologists. School psychology intern supervisors and early career psychologists have their membership paid for or reimbursed for the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Stipends for GASP and/or NASP conference attendance are provided to school psychology internship supervisors. Additional on-site professional development opportunities have been offered for all school psychologists throughout the school year with some funding coming from the grant. The senior coordinator and lead school psychologist, who are DCSD-RTR Project Director and Co-Director respectively, receive paid membership for both GASP and NASP, and stipends for traveling to GASP and NASP conferences. Similarly, GSU DCSD-RTR Project Director and Co-Director, Dr. LaSalle-Finley and Dr. Perkins respectively, receive membership payment to GASP and NASP along with conference attendance. Their funding was mistakenly omitted from the grant initial calculations and have been given approval from the US DOE Federal Agent to alter the Technical Service Agreement amount to include these funds.